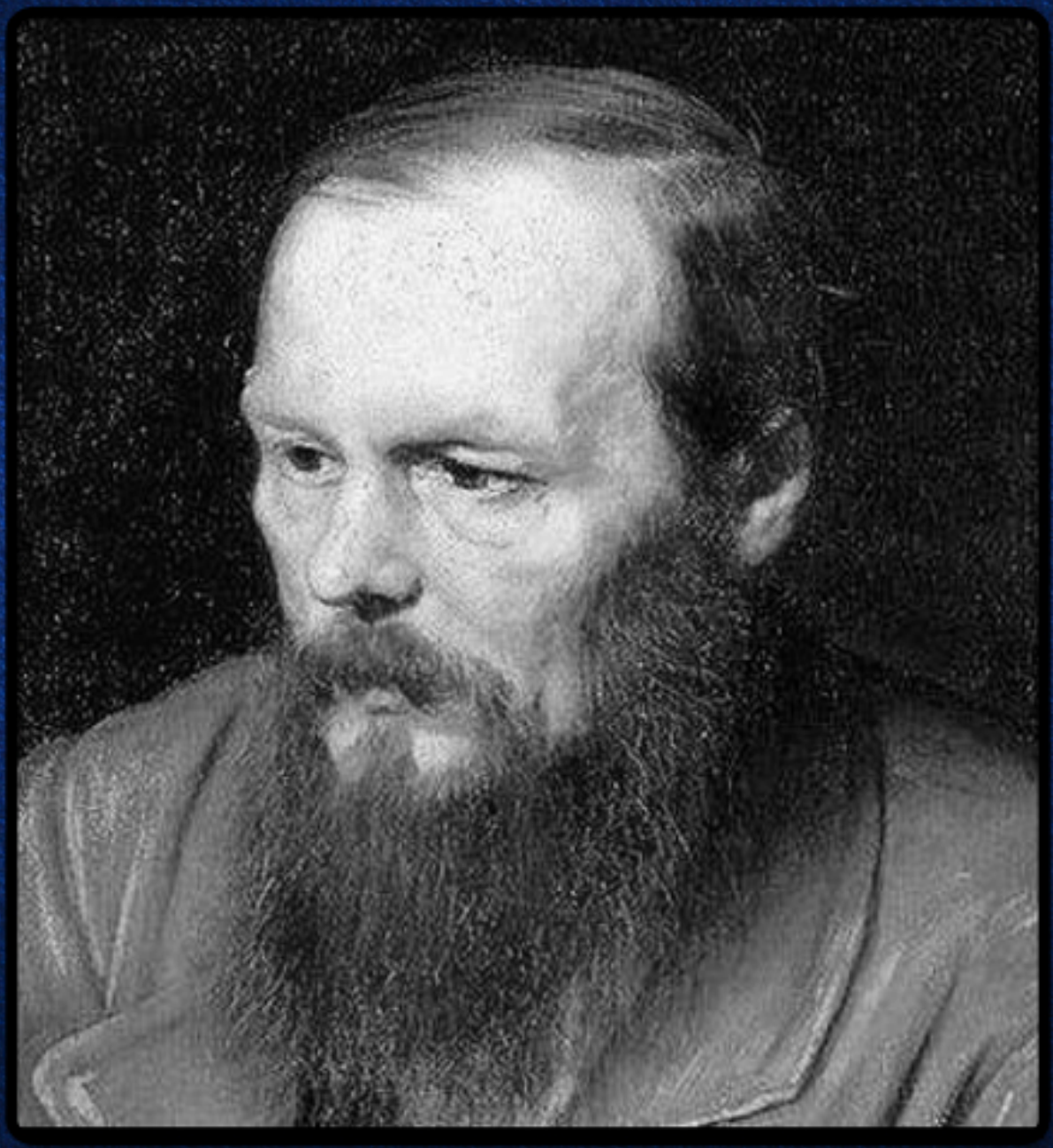
Complete Works of

FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY



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The Complete Works of

FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

(1821-1881)



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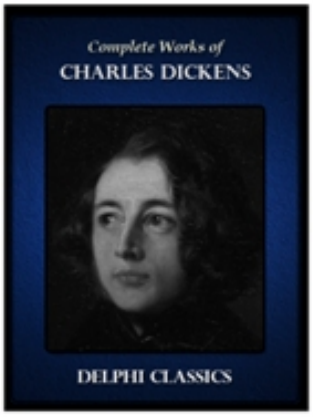
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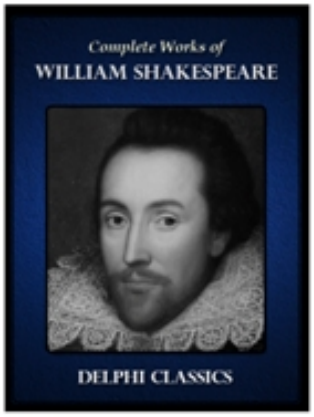
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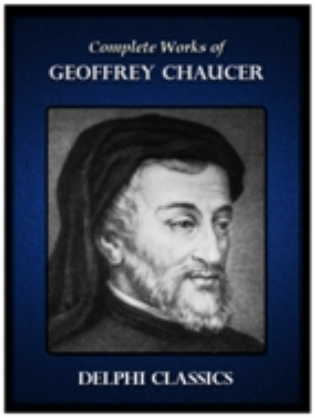


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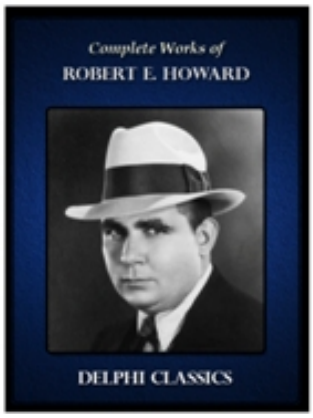


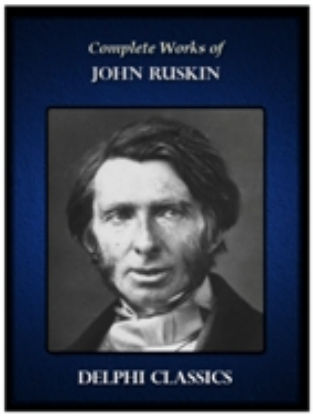
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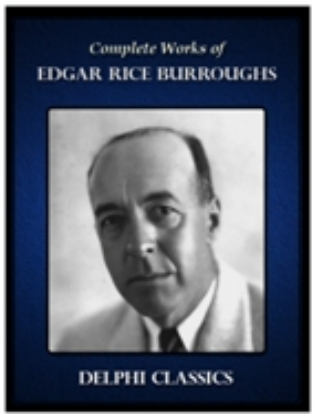
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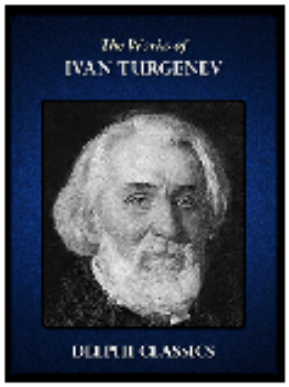
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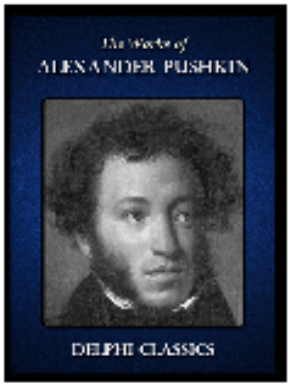


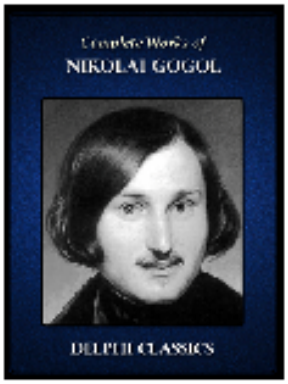
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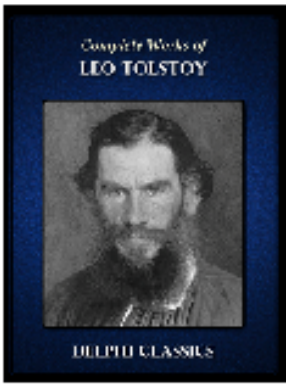
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The Novels



Dostoyevsky's birthplace — Moscow Hospital for the poor - where his father worked



The author’s parents were both from a Lithuanian noble family from the Pinsk region, with roots dating back to the 16th century. Dostoyevsky's immediate ancestors on his mother Maria's side were merchants; the male line on his father's side were priests. His father, Mikhail, was expected to join the clergy, but instead ran away from home and broke with the family permanently.

POOR FOLK



Translated by C. J. Hogarth

Poor Folk was Dostoyevsky's first novel, which he wrote over the span of nine months and published in 1845. It was lauded by the influential critic Belinsky as being 'socially conscious literature' and he hailed Dostoyevsky as the new Gogol. The novel was partly inspired by Gogol's short story *The Overcoat*, which also features the male protagonist of a copy clerk. *Poor Folk* is written in the form of letters of correspondence between the two main characters. Like Gogol's short story, the novel gives a profound and harrowing account of the lives of low income Russians in the mid-nineteenth century.



Dostoyevsky at the beginning of his literary career

POOR FOLK

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POOR FOLK

April 8th

MY DEAREST BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — How happy I was last night — how immeasurably, how impossibly happy! That was because for once in your life you had relented so far as to obey my wishes. At about eight o'clock I awoke from sleep (you know, my beloved one, that I always like to sleep for a short hour after my work is done) — I awoke, I say, and, lighting a candle, prepared my paper to write, and trimmed my pen. Then suddenly, for some reason or another, I raised my eyes — and felt my very heart leap within me! For you had understood what I wanted, you had understood what my heart was craving for. Yes, I perceived that a corner of the curtain in your window had been looped up and fastened to the cornice as I had suggested should be done; and it seemed to me that your dear face was glimmering at the window, and that you were looking at me from out of the darkness of your room, and that you were thinking of me. Yet how vexed I felt that I could not distinguish your sweet face clearly! For there was a time when you and I could see one another without any difficulty at all. Ah me, but old age is not always a blessing, my beloved one! At this very moment everything is standing awry to my eyes, for a man needs only to work late overnight in his writing of something or other for, in the morning, his eyes to be red, and the tears to be gushing from them in a way that makes him ashamed to be seen before strangers. However, I was able to picture to myself your beaming smile, my angel — your kind, bright smile; and in my heart there lurked just such a feeling as on the occasion when I first kissed you, my little Barbara. Do you remember that, my darling? Yet somehow you seemed to be threatening me with your tiny finger. Was it so, little wanton? You must write and tell me about it in your next letter.

But what think you of the plan of the curtain, Barbara? It is a charming one, is it not? No matter whether I be at work, or about to retire to rest, or just awaking from sleep, it enables me to know that you are thinking of me, and remembering me — that you are both well and happy. Then when you lower the curtain, it means that it is time that I, Makar Alexievitch, should go to bed; and when again you raise the curtain, it means that you are saying to me, "Good morning," and asking me how I am, and whether I

have slept well. “As for myself,” adds the curtain, “I am altogether in good health and spirits, glory be to God!” Yes, my heart’s delight, you see how easy a plan it was to devise, and how much writing it will save us! It is a clever plan, is it not? And it was my own invention, too! Am I not cunning in such matters, Barbara Alexievna?

Well, next let me tell you, dearest, that last night I slept better and more soundly than I had ever hoped to do, and that I am the more delighted at the fact in that, as you know, I had just settled into a new lodging — a circumstance only too apt to keep one from sleeping! This morning, too, I arose (joyous and full of love) at cockcrow. How good seemed everything at that hour, my darling! When I opened my window I could see the sun shining, and hear the birds singing, and smell the air laden with scents of spring. In short, all nature was awaking to life again. Everything was in consonance with my mood; everything seemed fair and spring-like. Moreover, I had a fancy that I should fare well today. But my whole thoughts were bent upon you. “Surely,” thought I, “we mortals who dwell in pain and sorrow might with reason envy the birds of heaven which know not either!” And my other thoughts were similar to these. In short, I gave myself up to fantastic comparisons. A little book which I have says the same kind of thing in a variety of ways. For instance, it says that one may have many, many fancies, my Barbara — that as soon as the spring comes on, one’s thoughts become uniformly pleasant and sportive and witty, for the reason that, at that season, the mind inclines readily to tenderness, and the world takes on a more roseate hue. From that little book of mine I have culled the following passage, and written it down for you to see. In particular does the author express a longing similar to my own, where he writes:

“Why am I not a bird free to seek its quest?”

And he has written much else, God bless him!

But tell me, my love — where did you go for your walk this morning? Even before I had started for the office you had taken flight from your room, and passed through the courtyard — yes, looking as vernal-like as a bird in spring. What rapture it gave me to see you! Ah, little Barbara, little Barbara, you must never give way to grief, for tears are of no avail, nor sorrow. I know this well — I know it of my own experience. So do you rest quietly until you have regained your health a little. But how is our good Thedora? What a kind heart she has! You write that she is now living with

you, and that you are satisfied with what she does. True, you say that she is inclined to grumble, but do not mind that, Barbara. God bless her, for she is an excellent soul!

But what sort of an abode have I lighted upon, Barbara Alexievna? What sort of a tenement, do you think, is this? Formerly, as you know, I used to live in absolute stillness — so much so that if a fly took wing it could plainly be heard buzzing. Here, however, all is turmoil and shouting and clatter. The PLAN of the tenement you know already. Imagine a long corridor, quite dark, and by no means clean. To the right a dead wall, and to the left a row of doors stretching as far as the line of rooms extends. These rooms are tenanted by different people — by one, by two, or by three lodgers as the case may be, but in this arrangement there is no sort of system, and the place is a perfect Noah's Ark. Most of the lodgers are respectable, educated, and even bookish people. In particular they include a tchinovnik (one of the literary staff in some government department), who is so well-read that he can expound Homer or any other author — in fact, ANYTHING, such a man of talent is he! Also, there are a couple of officers (for ever playing cards), a midshipman, and an English tutor. But, to amuse you, dearest, let me describe these people more categorically in my next letter, and tell you in detail about their lives. As for our landlady, she is a dirty little old woman who always walks about in a dressing-gown and slippers, and never ceases to shout at Theresa. I myself live in the kitchen — or, rather, in a small room which forms part of the kitchen. The latter is a very large, bright, clean, cheerful apartment with three windows in it, and a partition-wall which, running outwards from the front wall, makes a sort of little den, a sort of extra room, for myself. Everything in this den is comfortable and convenient, and I have, as I say, a window to myself. So much for a description of my dwelling-place. Do not think, dearest, that in all this there is any hidden intention. The fact that I live in the kitchen merely means that I live behind the partition wall in that apartment — that I live quite alone, and spend my time in a quiet fashion compounded of trifles. For furniture I have provided myself with a bed, a table, a chest of drawers, and two small chairs. Also, I have suspended an ikon. True, better rooms MAY exist in the world than this — much better rooms; yet COMFORT is the chief thing. In fact, I have made all my arrangements for comfort's sake alone; so do not for a moment imagine that I had any other end in view. And since your window happens to be just opposite to mine,

and since the courtyard between us is narrow and I can see you as you pass, — why, the result is that this miserable wretch will be able to live at once more happily and with less outlay. The dearest room in this house costs, with board, thirty-five roubles — more than my purse could well afford; whereas MY room costs only twenty-four, though formerly I used to pay thirty, and so had to deny myself many things (I could drink tea but seldom, and never could indulge in tea and sugar as I do now). But, somehow, I do not like having to go without tea, for everyone else here is respectable, and the fact makes me ashamed. After all, one drinks tea largely to please one's fellow men, Barbara, and to give oneself tone and an air of gentility (though, of myself, I care little about such things, for I am not a man of the finicking sort). Yet think you that, when all things needful — boots and the rest — have been paid for, much will remain? Yet I ought not to grumble at my salary, — I am quite satisfied with it; it is sufficient. It has sufficed me now for some years, and, in addition, I receive certain gratuities.

Well good-bye, my darling. I have bought you two little pots of geraniums — quite cheap little pots, too — as a present. Perhaps you would also like some mignonette? Mignonette it shall be if only you will write to inform me of everything in detail. Also, do not misunderstand the fact that I have taken this room, my dearest. Convenience and nothing else, has made me do so. The snugness of the place has caught my fancy. Also. I shall be able to save money here, and to hoard it against the future. Already I have saved a little money as a beginning. Nor must you despise me because I am such an insignificant old fellow that a fly could break me with its wing. True, I am not a swashbuckler; but perhaps there may also abide in me the spirit which should pertain to every man who is at once resigned and sure of himself. Good-bye, then, again, my angel. I have now covered close upon a whole two sheets of notepaper, though I ought long ago to have been starting for the office. I kiss your hands, and remain ever your devoted slave, your faithful friend,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

P.S. — One thing I beg of you above all things — and that is, that you will answer this letter as FULLY as possible. With the letter I send you a packet of bonbons. Eat them for your health's sake, nor, for the love of God, feel any uneasiness about me. Once more, dearest one, good-bye.

April 8th

MY BELOVED MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — Do you know, must quarrel with you. Yes, good Makar Alexievitch, I really cannot accept your presents, for I know what they must have cost you — I know to what privations and self-denial they must have led. How many times have I not told you that I stand in need of NOTHING, of absolutely NOTHING, as well as that I shall never be in a position to recompense you for all the kindly acts with which you have loaded me? Why, for instance, have you sent me geraniums? A little sprig of balsam would not have mattered so much — but geraniums! Only have I to let fall an unguarded word — for example, about geraniums — and at once you buy me some! How much they must have cost you! Yet what a charm there is in them, with their flaming petals! Wherever did you get these beautiful plants? I have set them in my window as the most conspicuous place possible, while on the floor I have placed a bench for my other flowers to stand on (since you are good enough to enrich me with such presents). Unfortunately, Thedora, who, with her sweeping and polishing, makes a perfect sanctuary of my room, is not over-pleased at the arrangement. But why have you sent me also bonbons? Your letter tells me that something special is afoot with you, for I find in it so much about paradise and spring and sweet odours and the songs of birds. Surely, thought I to myself when I received it, this is as good as poetry! Indeed, verses are the only thing that your letter lacks, Makar Alexievitch. And what tender feelings I can read in it — what roseate-coloured fancies! To the curtain, however, I had never given a thought. The fact is that when I moved the flower-pots, it LOOPED ITSELF up. There now!

Ah, Makar Alexievitch, you neither speak of nor give any account of what you have spent upon me. You hope thereby to deceive me, to make it seem as though the cost always falls upon you alone, and that there is nothing to conceal. Yet I KNOW that for my sake you deny yourself necessaries. For instance, what has made you go and take the room which you have done, where you will be worried and disturbed, and where you have neither elbow-space nor comfort — you who love solitude, and never like to have any one near you? To judge from your salary, I should think that you might well live in greater ease than that. Also, Thedora tells me that your circumstances used to be much more affluent than they are at

present. Do you wish, then, to persuade me that your whole existence has been passed in loneliness and want and gloom, with never a cheering word to help you, nor a seat in a friend's chimney-corner? Ah, kind comrade, how my heart aches for you! But do not overtask your health, Makar Alexievitch. For instance, you say that your eyes are over-weak for you to go on writing in your office by candle-light. Then why do so? I am sure that your official superiors do not need to be convinced of your diligence!

Once more I implore you not to waste so much money upon me. I know how much you love me, but I also know that you are not rich. . . . This morning I too rose in good spirits. Thedora had long been at work; and it was time that I too should bestir myself. Indeed I was yearning to do so, so I went out for some silk, and then sat down to my labours. All the morning I felt light-hearted and cheerful. Yet now my thoughts are once more dark and sad — once more my heart is ready to sink.

Ah, what is going to become of me? What will be my fate? To have to be so uncertain as to the future, to have to be unable to foretell what is going to happen, distresses me deeply. Even to look back at the past is horrible, for it contains sorrow that breaks my very heart at the thought of it. Yes, a whole century in tears could I spend because of the wicked people who have wrecked my life!

But dusk is coming on, and I must set to work again. Much else should I have liked to write to you, but time is lacking, and I must hasten. Of course, to write this letter is a pleasure enough, and could never be wearisome; but why do you not come to see me in person? Why do you not, Makar Alexievitch? You live so close to me, and at least SOME of your time is your own. I pray you, come. I have just seen Theresa. She was looking so ill, and I felt so sorry for her, that I gave her twenty kopecks. I am almost falling asleep. Write to me in fullest detail, both concerning your mode of life, and concerning the people who live with you, and concerning how you fare with them. I should so like to know! Yes, you must write again. Tonight I have purposely looped the curtain up. Go to bed early, for, last night, I saw your candle burning until nearly midnight. Goodbye! I am now feeling sad and weary. Ah that I should have to spend such days as this one has been. Again good-bye. — Your friend,

BARBARA DOBROSELOVA.

April 8th

MY DEAREST BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — To think that a day like this should have fallen to my miserable lot! Surely you are making fun of an old man? ... However, it was my own fault — my own fault entirely. One ought not to grow old holding a lock of Cupid's hair in one's hand. Naturally one is misunderstood.... Yet man is sometimes a very strange being. By all the Saints, he will talk of doing things, yet leave them undone, and remain looking the kind of fool from whom may the Lord preserve us! . . . Nay, I am not angry, my beloved; I am only vexed to think that I should have written to you in such stupid, flowery phraseology. Today I went hopping and skipping to the office, for my heart was under your influence, and my soul was keeping holiday, as it were. Yes, everything seemed to be going well with me. Then I betook myself to my work. But with what result? I gazed around at the old familiar objects, at the old familiar grey and gloomy objects. They looked just the same as before. Yet WERE those the same inkstains, the same tables and chairs, that I had hitherto known? Yes, they WERE the same, exactly the same; so why should I have gone off riding on Pegasus' back? Whence had that mood arisen? It had arisen from the fact that a certain sun had beamed upon me, and turned the sky to blue. But why so? Why is it, sometimes, that sweet odours seem to be blowing through a courtyard where nothing of the sort can be? They must be born of my foolish fancy, for a man may stray so far into sentiment as to forget his immediate surroundings, and to give way to the superfluity of fond ardour with which his heart is charged. On the other hand, as I walked home from the office at nightfall my feet seemed to lag, and my head to be aching. Also, a cold wind seemed to be blowing down my back (enraptured with the spring, I had gone out clad only in a thin overcoat). Yet you have misunderstood my sentiments, dearest. They are altogether different to what you suppose. It is a purely paternal feeling that I have for you. I stand towards you in the position of a relative who is bound to watch over your lonely orphanhood. This I say in all sincerity, and with a single purpose, as any kinsman might do. For, after all, I AM a distant kinsman of yours — the seventh drop of water in the pudding, as the proverb has it — yet still a kinsman, and at the present time your nearest relative and protector, seeing that where you had the right to look for help and protection, you found only

treachery and insult. As for poetry, I may say that I consider it unbecoming for a man of my years to devote his faculties to the making of verses. Poetry is rubbish. Even boys at school ought to be whipped for writing it.

Why do you write thus about “comfort” and “peace” and the rest? I am not a fastidious man, nor one who requires much. Never in my life have I been so comfortable as now. Why, then, should I complain in my old age? I have enough to eat, I am well dressed and booted. Also, I have my diversions. You see, I am not of noble blood. My father himself was not a gentleman; he and his family had to live even more plainly than I do. Nor am I a milksop. Nevertheless, to speak frankly, I do not like my present abode so much as I used to like my old one. Somehow the latter seemed more cosy, dearest. Of course, this room is a good one enough; in fact, in SOME respects it is the more cheerful and interesting of the two. I have nothing to say against it — no. Yet I miss the room that used to be so familiar to me. Old lodgers like myself soon grow as attached to our chattels as to a kinsman. My old room was such a snug little place! True, its walls resembled those of any other room — I am not speaking of that; the point is that the recollection of them seems to haunt my mind with sadness. Curious that recollections should be so mournful! Even what in that room used to vex me and inconvenience me now looms in a purified light, and figures in my imagination as a thing to be desired. We used to live there so quietly — I and an old landlady who is now dead. How my heart aches to remember her, for she was a good woman, and never overcharged for her rooms. Her whole time was spent in making patchwork quilts with knitting-needles that were an arshin [An ell.] long. Oftentimes we shared the same candle and board. Also she had a granddaughter, Masha — a girl who was then a mere baby, but must now be a girl of thirteen. This little piece of mischief, how she used to make us laugh the day long! We lived together, a happy family of three. Often of a long winter’s evening we would first have tea at the big round table, and then betake ourselves to our work; the while that, to amuse the child and to keep her out of mischief, the old lady would set herself to tell stories. What stories they were! — though stories less suitable for a child than for a grown-up, educated person. My word! Why, I myself have sat listening to them, as I smoked my pipe, until I have forgotten about work altogether. And then, as the story grew grimmer, the little child, our little bag of mischief, would grow thoughtful in proportion, and clasp her rosy cheeks in her tiny hands, and, hiding her face, press

closer to the old landlady. Ah, how I loved to see her at those moments! As one gazed at her one would fail to notice how the candle was flickering, or how the storm was swishing the snow about the courtyard. Yes, that was a goodly life, my Barbara, and we lived it for nearly twenty years. . . . How my tongue does carry me away! Maybe the subject does not interest you, and I myself find it a not over-easy subject to recall — especially at the present time.

Darkness is falling, and Theresa is busying herself with something or another. My head and my back are aching, and even my thoughts seem to be in pain, so strangely do they occur. Yes, my heart is sad today, Barbara.... What is it you have written to me? — -"Why do you not come in PERSON to see me?" Dear one, what would people say? I should have but to cross the courtyard for people to begin noticing us, and asking themselves questions. Gossip and scandal would arise, and there would be read into the affair quite another meaning than the real one. No, little angel, it were better that I should see you tomorrow at Vespers. That will be the better plan, and less hurtful to us both. Nor must you chide me, beloved, because I have written you a letter like this (reading it through, I see it to be all odds and ends); for I am an old man now, dear Barbara, and an uneducated one. Little learning had I in my youth, and things refuse to fix themselves in my brain when I try to learn them anew. No, I am not skilled in letter-writing, Barbara, and, without being told so, or any one laughing at me for it, I know that, whenever I try to describe anything with more than ordinary distinctness, I fall into the mistake of talking sheer rubbish. . . . I saw you at your window today — yes, I saw you as you were drawing down the blind! Good-bye, goodbye, little Barbara, and may God keep you! Good-bye, my own Barbara Alexievna! — Your sincere friend,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

P.S. — Do not think that I could write to you in a satirical vein, for I am too old to show my teeth to no purpose, and people would laugh at me, and quote our Russian proverb: "Who diggeth a pit for another one, the same shall fall into it himself."

April 9th

MY DEAREST MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — Are not you, my friend and benefactor, just a little ashamed to repine and give way to such despondency? And surely you are not offended with me? Ah! Though often thoughtless in my speech, I never should have imagined that you would take my words as a jest at your expense. Rest assured that NEVER should I make sport of your years or of your character. Only my own levity is at fault; still more, the fact that I am so weary of life.

What will such a feeling not engender? To tell you the truth, I had supposed that YOU were jesting in your letter; wherefore, my heart was feeling heavy at the thought that you could feel so displeased with me. Kind comrade and helper, you will be doing me an injustice if for a single moment you ever suspect that I am lacking in feeling or in gratitude towards you. My heart, believe me, is able to appraise at its true worth all that you have done for me by protecting me from my enemies, and from hatred and persecution. Never shall I cease to pray to God for you; and, should my prayers ever reach Him and be received of Heaven, then assuredly fortune will smile upon you!

Today I am not well. By turns I shiver and flush with heat, and Thedora is greatly disturbed about me. . . . Do not scruple to come and see me, Makar Alexievitch. How can it concern other people what you do? You and I are well enough acquainted with each other, and one’s own affairs are one’s own affairs. Goodbye, Makar Alexievitch, for I have come to the end of all I had to say, and am feeling too unwell to write more. Again I beg of you not to be angry with me, but to rest assured of my constant respect and attachment. — Your humble, devoted servant, BARBARA DOBROSELOVA.

April 12th

DEAREST MISTRESS BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — I pray you, my beloved, to tell me what ails you. Every one of your letters fills me with alarm. On the other hand, in every letter I urge you to be more careful of yourself, and to wrap up yourself warmly, and to avoid going out in bad weather, and to be in all things prudent. Yet you go and disobey me! Ah, little angel, you are a perfect child! I know well that you are as weak as a blade of grass, and that, no matter what wind blows upon you, you are ready to fade. But you must be careful of yourself, dearest; you MUST look after yourself better; you MUST avoid all risks, lest you plunge your friends into desolation and despair.

Dearest, you also express a wish to learn the details of my daily life and surroundings. That wish I hasten to satisfy. Let me begin at the beginning, since, by doing so, I shall explain things more systematically. In the first place, on entering this house, one passes into a very bare hall, and thence along a passage to a mean staircase. The reception room, however, is bright, clean, and spacious, and is lined with redwood and metal- work. But the scullery you would not care to see; it is greasy, dirty, and odoriferous, while the stairs are in rags, and the walls so covered with filth that the hand sticks fast wherever it touches them. Also, on each landing there is a medley of boxes, chairs, and dilapidated wardrobes; while the windows have had most of their panes shattered, and everywhere stand washtubs filled with dirt, litter, eggshells, and fish-bladders. The smell is abominable. In short, the house is not a nice one.

As to the disposition of the rooms, I have described it to you already. True, they are convenient enough, yet every one of them has an ATMOSPHERE. I do not mean that they smell badly so much as that each of them seems to contain something which gives forth a rank, sickly-sweet odour. At first the impression is an unpleasant one, but a couple of minutes will suffice to dissipate it, for the reason that EVERYTHING here smells — people’s clothes, hands, and everything else — and one grows accustomed to the rankness. Canaries, however, soon die in this house. A naval officer here has just bought his fifth. Birds cannot live long in such an air. Every morning, when fish or beef is being cooked, and washing and scrubbing are in progress, the house is filled with steam. Always, too, the kitchen is full of

linen hanging out to dry; and since my room adjoins that apartment, the smell from the clothes causes me not a little annoyance. However, one can grow used to anything.

From earliest dawn the house is astir as its inmates rise, walk about, and stamp their feet. That is to say, everyone who has to go to work then gets out of bed. First of all, tea is partaken of. Most of the tea-urns belong to the landlady; and since there are not very many of them, we have to wait our turn. Anyone who fails to do so will find his teapot emptied and put away. On the first occasion, that was what happened to myself. Well, is there anything else to tell you? Already I have made the acquaintance of the company here. The naval officer took the initiative in calling upon me, and his frankness was such that he told me all about his father, his mother, his sister (who is married to a lawyer of Tula), and the town of Kronstadt. Also, he promised me his patronage, and asked me to come and take tea with him. I kept the appointment in a room where card-playing is continually in progress; and, after tea had been drunk, efforts were made to induce me to gamble. Whether or not my refusal seemed to the company ridiculous I cannot say, but at all events my companions played the whole evening, and were playing when I left. The dust and smoke in the room made my eyes ache. I declined, as I say, to play cards, and was, therefore, requested to discourse on philosophy, after which no one spoke to me at all — a result which I did not regret. In fact, I have no intention of going there again, since every one is for gambling, and for nothing but gambling. Even the literary tchinovnik gives such parties in his room — though, in his case, everything is done delicately and with a certain refinement, so that the thing has something of a retiring and innocent air.

In passing, I may tell you that our landlady is NOT a nice woman. In fact, she is a regular beldame. You have seen her once, so what do you think of her? She is as lanky as a plucked chicken in consumption, and, with Phaldoni (her servant), constitutes the entire staff of the establishment. Whether or not Phaldoni has any other name I do not know, but at least he answers to this one, and every one calls him by it. A red-haired, swine-jowled, snub-nosed, crooked lout, he is for ever wrangling with Theresa, until the pair nearly come to blows. In short, life is not overly pleasant in this place. Never at any time is the household wholly at rest, for always there are people sitting up to play cards. Sometimes, too, certain things are done of which it would be shameful for me to speak. In particular, hardened

though I am, it astonishes me that men WITH FAMILIES should care to live in this Sodom. For example, there is a family of poor folk who have rented from the landlady a room which does not adjoin the other rooms, but is set apart in a corner by itself. Yet what quiet people they are! Not a sound is to be heard from them. The father — he is called Gorshkov — is a little grey-headed tchinovnik who, seven years ago, was dismissed from public service, and now walks about in a coat so dirty and ragged that it hurts one to see it. Indeed it is a worse coat even than mine! Also, he is so thin and frail (at times I meet him in the corridor) that his knees quake under him, his hands and head are tremulous with some disease (God only knows what!), and he so fears and distrusts everybody that he always walks alone. Reserved though I myself am, he is even worse. As for his family, it consists of a wife and three children. The eldest of the latter — a boy — is as frail as his father, while the mother — a woman who, formerly, must have been good looking, and still has a striking aspect in spite of her pallor — goes about in the sorriest of rags. Also I have heard that they are in debt to our landlady, as well as that she is not overly kind to them. Moreover, I have heard that Gorshkov lost his post through some unpleasantness or other — through a legal suit or process of which I could not exactly tell you the nature. Yes, they certainly are poor — Oh, my God, how poor! At the same time, never a sound comes from their room. It is as though not a soul were living in it. Never does one hear even the children — which is an unusual thing, seeing that children are ever ready to sport and play, and if they fail to do so it is a bad sign. One evening when I chanced to be passing the door of their room, and all was quiet in the house, I heard through the door a sob, and then a whisper, and then another sob, as though somebody within were weeping, and with such subdued bitterness that it tore my heart to hear the sound. In fact, the thought of these poor people never left me all night, and quite prevented me from sleeping.

Well, good-bye, my little Barbara, my little friend beyond price. I have described to you everything to the best of my ability. All today you have been in my thoughts; all today my heart has been yearning for you. I happen to know, dearest one, that you lack a warm cloak. To me too, these St. Petersburg springs, with their winds and their snow showers, spell death. Good heavens, how the breezes bite one! Do not be angry, beloved, that I should write like this. Style I have not. Would that I had! I write just what wanders into my brain, in the hope that I may cheer you up a little. Of

course, had I had a good education, things might have been different; but, as things were, I could not have one. Never did I learn even to do simple sums! — Your faithful and unchangeable friend,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

April 25th

MY DEAREST MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — Today I met my cousin Sasha. To see her going to wrack and ruin shocked me terribly. Moreover, it has reached me, through a side wind, that she has been making inquiry for me, and dogging my footsteps, under the pretext that she wishes to pardon me, to forget the past, and to renew our acquaintance. Well, among other things she told me that, whereas you are not a kinsman of mine, that she is my nearest relative; that you have no right whatever to enter into family relations with us; and that it is wrong and shameful for me to be living upon your earnings and charity. Also, she said that I must have forgotten all that she did for me, though thereby she saved both myself and my mother from starvation, and gave us food and drink; that for two and a half years we caused her great loss; and, above all things, that she excused us what we owed her. Even my poor mother she did not spare. Would that she, my dead parent, could know how I am being treated! But God knows all about it. . . . Also, Anna declared that it was solely through my own fault that my fortunes declined after she had bettered them; that she is in no way responsible for what then happened; and that I have but myself to blame for having been either unable or unwilling to defend my honour. Great God! WHO, then, has been at fault? According to Anna, Hospodin [Mr.] Bwikov was only right when he declined to marry a woman who — But need I say it? It is cruel to hear such lies as hers. What is to become of me I do not know. I tremble and sob and weep. Indeed, even to write this letter has cost me two hours. At least it might have been thought that Anna would have confessed HER share in the past. Yet see what she says! ... For the love of God do not be anxious about me, my friend, my only benefactor. Thedora is over apt to exaggerate matters. I am not REALLY ill. I have merely caught a little cold. I caught it last night while I was walking to Bolkovo, to hear Mass sung for my mother. Ah, mother, my poor mother! Could you but rise from the grave and learn what is being done to your daughter!

B. D.

May 20th

MY DEAREST LITTLE BARBARA, — I am sending you a few grapes, which are good for a convalescent person, and strongly recommended by doctors for the allayment of fever. Also, you were saying the other day that you would like some roses; wherefore, I now send you a bunch. Are you at all able to eat, my darling? — for that is the chief point which ought to be seen to. Let us thank God that the past and all its unhappiness are gone! Yes, let us give thanks to Heaven for that much! As for books, I cannot get hold of any, except for a book which, written in excellent style, is, I believe, to be had here. At all events, people keep praising it very much, and I have begged the loan of it for myself. Should you too like to read it? In this respect, indeed, I feel nervous, for the reason that it is so difficult to divine what your taste in books may be, despite my knowledge of your character. Probably you would like poetry — the poetry of sentiment and of love making? Well, I will send you a book of MY OWN poems. Already I have copied out part of the manuscript.

Everything with me is going well; so pray do not be anxious on my account, beloved. What Thedora told you about me was sheer rubbish. Tell her from me that she has not been speaking the truth. Yes, do not fail to give this mischief-maker my message. It is not the case that I have gone and sold a new uniform. Why should I do so, seeing that I have forty roubles of salary still to come to me? Do not be uneasy, my darling. Thedora is a vindictive woman — merely a vindictive woman. We shall yet see better days. Only do you get well, my angel — only do you get well, for the love of God, lest you grieve an old man. Also, who told you that I was looking thin? Slanders again — nothing but slanders! I am as healthy as could be, and have grown so fat that I am ashamed to be so sleek of paunch. Would that you were equally healthy! . . . Now goodbye, my angel. I kiss every one of your tiny fingers, and remain ever your constant friend,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

P.S. — But what is this, dearest one, that you have written to me? Why do you place me upon such a pedestal? Moreover, how could I come and visit you frequently? How, I repeat? Of course, I might avail myself of the cover of night; but, alas! the season of the year is what it is, and includes no night time to speak of. In fact, although, throughout your illness and

delirium, I scarcely left your side for a moment, I cannot think how I contrived to do the many things that I did. Later, I ceased to visit you at all, for the reason that people were beginning to notice things, and to ask me questions. Yet, even so, a scandal has arisen. Theresa I trust thoroughly, for she is not a talkative woman; but consider how it will be when the truth comes out in its entirety! What THEN will folk not say and think? Nevertheless, be of good cheer, my beloved, and regain your health. When you have done so we will contrive to arrange a rendezvous out of doors.

June 1st

MY BELOVED MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — So eager am I to do something that will please and divert you in return for your care, for your ceaseless efforts on my behalf — in short, for your love for me — that I have decided to beguile a leisure hour for you by delving into my locker, and extracting thence the manuscript which I send you herewith. I began it during the happier period of my life, and have continued it at intervals since. So often have you asked me about my former existence — about my mother, about Pokrovski, about my sojourn with Anna Thedorovna, about my more recent misfortunes; so often have you expressed an earnest desire to read the manuscript in which (God knows why) I have recorded certain incidents of my life, that I feel no doubt but that the sending of it will give you sincere pleasure. Yet somehow I feel depressed when I read it, for I seem now to have grown twice as old as I was when I penned its concluding lines. Ah, Makar Alexievitch, how weary I am — how this insomnia tortures me! Convalescence is indeed a hard thing to bear!

B. D.

ONE

UP to the age of fourteen, when my father died, my childhood was the happiest period of my life. It began very far away from here- in the depths of the province of Tula, where my father filled the position of steward on the vast estates of the Prince P — . Our house was situated in one of the Prince’s villages, and we lived a quiet, obscure, but happy, life. A gay little child was I — my one idea being ceaselessly to run about the fields and the woods and the garden. No one ever gave me a thought, for my father was always occupied with business affairs, and my mother with her housekeeping. Nor did any one ever give me any lessons — a circumstance for which I was not sorry. At earliest dawn I would hie me to a pond or a copse, or to a hay or a harvest field, where the sun could warm me, and I could roam wherever I liked, and scratch my hands with bushes, and tear my clothes in pieces. For this I used to get blamed afterwards, but I did not care.

Had it befallen me never to quit that village — had it befallen me to remain for ever in that spot — I should always have been happy; but fate ordained that I should leave my birthplace even before my girlhood had

come to an end. In short, I was only twelve years old when we removed to St. Petersburg. Ah! how it hurts me to recall the mournful gatherings before our departure, and to recall how bitterly I wept when the time came for us to say farewell to all that I had held so dear! I remember throwing myself upon my father's neck, and beseeching him with tears to stay in the country a little longer; but he bid me be silent, and my mother, adding her tears to mine, explained that business matters compelled us to go. As a matter of fact, old Prince P — had just died, and his heirs had dismissed my father from his post; whereupon, since he had a little money privately invested in St. Petersburg, he bethought him that his personal presence in the capital was necessary for the due management of his affairs. It was my mother who told me this. Consequently we settled here in St. Petersburg, and did not again move until my father died.

How difficult I found it to grow accustomed to my new life! At the time of our removal to St. Petersburg it was autumn — a season when, in the country, the weather is clear and keen and bright, all agricultural labour has come to an end, the great sheaves of corn are safely garnered in the byre, and the birds are flying hither and thither in clamorous flocks. Yes, at that season the country is joyous and fair, but here in St. Petersburg, at the time when we reached the city, we encountered nothing but rain, bitter autumn frosts, dull skies, ugliness, and crowds of strangers who looked hostile, discontented, and disposed to take offence. However, we managed to settle down — though I remember that in our new home there was much noise and confusion as we set the establishment in order. After this my father was seldom at home, and my mother had few spare moments; wherefore, I found myself forgotten.

The first morning after our arrival, when I awoke from sleep, how sad I felt! I could see that our windows looked out upon a drab space of wall, and that the street below was littered with filth. Passers-by were few, and as they walked they kept muffling themselves up against the cold.

Then there ensued days when dullness and depression reigned supreme. Scarcely a relative or an acquaintance did we possess in St. Petersburg, and even Anna Thedorovna and my father had come to loggerheads with one another, owing to the fact that he owed her money. In fact, our only visitors were business callers, and as a rule these came but to wrangle, to argue, and to raise a disturbance. Such visits would make my father look very discontented, and seem out of temper. For hours and hours he would pace

the room with a frown on his face and a brooding silence on his lips. Even my mother did not dare address him at these times, while, for my own part, I used to sit reading quietly and humbly in a corner — not venturing to make a movement of any sort.

Three months after our arrival in St. Petersburg I was sent to a boarding-school. Here I found myself thrown among strange people; here everything was grim and uninviting, with teachers continually shouting at me, and my fellow-pupils for ever holding me up to derision, and myself constantly feeling awkward and uncouth. How strict, how exacting was the system! Appointed hours for everything, a common table, ever-insistent teachers! These things simply worried and tortured me. Never from the first could I sleep, but used to weep many a chill, weary night away. In the evenings everyone would have to repeat or to learn her lessons. As I crouched over a dialogue or a vocabulary, without daring even to stir, how my thoughts would turn to the chimney-corner at home, to my father, to my mother, to my old nurse, to the tales which the latter had been used to tell! How sad it all was! The memory of the merest trifle at home would please me, and I would think and think how nice things used to be at home. Once more I would be sitting in our little parlour at tea with my parents — in the familiar little parlour where everything was snug and warm! How ardently, how convulsively I would seem to be embracing my mother! Thus I would ponder, until at length tears of sorrow would softly gush forth and choke my bosom, and drive the lessons out of my head. For I never could master the tasks of the morrow; no matter how much my mistress and fellow-pupils might gird at me, no matter how much I might repeat my lessons over and over to myself, knowledge never came with the morning. Consequently, I used to be ordered the kneeling punishment, and given only one meal in the day. How dull and dispirited I used to feel! From the first my fellow-pupils used to tease and deride and mock me whenever I was saying my lessons. Also, they used to pinch me as we were on our way to dinner or tea, and to make groundless complaints of me to the head mistress. On the other hand, how heavenly it seemed when, on Saturday evening, my old nurse arrived to fetch me! How I would embrace the old woman in transports of joy! After dressing me, and wrapping me up, she would find that she could scarcely keep pace with me on the way home, so full was I of chatter and tales about one thing and another. Then, when I had arrived home merry and lighthearted, how fervently I would embrace my parents, as though I

had not seen them for ten years. Such a fussing would there be — such a talking and a telling of tales! To everyone I would run with a greeting, and laugh, and giggle, and scamper about, and skip for very joy. True, my father and I used to have grave conversations about lessons and teachers and the French language and grammar; yet we were all very happy and contented together. Even now it thrills me to think of those moments. For my father's sake I tried hard to learn my lessons, for I could see that he was spending his last kopeck upon me, and himself subsisting God knows how. Every day he grew more morose and discontented and irritable; every day his character kept changing for the worse. He had suffered an influx of debts, nor were his business affairs prospering. As for my mother, she was afraid even to say a word, or to weep aloud, for fear of still further angering him. Gradually she sickened, grew thinner and thinner, and became taken with a painful cough. Whenever I reached home from school I would find every one low-spirited, and my mother shedding silent tears, and my father raging. Bickering and high words would arise, during which my father was wont to declare that, though he no longer derived the smallest pleasure or relaxation from life, and had spent his last coin upon my education, I had not yet mastered the French language. In short, everything began to go wrong, to turn to unhappiness; and for that circumstance, my father took vengeance upon myself and my mother. How he could treat my poor mother so I cannot understand. It used to rend my heart to see her, so hollow were her cheeks becoming, so sunken her eyes, so hectic her face. But it was chiefly around myself that the disputes raged. Though beginning only with some trifle, they would soon go on to God knows what. Frequently, even I myself did not know to what they related. Anything and everything would enter into them, for my father would say that I was an utter dunce at the French language; that the head mistress of my school was a stupid, common sort of women who cared nothing for morals; that he (my father) had not yet succeeded in obtaining another post; that Lamonde's "Grammar" was a wretched book — even a worse one than Zapolski's; that a great deal of money had been squandered upon me; that it was clear that I was wasting my time in repeating dialogues and vocabularies; that I alone was at fault, and that I must answer for everything. Yet this did not arise from any WANT OF LOVE for me on the part of my father, but rather from the fact that he was incapable of putting himself in my own and my mother's place. It came of a defect of character.

All these cares and worries and disappointments tortured my poor father until he became moody and distrustful. Next he began to neglect his health. with the result that, catching a chill, he died, after a short illness, so suddenly and unexpectedly that for a few days we were almost beside ourselves with the shock — my mother, in particular, lying for a while in such a state of torpor that I had fears for her reason. The instant my father was dead creditors seemed to spring up out of the ground, and to assail us en masse. Everything that we possessed had to be surrendered to them, including a little house which my father had bought six months after our arrival in St. Petersburg. How matters were finally settled I do not know, but we found ourselves roofless, shelterless, and without a copper. My mother was grievously ill, and of means of subsistence we had none. Before us there loomed only ruin, sheer ruin. At the time I was fourteen years old. Soon afterwards Anna Thedorovna came to see us, saying that she was a lady of property and our relative; and this my mother confirmed — though, true, she added that Anna was only a very DISTANT relative. Anna had never taken the least notice of us during my father's lifetime, yet now she entered our presence with tears in her eyes, and an assurance that she meant to better our fortunes. Having condoled with us on our loss and destitute position, she added that my father had been to blame for everything, in that he had lived beyond his means, and taken upon himself more than he was able to perform. Also, she expressed a wish to draw closer to us, and to forget old scores; and when my mother explained that, for her own part, she harboured no resentment against Anna, the latter burst into tears, and, hurrying my mother away to church, then and there ordered Mass to be said for the "dear departed," as she called my father. In this manner she effected a solemn reconciliation with my mother.

Next, after long negotiations and vacillations, coupled with much vivid description of our destitute position, our desolation, and our helplessness, Anna invited us to pay her (as she expressed it) a "return visit." For this my mother duly thanked her, and considered the invitation for a while; after which, seeing that there was nothing else to be done, she informed Anna Thedorovna that she was prepared, gratefully, to accept her offer. Ah, how I remember the morning when we removed to Vassilievski Island! [A quarter of St. Petersburg.] It was a clear, dry, frosty morning in autumn. My mother could not restrain her tears, and I too felt depressed. Nay, my very heart

seemed to be breaking under a strange, undefined load of sorrow. How terrible it all seemed! . . .

II

AT first — that is to say, until my mother and myself grew used to our new abode — we found living at Anna Thedorovna's both strange and disagreeable. The house was her own, and contained five rooms, three of which she shared with my orphaned cousin, Sasha (whom she had brought up from babyhood); a fourth was occupied by my mother and myself; and the fifth was rented of Anna by a poor student named Pokrovski. Although Anna lived in good style — in far better style than might have been expected — her means and her avocation were conjectural. Never was she at rest; never was she not busy with some mysterious something or other. Also, she possessed a wide and varied circle of friends. The stream of callers was perpetual — although God only knows who they were, or what their business was. No sooner did my mother hear the door- bell ring than off she would carry me to our own apartment. This greatly displeased Anna, who used again and again to assure my mother that we were too proud for our station in life. In fact, she would sulk for hours about it. At the time I could not understand these reproaches, and it was not until long afterwards that I learned — or rather, I guessed — why eventually my mother declared that she could not go on living with Anna. Yes, Anna was a bad woman. Never did she let us alone. As to the exact motive why she had asked us to come and share her house with her I am still in the dark. At first she was not altogether unkind to us but, later, she revealed to us her real character — as soon, that is to say, as she saw that we were at her mercy, and had nowhere else to go. Yes, in early days she was quite kind to me — even offensively so, but afterwards, I had to suffer as much as my mother. Constantly did Anna reproach us; constantly did she remind us of her benefactions, and introduce us to her friends as poor relatives of hers whom, out of goodness of heart and for the love of Christ, she had received into her bosom. At table, also, she would watch every mouthful that we took; and, if our appetite failed, immediately she would begin as before, and reiterate that we were over-dainty, that we must not assume that riches would mean happiness, and that we had better go and live by ourselves. Moreover, she never ceased to inveigh against my father — saying that he had sought to be better than other people, and thereby had brought himself to a bad end; that he had left his wife and daughter destitute; and that, but for the fact that we

had happened to meet with a kind and sympathetic Christian soul, God alone knew where we should have laid our heads, save in the street. What did that woman not say? To hear her was not so much galling as disgusting. From time to time my mother would burst into tears, her health grew worse from day to day, and her body was becoming sheer skin and bone. All the while, too, we had to work — to work from morning till night, for we had contrived to obtain some employment as occasional sempstresses. This, however, did not please Anna, who used to tell us that there was no room in her house for a modiste's establishment. Yet we had to get clothes to wear, to provide for unforeseen expenses, and to have a little money at our disposal in case we should some day wish to remove elsewhere. Unfortunately, the strain undermined my mother's health, and she became gradually weaker. Sickness, like a cankerworm, was gnawing at her life, and dragging her towards the tomb. Well could I see what she was enduring, what she was suffering. Yes, it all lay open to my eyes.

Day succeeded day, and each day was like the last one. We lived a life as quiet as though we had been in the country. Anna herself grew quieter in proportion as she came to realise the extent of her power over us. In nothing did we dare to thwart her. From her portion of the house our apartment was divided by a corridor, while next to us (as mentioned above) dwelt a certain Pokrovski, who was engaged in teaching Sasha the French and German languages, as well as history and geography— "all the sciences," as Anna used to say. In return for these services he received free board and lodging. As for Sasha, she was a clever, but rude and uncouth, girl of thirteen. On one occasion Anna remarked to my mother that it might be as well if I also were to take some lessons, seeing that my education had been neglected at school; and, my mother joyfully assenting, I joined Sasha for a year in studying under this Pokrovski.

The latter was a poor — a very poor — young man whose health would not permit of his undertaking the regular university course. Indeed, it was only for form's sake that we called him "The Student." He lived in such a quiet, humble, retiring fashion that never a sound reached us from his room. Also, his exterior was peculiar — he moved and walked awkwardly, and uttered his words in such a strange manner that at first I could never look at him without laughing. Sasha was for ever playing tricks upon him — more especially when he was giving us our lessons. But unfortunately, he was of a temperament as excitable as herself. Indeed, he was so irritable that the

least trifle would send him into a frenzy, and set him shouting at us, and complaining of our conduct. Sometimes he would even rush away to his room before school hours were over, and sit there for days over his books, of which he had a store that was both rare and valuable. In addition, he acted as teacher at another establishment, and received payment for his services there; and, whenever he had received his fees for this extra work, he would hasten off and purchase more books.

In time I got to know and like him better, for in reality he was a good, worthy fellow — more so than any of the people with whom we otherwise came in contact. My mother in particular had a great respect for him, and, after herself, he was my best friend. But at first I was just an overgrown hoyden, and joined Sasha in playing the fool. For hours we would devise tricks to anger and distract him, for he looked extremely ridiculous when he was angry, and so diverted us the more (ashamed though I am now to admit it). But once, when we had driven him nearly to tears, I heard him say to himself under his breath, “What cruel children!” and instantly I repented — I began to feel sad and ashamed and sorry for him. I reddened to my ears, and begged him, almost with tears, not to mind us, nor to take offence at our stupid jests. Nevertheless, without finishing the lesson, he closed his book, and departed to his own room. All that day I felt torn with remorse. To think that we two children had forced him, the poor, the unhappy one, to remember his hard lot! And at night I could not sleep for grief and regret. Remorse is said to bring relief to the soul, but it is not so. How far my grief was internally connected with my conceit I do not know, but at least I did not wish him to think me a baby, seeing that I had now reached the age of fifteen years. Therefore, from that day onwards I began to torture my imagination with devising a thousand schemes which should compel Pokrovski to alter his opinion of me. At the same time, being yet shy and reserved by nature, I ended by finding that, in my present position, I could make up my mind to nothing but vague dreams (and such dreams I had). However, I ceased to join Sasha in playing the fool, while Pokrovski, for his part, ceased to lose his temper with us so much. Unfortunately this was not enough to satisfy my self-esteem.

At this point, I must say a few words about the strangest, the most interesting, the most pitiable human being that I have ever come across. I speak of him now — at this particular point in these memoirs — for the reason that hitherto I had paid him no attention whatever, and began to do

so now only because everything connected with Pokrovski had suddenly become of absorbing interest in my eyes.

Sometimes there came to the house a ragged, poorly-dressed, grey-headed, awkward, amorphous — in short, a very strange-looking — little old man. At first glance it might have been thought that he was perpetually ashamed of something — that he had on his conscience something which always made him, as it were, bristle up and then shrink into himself. Such curious starts and grimaces did he indulge in that one was forced to conclude that he was scarcely in his right mind. On arriving, he would halt for a while by the window in the hall, as though afraid to enter; until, should any one happen to pass in or out of the door — whether Sasha or myself or one of the servants (to the latter he always resorted the most readily, as being the most nearly akin to his own class) — he would begin to gesticulate and to beckon to that person, and to make various signs. Then, should the person in question nod to him, or call him by name (the recognised token that no other visitor was present, and that he might enter freely), he would open the door gently, give a smile of satisfaction as he rubbed his hands together, and proceed on tiptoe to young Pokrovski's room. This old fellow was none other than Pokrovski's father.

Later I came to know his story in detail. Formerly a civil servant, he had possessed no additional means, and so had occupied a very low and insignificant position in the service. Then, after his first wife (mother of the younger Pokrovski) had died, the widower bethought him of marrying a second time, and took to himself a tradesman's daughter, who soon assumed the reins over everything, and brought the home to rack and ruin, so that the old man was worse off than before. But to the younger Pokrovski, fate proved kinder, for a landowner named Bwikov, who had formerly known the lad's father and been his benefactor, took the boy under his protection, and sent him to school. Another reason why this Bwikov took an interest in young Pokrovski was that he had known the lad's dead mother, who, while still a serving-maid, had been befriended by Anna Thedorovna, and subsequently married to the elder Pokrovski. At the wedding Bwikov, actuated by his friendship for Anna, conferred upon the young bride a dowry of five thousand roubles; but whither that money had since disappeared I cannot say. It was from Anna's lips that I heard the story, for the student Pokrovski was never prone to talk about his family affairs. His mother was said to have been very good-looking; wherefore, it is the more

mysterious why she should have made so poor a match. She died when young — only four years after her espousal.

From school the young Pokrovski advanced to a gymnasium, [Secondary school.] and thence to the University, where Bwikov, who frequently visited the capital, continued to accord the youth his protection. Gradually, however, ill health put an end to the young man's university course; whereupon Bwikov introduced and personally recommended him to Anna Thedorovna, and he came to lodge with her on condition that he taught Sasha whatever might be required of him.

Grief at the harshness of his wife led the elder Pokrovski to plunge into dissipation, and to remain in an almost permanent condition of drunkenness. Constantly his wife beat him, or sent him to sit in the kitchen — with the result that in time, he became so inured to blows and neglect, that he ceased to complain. Still not greatly advanced in years, he had nevertheless endangered his reason through evil courses — his only sign of decent human feeling being his love for his son. The latter was said to resemble his dead mother as one pea may resemble another. What recollections, therefore, of the kind helpmeet of former days may not have moved the breast of the poor broken old man to this boundless affection for the boy? Of naught else could the father ever speak but of his son, and never did he fail to visit him twice a week. To come oftener he did not dare, for the reason that the younger Pokrovski did not like these visits of his father's. In fact, there can be no doubt that the youth's greatest fault was his lack of filial respect. Yet the father was certainly rather a difficult person to deal with, for, in the first place, he was extremely inquisitive, while, in the second place, his long-winded conversation and questions — questions of the most vapid and senseless order conceivable — always prevented the son from working. Likewise, the old man occasionally arrived there drunk. Gradually, however, the son was weaning his parent from his vicious ways and everlasting inquisitiveness, and teaching the old man to look upon him, his son, as an oracle, and never to speak without that son's permission.

On the subject of his Petinka, as he called him, the poor old man could never sufficiently rhapsodise and dilate. Yet when he arrived to see his son he almost invariably had on his face a downcast, timid expression that was probably due to uncertainty concerning the way in which he would be received. For a long time he would hesitate to enter, and if I happened to be there he would question me for twenty minutes or so as to whether his

Petinka was in good health, as well as to the sort of mood he was in, whether he was engaged on matters of importance, what precisely he was doing (writing or meditating), and so on. Then, when I had sufficiently encouraged and reassured the old man, he would make up his mind to enter, and quietly and cautiously open the door. Next, he would protrude his head through the chink, and if he saw that his son was not angry, but threw him a nod, he would glide noiselessly into the room, take off his scarf, and hang up his hat (the latter perennially in a bad state of repair, full of holes, and with a smashed brim) — the whole being done without a word or a sound of any kind. Next, the old man would seat himself warily on a chair, and, never removing his eyes from his son, follow his every movement, as though seeking to gauge Petinka's state of mind. On the other hand, if the son was not in good spirits, the father would make a note of the fact, and at once get up, saying that he had "only called for a minute or two," that, "having been out for a long walk, and happening at the moment to be passing," he had "looked in for a moment's rest." Then silently and humbly the old man would resume his hat and scarf; softly he would open the door, and noiselessly depart with a forced smile on his face — the better to bear the disappointment which was seething in his breast, the better to help him not to show it to his son.

On the other hand, whenever the son received his father civilly the old man would be struck dumb with joy. Satisfaction would beam in his face, in his every gesture, in his every movement. And if the son deigned to engage in conversation with him, the old man always rose a little from his chair, and answered softly, sympathetically, with something like reverence, while strenuously endeavouring to make use of the most recherche (that is to say, the most ridiculous) expressions. But, alas! He had not the gift of words. Always he grew confused, and turned red in the face; never did he know what to do with his hands or with himself. Likewise, whenever he had returned an answer of any kind, he would go on repeating the same in a whisper, as though he were seeking to justify what he had just said. And if he happened to have returned a good answer, he would begin to preen himself, and to straighten his waistcoat, frockcoat and tie, and to assume an air of conscious dignity. Indeed, on these occasions he would feel so encouraged, he would carry his daring to such a pitch, that, rising softly from his chair, he would approach the bookshelves, take thence a book, and read over to himself some passage or another. All this he would do with an

air of feigned indifference and sangfroid, as though he were free ALWAYS to use his son's books, and his son's kindness were no rarity at all. Yet on one occasion I saw the poor old fellow actually turn pale on being told by his son not to touch the books. Abashed and confused, he, in his awkward hurry, replaced the volume wrong side uppermost; whereupon, with a supreme effort to recover himself, he turned it round with a smile and a blush, as though he were at a loss how to view his own misdemeanour. Gradually, as already said, the younger Pokrovski weaned his father from his dissipated ways by giving him a small coin whenever, on three successive occasions, he (the father) arrived sober. Sometimes, also, the younger man would buy the older one shoes, or a tie, or a waistcoat; whereafter, the old man would be as proud of his acquisition as a peacock. Not infrequently, also, the old man would step in to visit ourselves, and bring Sasha and myself gingerbread birds or apples, while talking unceasingly of Petinka. Always he would beg of us to pay attention to our lessons, on the plea that Petinka was a good son, an exemplary son, a son who was in twofold measure a man of learning; after which he would wink at us so quizzingly with his left eye, and twist himself about in such amusing fashion, that we were forced to burst out laughing. My mother had a great liking for him, but he detested Anna Thedorovna — although in her presence he would be quieter than water and lowlier than the earth.

Soon after this I ceased to take lessons of Pokrovski. Even now he thought me a child, a raw schoolgirl, as much as he did Sasha; and this hurt me extremely, seeing that I had done so much to expiate my former behaviour. Of my efforts in this direction no notice had been taken, and the fact continued to anger me more and more. Scarcely ever did I address a word to my tutor between school hours, for I simply could not bring myself to do it. If I made the attempt I only grew red and confused, and rushed away to weep in a corner. How it would all have ended I do not know, had not a curious incident helped to bring about a rapprochement. One evening, when my mother was sitting in Anna Thedorovna's room, I crept on tiptoe to Pokrovski's apartment, in the belief that he was not at home. Some strange impulse moved me to do so. True, we had lived cheek by jowl with one another; yet never once had I caught a glimpse of his abode. Consequently my heart beat loudly- - so loudly, indeed, that it seemed almost to be bursting from my breast. On entering the room I glanced around me with tense interest. The apartment was very poorly furnished,

and bore few traces of orderliness. On table and chairs there lay heaps of books; everywhere were books and papers. Then a strange thought entered my head, as well as, with the thought, an unpleasant feeling of irritation. It seemed to me that my friendship, my heart's affection, meant little to him, for HE was well-educated, whereas I was stupid, and had learned nothing, and had read not a single book. So I stood looking wistfully at the long bookshelves where they groaned under their weight of volumes. I felt filled with grief, disappointment, and a sort of frenzy. I felt that I MUST read those books, and decided to do so — to read them one by one, and with all possible speed. Probably the idea was that, by learning whatsoever HE knew, I should render myself more worthy of his friendship. So, I made a rush towards the bookcase nearest me, and, without stopping further to consider matters, seized hold of the first dusty tome upon which my hands chanced to alight, and, reddening and growing pale by turns, and trembling with fear and excitement, clasped the stolen book to my breast with the intention of reading it by candle light while my mother lay asleep at night.

But how vexed I felt when, on returning to our own room, and hastily turning the pages, only an old, battered worm-eaten Latin work greeted my eyes! Without loss of time I retraced my steps. Just when I was about to replace the book I heard a noise in the corridor outside, and the sound of footsteps approaching. Fumblingly I hastened to complete what I was about, but the tiresome book had become so tightly wedged into its row that, on being pulled out, it caused its fellows to close up too compactly to leave any place for their comrade. To insert the book was beyond my strength; yet still I kept pushing and pushing at the row. At last the rusty nail which supported the shelf (the thing seemed to have been waiting on purpose for that moment!) broke off short; with the result that the shelf descended with a crash, and the books piled themselves in a heap on the floor! Then the door of the room opened, and Pokrovski entered!

I must here remark that he never could bear to have his possessions tampered with. Woe to the person, in particular, who touched his books! Judge, therefore, of my horror when books small and great, books of every possible shape and size and thickness, came tumbling from the shelf, and flew and sprang over the table, and under the chairs, and about the whole room. I would have turned and fled, but it was too late. "All is over!" thought I. "All is over! I am ruined, I am undone! Here have I been playing

the fool like a ten-year-old child! What a stupid girl I am! The monstrous fool!”

Indeed, Pokrovski was very angry. “What? Have you not done enough?” he cried. “Are you not ashamed to be for ever indulging in such pranks? Are you NEVER going to grow sensible?” With that he darted forward to pick up the books, while I bent down to help him.

“You need not, you need not!” he went on. “You would have done far better not to have entered without an invitation.”

Next, a little mollified by my humble demeanour, he resumed in his usual tutorial tone — the tone which he had adopted in his new- found role of preceptor:

“When are you going to grow steadier and more thoughtful? Consider yourself for a moment. You are no longer a child, a little girl, but a maiden of fifteen.”

Then, with a desire (probably) to satisfy himself that I was no longer a being of tender years, he threw me a glance — but straightway reddened to his very ears. This I could not understand, but stood gazing at him in astonishment. Presently, he straightened himself a little, approached me with a sort of confused expression, and haltingly said something — probably it was an apology for not having before perceived that I was now a grown-up young person. But the next moment I understood. What I did I hardly know, save that, in my dismay and confusion, I blushed even more hotly than he had done and, covering my face with my hands, rushed from the room.

What to do with myself for shame I could not think. The one thought in my head was that he had surprised me in his room. For three whole days I found myself unable to raise my eyes to his, but blushed always to the point of weeping. The strangest and most confused of thoughts kept entering my brain. One of them — the most extravagant — was that I should dearly like to go to Pokrovski, and to explain to him the situation, and to make full confession, and to tell him everything without concealment, and to assure him that I had not acted foolishly as a minx, but honestly and of set purpose. In fact, I DID make up my mind to take this course, but lacked the necessary courage to do it. If I had done so, what a figure I should have cut! Even now I am ashamed to think of it.

A few days later, my mother suddenly fell dangerously ill. For two days past she had not left her bed, while during the third night of her illness she

became seized with fever and delirium. I also had not closed my eyes during the previous night, but now waited upon my mother, sat by her bed, brought her drink at intervals, and gave her medicine at duly appointed hours. The next night I suffered terribly. Every now and then sleep would cause me to nod, and objects grow dim before my eyes. Also, my head was turning dizzy, and I could have fainted for very weariness. Yet always my mother's feeble moans recalled me to myself as I started, momentarily awoke, and then again felt drowsiness overcoming me. What torture it was! I do not know, I cannot clearly remember, but I think that, during a moment when wakefulness was thus contending with slumber, a strange dream, a horrible vision, visited my overwrought brain, and I awoke in terror. The room was nearly in darkness, for the candle was flickering, and throwing stray beams of light which suddenly illuminated the room, danced for a moment on the walls, and then disappeared. Somehow I felt afraid — a sort of horror had come upon me — my imagination had been over-excited by the evil dream which I had experienced, and a feeling of oppression was crushing my heart.... I leapt from the chair, and involuntarily uttered a cry — a cry wrung from me by the terrible, torturing sensation that was upon me. Presently the door opened, and Pokrovski entered.

I remember that I was in his arms when I recovered my senses. Carefully seating me on a bench, he handed me a glass of water, and then asked me a few questions — though how I answered them I do not know. "You yourself are ill," he said as he took my hand. "You yourself are VERY ill. You are feverish, and I can see that you are knocking yourself out through your neglect of your own health. Take a little rest. Lie down and go to sleep. Yes, lie down, lie down," he continued without giving me time to protest. Indeed, fatigue had so exhausted my strength that my eyes were closing from very weakness. So I lay down on the bench with the intention of sleeping for half an hour only; but, I slept till morning. Pokrovski then awoke me, saying that it was time for me to go and give my mother her medicine.

When the next evening, about eight o'clock, I had rested a little and was preparing to spend the night in a chair beside my mother (fixedly meaning not to go to sleep this time), Pokrovski suddenly knocked at the door. I opened it, and he informed me that, since, possibly, I might find the time wearisome, he had brought me a few books to read. I accepted the books, but do not, even now, know what books they were, nor whether I looked

into them, despite the fact that I never closed my eyes the whole night long. The truth was that a strange feeling of excitement was preventing me from sleeping, and I could not rest long in any one spot, but had to keep rising from my chair, and walking about the room. Throughout my whole being there seemed to be diffused a kind of elation — of elation at Pokrovski's attentions, at the thought that he was anxious and uneasy about me. Until dawn I pondered and dreamed; and though I felt sure Pokrovski would not again visit us that night, I gave myself up to fancies concerning what he might do the following evening.

That evening, when everyone else in the house had retired to rest, Pokrovski opened his door, and opened a conversation from the threshold of his room. Although, at this distance of time, I cannot remember a word of what we said to one another, I remember that I blushed, grew confused, felt vexed with myself, and awaited with impatience the end of the conversation although I myself had been longing for the meeting to take place, and had spent the day in dreaming of it, and devising a string of suitable questions and replies. Yes, that evening saw the first strand in our friendship knitted; and each subsequent night of my mother's illness we spent several hours together. Little by little I overcame his reserve, but found that each of these conversations left me filled with a sense of vexation at myself. At the same time, I could see with secret joy and a sense of proud elation that I was leading him to forget his tiresome books. At last the conversation turned jestingly upon the upsetting of the shelf. The moment was a peculiar one, for it came upon me just when I was in the right mood for self- revelation and candour. In my ardour, my curious phase of exaltation, I found myself led to make a full confession of the fact that I had become wishful to learn, to KNOW, something, since I had felt hurt at being taken for a chit, a mere baby. . . . I repeat that that night I was in a very strange frame of mind. My heart was inclined to be tender, and there were tears standing in my eyes. Nothing did I conceal as I told him about my friendship for him, about my desire to love him, about my scheme for living in sympathy with him and comforting him, and making his life easier. In return he threw me a look of confusion mingled with astonishment, and said nothing. Then suddenly I began to feel terribly pained and disappointed, for I conceived that he had failed to understand me, or even that he might be laughing at me. Bursting into tears like a child, I sobbed, and could not stop myself, for I had fallen into a kind of fit; whereupon he seized my hand, kissed it, and clasped it to

his breast — saying various things, meanwhile, to comfort me, for he was labouring under a strong emotion. Exactly what he said I do not remember — I merely wept and laughed by turns, and blushed, and found myself unable to speak a word for joy. Yet, for all my agitation, I noticed that about him there still lingered an air of constraint and uneasiness. Evidently, he was lost in wonder at my enthusiasm and raptures — at my curiously ardent, unexpected, consuming friendship. It may be that at first he was amazed, but that afterwards he accepted my devotion and words of invitation and expressions of interest with the same simple frankness as I had offered them, and responded to them with an interest, a friendliness, a devotion equal to my own, even as a friend or a brother would do. How happy, how warm was the feeling in my heart! Nothing had I concealed or repressed. No, I had bared all to his sight, and each day would see him draw nearer to me.

Truly I could not say what we did not talk about during those painful, yet rapturous, hours when, by the trembling light of a lamp, and almost at the very bedside of my poor sick mother, we kept midnight tryst. Whatsoever first came into our heads we spoke of — whatsoever came riven from our hearts, whatsoever seemed to call for utterance, found voice. And almost always we were happy. What a grievous, yet joyous, period it was — a period grievous and joyous at the same time! To this day it both hurts and delights me to recall it. Joyous or bitter though it was, its memories are yet painful. At least they seem so to me, though a certain sweetness assuaged the pain. So, whenever I am feeling heartsick and oppressed and jaded and sad those memories return to freshen and revive me, even as drops of evening dew return to freshen and revive, after a sultry day, the poor faded flower which has long been drooping in the noontide heat.

My mother grew better, but still I continued to spend the nights on a chair by her bedside. Often, too, Pokrovski would give me books. At first I read them merely so as to avoid going to sleep, but afterwards I examined them with more attention, and subsequently with actual avidity, for they opened up to me a new, an unexpected, an unknown, an unfamiliar world. New thoughts, added to new impressions, would come pouring into my heart in a rich flood; and the more emotion, the more pain and labour, it cost me to assimilate these new impressions, the dearer did they become to me, and the more gratefully did they stir my soul to its very depths. Crowding into my heart without giving it time even to breathe, they would cause my

whole being to become lost in a wondrous chaos. Yet this spiritual ferment was not sufficiently strong wholly to undo me. For that I was too fanciful, and the fact saved me.

With the passing of my mother's illness the midnight meetings and long conversations between myself and Pokrovski came to an end. Only occasionally did we exchange a few words with one another — words, for the most part, that were of little purport or substance, yet words to which it delighted me to apportion their several meanings, their peculiar secret values. My life had now become full — I was happy; I was quietly, restfully happy. Thus did several weeks elapse....

One day the elder Pokrovski came to see us, and chattered in a brisk, cheerful, garrulous sort of way. He laughed, launched out into witticisms, and, finally, resolved the riddle of his transports by informing us that in a week's time it would be his Petinka's birthday, when, in honour of the occasion, he (the father) meant to don a new jacket (as well as new shoes which his wife was going to buy for him), and to come and pay a visit to his son. In short, the old man was perfectly happy, and gossiped about whatsoever first entered his head.

My lover's birthday! Thenceforward, I could not rest by night or day. Whatever might happen, it was my fixed intention to remind Pokrovski of our friendship by giving him a present. But what sort of present? Finally, I decided to give him books. I knew that he had long wanted to possess a complete set of Pushkin's works, in the latest edition; so, I decided to buy Pushkin. My private fund consisted of thirty roubles, earned by handiwork, and designed eventually to procure me a new dress, but at once I dispatched our cook, old Matrena, to ascertain the price of such an edition. Horrors! The price of the eleven volumes, added to extra outlay upon the binding, would amount to at least SIXTY roubles! Where was the money to come from? I thought and thought, yet could not decide. I did not like to resort to my mother. Of course she would help me, but in that case every one in the house would become aware of my gift, and the gift itself would assume the guise of a recompense — of payment for Pokrovski's labours on my behalf during the past year; whereas, I wished to present the gift ALONE, and without the knowledge of anyone. For the trouble that he had taken with me I wished to be his perpetual debtor — to make him no payment at all save my friendship. At length, I thought of a way out of the difficulty.

I knew that of the hucksters in the Gostinni Dvor one could sometimes buy a book — even one that had been little used and was almost entirely new — for a half of its price, provided that one haggled sufficiently over it; wherefore I determined to repair thither. It so happened that, next day, both Anna Thedorovna and ourselves were in want of sundry articles; and since my mother was unwell and Anna lazy, the execution of the commissions devolved upon me, and I set forth with Matrena.

Luckily, I soon chanced upon a set of Pushkin, handsomely bound, and set myself to bargain for it. At first more was demanded than would have been asked of me in a shop; but afterwards — though not without a great deal of trouble on my part, and several feints at departing — I induced the dealer to lower his price, and to limit his demands to ten roubles in silver. How I rejoiced that I had engaged in this bargaining! Poor Matrena could not imagine what had come to me, nor why I so desired to buy books. But, oh horror of horrors! As soon as ever the dealer caught sight of my capital of thirty roubles in notes, he refused to let the Pushkin go for less than the sum he had first named; and though, in answer to my prayers and protestations, he eventually yielded a little, he did so only to the tune of two-and-a-half roubles more than I possessed, while swearing that he was making the concession for my sake alone, since I was “a sweet young lady,” and that he would have done so for no one else in the world. To think that only two-and-a-half roubles should still be wanting! I could have wept with vexation. Suddenly an unlooked-for circumstance occurred to help me in my distress.

Not far away, near another table that was heaped with books, I perceived the elder Pokrovski, and a crowd of four or five hucksters plaguing him nearly out of his senses. Each of these fellows was proffering the old man his own particular wares; and while there was nothing that they did not submit for his approval, there was nothing that he wished to buy. The poor old fellow had the air of a man who is receiving a thrashing. What to make of what he was being offered him he did not know. Approaching him, I inquired what he happened to be doing there; whereat the old man was delighted, since he liked me (it may be) no less than he did Petinka.

“I am buying some books, Barbara Alexievna,” said he, “I am buying them for my Petinka. It will be his birthday soon, and since he likes books I thought I would get him some.”

The old man always expressed himself in a very roundabout sort of fashion, and on the present occasion he was doubly, terribly confused. Of no matter what book he asked the price, it was sure to be one, two, or three roubles. The larger books he could not afford at all; he could only look at them wistfully, fumble their leaves with his finger, turn over the volumes in his hands, and then replace them. “No, no, that is too dear,” he would mutter under his breath. “I must go and try somewhere else.” Then again he would fall to examining copy-books, collections of poems, and almanacs of the cheaper order.

“Why should you buy things like those?” I asked him. “They are such rubbish!”

“No, no!” he replied. “ See what nice books they are! Yes, they ARE nice books!” Yet these last words he uttered so lingeringly that I could see he was ready to weep with vexation at finding the better sorts of books so expensive. Already a little tear was trickling down his pale cheeks and red nose. I inquired whether he had much money on him; whereupon the poor old fellow pulled out his entire stock, wrapped in a piece of dirty newspaper, and consisting of a few small silver coins, with twenty kopecks in copper. At once I seized the lot, and, dragging him off to my huckster, said: “ Look here. These eleven volumes of Pushkin are priced at thirty-two-and-a-half roubles, and I have only thirty roubles. Let us add to them these two-and- a-half roubles of yours, and buy the books together, and make them our joint gift.” The old man was overjoyed, and pulled out his money en masse; whereupon the huckster loaded him with our common library. Stuffing it into his pockets, as well as filling both arms with it, he departed homewards with his prize, after giving me his word to bring me the books privately on the morrow.

Next day the old man came to see his son, and sat with him, as usual, for about an hour; after which he visited ourselves, wearing on his face the most comical, the most mysterious expression conceivable. Smiling broadly with satisfaction at the thought that he was the possessor of a secret, he informed me that he had stealthily brought the books to our rooms, and hidden them in a corner of the kitchen, under Matrena’s care. Next, by a natural transition, the conversation passed to the coming fete- day; whereupon, the old man proceeded to hold forth extensively on the subject of gifts. The further he delved into his thesis, and the more he expounded it, the clearer could I see that on his mind there was something which he could

not, dared not, divulge. So I waited and kept silent. The mysterious exaltation, the repressed satisfaction which I had hitherto discerned in his antics and grimaces and left-eyed winks gradually disappeared, and he began to grow momentarily more anxious and uneasy. At length he could contain himself no longer.

"Listen, Barbara Alexievna," he said timidly. "Listen to what I have got to say to you. When his birthday is come, do you take TEN of the books, and give them to him yourself — that is, FOR yourself, as being YOUR share of the gift. Then I will take the eleventh book, and give it to him MYSELF, as being my gift. If we do that, you will have a present for him and I shall have one — both of us alike."

"Why do you not want us to present our gifts together, Zachar Petrovitch?" I asked him.

"Oh, very well," he replied. "Very well, Barbara Alexievna. Only- only, I thought that—"

The old man broke off in confusion, while his face flushed with the exertion of thus expressing himself. For a moment or two he sat glued to his seat.

"You see," he went on, "I play the fool too much. I am forever playing the fool, and cannot help myself, though I know that it is wrong to do so. At home it is often cold, and sometimes there are other troubles as well, and it all makes me depressed. Well, whenever that happens, I indulge a little, and occasionally drink too much. Now, Petinka does not like that; he loses his temper about it, Barbara Alexievna, and scolds me, and reads me lectures. So I want by my gift to show him that I am mending my ways, and beginning to conduct myself better. For a long time past, I have been saving up to buy him a book — yes, for a long time past I have been saving up for it, since it is seldom that I have any money, unless Petinka happens to give me some. He knows that, and, consequently, as soon as ever he perceives the use to which I have put his money, he will understand that it is for his sake alone that I have acted."

My heart ached for the old man. Seeing him looking at me with such anxiety, I made up my mind without delay.

"I tell you what," I said. "Do you give him all the books."

"ALL?" he ejaculated. "ALL the books?"

"Yes, all of them."

"As my own gift?" "Yes, as your own gift."

“As my gift alone?”

“Yes, as your gift alone.”

Surely I had spoken clearly enough, yet the old man seemed hardly to understand me.

“Well,” said he after reflection, “that certainly would be splendid — certainly it would be most splendid. But what about yourself, Barbara Alexievna?”

“Oh, I shall give your son nothing.”

“What?” he cried in dismay. “Are you going to give Petinka nothing — do you WISH to give him nothing?” So put about was the old fellow with what I had said, that he seemed almost ready to renounce his own proposal if only I would give his son something. What a kind heart he had! I hastened to assure him that I should certainly have a gift of some sort ready, since my one wish was to avoid spoiling his pleasure.

“Provided that your son is pleased,” I added, “and that you are pleased, I shall be equally pleased, for in my secret heart I shall feel as though I had presented the gift.”

This fully reassured the old man. He stopped with us another couple of hours, yet could not sit still for a moment, but kept jumping up from his seat, laughing, cracking jokes with Sasha, bestowing stealthy kisses upon myself, pinching my hands, and making silent grimaces at Anna Thedorovna. At length, she turned him out of the house. In short, his transports of joy exceeded anything that I had yet beheld.

On the festal day he arrived exactly at eleven o’clock, direct from Mass. He was dressed in a carefully mended frockcoat, a new waistcoat, and a pair of new shoes, while in his arms he carried our pile of books. Next we all sat down to coffee (the day being Sunday) in Anna Thedorovna’s parlour. The old man led off the meal by saying that Pushkin was a magnificent poet. Thereafter, with a return to shamefacedness and confusion, he passed suddenly to the statement that a man ought to conduct himself properly; that, should he not do so, it might be taken as a sign that he was in some way overindulging himself; and that evil tendencies of this sort led to the man’s ruin and degradation. Then the orator sketched for our benefit some terrible instances of such incontinence, and concluded by informing us that for some time past he had been mending his own ways, and conducting himself in exemplary fashion, for the reason that he had perceived the justice of his son’s precepts, and had laid them to heart so well that he, the

father, had really changed for the better: in proof whereof, he now begged to present to the said son some books for which he had long been setting aside his savings.

As I listened to the old man I could not help laughing and crying in a breath. Certainly he knew how to lie when the occasion required! The books were transferred to his son's room, and arranged upon a shelf, where Pokrovski at once guessed the truth about them. Then the old man was invited to dinner and we all spent a merry day together at cards and forfeits. Sasha was full of life, and I rivalled her, while Pokrovski paid me numerous attentions, and kept seeking an occasion to speak to me alone. But to allow this to happen I refused. Yes, taken all in all, it was the happiest day that I had known for four years.

But now only grievous, painful memories come to my recollection, for I must enter upon the story of my darker experiences. It may be that that is why my pen begins to move more slowly, and seems as though it were going altogether to refuse to write. The same reason may account for my having undertaken so lovingly and enthusiastically a recounting of even the smallest details of my younger, happier days. But alas! those days did not last long, and were succeeded by a period of black sorrow which will close only God knows when!

My misfortunes began with the illness and death of Pokrovski, who was taken worse two months after what I have last recorded in these memoirs. During those two months he worked hard to procure himself a livelihood since hitherto he had had no assured position. Like all consumptives, he never — not even up to his last moment — altogether abandoned the hope of being able to enjoy a long life. A post as tutor fell in his way, but he had never liked the profession; while for him to become a civil servant was out of the question, owing to his weak state of health. Moreover, in the latter capacity he would have had to have waited a long time for his first instalment of salary. Again, he always looked at the darker side of things, for his character was gradually being warped, and his health undermined by his illness, though he never noticed it. Then autumn came on, and daily he went out to business — that is to say, to apply for and to canvass for posts — clad only in a light jacket; with the result that, after repeated soakings with rain, he had to take to his bed, and never again left it. He died in mid-autumn at the close of the month of October.

Throughout his illness I scarcely ever left his room, but waited on him hand and foot. Often he could not sleep for several nights at a time. Often, too, he was unconscious, or else in a delirium; and at such times he would talk of all sorts of things — of his work, of his books, of his father, of myself. At such times I learned much which I had not hitherto known or divined about his affairs. During the early part of his illness everyone in the house looked askance at me, and Anna Thedorovna would nod her head in a meaning manner; but, I always looked them straight in the face, and gradually they ceased to take any notice of my concern for Pokrovski. At all events my mother ceased to trouble her head about it.

Sometimes Pokrovski would know who I was, but not often, for more usually he was unconscious. Sometimes, too, he would talk all night with some unknown person, in dim, mysterious language that caused his gasping voice to echo hoarsely through the narrow room as through a sepulchre; and at such times, I found the situation a strange one. During his last night he was especially lightheaded, for then he was in terrible agony, and kept rambling in his speech until my soul was torn with pity. Everyone in the house was alarmed, and Anna Thedorovna fell to praying that God might soon take him. When the doctor had been summoned, the verdict was that the patient would die with the morning.

That night the elder Pokrovski spent in the corridor, at the door of his son’s room. Though given a mattress to lie upon, he spent his time in running in and out of the apartment. So broken with grief was he that he presented a dreadful spectacle, and appeared to have lost both perception and feeling. His head trembled with agony, and his body quivered from head to foot as at times he murmured to himself something which he appeared to be debating. Every moment I expected to see him go out of his mind. Just before dawn he succumbed to the stress of mental agony, and fell asleep on his mattress like a man who has been beaten; but by eight o’clock the son was at the point of death, and I ran to wake the father. The dying man was quite conscious, and bid us all farewell. Somehow I could not weep, though my heart seemed to be breaking.

The last moments were the most harassing and heartbreaking of all. For some time past Pokrovski had been asking for something with his failing tongue, but I had been unable to distinguish his words. Yet my heart had been bursting with grief. Then for an hour he had lain quieter, except that he had looked sadly in my direction, and striven to make some sign with his

death-cold hands. At last he again essayed his piteous request in a hoarse, deep voice, but the words issued in so many inarticulate sounds, and once more I failed to divine his meaning. By turns I brought each member of the household to his bedside, and gave him something to drink, but he only shook his head sorrowfully. Finally, I understood what it was he wanted. He was asking me to draw aside the curtain from the window, and to open the casements. Probably he wished to take his last look at the daylight and the sun and all God's world. I pulled back the curtain, but the opening day was as dull and mournful — looking as though it had been the fast-flickering life of the poor invalid. Of sunshine there was none. Clouds overlaid the sky as with a shroud of mist, and everything looked sad, rainy, and threatening under a fine drizzle which was beating against the window-panes, and streaking their dull, dark surfaces with runlets of cold, dirty moisture. Only a scanty modicum of daylight entered to war with the trembling rays of the ikon lamp. The dying man threw me a wistful look, and nodded. The next moment he had passed away.

The funeral was arranged for by Anna Thedorovna. A plain coffin was bought, and a broken-down hearse hired; while, as security for this outlay, she seized the dead man's books and other articles. Nevertheless, the old man disputed the books with her, and, raising an uproar, carried off as many of them as he could — stuffing his pockets full, and even filling his hat. Indeed, he spent the next three days with them thus, and refused to let them leave his sight even when it was time for him to go to church. Throughout he acted like a man bereft of sense and memory. With quaint assiduity he busied himself about the bier — now straightening the candlestick on the dead man's breast, now snuffing and lighting the other candles. Clearly his thoughts were powerless to remain long fixed on any subject. Neither my mother nor Anna Thedorovna were present at the requiem, for the former was ill and the latter was at loggerheads with the old man. Only myself and the father were there. During the service a sort of panic, a sort of premonition of the future, came over me, and I could hardly hold myself upright. At length the coffin had received its burden and was screwed down; after which the bearers placed it upon a bier, and set out. I accompanied the cortege only to the end of the street. Here the driver broke into a trot, and the old man started to run behind the hearse — sobbing loudly, but with the motion of his running ever and anon causing the sobs to quaver and become broken off. Next he lost his hat, the poor old fellow, yet would not stop to

pick it up, even though the rain was beating upon his head, and a wind was rising and the sleet kept stinging and lashing his face. It seemed as though he were impervious to the cruel elements as he ran from one side of the hearse to the other — the skirts of his old greatcoat flapping about him like a pair of wings. From every pocket of the garment protruded books, while in his hand he carried a specially large volume, which he hugged closely to his breast. The passers-by uncovered their heads and crossed themselves as the cortege passed, and some of them, having done so, remained staring in amazement at the poor old man. Every now and then a book would slip from one of his pockets and fall into the mud; whereupon somebody, stopping him, would direct his attention to his loss, and he would stop, pick up the book, and again set off in pursuit of the hearse. At the corner of the street he was joined by a ragged old woman; until at length the hearse turned a corner, and became hidden from my eyes. Then I went home, and threw myself, in a transport of grief, upon my mother’s breast — clasping her in my arms, kissing her amid a storm of sobs and tears, and clinging to her form as though in my embraces I were holding my last friend on earth, that I might preserve her from death. Yet already death was standing over her....

June 11th

How I thank you for our walk to the Islands yesterday, Makar Alexievitch! How fresh and pleasant, how full of verdure, was everything! And I had not seen anything green for such a long time! During my illness I used to think that I should never get better, that I was certainly going to die. Judge, then, how I felt yesterday! True, I may have seemed to you a little sad, and you must not be angry with me for that. Happy and light-hearted though I was, there were moments, even at the height of my felicity, when, for some unknown reason, depression came sweeping over my soul. I kept weeping about trifles, yet could not say why I was grieved. The truth is that I am unwell — so much so, that I look at everything from the gloomy point of view. The pale, clear sky, the setting sun, the evening stillness — ah, somehow I felt disposed to grieve and feel hurt at these things; my heart seemed to be over-charged, and to be calling for tears to relieve it. But why should I write this to you? It is difficult for my heart to express itself; still more difficult for it to forego self- expression. Yet possibly you may understand me. Tears and laughter! . . . How good you are, Makar Alexievitch! Yesterday you looked into my eyes as though you could read in them all that I was feeling — as though you were rejoicing at my happiness. Whether it were a group of shrubs or an alleyway or a vista of water that we were passing, you would halt before me, and stand gazing at my face as though you were showing me possessions of your own. It told me how kind is your nature, and I love you for it. Today I am again unwell, for yesterday I wetted my feet, and took a chill. Thedora also is unwell; both of us are ailing. Do not forget me. Come and see me as often as you can. — Your own,

BARBARA ALEXIEVNA.

June 12th

MY DEAREST BARBARA ALEXIEVNA — I had supposed that you meant to describe our doings of the other day in verse; yet from you there has arrived only a single sheet of writing. Nevertheless, I must say that, little though you have put into your letter, that little is not expressed with rare beauty and grace. Nature, your descriptions of rural scenes, your analysis of your own feelings- -the whole is beautifully written. Alas, I have no such talent! Though I may fill a score of pages, nothing comes of it — I might as well never have put pen to paper. Yes, this I know from experience.

You say, my darling, that I am kind and good, that I could not harm my fellow-men, that I have power to comprehend the goodness of God (as expressed in nature's handiwork), and so on. It may all be so, my dearest one — it may all be exactly as you say. Indeed, I think that you are right. But if so, the reason is that when one reads such a letter as you have just sent me, one's heart involuntarily softens, and affords entrance to thoughts of a graver and weightier order. Listen, my darling; I have something to tell you, my beloved one.

I will begin from the time when I was seventeen years old and first entered the service — though I shall soon have completed my thirtieth year of official activity. I may say that at first I was much pleased with my new uniform; and, as I grew older, I grew in mind, and fell to studying my fellow-men. Likewise I may say that I lived an upright life — so much so that at last I incurred persecution. This you may not believe, but it is true. To think that men so cruel should exist! For though, dearest one, I am dull and of no account, I have feelings like everyone else. Consequently, would you believe it, Barbara, when I tell you what these cruel fellows did to me? I feel ashamed to tell it you — and all because I was of a quiet, peaceful, good-natured disposition!

Things began with "this or that, Makar Alexievitch, is your fault." Then it went on to "I need hardly say that the fault is wholly Makar Alexievitch's." Finally it became "OF COURSE Makar Alexievitch is to blame." Do you see the sequence of things, my darling? Every mistake was attributed to me, until "Makar Alexievitch" became a byword in our department. Also, while making of me a proverb, these fellows could not

give me a smile or a civil word. They found fault with my boots, with my uniform, with my hair, with my figure. None of these things were to their taste: everything had to be changed. And so it has been from that day to this. True, I have now grown used to it, for I can grow accustomed to anything (being, as you know, a man of peaceable disposition, like all men of small stature) — yet why should these things be? Whom have I harmed? Whom have I ever supplanted? Whom have I ever traduced to his superiors? No, the fault is that more than once I have asked for an increase of salary. But have I ever CABALLED for it? No, you would be wrong in thinking so, my dearest one. HOW could I ever have done so? You yourself have had many opportunities of seeing how incapable I am of deceit or chicanery.

Why then, should this have fallen to my lot? . . . However, since you think me worthy of respect, my darling, I do not care, for you are far and away the best person in the world. . . . What do you consider to be the greatest social virtue? In private conversation Evstafi Ivanovitch once told me that the greatest social virtue might be considered to be an ability to get money to spend. Also, my comrades used jestingly (yes, I know only jestingly) to propound the ethical maxim that a man ought never to let himself become a burden upon anyone. Well, I am a burden upon no one. It is my own crust of bread that I eat; and though that crust is but a poor one, and sometimes actually a maggoty one, it has at least been EARNED, and therefore, is being put to a right and lawful use. What therefore, ought I to do? I know that I can earn but little by my labours as a copyist; yet even of that little I am proud, for it has entailed WORK, and has wrung sweat from my brow. What harm is there in being a copyist? “He is only an amanuensis,” people say of me. But what is there so disgraceful in that? My writing is at least legible, neat, and pleasant to look upon — and his Excellency is satisfied with it. Indeed, I transcribe many important documents. At the same time, I know that my writing lacks STYLE, which is why I have never risen in the service. Even to you, my dear one, I write simply and without tricks, but just as a thought may happen to enter my head. Yes, I know all this; but if everyone were to become a fine writer, who would there be left to act as copyists? . . . Whatsoever questions I may put to you in my letters, dearest, I pray you to answer them. I am sure that you need me, that I can be of use to you; and, since that is so, I must not allow myself to be distracted by any trifle. Even if I be likened to a rat, I do

not care, provided that that particular rat be wanted by you, and be of use in the world, and be retained in its position, and receive its reward. But what a rat it is!

Enough of this, dearest one. I ought not to have spoken of it, but I lost my temper. Still, it is pleasant to speak the truth sometimes. Goodbye, my own, my darling, my sweet little comforter! I will come to you soon — yes, I will certainly come to you. Until I do so, do not fret yourself. With me I shall be bringing a book. Once more goodbye. — Your heartfelt well-wisher,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

June 20th

MY DEAREST MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH — I am writing to you post-haste — I am hurrying my utmost to get my work finished in time. What do you suppose is the reason for this? It is because an opportunity has occurred for you to make a splendid purchase. Thedora tells me that a retired civil servant of her acquaintance has a uniform to sell — one cut to regulation pattern and in good repair, as well as likely to go very cheap. Now, DO not tell me that you have not got the money, for I know from your own lips that you HAVE. Use that money, I pray you, and do not hoard it. See what terrible garments you walk about in! They are shameful — they are patched all over! In fact, you have nothing new whatever. That this is so, I know for certain, and I care not WHAT you tell me about it. So listen to me for once, and buy this uniform. Do it for MY sake. Do it to show that you really love me.

You have sent me some linen as a gift. But listen to me, Makar Alexievitch. You are simply ruining yourself. Is it a jest that you should spend so much money, such a terrible amount of money, upon me? How you love to play the spendthrift! I tell you that I do not need it, that such expenditure is unnecessary. I know, I am CERTAIN, that you love me — therefore, it is useless to remind me of the fact with gifts. Nor do I like receiving them, since I know how much they must have cost you. No — put your money to a better use. I beg, I beseech of you, to do so. Also, you ask me to send you a continuation of my memoirs — to conclude them. But I know not how I contrived even to write as much of them as I did; and now I have not the strength to write further of my past, nor the desire to give it a single thought. Such recollections are terrible to me. Most difficult of all is it for me to speak of my poor mother, who left her destitute daughter a prey to villains. My heart runs blood whenever I think of it; it is so fresh in my memory that I cannot dismiss it from my thoughts, nor rest for its insistence, although a year has now elapsed since the events took place. But all this you know.

Also, I have told you what Anna Thedorovna is now intending. She accuses me of ingratitude, and denies the accusations made against herself with regard to Monsieur Bwikov. Also, she keeps sending for me, and telling me that I have taken to evil courses, but that if I will return to her,

she will smooth over matters with Bwikov, and force him to confess his fault. Also, she says that he desires to give me a dowry. Away with them all! I am quite happy here with you and good Thedora, whose devotion to me reminds me of my old nurse, long since dead. Distant kinsman though you may be, I pray you always to defend my honour. Other people I do not wish to know, and would gladly forget if I could. . . . What are they wanting with me now? Thedora declares it all to be a trick, and says that in time they will leave me alone. God grant it be so!

B. D.

June 21st

MY OWN, MY DARLING, — I wish to write to you, yet know not where to begin. Things are as strange as though we were actually living together. Also I would add that never in my life have I passed such happy days as I am spending at present. ’Tis as though God had blessed me with a home and a family of my own! Yes, you are my little daughter, beloved. But why mention the four sorry roubles that I sent you? You needed them; I know that from Thedora herself, and it will always be a particular pleasure to me to gratify you in anything. It will always be my one happiness in life. Pray, therefore, leave me that happiness, and do not seek to cross me in it. Things are not as you suppose. I have now reached the sunshine since, in the first place, I am living so close to you as almost to be with you (which is a great consolation to my mind), while, in the second place, a neighbour of mine named Rataziaev (the retired official who gives the literary parties) has today invited me to tea. This evening, therefore, there will be a gathering at which we shall discuss literature! Think of that my darling! Well, goodbye now. I have written this without any definite aim in my mind, but solely to assure you of my welfare. Through Theresa I have received your message that you need an embroidered cloak to wear, so I will go and purchase one. Yes, tomorrow I mean to purchase that embroidered cloak, and so give myself the pleasure of having satisfied one of your wants. I know where to go for such a garment. For the time being I remain your sincere friend,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

June 22nd

MY DEAREST BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — I have to tell you that a sad event has happened in this house — an event to excite one's utmost pity. This morning, about five o'clock, one of Gorshkov's children died of scarlatina, or something of the kind. I have been to pay the parents a visit of condolence, and found them living in the direst poverty and disorder. Nor is that surprising, seeing that the family lives in a single room, with only a screen to divide it for decency's sake. Already the coffin was standing in their midst — a plain but decent shell which had been bought ready-made. The child, they told me, had been a boy of nine, and full of promise. What a pitiful spectacle! Though not weeping, the mother, poor woman, looked broken with grief. After all, to have one burden the less on their shoulders may prove a relief, though there are still two children left — a babe at the breast and a little girl of six! How painful to see these suffering children, and to be unable to help them! The father, clad in an old, dirty frockcoat, was seated on a dilapidated chair. Down his cheeks there were coursing tears — though less through grief than owing to a long-standing affliction of the eyes. He was so thin, too! Always he reddens in the face when he is addressed, and becomes too confused to answer. A little girl, his daughter, was leaning against the coffin — her face looking so worn and thoughtful, poor mite! Do you know, I cannot bear to see a child look thoughtful. On the floor there lay a rag doll, but she was not playing with it as, motionless, she stood there with her finger to her lips. Even a bon-bon which the landlady had given her she was not eating. Is it not all sad, sad, Barbara?

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

June 25th

MY BELOVED MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH — I return you your book. In my opinion it is a worthless one, and I would rather not have it in my possession. Why do you save up your money to buy such trash? Except in jest, do such books really please you? However, you have now promised to send me something else to read. I will share the cost of it. Now, farewell until we meet again. I have nothing more to say.

B. D.

June 26th

MY DEAR LITTLE BARBARA — To tell you the truth, I myself have not read the book of which you speak. That is to say, though I began to read it, I soon saw that it was nonsense, and written only to make people laugh. “However,” thought I, “it is at least a CHEERFUL work, and so may please Barbara.” That is why I sent it you.

Rataziaev has now promised to give me something really literary to read; so you shall soon have your book, my darling. He is a man who reflects; he is a clever fellow, as well as himself a writer — such a writer! His pen glides along with ease, and in such a style (even when he is writing the most ordinary, the most insignificant of articles) that I have often remarked upon the fact, both to Phaldoni and to Theresa. Often, too, I go to spend an evening with him. He reads aloud to us until five o’clock in the morning, and we listen to him. It is a revelation of things rather than a reading. It is charming, it is like a bouquet of flowers — there is a bouquet of flowers in every line of each page. Besides, he is such an approachable, courteous, kind- hearted fellow! What am I compared with him? Why, nothing, simply nothing! He is a man of reputation, whereas I — well, I do not exist at all. Yet he condescends to my level. At this very moment I am copying out a document for him. But you must not think that he finds any DIFFICULTY in condescending to me, who am only a copyist. No, you must not believe the base gossip that you may hear. I do copying work for him simply in order to please myself, as well as that he may notice me — a thing that always gives me pleasure. I appreciate the delicacy of his position. He is a good — a very good — man, and an unapproachable writer.

What a splendid thing is literature, Barbara — what a splendid thing! This I learnt before I had known Rataziaev even for three days. It strengthens and instructs the heart of man. . . . No matter what there be in the world, you will find it all written down in Rataziaev’s works. And so well written down, too! Literature is a sort of picture — a sort of picture or mirror. It connotes at once passion, expression, fine criticism, good learning, and a document. Yes, I have learned this from Rataziaev himself. I can assure you, Barbara, that if only you could be sitting among us, and listening to the talk (while, with the rest of us, you smoked a pipe), and were to hear those present begin to argue and dispute concerning different

matters, you would feel of as little account among them as I do; for I myself figure there only as a blockhead, and feel ashamed, since it takes me a whole evening to think of a single word to interpolate — and even then the word will not come! In a case like that a man regrets that, as the proverb has it, he should have reached man's estate but not man's understanding. . . . What do I do in my spare time? I sleep like a fool, though I would far rather be occupied with something else — say, with eating or writing, since the one is useful to oneself, and the other is beneficial to one's fellows. You should see how much money these fellows contrive to save! How much, for instance, does not Rataziaev lay by? A few days' writing, I am told, can earn him as much as three hundred roubles! Indeed, if a man be a writer of short stories or anything else that is interesting, he can sometimes pocket five hundred roubles, or a thousand, at a time! Think of it, Barbara! Rataziaev has by him a small manuscript of verses, and for it he is asking — what do you think? Seven thousand roubles! Why, one could buy a whole house for that sum! He has even refused five thousand for a manuscript, and on that occasion I reasoned with him, and advised him to accept the five thousand. But it was of no use. "For," said he, "they will soon offer me seven thousand," and kept to his point, for he is a man of some determination.

Suppose, now, that I were to give you an extract from "Passion in Italy" (as another work of his is called). Read this, dearest Barbara, and judge for yourself:

"Vladimir started, for in his veins the lust of passion had welled until it had reached boiling point.

"'Countess,' he cried, 'do you know how terrible is this adoration of mine, how infinite this madness? No! My fancies have not deceived me — I love you ecstatically, diabolically, as a madman might! All the blood that is in your husband's body could never quench the furious, surging rapture that is in my soul! No puny obstacle could thwart the all-destroying, infernal flame which is eating into my exhausted breast! Oh Zinaida, my Zinaida!'

"'Vladimir!' she whispered, almost beside herself, as she sank upon his bosom.

"'My Zinaida!' cried the enraptured Smileski once more.

"His breath was coming in sharp, broken pants. The lamp of love was burning brightly on the altar of passion, and searing the hearts of the two unfortunate sufferers.

“‘Vladimir!’ again she whispered in her intoxication, while her bosom heaved, her cheeks glowed, and her eyes flashed fire.

“Thus was a new and dread union consummated.

“Half an hour later the aged Count entered his wife’s boudoir.

“‘How now, my love?’ said he. ‘Surely it is for some welcome guest beyond the common that you have had the samovar [Tea-urn.] thus prepared?’ And he smote her lightly on the cheek.”

What think you of THAT, Barbara? True, it is a little too outspoken — there can be no doubt of that; yet how grand it is, how splendid! With your permission I will also quote you an extract from Rataziaev’s story, Ermak and Zuleika:

“‘You love me, Zuleika? Say again that you love me, you love me!’

“‘I DO love you, Ermak,’ whispered Zuleika.

“‘Then by heaven and earth I thank you! By heaven and earth you have made me happy! You have given me all, all that my tortured soul has for immemorial years been seeking! ’Tis for this that you have led me hither, my guiding star—’tis for this that you have conducted me to the Girdle of Stone! To all the world will I now show my Zuleika, and no man, demon or monster of Hell, shall bid me nay! Oh, if men would but understand the mysterious passions of her tender heart, and see the poem which lurks in each of her little tears! Suffer me to dry those tears with my kisses! Suffer me to drink of those heavenly drops, Oh being who art not of this earth!’

“‘Ermak,’ said Zuleika, ‘the world is cruel, and men are unjust. But LET them drive us from their midst — let them judge us, my beloved Ermak! What has a poor maiden who was reared amid the snows of Siberia to do with their cold, icy, self-sufficient world? Men cannot understand me, my darling, my sweetheart.’

“‘Is that so? Then shall the sword of the Cossacks sing and whistle over their heads!’ cried Ermak with a furious look in his eyes.”

What must Ermak have felt when he learnt that his Zuleika had been murdered, Barbara? — that, taking advantages of the cover of night, the blind old Kouchoum had, in Ermak’s absence, broken into the latter’s tent, and stabbed his own daughter in mistake for the man who had robbed him of sceptre and crown?

“‘Oh that I had a stone whereon to whet my sword!’ cried Ermak in the madness of his wrath as he strove to sharpen his steel blade upon the

enchanted rock. ‘I would have his blood, his blood! I would tear him limb from limb, the villain!’”

Then Ermak, unable to survive the loss of his Zuleika, throws himself into the Irtisch, and the tale comes to an end.

Here, again, is another short extract — this time written in a more comical vein, to make people laugh:

“Do you know Ivan Prokofievitch Zheltopuzh? He is the man who took a piece out of Prokofi Ivanovitch’s leg. Ivan’s character is one of the rugged order, and therefore, one that is rather lacking in virtue. Yet he has a passionate relish for radishes and honey. Once he also possessed a friend named Pelagea Antonovna. Do you know Pelagea Antonovna? She is the woman who always puts on her petticoat wrong side outwards.”

What humour, Barbara — what purest humour! We rocked with laughter when he read it aloud to us. Yes, that is the kind of man he is. Possibly the passage is a trifle over-frolicsome, but at least it is harmless, and contains no freethought or liberal ideas. In passing, I may say that Rataziaev is not only a supreme writer, but also a man of upright life — which is more than can be said for most writers.

What, do you think, is an idea that sometimes enters my head? In fact, what if I myself were to write something? How if suddenly a book were to make its appearance in the world bearing the title of “The Poetical Works of Makar Dievushkin”? What THEN, my angel? How should you view, should you receive, such an event? I may say of myself that never, after my book had appeared, should I have the hardihood to show my face on the Nevski Prospect; for would it not be too dreadful to hear every one saying, “Here comes the literateur and poet, Dievushkin — yes, it is Dievushkin himself”? What, in such a case, should I do with my feet (for I may tell you that almost always my shoes are patched, or have just been resoled, and therefore look anything but becoming)? To think that the great writer Dievushkin should walk about in patched footgear! If a duchess or a countess should recognise me, what would she say, poor woman? Perhaps, though, she would not notice my shoes at all, since it may reasonably be supposed that countesses do not greatly occupy themselves with footgear, especially with the footgear of civil service officials (footgear may differ from footgear, it must be remembered). Besides, I should find that the countess had heard all about me, for my friends would have betrayed me to her — Rataziaev among the first of them, seeing that he often goes to visit

Countess V. and practically lives at her house. She is said to be a woman of great intellect and wit. An artful dog, that Rataziaev!

But enough of this. I write this sort of thing both to amuse myself and to divert your thoughts. Goodbye now, my angel. This is a long epistle that I am sending you, but the reason is that today I feel in good spirits after dining at Rataziaev's. There I came across a novel which I hardly know how to describe to you. Do not think the worse of me on that account, even though I bring you another book instead (for I certainly mean to bring one). The novel in question was one of Paul de Kock's, and not a novel for you to read. No, no! Such a work is unfit for your eyes. In fact, it is said to have greatly offended the critics of St. Petersburg. Also, I am sending you a pound of bonbons — bought specially for yourself. Each time that you eat one, beloved, remember the sender. Only, do not bite the iced ones, but suck them gently, lest they make your teeth ache. Perhaps, too, you like comfits? Well, write and tell me if it is so. Goodbye, goodbye. Christ watch over you, my darling! — Always your faithful friend, MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

June 27th

MY DEAREST MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH — Thedora tells me that, should I wish, there are some people who will be glad to help me by obtaining me an excellent post as governess in a certain house. What think you, my friend? Shall I go or not? Of course, I should then cease to be a burden to you, and the post appears to be a comfortable one. On the other hand, the idea of entering a strange house appals me. The people in it are landed gentry, and they will begin to ask me questions, and to busy themselves about me. What answers shall I then return? You see, I am now so unused to society — so shy! I like to live in a corner to which I have long grown used. Yes, the place with which one is familiar is always the best. Even if for companion one has but sorrow, that place will still be the best.... God alone knows what duties the post will entail. Perhaps I shall merely be required to act as nursemaid; and in any case, I hear that the governess there has been changed three times in two years. For God's sake, Makar Alexievitch, advise me whether to go or not. Why do you never come near me now? Do let my eyes have an occasional sight of you. Mass on Sundays is almost the only time when we see one another. How retiring you have become! So also have I, even though, in a way, I am your kinswoman. You must have ceased to love me, Makar Alexievitch. I spend many a weary hour because of it. Sometimes, when dusk is falling, I find myself lonely — oh, so lonely! Thedora has gone out somewhere, and I sit here and think, and think, and think. I remember all the past, its joys and its sorrows. It passes before my eyes in detail, it glimmers at me as out of a mist; and as it does so, well-known faces appear, which seem actually to be present with me in this room! Most frequently of all, I see my mother. Ah, the dreams that come to me! I feel that my health is breaking, so weak am I. When this morning I arose, sickness took me until I vomited and vomited. Yes, I feel, I know, that death is approaching. Who will bury me when it has come? Who will visit my tomb? Who will sorrow for me? And now it is in a strange place, in the house of a stranger, that I may have to die! Yes, in a corner which I do not know! ... My God, how sad a thing is life! ... Why do you send me comfits to eat? Whence do you get the money to buy them? Ah, for God's sake keep the money, keep the money. Thedora has sold a carpet which I have made. She got fifty roubles for it, which is very good — I had

expected less. Of the fifty roubles I shall give Thedora three, and with the remainder make myself a plain, warm dress. Also, I am going to make you a waistcoat — to make it myself, and out of good material.

Also, Thedora has brought me a book— “The Stories of Bielkin” — which I will forward you, if you would care to read it. Only, do not soil it, nor yet retain it, for it does not belong to me. It is by Pushkin. Two years ago I read these stories with my mother, and it would hurt me to read them again. If you yourself have any books, pray let me have them — so long as they have not been obtained from Rataziaev. Probably he will be giving you one of his own works when he has had one printed. How is it that his compositions please you so much, Makar Alexievitch? I think them SUCH rubbish!

— Now goodbye. How I have been chattering on! When feeling sad, I always like to talk of something, for it acts upon me like medicine — I begin to feel easier as soon as I have uttered what is preying upon my heart. Good bye, good-bye, my friend — Your own

B. D.

June 28th

MY DEAREST BARBARA ALEXIEVNA — Away with melancholy! Really, beloved, you ought to be ashamed of yourself! How can you allow such thoughts to enter your head? Really and truly you are quite well; really and truly you are, my darling. Why, you are blooming — simply blooming. True, I see a certain touch of pallor in your face, but still you are blooming. A fig for dreams and visions! Yes, for shame, dearest! Drive away those fancies; try to despise them. Why do I sleep so well? Why am I never ailing? Look at ME, beloved. I live well, I sleep peacefully, I retain my health, I can ruffle it with my juniors. In fact, it is a pleasure to see me. Come, come, then, sweetheart! Let us have no more of this. I know that that little head of yours is capable of any fancy — that all too easily you take to dreaming and repining; but for my sake, cease to do so.

Are you to go to these people, you ask me? Never! No, no, again no! How could you think of doing such a thing as taking a journey? I will not allow it — I intend to combat your intention with all my might. I will sell my frockcoat, and walk the streets in my shirt sleeves, rather than let you be in want. But no, Barbara. I know you, I know you. This is merely a trick, merely a trick. And probably Thedora alone is to blame for it. She appears to be a foolish old woman, and to be able to persuade you to do anything. Do not believe her, my dearest. I am sure that you know what is what, as well as SHE does. Eh, sweetheart? She is a stupid, quarrelsome, rubbish-talking old woman who brought her late husband to the grave. Probably she has been plaguing you as much as she did him. No, no, dearest; you must not take this step. What should I do then? What would there be left for ME to do? Pray put the idea out of your head. What is it you lack here? I cannot feel sufficiently overjoyed to be near you, while, for your part, you love me well, and can live your life here as quietly as you wish. Read or sew, whichever you like — or read and do not sew. Only, do not desert me. Try, yourself, to imagine how things would seem after you had gone. Here am I sending you books, and later we will go for a walk. Come, come, then, my Barbara! Summon to your aid your reason, and cease to babble of trifles.

As soon as I can I will come and see you, and then you shall tell me the whole story. This will not do, sweetheart; this certainly will not do. Of course, I know that I am not an educated man, and have received but a sorry

schooling, and have had no inclination for it, and think too much of Rataziaev, if you will; but he is my friend, and therefore, I must put in a word or two for him. Yes, he is a splendid writer. Again and again I assert that he writes magnificently. I do not agree with you about his works, and never shall. He writes too ornately, too laconically, with too great a wealth of imagery and imagination. Perhaps you have read him without insight, Barbara? Or perhaps you were out of spirits at the time, or angry with Thedora about something, or worried about some mischance? Ah, but you should read him sympathetically, and, best of all, at a time when you are feeling happy and contented and pleasantly disposed — for instance, when you have a bonbon or two in your mouth. Yes, that is the way to read Rataziaev. I do not dispute (indeed, who would do so?) that better writers than he exist — even far better; but they are good, and he is good too — they write well, and he writes well. It is chiefly for his own sake that he writes, and he is to be approved for so doing.

Now goodbye, dearest. More I cannot write, for I must hurry away to business. Be of good cheer, and the Lord God watch over you! — Your faithful friend,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

P.S — Thank you so much for the book, darling! I will read it through, this volume of Pushkin, and tonight come to you.

MY DEAR MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH — No, no, my friend, I must not go on living near you. I have been thinking the matter over, and come to the conclusion that I should be doing very wrong to refuse so good a post. I should at least have an assured crust of bread; I might at least set to work to earn my employers' favour, and even try to change my character if required to do so. Of course it is a sad and sorry thing to have to live among strangers, and to be forced to seek their patronage, and to conceal and constrain one's own personality — but God will help me. I must not remain forever a recluse, for similar chances have come my way before. I remember how, when a little girl at school, I used to go home on Sundays and spend the time in frisking and dancing about. Sometimes my mother would chide me for so doing, but I did not care, for my heart was too joyous, and my spirits too buoyant, for that. Yet as the evening of Sunday came on, a sadness as of death would overtake me, for at nine o'clock I had to return to school, where everything was cold and strange and severe —

where the governesses, on Mondays, lost their tempers, and nipped my ears, and made me cry. On such occasions I would retire to a corner and weep alone; concealing my tears lest I should be called lazy. Yet it was not because I had to study that I used to weep, and in time I grew more used to things, and, after my schooldays were over, shed tears only when I was parting with friends. . . .

It is not right for me to live in dependence upon you. The thought tortures me. I tell you this frankly, for the reason that frankness with you has become a habit. Cannot I see that daily, at earliest dawn, Thedora rises to do washing and scrubbing, and remains working at it until late at night, even though her poor old bones must be aching for want of rest? Cannot I also see that YOU are ruining yourself for me, and hoarding your last kopeck that you may spend it on my behalf? You ought not so to act, my friend, even though you write that you would rather sell your all than let me want for anything. I believe in you, my friend — I entirely believe in your good heart; but, you say that to me now (when, perhaps, you have received some unexpected sum or gratuity) and there is still the future to be thought of. You yourself know that I am always ailing — that I cannot work as you do, glad though I should be of any work if I could get it; so what else is there for me to do? To sit and repine as I watch you and Thedora? But how would that be of any use to you? AM I necessary to you, comrade of mine? HAVE I ever done you any good? Though I am bound to you with my whole soul, and love you dearly and strongly and wholeheartedly, a bitter fate has ordained that that love should be all that I have to give — that I should be unable, by creating for you subsistence, to repay you for all your kindness. Do not, therefore, detain me longer, but think the matter out, and give me your opinion on it. In expectation of which I remain your sweetheart,

B. D.

July 1st

Rubbish, rubbish, Barbara! — What you say is sheer rubbish. Stay here, rather, and put such thoughts out of your head. None of what you suppose is true. I can see for myself that it is not. Whatsoever you lack here, you have but to ask me for it. Here you love and are loved, and we might easily be happy and contented together. What could you want more? What have you to do with strangers? You cannot possibly know what strangers are like. I know it, though, and could have told you if you had asked me. There is a stranger whom I know, and whose bread I have eaten. He is a cruel man, Barbara — a man so bad that he would be unworthy of your little heart, and would soon tear it to pieces with his railings and reproaches and black looks. On the other hand, you are safe and well here — you are as safe as though you were sheltered in a nest. Besides, you would, as it were, leave me with my head gone. For what should I have to do when you were gone? What could I, an old man, find to do? Are you not necessary to me? Are you not useful to me? Eh? Surely you do not think that you are not useful? You are of great use to me, Barbara, for you exercise a beneficial influence upon my life. Even at this moment, as I think of you, I feel cheered, for always I can write letters to you, and put into them what I am feeling, and receive from you detailed answers.... I have bought you a wardrobe, and also procured you a bonnet; so you see that you have only to give me a commission for it to be executed. . . . No — in what way are you not useful? What should I do if I were deserted in my old age? What would become of me? Perhaps you never thought of that, Barbara — perhaps you never said to yourself, “How could HE get on without me?” You see, I have grown so accustomed to you. What else would it end in, if you were to go away? Why, in my hiking to the Neva’s bank and doing away with myself. Ah, Barbara, darling, I can see that you want me to be taken away to the Volkovo Cemetery in a broken-down old hearse, with some poor outcast of the streets to accompany my coffin as chief mourner, and the gravediggers to heap my body with clay, and depart and leave me there. How wrong of you, how wrong of you, my beloved! Yes, by heavens, how wrong of you! I am returning you your book, little friend; and,if you were to ask of me my opinion of it, I should say that never before in my life had I read a book so splendid. I keep wondering how I have hitherto contrived to remain such an

owl. For what have I ever done? From what wilds did I spring into existence? I KNOW nothing — I know simply NOTHING. My ignorance is complete. Frankly, I am not an educated man, for until now I have read scarcely a single book — only “A Portrait of Man” (a clever enough work in its way), “The Boy Who Could Play Many Tunes Upon Bells”, and “Ivik’s Storks”. That is all. But now I have also read “The Station Overseer” in your little volume; and it is wonderful to think that one may live and yet be ignorant of the fact that under one’s very nose there may be a book in which one’s whole life is described as in a picture. Never should I have guessed that, as soon as ever one begins to read such a book, it sets one on both to remember and to consider and to foretell events. Another reason why I liked this book so much is that, though, in the case of other works (however clever they be), one may read them, yet remember not a word of them (for I am a man naturally dull of comprehension, and unable to read works of any great importance), — although, as I say, one may read such works, one reads such a book as YOURS as easily as though it had been written by oneself, and had taken possession of one’s heart, and turned it inside out for inspection, and were describing it in detail as a matter of perfect simplicity. Why, I might almost have written the book myself! Why not, indeed? I can feel just as the people in the book do, and find myself in positions precisely similar to those of, say, the character Samson Virin. In fact, how many good-hearted wretches like Virin are there not walking about amongst us? How easily, too, it is all described! I assure you, my darling, that I almost shed tears when I read that Virin so took to drink as to lose his memory, become morose, and spend whole days over his liquor; as also that he choked with grief and wept bitterly when, rubbing his eyes with his dirty hand, he bethought him of his wandering lamb, his daughter Dunasha! How natural, how natural! You should read the book for yourself. The thing is actually alive. Even I can see that; even I can realise that it is a picture cut from the very life around me. In it I see our own Theresa (to go no further) and the poor Tchinovnik — who is just such a man as this Samson Virin, except for his surname of Gorshkov. The book describes just what might happen to ourselves — to myself in particular. Even a count who lives in the Nevski Prospect or in Naberezhnaia Street might have a similar experience, though he might APPEAR to be different, owing to the fact that his life is cast on a higher plane. Yes, just the same things might happen to him — just the same things. . . . Here you are wishing to go away

and leave us; yet, be careful lest it would not be I who had to pay the penalty of your doing so. For you might ruin both yourself and me. For the love of God, put away these thoughts from you, my darling, and do not torture me in vain. How could you, my poor little unfledged nestling, find yourself food, and defend yourself from misfortune, and ward off the wiles of evil men? Think better of it, Barbara, and pay no more heed to foolish advice and calumny, but read your book again, and read it with attention. It may do you much good.

I have spoken of Rataziaev's "The Station Overseer". However, the author has told me that the work is old-fashioned, since, nowadays, books are issued with illustrations and embellishments of different sorts (though I could not make out all that he said). Pushkin he adjudges a splendid poet, and one who has done honour to Holy Russia. Read your book again, Barbara, and follow my advice, and make an old man happy. The Lord God Himself will reward you. Yes, He will surely reward you. — Your faithful friend,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

MY DEAREST MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — Today Thedora came to me with fifteen roubles in silver. How glad was the poor woman when I gave her three of them! I am writing to you in great haste, for I am busy cutting out a waistcoat to send to you — buff, with a pattern of flowers. Also I am sending you a book of stories; some of which I have read myself, particularly one called "The Cloak." . . . You invite me to go to the theatre with you. But will it not cost too much? Of course we might sit in the gallery. It is a long time (indeed I cannot remember when I last did so) since I visited a theatre! Yet I cannot help fearing that such an amusement is beyond our means. Thedora keeps nodding her head, and saying that you have taken to living above your income. I myself divine the same thing by the amount which you have spent upon me. Take care, dear friend, that misfortune does not come of it, for Thedora has also informed me of certain rumours concerning your inability to meet your landlady's bills. In fact, I am very anxious about you. Now, goodbye, for I must hasten away to see about another matter — about the changing of the ribands on my bonnet.

P.S — Do you know, if we go to the theatre, I think that I shall wear my new hat and black mantilla. Will that not look nice?

July 7th

MY DEAREST BARBARA ALEXIEVNA — SO much for yesterday! Yes, dearest, we have both been caught playing the fool, for I have become thoroughly bitten with the actress of whom I spoke. Last night I listened to her with all my ears, although, strangely enough, it was practically my first sight of her, seeing that only once before had I been to the theatre. In those days I lived cheek by jowl with a party of five young men — a most noisy crew- and one night I accompanied them, willy-nilly, to the theatre, though I held myself decently aloof from their doings, and only assisted them for company's sake. How those fellows talked to me of this actress! Every night when the theatre was open, the entire band of them (they always seemed to possess the requisite money) would betake themselves to that place of entertainment, where they ascended to the gallery, and clapped their hands, and repeatedly recalled the actress in question. In fact, they went simply mad over her. Even after we had returned home they would give me no rest, but would go on talking about her all night, and calling her their Glasha, and declaring themselves to be in love with "the canary-bird of their hearts." My defenseless self, too, they would plague about the woman, for I was as young as they. What a figure I must have cut with them on the fourth tier of the gallery! Yet, I never got a sight of more than just a corner of the curtain, but had to content myself with listening. She had a fine, resounding, mellow voice like a nightingale's, and we all of us used to clap our hands loudly, and to shout at the top of our lungs. In short, we came very near to being ejected. On the first occasion I went home walking as in a mist, with a single rouble left in my pocket, and an interval of ten clear days confronting me before next pay-day. Yet, what think you, dearest? The very next day, before going to work, I called at a French perfumer's, and spent my whole remaining capital on some eau-de-Cologne and scented soap! Why I did so I do not know. Nor did I dine at home that day, but kept walking and walking past her windows (she lived in a fourth-storey flat on the Nevski Prospect). At length I returned to my own lodging, but only to rest a short hour before again setting off to the Nevski Prospect and resuming my vigil before her windows. For a month and a half I kept this up — dangling in her train. Sometimes I would hire cabs, and discharge them in view of her abode; until at length I had entirely ruined

myself, and got into debt. Then I fell out of love with her — I grew weary of the pursuit. . . . You see, therefore, to what depths an actress can reduce a decent man. In those days I was young. Yes, in those days I was VERY young.

M. D.

July 8th

MY DEAREST BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — The book which I received from you on the 6th of this month I now hasten to return, while at the same time hastening also to explain matters to you in this accompanying letter. What a misfortune, my beloved, that you should have brought me to such a pass! Our lots in life are apportioned by the Almighty according to our human deserts. To such a one He assigns a life in a general's epaulets or as a privy councillor — to such a one, I say, He assigns a life of command; whereas to another one, He allots only a life of unmurmuring toil and suffering. These things are calculated according to a man's CAPACITY. One man may be capable of one thing, and another of another, and their several capacities are ordered by the Lord God himself. I have now been thirty years in the public service, and have fulfilled my duties irreproachably, remained abstemious, and never been detected in any unbecoming behaviour. As a citizen, I may confess — I confess it freely — I have been guilty of certain shortcomings; yet those shortcomings have been combined with certain virtues. I am respected by my superiors, and even his Excellency has had no fault to find with me; and though I have never been shown any special marks of favour, I know that every one finds me at least satisfactory. Also, my writing is sufficiently legible and clear. Neither too rounded nor too fine, it is a running hand, yet always suitable. Of our staff only Ivan Prokofievitch writes a similar hand. Thus have I lived till the grey hairs of my old age; yet I can think of no serious fault committed. Of course, no one is free from MINOR faults. Everyone has some of them, and you among the rest, my beloved. But in grave or in audacious offences never have I been detected, nor in infringements of regulations, nor in breaches of the public peace. No, never! This you surely know, even as the author of your book must have known it. Yes, he also must have known it when he sat down to write. I had not expected this of you, my Barbara. I should never have expected it.

What? In future I am not to go on living peacefully in my little corner, poor though that corner be I am not to go on living, as the proverb has it, without muddying the water, or hurting any one, or forgetting the fear of the Lord God and of oneself? I am not to see, forsooth, that no man does me an injury, or breaks into my home — I am not to take care that all shall go well

with me, or that I have clothes to wear, or that my shoes do not require mending, or that I be given work to do, or that I possess sufficient meat and drink? Is it nothing that, where the pavement is rotten, I have to walk on tiptoe to save my boots? If I write to you overmuch concerning myself, is it concerning ANOTHER man, rather, that I ought to write — concerning HIS wants, concerning HIS lack of tea to drink (and all the world needs tea)? Has it ever been my custom to pry into other men's mouths, to see what is being put into them? Have I ever been known to offend any one in that respect? No, no, beloved! Why should I desire to insult other folks when they are not molesting ME? Let me give you an example of what I mean. A man may go on slaving and slaving in the public service, and earn the respect of his superiors (for what it is worth), and then, for no visible reason at all, find himself made a fool of. Of course he may break out now and then (I am not now referring only to drunkenness), and (for example) buy himself a new pair of shoes, and take pleasure in seeing his feet looking well and smartly shod. Yes, I myself have known what it is to feel like that (I write this in good faith). Yet I am nonetheless astonished that Thedor Thedorovitch should neglect what is being said about him, and take no steps to defend himself. True, he is only a subordinate official, and sometimes loves to rate and scold; yet why should he not do so — why should he not indulge in a little vituperation when he feels like it? Suppose it to be NECESSARY, for FORM'S sake, to scold, and to set everyone right, and to shower around abuse (for, between ourselves, Barbara, our friend cannot get on WITHOUT abuse — so much so that every one humours him, and does things behind his back)? Well, since officials differ in rank, and every official demands that he shall be allowed to abuse his fellow officials in proportion to his rank, it follows that the TONE also of official abuse should become divided into ranks, and thus accord with the natural order of things. All the world is built upon the system that each one of us shall have to yield precedence to some other one, as well as to enjoy a certain power of abusing his fellows. Without such a provision the world could not get on at all, and simple chaos would ensue. Yet I am surprised that our Thedor should continue to overlook insults of the kind that he endures.

Why do I do my official work at all? Why is that necessary? Will my doing of it lead anyone who reads it to give me a greatcoat, or to buy me a new pair of shoes? No, Barbara. Men only read the documents, and then require me to write more. Sometimes a man will hide himself away, and not

show his face abroad, for the mere reason that, though he has done nothing to be ashamed of, he dreads the gossip and slandering which are everywhere to be encountered. If his civic and family life have to do with literature, everything will be printed and read and laughed over and discussed; until at length, he hardly dare show his face in the street at all, seeing that he will have been described by report as recognisable through his gait alone! Then, when he has amended his ways, and grown gentler (even though he still continues to be loaded with official work), he will come to be accounted a virtuous, decent citizen who has deserved well of his comrades, rendered obedience to his superiors, wished noone any evil, preserved the fear of God in his heart, and died lamented. Yet would it not be better, instead of letting the poor fellow die, to give him a cloak while yet he is ALIVE — to give it to this same Thedor Thedorovitch (that is to say, to myself)? Yes, ‘twere far better if, on hearing the tale of his subordinate’s virtues, the chief of the department were to call the deserving man into his office, and then and there to promote him, and to grant him an increase of salary. Thus vice would be punished, virtue would prevail, and the staff of that department would live in peace together. Here we have an example from everyday, commonplace life. How, therefore, could you bring yourself to send me that book, my beloved? It is a badly conceived work, Barbara, and also unreal, for the reason that in creation such a Tchinovnik does not exist. No, again I protest against it, little Barbara; again I protest. — Your most humble, devoted servant,

M. D.

July 27th

MY DEAREST MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — Your latest conduct and letters had frightened me, and left me thunderstruck and plunged in doubt, until what you have said about Thedor explained the situation. Why despair and go into such frenzies, Makar Alexievitch? Your explanations only partially satisfy me. Perhaps I did wrong to insist upon accepting a good situation when it was offered me, seeing that from my last experience in that way I derived a shock which was anything but a matter for jesting. You say also that your love for me has compelled you to hide yourself in retirement. Now, how much I am indebted to you I realised when you told me that you were spending for my benefit the sum which you are always reported to have laid by at your bankers; but, now that I have learnED that you never possessed such a fund, but that, on hearing of my destitute plight, and being moved by it, you decided to spend upon me the whole of your salary — even to forestall it — and when I had fallen ill, actually to sell your clothes — when I learnED all this I found myself placed in the harassing position of not knowing how to accept it all, nor what to think of it. Ah, Makar Alexievitch! You ought to have stopped at your first acts of charity — acts inspired by sympathy and the love of kinsfolk, rather than have continued to squander your means upon what was unnecessary. Yes, you have betrayed our friendship, Makar Alexievitch, in that you have not been open with me; and, now that I see that your last coin has been spent upon dresses and bon-bons and excursions and books and visits to the theatre for me, I weep bitter tears for my unpardonable improvidence in having accepted these things without giving so much as a thought to your welfare. Yes, all that you have done to give me pleasure has become converted into a source of grief, and left behind it only useless regret. Of late I have remarked that you were looking depressed; and though I felt fearful that something unfortunate was impending, what has happened would otherwise never have entered my head. To think that your better sense should so play you false, Makar Alexievitch! What will people think of you, and say of you? Who will want to know you? You whom, like everyone else, I have valued for your goodness of heart and modesty and good sense — YOU, I say, have now given way to an unpleasant vice of which you seem never before to have been guilty. What were my feelings

when Thedora informed me that you had been discovered drunk in the street, and taken home by the police? Why, I felt petrified with astonishment — although, in view of the fact that you had failed me for four days, I had been expecting some such extraordinary occurrence. Also, have you thought what your superiors will say of you when they come to learn the true reason of your absence? You say that everyone is laughing at you, that every one has learnED of the bond which exists between us, and that your neighbours habitually refer to me with a sneer. Pay no attention to this, Makar Alexievitch; for the love of God, be comforted. Also, the incident between you and the officers has much alarmed me, although I had heard certain rumours concerning it. Pray explain to me what it means. You write, too, that you have been afraid to be open with me, for the reason that your confessions might lose you my friendship. Also, you say that you are in despair at the thought of being unable to help me in my illness, owing to the fact that you have sold everything which might have maintained me, and preserved me in sickness, as well as that you have borrowed as much as it is possible for you to borrow, and are daily experiencing unpleasantness with your landlady. Well, in failing to reveal all this to me you chose the worse course. Now, however, I know all. You have forced me to recognise that I have been the cause of your unhappy plight, as well as that my own conduct has brought upon myself a twofold measure of sorrow. The fact leaves me thunderstruck, Makar Alexievitch. Ah, friend, an infectious disease is indeed a misfortune, for now we poor and miserable folk must perforce keep apart from one another, lest the infection be increased. Yes, I have brought upon you calamities which never before in your humble, solitary life you had experienced. This tortures and exhausts me more than I can tell to think of.

Write to me quite frankly. Tell me how you came to embark upon such a course of conduct. Comfort, oh, comfort me if you can. It is not self-love that prompts me to speak of my own comforting, but my friendship and love for you, which will never fade from my heart. Goodbye. I await your answer with impatience. You have thought but poorly of me, Makar Alexievitch. — Your friend and lover,

BARBARA DOBROSELOVA.

July 28th

MY PRICELESS BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — What am I to say to you, now that all is over, and we are gradually returning to our old position? You say that you are anxious as to what will be thought of me. Let me tell you that the dearest thing in life to me is my self-respect; wherefore, in informing you of my misfortunes and misconduct, I would add that none of my superiors know of my doings, nor ever will know of them, and that therefore, I still enjoy a measure of respect in that quarter. Only one thing do I fear — I fear gossip. Garrulous though my landlady be, she said but little when, with the aid of your ten roubles, I today paid her part of her account; and as for the rest of my companions, they do not matter at all. So long as I have not borrowed money from them, I need pay them no attention. To conclude my explanations, let me tell you that I value your respect for me above everything in the world, and have found it my greatest comfort during this temporary distress of mine. Thank God, the first shock of things has abated, now that you have agreed not to look upon me as faithless and an egotist simply because I have deceived you. I wish to hold you to myself, for the reason that I cannot bear to part with you, and love you as my guardian angel. . . . I have now returned to work, and am applying myself diligently to my duties. Also, yesterday Evstafi Ivanovitch exchanged a word or two with me. Yet I will not conceal from you the fact that my debts are crushing me down, and that my wardrobe is in a sorry state. At the same time, these things do not REALLY matter and I would bid you not despair about them. Send me, however, another half-rouble if you can (though that half-rouble will stab me to the heart — stab me with the thought that it is not I who am helping you, but YOU who are helping ME). Thedora has done well to get those fifteen roubles for you. At the moment, fool of an old man that I am, I have no hope of acquiring any more money; but as soon as ever I do so, I will write to you and let you know all about it. What chiefly worries me is the fear of gossip. Goodbye, little angel. I kiss your hands, and beseech you to regain your health. If this is not a detailed letter, the reason is that I must soon be starting for the office, in order that, by strict application to duty, I may make amends for the past. Further information concerning my doings (as well as concerning that affair

with the officers) must be deferred until tonight. — Your affectionate and respectful friend,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

July 28th

DEAREST LITTLE BARBARA, — It is YOU who have committed a fault — and one which must weigh heavily upon your conscience. Indeed, your last letter has amazed and confounded me, — so much so that, on once more looking into the recesses of my heart, I perceive that I was perfectly right in what I did. Of course I am not now referring to my debauch (no, indeed!), but to the fact that I love you, and to the fact that it is unwise of me to love you — very unwise. You know not how matters stand, my darling. You know not why I am BOUND to love you. Otherwise you would not say all that you do. Yet I am persuaded that it is your head rather than your heart that is speaking. I am certain that your heart thinks very differently.

What occurred that night between myself and those officers I scarcely know, I scarcely remember. You must bear in mind that for some time past I have been in terrible distress — that for a whole month I have been, so to speak, hanging by a single thread. Indeed, my position has been most pitiable. Though I hid myself from you, my landlady was forever shouting and railing at me. This would not have mattered a jot — the horrible old woman might have shouted as much as she pleased — had it not been that, in the first place, there was the disgrace of it, and, in the second place, she had somehow learned of our connection, and kept proclaiming it to the household until I felt perfectly deafened, and had to stop my ears. The point, however, is that other people did not stop their ears, but, on the contrary, pricked them. Indeed, I am at a loss what to do.

Really this wretched rabble has driven me to extremities. It all began with my hearing a strange rumour from Thedora — namely, that an unworthy suitor had been to visit you, and had insulted you with an improper proposal. That he had insulted you deeply I knew from my own feelings, for I felt insulted in an equal degree. Upon that, my angel, I went to pieces, and, losing all self- control, plunged headlong. Bursting into an unspeakable frenzy, I was at once going to call upon this villain of a seducer — though what to do next I knew not, seeing that I was fearful of giving you offence. Ah, what a night of sorrow it was, and what a time of gloom, rain, and sleet! Next, I was returning home, but found myself unable to stand upon my feet. Then Emelia Ilyitch happened to come by. He also is a

tchinovnik — or rather, was a tchinovnik, since he was turned out of the service some time ago. What he was doing there at that moment I do not know; I only know that I went with him. . . . Surely it cannot give you pleasure to read of the misfortunes of your friend — of his sorrows, and of the temptations which he experienced? . . . On the evening of the third day Emelia urged me to go and see the officer of whom I have spoken, and whose address I had learned from our dvornik. More strictly speaking, I had noticed him when, on a previous occasion, he had come to play cards here, and I had followed him home. Of course I now see that I did wrong, but I felt beside myself when I heard them telling him stories about me. Exactly what happened next I cannot remember. I only remember that several other officers were present as well as he. Or it may be that I saw everything double — God alone knows. Also, I cannot exactly remember what I said. I only remember that in my fury I said a great deal. Then they turned me out of the room, and threw me down the staircase — pushed me down it, that is to say. How I got home you know. That is all. Of course, later I blamed myself, and my pride underwent a fall; but no extraneous person except yourself knows of the affair, and in any case it does not matter. Perhaps the affair is as you imagine it to have been, Barbara? One thing I know for certain, and that is that last year one of our lodgers, Aksenti Osipovitch, took a similar liberty with Peter Petrovitch, yet kept the fact secret, an absolute secret. He called him into his room (I happened to be looking through a crack in the partition-wall), and had an explanation with him in the way that a gentleman should — noone except myself being a witness of the scene; whereas, in my own case, I had no explanation at all. After the scene was over, nothing further transpired between Aksenti Osipovitch and Peter Petrovitch, for the reason that the latter was so desirous of getting on in life that he held his tongue. As a result, they bow and shake hands whenever they meet. . . . I will not dispute the fact that I have erred most grievously — that I should never dare to dispute, or that I have fallen greatly in my own estimation; but, I think I was fated from birth so to do — and one cannot escape fate, my beloved. Here, therefore, is a detailed explanation of my misfortunes and sorrows, written for you to read whenever you may find it convenient. I am far from well, beloved, and have lost all my gaiety of disposition, but I send you this letter as a token of my love, devotion, and respect, Oh dear lady of my affections. — Your humble servant,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

July 29th

MY DEAREST MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — I have read your two letters, and they make my heart ache. See here, dear friend of mine. You pass over certain things in silence, and write about a PORTION only of your misfortunes. Can it be that the letters are the outcome of a mental disorder? . . . Come and see me, for God's sake. Come today, direct from the office, and dine with us as you have done before. As to how you are living now, or as to what settlement you have made with your landlady, I know not, for you write nothing concerning those two points, and seem purposely to have left them unmentioned. Au revoir, my friend. Come to me today without fail. You would do better ALWAYS to dine here. Thedora is an excellent cook. Goodbye — Your own,

BARBARA DOBROSELOVA.

August 1st

MY DARLING BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — Thank God that He has sent you a chance of repaying my good with good. I believe in so doing, as well as in the sweetness of your angelic heart. Therefore, I will not reproach you. Only I pray you, do not again blame me because in the decline of my life I have played the spendthrift. It was such a sin, was it not? — such a thing to do? And even if you would still have it that the sin was there, remember, little friend, what it costs me to hear such words fall from your lips. Do not be vexed with me for saying this, for my heart is fainting. Poor people are subject to fancies — this is a provision of nature. I myself have had reason to know this. The poor man is exacting. He cannot see God's world as it is, but eyes each passer-by askance, and looks around him uneasily in order that he may listen to every word that is being uttered. May not people be talking of him? How is it that he is so unsightly? What is he feeling at all? What sort of figure is he cutting on the one side or on the other? It is matter of common knowledge, my Barbara, that the poor man ranks lower than a rag, and will never earn the respect of any one. Yes, write about him as you like — let scribblers say what they choose about him — he will ever remain as he was. And why is this? It is because, from his very nature, the poor man has to wear his feelings on his sleeve, so that nothing about him is sacred, and as for his self-respect — ! Well, Emelia told me the other day that once, when he had to collect subscriptions, official sanction was demanded for every single coin, since people thought that it would be no use paying their money to a poor man. Nowadays charity is strangely administered. Perhaps it has always been so. Either folk do not know how to administer it, or they are adept in the art — one of the two. Perhaps you did not know this, so I beg to tell it you. And how comes it that the poor man knows, is so conscious of it all? The answer is — by experience. He knows because any day he may see a gentleman enter a restaurant and ask himself, "What shall I have to eat today? I will have such and such a dish," while all the time the poor man will have nothing to eat that day but gruel. There are men, too — wretched busybodies — who walk about merely to see if they can find some wretched tchinovnik or broken-down official who has got toes projecting from his boots or his hair uncut! And when they have found such a one they make a report of the circumstance, and their

rubbish gets entered on the file.... But what does it matter to you if my hair lacks the shears? If you will forgive me what may seem to you a piece of rudeness, I declare that the poor man is ashamed of such things with the sensitiveness of a young girl. YOU, for instance, would not care (pray pardon my bluntness) to unrobe yourself before the public eye; and in the same way, the poor man does not like to be pried at or questioned concerning his family relations, and so forth. A man of honour and self-respect such as I am finds it painful and grievous to have to consort with men who would deprive him of both.

Today I sat before my colleagues like a bear's cub or a plucked sparrow, so that I fairly burned with shame. Yes, it hurt me terribly, Barbara. Naturally one blushes when one can see one's naked toes projecting through one's boots, and one's buttons hanging by a single thread! As though on purpose, I seemed, on this occasion, to be peculiarly dishevelled. No wonder that my spirits fell. When I was talking on business matters to Stepan Karlovitch, he suddenly exclaimed, for no apparent reason, "Ah, poor old Makar Alexievitch!" and then left the rest unfinished. But I knew what he had in his mind, and blushed so hotly that even the bald patch on my head grew red. Of course the whole thing is nothing, but it worries me, and leads to anxious thoughts. What can these fellows know about me? God send that they know nothing! But I confess that I suspect, I strongly suspect, one of my colleagues. Let them only betray me! They would betray one's private life for a groat, for they hold nothing sacred.

I have an idea who is at the bottom of it all. It is Rataziaev. Probably he knows someone in our department to whom he has recounted the story with additions. Or perhaps he has spread it abroad in his own department, and thence, it has crept and crawled into ours. Everyone here knows it, down to the last detail, for I have seen them point at you with their fingers through the window. Oh yes, I have seen them do it. Yesterday, when I stepped across to dine with you, the whole crew were hanging out of the window to watch me, and the landlady exclaimed that the devil was in young people, and called you certain unbecoming names. But this is as nothing compared with Rataziaev's foul intention to place us in his books, and to describe us in a satire. He himself has declared that he is going to do so, and other people say the same. In fact, I know not what to think, nor what to decide. It is no use concealing the fact that you and I have sinned against the Lord God.... You were going to send me a book of some sort, to divert my mind

— were you not, dearest? What book, though, could now divert me? Only such books as have never existed on earth. Novels are rubbish, and written for fools and for the idle. Believe me, dearest, I know it through long experience. Even should they vaunt Shakespeare to you, I tell you that Shakespeare is rubbish, and proper only for lampoons — Your own,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

August 2nd

MY DEAREST MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — Do not disquiet yourself. God will grant that all shall turn out well. Thedora has obtained a quantity of work, both for me and herself, and we are setting about it with a will. Perhaps it will put us straight again. Thedora suspects my late misfortunes to be connected with Anna Thedorovna; but I do not care — I feel extraordinarily cheerful today. So you are thinking of borrowing more money? If so, may God preserve you, for you will assuredly be ruined when the time comes for repayment! You had far better come and live with us here for a little while. Yes, come and take up your abode here, and pay no attention whatever to what your landlady says. As for the rest of your enemies and ill-wishers, I am certain that it is with vain imaginings that you are vexing yourself. . . . In passing, let me tell you that your style differs greatly from letter to letter. Goodbye until we meet again. I await your coming with impatience — Your own,

B. D.

August 3rd

MY ANGEL, BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — I hasten to inform you, 0h light of my life, that my hopes are rising again. But, little daughter of mine — do you really mean it when you say that I am to indulge in no more borrowings? Why, I could not do without them. Things would go badly with us both if I did so. You are ailing. Consequently, I tell you roundly that I MUST borrow, and that I must continue to do so.

Also, I may tell you that my seat in the office is now next to that of a certain Emelia Ivanovitch. He is not the Emelia whom you know, but a man who, like myself, is a privy councillor, as well as represents, with myself, the senior and oldest official in our department. Likewise he is a good, disinterested soul, and one that is not over-talkative, though a true bear in appearance and demeanour. Industrious, and possessed of a handwriting purely English, his caligraphy is, it must be confessed, even worse than my own. Yes, he is a good soul. At the same time, we have never been intimate with one another. We have done no more than exchange greetings on meeting or parting, borrow one another's penknife if we needed one, and, in short, observe such bare civilities as convention demands. Well, today he said to me, "Makar Alexievitch, what makes you look so thoughtful?" and inasmuch as I could see that he wished me well, I told him all — or, rather, I did not tell him EVERYTHING, for that I do to no man (I have not the heart to do it); I told him just a few scattered details concerning my financial straits. "Then you ought to borrow," said he. "You ought to obtain a loan of Peter Petrovitch, who does a little in that way. I myself once borrowed some money of him, and he charged me fair and light interest." Well, Barbara, my heart leapt within me at these words. I kept thinking and thinking, — if only God would put it into the mind of Peter Petrovitch to be my benefactor by advancing me a loan!" I calculated that with its aid I might both repay my landlady and assist yourself and get rid of my surroundings (where I can hardly sit down to table without the rascals making jokes about me). Sometimes his Excellency passes our desk in the office. He glances at me, and cannot but perceive how poorly I am dressed. Now, neatness and cleanliness are two of his strongest points. Even though he says nothing, I feel ready to die with shame when he approaches. Well, hardening my heart, and putting my diffidence into my ragged pocket, I

approached Peter Petrovitch, and halted before him more dead than alive. Yet I was hopeful, and though, as it turned out, he was busily engaged in talking to Thedosei Ivanovitch, I walked up to him from behind, and plucked at his sleeve. He looked away from me, but I recited my speech about thirty roubles, et cetera, et cetera, of which, at first, he failed to catch the meaning. Even when I had explained matters to him more fully, he only burst out laughing, and said nothing. Again I addressed to him my request; whereupon, asking me what security I could give, he again buried himself in his papers, and went on writing without deigning me even a second glance. Dismay seized me. “Peter Petrovitch,” I said, “I can offer you no security,” but to this I added an explanation that some salary would, in time, be due to me, which I would make over to him, and account the loan my first debt. At that moment someone called him away, and I had to wait a little. On returning, he began to mend his pen as though he had not even noticed that I was there. But I was for myself this time. “Peter Petrovitch,” I continued, “can you not do ANYTHING?” Still he maintained silence, and seemed not to have heard me. I waited and waited. At length I determined to make a final attempt, and plucked him by the sleeve. He muttered something, and, his pen mended, set about his writing. There was nothing for me to do but to depart. He and the rest of them are worthy fellows, dearest — that I do not doubt — but they are also proud, very proud. What have I to do with them? Yet I thought I would write and tell you all about it. Meanwhile Emelia Ivanovitch had been encouraging me with nods and smiles. He is a good soul, and has promised to recommend me to a friend of his who lives in Viborskaia Street and lends money. Emelia declares that this friend will certainly lend me a little; so tomorrow, beloved, I am going to call upon the gentleman in question. . . . What do you think about it? It would be a pity not to obtain a loan. My landlady is on the point of turning me out of doors, and has refused to allow me any more board. Also, my boots are wearing through, and have lost every button — and I do not possess another pair! Could anyone in a government office display greater shabbiness? It is dreadful, my Barbara — it is simply dreadful!

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

August 4th

MY BELOVED MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — For God's sake borrow some money as soon as you can. I would not ask this help of you were it not for the situation in which I am placed. Thedora and myself cannot remain any longer in our present lodgings, for we have been subjected to great unpleasantness, and you cannot imagine my state of agitation and dismay. The reason is that this morning we received a visit from an elderly — almost an old — man whose breast was studded with orders. Greatly surprised, I asked him what he wanted (for at the moment Thedora had gone out shopping); whereupon he began to question me as to my mode of life and occupation, and then, without waiting for an answer, informed me that he was uncle to the officer of whom you have spoken; that he was very angry with his nephew for the way in which the latter had behaved, especially with regard to his slandering of me right and left; and that he, the uncle, was ready to protect me from the young spendthrift's insolence. Also, he advised me to have nothing to say to young fellows of that stamp, and added that he sympathised with me as though he were my own father, and would gladly help me in any way he could. At this I blushed in some confusion, but did not greatly hasten to thank him. Next, he took me forcibly by the hand, and, tapping my cheek, said that I was very good-looking, and that he greatly liked the dimples in my face (God only knows what he meant!). Finally he tried to kiss me, on the plea that he was an old man, the brute! At this moment Thedora returned; whereupon, in some confusion, he repeated that he felt a great respect for my modesty and virtue, and that he much wished to become acquainted with me; after which he took Thedora aside, and tried, on some pretext or another, to give her money (though of course she declined it). At last he took himself off — again reiterating his assurances, and saying that he intended to return with some earrings as a present; that he advised me to change my lodgings; and, that he could recommend me a splendid flat which he had in his mind's eye as likely to cost me nothing. Yes, he also declared that he greatly liked me for my purity and good sense; that I must beware of dissolute young men; and that he knew Anna Thedorovna, who had charged him to inform me that she would shortly be visiting me in person. Upon that, I understood all. What I did next I scarcely know, for I had never before found myself in

such a position; but I believe that I broke all restraints, and made the old man feel thoroughly ashamed of himself — Thedora helping me in the task, and well-nigh turning him neck and crop out of the tenement. Neither of us doubt that this is Anna Thedorovna's work — for how otherwise could the old man have got to know about us?

Now, therefore, Makar Alexievitch, I turn to you for help. Do not, for God's sake, leave me in this plight. Borrow all the money that you can get, for I have not the wherewithal to leave these lodgings, yet cannot possibly remain in them any longer. At all events, this is Thedora's advice. She and I need at least twenty-five roubles, which I will repay you out of what I earn by my work, while Thedora shall get me additional work from day to day, so that, if there be heavy interest to pay on the loan, you shall not be troubled with the extra burden. Nay, I will make over to you all that I possess if only you will continue to help me. Truly, I grieve to have to trouble you when you yourself are so hardly situated, but my hopes rest upon you, and upon you alone. Goodbye, Makar Alexievitch. Think of me, and may God speed you on your errand!

B.D.

August 4th

MY BELOVED BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — These unlooked-for blows have shaken me terribly, and these strange calamities have quite broken my spirit. Not content with trying to bring you to a bed of sickness, these lickspittles and pestilent old men are trying to bring me to the same. And I assure you that they are succeeding — I assure you that they are. Yet I would rather die than not help you. If I cannot help you I SHALL die; but, to enable me to help you, you must flee like a bird out of the nest where these owls, these birds of prey, are seeking to peck you to death. How distressed I feel, my dearest! Yet how cruel you yourself are! Although you are enduring pain and insult, although you, little nestling, are in agony of spirit, you actually tell me that it grieves you to disturb me, and that you will work off your debt to me with the labour of your own hands! In other words, you, with your weak health, are proposing to kill yourself in order to relieve me to term of my financial embarrassments! Stop a moment, and think what you are saying. WHY should you sew, and work, and torture your poor head with anxiety, and spoil your beautiful eyes, and ruin your health? Why, indeed? Ah, little Barbara, little Barbara! Do you not see that I shall never be any good to you, never any good to you? At all events, I myself see it. Yet I WILL help you in your distress. I WILL overcome every difficulty, I WILL get extra work to do, I WILL copy out manuscripts for authors, I WILL go to the latter and force them to employ me, I WILL so apply myself to the work that they shall see that I am a good copyist (and good copyists, I know, are always in demand). Thus there will be no need for you to exhaust your strength, nor will I allow you to do so — I will not have you carry out your disastrous intention. . . Yes, little angel, I will certainly borrow some money. I would rather die than not do so. Merely tell me, my own darling, that I am not to shrink from heavy interest, and I will not shrink from it, I will not shrink from it — nay, I will shrink from nothing. I will ask for forty roubles, to begin with. That will not be much, will it, little Barbara? Yet will any one trust me even with that sum at the first asking? Do you think that I am capable of inspiring confidence at the first glance? Would the mere sight of my face lead any one to form of me a favourable opinion? Have I ever been able, remember you, to appear to anyone in a favourable light? What think you? Personally, I see difficulties

in the way, and feel sick at heart at the mere prospect. However, of those forty roubles I mean to set aside twenty-five for yourself, two for my landlady, and the remainder for my own spending. Of course, I ought to give more than two to my landlady, but you must remember my necessities, and see for yourself that that is the most that can be assigned to her. We need say no more about it. For one rouble I shall buy me a new pair of shoes, for I scarcely know whether my old ones will take me to the office tomorrow morning. Also, a new neck-scarf is indispensable, seeing that the old one has now passed its first year; but, since you have promised to make of your old apron not only a scarf, but also a shirt-front, I need think no more of the article in question. So much for shoes and scarves. Next, for buttons. You yourself will agree that I cannot do without buttons; nor is there on my garments a single hem unfrayed. I tremble when I think that some day his Excellency may perceive my untidiness, and say — well, what will he NOT say? Yet I shall never hear what he says, for I shall have expired where I sit — expired of mere shame at the thought of having been thus exposed. Ah, dearest! . . . Well, my various necessities will have left me three roubles to go on with. Part of this sum I shall expend upon a half-pound of tobacco — for I cannot live without tobacco, and it is nine days since I last put a pipe into my mouth. To tell the truth, I shall buy the tobacco without acquainting you with the fact, although I ought not so to do. The pity of it all is that, while you are depriving yourself of everything, I keep solacing myself with various amenities — which is why I am telling you this, that the pangs of conscience may not torment me. Frankly, I confess that I am in desperate straits — in such straits as I have never yet known. My landlady flouts me, and I enjoy the respect of noone; my arrears and debts are terrible; and in the office, though never have I found the place exactly a paradise, noone has a single word to say to me. Yet I hide, I carefully hide, this from every one. I would hide my person in the same way, were it not that daily I have to attend the office where I have to be constantly on my guard against my fellows. Nevertheless, merely to be able to CONFESS this to you renews my spiritual strength. We must not think of these things, Barbara, lest the thought of them break our courage. I write them down merely to warn you NOT to think of them, nor to torture yourself with bitter imaginings. Yet, my God, what is to become of us? Stay where you are until I can come to you; after which I shall not return hither, but simply disappear. Now I have finished my letter, and must go and shave

myself, inasmuch as, when that is done, one always feels more decent, as well as consorts more easily with decency. God speed me! One prayer to Him, and I must be off.

M. DIEVUSHKIN.

August 5th

DEAREST MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, - You must not despair. Away with melancholy! I am sending you thirty kopecks in silver, and regret that I cannot send you more. Buy yourself what you most need until tomorrow. I myself have almost nothing left, and what I am going to do I know not. Is it not dreadful, Makar Alexievitch? Yet do not be downcast — it is no good being that. Thedora declares that it would not be a bad thing if we were to remain in this tenement, since if we left it suspicions would arise, and our enemies might take it into their heads to look for us. On the other hand, I do not think it would be well for us to remain here. If I were feeling less sad I would tell you my reason.

What a strange man you are, Makar Alexievitch! You take things so much to heart that you never know what it is to be happy. I read your letters attentively, and can see from them that, though you worry and disturb yourself about me, you never give a thought to yourself. Yes, every letter tells me that you have a kind heart; but I tell YOU that that heart is overly kind. So I will give you a little friendly advice, Makar Alexievitch. I am full of gratitude towards you — I am indeed full for all that you have done for me, I am most sensible of your goodness; but, to think that I should be forced to see that, in spite of your own troubles (of which I have been the involuntary cause), you live for me alone — you live but for MY joys and MY sorrows and MY affection! If you take the affairs of another person so to heart, and suffer with her to such an extent, I do not wonder that you yourself are unhappy. Today, when you came to see me after office-work was done, I felt afraid even to raise my eyes to yours, for you looked so pale and desperate, and your face had so fallen in. Yes, you were dreading to have to tell me of your failure to borrow money — you were dreading to have to grieve and alarm me; but, when you saw that I came very near to smiling, the load was, I know, lifted from your heart. So do not be despondent, do not give way, but allow more rein to your better sense. I beg and implore this of you, for it will not be long before you see things take a turn for the better. You will but spoil your life if you constantly lament another person’s sorrow. Goodbye, dear friend. I beseech you not to be over-anxious about me.

B. D.

August 5th

MY DARLING LITTLE BARBARA, — This is well, this is well, my angel! So you are of opinion that the fact that I have failed to obtain any money does not matter? Then I too am reassured, I too am happy on your account. Also, I am delighted to think that you are not going to desert your old friend, but intend to remain in your present lodgings. Indeed, my heart was overcharged with joy when I read in your letter those kindly words about myself, as well as a not wholly unmerited recognition of my sentiments. I say this not out of pride, but because now I know how much you love me to be thus solicitous for my feelings. How good to think that I may speak to you of them! You bid me, darling, not be faint-hearted. Indeed, there is no need for me to be so. Think, for instance, of the pair of shoes which I shall be wearing to the office tomorrow! The fact is that over-brooding proves the undoing of a man — his complete undoing. What has saved me is the fact that it is not for myself that I am grieving, that I am suffering, but for YOU. Nor would it matter to me in the least that I should have to walk through the bitter cold without an overcoat or boots — I could bear it, I could well endure it, for I am a simple man in my requirements; but the point is — what would people say, what would every envious and hostile tongue exclaim, when I was seen without an overcoat? It is for OTHER folk that one wears an overcoat and boots. In any case, therefore, I should have needed boots to maintain my name and reputation; to both of which my ragged footgear would otherwise have spelled ruin. Yes, it is so, my beloved, and you may believe an old man who has had many years of experience, and knows both the world and mankind, rather than a set of scribblers and daubers.

But I have not yet told you in detail how things have gone with me today. During the morning I suffered as much agony of spirit as might have been experienced in a year. ’Twas like this: First of all, I went out to call upon the gentleman of whom I have spoken. I started very early, before going to the office. Rain and sleet were falling, and I hugged myself in my greatcoat as I walked along. “Lord,” thought I, “pardon my offences, and send me fulfilment of all my desires;” and as I passed a church I crossed myself, repented of my sins, and reminded myself that I was unworthy to hold communication with the Lord God. Then I retired into myself, and

tried to look at nothing; and so, walking without noticing the streets, I proceeded on my way. Everything had an empty air, and everyone whom I met looked careworn and preoccupied, and no wonder, for who would choose to walk abroad at such an early hour, and in such weather? Next a band of ragged workmen met me, and jostled me boorishly as they passed; upon which nervousness overtook me, and I felt uneasy, and tried hard not to think of the money that was my errand. Near the Voskresenski Bridge my feet began to ache with weariness, until I could hardly pull myself along; until presently I met with Ermolaev, a writer in our office, who, stepping aside, halted, and followed me with his eyes, as though to beg of me a glass of vodka. "Ah, friend," thought I, "go YOU to your vodka, but what have I to do with such stuff?" Then, sadly weary, I halted for a moment's rest, and thereafter dragged myself further on my way. Purposely I kept looking about me for something upon which to fasten my thoughts, with which to distract, to encourage myself; but there was nothing. Not a single idea could I connect with any given object, while, in addition, my appearance was so draggled that I felt utterly ashamed of it. At length I perceived from afar a gabled house that was built of yellow wood. This, I thought, must be the residence of the Monsieur Markov whom Emelia Ivanovitch had mentioned to me as ready to lend money on interest. Half unconscious of what I was doing, I asked a watchman if he could tell me to whom the house belonged; whereupon grudgingly, and as though he were vexed at something, the fellow muttered that it belonged to one Markov. Are ALL watchmen so unfeeling? Why did this one reply as he did? In any case I felt disagreeably impressed, for like always answers to like, and, no matter what position one is in, things invariably appear to correspond to it. Three times did I pass the house and walk the length of the street; until the further I walked, the worse became my state of mind. "No, never, never will he lend me anything!" I thought to myself, "He does not know me, and my affairs will seem to him ridiculous, and I shall cut a sorry figure. However, let fate decide for me. Only, let Heaven send that I do not afterwards repent me, and eat out my heart with remorse!" Softly I opened the wicket-gate. Horrors! A great ragged brute of a watch-dog came flying out at me, and foaming at the mouth, and nearly jumping out his skin! Curious is it to note what little, trivial incidents will nearly make a man crazy, and strike terror to his heart, and annihilate the firm purpose with which he has armed himself. At all events, I approached the house more dead than alive, and walked straight

into another catastrophe. That is to say, not noticing the slipperiness of the threshold, I stumbled against an old woman who was filling milk- jugs from a pail, and sent the milk flying in every direction! The foolish old dame gave a start and a cry, and then demanded of me whither I had been coming, and what it was I wanted; after which she rated me soundly for my awkwardness. Always have I found something of the kind befall me when engaged on errands of this nature. It seems to be my destiny invariably to run into something. Upon that, the noise and the commotion brought out the mistress of the house — an old beldame of mean appearance. I addressed myself directly to her: “Does Monsieur Markov live here?” was my inquiry. “No,” she replied, and then stood looking at me civilly enough. “But what want you with him?” she continued; upon which I told her about Emelia Ivanovitch and the rest of the business. As soon as I had finished, she called her daughter — a barefooted girl in her teens — and told her to summon her father from upstairs. Meanwhile, I was shown into a room which contained several portraits of generals on the walls and was furnished with a sofa, a large table, and a few pots of mignonette and balsam. “Shall I, or shall I not (come weal, come woe) take myself off?” was my thought as I waited there. Ah, how I longed to run away! “Yes,” I continued, “I had better come again tomorrow, for the weather may then be better, and I shall not have upset the milk, and these generals will not be looking at me so fiercely.” In fact, I had actually begun to move towards the door when Monsieur Markov entered — a grey-headed man with thievish eyes, and clad in a dirty dressing-gown fastened with a belt. Greetings over, I stumbled out something about Emelia Ivanovitch and forty roubles, and then came to a dead halt, for his eyes told me that my errand had been futile. “No,” said he, “I have no money. Moreover, what security could you offer?” I admitted that I could offer none, but again added something about Emelia, as well as about my pressing needs. Markov heard me out, and then repeated that he had no money. “ Ah,” thought I, “I might have known this — I might have foreseen it!” And, to tell the truth, Barbara, I could have wished that the earth had opened under my feet, so chilled did I feel as he said what he did, so numbed did my legs grow as shivers began to run down my back. Thus I remained gazing at him while he returned my gaze with a look which said, “Well now, my friend? Why do you not go since you have no further business to do here?” Somehow I felt conscience-stricken. “How is it that you are in such need of money?” was what he appeared to be asking;

whereupon,I opened my mouth (anything rather than stand there to no purpose at all!) but found that he was not even listening. “I have no money,” again he said, “or I would lend you some with pleasure.” Several times I repeated that I myself possessed a little, and that I would repay any loan from him punctually, most punctually, and that he might charge me what interest he liked, since I would meet it without fail. Yes, at that moment I remembered our misfortunes, our necessities, and I remembered your half-rouble. “No,” said he, “I can lend you nothing without security,” and clinched his assurance with an oath, the robber!

How I contrived to leave the house and, passing through Viborskaia Street, to reach the Voskresenski Bridge I do not know. I only remember that I feltterribly weary, cold, and starved, and that it was ten o’clock before I reached the office. Arriving, I tried to clean myself up a little, but Sniegirev, the porter, said that it was impossible for me to do so, and that I should only spoil the brush, which belonged to the Government. Thus, my darling, do such fellows rate me lower than the mat on which they wipe their boots! What is it that will most surely break me? It is not the want of money, but the LITTLE worries of life — these whisperings and nods and jeers. Anyday his Excellency himself may round upon me. Ah, dearest, my golden days are gone. Today I have spent in reading your letters through; and the reading of them has made me sad. Goodbye, my own, and may the Lord watch over you!

M. DIEVUSHKIN.

P.S. — To conceal my sorrow I would have written this letter half jestingly; but, the faculty of jesting has not been given me. My one desire, however, is to afford you pleasure. Soon I will come and see you, dearest. Without fail I will come and see you.

August 11th

O Barbara Alexievna, I am undone — we are both of us undone! Both of us are lost beyond recall! Everything is ruined — my reputation, my self-respect, all that I have in the world! And you as much as I. Never shall we retrieve what we have lost. I — I have brought you to this pass, for I have become an outcast, my darling. Everywhere I am laughed at and despised. Even my landlady has taken to abusing me. Today she overwhelmed me with shrill reproaches, and abased me to the level of a hearth-brush. And last night, when I was in Rataziaev's rooms, one of his friends began to read a scribbled note which I had written to you, and then inadvertently pulled out of my pocket. Oh beloved, what laughter there arose at the recital! How those scoundrels mocked and derided you and myself! I walked up to them and accused Rataziaev of breaking faith. I said that he had played the traitor. But he only replied that I had been the betrayer in the case, by indulging in various amours. "You have kept them very dark though, Mr. Lovelace!" said he — and now I am known everywhere by this name of "Lovelace." They know EVERYTHING about us, my darling, EVERYTHING — both about you and your affairs and about myself; and when today I was for sending Phaldoni to the bakeshop for something or other, he refused to go, saying that it was not his business. "But you MUST go," said I. "I will not," he replied. "You have not paid my mistress what you owe her, so I am not bound to run your errands." At such an insult from a raw peasant I lost my temper, and called him a fool; to which he retorted in a similar vein. Upon this I thought that he must be drunk, and told him so; whereupon he replied: "WHAT say you that I am? Suppose you yourself go and sober up, for I know that the other day you went to visit a woman, and that you got drunk with her on two grivenniks." To such a pass have things come! I feel ashamed to be seen alive. I am, as it were, a man proclaimed; I am in a worse plight even than a tramp who has lost his passport. How misfortunes are heaping themselves upon me! I am lost — I am lost for ever!

M. D.

August 13th

MY BELOVED MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — It is true that misfortune is following upon misfortune. I myself scarcely know what to do. Yet, no matter how you may be fairing, you must not look for help from me, for only today I burned my left hand with the iron! At one and the same moment I dropped the iron, made a mistake in my work, and burned myself! So now I can no longer work. Also, these three days past, Thedora has been ailing. My anxiety is becoming positively torturous. Nevertheless, I send you thirty kopecks — almost the last coins that I have left to me, much as I should have liked to have helped you more when you are so much in need. I feel vexed to the point of weeping. Goodbye, dear friend of mine. You will bring me much comfort if only you will come and see me today.

B. D.

August 14th

What is the matter with you, Makar Alexievitch? Surely you cannot fear the Lord God as you ought to do? You are not only driving me to distraction but also ruining yourself with this eternal solicitude for your reputation. You are a man of honour, nobility of character, and self-respect, as everyone knows; yet, at any moment, you are ready to die with shame! Surely you should have more consideration for your grey hairs. No, the fear of God has departed from you. Thedora has told you that it is out of my power to render you anymore help. See, therefore, to what a pass you have brought me! Probably you think it is nothing to me that you should behave so badly; probably you do not realise what you have made me suffer. I dare not set foot on the staircase here, for if I do so I am stared at, and pointed at, and spoken about in the most horrible manner. Yes, it is even said of me that I am “united to a drunkard.” What a thing to hear! And whenever you are brought home drunk folk say, “They are carrying in that tchinovnik.” THAT is not the proper way to make me help you. I swear that I MUST leave this place, and go and get work as a cook or a laundress. It is impossible for me to stay here. Long ago I wrote and asked you to come and see me, yet you have not come. Truly my tears and prayers must mean NOTHING to you, Makar Alexievitch! Whence, too, did you get the money for your debauchery? For the love of God be more careful of yourself, or you will be ruined. How shameful, how abominable of you! So the landlady would not admit you last night, and you spent the night on the doorstep? Oh, I know all about it. Yet if only you could have seen my agony when I heard the news! . . . Come and see me, Makar Alexievitch, and we will once more be happy together. Yes, we will read together, and talk of old times, and Thedora shall tell you of her pilgrimages in former days. For God’s sake beloved, do not ruin both yourself and me. I live for you alone; it is for your sake alone that I am still here. Be your better self once more — the self which still can remain firm in the face of misfortune. Poverty is no crime; always remember that. After all, why should we despair? Our present difficulties will pass away, and God will right us. Only be brave. I send you two grivenniks for the purchase of some tobacco or anything else that you need; but,for the love of heaven, do not spend the money foolishly. Come you and see me soon; come without fail. Perhaps you may be ashamed to

meet me, as you were before, but you NEED not feel like that — such shame would be misplaced. Only do bring with you sincere repentance and trust in God, who orders all things for the best.

B. D.

August 19th

MY DEAREST BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, -Yes, I AM ashamed to meet you, my darling — I AM ashamed. At the same time, what is there in all this? Why should we not be cheerful again? Why should I mind the soles of my feet coming through my boots? The sole of one's foot is a mere bagatelle — it will never be anything but just a base, dirty sole. And shoes do not matter, either. The Greek sages used to walk about without them, so why should we coddle ourselves with such things? Yet why, also, should I be insulted and despised because of them? Tell Thedora that she is a rubbishy, tiresome, gabbling old woman, as well as an inexpressibly foolish one. As for my grey hairs, you are quite wrong about them, inasmuch as I am not such an old man as you think. Emelia sends you his greeting. You write that you are in great distress, and have been weeping. Well, I too am in great distress, and have been weeping. Nay, nay. I wish you the best of health and happiness, even as I am well and happy myself, so long as I may remain, my darling, — Your friend,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

August 21st

MY DEAR AND KIND BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — I feel that I am guilty, I feel that I have sinned against you. Yet also I feel, from what you say, that it is no use for me so to feel. Even before I had sinned I felt as I do now; but I gave way to despair, and the more so as recognised my fault. Darling, I am not cruel or hardhearted. To rend your little soul would be the act of a blood-thirsty tiger, whereas I have the heart of a sheep. You yourself know that I am not addicted to bloodthirstiness, and therefore that I cannot really be guilty of the fault in question, seeing that neither my mind nor my heart have participated in it.

Nor can I understand wherein the guilt lies. To me it is all a mystery. When you sent me those thirty kopecks, and thereafter those two grivenniks, my heart sank within me as I looked at the poor little money. To think that though you had burned your hand, and would soon be hungry, you could write to me that I was to buy tobacco! What was I to do? Remorselessly to rob you, an orphan, as any brigand might do? I felt greatly depressed, dearest. That is to say, persuaded that I should never do any good with my life, and that I was inferior even to the sole of my own boot, I took it into my head that it was absurd for me to aspire at all — rather, that I ought to account myself a disgrace and an abomination. Once a man has lost his self-respect, and has decided to abjure his better qualities and human dignity, he falls headlong, and cannot choose but do so. It is decreed of fate, and therefore I am not guilty in this respect.

That evening I went out merely to get a breath of fresh air, but one thing followed another — the weather was cold, all nature was looking mournful, and I had fallen in with Emelia. This man had spent everything that he possessed, and, at the time I met him, had not for two days tasted a crust of bread. He had tried to raise money by pawning, but what articles he had for the purpose had been refused by the pawnbrokers. It was more from sympathy for a fellow-man than from any liking for the individual that I yielded. That is how the fault arose, dearest.

He spoke of you, and I mingled my tears with his. Yes, he is a man of kind, kind heart — a man of deep feeling. I often feel as he did, dearest, and, in addition, I know how beholden to you I am. As soon as ever I got to know you I began both to realise myself and to love you; for until you came

into my life I had been a lonely man — I had been, as it were, asleep rather than alive. In former days my rascally colleagues used to tell me that I was unfit even to be seen; in fact, they so disliked me that at length I began to dislike myself, for, being frequently told that I was stupid, I began to believe that I really was so. But the instant that YOU came into my life, you lightened the dark places in it, you lightened both my heart and my soul. Gradually, I gained rest of spirit, until I had come to see that I was no worse than other men, and that, though I had neither style nor brilliancy nor polish, I was still a MAN as regards my thoughts and feelings. But now, alas! pursued and scorned of fate, I have again allowed myself to abjure my own dignity. Oppressed of misfortune, I have lost my courage. Here is my confession to you, dearest. With tears I beseech you not to inquire further into the matter, for my heart is breaking, and life has grown indeed hard and bitter for me — Beloved, I offer you my respect, and remain ever your faithful friend,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

September 3rd

The reason why I did not finish my last letter, Makar Alexievitch, was that I found it so difficult to write. There are moments when I am glad to be alone — to grieve and repine without any one to share my sorrow: and those moments are beginning to come upon me with ever-increasing frequency. Always in my reminiscences I find something which is inexplicable, yet strongly attractive-so much so that for hours together I remain insensible to my surroundings, oblivious of reality. Indeed, in my present life there is not a single impression that I encounter — pleasant or the reverse — which does not recall to my mind something of a similar nature in the past. More particularly is this the case with regard to my childhood, my golden childhood. Yet such moments always leave me depressed. They render me weak, and exhaust my powers of fancy; with the result that my health, already not good, grows steadily worse.

However, this morning it is a fine, fresh, cloudless day, such as we seldom get in autumn. The air has revived me and I greet it with joy. Yet to think that already the fall of the year has come! How I used to love the country in autumn! Then but a child, I was yet a sensitive being who loved autumn evenings better than autumn mornings. I remember how beside our house, at the foot of a hill, there lay a large pond, and how the pond — I can see it even now! — shone with a broad, level surface that was as clear as crystal. On still evenings this pond would be at rest, and not a rustle would disturb the trees which grew on its banks and overhung the motionless expanse of water. How fresh it used to seem, yet how cold! The dew would be falling upon the turf, lights would be beginning to shine forth from the huts on the pond's margin, and the cattle would be wending their way home. Then quietly I would slip out of the house to look at my beloved pond, and forget myself in contemplation. Here and there a fisherman's bundle of brushwood would be burning at the water's edge, and sending its light far and wide over the surface. Above, the sky would be of a cold blue colour, save for a fringe of flame-coloured streaks on the horizon that kept turning ever paler and paler; and when the moon had come out there would be wafted through the limpid air the sounds of a frightened bird fluttering, of a bulrush rubbing against its fellows in the gentle breeze, and of a fish rising with a splash. Over the dark water there would gather a thin, transparent

mist; and though, in the distance, night would be looming, and seemingly enveloping the entire horizon, everything closer at hand would be standing out as though shaped with a chisel — banks, boats, little islands, and all. Beside the margin a derelict barrel would be turning over and over in the water; a switch of laburnum, with yellowing leaves, would go meandering through the reeds; and a belated gull would flutter up, dive again into the cold depths, rise once more, and disappear into the mist. How I would watch and listen to these things! How strangely good they all would seem! But I was a mere infant in those days — a mere child.

Yes, truly I loved autumn-tide — the late autumn when the crops are garnered, and field work is ended, and the evening gatherings in the huts have begun, and everyone is awaiting winter. Then does everything become more mysterious, the sky frowns with clouds, yellow leaves strew the paths at the edge of the naked forest, and the forest itself turns black and blue — more especially at eventide when damp fog is spreading and the trees glimmer in the depths like giants, like formless, weird phantoms. Perhaps one may be out late, and had got separated from one's companions. Oh horrors! Suddenly one starts and trembles as one seems to see a strange-looking being peering from out of the darkness of a hollow tree, while all the while the wind is moaning and rattling and howling through the forest — moaning with a hungry sound as it strips the leaves from the bare boughs, and whirls them into the air. High over the tree-tops, in a widespread, trailing, noisy crew, there fly, with resounding cries, flocks of birds which seem to darken and overlay the very heavens. Then a strange feeling comes over one, until one seems to hear the voice of some one whispering: "Run, run, little child! Do not be out late, for this place will soon have become dreadful! Run, little child! Run!" And at the words terror will possess one's soul, and one will rush and rush until one's breath is spent — until, panting, one has reached home.

At home, however, all will look bright and bustling as we children are set to shell peas or poppies, and the damp twigs crackle in the stove, and our mother comes to look fondly at our work, and our old nurse, Iliana, tells us stories of bygone days, or terrible legends concerning wizards and dead men. At the recital we little ones will press closer to one another, yet smile as we do so; when suddenly, everyone becomes silent. Surely somebody has knocked at the door? . . . But nay, nay; it is only the sound of Frolovna's spinning-wheel. What shouts of laughter arise! Later one will be unable to

sleep for fear of the strange dreams which come to visit one; or, if one falls asleep, one will soon wake again, and, afraid to stir, lie quaking under the coverlet until dawn. And in the morning, one will arise as fresh as a lark and look at the window, and see the fields overlaid with hoarfrost, and fine icicles hanging from the naked branches, and the pond covered over with ice as thin as paper, and a white steam rising from the surface, and birds flying overhead with cheerful cries. Next, as the sun rises, he throws his glittering beams everywhere, and melts the thin, glassy ice until the whole scene has come to look bright and clear and exhilarating; and as the fire begins to crackle again in the stove, we sit down to the tea-urn, while, chilled with the night cold, our black dog, Polkan, will look in at us through the window, and wag his tail with a cheerful air. Presently, a peasant will pass the window in his cart bound for the forest to cut firewood, and the whole party will feel merry and contented together. Abundant grain lies stored in the byres, and great stacks of wheat are glowing comfortably in the morning sunlight. Everyone is quiet and happy, for God has blessed us with a bounteous harvest, and we know that there will be abundance of food for the wintertide. Yes, the peasant may rest assured that his family will not want for aught. Song and dance will arise at night from the village girls, and on festival days everyone will repair to God's house to thank Him with grateful tears for what He has done . . . . Ah, a golden time was my time of childhood! . . .

Carried away by these memories, I could weep like a child. Everything, everything comes back so clearly to my recollection! The past stands out so vividly before me! Yet in the present everything looks dim and dark! How will it all end? — how? Do you know, I have a feeling, a sort of sure premonition, that I am going to die this coming autumn; for I feel terribly, oh so terribly ill! Often do I think of death, yet feel that I should not like to die here and be laid to rest in the soil of St. Petersburg. Once more I have had to take to my bed, as I did last spring, for I have never really recovered. Indeed I feel so depressed! Thedora has gone out for the day, and I am alone. For a long while past I have been afraid to be left by myself, for I keep fancying that there is someone else in the room, and that that someone is speaking to me. Especially do I fancy this when I have gone off into a reverie, and then suddenly awoken from it, and am feeling bewildered. That is why I have made this letter such a long one; for, when I am writing, the mood passes away. Goodbye. I have neither time nor paper left for more,

and must close. Of the money which I saved to buy a new dress and hat, there remains but a single rouble; but, I am glad that you have been able to pay your landlady two roubles, for they will keep her tongue quiet for a time. And you must repair your wardrobe.

Goodbye once more. I am so tired! Nor can I think why I am growing so weak — why it is that even the smallest task now wearies me? Even if work should come my way, how am I to do it? That is what worries me above all things.

B. D.

September 5th

MY BELOVED BARBARA, — Today I have undergone a variety of experiences. In the first place, my head has been aching, and towards evening I went out to get a breath of fresh air along the Fontanka Canal. The weather was dull and damp, and even by six o'clock, darkness had begun to set in. True, rain was not actually falling, but only a mist like rain, while the sky was streaked with masses of trailing cloud. Crowds of people were hurrying along Naberezhnaia Street, with faces that looked strange and dejected. There were drunken peasants; snub-nosed old harridans in slippers; bareheaded artisans; cab drivers; every species of beggar; boys; a locksmith's apprentice in a striped smock, with lean, emaciated features which seemed to have been washed in rancid oil; an ex-soldier who was offering penknives and copper rings for sale; and so on, and so on. It was the hour when one would expect to meet no other folk than these. And what a quantity of boats there were on the canal. It made one wonder how they could all find room there. On every bridge were old women selling damp gingerbread or withered apples, and every woman looked as damp and dirty as her wares. In short, the Fontanka is a saddening spot for a walk, for there is wet granite under one's feet, and tall, dingy buildings on either side of one, and wet mist below and wet mist above. Yes, all was dark and gloomy there this evening.

By the time I had returned to Gorokhovaia Street darkness had fallen and the lamps had been lit. However, I did not linger long in that particular spot, for Gorokhovaia Street is too noisy a place. But what sumptuous shops and stores it contains! Everything sparkles and glitters, and the windows are full of nothing but bright colours and materials and hats of different shapes. One might think that they were decked merely for display; but no, — people buy these things, and give them to their wives! Yes, it IS a sumptuous place. Hordes of German hucksters are there, as well as quite respectable traders. And the quantities of carriages which pass along the street! One marvels that the pavement can support so many splendid vehicles, with windows like crystal, linings made of silk and velvet, and lacqueys dressed in epaulets and wearing swords! Into some of them I glanced, and saw that they contained ladies of various ages. Perhaps they were princesses and countesses! Probably at that hour such folk would be hastening to balls and

other gatherings. In fact, it was interesting to be able to look so closely at a princess or a great lady. They were all very fine. At all events, I had never before seen such persons as I beheld in those carriages. . . .

Then I thought of you. Ah, my own, my darling, it is often that I think of you and feel my heart sink. How is it that YOU are so unfortunate, Barbara? How is it that YOU are so much worse off than other people? In my eyes you are kind-hearted, beautiful, and clever — why, then, has such an evil fate fallen to your lot? How comes it that you are left desolate — you, so good a human being! While to others happiness comes without an invitation at all? Yes, I know — I know it well — that I ought not to say it, for to do so savours of free-thought; but why should that raven, Fate, croak out upon the fortunes of one person while she is yet in her mother's womb, while another person it permits to go forth in happiness from the home which has reared her? To even an idiot of an Ivanushka such happiness is sometimes granted. "You, you fool Ivanushka," says Fate, "shall succeed to your grandfather's money-bags, and eat, drink, and be merry; whereas YOU (such and such another one) shall do no more than lick the dish, since that is all that you are good for." Yes, I know that it is wrong to hold such opinions, but involuntarily the sin of so doing grows upon one's soul. Nevertheless, it is you, my darling, who ought to be riding in one of those carriages. Generals would have come seeking your favour, and, instead of being clad in a humble cotton dress, you would have been walking in silken and golden attire. Then you would not have been thin and wan as now, but fresh and plump and rosy-cheeked as a figure on a sugar-cake. Then should I too have been happy — happy if only I could look at your lighted windows from the street, and watch your shadow — happy if only I could think that you were well and happy, my sweet little bird! Yet how are things in reality? Not only have evil folk brought you to ruin, but there comes also an old rascal of a libertine to insult you! Just because he struts about in a frockcoat, and can ogle you through a gold-mounted lorgnette, the brute thinks that everything will fall into his hands — that you are bound to listen to his insulting condescension! Out upon him! But why is this? It is because you are an orphan, it is because you are unprotected, it is because you have no powerful friend to afford you the decent support which is your due. WHAT do such facts matter to a man or to men to whom the insulting of an orphan is an offence allowed? Such fellows are not men at all, but mere vermin, no matter what they think themselves to be. Of that I am certain.

Why, an organ-grinder whom I met in Gorokhovaia Street would inspire more respect than they do, for at least he walks about all day, and suffers hunger — at least he looks for a stray, superfluous groat to earn him subsistence, and is, therefore, a true gentleman, in that he supports himself. To beg alms he would be ashamed; and, moreover, he works for the benefit of mankind just as does a factory machine. “So far as in me lies,” says he, “I will give you pleasure.” True, he is a pauper, and nothing but a pauper; but, at least he is an HONOURABLE pauper. Though tired and hungry, he still goes on working — working in his own peculiar fashion, yet still doing honest labour. Yes, many a decent fellow whose labour may be disproportionate to its utility pulls the forelock to no one, and begs his bread of no one. I myself resemble that organ-grinder. That is to say, though not exactly he, I resemble him in this respect, that I work according to my capabilities, and so far as in me lies. More could be asked of no one; nor ought I to be adjudged to do more.

Apropos of the organ-grinder, I may tell you, dearest, that today I experienced a double misfortune. As I was looking at the grinder, certain thoughts entered my head and I stood wrapped in a reverie. Some cabmen also had halted at the spot, as well as a young girl, with a yet smaller girl who was dressed in rags and tatters. These people had halted there to listen to the organ- grinder, who was playing in front of some one’s windows. Next, I caught sight of a little urchin of about ten — a boy who would have been good-looking but for the fact that his face was pinched and sickly. Almost barefooted, and clad only in a shirt, he was standing agape to listen to the music — a pitiful childish figure. Nearer to the grinder a few more urchins were dancing, but in the case of this lad his hands and feet looked numbed, and he kept biting the end of his sleeve and shivering. Also, I noticed that in his hands he had a paper of some sort. Presently a gentleman came by, and tossed the grinder a small coin, which fell straight into a box adorned with a representation of a Frenchman and some ladies. The instant he heard the rattle of the coin, the boy started, looked timidly round, and evidently made up his mind that I had thrown the money; whereupon, he ran to me with his little hands all shaking, and said in a tremulous voice as he proffered me his paper: “Pl-please sign this.” I turned over the paper, and saw that there was written on it what is usual under such circumstances. “Kind friends I am a sick mother with three hungry children. Pray help me. Though soon I shall be dead, yet, if you will not forget my little ones in this

world, neither will I forget you in the world that is to come." The thing seemed clear enough; it was a matter of life and death. Yet what was I to give the lad? Well, I gave him nothing. But my heart ached for him. I am certain that, shivering with cold though he was, and perhaps hungry, the poor lad was not lying. No, no, he was not lying.

The shameful point is that so many mothers take no care of their children, but send them out, half-clad, into the cold. Perhaps this lad's mother also was a feckless old woman, and devoid of character? Or perhaps she had no one to work for her, but was forced to sit with her legs crossed — a veritable invalid? Or perhaps she was just an old rogue who was in the habit of sending out pinched and hungry boys to deceive the public? What would such a boy learn from begging letters? His heart would soon be rendered callous, for, as he ran about begging, people would pass him by and give him nothing. Yes, their hearts would be as stone, and their replies rough and harsh. "Away with you!" they would say. "You are seeking but to trick us." He would hear that from every one, and his heart would grow hard, and he would shiver in vain with the cold, like some poor little fledgling that has fallen out of the nest. His hands and feet would be freezing, and his breath coming with difficulty; until, look you, he would begin to cough, and disease, like an unclean parasite, would worm its way into his breast until death itself had overtaken him — overtaken him in some foetid corner whence there was no chance of escape. Yes, that is what his life would become.

There are many such cases. Ah, Barbara, it is hard to hear "For Christ's sake!" and yet pass the suppliant by and give nothing, or say merely: "May the Lord give unto you!" Of course, SOME supplications mean nothing (for supplications differ greatly in character). Occasionally supplications are long, drawn-out and drawling, stereotyped and mechanical — they are purely begging supplications. Requests of this kind it is less hard to refuse, for they are purely professional and of long standing. "The beggar is overdoing it," one thinks to oneself. "He knows the trick too well." But there are other supplications which voice a strange, hoarse, unaccustomed note, like that today when I took the poor boy's paper. He had been standing by the kerbstone without speaking to anybody — save that at last to myself he said, "For the love of Christ give me a groat!" in a voice so hoarse and broken that I started, and felt a queer sensation in my heart, although I did not give him a groat. Indeed, I had not a groat on me. Rich folk dislike

hearing poor people complain of their poverty. “They disturb us,” they say, “and are impertinent as well. Why should poverty be so impertinent? Why should its hungry moans prevent us from sleeping?”

To tell you the truth, my darling, I have written the foregoing not merely to relieve my feelings, but, also, still more, to give you an example of the excellent style in which I can write. You yourself will recognise that my style was formed long ago, but of late such fits of despondency have seized upon me that my style has begun to correspond to my feelings; and though I know that such correspondence gains one little, it at least renders one a certain justice. For not unfrequently it happens that, for some reason or another, one feels abased, and inclined to value oneself at nothing, and to account oneself lower than a dishclout; but this merely arises from the fact that at the time one is feeling harassed and depressed, like the poor boy who today asked of me alms. Let me tell you an allegory, dearest, and do you hearken to it. Often, as I hasten to the office in the morning, I look around me at the city — I watch it awaking, getting out of bed, lighting its fires, cooking its breakfast, and becoming vocal; and at the sight, I begin to feel smaller, as though some one had dealt me a rap on my inquisitive nose. Yes, at such times I slink along with a sense of utter humiliation in my heart. For one would have but to see what is passing within those great, black, grimy houses of the capital, and to penetrate within their walls, for one at once to realise what good reason there is for self-depredation and heart-searching. Of course, you will note that I am speaking figuratively rather than literally.

Let us look at what is passing within those houses. In some dingy corner, perhaps, in some damp kennel which is supposed to be a room, an artisan has just awakened from sleep. All night he has dreamt — IF such an insignificant fellow is capable of dreaming? — about the shoes which last night he mechanically cut out. He is a master-shoemaker, you see, and therefore able to think of nothing but his one subject of interest. Nearby are some squalling children and a hungry wife. Nor is he the only man that has to greet the day in this fashion. Indeed, the incident would be nothing — it would not be worth writing about, save for another circumstance. In that same house ANOTHER person — a person of great wealth-may also have been dreaming of shoes; but, of shoes of a very different pattern and fashion (in a manner of speaking, if you understand my metaphor, we are all of us shoemakers). This, again, would be nothing, were it not that the rich person has no one to whisper in his ear: “Why dost thou think of such things? Why

dost thou think of thyself alone, and live only for thyself — thou who art not a shoemaker? THY children are not ailing. THY wife is not hungry. Look around thee. Can’st thou not find a subject more fitting for thy thoughts than thy shoes?” That is what I want to say to you in allegorical language, Barbara. Maybe it savours a little of free-thought, dearest; but, such ideas WILL keep arising in my mind and finding utterance in impetuous speech. Why, therefore, should one not value oneself at a groat as one listens in fear and trembling to the roar and turmoil of the city? Maybe you think that I am exaggerating things — that this is a mere whim of mine, or that I am quoting from a book? No, no, Barbara. You may rest assured that it is not so. Exaggeration I abhor, with whims I have nothing to do, and of quotation I am guiltless.

I arrived home today in a melancholy mood. Sitting down to the table, I had warmed myself some tea, and was about to drink a second glass of it, when there entered Gorshkov, the poor lodger. Already, this morning, I had noticed that he was hovering around the other lodgers, and also seeming to want to speak to myself. In passing I may say that his circumstances are infinitely worse than my own; for, only think of it, he has a wife and children! Indeed, if I were he, I do not know what I should do. Well, he entered my room, and bowed to me with the pus standing, as usual, in drops on his eyelashes, his feet shuffling about, and his tongue unable, at first, to articulate a word. I motioned him to a chair (it was a dilapidated enough one, but I had no other), and asked him to have a glass of tea. To this he demurred — for quite a long time he demurred, but at length he accepted the offer. Next, he was for drinking the tea without sugar, and renewed his excuses, but upon the sugar I insisted. After long resistance and many refusals, he DID consent to take some, but only the smallest possible lump; after which, he assured me that his tea was perfectly sweet. To what depths of humility can poverty reduce a man! “Well, what is it, my good sir?” I inquired of him; whereupon he replied: “It is this, Makar Alexievitch. You have once before been my benefactor. Pray again show me the charity of God, and assist my unfortunate family. My wife and children have nothing to eat. To think that a father should have to say this!” I was about to speak again when he interrupted me. “You see,” he continued, “I am afraid of the other lodgers here. That is to say, I am not so much afraid of, as ashamed to address them, for they are a proud, conceited lot of men. Nor would I have troubled even you, my friend and former benefactor, were it not that I know

that you yourself have experienced misfortune and are in debt; wherefore, I have ventured to come and make this request of you, in that I know you not only to be kind-hearted, but also to be in need, and for that reason the more likely to sympathise with me in my distress." To this he added an apology for his awkwardness and presumption. I replied that, glad though I should have been to serve him, I had nothing, absolutely nothing, at my disposal. "Ah, Makar Alexievitch," he went on, "surely it is not much that I am asking of you? My-my wife and children are starving. C-could you not afford me just a grivennik? " At that my heart contracted, "How these people put me to shame!" thought I. But I had only twenty kopecks left, and upon them I had been counting for meeting my most pressing requirements. "No, good sir, I cannot," said I. "Well, what you will," he persisted. "Perhaps ten kopecks?" Well I got out my cash-box, and gave him the twenty. It was a good deed. To think that such poverty should exist! Then I had some further talk with him. "How is it," I asked him, "that, though you are in such straits, you have hired a room at five roubles?" He replied that though, when he engaged the room six months ago, he paid three months' rent in advance, his affairs had subsequently turned out badly, and never righted themselves since. You see, Barbara, he was sued at law by a merchant who had defrauded the Treasury in the matter of a contract. When the fraud was discovered the merchant was prosecuted, but the transactions in which he had engaged involved Gorshkov, although the latter had been guilty only of negligence, want of prudence, and culpable indifference to the Treasury's interests. True, the affair had taken place some years ago, but various obstacles had since combined to thwart Gorshkov. "Of the disgrace put upon me," said he to me, "I am innocent. True, I to a certain extent disobeyed orders, but never did I commit theft or embezzlement." Nevertheless the affair lost him his character. He was dismissed the service, and though not adjudged capitally guilty, has been unable since to recover from the merchant a large sum of money which is his by right, as spared to him (Gorshkov) by the legal tribunal. True, the tribunal in question did not altogether believe in Gorshkov, but I do so. The matter is of a nature so complex and crooked that probably a hundred years would be insufficient to unravel it; and, though it has now to a certain extent been cleared up, the merchant still holds the key to the situation. Personally I side with Gorshkov, and am very sorry for him. Though lacking a post of any kind, he still refuses to despair, though his resources are completely exhausted. Yes,

it is a tangled affair, and meanwhile he must live, for, unfortunately, another child which has been born to him has entailed upon the family fresh expenses. Also, another of his children recently fell ill and died — which meant yet further expense. Lastly, not only is his wife in bad health, but he himself is suffering from a complaint of long standing. In short, he has had a very great deal to undergo. Yet he declares that daily he expects a favourable issue to his affair — that he has no doubt of it whatever. I am terribly sorry for him, and said what I could to give him comfort, for he is a man who has been much bullied and misled. He had come to me for protection from his troubles, so I did my best to soothe him. Now, goodbye, my darling. May Christ watch over you and preserve your health. Dearest one, even to think of you is like medicine to my ailing soul. Though I suffer for you, I at least suffer gladly. — Your true friend,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

September 9th

MY DEAREST BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — I am beside myself as I take up my pen, for a most terrible thing has happened. My head is whirling round. Ah, beloved, how am I to tell you about it all? I had never foreseen what has happened. But no — I cannot say that I had NEVER foreseen it, for my mind DID get an inkling of what was coming, through my seeing something very similar to it in a dream.

I will tell you the whole story — simply, and as God may put it into my heart. Today I went to the office as usual, and, upon arrival, sat down to write. You must know that I had been engaged on the same sort of work yesterday, and that, while executing it, I had been approached by Timothei Ivanovitch with an urgent request for a particular document. "Makar Alexievitch," he had said, "pray copy this out for me. Copy it as quickly and as carefully as you can, for it will require to be signed today." Also let me tell you, dearest, that yesterday I had not been feeling myself, nor able to look at anything. I had been troubled with grave depression — my breast had felt chilled, and my head clouded. All the while I had been thinking of you, my darling. Well, I set to work upon the copying, and executed it cleanly and well, except for the fact that, whether the devil confused my mind, or a mysterious fate so ordained, or the occurrence was simply bound to happen, I left out a whole line of the document, and thus made nonsense of it! The work had been given me too late for signature last night, so it went before his Excellency this morning. I reached the office at my usual hour, and sat down beside Emelia Ivanovitch. Here I may remark that for a long time past I have been feeling twice as shy and diffident as I used to do; I have been finding it impossible to look people in the face. Let only a chair creak, and I become more dead than alive. Today, therefore, I crept humbly to my seat and sat down in such a crouching posture that Efim Akimovitch (the most touchy man in the world) said to me sotto voce: "What on earth makes you sit like that, Makar Alexievitch?" Then he pulled such a grimace that everyone near us rocked with laughter at my expense. I stopped my ears, frowned, and sat without moving, for I found this the best method of putting a stop to such merriment. All at once I heard a bustle and a commotion and the sound of someone running towards us. Did my ears deceive me? It was I who was being summoned in peremptory tones! My

heart started to tremble within me, though I could not say why. I only know that never in my life before had it trembled as it did then. Still I clung to my chair- -and at that moment was hardly myself at all. The voices were coming nearer and nearer, until they were shouting in my ear: “Dievushkin! Dievushkin! Where is Dievushkin?” Then at length I raised my eyes, and saw before me Evstafi Ivanovitch. He said to me: “Makar Alexievitch, go at once to his Excellency. You have made a mistake in a document.” That was all, but it was enough, was it not? I felt dead and cold as ice — I felt absolutely deprived of the power of sensation; but, I rose from my seat and went whither I had been bidden. Through one room, through two rooms, through three rooms I passed, until I was conducted into his Excellency’s cabinet itself. Of my thoughts at that moment I can give no exact account. I merely saw his Excellency standing before me, with a knot of people around him. I have an idea that I did not salute him — that I forgot to do so. Indeed, so panic- stricken was I, that my teeth were chattering and my knees knocking together. In the first place, I was greatly ashamed of my appearance (a glance into a mirror on the right had frightened me with the reflection of myself that it presented), and, in the second place, I had always been accustomed to comport myself as though no such person as I existed. Probably his Excellency had never before known that I was even alive. Of course, he might have heard, in passing, that there was a man named Dievushkin in his department; but never for a moment had he had any intercourse with me.

He began angrily: “What is this you have done, sir? Why are you not more careful? The document was wanted in a hurry, and you have gone and spoiled it. What do you think of it?” — the last being addressed to Evstafi Ivanovitch. More I did not hear, except for some flying exclamations of “What negligence and carelessness! How awkward this is!” and so on. I opened my mouth to say something or other; I tried to beg pardon, but could not. To attempt to leave the room, I had not the hardihood. Then there happened something the recollection of which causes the pen to tremble in my hand with shame. A button of mine — the devil take it! — a button of mine that was hanging by a single thread suddenly broke off, and hopped and skipped and rattled and rolled until it had reached the feet of his Excellency himself — this amid a profound general silence! THAT was what came of my intended self-justification and plea for mercy! THAT was the only answer that I had to return to my chief!

The sequel I shudder to relate. At once his Excellency's attention became drawn to my figure and costume. I remembered what I had seen in the mirror, and hastened to pursue the button. Obstinacy of a sort seized upon me, and I did my best to arrest the thing, but it slipped away, and kept turning over and over, so that I could not grasp it, and made a sad spectacle of myself with my awkwardness. Then there came over me a feeling that my last remaining strength was about to leave me, and that all, all was lost — reputation, manhood, everything! In both ears I seemed to hear the voices of Theresa and Phaldoni. At length, however, I grasped the button, and, raising and straightening myself, stood humbly with clasped hands — looking a veritable fool! But no. First of all I tried to attach the button to the ragged threads, and smiled each time that it broke away from them, and smiled again. In the beginning his Excellency had turned away, but now he threw me another glance, and I heard him say to Evstafi Ivanovitch: "What on earth is the matter with the fellow? Look at the figure he cuts! Who to God is he? Ah, beloved, only to hear that, "Who to God is he? Truly I had made myself a marked man! In reply to his Excellency Evstafi murmured: "He is no one of any note, though his character is good. Besides, his salary is sufficient as the scale goes."

"Very well, then; but help him out of his difficulties somehow," said his Excellency. "Give him a trifle of salary in advance."

"It is all forestalled," was the reply. "He drew it some time ago. But his record is good. There is nothing against him." At this I felt as though I were in Hell fire. I could actually have died! "Well, well," said his Excellency, "let him copy out the document a second time. Dievushkin, come here. You are to make another copy of this paper, and to make it as quickly as possible." With that he turned to some other officials present, issued to them a few orders, and the company dispersed. No sooner had they done so than his Excellency hurriedly pulled out a pocket-book, took thence a note for a hundred roubles, and, with the words, "Take this. It is as much as I can afford. Treat it as you like," placed the money in my hand! At this, dearest, I started and trembled, for I was moved to my very soul. What next I did I hardly know, except that I know that I seized his Excellency by the hand. But he only grew very red, and then — no, I am not departing by a hair's-breadth from the truth — it is true — that he took this unworthy hand in his, and shook it! Yes, he took this hand of mine in his, and shook it, as though I had been his equal, as though I had been a general like himself! "Go now,"

he said. “This is all that I can do for you. Make no further mistakes, and I will overlook your fault.”

What I think about it is this: I beg of you and of Thedora, and had I any children I should beg of them also, to pray ever to God for his Excellency. I should say to my children: “For your father you need not pray; but for his Excellency, I bid you pray until your lives shall end.” Yes, dear one — I tell you this in all solemnity, so hearken well unto my words — that though, during these cruel days of our adversity, I have nearly died of distress of soul at the sight of you and your poverty, as well as at the sight of myself and my abasement and helplessness, I yet care less for the hundred roubles which his Excellency has given me than for the fact that he was good enough to take the hand of a wretched drunkard in his own and press it. By that act he restored me to myself. By that act he revived my courage, he made life forever sweet to me. . . . Yes, sure am I that, sinner though I be before the Almighty, my prayers for the happiness and prosperity of his Excellency will yet ascend to the Heavenly Throne! . . .

But, my darling, for the moment I am terribly agitated and distraught. My heart is beating as though it would burst my breast, and all my body seems weak. . . . I send you forty-five roubles in notes. Another twenty I shall give to my landlady, and the remaining thirty-five I shall keep — twenty for new clothes and fifteen for actual living expenses. But these experiences of the morning have shaken me to the core, and I must rest awhile. It is quiet, very quiet, here. My breath is coming in jerks — deep down in my breast I can hear it sobbing and trembling. . . . I will come and see you soon, but at the moment my head is aching with these various sensations. God sees all things, my darling, my priceless treasure! — Your steadfast friend,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

September 10th

MY BELOVED MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — I am unspeakably rejoiced at your good fortune, and fully appreciate the kindness of your superior. Now, take a rest from your cares. Only do not AGAIN spend money to no advantage. Live as quietly and as frugally as possible, and from today begin always to set aside something, lest misfortune again overtake you. Do not, for God's sake, worry yourself — Thedora and I will get on somehow. Why have you sent me so much money? I really do not need it — what I had already would have been quite sufficient. True, I shall soon be needing further funds if I am to leave these lodgings, but Thedora is hoping before long to receive repayment of an old debt. Of course, at least TWENTY roubles will have to be set aside for indispensable requirements, but theremainder shall be returned to you. Pray take care of it, Makar Alexievitch. Now, goodbye. May your life continue peacefully, and may you preserve your health and spirits. I would have written to you at greater length had I not felt so terribly weary. Yesterday I never left my bed. I am glad that you have promised to come and see me. Yes, you MUST pay me a visit.

B. D.

September 11th

MY DARLING BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — I implore you not to leave me now that I am once more happy and contented. Disregard what Thedora says, and I will do anything in the world for you. I will behave myself better, even if only out of respect for his Excellency, and guard my every action. Once more we will exchange cheerful letters with one another, and make mutual confidence of our thoughts and joys and sorrows (if so be that we shall know any more sorrows?). Yes, we will live twice as happily and comfortably as of old. Also, we will exchange books. . . . Angel of my heart, a great change has taken place in my fortunes — a change very much for the better. My landlady has become more accommodating; Theresa has recovered her senses; even Phaldoni springs to do my bidding. Likewise, I have made my peace with Rataziaev. He came to see me of his own accord, the moment that he heard the glad tidings. There can be no doubt that he is a good fellow, that there is no truth in the slanders that one hears of him. For one thing, I have discovered that he never had any intention of putting me and yourself into a book. This he told me himself, and then read to me his latest work. As for his calling me “Lovelace,” he had intended no rudeness or indecency thereby. The term is merely one of foreign derivation, meaning a clever fellow, or, in more literary and elegant language, a gentleman with whom one must reckon. That is all; it was a mere harmless jest, my beloved. Only ignorance made me lose my temper, and I have expressed to him my regret. . . . How beautiful is the weather today, my little Barbara! True, there was a slight frost in the early morning, as though scattered through a sieve, but it was nothing, and the breeze soon freshened the air. I went out to buy some shoes, and obtained a splendid pair. Then, after a stroll along the Nevski Prospect, I read “The Daily Bee”. This reminds me that I have forgotten to tell you the most important thing of all. It happened like this:

This morning I had a talk with Emelia Ivanovitch and Aksenti Michaelovitch concerning his Excellency. Apparently, I am not the only person to whom he has acted kindly and been charitable, for he is known to the whole world for his goodness of heart. In many quarters his praises are to be heard; in many quarters he has called forth tears of gratitude. Among other things, he undertook the care of an orphaned girl, and married her to

an official, the son of a poor widow, and found this man place in a certain chancellory, and in other ways benefited him. Well, dearest, I considered it to be my duty to add my mite by publishing abroad the story of his Excellency's gracious treatment of myself. Accordingly, I related the whole occurrence to my interlocutors, and concealed not a single detail. In fact, I put my pride into my pocket — though why should I feel ashamed of having been elated by such an occurrence? "Let it only be noised afield," said I to myself, and it will resound greatly to his Excellency's credit. — So I expressed myself enthusiastically on the subject and never faltered. On the contrary, I felt proud to have such a story to tell. I referred to every one concerned (except to yourself, of course, dearest) — to my landlady, to Phaldoni, to Rataziaev, to Markov. I even mentioned the matter of my shoes! Some of those standing by laughed — in fact every one present did so, but probably it was my own figure or the incident of my shoes — more particularly the latter — that excited merriment, for I am sure it was not meant ill-naturedly. My hearers may have been young men, or well off; certainly they cannot have been laughing with evil intent at what I had said. Anything against his Excellency CANNOT have been in their thoughts. Eh, Barbara?

Even now I cannot wholly collect my faculties, so upset am I by recent events. . . . Have you any fuel to go on with, Barbara? You must not expose yourself to cold. Also, you have depressed my spirits with your fears for the future. Daily I pray to God on your behalf. Ah, HOW I pray to Him! . . . Likewise, have you any woollen stockings to wear, and warm clothes generally? Mind you, if there is anything you need, you must not hurt an old man's feelings by failing to apply to him for what you require. The bad times are gone now, and the future is looking bright and fair.

But what bad times they were, Barbara, even though they be gone, and can no longer matter! As the years pass on we shall gradually recover ourselves. How clearly I remember my youth! In those days I never had a kopeck to spare. Yet, cold and hungry though I was, I was always light-hearted. In the morning I would walk the Nevski Prospect, and meet nice-looking people, and be happy all day. Yes, it was a glorious, a glorious time! It was good to be alive, especially in St. Petersburg. Yet it is but yesterday that I was beseeching God with tears to pardon me my sins during the late sorrowful period — to pardon me my murmurings and evil thoughts and gambling and drunkenness. And you I remembered in my prayers, for you

alone have encouraged and comforted me, you alone have given me advice and instruction. I shall never forget that, dearest. Today I gave each one of your letters a kiss. . . . Goodbye, beloved. I have been told that there is going to be a sale of clothing somewhere in this neighbourhood. Once more goodbye, goodbye, my angel-Yours in heart and soul,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

September 15th

MY DEAREST MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — I am in terrible distress. I feel sure that something is about to happen. The matter, my beloved friend, is that Monsieur Bwikov is again in St. Petersburg, for Thedora has met him. He was driving along in a drozhki, but, on meeting Thedora, he ordered the coachman to stop, sprang out, and inquired of her where she was living; but this she would not tell him. Next, he said with a smile that he knew quite well who was living with her (evidently Anna Thedorovna had told him); whereupon Thedora could hold out no longer, but then and there, in the street, railed at and abused him — telling him that he was an immoral man, and the cause of all my misfortunes. To this he replied that a person who did not possess a groat must surely be rather badly off; to which Thedora retorted that I could always either live by the labour of my hands or marry — that it was not so much a question of my losing posts as of my losing my happiness, the ruin of which had led almost to my death. In reply he observed that, though I was still quite young, I seemed to have lost my wits, and that my "virtue appeared to be under a cloud" (I quote his exact words). Both I and Thedora had thought that he does not know where I live; but, last night, just as I had left the house to make a few purchases in the Gostinni Dvor, he appeared at our rooms (evidently he had not wanted to find me at home), and put many questions to Thedora concerning our way of living. Then, after inspecting my work, he wound up with: "Who is this tchinovnik friend of yours?" At the moment you happened to be passing through the courtyard, so Thedora pointed you out, and the man peered at you, and laughed. Thedora next asked him to depart — telling him that I was still ill from grief, and that it would give me great pain to see him there; to which, after a pause, he replied that he had come because he had had nothing better to do. Also, he was for giving Thedora twenty-five roubles, but, of course, she declined them. What does it all mean? Why has he paid this visit? I cannot understand his getting to know about me. I am lost in conjecture. Thedora, however, says that Aksinia, her sister-in-law (who sometimes comes to see her), is acquainted with a laundress named Nastasia, and that this woman has a cousin in the position of watchman to a department of which a certain friend of Anna Thedorovna's nephew forms one of the staff. Can it be, therefore, that an intrigue has been hatched

through THIS channel? But Thedora may be entirely mistaken. We hardly know what to think. What if he should come again? The very thought terrifies me. When Thedora told me of this last night such terror seized upon me that I almost swooned away. What can the man be wanting? At all events, I refuse to know such people. What have they to do with my wretched self? Ah, how I am haunted with anxiety, for every moment I keep thinking that Bwikov is at hand! WHAT will become of me? WHAT MORE has fate in store for me? For Christ’s sake come and see me, Makar Alexievitch! For Christ’s sake come and see me soon!

September 18th

MY BELOVED BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — Today there took place in this house a most lamentable, a most mysterious, a most unlooked-for occurrence. First of all, let me tell you that poor Gorshkov has been entirely absolved of guilt. The decision has been long in coming, but this morning he went to hear the final resolution read. It was entirely in his favour. Any culpability which had been imputed to him for negligence and irregularity was removed by the resolution. Likewise, he was authorised to recover of the merchant a large sum of money. Thus, he stands entirely justified, and has had his character cleansed from all stain. In short, he could not have wished for a more complete vindication. When he arrived home at three o'clock he was looking as white as a sheet, and his lips were quivering. Yet there was a smile on his face as he embraced his wife and children. In a body the rest of us ran to congratulate him, and he was greatly moved by the act. Bowing to us, he pressed our hands in turn. As he did so I thought, somehow, that he seemed to have grown taller and straighter, and that the pus-drops seemed to have disappeared from his eyelashes. Yet how agitated he was, poor fellow! He could not rest quietly for two minutes together, but kept picking up and then dropping whatsoever came to his hand, and bowing and smiling without intermission, and sitting down and getting up, and again sitting down, and chattering God only knows what about his honour and his good name and his little ones. How he did talk — yes, and weep too! Indeed, few of ourselves could refrain from tears; although Rataziaev remarked (probably to encourage Gorshkov) that honour mattered nothing when one had nothing to eat, and that money was the chief thing in the world, and that for it alone ought God to be thanked. Then he slapped Gorshkov on the shoulder, but I thought that Gorshkov somehow seemed hurt at this. He did not express any open displeasure, but threw Rataziaev a curious look, and removed his hand from his shoulder. ONCE upon a time he would not have acted thus; but characters differ. For example, I myself should have hesitated, at such a season of rejoicing, to seem proud, even though excessive deference and civility at such a moment might have been construed as a lapse both of moral courage and of mental vigour. However, this is none of my business. All that Gorshkov said was: "Yes, money IS a good thing, glory be to God!" In fact, the whole time that

we remained in his room he kept repeating to himself: “Glory be to God, glory be to God!” His wife ordered a richer and more delicate meal than usual, and the landlady herself cooked it, for at heart she is not a bad woman. But until the meal was served Gorshkov could not remain still. He kept entering everyone’s room in turn (whether invited thither or not), and, seating himself smilingly upon a chair, would sometimes say something, and sometimes not utter a word, but get up and go out again. In the naval officer’s room he even took a pack of playing-cards into his hand, and was thereupon invited to make a fourth in a game; but after losing a few times, as well as making several blunders in his play, he abandoned the pursuit. “No,” said he, “that is the sort of man that I am — that is all that I am good for,” and departed. Next, encountering myself in the corridor, he took my hands in his, and gazed into my face with a rather curious air. Then he pressed my hands again, and moved away still smiling, smiling, but in an odd, weary sort of manner, much as a corpse might smile. Meanwhile his wife was weeping for joy, and everything in their room was decked in holiday guise. Presently dinner was served, and after they had dined Gorshkov said to his wife: “See now, dearest, I am going to rest a little while;” and with that went to bed. Presently he called his little daughter to his side, and, laying his hand upon the child’s head, lay a long while looking at her. Then he turned to his wife again, and asked her: “What of Petinka? Where is our Petinka?” whereupon his wife crossed herself, and replied: “Why, our Petinka is dead!”

“Yes, yes, I know — of course,” said her husband. “Petinka is now in the Kingdom of Heaven.” This showed his wife that her husband was not quite in his right senses — that the recent occurrence had upset him; so she said: “My dearest, you must sleep awhile.”

“I will do so,” he replied, “ — at once — I am rather—” And he turned over, and lay silent for a time. Then again he turned round and tried to say something, but his wife could not hear what it was. “What do you say?” she inquired, but he made no reply. Then again she waited a few moments until she thought to herself, “He has gone to sleep,” and departed to spend an hour with the landlady. At the end of that hour she returned — only to find that her husband had not yet awoken, but was still lying motionless. “He is sleeping very soundly,” she reflected as she sat down and began to work at something or other. Since then she has told us that when half an hour or so had elapsed she fell into a reverie. What she was thinking of she cannot

remember, save that she had forgotten altogether about her husband. Then she awoke with a curious sort of sensation at her heart. The first thing that struck her was the deathlike stillness of the room. Glancing at the bed, she perceived her husband to be lying in the same position as before. Thereupon she approached him, turned the coverlet back, and saw that he was stiff and cold — that he had died suddenly, as though smitten with a stroke. But of what precisely he died God only knows. The affair has so terribly impressed me that even now I cannot fully collect my thoughts. It would scarcely be believed that a human being could die so simply — and he such a poor, needy wretch, this Gorshkov! What a fate, what a fate, to be sure! His wife is plunged in tears and panic-stricken, while his little daughter has run away somewhere to hide herself. In their room, however, all is bustle and confusion, for the doctors are about to make an autopsy on the corpse. But I cannot tell you things for certain; I only know that I am most grieved, most grieved. How sad to think that one never knows what even a day, what even an hour, may bring forth! One seems to die to so little purpose! .-Your own

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

September 19th

MY BELOVED BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — I hasten to let you know that Rataziaev has found me some work to do for a certain writer — the latter having submitted to him a large manuscript. Glory be to God, for this means a large amount of work to do. Yet, though the copy is wanted in haste, the original is so carelessly written that I hardly know how to set about my task. Indeed, certain parts of the manuscript are almost undecipherable. I have agreed to do the work for forty kopecks a sheet. You see therefore (and this is my true reason for writing to you), that we shall soon be receiving money from an extraneous source. Goodbye now, as I must begin upon my labours. — Your sincere friend,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

September 23rd

MY DEAREST MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — I have not written to you these three days past for the reason that I have been so worried and alarmed.

Three days ago Bwikov came again to see me. At the time I was alone, for Thedora had gone out somewhere. As soon as I opened the door the sight of him so terrified me that I stood rooted to the spot, and could feel myself turning pale. Entering with his usual loud laugh, he took a chair, and sat down. For a long while I could not collect my thoughts; I just sat where I was, and went on with my work. Soon his smile faded, for my appearance seemed somehow to have struck him. You see, of late I have grown thin, and my eyes and cheeks have fallen in, and my face has become as white as a sheet; so that anyone who knew me a year ago would scarcely recognise me now. After a prolonged inspection, Bwikov seemed to recover his spirits, for he said something to which I duly replied. Then again he laughed. Thus he sat for a whole hour- -talking to me the while, and asking me questions about one thing and another. At length, just before he rose to depart, he took me by the hand, and said (to quote his exact words): “Between ourselves, Barbara Alexievna, that kinswoman of yours and my good friend and acquaintance — I refer to Anna Thedorovna - is a very bad woman “ (he also added a grosser term of opprobrium). “First of all she led your cousin astray, and then she ruined yourself. I also have behaved like a villain, but such is the way of the world.” Again he laughed. Next, having remarked that, though not a master of eloquence, he had always considered that obligations of gentility obliged him to have with me a clear and outspoken explanation, he went on to say that he sought my hand in marriage; that he looked upon it as a duty to restore to me my honour; that he could offer me riches; that, after marriage, he would take me to his country seat in the Steppes, where we would hunt hares; that he intended never to visit St. Petersburg again, since everything there was horrible, and he had to entertain a worthless nephew whom he had sworn to disinherit in favour of a legal heir; and, finally, that it was to obtain such a legal heir that he was seeking my hand in marriage. Lastly, he remarked that I seemed to be living in very poor circumstances (which was not surprising, said he, in view of the kennel that I inhabited); that I should die if I remained a month

longer in that den; that all lodgings in St. Petersburg were detestable; and that he would be glad to know if I was in want of anything.

So thunderstruck was I with the proposal that I could only burst into tears. These tears he interpreted as a sign of gratitude, for he told me that he had always felt assured of my good sense, cleverness, and sensibility, but that hitherto he had hesitated to take this step until he should have learned precisely how I was getting on. Next he asked me some questions about YOU; saying that he had heard of you as a man of good principle, and that since he was unwilling to remain your debtor, would a sum of five hundred roubles repay you for all you had done for me? To this I replied that your services to myself had been such as could never be requited with money; whereupon, he exclaimed that I was talking rubbish and nonsense; that evidently I was still young enough to read poetry; that romances of this kind were the undoing of young girls, that books only corrupted morality, and that, for his part, he could not abide them. “You ought to live as long as I have done,” he added, “and THEN you will see what men can be.”

With that he requested me to give his proposal my favourable consideration — saying that he would not like me to take such an important step unguardedly, since want of thought and impetuosity often spelt ruin to youthful inexperience, but that he hoped to receive an answer in the affirmative. “Otherwise,” said he, “I shall have no choice but to marry a certain merchant’s daughter in Moscow, in order that I may keep my vow to deprive my nephew of the inheritance. — Then he pressed five hundred roubles into my hand — to buy myself some bonbons, as he phrased it — and wound up by saying that in the country I should grow as fat as a doughnut or a cheese rolled in butter; that at the present moment he was extremely busy; and that, deeply engaged in business though he had been all day, he had snatched the present opportunity of paying me a visit. At length he departed.

For a long time I sat plunged in reflection. Great though my distress of mind was, I soon arrived at a decision.... My friend, I am going to marry this man; I have no choice but to accept his proposal. If anyone could save me from this squalor, and restore to me my good name, and avert from me future poverty and want and misfortune, he is the man to do it. What else have I to look for from the future? What more am I to ask of fate? Thedora declares that one need NEVER lose one’s happiness; but what, I ask HER, can be called happiness under such circumstances as mine? At all events I

see no other road open, dear friend. I see nothing else to be done. I have worked until I have ruined my health. I cannot go on working forever. Shall I go out into the world? Nay; I am worn to a shadow with grief, and become good for nothing. Sickly by nature, I should merely be a burden upon other folks. Of course this marriage will not bring me paradise, but what else does there remain, my friend — what else does there remain? What other choice is left?

I had not asked your advice earlier for the reason that I wanted to think the matter over alone. However, the decision which you have just read is unalterable, and I am about to announce it to Bwikov himself, who in any case has pressed me for a speedy reply, owing to the fact (so he says) that his business will not wait nor allow him to remain here longer, and that therefore, no trifle must be allowed to stand in its way. God alone knows whether I shall be happy, but my fate is in His holy, His inscrutable hand, and I have so decided. Bwikov is said to be kind-hearted. He will at least respect me, and perhaps I shall be able to return that respect. What more could be looked for from such a marriage?

I have now told you all, Makar Alexievitch, and feel sure that you will understand my despondency. Do not, however, try to divert me from my intention, for all your efforts will be in vain. Think for a moment; weigh in your heart for a moment all that has led me to take this step. At first my anguish was extreme, but now I am quieter. What awaits me I know not. What must be must be, and as God may send....

Bwikov has just arrived, so I am leaving this letter unfinished. Otherwise I had much else to say to you. Bwikov is even now at the door! ...

September 23rd

MY BELOVED BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — I hasten to reply to you — I hasten to express to you my extreme astonishment. . . . In passing, I may mention that yesterday we buried poor Gorshkov. . . .

Yes, Bwikov has acted nobly, and you have no choice but to accept him. All things are in God's hands. This is so, and must always be so; and the purposes of the Divine Creator are at once good and inscrutable, as also is Fate, which is one with Him. . . .

Thedora will share your happiness — for, of course, you will be happy, and free from want, darling, dearest, sweetest of angels! But why should the matter be so hurried? Oh, of course — Monsieur Bwikov's business affairs. Only a man who has no affairs to see to can afford to disregard such things. I got a glimpse of Monsieur Bwikov as he was leaving your door. He is a fine-looking man — a very fine-looking man; though that is not the point that I should most have noticed had I been quite myself at the time. . .

In the future shall we be able to write letters to one another? I keep wondering and wondering what has led you to say all that you have said. To think that just when twenty pages of my copying are completed THIS has happened! . . . I suppose you will be able to make many purchases now — to buy shoes and dresses and all sorts of things? Do you remember the shops in Gorokhovaia Street of which I used to speak? . . .

But no. You ought not to go out at present — you simply ought not to, and shall not. Presently, you will he able to buy many, many things, and to, keep a carriage. Also, at present the weather is bad. Rain is descending in pailfuls, and it is such a soaking kind of rain that — that you might catch cold from it, my darling, and the chill might go to your heart. Why should your fear of this man lead you to take such risks when all the time I am here to do your bidding? So Thedora declares great happiness to be awaiting you, does she? She is a gossiping old woman, and evidently desires to ruin you.

Shall you be at the all-night Mass this evening, dearest? I should like to come and see you there. Yes, Bwikov spoke but the truth when he said that you are a woman of virtue, wit, and good feeling. Yet I think he would do far better to marry the merchant's daughter. What think YOU about it? Yes, 'twould be far better for him. As soon as it grows dark tonight I mean to

come and sit with you for an hour. Tonight twilight will close in early, so I shall soon be with you. Yes, come what may, I mean to see you for an hour. At present, I suppose, you are expecting Bwikov, but I will come as soon as he has gone. So stay at home until I have arrived, dearest.

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

September 27th

DEAR MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, -Bwikov has just informed me that I must have at least three dozen linen blouses; so I must go at once and look for sempstresses to make two out of the three dozen, since time presses. Indeed, Monsieur Bwikov is quite angry about the fuss which these fripperies are entailing, seeing that there remain but five days before the wedding, and we are to depart on the following day. He keeps rushing about and declaring that no time ought to be wasted on trifles. I am terribly worried, and scarcely able to stand on my feet. There is so much to do, and, perhaps, so much that were better left undone! Moreover, I have no blond or other lace; so THERE is another item to be purchased, since Bwikov declares that he cannot have his bride look like a cook, but, on the contrary, she must "put the noses of the great ladies out of joint." That is his expression. I wish, therefore, that you would go to Madame Chiffon's, in Gorokhovaia Street, and ask her, in the first place, to send me some sempstresses, and, in the second place, to give herself the trouble of coming in person, as I am too ill to go out. Our new flat is very cold, and still in great disorder. Also, Bwikov has an aunt who is at her last gasp through old age, and may die before our departure. He himself, however, declares this to be nothing, and says that she will soon recover. He is not yet living with me, and I have to go running hither and thither to find him. Only Thedora is acting as my servant, together with Bwikov's valet, who oversees everything, but has been absent for the past three days.

Each morning Bwikov goes to business, and loses his temper. Yesterday he even had some trouble with the police because of his thrashing the steward of these buildings. . . I have no one to send with this letter so I am going to post it. . . Ah! I had almost forgotten the most important point — which is that I should like you to go and tell Madame Chiffon that I wish the blond lace to be changed in conformity with yesterday's patterns, if she will be good enough to bring with her a new assortment. Also say that I have altered my mind about the satin, which I wish to be tamboured with crochet-work; also, that tambour is to be used with monograms on the various garments. Do you hear? Tambour, not smooth work. Do not forget that it is to be tambour. Another thing I had almost forgotten, which is that

the lappets of the fur cloak must be raised, and the collar bound with lace. Please tell her these things, Makar Alexievitch. — Your friend,

B. D.

P.S. — I am so ashamed to trouble you with my commissions! This is the third morning that you will have spent in running about for my sake. But what else am I to do? The whole place is in disorder, and I myself am ill. Do not be vexed with me, Makar Alexievitch. I am feeling so depressed! What is going to become of me, dear friend, dear, kind, old Makar Alexievitch? I dread to look forward into the future. Somehow I feel apprehensive; I am living, as it were, in a mist. Yet, for God’s sake, forget none of my commissions. I am so afraid lest you should make a mistake! Remember that everything is to be tambour work, not smooth.

September 27th

MY BELOVED BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — I have carefully fulfilled your commissions. Madame Chiffon informs me that she herself had thought of using tambour work as being more suitable (though I did not quite take in all she said). Also, she has informed me that, since you have given certain directions in writing, she has followed them (though again I do not clearly remember all that she said — I only remember that she said a very great deal, for she is a most tiresome old woman). These observations she will soon be repeating to you in person. For myself, I feel absolutely exhausted, and have not been to the office today. . .

Do not despair about the future, dearest. To save you trouble I would visit every shop in St. Petersburg. You write that you dare not look forward into the future. But by tonight, at seven o'clock, you will have learned all, for Madame Chiffon will have arrived in person to see you. Hope on, and everything will order itself for the best. Of course, I am referring only to these accursed gewgaws, to these frills and fripperies! Ah me, ah me, how glad I shall be to see you, my angel! Yes, how glad I shall be! Twice already today I have passed the gates of your abode. Unfortunately, this Bwikov is a man of such choler that — Well, things are as they are.

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

September 28th

MY DEAREST MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — For God’s sake go to the jeweller’s, and tell him that, after all, he need not make the pearl and emerald earrings. Monsieur Bwikov says that they will cost him too much, that they will burn a veritable hole in his pocket. In fact, he has lost his temper again, and declares that he is being robbed. Yesterday he added that, had he but known, but foreseen, these expenses, he would never have married. Also, he says that, as things are, he intends only to have a plain wedding, and then to depart. “You must not look for any dancing or festivity or entertainment of guests, for our gala times are still in the air.” Such were his words. God knows I do not want such things, but none the less Bwikov has forbidden them. I made him no answer on the subject, for he is a man all too easily irritated. What, what is going to become ofme?

B. D.

September 28th

MY BELOVED BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — All is well as regards the jeweller. Unfortunately, I have also to say that I myself have fallen ill, and cannot rise from bed. Just when so many things need to be done, I have gone and caught a chill, the devil take it! Also I have to tell you that, to complete my misfortunes, his Excellency has been pleased to become stricter. Today he railed at and scolded Emelia Ivanovitch until the poor fellow was quite put about. That is the sum of my news.

No — there is something else concerning which I should like to write to you, but am afraid to obtrude upon your notice. I am a simple, dull fellow who writes down whatsoever first comes into his head — Your friend,

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

September 29th

MY OWN BARBARA ALEXIEVNA, — Today, dearest, I saw Thedora, who informed me that you are to be married tomorrow, and on the following day to go away — for which purpose Bwikov has ordered a post-chaise....

Well, of the incident of his Excellency, I have already told you. Also I have verified the bill from the shop in Gorokhovaia Street. It is correct, but very long. Why is Monsieur Bwikov so out of humour with you? Nay, but you must be of good cheer, my darling. I am so, and shall always be so, so long as you are happy. I should have come to the church tomorrow, but, alas, shall be prevented from doing so by the pain in my loins. Also, I would have written an account of the ceremony, but that there will be no one to report to me the details. . . .

Yes, you have been a very good friend to Thedora, dearest. You have acted kindly, very kindly, towards her. For every such deed God will bless you. Good deeds never go unrewarded, nor does virtue ever fail to win the crown of divine justice, be it early or be it late. Much else should I have liked to write to you. Every hour, every minute I could occupy in writing. Indeed I could write to you forever! Only your book, “The Stories of Bielkin”, is left to me. Do not deprive me of it, I pray you, but suffer me to keep it. It is not so much because I wish to read the book for its own sake, as because winter is coming on, when the evenings will be long and dreary, and one will want to read at least SOMETHING.

Do you know, I am going to move from my present quarters into your old ones, which I intend to rent from Thedora; for I could never part with that good old woman. Moreover, she is such a splendid worker. Yesterday I inspected your empty room in detail, and inspected your embroidery-frame, with the work still hanging on it. It had been left untouched in its corner. Next, I inspected the work itself, of which there still remained a few remnants, and saw that you had used one of my letters for a spool upon which to wind your thread. Also, on the table I found a scrap of paper which had written on it, “My dearest Makar Alexievitch I hasten to—” that was all. Evidently, someone had interrupted you at an interesting point. Lastly, behind a screen there was your little bed. . . . Oh darling of

darlings!!! . . . Well, goodbye now, goodbye now, but for God’s sake send me something in answer to this letter!

MAKAR DIEVUSHKIN.

September 30th

MY BELOVED MAKAR ALEXIEVITCH, — All is over! The die is cast! What my lot may have in store I know not, but I am submissive to the will of God. Tomorrow, then, we depart. For the last time, I take my leave of you, my friend beyond price, my benefactor, my dear one! Do not grieve for me, but try to live happily. Think of me sometimes, and may the blessing of Almighty God light upon you! For myself, I shall often have you in remembrance, and recall you in my prayers. Thus our time together has come to an end. Little comfort in my new life shall I derive from memories of the past. The more, therefore, shall I cherish the recollection of you, and the dearer will you ever be to my heart. Here, you have been my only friend; here, you alone have loved me. Yes, I have seen all, I have known all — I have throughout known how well you love me. A single smile of mine, a single stroke from my pen, has been able to make you happy. . . . But now you must forget me. . . . How lonely you will be! Why should you stay here at all, kind, inestimable, but solitary, friend of mine?

To your care I entrust the book, the embroidery frame, and the letter upon which I had begun. When you look upon the few words which the letter contains you will be able mentally to read in thought all that you would have liked further to hear or receive from me — all that I would so gladly have written, but can never now write. Think sometimes of your poor little Barbara who loved you so well. All your letters I have left behind me in the top drawer of Thedora’s chest of drawers. . . You write that you are ill, but Monsieur Bwikov will not let me leave the house today; so that I can only write to you. Also, I will write again before long. That is a promise. Yet God only knows when I shall be able to do so. . . .

Now we must bid one another forever farewell, my friend, my beloved, my own! Yes, it must be forever! Ah, how at this moment I could embrace you! Goodbye, dear friend — goodbye, goodbye! May you ever rest well and happy! To the end I shall keep you in my prayers. How my heart is aching under its load of sorrow! . . . Monsieur Bwikov is just calling for me. . . . — Your ever loving

B.

P.S. — My heart is full! It is full to bursting of tears! Sorrow has me in its grip, and is tearing me to pieces. Goodbye. My God, what grief! Do not,

do not forget your poor Barbara!

BELOVED BARBARA — MY JEWEL, MY PRICELESS ONE, — You are now almost en route, you are now just about to depart! Would that they had torn my heart out of my breast rather than have taken you away from me! How could you allow it? You weep, yet you go! And only this moment I have received from you a letter stained with your tears! It must be that you are departing unwillingly; it must be that you are being abducted against your will; it must be that you are sorry for me; it must be that — that you LOVE me! . . .

Yet how will it fare with you now? Your heart will soon have become chilled and sick and depressed. Grief will soon have sucked away its life; grief will soon have rent it in twain! Yes, you will die where you be, and be laid to rest in the cold, moist earth where there is no one to bewail you. Monsieur Bwikov will only be hunting hares! . . .

Ah, my darling, my darling! WHY did you come to this decision? How could you bring yourself to take such a step? What have you done, have you done, have you done? Soon they will be carrying you away to the tomb; soon your beauty will have become defiled, my angel. Ah, dearest one, you are as weak as a feather. And where have I been all this time? What have I been thinking of? I have treated you merely as a forward child whose head was aching. Fool that I was, I neither saw nor understood. I have behaved as though, right or wrong, the matter was in no way my concern. Yes, I have been running about after fripperies! . . . Ah, but I will leave my bed. Tomorrow I will rise sound and well, and be once more myself. . . .

Dearest, I could throw myself under the wheels of a passing vehicle rather than that you should go like this. By what right is it being done? . . . I will go with you; I will run behind your carriage if you will not take me — yes, I will run, and run so long as the power is in me, and until my breath shall have failed. Do you know whither you are going? Perhaps you will not know, and will have to ask me? Before you there lie the Steppes, my darling — only the Steppes, the naked Steppes, the Steppes that are as bare as the palm of my hand. There live only heartless old women and rude peasants and drunkards. There the trees have already shed their leaves. There there abide but rain and cold. Why should you go thither? True, Monsieur Bwikov will have his diversions in that country — he will be able to hunt the hare; but what of yourself? Do you wish to become a mere estate lady?

Nay; look at yourself, my seraph of heaven. Are you in any way fitted for such a role? How could you play it? To whom should I write letters? To whom should I send these missives? Whom should I call “my darling”? To whom should I apply that name of endearment? Where, too, could I find you?

When you are gone, Barbara, I shall die — for certain I shall die, for my heart cannot bear this misery. I love you as I love the light of God; I love you as my own daughter; to you I have devoted my love in its entirety; only for you have I lived at all; only because you were near me have I worked and copied manuscripts and committed my views to paper under the guise of friendly letters.

Perhaps you did not know all this, but it has been so. How, then, my beloved, could you bring yourself to leave me? Nay, you MUST not go — it is impossible, it is sheerly, it is utterly, impossible. The rain will fall upon you, and you are weak, and will catch cold. The floods will stop your carriage. No sooner will it have passed the city barriers than it will break down, purposely break down. Here, in St. Petersburg, they are bad builders of carriages. Yes, I know well these carriage-builders. They are jerry-builders who can fashion a toy, but nothing that is durable. Yes, I swear they can make nothing that is durable. . . . All that I can do is to go upon my knees before Monsieur Bwikov, and to tell him all, to tell him all. Do you also tell him all, dearest, and reason with him. Tell him that you MUST remain here, and must not go. Ah, why did he not marry that merchant’s daughter in Moscow? Let him go and marry her now. She would suit him far better and for reasons which I well know. Then I could keep you. For what is he to you, this Monsieur Bwikov? Why has he suddenly become so dear to your heart? Is it because he can buy you gewgaws? What are THEY? What use are THEY? They are so much rubbish. One should consider human life rather than mere finery.

Nevertheless, as soon as I have received my next instalment of salary I mean to buy you a new cloak. I mean to buy it at a shop with which I am acquainted. Only, you must wait until my next installment is due, my angel of a Barbara. Ah, God, my God! To think that you are going away into the Steppes with Monsieur Bwikov — that you are going away never to return! . . . Nay, nay, but you SHALL write to me. You SHALL write me a letter as soon as you have started, even if it be your last letter of all, my dearest. Yet will it be your last letter? How has it come about so suddenly, so

irrevocably, that this letter should be your last? Nay, nay; I will write, and you shall write — yes, NOW, when at length I am beginning to improve my style. Style? I do not know what I am writing. I never do know what I am writing. I could not possibly know, for I never read over what I have written, nor correct its orthography. At the present moment, I am writing merely for the sake of writing, and to put as much as possible into this last letter of mine. . . .

Ah, dearest, my pet, my own darling!.

THE END

THE DOUBLE



A PETERSBURG POEM

Translated by Constance Garnett

The novella *The Double: A Petersburg Poem* was first published in 1846 and deals with the internal psychological struggle of its main character, Yakov Petrovich Golyadkin. The motif of the novella is a doppelganger or fetch, which, according to German folklore, is a supernatural double of a living person. *The Double* is the most Gogolesque of Dostoyevsky's works; its subtitle "The Poem" imitates that of *Dead Souls*. The story is told in great detail with a style intensely saturated by phonetic and rhythmical expressiveness. The plot concerns a government clerk who goes mad, obsessed by the idea that a fellow clerk has usurped his identity.



Dostoyevsky, c. 1847, close to the time of publication

THE DOUBLE

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CHAPTER I

It was a little before eight o'clock in the morning when Yakov Petrovitch Golyadkin, a titular councillor, woke up from a long sleep. He yawned, stretched, and at last opened his eyes completely. For two minutes, however, he lay in his bed without moving, as though he were not yet quite certain whether he were awake or still asleep, whether all that was going on around him were real and actual, or the continuation of his confused dreams. Very soon, however, Mr. Golyadkin's senses began more clearly and more distinctly to receive their habitual and everyday impressions. The dirty green, smoke-begrimed, dusty walls of his little room, with the mahogany chest of drawers and chairs, the table painted red, the sofa covered with American leather of a reddish colour with little green flowers on it, and the clothes taken off in haste overnight and flung in a crumpled heap on the sofa, looked at him familiarly. At last the damp autumn day, muggy and dirty, peeped into the room through the dingy window pane with such a hostile, sour grimace that Mr. Golyadkin could not possibly doubt that he was not in the land of Nod, but in the city of Petersburg, in his own flat on the fourth storey of a huge block of buildings in Shestilavotchny Street. When he had made this important discovery Mr. Golyadkin nervously closed his eyes, as though regretting his dream and wanting to go back to it for a moment. But a minute later he leapt out of bed at one bound, probably all at once, grasping the idea about which his scattered and wandering thoughts had been revolving. From his bed he ran straight to a little round looking-glass that stood on his chest of drawers. Though the sleepy, short-sighted countenance and rather bald head reflected in the looking-glass were of such an insignificant type that at first sight they would certainly not have attracted particular attention in any one, yet the owner of the countenance was satisfied with all that he saw in the looking-glass. "What a thing it would be," said Mr. Golyadkin in an undertone, "what a thing it would be if I were not up to the mark today, if something were amiss, if some intrusive pimple had made its appearance, or anything else unpleasant had happened; so far, however, there's nothing wrong, so far everything's all right."

Greatly relieved that everything was all right, Mr Golyadkin put the looking-glass back in its place and, although he had nothing on his feet and

was still in the attire in which he was accustomed to go to bed, he ran to the little window and with great interest began looking for something in the courtyard, upon which the windows of his flat looked out. Apparently what he was looking for in the yard quite satisfied him too; his face beamed with a self-satisfied smile. Then, after first peeping, however, behind the partition into his valet Petrushka's little room and making sure that Petrushka was not there, he went on tiptoe to the table, opened the drawer in it and, fumbling in the furthest corner of it, he took from under old yellow papers and all sorts of rubbish a shabby green pocket-book, opened it cautiously, and with care and relish peeped into the furthest and most hidden fold of it. Probably the roll of green, grey, blue, red and particoloured notes looked at Golyadkin, too, with approval: with a radiant face he laid the open pocket-book before him and rubber his hands vigorously in token of the greatest satisfaction. Finally, he took it out - his comforting roll of notes - and, for the hundredth time since the previous day, counted them over, carefully smoothing out every note between his forefinger and his thumb.

"Seven hundred and fifty roubles in notes," he concluded at last, in a half-whisper. "Seven hundred and fifty roubles, a noteworthy sum! It's an agreeable sum," he went on, in a voice weak and trembling with gratification, as he pinched the roll with his fingers and smiled significantly; "it's a very agreeable sum! A sum agreeable to any one! I should like to see the man to whom that would be a trivial sum! There's no knowing what a man might not do with a sum like that. .

. . What's the meaning of it, though?" thought Mr. Golyadkin; "where's Petrushka?" And still in the same attire he peeped behind the partition again. Again there was no sign of Petrushka; and the samovar standing on the floor was beside itself, fuming and raging in solitude, threatening every minute to boil over, hissing and lisping in its mysterious language, to Mr. Golyadkin something like, "Take me, good people, I'm boiling and perfectly ready."

"Damn the fellow," thought Mr. Golyadkin. "That lazy brute might really drive a man out of all patience; where's he dawdling now?"

In just indignation he went out into the hall, which consisted of a little corridor at the end of which was a door into the entry, and saw his servant surrounded by a good-sized group of lackeys of all sorts, a mixed rabble from outside as well as from the flats of the house. Petrushka was telling

something, the others were listening. Apparently the subject of the conversation, or the conversation itself, did not please Mr. Golyadkin. He promptly called Petrushka and returned to his room, displeased and even upset. “That beast would sell a man for a halfpenny, and his master before any one,” he thought to himself: “and he has sold me, he certainly has. I bet he has sold me for a farthing. Well?”

“They’ve brought the livery, sir.”

“Put it on, and come here.”

When he had put on his livery, Petrushka, with a stupid smile on his face, went in to his master. His costume was incredibly strange. He had on a much-worn green livery, with frayed gold braid on it, apparently made for a man a yard taller than Petrushka. In his hand he had a hat trimmed with the same gold braid and with a feather in it, and at his hip hung a footman’s sword in a leather sheath. Finally, to complete the picture, Petrushka, who always liked to be in neglig, was barefooted. Mr. Golyadkin looked at Petrushka from all sides and was apparently satisfied. The livery had evidently been hired for some solemn occasion. It might be observed, too, that during his master’s inspection Petrushka watched him with strange expectance and with marked curiosity followed every movement he made, which extremely embarrassed Mr. Golyadkin.

“Well, and how about the carriage?”

“The carriage is here too.”

“For the whole day?”

“For the whole day. Twenty five roubles.”

“And have the boots been sent?”

“Yes.”

“Do it! can’t even say, ‘yes, sir.’ Bring them here.”

Expressing his satisfaction that the boots fitted, Mr. Golyadkin asked for his tea, and for water to wash and shave. He shaved with great care and washed as scrupulously, hurriedly sipped his tea and proceeded to the principal final process of attiring himself: he put on an almost new pair of trousers; then a shirtfront with brass studs, and a very bright and agreeably flowered waistcoat; about his neck he tied a gay, particoloured cravat, and finally drew on his coat, which was also newish and carefully brushed. As he dressed, he more than once looked lovingly at his boots, lifted up first one leg and then the other, admired their shape, kept muttering something to himself, and from time to time made expressive grimaces. Mr. Golyadkin

was, however, extremely absent-minded that morning, for he scarcely noticed the little smiles and grimaces made at his expanse by Petrushka, who was helping him dress. At last, having arranged everything properly and having finished dressing, Mr. Golyadkin put his pocket-book in his pocket, took a final admiring look at Petrushka, who had put on his boots and was therefore also quite ready, and, noticing that everything was done and that there was nothing left to wait for, he ran hurriedly and fussily out on to the stairs, with a slight throbbing at his heart. the light-blue hired carriage with a crest on it rolled noisily up to the steps. Petrushka, winking to the driver and some of the gaping crowd, helped his master into the carriage; and hardly able to suppress an idiotic laugh, shouted in an unnatural voice: “Off!” jumped up on the footboard, and the whole turnout, clattering and rumbling noisily, rolled into the Nevsky Prospect. As soon as the light-blue carriage dashed out of the gate, Mr. Golyadkin rubbed his hands convulsively and went off into a slow, noiseless chuckle, like a jubilant man who has succeeded in bringing off a splendid performance and is as pleased as Punch with the performance himself. Immediately after his access of gaiety, however, laughter was replaced by a strange and anxious expression on the face of Mr. Golyadkin. Though the weather was damp and muggy, he let down both windows of the carriage and began carefully scrutinizing the passers-by to left and to right, at once assuming a decorous and sedate air when he thought any one was looking at him. At the turning from Liteyny Street into the Nevsky Prospect he was startled by a most unpleasant sensation and, frowning like some poor wretch whose corn has been accidentally trodden on, he huddled with almost panic-stricken hast into the darkest corner of his carriage.

He had seen two of his colleagues, two young clerks serving in the same government department. The young clerks were also, it seemed to Mr. Golyadkin, extremely amazed at meeting their colleague in such a way; one of them, in fact, pointed him out to the other. Mr. Golyadkin even fancied that the other had actually called his name, which, of course, was very unseemly in the street. Our hero concealed himself and did not respond. “The silly youngsters!” he began reflecting to himself. “Why, what is there strange in it? A man in a carriage, a man needs to be in a carriage, and so he hires a carriage. They’re simply noodles! I know them - simply silly youngsters, who still need thrashing! They want to be paid a salary for

playing pitch-farthing and dawdling about, that's all they're fit for. It'd let them all know, if only . . ."

Mr. Golyadkin broke off suddenly, petrified. A smart pair of Kazan horses, very familiar to Mr. Golyadkin, in a fashionable droshky, drove rapidly by on the right side of his carriage. The gentleman sitting in the droshky, happening to catch a glimpse of Mr. Golyadkin, who was rather incautiously poking his head out of the carriage window, also appeared to be extremely astonished at the unexpected meeting and, bending out as far as he could, looked with the greatest of curiosity and interest into the corner of the carriage in which our hero made haste to conceal himself. The gentleman in the droshky was Andrey Filippovitch, the head of the office in which Mr. Golyadkin served in the capacity of assistant to the chief clerk. Mr. Golyadkin, seeing that Andrey Filippovitch recognized him, that he was looking at him open-eyed and that it was impossible to hide, blushed up to her ears.

"Bow or not? Call back or not? Recognize him or not?" our hero wondered in indescribable anguish, "or pretend that I am not myself, but somebody else strikingly like me, and look as though nothing were the matter. Simply not I, not I - and that's all," said Mr. Golyadkin, taking off his hat to Andrey Filippovitch and keeping his eyes fixed upon him. "I'm . . . I'm all right," he whispered with an effort; "I'm . . . quite all right. It's not I, it's not I - and that is the fact of the matter."

Soon, however, the droshky passed the carriage, and the magnetism of his chief's eyes was at an end. Yet he went on blushing, smiling and muttering something to himself. . .

"I was a fool not to call back," he thought at last. "I ought to have taken a bolder line and behaved with gentlemanly openness. I ought to have said 'This is how it is, Andrey Filippovitch, I'm asked to the dinner too,' and that's all it is!"

Then, suddenly recalling how taken aback he had been, our hero flushed as hot as fire, frowned, and cast a terrible defiant glance at the front corner of the carriage, a glance calculated to reduce all his foes to ashes. At last, he was suddenly inspired to pull the cord attached to the driver's elbow, and stopped the carriage, telling him to drive back to Liteyny Street. The fact was, it was urgently necessary for Mr. Golyadkin, probably for the sake of his own peace of mind, to say something very interesting to his doctor, Krestyan Ivanovitch. And, though he had made Krestyan Ivanovitch's

acquaintance quite recently, having, indeed, only paid him a single visit, and that one the previous week, to consult him about some symptom. but a doctor, as they say, is like a priest, and it would be stupid for him to keep out of sight, and, indeed, it was his duty to know his patients. “Will it be all right, though,” our hero went on, getting out of the carriage at the door of a five-storey house in Liteyny Street, at which he had told the driver to stop the carriage: “Will it be all right? Will it be proper? Will it be appropriate? After all, though,” he went on, thinking as he mounted the stairs out of breath and trying to suppress that beating of his heart, which had the habit of beating on all other people’s staircases: “After all, it’s on my own business and there’s nothing reprehensible in it. . . . It would be stupid to keep out of sight. Why, of course, I shall behave as though I were quite all right, and have simply looked in as I passed. . . . He will see, that it’s all just as it should be.”

Reasoning like this, Mr. Golyadkin mounted to the second storey and stopped before flat number five, on which there was a handsome brass door-plate with the inscription -

KRESTYAN IVANOVITCH RUTENSPITZ

Doctor of Medicine and Surgery

Stopping at the door, our hero made haste to assume an air of propriety, ease, and even of a certain affability, and prepared to pull the bell. As he was about to do so he promptly and rather appropriately reflected that it might be better to come to-morrow, and that it was not very pressing for the moment. But as he suddenly heard footsteps on the stairs, he immediately changed his mind again and at once rang Krestyan Ivanovitch’s bell - with an air, moreover, of great determination.

CHAPTER II

The doctor of medicine and surgery, Krestyan Ivanovitch Rutenspitz, a very hale though elderly man, with thick eyebrows and whiskers that were beginning to turn grey, eyes with an expressive gleam in them that looked capable of routing every disease, and, lastly, with orders of some distinction on his breast, was sitting in his consulting-room that morning in his comfortable armchair. He was drinking coffee, which his wife had brought him with her own hand, smoking a cigar and from time to time writing prescriptions for his patients. After prescribing a draught for an old man who was suffering from haemorrhoids and seeing the aged patient out by the side door, Krestyan Ivanovitch sat down to await the next visitor.

Mr. Golyadkin walked in.

Apparently Krestyan Ivanovitch did not in the least expect nor desire to see Mr. Golyadkin, for he was suddenly taken aback for a moment, and his countenance unconsciously assumed a strange and, one may almost say, a displeased expression. As Mr. Golyadkin almost always turned up inappropriately and was thrown into confusion whenever he approached any one about his own little affairs, on this occasion, too, he was desperately embarrassed. Having neglected to get ready his first sentence, which was invariably a stumbling-block for him on such occasions, he muttered something - apparently an apology - and, not knowing what to do next, took a chair and sat down, but, realizing that he had sat down without being asked to do so, he was immediately conscious of his lapse, and made haste to efface his offence against etiquette and good breeding by promptly getting up again from the seat he had taken uninvited. Then, on second thoughts, dimly perceiving that he had committed two stupid blunders at once, he immediately decided to commit a third - that is, tried to right himself, muttered something, smiled, blushed, was overcome with embarrassment, sank into expressive silence, and finally sat down for good and did not get up again. Only, to protect himself from all contingencies, he looked at the doctor with that defiant glare which had an extraordinary power of figuratively crushing Mr. Golyadkin’s enemies and reducing them to ashes. This glance, moreover, expressed to the full Mr. Golyadkin’s independence - that is, to speak plainly, the fat that Mr. Golyadkin was “all right,” that he was “quite himself, like everybody else,” and that there was

“nothing wrong in his upper storey.” Krestyan Ivanovitch coughed, cleared his throat, apparently in token of approval and assent to all this, and bent an inquisitorial interrogative gaze upon his visitor.

“I have come to trouble you a second time, Krestyan Ivanovitch,” began Mr. Golyadkin, with a smile, “and now I venture to ask your indulgence a second time. . . .” He was obviously at a loss for words.

“H’m . . . Yes!” pronounced Krestyan Ivanovitch, puffing out a spiral of smoke and putting down his cigar on the table, “but you must follow the treatment prescribed to you; I explained to you that what would be beneficial to your health is a change of habits. . . . Entertainment, for instance, and, well, friends - you should visit your acquaintances, and not be hostile to the bottle; and likewise keep cheerful company.”

Mr. Golyadkin, still smiling, hastened to observe that he thought he was like every one else, that he lived by himself, that he had entertainments like every one else . . . that, of course, he might go to the theatre, for he had the means like every one else, that he spent the day at the office and the evenings at home, that he was quite all right; he even observed, in passing, that he was, so far as he could see, as good as any one, that he lived at home, and finally, that he had Petrushka. At this point Mr. Golyadkin hesitated.

“H’m! no, that is not the order of proceeding that I want; and that is not at all what I would ask you. I am interested to know, in general, are you a great lover of cheerful company? Do you take advantages of festive occasions; and well, do you lead a melancholy or cheerful manner of life?”

“Krestyan Ivanovitch, I . . .”

“H’m! . . . I tell you,” interrupted the doctor, “that you must have a radical change of life, must, in a certain sense, break in your character.” (Krestyan Ivanovitch laid special stress on the word “break in,” and paused for a moment with a very significant air.) “Must not shrink from gaiety, must visit entertainments and clubs, and in any case, be not hostile to the bottle. Sitting at home is not right for you . . . sitting at home is impossible for you.”

“I like quiet, Krestyan Ivanovitch,” said Mr. Golyadkin, with a significant look at the doctor and evidently seeking words to express his ideas more successfully: “In my flat there’s only me and Petrushka. . . . I mean my man, Krestyan Ivanovitch. I mean to say, Krestyan Ivanovitch, that I go my way, my own way, Krestyan Ivanovitch. I keep myself to

myself, and so far as I can see am not dependent on any one. I go out for walks, too, Krestyan Ivanovitch."

"What? Yes! well, nowadays there's nothing agreeable in walking: the climate's extremely bad."

"Quite so, Krestyan Ivanovitch. Though I'm a peaceable man, Krestyan Ivanovitch, as I've had the honour of explaining to you already, yet my way lies apart, Krestyan Ivanovitch. The ways of life are manifold . . . I mean . . . I mean to say, Krestyan Ivanovitch. . . . Excuse me, Krestyan Ivanovitch, I've no great gift for eloquent speaking."

"H'm . . . you say . . ."

"I say, you must excuse me, Krestyan Ivanovitch, that as far as I can see I am no great hand at eloquence in speaking," Mr. Golyadkin articulated, stammering and hesitating, in a half-aggrieved voice. "In that respect, Krestyan Ivanovitch, I'm not quite like other people," he added, with a peculiar smile, "I can't talk much, and have never learnt to embellish my speech with literary graces. On the other hand, I cat, Krestyan Ivanovitch; on the other hand, I act, Krestyan Ivanovitch."

"H'm . . . How's that . . . you act?" responded Krestyan Ivanovitch.

Then silence followed for half a minute. The doctor looked somewhat strangely and mistrustfully at his visitor. Mr. Golyadkin, for his part, too, stole a rather mistrustful glance at the doctor.

"Krestyan Ivanovitch," he began, going on again in the same tone as before, somewhat irritated and puzzled by the doctors extreme obstinacy: "I like tranquillity and not the noisy gaiety of the world. Among them, I mean, in the noisy world, Krestyan Ivanovitch one must be able to polish the floor with one's boots . . ." (here Mr. Golyadkin made a slight scrape on the floor with his toe); "they expect it, and they expect puns too . . . one must know how to make a perfumed compliment . . . that's what they expect there. And I've not learnt to do it, Krestyan Ivanovitch, I've never learnt all those tricks, I've never had the time. I'm a simple person, and not ingenious, and I've no external polish. On that side I surrender, Krestyan Ivanovitch, I lay down my arms, speaking in that sense."

All this Mr. Golyadkin pronounced with an air which made it perfectly clear that our hero was far from regretting that he was laying down his arms in that sense and that he had not learnt these tricks; quite the contrary, indeed. As Krestyan Ivanovitch listened to him, he looked down with a very unpleasant grimace on his face, seeming to have a presentiment of

something. Mr. Golyadkin's tirade was followed by a rather long and significant silence.

"You have, I think, departed a little from the subject," Krestyan Ivanovitch said at last, in a low voice: "I confess I cannot altogether understand you."

"I'm not a great hand at eloquent speaking, Krestyan Ivanovitch; I've had the honour to inform you, Krestyan Ivanovitch, already," said Mr. Golyadkin, speaking this time in a sharp and resolute tone.

"H'm!" . . .

"Krestyan Ivanovitch!" began Mr. Golyadkin again in a low but more significant voice in a somewhat solemn style and emphasizing every point: "Krestyan Ivanovitch, when I came in here I began with apologies. I repeat the same thing again, and again ask for your indulgence. There's no need for me to conceal it, Krestyan Ivanovitch. I'm an unimportant man, as you know; but fortunately for me, I do not regret being an unimportant man. Quite the contrary, indeed, Krestyan Ivanovitch, and, to be perfectly frank, I'm proud that I'm not a great man but an unimportant man. I'm not one to intrigue and I'm proud of that too, I don't act on the sly, but openly, without cunning, and although I could do harm too, and a great deal of harm, indeed, and know to whom and how to do it, Krestyan Ivanovitch, yet I won't sully myself, and in that sense I was my hands. In that sense, I say, I wash them, Krestyan Ivanovitch!" Mr. Golyadkin paused expressively for a moment; he spoke with mild fervour.

"I set to work, Krestyan Ivanovitch," our hero continued, "directly, openly, by no devious ways, for I disdain them, and leave them to others. I do not try to degrade those who are perhaps purer than you and I . . . that is, I mean, I and they, Krestyan Ivanovitch - I didn't mean you. I don't like insinuations; I've no taste for contemptible duplicity; I'm disgusted by slander and calumny. I only put on a mask at a masquerade, and don't wear one before people every day. I only ask you, Krestyan Ivanovitch, how you would revenge yourself upon your enemy, your most malignant enemy - the one you would consider such?" Mr. Golyadkin concluded with a challenging glance at Krestyan Ivanovitch.

Though Mr. Golyadkin pronounced this with the utmost distinctness and clearness, weighing his words with a self-confident air and reckoning on their probable effect, yet meanwhile he looked at Krestyan Ivanovitch with anxiety, with great anxiety, with extreme anxiety. Now he was all eyes: and

timidly waited for the doctor’s answer with irritable and agonized impatience. But to the perplexity and complete amazement of our hero, Krestyan Ivanovitch only muttered something to himself; then he moved his armchair up to the table, and rather drily though politely announced something to the effect that his time was precious, and that he did not quite understand; that he was ready, however, to attend to him as far as he was able, but he wold not go into anything further that did not concern him. At this point he took the pen, drew a piece of paper towards him, cut out of it the usual long strip, and announced that he would immediately prescribe what was necessary.

“No, it’s not necessary, Krestyan Ivanovitch! No, that’s not necessary at all!” said Mr. Golyadkin, getting up from his seat, and clutching Krestyan Ivanovitch’s right hand. “That isn’t what’s wanted, Krestyan Ivanovitch.”

And, while he said this, a queer change came over him. His grey eyes gleamed strangely, his lips began to quiver, all the muscles, all the features of his face began moving and working. He was trembling all over. After stopping the doctor’s hand, Mr. Golyadkin followed his first movement by standing motionless, as though he had no confidence in himself and were waiting for some inspiration for further action.

Then followed a rather strange scene.

Somewhat perplexed, Krestyan Ivanovitch seemed for a moment rooted to his chair and gazed open-eyed in bewilderment at Mr. Golyadkin, who looked at him in exactly the same way. At last Krestyan Ivanovitch stood up, gently holding the lining of Mr. Golyadkin’s coat. For some seconds they both stood like that, motionless, with their eyes fixed on each other. Then, however, in an extraordinarily strange way came Mr. Golyadkin’s second movement. His lips trembled, his chin began twitching, and our hero quite unexpectedly burst into tears. Sobbing, shaking his head and striking himself on the chest with his right hand, while with his left clutching the lining of the doctor’s coat, he tried to say something and to make some explanation but could not utter a word.

At last Krestyan Ivanovitch recovered from his amazement.

“Come, calm yourself!” he brought out at last, trying to make Mr. Golyadkin sit down in an armchair.

“I have enemies, Krestyan Ivanovitch, I have enemies; I have malignant enemies who have sworn to ruin me . . .” Mr Golyadkin answered in a frightened whisper.

“Come, come, why enemies? you mustn’t talk about enemies! You really mustn’t. Sit down, sit down,” Krestyan Ivanovitch went on, getting Mr. Golyadkin once and for all into the armchair.

Mr. Golyadkin sat down at last, still keeping his eyes fixed on the doctor. With an extremely displeased air, Krestyan Ivanovitch strode from one end of the room to another. A long silence followed.

“I’m grateful to you, Krestyan Ivanovitch, I’m very grateful, and I’m very sensible of all you’ve done for me now. To my dying day I shall never forget your kindness, Krestyan Ivanovitch,” said Mr. Golyadkin, getting up from his seat with an offended air.

“Come, give over! I tell you, give over!” Krestyan Ivanovitch responded rather sternly to Mr. Golyadkin’s outburst, making him sit down again.

“Well, what’s the matter? Tell me what is unpleasant,” Krestyan Ivanovitch went on, “and what enemies are you talking about? What is wrong?”

“No, Krestyan Ivanovitch we’d better leave that now,” answered Mr. Golyadkin, casting down his eyes; “let us put all that aside for the time. . . . Till another time, Krestyan Ivanovitch, till a more convenient moment, when everything will be discovered and the mask falls off certain faces, and something comes to light. But, meanwhile, now, of course, after what has passed between us . . . you will agree yourself, Krestyan Ivanovitch. . . . Allow me to wish you good morning, Krestyan Ivanovitch,” said Mr. Golyadkin, getting up gravely and resolutely and taking his hat.

“Oh, well . . . as you like . . . h’m . . .” (A moment of silence followed.) “For my part, you know . . . whatever I can do . . . and I sincerely wish you well.”

“I understand you, Krestyan Ivanovitch, I understand: I understand you perfectly now . . . In any case excuse me for having troubled you, Krestyan Ivanovitch.”

“H’m, no, I didn’t mean that. However, as you please; go on taking the medicines as before. . . .”

“I will go with the medicines as you say, Krestyan Ivanovitch. I will go on with them, and I will get them at the same chemist’s . . . To be a chemist nowadays, Krestyan Ivanovitch, is an important business. . . .”

“How so? In what sense do you mean?”

“In a very ordinary sense, Krestyan Ivanovitch. I mean to say that nowadays that’s the way of the world. . .”

“H’m. . .”

“And that every silly youngster, not only a chemist’s boy turns up his nose at respectable people.”

“H’m. How do you understand that?”

“I’m speaking of a certain person, Krestyan Ivanovitch . . . of a common acquaintance of ours, Krestyan Ivanovitch, of Vladimir Semyonovitch . . .”

“Ah!”

“Yes, Krestyan Ivanovitch: and I know certain people, Krestyan Ivanovitch, who didn’t keep to the general rule of telling the truth, sometimes.”

“Ah! How so?”

“Why, yes, it is so: but that’s neither here nor there: they sometimes manage to serve you up a fine egg in gravy.”

“What? Serve up what?”

“An egg in gravy, Krestyan Ivanovitch. It’s a Russian saying. They know how to congratulate some one the right moment, for instance; there are people like that.”

“Congratulate?”

“yes, congratulate, Krestyan Ivanovitch, as some one I know very well did the other day!” . . .

“Some one you know very well . . . Ah! how was that?” said Krestyan Ivanovitch, looking attentively at Mr. Golyadkin.

“Yes, some one I know very well indeed congratulated some one else I know very well - and, what’s more, a comrade, a friend of his heart, on his promotion, on his receiving the rank of assessor. This was how it happened to come up: ‘I am exceedingly glad of the opportunity to offer you, Vladimir Semyonovitch, my congratulations, my sincere congratulations, on your receiving the rank of assessor. And I’m the more please, as all the world knows that there are old women nowadays who tell fortunes.’”

At this point Mr. Golyadkin gave a sly nod, and screwing up his eyes, looked at Krestyan Ivanovitch . . .

“H’m. So he said that. . . .”

“He did, Krestyan Ivanovitch, he said it and glanced at once at Andrey Filippovitch, the uncle of out Prince Charming, Vladimir Semyonovitch. But what is it to me, Krestyan Ivanovitch, that he has been made an assessor? What is it to me? And he wants to get married and the milk is scarcely dry on his lips, if I may be allowed the expression. And I said as

much. Vladimir Semyonovitch, said I! I've said everything now; allow me to withdraw."

"H'm . . ."

"Yes, Krestyan Ivanovitch, all me now, I say, to withdraw. But, to kill two birds with one stone, as I twitted our young gentleman with the old women, I turned to Klara Olsufyevna (it all happened the same day, before yesterday at Olsufy Ivanovitch's), and she had only just sung a song with feeling, 'You've sung songs of feeling, madam,' said I, 'but they've not been listened to with a pure heart.' And by that I hinted plainly, Krestyan Ivanovitch, hinted plainly, that they were not running after her now, but looking higher . . ."

"Ah! And what did he say?"

"He swallowed the pill, Krestyan Ivanovitch, as the saying is."

"H'm . . ."

"Yes, Krestyan Ivanovitch. To the old man himself, too, I said, 'Olsufy Ivanovitch,' said I, 'I know how much I'm indebted to you, I appreciate to the full all the kindness you've showered upon me from my childhood up. But open your eyes, Olsufy Ivanovitch,' I said. 'Look about you. I myself do things openly and aboveboard, Olsufy Ivanovitch.'"

"Oh, really!"

"Yes, Krestyan Ivanovitch. Really . . ."

"What did he say?"

"Yes, what, indeed, Krestyan Ivanovitch? He mumbled one thing and another, and 'I know you,' and that 'his Excellency was a benevolent man' - he rambled on . . . But, there, you know! he's begun to be a bit shaky, as they say, with old age."

"Ah! So that's how it is now . . ."

"Yes, Krestyan Ivanovitch. And that's how we all are! Poor old man! He looks towards the grave, breathes incense, as they say, while they concoct a piece of womanish gossip and he listens to it; without him they wouldn't . . ."

"Gossip, you say?"

"Yes, Krestyan Ivanovitch, they've concocted a womanish scandal. Our bear, too, had a finger in it, and his nephew, our Prince Charming. They've joined hands with the old women and, of course, they've concocted the affair. Would you believe it? They plotted the murder of some one! . . ."

"The murder of some one?"

“Yes, Krestyan Ivanovitch, the moral murder of some one. They spread about . . . I’m speaking of a man I know very well.”

Krestyan Ivanovitch nodded.

“They spread rumours about him . . . I confess I’m ashamed to repeat them, Krestyan Ivanovitch.”

“H’m.” . . .

“They spread a rumour that he had signed a promise to marry though he was already engaged in another quarter . .

. and would you believe it, Krestyan Ivanovitch, to whom?”

“Really?”

“To a cook, to a disreputable German woman from whom he used to get his dinners; instead of paying what he owed, he offered her his hand.”

“Is that what they say?”

“Would you believe it, Krestyan Ivanovitch? A low German, a nasty shameless German, Karolina Ivanovna, if you know . . .”

“I confess, for my part . . .”

“I understand you, Krestyan Ivanovitch, I understand, and for my part I feel it . . .”

“Tell me, please, where are you living now?”

“Where am I living now, Krestyan Ivanovitch?”

“Yes . . . I want . . . I believe you used to live . . .”

“Yes, Krestyan Ivanovitch, I did, I used to. To be sure I lived!” answered Mr. Golyadkin, accompanying his words with a little laugh, and somewhat disconcerting Krestyan Ivanovitch by his answer.

“No, you misunderstood me; I meant to say . . .”

“I, too, meant to say, Krestyan Ivanovitch, I meant it too,” Mr. Golyadkin continued, laughing. “But I’ve kept you far too long, Krestyan Ivanovitch. I hope you will allow me now, to wish you good morning.”

“H’m . . .”

“Yes, Krestyan Ivanovitch, I understand you; I fully understand you now,” said our hero, with a slight flourish before Krestyan Ivanovitch. “And so permit me to wish you good morning . . .”

At this point our hero made a scraping with the toe of his boot and walked out of the room, leaving Krestyan Ivanovitch in the utmost amazement. As he went down the doctor’s stairs he smiled and rubbed his hands gleefully. On the steps, breathing the fresh air and feeling himself at liberty, he was certainly prepared to admit that he was the happiest of

mortals, and thereupon to go straight to his office - when suddenly his carriage rumbled up to the door: he glanced at it and remembered everything. Petrushka was already opening the carriage door. Mr. Golyadkin was completely overwhelmed by a strong and unpleasant sensation. He blushed, as it were, for a moment. Something seemed to stab him. He was just about to raise his foot to the carriage step when he suddenly turned round and looked towards Krestyan Ivanovitch's window. Yes, it was so! Krestyan Ivanovitch was standing at the window, was stroking his whiskers with his right hand and staring with some curiosity at the hero of out story.

"That doctor is silly," thought Mr. Golyadkin, huddling out of sight in the carriage; "extremely silly. He may treat his patients all right, but still . . . he's as stupid as a post."

Mr. Golyadkin sat down, Petrushka shouted "Off!" and the carriage rolled towards Nevsky Prospect again.

CHAPTER III

All that morning was spent by Mr. Golyadkin in a strange bustle of activity. On reaching the Nevsky Prospect our hero told the driver to stop at the bazaar. Skipping out of his carriage, he ran to the Arcade, accompanied by Petrushka, and went straight to a shop where gold and silver articles were for sale. One could see from his very air that he was overwhelmed with business and had a terrible amount to do. Arranging to purchase a complete dinner- and tea-service for fifteen hundred roubles and including in the bargain for that sum a cigar-case of ingenious form and a silver shaving-set, and finally, asking the price of some other articles, useful and agreeable in their own way, he ended by promising to come without fail next day, or to send for his purchases the same day. He took the number of the shop, and listening attentively to the shopkeeper, who was very pressing for a small deposit, said that he should have it all in good time. After which he took leave of the amazed shopkeeper and, followed by a regular flock of shopmen, walked along the Arcade, continually looking round at Petrushka and diligently seeking our fresh shops. On the way he dropped into a money-changer’s and changed all his big notes into small ones, and though he lost on the exchange, his pocket-book was considerably fatter, which evidently afforded him extreme satisfaction. Finally, he stopped at a shop for ladies’ dress materials. Here, too, after deciding to purchase good for a considerable sum, Mr. Golyadkin promised to come again, took the number of the shop and, on being asked for a deposit, assured the shopkeeper that “he should have a deposit too, all in good time.” Then he visited several other shops, making purchases in each of them, asked the price of various things, sometimes arguing a long time with the shopkeeper, going out of the shop and returning two or three times - in fact he displayed exceptional activity. From the Arcade our hero went to a well-known furniture shop, where he ordered furniture for six rooms; he admired a fashionable and very toilet table for ladies’ use in the latest style, and, assuring the shopkeeper than he would certainly send for all these things, walked out of the shop, as usual promising a deposit. then he went off somewhere else and ordered something more. In short, there seemed to be no end to the business he had to get through. At last, Mr. Golyadkin seemed to grow heartily sick of it all, and he began, goodness knows why, to be tormented by the stings of

conscience. Nothing would have induced him now, for instance, to meet Andrey Filippovitch, or even Krestyan Ivanovitch.

At last, the town clock struck three. When Mr. Golyadkin finally took his seat in the carriage, of all the purchases he had made that morning he had, it appeared, in reality only got a pair of gloves and a bottle of scent, that cost a rouble and a half. As it was still rather early, he ordered his coachman to stop near a well-known restaurant in Nevsky Prospect which he only knew by reputation, got out of the carriage, and hurried in to have a light lunch, to rest and to wait for the hour fixed for the dinner.

Lunching as a man lunches who has the prospect before him of going out to a sumptuous dinner, that is, taking a snack of something in order to still the pangs, as they say, and drinking one small glass of vodka, Mr. Golyadkin established himself in an armchair and, modestly looking about him, peacefully settled down to an emaciated nationalist paper. After reading a couple of lines he stood up and looked in the looking-glass, set himself to rights and smoothed himself down; then he went to the window and looked to see whether his carriage was there . . . then he sat down again in his place and took up the paper. It was noticeable that our hero was in great excitement. Glancing at his watch and seeing that it was only a quarter past three and that he had consequently a good time to wait and, at the same time, opining that to sit like that was unsuitable, Mr. Golyadkin ordered chocolate, though he felt no particular inclination for it at the moment. Drinking the chocolate and noticing that the time had moved on a little, he went up to pay his bill.

He turned round and saw facing him two of his colleagues, the same two he had met that morning in Liteyny Street, - young men, very much his juniors both in age and rank. Our hero’s relations with them were neither one thing nor the other, neither particularly friendly nor openly hostile. Good manners were, of course, observed on both sides: there was no closer intimacy, nor could there be. The meeting at this moment was extremely distasteful to Mr. Golyadkin. He frowned a little, and was disconcerted for an instant.

“Yakov Petrovitch, Yakov Petrovitch!” chirped the two register clerks; “you here? what brings you? . . .”

“Ah, it is you, gentlemen,” Mr. Golyadkin interrupted hurriedly, somewhat embarrassed and scandalized by the amazement of the clerks and by the abruptness of their address, but feeling obliged, however, to appear

jaunty and free and easy. “You’ve deserted gentlemen, he-he-he . . .” Then, to keep up his dignity and to condescend to the juveniles, with whom he never overstepped certain limits, he attempted to slap one of the youths on the shoulder; but this effort at good fellowship did not succeed and, instead of being a well-bred little jest, produced quite a different effect.

“Well, and our bear, is he still at the office?”

“Who’s that, Yakov Petrovitch?”

“Why, the bear. Do you mean to say you don’t know whose name that is? . . .” Mr. Golyadkin laughed and turned to the cashier to take his change.

“I mean Andrey Filippovitch, gentlemen,” he went on, finishing with the cashier, and turning to the clerks this time with a very serious face. The two register clerks winked at one another.

“He’s still at the office and asking for you, Yakov Petrovitch,” answered one of them.

“At the office, eh! In that case, let him stay, gentlemen. And asking for me, eh?”

“He was asking for you, Yakov Petrovitch; but what’s up with you, scented, pomaded, and such a swell? . . .”

“Nothing, gentlemen, nothing! that’s enough,” answered Mr. Golyadkin, looking away with a constrained smile. Seeing that Mr. Golyadkin was smiling, the clerks laughed aloud. Mr. Golyadkin was a little offended.

“I’ll tell you as friends, gentlemen,” our hero said, after a brief silence, as though making up his mind (which, indeed, was the case) to reveal something to them. “You all know me, gentlemen, but hitherto you’ve known me only on one side. no one is to blame for that and I’m conscious that the fault has been partly my own.”

Mr. Golyadkin pursed his lips and looked significantly at the clerks. The clerks winked at one another again.

“Hitherto, gentlemen, you have not known me. To explain myself here and now would not be appropriate. I will only touch on it lightly in passing. There are people, gentlemen, who dislike roundabout ways and only mask themselves at masquerades. There are people who do not see man’s highest avocation in polishing the floor with their boots. There are people, gentlemen, who refuse to say that they are happy and enjoying a full life when, for instance, their trousers set properly. There are people, finally, who dislike dashing and whirling about for no object, fawning, and licking the dust, and above all, gentlemen, poking their noses where they are not

wanted. . . I've told you almost everything, gentlemen; now allow me to withdraw. . ."

Mr. Golyadkin paused. As the register clerks had not got all that they wanted, both of them with great incivility burst into shouts of laughter. Mr. Golyadkin flared up.

"Laugh away, gentlemen, laugh away for the time being! If you live long enough you will see," he said, with a feeling of offended dignity, taking his hat and retreating to the door.

"But I will say more, gentlemen," he added, turning for the last time to the register clerks, "I will say more - you are both here with me face to face. This, gentlemen, is my rule: if I fail I don't lose heart, if I succeed I persevere, and in any case I am never underhand. I'm not one to intrigue - and I'm proud of it. I've never prided myself on diplomacy. They say, too, gentlemen, that the bird flies itself to the hunter. It's true and I'm ready to admit it; but who's the hunter, and who's the bird in this case? That is still the question, gentlemen!"

Mr. Golyadkin subsided into eloquent silence, and, with a most significant air, that is, pursing up his lips and raising his eyebrows as high as possible, he bowed to the clerks and walked out, leaving them in the utmost amazement.

"What are your orders now?" Petrushka asked, rather gruffly; he was probably weary of hanging about in the cold. "What are your orders?" he asked Mr. Golyadkin, meeting the terrible, withering glance with which our hero had protected himself twice already that morning, and to which he had recourse now for the third time as he came down the steps.

"To Ismailovsky Bridge."

"To Ismailovsky Bridge! Off!"

"Their dinner will not begin till after four, or perhaps five o'clock," thought Mr. Golyadkin; "isn't it early now? However, I can go a little early; besides, it's only a family dinner. And so I can go sans facons, as they say among well-bred people. Why shouldn't I go sans facons? The bear told us, too, that it would all be sans facons, and so I will be the same. . . ." Such were Mr. Golyadkin's reflections and meanwhile his excitement grew more and more acute. It could be seen that he was preparing himself for some great enterprise, to say nothing more; he muttered to himself, gesticulated with his right hand, continually looked out of his carriage window, so that, looking at Mr. Golyadkin, no one would have said that he was on his way to

a good dinner, and only a simple dinner in his family circle - sans facons, as they say among well-bred people. Finally, just at Ismailovsky Bridge, Mr. Golyadkin pointed out a house; and the carriage rolled up noisily and stopped at the first entrance on the right. Noticing a feminine figure at the second storey window, Mr. Golyadkin kissed his hand to her. He had, however, not the slightest idea what he was doing, for he felt more dead than alive at the moment. He got out of the carriage pale, distracted; he mounted the steps, took off his hat, mechanically straightened himself, and though he felt a slight trembling in his knees, he went upstairs.

“Olsufy Ivanovitch?” he inquired of the man who opened the door.

“At home, sir; at least he’s not at home, his honour’s not at home.”

“What? What do you mean, my good man? I-I’ve come to dinner, brother. Why, you know me?”

“To be sure I know you! I’ve orders not to admit you.”

“You . . . you, brother . . . you must be making a mistake. It’s I, my boy, I’m invited; I’ve come to dinner,” Mr. Golyadkin announced, taking off his coat and displaying unmistakable intentions of going into the room.

“Allow me, sir, you can’t, sir. I’ve orders not to admit you. I’ve orders to refuse you. That’s how it is.”

Mr. Golyadkin turned pale. At that very moment the door of the inner room opened and Gerasimitch, Olsufy Ivanovitch’s old butler, came out.

“You see the gentlemen wants to go in, Emelyan Gerasimitch, and I . . .”

“And you’re a fool, Alexeitch. Go inside and send the rascal Semyonovitch here. It’s impossible,” he said politely but firmly, addressing Mr. Golyadkin. “It’s quite impossible. His honour begs you to excuse him; he can’t see you.”

“He said he couldn’t see me?” Mr. Golyadkin asked uncertainly. “Excuse me, Gerasimitch, why is it impossible?”

“It’s quite impossible. I’ve informed your honour; they said ‘Ask him to excuse us.’ They can’t see you.”

“Why not? How’s that? Why.”

“Allow me, allow me! . . .”

“How is it though? It’s out of the question! Announce me . . . How is it? I’ve come to dinner. . .”

“Excuse me, excuse me . . .”

“Ah, well, that’s a different matter, they asked to be excused: but, allow me, Gerasimitch; how is it, Gerasimitch?”

“Excuse me, excuse me! replied Gerasimitch, very firmly putting away Mr. Golyadkin’s hand and making way for two gentlemen who walked into the entry that very instant. The gentlemen in question were Andrey Filippovitch and his nephew Vladimir Semyonovitch. Both of the looked with amazement at Mr. Golyadkin. Andrey Filippovitch seemed about to say something, but Mr. Golyadkin had by now made up his mind: he was by now walking out of Olsufy Ivanovitch’s entry, blushing and smiling, with eyes cast down and a countenance of helpless bewilderment. “I will come afterwards, Gerasimitch; I will explain myself: I hope that all this will without delay be explained in due season. . . .”

“Yakov Petrovitch, Yakov Petrovitch . . .” He heard the voice of Andrey Filippovitch following him.

Mr. Golyadkin was by that time on the first landing. He turned quickly to Andrey Filippovitch.

“What do you desire, Andrey Filippovitch?” he said in a rather resolute voice.

“What’s wrong with you, Yakov Petrovitch? In what way?”

“No matter, Andrey Filippovitch. I’m on my own account here. This is my private life, Andrey Filippovitch.”

“What’s that?”

“I say, Andrey Filippovitch, that this is my private life, and as for my being here, as far as I can see, there’s nothing reprehensible to be found in it as regards my official relations.”

“What! As regards your official . . . What’s the matter with you, my good sir?”

“Nothing, Andrey Filippovitch, absolutely nothing; an impudent slut of a girl, and nothing more . . .”

“What! What?” Andrey Filippovitch was stupefied with amazement. Mr. Golyadkin, who had up till then looked as though he would fly into Andrey Filippovitch’s face, seeing that the head of his office was laughing a little, almost unconsciously took a step forward. Andrey Filippovitch jumped back. Mr. Golyadkin went up one step and then another. Andrey Filippovitch looked about him uneasily. Mr. Golyadkin mounted the stairs rapidly. Still more rapidly Andrey Filippovitch darted into the flat and slammed the door after him. Mr. Golyadkin was left alone. Everything grew dark before his eyes. He was utterly nonplussed, and stood now in a sort of senseless hesitation, as though recalling something extremely senseless, too,

that had happened quite recently. “Ech, ech!” he muttered, smiling with constraint. Meanwhile, there came the sounds of steps and voices on the stairs, probably of other guests invited by Olsufy Ivanovitch. Mr. Golyadkin recovered himself to some extent; put up his racoon collar, concealing himself behind it as far as possible, and began going downstairs with rapid little steps, tripping and stumbling in his haste. He felt overcome by a sort of weakness and numbness. His confusion was such that, when he came out on the steps, he did not even wait for his carriage but walked across the muddy court to it. When he reached his carriage and was about to get into it, Mr. Golyadkin inwardly uttered a desire to sink into the earth, or to hide in a mouse hole together with his carriage. It seemed to him that everything in Olsufy Ivanovitch’s house was looking at him now out of every window. He knew that he would certainly die on the spot if he were to go back.

“What are you laughing at, blockhead?” he said in a rapid mutter to Petrushka, who was preparing to help him into the carriage.

“What should I laugh at? I’m not doing anything; where are we to drive to now?”

“Go home, drive on. . . .”

“Home, off!” shouted Petrushka, climbing on to the footboard.

“What a crow’s croak!” thought Mr. Golyadkin. Meanwhile, the carriage had driven a good distance from Ismailovsky Bridge. Suddenly our hero pulled the cord with all his might and shouted to the driver to turn back at once. The coachman turned his horses and within two minutes was driving into Olsufy Ivanovitch’s yard again.

“Don’t, don’t, you fool, back!” shouted Mr. Golyadkin - and, as though he were expecting this order, the driver made no reply but, without stopping at the entrance, drove all round the courtyard and out into the street again.

Mr. Golyadkin did not drive home, but, after passing the Semyonovsky Bridge, told the driver to return to a side street and stop near a restaurant of rather modest appearance. Getting out of the carriage, our hero settled up with the driver and so got rid of his equipage at last. He told Petrushka to go home and await his return, while he went into the restaurant, took a private room and ordered dinner. He felt very ill and his brain was in the utmost confusion and chaos. For a long time he walked up and down the room in agitation; at last he sat down in a chair, propped his brow in his hands and began doing his very utmost to consider and settle something relating to his present position.

CHAPTER IV

That day the birthday of Klara Olsufyevna, the only daughter of the civil councillor, Berendyev, at one time Mr. Golyadkin's benefactor and patron, was being celebrated by a brilliant and sumptuous dinner-party, such as had not been seen for many a long day within the walls of the flats in the neighbourhood of Ismailovsky Bridge - a dinner more like some Balthazar's feast, with a suggestion of something Babylonian in its brilliant luxury and style, with Veuve-Clicquot champagne, with oysters and fruit from Eliseyev's and Milyutin's, with all sorts of fatted calves, and all grades of the government service. This festive day was to conclude with a brilliant ball, a small birthday ball, but yet brilliant in its taste, its distinction and its style. Of course, I am willing to admit that similar balls do happen sometimes, though rarely. Such balls, more like family rejoicings than balls, can only be given in such houses as that of the civil councillor, Berendyev. I will say more: I even doubt if such balls could be given in the houses of all civil councillors. Oh, if I were a poet! such as Homer or Pushkin, I mean, of course; with any lesser talent one would not venture - I should certainly have painted all that glorious day for you, oh, my readers, with a free brush and brilliant colours! Yes, I should begin my poem with my dinner, I should lay special stress on that striking and solemn moment when the first goblet was raised to the honour of the queen of the fete. I should describe to you the guests plunged in a reverent silence and expectation, as eloquent as the rhetoric of Demosthenes; I should describe for you, then, how Andrey Filippovitch, having as the eldest of the guests some right to take precedence, adorned with his grey hairs and the orders what well befit grey hairs, got up from his seat and raised above his head the congratulatory glass of sparkling wine - brought from a distant kingdom to celebrate such occasions and more like heavenly nectar than plain wine. I would portray for you the guests and the happy parents raising their glasses, too, after Andrey Filippovitch, and fastening upon him eyes full of expectation. I would describe for you how the same Andrey Filippovitch, so often mentioned, after dropping a tear in his glass, delivered his congratulations and good wishes, proposed the toast and drank the health . . . but I confess, I freely confess, that I could not do justice to the solemn moment when the queen of the fete, Klara Olsufyevna, blushing like a rose in spring, with the

glow of bliss and of modesty, was so overcome by her feelings that she sank into the arms of her tender mamma; how that tender mamma shed tears, and how the father, Olsufy Ivanovitch, a hale old man and a privy councillor, who had lost the use of his legs in his long years of service and been rewarded by destiny for his devotion with investments, a house, some small estates, and a beautiful daughter, sobbed like a little child and announced through his tears that his Excellency was a benevolent man. I could not, I positively could not, describe the enthusiasm that followed that moment in every heart, an enthusiasm clearly evinced in the conduct of a youthful register clerk (though at that moment he was more like a civil councillor than a register clerk), who was moved to tears, too, as he listened to Andrey Filippovitch. In his turn, too, Andrey Filippovitch was in that solemn moment quite unlike a collegiate councillor and the head of an office in the department - yes, he was something else . . . what, exactly, I do not know, but not a collegiate councillor. He was more exalted! Finally . . . Oh, why do I not possess the secret of lofty, powerful language, of the sublime style, to describe these grand and edifying moments of human life, which seem created expressly to prove that virtue sometimes triumphs over ingratitude, free-thinking, vice and envy! I will say nothing, but in silence - which will be better than any eloquence - I will point to that fortunate youth, just entering on his twenty-sixth spring - to Vladimir Semyonovitch, Andrey Filippovitch’s nephew, who in his turn now rose from his seat, who in his turn proposed a toast, and upon whom were fastened the tearful eyes of the parents, the proud eyes of Andrey Filippovitch, the modest eyes of the queen of the fete, the solemn eyes of the guests and even the decorously envious eyes of some of the young man’s youthful colleagues. I will say nothing of that, though I cannot refrain from observing that everything in that young man - who was, indeed, speaking in a complimentary sense, more like an elderly than a young man - everything, from his blooming cheeks to his assessorial rank seemed almost to proclaim aloud the lofty pinnacle a man can attain through morality and good principles! I will not describe how Anton Antonovitch Syetotochkin, a little old man as grey as a badger, the head clerk of a department, who was a colleague of Andrey Filippovitch’s and had once been also of Olsufy Ivanovitch’s, and was an old friend of the family and Klara Olsufyevna’s godfather, in his turn proposed a toast, crowed like a cock, and cracked many little jokes; how by this extremely proper breach of propriety, if one may use such an

expression, he made the whole company laugh till they cried, and how Klara Olsufyevna, at her parents' bidding, rewarded him for his jocularity and politeness with a kiss. I will only say that the guests, who must have felt like kinsfolk and brothers after such a dinner, at last rose from the table, and the elderly and more solid guests, after a brief interval spent in friendly conversation, interspersed with some candid, though, of course, very polite and proper observations, went decorously into the next room and, without losing valuable time, promptly divided themselves up into parties and, full of the sense of their own dignity, installed themselves at tables covered with green baize. Meanwhile, the ladies established in the drawing-room suddenly became very affable and began talking about dress-materials. And the venerable host, who had lost the use of his legs in the service of loyalty and religion, and had been rewarded with all the blessings we have enumerated above, began walking about on crutches among his guests, supported by Vladimir Semyonovitch and Klara Olsufyevna, and he, too, suddenly becoming extremely affable, decided to improvise a modest little dance, regardless of expense; to that end a nimble youth (the one who was more like a civil councillor than a youth) was despatched to fetch musicians, and musicians to the number of eleven arrived, and exactly at half-past eight struck up the inviting strains of a French quadrille, followed by various other dances. . . . It is needless to say that my pen is too weak, dull, and spiritless to describe the dance that owed its inspiration to the genial hospitality of the grey-headed host. And how, I ask, can the modest chronicler of Mr. Golyadkin's adventures, extremely interesting as they are in their own way, how can I depict the choice and rare mingling of beauty, brilliance, style, gaiety, polite solidity and solid politeness, sportiveness, joy, all the mirth and playfulness of these wives and daughters of petty officials, more like fairies than ladies - in a complimentary sense - with their lily shoulders and their rosy faces, their ethereal figures, their playfully agile homeopathic - to use the exalted language appropriate - little feet? How can I describe to you, finally, the gallant officials, their partners - gay and solid youths, steady, gleeful, decorously vague, smoking a pipe in the intervals between the dancing in a little green room apart, or not smoking a pipe in the intervals between the dances, every one of them with a highly respectable surname and rank in the service - all steeped in a sense of the elegant and a sense of their own dignity; almost all speaking French to their partners, or if Russian, using only the most well-bred expressions,

compliments and profound observations, and only in the smoking -room permitting themselves some genial lapses from this high tone, some phrases of cordial and friendly brevity, such, for instance, as: "'Pon my soul, Petka, you rake, you did kick me off that polka in style," or, "I say, Vasya, you dog, you did give your partner a time of it." For all this, as I've already had the honour of explaining, oh, my readers! my pen fails me, and therefore I am dumb. Let us rather return to Mr. Golyadkin, the true and only hero of my very truthful tale.

The fact is that he found himself now in a very strange position, to the least of it. He was here also, gentlemen - that is, not at the dance, but almost at the dance; he was "all right, though; he could take care of himself," yet at that moment he was a little astray; he was standing at that moment, strange to say - on the landing of the back stairs to Olsufy Ivanovitch's flat. But it was "all right" his standing there; he was "quite well." He was standing in a corner, huddled in a place which was not very warm, though it was dark, partly hidden by a huge cupboard and an old screen, in the midst of rubbish, litter, and odds and ends of all sorts, concealing himself for the time being and watching the course of proceedings as a disinterested spectator. He was only looking on now, gentlemen; he, too, gentlemen, might go in, of course . . . why should he not go in? He had only to take one step and he would go in, and would go in very adroitly. Just now, though he had been standing nearly three hours between the cupboard and the screen in the midst of the rubbish, litter and odds and ends of all sorts, he was only quoting, in his own justification, a memorable phrase of the French minister, Villesle: "All things come in time to him who has the strength to wait." Mr. Golyadkin had read this sentence in some book on quite a different subject, but now very aptly recalled it. The phrase, to begin with, was exceedingly appropriate to his present position, and, indeed, why should it not occur to the mind of a man who had been waiting for almost three hours in the cold and the dark in expectation of a happy ending to his adventures. After quoting very appropriately the phrase of the French minister, Villesle, Mr. Golyadkin immediately thought of the Turkish Vizier, Martsimiris, as well as of the beautiful Mergravine Luise, whose story he had read also in some book. Then it occurred to his mind that the Jesuits made it their rule that any means were justified if only the end were attained. Fortifying himself somewhat with this historical fact, Mr. Golyadkin said to himself, What were the Jesuits? The Jesuits were every one of them very great fools; that

he was better than any of them; that if only the refreshment-room would be empty for one minute (the door of the refreshment-room opened straight into the passage to the back stairs, where Mr. Golyadkin was in hiding now), he would, in spite of all the Jesuits in the world, go straight in, first from the refreshment-room into the tea-room, then into the room where they were now playing cards, and then straight into the hall where they were now dancing the polka, and he would go in - he would slip through - and that would be all, no one would notice him; and once there he would know what to do.

Well, so this is the position in which we find the hero of our perfectly true story, though, indeed, it is difficult to explain what was passing in him at that moment. The fact is that he had made his way to the back of the stairs and to the passage, on the ground that, as he said, “why shouldn’t he? and everyone did go that way?”; but he had not ventured to penetrate further, evidently he did not dare to do so . . . “not because there was anything he did not dare, but just because he did not care to, because he preferred to be in hiding”; so here he was, waiting now for a chance to slip in, and he had been waiting for it two hours and a half. “Why not wait? Villesle himself had waited. But what had Villesle to do with it?” thought Mr. Golyadkin: “How does Villesle come in? But how am I to . . . to go and walk in? . . . Ech, you dummy!” said Mr. Golyadkin, pinching his benumbed cheek with his benumbed fingers; “you silly fool, you silly old Golyadkin - silly fool of a surname!” . . .

But these compliments paid to himself were only by the way and without any apparent aim. Now he was on the point of pushing forward and slipping in; the refreshment-room was empty and no one was in sight. Mr. Golyadkin saw all this through the little window; in two steps he was at the door and had already opened it. “Should he go in or not? Come, should he or not? I’ll go in . . . why not? to the bold all ways lie open!” Reassuring himself in this way, our hero suddenly and quite unexpectedly retreated behind the screen. “No,” he thought. “Ah, now, somebody’s coming in? Yes, they’ve come in; why did I dawdle when there were no people about? Even so, shall I go and slip in? . . . No, how slip in when a man has such a temperament! Fie, what a low tendency! I’m as scared as a hen! Being scared is our special line, that’s the fact of the matter! To be abject on every occasion is our line: no need to ask us about that. Just stand here like a post and that’s all! At home I should be having a cup of tea now . . .

It would be pleasant, too, to have a cup of tea. If I come in later Petrushka ‘ll grumble, maybe. Shall I go home? Damnation take all this! I’ll go and that’ll be the end of it!” Reflecting on his position in this way, Mr. Golyadkin dashed forward as though some one had touched a spring in him; in two steps he found himself in the refreshment-room, flung off his overcoat, took off his hat, hurriedly thrust these things into a corner, straightened himself and smoothed himself down; then . . .then he moved on to the tea-room, and from the tea-room darted into the next room, slipped almost unnoticed between the card-players, who were at the tip-top of excitement, then . . . Mr. Golyadkin forgot everything that was going on about him, and went straight as an arrow into the drawing room.

As luck would have it they were not dancing. The ladies were promenading up and down the room in picturesque groups. The gentlemen were standing about in twos and threes or flitting about the room engaging partners. Mr. Golyadkin noticed nothing of this. He saw only Klara Olsufyevna, near her Andrey Filippovitch, then Vladimir Semyonovitch, two or three officers, and, finally, two or three other young men who were also very interesting and, as any one could see at once, were either very promising or had actually done something. . . . He saw some one else too. Or, rather, he saw nobody and looked at nobody . . . but, moved by the same spring which had sent him dashing into the midst of a ball to which he had not been invited, he moved forward, and then forwarder and forwarder. On the way he jostled against a councillor and trod on his foot, and incidentally stepped on a very venerable old lady’s dress and tore it a little, pushed against a servant with a tray and then ran against somebody else, and, not noticing all this, passing further and further forward, he suddenly found himself facing Klara Olsufyevna. There is no doubt whatever that he would, with the utmost delight, without winking an eyelid, have sunk through the earth at that moment; but what has once been done cannot be recalled . . . can never be recalled. What was he to do? “If I fail I don’t lose heart, if I succeed I persevere.” Mr. Golyadkin was, of course, not “one to intrigue,” and “not accomplished in the art of polishing the floor with his boots.” . . . And so, indeed, it proved. Besides, the Jesuits had some hand in it too . . . though Mr. Golyadkin had no thoughts to spare for them now! All the moving, noisy, laughing groups were suddenly hushed as though at a signal and, little by little, crowded round Mr. Golyadkin. He, however, seemed to hear nothing, to see nothing, he could not look . . . he could not possibly

look at anything; he kept his eyes on the floor and so stood, giving himself his word of honour, in passing, to shoot himself one way or another that night. Making this vow, Mr. Golyadkin inwardly said to himself, “Here goes!” and to his own great astonishment began unexpectedly to speak.

He began with congratulations and polite wishes. The congratulations went off well, but over the good wishes out hero stammered. He felt that if he stammered all would be lost at once. And so it turned out - he stammered and floundered . . . floundering, he blushed crimson; blushing, he was overcome with confusion. In his confusion he raised his eyes; raising his eyes he looked about him; looking about him - he almost swooned . . . Every one stood still, every one was silent, a little nearer there was laughter. Mr. Golyadkin fastened a humble, imploring look on Andrey Filippovitch. Andrey Filippovitch. Andrey Filippovitch responded with such a look that if our hero had not been utterly crushed already he certainly would have been crushed a second time - that is, if that were possible. The silence lasted long.

“This is rather concerned with my domestic circumstances and my private life, Andrey Filippovitch,” our hero, half-dead, articulated in a scarcely audible voice; “it is not an official incident, Andrey Filippovitch . . .”

“For shame, sir, for shame!” Andrey Filippovitch pronounced in a half whisper, with an indescribable air of indignation; he pronounced these words and, giving Klara Olsufyevna his arm, he turned away from Mr. Golyadkin.

“I’ve nothing to be ashamed of, Andrey Filippovitch,” answered Mr. Golyadkin, also in a whisper, turning his miserable eyes about him, trying helplessly to discover in the amazed crowd something on which he could gain a footing and retrieve his social position.

“Why, it’s all right, it’s nothing, gentlemen! Why, what’s the matter? Why, it might happen to any one,” whispered Mr. Golyadkin, moving a little away and trying to escape from the crowd surrounding him.

They made way for him. Our hero passed through two rows of inquisitive and wondering spectators. Fate drew him on. He felt himself, that fate was leading him on. He would have given a great deal, of course, for a chance to be back in the passage by the back stairs, without having committed a breach of propriety; but as that was utterly impossible he began trying to creep away into a corner and to stand there - modestly,

decorously, apart, without interfering with any one, without attracting especial attention, but at the same time to win the favourable notice of his host and the company. At the same time Mr. Golyadkin felt as though the ground were giving way under him, as though he were staggering, falling. At last he made his way to a corner and stood in it, like an unconcerned, rather indifferent spectator, leaning his arms on the backs of two chairs, taking complete possession of them in that way, and trying, as far as he could, to glance confidently at Olsufy Ivanovitch's guests, grouped about him. Standing nearest him was an officer, a tall and handsome fellow, beside whom Golyadkin felt himself an insect.

"These two chairs, lieutenant, are intended, one for Klara Olsufyevna, and the other for Princess Tchevtchehanov; I'm taking care of them for them," said Mr. Golyadkin breathlessly, turning his imploring eyes on the officer. The lieutenant said nothing, but turned away with a murderous smile. Checked in this direction, our hero was about to try his luck in another quarter, and directly addressed an important councillor with a cross of great distinction on his breast. But the councillor looked him up and down with such a frigid stare that Mr. Golyadkin felt distinctly as though a whole bucketful of cold water had been thrown over him. He subsided into silence. He made up his mind that it was better to keep quiet, not to open his lips, and to show that he was "all right," that he was "like every one else," and that his position, as far as he could see, was quite a proper one. With this object he rivetted his gaze on the lining of his coat, ten raised his eyes and fixed them upon a very respectable-looking gentleman. "That gentleman has a wig on," thought Mr. Golyadkin; "and if he takes off that wig he will be bald, his head will be as bare as the palm of my hand." Having made this important discovery, Mr. Golyadkin thought of the Arab Emirs, whose heads are left bare and shaven if they take off the green turbans they wear as a sign of their descent from the prophet Mahomet. Then, probably from some special connection of ideas with the Turks, he thought of Turkish slippers and at once, apropos of that, recalled the fact that Andrey Filippovitch was wearing boots, and that his boots were more like slippers than boots. It was evident that Mr. Golyadkin had become to some extent reconciled to his position. "What if that chandelier," flashed through Mr. Golyadkin's mind, "were to come down from the ceiling and fall upon the company. I should rush at once to save Klara Olsufyevna. 'Save her!' I should cry. 'Don't be alarmed, madam, it's of no consequence,

I will rescue you, I.’ Then . . .” At that moment Mr. Golyadkin looked about in search of Klara Olsufyevna, and saw Gerasimitch, Olsufy Ivanovitch’s old butler. Gerasimitch, with a most anxious and solemnly official air, was making straight for him. Mr. Golyadkin started and frowned from an unaccountable but most disagreeable sensation; he looked about him mechanically; it occurred to his mind that if only he could somehow creep off somewhere, unobserved, on the sly - simply disappear, that it, behave as though he had done nothing at all, as though the matter did not concern him in the least! . . . But before hour hero could make up his mind to do anything, Gerasimitch was standing before him.

“Do you see, Gerasimitch,” said our hero, with a little smile, addressing Gerasimitch; “you go and tell them - do you see the candle there in the chandelier, Gerasimitch - it will be falling down directly: so, you know, you must tell them to see to it; it really will fall down, Gerasimitch. . . .”

“The candle? No, the candle’s standing straight; but somebody is asking for you, sir.”

“Who is asking for me, Gerasimitch?”

“I really can’t say, sir, who it is. A man with a message. ‘Is Yakov Petrovitch Golyadkin here?’ says he. ‘Then call him out,’ says he, ‘on very urgent and important business . . .’ you see.”

“No, Gerasimitch, you are making a mistake; in that you are making a mistake, Gerasimitch.”

“I doubt it, sir.”

“No, Gerasimitch, it isn’t doubtful; there’s nothing doubtful about it, Gerasimitch. Nobody’s asking for me, but I’m quite at home here - that is, in my right place, Gerasimitch.”

Mr. Golyadkin took breath and looked about him. Yes! every one in the room, all had their eyes fixed upon him, and were listening in a sort of solemn expectation. The men had crowded a little nearer and were all attention. A little further away the ladies were whispering together. The master of the house made his appearance at no great distance from Mr. Golyadkin, and though it was impossible to detect from his expression that he, too, was taking a close and direct interest in Mr. Golyadkin’s position, for everything was being done with delicacy, yet, nevertheless, it all made our hero feel that the decisive moment had come for him. Mr. Golyadkin saw clearly that the time had come for a old stroke, the chance of putting his enemies to shame. Mr. Golyadkin was in great agitation. He was aware of a

sort of inspiration and, in a quivering and impressive voice, he began again, addressing the waiting butler -

“No, my dear fellow, no one’s calling for me. You are mistaken. I will say more: you were mistaken this morning too, when you assured me. . . . dared to assure me, I say (he raised his voice), “that Olsufy Ivanovitch, who has been my benefactor for as long as I can remember and has, in a sense, been a father to me, was shutting his door upon me at the moment of solemn family rejoicing for his paternal heart.” (Mr. Golyadkin looked about him complacently, but with deep feeling. A tear glittered on his eyelash.) “I repeat, my friend,” our hero concluded, “you were mistaken, you were cruelly and unpardonably mistaken. . . .”

The moment was a solemn one. Mr. Golyadkin felt that the effect was quite certain. He stood with modestly downcast eyes, expecting Olsufy Ivanovitch to embrace him. Excitement and perplexity were apparent in the guests, even the inflexible and terrible Gerasimitch faltered over the words “I doubt it . . ,” when suddenly the ruthless orchestra, apropos of nothing, struck up a polka. All was lost, all was scattered to the winds. Mr. Golyadkin started; Gerasimitch stepped back; everything in the room began undulating like the sea; and Vladimir Semyonovitch led the dance with Klara Olsufyevna, while the handsome lieutenant followed with Princess Tchevtchehanov. Onlookers, curious and delighted, squeezed in to watch them dancing the polka - an interesting, fashionable new dance which every one was crazy over. Mr. Golyadkin was, for the time, forgotten. But suddenly all were thrown into excitement, confusion and bustle; the music ceased . . . a strange incident had occurred. Tired out with the dance, and almost breathless with fatigue, Klara Olsufyevna, with glowing cheeks and heaving bosom, sank into an armchair, completely exhausted . . . All hearts turned to the fascinating creature, all vied with one another in complimenting her and thanking her for the pleasure conferred on them, - all at once there stood before her Mr. Golyadkin. He was pale, extremely perturbed; he, too, seemed completely exhausted, he could scarcely move. He was smiling for some reason, he stretched out his hand imploringly. Klara Olsufyevna was so taken aback that she had not time to withdraw hers and mechanically got up at his invitation. Mr. Golyadkin lurched forward, first once, then a second time, then lifted his leg, then made a scrape, then gave a sort of stamp, then stumbled . . . he, too, wanted to dance with Klara Olsufyevna. Klara Olsufyevna uttered a shriek; every one

rushed to release her hand from Mr. Golyadkin's, and in a moment our hero was carried almost ten paces away by the rush of the crowd. A circle formed round him too. Two old ladies, whom he had almost knocked down in his retreat raised a great shrieking and outcry. The confusion was awful; all were asking questions, every one was shouting, every one was finding fault. The orchestra was silent. Our hero whirled round in his circle and mechanically, with a semblance of a smile, muttered something to himself, such as, "Why not?" and "that the polka, so far, at least, as he could see, was a new and very interesting dance, invented for the diversion of the ladies. . . but that since things had taken this turn, he was ready to consent." But Mr. Golyadkin's consent no one apparently thought of asking. Our hero was suddenly aware that some one's hand was laid on his arm, that another hand was pressed against his back, that he was with peculiar solicitude being guided in a certain direction. At last he noticed that he was going straight to the door. Mr. Golyadkin wanted to say something, to do something. . . . But no, he no longer wanted to do anything. He only mechanically kept laughing in answer. At last he was aware that they were putting on his greatcoat, that his hat was thrust over his eyes; finally he felt that he was in the entry on the stairs in the dark and cold. At last he stumbled, he felt that he was falling down a precipice; he tried to cry out - and suddenly he found himself in the courtyard. The air blew fresh on him, he stood still for a minute; at that very instant, the strains reached him of the orchestra striking up again. Mr. Golyadkin suddenly recalled it all; it seemed to him that all his flagging energies came back to him again. He had been standing as though rivetted to the spot, but now he started off and rushed away headlong, anywhere, into the air, into freedom, wherever chance might take him.

CHAPTER V

It was striking midnight from all the clock towers in Petersburg when Mr. Golyadkin, beside himself, ran out on the Fontanka Quay, close to the Ismailovsky Bridge, fleeing from his foes, from persecution, from a hailstorm of nips and pinches aimed at him, from the shrieks of excited old ladies, from the Ohs and Ahs of women and from the murderous eyes of Andrey Filippovitch. Mr. Golyadkin was killed - killed entirely, in the full sense of the word, and if he still preserved the power of running, it was simply through some sort of miracle, a miracle in which at last he refused himself to believe. It was an awful November night - wet, foggy, rainy, snowy, teeming with colds in the head, fevers, swollen faces, quinseys, inflammations of all kinds and descriptions - teeming, in fact, with all the gifts of a Petersburg November. The wind howled in the deserted streets, lifting up the black water of the canal above the rings on the bank, and irritably brushing against the lean lamp-posts which chimed in with its howling in a thin, shrill creak, keeping up the endless squeaky, jangling concert with which every inhabitant of Petersburg is so familiar. Snow and rain were falling both at once. Lashed by the wind, the streams of rainwater spurted almost horizontally, as though from a fireman’s hose, pricking and stinging the face of the luckless Mr. Golyadkin like a thousand pins and needles. In the stillness of the night, broken only by the distant rumbling of carriages, the howl of the wind and the creaking of the lamp-posts, there was the dismal sound of the splash and gurgle of water, rushing from every roof, every porch, every pipe and every cornice, on to the granite of the pavement. There was not a soul, near or far, and, indeed, it seemed there could not be at such an hour and in such weather. And so only Mr. Golyadkin, alone with his despair, was fleeing in terror along the pavement of Fontanka, with his usual rapid little step, in haste to get home as soon as possible to his flat on the fourth storey in Shestilavotchny Street.

Though the snow, the rain, and all the nameless horrors of a raging snowstorm and fog, under a Petersburg November sky, were attacking Mr. Golyadkin, already shattered by misfortunes, were showing him no mercy, giving him no rest, drenching him to the bone, glueing up his eyelids, blowing right through him from all sides, baffling and perplexing him - though conspiring and combining with all his enemies to make a grand day,

evening, and night for him, in spite of all this Mr. Golyadkin was almost insensible to this final proof of the persecution of destiny: so violent had been the shock and the impression made upon him a few minutes before at the civil councillor Berendyev's! If any disinterested spectator could have glanced casually at Mr. Golyadkin's painful progress, he would certainly have said that Mr. Golyadkin looked as though he wanted to hide from himself, as though he were trying to run away from himself! Yes! It was really so. One may say more: Mr. Golyadkin did not want only to run away from himself, but to be obliterated, to cease to be, to return to dust. At the moment he took in nothing surrounding him, understood nothing of what was going on about him, and looked as though the miseries of the stormy night, of the long tramp, the rain, the snow, the wind, all the cruelty of the weather, did not exist for him. The golosh slipping off the boot on Mr. Golyadkin's right foot was left behind in the snow and slush on the pavement of Fontanka, and Mr. Golyadkin did not think of turning back to get it, did not, in fact, notice that he had lost it. He was so perplexed that, in spite of everything surrounding him, he stood several times stock still in the middle of the pavement, completely possessed by the thought of his recent horrible humiliation; at that instant he was dying, disappearing; then he suddenly set off again like mad and ran and ran without looking back, as though he were pursued, as though he were fleeing from some still more awful calamity. . . . The position was truly awful! . . . At last Mr. Golyadkin halted in exhaustion, leaned on the railing in the attitude of a man whose nose has suddenly begun to bleed, and began looking intently at the black and troubled waters of the canal. All that is known is that at that instant Mr. Golyadkin reached such a pitch of despair, was so harassed, so tortured, so exhausted, and so weakened in what feeble faculties were left him that he forgot everything, forgot the Ismailovsky Bridge, forgot Shestilavotchny Street, forgot his present plight . . .

After all, what did it matter to him? The thing was done. The decision was affirmed and ratified; what could he do? All at once . . . all at once he started and involuntarily skipped a couple of paces aside. With unaccountable uneasiness he bean gazing about him; but no one was there, nothing special had happened, and yet . . . and yet he fancied that just now, that very minute, some one was standing near him, beside him, also leaning on the railing, and - marvellous to relate! - had even said something to him,

said something quickly, abruptly, not quite intelligibly, but something quite private, something concerning himself.

“Why, was it my fancy?” said Mr. Golyadkin, looking round once more. “But where am I standing? . . . Ech, ech,” he thought finally, shaking his head, though he began gazing with an uneasy, miserable feeling into the damp, murky distance, straining his sight and doing his utmost to pierce with his short-sighted eyes the wet darkness that stretched all round him. There was nothing new, however, nothing special caught the eye of Mr. Golyadkin. Everything seemed to be all right, as it should be, that is, the snow was falling more violently, more thickly and in larger flakes, nothing could be seen twenty paces away, the lamp-posts creaked more shrilly than ever and the wind seemed to intone its melancholy song even more tearfully, more piteously, like an importunate beggar whining for a copper to get a crust of bread. At the same time a new sensation took possession of Mr. Golyadkin’s whole being: agony upon agony, terror upon terror . . . a feverish tremor ran through his veins. The moment was insufferably unpleasant! “Well, no matter; perhaps it’s no matter at all, and there’s no stain on any one’s honour. Perhaps it’s as it should be,” he went on, without understanding what he was saying. “Perhaps it will al be for the best in the end, and there will be nothing to complain of, and every one will be justified.”

Talking like this and comforting himself with words, Mr. Golyadkin shook himself a little, shook off the snow which had drifted in thick layers on his hat, his collar, his overcoat, his tie, his boots and everything - but his strange feeling, his strange obscure misery he could not get rid of, could not shake off. Somewhere in the distance there was the boom of a cannon shot. “Ach, what weather!” thought our hero.

“Tchoo! isn’t there going to be a flood? It seems as though the water has risen so violently.”

Mr. Golyadkin had hardly said or thought this when he saw a person coming towards him, belated, no doubt, like him, through some accident. An unimportant, casual incident, one might suppose, but for some unknown reason Mr. Golyadkin was troubled, even scared, and rather flurried. It was not that he was exactly afraid of some ill-intentioned man, but just that “perhaps . . . after all, who knows, this belated individual,” flashed through Mr. Golyadkin’s mind, “maybe he’s that very thing, maybe he’s the very principal thing in it, and isn’t here for nothing, but is here with an object,

crossing my path and provoking me.” Possibly, however, he did not think this precisely, but only had a passing feeling of something like it - and very unpleasant. There was no time, however, for thinking and feeling. The stranger was already within two paces. Mr. Golyadkin, as he invariably did, hastened to assume a quite peculiar air, an air that expressed clearly that he, Golyadkin, kept himself to himself, that he was “all right,” that the road was wide enough for all, and that he, Golyadkin, was not interfering with any one. Suddenly he stopped short as though petrified, as though struck by lightning, and quickly turned round after the figure which had only just passed him - turned as though some one had given him a tug from behind, as though the wind had turned him like a weathercock. The passer-by vanished quickly in the snowstorm. He, too, walked quickly; he was dressed like Mr. Golyadkin and, like him, too, wrapped up from head to foot, and he, too, tripped and trotted along the pavement of Fontanka with rapid little steps that suggested that he was a little scared.

“What - what is it?” whispered Mr. Golyadkin, smiling mistrustfully, though he trembled all over. An icy shiver ran down his back. Meanwhile, the stranger had vanished completely; there was no sound of his step, while Mr. Golyadkin still stood and gazed after him. At last, however, he gradually came to himself.

“Why, what’s the meaning of it?” he thought with vexation. “Why, have I really gone out of my mind, or what?” He turned and went on his way, making his footsteps more rapid and frequent, and doing his best not to think of anything at all. He even closed his eyes at last with the same object. Suddenly, through the howling of the wind and the uproar of the storm, the sound of steps very close at hand reached his ears again. He started and opened his eyes. Again a rapidly approaching figure stood out black before him, some twenty paces away. This little figure was hastening, tripping along, hurrying nervously; the distance between them grew rapidly less. Mr. Golyadkin could by now get a full view of the second belated companion. He looked full at him and cried out with amazement and horror; his legs gave way under him. It was the same individual who had passed him ten minutes before, and who now quite unexpectedly turned up facing him again. But this was not the only marvel that struck Mr. Golyadkin. He was so amazed that he stood still, cried out, tried to say something, and rushed to overtake the stranger, even shouted something to him, probably anxious to stop him as quickly as possible. The stranger did, in fact, stop ten paces

from Mr. Golyadkin, so that the light from the lamp-post that stood near fell full upon his whole figure - stood still, turned to Mr. Golyadkin, and with impatient and anxious face waited to hear what he would say.

“Excuse me, possibly I’m mistaken,” our hero brought out in a quavering voice.

The stranger in silence, and with an air of annoyance, turned and rapidly went on his way, as though in haste to make up for the two seconds he had wasted on Mr. Golyadkin. As for the latter, he was quivering in every nerve, his knees shook and gave way under him, and with a moan he squatted on a stone at the edge of the pavement. There really was reason, however, for his being so overwhelmed. The fact is that this stranger seemed to him somehow familiar. That would have been nothing, though. But he recognised, almost certainly recognised this man. He had often seen him, that man, had seen him some time, and very lately too; where could it have been? Surely not yesterday? But, again, that was not the chief thing that Mr. Golyadkin had often seen him before; there was hardly anything special about the man; the man at first sight would not have aroused any special attention. He was just a man like any one else, a gentleman like all other gentlemen, of course, and perhaps he had some good qualities and very valuable one too - in fact, he was a man who was quite himself. Mr. Golyadkin cherished no sort of hatred or enmity, not even the slightest hostility towards this man - quite the contrary, it would seem, indeed - and yet (and this was the real point) he would not for any treasure on earth have been willing to meet that man, and especially to meet him as he had done now, for instance. We may say more: Mr. Golyadkin knew that man perfectly well: he even knew what he was called, what his name was; and yet nothing would have induced him, and again, for no treasure on earth would he have consented to name him, to consent to acknowledge that he was called so-and-so, that his father’s name was this and his surname was that. Whether Mr. Golyadkin’s stupefaction lasted a short time or a long time, whether he was sitting for a long time on the stone of the pavement I cannot say; but, recovering himself a little at last, he suddenly fall to running, without looking round, as fast as his legs could carry him; his mind was preoccupied, twice he stumbled and almost fell - and through this circumstance his other boot was also bereaved of its golosh. At last Mr. Golyadkin slackened his pace a little to get breath, looked hurriedly round and saw that he had already, without being aware of it, run passed part of

the Nevsky Prospect and was now standing at the turning into Liteyny Street. Mr. Golyadkin turned into Liteyny Street. His position at that instant was like that of a man standing at the edge of a fearful precipice, while the earth is bursting open under him, is already shaking, moving, rocking for the last time, falling, drawing him into the abyss, and yet, the luckless wretch has not the strength, nor the resolution, to leap back, to avert his eyes from the yawning gulf below; the abyss draws him and at last he leaps into it of himself, himself hastening the moment of destruction. Mr. Golyadkin knew, felt and was firmly convinced that some other evil would certainly befall him on the way, that some unpleasantness would overtake him, that he would, for instance, meet his stranger once more: but - strange to say, he positively desired this meeting, considered it inevitable, and all he asked was that it might all be quickly over, that he should be relieved from his position in one way or another, but as soon as possible. And meanwhile he ran on and on, as though moved by some external force, for he felt a weakness and numbness in his whole being: he could not think of anything, though his thoughts caught at everything like brambles. A little lost dog, soaked and shivering, attached itself to Mr. Golyadkin, and ran beside him, scurrying along with tail and ears drooping, looking at him from time to time with timid comprehension. Some remote, long-forgotten idea - some memory of something that had happened long ago - came back into his mind now, kept knocking at his brain as with a hammer, vexing him and refusing to be shaken off.

“Ech, that horrid little cur!” whispered Mr. Golyadkin, not understanding himself.

At last he saw his stranger at the turning into Italyansky Street. But this time the stranger was not coming to meet him, but was running in the same direction as he was, and he, too, was running, a few steps in front. At last they turned into Shestilavotchny Street.

Mr. Golyadkin caught his breath. The stranger stopped exactly before the house in which Mr. Golyadkin lodged. He heard a ring at the bell and almost at the same time the grating of the iron bolt. The gate opened, the stranger stooped, darted in and disappeared. Almost at the same instant Mr. Golyadkin reached the spot and like an arrow flew in at the gate. Heedless of the grumbling porter, he ran, gasping for breath, into the yard, and immediately saw his interesting companion, whom he had lost sight of for a moment.

The stranger darted towards the staircase which led to Mr. Golyadkin's flat. Mr. Golyadkin rushed after him. The stairs were dark, damp and dirt. At every turning there were heaped-up masses of refuse from the flats, so that any unaccustomed stranger who found himself on the stairs in the dark was forced to travel to and fro for half an hour in danger of breaking his legs, cursing the stairs as well as the friends who lived in such an inconvenient place. But Mr. Golyadkin's companion seemed as though familiar with it, as though at home; he ran up lightly, without difficulty, showing a perfect knowledge of his surroundings. Mr. Golyadkin had almost caught him up; in fact, once or twice the stranger's coat flicked him on the nose. His heart stood still. The stranger stopped before the door of Mr. Golyadkin's flat, knocked on it, and (which would, however, have surprised Mr. Golyadkin at any other time) Petrushka, as though he had been sitting up in expectation, opened the door at once and, with a candle in his hand, followed the strange as the latter went in. The hero of our story dashed into his lodging beside himself; without taking off his hat or coat he crossed the little passage and stood still in the doorway of his room, as though thunderstruck. All his presentiments had come true. All that he had dreaded and surmised was coming to pass in reality. His breath failed him, his head was in a whirl. The stranger, also in his coat and hat, was sitting before him on his bed, and with a faint smile, screwing up his eyes, nodded to him in a friendly way. Mr. Golyadkin wanted to scream, but could not - to protest in some way, but his strength failed him. His hair stood on end, and he almost fell down with horror. And, indeed, there was good reason. He recognised his nocturnal visitor. The nocturnal visitor was no other than himself - Mr. Golyadkin himself, another Mr. Golyadkin, but absolutely the same as himself - in fact, what is called a double in every respect. . .

CHAPTER VI

At eight o’clock next morning Mr. Golyadkin woke up in his bed. At once all the extraordinary incidents of the previous day and the wild, incredible night, with all its almost impossible adventures, presented themselves to his imagination and memory with terrifying vividness. Such intense, diabolical malice on the part of his enemies, and, above all, the final proof of that malice, froze Mr. Golyadkin’s heart. But at the same time it was all so strange, incomprehensible, wild, it seemed so impossible, that it was really hard to credit the whole business; Mr. Golyadkin was, indeed, ready to admit himself that it was all an incredible delusion, a passing aberration of the fancy, a darkening of the mind, if he had not fortunately known by bitter experience to what lengths spite will sometimes carry any one, what a pitch of ferocity an enemy may reach when he is bent on revenging his honour and prestige. Besides, Mr. Golyadkin’s exhausted limbs, his heavy head, his aching back, and the malignant cold in his head bore vivid witness to the probability of his expedition of the previous night and upheld the reality of it, and to some extent of all that had happened during that expedition. And, indeed, Mr. Golyadkin had known long, long before that something was being got up among them, that there was some one else with them. But after all, thinking it over thoroughly, he made up his mind to keep quiet, to submit and not to protest for the time.

“They are simply plotting to frighten me, perhaps, and when they see that I don’t mind, that I make no protest, but keep perfectly quiet and put up with it meekly, they’ll give it up, they’ll give it up of themselves, give it up of their own accord.”

Such, then, were the thoughts in the mind of Mr. Golyadkin as, stretching in his bed, trying to rest his exhausted limbs, he waited for Petrushka to come into his room as usual . . . He waited for a full quarter of an hour. He heard the lazy scamp fiddling about with the samovar behind the screen, and yet he could not bring himself to call him. We may say more: Mr. Golyadkin was a little afraid of confronting Petrushka.

“Why, goodness knows,” he thought, “goodness knows how that rascal looks at it all. He keeps on saying nothing, but he has his own ideas.”

At last the door creaked and Petrushka came in with a tray in his hands. Mr. Golyadkin stole a timid glance at him, impatiently waiting to see what

would happen, waiting to see whether he would not say something about a certain circumstance. But Petrushka said nothing; he was, on the contrary, more silent, more glum and ill-humoured than usual; he looked askance from under his brows at everything; altogether it was evident that he was very much put out about something; he did not even once glance at his master, which, by the way, rather piqued the latter. Setting all he had brought on the table, he turned and went out of the room without a word.

“He knows, he knows, he knows all about it, the scoundrel!” Mr. Golyadkin grumbled to himself as he took his tea. Yet out hero did not address a single question to his servant, though Petrushka came into his room several times afterwards on various errands. Mr. Golyadkin was in great trepidation of spirit. He dreaded going to the office. He had a strong presentiment that there he would find something that would not be “just so.”

“You may be sure,” he thought, “that as soon as you go you will light upon something! Isn’t it better to endure in patience? Isn’t it better to wait a bit now? Let them do what they like there; but I’d better stay here a bit today, recover my strength, get better, and think over the whole affair more thoroughly, then afterwards I could seize the right moment, fall upon them like snow from the sky, and get off scot free myself.”

Reasoning like this, Mr. Golyadkin smoked pipe after pipe; time was flying. It was already nearly half-past nine.

“Why, it’s half-past nine already,” thought Mr. Golyadkin; “it’s late for me to make my appearance. Besides, I’m ill, of course I’m ill, I’m certainly ill; who denies it? What’s the matter with me? If they send to make inquiries, let the executive clerk come; and, indeed, what is the mater with me really? Mr back aches, I have a cough, and a cold in my head; and, in fact, it’s out of the question for me to go out, utterly out of the question in such weather. I might be taken ill and, very likely, die; nowadays especially the death-rate is so high . . .”

With such reasoning Mr. Golyadkin succeeded at last in setting his conscience at rest, and defended himself against the reprimands he expected from Andrey Filippovitch for neglect of his duty. As a rule in such cases our hero was particularly fond of justifying himself in his own eyes with all sorts of irrefutable arguments, and so completely setting his conscience at rest. And so now, having completely soothed his conscience, he took up his pipe, filled it, and had no sooner settled down comfortably to smoke, when

he jumped up quickly from the sofa, flung away the pipe, briskly washed, shaved, and brushed his hair, got into his uniform and so on, snatched up some papers, and flew to the office.

Mr. Golyadkin went into his department timidly, in quivering expectation of something unpleasant - an expectation which was none the less disagreeable for being vague and unconscious; he sat timidly down in his invariable place next the head clerk, Anton Antonovitch Syetotchkin. Without looking at anything or allowing his attention to be distracted, he plunged into the contents of the papers that lay before him. He made up his mind and vowed to himself to avoid, as far as possible, anything provocative, anything that might compromise him, such as indiscreet questions, jests, or unseemly allusions to any incidents of the previous evening; he made up his mind also to abstain from the usual interchange of civilities with his colleagues, such as inquiries after health and such like. But evidently it was impossible, out of the question, to keep to this. Anxiety and uneasiness in regard to anything near him that was annoying always worried him far more than the annoyance itself. And that was why, in spite of his inward vows to refrain from entering into anything, whatever happened, and to keep aloof from everything, Mr. Golyadkin from time to time, on the sly, very, very quietly, raised his head and stealthily looked about him to right and to left, peeped at the countenances of his colleagues, and tried to gather whether there were not something new and particular in them referring to himself and with sinister motives concealed from him. He assumed that there must be a connection between all that had happened yesterday and all that surrounded him now. At last, in his misery, he began to long for something - goodness knows what - to happen to put an end to it - even some calamity - he did not care. At this point destiny caught Mr. Golyadkin: he had hardly felt this desire when his doubts were solved in the strange and most unexpected manner.

The door leading from the next room suddenly gave a soft and timid creak, as though to indicate that the person about to enter was a very unimportant one, and a figure, very familiar to Mr. Golyadkin, stood shyly before the very table at which our hero was seated. The latter did not raise his head - no, he only stole a glance at him, the tiniest glance; but he knew all, he understood all, to every detail. He grew hot with shame, and buried his devoted head in his papers with precisely the same object with which the ostrich, pursued by hunters, hides his head in the burning sand. The new

arrival bowed to Andrey Filippovitch, and thereupon he heard a voice speaking in the regulation tone of condescending tone of politeness with which all persons in authority address their subordinates in public offices.

“Take a seat here,” said Andrey Filippovitch, motioning the newcomer to Anton Antonovitch’s table. “Here, opposite Mr. Golyadkin, and we’ll soon give you something to do.”

Andrey Filippovitch ended by making a rapid gesture that decorously admonished the newcomer of his duty, and then he immediately became engrossed in the study of the papers that lay in a heap before him.

Mr. Golyadkin lifted his eyes at last, and that he did not fall into a swoon was simply because he had foreseen it all from the first, that he had been forewarned from the first, guessing in his soul who the stranger was. Mr. Golyadkin’s first movement was to look quickly about him, to see whether there were any whispering, any office joke being cracked on the subject, whether any one’s face was agape with wonder, whether, indeed, some one had not fallen under the table from terror. But to his intense astonishment there was no sign of anything of the sort. The behaviour of his colleagues and companions surprised him. It seemed contrary to the dictates of common sense. Mr. Golyadkin was positively scared at this extraordinary reticent. The fact spoke for itself; it was a strange, horrible, uncanny thing. It was enough to rouse any one. All this, of course, only passed rapidly through Mr. Golyadkin’s mind. He felt as though he were burning in a slow fire. And, indeed, there was enough to make him. The figure that was sitting opposite Mr. Golyadkin now was his terror, was his shame, was him nightmare of the evening before; in short, was Mr. Golyadkin himself, not the Mr. Golyadkin who was sitting now in his chair with his mouth wide open and his pen petrified in his hand, not the one who acred as assistant to his chief, not the one who liked to efface himself and slink away in the crowd, not the one whose deportment plainly said, “Don’t touch me and I won’t touch you,” or, “Don’t interfere with me, you see I’m not touching you”; no, this was another Mr. Golyadkin, quite different, yet at the same time, exactly like the first - the same height, the same figure, the same clothes, the same baldness; in fact, nothing, absolutely nothing, was lacking to complete the likeness, so that if one were to set them side by side, nobody, absolutely nobody, could have undertaken to distinguish which was the real Mr. Golyadkin and which was the new one, which was the original and which was the copy.

Our hero was - if the comparison can be made - in the position of a man upon whom some practical joker has stealthily, by way of jest, turned a burning glass.

“What does it mean? Is it a dream?” he wondered. “Is it reality or the continuation of what happened yesterday? And besides, by what right is this all being done? Who sanctioned such a clerk, who authorized this? Am I asleep, am I in a waking dream?”

Mr. Golyadkin tried pinching himself, even tried to screw up his courage to pinch some one else . . . No, it was not a dream and that was all about it. Mr. Golyadkin felt that the sweat was trickling down him in big drops; he felt that what was happening to him was something incredible, unheard of, and for that very reason was, to complete his misery, utterly unseemly, for Mr. Golyadkin realized and felt how disadvantageous it was to be the first example of such a burlesque adventure. He even began to doubt his own existence, and though he was prepared for anything and had been longing for his doubts to be settled in any way whatever, yet the actual reality was startling in its unexpectedness. His misery was poignant and overwhelming. At times he lost all power of thought and memory. Coming to himself after such a moment, he noticed that he was mechanically and unconsciously moving the pen over the paper. Mistrustful of himself, he began going over what he had written - and could make nothing of it. At last the other Mr. Golyadkin, who had been sitting discreetly and decorously at the table, got up and disappeared through the door into the other room. Mr. Golyadkin looked around - everything was quiet; he heard nothing but the scratching of pens, the rustle of turning over pages, and conversation in the corners furthest from Andrey Filippovitch’s seat. Mr. Golyadkin looked at Anton Antonovitch, and as, in all probability, our hero’s countenance fully reflected his real condition and harmonized with the whole position, and was consequently, from one point of view, very remarkable, good-natured Anton Antonovitch, laying aside his pen, inquired after his health with marked sympathy.

“I’m very well, thank God, Anton Antonovitch,” said Mr. Golyadkin, stammering. “I am perfectly well, Anton Antonovitch. I am all right now, Anton Antonovitch,” he added uncertainly, not yet fully trusting Anton Antonovitch, whose name he had mentioned so often.

“I fancied you were not quite well: though that’s not to be wondered at; no, indeed! Nowadays especially there’s such a lot of illness going about.

Do you know . . .”

“Yes, Anton Antonovitch, I know there is such a lot of illness . . . I did not mean that, Anton Antonovitch,” Mr. Golyadkin went on, looking intently at Anton Antonovitch. “You see, Anton Antonovitch, I don’t even know how you, that is, I mean to say, how to approach this matter, Anton Antonovitch. . . .”

“How so? I really . . . do you know . . . I must confess I don’t quite understand; you must . . . you must explain, you know, in what way you are in difficulties,” said Anton Antonovitch, beginning to be in difficulties himself, seeing that there were actually tears in Mr. Golyadkin’s eyes.

“Really, Anton Antonovitch . . . I . . . here . . . there’s a clerk here, Anton Antonovitch . . .”

“Well! I don’t understand now.”

“I mean to say, Anton Antonovitch, there’s a new clerk here.”

“Yes, there is; a namesake of yours.”

“What?” cried Mr. Golyadkin.

“I say a namesake of yours; his name’s Golyadkin too. Isn’t he a brother of yours?”

“No, Anton Antonovitch, I . . .”

“H’m! you don’t say so! Why, I thought he must be a relation of yours. Do you know, there’s a sort of family likeness.”

Mr. Golyadkin was petrified with astonishment, and for the moment he could not speak. To treat so lightly such a horrible, unheard-of thing, a thing undeniably rare and curious in its way, a thing which would have amazed even an unconcerned spectator, to talk of a family resemblance when he could see himself as in a looking-glass!

“Do you know, Yakov Petrovitch, what I advise you to do?” Anton Antonovitch went on. “Go and consult a doctor. Do you know, you look somehow quite unwell. You eyes look peculiar . . . you know, there’s a peculiar expression in them.”

“No, Anton Antonovitch, I feel, of course . . . that is, I keep wanting to ask about this clerk.”

“Well?”

“That is, have not you noticed, Anton Antonovitch, something peculiar about him, something very marked?”

“That is . . .?”

“That is, I mean, Anton Antonovitch, a striking likeness with somebody, for instance; with me, for instance? You spoke just now, you see, Anton Antonovitch, of a family likeness. You let slip the remark. . . . You know there really are sometimes twins exactly alike, like two drops of water, so that they can’t be told apart. Well, it’s that that I mean.”

“To be sure,” said Anton Antonovitch, after a moment’s thought, speaking as though he were struck by the fact for the first time: “yes, indeed! You are right, there is a striking likeness, and you are quite right in what you say. You really might be mistaken for one another,” he went on, opening his eyes wider and wider; “and, do you know, Yakov Petrovitch, it’s positively a marvellous likeness, fantastic, in fact, as the saying is; that is, just as you . . . Have you observed, Yakov Petrovitch? I wanted to ask you to explain it; yes, I must confess I didn’t take particular notice at first. It’s wonderful, it’s really wonderful! And, you know, you are not a native of these parts, are you, Yakov Petrovitch?”

“No.”

“He is not from these parts, you know, either. Perhaps he comes from the same part of the country as you do. Where, may I make bold to inquire, did your mother live for the most part?”

“You said . . . you say, Anton Antonovitch, that he is not a native of these parts?”

“No, he is not. And indeed how strange it is!” continued the talkative Anton Antonovitch, for whom it was a genuine treat to gossip. “It may well arouse curiosity; and yet, you know, you might pass him by, brush against him, without noticing anything. But you mustn’t be upset about it. It’s a thing that does happen. Do you know, the same thing, I must tell you, happened to my aunt on my mother’s side; she saw her own double before her death . . .”

“No, I - excuse me for interrupting you, Anton Antonovitch - I wanted to find out, Anton Antonovitch, how that clerk . . . that is, on what footing is he here?”

“In the place of Semyon Ivanovitch, to fill the vacancy left by his death; the post was vacant, so he was appointed. Do you know, I’m told poor Semyon Ivanovitch left three children, all tiny dots. The widow fell at the feet of his Excellency. They do say she’s hiding something; she’s got a bit of money, but she’s hiding it.”

“No, Anton Antonovitch, I was still referring to that circumstance.”

“You mean . . .? To be sure! But why are you so interested in that? I tell you not to upset yourself. All this is temporary to some extent. Why, after all, you know, you have nothing to do with it. So it has been ordained by God Almighty, it’s His will, and it is sinful repining. His wisdom is apparent in it. And as far as I can make out, Yakov Petrovitch, you are not to blame in any way. There are all sorts of strange things in the world! Mother Nature is liberal with her gifts, and you are not called upon to answer for it, you won’t be responsible. Here, for instance, you have heard, I expect, of those - what’s their name? - oh, the Siamese twins who are joined together at the back, live and eat and sleep together. I’m told they get a lot of money.”

“Allow me, Anton Antonovitch . . .”

“I understand, I understand! Yes! But what of it? It’s no matter, I tell you, ad far as I can see there’s nothing for you to upset yourself about. After all, he’s a clerk - as a clerk he seems to be a capable man. He says his name is Golyadkin, that he’s not a native of this district, and that he’s a titular councillor. He had a personal interview with his Excellency.”

“And how did his Excellency . . .?”

“It was all right; I am told he gave a satisfactory account of himself, gave his reasons, said, ‘It’s like this, your Excellency,’ and that he was without means and anxious to enter the service, and would be particularly flattered to be serving under his Excellency . . . all that was proper, you know; he expressed himself neatly. He must be a sensible man. But of course he came with a recommendation; he couldn’t have got in without that . . .”

“Oh, from whom . . . that is, I mean, who is it has had a hand in this shameful business?”

“Yes, a good recommendation, I’m told; his Excellency, I’m told laughed with Andrey Filippovitch.”

“Laughed with Andrey Filippovitch?”

“Yes, he only just smiled and said that it was all right, and that he had nothing against it, so long as he did his duty . . .”

“Well, and what more? You relieve me to some extent, Anton Antonovitch; go on, I entreat you.”

“Excuse me, I must tell you again . . . Well, then, come, it’s nothing, it’s a very simple matter; you mustn’t upset yourself, I tell you, and there’s nothing suspicious about it. . .”

“No. I . . . that is, Anton Antonovitch, I want to ask you, didn’t his Excellency say anything more . . .about me, for instance?”

“Well! To be sure! No, nothing of the sort; you can set your mind quite at rest. You know it is, of course, a rather striking circumstance, and at first . . .why, here, I, for instance, I scarcely noticed it. I really don’t know why I didn’t notice it till you mentioned it. But you can set your mind at rest entirely. He said nothing particular, absolutely nothing,” added good-natured Anton Antonovitch, getting up from his chair.

“So then, Anton, Antonovitch, I . . .”

“Oh, you must excuse me. Here I’ve been gossiping about these trivial matters, and I’ve business that is important and urgent. I must inquire about it.”

“Anton Antonovitch!” Andrey Filippovitch’s voice sounded, summoning him politely, “his Excellency has been asking for you.”

“This minute, I’m coming this minute, Andrey Filippovitch.” And Anton Antonovitch, taking a pile of papers, flew off first to Andrey Filippovitch and then into his Excellency’s room.

“Then what is the meaning of it?” thought Mr. Golyadkin. “Is there some sort of game going on? So the wind’s in that quarter now . . . That’s just as well; so things have taken a much pleasanter turn,” our hero said to himself, rubbing his hands, and so delighted that he scarcely knew where he was. “So our position is an ordinary thing. So it turns out to be all nonsense, it comes to nothing at all. No one has done anything really, and they are not budging, the rascals, they are sitting busy over their work; that’s splendid, splendid! I like the good-natured fellow, I’ve always liked him, and I’m always ready to respect him . . . though it must be said one doesn’t know what to think; this Anton Antonovitch . . . I’m afraid to trust him; his hair’s grey, and he’s getting shaky. It’s an immense and glorious thing that his Excellency said nothing, and let it pass! It’s a good thing! I approve! Only why does Andrey Filippovitch interfere with his grins? What’s he got to do with it? The old rogue. Always on my track, always, like a black cat, on the watch to run across a man’s path, always thwarting and annoying a man, always annoying and thwarting a man . . .”

Mr. Golyadkin looked around him again, and again his hopes revived. Yet he felt that he was troubled by one remote idea, an unpleasant idea. It even occurred to him that he might try somehow to make up to the clerks, to be the first in the field even (perhaps when leaving the office or going up to

them as though about his work), to drop a hint in the course of conversation, saying, “This is how it is, what a striking likeness, gentlemen, a strange circumstance, a burlesque farce!” - that is, treat it all lightly, and in this way sound the depth of the danger. “Devils breed in still waters,” our hero concluded inwardly.

Mr. Golyadkin, however, only contemplated this; he thought better of it in time. He realized that this would be going too far. “That’s your temperament,” he said to himself, tapping himself lightly on the forehead; “as soon as you gain anything you are delighted! You’re a simple soul! No, you and I had better be patient, Yakov Petrovitch; let us wait and be patient!”

Nevertheless, as we have mentioned already, Mr. Golyadkin was buoyed up with the most confident hopes, feeling as though he had risen from the dead.

“No matter,” he thought, “it’s as though a hundred tons had been lifted off my chest! Here is a circumstance, to be sure! The box has been opened by the lid. Krylov is right, a clever chap, a rogue, that Krylov, and a great fable-write! And as for him, let him work in the office, and good luck to him so long as he doesn’t meddle or interfere with any one; let him work in the office - I consent and approve!”

Meanwhile the hours were passing, flying by, and before he noticed the time it struck four. The office was closed. Andrey Filippovitch took his hat, and all followed his example in due course. Mr. Golyadkin dawdled a little on purpose, long enough to be the last to go out when all the others had gone their several ways. Going out from the street he felt as though he were in Paradise, so that he even felt inclined to go a longer way round, and to walk along the Nevsky Prospect.

“To be sure this is destiny,” thought our hero, “this unexpected turn in affairs. And the weather’s more cheerful, and the frost and the little sledges. And the frost suits the Russian, the Russian gets on capitally with the frost. I like the Russian. And the dear little snow, and the first few flakes in autumn; the sportsman would say, ‘It would be nice to go shooting hares in the first snow.’ Well, there, it doesn’t matter.”

This was how Mr. Golyadkin’s enthusiasm found expression. Yet something was fretting in his brain, not exactly melancholy, but at times he had such a gnawing at his heart that he did not know how to find relief.

“Let us wait for the day, though, and then we shall rejoice. And, after all, you know, what does it matter? Come, let us think it over, let us look at it. Come, let us consider it, my young friend, let us consider it. Why, a man’s exactly like you in the first place, absolutely the same. Well, what is there in that? If there is such a man, why should I weep over it? What is it to me? I stand aside, I whistle to myself, and that’s all! That’s what I laid myself open to, and that’s all about it! Let him work in the office! Well, it’s strange and marvellous, they say, that the Siamese twins . . . But why bring in Siamese twins? They are twins, of course, but even great men, you know, sometimes look queer creatures. In fact, we know from history that the famous Suvorov used to crow like a cock . . . But there, he did all that with political motives; and he was a great general . . .but what are generals, after all? But I keep myself to myself, that’s all, and I don’t care about any one else, and, secure in my innocence, I scorn my enemies. I am not one to intrigue, and I’m proud of it. Gentle, straightforward, neat and nice, meek and mild.”

All at once Mr. Golyadkin broke off, his tongue failed him and he began trembling like a leaf; he even closed his eyes for a minute. Hoping, however, that the object of his terror was only an illusion, he opened his eyes at last and stole a timid glance to the right. No, it was not an illusion! . . . His acquaintance of that morning was tripping along by his side, smiling, peeping into his face, and apparently seeking an opportunity to begin a conversation with him. The conversation was not begun, however. They both walked like this for about fifty paces. All Mr. Golyadkin’s efforts were concentrated on muffling himself up, hiding himself in his coat and pulling his hat down as far as possible over his eyes. To complete his mortification, his companion’s coat and hat looked as though they had been taken off Mr. Golyadkin himself.

“Sir,” our hero articulated at last, trying to speak almost in a whisper, and not looking at his companion, “we are going different ways, I believe . . . I am convinced of it, in fact,” he said, after a pause. “I am convinced, indeed, that you quite understand me,” he added, rather severely, in conclusion.

“I could have wished . . ,” his companion pronounced at last, “I could have wished . . . no doubt you will be magnanimous and pardon me . . . I don’t know to whom to address myself here . . . my circumstances . . . I trust you will pardon my intrusiveness. I fancied, indeed, that, moved by

compassion, you showed some interest in me this morning. On my side, I felt drawn to you from the first moment. I . . .”

At this point Mr. Golyadkin inwardly wished that his companion might sink into the earth.

“If I might venture to hope that you would accord me an indulgent hearing, Yakov Petrovitch . . .”

“We - here, we - we . . . you had better come home with me,” answered Mr. Golyadkin. “We will cross now to the other side of the Nevsky Prospect, it will be more convenient for us there, and then by the little back street . . . we’d better go by the back street.”

“Very well, by all means let us go by the back street,” our hero’s meek companion responded timidly, suggesting by the tone of his reply that it was not for him to choose, and that in his position he was quite prepared to accept the back street. As for Mr. Golyadkin, he was utterly unable to grasp what was happening to him. He could not believe in himself. He could not get over his amazement.

CHAPTER VII

He recovered himself a little on the staircase as he went up to his flat.
“Oh, I’m a sheep’s head,” he railed at himself inwardly. “Where am I taking him? I am thrusting my head into the noose. What will Petrushka think, seeing us together? What will the scoundrel dare to imagine now? He’s suspicious . . .”

But it was too late to regret it. Mr. Golyadkin knocked at the door; it was opened, and Petrushka began taking off the visitor’s coat as well as his master’s. Mr. Golyadkin looked askance, just stealing a glance at Petrushka, trying to read his countenance and divine what he was thinking. But to his intense astonishment he saw that his servant showed no trace of surprise, but seemed, on the contrary, to be expected something of the sort. Of course he did not look morose, as it was; he kept his eyes turned away and looked as though he would like to fall upon somebody.

“Hasn’t somebody bewitched them all today?” thought our hero. “Some devil must have got round them. There certainly must be something peculiar in the whole lot of them today. Damn it all, what a worry it is!”

Such were Mr. Golyadkin’s thoughts and reflections as he led his visitor into his room and politely asked him to sit down. The visitor appeared to be greatly embarrassed, he was very shy, and humbly watched every movement his host made, caught his glance, and seemed trying to divine his thoughts from them. There was a downtrodden, crushed, scared look about all his gestures, so that - if the comparison may be allowed - he was at that moment rather like the man who, having lost his clothes, is dressed up in somebody else’s: the sleeves work up to the elbows, the waist is almost up to his neck, and he keeps every minute pulling down the short waistcoat; he wriggles sideways and turns away, tries to hide himself, or peeps into every face, and listens whether people are talking of his position, laughing at him or putting him to shame - and he is crimson with shame and overwhelmed with confusion and wounded vanity. . . . Mr. Golyadkin put down his hat in the window, and carelessly sent it flying to the floor. The visitor darted at once to pick it up, brushed off the dust, and carefully put it back, while he laid his own on the floor near a chair, on the edge of which he meekly seated himself. This little circumstance did something to open Mr. Golyadkin’s eyes; he realized that the man was in great straits, and so did

not put himself out for his visitor as he had done at first, very properly leaving all that to the man himself. The visitor, for his part, did nothing either; whether he was shy, a little ashamed, or from politeness was waiting for his host to begin is not certain and would be difficult to determine. At that moment Petrushka came in; he stood still in the doorway, and fixed his eyes in the direction furthest from where the visitor and his master were seated.

“Shall I bring in dinner for two?” he said carelessly, in a husky voice.

“I - I don’t know . . . you . . . yes, bring dinner for two, my boy.”

Petrushka went out. Mr. Golyadkin glanced at his visitor. The latter crimsoned to his ears. Mr. Golyadkin was a kind-hearted man, and so in the kindness of his heart he at once elaborated a theory.

“The fellow’s hard up,” he thought. “Yes, and in his situation only one day. Most likely he’s suffered in his time. Maybe his good clothes are all that he has, and nothing to get him a dinner. Ah, poor fellow, how crushed he seems! But no matter; in a way it’s better so. . . . Excuse me,” began Mr. Golyadkin, “allow me to ask what I may call you.”

“I . . . I . . . I’m Yakov Petrovitch,” his visitor almost whispered, as though conscience-stricken and ashamed, as though apologizing for being called Yakov Petrovitch too.

“Yakov Petrovitch!” repeated our visitor, unable to conceal his confusion.

“Yes, just so. . . . The same name as yours,” responded the meek visitor, venturing to smile and speak a little jocosely. But at once he drew back, assuming a very serious air, though a little disconcerted, noticing that his host was in no joking mood.

“You . . . allow me to ask you, to what am I indebted for the honour . . .?”

“Knowing your generosity and your benevolence,” interposed the visitor in a rapid but timid voice, half rising from his seat, “I have ventured to appeal to you and to beg for your . . . acquaintance and protection . . ,” he concluded, choosing his phrases with difficulty and trying to select words not too flattering or servile, that he might not compromise his dignity and not so bold as to suggest an unseemly equality. In fact, one may say the visitor behaved like a gentlemanly beggar with a darned waistcoat, with an honourable passport in his pocket, who has not yet learnt by practice to hold out his hand properly for alms.

“You perplex me,” answered Mr. Golyadkin, gazing round at himself, his walls and his visitor. “In what could I . . . that is, I mean, in what way could I be of service to you?”

“I felt drawn to you, Yakov Petrovitch, at first sight, and, graciously forgive me, I built my hopes Yakov Petrovitch. I . . . I’m in a desperate plight here, Yakov Petrovitch; I’m poor, I’ve had a great deal of trouble, Yakov Petrovitch, and have only recently come here. Learning that you, with your innate goodness and excellence of heart, are of the same name . . .”

Mr. Golyadkin frowned.

“Of the same name as myself and a native of the same district, I made up my mind to appeal to you, and to make known to you my difficult position.”

“Very good, very good; I really don’t know what to say,” Mr. Golyadkin responded in an embarrassed voice. “We’ll have a talk after dinner . . .”

The visitor bowed; dinner was brought in. Petrushka laid the table, and Mr. Golyadkin and his visitor proceeded to partake of it. The dinner did not last long, for they were both in a hurry, the host because he felt ill at ease, and was, besides, ashamed that the dinner was a poor one - he was partly ashamed because he wanted to give the visitor a good meal, and partly because he wanted to show him he did not live like a beggar. The visitor, on his side too, was in terrible confusion and extremely embarrassed. When he had finished the piece of bread he had taken, he was afraid to put out his hand to take another piece, was ashamed to help himself to the best morsels, and was continually assuring his host that he was not at all hungry, that the dinner was excellent, that he was absolutely satisfied with it, and should not forget it to his dying day. When the meal was over Mr. Golyadkin lighted his pipe, and offered a second, which was brought in, to his visitor. They sat facing each other, and the visitor began telling his adventures.

Mr. Golyadkin junior’s story lasted for three or four hours. His history was, however, composed of the most trivial and wretched, if one may say so, incidents. It dealt with details of service in some lawcourt in the provinces, of prosecutors and presidents, of some department intrigues, of the depravity of some registration clerks, of an inspector, of the sudden appointment of a new chief in the department, of how the second Mr. Golyadkin had suffered quite without any fault on his part; of his aged aunt, Pelegea Semyonovna; of how, through various intrigues on the part of his enemies, he had lost his situation, and had come to Petersburg on foot; of

the harassing and wretched time he had spent here in Petersburg, how for a long time he had tried in vain to get a job, had spent all his money, had nothing left, had been living almost in the street, lived on a crust of bread and washed it down with his tears, slept on the bare floor, and finally how some good Christian had exerted himself on his behalf, had given him an introduction, and had nobly got him into a new berth. Mr. Golyadkin's visitor shed tears as he told his story, and wiped his eyes with a blue-check handkerchief that looked like oilcloth. He ended by making a clean breast of it to Mr. Golyadkin, and confessing that he was not only for the time without means of subsistence and money for a decent lodging, but had not even the wherewithal to fit himself out properly, so that he had, he said in conclusion, been able to get together enough for a pair of wretched boots, and that he had had to hire a uniform for the time.

Mr. Golyadkin was melted; he was genuinely touched. Even though his visitor's story was the paltriest story, every word of it was like heavenly manna to his heart. The fact was that Mr. Golyadkin was beginning to forget his last misgivings, to surrender his soul to freedom and rejoicing, and at last mentally dubbed himself a fool. It was all so natural! And what a thing to break his heart over, what a thing to be so distressed about! To be sure there was, there really was, one ticklish circumstance - but, after all, it was not a misfortune; it could be no disgrace to a man, it could not cast a slur on his honour or ruin his career, if he were innocent, since nature herself was mixed up in it. Moreover, the visitor begged for protection, wept, railed at destiny, seemed such an artless, pitiful, insignificant person, with no craft or malice about him, and he seemed now to be ashamed himself, though perhaps on different grounds, of the strange resemblance of his countenance with that of Mr. Golyadkin's. his behaviour was absolutely unimpeachable; his one desire was to please his host, and he looked as a man looks who feels conscience-stricken and to blame in regard to some one else. If any doubtful point were touched upon, for instance, the visitor at once agreed with Mr. Golyadkin's opinion. If by mistake he advanced an opinion in opposition to Mr. Golyadkin's and afterwards noticed that he had made a slip, he immediately corrected his mistake, explained himself and made it clear that he meant the same thing as his host, that he thought as he did and took the same view of everything as he did. In fact, the visitor made every possible effort to "make up to" Mr. Golyadkin, so that the latter made up his mind at last that his visitor must be a very amiable person in every way.

Meanwhile, tea was brought in; it was nearly nine o’clock. Mr. Golyadkin felt in a very good-humour, grew lively and skittish, let himself go a little, and finally plunged into a most animated and interesting conversation with his visitor. In his festive moments Mr. Golyadkin was fond of telling interesting anecdotes. So now he told the visitor a great deal about Petersburg, about its entertainments and attractions, about the theatre, the clubs, about Brulov’s picture, and about the two Englishmen who came from England to Petersburg on purpose to look at the iron railing of the Summer Garden, and returned at once when they had seen it; about the office; about Olsufy Ivanovitch and Andrey Filippovitch; about the way that Russia was progressing, was hour by hour progressing towards a state of perfection, so that

“Arts and letters flourish here today”;

about an anecdote he had lately read in the Northern Bee concerning a boa-constrictor in India of immense strength; about Baron Brambeus, and so on. In short, Mr. Golyadkin was quite happy, first, because his mind was at rest, secondly, because, so far from being afraid of his enemies, he was quite prepared now to challenge them all to mortal combat; thirdly, because he was now in the role of patron and was doing a good deed. Yet he was conscious at the bottom of his heart that he was not perfectly happy, that there was still a hidden worm gnawing at his heart, though it was only a tiny one. He was extremely worried by the thought of the previous evening at Olsufy Ivanovitch’s. He would have given a great deal now for nothing to have happened of what took place then.

“It’s no matter, though!” our hero decided at last, and he firmly resolved in his heart to behave well in future and never to be guilty of such pranks again. As Mr. Golyadkin was now completely worked up, and had suddenly become almost blissful, the fancy took him to have a jovial time. Rum was brought in by Petrushka, and punch was prepared. The visitor and his host drained a glass each, and then a second. The visitor appeared even more amiable than before, and gave more than one proof of his frankness and charming character; he entered keenly into Mr. Golyadkin’s joy, seemed only to rejoice in his rejoicing, and to look upon him as his one and only benefactor. Taking up a pen and a sheet of paper, he asked Golyadkin not to look at what he was going to write, but afterwards showed his host what he had written. It turned out to be a verse of four lines, written with a good

deal of feeling, in excellent language and handwriting, and evidently was the composition of the amiable visitor himself. the lines were as follows -

“If thou forget me,

I shall not forget thee;

Though all things may be,

Do not thou forget me.” With tears in his eyes Mr. Golyadkin embraced his companion, and, completely overcome by his feelings, he began to initiate his friend into some of his own secrets and private affairs, Andrey Filippovitch and Klara Olsufyevna being prominent in his remarks.

“Well, you may be sure we shall get on together, Yakov Petrovitch,” said our hero to his visitor. “You and I will take to each other like fish to the water, Yakov Petrovitch; we shall be like brothers; we’ll be cunning, my dear fellow, we’ll work together; we’ll get up an intrigue, too, to pay them out. To pay them out we’ll get up an intrigue too. And don’t you trust any of them. I know you, Yakov Petrovitch, and I understand your character; you’ll tell them everything straight out, you know, you’re a guileless soul! You must hold aloof from them all, my boy.”

His companion entirely agreed with him, thanked Mr. Golyadkin, and he, too, grew tearful at last.

“Do you know, Yasha,” Mr. Golyadkin went on in a shaking voice, weak with emotion, “you must stay with me for a time, or stay with me for ever. We shall get on together. What do you say, brother, eh? And don’t you worry or repine because there’s such a strange circumstance about us now; it’s a sin to repine, brother; it’s nature! And Mother Nature is liberal with her gifts, so there, brother Yasha! It’s from love for you that I speak, from brotherly love. But we’ll be cunning, Yasha; we’ll lay a mine, too, and we’ll make them laugh the other side of their mouths.”

They reached their third and fourth glasses of punch at last, and then Mr. Golyadkin began to be aware of two sensations: the one that he was extraordinarily happy, and the other that he could not stand on his legs. The guest was, of course, invited to stay the night. A bed was somehow made up on two chairs. Mr. Golyadkin junior declared that under a friend’s roof the bare floor would be a soft bed, that for his part he could sleep anywhere, humbly and gratefully; that he was in paradise now, that he had been through a great deal of trouble and grief in his time; he had seen ups and downs, had all sorts of things to put up with, and - who could tell what the future would be? - maybe he would have still more to put up with. Mr.

Golyadkin senior protested against this, and began to maintain that one must put one's faith in God. His guest entirely agreed, observing that there was, of course, no one like God. At this point Mr. Golyadkin senior observed that in certain respects the Turks were right in calling upon God even in their sleep. Then, though disagreeing with certain learned professors in the slanders thy had promulgated against the Turkish prophet Mahomet and recognizing him as a great politician in his own line, Mr. Golyadkin passed to a very interesting description of an Algerian barber's shop which he had read in a book of miscellanies. The friends laughed heartily at the simplicity of the Turks, but paid dur tribute to their fanaticism, which they ascribed to opium. . . . At last the guest began undressing, and thinking in the kindness of his heart that very likely he hadn't even a decent shirt, Mr. Golyadkin went behind the screen to avoid embarrassing a man who had suffered enough, and partly to reassure himself as far as possible about Petrushka, to sound him, to cheer him up if he could, to be kind to the fellow so that every one might be happy and that everything might be pleasant all round. It must be remarked that Petrushka still rather bothered Mr. Golyadkin.

"You go to bed now, Pyotr," Mr. Golyadkin said blandly, going into his servant's domain; "you go to bed now and wake me up and eight o'clock. Do you understand Petrushka?"

Mr. Golyadkin spoke with exceptional softness and friendliness. But Petrushka remained mute. He was busy making his bed, and did not even turn round to face his master, which he ought to have done out of simple respect.

"Did you hear what I said, Pyotr?" Mr. Golyadkin went on. "You go to bed now and wake me tomorrow at eight o'clock; do you understand?"

"Why, I know that; what's the use of telling me?" Petrushka grumbled to himself.

"Well, that's right, Petrushka; I only mention it that you might be happy and at rest. Now we are all happy, so I want you, too, to be happy and satisfied. And now I wish you good-night. Sleep, Petrushka, sleep; we all have to work . .

. Don't think anything amiss, my man . . ." Mr. Golyadkin began, but stopped short. "Isn't this too much?" he thought. "Haven't I gone too far? That's how it always is; I always overdo things."

Our hero felt much dissatisfied with himself as he left Petrushka. He was, besides, rather wounded by Petrushka's grumpiness and rudeness. "One jests with the rascal, his master does him too much honour, and the rascal does not feel it," thought Mr. Golyadkin. "But there, that's the nasty way of all that sort of people!"

Somewhat shaken, he went back to his room, and, seeing that his guest had settled himself for the night, he sat down on the edge of his bed for a minute.

"Come, you must own, Yasha," he began in a whisper, wagging his head, "you're a rascal, you know; what a way you've treated me! You see, you've got my name, do you know that?" he went on, jesting in a rather familiar way with his visitor. At last, saying a friendly good-night to him, Mr. Golyadkin began preparing for the night. The visitor meanwhile began snoring. Mr. Golyadkin in his turn got into bed, laughing and whispering to himself: "You are drunk today, my dear fellow, Yakov Petrovitch, you rascal, you old Golyadkin - what a surname to have! Why, what are you so pleased about? You'll be crying tomorrow, you know, you sniveller; what am I to do with you?"

At this point a rather strange sensation pervaded Mr. Golyadkin's whole being, something like doubt or remorse.

"I've been over-excited and let myself go," he thought; "now I've a noise in my head and I'm drunk; I couldn't restrain myself, ass that I am! and I've been babbling bushels of nonsense, and, like a rascal, I was planning to be so sly. Of course, to forgive and forget injuries is the height of virtue; but it's a bad thing, nevertheless! Yes, that is so!"

At this point Mr. Golyadkin got up, took a candle and went on tiptoe to look once more at his sleeping guest. He stood over him for a long time meditating deeply.

"An unpleasant picture! A burlesque, a regular burlesque, and that's the fact of the matter!"

At last Mr. Golyadkin settled down finally. There was a humming, a buzzing, a ringing in his head. He grew more and more drowsy . . . tried to think about something very important, some delicate question - but could not. Sleep descended upon his devoted head, and he slept as people generally do sleep who are not used to drinking and have consumed five glasses of punch at some festive gathering.

CHAPTER VIII

Mr. Golyadkin woke up next morning at eight o'clock as usual; as soon as he was awake he recalled all the adventures of the previous evening - and frowned as he recalled them. "Ugh, I did play the fool last night!" he thought, sitting up and glancing at his visitor's bed. But what was his amazement when he saw in the room no trace, not only of his visitor, but even of the bed on which his visitor had slept!

"What does it mean?" Mr. Golyadkin almost shrieked. "What can it be? What does this new circumstance portend?"

While Mr. Golyadkin was gazing in open-mouthed bewilderment at the empty spot, the door creaked and Petrushka came in with the tea-tray.

"Where, where?" our hero said in a voice hardly audible, pointing to the place which had ben occupied by his visitor the night before.

At first Petrushka made no answer and did not look at his master, but fixed his eyes upon the corner to the right till Mr. Golyadkin felt compelled to look into that corner too. After a brief silence, however, Petrushka in a rude and husky voice answered that his master was not at home.

"You idiot; why I'm your master, Petrushka!" said Mr. Golyadkin in a breaking voice, looking open-eyed a his servant.

Petrushka made no reply, but he gave Mr. Golyadkin such a look that the latter crimsoned to his ears - looked at hm with an insulting reproachfulness almost equivalent to open abuse. Mr. Golyadkin was utterly flabbergasted, as the saying is. At last Petrushka explained that the 'other one' had gone away an hour and a half ago, and would not wait. His answer, of course, sounded truthful and probable; it was evident that Petrushka was not lying; that his insulting look and the phrase the 'other one' employed by him were only the result of the disgusting circumstance with which he was already familiar, but still he understood, though dimly, that something was wrong, and that destiny had some other surprise, not altogether a pleasant one, in store for him.

"All right, we shall see," he thought to himself. "We shall see in due time; we'll get to the bottom of all this . . . Oh, Lord, have mercy upon us!" he moaned in conclusion, in quite a different voice. "And why did I invite him to what end did I do all that? Why, I am thrusting my head into their thievish noose myself; I am tying the noose with my own hands. Ach, you

fool, you fool! You can’t resist babbling like some silly boy, some chancery clerk, some wretched creature of no class at all, some rag, some rotten dishcloth; you’re a gossip, an old woman! . . . Oh, all ye saints! And he wrote verses, the rogue, and expressed his love for me! How could . . . How can I show him the door in a polite way if he turns up again, the rogue? Of course, there are all sorts of ways and means. I can say this is how it is, my salary being so limited . . . Or scare him off in some way saying that, taking this and that into consideration, I am forced to make clear . . . that he would have to pay an equal share of the cost of board and lodging, and pay the money in advance. H’m! No, damn it all, no! That would be degrading to me. It’s not quite delicate! Couldn’t I do something like this: suggest to Petrushka that he should annoy him in some way, should be disrespectful, be rude, and get rid of him in that way. Set them at each other in some way. . . . No, damn it all, no! It’s dangerous and again, if one looks at it from that point of view - it’s not the right thing at all! Not the right thing at all! But there, even if he doesn’t come, it will be a bad look-out, too! I babbled to him last night! . . . Ach, it’s a bad look-out, a bad look-out! Ach, we’re in a bad way! Oh, I’m a cursed fool, a cursed fool! you can’t train yourself to behave as you ought, you can’t conduct yourself reasonably. Well, what if he comes and refuses. And God grant he may come! I should be very glad if he did come. . . .”

Such were Mr. Golyadkin’s reflections as he swallowed his tea and glanced continually at the clock on the wall.

“It’s a quarter to nine; it’s time to go. And something will happen! What will there be there? I should like to know what exactly lies hidden in this - that is, the object, the aim, and the various intrigues. It would be a good thing to find out what all these people are plotting, and what will be their first step. . . .”

Mr. Golyadkin could endure it no longer. He threw down his unfinished pipe, dressed and set off for the office, anxious to ward off the danger if possible and to reassure himself about everything by his presence in person. There was danger: he knew himself that there was danger.

“We . . . will get to the bottom of it,” said Mr. Golyadkin, taking off his coat and goloshes in the entry. “We’ll go into all these matters immediately.”

Making up his mind to act in this way, out hero put himself to rights, assumed a correct and official air, and was just about to pass into the

adjoining room, when suddenly, in the very doorway, he jostled against his acquaintance of the day before, his friend and companion. Mr. Golyadkin junior seemed not to notice Mr. Golyadkin senior, though they met almost nose to nose. Mr. Golyadkin junior seemed to be busy, to be hastening somewhere, was breathless; he had such an official, such a business-like air that it seemed as though any one could read his face: ‘Entrusted with a special commission.’ . . .

“Oh, it’s you, Yakov Petrovitch!” said our hero, clutching the hand of his last night’s visitor.

“Presently, presently, excuse me, tell me about it afterwards,” cried Mr. Golyadkin junior, dashing on.

“But, excuse me; I believe, Yakov Petrovitch, you wanted . . .”

“What is it? Make haste and explain.”

At this point his visitor of the previous night halted as though reluctantly and against his will, and put his ear almost to Mr. Golyadkin’s nose.

“I must tell you, Yakov Petrovitch, that I am surprised at your behaviour . . . behaviour which seemingly I could not have expected at all.”

“There’s a proper form for everything. Go to his Excellency’s secretary and then appeal in the proper way to the directors of the office. Have you got your petition?”

“You . . . I really don’t know Yakov Petrovitch! You simply amaze me, Yakov Petrovitch! You certainly don’t recognize me or, with characteristic gaiety, you are joking.”

“Oh, it’s you,” said Mr. Golyadkin junior, seeming only now to recognize Mr. Golyadkin senior. “So, it’s you? Well, have you had a good night?”

Then smiling a little - a formal an conventional smile, by no means the sort of smile that was befitting (for, after all, he owed a debt of gratitude to Mr. Golyadkin senior) - smiling this formal and conventional smile, Mr. Golyadkin junior added that he was very glad Mr. Golyadkin senior had had a good night; then he made a slight bow and shuffling a little with his feet, looked to the right, and to the left, then dropped his eyes to the floor, made for the side door and muttering in a hurried whisper that he had a special commission, dashed into the next room. He vanished like an apparition.

“Well, this is queer!” muttered our hero, petrified for a moment; “this is queer! This is a strange circumstance.”

At this point Mr. Golyadkin felt as though he had pins and needles all over him.

“However,” he went on to himself, as he made his way to his department, “however, I spoke long ago of such a circumstance: I had a presentiment long ago that he had a special commission. Why, I said yesterday that the man must certainly be employed on some special commission.”

“Have you finished copying out the document you had yesterday, Yakov Petrovitch,” Anton Antonovitch Syetotchkin asked Mr. Golyadkin, when the latter was seated beside him. “Have you got it here?”

“Yes,” murmured Mr. Golyadkin, looking at the head clerk with a rather helpless glance.

“That’s right! I mention it because Andrey Filippovitch has asked for it twice. I’ll be bound his Excellency wants it. . . .”

“Yes, it’s finished. . .”

“Well, that’s all right then.”

“I believe, Anton Antonovitch, I have always performed my duties properly. I’m always scrupulous over the work entrusted to me by my superiors, and I attend to it conscientiously.”

“Yes. Why, what do you mean by that?”

“I mean nothing, Anton Antonovitch. I only want to explain, Anton Antonovitch, that I . . . that is, I meant to express that spite and malice sometimes spare no person whatever in their search for their daily and revolting food. . . .”

“Excuse me, I don’t quite understand you. What person are you alluding to?”

“I only meant to say, Anton Antonovitch, that I’m seeking the straight path and I scorn going to work in a roundabout way. That I am not one to intrigue, and that, if I may be allowed to say so, I may very justly be proud of it. . . .”

“Yes. That’s quite so, and to the best of my comprehension I thoroughly endorse your remarks; but allow me to tell you, Yakov Petrovitch, that personalities are not quite permissible in good society, that I, for instance, am ready to put up with anything behind my back - for every one’s abused behind his back - but to my face, if you please, my good sir, I don’t allow any one to be impudent. I’ve grown grey in the government service, sir, and I don’t allow any one to be impudent to me in my old age. . . .”

“No, Anton Antonovitch . . . you see, Anton Antonovitch . . . you haven’t quite caught my meaning. To be sure, Anton Antonovitch, I for my part could only thing it an honour . . .”

“Well, then, I ask pardon too. We’ve been brought up in the old school. And it’s too late for us to learn your new-fangled ways. I believe we’ve had understanding enough for the service of our country up to now. As you are aware, sir, I have an order of merit for twenty-five years’ irreproachable service. . . .”

“I feel it, Anton Antonovitch, on my side, too, I quite feel all that. But I didn’t mean that, I am speaking of a mask, Anton Antonovitch. . . .”

“A mask?”

“Again you . . . I am apprehensive that you are taking this, too, in a wrong sense, that is the sense of my remarks, as you say yourself, Anton Antonovitch. I am simply enunciating a theory, that is, I am advancing the idea, Anton Antonovitch, that persons who wear a mask have become far from uncommon, and that nowadays it is hard to recognize the man beneath the mask . . .”

“Well, do you know, it’s not altogether so hard. Sometimes it’s fairly easy. Sometimes one need not go far to look for it.”

“No, you know, Anton Antonovitch, I say, I say of myself, that I, for instance, do not put on a mask except when there is need of it; that is simply at carnival time or at some festive gathering, speaking in the literal sense; but that I do not wear a mask before people in daily life, speaking in another less obvious sense. That’s what I meant to say, Anton Antonovitch.”

“Oh, well, but we must drop all this, for now I’ve no time to spare,” said Anton Antonovitch, getting up from his seat and collecting some papers in order to report upon them to his Excellency. “Your business, as I imagine, will be explained in due course without delay. You will see for yourself whom you should censure and whom you should blame, and thereupon I humbly beg you to spare me from further explanations and arguments which interfere with my work. . . .”

“No, Anton Antonovitch,” Mr. Golyadkin, turning a little pale, began to the retreating figure of Anton Antonovitch; “I had no intention of the kind.”

“What does it mean?” our hero went on to himself, when he was left alone; “what quarter is the wind in now, and what is one to make of this new turn?”

At the very time when our bewildered and half-crushed hero was setting himself to solve this new question, there was a sound of movement and bustle in the next room, the door opened and Andrey Filippovitch, who had been on some business in his Excellency's study, appeared breathless in the doorway, and called to Mr. Golyadkin. Knowing what was wanted and anxious not to keep Andrey Filippovitch waiting, Mr. Golyadkin leapt up from his seat, and as was fitting immediately bustled for all he was worth getting the manuscript that was required finally neat and ready and preparing to follow the manuscript and Andrey Filippovitch into his Excellency's study. Suddenly, almost slipping under the arm of Andrey Filippovitch, who was standing right in the doorway, Mr. Golyadkin junior darted into the room in breathless haste and bustle, with a solemn and resolutely official air; he bounded straight up to Mr. Golyadkin senior, who was expecting nothing less than such a visitation.

"The papers, Yakov Petrovitch, the papers . . . his Excellency has been pleased to ask for them; have you got them ready?" Mr. Golyadkin senior's friend whispered in a hurried undertone. "Andrey Filippovitch is waiting for you. . . ."

"I know he is waiting without your telling me," said Mr. Golyadkin senior, also in a hurried whisper.

"No, Yakov Petrovitch, I did not mean that; I did not mean that at all, Yakov Petrovitch, not that at all; I sympathise with you, Yakov Petrovitch, and am humbly moved by genuine interest."

"Which I most humbly beg you to spare me. Allow me, allow me . . ."

"You'll put it in an envelope, of course, Yakov Petrovitch, and you'll put a mark in the third page; allow me, Yakov Petrovitch. . . ."

"You allow me, if you please . . ."

"But, I say, there's a blot here, Yakov Petrovitch; did you know there was a blot here? . . ."

At this point Andrey Filippovitch called Yakov Petrovitch a second time.

"One moment, Andrey Filippovitch, I'm only just . . . Do you understand Russian, sir?"

"It would be best to take it out with a penknife, Yakov Petrovitch. You had better rely upon me; you had better not touch it yourself, Yakov Petrovitch, rely upon me - I'll do it with a penknife . . ."

Andrey Filippovitch called Mr. Golyadkin a third time.

"But, allow me, where's the blot? I don't think there's a blot at all."

“It’s a huge blot. Here it is! Here, allow me, I saw it here . . . you just let me, Yakov Petrovitch, I’ll just touch it with the penknife, I’ll scratch it out with the penknife from true-hearted sympathy. There, life this; see, it’s done.”

At this point, and quite unexpectedly, Mr. Golyadkin junior overpowered Mr. Golyadkin senior in the momentary struggle that had arisen between them, and so, entirely against the latter’s will, suddenly, without rhyme or reason, took possession of the document required by the authorities, and instead of scratching it out with the penknife in true-hearted sympathy as he had perfidiously promised Mr. Golyadkin senior, hurriedly rolled it up, put it under his arm, in two bounds was beside Andrey Filippovitch, who noticed none of his manoeuvres, and flew with the latter into the Director’s room. Mr. Golyadkin remained as though rivetted to the spot, holding the penknife in his hand and apparently on the point of scratching something out with it . . .

Our hero could not yet grasp his new position. He could not at once recover himself. He felt the blow, but thought that it was somehow all right. In terrible, indescribable misery he tore himself at last from his seat, rushed straight to the Director’s room, imploring heaven on the way that it would be all right . . . In the furthest most room, which adjoined the Director’s private room, he ran straight upon Andrey Filippovitch in company with his namesake. Both of them moved aside. Andrey Filippovitch was talking with a good-humoured smile, Mr. Golyadkin senior’s namesake was smiling, too, fawning upon Andrey Filippovitch and tripping about at a respectful distance from him, and was whispering something in his ear with a delighted air, to which Andrey Filippovitch assented with a gracious nod. In a flash our hero grasped the whole position. The fact was that the work had surpassed his Excellency’s expectations (as he learnt afterwards) and was finished punctually by the time it was needed. He Excellency was extremely pleased with it. It was even said that his excellency had said “Thank you” to Mr. Golyadkin junior, had thanked him warmly, had said that he would remember it on occasion and would never forget it.

. . . Of course, the first thing Mr. Golyadkin did was to protest, to protest with the utmost vigour of which he was capable. Pale as death, and hardly knowing what he was doing, he rushed up to Andrey Filippovitch. But the latter, hearing that Mr. Golyadkin’s business was a private matter, refused to listen, observing firmly that he had not a minute to spare for his own affairs.

The curtness of his tone and his refusal struck Mr. Golyadkin.

“I had better, perhaps, try in another quarter . . . I had better appeal to Anton Antonovitch.”

But to his disappointment Anton Antonovitch was not available either: he, too, was busy over something somewhere!

“Ah, it was not without design that he asked me to spare him explanation and discussion!” thought our hero. “This was what the old rogue had in his mind! In that case I shall simply make bold to approach his Excellency.”

Still pale and feeling that his brain was in a complete ferment, greatly perplexed as to what he ought to decide to do, Mr. Golyadkin sat down on the edge of the chair. “It would have been a great deal better if it had all been just nothing,” he kept incessantly thinking to himself. “Indeed, such a mysterious business was utterly improbable. In the first place, it was nonsense, and secondly it could not happen. Most likely it was imagination, or something else happened, and not what really did happen; or perhaps I went myself . .

. and somehow mistook myself for some one else . . . in short, it’s an utterly impossible thing.”

Mr. Golyadkin had no sooner made up his mind that it was an utterly impossible thing that Mr. Golyadkin junior flew into the room with papers in both hands as well as under his arm. Saying two or three words about business to Andrey Filippovitch as he passed, exchanging remarks with one, polite greetings with another, and familiarities with a third, Mr. Golyadkin junior, having apparently no time to waste, seemed on the point of leaving the room, but luckily for Mr. Golyadkin senior he stopped near the door to say a few words as he passed two or three clerks who were at work there. Mr. Golyadkin senior rushed straight at him. As soon as Mr. Golyadkin junior saw Mr. Golyadkin senior’s movement he began immediately, with great uneasiness, looking about him to make his escape. but our hero already held his last night’s guest by the sleeve. The clerks surrounding the two titular councillors stepped back and waited with curiosity to see what would happen. The senior titular councillor realized that public opinion was not on his side, he realized that they were intriguing against him: which made it all the more necessary to hold his own now. The moment was a decisive one.

“Well!” said Mr. Golyadkin junior, looking rather impatiently at Mr. Golyadkin senior.

The latter could hardly breathe.

“I don’t know,” he began, “in what way to make plain to you the strangeness of your behaviour, sir.”

“Well. Go on.” At this point Mr. Golyadkin junior turned round and winked to the clerks standing round, as though to give them to understand that a comedy was beginning.

“The impudence and shamelessness of your manners with me, sir, in the present case, unmasks your true character . . .

better than any words of mine could do. Don’t rely on your trickery: it is worthless. . . .”

“Come, Yakov Petrovitch, tell me now, how did you spend the night?” answered Mr. Golyadkin junior, looking Mr. Golyadkin senior straight in the eye.

“You forget yourself, sir,” said the titular councillor, completely flabbergasted, hardly able to feel the floor under his feet. “I trust that you will take a different tone. . . .”

“My darling!” exclaimed Mr. Golyadkin junior, making a rather unseemly grimace at Mr. Golyadkin senior, and suddenly, quite unexpectedly, under the pretence of caressing him, he pinched his chubby cheek with two fingers.

Our hero grew as hot as fire . . . As soon as Mr. Golyadkin junior noticed that his opponent, quivering in every limb, speechless with rage, as red as a lobster, and exasperated beyond all endurance, might actually be driven to attack him, he promptly and in the most shameless way hastened to be beforehand with his victim. Patting him two or three times on the cheek, tickling him two or three times, playing with him for a few seconds in this way while his victim stood rigid and beside himself with fury to the no little diversion of the young men standing round, Mr. Golyadkin junior ended with a most revolting shamelessness by giving Mr. Golyadkin senior a poke in his rather prominent stomach, and with a most venomous and suggestive smile said to him: “You’re mischievous brother Yakov, you are mischievous! We’ll be sly, you and I, Yakov Petrovitch, we’ll be sly.”

Then, and before our hero could gradually come to himself after the last attack, Mr. Golyadkin junior (with a little smile beforehand to the spectators standing round) suddenly assumed a most businesslike, busy and official air, dropped his eyes to the floor and, drawing himself in, shrinking together, and pronouncing rapidly “on a special commission” he cut a caper

with his short leg, and darted away into the next room. Our hero could not believe his eyes and was still unable to pull himself together. . .

At last he roused himself. Recognizing in a flash that he was ruined, in a sense annihilated, that he had disgraced himself and sullied his reputation, that he had been turned into ridicule and treated with contempt in the presence of spectators, that he had been treacherously insulted, by one whom he had looked on only the day before as his greatest and most trustworthy friend, that he had been put to utter confusion, Mr. Golyadkin senior rushed in pursuit of his enemy. At the moment he would not even think of the witnesses of his ignominy.

“They’re all in a conspiracy together,” he said to himself; “they stand by each other and set each other on to attack me.” After taking a dozen steps, however, our perceived clearly that all pursuit would be vain and useless, and so he turned back. “You won’t get away,” he thought, “you will get caught on day; the wolf will have to pay for the sheep’s tears.”

With ferocious composure and the most resolute determination Mr. Golyadkin went up to his chair and sat down upon it. “You won’t escape,” he said again.

Now it was not a question of passive resistance: there was determination and pugnacity in the air, and any one who had seen how Mr. Golyadkin at that moment, flushed and scarcely able to restrain his excitement, stabbed his pen into the inkstand and with what fury he began scribbling on the paper, could be certain beforehand that the that the matter would not pass off like this, and could not end in a simple, womanish way. In the depth of his soul he formed a resolution, and in the depth of his heart swore to carry it out. To tell the truth he still did not quite know how to act, or rather did not know at all, but never mind, that did not matter!

“Imposture and shamelessness do not pay nowadays, sir. Imposture and shamelessness, sir, lead to no good, but lead to the halter. Grishka Otrepyov was the only one, sir, who gained by imposture, deceiving the blind people and even that not for long.”

In spite of this last circumstance Mr. Golyadkin proposed to wait til such time as the mask should fall from certain persons and something should be made manifest. For this it was necessary, in the first place, that office hours should be over as soon as possible, and till then our hero proposed to take no step. He knew then how he must act after taking that step, how to arrange his whole plan of action, to abase the horn of arrogance and crush

the snake gnawing the dust in contemptible impotence. To allow himself to be treated like a rag used for wiping dirty boots, Mr. Golyadkin could not. He could not consent to that, especially in the present case. Had it not been for that last insult, our hero might have, perhaps, brought himself to control his anger; he might, perhaps, have been silent, have submitted and not have protested too obstinately; he would just have disputed a little, have made a slight complaint, have proved that he was in the right, then he would have given way a little, then, perhaps, he would have given way a little more, then he would have come round altogether, then, especially when the opposing party solemnly admitted that he was right, perhaps, he would have overlooked it completely, would even have been a little touched, there might even, perhaps - who could tell - spring up a new, close, warm friendship, on an even broader basis than the friendship of last night, so that this friendship might, in the end, completely eclipse the unpleasantness of the rather unseemly resemblance of the two individuals, so that both the titular councillors might be highly delighted, and might go on living till they were a hundred, and so on. To tell the whole truth, Mr. Golyadkin began to regret a little that he had stood up for himself and his rights, and had at once come in for unpleasantness in consequence.

“Should he give in,” thought Mr. Golyadkin, “say he was joking, I would forgive him. I would forgive him even more if he would acknowledge it aloud. but I won’t let myself be treated like a rag. And I have not allowed even persons very different from him to treat me so, still less will I permit a depraved person to attempt it. I am not a rag. I am not a rag, sir!”

In short, our hero made up his mind “You’re in fault yourself, sir!” he thought. He made up his mind to protest with all his might to the very last. That was the sort of man he was! He could not consent to allow himself to be insulted, still less to allow himself to be treated as a rag, and, above all, to allow a thoroughly vicious man to treat him so. No quarrelling, however, no quarrelling! Possibly if some one wanted, if some one, for instance, actually insisted on turning Mr. Golyadkin into rag, he might have done so, might have might have done so without opposition or punishment (Mr. Golyadkin was himself conscious of this at times), and he would have been a rag and not Golyadkin - yes, a nasty, filthy rag; but that rag would not have been a simple rag, it would have been a rag possessed of dignity, it would have been a rag possessed of feelings and sentiments, even though dignity was defenceless and feelings could not assert themselves, and lay

hidden deep down in the filthy folds of the rag, still thee feelings were there . . .

The hours dragged on incredibly slowly; at last it struck four. Soon after, all got up and, following the head of the department, moved each on his homeward way. Mr. Golyadkin mingled with the crowd; he kept a vigilant look out, and did not lose sight of the man he wanted. At last our hero saw hat his friend ran up to the office attendants who handed the clerks their overcoats, and hung about near them waiting for his in his usual nasty way. The minute was a decisive one. Mr. Golyadkin forced his way somehow through the crowd and, anxious not to be left behind, he, too, began fussing about his overcoat. But Mr. Golyadkin's friend and companion was given his overcoat first because on this occasion, too, he had succeeded, as he always did, in making up to them, whispering something to them, cringing upon them and getting round them.

After putting on his overcoat, Mr. Golyadkin junior glanced ironically at Mr. Golyadkin senior, acting in this way openly and defiantly, looked about him with his characteristic insolence, finally he tripped to and fro among the other clerks - no doubt in order to leave a good impression on them - said a word to one, whispered something to another, respectfully accosted a third, directed a smile at a fourth, gave his hand to a fifth, and gaily darted downstairs. Mr. Golyadkin senior flew after him, and to his inexpressible delight overtook him on the last step, and seized him by the collar of his overcoat. It seemed as though Mr. Golyadkin junior was a little disconcerted, and he looked about him with a helpless air.

"What do you mean by this?" he whispered to Mr. Golyadkin at last, in a weak voice.

"Sir, if you are a gentleman, I trust that you remember our friendly relations yesterday," said out hero.

"Ah, yes! Well? Did you sleep well?"

Fury rendered Mr. Golyadkin senior speechless for a moment.

"I slept well, sir . . . but allow me to tell you, sir, that you are playing a very complicated game . . ."

"Who says so? My enemies say that," answered abruptly the man who called himself Mr. Golyadkin, and saying this, he unexpectedly freed himself from the feeble hand of the real Mr. Golyadkin. As soon as he was free he rushed away from the stairs, looked around him, saw a cab, ran up to it, got in, and in one moment vanished from Mr. Golyadkin senior's sight.

The despairing titular councillor, abandoned by all, gazed about him, but there was no other cab. He tried to run, but his legs gave way under him. With a look of open-mouthed astonishment on his countenance, feeling crushed and shrivelled up, he leaned helplessly against a lamp post, and remained so for some minutes in the middle of the pavement. It seemed as though all were over for Mr. Golyadkin.

CHAPTER IX

Everything, apparently, and even nature itself, seemed up in arms against Mr. Golyadkin; but he was still on his legs and unconquered; he felt that he was unconquered. He was ready to struggle. he rubbed his hands with such feeling and such energy when he recovered from his first amazement that it could be deduced from his very air that he would not give in. yet the danger was imminent; it was evident; Mr. Golyadkin felt it; but how to grapple with it, with this danger? - that was the question. the thought even flashed through Mr. Golyadkin's mind for a moment, "After all, why not leave it so, simply give up? Why, what is it? Why, it's nothing. I'll keep apart as though it were not I," thought Mr. Golyadkin. "I'll let it all pass; it's not I, and that's all about it; he's separate too, maybe he'll give it up too; he'll hang about, the rascal, he'll hang about. He'll come back and give it up again. Than's how it will be! I'll take it meekly. And, indeed, where is the danger? Come, what danger is there? I should like any one to tell me where the danger lies in this business. It is a trivial affair. An everyday affair. . . ."

At this point Mr. Golyadkin's tongue failed; the words died away on his lips; he even swore at himself for this thought; he convicted himself on the spot of abjectness, of cowardice for having this thought; things were no forwarder, however. He felt that to make up his mind to some course of action was absolutely necessary for him at the moment; he even felt that he would have given a great deal to any one who could have told him what he must decide to do. Yes, but how could he guess what? Though, indeed, he had no time to guess. In any case, that he might lose no time he took a cab and dashed home.

"Well? What are you feeling now?" he wondered; "what are you graciously pleased to be thinking of, Yakov Petrovitch? What are you doing? What are you doing now, you rogue, you rascal? You've brought yourself to this plight, and now you are weeping and whimpering!"

So Mr. Golyadkin taunted himself as he jolted along in the vehicle. To taunt himself and so to irritate his wounds was, at this time, a great satisfaction to Mr. Golyadkin, almost a voluptuous enjoyment.

"Well," he thought, "if some magician were to turn up now, or if it could come to pass in some official way and I were told: 'Give a finger of your right hand, Golyadkin - and it's a bargain with you; there shall not be the

other Golyadkin, and you will be happy, only you won't have your finger' - yes, I would sacrifice my finger, I would certainly sacrifice it, I would sacrifice it without winking. . . . The devil take it all!" the despairing titular councillor cried at last. "Why, what is it all for? Well, it all had to be; yes, it absolutely had to; yes, just this had to be, as though nothing else were possible! And it was all right at first. Every one was pleased and happy. But there, it had to be! There's nothing to be gained by talking, though; you must act."

And so, almost resolved upon some action, Mr. Golyadkin reached home, and without a moment's delay snatched up his pipe and, sucking at it with all his might and puffing out clouds of smoke to right and to left, he began pacing up and down the room in a state of violent excitement. Meanwhile, Petrushka began laying the table. At last Mr. Golyadkin made up his mind completely, flung aside his pipe, put on his overcoat, said he would not dine at home and ran out of the flat. Petrushka, panting, overtook him on the stairs, bringing the hat he had forgotten. Mr. Golyadkin took his hat, wanted to say something incidentally to justify himself in Petrushka's eyes that the latter might not think anything particular, such as, "What a queer circumstance! here he forgot his hat - and so on," but as Petrushka walked away at once and would not even look at him, Mr. Golyadkin put on his hat without further explanation, ran downstairs, and repeating to himself that perhaps everything might be for the best, and that affairs would somehow be arranged, though he was conscious among other things of a cold chill right down to his heels, he went out into the street, took a cab and hastened to Andrey Filippovitch's.

"Would it not be better tomorrow, though?" thought Mr. Golyadkin, as he took hold of the bell-rope of Andrey Filippovitch's flat. "And, besides, what can I say in particular? There is nothing particular in it. It's such a wretched affair, yes, it really is wretched, paltry, yes, that is, almost a paltry affair . . . yes, that's what it is, the incident .

. . Suddenly Mr. Golyadkin pulled at the bell; the bell rang; footsteps were heard within . . . Mr. Golyadkin cursed himself on the spot for his hastiness and audacity. His recent unpleasant experiences, which he had almost forgotten over his work, and his encounter with Andrey Filippovitch immediately cam back into his mind. But by now it was too late to run away: the door opened. Luckily for Mr. Golyadkin he was informed that

Andrey Filippovitch had not returned from the office and had not dined at home.

“I know where he dines: he dines near the Ismailovsky Bridge,” thought our hero; and he was immensely relieved. To the footman’s inquiry what message he would leave, he said: “It’s all right, my good man, I’ll look in later,” and he even ran downstairs with a certain cheerful briskness. Going out into the street, he decided to dismiss the cab and paid the driver. When the man asked for something extra, saying he had been waiting in the street and had not spared his horse for his honour, he gave him five kopecks extra, and even willingly; and then walked on.

“It really is such a thing,” thought Mr. Golyadkin, “that it cannot be left like that; though, if one looks at it that way, looks at it sensibly, why am I hurrying about here, in reality? Well, yes, though, I will go on discussing why I should take a lot of trouble; why I should rush about, exert myself, worry myself and wear myself out. To begin with, the thing’s done and there’s no recalling it . . . of course, there’s no recalling it! Let us put it like this: a man turns up with a satisfactory reference, said to be a capable clerk, of good conduct, only he is a poor man and has suffered many reverses - all sorts of ups and downs - well, poverty is not a crime: so I must stand aside. Why, what nonsense it is! Well, he came; he is so made, the man is so made by nature itself that he is as like another man as though they were two drops of water, as though he were a perfect copy of another man; how could they refuse to take him into the department on that account? If it is fate, if it is only fate, if it only blind chance that is to blame - is he to be treated like a rag, is he to be refused a job in the office? . . . Why, what would become of justice after that? He is a poor man, hopeless, downcast; it makes one’s heart ache: compassion bids one care for him! Yes! There’s no denying, there would be a fine set of head officials, if they took the same view as a reprobate like me! What an addlepate I am! I have foolishness enough for a dozen! Yes, yes! They did right, and many thanks to them for being good to a poor, luckless fellow . . . Why, let us imagine for a moment that we are twins, that we had been born twin brothers, and nothing else - there it is! Well, what of it? Why, nothing! All the clerks can get used to it . . . And an outsider, coming into our office, would certainly find nothing unseemly or offensive in the circumstance. In fact, there is really something touching it; to think that the divine Providence created two men exactly alike, and the heads of the department, seeing the divine handiwork, provided for two

twins. It would, of course," Mr. Golyadkin went on, drawing a breath and dropping his voice, "it would, of course . . . it would, of course, have been better if there had been . . . if there had been nothing of this touching kindness, and if there had been no twins either . . . The devil take it all! And what need was there for it? And what was the particular necessity that admitted of no delay! My goodness! The devil has made a mess of it! Besides, he has such a character, too, he's of such a playful, horrid disposition - he's such a scoundrel, he's such a nimble fellow! He's such a toady! Such a lickspittle! He's such a Golyadkin! I daresay he will misconduct himself; yes, he'll disgrace my name, the blackguard! And now I have to look after hm and wait upon him! What an infliction! But, after all, what of it? It doesn't matter. Granted, he's a scoundrel, well, let him be a scoundrel, but to make up for it, the other one's honest; so he will be a scoundrel and I'll be honest, and they'll say that this Golyadkin's a rascal, don't take any notice of him, and don't mix him up with the other; but the other one's honest, virtuous, mild, free from malice, always to be relied upon in the service, and worthy of promotion; that's how it is, very good . . . but what if . . . what if they get us mixed up! . . . He is equal to anything! Ah, Lord, have mercy upon us! . . . He will counterfeit a man, he will counterfeit him, the rascal - he will change one man for another as though he were a rag, and not reflect that a man is not a rag. Ach, mercy on us! Ough, what a calamity!" . . .

Reflecting and lamenting in this way, Mr. Golyadkin ran on, regardless of where he was going. He came to his senses in Nevsky Prospect, only owing to the chance that he ran so neatly full-tilt into a passer-by that he saw stars in his eyes. Mr. Golyadkin muttered his excuses without raising his head, and it was only after the passer-by, muttering something far from flattering, had walked a considerable distance away, that he raised his nose and looked about to see where he was and how he had got there. Noticing when he did so that he was close to the restaurant in which he had sat for a while before the dinner-part at Olsufy Ivanovitch's, our hero was suddenly conscious of a pinching and nipping sensation in his stomach; he remembered that he had not dined; he had no prospect of a dinner-party anywhere. And so, without losing precious time, he ran upstairs into the restaurant to have a snack of something as quickly as possible, and to avoid delay by making all the haste he could. And though everything in the restaurant was rather dear, that little circumstance did not on this occasion

make Mr. Golyadkin pause, and, indeed, he had no time to pause over such a trifle. In the brightly lighted room the customers were standing in rather a crowd round the counter, upon which lay heaps of all sorts of such edibles as are eaten by well-bred person’s at lunch. The waiter scarcely had time to fill glasses, to serve, to take money and give change. Mr. Golyadkin waited for his turn and modestly stretched out his had for a savoury patty. Retreating into a corner, turning his back on the company and eating with appetite, he went back to the attendant, put down his plate and, knowing the price, took out a ten-kopeck piece and laid the coin on the counter, catching the waiter’s eye as though to say, “Look, here’s the money, one pie,” and so on.

“One rouble ten kopecks is your bill,” the waiter filtered through his teeth.

Mr. Golyadkin was a good deal surprised.

“You are speaking to me? . . . I . . . I took one pie, I believe.”

“You’ve had eleven,” the man said confidently.

“You . . . so it seems to me . . . I believe, you’re mistaken . . . I really took only one pie, I think.”

“I counted them; you took eleven. Since you’ve had them you must pay for them; we don’t give anything away for nothing.”

Mr. Golyadkin was petrified. “What sorcery is this, what is happening to me?” he wondered. Meanwhile, the man waited for Mr. Golyadkin to make up his mind; people crowded round Mr. Golyadkin; he was already feeling in his pocket for a silver rouble, to pay the full amount at once, to avoid further trouble. “Well, if it was eleven, it was eleven,” he thought, turning as red as a lobster. “Why, a man’s hungry, so he eats eleven pies; well, let him eat, and may it do him good; and there’s nothing to wonder at in that, and there’s nothing to laugh at . . .”

At that moment something seemed to stab Mr. Golyadkin. He raised his eyes and - at once he guessed he riddle. He knew what the sorcery was. All his difficulties were solved . . .

In the doorway of the next room, almost directly behind the waiter and facing Mr. Golyadkin, in the doorway which, till that moment, our hero had taken for a looking-glass, a man was standing - he was standing, Mr. Golyadkin was standing - not the original Mr. Golyadkin, the hero of our story, but the other Mr. Golyadkin, the new Mr. Golyadkin. The second Mr. Golyadkin was apparently in excellent spirits. He smiled to Mr. Golyadkin

the first, nodded to him, winked, shuffled his feet a little, and looked as though in another minute he would vanish, would disappear into the next room, and then go out, maybe, by a back way out; and there it would be, and all pursuit would be in vain. In his hand he had the last morsel of the tenth pie, and before Mr. Golyadkin's very eyes he popped it into his mouth and smacked his lips.

"He had impersonated me, the scoundrel!" thought Mr. Golyadkin, flushing hot with shame. "He is not ashamed of the publicity of it! Do they see him? I fancy no one notices him . . ."

Mr. Golyadkin threw down his rouble as though it burnt his fingers, and without noticing the waiter's insolently significant grin, a smile of triumph and serene power, he extricated himself from the crowd, and rushed away without looking round. "We must be thankful that at least he has not completely compromised anyone!" thought Mr. Golyadkin senior. "We must be thankful to him, the brigand, and to fate, that everything was satisfactorily settled. The waiter was rude, that was all. But, after all, he was in the right. One rouble and ten kopecks were owing: so he was in the right. 'We don't give things away for nothing,' he said! Though he might have been more polite, the rascal . . ."

All this Mr. Golyadkin said to himself as he went downstairs to the entrance, but on the last step he stopped suddenly, as though he had been shot, and suddenly flushed till the tears came into his eyes at the insult to his dignity. After standing stockstill for half a minute, he stamped his foot, resolutely, at one bound leapt from the step into the street and, without looking round, rushed breathless and unconscious of fatigue back home, without changing his coat, though it was his habit to change into an old coat at home, without even stopping to take his pipe, he sat down on the sofa, drew the inkstand towards him, took up a pen, got a sheet of notepaper, and with a hand that trembled from inward excitement, began scribbling the following epistle,

"Dear Sir Yakov Petrovitch!

"I should not take up my pen if my circumstances, and your own action, sir, had not compelled me to that step. Believe me that nothing but necessity would have induced me to enter upon such a discussion with you and therefore, first of all, I beg you, sir, to look upon this step of mine not as a premeditated design to insult you, but as the inevitable consequence of the circumstance that is a bond between us now."

(“I think that’s all right, proper courteous, though not lacking in force and firmness . . . I don’t think there is anything for him to take offence at. Besides, I’m fully within my rights,” thought Mr. Golyadkin, reading over what he had written.)

“Your strange and sudden appearance, sir, on a stormy night, after the coarse and unseemly behavious of my enemies to me, for whom I feel too much contempt even to mention their names, was the starting-point of all the misunderstanding existing between us at the present time. Your obstinate desire to persist in your course of action, sir, and forcibly to enter the circle of my existence and all my relations in practical life, transgresses every limit imposed by the merest politeness and every rule of civilized society. I imagine there is no need, sir, for me to refer to the seizure by you of my papers, and particularly to your taking away my good name, in order to gain the favour of my superiors - favour you have not deserved. There is no need to refer here either to your intentional and insulting refusal of the necessary explanation in regard to us. Finally, to omit nothing, I will not allude here to your last strange, on my even say, your incomprehensible behaviour to me in the coffee-house. I am far from lamenting over the needless - for me - loss of a rouble; but I cannot help expressing my indignation at the recollection of your public outrage upon me, to the detriment of my honour, and what is more, in the presence of several persons of good breeding, though not belonging to my circle of acquaintance.”

(“Am I not going too far?” thought Mr. Golyadkin. “Isn’t it too much; won’t it be too insulting - that taunt about good breeding, for instance? . . . But there, it doesn’t matter! I must show him the resoluteness of my character. I might, however, to soften him, flatter him, and butter him up at the end. But there, we shall see.”)

“But I should not weary you with my letter, sir, if I were not firmly convinced that the nobility of your sentiments and your open, candid character would suggest to you yourself a means for retrieving all lapses and returning everything to its original position.

“With full confidence I venture to rest assured that you will not take my letter in a sense derogatory to yourself, and at the same time that you will not refuse to explain yourself expressly on this occasion by letter, sending the same by my man.

“In expectation of your reply, I have the honour, dear sir, to remain,

“Your humble servant, “Y. Golyadkin.”

“Well, that is quite all right. The thing’s done, it has come to letter-writing. But who is to blame for that? He is to blame himself: by his own action he reduces a man to the necessity of resorting to epistolary composition. And I am within my rights. . . .”

Reading over his letter for the last time, Mr. Golyadkin folded it up, sealed it and called Petrushka. Petrushka came in looking, as usual, sleepy and cross about something.

“You will take this letter, my boy . . . do you understand?”

Petrushka did not speak.

“You will take it to the department; there you must find the secretary on duty, Vahramyev. He is the one on duty today. Do you understand that?”

“I understand.”

“‘I understand’! He can’t even say, ‘I understand, sir!’ You must ask the secretary, Vahramyev, and tell him that your master desired you to send his regards, and humbly requests him to refer to the address book of our office and find out where the titular councillor, Golyadkin, is living?”

Petrushka remained mute, and, as Mr. Golyadkin fancied, smiled.

“Well, so you see, Pyotr, you have to ask him for the address, and find out where the new clerk, Golyadkin, lives.”

“Yes.”

“You must ask for the address and then take this letter there. Do you understand?”

“I understand.”

“If there . . . where you have to take the letter, that gentleman to whom you have to give the letter, that Golyadkin . . . What are you laughing at, you blockhead?”

“What is there to laugh at? What is it to me! I wasn’t doing anything, sir. it’s not for the likes of us to laugh. . . .”

“Oh, well . . . if that gentleman should ask, ‘How is your master, how is he’; if he . . . well, if he should ask you anything - you hold your tongue, and answer, ‘My master is all right and begs you for an answer to his letter.’ Do you understand?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, then, say, ‘My master is all right and quite well,’ say ‘and is just getting ready to pay a call: and he asks you,’ say, ‘for an answer in writing.’ Do you understand?”

“Yes.”

“Well, go along, then.”

“Why, what a bother I have with this blockhead too! He’s laughing, and there’s nothing to be done. What’s he laughing at? I’ve lived to see trouble. Here I’ve lived like this to see trouble. Though perhaps it may all turn out for the best. . . .

That rascal will be loitering about for the next two hours now, I expect; he’ll go off somewhere else. . . . There’s no sending him anywhere. What a misery it is! . . . What misery has come upon me!”

Feeling his troubles to the full, our hero made up his mind to remain passive for two hours till Petrushka returned. For an hour of the time he walked about the room, smoked, then put aside his pipe and sat down to a book, then he lay down on the sofa, then took up his pipe again, then again began running about the room. He tried to think things over but was absolutely unable to think about anything. At last the agony of remaining passive reached the climax and Mr. Golyadkin made up his mind to take a step. “Petrushka will come in another hour,” he thought. “I can give the key to the porter, and I myself can, so to speak . . . I can investigate the matter: I shall investigate the matter in my own way.”

Without loss of time, in haste to investigate the matter, Mr. Golyadkin took his hat, went out of the room, locked up his flat, went in to the porter, gave him the key, together with ten kopecks - Mr. Golyadkin had become extraordinarily free-handed of late - and rushed off. Mr. Golyadkin went first on foot to the Ismailovsky Bridge. It took him half an hour to get there. When he reached to goal of his journey he went straight into the yard of the house so familiar to him, and glanced up at the windows of the civil councillor Berendyev’s flat. Except for three windows hung with red curtains all the rest was dark.

“Olsufy Ivanovitch has no visitors today,” thought Mr. Golyadkin; “they must all be staying at home today.”

After standing for some time in the yard, our hero tried to decide on some course of action. but he was apparently not destined to reach a decision. Mr. Golyadkin changed his mind, and with a wave of his hand went back into the street.

“No, there’s no need for me to go today. What could I do here? . . . No, I’d better, so to speak . . . I’ll investigate the matter personally.”

Coming to this conclusion, Mr. Golyadkin rushed off to his office. He had a long way to go. It was horribly muddy, besides, and the wet snow lay about in thick drifts. But it seemed as though difficulty did not exist for our hero at the moment. He was drenched through, it is true, and he was a ood deal spattered with mud.

“But that’s no matter, so long as the object is obtained.”

And Mr. Golyadkin certainly was nearing his goal. The dark mass of the huge government building stood up black before his eyes.

“Stay,” he thought; “where am I going, and what am I going to do here? Suppose I do find out where he lives? Meanwhile, Petrushka will certainly have come back and brought me the answer. I am only wasting my precious time, I am simply wasting my time. Though shouldn’t I, perhaps, go in and see Vahramyev? But, no, I’ll go later. . . . Ech! There was no need to have gone out at all. But, there, it’s my temperament! I’ve a knack of always seizing a chance of rushing ahead of things, whether there is a need to or not. . .

. H’m! . . . what time is it? It must be nine by now. Petrushka might come and not find me at home. It was pure folly on my part to go out. . . Ech, it is really a nuisance!”

Sincerely acknowledging that he had been guilty of an act of folly, our hero ran back to Shestilavotchny Street. He arrived there, weary and exhausted. From the porter he learned that Petrushka has not dreamed of turning up yet.

“To be sure! I foresaw it would be so,” thought our hero; and meanwhile it’s nine o’clock. Ech, he’s such a good-for-nothing chap! He’s always drinking somewhere! Mercy on us! What a day had fallen to my miserable lot!”

Reflecting in this way, Mr. Golyadkin unlocked his flat, got a light, took off his outdoor things, lighted his pipe and, tired, worn-out, exhausted and hungry, lay down on the sofa and waited for Petrushka. The candle burnt dimly; the light flickered on the wall. . . . Mr. Golyadkin gazed and gazed, and thought and thought, and fell asleep at last, worn out.

It was late when he woke up. The candle had almost burnt down, was smoking and on the point of going out. Mr. Golyadkin jumped up, shook himself, and remembered it all, absolutely all. behind the screen he heard Petrushka snoring lustily. Mr. Golyadkin rushed to the window - not a light anywhere. he opened the movable pane - all was still; the city was asleep as

though it were dead: so it must have been two or three o’clock; so it proved to be, indeed; the clock behind the partition made an effort and struck two. Mr. Golyadkin rushed behind the partition.

He succeeded, somehow, though only after great exertions, in rousing Petrushka, and making him sit up in his bed. At that moment the candle went out completely. About ten minutes passed before Mr. Golyadkin succeeded in finding another candle and lighting it. In the interval Petrushka had fallen asleep again.

“You scoundrel, you worthless fellow!” said Mr. Golyadkin, shaking him up again. “Will you get up, will you wake?” After half an hour of effort Mr. Golyadkin succeeded, however, in rousing his servant thoroughly, and dragging him out from behind the partition. Only then, our hero remarked the fact that Petrushka was what is called dead-drunk and could hardly stand on his legs.

“You good-for-nothing fellow!” cried Mr. Golyadkin; “you ruffian! You’ll be the death of me! Good heavens! whatever has he done with the letter? Ach, my God! where is it? . . . And why did I write it? As though there were any need for me to have written it! I went scribbling away out of pride, like a noodle! I’ve got myself into this fix out of pride! That is what dignity does for you, you rascal, that is dignity! . . . Come, what have you done with the letter, you ruffian? To whom did you give it?”

“I didn’t give any one any letter; and I never had any letter . . . so there!”

Mr. Golyadkin wrung his hands in despair.

“Listen, Pyotr . . . listen to me, listen to me . . .”

“I am listening . . .”

“Where have you been? - answer . . .”

“Where have I been . . . I’ve been to see good people! What is it to me!”

“Oh, Lord, have mercy on us! Where did you go, to begin with? Did you go to the department? . . . Listen, Pyotr, perhaps you’re drunk?”

“Me drunk! If I should be struck on the spot this minute, not a drop, not a drop - so there. . . .”

“No, no, it’s no matter you’re being drunk. . . . I only asked; it’s all right your being drunk; I don’t mind, Petrushka, I don’t mind. . . . Perhaps it’s only that you have forgotten, but you’ll remember it all. Come, try to remember - have you been to that clerk’s, to Vahramyev’s; have you been to him or not?”

“I have not been, and there’s no such clerk. Not if I were this minute . . .”

“No, no, Pyotr! No, Petrushka, you know I don’t mind. Why, you see I don’t mind. . . . Come, what happened? To be sure, it’s cold and damp in the street, and so a man has a drop, and it’s no matter. I am not angry. I’ve been drinking myself today, my boy. . . . Come, think and try and remember, did you go to Vahramyev?”

“Well, then, now, this is how it was, it’s the truth - I did go, if this very minute . . .”

“Come, that is right, Petrushka, that is quite right that you’ve been. you see I’m not angry. . . . Come, come,” our hero went on, coaxing his servant more and more, patting him on the shoulder and smiling to him, “come, you had a little nip, you scoundrel. . . . You had two-penn’orth of something I suppose? You’re a sly rogue! Well, that’s no matter; come, you see that I’m not angry . . . . I’m not angry, my boy, I’m not angry. . . .”

“No, I’m not a sly rogue, say what you like. . . . I only went to see some good friends. I’m not a rogue, and I never have been a rogue. . . .”

“Oh, no, no, Petrushka; listen, Petrushka, you know I’m not scolding when I called you a rogue. I said that in fun, I said it in a good sense. You see, Petrushka, it is sometimes a compliment to a man when you call him a rogue, a cunning fellow, that he’s a sharp chap and would not let any one take him in. Some men like it . . . Come, come, it doesn’t matter! Come, tell me, Petrushka, without keeping anything back, openly, as to a friend . . . did you go to Vahramyev’s, and did he give you the address?”

“He did give me the address, he did give me the address too. He’s a nice gentleman! ‘You master,’ says he, ‘is a nice man,’ says he, ‘very nice man;’ says he, ‘I send my regards,’ says he, ‘to your master, thank him and say that I like him,’ says he - ‘how I do respect your master,’ says he. ‘Because,’ says he, ‘your master, Petrushka,’ says he, ‘is a good man, and you,’ says he, ‘Petrushka, are a good man too . . . .’”

“Ah, mercy on us! But the address, the address! You Judas!” The last word Mr. Golyadkin uttered almost in a whisper.

“And the address . . . he did give the address too.”

“He did? Well, where does Golyadkin, the clerk Golyadkin, the titular councillor, live?”

“‘Why,’ says he, ‘Golyadkin will be now at Shestilavotchny Street. When you get into Shestilavotchny Street take the stairs on the right and it’s on the fourth floor. And there,’ says he, ‘you’ll find Golyadkin. . . .”

“You scoundrel!” our hero cried, out of patience at last. “You’re a ruffian! Why, that’s my address; why, you are talking about me. But there’s another Golyadkin; I’m talking about the other one, you scoundrel!”

“Well, that’s as you please! What is it to me? Have it your own way . . .”

“And the letter, the letter?” . . .

“What letter? There wasn’t any letter, and I didn’t see any letter.”

“But what have you done with it, you rascal?”

“I delivered the letter, I delivered it. He sent his regards. ‘Thank you,’ says he, ‘your master’s a nice man,’ says he. ‘Give my regards,’ says he, ‘to your master. . . .’”

“But who said that? Was it Golyadkin said it?”

Petrushka said nothing for a moment, and then, with a broad grin, he stared straight into his master’s face. . . .

“Listen, you scoundrel!” began Mr. Golyadkin, breathless, beside himself with fury; “listen, you rascal, what have you done to me? Tell me what you’ve done to me! You’ve destroyed me, you villain, you’ve cut the head off my shoulders, you Judas!”

“Well, have it your own way! I don’t care,” said Petrushka in a resolute voice, retreating behind the screen.

“Come here, come here, you ruffian. . . .”

“I’m not coming to you now, I’m not coming at all. What do I care, I’m going to good folks. . . . Good folks live honestly, good folks live without falsity, and they never have doubles. . . .”

Mr. Golyadkin’s hands and feet went icy cold, his breath failed him. . . .

“Yes,” Petrushka went on, “they never have doubles. God doesn’t afflict honest folk. . . .”

“You worthless fellow, you are drunk! Go to sleep now, you ruffian! And tomorrow you’ll catch it,” Mr. Golyadkin added in a voice hardly audible. As for Petrushka, he muttered something more; then he could be heard getting into bed, making the bed creak. After a prolonged yawn, he stretched; and at last began snoring, and slept the sleep of the just, as they say. Mr. Golyadkin was more dead than alive. Petrushka’s behaviour, his very strange hints, which were yet so remote that it was useless to be angry at them, especially as they were uttered by a drunken man, and, in short, the sinister turn taken by the affair altogether, all this shook Mr. Golyadkin to the depths of his being.

“And what possessed me to go for him in the middle of the night?” said our hero, trembling all over from a sickly sensation. “What the devil made me have anything to do with a drunken man! What could I expect from a drunken man? Whatever he says is a lie. But what was he hinting at, the ruffian? Lord, have mercy on us! And why did I write that letter? I’m my own enemy, I’m my own murderer! As if I couldn’t hold my tongue? I had to go scribbling nonsense! And what now! You are going to ruin, you are like an old rag, and yet you worry about your pride; you say, ‘my honour is wounded,’ you must stick up for your honour! Mr own murderer, that is what I am!”

Thus spoke Mr. Golyadkin and hardly dared to stir for terror. At last his eyes fastened upon an object which excited his interest to the utmost. In terror lest the object that caught his attention should prove to be an illusion, a deception of his fancy, he stretched out his hand to it with hope, with dread, with indescribable curiosity. . . . No, it was not a deception Not a delusion! It was a letter, really a letter, undoubtedly a letter, and addressed to him. Mr. Golyadkin took the letter from the table. His heart beat terribly.

“No doubt that scoundrel brought it,” he thought, “put it there, and then forgot it; no doubt that is how it happened: no doubt that is just how it happened. . . .”

The letter was from Vahramyev, a young fellow-clerk who had once been his friend. “I had a presentiment of this, thought,” thought our hero, “and I had a presentiment of all that there will be in the letter. . . .”

The letter was as follows -

“Dear Sir Yakov Petrovitch!

“Your servant is drunk, and there is no getting any sense out of him. For that reason I prefer to reply by letter. I hasten to inform you that the commission you’ve entrusted to me - that is, to deliver a letter to a certain person you know, I agree to carry out carefully and exactly. That person, who is very well known to you and who has taken the place of a friend to me, whose name I will refrain from mentioning (because I do not wish unnecessarily to blacken the reputation of a perfectly innocent man), lodges with us at Karolina Ivanovna’s, in the room in which, when you were among us, the infantry officer from Tambov used to be. That person, however, is always to be found in the company of honest and true-hearted persons, which is more than one can say for some people. I intend from this day to break off all connection with you; it’s impossible for us to remain on

friendly terms and to keep up the appearance of comradeship congruous with them. And, therefore, I beg you, dear sir, immediately on the receipt of this candid letter from me, to send me the two roubles you owe me for the razor of foreign make which I sold you seven months ago, if you will kindly remember, when you were still living with us in the lodgings of Karolina Ivanovna, a lady whom I respect from the bottom of my heart. I am acting in this way because you, from the accounts I hear from sensible persons, have lost your dignity and reputation and have become a source of danger to the morals of the innocent and uncontaminated. For some persons are not straightforward, their words are full of falsity and their show of good intentions is suspicious. People can always be found capable of insulting Karolina Ivanovna, who is always irreproachable in her conduct, and an honest woman, and, what's more, a maiden lady, though no longer young - though, on the other hand, of a good foreign family - and this fact I've been asked to mention in this letter by several persons, and I speak also for myself. In any case you will learn all in due time, if you haven't learnt it yet, though you've made yourself notorious from one end of the town to the other, according to the accounts I hear from sensible people, and consequently might well have received intelligence relating to you, my dear sir, that a certain person you know, whose name I will not mention here, for certain honourable reasons, is highly respected by right-thinking people, and is, moreover, of lively and agreeable disposition, and is equally successful in the service and in the society of persons of common sense, is true in word and in friendship, and does not insult behind their back those with whom he is on friendly terms to their face.

"In any case, I remain "Your obedient servant, "N. Vahramyev."

"P.S. You had better dismiss your man: he is a drunkard and probably gives you a great deal of trouble; you had better engage Yevstafy, who used to be in service here, and is not out of a place. Your present servant is not only a drunkard, but, what's more, he's a thief, for only last week he sold a pound of sugar to Karolina Ivanovna at less than cost price, which, in my opinion, he could not have done otherwise than by robing you in a very sly way, little by little, at different times. I write this to you for your own good, although some people can do nothing but insult and deceive everybody, especially persons of honesty and good nature; what is more, they slander them behind their back and misrepresent them, simply from envy, and because they can't call themselves the same.

“V.”

After reading Vahramyev’s letter our hero remained for a long time sitting motionless on his sofa. A new light seemed breaking through the obscure and baffling fog which had surrounded him for the last two days. Our hero seemed to reach a partial understanding . . . He tried to get up from the sofa to take a turn about the room, to rouse himself, to collect his scattered ideas, to fix them upon a certain subject and then to set himself to rights a little, to think over his position thoroughly. But as soon as he tried to stand up he fell back again at once, weak and helpless. “Yes, of course, I had a presentiment of all that; how he writes though, and what is the real meaning of his words. Supposing I do understand the meaning; but what is it leading to? He should have said straight out: this and that is wanted, and I would have done it. Things have taken such a turn, things have come to such an unpleasant pass! Oh, if only tomorrow would make haste and come, and I could make haste and get to work! I know now what to do. I shall say this and that, I shall agree with his arguments, I won’t sell my honour, but . . . maybe; but he, that person we know of, that disagreeable person, how does he come to be mixed up in it? And why has he turned up here? Oh, if tomorrow would make haste and come! They’ll slander me before then, they are intriguing, they are working to spite me! The great thing is not to lose time, and now, for instance, to write a letter, and to say this and that and that I agree to this and that. And as soon as it is daylight tomorrow send it off, before he can do anything . . . and so checkmate them, get in before them, the darlings. . . . They will ruin me by their slanders, and that’s the fact of the matter!”

Mr. Golyadkin drew the paper to him, took up a pen and wrote the following missive in answer to the secretary’s letter -

“Dear Sir Nestor Ignatyevitch!

“With amazement mingled with heartfelt distress I have perused your insulting letter to me, for I see clearly that you are referring to me when you speak of certain discreditable persons and false friends. I see with genuine sorrow how rapidly the calumny has spread and how deeply it has taken root, to the detriment of my prosperity, my honour and my good name. And this is the more distressing and mortifying that even honest people of a genuinely noble way of thinking and, what is even more important, of straightforward and open dispositions, abandon the interests of honourable men and with all the qualities of their hearts attach themselves to the

pernicious corruption, which in our difficult and immoral age has unhappily increased and multiplied so greatly and so disloyally. In conclusion, I will say that the debt of two roubles of which you remind me I regard as a sacred duty to return to you in its entirety.

“As for your hints concerning a certain person of the female sex, concerning the intentions, calculations and various designs of that person, I can only tell you, sir, that I have but a very dim and obscure understanding of those insinuations. Permit me, sir, to preserve my honourable way of thinking and my good name undefiled, in any case. I am ready to stoop to a written explanation as more secure, and I am, moreover, ready to enter into conciliatory proposals on mutual terms, of course. To that end I beg you, my dear sir, to convey to that person my readiness for a personal arrangement and, what is more, to beg her to fix the time and place of the interview. It grieved me, sir, to read your hints of my having insulted you, having been treacherous to our original friendship and having spoken ill of you. I ascribe this misunderstanding to the abominable calumny, envy and ill-will of those whom I may justly stigmatize as my bitterest foes. But I suppose they do not know that innocence is strong through its very innocence, that the shamelessness, the insolence and the revolting familiarity of some persons, sooner or later gains the stigma of universal contempt; and that such persons come to ruin through nothing but their own worthlessness and the corruption of their own hearts. In conclusion, I beg you, sir, to convey to those persons that their strange pretensions and their dishonourable and fantastic desire to squeeze others out of the position which those others occupy, by their very existence in this world, and to take their place, are deserving of contempt, amazement, compassion and, what is more, the madhouse; moreover, such efforts are severely prohibited by law, which in my opinion is perfectly just, for every one ought to be satisfied with his own position. Every one has his fixed position, and if this is a joke it is a joke in very bad taste. I will say more: it is utterly immoral, for, I make bold to assure you, sir, my own views which I have expounded above, in regard to keeping one’s own place, are purely moral.

“In any case I have the honour to remain,

“Your humble servant, “Y. Golyadkin.”

CHAPTER X

Altogether, we may say, the adventures of the previous day had thoroughly unnerved Mr. Golyadkin. Our hero passed a very bad night; that is, he did not get thoroughly off to sleep for five minutes: as though some practical joker had scattered bristles in his bed. He spent the whole night in a sort of half-sleeping state, tossing from side to side, from right to left, moaning and groaning, dozing off for a moment, waking up again a minute later, and all was accompanied by a strange misery, vague memories, hideous visions - in fact, everything disagreeable that can be imagined. . . .

At one moment the figure of Andrey Filippovitch appeared before him in a strange, mysterious half-light. It was a frigid, wrathful figure, with a cold, harsh eye and with stiffly polite word of blame on its lips . . . and as soon as Mr. Golyadkin began going up to Andrey Filippovitch to defend himself in some way and to prove to him that he was not at all such as his enemies represented him, that he was like this and like that, that he even possessed innate virtues of his own, superior to the average - at once a person only too well known for his discreditable behaviour appeared on the scene, and by some most revolting means instantly frustrated poor Mr. Golyadkin's efforts, on the spot, almost before the latter's eyes, blackened his reputation, trampled his dignity in the mud, and then immediately took possession of his place in the service and in society.

At another time Mr. Golyadkin's head felt sore from some sort of slight blow of late conferred and humbly accepted, received either in the course of daily life or somehow in the performance of his duty, against which blow it was difficult to protest . . . And while Mr. Golyadkin was racking his brains over the question of why it was difficult to protest even against such a blow, this idea of a blow gradually melted away into a different form - into the form of some familiar, trifling, or rather important piece of nastiness which he had seen, heard, or even himself committed - and frequently committed, indeed, and not on nasty ground, not from any nasty impulse, even, but just because it happened - sometimes, for instance, out of delicacy, another time owing to his absolute defencelessness - in fact, because . . .

because, in fact, Mr. Golyadkin knew perfectly well because of what! At this point Mr. Golyadkin blushed in his sleep, and, smothering his blushes, muttered to himself that in this case he ought to be able to show the strength

of his character, he ought to be able to show in this case the remarkable strength of his character, and then wound up by asking himself, “What, after all, is strength of character? Why understand it now?” . . .

But what irritated and enraged Mr. Golyadkin most of all was that invariably, at such a moment, a person well known for his undignified burlesque turned up uninvited, and, regardless of the fact that the matter was apparently settled, he, too, would begin muttering, with an unseemly little smile “What’s the use of strength of character! How could you and I, Yakov Petrovitch, have strength of character? . . .”

Then Mr. Golyadkin would dream that he was in the company of a number of persons distinguished for their wit and good breeding; that he, Mr. Golyadkin, too, was conspicuous for his wit and politeness, that everybody like him, which was very agreeable to Mr. Golyadkin, too, was conspicuous for his wit and politeness, that everybody liked him, even some of his enemies who were present began to like him, which was very agreeable to Mr. Golyadkin; that every one gave him precedence, and that at last Mr. Golyadkin himself, with gratification, overheard the host, drawing one of the guests aside, speak in his, Mr. Golyadkin’s praise . . . and all of a sudden, apropos of nothing, there appeared again a person, notorious for his treachery and brutal impulses, in the form of Mr. Golyadkin junior, and on the spot, at once, by his very appearance on the scene, Mr. Golyadkin junior destroyed the whole triumph and glory of Mr. Golyadkin senior, eclipsed Mr. Golyadkin senior, trampled him in the mud, and, at last, proved clearly that Golyadkin senior - that is, the genuine one - was not the genuine one at all but the sham, and that he, Golyadkin junior, was the real one; that, in fact, Mr. Golyadkin senior was not at all what he appeared to be, but something very disgraceful, and that consequently he had no right to mix in the society of honourable and well-bred people. And all this was done so quickly that Mr. Golyadkin had not time to open his mouth before all of them were subjugated, body and soul, by the wicked, sham Mr. Golyadkin, and with profound contempt rejected him, the real and innocent Mr. Golyadkin. There was not one person left whose opinion the infamous Mr. Golyadkin would not have changed round. There was not left one person, even the most insignificant of the company, to whom the false and worthless Mr. Golyadkin would not make up in his blandest manner, upon whom he would not fawn in his own way, before whom he would not burn sweet and agreeable incense, so that the flattered person simply sniffed and

sneezed till the tears came, in token of the intensest pleasure. And the worst of it was that all this was done in a flash: the swiftness of movement of the false and worthless Mr. Golyadkin was marvellous! he sincerely had time, for instance, to make up to one person and win his good graces - and before one could wink an eye he was at another. He stealthily fawns on another, drops a smile of benevolence, twirls on his short, round, though rather wooden-looking leg, and already he's at a third, and is cringing upon a third, he's making up to him in a friendly way; before one has time to open one's mouth, before one has time to feel surprised he's at a fourth, at the same manoeuvres with him - it was horrible: sorcery and nothing else! And every one was pleased with him and everybody liked him, and every one was exalting him, and all were proclaiming in chorus that his politeness and sarcastic wit were infinitely superior to the politeness and sarcastic wit of the real Mr. Golyadkin and putting the real and innocent Mr. Golyadkin to shame thereby and rejecting the veritable Mr. Golyadkin, and shoving and pushing out the loyal Mr. Golyadkin, and showering blows on the man so well known for his love towards his fellow creatures! . . .

In misery, in terror and in fury, the cruelly treated Mr. Golyadkin ran out into the street and began trying to take a cab in order to drive straight to his Excellency's, or, at any rate, to Andrey Filippovitch, but - horror! the cabman absolutely refused to take Mr. Golyadkin, saying, "We cannot drive two gentlemen exactly alike, sir; a good man tries to like honestly, your honour, and never has a double." Overcome with shame, the unimpeachable, honest Mr. Golyadkin looked round and did, in fact, assure himself with his own eyes that the cabman and Petrushka, who had joined them, were all quite right, for the depraved Mr. Golyadkin was actually on the spot, beside him, close at hand, and with his characteristic nastiness was again, at this critical moment, certainly preparing to do something very unseemly, and quite out of keeping with that gentlemanliness of character which is usually acquired by good breeding - that gentlemanliness of which the loathsome Mr. Golyadkin the second was always boasting on every opportunity. Beside himself with shame and despair, the utterly ruined though perfectly just Mr. Golyadkin dashed headlong away, wherever fate might lead him; but with every step he took, with every thud of his foot on the granite of the pavement, there leapt up as though out of the earth a Mr. Golyadkin precisely the same, perfectly alike, and of a revolting depravity of heart. And all these precisely similar Golyadkins set to running after one

another as soon as they appeared, and stretched in a long chain like a file of geese, hobbling after the real Mr. Golyadkin, so there was nowhere to escape from these duplicates - so that Mr. Golyadkin, who was in every way deserving of compassion, was breathless with terror; so that at last a terrible multitude of duplicates had sprung into being; so that the whole town was obstructed at last by duplicate Golyadkins, and the police officer, seeing such a breach of decorum, was obliged to seize all these duplicates by the collar and to put them into the watch-house, which happened to be beside him . . . Numb and chill with horror, our hero woke up, and numb and chill with horror felt that his waking state was hardly more cheerful . . . It was oppressive and harrowing . . . He was overcome by such anguish that it seemed as though some one were gnawing at his heart.

At last Mr. Golyadkin could endure it no longer. “This shall not be!” he cried, resolutely sitting up in bed, and after this exclamation he felt fully awake.

It seemed as though it were rather late in the day. It was unusually light in the room. The sunshine filtered through the frozen panes and flooded the room with light, which surprised Mr. Golyadkin not a little and, so far as Mr. Golyadkin could remember, at least, there had scarcely ever been such exceptions in the course of the heavenly luminary before. Our hero had hardly time to wonder at this when he heard the clock buzzing behind the partition as thought it was just on the point of striking. “Now,” thought Mr. Golyadkin, and he prepared to listen with painful suspense. . . .

But to complete Mr. Golyadkin’s astonishment, clock whirred and only struck once.

“What does this mean?” cried out hero, finally leaping out of bed. And, unable to believe his ears, he rushed behind the screen just as he was. It actually was one o’clock. Mr. Golyadkin glanced at Petrushka’s bed; but the room did not even smell of Petrushka: his bed had long been made and left, his boots were nowhere to be seen either - an unmistakable sign that Petrushka was not in the house. Mr. Golyadkin rushed to the door: the door was locked. “But where is he, where is Petrushka?” he went on in a whisper, conscious of intense excitement and feeling a perceptible tremor run all over him . . . Suddenly a thought floated into his mind . . . Mr. Golyadkin rushed to the table, looked all over it, felt all round - yes, it was true, his letter of the night before to Vahramyev was not there. Petrushka was nowhere behind the screen either, the clock had just struck one, and

some new points were evident to him in Vahramyev's letter, points that were obscure at first sight though now they were fully explained. Petrushka had evidently been bribed at last! "Yes, yes, that was so!"

"So this was how the chief plot was hatched!" cried Mr. Golyadkin, slapping himself on the forehead, opening his eyes wider and wider; "so in that filthy German woman's den the whole power of evil lies hidden now! So she was only making a strategic diversion in directing me to the Ismailovsky Bridge - she was putting me off the scent, confusing me (the worthless witch), and in that way laying her mines! Yes, that is so! If one only looks at the thing from that point of view, all of this is bound to be so, and the scoundrel's appearance on the scene is fully explained: it's all part and parcel of the same thing. They've kept him in reserve a long while, they had him in readiness for the evil day. This is how it has all turned out! This is what it has come to. But there, never mind. No time has been lost so far."

At this point Mr. Golyadkin recollected with horror that it was past one in the afternoon. "What if they have succeeded by now? . . ." He uttered a moan. . . . "But, no, they are lying, they've not had time -we shall see. . . ."

He dressed after a fashion, seized paper and a pen, and scribbled the following missive -

"Dear Sir Yakov Petrovitch!

"Either you or I, but both together is out of the question! And so I must inform you that your strange, absurd, and at the same time impossible desire to appear to be my twin and to give yourself out as such serves no other purpose than to bring about your complete disgrace and discomfiture. And so I beg you, for the sake of your own advantage, to step aside and make way for really honourable men of loyal aims. In the opposite case I am ready to determine upon extreme measures. I lay down my pen and await . . . However, I remain ready to oblige or to meet you with pistols.

"Y. Golyadkin."

Our hero rubbed his hands energetically when he had finished the letter. Then, pulling on his greatcoat and putting on his hat, he unlocked his flat with a spare key and set off for the department. He reached the office but could not make up his mind to go in - it was by now too late. It was half-past two by Mr. Golyadkin's watch. All at once a circumstance of apparently little importance settled some doubts in Mr. Golyadkin's mind: a flushed and breathless figure suddenly made its appearance from behind the screen of the department building and with a stealthy movement like a rat

he darted up the steps and into the entry. It was a copying clerk called Ostafyev, a man Mr. Golyadkin knew very well, who was rather useful and ready to do anything for a trifle. Knowing Ostafyev's weak spot and surmising that after his brief, unavoidable absence he would probably be greedier than ever for tips, our hero made up his mind not to be sparing of them, and immediately darted up the steps, and then into the entry after him, called to him and, with a mysterious are, drew him aside into a convenient corner, behind a huge iron stove. And having led him there, our hero began questioning him.

"Well, my dear fellow, how are things going in there . . .

you understand me? . . ."

"Yes, your honour, I wish you good health, your honour."

"All right, my good man, all right; but I'll reward you, my good fellow. Well, you see, how are things?"

"What is your honour asking?" At this point Ostafyev held his hand as though by accident before his open mouth.

"You see, my dear fellow, this is how it is . . . but don't you imagine . . . Come, is Andrey Filippovitch here?. . ."

"Yes, he is here."

"And are the clerks here?"

"Yes, sir, they are here as usual."

"And his Excellency too?"

"And his Excellency too." Here the man held his hand before his mouth again, and looked rather curiously and strangely at Mr. Golyadkin, so at least our hero fancied.

"And there's nothing special there, my good man?"

"No, sir, certainly not, sir."

"So there's nothing concerning me, my friend. Is there nothing going on there - that is, nothing more than . . . eh? nothing more, you understand, my friend?"

"No, sir, I've heard nothing so far, sir." Again the man put his hand before his mouth and again looked rather strangely at Mr. Golyadkin. The fact was, Mr. Golyadkin was trying to read Ostafyev's countenance, trying to discover whether there was not something hidden in it. And, in fact, he did look as though he were hiding something: Ostafyev seemed to grow colder and more churlish, and did not enter into Mr. Golyadkin's interests with the same sympathy as at the beginning of the conversation. "He is to

some extent justified," thought Mr. Golyadkin. "After all, what am I to him? Perhaps he has already been bribed by the other side, and that's why he has just been absent. but, here, I'll try him . . ." Mr. Golyadkin realized that the moment for kopecks had arrived.

"Here, my dear fellow . . ."

"I'm feelingly grateful for your honour's kindness."

"I'll give you more than that."

"Yes, your honour."

"I'll give you some more directly, and when the business is over I'll give you as much again. Do you understand?"

The clerk did not speak. He stood at attention and stared fixedly at Mr. Golyadkin.

"Come, tell me now: have you heard nothing about me? . . ."

"I think, so far, I have not . . . so to say . . . nothing so far." Ostafyev, like Mr. Golyadkin, spoke deliberately and preserved a mysterious air, moving his eyebrows a little, looking at the ground, trying to fall into the suitable tone, and, in fact, doing his very utmost to earn what had been promised him, for what he had received already he reckoned as already earned.

"And you know nothing?"

"So far, nothing, sir."

"Listen . . . you know . . . maybe you will know . . ."

"Later on, of course, maybe I shall know."

"It's a poor look out," thought our hero. "Listen: here's something more, my dear fellow."

"I am truly grateful to your honour."

"Was Vahramyev here yesterday? . . ."

"Yes, sir."

"And . . . somebody else? . . . Was he? . . . Try and remember, brother."

The man ransacked his memory for a moment, and could think of nothing appropriate.

"No, sir, there wasn't anybody else."

"H'm!" a silence followed.

"Listen, brother, here's some more; tell me all, every detail."

"Yes, sir," Ostafyev had by now become as soft as silk; which was just what Mr. Golyadkin needed.

"Explain to me now, my good man, what footing is he on?"

“All right, sir, a good one, sir,” answered the man, gazing open-eyed at Mr. Golyadkin.

“How do you mean, all right?”

“Well, it’s just like that, sir.” Here Ostafyev twitched his eyebrows significantly. But he was utterly nonplussed and didn’t know what more to say.

“It’s a poor look out,” thought Mr. Golyadkin.

“And hasn’t anything more happened . . . in there . . . about Vahramyev?”

“But everything is just as usual.”

“Think a little.”

“There is, they say . . .”

“Come, what?” Ostafyev put his hand in front of his mouth.

“Wasn’t there a letter . . . from here . . . to me?”

“Mihyeev the attendant went to Vahramyev’s lodging, to their German landlady, so I’ll go and ask him if you like.”

“Do me the favour, brother, for goodness’ sake! . . . I only mean . . . you mustn’t imagine anything, brother, I only mean . . . Yes, you question him, brother, find out whether they are not getting up something concerning me. Find out how he is acting. That is what I want; that is what you must find out, my dear fellow, and then I’ll reward you, my good man. . . .”

“I will, your honour, and Ivan Semyonovitch sat in your place today, sir.”

“Ivan Semyonovitch? Oh! really, you don’t say so.”

“Andrey Filippovitch told him to sit there.”

“Re-al-ly! How did that happen? You must find out, brother; for God’s sake find out, brother; find it all out - and I’ll reward you, my dear fellow; that’s what I want to know .

. . and don’t you imagine anything, brother. . . .”

“Just so, sir, just so; I’ll go at once. And aren’t you going in today, sir?”

“No, my friend; I only looked round, I only looked round, you know. I only came to have a look round, my friend, and I’ll reward you afterwards, my friend.”

“Yes, sir.” The man ran rapidly and eagerly up the stairs and Mr. Golyadkin was left alone.

“It’s a poor look out!” he thought. “Eh, it’s a bad business, a bad business! Ech! things are in a bad way with us now! What does it all mean? What did that drunkard’s insinuations mean, for instance, and whose

trickery was it? Ah! I know whose it was. And what a thing this is. No doubt they found out and made him sit there. . . . But, after all, did they sit him there? It was Andrey Filippovitch sat him there and with what object? Probably they found out. . . . That is Vahramyev's work - that is, not Vahramyev, he is as stupid as an ashen post, Vahramyev is, and they are all at work on his behalf, and they egged that scoundrel on to come here for the same purpose, and the German woman brought up her grievance, the one-eyed hussy. I always suspected that this intrigue was not without an object and that in all this old-womanish gossip there must be something, and I said as much to Krestyan Ivanovitch, telling him they'd sworn to cut a man's throat - in a moral sense, of course - and they pounced upon Karolina Ivanovna. Yes, there are master hands at work in this, one can see! Yes, sir, there are master hands at work in this, not Vahramyev's. I've said already that Vahramyev is stupid, but . . . I know who it is behind it all, it's that rascal, that impostor! It's only that he relies upon, which is partly proved by his successes in the best society. And it would certainly be desirable to know on what footing he stands now. What is he now among them? Only, why have they taken Ivan Semyonovitch? What the devil do they want with Ivan Semyonovitch? Could not they have found any one else? Though it would come to the same thing whoever it had been, and the only thing I know is that I have suspected Ivan Semyonovitch for a long time past. I noticed long ago what a nasty, horrid old man he was - they say he lends money and takes interest like any Jew. To be sure, the bear's the leading spirit in the whole affair. One can detect the bear in the whole affair. It began in this way. It began at the Ismailovsky Bridge; that's how it began . . ."

At this point Mr. Golyadkin frowned, as though he had taken a bit out of a lemon, probably remembering something very unpleasant.

"But, there, it doesn't matter," he thought. "I keep harping on my own troubles. What will Ostafyev find out? Most likely he is staying on or has been delayed somehow. It is a good thing, in a sense, that I am intriguing like this, and am laying mines on my side too. I've only to give Ostafyev ten kopecks and he's . . . so to speak, on my side. Only the point is, is he really on my side? Perhaps they've got him on their side too . . . and they are carrying on an intrigue by means of him on their side too. He looks a ruffian, the rascal, a regular ruffian; he's hiding something, the rogue. 'No,

nothing,’ says he, ‘and I am deeply grateful to your honour.’ says he. You ruffian, you!”

He heard a noise . . . Mr. Golyadkin shrank up and skipped behind the stove. Some one came down stairs and went out into the street. “Who could that be going away now?” our hero thought to himself. A minute later footsteps were audible again . . . At this point Mr. Golyadkin could not resist poking the very tip of his nose out beyond his corner - he poked it out and instantly withdrew it again, as though some one had pricked it with a pin. This time some one he knew well was coming - that is the scoundrel, the intriguer and the reprobate - he was approaching with his usual mean, tripping little step, prancing and shuffling with his feet as though he were going to kick some one.

“The rascal,” said our hero to himself.

Mr. Golyadkin could not, however, help observing that the rascal had under his arm a huge green portfolio belonging to his Excellency.

“He’s on a special commission again,” thought Mr. Golyadkin, flushing crimson and shrinking into himself more than ever from vexation.

As soon as Mr. Golyadkin junior had slipped past Mr. Golyadkin senior without observing him in the least, footsteps were heard for the third time, and this time Mr. Golyadkin guessed that these were Ostafyev’s. It was, in fact, the sleek figure of a copying clerk, Pisarenko by name. This surprised Mr. Golyadkin. Why had he mixed up other people in their secret? our hero wondered. What barbarians! nothing is sacred to them! “Well, my friend?” he brought out, addressing Pisarenko: “who sent you, my friend? . . .”

“I’ve come about your business. There’s no news so far from any one. But should there be any we’ll let you know.”

“And Ostafyev?”

“It was quite impossible for him to come, your honour. His Excellency has walked through the room twice, and I’ve no time to stay.”

“Thank you, my good man, thank you . . . only, tell me . . .”

“Upon my word, sir, I can’t stay. . . . They are asking for us every minute . . . but if your honour will stay here, we’ll let you know if anything happens concerning your little affair.”

“No, my friend, you just tell me . . .”

“Excuse me, I’ve no time to stay, sir,” said Pisarenko, tearing himself away from Mr. Golyadkin, who had clutched him by the lapel of his coat. “I really can’t. If your honour will stay here we’ll let you know.”

“In a minute, my good man, in a minute! In a minute, my good fellow! I tell you what, here’s a letter; and I’ll reward you, my good mad.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Try and give it to Mr. Golyadkin my dear fellow.”

“Golyadkin?”

“Yes, my man, to Mr. Golyadkin.”

“Very good, sir; as soon as I get off I’ll take it, and you stay here, meanwhile; no one will see you here . . .”

“No, my good man, don’t imagine . . . I’m not standing here to avoid being seen. But I’m not going to stay here now, my friend. . . I’ll be close here in the side of the street. There’s a coffee-house near here; so I’ll wait there, and if anything happens, you let me know about anything, you understand?”

“Very good, sir. Only let me go; I understand.”

“And I’ll reward you,” Mr. Golyadkin called after Pisarenko, when he had at last released him. . . .”

“The rogue seemed to be getting rather rude,” our hero reflected as he stealthily emerged from behind the stove. “There’s some other dodge here. That’s clear . . . At first it was one thing and another . . . he really was in a hurry, though; perhaps there’s a great deal to do in the office. And his Excellency had been through the room twice . . . How did that happen? . . . Ough! never mind! it may mean nothing, perhaps; but now we shall see. . . .”

At this point Mr. Golyadkin was about to open the door, intending to go out into the street, when suddenly, at that very instant, his Excellency’s carriage was opened from within and a gentleman jumped out. This gentleman was no other than Mr. Golyadkin junior, who had only gone out ten minutes before. Mr. Golyadkin senior remembered that the Director’s flat was only a couple of paces away.

“He has been out on a special commission,” our hero thought to himself.

Meanwhile, Mr. Golyadkin junior took out of the carriage a thick green portfolio and other papers. Finally, giving some orders to the coachman, he opened the door, almost ran up against Mr. Golyadkin senior, purposely avoided noticing him, acting in this way expressly to annoy him, and mounted the office staircase at a rapid canter.

“It’s a bad look out,” thought Mr. Golyadkin. “This is what it has come to now! Oh, good Lord! look at him.”

For half a minute our hero remained motionless. At last he made up his mind. Without pausing to think, though he was aware of a violent palpitation of the heart and a tremor in all his limbs, he ran up the stair after his enemy.

“Here goes; what does it matter to me? I have nothing to do with the case,” he thought, taking off his hat, his greatcoat and his goloshes in the entry.

When Mr. Golyadkin walked into his office, it was already getting dusk. Neither Andrey Filippovitch nor Anton Antonovitch were in the room. Both of them were in the Director’s room, handing in reports. The Director, so it was rumoured, was in haste to report to a still higher Excellency. In consequence of this, and also because twilight was coming on, and the office hours were almost over, several of the clerks, especially the younger ones, were, at the moment when our hero entered, enjoying a period of inactivity; gathered together in groups, they were talking, arguing, and laughing, and some of the most youthful - that is, belonging to the lowest grades in the service, had got up a game of pitch-farthing in a corner, by a window. Knowing what was proper, and feeling at the moment a special need to conciliate and get on with them, Mr. Golyadkin immediately approached those with him he used to get on best, in order to wish them good day, and so on. But his colleagues answered his greetings rather strangely. He was unpleasantly impressed by a certain coldness, even curtness, one might almost say severity in their manner. No one shook hands with him. Some simply said, “Good day” and walked away; others barely nodded; one simply turned away and pretended not to notice him; at last some of them - and what mortified Mr. Golyadkin most of all, some of the youngsters of the lowest grades, mere lads who, as Mr. Golyadkin justly observed about them, were capable of nothing but hanging about and playing pitch-farthing at every opportunity - little by little collected round Mr. Golyadkin, formed a group round him and almost barred his way. They all looked at him with a sort of insulting curiosity.

It was a bad sign. Mr. Golyadkin felt this, and very judiciously decided not to notice it. Suddenly a quite unexpected event completely finished him off, as they say, and utterly crushed him.

At the moment most trying to Mr. Golyadkin senior, suddenly, as though by design, there appeared in the group of fellow clerks surrounding him the figure of Mr. Golyadkin junior, gay as ever, smiling a little smile as ever,

nimble, too, as ever; in short, mischievous, skipping and tripping, chuckling and fawning, with sprightly tongue and sprightly toe, as always, precisely as he had been the day before at a very unpleasant moment for Mr. Golyadkin senior, for instance.

Grinning, tripping and turning with a smile that seemed to say “good evening,” to every one, he squeezed his way into the group of clerks, shaking hands with one, slapping another on the shoulder, putting his arm round another, explaining to a fourth how he had come to be employed by his Excellency, where he had been, what he had done, what he had brought with him; to the fifth, probably his most intimate friend, he gave a resounding kiss - in fact, everything happened as it had in Mr. Golyadkin’s dream. When he had skipped about to his heart’s content, polished them all off in his usual way, disposed them all in his favour, whether he needed them or not, when he had lavished his blandishments to the delectation of all the clerks, Mr. Golyadkin junior suddenly, and most likely by mistake, for he had not yet had time to notice his senior, held out his hand to Mr. Golyadkin senior also. Probably also by mistake - though he had had time to observe the dishonourable Mr. Golyadkin junior thoroughly, our hero at once eagerly seized the hand so unexpectedly held out to him and pressed it in the warmest and friendliest way, pressed it with a strange, quite unexpected, inner feeling, with a tearful emotion. Whether our hero was misled by the first movement of his worthless foe, or was taken unawares, or, without recognizing it, felt at the bottom of his heart how defenceless he was - it is difficult to say. The fact remains that Mr. Golyadkin senior, apparently knowing what he was doing, of his own free will, before witnesses, solemnly shook hands with him whom he called his mortal foe. But what was the amazement, the stupefaction and fury, what was the horror and the shame of Mr. Golyadkin senior, when his enemy and mortal foe, the dishonourable Mr. Golyadkin junior, noticing the mistake of that persecuted, innocent, perfidiously deceived man, without a trace of shame, of feeling, of compassion or of conscience, pulled his hand away with insufferable rudeness and insolence. What was worse, he shook the hand as though it had been polluted with something horrid; what is more, he spat aside with disgust, accompanying this with a most insulting gesture; worse still, he drew out his handkerchief and, in the most unseemly way, wiped all the fingers that had rested for one moment in the hand of Mr. Golyadkin senior. While he did this Mr. Golyadkin junior looked about him in his

characteristic horrid way, took care that every one should see what he was doing, glanced into people's eyes and evidently tried to insinuate to every one everything that was most unpleasant in regard to Mr. Golyadkin senior. Mr. Golyadkin junior's revolting behaviour seemed to arouse general indignation among the clerks that surrounded them; even the frivolous youngsters showed their displeasure. A murmur of protest rose on all sides. Mr. Golyadkin could not but discern the general feeling; but suddenly - an appropriate witticism that bubbled from the lips of Mr. Golyadkin junior shattered, annihilated our hero's last hopes, and inclined the balance again in favour of his deadly and undeserving for.

"He's our Russian Faublas, gentlemen; allow me to introduce the youthful Faublas," piped Mr. Golyadkin junior, with his characteristic insolence, pirouetting and threading his way among the clerks, and directing their attention to the petrified though genuine Mr. Golyadkin. "Let us kiss each other, darling," he went on with insufferable familiarity, addressing the man he had so treacherously insulted. Mr. Golyadkin junior's unworthy jest seemed to touch a responsive chord, for it contained an artful allusion to an incident with which all were apparently familiar. Our hero was painfully conscious of the hand of his enemies. But he had made up his mind by now. With glowing eyes, with pale face, with a fixed smile he tore himself somehow out of the crowd and with uneven, hurried steps made straight for his Excellency's private room. In the room next to the last he was met by Andrey Filippovitch, who had only just come out from seeing his Excellency, and although there were present in this room at the moment a good number of persons of whom Mr. Golyadkin knew nothing, yet out hero did not care to take such a fact into consideration. Boldly, resolutely, directly, almost wondering at himself and inwardly admiring his own courage, without loss of time he accosted Andrey Filippovitch, who was a good deal surprised by the unexpected attack.

"Ah! . . . What is it . . . what do you want?" asked the head of the division, not hearing Mr. Golyadkin's hesitation words.

"Andrey Filippovitch, may . . . might I, Andrey Filippovitch, may I have a conversation with his Excellency at once and in private?" our hero said resolutely and distinctly, fixing the most determined glance on Andrey Filippovitch.

"What next! of course not." Andrey Filippovitch scanned Mr. Golyadkin from head to foot.

“I say all this, Andrey Filippovitch, because I am surprised that no-one here unmasks the imposter and scoundrel.”

“Wha-a-at!”

“Scoundrel, Andrey Filippovitch!”

“Of whom are you pleased to speak in those terms?”

“Of a certain person, Andrey Filippovitch; I’m alluding, Andrey Filippovitch, to a certain person; I have the right . .

. I imagine, Andrey Filippovitch, that the authorities would surely encourage such action,” added Mr. Golyadkin, evidently hardly knowing what he was saying. “Andrey Filippovitch . . . but no doubt you see yourself, Andrey Filippovitch, that this honourable action is a mark of my loyalty in every way - of my looking upon my superior as a father, Andrey Filippovitch; I as much as to say look upon my benevolent superior as a father and blindly trust my fate to him. It’s as much as to say . . . you see . . . “ At this point Mr. Golyadkin’s voice trembled and two tears ran down his eyelashes.

As Andrey Filippovitch listened to Mr. Golyadkin he was so astonished that he could not help stepping back a couple of paces. Then he looked about him uneasily . . . It is difficult to say how the matter would have ended. But suddenly the door of his Excellency’s room was opened, and he himself came out, accompanied by several officials. All the persons in his room followed in a string. His Excellency called to Andrey Filippovitch and walked beside him, beginning to discuss some business details. When all had set off and gone out of the room, Mr. Golyadkin woke up. Growing calmer, he took refuge under the wing of Anton Antonovitch, who came last in the procession and who, Mr. Golyadkin fancied, looked stern and anxious. “I’ve been talking nonsense, I’ve been making a mess of it again, but there, never mind,” he thought.

“I hope, at least, that you, Anton Antonovitch will consent to listen to me and to enter into my position,” he said quietly, in a voice that still trembled a little. “Rejected by all, I appeal to you. I am still at a loss to understand what Andrey Filippovitch’s words mean, Anton Antonovitch. Explain them to me if you can . . .”

“Everything will be explained in due time,” Anton Antonovitch replied sternly and emphatically, and as Mr. Golyadkin fancied with an air that give him plainly to understand that Anton Antonovitch did not wish to continue

the conversation. “You will soon know all about it. You will be officially informed about everything today.”

“What do you mean by officially informed, Anton Antonovitch? Why officially?” our hero asked timidly.

“It is not for you and me to discuss what our superiors decide upon, Yakov Petrovitch.”

“Why our superiors, Anton Antonovitch?” said our hero, still more intimidate; “why our superiors? I don’t see what reason there is to trouble our superiors in the matter, Anton Antonovitch . . . Perhaps you mean to say something about yesterday’s doings, Anton Antonovitch?”

“Oh no, nothing to do with yesterday; there’s something else amiss with you.”

“What is there amiss, Anton Antonovitch? I believe, Anton Antonovitch, that I have done nothing amiss.”

“Why, you were meaning to be sly with some one,” Anton Antonovitch cut in sharply, completely flabbergasting Mr. Golyadkin.

Mr. Golyadkin started, and turned as white as a pocket-handkerchief.

“Of course, Anton Antonovitch,” he said, in a voice hardly audible, “if one listens to the voice of calumny and hears one’s enemies’ tales, without heeding what the other side has to say in its defence, then, of course . . . then, of course, Anton Antonovitch, one must suffer innocently and for nothing.”

“To be sure; but your unseemly conduct, in injuring the reputation of a virtuous young lady belonging to that benevolent, highly distinguished and well-known family who had befriended you . . .”

“What conduct do you mean, Anton Antonovitch?”

“What I say. Do you know anything about your praiseworthy conduct in regard to that other young lady who, though poor, is of honourable foreign extraction?”

“Allow me, Anton Antonovitch . . . if you would kindly listen to me, Anton Antonovitch . . .”

“And your treacherous behaviour and slander of another person, your charging another person with your own sins. Ah, what do you call that?”

“I did not send him away, Anton Antonovitch,” said our hero, with a tremor; “and I’ve never instructed Petrushka, my man, to do anything of the sort . . . He has eaten my bread, Anton Antonovitch, he has taken advantage

of my hospitality," our hero added expressively and with deep emotion, so much so that his chin twitched a little and tears were ready to start again.

"That is only your talk, that he has eaten your bread," answered Anton Antonovitch, somewhat offended, and there was a perfidious note in his voice which sent a pang to Mr. Golyadkin's heart.

"Allow me most humbly to ask you again, Anton Antonovitch, is his Excellency aware of all this business?"

"Upon my word, you must let me go now, though. I've not time for you now. . . . You'll know everything you need to know today."

"Allow me, for God's sake, one minute, Anton Antonovitch."

"Tell me afterwards. . ."

"No, Anton Antonovitch; I . . . you see, Anton Antonovitch . . . only listen . . . I am not one for freethinking, Anton Antonovitch; I shun freethinking; I am quite ready for my part . . . and, indeed, I've given up that idea. . . ."

"Very good, very good. I've heard that already."

"No, you have not heard it, Anton Antonovitch. It is something else, Anton Antonovitch: it's a good thing, really, a good thing and pleasant to hear . . . As I've explained to you, Anton Antonovitch, I admit that idea, that divine Providence has created two men exactly alike, and that a benevolent government, seeing the hand of Providence, provided a berth for two twins. That is a good thing, Anton Antonovitch, and that I am very far from freethinking. I look upon my benevolent government as a father; I say 'yes,' by all means; you are benevolent authorities, and you, of course . . . A young man must be in the service . . . Stand up for me, Anton Antonovitch, take my part, Anton Antonovitch . . . I am all right . . . Anton Antonovitch, for God's sake, one little word more. . . . Anton Antonovitch. . . ."

But by now Anton Antonovitch was far away from Mr. Golyadkin . . . Our hero was so bewildered and overcome by all that had happened and all that he had heard that he did not know where he was standing, what he had heard, what he had done, what was being done to him, and what was going to be done to him.

With imploring eyes he sought for Anton Antonovitch in the crowd of clerks, that he might justify himself further in his eyes and say something to him extremely high toned and very agreeable, and creditable to himself. . . . By degrees, however, a new light began to break upon our hero's bewildered mind, a new and awful light that revealed at once a whole

perspective of hitherto unknown and utterly unsuspected circumstances . . . At that moment somebody gave our bewildered hero a poke in the ribs. He looked around. Pisarenko was standing before him.

“A letter, your honour.”

“Ah, you’ve been taken out already, my good man?”

“No, it was brought at ten o’clock this morning. Sergey Mihyeev, the attendant, brought it form Mr. Vahramyev’s lodging.”

“Very good, very good, and I’ll reward you now, my dear fellow.”

Saying this, Mr. Golyadkin thrust the letter in his side pocket of his uniform and buttoned up every button of it; then he looked round him, and to his surprise, found that he was by now in the hall of the department in a group of clerks crowding at the outer door, for office hours were over. Mr. Golyadkin had not only failed till that moment to observe this circumstance, but had no notion how he suddenly came to be wearing his greatcoat and goloshes and to be holding his hat in his hand. All the clerks were motionless, in reverential expectation. The fact was that his Excellency was standing at the bottom of the stairs waiting for his carriage, which was for some reason late in arriving, and was carrying on a very interesting conversation with Andrey Filippovitch and two councillors. At a little distance from Andrey Filippovitch stood Anton Antonovitch and several other clerks, who were all smiles, seeing that his Excellency was graciously making a joke. The clerks who were crowded at the top of the stair were smiling too, in expectation of his Excellency’s laughing again. The only one who was not smiling was Fedosyevitch, the corpulent hall-porter, who stood stiffly at attention, holding the handle of the door, waiting impatiently for the daily gratification that fell to his share - that is, the task of flinging one half of the door wide open with a swing of his arm, and then, with a low bow, reverentially making way for his Excellency to pass. But the one who seemed to be more delighted than any and to feel the most satisfaction of all was the worthless and ungentlemanly enemy of Mr. Golyadkin. At that instant he positively forgot all the clerks, and even gave up tripping and pirouetting in his usual odious way; he even forgot to make up to anybody. He was all eyes and ears, he even doubled himself up strangely, no doubt in the strained effort to hear, and never took his eyes off his Excellency, and only from time to time his arms, legs and head twitched with faintly perceptible tremors that betrayed the secret emotions of his soul.

“Ah, isn’t he in a state!” thought our hero; “he looks like a favourite, the rascal! I should like to know how it is that he deceives society of every class. He has neither brains nor character, neither education nor feeling; he’s a lucky rogue! Mercy on us! How can a man, when you think of it, come and make friends with every one so quickly! And he’ll get on, I swear the fellow will get on, the rogue will make his way - he’s a lucky rascal! I should like to know, too, what he keeps whispering to every one - what plots he is hatching with all these people, and what secrets they are talking about? Lord, have mercy on us! If only I could . . . get on with them a little too . . . say this and that and the other. Hadn’t I better ask him . . . tell him I won’t do it again; say ‘I’m in fault, and a young man must serve nowadays, your Excellency’? I am not going to protest in any way, either; I shall bear it all with meekness and patience, so there! Is that the way to behave? . . . Though you’ll never see through him, though, the rascal; you can’t reach him with anything you say; you can’t hammer reason into his head . . . We’ll make an effort, though. I may happen to hit on a good moment, so I’ll make an effort. . . .”

Feeling in his uneasiness, his misery and his bewilderment that he couldn’t leave things like this, that the critical moment had come, that he must explain himself to some one, our hero began to move a little towards the place where his worthless and undeserving enemy stood: but at that very moment his Excellency’s long-expected carriage rolled up into the entrance, Fedosyevitch flung open the door and, bending double, let his Excellency pass out. All the waiting clerks streamed out towards the door, and for a moment separated Mr. Golyadkin senior from Mr. Golyadkin junior.

“You shan’t get away!” said our hero, forcing his way through the crowd while he kept his eyes fixed upon the man he wanted. At last the crowd dispersed. Our hero felt he was free and flew in pursuit of his enemy.

CHAPTER XI

Mr. Golyadkin’s breath failed him; he flew as though on wings after his rapidly retreating enemy. He was conscious of immense energy. Yet in spite of this terrible energy he might confidently have said that at that moment a humble gnat - had a gnat been able to exist in Petersburg at that time of the year - could very easily have knocked him down. He felt, too, that he was utterly weak again, that he was carried along by a peculiar outside force, that it was not he himself who was funning, but, on the contrary, that his legs were giving way under him, and refused to obey him. This all might turn out for the best, however.

“Whether it is for the best or not for the best,” thought Mr. Golyadkin, almost breathless from running so quickly, “but that the game is lost there cannot be the slightest doubt now; that I am utterly done for is certain, definite, signed and ratified.”

In spite of all this our hero felt as though he had risen from the dead, as though he had withstood a battalion, as though he had won a victory when he succeeded in clutching the overcoat of his enemy, who had already raised one foot to get into the cab he had engaged.

“My dear sir! My dear sir!” he shouted to the infamous Mr. Golyadkin junior, holding him by the button. “My dear sir, I hope that you . . .”

“No, please do not hope for anything,” Mr. Golyadkin’s heartless enemy answered evasively, standing with one foot on the step of the cab and vainly waving the other leg in the air, in his efforts to get in, trying to preserve his equilibrium, and at the same time trying with all his might to wrench his coat away from Mr. Golyadkin senior, while the latter held on to it with all the strength that had been vouchsafed to him by nature.

“Yakov Petrovitch, only ten minutes . . .”

“Excuse me, I’ve no time . . .”

“You must admit, Yakov Petrovitch . . . please, Yakov Petrovitch . . . For God’s sake, Yakov Petrovitch . . . let us have it out - in a straightforward way . . . one little second, Yakov Petrovitch . . .

“My dear fellow, I can’t stay,” answered Mr. Golyadkin’s dishonourable enemy, with uncivil familiarity, disguised as good-natured heartiness; “another time, believe me, with my whole soul and all my heart; but now I really can’t . . .”

“Scoundrel!” thought our hero. “Yakov Petrovitch,” he cried miserably. “I have never been your enemy. Spiteful people have described me unjustly . . . I am ready, on my side . . . Yakov Petrovitch, shall we go in here together, at once, Yakov Petrovitch? And with all my heart, as you have so justly expressed it just now, and in straightforward, honourable language, as you have expressed it just now - here into this coffee-house; there the facts will explain themselves: they will really, Yakov Petrovitch. Then everything will certainly explain itself . . .”

“Into the coffee-house? Very good. I am not against it. Let us go into the coffee-house on one condition only, my dear, on one condition - that these things shall be cleared up. We will have it out, darling,” said Mr. Golyadkin junior, getting out of the cab and shamelessly slapping our hero on the shoulder; “You friend of my heart, for your sake, Yakov Petrovitch, I am ready to go by the back street (as you were pleased to observe so aptly on one occasion, Yakov Petrovitch). Why, what a rogue he is! Upon my word, he does just what he likes with one!” Mr. Golyadkin’s false friend went on, fawning upon him and cajoling him with a little smile. The coffee-house which the two Mr. Golyadkins entered stood some distance away from the main street and was at the moment quite empty. A rather stout German woman made her appearance behind the counter. Mr. Golyadkin and his unworthy enemy went into the second room, where a puffy-looking boy with a closely shaven head was busy with a bundle of chips at the stove, trying to revive the smouldering fire. At Mr. Golyadkin junior’s request chocolate was served.

“And a sweet little lady-tart,” said Mr. Golyadkin junior, with a sly wink at Mr. Golyadkin senior.

Our hero blushed and was silent.

“Oh, yes, I forgot, I beg your pardon. I know your taste. We are sweet on charming little Germans, sir; you and I are sweet on charming and agreeable little Germans, aren’t we, you upright soul? We take their lodgings, we seduce their morals, they win our hearts with their beersoup and their milksoup, and we give them notes of different sorts, that’s what we do, you Faublas, you deceiver!” All this Mr. Golyadkin junior said, making an unworthy though villainously artful allusion to a certain personage of the female sex, while he fawned upon our hero, smiled at him with an amiable air, with a deceitful show of being delighted with him and pleased to have met him. Seeing that Mr. Golyadkin senior was by no

means so stupid and deficient in breeding and the manners of good society as to believe in him, the infamous man resolved to change his tactics and to make a more upon attack upon him. After uttering his disgusting speech, the false Mr. Golyadkin ended by slapping the real and substantial Mr. Golyadkin on the shoulder, with a revolting effrontery and familiarity. Not content with that, he began playing pranks utterly unfit for well-bred society; he took it into his head to repeat his old, nauseous trick - that is, regardless of the resistance and faint cries of the indignant Mr. Golyadkin senior, he pinched the latter on the cheek. At the spectacle of such depravity our hero boiled within, but was silent . . . only for the time, however.

“That is the talk of my enemies,” he answered at last, in a trembling voice, prudently restraining himself. At the same time our hero looked round uneasily towards the door. The fact was that Mr. Golyadkin junior seemed in excellent spirits, and ready for all sorts of little jokes, unseemly in a public place, and, speaking generally, not permissible by the laws of good manners, especially in well-bred society.

“Oh, well, in that case, as you please,” Mr. Golyadkin junior gravely responded to our hero’s thought, setting down upon the table the empty cup which he had gulped down with unseemly greed. “Well, there’s no need for me to stay long with you, however. . . . Well, how are you getting on now, Yakov Petrovitch?”

“There’s only one thing I can tell you, Yakov Petrovitch,” our hero answered, with sangfroid and dignity; “I’ve never been your enemy.”

“H’m . . . Oh, what about Petrushka? Petrushka is his name, I fancy? Yes, it is Petrushka! Well, how is he? Well? The same as ever?”

“He’s the same as ever, too, Yakov Petrovitch,” answered Mr. Golyadkin senior, somewhat amazed. “I don’t know, Yakov Petrovitch . . . from my standpoint . . . from a candid, honourable standpoint, Yakov Petrovitch, you must admit, Yakov Petrovitch. . . .”

“Yes, but you know yourself, Yakov Petrovitch,” Mr. Golyadkin junior answered in a soft and expressive voice, so posing falsely as a sorrowful man overcome with remorse and deserving compassion. “You know yourself as we live in difficult time . . . I appeal to you, Yakov Petrovitch; you are an intelligent man and your reflections are just,” Mr. Golyadkin junior said in conclusion, flattering Mr. Golyadkin senior in an abject way. “Life is not a game, you know yourself, Yakov Petrovitch,” Mr. Golyadkin

junior added, with vast significance, assuming the character of a clever and learned man, who is capable of passing judgements on lofty subjects.

“For my part, Yakov Petrovitch,” our hero answered warmly, “for my part, scorning to be roundabout and speaking boldly and openly, using straightforward, honourable language and putting the whole matter on an honourable basis, I tell you I can openly and honourably assert, Yakov Petrovitch, that I am absolutely pure, and that, you know it yourself, Yakov Petrovitch, the error is mutual - it may all be the world’s judgment, the opinion of the slavish crowd. . . . I speak openly, Yakov Petrovitch, everything is possible. I will say, too, Yakov Petrovitch, if you judge it in this way, if you look at the matter from a lofty, noble point of view, then I will boldly say, without false shame I will say, Yakov Petrovitch, it will positively be a pleasure to me to discover that I have been in error, it will positively be a pleasure to me to recognize it. You know yourself you are an intelligent man and, what is more, you are a gentleman. Without shame, without false shame, I am ready to recognize it,” he wound up with dignity and nobility.

“It is the decree of destiny, Yakov Petrovitch . . . but let us drop all this,” said Mr. Golyadkin junior. “Let us rather use the brief moment of our meeting for a more pleasant and profitable conversation, as is only suitable between two colleagues in the service . . . Really, I have not succeeded in saying two words to you all this time. . . . I am not to blame for that, Yakov Petrovitch. . . .”

“Nor I,” answered our hero warmly, “nor I, either! My heart tells me, Yakov Petrovitch, that I’m not to blame in all this matter. Let us blame fate for all this, Yakov Petrovitch,” added Mr. Golyadkin senior, in a quick, conciliatory tone of voice. His voice began little by little to soften and to quaver.

“Well! How are you in health?” said the sinner in a sweet voice.

“I have a little cough,” answered our hero, even more sweetly.

“Take care of yourself. There is so much illness going about, you may easily get quinsy; for my part I confess I’ve begun to wrap myself up in flannel.”

“One may, indeed, Yakov Petrovitch, very easily get quinsy,” our hero pronounced after a brief silence; “Yakov Petrovitch, I see that I have made a mistake, I remember with softened feelings those happy moments which we

were so fortunate as to spend together, under my poor, though I venture to say, hospitable roof . . .”

“In your letter, however, you wrote something very different,” said Mr. Golyadkin junior reproachfully, speaking on this occasion - though only on this occasion - quite justly.

“Yakov Petrovitch, I was in error. . . . I see clearly now that I was in error in my unhappy letter too. Yakov Petrovitch, I am ashamed to look at you, Yakov Petrovitch, you wouldn’t believe . . . Give me that letter that I may tear it to pieces before your eyes, Yakov Petrovitch, and if that is utterly impossible I entreat you to read it the other way before - precisely the other way before - that is, expressly with a friendly intention, giving the opposite sense to the whole letter. I was in error. Forgive me, Yakov Petrovitch, I was quite . . . I was grievously in error, Yakov Petrovitch.”

“You say so?” Mr. Golyadkin’s perfidious friend inquired, rather casually and indifferently.

“I say that I was quite in error, Yakov Petrovitch, and that for my part, quite without false shame, I am . . .”

“Ah, well, that’s all right! That’s a nice thing your being in error,” answered Mr. Golyadkin junior.

“I even had an idea, Yakov Petrovitch,” our candid hero answered in a gentlemanly way, completely failing to observe the horrible perfidy of his deceitful enemy; “I even had an idea that here were two people created exactly alike. . . .”

“Ah, is that your idea?”

At this point the notoriously worthless Mr. Golyadkin took up his hat. Still failing to observe his treachery, Mr. Golyadkin senior, too, got up and with a noble, simple-hearted smile to his false friend, tried in his innocence to be friendly to him, to encourage him, and in that way to form a new friendship with him.

“Good-bye, your Excellency,” Mr. Golyadkin junior called out suddenly. Our hero started, noticing in his enemy’s face something positively Bacchanalian, and, solely to get rid of him, put two fingers into the unprincipled man’s outstretched hand; but then . . . then his enemy’s shameless ness passed all bounds. Seizing the two fingers of Mr. Golyadkin’s hand and at first pressing them, the worthless fellow on the spot, before Mr. Golyadkin’s eyes, had the effrontery to repeat the shameful joke of the morning. The limit of human patience was exhausted.

He had just hidden in his pocket the handkerchief with which he had wiped his fingers when Mr. Golyadkin senior recovered from the shock and dashed after him into the next room, into which his irreconcilable foe had in his usual hasty way hastened to decamp. As though perfectly innocent, he was standing at the counter eating pies, and with perfect composure, like a virtuous man, was making polite remarks to the German woman behind the counter.

“I can’t go into it before ladies,” thought our hero, and he, too, went up to the counter, so agitated that he hardly knew what he was doing.

“The tart is certainly not bad! What do you think?” Mr. Golyadkin junior began upon his unseemly sallies again, reckoning, no doubt, upon Mr. Golyadkin’s infinite patience. The stout German, for her part, looked at both her visitors with pewtery, vacant-looking eyes, smiling affably and evidently not understanding Russian. Our hero flushed red as fire at the words of the unabashed Mr. Golyadkin junior, and, unable to control himself, rushed at him with the evident intention of tearing him to pieces and finishing him off completely, but Mr. Golyadkin junior, in his usual mean way, was already far off; he took flight, he was already on the steps. It need hardly be said that, after the first moment of stupefaction with which Mr. Golyadkin senior was naturally overcome, he recovered himself and went at full speed after his insulting enemy, who had already got into a cab, whose driver was obviously in collusion with him. But at that very instant the stout German, seeing both her customers make off, shrieked and rang her bell with all her might. Our hero was on the point of flight, but he turned back, and, without asking for change, flung her money for himself and for the shameless man who had left without paying, and although thus delayed he succeeded in catching up his enemy. Hanging on to the side of the cab with all the force bestowed on him by nature, our hero was carried for some time along the street, clambering upon the vehicle, while Mr. Golyadkin junior did his utmost to dislodge him. Meanwhile the cabman, with whip, with reins, with kicks and with shouts urged on his exhausted nag, who quite unexpectedly dropped into a gallop, biting at the bit, and kicking with his hind legs in a horrid way. At last our enemy and with his back to the driver, his knees touching the knees and his right hand clutching the very shabby fur collar of his depraved and exasperated foe.

The enemies were borne along for some time in silence. Our hero could scarcely breathe. It was a bad road and he was jolted at every step and in

peril of breaking his neck. Moreover, his exasperated foe still refused to acknowledge himself vanquished and was trying to shove him off into the mud. To complete the unpleasantness of his position the weather was detestable. The snow was falling in heavy flakes and doing its utmost to creep under the unfastened overcoat of the genuine Mr. Golyadkin. It was foggy and nothing could be seen. It was difficult to tell through what street and in what direction they were being taken . . . It seemed to Mr. Golyadkin that what was happening to him was somehow familiar. One instant he tried to remember whether he had had a presentiment of it the day before, in a dream, for instance. . . .

At last his wretchedness reached the utmost pitch of agony. Leaning upon his merciless opponent, he was beginning to cry out. But his cries died away upon his lips. . . . There was a moment when Mr. Golyadkin forgot everything, and made up his mind that all this was of no consequence and that it was all nothing, that it was happening in some inexplicable manner, and that, therefore, to protest was effort thrown away. . . . But suddenly and almost at the same instant that our hero was drawing this conclusion, an unexpected jolt have quite a new turn to the affair. Mr. Golyadkin fell off the cab like a sack of flour and rolled on the ground, quite correctly recognizing, at the moment of his fall, that his excitement had been very inappropriate. Jumping up at last, he saw that they had arrived somewhere; the cab was standing in the middle of some courtyard, and from the first glance our hero noticed that it was the courtyard of the house in which was Olsufy Ivanovitch’s flat. At the same instant he noticed that his enemy was mounting the steps, probably on his way to Olsufy Ivanovitch’s. In indescribable misery he was about to pursue his enemy, but, fortunately for himself, prudently thought better of it. Not forgetting to pay the cabman, Mr. Golyadkin ran with all his might along the street, regardless of where he was going. The snow was falling heavily as before; as before it was muggy, wet, and dark. Out hero did not walk, but flew, coming into collision with every one on the way - men, women and children. About him and after him he heard frightened voices, squeals, screams . . . But Mr. Golyadkin seemed unconscious and would pay no heed to anything. . . . He came to himself, however, on Semyonovsky Bridge, and then only through succeeding in tripping against and upsetting two peasant women and the wares they were selling, and tumbling over them.

“That’s no matter,” thought Mr. Golyadkin, “that can easily be set right,” and felt in his pocket at once, intending to make up for the cakes, apples, nuts and various trifles he had scattered with a rouble. Suddenly a new light dawned upon Mr. Golyadkin; in his pocket he felt the letter given him in the morning by the clerk. Remembering that there was a tavern he knew close by, he ran to it without a moment’s delay, settled himself at a little table lighted up by a tallow candle, and, taking no notice of anything, regardless of the waiter who came to ask for his orders, broke the seal and began reading the following letter, which completely astounded him -

“You noble man, who are suffering for my sake, and will be dear to my heart for ever!

“I am suffering, I am perishing - save me! The slanderer, the intriguer, notorious for the immorality of his tendencies, has entangled me in his snares and I am undone! I am lost! But he is abhorrent to me, while you! . . . They have separated us, they have intercepted my letters to you - and all this has been the vicious man who has taken advantage of his one good quality - his likeness to you. A man can always be plain in appearance, yet fascinate by his intelligence, his strong feelings and his agreeable manners . . . I am ruined! I am being married against my will, and the chief part in this intrigue is taken by my parent, benefactor and civil councillor, Olsufy Ivanovitch, no doubt desirous of securing me a place and relations in well-bred society. . . . But I have made up my mind and I protest by all the powers bestowed on me by nature. Be waiting for me with a carriage at nine o’clock this evening at the window of Olsufy Ivanovitch’s flat. We are having another ball and a handsome lieutenant is coming. I will come out and we will fly. Moreover, there are other government offices in which one can be of service to one’s country. In any case, remember, my friend, that innocence is strong in its very innocence. Farewell. Wait with the carriage at the entrance. I shall throw myself into the protection of your arms at two o’clock in the night.

“Yours till death, “Klara Olsufyevna.”

After reading the letter our hero remained for some minutes as though petrified. In terrible anxiety, in terrible agitation, white as a sheet, with the letter in his hand, he walked several times up and down the room; to complete the unpleasantness of his position, though our hero failed to observe it, he was at that moment the object of the exclusive attention of every one in the room, his gesticulating with both hands, perhaps some

enigmatic words unconsciously addressed to the air, probably all this prejudiced Mr. Golyadkin in the opinion of the customers, and even the waiter began to look at him suspiciously. Coming to himself, Mr. Golyadkin noticed that he was standing in the middle of the room and was in an almost unseemly, discourteous manner staring at an old man of very respectable appearance who, having dined and said grace before the ikon, had sat down again and fixed his eyes upon Mr. Golyadkin. Our hero looked vaguely about him and noticed that every one, actually every one, was looking at him with a hostile and suspicious air. All at once a retired military man in a red collar asked loudly for the Police News. Mr. Golyadkin started and turned crimson: he happened to look down and saw that he was in such disorderly attire as he would not have worn even at home, much less in a public place. His boots, his trousers and the whole of his left side were covered with mud; the trouser-strap was torn off his right foot, and his coat was even torn in many places. In extreme misery our hero went up to the table at which he had read the letter, ad saw that the attendant was coming up to him with a strange and impudently peremptory expression of face. utterly disconcerted and crestfallen, our hero began to look about the table at which he was now standing. On the table stood a dirt plate, left there from somebody's dinner, a soled table-napkin and a knife, fork and spoon that had just been used. "Who has been having dinner?" thought our hero. "Can it have been I? Anything is possible! I must have had dinner without noticing it; what am I to do?"

Raising his eyes, Mr. Golyadkin again saw beside him the waiter who was about to address him.

"How much is my bill, my lad?" our hero inquired, in a trembling voice.

A loud laugh sounded round Mr. Golyadkin, the waiter himself grinned. Mr. Golyadkin realized that he had blundered again, and had done something dreadfully stupid. He was overcome by confusion, and to avoid standing there with nothing to do he put his hand in his pocket to get out his handkerchief; but to the indescribable amazement of himself and all surrounding him, he pulled out instead of his handkerchief the bottle of medicine which Krestyan Ivanovitch had prescribed for him four days earlier. "Get the medicine at the same chemist's," floated through Mr. Golyadkin's brain. . . .

Suddenly he started and almost cried out in horror. A new light dawned. . . . The dark reddish and repulsive liquid had a sinister gleam to Mr.

Golyadkin's eyes. . . . The bottle dropped from his hands and was instantly smashed. Our hero cried out and stepped back a pace to avoid the spilled medicine . . . he was trembling in every limb, and drops of sweat came out on to his brow and temples. "So my life is in danger!" Meantime there was a stir, a commotion in the room; every one surrounded Mr. Golyadkin, every one talked to Mr. Golyadkin, some even caught hold of Mr. Golyadkin. But our hero was dumb and motionless, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, feeling nothing. . . . At last, as though tearing himself from the place, he rushed out of the tavern, pushing away all and each who tried to detain him; almost unconscious, he got into the first cab that passed him and drove to his flat.

In the entry of his flat he met Mihyeev, an attendant from the office, with an official envelope in his hand.

"I know, my good man, I know all about it," our exhausted hero answered, in a weak, miserable voice; "it's official . . ."

The envelope did, in fact, contain instructions to Mr. Golyadkin, signed by Andrey Filippovitch, to give up the business in his hands to Ivan Semyonovitch. Taking the envelope and giving ten kopecks to the man, Mr. Golyadkin went into his flat and saw that Petrushka was collecting all his odds and ends, all his things into a heap, evidently intending to abandon Mr. Golyadkin and move to the flat of Karolina Ivanovna, who had enticed him to take the place of Yevstafy.

CHAPTER XII

Petrushka came in swaggering, with a strangely casual manner and an air of vulgar triumph on his face. It was evident that he had some idea in his head, that he felt thoroughly within his rights, and he looked like an unconcerned spectator - that is, as though he were anybody's servant rather than Mr. Golyadkin's.

"I say, you know, my good lad," our hero began breathlessly, "what time is it?"

Without speaking, Petrushka went behind his partition, then returned, and in a rather independent tone announced that it was nearly half-past seven.

"Well, that's all right, my lad, that's all right. Come, you see, my boy . . . allow me to tell you, my good lad, that everything, I fancy, is at an end between us."

Petrushka said nothing.

"Well, now as everything is over between us, tell me openly, as a friend, where you have been."

"Where I've been? To see good people, sir."

"I know, my good lad, I know. I have always been satisfied with you, and I give you a character . . . Well, what are you doing with them now?"

"Why, sir! You know yourself. We all know a decent man won't teach you any harm."

"I know, my dear fellow, I know. Nowadays good people are rare, my lad; prize them, my friend. Well, how are they?"

"To be sure, they . . . Only I can't serve you any longer, sir; as your honour must know."

"I know, my dear fellow, I know your zeal and devotion; I have seen it all, my lad, I've noticed it. I respect you, my friend. I respect a good and honest man, even though he's a lackey."

"Why, yes, to be sure! The like's of us, of course, as you know yourself, are as good as anybody. That's so. We all know, sir, that there's no getting on without a good man."

"Very well, very well, my boy, I feel it. . . . Come, here's your money and here's your character. Now we'll kiss and say good-bye, brother. . . . Come, now, my lad, I'll ask one service of you, one last service," said Mr.

Golyadkin, in a solemn voice. “You see, my dear boy, all sorts of things happen. Sorrow is concealed in gilded palaces, and there’s no escaping it. You know, my boy, I’ve always been kind to you, my boy.

Petrushka remained mute.

“I believe I’ve always been kind to you, my dear fellow .

. . Come, how much linen have we now, my dear boy?”

“Well, it’s all there. Linen shirts six, three pairs of socks; four shirtfronts; flannel vests; of underlinen two sets. You know all that yourself. I’ve got nothing of yours, sir. . . . I look after my master’s belongings, sir. I am like that, sir . . . we all know . . . and I’ve . . . never been guilty of anything of the sort, sir, you know yourself, sir . . .”

“I trust you, my lad, I trust you. I didn’t mean that, my friend, I didn’t mean that, you know, my lad; I tell you what . . .”

“To be sure, sir, we know that already. Why, when I used to be in the service at general Stolnyakov’s . . . I lost the lace through the family’s going away to Saratov . . . they’ve an estate there . . .”

“No; I didn’t mean that, my lad, I didn’t mean that; don’t think anything of the sort, my dear fellow . . .”

“To be sure. It’s easy, as you know yourself, sir, to take away the character of folks like us. And I’ve always given satisfaction - ministers, generals, senators, counts - I’ve served them all. I’ve been at Prince Svintchatkin’s, at Colonel Pereborkin’s, at General Nedobarov’s - they’ve gone away too, they’ve gone to their property. As we all know . . .”

“Yes, my lad, very good, my lad, very good. And now I’m going away, my friend . . . A different path lies before each man, no one can tell what road he may have to take. Come, my lad, put out my clothes now, lay out my uniform too . . . and my other trousers, my sheets, quilts and pillows . . .”

“Am I to pack them all in the bag?”

“Yes, my lad, yes; the bag, please. Who knows what may happen to us. Come, my dear boy, you can go and find a carriage . . .”

“A carriage?. . .”

“Yes, my lad, a carriage; a roomy one, and take it by the hour. And don’t imagine anything . . .”

“Are you planning to go far away, sir?”

“I don’t know my lad, I don’t know that either. I think you had better pack my feather bed too. What do you think, my lad? I am relying on you,

my dear fellow . . .”

“Is your honour setting off at once?”

“Yes, my friend, yes! Circumstances have turned out so . . . so it is, my dear fellow, so it is . . .”

“To be sure, sir; when we were in the regiment the same thing happened to the lieutenant; they eloped from a country gentleman’s . . .”

“Eloped? . . . How! My dear fellow!”

“Yes, sir, eloped, and they were married in another house. Everything was got ready beforehand. There was a hue and cry after them; the late prince took their part, and so it was all settled . . .”

“They were married, but . . . how is it, my dear fellow . . . How did you come to know, my boy?”

“Why, to be sure! The earth is full of rumours, sir. We know, sir, we’ve all . . . to be sure, there’s no one without sin. Only I’ll tell you now, sir, let me speak plainly and vulgarly, sir; since it has come to this, I must tell you, sir; you have an enemy - you’ve a rival, sir, a powerful rival, so there . . .”

“I know, my dear fellow, I know; you know yourself, my dear fellow. . . . So, you see, I’m relying upon you. What are we to do now, my friend! How do you advise me?”

“Well, sir, if you are in that way now, if you’ve come, so to say, to such a pass, sir, you’ll have to make some purchases, sir - say some sheets, pillows, another feather bed, a double one, a good quilt - here at the neighbours downstairs - she’s a shopkeeper, sir - she has a good fox-fur cloak, so you might look at it and buy it, you might have a look at it at once. You’ll need it now, sir; it’s a good cloak, sir, satin-lined with fox . . .”

“Very good, my lad, very good, I agree; I rely upon you, I rely upon you entirely; a cloak by all means, if necessary .

. . Only make haste, make haste! For God’s sake make haste! I’ll buy the cloak - only please make haste! It will soon be eight o’clock. Make haste for God’s sake, my dear lad! Hurry up, my lad . . .”

Petrushka ran up to gather together a bundle of linen, pillows, quilt, sheets, and all sorts of odds and ends, tied them up and rushed headlong out of the room. Meanwhile, Mr. Golyadkin seized the letter once more, but he could not read it. Clutching his devoted head, he leaned against the wall in a state of stupefaction. He could not think of anything, he could do nothing either, and could not even tell what was happening to him. At last, seeing that time was passing and neither Petrushka nor the fur cloak had made

their appearance, Mr. Golyadkin made up his mind to go himself. Opening the door into the entry, he heard below noise, talk, disputing and scuffling . . . Several of the women of the neighbouring flats were shouting, talking and protesting about something - Mr. Golyadkin knew what. Petrushka's voice was heard: then there was a sound of footsteps.

"My goodness! They'll bring all the world in here," moaned Mr. Golyadkin, wringing his hands in despair and rushing back into his room. Running back into his room, he fell almost senseless on the sofa with his face in the pillow. After lying a minute in this way, he jumped up and, without waiting for Petrushka, he put on his goloshes, his hat and his greatcoat, snatched up his papers and ran headlong downstairs.

"Nothing is wanted, nothing, my dear fellow! I will manage myself - everything myself. I don't need you for the time, and meantime, things may take a better turn, perhaps," Mr. Golyadkin muttered to Petrushka, meeting him on the stair; then he ran out into the yard, away from the house. There was a faintness at his heart, he had not yet made up his mind what was his position, what he was to do, how he was to act in the present critical position.

"Yes, how am I to act? Lord, have mercy on me! And that all this should happen!" he cried out at last in despair, tottering along the street at random; "that all this must needs happen! Why, but for this, but for just this, everything would have been put right; at one stroke, at one skilful, vigorous, firm stroke it would have been set right. I would have my finger cut off to have set right! And I know, indeed, how it would have been settled. This is how it would have been managed: I'd have gone on the spot . . . said how it was . . . 'with your permission, sir, I'm neither here nor there in it . . . things aren't done like that,' I would say, 'my dear sir, things aren't done like that, there's no accepting an imposter in our office; an imposter . . . my dear sir, is a man . . . who is worthless and of no service to his country. Do you understand that? Do you understand that, my dear sir,' I should say! That's how it would be . . . But no . . . after all, things are not like that . . . not a bit like that . . . I am talking nonsense, like a fool! A suicidal fool! It's not like that at all, you suicidal fool . . . This is how things are done, though, you profligate man! . . . Well, what am I to do with myself now? Well, what am I going to do with myself now. What am I fit for now? Come, what are you fit for now, for instance, you, Golyadkin, you, you worthless fellow! Well, what now? I must get a carriage; 'hire a carriage and bring it here,'

says she, ‘we shall get our feet wet without a carriage,’ says she . . . And who could ever have thought it! Fie, fie, my young lady! Fie, fie, a young lady of virtuous behaviour! Well, well, the girl we all thought so much of! You’ve distinguished yourself, madam, there’s no doubt of that! you’ve distinguished yourself! . . . And it all comes from immoral education. And now that I’ve looked into it and seen through it all I see that it is due to nothing else but immorality. Instead of looking after her as a child . . . and the rod at times . . . they stuff her with sweets and dainties, and the old man is always doting over her: saying ‘my dear, my love, my beauty,’ saying, ‘we’ll marry you to a count!’ . . . And now she has come forward herself and shown her cards, as though to say that’s her little game! Instead of keeping her at home as a child, they sent her to a boarding school, to a French madame, and emigre, a Madame Falbalas or something, and she learned all sorts of things at that Madame Falbalas’, and this is how it always turns out. ‘Come,’ says she, ‘and be happy! Be in a carriage,’ she says, ‘at such a time, under the windows, and sing a sentimental serenade in the Spanish style; I await you and I know you love me, and we will fly together and live in a hut.’ But the fact is it’s impossible; since it has come to that, madam, it’s impossible, it is against the law to abduct an innocent, respectable girl from her parents’ roof without their sanction! And, if you come to that, why, what for and what need is there to do it? Come, she should marry a suitable person, the man marked out by destiny, and that would be the end of it. But I’m in the government service, I might lose my berth through it: I might be arrested for it, madam! I tell you that! If you did not know it. It’s that German woman’s doing. She’s a the bottom of it all, the witch; she cooked the whole kettle of fish. For they’ve slandered a man, for they’ve invented a bit of womanish gossip about him, a regular performance by the advice of Andrey Filippovitch, that’s what it came from. Otherwise how could Petrushka be mixed up in it? What has he to do with it? What need for the rogue to be in it? No, I cannot, madam, I cannot possibly, not on any account . . . No, madam, this time you must really excuse me. It’s all your doing, madam, it’s not all the German’s doing, it’s not the witch’s doing at all, but simply yours. For the witch is a good woman, for the witch is not to blame in any way; it’s your fault, madam; it’s you who are to blame, let me tell you! I shall not be charged with a crime through you, madam. . . . A man might be ruined . . . a man might lose sight of himself, and not be able to restrain himself - a wedding, indeed! And

how is it all going to end? And how will it all be arranged? I would give a great deal to know all that! . . .”

So our hero reflected in his despair. Coming to himself suddenly, he observed that he was standing somewhere in Liteyny Street. The weather was awful: it was a thaw; snow and rain were falling - just as at that memorable time when at the dread hour of midnight all Mr. Golyadkin’s troubles had begun. “This is a nice night for a journey!” thought Mr. Golyadkin, looking at the weather; “it’s death all round. . . .

Good Lord! Where am I to find a carriage, for instance? I believe there’s something black there at the corner. We’ll see, we’ll investigate . . . Lord, have mercy on us!” our hero went on, bending his weak and tottering steps in the direction in which he saw something that looked like a cab.

“No, I know what I’ll do; I’ll go straight and fall on my knees, if I can, and humbly beg, saying ‘I put my fate in your hands, in the hands of my superiors’; saying, ‘Your Excellency, be a protector and a benefactor’; and then I’ll say this and that, and explain how it is and that it is an unlawful act; ‘Do not destroy me, I look upon you as my father, do not abandon me . . . save my dignity, my honour, my name, my reputation . . . and save me from a miscreant, a vicious man.

. . . He’s another person, your Excellency, and I’m another person too; he’s apart and I am myself by myself too; I am really myself by myself, your Excellency; really myself by myself,’ that’s what I shall say. ‘I cannot be like him. Change him, dismiss him, give orders for him to be changed and a godless, licentious impersonation to be suppressed . . . that it may not be an example to others, your Excellency. I look upon you as a father’; those in authority over us, our benefactors and protectors, are bound, of course, to encourage such impulses. . . . There’s something chivalrous about it: I shall say, ‘I look upon you, my benefactor and superior, as a father, and trust my fate to you, and I will not say anything against it; I put myself in your hands, and retire from the affair myself’ . . . that’s what I would say.”

“Well, my man, are you a cabman?”

“Yes . . .”

“I want a cab for the evening . . .”

“And does your honour want to go far?”

“For the evening, for the evening; wherever I have to go, my man, wherever I have to go.”

“Does your honour want to drive out of town?”

“Yes, my friend, out of town, perhaps. I don’t quite know myself yet, I can’t tell you for certain, my man. Maybe you see it will all be settled for the best. We all know, my friend . . .”

“Yes, sir, of course we all know. Please God it may.”

“Yes, my friend, yes; thank you, my dear fellow; come, what’s your fare, my good man? . . .”

“Do you want to set off at once?”

“Yes, at once, that is, no, you must wait at a certain place. . . . A little while, not long, you’ll have to wait. . . .”

“Well, if you hire me for the whole time, I couldn’t ask less than six roubles for weather like this . . .”

“Oh, very well, my friend; and I thank you, my dear fellow. So, come, you can take me now, my good man.”

“Get in; allow me, I’ll put it straight a bit - now will your honour get in. Where shall I drive?”

“To the Ismailovsky Bridge, my friend.”

The driver plumped down on the box, with difficulty roused his pair of lean nags from the trough of hay, and was setting off for Ismailovsky Bridge. But suddenly Mr. Golyadkin pulled the cord, stopped the cab, and besought him in an imploring voice not to drive to Ismailovsky Bridge, but to turn back to another street. The driver turned into another street, and then minutes later Mr. Golyadkin’s newly hired equipage was standing before the house in which his Excellency had a flat. Mr. Golyadkin got out of the carriage, begged the driver to be sure to wait and with a sinking heart ran upstairs to the third storey and pulled the bell; the door was opened and our hero found himself in the entry of his Excellency’s flat.

“Is his Excellency graciously pleased to be at home?” said Mr. Golyadkin, addressing the man who opened the door.

“What do you want?” asked the servant, scrutinizing Mr. Golyadkin from head to foot.

“I, my friend . . . I am Golyadkin, the titular councillor, Golyadkin . . . To say . . . something or other . . . to explain . . .”

“You must wait; you cannot . . .”

“My friend, I cannot wait; my business is important, it’s business that admits of no delay . . .”

“But from whom have you come? Have you brought papers?. . .”

“No, my friend, I am on my own account. Announce me, my friend, say something or other, explain. I’ll reward you, my good man . . .”

“I cannot. His Excellency is not at home, he has visitors. Come at ten o’clock in the morning . . .”

“Take in my name, my good man, I can’t wait - it is impossible. . . . You’ll have to answer for it, my good man.”

“Why, go and announce him! What’s the matter with you; want to save your shoe leather?” said another lackey who was lolling on the bench and had not uttered a word till then.

“Shoe leather! I was told not to show any one up, you know; their time is the morning.”

“Announce him, have you lost your tongue?”

“I’ll announce him all right - I’ve not lost my tongue. It’s not my orders; I’ve told you, it’s not my orders. Walk inside.”

Mr. Golyadkin went into the outermost room; there was a clock on the table. He glanced at it: it was half-past eight. His heart ached within him. Already he wanted to turn back, but at that very moment the footman standing at the door of the next room had already boomed out Mr. Golyadkin’s name.

“Oh, what lungs,” thought our hero in indescribable misery. “Why, you ought to have said: ‘he has come most humbly and meekly to make an explanation . . . something . . . be graciously pleased to see him’ . . . Now the whole business is ruined; all my hopes are scattered to the winds. But . . . however . . . never mind . . .”

There was no time to think, moreover. The lackey, returning, said, “Please walk in,” and led Mr. Golyadkin into the study.

When our hero went in, he felt as though he were blinded, for he could see nothing at all . . . But three or four figures seemed flitting before his eyes: “Oh, yes, they are the visitors,” flashed through Mr. Golyadkin’s mind. At last our hero could distinguish clearly the star on the black coat of his Excellency, then by degrees advanced to seeing the black coat and at last gained the power of complete vision. . . .

“What is it?” said a familiar voice above Mr. Golyadkin.

“The titular councillor, Golyadkin, your Excellency.”

“Well?”

“I have come to make an explanation . . .”

“How? . . . What?”

“Why, yes. This is how it is. I’ve come for an explanation, your Excellency . . .”

“But you . . . but who are you? . . .”

“M-m-m-mist-er Golyadkin, your Excellency, a titular councillor.”

“Well, what is it you want?”

“Why, this is how it is, I look upon you as a father; I retire . . . defend me from my enemy! . . .”

“What’s this? . . .”

“We all know . . .”

“What do we all know?”

Mr. Golyadkin was silent: his chin began twitching a little.

“Well?”

“I thought it was chivalrous, your Excellency . . . ‘There’s something chivalrous in it,’ I said, ‘and I look upon my superior as a father’ . . . this is what I thought; ‘protect me, I tear . . . earfully . . . b . . . eg and that such imp . . . impulses ought . . . to . . . be encouraged . . .”

His excellency turned away, our hero for some minutes could distinguish nothing. There was a weight on his chest. His breathing was laboured; he did not know where he was standing . . . He felt ashamed and sad. God knows what followed. . . Recovering himself, our hero noticed that his Excellency was talking with his guests, and seemed to be briskly and emphatically discussing something with them. One of the visitors Mr. Golyadkin recognized at once. This was Andrey Filippovitch; he knew no one else; yet there was another person that seemed familiar - a tall, thick-set figure, middle-aged, possessed of very thick eyebrows and whiskers and a significant sharp expression. On his chest was an order and in his mouth a cigar. This gentleman was smoking and nodding significantly without taking the cigar out of his mouth, glancing from time to time at Mr. Golyadkin. Mr. Golyadkin felt awkward; he turned away his eyes and immediately saw another very strange visitor. Through a door which our hero had taken for a looking-glass, just as he had done once before - he made his appearance - we know who: a very intimate friend and acquaintance of Mr. Golyadkin’s. Mr. Golyadkin junior had actually been till then in a little room close by, hurriedly writing something; now, apparently, he was needed - and he came in with papers under his arm, went up to his Excellency, and while waiting for exclusive attention to be paid him succeeded very adroitly in putting his spoke into the talk and

consultation, taking his place a little behind Andrey Filippovitch’s back and partly screening him from the gentleman smoking the cigar. Apparently Mr. Golyadkin junior took an intense interest in the conversation, to which he was listening now in a gentlemanly way, nodding his head, fidgeting with his feet, smiling, continually looking at his Excellency - as it were beseeching him with his eyes to let him put his word in.

“The scoundrel,” thought Mr. Golyadkin, and involuntarily he took a step forward. At this moment his Excellency turned round and came rather hesitatingly towards Mr. Golyadkin.

“Well, that’s all right, that’s all right; well, run along, now. I’ll look into your case, and give orders for you to be taken . . .”

At this point his Excellency glanced at the gentleman with the thick whiskers. The latter nodded in assent.

Mr. Golyadkin felt and distinctly understood that they were taking him for something different and not looking at him in the proper light at all.

“In one way or another I must explain myself,” he thought; “I must say, ‘This is how it is, your Excellency.’”

At this point in his perplexity he dropped his eyes to the floor and to his great astonishment he saw a good-sized patch of something white on his Excellency’s boots.

“Can there be a hole in them?” thought Mr. Golyadkin. Mr. Golyadkin was, however, soon convinced that his Excellency’s boots were not split, but were only shining brilliantly - a phenomenon fully explained by the fact that they were patent leather and highly polished.

“It is what they call blick,” thought our hero; “the term is used particularly in artists studios; in other places such a reflected light is called a rib of light.”

At this point Mr. Golyadkin raised his eyes and saw that the time had come to speak, for things might easily end badly . . .

Our hero took a step forward.

“I say this is how it is, your Excellency,” he said, “and there’s no accepting imposters nowadays.”

His Excellency made no answer, but rang the bell violently. Our hero took another step forward.

“He is a vile, vicious man, your Excellency,” said our hero, beside himself and faint with terror, though he still pointed boldly and resolutely at

his unworthy twin, who was fidgeting about near his Excellency. “I say this is how it is, and I am alluding to a well-known person.”

There was a general sensation at Mr. Golyadkin’s words. Andrey Filippovitch and the gentleman with the cigar nodded their heads; his Excellency impatiently tugged at the bell to summon the servants. At this point Mr. Golyadkin junior came forward in his turn.

“Your Excellency,” he said, “I humbly beg permission to speak.” There was something very resolute in Mr. Golyadkin junior’s voice; everything showed that he felt himself completely in the right.

“Allow me to ask you,” he began again, anticipating his Excellency’s reply in his eagerness, and this time addressing Mr. Golyadkin; “allow me to ask you, in whose presence you are making this explanation? Before whom are you standing, in whose room are you? . . .”

Mr. Golyadkin junior was in a state of extraordinary excitement, flushed and glowing with wrath and indignation; there were positively tears in his eyes.

A lackey, appearing in the doorway, roared at the top of his voice the name of some new arrivals, the Bassavryukovs.

“A good aristocratic name, hailing from Little Russia,” thought Mr. Golyadkin, and at that moment he felt some one lay a very friendly hand on his back, then a second hand was laid on his back. Mr. Golyadkin’s infamous twin was tripping about in front leading the way; and our hero saw clearly that he was being led to the big doors of the room.

“Just as it was at Olsufy Ivanovitch’s,” he thought, and he found himself in the hall. Looking round, he saw beside him two of the Excellency’s lackeys and his twin.

“The greatcoat, the greatcoat, the greatcoat, the greatcoat, my friend! The greatcoat of my best friend!” whispered the depraved man, snatching the coat from one of the servants, and by way of a nasty and ungentlemanly joke flinging it straight at Mr. Golyadkin’s head. Extricating himself from under his coat, Mr. Golyadkin distinctly heard the two lackeys snigger. But without listening to anything, or paying attention to it, he went out of the hall and found himself on the lighted stairs. Mr. Golyadkin junior following him.

“Goodbye, your Excellency!” he shouted after Mr. Golyadkin senior.

“Scoundrel!” our hero exclaimed, beside himself.

“Well, scoundrel, then . . .”

“Depraved man! . . .”

“Well, depraved man, then . . ,” answered Mr. Golyadkin’s unworthy enemy, and with his characteristic baseness he looked down from the top of the stairs straight into Mr. Golyadkin’s face as though begging him to go on. Our hero spat with indignation and ran out of the front door; he was so shattered, so crushed, that he had no recollection of how he got into the cab or who helped him in. Coming to himself, he found that he was being driven to Fontanka. “To Ismailovsky Bridge, then,” thought Mr. Golyadkin. At this point Mr. Golyadkin tried to think of something else, but could not; there was something so terrible that he could not explain it . . . “Well, never mind,” our hero concluded, and he drove to Ismailovsky Bridge.

CHAPTER XIII

It seemed as though the weather meant to change for the better. The snow, which had till then been coming down in regular clouds, began growing visible and here and there tiny stars sparkled in it. It was only wet, muddy, damp and stifling, especially for Mr. Golyadkin, who could hardly breathe as it was. His greatcoat, soaked and heavy with wet, sent a sort of unpleasant warm dampness all through him and weighed down his exhausted legs. A feverish shiver sent sharp, shooting pains all over him; he was in a painful cold sweat of exhaustion, so much so that Mr. Golyadkin even forgot to repeat at every suitable occasion with his characteristic firmness and resolution his favourite phrase that “it all, maybe, most likely, indeed, might turn out for the best.”

“But all this does not matter for the time,” our hero repeated, still staunch and not downhearted, wiping from his face the cold drops that streamed in all directions from the brim of his round hat, which was so soaked that it could hold no more water. Adding that all this was nothing so far, our hero tried to sit on a rather thick clump of wood, which was lying near a heap of logs in Olsufy Ivanovitch’s yard. Of course, it was no good thinking of Spanish serenades or silken ladders, but it was quite necessary to think of a modest corner, snug and private, if not altogether warm. He felt greatly tempted, we may mention in passing, by that corner in the back entry of Olsufy Ivanovitch’s flat in which he had once, almost at the beginning of this true story, stood for two hours between a cupboard and an old screen among all sorts of domestic odds and ends and useless litter. The fact is that Mr. Golyadkin had been standing waiting for two whole hours on this occasion in Olsufy Ivanovitch’s yard. But in regard to that modest and snug little corner there were certain drawbacks which had not existed before. The first drawback was the fact that it was probably now a marked place and that certain precautionary measures had been taken in regard to it since the scandal at Olsufy Ivanovitch’s last ball. Secondly, he had to wait for a signal from Klara Olsufyevna, for there was bound to be some such signal, it was always a feature in such cases and, “it didn’t begin with us and it won’t end with us.”

At this point Mr. Golyadkin very appropriately remembered a novel he had read long ago in which the heroine, in precisely similar circumstances,

signalled to Alfred by tying a pink ribbon to her window. But now, at night, in the climate of Petersburg, famous for its dampness and unreliability, a pink ribbon was hardly appropriate and, in fact, was utterly out of the question.

“No, it’s not a matter of silk ladders,” thought our hero, “and I had better stay here quietly and comfortably . . . I had better stand here.”

And he selected a place in the yard exactly opposite the window, near a stack of firewood. Of course, many persons, grooms and coachmen, were continually crossing the yard, and there was, besides, the rumbling of wheels and the snorting of horses and so on; yet it was a convenient place, whether he was observed or not; but now, anyway, there was the advantage of being to some extent in the shadow, and no one could see Mr. Golyadkin while he himself could see everything.

The windows were brightly lit up, there was some sort of ceremonious party at Olsufy Ivanovitch’s. But he could hear no music as yet.

“So it’s not a ball, but a party of some other sort,” thought our hero, somewhat aghast. “Is it today?” floated the doubt through him. “Have I made a mistake in the date? Perhaps; anything is possible. . . . Yes, to be sure, anything is possible . . . Perhaps she wrote a letter to me yesterday, and it didn’t reach me, and perhaps it did not reach me because Petrushka put his spoke in, the rascal! Or it was tomorrow, that is - wait with a carriage. . . .”

At this point our hero turned cold all over and felt in his pocket for the letter, to make sure. But to his surprise the letter was not in his pocket.

“How’s this?” muttered Mr. Golyadkin, more dead than alive. “Where did I leave it? Then I must have lost it. That is the last straw!” he moaned at last. “Oh, if it falls into evil hands! Perhaps in has already. Good Lord! What may it not lead to! It may lead to something such that . . . Ach, my miserable fate!” At this point Mr. Golyadkin began trembling like a leaf at the thought that perhaps his vicious twin had thrown the greatcoat at him with the object of stealing the letter of which he had somehow got an inkling from Mr. Golyadkin’s enemies.

“What’s more, he’s stealing it,” thought our hero, “as evidence . . . but why evidence! . . .”

After the first shock of horror, the blood rushed to Mr. Golyadkin’s head. Moaning and gnashing his teeth, he clutched his burning head, sank back on his block of wood and relapsed into brooding. . . . But he could form no

coherent thought. Figures kept flitting through his brain, incidents came back to his memory, now vaguely, now very distinctly, the tunes of some foolish songs kept ringing in his ears. . . . He was in great distress, unnatural distress!

“My God, my God!” our hero thought, recovering himself a little, and suppressing a muffled sob, “give me fortitude in the immensity of my afflictions! That I am done for, utterly destroyed - of that there can be no doubt, and that’s all in the natural order of things, since it cannot be otherwise. To begin with, I’ve lost my berth, I’ve certainly lost it, I must have lost it . . . Well, supposing things are set right somehow. Supposing I have money enough to begin with: I must have another lodging, furniture of some sort. . . . In the first place, I shan’t have Petrushka. I can get on without the rascal . . .

somehow, with help from the people of the house; well, that will be all right! I can go in and out when I like, and Petrushka won’t grumble at my coming in late - yes, that is so; that’s why it’s a good thing to have the people in the house. . . . Well, supposing that’s all right; but all that’s nothing to do with it.”

At this point the thought of the real position again dawned upon Mr. Golyadkin’s memory. He looked round.

“Oh, Lord, have mercy on me, have mercy on me! What am I talking about?” he thought, growing utterly desperate and clutching his burning head in his hands. . . .

“Won’t you soon be going, sir?” a voice pronounced above Mr. Golyadkin. Our hero started; before him stood his cabman, who was also drenched through and shivering; growing impatient, and having nothing to do, he had thought fit to take a look at Mr. Golyadkin behind the woodstack.

“I am all right, my friend . . . I am coming soon, soon, very soon; you wait . . .”

The cabman walked away, grumbling to himself. “What is he grumbling about?” Mr. Golyadkin wondered through his tears. “Why, I have hired him for the evening, why, I’m . . . within my rights now . . . that’s so! I’ve hired him for the evening and that’s the end of it. If one stands still, it’s just the same. That’s for me to decide. I am free to drive on or not to drive on. And my staying here by the woodstack has nothing to do with the case. . . and don’t dare to say anything; think, the gentleman wants to stand behind the

woodstack, and so he’s standing behind it . . . and he is not disgracing any one’s honour! That’s the fact of the matter.

“I tell you what is it is, madam, if you care to know. Nowadays, madam, nobody lives in a hut, or anything of that sort. No, indeed. And in our industrial age there’s no getting on without morality, a fact of which you are a fatal example, madam . . . You say we must get a job as a register clerk and live in a hut on the sea-shore. In the first place, madam, there are no register clerks on the sea-shore, and in the second place we can’t get a job as a register clerk. For supposing, for example, I send in a petition, present myself - saying a register clerk’s place or something of the sort . . . and defend me from my enemy . . . they’ll tell you, madam, they’ll say, to be sure . . . we’ve lots of register clerks, and here you are not at Madame Falbalas’, where you learnt the rules of good behaviour of which you are a fatal example. Good behaviour, madam, means staying at home, honouring your father and not thinking about suitors prematurely. Suitors will come in good time, madam, that’s so! Of course, you are bound to have some accomplishments, such as playing the piano sometimes, speaking French, history, geography, scripture and arithmetic, that’s the truth of it! And that’s all you need. Cooking, too, cooking certainly forms part of the education of a well-behaved girl! But as it is, in the first place, my fine lady, they won’t let you go, they’ll raise a hue and cry after you, and then they’ll lock you up in a nunnery. How will it be then, madam? What will you have me do then? Would you have me, madam, follow the example of some stupid novels, and melt into tears on a neighbouring hillock, gazing at the cold walls of your prison house, and finally die, following the example of some wretched German poets and novelists. Is that it, madam? But, to begin with, allow me to tell you, as a friend, that things are not done like that, and in the second place I would have given you and your parents, too, a good thrashing for letting you read French books; for French books teach you no good. There’s a poison in them . . . a pernicious poison, madam! Or do you imagine, allow me to ask you, or do you imagine that we shall elope with impunity, or something of that sort . . . that was shall have a hut on the shore of the sea and so on; and that we shall begin billing and cooing and talking about our feelings, and that so we shall spend our lives in happiness and content; and then there would be little ones - so then we shall . . . shall go to our father, the civil councillor, Olsufy Ivanovitch, and say, ‘we’ve got a little one, and so, on this propitious occasion remove your curse, and bless the couple.’

No, madam, I tell you again, that’s not the way to do things, and for the first thing there’ll be no billing and cooing and please don’t reckon on it. Nowadays, madam, the husband is the master and a good, well-brought-up wife should try and please him in every way. And endearments, madam, are not in favour, nowadays, in our industrial age; the day of Jean Jacques Rousseau is over. The husband comes home, for instance, hungry from the office, and asks, ‘Isn’t there something to eat, my love, a drop of vodka to drink, a bit of salt fish to eat?’ So then, madam, you must have the vodka and the herring ready. Your husband will eat it with relish, and he won’t so much as look at you, he’ll only say ‘Run into the kitchen, kitten,’ he’ll say, ‘and look after the dinner, and at most, once a week, he’ll kiss you, even then rather indifferently . . . That’s how it will be with us, my young lady! Yes, even then indifferently. . . . That’s how it will be, if one considers it, if it has come to one’s looking at the thing in that way. . . . And how do I come in? Why have you mixed me up in your caprices? ‘The noble man who is suffering for your sake and will be dear to your heart for ever,’ and so on. but in the first place, madam, I am not suited to you, you know yourself, I’m not a great hand at compliments, I’m not fond of uttering perfumed trifles for the ladies. I’m not fond of lady-killers, and I must own I’ve never been a beauty to look at. You won’t find any swagger or false shame in me, and I tell you so now in all sincerity. This is the fact of the matter: we can boast of nothing but a straightforward, open character and common sense; we have nothing to do with intrigues. I am not one to intrigue, I say so and I’m proud of it - that’s the fact of the matter! . . . I wear no mask among straightforward people, and to tell you the whole truth. . . .”

Suddenly Mr. Golyadkin started. The red and perfectly sopping beard of the cabman appeared round the woodstack again. . . .

“I am coming directly, my friend. I’m coming at once, you know,” Mr. Golyadkin responded in a trembling and failing voice.

The cabman scratched his head, then stroked his beard, and moved a step forward. . . stood still and looked suspiciously at Mr. Golyadkin.

“I am coming directly, my friend; you see, my friend . . .

I . . . just a little, you see, only a second! . . . more . . . here, you see, my friend. . . .”

“Aren’t you coming at all?” the cabman asked at last, definitely coming up to Mr. Golyadkin.

“No, my friend, I’m coming directly. I am waiting, you see, my friend. . . .”

“So I see . . .”

“You see, my friend, I . . . What part of the country do you come from, my friend?”

“We are under a master . . .”

“And have you a good master? . . .”

“All right . . .”

“Yes, my friend; you stay here, my friend, you see . . .

Have you been in Petersburg long, my friend?”

“It’s a year since I came . . .”

“And are you getting on all right, my friend?”

“Middling.”

“To be sure, my friend, to be sure. You must thank Providence, my friend. You must look out for straightforward people. Straightforward people are non too common nowadays, my friend; he would give you washing, food, and drink, my good fellow, a good man would. But sometimes you see tears shed for the sake of gold, my friend . . . you see a lamentable example; that’s the fact of the matter, my friend. . . .”

The cabman seemed to feel sorry for Mr. Golyadkin. “Well, your honour, I’ll wait. Will your honour be waiting long?”

“No, my friend, no; I . . . you know . . . I won’t wait any longer, my good man . . . What do you think, my friend? I rely upon you. I won’t stay any longer.”

“Aren’t you going at all?”

“No, my friend, no; I’ll reward you, my friend . . . that’s the fact of the matter. How much ought I to give you, my dear fellow?”

“What you hired me for, please, sir. I’ve been waiting here a long time; don’t be hard on a man, sir.”

“Well, here, my good man, here.”

At this point Mr. Golyadkin gave six roubles to the cabman, and made up his mind in earnest to waste no more time, that is, to clear off straight away, especially as the cabman was dismissed and everything was over, and so it was useless to wait longer. He rushed out of the yard, went out of the gate, turned to the left and without looking round took to his heels, breathless and rejoicing. “Perhaps it will all be for the best,” he thought, “and perhaps in this way I’ve run away from trouble.” Mr. Golyadkin suddenly became all

at once light-hearted. “Oh, if only it could turn out for the best!” thought our hero, though he put little faith in his own words. “I know what I’ll do . . ,” he thought. “No, I know, I’d better try the other tack . . . Or wouldn’t it be better to do this? . . .” In this way, hesitating and seeking for the solution of his doubts, our hero ran to Semyonovsky Bridge; but while running to Semyonovsky Bridge he very rationally and conclusively decided to return.

“It will be better so,” he thought. “I had better try the other tack, that is . . . I will just go - I’ll look on simply as an outsider, an outsider - and nothing more, whatever happens - it’s not my fault, that’s the fact of the matter! That’s how it shall be now.”

Deciding to return, our hero actually did return, the more readily because with this happy thought he conceived of himself now as quite an outsider.

“It’s the best thing; one’s not responsible for anything, and one will see all that’s necessary . . . that’s the fact of the matter!”

It was a safe plan and that settled it. Reassured, he crept back under the peaceful shelter of his soothing and protecting woodstack, and began gazing intently at the window. This time he was not destined to gaze and wait long. Suddenly a strange commotion became apparent at all the windows. Figures appeared, curtains were drawn back, whole groups of people were crowding to the windows at Olsufy Ivanovitch’s flat. All were peeping out looking for something in the yard. From the security of his woodstack, our hero, too, began with curiosity watching the general commotion, and with interest craned forward to right and to left so far as he could within the shadow of the woodstack. Suddenly he started, held his breath and almost sat down with horror. It seemed to him - in short, he realized, that they were looking for nothing and for nobody but him, Mr. Golyadkin! Every one was looking in his direction. It was impossible to escape; they saw him . . . In a flutter, Mr. Golyadkin huddled as closely as he could to the woodstack, and only then noticed that the treacherous shadow had betrayed him, that it did not cover him completely. Our hero would have been delighted at that moment to creep into a mouse-hole in the woodstack, and there meekly to remain, if only it had been possible. But it was absolutely impossible. In his agony he began at last staring openly and boldly at the windows, it was the best thing to do. . . . And suddenly he glowed with shame. He had been fully discovered, every one was staring at him at once, they were all waving their hands, all were nodding their heads at him, all were calling to him; then

several windows creaked as they opened, several voices shouted something to him at once. . . .

“I wonder why they don’t whip these naughty girls as children,” our hero muttered to himself, losing his head completely. Suddenly there an down the steps he (we know who), without his hat or greatcoat, breathless, rubbing his hands, wriggling, capering, perfidiously displaying intense joy at seeing Mr. Golyadkin.

“Yakov Petrovitch,” whispered this individual, so notorious for his worthlessness, “Yakov Petrovitch, are you here? You’ll catch cold. It’s chilly here, Yakov Petrovitch. Come indoors.”

“Yakov Petrovitch! No, I’m all right, Yakov Petrovitch,” our hero muttered in a submissive voice.

“No, this won’t do, Yakov Petrovitch, I beg you, I humbly beg you to wait with us. ‘Make him welcome and bring him in,’ they say, ‘Yakov Petrovitch.’”

“No, Yakov Petrovitch, you see, I’d better . . . I had better go home, Yakov Petrovitch . . ,” said our hero, burning at a slow fire and freezing at the same time with shame and terror.

“No - no - no - no!” whispered the loathsome person. “No - no - no, on no account! Come along,” he said resolutely, and he dragged Mr. Golyadkin senior to the steps. Mr. Golyadkin senior did not at all want to go, but as every one was looking at them, it would have been stupid to struggle and resist; so our hero went - though, indeed, one cannot say that he went, because he did not know in the least what was being done with him. Though, after all, it made no difference!

Before our hero had time to recover himself and come to his senses, he found himself in the drawing-room. He was pale, dishevelled, harassed; with lustreless eyes he scanned the crowd - horror! The drawing-room, all the rooms - were full to overflowing. There were masses of people, a whole galaxy of ladies; and all were crowding round Mr. Golyadkin and he perceived clearly that they were all forcing him in one direction.

“Not towards the door,” was the thought that floated through Mr. Golyadkin’s mind.

They were, in fact, forcing him not towards the door but Olsufy Ivanovitch’s easy chair. On one side of the armchair stood Klara Olsufyevna, pale, languid, melancholy, but gorgeously dressed. Mr. Golyadkin was particularly struck by a little white flower which rested on

her superb hair. On the other side of the armchair stood Vladimir Semyonovitch, clad in black, with his new order in his buttonhole. Mr. Golyadkin was led in, as we have described above, straight up to Olsufy Ivanovitch - on one side of him Mr. Golyadkin junior, who had assumed an air of great decorum and propriety, to the immense relief of our hero, while on the other side was Andrey Filippovitch, with a very solemn expression on his face.

“What can it mean?” Mr. Golyadkin wondered.

When he saw that he was being led to Olsufy Ivanovitch, an idea struck him like a flash of lightning. The thought of the intercepted letter darted through his brain. In great agony our hero stood before Olsufy Ivanovitch’s chair.

“What will he say now?” he wondered to himself. “Of course, it will be all aboveboard now, that is, straightforward and, one may say, honourable; I shall say this is how it is, and so on.”

But what our hero apparently feared did not happen. Olsufy Ivanovitch received Mr. Golyadkin very warmly, and though he did not hold out his hand to him, yet as he gazed at out hero, he shook his grey and venerable head - shook it with an air of solemn melancholy and yet of goodwill. So, at least, it seemed to Mr. Golyadkin. He even fancied that a tear glittered in Olsufy Ivanovitch’s lustreless eyes; he raised his eyes and saw that there seemed to be tears, too, on the eyelashes of Klara Olsufyevna, who was standing by - that there seemed to be something of the same sort even in the eyes of Vladimir Semyonovitch - that the unruffled and composed dignity of Andrey Filippovitch has the same significance as the general tearful sympathy - that even the young man who was so much like a civil councillor, seizing the opportunity, was sobbing bitterly. . . . Though perhaps this was only all Mr. Golyadkin’s fancy, because he was so much moved himself, and distinctly felt the hot tears running down his cheeks. . . .

Feeling reconciled with mankind and his destiny, and filled with love at the moment, not only for Olsufy Ivanovitch, not only for the whole part collected there, but even for his noxious twin (who seemed now to be by no means noxious, and not even to be his twin at all, but a person very agreeable in himself and in no way connected with him), our hero, in a

voice broken with sobs, tried to express his feelings to Olsufy Ivanovitch, but was too much overcome by all that he had gone through, and could not utter a word; he could only, with an expressive gesture, point meekly to his heart. . .

At last, probably to spare the feelings of the old man, Andrey Filippovitch led Mr. Golyadkin a little away, though he seemed to leave him free to do as he liked. Smiling, muttering something to himself, somewhat bewildered, yet almost completely reconciled with fate and his fellow creatures, our hero began to make his way through the crowd of guests. Every one made way for him, every one looked at him with strange curiosity and with mysterious, unaccountable sympathy. Our hero went into another room; he met with the same attention everywhere; he was vaguely conscious of the whole crowd closely following him, noting every step he took, talking in undertones among themselves of something very interesting, shaking their heads, arguing and discussing in whispers. Mr. Golyadkin wanted very much to know what they were discussing in whispers. Looking round, he saw near him Mr. Golyadkin junior. Feeling an overwhelming impulse to seize his hand and draw him aside, Mr. Golyadkin begged the other Yakov Petrovitch most particularly to co-operate with him in all his future undertakings, and not to abandon him at a critical moment. Mr. Golyadkin junior nodded his head gravely and warmly pressed the hand of Mr. Golyadkin senior. Our hero’s heart was quivering with hte intensity of his emotion. He was gasping for breath, however; he felt so oppressed - so oppressed; he felt that all those eyes fastened upon him were oppressing and dominating him . . . . Mr. Golyadkin caught a glimpse of the councillor who wore a wig. The latter was looking at him with a stern, searching eye, not in the least softened by the general sympathy. . . .

Our hero made up his mind to go straight up to him in order to smile at him and have an immediate explanation, but this somehow did not come off. For one instant Mr. Golyadkin became almost unconscious, almost lost all memory, all feeling.

When he came to himself again he noticed that he was the centre of a large ring formed by the rest of the party round him. Suddenly Mr. Golyadkin’s name was called from the other room; noise and excitement, all rushed to the door of the first room, almost carrying our hero along with them. In the crush the hard-hearted councillor in the wig was side by side with Mr. Golyadkin, and, taking our hero by the hand, he made him sit

down opposite Olsufy Ivanovitch, at some distance from the latter, however. Every one in the room sat down; the guests were arranged in rows round Mr. Golyadkin and Olsufy Ivanovitch. Everything was hushed; every one preserved a solemn silence; every one was watching Olsufy Ivanovitch, evidently expecting something out of the ordinary. Mr. Golyadkin noticed that beside Olsufy Ivanovitch's chair and directly facing the councillor sat Mr. Golyadkin junior, with Andrey Filippovitch. The silence was prolonged; they were evidently expecting something.

"Just as it is in a family when some one is setting off on a far journey. We've only to stand up and pray now," thought our hero.

Suddenly there was a general stir which interrupted Mr. Golyadkin's reflections. Something they had been waiting for happened.

"He is coming, he is coming!" passed from one to another in the crowd.

"Who is it that is coming?" floated through Mr. Golyadkin's mind, and he shuddered at a strange sensation. "High time too!" said the councillor, looking intently at Andrey Ivanovitch. Andrey Filippovitch, for his part, glanced at Olsufy Ivanovitch. Olsufy Ivanovitch gravely and solemnly nodded his head.

"Let us stand up," said the councillor, and he made Mr. Golyadkin get up. All rose to their feet. Then the councillor took Mr. Golyadkin senior by the hand, and Andrey Filippovitch took Mr. Golyadkin junior, and in this way these two precisely similar persons were conducted through the expectant crowd surrounding them. Our hero looked about him in perplexity; but he was at once checked and his attention was called to Mr. Golyadkin junior, who was holding out his hand to him.

"They want to reconcile us," thought our hero, and with emotion he held out his hand to Mr. Golyadkin junior; and then - then bent his head forward towards him. The other Mr. Golyadkin did the same. . . .

At this point it seemed to Mr. Golyadkin senior that his perfidious friend was smiling, that he gave a sly, hurried wink to the crowd of onlookers, and that there was something sinister in the face of the worthless Mr. Golyadkin junior, that he even made a grimace at the moment of his Judas kiss. . . .

There was a ringing in Mr. Golyadkin's ears, and a darkness before his eyes; it seemed to him that an infinite multitude, an unending series of precisely similar Golyadkins were noisily bursting in at every door of the room; but it was too late. . . . the resounding, treacherous kiss was over, and . . .

Then quite an unexpected event occurred. . . . The door opened noisily, and in the doorway stood a man, the very sight of whom sent a chill to Mr. Golyadkin's heart. He stood rooted to the spot. A cry of horror died away in his choking throat. Yet Mr. Golyadkin knew it all beforehand, and had had a presentiment of something of the sort for a long time. The new arrival went up to Mr. Golyadkin gravely and solemnly. Mr. Golyadkin knew this personage very well. He had seen him before, had seen him very often, had seen him that day . . . This personage was a tall, thick-set man in a black dress-coat with a good-sized cross on his breast, and was possessed of thick, very black whiskers; nothing was lacking but the cigar in the mouth to complete the picture. Yet this person's eyes, as we have mentioned already, sent a chill to the heart of Mr. Golyadkin. With a grave and solemn air this terrible man approached the pitiable hero of our story. . . . Our hero held out his hand to him; the stranger took his hand and drew him along with him . . . With a crushed and desperate air our hero looked about him.

"It's . . . it's Krestyan Ivanovitch Rutenspitz, doctor of medicine and surgery; your old acquaintance, Yakov Petrovitch!" a detestable voice whispered in Mr. Golyadkin's ear. He looked around: it was Mr. Golyadkin's twin, so revolting in the despicable meanness of his soul. A malicious, indecent joy shone in his countenance; he was rubbing his hands with rapture, he was turning his head from side to side in ecstasy, he was fawning round every one in delight and seemed ready to dance with glee. At last he pranced forward, took a candle from one of the servants and walked in front, showing the way to Mr. Golyadkin and Krestyan Ivanovitch. Mr. Golyadkin heard the whole party in the drawing-room rush after him, crowding and squeezing one another, and all beginning to repeat after Mr. Golyadkin himself, "It is all right, don't be afraid, Yakov Petrovitch; this is you old friend and acquaintance, you know, Krestyan Ivanovitch Rutenspitz. . ."

At last they came out on the brightly lighted stairs; there was a crowd of people on the stairs too. The front door was thrown open noisily, and Mr. Golyadkin found himself on the steps, together with Krestyan Ivanovitch. At the entrance stood a carriage with four horses that were snorting with impatience. The malignant Mr. Golyadkin junior in three bounds flew down the stair and opened the carriage door himself. Krestyan Ivanovitch, with an impressive gesture, asked Mr. Golyadkin to get in. There was no need of the impressive gesture, however; there were plenty of people to help him in. . . .

Faint with horror, Mr. Golyadkin looked back. The whole of the brightly lighted staircase was crowded with people; inquisitive eyes were looking at him from all sides; Olsufy Ivanovitch himself was sitting in his easy chair on the top landing, and watching all that took place with deep interest. Every one was waiting. A murmur of impatience passed through the crowd when Mr. Golyadkin looked back.

“I hope I have done nothing . . . nothing reprehensible . . . or that can call for severity . . . and general attention in regard to my official relations,” our hero brought out in desperation. A clamour of talk rose all round him, all were shaking their head, tears started from Mr. Golyadkin’s eyes.

“In that case I’m ready . . . I have full confidence . . . and I entrust my fate to Krestyan Ivanovitch. . . .”

No sooner had Mr. Golyadkin declared that he entrusted his fate to Krestyan Ivanovitch than a dreadful, deafening shout of joy came from all surrounding him and was repeated in a sinister echo through the whole of the waiting crowd. Then Krestyan Ivanovitch on one side and Andrey Filippovitch on the other helped Mr. Golyadkin into the carriage; his double, in his usual nasty way, was helping to get him in from behind. The unhappy Mr. Golyadkin senior took his last look on all and everything, and, shivering like a kitten that has been drenched with cold water - if the comparison may be permitted - got into the carriage. Krestyan Ivanovitch followed him immediately. The carriage door slammed. There was a swish of the whip on the horses’ backs. . . the horses started off. . . . The crowd dashed after Mr. Golyadkin. The shrill, furious shouts of his enemies pursued him by way of good wishes for his journey. For some time several persons were still running by the carriage that bore away Mr. Golyadkin; but by degrees they were left behind, till at last they all disappeared. Mr. Golyadkin’s unworthy twin kept up longer than any one. With his hands in the trouser pockets of his green uniform he ran on with a satisfied air, skipping first to one and then to the other side of the carriage, sometimes catching hold of the window-frame and hanging on by it, poking his head in at the window, and throwing farewell kisses to Mr. Golyadkin. But he began to get tired, he was less and less often to be seen, and at last vanished altogether. There was a dull ache in Mr. Golyadkin’s heart; a hot rush of blood set Mr. Golyadkin’s head throbbing; he felt stifled, he longed to unbutton himself - to bare his breast, to cover it with snow and pour cold water on it. He sank at last into forgetfulness. . . .

When he came to himself, he saw that the horses were taking him along an unfamiliar road. There were dark patches of copse on each side of it; it was desolate and deserted. Suddenly he almost swooned; two fiery eyes were staring at him in the darkness, and those two eyes were glittering with malignant, hellish glee. “That’s not Krestyan Ivanovitch! Who is it? Or is it he? It is. It is Krestyan Ivanovitch, but not the old Krestyan Ivanovitch, it’s another Krestyan Ivanovitch! It’s a terrible Krestyan Ivanovitch!” . . .

“Krestyan Ivanovitch, I . . . I believe . . . I’m all right, Krestyan Ivanovitch,” our hero was beginning timidly in a trembling voice, hoping by his meekness and submission to soften the terrible Krestyan Ivanovitch a little.

“You get free quarters, wood, with light, and service, the which you deserve not,” Krestyan Ivanovitch’s answer rang out, stern and terrible as a judge’s sentence.

Our hero shrieked and clutched his head in his hands. Alas! For a long while he had been haunted by a presentiment of this.

THE END

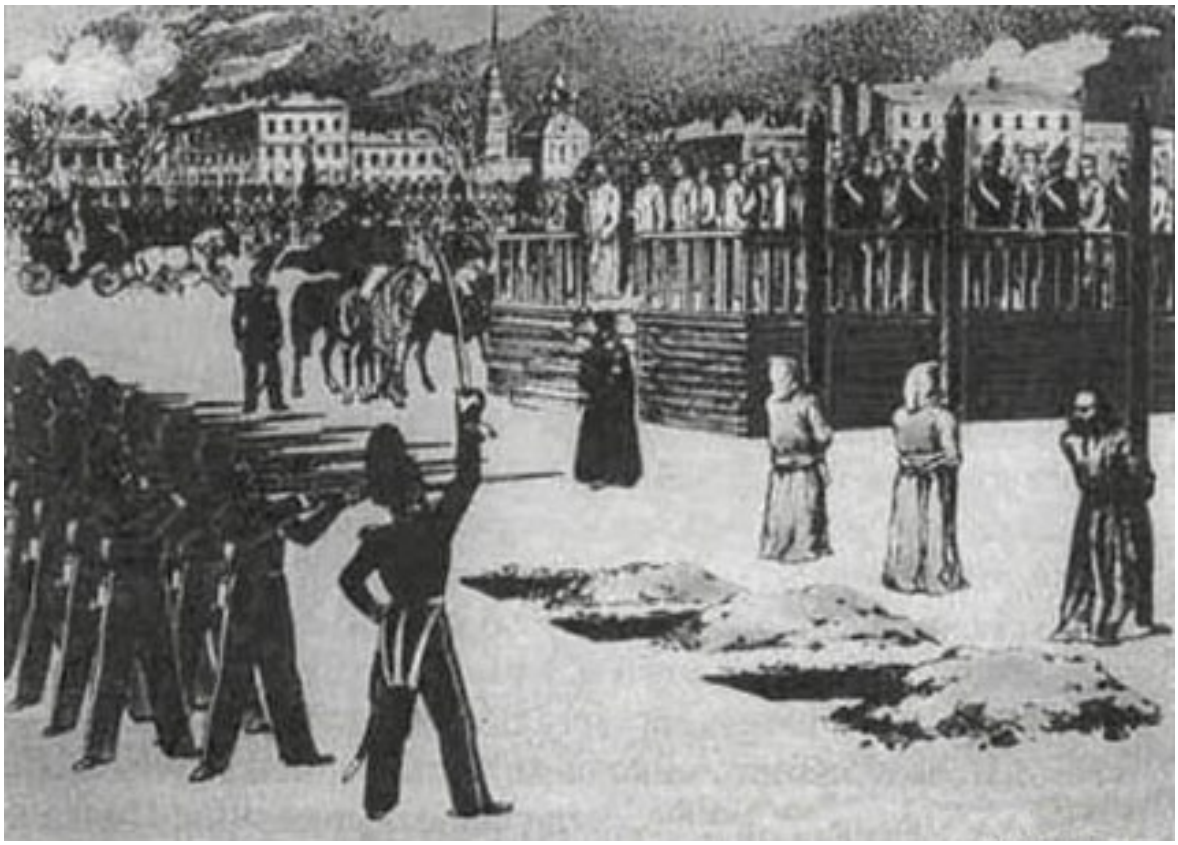
NETOCHKA NEZVANOVA



AN INCOMPLETE NOVEL

Translated by Constance Garnett

Netochka Nezvanova is Dostoyevsky's first - although unfinished - attempt at writing a novel. The first completed section of the book was published in 1849. According to translator Jane Kentish, this first publication was intended as "no more than a prologue to the novel". Further work on the novel was hindered by Dostoyevsky's arrest and exile to Siberia for alleged revolutionary activities. Dostoyevsky never resumed work on *Netochka Nezvanova*, leaving it incomplete. The fragment tells the story of Netochka and her childhood, which dominated by her stepfather, Efimov, a failed musician that believes he is a neglected genius. The young girl is strangely drawn to this drunken ruin of a man, who exploits her and drives the family to poverty. But when she is rescued by an aristocratic family, the abuse against Netochka's delicate psyche continues in a more subtle way, condemning her to remain an outsider - a solitary spectator of an otherwise glittering society. With its depiction of the suffering, loneliness, madness and sin that affect both rich and poor in St Petersburg, *Netochka Nezvanova* begins to explore the many great themes that were to dominate Dostoyevsky's later novels.



A sketch of the Petrashevsky Circle mock execution, which the author suffered, prior to his exile in Siberia.

NETOCHKA NEZVANOVA

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CHAPTER I

I DON'T remember my father. He died when I was two years old. My mother married a second time. This second marriage brought her a great deal of sorrow, though it was a marriage of love. My stepfather was a musician. His history was a remarkable one: he was the strangest, the most extraordinary man I have ever known'. His image is very vivid among the earliest impressions of my childhood, so vivid that those impressions have had an influence on the whole of my life. First of all, to make my story intelligible, I will give a sketch of his biography. Everything which I am now going to tell you I learned later on from the celebrated violinist B., who was a comrade and an intimate friend of my stepfather's in his youth.

My stepfather's surname was Yefimov. He was born on the estate of a very rich landowner and was the son of a poor musician, who after years of wandering had settled on the estate of this landowner and played in the latter's orchestra. The landowner lived in luxurious style, and loved music passionately, above everything. The story was told of him that, though he never left home even to go to Moscow, yet on one occasion he took it into his head to go to some watering- place abroad, and that he went there for no longer than a few weeks with the sole object of hearing a famous violinist who, as the newspapers announced, was going to give three concerts at the watering-place. He had himself a fairly good orchestra of musicians, on which he spent almost the whole of his income. This orchestra my stepfather entered as clarinet player. He was twenty-two years old when he made the acquaintance of a strange man. In the same district there was living a wealthy count, who ruined himself over keeping up a private theatre in his house. This count had dismissed the conductor of his orchestra, an Italian, for bad conduct. This Italian certainly was a bad man. After he had been turned off he sank into complete degradation. He took to going from one village tavern to another, got drunk, sometimes begged, and there was no one in the whole province who would employ him. It was with this fellow that my stepfather made friends. This connection was strange and inexplicable, for no one noticed that he changed for the worse in his behaviour through imitation of his friend; and even his patron himself, who had at first forbidden him to associate with the Italian, afterwards winked at their friendship. At last the Italian met with a sudden death. One morning he was found by some peasants in a ditch by the dam. An inquest was held, and it appeared that he had died of an apoplectic fit. His belongings were in

the keeping of my stepfather, who promptly produced evidence that he was entitled to take possession of them: the Italian had left a note in his own handwriting bequeathing everything he had to my stepfather in case of his death. The property consisted of a black frock-coat which had been carefully preserved by its late owner, as he never gave up hope of getting a situation, and of a rather ordinary-looking violin. Nobody disputed the inheritance. But a short time afterwards, the first violin of the count's orchestra came to the landowner with a letter from the count, in which the latter begged him to persuade Yefimov in sell the violin left him by the Italian, as he greatly desired to obtain it for his orchestra. He offered three thousand roubles, and added that he had several times already sent for Yegor Yefimov in order that he might arrange the sale with him personally, but had always met with an obstinate refusal from the latter. The count concluded by saying that the price he offered was what the violin was worth, that he was not trying to get it for less than its value, and that in Yefimov's refusal he saw an insulting suspicion that he, the count, was trying to take advantage of the musician's simplicity and ignorance, and he therefore begged Yefimov's patron to bring him to reason.

The landowner promptly sent for my stepfather.

"Why won't you sell the violin?" he asked him. "It's no use to you. You'll be given three thousand roubles, that's what it is worth, and you are making a mistake if you think you will get more. The count isn't going to cheat you."

Yefimov answered that he would not go to the count of his own accord, but that if he were sent, he must do his master's bidding; he would not sell the fiddle to the count, but if they should take it from him by force, then again he must submit to his master's will.

It was clear that by this answer he had touched a very sensitive spot in his patron's character. The fact was that the latter had always said with pride that he knew how to treat his musicians, for they were all genuine artists, every one of them, and that thanks to them his orchestra was not only better than the count's, but equal to any in Petersburg or Moscow.

"Very well," answered the landowner. "I will inform the count that you won't sell the violin because you won't, for you have a perfect right to sell it or not to sell it, you understand? But I ask you myself, what use is the violin to you? The clarinet is your instrument, though you are a poor player.

Let me have it. I'll give you three thousand" (who could have told it was such a valuable instrument?).

Yefimov gave a laugh.

"No, sir, I won't sell it you," he answered. "Of course you are the master..."

"Why, I am not forcing you, am I? I am not compelling you, am I?" cried the landowner, losing his temper, the more readily as the conversation took place before the count's musician, who might from this scene draw very disadvantageous conclusions as to the position of the musicians in the landowner's orchestra. "Be off, you ungrateful fellow! Don't let me see you again. But for me what would have become of you with your clarinet, which you can't play? With me you are fed and clothed and get a salary; you live like a gentleman, but you don't care to understand that, and you don't feel it. Be off, and do not exasperate me with your presence here!"

The landowner used to drive everyone with whom he got angry out of his presence, because he was afraid of himself and his own hastiness. And on no account would he have behaved too severely with "artists", as he called his musicians.

The bargain did not come off, and it seemed as though that was the end of the matter, when a month later the count's violinist got up a horrible plot. On his own initiative, he made a statement to the police, in which he charged my stepfather with being responsible for the Italian's death, and with having murdered him with the mercenary object of acquiring a rich inheritance. He asserted that the will had been extorted by force, and swore that he could produce witnesses in support of his accusation. Neither the warnings nor the entreaties of the count and the landowner on behalf of my stepfather could move the informer from his purpose. They pointed out to him that the inquest on the Italian had been properly conducted, that he was flying in the face of facts, possibly through personal spite and disappointment at not getting the valuable instrument which was to have been bought for him. The musician stuck to his point, swore that he was right, asserted that the apoplectic fit had been due not to drunkenness but to poison, and demanded a second inquest. At the first glance there seemed to be something in his story. The case was followed up, of course. Yefimov was taken and sent to prison in town. The trial, in which the whole province took an interest, began. It was soon over, and ended in the musician being convicted of false witness. He was sentenced to a fitting punishment, but he

stuck to the story to the end, and maintained that he was right. Finally he acknowledged that he had no proofs, that the evidence he had brought forward had been invented by himself, but that he had been led by suppositions, by surmises, to invent it all; for up to the time of the second inquest, when Yefimov's innocence was formally proved, he had been fully convinced that Yefimov had caused the death of the luckless Italian, though he had perhaps not poisoned him, but murdered him in some other way. But the informer's sentence was not carried out, he was suddenly taken ill with inflammation of the brain, went out of his mind, and died in the prison hospital.

During the whole of this affair, the landowner behaved in the most generous way. He defended my stepfather as though he had been his own son. Several times he went to the prison, to comfort him, to give him money, and learning that Yefimov was fond of smoking, took him the best cigars, and when he was acquitted gave a fete to the orchestra. The landowner looked upon the Yefimov affair as a matter concerning the whole orchestra, because he prized good behaviour in his musicians, if not more than, at least as much as their talents. A whole year passed, and suddenly a rumour went round the province, that a famous violinist, a Frenchman, had arrived in the chief town of the province and was going to give a few concerts there. The landowner began at once trying to get him to pay him a visit. Everything seemed favourable; the Frenchman promised to come. All the preparations were made, almost the whole district had been invited to meet him, but all at once things took quite a different turn.

One morning it was announced that Yefimov had disappeared, no one knew where. A search was made, but there was no trace of him. The orchestra was in a desperate plight, there was no one to play the clarinet; when, three days after Yefimov's disappearance, the landowner received a letter from the French violinist in which the latter haughtily refused the invitation, adding, in a roundabout way of course, that he would for the future be extremely careful in his relations with gentlemen who keep their own orchestras of musicians, that it was an offence against good taste to see real talent under the control of a man who did not know its value, and that the example of Yefimov, a true artist and the best violinist he had met in Russia, was a proof of the justice of his words.

The landowner was thrown into the utmost amazement by reading this letter. He was mortified to the depths of his soul. What! Yefimov, the

Yefimov for whom he had done so much, on whom he had heaped such kindness, had so mercilessly and shamelessly slandered him to a European artist, the sort of man whose opinion he most valued! And the letter was inexplicable in another way: he was informed that Yefimov was an artist of real talent, that he was a violinist, but that his talent had not been recognised and he had been forced to play another instrument. All this so much astounded the landowner that he immediately prepared to go to the town for a personal interview with the Frenchman, when he received a letter from the count in which the latter invited him to come to his house at once, and told him that he knew all about the affair, that the famous Frenchman was now in his house with Yefimov, that, being astonished at the latter's impudence and slander, he, the count, had ordered him to be detained, and that the presence of the landowner was essential, since he, the count, was also implicated in Yefimov's accusation. He added that the affair was very important, and must be cleared up as soon as possible.

The landowner, promptly setting off to the count's, at" once made the acquaintance of the Frenchman there and told him all my stepfather's story, adding that he had never suspected so great a talent in Yefimov, that the latter had been on the contrary a very poor clarinet player, and that he heard now for the first time that his runaway musician was a violinist. He added further that Yefimov was a free man, that he enjoyed complete liberty, and could leave him at any moment if he really were oppressed. The Frenchman was surprised. They sent for Yefimov, and he was almost unrecognisable: he behaved conceitedly, answered with derision and persisted in the truth of all he had told the Frenchman. All this intensely exasperated the count, who told my stepfather in so many words that he was a scoundrel and a slanderer, and that he deserved an ignominious punishment.

"Don't excite yourself, your Excellency. I know you well enough already, and understand you thoroughly," my stepfather answered. "Thanks to you, I was within an inch of being sentenced for murder. I know at whose instigation Alexey Nikiforitch, your late musician, trumped up a false charge against me."

The count was beside himself with rage on hearing this horrible accusation. He could hardly control himself; but a government official who had come to the count's on business and happened to be in the room, declared that he could not let this pass without investigation, that Yefimov's insulting rudeness was equivalent to malice, wilful slander and libel, and he

respectfully asked to be allowed to arrest him on the spot in the count’s house. The Frenchman showed great indignation, and said that he could not understand such black ingratitude. Then my stepfather replied emphatically that to be punished, to be tried, even though it were again on a charge of murder, was better than such an existence as he had hitherto endured, belonging to the landowner’s orchestra, and being unable to leave it owing to his extreme poverty. And with these words he went out of the room, accompanied by the man who arrested him. They shut him up in a room apart, and threatened to take him to the town next day.

About midnight the prisoner’s door was opened. The landowner walked in. He was in his dressing-gown and slippers and was carrying a lighted lantern. It appeared that he could not sleep, and that he was so terribly worried that he had been driven to leave his bed at such an hour. Yefimov was not asleep and he looked with amazement at his visitor, who put down the lantern and in great agitation sat down in a chair facing him.

“Yegor,” he said to him, “why have you done me this wrong?’’

Yefimov did not answer. The landowner repeated his question, and there was a note of deep feeling, of strange misery in his words.

“God knows why I have, sir!” my stepfather answered at last, with a despairing gesture. “I suppose that the devil confounded me! I don’t know myself who drove me to do it! But I can’t go on living with you, I can’t bear it... The devil himself has got hold of me!”

“Yegor,” the landowner began again, “come back to me. I will forget everything, I will forgive everything. Listen: you shall be my leading musician, I offer you a salary above all the others...

“No, sir, no, and don’t speak of it; your house is not for me to live in! I tell you that the devil has got hold of me. I shall set fire to the house if I stay with you. Such misery comes over me at times that it would have been better if I had never been born. I cannot answer for myself now; you had better leave me alone, sir. It has been like this with me ever since that devil made a friend of me....”

“Who?” asked the landowner.

“Why, who died like a forsaken dog, the Italian.”

“It was he who taught you to play, Yegorushka.”

“Yes! Many things he taught me to my ruin. It would have been better for me not to have seen him.”

“Was he a first-rate violinist too, Yegorushka?”

“No, he couldn’t do much himself, but he taught well. I learned by myself, he only showed me, and better for me if my hand had been withered than what I have learned. I don’t myself know now what I want. Here, sir, if you were to ask me: ‘What do you want, Yegorka? I can give you anything,’ I shouldn’t say a word in answer, because I don’t know myself what I want. No, sir, I tell you again you had better leave me alone. I shall do myself some mischief, so as to be sent far away, and that will be the end of it!”

“Yegor,” said the landowner after a minute’s silence, “I cannot leave you like this. Since you don’t want to be in my service, go your own way, you are a free man, I cannot keep you; but I cannot part from you like this. Play me something, Yegor, play on your violin. For God’s sake play something. I am not ordering you, understand me, I am not compelling you, I beg you with tears: play me, Yegorushka, for God’s sake, what you played to the Frenchman. Give me the pleasure. You are obstinate and I am obstinate. I have my ways too, Yegorushka. I feel for you, you too might have feeling. I can’t bear it if of your own free will and pleasure you do not play me what you played the Frenchman.”

“Well, so be it,” said Yefimov. “I had vowed to myself never to play before you, sir, before you above all, but now my heart has melted. I will play to you only for the first and last time, and you will never hear me again anywhere, sir, not if you pay me a thousand roubles.”

Then he took his violin and began playing variations on Russian songs. B. said that these variations were his first and best piece for the violin, and that he never played anything so well and with such inspiration. The landowner, who could not listen to any music with indifference, shed tears. When the performance was over, he got up from his chair, took out three hundred roubles, gave them to my stepfather and said:

“Now go your way, Yegor. I will let you out from here and will make everything right with the count; but listen: never meet me again. A wide road lies open to you, but if we run against each other on it, it will be mortifying for you and also for me. Well, good-bye.... Wait a moment, one more piece of advice for you on your way, one only. Don’t drink, but study, study every hour. Don’t grow conceited. I speak to you as your own father would speak to you. Mind, I tell you once again, study and don’t take to drink; but if you once take to it from grief (and you will have much trouble) you may reckon all is lost, everything will go to the devil, and maybe you

yourself will die in the ditch like your Italian. Come, now, good-bye!... Stay, kiss me.”

They kissed each other, and then my stepfather went away in freedom.

Scarcely had he found himself at liberty when he began by squandering his three hundred roubles on debauchery in the nearest town, associating with a very low, dirty crew of rollicking companions. Being left penniless with no one to help him, he ended by being compelled to go into a wretched band attached to a strolling provincial company, as the first and perhaps the only violinist. All this was utterly inconsistent with his original intentions, which were to go as soon as possible to study in Petersburg, to obtain a good situation, and to develop into a first-rate artist. But he did not get on in the little orchestra. He soon quarrelled with the manager of the company, and left. Then he completely lost heart, and even brought himself to a desperate step very galling to his pride. He wrote a letter to the landowner, his former patron, describing his position and asking for money. The letter was written in a rather independent style, but no answer came to him. Then he wrote a second letter in which in the most cringing phrases, calling the landowner his benefactor and a true connoisseur of the arts, he begged him again for assistance. At last an answer came. The landowner sent him a hundred roubles and a few lines in the handwriting of his valet, in which he told him not to trouble him with begging letters in the future. When he got this money, my stepfather meant to set off for Petersburg at once, but after paying his debts he had so little money left that the journey was out of the question.

He was obliged to remain in the provinces, again went into some provincial orchestra, then again could not get on in it, and passing from one place to another, spent six whole years in the provinces, all the while cherishing the dream of getting in a short time to Petersburg. At last he was attacked by something like terror. With despair he noticed how his talent was suffering, continually hampered by his disorderly and beggarly existence; and one morning he abandoned his manager, took his violin and, almost begging his way, at last reached Petersburg. He installed himself somewhere in a garret, and it was here that he made the acquaintance of B., who had just arrived from Germany and was also striving to make a career. They soon made friends, and B. recalls their acquaintance with deep feeling even now. Both were young; they had the same hopes and the same object. But B. was still in his first youth; he had had little experience of poverty

and sorrow; moreover he was pre-eminently a German and worked for his object obstinately and systematically, with a complete consciousness of his powers, and almost able to calculate beforehand the degree of success he could attain; while his companion, Yefimov, who was thirty, was already tired and weary, had lost all capacity for persistent effort, and had exhausted his early health and vigour in the seven years during which he had been forced for a crust of bread to lead a vagabond existence shifting about from one provincial company or private orchestra to another. He had been supported by the one perpetual unchanging hope of struggling out of his wretched position, saving money and getting to Petersburg. But this hope had been dim and vague, it was a sort of irresistible inner impulse which had with years lost its first definiteness even in Yefimov's own eyes; and by the time he came to Petersburg he was acting almost unconsciously through a sort of everlasting habit of everlasting yearning and brooding over the journey, and scarcely knew himself what he was going to do in the capital. His enthusiasm was somehow spasmodic, jaundiced, and came by fits and starts, as though he were trying to deceive himself by this enthusiasm, and to persuade himself that his vigour, his first fervour, his first inspiration, had not yet disappeared. His incessant ecstasies impressed the cool and methodical B.; he was dazzled, and hailed my stepfather as the coming musical genius. At first B. could imagine no other future for him. But before long his eyes were opened, and he saw through my step father completely. He saw clearly that all this jerkiness, feverish haste, and impatience were nothing but unconscious despair at the thought of his wasted talents; and that possibly the talent itself had not been even at the very first so great, that there had been in it a great deal of blindness, of mistaken self-confidence, of premature self-satisfaction and of incessant dreaming, incessant brooding over his own genius. "But," B. used to tell me, "I could not help wondering at the strange character of my companion. A desperate feverish contest between violently over-strained will and inner impotence was taking place in actual life before my eyes. The unhappy man had for seven whole years been content with mere dreams of his future glory, so much so that he did not even notice how he had lost what is most fundamental in our art, how he had let slip even the most fundamental mechanism of his work. And yet the most colossal plans for the future were continually taking shape in his disordered imagination. It was not enough for him to want to be a genius of the first rank, one of the first violinists in

the world; it was not enough for him that he already considered himself such a genius — on the top of all that, he dreamed of becoming also a composer, though he knew nothing about counterpoint. But what astounded me most of all," B. added, "was that this man, with his complete impotence, with his really insignificant knowledge of the technique of his art, had yet so deep, so clear, and so instinctive an understanding of music. He felt and understood it so deeply that it was no wonder if he went astray in his own estimate of himself, and took himself not merely for a profound instinctive critic of music, but for a high priest of that art, for a genius. Sometimes in his coarse, plain language, untouched by any education, he would utter such profound truths that I was struck dumb, and could not understand how he had divined it all, never having read anything and never having been taught anything. And I was indebted to him," B. would add, "to him and his counsels, for much of my own progress. As for me," B. continued, "I was not troubled on my own account. I, too, loved my art passionately, though from the very beginning of my career I knew that I should be in a real sense a humble labourer in the field of art and that I wanted nothing more; but on the other hand, I was proud of the fact that I had not, like the ungrateful servant, buried what had been given me by nature, but had increased it a hundredfold. And if the finish of my execution were praised, if the perfection of my mechanism were admired, all that I owed to unceasing, unflagging toil, to the clear recognition of my own powers, to voluntary self-subordination and to a persistent struggle against conceit, against premature self-satisfaction, and the indolence that is the natural consequence of that self- satisfaction."

B. in his turn tried to give good advice to the friend by whom he was at first so dominated, but only succeeded in irritating him to no purpose. A coolness between them followed. B. soon observed that his friend was beginning to be more and more a prey to apathy, misery and boredom, that his bouts of enthusiasm were becoming less and less frequent, and that all this was followed by a gloomy, savage despondency. Finally Yefimov took to abandoning his violin and sometimes would not touch it for a whole week. Complete moral collapse was not far off, and before long the wretched man had sunk into every vice. What his former patron had foretold came true. He gave way to excessive drinking. B. looked on at him with horror; his advice had no effect, and indeed he was afraid to say a word. Little by little Yefimov became utterly shameless; he did not scruple

to live at B.’s expense, and even behaved as though he had a complete right to do so. Meanwhile B.’s resources were being exhausted, he lived from hand to mouth by giving lessons, or by playing at evening parties for merchants, for Germans, and for petty officials who, though they paid little, paid him something. Yefimov seemed unwilling to notice his friend’s straits: he behaved sullenly with him, and for weeks together did not deign to say a word to him. One day B. observed to him in the mildest way that it would not be amiss for him to take up his violin occasionally, that he might not lose his skill with the instrument altogether; then Yefimov flew into a rage and declared that he would never touch his violin again, as though he imagined that someone would implore him on his knees to do so. On another occasion B. needed someone to play with him at an evening party, and he asked Yefimov. This invitation moved Yefimov to fury. He declared that he was not a street musician, and would not demean himself like B. to degrade his noble art by playing to low tradesmen who would not understand his talent and his playing. B. did not say one word in answer; but Yefimov, brooding over this suggestion in the absence of his friend, who had gone to play, imagined that all this was only a hint at the fact that he was living at B.’s expense, and a desire to make him feel that he, too, ought to try to earn some money. When B.

came back, Yefimov began to reproach him for the meanness of his conduct, and declared that he would not remain with him another minute. He actually did disappear for two days, but on the third turned up again as though nothing had happened, and went on living as before.

Only their former intimacy and affection, and the compassion which B. felt for the ruined man, restrained him from making up his mind to put an end to this disorderly existence and to part with Yefimov for ever. At last they did part. Fortune smiled on B., he obtained powerful patronage and succeeded in giving a brilliant concert. By that time he was a first-rate performer, and his rapidly growing reputation soon afterwards gained him a place in the orchestra of an opera-house where he quickly won well-deserved success. At parting he gave Yefimov money, and begged him with tears in his eyes to return to the right path. B. cannot to this day remember him without marked feeling. His friendship with Yefimov was one of the strongest impressions of his youth. They had begun their career together, had become warmly attached to one another, and even Yefimov’s strangeness, his coarse and glaring defects, drew B. more warmly to him. B.

understood him; he saw through him, and knew beforehand how it would end. They embraced, and both shed tears at parting. Then Yefimov said through tears and sobs that he was a ruined and most unhappy man, that he had known it a long time, and that only now he saw his ruin clearly.

“I have no talent!” he said, turning as pale as death.

B. was deeply moved.

“Listen, Yegor Petrovitch,” he said to him. “What are you doing to yourself? You will only ruin yourself with your despair; you have no patience, no courage. Now you are saying in a fit of despondency that you have no talent. It’s not true. You have talent, I assure you you have. You have it. I can tell that merely from the way you feel and understand music. I will prove you that by the whole of your life. You have told me about the way you lived in the past; then, too, you were haunted by the same despair. Then your first teacher, that strange man of whom you have told me so much, first roused in you a love for music and divined your talent. You felt it then as intensely and painfully as you feel it now, but you did not understand what was happening to you. You could not bear living in your patron’s house, and you did not know yourself what you wanted. Your teacher died too early. He left you with nothing but vague yearnings and, worst of all, did not explain you to yourself. You felt that you needed some other wider path, that you were destined for other aims, but you did not understand how this could come about, and in your misery you came to hate everything that surrounded you. Your six years of poverty and hardship have not been lost; you have studied, you have thought, you have become conscious of yourself and your powers, you understand music and your vocation now. My friend, you must have patience and courage. A lot far more to be envied than mine awaits you; you are a hundred times more of an artist than I; but God gave you but the tenth part of my patience. Study and do not drink, as your kind old patron told you; and above all, begin from the beginning again, from the ABC. What worries you? Is it poverty, privation? But poverty and privation form the artist. They are inevitable at first. No one wants you now, no one cares to know you; that is the way of the world. Wait a bit, it will be different presently when they find out that you have a gift. Envy, petty meanness, and, worst of all, stupidity will weigh upon you more heavily than privation. Talent wants sympathy, it wants to be understood, and you will see what people will press round you when you attain ever so little of your aim. They will set at nought and

despise what you have gained by bitter toil, privations, hunger, sleepless nights. They will not encourage you, they will not comfort you, your future comrades, they will not point out to you what is good and true in you; but with spiteful glee will catch up every mistake you make, will urge you to what is bad in you, to what you are mistaken about, and under an outward show of coolness and contempt will rejoice as though it were a festivity over every mistake you make. (As though anyone were free from mistakes!) You are conceited, you are often proud when there is no need to be, and may offend the amour-propre of some nonentity, and then there will be trouble — you will be one and they will be many. They will torment you with pin-pricks. Even I am beginning to have experience of that. Cheer up! You are not so poor, you can live. Don't look down on humble work, slave away as I have done at poor artisans' entertainments. But you are impatient, you are sick with your impatience, you are not simple enough, you are too subtle, you think too much, you give your brain too much work. You are audacious in words, and faint-hearted when you take up your bow. You are vain, and yet not bold enough.

Courage! wait a bit, study; and if you do not rely on your own powers, then trust to luck: you have fervour, you have feeling. You may reach your goal, and if not, anyway try your luck, you will not lose in any case, for the stake is too great. Trusting to *luck,* brother, is a great tiling."

Yefimov listened to his comrade with deep feeling. But as the latter talked, the pallor left his cheeks; they flushed red; his eyes flashed with unaccustomed fire, courage and hope. This courage soon passed into self-confidence, and then into his habitual arrogance; and at last, when B. was finishing his exhortation, Yefimov listened to him absent-mindedly and impatiently. He warmly pressed his hand, however, thanked him, and always rapid in his transitions from the lowest self- abasement and despondency to extreme arrogance and insolence, declared conceitedly that his friend need not trouble himself about his future, that he knew how to manage his own affairs, that he hoped very shortly to get powerful support, that he would give a concert and so at once obtain fame and money. B. shrugged his shoulders but did not contradict him; and they parted, though of course not for long. Yefimov at once spent the money that had been given to him and came to borrow more; then a second time, and a fourth, and a tenth, till at last B. lost patience and said he was not at home. From that time he lost sight of him completely.

Several years passed. One day, as B. was coming home from a rehearsal, at the entrance of a dirty tavern in a back street he jostled against a badly dressed drunken man who called him by his name. It was Yefimov. He was greatly changed, his face looked yellow and bloated. It could be seen that his reckless life was putting a stamp upon him that could never be effaced. B. was overjoyed, and before he had time to say a couple of words to him, had followed him into the tavern into which Yefimov dragged him. There in a little grimy room apart B. scrutinised his companion more closely. The latter was almost in rags, in broken boots; his frayed shirt-front was covered with wine stains. His hair was thin and beginning to turn grey.

“How are you getting on? Where are you now?” B. asked him.

Yefimov was overcome with embarrassment, even scared at first; he answered jerkily and incoherently, so much so that B. began to think that he was out of his mind. At last Yefimov confessed that he could not talk until he had had a drink of vodka, and that they had long since refused him credit in the tavern. Saying this, he flushed crimson, though he tried to carry it off with a jaunty gesture; but it gave an effect of insolence, artificiality and importunity, so that it was all very pitiful and excited the compassion of kind-hearted B., who saw that his worst apprehensions were fulfilled. He ordered vodka, however. Yefimov’s face was transformed with gratitude, and he was so overcome that he was ready with tears in his eyes to kiss his benefactor’s hand. Over dinner B. learned to his great surprise that the wretched man was married. But he was still more amazed when he heard that his wife was the cause of all his misery and misfortunes, and that his marriage had destroyed all his talent.

“How is that?” asked B.

“It’s two years since I have taken up my violin, brother,” Yefimov answered. “She’s a common woman, a cook, a coarse, uneducated woman. Damn her.... We do nothing but quarrel.”

“Then why did you marry her if that is how it is?”

“I had nothing to eat. I got to know her; she had about a thousand roubles. I rushed headlong into matrimony. It was she fell in love with me. She flung herself on my neck. No one drove her to it. The money has gone on food and on drink, and — it’s all up with my talent! All is lost.”

B. saw that Yefimov seemed in a hurry to justify himself.

“I have thrown it all up, thrown it all up,” he added. Then he informed him that of late years he had attained almost perfection on the violin, that

though B. was one of the first violinists in the town, yet he would not have been able to hold a candle to him, Yefimov, perhaps, if the latter had cared to outshine him.

“Then what’s the difficulty?” said B., surprised. “You should get a post!”

“It’s not worth while,” said Yefimov, with a wave of his hand. “There isn’t one of you there who knows anything about it. What do you know? Bosh! nothing, that’s all you know. To scrape out some jig in a ballet — that’s your job. You have never seen and never heard good violinists. What’s the good of bothering you: you can stay as you like!”

At this point Yefimov waved his arm again and gave a lurch in his chair, for he was quite drunk. Then he began inviting B. to come and see him. But the latter refused, taking his address and promising to go to him next day. Yefimov, who by now had eaten his fill, looked sarcastically at his old friend, and did everything he could to stick pins into him. When they were going away he took B.’s expensive fur coat and handed it to him like a menial to his superior. As they passed through the outer room he stopped and introduced him to the people of the tavern and the company generally as the greatest violinist in Petersburg. In fact he was very disgusting at that moment.

B. did, however, seek him out next morning, and found him in a garret where we were all living at that time in great poverty. I was four years old then, and my mother had been married to Yefimov two years. She was an unhappy woman. In the past she had been a governess, very well educated, and good-looking, and had through poverty married an old government clerk, my father. She only lived with him a year. When my father died suddenly and his meagre fortune was divided among his heirs, my mother was left to face the world alone with me, with a trifling sum of money, all that came to her share. To get a situation as a governess again, with a very young child, was difficult. It was then that in some casual way she met Yefimov, and really did fall in love with him. She was an enthusiast and a dreamer; she saw in Yefimov a genius and believed in him on the strength of his conceited talk of a brilliant future. Her imagination was flattered by the glorious task of being the prop, the guide of a man of genius, and she married him.

All her dreams and hopes vanished in the first month, and there was left before her the pitiful reality. Yefimov, who really had, perhaps, married my mother because she had about a thousand roubles, folded his hands as soon

as the money was spent; and as though delighted at the excuse, declared to each and all that marriage was the death of his talent, that he could not work in a stuffy room face to face with his starving family, that songs and music would not come into his mind in such surroundings, and that evidently he was fated to be unlucky. I believe he persuaded himself of the justice of his complaints, and it seemed as though he were glad of an excuse. It seemed as though this unhappy ruined genius were seeking for an external cause upon which the blame for all his failures, all his calamities, could be cast. He could not face the awful thought that he had been ruined for art long ago and for ever. He struggled convulsively with that fearful conviction as with a delirious nightmare, and when at last the reality overcame him, when at moments his eyes were opened, he felt ready to go mad with horror. He could not so easily lose his belief in what had so long been the centre of his life, and to his last hour imagined that the moment had not passed. In times of doubt he gave himself up to drink, which drove away his depression with its vile, stupefying fumes. In fact he did not know how necessary his wife was to him at that time. She was a living pretext, and in reality my stepfather became almost insane over the idea that when he buried his wife *who had ruined* him all would go well again. My poor mother did not understand him. Like a regular dreamer, she broke down at the first step into hostile reality; she became hot-tempered, bitter, shrewish. She was continually quarrelling with her husband, who took a sort of pleasure in tormenting her, and was continually egging him on to work. But my stepfather's blind obsession, his fixed idea, his craze, made him almost inhuman and unfeeling. He only laughed, and swore he would not touch his violin till the death of his wife, and he told her this with brutal frankness. My mother, who in spite of everything loved him passionately to the day of her death, could not endure such a life. She became permanently ill and suffering, lived continually on the rack, and in addition to all this misery, the whole anxiety of maintaining the family fell upon her alone. She took to preparing meals for persons who would come and fetch them. But her husband carried off all her money on the sly, and she was often compelled to send back empty dishes instead of dinner to those for whom she cooked. When B. visited us she was busy washing linen and remaking old clothes. We lived like this from hand to mouth in our garret.

B. was struck by the poverty of the family.

“I say, it’s all nonsense what you tell me,” he said to my stepfather. “It’s not a case of ruining your talent. She is keeping you, and what are you doing?”

“Oh, nothing,” answered my stepfather.

But B. did not know all my mother’s troubles yet. Her husband often brought home a regular rabble of ragamuffins and rowdies, and what scenes there were then!

B. spent a long time persuading his old comrade to reform. At last he told him if he wouldn’t mend his ways he, B., would not help him; he declared without beating about the bush that he would not give him money, because it would be spent on drink; and he asked him finally to play him something on the violin, that he might see what could be done for him. While my stepfather went for his violin, B. began secretly giving money to my mother, but she would not take it. It was the first time she had had to take charity. Then B. gave the money to me, and the poor woman melted into tears. My stepfather brought his violin, but asked for vodka, saying he could not play without it. They sent for vodka. He drank it, and began getting excited. “I will play you something of my own composition, because you are a friend,” he said to B., and he drew out from under a chest of drawers a thick dusty manuscript book.

“I wrote all that myself,” he said, pointing to the book. “There you shall see! It’s very different from your ballets, my boy.”

B. looked at a few pages without a word; then he opened the music he had with him, and asked Yefimov to lay aside his own composition for the time and to play something of what he had brought.

My stepfather was a little offended; however, afraid of losing a powerful friend, he did as B. told him. B. perceived that his old friend had really worked and made much progress since they had parted, though he did boast that he hadn’t touched the violin since his marriage. The joy of my poor mother was worth seeing. She looked at her husband and was proud of him again. The kind-hearted B., genuinely delighted, determined to set my stepfather on his feet again. Even then he had powerful connections, and promptly began recommending his poor friend and asking for help for him, making him promise beforehand that he would behave himself. And meanwhile at his own expense he rigged him out in better clothes, and took him to see several prominent persons upon whom the appointment he wanted to get for him depended. The fact was that Yefimov’s bravado was

only in words, and he seems to have gladly accepted his old friend's proposition. B. told me that the flattery and cringing obsequiousness with which my stepfather tried to conciliate him, from fear of losing his favour, made him feel ashamed. Yefimov realised that he was being put on the right path, and even left off drinking.

At last a place was found for him in the orchestra of a theatre. He stood the test well, for in one month of diligence and hard work he regained all that he had lost in a year and a half of idleness, and he promised to work for the future and be punctual in the discharge of his new duties. But the position of my mother and me was not in the least improved. My stepfather did not give my mother a farthing of his salary; he spent it all on himself, eating and drinking with his new companions, of whom he soon had a regular circle. He associated chiefly with the theatre attendants, chorus singers, supers — in short, with people amongst whom he could be first; and he avoided men of real talent. He succeeded in inspiring in them a peculiar respect for himself; he at once impressed upon them that he was an unrecognised genius, that he had been ruined by his wife, and finally that their conductor knew nothing at all about music. He laughed at all the players in the orchestra, at the selection of plays that were produced, and even at the composers of the operas they played. Finally, he propounded a new theory of music; in short, he made all the orchestra sick of him. He quarrelled with his superiors and with the conductor, was rude to the manager, gained the reputation of being the most troublesome, the most nonsensical, and at the same time the most worthless person, and made himself insufferable to everybody.

And indeed it was extremely strange to see such an insignificant man, such a poor and useless performer and careless musician, with such immense pretensions, with such boastfulness and swagger, with such an overbearing manner.

It ended in my stepfather's quarrelling with B., inventing the most horrible slander, the most disgusting calumny against him, and circulating it as authentic fact. After six months of desultory work he was discharged from the orchestra, for drunkenness and negligence in the discharge of his duties. But he still hung round the place. He was soon seen in his old rags, for his decent clothes were all sold or pawned. He took to visiting his former associates, regardless of whether they were pleased to see him or not; he spread spiteful gossip, babbled nonsense, wept over his hard lot, and

invited them all to come and see his wicked wife. Of course there were people found to listen, people who took pleasure in giving drink to the discharged musician, and making him talk all sorts of nonsense. Besides, he always talked wittily and cleverly, and interspersed his talk with biting sarcasm and cynical sallies which pleased listeners of a certain class. He was taken for something like a crazy buffoon, whom it was sometimes pleasant to set talking to pass an idle hour. They liked teasing him by talking before him of some new violinist who had come to Petersburg. When he heard this, Yefimov's face fell, he grew depressed and would begin inquiring who had come, and who was this new celebrity, and at once began to feel jealous of his fame. I believe that this was the beginning of his real permanent madness — the fixed idea that he was the finest violinist, at least in Petersburg, but that he was persecuted by fate and ill-used, that owing to various intrigues he was not understood and left in obscurity. The last idea positively flattered him, for there are natures who are very fond of thinking themselves injured and oppressed, complaining aloud of it, or consoling themselves by gloating in secret over their unrecognised greatness. He could count over all the violinists in Petersburg on his fingers, and according to his notions could not find a rival in any one of them. Connoisseurs and musical amateurs who knew the poor crazy fellow liked to talk before him of some celebrated violinist so as to set him talking. They liked his malice, his biting remarks, they liked the apt and clever things he said as he criticised the playing of his supposed rivals. Often they did not understand him, but they were convinced that no one else could hit off the musical celebrities of the day so neatly and with such smart caricature. Even the musicians at whom he laughed were a little afraid of him, for they knew his biting wit. They recognised the aptness of his attacks and the justice of his criticism when there was something to find fault with. People grew used to seeing him in the corridors of the theatre and behind the scenes. The attendants let him pass unquestioned as though he were someone indispensable, and he became something like a Russian Thersites. This manner of life lasted for two or three years, but at last he bored everyone in this latter pose as well. His complete ostracism followed, and for the last two years of his life my stepfather seemed to have vanished entirely and was seen nowhere. B., however, met him on two occasions, but in such a pitiful plight that compassion once more got the upper hand of his repugnance. He called out his name, but my stepfather was offended and

affected not to have heard him, pulled his old battered hat over his eyes and passed by. At last, on the morning of one of the chief holidays, B. was informed that his old friend Yefimov had come with his greetings. B. went out to him. Yefimov was drunk, and began making extremely low bows almost down to the ground, murmured something inarticulate, and obstinately refused to go into the room. What his behaviour was meant to convey was: “How should poor wretches like us associate with great people like you? the flunkey’s place is good enough for the likes of us; just to greet you on a holiday, we make our bow and take ourselves off.” In fact, it was all horrid, stupid, and revoltingly nasty. From that time B. did not see him again, till the catastrophe by which this miserable, morbid, and delirious life was ended. It ended strangely. This catastrophe is closely interwoven not only with the earliest impressions of my childhood, but with my whole life. This is how it came to pass. But I ought first to explain what my childhood was like, and what this man, whose image is so painfully reflected in my earliest impressions, and who was the cause of my mother’s death, meant to me.

CHAPTER II

I BEGIN to remember myself very late, not till I was nearly line years old. I don’t know how it was, but everything what happened to me before that age has left no impression I can recall now. But from the time I was eight and a half I remember everything very distinctly, day by day, without a break, as though everything that happened then had occurred not longer ago than yesterday. It is true I can, as though in a dream, remember something earlier — a little lamp always burning in a dark corner before an old-fashioned ikon; then my being once kicked in the street by a horse, from which, as I was told afterwards, I lay ill in bed for three months; then, too, during that illness my waking up at night beside my mother with whom I was sleeping, and being suddenly terrified by my sick dreams, the stillness of the night, and the mice scratching in the corner, and trembling with terror all night, huddling under the bedclothes but not daring to wake my mother, from which I conclude that my fear of her was greater than any other terror. But from the minute when I began to be conscious of myself I developed rapidly, surprisingly, and was terribly capable of receiving many quite unchildlike impressions. Everything became clear before my eyes, everything became intelligible to me extremely quickly. The time from which I begin to remember my feelings well made a vivid and sorrowful impression on me; this impression was repeated every day afterwards and grew stronger every day; it threw a strange and gloomy colour over the whole time I lived with my parents, and over the whole of my childhood too.

It seems to me now that I became suddenly conscious, as though awaking from deep sleep (though at the time, of course, the change cannot have been so startling). I found myself in a big room with a low-pitched ceiling, stuffy and unclean. The walls were coloured a dirty grey tint; in the corner stood a huge Russian stove; the windows looked out into the street, or more accurately, on to the roof of the house opposite, and were low and broad, like chinks. The window-sills were so high from the floor that I remember — I had to push the table up, set a stool on it, and so clamber up to the window, in which I was very fond of sitting when there was no one at home. From our room one could see half the town; we lived just under the roof of a very huge six-storey house. Our furniture consisted of a relic of a sofa with the stuffing coming out, covered with American leather and coated with dust, a plain white table, two chairs, my mother’s bed, in the

corner a little cupboard with things in it, a chest of drawers which always stood tilted to one side, and a torn paper screen.

I remember that it was dusk; everything was in disorder and had been flung about — brushes, rags, our wooden bowls and spoons, a broken bottle, and I don't know what else besides. I remember that my mother was intensely excited and was crying about something. My stepfather was sitting in a corner in the tattered frock-coat he always wore. He said something sarcastic, which made her angrier than ever, and then brushes and bowls began flying about again. I burst out crying, I began screaming and rushed at them both. I was in a terrible panic, and put my arms round my stepfather to shield him. God knows why, but it seemed to me that my mother had no reason to be angry with him, that he was not to blame; I wanted to beg forgiveness for him, to bear any punishment for his sake. I was dreadfully frightened of my mother, and imagined that everyone else was equally afraid of her. At first my mother was astonished, then she took me by the hand and dragged me away behind the screen. I knocked my arm against the bedstead rather painfully, but my terror was greater than the pain and I did not even wince. I remember, too, that my mother began hotly and bitterly saying something to my father and pointing at me. (I will henceforward call him my father, as it was only much later that I learned that he was not related to me.) The whole scene lasted about two hours and, quivering with suspense, I did my very utmost to guess how it would end. At last the quarrel subsided, and my mother went out. Then my father called me, kissed me, stroked my head, took me on his knee, and I nestled closely, sweetly to his bosom. It was perhaps the first caress I had ever received from either parent, and perhaps that is why I began to remember everything so distinctly from that time. I observed, too, that I had gained my father's favour by defending him; and the idea occurred to me, I believe for the first time, that he had a great deal to put up with, and suffered at my mother's hands. From that time this idea was always with me, and made me more indignant every day.

From that moment I began to feel a boundless love for my father; but a strange sort of love, not a childlike feeling. I should say that it was rather a compassionate, *motherly* feeling, if such a definition of my love were not rather absurd as applied to a child. My father always seemed to me so much to be pitied, so persecuted, so crushed, such a victim, that it seemed to me a terrible and unnatural thing not to love him passionately, not to comfort him

and be kind to him, not to do one’s utmost for him. But I don’t understand to this day how the idea entered my head that my father was such a victim, the most unhappy man in the world! Who had instilled that idea into me? In what way could a child such as I was have any understanding of his failures? But I did understand them, though I interpreted them and changed them in my imagination; but to this day I cannot conceive how this impression was formed. Perhaps my mother was too severe with me, and I attached myself to my father as a creature suffering together with me from the same cause.

I have already described my first awakening from the sleep of childhood, the first stirrings of life in me. My heart was wounded from the first moment, and my development began with inconceivable and exhausting rapidity. I could no longer be satisfied with external impressions alone. I began to think, to reason, to notice, but this noticing began so unnaturally early, that my imagination could not but interpret in its own way what was noticed, and I found myself all at once in a world apart. Everything around me began to be like the fairy tale which my father used often to tell me, and which I could not but take for the holy truth. A strange idea arose in me. I became fully aware — though I don’t know how it came about — that I was living in a strange home, and that my parents were utterly unlike the other people I had chanced to meet at that time. Why is it, I wondered, why is it I see other people unlike my parents even in appearance? How is it that I have noticed laughter on other faces, and how is it that I was at once struck by the fact that in our corner they never laughed, they never rejoiced? What force, what cause drove me, a child of nine, to look about me so diligently and listen to every word uttered by the people I chanced to meet on the stairs, or in the street when, covering my rags with my mother’s old jacket, I went out in the evening with a few coppers to buy a few ha’p’orths of sugar, tea, or bread? I understood — and I don’t remember how I came to — that there was everlasting, unbearable sorrow in our garret. I racked my brains trying to guess why it was so, and I don’t know who helped me to solve the riddle in my own way; I blamed my mother and accepted her as my father’s evil genius; and I repeat, I don’t know how so monstrous an idea could have taken shape in my brain... And the more attached I became to my father, the more I grew to hate my mother. The memory of all this is a deep and bitter anguish to me to this day. Here is another incident, which did even more than the first to strengthen my strange devotion to my father. About nine

o’clock one evening my mother sent me out to the shop for some yeast. My father was not at home. On my way back I fell down in the street and spilt the whole cupful. My first thought was, how angry my mother would be. At the same time I felt a horrible pain in my left arm, and could not get up. Passers-by stopped round me; an old woman began picking me up, and a boy running by hit me on the head with a key. At last I was set upon my feet. I picked up the pieces of the broken cup and walked on staggering, hardly able to put one leg before the other. Suddenly I caught sight of my father. He was standing in a crowd before a grand house that was opposite our lodging. This house belonged to people of consequence and was brilliantly lighted up; a great number of carriages had driven up to the entrance, and strains of music floated down from the windows into the street. I clutched my father by the skirt of his frock-coat, pointed to the pieces of the broken cup, and with tears began saying that I was afraid to go in to mother. I felt somehow sure that he would stand up for me. But why was I convinced of it? Who had suggested to me, who had instilled into me that he loved me more than my mother did? Why was it I approached him without fear? He took me by the hand, began comforting me, then said that he wanted to show me something, and lifted me up in his arms. I could not see anything, for he took me by my bruised arm and it hurt me frightfully; but I did not cry out for fear of wounding him. He kept asking me whether I saw something. I did my utmost to answer so as to please him, and said that I could see red curtains. When he wanted to carry me to the other side of the street nearer to the house, I suddenly, I don’t know why, began crying, hugging him, and entreating him to make haste and take me up to mother. I remember that my father’s caresses were bitter to me at the time, and I could not bear the thought that one of the two people I so longed to love loved me and was kind to me, while I dared not go to the other and was afraid. But my mother was scarcely angry at all, and sent me to bed at once. I remember that the pain in my arm, growing more and more acute, made me feverish. Yet I was particularly happy that it had all gone off so well, and dreamed all night of the house with the red curtains.

And when I woke next morning my first thought, my first care, was the house with the red curtains. As soon as my mother had gone out I clambered up to the little window and began looking at it. The house had long ago excited my childish curiosity. I liked looking at it particularly in the evening, when the street was lighted up, and when the crimson red

curtains behind the plate-glass windows of the brightly lighted house began to gleam with a peculiar blood-red glow. Sumptuous carriages with lovely proud horses were continually driving up to the front door, and everything attracted my curiosity: the clamour and bustle at the entrance, and the different coloured lamps of the carriages, and the grandly dressed women who arrived in them. All this took, in my childish imagination, an air of royal magnificence and fairytale enchantment. Now since my meeting with my father before the grand house it became doubly marvellous and interesting. Now strange conceptions and theories began to stir in my excited imagination. And I am not surprised that, between two such strange people as my father and mother, I became such a strange, fantastic child. I was peculiarly affected by the contrast of their characters. I was struck, for instance, by the fact that my mother was continually working and worrying to gain our poor livelihood, was continually reproaching my father that she was the only one to toil for us all; and I could not help asking myself the question: why was it my father did not help her at all, why was it that he lived like a stranger in our home? One or two words dropped by my mother gave me a notion about this, and with some astonishment I learned that my father was an artist (that word I retained in my memory), that my father was a man of genius; the notion that an artist was a special sort of man, unlike others, shaped itself immediately in my imagination. Possibly my father’s behaviour led me to that reflection; perhaps I had heard something which now has escaped my memory; but the meaning of my father’s words uttered before me on one occasion with peculiar feeling was strangely intelligible to me. The words were: “The time would come when he would not be in poverty, when he would be a gentleman and wealthy; and, in fact, he would rise again when my mother died.” I remember that at first I was fearfully frightened at those words. I could not stay in the room, I ran out into our cold passage and there burst into sobs, with my elbows on the window-sill and my face in my hands. But afterwards, when I had pondered continually over it, when I had grown used to my father’s horrible desire, my wild imagination came to my assistance. Yes, I could not long remain in the agony of uncertainty, and absolutely had to fix upon some supposition. And so, I don’t know how it all began at first — but in the end I fastened upon the idea that when my mother died, my father would leave this dreary garret and would go away somewhere with me. But where? Up to the last I could not clearly picture. I remember only that everything with which I could

beautify the place to which we were going (and I made up my mind for certain that we were going together), everything brilliant, luxurious and magnificent I could create in my wild imagination — all this was brought into play in these daydreams. I fancied that we should at once become rich; I should not have to go on errands to the shops (which was very hard for me, because the children living in the next house tormented me whenever I went out, and I was dreadfully afraid particularly when I was carrying milk or oil and knew that if I spilt it I should be severely punished); then in my dreams I decided that my father would at once get new clothes, that we should go to live in a splendid house. And here the grand house with the red curtains, and my meeting near it with my father who wanted to show me something in it, came to the assistance of my imagination, and it followed immediately in my conjectures that we should move into that house and should live in it in perpetual bliss, keeping a sort of perpetual holiday. From that time forth I used to look out of window in the evenings with intense curiosity at that house which seemed to me enchanted, recalling the crowd of visitors more grandly dressed than I had ever seen before; I imagined those strains of sweet music floating out of the windows, and watched the shadows flitting on the window curtains, and kept trying to guess what was going on there, and it always seemed to me that over there it was paradise and a perpetual holiday. I grew to hate our poor abode, the rags in which I went about; and one day when my mother scolded me and told me to get down from the window, to which I had climbed up as usual, the idea came into my head at once that she did not want me to look at that house, that she did not want me to think of it, that she disliked the thought of our happiness, that she wanted to prevent it... I looked at my mother intently and suspiciously all that evening.

And how could such unfeeling callousness in regard to a creature so continually suffering as my mother have arisen in me? It is only now that I understand what a misery her life was, and I cannot think of her martyrdom without pain. Even then in the dark period of my strange childhood, in the period of this unnatural development, my heart often ached from pain and pity — and uneasiness, bewilderment and doubt lay heavily on my soul. Even then conscience was rising up within me, and often with distress and misery I felt my injustice towards my mother. But we had somehow become estranged from one another, and I cannot remember ever being affectionate

to her. Now even the most trifling recollection lacerates and tears at my heart.

I remember once (of course what I am describing now is trivial, paltry, coarse, but it is just such reminiscences which torture me especially, and are imprinted upon my memory more poignantly than anything), one evening when my father was not at home, my mother sent me to the shop to buy her tea and sugar, but she kept hesitating, unable to decide, and counting over her coppers — the pitiful sum she could spend. She was calculating, I think, for half an hour, and seemed still unable to reckon it to her satisfaction. Moreover, there were moments when probably she sank into a sort of stupor. As I remember now, she kept talking on, reckoning in low measured tones, as though dropping her words accidentally; her lips and her cheeks were pale, her hands always trembled, and she always kept shaking her head when she was thinking in solitude.

“No, no need,” she said, looking at me. “I had better go to bed. Eh? Are you asleep, Nyetochka?”

I did not answer; then she lifted up my head and looked at me, so gently, so caressingly, her face lighted up and glowed with such a motherly smile, that my heart ached and began beating fast. Besides, she had called me Nyetochka, which meant that she was feeling particularly fond of me. She had invented that name herself, lovingly transforming my name Anna into the diminutive Nyetochka, and when she called me that, it meant that she felt affectionate. I was touched, I longed to hug her, to nestle up to her and weep with her. And for a long time she stroked my head, poor woman, perhaps mechanically in the end, forgetting that she was fondling me, while she kept repeating: “My child, Anneta, Nyetochka.” The tears were gushing from my eyes, but I made an effort and controlled myself. I was somehow stubborn in not displaying my feelings before her, though I was inwardly distressed. But that could not have been natural hard-heartedness in me. She could not have so turned me against her simply by her severity to me. No! I was corrupted by my fantastic exclusive love for my father.

I sometimes woke at night in my short little bed under the chilly quilt, and I was always frightened. Half asleep I remembered how, not long ago, when I was smaller, I slept with my mother and was not so frightened when I woke up at night; I had only to nestle up to her, shut my eyes and hug her tight, and I would go to sleep again at once. I still felt as though I could not help loving her in secret. I have noticed since that many children are

abnormally unfeeling, and if they love anyone they love that one exclusively. That is how it was with me.

Sometimes there would be a deathlike silence in our garret for a whole week. My father and mother were weary of quarrelling, and I lived between them as before, always silent, always brooding, always fretting and always struggling to arrive at something in my dreams. Watching them I fully grasped their attitude to one another. I understood the obscure never-ending antagonism between them, understood all the sorrow and all the stupefying influences of the disordered existence which had made our garret its home. Of course, I understood it without grasping cause or effect, I understood it, of course, only as far as I was capable of understanding. Sometimes on the long winter evenings, huddled in some corner, I would watch them eagerly for hours together and gaze into my father's face, trying all the while to guess what he was thinking about, what was interesting him. Then I was impressed and frightened by my mother. She kept walking up and down the room without stopping, for hours at a time, often even at night, in the attacks of sleeplessness from which she suffered; she would walk up and down whispering to herself as though she were alone in the room, flinging wide her arms or folding them across her bosom, or wringing her hands in terrible, never-ending misery. Sometimes tears streamed down her cheeks, tears which perhaps she herself did not understand. She was suffering from a very complicated disease which she neglected entirely.

I remember that I became more and more oppressed by my solitude and the silence I did not dare to break. I had been for a whole year living a conscious life, always thinking, dreaming and tormented in secret by unintelligible, obscure impulses which had suddenly sprung up in me. I was as wild as though I were in a forest. At last my father was the first to notice me; he called me to him and asked me why I stared at him so. I don't remember what answer I made. I remember he seemed to reflect, and said at last that next day he would bring me an alphabet and teach me to read. I looked forward to this alphabet with impatience and dreamed about it all night, with no clear idea what an alphabet was. At last next day my father really did begin to teach me. Grasping in a couple of words what was required of me, I learned rapidly, for I knew I should please him by doing so. This was the happiest time of my life then. When he praised me for my quickness, patted me on the head and kissed me, I began crying with delight at once. Little by little my father began to be fond of me; I grew bold

enough to talk to him, and often we talked together for an hour without weariness, though sometimes I did not understand a word of what he said to me. But I was somehow afraid of him, afraid he might think I was dull with him, and so I did my very best to pretend to understand everything. To sit with me in the evenings became at last a habit with him. As soon as it began to get dark and he came home, I went to him at once with my reading-book. He would make me sit down on a little stool facing him, and after the lesson he would begin to read me a book. I did not understand a word of it, but I laughed continually, blinking to please him very much by doing so. I certainly did interest him, and it amused him to see my laughter. About this time, he began one evening telling me a story. It was the first story it had been my lot to hear. I sat as though spellbound, and burning with impatience as I followed the story, I was carried away to some other realm as I listened to him, and by the end of the tale I was in a perfect rapture. It was not that the story affected me so greatly, no; but I took it all for truth, at once gave full rein to my fertile fancy, and mixed up reality with fiction. The house with the red curtains, too, at once rose before my imagination; then, I don't know in what way, my father who told me the story appeared as a character acting in it, as well as my mother who seemed to be preventing us going, I don't know where, and last, or rather first, I myself, with my marvellous day-dreams, with my fantastic brain full of wild impossible phantoms, took a part in it, too. All this was so muddled together in my head that it soon turned into a formless chaos, and for a time I lost all touch, all feeling of the present, of the actual, and lived in an unreal world. At that time I was dying with impatience to speak to my father of what was awaiting us in the future, what he was himself expecting, and where he would take me with him when at last we should leave our garret. For my part I was convinced that all this would soon come to pass, but how and in what form all this would be I could not tell, and worried myself racking my brains over it. At times — and it would happen particularly in the evenings — it seemed to me that in another minute father would beckon me on the sly, and call me out into the passage; unseen by my mother I would snatch up my reading-book as I went, and also our picture, a wretched lithograph which had been hanging unframed on the wall from time immemorial, and which I was quite determined to take with us, and we should run away in secret and never come back home to mother again. One day when mother was not at home I chose a moment when father was in a particularly good

humour — that happened to him when he had just drunk wine — went up to him and began speaking about something with the intention of immediately turning the conversation to my treasured secret; and hugging him tight with a throbbing heart, frightened as though I were going to speak of something mysterious and terrible, I began, speaking disconnectedly and faltering over every word, to ask him: where we were going, whether it would be soon, what we should take with us, how we should live, and finally whether we were going to live in the house with the red curtains?

“House? Red curtains? What do you mean? What nonsense are you talking, silly?”

Then, more frightened than ever, I began explaining to him that when mother died we should not go on living in the garret, that he would take me away somewhere, that we should both be rich and happy, and assured him at last that he had promised me all this. And as I did so I was fully persuaded that my father really had spoken of it before, anyway I fancied it was so.

“Your mother? Dead? When your mother is dead?” he repeated, looking at me in amazement, changing his countenance somewhat, and knitting his thick grizzled eyebrows. “What are you saying, poor, foolish child?”

Then he began scolding me, and told me over and over again that I was a silly child, that I did not understand anything... and I don’t remember what else, but he was very much upset.

I did not understand a word of his reproaches, I did not understand how it wounded him that I had listened to what he had said to my mother in anger and intense misery, had remembered his words and had brooded over them by myself. Whatever he was at that time, however far his own madness had gone, yet all this must naturally have been a shock to him. Yet though I did not understand why he was angry, it made me horribly sad and miserable; I began to cry; it seemed to me that all that was awaiting us was so important that a silly child like me must not dare to talk of it. Moreover, although I did not understand this at the first word, yet I felt in an obscure way that I had wronged my mother. I was overcome by dread and horror, and doubt crept into my heart. Then, seeing that I was crying and miserable, he began comforting me, wiped away my tears with his sleeve, and told me not to cry. We sat for a little time in silence, however; he frowned and seemed to be pondering something, then began speaking to me again; but however much I tried to attend, everything he said seemed to me extremely

obscure. From some words of that conversation which I have remembered to this day, I conclude that he explained to me that he was a great artist, that nobody understood him, and that he was a man of great talent. I remember, too, that, asking whether I understood, and receiving, of course, a satisfactory answer, he made me repeat “of talent”, at which he laughed a little, for perhaps in the end it struck him as funny that he should have talked with me of a matter so important to him.

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Karl Fyodoritch, and I laughed and grew cheerful again when father, pointing to him, said to me:

“Now Karl Fyodoritch, here, hasn’t a ha’p’orth of talent!”

This Karl Fyodoritch was a very interesting person. I had seen so few people at that period of my life that I could not possibly forget him. I can picture him now: he was a German whose surname was Meyer, he was born in Germany and had come to Russia, set upon getting into a ballet. But he was a very poor dancer, so he could not get taken on for any part in which dancing was necessary, and was only employed as a super in the theatres. He played various dumb parts such as one of the suite of Fortinbras, or one of those knights of Verona who to the number of twenty flourish cardboard daggers and shout all at once, “We will die for our king!” But certainly no actor in the world was more passionately devoted to his parts than Karl Fyodoritch. The most dreadful misfortune and sorrow of his life was that he could not get into a ballet. He put the art of the ballet above every other, and was in his way as devoted to it as my father was to the violin. He had made friends with my father when they were both employed at the theatre, and the unsuccessful dancer had never given him up since. They saw each other very often, and together bewailed their hard lot and that their talents were not recognised.

The German was the most sentimental, soft-hearted man in the world, and he cherished for my stepfather the most ardent and disinterested affection; but father, I fancy, was not particularly attached to him, and only put up with his company for lack of any other. Moreover, father was so exclusive that he could not see that the art of the ballet was an art at all, and this wounded the poor German to tears. Knowing his weak spot, he always touched upon it, and laughed at the luckless Karl Fyodoritch when the latter grew hot and excited trying to refute him. I heard a great deal about Karl Fyodoritch later on from B., who always called him the Nuremberg skipjack. B. told me a great deal about this friendship with my father; more

than once they met, and after drinking a little, shed tears over their fate, over the fact that they were not recognised. I remember such interviews, I remember also that, looking at the two eccentric creatures, I began whimpering too, though I did not know why. This always happened when mother was not at home; the German was dreadfully frightened of her, and would always stand outside in the passage waiting till someone went out to him, and if he heard that mother was at home he ran downstairs again at once. He always brought some German poetry with him, and became intensely excited reading it aloud to us; and then recited it, translated into broken Russian for our benefit. This greatly amused father, and I laughed till I cried. But once they got hold of something in Russian over which they were both very enthusiastic, so that they almost always read it over when they met. I remember that it was a drama in verse by some celebrated Russian writer. I knew the first few lines of this drama so well that when I came across it many years afterwards I recognised it without difficulty. This drama treated of the troubles of a great artist, Gennaro or Giacobi, who cried on one page: “I am not recognised!” and on another, “I am famous!” or, “I have no talent!” and a few lines farther on, “I have talent!” All ended very pathetically. The play was, of course, a very poor one; but strange to say, it affected in the most naive and tragic way the two readers, who found in the leading character a great resemblance to themselves. I remember that sometimes Karl Fyodoritch was so ecstatic that he would leap up from his seat, run into the opposite corner of the room, and urgently, insistently, with tears in his eyes, beg father and me, whom he always called “Mademoiselle”, at once upon the spot to judge between him and his fate and the public. Thereupon he would fall to dancing and executing various steps, crying out to us to tell him at once whether he was an artist or not, and whether anything could be said to the contrary — that is, that he had no talent. Father would at once grow merry, and wink at me on the sly as though to let me know that he would make fun of the German in a most amusing way. I was immensely diverted, but father would hold up his hand and I would control myself, choking with laughter. I cannot help laughing even now at the mere memory of it. I can see that poor Karl Fyodoritch now. He was a very little, extremely lean, grey-headed man, with a red hooked nose stained with snuff, and grotesque bow-legs; but in spite of that he seemed to be proud of their shape and wore tightly fitting trousers. When he stopped at the last caper in an attitude, holding out his hands to us and

smiling as dancers smile on the stage when they have finished their steps, father for some moments remained silent as though he could not make up his mind to pronounce judgment, and purposely left the unrecognised dancer in his attitude so that the latter began swaying from side to side on one leg, doing his utmost to preserve his balance. At last father would glance towards me with a very serious face, as though inviting me to be an impartial witness of his judgment, and at the same time the timid imploring eyes of the dancer were fastened upon me.

“No, Karl Fyodoritch, you haven’t done it!” father would say at last, pretending that it grieved him to utter the bitter truth.

Then a genuine groan broke from the chest of Karl Fyodoritch; but he recovered himself instantly, with still more rapid gesticulations begged our attention again, declared that he had been dancing on the wrong system, and besought us to criticise him once more. Then he ran off again to the other corner, and sometimes hopped so zealously that he knocked his head against the ceiling and bruised himself badly, but heroically bore the pain like a Spartan, again stopped in an attitude, again with a smile stretched out trembling hands to us, and again begged us to decide his fate. But father was relentless, and answered gloomily as before:

“No, Karl Fyodoritch, it seems it’s your fate: you’ve not done it!”

Then I could restrain myself no longer and broke into peals of laughter in which my father joined. Karl Fyodoritch noticed at last that we were laughing at him, turned crimson with indignation, and with tears in his eyes, with intense though comic feeling which made me feel miserable afterwards on the poor fellow’s account, said to father:

“You are a treacherous friend!”

Then he would snatch up his hat and run away from us, swearing by everything in the world that he would never come again. But these quarrels did not last long. A few days later he would come to see us again, and the reading of the celebrated drama would begin once more, once more tears would be shed, and once more the simple-hearted Karl Fyodoritch would ask us to judge between him and the public and his fate, only he would entreat us this time to judge seriously, as true friends should, and not to laugh at him.

One day mother sent me to the shop to make some purchase, and I came back carrying carefully the small silver change I had been given. As I went up the stairs I met my father, who was coming up from the yard. I laughed

to him because I could not restrain my feeling when I saw him, and bending down to kiss me, he noticed the silver money in my hand.... I had forgotten to say that I had studied the expression of his face so carefully that I could detect almost all his wishes at the first glance. When he was sad, I was racked with misery. He was most often and most acutely depressed when he had no money, and so could not get a drop of the drink to which he had accustomed himself. But at the moment when I met him on the stairs it seemed to me that something particular was passing in his mind. His lustreless eyes shifted uneasily; for the first moment he did not notice me; but when he saw the shining coins in my hand, he suddenly flushed, then turned pale, stretched out his hand to take the money from me, then at once drew it back. Evidently there was a struggle going on within him. Then apparently he mastered himself, told me to go upstairs, went down a few steps, but suddenly stopped and hurriedly called me. He was very much confused.

“Listen, Nyetochka,” he said; “give me that money. I’ll give it to you back. You will give it to Daddy, won’t you? You are a good little thing, Nyetochka.”

I felt that I had known this was coming. But for the first instant, the thought of mother’s anger, timidity, and, above all, an instinctive shame on my own account and my father’s restrained me from giving him the money. He saw that in a flash, and said hastily:

“Oh, you needn’t, you needn’t!...”

“No, no, Daddy, take it; I will say I lost it, that the children next door took it.”

“Oh, very well, very well; I knew you were a clever girl,” he said, smiling with quivering lips, no longer concealing his delight when he felt the money in his hands. “You are a kind girl, you are my little angel! There, let me kiss your hand.”

Then he seized my hand and would have kissed it, but I quickly pulled it away. I was overcome by a sort of pity, and began being more and more agonisingly ashamed. I ran upstairs in a sort of panic, abandoning my father without saying good-bye to him. When I went into the room my cheeks were burning and my heart was throbbing with an overwhelming sensation I had never known till then. However, I had the boldness to tell my mother that I had dropped the money in the snow and could not find it. I expected a beating at least, but it did not come off. Mother certainly was beside herself

with distress at first, for we were dreadfully poor. She began scolding me, but at once seemed to change her mind and left off, only observing that I was a clumsy careless girl, and that it seemed I did not love her much since I took so little care of her property. This observation hurt me more than a beating would have done. But mother knew me. She had noticed my sensibility, which often reached the pitch of morbid irritability, and thought by bitter reproaches for not loving her to impress me more strongly and make me more careful in the future.

Towards dusk, when father was to come home, I waited for him as usual in the passage. This time I was in a terrible state of mind. My feelings were troubled by something which sickeningly tortured my conscience. At last my father came in, and I was greatly relieved at his coming. I seemed to think it would make me feel better. He had already been drinking, but on seeing me at once assumed a mysterious and embarrassed air; and drawing me aside into a corner, looking timidly towards our door, took out of his pocket a cake he had bought and began in a whisper bidding me never to take money again and hide it from mother, that that was bad and shameful and very wrong; that it had been done this time because Daddy needed the money very much, but that he would give it back; that I could say afterwards I had found it again. And to take from mother was shameful, and that for the future I must not dream of it, and that if I were obedient for the future he would buy me some cakes again. In the end he even added that I must feel for mother, that mother was so ill and so poor, that she worked for us all. I listened in terror, trembling all over, and tears rushed into my eyes. I was so overwhelmed that I could not say a word, and could not move from the spot. At last, he went into the room, told me not to cry nor say anything about it to mother. I noticed that he was fearfully upset himself. All the evening I was in a panic, and did not dare to look at him or go near him. He, too, evidently avoided my eyes. Mother was walking up and down the room and was talking to herself as usual, as though she were in a dream. That day she was feeling worse, she had had some sort of attack. At last my mental sufferings began to make me feverish. When night came on I could not go to sleep. I was tormented by delirious dreams. At last I could not bear it, and began crying bitterly. My sobs wakened my mother; she called to me and asked me what was the matter. I did not answer, but wept more bitterly. Then she lighted a candle, came up to me and began trying to soothe me, thinking I was frightened by something I had dreamed. “Oh, you silly little

thing,” she said, “you still cry when you have a bad dream. Come, give over!” And then she kissed me, saying I should sleep with her. But I would not, and dared not hug her or go to her. My heart was torn in unimaginable tortures. I longed to tell her all about it. I was on the point of doing so, but the thought of father and his prohibition restrained me. “Oh, you poor little Nyetochka!” said my mother, tucking me up in my bed and covering me up with her old jacket as she noticed that I was shivering with feverish chilliness. “I am afraid you will be an invalid like me!” Then she looked at me so mournfully that I could not bear her eyes, I frowned and turned away. I don’t remember how I fell asleep, but half awake I heard my poor mother trying for a long time to lull me to sleep. I had never suffered such anguish before. My heart ached painfully. Next morning I felt better. I talked to my father without referring to what had happened the day before, for I divined beforehand that this would please him. He immediately became very cheerful, for he had been frowning whenever he looked at me. Now a sort of joy, an almost childish satisfaction came over him at my light-hearted air. My mother soon went out, and then he could restrain himself no longer. He began kissing me, so that I was almost hysterically delighted and laughed and cried together. At last he said that he wanted to show me something very nice, that I should be very much pleased to see, for my being such a good and clever girl. Then he unbuttoned his waistcoat and took out a key, which he had hanging round his neck on a black cord. Then looking mysteriously at me as though he wanted to read in my face all the delight that in his opinion I must be feeling, he opened a chest and carefully took out of it a black box of peculiar shape which I had never seen before. He took up this box with a sort of timidity and was completely transformed; the laughter vanished from his face, and was succeeded by a solemn expression. At last he opened the mysterious box with a key and took out of it a thing which I had never seen before — a thing, at the first glance, of a very queer shape. He took it in his hands carefully, with a look of reverence, and said that this was his violin, his instrument. Then he began saying a great deal to me in a quiet solemn voice; but I did not understand him, and only retained in my memory the phrases I knew already — that he was an artist, that he was a genius, that he would one day play on the violin, and that at last we should all be rich and should attain some great happiness. Tears came into his eyes and ran down his cheeks. I was very much touched. At last he kissed his violin and gave it to me to kiss. Seeing that I

wanted to look at it more closely, he led me to my mother's bed and put the violin in my hand, but I saw that he was trembling with fear that I might break it. I took the violin in my hands and touched the strings, which gave forth a faint sound.

"It's music," I said, looking at father.

"Yes, yes, music," he repeated, rubbing his hands joyfully. "You are a clever child, a good child!"

But in spite of his praise and his delight, I saw that he was uneasy over his violin, and I was frightened too — I made haste to give it back to him. The violin was put back in the box with the same precaution, the box was locked up and put back in the chest; father stroked me on the head again, and promised to show me the violin every time I was as now, clever, good and obedient. So the violin dispelled our common sadness. Only in the evening as father was going out he whispered to me to remember what he had told me yesterday.

This was how I grew up in our garret, and little by little my love — no, I should rather say passion, for I do not know a word strong enough to express fully the overwhelming feeling for my father which was an anguish to myself — grew into something like a morbid obsession. I had only one enjoyment — thinking and dreaming of him; only one desire — to do anything that would give him the slightest satisfaction. How often have I waited on the stairs for him to come in, often shivering and blue with cold, simply to know one instant sooner of his arrival and to look at him a little sooner. I used to be almost frantic with delight when he bestowed the slightest caress on me. And meanwhile it often distressed me dreadfully that I was so obstinately cold with my poor mother; there were moments when I was torn by pity and misery as I looked at her. I could not be unmoved by their everlasting hostility, and I had to choose between them. I had to take the side of one or of the other, and I took the side of this half-crazy man, solely from his being so pitiful, so humiliated in my eyes, and from his having so incomprehensibly impressed my imagination from the beginning. But who can tell? Perhaps I attached myself to him because he was very strange even to look at, and not so grave and gloomy as my mother; because he was almost mad, and often there was something of buffoonery, of childish make- believe about him; and lastly, because I was less afraid of him and indeed had less respect for him than for my mother. He was, as it were, more on my level. Little by little I felt that the ascendancy was even

on my side, and that I dominated him a little, that I was necessary to him. I was inwardly proud of this, inwardly triumphant, and realising that I was necessary to him, even played with him at times. This strange devotion of mine was indeed not unlike being in love.... But it was not destined to last long: a short time afterwards I lost my father and mother. Their life ended in a terrible catastrophe which is deeply and painfully printed upon my memory. This is how it happened.

CHAPTER III

JUST at the time all Petersburg was excited by a great piece of news. The rumour went about that the famous S. had arrived in the town. The whole musical world of Petersburg was astir. Singers, actors, poets, artists, musical people, and even those who were not at all musical, but with modest pride declared that they did not know one note from another, rushed with eager enthusiasm to buy tickets. The hall could not seat a tenth of the enthusiasts who were able to pay twenty-five roubles for a ticket; but the European fame of S., his old age crowned with laurels, the unflagging freshness of his talent, the rumours that of late years he rarely took up the bow for the benefit of the public, the assertion that he was making the tour of Europe for the last time and would give up playing altogether afterwards, all produced an effect. In fact, the sensation was immense.

I have mentioned already that the arrival of any new violinist, of a celebrity of any note, had a most unpleasant effect on my stepfather. He was always one of the first to hasten to hear the new arrival, so as to discover quickly the full extent of his merits. He was often made really ill by the applause bestowed upon the newcomer, and was only pacified when he could discover defects in the new violinist's playing, and greedily circulated his opinion wherever he could. The poor madman recognised in the whole world but one musical genius, and that genius was, of course, himself. But the talk about the arrival of S. the musical genius had a shattering effect upon him. I must observe that for the previous ten years Petersburg had not heard a single famous musician, even of less distinction; consequently my father could have no conception of the play of European musicians of the first rank.

I have been told that at the first rumours of S.'s visit, my father was seen again behind the scenes of the theatre. He is said to have seemed extremely agitated, and to have inquired uneasily of S. and the approaching concert. It was a long time since he had been seen behind the scenes, and his appearance there made quite a sensation. Someone wanted to tease him, and with a challenging air said: "Now, Yegor Petrovitch, old man, you are going to hear something very different from ballet music, something that will make your life not worth living, I expect." I am told that he turned pale when he heard that jeer, but answered with an hysterical smile: "We shall see; far-off bells always ring sweet. S., you know, has only been in Paris, and the French have made a fuss of him, and we know what the French

are!” And so on. There was a sound of laughter round him; the poor fellow was offended, but, controlling himself, added that he would say nothing; however, that we should see, that we should know, that the day after tomorrow was not long to wait, and that all doubts would soon be solved.

B. tells that just before dusk the same evening he met Prince X., a well-known musical amateur, a man with a deep love and understanding of music. They walked along together, talking of the newly arrived star, when all at once at a street-turning B. caught sight of my father, who was standing before a shop window, looking intently at a placard in it with an announcement in big letters of S.’s concert.

“Do you see that man?” said B., pointing to my father.

“Who is he?” asked Prince X.

“You have heard of him already. That’s Yefimov, of whom I have talked to you more than once, and on whose behalf you interested yourself on one occasion.”

“Ah, that’s interesting,” said Prince X. “You talked a great deal about him. I am told he is very interesting. I should like to hear him.”

“That’s not worth while,” answered B., “and it’s painful. I don’t know how it would be with you, but he always rends my heart. His life is a terrible, hideous tragedy. I feel for him deeply, and however abject he may be, my sympathy for him is not extinct. You say, prince, that he must be interesting. That is true, but he makes too painful an impression. To begin with, he is mad, and then three crimes lie at his door, for besides his own he has ruined two existences — his wife’s and his daughter’s. I know him. It would kill him on the spot if he realised his crime. But the whole horror of it is that for the last eight years he has *almost* realised it, and for eight years he has been struggling with his conscience on the brink of recognising it, not almost, but fully.”

“You say he is poor?” said Prince X.

“Yes; but poverty is almost good fortune for him now, because it is an excuse. He can assure everyone now that poverty is the only thing that hinders him, and that if he were rich he would have leisure and no anxiety, and it would be seen at once how far he was a musician. He married with the strange hope that the thousand roubles his wife had could help to give him a standing. He behaved like a dreamer, like a poet, but he has always behaved like that all his life. Do you know what he has been continually saying for the last eight years? He asserts that his wife is responsible for his

poverty, that she hinders him. He has folded his hands and won't work. But if you were to take his wife away he would be the most miserable creature on earth. Here, he hasn't touched his violin for several years — do you know why? Because every time he takes the bow in his hand, he is inwardly forced to admit that he is no good, a nonentity, not a musician. Now while his fiddle is laid aside he has a faint remote hope that that is false. He is a dreamer. He thinks that all at once by some miracle he will become the most celebrated man in the world. His motto is: *'Aut Caesar, aut nihil,'* as though one could become Caesar all at once, in one minute. He thirsts for fame. And if such a feeling becomes the mainspring of an artist's activity, then he ceases to be an artist; for he has lost the chief instinct of the artist, that is, the love for art simply because it is art and nothing else, not fame. With S., on the other hand, it is quite the contrary: when he takes up his bow nothing in the world exists for him but music. Next to his violin money is the chief thing for him, and fame only comes third, I think. But he hasn't worried himself much about that.... Do you know what is absorbing that luckless fellow now?" added B., pointing to Yefimov. "He is engrossed by the most stupid, most trivial, most pitiful and most absurd anxiety in the world — that is, whether he is superior to S. or S. is superior to him — nothing less, for he is still persuaded that he is the foremost musician in the world. Convince him that he is not a musical genius, and I assure you he would die on the spot as though struck down by a thunderbolt; for it is terrible to part with a fixed idea to which one has sacrificed one's whole life, and which anyway rests on a deep and real foundation, for he had a genuine vocation at first."

"But it will be interesting to see what happens to him when he hears S.," observed Prince X.

"Yes," said B. thoughtfully. "But, no; he would recover at once; his madness is stronger than the truth, and he would at once invent some evasion."

"You think so," said Prince X.

At that moment they came up to my father. He was trying to pass them unnoticed, but B. stopped him and began speaking to him. B. asked him whether he would be at S.'s concert. My father answered indifferently that he did not know, that he had business of more importance than any concerts and any foreign celebrities; but, however, he would wait and see, and if he had an hour free — he might perhaps go in. Then he looked rapidly at B.

and Prince X. and smiled mistrustfully, then snatched at his hat, nodded, and walked by, saying he was in a hurry.

But even the day before, I was aware of my father's anxiety. I did not know exactly what it was that was worrying him, but I saw that he was terribly uneasy; even mother noticed it. She was extremely ill at the time, and could scarcely put one foot before the other. Father was continually coming in and going out. In the morning three or four visitors, old companions in the orchestra, came to see him; at which I was greatly surprised, as except Karl Fyodoritch we scarcely ever saw anyone, and all our acquaintances had dropped us since father had quite given up the theatre. At last Karl Fyodoritch ran in panting and brought a poster. I listened and watched attentively, and all this troubled me as much as though I alone were responsible for all this commotion and for the uneasiness I read on my father's face. I longed to understand what they were talking about, and for the first time I heard the name of S. Then I grasped that the sum of fifteen roubles at least was necessary in order to see this S. I remember, too, that father could not refrain from saying with a wave of his hand that he knew these foreign prodigies, these unique geniuses, he knew S. too; that they were all Jews running after Russian money, because the Russians in their simplicity would believe in any nonsense, and especially anything the French made a fuss about. I knew already what was meant by the words, *not a genius.* The visitors began laughing, and soon all of them went away, leaving father thoroughly out of humour. I realised that he was angry with S. for some reason, and to propitiate him and to distract his attention I went up to the table, took up the poster, began spelling it out and read aloud the name of S. Then laughing and looking towards father, who was sitting on a chair brooding, said: "I expect he is another one like Karl Fyodoritch: I expect he won't hit it off either." Father started as though he were frightened, tore the poster out of my hands, shouted at me, stamped, and snatching up his hat was about to go out of the room, but came back at once, called me out into the passage, kissed me, and with uneasiness with some secret dread began saying to me that I was a good, clever child, that he was sure I had not meant to wound him, that he was reckoning on me to do him a great service, but what it was exactly he did not say. Moreover, it was bitter to me to listen to him; I saw that his words and his endearments were not genuine, and all this had a shattering effect on me.

Next day at dinner — it was the day before the concert — father seemed utterly crushed. He was completely changed, and was incessantly looking at mother. At last, to my surprise, he actually began talking to mother. I was surprised, because he hardly ever said anything to her. After dinner he began being particularly attentive to me; he was continually on various pretexts calling me into the passage and, looking about him as though he were frightened of being caught, he kept patting me on the head, kissing me and telling me that I was a good child, that I was an obedient child, that he was sure I loved my Daddy and would do what he was going to ask me. All this made me unbearably miserable. At last, when for the tenth time he called me out into the passage, the mystery was explained. With a miserable, harassed face, looking away uneasily, he asked me whether I knew where mother had put the twenty-five roubles she had brought in the morning before. I was ready to die with terror when I heard this question. But at that moment someone made a noise on the stairs, and father, alarmed, abandoned me and ran out. It was evening when he came back, confused, sad, and careworn; he sat down in silence and began looking at me with something like joy in his face. A feeling of dread came over me, and I avoided his eyes. At last mother, who had been in bed all day, called me, gave me some coppers and sent me to the shop to buy tea and sugar. We rarely drank tea. Mother permitted herself this luxury, as it was for our means, only when she felt ill and feverish. I took the money, and as soon as I got into the passage set off to run as though I were afraid of being overtaken. But what I had foreseen happened: father overtook me in the street and turned me back to the stairs.

“Nyetochka,” he said in a shaking voice. “My darling! Listen: give me that money and to-morrow I’ll...”

“Daddy! Daddy!” I cried, falling on my knees and imploring him. “Daddy! I can’t! I mustn’t! Mother needs the tea... I mustn’t take it from mother, I mustn’t! I’ll get it another time.”

“So you won’t? you won’t?” he whispered in a sort of frenzy. “So you won’t love me? Oh, very well. I shall have nothing more to do with you, then. You can stay with mother, and I shall go away and shan’t take you with me. Do you hear, you wicked girl? Do you hear?”

“Daddy!” I cried, filled with horror. “Take the money. What can I do now!” I cried, wringing my hands and clutching at the skirts of his coat. “Mother will cry, mother will scold me again.”

Apparently he had not expected so much resistance, yet he took the money. At last, unable to endure my sobs and lamentations, he left me on the stairs and ran down. I went upstairs, but my strength failed me at the door of our garret; I did not dare to go in. Every feeling in me was revolted and shattered. I hid my face in my hands and ran to the window, as I had done when first I heard my father say he wished for my mother's death. I was in a sort of stupor, in a state of numbness, and kept starting as I listened to every sound on the stairs. As last I heard someone coming rapidly upstairs. It was he, I recognised his step.

"You are here?" he said in a whisper.

I flew to him.

"There," he said, thrusting the money into my hand; "there! Take it back. I am not your father now, do you hear? I don't care to be your father. You love mother more than me! So go to mother! But I don't want to have anything to do with you!" As he said this he pushed me away and ran downstairs again. Weeping, I flew to overtake him.

"Daddy! Dear Daddy! I will be obedient," I cried. "I love you more than mother. Take the money back, take it!"

But he did not hear me; he had vanished. All that evening I felt more dead than alive, and shivered as though in a fever. I remember mother said something to me, called me to her; I was hardly conscious, I could hear and see nothing. It ended in violent hysterics; I began crying and screaming; mother was frightened and did not know what to do. She took me into her bed, and I don't remember how I fell asleep, with my arms round her neck, trembling and starting with fright at every instant. The whole night passed like that. In the morning I woke up very late, mother was no longer in the room. At that time she went out every day to her work. There was someone with father, and they were both talking in loud voices. I had to wait till the visitor was gone; and when we were left alone I flew to my father and begged him, sobbing, to forgive me for what had happened the day before.

"But will you be a good girl as you were before?" he asked me grimly.

"Yes, Daddy, yes," I answered. "I will tell you where mother's money is put. It was lying yesterday in a box in the little chest."

"It was? Where?" he cried, starting, and got up from his chair. 'Where was it?"

"It's locked up, Father!" I said. "Wait a little: in the evening when mother goes to get change, for there are not coppers left, I saw."

“I must have fifteen roubles, Nyetochka. Do you hear? Only fifteen roubles! Get it me to-day; I will bring it all back to you to-morrow. And I will go directly and buy you some sugar-candy, I wall buy you some nuts... I will buy you a doll too... and to-morrow again, and I will bring you little treats every day if you will be a good girl.”

“You needn’t, Daddy, you needn’t! I don’t want treats. I won’t eat them, I shall give them you back!” I cried, choking with tears all of a sudden, for my heart seemed bursting. I felt at that moment that he had no pity for me, and that he did not love me because he saw how I loved him, but thought that I was ready to serve him for the sake of treats. At that moment I, a child, understood him through and through, and felt that that understanding had wounded me for ever, that I could not love him as before, that I had lost the old daddy. He was in a kind of ecstasy over my promise, he saw that I was ready to do anything for him, that I had done everything for him, and Gods knows how much that “everything” was to me then. I knew what that money meant to my poor mother, I knew that she might be ill with distress at losing it, and remorse was crying aloud in me and rending my heart. But he saw nothing; he thought of me as though I were a child of three, while I understood it all. His delight knew no bounds; he kissed me, tried to coax me not to cry, promised that that very day he would leave mother and go off somewhere — meaning, I suppose, to flatter the daydream that never left me. He took a poster out of his pocket, began assuring me that the man he was going to see to-day was his enemy, his mortal enemy, but that his enemies would not succeed. He was exactly like a child himself as he talked to me about his enemies. Noticing that I was not smiling as usual when he talked to me, and was listening to him in silence, he took up his hat and went out of the room, for he was in a hurry to go off somewhere; but as he went out he kissed me again and nodded to me with a smile, as though he were not quite sure of me, and, as it were, trying to prevent my changing my mind.

I have said already that he was like a madman; but that had been apparent the day before. He needed the money to get a ticket for the concert which was to decide everything for him. He seemed to feel beforehand that this concert was to decide his fate; but he was so beside himself that the day before he had tried to take those few coppers from me as though he could get a ticket with them. His strange condition showed itself even more distinctly at dinner. He simply could not sit still, and did not touch a morsel;

he was continually getting up from his seat and sitting down again, as though he were hesitating. At one moment he would snatch up his hat as though he were going off somewhere, then suddenly he became strangely absent-minded, kept whispering something to himself, then suddenly glanced at me, winked, made some sign to me as though impatient to get the money as soon as possible, and was angry with me for not having obtained it yet. My mother even noticed his strange behaviour, and looked at him in surprise. I felt as though I were under sentence of death. Dinner was over; I huddled in a corner and, shivering as though I were in a fever, counted the minutes to the hour when mother usually sent me to the shop. I have never spent more agonising hours in my life; they will live in my memory for ever. What feelings did I not pass through in my imagination! There are moments in which you go through more in your inner consciousness than in whole years of actual life. I felt that I was doing something wicked; he had himself helped my good instincts when, like a coward, he had thrust me into evil-doing the first time, and frightened by it had explained to me that I had done very wrong. How could he fail to see how hard it is to deceive an impressionable nature that had already felt and interpreted much good and evil? I understood, of course, what the horrible extremity was that drove him once more to thrust me into vice, to sacrifice my poor defenceless childhood, and risk upsetting my unstable conscience again. And now, huddled in my corner, I wondered to myself why he had promised me rewards for what I had made up my mind to do of my own accord. New sensations, new impulses, unknown till then, new questions rose up crowding upon my mind, and I was tortured by these questions. Then all at once I began thinking about mother; I pictured her distress at the loss of her last earnings. At last mother laid down the work which she was doing with an effort and called me. I trembled and went to her. She took some money out of the chest of drawers, and as she gave it me, she said: “Run along, Nyetochka, only God forbid that they should give you short change as they did the other day; and don’t lose it, whatever happens.” I looked with an imploring face at my father, but he nodded and smiled at me approvingly, and rubbed his hands with impatience. The clock struck six, and the concert was at seven. He had had much to suffer in those hours of suspense too.

I stopped on the stairs waiting for him. He was so excited and agitated that without any precaution he ran after me at once. I gave him the money; it was dark on the stairs and I could not see his face, but I felt that he was

trembling all over as he took the money. I stood as though turned to stone, and did not move from the spot. I only came to myself when he sent me upstairs again to fetch his hat.

“Daddy!... Surely... aren’t you coming with me?” I asked in a breaking voice, thinking of my last hope — his protection.

“No... you had better go alone... eh? Wait a minute, wait a minute,” he cried, catching himself up. “Wait a minute, I will get you something nice directly, only you go in first and bring my hat here.”

I felt as though an icy hand had been laid upon my heart. I shrieked, pushed him away and rushed upstairs. When I went into the room my face was full of horror, and if I had tried to say that I had been robbed of the money mother would have believed me. But I could say nothing at that moment. In a paroxysm of convulsive despair I threw myself across my mother’s bed and hid my face in ray hands. A minute later the door creaked timidly and father came in. He had come for his hat.

“Where is the money?” cried my mother, suddenly guessing that something extraordinary had happened. “Where is the money? Speak, speak!” Then she snatched me up from the bed and stood me in the middle of the room.

I stood mute with my eyes on the floor; I scarcely understood what was happening to me and what they were doing to me.

“Where is the money?” she cried again, leaving me and suddenly turning on father, who had caught up his hat. “Where is the money?” she repeated. “Ah! She has given it to you. Godless wretch! You have murdered me! You have destroyed me! So you will ruin her too? A child! Her? Her? No, you shall not go off like that!”

And in one instant she had flown to the door, locked it on the inside and taken the key.

“Speak! Confess!” she said to me in a voice scarcely audible from emotion. “Tell me all about it! Speak! Speak, or I don’t know what I shall do to you.”

She seized my hands and wrung them as she questioned me. At that instant I vowed to be silent and not say a word about father, but timidly raised my eyes to him for the last time.... One look, one word from him, such as I was expecting and praying for in my heart — and I should have been happy, in spite of any agony, any torture.... But, my God! With a callous threatening gesture he commanded me to be silent, as though I

could be afraid of any other threat at that moment! There was a lump in my throat, my breath failed me, my legs gave way under me, and I fell senseless on the floor.... I had a second nervous attack like the one the day before.

I came to myself when there was a sudden knock at the door of our garret. Mother unlocked the door, and saw a man in livery who, coming into the room and looking round in amazement at all three of us, asked for the musician Yefimov. My stepfather introduced himself. Then the footman gave him a note and announced that he came from B., who was at that moment at Prince X.'s. In the envelope lay an invitation ticket to S.'s concert.

The arrival of a footman in gorgeous livery who mentioned the name of Prince X. as his master, who had sent on purpose to fetch Yefimov, a poor musician — all this instantly made a great impression on my mother. I have mentioned already when describing her character that the poor woman still loved my father. And now in spite of eight years of perpetual misery and suffering her heart was still unchanged, she still could love him! God knows, perhaps at this moment she imagined a complete change in his fortunes. Even the faintest shadow of hope had an influence on her. How can one tell, perhaps she, too, was a little infected by her crazy husband's unshakable self-confidence. And indeed it would have been impossible that his self-confidence should not have had some influence on a weak woman, and on Prince X.'s attention she might instantly build a thousand plans for him. In an instant she was ready to turn to him again; she was ready to forgive him for all her life, even to overlook his last crime, the sacrifice of her only child, and in a rush of renewed enthusiasm, in a rush of new hope, to reduce that crime to an ordinary act, an act of cowardice to which he had been driven by poverty, his degraded life, and his desperate position. Everything with her was impulsive, and in an instant she had forgiveness and boundless compassion for her ruined husband.

My father began bustling about; he, too, was impressed by this attention from Prince X. and B. He turned straight away to mother, whispered something to her, and she went out of the room. She came back two minutes later, having changed the money, and father immediately gave a silver rouble to the messenger, who went away with a polite bow. Meanwhile mother, after going out for a minute, brought an iron, got out her husband's best shirt-front and began ironing it. She herself tied round his neck a white

cambric cravat which had been preserved from time immemorial in his wardrobe, together with his black — by now very shabby — dress-coat which had been made for him when he was in the orchestra of a theatre. When his toilet was complete, father took his hat, but as he was going out asked for a glass of water; he was pale, and sat down on a chair for a minute, feeling faint. I had recovered sufficiently to hand him the water; perhaps the feeling of hostility had stolen back again into mother's heart and cooled her first enthusiasm.

Father went away; we were left alone. I crouched in the corner, and for a long time watched my mother in silence. I had never before seen her in such excitement; her lips were quivering, her pale cheeks suddenly glowed, and from time to time she trembled all over. At last her misery began to find an outlet in complaining, in stifled sobs and lamentation.

"It is all my fault, my fault, wretched mother that I am!" she said, talking to herself. "What will become of her? What will become of her when I die?" she went on, standing still in the middle of the room, as though thunderstruck by the very thought. "Nyetochka! my child! My poor little child! Unhappy child!" she said, taking me by the hand and embracing me convulsively. "How will you be left after I am dead, when even now I can't educate you, look after you and watch over you as I ought? Ah, you don't understand me! Do you understand? Will you remember what I have just said to you, Nyetochka? Will you remember it in the future?"

"I will, mother, I will," I said, clasping my hands and beseeching her.

She held me tight in a long embrace, as though trembling at the very thought of parting from me. My heart was bursting.

"Mammy! Mammy!" I said, sobbing. "Why is it... Why is it you don't love Daddy?" and my sobs prevented my finishing.

A groan broke from her bosom. Then in a new rush of terrible misery she began walking up and down the room.

"My poor, poor child! And I did not notice how she was growing up; she knows, she knows all about it! My God! What an impression, what an example!" And again she wrung her hands in despair.

Then she came up to me and with frenzied love kissed me, kissed my hands, bathed them with tears, sought my forgiveness.... I have never seen such suffering.... At last she seemed exhausted, and fell into apathy. So passed a whole hour. Then she got up, weary and exhausted, and told me to go bed. I went off into my corner, wrapped myself up in the quilt, but could

not get to sleep. I was worried about her and I was worried about father. I awaited his return with impatience. I was possessed by a kind of terror at the thought of him. Half an hour later mother took a candle and came up to me to see whether I was asleep. To soothe her I shut my eyes tight and pretended to be asleep. After looking at me she went very quietly to the cupboard, opened it, and poured herself out a glass of wine. She drank it and went to sleep, leaving a candle alight on the table and the door unlocked, as she always did when father might come in late.

I lay in a sort of stupor, but sleep would not come to me.

As soon as I had closed my eyes, I woke up again trembling at some horrible vision. My misery grew more acute every minute. I wanted to cry out, but the scream died away in my breast. At last, late in the night, I heard our door open. I don't remember how long it was afterwards, but when I opened my eyes I saw father. It seemed to me that he was fearfully pale. He was sitting in a chair close to the door, and seemed to be lost in thought. There was a deathly stillness in the room. The guttering candle shed a mournful light over our abode.

I watched him a long time, but still father did not move from his seat; he was sitting motionless, still in the same position, with his head bowed, and his hands pressed rigidly against his knees. Several times I attempted to call to him, but could not. My state of numb stupor persisted. At last he suddenly came to himself, raised his head and got up from his chair. He stood for some minutes in the middle of the room as though he were making some decision; then suddenly went up to my mother's bed, listened, and assuring himself that she was asleep, went to the chest where he kept his violin.

He unlocked the chest, brought out the black violin case and put it on the table; then looked about him again. His eyes had a lustreless and wandering look, such as I had never seen in them before.

He was about to take up the violin, but at once leaving it went back and shut the door; then noticing the open cupboard, went stealthily to it, saw the glass and the wine, poured some out and drank it. Then for the third time he took up the violin, but for the third time put it down and went up to mother's bed. Rigid with terror, I watched to see what would happen.

He listened for a very long time, then put the quilt over her face and began feeling her with his hand. I started. He bent down once more and almost put his head to her, but when he got up the last time there seemed a

gleam of a smile on his fearfully white face. He quietly and carefully covered the sleeping figure with the quilt, covered her head, her feet and I began trembling with a terror I did not understand; I felt frightened for mother, I felt terrified by her deep sleep, and I looked with uneasiness at the immovable angular fine of her limbs under the quilt.... Like lightning the fearful thought flashed through me!

When he had finished all these preliminaries he went back to the cupboard again and drank off the rest of the wine. He was trembling all over as he went to the table. His face was unrecognisable, it was so white. Then he took up the violin again. I saw the violin and knew what it was, but now I expected something awful, terrible, monstrous.... I shuddered at the first note. Father began playing, but the notes came, as it were, jerkily, he kept stopping as though he were recalling something; at last with a harassed agonised face put down his bow and looked strangely at the bed. Something there still troubled him. He went up to the bed again.... I did not miss a single movement he made, and almost swooning with a feeling of horror, watched him.

All at once he began hurriedly groping for something, and again the same fearful thought flashed through me like lightning. I wondered why mother slept so soundly. How was it she did not wake when he touched her face with his hand? At last I saw him getting together all the clothes he could. He took mother’s pelisse, his old frock-coat, his dressing-gown, even the clothes that I had thrown off when I went to bed, so that he covered mother completely and hid her under the pile thrown on her. She still lay motionless, not stirring a limb.

She was sleeping soundly.

He seemed to breathe more freely when he had finished his task. This time nothing hindered him, but yet he was still uneasy. He moved the candle and stood with his face towards the door, so as not even to look towards the bed. At last he took the violin, and with a despairing gesture drew his bow across it.... The music began.

But it was not music.... I remember everything distinctly; to the last moment I remembered everything that caught my attention at the time. No, this was not music such as I have heard since. They were not the notes of the violin, but some terrible voice seemed to be resounding for the first time in our room. Either my impressions were abnormal and due to delirium, or my senses had been so affected by all I had witnessed and were prepared for

terrible and agonising impressions — but I am firmly convinced that I heard groans, the cry of a human voice, weeping. Utter despair flowed forth in these sounds; and at the end, when there resounded the last awful chord which seemed to combine all the horror of lamentation, the very essence of torment, of hopeless despair, I could not bear it — I began trembling, tears spurted from my eyes, and rushing at father with a fearful, despairing shriek, I clutched at his hands. He uttered a cry and dropped the violin.

He stood for a minute as though bewildered. At last his eyes began darting and straying from side to side, he seemed to be looking for something; suddenly he snatched up the violin, brandished it above me, and... another minute and he would perhaps have killed me on the spot.

“Daddy!” I shouted at him; “Daddy!”

He trembled like a leaf when he heard my voice, and stepped back a couple of paces.

“Oh, so you are still left! So it’s not all over yet! So you are still left with me!” he shouted, lifting me in the air above his shoulders.

“Daddy!” I cried again. “For God’s sake don’t terrify me! I am frightened! Oh!’’

My wail impressed him; he put me down on the ground gently, and for a minute looked at me without speaking, as though recognising and remembering something. At last, as though at some sudden revulsion, as though at some awful thought, tears gushed from his lustreless eyes; he bent down and began looking intently in my face.

“Daddy,” I said to him, racked by terror, “don’t look like that! Let us go away from here! Let us make haste and go away! Let us go, let us run away!”

“Yes, we’ll run away, we’ll run away. It’s high time. Come along, Nyetochka. Make haste, make haste!” And he rushed about as though he had only now grasped what he must do. He looked hurriedly around, and seeing mother’s handkerchief on the ground, picked it up and put it in his pocket. Then he saw her cap, and picked that up too and put it in his pocket, as though preparing for a long journey and putting together everything he would want.

I got my clothes on in an instant, and in haste I too began snatching up everything which I fancied necessary for the journey.

“Is everything ready, everything?” asked my father. “Is everything ready? Make haste! make haste!”

I hurriedly tied up my bundle, threw a kerchief on my head, and we were about to set off when the idea occurred to me that I must take the picture which was hanging on the wall. Father instantly agreed to this. Now he was quiet, spoke in a whisper, and only urged me to make haste and start. The picture hung very high up. Together we brought a chair, put a stool on it, and clambering on it, after prolonged efforts, took it down. Then everything was ready for our journey. He took me by the hand, and we had almost started when father suddenly stopped me. He rubbed his forehead for some minutes as though trying to remember something which had not been done. At last he seemed to find what he wanted; he felt for the key which lay under mother's pillow and began hurriedly looking for something in the chest of drawers. At last he came back to me and brought me some money he had found in the box.

"Here, take this, take care of it," he whispered to me. Don't lose it, remember, remember!"

At first he put the money in my hand, then took it back and thrust it in the bosom of my dress. I remembered that I shuddered when that silver touched my body, and it seemed that only then I understood what money meant. Now we were ready again, but all at once he stopped me again.

"Nyetochka!" he said to me, as though reflecting with an effort, "my child, I have forgotten.... What is it?... I can't remember.... Yes, yes, I have found it, I remember!... Come here, Nyetochka!"

He led me to the corner where the holy image stood, and told me to kneel down.

"Pray, my child, pray! You will feel better!... Yes, really it will be better," he whispered, pointing to the ikon, and looking at me strangely. "Say your prayers," he said in an imploring voice.

I dropped on my knees, and clasping my hands, full of horror and despair which by now had gained complete possession of me, I sank on the floor and lay there for some moments without breathing. I strained every thought, every feeling to pray, but tears overwhelmed me. I got up exhausted with misery. I no longer wanted to go with him, I was frightened of him. At last what harassed and tortured me burst out.

"Daddy," I said, melting into tears, "and Mammy?... What's the matter with Mammy? Where is she? Where's my Mammy?"

I could not go on, I wept bitterly.

He shed tears too, as he looked at me. At last he took me by the hand, led me up to the bed, swept away the pile of clothes and turned down the quilt. My God! she lay dead, already cold and blue. Almost senseless, I flung myself on her and threw my arms round her dead body. My father made me kneel down.

“Bow down to her, child!” he said. “Say good-bye to her....”

I bowed down. My father bowed down beside me. He was fearfully pale. His lips were trembling and whispering something.

“It wasn’t I, Nyetochka, it wasn’t I,” he said, pointing at the dead body with a trembling finger. “Do you hear? *It was not I, it was not my doing.* Remember, Nyetochka!”

“Daddy, let us go,” I whispered in terror, “it’s time!”

“Yes, it is time now, we ought to have gone long ago!” he said, gripping me tightly by the hand, in haste to get out of the room. “Now let us set off. Thank God, thank God, now it is all over!”

We went down the stairs; the drowsy porter unlocked the gate for us, looking at us suspiciously; and father, as though afraid he would question him, ran out of the gate first, so that I had difficulty in overtaking him. We went down our street and came out on the bank of the canal. Snow had fallen on the pavement overnight, and was coming down in tiny flakes now. It was cold, I was chilled to the bone, and ran along with father clutching convulsively at the skirts of his coat. His violin was under his arm, and he was continually stopping to prevent its slipping.

We walked for a quarter of an hour; at last he turned along the sloping pavement down to the edge of the canal and sat down on the farthest part. There was a hole cut in the ice two paces from us. There was not a sound around. Oh, God! How I remember to this day the terrible feeling that overpowered me! At last everything of which I had been dreaming for a whole year had come to pass. We had left our poor home. But was this what I was expecting, was it of this I was dreaming, was this the creation of my childish imagination, when I looked into the future for the happiness of him whom I loved with a passion so unlike a child’s? Above all, the thought of mother tortured me at that moment. Why had we left her alone, I wondered. We had abandoned her body like some useless thing. I remember that that harassed and tortured me more than anything.

“Daddy,” I began, unable to endure my agonising thoughts, “Daddy!”

“What is it?” he said sullenly.

“Why have we left Mammy there, Daddy? Why have we deserted her?” I asked, beginning to cry. “Daddy, let us go home again. Let us fetch someone to her.”

“Yes, yes,” he said, starting and getting up from the post as though some new idea had come into his mind, which settled all his doubts. “Yes, Nyetochka, it won’t do; we must go to Mother, she is cold there. You go to her, Nyetochka. It isn’t dark, there’s a candle there, don’t be frightened. Fetch someone to her and then come back to me; you go alone and I will wait for you here.... I won’t go away...”

I went at once, but I had scarcely reached the pavement when something seemed to stab me to the heart.... I turned round, and saw that he was already running in the opposite direction and was running away from me, leaving me alone, abandoning me at such a moment. I screamed as loud as I could and panic-stricken flew to overtake him. I gasped for breath; he ran faster and faster.... I lost sight of him. On the way I came upon his hat which he had lost in his flight. I picked it up and fell to running again. My breath failed me and my legs gave way under me. I felt as though something hideous were happening to me. It kept seeming to me that it was a dream, and at times I had the sensation I had had in dreams that I was running away from someone, but that my legs were giving way under me, that I was being overtaken and was falling senseless. An agonising sensation was rending my heart; I was sorry for him, my heart ached when I realised that he was running without an overcoat, without a hat away from me, away from his beloved child.... I wanted to overtake him simply to kiss him warmly once more, to tell him not to be afraid of me, to soothe him, to assure him that I would not run after him if he did not wish it, but would go back alone to mother. I made out at last that he had turned down a street. Running to it and turning down it I could still discern him before me. Then my strength failed me; I began crying and screaming. I remember that as I ran I knocked up against two passers-by, who stopped in the middle of the pavement and looked after us in amazement.

“Daddy, Daddy!” I cried for the last time, but I slipped on the pavement and fell at the gateway of a house. I felt my whole face bathed in blood. A moment later I lost consciousness.

I came to myself in a soft warm bed, and saw beside me kind welcoming faces which greeted my recovery with delight.

I made out an old woman with spectacles on her nose, a tall gentleman who looked at me with deep compassion, then a lovely young lady, and last of all a grey-headed old man who held my hand and looked at his watch. I woke up to a new life. One of the people I had rushed up against in my flight was Prince X., and I had fallen down at the gate of his house. When after long investigations it was found out who I was, the prince who had sent my father the ticket for S.'s concert, impressed by the strangeness of the coincidence, resolved to take me into his house and bring me up with his own children. Search was made to discover what had become of my father, and it was ascertained that he had been apprehended outside the town, suffering from an attack of acute mania. He was taken to the hospital, where he died two days later.

He died because such a death was a necessity to him, the natural consequence of such a life. He was bound to die like that, when everything that had supported him in life crumbled away at once and faded away like a phantom, like an insubstantial empty dream. He died when his last hope vanished, when in one instant everything with which he had deceived himself and sustained himself through life fell to pieces before his eyes. The truth blinded him with its unbearable light, and what was false was recognised as false by himself. At his last hour he had heard a marvellous genius, who had revealed to him himself and condemned him for ever. With the last sound that floated from the strings of the master's violin the whole mystery of art was revealed to him, and genius, ever youthful, powerful and true, had crushed him by its truth. It seemed as though all that had weighed upon him his whole life in mysterious unfathomable agonies, all that had hitherto tortured him impalpably, elusively, only in dreams, that had taken clear shape at times though he had run from it in horror, screening himself with a He all his life, all of which he had had a presentiment though he had feared to face it — all this had suddenly flashed upon him at once, had been laid bare to his eyes which had till then stubbornly refused to recognise light for light, darkness for darkness. But the truth was more than his eyes could endure when he gazed upon what had been, what was, and what awaited him; it blinded and burnt up his reason. It had struck him down at once inexorably like lightning. What he had been expecting all his life with a tremor and a sinking of his heart had suddenly happened. It seemed as though an axe had been hanging over his head all his life. All his life he had been every moment expecting in unutterable anguish that it would strike

him and — at last the axe had struck him! The blow was fatal. He tried to flee from the sentence passed upon him, but there was nowhere for him to flee, his last hope had vanished, his last excuse had disappeared. The woman whose life had weighed upon him so many years, who would not let him live, at whose death as he blindly believed he would suddenly revive again — died. At last he was alone, there was nothing to hamper him; at last he was free! For the last time in convulsive despair he tried to judge himself, to judge himself sternly and relentlessly, like a partial, disinterested critic; but his enfeebled bow could only faintly repeat the last musical phrase of the genius.... At that instant madness, which had been stalking him for ten years, clutched him beyond escape.

CHAPTER IV

I RETURNED to health slowly; and even when no longer confined to my bed, my brain remained in a sort of stupor, and for a long time I could not quite understand what had happened to me. There were moments when it seemed to me that I was dreaming, and I remember I longed that all that was happening might really turn into a dream! And as I fell asleep at night I hoped that I might somehow wake up in our poor garret and see father and mother.... But, at last my position grew clear to me, and little by little I understood that I had become utterly alone and was living with strangers. Then for the first time I felt that I was an orphan.

At first I looked eagerly at all the new things that so suddenly surrounded me. At first everything seemed strange and wonderful, everything bewildered me — the new faces, the new habits, and the rooms of the old princely mansion, large, lofty and richly furnished as I see now, but so gloomy and forbidding that I remember I was genuinely afraid to make my way across the long, long drawing-room in which I felt that I should be utterly lost. My illness had not yet quite passed off and my impressions were gloomy, oppressive, in perfect keeping with this solemnly dignified gloomy abode. Moreover, a depression I did not myself understand grew stronger and stronger in my little heart. I would stop in amazement before a picture, a looking-glass, a fireplace of cunning workmanship, or a statue which seemed to be hiding in some secluded niche on purpose to keep better watch on me and frighten me. I would stop and suddenly forget why I had stopped, what I wanted, what I had begun thinking about, and only when I came to myself I was sometimes overwhelmed by dread and perplexity.

Of those who from time to time came to see how I was when I was lying ill in bed, besides the old doctor, the one who impressed me most was a man, rather elderly, very serious, but very kind, who looked at me with deep compassion. I liked his face better than all the others. I longed to speak to him, but was afraid. He always looked depressed, spoke in brief snatches, and there was never a trace of a smile on his lips. This was Prince X., who had found me and was caring for me in his house. When I began to get better his visits became less and less frequent. The last time he came he brought me sweets, a child’s picture-book, kissed me, made the sign of the

cross over me, and begged me to be more cheerful. To comfort me he told me that I should soon have a companion, his daughter Katya, a little girl like me who was now in Moscow. Then after saying something to a middle-aged Frenchwoman, his children's nurse, and to the maid who looked after me, he commended me to them, went out, and from that time I did not see him for three weeks. The prince lived in complete solitude in his house. The princess lived in the larger part of the house; she, too, sometimes saw nothing of the prince for weeks together. Later on I noticed that all the members of the household hardly spoke of him, as though he were not in the house at all. They all respected him and loved him too, one could see that, and yet looked upon him as a strange and queer man. It seemed as though he realised himself that he was very odd, somehow not like other people, and so tried to keep out of their sight as much as possible. I shall have occasion to say a great deal and in much more detail about him.

One morning they dressed me in fine white linen, put me into a black woollen frock with white *pleureuses* at which I gazed with a sort of dejected wonder, combed my hair, and took me downstairs to the princess's apartments. I stood petrified with wonder when I was taken in to her; I had never before seen such wealth and magnificence around me. But that impression was momentary, and I turned pale when I heard the princess's voice bidding them bring me nearer. Even while I was being dressed I thought that I was being prepared for some painful ordeal, though God only knows how such an idea was suggested to me. Altogether I entered upon my new life with a strange distrust of everything surrounding me. But the princess was very gracious with me and kissed me. I looked at her a little more boldly. It was the same lovely lady whom I had seen when I regained consciousness. But I was trembling all over when I kissed her hand, and could not pluck up courage enough to answer her questions. She told me to sit down on a low stool near her. I think this place had been assigned me beforehand. One could see that the princess wished for nothing better than to care for me with her whole heart, to pet me and to take the place of a mother to me completely. But I was utterly unable to understand my good fortune, and did nothing to gain her good opinion. I was given a fine picture-book and told to look at it. The princess was writing a letter; from time to time she put down her pen and talked to me again; but I was confused and perplexed and said nothing sensible. In fact, though my story was very exceptional, and fate, moving in all sorts of mysterious ways,

undoubtedly played a great part in it, and in fact there was much in it that was interesting, inexplicable, and even fantastic, yet I myself turned out, as though in despite of these melodramatic surroundings, a most ordinary child, scared, as it were crushed, and even rather stupid. The last characteristic the princess disliked particularly, and I think she was thoroughly sick of me in a little while, for which I blame myself entirely, of course! Between two and three o'clock visitors began to arrive, and the princess suddenly became more attentive and affectionate to me. To the questions asked about me she answered that it was an extremely interesting story, and then began to tell it in French. As she told the story, her visitors looked at me, shook their heads and exclaimed. One young man eyed me through his lorgnette, one grey-headed and scented old gentleman would have kissed me; while I turned pale and red and sat with my eyes cast down, afraid to stir, and trembling in every limb. My heart ached. My mind went back to the past, to our garret. I thought of my father, our long silent evenings, mother; and when I thought of mother, tears welled up into my eyes, there was a lump in my throat, and I longed to run away, to disappear, to be alone.... Then when the visitors had gone, the princess's face became noticeably colder. She looked at me more crossly, spoke more abruptly, and I was particularly frightened by her piercing black eyes, sometimes fixed on me for a quarter of an hour at a stretch, and her tightly compressed lips. In the evening I was taken upstairs. I fell asleep in a fever, woke up in the night miserable and crying at delirious dreams. Next morning there was the same business, and I was taken to the princess again. At last she seemed herself tired of telling her visitors about my adventures, and the visitors tired of commiserating me. Besides, I was such an ordinary child, "entirely without simplicity", as I remember the princess herself expressed it in a tête-à-tête to a middle-aged lady who asked her whether she was not bored with me. And behold, one evening I was taken away not to be brought back again. So ended my career as favourite. I was allowed, however, to go about the house freely wherever I liked. I could not sit still in the same place, I was so intensely, morbidly miserable, and I was very, very glad when at last I could get away from everyone into the big rooms downstairs. I remember that I had a great longing to talk to the servants, but I was so afraid of annoying them that I preferred to remain alone. The way I liked best to pass my time was to retreat into some corner where I was more out of sight, to stand behind some piece of furniture and there at once begin recalling and

imagining all that had happened. But strange to say, I seemed to have forgotten the ending of my life with my parents and all that terrible time. Pictures flitted before my eyes, facts stood out. I did remember it all really — the night, the violin and father, I remembered how I had got him the money; but somehow I could not interpret, could not explain all that had happened.... Only there was a weight on my heart, and when in my memories I came to the moment when I said my prayers beside my dead mother a cold shiver ran all over me; I trembled, uttered a faint scream, and then my breathing felt choked, my whole chest ached, and my heart thumped so that I ran out of my corner in a panic. I was wrong, however, in saying that they left me alone, I was zealously and watchfully looked after; and the instructions of the prince, who had directed that I should be given complete freedom and not be restricted in any way, but not be lost sight of for a moment, were scrupulously carried out. I used to notice that from time to time someone of the household would glance into the room in which I was, and go away again without saying a word to me. I was much surprised and rather troubled by this attention; I could not understand why this was done. It seemed to me that I was being taken care of for some purpose, and that they meant to do something with me later on. I remember that I was always trying to get farther away, that I might know in case of need where to hide.

Once I strayed out on to the front staircase. It was wide, made of marble and covered with carpet, decorated with flowers and beautiful vases. Two tall men, very gaily dressed, and wearing gloves and the whitest of cravats, sat in silence on each landing. I gazed at them in amazement, and could not explain to myself why they sat there and did not speak, but simply stared at one another and did nothing.

I liked these solitary expeditions more and more. There was, besides, another reason for my running away from upstairs. The prince’s old aunt lived on the upper floor, scarcely ever going out. This old lady has left a vivid impression on my memory. She was almost the most important person in the house. Everyone observed a ceremonious etiquette with her, and even the princess, who looked so proud and imperious, had on fixed days twice a week to go upstairs and pay a personal visit to the prince’s aunt. She usually went in the morning; a frigid conversation began, frequently interrupted by solemn pauses, during which the old lady either murmured a prayer or counted her reckoning beads. The visit did not end till desired by the aunt,

who rose from her seat and kissed the princess on the lips, and thereby gave her to understand that the interview was at an end. In the past the princess had had to visit her husband's aunt every day; but of late at the old lady's desire the severity of this rule had been relaxed, and the princess was only obliged on the other five days of the week to send every morning to inquire after her health. In fact, the old lady lived like a hermit. She was unmarried, and when she was five-and-thirty had retired to a convent, where she spent seventeen years but did not take the veil; then she had left the convent and gone to Moscow to live with her widowed sister, Countess L., who was growing frailer in health year by year, and to be reconciled with her second sister, another unmarried Princess X. with whom she had been on bad terms for over twenty years. But the old ladies are said never to have spent a single day without quarrelling; thousands of times they were on the point of parting and could not bring themselves to do so, because they realised at last that each one of them was necessary to the other two, to ward off boredom and the infirmities of old age. But in spite of the unattractiveness of their manner of life, and the ceremonial boredom that reigned in their Moscow mansion, the whole town looked upon it as a duty not to discontinue visiting the three recluses. They were looked upon as the guardians of all the sanctities and traditions of aristocracy, and as living relics of the old nobility. Countess L. was an excellent woman, and many good things were remembered of her. People called on them first on arriving from Petersburg. Anyone who was received in their house was received everywhere. But the countess died and the remaining sisters parted; the elder princess remained in Moscow, to inherit her share of the fortune of the countess, who died without children, while the younger settled with her nephew Prince X. in Petersburg. On the other hand, the prince's two children, Katya and Alexandra, were visiting their great-aunt at Moscow, to entertain and console her in her solitude. Their mother, who loved her children passionately, did not dare to utter a word of protest at being parted from them for the whole period assigned for mourning. I have forgotten to mention that the prince's whole house was still in mourning when I came to live in it; but the time for it was soon over.

The old princess was dressed always in black, always in gowns of plain woollen stuff, and wore starched pleated collars which made her look like an inmate of an almshouse. She did not give up wearing the rosary, drove out in solemn state to mass, observed all the fasts, received visits from

various ecclesiastical dignitaries and pious personages, read holy books, and altogether led the life of a nun. The stillness on the upper floor was terrible, one dared not let a door creak. The old lady's senses were as keen as though she were a girl of fifteen, and she sent immediately to find out the cause of any noise, even the faintest creak. Everyone spoke in a whisper, everyone walked on tiptoe, and the poor Frenchwoman, herself an old lady, was obliged to give up her favourite footgear — shoes with high heels. Heels were banished. A fortnight after my arrival the old princess sent to inquire who I was, what I was like, how I had come into the house, and so on. Her curiosity was immediately and respectfully gratified. Then a second messenger was sent to the French lady to inquire why she, the old princess, had not yet seen me? At once there was a great to-do; they began combing my hair, washing my face and hands, which were already very clean, showing me how to walk in, how to bow, how to look more good-humoured and gracious, how to speak — in fact, I was regularly tormented.

Then an envoy was sent from our part of the house to inquire whether the great lady cared to see the little orphan. The answer that followed was in the negative, but another time, the following day after mass, was fixed. I did not sleep all night, and I was told afterwards that I was light-headed all night, and raving of going to the old princess and begging her forgiveness for something. At last my presentation arrived. I saw a spare little old lady sitting in a huge easy-chair. She nodded her head to me, and put on her spectacles to look at me more closely. I remember that she did not like me at all. It was observed that I was quite a savage, that I did not know how to curtsy, nor kiss hands. Questions followed and I scarcely answered them; but when allusion was made to my father and mother, I began to cry. The old lady was much displeased at my display of feeling; however, she began trying to console me, telling me to put my trust in God. Then she asked me when I had last been to church; and as I scarcely understood her question, for my education had been greatly neglected, the old princess was horrified. She sent for her niece. A consultation followed, and it was settled that I should be taken to church on the following Sunday. Till then the old princess undertook to pray for me, but told them to take me away as, in her own words, I had made a very painful impression on her. There was nothing strange in that, it was bound to be so. But it was evident that she did not like me at all; the same day word was sent that I was too noisy in my play and could be heard all over the house, though, as I sat all day long without

moving, this must have been the old lady's fancy. Yet the same message came next day. It happened about that time that I dropped a cup and broke it. The French governess and all the servants were in despair, and I was immediately sent to a room at the farther end of the house, where they all followed me in a state of panic.

I don't know how the incident ended: this was why I was glad to get downstairs and wander about the great rooms, knowing that there I should disturb no one.

I remember I was sitting one day in a big drawing-room downstairs. I hid my face in my hands, bowed my head, and sat like that I don't remember how many hours. I kept thinking and thinking; my immature mind was unable to analyse my misery, and I felt more dreary and sick at heart every day. Suddenly a soft voice rang out over me.

"What's the matter with you, my poor child?"

I raised my head; it was the prince. His gaze expressed deep sympathy and compassion; but I gazed at him with such a crushed, unhappy air that tears came into his big blue eyes.

"Poor little orphan!" he said, patting me on the head.

"No, no, not an orphan, no!" I said, and a moan broke from me and everything surged up in me and rose to the surface. I got up from my seat, clutched at his hand, and kissing it and wetting it with my tears, repeated in an imploring voice:

"No, no, not an orphan, no!"

"My child, what is the matter with you, my dear? What is it, poor Nyetochka?"

"Where is my mother? where is my mother?" I cried, sobbing loudly, unable to conceal my misery any longer, and helplessly falling on my knees before him. "Please tell me where my mother is?"

"Forgive me, my child!... Oh, poor little thing, I have reminded her.... What have I done? Come, come along with me, Nyetochka, come along with me."

He took me by the hand and led me along with him quickly. He was moved to the depths of his soul. At last we reached a room which I had not seen before.

It was the ikon room. It was dusk. The lamps gleamed brightly, with their lights reflected on the golden settings and precious stones of the ikons. The faces of the saints looked out dimly from the gold mountings.

Everything here was so unlike the other rooms, so mysterious and gloomy, that I was much impressed and overcome by a sort of terror. Besides, I was in such a morbid condition. The prince quickly made me kneel down before the ikon of the Mother of God, and knelt down beside me....

“Pray, my child, pray; we will both pray,” he said in a soft, broken voice.

But I could not pray; I was overwhelmed, even terrified; I remembered my father’s words that last night beside my mother’s body, and I had a nervous seizure. I lay in bed ill, and in this second period of my illness I almost died. This was how it happened.

One day a familiar name sounded in my ears. I heard the name of S. Someone of the household pronounced the name by my bedside. I started; memories came rushing upon me, and overwhelmed by recollections, dreams, and distress, I lay for I don’t know how many hours in real delirium. I woke up very late, it was dark all round me; the night-light had gone out, and the girl who used to sit in my room was not there. All at once I heard the sound of far-away music. At times the music died away entirely, at times grew more and more distinct as though it were coming nearer. I don’t remember what feeling came over me, what project sprang up in my sick brain. I got out of bed, and I don’t know how I found strength to do it, but I dressed in my mourning and went groping through the rooms. I found no one in the next room nor in the room beyond. At last I made my way into the corridor. The sounds were becoming more and more distinct. In the middle of the corridor there was a staircase leading down; that was the way by which I always went down to the big rooms. The staircase was brightly lighted up; people were walking about below. I hid in a corner to avoid being seen, and only when it was possible went downstairs to the second corridor. The music was coming from the drawing-room near; in it there was noise and talk as though thousands of people were assembled. One of the drawing-room doors leading out of the corridor was draped with two curtains of crimson velvet. I raised the outer one and stood between the two. My heart beat so violently that I could hardly stand. But a few minutes later, mastering my agitation, I ventured to move a little aside the border of the second curtain.... My goodness! the immense gloomy room which I was so afraid to enter was gleaming now with a thousand lights. It was like a sea of light flowing upon me, and my eyes, accustomed to the darkness, were at first painfully dazzled. The perfumed air fanned my face like a hot wind. Masses of people were walking to and fro; it seemed as though all had gay

and joyful faces. The women were in such rich, such light dresses. On all sides I saw eyes sparkling with delight. I stood as though spellbound. It seemed to me as though I had seen all this somewhere, in a dream.... There came back into my mind the dusk, our garret, the high window, the street far down below with the glittering lampposts, the windows of the house opposite with the red curtains, the carriages densely packed at the doors; the stamping and snorting of the proud horses, the shouts, the noise, the shadows at the windows, and the faint, distant music.... So here, here was that paradise! flashed through my mind. This was where I wanted to go with my poor father.... So it was not a dream.... Yes, I had seen it all before in my dreams, in my fancies! My imagination, inflamed by illness, took fire, and tears of inexplicable rapture streamed from my eyes. I looked about for my father: “he must be here, he is here,” I thought, and my heart beat with anticipation.... I could hardly breathe.... But the music ceased, a hum of voices began, and a murmur arose from all parts of the room. I gazed eagerly into the faces that flashed by me, and tried to recognise someone. All at once an extraordinary excitement was apparent in the room, I saw a tall lean old man on a raised platform. His pale face was smiling, he bent his angular figure, bowing in all directions. A profound silence followed as though all these people were holding their breath. All eyes were fixed on the old man, all were expectant. He raised his violin and touched the strings with his bow. The music began, and I felt all at once as though something were clutching my heart. In intense anguish, holding my breath, I listened to those sounds; something familiar was sounding in my ears, as though I had somewhere heard this before, some foreboding of something awful, horrible was reflected in my heart. At last the violin vibrated more loudly; the notes resounded faster and more shrilly. It was like a despairing wail, a pitiful lamentation, as though some prayer were being uttered in vain in all that crowd, and dying away, ceasing in despair. Something more and more familiar was taking shape in my heart, but my heart refused to believe it. I clenched my teeth to keep back a moan of pain, I clutched at the curtain that I might not fall. From time to time I closed my eyes and suddenly opened them, expecting that it was a dream, that I should wake up at some terrible moment I knew already, and that I was dreaming of that last night and bearing those same sounds. Opening my eyes, I tried to reassure myself, I looked eagerly into the crowd — no, these were different people, different faces. It seemed as though they were all, like me, expecting something —

all, like me, suffering agony; that they all wanted to scream at those fearful moans and wails to stop, not to tear their hearts. But the wails and moans flowed on, more agonising, more plaintive, more prolonged. Then the last fearful prolonged cry rang out, and everything in me was shaken.... I had no doubt. It was the same, the same cry! I recognised it, I had heard it before, it stabbed me to the heart as it had on that night. “Father! father!” flashed like lightning through my brain; “he is here, it’s he, he is calling me, it is his violin!” A groan seemed to rise from all that crowd, and terrific applause shook the room. I could restrain myself no longer, threw back the curtain and dashed into the room.

“Daddy, Daddy! it is you! Where are you?” I cried, almost beside myself.

I don’t know how I reached the tall old man; people let me pass, they stood aside to make way for me. I rushed to him with an agonising shriek; I thought that I was embracing my father.... All at once I saw that long bony hands had seized me and were lifting me up in the air. Black eyes were fixed upon me, and seemed as though they would scorch me with their fire. I looked at the old man. No, this was not my father, it was his murderer, was the thought that flashed through my brain. I was overwhelmed by frenzy, and all at once it seemed to me as though there were a shout of laughter at me, that that laughter was re-echoed in the room in a unanimous roar. I lost consciousness.

CHAPTER V

THIS was the second and last period of my illness. When I opened my eyes again I saw bending over me the face of a child, a girl of my own age, and my first movement was to hold out my hands to her. From my first glance at her, a feeling of happiness like a sweet foreboding filled my soul. Picture to yourself an ideally charming face, startling, dazzling beauty — beauty before which one stops short as though stabbed in delighted amazement, shuddering with rapture, and to which one is grateful for its existence, for one's eyes having fallen upon it, for its passing by one. It was the prince's daughter Katya, who had only just returned from Moscow. She smiled at my gesture, and my weak nerves ached with a sweet ecstasy.

The little princess called her father, who was only two paces away talking to the doctor.

"Well, thank God, thank God," said the prince, taking my hand, and his face beamed with genuine feeling. "I am glad, very glad," he said, speaking rapidly, as he always did. "And this is Katya, my little girl; you must make friends, here is a companion for you. Make haste and get well, Nyetochka. Naughty girl, what a fright she gave me!"

My recovery followed very quickly. A few days later I was up and about. Every morning Katya came to my bedside, always with a smile, always with laughter on her lips. I awaited her coming as a joyful event; I longed to kiss her. But the naughty child never stayed for more than a few minutes, she could not sit still. She always wanted to be on the move, to be running and jumping, making a noise and an uproar all over the house. And so she informed me from the first that she found it horribly dull to sit with me, and she would not come very often, and only came because she was so sorry for me that she could not help coming, and that we should get on better when I was well again. And every morning her first word was:

"Well, are you all right now?" And as I was still pale and thin, and as the smile seemed to peep out timorously on my mournful face, the little princess frowned at once, shook her head, and stamped her foot in vexation.

"But I told you yesterday to get better, you know! I suppose they don't give you anything to eat?"

"A little," I answered timidly, for I was already overawed by her. I wanted to do my utmost to please her, and so I was timid over every word I

uttered, over every movement I made. Her arrival moved me to more and more delight. I could not take my eyes off her, and when she went away I used to go on gazing at the spot where she had stood as though I were spellbound. I began to dream of her. And when I was awake I made up long conversations with her in her absence — I was her friend, played all sorts of pranks with her, wept with her when we were scolded. In short, I dreamed of her like a lover. I was desperately anxious to get well and grow fat, as she advised me.

Sometimes when Katya ran in to me in the morning and her first words were, “Aren’t you well yet? As thin as ever,” I was as downcast as though I were to blame. But nothing could be more genuine than Katya’s astonishment that I could not get well in twenty-four hours, so that at last she began to be really angry with me.

“Well, I will bring you a cake to-day if you like,” she said to me one day. “You must eat, and that will soon make you fatter.”

“Do bring it,” I said, delighted that I should see her a second time.

When she came to inquire after my health, Katya usually sat on a chair opposite me and began scrutinising me with her black eyes. And when first she made my acquaintance, she was continually looking me up and down from head to foot with the most naive astonishment. But conversation between us made little progress. I was intimidated by Katya and her abrupt sallies, though I was dying with desire to talk to her.

“Why don’t you talk?” Katya began after a brief silence.

“What is your father doing?” I asked, delighted that there was a sentence with which I could always begin a conversation.

“Nothing. Father’s all right. I had two cups of tea this morning instead of one. How many did you have?”

“One.”

Silence again.

“Falstaff tried to bite me to-day.”

“Is that the dog?”

“Yes, the dog. Haven’t you seen him?”

“Yes, I have seen him.”

And as again I did not know what to say, Katya stared at me in amazement.

“Well? Does it cheer you up when I talk to you?”

“Yes, very much; come oftener.”

“They told me that it would cheer you up for me to come and see you. But do make haste and get up. I will bring you a cake to-day.... Why are you always silent?”

“I don’t know.”

“I suppose you are always thinking?”

“Yes, I think a lot.”

“They tell me I talk a lot and don’t think much. There is no harm in talking, is there?”

“No. I am glad when you talk.”

“H’m, I will ask Madame Leotard, she knows everything. And what do you think about?”

“I think about you,” I answered after a brief pause.

“Does that cheer you up?”

“Yes.”

“So you like me, then?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I don’t like you yet. You are so thin. But I will bring you some cakes. Well, good-bye.”

And Katya, kissing me almost in the act of darting away, vanished from the room.

But after dinner the cake really did make its appearance. She ran in as though she were crazy, laughing with glee at having brought me something to eat which was forbidden.

“Eat more, eat well. That’s my cake, I did not eat it myself. Well, good-bye!” And she was gone in a flash.

Another time she suddenly flew in to see me after dinner, not at her usual hour. Her black curls were flying in all directions, her cheeks glowed crimson, her eyes were sparkling; she must have been racing and skipping about for the last hour.

“Can you play battledore and shuttlecock?” she cried, panting for breath, and speaking quickly in haste to be off again.

“No,” I answered, deeply regretting that I could not say yes.

“What a girl! Get well and I’ll teach you. That’s all I came for. I am just having a game with Madame Leotard. Good-bye, they are waiting for me.”

At last I got up for good, though I was still weak and frail. My first idea was never to be parted from Katya again. Some irresistible force seemed to draw me to her. I could not take my eyes off her, and that surprised Katya.

The attraction to her was so powerful, I became so increasingly ardent in my new feeling, that she could not avoid noticing it, and at first it struck her as incredibly strange. I remember that once, in the middle of some game, I could not refrain from throwing myself on her neck and kissing her. She extricated herself from my arms, caught hold of my hands, and frowning at me as though I had offended her in some way, asked me:

"What is the matter with you? Why are you kissing me?"

I was confused as though I were in fault, started at her sudden question and made no answer. Katya shrugged her shoulders in token of perplexity (a gesture that was habitual with her), compressed her pouting lips, gave up the game and sat down on die sofa in the corner, whence she scrutinised me for a long time, pondering over something as though considering a new question which had suddenly arisen in her mind. That was her habit, too, when any difficulty arose. On my side, too, I could not for a long while get used to these harsh and abrupt traits of her character.

At first I blamed myself, and thought that there really must be much that was strange in me. But though that was true, yet I was worried by not understanding why I could not be friends with Katya from the first, and make her like me once and for all. My failure to do so mortified me bitterly, and I was ready to shed tears at every hasty word from Katya, at every mistrustful glance she bent upon me. But my trouble grew not from day to day, but from hour to hour, for with Katya everything moved quickly. A few days later I began to notice that she had not taken to me at all, and was even beginning to feel an aversion for me. Everything in that child took place quickly, abruptly — some might have said roughly, if there had not been a genuine and noble grace in the rapid manifestations of her direct, naively open nature. It began by her feeling at first mistrust and then contempt for me. I think it arose from my complete inability to play any kind of game. Katya was fond of frolicking and racing about, she was strong, lively, agile; I was just the opposite. I was still weak from illness, quiet and dreamy; I did not enjoy playing. In short, I was entirely without the qualities that Katya liked. Moreover, I could not bear people to be displeased with me for anything, I became sad and dispirited at once, so that I had not the energy to smoothe over my offence and alter for the better the unfavourable impression I had made; in fact, I was in a hopeless plight. That Katya could not understand. At first she frightened me; in fact, she would stare at me in amazement, as her habit was after she had sometimes been struggling for a

whole hour with me, showing me how to play battledore and shuttlecock without making any progress. And as I immediately became dejected, as tears were ready to gush from my eyes, she would, after considering me two or three times without arriving at any explanation either from me or her reflections, abandon me altogether and begin playing alone, and would give up asking me to join her, and not even say a word to me for days together. This made such an impression on me that I could hardly endure her scorn. My new sort of loneliness seemed almost more unbearable than the old, I began to be sad and brooding, and dark thoughts clouded my soul again.

Madame Leotard, who looked after us, noticed this change in our relations. And as first of all she noticed me and was struck by my enforced loneliness, she went straight to the little princess and scolded her for not treating me properly. Katya scowled, shrugged her little shoulders, and declared that there was nothing she could do with me — that I didn't know how to play, that I was always thinking about something, and that she had better wait till her brother Sasha came back from Moscow, and then it would be much livelier for both of them.

But Madame Leotard was not satisfied with such an answer, and said that Katya was leaving me alone, though I was still ill; that I could not be as merry and playful as Katya; that that was all the better, however, since Katya was too full of mischief; that she was always up to some prank; that the day before yesterday the bulldog had almost bitten her — in fact, Madame Leotard gave her a merciless scolding. She ended by sending her to me, bidding her make it up with me at once.

Katya listened to Madame Leotard with great attention, as though she really understood something new and just from her observations. Abandoning a hoop which she had been trundling about, she came up to me and, looking at me gravely, asked wonderingly —

"Do you want to play?"

"No," I answered. I had been frightened for myself and for Katya while Madame Leotard was scolding her.

"What do you want to do?"

"I will sit still a little; it's tiring for me to run. Only don't be cross with me, Katya, for I like you very much."

"Well, then, I will play alone," said Katya slowly and deliberately, seeming surprised that, after all, it appeared, she was not to blame. "Well, good-bye. I won't be cross with you."

“Good-bye,” I said, getting up and giving her my hand.

“Perhaps you would like to kiss me?” she asked after a moment’s thought, probably remembering what had happened recently, and desiring to do what would please me best in order to finish with me agreeably and as quickly as possible.

“As you like,” I answered with timid hope.

She came up to me and very gravely, without a smile, kissed me. So, having accomplished all that was expected of her, having even done more than was necessary to give complete satisfaction to the poor child to whom she had been sent, she ran away from me gay and content, and her shouts and laughter were soon resounding through all the rooms again, till exhausted and out of breath she threw herself on the sofa to rest and recover. She kept looking at me suspiciously all the evening; most likely I seemed to her very queer and strange. It was evident that she wanted to talk to me, to find out the explanation of something that puzzled her about me; but on this occasion she restrained herself, I don’t know why. As a rule, Katya’s lessons began in the morning. Madame Leotard taught her French. The lessons consisted of repetition of grammar rules and the reading of La Fontaine. She was not taught much, for they could hardly get her to agree to sit still at her books for two hours in the day. She had at last been brought to agree to do so much, by her father’s request and her mother’s commands, and kept to her compact scrupulously because she had given her word. She had rare abilities; she was very quick of understanding. But she had some little peculiarities on that side too; if she did not understand anything she would at once begin thinking about it by herself, and could not endure asking for explanations — she seemed ashamed to do it. I have been told that she would for days at a time be struggling over some problem which she could not solve, and be angry that she could not master it by herself unaided; and only in the last extremity, when quite tired out, she would go to Madame Leotard and ask for her help to solve the problem which had baffled her. It was the same with everything she did. She thought a great deal, though that was not at all apparent at first sight. At the same time she was naive for her age; sometimes she would ask quite a foolish question, while at other times her answers would betray the most far-sighted subtlety and ingenuity.

When at last I was fit to have lessons too, Madame Leotard examined me as to my attainments, and finding that I read very well but wrote very badly,

considered it a matter of the first necessity to teach me French.

I made no objections, so one morning I sat down to lessons at the same table with Katya. It happened, as luck would have it, she was particularly dense and inattentive that morning, so much so that Madame Leotard was surprised at her. At one sitting I almost mastered the whole French alphabet, wishing to do my utmost to please Madame Leotard by my diligence. Towards the end of the lesson Madame Leotard was really angry with Katya.

“Look at her!” she said, indicating me. “The child is ill and is having her first lesson, and yet she has done ten times as much as you. Aren’t you ashamed?”

“Does she know more than I do?” Katya asked in astonishment.

“How long did it take you to learn the alphabet?”

“Three lessons.”

“And she has learnt it in one. So she learns three times as quickly as you do, and will soon catch you up.”

Katya pondered a little and turned suddenly fiery red, as she recognised that Madame Leotard’s observation was just. To flush crimson and grow hot with shame was the first thing she did if she failed in anything, if she were vexed or her pride were wounded, or she were caught in some piece of mischief — on almost every occasion, in fact. This time tears almost came into her eyes; but she said nothing, merely looked at me as though she would burn me with her eyes. I guessed at once what was wrong. The poor child’s pride and amour-propre were excessive. When we left Madame Leotard I began to speak, hoping to soften her vexation and to show that I was not to blame for the governess’s words, but Katya remained mute as though she had not heard me.

An hour later she came into the room where I was sitting over a book, thinking all the while of Katya, and feeling upset and frightened at her refusing to talk to me again. She looked at me from under her brows, sat down as usual on the sofa, and for half an hour did not take her eyes off me. At last I could bear it no longer, and glanced at her inquiringly.

“Can you dance?” asked Katya.

“No, I can’t.”

“I can.”

Silence.

“And can you play the piano?”

“No, I can’t do that, either.”

“I can. That’s very difficult to learn.”

I said nothing.

“Madame Leotard says you are cleverer than I am.”

“Madame Leotard is angry with you,” I said.

“And will father be angry too?”

“I don’t know,” I answered.

Silence again; Katya tapped the floor with her little foot in her impatience.

“So you are going to laugh at me because you are quicker at learning than I am?” she asked at last, unable to restrain her annoyance.

“Oh, no, no,” I cried, and I jumped up from my place to rush and hug her.

“And aren’t you ashamed to imagine such a thing and ask about it, princess?” we suddenly heard the voice of Madame Leotard, who had been watching us for the last five minutes and listening to our conversation. “For shame! You are envious of the poor child, and boast to her that you can dance and play the piano. For shame! I shall tell the prince all about it.”

Katya’s cheeks glowed like a fire.

“It’s a bad feeling. You have insulted her by your questions. Her parents were poor people and could not engage teachers for her; she has taught herself because she has a kind good heart. You ought to love her, and you want to quarrel with her. For shame, for shame! Why, she is an orphan. She has no one. You will be boasting next that you are a princess and she is not. I shall leave you alone. Think over what I have said to you, and improve.”

Katya did think for exactly two days. For two days her laughter and shouts were not heard. Waking in the night, I heard her even in her sleep still arguing with Madame Leotard. She actually grew a little thinner during those two days, and there was not such a vivid flush of red on her bright little face. At last on the third day we met downstairs in the big rooms. Katya was on her way from her mother’s room, but seeing me, she stopped and sat not far off, facing me. I waited in terror for what was coming, trembling in every limb.

“Nyetochka, why did they scold me because of you?” she asked at last.

“It was not because of me, Katenka,” I said in haste to defend myself.

“But Madame Leotard said that I had insulted you.”

“No, Katenka, no; you did not insult me.”

Katya shrugged her shoulders to express her perplexity.

“Why is it you are always crying?” she asked after a brief silence.

“I won’t cry if you want me not to,” I answered through my tears.

She shrugged her shoulders again.

“You were always crying before.”

I made no answer.

“Why is it you are living with us?” Katya asked suddenly.

I gazed at her in bewilderment, and something seemed to stab me to the heart.

“Because I am an orphan,” I answered at last, pulling myself together.

“Used you to have a father and mother?”

“Yes.”

“Well, didn’t they love you?”

“No... they did love me,” I answered with an effort.

“Were they poor?”

“Yes.”

“They didn’t each you anything?”

“They taught me to read.”

“Did you have any toys?”

“No.”

“Did you have any cakes?”

“No.”

“How many rooms had you?”

“One.”

“And had you any servants?”

“No, we had no servants.”

“Who did the work?”

“I used to go out and buy things myself.”

Katya’s questions lacerated my heart more and more. And memories and my loneliness and the astonishment of the little princess — all this stabbed and wounded my heart, and all the blood seemed to rush to it. I was trembling with emotion, and was choking with tears.

“I suppose you are glad you are living with us?”

I did not speak.

“Did you have nice clothes?”

“No.”

“Nasty ones?”

“Yes.”

“I have seen your dress, they showed me it.”

“Why do you ask me questions?” I said, trembling all over with a new and unknown feeling, and I got up from my seat. “Why do you ask me questions?” I went on, flushing with indignation. “Why are you laughing at me?”

Katya flared up, and she, too, rose from her seat, but she instantly controlled her feeling.

“No... I am not laughing,” she answered. “I only wanted to know whether it was true that your father and mother were poor.”

“Why do you ask me about father and mother?” I said, beginning to cry from mental distress. “Why do you ask such questions about them? What have they done to you, Katya?”

Katya stood in confusion and did not know what to answer. At that moment the prince walked in.

“What is the matter with you, Nyetochka?” he asked, looking at me and seeing my tears. “What is the matter with you?” he asked, glancing at Katya, who was as red as fire. “What were you talking about? What have you been quarrelling about? Nyetochka, what have you been quarrelling about?”

But I could not answer. I seized the prince’s hand and kissed it with tears.

“Katya, tell the truth. What has happened?”

Katya could not lie.

“I told her that I had seen what horrid clothes she had when she lived with her father and mother.”

“Who showed you them? Who dared to show them?”

“I saw them myself,” Katya answered resolutely.

“Well, very well! You won’t tell tales, I know that. What else?”

“And she cried and asked why I was laughing at her father and mother.

“Then you were laughing at them?”

Though Katya had not laughed, yet she must have had some such feeling when for the first time I had taken her words so. She did not answer a word, which meant that she acknowledged that it was the fact.

“Go to her at once and beg her forgiveness,” said the prince, indicating me.

The little princess stood as white as a handkerchief and did not budge.

“Well?” said the prince.

“I won’t,” Katya brought out at last in a low voice, with a most determined air.

“Katya!”

“No, I won’t, I won’t!” she cried suddenly, with flashing eyes, and she stamped. “I won’t beg forgiveness, papa. I don’t like her. I won’t live with her.... It’s not my fault she cries all day. I don’t want to. I don’t want to!”

“Come with me,” said the prince, taking her by the hand. “Nyetochka, go upstairs.” And he led her away into the study.

I longed to rush to the prince to intercede for Katya, but the prince sternly repeated his command and I went upstairs, turning cold and numb with terror. When I got to our room I sank on the sofa and hid my head in my hands. I counted the minutes, waited with impatience for Katya, I longed to fling myself at her feet. At last she came back, and without saying a word passed by me and sat down in a corner. Her eyes looked red and her cheeks were swollen from crying. All my resolution vanished. I looked at her in terror, and my terror would not let me stir.

I did my utmost to blame myself, tried my best to prove to myself that I was to blame for everything. A thousand times I was on the point of going up to Katya, and a thousand times I checked myself, not knowing how she would receive me. So passed one day and then a second. On the evening of the second day Katya was more cheerful, and began bowling her hoop through the rooms, but she soon abandoned this pastime and sat down alone in her corner. Before going to bed she suddenly turned to me, even took two steps in my direction, and her lips parted to say something to me; but she stopped, turned away and got into bed.” After that another day passed, and Madame Leotard, surprised, began at last asking Katya what had happened to her, and whether it was because she was ill she had become so quiet. Katya made some answer and took up the shuttlecock, but as soon as Madame Leotard turned away, she reddened and began to cry. She ran out of the room that I might not see her. And at last it was all explained: exactly three days after our quarrel she came suddenly, after dinner, into my room and shyly drew near me.

“Papa has ordered me to beg your forgiveness,” she said. “Do you forgive me?”

I clutched Katya by both hands quickly, and breathless with excitement, I said —

“Yes, yes.”

“Papa ordered me to kiss you. Will you kiss me?”

In reply I began kissing her hands, wetting them with my tears. Glancing at Katya, I saw in her an extraordinary change. Her lips were faintly moving, her chin was twitching, her eyes were moist; but she instantly mastered her emotion and a smile came for a second on her lips.

“I will go and tell father that I have kissed you and begged your forgiveness,” she said softly, as though reflecting to herself. “I haven’t seen him for three days; he forbade me to go in to him till I had,” she added after a brief pause.

And saying this, she went timidly and thoughtfully downstairs, as though she were uncertain how her father would receive her.

But an hour later there was a sound of noise, shouting, and laughter upstairs, Falstaff barked, something was upset and broken, several books flew on to the floor, the hoop went leaping and resounding through all the rooms — in short, I learned that Katya was reconciled with her father, and my heart was all aquiver with joy.

But she did not come near me, and evidently avoided talking with me. On the other hand, I had the honour of exciting her curiosity to the utmost. More and more frequently she sat down opposite in order to scrutinise me the more conveniently. Her observation of me became even more naive; the fact was that the spoilt and self-willed child, whom everyone in the house petted and cherished as a treasure, could not understand how it was that I had several times crossed her path when she had no wish at all to find me on it. But she had a noble, good little heart, which could always find the right path, if only by instinct. Her father, whom she adored, had more influence over her than anyone. Her mother doted on her, but was extremely severe with her; and it was from her mother that Katya got her obstinacy, her pride and her strength of will. But she had to bear the brunt of all her mother’s whims, which sometimes reached the point of moral tyranny. The princess had a strange conception of education, and Katya’s education was a strange mixture of senseless spoiling and ruthless severity. What was yesterday permitted was suddenly for no sort of reason forbidden to-day, and the child’s sense of justice was wounded.... But I am anticipating. I will only observe here that the child already realised the difference between her relations with her mother and with her father. With the latter she was absolutely herself, always open, and nothing was kept back. With her

mother it was quite the opposite — she was reserved, mistrustful, and unquestioningly obedient. Her obedience was not, however, due to sincere feeling and conviction, but was the result of a rigid system. I will explain this more fully later on. However, to the peculiar honour of my Katya, she did in fact understand her mother, and when she gave in to her it was with a full recognition of her boundless love, which at times passed into morbid hysteria — and the little princess magnanimously took that into her reckoning. Alas! that reckoning was of little avail to the headstrong girl later on!

But I scarcely understood what was happening to me. Everything within me was in a turmoil from a new and inexplicable sensation, and I am not exaggerating if I say that I suffered, that I was torn by this new feeling. In short — and may I be forgiven for saying so — I was in love with my Katya. Yes, it was love, real love, love with tears and bliss, passionate love. What was it drew me to her? What gave rise to such a love? It began from my first sight of her, when all my feelings were joyfully thrilled by the angelic beauty of the child. Everything about her was lovely; not one of her defects was innate — they were all derived from her surroundings, and all were in a state of conflict. In everything one could see a fine quality taking for the time the wrong form; but everything in her, from that conflict upwards, was radiant with joyous hope, everything foretold a reassuring future. Everyone admired her, everyone loved her — not only I. When at three o’clock we were taken out for a walk, passers-by would stop as though in amazement as soon as they saw her, and often an exclamation of admiration followed the fortunate child. She was born to be happy, she must be born to be happy — that was one’s first impression on meeting her. Perhaps my aesthetic sense, my sense of the artistic, was for the first time excited; it took shape for the first time, awakened by beauty, and that was the source from which my love arose.

The little princess’s chief defect, or rather the leading element in her character, which was incessantly seeking expression in its true form, and naturally was continually misdirected and in a state of conflict — was pride. This pride was carried to such a pitch that it showed itself in the simplest trifles and passed into vanity. For instance, contradiction of any sort did not annoy her or anger her, but merely surprised her. She could not conceive that anything could be different from what she wanted. But the feeling of justice always gained the upper hand in her heart. If she were convinced

that she had been unjust she at once accepted her punishment without repining or hesitation. And if till then she had not in her relation to me been true to herself, I set it down to an unconquerable aversion for me which for a time disturbed the grace and harmony of her whole being. It was bound to be so. She was carried away too passionately by her impulses, and it was always only by experience that she was brought into the right path. The results of all her undertakings were fine and true, but were gained only at the cost of incessant errors and mistakes.

Katya very soon satisfied her curiosity about me, and finally decided to let me alone. She behaved as though I were not in the house; she bestowed not an unnecessary word, scarcely a necessary one, upon me. I was banished from her games, and banished not by force, but so cleverly that it seemed as though I agreed to it. The lessons took their course, and if I was held up to her as an example of quickness of understanding and gentleness of disposition, I no longer had the honour of mortifying her vanity, though it was so sensitive that it could be wounded even by the bulldog, Sir John Falstaff. Falstaff was lethargic and phlegmatic, but fierce as a tiger when he was teased, so fierce that even his master could not make him obey. Another characteristic of the beast was that he had no affection for anyone whatever. But his greatest enemy was undoubtedly the old princess.... I am anticipating again, however. Katya’s vanity made her do her utmost to overcome Falstaff’s unfriendliness. She could not bear to think that there was even an animal in the house which did not recognise her authority, her power, did not give way to her, did not like her. And so Katya made up her mind to try and conquer Falstaff. She wanted to rule and dominate everyone; how could Falstaff be an exception? But the stubborn bulldog would not give in.

One day, when we were both sitting downstairs in one of the big drawing-rooms after dinner, the bulldog was lying stretched out in the middle of the room, enjoying his after- dinner siesta. It was at this moment that Katya took it into her head to conquer him. And so she abandoned her game and began cautiously on tiptoe to approach him, coaxing him, calling him the most endearing names, and beckoning to him ingratiatingly. But even before she got near him, Falstaff showed his terrible teeth; the little princess stood still. All she meant to do was to go up to Falstaff and stroke him — which he allowed no one to do but her mother, whose pet he was — and to make him follow her. It was a difficult feat, and involved serious

risks, as Falstaff would not have hesitated to bite off her hand or to tear her to pieces if he had thought fit. He was as strong as a bear, and I watched Katya's manoeuvres from a distance with anxiety and alarm. But it was not easy to make her change her mind all at once, and even Falstaff's teeth, which he displayed most uncivilly, were not a sufficient argument. Seeing that she could not approach him all at once, Katya walked round her enemy in perplexity. Falstaff did not budge. Katya made another circle, considerably diminishing its diameter, then a third, but when she reached a spot which Falstaff seemed to regard as the forbidden limit, he showed his teeth again. The little princess stamped her foot, walked away in annoyance and hesitation, and sat down on the sofa.

Ten minutes later she devised a new method of seduction, she went out and returned with a supply of biscuits and cakes — in fact, she changed her tactics. But Falstaff was indifferent, probably because he already had had enough to eat. He did not even look at the piece of biscuit which was thrown; when Katya again reached the forbidden line which Falstaff seemed to regard as his boundary there followed even more show of hostility than at first. Falstaff raised his head, bared his teeth, gave a faint growl and made a slight movement, as though he were preparing to leap up. Katya tinned crimson with anger, threw down the cakes, and sat down on the sofa again.

She was unmistakably excited as she sat there. Her little foot tapped on the carpet, her cheeks were flaming, and there were actually tears of vexation in her eyes. She chanced to glance at me — and the blood rushed to her head. She jumped up from her seat resolutely, and with a firm step went straight up to the fierce dog.

Perhaps astonishment had a powerful effect on Falstaff this time. He let his enemy cross the boundary, and only when Katya was two paces away greeted her with the most malignant growl. Katya stopped for a minute, but only for a minute, and resolutely advanced. I was almost fainting with terror. Katya was roused as I had never seen her before, her eyes were flashing, with victory, with triumph. She would have made a wonderful picture. She fearlessly faced the menacing eyes of the furious bulldog, and did not flinch at the sight of his terrible jaws. He sat up, a fearful growl broke from his hairy chest; in another minute he would have torn her to pieces. But the little princess proudly laid her little hand upon him, and three times stroked his back in triumph. For one instant the bulldog hesitated. That moment was the most awful; but all at once he moved, got

up heavily, stretched, and probably reflecting that it was not worth while having anything to do with children, walked calmly out of the room. Katya stood in triumph on the field of battle and glanced at me with an indescribable look in her eyes, a look full of the joy and intoxication of victory. I was as white as a sheet; she noticed it with a smile. But a deathly pallor overspread her cheeks too. She could scarcely reach the sofa, and sank on it almost fainting.

But my infatuation over her was beyond all bounds. From the day when I had suffered such terror on her account, I could not control my feelings. I was pining away in misery. A thousand times over I was on the point of throwing myself on her neck, but fear riveted me motionless to my seat. I remember I tried to avoid her that she might not see my emotion, but she chanced to come into the room where I was in hiding. I was so upset, and my heart began beating so violently that I felt giddy. I fancy that the mischievous girl noticed it, and for a day or two was herself somewhat disturbed. But soon she grew used to this state of affairs too. So passed a month, during the whole course of which I suffered in silence. My feelings were marked by an unaccountable power of standing a strain, if I may so express it; my character is distinguished by an extreme capacity for endurance, so that the outbreak, the sudden manifestation of feeling only comes at the last extremity. It must be remembered that all this time Katya and I did not exchange more than half a dozen words; but little by little I noticed from certain elusive signs that it was not due to forget- fullness nor indifference on her part, but to intentional avoidance, as though she had inwardly vowed to keep me at a certain distance. But I could not sleep at night, and by day could not conceal my emotion even from Madame Leotard. My love for Katya approached the abnormal. One day I stealthily took her handkerchief, another time the ribbon that she plaited in her hair, and spent whole nights kissing it and bathing it in my tears. At first Katya’s indifference wounded and mortified me, but then everything grew misty and I could not have given myself an account of my own feelings. In this way new impressions gradually crowded out the old, and memories of my sorrowful past lost their morbid power and were replaced by new life.

I remember I used sometimes to wake up at night, get out of bed, and go on tiptoe to the little princess in the dim light of our nightlight. I would gaze for hours at Katya sleeping; sometimes I would sit on her bed, bend down to her face and feel her hot breath on my cheeks. Softly, trembling with fear,

I would kiss her little hands, her shoulders, hair, and feet if her foot peeped out from under the quilt. little by little I began to notice — for I never took my eyes off Katya all that month — that Katya was growing more pensive from day to day; she had begun to lose the evenness of her temper: sometimes one would not hear her noise all day, while another time there would be such an uproar as never before. She became irritable, exacting, grew crimson and angry very often, and was even guilty of little cruelties in her behaviour to me. At one time she would suddenly refuse to have dinner with me, to sit beside me, as though she felt aversion for me; or she would go off to her mother's apartments and stay there for whole days together, knowing perhaps that I was pining in misery without her. Then she would suddenly begin staring for an hour at a stretch, so that I did not know what to do with myself from overwhelming confusion, turned red and pale by turns, and yet did not dare to get up and go out of the room. Twice Katya complained of feeling feverish, though she had never been known to feel ill before. All of a sudden one morning a new arrangement was made; at Katya's urgent desire she moved downstairs to the apartments of her mother, who was ready to die with alarm when Katya complained of being feverish. I must observe that Katya's mother was by no means pleased with me, and put down the change in Katya, which she, too, observed, to the influence of my morose disposition, as she expressed it, on her daughter's character. She would have parted us long before, but put off doing so for a time, knowing that she would have to face a serious dispute with the prince, who, though he gave way to her in nearly everything, sometimes became unyielding and immovably obstinate. She understood her husband thoroughly.

I was overwhelmed by Katya's removal, and spent a whole week in anguish of spirit. I was in desperate misery, racking my brains to discover the cause of Katya's dislike. My heart was torn with grief and indignation, and a sense of injustice began to rise up in my wounded heart. A certain pride began to stir within me, and when I met Katya at the hour when we were taken out for a walk, I looked at her with such independence, such gravity, so differently from ever before, that even she was struck by it. Of course this change continued only by fits and starts, and my heart ached more and more afterwards, and I grew weaker, and more faint-hearted than ever. At last one morning, to my intense astonishment and joyful confusion, the little princess came back upstairs. At first she threw herself on Madame

Leotard's neck with a wild laugh and announced that she had come back to live with us again, then she nodded to me, asked to be excused lessons that morning, and spent the whole morning frolicking and racing about. I had never seen her livelier and merrier. But towards evening she grew quiet and dreamy, and again a sort of sadness seemed to overshadow her charming little face. When her mother came in the evening to have a look at her, I saw that Katya made an unnatural effort to seem gay. But after her mother had gone she suddenly burst into tears. I was much impressed. Katya noticed my attention and went out of the room. In short, she was working up to some sudden crisis. Her mother was consulting doctors, and every day sent for Madame Leotard to question her minutely about Katya, and told her to watch over all her actions. Only I had a foreboding of the truth, and my heart beat with hope.

In short, my little romance was reaching its *denouement.* The third day after Katya's return to our floor, I noticed that she was looking at me all the morning with a wonderful light 290

in her eyes, with a long persistent gaze.... Several times I met that gaze, and each time we both blushed and cast down our eyes as though we were ashamed. At last the little princess burst out laughing and walked away. It struck three, and we had to dress to go out.

"Your shoe's untied," she said to me, "let me tie it."

I was bending down to tie it up myself, turning as red as a cherry, at Katya's having at last spoken to me.

"Let me do it," she said impatiently, and she laughed. She bent down on the spot, took my foot by force, set it on her knee and tied the lace. I was breathless; I did not know what to do from a sort of sweet terror. When she had finished tying the shoe, she stood up and scrutinised me from head to foot.

"Your neck is too open," she said, touching the bare skin of my neck with her little finger. "There, let me wrap it up."

I did not oppose her. She untied my neckerchief and retied it in her own fashion.

"Or you may get a cough," she said, with a sly smile, flashing her black, shining eyes upon me.

I was beside myself, I did not know what was happening to me and what was happening to Katya. But, thank goodness, our walk was soon over or I should not have been able to restrain myself, and should have rushed to kiss

her in the street. As we went up the stairs, however, I succeeded in stealthily kissing her on the shoulder. She noticed it, started, but said nothing. In the evening she was dressed up and taken downstairs. Her mother had visitors. But there was a strange commotion in the house that evening.

Katya had a nervous attack. Her mother was beside herself with alarm. The doctor came and did not know what to say. Of course it was all put down to Katya's age, but I thought otherwise. Next morning Katya made her appearance the same as ever, rosy and in good spirits, full of inexhaustible health, but of whims and caprices such as she had never had before.

In the first place, all that morning she disregarded Madame Leotard altogether. Then she suddenly wanted to go and see her old aunt. Contrary to her usual practice, the old lady, who could not endure her niece, was in continual conflict with her, and did not care to see her, on this occasion for some reason consented to see her. At first everything went well, and for the first hour they got on harmoniously. At first the little rogue asked her aunt's forgiveness for all her misdeeds, for her noisy play, for her shouting and disturbing her aunt. The old lady solemnly and with tears in her eyes forgave her. But the mischievous girl would go too far. She took it into her head to tell her aunt about pranks which were so far only in the stage of schemes and projects. Katya affected to be very meek and penitent, and to be very sorry for her sins; in short, the old fanatic was highly delighted, and her vanity was greatly flattered at the prospect of dominating Katya, the treasure and idol of the whole house, who could make even her mother gratify her whims. And so the naughty chit confessed in the first place that she had intended to pin a visiting card on her aunt's dress; then that she had planned to hide Falstaff under her bed; and then to break her spectacles, to carry off all her aunt's books, and put French novels from her mother's room in place of them, and to throw bits of flock all over the floor; then to hide a pack of cards in her aunt's pocket, and so on. In fact, she told her aunt of prank after prank each worse than the last. The old lady was beside herself, she turned pale and then red with anger. At last Katya could not keep it up any longer, she burst out laughing and ran away from her aunt. The old lady promptly sent for the child's mother. There was a fearful to-do, and the princess spent a couple of hours imploring her aunt with tears in her eyes to forgive Katya, to allow her not to be punished, and to take into consideration that the child was ill. At first the old lady would listen to

nothing; she declared that next day she should leave the house, and was only softened when the princess promised that she would only put off punishment till her daughter was well again, and then would satisfy the just indignation of the old lady. Katya, however, received a stern reprimand. She was taken downstairs to her mother.

But the rogue positively tore herself away after dinner. Making my way downstairs, I met her on the staircase. She opened the door and called Falstaff. I instantly guessed that she was plotting a terrible vengeance. The fact was that her old aunt had no more irreconcilable enemy than Falstaff. He was not friendly with anyone, he liked no one, but he was proud, haughty, and conceited in the extreme. He did not like anyone, but unmistakably insisted on being treated with due respect by all. Everyone felt it for him indeed, mixed with a not uncalled-for terror. But all at once with the arrival of the old lady everything was changed; Falstaff was cruelly insulted, in other words he was definitely forbidden to go upstairs.

At first Falstaff was frantic with resentment, and spent the whole day scratching at the door at the bottom of the stairs that led to the upper storey; but he soon guessed the cause of his banishment, and the first Sunday that the old lady went out to church, Falstaff dashed at the poor lady, barking shrilly. It was with difficulty that they rescued her from the furious vengeance of the offended dog, for he had been banished by the orders of the old princess, who declared that she could not endure the sight of him. From that time forward Falstaff was sternly forbidden to go upstairs, and when the old lady came downstairs he was chased into the farthest room. The sternest injunctions were laid upon the servants. But the revengeful brute found means on three occasions to get upstairs As soon as he reached the top he ran through the whole chain of apartments till he came to the old princess’s bedroom. Nothing could restrain him. Fortunately the old lady’s door was always closed, and Falstaff confined himself to howling horribly before it till the servants ran up and chased him downstairs. During the whole time of the terrible bulldog’s visit, the old lady screamed as though she were being devoured by him, and each time became really ill from terror. She had several times sent an ultimatum to the princess, and even came to the point of saying that either she or Falstaff must leave the house; but Katya’s mother would not consent to part with Falstaff.

The princess was not fond of many people and, after her children, Falstaff was dearer to her than anyone in the world, and the reason was this.

One day, six years before, the prince had come back from a walk bringing with him a sick and muddy puppy of the most pitiful appearance, though he was a bulldog of the purest breed. The prince had somehow saved him from death. But as this new-comer was extremely rude and unmannerly in his behaviour, he was at the instance of the princess banished to the backyard and put on a cord. The prince did not oppose this.

Two years later, when all the family were staying at a summer villa, little Sasha, Katya's younger brother, fell into the Neva. His mother uttered a shriek, and her first impulse was to fling herself into the water after her son. She was with difficulty kept back from certain death. Meanwhile the child was being rapidly carried away by the current, and only his clothes kept him afloat. They began hurriedly unmooring a boat, but to save him would have been a miracle. All at once a huge, gigantic bulldog leapt into the water across the path of the drowning child, caught him in his teeth, and swam triumphantly with him to the bank. The princess flew to kiss the wet and muddy dog. But Falstaff, who at that time bore the prosaic and plebeian name of Frix, could not endure caresses from anyone, and responded to the lady's kisses and embraces by biting her shoulder. The princess suffered all her life from the wound, but her gratitude was unbounded. Falstaff was taken into the inner apartments, cleansed, washed, and decorated with a silver collar of fine workmanship. He was installed in the princess's study on a magnificent bearskin, and soon the princess was able to stroke him without risk of immediate punishment. She was horrified when she learned that her favourite was called Frix, and immediately looked out for a new name as ancient as possible. But such names as Hector, Cerberus, etc., were too hackneyed; a name was sought which would be perfectly suitable for the pet of the family. At last the prince proposed calling the dog Falstaff, on the ground of his preternatural voracity. The name was accepted with enthusiasm, and the bulldog was always called that. Falstaff behaved well. Like a regular Englishman, he was taciturn, morose, and never attacked anyone till he was touched; he only insisted that his place on the bearskin should be regarded as sacred, and that he should be shown fitting respect in general. Sometimes he seemed to have something like an attack of hysterics, as though he were overcome by the spleen, and at such moments Falstaff remembered with bitterness that his foe, his irreconcilable foe, who had encroached upon his rights, was still unpunished. Then he made his way stealthily to the staircase that led to the upper storey, and finding the

door, as usual, closed, lay down somewhere not far from it, hid in a corner, and craftily waited till someone should be careless and leave the door open. Sometimes the revengeful beast would lie in wait for three days. But strict orders had been given to keep watch over the door, and for three months Falstaff had not got upstairs.

“Falstaff! Falstaff!” cried Katya, opening the door and coaxingly beckoning the dog to come to us on the stairs. At that very time Falstaff, with an instinctive feeling that the door would be opened, was preparing to leap across his Rubicon, but Katya’s summons seemed to him so impossible that for some time he resolutely refused to believe his ears. He was as sly as a cat, and not to show that he noticed the heedless opening of the door, went up to the window, laid his powerful paws on the window-sill and began gazing at the building opposite — behaved, in fact, like a man quite uninterested who has gone out for a walk and stopped for a minute to admire the fine architecture of a neighbouring building. Meanwhile his heart was throbbing and swooning in voluptuous expectation. What was his amazement, his joy, his frantic joy, when the door was flung wide open before him, and not only that, but he was called, invited, besought to go upstairs and wreak his just vengeance. Whining with delight, he showed his teeth, and terrible, triumphant, darted upstairs like an arrow. His impetus was so great that a chair that happened to be in his way was sent flying and overturned seven feet away. Falstaff flew like a cannon-ball. Madame Leotard uttered a shriek of horror. But Falstaff had already dashed to the forbidden door, was beating upon it with both paws, but could not open it, and howled like a lost soul. He was answered by a fearful scream from the old maid within. But a whole legion of enemies was flocking from all quarters, the whole household was moving upstairs, and Falstaff, the ferocious Falstaff, with a muzzle deftly popped over his jaws, with all his four limbs tied up, was ingloriously withdrawn from the field of battle and led downstairs with a noose round him.

An envoy was sent to his mistress.

On this occasion the princess was in no mood for forgiving and showing mercy; but whom could she punish? She guessed at once, in a flash; her eyes fell upon Katya.... That was it: Katya stood pale and trembling with fear. It was only now that she realised, poor child, the results of her mischief. Suspicion might fall upon the servants, on innocent people, and Katya was already preparing to tell the whole truth.

“Are you responsible?” her mother asked sternly.

I saw Katya’s deadly pallor and, stepping forward, I pronounced in a resolute voice —

“It was I let Falstaff in... by accident,” I added, for all my courage vanished before the princess’s threatening eyes.

“Madame Leotard, give her an exemplary punishment!” said the princess, and she walked out of the room.

I glanced at Katya: she stood as though thunder-struck; her hands hung down at her sides; her little blanched face was looking down.

The only punishment that was made use of for the prince’s children was being shut up in an empty room. To stay for two hours in an empty room was nothing. But when a child is put there by force against its will and told that it is deprived of freedom, the punishment is considerable. As a rule, Katya and her brother were shut up for two hours. In view of the enormity of my offence, I was shut up for four. Faint with delight I entered my black hole. I thought about Katya. I knew that I had won her. But instead of being there four hours, I was there till four o’clock in the morning. This is how it happened.

Two hours after I had been put in confinement, Madame Leotard learned that her daughter had arrived from Moscow, had been taken ill and wanted to see her. Madame Leotard went off, forgetting me. The maid who looked after us probably took for granted that I had been released. Katya was sent for downstairs, and obliged to stay with her mother till eleven o’clock in the evening. When she came Lack she was very much surprised that I was not in bed. The maid undressed her and put her to bed, but Katya had her reasons for not inquiring about me. She got into bed expecting me to come, knowing for a fact that I had been shut up for four hours, and expecting me to be brought by our nurse. But Nastya forgot me entirely, the more readily as I always undressed myself. And so I was left to spend the night in prison.

At four o’clock in the night I heard someone knocking and trying to break in. I was asleep, lying anyhow on the floor. When I awoke, I cried out with terror, but at once recognised Katya’s voice which rang out above all the rest, then the voice of Madame Leotard, then of the frightened Nastya, then of the housekeeper. At last the door was opened, and Madame Leotard hugged me with tears in her eyes, begging me to forgive her for having forgotten me. I flung myself on her neck in tears. I was shivering with cold, and all my bones ached from lying on the bare floor. I locked for Katya, but

she had run into our bedroom, leapt into bed, and when I went in she was already asleep — or pretending to be. She had accidentally fallen asleep while waiting for me in the evening, and had slept on till four o'clock in the morning. When she woke, she had made a fuss, a regular uproar in fact, wakened Madame Leotard, who had returned, our nurse, all the maids, and released me.

In the morning the whole household knew of my adventure; even the princess said that I had been treated too severely. As for the prince, I saw him that day, for the first time, moved to anger. He came upstairs at ten o'clock in the morning in great excitement.

"Upon my word," he began to Madame Leotard, "what are you about? What a way to treat the poor child. It's barbarous.

simply barbarous! Savage! A delicate, sick child, such a dreamy, timid little girl, so imaginative, and you shut her in a dark room all night! Why, it is ruining her! Don't you know her story? It's barbarous, it's inhuman, I tell you, madam! And how is such a punishment possible? Who invented, who could have invented such a punishment?"

Poor Madame Leotard, with tears in her eyes, began in confusion explaining how it had all happened, how she had forgotten me, how her daughter had arrived; but that the punishment in itself was good if it did not last too long, and that Jean Jacques Rousseau indeed said something of the sort.

"Jean Jacques Rousseau, madam! But Jean Jacques could not have said that. Jean Jacques is no authority. Jean Jacques Rousseau should not have dared to talk of education, he had no right to do so. Jean Jacques Rousseau abandoned his own children, madam! Jean Jacques was a bad man, madam!"

"Jean Jacques Rousseau! Jean Jacques a bad man! Prince! Prince! What are you saying?"

And Madame Leotard flared up.

Madame Leotard was a splendid woman, and above all things disliked hurting anyone's feelings; but touch one of her favourites, trouble the classic shades of Corneille, or Racine, insult Voltaire, call Jean Jacques Rousseau a bad man, call him a barbarian and — good heavens! Tears came into Madame Leotard's eyes, and the old lady trembled with excitement.

"You are forgetting yourself, prince!" she said at last, beside herself with agitation.

The prince pulled himself up at once and begged her pardon, then came up to me, kissed me with great feeling, made the sign of the cross over me, and left the room.

“Pauvre prince!” said Madame Leotard growing sentimental in her turn. Then we sat down to the schoolroom table.

But Katya was very inattentive at her lessons. Before going in to dinner she came up to me, looking flushed, with a laugh on her lips, stood facing me, seized me by the shoulders and said hurriedly as though ashamed:

“Well? You were shut up for a long time for me, weren’t you? After dinner let us go and play in the drawing-room.”

Someone passed by, and Katya instantly turned away from me.

In the dusk of evening we went down together to the big drawing-room, hand in hand. Katya was much moved and breathless with excitement. I was happy and joyful as I had never been before.

“Would you like a game of ball?” she said. “Stand here.”

She set me in one corner of the room, but instead of walking away and throwing the ball to me, she stopped three steps from me, glanced at me, flushed crimson and sank on the sofa, hiding her face in both hands. I made a movement towards her; she thought that I meant to go away.

“Don’t go, Nyetochka, stay with me,” she said. “I shall be all right in a minute.”

But in a flash she had jumped up from her place, and flushed and in tears flung herself on my neck. Her cheeks were wet, her lips were swollen like cherries, her curls were in disorder. She kissed me as though she were frantic, she kissed my face, eyes, lips, neck and hands, she sobbed as though she were in hysterics; I hugged her tight and we embraced each other sweetly, joyfully, like friends, like lovers who had met after a long separation. Katya’s heart beat so violently that I could hear every throb.

But we heard a voice in the next room. Katya was called to go to her mother. She kissed me for the last time, quietly, silently, warmly, and flew from me at Nastya’s call. I ran upstairs as though I had risen from the dead, flung myself on the sofa, hid my face in the pillow and sobbed with rapture. My heart was thumping as though it would burst my chest. I don’t know how I existed until the night. At last it struck eleven and I went to bed. Katya did not come back till twelve; she smiled at me from a distance but did not say a word. Nastya began undressing her slowly as though on purpose.

“Make haste, make haste, Nastya,” Katya muttered.

“What’s the matter with you, princess? Have you been running upstairs that your heart beats so?...” Nastya inquired.

“Oh, dear, how tiresome you are, Nastya! Make haste, make haste!” And Katya stamped on the floor in her vexation.

“Ah, what a little heart!” said Nastya, kissing the little foot from which she was taking off the shoe.

At last everything was done, Katya got into bed and Nastya went out of the room. Instantly Katya jumped out of bed and flew to me. I cried out as she came to me.

“Get into my bed, sleep with me!” she said, pulling me out of bed. A minute later I was in her bed. We embraced and hugged each other eagerly. Katya kissed and kissed me.

“Ah, I remember how you kissed me in the night,” she said, flushing as red as a poppy.

I sobbed.

“Nyetochka!” whispered Katya through her tears, “my angel, I have loved you for so long, for so long! Do you know since when?’’

“Since when?”

“Ever since father told me to beg your pardon that time when you stood up for your father, Nyetochka... my little for — lorn one,” she said, showering kisses on me again. She was crying and laughing together.

“Oh, Katya!”

“Oh, what — oh, what?”

“Why have we waited so long... so long..,” and I could not go on. We hugged each other and said nothing for three minutes.

“Listen, what did you think of me?” asked Katya.

“Oh, what a lot I thought about you, Katya. I have been thinking about you all the time, I thought about you day and night.”

“And at night you talked about me.”

“Really?”

“You cried ever so many times.”

“I say, why were you so proud all the time?”

“I was stupid, you know, Nyetochka. It comes upon me, and then it’s all over with me. I was angry with you.”

“What for?”

“Because I was horrid. First, because you were better than I was; and then because father loves you more than me! And father is a kind man, Nyetochka, isn’t he?”

“Oh, yes,” I said, thinking with tears of the prince.

“He’s a good man,” said Katya gravely. “But what am I to do with him? He’s always so.... Well, then I asked your forgiveness, and I almost cried, and that made me cross again.”

“And I saw, I saw that you wanted to cry.”

“Well, hold your tongue, you little silly, you’re a cry-baby yourself,” Katya exclaimed, putting her hand over my mouth. “Listen. I very much wanted to like you, and then all at once began to want to hate you; and I did hate you so, I did hate you so!...”

“What for?”

“Oh, because I was cross with you. I don’t know what for! And then I saw that you couldn’t live without me, and I thought, ‘I’ll torment her, the horrid thing!’”

“Oh, Katya!”

“My darling!” said Katya, kissing my hand. “Then I wouldn’t speak to you, I wouldn’t for anything. But do you remember how I stroked Falstaff?”

“Ah, you fearless girl!”

“Wasn’t I fri-ight-ened!” Katya drawled. “Do you know why I went up to him?”

“Why?”

“Why, you were looking at me. When I saw that you were looking... Ah, come what may, I would go up to him. I gave you a fright, didn’t I? Were you afraid for me?”

“Horribly!”

“I saw. And how glad I was that Falstaff went away! Goodness, how frightened I was afterwards when he had gone, the mo-on-ster!’’

And the little princess broke into an hysterical laugh; then she raised her feverish head and looked intently at me. Tears glistened like little pearls on her long eyelashes.

“Why, what is there in you that I should have grown so fond of you? Ah, you poor little thing with your flaxen hair; you silly little thing, such a cry-baby, with your little blue eyes; my little orphan girl!”

And Katya bent down to give me countless kisses again. A few drops of her tears fell on my cheeks. She was deeply moved.

“How I loved you, but still I kept thinking, ‘No, no! I won’t tell her.’ And you know how obstinate I was! What was I afraid of, why was I ashamed of you? See how happy we are now!”

“Katya! How it hurt me!” I said in a frenzy of joy. “It broke my heart!”

“Yes, Nyetochka, listen.... Yes, listen: who gave you your name Nyetochka?”

“Mother.”

“You must tell me about your mother.”

“Everything, everything,” I answered rapturously.

“And where have you put those two handkerchiefs of mine with lace on them? And why did you carry off my ribbon? Ah, you shameless girl! I know all about it.”

I laughed and blushed till the tears came.

“‘No,’ I thought, ‘I will torment her, let her wait.’ And at other times I thought, ‘I don’t like her a bit, I can’t bear her.’ And you are always such a meek little thing, my little lamb! And how frightened I was that you would think me stupid. You are clever, Nyetochka, you are very clever, aren’t you?”

“What do you mean, Katya?” I answered, almost offended.

“No, you are clever,” said Katya, gravely and resolutely. “I know that. Only I got up one morning and felt awfully fond of you. I had been dreaming of you all night. I thought I would ask mother to let me live downstairs. ‘I don’t want to like her, I don’t want to!’ And the next night I woke up and thought, ‘If only she would come as she did last night!’ And you did come! Ah, how I pretended to be asleep.... Ah, what shameless creatures we are, Nyetochka?”

“But why did you want not to like me?”

“I don’t know. But what nonsense I am talking, I liked you all the time, I always liked you. It was only afterwards I could not bear you; I thought, ‘I will kiss her one day, or else I will pinch her to death.’ There’s one for you, you silly!”

And the little princess pinched me.

“And do you remember my tying up your shoe?”

“Yes, I remember.”

“I remember. Were you pleased? I looked at you. ‘What a sweet darling,’ I thought. ‘If I tie up her shoe, what will she think?’ But I was happy too. And do you know, really I wanted to kiss you... but I didn’t kiss you. And

then it seemed so funny, so funny! And when we were out on our walk together, all the way I kept wanting to laugh. I couldn't look at you it was so funny. And how glad I was that you went into the black hole for me."

The empty room was called the "black hole".

"And were you frightened?"

"Horribly frightened."

"I wasn't so glad at your saying you did it, but I was glad that you were ready to be punished for me! I thought, 'She is crying now, but how I love her! To-morrow how I will kiss her, how I will kiss her!' And I wasn't sorry, I really wasn't sorry for you, though I did cry."

"But I didn't cry, I was glad!"

"You didn't cry? Ah, you wicked girl!" cried Katya, fastening her little lips upon me.

"Katya, Katya! Oh, dear! how lovely you are!"

"Yes, am I not? Well, now you can do what you like to me. My tyrant, pinch me. Please pinch me! My darling, pinch me!"

"You silly!"

"Well, what next?"

"Idiot!"

"And what next?"

"Why, kiss me."

And we kissed each other, cried, laughed, and our lips were swollen with kissing.

"Nyetochka! To begin with, you are always to sleep with me. Are you fond of kissing? And we will kiss each other. Then I won't have you be so depressed. Why were you so depressed? You'll tell me, won't you?"

"I will tell you everything, but I am not sad now, but happy!''

"No, you are to have rosy cheeks like mine. Oh, if tomorrow would only come quickly! Are you sleepy, Nyetochka?"

"No."

"Well, then let's talk."

And we chattered away for another two hours. Goodness knows what we didn't talk about. To begin with, the little princess unfolded all her plans for the future, and explained the present position of affairs; and so I learned that she loved her father more than anyone, almost more than me. Then we both decided that Madame Leotard was a splendid woman, and that she was not at all strict. Then we settled what we would do the next day, and the day

after, and, in fact, planned out our lives for the next twenty years. Katya decided that we should live in this way: one day she would give me orders and I should obey, and the next day it should be the other way round, I should command and she would obey unquestioningly, and so we should both give orders equally; and that if either disobeyed on purpose we would first quarrel just for appearances and then make haste to be reconciled. In short, an infinity of happiness lay before us. At last we were tired out with prattling, I could not keep my eyes open. Katya laughed at me and called me sleepy-head, but she fell asleep before I did. In the morning we woke up at the same moment, hurriedly kissed because someone was coming in, and I only just had time to scurry into my bed.

All day we did not know what to do for joy. We were continually hiding and running away from everyone, dreading other people's eyes more than anything. At last I began telling her my story. Katya was distressed to tears by what I told her.

"You wicked, wicked girl! Why didn't you tell me all this before? I should have loved you so. And did the boys in the street hurt you when they hit you?"

"Yes, I was so afraid of them."

"Oh, the wretches! Do you know, Nyetochka, I saw a boy beating another in the street. To-morrow I'll steal Falstaff's whip, and if I meet one like that, I'll give him such a beating!"

Her eyes were flashing with indignation.

We were frightened when anyone came in. We were afraid of being caught kissing each other. And we kissed each other that day at least a hundred times. So that day passed and the next. I was afraid that I should die of rapture, I was breathless with joy. But our happiness did not last long.

Madame Leotard had to report all the little princess's doings. She watched us for three days, and during those three days she gathered a great deal to relate. At last she went down to Katya's mother and told her all that she had observed — that we both seemed in a sort of frenzy; that for the last three days we had been inseparable; that we were continually kissing, crying and laughing like lunatics, and that like lunatics we babbled incessantly; that there had been nothing like this before, that she did not know to what to attribute it, but she fancied that the little princess was passing through some nervous crisis; and finally that she believed that it would be better for us to see each other more seldom.

“I have thought so for a long time,” answered the princess. “I knew that queer little orphan would give us trouble. The things I have been told about her, about her life in the past! Awful, really awful! She has an unmistakable influence over Katya. You say that Katya is very fond of her?”

“Absolutely devoted.”

The princess crimsoned with annoyance. She was already jealous of her daughter’s feeling for me.

“It’s not natural,” she said. “At first they seemed to avoid each other, and I must confess I was glad of it. Though she is only a little girl, I would not answer for anything. You understand me? She has absorbed her bringing up, her habits and perhaps principles from infancy, and I don’t understand what the prince sees in her. A thousand times I have suggested sending her to a boarding-school.”

Madame Leotard attempted to defend me, but the princess had already determined to separate us. Katya was sent for at once, and on arriving downstairs was informed that she would not see me again till the following Sunday — that is, for just a week.

I learned all this late in the evening and was horror-stricken; I thought of Katya, and it seemed to me that she would not be able to bear our separation. I was frantic with misery and grief and was taken ill in the night; in the morning the prince came to see me and whispered to me words of hope. The prince did his utmost, but all was in vain, the princess would not alter her intention. Little by little I was reduced to despair, I could hardly breathe for misery.

On the morning of the third day Nastya brought me a note from Katya. Katya wrote a fearful scrawl in pencil:

“I love you. I am sitting with mamma and thinking all the time how I can escape to you. But I shall escape, I have said so, and so I don’t cry. Write and tell me how you love me. And I was hugging you in my dreams all night, and was very miserable, Nyetochka. I am sending you some sweets. Farewell.”

I answered in the same style. I spent the day crying over Katya’s letter. Madame Leotard worried me with her caresses. In the evening she went to the prince and told him I should certainly be ill for the third time if I did not see Katya, and that she regretted having told the princess. I questioned Nastya about Katya. She told me that Katya was not crying but was very pale.

In the morning Nastya whispered to me:

“Go down to his Excellency’s study. Go down by the staircase on the right.”

My whole being revived with a presentiment. Breathless with expectation, I ran down and opened the study door. She was not there. Suddenly Katya clutched me from behind and kissed me warmly. Laughter, tears.... In a flash Katya tore herself from my arms, clambered on her father, leapt on his shoulders like a squirrel, but losing her balance, sprang off on to the sofa. The prince fell on the sofa after her. Katya was shedding tears of joy.

“Father, what a good man you are!”

“You madcaps! What has happened to you? What’s this friendship? What’s this love?”

“Be quiet, father, you know nothing about it.”

And we rushed into each other’s arms again.

I began looking at her more closely. She had grown thinner in three days. The red had begun to fade from her little face, and pallor was stealing into its place. I shed tears of grief.

At last Nastya knocked, a signal that Katya had been missed and was being asked for. Katya turned deathly pale.

“That’s enough, children. We’ll meet every day. Good-bye, and may God bless you,” said the prince.

He was touched as he looked at us; but his words did not come true. In the evening the news came from Moscow that little Sasha had fallen ill and was almost on the point of death. The princess decided to set off next day. This happened so suddenly that I knew nothing about it till the moment of saying good-bye to Katya. The prince himself had insisted on our being allowed to say good-bye, and the princess had only reluctantly consented. Katya looked shattered. I ran downstairs hardly knowing what I was doing, and threw myself on her neck. The travelling coach was already at the door. Katya uttered a shriek when she saw me, and sank unconscious. I flew to kiss her. The princess began trying to restore her. At last she came to herself and hugged me again.

“Good-bye, Nyetochka,” she said to me suddenly, laughing, with an indescribable expression on her face. “Don’t mind me; it’s nothing; I am not ill. I shall come back in a month, then we will not part again.”

“That’s enough,” said the princess calmly. “Let us start.”

But Katya came back once more. She squeezed me convulsively in her arms.

“My life,” she succeeded in whispering, hugging me. “Good-bye till we meet again.”

We kissed each other for the last time and Katya vanished — for a long, long time. Eight years passed before we met again.

* * *

I have purposely described so minutely this episode of my childhood, Katya’s first appearance in my life. But our story is inseparable. Her romance was my romance. It was as though it were fated that I should meet her; that she should find me. And I could not deny myself the pleasure of going back once more in memory into my childhood.... Now my story will go more quickly. My life passed all at once into a dead calm, and I seemed only to wake up again when I had reached my sixteenth year....

But a few words of what became of me on the departure of the prince’s family to Moscow.

I was left with Madame Leotard.

A fortnight later a messenger arrived with the news that their return to Petersburg was postponed indefinitely. As for family reasons Madame Leotard could not go to Moscow, her duties in the prince’s household were at an end; but she remained in the same family and entered the house of Alexandra Mihalovna, the princess’s elder daughter.

I have said nothing yet about Alexandra Mihalovna, and indeed I had only seen her once. She was the daughter of the princess by her first husband. The origin and family of the princess was somewhat obscure. Her first husband was a contractor. When the princess married a second time she did not know what to do with her elder daughter. She could not hope that she would make a brilliant marriage. Her dowry was only a moderate one; at last, four years before, they had succeeded in marrying her to a wealthy man of a very decent grade in the service. Alexandra Mihalovna passed into a different circle and saw a different world around her. The princess used to visit her twice a year; the prince, her stepfather, visited her once a week with Katya. But of late the princess had not liked letting Katya go to see her sister, and the prince took her on the sly. Katya adored her sister, but they were a great contrast in character. Alexandra Mihalovna was a woman of

twenty-two, quiet, soft and loving; it was as though some secret sorrow, some hidden heartache had cast a shade of austerity on her lovely features. Gravity and austerity seemed out of keeping with the angelic candour of her face, it was like mourning on a child. One could not look at her without feeling greatly attracted. She was pale and was said to be inclined to be consumptive when I saw her for the first time. She led a very solitary life, and did not like receiving many guests or paying visits; she was like a nun. She had no children. I remember she came to see Madame Leotard, and coming up to me, kissed me with much feeling. She was accompanied by a lean, rather elderly man. Tears came into his eyes as he looked at me. This was the violinist B. Alexandra Mihalovna put her arms round me and asked whether I would like to live with her and be her daughter. Looking into her face, I recognised my Katya's sister, and hugged her with a dull pain in my heart which set my whole chest aching... as though someone had once more pronounced over me the word "orphan". Then Alexandra Mihalovna showed me a letter from the prince. In it were a few lines addressed to me, and I read them with smothered sobs. The prince sent his blessing and wished me long life and happiness, and begged me to love his other daughter. Katya wrote me a few lines too. She wrote to me that she would not now leave her mother.

And so that evening I passed into another family, into another house, to new people, for a second time tearing my heart away from all that had become so dear, that by now had become like my own. I arrived exhausted and lacerated by mental suffering.... Now a new story begins.

CHAPTER VI

MY new life was as calm and unruffled as though I had been living among hermits.... I lived more than eight years with my new guardians, and I remember only very few occasions in which there were evening parties, dinners, or gatherings of friends and relations. With the exception of two or three people who came from time to time, the musician B., who was the friend of the family, and the people who came to see Alexandra Mihalovna's husband, almost always on business, no one came to see us. Alexandra Mihalovna's husband was always occupied with business and the duties of his office, and could only with difficulty contrive to get even a little free time, and that was divided between his family and social life. The necessity of maintaining important connections which it was impossible to neglect led him to show himself fairly frequently in society. People talked on all hands of his boundless ambition; but as he enjoyed the reputation of a businesslike and serious man, as he had a very prominent post, and as happiness and success seemed to dog his path, public opinion by no means denied its approval. It went beyond that, in fact. People always felt a special liking for him which they never felt for his wife. Alexandra Mihalovna lived in complete isolation; but she seemed to be glad of it. Her gentle character seemed created for seclusion.

She was devoted to me with her whole heart, and loved me as though I had been her own child; and with the tears not yet dry from parting with Katya, with a still aching heart, I threw myself eagerly into the motherly arms of my kind benefactress. From that time forward my warm love for her has been uninterrupted. To me she was mother, sister, friend, she replaced all the world for me and cherished my youth. Moreover, I soon noticed by instinct, by intuition, that her lot was by no means so rosy as might be imagined at first sight from her quiet and apparently serene life, from the show of freedom, from the unclouded brightness of the smile which so often lighted up her face; and so every day of my development made clear to me something new in the life of my benefactress, something which my heart slowly and painfully surmised, and together with this sorrowful knowledge my devotion to her grew greater and greater.

She was of a timid disposition and weak will. Looking at the candid and serene features of her face, one would never have supposed that any agitation could trouble her upright heart. It was unthinkable that she could dislike anyone; compassion in her always got the upper hand even of

repulsion — and yet there were few friends she was devoted to, and she lived in almost complete solitude.... She was passionate and impressionable by temperament, but at the same time she seemed afraid of her own impressionability, as though she were continually guarding her heart, not allowing it to forget itself even in dreams. Sometimes even at her sunniest moments I noticed tears in her eyes as though a sudden painful memory of something rankling in her conscience had flamed up in her soul, as though something were keeping hostile watch on her happiness and seeking to trouble it. And it seemed as though the happier she were, the calmer and serener the moment of her life, the nearer was this depression, the more likely to appear the sudden melancholy, the tears, as though some sudden crisis came over her. I don't remember one calm month in all the eight years. Her husband appeared to be very fond of her; she adored him. But at the first glance it seemed as though there were something unuttered between them. There was some secret in her life; at least I began to suspect it from the first moment....

Alexandra Mihalovna's husband made a forbidding impression on me from the first. This impression arose in childhood and was never effaced. In appearance he was a tall, thin man, who seemed intentionally to conceal the look in his eyes behind green spectacles. He was dry and uncommunicative, and even tête-à-tête with his wife seemed unable to find anything to talk about. He was obviously oppressed by society. He took no notice of me, and every time when we all three met in Alexandra Mihalovna's drawing-room for tea I felt ill at ease in his presence. I would glance stealthily at Alexandra Mihalovna, and notice with pain that she seemed to be hesitating over every movement she made, turning pale if she fancied her husband was becoming particularly cross and severe, or suddenly flushing as though she heard or divined some hint in something her husband said. I felt that she was oppressed in his presence, and yet it seemed as though she could not live without him for a minute. I was struck by her extraordinary attentiveness to him, to every word he uttered, to every movement he made; as though her whole soul longed to please him in some way, as though she felt that she did not succeed in doing what he desired. She seemed to be entreating his approbation; the slightest smile on his face, half a word of kindness — and she was happy; as though she had been at the first stage of still timorous, still hopeless love. She waited on her husband as though he were dangerously ill. When he went off into his study after pressing the

hand of Alexandra Mihalovna, at whom he always looked, as I fancied, with a compassion that weighed upon her, she was completely changed. Her movements, her talk, instantly became more light-hearted, and more free. But a sort of embarrassment remained for a long time after every interview with her husband. She began at once recalling every word as though weighing every sentence he had uttered. Frequently she turned to me with the question: had she heard right? Was that the expression Pyotr Alexandrovitch had used? as though looking for some other meaning in what he had said; and it was perhaps not for another hour that she quite regained her spirits, as though convinced that he was quite satisfied with her, and that she had no need to worry herself. Then she would suddenly become sweet, gay, and joyful; would kiss me, laugh with me, or go to the piano and improvise on it for an hour or two. But not infrequently her joy would be suddenly interrupted; she would begin to shed tears, and when I looked at her in agitation, in trouble and in anxiety, she would at once assure me in a whisper, as though afraid of being overheard, that her tears meant nothing, that she was happy, and that I must not worry about her. It would sometimes happen when her husband was away that she would suddenly begin to be agitated, would begin inquiring about him, would show anxiety, would send to find out what he was doing, would find out from the maid why the carriage was ordered and where he meant to drive, would inquire whether he were ill, in good spirits or depressed, what he said, and so on. It seemed as though she did not dare to speak to him herself about his business and pursuits. When he gave her some advice or asked her some question, she listened to him as quietly and was as overawed as though she were his slave. She very much liked him to praise something of hers, anything, a book or her needlework. She seemed flattered by this, and seemed to be made happy by it at once. But her joy was boundless when he chanced (which happened very rarely) to fondle one of their two tiny children. Her face was transformed, and beamed with happiness. And at such moments she sometimes let herself be *too much* carried away by joy in her husband’s presence. She would be so emboldened as suddenly, without any invitation from him, to suggest, of course timidly and with a trembling voice, that he should listen to some new piece of music she had just received, or would give his opinion about some book, or even that he would let her read him a page or two of some author who had made a special impression upon her that day. Sometimes her husband would graciously fall

in with her wishes and even smile condescendingly at her, as people smile at a spoilt child whom they do not want to check in some strange whim for fear of prematurely troubling its simplicity. But, I don't know why, I was revolted to the depths of my being by those smiles, that supercilious condescension, that inequality between them. I said nothing. I restrained myself and only watched them diligently with childish curiosity, but with prematurely harsh criticism. Another time I would notice that he suddenly seemed to pull himself up, seemed to recollect himself, as though he suddenly, painfully, and against his will were reminded of something disagreeable, awful, inevitable; instantly the condescending smile would vanish from his face, and his eyes would fasten on his nervously fluttered wife with a look of compassion which made me shudder, which, as I now realise, would have made me wretched if it had been turned upon me. At the same minute the joy vanished from Alexandra Mihalovna's face. The music or the reading was interrupted. She turned white, but controlled herself and was silent. There followed unpleasant moments, moments of anguish which sometimes lasted a long time. At last the husband put an end to them. He would get up from his seat, as though with an effort suppressing his emotion and vexation, and pacing two or three times up and down the room in gloomy silence would press his wife's hand, sigh deeply, and in undisguised perturbation would utter a few disconnected words in which the desire to comfort his wife was evident, and would go out of the room; while Alexandra Mihalovna would burst into tears, or would sink into a terrible prolonged melancholy. Often he blessed her and made the sign of the cross over her as though she were a child saying good-night to him, and she received his blessing with reverence and gratitude. But I cannot forget certain evenings in the house (two or three only, during those eight years) when Alexandra Mihalovna seemed suddenly transformed. An anger, an indignation, was reflected in her usually gentle face, instead of her invariable self-abasement and reverence for her husband. Sometimes the storm would be gathering for a whole hour; the husband would become more silent, more austere and more surly than usual. At last the poor woman's sore heart could bear no more. In a voice breaking with emotion she would begin talking, at first jerkily, disconnectedly, with hints and bitter pauses; then as though unable to endure her anguish she would suddenly break into tears and sobs, and then would follow an outburst of indignation, of reproaches, of complaints, of despair, as though she were passing

through a nervous crisis. And then it was worth seeing with what patience the husband bore it, with what sympathy he bent down to comfort her, kissed her hands, and even at last began weeping with her; then she would seem to recollect herself, her conscience would seem to cry out and convict her of crime. Her husband's tears would have a shattering effect on her and, wringing her hands in despair, with convulsive sobs she would fall at his feet and beg the forgiveness that was instantly vouchsafed her. But the agonies of her conscience, the tears and the entreaties for forgiveness went on a long time, and she would be still more timid, still more tremulous in his presence for whole months. I could comprehend nothing of these reproaches and upbraidings; I was sent out of the room on these occasions and always very awkwardly. But they could not keep their secret from me entirely." I watched, I noticed, I divined, and from the very beginning a vague suspicion took shape in me that there was some mystery in all this, that these sudden outbreaks of an exasperated heart were not simply a nervous crisis; that there was some reason for the husband's always being sullen, that there was some reason for his double-edged compassion for his poor sick wife, that there was some reason for her everlasting timidity and trepidation before him, and this meek, strange love which she did not even dare to display in her husband's presence, that there was some reason for her isolation, her nunlike seclusion, that sudden flush and deathly pallor on her face in the presence of her husband.

But since such scenes with her husband were very rare, since life was very monotonous and I saw her from so close at hand, since indeed I was developing and growing very rapidly and much that was new was beginning to stir unconsciously in me, distracting me from my observations, I grew accustomed at last to the life, and to the habits and characters surrounding me. I could not, of course, help wondering at times as I looked at Alexandra Mihalovna, but my doubts so far reached no solution. I loved her warmly, respected her sadness, and so was afraid of troubling her over-sensitive heart by my curiosity. She understood me, and how many times she was ready to thank me for my devotion! Sometimes, noticing my anxiety, she would smile through her tears and make a joke herself at her frequent weeping, then suddenly she would begin telling me that she was very contented, very happy, that everyone was so kind to her, that everyone she had known had been so fond of her, that she was very much distressed that Pyotr Alexandrovitch was always so worried about her, about her peace of

mind, while she was on the contrary so happy, so happy!... And then she would embrace me with such deep feeling, her face would be lighted up with such love, that my heart, if I may say so, ached with sympathy for her.

Her features were never effaced from my memory. They were regular, and their thinness and pallor only accentuated the severe charm of her beauty. Her thick black hair, combed smoothly down, framed her cheeks in sharp severe shadow; but that seemed to make more sweetly striking the contrast of her soft gaze, her large childishly clear blue eyes, which reflected at times so much simplicity, timidity, as it were defencelessness, as though fearful over every sensation, over every impulse of the heart — over the momentary gladness and over the frequent quiet sorrow. But at some happy unruffled moments there was so much that was serene and bright as day, so much goodness and tranquillity in the glance that penetrated to the heart The eyes, blue as the heavens, shone with such love and gazed so sweetly, and in them was reflected so deep a feeling of sympathy for everything that was noble, for everything that asked for love, that besought compassion — that the whole soul surrendered to her, was involuntarily drawn to her, and seemed to catch from her the same serenity, the same calm of spirit and peacemaking and love. So sometimes one gazes up at the blue sky and feels that one is ready to spend whole hours in secret contemplation, and that the soul is growing more free and calm, as though the vast vault of heaven were reflected in it as in a still sheet of water. When — and this happened often — exaltation sent the colour rushing to her face and her bosom heaved with emotion, then her eyes flashed like lightning and seemed to give forth sparks, as though her whole soul, which had chastely guarded the pure flame of beauty now inspiring her, had passed into them. At such moments she was as though inspired. And in this sudden rush of inspiration, in the transition from a mood of shrinking gentleness to lofty spiritual exaltation, to pure stern enthusiasm, there was at the same time so much that was naive, so much that was childishly impulsive, so much childlike faith, that I believe an artist would have given half his life to portray such a moment of lofty ecstasy and to put that inspired face upon canvas.

From my first days in that house I noticed that she was positively delighted to have me in her solitude. She had only one child then, and had only been twelve months a mother. But I was quite like a daughter to her, and she was incapable of making any distinction between me and her own

children. With what warmth she set about my education! She was in such a hurry at first that Madame Leotard could not help smiling as she looked at her. Indeed we set about everything at once, so that we could not understand each other. For instance, she undertook to teach me many things at once, but so many that it ended in more excitement, more heat, and more loving impatience on her part than in real benefit to me. At first she was disappointed at finding herself so incapable, but after a good laugh we started again from the beginning, though Alexandra Mihalovna, in spite of her first failure, still boldly declared herself opposed to Madame Leotard's system. They kept up a laughing argument, but my new instructress was absolutely opposed to every system, declaring that we should find the true method as we went along, that it was useless to stuff my head with dry information, and that success depended on understanding my instincts and on arousing my interest — and she was right, for she was triumphantly successful. To begin with, from the first the parts of pupil and teacher entirely disappeared. We studied like two friends, and sometimes it seemed as though I were teaching Alexandra Mihalovna, all unconscious of the subtlety of the method. So, too, arguments often sprung up between us, and I exerted myself to the utmost to prove that the thing was as I saw it, and imperceptibly Alexandra Mihalovna led me into the right way. But in the end when we reached the truth we were pursuing, I would guess how it was, would detect Alexandra Mihalovna's strategy, and pondering over all her efforts with me, sometimes whole hours sacrificed for my benefit, I fell on her neck and embraced her after every lesson. My sensibility touched and perplexed her. She began inquiring with interest about my past, wishing to hear it from me; and every time I told her anything, she grew more tender and more earnest with me, more earnest because through my unhappy childhood I aroused in her not only compassion, but a feeling as it were of respect. After I had told her about myself we usually fell into long conversations in which she explained my past experiences to me, so that I seemed really to live through them again and learnt a great deal that was new. Madame Leotard often thought such talk too serious and, seeing the tears I could not restrain, thought them quite unsuitable. I thought the very opposite, for after such *lessons* I felt as light-hearted and glad as though there had been nothing unhappy in my life. Moreover, I felt too grateful to Alexandra Mihalovna for making me love her more and more every day. Madame Leotard had no idea that all that had hitherto surged up from my

soul fitfully with premature violence was gradually in this way being smoothed out and brought into tuneful harmony. She did not know that my childish, lacerated heart had suffered such agonising pain that it was unjust in its exasperation and resented its sufferings, not understanding whence they came.

The day began by our meeting in the nursery beside her baby; we woke him, washed and dressed him, fed him, played with him and taught him to talk. At last we left the baby and sat down to work. We studied a great deal, but they were strange lessons. There was everything in them, but nothing definite. We read, discussed our impressions, put aside the book and went to music, and whole hours flew by unnoticed. In the evenings B., who was a friend of Alexandra Mihalovna's, would come, and Madame Leotard would come too; often a very lively heated conversation would begin, about art, about life (which we in our little circle knew only by hearsay), about reality, about ideals, about the past and the future, and we would sit up till after midnight. I listened intently, grew enthusiastic with the others, laughed or was touched, and it was at this time that I learned in full detail everything concerning my father and my early childhood. Meanwhile I was growing up; teachers were engaged for me from whom I should have learned nothing but for Alexandra Mihalovna. With my geography teacher I should have simply gone blind hunting for towns and rivers on the map. With Alexandra Mihalovna we set off on such voyages, stayed in such countries, saw such wonders, spent such delightful, such fantastic hours; and so great was the ardour of both of us that the books she had read were not enough for us, we were obliged to have recourse to new ones. Soon I was equal to teaching my geography teacher, though I must do him the justice to say he kept to the end his superiority in exact knowledge of the degrees of latitude and longitude in which any town was situated, and the thousands, hundreds and even tens of inhabitants living in it. Our teacher of history was paid his fees regularly also, but when he went away Alexandra Mihalovna and I learnt history in our own way; we took up our books and were often reading them till far into the night, or rather Alexandra Mihalovna read, for she exercised some censorship. I never felt so enthusiastic as I did after this reading. We were both excited as though we had been ourselves the heroes. Of course we read more between the lines than in the words themselves; moreover, Alexandra Mihalovna was splendid at describing things, so that it seemed that all we read about had happened in her presence. It may perhaps have

been absurd that we should have been so excited and sat up beyond midnight, I a child and she a stricken heart weighed down by the burden of life! I knew that she found, as it were, a rest from life beside me. I remember that at times I pondered strangely, looking at her. I was divining much before I had begun to live, I had already divined much in life.

At last I was thirteen. Meanwhile Alexandra Mihalovna's health grew worse and worse. She had become more irritable, her attacks of hopeless melancholy were more severe. Her husband's visits began to be more frequent, and he used to sit with her, as before, of course, gloomy, austere and almost silent, for longer and longer periods. I became more intensely absorbed in her lot.

I was growing out of childhood, a great number of new impressions, observations, enthusiasms, conjectures were taking shape in me. Certainly, the secret of this family began to worry me more and more. There were moments when it seemed to me that I understood something of that secret. At other times I would relapse into indifference, into apathy, even into annoyance, and forgot my curiosity as I found no answer to any question. At times — and this happened more and more frequently — I experienced a strange craving to be alone and to think, to do nothing but think. My present stage was like the time when I was living with my parents and when, before I had made friends with my father, I spent a whole year, thinking, imagining, looking out from my corner into God's world, so that at last I became like a wild creature, lost among the fantastic phantoms I had myself created. The difference was that now there was more impatience, more wretchedness, more new unconscious impulses, more thirst for movement, for thrills, so that I could not concentrate myself on one thing as in the past. On her side Alexandra Mihalovna seemed to hold herself more aloof from me. At that age I could hardly be her friend. I was not a child, I asked too many questions, and at times looked at her so that she was obliged to drop her eyes before me. These were strange moments. I could not bear to see her tears, and often tears rose into my own eyes as I looked at her. I flung myself on her neck and kissed her warmly. What answer could she make me? I felt that I was burdensome to her. But at other times — and they were sad and terrible times — she would convulsively embrace me as though in despair, as though seeking my sympathy, as though she were unable to endure her isolation, as though I understood her, as though we were suffering together. But yet the secret remained between us, that was

unmistakable, and I began at such moments myself to feel aloof from her. I felt ill at ease with her. Moreover, there was little now we had in common, nothing but music. But the doctors began to forbid her music. And books were a greater difficulty than anything, she did not know how to read with me. We should, of course, have stopped at the first page; every word might have been a hint, every insignificant phrase an enigma. We both avoided warm, sincere conversation *tête-à-tête*.

And it was at this time that fate suddenly and unexpectedly gave a new turn to my life in a very strange way. My attention, my feelings, my heart, my brain were all at once suddenly turned with intense energy amounting almost to enthusiasm into another, quite unexpected channel and, without realising the fact, I was carried along into a new world. I had no time to turn round, to look about me, to think things over; I might be going to ruin, I felt that indeed; but the temptation was too great for my fear, and I took my chance shutting my eyes. And for a long time I was diverted from the real life which was beginning to weigh upon me, and from which I had so eagerly and so uselessly sought an escape. This was what it was, and this is how it happened.

There were three doors leading out of the dining-room — one leading to the sitting-room, another to my room and the nursery, and the third to the library. From the library there was another way out, only separated from my room by a study in which Pyotr Alexandrovitch's assistant, his copyist, who was at the same time his secretary and his agent, was installed. The key of the bookcases and of the library was kept in his room. After dinner one day, when he was not in the house, I found the key on the floor. I was seized with curiosity, and arming myself with my find I went into the library. It was rather a large, very light room, furnished with eight large bookcases filled with books. There were a great number of books, most of which had come to Pyotr Alexandrovitch by inheritance. The rest of the books had been added by Alexandra Mihalovna, who was continually buying them. Great circumspection had been exercised hitherto in giving me books to read, so that I readily guessed that a great deal was forbidden me, and that many things were a secret from me. That was why I opened the first bookcase and took out the first book with irresistible curiosity, with a rush of terror and joy and of a peculiar un- definable feeling. The bookcase was full of novels. I took one of them, shut the bookcase and carried the book off to my room with as strange a sensation, with as much throbbing and

fluttering of my heart, as though I foresaw that a great transformation would take place in my life. Going into my room, I locked myself in and opened the book. But I could not read it, my mind was full of another preoccupation; I had first to plan securely and finally my access to the library in such a way that no one would know, and that I should retain the possibility of getting any book at any time. And so I postponed my enjoyment to a more convenient moment; I took the book back, but hid the key in my room. I hid it, and that was the first evil action in my life. I awaited the results; they were extremely satisfactory: Pyotr Alexandrovitch's secretary, after looking for the key the whole evening and part of the night, searching on the floor with a candle, decided in the morning to send for a locksmith, who from the bunch of keys he had brought with him made a new one to fit. So the matter ended, and no one heard anything more about the loss of the key. I was so cautious that I did not go into the library till a week later, when I felt perfectly secure from all suspicion. At first I chose a moment when the secretary was not at home; afterwards I took to going into the library from the dining-room, for Pyotr Alexandrovitch's secretary merely kept the key in his pocket, and never entered into closer relations with the books, and therefore did not even go into the room in which they were kept.

I began reading greedily, and soon I was entirely absorbed in reading. All my new cravings, all my recent yearnings, all the still vague impulses of my adolescence, which had surged up with such restless violence in my soul, prematurely stimulated by my too early development — all this was suddenly turned aside into a new channel that unexpectedly presented itself, as though fully satisfied by its new food, as though it had found its true path. Soon my heart and my head were so enchanted, soon my imagination was developing so widely, that I seemed to forget the whole world which had hitherto surrounded me. It seemed as though fate itself had stopped me on the threshold of a new life, into which I longed to plunge, and about which I spent my days and nights conjecturing; and before letting me step into the unknown path, had led me up on to a height, showing me the future in a magic panorama, in dazzling and alluring perspective. I was destined to live through that future by getting to know it first in books, to live through it in dreams, in hopes, in passionate impulses, in the voluptuous emotion of a youthful spirit." I began reading indiscriminately the first book that came into my hands, but fate watched over me; what I had learned and

experienced so far was so noble, so austere, that no evil unclean page could attract me. I was guarded by my childish instinct, my youth, my past. It was now that awakened intelligence suddenly, as it were, lighted up my whole past life. Indeed almost every page I read seemed to me as though it were already familiar, as though all these passions, all this life presented to me in such unexpected forms, in such enchanting pictures, was already familiar to me. And how could I help being carried away to the point of forgetting the present, of almost becoming estranged from reality, when in every book I read I found embodied the laws of the same destiny, the same spirit of adventure which dominates the life of man, yet is derived from some chief law of human life which is the condition of safety, preservation and happiness? This law which I suspected I strove my utmost to divine, with every instinct awakened in me almost by a feeling of self-preservation It was as though I had been forewarned, as though someone were prompting me. It was as though something were stirring prophetically in my heart. And every day hope grew stronger and stronger in my breast, though at the same time my longings, too, grew stronger for that future, for that life which impressed me in what I had read each day with all the power of art, with all the fascination of poetry. But as I have said already, my imagination dominated my impatience, and I was, in fact, bold only in my dreams, while in reality I was instinctively timid of the future. And therefore, as though by previous compact with myself, I unconsciously decided to be satisfied, for the time being, with the world of imagination, the world of dreams, in which I was the sole sovereign, in which there was nothing but fascination, nothing but delights; and unhappiness itself, if it were admitted, played a passive part, a transitory part, essential for the sake of contrast and for the sudden turn of destiny that was to give a happy ending to the rapturous romances in my brain. That is how I interpret now my state of mind at that time.

And such a life, a life of the imagination, a life absolutely estranged from everything surrounding me, actually lasted for three whole years!

This life was my secret, and at the end of three years I did not know whether to be afraid of its suddenly being discovered or not. All that I had lived through in those three years was too precious, too close to me. I was myself too closely reflected in all my imaginings, so much so that I might have been confused and frightened if any eye, no matter whose, had carelessly peeped into my soul. Moreover we all, the whole household, led

such an isolated life, so remote from society, in such monastic stillness, that each one of us must have become self- concentrated and have developed a craving for seclusion. That was what happened to me. Nothing about me was changed during those three years, everything remained as before. Dreary monotony reigned as before among us, which, I believe, if I had not been distracted by my secret hidden life, would have been an agony to my soul and would have driven me into some unknown and perilous path to escape from that spiritless and dreary circle, a path that might, perhaps, have led to my ruin. Madame Leotard had grown older, and was almost always shut up in her room; the children were still too little; B. was always the same; and Alexandra Mihalovna's husband was as austere, as unapproachable and as self-absorbed as ever. Between him and his wife there still persisted the same mysterious relation, which had begun to take a more and more grim and sinister aspect to my imagination. I felt more and more alarmed for Alexandra Mihalovna. Her joyless, colourless life was visibly wasting away before my eyes. Her health was growing weaker almost day by day. Despair, it seemed, had entered into her soul at last. She was obviously weighed down by something unknown, indefinite, of which she could not herself give an account — of something awful, though it was to her unintelligible; and she took it as an inevitable cross laid upon her life as a punishment. Her heart grew embittered at last in this mute anguish; even her intelligence took a different direction, dark and melancholy. One thing I observed struck me particularly: it seemed to me that, as I grew older, she held herself more aloof from me, so much so that her reserve with me took the form indeed of a sort of impatient annoyance. It even seemed to me, at some moments, that she did not like me; it seemed as though I were in her way. I have mentioned that I had purposely taken to holding myself aloof from her, and once apart from her I seemed as though I had caught the secretiveness of her character. That was how it was that all I passed through in those three years, all that was taking shape in my soul, in my dreams, in the knowledge I acquired, in my hopes and in my passionate transports — all was stubbornly kept to myself. Having once put up a screen between us we never came together again, though it seemed to me that I loved her more every day. I cannot recall without tears how devoted she was to me, and how deeply she felt in her heart the obligation to lavish upon me all the treasures of her love, and to keep her vow — to be a mother to me. It is true that her own sorrow often distracted her from me; for long intervals she

seemed to forget me, the more readily as I tried not to remind her of my existence; so that my sixteenth year arrived and no one seemed aware of it. But in her moments of lucidity, when she took a clearer view of what was going on around her, Alexandra Mihalovna seemed suddenly to be troubled about me; she would impatiently send for me from my room, would shower questions upon me about my lessons and my pursuits, as it were testing me, examining me, would not part from me for days together, would divine all my yearnings, all my desires, evidently thinking anxiously of my age, of my present and my future, and with inexhaustible love, with a sort of reverence, making ready to come to my help. But she was too much out of touch with me, and hence sometimes set to work too naively, so that I could too easily understand and see through it. It happened, for instance, when I was sixteen that, after looking through my books and questioning me as to what I was reading, she seemed suddenly to take fright at finding that I had not yet got beyond the childish books suitable for a girl of twelve. I guessed what she was feeling, and watched her attentively. For a whole fortnight she seemed to be preparing me, trying me, trying to find out how far I was developed, and how much I needed. At last she made up her mind to begin, and Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe,* which I had already perused at least three times, made its appearance on our table At first with timid expectation she kept watch on my impressions, seemed to be weighing them, as though she were apprehensive of them. At last this strained attitude between us, of which I was only too well aware, vanished; we both grew excited, and I felt so happy, so overjoyed that I could be open with her! By the time we finished the novel, she was delighted with me. Every observation I made during our reading was true, every impression was correct. In her eyes my development had made strides already. Impressed by this, delighted with me, she was gladly intending to undertake my education once more — she did not want to part from me again; but this was not in her power. Fate soon parted us, and prevented us from being close friends again. The first attack of illness, the first attack of her everlasting depression was enough to do this; and then followed again estrangements, reserves, mistrustfulness, and perhaps even exasperation.

Yet even at such periods there were moments when we were carried away. Reading, a few sympathetic words passing between us, music, and we forgot ourselves, spoke freely, spoke sometimes too freely, and afterwards felt ill at ease with each other. When we thought it over, we

looked at each other as though we were frightened, with suspicious curiosity and with mistrustfulness. Each of us had a line up to which our intimacy could go, but which we did not dare to overstep even if we had wished.

One day in the evening, just as it was getting dusk, I was reading inattentively in Alexandra Mihalovna's study. She was sitting at the piano, improvising variations on an Italian air which was a favourite of hers. When she passed at last to the tune itself, I was so carried away by the music that I began timidly in a low voice to hum the tune to myself. Soon completely carried away, I got up and went to the piano; as though she saw what I wanted, Alexandra Mihalovna began playing the accompaniment and lovingly followed every note of my voice. She seemed struck by its richness. I had never sung in her presence before, and indeed I scarcely knew my powers myself. Now we were both stirred. I raised my voice more and more; I was roused to energy, to passion, intensified by Alexandra Mihalovna's delighted wonder which I perceived in every touch of her accompaniment. At last the singing ended so successfully, with such fire and power, that she seized my hands in delight and looked at me joyfully.

"Anneta! But you have got a beautiful voice," she cried. "My goodness, how is it that I haven't noticed it?"

"I have only just noticed it myself," I answered, beside myself with joy.

"God bless you, my sweet, precious child! You must thank Him for this gift. Who knows... Oh, my God, my God!"

She was so touched by this surprise, in such a state of delight, that she did not know what to say to me, how to make enough of me. It was a moment of openness, mutual sympathy and close intimacy such as we had not had for a long while. Within an hour it seemed as though the house were keeping holiday. B. was sent for at once. While we were waiting for him to come we opened some other music-books at random which I knew better, and began a new air. This time I was shaking with nervousness. I did not want to spoil the first impression by failure. But soon my voice grew steadier and encouraged me. I was myself more and more astonished at its strength, and this second trial dispelled all doubts. In her impatient delight Alexandra Mihalovna sent for her children and their nurse; and at last, completely carried away, went to her husband and summoned him from his study, which she would hardly have dared to dream of doing at other times. Pyotr Alexandrovitch received the news graciously, congratulated me, and

was the first to declare that I ought to have singing lessons. Alexandra Mihalovna, as delighted and grateful as though something wonderful had been done for her, flew to kiss his hand. At last B. arrived. The old man was delighted. He was very fond of me. He talked of my father and of the past, and when I had sung before him two or three times, with a grave and anxious air, even with a certain mysteriousness in his tone, pronounced that I certainly had a voice and perhaps talent, and that it was out of the question to leave me untrained. Then, as though on second thoughts, Alexandra Mihalovna and he decided that it was risky to praise me too much at first; and I noticed how they exchanged glances and plotted together on the sly, so that their whole conspiracy against me was exceedingly naive and awkward. I was laughing to myself all the evening, seeing how they tried to restrain themselves later on when I had sung again, and how they even went out of their way to remark on my defects. But they did not keep it up for long, and B. was the first to betray himself, growing sentimental again in his delight. I had never suspected that he was so fond of me. We had the warmest, the most affectionate conversation all the evening. B. told us of the lives of some celebrated singers and musicians, speaking with the enthusiasm of an artist, with reverence, with emotion. Then after touching upon my father, he passed to me, to my childhood, to Prince X., to his family, of whom I had heard so little since my parting from them. But Alexandra Mihalovna did not know much about them herself. B. knew more than the rest of us, for he had paid more than one visit to Moscow; but at that point the conversation took a somewhat mysterious turn that was a puzzle to me, and several circumstances, particularly affecting Prince X., were unintelligible to me. Alexandra Mihalovna spoke of Katya; but B. could tell us nothing particular about her, and seemed as though intentionally desirous of saying nothing about her. That struck me. Far from having forgotten Katya, far from having lost my old feeling for her, I did not even dream that Katya could have changed. The effect of separation and of the long years lived apart, in the course of which we had sent each other no news, and of the difference of bringing-up and of the difference of our’ characters, escaped my notice. Katya was, in fact, never absent from my thoughts. She seemed to be still living with me; in my dreams particularly, in my romancings, and in my imagined adventures, we always went hand in hand. While I imagined myself the heroine of every story I read, I immediately put beside me my friend Katya and immediately made the

novel into two, of which one, of course, was my creation, though I cribbed unsparingly from my favourite authors. At last it was settled in our family council that a teacher of singing should be engaged for me. B. recommended someone very well known, one of the best. Next day an Italian called D. arrived; after hearing me, he confirmed his friend B.'s opinion, but declared that it would be far better for me to go to him for lessons, together with his other pupils, that emulation, imitation, and the various resources which would be at my disposal there would assist the development of my voice. Alexandra Mihalovna gave her consent, and from that time forth I used to go three times a week, at eight o'clock in the morning, to the Conservatoire.

Now I will describe a strange adventure which had a very great influence upon me, and with an abrupt transition began a new stage in my development. I had just reached my sixteenth year, and with it an incomprehensible apathy all at once came over my soul; I was sunk in an insufferable, miserable stagnation, incomprehensible to myself. All my dreams, all my yearnings seemed suddenly numb, even my dreaminess vanished as though from impotence. A cold indifference replaced the former ardour of my inexperienced heart. Even my gift, greeted with such enthusiasm by all whom I loved, lost its interest for me, and I callously neglected it. Nothing interested me, so much so that I felt even for Alexandra Mihalovna a cold indifference; for which I blamed myself, since I could not help recognising it. My apathy was interrupted from time to time by unaccountable melancholy and sudden tears. I sought solitude. At this strange moment a strange adventure shook my soul to its depths and transformed the dead calm into a real tempest. My heart was bitterly wounded. This was how it happened.

CHAPTER VII

I WENT into the library (it is a moment that I shall always remember) and took a novel of Walter Scott's, *St. Ronan's Well*, the only one of his novels I had not read. I remember that a poignant, indefinite misery made my heart ache as though with foreboding of trouble. I wanted to cry. There was a bright light in the room from the slanting rays of the setting sun which was streaming in at the high windows on to the parquetted floor; it was still; there was not a soul in the adjoining rooms. Pyotr Alexandrovitch was not at home, while Alexandra Mihalovna was in bed ill. I was actually crying, and, opening the second part of the book, was aimlessly turning over its pages, trying to discover some meaning in the disconnected phrases that flitted before my eyes. I was, as it were, trying my fortune, as people do, by opening a book at random. There are moments when all the intellectual and spiritual faculties, morbidly overstrained as it were, suddenly flare up in a bright flame of consciousness; and at such an instant the troubled soul, as though languishing with a foreboding of the future, with a foretaste of it, has something like prophetic vision. And your whole being so longs for life, so begs for life; and aflame with the most burning, blindest hope, your heart seems to summon the future with all its mystery, with all its uncertainty, even with its storms and upheavals, if only it brings life. Such was that moment.

I remember that I had just taken the book to open it at random again, and, reading the first page that presented itself, to divine the future from it. But as I opened it I noticed a piece of notepaper, covered with writing, folded into four and pressed as flat as though it had been laid in the book years ago and forgotten in it. With extreme curiosity I began examining my find; it was a letter with no address on it, signed with the two capital letters S. O. My interest was redoubled; I opened the paper, which almost stuck together, and from long lying between the pages left a clear imprint upon them. The folds of the letter were worn and frayed; one could see that it had at one time been read and re-read, and kept as a precious treasure. The ink had turned blue and faded — it had been written so long ago! A few words caught my eye by chance, and my heart began beating with expectation. In confusion I turned the letter over and over in my hands, as though purposely postponing the moment of reading. I took the letter to the light: yes! tears had dried, had dropped on those lines; the stain remained on the paper; here and there whole letters had been washed away by tears. Whose tears were

they? At last, breathless with suspense, I read half of the first page, and a cry of astonishment broke from me. I shut the bookcase, put the book back in its case, and hiding the letter under my shawl ran to my room, locked myself in, and began reading the letter again from the beginning. But my heart was thumping so that the words and letters danced and flitted before my eyes. For a long while I could make out nothing. In the letter there was a discovery, the beginning of a mystery; it struck me like a flash of lightning, for I learned to whom it was written. I knew that I was committing almost a crime in reading the letter; but the moment was too strong for me! The letter was to Alexandra Mihalovna. This was the letter; I will reproduce it here. I vaguely understood what was in it, and long after was haunted by conjectures and painful surmises. My heart was stirred and troubled for a long time, almost for ever, for much was called forth by this letter. I had truly divined the future.

It was a farewell letter, the last, and terrible. As I read it I felt a painful tightening of the heart, as though I had myself lost everything, as though everything had been taken from me for ever, even my dreams and my hopes, as though nothing more were left me but a life no longer wanted. Who was he, the writer of this letter? What was his life like afterwards? There were so many hints in the letter, so many facts, that one could not make a mistake; so many riddles, too, that one could not but be lost in conjectures. But I was scarcely mistaken; besides, the style of the letter, which implied so much, implied the whole character of the tie through which two hearts had been broken. The feelings, the thoughts of the writer were laid bare. They were of too special a character and, as I have said already, implied too much. But here is the letter; I am copying it word for word.

“You will not forget me, you have said it — I believe it and all my life henceforth is in those words of yours. We must part, our hour has struck! I have known this for a long while, my gentle, my sad beauty, but only now I understand it. Through all *our* time, through all the time that you have loved me, my heart has yearned and ached over our love, and — would you believe it? — my heart is easier now! I knew long ago that this would be the end, and that this was destined from the first! It is fate! Let me tell you, Alexandra: we are not *equals;* I always felt that, *always!* I was not worthy of you, and I, I alone ought to bear the punishment for the happiness I have known! Tell me, what was I beside you till the time when you came to

know me? My God! here two years have passed and I seem to have been unconscious of it till now; to this day I cannot grasp that *you* have loved *me!* I don't understand how we came to that point, how it began. Do you remember what I was compared with you? Was I worthy of you? In what did I excel, in what way was I particularly distinguished?

Till I knew you, I was coarse and common, I looked sullen and dejected. I desired no other life, did not dream of it, I did not invite it and did not want to invite it. Everything in me was somehow crushed, and I knew nothing in the world of more importance than my regular daily work. My only care was the morrow; and I was indifferent even to that. In the past, it was long ago, I had a dream of something like this, and I gave way to day-dreams like a fool. But a long, long time had passed since then, and I had begun living in solitude, calmly, gloomily, I actually did not feel the cold that froze my heart. And it slept. I knew and made up my mind that no other sun would ever rise for me, and believed it and did not repine at anything because I knew that so it was *bownd to be.* When you crossed my path, I did not understand that I could dare to raise my eyes to you. I was like a slave beside you. There was no tremor, no ache in my heart when I was by you, it told me nothing; it was unmoved. My soul did not recognise yours, though it found new light beside its fair sister soul. I know that; I felt it dimly. That I could feel, since the light of God's day is shed on the lowest blade of grass and warms and cherishes it even as the gorgeous flower beside which it meekly grows. When I learned all — do you remember? — after that evening, after those words, which stirred my soul to its depth, I was dazed, shattered, everything in me was troubled, and — do you know? — I was so overwhelmed, and had so little faith in myself, that I did not understand you! I have never spoken to you of that. You knew nothing of that; I was not in the past the same as you have found me. If I had been able, if I had dared to speak, I should have confessed it to you all long ago. But I was silent, and I am telling you everything now that you may know the man you are leaving, the man from whom you are parting! Do you know how I understood you at first? Passion caught me like fire, flowed in my veins like poison; it confused all my thoughts and feelings, I was intoxicated, I was as though possessed, and responded to your pure *compassionate* love not as equal to equal, not as one worthy of your pure love, but without understanding, heartlessly. I did not recognise what you were. I responded to you as to one who in my eyes had *forgotten herself to my level,* and not

one who wanted to raise me to hers. Do you know of what I suspected you, what is meant by those words, *forgotten herself to my level?* But no, I will not insult you with my confession; only one thing I will tell you: you have been cruelly mistaken in me! I could never rise to your level, never. I could only contemplate you in boundless love without ever coming near you. My passion, exalted by you, was not love, I was afraid of love; I dared not love you; love implies reciprocity, equality, and I was not worthy of them.... I don't know how it was with me! Ah! how can I tell you that, how can I make myself understood?... I did not believe it at first.... Oh! do you remember when my first excitement had subsided, when I could see things clearer, when nothing was left but a pure feeling purged of all that was gross, my first emotion was one of wonder, confusion, alarm, and — do you remember — how all at once I fell sobbing at your feet? Do you remember how, troubled and frightened, you kept asking with tears: what was I feeling? I said nothing, I could not answer you, but my heart was rent; my happiness weighed upon me like an unbearable burden, and my sobs seemed to whisper to me: 'Why is this? How have I deserved it? How am I deserving of bliss? My sister, my sister!' Oh! how many times — you did not know it — how many times I have in secret kissed your dress, in secret because I knew I was not worthy of you — and I could hardly breathe at such times, and my heart beat slowly, as though it meant to stop and swoon for ever. When I took your hand I turned pale and trembled all over; you confounded me by the purity of your soul. Ah, I cannot tell you all that has been accumulating in my heart and craving utterance! Do you know that at times your compassionate, everlasting tenderness was a burden and a torture to me? When you kissed me (it happened once and I shall never forget it), there was a mist before my eyes, and my whole spirit swooned in one instant. Why did I not die at that moment at your feet? Will you understand what I am trying to say? I want to tell you *everything* and I tell you this: yes, you love me very much, you have loved me as a sister loves a brother; you have loved me as your own creation, because you have raised my heart from the dead, awakened my mind from its slumber, and have instilled sweet hope into my breast. I could not, I dared not, I have not till now called you my sister, because I could not be your brother, because we were not equal, because you are mistaken in me!

"But, you see, I am writing all the while of myself; in this moment of fearful misery, I am thinking only of myself, though I know that you are

worrying about me. Oh, do not worry about me, my dear one! If you only knew how humiliated I am in my own eyes! It has all been discovered, what a fuss there has been! You will be an outcast on my account. Contempt, jeers will be showered upon you, because I am so low in their eyes! Oh, how greatly I am to blame for being unworthy of you! If only I had had consequence, personal value in their eyes, if I had inspired more respect in them, they would have forgiven you; but I am low, I am insignificant, I am absurd, and nothing is lower than to be absurd. *Who* is it that is making a fuss? Because *they* have begun to make a fuss I have lost heart; I have always been weak. Do you know the state I am in now: I am laughing at myself, and it seems to me that they are right, because I am absurd and hateful even to myself. I feel that; I hate even my face, my figure, all my habits, all my ignoble ways; I have always hated them. Oh, forgive me my crude despair. You have taught me yourself to tell you everything. I have ruined you, I have brought anger and contempt upon you because I was below you.

"And this thought, too, tortures me; it is hammering at my brain the whole time, and poisons and lacerates my heart. And I keep fancying that you have not loved the man you thought you found in me, that you were deceived in me. That is what hurts, that is what tortures me, and will torture me to death if I do not go out of my mind!

"Farewell, farewell! Now when all has been discovered, after their outcry and their tittle-tattle (I have heard them), when I have been humiliated, degraded in my own eyes, made ashamed of myself, ashamed even of you for your choice, when I have cursed myself, now I must run away and disappear for the sake of your peace. They insist on it, and so you will never see me again, never! It must be so, it is fated. Too much has been given me; fate has blundered, now she will correct her mistake and take it all away again. We came together, learnt to know each other, and now we are parting till we meet again. When will that be, where will that be? Oh, tell me, my own, where shall we meet again? Where am I to find you, how am I to know you, will you know me then? My whole soul is full of you. Oh, why is it, why should this happen to us? Why are we parting? Teach me — I don't understand, I shall never understand it — teach me how to tear my life in two, how to tear my heart out of my bosom and to live without it. Ah, when I think that I shall never see you again, never, never!...

“My God, what an uproar they have made! How afraid I feel for you now! I have only just met your husband; we are both unworthy of him, though we have neither of us sinned against him. He knows all; he sees us, he understands it all, and even beforehand everything was as clear as day to him. He has championed you heroically, he will save you, he will protect you from this tittle-tattle and uproar; his love and respect for you are boundless; he is your saviour, while I am running away!... I rushed up to him, I wanted to kiss his hand!... He told me that I must go at once. It is settled! I am told that he has quarrelled with them, with everyone on your account; they are all against you. They blame him for weakness and laxity. My God! What are they not saying about you! They don’t know, they *cannot understand*, they are *incapable* of it. Forgive them, forgive them, my poor darling, as I forgive them; and they have taken from me more than from you!

“I am beside myself, I don’t know what I am writing to you. Of what did I talk to yon last night at parting? I have forgotten it all. I was distracted, you were crying.... Forgive me those tears! I am so weak, so faint-hearted!

“There was something else I wanted to tell you.... Oh, if only I could once more bathe your hands in tears, as I am bathing this letter now! If I could be once more at your feet! If only *they* knew how noble was your feeling! But they are blind; their hearts are proud and haughty; they do not see it and will never see it. They have no eyes to see! They will not believe that you are innocent even according to their standards, not though everything on earth should swear it. As though they could understand! How can they fling a stone at you? Whose hand will throw the first? Oh, they will feel no shame, they will fling thousands of stones. They will fling them boldly, for they know how to do it. They will all throw them at once, and will say that they are without sin and will take the sin on themselves. Oh, if they knew what they are doing! If only one could tell them everything without concealment, so that they might see, might hear, might understand and be convinced! But no, they are not so spiteful.... I am in despair now, I am perhaps unjust to them. I am perhaps frightening you with my terror. Don’t be afraid, don’t be afraid of them, my own! They will understand you; one at least understands you already: have hope — it is your husband.

“Good-bye, good-bye. *I will not thank you.* Good-bye for ever.

“S. O.”

My confusion was so great that for a long time I did not know what was happening to me. I was shaken and terrified. Reality had fallen upon me unawares in the midst of the easy life of dreams on which I had lived for three years. I felt with horror that there was a great secret in my hands, and that that secret was binding my whole existence.... How? I did not know that yet myself. I felt that from that moment a new future was beginning for me. I had now, not of my own choice, become too close a participator in the life and relations of the people who had hitherto made up the whole world surrounding me, and I was afraid for myself. How should I enter their life, I, unbidden, I, a stranger to them? What should I bring them? How would these fetters which had so suddenly riveted me to another person’s secret be loosened? How could I tell? Perhaps my new part would be painful both for me and for them. I could not be silent, I could not refuse the part, and lock what I had learned in my heart for ever. But how would it be, and what would become of me? What was I to do? And what was it that I had found out, indeed? Thousands of questions, still vague and confused, rose up before me, and were already an unbearable weight upon my heart. I felt utterly lost.

Then, I remember, came another phase with new strange impressions I had not experienced before; I felt as though something were loosened in my bosom, as though my old misery had suddenly fallen off my heart and something new had begun to fill it, something such as I did not know yet whether to grieve or rejoice at. The moment was like that when a man leaves his home for ever, and a life hitherto calm and unruffled, for a far unknown journey, and for the last time looks round him, inwardly taking leave of his past, and at the same time feels a bitterness at heart from a mournful foreboding of the unknown future, perhaps gloomy and hostile, which awaits him on his new path. At last convulsive sobs broke from my bosom, and relieved my heart with hysterical weeping. I wanted to see someone, to hear someone, to hold someone tight, tight. I could not remain alone, I did not want solitude now; I flew to Alexandra Mihalovna and spent the whole evening with her. We were alone. I asked her not to play, and refused to sing in spite of her asking me. Everything seemed irksome to me, and I could not settle to anything. I believe we both shed tears. I only remember that I quite frightened her. She besought me to be calm, not to be agitated. She watched me in alarm, telling me that I was ill and that I did

not take care of myself. At last, utterly exhausted and shattered, I left her; I was as though in delirium, I went to bed in a fever.

Several days passed before I could recover myself and consider my position more clearly. At this time Alexandra Mihalovna and I were living in complete isolation. Pyotr Alexandrovitch was not in Petersburg. He had gone to Moscow on business, and spent three weeks there. Though the separation was so short, Alexandra Mihalovna sank into terrible depression. At times she grew more serene, but she shut herself up alone, so that even my society must have been a burden to her. Moreover, I tried to be alone myself. My brain was working with feverish activity; I was like one possessed. At times hours of long agonisingly disconnected reverie came upon me; it was as though I were dreaming that someone was laughing at me on the sly, as though something had taken possession of me that poisoned and confounded every thought. I could not shake off the distressing images that were continually appearing before me and giving me no peace. I was haunted by pictures of prolonged hopeless suffering, martyrdom, sacrifice endured submissively, unrepiningly and fruitlessly. It seemed to me that he for whom the sacrifice was made scorned it and laughed at it. It seemed to me that I had seen a criminal forgiving the sins of the righteous, and my heart was torn! At the same time I longed to be rid of my suspicion; I cursed it, I hated myself because all my convictions were not convictions but simply intuitions, because I could not justify my impressions to myself.

Then I went over in my mind those phrases, those last shrieks of terrible farewell. I pictured that man — *not her equal;* I tried to grasp all the agonising meaning of those words, “not her equal”. That despairing farewell made an agonising impression upon me: “I am absurd and am myself ashamed of your choice.” What did that mean? What people were these? What were they grieving over? What were they miserable about? What had they lost? Mastering myself with an effort, I read again with strained attention the letter which was so full of heart-rending despair, though its meaning was so strange, so difficult for me to understand. But the letter fell from my hands, and my heart was more and more overcome by violent emotion. All this was bound to end in some way, but I did not see the way out, or was afraid of it.

I was almost seriously ill when the carriage rumbled one day into the courtyard bringing Pyotr Alexandrovitch, who had returned from Moscow.

Alexandra Mihalovna flew to meet her husband with a cry of joy, but I stood as though rooted to the spot. I remember that I was struck myself by my own sudden emotion. I could not control myself, and rushed to my room. I did not understand why I was so suddenly alarmed, but I was frightened at this alarm. A quarter of an hour later I was summoned and given a letter from Prince X. In the drawing- room I found a stranger whom Pyotr Alexandrovitch had brought with him from Moscow, and, from some words which I caught, I learned that he was to stay with us for a long time. He was Prince X.'s agent, who had come to Petersburg about some very important business of the family which Pyotr Alexandrovitch had been looking after for some time. He gave me a letter from Prince X., and told me that the young princess wanted to write to me also, and had assured him to the last moment that the letter would be ready, but had sent him away empty-handed, begging him to tell me that it was absolutely no use for her to write to me, that one could write nothing in a letter, that she had spoilt five sheets of paper and had torn them all up, that to begin writing to each other we should have to make friends over again. Then she charged him to tell me that she would soon be seeing me. The unknown gentleman answered to my impatient questions that the news of our meeting soon was quite correct, and that the whole family was preparing to visit Petersburg shortly. I did not know what to do for joy at this information; I hastened to my room, locked myself in, and dissolved into tears as I opened the prince's letter. The prince promised me that I should soon see him and Katya, and with deep feeling congratulated me on my talent; finally he gave me his blessing and best wishes for the future, which he promised to provide for. I wept as I read this letter, but with those tears of joy was mingled such an insufferable sadness that I remember I was alarmed at myself, I did not know what was happening to me.

Several days passed. The newcomer used now to be working every morning, and often in the evening till after midnight, in the room next to mine, where Pyotr Alexandrovitch's secretary used to be. Often this gentleman and Pyotr Alexandrovitch shut themselves into the latter's study and worked together. One day Alexandra Mihalovna told me to go into her husband's study and ask him whether he would come and have tea with us. Finding no one in the study, and expecting Pyotr Alexandrovitch to come back shortly, I remained waiting for him. His portrait was hanging on the wall. I remember that I shuddered as I looked at the portrait, and with an

excitement I could not myself understand I began scrutinising it intently. It was hung rather high up; moreover, it was beginning to get dark, and to see it better, I pushed a chair up and stood on it. I wanted to detect something, as though I hoped to find the solution of my doubts; and I remember what struck me first of all was the eyes in the portrait. It struck me at once that I had never seen the eyes of this man before, he always kept them hidden behind spectacles.

Even in my childhood I had disliked the way he looked at people, through some strange unaccountable prejudice, but now that prejudice seemed to be justified. My imagination was worked up. It suddenly seemed to me as though the eyes of the portrait in confusion turned away from my searching inquisitorial gaze, that they were trying to avoid it, that there was lying and duplicity in those eyes; it seemed to me that I had guessed right, and I cannot explain the secret joy that stirred in me at having guessed right. A faint cry broke from me. At that moment I heard a rustle behind me. I looked round; Pyotr Alexandrovitch was standing behind me, staring at me. I fancied that he reddened. I turned hot all over, and jumped down from the chair.

“What are you doing here?” he asked in a stern voice. “Why are you here?”

I did not know what to answer. Recovering myself a little, I gave him Alexandra Mihalovna’s message after a fashion. I don’t know what answer he made me, I don’t remember how I got out of the room, but when I reached Alexandra Mihalovna I had completely forgotten the answer for which she was waiting, and said at a venture that he was coming.

“But what is the matter with you, Nyetochka?” she asked. “You are crimson; look at yourself! What’s the matter with you?”

“I don’t know... I have been running quickly...” I answered.

“What did Pyotr Alexandrovitch say to you?” she interrupted, troubled.

I did not answer. At that moment Pyotr Alexandrovitch’s steps were heard, and I immediately walked out of the room. I waited for two full hours in great perturbation. At last I was summoned to Alexandra Mihalovna. I found her silent and preoccupied. As I went in she bent a rapid, searching glance upon me, but at once dropped her eyes. I fancied that some embarrassment was reflected in her face. I soon noticed that she was in low spirits; she spoke little, did not look at me at all, and in reply to

B.’s anxious inquiries said she had a headache. Pyotr Alexandrovitch was more talkative than usual, but he talked only to B.

Alexandra Mihalovna went absent-mindedly to the piano.

“Sing something,” said B., turning to me.

“Yes, Anneta, sing your new song,” Alexandra Mihalovna chimed in, as though catching at the idea.

I glanced at her; she looked at me in uneasy suspense.

But I could not control myself. Instead of going to the piano and singing something, I was overcome with confusion, and in my embarrassment could not even think how to excuse myself; at last annoyance got the upper hand, and I refused point- blank.

“Why don’t you want to sing?” said Alexandra Mihalovna, with a significant glance at me and a fleeting one at her husband.

Those two glances drove me out of all patience. I got up from the table in complete confusion; no longer concealing it, but shaking with a feeling of impatience and annoyance, I repeated with heat that I did not want to, I could not, that I was not well. As I said this I looked them all in the face, but God knows how I longed at that moment to be in my own room and to hide myself from them all.

B. was surprised, Alexandra Mihalovna was visibly distressed and did not say a word. But Pyotr Alexandrovitch suddenly got up from his chair and said that he had forgotten some work; and evidently vexed that he had wasted valuable time, went hurriedly out of the room, saying that he would perhaps look in later, but at the same time, in case he did not, he shook hands with B. by way of good-bye.

“What’s the matter with you?” B. asked. “You look really ill.”

“Yes, I am unwell, very unwell,” I answered impatiently.

“Yes, you certainly are pale, and just now you were so flushed,” observed Alexandra Mihalovna, and she suddenly checked herself.

“Do stop!” I said, going straight up to her and looking her in the face. The poor thing could not face my eyes, she dropped hers as though she were guilty, and a faint flush suffused her pale cheeks. I took her hand and kissed it. Alexandra Mihalovna looked at me, with a show of naive pleasure.

“Forgive me for having been such an ill-tempered, naughty child to-day,” I said with feeling; “but I really aim ill. Let me go, and don’t be angry.”

“We are all children,” she said with a timid smile. “And indeed I am a child too, and worse, much worse than you,” she added in my ear. “Good-night, be well. Only for God’s sake don’t be cross with me.”

“What for?” I asked, I was so struck by this naive entreaty.

“What for?” she repeated, greatly confused, and even frightened at herself. “What for? Why, you see what I am like, Nyetochka. What did I say to you? Good-night! You are cleverer than I am.... And I am worse than a child.”

“Come, that’s enough,” I answered, much moved, and not knowing what to say to her. Kissing her once more, I went hurriedly out of the room.

I felt horribly vexed and sad. Moreover, I was furious with myself, feeling that I was not on my guard and did not know how to behave. I was ashamed to the point of tears, and fell asleep in the depths of depression. When I woke up in the morning my first thought was that the whole previous evening was a pure creation of the imagination, a mirage, that we had only been mystifying each other, that we had been in a nervous flutter, had made a regular adventure out of a trifle, and that it was all due to inexperience and our not being used to receiving external impressions. I felt that the letter was to blame for it all, that it was disturbing me too much, and that my imagination was overwrought, and I made up my mind for the future that I had better not think about anything. Settling all my trouble with such exceptional ease, and fully convinced that I could as easily act as I had resolved, I felt calmer, and set off to my singing lesson in quite a cheerful mood. The morning air completely cleared away my headache. I was very fond of my morning walks to my lessons. It was so enjoyable going through the town, which was already by nine o’clock full of life, and was busily beginning its daily round. We usually went by the liveliest and busiest streets. And I delighted in this background for the beginning of my artistic life, the contrast between this petty everyday life, these trivial but living cares, and the art which was awaiting me two paces away from this life, on the third storey of a huge house crowded from top to bottom with inhabitants who, as it seemed to me, had nothing whatever to do with any art. These busy cross passers-by, among whom I moved with my music-book under my arm; old Natalya who escorted me and always unconsciously set me trying to solve the riddle of what she was thinking about — then my teacher, a queer fellow, half Italian and half French, at moments a genuine enthusiast, far more often a pedant and most of all a

money-grubber — all this intertained me, and made me laugh or ponder. Moreover, I loved music with timid but passionate hope, built castles in the air, fashioned for myself the most marvellous future, and often as I came back was fired by my own imaginings. In fact, at those hours I was almost happy.

I had just such a moment that day, when at ten o'clock I was coming home from my lesson. I had forgotten everything, and I remember I was absorbed in some joyful dream. But all at once, as I was going upstairs, I started as though I were scalded. I heard above me the voice of Pyotr Alexandrovitch, who at that moment was coming downstairs. The unpleasant feeling that came over me was so intense, the memory of yesterday's incident impressed me so disagreeably, that I could not conceal my discomfort. I made a slight bow to him, but my face was probably expressive at the moment, for he stopped short, facing me in surprise. Noticing his movement, I flushed crimson and went hurriedly upstairs; he muttered something after me and went his way. I was ready to cry with vexation, and could not understand what it was that had happened. I was not myself all the morning, and did not know what course to take in order to make an end of it and be rid of it all as quickly as possible. A thousand times I vowed to myself to be more sensible, and a thousand times I was overwhelmed with dread of what I might do. I felt that I hated Alexandra Mihalovna's husband, and yet at the same time I was in despair over my own behaviour. Continual agitation made me quite unwell on this occasion, and I was utterly unable to control myself. I felt vexed with everyone; I sat in my room all the morning and did not even go to Alexandra Mihalovna. She came to see me. She almost cried out when she glanced at me. I was so pale that I was frightened myself when I looked in the looking-glass. Alexandra Mihalovna stayed a whole hour with me, looking after me as though I were a little child.

But her attention made me so depressed, her kindness weighed upon me so, it was such an agony to look at her, that at last I asked her to leave me alone. She went away in great anxiety about me. At last my misery found a vent in tears and hysterics. Towards evening I felt better....

Better, because I made up my mind to go to her. I made up my mind to fall on my knees before her, to give her the letter she had lost, and to tell her about everything; to tell her about all the agonies I had endured, all my doubts; to embrace her with the boundless love that glowed in my heart, for

her, my martyr; to tell her that I was her child, her friend, that my heart was open to her, that she must look into it and see the ardent, steadfast feeling for her in it. My God! I knew, I felt, that I was the last to whom she could open her heart, but it seemed to me that that made the salvation more certain, and would make the effect of my words more powerful... Though vaguely and obscurely, I did understand her sufferings, and my heart boiled with indignation at the thought that she might blush before me, before my judgment.... Poor darling, my poor darling, as though you were the sinner! That's what I should say to her, weeping at her feet. My sense of justice was revolted, I was furious. I don't know what I should have done, but I only came to my senses afterwards when an unexpected incident saved me and her from disaster, by checking me at my first step. Then I was horrified. Could her tortured heart have risen to hope again? I should have killed her at one blow!

This is what happened. I was on my way to her study and only two rooms from it, when Pyotr Alexandrovitch came in by a side door and, not noticing me, went on before me. He, too, was going to see her. I stood stock-still; he was the last person I wanted to meet at such a moment. I wanted to get away, but curiosity kept me rooted to the spot.

He stood for a minute before the looking-glass, arranged his hair, and to my intense astonishment I suddenly heard him begin humming a tune. Instantly an obscure far-away incident of my childhood rose to my memory. To understand the strange sensation I felt at that moment, I will describe the incident. It was an incident that made a profound impression upon me in the first year of my living in that house, although only now its significance became clear, for only now, only at this moment, I realised what was the origin of my unaccountable aversion for the man! I have already mentioned that even in those days I always felt ill at ease with him. I have already described the depressing effect on me of his frowning anxious air, and the expression of his face so frequently melancholy and dejected; how unhappy I was after the hours we spent together at Alexandra Mihalovna's tea-table, and what agonising misery rent my heart on the two or three occasions when it was my lot to witness the gloomy, sinister scenes which I have referred to already. It happened that I came upon him then just as I had done now — in the same room, at the same time, when he, like me, was going to see Alexandra Mihalovna. I had been overcome with purely childish shyness of meeting him alone, and so hid in a corner as though I had done

something wrong, praying to fate that he might not notice me. Just as now he had stopped before the looking-glass, and I shuddered with a vague unchildlike feeling. It seemed to me as though he were making up his face. Anyway, I had clearly seen a smile on his face before he went to the looking-glass; I saw him laughing, as I had never seen him before, for (I remember that it was this that had struck me most of all) he never laughed in the presence of Alexandra Mihalovna. But as soon as he looked in the looking-glass his face was completely transformed. The smile disappeared as though at the word of command, and his lips were twisted by some bitter feeling, which seemed to spring from the heart spontaneously against his will, a feeling which it seemed beyond human power to disguise in spite of the most magnanimous efforts, a paroxysm of pain brought lines into his forehead and seemed to weigh upon his brow. His eyes were darkly concealed behind spectacles — in short, he seemed as though at a given signal to be changed into a different man. I remember that I, as a little child, shuddered with fear from dread of understanding what I had seen, and from that time an uncomfortable, disagreeable impression was stored away in my heart for ever. After looking at himself for a minute in the looking-glass, he, with bent head and bowed figure, looking as he always did before Alexandra Mihalovna, went on tiptoe to her study. This was the incident that had struck me in the past.

Now, just as then, he stopped before the same looking-glass and thought that he was alone. Just as then I, with a hostile, unpleasant feeling, found myself alone with him; but when I heard that singing (singing from him, from whom it was so impossible to expect anything of the kind!), which struck me as so unexpected that I stood as though rooted to the spot, when at that very instant I was reminded of the almost exactly similar moment of my childhood, I cannot describe the malignant feeling that went through my heart. All my nerves quivered, and in response to this luckless song I went off into such a peal of laughter that the poor singer, uttering a cry, stepped two paces back from the looking-glass and, pale as death, as though ignominiously caught in the act, looked at me, beside himself with alarm, wonder and fury. His expression affected me nervously. I replied to it with a nervous hysterical laugh right in his face, I walked by him laughing and, still laughing, went in to Alexandra Mihalovna. I knew that he was standing behind the curtains over the door, that he was perhaps hesitating whether to come in or not, that he was rooted to the spot by rage and cowardice, and

with a nervous defiant impatience I wanted to see what he would do. I was ready to bet that he would not come in, and I was right. He did not come in till half an hour later. Alexandra Mihalovna looked at me for a long time in the utmost perplexity. But her inquiries as to what was the matter with me were fruitless. I could not answer, I was gasping for breath. At last she understood that I was in hysterics, and looked after me anxiously. When I had recovered I took her hands and began kissing them. Only then I grasped the position, and only then the thought occurred to me that I should have been the death of her if it had not been for the encounter with her husband. I looked at her as one risen from the dead.

Pyotr Alexandrovitch walked in. I took a furtive glance at him; he looked as though nothing had passed between us, that is, he was gloomy and austere as usual. But from his pale face and the faintly twitching corners of his mouth I guessed that he could hardly conceal his perturbation. He greeted Alexandra Mihalovna coldly and sat down in his place without a word. His hand trembled as he took his cup of tea. I expected an explosion, and I was overcome by an exaggerated terror. I should have liked to retreat, but could not bring myself to leave Alexandra Mihalovna. At the sight of her husband, she, too, had a foreboding of trouble. At last, what I was expecting with such terror happened.

In the midst of a profound silence I raised my eyes and met Pyotr Alexandrovitch's spectacles turned straight upon me. This was so unexpected that I started, almost cried out, and dropped my eyes. Alexandra Mihalovna noticed my perturbation.

"What's the matter with you? What are you blushing at?" I heard Pyotr Alexandrovitch's harsh voice.

I was silent; my heart was thumping so that I could not answer a word.

"What is she blushing at? Why is she always blushing?" he asked, addressing Alexandra Mihalovna and rudely pointing towards me.

I could hardly breathe for indignation. I flung an imploring glance at Alexandra Mihalovna. She understood me. Her pale cheeks flushed.

"Anneta," she said to me in a firm voice, such as I should never have expected from her, "go to your own room, I'll come to you in a minute; we will spend the evening together...."

"I asked you a question, did you hear me or not?" Pyotr Alexandrovitch interrupted, raising his voice still higher, and seeming not to hear what his wife had said. "Why do you blush when you meet me? Answer!"

“Because you make her blush and me too,” answered Alexandra Mihalovna in a breaking voice.

I looked with surprise at Alexandra Mihalovna. The heat of her retort was quite incomprehensible to me for the first moment.

“I make you blush — I?” answered Pyotr Alexandrovitch, emphasising the word I, and apparently roused to fury too. “*You* have blushed for *me?* Do you mean to tell me *I* can make *you* blush for *me?* It’s for *you* to blush, not for me, don’t you think?”

This phrase, uttered with such callous biting sarcasm, was so intelligible to me that I gave a cry of horror and rushed to Alexandra Mihalovna. Surprise, pain, reproach and horror were all depicted on her face, which began to turn deathly pale. Clasping my hands with a look of entreaty, I glanced at Pyotr Alexandrovitch. It seemed as though he himself thought he had gone too far; but the fury that had wrung that phrase out of him had not passed. Noticing my mute prayer, he was confused, however. My gesture betrayed clearly that I knew a great deal of what had hitherto been a secret between them, and that I quite understood his words.

“Anneta, go to your room,” Alexandra Mihalovna repeated in a weak but firm voice, getting up from her chair. “I want to speak to Pyotr Alexandrovitch...”

She was calm on the surface; but that calm made me more frightened than any excitement would have done. I behaved as though I did not hear what she said, and remained stock-still. I strained every nerve to read in her face what was passing in her soul at that instant. It seemed to me that she had understood neither my gesture nor my exclamation.

“See what you have done, miss!” said Pyotr Alexandrovitch, taking my hand and pointing to his wife.

My God! I have never seen such despair as I read now on that crushed, deathly-looking face. He took me by the hand and led me out of the room. I took one last look at them. Alexandra Mihalovna was standing with her elbows on the mantelpiece, holding her head tight in both hands. Her whole attitude was expressive of unbearable torture. I seized Pyotr Alexandrovitch’s hand and squeezed it warmly.

“For God’s sake, for God’s sake,” I brought out in a breaking voice, “spare her!”

“Don’t be afraid, don’t be afraid,” he said, looking at me strangely; “it’s nothing, it’s nerves. Go along, go along.”

Going into my room, I threw myself on the sofa and hid my face in my hands. For three whole hours I remained in that attitude, and I passed through a perfect hell during those hours. At last I could bear it no longer, and sent to inquire whether I could go to Alexandra Mihalovna. Madame Leotard came with an answer. Pyotr Alexandrovitch sent to say that the attack was over, that there was no need for anxiety, but that Alexandra Mihalovna must have rest. I did not go to bed till three o'clock in the morning, but walked up and down the room thinking. My position was more perplexing than ever, but I somehow felt calmer, perhaps because I felt myself more to blame than anyone. I went to bed looking forward impatiently to the next day.

But next day, to my grievous surprise, I found an unaccountable coldness in Alexandra Mihalovna. At first I fancied that it was painful to her pure and noble heart to be with me after the scene of the day before with her husband, of which I had been the involuntary witness. I knew that the childlike creature was capable of blushing at the sight of me, and begging my forgiveness for the unlucky scene's having wounded me the day before. But I soon noticed in her another anxiety and an annoyance, which showed itself very awkwardly; at one time she would answer me coldly and dryly, then a peculiar significance could be detected in her words, then she would suddenly become very tender with me as though repenting the harshness which she could not feel in her heart, and there was a note of reproach in her affectionate and gentle words. At last I asked her directly what was the matter, and whether she had anything to say to me. She was a little taken aback at my rapid question, but at once raising her large clear eyes and looking at me with a tender smile, she said —

"It's nothing, Nyetochka; only do you know, when you asked me so quickly I was rather taken aback. That was because you asked me so quickly.... I assure you. But listen — tell me the truth, my child — have you got anything on your mind which would have made you as confused if you had been asked about it so quickly and unexpectedly?"

"No," I answered, looking at her with clear eyes.

"Well, that is good to hear! If you only knew, my dear, how grateful I am to you for that good answer. Not that I could suspect you of anything bad — never. I could not forgive myself the thought of such a thing. But listen; I took you as a child, and now you are seventeen. You see for yourself: I am ill, I am like a child myself, I have to be looked after. I cannot fully take the

place of a mother to you, although there was more than enough love in my heart for that. If I am troubled by anxiety now it is, of course, not your fault, but mine. Forgive me for the question, and for my having perhaps involuntarily failed in keeping the promises I made to you and my father when I took you into my house. This worries me very much, and has often worried me, my dear."

I embraced her and shed tears.

"Oh, I thank you; I thank you for everything," I said, bathing her hands with my tears. "Don't talk to me like that, don't break my heart. You have been more than a mother to me, yes; may God bless you and the prince for all you have both done for a poor, desolate child!"

"Hush, Nyetochka, hush! Hug me instead; that's right, hold me tight! Do you know, I believe, I don't know why, that it is the last time you will embrace me."

"No, no," I said, sobbing like a child; "no, that cannot be. You will be happy.... You have many days before you. Believe me, we shall be happy."

"Thank you, thank you for loving me so much. I have not many friends about me now; they have all abandoned me!"

"Who have abandoned you? Who are they?"

"There used to be other people round me; yon don't know, Nyetochka. They have all left me. They have all faded away as though they were ghosts. And I have been waiting for them, waiting for them all my life. God be with them. Look, Nyetochka, you see it is late autumn, soon the snow will be here; with the first snow I shall die — but I do not regret it.

Farewell."

Her face was pale and thin, an ominous patch of red glowed on each cheek, her lips quivered and were parched by fever.

She went up to the piano and struck a few chords; at that instant a string snapped with a clang and died away in a long jarring sound...

"Do you hear, Nyetochka, do you hear?" she said all at once in a sort of inspired voice, pointing to the piano. "That string was strained too much, to the breaking point, it could bear no more and has perished. Do you hear how plaintively the sound is dying away?"

She spoke with difficulty. Mute spiritual pain was reflected in her face, her eyes filled with tears.

"Come, Nyetochka, enough of that, my dear. Fetch the children."

I brought them in. She seemed to find repose as she looked at them, and sent them away an hour later.

“You will not forsake them when I am dead, Nyetochka? Will you?” she said in a whisper, as though afraid someone might overhear us.

“Hush, you are killing me!” was all I could say to her in answer.

“I was joking,” she said with a smile, after a brief pause. “And you believed me. You know, I talk all sorts of nonsense sometimes. I am like a child now, you must forgive me everything.”

Then she looked at me timidly, as though afraid to say something. I waited.

“Mind you don’t alarm him,” she said at last, dropping her eyes, with a faint flush in her cheeks, and in so low a voice that I could hardly catch her words.

“Whom?” I asked, with surprise.

“My husband. You might perhaps tell him what I have said.”

“What for, what for?” I repeated, more and more surprised.

“Well, perhaps you wouldn’t tell him, how can I say!” she answered, trying to glance shyly at me, though the same simple-hearted smile was shining on her lips, and the colour was mounting more and more into her face. “Enough of that; I am still joking, you know.”

My heart ached more and more.

“Only you will love them when I am dead, won’t you?” she added gravely, and again, as it seemed, with a mysterious air. “You will love them as if they were your own. Won’t you? Remember, I always looked on you as my own, and made no difference between you and the children.”

“Yes, yes,” I answered, not knowing what I was saying, and breathless with tears and confusion.

A hot kiss scalded my hand before I had time to snatch it away. I was tongue-tied with amazement.

What is the matter with her? What is she thinking? What happened between them yesterday? was the thought that floated through my mind.

A minute later she began to complain of being tired.

“I have been ill a long time, but I did not want to frighten you two. You both love me — don’t you...? Good-bye for now, Nyetochka; leave me, but be sure to come in the evening. You will, won’t you?”

I promised to; but I was glad to get away, I could not have borne any more.

“Poor darling, poor darling! What suspicion are you taking with you to the grave?” I exclaimed to myself, sobbing. “What new trouble is poisoning and gnawing your heart, though you scarcely dare to breathe a word of it? My God! This long suffering which I understand now through and through, this life without a ray of sunshine, this timid love that asks for nothing! And even now, now, almost on her death-bed, when her heart is torn in two with pain, she is afraid, like a criminal, to utter the faintest murmur, the slightest complaint — and imagining, inventing a new sorrow, she has already submitted to it, is already resigned to it...”

Towards the evening, in the twilight, I took advantage of the absence of Ovrov (the man who had come from Moscow) to go into the library and, unlocking a bookcase, began rummaging among the bookshelves to choose something to read aloud to Alexandra Mihalovna. I wanted to distract her mind from gloomy thoughts, and to choose something gay and light... I was a long time, absent-mindedly choosing. It got darker, and my depression grew with the darkness. I found in my hands the same book again, with the page turned down on which even now I saw the imprint of the letter, which had never left my bosom since that day — the secret with which my existence seemed, as it were, to have been broken and to have begun anew, and with which so much that was cold, unknown, mysterious, forbidding and now so ominously menacing in the distance had come upon me... What will happen to me? I wondered: the corner in which I had been so snug and comfortable would be empty. The pure clean spirit which had guarded my youth would leave me. What was before me? I was standing in a reverie over my past, now so dear to my heart, as it were striving to gaze into the future, into the unknown that menaced me... I recall that minute as though I were living it again; it cut so sharply into my memory.

I was holding the letter and the open book in my hands, my face was wet with tears. All at once I started with dismay; I heard the sound of a familiar voice. At the same time I felt that the letter was torn out of my hands. I shrieked and looked round; Pyotr Alexandrovitch was standing before me. He seized me by the arm and held me firmly; with his right hand he raised the letter to the light and tried to decipher the first lines... I cried out, and would have faced death rather than leave the letter in his hands. From his triumphant smile I saw that he had succeeded in making out the first lines. I lost my head...

A moment later I had dashed at him, hardly knowing what I was doing, and snatched the letter from him. All this happened so quickly that I had not time to realise how I had got the letter again. But seeing that he meant to snatch it out of my hand again, I made haste to thrust it into my bosom and step back three or four paces.

For half a minute we stared at each other in silence. I was still trembling with terror, pale. With quivering lips that turned blue with rage, he broke the silence.

“That’s enough!” he said in a voice weak with excitement. “You surely don’t wish me to use force; give me back the letter of your own accord.”

Only now I realised what had happened and I was breathless with resentment, shame, and indignation at this coarse brutality. Hot tears rolled down my burning cheeks. I was shaking all over with excitement, and was for some time incapable of uttering a word.

“Did you hear?” he said, advancing two paces towards me.

“Leave me alone, leave me alone!” I cried, moving away from him. “Your behaviour is low, ungentlemanly. You are forgetting yourself! Let me go!...”

“What? What’s the meaning of this? And you dare to take up that tone to me... after what you’ve... Give it me, I tell you!”

He took another step towards me, but glancing at me saw such determination in my eyes that he stopped, as though hesitating.

“Very good!” he said dryly at last, as though he had reached a decision, though he could still scarcely control himself. “That will do later, but first...”

Here he looked round him.

“You... Who let you into the library? How is it that this bookcase is open? Where did you get the key?”

“I am not going to answer you,” I said. “I can’t talk to you. Let me go, let me go.”

I went towards the door.

“Excuse me,” he said, holding me by the arm. “You are not going away like that.”

I tore my arm away from him without a word, and again made a movement towards the door.

“Very well. But I really cannot allow you to receive letters from your lovers in my house....”

I cried out with horror, and looked at him frantically....

“And so...”

“Stop!” I cried. “How can you? How could you say it to me? My God! My God!...”

“What? What? Are you threatening me too?”

But as I gazed at him, I was pale and overwhelmed with despair. The scene between us had reached a degree of exasperation I could not understand. My eyes besought him not to prolong it. I was ready to forgive the outrage if only he would stop. He looked at me intently, and visibly hesitated.

“Don’t drive me to extremes,” I whispered in horror.

“No, I must get to the bottom of it,” he said at last, as though considering. “I must confess the look in your eyes almost made me hesitate,” he added with a strange smile. “But unluckily, the fact speaks for itself. I succeeded in reading the first words of your letter. It’s a love letter. You won’t persuade me it isn’t! No, dismiss that idea from your mind! And that I could doubt it for a moment only proves that I must add to your excellent qualities your abilities as an expert liar, and therefore I repeat...”

As he talked, his face was more and more distorted with anger. He turned white, his lips were drawn and twitching, so that he could hardly articulate the last words. It was getting dark. I stood defenceless, alone, facing a man who was capable of insulting a woman. All appearances were against me too; I was tortured with shame, distracted, and could not understand this man’s fury. Beside myself with terror, I rushed out of the room without answering him, and only came to myself as I stood on the threshold of Alexandra Mihalovna’s study. At that instant I heard his footsteps; I was just about to go in when I stopped short as though thunderstruck.

“What will happen to her?” was the thought that flashed through my mind. “That letter!... No; better anything in the world than that last blow to her,” and I was rushing back. But it was too late; he was standing beside me.

“Let us go where you like, only not here, not here!” I whispered, clutching at his arm. “Spare her! I will go back to the library or... where you like! You will kill her!”

“It is you who are killing her,” he said, pushing me away.

Every hope vanished. I felt that to bring the whole scene before Alexandra Mihalovna was just what he wanted.

“For God’s sake,” I said, doing my utmost to hold him back. But at that instant the curtain was raised, and Alexandra Mihalovna stood facing us. She looked at us in surprise. Her face was paler than usual. She could hardly stand on her feet. It was evident that it had cost her a great effort to get as far as us when she heard our voices.

“Who is here? What are you talking about here?” she asked, looking at us in the utmost amazement.

There was a silence that lasted several moments, and she turned as white as a sheet. I flew to her, held her tight in my arms, and drew her back into her room. Pyotr Alexandrovitch walked in after me. I hid my face on her bosom and clasped her more and more tightly in my arms, half dead with suspense.

“What is it, Nyetochka, what’s happened to you both?” Alexandra Mihalovna asked a second time.

“Ask her, you defended her so warmly yesterday,” said Pyotr Alexandrovitch, sinking heavily into an arm-chair.

I held her more tightly in my embrace.

“But, my goodness, what is the meaning of it?” said Alexandra Milialovna in great alarm. “You are so irritated, and she is frightened and crying. Anneta, tell me all that has happened.”

“No, allow me first,” said Pyotr Alexandrovitch, coming up to us, taking me by the arm, and pulling me away from Alexandra Mihalovna. “Stand here,” he said, putting me in the middle of the room. “I wish to judge you before her who has been a mother to you. And don’t worry yourself, sit down,” he added, motioning Alexandra Mihalovna to an easy- chair. “It grieves me that I cannot spare you this unpleasant scene; but it must be so.”

“Good heavens! What is coming?” said Alexandra Mihalovna, in great distress, gazing alternately at me and her husband. I wrung my hands, feeling that the fatal moment was at hand. I expected no mercy from him now.

“In short,” Pyotr Alexandrovitch went on, “I want you to judge between us. You always (and I can’t understand why, it is one of your whims), you always — yesterday, for instance — thought and said... but I don’t know how to say it, I blush at the suggestion.... In short, you defended her, you attacked me, you charged me with *undue* severity; you even hinted at *another feeling,* suggesting that that provoked me to *undue* severity; you... but I do not understand why, I cannot help my confusion, and the colour

that flushes my face at the thought of your suppositions; and so I cannot speak of them directly, openly before her.... In fact you...”

“Oh, you won’t do that! No, you won’t say that!” cried Alexandra Mihalovna in great agitation, hot with shame. “No, spare her. It was all my fault, it was my idea! I have no suspicions now. Forgive me for them, forgive me. I am ill, you must forgive me, only do not speak of it to her, don’t.... Anneta,” she said, coming up to me, “Anneta, go out of the room, make haste, make haste! He was joking; it is all my fault; it is a tactless joke....”

“In short, you were jealous of her on my account,” said Pyotr Alexandrovitch, ruthlessly flinging those words in the face of her agonised suspense.

She gave a shriek, turned pale and leaned against her chair for support, hardly able to stand on her feet.

“God forgive you,” she said at last in a faint voice. “Forgive me for him, Nyetochka, forgive me; it was all my fault, I was ill, I...”

“But this is tyrannical, shameless, vile!” I cried in a frenzy, understanding it all at last, understanding why he wanted to discredit me in his wife’s eyes. “It’s below contempt; you...”

“Anneta!” cried Alexandra Mihalovna, clutching my hands in horror.

“It’s a farce, a farce, and nothing else!” said Pyotr Alexandrovitch, coming up to us in indescribable excitement. “It’s a farce, I tell you,” he went on, looking intently with a malignant smile at his wife. “And the only one deceived by the farce is — you. Believe me, *we,*” he brought out breathlessly, pointing at me, “are not at all afraid of discussing such matters; believe me, that we are not so maidenly as to be offended, to blush and to cover our ears, when we are talked to about such subjects. You must excuse me, I express myself plainly, simply, coarsely perhaps, but — it is necessary. Are you so sure, madam, of this... young person’s correctness of behaviour?”

“My God! What is the matter with you? You are forgetting yourself!” said Alexandra Mihalovna, numb and half dead with horror.

“Not so loud, please,” Pyotr Alexandrovitch interrupted her contemptuously. “I don’t like it. This is a simple matter, plain, vulgar in the extreme. I am asking you about her behaviour. Do you know...”

But I did not let him finish, and seizing him by the arm, I forcibly drew him away. Another minute — and everything might have been lost.

“Don’t speak of the letter,” I said quickly, in a whisper. “You will kill her on the spot. Censure of me will be censure of her too. She cannot judge me, for I know all.... Do you understand? I know *all!”*

He looked at me intently with wild curiosity, was confused; the blood rushed to his face.

“I know *all, all!”* I repeated.

He was still hesitating. A question was trembling on his lips. I forestalled him.

“This is what happened,” I said aloud hurriedly, addressing Alexandra Mihalovna, who was looking at us with timid and anxious amazement. “It was all my fault. I have been deceiving you for the last four years. I carried off the key of the library, and have for four years been secretly reading the books in it. Pyotr Alexandrovitch caught me reading a book which... could not, should not have been in my hands. In his anxiety over me, he has exaggerated the danger!... But I do not justify myself,” I added quickly, noticing a sarcastic smile on his lips. “It is all my fault. The temptation was too great for me, and having once done wrong, I was ashamed to confess what I had done.... That’s all, almost all that has passed between us.”

“Oho, how smart,” Pyotr Alexandrovitch whispered beside me.

Alexandra Mihalovna listened to me intently; but there was an unmistakable shade of mistrustfulness on her face. She kept looking first at me, then at her husband. A silence followed. I could hardly breathe. She let her head fall on her bosom and hid her face in her hands, considering and evidently weighing every word I had uttered. At last she raised her head and looked at me intently.

“Nyetochka, my child,” she said, “I know you cannot He. Was this everything that happened, absolutely all?”

“Yes, all,” I answered.

“Was that all?” she asked, addressing her husband.

“Yes,” he answered with an effort, “all!”

I heaved a sigh.

“On your word of honour, Nyetochka?”

“Yes,” I answered without faltering.

But I could not refrain from glancing at Pyotr Alexandrovitch. He laughed as he heard my answer. I flushed hotly, and my confusion did not escape poor Alexandra Mihalovna. There was a look of overwhelming agonising misery in her face.

“That’s enough,” she said mournfully. “I believe you. I cannot but believe you.”

“I think such a confession is sufficient,” said Pyotr Alexandrovitch. “You have heard! What would you have me think?”

Alexandra Mihalovna made no answer. The scene became more and more unbearable.

“I will look through all the books to-morrow,” Pyotr Alexandrovitch went on. “I don’t know what else there was there; but...”

“But what book was she reading?” asked Alexandra Mihalovna.

“What book? Answer,” he said, addressing me. “You can *explain things* better than I can,” he said, with a hidden irony.

I was confused, and could not say a word. Alexandra Mihalovna blushed and dropped her eyes. A long pause followed Pyotr Alexandrovitch. walked up and down the room in vexation.

“I don’t know what has passed between you,” Alexandra Mihalovna began at last, timidly articulating each word; “but if *that* was *all,”* she went on, trying to put a special significance into her voice, though she was embarrassed by her husband’s fixed stare and trying not to look at him, “if that was *all*, I don’t know what we all have to be so unhappy and despairing about. I am most to blame, I alone, and it troubles me very much. I have neglected her education, and I ought to answer for it all. She must forgive me, and I cannot and dare not blame her. But, again, what is there to be so desperate about? The danger is over. Look at her,” she went on, speaking with more and more feeling, and casting a searching glance at her husband, “look at her, has her indiscretion left any trace on her? Do you suppose I don’t know her, my child, my darling daughter? Don’t I know that her heart is pure and noble, that in that pretty little head,” she went on, drawing me towards her and fondling me, “there is clear, candid intelligence and a conscience that fears deceit.... Enough of this, my dear! Let us drop it! Surely something else is underlying our distress; perhaps it was only a passing shadow of antagonism. But we will drive it away by love, by good-will, and let us put away our perplexities. Perhaps there is a good deal that has not been spoken out between us, and I blame myself most. I was first reserved with you, I was the first to be suspicious — goodness knows of what, and my sick brain is to blame for it.... But since we have been open to some extent, you must both forgive me because... because indeed there was no great sin in what I suspected....”

As she said this she glanced shyly, with a flush on her cheek, at her husband, and anxiously awaited his words. As he heard her a sarcastic smile came on to his lips. He left off walking about and stopped directly facing her, with his hands behind his back. He seemed to be scrutinising her confusion, watched it, revelled in it; feeling his eyes fixed upon her, she was overwhelmed with confusion. He waited a moment as though he expected something more. At last he cut short the uncomfortable scene by a soft, prolonged, malignant laugh.

"I am sorry for you, poor woman!" he said at last gravely and bitterly, leaving off smiling. "You have taken up an attitude which you cannot keep up. What did you want? You wanted to incite me to answer, to rouse me by fresh suspicions, or rather by the old suspicion which you have failed to conceal in your words. The implication of your words, that there is no need to be angry with her, that she is good even after reading immoral books, the morality of which — I am saying what I think — seems already to have borne fruits, that you will answer for her yourself; wasn't that it? Well, in explaining that, you hint at something else; you imagine that my suspiciousness and my persecution arise from some other feeling. You even hinted to me yesterday — please do not stop me, I like to speak straight out — you even hinted yesterday that in some people (I remember that you observed that such people were most frequently steady, severe, straightforward, clever, strong, and God knows what other qualities you did not bestow on them in your generosity), that in some people, I repeat, love (and God knows why you imagined such a thing) cannot show itself except harshly, hotly, sternly, often in the form of suspicions and persecutions. I don't quite remember whether that was just what you said yesterday... please don't stop me. I know your protégée well: she can hear all, all, I repeat for the hundredth time, all. You are deceived. But I do not know why it pleases you to insist on my being just such a man. God knows why you want to dress me up like a tomfool. It is out of the question, at my age, to be in love with this young girl; moreover, let me tell you, madam, *I know my duty,* and however generously you may excuse me, I shall say as before, that *crime will always remain crime, that sin will always be sin, shameful, abominable, dishonourable, to whatever height of grandeur you raise the vicious feeling!* But enough, enough, and let me hear no more of these abominations!"

Alexandra Mihalovna was crying. “Well, let me endure this, let this be for me!” she said at last, sobbing and embracing me. “My suspicions may have been shameful, you may jeer so harshly at them; but you, my poor child, why are you condemned to hear such insults? and I cannot defend you! I am speechless! My God! I cannot be silent, sir, I can’t endure it.... Your behaviour is insane.”

“Hush, hush,” I whispered, trying to calm her excitement, afraid that her cruel reproaches would put him out of patience. I was still trembling with fear for her.

“But, blind woman!” he shouted, “you do not know, you do not see.”

He stopped for a moment.

“Away from her!” he said, addressing me and tearing my hand out of the hands of Alexandra Mihalovna. “I will not allow you to touch my wife; you pollute her, you insult her by your presence. But... but what forces me to be silent when it is necessary, when it is essential to speak?” he shouted, stamping. “And I will speak, I will tell you everything. I don’t know what you *know,* madam, and with what you tried to threaten me, and I don’t care to know. Listen!” he went oh, addressing Alexandra Mihalovna. “Listen...”

“Be silent!” I cried, darting forward. “Hold your tongue, not a word!”

“Listen!...”

“Hold your tongue in the name of...”

“In the name of what, madam?” he interrupted, with a rapid and piercing glance into my eyes. “In the name of what?” Let me tell you I pulled out of her hands a letter from a lover! So that’s what’s going on in our house! That’s what’s going on at your side! That’s what you have not noticed, not seen!”

I could hardly stand. Alexandra Mihalovna turned white as death.

“It cannot be,” she whispered in a voice hardly audible.

“I have seen the letter, madam; it has been in my hands; I have read the first lines and I am not mistaken: the letter was from a lover. She snatched it out of my hands. It is in her possession now — it is clear, it is so, there is no doubt of it; and if you still doubt it, look at her and then try and hope for a shadow of doubt.”

“Nyetochka!” cried Alexandra Mihalovna, rushing at me. “But no, don’t speak, don’t speak! I don’t understand what it was, how it was.... My God! My God!”

And she sobbed, hiding her face in her hands.

“But no, it cannot be,” she cried again. “You are mistaken. I know... I know what it means,” she said, looking intently at her husband. “You... I... could not... you are not deceiving me, Nyetochka, you cannot deceive me. Tell me all, all without reserve. He has made a mistake? Yes, he has made a mistake, hasn’t he? He has seen something else, he was blind! Yes, wasn’t he, wasn’t he? Why did you not tell me all about it, Nyetochka, my child, my own child?”

“Answer, make haste, make haste!” I heard Pyotr Alexandrovitch’s voice above my head. “Answer: did I or did I not see the letter in your hand?”

“Yes!” I answered, breathless with emotion.

“Is that letter from your lover?”

“Yes!” I answered.

“With whom you are now carrying on an intrigue?”

“Yes, yes, yes!” I said, hardly knowing what I was doing by now, and answering yes to every question, simply to put an end to our agony.

“You hear her. Well, what do you say now? Believe me, you kind, too confiding heart,” he added, taking his wife’s hand; “believe me and distrust all that your sick imagination has created. You see now, what this... young person is. I only wanted to show how impossible your suspicions were. I noticed all this long ago, and am glad that at last I have unmasked her before you. It was disagreeable to me to see her beside you, in your arms, at the same table with us, in my house, in fact, I was revolted by your blindness. That was the reason and the only reason that I observed her, watched her; my attention attracted your notice, and starting from God knows what suspicion, God only knows what you have deduced from it. But now the position is clear, every doubt is at an end, and to-morrow, madam, to-morrow you will leave my house,” he concluded, addressing me.

“Stop!” cried Alexandra Mihalovna, getting up from her chair. “I don’t believe in all this scene. Don’t look at me so dreadfully, don’t laugh at me. I want to judge you now. Anneta, my child, come to me, give me your hand, so. We are all sinners!” she said in a voice that quivered with tears, and she looked meekly at her husband. “And which of us can refuse anyone’s hand? Give me your hand, Anneta, my dear child; I am no worthier, no better than you; you cannot injure me by your presence, for I too, I *too* am a *sinner.”*

“Madam!” yelled Pyotr Alexandrovitch in amazement. “Madam! Restrain yourself! Do not forget yourself!...”

“I am not forgetting anything. Do not interrupt me, but let me have my say. You saw a letter in her hand, you even read it, you say, and she... has admitted that this letter is from the man she loves. But does that show that she is a criminal? Does that justify your treating her like this, insulting her like this before your wife? Yes, sir, before your wife? Have you gone into this affair? Do you know how it has happened?”

“The only thing is for me to run and beg her pardon. Is that what you want?” cried Pyotr Alexandrovitch. “It puts me out of all patience listening to you! Think what you are talking about. Do you know what you are talking about? Do you know what and whom you are defending? Why, I see through it all....”

“And you don’t see the very first thing because anger and pride prevent your seeing. You don’t see what I am defending and what I mean. I am not defending vice. But have you considered — and you will see clearly if you do consider — have you considered that perhaps she is as innocent as a child? Yes, I am not defending vice! I will make haste and explain myself, if that will be pleasant to you. Yes; if she had been a wife, a mother, and had forgotten her duties, oh, then I would have agreed with you.... You see I have made a reservation. Notice that and don’t reproach me. But what if she has received this letter thinking no harm? What if in her inexperience she has been carried away by her feelings and had no one to hold her back? If I am more to blame than anyone because I did not watch over her heart? If this letter is the first? If you have insulted her fragrant maidenly feelings with your coarse suspicions? What if you have sullied her imagination with your cynical talk about the letter? If you did not see the chaste maidenly shame which was shining on her face, pure as innocence, which I see now, which I saw when distracted, harassed, not knowing what to say and torn with anguish, she answered yes to all your inhuman questions? Yes, yes! Yes, it is inhuman; it is cruel. I don’t know you; I shall never forgive you this, never!”

“Yes, have mercy on me, have mercy on me!” I cried, holding her in my arms. “Spare me, trust me, do not repulse me....”

I fell on my knees before her.

“What if I had not been beside her,” she went on breathlessly, “and if you had frightened her with your words, and if the poor child had been herself persuaded that she was guilty, if you had confounded her conscience and soul and chattered the peace of her heart? My God! You mean to turn

her out of the house! But do you know who are treated like that? You know that if you turn her out of the house, you are turning us out together, both of us. Do you hear me, sir?”

Her eyes flashed; her bosom heaved; her feverish excitement reached a climax....

“Yes, I’ve heard enough, madam!” Pyotr Alexandrovitch shouted at last. “Enough of this! I know that there are Platonic passions, and to my sorrow I know it, madam, do you hear? To my sorrow. But I cannot put up with gilded vice, madam! I do not understand it. Away with tawdry trappings! And if you feel guilty, if you are conscious of some wrong-doing on your part (it is not for me to remind you of it, madam), if you, in fact, like the idea of leaving my house... there is nothing left for me to say, but that you made a mistake in not carrying out your design when it was the fitting moment.

If you have forgotten how many years ago, I will help you....”

I glanced at Alexandra Mihalovna, she was leaning on me and clutching convulsively at me, helpless with inward agony, half closing her eyes in intense misery. Another minute and she would have been ready to drop.

“Oh, for God’s sake, if only this once, spare her! Don’t say the last word,” I cried, flinging myself on my knees before Pyotr Alexandrovitch, and forgetting that I was betraying myself; but it was too late. A faint scream greeted my words, and the poor woman fell senseless on the floor.

“It is all over! You have killed her,” I said. “Call the servants, save her! I will wait for you in your study. I must speak to you; I will tell you all....”

“But what? But what?”

“Afterwards !”

The fainting and hysterics lasted two hours. The whole household was alarmed. The doctor shook his head dubiously. Two hours later I went into Pyotr Alexandrovitch’s study. He had only just come back from his wife, and was walking up and down the room, pale and distracted, biting his nails fill they bled. I had never seen him in such a state.

“What do you want to say to me?” he said in a harsh coarse voice. “You wanted to say something?”

“Here is the letter you found in my possession. Do you recognise it?”

“Yes.”

“Take it.”

He took the letter and raised it to the light. I watched him attentively. A few minutes later, he turned quickly to the fourth page and read the signature. I saw the blood rush to his head.

“What’s this?” he asked me, petrified with amazement.

“It’s three years ago that I found that letter in a book. I guessed that it was forgotten, I read it and learned everything. From that time forth it has been in my possession because I had no one to whom to give it. I could not give it to her. Could I to you? But you must have known the contents of this letter, and all the sorrowful story in it.... What your pretending is for, I don’t know. That is for the present dark to me. I cannot yet see clearly into your dark soul. You wanted to keep up your superiority over her, and have done so. But for what object? To triumph over a phantom, over a sick woman’s unhinged imagination, to prove to her that she has erred and you are more sinless than she! And you have attained your aim, for this suspicion of hers is the fixed idea of a failing brain, perhaps, the last plaint of a heart broken against the injustice of men’s verdict, with which you were at one. ‘What docs it matter if you have fallen in love with her?’ That is what she said, that is what she wanted to show you. Your vanity, your jealous egoism have been merciless. Good-bye! No need to explain! But mind, I know you, I see through you. Don’t forget that!”

I went to my own room, scarcely knowing what was happening to me. At the door I was stopped by Ovrov, Pyotr Alexandrovich’s secretary.

“I should like to have a word with you,” he said with a respectful bow.

I looked at him, scarcely understanding what he said to me.

“Afterwards. Excuse me, I am not well,” I answered at last, passing him.

“To-morrow then,” he said, bowing with an ambiguous smile.

But perhaps that was my fancy. All this seemed to flit before my eyes.

THE END OF THE FRAGMENT

LEFT UNFINISHED BY DOSTOYEVSKY

UNCLE'S DREAM



Translated by Constance Garnett

The Uncle's Dream was the first work that Dostoyevsky completed after his five years of agony in exile in Siberia and the novel reveals a profound transformation in the author's vision of the world. There is no longer the contained, brooding, dream-prone atmosphere of his earlier stories. Instead, *Uncle's Dream* is narrated with firm objectivity, combining satire, social reportage, puppet theatre and farce in its comic send-up of small-town manners and morals.



Dostoyevsky in the year of publication, 1859



The 2003 Russian TV series based on the short novel

UNCLE’S DREAM

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UNCLE’S DREAM

(FROM THE ANNALS OF MORDASOV)

CHAPTER I.

Maria Alexandrovna Moskaleva was the principal lady of Mordasoff — there was no doubt whatever on that point! She always bore herself as though *she* did not care a fig for anyone, but as though no one else could do without *her*. True, there were uncommonly few who loved her — in fact I may say that very many detested her; still, everyone was afraid of her, and that was what she liked!

Now, why did Maria Alexandrovna, who dearly loves scandal, and cannot sleep at night unless she has heard something new and piquant the day before, — why, or how did she know how to bear herself so that it would never strike anyone, looking at her, to suppose that the dignified lady was the most inveterate scandal-monger in the world — or at all events in Mordasoff? On the contrary, anyone would have said at once, that scandals and such-like pettiness must vanish in her presence; and that scandal-mongers, caught red-handed by Maria Alexandrovna, would blush and tremble, like schoolboys at the entrance of the master; and that the talk would immediately be diverted into channels of the loftiest and most sublime subjects so soon as she entered the room. Maria Alexandrovna knew many deadly and scandalous secrets of certain other Mordasoff inhabitants, which, if she liked to reveal them at any convenient opportunity, would produce results little less terrible than the earthquake of Lisbon. Still, she was very quiet about the secrets she knew, and never let them out except in cases of absolute need, and then only to her nearest and dearest friends. She liked to hint that she knew certain things, and frighten people out of their wits; preferring to keep them in a state of perpetual terror, rather than crush them altogether.

This was real talent — the talent of tactics.

We all considered Maria Alexandrovna as our type and model of irreproachable *comme-il-faut*! She had no rival in this respect in Mordasoff! She could kill and annihilate and pulverize any rival with a single word. We

have seen her do it; and all the while she would look as though she had not even observed that she had let the fatal word fall.

Everyone knows that this trait is a speciality of the highest circles.

Her circle of friends was large. Many visitors to Mordasoff left the town again in an ecstasy over her reception of them, and carried on a correspondence with her afterwards! Somebody even addressed some poetry to her, which she showed about the place with great pride. The novelist who came to the town used to read his novel to her of an evening, and ended by dedicating it to her; which produced a very agreeable effect. A certain German professor, who came from Carlsbad to inquire into the question of a little worm with horns which abounds in our part of the world, and who wrote and published four large quarto volumes about this same little insect, was so delighted and ravished with her amiability and kindness that to this very day he carries on a most improving correspondence upon moral subjects from far Carlsbad!

Some people have compared Maria Alexandrovna, in certain respects, with Napoleon. Of course it may have been her enemies who did so, in order to bring Maria Alexandrovna to scorn; but all I can say is, How is it that Napoleon, when he rose to his highest, that *too* high estate of his, became giddy and fell? Historians of the old school have ascribed this to the fact that he was not only not of royal blood, but was not even a gentleman! and therefore when he rose too high, he thought of his proper place, the ground, became giddy and fell! But why did not Maria Alexandrovna's head whirl? And how was it that she could always keep her place as the first lady of Mordasoff?

People have often said this sort of thing of Maria Alexandrovna; for instance: "Oh — yes, but how would she act under such and such difficult circumstances?" Yet, when the circumstances arose, Maria Alexandrovna invariably rose also to the emergency! For instance, when her husband — Afanassy Matveyevitch — was obliged to throw up his appointment, out of pure incapacity and feebleness of intellect, just before the government inspector came down to look into matters, all Mordasoff danced with delight to think that she would be down on her knees to this inspector, begging and beseeching and weeping and praying — in fact, that she would drop her wings and fall; but, bless you, nothing of the sort happened! Maria Alexandrovna quite understood that her husband was beyond praying for: he must retire. So she only rearranged her affairs a little, in such a manner

that she lost not a scrap of her influence in the place, and her house still remained the acknowledged head of all Mordasoff Society!

The procurer's wife, Anna Nicolaevna Antipova, the sworn foe of Maria Alexandrovna, though a friend so far as could be judged outside, had already blown the trumpet of victory over her rival! But when Society found that Maria Alexandrovna was extremely difficult to put down, they were obliged to conclude that the latter had struck her roots far deeper than they had thought for.

As I have mentioned Afanassy Matveyevitch, Maria Alexandrovna's husband, I may as well add a few words about him in this place.

Firstly, then, he was a most presentable man, so far as exterior goes, and a very high-principled person besides; but in critical moments he used to lose his head and stand looking like a sheep which has come across a new gate. He looked very majestic and dignified in his dress-coat and white tie at dinner parties, and so on; but his dignity only lasted until he opened his mouth to speak; for then — well, you'd better have shut your ears, ladies and gentlemen, when he began to talk — that's all! Everyone agreed that he was quite unworthy to be Maria Alexandrovna's husband. He only sat in his place by virtue of his wife's genius. In my humble opinion he ought long ago to have been derogated to the office of frightening sparrows in the kitchen garden. There, and only there, would he have been in his proper sphere, and doing some good to his fellow countrymen.

Therefore, I think Maria Alexandrovna did a very wise thing when she sent him away to her village, about a couple of miles from town, where she possessed a property of some hundred and twenty souls — which, to tell the truth, was all she had to keep up the respectability and grandeur of her noble house upon!

Everybody knew that Afanassy was only kept because he had earned a salary and perquisites; so that when he ceased to earn the said salary and perquisites, it surprised no-one to learn that he was sent away— "returned empty" to the village, as useless and fit for nothing! In fact, everyone praised his wife for her soundness of judgment and decision of character!

Afanassy lived in clover at the village. I called on him there once and spent a very pleasant hour. He tied on his white ties, cleaned his boots himself (not because he had no-one to do it for him, but for the sake of art, for he loved to have them *shine*), went to the bath as often as he could, had tea four times a day, and was as contented as possible.

Do you remember, a year and a half ago, the dreadful stories that were afoot about Zenaida, Maria Alexandrovna's and Afanassy's daughter? Zenaida was undoubtedly a fine, handsome, well-educated girl; but she was now twenty-three years old, and not married yet. Among the reasons put forth for Zenaida being still a maid, one of the strongest was those dark rumours about a strange attachment, a year and a half ago, with the schoolmaster of the place — rumours not hushed up even to this day. Yes, to this very day they tell of a love-letter, written by Zina, as she was called, and handed all about Mordasoff. But kindly tell me, who ever saw this letter? If it went from hand to hand what became of it? Everyone seems to have heard of it, but no one ever saw it! At all events, *I* have never met anyone who actually saw the letter with his own eyes. If you drop a hint to Maria Alexandrovna about it, she simply does not understand you.

Well, supposing that there *was* something, and that Zina did write such a letter; what dexterity and skill of Maria Alexandrovna, to have so ably nipped the bud of the scandal! I feel sure that Zina *did* write the letter; but Maria Alexandrovna has managed so well that there is not a trace, not a shred of evidence of the existence of it. Goodness knows how she must have worked and planned to save the reputation of this only daughter of hers; but she managed it somehow.

As for Zina not having married, there's nothing surprising in that. Why, what sort of a husband could be found for her in Mordasoff? Zina ought to marry a reigning prince, if anyone! Did you ever see such a beauty among beauties as Zina? I think not. Of course, she was very proud — too proud.

There was Mosgliakoff — some people said she was likely to end by marrying *him*; but I never thought so. Why, what was there in Mosgliakoff? True, he was young and good looking, and possessed an estate of a hundred and fifty souls, and was a Petersburg swell; but, in the first place, I don't think there was much inside his head. He was such a funny, new-idea sort of man. Besides, what is an estate of a hundred and fifty souls, according to present notions? Oh, no; that's a marriage that never could come off.

There, kind reader, all you have just read was written by me some five months ago, for my own amusement. I admit, I am rather partial to Maria Alexandrovna; and I wished to write some sort of laudatory account of that charming woman, and to mould it into the form of one of those playful "letters to a friend," purporting to have been written in the old golden days

(which will never return — thank Heaven!) to one of the periodicals of the time, “The Northern Bee,” or some such paper. But since I have no “friend,” and since I am, besides, naturally of a timid disposition, and especially so as to my literary efforts, the essay remained on my writing-table, as a memorial of my early literary attempts and in memory of the peaceful occupation of a moment or two of leisure.

Well, five months have gone by, and lo! great things have happened at Mordasoff!

Prince K —— drove into the town at an early hour one fine morning, and put up at Maria Alexandrovna’s house! The prince only stayed three days, but his visit proved pregnant with the most fatal consequences. I will say more — the prince brought about what was, in a certain sense, a revolution in the town, an account of which revolution will, of course, comprise some of the most important events that have ever happened in Mordasoff; and I have determined at last, after many heart-sinkings and flutterings, and much doubt, to arrange the story into the orthodox literary form of a novel, and present it to the indulgent Public! My tale will include a narrative of the Rise and Greatness and Triumphant Fall of Maria Alexandrovna, and of all her House in Mordasoff, a theme both worthy of, and attractive to any writer!

Of course I must first explain why there should have been anything extraordinary in the fact that Prince K —— came to Mordasoff, and put up at Maria Alexandrovna’s mansion. And in order to do this, I must first be allowed to say a few words about this same Prince K —— . This I shall now do. A short biography of the nobleman is absolutely necessary to the further working out of my story. So, reader, you must excuse me.

CHAPTER II.

I will begin, then, by stating that Prince K —— was not so very, very old, although, to look at him, you would think he *must* fall to pieces every moment, so decayed, or rather, worn-out was he. At Mordasoff all sorts of strange things were told of him. Some declared that the old prince's wits had forsaken him. All agreed that it was passing strange that the owner of a magnificent property of four thousand souls, a man of rank, and one who could have, if he liked, a great influence, and play a great part in his country's affairs; that such a man should live all alone upon his estate, and make an absolute hermit of himself, as did Prince K —— . Many who had known him a few years before insisted upon it that he was very far from loving solitude then, and was as unlike a hermit as anyone could possibly be.

However, here is all I have been able to learn authentically as to his antecedents, etc.: —

Some time or other, in his younger days — which must have been a mighty long while ago, — the prince made a most brilliant entry into life. He knocked about and enjoyed himself, and sang romantic songs, and wrote epigrams, and led a fast life generally, very often abroad, and was full of gifts and intellectual capacity.

Of course he very soon ran through his means, and when old age approached, he suddenly found himself almost penniless. Somebody recommended him to betake himself to his country seat, which was about to be sold by public auction. So off he went with that intention; but called in at Mordasoff, and stopped there six months. He liked this provincial life, and while in our town he spent every farthing he had left in the world, continuing his reckless life as of old, galivanting about, and forming intimacies with half the ladies of Mordasoff.

He was a kind-hearted, good sort of a man, but, of course, not without certain princely failings, which, however, were accounted here to be nothing but evidences of the highest breeding, and for this reason caused a good effect instead of aversion. The ladies, especially, were in a state of perpetual ecstasy over their dear guest. They cherished the fondest and tenderest recollections of him. There were also strange traditions and rumours about the prince. It was said that he spent more than half the day at

his toilet table; and that he was, in fact, made up of all sorts of little bits. No one could say when or how he had managed to fall to pieces so completely.

He wore a wig, whiskers, moustache, and even an “espagnole,” all false to a hair, and of a lovely raven black; besides which he painted and rouged every day. It was even said that he managed to do away with his wrinkles by means of *hidden springs* — hidden somehow in his wig. It was said, further, that he wore stays, in consequence of the want of a rib which he had lost in Italy, through being caused to fly, involuntarily, out of a window during a certain love affair. He limped with his left foot, and it was whispered that the said foot was a cork one — a very scientific member, made for him in place of the real one which came to grief during another love affair, in Paris this time. But what will not people say? At all events, I know for a fact that his right eye was a glass one; beautifully made, I confess, but still — glass. His teeth were false too.

For whole days at a time he used to wash himself in all sorts of patent waters and scents and pomades.

However, no one could deny that even then he was beginning to indulge in senile drivel and chatter. It appeared his career was about over; he had seen his best days, everyone knew that he had not a copeck left in the world!

Then, suddenly and unexpectedly, an old relative of his — who had always lived in Paris, but from whom he never had had the slightest hope of inheritance — died, after having buried her legal heir exactly a month before! The prince, to his utter astonishment, turned out to be the next heir, and a beautiful property of four thousand serfs, just forty miles from Mordasoff, became his — absolutely and unquestionably!

He immediately started off to Petersburg, to see to his affairs. Before he departed, however, the ladies of our town gave him a magnificent subscription banquet. They tell how bewitching and delightful the prince was at this last dinner; how he punned and joked and told the most *unusual* stories; and how he promised to come to Donchanovo (his new property) very soon, and gave his word that on his arrival he would give endless balls and garden parties and picnics and fireworks and entertainments of all kinds, for his friends here.

For a whole year after his departure, the ladies of the place talked of nothing but these promised festivities; and awaited the arrival of the “dear old man” with the utmost impatience. At last the prince arrived; but to the

disappointment and astonishment of everyone, he did not even call in at Mordasoff on the way; and on his arrival at Donchanovo he shut himself up there, as I have expressed it before, like a very hermit.

All sorts of fantastic rumours were bruited about, and from this time the prince's life and history became most secret, mysterious, and incomprehensible.

In the first place, it was declared that the prince had not been very successful in St. Petersburg; that many of his relations — future heirs and heirs presumptive, and so on, had wished to put the Prince under some kind of restraint, on the plea of "feebleness of intellect;" probably fearing that he would run through this property as he had done with the last! And more, some of them went so far as to suggest that he should be popped into a lunatic asylum; and he was only saved by the interference of one of the nearest of kin, who pointed out that the poor old prince was more than half dead already, and that the rest of him must inevitably soon die too; and that then the property would come down to them safely enough without the need of the lunatic asylum. I repeat, what will not people say? Especially at our place, Mordasoff! All this, it was said, had frightened the prince dreadfully; so that his nature seemed to change entirely, and he came down to live a hermit life at Donchanovo.

Some of our Mordasoff folk went over to welcome him on his arrival; but they were either not received at all or received in the strangest fashion. The prince did not recognise his old friends: many people explained that he did not *wish* to recognise them. Among other visitors to Donchanovo was the Governor.

On the return of the latter from his visit, he declared that the prince was undoubtedly a little "off his head." The Governor always made a face if anyone reminded him of this visit of his to Donchanovo. The ladies were dreadfully offended.

At last an important fact was revealed: namely, that there was with the prince, and apparently in authority over him, some unknown person of the name of Stepanida Matveyevna, who had come down with him from St. Petersburg; an elderly fat woman in a calico dress, who went about with the house-keys in her hand; and that the prince obeyed this woman like a little child, and did not dare take a step without her leave; that she washed him and dressed him and soothed and petted him just like a nurse with a baby; and lastly, that she kept all visitors away from him, even relations — who,

little by little, had begun to pervade the place rather too frequently, for the purpose of seeing that all was right.

It was said that this person managed not only the prince, but his estate too: she turned off bailiffs and clerks, she encashed the rents, she looked after things in general — and did it well, too; so that the peasants blessed their fate under her rule.

As for the prince, it was rumoured that he spent his days now almost entirely at his toilet-table, trying on wigs and dress-coats, and that the rest of his time was spent playing cards and games with Stepanida Matveyevna, and riding on a quiet old English mare. On such occasions his nurse always accompanied him in a covered droshky, because the prince liked to ride out of bravado, but was most unsafe in his saddle.

He had been seen on foot too, in a long great coat and a straw hat with a wide brim; a pink silk lady's tie round his neck, and a basket on his arm for mushrooms and flowers and berries, and so on, which he collected. The nurse accompanied him, and a few yards behind walked a manservant, while a carriage was in attendance on the high road at the side. When any peasant happened to meet him, and with low bow, and hat in hand, said, "Good morning, your highness — our beloved Sun, and Father of us all," or some such Russian greeting, he would stick his eye-glass in his eye, nod his head and say, with great urbanity, and in French, "Bon jour, mon ami, bon jour!"

Lots of other rumours there were — in fact, our folks could not forget that the prince lived so near them.

What, then, must have been the general amazement when one fine day it was trumpeted abroad that the prince — their curious old hermit-prince, had arrived at Mordasoff, and put up at Maria Alexandrovna's house!

Agitation and bewilderment were the order of the day; everybody waited for explanations, and asked one another what could be the meaning of this mystery? Some proposed to go and see for themselves; all agreed that it was *most* extraordinary. The ladies wrote notes to each other, came and whispered to one another, and sent their maids and husbands to find out more.

What was particularly strange was, why had the prince put up at Maria Alexandrovna's, and not somewhere else? This fact annoyed everyone; but, most of all, Mrs. Antipova, who happened to be a distant relative of the prince.

However, in order to clear up all these mysteries and find an answer to all these questions, we must ourselves go and see Maria Alexandrovna. Will you follow me in, kind reader? It is only ten in the morning, certainly, as you point out; but I daresay she will receive such intimate friends, all the same. Oh, yes; she’ll see us all right.

CHAPTER III.

It is ten o’clock in the morning, and we are at Maria Alexandrovna’s, and in that room which the mistress calls her “salon” on great occasions; she has a boudoir besides.

In this salon the walls are prettily papered, and the floor is nicely painted; the furniture is mostly red; there is a fireplace, and on the mantelpiece a bronze clock with some figure — a Cupid — upon it, in dreadfully bad taste. There are large looking-glasses between the windows. Against the back wall there stands a magnificent grand piano — Zina’s — for Zina is a musician. On a table in the middle of the room hisses a silver tea-urn, with a very pretty tea-set alongside of it.

There is a lady pouring out tea, a distant relative of the family, and living with Maria Alexandrovna in that capacity, one Nastasia Petrovna Ziablova. She is a widow of over thirty, a brunette with a fresh-looking face and lively black eyes, not at all bad looking.

She is of a very animated disposition, laughs a great deal, is fond of scandal, of course; and can manage her own little affairs very nicely. She has two children somewhere, being educated. She would much like to marry again. Her last husband was a military man.

Maria Alexandrovna herself is sitting at the fire in a very benign frame of mind; she is dressed in a pale-green dress, which becomes her very well; she is unspeakably delighted at the arrival of the Prince, who, at this moment, is sitting upstairs, at his toilet table. She is so happy, that she does not even attempt to conceal her joy. A young man is standing before her and relating something in an animated way; one can see in his eyes that he wishes to curry favour with his listener.

This young fellow is about twenty-five years old, and his manners are decidedly good, though he has a silly way of going into raptures, and has, besides, a good deal too much of the “funny man” about him. He is well dressed and his hair is light; he is not a bad-looking fellow. But we have already heard of this gentleman: he is Mr. Mosgliakoff. Maria Alexandrovna considers him rather a stupid sort of a man, but receives him very well. He is an aspirant for the hand of her daughter Zina, whom, according to his own account, he loves to distraction. In his conversation, he refers to Zina every other minute, and does his best to bring a smile to

her lips by his witty remarks; but the girl is evidently very cool and indifferent with him. At this moment she is standing away at the side near the piano, turning over the leaves of some book.

This girl is one of those women who create a sensation amounting almost to amazement when they appear in society. She is lovely to an almost impossible extent, a brunette with splendid black eyes, a grand figure and divine bust. Her shoulders and arms are like an antique statue; her gait that of an empress. She is a little pale to-day; but her lips, with the gleam of her pearly teeth between them, are things to dream of, if you once get a sight of them. Her expression is severe and serious.

Mr. Mosgliakoff is evidently afraid of her intent gaze; at all events, he seems to cower before her when she looks at him. She is very simply dressed, in a white muslin frock — the white suits her admirably. But then, *everything* suits her! On her finger is a hair ring: it does not look as though the hair was her mother's, from the colour. Mosgliakoff has never dared to ask her whose hair it is. This morning she seems to be in a peculiarly depressed humour; she appears to be very much preoccupied and silent: but her mother is quite ready to talk enough for both; albeit she glances continually at Zina, as though anxious for her, but timidly, too, as if afraid of her.

"I am *so* pleased, Pavel Alexandrovitch," she chirps to Mosgliakoff; "*so* happy, that I feel inclined to cry the news out of the window to every passer-by. Not to speak of the delightful surprise — to both Zina and myself — of seeing you a whole fortnight sooner than we expected you — that, of course, 'goes without saying'; but I am so, *so* pleased that you should have brought this dear prince with you. You don't know how I love that fascinating old man. No, no! You would never believe it. You young people don't understand this sort of rapture; you never would believe me, assure you as much as ever I pleased.

"Don't you remember, Zina, how much he was to me at that time — six years ago? Why, I was his guide, his sister, his mother! There was something delightfully ingenuous and ennobling in our intimacy — one might say *pastoral*; I don't know what to call it — it was delightful. That is why the poor dear prince thinks of *my* house, and only mine, with gratitude, now. Do you know, Pavel Alexandrovitch, perhaps you have *saved* him by thus bringing him to me? I have thought of him with quaking of heart all these six years — you'd hardly believe it, — and *dreamed* of him, too. They

say that wretch of a woman has bewitched and ruined him; but you've got him out of the net at last. We must make the best of our opportunity now, and save him outright. Do tell me again, how did you manage it? Describe your meeting and all in detail; I only heard the chief point of the story just now, and I do so like details. So, he's still at his toilet table now, is he?—"

"Yes. It was all just as I told you, Maria Alexandrovna!" begins Mosgliakoff readily — delighted to repeat his story ten times over, if required— "I had driven all night, and not slept a wink. You can imagine what a hurry I was in to arrive here," he adds, turning to Zina; "in a word, I swore at the driver, yelled for fresh horses, kicked up a row at every post station: my adventures would fill a volume. Well, exactly at six o'clock in the morning I arrived at the last station, Igishova. 'Horses, horses!' I shouted, 'let's have fresh horses quick; I'm not going to get out.' I frightened the post-station man's wife out of her wits; she had a small baby in her arms, and I have an idea that its mother's fright will affect said baby's supply of the needful. Well, the sunrise was splendid — fine frosty morning — lovely! but I hadn't time to look at anything. I got my horses — I had to deprive some other traveller of his pair; he was a professor, and we nearly fought a duel about it.

"They told me some prince had driven off a quarter of an hour ago. He had slept here, and was driving his own horses; but I didn't attend to anything. Well, just seven miles from town, at a turn of the road, I saw that some surprising event had happened. A huge travelling carriage was lying on its side; the coachman and two flunkeys stood outside it, apparently dazed, while from inside the carriage came heart-rending lamentations and cries. I thought I'd pass by and let them all be — ; it was no affair of mine: but humanity insisted, and would not take a denial. (I think it is Heine says that humanity shoves its nose in everywhere!) So I stopped; and my driver and myself, with the other fellows, lifted the carriage on to its legs again, or perhaps I should say wheels, as it had no legs.

"I thought to myself, 'This is that very prince they mentioned!' So, I looked in. Good Heavens! it was our prince! Here was a meeting, if you like! I yelled at him, 'Prince — uncle!' Of course he hardly knew me at the first glance, but he very soon recognised me. At least, I don't believe he knows who I am really, even *now*; I think he takes me for someone else, not a relation. I saw him last seven years ago, as a boy; I remember *him*, because he struck me so; but how was he to remember *me*? At all events, I

told him my name, and he embraced me ecstatically; and all the while he himself was crying and trembling with fright. He really was *crying*, I'll take my oath he was! I saw it with my own eyes.

"Well, we talked a bit, and at last I persuaded him to get into my trap with me, and call in at Mordasoff, if only for one day, to rest and compose his feelings. He told me that Stepanida Matveyevna had had a letter from Moscow, saying that her father, or daughter, or both, with all her family, were dying; and that she had wavered for a long time, and at last determined to go away for ten days. The prince sat out one day, and then another, and then a third, measuring wigs, and powdering and pomading himself; then he grew sick of it, and determined to go and see an old friend, a priest called Misael, who lived at the Svetozersk Hermitage. Some of the household, being afraid of the great Stepanida's wrath, opposed the prince's proposed journey; but the latter insisted, and started last night after dinner. He slept at Igishova, and went off this morning again, at sunrise. Just at the turn going down to the Reverend Mr. Misael's, the carriage went over, and the prince was very nearly shot down the ravine."

"Then I step in and save the prince, and persuade him to come and pay a visit to our mutual friend, Maria Alexandrovna (of whom the prince told me that she is the most delightful and charming woman he has ever known). And so here we are, and the prince is now upstairs attending to his wigs and so on, with the help of his valet, whom he took along with him, and whom he always would and will take with him wherever he goes; because he would sooner die than appear before ladies without certain little secret touches which require the valet's hand. There you are, that's the whole story."

"Why, what a humourist he is, isn't he, Zina?" said the lady of the house. "How beautifully you told the story! Now, listen, Paul: one question; explain to me clearly how you are related to the prince; you call him uncle!"

"I really don't know, Maria Alexandrovna; seventh, cousin I think, or something of that sort. My aunt knows all about it; it was she who made me go down to see him at Donchanova, when I got kicked out by Stepanida! I simply call him 'uncle,' and he answers me; that's about all our relationship."

"Well, I repeat, it was Providence that made you bring him straight to my house as you did. I tremble to think of what might have happened to the poor dear prince if somebody else, and not I, had got hold of him! Why,

they'd have torn him to pieces among them, and picked his bones! They'd have pounced on him as on a new-found mine; they might easily have robbed him; they are capable of it. You have no idea, Paul, of the depth of meanness and greediness to which the people of this place have fallen!"

"But, my dear good Maria Alexandrovna — as if he would ever *think* of bringing him anywhere but to yourself," said the widow, pouring out a cup of tea; "you don't suppose he would have taken the prince to Mrs. Antipova's, surely, do you?"

"Dear me, how very long he is coming out," said Maria Alexandrovna, impatiently rising from her chair; "it really is quite strange!"

"Strange! what, of uncle? Oh dear, no! he'll probably be another five hours or so putting himself together; besides, since he has no memory whatever, he has very likely quite forgotten that he has come to your house! Why, he's a most extraordinary man, Maria Alexandrovna."

"Oh don't, don't! Don't talk like that!"

"Why not, Maria Alexandrovna? He is a lump of composition, not a man at all! Remember, you haven't seen him for six years, and I saw him half an hour ago. He is half a corpse; he's only the memory of a man; they've forgotten to bury him! Why, his eye is made of glass, and his leg of cork, and he goes on wires; he even talks on wires!"

Maria Alexandrovna's face took a serious expression. "What nonsense you talk," she said; "and aren't you ashamed of yourself, you, a young man and a relation too — to talk like that of a most honourable old nobleman! not to mention his incomparable personal goodness and kindness" (her voice here trembled with emotion). "He is a relic, a chip, so to speak, of our old aristocracy. I know, my dear young friend, that all this flightiness on your part, proceeds from those 'new ideas' of which you are so fond of talking; but, goodness me, I've seen a good deal more of life than you have: I'm a mother; and though I see the greatness and nobleness, if you like, of these 'new ideas,' yet I can understand the practical side of things too! Now, this gentleman is an old man, and that is quite enough to render him ridiculous in your eyes. You, who talk of emancipating your serfs, and 'doing something for posterity,' indeed! I tell you what it is, it's your Shakespeare! You stuff yourself full of Shakespeare, who has long ago outlived his time, my dear Paul; and who, if he lived now, with all his wisdom, would never make head or tail of our way of life!"

“If there be any chivalry left in our modern society, it is only in the highest circles of the aristocracy. A prince is a prince either in a hovel or in a palace! *You* are more or less a representative of the highest circles; your extraction is aristocratic. I, too, am not altogether a stranger to the upper ten, and it’s a bad fledgling that fouls its own nest! However, my dear Paul, you’ll forget your Shakespeare yet, and you’ll understand all this much better than I can explain it. I foresee it! Besides, I’m sure you are only joking; you did not mean what you said. Stay here, dear Paul, will you? I’m just going upstairs to make inquiries after the prince, he may want something.” And Maria Alexandrovna left the room hurriedly.

“Maria Alexandrovna seems highly delighted that Mrs. Antipova, who thinks so much of herself, did not get hold of the prince!” remarked the widow; “Mrs. Antipova must be gnashing her teeth with annoyance just now! She’s a relation, too, as I’ve been pointing out to Maria Alexandrovna.”

Observing that no one answered her, and casting her eyes on Zina and Mosgliakoff, the widow suddenly recollected herself, and discreetly left the room, as though to fetch something. However, she rewarded herself for her discretion, by putting her ear to the keyhole, as soon as she had closed the door after her.

Pavel Alexandrovitch immediately turned to Zina. He was in a state of great agitation; his voice shook.

“Zenaida Afanassievna, are you angry with me?” he began, in a timid, beseechful tone.

“With you? Why?” asked Zina, blushing a little, and raising her magnificent eyes to his face.

“For coming earlier. I couldn’t help it; I couldn’t wait another fortnight; I dreamed of you every night; so I flew off to learn my fate. But you are frowning, you are angry; — oh; am I really not to hear anything definite, even now?”

Zina distinctly and decidedly frowned.

“I supposed you would speak of this,” she said, with her eyes drooped again, but with a firm and severe voice, in which some annoyance was perceptible; “and as the expectation of it was very tedious, the sooner you had your say, the better! You insist upon an answer again, do you? Very well, I say *wait*, just as I said it before. I now repeat, as I did then, that I have not as yet decided, and cannot therefore promise to be your wife. You

cannot force a girl to such a decision, Pavel Alexandrovitch! However, to relieve your mind, I will add, that I do not as yet refuse you absolutely; and pray observe that I give you thus much hope of a favourable reply, merely out of forced deference to your impatience and agitation; and that if I think fit afterwards to reject you altogether, you are not to blame me for having given you false hopes. So now you know."

"Oh, but — but — what's the use of that? What hope am I to get out of that, Zina?" cried Mosgliakoff in piteous tones.

"Recollect what I have said, and draw whatever you please from the words; that's your business. I shall add nothing. I do not refuse you; I merely say — wait! And I repeat, I reserve the free right of rejecting you afterwards if I choose so to do. Just one more word: if you come here before the fixed time relying on outside protection, or even on my mother's influence to help you gain your end, let me tell you, you make a great mistake; if you worry me now, I shall refuse you outright. I hope we understand each other now, and that I shall hear no more of this, until the period I named to you for my decision." All this was said quietly and drily, and without a pause, as if learnt by rote. Paul felt foolish; but just at this moment Maria Alexandrovna entered the room, and the widow after her.

"I think he's just coming, Zina! Nastasia Petrovna, make some new tea quick, please!" The good lady was considerably agitated.

"Mrs. Antipova has sent her maid over to inquire about the prince already. How angry she must be feeling just now," remarked the widow, as she commenced to pass over the tea-urn.

"And what's that to me!" replied Maria Alexandrovna, over her shoulder. "Just as though *I* care what she thinks! *I* shall not send a maid to her kitchen to inquire, I assure you! And I am surprised, downright *surprised*, that, not only you, but all the town, too, should suppose that that wretched woman is my enemy! I appeal to you, Paul — you know us both. Why should I be her enemy, now? Is it a question of precedence? Pooh! I don't care about precedence! She may be first, if she likes, and I shall be readiest of all to go and congratulate her on the fact. Besides, it's all nonsense! Why, I take her part; I *must* take her part. People malign her; *why* do you all fall upon her so? Because she's young, and likes to be smart; is that it? Dear me, I think finery is a good bit better than some other failings — like Natalia Dimitrievna's, for instance, who has a taste for things that cannot be mentioned in polite society. Or is it that Mrs. Antipova goes out too much,

and never stays at home? My goodness! why, the woman has never had any education; naturally she doesn't care to sit down to read, or anything of that sort. True, she coquets and makes eyes at everybody who looks at her. But why do people tell her that she's pretty? especially as she only has a pale face, and nothing else to boast of.

"She is amusing at a dance, I admit; but why do people tell her that she dances the polka so well? She wears hideous hats and things; but it's not her fault that nature gave her no gift of good taste. She talks scandal; but that's the custom of the place — who doesn't here? That fellow, Sushikoff, with his whiskers, goes to see her pretty often while her husband plays cards, but that *may* be merely a trumped-up tale; at all events I always say so, and take her part in every way! But, good heavens! here's the prince at last! 'Tis he, 'tis he! I recognise him! I should know him out of a thousand! At last I see you! At last, my Prince!" cried Maria Alexandrovna, — and she rushed to greet the prince as he entered the room.

CHAPTER IV.

At first sight you would not take this prince for an old man at all, and it is only when you come near and take a good look at him, that you see he is merely a dead man working on wires. All the resources of science are brought to bear upon this mummy, in order to give it the appearance of life and youth. A marvellous wig, glorious whiskers, moustache and napoleon — all of the most raven black — cover half his face. He is painted and powdered with very great skill, so much so that one can hardly detect any wrinkles. What has become of them, goodness only knows.

He is dressed in the pink of fashion, just as though he had walked straight out of a tailor's fashion-page. His coat, his gloves, tie, his waistcoat, his linen, are all in perfect taste, and in the very last mode. The prince limps slightly, but so slightly that one would suppose he did it on purpose because *that* was in fashion too. In his eye he wears a glass — in the eye which is itself glass already.

He was soaked with scent. His speech and manner of pronouncing certain syllables was full of affectation; and this was, perhaps, all that he retained of the mannerisms and tricks of his younger days. For if the prince had not quite lost his wits as yet, he had certainly parted with nearly every vestige of his memory, which — alas! — is a thing which no amount of perfumeries and wigs and rouge and tight-lacing will renovate. He continually forgets words in the midst of conversation, and loses his way, which makes it a matter of some difficulty to carry on a conversation with him. However, Maria Alexandrovna has confidence in her inborn dexterity, and at sight of the prince she flies into a condition of unspeakable rapture.

"Oh! but you've not changed, you've not changed a *bit*!" she cries, seizing her guest by both hands, and popping him into a comfortable arm-chair. "Sit down, dear Prince, do sit down! Six years, prince, six whole long years since we saw each other, and not a letter, not a little tiny scrap of a note all the while. *Oh*, how naughty you have been, prince! And *how* angry I have been with you, my dear friend! But, tea! tea! Good Heavens, Nastasia Petrovna, tea for the prince, quick!"

"Th — thanks, thanks; I'm very s — orry!" stammered the old man (I forgot to mention that he stammered a little, but he did even this as though

it were the fashion to do it). “Very s — sorry; fancy, I — I wanted to co — come last year, but they t — told me there was cho — cho — cholera here.”

“There was foot and mouth disease here, uncle,” put in Mosgliakoff, by way of distinguishing himself. Maria Alexandrovna gave him a severe look.

“Ye — yes, foot and mouth disease, or something of that s — sort,” said the prince; “so I st — stayed at home. Well, and how’s your h — husband, my dear Anna Nic — Nicolaevna? Still at his proc — procuror’s work?”

“No, prince!” said Maria Alexandrovna, a little disconcerted. “My husband is not a procurer.”

“I’ll bet anything that uncle has mixed you up with Anna Nicolaevna Antipova,” said Mosgliakoff, but stopped suddenly on observing the look on Maria Alexandrovna’s face.

“Ye — yes, of course, Anna Nicolaevna. A — An. What the deuce! I’m always f — forgetting; Antipova, Antipova, of course,” continued the prince.

“No, prince, you have made a great mistake,” remarked Maria Alexandrovna, with a bitter smile. “I am not Anna Nicolaevna at all, and I confess I should never have believed that you would not recognise me. You have astonished me, prince. I am your old friend, Maria Alexandrovna Moskaloff. Don’t you remember Maria Alexandrovna?”

“M — Maria Alexandrovna! think of that; and I thought she was w — what’s her name. Y — yes, Anna Vasilievna! *C’est délicieux.* W — why I thought you were going to take me to this A — Anna Matveyevna. Dear me! *C’est ch — charmant!* It often happens so w — with me. I get taken to the wrong house; but I’m v — very pleased, v — very pleased! So you’re not Nastasia Va — silievna? How interesting.”

“I’m Maria Alexandrovna, prince; *Maria Alexandrovna*! Oh! how naughty you are, Prince, to forget your best, best friend!”

“Ye — es! ye — yes! best friend; best friend, for — forgive me!” stammered the old man, staring at Zina.

“That’s my daughter Zina. You are not acquainted yet, prince. She wasn’t here when you were last in the town, in the year —— you know.”

“Oh, th — this is your d — daughter!” muttered the old man, staring hungrily at Zina through his glasses. “Dear me, dear me. *Ch — charmante, ch — armante!* But what a lo — ovely girl,” he added, evidently impressed.

“Tea! prince,” remarked Maria Alexandrovna, directing his attention to the page standing before him with the tray. The prince took a cup, and

examined the boy, who had a nice fresh face of his own.

“Ah! this is your l — little boy? Wh — what a charming little b — boy! and does he be — behave nicely?”

“But, prince,” interrupted Maria Alexandrovna, impatiently, “what is this dreadful occurrence I hear of? I confess I was nearly beside myself with terror when I heard of it. Were you not hurt at all? *Do* take care. One cannot make light of this sort of thing.”

“Upset, upset; the c — coachman upset me!” cried the prince, with unwonted vivacity. “I thought it was the end of the world, and I was fri — frightened out of my wits. I didn’t expect it; I didn’t, indeed! and my co — oachman is to blame for it all. I trust you, my friend, to lo — ok into the matter well. I feel sure he was making an attempt on my life!”

“All right, all right, uncle,” said Paul; “I’ll see about it. But look here — forgive him, just this once, uncle; just this once, won’t you?”

“N — not I! Not for anything! I’m sure he wants my life, he and Lavrenty too. It’s — it’s the ‘new ideas;’ it’s Com — Communism, in the fullest sense of the word. I daren’t meet them anywhere.”

“You are right, you are quite right, prince,” cried Maria Alexandrovna. “You don’t know how I suffer myself from these wretched people. I’ve just been obliged to change two of my servants; and you’ve no idea how *stupid* they are, prince.”

“Ye — yes! quite so!” said the prince, delighted — as all old men are whose senile chatter is listened to with servility. “But I like a fl — flunky to look stupid; it gives them presence. There’s my Terenty, now. You remember Terenty, my friend? Well, the f — first time I ever looked at him I said, ‘You shall be my ha — hall porter.’ He’s stupid, phen — phen — omenally stupid, he looks like a she — sheep; but his dig — dignity and majesty are wonderful. When I look at him he seems to be composing some l — learned dis — sertation. He’s just like the German philosopher, Kant, or like some fa — fat old turkey, and that’s just what one wants in a serving-man.”

Maria Alexandrovna laughed, and clapped her hands in the highest state of ecstasy; Paul supported her with all his might; Nastasia Petrovna laughed too; and even Zina smiled.

“But, prince, how clever, how witty, how *humorous* you are!” cried Maria Alexandrovna. “What a wonderful gilt of remarking the smallest refinements of character. And for a man like you to eschew all society, and

shut yourself up for five years! With such talents! Why, prince, you could *write*, you could be an author. You could emulate Von Vezin, Gribojedoff, Gogol!”

“Ye — yes! ye — yes!” said the delighted prince. “I can reproduce things I see, very well. And, do you know, I used to be a very wi — witty fellow indeed, some time ago. I even wrote a play once. There were some very smart couplets, I remember; but it was never acted.”

“Oh! how nice it would be to read it over, especially just *now*, eh, Zina? for we are thinking of getting up a play, you must know, prince, for the benefit of the ‘martyrs of the Fatherland,’ the wounded soldiers. There, now, how handy your play would come in!”

“Certainly, certainly. I — I would even write you another. I think I’ve quite forgotten the old one. I remember there were two or three such epigrams that (here the prince kissed his own hand to convey an idea of the exquisite wit of his lines) I recollect when I was abroad I made a real furore. I remember Lord Byron well; we were great friends; you should have seen him dance the mazurka one day during the Vienna Congress.”

“Lord Byron, uncle? — Surely not!”

“Ye — yes, Lord Byron. Perhaps it was not Lord Byron, though, perhaps it was someone else; no, it wasn’t Lord Byron, it was some Pole; I remember now. A won — der-ful fellow that Pole was! He said he was a C — Count, and he turned out to be a c — cook — shop man! But he danced the mazurka won — der — fully, and broke his leg at last. I recollect I wrote some lines at the time: —

“Our little Pole
Danced like blazes.”

— How did it go on, now? Wait a minute! No, I can’t remember.”

“I’ll tell you, uncle. It must have been like this,” said Paul, becoming more and more inspired: —

“But he tripped in a hole,
Which stopped his crazes.”

“Ye — yes, that was it, I think, or something very like it. I don’t know, though — perhaps it wasn’t. Anyhow, the lines were very sm — art. I forget a good deal of what I have seen and done. I’m so b — busy now!”

“But do let me hear how you have employed your time in your solitude, dear prince,” said Maria Alexandrovna. “I must confess that I have thought

of you so often, and often, that I am burning with impatience to hear more about you and your doings."

"Employed my time? Oh, very busy; very busy, ge — generally. One rests, you see, part of the day; and then I imagine a good many things."

"I should think you have a very strong imagination, haven't you, uncle?" remarked Paul.

"Exceptionally so, my dear fellow. I sometimes imagine things which amaze even myself! When I was at Kadueff, — by-the-by, you were vice-governor of Kadueff, weren't you?"

"I, uncle! Why, what are you thinking of?"

"No? Just fancy, my dear fellow! and I've been thinking all this time how f — funny that the vice-governor of Kadueff should be here with quite a different face: he had a fine intelligent, dig — dignified face, you know. A wo — wonderful fellow! Always writing verses, too; he was rather like the Ki — King of Diamonds from the side view, but—"

"No, prince," interrupted Maria Alexandrovna. "I assure you, you'll ruin yourself with the life you are leading! To make a hermit of oneself for five years, and see no one, and hear no one: you're a lost man, dear prince! Ask any one of those who love you, they'll all tell you the same; you're a lost man!"

"No," cried the prince, "really?"

"Yes, I assure you of it! I am speaking to you as a sister — as a friend! I am telling you this because you are very dear to me, and because the memory of the past is sacred to me. No, no! You must change your way of living; otherwise you will fall ill, and break up, and die!"

"Gracious heavens! Surely I shan't d — die so soon?" cried the old man. "You — you are right about being ill; I am ill now and then. I'll tell you all the sy — symptoms! I'll de — detail them to you. Firstly I—"

"Uncle, don't you think you had better tell us all about it another day?" Paul interrupted hurriedly. "I think we had better be starting just now, don't you?"

"Yes — yes, perhaps, perhaps. But remind me to tell you another time; it's a most interesting case, I assure you!"

"But listen, my dear prince!" Maria Alexandrovna resumed, "why don't you try being doctored abroad?"

"Ab — road? Yes, yes — I shall certainly go abroad. I remember when I was abroad, about '20; it was delightfully g — gay and jolly. I very nearly

married a vi — viscountess, a French woman. I was fearfully in love, but som — somebody else married her, not I. It was a very s — strange thing. I had only gone away for a coup — couple of hours, and this Ger — German baron fellow came and carried her off! He went into a ma — madhouse afterwards!"

"Yes, dear prince, you must look after your health. There are such good doctors abroad; and — besides, the mere change of life, what will not that alone do for you! You *must* desert your dear Donchanovo, if only for a time!"

"C — certainly, certainly! I've long meant to do it. I'm going to try hy — hydropathy!"

"Hydropathy?"

"Yes. I've tried it once before: I was abroad, you know, and they persuaded me to try drinking the wa — waters. There wasn't anything the matter with me, but I agreed, just out of deli — delicacy for their feelings; and I did seem to feel easier, somehow. So I drank, and drank, and dra — ank up a whole waterfall; and I assure you if I hadn't fallen ill just then I should have been quite well, th — thanks to the water! But, I confess, you've frightened me so about these ma — maladies and things, I feel quite put out. I'll come back d — directly!"

"Why, prince, where are you off to?" asked Maria Alexandrovna in surprise.

"Directly, directly. I'm just going to note down an i — idea!"

"What sort of idea?" cried Paul, bursting with laughter.

Maria Alexandrovna lost all patience.

"I cannot understand what you find to laugh at!" she cried, as the old man disappeared; "to laugh at an honourable old man, and turn every word of his into ridicule — presuming on his angelic good nature. I assure you I *blushed* for you, Paul Alexandrovitch! Why, what do you see in him to laugh at? I never saw anything funny about him!"

"Well, I laugh because he does not recognise people, and talks such nonsense!"

"That's simply the result of his sad life, of his dreadful five years' captivity, under the guardianship of that she-devil! You should *pity*, not laugh at him! He did not even know *me*; you saw it yourself. I tell you it's a crying shame; he must be saved, at all costs! I recommend him to go abroad so that he may get out of the clutches of that — beast of a woman!"

“Do you know what — we must find him a wife!” cried Paul.

“Oh, Mr. Mosgliakoff, you are too bad; you really are too bad!”

“No, no, Maria Alexandrovna; I assure you, this time I’m speaking in all seriousness. Why *not* marry him off? Isn’t it rather a brilliant idea? What harm can marriage do him? On the contrary, he is in that position that such a step alone can save him! In the first place, he will get rid of that fox of a woman; and, secondly, he may find some girl, or better still some widow — kind, good, wise and gentle, and poor, who will look after him as his own daughter would, and who will be sensible of the honour he does her in making her his wife! And what could be better for the old fellow than to have such a person about him, rather than the — woman he has now? Of course she must be nice-looking, for uncle appreciates good looks; didn’t you observe how he stared at Miss Zina?”

“But how will you find him such a bride?” asked Nastasia Petrovna, who had listened intently to Paul’s suggestion.

“What a question! Why, you yourself, if you pleased! and why not, pray? In the first place, you are good-looking, you are a widow, you are generous, you are poor (at least I don’t think you are very rich). Then you are a very reasonable woman: you’ll learn to love him, and take good care of him; you’ll send that other woman to the deuce, and take your husband abroad, where you will feed him on pudding and lollipops till the moment of his quitting this wicked world, which will be in about a year, or in a couple of months perhaps. After that, you emerge a princess, a rich widow, and, as a prize for your goodness to the old gentleman, you’ll marry a fine young marquis, or a governor-general, or somebody of the sort! There — that’s a pretty enough prospect, isn’t it?”

“Tfu! Goodness me! I should fall in love with him at once, out of pure gratitude, if he only proposed to me!” said the widow, with her black eyes all ablaze; “but, of course, it’s all nonsense!”

“Nonsense, is it? Shall I make it sound sense, then, for you? Ask me prettily, and if I don’t make you his betrothed by this evening, you may cut my little finger off! Why, there’s nothing in the world easier than to talk uncle into anything you please! He’ll only say, ‘Ye — yes, ye — yes,’ just as you heard him now! We’ll marry him so that he doesn’t know anything about it, if you like? We’ll deceive him and marry him, if you please! Any way you like, it can be done! Why, it’s for his own good; it’s out of pity for

himself! Don’t you think, seriously, Nastasia Petrovna, that you had better put on some smart clothes in any case?”

Paul’s enthusiasm amounted by now to something like madness, while the widow’s mouth watered at his idea, in spite of her better judgment.

“I know, I know I look horridly untidy!” she said. “I go about anyhow, nowadays! There’s nothing to dress for. Do I really look like a regular cook?”

All this time Maria Alexandrovna sat still, with a strange expression on her face. I shall not be far wrong if I say that she listened to Paul’s wild suggestion with a look of terror, almost: she was confused and startled; at last she recollected herself, and spoke.

“All this is very nice, of course; but at the same time it is utter nonsense, and perfectly out of the question!” she observed cuttingly.

“Why, why, my good Maria Alexandrovna? Why is it such nonsense, or why out of the question?”

“For many reasons; and, principally because you are, as the prince is also, a guest in my house; and I cannot permit anyone to forget their respect towards my establishment! I shall consider your words as a joke, Paul Alexandrovitch, and nothing more! Here comes the prince — thank goodness!”

“Here I am!” cried the old man as he entered. “It’s a wo — wonderful thing how many good ideas of all s — sorts I’m having to-day! and another day I may spend the whole of it without a single one! As — tonishing? not one all day!”

“Probably the result of your accident, to-day, uncle! Your nerves got shaken up, you see, and — —”

“Ye — yes, I think so, I think so too; and I look on the accident as pro — fitable, on the whole; and therefore I’m going to excuse the coachman. I don’t think it was an at — tempt on my life, after all, do you? Besides, he was punished a little while a — go, when his beard was sh — shaved off!”

“Beard shaved off? Why, uncle, his beard is as big as a German state!”

“Ye — yes, a German state, you are very happy in your ex — pressions, my boy! but it’s a fa — false one. Fancy what happened: I sent for a price-current for false hair and beards, and found advertisements for splendid ser — vants’ and coachmen’s beards, very cheap — extraordinarily so! I sent for one, and it certainly was a be — auty. But when we wanted to clap it on the coachman, we found he had one of his own t — twice as big; so I

thought, shall I cut off his, or let him wear it, and send this one b — back? and I decided to shave his off, and let him wear the f — false one!”

“On the theory that art is higher than nature, I suppose uncle?”

“Yes, yes! Just so — and I assure you, when we cut off his beard he suffered as much as though we were depriving him of all he held most dear! But we must be go — going, my boy!”

“But I hope, dear prince, that you will only call upon the governor!” cried Maria Alexandrovna, in great agitation. “You are *mine* now, Prince; you belong to *my* family for the whole of this day! Of course I will say nothing about the society of this place. Perhaps you are thinking of paying Anna Nicolaevna a visit? I will not say a word to dissuade you; but at the same time I am quite convinced that — time will show! Remember one thing, dear Prince, that I am your sister, your nurse, your guardian for to-day at least, and oh! — I tremble for you. You don’t know these people, Prince, as I do! You don’t know them fully: but time will teach you all you do not know.”

“Trust me, Maria Alexandrovna!” said Paul, “it shall all be exactly as I have promised you!”

“Oh — but you’re such a weathercock! I can never trust *you*! I shall wait for you at dinner time, Prince; we dine early. How sorry I am that my husband happens to be in the country on such an occasion! How happy he would have been to see you! He esteems you so highly, Prince; he is so sincerely attached to you!”

“Your husband? dear me! So you have a h — husband, too!” observed the old man.

“Oh, prince, prince! how forgetful you are! Why, you have *quite*, quite forgotten the past! My husband, Afanassy Matveyevitch, surely you must remember him? He is in the country: but you have seen him thousands of times before! Don’t you remember — Afanassy Matveyevitch!”

“Afanassy Matveyevitch. Dear me! — and in the co — country! how very charming! So you have a husband! dear me, I remember a vaudeville very like that, something about —

“The husband’s here,

And his wife at Tvere.”

Charming, charming — such a good rhyme too; and it’s a most ri — diculous story! Charming, charming; the wife’s away, you know, at Jaroslaf or Tv —— or somewhere, and the husband is —— is —— Dear me! I’m

afraid I've forgotten what we were talking about! Yes, yes — we must be going, my boy! *Au revoir, madame; adieu, ma charmante demoiselle*" he added, turning to Zina, and putting the ends of her fingers to his lips.

"Come back to dinner, — to dinner, prince! don't forget to come back here quick!" cried Maria Alexandrovna after them as they went out; "be back to dinner!"

CHAPTER V.

“Nastasia Petrovna, I think you had better go and see what is doing in the kitchen!” observed Maria Alexandrovna, as she returned from seeing the prince off. “I’m sure that rascal Nikitka will spoil the dinner! Probably he’s drunk already!” The widow obeyed.

As the latter left the room, she glanced suspiciously at Maria Alexandrovna, and observed that the latter was in a high state of agitation. Therefore, instead of going to look after Nikitka, she went through the “Salon,” along the passage to her own room, and through that to a dark box-room, where the old clothes of the establishment and such things were stored. There she approached the locked door on tiptoe; and stifling her breath, she bent to the keyhole, through which she peeped, and settled herself to listen intently. This door, which was always kept shut, was one of the three doors communicating with the room where Maria Alexandrovna and Zina were now left alone. Maria Alexandrovna always considered Nastasia an untrustworthy sort of woman, although extremely silly into the bargain. Of course she had suspected the widow — more than once — of eavesdropping; but it so happened that at the moment Madame Moskaleva was too agitated and excited to think of the usual precautions.

She was sitting in her arm-chair and gazing at Zina. Zina felt that her mother was looking at her, and was conscious of an unpleasant sensation at her heart.

“Zina!”

Zina slowly turned her head towards the speaker, and lifted her splendid dark eyes to hers.

“Zina, I wish to speak to you on a most important matter!”

Zina adopted an attentive air, and sat still with folded hands, waiting for light. In her face there was an expression of annoyance as well as irony, which she did her best to hide.

“I wish to ask you first, Zina, what you thought of *that* Mosgliakoff, to-day?”

“You have known my opinion of him for a long time!” replied Zina, surlily.

“Yes, yes, of course! but I think he is getting just a little *too* troublesome, with his continual bothering you—”

“Oh, but he says he is in love with me, in which case his importunity is pardonable!”

“Strange! You used not to be so ready to find his offences pardonable; you used to fly out at him if ever I mentioned his name!”

“Strange, too, that you always defended him, and were so very anxious that I should marry him! — and now you are the first to attack him!”

“Yes; I don’t deny, Zina, that I did wish, then, to see you married to Mosgliakoff! It was painful to me to witness your continual grief, your sufferings, which I can well realize — whatever you may think to the contrary! — and which deprived me of my rest at night! I determined at last that there was but one great change of life that would ever save you from the sorrows of the past, and that change was matrimony! We are not rich; we cannot afford to go abroad. All the asses in the place prick their long ears, and wonder that you should be unmarried at twenty-three years old; and they must needs invent all sorts of stories to account for the fact! As if I would marry you to one of our wretched little town councillors, or to Ivan Ivanovitch, the family lawyer! There are no husbands for *you* in this place, Zina! Of course Paul Mosgliakoff is a silly sort of a fellow, but he is better than these people here: he is fairly born, at least, and he has 150 serfs and landed property, all of which is better than living by bribes and corruption, and goodness knows what jobbery besides, as these do! and that is why I allowed my eyes to rest on him. But I give you my solemn word, I never had any real sympathy for him! and if Providence has sent you someone better now, oh, my dear girl, how fortunate that you have not given your word to Mosgliakoff! You didn’t tell him anything for certain to-day, did you, Zina?”

“What is the use of beating about the bush, when the whole thing lies in a couple of words?” said Zina, with some show of annoyance.

“Beating about the bush, Zina? Is that the way to speak to your mother? But what am I? You have long ceased to trust to your poor mother! You have long looked upon me as your enemy, and not as your mother at all!”

“Oh, come mother! you and I are beyond quarrelling about an expression! Surely we understand one another by now? It is about time we did, anyhow!”

“But you offend me, my child! you will not believe that I am ready to devote *all, all* I can give, in order to establish your destiny on a safe and happy footing!”

Zina looked angrily and sarcastically at her mother.

“Would not you like to marry me to this old prince, now, in order to establish my destiny on a safe and happy footing?”

“I have not said a word about it; but, as you mention the fact, I will say that if you *were* to marry the prince it would be a very happy thing for you, and—”

“Oh! Well, I consider the idea utter nonsense!” cried the girl passionately. “Nonsense, humbug! and what’s more, I think you have a good deal too much poetical inspiration, mamma; you are a woman poet in the fullest sense of the term, and they call you by that name here! You are always full of projects; and the impracticability and absurdity of your ideas does not in the least discourage you. I felt, when the prince was sitting here, that you had that notion in your head. When Mosgliakoff was talking nonsense there about marrying the old man to somebody I read all your thoughts in your face. I am ready to bet any money that you are thinking of it now, and that you have come to me now about this very question! However, as your perpetual projects on my behalf are beginning to weary me to death, I must beg you not to say one word about it, not *one word*, mamma; do you hear me? *not one word*; and I beg you will remember what I say!” She was panting with rage.

“You are a child, Zina; a poor sorrow-worn, sick child!” said Maria Alexandrovna in tearful accents. “You speak to your poor mother disrespectfully; you wound me deeply, my dear; there is not another mother in the world who would have borne what I have to bear from you every day! But you are suffering, you are sick, you are sorrowful, and I am your mother, and, first of all, I am a Christian woman! I must bear it all, and forgive it. But one word, Zina: if I had really thought of the union you suggest, why would you consider it so impracticable and absurd? In my opinion, Mosgliakoff has never said a wiser thing than he did to-day, when he declared that marriage was what alone could save the prince, — not, of course, marriage with that slovenly slut, Nastasia; there he certainly *did* make a fool of himself!”

“Now look here, mamma; do you ask me this out of pure curiosity, or with design? Tell me the truth.”

“All I ask is, why does it appear to you to be so absurd?”

“Good heavens, mother, you’ll drive me wild! What a fate!” cried Zina, stamping her foot with impatience. “I’ll tell you why, if you can’t see for

yourself. Not to mention all the other evident absurdities of the plan, to take advantage of the weakened wits of a poor old man, and deceive him and marry him — an old cripple, in order to get hold of his money, — and then every day and every hour to wish for his death, is, in my opinion, not only nonsense, but so mean, *so* mean, mamma, that I — I can't congratulate you on your brilliant idea; that's all I can say!"

There was silence for one minute.

"Zina, do you remember all that happened two years ago?" asked Maria Alexandrovna of a sudden.

Zina trembled.

"Mamma!" she said, severely, "you promised me solemnly never to mention that again."

"And I ask you now, as solemnly, my dear child, to allow me to break that promise, just once! I have never broken it before. Zina! the time has come for a full and clear understanding between us! These two years of silence have been terrible. We cannot go on like this. I am ready to pray you, on my knees, to let me speak. Listen, Zina, your own mother who bore you beseeches you, on her knees! And I promise you faithfully, Zina, and solemnly, on the word of an unhappy but adoring mother, that never, under any circumstances, not even to save my life, will I ever mention the subject again. This shall be the last time, but it is absolutely necessary!"

Maria Alexandrovna counted upon the effect of her words, and with reason:

"Speak, then!" said Zina, growing whiter every moment.

"Thank you, Zina! —— Two years ago there came to the house, to teach your little brother Mitya, since dead, a tutor — —"

"Why do you begin so solemnly, mamma? Why all this eloquence, all these quite unnecessary details, which are painful to me, and only too well known to both of us?" cried Zina with a sort of irritated disgust.

"Because, my dear child, I, your mother, felt in some degree bound to justify myself before you; and also because I wish to present this whole question to you from an entirely new point of view, and not from that mistaken position which you are accustomed to take up with regard to it; and because, lastly, I think you will thus better understand the conclusion at which I shall arrive upon the whole question. Do not think, dear child, that I wish to trifle with your heart! No, Zina, you will find in me a real mother; and perhaps, with tears streaming from your eyes, you will ask and beseech

at my feet — at the feet of the ‘*mean woman*,’ as you have just called me, — yes, and pray for that reconciliation which you have rejected so long! That’s why I wish to recall all, Zina, *all* that has happened, from the very beginning; and without this I shall not speak at all!”

“Speak, then!” repeated Zina, cursing the necessity for her mother’s eloquence from the very bottom of her heart.

“I continue then, Zina! —— This tutor, a master of the parish school, almost a boy, makes upon you what is, to me, a totally inexplicable impression. I built too much upon my confidence in your good sense, or your noble pride, and principally upon the fact of his insignificance — (I must speak out!) — to allow myself to harbour the slightest suspicion of you! And then you suddenly come to me, one fine day, and state that you intend to marry the man! Zina, it was putting a knife to my heart! I gave a shriek and lost consciousness.

“But of course you remember all this. Of course I thought it my duty to use all my power over you, which power you called tyranny. Think for yourself — a boy, the son of a deacon, receiving a salary of twelve roubles a month — a writer of weak verses which are printed, out of pity, in the ‘library of short readings.’ A man, a boy, who could talk of nothing but that accursed Shakespeare, — this boy to be the husband of Zenaida Moskaloff! Forgive me, Zina, but the very thought of it all makes me *wild*!

“I rejected him, of course. But no power would stop *you*; your father only blinked his eyes, as usual, and could not even understand what I was telling him about. You continue your relations with this boy, even giving him rendezvous, and, worst of all, you allow yourself to correspond with him!

“Rumours now begin to flit about town: I am assailed with hints; they blow their trumpets of joy and triumph; and suddenly all my fears and anticipations are verified! You and he quarrel over something or other; he shows himself to be a boy (I can’t call him a man!), who is utterly unworthy of you, and threatens to show your letters all over the town! On hearing this threat, you, beside yourself with irritation, boxed his ears. Yes, Zina, I am aware of even that fact! I know all, all! But to continue — the wretched boy shows one of your letters the very same day to that ne’er-do-well Zanshin, and within an hour Natalie Dimitrievna holds it in her hands — my deadly enemy! The same evening the miserable fellow attempts to put an end to himself, in remorse. In a word, there is a fearful scandal stirred up. That

slut, Nastasia, comes panting to me with the dreadful news; she tells me that Natalie Dimitrievna has had your letter for a whole hour. In a couple of hours the whole town will learn of your foolishness! I bore it all. I did not fall down in a swoon; but oh, the blows, the blows you dealt to my heart, Zina! That shameless scum of the earth, Nastasia, says she will get the letter back for two hundred roubles! I myself run over, in thin shoes, too, through the snow to the Jew Baumstein, and pledge my diamond clasps — a keepsake of my dear mother's! In a couple of hours the letter is in my hands! Nastasia had stolen it; she had broken open a desk, and your honour was safe!

"But what a dreadful day you had sentenced me to live! I noticed some grey hairs among my raven locks for the first time, next morning! Zina, you have judged this boy's action yourself now! You can admit now, and perhaps smile a bitter smile over the admission, that it was beyond the limits of good sense to wish to entrust your fate to this youth.

"But since that fatal time you are wretched, my child, you are miserable! You cannot forget him, or rather not him — for he was never worthy of you, — but you cannot forget the phantom of your past joy! This wretched young fellow is now on the point of death — consumption, they say; and you, angel of goodness that you are! you do not wish to marry while he is alive, because you fear to harass him in his last days; because to this day he is miserable with jealousy, though I am convinced that he never loved you in the best and highest sense of the word! I know well that, hearing of Mosgliakoff's proposal to you, he has been in a flutter of jealousy, and has spied upon you and your actions ever since; and you — you have been merciful to him, my child. And oh! God knows how I have watered my pillow with tears for you!"

"Oh, mother, do drop all this sort of thing!" cried Zina, with inexpressible agony in her tone. "Surely we needn't hear all about your pillow!" she added, sharply. "Can't we get on without all this declamation and pirouetting?"

"You do not believe me, Zina! Oh! do not look so unfriendly at me, my child! My eyes have not been dry these two years. I have hidden my tears from you; but I am changed, Zina mine, much changed and in many ways! I have long known of your feelings, Zina, but I admit I have only lately realized the depth of your mental anguish. Can you blame me, my child, if I looked upon this attachment of yours as romanticism — called into being

by that accursed Shakespeare, who shoves his nose in everywhere where he isn't wanted?

"What mother would blame me for my fears of that kind, for my measures, for the severity of my judgment? But now, understanding as I do, and realizing your two years' sufferings, I can estimate the depth of your real feelings. Believe me, I understand you far better than you understand yourself! I am convinced that you love not him — not this unnatural boy, — but your lost happiness, your broken hopes, your cracked idol!

"I have loved too — perhaps more deeply than yourself; I, too, have suffered, I, too, have lost my exalted ideals and seen them levelled with the earth; and therefore who can blame me now — and, above all, can *you* blame me now, — if I consider a marriage with the prince to be the one saving, the one *essential* move left to you in your present position"?

Zina listened to this long declamation with surprise. She knew well that her mother never adopted this tone without good reason. However this last and unexpected conclusion fairly amazed her.

"You don't mean to say you seriously entertain the idea of marrying me to this prince?" she cried bewildered, and gazing at her mother almost with alarm; "that this is no mere idea, no project, no flighty inspiration, but your deliberate intention? I *have* guessed right, then? And pray, *how* is this marriage going to save me? and *why* is it essential to me in my present position? And — and what has all this to do with what you have been talking about? —— I cannot understand you, mother, — not a bit!"

"And *I* can't understand, angel mine, how you *cannot* see the connection of it all!" cried Maria Alexandrovna, in her turn. "In the first place, you would pass into new society, into a new world. You would leave for ever this loathsome little town, so full of sad memories for you; where you meet neither friends nor kindness; where they have bullied and maligned you; where all these — these *magpies* hate you because you are good looking! You could go abroad this very spring, to Italy, Switzerland, Spain! — to Spain, Zina, where the Alhambra is, and where the Guadalquiver flows — no wretched little stream like this of ours!"

"But, one moment, mother; you talk as though I were married already, or at least as if the prince had made me an offer!"

"Oh, no — oh dear, no! don't bother yourself about that, my angel! I know what I'm talking about! Let me proceed. I've said my 'firstly;' now,

then, for my ‘secondly!’ I understand, dear child, with what loathing you would give your hand to that Mosgliakoff! — —”

“I know, without your telling me so, that I shall never be *his* wife!” cried Zina, angrily, and with flashing eyes.

“If only you knew, my angel, how I understand and enter into your loathing for him! It is dreadful to vow before the altar that you will love a man whom you *cannot* love — how dreadful to belong to one whom you cannot esteem! And he insists on your *love* — he only marries you for love. I can see it by the way he looks at you! Why deceive ourselves? I have suffered from the same thing for twenty-five years; your father ruined me — he, so to speak, sucked up my youth! You have seen my tears many a time! — —”

“Father’s away in the country, don’t touch *him*, please!” said Zina.

“I know you always take his part! Oh, Zina, my very heart trembled within me when I thought to arrange your marriage with Mosgliakoff for financial reasons! I trembled for the consequences. But with the prince it is different, you need not deceive him; you cannot be expected to give him your *love*, not your *love* — oh, no! and he is not in a state to ask it of you!”

“Good heavens, what nonsense! I do assure you you are in error from the very first step — from the first and most important step! Understand, that I do not care to make a martyr of myself for some unknown reason! Know, also, that I shall not marry anyone at all; I shall remain a maid. You have bitten my head off for the last two years because I would not marry. Well, you must accept the fact, and make the best of it; that’s all I can say, and so it shall be!”

“But Zina, darling — my Zina, don’t be so cross before you have heard me out! What a hot-headed little person you are, to be sure! Let me show you the matter from my point of view, and you’ll agree with me — you really will! The prince will live a year — two at most; and surely it is better to be a young widow than a decayed old maid! Not to mention the fact that you will be a princess — free, rich, independent! I dare say you look with contempt upon all these calculations — founded upon his death; but I am a mother, and what mother will blame me for my foresight?

“And if you, my angel of kindness, are unwilling to marry, even now, out of tenderness for that wretched boy’s feelings, oh, think, think how, by marrying this prince, you will rejoice his heart and soothe and comfort his soul! For if he has a single particle of commonsense, he must understand

that jealousy of this old man were *too* absurd — *too* ridiculous! He will understand that you marry him — for money, for convenience; that stern necessity compels you to it!

"And lastly, he will understand that — that, — well I simply wish to say, that, upon the prince's death, you will be at liberty to marry whomsoever you please."

"That's a truly simple arrangement! All I have to do is to marry this prince, rob him of his money, and then count upon his death in order to marry my lover! You are a clever arithmetician, mamma; you do your sums and get your totals nicely. You wish to seduce me by offering me this! Oh, I understand you, mamma — I understand you well! You cannot resist the expression of your noble sentiments and exalted ideas, even in the manufacture of a nasty business. Why can't you say simply and straightforwardly, 'Zina, this is a dirty affair, but it will pay us, so please agree with me?' at all events, that would be candid and frank on your part."

"But, my dear child, why, *why* look at it from this point of view? Why look at it under the light of suspicion as *deceit*, and low cunning, and covetousness? You consider my calculations as meanness, as deceit; but, by all that is good and true, where is the meanness? Show me the deceit. Look at yourself in the glass: you are so beautiful, that a kingdom would be a fair price for you! And suddenly you, you, the possessor of this divine beauty, sacrifice yourself, in order to soothe the last years of an old man's life! You would be like a beautiful star, shedding your light over the evening of his days. You would be like the fresh green ivy, twining in and about his old age; not the stinging nettle that this wretched woman at his place is, fastening herself upon him, and thirstily sucking his blood! Surely his money, his rank are not worthy of being put in the scales beside *you*? Where is the meanness of it; where is the deceit of all this? You don't know what you are saying, Zina."

"I suppose they *are* worthy of being weighed against me, if I am to marry a cripple for them! No, mother, however you look at it, it is deceit, and you can't get out of *that*!"

"On the contrary, my dear child, I can look at it from a high, almost from an exalted — nay, Christian — point of view. You, yourself, told me once, in a fit of temporary insanity of some sort, that you wished to be a sister of charity. You had suffered; you said your heart could love no more. If, then, you cannot love, turn your thoughts to the higher aspect of the case. This

poor old man has also suffered — he is unhappy. I have known him, and felt the deepest sympathy towards him — akin to love, — for many a year. Be his friend, his daughter, be his plaything, even, if you like; but warm his old heart, and you are doing a good work — a virtuous, kind, noble work of love.

"He may be funny to look at; don't think of that. He's but half a man — pity him! You are a Christian girl — do whatever is right by him; and this will be medicine for your own heart-wounds; employment, action, all this will heal you too, and where is the deceit here? But you do not believe me. Perhaps you think that I am deceiving myself when I thus talk of duty and of action. You think that I, a woman of the world, have no right to good feeling and the promptings of duty and virtue. Very well, do not trust me, if you like: insult me, do what you please to your poor mother; but you will have to admit that her words carry the stamp of good sense, — they are saving words! Imagine that someone else is talking to you, not I. Shut your eyes, and fancy that some invisible being is speaking. What is worrying you is the idea that all this is for money — a sort of sale or purchase. Very well, then *refuse* the money, if it is so loathsome to your eyes. Leave just as much as is absolutely necessary for yourself, and give the rest to the poor. Help *him*, if you like, the poor fellow who lies there a-dying!"

"He would never accept my help!" muttered Zina, as though to herself.

"He would not, but his mother would!" said Maria Alexandrovna. "She would take it, and keep her secret. You sold your ear-rings, a present from your aunt, half a year or so ago, and helped her; *I* know all about it! I know, too, that the woman washes linen in order to support her unfortunate son!"

"He will soon be where he requires no more help!"

"I know, I understand your hints." Maria Alexandrovna sighed a real sigh. "They say he is in a consumption, and must die.

"But *who* says so?

"I asked the doctor the other day, because, having a tender heart, Zina, I felt interested in the poor fellow. The doctor said that he was convinced the malady was *not* consumption; that it was dangerous, no doubt, but still *not* consumption, only some severe affection of the lungs. Ask him yourself! He certainly told me that under different conditions — change of climate and of his style of living, — the sick man might well recover. He said — and I have read it too, somewhere, that off Spain there is a wonderful island, called Malaga — I think it was Malaga; anyhow, the name was like some

wine, where, not only ordinary sufferers from chest maladies, but even consumptive patients, recover entirely, solely by virtue of the climate, and that sick people go there on purpose to be cured.

“Oh, but Spain — the Alhambra alone — and the lemons, and the riding on mules. All this is enough in itself to impress a poetical nature. You think he would not accept your help, your money — for such a journey? Very well — deceit is permissible where it may save a man’s life.

“Give him hope, too! Promise him your love; promise to marry him when you are a widow! Anything in the world can be said with care and tact! Your own mother would not counsel you to an ignoble deed, Zina. You will do as I say, to save this boy’s life; and with this object, everything is permissible! You will revive his hope; he will himself begin to think of his health, and listen to what the doctor says to him. He will do his best to resuscitate his dead happiness; and if he gets well again, even if you never marry him, you will have saved him — raised him from the dead!

“I can look at him with some sympathy. I admit I can, now! Perhaps sorrow has changed him for the better; and I say frankly, if he should be worthy of you when you become a widow, marry him, by all means! You will be rich then, and independent. You can not only cure him, but, having done so, you can give him position in the world — a career! Your marriage to him will then be possible and pardonable, not, as now, an absolute impossibility!

“For what would become of both of you were you to be capable of such madness *now*? Universal contempt, beggary; smacking little boys, which is part of his duty; the reading of Shakespeare; perpetual, hopeless life in Mordasoff; and lastly his certain death, which will undoubtedly take place before long unless he is taken away from here!

“While, if you resuscitate him — if you raise him from the dead, as it were, you raise him to a good, useful, and virtuous life! He may then enter public life — make himself rank, and a name! At the least, even if he must die, he will die happy, at peace with himself, in your arms — for he will be by then assured of your love and forgiveness of the past, and lying beneath the scent of myrtles and lemons, beneath the tropical sky of the South. Oh, Zina, all this is within your grasp, and all — all is *gain*. Yes, and all to be had by merely marrying this prince.”

Maria Alexandrovna broke off, and for several minutes there was silence; not a word was said on either side: Zina was in a state of

indescribable agitation. I say indescribable because I will not attempt to describe Zina’s feelings: I cannot guess at them; but I *think* that Maria Alexandrovna had found the road to her heart.

Not knowing how her words had sped with her daughter, Maria Alexandrovna now began to work her busy brain to imagine and prepare herself for every possible humour that Zina might prove to be in; but at last she concluded that she had happened upon the right track after all. Her rude hand had touched the sorest place in Zina’s heart, but her crude and absurd sentimental twaddle had not blinded her daughter. “However, that doesn’t matter” — thought the mother. “All I care to do is to make her *think*; I wish my ideas to stick!” So she reflected, and she gained her end; the effect was made — the arrow reached the mark. Zina had listened hungrily as her mother spoke; her cheeks were burning, her breast heaved.

“Listen, mother,” she said at last, with decision; though the sudden pallor of her face showed clearly what the decision had cost her. “Listen mother — —” But at this moment a sudden noise in the entrance hall, and a shrill female voice, asking for Maria Alexandrovna, interrupted Zina, while her mother jumped up from her chair.

“Oh! the devil fly away with this magpie of a woman!” cried the latter furiously. “Why, I nearly drove her out by force only a fortnight ago!” she added, almost in despair. “I can’t, I can’t receive her now. Zina, this question is too important to be put off: she must have news for me or she never would have dared to come. I won’t receive the old —— Oh! *how* glad I am to see you, dear Sophia Petrovna. What lucky chance brought *you* to see me? What a *charming* surprise!” said Maria Alexandrovna, advancing to receive her guest.

Zina escaped out of the room.

CHAPTER VI.

Mrs. Colonel Tarpuchin, or Sophia Petrovna, was only morally like a magpie; she was more akin to the sparrow tribe, viewed physically. She was a little bit of a woman of fifty summers or so, with lively eyes, and yellow patches all over her face. On her little wizened body and spare limbs she wore a black silk dress, which was perpetually on the rustle: for this little woman could never sit still for an instant.

This was the most inveterate and bitterest scandal-monger in the town. She took her stand on the fact that she was a Colonel's wife, though she often fought with her husband, the Colonel, and scratched his face handsomely on such occasions.

Add to this, that it was her custom to drink four glasses of "vodki" at lunch, or earlier, and four more in the evening; and that she hated Mrs. Antipova to madness.

"I've just come in for a minute, *mon ange*," she panted; "it's no use sitting down — no time! I wanted to let you know what's going on, simply that the whole town has gone mad over this prince. Our 'beauties,' you know what I mean! are all after him, fishing for him, pulling him about, giving him champagne — you would not believe it! *would* you now? How on earth you could ever have let him out of the house, I can't understand! Are you aware that he's at Natalia Dimitrievna's at this moment?"

"At *Natalia Dimitrievna's*?" cried Maria Alexandrovna jumping up. "Why, he was only going to see the Governor, and then call in for one moment at the Antipova's!"

"Oh, yes, just for one moment — of course! Well, catch him if you can, there! That's all I can say. He found the Governor 'out,' and went on to Mrs. Antipova's, where he has promised to dine. There Natalia caught him — she is never away from Mrs. Antipova nowadays, — and persuaded him to come away with her to lunch. So there's your prince! catch him if you can!"

"But how — Mosgliakoff's with him — he promised—"

"Mosgliakoff, indeed, — why, he's gone too! and they'll be playing at cards and clearing him out before he knows where he is! And the things Natalia is saying, too — out loud if you please! She's telling the prince to

his face that you, *you* have got hold of him with certain views — *vous comprenez*?”

“She calmly tells him this to his face! Of course he doesn’t understand a word of it, and simply sits there like a soaked cat, and says ‘Ye — yes!’ And would you believe it, she has trotted out her Sonia — a girl of fifteen, in a dress down to her knees — my word on it? Then she has sent for that little orphan — Masha; she’s in a short dress too, — why, I swear it doesn’t reach her knees. I looked at it carefully through my pince-nez! She’s stuck red caps with some sort of feathers in them on their heads, and set them to dance some silly dance to the piano accompaniment for the prince’s benefit! You know his little weakness as to our sex, — well, you can imagine him staring at them through his glass and saying, ‘*Charmant!* — What figures!’ Tfu! They’ve turned the place into a music hall! Call that a dance! I was at school at Madame Jarne’s, I know, and there were plenty of princesses and countesses there with me, too; and I know I danced before senators and councillors, and earned their applause, too: but as for this dance — it’s a low can-can, and nothing more! I simply *burned* with shame, — I couldn’t stand it, and came out.”

“How! have you been at Natalia Dimitrievna’s? Why, you —— !”

“What! — she offended me last week? is that what you you mean? Oh, but, my dear, I *had* to go and have a peep at the prince — else, when should I have seen him? As if I would have gone *near* her but for this wretched old prince. Imagine — chocolate handed round and *me left out*. I’ll let her have it for that, some day! Well, good-bye, *mon ange*: I must hurry off to Akulina, and let her know all about it. You may say good-bye to the prince; he won’t come near you again now! He has no memory left, you know, and Mrs. Antipova will simply carry him off bodily to her house. He’ll think it’s all right —— They’re all afraid of you, you know; they think that you want to get hold of him — you understand! Zina, you know!”

“*Quelle horreur!*”

“Oh, yes, I know! I tell you — the whole town is talking about it! Mrs. Antipova is going to make him stay to dinner — and then she’ll just keep him! She’s doing it to spite *you*, my angel. I had a look in at her back premises. *Such* arrangements, my dear. Knives clattering, people running about for champagne. I tell you what you must do — go and grab him as he comes out from Natalia Dimitrievna’s to Antipova’s to dinner. He promised *you* first, he’s *your* guest. Tfu! don’t you be laughed at by this brace of

chattering magpies — good for nothing baggage, both of them. ‘Procuror’s lady,’ indeed! Why, I’m a Colonel’s wife. Tfu! — *Mais adieu, mon ange*. I have my own sledge at the door, or I’d go with you.”

Having got rid of this walking newspaper, Maria Alexandrovna waited a moment, to free herself of a little of her super-abundant agitation. Mrs. Colonel’s advice was good and practical. There was no use losing time, — none to lose, in fact. But the greatest difficulty of all was as yet unsettled.

Maria Alexandrovna flew to Zina’s room.

Zina was walking up and down, pale, with hands folded and head bent on her bosom: there were tears in her eyes, but Resolve was there too, and sparkled in the glance which she threw on her mother as the latter entered the room. She hastily dried her tears, and a sarcastic smile played on her lips once more.

“Mamma,” she began, anticipating her mother’s speech “you have already wasted much of your eloquence over me — too much! But you have not blinded me; I am not a child. To do the work of a sister of mercy, without the slightest call thereto, — to justify one’s meanness — meanness proceeding in reality from the purest egotism, by attributing to it noble ends, — all this is a sort of Jesuitism which cannot deceive *me*. Listen! I repeat, all *this could not deceive me*, and I wish you to understand that!”

“But, dearest child!” began her mother, in some alarm.

“Be quiet, mamma; have patience, and hear me out. In spite of the full consciousness that all this is pure Jesuitism, and in spite of my full knowledge of the absolutely ignoble character of such an act, I accept your proposition in full, — you hear me — *in full*; and inform you hereby, that I am ready to marry the prince. More! I am ready to help you to the best of my power in your endeavours to lure the prince into making me an offer. Why do I do this? You need not know that; enough that I have consented. I have consented to the whole thing — to bringing him his boots, to serving him; I will dance for him, that my meanness may be in some sort atoned. I shall do all I possibly can so that he shall never regret that he married me! But in return for my consent I insist upon knowing *how* you intend to bring the matter about? Since you have spoken so warmly on the subject — I know you! — I am convinced you must have some definite plan of operation in your head. Be frank for once in your life; your candour is the essential condition upon which alone I give my consent. I shall not decide until you have told me what I require!”

Maria Alexandrovna was so surprised by the unexpected conclusion at which Zina arrived, that she stood before the latter some little while, dumb with amazement, and staring at her with all her eyes. Prepared to have to combat the stubborn romanticism of her daughter — whose obstinate nobility of character she always feared, — she had suddenly heard this same daughter consent to all that her mother had required of her.

Consequently, the matter had taken a very different complexion. Her eyes sparkled with delight:

"Zina, Zina!" she cried; "you are my life, my — —"

She could say no more, but fell to embracing and kissing her daughter.

"Oh, mother, I don't *want* all this kissing!" cried Zina, with impatience and disgust. "I don't need all this rapture on your part; all I want is a plain answer to my question!"

"But, Zina, I love you; I adore you, darling, and you repel me like this! I am working for your happiness, child!"

Tears sparkled in her eyes. Maria Alexandrovna really loved her daughter, in her own way, and just now she actually felt deeply, for once in her life — thanks to her agitation, and the success of her eloquence.

Zina, in spite of her present distorted view of things in general, knew that her mother loved her; but this love only annoyed her; she would much rather — it would have been easier for her — if it had been hate!

"Well, well; don't be angry, mamma — I'm so excited just now!" she said, to soothe her mother's feelings.

"I'm not angry, I'm not angry, darling! I know you are much agitated!" cried Maria Alexandrovna. "You say, my child, that you wish me to be candid: very well, I will; I will be *quite* frank, I assure you. But you might have trusted me! Firstly, then, I must tell you that I have no actually organized plan yet — no *detailed* plan, that is. You must understand, with that clever little head of yours, you must see, Zina, that I *cannot* have such a plan, all cut out. I even anticipate some difficulties. Why, that magpie of a woman has just been telling me all sorts of things. We ought to be quick, by the bye; you see, I am quite open with you! But I swear to you that the end shall be attained!" she added, ecstatically. "My convictions are not the result of a poetical nature, as you told me just now; they are founded on facts. I rely on the weakness of the prince's intellect — which is a canvas upon which one can stitch any pattern one pleases!

“The only fear is, we may be interfered with! But a fool of a woman like that is not going to get the better of *me*!” she added, stamping her foot, and with flashing eyes. “That’s my part of the business, though; and to manage it thoroughly I must begin as soon as possible — in fact, the whole thing, or the most important part of it, must be arranged this very day!”

“Very well, mamma; but now listen to one more piece of candour. Do you know why I am so interested in your plan of operations, and do not trust it? because I am not sure of myself! I have told you already that I consent to this —— meanness; but I must warn you that if I find the details of your plan of operations *too* dirty, too mean and repulsive, I shall not be able to stand it, and shall assuredly throw you over. I know that this is a new pettiness, to consent to a wicked thing and then fear the dirt in which it floats! But what’s to be done? So it will be, and I warn you!”

“But Zina, dear child, where is the wickedness in this?” asked Maria Alexandrovna timidly. “It is simply a matter of a marriage for profit; everybody does it! Look at it in this light, and you will see there is nothing particular in it; it is good ‘form’ enough!”

“Oh, mamma, don’t try to play the fox over me! Don’t you see that I have consented to everything — to *everything*? What else do you require of me? Don’t be alarmed if I call things by their proper names! For all you know it may be my only comfort!” And a bitter smile played over her lips.

“Very well, very well, dear! we may disagree as to ideas and yet be very fond of one another. But if you are afraid of the working of my plan, and dread that you will see any baseness or meanness about it, leave it all to me, dear, and I guarantee you that not a particle of dirt shall soil you! Your hands shall be clean! As if I would be the one to compromise you! Trust me entirely, and all shall go grandly and with dignity; all shall be done worthily; there shall be no scandal — even if there be a whisper afterwards, we shall all be out of the way, far off! We shall not stay here, of course! Let them *howl* if they like, *we* won’t care. Besides, they are not worth bothering about, and I wonder at your being so frightened of these people, Zina. Don’t be angry with me! how can you be so frightened, with your proud nature?”

“I’m not frightened; you don’t understand me a bit!” said Zina, in a tone of annoyance.

“Very well, darling; don’t be angry. I only talk like this because these people about here are always stirring up mud, if they can; while you — this is the first time in your life you have done a mean action. — *Mean* action!

What an old fool I am! On the contrary, this is a most generous, *noble* act! I'll prove this to you once more, Zina. Firstly, then, it all depends upon the point of view you take up — —"

"Oh! bother your proofs, mother. I've surely had enough of them by now," cried Zina angrily, and stamped her foot on the floor.

"Well, darling, I won't; it was stupid of me — I won't!"

There was another moment's silence. Maria Alexandrovna looked into her daughter's eyes as a little dog looks into the eyes of its mistress.

"I don't understand how you are going to set about it," said Zina at last, in a tone of disgust. "I feel sure you will only plunge yourself into a pool of shame! I'm not thinking of these people about here. I despise their opinions; but it would be very ignominious for *you*."

"Oh! if that's all, my dear child, don't bother your head about it: please, *please* don't! Let us be agreed about it, and then you need not fear for me. Dear me! if you but knew, though, what things I have done, and kept my skin whole! I tell you this is *nothing* in comparison with *real* difficulties which I have arranged successfully. Only let me try. But, first of all we must get the prince *alone*, and that as soon as possible. That's the first move: all the rest will depend upon the way we manage this. However, I can foresee the result. They'll all rise against us; but I'll manage *them* all right! I'm a little nervous about Mosgliakoff. He — —"

"Mosgliakoff!" said Zina, contemptuously.

"Yes, but don't you be afraid, Zina! I'll give you my word I'll work him so that he shall help us himself. You don't know me yet, my Zina. My child, when I heard about this old prince having arrived this morning, the idea, as it were, shone out all at once in my brain! Who would have thought of his really coming to us like this! It is a chance such as you might wait for a thousand years in vain. Zina, my angel! there's no shame in what you are doing. What *is* wrong is to marry a man whom you loathe. Your marriage with the prince will be no *real* marriage; it is simply a domestic contract. It is he, the old fool, who gains by it. It is *he* who is made unspeakably, immeasurably happy. Oh! Zina, how lovely you look to-day. If I were a man I would give you half a kingdom if you but raised your finger for it! *Asses* they all are! Who wouldn't kiss a hand like this?" and Maria Alexandrovna kissed her daughter's hand warmly. "Why, this is my own flesh and blood, Zina. What's to be done afterwards? You won't part with me, will you? You won't drive your old mother away when you are happy yourself? No,

darling, for though we have quarrelled often enough, you have not such another friend as I am, Zina! You — —”

“Mamma, if you’ve made up your mind to it all, perhaps it is time you set about making some move in the matter. We are losing time,” said Zina, impatiently.

“Yes, it is, it is indeed time; and here am I gabbling on while they are all doing their best to seduce the prince away from us. I must be off at once. I shall find them, and bring the prince back by force, if need be. Good-bye, Zina, darling child. Don’t be afraid, and don’t look sad, dear; please don’t! It will be all well, nay, *gloriously* well! Good-bye, good-bye!”

Maria Alexandrovna made the sign of the Cross over Zina, and dashed out of the room. She stopped one moment at her looking-glass to see that all was right, and then, in another minute, was seated in her carriage and careering through the Mordasoff streets. Maria Alexandrovna lived in good style, and her carriage was always in waiting at that hour in case of need.

“No, no, my dears! it’s not for *you* to outwit me,” she thought, as she drove along. “Zina agrees; so half the work is done. Oh, Zina, Zina! so your imagination is susceptible to pretty little visions, is it? and I *did* treat her to a pretty little picture. She was really touched at last; and how lovely the child looked to-day! If I had her beauty I should turn half Europe topsy-turvy. But wait a bit, it’s all right. Shakespeare will fly away to another world when you’re a princess, my dear, and know a few people. What does she know? Mordasoff and the tutor! And what a princess she will make. I *love* to see her pride and pluck. She looks at you like any queen. And not to know her own good! However, she soon will. Wait a bit; let this old fool die, and then the boy, and I’ll marry her to a reigning prince yet! The only thing I’m afraid of is — haven’t I trusted her too much? Didn’t I allow my feelings to run away with me too far? I am anxious about her. I am anxious, anxious!”

Thus Maria Alexandrovna reflected as she drove along. She was a busy woman, was Maria Alexandrovna.

Zina, left alone, continued her solitary walk up and down the room with folded hands and thoughtful brow. She had a good deal to think of! Over and over again she repeated, “It’s time — it’s time — oh, it’s time!” What did this ejaculation mean? Once or twice tears glistened on her long silken eyelashes, and she did not attempt to wipe them away.

Her mother worried herself in vain, as far as Zina was concerned; for her daughter had quite made up her mind: — she was ready, come what might!

“Wait a bit!” said the widow to herself, as she picked her way out of her hiding-place, after having observed and listened to the interview between Zina and her mother. “And I was thinking of a wedding dress for myself; I positively thought the prince would really come my way! So much for *my* wedding dress — what a fool I was! Oho! Maria Alexandrovna — I’m a baggage, am I — and a beggar; — and I took a bribe of two hundred roubles from you, did I? And I didn’t spend it on expenses connected with your precious daughter’s letter, did I? and break open a desk for your sake with my own hands! Yes, madam; I’ll teach you what sort of a baggage Nastasia Petrovna is; both of you shall know her a little better yet! Wait a bit!”

CHAPTER VII.

Maria Alexandrovna's genius had conceived a great and daring project.
To marry her daughter to a rich man, a prince, and a cripple; to marry her secretly, to take advantage of the senile feebleness of her guest, to marry her daughter to this old man *burglariously*, as her enemies would call it, — was not only a daring, it was a downright audacious, project.

Of course, in case of success, it would be a profitable undertaking enough; but in the event of *non*-success, what an ignominious position for the authors of such a failure.

Maria Alexandrovna knew all this, but she did not despair. She had been through deeper mire than this, as she had rightly informed Zina.

Undoubtedly all this looked rather too like a robbery on the high road to be altogether pleasant; but Maria Alexandrovna did not dwell much on this thought. She had one very simple but very pointed notion on the subject: namely, this— "*once married they can't be unmarried again*."

It was a simple, but very pleasant reflection, and the very thought of it gave Maria Alexandrovna a tingling sensation in all her limbs. She was in a great state of agitation, and sat in her carriage as if on pins and needles. She was anxious to begin the fray: her grand plan of operations was drawn up; but there were thousands of small details to be settled, and these must depend upon circumstances. She was not agitated by fear of failure — oh dear, no! all she minded was delay! she feared the delay and obstructions that might be put in her way by the Mordasoff ladies, whose pretty ways she knew so well! She was well aware that probably at this moment the whole town knew all about her present intentions, though she had not revealed them to a living soul. She had found out by painful experience that nothing, not the most secret event, could happen in her house in the morning but it was known at the farthest end of the town by the evening.

Of course, no anticipation, no presentiment, deterred or deceived Maria Alexandrovna: she might feel such sensations at times, but she despised them. Now, this is what had happened in the town this morning, and of which our heroine was as yet only partly informed. About mid-day, that is, just three hours after the prince's arrival at Mordasoff, extraordinary rumours began to circulate about the town.

Whence came they? Who spread them? None could say; but they spread like wild-fire. Everyone suddenly began to assure his neighbour that Maria Alexandrovna had engaged her daughter to the prince; that Mosgliakoff had notice to quit, and that all was settled and signed, and the penniless, twenty-three-year-old Zina was to be the princess.

Whence came this rumour? Could it be that Maria Alexandrovna was so thoroughly known that her friends could anticipate her thoughts and actions under any given circumstances?

The fact is, every inhabitant of a provincial town lives under a glass case; there is no possibility of his keeping anything whatever secret from his honourable co-dwellers in the place. They know *everything*; they know it, too, better than he does himself. Every provincial person should be a psychologist by nature; and that is why I have been surprised, often and often, to observe when I am among provincials that there is not a great number of psychologists — as one would expect, — but an infinite number of dreadful asses. However, this a digression.

The rumour thus spread, then, was a thunder-like and startling shock to the Mordasoff system. Such a marriage — a marriage with this prince — appeared to all to be a thing so very desirable, so brilliant, that the strange side of the affair had not seemed to strike anyone as yet!

One more circumstance must be noticed. Zina was even more detested in the place than her mother; why, I don’t know. Perhaps her beauty was the prime cause. Perhaps, too, it was that Maria Alexandrovna was, as it were, one of themselves, a fruit of their own soil: if she was to go away she might even be missed; she kept the place alive more or less — it might be dull without her! But with Zina it was quite a different matter: she lived more in the clouds than in the town of Mordasoff. She was no company for these good people; she could not pair with them. Perhaps she bore herself towards them, unconsciously though, too haughtily.

And now this same Zina, this haughty girl, about whom there were certain scandalous stories afloat, this same Zina was to become a millionaire, a princess, and a woman of rank and eminence!

In a couple of years she might marry again, some duke, perhaps, or a general, maybe a Governor; their own Governor was a widower, and very fond of the ladies! Then she would be the first lady of their province! Why, the very thought of such a thing would be intolerable: in fact, this rumour of

Zina's marriage with the prince aroused more irritation in Mordasoff than any other piece of gossip within the memory of man!

People told each other that it was a sin and a shame, that the prince was crazy, that the old man was being deceived, caught, robbed — anything you like; that the prince must be saved from the bloodthirsty talons he had floundered into; that the thing was simply robbery, immorality. And why were any others worse than Zina? Why should not somebody else marry the prince?

Maria Alexandrovna only guessed at all this at present — but that was quite enough. She knew that the whole town would rise up and use all and every means to defeat her ends. Why, they had tried to "confiscate" the prince already; she would have to retrieve him by force, and if she should succeed in luring or forcing him back now, she could not keep him tied to her apron-strings for ever. Again, what was to prevent this whole troop of Mordasoff gossips from coming *en masse* to her salon, under such a plausible plea, too, that she would not be able to turn them out. She knew well that if kicked out of the door these good people would get in at the window — a thing which had actually happened before now at Mordasoff.

In a word, there was not an hour, not a moment to be lost; and meanwhile things were not even begun. A brilliant idea now struck Maria Alexandrovna. We shall hear what this idea was in its proper place, meanwhile I will only state that my heroine dashed through the streets of Mordasoff, looking like a threatening storm-cloud as she swept along full of the stern and implacable resolve that the prince should come back if she had to drag him, and fight for him; and that all Mordasoff might fall in ruins but she should have her way!

Her first move was successful — it could not have been more so.

She chanced to meet the prince in the street, and carried him off to dinner with her.

If my reader wishes to know *how* this feat was accomplished with such a circle of enemies about and around her, and how she managed to make such a fool of Mrs. Antipova, then I must be allowed to point out that such a question is an insult to Maria Alexandrovna. As if *she* were not capable of outwitting any Antipova that ever breathed!

She simply "arrested" the prince at her rival's very door, as he alighted there with Mosgliakoff, in spite of the latter's terror of a scandal, and in spite of everything else; and she popped the old man into the carriage

beside her. Of course the prince made very little resistance, and as usual, forgot all about the episode in a couple of minutes, and was as happy as possible.

At dinner he was hilarious to a degree; he made jokes and fun, and told stories which had no ends, or which he tacked on to ends belonging to other stories, without remarking the fact.

He had had three glasses of champagne at lunch at Natalie Dimitrievna's. He now took more wine, and his old head whirled with it. Maria Alexandrovna plied him well. The dinner was very good: the mistress of the house kept the company alive with most bewitching airs and manners, — at least so it should have been, but all excepting herself and the prince were terribly dull on this occasion. Zina sat silent and grave. Mosgliakoff was clearly off his feed: he was very thoughtful; and as this was unusual Maria Alexandrovna was considerably anxious about him. The widow looked cross and cunning; she continually made mysterious signs to Mosgliakoff on the sly; but the latter took no notice of them.

If the mistress herself had not been so amiable and bewitching, the dinner party might have been mistaken for a lunch at a funeral!

Meanwhile Maria Alexandrovna's condition of mind was in reality excited and agitated to a terrible degree. Zina alone terrified her by her tragic look and tearful eyes. And there was another difficulty — for that accursed Mosgliakoff would probably sit about and get in the way of business! One could not well set about it with him in the room!

So, Maria Alexandrovna rose from the table in some agitation.

But what was her amazement, her joyful surprise, when Mosgliakoff came up to her after dinner, of his own accord, and suddenly and most unexpectedly informed her that he must — to his infinite regret — leave the house on important business for a short while.

"Why, where are you going to?" she asked, with great show of regret.

"Well, you see," began Mosgliakoff, rather disconcerted and uncomfortable, "I have to — *may* I come to you for advice?"

"What is it — what is it?"

"Why, you see, my godfather Borodueff — you know the man; I met him in the street to-day, and he is dreadfully angry with me, says I am grown so *proud*, that though I have been in Mordasoff three times I have never shown my nose inside his doors. He asked me to come in for a cup of tea at five — it's four now. He has no children, you know, — and he is

worth a million of roubles — *more*, they say; and if I marry Zina — you see, — and he's seventy years old now!"

"Why, my good boy, of course, of course! — what are you thinking of? You must not neglect that sort of thing — go at once, of course! I *thought* you looked preoccupied at dinner. You ought to have gone this morning and shewn him that you cared for him, and so on. Oh, you boys, you boys!" cried Maria Alexandrovna with difficulty concealing her joy.

"Thanks, thanks, Maria Alexandrovna! you've made a man of me again! I declare I quite feared telling you — for I know you didn't think much of the connection. — He is a common sort of old fellow, I know! So good-bye — my respects to Zina, and apologies — I must be off, of course I shall be back soon!"

"Good-bye — take my blessing with you; say something polite to the old man for me; I have long changed my opinion of him; I have grown to like the real old Russian style of the man. *Au revoir, mon ami, au revoir!*"

"Well, it *is* a mercy that the devil has carried him off, out of the way!" she reflected, flushing with joy as Paul took his departure out of the room. But Paul had only just reached the hall and was putting on his fur coat when to him appeared — goodness knows whence — the widow, Nastasia Petrovna. She had been waiting for him.

"Where are you going to?" she asked, holding him by the arm.

"To my godfather Borodueff's — a rich old fellow; I want him to leave me money. Excuse me — I'm in rather a hurry!"

Mosgliakoff was in a capital humour!

"Oh! then say good-bye to your betrothed!" remarked the widow, cuttingly.

"And why 'good-bye'?"

"Why; you think she's yours already, do you? and they are going to marry her to the prince! I heard them say so myself!"

"To the prince? Oh, come now, Nastasia Petrovna!"

"Oh, it's not a case of 'come now' at all! Would you like to see and hear it for yourself? Put down your coat, and come along here, — this way!"

"Excuse me, Nastasia Petrovna, but I don't understand what you are driving at!"

"Oh! you'll understand fast enough if you just bend down here and listen! The comedy is probably just beginning!"

"What comedy?"

“Hush! don’t talk so loud! The comedy of humbugging *you*. This morning, when you went away with the prince, Maria Alexandrovna spent a whole hour talking Zina over into marrying the old man! She told her that nothing was easier than to lure the prince into marrying her; and all sorts of other things that were enough to make one sick! Zina agreed. You should have heard the pretty way in which *you* were spoken of! They think you simply a fool! Zina said plump out that she would never marry you! Listen now, listen!”

“Why — why — it would be most godless cunning,” Paul stammered, looking sheepishly into Nastasia’s eyes.

“Well, just you listen — you’ll hear that, and more besides!”

“But how am I to listen?”

“Here, bend down here. Do you see that keyhole!”

“Oh! but, Nastasia Petrovna, I can’t eavesdrop, you know!”

“Oh, nonsense, nonsense! Put your pride in your pocket! You’ve come, and you must listen now!”

“Well, at all events — —”

“Oh! if you can’t bear to be an eavesdropper, let it alone, and be made a fool of! One goes out of one’s way solely out of pity for you, and you must needs make difficulties! What is it to me? I’m not doing this for myself! *I* shall leave the house before night, in any case!”

Paul, steeling his heart, bent to the keyhole.

His pulses were raging and throbbing. He did not realise what was going on, or what he was doing, or where he was.

CHAPTER VIII.

“So you were very gay, prince, at Natalia Dimitrievna’s?” asked Maria Alexandrovna, surveying the battlefield before her; she was anxious to begin the conversation as innocently as possible; but her heart beat loud with hope and agitation.

After dinner the Prince had been carried off to the salon, where he was first received in the morning. Maria Alexandrovna prided herself on this room, and always used it on state occasions.

The old man, after his six glasses of champagne, was not very steady on his legs; but he talked away all the more, for the same reason.

Surveying the field of battle before the fray, Maria Alexandrovna had observed with satisfaction that the voluptuous old man had already begun to regard Zina with great tenderness, and her maternal heart beat high with joy.

“Oh! ch — charming — very gay indeed!” replied the prince, “and, do you know, Nat — alia Dimitrievna is a wo — wonderful woman, a ch — charming woman!”

Howsoever busy with her own high thoughts and exalted ideas, Maria Alexandrovna’s heart waxed wrathful to hear such a loud blast of praise on her rival’s account.

“Oh! Prince,” she began, with flashing eyes, “if Natalia Dimitrievna is a charming woman in your eyes, then I really don’t know *what* to think! After such a statement, dear Prince, you must not claim to know society here — no, no!”

“Really! You sur — pr — prise me!”

“I assure you — I assure you, *mon cher* Prince! Listen Zina, I must just tell the prince that absurd story about what Natalia Dimitrievna did when she was here last week. Dearest prince, I am not a scandal-monger, but I must, I really *must* tell you this, if only to make you laugh, and to show you a living picture, as it were, of what people are like in this place! Well, last week this Natalia Dimitrievna came to call upon me. Coffee was brought in, and I had to leave the room for a moment — I forget why — at all events, I went out. Now, I happened to have remarked how much sugar there was in the silver sugar basin; it was quite full. Well, I came back in a few minutes — looked at the sugar basin, and! —— three lumps — three little wretched lumps at the very bottom of the basin, prince! — and she was all alone in

the room, mind! Now that woman has a large house of her own, and lots of money! Of course this is merely a funny story — but you can judge from this what sort of people one has to deal with here!”

“N — no! you don’t mean it!” said the prince, in real astonishment. “What a gr — eedy woman! Do you mean to say she ate it all up?”

“There, prince, and that’s your ‘charming woman!’ What do you think of *that* nice little bit of lady-like conduct? I think I should have died of shame if I had ever allowed myself to do such a dirty thing as that!”

“Ye — yes, ye — yes! but, do you know, she is a real ‘*belle femme*’ all the same!”

“What! Natalia Dimitrievna? My dear prince; why, she is a mere tub of a woman! Oh! prince, prince! what have you said? I expected far better taste of *you*, prince!”

“Ye — yes, tub — tub, of course! but she’s a n — nice figure, a nice figure! And the girl who danced — oh! a nice figure too, a very nice figure of a wo — woman!”

“What, Sonia? Why she’s a mere child, prince? She’s only thirteen years old.”

“Ye — yes, ye — yes, of course; but her figure de — velops very fast — charming, charming! And the other da — ancing girl, she’s de — veloping too — nicely: she’s dirty rather — she might have washed her hands, but very at — tractive, charming!” and the prince raised his glass again and hungrily inspected Zina. “*Mais quelle charmante personne!* — what a lovely girl!” he muttered, melting with satisfaction.

“Zina, play us something, or — better still, sing us a song! How she sings, prince! she’s an artiste — a real artiste; oh if you only knew, dear prince,” continued Maria Alexandrovna, in a half whisper, as Zina rose to go to the piano with her stately but quiet gait and queenly composure, which evidently told upon the old man; “if you only knew what a daughter that is to me! how she can love; how tender, how affectionate she is to me! what taste she has, what a heart!”

“Ye — yes! ye — yes! taste. And do you know, I have only known one woman in all my life who could compare with her in love — liness. It was the late C — ountess Nainsky: she died thirty years ago, a w — onderful woman, and her beauty was quite sur — passing. She married her co — ook at last.”

“Her cook, prince?”

“Ye — yes, her cook, a Frenchman, abroad. She bought him a count’s title a — broad; he was a good-looking fellow enough, with little moustaches — —”

“And how did they get on?”

“Oh, very well indeed; however, they p — arted very soon; they quarrelled about some sa — sauce. He robbed her — and bo — olted.”

“Mamma, what shall I play?” asked Zina.

“Better sing us something, Zina. *How* she sings, prince! Do you like music?”

“Oh, ye — yes! charming, charming. I love music pass — sionately. I knew Beethoven, abroad.”

“Knew Beethoven!” cried Maria Alexandrovna, ecstatically. “Imagine, Zina, the prince knew Beethoven! Oh, prince, did you really, *really* know the great Beethoven?”

“Ye — yes, we were great friends, Beet — hoven and I; he was always taking snuff — such a funny fellow!”

“What, Beethoven?”

“Yes, Beethoven; or it may have been some other German fellow — I don’t know; there are a great many Germans there. I forget.”

“Well, what shall I sing, mamma?” asked Zina again.

“Oh Zina darling, do sing us that lovely ballad all about knights, you know, and the girl who lived in a castle and loved a troubadour. Don’t you know! Oh, prince, how I do *love* all those knightly stories and songs, and the castles! Oh! the castles, and life in the middle ages, and the troubadours, and heralds and all. Shall I accompany you, Zina? Sit down near here, prince. Oh! those castles, those castles!”

“Ye — yes, ye — yes, castles; I love ca — astles too!” observed the prince, staring at Zina all the while with the whole of his one eye, as if he would like to eat her up at once. “But, good heavens,” he cried, “that song! I know that s — song. I heard that song years — years ago! Oh! how that song reminds me of so — omething. Oh, oh.”

I will not attempt to describe the ecstatic state of the prince while Zina sang.

She warbled an old French ballad which had once been all the fashion. Zina sang it beautifully; her lovely face, her glorious eyes, her fine sweet contralto voice, all this went to the prince’s heart at once; and her dark thick hair, her heaving bosom, her proud, beautiful, stately figure as she sat at the

piano, and played and sang, quite finished him. He never took his eyes off her, he panted with excitement. His old heart, partially revivified with champagne, with the music, and with awakening recollections (and who is there who has no beloved memories of the past?), his old heart beat faster and faster. It was long since it had last beat in this way. He was ready to fall on his knees at her feet, when Zina stopped singing, and he was almost in tears with various emotions.

"Oh, my charming, charming child," he cried, putting his lips to her fingers, "you have ra — vished me quite — quite! I remember all now. Oh charming, charming child! — —"

The poor prince could not finish his sentence.

Maria Alexandrovna felt that the moment had arrived for her to make a move.

"Why, *why* do you bury yourself alive as you do, prince?" she began, solemnly. "So much taste, so much vital energy, so many rich gifts of the mind and soul — and to hide yourself in solitude all your days; to flee from mankind, from your friends. Oh, it is unpardonable! Prince, bethink yourself. Look up at life again with open eyes. Call up your dear memories of the past; think of your golden youth — your golden, careless, happy days of youth! Wake them, wake them from the dead, Prince! and wake yourself, too; and recommence life among men and women and society! Go abroad — to Italy, to Spain, oh, to Spain, Prince! You must have a guide, a heart that will love and respect, and sympathize with you! You have friends; summon them about you! Give the word, and they will rally round you in crowds! I myself will be the first to throw up everything, and answer to your cry! I remembered our old friendship, my Prince; and I will sacrifice husband, home, all, and follow you. Yes, and were I but young and lovely, like my daughter here, I would be your fellow, your friend, your *wife*, if you said but the word!"

"And I am convinced that you were a most charming creature in your day, too!" said the prince, blowing his nose violently. His eyes were full of tears.

"We live again in our children," said Maria Alexandrovna, with great feeling. "I, too, have my guardian angel, and that is this child, my daughter, Prince, the partner of my heart and of all my thoughts! She has refused seven offers because she is unwilling to leave me! So that she will go too, when you accompany me abroad."

“In that case, I shall certainly go abroad,” cried the prince with animation. “As — suredly I shall go! And if only I could ve — venture to hope — oh! you be — witching child, charming, be — witching child!” And the prince recommenced to kiss Zina’s fingers. The poor old man was evidently meditating going down on his knees before her.

“But, Prince,” began Maria Alexandrovna again, feeling that the opportunity had arrived for another display of eloquence. “But, Prince, you say, ‘If only I could flatter myself into indulging any hope!’ Why, what a strange man you are, Prince. Surely you do not suppose that you are unworthy the flattering attention of *any* woman! It is not only youth that constitutes true beauty. Remember that you are, so to speak, a chip of the tree of aristocracy. You are a representative of all the most knightly, most refined taste and culture and manners. Did not Maria fall in love with the old man Mazeppa? I remember reading that Lauzun, that fascinating marquis of the court of Louis (I forget which), when he was an old, bent and bowed man, won the heart of one of the youngest and most beautiful women about the court.

“And who told you you are an old man? Who taught you that nonsense? Do men like you ever grow old? You, with your wealth of taste and wit, and animation and vital energy and brilliant manners! Just you make your appearance at some watering-place abroad with a young wife on your arm — some lovely young girl like my Zina, for instance — of course I merely mention her as an example, nothing more, — and you will see at once what a colossal effect you will produce: you, a scion of our aristocracy; she a beauty among beauties! You will lead her triumphantly on your arm; she, perhaps, will sing in some brilliant assemblage; you will delight the company with your wit. Why, all the people of the place will crowd to see you! All Europe will ring with your renown, for every newspaper and feuilleton at the Waters will be full of you. And yet you say, ‘If I could but *venture* to *hope*,’ indeed!”

“The feuilletons! yes — ye — yes, and the newspapers,” said the prince, growing more and more feeble with love, but not understanding half of Maria Alexandrovna’s tall talk. “But, my child, if you’re not tired, do repeat that song which you have just sung so cha — armingly once more.”

“Oh! but, Prince, she has other lovely songs, still prettier ones; don’t you remember *L’Hirondelle*? You must have heard it, haven’t you?”

“Ye — yes, I remember it; at least I’ve for — gotten it. No, no! the one you have just sung. I don’t want the Hir — ondelle! I want that other song,” whined the prince, just like any child.

Zina sang again.

This time the prince could not contain himself; he fell on his knees at her feet, he cried, he sobbed:

“Oh, my beautiful *chatelaine*!” he cried in his shaky old voice — shaky with old age and emotion combined. “Oh, my charming, charming *chatelaine*! oh, my dear child! You have re — minded me of so much that is long, long passed! I always thought then that things must be fairer in the future than in the present. I used to sing duets with the vis — countess in this very ballad! And now, oh! I don’t know what to do, I don’t know *what* to do!”

The prince panted and choked as he spoke; his tongue seemed to find it difficult to move; some of his words were almost unintelligible. It was clear that he was in the last stage of emotional excitement. Maria Alexandrovna immediately poured oil on the fire.

“Why, Prince, I do believe you are falling in love with my Zina,” she cried, feeling that the moment was a solemn one.

The prince’s reply surpassed her fondest expectations.

“I am madly in love with her!” cried the old man, all animated, of a sudden. He was still on his knees, and he trembled with excitement as he spoke. “I am ready to give my life for her! And if only I could hope, if only I might have a little hope — I, — but, lift me up; I feel so weak. I — if only she would give me the hope that I might offer her my heart, I — she should sing ballads to me every day; and I could look at her, and look and gaze and gaze at her. —— Oh, my God! my God!”

“Prince, Prince! you are offering her your hand. You want to take her from me, my Zina! my darling, my *ange*, my own dear child, Zina! No, Zina, no, I can’t let you go! They must tear you from me, Zina. They must tear you first from your mother’s arms!”

Maria Alexandrovna sprang to her daughter, and caught her up in a close embrace, conscious, withal, of serious physical resistance on Zina’s part. The fond mother was a little overdoing it.

Zina felt this with all her soul, and she looked on at the whole comedy with inexpressible loathing.

However, she held her tongue, and that was all the fond mother required of her.

“She has refused nine men because she will not leave me!” said Maria. “But this time, I fear — my heart tells me that we are doomed to part! I noticed just now how she looked at you, Prince. You have impressed her with your aristocratic manner, with your refinement. Oh! Prince, you are going to separate us — I feel it, I feel it!”

“I ad — ore her!” murmured the poor old man, still trembling like an autumnal leaf.

“And you’ll consent to leave your mother!” cried Maria Alexandrovna, throwing herself upon her daughter once more. Zina made haste to bring this, to her, painful scene to an end. She stretched her pretty hand silently to the prince, and even forced herself to smile. The prince reverently took the little hand into his own, and covered it with kisses.

“I am only this mo — ment beginning to live,” he mutterred, in a voice that seemed choking with rapture and ecstasy.

“Zina,” began Maria Alexandrovna, solemnly, “look well at this man! This is the most honest and upright and noble man of all the men I know. He is a knight of the middle ages! But she knows it, Prince, she knows it too well; to my grief I say it. Oh! why did you come here? I am surrendering my treasure to you — my angel! Oh! take care of her, Prince. Her mother entreats you to watch over her. And what mother could blame my grief!”

“Enough, mamma! that’s enough,” said Zina, quietly.

“Protect her from all hurt and insult, Prince! Can I rely upon your sword to flash in the face of the vile scandal-monger who dares to offend my Zina?”

“Enough, mother, I tell you! am I —— ?”

“Ye — yes, ye — yes, it shall flash all right,” said the prince. “But I want to be married now, at once. I — I’m only just learning what it is to live. I want to send off to Donchanovo at once. I want to send for some di — iamonds I have there. I want to lay them at her feet. —— I — —”

“What noble ardour! what ecstasy of love! what noble, generous feelings you have, Prince!” cried Maria Alexandrovna. “And you could bury yourself — *bury* yourself, far from the world and society! I shall remind you of this a thousand times! I go mad when I think of that *hellish* woman.”

“What could I do? I was fri — ghtened!” stammered the prince in a whining voice: “they wanted to put me in a lu — unatic asylum! I was

dreadfully alarmed!”

“In a lunatic asylum? Ah, the scoundrels! oh, the inhuman wretches! Ah, the low cunning of them! Yes, Prince; I had heard of it. But the lunacy was in these people, not in *you*. Why, *why* was it — what for?”

“I don’t know myself, what it was for,” replied the poor old man, feebly sinking into his chair; “I was at a ball, don’t you know, and told some an — ecdote or other and they didn’t like it; and so they got up a scandal and a ro — ow.”

“Surely that was not all, Prince?”

“No; — the — I was playing cards with Prince Paul De — mentieff, and I was cleared out: you see, I had two kings and three quee — ns, three kings and two qu — eens; or I should say — one king — and some queens — I know I had —— .”

“And it was for this? Oh, the hellish inhumanity of some people! You are weeping, Prince; but be of good cheer — it is all over now! Now I shall be at hand, dearest Prince, — I shall not leave Zina; and we shall see which of them will dare to say a word to you, *then*! And do you know, my Prince, your marriage will expose them! it will shame them! They will see that you are a man — that a lovely girl like our Zina would never have married a madman! You shall raise your head proudly now, and look them straight in the face!”

“Ye — yes; I shall look them straight in the f — ace!” murmured the prince, slowly shutting his eyes.

Maria Alexandrovna saw that her work was done: the prince was tired out with love and emotion. She was only wasting her eloquence!

“Prince, you are disturbed and tired, I see you are!” she said; “you must rest, you must take a good rest after so much agitation,” she added, bending over him maternally.

“Ye — yes, ye — yes; I should like to lie down a little,” said the old man.

“Of course, of course! you must lie down! those agitating scenes —— stop, I will escort you myself, and arrange your couch with my own hands! Why are you looking so hard at that portrait, Prince? That is my mother’s picture; she was an angel — not a woman! Oh, why is she not among us at this joyful moment!”

“Ye — yes; charming — charming! Do you know, I had a mother too, — a princess, and imagine! a re — markably, a re — markably fat woman she

was; but that is not what I was going to say, —— I — I feel a little weak, and —— Au revoir, my charming child — to-morrow — to-day — I will — I — I — Au revoir, au revoir!" Here the poor old fellow tried to kiss his hand, but slipped, and nearly fell over the threshold of the door.

"Take care, dear Prince — take care! lean on my arm!" cried Maria Alexandrovna.

"Charming, ch — arming!" he muttered, as he left the room. "I am only now le — learning to live!"

Zina was left alone.

A terrible oppression weighed down her heart. She felt a sensation of loathing which nearly suffocated her. She despised herself — her cheeks burned. With folded hands, and teeth biting hard into her lips, she stood in one spot, motionless. The tears of shame streamed from her eyes, —— and at this moment the door opened, and Paul Mosgliakoff entered the room!

CHAPTER IX.

He had heard all — *all*.

He did not actually enter the room, but stood at the door, pale with excitement and fury. Zina looked at him in amazement.

“So that’s the sort of person you are!” he cried panting. “At last I have found you out, have I?”

“Found me out?” repeated Zina, looking at him as though he were a madman. Suddenly her eyes flashed with rage. “How dare you address me like that?” she cried, advancing towards him.

“I have heard all!” said Mosgliakoff solemnly, but involuntarily taking a step backwards.

“You heard? I see — you have been eavesdropping!” cried Zina, looking at him with disdain.

“Yes, I have been eavesdropping! Yes — I consented to do a mean action, and my reward is that I have found out that you, too, are —— I don’t know how to express to you what I think you!” he replied, looking more and more timid under Zina’s eyes.

“And supposing that you *have* heard all: what right have you to blame me? What right have you to speak to me so insolently, in any case?”

“*I! — I?* what right have *I*? and *you* can ask me this? You are going to marry this prince, and I have no right to say a word! Why, you gave me your promise — is that nothing?”

“When?”

“How, when?”

“Did not I tell you that morning, when you came to me with your sentimental nonsense — did I not tell you that I could give you no decided answer?”

“But you did not reject me; you did not send me away. I see — you kept me hanging in reserve, in case of need! You lured me into your net! I see, I see it all!”

An expression of pain flitted over Zina’s careworn face, as though someone had suddenly stabbed her to the heart; but she mastered her feelings.

“If I didn’t turn you out of the house,” she began deliberately and very clearly, though her voice had a scarcely perceptible tremor in it, “I refrained

from such a course purely out of pity. You begged me yourself to postpone, to give you time, not to say you ‘No,’ to study you better, and ‘then,’ you said, ‘then, when you know what a fine fellow I am, perhaps you will not refuse me!’ These were your own words, or very like them, at the very beginning of your courtship! — you cannot deny them! And now you dare to tell me that I ‘lured you into my net,’ just as though you did not notice my expression of loathing when you made your appearance this morning! You came a fortnight sooner than I expected you, and I did not hide my disgust; on the contrary, I made it evident — you must have noticed it — I know you did; because you asked me whether I was angry because you had come sooner than you promised! Let me tell you that people who do not, and do not *care* to, hide their loathing for a man can hardly be accused of luring that man into their net! You dare to tell me that I was keeping you in reserve! Very well; my answer to that is, that I judged of you like this: ‘Though he may not be endowed with much intellect, still he may turn out to be a good enough fellow; and if so, it might be possible to marry him.’ However, being persuaded, now, that you are a fool, and a *mischievous* fool into the bargain, — having found out this fact, to my great joy, — it only remains for me now to wish you every happiness and a pleasant journey. Good-bye!”

With these words Zina turned her back on him, and deliberately made for the door.

Mosgliakoff, seeing that all was lost, boiled over with fury.

“Oh! so I’m a fool!” he yelled; “I’m a fool, am I? Very well, good-bye! But before I go, the whole town shall know of this! They shall all hear how you and your mother made the old man drunk, and then swindled him! I shall let the whole world know it! You shall see what Mosgliakoff can do!”

Zina trembled and stopped, as though to answer; but on reflection, she contented herself by shrugging her shoulders; glanced contemptuously at Mosgliakoff, and left the room, banging the door after her.

At this moment Maria Alexandrovna made her appearance. She heard Mosgliakoff’s exclamation, and, divining at once what had happened, trembled with terror. Mosgliakoff still in the house, and near the prince! Mosgliakoff about to spread the news all over the town! At this moment, when secrecy, if only for a short time, was essential! But Maria Alexandrovna was quick at calculations: she thought, with an eagle flight of

the mind, over all the circumstances of the case, and her plan for the pacification of Mosgliakoff was ready in an instant!

“What is it, *mon ami*?” she said, entering the room, and holding out her hand to him with friendly warmth.

“How—*’mon ami*?*’*” cried the enraged Mosgliakoff. “*Mon ami*, indeed! the moment after you have abused and reviled me like a pickpocket! No, no! Not quite so green, my good lady! I’m not to be so easily imposed upon again!”

“I am sorry, extremely sorry, to see you in such a *strange* condition of mind, Paul Alexandrovitch! What expressions you use! You do not take the trouble to choose your words before ladies — oh, fie!”

“Before ladies? Ho ho! You — you are — you are anything you like — but not a lady!” yelled Mosgliakoff.

I don’t quite know what he meant, but it was something very terrible, you may be sure!

Maria Alexandrovna looked benignly in his face:

“Sit down!” she said, sorrowfully, showing him a chair, the same that the old prince had reclined in a quarter of an hour before.

“But listen, *will* you listen, Maria Alexandrovna? You look at me just as though you were not the least to blame; in fact, as though *I* were the guilty party! Really, Maria Alexandrovna, this is a little *too* much of a good thing! No human being can stand that sort of thing, Maria Alexandrovna! You must be aware of that fact!”

“My dear friend,” replied Maria Alexandrovna— “you will allow me to continue to call you by that name, for you have no better friend than I am! — my friend, you are suffering — you are amazed and bewildered; your heart is sore, and therefore the tone of your remarks to me is perhaps not surprising. But I have made up my mind to open my heart to you, especially as I am, perhaps, in some degree to blame before you. Sit down; let us talk it over!”

Maria Alexandrovna’s voice was tender to a sickly extent. Her face showed the pain she was suffering. The amazed Mosgliakoff sat down beside her in the arm-chair.

“You hid somewhere, and listened, I suppose?” she began, looking reproachfully into his face.

“Yes I did, of course I did; and a good thing too! What a fool I should have looked if I hadn’t! At all events now I know what you have been

plotting against me!” replied the injured man, rudely; encouraging and supporting himself by his own fury.

“And you — and you — with your principles, and with your bringing up, could condescend to such an action — Oh, oh!”

Mosgliakoff jumped up.

“Maria Alexandrovna, this is a little too much!” he cried. “Consider what *you* condescend to do, with *your* principles, and *then* judge of other people.”

“One more question,” she continued, without replying to his outburst: “who recommended you to be an eavesdropper; who told you anything; who is the spy here? That’s what I wish to know!”

“Oh, excuse me; that I shall *not* tell you!”

“Very well; I know already. I said, Paul, that I was in some degree to blame before you. But if you look into the matter you will find that if I am to blame it is solely in consequence of my anxiety to do you a good turn!”

“*What?* a good turn — *me*? No, no, madam! I assure you I am not to be caught again! I’m not quite such a fool!”

He moved so violently in his arm-chair that it shook again.

“Now, do be cool, if you can, my good friend. Listen to me attentively, and you will find that what I say is only the bare truth. In the first place I was anxious to inform you of all that has just taken place, in which case you would have learned everything, down to the smallest detail, without being obliged to descend to eavesdropping! If I did not tell you all before, it was simply because the whole matter was in an embryo condition in my mind. It was then quite possible that what *has* happened would never happen. You see, I am quite open with you.

“In the second place, do not blame my daughter. She loves you to distraction; and it was only by the exercise of my utmost influence that I persuaded her to drop you, and accept the prince’s offer.”

“I have just had the pleasure of receiving convincing proof of her ‘love to distraction!’ ” remarked Mosgliakoff, ironically and bitterly.

“Very well. But how did you speak to *her*? As a lover should speak? Again, ought *any* man of respectable position and tone to speak like that? You insulted and wounded her!”

“Never mind about my ‘tone’ now! All I can say is that this morning, when I went away with the prince, in spite of both of you having been as

sweet as honey to me before, you reviled me behind my back like a pickpocket! *I* know all about it, you see!”

“Yes, from the same dirty source, I suppose?” said Maria Alexandrovna, smiling disdainfully. “Yes, Paul, I *did* revile you: I pitched into you considerably, and I admit it frankly. But it was simply that I was *bound* to blacken you before her. Why? Because, as I have said, I required her to consent to leave you, and this consent was so difficult to tear from her! Short-sighted man that you are! If she had not loved you, why should I have required so to blacken your character? Why should I have been obliged to take this extreme step? Oh! you don’t know all! I was forced to use my fullest maternal authority in order to erase you from her heart; and with all my influence and skill I only succeeded in erasing your dear image superficially and partially! If you saw and heard all just now, it cannot have escaped you that Zina did not once, by either word or gesture, encourage or confirm my words to the prince? Throughout the whole scene she said not one word. She sang, but like an automaton! Her whole soul was in anguish, and at last, out of pity for her, I took the prince away. I am sure, she cried, when I left her alone! When you entered the room you must have observed tears in her eyes?”

Mosgliakoff certainly did recall the fact that when he rushed into the room Zina was crying.

“But you — *you* — why were *you* so against me, Maria Alexandrovna?” he cried. “Why did you revile me and malign me, as you admit you did?”

“Ah, now that’s quite a different question. Now, if you had only asked me reasonably at the beginning, you should have had your answer long ago! Yes, you are right. It was I, and I alone, who did it all. Do not think of Zina in the matter. Now, *why* did I do it? I reply, in the first place, for Zina’s sake. The prince is rich, influential, has great connections, and in marrying him Zina will make a brilliant match. Very well; then if the prince dies — as perhaps he will die soon, for we are all mortal, — Zina is still young, a widow, a princess, and probably very rich. Then she can marry whom she pleases; she may make another brilliant match if she likes. But of course she will marry the man she loves, and loved before, the man whose heart she wounded by accepting the prince. Remorse alone would be enough to make her marry the man whom she had loved and so deeply injured!”

“Hem!” said Paul, gazing at his boots thoughtfully.

“In the second place,” continued Maria, “and I will put this shortly, because, though you read a great deal of your beloved Shakespeare, and extract his finest thoughts and ideals, yet you are very young, and cannot, perhaps, apply what you read. You may not understand my feelings in this matter: listen, however. *I* am giving my Zina to this prince partly for the prince’s own sake, because I wish to save him by this marriage. We are old friends; he is the dearest and best of men, he is a knightly, chivalrous gentleman, and he lives helpless and miserable in the claws of that devil of a woman at Donchanovo! Heaven knows that I persuaded Zina into this marriage by putting it to her that she would be performing a great and noble action. I represented her as being the stay and the comfort and the darling and the idol of a poor old man, who probably would not live another year at the most! I showed her that thus his last days should be made happy with love and light and friendship, instead of wretched with fear and the society of a detestable woman. Oh! do not blame Zina. She is guiltless. I am not — I admit it; for if there have been calculations it is I who have made them! But I calculated for her, Paul; for her, not myself! I have outlived my time; I have thought but for my child, and what mother could blame me for this?” Tears sparkled in the fond mother’s eyes. Mosgliakoff listened in amazement to all this eloquence, winking his eyes in bewilderment.

“Yes, yes, of course! You talk well, Maria Alexandrovna, but you forget — you gave me your word, you encouraged me, you gave me my hopes; and where am I now? I have to stand aside and look a fool!”

“But, my dear Paul, you don’t surely suppose that I have not thought of you too! Don’t you see the huge, immeasurable gain to yourself in all this? A gain so vast that I was bound in your interest to act as I did!”

“Gain for me! How so?” asked Paul, in the most abject state of confusion and bewilderment.

“Gracious Heavens! do you mean to say you are really so simple and so short-sighted as to be unable to see *that*?” cried Maria Alexandrovna, raising her eyes to the ceiling in a pious manner. “Oh! youth, youth! That’s what comes of steeping one’s soul in Shakespeare! You ask me, my dear friend Paul, where is the gain to you in all this. Allow me to make a little digression. Zina loves you — that is an undoubted fact. But I have observed that at the same time, and in spite of her evident love, she is not quite sure of your good feeling and devotion to her; and for this reason she is

sometimes cold and self-restrained in your presence. Have you never observed this yourself, Paul?”

“Certainly; I did this very day; but go on, what do you deduce from that fact?”

“There, you see! you have observed it yourself; then of course I am right. She is not quite sure of the *lasting* quality of your feeling for her! I am a mother, and I may be permitted to read the heart of my child. Now, then, supposing that instead of rushing into the room and reproaching, vilifying, even *swearing* at and insulting this sweet, pure, beautiful, proud being, instead of hurling contempt and vituperation at her head — supposing that instead of all this you had received the bad news with composure, with tears of grief, maybe; perhaps even with despair — but at the same time with noble composure of soul — —”

“H’m!”

“No, no — don’t interrupt me! I wish to show you the picture as it is. Very well, supposing, then, that you had come to her and said, ‘Zina, I love you better than my life, but family considerations must separate us; I understand these considerations — they are devised for your greater happiness, and I dare not oppose them. Zina, I forgive you; be happy, if you can!’ — think what effect such noble words would have wrought upon her heart!”

“Yes — yes, that’s all very true, I quite understand that much! but if I *had* said all this, I should have had to go all the same, without satisfaction!”

“No, no, no! don’t interrupt me! I wish to show you the *whole* picture in all its detail, in order to impress you fully and satisfactorily. Very well, then, imagine now that you meet her in society some time afterwards: you meet perhaps at a ball — in the brilliant light of a ball-room, under the soothing strains of music, and in the midst of worldly women and of all that is gay and beautiful. You alone are sad — thoughtful — pale, — you lean against some pillar (where you are visible, however!) and watch her. She is dancing. You hear the strains of Strauss, and the wit and merriment around you, but you are sad and wretched.

“What, think you, will Zina make of it? With what sort of eyes will she gaze on you as you stand there? ‘And I could doubt this man!’ she will think, ‘this man who sacrificed all, all, for my sake — even to the mortal wounding of his heart!’ Of course the old love will awake in her bosom and will swell with irresistible power!”

Maria Alexandrovna stopped to take breath. Paul moved violently from side to side of his chair.

“Zina now goes abroad for the benefit of the prince’s health — to Italy — to Spain,” she continued, “where the myrtle and the lemon tree grow, where the sky is so blue, the beautiful Guadalquiver flows! to the land of love, where none can live without loving; where roses and kisses — so to speak — breathe in the very air around. You follow her — you sacrifice your business, friends, everything, and follow her. And so your love grows and increases with irresistible might. Of course that love is irreproachable — innocent — you will languish for one another — you will meet frequently; of course others will malign and vilify you both, and call your love by baser names — but your love is innocent, as I have purposely said; I am her mother — it is not for me to teach you evil, but good. At all events the prince is not in the condition to keep a very sharp look-out upon you; but if he did, as if there would be the slightest ground for base suspicion? Well, the prince dies at last, and then, who will marry Zina, if not yourself? You are so distant a relative of the prince’s that there could be no obstacle to the match; you marry her — she is young still, and rich. You are a grandee in an instant! you, too, are rich now! I will take care that the prince’s will is made as it should be; and lastly, Zina, now convinced of your loyalty and faithfulness, will look on you hereafter as her hero, as her paragon of virtue and self-sacrifice! Oh! you must be blind, — *blind*, not to observe and calculate your own profit when it lies but a couple of strides from you, grinning at you, as it were, and saying, ‘Here, I am yours, take me! Oh, Paul, Paul!’ ”

“Maria Alexandrovna!” cried Mosgliakoff, in great agitation and excitement, “I see it all! I have been rude, and a fool, and a scoundrel too!” He jumped up from his chair and tore his hair.

“Yes, and unbusinesslike, that’s the chief thing — unbusinesslike, and blindly so!” added Maria Alexandrovna.

“I’m an ass! Maria Alexandrovna,” he cried in despair. “All is lost now, and I loved her to madness!”

“Maybe all is not lost yet!” said this successful orator softly, and as though thinking out some idea.

“Oh! if only it could be so! help me — teach me. Oh! save me, save me!”

Mosgliakoff burst into tears.

“My dear boy,” said Maria Alexandrovna, sympathetically, and holding out her hand, “you acted impulsively, from the depth and heat of your passion — in fact, out of your great love for her; you were in despair, you had forgotten yourself; she must understand all that!”

“Oh! I love her madly! I am ready to sacrifice everything for her!” cried Mosgliakoff.

“Listen! I will justify you before her.”

“Oh, Maria Alexandrovna!”

“Yes, I will. I take it upon myself! You come with me, and you shall tell her exactly what I said!”

“Oh, how kind, how good you are! Can’t we go at once, Maria Alexandrovna?”

“Goodness gracious, no! What a very green hand you are, Paul! She’s far too proud! she would take it as a new rudeness and impertinence! To-morrow I shall arrange it all comfortably for you: but now, couldn’t you get out of the way somewhere for a while, to that godfather of yours, for instance? You could come back in the evening, if you pleased; but my advice would be to stay away!”

“Yes, yes! I’ll go — of course! Good heavens, you’ve made a man of me again! — Well, but look here — one more question: — What if the prince does *not* die so soon?”

“Oh, my dear boy, how delightfully naïve you are! On the contrary, we must pray for his good health! We must wish with all our hearts for long life to this dear, good, and chivalrous old man! I shall be the first to pray day and night for the happiness of my beloved daughter! But alas! I fear the prince’s case is hopeless; you see, they must visit the capital now, to bring Zina out into society. — I dreadfully fear that all this may prove fatal to him; however, we’ll pray, Paul, we can’t do more, and the rest is in the hands of a kind Providence. You see what I mean? Very well — good-bye, my dear boy, bless you! Be a man, and wait patiently — be a man, that’s the chief thing! I never doubted your generosity of character; but be brave — good-bye!” She pressed his hand warmly, and Mosgliakoff walked out of the room on tip-toes.

“There goes *one* fool, got rid of satisfactorily!” observed Maria Alexandrovna to herself,— “but there are more behind —— !”

At this moment the door opened, and Zina entered the room. She was paler than usual, and her eyes were all ablaze.

“Mamma!” she said, “be quick about this business, or I shall not be able to hold out. It is all so dirty and mean that I feel I must run out of the house if it goes on. Don’t drive me to desperation! I warn you — don’t weary me out — don’t weary me out!”

“Zina — what is it, my darling? You — you’ve been listening?” cried Maria Alexandrovna, gazing intently and anxiously at her daughter.

“Yes, I have; but you need not try to make me ashamed of myself as you succeeded in doing with that fool. Now listen: I solemnly swear that if you worry and annoy me by making me play various mean and odious parts in this comedy of yours, — I swear to you that I will throw up the whole business and put an end to it in a moment. It is quite enough that I have consented to be a party in the main and essence of the base transactions; but — but — I did not know myself, I am poisoned and suffocated with the stench of it!” — So saying, she left the room and banged the door after her.

Maria Alexandrovna looked fixedly after her for a moment, and reflected.

“I must make haste,” she cried, rousing herself; “*she* is the greatest danger and difficulty of all! If these detestable people do not let us alone, instead of acting the town-criers all over the place (as I fear they are doing already!) — all will be lost! She won’t stand the worry of it — she’ll drop the business altogether! — At all hazards, I must get the prince to the country house, and that quickly, too! I shall be off there at once, first, and bring my fool of a husband up: he shall be made useful for once in his life! Meanwhile the prince shall have his sleep out, and when he wakes up I shall be back and ready to cart him away bodily!”

She rang the bell.

“Are the horses ready?” she inquired of the man.

“Yes, madam, long ago!” said the latter.

She had ordered the carriage the moment after she had taken the prince upstairs.

Maria Alexandrovna dressed hurriedly, and then looked in at Zina’s room for a moment, before starting, in order to tell her the outlines of her plan of operations, and at the same time to give Zina a few necessary instructions. But her daughter could not listen to her. She was lying on her bed with face hidden in the pillows, crying, and was tearing her beautiful hair with her long white hands: occasionally she trembled violently for a

moment, as though a blast of cold had passed through all her veins. Her mother began to speak to her, but Zina did not even raise her head!

Having stood over her daughter in a state of bewilderment for some little while, Maria Alexandrovna left the room; and to make up for lost time bade the coachman drive like fury, as she stepped into the carriage.

“I don’t quite like Zina having listened!” she thought as she rattled away. “I gave Mosgliakoff very much the same argument as to herself: she is proud, and may easily have taken offence! H’m! Well, the great thing is to be in time with all the arrangements, — before people know what I am up to! Good heavens, fancy, if my fool of a husband were to be out!!”

And at the very thought of such a thing, Maria Alexandrovna’s rage so overcame her that it was clear her poor husband would fare badly for his sins if he proved to be not at home! She twisted and turned in her place with impatience, — the horses almost galloped with the carriage at their heels.

CHAPTER X.

On they flew.

I have said already that this very day, on her first drive after the prince, Maria Alexandrovna had been inspired with a great idea! and I promised to reveal this idea in its proper place. But I am sure the reader has guessed it already! — It was, to “confiscate” the prince in her turn, and carry him off to the village where, at this moment, her husband Afanassy Matveyevitch vegetated alone.

I must admit that our heroine was growing more and more anxious as the day went on; but this is often the case with heroes of all kinds, just before they attain their great ends! Some such instinct whispered to her that it was not safe to remain in Mordasoff another hour, if it could be avoided; — but once in the country house, the whole town might go mad and stand on its head, for all she cared!

Of course she must not lose time, even there! All sorts of things might happen — even the police might interfere. (Reader, I shall never believe, for my part, that my heroine really had the slightest fear of the vulgar police force; but as it has been rumoured in Mordasoff that at this moment such a thought *did* pass through her brain, why, I must record the fact.)

In a word she saw clearly that Zina’s marriage with the prince must be brought about at once, without delay! It was easily done: the priest at the village should perform the ceremony; why not the day after to-morrow? or indeed, in case of need, to-morrow? Marriages had often been brought about in less time than this — in two hours, she had heard! It would be easy enough to persuade the prince that haste and simplicity would be in far better taste than all the usual pomps and vanities of common everyday weddings. In fact, she relied upon her skill in putting the matter to the old man as a fitting dramatic issue to a romantic story of love, and thus to touch the most sensitive string of his chivalrous heart.

In case of absolute need there was always the possibility of making him drunk, or rather of *keeping* him perpetually drunk. And then, come what might, Zina would be a princess! And if this marriage were fated to produce scandal among the prince’s relations and friends in St. Petersburg and Moscow, Maria Alexandrovna comforted herself with the reflection that marriages in high life nearly always *were* productive of scandal; and that

such a result might fairly be looked upon as “good form,” and as peculiar to aristocratic circles.

Besides, she felt sure that Zina need only show herself in society, with her mamma to support her, and every one of all those countesses and princes should very soon either acknowledge her of their own accord, or yield to the head-washing that Maria Alexandrovna felt herself so competent to give to any or all of them, individually or collectively.

It was in consequence of these reflections that Maria Alexandrovna was now hastening with all speed towards her village, in order to bring back Afanassy Matveyevitch, whose presence she considered absolutely necessary at this crisis. It was desirable that her husband should appear and invite the prince down to the country: she relied upon the appearance of the father of the family, in dress-coat and white tie, hastening up to town on the first rumours of the prince’s arrival there, to produce a very favourable impression upon the old man’s self-respect: it would flatter him; and after such a courteous action, followed by a polite and warmly-couched invitation to the country, the prince would hardly refuse to go.

At last the carriage stopped at the door of a long low wooden house, surrounded by old lime trees. This was the country house, Maria Alexandrovna’s village residence.

Lights were burning inside.

“Where’s my old fool?” cried Maria Alexandrovna bursting like a hurricane into the sitting-room.

“Whats this towel lying here for? — Oh! — he’s been wiping his head, has he. What, the baths again! and tea — of course tea! — always tea! Well, what are you winking your eyes at me for, you old fool? — Here, why is his hair not cropped? Grisha, Grisha! — here; why didn’t you cut your master’s hair, as I told you?”

Maria Alexandrovna, on entering the room, had intended to greet her husband more kindly than this; but seeing that he had just been to the baths and that he was drinking tea with great satisfaction, as usual, she could not restrain her irritable feelings.

She felt the contrast between her own activity and intellectual energy, and the stolid indifference and sheep-like contentedness of her husband, and it went to her heart!

Meanwhile the “old fool,” or to put it more politely, he who had been addressed by that title, sat at the tea-urn, and stared with open mouth, in

abject alarm, opening and shutting his lips as he gazed at the wife of his bosom, who had almost petrified him by her sudden appearance.

At the door stood the sleepy, fat Grisha, looking on at the scene, and blinking both eyes at periodical intervals.

“I couldn’t cut his hair as you wished, because he wouldn’t let me!” he growled at last. “ ’You’d better let me do it!’ — I said, ‘or the mistress’ll be down one of these days, and then we shall both catch it!’ ”

“No,” he says, “I want it like this now, and you shall cut it on Sunday. I like it long!”

“What! — So you wish to curl it without my leave, do you! What an idea — as if you could wear curls with your sheep-face underneath! Good gracious, what a mess you’ve made of the place; and what’s the smell — what have you been doing, idiot, eh!” cried Maria Alexandrovna, waxing more and more angry, and turning furiously upon the wretched and perfectly innocent Afanassy!

“Mam — mammy!” muttered the poor frightened master of the house, gazing with frightened eyes at the mistress, and blinking with all his might — “mammy!”

“How many times have I dinned into your stupid head that I am *not* your ‘mammy.’ How can I be your mammy, you idiotic pigmy? How dare you call a noble lady by such a name; a lady whose proper place is in the highest circles, not beside an ass like yourself!”

“Yes — yes, — but — but, you *are* my legal wife, you know, after all; — so I — it was husbandly affection you know — —” murmured poor Afanassy, raising both hands to his head as he spoke, to defend his hair from the tugs he evidently expected.

“Oh, idiot that you are! did anyone ever hear such a ridiculous answer as that — legal wife, indeed! Who ever heard the expression ‘*legal* wife,’ in good society — nasty low expression! And how dare you remind me that I am your wife, when I use all my power and do all I possibly can at every moment to forget the fact, eh? What are you covering your head with your hands for? Look at his hair — now: wet, as wet as reeds! it will take three hours to dry that head! How on earth am I to take him like this? How can he show his face among respectable people? What am I to do?”

And Maria Alexandrovna bit her finger-nails with rage as she walked furiously up and down the room.

It was no very great matter, of course; and one that was easily set right; but Maria Alexandrovna required a vent for her feelings and felt the need of emptying out her accumulated wrath upon the head of the wretched Afanassy Matveyevitch; for tyranny is a habit recallable at need.

Besides, everyone knows how great a contrast there is between the sweetness and refinement shown by many ladies of a certain class on the stage, as it were, of society life, and the revelations of character behind the scenes at home; and I was anxious to bring out this contrast for my reader's benefit.

Afanassy watched the movements of his terrible spouse in fear and trembling; perspiration formed upon his brow as he gazed.

"Grisha!" she cried at last, "dress your master this instant! Dress-coat, black trousers, white waistcoat and tie, quick! Where's his hairbrush — quick, quick!"

"Mam — my! Why, I've just been to the bath. I shall catch cold if I go up to town just now!"

"You won't catch cold!"

"But — mammy, my hair's quite wet!"

"We'll dry it in a minute. Here, Grisha, take this brush and brush away till he's dry, — harder — harder — much harder! There, that's better!"

Grisha worked like a man. For the greater convenience of his herculean task he seized his master's shoulder with one hand as he rubbed violently with the other. Poor Afanassy grunted and groaned and almost wept.

"Now, then, lift him up a bit. Where's the pomatum? Bend your head, duffer! — bend lower, you abject dummy!" And Maria Alexandrovna herself undertook to pomade her husband's hair, ploughing her hands through it without the slightest pity. Afanassy heartily wished that his shock growth had been cut. He winced, and groaned and moaned, but did not cry out under the painful operation.

"You suck my life-blood out of me — bend lower, you idiot!" remarked the fond wife— "bend lower still, I tell you!"

"How have I sucked your life blood?" asked the victim, bending his head as low as circumstances permitted.

"Fool! — allegorically, of course — can't you understand? Now, then, comb it yourself. Here, Grisha, dress him, quick!"

Our heroine threw herself into an arm-chair, and critically watched the ceremony of adorning her husband. Meanwhile the latter had a little

opportunity to get his breath once more and compose his feelings generally; so that when matters arrived at the point where the tie is tied, he had even developed so much audacity as to express opinions of his own as to how the bow should be manufactured.

At last, having put his dress-coat on, the lord of the manor was his brave self again, and gazed at his highly ornate person in the glass with great satisfaction and complacency.

"Where are you going to take me to?" he now asked, smiling at his reflected self.

Maria Alexandrovna could not believe her ears.

"What — *what*? How *dare* you ask me where I am taking you to, sir!"

"But — mammy — I must know, you know — —"

"Hold your tongue! You let me hear you call me mammy again, especially where we are going to now! you sha'n't have any tea for a month!"

The frightened consort held his peace.

"Look at that, now! You haven't got a single 'order' to put on — sloven!" she continued, looking at his black coat with contempt.

"The Government awards orders, mammy; and I am not a sloven, but a town councillor!" said Afanassy, with a sudden excess of noble wrath.

"What, what — *what*! So you've learned to argue now, have you — you mongrel, you? However, I haven't time to waste over you now, or I'd —— but I sha'n't forget it. Here, Grisha, give him his fur coat and his hat — quick; and look here, Grisha, when I'm gone, get these three rooms ready, and the green room, and the corner bedroom. Quick — find your broom; take the coverings off the looking-glasses and clocks, and see that all is ready and tidy within an hour. Put on a dress coat, and see that the other men have gloves: don't lose time. Quick, now!"

She entered the carriage, followed by Afanassy. The latter sat bewildered and lost.

Meanwhile Maria Alexandrovna reflected as to how best she could drum into her husband's thick skull certain essential instructions with regard to the present situation of affairs. But Afanassy anticipated her.

"I had a very original dream to-day, Maria Alexandrovna," he observed quite unexpectedly, in the middle of a long silence.

"Tfu! idiot. I thought you were going to say something of terrific interest, from the look of you. Dream, indeed! How dare you mention your

miserable dreams to me! Original, too! Listen here: if you dare so much as remind me of the word ‘dream,’ or say anything else, either, where we are going to-day, I — I don’t know *what* I won’t do to you! Now, look here: Prince K. has arrived at my house. Do you remember Prince K.?”

“Oh, yes, mammy, I remember; and why has he done us this honour?”

“Be quiet; that’s not your business. Now, you are to invite him, with all the amiability you can, to come down to our house in the country, at once! That is what I am taking you up for. And if you dare so much as breathe another word of any kind, either to-day or to-morrow, or next day, without leave from me, you shall herd geese for a whole year. You’re not to say a single word, mind! and that’s all you have to think of. Do you understand, now?”

“Well, but if I’m asked anything?”

“Hold your tongue all the same!”

“Oh, but I can’t do that — I can’t do — —”

“Very well, then; you can say ‘H’m,’ or something of that sort, to give them the idea that you are very wise indeed, and like to think well before answering.”

“H’m.”

“Understand me, now. I am taking you up because you are to make it appear that you have just heard of the prince’s visit, and have hastened up to town in a transport of joy to express your unbounded respect and gratitude to him, and to invite him at once to your country house! Do you understand me?”

“H’m.”

“I don’t want you to say ‘H’m’ *now*, you fool! You must answer *me* when I speak!”

“All right — all right, mammy. All shall be as you wish; but why am I to ask the prince down?”

“What — what! arguing again. What business is it of yours *why* you are to invite him? How dare you ask questions!”

“Why it’s all the same thing, mammy. How am I to invite him if I must not say a word?”

“Oh, I shall do all the talking. All you have to do is to bow. Do you hear? *Bow*; and hold your hat in your hand and look polite. Do you understand, or not?”

“I understand, mam — Maria-Alexandrovna.”

“The prince is very witty, indeed; so mind, if he says anything either to yourself or anyone else, you are to laugh cordially and merrily. Do you hear me?”

“H’m.”

“Don’t say ‘H’m’ to *me*, I tell you. You are to answer me plainly and simply. Do you hear me, or not?”

“Yes, yes; I hear you, of course. That’s all right. I only say ‘H’m,’ for practice; I want to get into the way of saying it. But look here, mammy, it’s all very well; you say I’m not to speak, and if he speaks to me I’m to look at him and laugh — but what if he asks me a question?”

“Oh — you dense log of a man! I tell you again, you are to be quiet. *I’ll* answer for you. You have simply got to look polite, and smile!”

“But he’ll think I am dumb!” said Afanassy.

“Well, and what if he does. Let him! You’ll conceal the fact that you are a fool, anyhow!”

“H’m, and if *other* people ask me questions?”

“No one will; there’ll be no one to ask you. But if there *should* be anyone else in the room, and they ask you questions, all you have to do is to smile sarcastically. Do you know what a sarcastic smile is?”

“What, a witty sort of smile, is it, mammy?”

“I’ll let you know about it! *Witty*, indeed! Why, who would think of expecting anything witty from a fool like you. No, sir, a jesting smile — *jesting* and *contemptuous*!”

“H’m.”

“Good heavens. I’m afraid for this idiot,” thought Maria Alexandrovna to herself. “I really think it would have been almost better to leave him behind, after all.” So thinking, nervous and anxious, Maria Alexandrovna drove on. She looked out of the window, and she fidgeted, and she bustled the coachman up. The horses were almost flying through the air; but to her they appeared to be crawling. Afanassy sat silent and thoughtful in the corner of the carriage, practising his lessons. At last the carriage arrived at the town house.

Hardly, however, had Maria Alexandrovna mounted the outer steps when she became aware of a fine pair of horses trotting up — drawing a smart sledge with a hood to it. In fact, the very “turn-out” in which Anna Nicolaevna Antipova was generally to be seen.

Two ladies sat in the sledge. One of these was, of course, Mrs. Antipova herself; the other was Natalia Dimitrievna, of late the great friend and ally of the former lady.

Maria Alexandrovna's heart sank.

But she had no time to say a word, before another smart vehicle drove up, in which there reclined yet another guest. Exclamations of joy and delight were now heard.

"Maria Alexandrovna! and Afanassy Matveyevitch! Just arrived, too! Where from? How extremely delightful! And here we are, you see, just driven up at the right moment. We are going to spend the evening with you. What a delightful surprise."

The guests alighted and fluttered up the steps like so many swallows.

Maria Alexandrovna could neither believe her eyes nor her ears.

"Curse you all!" she said to herself. "This looks like a plot — it must be seen to; but it takes more than a flight of magpies like *you* to get to windward of *me*. Wait a little!!"

CHAPTER XI.

Mosgliakoff went out from Maria Alexandrovna's house to all appearances quite pacified. She had fired his ardour completely. His imagination was kindled.

He did not go to his godfather's, for he felt the need of solitude. A terrific rush of heroic and romantic thoughts surged over him, and gave him no rest.

He pictured to himself the solemn explanation he should have with Zina, then the generous throbs of his all-forgiving heart; his pallor and despair at the future ball in St. Petersburg; then Spain, the Guadalquiver, and love, and the old dying prince joining their hands with his last blessing. Then came thoughts of his beautiful wife, devoted to himself, and never ceasing to wonder at and admire her husband's heroism and exalted refinement of taste and conduct. Then, among other things, the attention which he should attract among the ladies of the highest circles, into which he would of course enter, thanks to his marriage with Zina — widow of the Prince K.: then the inevitable appointments, first as a vice-governor, with the delightful accompaniment of salary: in a word, all, *all* that Maria Alexandrovna's eloquence had pictured to his imagination, now marched in triumphant procession through his brain, soothing and attracting and flattering his self-love.

And yet — (I really cannot explain this phenomenon, however!) — and yet, no sooner did the first flush of this delightful sunrise of future delights pass off and fade away, than the annoying thought struck him: this is all very well, but it is in the future: and now, to-day, I shall look a dreadful fool. As he reflected thus, he looked up and found that he had wandered a long way, to some of the dirty back slums of the town. A wet snow was falling; now and again he met another belated pedestrian like himself. The outer circumstances began to anger Mosgliakoff, which was a bad sign; for when things are going well with us we are always inclined to see everything in a rose-coloured light.

Paul could not help remembering that up to now he had been in the habit of cutting a dash at Mordasoff. He had enjoyed being treated at all the houses he went to in the town, as Zina's accepted lover, and to be congratulated, as he often was, upon the honour of that distinction. He was

proud of being her future husband; and here he was now with notice to quit. He would be laughed at. He couldn't tell everybody about the future scene in the ball-room at St. Petersburg, and the Guadalquiver, and all that! And then a thought came out into prominence, which had been uncomfortably fidgeting about in his brain for some time: "Was it all true? *Would* it really come about as Maria Alexandrovna had predicted?"

Here it struck him that Maria Alexandrovna was an amazingly cunning woman; that, however worthy she might be of universal esteem, still she was a known scandal-monger, and lied from morning to night! that, again, she probably had some good reason for wishing him out of the place to-night. He next bethought him of Zina, and of her parting look at him, which was very far from being expressive of passionate love; he remembered also, that, less than an hour ago she had called him a fool.

As he thought of the last fact Paul stopped in his tracks, as though shot; blushed, and almost cried for very shame! At this very moment he was unfortunate enough to lose his footing on the slippery pavement, and to go head-first into a snow-heap. As he stood shaking himself dry, a whole troop of dogs, which had long trotted barking at his heels, flew at him. One of them, a wretched little half-starved beast, went so far as to fix her teeth into his fur coat and hang therefrom. Swearing and striking out, Paul cleared his way out of the yelping pack at last, in a fury, and with rent clothes; and making his way as fast as he could to the corner of the street, discovered that he hadn't the slightest idea where he was. He walked up lanes, and down streets, and round corners, and lost himself more and more hopelessly; also his temper. "The devil take all these confounded exalted ideas!" he growled, half aloud; "and the archfiend take every one of you, you and your Guadalquivers and humbug!"

Mosgliakoff was not in a pretty humour at this moment.

At last, tired and horribly angry, after two hours of walking, he reached the door of Maria Alexandrovna's house.

Observing a host of carriages standing outside, he paused to consider.

"Surely she has not a party to-night!" he thought, "and if she has, *why* has she a party?"

He inquired of the servants, and found out that Maria Alexandrovna had been out of town, and had fetched up Afanassy Matveyevitch, gorgeous in his dress-suit and white tie. He learned, further, that the prince was awake, but had not as yet made his appearance in the "salon."

On receiving this information, Paul Mosgliakoff said not a word, but quietly made his way upstairs to his uncle's room.

He was in that frame of mind in which a man determines to commit some desperate act, out of revenge, aware at the time, and wide awake to the fact that he is about to do the deed, but forgetting entirely that he may very likely regret it all his life afterwards!

Entering the prince's room, he found that worthy seated before the glass, with a perfectly bare head, but with whiskers and napoleon stuck on. His wig was in the hands of his old and grey valet, his favourite Ivan Pochomitch, and the latter was gravely and thoughtfully combing it out.

As for the prince, he was indeed a pitiable object! He was not half awake yet, for one thing; he sat as though he were still dazed with sleep; he kept opening and shutting his mouth, and stared at Mosgliakoff as though he did not know him!

"Well, how are you, uncle?" asked Mosgliakoff.

"What, it's you, is it!" said the prince. "Ye — yes; I've been as — leep a little while! Oh, heavens!" he cried suddenly, with great animation, "why, I've got no wi — ig on!"

"Oh, never mind that, uncle; I'll help you on with it, if you like!"

"Dear me; now you've found out my se — ecret! I told him to shut the door. Now, my friend, you must give me your word in — stantly, that you'll never breathe a hint of this to anyone — I mean about my hair being ar — tificial!"

"Oh, uncle! As if I could be guilty of such meanness?" cried Paul, who was anxious to please the prince, for reasons of his own.

"Ye — yes, ye — yes. Well, as I see you are a good fe — ellow, I — I'll just as — tonish you a little: I'll tell you all my secrets! How do you like my mous — tache, my dear boy?"

"Wonderful, uncle, wonderful! It astonishes me that you should have been able to keep it so long!"

"Sp — are your wonder, my friend, it's ar — tificial!"

"No!! That's difficult to believe! Well, and your whiskers, uncle! admit — you black them, now *don't* you?"

"Black them? Not — only I don't black them, but they, too, are ar — tificial!" said the Prince, regarding Mosgliakoff with a look of triumph.

"*What!* Artificial? No, no, uncle! I can't believe *that*! You're laughing at me!"

“*Parole d’honneur, mon ami!*” cried the delighted old man; “and fancy, all — everybody is taken in by them just as you were! Even Stepanida Matveyevna cannot believe they are not real, sometimes, although she often sticks them on herself! But, I am sure, my dear friend, you will keep my se — cret. Give me your word!”

“I do give you my word, uncle! But surely you do not suppose I would be so mean as to divulge it?”

“Oh, my boy! I had such a fall to-day, without you. The coachman upset me out of the carriage again!”

“How? When?”

“Why, we were driving to the mo — nastery, when? — —”

“I know, uncle: that was early this morning!”

“No, no! A couple of hours ago, not more! I was driving along with him, and he suddenly took and up — set me!”

“Why, my dear uncle, you were asleep,” began Paul, in amazement!

“Ye — yes, ye — yes. I did have a sleep; and then I drove away, at least I — at least I — dear me, how strange it all seems!”

“I assure you, uncle, you have been dreaming! You saw all this in a dream! You have been sleeping quietly here since just after dinner!”

“No!” And the prince reflected. “Ye — yes. Perhaps I did see it all in a dream! However, I can remember all I saw quite well. First, I saw a large bull with horns; and then I saw a pro — curor, and I think he had huge horns too. Then there was Napoleon Buonaparte. Did you ever hear, my boy, that people say I am so like Napoleon Buonaparte? But my profile is very like some old pope. What do you think about it, my bo — oy?”

“I think you are much more like Napoleon Buonaparte, uncle!”

“Why, ye — yes, of course — full face; so I am, my boy, so I am! I dreamt of him on his is — land, and do you know he was such a merry, talk — ative fellow, he quite am — used me!”

“Who, uncle — Napoleon?” asked Mosgliakoff, looking thoughtfully at the old man. A strange idea was beginning to occupy his brain — an idea which he could not quite put into shape as yet.

“Ye — yes, ye — yes, Nap — oleon. We talked about philosophical subjects. And do you know, my boy, I became quite sorry that the English had been so hard upon him. Of course, though, if one didn’t chain him up, he would be flying at people’s throats again! Still I’m sorry for him. Now I

should have managed him quite differently. I should have put him on an uninhabited island."

"Why uninhabited, uncle?" asked Mosgliakoff, absently.

"Well, well, an inhabited one, then; but the in — habitants must be good sort of people. And I should arrange all sorts of amusements for him, at the State's charge: theatres, balle's, and so on. And, of course, he should walk about, under proper su — pervision. Then he should have tarts (he liked tarts, you know), as many tarts as ever he pleased. I should treat him like a fa — ather; and he would end by being sorry for his sins, see if he wouldn't!"

Mosgliakoff listened absently to all this senile gabble, and bit his nails with impatience. He was anxious to turn the conversation on to the subject of marriage. He did not know quite clearly why he wished to do so, but his heart was boiling over with anger.

Suddenly the old man made an exclamation of surprise.

"Why, my dear boy, I declare I've forgotten to tell you about it. Fancy, I made an offer of marriage to-day!"

"An offer of marriage, uncle?" cried Paul, brightening up.

"Why, ye — yes! an offer. Pachomief, are you going? All right! Away with you! Ye — yes, *c'est une charmante personne*. But I confess, I took the step rather rash — ly. I only begin to see that now. Dear me! dear, dear me!"

"Excuse me, uncle; but *when* did you make this offer?"

"Well, I admit I don't know exactly *when* I made it! Perhaps I dre — dreamed it; I don't know. Dear me, how very strange it all seems!"

Mosgliakoff trembled with joy: his new idea blazed forth in full developed glory.

"And *whom* did you propose to?" he asked impatiently.

"The daughter of the house, my boy; that beau — tiful girl. I — I forget what they call her. Bu — but, my dear boy, you see I — I can't possibly marry. What am I to do?"

"Oh! of course, you are done for if you marry, that's clear. But let me ask you one more question, uncle. Are you perfectly certain that you actually made her an offer of marriage?"

"Ye — yes, I'm sure of it; I — I —— ."

"And what if you dreamed the whole thing, just as you did that you were upset out of the carriage a second time?"

“Dear me! dear me! I — I really think I may have dreamed it; it’s very awkward. I don’t know how to show myself there, now. H — how could I find out, dear boy, for certain? Couldn’t I get to know by some outside way whether I really did make her an offer of ma — arriage or not? Why, just you think of my dreadful po — sition!”

“Do you know, uncle, I don’t think we need trouble ourselves to find out at all.”

“Why, wh — what then?”

“I am convinced that you were dreaming.”

“I — I think so myself, too, my dear fellow; es — pecially as I often have that sort of dream.”

“You see, uncle, you had a drop of wine for lunch, and then another drop or two for dinner, don’t you know; and so you may easily have — —”

“Ye — yes, quite so, quite so; it may easily have been that.”

“Besides, my dear uncle, however excited you may have been, you would never have taken such a senseless step in your waking moments. So far as I know you, uncle, you are a man of the highest and most deliberate judgment, and I am positive that — —”

“Ye — yes, ye — yes.”

“Why, only imagine — if your relations were to get to hear of such a thing. My goodness, uncle! they were cruel enough to you before. What do you suppose they would do *now*, eh?”

“Goodness gracious!” cried the frightened old prince. “Good — ness gracious! Wh — why, what would they do, do you think?”

“Do? Why, of course, they would all screech out that you had acted under the influence of insanity: in fact, that you were mad; that you had been swindled, and that you must be put under proper restraint. In fact, they’d pop you into some lunatic asylum.”

Mosgliakoff was well aware of the best method of frightening the poor old man out of his wits.

“Gracious heavens!” cried the latter, trembling like a leaflet with horror. “Gra — cious heavens! would they really do that?”

“Undoubtedly; and, knowing this, uncle, think for yourself. Could you possibly have done such a thing with your eyes open? As if you don’t understand what’s good for you just as well as your neighbours. I solemnly affirm that you saw all this in a dream!”

“Of course, of course; un — doubtedly in a dream, un — doubtedly so! What a clever fellow you are, my dear boy; you saw it at once. I am deeply grate — ful to you for putting me right. I was really quite under the im — pression I had actually done it.”

“And how glad I am that I met you, uncle, before you went in there! Just fancy, what a mess you might have made of it! You might have gone in thinking you were engaged to the girl, and behaved in the capacity of accepted lover. Think how fearfully dangerous —— .”

“Ye — yes, of course; most dangerous!”

“Why, remember, this girl is twenty-three years old. Nobody will marry her, and suddenly *you*, a rich and eminent man of rank and title, appear on the scene as her accepted swain. They would lay hold of the idea at once, and act up to it, and swear that you really were her future husband, and would marry you off, too. I daresay they would even count upon your speedy death, and make their calculations accordingly.”

“No!”

“Then again, uncle; a man of your dignity — —”

“Ye — yes, quite so, dig — nity!”

“And wisdom, — and amiability — —”

“Quite so; wis — dom — wisdom!”

“And then — a prince into the bargain! Good gracious, uncle, as if a man like yourself would make such a match as *that*, if you really did mean marrying! What would your relations say?”

“Why, my dear boy, they’d simply ea — eat me up, — I — I know their cunning and malice of old! My dear fellow — you won’t believe it — but I assure you I was afraid they were going to put me into a lun — atic asylum! a common ma — ad-house! Goodness me, think of that! Whatever should I have done with myself all day in a ma — ad-house?”

“Of course, of course! Well, I won’t leave your side, then, uncle, when you go downstairs. There are guests there too!”

“Guests? dear me! I — I — —”

“Don’t be afraid, uncle; I shall be by you!”

“I — I’m *so* much obliged to you, my dear boy; you have simply sa — ved me, you have indeed! But, do you know what, — I think I’d better go away altogether!”

“To-morrow, uncle! to-morrow morning at seven! and this evening you must be sure to say, in the presence of everybody, that you are starting away

at seven next morning: you must say good-bye to-night!”

“Un — doubtedly, undoubtedly — I shall go; — but what if they talk to me as though I were engaged to the young wo — oman?”

“Don’t you fear, uncle! I shall be there! And mind, whatever they say or hint to you, you must declare that you dreamed the whole thing — as indeed you did, of course?”

“Ye — yes, quite so, un — doubtedly so! But, do you know my dear boy, it was a most be — witching dream, for all that! She is a wond — erfully lovely girl, my boy, — such a figure — bewitching — be — witching!”

“Well, *au revoir*, uncle! I’m going down, now, and you — —”

“How! How! you are not going to leave me alone?” cried the old man, greatly alarmed.

“No, no — oh no, uncle; but we must enter the room separately. First, I will go in, and then you come down; that will be better!”

“Very well, very well. Besides, I just want to note down one little i — dea — —”

“Capital, uncle! jot it down, and then come at once; don’t wait any longer; and to-morrow morning — —”

“And to-morrow morning away we go to the Her — mitage, straight to the Her — mitage! Charming — charm — ing! but, do you know, my boy, — she’s a fas — cinating girl — she is indeed! be — witching! Such a bust! and, really, if I were to marry, I — I — really — —”

“No, no, uncle! Heaven forbid!”

“Yes — yes — quite so — Heaven for — bid! — well, *au revoir*, my friend — I’ll come directly; by the bye — I meant to ask you, have you read Kazanoff’s Memoirs?”

“Yes, uncle. Why?”

“Yes, yes, quite so — I forget what I wanted to say — —”

“You’ll remember afterwards, uncle! *au revoir!*”

“*Au revoir*, my boy, *au revoir* — but, I say, it was a bewitching dream, a most be — witching dream!”

CHAPTER XII.

“Here we all are, all of us, come to spend the evening; Proskovia Ilinishna is coming too, and Luisa Karlovna and all!” cried Mrs. Antipova as she entered the salon, and looked hungrily round. She was a neat, pretty little woman! she was well-dressed, and knew it.

She looked greedily around, as I say, because she had an idea that the prince and Zina were hidden together somewhere about the room.

“Yes, and Katerina Petrovna, and Felisata Michaelovna are coming as well,” added Natalia Dimitrievna, a huge woman — whose figure had pleased the prince so much, and who looked more like a grenadier than anything else. This monster had been hand and glove with little Mrs. Antipova for the last three weeks; they were now quite inseparable. Natalia looked as though she could pick her little friend up and swallow her, bones and all, without thinking.

“I need not say with what *rapture* I welcome you both to my house, and for a whole evening, too!” piped Maria Alexandrovna, a little recovered from her first shock of amazement; “but do tell me, what miracle is it that has brought you all to-day, when I had quite despaired of ever seeing anyone of you in my house again?”

“Oh, oh! my *dear* Maria Alexandrovna!” said Natalia, very affectedly, but sweetly. The attributes of sweetness and affectation were a curious contrast to her personal appearance.

“You see, dearest Maria Alexandrovna,” chirped Mrs. Antipova, “we really must get on with the private theatricals question! It was only this very day that Peter Michaelovitch was saying how *bad* it was of us to have made no progress towards rehearsing, and so on; and that it was quite time we brought all our silly squabbles to an end! Well, four of us got together to-day, and then it struck us ‘Let’s all go to Maria Alexandrovna’s, and settle the matter once for all!’ So Natalia Dimitrievna let all the rest know that we were to meet here! We’ll soon settle it — I don’t think we should allow it to be said that we do nothing but ‘squabble’ over the preliminaries and get no farther, do *you*, dear Maria Alexandrovna?” She added, playfully, and kissing our heroine affectionately, “Goodness me, Zenaida, I declare you grow prettier every day!” And she betook herself to embracing Zina with equal affection.

“She has nothing else to do, but sit and grow more and more beautiful!” said Natalia with great sweetness, rubbing her huge hands together.

“Oh, the devil take them all! they know I care nothing about private theatricals — cursed magpies!” reflected Maria Alexandrovna, beside herself with rage.

“Especially, dear, as that delightful prince is with you just now. You know there is a private theatre in his house at Donchanof, and we have discovered that somewhere or other there, there are a lot of old theatrical properties and decorations and scenery. The prince was at my house to-day, but I was so surprised to see him that it all went clean out of my head and I forgot to ask him. Now we’ll broach the subject before him. You must support me and we’ll persuade him to send us all the old rubbish that can be found. We want to get the prince to come and see the play, too! He is sure to subscribe, isn’t he — as it is for the poor? Perhaps he would even take a part; he is such a dear, kind, willing old man. If only he did, it would make the fortune of our play!”

“Of course he will take a part! why, he can be made to play *any* part!” remarked Natalia significantly.

Mrs. Antipova had not exaggerated. Guests poured in every moment! Maria Alexandrovna hardly had time to receive one lot and make the usual exclamations of surprise and delight exacted by the laws of etiquette before another arrival would be announced.

I will not undertake to describe all these good people. I will only remark that every one of them, on arrival, looked about her cunningly; and that every face wore an expression of expectation and impatience.

Some of them came with the distinct intention of witnessing some scene of a delightfully scandalous nature, and were prepared to be very angry indeed if it should turn out that they were obliged to leave the house without the gratification of their hopes.

All behaved in the most amiable and affectionate manner towards their hostess; but Maria Alexandrovna firmly braced her nerves for battle.

Many apparently natural and innocent questions were asked about the prince; but in each one might be detected some hint or insinuation.

Tea came in, and people moved about and changed places: one group surrounded the piano; Zina was requested to play and sing, but answered drily that she was not quite well — and the paleness of her face bore out

this assertion. Inquiries were made for Mosgliakoff; and these inquiries were addressed to Zina.

Maria Alexandrovna proved that she had the eyes and ears of ten ordinary mortals. She saw and heard all that was going on in every corner of the room; she heard and answered every question asked, and answered readily and cleverly. She was dreadfully anxious about Zina, however, and wondered why she did not leave the room, as she usually did on such occasions.

Poor Afanassy came in for his share of notice, too. It was the custom of these amiable people of Mordasoff to do their best to set Maria Alexandrovna and her husband “by the ears;” but to-day there were hopes of extracting valuable news and secrets out of the candid simplicity of the latter.

Maria Alexandrovna watched the state of siege into which the wretched Afanassy was thrown, with great anxiety; he was answering “H’m!” to all questions put to him, as instructed; but with so wretched an expression and so extremely artificial a mien that Maria Alexandrovna could barely restrain her wrath.

“Maria Alexandrovna! your husband won’t have a word to say to me!” remarked a sharp-faced little lady with a devil-may-care manner, as though she cared nothing for anybody, and was not to be abashed under any circumstances. “Do ask him to be a *little* more courteous towards ladies!”

“I really don’t know myself what can have happened to him to-day!” said Maria Alexandrovna, interrupting her conversation with Mrs. Antipova and Natalia, and laughing merrily; “he is so *dreadfully* uncommunicative! He has scarcely said a word even to *me*, all day! Why don’t you answer Felisata Michaelovna, Afanassy? What did you ask him?”

“But, but — why, mammy, you told me yourself” — began the bewildered and lost Afanassy. At this moment he was standing at the fireside with one hand placed inside his waistcoat, in an artistic position which he had chosen deliberately, on mature reflection, — and he was sipping his tea. The questions of the ladies had so confused him that he was blushing like a girl.

When he began the justification of himself recorded above, he suddenly met so dreadful a look in the eyes of his infuriated spouse that he nearly lost all consciousness, for terror!

Uncertain what to do, but anxious to recover himself and win back her favour once more, he said nothing, but took a gulp of tea to restore his scattered senses.

Unfortunately the tea was too hot; which fact, together with the hugeness of the gulp he took — quite upset him. He burned his throat, choked, sent the cup flying, and burst into such a fit of coughing that he was obliged to leave the room for a time, awakening universal astonishment by his conduct.

In a word, Maria Alexandrovna saw clearly enough that her guests knew all about it, and had assembled with malicious intent! The situation was dangerous! They were quite capable of confusing and overwhelming the feeble-minded old prince before her very eyes! They might even carry him off bodily — after stirring up a quarrel between the old man and herself! *Anything* might happen.

But fate had prepared her one more surprise. The door opened and in came Mosgliakoff — who, as she thought, was far enough away at his godfather's, and would not come near her to-night! She shuddered as though something had hurt her.

Mosgliakoff stood a moment at the door, looking around at the company. He was a little bewildered, and could not conceal his agitation, which showed itself very clearly in his expression.

"Why, it's Paul Alexandrovitch! and you told us he had gone to his godfather's, Maria Alexandrovna. We were told you had hidden yourself away from us, Paul Alexandrovitch!" cried Natalia.

"Hidden myself?" said Paul, with a crooked sort of a smile. "What a strange expression! Excuse me, Natalia Dimitrievna, but I never hide from anyone; I have no cause to do so, that I know of! Nor do I ever hide anyone else!" he added, looking significantly at Maria Alexandrovna.

Maria Alexandrovna trembled in her shoes.

"Surely this fool of a man is not up to anything disagreeable!" she thought. "No, no! that would be worse than anything!" She looked curiously and anxiously into his eyes.

"Is it true, Paul Alexandrovitch, that you have just been politely dismissed? — the Government service, I mean, of course!" remarked the daring Felisata Michaelovna, looking impertinently into his eyes.

"Dismissed! How dismissed? I'm simply changing my department, that's all! I am to be placed at Petersburg!" Mosgliakoff answered, drily.

“Oh! well, I congratulate you!” continued the bold young woman. “We were alarmed to hear that you were trying for a — a place down here at Mordasoff. The berths here are wretched, Paul Alexandrovitch — no good at all, I assure you!”

“I don’t know — there’s a place as teacher at the school, vacant, I believe,” remarked Natalia.

This was such a crude and palpable insinuation that even Mrs. Antipova was ashamed of her friend, and kicked her, under the table.

“You don’t suppose Paul Alexandrovitch would accept the place vacated by a wretched little schoolmaster!” said Felisata Michaelovna.

But Paul did not answer. He turned at this moment, and encountered Afanassy Matveyevitch, just returning into the room. The latter offered him his hand. Mosgliakoff, like a fool, looked beyond poor Afanassy, and did not take his outstretched hand: annoyed to the limits of endurance, he stepped up to Zina, and muttered, gazing angrily into her eyes:

“This is all thanks to you! Wait a bit; you shall see this very day whether I am a fool or not!”

“Why put off the revelation? It is clear enough already!” said Zina, aloud, staring contemptuously at her former lover.

Mosgliakoff hurriedly left her. He did not half like the loud tone she spoke in.

“Have you been to your godfather’s?” asked Maria Alexandrovna at last, determined to sound matters in this direction.

“No, I’ve just been with uncle.”

“With your uncle! What! have you just come from the prince now?”

“Oh — oh! and we were told the prince was asleep!” added Natalia Dimitrievna, looking daggers at Maria Alexandrovna.

“Do not be disturbed about the prince, Natalia Dimitrievna,” replied Paul, “he is awake now, and quite restored to his senses. He was persuaded to drink a good deal too much wine, first at your house, and then here; so that he quite lost his head, which never was too strong. However, I have had a talk with him, and he now seems to have entirely recovered his judgment, thank God! He is coming down directly to take his leave, Maria Alexandrovna, and to thank you for all your kind hospitality; and to-morrow morning early we are off to the Hermitage. Thence I shall myself see him safe home to Donchanovo, in order that he may be far from the temptation to further excesses like that of to-day. There I shall give him

over into the hands of Stepanida Matveyevna, who must be back at home by this time, and who will assuredly never allow him another opportunity of going on his travels, I'll answer for that!"

So saying, Mosgliakoff stared angrily at Maria Alexandrovna. The latter sat still, apparently dumb with amazement. I regret to say — it gives me great pain to record it — that, perhaps for the first time in her life, my heroine was decidedly alarmed.

"So the prince is off to-morrow morning! Dear me; why is that?" inquired Natalia Dimitrievna, very sweetly, of Maria Alexandrovna.

"Yes. How is that?" asked Mrs. Antipova, in astonishment.

"Yes; dear me! how comes that, I wonder!" said two or three voices. "How can that be? When we were told — dear me! How very strange!"

But the mistress of the house could not find words to reply in.

However, at this moment the general attention was distracted by a most unwonted and eccentric episode. In the next room was heard a strange noise — sharp exclamations and hurrying feet, which was followed by the sudden appearance of Sophia Petrovna, the fidgety guest who had called upon Maria Alexandrovna in the morning.

Sophia Petrovna was a very eccentric woman indeed — so much so that even the good people of Mordasoff could not support her, and had lately voted her out of society. I must observe that every evening, punctually at seven, this lady was in the habit of having, what she called, "a snack," and that after this snack, which she declared was for the benefit of her liver, her condition was well *emancipated*, to use no stronger term. She was in this very condition, as described, now, as she appeared flinging herself into Maria Alexandrovna's salon.

"Oho! so this is how you treat me, Maria Alexandrovna!" she shouted at the top of her voice. "Oh! don't be afraid, I shall not inflict myself upon you for more than a minute! I won't sit down. I just came in to see if what they said was true! Ah! so you go in for balls and receptions and parties, and Sophia Petrovna is to sit at home alone, and knit stockings, is she? You ask the whole town in, and leave me out, do you? Yes, and I was *mon ange*, and 'dear,' and all the rest of it when I came in to warn you of Natalia Dimitrievna having got hold of the prince! And now this very Natalia Dimitrievna, whom you swore at like a pickpocket, and who was just about as polite when she spoke of you, is here among your guests? Oh, don't mind *me*, Natalia Dimitrievna, *I* don't want your *chocolat à la santé* at a penny

the ounce, six cups to the ounce! thanks, I can do better at home; t'fu, a good deal better."

"Evidently!" observed Natalia Dimitrievna.

"But — goodness gracious, Sophia Petrovna!" cried the hostess, flushing with annoyance; "what is it all about? Do show a little common sense!"

"Oh, don't bother about me, Maria Alexandrovna, thank you! I know all about it — oh, dear me, yes! — *I* know all about it!" cried Sophia Petrovna, in her shrill squeaky voice, from among the crowd of guests who now surrounded her, and who seemed to derive immense satisfaction from this unexpected scene. "Oh, yes, I know all about it, I assure you! Your friend Nastasia came over and told me all! You got hold of the old prince, made him drunk and persuaded him to make an offer of marriage to your daughter Zina — whom nobody else will marry; and I daresay you suppose you are going to be a very great lady, indeed — a sort of duchess in lace and jewellery. Tfu! Don't flatter yourself; you may not be aware that I, too, am a colonel's lady! and if you don't care to ask me to your betrothal parties, you needn't: I scorn and despise you and your parties too! I've seen honester women than you, you know! I have dined at Countess Zalichvatsky's; a chief commissioner proposed for my hand! A lot *I* care for your invitations. Tfu!"

"Look here, Sophia Petrovna," said Maria Alexandrovna, beside herself with rage; "I assure you that people do not indulge in this sort of sally at respectable houses; especially in *the condition you are now in*! And let me tell you that if you do not immediately relieve me of your presence and eloquence, I shall be obliged to take the matter into my own hands!"

"Oh, I know — you'll get your people to turn me out! Don't trouble yourself — I know the way out! Good-bye, — marry your daughter to whom you please, for all I care. And as for *you*, Natalia Dimitrievna, I will thank you not to laugh at me! I may not have been asked here, but at all events *I* did not dance a can-can for the prince's benefit. What may *you* be laughing at, Mrs. Antipova? I suppose you haven't heard that your *great friend* Lushiloff has broken his leg? — he has just been taken home. Tfu! Good-bye, Maria Alexandrovna — good luck to you! Tfu!"

Sophia Petrovna now disappeared. All the guests laughed; Maria Alexandrovna was in a state of indescribable fury.

"I think the good lady must have been drinking!" said Natalia Dimitrievna, sweetly.

“But what audacity!”

“*Quelle abominable femme!*”

“What a raving lunatic!”

“But really, what excessively improper things she says!”

“Yes, but what *could* she have meant by a ‘betrothal party?’ What sort of a betrothal party is this?” asked Felisata Michaelovna innocently.

“It is too bad — too bad!” Maria Alexandrovna burst out at last. “It is just such abominable women as this that sow nonsensical rumours about! it is not the fact that there *are* such women about, Felisata Michaelovna, that is so surprising; the astonishing part of the matter is that ladies can be found who support and encourage them, and believe their abominable tales, and — —”

“The prince, the prince!” cried all the guests at once.

“Oh, oh, here he is — the dear, dear prince!”

“Well, thank goodness, we shall hear all the particulars now!” murmured Felisata Michaelovna to her neighbour.

CHAPTER XIII.

The prince entered and smiled benignly around.

All the agitation which his conversation with Mosgliakoff, a quarter of an hour since, had aroused in his chicken-heart vanished at the sight of the ladies.

Those gentle creatures received him with chirps and exclamations of joy. Ladies always petted our old friend the prince, and were — as a rule — wonderfully familiar with him. He had a way of amusing them with his own individuality which was astonishing! Only this morning Felisata Michaelovna had announced that she would sit on his knee with the greatest pleasure, if he liked; “because he was such a dear old pet of an old man!”

Maria Alexandrovna fastened her eyes on him, to read — if she could — if it were but the slightest indication of his state of mind, and to get a possible idea for a way out of this horribly critical position. But there was nothing to be made of *his* face; it was just as before — just as ever it was!

“Ah — h! here’s the prince at last!” cried several voices. “Oh, Prince, how we have waited and waited for you!”

“With impatience, Prince, with impatience!” another chorus took up the strain.

“Dear me, how very flat — tering!” said the old man, settling himself near the tea-table.

The ladies immediately surrounded him. There only remained Natalia Dimitrievna and Mrs. Antipova with the hostess. Afanassy stood and smiled with great courtesy.

Mosgliakoff also smiled as he gazed defiantly at Zina, who, without taking the slightest notice of him, took a chair near her father, and sat down at the fireside.

“Prince, do tell us — is it true that you are about to leave us so soon?” asked Felisata Michaelovna.

“Yes, yes, *mesdames*; I am going abroad almost im — mediately!”

“Abroad, Prince, abroad? Why, what can have caused you to take such a step as that?” cried several ladies at once.

“Yes — yes, abroad,” said the prince; “and do you know it is principally for the sake of the new i — deas — —”

“How, new ideas? what new ideas — what does he mean?” the astonished ladies asked of one another.

“Ye — yes. Quite so — new ideas!” repeated the prince with an air of deep conviction, “everybody goes abroad now for new ideas, and I’m going too, to see if I can pick any up.”

Up to this moment Maria Alexandrovna had listened to the conversation observantly; but it now struck her that the prince had entirely forgotten her existence — which would not do!

“Allow me, Prince, to introduce my husband, Afanassy Matveyevitch. He hastened up from our country seat so soon as ever he heard of your arrival in our house.”

Afanassy, under the impression that he was being praised, smiled amiably and beamed all over.

“Very happy, very happy — Afanassy Mat — veyevitch!” said the prince. “Wait a moment: your name reminds me of something, Afanassy Mat — veyevitch; ye — yes, you are the man down at the village! Charming, charm — ing! Very glad, I’m sure. Do you remember, my boy,” (to Paul) “the nice little rhyme we fitted out to him? What was it?”

“Oh, I know, prince,” said Felisata Michaelovna —

“ ’When the husband’s away

The wife will play!”

“Wasn’t that it? We had it last year at the theatre.”

“Yes, yes, quite so, ye — yes, ‘the wife will play!’ That’s it: charming, charming. So you are that ve — ry man? Dear me, I’m *very* glad, I’m sure,” said the prince, stretching out his hand, but not rising from his chair. “Dear me, and how is your health, my dear sir?”

“H’m!”

“Oh, he’s quite well, thank you, prince, *quite* well,” answered Maria Alexandrovna quickly.

“Ye — yes, I see he is — he looks it! And are you still at the vill — age? Dear me, very pleased, I’m sure; why, how red he looks, and he’s always laugh — ing.”

Afanassy smiled and bowed, and even “scraped,” as the prince spoke, but at the last observation he suddenly, and without warning or apparent reason, burst into loud fits of laughter.

The ladies were delighted. Zina flushed up, and with flashing eyes darted a look at her mother, who, in her turn, was boiling over with rage.

It was time to change the conversation.

“Did you have a nice nap, prince?” she inquired in honied accents; but at the same time giving Afanassy to understand, with very un-honied looks that he might go — well, anywhere!

“Oh, I slept won — derfully, wonderfully? And do you know, I had such a most fascinating, be — witching dream!”

“A dream? how delightful! I do so love to hear people tell their dreams,” cried Felisata.

“Oh, a fas — cinating dream,” stammered the old man again, “quite be — witching, but all the more a dead secret for that very reas — on.”

“Oh, Prince, you don’t mean to say you can’t tell us?” said Mrs. Antipova. “I suppose it’s an *extraordinary* dream, isn’t it?”

“A dead secret!” repeated the prince, purposely whetting the curiosity of the ladies, and enjoying the fun.

“Then it *must* be interesting, oh, *dreadfully* interesting,” cried other ladies.

“I don’t mind taking a bet that the prince dreamed that he was kneeling at some lovely woman’s feet and making a declaration of love,” said Felisata Michaelovna. “Confess, now, prince, that it was so? confess, dear prince, confess.”

“Yes, Prince, confess!” the chorus took up the cry. The old man listened solemnly until the last voice was hushed. The ladies’ guesswork flattered his vanity wonderfully; he was as pleased as he could be. “Though I did say that my dream was a dead se — cret,” he replied at last, “still I am obliged to confess, dear lady, that to my great as — tonishment you have almost exactly guessed it.”

“I’ve guessed it, I’ve guessed it,” cried Felisata, in a rapture of joy. “Well, prince, say what you like, but it’s your *plain* duty to tell us the name of your beauty; come now, *isn’t* it?”

“Of course, of course, prince.”

“Is she in this town?”

“Dear prince, *do* tell us.”

“*Darling* prince, do, *do* tell us; you positively *must*,” was heard on all sides.

“*Mesdames, mes — dames*; if you must know, I will go so far as to say that it is the most charming, and be — witching, and vir — tuous lady I know,” said the prince, unctuously.

“The most bewitching? and belonging to this place? Who *can* it be?” cried the ladies, interchanging looks and signs.

“Why, of course, the young lady who is considered the reigning beauty here,” remarked Natalia Dimitrievna, rubbing her hands and looking hard at Zina with those cat’s-eyes of hers. All joined her in staring at Zina.

“But, prince, if you dream those sort of things, why should not you marry somebody *bona fide*?” asked Felisata, looking around her with a significant expression.

“We would marry you off beautifully, prince!” said somebody else.

“Oh, dear prince, *do* marry!” chirped another.

“Marry, marry, *do* marry!” was now the cry on all sides.

“Ye — yes. Why should I not ma — arry!” said the old man, confused and bewildered with all the cries and exclamations around him.

“Uncle!” cried Mosgliakoff.

“Ye — yes, my boy, quite so; I un — derstand what you mean. I may as well tell you, ladies, that I am not in a position to marry again; and having passed one most delightful evening with our fascinating hostess, I must start away to-morrow to the Hermitage, and then I shall go straight off abroad, and study the question of the enlightenment of Europe.”

Zina shuddered, and looked over at her mother with an expression of unspeakable anguish.

But Maria Alexandrovna had now made up her mind how to act; all this while she had played a mere waiting game, observing closely and carefully all that was said or done, although she could see only too clearly that her plans were undermined, and that her foes had come about her in numbers which were too great to be altogether pleasant.

At last, however, she comprehended the situation, she thought, completely. She had gauged how the matter stood in all its branches, and she determined to slay the hundred-headed hydra at one fell blow!

With great majesty, then, she rose from her seat, and approached the tea-table, stalking across the room with firm and dignified tread, as she looked around upon her pigmy foes. The fire of inspiration blazed in her eyes. She resolved to smite once, and annihilate this vile nest of poisonous scandal-adders: to destroy the miserable Mosgliakoff, as though he were a blackbeetle, and with one triumphant blow to reassert all her influence over this miserable old idiot-prince!

Some audacity was requisite for such a performance, of course; but Maria Alexandrovna had not even to put her hand in her pocket for a supply of that particular commodity.

"*Mesdames*," she began, solemnly, and with much dignity (Maria Alexandrovna was always a great admirer of solemnity); "*mesdames*, I have been a listener to your conversation — to your witty remarks and merry jokes — long enough, and I consider that my turn has come, at last, to put in a word in contribution.

"You are aware we have all met here accidentally (to my great joy, I must add — to my very great joy); but, though I should be the first to refuse to divulge a family secret before the strictest rules of ordinary propriety rendered such a revelation necessary, yet, as my dear guest here appears to me to have given us to understand, by covert hints and insinuations, that he is not averse to the matter becoming common property (he will forgive me if I have mistaken his intentions!) — I cannot help feeling that the prince is not only not averse, but actually desires me to make known our great family secret. Am I right, Prince?"

"Ye — yes, quite so, quite so! Very glad, ve — ry glad, I'm sure!" said the prince, who had not the remotest idea what the good lady was talking about!

Maria Alexandrovna, for greater effect, now paused to take breath, and looked solemnly and proudly around upon the assembled guests, all of whom were now listening with greedy but slightly disturbed curiosity to what their hostess was about to reveal to them.

Mosgliakoff shuddered; Zina flushed up, and arose from her seat; Afanassy, seeing that something important was about to happen, blew his nose violently, in order to be ready for any emergency.

"Yes, ladies; I am ready — nay, gratified — to entrust my family secret to your keeping! —— This evening, the prince, overcome by the beauty and virtues of my daughter, has done her the honour of proposing to me for her hand. Prince," she concluded, in trembling tearful accents, "dear Prince; you must not, you cannot blame me for my candour! It is only my overwhelming joy that could have torn this dear secret prematurely from my heart: and what mother is there who will blame me in such a case as this?"

Words fail me to describe the effect produced by this most unexpected sally on the part of Maria Alexandrovna. All present appeared to be struck

dumb with amazement. These perfidious guests, who had thought to frighten Maria Alexandrovna by showing her that they knew her secret; who thought to annihilate her by the premature revelation of that secret; who thought to overwhelm her, for the present, with their hints and insinuations; these guests were themselves struck down and pulverized by this fearless candour on her part! Such audacious frankness argued the consciousness of strength.

“So that the prince actually, and of his own free-will is really going to marry Zina? So they did not drink and bully and swindle him into it? So he is not to be married burglariously and forcibly? So Maria Alexandrovna is not afraid of anybody? Then we can’t knock this marriage on the head — since the prince is not being married compulsorily!”

Such were the questions and exclamations the visitors now put to themselves and each other.

But very soon the whispers which the hostess’s words had awakened all over the room, suddenly changed to chirps and exclamations of joy.

Natalia Dimitrievna was the first to come forward and embrace Maria Alexandrovna; then came Mrs. Antipova; next Felisata Michaelovna. All present were shortly on their feet and moving about, changing places. Many of the ladies were pale with rage. Some began to congratulate Zina, who was confused enough without; some attached themselves to the wretched Afanassy Matveyevitch. Maria Alexandrovna stretched her arms theatrically, and embraced her daughter — almost by force.

The prince alone gazed upon the company with a sort of confused wonder; but he smiled on as before. He seemed to be pleased with the scene. At sight of the mother and daughter embracing, he took out his handkerchief, and wiped his eye, in the corner of which there really was a tear.

Of course the company fell upon him with their congratulations before very long.

“I congratulate you, Prince! I congratulate you!” came from all sides at once.

“So you *are* going to be married, Prince?”

“So you *really are* going to marry?”

“Dear Prince! You really are to be married, then?”

“Ye — yes, ye — yes; quite so, quite so!” replied the old fellow, delighted beyond measure with all the rapture and atmosphere of

congratulation around him; “and I confess what I like best of all, is the ve — ery kind in — terest you all take in me! I shall never forget it, never for — get it! Charming! charming! You have brought the tears to my eyes!”

“Kiss me, prince!” cried Felisata Michaelovna, in stentorian tones.

“And I con — fess further,” continued the Prince, as well as the constant physical interruptions from all sides allowed him; “I confess I am beyond measure as — tonished that Maria Alexandrovna, our revered hostess, should have had the extraordinary penet — ration to guess my dream! She might have dreamed it herself, instead of me. Ex — traordinary perspicacity! Won — derful, wonderful!”

“Oh, prince; your dream again!”

“Oh, come, prince! admit — confess!” cried one and all.

“Yes, prince, it is no use concealing it now; it is time we divulged this secret of ours!” said Maria Alexandrovna, severely and decidedly. “I quite entered into your refined, allegorical manner; the delightful delicacy with which you gave me to understand, by means of subtle insinuations, that you wished the fact of your engagement to be made known. Yes, ladies, it is all true! This very evening the prince knelt at my daughter’s feet, and actually, and by no means in a dream, made a solemn proposal of marriage to her!”

“Yes — yes, quite so! just exactly like that; and under the very cir — cumstances she describes: just like re — ality,” said the old man. “My dear young lady,” he continued, bowing with his greatest courtesy to Zina, who had by no means recovered from her amazement as yet; “my dear young lady, I swear to you, I should never have dared thus to bring your name into pro — minence, if others had not done so before me! It was a most be — witching dream! a be — witching dream! and I am doubly happy that I have been per — mitted to describe it. Charming — charming!”

“Dear me! how very curious it is: he insists on sticking to his idea about a dream!” whispered Mrs. Antipova to the now slightly paling Maria Alexandrovna. Alas! that great woman had felt her heart beating more quickly than she liked without this last little reminder!

“What does it mean?” whispered the ladies among themselves.

“Excuse me, prince,” began Maria Alexandrovna, with a miserable attempt at a smile, “but I confess you astonish me a great deal! What is this strange idea of yours about a dream? I confess I had thought you were joking up to this moment; but — if it be a joke on your part, it is

exceedingly out of place! I should like — I am *anxious* to ascribe your conduct to absence of mind, but — —”

“Yes; it may really be a case of absence of mind!” put in Natalia Dimitrievna in a whisper.

“Yes — yes — of course, quite so; it may easily be absence of mind!” confirmed the prince, who clearly did not in the least comprehend what they were trying to get out of him; “and with regard to this subject, let me tell you a little an — ecdote. I was asked to a funeral at Petersburg, and I went and made a little mis — take about it and thought it was a birthday par — ty! So I brought a lovely bouquet of cam — ellias! When I came in and saw the master of the house lying in state on a table, I didn’t know where to lo — ok, or what to do with my ca — mellias, I assure you!”

“Yes; but, Prince, this is not the moment for stories!” observed Maria Alexandrovna, with great annoyance. “Of course, my daughter has no need to beat up a husband; but at the same time, I must repeat that you yourself here, just by the piano, made her an offer of marriage. *I* did not ask you to do it! I may say I was amazed to hear it! However, since the episode of your proposal, I may say that I have thought of nothing else; and I have only waited for your appearance to talk the matter over with you. But now — well, I am a mother, and this is my daughter. You speak of a dream. I supposed, naturally, that you were anxious to make your engagement known by the medium of an allegory. Well, I am perfectly well aware that someone may have thought fit to confuse your mind on this matter; in fact, I may say that I have my suspicions as to the individual responsible for such a —— however, kindly explain yourself, Prince; explain yourself quickly and satisfactorily. You cannot be permitted to jest in this fashion in a respectable house.”

“Ye — yes — quite so, quite so; one should not jest in respectable houses,” remarked the prince, still bewildered, but beginning gradually to grow a little disconcerted.

“But that is no answer to my question, Prince. I ask you to reply categorically. I insist upon your confirming — confirming here and at once — the fact that this very evening you made a proposal of marriage to my daughter!”

“Quite so — quite so; I am ready to confirm that! But I have told the com — pany all about it, and Felisata Michaelovna ac — tually guessed my dream!”

“*Not dream!* it was *not* a dream!” shouted Maria Alexandrovna furiously. “It was not a dream, Prince, but you were wide awake. Do you hear? Awake — you were *awake*!”

“Awake?” cried the prince, rising from his chair in astonishment. “Well, there you are, my friend; it has come about just as you said,” he added, turning to Mosgliakoff. “But I assure you, most es — teemed Maria Alexandrovna, that you are under a del — usion. I am quite convinced that I saw the whole scene in a dream!”

“Goodness gracious!” cried Maria Alexandrovna.

“Do not disturb yourself, dear Maria Alexandrovna,” said Natalia Dimitrievna, “probably the prince has forgotten; he will recollect himself by and by.”

“I am astonished at you, Natalia Dimitrievna!” said the now furious hostess. “As if people forget this sort of thing! Excuse me, Prince, but are you laughing at us, or what are you doing? Are you trying to act one of Dumas’ heroes, or Lauzun or Ferlacourt, or somebody? But, if you will excuse me saying so, you are a good deal too old for that sort of thing, and I assure you, your amiable little play-acting will not do here! My daughter is not a French viscountess! I tell you, this very evening and in this very spot here, my daughter sang a ballad to you, and you, amazed at the beauty of her singing, went down on your knees and made her a proposal of marriage. I am not talking in my sleep, am I? Surely I am wide awake? Speak, Prince, am I asleep, or not?”

“Ye — yes, of course, of course — quite so. I don’t know,” said the bewildered old man. “I mean, I don’t think I am drea — ming now; but, a little while ago I *was* asleep, you see; and while asleep I had this dream, that I — —”

“Goodness me, Prince, I tell you you were *not* dreaming. *Not dreaming*, do you hear? *Not* dreaming! What on earth do you mean? Are you raving, Prince, or what?”

“Ye — yes; deuce only knows. I don’t know! It seems to me I’m getting be — wildered,” said the prince, looking around him in a state of considerable mental perturbation.

“But, my dear Prince, how can you possibly have *dreamed* this, when I can tell you all the minutest details of your proposal and of the circumstances attending it? You have not told any of us of these details. How could I possibly have known what you dreamed?”

“But, perhaps the prince *did* tell someone of his dream, in detail,” remarked Natalia Dimitrievna.

“Ye — yes, quite so — quite so! Perhaps I did tell someone all about my dream, in detail,” said the now completely lost and bewildered prince.

“Here’s a nice comedy!” whispered Felisata Michaelovna to her neighbour.

“My goodness me! this is too much for *anybody’s* patience!” cried Maria Alexandrovna, beside herself with helpless rage. “Do you hear me, Prince? She sang you a ballad — *sang you a ballad*! Surely you didn’t dream that too?”

“Certainly — cer — tainly, quite so. It really did seem to me that she sang me a ballad,” murmured the prince; and a ray of recollection seemed to flash across his face. “My friend,” he continued, addressing Mosgliakoff, “I believe I forgot to tell you, there was a ballad sung — a ballad all about castles and knights; and some trou — badour or other came in. Of course, of course, I remember it all quite well. I recoll — ect I did turn over the ballad. It puzzles me much, for now it seems as though I had really heard the ballad, and not dreamt it all.”

“I confess, uncle,” said Mosgliakoff, as calmly as he could, though his voice shook with agitation, “I confess I do not see any difficulty in bringing your actual experience and your dream into strict conformity; it is consistent enough. You probably *did* hear the ballad. Miss Zenaida sings beautifully; probably you all adjourned into this room and Zenaida Afanassievna sang you the song. Of course, I was not there myself, but in all probability this ballad reminded you of old times; very likely it reminded you of that very vicomtesse with whom you used once to sing, and of whom you were speaking to-day; well, and then, when you went up for your nap and lay down, thinking of the delightful impressions made upon you by the ballad and all, you dreamed that you were in love and made an offer of marriage to the lady who had inspired you with that feeling.”

Maria Alexandrovna was struck dumb by this display of barefaced audacity.

“Why, ye — yes, my boy, yes, of course; that’s exactly how it really wa — as!” cried the prince, in an ecstasy of delight. “Of course it was the de — lightful impressions that caused me to dream it. I certainly re — member the song; and then I went away and dreamed about my pro — posal, and that I really wished to marry! The viscountess was there too. How

beautifully you have unravelled the diffi — culty, my dear boy. Well, now I am quite convinced that it was all a dream. Maria Alex — androvna! I assure you, you are under a delu — usion: it was a dream. I should not think of trifling with your feelings otherwise."

"Oh, indeed! Now I perceive very clearly whom we have to thank for making this dirty mess of our affairs!" cried Maria Alexandrovna, beside herself with rage, and turning to Mosgliakoff: "You are the man, sir — the *dishonest* person. It is you who stirred up this mud! It is you that puzzled an unhappy old idiot into this eccentric behaviour, because you yourself were rejected! But we shall be quits, my friend, for this offence! You shall pay, you shall pay! Wait a bit, my dishonest friend; wait a bit!"

"Maria Alexandrovna!" cried Mosgliakoff, blushing in his turn until he looked as red as a boiled lobster, "your words are so, so —— to such an extent — I really don't know how to express my opinion of you. No lady would ever permit herself to — to — . At all events I am but protecting my relative. You must allow that to *allure* an old man like this is, is —— ."

"Quite so, quite so; *allure*," began the prince, trying to hide himself behind Mosgliakoff.

"Afanassy Matveyevitch!" cried Maria Alexandrovna, in unnatural tones; "do you hear, sir, how these people are shaming and insulting me? Have you *quite* exempted yourself from all the responsibilities of a man? Or are you actually a — a wooden block, instead of the father of a family? What do you stand blinking there for? eh! Any other husband would have wiped out such an insult to his family with the blood of the offender long ago."

"Wife!" began Afanassy, solemnly, delighted, and proud to find that a need for him had sprung up for once in his life. "Wife, are you quite certain, now, that *you* did not dream all this? You might so easily have fallen asleep and dreamed it, and then muddled it all up with what really happened, you know, and so — —"

But Afanassy Matveyevitch was never destined to complete his ingenious, but unlucky guess.

Up to this moment the guests had all restrained themselves, and had managed, cleverly enough, to keep up an appearance of solid and judicial interest in the proceedings. But at the first sound, almost, of Afanassy's voice, a burst of uncontrollable laughter rose like a tempest from all parts of the room.

Maria Alexandrovna, forgetting all the laws of propriety in her fury, tried to rush at her unlucky consort; but she was held back by force, or, doubtless, she would have scratched out that gentleman's eyes.

Natalia Dimitrievna took advantage of the occasion to add a little, if only a little, drop more of poison to the bitter cup.

"But, dear Maria Alexandrovna," she said, in the sweetest honied tones, "perhaps it may be that it really *was* so, as your husband suggests, and that you are actually under a strange delusion?"

"How! What was a delusion?" cried Maria Alexandrovna, not quite catching the remark.

"Why, my dear Maria, I was saying, *mightn't* it have been so, dear, after all? These sort of things *do* happen sometimes, you know!"

"*What* sort of things do happen, eh? What are you trying to do with me? What am I to make of you?"

"Why, perhaps, dear, you really *did* dream it all!"

"What? *dream* it! *I* dreamed it? And you dare suggest such a thing to me — straight to my face?"

"Oh, why not? Perhaps it really was the case," observed Felisata Michaelovna.

"Ye — yes, quite so, very likely it act — ually *was* the case," muttered the old prince.

"He, too — gracious Heaven!" cried poor Maria Alexandrovna, wringing her hands.

"Dear me, how you do worry yourself, Maria Alexandrovna. You should remember that dreams are sent us by a good Providence. If Providence so wills it, there is no more to be said. Providence gives the word, and we can neither weep nor be angry at its dictum."

"Quite so, quite so. We can't be a — angry about it," observed the prince.

"Look here; do you take me for a lunatic, or not?" said Maria Alexandrovna. She spoke with difficulty, so dreadfully was she panting with fury. It was more than flesh and blood could stand. She hurriedly grasped a chair, and fell fainting into it. There was a scene of great excitement.

"She has fainted in obedience to the laws of propriety!" observed Natalia Dimitrievna to Mrs. Antipova. But at this moment — at this moment when the general bewilderment and confusion had reached its height, and when

the scene was strained to the last possible point of excitement, another actor suddenly stepped to the front; one who had been silent hitherto, but who immediately threw quite a different complexion on the scene.

CHAPTER XIV.

Zenaida, or Zina Afanassievna, was an individual of an extremely romantic turn of mind.

I don’t know whether it really was that she had read too much of “that fool Shakespeare,” with her “little tutor fellow,” as Maria Alexandrovna insisted; but, at all events she was very romantic. However, never, in all her experience of Mordasoff life, had Zina before made such an ultra-romantic, or perhaps I might call it *heroic*, display as on the occasion of the sally which I am now about to describe.

Pale, and with resolution in her eyes, yet almost trembling with agitation, and wonderfully beautiful in her anger and scorn, she stepped to the front.

Gazing around at all, defiantly, she approached her mother in the midst of the sudden silence which had fallen on all present. Her mother roused herself from her swoon at the first indication of a projected movement on Zina’s part, and she now opened her eyes.

“Mamma!” cried Zina, “why should we deceive anyone? Why befoul ourselves with more lies? Everything is so foul already that surely it is not worth while to bemean ourselves any further by attempting to gloss over the filth!”

“Zina, Zina! what are you thinking of? *Do* recollect yourself!” cried Maria Alexandrovna, frightened out of her wits, and jumping briskly up from her chair.

“I told you, mamma — I told you before, that I should not be able to last out the length of this shameful and ignominious business!” continued Zina. “Surely we need no further bemean and befoul ourselves! I will take it all on myself, mamma. I am the basest of all, for lending myself, of my own free will, to this abominable intrigue! You are my mother; you love me, I know, and you wished to arrange matters for my happiness, as you thought best, and according to your lights. *Your* conduct, therefore, is pardonable; but mine! oh, no! never, never!”

“Zina, Zina! surely you are not going to tell the whole story? Oh! woe, woe! I felt that the knife would pierce my heart!”

“Yes, mamma, I shall tell all; I am disgraced, you — we all of us are disgraced — —”

“Zina, you are exaggerating! you are beside yourself; and you don’t know what you are saying. And why say anything about it? The ignominy and disgrace is not on our side, dear child; I will show in a moment that it is not on our side!”

“No, mamma, no!” cried Zina, with a quiver of rage in her voice, “I do not wish to remain silent any longer before these — persons, whose opinion I despise, and who have come here for the purpose of laughing at us. I do not wish to stand insult from any one of them; none of them have any right to throw dirt at me; every single one of them would be ready at any moment to do things thirty times as bad as anything either I or you have done or would do! Dare they, *can* they constitute themselves our judges?”

“Listen to that!”

“There’s a pretty little speech for you!”

“Why, that’s *us* she’s abusing”!

“A nice sort of creature she is herself!”

These and other such-like exclamations greeted the conclusion of Zina’s speech.

“Oh, she simply doesn’t know what she’s talking about!” observed Natalia Dimitrievna.

We will make a digression, and remark that Natalia Dimitrievna was quite right there!

For if Zina did not consider these women competent to judge herself, why should she trouble herself to make those exposures and admissions which she proposed to reveal in their presence? Zina was in much too great a hurry. (She always was, — so the best heads in Mordasoff had agreed!) All might have been set right; all might have been satisfactorily arranged! Maria Alexandrovna was a great deal to blame this night, too! She had been too much “in a hurry,” like her daughter, — and too arrogant! She should have simply raised the laugh at the old prince’s expense, and turned him out of the house! But Zina, in despite of all common sense (as indicated above), and of the sage opinions of all Mordasoff, addressed herself to the prince:

“Prince,” she said to the old man, who actually rose from his arm-chair to show his respect for the speaker, so much was he struck by her at this moment!— “Prince forgive us; we have deceived you; we entrapped you — —”

“*Will* you be quiet, you wretched girl?” cried Maria Alexandrovna, wild with rage.

“My dear young lady — my dear child, my darling child!” murmured the admiring prince.

But the proud haughty character of Zina had led her on to cross the barrier of all propriety; — she even forgot her own mother who lay fainting at her feet — a victim to the self-exposure her daughter indulged in.

“Yes, prince, we both cheated you. Mamma was in fault in that she determined that I must marry you; and I in that I consented thereto. We filled you with wine; I sang to you and postured and posed for your admiration. We tricked you, a weak defenceless old man, we *tricked* you (as Mr. Mosgliakoff would express it!) for the sake of your wealth, and your rank. All this was shockingly mean, and I freely admit the fact. But I swear to you, Prince, that I consented to all this baseness from motives which were *not* base. I wished, — but what a wretch I am! it is doubly mean to justify one’s conduct in such a case as this! But I will tell you, Prince, that if I had accepted anything from you, I should have made it up to you for it, by being your plaything, your servant, your — your ballet dancer, your slave — anything you wished. I had sworn to this, and I should have kept my oath.”

A severe spasm at the throat stopped her for a moment; while all the guests sat and listened like so many blocks of wood, their eyes and mouths wide open.

This unexpected, and to them perfectly unintelligible sally on Zina’s part had utterly confounded them. The old prince alone was touched to tears, though he did not understand half that Zina said.

“But I will marry you, my beau — t — iful child, I *will* marry you, if you like” — he murmured, “and est — eem it a great honour, too! But I as — sure you it was all a dream, — what does it mat — ter what I dream? Why should you take it so to heart? I don’t seem to under — stand it all; please explain, my dear friend, what it all means!” he added, to Paul.

“As for you, Pavel Alexandrovitch,” Zina recommenced, also turning to Mosgliakoff, “you whom I had made up my mind, at one time, to look upon as my future husband; you who have now so cruelly revenged yourself upon me; must you needs have allied yourself to these people here, whose object at all times is to humiliate and shame me? And you said that you loved me! However, it is not for me to preach moralities to you, for I am worse than all! I wronged you, distinctly, in holding out false hopes and half promises. I never loved you, and if I had agreed to be your wife, it would have been

solely with the view of getting away from here, out of this accursed town, and free of all this meanness and baseness. However, I swear to you that had I married you, I should have been a good and faithful wife! You have taken a cruel vengeance upon me, and if that flatters your pride, then — —”

“Zina!” cried Mosgliakoff.

“If you still hate me — —”

“Zina!!”

“If you ever did love me — —”

“Zenaida Afanassievna!”

“Zina, Zina — my child!” cried Maria Alexandrovna.

“I am a blackguard, Zina — a blackguard, and nothing else!” cried Mosgliakoff; while all the assembled ladies gave way to violent agitation. Cries of amazement and of wrath broke upon the silence; but Mosgliakoff himself stood speechless and miserable, without a thought and without a word to plead for him!

“I am an ass, Zina,” he cried at last, in an outburst of wild despair,— “an ass! oh far, far worse than an ass. But I will prove to you, Zina, that even an ass can behave like a generous human being! Uncle, I cheated you! I, I — it was I who cheated you: you were *not* asleep, — you were wide awake when you made this lady an offer of marriage! And I — scoundrel that I was — out of revenge because I was rejected by her myself, persuaded you that you had dreamed it all!”

“Dear me, what wonderful and interesting revelations we are being treated to now!” whispered Natalia to Mrs. Antipova.

“My dear friend,” replied the prince, “com — pose yourself, do! I assure you — you quite start — led me with that sudden ex — clamation of yours! Besides, you are labouring under a delusion; — I will marr — y the lady, of course, if ne — cessary. But you told me, yourself, it was all a dre — eam!”

“Oh, how am I to tell you? Do show me, somebody, how to explain to him! Uncle, uncle! this is an important matter — a most important family affair! Think of that, uncle — just try to realise that — —”

“Wait a bit, my boy — wait a bit: let me think! First there was my coachman, Theophile — —”

“Oh, never mind Theophile now, for goodness sake!”

“Of course we need not waste time over The — ophile. Well — then came Na — poleon; and then we seemed to be sitting at tea, and some la — dy came and ate up all our su — gar!”

“But, uncle!” cried Mosgliakoff, at his wits’ end, “it was Maria Alexandrovna herself told us that anecdote about Natalia Dimitrievna! I was here myself and heard it! — I was a blackguard, and listened at the keyhole!”

“How, Maria Alexandrovna!” cried Natalia, “you’ve told the prince too, have you, that I stole sugar out of your basin? So I come to you to steal your sugar, do I, eh! do I?”

“Get away from me!” cried Maria Alexandrovna, with the abandonment of utter despair.

“Oh, dear no! I shall do nothing of the sort, Maria Alexandrovna! I steal your sugar, do I? I tell you you shall not talk of me like that, madam — you dare not! I have long suspected you of spreading this sort of rubbish abroad about me! Sophia Petrovna came and told me all about it. So I stole your sugar, did I, eh?”

“But, my dear la — dies!” said the prince, “it was only part of a dream! What do my dreams matter? — —”

“Great tub of a woman!” muttered Maria Alexandrovna through her teeth.

“What! what! I’m a tub, too, am I?” shrieked Natalia Dimitrievna. “And what are you yourself, pray? Oh, I have long known that you call me a tub, madam. Never mind! — at all events my husband is a man, madam, and not a fool, like yours!”

“Ye — yes — quite so! I remember there *was* something about a tub, too!” murmured the old man, with a vague recollection of his late conversation with Maria Alexandrovna.

“What — *you*, too? *you* join in abusing a respectable woman of noble extraction, do you? How dare you call me names, prince — you wretched old one-legged misery! I’m a tub am I, you one-legged old abomination?”

“Wha — at, madam, I one-legged?”

“Yes — one-legged and toothless, sir; that’s what you are!”

“Yes, and one-eyed too!” shouted Maria Alexandrovna.

“And what’s more, you wear stays instead of having your own ribs!” added Natalia Dimitrievna.

“His face is all on wire springs!”

“He hasn’t a hair of his own to swear by!”

“Even the old fool’s moustache is stuck on!” put in Maria Alexandrovna.

“Well, Ma — arie Alexandrovna, give me the credit of having a nose of my ve — ry own, at all events!” said the prince, overwhelmed with confusion under these unexpected disclosures. “My friend, it must have been you betrayed me! *you* must have told them that my hair is stuck on?”

“Uncle, what an idea, I —— !”

“My dear boy, I can’t stay here any lon — ger, take me away somewhere — *quelle société*! Where have you brought me to, eh? — Gracious Hea — eaven, what dreadful soc — iety!”

“Idiot! scoundrel!” shrieked Maria Alexandrovna.

“Goodness!” said the unfortunate old prince. “I can’t quite remember just now what I came here for at all — I suppose I shall reme — mber directly. Take me away, quick, my boy, or I shall be torn to pieces here! Besides, I have an i — dea that I want to make a note of — —”

“Come along, uncle — it isn’t very late; I’ll take you over to an hotel at once, and I’ll move over my own things too.”

“Ye — yes, of course, a ho — tel! Good-bye, my charming child; you alone, you — are the only vir — tuous one of them all; you are a no — oble child. Good-bye, my charming girl! Come along, my friend; — oh, good gra — cious, what people!”

I will not attempt to describe the end of this disagreeable scene, after the prince’s departure.

The guests separated in a hurricane of scolding and abuse and mutual vituperation, and Maria Alexandrovna was at last left alone amid the ruins and relics of her departed glory.

Alas, alas! Power, glory, weight — all had disappeared in this one unfortunate evening. Maria Alexandrovna quite realised that there was no chance of her ever again mounting to the height from which she had now fallen. Her long preeminence and despotism over society in general had collapsed.

What remained to her? Philosophy? She was wild with the madness of despair all night! Zina was dishonoured — scandals would circulate, never-ceasing scandals; and — oh! it was dreadful!

As a faithful historian, I must record that poor Afanassy was the scapegoat this night; he “caught it” so terribly that he eventually disappeared; he had hidden himself in the garret, and was there starved to death almost, with cold, all night.

The morning came at last; but it brought nothing good with it! Misfortunes never come singly.

CHAPTER XV.

If fate makes up its mind to visit anyone with misfortune, there is no end to its malice! This fact has often been remarked by thinkers; and, as if the ignominy of last night were not enough, the same malicious destiny had prepared for this family more, yea, and worse — evils to come!

By ten o'clock in the morning a strange and almost incredible rumour was in full swing all over the town: it was received by society, of course, with full measure of spiteful joy, just as we all love to receive delightfully scandalous stories of anyone about us.

"To lose one's sense of shame to such an extent!" people said one to another.

"To humiliate oneself so, and to neglect the first rules of propriety! To loose the bands of decency altogether like this, really!" etc. etc.

But here is what had happened.

Early in the morning, something after six o'clock, a poor piteous-looking old woman came hurriedly to the door of Maria Alexandrovna's house, and begged the maid to wake Miss Zina up as quickly, as possible, — *only* Miss Zina, and very quietly, so that her mother should not hear of it, if possible.

Zina, pale and miserable, ran out to the old woman immediately.

The latter fell at Zina's feet and kissed them and begged her with tears to come with her at once to see poor Vaísia, her son, who had been so bad, *so* bad all night that she did not think he could live another day.

The old woman told Zina that Vaísia had sent to beg her to come and bid him farewell in this his death hour: he conjured her to come by all the blessed angels, and by all their past — otherwise he must die in despair.

Zina at once decided to go, in spite of the fact that, by so doing, she would be justifying all the scandal and slanders disseminated about her in former days, as to the intercepted letter, her visits to him, and so on. Without a word to her mother, then, she donned her cloak and started off with the old woman, passing through the whole length of the town, into one of the poorest slums of Mordasof — and stopped at a little low wretched house, with small miserable windows, and snow piled round the basement for warmth.

In this house, in a tiny room, more than half of which was occupied by an enormous stove, on a wretched bed, and covered with a miserably thin

quilt, lay a young man, pale and haggard: his eyes were ablaze with the fire of fever, his hands were dry and thin, and he was breathing with difficulty and very hoarsely. He looked as though he might have been handsome once, but disease had put its finger on his features and made them dreadful to look upon and sad withal, as are so many dying consumptive patients' faces.

His old mother who had fed herself for a year past with the conviction that her son would recover, now saw at last that Vaísia was not to live. She stood over him, bowed down with her grief — tearless, and looked and looked, and could not look enough; and felt, but could not realize, that this dear son of hers must in a few days be buried in the miserable Mordasof churchyard, far down beneath the snow and frozen earth!

But Vaísia was not looking at her at this moment! His poor suffering face was at rest now, and happy; for he saw before him the dear image which he had thought of, dreamed of, and loved through all the long sad nights of his illness, for the last year and a half! He realised that she forgave him, and had come, like an angel of God, to tell him of her forgiveness, here, on his deathbed.

She pressed his hands, wept over him, stood and smiled over him, looked at him once more with those wonderful eyes of hers, and all the past, the undying ever-present past rose up before the mind's eye of the dying man. The spark of life flashed up again in his soul, as though to show, now that it was about to die out for ever on this earth, how hard, how hard it was to see so sweet a light fade away.

"Zina, Zina!" he said, "my Zina, do not weep; don't grieve, Zina, don't remind me that I must die! Let me gaze at you, so — so, — and feel that our two souls have come together once more — that you have forgiven me! Let me kiss your dear hands again, as I used, and so let me die without noticing the approach of death.

"How thin you have grown, Zina! and how sweetly you are looking at me now, my Zina! Do you remember how you used to laugh, in bygone days? Oh, Zina, my angel, I shall not ask you to forgive me, — I will not remember anything about — that, you know what! for if you *do* forgive me, I can never forgive myself!

"All the long, long nights, Zina, I have lain here and thought, and thought; and I have long since decided that I had better die, Zina; for I am not fit to live!"

Zina wept, and silently pressed his hands, as though she would stop him talking so.

“Why do you cry so?” continued the sick man. “Is it because I am dying? but all the past is long since dead and buried, Zina, my angel! You are wiser than I am, you know I am a bad, wicked man; surely you cannot love me still? Do you know what it has cost me to realise that I am a bad man? I, who have always prided myself before the world — and what on? Purity of heart, generosity of aim! Yes, Zina, so I did, while we read Shakespeare; and in theory I was pure and generous. Yet, how did I prove these qualities in practice?”

“Oh, don’t! don’t!” sobbed Zina, “you are not fair to yourself: don’t talk like this, please don’t!”

“Don’t stop me, Zina! You forgave me, my angel; I know you forgave me long ago, but you must have judged me, and you know what sort of man I really am; and that is what tortures me so! I am unworthy of your love, Zina! And you were good and true, not only in theory, but in practice too! You told your mother you would marry me, and no one else, and you would have kept your word! Do you know, Zina, I never realized before what you would sacrifice in marrying me! I could not even see that you might die of hunger if you did so! All I thought of was that you would be the bride of a great poet (in the future), and I could not understand your reasons for wishing to delay our union! So I reproached you and bullied you, and despised you and suspected you, and at last I committed the crime of showing your letter! I was not even a scoundrel at that moment! I was simply a worm-man. Ah! how you must have despised me! No, it is well that I am dying; it is well that you did not marry me! I should not have understood your sacrifice, and I should have worried you, and perhaps, in time, have learned to hate you, and ... but now it is good, it is best so! my bitter tears can at least cleanse my heart before I die. Ah! Zina! Zina! love me, love me as you did before for a little, little while! just for the last hour of my life. I know I am not worthy of it, but — oh, my angel, my Zina!”

Throughout this speech Zina, sobbing herself, had several times tried to stop the speaker; but he would not listen. He felt that he must unburden his soul by speaking out, and continued to talk — though with difficulty, panting, and with choking and husky utterance.

“Oh, if only you had never seen me and never loved me,” said Zina, “you would have lived on now! Ah, *why* did we ever meet?”

“No, no, darling, don’t blame yourself because I am dying! think of all my self-love, my romanticism! I am to blame for all, myself! Did they ever tell you my story in full? Do you remember, three years ago, there was a criminal here sentenced to death? This man heard that a criminal was never executed whilst ill! so he got hold of some wine, mixed tobacco in it, and drank it. The effect was to make him so dreadfully sick, with blood-spitting, that his lungs became affected; he was taken to a hospital, and a few weeks after he died of virulent consumption! Well, on that day, you know, after the letter, it struck me that I would do the same; and why do you think I chose consumption? Because I was afraid of any more sudden death? Perhaps. But, oh, Zina! believe me, a romantic nonsense played a great part in it; at all events, I had an idea that it would be striking and grand for me to be lying here, dying of consumption, and you standing and wringing your hands for woe that *love* should have brought me to this! You should come, I thought, and beg my pardon on your knees, and I should forgive you and die in your arms!”

“Oh, don’t! don’t!” said Zina, “don’t talk of it now, dear! you are not really like that. Think of our happy days together, think of something else — not that, not that!”

“Oh, but it’s so bitter to me, darling; and that’s why I must speak of it. I havn’t seen you for a year and a half, you know, and all that time I have been alone; and I don’t think there was one single minute of all that time when I have not thought of you, my angel, Zina! And, oh! how I longed to do something to earn a better opinion from you! Up to these very last days I have never believed that I should really die; it has not killed me all at once, you know. I have long walked about with my lungs affected. For instance, I have longed to become a great poet suddenly, to publish a poem such as has never appeared before on this earth; I intended to pour my whole soul and being into it, so that wherever I was, or wherever *you* were, I should always be with you and remind you of myself in my poems! And my greatest longing of all was that you should think it all over and say to yourself at last some day, ‘No, he is not such a wretch as I thought, after all!’ It was stupid of me, Zina, stupid — stupid — wasn’t it, darling?”

“No, no, Vaísia — no!” cried Zina. She fell on his breast and kissed his poor hot, dry hands.

“And, oh! how jealous I have been of you all this time, Zina! I think I should have died if I had heard of your wedding. I kept a watch over you,

you know; I had a spy — there!" (he nodded towards his mother). "She used to go over and bring me news. You never loved Mosgliakoff — now *did* you, Zina? Oh, my darling, my darling, will you remember me when I am dead? Oh, I know you will; but years go by, Zina, and hearts grow cold, and yours will cool too, and you'll forget me, Zina!"

"No, no, never! I shall never marry. You are my first love, and my only — only — undying love!"

"But all things die, Zina, even our memories, and our good and noble feelings die also, and in their place comes reason. No, no, Zina, be happy, and live long. Love another if you can, you cannot love a poor dead man for ever! But think of me now and then, if only seldom; don't think of my faults: forgive them! For oh, Zina, there was good in that sweet love of ours as well as evil. Oh, golden, golden days never to be recalled! Listen, darling, I have always loved the sunset hour — remember me at that time, will you? Oh no, no! why must I die? oh *how* I should love to live on now. Think of that time — oh, just think of it! it was all spring then, the sun shone so bright, the flowers were so sweet, ah me! and look, now — look!"

And the poor thin finger pointed to the frozen window-pane. Then he seized Zina's hand and pressed it tight over his eyes, and sighed bitterly — bitterly! His sobs nearly burst his poor suffering breast.... And so he continued suffering and talking all the long day. Zina comforted and soothed him as she best could, but she too was full of deadly grief and pain. She told him — she promised him — never to forget; that she would never love again as she loved him; and he believed her and wept, and smiled again, and kissed her hands. And so the day passed.

Meanwhile, Maria Alexandrovna had sent some ten times for Zina, begging her not to ruin her reputation irretrievably. At last, at dusk, she determined to go herself; she was out of her wits with terror and grief.

Having called Zina out into the next room, she proceeded to beg and pray her, on her knees, "to spare this last dagger at her heart!"

Zina had come out from the sick-room ill: her head was on fire, — she heard, but could not comprehend, what her mother said; and Marie Alexandrovna was obliged to leave the house again in despair, for Zina had determined to sit up all night with Vaísia.

She never left his bedside, but the poor fellow grew worse and worse. Another day came, but there was no hope that the sick man would see its close. His old mother walked about as though she had lost all control of her

actions; grief had turned her head for the time; she gave her son medicines, but he would none of them! His death agony dragged on and on! He could not speak now, and only hoarse inarticulate sounds proceeded from his throat. To the very last instant he stared and stared at Zina, and never took his eyes off her; and when their light failed them he still groped with uncertain fingers for her hand, to press and fondle it in his own!

Meanwhile the short winter day was waning! And when at even the last sunbeam gilded the frozen window-pane of the little room, the soul of the sufferer fled in pursuit of it out of the emaciated body that had kept it prisoner.

The old mother, seeing that there was nothing left her now but the lifeless body of her beloved Vaísia, wrung her hands, and with a loud cry flung herself on his dead breast.

“This is your doing, you viper, you cursed snake,” she yelled to Zina, in her despair; “it was you ruined and killed him, you wicked, wretched girl.” But Zina heard nothing. She stood over the dead body like one bereft of her senses.

At last she bent over him, made the sign of the Cross, kissed him, and mechanically left the room. Her eyes were ablaze, her head whirled. Two nights without sleep, combined with her turbulent feelings, were almost too much for her reason; she had a sort of confused consciousness that all her past had just been torn out of her heart, and that a new life was beginning for her, dark and threatening.

But she had not gone ten paces when Mosgliakoff suddenly seemed to start up from the earth at her feet.

He must have been waiting for her here.

“Zenaida Afanassievna,” he began, peering all around him in what looked like timid haste; it was still pretty light. “Zenaida Afanassievna, of course I am an ass, or, if you please, perhaps not quite an ass, for I really think I am acting rather generously this time. Excuse my blundering, but I am rather confused, from a variety of causes.”

Zina glanced at him almost unconsciously, and silently went on her way. There was not much room for two on the narrow pavement, and as Zina did not make way for Paul, the latter was obliged to walk on the road at the side, which he did, never taking his eyes off her face.

“Zenaida Afanassievna,” he continued, “I have thought it all over, and if you are agreeable I am willing to renew my proposal of marriage. I am even

ready to forget all that has happened; all the ignominy of the last two days, and to forgive it — but on one condition: that while we are still here our engagement is to remain a strict secret. You will depart from this place as soon as ever you can, and I shall quietly follow you. We will be married secretly, somewhere, so that nobody shall know anything about it; and then we'll be off to St. Petersburg by express post — don't take more than a small bag — eh? What say you, Zenaida Afanassievna; tell me quick, please, I can't stay here. We might be seen together, you know."

Zina did not answer a word; she only looked at Mosgliakoff; but it was such a look that he understood all instantly, bowed, and disappeared down the next lane.

"Dear me," he said to himself, "what's the meaning of this? The day before yesterday she became so jolly humble, and blamed herself all round. I've come on the wrong day, evidently!"

Meanwhile event followed event in Mordasof.

A very tragical circumstance occurred.

The old prince, who moved over to the hotel with Mosgliakoff, fell very ill that same night, dangerously ill. All Mordasof knew of it in the morning; the doctor never left his side. That evening a consultation of all the local medical talent was held over the old man (the invitations to which were issued in Latin); but in spite of the Latin and all they could do for him, the poor prince was quite off his head; he raved and asked his doctor to sing him some ballad or other; raved about wigs, and occasionally cried out as though frightened.

The Mordasof doctors decided that the hospitality of the town had given the prince inflammation of the stomach, which had somehow "gone to the head."

There might be some subordinate moral causes to account for the attack; but at all events he ought to have died long ago; and so he would certainly die now.

In this last conclusion they were not far wrong; for the poor old prince breathed his last three days after, at the hotel.

This event impressed the Mordasof folk considerably. No one had expected such a tragical turn of affairs. They went in troops to the hotel to view the poor old body, and there they wagged their heads wisely and ended by passing severe judgment upon "the murderers of the unfortunate Prince," — meaning thereby, of course, Maria Alexandrovna and her daughter. They

predicted that this matter would go further. Mosgliakoff was in a dreadful state of perturbation: he did not know what to do with the body. Should he take it back to Donchanof! or what? Perhaps he would be held responsible for the old man's death, as he had brought him here? He did not like the look of things. The Mordasof people were less than useless for advice, they were all far too frightened to hazard a word.

But suddenly the scene changed.

One fine evening a visitor arrived — no less a person than the eminent Prince Shepetiloff, a young man of thirty-five, with colonel's epaulettes, a relative of the dead man. His arrival created a great stir among all classes at Mordasof.

It appeared that this gentleman had lately left St. Petersburg, and had called in at Donchanof. Finding no one there, he had followed the prince to Mordasof, where the news and circumstances of the old man's death fell upon him like a thunder-clap!

Even the governor felt a little guilty while detailing the story of the prince's death: all Mordasof felt and looked guilty.

This visitor took the matter entirely into his own hands, and Mosgliakoff made himself scarce before the presence of the prince's real nephew, and disappeared, no one knew whither.

The body was taken to the monastery, and all the Mordasof ladies flocked thither to the funeral. It was rumoured that Maria Alexandrovna was to be present, and that she was to go on her knees before the coffin, and loudly pray for pardon; and that all this was in conformity with the laws of the country.

Of course this was all nonsense, and Maria Alexandrovna never went near the place!

I forgot to state that the latter had carried off Zina to the country house, not deeming it possible to continue to live in the town. There she sat, and trembled over all the second-hand news she could get hold of as to events occurring at Mordasof.

The funeral procession passed within half a mile of her country house; so that Maria Alexandrovna could get a good view of the long train of carriages looking black against the white snow roads; but she could not bear the sight, and left the window.

Before the week was out, she and her daughter moved to Moscow, taking Afanassy Matveyevitch with them; and, within a month, the country house

and town house were both for sale.

And so Mordasof lost its most eminent inhabitant for ever!

Afanassy Matveyevitch was said to be for sale with the country house.

A year — two years went by, and Mordasof had quite forgotten Maria Alexandrovna, or nearly so! Alas! so wags the world! It was said that she had bought another estate, and had moved over to some other provincial capital; where, of course, she had everybody under her thumb; that Zina was not yet married; and that Afanassy Matveyevitch — but why repeat all this nonsense? None of it was true; it was but rumour! ——

It is three years since I wrote the last words of the above chronicles of Mordasof, and whoever would have believed that I should have to unfold my MS. and add another piece of news to my narrative?

Well, to business! —

Let's begin with Paul Mosgliakoff. — After leaving Mordasof, he went straight to St. Petersburg, where he very soon obtained the clerkship he had applied for. He then promptly forgot all about Mordasof, and the events enacted there. He enjoyed life, went into society, fell in love, made another offer of marriage, and had to swallow another snub; became disgusted with Petersburg life, and joined an expedition to one of the remote quarters of our vast empire.

This expedition passed through its perils of land and water, and arrived in due course at the capital of the remote province which was its destination.

There the members were well received by the governor, and a ball was arranged for their entertainment.

Mosgliakoff was delighted. He donned his best Petersburg uniform, and proceeded to the large ball-room with the full intention of producing a great and startling effect. His first duty was to make his bow to the governor-general's lady, of whom it was rumoured that she was young, and very lovely.

He advanced then, with some little "swagger," but was suddenly rooted to the spot with amazement. Before him stood Zina, beautifully dressed, proud and haughty, and sparkling with diamonds! She did not recognize him; her eyes rested a moment on his face, and then passed on to glance at some other person.

Paul immediately departed to a safe and quiet corner, and there button-holed a young civilian whom he questioned, and from whom he learned certain most interesting facts. He learned that the governor-general had married a very rich and very lovely lady in Moscow, two years since; that his wife was certainly very beautiful, but, at the same time, excessively proud and haughty, and danced with none but generals. That the governor's lady had a mother, a lady of rank and fashion, who had followed them from Moscow; that this lady was very clever and wise, but that even she was quite under the thumb of her daughter; as for the general (the governor), he doted on his wife.

Mosgliakoff inquired after our old friend Afanassy; but in their "remote province" nothing was known of that gentleman.

Feeling a little more at home presently, Paul began to walk about the room, and shortly espied Maria Alexandrovna herself. She was wonderfully dressed, and was surrounded by a bevy of ladies who evidently dwelt in the glory of her patronage: she appeared to be exceedingly amiable to them — wonderfully so!

Paul plucked up courage and introduced himself. Maria Alexandrovna seemed to give a shudder at first sight of him, but in an instant she was herself again. She was kind enough to recognise Paul, and to ask him all sorts of questions as to his Petersburg experiences, and so on. She never said a word about Mordasof, however. She behaved as though no such place existed.

After a minute or so, and having dropped a question as to some Petersburg prince whom Paul had never so much as heard of, she turned to speak to another young gentleman standing by, and in a second or two was entirely oblivious of Mosgliakoff. With a sarcastic smile our friend passed on into the large hall. Feeling offended — though he knew not why — he decided not to dance. So he leant his back against one of the pillars, and for a couple of hours did nothing but follow Zina about with his eyes. But alas! all the grace of his figure and attitude, and all the fascinations of his general appearance were lost upon her, she never looked at him.

At last, with legs stiff from standing, tired, hungry, and feeling miserable generally, he went home. Here he tossed about half the night thinking of the past, and next morning, having the chance of joining a branch party of his expedition, he accepted the opportunity with delight, and left the town at once.

The bells tinkled, the horses trotted gaily along, kicking up snowballs as they went. Paul Mosgliakoff fell to thinking, then he fell to snoring, and so he continued until the third station from the start; there he awoke fresh and jolly, and with the new scenery came newer, and healthier, and pleasanter thoughts.

THE END

THE VILLAGE OF STEPANCHIKOVO



OR, THE FRIEND OF THE FAMILY

Translated by Constance Garnett

The Village of Stepanchikovo (also known in English as *The Friend of the Family*) was first published in 1859. The novella relates how Sergey Aleksandrovich (the point of view character) is summoned from St. Petersburg to the estate of his uncle, Colonel Yegor Ilich Rostanev, and finds that a middle-aged charlatan named Foma Fomich Opiskin has swindled the nobles around him into believing that he is a virtuous mentor, despite his aggressive, selfish and spiteful behaviour. *The Village of Stepanchikovo* offers a fascinating insight into the genesis and workings of Dostoyevsky's later novels, such as *The Idiot* and *The Brothers Karamazov.*



Dostoyevsky (right) with Shokan Walikhanuli, in the year of publication, 1859

THE VILLAGE OF STEPANCHIKOVO

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PART I

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

WHEN my uncle, Colonel Yegor Ilyitch Rostanev, left the army, he settled down in Stepantchikovo, which came to him by inheritance, and went on steadily living in it, as though he had been all his life a regular country gentleman who had never left his estates. There are natures that are perfectly satisfied with everyone and can get used to everything; such was precisely the disposition of the retired colonel. It is hard to imagine a man more peaceable and ready to agree to anything. If by some caprice he had been gravely asked to carry some one for a couple of miles on his shoulders he would perhaps have done so. He was so good-natured that he was sometimes ready to give away everything at the first asking, and to share almost his last shirt with anyone who coveted it. He was of heroic proportions; tall and well made, with ruddy cheeks, with teeth white as ivory, with a long brown moustache, with a loud ringing voice, and with a frank hearty laugh; he spoke rapidly and jerkily. He was at the time of my story about forty and had spent his life, almost from his sixteenth year, in the Hussars. He had married very young and was passionately fond of his wife; but she died, leaving in his heart a noble memory that nothing could efface.

When he inherited Stepantchikovo, which increased his fortune to six hundred serfs, he left the army, and, as I have said already, settled in the country together with his children, Ilyusha, a boy of eight, whose birth had cost his mother’s life, and Sashenka, a girl of fifteen, who had been brought up at a boarding-school in Moscow. But my uncle’s house soon became a regular Noah’s Ark. This was how it happened.

Just at the time when he came into the property and retired from the army, his mother, who had, sixteen years before, married a certain General Krahotkin, was left a widow. At the time of her second marriage my uncle was only a cornet, and yet he, too, was thinking of getting married. His

mother had for a long time refused her blessing, had shed bitter tears, had reproached him with egoism, with ingratitude, with disrespect. She had proved to him that his estates, amounting to only two hundred and fifty serfs, were, as it was, barely sufficient for the maintenance of his family (that is, for the, maintenance of his mamma, with all her retinue of toadies, pug-dogs, Pomeranians, Chinese cats and so on). And, in the midst of these reproaches, protests and shrill upbraidings, she all at once quite unexpectedly got married herself before her son, though she was forty-two years of age. Even in this, however, she found an excuse for blaming my poor uncle, declaring that she was getting married solely to secure in her old age the refuge denied her by the undutiful egoist, her son, who was contemplating the unpardonable insolence of making a home of his own.

I never could find out what really induced a man apparently so reasonable as the deceased General Krahotkin to marry a widow of forty-two. It must be supposed that he suspected she had money. Other people thought that he only wanted a nurse, as he had already had a foretaste of the swarm of diseases which assailed him in his old age. One thing is certain, the general never had the faintest respect for his wife at any time during his married life, and he ridiculed her sarcastically at every favourable opportunity. He was a strange person. Half educated and extremely shrewd, he had a lively contempt for all and everyone; he had no principles of any sort; laughed at everything and everybody, and in his old age, through the infirmities that were the consequence of his irregular and immoral life, he became spiteful, irritable and merciless. He had been a successful officer; yet he had been forced, through “an unpleasant incident’’, to resign his commission, losing his pension and only just escaping prosecution. This had completely soured his temper. Left almost without means, with no fortune but a hundred ruined serfs, he folded his hands and never during the remaining twelve years of his life troubled himself to inquire what he was living on and who was supporting him. At the same time he insisted on having all the comforts of life, kept his carriage and refused to curtail his expenses. Soon after his marriage he lost the use of his legs and spent the last ten years of his life in an invalid chair wheeled about by two seven-foot flunkeys, who never heard anything from him but abuse of the most varied kind. The carriage, the flunkeys and the invalid chair were paid for by the undutiful son, who sent his mother his last farthing, mortgaged and re-mortgaged his estate, denied himself necessaries, and incurred debts almost

impossible for him to pay in his circumstances at the time; and yet the charge of being an egoist and an undutiful son was persistently laid at his door. But my uncle's character was such that at last he quite believed himself that he was an egoist, and therefore, to punish himself and to avoid being an egoist, he kept sending them more and more money. His mother stood in awe of her husband; but what pleased her most was that he was a general, and that through him she was "Madame la Générale".

She had her own apartments in the house, where, during the whole period of her husband's semi-existence, she queened it in a society made up of toadies, lapdogs, and the gossips of the town. She was an important person in her little town. Gossip, invitations to stand godmother at christenings and to give the bride away at weddings, a halfpenny rubber, and the respect shown her in all sorts of ways as the wife of a general fully made up to her for the drawbacks of her home life. All the magpies of the town came to her with their reports, the first place everywhere was always hers — in fact, she got out of her position all she could get out of it. The general did not meddle in all that; but before people he laughed mercilessly at his wife, asked himself, for instance, such questions as why he had married "such a dowdy", and nobody dared contradict him. Little by little all his acquaintances left him, and at the same time society was essential to him; he loved chatting, arguing; he liked to have a listener always sitting beside him. He was a free-thinker and atheist of the old school, and so liked to hold forth on lofty subjects.

But the listeners of the town of N-had no partiality for lofty subjects, and they became fewer and fewer. They tried to get up a game of whist in the household; but as a rule the game ended in outbreaks on the part of the general, which so terrified his wife and her companions that they put up candles before the ikons, had a service sung, divined the future with beans and with cards, distributed rolls among the prisoners, and looked forward in a tremor to the after-dinner hour when they would have to take a hand at whist again and at every mistake to endure shouts, screams, oaths and almost blows. The general did not stand on ceremony with anybody when something was not to his taste; he screamed like a peasant woman, swore like a coachman, sometimes tore up the cards, threw them about the floor, drove away his partners, and even shed tears of anger and vexation — and for no more than a knave's having been played instead of a nine. At last, as

his eyesight was failing, they had to get him a reader; it was then that Foma Fomitch Opiskin appeared on the scene.

I must confess I announce this new personage with a certain solemnity. There is no denying that he is one of the principal characters in my story. How far he has a claim on the attention of the reader I will not explain; the reader can answer that question more suitably and more readily himself.

Foma Fomitch entered General Krahotkin's household as a paid companion — neither more nor less. Where he turned up from is shrouded in the mists of obscurity. I have, however, made special researches and have found out something of the past circumstances of this remarkable man. He was said in the first place to have been sometime and somewhere in the government service, and somewhere or other to have suffered, I need hardly say, "for a good cause". It was said, too, that at some time he had been engaged in literary pursuits in Moscow. There is nothing surprising in that; Foma Fomitch's crass ignorance would, of course, be no hindrance to him in a literary career. But all that is known for certain is that he did not succeed in anything, and that at last he was forced to enter the general's service in the capacity of reader and martyr. There was no ignominy which he had not to endure in return for eating the general's bread. It is true that in later years, when on the general's death he found himself a person of importance and consequence, he more than once assured us all that his consenting to be treated as a buffoon was an act of magnanimous self-sacrifice on the altar of friendship; that the general had been his benefactor; that the deceased had been a great man misunderstood, who only to him, Foma, had confided the inmost secrets of his soul; that in fact, if he, Foma, had actually at the general's urgent desire played the part of various wild beasts and posed in grotesque attitudes, this had been solely in order to entertain and distract a suffering friend shattered by disease. But Foma Fomitch's assurances and explanations on this score can only be accepted with considerable hesitation; and yet this same Foma Fomitch, even at the time when he was a buffoon, was playing a very different part in the ladies' apartments of the general's house. How he managed this, it is difficult for anyone not a specialist in such matters to conceive. The general's lady cherished a sort of mysterious reverence for him — why? There is no telling. By degrees he acquired over the whole feminine half of the general's household a marvellous influence, to some extent comparable to the influence exercised by the Ivan Yakovlevitches and such-like seers and

prophets, who are visited in madhouses by certain ladies who devote themselves to the study of their ravings. He read aloud to them works of spiritual edification; held forth with eloquent tears on the Christian virtues; told stories of his life and his heroic doings; went to mass, and even to matins; at times foretold the future; had a peculiar faculty for interpreting dreams, and was a great hand at throwing blame on his neighbours. The general had a notion of what was going on in the back rooms, and tyrannised over his dependent more mercilessly than ever. But Foma's martyrdom only increased his prestige in the eyes of Madame la Générale and the other females of the household.

At last everything was transformed. The general died. His death was rather original. The former free-thinker and atheist became terror-stricken beyond all belief. He shed tears, repented, had ikons put up, sent for priests. Services were sung, and extreme unction was administered. The poor fellow screamed that he did not want to die, and even asked Foma Fomitch's forgiveness with tears. This latter circumstance was an asset of some value to Foma Fomitch later on. Just before the parting of the general's soul from the general's body, however, the following incident took place. The daughter of Madame la Générale by her first marriage, my maiden aunt, Praskovya Ilyinitchna, who always lived in the general's house, and was one of his favourite victims, quite indispensable to him during the ten years that he was bedridden, always at his beck and call, and with her meek and simple-hearted mildness the one person who could satisfy him, went up to his bedside shedding bitter tears, and would have smoothed the pillow under the head of the sufferer; but the sufferer still had strength to clutch at her hair and pull it violently three times, almost foaming at the mouth with spite. Ten minutes later he died. They had sent word to the colonel, though Madame la Generate had declared that she did not want to see him and would sooner die than set eyes on him at such a moment. There was a magnificent funeral at the expense, of course, of the undutiful son on whom the widowed mother did not wish to set her eyes.

In the ruined property of Knyazevka, which belonged to several different owners and in which the general had his hundred serfs, there stands a mausoleum of white marble, diversified with laudatory inscriptions to the glory of the intellect, talents, nobility of soul, orders of merit and rank of the deceased. Foma Fomitch took a prominent part in the composition of these eulogies. Madame la Générale persisted for a long time in keeping up

her dignity and refusing to forgive her disobedient son. Sobbing and making a great outcry, surrounded by her crowd of toadies and pug-dogs, she kept declaring that she would sooner live on dry bread and I need hardly say “soak it in her tears”, that she would sooner go stick in hand to beg alms under the windows than yield to the request of her “disobedient” son that she should come and live with him at Stepantchikovo, and that she would never, never set foot within his house! As a rule the word foot in this connection is uttered with peculiar effect by ladies. Madame la Generale’s utterance of the word was masterly, artistic. . . . In short, the amount of eloquence that was expended was incredible. It must be observed that at the very time of these shrill protests they were by degrees packing up to move to Stepantchikovo. The colonel knocked up all his horses driving almost every day thirty miles from Stepantchikovo to the town, and it was not till a fortnight after the general’s funeral that he received permission to appear before the eyes of his aggrieved parent. Foma Fomitch was employed as go-between. During the whole of that fortnight he was reproaching the disobedient son and putting him to shame for his “inhuman” conduct, reducing him to genuine tears, almost to despair. It is from this time that the incomprehensible, inhumanly despotic domination of Foma Fomitch over my poor uncle dates. Foma perceived the kind of man he had to deal with, and felt at once that his days of playing the buffoon were over, and that in the wilds even Foma might pass for a nobleman. And he certainly made up for lost time.

“What will you feel like,” said Foma, “if your own mother, the authoress, so to speak, of your days, should take a stick and, leaning on it with trembling hands wasted with hunger, should actually begin to beg for alms under people’s windows? Would it not be monstrous, considering her rank as a general’s lady and the virtues of her character? What would you feel like if she should suddenly come, by mistake, of course — but you know it might happen — and should stretch out her hand under your windows, while you, her own son, are perhaps at that very moment nestling in a feather bed, and ... in fact, in luxury? It’s awful, awful! But what is most awful of all — allow me to speak candidly, Colonel — what is most awful of all is the fact that you are standing before me now like an unfeel-

ing post, with your mouth open and your eyes blinking, so that it is a positive disgrace, while you ought to be ready at the mere thought of such a

thing to tear your hair out by the roots and to shed streams — what am I saying? — rivers, lakes, seas, oceans of tears. ...”

In short, Foma in his excessive warmth grew almost incoherent. But such was the invariable outcome of his eloquence. It ended, of course, in Madame la Générale together with her female dependents and lapdogs, with Foma Fomitch and with Mademoiselle Perepelitsyn, her chief favourite, at last honouring Stepantchikovo by her presence. She said that she would merely make the experiment of living at her son’s till she had tested his dutifulness. You can imagine the colonel’s position while his dutifulness was being tested! At first, as a widow recently bereaved, Madame la Générale thought it her duty two or three times a week to be overcome by despair at the thought of her general, never to return; and punctually on each occasion the colonel for some unknown reason came in for a wigging. Sometimes, especially if visitors were present, Madame la Générale would send for her grandchildren, little Ilyusha and fifteen-year-old Sashenka, and making them sit down beside her would fix upon them a prolonged, melancholy, anguished gaze, as upon children ruined in the hands of such a father; she would heave deep, painful sighs, and finally melt into mute mysterious tears, for at least a full hour. Woe betide the colonel if he failed to grasp the significance of those tears! And, poor fellow, he hardly ever succeeded in grasping their significance, and in the simplicity of his heart almost always put in an appearance at such tearful moments, and whether he liked it or not came in for a severe heckling. But his filial respect in no way decreased and reached at last an extreme limit. In short, both Madame la Générale and Foma Fomitch were fully conscious that the storm which had for so many years menaced them in the presence of General Krahotkin had passed away and would never return. Madame la Générale used at times to fall on her sofa in a swoon. A great fuss and commotion arose. The colonel was crushed, and trembled like a leaf.

“Cruel son!” Madame la Générale would shriek as she came to. “You have lacerated my inmost being . . . mes entrailles, mes entrailles!”

“But how have I lacerated your inmost being, mamma?” the colonel would protest timidly.

“You have lacerated it, lacerated it I He justifies himself, too. He is rude. Cruel son! I am dying! ...”

The colonel was, of course, annihilated. But it somehow happened that Madame la Générale always revived again. Half an hour later he would be

taking someone by the button-hole and saying —

“Oh, well, my dear fellow, you see she is a grattde dame, the wife of a general. She is the kindest-hearted old lady: she is accustomed to all this refined . . . She is on a different level from a blockhead like me! Now she is angry with me. No doubt I am to blame. My dear fellow, I don’t know yet what I’ve done, but no doubt it’s my fault. ...”

It would happen that Mademoiselle Perepelitsyn, an old maid in a shawl, with no eyebrows, with little rapacious eyes, with lips thin as a thread, with hands washed in cucumber water, and with a spite against the whole universe, would feel it her duty to read the colonel a lecture.

“It’s all through your being undutiful, sir; it’s all through your being an egoist, sir; through your wounding your mamma, sir — she’s not used to such treatment. She’s a general’s lady, and you are only a colonel, sir.”

“That is Mademoiselle Perepelitsyn, my dear fellow,” the colonel would observe to his listener; “an excellent lady, she stands up for my mother like a rock! A very rare person! < You mustn’t imagine that she is in a menial position; she is the daughter of a major herself! Yes, indeed.”

. But, of course, this was only the prelude. The great lady who could carry out such a variety of performances in her turn trembled like a mouse in the presence of her former dependent. Foma Fomitch had completely bewitched her. She could not make enough of him and she saw with his eyes and heard with his ears. A cousin of mine, also a retired hussar, a man still young, though he had been an incredible spendthrift, told me bluntly and simply that it was his firm conviction, after staying for a time at my uncle’s, that Madame la Générale was on terms of improper intimacy with Foma Fomitch. I need hardly say that at the time I rejected this supposition with indignation as too coarse and simple. No, it was something different, and that something different I cannot explain without first explaining to the reader the character of Foma Fomitch as I understood it later.

Imagine the most insignificant, the most cowardly creature, an outcast from society, of no service to anyone, utterly use-

less, utterly disgusting, but incredibly vain, though entirely destitute of any talent by which he might have justified his morbidly sensitive vanity. I hasten to add that Foma Fomitch was the incarnation of unbounded vanity, but that at the same time it was a special kind of vanity — that is, the vanity found in a complete nonentity, and, as is usual in such cases, a vanity mortified and oppressed by grievous failures in the past; a vanity that has

begun rankling long, long ago, and ever since has given off envy and venom, at every encounter, at every success of anyone else. I need hardly say that all this was seasoned with the most unseemly touchiness, the most insane suspiciousness. It may be asked, how is one to account for such vanity? How does it arise, in spite of complete insignificance, in pitiful creatures who are forced by their social position to know their place? How answer such a question? Who knows, perhaps, there are exceptions, of whom my hero is one? He certainly is an exception to the rule, as will be explained later. But allow me to ask: are you certain that those who are completely resigned to be your buffoons, your parasites and your toadies, and consider it an honour and a happiness to be so, are you certain that they are quite devoid of vanity and envy? What of the slander and backbiting and tale-bearing and mysterious whisperings in back corners, somewhere aside and at your table? Who knows, perhaps, in some of these degraded victims of fate, your fools and buffoons, vanity far from being dispelled by humiliation is even aggravated by that very humiliation, by being a fool and buffoon, by eating the bread of dependence and being for ever forced to submission and self-suppression? Who knows, maybe, this ugly exaggerated vanity is only a false fundamentally depraved sense of personal dignity, first outraged, perhaps, in childhood by oppression, poverty, filth, spat upon, perhaps, in the person of the future outcast’s parents before his eyes? But I have said that Foma Fomitch was also an exception to the general rule; that is true. He had at one time been a literary man slighted and unrecognised, and literature is capable of ruining men very different from Foma Fomitch — I mean, of course, when it is not crowned with success. I don’t know, but it may be assumed that Foma Fomitch had been unsuccessful before entering on a literary career; possibly in some other calling, too, he had received more kicks than halfpence, or possibly something worse. About that, however, I cannot say; but I made inquiries later on, and I know for certain that Foma Fomitch composed, at some time in Moscow, a romance very much like those that were published every year by dozens in the ‘thirties, after the style of The Deliverance of Moscow, The Chieftains of the Tempest, Sons of Love, or the Russians in novels which in their day afforded an agreeable butt for the wit of Baron, Brambeus. That was, of course, long ago; but the serpent of literary vanity sometimes leaves a deep and incurable sting, especially in insignificant and dull-witted persons. Foma Fomitch had been disappointed from his first

step in a literary career, and it was then that he was finally enrolled in the vast army of the disappointed, from which all the crazy saints, hermits and wandering pilgrims come later on. I think that his monstrous boastfulness, his thirst for praise and distinction, for admiration and homage, dates from the same period. Even when he was a buffoon he got together a group of idiots to do homage to him. Somewhere and somehow to stand first, to be an oracle, to swagger and give himself airs — that was his most urgent craving! As others did not praise him he began to praise himself. I have myself in my uncle's house at Stepantchikovo heard Foma's sayings after he had become the absolute monarch and oracle of the household. "I am not in my proper place among you," he would say sometimes with mysterious impressiveness. "I am not in my proper place here. I will look round, I will settle you all, I will show you, I will direct you, and then good-bye; to Moscow to edit a review! Thirty thousand people will assemble every month to hear my lectures. My name will be famous at last, and then — woe to my enemies."

But while waiting to become famous the genius insisted upon immediate recognition in substantial form. It is always pleasant to receive payment in advance, and in this case it was particularly so. I know that he seriously assured my uncle that some great work lay before him, Foma, in the future — a work for which he had been summoned into the world, and to the accomplishment of this work he was urged by some sort of person with wings, who visited him at night, or something of that kind. This great work was to write a book full of profound wisdom in the soul-saving line, which would set the whole world agog and stagger all Russia. And when all Russia was staggered, he, Foma, disdaining glory, would retire into a monastery, and in the catacombs of Kiev would pray day and night for the happiness of the Fatherland. All this imposed upon my uncle.

Well, now imagine what this Foma, who had been all his life oppressed and crushed, perhaps actually beaten too, who was vain and secretly lascivious, who had been disappointed in his literary ambitions, who had played the buffoon for a crust of bread, who was at heart a despot in spite of all his previous abjectness and impotence, who was a braggart, and insolent when successful, might become when he suddenly found himself in the haven he had reached after so many ups and downs, honoured and glorified, humoured and flattered, thanks to a patroness who was an idiot and a patron who was imposed upon and ready to agree to anything. I must, of course,

explain my uncle’s character more fully, or Foma Fomitch’s success cannot be understood. But for the moment I will say that Foma was a complete illustration of the saying, “Let him sit down to the table and he will put his feet on it.” He paid us out for his past! A base soul escaping from oppression becomes an oppressor. Foma had been oppressed, and he had at once a craving to oppress others; he had been the victim of whims and caprices and now he imposed his own whims and caprices on others. He had been the butt of others, and now he surrounded himself with creatures whom he could turn into derision. His boasting was ridiculous; the airs he gave himself were incredible; nothing was good enough for him; his tyranny was beyond all bounds, and it reached such a pitch that simple-hearted people who had not witnessed his manoeuvres, but only heard queer stories about him, looked upon all this as a miracle, as the work of the devil, crossed themselves and spat.

I was speaking of my uncle. Without explaining his remarkable character (I repeat) it is, of course, impossible to understand Foma Fomitch’s insolent domination in another man’s house; it is impossible to understand the metamorphosis of the cringing dependent into the great man. Besides being kind-hearted in the extreme, my uncle was a man of the most refined delicacy in spite of a somewhat rough exterior, of the greatest generosity and of proved courage. I boldly say of “courage”; nothing could have prevented him from fulfilling an obligation, from doing his duty — in such cases no obstacle would have dismayed him. His soul was as pure as a child’s. He was a perfect child at forty, open-hearted in the extreme, always good-humoured, imagining everybody an angel, blaming himself for other people’s shortcomings, and exaggerating the good qualities of others, even pre-supposing them where they could not possibly exist. He was one of those very generous and pure-hearted men who are positively ashamed to assume any harm of another, are always in haste to endow their neighbours with every virtue, rejoice at other people’s success, and in that way always live in an ideal world, and when anything goes wrong always blame themselves first. To sacrifice themselves in the interests of others is their natural vocation. Some people would have called him cowardly, weak-willed and feeble. Of course he was weak, and indeed he was of too soft a disposition; but it was not from lack of will, but from the fear of wounding, of behaving cruelly, from excess of respect for others and for mankind in general. He was, however, weak-willed and cowardly only when nothing

was at stake but his own interests, which he completely disregarded, and for this he was continually an object of derision, and often with the very people for whom he was sacrificing his own advantage. He never believed, however, that he had enemies; he had them, indeed, but he somehow failed to observe them. He dreaded fuss and disturbance in the house like fire, and immediately gave way to anyone and submitted to anything. He gave in through a sort of shy good nature, from a sort of shy delicacy. “So be it,” he would say, quickly brushing aside all reproaches for his indulgence and weakness; “so be it . . . that everyone may be happy and contented!” I need hardly say that he was ready to submit to every honourable influence. What is more, an adroit rogue might have gained complete control over him, and even have lured him on to do wrong, of course misrepresenting the wrong action as a right one. My uncle very readily put faith in other people, and was often far from right in doing so. When, after many sufferings, he brought himself at last to believe that the man who deceived him was dishonest, he always blamed himself first — and sometimes blamed himself only. Now imagine, suddenly queening it in his quiet home, a capricious, doting, idiot woman — inseparable from another idiot, her idol — a woman who had only feared her general, and was now afraid of nothing, and impelled by a craving to make up to herself for what she had suffered in the past; and this idiot woman my uncle thought it his duty to revere, simply because she was his mother. They began with proving to my uncle at once that he was coarse, impatient, ignorant and selfish to the utmost degree. The remarkable thing is that the idiotic old lady herself believed in what she professed. And I believe that Foma Fomitch did also, at least to some extent. They persuaded my uncle, too, that Foma had been sent from heaven by Divine Providence for the salvation of his soul and the subduing of his unbridled passions; that he was haughty, proud of his wealth, and quite capable of reproaching Foma Fomitch for eating his bread. My poor uncle was very soon convinced of the depth of his degradation, was ready to tear his hair and to beg forgiveness. . . .

“It’s all my own fault, brother,” he would say sometimes to one of the people he used to talk to. “It’s all my fault I One ought to be doubly delicate with a man who is under obligations to one. ... I mean that I . . . Under obligations, indeed! I am talking nonsense again! He is not under obligations to me at all: on the contrary, it is I who am under an obligation to him for living with me! And here I have reproached him for eating my

bread! . . . Not that I did reproach him, but it seems I made some slip of the tongue — I often do make such slips. . . . And, after all, the man has suffered, he has done great things; for ten years in spite of insulting treatment he was tending his sick friend! And then his learning. . . . He's a writer! A highly educated man! A very lofty character; in short . . ."

The conception of the highly educated and unfortunate Foma ignominiously treated by the cruel and capricious general rent my uncle's heart with compassion and indignation. All Foma's peculiarities, all his ignoble doings my uncle at once ascribed to his sufferings, the humiliations he had endured in the past, and the bitterness left by them. ... He at once decided in his soft and generous heart that one could not be so exacting with a man who had suffered as with an ordinary person; that one must not only forgive him, but more than that, one must, by gentle treatment, heal his wounds, restore him and reconcile him with humanity. Setting this object before him he was completely fired by it, and lost all power of perceiving that his new friend was a lascivious and capricious animal, an egoist, a sluggard, a lazy drone — and nothing more. He put implicit faith in Foma's genius and learning. I forgot to mention that my uncle had the most naive and disinterested reverence for the words "learning" and "literature", though he had himself never studied anything. This was one of his chief and most guileless peculiarities.

"He is writing," he would whisper, walking on tiptoe, though he was two rooms away from Foma's study. "I don't know precisely what he is writing," he added, with a proud and mysterious air, "but no doubt he is brewing something, brother. ... I mean in the best sense, of course; it would be clear to some people, but to you and me, brother, it would be just a jumble that ... I fancy he is writing of productive forces of some sort — he said so himself. I suppose that has something to do with politics. Yes, his name will be famous! Then we shall be famous through him. He told me that himself, brother. ..."

I know for a fact that my uncle was forced by Foma's orders to shave off his beautiful fair whiskers. Foma considered that these whiskers made my uncle look like a Frenchman, and that wearing them showed a lack of patriotism. Little by little Foma began meddling in the management of the estate, and giving sage counsels on the subject. These sage counsels were terrible. The peasants soon saw the position and understood who was their real master, and scratched their heads uneasily. Later on I overheard Foma

talking to the peasants; I must confess I listened. Foma had told us before that he was fond of talking to intelligent Russian peasants. So one day he went to the threshing floor: after talking to the peasants about the farm-work, though he could not tell oats from wheat, after sweetly dwelling on the sacred obligations of the peasant to his master, after touching lightly on electricity and the division of labour, subjects of which I need hardly say he knew nothing, after explaining to his listeners how the earth went round the sun, and being at last quite touched by his own eloquence — he began talking about the ministers. I understood. Pushkin used to tell a story of a father who impressed upon his little boy of four that he, his papa, was so brave "that the Tsar loves Papa. . . ." So evidently this papa needed this listener of four years old! And the peasants always listened to Foma Fomitch with cringing respect.

"And did you get a large salary from royalty, little father?" a grey-headed old man called Arhip Korotky asked suddenly from the crowd of peasants, with the evident intention of being flattering; but the question struck Foma Fomitch as familiar, and he could not endure familiarity.

"And what business is that of yours, you lout?" he answered, looking contemptuously at the poor peasant. "Why are you thrusting forward your pug-face? Do you want me to spit in it?"

Foma Fomitch always talked in that tone to the "intelligent Russian peasant".

"You are our father," another peasant interposed; "you know we are ignorant people. You may be a major or a colonel or even your Excellency, we don't know how we ought to speak to you."

"You lout!" repeated Foma Fomitch, mollified however. "There are salaries and salaries, you blockhead! One will get nothing, though he is a general — because he does nothing to deserve it, he is of no service to the Tsar. But I.got twenty thousand when I was serving in the Ministry, and I did not take it, I served for the honour of it. I had plenty of money of my own. I gave my salary to the cause of public enlightenment, and to aid those whose homes have been burnt in Kazan."

"I say! So it was you who rebuilt Kazan, little father?" the amazed peasant went on.

The peasants wondered at Foma Fomitch as a rule.

"Oh, well, I had my share in it," Foma answered, with a show of reluctance, as though vexed with himself for deigning to converse on such a

subject with such a person.

His conversations with my uncle were of a different stamp.

“What were you in the past?” Foma would say, for instance, lolling after an ample dinner in an easy-chair, while a servant stood behind him brandishing a fresh lime branch to keep off the flies. “What were you like before I came? But now I have dropped into your soul a spark of that heavenly fire which is glowing there now. Did I drop a spark of heavenly fire into your soul or not? Answer. Did I drop a spark or did I not?”

Foma Fomitch, indeed, could not himself have said why he asked such a question. But my uncle’s silence and confusion at once spurred him on. He who had been so patient and downtrodden in the past now exploded like gunpowder at the slightest provocation. My uncle’s silence seemed to him insulting, and he now insisted on an answer.

“Answer: is the spark glowing in you or not?”

My uncle hesitated, shrank into himself, and did not know what line to take.

“Allow me to observe that I am waiting,” said Foma in an aggrieved voice.

“Metis, ripondez done, Yegorushka,” put in Madame la Generale, shrugging her shoulders.

“I am asking you, is that spark burning within you or not?” Foma repeated condescendingly, taking a sweetmeat out of a bonbon box, which always stood on a table before him by Madame la Generale’s orders.

“I really don’t know, Foma,” my uncle answered at last with despair in his eyes. “Something of the sort, no doubt. . . . You really had better not ask or I am sure to say something wrong. . . .”

“Oh, very well! So you look upon me as so insignificant as not to deserve an answer — that’s what you meant to say. But so be it; let me be a nonentity.”

“Oh, no, Foma, God bless you! Why, when did I imply that?”

“Yes, that’s just what you did mean to say.”

“I swear I didn’t.”

“Oh, very well, then, I lie. So then you charge me with trying to pick a quarrel on purpose; it’s another insult added to all the past, but I will put up with this, too. ...”

“Mais, mon filsf” cried Madame la Gen£rale in alarm.

“Foma Fomitch! Mamma!” exclaimed my uncle in despair. “Upon my word it’s not my fault. Perhaps I may have let slip such a thing without knowing it. . . . You mustn’t mind me, Foma; I am stupid, you know; I feel I am stupid myself; I feel there is something amiss with me. ... I know, Foma, I know! You need not say anything,” he went on, waving his hand. “I have lived forty years, and until now, until I knew you, I thought I was all right . . . like everyone else. And I didn’t notice before that I was as sinful as a goat, an egoist of the worst description, and I’ve done such a lot of mischief that it is a wonder the world puts up with me.”

“Yes, you certainly are an egoist,” observed Foma, with conviction.

“Well, I realise myself that I am an egoist now! Yes, that’s the end of it! I’ll correct myself and be better!”

“God grant you may!” concluded Foma Fomitch, and sighing piously he got up from his arm-chair to go to his room for an after-dinner nap. Foma Fomitch always dozed after dinner.

To conclude this chapter, may I be allowed to say something about my personal relations with my uncle, and to explain how I came to be face to face with Foma Fomitch, and with no thought or suspicion suddenly found myself in a vortex of the most important incidents that had ever happened in the blessed village of Stepantchikovo? With this I intend to conclude my introduction and to proceed straight with my story.

In my childhood, when I was left an orphan and alone in the world, my uncle took the place of a father to me; educated me at his expense, and did for me more than many a father does for his own child. From the first day he took me into his house I grew warmly attached to him. I was ten years old at the time, and I remember that we got on capitally, and thoroughly understood each other. We spun tops together, and together stole her cap from a very disagreeable old lady, who was a relation of both of us. I promptly tied the cap to the tail of a paper kite and sent it flying to the clouds. Many years afterwards I saw something of my uncle for a short time in Petersburg, where I was finishing my studies at his expense. During that time I became attached to him with all the warmth of youth: something generous, mild, truthful, light-hearted and naive to the utmost degree struck me in his character and attracted everyone. When I left the university I spent some time in Petersburg with nothing to do for the time, and, as is often the case with callow youths, was convinced that in a very short time I should do much that was very interesting and even great. I did not want to

leave Petersburg. I wrote to my uncle at rather rare intervals and only when I wanted money, which he never refused me. Meanwhile, I heard from a house serf of my uncle's, who came to Petersburg on some business or other, that marvellous things were taking place at Stepantchikovo. These first rumours interested and surprised me. I began writing to my uncle more regularly. He always answered me somewhat obscurely and strangely, and in every letter seemed trying to talk of nothing but learned subjects, expressing great expectations of me in the future in a literary and scientific line, and pride in my future achievements. At last, after a rather long silence, I received a surprising letter from him, utterly unlike all his previous letters. It was full of such strange hints, such rambling and contradictory statements that at first I could make nothing of it. All that one could see was that the writer was in great perturbation. One thing was clear in the letter: my uncle gravely, earnestly, almost imploringly urged me as soon as possible to marry his former ward, the daughter of a very poor provincial government clerk, called Yezhevikin. This girl had received an excellent education at a school in Moscow at my uncle's expense, and was now the governess of his children. He wrote tiiat she was unhappy, that I might make her happy, that I should, in fact, be doing a noble action. He appealed to the generosity of my heart, and promised to give her a dowry. Of the dowry, however, he spoke somewhat mysteriously, timidly, and he concluded the letter by beseeching me to keep all this a dead secret. This letter made such an .impression on me that my head began to go round. And, indeed, what raw young man would not have been affected by such a proposition, if only on its romantic side? Besides, I had heard that this young governess was extremely pretty. Yet I did not know what to decide, though I wrote to my uncle that I would set off for Stepantchikovo immediately. My uncle had sent me the money for the journey with the letter. Nevertheless, I lingered another three weeks in Petersburg, hesitating and somewhat uneasy.

All at once I happened to meet an old comrade of my uncle's, who had stayed at Stepantchikovo on his way back from the Caucasus to Petersburg. He was an elderly and judicious person, an inveterate bachelor. He told me with indignation about Foma Fomitch, and thereupon informed me of one circumstance of which I had no idea till then: namely, that Foma Fomitch and Madame la Generate had taken up a notion, and were set upon the idea of marrying my uncle to a very strange lady, not in her first youth and

scarcely more than halfwitted, with an extraordinary history, and almost half a million of dowry; that Madame la Générale had nearly succeeded in convincing this lady that they were relations, and so alluring her into the house; that my uncle, of course, was in despair, but would probably end by marrying the half million of dowry; and that, finally, these two wiseacres, Madame la Générale and Foma Fomitch, were making a terrible onslaught on the poor defenceless governess, and were doing their utmost to turn her out of the house, apparently afraid that my uncle might fall in love with her, or perhaps knowing that he was already in love with her. These last words impressed me. However, to all my further questions as to whether my uncle really was or was not in love with her, my informant either could not or would not give me an exact answer, and indeed he told his whole story briefly, as it were reluctantly, and noticeably avoided detailed explanations. I thought it over; the news was so strangely contradictory of my uncle's letter and his proposition! . . . But it was useless to delay. I decided to go to Stepantchikovo, hoping not only to comfort my uncle and bring him to reason, but even to save him; that is, if possible, to turn Foma out, to prevent the hateful marriage with the old maid, and finally — as I had come to the conclusion that my uncle's love was only a spiteful invention of Foma's — to rejoice the unhappy but of course interesting young lady by the offer of my hand, and so on and so on. By degrees I so worked myself up that, being young and having nothing to do, I passed from hesitation to the opposite extreme; I began burning with the desire to perform all sorts of great and wonderful deeds as quickly as possible. I even fancied that I was displaying extraordinary generosity by nobly sacrificing myself to secure the happiness of a charming and innocent creature; in fact, I remember that I was exceedingly well satisfied with myself during the whole of my journey. It was July, the sun was shining brightly, all around me stretched a vast expanse of fields full of unripe corn. ... I had so long sat bottled up in Petersburg that I felt as though I were only now looking at God's world!

CHAPTER II

MR. BAHTCHEYEV

I WAS approaching my destination. Driving through the little town of B-, from which I had only eight miles farther to Stepantchikovo, I was obliged to stop at the blacksmith's near the town gate, as the tyre of the front wheel of my chaise broke. To repair it in some way well enough to stand the remaining eight miles was a job that should not take very long, and so I made up my mind not to go elsewhere, but to remain at the blacksmith's while he set it right. As I got out of the chaise I saw a stout gentleman who, like me, had been compelled to stop to have his carriage repaired. He had been standing a whole hour in the insufferable heat, shouting and swearing, and with fretful impatience urging on the blacksmiths who were busy about his fine carriage. At first sight this angry gentleman struck me as extremely peevish. He was about five-and-forty, of middle height, very stout, and pockmarked; his stoutness, his double chin and his puffy, pendant cheeks testified to the blissful existence of a landowner. There was something feminine about his whole figure which at once caught the eye. He was dressed in loose, comfortable, neat clothes which were, however, quite unfashionable.

I cannot imagine why he was annoyed with me, since he saw me for the first time in his life, and had not yet spoken a single word to me. I noticed the fact from the extraordinarily furious looks he turned upon me as soon as I got out of the carriage. Yet I felt a great inclination to make his acquaintance. From the chatter of his servants, I gathered that he had just come from Stepantchikovo, from my uncle's, and so it was an opportunity for making full inquiries about many things. I was just taking off my cap and trying as agreeably as possible to observe how unpleasant these delays on the road sometimes were; but the fat gentleman, as it were reluctantly, scanned me from head to boots with a displeased and ill-humoured stare, muttered something to himself and turned heavily his full back view to me. This aspect of his person, however interesting to the observer, held out no hopes of agreeable conversation.

“Grishka! Don’t grumble to yourself! I’ll thrash you! ..,” he shouted suddenly to his valet, as though he had not heard what I said about delays on the journey.

This Grishka was a grey-headed, old-fashioned servant dressed in a long-skirted coat and wearing very long grey whiskers. Judging from certain signs, he too was in a very bad humour, and was grumbling morosely to himself. An explanation immediately followed between the master and the servant.

“You’ll thrash me! Bawl a little louder!” muttered Grishka, as though to himself, but so loudly that everybody heard it; and with indignation he turned away to adjust something in the carriage.

“What? What did you say? ‘Bawl a little louder. . . So you are pleased to be impudent!” shouted the fat man, turning purple.

“What on earth are you nagging at me for? One can’t say a word!”

“Why nag at you? Do you hear that? He grumbles at me and I am not to nag at him!”

“Why, what should I grumble at?”

“What should you grumble at . . . you’re grumbling, right enough! I know what you are grumbling about; my having come away from the dinner — that’s what it is.”

“What’s that to me! You can have no dinner at all for all I care. I am not grumbling at you; I simply said a word to the blacksmiths.”

“The blacksmiths. . . . Why grumble at the blacksmiths?”

“I did not grumble at them, I grumbled at the carriage.”

“And why grumble at the carriage?”

“What did it break down for? It mustn’t do it again.”

“The carriage. ... No, you are grumbling at me, and not at the carriage. It’s his own fault and he swears at other people!”

“Why on earth do you keep on at me, sir? Leave off, please!”

“Why have you been sitting like an owl all the way, not saying a word to me, eh? You are ready enough to talk at other times!”

“A fly was buzzing round my mouth, that’s why I didn’t talk and sat like an owl. Why, am I to tell you fairy tales, or what? Take Malanya the storyteller with you if you are fond of fairy tales.”

The fat man opened his mouth to reply, but apparently could think of nothing and held his peace. The servant, proud of his skill in argument and

his influence over his master displayed before witnesses, turned to the workmen with redoubled dignity and began showing them something.

My efforts to make acquaintance were fruitless, and my own awkwardness did not help matters. I was assisted, however, by an unexpected incident. A sleepy, unwashed and unkempt countenance suddenly peeped out of the window of a closed carriage which had stood from time immemorial without wheels in the blacksmith's yard, daily though vainly expecting to be repaired. At the appearance of this countenance there was a general outburst of laughter from the workmen. The joke was that the man peeping out of the dismantled carriage was locked in and could not get out. Having fallen asleep in it drunk, he was now vainly begging for freedom; at last he began begging someone to run for his tool. All this immensely entertained the spectators.

There are persons who derive peculiar delight and entertainment from strange things. The antics of a drunken peasant, a man stumbling and falling down in the street, a wrangle between two women and other such incidents arouse at times in some people the most good-humoured and unaccountable delight. The fat gentleman belonged precisely to that class. Little by little his countenance from being sullen and menacing began to look pleased and good-humoured, and at last brightened up completely.

"Why, that's Vassilyev, isn't it?" he asked with interest. "How did he get here?"

"Yes, it is Vassilyev, sir!" was shouted on all sides.

"He's been on the spree, sir," added one of the workmen, a tall, lean, elderly man with a pedantically severe expression "of face, who seemed disposed to take the lead; "he's been on the spree, sir. It's three days since he left his master, and he's lying hidden here; he's come and planted himself upon us! Here he is asking for a chisel. Why, what do you want a chisel for now, you addle-pate? He wants to pawn his last tool."

"Ech, Arhipushka! Money's like a bird, it flies up and flies away again! Let me out, for God's sake," Vassilyev entreated in a thin cracked voice, poking his head out of the carriage.

"You stay where you are, you idol; you are lucky to be there!" Arhip answered sternly. "You have been drunk since the day before yesterday; you were hauled out of the street at daybreak this morning. You must thank God we hid you, we told Matvey Ilyitch that you were ill, that you had a convenient attack of colic."

There was a second burst of laughter.

“But where is the chisel?”

“Why, our Zuey has got it! How he keeps on about it! A drinking man, if ever there was one, Stepan Alexyevitch.”

“He-he-he! Ah, the scoundrel! So that’s how you work in the town; you pawn your tools!” wheezed the fat man, spluttering with glee, quite pleased and suddenly becoming extraordinarily good-humoured. “And yet it would be hard to find such a carpenter even in Moscow, but this is how he always recommends himself, the ruffian,” he added, quite unexpectedly turning to me. “Let him out, Arhip, perhaps he wants something.”

The gentleman was obeyed. The nail with which they had fastened up the carriage door, chiefly in order to amuse themselves at Vassilyev’s expense when he should wake up, was taken out, and Vassilyev made his appearance in the light of day, muddy, dishevelled and ragged. He blinked at the sunshine, sneezed and gave a lurch; and then putting up his hand to screen his eyes, he looked round.

“What a lot of people, what a lot of people,” he said, shaking his head, “and all, seemingly, so . . . ober/’ he drawled, with a sort of mournful pensiveness as though reproaching himself. “Well, good-morning, brothers, good-day.”

Again there was a burst of laughter.

“Good-morning! Why, sec how much of the day is gone, you heedless fellow!”

“Go it, old man!”

“As we say, have your fling, if it don’t last long.”

“He-he-he! he has a ready tongue!” cried the fat man, roiling with laughter and again glancing genially at me. “Aren’t you ashamed, Vassilyev?”

“It’s sorrow drives me to it! Stepan Alexyevitch, sir, it’s sorrow,” Vassilyev answered gravely, with a wave of his hand, evidently glad of another opportunity to mention his sorrow.

“What sorrow, you booby?”

“A trouble such as was never heard of before. We are being made over to Foma Fomitch.”

“Whom? When?” cried the fat man, all of a flutter.

I, too, took a step forward; quite unexpectedly, the question concerned me too.

“Why, all the people of Kapitonovko. Our master, the colonel — God give him health — wants to give up all our Kapitonovko, his property, to Foma Fomitch. Full seventy souls he is handing over to him. ‘It’s for you, Foma,’ says he. ‘Here, now, you’ve nothing of your own, one may say; you are not much of a landowner; all you have to keep you are two smelts in Lake Ladoga — that’s all the serfs your father left you. For your parent,’ “ Vassilyev went on, with a sort of spiteful satisfaction, putting touches of venom into his story in all that related to Foma Fomitch—” ‘for your parent was a gentleman of ancient lineage, though from no one knows where, and no one knows who he was; he too, like you, lived with the gentry, was allowed to be in the kitchen as a charity. But now when I make over Kapitonovko to you, you will be a landowner too, and a gentleman of ancient lineage, and will have serfs of your own. You can lie on the stove and be idle as a gentle-„„„ * >>

man. . . .

But Stepan Alexyevitch was no longer listening. The effect produced on him by Vassilyev’s half-drunken story was extraordinary. The fat man was so angry that he turned positively purple; his double chin was quivering, his little eyes grew bloodshot. I thought he would have a stroke on the spot.

“That’s the last straw!” he said, gasping. “That low brute, Foma, the parasite, a landowner! Tfoo! Go to perdition! Damn it all! Hey, you make haste and finish! Home!”

“Allow me to ask you,” I said, stepping forward uncertainly, “you were pleased to mention the name of Foma Fomitch just now; I believe his surname, if I am not mistaken, is Opiskin. Well, you see, I should like ... in short, I have a special reason for being interested in that personage, and I should be very glad to know, on my own account, how far one may believe the words of this good man that his master, Yegor Ilyitch Rostanev, means to make Foma Fomitch a present of one of his villages. That interests me extremely, and I . . .”

“Allow me to ask you,” the fat man broke in, “on what grounds are you interested in that personage, as you style him; though to my mind ‘that damned low brute’ is what he ought to be called, and not a personage. A fine sort of personage, the scurvy knave! He’s a simple disgrace, not a personage!”

I explained that so far I was in complete ignorance in regard to this person, but that Yegor Ilyitch Rostanev was my uncle, and that I myself was

Sergey Alexandrovitch So-and-so.

“The learned gentleman? My dear fellow! they are expecting you impatiently,” cried the fat man, genuinely delighted. “Why, I have just come from them myself, from Stepantchikovo; I went away from dinner, I got up from the pudding, I couldn’t sit it out with Foma! I quarrelled with them all there on account of that damned Foma. . . . Here’s a meeting! You must excuse me, my dear fellow. I am Stepan Alexyevitch Bahtcheyev, and I remember you that high. . . . Well, who would have thought it! ... But allow me.”

And the fat man advanced to kiss me.

After the first minutes of excitement, I at once proceeded to question him: the opportunity was an excellent one.

“But who is this Foma?” I asked. “How is it he has gained the upper hand of the whole house? Why don’t they kick him out of the yard? I must confess ...”

“Kick him out? You must be mad. Why, Yegor Ilyitch tiptoes before him! Why, once Foma laid it down that Thursday was Wednesday, and so everyone in the house counted Thursday Wednesday. ‘I won’t have it Thursday, let it be Wednesday!’ So there were two Wednesdays in one week. Do you suppose I am making it up? I am not exaggerating the least little bit. Why, my dear fellow, it’s simply beyond all belief.”

“I have heard that, but I must confess ...”

“I confess and I confess! The way the man keeps on! What is there to confess? No, you had better ask me what sort of jungle I have come out of. The mother of Yegor Ilyitch, I mean of the colonel, though a very worthy lady and a general’s widow too, in my opinion is in her dotage; why, that damned Foma is the very apple of her eye. She is the cause of it all; it was she brought him into the house. He has talked her silly, she hasn’t a word to say for herself now, though she is called her Excellency — she skipped into marriage with General Krahotkin at fifty! As for Yegor Ilyitch’s sister, Praskovya Ilyinitchna, who is an old maid of forty, I don’t care to speak of her. It’s oh dear, and oh my, and cackling like a hen. I am sick of her — bless her! The only thing about her is that she is of the female sex; and so I must respect her for no cause or reason, simply because she is of the female sex! Tfool It’s not the thing for me to speak of her, she’s your aunt. Alexandra Yegorovna, the colonel’s daughter, though she is only a little girl — just in her sixteenth year — to my thinking is the cleverest of the lot; she

doesn’t respect Foma; it was fun to see her. A sweef young lady, and that’s the fact! And why should she respect him? Why, Foma was a buffoon waiting on the late General Krahotkin. Why, he used to imitate all sorts of beasts to entertain the general! And it seems that in old days Jack was the man; but nowadays Jack is the master, and now the colonel, your uncle, treats this retired buffoon as though he were his own father. He has set him up in a frame, the rascal, and bows down at the feet of the man who is sponging upon him. Tfoo!”

“Poverty is not a vice, however . . . and I must confess . . . allow me to ask you, is he handsome, clever?”

“Foma? A perfect picture!” answered Bahtcheyev, with an extraordinary quiver of spite in his voice. (My questions seemed to irritate him, and he began to look at me suspiciously.) “A perfect picture! Do you hear, good people: he makes him out a beauty! Why, he is like a lot of brute beasts in one, if you want to know the whole truth, my good man. Though that wouldn’t matter if he had wit; if only he had wit, the rogue — why, then I would be ready to do violence to my feelings and agree, maybe, for the sake of wit; but, you see, there’s no trace of wit about him whatever! He has cast a spell on them all; he is a regular alchemist! Tfoo! I am tired of talking. One ought to curse them and say no more about it. You have upset me with your talk, my good sir! Hey, you! Are you ready or not?”

“Raven still wants shoeing,” Grishka answered gloomily.

“Raven. I’ll let you have a raven! . . > Yes, sir, I could tell you a story that would simply make you gape with wonder, so that you would stay with your mouth open till the Second Coming. Why, I used to feel a respect for him myself. Would you believe it? I confess it with shame, I frankly confess it, I was a fool. Why, he took me in too. He’s a know-all. He knows the ins and outs of everything, he’s studied all the sciences. He gave me some drops; you see, my good sir, I am a sick man, a poor creature. You may not believe it, but I am an invalid. And those drops of his almost turned me inside out. You just keep quiet and listen; go yourself and you will be amazed. Why, he will make the colonel shed tears of blood; the colonel will shed tears of blood through him, but then it will be too late. You know, the whole neighbourhood all around has dropped his acquaintance owing to this accursed Foma. No one can come to the place without being insulted by him. I don’t count; even officials of high rank he doesn’t spare. He lectures every one. He sets up for a teacher of morality, the scoundrel. ‘I am a wise

man,’ says he; ‘I am cleverer than all of you, you must listen to no one but me, I am a learned man.’ Well, what of it? Because he is learned, must he persecute people who are not? . . . And when he begins in his learned language, he goes hammering on ta-ta-ta! Ta-ta-ta! I’ll tell you his tongue is such a one to wag that if you cut it off and throw it on the dungheap it will go on wagging there till a crow picks it up. He is as conceited and puffed out as a mouse in a sack of grain. He is trying to climb so high that he will overreach himself. Why, here, for instance, he has j taken it into his head to teach the house serfs French. You can believe it or not, as you like. It will be a benefit to him, he says. To a lout, to a servant! Tfoo! A shameless fellow, damn him, that is what he is. What does a clodhopper want ‘ with French, I ask you? And indeed what do the likes of us want with French? For gallivanting with young ladies in the mazurka or dancing attendance on other men’s wives? Profligacy, that’s what it is, I tell you! But to my thinking, when one has drunk a bottle of vodka one can talk in any language. So that is all the respect I have for your French language! I dare say you can chatter away in French: Ta-ta-ta, the tabby has married the torn,” Bahtcheyev said, looking at me in scornful indignation. “Are you a learned man, my good sir — eh? Have you gone in for some learned line?”

“Well ... I am somewhat interested ...”

“I suppose you have studied all the sciences, too?”

“Quite so, that is, no ... I must own I am more interested now in observing ... I have been staying in Petersburg, but now I am hurrying to my uncle’s.”

“And who is the attraction at your uncle’s? You had better have stayed where you were, since you had somewhere to stay. No, my good sir, I can tell you, you won’t make much way by being learned, and no uncle will be of any use to you; you’ll get caught in a trap! Why, I got quite thin, staying twenty-four hours with them. Would you believe that I got thin, staying with them? No, I see you don’t believe it. Oh, well, you needn’t believe it if you don’t want to, bless you.”

“No, really I quite believe it, only I still don’t understand,” I answered, more and more bewildered.

“I believe it, but I don’t believe you! You learned gentlemen are all fond of cutting capers! All you care about is hopping about on one leg and showing off! I am not fond of learned people, my good sir; they give me the spleen! I have come across your Petersburgers — a worthless lot! They are

all Freemasons; they spread infidelity in all directions; they are afraid of a drop of vodka, as though it would bite them — Tfoo! You have put me out of temper, sir, and I don't want to tell you anything! After all, I have not been engaged to tell you stories, and I am tired of talking. One doesn't pitch into everybody, sir, and indeed it's a sin to do it. . . . Only your learned gentleman at your uncle's has driven the footman Vidoplyasov almost out of his wits. Vidoplyasov has gone crazy all through Foma Fomitch. . .

"As for that fellow Vidoplyasov," put in Grishka, who had till then been following the conversation with severe decorum, "I'd give him a flogging. If I came across him, I'd thrash the German nonsense out of him. I'd give him more than you could get into two hundred."

"Be quiet!" shouted his master. "Hold your tongue; no one's talking to you."

"Vidoplyasov," I said, utterly nonplussed and not knowing what to say. "Vidoplyasov, what a queer name!"

"Why is it queer? There you are again. Ugh, you learned gentlemen, you learned gentlemen!"

I lost patience.

"Excuse me," I said, "but why are you so cross with me? What have I done? I must own I have been listening to you for half an hour, and I still don't know what it is all about. ..."

"What are you offended about, sir?" answered the fat man. "There is no need for you to take offence! I am speaking to you for your good. You mustn't mind my being such a grumbler and shouting at my servant just now. Though he is the most natural rascal, my Grishka, I like him for it, the scoundrel. A feeling heart has been the ruin of me — I tell you frankly; and Foma is to blame for it all. He'll be the ruin of me, I'll take my oath of that. Here, thanks to him, I have been baking in the sun for two hours. I should have liked to have gone to the priest's while these fools were dawdling about over their job. The priest here is a very nice fellow. But he has so upset me, Foma has, that it has even put me off seeing the priest. What a set they all are! There isn't a decent tavern here. I tell you they are all scoundrels, every one of them. And it would be a different thing if he were some great man in the service," Bahtcheyev went on, going back again to Foma Fomitch, whom he seemed unable to shake off, "it would be pardonable perhaps for a man of rank; but as it is he has no rank at all; I know for a fact that he hasn't. He says he has suffered in the cause of justice

in the year forty something that never was, so we have to bow down to him for that! If the least thing is not to his liking — up he jumps and begins squealing: ‘They are insulting me, they are insulting my poverty, they have no respect for me.’ You daren’t sit down to table without Foma, and yet he keeps them waiting. ‘I have been slighted,’ he’d say; ‘I am a poor wanderer, black bread is good enough for me.’ As soon as they sit down he turns up, our fiddle strikes up again, ‘Why did you sit down to table without me? So no respect is shown me in anything.’ In fact your soul is not your own. I held my peace for a long time, sir, he imagined that I was going to fawn upon him, like a lapdog on its hind legs begging; ‘Here, boy, here’s a bit, eat it up.’ No, my lad, you run in the shafts, while I sit in the cart. I served in the same regiment with Yegor Ilyitch, you know; I took my discharge with the rank of a Junker, while he came to his estate last year, a retired colonel. I said to him, ‘Ale, you will be your own undoing, don’t be too soft with Foma! You’ll regret it.”No,’ he would say, ‘he is a most excellent person’ (meaning Foma), ‘he is a friend to me; he is teaching me a higher standard of life.’ Well, thought I, there is no fighting against a higher standard; if he has set out to teach a higher standard of life, then it is all up. What do you suppose he made a to-do about to-day? To-morrow is the day of Elijah the Prophet” (Mr. Bahtcheyev crossed himself), “the patron saint of your uncle’s son Ilyusha. I was thinking to spend the day with them and to dine there, and had ordered a plaything from Petersburg, a German on springs, kissing the hand of his betrothed, while she wiped away a tear with her handkerchief — a magnificent thing! (I shan’t give it now, no, thank you; it’s lying there in my carriage and the German’s nose is smashed off; I am taking it back.) Yegor Ilyitch himself would not have been disinclined to enjoy himself and be festive on such a day, but Foma won’t have it. As much as to say: ‘Why are you beginning to make such a fuss over Ilyusha? So now you are taking no notice of me.’ Eh? What dp you say to a goose like that? He is jealous of a boy of eight over his nameday! ‘Look here,’ he says, ‘it is my nameday too.’ But you know it will be St. Ilya’s, not St. Foma’s. ‘No,’ he says, ‘that is my nameday too!’ I looked on and put up with it. And what do you think? Now they are walking about on tiptoe, whispering, uncertain what to do — to reckon Ilya’s day as the nameday or not, to congratulate him or not. If they don’t congratulate him he may be offended, if they do he may take it for scoffing. Tfoo, what a plague! We sat down to dinner. . . . But are you listening, my good sir?”

“Most certainly I am; I am listening with peculiar gratification, in fact, because through you I have now learned . . . and ... I must say ...”

“To be sure, with peculiar gratification! I know your peculiar gratification. . . . You are not jeering at me, talking about your gratification?”

“Upon my word, how could I be jeering? On the contrary. And indeed you express yourself with such originality that I am tempted to note down your words.”

“What’s that, sir, noting down?” asked Mr. Bahtcheyev, looking at me with suspicion and speaking with some alarm.

“Though perhaps I shall not note them down. . . . I didn’t mean anything.”

“No doubt you are trying to flatter me?”

“Flatter you, what do you mean?” I asked with surprise.

“Why, yes. Here you are flattering me now; I am telling you everything like a fool, and later on you will go and write a sketch of me somewhere.”

I made haste at once to assure Mr. Bahtcheyev that I was not that sort of person, but he still looked at me suspiciously.

“Not that sort of person! Who can tell what you are? Perhaps better still. Foma there threatened to write an account of me and to send it to be published.”

“Allow me to ask,” I interrupted, partly from a desire to change the conversation. “Is it true that my uncle wants to get married?”

“What if he does? That would not matter. Get married if you have a mind to, that’s no harm; but something else is,” added Mr. Bahtcheyev meditatively. “H’ml that question, my good sir, I cannot answer fully. There are a lot of females mixed up in the business now, like flies in jam; and you know there is no making out which wants to be married. And as a friend I don’t mind telling you, sir, I don’t like woman! It’s only talk that she is a human being, but in reality she is simply a disgrace and a danger to the soul’s salvation. But that your uncle is in love like a Siberian cat, that I can tell you for a fact. I’ll say no more about that now, sir, you will see for yourself; but what’s bad is that the business drags on. If you are going to get married, get married; but he is afraid to tell Foma and afraid to tell the old lady, she will be squealing all over the place and begin kicking up a rumpus. She takes Foma’s part: ‘Foma Fomitch will be hurt,’ she’d say, ‘if a new mistress comes into the house, for then he won’t be able to stay two hours

in it.’ The bride will chuck him out by the scruff of his neck, if she is not a fool, and in one way or another will make such an upset that he won’t be able to find a place anywhere in the neighbourhood. So now he is at his pranks, and he and the mamma are trying to foist a queer sort of bride on him. . . . But why did you interrupt me, sir? I wanted to tell you what was most important, and you interrupted me! I am older than you are, and it is not the right thing to interrupt an old man.”

I apologised.

“You needn’t apologise! I wanted to put before you, as a learned man, how he insulted me to-day. Come, tell me what you think of it, if you are a good-hearted man. We sat down to dinner; well, he fairly bit my head off at dinner, I can tell you! I saw from the very beginning; he sat there as cross as, two sticks, as though nothing were to his liking. He’d have been glad to drown me in a spoonful of water, the viper! He is a man of such vanity that his skin’s not big enough for him. So he took it into his head to pick a quarrel with me, to teach me a higher standard. Asked me to tell him why I was so fat! The man kept pestering me, why was I fat and not thin? What do you think of that question? Tell me, my good sir. Do you see anything witty in it? I answered him very reasonably: ‘That’s as God has ordained, Foma Fomitch. One man’s fat and one man’s thin; and no mortal can go against the decrees of Divine Providence.’ That was sensible, wasn’t it? What do you say? ‘No,’ said he; ‘you have five hundred serfs, you live at your ease and do nothing for your country; you ought to be in the service, but you sit at home and play your concertina’ — and it is true when I am depressed I am fond of playing on the concertina. I answered very reasonably again: ‘How should I go into the service, Foma Fomitch? What uniform could I pinch my corpulence into? If I pinched myself in and put on a uniform, and sneezed unwarily — all the buttons would fly off, and what’s more, maybe before my superiors, and, God forbid! they might take it for a practical joke, and what then?’ Well, tell me, what was there funny in that? But there, there was such a roar at my expense, such a ha-ha-ha and he-he-he. . . . The fact is he has no sense of decency, I tell you, and he even thought fit to slander me in the French dialect: ‘cochon/ he called me. Well I know what cochon means. ‘Ah, you damned philosopher,’ I thought. ‘Do you suppose I’m going to give in to you?’ I bore it as long as I could, but I couldn’t stand it. I got up from the table, and before all the honourable company I blurted out in his face: ‘I have done you an injustice, Foma Fomitch, my kind

benefactor.’ I said, ‘I thought that you were a well-bred man, and you turn out to be just as great a hog as any one of us.’ I said that and I left the table, left the pudding — they were just handing the pudding round. ‘Bother you ana your pudding!’ I thought. ...”

“Excuse me,” I said, listening to Mr. Bahtcheyev’s whole story; “I am ready, of course, to agree with you completely. The point is, that so far I know nothing positive. . . . But I have got ideas of my own on the subject, you see.”

“What ideas, my good sir?” Mr. Bahtcheyev asked mistrustfully.

“You see,” I began, hesitating a little, “it is perhaps not the moment, but I am ready to tell it. This is what I think: perhaps we are both mistaken about Foma Fomitch, perhaps under these oddities lies hidden a peculiar, perhaps a gifted nature, who knows? Perhaps it is a nature that has been wounded, crushed by sufferings, avenging itself, so to speak, on all humanity. I have heard that in the past he was something like a buffoon; perhaps that humiliated him, mortified him, overwhelmed him. ... Do you understand: a man of noble nature . . . perception . . . and to play the part of a buffoon! . . . And so he has become mistrustful of all mankind and . . . and perhaps if he could be reconciled to humanity . . . that is, to his fellows, perhaps he would turn out a rare nature, perhaps even a very remarkable one and . . . and . . . you know there must be something in the man. There is a reason, of course, for everyone doing homage to him.”

I was conscious myself that I was maundering horribly. I might have been forgiven in consideration of my youth. But Mr. Bahtcheyev did not forgive me. He looked gravely and sternly into my face and suddenly turned crimson as a turkey cock.

“Do you mean that Foma’s a remarkable man?” he asked abruptly.

“Listen, I scarcely myself believe a word of what I said just now. It was merely by way of a guess. ...”

“Allow me, sir, to be so inquisitive as to ask: have you studied philosophy?”

“In what sense?” I asked in perplexity.

“No, in no particular sense; you answer me straight out, apart from any sense, sir: have you studied philosophy or not?”

“I must own I am intending to study it, but ...”

“There it is!” shouted Mr. Bahtcheyev, giving full rein to his indignation. “Before you opened your mouth, sir, I guessed that you were a philosopher!

There is no deceiving me! No, thank you! I can scent out a philosopher two miles off! You can go and kiss your Foma Fomitch. A remarkable man, indeed! Tfoo! confound it all! I thought you" were a man of good intentions too, while you . . . Here!" he shouted to the coachman, who had already clambered on the box of the carriage, which by now had been put in order. "Home!"

With difficulty I succceded somehow in soothing him; somehow or other he was mollified at last; but it was a long time before he could bring himself to lay aside his wrath and look on me with favour. Meantime he got into the carriage, assisted by Grishka and Arhip, the man who had reproved Vassilyev.

"Allow me to ask you," I said, going up to the carriage. "Are you never coming again to my uncle's?"

"To your uncle's? Curse the fellow who has told you that! Do you think that I am a consistent man, that I shall keep it up? That's just my trouble, that I am not a man, but a rag.

Before a week's past, I shall fly round there again. And why? There it is, I don't know myself why, but I shall go; I shall fight with Foma again. That's just my trouble, sir! The Lord has sent that Foma to chastise me for my sins. I have as much will as an old woman, there is no consistency in me, I am a first-class coward, my good sir. ..."

We parted friends, however; he even invited me to dine with him.

"You come, sir, you come, we will dine together; I have got some vodka brought on foot from Kiev, and my cook has been in Paris. He serves such fricassees, he makes such pasties, that you can only lick your fingers and bow down to him, the rascal. A man of culture! Only it is a long time since I thrashed him, he is getting spoilt with me. ... It is a good thing you reminded me. ... Do come. I'd invite you to come to-day, only somehow I am out of sorts, down in the mouth — in fact, quite knocked up. I am a sick man, you know, a poor creature. Maybe you won't believe it. . . . Well, good-bye, sir, it is time for me to set sail. And your little trap yonder is ready. And tell Foma he had better not come across me; I should give him such a sentimental greeting that he . . ."

But his last words were out of hearing; the carriage, drawn by four strong horses, vanished in clouds of dust. My chaise too was ready; I got into it and we at once drove through the little town. "Of course this gentleman is exaggerating," I thought; "he is too angry and cannot be

impartial. But, again, all that he said about uncle was very remarkable. So that makes two people in the same story, that uncle is in love with that young lady. . . . H’m! Shall I get married or not?” This time I meditated in earnest.

CHAPTER III

MY TNCLE

I MUST own I was actually a little daunted. My romantic dreams suddenly seemed to me extremely queer, even rather stupid as soon as I reached Stepantchikovo. That was about five o'clock in the afternoon. The road ran by the manor house. I saw again after long absence the immense garden in which some happy days of my childhood had been passed, and which I had often seen afterwards in my dreams, in the dormi-

tones of the various schools which undertook my education. I jumped out of the carriage and walked across the garden to the hause. I very much wanted to arrive unannounced, to inquire for my uncle, to fetch him out and to talk to him first of all. And so I did. Passing down the avenue of lime trees hundreds of years old, I went up on to the veranda, from which one passed by a glass door into the inner rooms. The veranda was surrounded by flower-beds and adorned with pots of expensive flowers. Here I met one of the natives, old Gavrila, who had at one time looked after me and was now the honoured valet of my uncle. The old fellow was wearing spectacles, and was holding in his hand a manuscript book which he was reading with great attention. I had seen him three years before in Petersburg, where he had come with my uncle, and so he recognised me at once. With exclamations of joy he fell to kissing my hand, and as he did so the spectacles fell off his nose on to the floor. Such devotion on the part of the old man touched me very much. But disturbed by my recent conversation with Mr. Bahtcheyev, I looked first at the suspicious manuscript book which had been in Gavrila's hands.

"What's this, Gavrila? Surely they have not begun teaching you French too?" I asked the old man.

"They are teaching me in my old age, like a starling, sir," Gavrila answered mournfully.

"Does Foma himself teach you?"

"Yes, sir; a very clever man he must be."

"Not a doubt that he is clever! Does he teach you by conversations?"

“By a copy-book, sir.”

“Is that what you have in your hands? Ah! French words in Russian letters, a sharp dodge! You give in to such a blockhead, such an arrant fool, aren’t you ashamed, Gavrila?” I cried, instantly forgetting my lofty theories about Foma Fomitch for which I had caught it so hotly from Mr. Bahtcheyev.

“How can he be a fool, sir?” answered the old man, “if he manages our betters as he does.”

“H’m, perhaps you are right, Gavrila,” I muttered, pulled up by this remark. “Take me to my uncle.”

“My falcon! But I can’t show myself, I dare not, I have begun to be afraid even of him. I sit here in my misery and step behind the flower-beds when he is pleased to come out.”

“But why are you afraid?”

“I didn’t know my lesson this morning, Foma Fomitch made me go down on my knees, but I didn’t stay on my knees. I am too old, Sergey Alexandrovitch, for them to play such tricks with me. The master was pleased to be vexed at my disobeying Foma Fomitch, ‘he takes trouble about your education, old grey-beard,’ said he; ‘he wants to teach you the pronunciation.’ So here I am walking to and fro repeating the vocabulary. Foma Fomitch promised to examine me again this evening.”

It seemed to me that there was something obscure about this.

“There must be something connected with French,” I thought, “which the old man cannot explain.”

“One question, Gavrila: what sort of man is he? Good-looking, tall?”

“Foma Fomitch? No, sir, he’s an ugly little scrub of a man.”

“H’m! Wait a bit, Gavrila, perhaps it can be all set right; in fact I can promise you it certainly will be set right. But . . . where is my uncle?”

“He is behind the stables seeing some peasants. The old men have come from Kapitonovko to pay their respects to him. They had heard that they were being made over to Foma Fomitch. They want to beg not to be.”

“But why behind the stables?”

“They are frightened, sir. ...”

I did, in fact, find my uncle behind the stables. There he was, standing before a group of peasants who were bowing down to the ground and earnestly entreating him. Uncle was explaining something to them with

warmth. I went up and called to him. He turned round and we rushed into each other’s arms.

He was extremely glad to see me; his delight was almost ecstatic. He hugged me, pressed my hands, as though his own son had returned to him after escaping some mortal danger, as though by my arrival I had rescued him from some mortal danger and brought with me the solution of all his perplexities, as well as joy and lifelong happiness for him and all whom he loved. Uncle would not have consented to be happy alone. After the first outburst of delight, he got into such a fuss that at last he was quite flustered and bewildered. He showered questions upon me, wanted to take me at once to see his family. We were just going, but my uncle turned back, wishing to present me first to the peasants of Kapitonovko. Then, I remember, he suddenly began talking, apropos of I don’t know what, of some Mr. Korovkin, a remarkable man whom he had met three days before, on the high road, and whom he was very impatiently expecting to pay him a visit. Then he dropped Mr. Korovkin too and spoke of something else. I looked at him with enjoyment. Answering his hurried questions, I told him that I did not want to go into the service, but to continue my studies. As soon as the subject of study was broached, my uncle at once knitted his brows and assumed an extraordinarily solemn air. Learning that of late I had been engaged on mineralogy, he raised his head and looked about him proudly, as though he had himself, alone and unaided, discovered the whole of that science and written all that was published about it. I have mentioned already that he cherished the most disinterested reverence for the word “science”, the more disinterested that he himself had no scientific knowledge whatever.

“Ah, my boy, there are people in the world who know everything,” he said to me once, his eyes sparkling with enthusiasm. “One sits among them, listens, and one knows one understands nothing of it all, and yet one loves it. And why? Because it is in the cause of reform, of enlightenment, of the general welfare! That I do understand. Here I now travel by train, and my Ilyusha, perhaps, may fly through the air. . . . And then trade, manufactures — those channels, so to say . . . that is, I mean, turn it which way you will, it’s of service. . . . It is of service, isn’t it?”

But to return to our meeting.

“But wait a bit, wait a bit, my dear,” lie began, speaking rapidly and rubbing his hands, “you will see a man! A rare man, I tell you, a learned

man, a man of science; ‘he will survive his century.’ It’s a good saying, isn’t it, ‘will survive his century’? Foma explained it to me. . . . Wait a little, I will introduce you to him.”

“Are you speaking of Foma Fomitch, uncle?”

“No, no, my dear, I was speaking of Korovkin, though Foma too, he too . . . but I am simply talking of Korovkin just now,” he added, for some unknown reason turning crimson, and seeming embarrassed as soon as Foma’s name was mentioned.

“What sciences is he studying, uncle?”

“Science, my boy, science, science in general. I can’t tell you which exactly, I only know that it is science. How he speaks about railways! And, you know,” my uncle added in a half whisper, screwing up his right eye significantly, “just a little of the free-thinker. I noticed it, especially when he was speaking of marriage and the family . . . it’s a pity I did not understand much of it myself (there was no time), I would have told you all about it in detail. And he is a man of the noblest qualities, too! I have invited him to visit me. I am expecting him from hour to hour.”

Meanwhile the peasants were gazing at me with round eyes and open mouths as though at some marvel.

“Listen, uncle,” I interrupted him; “I believe I am hindering the peasants. No doubt they have come about something urgent. What do they want? I must own I suspect something, and I should be very glad to hear. ...”

Uncle suddenly seemed nervous and flustered.

“Oh, yes! I had forgotten. Here, you see . . . what is one to do with them? They have got a notion — and I should very much like to know who first started it — they have got a notion, that I am giving them away together with the whole of Kapitonovko — do you remember Kapitonovko? We used to drive out there in the evenings with dear Katya — the whole of Kapitonovko with the sixty-eight souls in it to Foma Fomitch. ‘Wo don’t want to leave you,’ they say, and that is all about it.”

“So it is not true, uncle, you are not giving him Kapitonovko,” I cried, almost rapturously.

“I never thought of it, it never entered my head! And from whom did you hear it? Once one drops a word, it is all over the place, And why do they so dislike Foma? Wait a little, Sergey, I will introduce you to him,” he added, glancing at me timidly, as though he were aware in me, too, of hostility towards Foma Fomitch. “He is a wonderful man, my boy.”

“We want no one but you, no one!” the peasants suddenly wailed in chorus. “You are our father, we are your children!”

“Listen, uncle,” I said. “I have not seen Foma Fomitch yet, but . . . you see ... I have heard something. I must confess that I met Mr. Bahtcheyev to-day. However, I have my own idea on that subject. Anyway, uncle, finish with the peasants and let them go, and let us talk by ourselves without witnesses. I must own, that’s what I have come for. ...”

“To be sure, to be sure,” my uncle assented; “to be sure. We’ll dismiss the peasants and then we can have a talk, you know, a friendly, affectionate, thorough talk. Come,” he went on, speaking rapidly and addressing the peasants, “you can go now, my friends. And for the future come to me whenever there is need; straight to me, and come at any time.”

“You are our father, we are your children! Do not give us to Foma Fomitch for our undoing! All we, poor people, are beseeching you!” the peasants shouted once more.

“See what fools! But I am not giving you away, I tell you.”

“Or he’ll never leave off teaching us, your honour. He does nothing but teach the fellows here, so they say.”

“Why, you don’t mean to say he is teaching you French?” I cried, almost in alarm.

“No, sir, so far God has had mercy on us!” answered one of the peasants, probably a great talker, a red-haired man with a huge bald patch on the back of his head, with a long, scanty, wedge-shaped beard, which moved as he talked as though it were a separate individual. “No, sir, so far God has had mercy on us.”

“But what does he teach you?”

“Well, your honour, what he teaches us, in a manner of speaking, is buying a gold casket to keep a brass farthing in.”

“How do you mean, a brass farthing?”

“Seryozha, you are mistaken, it’s a slander!” cried my uncle, turning crimson and looking terribly embarrassed. “The fools have misunderstood what was said to them. He merely . . . there was nothing about a brass farthing. There is no need for you to understand everything, and shout at the top of your voice,” my uncle continued, addressing the peasant reproachfully. “One wants to do you good and you don’t understand, and make an uproar!”

“Upon my word, uncle, teaching them French?”

“That’s for the sake of pronunciation, Seryozha, simply for the pronunciation,” said my uncle in an imploring voice. “He said himself that it was for the sake of the pronunciation. . . . Besides, something special happened in connection with this, which you know nothing about and so you cannot judge. You must investigate first and then blame. ... It is easy to find fault!”

“But what are you about?” I shouted, turning impetuously to the peasants again. “You ought to speak straight out. You should say, This won’t do, Foma Fomitch, this is how it ought to be!’ You have got a tongue, haven’t you?”

“Where is the mouse who will bell the cat, your honour? ‘I am teaching you, clodhoppers, cleanliness and order,’ he says. ‘Why is your shirt not clean?’ Why, one is always in a sweat, that’s why it isn’t clean! One can’t change every day. Cleanliness won’t save you and dirt won’t kill you.”

“And look here, the other day he came to the threshing floor,” began another peasant, a tall lean fellow all in patches and wearing wretched bark shoes, apparently one of those men who are always discontented about something and always have some vicious venomous word ready in reserve. Till then he had been hidden behind the backs of the other peasants, had been listening in gloomy silence, and had kept all the time on his face an ambiguous, bitterly subtle smile. “He came to the threshing floor. ‘Do you know, he said, ‘how many miles it is to the sun?”Why, who can tell? Such learning is not for us but for the gentry.”No, says he; ‘you are a fool, a lout, you don’t understand what is good for you; but I,’ said he, ‘am an astronomer! I know all God’s planets.’”

“Well, and did he tell you how many miles it is to the sun?” my uncle put in, suddenly reviving and winking gaily at me, as though to say, “See what’s coming!”

“Yes, he did tell us how many,” the peasant answered reluctantly, not expecting such a question.

“Well, how many did he say, how many exactly?”

“Your honour must know best, we live in darkness.”

“Oh, I know, my boy, but do you remember?”

“Why, he said it would be so many hundreds or thousands, it was a big number, he said. More than you could carry in three cartloads.”

“Try and remember, brother! I dare say you thought it would be about a mile, that you could reach up to it with your hand. No, my boy; you see, the

earth is like a round ball, do you understand?" my uncle went on, describing a sphere in the air with his hands.

The peasant smiled bitterly.

"Yes, like a ball, it hangs in the air of itself and moves round the sun. And the sun stands still, it only seems to you that it moves. There's a queer thing! And the man who discovered this was Captain Cook, a navigator . . . devil only knows who did discover it," he added in a half whisper, turning to me. "I know nothing about it myself, my boy. ... Do you know how far it is to the sun?"

"I do, uncle," I answered, looking with surprise at all this scene. "But this is what I think: of course ignorance means slovenliness; but on the other hand ... to teach peasants astronomy ..."

"Just so, just so, slovenliness," my uncle assented, delighted with my expression, which struck him as extremely apt. "A noble thought! Slovenliness precisely! That is what I have always said . . . that is, I never said so, but I felt it. Do you hear?" he cried to the peasants. "Ignorance is as bad as slovenliness, it's as bad as dirt. That's why Foma wanted to teach you. He wanted to teach you something good — that was all right. That's as good as serving one's country — it's as good as any official rank. So you see what science is! Well, that's enough, that's enough, my friends. Go, in God's name; and I am glad, glad. . . . Don't worry yourselves, I won't forsake you."

"Protect us, father!"

"Let us breathe freely!"

And the peasants plumped down at his feet.

"Come, come, that's nonsense. Bow down to God and your Tsar, and not to me. . . . Come, go along, behave well, be deserving . . and all that. You know," he said, turning suddenly to me as soon as the peasants had gone away, and beaming with pleasure, "the peasant loves a kind word, and a little present would do no harm. Shall I give them something, eh? What do you think? In honour of your arrival. . . . Shall I or not?"

"But you are a kind of Frol Silin, uncle, a benevolent person, I see."

"Oh, one can't help it, my boy, one can't help it; that's nothing. I have been meaning to give them a present for a long time," he said, as though excusing himself. "And as for your thinking it funny of me to give the peasants a lesson in science, I simply did that, my boy, in delight at seeing you, Seryozha. I simply wanted the peasants to hear how many miles it was

to the sun and gape in wonder. It's amusing to see them gape, my dear. . . . One seems to rejoice over them. Only, my boy, don't speak in the drawing-room of my having had an interview with the peasants, you know. I met them behind the stables on purpose that we should not be seen. It was impossible to have it there, my boy: it is a delicate business, and indeed they came in secret themselves. I did it more for their sake. . . ."

"Well, here I have come, uncle," I began, changing the conversation and anxious to get to the chief point as quickly as possible. "I must own your letter so surprised me that I . . ."

"My dear, not a word of that," my uncle interrupted, as though in alarm, positively dropping his voice. "Afterwards, afterwards, all that shall be explained. I have, perhaps, acted wrongly towards you, very wrongly, perhaps. ..."

"Acted wrongly towards me, uncle?"

"Afterwards, afterwards, my dear, afterwards! It shall all be explained. But what a fine fellow you have grown! My dear boy! How eager I have been to see you! I wanted to pour out my heart, so to speak . . . you are clever, you are my only hope . . . you and Korovkin. I must mention to you that they are all angry with you here. Mind, be careful, don't be rash."

"Angry with me?" I asked, looking at uncle in wonder, unable to understand how I could have angered people with whom I was as yet unacquainted. "Angry with me?"

"Yes, with you, my boy. It can't be helped! Foma Fomitch is a little . . . and . . . well . . . mother following his example. Be careful, respectful, don't contradict. The great thing is to be respectful. ..."

"To Foma Fomitch, do you mean, uncle?"

"It can't be helped, my dear; you see, I don't defend him. Certainly he has his faults, perhaps, and especially just now, at this particular moment. . . . Ah, Seryozha, dear, how it all worries me. And if only it could be settled comfortably, if only we could all be satisfied and happy! . . . But who has not faults? We are not perfect ourselves, are we?"

"Upon my word, uncle! Consider what he is doing. . . ."

"Oh, my dear! It's all trivial nonsense, nothing more! Here, for instance, let me tell you, he is angry with me, and what for, do you suppose? . . . Though perhaps it's my own fault. ... I'd better tell you afterwards. ..."

"But, do you know, uncle, I have formed an idea of my own about it," I interrupted, in haste to give expression to my theory. Indeed, we both

seemed nervous and hurried. “In the first place, he has been a buffoon; that has mortified him, rankled, outraged his ideal; and that has made his character embittered, morbid, resentful, so to say, against all humanity. . . . But if one could reconcile him with mankind, if one could bring him back to himself ...”

“Just so, just so,” cried my uncle, delighted; “that’s just it. A generous idea! And in fact it would be shameful, ungenerous of us to blame him! Just so! ... Oh, my dear, you understand me; you have brought me comfort! If only things could be set straight, somehow! Do you know, I am afraid to show myself. Here you have come, and I shall certainly catch it from them!’

“Uncle, if that is how it is . . .”I began, disconcerted by this confession.

“No-no-no I For nothing in the world,” he cried, clutching my hands. “You are my guest and I wish it!”

“Uncle, tell me at once,” I began insistently, “why did you send for me? What do you expect of me, and, above all, in what way have you been to blame towards me?”

“My dear, don’t ask. Afterwards, afterwards; all that shall be explained afterwards. I have been very much to blame, perhaps, but I wanted to act like an honest man, and . . . and . . . you shall marry her! You will marry her, if there is one grain of gentlemanly feeling in you,” he added, flushing all over with some sudden feeling and warmly and enthusiastically pressing my hand. “But enough, not another word, you will soon see for yourself. It will depend on you. . . . The great thing is that you should be liked, that you should make a good impression. Above all — don’t be nervous.”

“Come, listen, uncle. Whom have you got there? I must own I have been so little in society, that ...”

“That you are rather frightened,” put in my uncle, smiling. “Oh, that’s no matter. Cheer up, they are all our own people I The great thing is to be bold and not afraid. I keep feeling anxious about you. Whom have we got there, you ask? Yes, who is there. ... In the first place, my mother,” he began hurriedly. “Do you remember mamma or not? The most kind-hearted, generous woman, no airs about her — that one can say; a little of the old school, perhaps, but that’s all to the good. To be sure she sometimes takes fancies into her head, you know, will say one thing and another; she is vexed with me now, but it is my own fault, I know it is my own fault. And the fact is — you know she is what is called a grande dame, a general’s lady . . . her husband was a most excellent man. To begin with, he was a general,

a most cultivated man; he left no property, but he was covered with wounds — he was deserving of respect, in fact. Then there's Miss Perepelitsyn; well, she ... I don't know ... of late she has been rather . . . her character is so . . . but one mustn't find fault with everyone. There, never mind her . . . you mustn't imagine she is in a menial position, she's a major's daughter herself, my boy, she is mother's confidante and favourite, my dear! Then there is my sister Praskovya Ilyinitchna. Well, there is no need to say much about her, she is simple and good-natured, a bit fussy, but what a heart! The heart is the great thing. Though she is middle-aged, yet, do you know, I really believe that queer fellow Bahtcheyev is making up to her. He wants to make a match of it. But mind you don't say a word, it is a secret! Well, and who else is there? I won't tell you about the children, you will see for yourself. It's Ilyusha's nameday to-morrow. . . . Why there, I was almost forgetting, we have had staying with us for the last month Ivan Ivanitch Mizintchikov, your second cousin, I believe; yes, of course, he is your second cousin! He has lately given up his commission; he was a lieutenant in the Hussars; still a young man. A noble soul! But, you know, he has got through his money. I really can't think how he managed to get rid of it. Though indeed he had next to nothing, but anyway he got through it and ran into debt. . . . Now he is staying with me. I didn't know him at all till lately; he came and introduced himself. He is a dear fellow, good-humoured, quiet and respectful. No one gets a word out of him. He is always silent. Foma calls him in jest the 'silent stranger' — he doesn't mind; he isn't vexed. Foma's satisfied, he says Ivan's not very bright. And Ivan never contradicts him, but always falls in with everything he says. H'm! he seems so crushed . . . but there, God bless him, you will see for yourself. There are guests from the town, Pavel Semyonitch Obnoskin and his mother; he's young but a man of superior mind, something mature, steadfast, you know . . . only I don't know how to express it; and what's more, of the highest principles; strict morals. And lastly there is staying with us, you know, a lady called Tatyana Ivanovna; she, too, may be a distant relation. You don't know her. She is not quite young, that one mu^t own, but . . . she is not without attractions: she is rich enough to buy Stepantchikovo twice over, she has only lately come into her money, and has had a wretched time of it till now. Please, Seryozha, my boy, be careful; she is such a nervous invalid . . . something phan-tasmagorial in her character, you know. Well, you are a gentleman, you will understand; she has had troubles, you know, one has to

be doubly careful with a person who has had troubles! But you mustn't imagine anything, you know. Of course she has her weaknesses; sometimes she is in such a hurry, she speaks so fast, that she says the wrong thing. Not that she lies, don't imagine that ... it all comes, my boy, from a pure and noble heart, so to say. I mean, even if she does say something false, it's simply from excess of noble-heartedness, so to say — do you understand?"

I fancied that my uncle was horribly confused.

"Listen, uncle," I began, "I am so fond of you . . . forgive the direct question: are you going to marry someone here or not?"

"Why, from whom did you hear that?" he answered, blushing like a child. "You see, my dear . . . I'll tell you all about it; in the first place, I am not going to get married. Mamma, my sister to some extent, and most of all Foma Fomitch, whom mamma worships — and with good reason, with good reason, he has done a great deal for her — they all want me to marry that same Tatyana Ivanovna, as a sensible step for the benefit of all. Of course they desire nothing but my good — I understand that, of course; but nothing will induce me to marry — I have made up my mind about that. In spite of that I have not succeeded in giving them a decided answer, I have not said yes, or no. It always happens like that with me, my boy. They thought that I had consented and are insisting that to-morrow, in honour of the festive occasion, I should declare myself . . . and so there is such a flutter in preparation for to-morrow that I really don't know what line to take! And besides, Foma Fomitch, I don't know why, is vexed with me, and mamma is too. I must say, my boy, I have simply been reckoning on you and on Korovkin. ... I wanted to pour out my troubles, so to say. ..."

"But how can Korovkin be of any use in this matter, uncle?"

"He will help, he will help, my dear — he is a wonderful man; in short, a man of learning! I build upon him as on a rock; a man who would conquer anything! How he speaks of domestic happiness! I must own I have been reckoning on you too; I thought you might bring them to reason. Consider and judge . . . granted that I have been to blame, really to blame — I understand all that — I am not without feeling. But all the same I might be forgiven some day! Then how well we should get on together! Oh, my boy, how my Sashenka has grown up, she'll be thinking of getting married directly! What a fine boy my Ilyusha has become! To-morrow is his nameday. But I am afraid for my Sashenka — that's the trouble."

“Uncle! Where is my portmanteau? I will change my things and make my appearance in a minute, and then ...”

“In the upper room, my boy, in the upper room. I gave orders beforehand that as soon as you arrived you should be taken straight up there, so that no one should see you. Yes, yes, change your things! That’s capital, capital, first-rate. And meanwhile I will prepare them all a little. Well, good luck to us! You know, my boy, we must be diplomatic. One is forced to become a Talleyrand. But there, never mind. They are drinking tea there now. We have tea early. Foma Fomitch likes to have his tea as soon as he wakes up; it is better, you know. Well, Til go in, then, and you make haste and follow me, don’t leave me alone; it will be awkward for me, my boy, alone. . . . But, stay! I have another favour to ask of you: don’t cry out at me in there as you did out here just now — will you? If you want to make some criticism you can make it afterwards here when we are alone; till then hold yourself in and wait! You see, I have put my foot in it already with them. They are annoyed with me . . .”

“I say, uncle, from all that I have seen and heard it seems to me that you ...”

“That I am as soft as butter, eh? Don’t mind speaking out!” he interrupted me quite unexpectedly. “There is no help for it, my boy. I know it myself. Well, so you will come? Come as quick as you can, please!”

Going upstairs, I hurriedly opened my portmanteau, remembering my uncle’s instructions to come down as soon as possible. As I was dressing, I realised that I had so far learned scarcely anything I wanted to know, though I had been talking to my uncle for a full hour. That struck me. Only one thing was pretty clear to me: my uncle was still set upon my getting married; consequently, all rumours to the opposite, that is, that my uncle was in love with the same lady himself, were wide of the mark. I remember that I was much agitated. Among other things the thought occurred to me that by my coming, and by my silence, I had almost made a promise, given my word, bound myself for ever. “It is easy,” I thought, “it is easy to say a word which will bind one, hand and foot, for ever. And I have not yet seen my proposed bride!” And again: why this antagonism towards me on the part of the whole family? Why were they bound to take a hostile attitude to my coming as my uncle said they did? And what a strange part my uncle was playing here in his own house! What was the cause of his secretiveness? Why these worries and alarms? I must own that it all struck

me suddenly as something quite senseless; and my romantic and heroic dreams took flight com-

pletely at the first contact with reality. Only now, after my conversation with my uncle, I suddenly realised all the incongruity and eccentricity of his proposition, and felt that no one but my uncle would have been capable of making such a proposal and in such circumstances. I realised, too, that I was something not unlike a fool for galloping here full speed at his first word, in high delight at his suggestion. I was dressing hurriedly, absorbed in my agitating doubts, so that I did not at first notice the man who was waiting on me.

“Will your honour wear the Adelaida-coloured tie or the one with the little checks on it?” the man asked suddenly, addressing me with exceptionally mawkish obsequiousness.

I glanced at him, and it seemed to me that he, too, was worthy of attention. He was a man still young, for a flunkey well dressed, quite as well as many a provincial dandy. The brown coat, the white breeches, the straw-coloured waistcoat, the patent-leather boots and the pink tie had evidently been selected with intention. All this was bound at once to attract attention to the young dandy’s refined taste. The watch-chain was undoubtedly displayed with the same object. He was pale, even greenish in fact, and had a long hooked nose, thin and remarkably white, as though it were made of china. The smile on his thin lips expressed melancholy, a refined melancholy, however. His large prominent eyes, which looked as though made of glass, had an extraordinarily stupid expression, and yet there was a gleam of refinement in them. His thin soft ears were stuffed up with cotton-wool — also a refinement. His long, scanty, flaxen hair was curled and pomaded. His hands were white, clean, and might have been washed in rose-water; his fingers ended in extremely long dandified pink nails. All this indicated a spoilt and idle fop. He lisped and mispronounced the letter “r” in fashionable style, raised and dropped his eyes, sighed and gave himself incredibly affected airs. He smelt of scent. He was short, feeble and flabby-looking, and moved about with knees and haunches bent, probably thinking this the height of refinement — in fact he was saturated with refinement, subtlety and an extraordinary sense of his own dignity. This last characteristic displeased me, I don’t know why, and moved me to wrath.

“So that tie is Adelaida colour?” I asked, looking severely at the young valet.

“Yes, Adelaida,” he answered, with undisturbed refinement.

“And is there an Agrafena colour?”

“No, sir, there cannot be such a colour.”

“Why not?”

“Agrafena is not a polite name, sir.”

“Not polite! Why not?”

“Why, Adelaida, we all know, is a foreign name anyway, a ladylike name, but any low peasant woman can be called Agrafena.”

“Are you out of your mind?”

“No, sir, I am in my right mind, sir. Of course you are free to call me any sort of name, but many generals and even some counts in Moscow and Petersburg have been pleased with my conversation, sir.”

“And what’s your name?”

“Vidoplyasov.”

“Ah, so you are Vidoplyasov?”

“Just so, sir.”

“Well, wait a bit, my lad, and I will make your acquaintance.”

“It is something like Bedlam here,” I thought to myself as I went downstairs.

CHAPTER IV

AT TEA

TEA was being served in the room that gave on to the veranda where I had that afternoon met Gavrila. I was much perturbed by my uncle's mysterious warnings in regard to the reception awaiting me. Youth is sometimes excessively vain, and youthful vanity is almost always cowardly. And so it was extremely unpleasant for me when, immediately going in at the door and seeing the whole party round the tea-table, I stumbled over a rug, staggered and, recovering my balance, flew unexpectedly into the middle of the room. As overwhelmed with confusion as though I had at one stroke lost my career, my honour and my good name, I stood without moving, turning as red as a crab and looking with a senseless stare at the company. I mention this incident, in itself so trivial, only because of the effect it had on my state of mind during the whole of that day, and consequently my attitude to some of the personages of my story. I tried to bow, did not fully succeed, turned redder than ever, flew up to my uncle and clutched at his hand.

"How do you do, uncle," I gasped out breathlessly, intending to say something quite different and much cleverer, but to my own surprise I said nothing but, "how do you do."

"Glad to see you, glad to see you, my boy," answered my uncle, distressed on my account. "You know, we have met already. Don't be nervous, please," he added in a whisper, "it's a thing that may happen to anyone, and worse still, one sometimes falls flat! . . . And now, mother, let me introduce to you: this is our young man; he is a little overcome at the moment, but I am sure you will like him. My nephew, Sergey Alexandrovitch," he added, addressing the company.

But before going on with my st<pry, allow me, gentle reader, to introduce to you by name the company in which I suddenly found myself. This is essential to the orderly sequence of my narrative.

The party consisted of several ladies and two men besides my uncle and me. Foma Fomitch, whom I was so eager to see, and who — even then I felt it — was absolute monarch in the house, was not there; he was conspicuous

by his absence, and seemed to have taken with him all brightness from the room. They all looked gloomy and worried. One could not help noticing it from the first glance; embarrassed and upset as I was at the moment, I yet discerned that my uncle, for instance, was almost as upset as I was, though he was doing his utmost to conceal his anxiety under a show of ease. Something was lying like a heavy weight on his heart. One of the two gentlemen in the room was a young man about five-and-twenty, who turned out to be the Obnoskin my uncle had spoken of that afternoon, praising his intelligence and high principles. I did not take to this gentleman at all, everything about him savoured of vulgar chic; his dress, in spite of its chic, was shabby and common; his face looked, somehow, shabby too. His thin flaxen moustaches like a beetle's whiskers, and his unsuccessful wisps of beard, were evidently intended to show that he was a man of independent character and perhaps advanced ideas. He was continually screwing up his eyes, smiling with an affectation of malice; he threw himself into attitudes on his chair, and repeatedly stared at me through his eyeglass; but when I turned to him, he immediately dropped his eyeglass and seemed overcome with alarm. The other gentle-

man was young too, being about twenty-eight. He was my cousin, Mizintchikov. He certainly was extremely silent. He did not utter a single word at tea, and did not laugh when eveiyone else laughed; but I saw in him no sign of that "crushed" condition my uncle had detected; on the contrary, the look in his light brown eyes expressed resoluteness and a certain decision of character. Mizintchikov was dark and rather good-looking, with black hair; he was very corrcctly dressed — at my uncle's expense, as I learned later. Of the ladies the one I noticed first of all from her spiteful anaemic face was Miss Perepelitsyn. She was sitting near Madame la Generale — of whom I will give a special account later — not beside her, but deferentially a little behind; she was continually bending down and whispering something into the ear of her patroness. Two or three elderly lady companions were sitting absolutely mute in a row by the window, gazing open-eyed at Madame la Générale and waiting respectfully for their tea. My attention was attracted also by a fat, absolutely redundant lady, of about fifty, dressed very tastelessly and gaudily, wearing rouge, I believe, though she had hardly any teeth except blackened and broken stumps; this fact did not, however, prevent her from mincing, screwing up her eyes, dressing in the height of fashion and almost making eyes. She was hung

round with chains, and like Monsieur Obnoskin was continually turning her lorgnette on me. This was his mother. Praskovya Ilyinitchna, my meek aunt, was pouring out the tea. She obviously would have liked to embrace me after our long separation, and of course to have shed a few tears on the occasion, but she did not dare. Everything here was, it seemed, under rigorous control. Near her was sitting a very pretty black-eyed girl of fifteen, who looked at me intently with childish curiosity — my cousin Sashenka. Finally, and perhaps most conspicuous of all, was a very strange lady, dressed richly and extremely youthfully, though she was far from being in her first youth and must have been at least five-and-thirty. Her face was very thin, pale, and withered, but extremely animated; a bright colour was constantly appearing in her pale cheeks, almost at every movement, at every flicker of feeling; she was in continual excitement, twisting and turning in her chair, and seemed unable to sit still for a minute. She kept looking at me with a kind of greedy curiosity, and was continually bending down to whisper something into the ear of Sashenka, or of her neighbour on the other side, and immediately afterwards laughing in the most childish and simple-hearted way. But to my surprise her eccentricities seemed to pass unnoticed by the others, as though they had all agreed to pay no attention to them. I guessed that this was Tatyana lvanovna, the lady in whom, to use my uncle's expression, "there was something phantasmagorial", whom they were trying to force upon him as a bride, and whose favour almost everyone in the house was trying to court for the sake of her money. But I liked her eyes, blue and mild; and though there were already crow's-feet round the eyes, their expression was so simple-hearted, so merry and good-humoured, that it was particularly pleasant to meet them. Of Tatyana Ivanovna, one of the real "heroines" of my story, I shall speak more in detail later; her history was very remarkable. Five minutes after my entrance, a very pretty boy, my cousin Ilyusha, ran in from the garden, with his pockets full of knuckle-bones and a top in his hand. He was followed by a graceful young girl, rather pale and weary-looking, but very pretty. She scanned the company with a searching, mistrustful, and even timid glance, looked intently at me, and sat down by Tatyana Ivanovna. I remember that I could not suppress a throb at my heart; I guessed that this was the governess. . . . I remember, too, that on her entrance my uncle stole a swift glance at me and flushed crimson, then he bent down, caught up Ilyusha in his arms, and brought him up to me to be kissed. I noticed, too,

that Madame Obnoskin first stared at my uncle and then with a sarcastic smile turned her lorgnette on the governess. My uncle was very much confused and, not knowing what to do, was on the point of calling to Sashenka to introduce her to me; but the girl merely rose from her seat and in silence, with grave dignity, dropped me a curtsy. I liked her doing this, however, for it suited her. At the same instant my kindly aunt, Praskovya Ilyinitchna, could hold out no longer and, abandoning the tea-tray, dashed up to embrace me; but before I had time to say a couple of words to her I heard the shrill voice of Miss Perepelitsyn hissing out that Praskovya Ilyinitchna seemed to have forgotten Madame la Generale. “Madame has asked for her tea, and you do not pour it out, and she is waiting.” And Praskovya Ilyinitchna, leaving me, flew back in all haste to her duties. Madame la Generate, the most important person of the party, in whose presence all the others were on their best behaviour, was a lean spiteful old woman, dressed in mourning — spiteful, how-

ever, chiefly from old age and from the loss of her mental faculties which had never been over-brilliant); even in the past, she had been a nonsensical creature. Her rank as a general’s wife had made her even stupider and more arrogant. When she was in a bad humour the house became a perfect hell. She had two ways of displaying her ill humour. The first was a silent method, when the old lady would not open her lips for days together, but maintained an obstinate silence and pushed away or even sometimes flung on the floor everything that was put before her. The other method was the exact opposite — garrulous. This would begin, as a rule, by my grandmother’s — for she was my grandmother, of course — being plunged into a state of extreme despondency, and expecting the end of the world and the failure of all her undertakings, foreseeing poverty and every possible trouble in the future, being carried away bv her own presentiments, reckoning on her fingers the calamities that were coming, and reaching a climax of enthusiasm and intense excitement over the enumeration. It always appeared, of course, that she had foreseen all this long before, and had said nothing only because she was forced to be silent “in this house”. But if only she had been treated with respect, if only they had cared to listen to her earlier, then, etc. etc. In all this, the flock of lady companions and Miss Perepelitsyn promptly followed suit, and finally it was solemnly ratified by Foma Fomitch. At the minute when I was presented to her she was in a horrible rage, and apparently it was taking the silent form, the most

terrible. Everyone was watching her with apprehension. Only Tatyana Ivanovna, who was completely unconscious of it all, was in the best of spirits. My uncle purposely with a certain solemnity led me up to my grandmother; but the latter, making a wry face, pushed away her cup ill-humouredly.

“Is this that volti-geur?” she drawled through her teeth, addressing Miss Perepelitsyn.

This foolish question completely disconcerted me. I don’t understand why she called me a voliigcur. But such questions were easy enough to her. Miss Perepelitsyn bent down and whispered something in her ear, but the old lady waved her off angrily. I remained standing with my mouth open and looked inquiringly at my uncle. They all looked at one another and Obnoskin even grinned, which I did not like at all.

“She sometimes talks at random, my boy,” my uncle, a little disconcerted himself, whispered in my ear; “but it means nothing, it’s just her goodness of heart. The heart is what one must look at.”

“Yes, the heart, the heart,” Tatyana Ivanovna’s bell-like voice rang out. She had not taken her eyes off me all this time, and seemed as though she could not sit still in her chair. I suppose the word “heart”, uttered in a whisper, had reached her ear.

But she did not go on, though she was evidently longing to express herself. Whether she was overcome with confusion or some other feeling, she suddenly subsided into silence, flushed extremely red, turned quickly to the governess and whispered something in her ear, and suddenly putting her handkerchief before her mouth and sinking back in her chair, began giggling as though she were in hysterics. I looked at them all in extreme amazement; but to my surprise, everyone was particularly grave and looked as though nothing exceptional had happened. I realised, of course, the kind of person Tatyana Ivanovna was. At last I was handed tea, and I recovered myself a little. I don’t know why, but I suddenly felt that it was my duty to begin a polite conversation with the ladies.

“It was true what you told me, uncle,” I began, “when you warned me that I might be a little abashed. I openly confess — why conceal it?” I went on, addressing Madame Obnoskin with a deprecating smile, “that I have hitherto had hardly any experience of ladies’ society. And just now when I made my entry so unsuccessfully, it seemed to me that my position in the middle of the room was very ridiculous and made me look rather a

simpleton, didn’t it? Have you read The Simpleton?” I added, feeling more and more lost, blushing at my ingratiating candour, and glaring at Monsieur Obnoskin, who was still looking me up and down with a grin on his iace.

“Ju^t so, just so, just so!” my uncle cried suddenly with extreme animation, genuinely delighted that the conversation had been set going somehow and that I had recovered myself. “That’s no great matter, my boy, your talking of the likelihood of your being abashed. Well, you have been, and that’s the end of it. But when I first made my debut, I actually told a lie, my boy, would you believe that? Yes, really, Anfisa Petrovna, I assure you, it’s worth hearing. Just after I had become a Junker, I went to Moscow, and presented myself to a very important lady with a letter of introduction;

that is, she was a very haughty woman, but in reality very good-natured, in spite of what they said. I went in — I was shown up. The drawing-room was full of people, chiefly swells. I made my bow and sat down. At the second word, she asked me: ‘Have you estates in the country?’ And I hadn’t got as much as a hen — what was I to answer? I felt crushed to the earth. Everyone was looking at me (I was only a young Junker!). Why not say: no, I have nothing; and that would have been the right thing because it was the truth. But I couldn’t face it! ‘Yes,’ I said, ‘a hundred and seventeen serfs,’ And why did I stick on that seventeen? If one must tell a lie, it is better to tell it with a round number, isn’t it? A minute later, through my letter of introduction, it appeared that I was as poor as a church mouse, and I had told a lie into the bargain! . . . Well, there was no help for it. I took myself off as fast as I could, and never set foot in the place again. In those days I had nothing, you know. All I have got now is three hundred serfs from Uncle Afanasy Matveyitch, and two hundred serfs with Kapitonovko, which came to me earlier from my grandmother Akulina Panfilovna, a total of more than five hundred serfs. That’s capital! But from that day I gave up lying and don’t tell lies now.”

“Well, I shouldn’t have given it up, it I were you. There is no knowing what may happen,” observed Obnoskin, smiling ironically.

“To be sure, that’s true! Goodness knows what may happen,” my uncle assented good-naturedlv.

Obnoskin burst into loud laughter, throwing himself back in his chair; his mother smiled; Miss Perepelitsyn sniggered in a particularly disgusting way; Tatyana lvanovna giggled too, without knowing why, and even clapped her hands; in fact, I ^aw distinctly that my uncle counted for

nothing in his own house. Sashenka's eyes flashed angrily, and she looked steadily at Obnoskin. The governess flushed and looked down. My uncle was surprised.

"What is it? What's happened?" he repeated, looking round at us all in perplexity.

All this time my cousin Mizintchikov was sitting a little way off, saying nothing and not even smiling when everyone laughed. He drank tea zealously, gazed philosophically at the whole company, and several times as though in an access of unbearable boredom broke into whistling, probably a habit of his, but pulled himself up in time. Obnoskin, who had jeered at my uncle and had attempted to attack me, seemed not to dare to glance at Mizintchikov; I noticed that. I noticed, too, that my silent cousin looked frequently at me and with evident curiosity, as though he was trying to make up his mind what sort of person I was.

"I am certain," Madame Obnoskin minced suddenly, "I am perfectly certain Monsieur Serge — that is your name, I believe? — that at home, in Petersburg, you were not greatly devoted to the ladies. I know that there are many, a great many young men nowadays in Petersburg who shun the society of ladies altogether. But in my opinion they are all free-thinkers. Nothing would induce me to regard it as anything but unpardonable free-thinking. And I must say it surprises me, young man, it surprises me, simply surprises me! . . ."

"I have not been into society at all," I answered with extraordinary animation. "But that ... I imagine at least . . . is of no consequence. I have lived, that is I have generally had lodgings . . . but that is no matter, I assure you. I shall be known one day; but hitherto I have always stayed at home. . . ."

"He is engaged in learned pursuits," observed my uncle, drawing himself up with dignity.

"Oh, uncle, still talking of your learned pursuits! . . . Only fancy," I went on with an extraordinary free and easy air, smirking affably, and again addressing Madame Obnoskin, "my beloved uncle is so devoted to learning that he has unearthed somewhere on the high road a marvellous practical philosopher, a Mr. Korovkin; and his first words to me after all these years of separation were that he was expecting this phenomenal prodigy with the most acute, one may say, impatience . . . from love of learning, of course. . . ."

And I sniggered, hoping to provoke a general laugh at my facetiousness.

“Who is that? Of whom is he talking?” Madame la Générale jerked out sharply, addressing Miss Perepelitsyn.

“Yegor Ilyitch has been inviting visitors, learned gentlemen; he drives along the high road collecting them,” the lady hissed out.

My uncle was completely dumbfounded.

“Oh, yes! I had forgotten,” he cried, turning upon me a glance that expressed reproach. “I am expecting Korovkin. A man of learning, a man who will survive his century. . . .”

He broke off and relapsed into silence, Madame la Générale waved her arm, and this time so successfully that she knocked over a cup, which flew off the table and was smashed. General excitement followed.

“She always does that when she is angry; she throws things on the floor,” my uncle whispered in confusion. “But she only does it when she is angry. . . . Don’t stare, my boy, don’t take any notice, look the other way. . . . What made you speak of Korovkin? ...”

But I was looking away already; at that moment I met the eyes of the governess, and it seemed to me that in their expression there was something reproachful, even contemptuous; a flush of indignation glowed upon her pale cheeks. I understood the look in her face, and guessed that by my mean and disgusting desire to make my uncle ridiculous in order to make myself a little less so, I had not gained much in that young lady’s estimation. I cannot express how ashamed I felt!

“I must go on about Petersburg with you,” Anfisa Petrovna gushed again, when the commotion caused by the breaking of the cup had subsided. “I recall with such enjoyment, I may say, our life in that charming city. . . . We were very intimately acquainted with a family — do you remember, Pavel, General Polovitsin. . . . Oh, what a fascinating, fas-ci-na-ting creature his wife was! You know that aristocratic distinction, beau ntondc! . . . Tell me, you have most likely met her? ... I must own I have been looking forward to your being here with impatience; I have been hoping to hear a great deal, a very great deal about our friends in Petersburg. ...”

“I am very sorry that I cannot . . . excuse me. ... As I have said already, I have rarely been into society, and I don’t know General Polovitsin; I have never even heard of him,” I answered impatiently, my affability being suddenly succeeded by a mood of extreme annoyance and irritability.

“He is studying mineralogy,” my incorrigible uncle put in with pride. “Is that investigating all sorts of stones, mineralogy, my boy?”

“Yes, uncle, stones. . . .”

“H’m. . . . There are a great many sciences and they are all of use! And do you know, my boy, to tell you the truth, I did not know what mineralogy meant! It’s all Greek to me. In other things I am so-so, but at learned subjects I am stupid — I frankly confess it!”

“You frankly confess!” Obnoskin caught him up with a snigger.

“Papa!” cried Sashenka, looking reproachfully at her father.

“What is it, darling? Oh, dear, I keep interrupting you, Anfisa Petrovna,” my uncle caught himself up suddenly, not understanding Sashenka’s exclamation. “Please forgive me.”

“Oh, don’t distress yourself,” Anfisa Petrovna answered with a sour smile. “Though I have said everything already to your nephew, and will finish perhaps, Monsieur Serge — that is right, isn’t it? — by telling you that you really must reform. I believe that the sciences, the arts . . . sculpture, for instance ... all those lofty ideas, in fact, have their fas-cin-na-ting side, but they do not take the place of ladies! . . . Women, women would form you, young man, and so to do without them is impossible, young man, impossible, im-poss-ible!”

“Impossible, impossible,” Tatyana Ivanovna’s rather shrill voice rang out again. “Listen,” she began, speaking with a sort of childish haste and flushing crimson, of course, “listen, I want to ask you something. ...”

“Pray do,” I answered, looking at her attentively.

“I wanted to ask you whether you have come to stay long or not?”

“I really don’t know, that’s as my affairs ...”

“Affairs! What sort of affairs can he have? Oh, the mad fellow! . . .”

And Tatyana Ivanovna, blushing perfectly crimson and hiding behind her fan, bent down to the governess and at once began whispering something to her. Then she suddenly laughed and clapped her hands.

“Stay! stay!” she cried, breaking away from her confidante and again addressing me in a great hurry as though afraid I were going away. “Listen, do you know what I am going to tell you? You are awfully, awfully like a young man, a fas-ci-na-ting young man! Sashenka, Nastenka, do you remember? He is awfully like that madman — do you remember, Sashenka? We were out driving when we met him ... on horseback in a white waistcoat ... he put up his eyeglass at me, too, the shameless fellow!

Do you remember, I hid myself in my veil, too, but I couldn’t resist putting my head out of the carriage window and shouting to him: ‘You shameless fellow!’ and then I threw my bunch of flowers on the road? ... Do you remember, Nastenka?”

And the lady, half crazy over eligible young men, hid her face in her hands, all excitement; then suddenly leaped up from her seat, darted to the window, snatched a rose from a bowl, threw it on the floor near me and ran out of the room. She was gone in a flash! This time a certain embarrassment was apparent, though Madame la Generate was again completely unmoved. Anfisa Petrovna, for instance, showed no surprise, but seemed suddenly a little troubled and looked with anxiety at her son; the young ladies blushed, while Pavel Obnoskin, with a look of vexation which at the time I did not understand, got up from his chair and went to the window. My uncle was beginning to make signs to me, but at that instant another person walked into the room and drew the attention of all.

“Ah, here is Yevgraf Larionitch! Talk of angels!” cried my uncle, genuinely delighted. “Well, brother, have you come from the town?”

“Queer set of creatures! They seem to have been collected here on purpose!” I thought to myself, not yet understanding fully what was passing before my eyes, and not suspecting either that I was probably adding another to the collection of queer creatures by appearing among them.

CHAPTER V

YEZHEVIKIN

THERE walked or rather squeezed himself into the room (though the doors were very wide ones) a little figure which even in the doorway began wriggling, bowing and smirking, looking with extraordinary curiosity at all the persons present. It was a little pockmarked old man with quick and furtive eyes, with a bald patch at the top of his head and another at the back, with a look of undefined subtle mockery on his rather thick lips. He was wearing a very shabby dress-coat which looked as though it were second-hand. One button was hanging by a thread; two or three were completely missing. His high boots full of holes, and his greasy cap, were in keeping with his pitiful attire; he had a very dirty check pocket-handkerchief in his hand, with which he wiped the sweat from his brow and temples. I noticed that the governess blushed slightly and looked rapidly at me. I fancied, too, that there was something proud and challenging in this glance.

“Straight from the town, benefactor! Straight from there, my kind protector! I will tell you everything, only first let me pay my respects,” said the old man. And he made straight for Madame la Generate, but stopped half-way and again addressed my uncle.

“You know my leading characteristic, benefactor — a sly rogue, a regular sly rogue! You know that as soon as I walk in I make for the chief person of the house, I turn my toes in her direction first of all, so as from the first step to win favour and protection. A sly rogue, my good sir, a sly rogue, benefactor. Allow me, my dear lady, allow me, your Excellency, to kiss your dress, or I might sully with my lips your hand of gold, of general’s rank.”

Madame la Générale to my surprise gave him her hand to kiss rather graciously.

“And my respects to you, our beauty,” he went on, “Miss Perepelitsyn. There is no help for it, Madam, I am a sly rogue. As long ago as 1841 it was settled that I was a rogue, when I was dismissed from the service just at the time when Valentin Ignatyevitch Tihontsev became ‘your honour’. He was

made an assessor; he was made an assessor and I was made a rogue. And, you know, I am so open by nature that I make no secret of it. It can't be helped. I have tried living honestly, I have tried it, but now I must try something else. Alexandra Yegor-ovna, our little apple in syrup," he went on, going round the table and making his way up to Sashenka, "let me kiss your dress; there is a smell of apples and all sorts of nice things about you, young lady. Our respects to the hero of the day; I have brought you a bow and arrow, my little sir. I was a whole morning making it, my lads helped me; we will shoot with it presently. And when you grow up you will be an officer and cut off a Turk's head. Tatyana Ivanovna . . . but oh, she is not here, my benefactress! Or I would have kissed her dress too. Praskovya Ilyinitchna, my kindest friend, I can't get near you or I would kiss your foot as well as your hand, so there! Anfisa Petrovna, I protest my profound respect for you. I prayed for you only to-day, benefactress, on my knees with tears I prayed for you and for your son also that God might send him honours of all sorts — and talents too, talents especially! And by the way, our humblest duty to Ivan Ivanitch Mizintchikov. May God send you all that you desire for yourself, for you will never make out, sir, what you do want for yourself: such a silent gentleman. . . . Good-day, Nastya! All my small fry send their love to you, they talk of you every day. And now a deep bow to my host. I come from the town, your honour, straight off from the town. And this, no doubt, is your nephew who is being trained in a learned faculty? My humble duty, sir; let me have your hand."

There was laughter. One could see that the old man played the part of an amateur clown. His arrival livened the party up. Many did not even understand his sarcasms, and yet he had made slight digs at them all. Only the governess, whom to my surprise he called simply Nastya, blushed and frowned. I was pulling back my hand, but I believe that was just what the horrid old man wanted.

"But I only asked to shake it, sir, if you will allow me; not to kiss it. And you thought I meant to kiss it? No, my dear sir, for the time being I will only shake it. I suppose you took me for the clown of the establishment, kind sir?" he said, looking at me mockingly.

"N — o, no, really, I . . ."

"To be sure, sir! If I am a fool, then someone else here is one too. Treat me with respect; I am not such a rogue yet as you imagine. Though maybe I am a clown too. I am a slave, my wife is a slave, and so there is nothing for

it but flattery. That's how it is! You get something by it anyway, if only to make sop for the children. Sugar, scatter as much sugar as you can in everything, that will make things more wholesome for you. I tell you this in secret, sir; maybe you will have need of it. Fortune has been hard on me, that is why I am a clown."

"He-he-he! The old man is a comical fellow! He always makes us laugh!" piped Anfisa Petrovna.

"My dear madam and benefactress, a fool has a better time of it in this world! If I had only known that, I would have enlisted among the fools in early childhood, and I dare say by now I might have been a wise man. But as it is, I wanted to be a clever man at first, so now I am a fool in my old age."

"Tell me, please," interposed Obnoskin (he probably was not pleased by the remark about talents), lolling in a particularly free and easy way in his arm-chair and staring at the old man through his eyeglass as though at an insect, "tell ine, please ... I always forget your surname . . . what the deuce is it? ..."

"Oh, my dear sir! Why, my surname, if it please you, is Yezhevikin; but what does that matter? Here I have been sitting without a job these nine years, I just go on living in accordance with the laws of nature. And my children, my children are simply a family of Holmskys. As the proverb goes, The rich man has calves, the poor man has kids/"

"Oh, yes . . . calves ... but that's beside the point. Come, listen, I have been wanting to ask you a long time: why is it that when you come in, you look back at once? It's very funny."

"Why do I look back? Why, I am always fancying, sir, that someone behind me wants to slap me on the back and squash me like a fly. That is why I look round. I have become a monomaniac, sir."

Again there was laughter. The governess got up from her seat as though she would go away, but sank back in her chair again. There was a look of pain and suffering on her face in spite of the colour that flooded her cheeks.

"You know who it is, my boy?" my uncle whispered. "It's her father, you know!"

I stared at my uncle open-eyed. The name of Yezhevikin had completely slipped out of my mind. I had been playing the hero, had been dreaming all the journey of my proposed bride, had been building magnificent plans for

her benefit, and had utterly forgotten her name, or rather had taken no notice of it from the first.

“What, her father?” I answered, also in a whisper. “Why, I thought she was an orphan.”

“It’s her father, my boy, her father. And do you know, a most honest, a most honourable man and he does not even drink, but only plays at being a fool; fearfully poor, my boy, eight children! They live on Nastya’s salary. He was turned out of the service through his tongue. He comes here every week. He is such a proud fellow — nothing will induce him to take help. I have offered it, many times I have offered it — he won’t take it. An embittered man.”

“Well, Yevgraf Larionitch, what news have you?” uncle asked, and slapped him warmly on the shoulder, noticing that the suspicious old man was already listening to our conversation.

“What news, benefactor? Valentin Ignatyitch made a statement about Trishin’s case yesterday. The flour under his charge turned out to be short weight. It is that Trishin, madam, who looks at you and puffs like a samovar. Perhaps you graciously remember him? So Valentin Ignatyitch writes of Trishin: ‘If,’ said he, ‘the often-mentioned Trishin could not guard his own niece’s honour — she eloped with an officer last year —

‘how/ said he, ‘should he take care of government property?’ He stuck that into his report, by God, I am not lying/’

“Fie! What stories you tell!” cried Anfisa Petrovna.

“Just so, just so, just so! You’ve overshot the mark, friend Yevgraf,” my uncle chimed in. “Ate! your tongue will be your ruin. You are a straightforward man, honourable and upright, I can say that, but you have a venomous tongue! And I can’t understand how it is you can’t get on with them. They seem good-natured people, simple ...”

“Kind friend and benefactor! But it’s just the simple man that I am afraid of,” cried the old man with peculiar fervour.

I liked the answer. I went rapidly up to Yezhevikin and warmly pressed his hand. The truth is, I wanted in some way to protest against the general tone and to show my sympathy for the old man openly. And perhaps, who knows? perhaps I wanted to raise myself in the opinion of Nastasya Yevgrafovna! But my movement led to no good.

“Allow me to ask you,” I said, blushing and llustered as usual, “have you heard of the Jesuits?”

“No, my good sir, I haven’t; well, maybe something . . . though how should we! But why?”

“Oh ... I meant to tell you something apropos. . . . But remind me some other time. But now let me assure you, I understand you and . . . know how to appreciate ...”

And utterly confused, I gripped his hand again.

“Certainly, I will remind you, sir, certainly. I will write it in golden letters. If you will allow me, I’ll tie a knot in my handkerchief.”

And he actually looked for a dry corner in his dirty, snuffy handkerchief, and tied a knot in it.

“Yevgraf Larionitch, take your tea,” said Praskovya Ilyinitchna.

“Immediately, my beautiful lady; immediately, my princess, I mean, not my lady! That’s in return for your tea. I met Stepan Alexyevitch Bahtcheyev on the road, madam. He was so festive that I didn’t know what to make of it! I began to wonder whether he wasn’t going to get married. Flatter away, flatter away!” he said in a half whisper, winking at me and screwing up his eyes as he carried his cup by me. “And how is it that my benefactor, my chief one, Foma Fomitch, is not to be seen? Isn’t he coming to tea?”

My uncle started as though he had been stung, and glanced timidly at his mother.

“I really don’t know,” he answered uncertainly, with a strange perturbation. “We sent for him, but he ... I don’t know really, perhaps he is indisposed. I have already sent Vidoplyasov and . . . Perhaps I ought to go myself, though?”

“I went in to him myself just now,” Yezhevikin brought out mysteriously.

“Is it possible!” cried out my uncle in alarm. “Well, how was it?”

“I went in to him, first of all, I paid him my respects. His honour said he should drink his tea in solitude, and then added that a crust of dry bread would be enough for him, yes.”

These words seemed to strike absolute terror into my uncle.

“But you should have explained to him, Yevgraf Larionitch; you should have told him,” my uncle said at last, looking at the old man with distress and reproach. “I did, I did.”

“Well?”

“For a long time he did not deign to answer me. He was sitting over some mathematical problem, he was working out something; one could see

it was a brain-racking problem. He drew the breeches of Pythagoras, while I was there, I saw him myself. I repeated it three times, only at the fourth he raised his head and seemed to see me for the first time. ‘I am not coming,’ he said; ‘a learned gentleman has arrived here now, so I should be out of place beside a luminary like that!’ He made use of that expression ‘beside a luminary’.”

And the horrid old man stole a sly glance at me.

“That is just what I expected,” cried my uncle, clasping his hands. “That’s how I thought it would be. He says that about you, Sergey, that you are a ‘learned gentleman’. Well, what’s to be done now?”

“I must confess, uncle,” I answered with dignity, shrugging my shoudders, “it seems to me such an absurd refusal that it is not worth noticing, and I really wonder at your being troubled by it. . . .”

“Oh, my boy, you know nothing about it!” he cried, with a vigorous wave of his hand.

“It’s no use grieving now, sir,” Miss Perepelitsyn put in suddenly, “since all the wicked causes of it have come from you in the first place, Yegor Ilyitch. If you take off your head you don’t weep for your hair. You should have listened to your mamma, sir, and you would have had no cause for tears now.”

“Why, how am I to blame, Anna Nilovna? Have some fear of God!” said my uncle in an imploring voice, as though begging for an explanation.

“I do fear God, Yegor Ilyitch; but it all comes from your being an egoist, sir, and not loving your mother,” Miss Perepelitsyn answered with dignity. “Why didn’t you respect her wishes in the first place? She is your mother, sir. And I am not likely to tell you a lie, sir. I am a majoi’s daughter myself, and not just anybody, sir.”

It seemed to me that Miss Perepelitsyn had intervened in the conversation with the sole object of informing us all, and me in particular as a new-comer, that she was a major’s daughter and not just anybody.

“It’s because he ill-treats his own mother,” Madame la Genirale herself brought out at last in a menacing voice.

“Mamma, have mercy on us! How am I ill-treating you?”

“It is because you are a black-hearted egoist, Yegorushka,” Madame la Générale went on, growing more and more animated “Mamma, mamma! in what way am I a black-hearted egoist?” cried my uncle, almost in despair. “For five days, for five whole days you have been angry with me and will

not speak to me. And what for? what for? Let them judge me, let the whole world judge me! But let them hear my defence too. I have long kept silent, mamma, you would not hear me; let these people hear me now. Anfisa Petrovna! Pavel Semyo-nitch, generous Pavel Semyonitch! Sergey, my dear! You are an outsider, you are, so to speak, a spectator. You can judge impartially. ...”

“Calm yourself, Yegor Tlyitch, calm yourself,” cried Anfisa Petrovna, “don’t kill your mamma.”

“I am not killing my mamma, Anfisa Petrovna; but here I lay bare my heart, you can strike at it!” my uncle went on, worked up to the utmost pitch as people of weak character sometimes are when they are driven out of all patience, though their heat is like the fire of burning straws. “I want to say, Anfisa Petrovna, that I am not ill-treating any one. I start with saying that Foma Fomitch is the noblest and the most honour able of men, and a man of superior qualities too, but . . . but he has been unjust to me in this case.”

“H’m!” grunted Obnoskin, as though he wanted to irritate my uncle still more.

“Pavel Semyonitch, noble-hearted Pavel Semyonitch! Can you really think that I am, so to speak, an unfeeling stone?

Why, I see, I understand — with tears in my heart, I may say I understand — that all this misunderstanding comes from the excess of his affection for me. But, say what you like, he really is unjust in this case. I will tell you all about it. I want to tell the whole story, Anfisa Petrovna, clearly and in full detail, that you may see from what the thing started, and whether mamma is right in being angry with me for not satisfying Foma Fomitch. And you listen too, Seryozha,” he added, addressing me, which he did, indeed, during the rest of his story, as though he were afraid of his other listeners and doubtful of their sympathy; “you, too, listen and decide whether I am right or wrong. You will see what the whole business arose from. A week ago — yes, not more than a week — my old chief, General Rusapetov, was passing through our town with his wife and stepdaughter, and broke the journey there. I was overwhelmed. I hastened to seize the opportunity, I flew over, presented myself and invited them to dinner. He promised to come if it were possible. He is a very fine man, I assure you; he is conspicuous for his virtues and is a man of the highest rank into the bargain! He has been a benefactor to his stepdaughter; he married an orphan girl to an admirable young man (now a lawyer at Malinova; still a young

man, but with, one may say, an all-round education); in short, he is a general of generals. Well, of course there was a tremendous fuss and bustle in the house — cooks, fricassees — I sent for an orchestra. I was delighted, of course, and looked festive; Foma Fomitch did not like my being delighted and looking festive! He sat down to the table — I remember, too, he was handed his favourite jelly and cream — he sat on and on without saying a word, then all at once jumped up. ‘I am being insulted, insulted!”But why, in what way are you being insulted, Foma Fomitch?”You despise me now,’ he said; ‘you are taken up with generals now, you think more of generals now than of me.’ Well, of course I am making a long story short, so to say, I am only giving you the pith of it; but if only you knew what he said besides ... in a word, he stirred me to my inmost depths. What was I to do? I was depressed by it, of course; it was a blow to me, I may say. I went about like a cock drenched with rain. The festive day anived. The general sent to say he couldn’t come, he apologised — so he was not coming. I went to Foma. ‘Come, Foma/ I said, ‘set your mind at rest, he is not coming/ And would you believe it, he wouldn’t forgive me, and that was the end of it. ‘I have been insulted/ he said, ‘and that is all about it!’ I said this and that. ‘No/ he said. ‘You can go to your generals; you think more of generals than of me, you have broken our bonds of friendship,’ he said. Of course, my dear, I understand what he was angry over, I am not a block, I am not a sheep, I am not a perfect post. It was, of course, from the excess of his affection for me, from jealousy — he says that himself — he is jealous of the general on my account, he is afraid of losing my affection, he is testing me, he wants to see how much I am ready to sacrifice for him. ‘No/ he said, ‘I am just as good as the general for you, I am myself “your Excellency” for you! I will be reconciled to you when you prove your respect for me/ ‘In what way am I to prove my respect for you, Foma Fomitch?”Call me for a whole day “your Excellency”, says he, ‘then you will prove your respect.’ I felt as though I were dropping from the clouds; you can picture my amazement. ‘That will serve you,’ said he, ‘as a lesson not to be in ecstasies at the sight of generals when there are other people, perhaps, superior to all your generals.’ Well, at that point I lost patience, I confess it! I confess it openly. ‘Foma Fomitch/ I said, ‘is such a thing possible? Can I take it upon myself to do it? Can I, have I the right to promote you to be a general? Think who it is bestows the rank of a general. How can I address you as, “your Excellency”? Why, it is infringing the

decrees of Providence! Why, the general is an honour to his country; the general has faced the enemy, he has shed his blood on the field of honour. How am I to call you “your Excellency”?’ He would not give way, there was no doing anything. ‘Whatever you want, Foma/ I said, ‘I will do anything for you. Here you told me to shave off my whiskers because they were not patriotic enough — I shaved them off; I frowned, but I did shave them. What is more, I will do anything you like, only do give up the rank of a general’/ ‘No/ said he, ‘I won’t be reconciled till you call mo “your Excellency”; that/ said he, ‘will be good for your moral character, it will humble your spirit!’ said he. And so now for a week, a whole week, he won’t speak to me; he is cross to everyone that comes; he heard about you, that you were learned — that was my fault; I got warm and said too much — so he said he would not set foot in the house if you came into it. ‘So I am not learned enough for you now,’ said he. So there will be trouble when he hears now about Korovkin! Come now, please, tell me in what way have I been to blame? Was I to take on myself to call him ‘your Excellency’? Why, it is impossible to live in such a position! What did he drive poor Bahtcheyev away from the table to-day for? Supposing Bahtcheyev is not a great astronomer, why I am not a great astronomer, and you are not a great astronomer. . . . Why is it? Why is it?”

“Because you are envious, Yegorushka,” mumbled Madame la Générale again.

“Mamma,” cried my uncle in despair, “you will drive me out of my mind! . . . Those are not your words, you are repeating what others say, mamma! I am, in fact, made out a stone, a block, a lamp-post and not your son.”

“I heard, uncle,” I interposed, utterly amazed by his story— “I heard from Bahtcheyev, I don’t know whether it was true or not — that Foma Fomitch was jealous of Ilyusha’s nameday, and declares that to-morrow is his nameday too. I must own that this characteristic touch so astounded me that I . . .”

“His birthday, my dear, his birthday!” my uncle interrupted me, speaking rapidly. “He only made a mistake in the word, but he is right; to-morrow is his birthday. Truth, my boy, before everything. ...”

“It’s not his birthday at all!” cried Sashenka.

“Not his birthday!” cried my uncle, in a fluster.

“It’s not his birthday, papa. You simply say what isn’t true to deceive yourself and to satisfy Foma Fomitch. His birthday was in March. Don’t you remember, too, we went on a pilgrimage to the monastery just before, and he wouldn’t let anyone sit in peace in the carriage? He kept crying out that the cushion was crushing his side, and pinching us; he pinched auntie twice in his ill humour. T am fond of camellias/ he said, ‘for I have the taste of the most refined society, and you grudge picking me any from the conservatory.’ And all day long he sulked and grizzled and would not talk to us. . . .”

I fancy that if a bomb had fallen in the middle of the room it would not have astounded and alarmed them all as much as this open mutiny — and of whom? — of a little girl who was not even permitted to speak aloud in her grandmother’s presence. Madame fa Generale, dumb with amazement and fury, rose from her seat, stood erect and stared at her insolent grandchild, unable to believe her eyes. My uncle was paralysed with horror.

“She is allowed to do just as she likes, she wants to be the death of her grandmother!” cried Miss Perepelitsyn.

“Sasha, Sasha, think what you arc saying! What’s the matter with you, Sasha?” cried my uncle, rushing from one to the other, from his mother to Sashenka to stop her.

“I won’t hold my tongue, papa!” cried Sashenka, leaping up from her chair with flashing eyes and stamping with her feet. “I won’t hold my tongue! We have all suffered too long from Foma Fomitch, from your nasty, horrid Foma Fomitch! Foma Fomitch will be the ruin of us all, for people keep on telling him that he is so clever, generous, noble, learned, a mix-up of all the virtues, a sort of potpourri, and like an idiot Foma Fomitch believes it all. So many nice things are offered to him that anyone else would be ashamed; but Foma Fomitch gobbles up all that is put before him and asks for more. You’ll see, he will be the ruin of us all, and it’s all papa’s fault! Horrid, horrid Foma Fomitch! I speak straight out, I am not afraid of anyone! He is stupid, ill-tempered, dirty, ungentle-manly, cruel-hearted, a bully, a mischief-maker, a liar. . . . Oh, I’d turn him out of the house this minute, I would, but papa adores him, papa is crazy over him!”

“Oh!” shrieked her grandmother, and she fell in a swoon on the sofa.

“Agafya Timofyevna, my angel,” cried Anfisa Petrovna, “take my smelling-salts! Water, make haste, water!”

“Water, water!” shouted my uncle. “Mamma, mamma, calm yourself! I beg you on my knees to calm yourself! ...”

“You ought to be kept on bread and water and shut up in a dark room . . . you’re a murderess!” Miss Perepelitsyn, shaking with spite, hissed at Sashenka.

“I will be kept on bread and water, I am not afraid of anything!” cried Sashenka, moved to frenzy in her turn. “I will defend papa because he can’t defend himself. Who is he, who is your Foma Fomitch compared with papa? He eats papa’s bread and insults papa, the ungrateful creature. I would tear him to pieces, your Foma Fomitch! I’d challenge him to a duel and shoot him on the spot with two pistols! . . .”

“Sasha, Sasha,” cried my uncle in despair. “Another word and I am ruined, hopelessly ruined.”

“Papa,” cried Sashenka, flinging herself headlong at her father, dissolving into tears and hugging him in her arms, “papa, how can you ruin yourself like this, you so kind, and good, and merry and clever? How can you give in to that horrid ungrateful man, be his plaything and let him turn you into ridicule? Papa, my precious papa! ...”

She burst into sobs, covered her face with her hands and ran out of the room.

A fearful hubbub followed. Madame la Générale lay in a swoon. My uncle was kneeling beside her kissing her hands. Miss Perepelitsyn was wriggling about them and casting spiteful but triumphant glances at us. Anfisa Petrovna was moistening the old lady’s temples and applying her smelling-salts. Praskovya Ilyinitchna was shedding tears and trembling, Yezhevikin was looking for a corner to seek refuge in, while the governess stood pale and completely overwhelmed with terror. Mizintchikov was the only one who remained unchanged. He got up, went to the window and began looking out of it, resolutely declining to pay attention to the scene around him.

All at once Madame la Générale sat up, drew herself up and scanned me with a menacing eye.

“Go away!” she shouted, stamping her foot at me.

I must confess that this I had not in the least expected.

“Go away! Go out of the house! What has he come for? Don’t let me see a trace of him!”

“Mamma, mamma, what do you mean? Why, this is Seryozha,” my uncle muttered, shaking all over with terror. “Why, he has come to pay us a visit, mamma.”

“What Seryozha? Nonsense. I won’t hear a word. Go away! It’s Korovkin. I am convinced it is Korovkin. My presentiments never deceive me. He has come to turn Foma Fomitch out; he has been sent for with that very object. I have a presentiment in my heart. ... Go away, you scoundrel!”

“Uncle, if this is how it is,” I said, spluttering with honest indignation, “then excuse me, I’ll ...” And I reached after my hat.

“Sergey, Sergey, what are you about? . . . Well, this really is. . . . Mamma, this is Seryozha! . . . Sergey, upon my word!” he cried, racing after me and trying to take away my hat. “You are my visitor; you’ll stay, I wish it! She doesn’t mean it,” he went on in a whisper; “she only goes on like this when she is angry. . . . You only keep out of her sight just at first . . . keep out of the way and it will all pass over. She will forgive you, I assure you! She is good-natured, only she works herself up. You hear she takes you for Korovkin, but afterwards she will forgive you, I assure you. . . . What do you want?” he cried to Gavrila, who came into the room trembling with fear.

Gavrila came in not alone; with him was a very pretty peasant boy of sixteen who had been taken as a house serf on account of his good looks, as I heard afterwards. His name was Falaley. He was wearing a peculiar costume, a red silk shirt with embroidery at the neck and a belt of gold braid, full black velveteen breeches, and goatskin boots turned over with red. This costume was designed by Madame la Générale herself. The boy was sobbing bitterly, and tears rolled one after another from his big blue eyes.

“What’s this now?” cried my uncle. “What has happened? Speak, you ruffian!”

“Foma Fomitch told us to come here; he is coming after us himself,” answered the despondent Gavrila. “Me for an examination, while he . . .”

“He?”

“He has been dancing, sir,” answered Gavrila in a tearful voice.

“Dancing!” cried my uncle in horror.

“Dancing,” blubbered Falaley with a sob.

“The Komarinsky!”

“Yes, the Kom-a-rin-sky.”

“And Foma Fomitch found him?”

“Ye-es, he found me.”

“You’ll be the death of me!” cried my uncle. “I am done for!” And he clutched his head in both hands.

“Foma Fomitch!” Vidoplyasov announced, entering the room.

The door opened, and Foma Fomitch in his own person stood facing the perplexed company.

CHAPTER VI

OF THE WHITE BULL AND THE KOMARINSKY PEASANT

BEFORE I have the honour of presenting the reader with Foma Fomitch in person, I think it is absolutely essential to say a few words about Falaley and to explain what there was terrible in the fact of his dancing the Komarinsky and Foma Fomitch's finding him engaged in that light-hearted diversion. Falaley was a house serf boy, an orphan from the cradle, and a godson of my uncle's late wife. My uncle was very fond of him. That fact alone was quite sufficient to make Foma Fomitch, after he had settled at Stepantchikovo and gained complete domination over my uncle, take a dislike to the latter's favourite, Falaley. But Madame la Générale took a particular fancy to the boy, who, in spite of Foma Fomitch's wrath, remained upstairs in attendance on the family. Madame la Générale herself insisted upon it, and Foma gave way, storing up the injury — he looked on everything as an injury — in his heart and revenging it on every favourable occasion on my uncle, who was in no way responsible. Falaley was wonderfully good-looking. He had a girlish face, the face of a beautiful peasant girl. Madame la Generale petted and spoiled him, prized him as though he were a rare and pretty toy, and there was no saying which she loved best, her little curly black dog Ami or Falaley. We have already referred to his costume, which was her idea. The young ladies gave him pomatum, and it was the duty of the barber Kuzma to curl his hair on holidays. This boy was a strange creature. He could not be called a perfect idiot or imbecile, but he was so naive, so truthful and simple-hearted, that he might sometimes be certainly taken for a fool. If he had a dream, he would go at once to tell it to his master or mistress. He joined in the conversation of the gentlefolk without caring whether he was interrupting them. He would tell them things quite impossible to tell gentlefolks. He would dissolve into the most genuine tears when his mistress fell into a swoon or when his master was too severely scolded. He sympathised with every sort of distress. He would sometimes go up to Madame la Generale,

kiss her hands, and beg her not to be cross — and the old lady would magnanimously forgive him these audacities. He was sensitive in the extreme, kind-hearted, as free from malice as a lamb and as gay as a happy child. They gave him dainties from the dinner-table.

He always stood behind Madame la Generale's chair and was awfully fond of sugar. When he was given a lump of sugar he would nibble at it with his strong milk-white teeth, and a gleam of indescribable pleasure shone in his merry blue eyes and all over his pretty little face.

For a long time Foma Fomitch raged; but reflecting at last that he would get nothing by anger, he suddenly made up his mind to be Falaley's benefactor. After first pitching into my uncle for doing nothing for the education of the house serfs, he determined at once to set about training the poor boy in morals, good manners and French.

"What I" he would say in defence of his absurd idea (an idea not confined to Foma Fomitch, as the writer of these lines can testify), "what! he is always upstairs waiting on his mistress; one day, forgetting that he does not know French, she will say to him, for instance: "Donnay mooah mon mooshooar' — he ought to be equal to the occasion and able to do his duty even then!"

But it appeared not only that it was impossible to teach Falaley French, but that the cook Andron, the boy's uncle, who had disinterestedly tried to teach him to read Russian, had long ago given it up in despair and put the alphabet away on the shelf. Falaley was so dull at book-learning that he could understand absolutely nothing. Moreover, this led to further trouble. The house serfs began calling Falaley, in derision, a Frenchman, and old Gavrila, my uncle's valet, openly ventured to deny the usefulness of learning French. This reached Foma Fomitch's ears and, bursting with wrath, he made his opponent, Gavrila, himself learn French as a punishment. This was the origin of the whole business of teaching the servants French ^hich so exasperated Mr. Bahtcheyev. It was still worse in regard to manners. Foma was absolutely unable to train Falaley to suit his ideas, and in spite of his prohibition, the boy would go in to tell him his dreams in the morning, which Foma Fomitch considered extremely ill-mannered and familiar. But Falaley obstinately remained Falaley. My uncle was, of course, the first to suffer for all this.

"Do you know, do you know what he has done to-day?" Foma would exclaim, selecting a moment when all were gathered together in order to

produce a greater sensation. “Do you know what your systematic spoiling is coming to? To-day he gobbled up a piece of pie given him at the table; and do you know what he said of it? Come here, come here, silly fool; come here, idiot; come here, red face. ...”

Falaley would come up weeping and rubbing his eyes with both hands.

“What did you say when you greedily ate up your pie? Repeat it before everyone!”

Falaley would dissolve in bitter tears and make no answer.

“Then I’ll speak for you, if that’s how it is. You said, slapping yourself on your stuffed and vulgar stomach: ‘I’ve gobbled up the pie as Martin did the soap!’ Upon my word, Colonel, can expressions like that be used in educated society, still more in aristocratic society? Did you say it or not? Speak!”

“I di-id ...” Falaley would assent, sobbing.

“Well, then, tell me now, does Martin eat soap? Where have you seen a Martin who eats soap? Tell me, give me an idea of this phenomenal Martin!”

Silence.

“I am asking you,” Foma would persist, “who is this Martin? I want to see him, I want to make his acquaintance. Well, what is he? A registiy clerk, an astronomer, a provincial, a poet, an army captain, a serving man — he must have been something. Answer!’’

“A ser-er-ving ma-an,” Falaley would answer at last, still weeping.

“Whose? Who is his master?”

But Falaley was utterly unable to say who was his master. It would end, of course, in Foma Fomitch’s rushing out of the room in a passion, crying out that he had been insulted; Madame la Generate would show symptoms of an attack, while my uncle would curse the hour of his birth, beg everybody’s pardon, and for the rest of the day walk about on tiptoe in his own rooms.

As ill-luck would have it, on the day after the trouble over Martin and the soap, Falaley, who had succeeded in completely forgetting about Martin and all his woes of the previous day, informed Foma Fomitch as he took in his tea in the morning that he had had a dream about a white bull. This was the last straw! Foma Fomitch was moved to indescribable indignation, he promptly summoned my uncle and began upbraiding him for the vulgarity of the dream dreamed by his Faleley. This time severe steps were taken:

Falaley was punished, he had to kneel down in the corner. He was sternly forbidden to dream of such coarse rustic subjects.

“What I am angry at,” said Foma, “apart from the fact that he really ought not to dare to think of blurting out his dreams to me, especially a dream of a white bull — apart from that — you must agree, Colonel — what is the white bull but a proof of coarseness, ignorance and loutishness in your unkempt Falaley? As the thoughts are, so will the dreams be. Did I not tell you before that you would never make anything of him, and that he ought not to remain upstairs waiting upon the family? You will never, never develop that senseless peasant soul into anything lofty or poetical. Can’t you manage,” he went on, addressing Falaley, “can’t you manage to dream of something elegant, refined, genteel, some scene from good society, such as gentlemen playing cards or ladies walking in a lovely garden?”

Falaley promised he would be sure to dream next night of gentlemen or ladies walking in a lovely garden.

As he went to bed, Falaley prayed tearfully on the subject and wondered for a long time what he could do so as not to dream of the accursed white bull. But deceitful are the hopes of man. On waking up next morning, he remembered with horror that he had again been dreaming all night of the hateful white bull, and had not dreamed of even one lady walking in a lovely garden. This time the consequences were singular. Foma Fomitch positively declared that he did not believe in the possibility of such a coincidence, the possibility of such a repetition of a dream, and that Falaley was prompted to say this by someone of the household, perhaps even by the colonel himself on purpose to annoy Foma Fomitch. There was no end of an uproar, tears and rcproachcs. Madame la Générale was taken ill towards the evening, the whole household wore a dejected air. There was still a taint hope that the following, that is the third, night Falaley would be sure to have some dream of refined society. What was the universal indignation when for a whole week, every blessed night, Falaley went on dreaming of the white bull and nothing but the white bull. It was no use even to think of refined society.

But the most interesting point was that Falaley was utterly incapable of thinking of lying, of simply saying that he had dreamed not of the white bull, but of a carriage, for instance, full of ladies and Foma Fomitch. This was all the more strange since lying indeed would not have been so very sinful in so extreme a case. But Falaley was so truthful that he positively

could not tell a lie even if he wanted to. It was, indeed, not even suggested to him by anyone. They all knew that he would betray himself at the first moment, and Foma Fomitch would immediately detect him in lying. What was to be done? My uncle's position was becoming intolerable. Falaley was absolutely incorrigible. The poor boy was positively growing thinner from worry.

The housekeeper Malanya declared that he was bewitched, and sprinkled him with magic water. She was assisted in this compassionate and salutary operation by the tender-hearted Praskovya Ilyinitchna, but even that was no use. Nothing was of use!

"The deuce take the damned thing!" Falaley said. "The same dream every night! Every evening I pray, 'Don't let me dream of the white bull, don't let me dream of the white bull!' and there it is, there it is, the damned beast facing me, huge, with horns and such thick lips, oo-oo-oo!"

My uncle was in despair, but luckily Foma Fomitch seemed all at once to have forgotten about the white bull Of course no one believed that Foma Fomitch could forget a circumstance so important. Everyone assumed with terror that he was keeping the white bull in reserve, and would bring it out on the first suitable occasion. It appeared later on that Foma Fomitch had no thoughts to spare for the white bull at that moment. He had other business in hand, other cares. Other plans were maturing in his beneficent and fertile brain. That is why he let Falaley breathe in peace, and everyone else too had a respite. The boy grew gay again, and even began to forget what had happened; even the white bull began to visit him less and less frequently, though it still at times reminded him of its fantastic existence. In fact, everything would have gone well if there had been no such thing as the Komarinsky.

It must be noted that Falaley was an excellent dancer. Dancing was his chief accomplishment, even something like his vocation. He danced with vigour, with inexhaustible gaiety, and he was particularly fond of dancing the Komarinsky Peasant. Not that he was so much attracted by the frivolous and in any case inexplicable steps of that volatile peasant — no, he liked dancing the Komarinsky solely because to hear the Komarinsky and not dance to the tune was utterly beyond him. Sometimes in the evenings two or three of the footmen, the coachmen, the gardener who played the fiddle, and even some of the ladies of the servants' hall would gather together in a circle in some back yard as far away as possible from Foma Fomitch. Music

and dances would begin, and finally the Komarinsky would triumphantly come into its own. The orchestra consisted of two balalaikas, a guitar, a fiddle, and a tambourine, with which the postilion Mityushka was a capital hand. Falaley's condition was worth watching at such times: he would dance to complete oblivion of himself, to utter exhaustion, encouraged by the shouts and laughter of his audience. He would squeal, shout, laugh, clap his hands. He danced as though carried away by some intangible outside force with which he could not cope, and he struggled persistently to keep up with the continually increasing pace of the reckless tune as he tapped on the ground with his heels. These were minutes of real delight to him; and everything would have gone happily and merrily if rumours of the Komarinsky had not at last reached Foma Fomitch.

Foma Fomitch was petrified, and sent at once for the colonel.

"There is only one thing I wish to learn from you," Foma began, "have you positively sworn to be the ruin of that luckless idiot or not? In the first case I will stand aside at once; if not, then I . . ."

"But what is the matter? What has happened?" cried my uncle, alarmed.

"You ask what has happened? Do you know that he is dancing the Komarinsky?"

"Well . . . well, what of it?"

"Well, what of it!" shrieked Foma. "And you say that — you, their master, standing in a sense in the place of their father! But have you then a true idea of what the Komarinsky is? Do you know that that song describes a debauched peasant, attempting in a state of drunkenness the most immoral action? Do you know what sacrilege it is that vicious Little Russian is committing? He is trampling upon the most precious bonds and, so to say, stamping them under his big loutish boots, accustomed to tread only the floor of the village inn. And do you realise that you have wounded my moral feelings by your answer? Do you realise that you have insulted me personally by your answer? Do you understand that or not?"

"But, Foma; why, it's only a song, Foma. ..."

"You say only a song! And you are not ashamed that you own to me that you know that song — you, a member of honourable society, the father of honourable, innocent children and a colonel intp the bargain! Only a song! But I am certain that the song is drawn from real life. Only a song! But what decent man can without a blush of shame admit that he knows that song, that he has ever heard that song? What man could?"

“Well, but, you see, you know it yourself, Foma, since you ask about it,” my disconcerted uncle answered in the simplicity of his heart.

“What, I know it, I . . . P You have insulted me,” Foma Fomitch cried at once, leaping up from his chair and spluttering with fury.

He had never expected such a crushing answer.

I will not undertake to describe the wrath of Foma Fomitch. The colonel was ignominiously driven from the presence of the guardian of morality for the ill manners and tactlessness of his reply. But from that hour Foma Fomitch vowed to catch Falaley in the act of dancing the Komarinsky. In the evening, when everyone supposed he was busy at work, he stole out into the garden, went the round of the kitchen garden, and threaded his way into the hemp patch, from which there was a view in the distance of the back yard in which the dances took place. He stalked poor Falaley as a sportsman stalks a bird, picturing with relish the wigging he would, if he succeeded, give the whole household and the colonel in particular. His unwearying efforts were at last crowned with success. He had come upon the Komarinsky! It will be understood now why my uncle tore his hair when he saw Falaley weeping and heard Vidoplyasov announce Foma Fomitch, who so unexpectedly and at such a moment of perturbation was standing before us in person.

CHAPTER VII

FOMA FOMITCH

I SCRUTINISED this gentleman with intense curiosity.
Gavrila had been right in saying that he was an ugly little man. Foma was short, with light eyebrows and eyelashes and grizzled hair, with a hooked nose, and with little wrinkles all over his face. On his chin there was a big wart. He was about fifty. He came in softly with measured steps, with his eyes cast down. But yet the most insolent self-confidence was expressed in his face, and in the whole of his pedantic figure. To my astonishment, he made his appearance in a dressing-gown — of a foreign cut it is true, but still a dressing-gown — and he wore slippers too. The collar of his shirt unadorned by any cravat was a lay-down one a Venfant; this gave Foma Fomitch an extremely foolish look. He went up to an empty arm-chair, moved it to the table, and sat down in it without saying a word to anyone. All the hubbub, all the excitement that had been raging a minute before, vanished instantaneously. There was such a hush that one could have heard a pin drop. Madame la Générale became as meek as a lamb. The cringing infatuation of this poor imbecile for Foma Fomitch was apparent now. She fixed her eyes upon her idol as though gloating over the sight of him. Miss Perepelitsyn rubbed her hands with a simper, and poor Praskovya Ilyinitchna was visibly trembling with alarm. My uncle began bustling about at once.

“Tea, tea, sister! Only plenty of sugar in it, sister; Foma Fomitch likes plenty of sugar in his tea after his nap. You do like plenty of sugar, don’t you, Foma?”

“I don’t care for any tea just now!” Foma pronounced deliberately and with dignity, waving him off with a careworn air. “You always keep on about plenty of sugar.”

These words and Foma’s entrance, so incredibly ludicrous in its pedantic dignity, interested me extremely, i was curious to find out to what point, to what disregard of decency the insolence of this upstart little gentleman would go.

“Foma,” cried my uncle. “Let me introduce my nephew Sergey Alexandrovitch! He has just arrived.”

Foma Fomitch looked him up and down.

“I am surprised that you always seem to take pleasure in systematically interrupting me, Colonel,” he said after a significant silence, taking absolutely no notice of me. “One talks to you of something serious, and you . . . discourse ... of goodness knows what. . . . Have you seen Falaley?”

“I have, Foma. . . .”

“Ah, you have seen him. Well, I will show you him again though you have seen him; you can admire your handiwork ...ma moral sense. Come here, you idiot! come here, you Dutch-faced fool! Well, come along! Don’t be afraid!”

Falaley went up to him with his mouth open, sobbing and gulping back his tears. Foma Fomitch looked at him with relish.

“I called him a Dutch-faced fool with intention, Pavel Semyonitch,” he observed, lolling at his ease in his low chair and turning slightly towards Obnoskin, who was sitting next him. “And speaking generally, you know, I see no necessity for softening my expressions in any case. The truth should be the truth. And however you cover up filth it will still remain filth. Why trouble to soften it? It’s deceiving oneself and others. Only a silly worldly numskull can feel the need of such senseless conventions. Tell me — I submit it to your judgment — do you find anything lovely in that face? I mean, of course, anything noble, lovely, exalted, not just vulgar red cheeks.”

Foma Fomitch spoke quietly, evenly, and with a kind of majestic nonchalance.

“Anything lovely in him?” answered Obnoskin, with insolent carelessness. “I think that he is simply a good piece of roast beef — and nothing else.”

“Went up to the looking-glass and looked into it to-day,” Foma continued, pompously omitting the pronoun. “I am far from considering myself a beauty, but I could not help coming to the conclusion that there is something in these grey eyes which distinguished me from any Falaley. There is thought, there is life, there is intelligence in these eyes. It is not myself I am praising. I am speaking generally of our class. Now what do you think, can there be a scrap, a grain of soul in that living beefsteak? Yes, indeed, take note, Pavel Semyonitch, how these people, utterly devoid of

thought and ideal, and living by meat alone, always have revoltingly fresh complexions, coarsely and stupidly fresh! Would you like to know the level of his intellectual faculties. Hey, you image! Come nearer, let us admire you. Why are you gaping? Do you want to swallow a whale? Are you handsome? Answer, are you handsome?”

“I a-am!” answered Falaley, with smothered sobs.

Obnoskin roared with laughter. I felt that I was beginning to tremble with anger.

“Do you hear?” Foma went on, turning to Obnoskin in triumph. “Would you like to hear something more? I have come to put him through an examination. You see, Pavel Semyonitch, there are people who are desirous of corrupting and ruining this poor idiot. Perhaps I am too severe in my judgment, perhaps I am mistaken; but I speak from love of humanity. He was just now dancing the most improper of dances. That is of no concern to anyone here. But now hear for yourself. . . . Answer: what were you doing just now? Answer, answer immediately — do you hear?”

“I was da-ancing,” said Falaley, mastering his sobs.

“What were you dancing? What dance? Speak!”

“The Komarinsky. ...”

“The Komarinsky! And who was that Komarinsky? What was the Komarinsky? Do you suppose I can understand anything from that answer? Come, give us an idea. Who was your Komarinsky?”

“A pea-easant. ...”

“A peasant, only a peasant! I am surprised! A remarkable peasant, then! Then was it some celebrated peasant, if poems and dances are made about him? Come, answer!”

Foma could not exist without tormenting people, he played with his victim like a cat with a mouse; but Falaley remained mute, whimpering and unable to understand the question.

“Answer,” Foma persisted. “You are asked what sort of peasant was it? Speak! . . . Was he a seignorial peasant, a crown peasant, free, bond, industrial? There are ever so many sorts of peasants. ...”

“In-dus-tri-al. ...”

“Ah, industrial! Do you hear, Pavel Semyonitch? A new historical fact: the Komarinsky peasant was industrial. H’m. . . . Well, what did that industrial peasant do? For what exploits is he celebrated in song . . . and dance?”

The question was a delicate one, and since it was put to Falaley, a risky one too.

“Come . . . Though ...” Obnoskin began, glancing towards his mamma, who was beginning to wriggle on the sofa in a peculiar way.

But what was to be done? Foma Fomitch’s whims were respected as law.

“Upon my word, uncle, if you don’t suppress that fool he’ll . . . you see what he is working up to — Falaley will blurt out some nonsense, I assure you ...” I whispered to my uncle, who was utterly distracted and did not know what line to take.

“You had really better, Foma ..,” he began. “Here, I want to introduce to you, Foma, my nephew, a young man who is studying mineralogy.”

“I “beg you, Colonel, not to interrupt me with your mineralogy, a subject of which, as far as I am aware, you know nothing, and others perhaps little more. I am not a baby. He will answer me that this peasant, instead of working for the welfare of his family, has been drinking till he is tipsy, has sold his coat for drink, and is running about the street in an inebriated condition. That is, as is well known, the subject of the poem that sings the praises of drink. Don’t be uneasy, he knows now what he has to answer. Come, answer: what did that peasant do? Come, I have prompted you, I have put the words into your mouth. What I want is to hear it from you yourself, what he did, for what he was famous, how he gained the immortal glory of being sung by the troubadours. Well?”

The luckless Falaley looked round him in misery and, not knowing what to say, opened and shut his mouth like a carp hauled out of the water on to the sand.

“I am ashamed to sa-ay!” he bellowed at last in utter despair.

“Ah, ashamed to say!” bellowed Foma in triumph. “See, that’s the answer I have wrung out of him, Colonel! Ashamed to say, but not ashamed to do. That’s the morality which you have sown, which has sprung up and which you are now . . . watering; but it is useless to waste words! Go to the kitchen now, Falaley. I’ll say nothing to you now, out of regard for my audience, but to-day, to-day you will be severely and rigorously punished. If not, if this time they put you before me, you may stay here and entertain your betters with the Komarinsky while I will leave this house to-day! That’s enough. I have spoken, you can go!”

“Come, I think you really are severe ..,” mumbled Obnoskin.

“Just so, just so, just so,” my uncle began crying out, but he broke off and subsided. Foma looked gloomily askance at him.

“I wonder, Pavel Semyonitch,” he went on, “what all our contemporary writers, poets, learned men and thinkers are about. How is it they pay no attention to what songs are being sung by the Russian people and to what songs they are dancing? What have the Pushkins, the Lermontovs, the Borozdins been about all this time? I wonder at them. The people dance the Komarinsky, the apotheosis of drunkenness, while they sing of forget-me-nots! Why don’t they write poems of a more moral tone for popular use, why don’t they fling aside their forget-me-nots? It’s a social question. Let them depict a peasant, but a peasant made genteel, so to say, a villager and not a peasant; let them paint me the village sage in his simplicity, maybe even in his bark shoes — I don’t object even to that — but brimming over with the virtues which — I make bold to say — some over-lauded Alexander of Macedon may envy. I know Russia and Russia knows me, that is why I say this. Let them portray that peasant, weighed down maybe with a family and grey hair, in a stuffy hut, hungry, too, maybe, but contented; not repining, but blessing his poverty, and indifferent to the rich man’s gold. Let the rich man at last with softened heart bring him his gold; let, indeed, in this the virtues of the peasant be united with the virtues of his master, perhaps a grand gentleman. The villager and the grand gentleman so widely sparatcd in social grade are made one at last in virtue — that is an exalted thought! But what do we see? On one side forget-me-nots, and on the other the peasant dashing out of the pothouse and running about the street in a dishevelled condition! What is there poetic in that? Tell me, pray, what is there to admire in that? Where is the wit? Where is the grace? Where is the morality? I am amazed at it!”

“I am ready to pay you a hundred roubles for such words,” said Yezhevikin, with an enthusiastic air. “And you know the bald devil will try and get it out of me,” he whispered on the sly. “Flatter away, flatter away!”

“H’m, yes . . . you’ve put that very well,” Obnoskin pronounced.

“Exactly so, exactly so,” cried my uncle, who had been listening with the deepest attention and looking at me with triumph. “What a subject has come up!” he whispered, rubbing his hands. “A topic of many aspects, dash it all! Foma Fomitch, here is my nephew,” he added, in the overflow of his feelings. “He is engaged in literary pursuits too, let me introduce him.”

As before, Foma Fomitch paid not the slightest attention to my uncle's introduction.

"For God's sake, don't introduce me any more! I entreat you in earnest," I whispered to my uncle, with a resolute air.

"Ivan Ivanitch!" Foma began, suddenly addressing Mizintchikov and looking intently at h'm, "we have just been talking. What is your opinion?"

"Mine? You are asking me?" Mizintchikov responded in surprise, looking as though he had only just woken up.

"Yes, you. I am asking you because I value the cfpinion of really clever people, and not the pioblematic wiseacres who are only clever because they are being continually introduced as clever people, as learned people, and are sometimes sent for expressly to be made a show ot or something of the sort."

This thrust was aimed directly at me. And yet there was no doubt that though Foma Fomitch took no notice whatever of me, he had begun this whole conversation concerning literature entirely for my benefit, to dazzle, to annihilate, to crush at the first step the elever and learned young man from Petersburg. I at any rate had no doubt of it.

"If you want to know my opinion, I ... I agree with your opinion," answered Mizintchikov listlessly and reluctantly.

"You always agree with me! It's positively wearisome,"

replied Foma. "I tell you frankly, Pavel Semyonitch," he went on, after a brief silence again addressing Obnoskin, "if I respect the immortal Karamzin it is not for his history, not for Mar fa Posadnitsa, not for Old and New Russia, but just for having written Frol Silin; it is a noble epic! It is a purely national product, and will live for ages and ages! a most lofty epic!"

"Just so, just so! a lofty epoch! Frol Silin, a benevolent man! I remember, I have read it. He bought the freedom of two girls, too, and then looked towards heaven and wept. A very lofty trait," my uncle chimed in, beaming with satisfaction.

My poor uncle! he never could resist taking part in an intellectual conversation. Foma gave a malicious smile, but he remained silent.

"They write very interestingly, though, even now," Anfisa Petrovna intervened discreetly. "The Mysteries of Brussels, for instance."

"I should not say so," observed Foma, as it were regretfully. "I was lately reading one of the poems ... not up to much! 'Forget-me-nots'. Of

contemporary writers, if you will, the one I like best of all is ‘Scribbler’, a light pen!”

“‘Scribbler’!” cried Anfisa Petrovna. “Is that the man who writes letters in the magazines? Ah, how enchanting it is, what playing with words!”

“Precisely, playing with words; he, so to speak, plays with his pen. An extraordinary lightness of style.”

“Yes, but he is a pedant!” Obnoskin observed carelessly.

“Yes, a pedant he is, I don’t dispute it; but a charming pedant, a graceful pedant! Of course, not one of his ideas would stand serious criticism, but one is carried away by his lightness! A babbler, I agree, but a charming babbler, a graceful babbler. Do you remember, for instance, in one of his articles he mentions that he has his own estates?”

“Estates!” my uncle caught up. “That’s good! In what province?”

Foma stopped, looking fixedly at my uncle, and went on in the same tone:

“Tell me in the name of common sense, of what interest is it to me, the reader, to know that he has his own estates? If he has — I congratulate him on it! But how charmingly, how jestingly, it is described! He sparkles with wit, he splashes with wit, he boils over? He is a Narzan of wit! Yes, that is the way to write! I fancy I should write just like that, if I were to consent to write for magazines. ...”

“Perhaps you would do even better,” Yezhevikin observed respectfully.

“There is positively something musical in the language,” my uncle put in.

Foma Fomitch lost patience at last.

“Colonel,” he said, “is it not possible to ask you — with all conceivable delicacy of course — not to interfere with us, but to allow us to finish our conversation in peace. You cannot offer an opinion in our conversation! You cannot. Don’t disturb our agreeable literary chat. Look after your land, drink your tea, but . . . leave literature alone. It will lose nothing by it, I assure you — I assure you!”

This was surpassing the utmost limit of impudence! I did not know what to think.

“Why, you yourself, Foma, said it was musical,” my uncle brought out in confusion and distress.

“Quite so, but I spoke with a knowledge of the subject, I spoke appropriately; while you ...”

“To be sure, but we spoke with intellect,” put in Yezhevikin, wriggling round Foma Fomitch. “We have just a little intelligence, though we may have to borrow some; just enough to run a couple of government departments and we might manage a third, if need be — that’s all we can boast of!”

“So it seems I have been talking nonsense again,” said my uncle in conclusion, and he smiled his good-natured smile.

“You admit it, anyway,” observed Foma.

“It’s all right, it’s all right, Foma, I am not angry. I know that you pull me up like a friend, like a relation, like a brothei. I have myself allowed you to do it, begged you to, indeed. It’s a good thing. It’s for my benefit. I thank you for it and will profit by it.”

My patience was exhausted. All that I had hitherto heard about Foma Fomitch had seemed to me somewhat exaggerated. Now when I saw it all for myself, my astonishment was beyond all bounds. I could not believe my senses; I could not understand such impudence, such insolent domineering on one side and such voluntary slavery, such credulous good nature on the other. Though, indeed, my uncle himself was confused by such impudence. That was evident ... I was burning with desire to come to grips with Foma, to do battle with him, to be rude to him in some way, in as startling a fashion as possible — and then let come what may! This idea excited me. I looked for an opportunity, and completely ruined the brim of my hat while I waited for it. But the opportunity did not present itself. Foma absolutely refused to notice me.

“You are right, perfectly right, Foma,” my uncle went on, doing his utmost to recover himself, and to smoothe over the unpleasantness of what had been said before. “What you say is true, Foma. I thank you for it. One must know the subject before one discusses it. I am sorry! It is not the first time I have been in the same predicament. Only fancy, Sergey, on one occasion I was an examiner . . . you laugh! But there it is! I really was an examiner, and that was all about it. I was invited to an institution, to be present at an examination, and they set me down together with the examiners, as a sign of respect, there was an empty seat. So, I will own to you, I was frightened, I was positively alarmed, I do not know a single science. What was I to do? I thought that in another minute they would drag me myself to the black board! Well, what then? Nothing happened, it went off all right, I even asked questions myself; who was Noah? On the whole

they answered splendidly; then we had lunch and toasted enlightenment in champagne. It was a fine school!”

Foma Fomitch and Obnoskin burst into roars of laughter.

“Indeed, I laughed myself afterwards,” cried my uncle, laughing in a most good-natured way and delighted that general cheerfulness was restored. “Yes, Foma, here goes! I will amuse you all by telling you how I put my foot in it once. . . . Only fancy, Sergey, we were staying at Krasnogorsk ...”

“Allow me to inquire, Colonel, will you be long in telling your story?” Foma interposed.

“Oh, Foma! Why, it is the most delightful story, enough to make one split with laughter; you only listen, it is good, it really is good. I’ll tell you how I put my foot in it.”

“I always listen with pleasure to your stories when they are of that sort,” Obnoskin pronounced, yawning.

“There is no help for it, we must listen,” Foma decided.

“But upon my word it is good, Foma, it really is. I want to tell you how I put my foot into it on one occasion, Anfisa Petrovna. You listen too, Sergey, it is an edifying story indeed. We were staying at Krasnogorsk,” my uncle began, beaming with pleasure, talking with nervous haste, and falling into innumerable parentheses as he always did when he was beginning to tell some story for the pleasure of his audience. “As soon as we arrived, the same evening we went to the theatre. There was a first-rate actress, Kuropatkina; she afterwards ran away with the cavalry captain Zvyerkov and did not finish the play she was acting: so they let down the curtain. . . . This Zvyerkov was a beast, both for drinking and playing cards, and not that he was a drunkard, but simply ready to join his comrades at festive moments. But when he did get really drunk then he forgot everything, where he lived, in what country, and what his name was. Absolutely everything, in fact: but he was a very fine fellow really. . . . Well, I was sitting in the theatre. In the interval I got up, and I ran across a comrade called Kornouhov. ... A unique fellow, I assure you. We had not see each other for six years, it is true. Well, he had stayed in the company and was covered with crosses. I have heard lately — he’s an actual civil councillor; he transferred to the civil service and worked his way up to a high grade. . . . Well, of course, we were delighted. One thing and another. In the box next to us were three ladies; the one on the left was the ugliest woman in the

world. . . . Afterwards I found out that she was a splendid woman, the mother of a family, and the happiness of her husband. . . . Well, so I like a fool blurt out to Komouhov: T say, old man, can you tell me who that scarecrow is?"Who do you mean?"Why, that one."That's my cousin.' Tfoo, the devil! judge of my position! To put myself right: 'Not that one,' I said. 'What eyes you've got! I mean the one who is sitting there, who is that?"That's my sister.' Tfoo, plague take it all! And his sister, as luck would have it, was a regular rosebud, a sweet little thing; dressed up like anything — brooches, gloves, bracelets, in fact a perfect cherub. Afterwards she married a very fine fellow called Pyhtin; she eloped with him, it was a runaway match; but now it is all right, and they are very well off; their parents are only too delighted! Well, so I cried out, 'Oh, no!' not knowing how to get out of it, 'not that one, the one in the middle, who is she?' Tn the middle? Well, my boy, that's my wife.' . . . And she, between ourselves, was a perfect sugarplum. I felt that I could have eaten her up at one mouthful, I was so delighted with her. . . . 'Well,' I said, 'have you ever seen a fool? Here is one facing you, and here's his head; cut it off, don't spare itl' He laughed. Afterwards he introduced them to me and must have told them, the rascal. They were in fits of laughter over something! And I must say I never spent an evening more merrily. So you see, Foma, old man, how one can put one's foot in it! Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

But it was no use my poor uncle laughing; in vain he looked round the company with his kind and good-humoured eyes; a dead silence was the response that greeted his light-hearted story. Foma Fomitch sat in gloomy dumbness and all the others followed his example; only Obnoskin gave a faint smile, foreseeing the baiting my uncle would get. My uncle was embarrassed and flushed crimson. This was what Foma desired.

"Have you finished?" he asked at last, turning with dignity to the embarrassed story-teller.

"Yes, Foma."

"And are you satisfied?"

"How do you mean, satisfied?" asked my poor uncle miserably.

"Are you happier now? Are you pleased at having broken up the pleasant literary conversation of your friends by interrupting them and so satisfying your petty vanity?"

"Oh, come, Foma, I wanted to amuse you all, and you ..."

“Amuse!” cried Foma, suddenly becoming extraordinarily heated; “but you are only able to depress us, not amuse us. Amuse! but do you know that your story was almost immoral! I say nothing of its impropriety, that is self-evident. . . . You informed us just now with rare coarseness of feeling that you laughed at innocence, at an honourable lady, simply because she had not the honour to please you, and you wanted to make us, us laugh, that is applaud you, that is applaud a coarse and improper action, and all because you are the master of this house! You can do as you like, Colonel, you can seek out toadies, flatterers, sycophants, you can even send for them from distant parts and so increase your retinue to the detriment of straightforwardness and frank nobility of soul, but never will Foma Opiskin be your toady, your flatterer, your sycophant! I can assure you of that, if of anything. ...”

“Oh, Foma! You misunderstand me, Foma.”

“No, Colonel; I have seen through you for a long time, I know you through and through. You are devoured by boundless vanity. You have pretensions to an incomparable keenness of wit, and forget that wit is blunted by pretension. You . . .”

“Oh, stop, Foma, for God’s sake! Have some shame, if only before people!”

“It’s sad, you know, to see all this, Colonel, and it’s im-

possible to be silent when one sees it. I am poor, I am living at the expense of your mother. It may be expected, perhaps, that I should flatter you by my silence, and I don’t care for any milksop to take me for your toady! Possibly when I came into this room just now I intentionally accentuated my truthful candour, was forced to be intentionally rude, just because you yourself put me into such a position. You are too haughty with me, Colonel, I may be taken for your slave, your toady. Your pleasure is to humiliate me before strangers, while I am really your equal — your equal in every respect. Perhaps I am doing you a favour in living with you, and not you doing me one. I am insulted, so I am forced to sing my own praises — that’s natural I I cannot help speaking, I must speak, I am bound at once to protest, and that is why I tell you straight out that you are phenomenally envious. You see, for instance, someone in a simple friendly conversation unconsciously reveals his knowledge, his reading, his taste, and so you are annoyed, you can’t sit still. ‘Let me display my knowledge and my taste,’ you think! And what taste have you, if you will allow me to ask? You know

as much about art — if you will excuse my saying so, Colonel — as a bull about beef! That's harsh and rude, I admit; anyway it is straightforward and just. You won't hear that from your flatterers, Colonel.'

"Oh, Foma! ..."

"It is 'Oh, Foma,' to be sure. The truth is not a feather bed, it seems. Very well, then, we will speak later about this, but now let me entertain the company a little. You can't be the only one to distinguish yourself all the time. Pavel Semyonitch, have you seen this sea monster in human form? I have been observing him for a long time. Look well at him; why, he would like to devour me whole, at one gulp."

He was speaking of Gavrila. The old servant was standing at the door, and certainly was looking on with distress at the scolding of his master.

"I want to entertain you, too, with a performance, Pavel Semyonitch. Come here, you scarecrow, come here! Condescend to approach us a little nearer, Gavrila Ignatitch! Here you see, Pavel Semyonitch, is Gavrila; as a punishment for rudeness he is studying the French dialect. Like Orpheus, I soften the manners of these parts not only with songs but with the French dialect. Come, Mossoo Frenchy — he can't bear to be called Mossoo — do you know your lesson?"

"I have learnt it," said Gavrila, hanging his head.

''Well, Parlay — voo — fransay?''

"Vee, moossyu, zhe — le — pari — on — peu. ..."

I don't know whether it was Gavrila's mournful face as he uttered the French phrase, or whether they were all aware of Foma's desire that they should laugh, but anyway they all burst into a roar of laughter as soon as Gavrila opened his lips. Even Madame la Générale deigned to be amused. Anfisa Petrovna, sinking back on the sofa, shrieked, hiding her face behind her fan. What seemed most ludicrous was that Gavrila, seeing what his examination was being turned into, could not restrain himself from spitting and commenting reproachfully: "To think of having lived to such disgrace in my old age!"

Foma Fomitch was startled.

"What? What did you say? So you think fit to be rude?"

"No, Foma Fomitch," Gavnla replied with dignity. "My words were no rudeness, and it's not for me, a serf, to be rude to you, a gentleman born. But every man bears the image of God upon him, His image and semblance. I am sixty-three years old. My father remembers Pugatchev, the monster,

and my grandfather helped his master, Matvey Nikititch — God grant him the kingdom of heaven — to hang Pugatchev on an aspen tree, for which my father was honoured beyond all others by our late master, Afanasy Matveyitch: he was his valet, and ended his life as butler. As for me, Foma Fomitch, sir, though I am my master's bondman, I have never known such a shame done me from my birth upward till now."

And at the last word Gavrila spread out his hands and hung his head. My uncle was watching him uneasily.

"Come, that's enough, Gavrila," he cried. "No need to say more, that's enough!"

"Never mind, never mind," said Foma, turning a little pale and giving a forced smile. "Let him speak, these are the fruits of your . . ."

"I will tell you everything," said Gavrila with extraordinary fervour, "I will conceal nothing! You may bind the hands, but there is no binding the tongue. Though I may seem beside you, Foma Fomitch, a low man, in fact a slave, yet I can feel insulted! Service and obedience I am always bound to give you, because I am born a slave and must do my duty in fear and trembling. You sit writing a book, it's my duty not to let you be interrupted — that is my real duty. Any service that is needed I am pleased to do. But in my old age to bleat in some outlandish way and be put to shame before folk! Why, I can't go into the servants' room now: 'You are a Frenchyl' they say, 'a Frenchy!' No, Foma Fomitch, sir, it's not only a fool like me, but all good folks have begun to say the same: that you have become now a wicked man and that our master is nothing but a little child before you, that though you are a gentleman by birth and a general's son, and yourself may be near being a general too, yet you are as wicked as a real fury must be."

Gavrila had finished. I was beside myself with delight. Foma Fomitch sat pale with rage in the midst of the general discomfiture and seemed unable to recover from Gavrila's sudden attack upon him; he seemed at that moment to be deliberating how far his wrath should carry him. At last the outburst followed.

"What, he dares to be rude to me — me! but this is mutiny!" shrieked Foma, and he leapt up from his chair.

Madame la Générale followed his example, clasping her hands. There was a general commotion, my uncle rushed to turn the culprit out, "Put him in fetters, put him in fetters!" cried Madame la G£nerale. "Take him to the

town at once and send him for a soldier, Yegorushka, or you shall not have my blessing. Fix the fetters on him at once, and send him for a soldier."

"What!" cried Foma. "Slave! Lout! Hamlet! He dares to be rude to me! He, he, a rag to wipe my boots! He dares to call me a fury!"

I slipped forward with unusual determination.

"I must confess that in this affair I am completely of Gavrila's opinion," I said, looking Foma Fomitch straight in the face and trembling with excitement.

He was so taken aback by this onslaught that for the first minute he seemed unable to believe his ears.

"What's this now?" he cried out at last, pouncing upon me in a frenzy, and fixing his little bloodshot eyes upon me. "Why, who are you?"

"Foma Fomitch ..," my uncle, utterly distracted, began, "this is Seryozha, my nephew. . . ."

"The learned gentleman!" yelled Foma. "So he's the learned gentleman! Liberie — egahte — fratermte. Journal des Debuts! No, my friend, you won't take me in! I am not such a fool. This isn't Petersburg, you won't impose upon us. And I spit on your des Debats. You have your des Debats, but to us that's all fiddlesticks, young man! Learned! You know as much as I have forgotten seven times over. So much for your learning!"

If they had not held him back I believe he would have fallen upon me with his fists.

"Why, he is drunk," I said, looking about me in bewilderment.

"Who, I?" cried Foma, in a voice unlike his own.

"Yes, you!"

"Drunk?"

"Yes, drunk."

This was more than Foma could endure. He uttered a screech as though he were being murdered and rushed out of the room. Madame la Générale seemed desirous of falling into a swoon, but reflected that it would be better to run after Foma Fomitch. She was followed by all the others, and last of all by my uncle. When I recovered myself and looked round I saw in the room no one but Yezhevikin. He was smiling and rubbing his hands.

"You promised just now to tell me about the Jesuits," he said in an insinuating voice.

"What?" I asked, not understanding what he was talking about.

“About the Jesuits, you promised just now to tell me . . . some little anecdote. ...”

I ran out into the veranda and from there into the garden. My head was going round. . . .

CHAPTER VIII

A DECLARATION OF LOVE

I WANDERED about the garden for about a quarter of an hour, feeling irritated and extremely dissatisfied with myself, and deliberating what I should do now. The sun was setting. Suddenly at a tuining into a dark avenue I met Nastenka face to face. She had tears in her eyes, in her hand a handkerchief with which she was wiping them.

“I was looking for you,” she said.

“And I for you,” I answered. “Tell me, am I in a madhouse?”

“Certainly not in a madhouse,” she answered resentfully, with an intent glance at me.

“Well, if that’s so, what’s the meaning of it all? For Christ’s sake give me some advice. Where has my uncle gone now? Can I go to him? I am very glad that I have met you; perhaps you will be able to suggest what I ought to do.”

“No, better not go to him. I have just come away from them.”

“Why, where are they?”

“Who knows? Perhaps by now they have run into the kitchen garden again,” she said irritably.

“Into the kitchen garden!”

“Why, last week, Foma Fomitch began shouting that he wouldn’t stay in the house, and all at once he ran into tho kitchen garden, found a spade in the shed and began digging the beds. We were all amazed, and wondered whether he hadn’t gone out of his mind. That I may not be reproached for doing nothing for my keep,’ said he, ‘here I will dig and pay for the bread I have eaten, and then I will go away. That’s what you have driven me to.’ And then they all began crying and almost falling on their knees before him; they took the spade away from him; but he would go on digging; he dug up all the turnips, that was all he did. They humoured him once, he may do it again. That would be just like him.”

“And you . . . you tell that with such coolness!” I cried out, with intense indignation.

She looked at me with flashing eyes.

“Forgive me, I really don’t know what I am saying! Listen! do you know what I’ve come here for?”

“N-no,” she answered, flushing crimson, and some painful feeling was reflected in her charming face.

“You must excuse me,” I went on. “I am upset, I feel that this is not how I ought to have begun speaking of this . . . especially with you. . . . But never mind! To my thinking, openness in such matters is best. I confess . . . that is, I meant to say . . . you know my uncle’s design? He has told me to ask for your hand. ...”

“Oh, what nonsense! don’t speak of it, please,” she said, hurriedly interrupting me and flushing crimson.

I was disconcerted.

“How nonsense? But he wrote to me, you see.”

“So he wrote to you?” she asked eagerly. “Oh, what a man! How he promised that he would not write! What nonsense! Good heavens, what nonsense!”

“Forgive me,” I muttered, not knowing what to say. “Perhaps I have acted incautiously, crudely . . . but, you see, it’s such a moment! Only think, goodness knows what’s going on around us. . . .”

“Oh, for God’s sake don’t apologise! Believe me that it is painful for me to hear this apart from that, and yet, do you know, I wanted to speak to you myself, to find out something. . . . Oh, how vexatious! So he really wrote to you? That’s what I was most afraid of! My God, what a man he is! And you believed him and galloped here full speed? Well, that’s the last straw!”

She did not conceal her annoyance. My position was not an attractive one.

“I must confess I did not expect ...” I blurted out in the utmost confusion, “such a turn ... I expected, on the contrary . . .”

“Ah, so that’s what you expected? ..,” she brought out with light irony, biting her lip. “And do you know, you must show me the letter he wrote.”

“Very good.”

“And please don’t be angry with me, don’t be offended; I have trouble enough without that!” she said in an imploring voice, though a mocking smile faintly gleamed on her pretty hps.

“Oh, please don’t take me for a fool,” I cried hotly. “But perhaps you are prejudiced against me, perhaps someone has spoken against me? Perhaps

you say this because I put my foot in it just now? But that is nothing, I assure you. I know what a fool I must look to you now. Don’t laugh at me, please! I don’t know what I am saying, and it is all because I am twenty-two, damn it.”

“Oh, mercy on us, why?”

“You ask why? Anyone who is twenty-two, you know, has it written in his face; as I had, for instance, when I bounced out just now in the middle of the room, or as when I stand before you now. . . . It’s a damnable age!”

“Oh, no, no!” answered Nastenka, hardly able to restrain her laughter. “I am sure that you are kind and nice and clever, and I say that sincerely, I do really! But . . . you are only very vain. You may get over that in time.”

“I fancy I am only as vain as I ought to be.”

“Oh, no. Think how embarrassed you were just now, and what for? Because you stumbled as you came in! ... What right had you to turn into ridicule your good generous uncle who has done you so much kindness? Why did you try to turn the laugh against him when you were laughable yourself? That was horrid, shameful I It does not do you credit, and I must own I disliked you very much at that minute, so there!”

“That’s true! I was a blockhead! more than that — I did a mean thing! You noticed it, and that is my punishment. Abuse me, laugh at me, but listen; perhaps you will change your opinion of me in the end,” I added, carried away by a strange feeling. “You know so little of me as yet; afterwards when you know more of me, then . . . perhaps ...”

“For God’s sake let us stop this conversation!” cried Nastenka, with visible impatience.

“Very well, very well, let us stop! But . . . where can I see you?”

“Where can you see me?”

“Why, you know, this cannot be the last word we have to say to each other, Nastasya Yevgrafovna! For God’s sake, let me meet you again to-day, for instance. But it’s already getting dark. So if it is anyhow possible let it be to-morrow early, I will ask to be called earlier on purpose. You know there’s an arbour over there by the pond. You see, I remember it, I know the way. I used to stay here when I was little.”

“Meet you! What for? Why, we are talking now.”

“But I know nothing yet, Nastasya Yevgrafovna, I will first find out everything from my uncle. Why, he is bound to tell me everything now. And then, perhaps, I shall have something very important to tell you. ...”

“No, no! You mustn’t, you mustn’t!” cried Nastenka. “Let us end it all at once now, so that we may never think of it again. And don’t go to that arbour for nothing; I assure you I shall not go. And please put all this nonsense out of your head — I beg you in earnest. ...”

“So then uncle has behaved like a madman to me!” I cried in an excess of insufferable vexation. “Why did he send for me? But listen, what is that noise?”

We were close to the house; from the open windows came the sounds of shrieking and extraordinary outcries.

“My God!” she said, turning pale, “again! I foresaw it would be so!”

“You foresaw it? Nastasya Yevgrafovna, one more question. Of course I have not the least right to do so, but I venture to put this last question to you for the good of us all. Tell me —

and I will keep it secret to the grave — tell me frankly: is my uncle in love with you or not?”

“Oh! Please, please put that nonsense out of your head once for all,” she cried, flushing crimson with anger. “And you, too! If he were in love with me, he wouldn’t have wanted to have married me to you,” she added with a bitter smile. “And what put that idea into your head? Don’t you know what the trouble’s about? Do you hear those shouts?”

“But. . . . It’s Foma Fomitch. . . .”

“Yes, of course it is Foma Fomitch; but now the trouble is over me because they are saying the same thing as you, the same senseless thing; they, too, suspect that he is in love with me. And as I am poor and of no consequence, and as it costs nothing to throw dirt on me and they want to marry him to someone else, they are insisting that he should send me home to my father to make things sure. And when they talk to’him of that he flies into a rage at once; he’s ready to tear Foma Fomitch to pieces even. They are quarrelling about that now; I feel that it is about that.”

“So that’s the truth! So he really is going to marry that Tatyana, then.”

“That Tatyana?”

“Yes, that silly fool!”

“Not a silly fool at all! She is good; you have no right to talk like that! She has a noble heart, nobler than many other people. It’s not her fault that she is unfortunate.”

“Forgive me. Supposing you are quite right about that, yet aren’t you mistaken about the chief point? Tell me, how is it, then, that they make your

father welcome, as I noticed? Why, if they were so set against you as you say and were turning you out, they would be angry with him too, and would give him a cold welcome."

"Why, don't you see what my father is doing for my sake? He is playing the fool before them! He is received just because he has succeeded in ingratiating himself with Foma Fomitch; and as Foma Fomitch was a buffoon himself, you see it flatters him to have buffoons about him now. For whose sake do you suppose my father does it? He does it for me, only for me. He wants nothing; he wouldn't bow down to anyone for himself. He may be very absurd in some people's eyes, but he is a noble man, the noblest of men! He thinks — goodness knows why, and certainly not because I get a good salary here, I assure you — he thinks that it is best for me to stay here in this house;

but now I have quite brought him round. I wrote to him firmly. He has come on purpose to take me; and if it comes to extremes, to-morrow. For things have got beyond everything; they are ready to tear me to pieces, and I am certain that they are quarrelling about me now. They are at him, on my account, they will be the death of him! And he is like a father to me — do you hear? more even than my own father. I won't stay to see it. I know more than other people. To-morrow, to-morrow I am going! Who knows: perhaps that will make them put off, if only for a time, his marriage to Tatyana Ivanovna. . . . Here I have told you all about it now. Tell him this, because I can't speak to him now; we arc watched, especially by that Perepelitsyn woman. Tell him not to worry about me, tell him I would rather eat black bread and live in my father's hut than be the cause of his sufferings here. I am a poor girl, and I ought to live like a poor girl. But, my God, what an uproar! What shouting! What is happening? Yes, come what may I shall go in! I will tell them all this straight to their faces myself, whatever happens! I ought to do it! Good-bye."

She ran away. I remained standing on the same spot, fully conscious of the absurdity of the part it had just been my lot to play, and completely puzzled to think how it would all be settled. I was sorry for the poor girl, and I was afraid for my uncle. All at once I found Gavrila at my side; he was still holding the exercise book in his hand.

"Please come to your uncle," he said in a dejected voice.

I pulled myself together.

"To my uncle? Where is he? What's happening to him now?"

“In the tea-room. Where your honour had tea this afternoon.”

“Who is with him?”

“His honour’s alone. He is waiting.”

‘‘For whom? For me?”

“He has sent for Foma Fomitch. Happy days have come for us,” he added, with a deep sigh.

“Foma Fomitch? H’m! Where are the others? Where’s your mistress?”

“In her own apartments. Her honour’s fallen into a swoon, and now she is lying unconscious and crying.”

Conversing in this way, we reached the veranda. It was almost completely dark outside. My uncle really was alone in the very room in which my encounter with Foma Fomitch had taken place, and he was striding up and down it. There were lighted candles on the tables. He was pale and breathing hard; his hands were trembling, and from time to time a nervous shudder ran over his whole frame.

CHAPTER IX

YOUR EXCELLENCY

“A >f Y dear boy, it’s all over, it’s all settled,” he pronounced IVXin a tragic half-whisper.

“Uncle,” I said, “I heard shouts and uproar.”

“Yes, my boy, shouts there were; shouts of all sorts. Mamma is in a swoon, and everything is upside down now. But I have made up my mind, and shall insist on my own way. I am afraid of no one now, Seryozha. I want to show them that I, too, have a will of my own, and I will show them! And so I have sent for you on purpose that you may help me show them. . . . My heart is broken, Seryozha . . . but I ought, I am bound to act with severity. Justice is inexorable.”

“But whatever has happened, uncle?”

“I am parting with Foma,” my uncle pronounced in a resolute voice.

“Uncle,” I cried, delighted, “you could have thought of nothing better! And if I can assist in any way to carry out your decision . . . make use of me now and always.”

“Thank you, my boy, thank you! But now it is all settled. I am waiting for Foma, I have already sent for him. Either he or I. We must part. Either Foma leaves this house to-morrow or I swear I’ll throw up everything and go into the Hussars again. They will take me and give me a division. Away with all this bobbery! A fresh start in every way now. What have you got that French exercise book for?” he cried furiously, addressing Gavrila. “Away with it! Burn it, stamp on it, tear it to pieces! I am your master, and I order you not to learn French. You can’t disobey me, you dare not, for I am your master, and not Foma Fomitch!”

“I thank Thee, 0 Lord!” Gavrila muttered to himself.

Evidently things had got beyond a joke.

“My dear,” my uncle went on, with deep feeling, “they are asking me the impossible. You shall decide; you stand between me and them now as an impartial judge. You don’t know what they have insisted on my doing, you don’t know, and at last they have formally demanded it, they have spoken

out. But it’s repugnant to humanity, to decent feeling, to honour. . . . I will tell you all about it, but first ...”

“I know about it already, uncle!” I cried, interrupting him. “I can guess ... I have just been talking to Nastasya Yevgrafovna.”

“My dear, not a word, not a word of that now!” he interrupted me hurriedly, as though he were frightened. “I will explain about it later on, but meanwhile. . . . Well?” he cried to Vidoplyasov, who walked in. “Where is Foma Fomitch?”

Vidoplyasov entered with the information “that Foma Fomitch did not wish to come, and considered that the insistence on his doing so was rude to the point of impertinence, so that his honour, Foma Fomitch, was greatly offended by it.”

“Bring him! Drag him! Fetch him here! Drag him here by force!” cried my uncle, stamping.

Vidoplyasov, who had never seen his master in such a rage, retreated in alarm. I was surprised.

“Something very important must have happened,” I thought, “if a man of his character is capable of being moved to such wrath and such determination.”

For some moments my uncle walked up and down the room as though struggling with himself.

“Don’t tear up your exercise book though,” he said to Gavrila as last. “Wait a little and stay here. You may perhaps be wanted. My dear,” he went on, turning to me, “I think I was too noisy just now. Everything must be done with dignity and manliness, but without shouting and insulting people. Do you know what, Seryozha; wouldn’t it be better if you were to go out? It will be just the same to you. I will tell you all about it later on — eh? What do you think? Do that for my sake, please.”

“Are you frightened, uncle? Are you repenting?” I said, looking at him intently.

“No, no, my dear boy, I am not repenting,” cried my uncle, with redoubled earnestness. “I am afraid of nothing now. I have taken decisive steps, the most decisive! You don’t know, you can’t imagine what they have demanded of me! Ought I to consent? No, I will show them. I have made a stand against them and I will show them. I was bound to show them sooner or later! But you know, my dear boy, I am sorry I

sent for you; it will be very liard, perhaps, for Foma if you are here, so to say, the witness of his humiliation. You see, I want to turn him out of the house in a gentlemanly way, without humiliating him at all. Though, indeed, it is only a form of words to say, without humiliation. The position is such, my boy, that however honied one's speech is it will still be insulting. I am coarse, uneducated perhaps, I may do something in my foolishness that I may regret later. Anyway he has done a great deal for me. ... Go away, my dear. . . . Here, they are bringing him! Seryozha, I entreat you, go away; I will tell you all about it afterwards. For Christ's sake go away!"

And uncle led me out on to the veranda at the very moment when Foma walked into the room. But I must confess I did not go away; I made up my mind to stay on the veranda, where it was very dark, and so it was difficult to see me from within. I made up my mind to play the eavesdropper! I do not justify my action, but I can boldly say that I consider I performed an heroic feat in standing that whole half-hour on the veranda without losing patience.

From my position I could not only hear well, but could even see well; the doors were of glass. I now beg the reader to imagine Foma Fomitch after he had been commanded to come, and threatened with force if he refused.

"Can my ears have heard that threat aright, Colonel? cried Foma, entering the room. "Was that your message?"

"Yes, Foma, yes; calm yourself," my uncle answered valiantly. "Sit down; we must have a little serious friendly talk like brothers. Sit down, Foma."

Foma Fomitch majestically sat down on a low chair. My uncle walked about the room with rapid and uneven steps, evidently puzzled how to begin.

"Like brothers, precisely," he repeated. "You understand me, Foma; you are not a boy, I am not a boy either — in fact, we are both getting on. . . . H'm! You see, Foma, we don't get on together on certain points . . . yes, on certain points, precisely, and so, Foma, would it not be better to part? I am convinced that you are a generous man, that you wish me well, and so . . . But why prolong the discussion? Foma, I am your friend now and always, and I swear that by all the saints! Here are fifteen thousand roubles in silver; it's all I have to bless myself with. I have scraped together every farthing, I have robbed my own children. Take it boldly! I ought — it is my duty — to

secure your future. It’s almost all in bank-notes and very little in cash. Take it boldly; you owe me nothing, for I shall never be able to repay you for all you have done for me. Yes, yes, precisely, I feel that, though now we are in disagreement over the most important point. Tomorrow or the day after, or when you like, let us part. Drive to our little town, Foma, it is not eight miles away; there behind the church in the first side-street there is a little house with green shutters, a charming little house belonging to the widow of a priest, that looks as though it had been built for you. She is selling it, and I will buy it for you in addition to this money. Settle there near us. Work at literature, study science, you will win fame. . . . The officials there are gentlemanly, agreeable, disinterested men; the head priest is learned. You shall come and stay with us for the holidays — and we shall all live as in paradise. Will you?”

“So these are the terms on which Foma is to be kicked out!” I thought. “Uncle did not say a word to me about money.”

For a long time a profound silence reigned. Foma sat in his easy-chair as though struck dumb, gazing fixedly at my uncle, who was evidently becoming uncomfortable from that silence and that stare.

“The money!” Foma articulated at last in an affectedly faint voice. “Where is it? Where is that money? Give it me, give it here at once!”

“Here it is, Foma, everything I have to the last farthing, just fifteen thousand. Here are notes and securities; you can see for yourself . . . here!”

“Gavrila, take that money,” Foma said mildly, “it may be of use to you, old man. But no!” he cried all at once, raising his voice to an extraordinary squeal and leaping up from his chair; “no, give me that money first, Gavnla! Give it me. Give it me. Give me those millions that I may trample them underfoot; give them to me that I may tear them to pieces, spit on them, fling them away, spurn them, scorn them! . . . They offer money to me — to me! They try to buy me to leave this house! Have I heard that? Have I lived to see this last ignominy? Here they are, here are your millions! Look! there, there, there, there. That is how Foma Opiskin behaves if you did not know it before, Colonel!”

And Foma threw the whole roll of notes about the room. It was noticeable that he did not tear or spit on one of the notes as he had boasted of doing; he only crumpled them a little, and even that rather carefully. Gavrila flew to pick up the notes from the floor, and later on, after Foma’s departure, he carefully restored them to his master.

Foma's action produced an overwhelming impression upon my uncle. In his turn, he now stood facing him, immovably, senselessly, open-mouthed. Foma meanwhile had replaced himself in his arm-chair and was panting as though from unutterable agitation.

"You are a man of lofty feelings, Foma!" my uncle cried out at last, recovering himself. "You are the noblest of men!" * "I know it," Foma answered in a faint voice, but with ineffable dignity.

"Foma, forgive me! I have been a mean wretch to you, Foma!"

"Yes, to me," Foma assented.

"Foma, it is not your disinterestedness that I marvel at," my uncle went on enthusiastically, "but that I could have been so coarse, blind and mean as to offer you money in such circumstances. But, Foma, you are mistaken about one thing; I was not bribing you, I was not paying you for leaving this house, but just simply I wanted you to have money that you might not be in straits when you leave me. I swear that! On my knees, on my knees I am ready to beg your forgiveness, Foma; and if you like, I am ready to go down on my knees before you this moment ... if you wish me to. . . ."

"I don't want your kneeling, Colonel."

"But, my God! Foma, consider: you know I was carried away, overwhelmed, I was not myself. . . . But do tell me, do say in what way I can, in what way I may be able to efface this insult! Instruct me, admonish me. . . ."

"In no way, in no way, Colonel! And rest assured that to-morrow morning I shall shake the dust from off my boots on the threshold of this house."

And Foma began to get up from his chair. My uncle rushed in horror to make him sit down again.

"No, Foma, you will not go away, I assure you!" cried my uncle. "It is no use talking about dust and boots, Foma! You are not going away, or I will follow you to the utmost ends of the earth, and I will follow you till such time as you forgive me ... I swear it, Foma, and I will do it!"

"Forgive you? You are to blame?" said Foma. "But do you yet understand the wrong you have done me? Do you understand that even the fact that you have given me a piece of bread here has become a wrong to me now? Do you under-

stand that now in one minute you have poisoned every morsel I have tasted in your house? You reproached me just now with those morsels, with

every mouthful of the bread I have eaten; you have shown me now that I have been living like a slave in your house, like a flunkey, like a rag to wipe your polished boots I And yet I, in the purity of my heart, imagined up to now that I was residing in your house as a friend and a brother! Did you not, did you not yourself in your snakelike speeches assure me a thousand times of that brotherly relation? Why did you mysteriously weave for me the snare in which I have been caught like a fool? Why have you dug in the darkness this wolt-pit into which you have yourself thrust me now? Why did you not strike me down with one blow before? Why did you not wring my neck at the very beginning like a cock, because he . . . well, for instance, simply because he doesn't lay eggs? Yes, that's just it! I stick to that comparison, Colonel, though it is taken from rustic life and recalls the trivial tone of modern literature; I stick to it, because one sees in it all the senselessness of your accusation; for I am as much in fault as this supposititious cock who displeases his frivolous owner by not laying eggs! Upon my word, Colonel! Does one pay a friend, a brother, with money — and what for? That's the point, what for? 'Here, my beloved brother, I am indebted to you; you have even saved my life; here are a few of Judas's silver pieces for you, only get away out of my sight!' How naive! How crudely you have behaved to me! You thought that I was thirsting for your gold, while I was cherishing only the heavenly feeling of securing your welfare. Oh, how you have broken my heart! You have played with my finest feelings like some wretched boy with a ninepin! Long, long ago, Colonel, I foresaw all this — that is why I have long choked over your bread, I have been suffocated by your bread! That is why your feather beds have stifled me, they have stifled me instead of lulling me to slumber! That is why your sugar, your sweetmeats have been cayenne pepper to me and not sweetmeats! No, Colonel! live alone, prosper alone, and let Foma go his sorrowful way with a wallet on his back. So it shall be, Colonel!"

"No, Foma, no! It shall not be so, it cannot be so!" moaned my uncle, utterly crushed.

"Yes, Colonel, yes! So it shall be, for so it must be. Tomorrow I shall depart from you. Scatter your millions, strew all my way, ail the high road to Moscow with your bank-

notes — and I will walk proudly and scornfully over your notes; this very foot, Colonel, will trample your notes into the mud and crush them; for

Foma Opiskin the nobility of his own soul will be enough t I have said it and I have shown it! Farewell, Colonel, fa-re-we-ell!’’

And Foma began again getting up from his chair.

“Forgive me, forgive me, Foma; forget it! . . ,” repeated my uncle, in an imploring voice.

“Forgive you! Why, what use will my forgiveness be to you? Why, supposing I do forgive you: I am a Christian; I cannot refuse to forgive; I have almost forgiven you already. But consider yourself: is it in the least consistent with common sense and gentlemanly feeling for me to stay one minute longer in your house? Why, you have turned me out of it!”

“It is consistent, it is consistent, Foma! I assure you that it is consistent!”

“It is? But are we equals now? Don’t you understand that I have, so to speak, crushed you by my generosity, and you have crushed yourself by your degrading action? You are crushed and I am uplifted. Where is the equality? Is friendship possible without equality? I say this, uttering a cry of lamentation from my heart, and not triumphing, not exalting myself over you, as you perhaps imagine.”

“But I am uttering a cry of lamentation from my heart too, Foma, I assure you.”

“And this is the man,” Foma went on, changing his severe tone for a sanctimonious one, “this is the man for whom I so often kept vigil at night! How many times on my sleepless nights have I arisen from my bed, have lighted a candle and said to myself, ‘Now he is sleeping peacefully, trusting in you. Do not you, Foma, sleep, be valiant for him; maybe you will think of something more for the welfare of that man.’ That is what Foma thought on his sleepless nights, Colonel! And this is how that colonel has repaid him! But enough, enough ...”

“But I will deserve your friendship again, Foma; I will deserve it, I swear to you.”

“You will deserve it? Where is the guarantee? As a Christian I will forgive you, and even love you; but as a man and a gentleman I shall not be able to help despising you. I must, I am bound to, in the name of morality, because — I repeat it — you have disgraced yourself, while my action has been most high-minded. Why, who out of your set would perform such an action? Would any one of them refuse an immense sum of money which poor destitute Foma, despised by all, has refused from devotion to true greatness? No, Colonel; to be on a level with me you must perform now a

regular series of heroic deeds. And what are you capable of when you cannot even address me as your equal, but call me Foma like a servant. ...”

“FomaI but I call you so from affection!” wailed my uncle. “I did not know you disliked it. My God! if I had only known! ...”

“You,” Foma pursued, “you who could not, or rather, would not, grant the most insignificant, the most trivial request when I asked you to address me like a general as ‘your Excellency’ ...”

“But, Foma, you know that is really, so to say, high treason, Foma!”

“High treason! You have learnt some phrase out of a book and repeat it like a parrot! But, do you know, you put me to shame, covered me with ignominy by your refusal to call me ‘your Excellency’; you covered me with ignominy because without understanding my reasons you made me look a capricious fool worthy of a madhouse. Why, do you suppose I don’t understand that I should have been ridiculous if I had wanted to be styled ‘Excellency’ — I who despise all these ranks and earthly grandeurs, insignificant in themselves if they are not lighted up by virtue? For a million I would not accept the rank of general, without virtue. And meanwhile you looked upon me as a madman! It was for your benefit I sacrificed my pride and allowed you, you to be able to look upon me as a madman, you and your learned gentlemen! It was solely in order to enlighten your mind, to develop your morals, and to shed upon you the light of new ideas that I made up my mind to demand from you a general’s title. I wanted you for the future not to regard generals as the highest luminaries on this earthly sphere; I wanted to show you that rank is nothing without greatness of soul, and that there is no need to rejoice at the arrival of your general when there are, perhaps, standing at your side, people made illustrious by virtue! But you have so constantly prided yourself before me on your rank of colonel that it was hard for you to say to me: ‘your Excellency.’ That was the root of it! That was where one must look for the reason, and not in any breach of the decrees of Providence I The whole reason is, that you are a colonel and I am simply Foma. ...”

“No, Foma; no, I assure you that it is not so. You are a learned man . . . you are not simply Foma. ... I respect you. ...”

“You respect me! Good! Then tell me, since you respect me, what is your opinion, am I worthy of the rank of a general or am I not? Answer at once and straightforwardly, am I or not? I want to see your intelligence, your development.”

“For honesty, for disinterestedness, for intelligence, for lofty nobility of soul you are worthy of it,” my uncle brought out with pride.

“Well, if I am worthy of it, why will you not say ‘your Excellency’ to me?”

“Foma, I will, perhaps.”

“But, I insist! And I insist now, Colonel, I require it and insist. I see how hard it is for you, that is why I insist. That sacrifice on your side will be the first step in your moral victory, for — don’t forget it — you will have to gain a series of moral victories to be on a level with me; you must conquer yourself, and only then I shall feel certain of your sincerity. ...”

“To-morrow, then, I will call you ‘your Excellency’, Foma.”

“No, not to-morrow, Colonel, to-morrow can take care of itself. I insist that you now at once address me as ‘your Excellency’.”

“Certainly, Foma, I am ready; only what do you mean by ‘at once’, Foma?”

“Why not at once, or are you ashamed? That’s an insult to me if you are ashamed.”

“Oh, well, if you like, Foma. I am ready ... I am proud to do so, indeed; only it’s queer, Foma, apropos of nothing, ‘Good-day, your Excellency.’ You see, one can’t.”

“No, not ‘Good-day, your Excellency.’ That’s an offensive tone, it is like a joke, a farce. I do not permit such jokes with me. You forget yourself, Colonel, you forget yourself. Change your tone!”

“And you are not joking, Foma?”

“In the first place, I am not Foma, Yegor Ilyitch, and don’t you forget it. I am Foma Fomitch.”

“Oh, Foma Fomitch, I am delighted, really, I am altogether delighted, only what am I to say?”

“You are puzzled what to add to the phrase, ‘your Excellency’. That I understand. You should have explained yourself long ago. It is excusable indeed, especially if a man is not a literary character, to put it politely. Well, I will help you, since you are not a literary character. Repeat after me, ‘Your Excellency!’ . . .”

“Well, your Excellency ...”

“No, not ‘Well, your Excellency,’ but simply ‘your Excellency!’ I tell you, Colonel, you must change your tone. I hope, too, that you will not be offended if I suggest that you should make a slight bow. And at the same

time bend forward, expressing in that way respectfulness and readiness, so to say, to fly on his errands. I have been in the society of generals myself, and I know all that, so then ‘your Excellency.’”

“Your Excellency . . .”

“How inexpressibly delighted I am that I have at last an opportunity of asking your forgiveness for not having recognised from the first moment your Excellency’s soul. I make bold to assure you that I will not for the future spare my poor efforts for the public welfare. . . . Well, that’s enough!”

Poor uncle! He had to repeat all this rigmarole phrase by phrase, word by word. I stood and blushed as though I were guilty. I was choking with rage.

“Well, don’t you feel now,” the torturer went on, “that your heart is suddenly lighter, as though an angel had flown into your soul? ... Do you feel the presence of that angel? Answer.”

“Yes, Foma, I certainly feel more at ease,” answered my uncle.

“As though after you have conquered yourself your heart were, so to say, steeped in holy oil?”

“Yes, Foma; certainly it all seems as it were in butter.”

“As it were in butter? H’m. I wasn’t talking of butter, though. . . . Well, never mind! You see, Colonel, the value of a duty performed! Conquer yourself. You are vain, immensely vain!”

“I see I am, Foma,” my uncle answered, with a sigh.

“You are an egoist, and indeed a gloomy egoist. . . .”

“An egoist I am, it is true, Foma, and I see it; ever since I have come to know you, I have learned to know that too.”

“I am speaking to you now like a father, like a tender mother. . . . You repel people and forget that a friendly calf sucks two mothers.”

“That is true too, Foma!”

“You are coarse. You jar so coarsely upon the human heart, you so egoistically insist upon attention, that a decent man is ready to run from you to the utmost ends of the earth.”

My uncle heaved another deep sigh.

“Be softer, more attentive, more loving to others; forget yourself for the sake of others, then they will think of you. Live and let others live — that is my rule! Suffer, labour, pray and hope — those are the truths which I would like to instil into all mankind at once! Model yourself on them and then I shall be the first to open my heart to you, I shall weep on your bosom ... if

need be. . . . As it is, it is always T and T and ‘my gracious self with you. But, you know, one may get sick at last of your gracious self, if you will allow me to say so.”

“A sweet-tongued gentleman,” Gavrila brought out, awestruck.

“That’s true, Foma, I feel all’ that,” my uncle assented, deeply touched. “But I am not altogether to blame, Foma. I’ve been brought up like this, I have lived with soldiers; but I swear, Foma, I have not been without feeling. When I said good-bye to the regiment, all the hussars, all my division, simply shed tears and said they would never get another like me. I thought at the time that I too was not altogether a lost soul.”

“Again a piece of egoism! Again I catch you in vanity. You are boasting and at the same time reproaching me with the hussars’ tears. Why don’t I boast of anyone’s tears? And yet there may have been grounds, there may have been grounds for doing so.”

“I meant nothing, Foma, it was a slip of the tongue. I couldn’t help remembering those old happy times.”

“Happy times do not fall from heaven, we make them ourselves; it lies in our hearts, Yegor Ilyitch. That is why I am always happy and, in spite of my sufferings, contented, tranquil in spirit, and am not a burden to anyone unless it is to fools, upstarts and learned gentlemen, on whom I have no mercy and don’t care to have. I don’t like fools! And what are these learned gentlemen? ‘A man of learning’; and his learning turns out to be nothing but a hoaxing trick, and not learning. Why, what did he say just now? Let him come here! Let all these men of learning come here! I can refute them all; I can refute all their propositions! I say nothing of greatness of soul . . .”

“Of course, Foma. Who doubts it?”

“This afternoon, for instance, I showed intelligence, talent, colossal erudition, knowledge of the human heart, knowledge of contemporary literature; I showed and displayed in a brilliant fashion how some wretched Komarinsky may furnish a lofty topic of conversation for a man of talent. And did any one of them appreciate me as I deserved? No, they turned away! Why, I am certain he has told you already that I know nothing, and yet perhaps Macchiaveili himself or some Mercadante was sitting before him and only to blame for being poor and in obscurity. . . . That does not penetrate to them I . . . I hear of Korovkin too. What sort of queer fish is he?”

“He is a clever man, Foma, a man of learning. ... I am expecting him. He will certainly be a nice man, Foma.”

“H’m, I doubt it. Most likely some modern ass laden with books; there is no soul in them, Colonel, no heart in them! And what is learning without virtue?”

“No, Foma, no. How he talked of family happiness! The heart feels it of itself, Foma.”

“H’m! We will have a look at him; we will examine Korovkin too. But enough,” Foma concluded, getting up from his easy-chair. “I cannot altogether forgive you yet, Colonel; the insult was too deadly; but I will pray, and perhaps God will shed peace on the wounded heart. We will speak further of this to-morrow, but now permit me to withdraw. I am tired and exhausted. ...”

“Oh, Foma!” cried my uncle in a fluster, “why, of course you are tired! I say, won’t you have something to support you, a snack of something? I will order something at once.”

“A snack! Ha-ha-ha!” answered Foma, with a contemptuous laugh. “First they offer you a drink of poison, and then they ask you if you won’t have a snack of something. They want to heal the wounds of the heart with stewed mushrooms or pickled apples! What a pitiful materialist you are, Colonel!”

“Oh, Foma, I spoke in all simplicity . . .”

“Oh, very well. Enough of that. I will withdraw, and you go at once to your mother; fall on your knees, sob, weep, but beg for her forgiveness, that is your duty, that is a moral obligation.”

“Oh, Foma, I have been thinking of nothing but that all the time; even now while I have been talking to you I have been thinking of it. I am ready to implore her on my knees till dawn. But only think, Foma, what they are expecting of me.

Why, you know it’s unjust, Foma, it’s cruel. Be entirely magnanimous, make me completely happy, think a little, decide, and then . . . then ... I swear! . . .”

“No, Yegor Ilyitch, no, it’s no business of mine,” answered Foma. “You know that I do not meddle in the slightest degree in all that; you may be persuaded that I am at the bottom of it all, but I assure you that from the very beginning I have held entirely aloof from this affair. It is solely the desire of your mother, and she, of course, wishes for nothing but your good.

... Go to her, make haste, fly and rectify the position by your obedience . . . and let not the sun go down upon your wrath; while I ... I shall be all night long praying for you. I have known no sleep for many a night, Yegor Ilyitch. Good night! I forgive you too, old man," he said, turning to Gavrila. "I know you did not do it of yourself. You forgive me too if I have offended you. . . . Good night, good night, all, and may the Lord bless you."

Foma went out. I rushed at once into the room.

"You've been listening!" cried my uncle.

"Yes, uncle, I have been listening! And you, you could call him 'your Excellency'?"

"What could I do, brother? Indeed, I am proud of it. . . . That was no great act of sacrifice. But what a noble, what a disinterested, what a great man! Sergey, why, you heard yourself . . . and how I could, how I could thrust that money on him, I simply don't understand I My dear, I was carried away, I was in a rage. I did not understand him; I suspected him, I accused him. . . . But no, he could not be antagonistic to me — I see that now . . . and do you remember what a noble expression there was on his face when he was refusing the money?"

"Very well, uncle, you can be as proud as you like, but I am going; my patience is at an end. For the last time I say it, tell me what you want of me? Why did you send for me, and what do you expect? And if it is all over and I am of no use to you, then I am going. I can't endure such exhibitions! I am going this very day."

"My dear!" My uncle was in a fluster as usual. "Only wait two minutes; I am going now, dear boy, to mamma, to settle there ... a grave, important, immense question! . . . And you meanwhile go to your room. Here, Gavrila will take you to the summer lodge. You know the summer lodge, it is in the garden. I have given orders, and your trunk has been taken there; and I am going in to beg forgiveness and settle one question — I know now what to do — and then I will be with you in a flash, and then I'll tell you everything, I'll open my whole soul to you and . . . and . . . happy days will come for us too, some time! Two minutes, only two minutes, Sergey!"

He pressed my hand and hurriedly went out. There was nothing to be done, I had to go off with Gavrila again.

CHAPTER X

MIZINTCHIKOV

THE lodge to which Gavrila conducted me was called “the new lodge” only from old habit, because it was built long ago in the time of the former owners. It was a pretty little wooden house, standing in the garden a few paces from the old house. It was surrounded on three sides by tall old lime trees which touched the roof with their branches. All the four rooms of this little house were kept ready for visitors, and were not badly furnished. Going into the room assigned me, to which my portmanteau had been already taken, I saw on a little table before the bedstead a sheet of notepaper, covered with magnificent handwriting in various styles framed in garlands and flourishes. The capital letters and the garlands were illuminated in various colours. The whole made a very pretty specimen of calligraphy. From the first words I read I saw that it was a begging letter addressed to me, and that in it I was styled “Enlightened benefactor”. It was headed “The Plaints of Vidoplyasov”. Though I tried with strained attention to make out something of what was written, my efforts were all in vain, it was the most inflated nonsense, written in a high-flown flunkey lingo. I could only surmise that Vidoplyasov was in trouble of some sort, was begging for my assistance, was building great hopes upon me, “by reason of my enlightenment”, and in conclusion begged me to interest myself on his behalf with my uncle and to work upon him with “my machinery”, as he expressed it at the end of this epistle. I was still reading it when the door opened and Mizintchikov walked in.

“I hope you will allow me to make your acquaintance,” he said in a free and easy way, though with extreme courtesy, offering me his hand. “I could not say two words to you this afternoon, and yet from the first glance I felt a desire to know you better.”

I answered at once that I was delighted and so on, though I was, in fact, in an extremely bad temper. We sat down.

“What have you got here?” he said, glancing at the sheet of paper which I was still holding in my hand. “Not ‘the plaints of Vidoplyasov’? That’s

what it is. I was certain that Vidoplyasov was attacking you too. He presented me with just such a document with the same complaints; and he has been expecting you a long time and most likely got ready beforehand. You need not be surprised: there's a great deal that's queer here, and really there is plenty to laugh at."

"Only to laugh at?"

"Oh, well, surely not to cry over. If you like I will give you Vidoplyasov's history, and I am certain that you will laugh."

"I confess I am not interested in Vidoplyasov just now," I answered with vexation.

It was evident to me that Mr. Mizintchikov's friendliness and his polite conversation were all assumed by him with some object, and that he was simply trying to get something out of me. He had sat scowling and serious in the afternoon; now he was good-humoured, smiling, and ready to tell me long stories. It was evident from the first glance that the man was perfectly self-possessed, and he seemed to understand human nature.

"That cursed Foma!" I said, banging my fist on the table with fury. "I am positive that he is at the bottom of every sort of mischief here and mixed up in it all! Cursed brute!"

"I think your anger is excessive," Mizintchikov observed.

"My anger excessive!" I cried, instantly firing up. "I let myself go too far this afternoon, of course, and so gave everyone a right to blame me. I know very well that I plunged in and put my foot in it on every point, and I think there is no need to tell me that! ... I know, too, that that's not the way to behave in decent society; but how could I help letting myself go? tell me that. Why, this is a madhouse, if you care to know! And . . . and ... in fact ... I am simply going away, so there."

"Do you smoke?" Mizintchikov asked calmly.

"Yes."

"Then you will probably allow me to smoke? They won't let me in there, and I am wretched without it. I agree," he went on, as he lighted a cigarette, "that all this is like a madhouse; but believe me, I do not venture to criticise you, just because in your place I should perhaps be three times as excited and violent as you."

"And why were you not violent if you really were angry too? I remember you very cool, on the contrary, and, I confess, I even thought it strange that

you did not stand up for my poor uncle, who is ready to befriend . . . all and everyone!”

“You are right: he has belriended many people; but I consider it perfectly useless to stand up for him: in the first place it would be useless and even derogatory for him in a way; and in the second I should be kicked out to-morrow. And I tell you frankly my circumstances are such that to be a guest here is a great advantage for me.”

“But I do not make the slightest claim on your frankness in regard to your circumstances ... I should, however, have liked to ask, since you have been here a month ...”

“Please, do, ask anything: I am at your service,” Mizintchikov answered, hurriedly moving up a chair.

“Well, explain this, for instance: Foma Fomitch has just refused fifteen thousand roubles which were in his hands — I saw it with my own eyes.”

“What? Impossible!” cried Mizintchikov. “Tell me, please.”

I told him, saying nothing about “your Excellency”, Mizintchikov listened with greedy curiosity. He positively changed countenance when the fifteen thousand were mentioned.

“That’s smart!” he said, when he heard my story. “I really did not expect it of Foma.”

“He did refuse the money, though! How do you explain that? Surely not by the nobility of his soul?”

“He refused fifteen thousand to take thirty later. Though, do you know,” he added after a moment’s thought, “I doubt whether Foma had any mercenary design in it. He is not a practical man; he is a sort of poet, too, in his own way. Fifteen thousand . . . h’m. He would have taken the money, do you see, but he couldn’t resist the temptation to strike an attitude and give himself airs. I tell you he’s a sentimental mush, and the sloppiest old sniveller and all that, with the most unbounded vanity!”

Mizintchikov was positively roused to anger. It was evident that he was very much annoyed and even envious. I looked at him with curiosity.

“H’m! We may expect great changes,” he added, musing. “Now Yegor Ilyitch is ready to worship Foma. I shouldn’t wonder if he does get married now that his heart is softened,” he muttered through his teeth.

“So you think that this abominable, unnatural marriage with that crazy fool really will come off?”

Mizintchikov looked at me searchingly.

“The scoundrels!” I cried emphatically.

“There is a fairly sound idea at the back of it, though. They maintain that he ought to do something for his family.”

“As though he hadn’t done enough for them,” I cried indignantly. “And you, you talk of there being a sound idea in marrying a vulgar fool!”

“Of course I agree with you that she is a fool. . . . H’m! It’s a good thing that you are so fond of your uncle; I sympathise with him myself . . . though he could round off his estate finely with her fortune! They have other reasons, though; they are afraid that Yegor Ilyitch may marry that governess ... do you remember, an attractive girl?”

“But is that likely to be true? ...” I asked in agitation. “It seems to me that it’s spiteful gossip. Tell me, for goodness’ sake, it interests me extremely. ...”

“Oh, he is head over ears in love with her! Only, of course, he conceals it.”

“He conceals it? You think that he is concealing it? And she? Does she love him?’’

“It is very likely she does. It is all to her advantage to marry him, though; she is very poor.”

“But what grounds have you for your supposition that they love each other?”

“Oh, you know, you can’t help seeing it; besides, I believe they meet in secret. They do say that she has illicit relations with him, in fact. Only, please, don’t repeat that. I tell you as a secret.”

“Is it possible to believe that?” I cried. “And you, you acknowledge that you believe it?”

“Of course I do not fully believe it, I wasn’t there. But it’s very possible, though.”

“Very possible? Think of my uncle’s sense of honour, his noble character.”

“I agree; but one may be carried away, with a conviction that one is going to make it right with matrimony afterwards. People often are. But, I repeat, I don’t insist on the absolute certainty of the facts, especially as they have blackened her character in all sorts of ways here; they even say that she had an intrigue with Vidoplyasov.”

“There, you see,” I cried, “with Vidoplyasov. Why, as though it were possible! Isn’t it revolting even to listen to such a thing? Surely you can’t

believe it?”

“I tell you that I do not quite believe it,” answered Mizintchikov calmly, “but it might happen. Anything may happen in this world. I was not there, and besides, I consider it not my business. But as I see you take great interest in all this, I feel I ought to add that I really don’t put much faith in the story about Vidoplyasov. It’s all the invention of Anna Nilovna, that Miss Perepelitsyn; it’s she who has set those rumours going here out of envy because she dreamed in the past of marrying Yegor Ilyitch herself — yes, by Jove, on the ground that she is a major’s daughter. Now she is disappointed and awfully furious. But I believe I have told you all about that business now, and I confess I greatly dislike gossip, especially as we are losing precious time. I have come to ask you a trifling favour, you see.”

“A favour? Certainly; any way in which I can be of use to you.”

“I understand, and indeed I hope to interest you, for I see you love your uncle and take great interest in his fate in the matrimonial line; but before I ask you that favour I will ask you another, a preliminary one.”

“What is that?”

“I’ll tell you; perhaps you will consent to grant my chief request, and perhaps not; but in any case, before telling it you I will humbly ask you to grant one great favour, to give me your word of honour as a nobleman and a gentleman that all you hear from me shall remain a dead secret, and that you will not betray the secret in any case or for the sake of any person, and will not take advantage for your own benefit of the idea which I now find it necessary to communicate to you. Do you agree or not?”

It was a solemn introduction. I gave my assent.

“Well?” ... I said.

“It is really a very simple matter,” Mizintchikov began. “I want to elope with Tatyana Ivanovna and to marry her;

in short, there is to be something in the Gretna Green style, do you understand?”

I stared Mizintchikov straight in the face, and for some time I could not utter a word.

“I confess I don’t understand at all,” I brought out at last; “and what’s more,” I went on, “expecting that I had to do with a sensible man, I did not in the least expect ...”

“Expecting you did not expect,” interrupted Mizintchikov; “which may be translated, that I and my project are stupicU-that’s so, isn’t it?”

“Oh, not at all . . . but . . .”

“Oh, please, don’t mind speaking plainly! Don’t be uneasy; you will do me a great pleasure by plain speaking, in fact, for so we shall get nearer our object. I agree with you, though, that all this must seem somewhat strange at the first glance. But I venture to assure you that so far from being foolish, my project is extremely sensible; and if you will be so good as to listen to all the circumstances ...”

“Oh, certainly! I am listening eagerly.”

“There is scarcely anything to tell, though. You see, I am in debt and haven’t a farthing. I have, besides, a sister, a girl of nineteen, fatherless and motherless, living in a family and entirely without means, you know. For that I am partly to blame. We inherited a property of forty serfs. Just at that time I was promoted to be a cornet. Well, at first, of course, I mortgaged, and then I squandered our money in other ways too. I lived like a fool, set the fashion, gave myself airs, gambled, drank — it was idiotic, in fact, and I am ashamed to remember it. Now I have come to my senses and want to change my manner of life completely. But to do so it is absolutely essential to have a hundred thousand roubles. As I shall never get anything in the service, since I am not qualified for anything and have scarcely any education, there are, of course, only two resources left to me: to steal or to marry a rich wife. I came here almost without boots to my feet, I walked, I could not drive. My sister gave me her last three roubles when I set off from Moscow. Here I saw Tatyana Ivanovna, and at once the idea dawned upon me. I immediately resolved to sacrifice myself and marry her. You will agree that all that is nothing but good sense. Besides, I am doing it more for my sister’s sake . . . though, of course, for my own too.”

“But allow me to ask, do you mean to make a formal pro-

posal to Tatyana Ivanovna? ...”

“God forbid, they would kick me out at once; but if I suggest an elopement, a runaway match, she will marry me at once. That’s the whole point, that there should be something romantic and sensational about it. Of course it would all immediately end in legal matrimony. If only I can allure her away from here!”

“But why are you so sure that she will elope with you?”

“Oh, don’t trouble about that! I am perfectly sure of that. The whole plan rests on the idea that Tatyana Ivanovna is ready to carry on an intrigue with anyone she meets, with anyone, in fact, to whom it occurs to respond to her.

That is why I first asked you to give me your word of honour that you would not take advantage of the idea. You will understand, of course, that it would be positively wicked of me not to take advantage of such an opportunity, especially in my circumstances.”

“So then she is quite mad. ... Oh, I beg your pardon,” I added, catching myself up. “Since you now have intentions. . . .”

“Please don’t mind speaking out, as I have asked you already. You ask, is she quite mad? What shall I tell you? Of course she is not mad, since she is not yet in a madhouse; besides, I really don’t see anything particularly mad in this mania for love affairs. She is a respectable girl in spite of everything. You see, till a year ago she was horribly poor, and from her birth up has lived in bondage to the ladies who befriended her. Her heart is exreptionally susceptible; no one has asked her in marriage. . . . Well, you understand: dreams, desires, hopes, the fervour of feelings which she has always had to conceal, perpetual agonies at the hands of the ladies who befriended her — all that of course might well drive a sensitive character to derangement. And all at once she comes in for a fortune; you’ll allow that is enough to upset anyone. Well, now of course people make up to her and hang about her, and all her hopes have risen up. She told us this afternoon about a dandy in a white waistcoat; that’s a lact which happened literally as she described. From that fact you can judge of the rest. With sighs, notes, verses you can inveigle her at once; and if with all that you hint at a silken rope ladder, a Spanish serenade and all that nonsense, you can do what you like with her. I have put it to the test, and at once obtained a secret interview. But meanwhile I have put it off till the right moment. But I must carry her off within four days. The evening before I shall begin to make tender speeches, to sigh: I can sing and play the guitar pretty well. At night there will be a meeting in the arbour, and at dawn the coach will be in readiness; I shall entice her away, we shall get into the coach and drive off. You understand that there is no risk about it whatever; she is of age, and what’s more, completely her own mistress. And if once she ran away with me she would, of course, be bound to me. I should take her to a poor but respectable family, thirty miles away, who would look after her, and not let anyone come near her till the wedding; and meanwhile I shan’t lose time, we’ll get married within three days — it can be done. Of course, first of all, money is needed; but I have reckoned that I shall not need more than five hundred roubles for the whole business, and for that I rely on Yegor Ilyitch.

He will give it, of course, without knowing what is up. Do you understand now?”

“I do,” I answered, taking it all in fully. “But tell me, in what way can I be of use to you?”

“Oh, in a great deal, I assure you, or I would not have asked you. I told you that I had in view a poor but very respectable family. You can help me both here and there, and as a witness. I must own that without your help I should be at a loss.”

“Another question, why have you done me the honour to select me to receive your confidence, though you know nothing of me, since I have only been here a few hours?”

“Your question,” Mizintchikov answered with the most polite smile, “your question, I frankly confess, gives me great satisfaction, because it affords me an opportunity of expressing my special regard for you.”

“Oh, you do me too much honour!”

“No; you see, I have been studying you a little this afternoon. Admitting you are both hasty and . . . and . . . well, young, I tell you what I am thoroughly certain of: when you have given me your word that you will tell no one you will certainly keep it. You are not Obnoskin — that’s the first point. Secondly, you are honest and will not take advantage of my idea — for yourself, of course, I mean — unless you would like to enter into a friendly compact with me. In that case I will perhaps agree to yield to you my idea — that is, Tatyana Ivanovna — and be ready to help you zealously in the elopement, only on condition of receiving from you a month after your marriage fifty thousand roubles, for which you would of course give me security beforehand in the shape of an IOU.”

“What!” I cried out. “So now you are offering her to me?”

“Naturally, I can give it up to you if on reflection you wish it. I should of course be a loser, but . . . the idea belongs to me, and you know one is paid for one’s ideas. Thirdly and lastly I asked you because I had no choice. And taking into consideration the position here, it was impossible to delay long; besides which it will soon be the fast ot the Assumption, and they won’t celebrate weddings. I hope you fully understand ine now?”

“Perfectly. And once more, I feel bound to keep your secret quite sacred; but I cannot be your accomplice in the business, and I think it my duty to tell you so at once.”

“Why so?”

“You ask, why so?” I cried, giving the rein to my pent-up feelings at last. “Why, surely you must understand that such an act is positively dishonourable. Supposing you were quite correct in your calculations, reckoning on the lady’s weakness of mind and unhappy mania, why it’s that very thing which ought to restrain you as an honourable man! You say yourself that she is worthy of respect in spite of being ridiculous, and you are taking advantage of her misfortune to rob her of a hundred thousand. You will not, of course, be a real husband to her, carrying out your obligations: you will certainly leave her . . . it’s so dishonourable that, excuse me, I can’t even understand how you could bring yourself to ask me to assist you.”

“Ough! my goodness! how romantic!” cried Mizintchikov, looking at me with unfeigned surprise. “Though, indeed, it’s not that it’s romantic, but simply I believe that you don’t imderstand the position. You say that it’s dishonourable, and yet all the advantages are not on my side, but hers . . . only consider ...”

“Of course, if one looks at it from your point of view I dare say it will appear that you will be doing something most magnanimous in marrying Tatyana Ivanovna,” I answered, with a sarcastic smile.

“Well, what else? Just so, it is something most magnanimous,” cried Mizintchikov, growing hot in his turn. “Only consider: in the first place, I am sacrificing myself in consenting to be her husband. Is not that some sacrifice? In the second place, although she has certainly a hundred thousand in silver roubles I shall only take a hundred thousand in paper, and I have sworn that I won’t take another farthing from her all my life, though I could; that’s some sacrifice again. Lastly, look into it more deeply. Could she anyway lead a peaceful life? For her to live in peace one would have to take her money from her and put her in a madhouse, for one may expect any minute that some worthless fellow, some scheming rogue, some adventurer, will turn up with a moustache and an imperial, with a guitar and serenades, someone in the style of Obnoskin, who will inveigle her, marry her and strip her completely, and then turn her out into the gutter. This, for instance, is a most respectable household, and yet they are only keeping her here because they are speculating on her fortune. From such risks she must be saved, rescued. Well, you see, as soon as she marries me such risks are over, it will be my duty to see that no trouble comes near her. In the first place, I shall settle her at once in Moscow, in a poor but honourable family — not the one

I have spoken of to you, but another; my sister will be constantly with her; they will look after her and pay her every attention. She will have two hundred and fifty thousand, possibly three hundred, in paper left, one can do well on that, you know! Every pleasure will be provided for her, all sorts of entertainment, balls, masquerades and concerts. She may even dream of love affairs, only of course I shall look after that. She may dream as much as she likes, but not so in reality! Now, for instance, anyone can ill-treat her, but no one will be able to then; she will be my wife, she will be a Mizintchikov, and I won't allow my name to be insulted! That alone is worth something, isn't it? Naturally I am not going to live with her. She will live in Moscow, and I shall live somewhere in Petersburg. I admit that, because I am doing things straightforwardly with you. But what if we do live apart? Look at her character and just consider, is she fit to be a wife and live with a husband? Is it possible to go on living with her continually? Why, she is the most light-headed creature in the world. She must have incessant change; she is capable next day of forgetting that she was married yesterday and made a lawful wife. Why, I should make her wretched in the end if I were to live with her and insist on her strictly performing her wifely duties. Naturally I shall go and see her once a year or oftener, and not to get money, I assure you. I have told you that I am not going to take more than a hundred thousand in paper from her, and I shan't either! On the money side I shall treat her in the most honourable way. If I come to see her for two or three days, my visit will actually be a pleasure to her and not a bore; I shall laugh with her, tell her stories, take her to a ball, make love to her, give her little souvenirs, sing songs to her, make her a present of a lapdog, have a romantic parting from her, and keep up an exchange of love letters. Why, she will be in ecstasies over such a romantic, devoted, and amusing husband. To my thinking, that is the rational way to proceed; that's how all husbands ought to behave. Husbands are only precious to their wives when they are absent, and following my system, I shall engage Tatyana Ivanovna's heart in the most honied way for the whole of her life. What more can she want? tell me that. Why, it is paradise, not life!"

I listened in silence and with wonder; I realised that it was impossible to turn Mr. Mizintchikov irom his plan. He was fanatically persuaded of the rectitude and even the greatness of his project, and spoke of it with the enthusiasm of an inventor. But there was still one rather delicate question which it was essential to clear up.

“Have you reflected,” I said, “that she is almost betrothed to my uncle? It will be a great insult to him if you elope with her; you will be carrying her off almost on the eve of her wedding, and what’s more, will borrow from him to carry out your exploit.”

“That is just where I have you!” Mizintchikov cried out with heat. “You needn’t trouble, I foresaw your objection. But first and foremost, your uncle has not yet made her an offer, consequently there is no need for me to know that they are intending her for a match for him; moreover, I beg you to note that I thought of this enterprise three weeks ago, when I knew nothing of their intentions, so I am perfectly justified from the moral point of view as regards them. And in fact, strictly speaking, it is rather he who is carrying off my betrothed than I his, whom, take note, I have already met in secret at night in the arbour. And lastly, allow me to ask, were not you yourself in a perfect frenzy at your uncle’s being forced to marry Tatyana Ivanovna? And now you are all at once standing up for the marriage, and talking of honour, of some insult to the family! Why, on the contrary, I am doing your uncle the greatest service, I am saving him — you ought to understand that. He looks on the match with aversion, and what’s more, is in love with another young lady! Why, what sort of wife would Tatyana Ivanovna be to him? And she would be wretched with him too, because, say what you like, she would then have to be restrained from throwing roses at young men. And you know if I elope with her in the night, then no Madame la Generale, no Foma Fomitch, will be able to do anything. To bring back a bride who has run away from the wedding would be too discreditable. Isn’t that a service, isn’t it a benefit to Yegor Ilyitch?”

I must own this last argument had a great effect on me.

“But what if he makes her an offer to-morrow?” I said. “You see, it would be rather too late then; she will be formally betrothed to him.”

“To be sure it will be, but that is just why we must work to prevent it. What am I asking you to help me for? It’s hard for me alone, but the two of us together can arrange things and prevent Yegor Ilyitch from making a proposal. We must do everything we can to prevent it, even if it comes to thrashing Foma Fomitch and so distracting the general attention from all thoughts of the match. Of course that is only in the last extremity, I only give that for the sake of example. This is what I am relying on you for.”

“One more last question: have you told no one but me of your scheme?”

Mizintchikov scratched the back of his head and made a very wry face.

“I must confess that question is worse than the bitterest pill for me. That’s just the trouble, that I have given away the idea ... in fact, I have been the most awful fool! And to whcm, do you suppose? To Obnoskin! I can scarcely believe it myself. I don’t know how it happened! He is always about the place, I did not know him so well, and when this inspiration dawned upon me I was, of course, greatly excited; and as I realised even then that I should need someone to help me, I appealed to Obnoskin ... it was unpardonable, unpardonable!”

“Well, and what did Obnoskin say?”

“He agreed with enthusiasm, but next day early in the morning he disappeared. Three days later he turned up again with his mamma. He doesn’t say a word to me, and in fact avoids me as though he were afraid of me. I saw at once what was up. And his mother is a regular shark, she’s been in tight places before now. I used to know her in the past. Of course he has told her all about it. I am waiting and keeping quiet; they are spying on me, and »things are in rather a strained position . . . that’s why I am fa a hurry.”

“What is it exactly you fear from them?”

“They can’t do a great deal, of course, but that they will do something nasty — that is certain. They will insist on having money for keeping quiet and helping, that I expect. . . . Only I can’t give them a great deal, and I am not going to. I have made up my mind about that. I can’t give more than three thousand paper roubles. Judge for yourself: three thousand to them, five hundred in silver for the wedding, for I must pay your uncle back in full; then my old debts; then at least something for my sister, something at least. There won’t be much left out of a hundred thousand, will there? Why, it will be ruin! . . . The Obnoskins have gone away, though.”

“Gone away?” I asked with curiosity.

“Just after tea, damn them! but they will turn up again to-morrow, you will see. Well, how is it to be, then? Do you agree?”

“I must own,” I answered, shrugging, “I really don’t know what to say. It’s a delicate matter. ... Of course I will keep it all secret, I am not Obnoskin; but ... I think it’s no use your building hopes on me.”

“I see,” said Mizintchikov, getting up from his chair, “that you are not yet sick of Foma Fomitch and your grandmother; and though you do care for your kind and generous uncle, you have not yet sufficiently realised how he is being tormented. You are new to the place. . . . But patience! You will

be here to-morrow, look about you, and by evening you'll consent. Your uncle is lost if you don't, do you understand? They will certainly force him to marry her. Don't forget that to-morrow he may perhaps make her an offer. It will be too late, we must settle things to-day."

"Really, I wish you every success, but as for helping you . . . I don't know in what way."

"We know! But let us wait till to-morrow," said Mizintchikov, smiling ironically. "La mat porte conseil. Good-bye for the present. I will come to you early in the morning, and you think things over. ..."

He turned and went out whistling.

I almost followed him out, to get a breath of fresh air. The moon had not yet risen; it was a dark night, warm and stifling. The leaves on the trees did not stir. In spite of being terribly tired I wanted to walk to distract my mind, collect my thoughts; but I had not gone above ten paces when I suddenly heard my uncle's voice. He was mounting the steps of the lodge in company with someone, and speaking with great animation. I turned back and called to him. My uncle was with Vidoplyasov.

CHAPTER XI

THE EXTREME OF PERPLEXITY

“T TNCLE,” I said, “at last I have got you.”
vJ “My dear boy, I was rushing to you myself. Here, I will just finish with Vidoplyasov, and then we can talk to our hearts’ content. I have a great deal to tell you.”

“What, Vidoplyasov now! Oh, get rid of him, uncle.”

“Only another five or ten minutes, Sergey, and I shall be entirely at your disposal. You see, it’s important.”

“Oh, no doubt, it is his foolishness,” I said, with vexation.

“What can I say to you, my dear? The man has certainly found a time to worry me with his nonsense! Yes, my good Grigory, couldn’t you find some other time for your complaints? Why, what can I do for you? You might have compassion even on me, my good boy. Why, I am, so to say, worn out by you all, devoured alive, body and soul! They are too much for me, Sergey!” And my uncle made a gesture of the profoundest misery with both hands.

“But what business can be so important that you can’t leave it? And, uncle, I do so want ...”

“Oh, my dear boy, as it is they keep crying out that I take no trouble over my servants’ morals! Very likely he will complain of me to-morrow that I wouldn’t listen to him, and then ..,” and my uncle waved his hand in despair again.

“Well, then, make haste and finish with him! Perhaps I can help you; let us go up the steps. What is it? What does he want?” I said as we went into the room.

“Well, you see, my dear, he doesn’t like his own surname, and asks leave to change it. What do you think of that?”

“His surname! What do you mean? . . . Well, uncle, before I hear what he has to say himself, allow me to remark that it is only in your household such queer things can happen,” I said, flinging up my hands in amazement.

“Oh, my dear boy, I might fling up my hands like you, but that’s no good,” my uncle said with vexation. “Come, talk to him yourself, you have a try. He has been worrying me for two months past. ...”

“It’s not a respectable surname,” Vidoplyasov observed.

“But why is it not respectable?” I asked him in surprise.

“Oh, because it suggests all sorts of abomination.”

“But why abomination? And how can you change it? Does anyone change his surname?”

“Well, really, sir, do other people have such surnames?”

“I agree that your surname is a somewhat strange one,” I went on, in complete bewilderment; “but there is no help for it now, you know. Your father had the same surname, I suj> pose, didn’t he?”

“That is precisely so that through my parent I have in that way had to suffer all my life, inasmuch as I am destined by my name to accept many jeers and to endure many sorrows,” answered Vidoplyasov.

“I bet, uncle, that Foma Fomitch has a hand in thisl” I cried with vexation.

“Oh, no, my boy; oh, no, you are mistaken. Foma certainly has befriended him. He has taken him to be his secretary, that’s the whole of his duty. Well, of course he has developed him, has filled him with noble sentiments, so that he is even in some ways cultivated. . . . You see, I will tell you all about it. ...”

“That is true,” Vidoplyasov interrupted, “that Foma Fomitch is my true benefactor, and being a true benefactor to me, he has brought me to understand my insignificance, what a worm I am upon the earth, so that through his honour I have for the first time learned to comprehend my destiny.”

“There you see, Seryozha, there you see what it all means,” my uncle went on, growing flustered as he always did. “He lived at first in Moscow, almost from childhood, in the service of a teacher of calligraphy. You should see how he has learned to write from him, and he illuminates in colours and gold with cupids round, you know — in fact he is an artist, you know. Ilyusha has lessons from him; I pay him a rouble and a half a lesson. Foma himself fixed on a rouble and a half. He goes to three gentlemen’s houses in the neighbourhood; they pay him too. You see how he is dressed! What’s more, he writes poetry.”

“Poetry! That’s the last straw!”

“Poetry, my dear boy, poetry. And don’t imagine I am joking; real poetry, so to say, versifications, and so well composed, you know, on all sorts of subjects. He’ll describe any subject you like in a poem. It’s a real talent! On mamma’s nameday he concocted such a harangue that we listened with our mouths open; there was something from mythology in it, and the Muses flying about, so that indeed, you know, one could see the . . . what do you call it? . . . polish of form — in fact it was perfectly in rhyme. Foma corrected it. Well, I have nothing against that, and indeed I am quite pleased. Let him compose, as long as he doesn’t get into mischief. You see, Grigory, my boy, I speak to you like a father. Foma heard of it, looked at his poetry, encouraged him, and chose him as his reader and copyist — in fact he has educated him. It is true, as he says, that Foma has been a benefactor to him. Well, and so, you know, he has begun to have gentlemanly and romantic sentiments, and a feeling of independence — Foma explained it all to me, but I have really forgotten; only I must own that I wanted, apart from Foma, to give him his freedom. I feel somehow ashamed, you know! . . . but Foma opposes that and says that he finds him useful, that he likes him; and what’s more he says: ‘It’s a great honour to me, as his master, to have poets among my own servants; that that’s how some barons somewhere used to live, and that it is living en grand.’ Well, en grand so be it, then! I have begun to respect him, my boy — you understand. . . . Only goodness knows how he is behaving! The worst of it is that since he has taken to poetry he has become so stuck-up with the rest of the servants that he won’t speak to them. Don’t you take offence, Grigory, I am speaking to you like a father. Last winter, he promised to marry a serf girl here, Matryona, and a very nice girl she is, honest, hard-working and merry. But now it is ‘No, I won’t’. That’s all about it, he has given her up. Whether it is that he has grown conceited, or has planned first to make a name and then to seek a match in some other place.”

“More through the advice of Foma Fomitch,” observed Vidoplyasov, “seeing that his honour is my true well-wisher.”

“Oh, of course Foma Fomitch has a hand in everything,” I could not help exclaiming.

“Ough, my dear boy, that’s not it!” my uncle interrupted me hurriedly. “Only, you see, now he has no peace. She’s a bold, quarrelsome girl, she has set them all against him, they mimic him, bait him, even the serf boys look upon him as a buffoon. . . .”

“It’s chiefly owing to Matryona,” observed Vidoplyasov; “for Matryona’s a real fool, and being a real fool, she’s a woman of unbridled character. Through her I have come in this manner to endure such prolonged sufferings.”

“Ough, Grigory, my boy, I have talked to you already/’ my uncle went on, looking reproachfully at Vidoplyasov. “You see, Sergey, they have made up some horrid rhyme on his surname. He comes to me and complains, asks whether he cannot somehow change his surname, says that he has long been upset at its ugly sound. ...”

“It’s an undignified name,” Vidoplyasov put in.

“Come, you be quiet, Grigory! Foma approved of it too . . . that is, he did not approve exactly, but, you see, this was his idea: that in case he were to publish his poems — and Foma has a project of his doing so — such a surname perhaps might be a drawback, mightn’t it?”

“So he wants to publish his verses, uncle?”

“Yes, my boy. It’s settled already — at my expense, and on the title-page will be put, ‘the serf of so-and-so’, and in the preface, the author’s thanks to Foma for his education. It’s dedicated to Foma. Foma is writing the prelace himself. Well, so just fancy if on the title-page there stands, ‘The Poems of Vidoplyasov’.”

“The Plaints of Vidoplyasov,” Vidoplyasov corrected.

“There, you see, plaints too! Well, Vidoplyasov is no use for a surname, it positively revolts the delicacy of one’s feelings, so Foma says. And all these critics, they say, are such fellows for picking holes and jeering; Brambeus, for instance. . . . They don’t stick at anything, you know! They will make a laughing-stock of him for his surname alone; they’ll tickle your sides for you till you can do nothing but scratch them, won’t they? What I say is, put any surname you like on your poems — a pseudonym it’s called, isn’t it? I don’t remember; some word ending in nym. ‘But no,’ he says; ‘give the order to the whole servants’ hall to call me by a new name hereafter, for ever, so that I may have a genteel surname to suit my talent.’”

“I bet that you consented, uncle. ...”

“I did, Seryozha, my boy, to avoid quarrelling with them; let them do as they like. You see, at that time there was a misunderstanding between Foma and me. So since then it has come to a new surname every week, and he keeps choosing such dainty ones as Oleandrov, Tulipov. . . . Only think, Grigory, at first you asked to be called ‘Vyerny’ (i.e. true, faithful)

—’Grigory Vyerny’; afterwards you didn’t like the name yourself because some simpleton found a rhyme to it, ‘skverny’ (i.e. nasty, horrid). You complained, and the fellow was punished. You were a fortnight thinking of a new name — what a selection you had! — at last you made up your mind and came to be asked to be called ‘Ulanov’. Come, tell me, my boy, could anything be sillier than ‘Ulanov’? I agreed to that too, and gave instructions a second time about changing your surname to Ulanov. It was simply to get rid of him,” added my uncle, turning to me. “You spoilt all the walls, all the window-sills in the arbour scribbling ‘Ulanov’ in pencil, they have had to paint it since. You wasted a whole quire of good paper on signing your name ‘Ulanov’. At last that was a failure too, they found a rhyme for you: ‘Bolvanov’ (i.e. fool, blockhead). He didn’t want to be a blockhead, so the name must be changed again! What did you choose next? I have forgotten.”

“Tantsev,” answered Vidoplyasov. “If I am destined through my surname to be connected with dancing, it would be more dignified in the foreign form: ‘Tantsev’.”

“Oh, yes, ‘Tantsev’. I agreed to that too, Sergey. Only they found a rhyme to that which I don’t like to repeat. To-day he comes forward again, he has thought of something new. I bet he has got some new surname. Have you, Grigory? Confess!”

“I have truly been meaning for a long time to lay at your feet a new name, a genteel one.”

“What is it?”

“Essbouquetov.”

“Aren’t you ashamed, really ashamed, Grigory? A surname off a pomatum pot! And you call yourself a clever man. How many days he must have been thinking about it! Why, that’s what is written on scent-bottles.”

“Upon my word, uncle,” I said in a half-whisper, “why, he is simply a fool, a perfect fool.”

“It can’t be helped,” my uncle answered, also in a whisper. “They declare all round that he is clever, and that all this is due to the working of noble qualities. ...”

“But for goodness’ sake, get rid of him!”

“Listen, Grigory! I have really no time, my boy,” my uncle began in something of an imploring tone, as though he were afraid even of Vidoplyasov. “Come, judge for yourself, how can I attend to your complaints now? You say that they have insulted you in some way again.

Come, I give you my word that to-morrow I will go into it all; and now go, and God be with you. . . . Stay! What is Foma Fomitch doing?”

“He has lain down to rest. He told me that if I was asked about him, I was to say that he is at prayer, that he intends to be praying a long time to-night.”

“H’m! Well, you can go, you can go, my boy! You see, Seryozha, he is always with Foma, so that I am actually afraid of him. And that’s why the servants don’t like him, because he is always telling tales to Foma. Now he has gone away, and very likely to-morrow he will have spun some fine yarn about something! I’ve made it all right, my boy, and feel at peace now. ... I was in haste to get to ycm. Now at last I am with you again,” he brought out with feeling, pressing my hand. “And you know I thought, my dear, that you were desperately angry with me, and would be sure to slip off. I sent them to keep an eye on you. But now, thank God I And this afternoon, Gavrila, what a to-do! and Falaley, and you, and one thing after another! Well, thank God! thank God! At last we can talk to our hearts’ content. I will open my heart to you. You mustn’t go away, Seryozha; you are all I have, you and Korovkin. ...”

“But excuse me, uncle, how have you put things right, and what have I to expect here after what has happened? I must own my head’s going round.”

“And do you suppose that mine isn’t? It has been waltzing round for the last six months, my head has, my boy! But, thank God, everything is settled now. In the first place, they have forgiven me, completely forgiven me, on certain conditions of course; but now I am scarcely afraid of anything. Sashenka has been forgiven too. Ah, Sasha, Sasha, this afternoon ... a passionate little heart! She went a little too far, but she has a heart of gold! I am proud of that girl, Seryozha. May the blessing of God be with her for ever. You too have been forgiven, and even — do yon know — you can do just what you like; you can go all over the house and into the garden, and even among the guests. In fact, you can do just as you like; but only on one condition, that you will say nothing tomorrow in the presence of mamma or Forna — that’s an absolute condition, that is literally not half a word, I have promised for you already — but will only listen to what your elders . . . that is, I mean, what others may say. They say that you are young. Don’t you be offended, Seryozha; you know you really are young. . . . That’s what Anna Nilovna says. ...”

Of course I was very young, and showed it at once by boiling over with indignation at such insulting conditions.

“Listen, uncle,” I cried, almost breathless. “Tell me one thing and set my mind at rest: am I really in a madhouse or not?”

“There you are, my boy, criticising at once! You can’t be patient,” my uncle answered, in distress. “It’s not a madhouse at all, it’s nothing but over-hastiness on both sides. But you must consider, my boy, how you have behaved yourself. You remember what a sousing you gave him — a man, so to say, of venerable years?”

“Such men have no venerable years, uncle.”

“Oh, there, my boy, you go too far! That’s really free-thinking. I have nothing against rational free-thinking myself, my boy, but really that is beyond the mark; you really surprise me, Sergey.”

“Don’t be angry, uncle. I beg pardon, but I only beg your pardon. As for your Foma Fomitch ...”

“There, now, it is your! Oh, Sergey, my boy, don’t judge him too harshly; he is a misanthropical man and nothing more, morbid! You musn’t judge him too severely. But he is a high-minded man; in fact, he is simply the most high-minded of men! Why, you saw it yourself just now; he was simply glorious. And as for the tricks he plays sometimes, it is no use noticing it. Why, it happens to everyone.”

“On the contrary, uncle, it happens to nobody.”

“Ough, he keeps on at the same thing! There is not much good nature in you, Seryozha; you don’t know how to forgive. . . .”

“Oh, all right, uncle, all right! Let us leave that. Tell me, have you seen Nastasya Yevgrafovna?”

“Oh, my dear, the whole bother has been about her. I tell you what, Seryozha, and first, what is most important: we’ve all decided to congratulate him to-morrow on his birthday — Foma, I mean — for to-morrow really is his birthday. Sashenka is a good girl, but she is mistaken; so we will go, the whole tribe of us, rather earlv, before mass. Ilyusha will recite some verses to him which will be like oil on his heart — in fact, it will flatter him. Oh, if only you, Seryozha, would congratulate him with us! He would perhaps forgive you altogether. How splendid it would be if you were reconciled! Forget your wrongs, Seryozha; you insulted him too, you know ... he is a most worthy man. . . .”

“Uncle! uncle!” I cried, losing all patience, “I want to talk of what is important, and you. ... Do you know, I s\y again, what is happening to Nastasya Yevgrafovna?”

“Why, what is the matter, my boy? Why are you shouting? All the trouble has arisen over her, though indeed it arose some time ago. I did not want to tell you about it before, so as not to frighten you, for they wanted simply to turn her out, and they insisted on my sending her away too. You can imagine my position. . . . Oh, well, thank (iod, all that is set right now. They thought, you see — I will confess it all to you — that I was in love with her myself, and wanted to marry her; that I was, in short, rushing to ruin, and that really would be rushing to my rum, they have explained it s> to me. And so, to save me, they meant to turn her out. It was mamma’s doing, and most of all Anna Nilovna’s. Foma si\s nothing so tar. But now I have convinced them all that they are wrong, and I must confess I have told them already that you are making Nastenka a formal proposal and that is what \ou have come for. Well, that has pacificd them to some extent, and now she will remain, though not altogether; that is, so far only on probation. Still, she will remain. And indeed \ou have risen in general esteem since I told her you were courting her. Anyway, mamma seems pacified. Only Anna Nilovna goes on grumbling! I really don’t know what to think of to satisfy her. And what is it she really wants, Anna Nilovna?”

“Uncle, you are greatly in eiror’ Why, do you know that Nastasya Yevgrafovna is going away to-morrow if she has not gone away already? Do you know that her father came to-day on purpose to take her away? That it’s all a settled thing, that she told me of it to-day herself, and in con< luMon asked me to give you her greetings? Do vou Lno.v that or not?”

My uncle stood blankly facing me with his mouth open. I fancied that he shuddered, and a moan broke from his lips.

Without loss of time I ha^tuud to describe to him all my conversation with Nastenka, my attempt to pay her my addresses, her resolute refusal, her anger with my uncle for having summoned me. I explained that she was hoping by her departure to save him fiom mairying Tatyana Ivanovna. In fact I concealed nothing from him; indeed I purposely exaggerated everything that was unpleasant in my story. I wanted to impress my uncle so as to wring some resolute step out of him, and I really did impress him. He cried out and clutched at his head.

“Where is she, don’t you know? Where is she now?” he brought out at last, turning pale with alarm. “And I, like a fool came here quite easy in my mind, I thought everything had been set right,” he added in despair.

“I don’t know where she is now; only when the uproar was beginning she went to you: she meant to proclaim all this aloud, before them all. Most likely they would not let her go in.”

“No, indeed! What might she not have done! Ah, the hot-headed proud little thing! And what is she going to? What is she going to? And you, you are a pretty fellow. Why, what did she refuse you for? It’s nonsense! You ought to have made her like you. Why doesn’t she like you? For God’s sake, answer, why are you standing there?”

“Have mercy on me, uncle! How can you ask such questions?”

“But you know this is impossible! You must marry her, you must. What did I bring you from Petersburg for? You must make her happy! Now they will drive her away, but when she is your wife, my own niece, they won’t drive her away. If not, what has she to go to? What will become of her? To be a governess. Why, that is simply senseless nonsense, being a governess. While she is looking for a place, what is she going to live upon at home? Her old father has got nine to keep; they go hungry themselves. She won’t take a farthing from me, you know, if she goes away through this disgusting gossip; she won’t, nor will her father. And to go away like this — it is awful! It will cause a scandal — I know. And her salary has been paid for a long time in advance for necessities at home; you know she is their breadwinner. Why, supposing I do recommend her as a governess, and find an honest and honourable family. . . . But where the devil is one to find them, honourable, really honourable people? Well, granting that there are many — indeed it’s a blasphemy to doubt it, but, my dear boy, you see it’s risky — can one rely on people? Besides, anyone poor is suspicious, and apt to fancy he is being forced to pay for food and kindness with humiliation! They will insult her; she is proud, and then . . . and what then? And what if some scoundrelly seducer turns up? She would spurn him, I know she would, but yet he would insult her, the scoundrel! And some discredit, some slur, some suspicion may be cast upon her all the same, and then. . . . My head is going round! Ah, my God!”

“Uncle, forgive me for one question,” I said solemnly. “Don’t be angry with me; understand that your answer to this question may decide much. Indeed, I have a right in a way to demand an answer from you, uncle!”

“What, what it is? What question?”

“Tell me as in God’s presence, openly and directly; don’t you feel that you are a little in love with Nastasya Yevgrafovna yourself and would like to marrv her? Just think; that is why she is being turned away from here.”

My uncle made a vigorous gesture of the most violent impatience.

“I? In love? With her? Whv, they have all gone off their heads, or are in a conspiracy against me. And why did I write to you to come if not to prove to them that they were all off their heads? Why am I making a match lor her with you? I? In love? With her? They are all crazy, that’s all about it!”

“But if it is so, uncle, do allow me to speak freely. I declare to you solemnly that I see absolutely nothing against the suggestion. On the contrary, you would make her happy, if only you love her and — and — God grant it may be so. And God give you love and good counsel!”

“But upon my word, what are you talking about?” cried my uncle, almost with horror. “I wonder how you can say such a thing coolly . . . and . . . you are altogether, my boy, in too great a hurry, I notice that characteristic in you! Why, aren’t you talking nonsense? How, pray, am I to marry her when I look upon her as a daughter and nothing else? It would be shameful for me, indeed, to look upon her in any other light; it would be a sin in fact! I am an old man, while she is a flower! Indeed, Foma made that clear to me in those very words. My heart glows with a father’s love for her, and here you talk of marriage! Maybe out of gratitude she would not refuse me, but you know she would despise me afterwards for taking advantage of her gratitude. I should spoil her life, I should lose her affection! And I would give mv soul for her, she is my beloved child! I love her just as I do Sasha, even more, I must own. Sasha is mv daughter by right, by law, but this one I have made my daughter bv love. I took her out of poverty, I have brought her up Katya, my lost angel, loved her; she left her to me as a daughter. I have given her a good education: she speaks French and plays the piano, she has read books and everything. . . . Such a sweet smile she has! Have you noticed it, Seryozha? As though she were laughing at one, but yet she is not laughing, but on the contrary, loving one. . . . You see I thought that you would come and make her an offer; they would be convinced that I had no intentions in regard to her, and would give over spreading these disgusting stories. She would remain with us then in peace, in comfort, and how happy we should be! You are both my children, both almost orphans, you have both grown up under my guardianship ... I should

have loved you so! I would have devoted my life to you; I would not part from you; I would follow you anywhere! Oh, how happy we might have been! And why are these people always so cross, always so angry, why do they hate each other? If only I could explain it all to them! If only I could make them see the whole truth! Ah, my God!”

“Yes, uncle, yes, that is all so; but, you see, she has refused me.”

“Refused you! Hm. ... Do you know, I had a sort of presentiment that she would refuse you,” he said, musing. “But no!” he cried. “I don’t believe it. It’s impossible. In that case, all our plans are upset! But you must have begun injudiciously somehow, even offended her perhaps. Perhaps you tried your hand at paying compliments. . . . Tell me how it was again, Sergey.”

I repeated the whole story in full detail again. When I came to Nastenka’s hoping by her departure to save my uncle from Tatvana Ivanovna, he gave a bitter smile.

“Save me!” he said. “Save me till to-morrow morning. . . .”

“But you don’t mean to say that you are going to marry Tatyana Ivanovna!” I cried in alarm.

“How else could I have paid for Nastasya’s not being sent away to-morrow? To-morrow I make the offer — the formal proposal.”

“And you have made up your mind to it, uncle?”

“What could I do, my boy, what could I do? It rends my heart, but I have made up my mind to it. The proposal will be to-morrow; they suggest that the wedding should be a quiet one, at home; it would certainly be better at home. You will perhaps be best man. I have already dropped a hint about you, so they won’t drive you away before then. There is no help for it, my boy. They say, ‘It’s a fortune for your children!’ Of course one would do anything for one’s children. One would turn head over heels, especially as really, perhaps, what they say is right. You know, I really ought to do something for my family. One can’t sit an idle drone for ever!”

“But, uncle, she is mad, you know!” I cried, forgetting myself, and there was a sickly pang at my heart.

“Oh, mad, is she now? She is not mad at all; it’s only, you know, that she has had trouble. . . . There is no help for it, my boy. Of course I should have been glad of one with sense. . . . Though, after all, some who have sense are no better! If only you knew what a kind-hearted creature she is, noble-hearted!”

“But, my God! he is resigning himself to the thought of it already,” I said in despair.

“And what else is there to do? You know they are doing their utmost for my benefit, and, indeed, I felt beforehand that sooner or later they would force me to marry, that there is no getting out of it. So better now than make more quarrelling about it. I am telling you everything quite openly, Seryozha. In a way I am actually glad. I have made up my mind, somehow. Why, I came here with my mind almost at ease. It seems, it’s my fate. And the great thing to make up for it wras that Nastenka would stay on. You know I agreed on that condition. And now she wants to run away of herself! But that shall not be!” my uncle cried, stamping. “Listen, Sergey,” he added with a determined air; “wait for me here, don’t go away. I will come back to you in an instant.”

“Where are you off to, uncle?”

“Perhaps I shall see her, Sergey; it will all be cleared up, believe me that it will all be cleared up, and . . . and . . . you shall marry her, I give you my word of honour!” . My uncle went quickly out of the room, and turned not towards the house, but into the garden. I watched him from the window.

CHAPTER XII

THE CATASTROPHE

I WAS left alone. My position was insufferable; I had been rejected, and my uncle meant to marry me almost by force. I was perplexed and lost in a tangle of ideas. Mizintchikov and his proposition was not absent from my mind for an instant. At all costs uncle must be saved! I even thought of going to look for Mizintchikov and telling him all about it. But where had my uncle gone, though? He had said himself that he was going to look for Nastenka, but had turned in the direction of the garden. The thought of secret meetings flashed through my mind, and a very unpleasant feeling clutched at my heart. I remembered what Mizintchikov had said of a secret liaison. After a moment's thought I rejected my suspicions with indignation. My uncle was incapable of deceit: that was obvious. My uneasiness grew greater every moment. Unconsciously I went out on to the steps, and walked into the garden down the very avenue into which my uncle had disappeared. The moon was beginning to rise. I knew that garden through and through, and was not afraid of losing myself. As I drew near the old arbour which stood in solitude on the bank of the neglected scum-covered pond, I suddenly stood rooted to the spot; I heard voices in the arbour. I cannot describe the strange feeling of annoyance that took possession of me. I felt convinced that my uncle and Nastenka were there, and went on going nearer, appeasing my conscience by thinking that I was walking at the same pace as before and not trying to approach stealthily. Suddenly there was the distinct sound of a kiss, then stifled exclamations, and immediately afterwards a shrill feminine shriek. At that instant a woman in a white dress ran out of the arbour and flashed by me like a swallow. It even seemed to me that she hid her face in her hands that she might not be recognised: probably I had been noticed from the arbour. But what was my amazement when in the swain who emerged after the flying lady I recognised — Obnoskin, Obnoskin, who, according to Mizintchikov's words, had gone away some hours before. Obnoskin on his side was greatly confused when he saw me; all his impudence vanished instantly.

“Excuse me, but ... I did not in the least expect to meet you,” he brought out, smiling and hesitating.

“Nor I you,” I answered ironically, “especially as I heard you had already gone away.”

“No. ... It was just ... I went a little on the way with my mother. But may I appeal to you as an absolutely honourable man?”

“What about?”

“There are cases — and you will agree yourself that it is so — when a truly honourable man is forced to appeal to the highest sense of honour of another truly honourable man. ... I hope you understand me. . . .”

“Do not hope, I understand absolutely nothing. ...”

“You saw the lady who was here with me in the arbour?”

“I saw her, but I did not recognise her.”

“Ah, you did not recognise her. . . . That lady I shall shortly call my wife.”

“I congratulate you. But in what way can I be of use to you?”

“Only in one way, by keeping it a dead secret that you have seen me with that lady.”

“Who can she be?” I wondered. “Surely not . . .”

“I really don’t know,” I answered Obnoskin. “I hope that you will excuse me for not being able to promise.”

“Yes, please, for God’s sake,” Obnoskin besought me. “Understand my position, it’s a secret. You may be betrothed too: then I . . .”

“Shi someone is coming!”

“Where?”

We did indeed catch a glimpse thirty paces away of the shadow of someone passing.

“It ... it must be Foma Fomitch!” Obnoskin whispered, trembling all over. “I know him from his walk. My God! And steps again from the other direction! Do you hear? . . . Good-bye! I thank you . . . and I entreat you . . .”

Obnoskin vanished. A minute later, as though he had sprung out of the earth, my uncle was before me.

“Is it you?” he greeted me. “It is all over, Seryozha, it is all over!”

I noticed, too, that he was trembling from head to foot.

“What is all over, uncle?”

“Come along!” he said, gasping for breath, and clutching my hand tightly he drew me alter him. He did not utter a word all the way to the lodge, nor did he let me speak. I was expecting something monstrous, and my expectations were almost realised.

When we went indoors he was overcome with giddiness, he was deathly pale. I promptly sprinkled him with water. “Something very awful must have happened,” I thought, “for a man like this to faint.”

“Uncle, what is the matter with you?” I asked him at last.

“All is over, Seryozha! Foma found me in the garden with Nastenka, at the very moment when I was kissing her.”

“Kissing her! In the garden!” I cried, looking at my uncle in amazement.

“In the garden, my boy. The Lord confounded me I I went there to be sure of seeing her. I wanted to speak openly to her, to make her see reason — about you, I mean. And she had been waiting for me a whole hour, on the broken seat, beyond the pond. . . . She often goes there when she wants to speak to me.”

“Often, uncle?”

“Yes, often, my boy! Of late we have been meeting almost every night. Only they must have watched us — in fact, I know that they watched us and that it was Anna Nilovna’s doing. We gave it up for a time. The last four days we have not met; but to-day it was necessary again. You saw yourself how necessary it was; how else could I have said anything to her? I went in the hope of finding her, and she had been sitting there a whole hour, waiting for me: she, too, wanted to tell me something. ...”

“Good heavens, how incautious! Why, you knew that you were being watched!”

“But, you see, it was a critical matter, Seryozha; there was a great deal we had to discuss together. I don’t dare to look at her in the daytime. She looks in one corner and I look in another, as though she did not exist. But towards night we meet and have a talk. ...”

“Well, what happened, uncle?”

“Before I could utter a couple of words, you know, my heart began throbbing and the tears gushed from my eyes. I began trying to persuade her to marry you, and she answered me: ‘You certainly don’t love me — you must be blind.’ And all of a sudden she flings herself on my neck, throws her arms round me, and begins crying and sobbing! T love no one but you,’ she said, ‘and won’t marry anyone. I have loved you for ever so long, but I

will never marry you. And to-morrow I am going away and going into a nunnery.’”

“My goodness! Did she really say that? Well, what then, uncle, what then?”

“I looked up and there was Foma facing us! And where had he sprung from? Could he have been sitting behind a bush, and waiting for some such lapse?”

“The scoundrel!”

“I was petrified, Nastenka ran away, while Foma Fomitch passed by without a word and held up his finger at me. Sergey, do you understand what a hubbub there will be to-morrow?”

“I should think I do!”

“Do you understand?” he cried in despair, leaping up from his seat. “Do you understand that they will try to ruin her, to disgrace her, to dishonour her; they are looking for a pretext to accuse her of something disgraceful, and now the pretext is found. You know they will say that she is carrying on an abominable intrigue with me! You know, the scoundrels made out that she had an intrigue with Vidoplyasov! It’s all Anna Nilovna’s tales. What will happen now? What will happen to-morrow? Will Foma really tell them?”

“He’ll certainly tell them, uncle.”

“If he does, if he really does tell ..,” he brought out, biting his lips and clenching his fists. “But no, I don’t believe it! He won’t tell, he will understand ... he is a man of the loftiest character! He will spare her. ...”

“Whether he spares her or whether he doesn’t,” I answered resolutely, “it is your duty in any case to make Nastasya Yevgrafovna an offer to-morrow.”

My uncle looked fixedly at me.

“Do you understand, uncle, that you have mined the girl’s reputation if this story gets about? Do you understand that you ought to prevent that calamity as quickly as possible; that you ought to look them all in the face boldly and proudly, ought to offer her your hand publicly, to spurn their arguments and pound Foma to a jelly if he hints a word against her?”

“My dear boy,” cried my uncle. “I thought of that as I came along here!”

“And did you make up your mind?”

“Yes, and finally! I had made up my mind before I began speaking to you.”

“Bravo, uncle!”

And I rushed to embrace him.

We talked for a long time. I put before him all the arguments, all the absolute necessity for marrying Nastenka, which, indeed, he understood far better than I did. But my eloquence was aroused. I was delighted on my uncle’s account. He was impelled by a sense of duty or he would never have taken a stand. He had the deepest reverence for duty, for obligation. But in spite of that I was quite unable to imagine how things would be settled. I knew and blindly believed that nothing would induce my uncle to fall short of what he had once recognised as his duty; but yet I could not believe that he would have the strength to stand out against his household. And so I did my utmost to incite him and urge him on, and set to work with all the fervour of youth.

“The more so,” I said, “as now everything is settled and your last doubts have vanished! What you did not expect, though in reality everyone else saw it, and everyone noticed it before you did, has happened; Nastasya Yevgrafovna loves you! Surely,” I cried, “you will not let that pure love be turned into shame and disgrace for her?”

“Never! But, my dear boy, can I really be going to be so happy?’ I cried my uncle, throwing himself on my neck. “And how is it she loves me, and what for? What for? It seems to me there is nothing in me likely to ... I am an old man compared to her; I certainly did not expect it! My angel, my angel! . . . Listen, Seryozha! you asked me this evening whether I were not in love with her: had you any idea?”

“All I saw, uncle, was that you love her as much as anyone can love: you love her and at the same time you don’t know it yourself. Upon my word! You invite me, you want to marry me to her solely in order that she may become your niece, and so you may have her always with you. ...”

“But you . . . you do forgive me, Sergey?”

“Oh, uncle. . . .”

And he embraced me again.

“Mind, uncle, they will all be against you: you must stand up for yourself and resist them, and no later than to-morrow!”

“Yes . . . yes, to-morrow ..,” he repeated somewhat pensively. “And you know we must attack the business with manliness, with true nobility of soul, with strength of will . . . Yes, with strength of will!”

“Don’t be frightened, uncle.”

“I am not frightened, Seryozha! There’s one thing I don’t know how to begin, how to proceed.”

“Don’t think about it, uncle. To-morrow will settle everything. Set your mind at rest for to-day. The more you think the worse it will be. And if Foma begins — kick him out of the house at once and pound him to a jelly.”

“And can’t we avoid kicking him out? What I have decided, my boy, is this. To-morrow I shall go to him early, at dawn, I shall tell him all about it, just as I have told you here. Surely he cannot but understand me, he is a high-minded man, the most high-minded of men. But I tell you what does worry me: what if mamma speaks to Tatyana Ivanovna to-day of the offer to be made to her to-morrow? That would be unlucky, wouldn’t it?”

“Don’t worry yourself about Tatyana Ivanovna, uncle.”

And I told him about the scene in the arbour with Obnoskin. My uncle was extremely surprised. I did not say a word about Mizintchikov.

“A fantastical person. A really fantastical person!” he cried. “Poor thing! They ingratiate themselves with her and try to take advantage of her simplicity. Was it really Obnoskin? But, you know, he has gone away. . . . Strange, awfully strange! I am astonished, Seryozha. . . . We must look into it to-morrow and take steps. . . . But are you perfectly certain that it was Tatyana Ivanovna?”

I answered that I had not seen her face, but for certain reasons I was positive that it was Tatyana Ivanovna.

“H’m. Wasn’t it a little intrigue with one of the servant girls and you fancied it was Tatyana Ivanovna? Wasn’t it Dasha, the gardener’s daughter? A sly hussy! She has been remarked upon, that’s why I say so. Anna Nilovna caught her! . . . But it wasn’t she, though! He said he meant to marry her. Strange, strange!”

At last we parted. I embraced my uncle and gave him my blessing.

“To-morrow, to-morrow,” he repeated, “it will all be settled; before you are up it will be settled. I shall go to Foma and take a chivalrous line, I will speak frankly as I would to my own brother, I will lay bare the inmost recesses of my heart. Good-bye, Seryozha. You go to bed, you are tired; but I am sure I shan’t shut my eyes all night.”

He went away. I went to bed at once, tired out and utterly exhausted. It had been a hard day. My nerves were overwrought, and before I fell really asleep I kept starting and waking up again. But strange as my impressions

were on going off to sleep, the strangeness of them was as nothing beside the queerness of my awakening next morning.

PART II

CHAPTER I

THE PURSUIT

I SLEPT soundly without dreaming. Suddenly I felt as though a load of some hundredweights was lying on my feet. I cried out and woke up. It was daylight; the sun was peeping brightly into the room. On my bed, or rather on my feet, was sitting Mr. Bahtcheyev.

It was impossible to doubt that it was he. Managing somehow to release my legs, I sat up in bed and looked at him with the blank amazement of a man just awake.

“And now he is looking about him,” cried the fat man. “Why are you staring at me? Get up, sir, get up. I have been waking you for the last half-hour; rub away at your eyes!”

“Why, what has happened? What’s the time?”

“It’s still early by the clock, but our Fevronya did not wait for dawn, but has given us the slip. Get up, we are going in pursuit!”

“What Fevronya?”

“Why, our young lady, the crazy one! She has given us the slip! She was off before dawn. I came to you, sir, only for a minute, to wake you, and here I have been busy with you a couple of hours. Get up, your uncle’s waiting for you. They waited for the festive day!” he added, with a malignant quiver in his voice.

“But whom and what are you talking about?” I asked impatiently, though I was beginning to guess. “Surely not Tatyana Ivanovna?”

“To be sure. She it is. I said so, I foretold it; they wouldn’t listen to me. A nice treat she has given us for the festive day now! She is mad on amour, and has amour on the brain. Tfoo! And that fellow, what do you say to that fellow? With his little beard, eh?”

“Can you mean Mizintchikov?”

“Tfoo, plague take it! Why, my dear sir, you had better rub your eyes and pull yourself together — if only for the great holy festive day. You must

have had a great deal too much at supper last night if you are still hazy this morning I With Mizintchikov I It’s with Obnoskin, not Mizintchikov. Ivan Ivanovitch Mizintchikov is a moral young man and he is coming with us in pursuit.”

‘‘What are you saying?” I cried, jumping up in bed. “Is it really with Obnoskin?”

“Tfoo, you annoying person!” answered the fat man, leaping up from his seat. “I come to him as to a man of culture to inform him of what has happened, and he still doubts it. Well, sir, if you want to come with us, get up, shoot into your breeches. It’s no good my spending more words on you; I’ve wasted golden time on you as it is.”

And he went out in extreme indignation.

Amazed by the news, I jumped out oi bed, hurriedly dressed, and ran downstairs. Thinking to find my uncle in the house, where everyone still seemed asleep and knowing nothing of what had happened, I cautiously mounted the front steps, and in the hall I met Nastenka She seemed to have dressed hurriedly in some sort of peignoir or schlafrock. Her hair was in disorder; it was evident that she had only just jumped out of bed, and she seemed to be waiting for someone in the hall.

“Tell me, is it true that Tatvana Ivanovna has run away with Obnoskin?” she asked hurriedly in a breaking voice, looking pale and frightened.

“I am told it is true. I am looking for my uncle, we want to go after them.”

“Oh, bring her back, make haste and bring her back. She will be ruined if you don’t fetch her back.”

“But where is uncle?”

“Most likely in the stable; they are getting the carriage out. I have been waiting for him here. Listen: tell him from me that I must go home to-day, I have quite made up my mind. My father will take me; I shall go at once if I can. Everything is hopeless now. All is lost!”

Saying this, she looked at me as though she were utterly lost, and suddenly dissolved into tears. I think she began to be hysterical.

“Calm yourself,” I besought her. “Why, it’s all for the best — you will see. What is the matter with you, Nastasya Yevgrafovna?”

“I ... I don’t know . . . what is the matter with me,” she said, sighing and unconsciously squeezing my hands. “Tell him . . .”

At that instant there was a sound from the other side of the door on the right.

She let go of my hand and, panic-stricken, ran away upstairs without finishing her sentence.

I found the whole party — that is, my uncle, Bahtcheyev, and Mizintchikov — in the back yard by the stable. Fresh horses had been harnessed in Bahtcheyev's carriage. Everything was ready for setting off; they were only waiting for me.

"Here he is!" cried my uncle on my appearance. "Have you heard, my boy?" he asked, with a peculiar expression on his face.

Alarm, perplexity, and, at the same time, hope were expressed in his looks, in his voice and in his movements. He was conscious that a momentous crisis had come in his life.

I was immediately initiated into all the details of the case. Mr. Bahtcheyev, who had spent a very bad night, left his house at dawn to reach the monastery five miles away in time for early mass. Just at the turning from the high road to the monastery he suddenly saw a chaise dashing along at full trot, and in the chaise Tatyana Ivanovna and Obnoskin. Tatyana Ivanovna, with a tear-stained and as it seemed frightened face, uttered a shriek and stretched out her hands to Mr. Bahtcheyev as though imploring his protection — so at least it appeared from his story; "while he, the scoundrel, with the little beard," he went on, "sits more dead than alive and tries to hide himself. But you are wrong there, my fine fellow, you can't hide yourself." Without stopping, Stepan Alexyevitch turned back to the road and galloped to Stepantchikovo and woke my uncle, Mizintchikov, and finally me. They decided to set off at once in pursuit.

"Obnoskin, Obnoskin," said my uncle, looking intently at me, looking at me as though he would like to say something else as well. "Who would have thought it?"

"Any dirty trick might have been expected of that low fellow!" cried Mizintchikov with the most vigorous indignation, and at once turned away to avoid my eye.

"What are we going to do, go or not? Or are we going to stand here till night babbling!" interposed Mr. Bahtcheyev as he clambered into the carriage.

"We are going, we are going," cried my uncle.

“It’s all for the best, uncle,” I whispered to him. “You see how splendidly it has all turned out?”

“Hush, my boy, don’t be sinful. . . . Ah, my dear I They will simply drive her away now, to punish her for their failure, you understand. It’s fearful, the prospect I sec before me!”

“Well, Yegor Ilyitch, are you going on whispering or starting?” Mr. Bahtcheyev cried out a second time. “Or <hall we unharness the horses and have a snack of something? What do you say; shall we have a drink of vodka?”

These words were uttered with such furious sarcasm that it was impossible not to satisfy Bahtcheyev at once. We all promptly got into the carriage, and the horses set off at a gallop.

For some time we were all silent. My uncle kept looking at me significantly, but did not care to speak to me before the others. He often sank into thought; then ah though waking up, started and looked about him in agitation. Mizintchikov was apparently calm, he smoked a cigar, and his looks expressed the indignation of an unjustly treated man. But Bahteheyev had excitement enough for all of us. He grumbled to himself, looked at everyone and everything with absolute indignation, flushed crimson, fumed, continually spat aside, and could not recover himself.

“Are you sure, Stepan Alexyevitch, that they have gone to Mishino?” my uncle asked suddenly. “It’s fifteen miles from here, my boy,” he added, addressing me. “It’s a little village of thirty souls, lately purchased from the forrnei owners by a provincial official. The most pettifogging fellow in the world. So at least they say about inm, perhaps mistakenly Stepan Alexyevitch declares that that is where Obnoskin has gone, and that that official will be helping him now.”

“To be sure,” cried Bahtcheyev, starting. “I tell you, it is Mishino. Only by now maybe there is no trace of him left at Mishino. I should think not, we have waited three hours chattering in the yard!”

“Don’t be uneasy,” observed Mizint’hikov. “We shall find them.”

“Find them, indeed! I dare say he will wait for you. The treasure is in his hands. You may be sure we have seen the last of him!”

“Calm yourself, Stepan Alexyevitch, calm yourself, we shall overtake them,” said my uncle. “They have not had time to take any steps yet, you will sec that is so”

“Not had time!” Mr. Bahtchcycv brought out angrily. “She’s had time for any mischief, for all she’s such a quiet onel ‘She’s a quiet one/ they say, ‘a quiet one,’ he added in a mincing voice, as though he were mimicking someone. ‘She has had troubles.’ Well, now, she has shown us her heels, for all her troubles. Now you have to chase after her along the high roads with your tongue out before you can see where you are going! They won’t let a man go to church for the holy saint’s day. Tfoo!”

“But she is not under age,” I observed; “she is not under guardianship. We can’t bring her back if she doesn’t want to come. What are we going to do?”

“Of course,” answered my uncle; “but she will want to — I assure you. What she is doing now means nothing. As soon as she sees us she will want to come back — I’ll answer for it. We can’t leave her like this, my boy, at the mercy of fate, to be sacrificed; it’s a duty, so to say. ...”

“She’s not under guardianship!” cried Bahtcheyev, pouncing on me at once. “She is a fool, my dear sir, a perfect fool — it’s not a case of her being under guardianship. I didn’t care to talk to you about her yesterday, but the other day I went by mistake into her room and what did I see, there she was before the looking-glass with her arms akimbo dancing a schottische! And dressed up to the nines: a fashion-plate, a regular fashion-plate! I simply spat in disgust and walked away. Then I foresaw all this, as clear as though it were written in a book!”

“Why abuse her so?” I observed with some timidity. “We know that Tatyana Ivanovna ... is not in perfect health ... or rather she has a mania. ... It seems to me that Obnoskin is the one to blame, not she.”

“Not in perfect health! Come, you get along,” put in the fat man, turning crimson with wrath. “Why, he has taken an oath to drive a man to fury! Since yesterday he has taken an oath to! She is a fool, my dear sir, I tell you, an absolute fool. It’s not that she’s not in perfect health; from early youth she has been mad on Cupid. And now Cupid has brought her to this pass. As for that fellow with the beard, it’s no use talking about him. I dare say by now he is racing off double quick with the money in his pocket and a grin on his face.

“Do you really think, then, that he’ll cast her off at once?”

“What else should he do? Is he going to drag such a treasure about with him? And what good is she to him? He’ll fleece her of everything and then

sit her down somewhere under a bush on the high road — and make off. While she can sit there under the bush and sniff the flowers."

"Well, you are too hasty there, Stepan, it won't be like that!" cried my uncle. "But why are you so cross? I wonder at you, Stepan. What's the matter with you?"

"Why, am I a man or not? It does make one cross, though it's no business of mine. Why, I am saying it perhaps in kindness to her. . . . Ech, damnation take it all! Why, what have I come here for? Why, what did I turn back for? What is it to do with me? What is it to do with me?"

So grumbled Mr. Bahtcheyev, but I left off listening to him and mused on the woman whom we were now in pursuit of — Tatyana Ivanovna. Here is a brief biography of her which I gathered later on from the most trustworthy sources, and which is essential to the explanation of her adventures.

A poor orphan child who grew up in a strange unfriendly house, then a poor girl, then a poor young woman, and at last a poor old maid, Tatyana Ivanovna in the course of her poor life had drained the over-full cup of sorrow, friendlessness, humiliation and reproach, and had tasted to the full the bitterness of the bread of others. Naturally of a gay, highly susceptible and frivolous temperament, she had at first endured her bitter lot in one way or another and had even been capable at times of the gayest careless laughter; but with years destiny at last got the upper hand of her. Little by little Tatyana Ivanovna grew thin and sallow, became irritable and morbidly susceptible, and sank into the most unrestrained, unbounded dreaminess, often interrupted by hysterical tears and convulsive sobbing. The fewer earthly blessings real life left to her lot, the more she comforted and deluded herself in imagination. The more certainly, the more irretrievably her last hopes in real life were passing and at last were lost, the more seductive grew her dreams, never to be realised. Fabulous wealth, unheard-of beauty, rich, elegant, distinguished suitors, always princes and sons of generals, who for her sake had kept their hearts in virginal purity and were dying at her feet from infinite love; and finally, he — he, the ideal of beauty combining in himself every possible perfection, passionate and loving, an artist, a poet, the son of a general — all at once or all by turns — began to appear to her not only in her dreams but almost in reality. Her reason was already beginning to fail, unable to stand the strain of this opiate of secret incessant dreaming. . . . And all at once destiny played a last fatal jest at her

expense. Living in the last extreme of humiliation, in melancholy surroundings that crushed the heart, a com-

panion to a toothless old lady, the most peevish in the world, scolded for everything, reproached for every crust she ate, for every threadbare rag she wore, insulted with impunity by anyone, protected by no one, worn out by her miserable existence and secretly plunged in the luxury of the maddest and most fervid dreams — she suddenly heard the news of the death of a distant relation, all of whose family had died long before (though she in her frivolous way had never taken the trouble to ascertain the fact); he was a strange man, a phrenologist and a money-lender, who led a solitary, morose, unnoticed life, in seclusion somewhere very remote in the wilds. And now all at once immense wealth fell as though by miracle from heaven and scattered gold at Tatyana Ivanovna's feet; she turned out to be the sole legitimate heiress of the dead money-lender. A hundred thousand silver roubles came to her at once. This jest of destiny was the last straw. Indeed, how could a mind already tottering doubt the truth of dreams when they were actually beginning to come true? And so the poor thing took leave of her last remaining grain of common sense. Swooning with bliss, she soared away beyond recall into her enchanted world of impossible imaginations and seductive fancies. Away with all reflection, all doubt, all the checks of real life, all its laws clear and inevitable as twice two make four. Thirty-five years and dreams of dazzling beauty, the sad chill of autumn and the luxuriance of the infinite bliss of love — all blended in her without discord. Her dreams had once already been realised in life; why should not all the rest come true? Why should not he appear? Tatyana Ivanovna did not reason, but she had faith. But while waiting for hum, the ideal — suitors and knights of various orders and simple gentlemen, officers and civilians, infantry men and cavalry men, grand noblemen and simply poets who had been in Paris or had been only in Moscow, with beards and without beards, with imperials and without imperials, Spaniards and not Spaniards (but Spaniards, by preference), began appearing before her day and night in horrifying numbers that awakened grave apprehensions in onlookers; she was but a step from the madhouse. All these lovely phantoms thronged about her in a dazzling, infatuated procession. In reality, in actual life, everything went the same fantastic way: anyone she looked at was in love with her; anyone who passed by was a Spaniard; if anyone died it must be for love of her. As ill-luck would have it, all this was confirmed in her eyes

by the fact that men such as Obnoskin, Mizintchikov, and dozens of others with the same motives began running after her. Everyone began suddenly trying to please her, spoiling her, flattering her. Poor Tatyana Ivanovna refused to suspect that all this was for the sake of her money. She was fully convinced that, as though at some signal, people had suddenly reformed, and all, every one of them, grown gay and kind, friendly and good. He had not appeared himself in person; but though there could be no doubt that he would appear, her daily life as it was was so agreeable, so alluring, so full of all sorts of distractions and diversions, that she could wait. Tatyana Ivanovna ate sweetmeats, culled the flowers of pleasure, and read novels. The novels heated her imagination and were usually flung aside at the sccond page; she could not read longer, but was carried to dreamland by the very first lines, by the most trivial hint at love, sometimes simply by the description of scenery, of a room, of a toilette. New finery, lace, hats, hair ornaments, ribbons, samples, paper patterns, designs, sweetmeats, flowers, lapdogs were being continually sent her. Three girls ^pent whole days rewing for her in the maid's room, while their lady was trying on bodices and flounces, and twisting and turning before the looking-glass from morning to night, and even in the night. She ac tually seemed younger and prettier on coming into her fortune. To this day I don't know what was her lelationship to the late General Krahotkin. I have always been persuaded that it was the invention of Madame la (ienerale, who wanted to get possession of Tatyana Ivanovna and at all costs to marry her to my uncle for her money. Mr. Bahtcheyev was right when he spoke of its being Cupid that had brought Tatyana Ivanovna to the last point; and my uncle's idea on hearing of her elopement with Obnoskin — to run after her and bring her back even by force — was the most rational one The poor creature was not fit to live without a guardian, and would have come to grief at once if she had fallen into evil hands.

It was past nine when we reached Mishino. It was a poor little village, lying in a hole two miles from the high road. Six or seven peasants' huts, berrimed with ^moke, slanting on one side and barely covered with blackened thatch, looked dejectedly and inhospitably at the traveller. There was not a garden, not a bush, to be seen for a quarter of a mile round. Only an old willow hung drowsily over the greenish pool that passed for a pond. Such a new abode could hardly make a cheering impression on Tatyana Ivanovna. The manor house consisted of a new long, narrow, wooden

building with six windows in a row, and had been roughly thatched. The owner, the official, had only lately taken possession. The yard was not even fenced, and only on one side a new hurdle had been begun from which the dry leaves of the nut branches had not yet dropped. Obnoskin's chaise was standing by the hurdle. We had fallen on the fugitives like snow on the head. From an open window came the sound of cries and weeping.

The barefoot boy who met us dashed away at breakneck speed. In the first room Tatyana Ivanovna with a tear-stained face was seated on a long chintz-covered sofa without a back. On seeing us she uttered a shriek and hid her face in her hands. Beside her stood Obnoskin, frightened and pitifully confused. He was so distraught that he flew to shake hands with us, as though overjoyed at our arrival. From the door that opened into the other room we had a peep of some lady's dress; someone was listening and looking through a crack imperceptible to us. The people of the house did not put in an appearance; it seemed as though they were not in the house; they were all in hiding somewhere.

"Here she is, the traveller! Hiding her face in her hands too!" cried Mr. Bahtcheyev, lumbering after us into the room.

"Restrain your transports, Stepan Alexyevitch! They are quite unseemly. No one has a right to speak now but Yegor Ilyitch; we have nothing to do here!" Mizintchikov observed sharply.

My uncle, casting a stern glance at Mr. Bahtcheyev, and seeming not to observe the existence of Obnoskin who had rushed to shake hands with him, went up to Tatyana Ivanovna, whose face was still hidden in her hands, and in the softest voice, with the most unaffected sympathy, said to her —

"Tatyana Ivanovna, we all so love and respect you that we have come ourselves to learn your intentions. Would you care to drive back with us to Stepantchikovo? It is Ilyusha's name-day, mamma is expecting you impatiently, while Sasha and Nastenka have no doubt been crying over you all the morning. ..."

Tatyana Ivanovna raised her head timidly, looked at him through her fingers, and suddenly bursting into tears, flung herself on his neck.

"Oh, take me away, make haste and take me away from here!" she said, sobbing. "Make haste, as much haste as you can!"

"She's gone off on the spree and made an ass of herself!" hissed Mr. Bahtcheyev, nudging my arm.

“Everything is at an end, then,” said my uncle, turning dryly to Obnoskin and scarcely looking at him. “Tatyana Ivanovna, please give me your arm. Let us go!”

There was a rustle the other side of the door; the door creaked and opened wider.

“If you look at it from another point of view though,” Obnoskin observed uneasily, looking at the open door, “you will see yourself, Yegor Ilyitch . . . your action in my house . . . and in fact I was bowing to you, and you would not even bow to me, Yegor Ilyitch. ...”

“Your action in my house, sir, was a low action,” said my uncle, looking sternly at Obnoskin, “and this house is not yours. You have heard: Tatyana Ivanovna docs not wish to remain here a minute. What more do you want? Not a word — do you hear? not another word, I beg! I am extremely desirous of avoiding further explanations, and indeed it would be more to your interest to do so.”

But at this point Obnoskin was so utterly crestfallen that ho began uttering the most unexpected drivel.

“Don’t despise me, Yegor Ilyitch,” he began in a half-whisper, almost crying with shame and continually glancing towards the door, probably from fear of being overheard. “It’s not my doing, but my mother’s. I didn’t do it from mercenary motives, Yegor Ilyitch; I didn’t mean anything; I did, of course, do it from interested motives, Yegor Ilyitch . . . but I did it with a noble object, Yegor Ilyitch. I should have used the money usefully ... I should have helped the poor. I wanted to support the movement for enlightenment, too, and even dreamed of endowing a university scholarship. . . . That was what I wanted to turn my wealth to, Yegor Ilyitch; and not to use it just for anything, Yegor Ilyitch.”

We all felt horribly ashamed Even Mizintchikov reddened and turned away, and my uncle was so confused that he did not know what to say.

“Come, come, that’s enough,” he said at last. “Calm yourself, Pavel Scmyonitch. It can’t be helped! It might happen to anyone. ... If you like, come to dinner . . . and I shall be delighted.”

But Mr. Bahtcheyev behaved quite differently.

“Endow a scholarship!” he bawled furiously. “You are not the sort to endow a scholarship! I bet you’d be ready to fleece anyone you come across. . . . Not a pair of breeches of his own, and here he is bragging of scholarships I Oh, you rag-and-bone man I So you’ve made a conquest of a

soft heart, have you? And where is she, the parent? Hiding, is she? I be* she is sitting somewhere behind a screen, or has crept under the bed in a fright. ...”

“Stepan, Stepan I” cried my uncle.

Obnoskin flushed and was on the point of protesting; but before he had time to open his mouth the door was flung open and Anfisa Petrovna herself, violently irritated, with flashing eyes, crimson with wrath, flew into the room.

“What’s this?” she shouted. “What’s this going on here? You break into a respectable house with your rabble, Yegor Ilyitch, frighten ladies, give orders! . . . What’s the meaning of it? I have not taken leave of my senses yet, Yegor Ilyitch! And you, you booby,” she went on yelling, pouncing on her son, “you are snivelling before them already. Your mother is insulted in her own house, and you stand gaping. Do you call yourself a gentlemanly young man after that? You are a rag, and not a young man, after that.”

Not a trace of the mincing airs and fashionable graces of the day before, not a trace of the lorgnette even was to be seen about Anfisa Petrovna now. She was a regular fury, a fury without a mask.

As soon as my uncle saw her he made haste to take Tatyana Ivanovna on his arm, and would have rushed out of the room, but Anfisa Petrovna at once barred the way.

“You are not going away like that, Yegor Ilyitch,” she clamoured again. “By what right are you taking Tatyana Ivanovna away by force? You are annoyed that she has escaped the abominable snares you had caught her in, you and your mamma and your imbecile Foma Fomitch; you would have liked to marry her yourself for the sake of filthy lucre. I beg your pardon, but our ideas here are not so low! Tatyana Ivanovna, seeing that you were plotting against her, that you were bringing her to ruin, confided in Pavlusha of herself. She herself begged him to save her from your snares, so to say; she was forced to run away from you by night — that’s a pretty thing! That’s what you have driven her to, isn’t it, Tatyana Ivanovna? And since that’s so, how dare you burst, a whole gang of you, into a respectable gentleman’s house and carry off a young lady by force in spite of her tears and protests? I will not permit it! I will not permit itl I have not taken leave of my senses! Tatyana Ivanovna will remain because she wishes it! Come, Tatyana Ivanovna, it is useless to listen to them, they are your enemies, not

your friends! Come along, don’t be frightened! I’ll see them all out directly! . .

“No, no!” cried Tatyana Ivanovna, terrified, “I don’t want to, I don’t want to I He is no husband for me. I don’t want to many your son! He’s no husband for me I”

“You don’t want to!” shouted Anfisa Petrovna, breathless with rage. “You don’t want to! You have come and you don’t want to! Then how dared you deceive us like this? Then how dared you give him your promise? You ran away with him by night, you forced yourself upon him, and have led us into embarrassment and expense. My son has perhaj>s lost an excellent match through you! He may have lost a dowry of ten thousand through you! ... No I you must pay for it, you ought to pay for it; we have proofs; you ran away at night. . . .”

But we did not hear this tirade to the end. All at once, grouping ourselves round my uncle, we moved forward straight upon Anfisa Petrovna and went out to the steps. The carriage was at hand at once.

“None but dishonourable people, none but scoundrete behave like that,” cried Anfisa Petrovna from the steps, in an absolute frenzy. “I will lodge a petition, you shall pay for it . . . you are going to a disreputable house, Tatyana Ivanovna. You cannot marry Yegor Ilyitch, under your very nose he is keeping his governess as his mistress.”

My uncle shuddered, turned pale, bit his lip and rushed to assist Tatyana Ivanovna into the carriage. I went round to the other side of the carriage, and was waiting for my turn to get in, when I suddenly found Obnoskin by my side, clutching at my hand.

“Allow me at least to seek your friendship!” he said warmly, squeezing my hand, with an expression of despair on his face.

“What’s that, friendship?” I said, lifting my foot to the carriage step.

“Yes! I recognised in you yesterday a man of culture; do not condemn me. . . . My mother led me on, I had nothing to do with it. My inclinations are rather for literature — I assure you; this was all my mother. ...”

“I believe you, I believe you,” I said. “Good-bye!”

We got in and the horses set off at a gallop. The shouts and curses of Anfisa Petrovna resounded for a long way after us, and unknown faces suddenly poked out of all the windows of the house and stared after us with wild curiosity.

There were five of us now in the carriage, but Mizintchikov got on to the box, giving up his former seat to Mr. Bahtcheyev, who had now to sit directly facing Tatyana Ivanovna. The latter was greatly relieved that we had taken her away, but she was still crying. My uncle consoled her as best he could. He was himself sad and brooding; it was evident that Anfisa Petrovna's frantic words about Nastenka were echoing painfully and bitterly in his heart. Our return journey would, however, have ended without any disturbance if only Mr. Bahtcheyev had not been with us.

Sitting opposite Tatyana Ivanovna, he seemed not himself, he could not look indifferent, he shifted in his seat, turned as red as a crab, and rolled his eyes fearfully, particularly when my uncle began trying to console Tatyana Ivanovna. The fat man was absolutely beside himself, and growled like a bulldog when it is teased. My uncle looked at him apprehensively. At last Tatyana Ivanovna, noticing the extraordinary state o'f mind of her vis-a-vis, began watching him intently; then she looked at us, smiled, and all at once picking up her parasol gracefully gave Mr. Bahtcheyev a light tap on the shoulder.

"Crazy fellow!" she said with a most enchanting playfulness, and at once hid her face in her fan.

This sally was the last straw.

"Wha-a-at?" roared the fat man. "What's that, madam? So you are after me now!"

"Crazy fellow! crazy fellow!" repeated Tatyana Ivanovna, and she suddenly burst out laughing and clapped her hands.

"Stop!" cried Bahtcheyev to the coachman, "stop!"

We stopped. Bahtcheyev opened the door, and hurriedly began clambering out of the carriage.

"Why, what is the matter, Stepan Alexyevitch? Where are you off to?" cried my uncle in astonishment.

"No, I have had enough of it," answered the fat man, trembling with indignation. "Deuce take it all! I am too old, madam, to be besieged with amours. I would rather die on the high road! Good-bye, madam. Comment vous portez-vous?"

And he actually began walking on foot. The carriage followed him at a walking pace.

"Stepan Alexyevitch!" cried my uncle, losing all patience at last. "Don't play the fool, come, get in! Why, it's time we were home."

“Bother you!” Stepan Alexyevitch brought out, breathless with walking, for owing to his corpulence he had quite lost the habit of exercise.

“Drive on full speed,” Mizintchikov shouted to the coachman.

“What are you doing? Stop!” my uncle cried out as the carriage dashed on.

Mizintchikov was not out in his reckoning, the desired result followed at once.

“Stop! Stop!” we heard a despairing wail behind us. “Stop, you ruffian! Stop, you cut-throat ...”

The fat man came into sight at Inst, half dead with exhaustion, with drops of sweat on his brow, untying his cravat and taking off his cap. Silently and gloomily he got into the carriage, and this time I gave him my seat; he was not anyway sitting directly opposite Tatyana Ivanovna, who all through this scene had been gushing with laughter and clapping her hands. She could not look gravely at Stepan Alexyevitch all the rest of the journey. He for his part sat without uttering a single word all the way home, staring intently at the hind wheel of the carriage.

It was midday when we got back to Stepantchikovo. I went straight to my lodge, where Gavrila immediately made his appearance with tea. I flew to question the old man, but my uncle walked in almost on his heels and promptly sent him away.

CHAPTER II

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

“I HAVE come to you for a minute, dear boy,” he began, “I was in haste to tell you. ... I have heard all about everything. None of them have even been to mass to-day, except Ilyusha, Sasha and Nastenka. They tell me mamma has been in convulsions. They have been rubbing her, it was all they could do to bring her to by rubbing. Now it has been settled for us all to go together to Foma, and I have been summoned. Only I don’t know whether to congratulate Forna on the name-day or not — it’s an important point! And in fact how are they going to take this whole episode? It’s awful, Seryozha, I foresee it. . .

“On the contrary, uncle,” I hastened in my turn to reply, “everything is settling itself splendidly. You see you can’t marry Tatyana Ivanovna now — that’s a great deal in itself. I wanted to make that clear to you on our way.”

“Oh, yes, my dear boy. But that’s not the point; there is the hand of Providence in it no doubt, as you say, but I wasn’t thinking of that. . . . Poor Tatyana Ivanovna! What adventures happen to her, though! . . . Obnoskin’s a scoundrel, a scoundrel! Though why do I call him ‘a scoundrel’? Shouldn’t I have been doing the same if I married her? . . . But that, again, is not what I have come about. . . . Did you hear what that wretch Anfisa Petrovna shouted about Nastenka this morning?”

“Yes, uncle. Haven’t you realised now that you must make haste?”

“Certainly, at all costs!” answered my uncle. “It is a solemn moment. Only there is one thing, dear boy, which we did not think of, but I was thinking of it afterwards all night. Will she marry me, that’s the point?”

“Mercy on us, uncle! After she told you herself that she loves you ...”

“But, my dear boy, you know she also said at once that nothing would induce her to marry me.”

“Oh, uncle, that’s only words; besides, circumstances are different to-day.”

“Do you think so? No, Sergey, my boy, it’s a delicate business, dreadfully delicate! H’m. . . . But do you know, though I was worrying, yet

my heart was somehow aching with happiness all night. Well, good-bye, I must fly. They are waiting for me; I am late as it is. I only ran in to have a word with you. Oh, my God!" he cried, coming back, "I have forgotten what is most important! Do you know what? I have written to him, to Foma!"

"When?"

"In the night, and in the morning, at daybreak, I sent the letter by Vidoplyasov. I put it all before him on two sheets of paper, I told him everything truthfully and frankly, in short that I ought, that is, absolutely must — do you understand — make Nastenka an offer. I besought him not to say a word about our meeting in the garden, and I have appealed to all the generosity of his heart to help me with mamma. I wrote a poor letter, of course, my boy, but I wrote it from my heart and, so to say, watered it with my tears. ..."

"Well? No answer?"

"So far no; only this morning when we were getting ready to set off, I met him in the hall in night attire, in slippers and nightcap — -he sleeps in a nightcap — he had come out of his room. He didn't say a word, he didn't even glance at me. I peeped up into his face, not a sign."

"Uncle, don't rely on him; he'll play you some dirty trick."

"No, no, my boy, don't say so!" cried my uncle, gesticulating. "I am sure of him. Besides, you know, it's my last hope. He will understand, he'll appreciate it. He's peevish, he's capricious, I don't deny it; but when it comes to a question of nobility, then he shines out like a pearl. . . . Yes, like a pearl. You think all that, Sergey, because you have never seen him yet when he is most noble . . . but, my God! if he really does spread abroad my secret of yesterday, then ... I don't know what will happen then, Sergey! What will be left me in the world that I can believe in? But no, he cannot be such a scoundrel. I am not worth the sole of hij shoe. Don't shake your head, my boy; it's true — I am not."

"Yegor Ilyitch! Your mamma is anxious about you." We hear from below the unpleasant voice of Miss Perepelitsyn, who had probably succeeded in hearing the whole of our conversation from the open window. "They are looking for you all over the house, and cannot find you."

"Oh, dear, I am late! How dreadful!" cried my uncle in a fluster. "My dear boy, for goodness' sake dress and come too. Why, it was just for that I ran in, so that we might go together. ... I fly, I fly! Anna Nilovna, I fly!"

When I was left alone, I recalled my meeting with Nastenka that morning and was very glad I had not told my uncle of it; I should have upset him even more. I foresaw a great storm, and could not imagine how my uncle would arrange his plans and make an offer to Nastenka. I repeat: in spite of my faith in his honour, I could not help feeling doubtful of his success.

However, I had to make ha^te. I considered myself bound to assist him, and'at once began dressing; but as I wanted to be as well-dressed as possible, I was not very quick in spite of my haste. Mizintchikov walked in.

"I have come for you," he said. "Yegor Ilyitch begs you to come at once."

"Let us go!"

I was quite ready, we set off.

"What news there?" I asked on the way.

"They are all in Foma's room, the whole party," answered Mizintchikov. "Foma is not in bad humour, but he is somewhat pensive and doesn't say much, just mutters through his teeth. He even kissed Uyusha, which of course delighted Yegor Ilyitch. He announced beforehand through Miss Perepelitsyn that they were not to congratulate him on the nameday, and that he had only wanted to test them. . . . Though the old lady keeps sniffing her smelling-salts, she is calm because Foma is calm. Of our adventure no one drops a hint, it is as though it had never happened; they hold their tongues because Foma holds his. He hasn't let anyone in all the morning, though. While we were away the old lady implored him by all the saints to come that she might consult him, and indeed she hobbled down to the door herself; but he locked himself in and answered that he was praying for the human race, or something of the sort. He has got something up his sleeve, one can see that from his face. But as Yegor Ilyitch is incapable of seeing anything from anyone's face, he is highly delighted now with Foma's mildness; he is a regular baby! Ilyusha has prepared some verses, and they have sent me to fetch you."

"And Tatyana Ivanovna?"

"What about Tatyana Ivanovna?"

"Is she there? With them?"

"No; she is in her own room," Mizintchikov answered dryly. "She is resting and crying. Perhaps she is ashamed too. I believe that . . . governess is with her now. I say! surely it is not a storm coming on? Look at the sky!"

“I believe it is a storm,” I answered, glancing at a storm-cloud that looked black on the horizon.

At that moment we went up on to the terrace.

“Tell me, what do you think of Obnoskin, eh?” I went on, not able to refrain from probing Mizintchikov on that point.

“Don’t speak to me of him! Don’t remind me of that blackguard,” he cried, suddenly stopping, flushing red and stamping. “The fool! the fool! to ruin such a splendid plan, such a brilliant idea! Listen: I am an ass, of course, for not having detected what a rogue he is! — I admit that solemnly, and perhaps that admission is just what you want. But I swear if he had known how to carry it through properly, I should perhaps have forgiven him. The fool! the fool! And how can such people be allowed in society, how can they be endured I How is it they are not sent to Siberia, into exile, into prison! But that’s all nonsense, they won’t get over me! Now I have experience anyway, and we shall see who gets the best of it. I am thinking over a new idea now. . . . You must admit one can’t lose one’s object simply because some outside tool has stolen one’s idea and not known how to set about it. Why, it’s unjust! And, in fact, this Tatyana will inevitably be married, that’s her predestined fate. And if no one has put her into a madhouse up to now, it was just because it is still possible to marry her. I will tell you my new idea. ...”

“But afterwards, I suppose,” I interrupted him, “for here we are.”

“Very well, very well, afterwards/’ Mi/intclukov answered, twisting his lips into a spasmodic smile. “And now. . . . But where are you going? I tell you, stiaight to Foma Fomitch’s room! Follow me; you have not been there yet. You will see another farce. . . . For it has really come to a farce.”

CHAPTER III

ILYUSHA’S NAMEDAY

FOMA occupied two large and excellent rooms; they were even better decorated than any other of the rooms in the house. The great man was surrounded by perfect comfort. The fresh and handsome wall-paper, the parti-coloured silk curtains on the windows, the rugs, the pier-glass, the fireplace, the softly upholstered elegant furniture — all testified to the tender solicitude of the family for Foma’s comfort. Pots of flowers stood in the windows and on little marble tables in front of the windows. In the middle of the study stood a large table covered with a red cloth and littered with books and manuscripts. A handsome bronze inkstand and a bunch of pens which Vidoplyasov had to look after — all this was to testify to the severe intellectual labours of Foma Fomiich. I will mention here by the way that though Foma had sat at that table for nearly eight years, he had composed absolutely nothing that was any good. Later on, when he had departed to a better world, we went through his manuscripts; they all turned out to be extraordinary trash. We found, for instance, the beginning of an historical novel, the scene of which was laid in Novgorod, in the seventh century; then a monstrous poem, “An Anchorite in the Churchyard”, written blank verse; then a meaningless meditation on the significance and characteristics of the Russian peasant, and how he should be treated; and finally “The Countess Vlonsky”, a novel of aristocratic life, also unfinished. There was nothing else. And yet Foma Fomitch had made my uncle spend large sums every year on books and journals. But many of them were actually found uncut. Later on, I caught Foma Fomitch more than once reading Paul de Kock, but he always slipped the book out of sight when people came in In the further wall of the study there was a glass door which led to the courtyard of the house.

They were waiting for us. Foma Fomitch was sitting in a comfortable arm-chair, wearing some sort of long coat that reached to his heels, but yet he wore no cravat. He certainly was silent and thoughtful. When we went in he raised his eyebrows slightly and bent a searching glance on me. I bowed; he responded with a slight bow, a fairly polite one, however. Grandmother,

seeing that Foma Fomitch was behaving graciously to me, gave me a nod and a smile. The poor woman had not expected in the morning that her paragon would take the news of Tatyana Ivanovna's "escapade" so calmly, and so she was now in the best of spirits, though she really had been in convulsions and fainting fits earlier in the day. Behind her chair, as usual, stood Miss Perepelitsyn, compressing her lips till they looked like a thread, smiling sourly and spitefully and rubbing her bony hands one against the other. Two always mute lady companions were installed beside Madame la Generate. There was also a nun of sorts who had strayed in that morning, and an elderly lady, a neighbour who had come in after mass to congratulate Madame la Generate on the nameday and who also sat mute. Aunt Praskovya Ilyinitchna was keeping in the background somewhere in a corner, and was looking with anxiety at Foma Fomitch and her mother. My uncle was sitting in an easy-chair, and his face was beaming with a look of exceptional joy. Facing him stood Ilyusha in his red holiday shirt, with his hair in curls, looking like a little angel. Sasha and Nastenka had in secret from everyone taught him some verses to rejoice his father on this auspicious day by his progress in learning. My uncle was almost weeping with delight. Foma's unexpected mildness, Madame la Generale's good humour, Ilyusha's name-day, the verses, all moved him to real enthusiasm, and with a solemnity worthy of the occasion he had asked them to send for me that I might hasten to share the general happiness and listen to the verses. Sasha and Nastenka, who had come in just after us, were standing near Ilyusha. Sasha was continually laughing, and at that moment was as happy as a little child. Nastenka, looking at her, also began smiling, though she had come into the room a moment before pale and depressed. She alone had welcomed Tatyana Ivanovna on her return from her excursion, and until then had been sitting upstairs with her. The rogue Ilyusha seemed, too, as though he could not keep from laughing as he looked at his instructresses. It seemed as though the three of them had prepared a very amusing joke which they meant to play now. ... I had forgotten Bahtcheyev. He was sitting on a chair at a little distance, still cross and red in the face; holding his tongue, sulking, blowing his nose and altogether playing a very gloomy part at the family festivity. Near him Yezhevikin was fidgeting about; he was fidgeting about everywhere, however, kissing the hands of Madame la Générale and of the visitors, whispering something to Miss Perepelitsyn, showing attention to Foma Fomitch, in fact he was all over the place. He,

too, was awaiting Ilyusha's verses with great interest, and at my entrance flew to greet me with bows as a mark of the deepest respect and devotion. Altogether there was nothing to show that he had come to protect his daughter, and to take her from Stepantchikovo for ever.

"Here he is!" cried my uncle gleefully on seeing me. "Ilyusha has got a poem for us, that's something unexpected, a real surprise! I am overpowered, my boy, and sent for you on purpose, and have put off the verses till you came. . . . Sit down beside me! Let us listen. Foma Fomitch, confess now, it must have been you who put them all up to it to please an old fellow like me. I'll wager that is how it is!"

Since my uncle was talking in such a tone and voice in Foma's room one would have thought that all must be well. But unluckily my uncle was, as Mizintc hikov expressed it, incapable of reading any man's face. Glancing at Foma's face, I could not help admitting that Mizintchikov was right and that something was certainly going to happen. ...

"Don't trouble about me, Colonel," Foma answered in a faint voice, the voice of a man forgiving his enemies. "I approve of the surprise, of course; it shows the sensibility and good principles of your children . . . Poetry is of use, too, even for the pronunciation. . . . But I have not been busy over verses this morning, Yegor Ilyitch; I have been praying . . .

you know that. ... I am ready to listen to the verses, however."

Meanwhile I had congratualted Ilyusha and kissed him.

"Quite so, Foma, I beg your pardon I Kiss him once more, though I am sure of your affection, Foma! Kiss him once more, Seryozha! Look what a fine big boy! Come, begin, Ilyusha! What is it about? I suppose it is something solemn from Lomonosov?"

And my uncle drew himself up with a dignified air. He could scarcely sit still in his seat for impatience and delight.

"No, papa, not from Lomonosov," said Sashenka, hardly able to suppress her laughter; "but as you have been a soldier and fought the enemy, Ilyusha has learnt a poem about warfare. . . The siege of Pamba, papa!"

"The siege of Pamba! I don't remember it. . . . What is this Pamba, do you know, Ilyusha? Something heroic, I suppose."

And my uncle drew himself up again.

"Begin, Ilyusha!" Sasha gave the word of command.

Ilyusha began in a little, clear, even voice, without stops or commas, as small children generally recite verses they have learned by heart —

“Nine long years Don Pedro Gomez Has besieged the fort of Pamba, On a diet of milk supported. And Don Pedro’s gallant warriors, Brave Castilians, full nine thousand, All to keep the vow they’ve taken Taste no bread nor other victuals, Milk they drink and milk alone.”

“What? What’s that about milk?” cried my uncle, looking at me in perplexity.

“Go on reciting, Ilyusha!” cried Sashenka.

“Every day Don Pedro Gomez, In his Spanish cloak enveloped, Bitterly his lot bewails. Lo, the tenth year is approaching; Still the fierce Moors are triumphant; And of all Don Pedro’s army Only nineteen men are left. ...”

“Why, it’s a regular string of nonsense!” cried my uncle uneasily. “Come, that’s impossible. Only nineteen men left out of a whole army, when there was a very considerable corps before? What is the meaning of it, my boy?”

But at that point Sasha could not contain herself, and went off into the most open and childish laughter; and though there was nothing very funny, it was impossible not to laugh too as one looked at her.

“They are funny verses, papa,” she cried, highly delighted with her childish prank. “The author made them like that on purpose to amuse everybody.”

“Oh! Funny!” cried my uncle, with a beaming face. “Comic, you mean! That’s just what I thought. . . . Just so, just so, funny! And very amusing, extremely amusing: he starved all his army on milk owing to some vow. What possessed them to take such a vow? Very witty, isn’t it, Foma? You see, mamma, these are jesting verses, such as authors sometimes do write, don’t they, Sergey? Extremely amusing. Well, well, Ilyusha, what next?”

“Only nineteen men are left! Them Don Pedro doth assemble And says to them: ‘Noble Nineteen! Let us raise aloft our standards! Let us blow on our loud trumpets! And with clashing of our cymbals Let us from Pamba retreat! Though the fort we have not taken, Yet with honour still untarnished We can swear on faith and conscience That our vow we have not broken; Nine long years we have not eaten, Not a morsel have we eaten, Milk we’ve drunk and milk alone!’”

“What a noodle! What comfort was it for him that he had drunk milk for nine years?” my uncle broke in again. “What is there virtuous in it? He would have done better to have eaten a whole sheep, and not have been the death of people I Excellent! capital! I see, I see now: it’s a satire on . . .

what do they call it? an allegory, isn't it? And perhaps aimed at some foreign general," my uncle added, addressing me, knitting hia brows significantly and screwing up his eyes, "eh? What do you think? But of course a harmless, good, refined satire that injures nobody! Excellent! excellent, and what matters most, it is refined. Well, Ilyusha, go on. Ah, you rogues, you rogues!" he added with feeling, looking at Sasha and stealthily also at Nastenka, who blushed and smiled.

"And emboldened by that saying, Those nineteen Castilian warriors, Each one swaying in his saddle, Feebly shouted all together: 'Sant' Iago Compostello! Fame and glory to Don Pedro I Glory to the Lion of Castile!' And his chaplain, one Diego, Through his teeth was heard to mutter: 'But if I had been commander, I'd have vowed to eat meat only, Drinking good red wine alone.'"

"There! Didn't I tell you so?" cried my uncle, extremely delighted. "Only one sensible man was found in the whole army, and he was some sort of a chaplain. And what is that, Sergey: a captain among them, or what?"

"A monk, an ecclesiastical person, uncle."

"Oh, yes, yes. Chaplain! I know, I remember. I have read of it in Radcliffe's novels. They have all sorts of orders, don't they. . . . Benedictines, I believe? . . . There are Benedictines, aren't there?"

"Yes, uncle."

"H'm! ... I thought so. Well, Ilyusha, what next? Excellent! capital!"

"And Don Pedro overhearing, With loud laughter gave the order: 'Fetch a sheep and give it to him! He has jested gallantly!'"

'What a time to laugh! What a fool! Even he saw it was funny at last! A sheep! So they had sheep; why did he not eat some himself! Well, Ilyusha, go on. Excellent! capital! Extraordinarily cutting!"

"But that's the end, papa!"

"Oh, the end. Indeed there wasn't much left to be done — was there, Sergey? Capital, Ilyusha! Wonderfully nice. Kiss me, darling. Ah, my precious! Who was it thought of it: you, Sasha?"

"No, it was Nastenka. We read it the other day. She read it and said: 'What ridiculous verses! It will soon be Ilyusha's nameday, let us make him learn them and recite them. It will make them laugh!"

"Oh, it was Nastenka? Well, thank you, thank you," my uncle muttered, suddenly flushing like a child. "Kiss me again, Ilyusha. You kiss me too, you rogue," he said, embracing Sashenka and looking into her face with

feeling. “You wait a bit, Sashenka, it will be your nameday soon,” he added, as though he did not know what to say to express his pleasure.

I turned to Nastenka and asked whose verses they were.

“Yes, yes, whose are the versed “ my uncle hurriedly chimed in. “It must have been a clever poet who wrote them, mustn’t it, Foma?”

“H’m . . .” Foma grunted to himself.

A biting sarcastic smile had not lett his face during the whole time of the recitation of the verses.

“I have really forgotten,” said Nastenka, looking timidly at Foma Fomitch.

“It’s Mr. Kuzma Prutkov wrote it, papa; it was published in the Contemporary/’ Sashenka broke in.

“Ku/ma Prutkov! I don’t know his name,” said my uncle. “Pushkin I know! . . . But one ran see he a gifted poet — isn’t he, Sergey? And what’s more, a man ot refined qualities, that’s as clear as twice two! Perhaps, indeed, he is an officer. ... I approve of him. And the Contemporary is a first-rate magazine. We certainly must take it in if poets like that are among the contributors. ... I like poets! They are fine fellows! They picture everything in vcr^e Do you know, Sergey, I met a literary man at your rooms in Petersburg. He had rather a peculiar nose, too . . . really! . . . What did you say, Foma?”

Foma Fomitch, who was getting more and more worked up, gave a loud snigger.

“No, I said nothing . . ,” he said, as though hardly able to suppress his laughter. “Co on, Yegor Ilyitch, go on! I will say my word later. . . . Stepan Alexycvitch is delighted to hear how you made the acquaintance of literary men in Petersburg.”

Stepan Alexyevitch, who had been sitting apart all the time lost in thought, suddenly raised his head, reddened, and turned in his chair with exasperation.

“Don’t you provoke me, Foma, but leave me in peace,” he said, looking wrathfully at Foma, with his little bloodshot eyes. “What is your literature to me? May God only give me good health,” he muttered to himself, “and plague take them all. . . and their authors too. . . . Voltairians, that’s what they are!”

“Authors are Voltairians?” said Yezhevikin immediately at his side. “Perfectly true what you have been pleased to remark, Stepan Alexyevitch.

Valentin Ignatyitch was pleased to express the same sentiments the other day. He actually called me a Voltairian, upon my soul he did! And yet, as you all know, I have written very little so far. ... If a bowl of milk goes sour — it's all Voltaire's fault! That's how it is with everything here."

"Well, no," observed my uncle with dignity, "that's an error, you know! Voltaire was nothing but a witty writer; he laughed at superstitions; and he never was a Voltairian! It was his enemies spread that rumour about him. Why were they all against him, really, poor fellow? ..."

Again the malignant snigger of Foma Fomitch was audible. My uncle looked at him uneasily and was perceptibly embarrassed.

"Yes, Foma, I am thinking about the magazine, you see," he said in confusion, trying to put himself right somehow. "You were perfectly right, my dear Foma, when you said the other day that we ought to subscribe to one. I think we ought to, myself. H'm . . . after all, they do assist in the diffusion of enlightenment; one would be a very poor patriot if one did not support them. Wouldn't one, Sergey. H'm . . . Yes . . . The Contemporary, for instance. But, do you know, Seryozha, the most instruction, to my thinking, is to be found in that thick magazine — what's its name? — in a yellow cover . . ."

"Notes of the Fatherland, papa."

"Oh, yes, Notes of the Fatherland, and a capital title, Sergey, isn't it? It is, so to say, the whole Fatherland sitting writing notes. ... A very fine object. A most edifying magazine. And what a thick one! What a job to publish such an omnibus! And the information in it almost makes one's eyes start out of one's head. I came in the other day, the volume was lying here, I took it up and from curiosity opened it and reeled off three pages at a go. It made me simply gape, my dear! And, you know, there is information about everything; what is meant, for instance, by a broom, a spade, a ladle, an ovenrake. To my thinking, a broom is a broom and an ovenrake an ovenrake!

No, my boy, wait a bit. According to the learned, an ovenrako turns out not an ovenrake, but an emblem or something mythological; I don't remember exactly, but something of the sort. . . . So that's how it is! They have gone into everything!"

I don't know what precisely Foma was preparing to do after this fresh outburst from my uncle, but at that moment Gavrila appeared and stood with bowed head in the doorway.

Foma Fomitch glanced at him significantly.

“Ready, Gavrila?” he asked in a faint but resolute voice.

“Yes, sir,” Gavrila answered mournfully, and heaved a sigh.

“And have you put my bundle on the cart?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, then, I am ready too!” said Foma, and he deliLxr-ately go up from his easy-chair. My uncle looked at him in amazement. Madame la Générale jumped up from her seat ana looked about her uneasily.

“Allow me, Colonel,” Foma began with dignity, “to ask you to leave for a moment the interesting subject of literary oven-rakes; you can continue it after I am gone. As I am taking leave of you for ever, I should like to say a few last words to you ——

Every listener was spellbound with alarm and amazement.

“Foma! Foma! but what is the matter with you? Where are you going?” my uncle cried at last.

“I am about to leave your house, Colonel,” Foma brought out in a perfectly composed voice. “I have made up my mind to go where fortune takes me, and so I have hired at my own expense a humble peasant’s cart. My bundle is lying in it already, it is of no great dimensions’ a few favourite books, two changes of linen — that is all! I am a poor man, Yegor Ilyitch, but nothing in the world would induce me now to take your gold, which I refused even yesterday!”

“But for God’s sake, Foma, what is the meaning of it?” cried my uncle, turning as white as a sheet.

Madame la Générale uttered a shriek and looked in despair at Foma Fomitch, stretching out her hands to him. Miss Perepelitsyn flew to support her. The lady companions sat petrified in their chairs. Mr. Bahtcheyev got up heavily from his seat.

“Well, here’s a pretty to-do!” Mizintchikov whispered beside me.

At that moment a distant rumble of thunder was heard, a storm was coming on.

CHAPTER IV

THE EXPULSION

“YOU ask me, I believe, Colonel, what is the meaning of this?” Foma brought out with a solemn dignity, as though enjoying the general consternation. “I am surprised at the question I Will you on your side explain how it is you can bring yourself to look me in the face now? Explain to me this last psychological problem in human shamelessness, and then I shall depart, the richer for new knowledge of the depravity of the human race.”

But my uncle was not equal to answering him. With open mouth and staring eyes he gazed at Foma, alarmed and annihilated.

“Merciful heavens! What passions!’’ hissed Miss Perepelitsyn.

“Do you understand, Colonel,” Foma went on, “that you had better let me go now, simply without asking questions? In your house even I, a man of years and understanding, begin to feel the purity of my morals gravely endangered. Believe me, that your questions can lead to nothing but putting you to shame.”

“Foma! Foma!” cried my uncle, and a cold perspiration came out on his forehead.

“And so allow me without further explanation to say a few farewell words at parting, my last words in your house, Yegor Ilyitch. The thing is done and there is no undoing it! I hope that you understand to what I am referring. But I implore you on my knees: if one spark of moral feeling is left in your heart, curb your unbridled passions! And if the noxious poison has not yet caught the whole edifice, then, as far as possible, extinguish the fire!”

“Foma, I assure you that you are in error!” cried my uncle, recovering himself little by little and foreseeing with horror the climax.

“Moderate your passions,” Foma continued in the same solemn voice, as though he had not heard my uncle’s exclamation, “conquer yourself. ‘If thou would’st conquer all the world — conquer thyself.’ That is my invariable rule. You are a landowner; you ought to shine like a diamond in

your estate, and what a vile example of unbridled passion you set your inferiors! I have been praying for you the whole night, and trembled as I sought for your happiness. I did not find it, for happiness lies in virtue. . .

“But this is impossible, Foma!” my uncle interrupted him again. “You have misunderstood and what you say is quite wrong.”

“And so remember you are a landowner,” Foma went on, still regaidless of my uncle’s exclamations. “Do not imagine that repose and sensuality are the destined vocation of the land-owning class. Fatal thought! Not repose, but zealous work, zealous towards God, towards your sovereign, and towards your country! Hard work, hard work is the duty of the landowner, he should work as hard as the poorest of his peasants!”

“What, am I to plough for the peasant, or what?” growled Bahtcheyev. “Why, I am a landowner, too. ...”

“I turn to you now, servants ot the house,” Foma went on, addres-mg Gavrila and Falaley, who had appeared in the doorway. “Love your master and and his family, and obey them humbly and meekly, and they will reward you with their love. And you, Colonel, be just and compassionate to them. A fellow-man — the image of God — like a child of tender years, so to say, is entrusted to you by your sovereign and your country. Great is the duty, but great also is the merit.”

“Foma Fomitch, my dear man, what notion is this?” cried Madame la Générale in despair, almost swooning with horror.

“Well, that is enough, I think,” Foma concluded, paying no attention even to Madame la Generale. “Now to lesser things; they may be small, but they are essential, Yegor Ilyitch. Your hay on the Harinsky waste has not been cut yet. Do not bo too late with it: mow it and mow it quickly. That is my advice. ...”

“But, Foma . . .”

“You meant to cut down the Zyryanovsky copse, I know; don’t cut it — that’s a second piece of advice. Preserve forest land, for trees retain humidity on the surface of the earth. It is a pity that you have sown the spring corn so late; it’s amazing how late you have been in sowing the spring corn! . . .”

“But, Foma . . .”

“But enough! One cannot convey everything, and indeed there is not time I will send you written instructions in a special book. Well, good-bye, good-bye all, God be with you, and the Lord bless you. I bless you too, my

child," he went on, turning to Ilyusha; "and may God keep you from the noxious poison of your passions. I bless you too, Falaley; forget the Komarinsky! . . . And all of you. . . . Remember Foma. . . . Well, let us go, Gavrila! Come and help me in, old man."

And Foma turned towards the door. Madame la Générale gave a piercing shriek and flew after him.

"No, Foma, I will not let you go like this," cried my uncle, and overtaking him, he seized him by the hand.

"So you mean to have resort to force?" Foma asked haughtily.

"Yes, Foma. . . even to force," answered my uncle, quivering with emotion. "You have said too much, and must explain your words! You have misunderstood my letter, Foma! . . ."

"Your letter!" squealed Foma, instantly flaring up as though he had been awaiting that minute for an explosion; "your letter! Here it is, your letter! Here it is. I tear this letter, I spit upon it! I trample your letter under my foot, and in doing so fulfil the most sacred duty of humanity. That is what I will do if you compel me by force to an explanation! Look! Look! Look!"

And scraps of paper flew about the room.

"I repeat, Foma, you have misunderstood it," cried my uncle, turning paler and paler. "I am making an offer of marriage, Foma, I am seeking my happiness."

"Marriage! You have seduced this young girl, and are trying to deceive me by offering her marriage, for I saw you with her last night in the garden, under the bushes."

Madame la Generate uttered a scream and fell fainting into an arm-chair. A fearful hubbub arose. Poor Nastenka sat deathly pale. Sasha, frightened, clutched Ilyusha and trembled as though she were in a fever.

"Foma!" cried my uncle in a frenzy, "if you divulge that secret you are guilty of the meanest action on earth!"

"I do divulge that secret," squealed Foma, "and I am performing the most honourable action! I am sent by God Himself to unmask your villainies to all the world. I am ready to clamber on some peasant's thatched roof and from there to proclaim your vile conduct to all the gentlemen of the neighbourhood and all the passers-by. . . . Yes, let me tell you all, all of you, that yesterday in the night I found him in the garden, under the bushes with this young girl whose appearance is so innocent. ..."

"Oh, what a disgrace!" piped Miss Perepelitsyn.

“Foma! Don’t be your own destruction!” cried my uncle, with clenched fists and flashing eyes.

“He,” squealed Foma, “he, alarmed at my having seen him, had the audacity to try with a lying letter to persuade me into conniving at his crime — yes, crime! ... for you have turned a hitherto innocent young girl into a . . .”

“Another insulting word to her and I will kill you, Foma, I swear! ...”

“I say that word, since you have succeeded in turning the most innocent young girl into a most depraved girl.”

Foma had hardly uttered this last word when my uncle seized him by the shoulder, turned him round like a straw, and flung him violently at the glass door, which led from the study into the courtyard. The shock was so violent that the closed door burst open, and Foma, flying head over heels down the stone steps, fell full length in the yard. Bits of broken glass wero scattered tinkling about the steps.

“Gavrila, pick him up!” cried my uncle, as pale as a corpse. “Put him in the cart, and within two minutes let there be no trace of him in Stepantchikovo!”

Whatever Foma’s design may have been, he certainly had not expected such a climax.

I will not undertake to describe what happened for the first minutes after this episode. The heart-rending wail of Madame la Générale as she rolled from side to side in an arm-chair; the stupefaction of Miss Perepelitsyn at this unexpected behaviour of my hitherto submissive uncle; the sighs and groans of the lady companions; Nastenka almost fainting with fright while her father hovered over her; Sashenka terror-stricken; my uncle in indescribable excitement pacing up and down the room waiting for his mother to come to herself; and lastly, the loud weeping of Falaley in lamentation over the troubles of his betters — all this made up an indescribable picture. I must add, too, that at this moment a violent storm broke over us; peals of thunder were more and more frequent, and big drops of rain began pattering on the window.

“Here’s a nice holiday!” muttered Mr. Bahtcheyev, bowing his head and flinging wide his arms.

“It’s a bad business,” I whispered to him, beside myself with excitement too. “But anyway they have turned Foma out, and he won’t come back again.”

“Mamma! Are you conscious? Are you better? Can you listen to me at last?” asked my uncle, stopping before the old lady’s arm-chair.

She raised her head, clasped her hands, and looked with imploring eyes at her son, whom she had never in her life before seen moved to such wrath.

“Mamma,” he went on, “it was the last straw, you have seen for yourself. It was not like this that I meant to approach this subject, but the hour has come, and it is useless to put it off. You have heard the calumny, hear my defence. Mamma, I love this noble and high-minded girl, I have loved her a long while, and I shall never cease to love her. She will make the happiness of my children, and will be a dutiful daughter to you. And so now, before you, and in the presence of my friends and my family, I solemnly plead at her feet, and beseech her to do me infinite honour by consenting to be my wife.”

Nastenka started, then flushed crimson all over and got up from her seat. Madame la Générale stared some time at her son as though she did not understand what he was saying to her, and all at once with a piercing wail flung herself on her knees.

“Yegorushka, my darling, bring Foma Fomitch back,” she cried. “Bring him back at once, or without him I shall die before night.”

My uncle was petrified at the sight of his self-willed and capricious old mother kneeling before him. His painful distress was reflected in his face. At last, recovering himself, he flew to raise her up and put her back in her chair.

“Bring Foma Fomitch back, Yegorushka,” the old lady went on wailing. “Bring him back darling! I cannot live without him!”

“Mamma,” my uncle cried sorrowfully, “have you heard nothing of what I have just said to you? I cannot bring Foma back — understand that. I cannot and I have not the right to after his low and scoundrelly slander on this angel of honour and virtue. Do you understand, mamma, that it is my duty, that my honour compels me now to defend virtue? You have heard: I am asking this young lady to be my wife, and I beg you to bless our union.”

Madame la Generate got up from her seat again and fell on her knees before Nastenka.

“My dear girl!” she wailed, “do not marry him. Do not marry him, but entreat him, my dear, to fetch back Foma Fomitch. Nastasya Yevgrafovna, darling! I will give up every-

thing, I will sacrifice everything if only you will not marry him. Old as I am, I have not spent everything, I had a little left me when my poor husband died. It’s all yours, my dear, I will give you everything, and Yegorushka will give you something too, but do not lay me living in my grave, beg him to bring back Foma Fomitch.”

And the old woman would have gone on wailing and diiveiling if Miss Perepelitsyn and all the lady companions nad not, with shrieks and moans, rushed to lift her up, indignant that she should be on her knees before a hired governess. Nastenka was so frightened that she could hardly stand, while Miss Perepelitsyn positively shed tears of fury.

“You will be the death of your mamma,” she screamed at my uncle. “You will be the death of her. And you, Nastasva Yevgrafovna, ought not to make dissension between mother and son; the Lord has forbidden it. . . .”

“Anna Nilovna, hold your tongue!” cried my uncle. “I have put up with enough!”

“Yes, and I have had enough to put up with from you too. Why do you reproach me with my friendless position? It is easy to insult the friendless. I am not your slave yet. I am the daughter of a major myself. You won’t see me long in your house, this very day ... I <diall be gone. ...”

But my uncle did not hear her; he went up to Nastenka and with reverence took her by the hand.

“Nastasya Yevgrafovna! You have heard my offer?” he said, looking at her with anguish, almost with despair.

“No, Yegor Ilyitch, no! We had better give it up,” said Nastenka, utterly dejected too. “It is all nonsense,” she said, pressing his hand and bursting into tears. “You only say this because of yesterday . . . but it cannot be. You see that yourself. We have made a mistake, Yegor Ilyitch. . . . But I shall always think of you as my benefactor and ... I shall pray for you always, always! ...”

At this point tears choked her. “My poor uncle had evidently foreseen this answer; he did not even think of protecting, ot insisting. He listened, bending down to her, still holding her hand, crushed and speechless There were tears in his eyes.

“I told you yesterday,” Nastya went on, “that I could not be your wife. You see that I am not wanted here . . . and I foresaw all this long ago; your mamma will not give vou her blessing . . . others too. Though you would

not regret it afterwards, because you are the most generous of men, yet you would be made miserable through me . . . with your soft-heartedness. ...”

“Just because of your soft-heartedness! Just because you are so soft-hearted! That’s it, Nastenka, that’s it!” chimed in her old father, who was standing on the other side of her chair. “That’s just it, that’s just the right word.”

“I don’t want to bring dissension into your house on my account,” Nastenka went on. “And don’t be uneasy about me, Yegor Ilyitch; no one will interfere with me, no one will insult me ... I am going to my father’s . . . this very day. . . . We had better say good-bye, Yegor Ilyitch, . . .”

And poor Nastenka dissolved into tears again.

“Nastasya Yevgrafovna! Surely this not not your final answer!” said my uncle, looking at her in unutterable despair. “Say only one word and I will sacrifice everything for you! . . .”

“It is final, it is final, Yegor Ilyitch . . .” Yezhevikin put in again, “and she has explained it all very well to you, as I must own I did not expect her to. You are a very soft-hearted man, Yegor Ilyitch, yes, very soft-hearted, and you have graciously done us a great honour! A great honour, a great honour! . . . But all the same we are not a match for you, Yegor Ilyitch. You ought to have a bride, Yegor Ilyitch, who would be wealthy and of high rank, and a great beauty and with a voice too, who would walk about your rooms all in diamonds and ostrich feathers. . . . Then perhaps Foma Fomitch would make a little concession and give his blessing! And you will bring Foma Fomitch back! It was no use, no use your insulting him. It was from virtue, you know, from excess of fervour that he said too much, you know. You will say yourself that it was through his virtue — you will see! A most worthy man. And here he is getting wet through now. It would be better to fetch him back now. . . . For you will have to fetch him back, you know. . . .”

“Fetch him back, fetch him back!” shrieked Madame la Generale. “What he says is right, my dear! . . .”

“Yes,” Yezhevikin went on. “Here youi* illustrious parent has upset herself about nothing. . . . Fetch him back! And Nastaya and I meanwhile will be on the march. . . .”

“Wait a minute, Yevgraf Larionitch!” cried my uncle, “I entreat you. There is one thing more must be said, Yevgraf, one thing only. . . .”

Saying this, he walked away, sat down in an arm-chair in the corner, bowed his head, and put his hands over his eyes as though he were thinking over something.

At that moment a violent clap of thunder sounded almost directly over the house. The whole building shook. Madame la Generate gave a scream, Miss Perepelitsyn did the same, the lady companions, and with them Mr. Bahtcheyev, all stupefied with terror, crossed themselves.

“Holy Saint, Elijah the prophetI” five or six voices murmured at once.

The thunder was followed by such a downpour that it seemed as though the whole lake were suddenly being emptied upon Stepantchikovo.

“And Foma Fomitch, what will become of him now out in the fields?” piped Miss Pcrepelitsyn.

“Yegorushka, fetch him back!” Madame la Générale cried in a voice of despair, and she rushed to the door as though crazy. Her attendant ladies held her back; they surrounded her, comforted her, whimpered, squealed. It was a perfect Bedlam!

“He went off with nothing over his coat. If he had only taken an overcoat with him!” Miss Perepelitsyn went on. “He did not take an umbrella either. He will be struck by lightning! . . .”

“He will certainly be struck!” Bahtchcycv chimed in. “And he will be soaked with rain afterwards, too.”

“You might hold you tongue!” I whispered to him.

“Why, he is a man, I suppose, or isn’t he?” Bahtcheyev answered wrathfully. “He is not a dog. I bet you wouldn’t go out of doors yourself. Come, go and have a bath for your plaisir.”

Foreseeing how it might end and dreading the possibility, I went up to my uncle, who sat as though chained to his chair.

“Uncle,” I said, bending down to his ear, “surely you won’t consent to bring Foma Fomitch back? Do understand that that would be the height of unseemliness, at any rate as long as Nastasya Yevgrafovna is here.”

“My dear,” answered my uncle, raising his head and looking at me resolutely,” I have been judging myself at this moment and I know what I ought to do. Don’t be uneasy, there shall be no offence to Nastenka, I will ^ce to that. . . .”

He got up from his seat and went to his mother.

“Mamma,” he said, “don’t worry yourself, I will bring Foma Fomitch back, I will overtake him; he cannot have gone far yet.

But I swear he shall come back only on one condition, that here publicly in the presence of all who were witnesses of the insult he should acknowledge how wrong he has been, and solemnly beg the forgiveness of this noble young lady. I will secure that, I will make him do it! He shall not cross the threshold of this house without it! I swear, too, mamma, solemnly, that if he consents to this of his own free will, I shall be ready to fall at his feet, and will give him anything, anything I can, without injustice to my children. I myself will renounce everything from this very day. The star of my happiness has set. I shall leave Stepantchikovo. You must all live here calmly and happily. I am going back to my regiment, and in the turmoil of war, on the field of battle, I will end my despairing days. . . . Enough! I am going!”

At that moment the door opened, and Gavrila, soaked through and incredibly muddy, stood facing the agitated company.

“What’s the matter? Where have you come from? Where is Foma?” cried my uncle, rushing up to Gavrila.

Everyone followed him, and with eager curiosity crowded round the old man, from whom dirty water was literally trickling in streams. Shrieks, sighs, exclamations accompanied every word Gavrila uttered.

“I left him at the birch copse, a mile away,” he began in a tearful voice. “The horse took fright at the lightning and bolted into a ditch.”

“Well? ..,” cried my uncle.

“The cart was upset. ...”

“Well? ... and Foma?”

“He fell into the ditch.”

“And then? Tell us, you tantalising old man!”

“He bruised his side and began crying. I unharnessed the horse, got on him and rode here to tell you.”

“And Foma remained there?”

“He got up and went on with his stick,” Gavrila concluded; then he heaved a sigh and bowed his head.

The tears and sobs of the tender sex were indescribable.

“Polkan!” cried my uncle, and he flew out of the room. Polkan was brought, my uncle leapt on him barebacked, and a minute later the thud of the horse’s hoofs told us that the pursuit of Foma Fomitch had begun. My uncle had actually galloped off without his cap.

The ladies ran to the windows. Among the sighs and groans were heard words of advice. There was talk of a hot bath, of Foma Fomitch being rubbed with spirits, of some soothing drink, of the fact that Foma Fomitch “had not had a crumb of bread between his lips all day and that he is wet through on an empty stomach.” Miss Perepehtsyn found his forgotten spectacles in their case, and the find produced an extraordinary eliect: Madame la Générale pounced on them with tears and lamentations, and still keeping them in her hand, pressed up to the window again to watch the road. The suspense reached the utmost pitch of intensity at last. In another corner Sashenka was trying to comfort Nastya; they were weeping in each other’s arms. Nastenka was holding Ilyusha’s hand and kissing him from time to time. Ilyusha was in floods of tears, though he did not yet know why. Yezhevikin and Mizintchikov were talking of something aside. I fancied that Bahtcheyev was looking at the girls as though he were ready to blubber himself. I went up to him.

“No, my good sir,” he said to me, “Foma Fomitch mav leave here one day perhaps, but the time for that has not yet come; they haven’t got gold-horned bulls for his chariot yet. Don’t worry yourself, sir, he’ll drive the owners out of the house and stay there himself!”

‘lhe storm was over, and Mr. Bahtche\ev had evidently changed his views.

All at once there was an outcry: “They are bringing him, thev are bringing him,” and the ladies ran shrieking to the door. Hardly ten minutes had parsed since my uncle set off; one would have thought it would have been impossible to bring Foma Fomitch back so quickly; but the enigma was very sunoly explained later on. When Foma Fomikh had let (iavrila go he really had “set oft walking with his stick”, but finding himself in complete solitude in the midst of the storm, the thunder, and the pouring ram, he was ignorniniously paim -stricken, turned back towards Stepantchikovo and ran after Gavrila. He was already in the village when my uncle came upon him. A passing cart wa^ stopped at once; some peasants ran up and put the unresisting Foma Fomitch into it. So they conveyed him straight to the open arms of Madame la Generale, who was almost beside herself with horror when she saw the condition he was in. He was even muddier and wetter than Gavrila. There was a terrific flurry and bustle; they wanted at once to drag him upstairs to change his linen; there was an outcry for elder-flower tea and other invigorating beverages, they

scurried in all directions without doing anything sensible; they all talked at once. . . . But Foma seemed to notice nobody and nothing. He was led in, supported under the arms. On reaching his easy-chair, he sank heavily into it and closed his eyes. Someone cried out that he was dying; a terrible howl was raised, and Falaley was the loudest of all, trying to squeeze through the crowd of ladies up to Foma Fomitch to kiss his hand at once. . . .

CHAPTER V

FOMA FOMITCH MAKES EVERYONE HAPPY

J HERE have they brought me?” Foma articulated at VV last, in the voice of a man dying in a righteous cause.

“Damnable humbug!” Mizintchikov whispered beside me. “As though he didn’t see where he had been brought! Now he will give us a fine exhibition!”

“You are among us, Foma, you are in your own circle!” cried my uncle. “Don’t give way, calm yourself! And really, Foma, you had better change your things, or you will be ill. . . . And won’t you take something to restore you, eh? Just something ... a little glass of something to warm you. ...”

“I could drink a little Malaga,” Foma moaned, closing his eyes again.

“Malaga? I am not sure there is any,” my uncle said, anxiously looking towards Praskovya Ilyinitchna.

“To be sure there is!” the latter answered. “There are four whole bottles left.” And jingling her keys she ran to fetch the Malaga, followed by exclamations of the ladies, who were clinging to Foma like flies round jam. On the other hand, Mr Bahtcheyev was indignant in the extreme.

“He wants Malaga!” he grumbled almost aloud. “And asks for a wine that no one drinks. Who drinks Malaga nowadays but rascals like him? Tfoo, you confounded fellow! What am I standing here for? What am I waiting for?”

“Foma,” my uncle began, stumbling over every word, “you see now . . . when you are rested and are with us again . . . that is, I meant to say, Foma, that I understand how accusing, so to say, the most innocent of beings ...”

“Where is it, my innocence, where?” Foma interrupted, as though he were feverish and in delirium. “Where are my golden days? Where art thou, my golden childhood, when innocent and lovely I ran about the fields chasing the spring butterflies? Where are those days? Give me back my innocence, give it me back! ...”

And Foma, flinging wide his arms, turned to each one of us in succession as though his innocence were in somebody's pocket. Bahtcheyev was ready to explode with wrath.

"Ech, so that's what he wants!" he muttered in a fury. "Give him his innocence! Does he want to kiss it, or what? Most likely he was as great a villain when he was a boy as he is now! I'll take my oath he was."

"Foma!" . . . my uncle was beginning again.

"Where, where are they, those days when I still had faith in love and loved mankind?" cried Foma; "when I embraced man and wept upon his bosom? But now where am I? Where am I?"

"You are with us, Foma, calm yourself," cried my uncle. "This is what I wanted to say to you, Foma. ..."

"You might at least keep silent now," hissed Miss Perepelitsyn, with a spiteful gleam in her vipcnsh eyes.

"Where am I?" Foma went on. "Who are about me? They are bulls and buffaloes turning their horns against me. Life, what art thou? If one lives one is dishonoured, disgraced, humbled, crushed; and when the earth is scattered on one's coffin, only then men will remember one and pile a monument on one's poor bones!"

"Holy saints, he is talking about monuments!" whispered Yezhevikin, clasping his hands.

"Oh, do not put up a monument to me," cried Foma, "do not! I don't need monuments. Raise up a monument to me in your hearts, I want nothing more, nothing more!"

"Foma," my uncle interposed, "enough, calm yourself! There is no need to talk about monuments. Only listen. You see, Foma, I understand that you were perhaps, so to say, inspired with righteous fervour when you reproached me, but you were carried away, Foma, beyond the limit of righteousness — I assure you you were mistaken, Foma. . . ."

"Oh, will you give over?" hissed Miss Perepelitsyn again. "Do you want to murder the poor man because he is in your hands? ..."

After Miss Perepelitsyn, Madame la Générale made a stir, and all her suite followed her example; they all waved their hands at my uncle to stop him.

"Anna Nilovna, be silent yourself, I know what I am saying!" my uncle answered firmly. "This is a sacred matter! A question of honour and justice.

Foma! you are a sensible man, you must at once ask the forgiveness of the virtuous young lady whom you have insulted.”

“What young lady? What young lady have I insulted?” Foma articulated in amazement, staring round at everyone as though he had entirely forgotten everything that had happened, and did not know what was the matter.

“Yes, Foma; and if now of your own accord you frankly acknowledge you have done wrong, I swear, Foma, I will fall at your feet and then ...”

“Whom have I insulted?” wailed Foma. “What young lady? Where is she? Where is the young lady? Recall to me something about the young lady! ...”

At that instant, Nastenka, confused and frightened, went up to Yegor Ilyitch and pulled him by the sleeve.

“No, Yegor Ilyitch, leave him alone, there is no need of an apology. What is the object of it all?” she said in an imploring voice. “Give it up!”

“Ah, now I begin to remember,” cried Foma. “My God, I understand. Oh, help me, help me to remember!” he implored, apparently in great excitement. “Tell me, is it true that I was turned out of this house, like the mangiest of curs? Is it true that I was struck by lightning? Is it true that I was kicked down the steps? Is it true? Is that true?”

The weeping and wailing of the fair sex were the most eloquent reply to Foma Fomitch.

“Yes, yes,” he repeated, “I remember ... I remember now that after the lightning and my fall I was running here, pursued by the thunder, to do my duty and then vanish for ever! Raise me up! Weak as I may be now, I must do my duty.”

He was at once helped up from his chair. Foma stood in the attitude of an orator and stretched out his hands.

“Colonel,” he cried, “now I have quite recovered. The thunder has not extinguished my intellectual capacities; it has left, it is true, -a deafness in my right ear, due perhaps not so much to the thunder as to my fall down the steps, but what of that? And what does anyone care about Foma’s right ear!”

Foma threw such a wealth of mournful irony into these last words, and accompanied them with such a pathetic smile, that the groans of the deeply-moved ladies resounded again. They all looked with reproach, and some also with fury, at my uncle, who was beginning to be crushed by so unanimous an expression of public opinion. Mizintchikov, with a curse,

walked away to the window. Bahtcheyev kept prodding me more and more violently with his elbow; he could hardly stand still.

“Now listen to my whole confession!’’ yelled Foma, turning upon all a proud and determined gaze, “and at the same time decide the fate of poor Opiskin! Yegor Ilyitch, for a long time past I have been watching over you, watching over you with a tremor at my heart, and I have seen everything, everything, while you were not suspecting that I was watching over you. Colonel! Perhaps I was mistaken, but I knew your egotism, your boundless vanity, your phenomenal sensuality, and who would blame me for trembling for the honour of an innocent young person?”

“Loma, ioma! . . . you need not enlarge on it, Foma,” cried my uncle, looking uneasily at Nastenka’s suffering face.

“What troubled me was not so much the innocence and trustfulness of the person in question as her inexperience,” Foma went on, as though he had not heard my uncle’s warning. “I saw that a tender feeling was blossoming in her heart, like a rose in spring, and I could not help recalling Petrarch’s saying, ‘Innocence is often but a hair’s breadth from ruin.’ I sighed, I groaned, and though I was ready to shed the last drop ot my blood to safeguard that pure pearl of maidenhood, who could answer to me for you, Yegor Ilyitch? I know the unbridled violence of your passions, and knowing that you are ready to sacrifice everything for their momentary gratification, I was plunged in the depths of alarm and apprehension for the fate of the noblest of girls. ...”

“Foma! Could you really imagine such a thing?” cried my uncle.

“With a shudder at my heart I watched over you. And if you want to know what I have been suffering, go to Shakespeare: in his Hamlet he describes the state of my soul. I became suspicious and terrible. In my anxiety, in indignation, I saw everything in the blackest colour and that not fhe ‘black colour’ sung of in the well-known song — I can assure you. That was the cause of the desire you saw in me to remove her far away from this house: I wanted to save her; that was why you have seen me of late irritable and bitter against the whole human race. Oh! who will reconcile me with humanity? I feel that I was perhaps over-exacting and unjust to your guests, to your nephew, to Mr. Bahtcheyev, when I expected from him a knowledge of astronomy; but who will blame me for my state of mind at the time? Going to Shakespeare again, I may say that the future looked to my imagination like a gloomy gulf of unfathomed depth with a crocodile lying

at the bottom. I felt that it was my duty to prevent disaster, that I was destined, appointed for that purpose — and what happened? You did not understand the generous impulse of my heart, and have been repaying me all this time with anger, with ingratitude, with jeers, with slights ...”

“Foma! If that is so ... ot course I feel ..,” cried my uncle, in extreme agitation.

“If you really do feel it, Colonel, be so kind as to listen and not interrupt me. I will continue. My whole fault lay in the fact, therefore, that I was too much troubled over the fate and the happiness of this child; for compared with you she is a child. It was the truest love for humanity that turned me all this time into a fiend of wrath and suspicion. I was ready to fall on people and tear them to pieces. And you know, Yegor Ilyitch, all your actions, as though of design, made me more suspicious every hour, and confirmed my fears. You know, Yegor Ilyitch, when you showered your gold upon me yesterday to drive me from you, I thought: ‘He is driving away in my person his conscience, so as more easily to perpetrate this wickedness. ...”

“Foma, Foma, can you have thought that yesterday?” my uncle cried out with horror. “Merciful heavens! and I hadn’t the faintest suspicion ...”

“Heaven itself inspired those suspicions,” Foma went on. “And judge for yourself: what could I suppose when chance led me that very evening to that fatal seat in the garden? What were my feelings at that moment — oh, my God! — when I saw with my own eyes that all my suspicions were justified in the most flagrant manner? But I had still one hope left, a faint one indeed, but still it was a hope, and — this morning you shattered it into dust and ashes! You sent me your letter, you alleged your intention to marry; you besought me not to make it public. . . . ‘But why?’ I wondered. ‘Why did he write now after I have found him out and not before? Why did he not run to me before, happy and comely — for love adorns the countenance — why did he not fly to my embrace, why did he not weep upon my bosom tears of infinite bliss and tell me all about it, all about it?’ Or am I a crocodile who would have devoured you instead of giving you good advice? Or am I some loathsome beetle who would only have bitten you and not assisted your happiness? ‘Am I his friend or the most repulsive of insects?’ that was the question I asked myself this morning. ‘With what object,’ I asked myself, ‘with what object did he invite his nephew from Petersburg and try to betroth him to this girl, if not to deceive us and his fnvolotts nephew, and meanwhile in secret to persist in his criminal

designs?’ Yes, Colonel, if anyone confirmed in me the thought that your mutual love was criminal, it was you yourself and you only! What is more, you have behaved like a criminal to this young girl; for through your tactlessness and selfish mistrustfulness you have exposed her, a modest and high-principled girl, to slander and odious suspicions.”

My uncle stood silent with bowed head, Foma’s eloquence was evidently getting the better of his convictions, and he was beginning to regard himself as a complete criminal. Madame la Générale and her followers were listening to Foma in awestruck silence, while Miss Perepelitsyn looked with spiteful triumph at poor Nastenka.

“Overwhelmed, nervously exhausted and shattered/’ Foma went on, “I locked myself in this morning and prayed, and the Lord showed me the right path. At last I decided: for the last time and publicly to put you to the test. I may have gone about it with too much fervour, I may have given way too much to my indignation; but foi my well-meaning effort, you flung me out of the window! As I fell out of the window I thought to myself: ‘This is how virtue is rewarded all the world over.’ Then I struck the earth, and I scarcely remember what happened to me afterwauK”

Shrieks and groans interrupted Foma Fomitth at this tragic recollection. Madame la Générale made a dash at him with a bottle of Malaga in her hand, which she had just snatched from Praskovya Uymitchna, but Foma majestically waved aside the hand and the Malaga and Madame la Générale herself.

“Let me alone,” he shouted, “I must finish. Wnat happened after my fall — I don’t know. I know one thing only, that now, wet through and on the verge of fever, I am standing here to secure your mutual happiness. Colonel! From many signs which I do not wish now to partieularise, I am convinced at last that your love was pure and even exalted, though at the same time criminally distrustful. Beaten, humiliated, suspected of insulting a young lady in defence of whose honour I am ready like a medieval knight to shed the last drop of my blood, I have made up my mind to show you how Foma Opiskin revenges an injury. Give me your hand, Colonel!”

“With pleasure, Foma!” cried my uncle. “And since you have now fully cleared the honour of this young lady from every aspersion, why ... of course . . . here is my hand, Foma, together with my regrets. ...”

And my uncle gave him his hand warmly, not yet suspecting what was to come of it.

“Give me your hand too,” went on Foma in a faint voice, parting the crowd of ladies who were pressing round him and appealing to Nastenka.

Nastenka was taken aback and confused, she looked timidly at Foma.

“Approach, approach, my sweet child! It is essential for your happiness,” Foma added caressingly, still holding my uncle’s hand in his.

“What’s he up to now?” said Mizintchikov.

Nastenka, frightened and trembling, went slowly up to Foma and timidly held out her hand.

Foma took her hand and put it in my uncje’s.

“I join your hands and bless you,” he pronounced in the most solemn voice. “And if the blessing of a poor sorrow-stricken sufferer may avail you, be happy. This is how Foma Opiskin takes his revenge! Hurrah!”

The amazement of everyone was immense. The conclusion was so unexpected that everyone was struck dumb. Madame la Générale stood rooted to the spot, with her mouth open and the bottle of Malaga in her hand. Miss Perepelitsyn turned pale and trembled with fury. The lady companions clasped their hands and sat petrified in their seats. My uncle trembled and tried to say something, but could not. Nastya turned deathly pale and timidly murmured that “it could not be” . . . but it was too late. Bahtcheyev was the first — we must do him that credit — to second Foma’s hurrah. I followed suit, and after me Sashenka shouted at the top of her ringing voice as she flew to embrace her father; then Ilyusha joined in, then Yezhevikin, and last of all Mizintchikov.

“Hurrah!” Foma cried once more; “hurrah! And on your knees, children of my heart, on your knees before the tenderest of mothers! Ask her blessing, and if need be I will kneel before her by your side. ...”

My uncle and Nastya, not looking at each other, and seeming not to understand what was being done to them, fell on their knees before Madame la Generale, the whole company flocked round them; but the old lady seemed to be stupefied, not knowing what to do. Foma came to the rescue at this juncture too; he plumped down himself before his patroness. This at once dispelled all her hesitation. Dissolving into tears, she said at last that she consented. My uncle jumped up and clasped Foma in his arms.

“Foma, Foma! . . ,” he began, but his voice broke and he could not go on.

“Champagne!” bawled Mr. Bahtcheyev. “Hurrah!”

“No, sir, not champagne,” Miss Perepelitsyn caught him up. She had by now recovered herself, and realised the position and at the same time its consequences. “Put up a candle to God, pray to the holy image and bless with the holy image, as is done by all godly people. ...”

At once all flew to carry out the sage suggestion; a fearful bustle followed. They had to light the candle. Mr. Bahtcheycv drew up a chair and got up on it to put the candle before the holy image, but immediately broke the chair and came down heavily on the floor — still on his feet, however. Not in the least irritated by this, he at once respectfully made way for Miss Perepelitsyn. The slender Miss Perepelitsyn had done the job in a flash: the candle was lighted. The nun and the lady companions began crossing themselves and bowing down to tho ground. They took down the image of the Saviour and carried it to Madame la Generale. My uncle and Nastya went down on their knees again and the ceremony was carried out under the pious instructions of Miss Perepelitsyn, who was saying every minute: “Bow down to her feet, kiss the image, kiss your mamma’s hand.” Mr. Bahtcheyev thought himself bound to kiss the image after the betrothed couple, and at the same time he kissed the hand of Madame la Generale.

“Hurrah!” he shouted again. “Come, now we will have some champagne.”

Everyone, however, was delighted. Madame la Générale was weeping, but it was now with tears of joy. Foma’s blessing had at once made the union sanctified and suitable, and what mattered most to her was that Foma Fomitch had distinguished himself and that now he would remain with her for ever. All the lady companions, in appearance at least, shared the general satisfaction. My uncle at one moment was on his knees kissing his mother’s hands, at the next was flying to embrace me, Bahtcheyev, Mizintchikov and Yezhevikin. Ilyusha he almost smothered in his embraces. Sasha ran to hug and kiss Nastenka. Praskovya Ilyinitchna dissolved into tears. Bahtcheyev, noticing this, went up to kiss her hand. Poor old Yezhevikin was completely overcome, he was weeping in a corner and was wiping his eyes with the same check handkerchief. In another corner Gavrila was whimpering and gazing reverently at Foma Fomitch, and Falaley was sobbing loudly and going up to each of the company in turn, kissing his hand. All were overwhelmed with feeling; no one yet had begun to talk, or explain things; it seemed as though everything had been said; nothing was heard but joyful exclamations. No one understood yet how all this had been so quickly

arranged. They knew one thing only, that it had all been arranged by Foma Fomitch, and that this was a solid fact which could not be changed.

But not five minutes had passed after the general rejoicing, when suddenly Tatyana Ivanovna made her appearance among us. In what way, by what intuition could she, sitting in her own room upstairs, have so quickly divined love and marriage below? She fluttered in with a radiant face, with tears of joy in her eyes, in a fascinating and elegant get-up (she had had time to change her dress before coming down), and flew straight to embrace Nastenka with loud exclamations.

“Nastenka, Nastenka! You loved him and I did not know!” she cried. “Goodness! They loved each other, they suffered in silence! They have been persecuted. What a romance! Nastya, darling, tell me the whole truth: do you really love this crazy fellow?”

By way of reply Nastya hugged and kissed her.

“My goodness, what a fascinating romance!” And Tatyana Ivanovna clapped her hands in delight. “Nastya, listen, my angel: all these men, all, every one, are ungrateful wretches, monsters, and not worthy of our love. But perhaps he is the best of them. Come to me, you crazy fellow!” she cried, addressing my uncle and clutching him by the arm. “Are you really in love? Are you really capable of loving? Look at me, I want to look into your eyes, I want to see whether those eyes are lying or not? No, no, they are not lying; there is the light of love in them. Oh, how happy I am! Nastenka, my dear, you are not rich — I shall make you a present of thirty thousand roubles. Take it, for God’s sake. I don’t want it, I

don’t want it; I shall have plenty left. No, no, no,” she cried, waving her hand as she saw Nastenka was meaning to refuse. ‘‘Don’t you speak, Yegor Ilyitch, it is not your affair. No, Nastya, I had made up my nund already to give you the money; I have been wanting to make you a present for a long time, and was only waiting for you to be in love. ... I shall see your happiness. You will wound me if you don’t take it; I shall cry, Nastya. No, no, no and no!”

Tatyana Ivanovna was so overjoyed that for the moment at least it was impossible, it would have been a pity indeed, to cross her. They could not bring themselves to do it, but put it off. She flew to kiss Madame la Generale, Miss Perepelitsyn and all of us. Mr. Bahtcheyev squeezed his way up to her very respectfully and asked to kiss her hand.

“My dear, good girl! Forgive an old fool like me for what happened this morning. I didn’t know what a heart of gold you had.”

“Crazy fellow! I know you,” Tatyana Ivanovna lisped with gleeful playfulness. She gave Mr. Bahtcheyev a flick on the nose with her glove, and swishing against him with her gorgeous skirts, fluttered away like a zephyr.

The fat man stepped aside respectfully.

“A very worthy young lady!” he said with feeling. “They have stuck a nose on to the German! You know!” he whispered to me confidentially, looking at me joyfully.

“What nose? What German?” I asked in surprise.

“Why, the one I ordered, the German kissing his lady’s hand while she is wiping away a tear with her handkerchief. Only yesterday my Yevdokem mended it; and when we came back from our expedition this morning I sent a man on horseback to fetch it. . . . They will soon be bringing it. A superb thing.”

“Foma!” cried my uncle in a frenzy of delight. “It is you who have made our happiness. How can I reward you?”

“Nohow, Colonel,” replied Foma, with a sanctimonious air. “Continue to pay no attention to me and be happy without Foma.”

He was evidently piqued; in the general rejoicing he seemed, as it were, forgotten.

“It is all due to our joy, Foma,” cried my uncle. “I don’t know whether I am on my head or my feet. Listen, Foma, I have insulted you. My whole blood is not enough to atone for my wrong to you, and that is why I say nothing and do not even beg your pardon. But if ever you have need of my head, my life, if you ever want someone to throw himself over a precipice for your sake, call upon me, and you shall see. . . . I will say nothing more, Foma.”

And my uncle waved his hand, fully recognising the impossibility of adding anything that could more strongly express his feeling. He only gazed at Foma with grateful eyes full of tears.

“See what an angel he is!” Miss Perepelitsyn piped in her turn in adulation of Foma.

“Yes, yes,” Sashenka put in. “I did not know you were such a good man, Foma Fomitch, and I was disrespectful to you. But forgive me, Foma

Fomitch, and you may be sure I will love you with all my heart. If you knew how much I respect you now!”

“Yes, Foma,” Bahtcheyev chimed in. “Forgive an old fool like me too. I didn’t know you, I didn’t know you. You are not merely a learned man, Foma, but also — simply a hero. My whole house is at your service. But there, the best of all would be, if you would come to me the day after to-morrow, old man, with Madame la Générale too, and the betrothed couple — the whole company, in fact. And we will have a dinner, I tell you. I won’t praise it beforehand, but one thing I can say, you will find everything you want unless it is bird’s milk. I give you my word of honour.”

In the midst of these demonstrations, Nastenka, too, went up to Foma Fomitch and without further words warmly embraced him and kissed him.

“Foma Fomitch,” she said, “you have been a true friend to us, you have done so much for us, that I don’t know how to repay you for it all; but I only know that I will be for you a most tender and respectful sister . . .”

She could say no more, she was choked by tears. Foma kissed her on the head and grew tearful.

“My children, the children of my heart,” he said. “Live and prosper, and in moments of happiness think sometimes of the poor exile. For myself, I will only say that misfortune is perhaps the mother of virtue. That, I believe, is said by Gogol, a frivolous writer, but from whom one may sometimes glean fruitful thoughts. Exile is a misfortune. I shall wander like a pilgrim with my staff over the face of the earth, and who knows? — perchance my troubles will make me more righteous yet! That thought is the one consolation left mel”

“But . . . where are you going, Foma?” my uncle asked in alarm.

All were startled, and pressed round Foma.

“Why, do you suppose I can remain in your house after your behaviour this morning?” Foma inquired with extraordinary dignity.

But he was not allowed to finish, outcries from all the company smothered his voice. They made him sit down in an easy-chair, they besought him, they shed tears over him, and I don’t know what they didn’t do. Of course he hadn’t the faintest intention of leaving “this hou^e”, just as he had not earlier that morning, nor the day before, nor on the occasion when he had taken to digging in the garden. He knew now that they would reverently detain him, would clutch at him, especially since he had made them all happy, since they all had faith in him again and were ready to carry

him on their shoulders and to consider it an honour and a happiness to do so. But most likely his cowardly return, when he was frightened by the storm, was rankling in his mind and egging him on to play the hero in some way. And above all, there was such a temptation to give himself airs; the opportunity of talking, of using line phrases and laying it on thick, of blowing his own trumpet, was too good for any possibility of resisting the temptation. He did not resist it; he tore himself out of the grasp of those who held him. He asked for his stalf, besought them to let him have his freedom, to let him wander out into the wide wide world, declared that in that house he had been dishonoured, beaten, that he had only come back to make everyone happy, and, he asked, could he remain in this “house of ingratitude and eat *oup, sustaining, perhaps, but seasoned with blows?” At last he left off struggling. He was reseated in his chair, but his eloquence was not arrested.

“Have I not been insulted here?” he cried. “Have I not been taunted? Haven’t you, you yourself, Colonel, have you not every hour pointed the finger of scorn and made the long nose of derision at me, like the ignorant children of the working class in the streets of the town? Yes, Colonel, I insist on that comparison, because if you have not done so physically it has yet been a moral long nose, and in some cases a moral long nose is more insulting than a physical one. I say nothing of blows . . .”

“Foma, Foma,” cried my uncle, “do not crush me with these recollections. I have told you already that all my blood is not enough to wash out the insults. Be magnanimous! Forgive, forget, and remain to contemplate our happiness I Your work, Foma ...”

“I want to love my fellow-man, to love him,” cried Foma, “and they won’t give me him, they forbid me to love him, they take him from me. Give me, give me my fellow-man that I may love him! Where is that fellow-man? Where is he hidden? Like Diogenes with his candle, I have been looking for him all my life and cannot find him; and I can love no one, to this day I cannot find the man. Woe to him who has made me a hater of mankind! I cry: give me my fellow-man that I may love him, and they thrust Falaley upon me! Am I to love Falaley? Do I want to love Falaley? Could I love Falaley, even if I wanted to? No. Why not? Because he is Falaley. Why do I not love humanity? Because all on earth are Falaleys or like Falaley. I don’t want Falaley, I hate Falaley, I spit on Falaley, I trample Falaley under my feet. And if I had to choose I would rather love Asmodeus

than Falaley. Come here, come here, my everlasting torment, come here," he cried, suddenly addressing Falaley, who was in the most innocent way standing on tiptoe, looking over the crowd that was surrounding Foma Fomitch. "Come here. I will show you, Colonel," cried Foma, drawing towards him Falaley, who was almost unconscious with terror, "I will show you the truth of my words about the everlasting long nose and finger of scorn! Tell me, Falaley, and tell the truth: what did you dream about last night? Come, Colonel, you will see your handiwork! Come, Falaley, tell us!"

The poor boy, shaking with terror,, turned despairing eyes about him, looking for someone to rescue him; but everyone was in a tremor waiting for his answer.

"Come, Falaley, I am waiting."

Instead of answering, Falaley screwed up his face, opened his mouth wide, and began bellowing like a calf.

"Colonel! Do you see this stubbornness? Do you mean to tell me it's natural? For the last time I ask you, Falaley, tell me: what did you dream of last night?"

"O-of . . ."

"Say you dreamed of me," said Bahtcheyev.

"Of your virtue, sir," Yezhevikin prompted in his other ear.

Falaley merely looked about him.

"O-of ... of your vir . . . of a white bu-ull," he roared at last, and burst into scalding tears.

Everyone groaned. But Foma Fomitch was in a paroxysm of extraordinary magnanimity.

"Anyway, I see your sincerity, Falaley/' he said. "A sincerity I do not observe in others. God bless you! If you are purposely mocking at me with that dream at the instigation of others, God will repay you and those others. If not, I respect your truthfulness; for even in the lowest of creatures like you it is my habit to discern the image and semblance of God. . . . I forgive you, Falaley. Embrace me, my children. I will remain with you."

"He will remain!" they all cried in delight.

"I will remain and I will forgive. Colonel, reward Falaley with some sugar, do not let him cry on such a day of happiness for all."

I need hardly say that such magnanimity was thought astounding. To take so much thought at such a moment, and for whom? For Falaley. My

uncle flew to carry out his instruction in regard to the sugar. Immediately a silver sugar-basin — I don't know where it came from — appeared in the hands of Praskovya Ilyinitchna. My uncle was about to take out two pieces with a trembling hand, then three, then he dropped them, at last, seeing he was incapable of doing anything from excitement.

"Ah!" he cried, "for a day like this! Hold out your coat, Falaley," and he poured into his coat all the contents of the sugar-basin. "That's for your truthfulness," he said, by way of edification.

"Mr. Korovkin!" Vidoplyasov announced, suddenly appearing in the doorway.

A slight flutter of consternation followed — Korovkin's visit was obviously ill-timed. They all looked inquiringly at my uncle.

"Korovkin!" cried my uncle, in some embarrassment. "Of course I am delighted . . ," he added, glancing timidly towards Foma; "but really I don't know whether to ask him in at such a moment. What do you think, Foma?"

"Oh, yes, why not," said Foma amicably. "Invite Korovkin too; let him, too, share in the general rejoicing."

In short, Foma Fomitch was in an angelic frame of mind.

"I most respectfully make bold to inform you," observed Vidoplyasov, "that the gentleman is not quite himself."

"Not quite himself? How? What nonsense are you talking?" cried my uncle.

"It is so, indeed; he is not quite in a sober condition."

But before my uncle had time to open his mouth, flush red, and show his alarm and extreme embarrassment, the mystery was explained. Korovkin appeared in the doorway, pushed Vidoplyasov aside and confronted the astonished company. He was a short, thick-set gentleman of forty, with dark hair touched with grey and closely cropped, with a round purple face and little bloodshot eyes, wearing a high horsehair cravat, fastened at the back with a buckle, an extraordinarily threadbare swallow-tail coat covered with fluff and hay and disclosing a bad rent under the arm, and unspeakable trousers, and carrying an incredibly greasy cap which he was holding out at arm's length. This gentleman was completely drunk. Advancing into the middle of the room, he stood still, staggering, nodding his head as though he were pecking at something with his nose in drunken hesitation; then he slowly grinned from ear to ear.

“Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen,” he began, “I . . . er . . .” (here he gave a tug at his collar) “got ‘em!”

Madame la Générale immediately assumed an air of offended dignity. Foma, sitting in his easy-chair, ironically looked the eccentric visitor up and down. Bahtcheyev stared at him in perplexity, through which some sympathy was, however, apparent. My uncle’s embarrassment was incredible; he was deeply distressed on Korovkin’s account.

“Korovkin,” he began. “Listen.”

“Attendcz!” Korovkin interrupted him. “Let me introduce myself: a child of nature. . . . But what do I see? There are ladies here. . . . Why didn’t you tell me, you rascal, that you had ladies here?” he added with a roguish smile. “Never mind! Don’t be shy. Let us be presented to the fair sex. Charming ladies,” he began, articulating with difficulty and stumbling over every word, “you see a luckless mortal . . . who . . . and so on. . . . The rest must remain unsaid. . . . Musicians! A polka!”

“Wouldn’t you like a nap?” asked Mizintchikov, quietly going up to Korovkin.

“A nap? You say that to insult me?”

“Not at all. You know a little sleep is a good thing after a journey ...”

“Never!” Korovkin answered with indignation. “Do you think I am drunk? — not a bit. But where do they sleep here?”

“Come along, I’ll take you at once.”

“Where? In the coach-house? No, my lad, you won’t take me in I I have spent a night there already. . . . Lead the way, though. Why not go along with a good fellow. ... I don’t want a pillow. A military man does not want a pillow. . . . But you produce a sofa for me, old man ... a sofa. And, I say,” he added, stopping, “I see you are a jolly fellow; produce something else for me . . . you know? A bit of the rummy, enough to drown a lly in, only enough for that, only one little glass, I mean.”

“Very well, very well!” answered Mizintchikov.

“Very well. But you wait a bit, I must say good-bye. Adieu, mcsdames and mcsdemoiselles. You have, so to speak, smitten. . . . But there, never mind! We will talk about that afterwards . . . only do wake me when it begins ... or even five minutes before it begins . . . don’t begin without me! Do you hear? Don’t begin! . . .”

And the merry gentleman vanished behind Mizintchikov.

Everyone was silent. The company had not got over their astonishment. At last Foma without a word began noiselessly chuckling, his laughter grew into a guffaw. Seeing that, Madame la Generale, too, was amused, though the expression of insulted dignity still remained on her face. Irrepressible laughter arose on all sides. My uncle stood as though paralysed, flushing almost to tears, and was for some time incapable of uttering a word.

“Merciful heavens!” he brought out at last. “Who could have known this? But you know . . . you know it might happen to anyone. Foma, I assure you that he is a most straightforward, honourable man, and an extremely well-read man too, Foma . . . you will see! . . .”

“I do see, I do see,” cried Foma, shaking with laughter, “extraordinarily well-read. Well-read is just the word.”

“How he can talk about railways!” Yezhevikin observed in an undertone.

“Foma,” my uncle was beginning, but the laughter of all the company drowned his words. Foma Fomitch was simply in fits, and looking at him, my uncle began laughing too.

“Well, what does it matter?” he said enthusiastically. “You are magnanimous, Foma, you have a great heart; you have made me happy . . . you forgive Korovkin too.”

Nastenka was the only one who did not laugh. She looked with eyes full of love at her future husband, and looked as though she would say —

“How splendid, how kind you are, the most generous of men, and how I love you!”

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

FOMA'S triumph was complete and beyond attack.
Certainly without him nothing would have been settled, and the accomplished fact stifled all doubts and objections. The gratitude of those he had made happy was beyond all bounds. My uncle and .Nastya waved me off when I attempted to drop a faint hint at the process by which Foma's consent to their marriage had been obained. Sashenka cried: "Good, kind Foma Fomitch; I will embroider him a cushion in woolwork!" and even reproached me for my hard-heartedness. I believe that Bahtecheyev in the fervour of his conversion would have strangled me if I had ventured to say anything disrespectful about Foma Fomitch. He followed Foma about like a little dog, gazed at him with devout reverence, and at every word the latter uttered he would exclaim: "You are a noble man, Foma. You are a learned man, Foma." As for Yezhevikin, he was highly delighted. The old man had for a long time past seen that Nastenka had turned Yegor Ilyitch's head, and from that time forward his one dream, waking and sleeping, was to bring about this marriage. He had clung to the idea to the last, and had only given it up when it had been impossible not to do so. Foma had changed the aspect of the affair. I need hardly say that in spite of his delight the old man saw through Foma; in short, it was clear that Foma Fomitch would be supreme in that household for ever, and that there would be no limit to his despotism. We all know that even the most unpleasant and ill-humoured people are softened, if only for a time, when their desires are gratified. Foma Fomitch, on the contrary, seemed to grow stupider when he was successful, and held his nose higher in the air than ever. Just before dinner, having changed all his clothes, he settled down in an arm-chair, summoned my uncle, and in the presence of the whole family began giving him another lecture.

"Colonel," he began, "you are about to enter upon holy matrimony. Do you realise the obligation ..."

And so on and so on. Imagine ten pages of the size of the Journal des Debats, of the smallest print, filled with the wildest nonsense, in which there was absolutely nothing dealing with the duties of marriage, but only the most shameful eulogies of the intellect, mildness, magnanimity, manliness and disinterestedness of himself, Foma Fomitch. Everyone was hungry, they all wanted their dinners; but in spite of that no one dared to protest, and everyone heard the twaddle reverently to the end. Even Bahtcheyev, in spite of his ravenous appetite, sat without stirring, absolutely respectful. Gratified by his own eloquence, Foma Fomitch grew livelier, and even drank rather heavily at dinner, proposing the most extraordinary toasts. He proceeded to display his wit by being jocose, at the expense of the happy pair, of course. Everybody laughed and applauded. But some of the jokes were so gross and suggestive that even Bahtcheyev was embarrassed by them. At last Nastenka jumped up from the table and ran away, to the indescribable delight of Foma Fomitch, but he immediately pulled himself up. Briefly but in strong terms he dwelt upon Nastenka's virtues, and proposed a toast to the health of the absent one. My uncle, who a minute before had been embarrassed and unhappy, was ready to hug Foma Fomitch again. Altogether the betrothed pair seemed somewhat ashamed of each other and their happiness — and I noticed that they had not said a word to each other from the time of the blessing, they even seemed to avoid looking at one another. When they got up from dinner, my uncle vanished, I don't know where. I strolled out on to the terrace to look for him. There I found Foma sitting in an easy-chair, drinking coffee and holding forth, extremely exnilarated. Only Yezhevikin, Bahtcheyev and Mizmtchikov were by him. I stopped to listen.

"Why," asked Foma, "am I ready at this moment to go through fire for my convictions? And why it it that none of you are capable of going through fire? Why is it? Why is it?"

"Well, but it's unnecessary, Foma Fomitch, to go through fire," Yezhevikin said bantenngly. "Why, what's the sense of it? In the first place it would hurt, and in the second it would burn — what would be left?"

"What would be left? Noble ashes would be left. But how ahould you understand, how should you appreciate me? To you, no great men exist but perhaps some Caesar or Alexander of Macedon. And what did your Caesars do? Whom did they make happy? What did your vaunted Alexander of Macedon do? He conquered the whole earth? But give me such a phalanx

and I could be a conqueror too, and so could you, and so could he. . . . On the other hand, he killed the virtuous Clitus, but I have not killed the virtuous Clitus. ... A puppy, a scoundrel! He ought to have had a thrashing, and not to have been glorified in universal history . . . and Caesar with him!’’

“You might spare Caesar, anyway, Foma Fomitch!”

“I won’t spare the fool!” cried Foma.

“No, don’t spare him!” Bahtcheyev, who had also been drinking, backed him up. “There is no need to spare them, they are all flighty fellows, they care for nothing but pirouetting on one leg! Sausage-eaters! Here, one of them was wanting to found a scholarship just now — and what is a scholarship? The devil only knows what it means! I bet it’s some new villainy! And here is another who in honourable society is staggering about and asking for rum. I have no objection to drinking. But one should drink and drink and then take a rest, and afterwards, maybe, drink again. It’s no good sparing them! They are all scoundrels. You are the only enlightened one among them, Foma!”

If Bahtcheyev surrendered to anyone he surrendered unconditionally and absolutely without criticism.

I looked for my uncle in the garden, by the pond in the most secluded spot. He was with Nastenka. Seeing me, Nastenka shot into the bushes as though she were in fault. My uncle came to meet me with a beaming face; there were tears of happiness in his eyes. He took both my hands and warmly pressed them.

“My dear,” he said, “I still cannot believe in my happiness. . . . Nastya feels the same. We only marvel and glorify the Almighty. She was crying just now. Would you believe it, I hardly know what I am doing yet, I am still utterly beside myself, and don’t know whether to believe it or not! And why has this come to me? Why? What have I done? How have I deserved it?”

“If anyone deserves anything, it is you, uncle,” I said with conviction. “I have never seen such an honest, such a fine, such a kind-hearted man as you.”

“No, Seryozha, no, it is too much,” he answered, as it were with regret. “What is bad is that we are kind (I am talking only about myself really) when we are happy; but when we are unhappy it is best not to come near us! Nastenka and I were only just talking of that. Though I was dazzled by

Foma, up to this very day perhaps, would you believe it, I did not quite believe in him, though I did assure you of his perfection; even yesterday I did not believe in him when he refused such a present! To my shame I say it. My heart shudders at the memory of this morning, but I could not control myself. . . . When he spoke of Nastya something seemed to stab me to the very heart. I did not undei stand and behaved like a tiger. . . .”

“Well, uncle, perhaps that was only natural.”

My uncle waved away the idea.

“No, no, my boy, don’t say so. The fact of it is, all this comes from the depravity of my nature, from my being a gloomy and sensual egoist and abandoning myself to my passions without restraint. That’s what Foma says.” (What could one answer to that?) “You don’t know, Seryozha,” he went on with deep feeling, “how often I have been irritable, unfeeling, unjust, haughty, and not only to Foma. Now it has all come back to my mind, and I feel ashamed that I have done nothing hitherto to deserve such happiness. Nastya has just said the same thing, though I really don’t know what sins she has, as she is an angel, not a human being! She has just been saying that we owe a terrible debt of gratitude to God; that we must try now to be better and always to be doing good deeds. . . . And if only you had heard how fervently, how beautifully she said all that! My God, what a wonderful girl!”

He stopped in agitation. A minute later he went on.

“We resolved, my dear boy, to cherish Foma in particular, mamma and Tatyana Ivanovna. Tatyana Ivanovna! What a generous-hearted creature! Oh, how much I have been to blame towards all of them! I have behaved badly to you too. . . . But if anyone ihould dare to insult Tatyana Ivanovna now, oh! then. . . . Oh, well, never mind! . . . We must do something for Mizintchikov too.”

“Yes, uncle, I have changed my opinion of Tatyana Ivanovna now. One cannot help respecting her and feeling for her.”

“Just so, just so,” my uncle assented warmly. “One can’t help respecting her! Now Korovkin, for instance, no doubt you laugh at him,” he added, glancing at me timidly, “and we all laughed at him this afternoon. And yet, you know, that was perhaps unpardonable. . . . You know, he may be an excellent, good-hearted man, but fate ... he has had misfortunes. . . . You don’t believe it, but perhaps it really is so.”

“No, uncle, why shouldn’t I believe it?”

And I began fervently declaring that even in the creature who has fallen lowest there may still survive the finest human feelings; that the depths of the human soul are unfathomable; that we must not despise the fallen, but on the contrary ought to seek them out and raise them up; that the commonly accepted standards of goodness and morality were not infallible, and so on, and so on; in fact I warmed up to the subject, and even began talking about the realist school. In conclusion I even repeated the verses: ‘When from dark error’s subjugation’ ...”

My uncle was extraordinarily delighted.

“My dear, my dear,” he said, much touched, “you understand me fully, and have said much better than I could what I wanted to express. Yes, yes! Good heavens! Why is it man is wicked? Why is it that I am so often wicked when it is so splendid, so fine to be good? Nastya was saying the same thing just now. . . . But look, though, what a glorious place this is,” he added, looking round him. “What scenery! What a picture! What a tree! Look: you could hardly get your arms round it. What sap! What foliage! What sunshine! How gay everything is, washed clean after the storm! . . . One would think that even the trees understand something, have feeling and enjoyment of life. ... Is that out of the question — eh? What do you think?”

“It’s very likely they do, uncle, in their own way, of course. ...”

“Oh, yes, in their own way, of course. . . . Marvellous, marvellous is the Creator! You must remember all this garden very well, Seryozha; how you used to race about and play in it when you were little! I remember, you know, when you were little,” he added, looking at me with an indescribable expression of love and happiness. “You were not allowed to go to the pond alone. But do you remember one evening dear Katya called you to her and began fondling you. . . . You had been running in the garden just before, and were flushed; your hair was so fair and curly. . . . She kept playing with it, and said: ‘It is a good thing that you have taken the little orphan to live with us!’ Do you remember?”

“Faintly, uncle.”

“It was evening, and you were both bathed in the glow of sunset, I was sitting in a corner smoking a pipe and watching you. ... I drive into the town every month to her grave. ..,” he added, dropping his voice, which quivered with suppressed tears. “I was just speaking to Nastya about it; she said we would go together. ...”

My uncle paused, trying to control his emotion. At that instant Vidoplyasov came up to us.

“Vidoplyasov!” said my uncle, starting. “Have you come from Foma Fomitch?”

“No, I have come more on my own affairs.”

“Oh, well, that’s capital. Now we shall hear about Korovkin. I wanted to inquire. ... I told him to look after him — Korovkin I mean. What’s the matter, Vidoplyasov?”

“I make bold to remind you,” said Vidoplyasov, “that yesterday you were graciously pleased to refer to my petition and to promise me your noble protection from the daily insults I receive.”

“Surely you are not harping on your surname again?” cried my uncle in alarm.

“What can I do? Hourly insults ...”

“Oh, Vidoplyasov, Vidoplyasov! What am I to do with you?” said my uncle in distress. “Why, what insults can you have to put up with? You will simply go out of your mind. You will end your days in a madhouse!”

“I believe I am in my right mind ...” Vidoplyasov was beginning.

“Oh, of course, of course,” my uncle interposed. “I did not say that to offend you, my boy, but for your good. Why, what sort of insults do you complain of? I am ready to bet that it is only some nonsense.”

“They won’t let me pass.”

“Who interferes with you?”

“They all do, and chiefly owing to Matryona. My life is a misery through her. It is well known that all discriminating people who have seen me from my childhood up have said that I am exactly like a foreigner, especially in the features of the face. Well, sir, now they won’t let me pass on account of it. As soon as I go by, they all shout all sorts of bad words after me; even the little children, who ought to be whipped, shout after me. ... As I came along here now they shouted. . . . I can’t stand it. Defend me, sir, with your protection!”

“Oh, Vidoplyasov! Well, what did they shout? No doubt it was some foolishness that you ought not to notice.”

“It would not be proper to repeat.”

“Why, what was it?” *

“It’s a disgusting thing to say.”

“Well, say it!”

“Grishka the dandy has eaten the candy.”

“Foo, what a man! I thought it was something serious! You should spit, and pass by.”

“I did spit, they shouted all the more.”

“But listen, uncle,” I said. “You see he complains that he can’t get on in this house; send him to Moscow for a time, to that calligrapher. You told me that he was trained by a calligrapher.”

“Well, my dear, that man, too, came to a tragic end.”

“Why, what happened to him?”

“He had the misfortune,” Vidoplyasov replied, “to appropriate the property of another, for which in spite of his talent he was put in prison, where he is ruined irrevocably.”

“Very well, Vidoplyasov, calm yourself now, and I will go into it all and set it right,” said my uncle, “I promise! Well, what news of Korovkin? Is he asleep?”

“No, sir, his honour has just gone away. I came to tell you.”

“What? Gone away! What do you mean? How could you let him go?” cried my uncle.

“Through the kindness of my heart, sir, it was pitiful to see him, sir. When he came to himself and remembered all the proceedings, he struck himself on the forehead and shouted at the top of his voice ...”

“At the top of his voice! . . .”

“It would be more respectful to express it, he gave utterance to many varied lamentations. He cried out: how could he present himself now to the fair sex? And then he added: ‘I am unworthy to be a man!’ and he kept talking so pitifully in choice language.”

“A man of refined feeling! I told you, Sergey. . . . But how could you let him go, Vidoplyasov, when I told you particularly to look after him? Oh, dear! oh, dear!”

“It was through the pity of my heart. He begged me not to tell you. His cabman fed the horses and harnessed them.

And for the sum lent him three days ago, he begged me to thank you most respectfully and say that he would send the money by one of the first posts.”

“What money is that, uncle?”

“He mentioned twenty-five silver roubles,” answered Vidoplyasov.

“I lent it him at the station, my dear; he hadn’t enough with him. Of course he will send it by the first post. . . . Oh, dear, how sorry I am! Shouldn’t we send someone to overtako him, Seryozha?”

“No, uncle, better not send.”

“I think so too. You see, Seryozha, I am not a philosopher of course, but I believe there is much more good in every man than appears on the surface. Korovkin now: he couldn’t face the shame of it. . . . But let us go to Foma! We have lingered here a long time; he may be wounded by our ingratitude, and neglect. . . . Let us go. Oh, Korovkin, Korovkin!”

My story is ended. The lovers were united, and their good genius in the form of Foma Fomitch held undisputed sway. I might at this point make very many befitting observations; but in reality all such observations are now completely superfluous. Such, anyway, is my opinion. I will instead say a few words about the subsequent fortunes of all the heroes of my tale. As is well known, no story is finished without this, and indeed it is prescribed by the rules.

The wedding of the couple who had been so graciously “made happy” took place six weeks after the events I have described. It was a quiet family affair, without much display or superfluous guests. I was Nastenka’s best man, Mizintchikov was my uncle’s. There were some visitors, however. But the foremost, the leading figure, was of course Foma Fomitch. He was made much of; he was carried on their shoulders. But it somehow happened that on this one occasion he was overcome by champagne. A scene followed, with all the accompaniment of reproaches, lamentations and outcries. Foma ran off to his room, locked himself in, cried that he was held in contempt, that now “new people had come into the family and that he was therefore nothing, not more than a bit of rubbish that must be thrown away.” My uncle was in despair; Nastenka wept; Madame la Generate, as usual, had an attack of hysterics. . . . The wedding festival was like a funeral. And seven years of living like that with their benefactor, Foma Fomitch, fell to the lot of my poor uncle and poor Nastenka-. Up to the time of his death (Foma Fomitch died a year ago), he was sulky, gave himself airs, was ill-humoured and quarrelsome; but the reverence for him of the couple he had “made happy”, far from diminishing, actually increased every day with his caprices. Yegor Ilyitch and Nastenka were so happy with each other that they were actually afraid of their happiness, and thought that God had given them too much, that they were not worthy ot such blessings; and

were inclined to expect that their latter days would be spent in hardship and suffering to atone for them. It will be readily understood that in this meek household, Foma Fomitch could do anything that took his fancy. And what did he not do in those seven years! One could never imagine to what unbridled absurdities his pampered, idle soul led him in inventing the most perverse, morally Sybaritic caprices. My grandmother died three years after my uncle's marriage. Foma was stricken with despair at his bereavement. His condition at the time is described with horror in my uncle's household to this day. When they were throwing earth into the grave, he leapt into it, shouting that he would be buried in it too. For a whole month they would not give him a knife or fork; and on one occasion four of them forced open his mouth and took out of it a pin which he was trying to swallow. An outsider who witnessed the conflict, observed that Foma Fomitch might have swallowed the pin a thousand times over during the struggle, but did not, however, do so. But everyone heard this criticism with positive indignation, and at once charged the critic with hard-hcartedncss and bad manners. Only Nastenka held her peace and gave a faint smile, while my uncle looked at her with some uneasiness. It must be observed that though Foma gave himself airs, and indulged his whims in my uncle's house as before, yet the insolent and despotic presumption with which he used to rail at my uncle was now a thing of the past. Foma complained, wept, blamed, reproached, cried shame, but did not scold as he had done — there was never another scene like the one concerned with "your Excellency", and this, I think, was due to Nastenka. Almost imperceptibly she compelled Foma to yield some points and to recognise some limits. She would not see her husband humiliated, and insisted on her wishes being respected. Foma perceivcd clearly that she almost understood him. I say almost, for Nastenka, too, humoured Foma and even seconded her husband whenever he sang the praises of his mentor. She tried to make other people, too, respect everything in her husband, and so publicly justified his devotion to Foma Fomitch. But I am sure that Nastenka's pure heart had forgiven all the insults of the past; she forgave Foma everything when he brought about her marriage. And what is more, I believe she seriously with all her heart entered into my uncle's idea that too much must not be expected from a "victim" who had once been a buffoon, but on the contrary, balm must be poured on his wounded heart. Poor Nastenka had herself been one of the humiliated, she had suffered and she remembered it. A month after the

death of his old patroness, Foma became quieter, even mild and friendly; but on the other hand, he began to have quite sudden attacks of a different sort — he would fall into a sort of magnetic trance, which alarmed everyone extremely. Suddenly, for instance, the sufferer, while saying something, or even laughing, would in one instant become unconscious and rigid, and rigid in the very position, he happened to be in a moment before the attack. If, for instance, he was laughing, he would remain with a smile on his lips; if he were holding something, a fork for instance, the fork would remain in his raised hand. Later on, of course, the hand would drop, but Foma Fomitch felt nothing and knew nothing of its dropping. He would sit, stare, even blink, but would say nothing, hear nothing, and understand nothing. This would last sometimes for a whole hour. Of course everyone in the house nearly died of fright, held their breath, walked about on tiptoe and shed tears. At last Foma would wake up feeling terribly exhausted, and would declare that he had seen and heard absolutely nothing all that time. The man must have been so perverse, so eager to show off, that he endured whole hours of voluntary agony, solely in order to say afterwards: “Look at me, I even feel more intensely than you.” Finally Foma cursed my uncle for the “hourly slights and insults” he received from him, and went to stay with Mr. Bahtcheyev. The latter, who had quarrelled with Foma Fomitch many times since my uncle’s marriage, but always ended by begging his pardon, on this occasion took the matter up with extraordinary warmth; he welcomed Foma with enthusiasm, stuffed him with good things, and at once resolved on a formal breach with my uncle, and even on lodging a complaint against him. There was a bit of land in dispute between them, though they never disputed about it, for my uncle had yielded all claim to it and had freely given it to Mr. Bahtcheyev. Without saying a word to anyone, Mr. Bahtcheyev ordered out his carriage, drove of! to the town, there scribbled off a petition and handed it in, appealing to the court to adjudge him the land formally with compensation for loss and damage and so to punish contumacy and robbery. Meanwhile next day Foma Fomitch, getting bored at Mr. Bahtcheyev’s, forgave my uncle, who came to apologise, and went back to Stepantchikovo. The wrath of Mr. Bahtcheyev, when he returned from the town and did not find Foma, was terrible; but three days later, he turned up at Stepantchikovo to apologise, begged my uncle’s pardon with tears in his eyes, and quashed his petition. My uncle made the peace between him and Foma Fomitch the same day, and

Bahtcheyev followed Foma Fomitch about like a little dog, and again said at every word: “You are a clever fellow, Foma! You are a learned man, Foma!”

Foma Fomitch is now lying in his grave near his old patroness; over him stands an expensive monument of white marble covered with lamentations and eulogistic inscriptions. Yegor Ilyitch and Nastenka sometimes go for a walk to the cemetery to pay reverent homage to his memory. They cannot even now speak of him without great feeling; they recall all his sayings, what he ate, what he liked. His things have been preserved as priceless treasures. Feeling so bereaved, my uncle and Nastya grew even mere attached to each other. God has not granted them children; they grieve over this, but dare not repine. Sashenka has long been married to an excellent young man. Ilyusha is studying in Moscow. And so my uncle and Nastya are alone together, and are devoted to each other. Their anxiety over each other is almost morbid. Nastya prays unceasingly. If one of them dies first, I think the other will not survive a week. But God grant them long life. They receive everyone with a most cordial welcome, and are ready to share all they have with anyone who is unfortunate. Nastenka is fond of reading the lives of the saints, and says with compunction that to do ordinary good work is not enough, that one ought to give everything to the poor and be happy in poverty. But for his concern for Ilyusha and Sashenka, my uncle would have done this long ago, for he always agrees with his wife in everything. Praskovya Ilyinitchna lives with them, and enjoys looking after their comfort; she superintends the management of the place. Mr. Bahtcheyev made her an offer of marriage very soon after my uncle’s wedding, but she refused him point-blank. It was concluded from that that she would go into a nunnery, but that did not come off either. Therp is one striking peculiarity about Praskovya Ilyinitchna’s character: the craving to obliterate herself completely for the sake of those she loves, to efface herself continually for them, to watch for their every inclination, to humour all their caprices, to wait upon them and serve them. Now, on the death of her mother, she considers it her duty not to leave her brother, and to take care of Nastenka in every way. Old Yc/hevikin is still living, and has taken to visiting his daughter more and more frequently of late. At first he drove my uncle to despair by absenting himself from Stcpantchikovo almost entirely, and also keeping away his “small fry” (as he called his children). All my uncle’s invitations were in vain; he was not so much proud as

sensitive and touchy. His over-sensitive amour-propre sometimes approached morbidity. The idea that he, a poor man, should be entertained in a wealthy house from kindness, that he might be regarded as an intrusive and unwelcome guest, was too much for him; he sometimes even declined Nastenka's help, and only accepted what was absolutely essential. From my uncle he would take absolutely nothing. Nastenka was quite mistaken when she told me that time in the garden that her father played the fool for her sake. It was true that he was extremely eager at that time to marry Nastenka to Yegor Ilyitch; but he acted as he did simply through an inner craving to give vent to his accumulated malice. The impulse to jeer and mock was in his blood. He posed as the most abject, grovelling flatterer, but at the same time made it perfectly clear that he was only doing this for show; and the more cringing his flattery, the more malignantly and openly apparent was the mockery behind it. It was his way. All his children were successfully placed in the best scholastic establishments in Moscow and Petersburg. But this was only after Nastenka had made it perfectly clear to him that it was being paid for out of her own pocket, that is, out of the thirty thousand given her by Tatyana Ivanovna. That thirty thousand she had actually never taken from Tatyana Ivanovna; but not to grieve and mortify her, they appeased her by promising to appeal to her at any sudden emergency. What they did was this: to satisfy her, considerable sums were borrowed from her on two occasions. But Tatyana Ivanovna died three years ago, and Nastya received her thirty thousand all the same. The death of poor Tatyana Ivandvna was sudden. The whole family were getting ready for a ball given by a neighbour, and she had hardly decked herself out in her ball-dress and put on a fascinating wreath of white roses, when she suddenly felt giddy, sat down in afi easy-chair and died. They buried her in the wreath. Nastya was in despair. Tatyana Ivanovna had been cherished and looked after like a little child in the house. She astonished everyone by the good sense of her will. Apart from Nastenka's thirty thousand, her whole fortune of three hundred thousand was devoted to the education of poor orphan girls and the provision of a sum of money for each on leaving the institution. In the year that she died Miss Perepelitsyn was married; on the death of Madame la Générale she had remained in the family in the hope of ingratiating herself with Tatyana Ivanovna. Meanwhile the petty official who had bought Mishino, the little village in which our scene with Obnoskin and his mother over Tatyana Ivanovna took place, was left a widower. This individual was

terribly fond of going to law, and had six children. Supposing that Miss Perepelitsyn had money, he began making proposals to her through a third person and she promptly accepted them. But Miss Perepelitsyn was as poor as a hen, her whole fortune was three hundred silver roubles, and that was given her by Nastenka on her wedding day. Now the husband and wife are quarrelling from morning till night. She pulls his children's hair, and boxes their ears; as for him, she scratches his face (so people say), and is constantly throwing her superior station as a major's daughter in his face. Mizintchikov has also established himself. He very sensibly gave up all his hopes of Tatyana Ivanovna, and began little by little to learn farming. My uncle recommended him to a wealthy count, who had an estate of three thousand serfs, sixty miles from Stepantchikovo, and who occasionally visited his property. Observing Mizin-tchikov's abilities, and influenced by my uncle's recommendation of him, the count offered him the post of steward on his estate, dismissed his former German steward, who in spite of the vaunted German honesty stripped his master like a lime tree. Five years later the estate was unrecognisable: the peasants were prosperous; the farming was developed in ways previously impossible; the returns were almost doubled; in fact the new steward distinguished himself, and was talked of for his abilities as a farmer all over the province. Great was the amazement and chagrin of the count when at the end of the five years Mizintchikov insisted on giving up his situation in spite of all protests and offers of increased salary I The count imagined that he had been lured away by a rival landowner in his own neighbourhood or in another province. And everyone was astonished when, two months after giving up his post, Mizintchikov acquired an excellent estate of a hundred serfs, about thirty miles from the count's, purchased from a hussar, a friend of his who had squandered all his fortune! The hundred serfs he promptly mortgaged, and a year later he had acquired another property of sixty serfs in the neighbourhood. Now he is a landowner, and the management of his estate is unequalled. Everyone wonders how he came by the money all at once. Some people shake their heads. But Mizintchikov is perfectly self-possessed, and feels that he is absolutely right. He has sent for his sister from Moscow, the sister who gave him her last three roubles to buy boots when he was setting off for Stepantchikovo — a very sweet girl, no longer in her first youth, gentle and loving, well-educated, but extremely timid. She had been all the time dragging out a miserable existence in Moscow as

a companion to some charitable lady. Now she worships her brother, and keeps house for him; she regards his will as law and thinks herself happy. Her brother does not spoil her, he makes her work rather hard, but she does not notice it. She has become a great favourite at Stepantchikovo, and I am told that Mr. Bahtcheyev is not indifferent to her. He would make her an offer, but is afraid of being refused. We hope, however, to give a fuller account of Mr. Bahtcheyev's doings in another story.

Well, I think I have dealt with all the characters of Stepantchikovo. ... Oh! I had forgotten: Gavrila has greatly aged and completely forgotten his French; Falaley has made a very decent coachman; while poor Vidoplyasov was for many years in a madhouse and, I believe, died there. In a few days I am going to Stepantchikovo, and will certainly inquire about him from my uncle.

THE INSULTED AND HUMILIATED



Translated by Constance Garnett

The Insulted and Humiliated was first published in 1861 and is narrated by a young author, Vanya, who has just released his first novel, bearing an obvious resemblance to Dostoyevsky's own first novel, *Poor Folk*. Dostoyevsky's sixth novel consists of two gradually converging subplots. One deals with Vanya's close friend and former love interest, Natasha, who has left her family to live with her new lover, Alyosha. Saintly but dim-witted, Alyosha is the son of Prince Valkovsky, who hopes to gain financially by marrying his foolish son off to the heiress Katya. Valkovsky's cruel machinations to break up Alyosha and Natasha make him one of the most memorable "predatory types" that Dostoyevsky created, similar to Stavrogin in *The Possessed*. The second plot deals with the 13-year old orphan Nellie, whom Vanya saves from an abusive household by taking her into his apartment, and whose deceased mother's story in some ways parallels Natasha's history. It is unusual to see a well-developed character as young as Nellie in a Dostoyevsky novel, but she may be one of his most moving creations, showing the influence of Dickens, whom Dostoyevsky is known to have read during the Siberian exile. Nellie's character clearly draws close parallels to the tragic character of Nell from *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

One of the most important themes throughout Dostoyevsky's work is the expiative value of suffering, and *The Insulted and Injured*, with its tragically moving plot and finely drawn array of characters, is a key exponent of that theme.



Dostoyevsky in Paris, close to the time of publication, 1863

THE INSULTED AND THE HUMILIATED

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PART I

CHAPTER I

LAST YEAR, on the evening of March 22, I had a very strange adventure. All that day I had been walking about the town trying to find a lodging. My old one was very damp, and I had begun to have an ominous cough. Ever since the autumn I had been meaning to move, but I had hung on till the spring. I had not been able to find anything decent all day. In the first place I wanted a separate tenement, not a room in other people's lodgings; secondly, though I could do with one room, it must be a large one, and, of course, it had at the same time to be as cheap as possible. I have observed that in a confined space even thought is cramped; When I was brooding over a future novel I liked to walk up and down the room. By the way, I always like better brooding over my works and dreaming how they should be written than actually writing them. And this really is not from laziness. Why is it?

I had been feeling unwell all day, and towards sunset I felt really very ill. Something like a fever set in. Moreover, I had been all day long on my legs and was tired. Towards evening, just before it got dark, I was walking along the Voznesensky Prospect. I love the March sun in Petersburg, especially at sunset, in clear frosty weather, of course. The whole street suddenly glitters, bathed in brilliant light. All the houses seem suddenly, as it were, to sparkle. Their grey, yellow, and dirty-green hues for an instant lose all their gloominess, it is as though there were a sudden clearness in one's soul, as though one were startled, or as though someone had nudged one with his elbow.

There is a new outlook, a new train of thought…. It is wonderful what one ray of sunshine can do for the soul of man!

But the ray of sunshine had died away; the frost grew sharper, and began to nip one's nose: the twilight deepened; gas flared from the shops. As I reached Muller's, the confectioner's, I suddenly stood stock-still and began staring at that side of the street, as though I had a presentiment that something extra-ordinary was just going to happen to me; and at that very

instant I saw, on the opposite side of the street, the old man with his dog. I remember quite well that I felt an unpleasant sensation clutch at my heart, and I could not myself have told what that sensation was.

I am not a mystic. I scarcely believe in presentiments and divinings, yet I have, as probably most people have, had some rather inexplicable experiences in my life. For example, this old man: why was it that at that meeting with him I had at once a presentiment that that same evening something not quite ordinary would happen to me? I was ill, however, and sensations in illness are almost always deceptive.

The old man, stooping and tapping the pavement with his stick, drew near the confectioner's, with his slow, feeble step, moving his legs as though they were sticks, and seeming not to bend them. I had never in my life come across such a strange, grotesque figure, and, whenever I had met him at Muller's before, he had always made a painful impression on me. His tall figure, his bent back, his death-like face with the stamp of eighty years upon it, his old greatcoat torn at the seams, the battered round hat, at least twenty years old, which covered his head — bald but for one lock of hair not grey but yellowish-white — all his movements, which seemed performed, as it were, aimlessly, as though worked by springs — no one who met him for the first time could help being struck by all this. It really was strange to see an old man who had so outlived the natural spar, alone, with no one to look after him, especially as he looked like a madman who had escaped from his keepers. I was struck, too, by his extraordinary emaciation; he seemed scarcely to have any body, it was as though there were nothing but skin over his bones. His large lustreless eyes, set as it were in blue rims, always stared straight before him, never looking to one side, and never seeing anything — of that I feel certain; though he looked at you, he walked straight at you as though there were an empty space before him. I noticed this several times. He had begun to make his appearance at Muller's only lately, he was always accompanied by his dog, and no one knew where he came from. Not one of the customers at Muller's could make up his mind to address him, nor did he accost any of them.

"And why does he drag himself to Muller's, what is there for him to do there?" I wondered, standing still on the opposite side of the street and gazing fixedly at him. A sort of irritable vexation, the result of illness and fatigue, surged up within me. "What is he thinking about?" I went on wondering. "What is there in his head? But does he still think of anything at

all? His face is so dead that it expresses nothing at all. And where could he have picked up that disgusting dog, which never leaves him, as though it were an inseparable part of him, and which is so like him?”

That wretched dog looked as though it, too, were eighty; yes, it certainly must have been so. To begin with, it looked older than dogs ever are, and secondly, it struck me, for some reason, the very first time I saw it, that it could not be a dog like all others; that it was an exceptional dog; that there must be something fantastic about it, something uncanny; that it might be a sort of Mephistopheles in dog-form, and that its fate was in some mysterious unknown way bound up with the fate of its master. Looking at it you would have allowed at once that twenty years must have elapsed since its last meal. It was as thin as a skeleton, or, which is much the same, as its master. Almost all its hair had fallen off, and its tail hung down between its legs as bare as a stick. Its head and long ears drooped sullenly forward. I never in my life met such a repulsive dog. When they both walked down the street, the master in front and the dog at his heels, its nose touched the skirt of his coat as though glued to it. And their gait and their whole appearance seemed almost to cry aloud at every step: “We are old, old. Oh Lord, how old we are!” I remember too that it occurred to me once that the old man and the dog had somehow stepped out of some page of Hoffmann illustrated by Gavarni and were parading this world by way of walking advertisements of the edition.

I crossed the road and followed the old man into the confectioner’s. In the shop the old man behaved in a very strange way, and Muller, standing at his counter, had begun of late to make a grimace of annoyance at the entrance of the unbidden guest. In the first place, the strange visitor never asked for anything. Every time he went straight to a corner by the stove and sat down in a chair there. If the seat by the stove were occupied, after standing for some time in bewildered perplexity before the gentleman who had taken his place, he walked away, seeming puzzled, to the other corner by the window. There he fixed on a chair, deliberately seated himself in it, took off his hat, put it on the floor beside him, laid his stick by his hat, and then, sinking back into the chair, he would remain without moving for three or four hours. He never took up a newspaper, never uttered a single word, a single sound, and simply sat there, staring straight before him with wide-open eyes, but with such a blank, lifeless look in them that one might well bet he saw and heard nothing of what was going on around him. The dog,

after turning round two or three times in the same place, lay down sullenly at his feet with its nose between his boots, heaving deep sighs, and, stretched out full length on the floor, it too stayed without moving the whole evening as though it bad died for the time. One might imagine that these two creatures lay dead all day somewhere, and only at sunset came to life again, simply to visit Muller's shop to perform some mysterious, secret duty. After sitting for three or four hours, the old man would at last get up, take up his hat and set off somewhere homewards. The dog too got up, and, with drooping tail and hanging head as before, followed him mechanically

with the same slow step. The habitual visitors at the shop began at last to avoid the old man in every way and would not even sit beside him, as though he gave them a feeling of repulsion. He noticed nothing of this.

The customers of this confectioner's shop were mostly Germans.They gathered there from all parts of the Voznesensky Prospect, mostly heads of shops of various sorts: carpenters, bakers, painters, hatters, saddlers, all patriarchal people in the German sense of the word. Altogether the patriarchal tradition was kept up at Muller's. Often the master of the shop joined some customer of his acquaintance and sat beside him at the table, when a certain amount of punch would be consumed. The dogs and small children of the household would sometimes come out to see the customers too, and the latter used to fondle both the children and the dogs. They all knew one another and all had a respect for one another. And while the guests were absorbed in the perusal of the German newspapers, through the door leading to the shopkeeper's rooms came the tinkling of "Mein lieber Augustin," on a cracked piano played by the eldest daughter, a little German miss with flaxen curls, very much like a white mouse. The waltz was welcomed with pleasure. I used to go to Muller's at the beginning of every month to read the Russian magazines which were taken there.

As I went in I saw that the old man was already sitting by the window, while the dog was lying as always, stretched out at his feet. I sat down in a corner without speaking, and inwardly asked myself why had I come here when there was really nothing for me to do here, when I was ill and it would have been better to make haste home to have tea and go to bed. Could I have come here simply to gaze at this old man? I was annoyed.

"What have I to do with him?" I thought, recalling that strange, painful sensation with which I had looked at him just before in the street. And what were all these dull Germans to me? What was the meaning of this fantastic

mood? What was the meaning of this cheap agitation over trifles which I had noticed in myself of late, which hindered me from living and taking a clear view of life? One penetrating reviewer had already remarked on it in his indignant criticism of my last novel. But though I hesitated, and deplored it, yet I remained where I was, and meantime I was more and more overcome by illness, and I was reluctant to leave the warm room. I took up a Frankfort paper, read a couple of lines and dropped into a doze. The Germans did not interfere with me. They read and smoked, and only once in half an hour or so communicated some piece of Frankfort news to one another abruptly in an undertone, or some jest or epigram of the renowned German wit, Saphir after which they would plunge into their reading again with redoubled pride in their nationality.

I dozed for half an hour and was waked by a violent shiver. It was certainly necessary to go home.

But meanwhile a drama in dumb show which was being enacted in the room stopped me again. I have said already that as soon as the old man sat down in his chair he would fix his eye on something and not remove it the whole evening. It had been my fate in the past to be exposed to that meaningless, persistent, unseeing stare. It was a very unpleasant, in fact unbearable, sensation, and I usually changed my seat as soon as I could. At this moment the old man's victim was a small, round, very neat little German, with a stiffly starched stand-up collar and an unusually red face, a new visitor to the shop, a merchant from Riga, called, as I learned afterwards, Adam Ivanitch Schultz. He was an intimate friend of Muller's, but as yet knew nothing of the old man or many of the customers. Sipping his punch and reading with relish the Dorfbarbier, he suddenly raised his eyes and observed the old man's immovable stare fixed upon him. It disconcerted him. Adam Ivanitch was a very touchy and sensitive man, like all "superior" Germans. It seemed to him strange and insulting that he should be stared at so unceremoniously. With stifled indignation he turned his eyes away from the tactless guest, muttered something to himself, and took refuge behind the newspaper. But within five minutes he could not resist peeping out suspiciously from behind the paper; still the same persistent stare, still the same meaningless scrutiny.

That time, too, Adam Ivanitch said nothing. But when the same thing was repeated a third time he flared up and felt it incumbent upon himself to defend his dignity and not to degrade, in the eyes of so gentlemanly a

company, the prestige of the fair town of Riga, of which he probably felt himself to be the representative. With an impatient gesture he flung the paper on the table, rapping it vigorously with the stick to which the paper was fastened, and blazing with personal dignity, and crimson with punch and amour Propre, in his turn he fastened his little bloodshot eyes on the offensive old man. It looked as though the two of them, the German and his assailant, were trying to overpower each other by the magnetic force of their stares, and were waiting to see which would be the first to be put out of countenance and drop his eyes. The rap of the stick and the eccentric position of Adam Ivanitch drew the attention of all the customers. All laid aside what they were doing, and with grave and speechless curiosity watched the two opponents. The scene was becoming very comical, but the magnetism of the little red-faced gentleman's defiant eyes was entirely thrown away. The old man went on staring straight at the infuriated Schultz, and absolutely failed to observe that he was the object of general curiosity; he was as unperturbed as though he were not on earth but in the moon.

Adam Ivanitch's patience broke down at last, and he exploded.

"Why do you stare at me so intently?" he shouted in German, in a sharp, piercing voice and with a menacing air.

But his adversary continued silent as though he did not understand and even did not hear the question. Adam Ivanitch made up his mind to speak to him in Russian.

"I am asking you what for you at me are so studiously staring?" he shouted with redoubled fury, "I am to the court well known, and you known not!" he added, leaping up from his chair.

But the old man did not turn a hair. A murmur of indignation was heard among the Germans. Muller himself, attracted by the uproar, came into the room. When he found out what was the matter he imagined that the old man was deaf, and bent down to his ear.

"Master Schultz asked you studiously not to stare at him," he said as loud as he could, looking intently at the incomprehensible visitor.

The old man looked mechanically at Muller; his face, which had till then been so immovable, showed traces of disturbing thought, of a sort of uneasy agitation. He was flustered, bent down, sighing and gasping, to pick up his hat, snatched it up together with his stick, got up from his chair, and with the piteous smile of a beggar turned out of a seat that he has taken by mistake, he prepared to go out of the room. In the meek and submissive

haste of the poor decrepit old man there was so much to provoke compassion, so much to wring the heart, that the whole company, from Adam Ivanitch downward, took a different view of the position at once. It was evident that the old man, far from being capable of insulting anyone, realized that he might be turned out from anywhere like a beggar.

Muller was a kind-hearted and compassionate man.

“No, no,” he said, patting him on the shoulder encouragingly, “sit still. Aber Herr Schultz asking you particularly not to look upon him. He is well known at the court.”

But the poor old man did not understand this either; he was more flustered than ever. He stooped to pick up his hand-kerchief, a ragged old blue one that had dropped out of his hat, and began to call his dog, which lay motionless on the floor an seemed to be sound asleep with its nose on its paws.

“Azorka, Azorka,” he mumbled in a quavering, aged voice. “Azorka!”

Azorka did not stir.

“Azorka, Azorka,” the old man repeated anxiously, and he poked the dog with his stick. But it remained in the same position.

The stick dropped from his hands. He stooped, knelt, down, and in both hands lifted Azorka’s head. The poor dog was dead. Unnoticed it had died at its master’s feet from old age, and perhaps from hunger too. The old man looked at it for a minute as though struck, as though he did not understand that Azorka was dead; then bent down gently to his old servant and friend and pressed his pale cheek to the dead face of the dog. A minute of silence passed. We were all touched. At last the poor fellow got up. He was very pale and trembled as though he were in a fever.

“You can have it stoffed,” said the sympathetic Muller anxious to comfort him an any way (by “stoffed” he mean stuffed). “You can have it well stoffed, Fyodor Karlitch Kruger stoffs beautifully; Fyodor Karlitch Kruger is a master at stoffing,” repeated Muller, picking up the stick from the ground and handing it to the old man.

“Yes, I can excellently stoff,” Herr Kruger himself modestly asserted, coming to the front.

He was a tall, lanky and virtuous German, with tangled red hair, and spectacles on his hooked nose.

“Fyodor Karlitch Kruger has a great talent to make all sorts magnificent stoffing, “added Muller, growing enthusiastic over his own idea.

“Yes, I have a great talent to make all sorts magnificent stoffing,” Herr Kruger repeated again. “And I will for nothing to stoff you your dog,” he added in an access of magnanimous self-sacrifice.

“No, I will you pay for to stoff it!” Adam Ivanitch Schultz cried frantically, turning twice as red as before, glowing with magnanimity in his turn and feeling himself the innocent cause of the misfortune.

The old man listened to all this evidently without understanding it, trembling all over as before. “Vait! Drink one glass of goot cognac!” cried Muller, seeing that the enigmatical guest was making efforts to get away.

They brought him the brandy. The old man mechanically took the glass, but his hand trembled, and before he raised it to his lips he spilt half, and put it back on the tray without taking a drop of it. Then with a strange, utterly inappropriate smile he went out of the shop with rapid, uneven steps, leaving Azorka on the floor. Everyone stood in bewilderment; exclamations were heard.

“Schwernoth! Was fur eine Geschichte? “ said the Germans, looking round-eyed at one another.

But I rushed after the, old man. A few steps from the shop, through a gate on the right, there is an alley, dark and narrow, shut in by huge houses. Something told me that the old man must have turned in there. A second house was being built here on the right hand, and was surrounded with scaffolding. The fence round the house came almost into the middle of the alley, and planks had been laid down to walk round the fence. In a dark corner made by the fence and the house I found the old man. He was sitting on the edge of the wooden pavement and held his head propped in both hands, with his elbows on his knees. I sat down beside him.

“Listen,” said I, hardly knowing how to begin. “Don’t grieve over Azorka. Come along, I’ll take you home. Don’t worry. I’ll go for a cab at once. Where do you live?”

The old man did not answer. I could not decide what to do. There were no passers-by in the alley. Suddenly he began clutching me by the arm.

“Stifling!” he said, in a husky, hardly audible voice, “Stifling!”

“Let’s go to your home,” I cried, getting up and forcibly lifting him up. “ You’ll have some tea and go to bed…. I’ll get a cab. I’ll call a doctor…. I know a doctor….” I don’t know what else I said to him. He tried to get up, but fell back again on the ground and began muttering again in the same hoarse choking voice. I bent down more closely and listened.

“In Vassilyevsky Island,” the old man gasped. “The sixth street. The six…th stre…et”

He sank into silence.

“You live in Vassilyevsky Island? But you’ve come wrong then. That would be to the left, and you’ve come to the right. I’ll take you directly …”

The old man did not stir. I took his hand; the hand dropped as though it were dead. I looked into his face, touched him — he was dead.

I felt as though it had all happened in a dream.

This incident caused me a great deal of trouble, in the course of which my fever passed off of itself. The old man’s lodging was discovered. He did not, however, live in Vassilyevsky Island, but only a couple of paces from the spot where he died, in Klugen’s Buildings, in the fifth storey right under the roof, in a separate flat, consisting of a tiny entry and a large low-pitched room, with three slits by way of windows. He had lived very poorly. His furniture consisted of a table, two chairs, and a very very old sofa as hard as a stone, with hair sticking out of it in all directions; and even these things turned out to be the landlord’s. The stove had evidently not been heated for a long while, and no candles were found either. I seriously think now that the old man went to Muller’s simply to sit in a lighted room and get warm. On the table stood an empty earthenware mug, and a stale crust of bread lay beside it. No money was found, not a farthing. There was not even a change of linen in which to bury him; someone gave his own shirt for the purpose. It was clear that he could not have lived like that, quite isolated, and no doubt someone must have visited him from time to time. In the table drawer they found his passport. The dead man turned out to be of foreign birth, though a Russian subject. His name was Jeremy Smith, and he was a mechanical engineer, seventy-eight years old. There were two books lying on the table, a short geography and the New Testament in the Russian translation, pencil-marked in the margin and scored by the finger-nail. These books I took for myself. The landlord and the other tenants were questioned — they all knew scarcely anything about him. There were numbers of tenants in the building, almost all artisans or German women who let lodgings with board and attendance. The superintendent of the block, a superior man, was also unable to say much about the former tenant, except that the lodging was let at six roubles a month, that the deceased had lived in it for four months, but had not paid a farthing, for the last two, so that he would have had to turn him out. The question was asked whether

anyone used to come to see him, but no one could give a satisfactory answer about this. It was a big block, lots of people would be coming to such a Noah’s Ark, there was no remembering all of them. The porter, who had been employed for five years in the flats and probably could have given some information, had gone home to his native village on a visit a fortnight before, leaving in his place his nephew, a young fellow who did not yet know half the tenants by sight. I don’t know for certain how all these inquiries ended at last, but finally the old man was buried. In the course of those days, though I had many things to look after, I had been to Vassilyevsky Island, to Sixth Street, and laughed at myself when I arrived there. What could I see in Sixth Street but an ordinary row of houses? But why, I wondered, did the old man talk of Sixth Street and Vassilyevsky Island when he was dying? Was he delirious?

I looked at Smith’s deserted lodging, and I liked it I took it for myself. The chief point about it was that it was large, though very low-pitched, so much so that at first I thought I should knock my head against the ceiling. But I soon got used to it. Nothing better could be found for six roubles a month. The independence of it tempted me. All I still had to do was to arrange for some sort of service, for I could not live entirely without a servant. The porter undertook meanwhile to come in once a day to do what was absolutely necessary. And who knows, thought I, perhaps someone will come to inquire for the old man But five days passed after his death, and no one had yet come.

CHAPTER II

AT THAT TIME, just a year ago, I was still working on the staff of some papers, wrote articles, and was firmly convinced that I should succeed one day in writing something good on a larger scale. I was sitting over a long novel at that time, but it had all ended in my being here in the hospital, and I believe I am soon going to die. And since I am going to die, why, one might ask write reminiscences?

I cannot help continually recalling all this bitter last year of my life. I want to write it all down, and if I had not found this occupation I believe I should have died of misery. All these impressions of the past excite me sometimes to the pitch of anguish, of agony. They will grow more soothing, more harmonious as I write them. They will be less like delirium, like a nightmare. So I imagine. The mere mechanical exercise of writing counts for something. It will soothe me, cool me, arouse anew in me my old literary habits, will turn my memories and sick dreams into work — into occupation…. Yes, it is a good idea. Moreover, it will be something to leave my attendant if he only pastes up the window with my manuscript, when he puts in the double frames for the winter.

But I have begun my story, I don't know why, in the middle. If it is all to be written, I must begin from the beginning. Well, let us begin at the beginning, though my autobiography won't be a long one,

I was not born here but far away in a remote province. It must be assumed that my parents were good people, but I was left an orphan as a child, and I was brought up in the house of Nikolay Sergeyitch Ichmenyev, a small landowner of the neighbourhood, who took me in out of pity. He had only one child, a daughter Natasha, a child three years younger than I. We grew up together like brother and sister. Oh, my dear childhood! How stupid to grieve and regret it at five-and-twenty, and to recall it alone with enthusiasm and gratitude! In those days there was such bright sunshine in the sky, so unlike the sun of Petersburg, and our little hearts beat so blithely and gaily. Then there were fields and woods all round us, not piles of dead stones as now. How wonderful were the garden and park in Vassilyevskoe, where Nikolay Sergeyitch was steward. Natasha and I used to go for walks in that garden, and beyond the garden was a great damp forest, where both of us were once lost. Happy, golden days! The first foretaste of life was

mysterious and alluring, and it was so sweet to get glimpses of it. In those days behind every bush, behind every tree, someone still seemed to be living, mysterious, unseen by us, fairyland was mingled with reality; and when at times the mists of evening were thick in the deep hollows and caught in grey, winding wisps about the bushes that clung to the stony ribs of our great ravine, Natasha and I, holding each other's hands, peeped from the edge into the depths below with timid curiosity, expecting every moment that someone would come forth or call us out of the mist at the bottom of the ravine; and that our nurse's fairy tales would turn out to be solid established truth. Once, long afterwards, I happened to remind Natasha how a copy of "Readings for Children" was got for us; how we ran off at once to the pond in the garden where was our favourite green seat under the old maple, and there settled ourselves, and began reading "Alphonso and Dalinda" — a fairy-story. I cannot to this day remember the story without a strange thrill at my heart, and when a year ago I reminded Natasha of the first lines: "Alphonso, the hero of my story, was born in Portugal; Don Ramiro his father," and so on, I almost shed tears. This must have seemed very stupid, and that was probably why Natasha smiled queerly at my enthusiasm at the time. But she checked herself at once (I remember that), and began recalling the old days to comfort me. One thing led to another, and she was moved herself. That was a delightful evening. We went over everything, and how I had been sent away to school in the district town-heavens, how she had cried then! — and our last parting when I left Vassilyevskoe for ever. I was leaving the boarding-school then and was going to Petersburg to prepare for the university. I was seventeen at that time and she was fifteen. Natasha says I was such an awkward gawky creature then, and that one couldn't look at me without laughing. At the moment of farewell I drew her aside to tell her something terribly important, but my tongue suddenly failed me and clove to the roof of my mouth. She remembers that I was in great agitation. Of course our talk came to nothing. I did not know what to say, and perhaps she would not have understood me. I only wept bitterly and so went away without saying anything. We saw each other again long afterwards in Petersburg; that was two years ago. Old Nikolay Sergeyitch had come to Petersburg about his lawsuit, and I had only just begun my literary career.

CHAPTER III

NIKOLAY SERGEYITCH came of a good family, which had long sunk into decay. But he was left at his parents' death with a fair estate with a hundred and fifty serfs on it. At twenty he went into the Hussars. All went well; but after six years in the army he happened one unlucky evening to lose all his property at cards. He did not sleep all night. The next evening he appeared at the card-table and staked his horse — his last possession. His card was a winning one, and it was followed by a second and a third, and within half an hour he had won back one of his villages, the hamlet Ichmenyevka, which had numbered fifty souls at the last census. He sent in his papers and retired from the service next day. He had lost a hundred serfs for ever. Two months later he received his discharge with the rank of lieutenant, and went home to his village. He never in his life spoke of his loss at cards, and in spite of his well-known good nature he would certainly have quarrelled with anyone who alluded to it. In the country he applied himself industriously to looking after his land, and at thirty-five he married a poor girl of good family, Anna Andreyevna Shumilov, who was absolutely without dowry, though she had received an education in a high-class school kept by a French emigree, called Mon-Reveche, a privilege upon which Anna Andreyevna prided herself all her life, although no one was ever able to discover exactly of what that education had consisted.

Nikolay Sergeyitch was an excellent farmer. The neighbouring landowners learned to manage their estates from him. A few years had passed when suddenly a landowner, Prince Pyotr Alexandrovitch Valkovsky, came from Petersburg to the neighbouring estate, Vassilyevskoe, the village of which had a population of nine hundred serfs, His arrival made a great stir in the whole neighbourhood. The prince was still young, though not in his first youth. He was of good rank in the service, had important connexions and a fortune; was a handsome man and a widower, a fact of particular interest to all the girls and ladies in the neighbourhood. People talked of the brilliant reception given him by the governor, to whom he was in some way related; of how he had turned the heads of all the ladies by his gallantries, and so on, and so on. In short, he was one of those brilliant representatives of aristocratic Petersburg society who rarely make their appearance in the provinces, but produce an extraordinary sensation

when they do. The prince, however, was by no means of the politest, especially to people who could be of no use to him, and whom he considered ever so little his inferiors. He did not think fit to make the acquaintance of his neighbours in the country, and at once made many enemies by neglecting to do so.

And so everyone was extremely surprised when the fancy suddenly took him to call on Nikolay Sergeyitch. It is true that the latter was one of his nearest neighbours. The prince made a great impression on the Ichmenyev household. He fascinated them both at once; Anna Andreyevna was particularly enthusiastic about him. In a short time he was on intimate terms with them, went there every day and invited them to his house.

He used to tell them stories, make jokes, play on their wretched piano and sing. The Ichmenyevs were never tired of wondering how so good and charming a man could be called a proud, stuck-up, cold egoist, as all the neighbours with one voice declared him to be. One must suppose that the prince really liked Nikolay Sergeyitch, who was a simple-hearted, straightforward, dis interested and generous man. But all was soon explained.

The prince had come to Vassilyevskoe especially, to get rid of his steward, a prodigal German, who was a conceited man and an expert agriculturist, endowed with venerable grey hair, spectacles, and a hooked nose; yet in spite of these advantages, he robbed the prince without shame or measure, and, what was worse, tormented several peasants to death. At last Ivan Karlovitch was caught in his misdeeds and exposed, was deeply offended, talked a great deal about German honesty, but, in spite of all this, was dismissed and even with some ignominy. The prince needed a steward and his choice fell on Nikolay Sergeyitch, who was an excellent manager and a man of whose honesty there could be no possible doubt. The prince seemed particularly anxious that Nikolay Sergeyitch should of his own accord propose to take the post, But this did not come off, and one fine morning the prince made the proposition himself, in the form of a very friendly and humble request. Nikolay Sergeyitch at first refused; but the liberal salary attracted Anna Andreyevna, and the redoubled cordiality of the prince overcame any hesitation he still felt.

The prince attained his aim. One may presume that he was skilful in judging character. During his brief acquaintance with Ichmenyev he soon perceived the kind of man he had to deal with, and realized that he must be

won in a warm and friendly way, that his heart must be conquered, and that, without that, money would do little with him. Valkovsky needed a steward whom he could trust blindly for ever, that he might never need to visit Vassilyevskoe again, and this was just what he was reckoning on. The fascination he exercised over Nikolay Sergeyitch was so strong that the latter genuinely believed in his friendship. Nikolay Sergeyitch was one of those very simple-hearted and naively romantic men who are, whatever people may say against them, so charming among us in Russia, and who are devoted with their whole soul to anyone to whom (God knows why) they take a fancy, and at times carry their devotion to a comical pitch.

Many years passed. Prince Valkovsky’s estate flourished. The relations between the owner of Vassilyevskoe and his steward continued without the slightest friction on either side, and did not extend beyond a purely business correspondence. Though the prince did not interfere with Nikolay Sergeyitch’s management, he sometimes gave him advice which astonished the latter by its extraordinary astuteness and practical ability. It was evident that he did not care to waste money, and was clever at getting it indeed. Five years after his visit to Vassilyevskoe the prince sent Nikolay Sergeyitch an authorization to purchase another splendid estate in the same province with a population of four hundred serfs. Nikolay Sergeyitch was delighted. The prince’s successes, the news of his advancement, his promotion, were as dear to his heart as if they had been those of his own brother. But his delight reached a climax when the prince on one occasion showed the extraordinary trust he put in him. This is how it happened…. But here I find it necessary to mention some details of the life of this Prince Valkovsky, who is in a way a leading figure in my story.

CHAPTER IV

I HAVE MENTIONED already that he was a widower. He had married in his early youth, and married for money. From his parents in Moscow, who were completely ruined, he received hardly anything. Vassilyevskoe was mortgaged over and over again. It was encumbered with enormous debts. At twenty-two the prince, who was forced at that time to take service in a government department in Moscow, had not a farthing, and made his entrance into life as the “beggar offspring of an ancient line.” His marriage to the elderly daughter of a tax contractor saved him.

The contractor, of course, cheated him over the dowry, but anyway he was able with his wife’s money to buy back his estate, and to get on to his feet again. The contractor’s daughter, who had fallen to the prince’s lot, was scarcely able to write, could not put two words together, was ugly, and had only one great virtue: she was good-natured and submissive. The prince took the utmost advantage of this quality in her. After the first year of marriage, he left his wife, who had meanwhile borne him a son, at Moscow, in charge of her father, the contractor, and went off to serve, in another province, where, through the interest of a powerful relation in Petersburg, he obtained a prominent post.

His soul thirsted for distinction, advancement, a career, and realizing that he could not live with his wife either in Petersburg or Moscow, he resolved to begin his career in the provinces until something better turned up. It is said that even in the first year of his marriage he wore his wife out by his brutal behaviour. This rumour always revolted Nikolay Sergeyitch, and he hotly defended the prince, declaring that he was incapable of a mean action. But seven years later his wife died, and the bereaved husband immediately returned to Petersburg. In Petersburg he actually caused some little sensation. With his fortune, his good looks and his youth, his many brilliant qualities, his wit, his taste, and his unfailing gaiety he appeared in Petersburg not as a toady and fortune-hunter, but as a man in a fairly independent position.

It is said that there really was something fascinating about him; something dominating and powerful. He was extremely attractive to women, and an intrigue with a society beauty gave him a scandalous renown. He scattered money without stint in spite of his natural economy,

which almost amounted to niggardliness; he lost money at cards when suitable, and could lose large sums without turning a hair. But he had not come to Petersburg for the sake of amusement. He was bent on making his career and finally establishing his position. He attained this object. Count Nainsky, his distinguished relative, who would have taken no notice of him if he had come as an ordinary applicant, was so struck by his success in society that he found it suitable and possible to show him particular attention, and even condescended to take his seven-year-old son to be brought up in his house.

To this period belongs the prince's visit to Vassilyevskoe and his acquaintance with Nikolay Sergeyitch. Attaining at last, through the influence of the count, a prominent post in one of the most important foreign embassies, he went abroad. Later, rumours of his doings were rather vague. People talked of some unpleasant adventure that had befallen him abroad, but no one could explain exactly what it was. All that was known was that he succeeded in buying an estate of four hundred serfs, as I have mentioned already. It was many years later that he returned from abroad; he was of high rank in the service and at once received a very prominent post in Petersburg. Rumours reached Ichmenyevka that he was about to make a second marriage which would connect him with a very wealthy, distinguished and powerful family. "He is on the high road to greatness," said Nikolay Sergeyitch, rubbing his hands with pleasure. I was at Petersburg then, at the university, and I remember Nikolay Sergeyitch wrote on purpose to ask me to find out whether the report was true. He wrote to the prince, too, to solicit his interest for me, but the prince left the letter unanswered. I only knew that the prince's son, who had been brought up first in the count's household and afterwards at the lycee, had now finished his studies at the age of nineteen. I wrote about this to Nikolay Sergeyitch, and told him, too, that the prince was very fond of his son, and spoilt him, and was already making plans for his future. All this I learnt from fellow-students who knew the young prince. It was about this time, that one fine morning Nikolay Sergeyitch received a letter from Prince Valkovsky that greatly astonished him.

The prince, who had till now, as I have mentioned already, confined himself to dry business correspondence with Nikolay Sergeyitch, wrote to him now in the most minute, unreserved, and friendly way about his intimate affairs. He complained of his son, said that the boy was grieving

him by his misconduct, that of course the pranks of such a lad were not to be taken too seriously (he was obviously trying to justify him), but that he had made up his mind to punish his son, to frighten him; in fact, to send him for some time into the country in charge of Nikolay Sergeyitch. The prince wrote that he was reckoning absolutely on “his kind-hearted, generous Nikolay Sergeyitch, and even more upon Anna Andreyevna.” He begged them both to receive the young scapegrace into their family, to teach him sense in solitude, to be fond of him if they could, and above all, to correct his frivolous character “by instilling the strict and salutary principles so essential to the conduct of life.” Nikolay Sergeyitch, of course, undertook the task with enthusiasm. The young prince arrived. They welcomed him like a son. Nikolay Sergeyitch very soon grew as fond of him as of his own Natasha.

Even later on, after the final breach between the boy’s father and Nikolay Sergeyitch, the latter sometimes would brighten up speaking of his Alyosha, as he was accustomed to call Prince Alexey Petrovitch. He really was a very charming boy; handsome, delicate and nervous as a woman, though at the same time he was merry and simple-hearted, with an open soul capable of the noblest feelings, and a loving heart, candid, and grateful.

He became the idol of the household. In spite of his nineteen years he was a perfect child. It was difficult to imagine what his father, who, it was said, loved him so much, could have sent him away for. It was said that he had led an idle and frivolous life in Petersburg, that he had disappointed his father by refusing to enter the service. Nikolay Sergeyitch did not question Alyosha, since the prince had evidently been reticent in his letter as to the real cause of his son’s banishment. There were rumours, however, of some unpardonable scrape of Alyosha’s, of some intrigue with a lady, of some challenge to a duel, of some incredible loss at cards; there was even talk of his having squandered other people’s money. There was also a rumour that the prince had decided to banish his son for no misdeed at all, but merely from certain purely egoistic motives. Nikolay Sergeyitch repelled this notion with indignation, especially as Alyosha was extraordinarily fond of his father, of whom he had known nothing throughout his childhood and boyhood. He talked of him with admiration and enthusiasm; it was evident that he was completely under his influence. Alyosha chattered sometimes, too, about a countess with whom both he and his father were flirting, and told how he, Alyosha, had cut his father out, and how dreadfully vexed his

father was about it. He always told this story with delight, with childlike simplicity, with clear, merry laughter, but Nikolay Sergeyitch checked him at once. Alyosha also confirmed the report that his father was intending to marry.

He had already spent nearly a year in exile. He used to write at stated intervals respectful and sedate letters to his father, and at last was so at home in Vassilyevskoe that when his father himself came in the summer (giving Nikolay Sergeyitch warning of his visit beforehand), the exile began of himself begging his father to let him remain as long as possible at Vassilyevskoe, declaring that a country life was his real vocation. All Alyosha's impulses and inclinations were the fruit of an excessive, nervous impressionability, a warm heart, and an irresponsibility which at times almost approached incoherence, an extreme susceptibility to every kind of external influence and a complete absence of will. But the prince listened somewhat suspiciously to his request…

Altogether Nikolay Sergeyitch could hardly recognize his former "friend." Prince Valkovsky was strangely altered. He suddenly became peculiarly captious with Nikolay Sergeyitch. When they went over the accounts of the estates lie betrayed a revolting greed, a niggardliness, and an incomprehensible suspiciousness.

All this deeply wounded the good-hearted Nikolay Sergeyitch; for a long time he refused to believe his senses. Everything this time was just the opposite of what had happened during the first visit, fourteen years before. This time the prince made friends with all his neighbours, all who were of consequence, that is, of course.

He did not once visit Nikolay Sergeyitch, and treated him as though he were his subordinate. Suddenly something inexplicable happened. Without any apparent reason a violent quarrel took place between the prince and Nikolay Sergeyitch. Heated, insulting words were overheard, uttered on both sides. Nikolay Sergeyitch indignantly left Vassilyevskoe, but the quarrel did not stop there. A revolting slander suddenly spread all over the neighbourhood. It was asserted that Nikolay Sergeyitch had seen through the young prince's character, and was scheming to take advantage of his failings for his own objects; that his daughter, Natasha (who was then seventeen), had ensnared the affections of the twenty-year-old boy; that the parents had fostered this attachment though they had pretended to notice nothing; that the scheming and "unprincipled" Natasha had bewitched the

youth, and that by her efforts he had been kept for a whole year from seeing any of the girls of good family who were so abundant in the honourable households of the neighbouring landowners.

It was asserted that the lovers were already plotting to be married at the village of Grigoryevo, fifteen versts from Vassilyevskoe, ostensibly without the knowledge of Natasha's parents, though really they knew all about it and were egging their daughter on with their abominable suggestions. In fact, I could fill a volume with all the slander that the local gossips of both sexes succeeded in circulating on this subject. But what was most remarkable was that the prince believed all this implicitly, and had indeed come to Vassilyevskoe simply on account of it, after receiving an anonymous letter from the province. One would have thought that no one who knew anything of Nikolay Sergeyitch could believe a syllable of all the accusations made against him. And yet, as is always the case, everyone was excited, everyone was talking, and, though they did not vouch for the story, they shook their heads and … condemned him absolutely. Nikolay Sergeyitch was too proud to defend his daughter to the gossips, and sternly prohibited his Anna Andreyevna from entering into any explanations with the neighbours. Natasha herself, who was so libelled, knew nothing of all these slanders and accusations till fully a year afterwards. They had carefully concealed the whole story from her, and she was as gay and innocent as a child of twelve. Meanwhile the breach grew wider and wider. Busybodies lost no time. Slanderers and false witnesses came forward and succeeded in making the prince believe that in Nikolay Sergeyitch's long years of stewardship at Vassilyevskoe he had by no means been a paragon of honesty and, what is more, that, three years before, Nikolay Sergeyitch had succeeded in embezzling twelve thousand roubles over the sale of the copse; that unimpeachable evidence of this could be brought before the court, especially as he had received no legal authorization for the sale from the prince, but had acted on his own judgement, persuading the prince afterwards of the necessity of the sale, and presenting him with a much smaller sum than he had actually received for the wood. Of course all this was only slander, as was proved later on, but the prince believed it all and called Nikolay Sergeyitch a thief in the presence of witnesses. Nikolay Sergeyitch could not control himself and answered him with a term as insulting. An awful scene took place. A lawsuit immediately followed. Nikolay Sergeyitch, not being able to produce certain documents, and

having neither powerful patrons nor experience in litigation, immediately began to get the worst of it. A distraint was laid on his property. The exasperated old man threw up everything and resolved to go to Petersburg to attend to his case himself, leaving an experienced agent to look after his interests in the province. The prince must soon have understood that he had been wrong in accusing Nikolay Sergeyitch. But the insult on both sides had been so deadly that there could be no talk of reconciliation, and the infuriated prince exerted himself to he utmost to get the best of it, that is, to deprive his former steward of his last crust of bread.

CHAPTER V

AND SO THE ICHMENYEVS moved to Petersburg. I am not going to describe my meeting with Natasha after our long separation.

All those four years I had never forgotten her. No doubt I did not myself quite understand the feeling with which I recalled her, but when we saw each other again I realized that she was destined to be my fate. For the first days after their arrival I kept fancying that she had not developed much in those four years but was just the same little girl as she had been at our parting. But afterwards I detected in her every day something new of which I had known nothing, as though it had been intentionally concealed, as though the girl were hiding herself from me — and what a joy there was in this discovery.

After moving to Petersburg the old man was at first irritable and gloomy. Things were going badly with him. He was indignant, flew into rages, was immersed in business documents, and had no thoughts to spare for us. Anna Andreyevna wandered about like one distraught, and at first could comprehend nothing. Petersburg alarmed her. She sighed and was full of misgivings, she wept for her old surroundings, for Ichmenyevka, worried at the thought that Natasha was grown up and that there was no one to think about her, and she lapsed into strange confidences with me for lack of a more suitable recipient of them.

It was not long before their arrival that I finished my first novel, the one with which my literary career began, and being a novice I did not know at first what to do with it. I said nothing about it at the Ichmenyevs. They almost quarrelled with me for leading an idle life, that is, not being in the service and not trying to get a post. The old man bitterly and irritably reproached me, from fatherly solicitude, of course. I was simply ashamed to tell him what I was doing. But how was I to tell them straight out that I did not want to enter the service, but wanted to write novels? And so I deceived them for the time, saying that I had not found a post, and that I was looking for one as hard as I could.

Nikolay Sergeyitch had no time to go into it. I remember that one day Natasha, overhearing our conversation, drew me aside mysteriously and besought me with tears to think of my future. She kept questioning me and trying to discover what I was doing, and when I refused to tell my secret

even to her, she made me swear that I would not ruin myself by being an idler and a loafer. Though I did not confess what I was doing even to her, I remember that for one word of approval from her of my work, of my first novel, I would have given up all the most flattering remarks of the critics and reviewers which I heard about myself afterwards. And then at last my novel came out. Long before its appearance there was a lot of talk and gossip about it in the literary world. B. was as pleased as a child when he read my manuscript. No! If I was ever happy it was not in the first intoxicating moment of my success, but before I had ever read or shown anyone my manuscript; in those long nights spent in exalted hopes and dreams and passionate love of my work, when I was living with my fancies, with the characters I had myself created, as though they were my family, as though they were real people; I loved them, I rejoiced and grieved with them, and sometimes shed genuine tears over my artless hero. And I cannot describe how the old people rejoiced at my success, though at first they were awfully surprised. How strange it seemed to them!

Anna Andreyevna, for instance, could not bring herself to believe that the new writer who was being praised by everyone was no other than the little Vanya who had done this and that and the other, and she kept shaking her head over it. The old man did not come round for some time, and at the first rumour of it was positively alarmed; he began to talk of the loss of my career in the service, of the immoral behaviour of authors in general. But the new reports that were continually coming, the paragraphs in the papers, and finally some words of praise uttered about me by persons whom he revered and trusted forced him to change his attitude. When he saw that I suddenly had plenty of money and heard how much money one might get for literary work, his last doubts vanished. Rapid in his transitions from doubt to full enthusiastic faith, rejoicing like a child at my good fortune, he suddenly rushed to the other extreme and indulged in unbridled hopes and most dazzling dreams of my future. Every day he was imagining a new career, new plans for me, and what did he not dream of in those plans! He even began to show me a peculiar respect of which there had been no trace before. But, I remember, doubt sometimes assailed and perplexed him suddenly, often in the midst of the most enthusiastic fancies.

“A writer, a poet. It seems strange somehow…. When has a poet made his way in the world, risen to high rank? They’re only scribbling fellows after all, not to be relied upon.”

I noticed that such doubts and delicate questions presented themselves more frequently at dusk (how well I remember all these details and all that golden time!). Towards dusk my old friend always became nervous, susceptible and suspicious. Natasha and I knew that and were always prepared to laugh at it beforehand. I remember I tried to cheer him up by telling him tales of Sumarokov's being made a general, of Derzhavin's having been presented with a snuff-box full of gold pieces, of how the Empress herself had visited Lomonossov; I told him about Pushkin, about Gogol.

"I know, my boy, I know all that," the old man replied, though perhaps it was the first time he had heard these stories. "Hm! Well, Vanya, anyway I'm glad your stuff isn't poetry. Poetry is nonsense, my boy; don't you argue, but believe an old man like me; I wish you nothing but good. It's simple nonsense, idle waste of time! It's for schoolboys to write poetry; poetry brings lots of you young fellows to the madhouse…. Granting Pushkin was a great man, who would deny it! Still, it's all jingling verse and nothing else. Something in the ephemeral way…. Though indeed I have read very little of it…. Prose is a different matter. A prose writer may be instructive — he can say something about patriotism, for instance, or about virtue in general…. Yes! I don't know how to express myself, my boy, but you understand me; I speak from love. But there, there, read!" he concluded with a certain air of patronage, when at last I had brought the book and we were all sitting at the round table after tea, "read us what you've scribbled; they're making a great outcry about you! Let's hear it! Let's hear it!"

I opened the book and prepared to read. My novel had come from the printers only that day, and having at last got hold of a copy, I rushed round to read it to them.

How vexed and grieved I was that I could not read it to them before from the manuscript, which was in the printer's hands! Natasha positively cried with vexation, she quarrelled and reproached me with letting other people read it before she had. … But now at last we were sitting round the table. The old man assumed a particularly serious and critical expression. He wanted to judge it very, very strictly "to make sure for himself." Anna Andreyevna, too, looked particularly solemn; I almost believe she had put on a new cap for the reading. She had long noticed that I looked with boundless love at her precious Natasha; that I was breathless and my eyes were dim when I addressed her, and that Natasha, too, looked at me as it

were more kindly than before. Yes! At last the time had come, had come at the moment of success, of golden hopes and perfect happiness, all, all had come, at once. The old lady had noticed, too, that her husband had begun to praise me excessively, and seemed to look at his daughter and me in a peculiar way…. And all at once she took fright; after all, I was not a count, nor a lord, nor a reigning prince, nor even a privy councillor, young and handsome with an order on his breast. Anna Andreyevna did not stop halfway in her wishes.

"The man's praised," she thought about me, "but there's no knowing what for. An author, a poet…. But what is an author after all?"

CHAPTER VI

I READ THEM my novel at one sitting. We began immediately after tea, and stayed up till two o'clock. The old man frowned at first. He was expecting something infinitely lofty, which might be beyond his comprehension, but must in any case be elevated. But, instead of that, he heard such commonplace, familiar things — precisely such as were always happening about him. And if only the hero had been a great or interesting man, or something historical like Roslavlev, or Yury Miloslavsky; instead of that he was described as a little, downtrodden, rather foolish clerk, with buttons missing from his uniform; and all this written in such simple language, exactly as we talk ourselves … Strange!

Anna Andreyevna looked inquiringly at Nikolay Sergeyitch, and seemed positively pouting a little as though she were resentful.

"Is it really worth while to print and read such nonsense, and they pay money for it, too," was written on her face. Natasha was all attention, she listened greedily, never taking her eyes off me, watching my lips as I pronounced each word, moving her own pretty lips after me. And yet before I had read half of it, tears were falling from the eyes of all three of them. Anna Andreyevna was genuinely crying, feeling for the troubles of my hero with all her heart, and longing with great naivety to help him in some way out of his troubles, as I gathered from her exclamations. The old man had already abandoned all hopes of anything elevated. "From the first step it's clear that you'll never be at the top of the tree; there it is, it's simply a little story; but it wrings your heart," he said, "and what's happening all round one grows easier to understand, and to remember, and one learns that the most downtrodden, humblest man is a man, too, and a brother."

Natasha listened, cried, and squeezed my hand tight by stealth under the table. The reading was over. She got up, her cheeks were flushed, tears stood in her eyes. All at once she snatched my hand, kissed it, and ran out of the room. The father and mother looked at one another.

"Hm! what an enthusiastic creature she is," said the old man, struck by his daughter's behaviour. "That's nothing though, nothing, it's a good thing, a generous impulse! She's a good girl…," he muttered, looking askance at his wife as though to justify Natasha and at the same time wanting to defend me too.

But though Anna Andreyevna had been rather agitated and touched during the reading, she looked now as though she would say: “Of course Alexander of Macedon was a hero, but why break the furniture?” etc.

Natasha soon came back, gay and happy, and coming over to me gave me a sly pinch. The old man attempted to play the stern critic of my novel again, but in his joy he was carried away and could not keep up the part.

“Well, Vanya, my boy, it’s good, it’s good! You’ve comforted me, relieved my mind more than I expected. It’s not elevated, it’s not great, that’s evident… . Over there there lies the ‘Liberation of Moscow,’ it was written in Moscow, you know. Well, you can see in that from the first line, my boy, that the author, so to speak, soars like an eagle. But, do you know, Vanya, yours is somehow simpler, easier to understand. That’s why I like it, because it’s easier to understand. It’s more akin to us as it were; it’s as though it had all happened to me myself. And what’s the use of the high-flown stuff? I shouldn’t have understood it myself. I should have improved the language. I’m praising it, but say what you will, it’s not very refined. But there, it’s too late now, it’s printed, unless perhaps there’s a second edition? But I say, my boy, maybe it will go into a second edition! Then there’ll be money again! Hmm!”

“And can you really have got so much money for it, Ivan Petrovitch?” observed Anna Andreyevna. “I look at you and somehow can’t believe it. Mercy on us, what people will give money for nowadays!”

“You know, Vanya,” said the old man, more and more carried away by enthusiasm, “it’s a career, though it’s not the service. Even the highest in the land will read it. Here you tell me Gogol receives a yearly allowance and was sent abroad. What if it were the same with you, eh? Or is it too soon? Must you write something more? Then write it, my boy, write it as quick as possible. Don’t rest on your laurels. What hinders you?”

And he said this with such an air of conviction, with such good nature that I could not pluck up resolution to stop him and throw cold water on his fancies.

“Or they may be giving you a snuff-box directly, mayn’t they? Why not? They want to encourage you. And who knows, maybe you’ll be presented at court,” he added in a half whisper, screwing up his left eye with a significant air— “or not? Is it too soon for the court?”

“The court, indeed!” said Anna Andreyevna with an offended air.

“In another minute you’ll be making me a general,” I answered, laughing heartily.

The old man laughed too. He was exceedingly pleased.

“Your excellency, won’t you have something to eat?” cried Natasha playfully. — she had meantime been getting supper for us.

She laughed, ran to her father and flung her warm arms round him.

“Dear, kind daddy!”

The old man was moved,

“Well, well, that’s all right! I speak in the simplicity of my heart. General or no general, come to supper. Ah, you sentimental girl!” he added, patting his Natasha on her flushed cheek, as he was fond of doing on every convenient occasion. “I spoke because I love you, Vanya, you know. But even if not a general (far from it!) you’re a distinguished man, an author.”

“Nowadays, daddy, they call them writers.”

“Not authors? I didn’t know. Well, let it be writers then, but I tell you what I wanted to say: people are not made kam-merherrs, of course, because they write novels; it’s no use to dream of that; but anyway you can make your mark; become, an attache of some sort. They may send you abroad, to Italy, for the sake of your health, or somewhere to perfect yourself in, your studies; you’ll be helped with money. Of course it must all be honourable on your side; you must get money and honour by work, by real good work, and not through patronage of one sort or another.”

“And don’t you be too proud then, Ivan Petrovich,” added Anna Andreyevna, laughing.

“You’d better give him a star, at once, daddy; after all, what’s the good of an attache?”

And she pinched my arm again.

“This girl keeps making fun of me,” said the old man, looking delightedly at Natasha, whose cheeks were glowing and whose eyes were shining like stars. “I think I really may have overshot the mark, children; but I’ve always been like that… But do you know, Vanya, I keep wondering at you: how perfectly simple you are…”

“Why, good heavens, daddy, what else could he be?”

“Oh, no. I didn’t mean that. Only, Vanya, you’ve a face that’s not what one would call a poet’s. They’re pale, they say, you know, the poets, and with hair like this, you know, and a look in their eyes … like Goethe, you know, and the rest of them, I’ve read that in Abaddon … well? Have I put

my foot in it again? Ah, the rogue, she's giggling at me! I'm not a scholar, my dears, but I can feel. Well, face or no face, that's no great matter, yours is all right for me, and I like it very much. I didn't mean that… . Only be honest, Vanya, be honest. That's the great thing, live honestly, don't be conceited! The road lies open before you. Serve your work honestly, that's what I meant to say; yes, that's just what I wanted to say!"

It was a wonderful time. Every evening, every free hour I spent with them. I brought the old man news of the literary world and of writers, in whom he began, I don't know why, to take an intense interest. He even began to read the critical articles of B. about whom I talked a great deal. He praised him enthusiastically, though he scarcely understood him, and inveighed against his enemies who wrote in the Northern Drone.

Anna Andreyevna kept a sharp eye on me and Natasha, but she didn't see everything. One little word had been uttered between us already, and I heard at last Natasha, with her little head drooping, and her lips half parted, whisper "Yes." But the parents knew of it later on. They had their thoughts, their conjectures. Anna Andreyevna shook her head for a long time. It seemed strange and dreadful to her. She had no faith in me.

"Yes, it's all right, of course, when it's successful, Ivan Petrovitch," she said, "but all of a sudden there'll be a failure or something of the sort; and what then? If only you had a post somewhere!"

"I've something I want to say to you, Vanya," said the old man, making up his mind. "I've seen for myself, I've noticed it and I confess I'm delighted that you and Natasha…you know what I mean. You see, Vanya, you're both very young, and my Anna Andreyevna is right. Let us wait a bit. Granted you have talent, remarkable talent perhaps…not genius, as they cried out about you at first, but just simply talent (I read you that article in the Drone to-day; they handle you too roughly, but after all, it's not much of a paper). Yes! You see talent's not money in the bank, and you're both poor. Let's wait a little, for a year and a half, or a year anyway. If you get on all right, get a firm footing, Natasha shall be yours. If you don't get on — judge for yourself. You're an honest man, think things over…."

And so we left it. And this is what happened within the year. Yes, it was almost exactly a year ago. One bright September day I went to see my old friends, feeling ill, and sick at heart, and sank on a chair almost fainting, so that they were actually frightened as they looked at me. My head went round and my heart ached so that ten times I had approached the door and

ten times I had turned back before I went in, but it was not because I had failed in my career and had neither renown nor money; it was not because I was not yet an attache and nowhere near being sent to Italy for my health. It was because one may live through ten years in one year, and my Natasha had lived through ten years in that year. Infinity lay between us. And I remember I sat there before the old man, saying nothing, with unconscious fingers tearing the brim of my hat, which was torn already; I sat and, I don't know why, waited for Natasha to come in. My clothes were shabby and did not fit me; I had grown thin, yellow and sunken in the face. And yet I did not look in the least like a poet, and there was none of that grandeur in my eyes about which good Nikolay Sergeyitch had been so concerned in the past.

Anna Andreyevna looked at me with unfeigned and ever ready compassion, thinking to herself:

"And he was within an ace of being betrothed to Natasha. Lord have mercy on us and preserve us!"

"Won't you have some tea, Ivan Petrovitch?" (the samovar was boiling on the table). "How are you getting on?" she asked me. "You're quite an invalid," she said in a plaintive voice which I can hear at this moment.

And I can see her as though it were to-day; even while she talked to me, her eyes betrayed another anxiety, the same anxiety which clouded the face of her old husband, too, as he sat now brooding, while his tea grew cold. I knew that they were terribly worried at this moment over their lawsuit with Prince Valkovsky, which was not promising well for them, and that they had had other new worries which had upset Nicholay Sergeyitch and made him ill.

The young prince, about whom the whole trouble that led to the lawsuit had arisen, had found an opportunity of visiting the Ichmenyevs five months before. The old man, who loved his dear Alyosha like a son, and spoke of him almost every day, welcomed him joyfully. Anna Andreyevna recalled Vassilyevskoe and shed tears. Alyosha went to see them more and more frequently without his father's knowledge. Nikolay Sergeyitch with his honesty, openness and uprightness indignantly disdained all precautions. His honourable pride forbade his even considering what the prince would say if he knew that his son inwardly despised all his absurd suspicions, and was received again in the house of the Ichmenyevs. But the old man did not know whether he would have the strength to endure fresh insults. The

young prince began to visit them almost daily. The parents enjoyed having him. He used to stay with them the whole evening, long after midnight. His father, of course, heard of all this at last. An abominable scandal followed. He insulted Nikolay Sergeyitch with a horrible letter, taking the same line as before, and peremptorily forbade his son to visit the house. This had happened just a fortnight before I came to them that day.

The old man was terribly depressed. Was his Natasha, his innocent noble girl, to be mixed up in this dirty slander, this vileness again! Her name had been insultingly uttered before by the man who had injured him. And was all this to be left unavenged? For the first few days he took to his bed in despair.

All that I knew. The story had reached me in every detail, though for the last three weeks I had been lying ill and despondent at my lodging and had not been to see them. But I knew besides.… No! At that time I only felt what was coming; I knew, but could not believe, that, apart from these worries, there was something which must trouble them beyond anything in the world, and I looked at them with torturing anguish. Yes, I was in torture; I was afraid to conjecture, afraid to believe, and did all I could to put off the fatal moment. And meanwhile I had come on account of it. I felt drawn to them that evening.

“Yes; Vanya,” the old man began, suddenly rousing himself, “surely you’ve not been ill? Why haven’t you been here for so long? I have behaved badly to you. I have been meaning ever so long to call on you, but somehow it’s all been….”

And he sank into brooding again.

“I haven’t been well,” I answered.

“Hm! Not well,” he repeated five minutes later. “I dare say not! I talked to you and warned you before, but you wouldn’t heed me. Hm! No, Vanya, my boy, the muse has lived hungry in a garret from time immemorial, and she’ll go on so. That’s what it is!”

Yes, the old man was out of spirits. If he had not had a sore heart himself, he would not have talked to me of the hungry muse. I looked intently at his face: it was sallower; there was a look of bewilderment in his eyes, some idea in the form of a question which he had not the strength to answer. He was abrupt and bitter, quite unlike himself. His wife looked at his uneasily and shook her head. When he turned away she stealthily nodded to me.

“How is Natalya Nikolaevna? Is she at home I inquired of the anxious lady.

“She’s at home, my dear man, she’s at home,” she answered as though perturbed by my question. “She’ll come in to see you directly. It’s a serious matter! Not a sight of you for three weeks! And she’s become so queer … there’s no making her out at all. I don’t know whether she’s well or ill, God bless her!

And she looked timidly at her husband.

“Why, there’s nothing wrong with her,” Nikolay Sergeyitch responded jerkily and reluctantly, “she’s quite well. The girl’s beginning to grow up, she’s left off being a baby, that’s all. Who can understand girlish moods and caprices?”

“Caprices, indeed!” Anna Andreyevna caught him up in an offended voice.

The old man said nothing and drummed on the table with his fingertips.

“Good God, is there something between them already?” I wondered in a panic.

“Well, how are you getting on?” he began again. “Is B. still writing reviews?”

“Yes,” I answered.

“Ech, Vanya, Vanya,” he ended up, with a wave of his hand.

“What can reviews do now?”

The door opened and Natasha walked in.

CHAPTER VII

SHE HELD HER HAT in her hand and laid it down on the piano; then she came up to me and held out her hand without speaking. Her lips faintly quivered, as though she wanted to utter something, some greeting to me, but she said nothing.

It was three weeks since we had seen each other. I looked at her with amazement and dread. How she had changed in those three weeks! My heart ached as I looked at those pale, hollow cheeks, feverishly parched lips, and eyes that gleamed under the long dark lashes with a feverish fire and a sort of passionate determination.

But, my God, how lovely she was! Never before, or since, have I seen her as she was on that fatal day. Was it the same, the same Natasha, the same girl who only a year ago had listened to my novel with her eyes fixed on me and her lips following mine, who had so gaily and carelessly laughed and jested with her father and me at supper afterwards; was it the same Natasha who in that very room had said “Yes” to me, hanging her head and flushing all over?

We heard the deep note of the bell ringing for vespers. She started. Anna Andreyevna crossed herself.

“You’re ready for church, Natasha, and they’re ringing for the service. Go, Natasha, go and pray. It’s a good thing it’s so near. And you’ll get a walk, too, at the same time. Why sit shut up indoors? See how pale you are, as though you were bewitched.”

“Perhaps…I won’t go…to-day,” said Natasha slowly, in a low voice, almost a whisper. “I’m…not well,” she added, and turned white as a sheet.

“You’d better go, Natasha. You wanted to just now and fetched your hat. Pray, Natasha, pray that God may give you good health,” Anna Andreyevna persuaded her daughter, looking timidly at her, as though she were afraid of her.

“Yes, go, and it will be a walk for you, too,” the old man added, and he, too, looked uneasily at his daughter. “Mother is right. Here, Vanya will escort you.”

I fancied that Natasha’s lips curled in a bitter smile. She went to the piano, picked up her hat and put it on. Her hands were trembling. All her

movements seemed as it were unconscious, as though she did not know what she were doing. Her father and mother watched her attentively.

“Good-bye,” she said, hardly audibly.

“My angel, why ‘good-bye’? Is it so faraway? A blow in the wind will do you good. See how pale you are. Ah, I forgot (I forget everything), I’ve finished a scapular for you; there’s a prayer sewn into it, my angel; a nun from Kiev taught it to me last year; a very suitable prayer. I sewed it in just now. Put it on, Natasha. Maybe God will send you good health. You are all we have.”

And the mother took out of her work-drawer a golden cross that Natasha wore round her neck; on the same ribbon was hung a scapular she had just finished.

“May it bring you health,” she added, crossing her daughter and putting the cross on. “At one time I used to bless you every night before you slept, and said a prayer, and you repeated it after me. But now you’re not the same, and God does not vouchsafe you a quiet spirit. Ach, Natasha, Natasha! Your mother’s prayer is no help to you….”

And the mother began crying.

Natasha kissed her mother’s hand without speaking, and took a step towards the door. But suddenly she turned quickly back and went up to her father. Her bosom heaved.

“Daddy, you cross…your daughter, too,” she brought out in a gasping voice, and she sank on her knees before him.

We were all perplexed at this unexpected and too solemn action. For a few seconds her father looked at her quite at a loss.

“Natasha, my little one, my girl, my darling, what’s the matter with you?” he cried at last, and tears streamed from his eyes. “Why are you grieving? Why are you crying day and night? I see it all, you know. I don’t sleep, it night, but stand and listen at your door. Tell me everything, Natasha, tell me all about it. I’m old, and we …”

He did not finish; he raised her and embraced her, and held her close. She pressed convulsively against his breast, and hid her head on his shoulder.

“It’s nothing, nothing, it’s only … I’m not well”, she kept repeating, choking with suppressed tears.

“May God bless you as I bless you, my darling child, my precious child!” said the father. “May He send you peace of heart for ever, and

protect you from all sorrow. Pray to God, my love, that my sinful prayer may reach Him."

"And my blessing, my blessing, too, is upon you," added the mother, dissolving into tears.

"Good-bye," whispered Natasha.

At the door she stood still again, took one more look at them, tried to say something more, but could not and went quickly out of the room. I rushed after her with a foreboding of evil.

CHAPTER VIII

SHE WALKED with her head down, rapidly, in silence, without looking at me. But as she came out of the street on to the embankment she stopped short, and took my arm.

"I'm stifling," she whispered. "My heart grips me… . I'm stifling."

"Come back, Natasha," I cried in alarm.

"Surely you must have seen, Vanya, that I've gone away for ever, left them for ever, and shall never go back," she said, looking at me with inexpressible anguish.

My heart sank. I had foreseen all this on my way to them. I had seen it all as it were in a mist, long before that day perhaps, yet now her words fell upon me like a thunderbolt.

We walked miserably along the embankment. I could not speak. I was reflecting, trying to think, and utterly at a loss. My heart was in a whirl. It seemed so hideous, so impossible!

"You blame me, Vanya?" she said at last.

"No … but … but I can't believe it; it cannot be!" I answered, not knowing what I was saying.

"Yes, Vanya, it really is so! I have gone away from them and I don't know what will become of them or what will become of me!"

"You're going to him, Natasha? Yes?"

"Yes," she answered.

"But that's impossible!" I cried frantically. "Don't you understand that it's impossible, Natasha, my poor girl! Why, it's madness. Why you'll kill them, and ruin yourself! Do you understand that, Natasha?"

"I know; but what am I to do? I can't help it," she said and her voice was as full of anguish as though she were facing the scaffold.

"Come back, come back, before it's too late," I besought her; and the more warmly, the more emphatically I implored her, the more I realized the uselessness of my entreaties, and the absurdity of them at that moment. "Do you understand, Natasha, what you are doing to your father? Have you thought of that? You know his father is your father's enemy. Why, the prince has insulted your father, has accused him of stealing money; why, he called him a thief. You know why they've gone to law with one another…. Good heavens! and that's not the worst. Do you know, Natasha (Oh, God,

of course you know it all!) … do you know that the prince suspected your father and mother of having thrown you and Alyosha together on purpose, when Alyosha was staying in the country with you? Think a minute, only fancy what you father went through then owing to that slander; why, his hair has turned grey in these two years! Look at him! And what's more, you know all this, Natasha. Good heavens! To say nothing of what it will mean to them both to lose you for ever. Why, you're their treasure, all that is left them in their old age. I don't want to speak of that, you must know it for yourself. Remember that your father thinks you have been slandered without cause, insulted by these snobs, unavenged! And now, at this very time, it's all flared up again, all this old rankling enmity has grown more bitter than ever, because you have received Alyosha. The prince has insulted your father again. The old man's anger is still hot at this fresh affront, and suddenly now all this, all this, all these accusations will turn out to be true! Everyone who knows about it will justify the prince now, and throw the blame on you and your father. Why, what will become of him now? It will kill him outright! Shame, disgrace, and through whom? Through you, his daughter, his one precious child! And your mother? Why, she won't outlive your old father, you know. Natasha, Natasha! What are you about? Turn back! Think what you are doing!"

She did not speak. At last she glanced at me, as it were, reproachfully. And there was such piercing anguish, such suffering in her eyes that I saw that apart from my words her wounded heart was bleeding already. I saw what her decision was costing her, and how I was torturing her, lacerating her with my useless words that came too late. I saw all that, and yet I could not restrain myself and went on speaking.

"Why, you said yourself just now to Anna Andreyevna that perhaps you would not go out of the house … to the service, So you meant to stay; so you were still hesitating?"

She only smiled bitterly in reply. And why did I ask that? I might have understood that all was irrevocably settled. But I was beside myself, too.

"Can you love him so much?" I cried, looking at her with a sinking at the heart, scarcely knowing what I was asking.

"What can I say to you, Vanya? You see, he told me to come, and here I am waiting for him," she said with the same bitter smile.

"But listen, only listen," I began again, catching at a straw; "this can all be arranged differently, quite differently; you need not go away from the

house. I'll tell you how to manage, Natasha. I'll undertake to arrange it all for you, meetings, and everything. Only don't leave home. I will carry your letters; why not? It would be better than what you're doing. I know how to arrange it; I'll do anything for both of you. You'll see. And then you won't ruin yourself, Natasha, dear, as you're doing…. For you'll ruin yourself hopelessly, as it is, hopelessly. Only agree, Natasha, and everything will go well and happily, and you can love each other as much as you like. And when your fathers have left off quarrelling (for they're bound to leave off some day) — then …"

"Enough, Vanya, stop!" she interrupted, pressing my hand tightly, and smiling through her tears. "Dear, kind Vanya! You're a good, honourable man! And not one word of yourself! I've deserted you, and you forgive everything, you think of nothing but my happiness. You are ready to carry letters for us."

She burst into tears.

"I know how you loved me, Vanya, and how you love me still, and you've not reproached me with one bitter word all this time, while I, I … my God I how badly I've treated you! Do you remember, Vanya, do you remember our time together? It would have been better if I'd never met him; never seen him! I could have lived with you, with you, dear, kind Vanya, my dear one. No, I'm not worthy of you! You see what I am; at such a minute I remind you of our past happiness, though you're wretched enough without that! Here you've not been to see us for three weeks: I swear to you, Vanya, the thought never once entered my head that you hated me and had cursed me. I knew why you did not come! You did not want to be in our way and to be a living reproach to us. And wouldn't it have been painful for you to see us? And how I've missed you, Vanya, how I've missed you! Vanya, listen, if I love Alyosha madly, insanely, yet perhaps I love you even more as a friend. I feel, I know that I couldn't go on living without you. I need you. I need your soul, your heart of gold…. Oh, Vanya, what a bitter, terrible time is before us!"

She burst into a flood of tears; yes, she was very wretched. "Oh, how I have been longing to see you," she went on, mastering her tears. "How thin you've grown, how ill and pale you are. You really have been ill, haven't you, Vanya? And I haven't even asked! I keep talking of myself. How are you getting on with the reviewers now? what about your new novel? Is it going well?"

“As though we could talk about novels, as though we could talk about me now, Natasha! As though my work mattered. That’s all right, let it be! But tell me, Natasha, did he insist himself that you should go to him?”

“No, not only he, it was more I. He did say so, certainly, but I too…. You see, dear, I’ll tell you everything; they’re making a match for him with a very rich girl, of very high rank and related to very grand people. His father absolutely insists on his marrying her, and his father, as you know, is an awful schemer; he sets every spring working; and it’s a chance that wouldn’t come once in ten years…. Connexions, money … and they say she’s very pretty, and she has education, a good heart, everything good; Alyosha’s attracted by her already, and what’s more his father’s very anxious to get it over, so as to get married himself. And so he’s determined to break it off between us. He’s afraid of me and my influence on Alyosha…”

“But do you mean to say that the prince knows of your love?”

I interrupted in surprise. “Surely he only suspects it; and is not at all sure of it?”

“He knows it. He knows all about it.”

“Why, who told him?”

“Alyosha told him everything a little while ago. He told me himself that he had told him all about it.”

“Good God, what is going on! He tells all this himself and at such a time?”

“Don’t blame him, Vanya,” Natasha broke in; “don’t jeer at him.

He can’t be judged like other people. Be fair. He’s not like you and me. He’s a child. He’s not been properly brought up. He doesn’t understand what he’s doing. The first impression, the influence of the first person he meets can turn him away from what he has promised a minute before. He has no character. He’ll vow to be true to you, and that very day he will just as truthfully, just as sincerely, devote himself to someone else; and what’s more he’ll be the first person to come and tell you about it. He may do something bad; but yet one can’t blame him for it, but can only feel sorry for him. He’s even capable of self-sacrifice, and if you knew what sacrifice! But only till the next new impression, then he’ll forget it all. So he’ll forget me if I’m not continually with him. That’s what he’s like!”

“Ach, Natasha, but perhaps that’s all not true, that’s only gossip. How can a boy like that get married!”

“I tell you his father has special objects of his own.”

“But how do you know that this young lady is so charming, and that he is already attracted by her?”

“Why, he told me so himself.”

“What! Told you himself that he might love another woman, and demands this sacrifice from you now?”

“No, Vanya, no. You don’t know him. You’ve not been much with him. You must know him better before you judge of him. There isn’t a truer and purer heart than his in the world. Why, would it be better if he were to he? And as for his being attracted by her, why, if he didn’t see me for a week he’d fall in love with some one else and forget me, and then when he saw me he’d be at my feet again. No! It’s a good thing I know it, that it’s not concealed from me, or else I should be dying of suspicion. Yes, Vanya! I have come to the conclusion; if I’m not always with him continually, every minute, he will cease to love me, forget me, and give me up. He’s like that; any other woman can attract him. And then what should I do? I should die … die indeed I I should be glad to die now. But what will it be for me to live without him? That would be worse than death itself, worse than any agony! Oh, Vanya, Vanya! It does mean something that I’ve abandoned my father and mother for him! Don’t try and persuade me, everything’s decided! He must be near me every hour, every minute. I can’t go back. I know that I am ruined and that I’m ruining others…. Ach, Vanya!” she cried suddenly and began trembling all over “what if he doesn’t love me even now! What if it’s true what you said of him just now” (I had never said it), “that he’s only deceiving me, that he only seems to be so truthful and sincere, and is really wicked and vain! I’m defending him to you now, and perhaps this very minute he’s laughing at me with another woman … and I, I’m so abject that I’ve thrown up everything and am walking about the streets looking for him…. Ach, Vanya!”

This moan broke with such anguish from her heart that my whole soul filled with grief. I realized that Natasha had lost all control of herself. Only a blind, insane, intense jealousy could have brought her to this frantic resolution. But jealousy flamed up in my heart, too, and suddenly burst out. I could not restrain myself. A horrid feeling drew me on.

“Natasha,” I said, “there’s only one thing I don’t understand. How can you love him after what you’ve just said about him yourself? You don’t respect him, you don’t even believe in his love, and you’re going to him

irrevocably and are ruining everyone for his sake. What's the meaning of it? He'll torture you so as to spoil your whole life; yes, and you his, too. You love him too much, Natasha, too much! I don't understand such love!"

"Yes, I love him as though I were mad," she answered, turning pale as though in bodily pain. "I never loved you like that, Vanya. I know I've gone out of my mind, and don't love him as I ought to. I don't love him in the right way…. Listen, Vanya, I knew beforehand, and even in our happiest moments I felt that he would bring me nothing but misery. But what is to be done if even torture from him is happiness to me now? Do you suppose I'm going to him to meet joy? Do you suppose I don't know beforehand what's in store for me, or what I shall have to bear from him? Why, he's sworn to love me, made all sorts of promises; but I don't trust one of his promises. I don't set any value on them, and I never have, though I knew he wasn't lying to me, and can't lie. I told him myself, myself, that I don't want to bind him in any way. That's better with him; no one likes to be tied — I less than any,. And yet I'm glad to be his slave, his willing slave; to put up with anything from him, anything, so long as he is with me, so long as I can look at him! I think he might even love another woman if only I were there, if only I might be near. Isn't it abject, Vanya?" she asked, suddenly looking at me with a sort of feverish, haggard look. For one instant it seemed to me she was delirious. "Isn't it abject, such a wish? What if it is? I say that it is abject myself. Yet if he were to abandon me I should run after him to the ends of the earth, even if he were to repulse me, even if he were to drive me away. You try to persuade me to go back — but what use is that? If I went back I should come away tomorrow. He would tell me to and I should come; he would call, would whistle to me like a dog, and I should run to him…. Torture! I don't shrink from any torture from him! I should know it was at his hands I was suffering! … Oh, there's no telling it, Vanya!"

"And her father and mother?" I thought. She seemed to have already forgotten them.

"Then he's not going to marry you, Natasha?"

"He's promised to. He's promised everything. It's for that he's sent for me now; to be married to-morrow, secretly, out of town. But you see, he doesn't know what he's doing. Very likely he doesn't know how one gets married. And what a husband! It's absurd really. And if he does get married he won't be happy; he'll begin to reproach me…. I don't want him to reproach me with anything, ever. I'll give up everything for him, and let

him do nothing for me! If he’s going to be unhappy from being married, why make him unhappy?”

“Yes, this is a sort of frenzy, Natasha,” said I. “Well, are you going straight to him now?”

“No, he promised to come here to fetch me. We agreed.”

And she looked eagerly into the distance, but as yet there was no one.

“And he’s not here yet. And you’ve come first!” I cried with indignation.

Natasha staggered as though from a blow. Her face worked convulsively.

“He may not come at all,” she said with bitter mockery. The day before yesterday he wrote that if I didn’t give him my word that I’d come, he would be obliged to put off his plan — of going away and marrying me; and his father will take him with him to the young lady. And he wrote it so simply, so naturally, as if it were nothing at all…. What if he really has gone to her, Vanya?”

I did not answer. She squeezed my hand tight, and her eyes glittered.

“He is with her,” she brought out, scarcely audibly. “He hoped I would not come here, so that he might go to her, and say afterwards that he was in the right, that he told me beforehand I wouldn’t, and I didn’t. He’s tired of me, so he stays away. Ach, my God! I’m mad! Why, he told me himself last time that I wearied him…. What am I waiting for?”

“Here he is,” I cried, suddenly catching sight of him on the embankment in the distance.

Natasha started, uttered a shriek, gazed intently at Alyosha’s approaching figure, and suddenly, dropping my hand, rushed to meet him. He, too, quickened his pace, and in a minute she was in his arms.

There was scarcely anyone in the street but ourselves. They kissed each other, laughed; Natasha laughed and cried both together, as though they were meeting after an endless separation. The colour rushed into her pale cheeks. She was like one possessed…. Alyosha noticed me and at once came up to me.

CHAPTER IX

I LOOKED AT HIM eagerly, although I had seen him many times before that minute. I looked into his eyes, as though his expression might explain all that bewildered me, might explain how this boy could enthral her, could arouse in her love so frantic that it made her forget her very first duty and sacrifice all that had been till that moment most holy to her. The prince took both my hands and pressed them warmly, and the look in his eyes, gentle and candid, penetrated to my heart.

I felt that I might be mistaken in my conclusions about him if only from the fact that he was my enemy. Yes, I was not fond of him; and I'm sorry to say I never could care for him — and was perhaps alone among his acquaintances in this. I could not get over my dislike of many things in him, even of his elegant appearance, perhaps, indeed, because it was too elegant. After wards I recognized that I had been prejudiced in my judgement.

He was tall, slender and graceful; his face was rather long and always pale; he had fair hair, large, soft, dreamy, blue eyes, in which there were occasional flashes of the most spontaneous, childish gaiety. The full crimson lips of his small, exquisitely modelled mouth almost always had a grave expression, and this gave a peculiarly unexpected and fascinating charm to the smile which suddenly appeared on them, and was so naive and candid that, whatever mood one was in, one felt instantly tempted to respond to it with a similar smile. He dressed not over-fashionably, but always elegantly; it was evident that this elegance cost him no effort whatever, that it was innate in him.

It is true that he had some unpleasant traits, some of the bad habits characteristic of aristocratic society: frivolity, self-complacency, and polite insolence. But he was so candid and simple at heart that he was the first to blame himself for these defects, to regret them and mock at them. I fancy that this boy could never tell a lie even in jest, or if he did tell one it would be with no suspicion of its being wrong. Even egoism in him was rather her attractive, just perhaps because it was open and not concealed. There was nothing reserved about him. He was weak, confiding, and fainthearted; he had no will whatever. To deceive or injure him would have been as sinful and cruel as deceiving and injuring a child. He was too simple for his age and had scarcely any notion of real life; though, indeed, I believe he would

not have any at forty. Men like him are destined never to grow up. I fancy that hardly any man could have disliked him; he was as affectionate as a child. Natasha had spoken truly; he might have been guilty of an evil action if driven to it by some strong influence, but if he had recognized the result of the action afterwards, I believe he would have died of regret. Natasha instinctively felt that she would have mastery and dominion over him that he would even be her victim. She had had a foretaste of the joys of loving passionately and torturing the man that she loved simply because she loved him, and that was why, perhaps, she was in haste to be the first to sacrifice herself. But his eyes, too, were bright with love, and he looked at her rapturously. She looked at me triumphantly. At that instant she forgot everything — her parents, and her leave-taking and her suspicions. She was happy.

"Vanya!" she cried. "I've been unfair to him and I'm not worthy of him. I thought you weren't coming, Alyosha. Forget my evil thoughts, Vanya! I'll atone for it!" she added, looking at him with infinite love.

He smiled, kissed her hand, and still keeping his hold of her hand turned to me, and said:

"Don't blame me either. I've been wanting to embrace you as a brother for ever so long; she has told me so much about you! We've somehow not made friends or got on together till now. Let us be friends, and … forgive us," he added, flushing slightly and speaking in an undertone, but with such a charming smile that I could not help responding to his greeting with my whole heart.

"Yes, yes, Alyosha," Natasha chimed in, " he's on our side, he's a brother to us, he has forgiven us already, and without him we shall not be happy. I've told you already…. Ah, we're cruel children, Alyosha! But we will live all three together….

Vanya!" she went on, and her lips began to quiver. "You'll go back home now to them. You have such a true heart that though they won't forgive me, yet when they see that you've forgiven me it may soften them a little. Tell them everything, everything, in your own words, from your heart; find the right words…. Stand up for me, save me. Explain to them all the reasons as you understand it. You know, Vanya, I might not have brought myself to it, if you hadn't happened to be with me to-day! You are my salvation. I rested all my hopes on you at once, for I felt that you would know how to tell them, so that at least the first awfulness would be easier for them. Oh, my

God, my God! … Tell them from me, Vanya, that I know I can never be forgiven now; if they forgive me, God won't forgive; but that if they curse me I shall always bless them and pray for them to the end of my life. My whole heart is with them! Oh, why can't we all be happy! Why, why! … My God, what have I done!" she cried out suddenly, as though realizing, and trembling all over with horror she hid her face in her hands.

Alyosha put his arm round her and held her close to him without speaking. Several minutes of silence followed.

"And you could demand such a sacrifice?" I cried, looking at him reproachfully.

"Don't blame me," he repeated. "I assure you that all this misery, terrible as it is, is only for the moment. I'm perfectly certain of it. We only need to have the courage to bear this moment; she said the very same to me herself. You know that what's at the bottom of it all is family pride, these quite foolish squabbles, some stupid lawsuits! … But (I've been thinking about it for a long while, I assure you) … all this must be put a stop to. We shall all come together again; and then we shall be perfectly happy, and the old people will be reconciled when they see us. Who knows, perhaps, our marriage will be the first step to their reconciliation. I think, in fact, it's bound to be so. What do you think?"

"You speak of your marriage. When is the wedding to be!" I asked, glancing at Natasha.

"To-morrow or the day after. The day after to-morrow at the latest — that's settled. I don't know much about it myself yet, you see; and in fact I've not made any arrangements. I thought that perhaps Natasha wouldn't come to-day. Besides, my father insisted on taking me to see my betrothed to-day. (You know they're making a match for me; has Natasha told you? But I won't consent.) So you see I couldn't make any definite arrangements. But anyway we shall be married the day after to-morrow. I think so, at least, for I don't see how else it can be. To-morrow we'll set off on the road to Pskov. I've a school-friend, a very nice fellow, living in the country not far-off, in that direction; you must meet him. There's a priest in the village there; though I don't know whether there is or not. I ought to have made inquiries, but I've not had time… . But all that's of no consequence, really. What matters is to keep the chief thing in view. One might get a priest from a neighbouring village, what do you think? I suppose there are neighbouring villages! It's a pity that I haven't had time to write a line; I ought to have

warned them we were corning. My friend may not be at home now perhaps…. But that's no matter. So long as there's determination everything will be settled of itself, won't it? And meanwhile, till to-morrow or the day after, she will be here with me. I have taken a flat on purpose, where we shall live when we come back. I can't go on living with my father, can I? You'll come and see us? I've made it so nice. My school-friends will come and see us. We'll have evenings …"

I looked at him in perplexity and distress. Natasha's eyes besought me to be kind and not to judge him harshly. She listened to his talk with a sort of mournful smile, and at the same time she seemed to be admiring him as one admires a charming, merry child, listening to its sweet but senseless prattle, I looked at her reproachfully. I was unbearably miserable.

"But your father?" I asked. "Are you so perfectly certain he'll forgive you?"

"He must," he replied. "What else is there left for him to do? Of course he may curse me at first; in fact, I'm sure he will. He's like that; and so strict with me. He may even take some proceedings against me; have recourse to his parental authority, in fact… . But that's not serious, you know. He loves me beyond anything. He'll be angry and then forgive us. Then everyone will be reconciled, and we shall all be happy. Her father, too."

"And what if he doesn't forgive you? Have you thought of that?"

"He's sure to forgive us, though perhaps not at once. But what then? I'll show him that I have character. He's always scolding me for not having character, for being feather-headed. He shall see now whether I'm feather-headed. To be a married man is a serious thing. I shan't be a boy then…. I mean I shall be just like other people… that is, other married men. I shall live by my own work. Natasha says that's ever so much better than living at other people's expense, as we all do. If you only knew what a lot of fine things she says to me! I should never have thought of it myself — I've not been brought up like that, I haven't been properly educated. It's true, I know it myself, I'm feather-headed and scarcely fit for anything; but, do you know, a wonderful idea occurred to me the day before yesterday. I'll tell you now though it's hardly the moment, for Natasha, too, must hear, and you'll give me your advice. You know I want to write stories and send them to the magazines just as you do. You'll help me with the editors, won't you? I've been reckoning upon you, and I lay awake all last night thinking of a

novel, just as an experiment, and do you know, it might turn out a charming thing. I took the subject from a comedy of Scribe's…. But I'll tell you it afterwards. The great thing is they would pay for it…. You see, they pay you."

I could not help smiling.

"You laugh," he said, smiling in response. "But, I say," he added with incredible simplicity, "don't think I'm quite as bad as I seem. I'm really awfully observant, you'll see that. Why shouldn't I try? It might come to something…. But I dare say you're right. Of course I know nothing of real life; that's what Natasha tells me; and indeed everyone says so; I should be a queer sort of writer. You may laugh, you may laugh; you'll set me right; you'll be doing it for her sake, and you love her. I tell you the truth. I'm not good enough for her; I feel that; it's a great grief to me, and I don't know why she's so fond of me. But I feel I'd give my life for her. I've really never been afraid of anything before, but at this moment I feel frightened. What is it we're doing? Heavens, is it possible that when a man's absolutely set upon his duty he shouldn't have the brains and the courage to do it? You must help us, anyway; you're our friend. You're the only friend left us. For what can I do alone! Forgive me for reckoning on you like this. I think of you as such a noble man, and far superior to me. But I shall improve, believe me, and be worthy of you both."

At this point he pressed my hand again, and his fine eyes were full of warm and sincere feeling. He held out his hand to me so confidingly, had such faith in my being his friend.

"She will help me to improve," he went on. "But don't think anything very bad of me; don't be too grieved about us. I have great hopes, in spite of everything, and on the financial side we've no need to trouble. If my novel doesn't succeed — to tell the truth I thought this morning that the novel is a silly idea, and I only talked about it to hear your opinion — I could, if the worst comes to the worst, give music-lessons. You didn't know I was good at music? I'm not ashamed to live by work like that; I have quite the new ideas about that. Besides I've a lot of valuable knickknacks, things for the toilet; what do we want with them? I'll sell them. And you know we can live for ever so long on that! And if the worst comes to the worst, I can even take a post in, some department. My father would really be glad. He's always at me to go into the service, but I always make out I'm not well. (But I believe my name is put down for something.) But when he sees that

marriage has done me good, and made me steady, and that I have really gone into the service, he'll be delighted and forgive me… ."

"But, Alexey Petrovitch, have you thought what a terrible to-do there'll be now between your father and hers? What will it be like in her home this evening, do you suppose?"

And I motioned towards Natasha, who had turned deadly pale at my words. I was merciless.

"Yes, yes, you're right. It's awful!" he answered. "I've thought about it already and grieved over it. But what can we do? You're right; if only her parents will forgive us! And how I love them — if you only knew! They've been like a father and mother to me, and this is how I repay them! Ach, these quarrels, these lawsuits! You can't imagine how unpleasant all that is now. And what are they quarrelling about! We all love one another so, and yet we're quarrelling. If only they'd be reconciled and make an end of it! That's what I'd do in their place…. I feel frightened at what you say. Natasha, it's awful what we're doing, you and I! I said that before… . You insisted on it yourself…. But, listen, Ivan Petrovitch, perhaps it will an be for the best, don't you think? They'll be reconciled, you know, in the end. We shall reconcile them. That is so, there's no doubt of it. They can't hold out against our love…. Let them curse us; we shall love them all the same, and they can't hold out. You don't know what a kind heart my father has sometimes. He only looks ferocious, but at other times he's most reasonable. If you only knew how gently he talked to me to-day, persuading me! And I'm going against him today, and that makes me very sad. It's all these stupid prejudices! It's simple madness! Why, if he were to take a good look at her, and were to spend only half an hour with her, he would sanction everything at once."

Alyosha looked tenderly and passionately at Natasha.

"I've fancied a thousand times with delight," he went on babbling, "how he will love her as soon as he gets to know her, and how she'll astonish everyone. Why, they've never seen a girl like her! My father is convinced that she is simply a schemer. It's my duty to vindicate her honour, and I shall do it. Ah, Natasha, everyone loves you, everyone. Nobody could help loving you," he added rapturously. "Though I'm not nearly good enough for you, still you must love me, Natasha, and I … you know me! And do we need much to make us happy! No, I believe, I do believe that this evening is bound to bring us all happiness, peace and harmony I Blessed be this

evening! Isn’t it so, Natasha? But what’s the matter? But, my goodness, what’s the matter?”

She was pale as death. All the while Alyosha rambled on she was looking intently at him, but her eyes grew dimmer and more fixed, and her face turned whiter and whiter. I fancied at last that she had sunk into a stupor and did not hear him. Alyosha’s exclamation seemed to rouse her. She came to herself, looked round her, and suddenly rushed to me. Quickly, as though in haste and anxious to hide it from Alyosha, she took a letter out of her pocket and gave it to me. It was a letter to her father and mother, and had been written overnight. As she gave it me she looked intently at me as though she could not take her eyes off me. There was a look of despair in them; I shall never forget that terrible look. I was overcome by horror, too. I saw that only now she realized all the awfulness of what she was doing. She struggled to say something, began to speak, and suddenly fell fainting. I was just in time to catch her. Alyosha turned pale with alarm; he rubbed her temples, kissed her hands and her lips. In two minutes she came to herself. The cab in which Alyosha had come was standing not far off; he called it. When she was in the cab Natasha clutched my hand frantically, and a hot tear scalded my fingers. The cab started. I stood a long while watching it. All my happiness was ruined from that moment, and my life was broken in half. I felt that poignantly…. I walked slowly back to my old friends. I did not know what to say to them, how I should go in to them. My thoughts were numb; my legs were giving way beneath me.

And that’s the story of my happiness; so my love was over and ended. I will now take up my story where I left it.

CHAPTER X

FIVE DAYS AFTER Smith's death, I moved into his lodging. All that day I felt insufferably sad. The weather was cold and gloomy. the wet snow kept falling, interspersed with rain.

Only towards evening the sun peeped out, and a stray sunbeam probably from curiosity glanced into my room. I had begun to regret having moved here. Though the room was large it was so low-pitched, so begrimed with soot, so musty, and so unpleasantly empty in spite of some little furniture. I thought then that I should certainly ruin what health I had left in that room. And so it came to pass, indeed.

All that morning I had been busy with my papers, sorting and arranging them. For want of a portfolio I had packed them in a pillow-case. They were all crumpled and mixed up. Then I sat down to write. I was still working at my long novel then; but I could not settle down to it. My mind was full of other things.

I threw down my pen and sat by the window. It got dark, and I felt more and more depressed. Painful thoughts of all kinds beset me. I kept fancying that I should die at last in Petersburg.

Spring was at hand. " I believe I might recover," I thought, "if I could get out of this shell into the light of day, into the fields and woods." It was so long since I had seen them. I remember, too, it came into my mind how nice it would be if by some magic, some enchantment, I could forget everything that had happened in the last few years; forget everything, refresh my mind, and begin again with new energy. In those days, I still dreamed of that and hoped for a renewal of life. "Better go into an asylum," I thought, "to get one's brain turned upside down and rearranged anew, and then be cured again." I still had a thirst for life and a faith in it! … But I remember even then I laughed. "What should I have to do after the madhouse? Write novels again? …"

So I brooded despondently, and meanwhile time was passing, Night had come on. That evening I had promised to see Natasha. I had had a letter from her the evening before, earnestly begging me to go and see her. I jumped up and began getting ready. I had an overwhelming desire to get out of my room, even into the rain and the sleet.

As it got darker my room seemed to grow larger and larger, as though the walls were retreating. I began to fancy that every night I should see Smith at once in every corner. He would sit and stare at me as he had at Adam Ivanitch, in the restaurant, and Azorka would lie at his feet. At that instant I had an adventure which made a great impression upon me.

I must frankly admit, however, that, either owing to the derangement of my nerves, or my new impressions in my new lodgings, or my recent melancholy, I gradually began at dusk to sink into that condition which is so common with me now at night in my illness, and which I call mysterious horror. It is a most oppressive, agonizing state of terror of something which I don’t know how to define, and something passing all understanding and outside the natural order of things, which yet may take shape this very minute, as though in mockery of all the conclusions of reason, come to me and stand before me as an undeniable fact, hideous, horrible, and relentless. This fear usually becomes more and more acute, in spite of all the protests of reason, so much so that although the mind sometimes is of exceptional clarity at such moments, it loses all power of resistance. It is unheeded, it becomes useless, and this inward division intensifies the agony of suspense. It seems to me something like the anguish of people who are afraid of the dead. But in my distress the indefiniteness of the apprehension makes my suffering even more acute.

I remember I was standing with my back to the door and taking my hat from the table, when suddenly at that very instant the thought struck me that when I turned round I should inevitably see Smith: at first he would softly open the door, would stand in the doorway and look round the room, then looking down would come slowly towards me, would stand facing me, fix his lustreless eyes upon me and suddenly laugh in my face, a long, toothless, noiseless chuckle, and his whole body would shake with laughter and go on shaking a long time. The vision of all this suddenly formed an extraordinarily vivid and distinct picture in my mind, and at the same time I was suddenly seized by the fullest, the most absolute conviction that all this would infallibly, inevitably come to pass; that it was already happening, only I hadn’t seen it because I was standing with my back to the door, and that just at that very instant perhaps the door was opening. I looked round quickly, and — the door actually was opening, softly, noiselessly, just as I had imagined it a minute before. I cried out. For a long time no one appeared, as though the door had opened of itself. All at once I saw in the

doorway a strange figure, whose eyes, as far as I could make out in the dark, were scrutinizing me obstinately and intently. A shiver ran over all my limbs; to my intense horror I saw that it was a child, a little girl, and if it had been Smith himself he would not have frightened me perhaps so much as this strange and unexpected apparition of an unknown child in my room at such an hour, and at such a moment.

I have mentioned already that the door opened as slowly and noiselessly as though she were afraid to come in. Standing in the doorway she gazed at me in a perplexity that was almost stupefaction. At last softly and slowly she advanced two steps into the room and stood before me, still without uttering a word.

I examined her more closely. She was a girl of twelve or thirteen, short, thin, and as pale as though she had just had some terrible illness, and this pallor showed up vividly her great, shining black eyes. With her left hand she held a tattered old shawl, and with it covered her chest, which was still shivering with the chill of evening. Her whole dress might be described as rags and tatters. Her thick black hair was matted and uncombed. We stood so for two minutes, staring at one another.

“Where’s grandfather?” she asked at last in a husky, hardly audible voice, as though there was something wrong with her throat or chest.

All my mysterious panic was dispersed at this question. It was an inquiry for Smith; traces of him had unexpectedly turned up.

“Your grandfather? But he’s dead!” I said suddenly, being taken unawares by her question, and I immediately regretted my abruptness. For a minute she stood still in the same position, then she suddenly began trembling all over, so violently that it seemed as though she were going to be overcome by some sort of dangerous, nervous fit. I tried to support her so that she did not fall. In a few minutes she was better, and I saw that she was making an unnatural effort to control her emotion before me.

“Forgive me, forgive me, girl! Forgive me, my child!” I said. “I told you so abruptly, and who knows perhaps it’s a mistake … poor little thing! … Who is it you’re looking for? The old man who lived here?”

“Yes,” she articulated with an effort, looking anxiously at me.

“His name was Smith? Was it?” I asked.

“Y-yes!”

“Then he … yes, then he is dead…. Only don’t grieve, my dear. Why haven’t you been here? Where have you come from now? He was buried

yesterday; he died suddenly… . So you're his granddaughter?"

The child made no answer to my rapid and incoherent questions. She turned in silence and went quietly out of the room. I was so astonished that I did not try to stop her or question her further. She stopped short in the doorway, and half-turning asked me, "Is Azorka dead, too?"

"Yes, Azorka's dead, too," I answered, and her question struck me as strange; it seemed as though she felt sure that Azorka must have died with the old man. Hearing my answer the girl went noiselessly out of the room and carefully closed the door after her.

A minute later I ran after her, horribly vexed with myself for having let her go. She went out so quickly that I did not hear her open the outer door on to the stairs.

"She hasn't gone down the stairs yet," I thought, and I stood still to listen. But all was still, and there was no sound of footsteps. All I heard was the slam of a door on the ground floor, and then all was still again.

I went hurriedly downstairs. The staircase went from my flat in a spiral from the fifth storey down to the fourth, from the fourth it went straight. It was a black, dirty staircase, always dark, such as one commonly finds in huge blocks let out in tiny flats. At that moment it was quite dark. Feeling my way down to the fourth storey, I stood still, and I suddenly had a feeling that there was someone in the passage here, hiding from me. I began groping with my hands. The girl was there, right in the corner, and with her face turned to the wall was crying softly and inaudibly.

"Listen, what are you afraid of?" I began. "I frightened you so, I'm so sorry. Your grandfather spoke of you when he was dying; his last words were of you…. I've got some books, no doubt they're yours. What's your name? Where do you live? He spoke of Sixth Street…."

But I did not finish. She uttered a cry of terror as though at my knowing where she lived; pushed me away with her thin, bony, little hand, and ran downstairs. I followed her; I could till hear her footsteps below. Suddenly they ceased…. When I ran out into the street she was not to be seen. Running as far as Voznesensky Prospect I realized that all my efforts were in vain.

She had vanished. "Most likely she hid from me somewhere," I thought "on her way downstairs."

CHAPTER XI

BUT I HAD HARDLY stepped out on the muddy wet pavement of the Prospect when I ran against a passer-by, who was hastening somewhere with his head down, apparently lost in thought. To my intense amazement I recognized my old friend Ichmenyev. It was an evening of unexpected meetings for me. I knew that the old man had been taken seriously unwell three days before; and here I was meeting him in such wet weather in the street. Moreover it had never been his habit to go out in the evening, and since Natasha had gone away, that is, for the last six months, he had become a regular stay-at-home. He seemed to be exceptionally delighted to see me, like a man who has at last found a friend with whom he can talk over his ideas. He seized my hand, pressed it warmly, and without asking where I was going, drew me along with him. He was upset about something, jerky and hurried in his manner. “Where had he been going?” I wondered.

It would have been tactless to question him. He had become terribly suspicious, and sometimes detected some offensive hint, some insult, in the simplest inquiry or remark.

I looked at him stealthily. His face showed signs of illness he had grown much thinner of late. His chin showed a week’s growth of beard. His hair, which had turned quite grey, hung down in disorder under his crushed hat, and lay in long straggling tails on the collar of his shabby old great-coat. I had noticed before that at some moments he seemed, as it were, forgetful, forgot for instance that he was not alone in the room, and would talk to himself, gesticulating with his hands. It was painful to look at him.

“Well, Vanya, well?” he began. “Where were you going? I’ve come out, my boy, you see; business. Are you quite well?”

“Are you quite well?” I answered. “You were ill only the other day, and here you are, out.”

The old man seemed not to hear what I said and made no answer.

“How is Anna Andreyevna?”

“She’s quite well, quite well …. Though she’s rather poorly, too. She’s rather depressed … she was speaking of you, wondering why you hadn’t been. Were you coming to see us now, Vanya, or not? Maybe I’m keeping you, hindering you from something,” he asked suddenly, looking at me distrustfully and suspiciously.

The sensitive old man had become so touchy and irritable that if I had answered him now that I wasn't going to see them, he would certainly have been wounded, and have parted from me coldly. I hastened to say that I was on my way to look in on Anna Andreyevna, though I knew I was already late, and might not have time to see Natasha at all.

"That's all right," said the old man, completely pacified by my answer, "that's all right."

And he suddenly sank into silence and pondered, as though he had left something unsaid.

"Yes, that's all right," he repeated mechanically, five minutes later, as though coming to himself after a long reverie. "Hm! You know, Vanya, you've always been like a son to us. God has not blessed us … with a son, but He has sent us you. That's what I've always thought. And my wife the same … yes! And you've always been tender and respectful to us, like a grateful son. God will bless you for it, Vanya, as we two old people bless and love you…. Yes!"

His voice quavered. He paused a moment.

"Well…well? You haven't been ill, have you? Why have you not been to see us for so long?"

I told him the whole incident of Smith, apologizing for having let Smith's affairs keep me, telling him that I had besides been almost ill, and that with all this on my hands it was a long way to go to Vassilyevsky Island (they lived there then). I was almost blurting out that I had nevertheless made time to see Natasha, but stopped myself in time.

My account of Smith interested my old friend very much. He listened more attentively. Hearing that my new lodging was damp, perhaps even worse than my old one, and that the rent was six roubles a month, he grew positively heated. He had become altogether excitable and impatient. No one but Anna Andreyevna could soothe him at such moments, and even she was not always successful.

"Hm! This is what comes of your literature, Vanya! It's brought you to a garret, and it will bring you to the graveyard I said so at the time. I foretold it! … Is B. still writing reviews?"

"No, he died of consumption. I told you so before, I believe."

"Dead, hm, dead! Yes, that's just what one would expect. Has he left anything to his wife and children? You told me he had a wife, didn't you? … What do such people marry for?"

“No, he’s left nothing,” I answered.

“Well, just as I thought! “ he cried, with as much warmth as though the matter closely and intimately concerned him, as though the deceased B. had been his brother. “Nothing! Nothing, you may be sure. And, do you know, Vanya, I had a presentiment he’d end like that, at the time when you used to be always singing his praises, do you remember? It’s easy to say left nothing! Hm! … He’s won fame. Even supposing it’s lasting fame, it doesn’t mean bread and butter. I always had a foreboding about you, too, Vanya, my boy. Though I praised you, I always had misgivings. So B.’s dead? Yes, and he well might be! It’s a nice way we live here, and … a nice place! Look at it!”

And with a rapid, unconscious movement of his hand he pointed to the foggy vista of the street, lighted up by the streetlamps dimly twinkling in the damp mist, to the dirty houses, to the wet and shining flags of the pavement, to the cross, sullen, drenched figures that passed by, to all this picture, hemmed in by the dome of the Petersburg sky, black as though smudged with Indian ink. We had by now come out into the square; before us in the darkness stood the monument, lighted up below by jets of gas, and further away rose the huge dark mass of St. Isaac’s, hardly distinguishable against the gloomy sky.

You used to say, Vanya, that he was a nice man, good and generous, with feeling, with a heart. Well, you see, they’re all like that, your nice people, your men with heart! All they can do is to beget orphans! Hm! … and I should think he must have felt cheerful at dying like that! E-e-ech! Anything to get away from here! Even Siberia… . What is it, child?” he asked suddenly, seeing a little girl on the pavement begging alms.

It was a pale, thin child, not more than seven or eight, dressed in filthy rags; she had broken shoes on her little bare feet. She was trying to cover her shivering little body with a sort of aged semblance of a tiny dress, long outgrown. Her pale, sickly, wasted face was turned towards us. She looked timidly, mutely at us without speaking, and with a look of resigned dread of refusal held out her trembling little hand to us. My old friend started at seeing her, and turned to her so quickly that he frightened her. She was startled and stepped back.

“What is it? What is it, child?” he cried. “You’re begging, eh? Here, here’s something for you … take it!”

And, shaking with fuss and excitement, he began feeling in his pocket, and brought out two or three silver coins. But it seemed to him too little. He found his purse, and taking out a rouble note — all that was in it — put it in the little beggar's hand.

"Christ keep you, my little one … my child! God's angel be with you!"

And with a trembling hand he made the sign of the cross over the child several times. But suddenly noticing that I was looking at him, he frowned, and walked on with rapid steps.

"That's a thing I can't bear to see, Vanya," he began, after a rather prolonged, wrathful silence. "Little innocent creatures shivering with cold in the street … all through their cursed fathers and mothers. Though what mother would send a child to anything so awful if she were not in misery herself! … Most likely she has other helpless little ones in the corner at home, and this is the eldest of them; and the mother ill herself very likely; and … hm! They're not prince's children! There are lots in the world, Vanya … not prince's children! Hm!"

He paused for a moment, as though at a loss for words.

"You see, Vanya, I promised Anna Andreyevna," he began, faltering and hesitating a little, "I promised her … that is Anna Andreyevna and I agreed together to take some little orphan to bring up … some poor little girl, to have her in the house altogether, do you understand? For it's dull for us old people alone.

Only, you see, Anna Andreyevna has begun to set herself against it somehow. So you talk to her, you know, not from me, but as though it came from yourself … persuade her, do you understand? I've been meaning for a long time to ask you to persuade her to agree; you see, it's rather awkward for me to press her. But why talk about trifles! What's a child to me? I don't want one; perhaps just as a comfort … so as to hear a child's voice … but the fact is I'm doing this for my wife's sake — it'll be livelier for her than being alone with me. But all that's nonsense. Vanya, we shall be a long time getting there like this, you know; let's take a cab. It's a long walk, and Anna Andreyevna will have been expecting us."

It was half-past seven when we arrived.

CHAPTER XII

THE ICHMENYEVS were very fond of each other. They were closely united by love and years of habit. Yet Nikolay Sergeyitch was not only now, but had, even in former days, in their happiest times, always been rather reserved with his Anna Andreyevna, sometimes even surly, especially before other people. Some delicate and sensitive natures show a peculiar perversity, a sort of chaste dislike of expressing themselves, and expressing their tenderness even to the being dearest to them, not only before people but also in private — even more in private in fact; only at rare intervals their affection breaks out, and it breaks out more passionately and more impulsively the longer it has been restrained. This was rather how Ichmenyev had been with his Anna Andreyevna from their youth upwards. He loved and respected her beyond measure in spite of the fact that she was only a good-natured woman who was capable of nothing but loving him, and that he was sometimes positively vexed with her because in her simplicity she was often tactlessly open with him. But after Natasha had gone away they somehow became tenderer to one another; they were painfully conscious of being left all alone in the world. And though Nikolay Sergeyitch was sometimes extremely gloomy, they could not be apart for two hours at a time without distress and uneasiness. They had made a sort of tacit compact not to say a word about Natasha, as though she had passed out of existence. Anna Andreyevna did not dare to make any allusion to her in her husband's presence, though this restraint was very hard for her. She had long ago in her heart forgiven Natasha. It had somehow become an established custom that every time I came I should bring her news of her beloved and never-forgotten child.

The mother was quite ill if she did not get news for some time, and when I came with tidings she was interested in the smallest details, and inquired with trembling curiosity. My accounts relieved her heart; she almost died of fright once when Natasha had fallen ill, and was on the point of going to her herself. But this was an extreme case. At first she was not able to bring herself to express even to me a desire to see her daughter; and almost always after our talk, when she had extracted everything from me, she thought it needful to draw herself up before me and to declare that though she was interested in her daughter's fate, yet Natasha had behaved so

wickedly that she could never be forgiven. But all this was put on. There were times when Anna Andreyevna grieved hopelessly, shed tears, called Natasha by the fondest names before me, bitterly complained against Nikolay Sergeyitch, and began in his presence to drop hints, though with great circumspection, about some people's pride, about hard-heartedness, about our not being able to forgive injuries, and God's not forgiving the unforgiving; but she never went further than this in his presence. At such times her husband immediately got cross and sullen and would sit silent and scowling, or begin suddenly talking of something else very loudly and awkwardly, or finally go off to his own room, leaving us alone, and so giving Anna Andreyevna a chance to pour out her sorrows to me in tears and lamentations. He always went off to his own room like this when I arrived, sometimes scarcely leaving time to greet me, so as to give me a chance to tell Anna Andreyevna all the latest news of Natasha. He did the same thing now.

"I'm wet through," he said, as soon as he walked into the room. "I'll go to my room. And you, Vanya, stay here. Such a business he's been having with his lodgings. You tell her, I'll be back directly."

And he hurried away, trying not even to look at us, as though ashamed of having brought us together. On such occasions, and especially when he came back, he was always very curt and gloomy, both with me and Anna Andreyevna, even fault-finding, as though vexed and angry with himself for his own softness and consideration.

"You see how he is," said Anna Andreyevna, who had of late laid aside all her stiffness with me, and all her mistrust of me; "that's how he always is with me; and yet he knows we understand all his tricks. Why should he keep up a pretence with me? Am I a stranger to him? He's just the same about his daughter. He might forgive her, you know, perhaps he even wants to forgive her. God knows! He cries at night, I've heard him. But he keeps up outwardly. He's eaten up with pride. Ivan Petrovitch, my dear, tell me quick, where was he going?"

"Nikolay Sergeyitch? I don't know. I was going to ask you."

"I was dismayed when he went out. He's ill, you know, and in such weather, and so late! I thought it must be for something important; and what can be more important than what you know of? I thought this to myself, but I didn't dare to ask. Why, I daren't question him about anything nowadays. My goodness! I was simply terror-stricken on his account and on hers.

What, thought I, if he has gone to her? What if he's made up his mind to forgive her? Why, he's found out everything, he knows the latest news of her; I feel certain he knows it; but how the news gets to him I can't imagine. He was terribly depressed yesterday, and to-day too. But why don't you say something? Tell me, my dear, what has happened? I've been longing for you like an angel of God. I've been all eyes watching for you. Come, will the villain abandon Natasha?"

I told Anna Andreyevna at once all I knew. I was always completely open with her. I told her that things seemed drifting to a rupture between Natasha and Alyosha, and that this was more serious than their previous misunderstandings; that Natasha had sent me a note the day before, begging me to come this evening at nine o'clock, and so I had not intended to come and see them that evening. Nikolay Sergeyitch himself had brought me. I explained and told her minutely that the position was now altogether critical, that Alyosha's father, who had been back for a fortnight after an absence, would hear nothing and was taking Alyosha sternly in hand; but, what was most important of all, Alyosha seemed himself not disinclined to the proposed match, and it was said he was positively in love with the young lady. I added that I could not help guessing that Natasha's note was written in great agitation. She wrote that to-night everything would be decided, but what was to be decided I did not know. It was also strange that she had written yesterday but had only asked me to come this evening, and had fixed the hour-nine o'clock. And so I was bound to go, and as quickly as possible.

"Go, my dear boy, go by all means!" Anna Andreyevna urged me anxiously. "Have just a cup of tea as soon as he comes back…. Ach, they haven't brought the samovar! Matryona Why are you so long with samovar? She's a saucy baggage! … Then when you've drunk your tea, find some good excuse and get away. But be sure to come to-morrow and tell me everything. And run round early! Good heavens! Something dreadful may have happened already! Though how could things be worse than they are, when you come to think of it! Why, Nikolay Sergeyitch knows everything, my heart tells me he does. I hear a great deal through Matryona, and she through Agasha, and Agasha is the god-daughter of Marya Vassilyevna, who lives in the prince's house … but there, you know all that. My Nikolay was terribly angry to-day. I tried to say one thing and another and he almost shouted at me. And then he seemed sorry, said he

was short of money. Just as though he'd been making an outcry about money. You know our circumstances. After dinner he went to have a nap. I peeped at him through the chink (there's a chink in the door he doesn't know of). And he, poor dear, was on his knees, praying before the shrine. I felt my legs give way under me when I saw it. He didn't sleep, and he had no tea; he took up his hat and went out. He went out at five o'clock. I didn't dare question him: he'd have shouted at me. He's taken to shouting — generally at Matryona, but sometimes at me. And when he starts it makes my legs go numb, and there's a sinking at my heart. Of course it's foolishness, I know it's his foolishness, but still it frightens me. I prayed for a whole hour after he went out that God would send him some good thought. Where is her note? Show it me!"

I showed it. I knew that Anna Andreyevna cherished a secret dream that Alyosha, whom she called at one time a villain and at another a stupid heartless boy, would in the end marry Natasha, and that the prince, his father, would consent to it. She even let this out to me, though at other times she regretted it, and went back on her words. But nothing would have made her venture to betray her hopes before Nikolay Sergeyitch, though she knew her husband suspected them, and even indirectly reproached her for them more than once. I believe that he would have cursed Natasha and shut her out of his heart for ever if he had known of the possibility of such a marriage.

We all thought so at the time. He longed for his daughter with every fibre of his being, but he longed for her alone with every memory of Alyosha cast out of her heart. It was the one condition of forgiveness, and though it was not uttered in words it could be understood, and could not be doubted when one looked at him.

"He's a silly boy with no backbone, no backbone, and he's cruel, I always said so," Anna Andreyevna began again. "And they didn't know how to bring him up, so he's turned out a regular weathercock; he's abandoning her after all her love. What will become of her, poor child? And what can he have found in this new girl, I should like to know."

"I have heard, Anna Andreyevna," I replied, "that his proposed fiancee is a delightful girl. Yes, and Natalya Nikolaevna says the same thing about her."

"Don't you believe it!" the mother interrupted. "Delightful, indeed! You scribblers think every one's delightful if only she wears petticoats. As for

Natasha’s speaking well of her, she does that in the generosity of her heart. She doesn’t know how to control him; she forgives him everything, but she suffers herself. How often he has deceived her already. The cruel-hearted villains! I’m simply terrified, Ivan Petrovitch! They’re all demented with pride. If my good man would only humble himself, if he would forgive my poor darling and fetch her home! If only I could hug her, if I could look at her! Has she got thinner?”

“She has got thin, Anna Andreyevna.”

“My darling! I’m in terrible trouble, Ivan Petrovitch! All last night and all to-day I’ve been crying … but there! … I’ll tell you about it afterwards. How many times I began hinting to him to forgive her; I daren’t say it right out, so I begin to hint at it, in a tactful way. And my heart’s in a flutter all the time: I keep expecting him to get angry and curse her once for all. I haven’t heard a curse from him yet … well, that’s what I’m afraid of, that he’ll put his curse upon her. And what will happen then? God’s punishment falls on the child the father has cursed. So I’m trembling with terror every day. And you ought to be ashamed, too, Ivan Petrovitch, to think you’ve grown up in our family, and been treated like a son by both of us, and yet you can speak of her being delightful too. But their Marya Vassilyevna knows better. I may have done wrong, but I asked her in to coffee one day when my good man had gone out for the whole morning. She told me all the ins and outs of it. The prince, Alyosha’s father, is in shocking relations with this countess. They say the countess keeps reproaching him with not marrying her, but he keeps putting it off. This fine countess was talked about for her shameless behaviour while her husband was living. When her husband died she went abroad: she used to have all sorts of Italians and Frenchmen about her, and barons of some sort — it was there she caught Prince Pyotr Alexandrovitch. And meantime her stepdaughter, the child of her first husband, the spirit contractor, has been growing up. This countess, the stepmother, has spent all she had, but the stepdaughter has been growing up, and the two millions her father had left invested for her have been growing too. Now, they say, she has three millions. The prince has got wind of it, so he’s keen on the match for Alyosha. (He’s a sharp fellow! He won’t let a chance slip!) The count, their relative, who’s a great gentleman at court you remember, has given his approval too: a fortune of three millions is worth considering. ‘Excellent’, he said, ‘talk it over with the countess.’ So the prince told the countess of his wishes. She opposed it tooth and nail.

She’s an unprincipled woman, a regular termagant, they say! They say some people won’t receive her here; it’s very different from abroad. ‘No,’ she says, ‘you marry me, prince, instead of my stepdaughter’s marrying Alyosha.’ And the girl, they say, gives way to her stepmother in everything; she almost worships her and always obeys her. She’s a gentle creature, they say, a perfect angel! The prince sees how it is and tells the countess not to worry herself. ‘You’ve spent all your money,’ says he, ‘and your debts you can never pay. But as soon as your stepdaughter marries Alyosha there’ll be a pair of them; your innocent and my little fool. We’ll take them under our wing and be their guardians together. Then you’ll have plenty of money, What’s the good of you’re marrying me?’ He’s a sharp fellow, a regular mason! Six months ago the countess wouldn’t make up her mind to it, but since then they say they’ve been staying at Warsaw, and there they’ve come to an agreement. That’s what I’ve heard. All this Marya Vassilyevna told me from beginning to end. She heard it all on good authority. So you see it’s all a question of money and millions, and not her being delightful!”

Anna Andreyevna’s story impressed me. It fitted in exactly with all I had heard myself from Alyosha. When he talked of it he had stoutly declared that he would never marry for money.

But he had been struck and attracted by Katerina Fyodorovna. I had heard from Alyosha, too, that his father was contemplating marriage, though he denied all rumour of it to avoid irritating the countess prematurely. I have mentioned already that Alyosha was very fond of his father, admired him and praised him; and believed in him as though he were an oracle.

“She’s not of a count’s family, you know, the girl you call delightful!” Anna Andreyevna went on, deeply resenting my praise of the young prince’s future fiancee. “Why, Natasha would be a better match for him. She’s a spirit-dealer’s daughter, while Natasha is a well-born girl of a good old family. Yesterday (I forgot to tell you) my old man opened his box — you know, the wrought-iron one; he sat opposite me the whole evening, sorting out our old family papers. And he sat so solemnly over it. I was knitting a stocking, and I didn’t look at him; I was afraid to. When he saw I didn’t say a word he got cross, and called me himself, and he spent the whole evening telling me about our pedigree. And do you know, it seems that the Ichmenyevs were noblemen in the days of Ivan the Terrible, and that my family, the Shumilovs, were well-known even in the days of Tsar

Alexey Mihalovitch; we've the documents to prove it, and it's mentioned in Karamzin's history too, so you see, my dear boy, we're as good as other people on that side. As soon as my old man began talking to me I saw what was in his mind. It was clear he felt bitterly Natasha's being slighted. It's only through their wealth they're set above us. That robber, Pyotr Alexandrovitch, may well make a fuss about money; everyone knows he's a cold-hearted, greedy soul. They say he joined the Jesuits in secret when he was in Warsaw. Is it true?"

"It's a stupid rumour," I answered, though I could not help being struck by the persistence of this rumour.

But what she had told me of her husband's going over his family records was interesting. He had never boasted of his pedigree before.

"It's all the cruel-hearted villains!" Anna Andreyevna went on. "Well, tell me about my darling. Is she grieving and crying? Ach, it's time you went to her! (Matryona! She's a saucy baggage.) Have they insulted her? Tell me, Vanya?"

What could I answer her? The poor lady was in tears. I asked her what was the fresh trouble of which she had been about to tell me just now.

"Ach, my dear boy! As though we hadn't trouble enough! It seems our cup was not full enough! You remember, my dear, or perhaps you don't remember, I had a little locket set in gold — a keepsake, and in it a portrait of Natasha as a child. She was eight years old then, my little angel. We ordered it from a travelling artist at the time. But I see you've forgotten! He was a good artist. He painted her as a cupid. She'd such fair hair in those days, all fluffy. He painted her in a little muslin smock, so that her little body shows through, and she looked so pretty in it you couldn't take your eves off her. I begged the artist to put little wings on her, but he wouldn't agree. Well after all our dreadful troubles, I took it out of its case and hung it on a string round my neck; so I've been wearing it beside my cross, though I was afraid he might see it. You know he told me at the time to get rid of all her things out of the house, or burn them, so that nothing might remind us of her. But I must have her portrait to look at, anyway; sometimes I cry, looking at it, and it does me good. And another time when I'm alone I keep kissing it as though I were kissing her, herself. I call her fond names, and make the sign of the cross over it every night. I talk aloud to her when I'm alone, ask her a question and fancy she has answered, and ask her another. Och, Vanya, dear, it makes me sad to talk about it! Well, so I was

glad he knew nothing of the locket and hadn’t noticed it. But yesterday morning the locket was gone. The string hung loose. It must have worn through and I’d dropped it. I was aghast. I hunted and hunted high and low — it wasn’t to be found. Not a sign of it anywhere, it was lost! And where could it have dropped? I made sure I must have lost it in bed, and rummaged through everything. Nowhere! If it had come off and dropped, some one might have picked it up, and who could have found it except him or Matryona? One can’t think of it’s being Matryona, she’s devoted to me heart and soul (Matryona, are you going to bring that samovar?). I keep thinking what will happen if he’s found it!

I sit so sad and keep crying and crying and can’t keep back my tears. And Nikolay Sergeyitch is kinder and kinder to me as though he knows what I am grieving about, and is sorry for me.

‘Well I’ve been wondering, how could he tell? Hasn’t he perhaps really found the locket and thrown it out of the window? In anger he’s capable of it, you know. He’s thrown it out and now he’s sad about it himself and sorry he threw it out. I’ve been already with Matryona to look under the window — I found nothing. Every trace has vanished. I’ve been crying all night. It’s the first night I haven’t made the sign of the cross over her. Och, it’s a bad sign, Ivan Petrovitch, it’s a bad sign, it’s an omen of evil; for two days I’ve been crying without stopping. I’ve been expecting you, my dear, as an angel of God, if only to relieve my heart…” and the poor lady wept bitterly.

“Oh yes, I forgot to tell you,” she began suddenly, pleased at remembering. “Have you heard anything from him about an orphan girl?”

“Yes, Anna Andreyevna. He told me you had both thought of it, and agreed to take a poor girl, an orphan, to bring up. Is that true?”

“I’ve never thought of it, my dear boy, I’ve never thought of it; I don’t want any orphan girl. She’ll remind me of our bitter lot, our misfortune! I want no one but Natasha. She was my only child, and she shall remain the only one. But what does it mean that he should have thought of an orphan? What do you think, Ivan Petrovitch? Is it to comfort me, do you suppose, looking at my tears, or to drive his own daughter out of his mind altogether, and attach himself to another child? What did he say about me as you came along? How did he seem to you — morose, angry? Tss! Here he is! Afterwards, my dear, tell me afterwards…. Don’t forget to come to-morrow.”

CHAPTER XIII

THE OLD MAN came in. He looked at us with curiosity and as though ashamed of something, frowned and went up to the table.
“Where’s the samovar?” he asked. “Do you mean to say she couldn’t bring it till now?”

“It’s coming, my dear, it’s coming. Here, she’s brought it!” said Anna Andreyevna fussily.

Matryona appeared with the samovar as soon as she saw Nikolay Serge, as though she had been waiting to bring it till he came in. She was an old, tried and devoted servant, but the most self-willed and grumbling creature in the world, with an obstinate and stubborn character. She was afraid of Nikolay Sergeyitch and always curbed her tongue in his presence. But she made-up for it with Anna Andreyevna, was rude to her at every turn, and openly attempted to govern her mistress, though at the same time she had a warm and genuine affection for her and for Natasha. I had known Matryona in the old days at Ichmenyevka.

“Hm! … It’s not pleasant when one’s wet through and they won’t even get one tea,” the old man muttered.

Anna Andreyevna at once made a sign to me. He could not endure these mysterious signals; and though at the minute he tried not to look at us, one could see from his face that Anna Andreyevna had just signalled to me about him, and that he was fully aware of it.

“I have been to see about my case, Vanya,” he began suddenly.

“It’s a wretched business. Did I tell you? It’s going against me altogether. It appears I’ve no proofs; none of the papers I ought to have. My facts cannot be authenticated it seems. Hm!…”

He was speaking of his lawsuit with the prince, which was still dragging on, but had taken a very bad turn for Nikolay Sergevitch. I was silent, not knowing what to answer. He looked suspiciously at me.

“Well!” he brought out suddenly, as though irritated by our silence, “the quicker the better! They won’t make a scoundrel of me, even if they do decide I must pay. I have my conscience, so let them decide. Anyway, the case will be over; it will be settled. I shall be ruined … I’ll give up everything and go to Siberia.”

“Good heavens! What a place to go to! And why so far?” Anna Andreyevna could not resist saying.

“And here what are we near?” he asked gruffly, as though glad of the objection.

“Why, near people … anyway,” began Anna Andreyevna, and she glanced at me in distress.

“What sort of people?” he cried, turning his feverish eyes from me to her and back again. “What people? Robbers, slanderers, traitors? There are plenty such everywhere; don’t be uneasy, we shall find them in Siberia too. If you don’t want to come with me you can stay here. I won’t take you against your will.”

“Nikolay Sergeyitch, my dear! With whom should I stay without you? Why, I’ve no one but you in the whole …”

She faltered, broke off, and turned to me with a look of alarm, as though begging for help and support. The old man was irritated and was ready to take offence at anything; it was impossible to contradict him.

“Come now, Anna Andreyevna,” said I. “It’s not half as bad in Siberia as you think. If the worst comes to the worst and you have to sell Ichmenyevka, Nikolay Sergeyitch’s plan is very good in fact. In Siberia you might get a good private job, and then…”

“Well, you’re talking sense, Ivan, anyway. That’s just what I thought. I’ll give up everything and go away.”

“Well, that I never did expect,” cried Anna Andreyevna, flinging up her hands. “And you too, Vanya! I didn’t expect it of you! … Why, you’ve never known anything but kindness from us and now…”

“Ha, ha, ha! What else did you expect? Why, what are we to live upon, consider that! Our money spent, we’ve come to our last farthing. Perhaps you’d like me to go to Prince Pyotr Alexandrovitch and beg his pardon, eh?”

Hearing the prince’s name, Anna Andreyevna trembled with alarm.

The teaspoon in her hand tinkled against the saucer.

“Yes, speaking seriously,” the old man went on, working himself up with malicious, obstinate pleasure, “what do you think, Vanya? Shouldn’t I really go to him? Why go to Siberia? I’d much better comb my hair, put on my best clothes, and brush myself to-morrow; Anna Andreyevna will get me a new shirt-front (one can’t go to see a person like that without!), buy me gloves, to be the correct thing; and then I’ll go to his excellency: ‘Your

excellency, little father, benefactor! Forgive me and have pity on me! Give me a crust of bread! I've a wife and little children!…'Is that right, Anna Andreyevna? Is that what you want?"

"My dear; I want nothing! I spoke without thinking. Forgive me if I vexed you, only don't shout," she brought out, trembling more and more violently in her terror.

I am convinced that everything was topsy-turvy and aching in his heart at that moment, as he looked at his poor wife's tears and alarm. I am sure that he was suffering far more than she was, but he could not control himself. So it is sometimes with the most good-natured people of weak nerves, who in spite of their kindliness are carried away till they find enjoyment in their own grief and anger, and try to express themselves at any cost, even that of wounding some other innocent creature, always by preference the one nearest and dearest. A woman sometimes has a craving to feel unhappy and aggrieved, though she has no misfortune or grievance. There are many men like women in this respect, and men, indeed, by no means feeble, and who have very little that is feminine about them. The old man had a compelling impulse to quarrel, though he was made miserable by it himself.

I remember that the thought dawned on me at the time: hadn't he perhaps really before this gone out on some project such as Anna Andreyevna suspected? What if God had softened his heart, and he had really been going to Natasha, and had changed his mind on the way, or something had gone wrong and made him give up his intentions, as was sure to happen; and so he had returned home angry and humiliated, ashamed of his recent feelings and wishes, looking out for someone on whom to vent his anger for his weakness, and pitching on the very ones whom he suspected of sharing the same feeling and wishes. Perhaps when he wanted to forgive his daughter, he pictured the joy and rapture of his poor Anna Andreyevna, and when it came to nothing she was of course the first to suffer for it.

But her look of hopelessness, as she trembled with fear before him, touched him. He seemed ashamed of his wrath, and for a minute controlled himself. We were all silent. I was trying not to look at him. But the good moment did not last long. At all costs he must express himself by some outburst, or a curse if need be.

"You see, Vanya," he said suddenly, "I'm sorry. I didn't want to speak, but the time has come when I must speak out openly without evasion, as

every straightforward man ought … do you understand, Vanya? I'm glad you have come, and so I want to say aloud in your presence so that others may hear that I am sick of all this nonsense, all these tears, and sighs, an misery. What I have torn out of my heart, which bleeds and aches perhaps, will never be back in my heart again. Yes! I've said so and I'll act on it. I'm speaking of what happened six months ago — you understand, Vanya? And I speak of this so openly, so directly, that you may make no mistake about my words," he added, looking at me with blazing eyes and obviously avoiding his wife's frightened glances. "I repeat: this is nonsense; I won't have it!… It simply maddens me that everyone looks upon me as capable of having such a low, weak feeling, as though I were a fool, as though I were the most abject scoundrel … they imagine I am going mad with grief… Nonsense! I have castaway, I have forgotten my old feelings! I have no memory of it! No! no! no! and no!…"

He jumped up from his chair, and struck the table so that the cups tinkled.

"Nicholay Sergeyitch! Have you no feeling for Anna Andreyevna! Look what you are doing to her!" I said, unable to restrain myself and looking at him almost with indignation. But it was only pouring oil on the flames.

"No, I haven't!" he shouted, trembling and turning white. "I haven't, for no one feels for me! For in my own house they're all plotting against me in my dishonour and on the side of my depraved daughter, who deserves my curse, and an punishment! …"

"Nikolay Sergeyitch, don't curse her! … Anything you like only don't curse our daughter!" screamed Anna Andreyevna.

"I will curse her!" shouted the old man, twice as loud as before; "because, insulted and dishonoured as I am, I am expected to go to the accursed girl and ask her forgiveness. Yes, yes, that's it! I'm tormented in this way in my own house day and night, day and night, with tears and sighs and stupid hints! They try to soften me…. Look, Vanya, look," he added, with trembling hands hastily taking papers out of his side-pocket, "here are the notes of our case. It's made out that I'm a thief, that I'm a cheat, that I have robbed my benefactor!… I am discredited, disgraced, because of her! There, there, look, look! …"

And he began polling out of the side-pocket of his coat various papers, and throwing them on the table one after another, hunting impatiently amongst them for the one he wanted to show me; but, as luck would have it,

the one he sought was not forthcoming. Impatiently he pulled out of his pocket all he had clutched in his hand, and suddenly something fell heavily on the table with a clink. Anna Andreyevna uttered a shriek. It was the lost locket.

I could scarcely believe my eyes. The blood rushed to the old man's head and flooded his cheeks; he started. Anna Andreyevna stood with clasped hands looking at him imploringly. Her face beamed with joyful hope. The old man's flush, his shame before us…. Yes, she was not mistaken, she knew now how her locket had been lost!

She saw that he had picked it up, had been delighted at his find, and, perhaps, quivering with joy, had jealously hidden it from all eyes; that in solitude, unseen by all, he had gazed at the face of his adored child with infinite love, had gazed and could not gaze enough; that perhaps like the poor mother he had shut himself away from everyone to talk to his precious Natasha, imagining her replies and answering them himself; and at night with agonizing grief, with suppressed sobs, he had caressed and kissed the dear image, and instead of curses invoked forgiveness and blessings on her whom he would not see and cursed before others.

"My dear, so you love her still!" cried Anna Andreyevna, unable to restrain herself further in the presence of the stern father who had just cursed her Natasha.

But no sooner had he heard her exclamation than an insane fury flashed in his eyes. He snatched up the locket, threw it violently on the ground, and began furiously stamping on it.

"I curse you, I curse you, for ever and ever!" he shouted hoarsely, gasping for breath. "For ever! For ever!"

"Good God!" cried the mother. "Her! My Natasha! Her little face! … trampling on it! Trampling on it! Tyrant cruel, unfeeling, proud man!"

Hearing his wife's wail the frantic old man stopped short, horrified at what he was doing. All at once he snatched up the locket from the floor and rushed towards the door, but he had not taken two steps when he fell on his knees, and dropping his arms on the sofa before him let his head fall helplessly.

He sobbed like a child, like a woman. Sobs wrung his breast as though they would rend it. The threatening old man became all in a minute weaker than a child. Oh, now he could not have cursed her; now he felt no shame before either of us, and in a sudden rush of love covered with kisses the

portrait he had just been trampling underfoot. It seemed as though all his tenderness, all his love for his daughter so long restrained, burst out now with irresistible force and shattered his whole being.

“Forgive, forgive her!” Anna Andreyevna exclaimed, sobbing, bending over him and embracing him, “Bring her back to her home, my dear, and at the dread day of judgement God will reward you for your mercy and humility! …”

“No, no! Not for anything! Never!” he exclaimed in a husky choking voice, “never! never!”

CHAPTER XIV

IT WAS LATE, ten o’clock, when I got to Natasha’s. She was living at that time in Fontanka, near the Semyonov bridge, on the fourth floor, in the dirty block of buildings belonging to the merchant Kolotushkin. When first she left home she had lived for a time with Alyosha in a very nice flat, small, but pretty and convenient, on the third storey of a house in Liteyny. But the young prince’s resources were soon exhausted. He did not become a music teacher, but borrowed money and was soon very heavily in debt. He spent his money on decorating the flat and on making presents to Natasha, who tried to check his extravagance, scolded him, and sometimes even cried about it. Alyosha, with his emotional and impressionable nature, revelled sometimes for a whole week in dreams of how he would make her a present and how she would receive it, making of this a real treat for himself, and rapturously telling me beforehand of his dreams and anticipations. Then he was so downcast at her tears and reproofs that one felt sorry for him, and as time went on these presents became the occasion of reproaches, bitterness, and quarrels. Moreover, Alyosha spent a great deal of money without telling Natasha, was led away by his companions and was unfaithful to her. He visited all sorts of Josephines and Minnas; though at the same time he loved her dearly. His love for her was a torment to him. He often came to see me depressed and melancholy, declaring that he was not worth Natasha’s little finger, that he was coarse and wicked, incapable of understanding her and unworthy of her love. He was to some extent right. There was no sort of equality between them; he felt like a child compared with her, and she always looked upon him as a child.

He repented with tears of his relations with Josephine, while he besought me not to speak of them to Natasha. And when, timid and trembling after these open confessions, he went back to her with me (insisting on my coming, declaring that he was afraid to look at her after what he had done, and that I was the one person who could help him through), Natasha knew from the first glance at him what was the matter. She was terribly jealous, and I don’t know how it was she always forgave him all his lapses. This was how it usually happened: Alyosha would go in with me, timidly address her, and look with timid tenderness into her eyes.

She guessed at once that he had been doing wrong, but showed no sign of it, was never the first to begin on the subject, on the contrary, always redoubled her caresses and became tenderer and more lively — and this was not acting or premeditated strategy on her part. No; for her fine nature there was a sort of infinite bliss in forgiving and being merciful; as though in the very process of forgiving Alyosha she found a peculiar, subtle charm. It is true that so far it was only the question of Josephines. Seeing her kind and forgiving, Alyosha could not restrain himself and at once confessed the whole story without being asked any questions — to relieve his heart and "to be the same as before," as she said.

When he had received her forgiveness he grew ecstatic at once, sometimes even cried with joy and emotion kissed and embraced her. Then at once his spirits rose, and he would begin with childlike openness giving her a full account of his adventures with Josephine; he smiled and laughed, blessed Natasha, and praised her to the skies, and the evening ended happily and merrily. When all his money was spent he began selling things.

As Natasha insisted upon it, a cheap little flat in Fontanka was found for her. Their things went on being sold; Natasha now even sold her clothes and began looking for work. When Alyosha heard of it his despair knew no bounds, he cursed himself, cried out that he despised himself, but meantime did nothing to improve the position. By now this last resource was exhausted; nothing was left for Natasha but work, and that was very poorly paid!

At first when they lived together, there had been a violent quarrel between Alyosha and his father. Prince Valkovsky's designs at the time to marry his son to Katerina Fyodorovna Filimonov, the countess's stepdaughter, were so far only a project. But the project was a cherished one. He took Alyosha to see the young lady, coaxed him to try and please her, and attempted to persuade him by arguments and severity. But the plan fell through owing to the countess. Then Alyosha's father began to shut his eyes to his son's affair with Natasha, leaving it to time.

Knowing Alyosha's fickleness and frivolity he hoped that the love affair would soon be over. As for the possibility of his marrying Natasha, the prince had till lately ceased to trouble his mind about it. As for the lovers they put off the question till a formal reconciliation with his father was possible, or vaguely till some change of circumstances. And Natasha was evidently unwilling to discuss the subject. Alyosha told me in secret that his

father was in a way rather pleased at the whole business. He was pleased at the humiliation of Ichmenyev. For form's sake, he kept up a show of displeasure with his son, decreased his by no means liberal allowance (he was exceedingly stingy with him), and threatened to stop even that. But he soon went away to Poland in pursuit of the countess, who had business there. He was still as actively set on his project of the match. For though Alyosha was, it is true, rather young to be married, the girl was very wealthy, and it was too good a chance to let slip. The prince at last attained his object. The rumour reached us that the match was at last agreed upon. At the time I am describing, the prince had only just returned to Petersburg. He met his son affectionately, but the persistence of Alyosha's connexion with Natasha was an unpleasant surprise to him. He began to have doubts, to feel nervous. He sternly and emphatically insisted on his son's breaking it off, but soon hit upon a much more effectual mode of attack, and carried off Alyosha to the countess. Her step-daughter, though she was scarcely more than a child, was almost a beauty, gay, clever, and sweet, with a heart of rare goodness and a candid, uncorrupted soul. The prince calculated that the lapse of six months must have had some effect, that Natasha could no longer have the charm of novelty, and that his son would not now look at his proposed fiancee with the same eyes as he had six months before. He was only partly right in his reckoning … Alyosha certainly was attracted. I must add that the father became all at once extraordinarily affectionate to him (though he still refused to give him money). Alyosha felt that his father's greater warmth covered an unchanged, inflexible determination, and he was unhappy — but not so unhappy as he would have been if he had not seen Katerina Fyodorovna every day. I knew that he had not shown himself to Natasha for five days. On my way to her from the Ichmenyevs I guessed uneasily what she wanted to discuss with me. I could see a light in her window a long way off. It had long been arranged between us that she should put a candle in the window if she were in great and urgent need of me, so that if I happened to pass by (and this did happen nearly every evening) I might guess from the light in the window that I was expected and she needed me. Of late she had often put the candle in the window…

CHAPTER XV

I FOUND NATASHA ALONE. She was slowly walking up and down the room, with her hands clasped on her bosom, lost in thought. A samovar stood on the table almost burnt out. It had been got ready for me long before. With a smile she held out her hand to me without speaking. Her face was pale and had an expression of suffering. There was a look of martyrdom, tenderness, patience, in her smile. Her clear blue eyes seemed to have grown bigger, her hair looked thicker from the wanness and thinness of her face.

“I began to think you weren’t coming,” she said, giving me her hand. “I was meaning to send Mavra to inquire; I was afraid you might be ill again.”

“No, I’m not ill. I was detained. I’ll tell you directly. But what’s the matter, Natasha, what’s happened?”

“Nothing’s happened,” she answered, surprised. “Why?”

“Why, you wrote … you wrote yesterday for me to come, and fixed the hour that I might not come before or after; and that’s not what you usually do.”

“Oh, yes! I was expecting him yesterday.”

“Why, hasn’t be been here yet?”

“No. I thought if he didn’t come I must talk things over with you,” she added, after a pause

“And this evening, did you expect him?”

“No, this evening he’s there.”

“What do you think, Natasha, won’t he come back at all?”

“Of course he’ll come,” she answered, looking at me with peculiar earnestness. She did not like the abruptness of my question. We lapsed into silence, walking up and down the room.

“I’ve been expecting you all this time, Vanya”, she began again with a smile. “And do you know what I was doing? I’ve been walking up and down, reciting poetry. Do you remember the bells, the

winter road, ‘My samovar boils on the table of oak’…? We read it together: “The snowstorm is spent; there’s a glimmer of light From the millions of dim watching eyes of the night. “And then:

“There’s the ring of a passionate voice in my ears

In the song of the bell taking part;

Oh, when will my loved one return from afar
To rest on my suppliant heart?
My life is no life! Rosy beams of the dawn
Are at play on the pane’s icy screen;
My samovar boils on my table of oak,
With the bright crackling fire the dark corner awoke,
And my bed with chintz curtains is seen.

“How fine that is. How tormenting those verses are, Vanya. And what a vivid, fantastic picture! It’s just a canvas with a mere pattern chalked on it. You can embroider what you like! Two sensations: the earliest, and the latest. That samovar, that chintz curtain — how homelike it all is. It’s like some little cottage in our little town at home; I feel as though I could see that cottage: a new one made of logs not yet weather-boarded …

And then another picture:

“Of a sudden I hear the same voice ringing out
With the bell; its sad accents I trace;
Oh, where’s my old friend? And I fear he’ll come in
With eager caress and embrace.
What a life, I endure! But my tears are in vain.
Oh, how dreary my room! Through the chinks the wind
blows
And outside the house but one cherry-tree grows,
Perhaps that has perished by now though — who knows?
It’s hid by the frost on the pane.
The flowers on the curtain have lost their gay tone,
And I wander sick; all my kinsfolk I shun, There’s no one to scold me or love me, not one,
The old woman grumbles alone….

‘I wander sick.’ That sick is so well put in. ‘There’s no one to scold me.’ That tenderness, what softness in that line; and what agonies of memory, agonies one has caused oneself, and one broods over them. Heavens, how fine it is! How true it is! …”

She ceased speaking, as though struggling with a rising spasm in her throat.

“Dear Vanya!” she said a minute later, and she paused again, as though she had forgotten what she meant to say, or had spoken without thinking, from a sudden feeling.

Meanwhile we still walked up and down the room. A lamp burned before the ikon. Of late Natasha had become more and more devout, and did not like one to speak of it to her.

“Is to-morrow a holiday?” I asked. “Your lamp is lighted.”

“No, it’s not a holiday … but, Vanya, sit down. You must be tired. Will you have tea? I suppose you’ve not had it yet?”

“Let’s sit down, Natasha. I’ve had tea already.”

“Where have you come from?”

“From them.”

That’s how we always referred to her old home.

“From them? How did you get time? Did you go of your own accord? Or did they ask you?”

She besieged me with questions. Her face grew still paler with emotion. I told her in detail of my meeting with her father, my conversation with her mother, and the scene with the locket.

I told her in detail, describing every shade of feeling. I never concealed anything from her, She listened eagerly, catching every word I uttered, the tears glittered in her eyes. The scene with the locket affected her deeply.

“Stay, stay, Vanya,” she said, often interrupting my story. “Tell me more exactly everything, everything as exactly as possible; you don’t tell me exactly enough …”

I repeated it again and again, replying every moment to her continual questions about the details.

“And you really think he was coming to see me?”

“I don’t know, Natasha, and in fact I can’t make up my mind; that he grieves for you and loves you is clear; but that he was coming to you is … is …”

“And he kissed the locket?” she interrupted. “What did he say when he kissed it?”

“It was incoherent. Nothing but exclamations; he called you by the tenderest names; he called for you.”

“Called for me?”

“Yes.”

She wept quietly.

“Poor things!” she said. “And if he knows everything,” she added after a brief silence, “it’s no wonder…. He hears a great deal about Alyosha’s father, too.”

“Natasha,” I said timidly, “let us go to them.”

“When?” she asked, turning pale and almost getting up from her chair.

She thought I was urging her to go at once.

“No, Vanya,” she added, putting her two hands on my shoulders, and smiling sadly; “no, dear, that’s what you’re always saying, but…we’d better not talk about it.”

“Will this horrible estrangement never be ended?” I cried mournfully. “Can you be so proud that you won’t take the first step? It’s for you to do it; you must make the first advance.

Perhaps your father’s only waiting for that to forgive you…. He’s your father; he has been injured by you! Respect his pride — it’s justifiable, it’s natural! You ought to do it. Only try, and he will forgive you unconditionally.”

“Unconditionally! That’s impossible. And don’t reproach me, Vanya, for nothing. I’m thinking of it day and night, and I think of it now. There’s not been a day perhaps since I left them that I haven’t thought of it. And how often we have talked about it! You know yourself it’s impossible.”

“Try!”

“No, my dear, it’s impossible. If I were to try I should only make him more bitter against me. There’s no bringing back what’s beyond recall. And you know what it is one can never bring back? One can never bring back those happy, childish days I spent with them. If my father forgave me he would hardly know me now. He loved me as a little girl; a grown-up child. He admired my childish simplicity. He used to pat me on the head just as when I was a child of seven and used to sit upon his knee and sing him my little childish songs. From my earliest childhood up to the last day he used to come to my bed and bless me for the night. A month before our troubles he bought me some ear-rings as a secret (but I knew all about it), and was as pleased as a child, imagining how delighted I should be with the present, and was awfully angry with everyone, and with me especially, when he found out that I had known all about him buying the ear-rings for a long time. Three days before I went away he noticed that I was depressed, and he became so depressed himself that it made him ill, and — would you believe it — to divert my mind he proposed taking tickets for the theatre! … Yes, indeed, he thought that would set me right. I tell you he knew and loved me as a little girl, and refused even to think that I should one day be a woman… It’s never entered his head. If I were to go home now he would

not know me. Even if he did forgive me he'd meet quite a different person now. I'm not the same; I'm not a child now. I have gone through a great deal. Even if he were satisfied with me he still would sigh for his past happiness, and grieve that I am not the same as I used to be when he loved me as a child. The past always seems best! It's remembered with anguish! Oh, how good the past was, Vanya!" she cried, carried away by her own words, and interrupting herself with this exclamation which broke painfully from her heart.

"That's all true that you say, Natasha," I said. "So he will have to learn to know and love you afresh. To know you especially. He will love you, of course. Surely you can't think that he's incapable of knowing and understanding you, he, with his heart?"

"Oh, Vanya, don't be unfair! What is there to understand in me? I didn't mean that. You see, there's something else: father's love is jealous, too; he's hurt that all began and was settled with Alyosha without his knowledge, that he didn't know it and failed to see it. He knows that he did not foresee it, and he puts down the unhappy consequences of our love and my flight to my 'ungrateful' secretiveness. I did not come to him at the beginning. I did not afterwards confess every impulse of my heart to him; on the contrary I hid it in myself. I concealed it from him and I assure you, Vanya, this is secretly a worse injury, a worse insult to him than the facts themselves — that I left them and have abandoned myself to my lover. Supposing he did meet me now like a father, warmly and affectionately, yet the seed of discord would remain. The next day, or the day after, there would be disappointments, misunderstandings, reproaches.

What's more, he won't forgive without conditions, even if I say — and say it truly from the bottom of my heart — that I understand how I have wounded him and how badly I've behaved to him. And though it will hurt me if he won't understand how much all this happiness with Alyosha has cost me myself, what miseries I have been through, I will stifle my feelings, I will put up with anything — but that won't be enough for him. He will insist on an impossible atonement; he will insist on my cursing my past, cursing Alyosha and repenting of my love for him. He wants what's impossible, to bring back the past and to erase the last six months from our life. But I won't curse anyone, and I can't repent. It's no one's doing; it just happened so…. No, Vanya, it can't be now. The time has not come."

"When will the time come?"

“I don’t know… . We shall have to work out our future happiness by suffering; pay for it somehow by fresh miseries. Everything is purified by suffering … Oh, Vanya, how much pain there is in the world!”

I was silent and looked at her thoughtfully.

“Why do you look at me like that, Alyosha — I mean Vanya!” she said, smiling at her own mistake.

“I am looking at your smile, Natasha. Where did you get it? You used not to smile like that.”

“Why, what is there in my smile?

“The old childish simplicity is still there, it’s true…. But when you smile it seems as though your heart were aching dreadfully. You’ve grown thinner, Natasha, and your hair seems thicker…. What dress have you got on? You used to wear that at home, didn’t you?”

“How you love me, Vanya,” she said, looking at me affectionately. “And what about you? What are you doing? How are things going with you?”

“Just the same, I’m still writing my novel. But it’s difficult, I can’t get on. The inspiration’s dried up. I dare say I could knock it off somehow, and it might turn out interesting. But it’s a pity to spoil a good idea. It’s a favourite idea of mine. But it must be ready in time for the magazine. I’ve even thought of throwing up the novel, and knocking off a short story, something light and graceful, and without a trace of pessimism. Quite without a trace…. Everyone ought to be cheerful and happy.”

“You’re such a hard worker, you poor boy! And how about Smith?”

“But Smith’s dead.”

“And he hasn’t haunted you? I tell you seriously, Vanya, you’re ill and your nerves are out of order; you’re always lost in such dreams. When you told me about taking that room I noticed it in you. So the room’s damp, not nice?”

“Yes, I had an adventure there this evening…. But I’ll tell you about it afterwards.”

She had left off listening and was sitting plunged in deep thought.

“I don’t know how I could have left them then. I was in a fever,” she added at last, looking at me with an expression that did not seem to expect an answer.

If I had spoken to her at that moment she would not have heard me.

“Vanya,” she said in a voice hardly audible, “I asked you to come for a reason.”

“What is it?”

“I am parting from him.”

“You have parted, or you’re going to part?”

“I must put an end to this life. I asked you to come that I might tell you everything, all, all that has been accumulating, and that I’ve hidden from you till now.”

This was always how she began, confiding to me her secret intentions, and it almost always turned out that I had learnt the whole secret from her long before.

“Ach, Natasha, I’ve heard that from you a thousand times, Of course it’s impossible for you to go on living together. Your relation is such a strange one. You have nothing in common. But will you have the strength?”

“It’s only been an idea before, Vanya, but now I have quite made up my mind. I love him beyond everything, and yet it seems I am his worst enemy. I shall ruin his future. I must set him free. He can’t marry me; he hasn’t the strength to go against his father. I don’t want to bind him either. And so I’m really glad he has fallen in love with the girl they are betrothing him to. It will make the parting easier for him. I ought to do it! It’s my duty… If I love him I ought to sacrifice everything for him. I ought to prove my love for him; it’s my duty! Isn’t it?”

“But you won’t persuade him, you know”

“I’m not going to persuade him. I shall be just the same with him if he comes in this minute. But I must find some means to make it easier for him to leave me without a conscience-prick. That’s what worries me, Vanya. Help me. Can’t you advise something?”

“There is only one way,” I said: “to leave off loving him altogether and fall in love with someone else. But I doubt whether even that will do it; surely you know his character. Here he’s not been to see you for five days. Suppose he had left you altogether. You’ve only to write that you are leaving him, and he’d run to you at once.”

“Why do you dislike him, Vanya?”

“I?”

“Yes, you, you! You’re his enemy, secret and open. You can’t speak of him without vindictiveness. I’ve noticed a thousand times that it’s your greatest pleasure to humiliate him and blacken him! Yes, blacken him, it’s the truth!”

“And you’ve told me so a thousand times already. Enough, Natasha, let’s drop this conversation.”

“I’ve been wanting to move into another lodging,” she began again after a silence. “Don’t be angry, Vanya.”

“Why, he’d come to another lodging, and I assure you I’m not angry.”

“Love, a new strong love, might hold him back. If he came back to me it would only be for a moment, don’t you think?”

“I don’t know, Natasha. Everything with him is so inconsistent. He wants to marry that girl, and to love you, too. He’s somehow able to do all that at once.”

“If I knew for certain that he loved her I would make up my mind … Vanya! Don’t hide anything from me! Do you know something

you don’t want to tell me?”

She looked at me with an uneasy, searching gaze.

“I know nothing, my dear. I give you my word of honour; I’ve always been open with you. But I’ll tell you what I do think: very likely he’s not nearly so much in love with the countess’s stepdaughter as we suppose. It’s nothing but attraction ….”

“You think so, Vanya? My God, if I were sure of that! Oh, how I should like to see him at this moment, simply to look at him! I should find out everything from his face! But he doesn’t come! He doesn’t come!”

“Surely you don’t expect him, Natasha?”

“No, he’s with her; I know. I sent to find out. How I should like to have a look at her, too…. Listen, Vanya, I’m talking nonsense, but is it really impossible for me to see her, is it impossible to meet her anywhere? What do you think?”

She waited anxiously to hear what I should say.

“You might see her. But simply to see her wouldn’t amount to much.”

“It would be enough for me only to see her; I should be able to tell then, for myself. Listen, I have become so stupid, you know. I walk up and down, up and down, here, always alone, always alone, always thinking; thoughts come rushing like a whirlwind! It’s so horrible! One thing I’ve thought of, Vanya; couldn’t you get to know her? You know the countess admired your novel (you said so yourself at the time). You sometimes go to Prince R—’s evenings; she’s sometimes there. Manage to be presented to her. Or perhaps Alyosha could introduce you. Then you could tell me all about her.”

“Natasha, dear, we’ll talk of that later. Tell me, do you seriously think you have the strength to face a separation? Look at yourself now; you’re not calm.”

“I … shall … have!” she answered, hardly audibly. “Anything for him. My whole life for his sake. But you know, Vanya, I can’t bear his being with her now, and having forgotten me; he is sitting by her, talking, laughing, as he used to sit here, do you remember? He’s looking into her eyes; he always does look at people like that — and it never occurs to him that I am here … with you.”

She broke off without finishing and looked at me in despair.

“Why, Natasha, only just now you were saying …”

“Let’s separate both at once, of our own accord,” she interrupted with flashing eyes. “I will give him my blessing for that … but it’s hard, Vanya, that he should forget me first! Ah, Vanya, what agony it is! I don’t understand myself. One thinks one thing, but it’s different when it comes to doing it. What will become of me!”

“Hush, hush, Natasha, calm yourself.”

“And now it’s five days. Every hour, every minute…. If I sleep I dream of nothing but him, nothing but him! I tell you what, Vanya, let’s go there. You take me!”

“Hush, Natasha!

“Yes, we will go! I’ve only been waiting for you! I’ve been thinking about it for the last three days. That was what I meant in my letter to you…. You must take me, you mustn’t refuse me this… I’ve been expecting you … for three days…. There’s a party there this evening…. He’s there … let us go!”

She seemed almost delirious. There was a noise in the passage Mavra seemed to be wrangling with some one.

“Stay, Natasha, who’s that?” I asked. “Listen.”

She listened with an incredulous smile, and suddenly turned fearfully white.

“My God! Who’s there?” she said, almost inaudibly.

She tried to detain me, but I went into the passage to Mavra. Yes! It actually was Alyosha. He was questioning Mavra about something. She refused at first to admit him.

“Where have you turned up from?” she asked, with an air of authority. “Well, what have you been up to? All right, then, go in, go in! You won’t

come it over me with your butter! Go in! I wonder what you've to say for yourself!"

"I'm not afraid of anyone! I'm going in!" said Alyosha, somewhat disconcerted, however.

"Well, go in then! You're a sauce-box!"

"Well, I'm going in! Ah! you're here, too!" he said, catching sight of me. "How nice it is that you're here Well, here I am, you see…. What had I better do?"

"Simply go in," I answered. "What are you afraid of?"

"I'm not afraid of anything, I assure you, for upon my word I'm not to blame. You think I'm to blame? You'll see; I'll explain it directly. Natasha, can I come in?" he cried with a sort of assumed boldness, standing before the closed door. No one answered.

"What's the matter?" he asked uneasily.

"Nothing; she was in there just now," I answered. "Can anything …"

Alyosha opened the door cautiously and looked timidly about the room. There was no one to be seen.

Suddenly he caught sight of her in the corner, between the cupboard and the window. She stood as though in hiding, more dead than alive. As I recall it now I can't help smiling. Alyosha went up to her slowly and warily.

"Natasha, what is it? How are you, Natasha?" he brought out timidly, looking at her with a sort of dismay.

"Oh, it's all right!" she answered in terrible confusion, as though she were in fault. "You … will you have some tea?"

"Natasha, listen." Alyosha began, utterly overwhelmed.

"You're convinced perhaps that I'm to blame. But I'm not, not a bit. You'll see; I'll tell you directly."

"What for?" Natasha whispered. "No, no, you needn't…. Come, give me your hand and … it's over … the same as before… ."

And she came out of the corner. A flush began to come into her cheeks. She looked down as though she were afraid to glance at Alyosha.

"Good God!" he cried ecstatically. "If I really were to blame I shouldn't dare look at her after that. Look, look!" he exclaimed, turning to me, "she thinks I am to blame; everything's against me; all appearances are against me! I haven't been here for five days! There are rumours that I'm with my betrothed — and what? She has forgiven me already! Already she says, 'Give me your hand and it's over'! Natasha, my darling, my angel! It's not

my fault, and you must know that! Not the least little bit! Quite the contrary! Quite the contrary “But … but you were to be there now…. You were invited there now …. How is it you’re here? Wh-what time is it?”

“Half-past ten! I have been there … but I said I wasn’t well and came away — and — and it’s the first time, the first time I’ve been free these five days. It’s the first time I’ve been able to tear myself away and come to you, Natasha. That is, I could have come before, but I didn’t on purpose. And why? You shall know directly. I’ll explain; that’s just what I’ve come for, to explain. Only this time I’m really not a bit to blame, not a bit, not a bit!”

Natasha raised her head and looked at him…. But the eyes that met her were so truthful, his face was so full of joy, sincerity and good-humour, that it was impossible to disbelieve him. I expected that they would cry out and rush into each other’s arms, as had often happened before at such reconciliations. But Natasha seemed overcome by her happiness; she let her head sink on her breast and … began crying softly…. Then Alyosha couldn’t restrain himself. He threw himself at her feet.

He kissed her hands, her feet. He seemed frantic. I pushed an easy-chair towards her. She sank into it. Her legs were giving way beneath her.

PART II

CHAPTER I

A MINUTE LATER we were all laughing as though we were crazy.
“Let me explain; let me explain!” cried Alyosha, his ringing voice rising above our laughter. “They think it’s just as usual …that I’ve come with some nonsense…. I say, I’ve something most interesting to tell you. But will you ever be quiet?”

He was extremely anxious to tell his story. One could see from his face that he had important news. But the dignified air he assumed in his naive pride at the possession of such news tickled Natasha at once. I could not help laughing too. And the angrier he was with us the more we laughed. Alyosha’s vexation and then childish despair reduced us at last to the condition of Gogol’s midshipman who roared with laughter if one held up one’s finger. Mavra, coming out of the kitchen, stood in the doorway and looked at us with grave indignation, vexed that Alyosha had not come in for a good “wigging” from Natasha, as she had been eagerly anticipating for the last five days, and that we were all so merry instead.

At last Natasha, seeing that our laughter was hurting Alyosha’s feelings, left off laughing.

“What do you want to tell us?” she asked.

“Well, am I to set the samovar?” asked Mavra, interrupting Alyosha without the slightest ceremony.

“Be off, Mavra, be off!” he cried, waving his hands at her, in a hurry to get rid of her. “I’m going to tell you everything that has happened, is happening, and is going to happen, because I know all about it. I see, my friends, you want to know where I’ve been for the last five days — that’s what I want to tell you, but you won’t let me. To begin with, I’ve been deceiving you all this time, Natasha, I’ve been deceiving you for ever so long, and that’s the chief thing.”

“Deceiving me?”

“Yes, deceiving you for the last month; I had begun it before my father came back. Now the time has come for complete openness. A month ago,

before father came back, I got an immense letter from him, and I said nothing to either of you about it. In his letter he told me, plainly and simply — and, I assure you, in such a serious tone that I was really alarmed — that my engagement was a settled thing, that my fiancee was simply perfection; that of course I wasn't good enough for her, but that I must marry her all the same, and so I must be prepared to put all this nonsense out of my head, and so on, and so on — we know, of course, what he means by nonsense. Well, that letter I concealed from you."

"You didn't!" Natasha interposed. "See how he flatters himself! As a matter of fact he told us all about it at once. I remember how obedient and tender you were all at once, and wouldn't leave my side, as though you were feeling guilty about something, and you told us the whole letter in fragments."

"Impossible; the chief point I'm sure I didn't tell you. Perhaps you both guessed something, but that's your affair. I didn't tell you. I kept it secret and was fearfully unhappy about it."

"I remember, Alyosha, you were continually asking my advice and told me all about it, a bit at a time, of course, as though it were an imaginary case," I added, looking at Natasha.

"You told us everything! Don't brag, please," she chimed in. "As though you could keep anything secret! Deception is not your strong point. Even Mavra knew all about it. Didn't you, Mavra?"

"How could I help it?" retorted Mavra, popping her head in at the door. " You'd told us all about it before three days were over. You couldn't deceive a child."

"Foo! How annoying it is to talk to you! You're doing all this for spite, Natasha! And you're mistaken too, Mavra. I remember, I was like a madman then. Do you remember, Mavra?"

"To be sure I do, you're like a madman now."

"No, no, I don't mean that. Do you remember, we'd no money then and you went to pawn my silver cigar-case. And what's more, Mavra, let me tell you you're forgetting yourself and being horribly rude to me. It's Natasha has let you get into such ways. Well, suppose I did tell you all about it at the time, bit by bit (I do remember it now), but you don't know the tone of the letter, the tone of it. And the tone was what mattered most in the letter, let me tell you. That's what I'm talking about."

"Why, what was the tone?" asked Natasha.

“Listen, Natasha, you keep asking questions as though you were in fun. Don’t joke about it. I assure you that it’s very important. It was in such a tone that I was in despair. My father had never spoken to me like that. It was as though he would sooner expect an earthquake of Lisbon than that he should fail to get his own way; that was the tone of it.”

“Well. well, tell us. Why did you want to conceal it from me?”

“Ach, my goodness! Why, for fear of frightening you! I hoped to arrange it all myself. Well, after that letter, as soon as my father came my troubles began. I prepared myself to answer him firmly, distinctly and earnestly, but somehow it never came off, He never asked me about it, he’s cunning! On the contrary he behaved as though the whole thing were settled and as though any difference or misunderstanding between us were impossible. Do you hear, impossible, such confidence! And he was so affectionate, so sweet to me. I was simply amazed. How clever he is, Ivan Petrovitch, if only you knew! He has read everything; he knows everything; you’ve only to look at him once and he knows all your thoughts as though they were his own. That’s no doubt why he has been called a Jesuit. Natasha doesn’t like me to praise him. Don’t be cross, Natasha. Well, so that’s how it is…oh, by the way! At first he wouldn’t give me any money, but now he has. He gave me some yesterday. Natasha, my angel! Our poverty is over now! Here, look! All he took off my allowance these last six months, to punish me, he paid yesterday. See how much there is; I haven’t counted it yet. Mavra, look what a lot of money; now we needn’t pawn our spoons and studs!”

He brought out of his pocket rather a thick bundle of notes, fifteen hundred roubles, and laid it on the table. Mavra looked at Alyosha with surprise and approval. Natasha eagerly urged him on.

“Well, so I wondered what I was to do,” Alyosha went on. “How was I to oppose him? If he’d been nasty to me I assure you I wouldn’t have thought twice about it. I’d have told him plainly I wouldn’t, that I was grown up now, and a man, and that that was the end of it. And believe me, I’d have stuck to it. But as it is, what could I say to him? But don’t blame me. I see you seem displeased, Natasha. Why do you look at one another? No doubt you’re thinking: here they’ve caught him at once and he hasn’t a grain of will. I have will, I have more than you think. And the proof of it is that in spite of my position I told myself at once, ‘it is my duty; I must tell my father everything, everything,’ and I began speaking and told him everything, and he listened.”

“But what? What did you tell him exactly?” Natasha asked anxiously.

“Why, that I don’t want any other fiancee, and that I have one already — you. That is, I didn’t tell him that straight out, but I prepared him for it, and I shall tell him to-morrow. I’ve made up my mind. To begin with I said that to marry for money was shameful and ignoble, and that for us to consider ourselves aristocrats was simply stupid (I talk perfectly openly to him as though he were my brother). Then I explained to him that I belonged to the tiers etat, and that the tiers etat c’est l’essentiel, that I am proud of being just like everybody else, and that I don’t want to be distinguished in any way; in fact, I laid all those sound ideas before him… . I talked warmly, convincingly. I was surprised at myself. I proved it to him, even from his own point of view…. I said to him straight out — how can we call ourselves princes? It’s simply a matter of birth; for what is there princely about us? We’re not particularly wealthy, and wealth’s the chief point. The greatest prince nowadays is Rothschild. And secondly, it’s a long time since anything has been heard of us in real society. The last was Uncle Semyon Valkovsky, and he was only known in Moscow, and he was only famous for squandering his last three hundred serfs, and if father hadn’t made money for himself, his grandsons might have been ploughing the land themselves. There are princes like that. We’ve nothing to be stuck-up over. In short, I told him everything that I was brimming over with — everything, warmly and openly; in fact, I said something more. He did not even answer me, but simply began blaming me for having given up going to Count Nainsky’s, and then told me I must try and keep in the good graces of Princess K. my godmother, and that if Princess

K. welcomes me then I shall be received everywhere, and my career is assured, and he went on and on about that! It was all hinting at my having given up everyone since I’ve been with you, Natasha, and that’s being all your influence. But he hasn’t spoken about you directly so far. In fact he evidently avoids it. We’re both fencing, waiting, catching one another, and you may be sure that our side will come off best.”

“Well, that’s all right. But how did it end, what has he decided? That’s what matters. And what a chatterbox you are, Alyosha!”

“Goodness only knows. There’s no telling what he’s decided. But I’m not a chatterbox at all; I’m talking sense. He didn’t settle anything, but only smiled at all my arguments; and such a smile, as though he were sorry for me. I know it’s humiliating, but I’m not ashamed of it. ‘I quite agree with

you,’ he said, ‘but let’s go to Count Nainsky’s, and mind you don’t say anything there. I understand you, but they won’t.’ I believe he’s not very well received everywhere himself; people are angry with him about something. He seems to be disliked in society now. The count at first received me very majestically, quite superciliously, as though he had quite forgotten I grew up in his house; he began trying to remember, he did, really. He’s simply angry with me for ingratitude, though really there was no sort of ingratitude on my part. It was horribly dull in his house, so I simply gave up going. He gave my father a very casual reception, too; so casual that I can’t understand why he goes there. It all revolted me. Poor father almost has to eat humble pie before him. I understand that it’s all for my sake, but I don’t want anything. I wanted to tell my father what I felt about it, afterwards, but I restrained myself. And, indeed, what would be the good? I shan’t change his convictions, I shall only make him angry, and he is having a bad time as it is.

Well, I thought, I’ll take to cunning and I’ll outdo them all — I’ll make the count respect me — and what do you think? I at once gained my object, everything was changed in a single day, Count Nainsky can’t make enough of me now, and that was all my doing, only mine, it was all through my cunning, so that my father was quite astonished!”

“Listen, Alyosha, you’d better keep to the point!” Natasha cried impatiently. “I thought you would tell me something about us, and you only want to tell us how you distinguished yourself at Count Nainsky’s. Your count is no concern of mine!”

“No concern! Do you hear, Ivan Petrovitch, she says it’s no concern of hers! Why, it’s the greatest concern! You’ll see it is yourself, it will all be explained in the end. Only let me tell you about it. And in fact (why not be open about it?) I’ll. tell you what, Natasha, and you, too, Ivan Petrovitch, perhaps I really am sometimes very, very injudicious, granted even I’m sometimes stupid (for I know it is so at times). But in this case, I assure you, I showed a great deal of cunning…in fact …of cleverness, so that I thought you’d be quite pleased that I’m not always so…stupid.”

“What are you saying, Alyosha? Nonsense, dear!”

Natasha couldn’t bear Alyosha to be considered stupid. How often she pouted at me, though she said nothing when I proved to Alyosha without ceremony that he had done something stupid it was a sore spot in her heart. She could not bear to see Alyosha humiliated, and probably felt it the more,

the more she recognized his limitations. But she didn't give him a hint of her opinion for fear of wounding his vanity. He was particularly sensitive on this point, and always knew exactly what she was secretly thinking. Natasha saw this and was very sorry, and she at once tried to flatter and soothe him. That is why his words now raised painful echoes in her heart.

"Nonsense, Alyosha, you're only thoughtless. You're not at all like that," she added. "Why do you run yourself down?"

"Well, that's all right. So let me prove it to you. Father was quite angry with me after the reception at the count's. I thought, 'wait a bit.' We were driving then to the princess's. I heard long ago that she was so old that she was almost doting, and deaf besides, and awfully fond of little dogs. She has a perfect pack of them, and adores them. In spite of all that, she has an immense influence in society, so that even Count Nainsky, le superbe, does l'antichambre to her. So I hatched a complete plan of future action on the way. And what do you think I built it all on? Why, on the fact that dogs always like me. Yes, really; I have noticed it. Either there's some magnetism in me, or else it's because I'm fond of all animals, I don't know. Dogs do like me, anyway. And, by the way, talking of magnetism, I haven't told you, Natasha, we called up spirits the other day; I was at a spiritualist's. It's awfully curious, Ivan Petrovitch; it really, impressed me. I called up Julius Caesar."

"My goodness! What did you want with Julius Caesar?" cried Natasha, going off into a peal of laughter. "That's the last straw!"

"Why not…as though I were such a …why shouldn't I call up Julius Caesar? What does it matter to him? Now she's laughing!"

"Of course it wouldn't matter to him at all…oh, you dear! Well, what did Julius Caesar say to you?"

"Oh, he didn't say anything. I simply held the pencil and the pencil moved over the paper and wrote of itself. They said it was Julius Caesar writing. I don't believe in it."

"But what did he write, then?"

"Why, he wrote something like the 'dip it in' in Gogol. Do leave oft laughing!"

"Oh, tell me about the princess, then."

"Well, you keep interrupting me. We arrived at the princess's and I began by making love to Mimi. Mimi is a most disgusting, horrid old dog, obstinate, too, and fond of biting. The princess dotes on her, she simply

worships her, I believe they are the same age. I began by feeding Mimi with sweetmeats, and in about ten minutes I had taught her to shake hands, which they had never been able to teach her before. The princess was in a perfect ecstasy, she almost cried with joy.

"'Mimi! Mimi! Mimi is shaking hands'

"Someone came in.

"'Mimi shakes hands, my godson here has taught her.'

"Count Nainsky arrived.

"'Mimi shakes hands!'

"She looked at me almost with tears of tenderness. She's an awfully nice old lady; I feel quite sorry for her. I was on the spot then, I flattered her again. On her snuff-box she has her own portrait, painted when she was a bride, sixty years ago. Well, she dropped her snuffbox. I picked up the snuff-box and exclaimed:

"'Quelle charmante peinture!' just as if I didn't know. 'It's an ideal beauty!'

"Well, that melted her completely. She talked to me of this and that; asked me where I had been studying, and whom I visit, and what splendid hair I had, and all that sort of thing. I made her laugh too. I told her a shocking story. She likes that sort of thing, She shook her finger at me, but she laughed a great deal. When she let me go, she kissed me and blessed me, and insisted I should go in every day to amuse her. The count pressed my hand; his eyes began to look oily. And as for father, though he's the kindest, and sincerest, and most honourable man in the world, if you'll believe me, he almost cried with joy on the way home. He hugged me, and became confidential, mysteriously confidential about a career, connexions, marriages, money; I couldn't understand a lot of it. It was then he gave me the money. That was all yesterday. To-morrow I'm to go to the princess's again. But still, my father's a very honourable man — don't you imagine anything — and although he keeps me away from you, Natasha, it's simply because he's dazzled by Katya's millions, and wants to get hold of them, and you haven't any; and he wants them simply for my sake, and it's merely through ignorance he is unjust to you. And what father doesn't want his son's happiness? It's not his fault that he has been accustomed to think that happiness is to be found in millions. They're all like that. One must look at him from that standpoint, you know, and no other, and then one can see at once that he's right. I've hurried to come to you, Natasha, to assure you of

that, for I know you're prejudiced against him, and of course that's not your fault. I don't blame you for it…."

"Then all that's happened is that you've made yourself a position at the princess's. Is that all your cunning amounts to?" asked Natasha.

"Not at all. What do you mean? That's only the beginning. I only told you about the princess — because, you understand, through her I shall get a hold over my father; but my story hasn't begun yet."

"Well, tell it then!"

"I've had another adventure this morning, and a very strange one too. I haven't got over it yet," Alyosha went on. "You must observe that, although it's all settled about our engagement between my father and the countess, there's been no formal announcement so far, so we can break it off at any moment without a scandal. Count Nainsky's the only person who knows it, but he's looked upon as a relation and a benefactor. What's more, though I've got to know Katya very well this last fortnight, till this very evening I've never said a word to her about the future, that is about marriage or… love. Besides, it's been settled to begin by asking the consent of Princess K. from whom is expected all sorts of patronage and showers of gold. The world will say what she says. She has such connexions…. And what they want more than anything is to push me forward in society. But it's the countess, Katya's stepmother, who insists most strongly on this arrangement. The point is that perhaps the princess so far won't receive her because of her doings abroad, and if the princess won't receive her, most likely nobody else will. So my engagement to Katya is a good chance for her. So the countess, who used to be against the engagement, was highly delighted at my success with the princess; but that's beside the point. What matters is this. I saw something of Katerina Fyodorvna last year, but I was a boy then, and I didn't under stand things, and so I saw nothing in her then…."

"Simply you loved me more then," Natasha broke in," that's why you saw nothing in her; and now…."

"Not, a word, Natasha!" cried Alyosha, hotly. "You are quite mistaken, and insulting me…. I won't even answer you; listen, and you'll see …. Ah, if only you knew Katya! If only you knew what a tender, clear, dove-like soul she is! But you will know. Only let me finish. A fortnight ago, when my father took me to see Katya as soon as they had arrived, I began to watch her intently. I noticed she watched me too. That roused my curiosity,

to say nothing of my having a special intention of getting to know her, an intention I had had ever since I got that letter from my father that impressed me so much. I'm not going to say anything about her. I'm not going to praise her. I'll only say one thing. She's a striking contrast to all her circle. She has such an original nature, such a strong and truthful soul, so strong in its purity and truthfulness, that I'm simply a boy beside her, like a younger brother, though she is only seventeen. Another thing I noticed, there's a great deal of sadness about her, as though she had some secret: she is not talkative; at home she's almost always silent as though afraid to speak…. She seems to be brooding over something. She seems to be afraid of my father. She doesn't like her stepmother — I could see that; it's the countess spreads the story that her stepdaughter is so fond of her, for some object of her own. That's all false. Katya simply obeys her without question, and it seems as though there's some agreement between them about it. Four days ago, after all my observations, I made up my mind to carry out my intention, and this evening I did. My plan was to tell Katya everything, to confess everything, get her on our side, and so put a stop to it all…."

"What! Tell her what, confess what?" Natasha asked uneasily.

"Everything, absolutely everything," answered Alyosha, "and thank God for inspiring me with the thought; but listen, listen! Four days ago I made up my mind to keep away from you both and stop it all myself. If I had been with you I should have been hesitating all the time. I should have been listening to you, and unable to decide on anything. By remaining alone, and putting myself in the position in which I was bound to repeat to myself every minute that I ought to stop it, that I must stop it, I screwed up my courage and — have stopped it! I meant to come back to you with the matter settled, and I've come with it settled!"

"What then? What? What has happened? Tell me quickly."

It's very simple! I went straight to her, boldly and honestly. But I must first tell you one thing that happened just before, and struck me very much. just before we set off, father received a letter. I was just going into his study and was standing in the doorway. He did not see us. He was so much overcome by the letter that he talked to himself, uttered some exclamations, walked about the room quite beside himself, and suddenly burst out laughing, holding the letter in his hand. I was quite afraid to go in, and waited for a minute. Father was so delighted about something, so delighted; he spoke to me rather queerly; then suddenly broke off and told me to get

ready at once, though it was not time for us to go. They had no one there to-day, only us two, and you were mistaken, Natasha, in thinking it was a party. You were told wrong."

"Oh, do keep to the point, Alyosha, please; tell me, how you told Katya."

"Luckily I was left for two hours alone with her. I simply told her that though they wanted to make a match between us, our marriage was impossible, that I had a great affection for her in my heart, and that she alone could save me. Then I told her everything. Only fancy, she knew nothing at all about our story, about you and me, Natasha. If only you could have seen how touched she was; at first she was quite scared. She turned quite white. I told her our whole story; how for my sake you'd abandoned your home; how we'd been living together, how harassed we were now, how afraid of everything, and that now we were appealing to her (I spoke in your name too, Natasha), that she would take our side, and tell her stepmother straight out that she wouldn't marry me; that that would be our one salvation, and that we had nothing to hope for from anyone else. She listened — with such interest, such sympathy. What eyes she had at that moment! Her whole soul was in them. Her eyes are perfectly blue. She thanked me for not doubting her, and promised to do all she could to help us. Then she began asking about you; said she wanted very much to know you, asked me to tell you that she loved you already like a sister, and that she hoped you would love her like a sister. And as soon as she heard I had not seen you for five days she began at once urging me to go to you."

Natasha was touched.

"And you could tell us first of your triumphs with some deaf princess! Ach, Alyosha!" she exclaimed, looking at him reproachfully. "Well tell me about Katya; was she happy, cheerful, when she said good-bye to you?"

"Yes, she was glad that she was able to do something generous, but she was crying. For she loves me too, Natasha! She confessed that she had begun to love me; that she sees hardly anyone, and that she was attracted by me long ago. She noticed me particularly because she sees cunning and deception all round her, and I seemed to her a sincere and honest person. She stood up and said: 'Well, God be with you, Alexey Petrovitch. And I was expecting….' She burst out crying and went away without saying what. We decided that to-morrow she should tell her stepmother that she won't have me, and that tomorrow I should tell my father everything and speak out boldly and firmly. She reproached me for not having told him before,

saying that an honourable man ought not to be afraid of anything. She is such a noble-hearted girl. She doesn't like my father either. She says he's cunning and mercenary. I defended him; she didn't believe me. If I don't succeed tomorrow with my father (and she feels convinced I shan't) then she advises me to get Princess K. to support me. Then no one would dare to oppose it. We promised to be like brother and sister to each other. Oh, if only you knew her story too, how unhappy she is, with what aversion she looks on her life with her stepmother, all her surroundings. She didn't tell me directly, as though she were afraid even of me, but I guessed it from some words, Natasha, darling! How delighted she would be with you if she could see you! And what a kind heart she has! One is so at home with her! You are created to be sisters and to love one another. I've been thinking so all along. And really I should like to bring you two together, and stand by admiring you. Don't imagine anything, Natasha, little one, and let me talk about her. I want to talk to you about her and to her about you. You know I love you more than anyone, more than her….You're everything to me!"

Natasha looked at him caressingly, and as it were mournfully, and did not speak. His words seemed like a caress, and yet a torment to her.

"And I saw how fine Katya was a long time ago, at least a fortnight," he went on. " I've been going to them every evening, you see. As I went home I kept thinking of you both, kept comparing you."

"Which of us came off best?" asked Natasha, smiling.

"Sometimes you and sometimes she. But you were always the best in the long run. When I talk to her I always feel I become somehow better, cleverer, and somehow finer. But to-morrow, tomorrow will settle everything!"

"And aren't you sorry for her? She loves you, you know. You say you've noticed it yourself."

"Yes, I am, Natasha. But we'll all three love one another, and then…."

"And then 'good-bye'" Natasha brought out quietly, as though to herself.

Alyosha looked at her in amazement.

But our conversation was suddenly interrupted in the most unexpected way. In the kitchen, which was at the same time the entry, we heard a slight noise as though someone had come in. A minute later Mavra opened the door and began nodding to Alyosha on the sly, beckoning to him. We all turned to her.

“Someone’s asking for you. Come along,” she said in a mysterious voice.

“Who can be asking for me now?” said Alyosha, looking at us in bewilderment. “I’m coming!”

In the kitchen stood his father’s servant in livery. It appeared that the prince had stopped his carriage at Natasha’s lodging on his way home, and had sent to inquire whether Alyosha were there. Explaining this, the footman went away at once.

“Strange! This has never happened before,” said Alyosha, looking at us in confusion. “What does it mean?”

Natasha looked at him uneasily. Suddenly Mavra opened the door again.

“Here’s the prince himself!” she said in a hurried whisper, and at once withdrew.

Natasha turned pale and got up from her seat. Suddenly her eyes kindled. She stood leaning a little on the table, and looked in agitation towards the door, by which the uninvited visitor would enter.

“Natasha, don’t be afraid! You’re with me. I won’t let you be insulted,” whispered Alyosha, disconcerted but not overwhelmed. The door opened, and Prince Valkovsky in his own

person appeared on the threshold.

CHAPTER II

HE TOOK US all in in a rapid attentive glance. It was impossible to guess from this glance whether he had come as a friend or as an enemy. But I will describe his appearance minutely. He struck me particularly that evening.

I had seen him before. He was a man of forty-five, not more, with regular and strikingly handsome features, the expression of which varied according to circumstances; but it changed abruptly, completely, with extraordinary rapidity, passing from the most agreeable to the most surly or displeased expression, as though some spring were suddenly touched. The regular oval of his rather swarthy face, his superb teeth, his small, rather thin, beautifully chiselled lips, his rather long straight nose, his high forehead, on which no wrinkle could be discerned, his rather large grey eyes, made him handsome, and yet his face did not make a pleasant impression. The face repelled because its expression was not spontaneous, but always, as it were, artificial, deliberate, borrowed, and a blind conviction grew upon one that one would never read his real expression. Looking more carefully one began to suspect behind the invariable mask something spiteful, cunning, and intensely egoistic. One’s attention was particularly caught by his fine eyes, which were grey and frank-looking. They were not completely under the control of his will, like his other features. He might want to look mild and friendly, but the light in his eyes was as it were twofold, and together with the mild friendly radiance there were flashes that were cruel, mistrustful, searching and spiteful…. He was rather tall, elegantly, rather slimly built, and looked strikingly young for his age. His soft dark brown hair had scarcely yet begun to turn grey. His ears, his hands, his feet were remarkably fine. It was preeminently the beauty of race. He was dressed with refined elegance and freshness but with some affectation of youth, which suited him, however. He looked like Alyosha’s elder brother. At any rate no one

would have taken him for the father of so grown-up a son.

He went straight up to Natasha and said, looking at her firmly:

“My calling upon you at such an hour, and unannounced, is strange, and against all accepted rules. But I trust that you will believe I can at least recognize the eccentricity of my behaviour. I know, too, with whom I have

to deal; I know that you are penetrating and magnanimous. Only give me ten minutes, and I trust that you will understand me and justify it."

He said all this courteously but with force, and, as it were, emphasis.

"Sit down," said Natasha, still unable to shake off her confusion and some alarm.

He made a slight bow and sat down.

"First of all allow me to say a couple of words to him," he said, indicating his son. "As soon as you had gone away, Alyosha, without waiting for me or even taking leave of us, the countess was informed that Katerina Fyodorovna was ill. She was hastening to her, but Katerina Fyodorovna herself suddenly came in distressed and violently agitated. She told us, forthwith, that she could not marry you. She said, too, that she was going into a nunnery, that you had asked for her help, and had told her that you loved Natalya Nikolaevna. This extraordinary declaration on the part of Katerina Fyodorovna, especially at such a moment, was of course provoked by the extreme strangeness of your explanation with her. She was almost beside herself; you can understand hole shocked and alarmed I was. As I drove past just now I noticed a light in your window," he went on, addressing Natasha, "then an idea which had been haunting me for a long time gained such possession of me that I could not resist my first impulse, and came in to see you. With what object? I will tell you directly, but I beg you beforehand not to be surprised at a certain abruptness in my explanation. It is all so sudden…"

"I hope I shall understand and appreciate what you are going to say, as I ought," answered Natasha, faltering.

The prince scrutinized her intently as though he were in a hurry to understand her through and through in one minute. "I am relying on your penetration too," he went on, "and I have ventured to come to you now just because I knew with whom I should have to deal. I have known you for a long time now, although I was at one time so unfair to you and did you injustice. Listen. You know that between me and your father there are disagreements of long standing. I don't justify myself; perhaps I have been more to blame in my treatment of him than I had supposed till now. But if so I was myself deceived. I am suspicious, and I recognize it. I am disposed to suspect evil rather than good: an unhappy trait, characteristic of a cold heart. But it is not my habit to conceal my failings. I believed in the past all that was said against you, and when you left your parents I was terror-

stricken for Alyosha. But then I did not know you. The information I have gathered little by little has completely reassured me. I have watched you, studied you, and am at last convinced that my suspicions were groundless. I have learnt that you are cut off from your family. I know, too, that your father is utterly opposed to your marriage with my son, and the mere fact that, having such an influence, such power, one may say, over Alyosha, you have not hitherto taken advantage of that power to force him to marry you — that alone says much for you. And yet I confess it openly, I was firmly resolved at that time to hinder any possibility of your marriage with my son. I know I am expressing myself too straightforwardly, but. at this moment straightforwardness on my part is what is most needed. You will admit that yourself when you have heard me to the end. Soon after you left your home I went away from Petersburg, but by then I had no further fears for Alyosha. I relied on your generous pride. I knew that you did not yourself want a marriage before the family dissensions were over, that you were unwilling to destroy the good understanding between Alyosha and me — for I should never have forgiven his marriage with you — that you were unwilling, too, to have it said of you that you were trying to catch a prince for a husband, and to be connected with our family. On the contrary, you showed a positive neglect of us, and were perhaps waiting for the moment when I should come to beg you to do us the honour to give my son your hand. Yet I obstinately remained your ill-wisher. I am not going to justify myself, but I will not conceal my reasons. Here they are. You have neither wealth nor position. Though I have property, we need more; our family is going downhill. We need money and connexions. Though Countess Zinaida Fyodorovna’s stepdaughter has no connexions, she is very wealthy. If we delayed, suitors would turn up and carry her off. And such a chance was not to be lost. So, though Alyosha is still so young, I decided to make a match for him. You see I am concealing nothing. You may look with scorn on a father who admits himself that from prejudice and mercenary motives he urged his son to an evil action; for to desert a generous hearted girl who has sacrificed everyone to him, and whom he has treated so badly, is an evil action. But I do not defend myself. My second reason for my son’s proposed marriage was that the girl is highly deserving of love and respect. She is handsome, well-educated, has a charming disposition, and is very intelligent, though in many ways still a child. Alyosha has no character, he is thoughtless, extremely injudicious, and at two-and-twenty is a perfect

child. He has at most one virtue, a good heart, positively a dangerous possession with his other failings. I have noticed for a long time that my influence over him was beginning to grow less; the impulsiveness and enthusiasm of youth are getting the upper hand, and even get the upper hand of some positive duties. I perhaps love him too fondly; but I am convinced that I am not a sufficient guide for him. And yet he must always be under some good influence. He has a submissive nature, weak and loving, liking better to love and to obey than to command. So he will be all his life. You can imagine how delighted I was at finding in Katerina Fyodorovna the ideal girl I should have desired for my son's wife. But my joy came too late. He was already under the sway of another influence that nothing could shake — yours. I have kept a sharp watch on him since I returned to Petersburg a month ago, and I notice with surprise a distinct change for the better in him. His irresponsibility and childishness are scarcely altered; but certain generous feelings are stronger in him. He begins to be interested not only in playthings, but in what is lofty, noble, and more genuine. His ideas are queer, unstable, sometimes absurd; but the desire, the impulse, the feeling is finer, and that is the foundation of everything; and all this improvement in him is undoubtedly your work. You have remodelled him. I will confess the idea did occur to me, then, that you rather than anyone might secure his happiness.

But I dismissed that idea, I did not wish to entertain it. I wanted to draw him away from you at any cost. I began to act, and thought I had gained my object. Only an hour ago I thought that the victory was mine. But what has just happened at the countess's has upset all my calculations at once, and what struck me most of all was something unexpected: the earnestness and constancy of Alyosha's devotion to you, the persistence and vitality of that devotion — which seemed strange in him. I repeat, you have remodelled him completely. I saw all at once that the change in him had gone further than I had supposed. He displayed to-day before my eyes a sudden proof of an intelligence of which I had not the slightest suspicion, and at the same time an extraordinary insight and subtlety of feeling. He chose the surest way of extricating himself from what he felt to be a difficult position. He touched and stirred the noblest chords in the human heart — the power of forgiving and repaying good for evil. He surrendered himself into the hands of the being he was injuring, and appealed to her for sympathy and help. He roused all the pride of the woman who already loved him by openly telling

her she had a rival, and aroused at the same time her sympathy for her rival, and forgiveness and the promise of disinterested, sisterly affection for himself. To go into such explanations without rousing resentment and mortification — to do that is sometimes beyond the capacity of the subtlest and cleverest; only pure young hearts under good guidance can do this. I am sure, Natalya Nikolaevna, that you took no part by word or suggestion in what he did to-day. You have perhaps only just heard of it from him. I am not mistaken. Am I?"

"You are not mistaken," Natasha assented. Her face was glowing, and her eyes shone with a strange light as though of inspiration. Prince Valkovsky's eloquence was beginning to produce its effect. "I haven't seen Alyosha for five days," she, added. He thought of all this himself and carried it all out himself.

"Exactly so," said Prince Valkovsky, "but, in spite of that, all this surprising insight, all this decision and recognition of duty, this creditable manliness, in fact, is all the result of your influence on him. I had thought all this out and was reflecting on it on my way home, and suddenly felt able to reach a decision. The proposed match with the countess's stepdaughter is broken off, and cannot be renewed; but if it were possible it could never come to pass. What if I have come to believe that you are the only woman that can make him happy, that you are his true guide, that you have already laid the foundations of his future happiness! I have concealed nothing from you and I am concealing nothing now; I think a great deal of a career, of money, of position, and even of rank in the service. With my intellect I recognize that a great deal of this is conventional, but I like these conventions, and am absolutely disinclined to run counter, to them. But there are circumstances when other considerations have to come in, when everything cannot be judged by the same standard…. Besides, I love my son dearly. In short, I have come to the conclusion that Alyosha must not be parted from you, because without you he will be lost. And must I confess it? I have perhaps been coming to this conclusion for the last month, and only now realize that the conclusion is a right one. Of course, I might have called on you to-morrow to tell you all this, instead of disturbing you at midnight. But my haste will show you, perhaps, how warmly, and still more how sincerely, I feel in the matter. I am not a boy, and I could not at my age make up my mind to any step without thinking it over. Everything had been thought over and decided before I came here. But I feel that I may have to

wait some time before you will be convinced of my sincerity…. But to come to the point: Shall I explain now why I came here? I came to do my duty to you, and solemnly, with the deepest respect, I beg you to make my son happy and to give him your hand. Oh, do not imagine that I have come like an angry father, who has been brought at last to forgive his children and graciously to consent to their happiness. No! No! You do me an injustice if you suppose I have any such ideas. Do not imagine either that I reckon on your consent, relying on the sacrifices you have made for my son; no again! I am the first to declare aloud that he does not deserve you, and (he is candid and good) he will say the same himself. But that is not enough. It is not only this that has brought me here at such an hour…. I have come here, (and he rose from his seat respectfully and with a certain solemnity), "I have come here to become your friend! I know I have no right whatever to this, quite the contrary! But — allow me to earn the right! Let me hope…."

Making a respectful bow to Natasha he awaited her reply. I was watching him intently all the time he was speaking. He noticed it.

He made his speech coldly, with some display of eloquence, and in parts with in certain nonchalance. The tone of the whole speech was incongruous indeed with the impulse that had brought him to us at an hour so inappropriate for a first visit, especially under such circumstances. Some of his expressions were evidently premeditated, and in some parts of his long speech — which was strange from its very length — he seemed to be artificially assuming the air of an eccentric man struggling to conceal an overwhelming feeling under a show of humour, carelessness and jest. But I only made all these reflections afterwards; at the time the effect was different. He uttered the last words so sincerely, with so much feeling, with such an air of genuine respect for Natasha, that it conquered us all. There was actually the glimmer of a tear on his eyelashes. Natasha's generous heart was completely won. She, too, got up, and, deeply moved, held out her hand to him without a word. He took it and kissed it with tenderness and emotion. Alyosha was beside himself with rapture.

"What did I tell you, Natasha?" he cried. "You wouldn't believe me. You wouldn't believe in his being the noblest man in the world! You see, you see for yourself! …"

He rushed to his father and hugged him warmly. The latter responded as warmly, but hastened to cut short the touching scene, as though ashamed to show his emotion.

“Enough,” he said, and took his hat. “I must go. I asked you to give me ten minutes and I have been here a whole hour,” he added, laughing. “But I leave you with impatient eagerness to see you again as soon as possible. Will you allow me to visit you as often as I can?”

“Yes, yes,” answered Natasha, “as often as you can … I want to make haste …to be fond of you…,” she added in embarrassment.

“How sincere you are, how truthful,” said Prince Valkovsky, smiling at her words. “You won’t be insincere even to be polite. But your sincerity is more precious than all artificial politeness. Yes! I recognize that it will take me a long, long time to deserve your love.”

“Hush, don’t praise me …. Enough,” Natasha whispered in confusion. How delightful she was at that moment!

“So be it,” Prince Valkovsky concluded. “I’ll say only a couple of words of something practical. You cannot imagine how unhappy I am! Do you know I can’t be with you to-morrow — neither to-morrow nor the day after. I received a letter this evening of such importance to me (requiring my presence on business at once) that I cannot possibly neglect it. I am leaving Petersburg to-morrow morning. Please do not imagine that I came to you to-night because I should have no time to-morrow or the day after. Of course you don’t think so, but that is just an instance of my suspicious nature. Why should I fancy that you must think so? Yes, my suspicious nature has often been a drawback to me in my life, and my whole misunderstanding with your family has perhaps been due to my unfortunate character! … To-day is Tuesday. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday I shall not be in Petersburg. I hope to return on Saturday for certain; and I will be with you the same day. Tell me, may I come to you for the whole evening?”

“Of course, of course!” cried Natasha. “On Saturday evening I shall expect you… I shall expect you impatiently!”

“Ah, how happy I am! I shall get to know you better and better! But … I must go! I cannot go without shaking hands with you, though,” he added, turning to me. “I beg your pardon! We are all talking so disconnectedly. I have several times had the pleasure of meeting you, and once, indeed, we were introduced. I cannot take my leave without telling you how glad I should be to renew our acquaintance ….”

“We have met, it’s true,” I answered, taking his hand.

“But I don’t remember that we became acquainted.”

“At Prince M.’s, last year.”

“I beg your pardon, I’ve forgotten. But I assure you this time I shall not forget. This evening will always remain in my memory.”

“Yes, you are right. I feel the same. I have long known that you have been a good and true friend to Natalya Nikolaevna and my son. I hope you three will admit me as a fourth. May I?” he added, addressing Natasha.

“Yes, he is a true friend to us, and we must all hold together,” Natasha answered with deep feeling.

Poor girl! She was positively beaming with delight that the prince had not overlooked me. How she loved me!

“I have met many worshippers of your talent,” Prince Valkovsky went on. “And I know two of your most sincere admirers — the countess, my dearest friend, and her stepdaughter Katerina Fyodorovna Filimonov. They would so like to know you personally. Allow me to hope that you will let me have the pleasure of presenting you to those ladies.”

“You are very flattering, though now I see so few people …”

“But give me your address! Where do you live? I shall do myself the pleasure …”

“I do not receive visitors, prince. At least not at present.”

“But, though I have not deserved to be an exception … I …”

“Certainly, since you insist I shall be delighted. I live at — Street, in Klugen’s Buildings.”

“Klugen’s Buildings!” he cried, as though surprised something. “What! Have you … lived there long?”

“No, not long,” I answered, instinctively watching him. “I live at No. 44.”

“Forty-four? You are living…alone?”

“Quite alone.”

“0-oh! I ask you because I think I know the house. So much the better…. I will certainly come and see you, certainly! I shall have much to talk over with you and I look for great things from you. You can oblige me in many ways. You see I am beginning straight off by asking you a favour. But good-bye! Shake hands again!”

He shook my hand and Alyosha’s, kissed Natasha’s hand again and went out without suggesting that Alyosha should follow him.

We three remained overwhelmed. It had all happened so unexpectedly, so casually. We all felt that in one instant everything had changed, and that something new and unknown was beginning. Alyosha without a word sat

down beside Natasha and softly kissed her hand. From time to time he peeped into her face as though to see what she would say. “Alyosha, darling, go and see Katerina Fyodorovna tomorrow,” she brought out at last.

“I was thinking of that myself,” he said, “I shall certainly go.”

“But perhaps it will be painful for her to see you. What’s to be done?”

“I don’t know, dear. I thought of that too. I’ll look round. I shall see… then I’ll decide. Well, Natasha, everything is changed for us now,” Alyosha said, unable to contain himself.

She smiled and gave him a long, tender look.

“And what delicacy he has. He saw how poor your lodging is and not a word …”

“Of what?”

“Why…of your moving…or anything,” he added reddening.

“Nonsense, Alyosha, why ever should he?”

“That’s just what I say. He has such delicacy. And how he praised you! I told you so … I told you. Yes, he’s capable of understanding and feeling anything! But he talked of me as though I were a baby; they all treat me like that. But I suppose I really am.”

“You’re a child, but you see further than any of us. You’re good, Alyosha!”

“He said that my good heart would do me harm. How’s that? I don’t understand. But I say, Natasha, oughtn’t I to make haste and go to him? I’ll be with you as soon as it’s light tomorrow.”

“Yes, go, darling, go. You were right to think of it. And be sure to show yourself to him, do you hear? And come to morrow as. early as you can. You won’t run away from me for five days now?” she added slyly, with a caressing glance.

We were all in a state of quiet, unruffled joy.

“Are you coming with me, Vanya?” cried Alyosha as he went out.

“No, he’ll stay a little. I’ve something more to say to you, Vanya. Mind, quite early to-morrow.”

“Quite early. Good-night, Mavra.”

Mavra was in great excitement. She had listened to all the prince said, she had overheard it all, but there was much she had not understood. She was Longing to ask questions, and make surmises. But meantime she looked serious, and even proud. She, too, realized that much was changed.

We remained alone. Natasha took my hand, and for some time was silent, as though seeking for something to say.

“I’m tired,” she said at last in a weak voice. “ Listen, are you going to them to-morrow?”

“Of course.”

“Tell mamma, but don’t speak to him.”

“I never speak of you to him, anyway.”

“Of course; he’ll find out without that. But notice what he says. How he takes it. Good heavens, Vanya, will he really curse me for this marriage? No, impossible.”

“The prince will have to make everything right,” I put in hurriedly. “They must be reconciled and then everything will go smoothly.”

“My God! If that could only be! If that could only be!” she cried imploringly.

“Don’t worry yourself, Natasha, everything will come right. Everything points to it.”

She looked at me intently.

“Vanya, what do you think of the prince?”

“If he was sincere in what he said, then to my thinking he’s a really generous man.”

“Sincere in what he said? What does that mean? Surely he couldn’t have been speaking insincerely?”

“I agree with you,” I answered. “Then some idea did occur to her,” I thought. “That’s strange!”

“You kept looking at him … so intently.”

“Yes, I thought him rather strange.”

“I thought so too. He kept on talking so…my dear, I’m tired. You know, you’d better be going home. And come to me to-morrow as early as you can after seeing them. And one other thing: it wasn’t rude of me to say that I wanted to get fond of him, was it?”

“No, why rude?”

“And not…stupid? You see it was as much as to say that so far I didn’t like him.”

“On the contrary, it was very good, simple, spontaneous. You looked so beautiful at that moment! He’s stupid if he doesn’t understand that, with his aristocratic breeding!”

“You seem as though you were angry with him, Vanya. But how horrid I am, how suspicious, and vain! Don’t laugh at me; I hide nothing from you, you know. Ah, Vanya, my dear! If I am unhappy again, if more trouble comes, you’ll be here beside me, I know; perhaps you’ll be the only one! How can I repay you for everything! Don’t curse me ever, Vanya!”

Returning home, I undressed at once and went to bed. My room was as dark and damp as a cellar. Many strange thoughts and sensations were hovering in my mind, and it was long before I could get to sleep.

But how one man must have been laughing at us that moment as he fell asleep in his comfortable bed — that is, if he thought us worth laughing at! Probably he didn’t.

CHAPTER III

AT TEN O’CLOCK next morning as I was coming out of my lodgings hurrying off to the Ichmenyevs in Vassilyevsky Island, and meaning to go from them to Natasha, I suddenly came upon my yesterday’s visitor, Smith’s grandchild, at the door. She was coming to see me. I don’t know why, but I remember I was awfully pleased to see her. I had hardly had time to get a good look at her the day before, and by daylight she surprised me more than ever. And, indeed, it would have been difficult to have found a stranger or more original creature — in appearance, anyway. With her flashing black eyes, which looked somehow foreign, her thick, dishevelled, black hair, and her mute, fixed, enigmatic gaze, the little creature might well have attracted the notice of anyone who passed her in the street.

The expression in her eyes was particularly striking. There was the light of intelligence in them, and at the same time an inquisitorial mistrust, even suspicion. Her dirty old frock looked even more hopelessly tattered by daylight. She seemed to me to be suffering from some wasting, chronic disease that was gradually and relentlessly destroying her. Her pale, thin face had an unnatural sallow, bilious tinge. But in spite of all the ugliness of poverty and illness, she was positively pretty. Her eyebrows were strongly marked, delicate and beautiful. Her broad, rather low brow was particularly beautiful, and her lips were exquisitely formed with a peculiar proud bold line, but they were pale and colourless.

“Ah, you again!” I cried. “Well, I thought you’d come! Come in!”

She came in, stepping through the doorway slowly just as before, and looking about her mistrustfully. She looked carefully round the room where her grandfather had lived, as though noting how far it had been changed by another inmate.

“Well, the grandchild is just such another as the grandfather,”

I thought. “Is she mad, perhaps?”

She still remained mute; I waited.

“For the books!” she whispered at last, dropping her eves.

“Oh yes, your books; here they are, take them! I’ve been keeping them on purpose for you.”

She looked at me inquisitively, and her mouth worked strangely as though she would venture on a mistrustful smile. But the effort at a smile

passed and was replaced by the same severe and enigmatic expression.

“Grandfather didn’t speak to you of me, did he?” she asked, scanning me ironically from head to foot.

“No, he didn’t speak of you, but….”

“Then how did you know I should come? Who told you?” she asked, quickly interrupting me.

“I thought your grandfather couldn’t live alone, abandoned by everyone. He was so old and feeble; I thought someone must be looking after him…. Here are your books, take them. Are they your lesson-books?”

“No.”

“What do you want with them, then?”

“Grandfather taught me when I used to see him.”

“Why did you leave off coming then?”

“Afterwards…I didn’t come. I was ill,” she added, as though defending herself.

“Tell me, have you a home, a father and mother?”

She frowned suddenly and looked at me, seeming almost scared. Then she looked down, turned in silence and walked softly out of the room without deigning to reply, just as she had done the day before. I looked after her in amazement. But she stood still in the doorway.

“What did he die of?” she asked me abruptly, turning slightly towards me with exactly the same movement and gesture as the day before, when she had asked after Azorka, stopping on her way out with her face to the door.

I went up to her and began rapidly telling her. She listened mutely and with curiosity, her head bowed and her back turned to me. I told her, too, how the old man had mentioned Sixth Street as he was dying.

“I imagine” I added, “that someone dear to him live there, and that’s why, I expected someone would come to inquire after him. He must have loved, you, since he thought of you at the last moment.”

“No,” she whispered, almost unconsciously it seemed; “he didn’t love me.”

She was strangely moved. As I told my story I bent down and looked into her face. I noticed that she was making great effort to suppress her emotion, as though too proud to let me see it. She turned paler and paler and bit her lower lip But what struck me especially was the strange thumping of her heart. It throbbed louder and louder, so that one could hear it two or

three paces off, as in cases of aneurysm. I thought she would suddenly burst into tears as she had done the day before but she controlled herself.

“And where is the fence?”

“What fence?”

“That he died under.”

“I will show you … when we go out. But, tell me, what do they call you?”

“No need to.”

“No need to-what?”

“Never mind … it doesn’t matter…. They don’t call me anything,” she brought out jerkily, seeming annoyed, an she moved to go away. I stopped her.

“Wait a minute, you queer little girl! Why, I only want to help you. I felt so sorry for you when I saw you crying in the corner yesterday. I can’t bear to think of it. Besides, your grandfather died in my arms, and no doubt he was thinking of you when he mentioned Sixth Street, so it’s almost as if he left you in my care. I dream of him… . Here, I’ve kept those books for you, but you’re such a wild little thing, as though you were afraid of me. You must be very poor and an orphan perhaps living among strangers; isn’t that so?”

I did my utmost to conciliate her, and I don’t know how it was she attracted me so much. There was something beside pity in my feeling for her. Whether it was the mysteriousness of the whole position, the impression made on me by Smith, or my own fantastic mood — I can’t say; but something drew me irresistibly to her. My words seemed to touch her. She bent on me a strange look, not severe now, but soft and deliberate, then looked down again as though pondering.

“Elena,” she brought out unexpectedly, and in an extremely low voice.

“That’s your name, Elena?”

“Yes.”

“Well, will you come and see me?”

“I can’t…. I don’t know….I will,” she whispered, as though pondering and struggling with herself.

At that moment a clock somewhere struck.

She started, and with an indescribable look of heart-sick anguish she whispered:

“What time was that?”

“It must have been half-past ten.”

She gave a cry of alarm.

“Oh, dear!” she cried and was making away. But again I stopped her in the passage.

“I won’t let you go like that,” I said. “What are you afraid of? Are you late?”

“Yes, yes. I came out secretly. Let me go! She’ll beat me,” she cried out, evidently saying more than she meant to and breaking away from me.

“Listen, and don’t rush away; you’re going to Vassilyevsky Island, so am I, to Thirteenth Street. I’m late, too. I’m going to take a cab. Will you come with me? I’ll take you. You’ll get there quicker than on foot. You can’t come back with me, you can’t!” she cried, even more panic-stricken. Her features positively worked with terror at the thought that I might come to the house where she was living.

“But I tell you I’m going to Thirteenth Street on business of my own. I’m not coming to your home! I won’t follow you. We shall get there sooner with a cab. Come along!”

We hurried downstairs. I hailed the first driver I met with a miserable droshky. It was evident Elena was in great haste, since she consented to get in with me. What was most baffling was that I positively did not dare to question her. She flung up her arms and almost leapt off the droshky when I asked her who it was at home she was so afraid of. “What is the mystery?” I thought.

It was very awkward for her to sit on the droshky. At every jolt to keep her balance she clutched at my coat with her left hand, a dirty, chapped little hand. In the other hand she held her books tightly. One could see that those books were very precious to her. As she recovered her balance she happened to show her leg, and to my immense astonishment I saw that she had no stockings, nothing but torn shoes. Though I had made up my mind not to question her, I could not restrain myself again.

“Have you really no stockings?” I asked. “How can you go about barefoot in such wet weather and when it’s so cold?”

“No,” she answered abruptly.

“Good heavens! But you must be living with someone! You ought to ask someone to lend you stockings when you go out.”

“I like it best….”

“But you’ll get ill. You’ll die”

“Let me die.”

She evidently did not want to answer and was angry at my question.

“Look! this was where he died,” I said, pointing out the house where the old man had died.

She looked intently, and suddenly turning with an imploring look, said to me:

“For God’s sake don’t follow me. But I’ll come, I’ll come again! As soon as I’ve a chance I’ll come.”

“Very well. I’ve told you already I won’t follow you. But what are you afraid of? You must be unhappy in some way. It makes me sad to look at you.”

“I’m not afraid of anyone,” she replied, with a note of irritation in her voice.

“But you said just now ‘she’ll beat me’”

“Let her beat me!” she answered, and her eyes flashed. “Let her, let her!” she repeated bitterly, and her upper lip quivered and was lifted disdainfully.

At last we reached Vassilyevsky Island. She stopped the droshky at the beginning of Sixth Street, and jumped off, looking anxiously round.

“Drive away! I’ll come, I’ll come,” she repeated, terribly uneasy, imploring me not to follow her. “Get on, make haste, make haste!”

I drove on. But after driving a few yards further along the embankment I dismissed the cab, and going back to Sixth Street ran quickly across the road. I caught sight of her; she had not got far away yet, though she was walking quickly, and continually looking about her. She even stopped once or twice to look more carefully whether I were following her or not. But I hid in a handy gateway, and she did not see me. She walked on. I followed her, keeping on the other side of the street.

My curiosity was roused to the utmost. Though I did not intend to follow her in, I felt I must find which house she lived in, to be ready in case of emergency. I was overcome by a strange, oppressive sensation, not unlike the impression her grandfather had made on me when Azorka died in the restaurant.

CHAPTER IV

WE WALKED A LONG WAY, as far as Little Avenue. She was almost running. At last she went into a little shop. I stood still and waited. “Surely she doesn’t live at the shop,” I thought.

She did in fact come out a minute later, but without the books. Instead of the books she had an earthenware cup in her hand. Going on a little further she went in at the gateway of an unattractive-looking house. It was an old stone house of two storeys, painted a dirty-yellow colour, and not large. In one of the three windows on the ground floor there was a miniature red coffin — as a sign that a working coffin-maker lived there. The windows of the upper storey were extremely small and perfectly square with dingy-green broken panes, through which I caught a glimpse of pink cotton curtains. I crossed the road, went up to the house, and read on an iron plate over the gate, “Mme. Bubnov.”

But I had hardly deciphered the inscription when suddenly I heard a piercing female scream, followed by shouts of abuse in Mme. Bubnov’s yard. I peeped through the gate. On the wooden steps of the house stood a stout woman, dressed like a working woman with a kerchief on her head, and a green shawl. Her face was of a revolting purplish colour. Her little, puffy, bloodshot eves were gleaming with spite. It was evident that she was not sober, though it was so early in the day. She was shrieking at poor Elena, who stood petrified. before her with the cup in her hand. A dishevelled female, painted and rouged, peeped from the stairs behind the purple-faced woman.

A little later a door opened on the area steps leading to the basement, and a poorly dressed, middle-aged woman of modest and decent appearance came out on the steps, probably attracted by the shouting. The other inhabitants of the basement, a decrepit-looking old man and a girl, looked out from the half-opened door. A big, hulking peasant, probably the porter, stood still in the middle of the yard with the broom in his hand, looking lazily at the scene.

“Ah, you damned slut, you bloodsucker, you louse!” squealed the woman, letting out at one breath all her store of abuse, for the most part without commas or stops, but with a sort of gasp. So this is how you repay, me for my care of you, you ragged wench. She was just sent for some

cucumbers and off she slipped. My heart told me she'd slip off when I sent her out! My heart ached it did! Only last night I all but pulled her hair out for it, and here she runs off again to-day. And where have you to go, you trollop? Where have you to go to? Who do you go to, you damned mummy, you staring viper, you poisonous vermin, who, who is it? Speak, you rotten scum, or I'll choke you where you stand!"

And the infuriated woman flew at the poor girl, but, seeing the woman looking at her from the basement steps, she suddenly checked herself and, addressing her, squealed more shrilly than ever, waving her arms as though calling her to witness the monstrous crimes of her luckless victim.

"Her mother's hopped the twig! You all know, good neighbours, she's left alone in the world. I saw she was on your hands, poor folks as you are, though you'd nothing to eat for yourselves. There, thought I, for St. Nikolay's sake I'll put myself out and take the orphan. So I took her. and would you believe it, here I've been keeping her these two months, and upon my word she's been sucking my blood and wearing me to a shadow, the leech, the rattlesnake, the obstinate limb of Satan. You may beat her, or you may let her alone, she won't speak. She might have a mouth full of water, the way she holds her tongue! She breaks my heart holding her tongue! What do you take yourself for, you saucy slut, you green monkey? If it hadn't been for me you'd have died of hunger in the street. You ought to be ready to wash my feet and drink the water, you monster, you black French poker! You'd have been done for but for me!"

"But why are you upsetting yourself so, Anna Trifonovna? How's she vexed you again?" respectfully inquired the woman who had been addressed by the raving fury.

"You needn't ask, my good soul, that you needn't. I don't like people going against me! I am one for having things my own way, right or wrong — I'm that sort! She's almost sent me to my grave this morning! I sent her to the shop to get some cucumbers, and it was three hours before she was back. I'd a feeling in my heart when I sent her — it ached it did, didn't it ache! Where's she been? Where did she go? What protectors has she found for herself? As though I'd not been a good friend to her. Why, I forgave her slut of a mother a debt of fourteen roubles, buried her at my own expense, and took the little devil to bring up, you know that, my dear soul, you know it yourself! Why, have I no rights over her, after that? She should feel it, but instead of feeling it she goes against me! I wished for her good. I wanted to

put her in a muslin frock, the dirty slut! I bought her boots at the Gostiny Dvor, and decked her out like a peacock, a sight for a holiday! And would you believe it, good friends, two days later she'd torn up the dress, torn it into rags, and that's how she goes about, that's how she goes about! And what do you think, she tore it on purpose — I wouldn't tell a lie, I saw it myself; as much as to say she would go in rags, she wouldn't wear muslin! Well, I paid, her out! I did give her a drubbing! Then I called in the doctor afterwards and had to pay him, too. If I throttled you, you vermin, I should be quit with not touching milk for a week; that would be penance enough for strangling you. I made her scrub the floor for a punishment; and what do you think, she scrubbed and scrubbed, the jade! It vexed me to see her scrubbing. Well, thought I, she'll run away from me now. And I'd scarcely thought it when I looked round and off she'd gone, yesterday. You heard how I beat her for it yesterday, good friends. I made my arms ache. I took away her shoes and stockings — she won't go off barefoot, thought I; yet she gave me the slip to-day, too! Where have you been? Speak! Who have you been complaining of me to, you nettle-seed? Who have you been telling tales to? Speak, you gipsy, you foreign mask! Speak!"

And in her frenzy, she rushed at the little girl, who stood petrified with horror, clutched her by the hair, and flung her on the ground. The cup with the cucumbers in it was dashed aside and broken. This only increased the drunken fury's rage. She beat her victim about the face and the head; but Elena remained obstinately mute; not a sound, not a cry, not a complaint escaped her, even under the blows.

I rushed into the yard, almost beside myself with indignation, and went straight to the drunken woman.

"What are you about? How dare you treat a poor orphan like that?" I cried, seizing the fury by her arm.

"What's this? Why, who are you?" she screamed, leaving Elena, and putting her arms akimbo. "What do you want in my house?"

"To tell you you're a heartless woman." I cried. "How dare you bully a poor child like that? She's not yours. I've just heard that she's only adopted, a poor orphan."

"Lord Jesus!" cried the fury. "But who are you, poking your nose in! Did you come with her, eh? I'll go straight to the police-captain! Andrey Timofeyitch himself treats me like a lady. Why, is it to see you she goes,

eh? Who is it? He’s come to make an upset in another person’s house. Police!”

And she flew at me, brandishing her fists. But at that instant we heard a piercing, inhuman shriek. I looked. Elena, who had been standing as though unconscious, uttering a strange, unnatural scream, fell with a thud on the ground, writhing in awful convulsions. Her face was working. She was in an epileptic fit. The dishevelled female and the woman from the basement ran, lifted her up, and hurriedly carried her up the steps.

“She may choke for me, the damned slut the woman shrieked after her. “That’s the third fit this month! … Get off, you pickpocket” and she rushed at me again. “Why are you standing there, porter? What do you get your wages for?”

“Get along, get along! Do you want a smack on the head?” the porter boomed out lazily, apparently only as a matter of form. “Two’s company and three’s none. Make your bow and take your hook!”

There was no help for it. I went out at the gate, feeling that my interference had been useless. But I was boiling with indignation. I stood on, the pavement facing the gateway, and looked through the gate. As soon as I had gone out the woman rushed up the steps, and the porter having done his duty vanished. Soon after, the woman who had helped to carry up Elena hurried down the steps on the way to the basement. Seeing me she stood still and looked at me with curiosity. Her quiet, good-natured face encouraged me. I went back into the yard and straight up to her.

“Allow me to ask,” I said, “who is that girl and what is that horrible woman doing with her? Please don’t imagine that I ask simply from curiosity. I’ve met the girl, and owing to special circumstances I am much interested in her.”

“If you’re interested in her you’d better take her home or find some place for her than let her come to ruin here,” said the woman with apparent reluctance, making a movement to get away from me.

“But if you don’t tell me, what can I do? I tell you I know nothing about her. I suppose that’s Mme. Bubnov herself, the woman of the house?”

“Yes”

“Then how did the girl fall into her hands? Did her mother die here?”

“Oh, I can’t say. It’s not our business.”

And again she would have moved away.

“But please do me a kindness. I tell you it’s very interesting to me. Perhaps I may be able to do something. Who is the girl? What was her mother? Do you know?”

“She looked like a foreigner of some sort; she lived down below with us; but she was ill; she died of consumption.”

“Then she must have been very poor if she shared a room in the basement?”

“Ough! she was poor! My heart was always aching for her. We simply live from hand to mouth, yet she owed us six roubles in the five months she lived with us. We buried her, too. My husband made the coffin.”

“How was it then that woman said she’d buried her?”

“As though she’d buried her!”

“And what was her surname?”

“I can’t pronounce it, sir. It’s difficult. It must have been German.”

“Smith?”

“No, not quite that. Well, Anna Trifonovna took charge of the orphan, to bring her up, she says. But it’s not the right thing at all.”

“I suppose she took her for some object?”

“She’s a woman who’s up to no good,” answered the woman, seeming to ponder and hesitate whether to speak or not. “What is it to us? We’re outsiders.”

“You’d better keep a check on your tongue,” I heard a man’s voice say behind us.

It was a middle-aged man in a dressing-gown, with a full-coat over the dressing-gown, who looked like an artisan, the woman’s husband.

“She’s no call to be talking to you, sir; it’s not our business,” he said, looking askance at me. “And you go in. Good-bye, sir; we’re coffin-makers. If you ever need anything in our way we shall be pleased…but apart from that we’ve nothing to say.”

I went out, musing, and greatly excited. I could do nothing, but I felt that it was hard for me to leave it like this. Some words dropped by the coffin-maker’s wife revolted me particularly. There was something wrong here; I felt that. I was walking away, looking down and meditating, when suddenly a sharp voice called me by my surname. I looked up.

Before me stood a man who had been drinking and was almost staggering, dressed fairly neatly, though he had a shabby overcoat and a

greasy cap. His face was very familiar. I looked more closely at it. He winked at me and smiled ironically.

“Don’t you know me?”

CHAPTER V

AH, WHY IT'S YOU, Masloboev!" I cried, suddenly recognizing him as an old schoolfellow who had been at my provincial gymnasium. "Well, this is a meeting!"

"Yes, a meeting indeed! We've not met for six years. Or rather, we have met, but your excellency hasn't deigned to look at me. To be sure, you're a general, a literary one that is, eh!…"

He smiled ironically as he said it.

"Come, Masloboev,, old boy, you're talking nonsense!" I interrupted. "Generals look very different from me even if they are literary ones, and besides, let me tell you, I certainly do remember having met you twice in the street. But you obviously. avoided me. And why should I go up to a man if I see he's trying to avoid me? And do you know what I believe? If you weren't drunk you wouldn't have called to me even now. That's true, isn't it? Well, how are you? I'm very, very glad to have met you, my boy."

"Really? And I'm not compromising you by my … 'unconventional' appearance? But there's no need to ask that. It's not a great matter; I always remember what a jolly chap you were, old Vanya. Do you remember you took a thrashing for me? You held your tongue and didn't give me away, and, instead of being grateful, I jeered at you for a week afterwards. You're a blessed innocent! Glad to see you, my dear soul!" (We kissed each other.) "How many years I've been pining in solitude—'From morn till night, from dark till light but I've not forgotten old times. They're not easy to forget. But what have you been doing, what have you been doing?"

"I? Why, I'm pining in solitude, too."

He gave me a long look, full of the deep feeling of a man slightly inebriated; though he was a very good-natured fellow at any time.

"No, Vanya, your case is not like mine," he brought out at last in a tragic tone. "I've read it, Vanya, you know, I've read it, I've read it!

… But I say, let us have a good talk! Are you in a hurry?"

"I am in a hurry, and I must confess I'm very much upset about something. I'll tell you what's better. Where do you live?"

"I'll tell you. But that's not better; shall I tell you what is better?"

"Why, what?"

“Why, this, do you see?” and he pointed out to me a sign a few yards from where we were standing. “You see, confectioner’s and restaurant; that is simply an eating-house, but it’s a good place. I tell you it’s a decent place, and the vodka — there’s no word for it! It’s come all the way from Kiev on foot. I’ve tasted it, many a time I’ve tasted it, I know; and they wouldn’t dare offer me poor stuff here. They know Filip Filippitch. I’m Filip Filippitch, you know. Eh? You make a face? No, let me have my say. Now it’s a quarter past eleven; I’ve just looked. Well, at twenty-five to twelve exactly I’ll let you go. And in the meantime we’ll drain the flowing bowl. Twenty minutes for an old friend. Is that right?”

“If it will really be twenty minutes, all right; because, my dear chap, I really am busy.”

“Well, that’s a bargain. But I tell you what. Two words to begin with: you don’t look cheerful … as though you were put out about something, is that so?”

“Yes.”

“I guessed it. I am going in for the study of physiognomy, you know; it’s an occupation, too. So, come along, we’ll have a talk. In twenty minutes I shall have time in the first place to sip the cup that cheers and to toss off a glass of birch wine, and another of orange bitters, then a Parfait amour, and anything else I can think of. I drink, old man! I’m good for nothing except on a holiday before service. But don’t you drink. I want you just as you are. Though if you did drink you’d betray a peculiar nobility of soul. Come along! We’ll have a little chat and then part for another ten years. I’m not fit company for you, friend Vanya!”

“Don’t chatter so much, but come along. You shall have twenty minutes and then let me go.”

To get to the eating-house we had to go tip a wooden staircase of two flights, leading from the street to the second storey. But on the stairs we suddenly came upon two gentlemen, very drunk. Seeing us they moved aside, staggering.

One of them was a very young and youthful-looking lad, with an exaggeratedly stupid expression of face, with only a faint trace of moustache and no beard. He was dressed like a dandy, but looked ridiculous, as though he were dressed up in someone else’s clothes. He had expensive-looking rings on his fingers, an expensive pin in his tie, and his hair was combed up into a crest which looked particularly absurd. He kept

smiling and sniggering. His companion, a thick-set, corpulent, bald-headed man of fifty, with a puffy, drunken, pock-marked face and a nose like a button, was dressed rather carelessly, though he, too, had a big pin in his tie and wore spectacles. The expression of his face was malicious and sensual. His nasty, spiteful and suspicious-looking little eyes were lost in fat and seemed to be peeping through chinks. Evidently they both knew Masloboev, but the fat man made a momentary grimace of vexation on seeing us, while the young man subsided into a grin of obsequious sweetness. He even took off his cap. He was wearing a cap.

"Excuse us, Filip Filippitch," he muttered, gazing tenderly at him.

"What's up?"

"I beg your pardon — I'm …. " (He flicked at his collar.). Mitroshka's in there. So it seems he's a scoundrel, Filip Filippitch.

"Well, what's the matter?"

"Why, it seems so…. Why, last week he" (here he nodded towards his companion) "got his mug smeared with sour cream in a shocking place, all through that chap Mitroshka …khe-e."

His companion, looking annoyed, poked him with his elbow.

"You should come with us, Filip Filippitch. We'd empty a half-dozen. May we hope for your company?"

"No, my dear man, I can't now," answered Masloboev, "I've business."

"Khe-e! And I've a little business, too concerning you…."

Again his companion nudged him with his elbow.

"Afterwards! Afterwards!"

Masloboev was unmistakably trying not to look at them. But no sooner had we entered the outer room, along the whole length of which ran a fairly clean counter, covered with eatables, pies, tarts, and decanters of different-coloured liqueurs, when Masloboev drew me into a corner and said:

"The young fellow's Sizobryuhov, the son of the celebrated corn-dealer; he came in for half a million when his father died, and now he's having a good time. He went to Paris, and there he got through no end of money. He'd have spent all there, perhaps, but he came in for another fortune when his uncle died, and he came back from Paris. So he's getting through the rest of it here. In another year he'll be sending the hat round. He's as stupid as a goose. He goes about in the best restaurants and in cellars and taverns, and with actresses, and he's trying to get into the hussars — he's just applied for a commission. The other, the old fellow, Arhipov, is something

in the way of a merchant, too, or an agent; he had something to do with government contracts, too. He's a beast, a rogue, and now he's a pal of Sizobryuhov's. He's a Judas and a Falstaff both at once; he's twice been made bankrupt, and he's a disgusting, sensual brute, up to all sorts of tricks. I know one criminal affair in that line that he was mixed up in; but he managed to get off. For one thing, I'm very glad I met him here; I was on the lookout for him…. He's plucking Sizobryuhov now, of course. He knows all sorts of queer places, which is what makes him of use to young fellows like that. I've had a grudge against him for ever so long. Mitroshka's got a bone to pick with him, too — that dashing-looking fellow with the gipsy face in the smart tunic, standing by the window. He deals in horses; he's known to all the hussars about here. I tell you, he's such a clever rogue that he'll make a false bank-note before your very eyes, and pass it off upon you though you've seen it. He wears a tunic, though it's a velvet one, and looks like a Slavophile (though I think it suits him); but put him into a fine dress-coat, or something like it, and take him to the English club and call him the great landowner, count Barabanov; he'll pass for a count for two hours, play whist, and talk like a count, and they'll never guess; he'll take them in. He'll come to a bad end. Well, Mitroshka's got a great grudge against the fat man, for Mitroshka's hard up just now. Sizobryuhov used to be very thick with him, but the fat man's carried him off before Mitroshka had time to fleece him. If they met in the eating-house just now there must be something up. I know something about it, too, and can guess what it is, for Mitroshka and no one else told me that they'd be here, and be hanging about these parts after some mischief. I want to take advantage of Mitroshka's hatred for Arhipov, for I have my own reasons, and indeed I came here chiefly on that account. I don't want to let Mitroshka see, and don't you keep looking at him, but when we go out he's sure to come up of himself and tell me what I want to know…. Now come along, Vanya, into the other room, do you see? Now, Stepan," he said, addressing the waiter, "you understand what I want."

"Yes, sir."

"And you'll bring it."

"Yes, sir."

"Mind you do. Sit down, Vanya. Why do you keep looking at me like that? I see you're looking at me. Are you surprised? Don't be surprised. Anything may happen to a man, even what he's never dreamed of …

especially in the days when … well, in the days when we used to cram Cornelius Nepos together. And, Vanya, be sure of one thing: though Masloboev may have strayed from the true path his heart is still unchanged, it's only circumstances that have altered. Though I may be in the soot I'm no dirtier than the rest. I set up for being a doctor, and I trained as a teacher of Russian literature, and I wrote an article on Gogol, and thought of going to the gold-diggings, and meant to get married. A living soul longs for something sweet in life, and she consented, though I was so poor I had nothing to tempt a cat with. I was on the point of borrowing a pair of good boots for the marriage ceremony, for mine had been in holes for eighteen months…. But I didn't get married. She married a teacher and I went as a counting-house clerk, not a commercial count-ing-house, but just a counting-house. But then the tune changed. Years have rolled by, and though I'm not in the service, I make enough to jog along: I take bribes without ruth and yet stand firm for the truth. I hunt with the hounds and I run with the hare. I have principles. I know, for instance, that one can't fight single-handed, and I mind my own business. My business is chiefly in the confidential line, you understand."

"You're not some sort of detective, are you?"

"No, not exactly a detective, but I do take up jobs, partly professionally, and partly on my own account, It's this way Vanya: I drink vodka. But as I haven't drunk my wits away, I know what lies before me. My time is past; there's no washing a black nag white. One thing I will say: if the man in me were not echoing still I should not have come up to you to-day, Vanya. You're right, I'd met you and seen you before, and many a time I longed to speak, but still I didn't dare, and put it off. I'm not worthy of you. And you were right, Vanya, when you said that I spoke this time only because I was drunk and though this is all awful rot we'll finish with me now. We'd better talk of you. Well, my dear soul, I've read it! I've read. it through. I'm talking of your first-born. When I read it, I almost became a respectable man, my friend. I was almost becoming one, but I thought better of it, and preferred to remain a disreputable man. So there it is…."

And he said much more. He got more and more drunk, and became very maudlin, almost lachrymose. Masloboev had always been a capital fellow, but cunning, and as it were precocious; he had been a shrewd, crafty, artful dodger from his school-days upwards, but he really had a good heart; he was a lost man. Among Russians there are many such. They often have

great abilities, but everything seems topsy-turvy in them, and what's more they are quite capable of acting against their conscience in certain cases through weakness, and not only come to ruin, but know beforehand that they are on the road to ruin. Masloboev, for instance, was drowning in vodka.

"One more word now, friend," he went on. "I heard what a noise your fame made at first; I read several criticisms on you afterwards. (I really did; you imagine I never read anything.) I met you afterwards in shabby boots, in the mud without goulashes, with a battered hat, and I drew my own conclusions. You're going in for being a journalist now, eh?"

"Yes, Masloboev."

"Joined the literary hacks, I suppose?"

"That's about it."

"Well, I tell you what then, my boy: drinking's better. Here I drink; I lie on the sofa (and I have a capital sofa with springs), and I imagine myself Homer, or Dante, or some Frederick Barbarossa — one can fancy what one likes, you know, but you can't fancy yourself a Dante, or a Frederick Barbarossa, in the first place because you want to be yourself, and secondly because all wishing is forbidden you; for you're a literary hack. I have fancy, but you have reality. Listen, tell me openly straightforwardly, speaking as a brother (if you won't you'll offend and humiliate me for ten years), don't you want money? I've plenty. Oh, don't make faces. Take some of it, pay off the entrepreneurs, throw off the yoke, then, when you're secure of a year's living, settle down to a cherished idea, write a great book. Eh? What do you say?"

"Listen, Masloboev! I appreciate your brotherly offer, but I can't make any answer at present, and the reason why is a long story. There are circumstances. But I promise that I'll tell you everything afterwards, like a brother. I thank you for your offer. I promise that I'll come to you, and I'll come often. But this is what I want to tell you. You have been open with me, and so I've made up my mind to ask your advice, especially as I believe you're first-rate in such affairs."

I told him the whole story of Smith and his granddaughter, beginning with the scene in the restaurant. Strange to say, as I told my tale it seemed to me from his eyes that he knew something about the story. I asked him.

"No, not exactly," he answered, "though I had heard something about Smith, a story of some old man dying in a restaurant. But I really do know

something about Mme. Bubnov. Only two months ago I got some money out of that lady. je prends mon bien ou je le trouve, and that's the only respect in which I am like Moliere. Though I squeezed a hundred roubles out of her, I vowed at the time I'd wring another five hundred out of her before I'd done. She's a nasty woman! She's in an unmentionable line of business. That wouldn't matter, but sometimes it goes too far. Don't imagine I'm a Don Quixote, please. The point is that I may make a very good thing of it, and when I met Sizobryuhov half an hour ago I was awfully pleased. Sizobryuhov was evidently brought here, and the fat man brought him, and as I know what the fat man's special trade is, I conclude … oh, well, I'll show him up! I'm very glad I heard from you about that girl; it's another clue for me. I undertake all sorts of private jobs, you know, and I know some queer people! I investigated a little affair for a prince not long ago, an affair, I tell you, one wouldn't have expected from that prince. Or would you care to hear another story about a married woman? You come and see me, old man, and I shall have subjects ready for you that people will never believe in if you write about them…."

"And what was the name of that prince?" I asked, with a foreboding of something.

"What do you want to know for? All right, it's Valkovsky."

"Pyotr?"

"Yes. Do you know him?

"Yes, but not very well. Well, Masloboev, I shall come to you to inquire about that gentleman more than once again," I said, getting up. "You've interested me greatly."

"Well, old boy, you can come as often as you like. I can tell you fine tales, though only within certain limits, do you understand? Or else one loses one's credit and honour, in business, that is, and all the rest of it."

"All right, as far as honour permits."

I was really agitated. He noticed it.

"Well, what do you say about the story I told you? Have you thought of something?"

"Your story? Well, wait a couple of minutes. I will pay."

He went up to the buffet, and there, as though by chance, stood close by the young man in the tunic, who was so unceremoniously called Mitroshka. It seemed to me that Masloboev knew him a good deal better than he had

admitted to me. Anyway, it was evident that they were not meeting for the first time.

Mitroshka was a rather original-looking fellow. In his sleeveless tunic and red silk shirt, with his sharp but handsome features, with his young-looking, swarthy face, and his bold, sparkling eyes he made a curious and not unattractive impression. There was an assumption of jauntiness in his gestures, and yet at the moment he was evidently restraining himself, aiming rather at an air of businesslike gravity and sedateness.

“Look here, Vanya,” said Masloboev, when he rejoined me, “look me up this evening at seven o’clock, and I may have something to tell you. By myself, you see, I’m no use; in old days I was, but now I’m only a drunkard and have got out of the way of things. But I’ve still kept my old connexions; I may find out something. I sniff about among all sorts of sharp people; that’s how I get on. In my free time, that is when I’m sober, I do something myself, it’s true, through friends, too…mostly in the investigation line…. But that’s neither here nor there. Enough. Here’s my address, in Shestilavotchny Street. But now, my boy, I’m really too far gone. I’ll swallow another — and home. I’ll lie down a bit. If you come I’ll introduce you to Alexandra Semyonovna, and if there’s time we’ll discuss poetry.”

“Well, and that too?”

“All right; that, too, perhaps.”

“Perhaps I will come. I’ll certainly come.”

CHAPTER VI

ANNA ANDREYEVNA had long been expecting me. What I had told her the day before, about Natasha's note, had greatly excited her curiosity; and she had expected me much earlier in the morning, by ten o'clock at the latest. By the time I turned up at two o'clock in the afternoon the poor woman's agonies of suspense had reached an extreme pitch. She was longing, too, to talk to me of the new hopes aroused in her the day before, and of Nikolay Sergeyitch, who had been ailing since then, who was gloomy, and at the same time seemed specially tender to her. When I made my appearance she received me with an expression of coldness and displeasure in her face, hardly opened her mouth, and showed no sign of interest, almost as though she would ask why I had come, and what possessed me to drop in every day. She was angry at my coming so late. But I was in a hurry, and without further delay I described to her the whole scene at Natasha's the evening before. As soon as she heard of the elder prince's visit and his solemn proposal, her assumed indifference vanished instantly. I cannot find words to describe how delighted she was; she seemed quite beside herself, crossed herself, shed tears, bowed down before the ikons, embraced me, and was on the point of running to Nikolay Sergeyitch to tell him of her joy.

Bless me, my dear, why, it's all the insults and humiliation he's been through that are making him ill, and as soon as he knows that full reparation will be made to Natasha, he'll forget it all in a twinkling."

I had much ado to dissuade her. Though the good lady had lived twenty-five years with her husband she did not understand him. She was desperately anxious, too, to set off with me immediately to Natasha's. I put it to her not only that Nikolay Sergeyitch would disapprove of her action, but that we might even ruin the whole business by going. With difficulty she was brought to think better of it, but she detained me another half-hour unnecessarily, talking herself the whole time.

"With whom shall I be left here?" she said, "sitting alone within four walls with such joy in my heart?"

At last I persuaded her to let me go, reminding her that Natasha must be sick of waiting for me. She made the sign of the cross several times to bless me on my way, sent a special blessing to Natasha, and almost shed tears

when I absolutely refused to come back again that evening, unless anything special had happened at Natasha's. I did not see Nicholay Sergeyitch on this occasion; he had been awake all night, complained of a headache, a chill, and was now asleep in his study.

Natasha, too, had been expecting me all the morning. When I went in she was, as usual, walking up and down the room, with her hands clasped, meditating. Even now when I think of her I always see her alone in a poor room, dreamy, deserted, waiting with folded hands and downcast eyes, walking aimlessly up and down.

Still walking up and down she asked me in a low voice why I was so late. I gave her a brief account of all my adventures, but she scarcely listened. One could see she was in great anxiety about something.

"Anything fresh?" I asked her.

"Nothing fresh," she answered. But I guessed at once from her face that there was something fresh, and that she was expecting me on purpose to tell me, and she would tell me, not at once but just as I was going, as she always did.

That was always our habit. I was used to her and I waited. We began, of course, talking of the previous evening. I was particularly struck by the fact that we were quite agreed in our impression of Prince Valkovsky; and she positively disliked him, disliked him much more than she had at the time. And when we analysed the visit, point by point, Natasha suddenly said:

"Listen, Vanya, you know it's always like that, if one doesn't like a man at first, it's almost a sure sign that one will like him afterwards. That's how it's always been with me, anyway."

"Let us hope so, Natasha. And this is my opinion, and it's a final one. I went over it all, and what I deduced was that though the prince was perhaps Jesuitical, he is giving his consent to your marriage genuinely and in earnest."

Natasha stood still in the middle of the room and looked at me sternly. Her whole face was transformed; her lips twitched a little.

"But how could he in a case like this begin deceiving and … lying?"

"Of course not, of course not!" I assented hurriedly.

"Of course he wasn't lying. It seems to me there's no need to think of that. There's no excuse to be found for such deception. And, indeed, am I so abject in his eyes that he could jeer at me like that? Could any man be capable of such an insult?"

“Of course not, of course not,” I agreed, thinking to myself, “you’re thinking of nothing else as you pace up and down, my poor girl, and very likely you’re more doubtful about it than I am.”

“Ah, how I could wish he were coming back sooner!” she said. “He wanted to spend the whole evening with me, and then…. It must have been important business, since he’s given it all up and gone away. You don’t know what it was, Vanya? You haven’t heard anything?”

“The Lord only knows. You know he’s always making money. I’ve heard he’s taking up a share in some contract in Petersburg. We know nothing about business, Natasha.”

“Of course we don’t. Alyosha talked of some letter yesterday.”

“News of some sort. Has Alyosha been here?

“Yes.”

“Early?”

“At twelve o’clock; he sleeps late, you know. He stayed a little while. I sent him off to Katerina Fyodorovna. Shouldn’t I have, Vanya?”

“Why, didn’t he mean to go himself?”

“Yes, he did.”

She was about to say more, but checked herself. I looked at her and waited. Her face was sad. I would have questioned her, but she sometimes particularly disliked questions.

“He’s a strange boy,” she said at last, with a slight twist of her mouth, trying not to look at me.

“Why? I suppose something’s happened?”

“No, nothing; I just thought so…. He was sweet, though…. But already….”

“All his cares and anxieties are over now,” said I.

Natasha looked intently and searchingly at me. She felt inclined perhaps to answer, “he hadn’t many cares or anxieties before,” but she fancied that my words covered the same thought. She pouted.

But she became friendly and cordial again at once. This time she was extraordinarily gentle. I spent more than an hour with her. She was very uneasy. The prince had frightened her. I noticed from some of her questions that she was very anxious to know what sort of impression she had made on him. Had she behaved properly? Hadn’t she betrayed her joy too openly? Had she been too ready to take offence? Or on the contrary too conciliatory? He mustn’t imagine anything. He mustn’t laugh at her! He

mustn’t feel contempt for her! … Her cheeks glowed like fire at the thought!

How can you be so upset simply at a bad man’s imagining something? Let him imagine anything!” said I.

“Why is he bad?” she asked.

Natasha was suspicious but pure-hearted and straightforward. Her doubts came from no impure source. She was proud and with a fine pride, and would not endure what she looked upon as higher than anything to be turned into a laughing-stock before her. She would, of course, have met with contempt the contempt of a base man, but at the same time her heart would have ached at mockery of what she thought sacred, whoever had been the mocker. This was not due to any lack of firmness. It arose partly from too limited a knowledge of the world, from being unaccustomed to people from having been shut up in her own little groove. She had spent all her life in her own little corner and had hardly left it. And finally that characteristic of good-natured people, inherited perhaps from her father — the habit of thinking highly of people, of persistently thinking them better that they really are, warmly exaggerating everything good in them — was highly developed in her. It is hard for such people to be disillusioned afterwards; and it is hardest of all when one feels one is oneself to blame. Why did one expect more than could be given? And such a disappointment is always in store for such people. It is best for them to stay quietly in their corners and not to go out into the world; I have noticed, in fact, that they really love their corners so much that they grow shy and unsociable in them. Natasha, however, had suffered many misfortunes, many mortifications, She was already a wounded creature, and she cannot be blamed, if indeed there be any blame in what I have said.

But I was in a hurry and got up to go. She was surprised and almost cried at my going, though she had shown no particular affection for me all the while I was with her; on the contrary, she seemed rather colder to me than usual. She kissed me warmly and looked for a long time into my face.

“Listen,” she said. “Alyosha was very absurd this morning and quite surprised me. He was very sweet, very happy apparently. but flew in, such a butterfly — such a dandy, and kept prinking before the looking-glass. He’s a little too unceremonious now…. Yes, and he didn’t stay long. Fancy, he brought me some sweets.”

“Sweets? Why, that’s very charming and simple-hearted, Ah, what a pair you are. Now you’ve begun watching and spying on one another, studying each other’s faces, and reading hidden thoughts in them (and understanding nothing about it). He’s not different. He’s merry and schoolboyish as he always was. But you, you!”

And whenever Natasha changed her tone and came to me with some complaint against Alyosha, or to ask for a solution of some ticklish question, or to tell me some secret, expecting me to understand her at half a word, she always, I remember, looked at me with a smile, as it were imploring me to answer somehow so that she should feel happy at heart at once. And I remember, too, I always in such cases assumed a severe and harsh tone as though scolding someone, and this happened quite unconsciously with me, but it was always successful. My severity and gravity were what was wanted; they seemed more authoritative, and people sometimes feel an irresistible craving to be scolded. Natasha was sometimes left quite consoled.

“No, Vanya, you see,” she went on, keeping one of her little hands on my shoulder, while her other pressed my hand and her eyes looked into mine, “I fancied that he was somehow too little affected … he seemed already such a man — you know, as though he’d been married ten years but was still polite to his wife. Isn’t that very premature? … He laughed, and prinked, but just as though all that didn’t matter, as though it only partly concerned me, not as it used to be … he was in a great hurry to see Katerina Fyodorovna…

. If I spoke to him he didn’t listen to me, or began talking of something else, you know, that horrid, aristocratic habit we’ve both been getting him out of. In fact, he was too…even indifferent it seemed…. But what am I saying! Here I’m doing it, here I’ve begun! Ah, what exacting, capricious despots we all are, Vanya! Only now I see it! We can’t forgive a man for a trifling change in his face, and God knows what has made his face change! You were right, Vanya, in reproaching me just now! It’s all my fault! We make our own troubles and then we complain of them…. Thanks, Vanya, you have quite comforted me. Ah, if he would only come to-day! But there perhaps he’ll be angry for what happened this morning.”

“Surely you haven’t quarrelled already!” I cried with surprise.

“I made no sign! But I was a little sad, and though he came in so cheerful he suddenly became thoughtful, and I fancied he said goodbye coldly. Yes, I’ll send for him… . You come, too, to-day, Vanya.”

“Yes, I’ll be sure to, unless I’m detained by one thing.”
“Why, what thing is it?”
“I’ve brought it on myself! But I think I’m sure to come all the same.”

CHAPTER VII

AT SEVEN O'CLOCK precisely I was at Masloboev's. He lived in lodge, a little house, in Shestilavotchny Street. He had three rather grubby but not badly furnished rooms. There was even the appearance of some prosperity, at the same time an extreme slovenliness. The door was opened by a very pretty girl of nineteen, plainly but charmingly dressed, clean, and with very good-natured, merry eyes. I guessed at once that this was the Alexandra Semyonovna to whom he had made passing allusion that morning, holding out an introduction to her as an allurement to me. She asked who I was, and hearing my name said that Masloboev was expecting me, but that he was asleep now in his room, to which she took me. Masloboev was asleep on a very good soft sofa with his dirty great-coat over him, and a shabby leather pillow under his head. He was sleeping very lightly. As soon as we went in he called me by my name.

"Ah, that was you? I was expecting you. I was just dreaming you'd come in and wake me. So it's time. Come along."

"Where are we going?

"To see a lady."

"What lady? Why?"

"Mme. Bubnov, to pay her out. Isn't she a beauty?" he drawled, turning to Alexandra Semyonovna, and he positively kissed his fin-ger-tips at the thought of Mme. Bubnov.

"Get along, you're making it up!" said Alexandra Semyonovna, feeling it incumbent on her to make a show of anger.

"Don't you know her? Let me introduce you, old man. Here, Alexandra Semyonovna, let me present to you a literary general; it's only once a year he's on view for nothing, at other times you have to pay."

"Here he is up to his nonsense again! Don't you listen to him; he's always laughing at me. How can this gentleman be a general!"

"That's just what I tell you, he's a special sort. But don't you imagine, your excellency, that we're silly; we are much cleverer than we seem at first sight."

"Don't listen to him! He's always putting me to confusion before honest folk, the shameless fellow. He'd much better take me to the theatre sometimes."

“Alexandra Semyonovna, love your household…. Haven’t you forgotten what you must love? Haven’t you forgotten the word? the one I taught you!”

“Of course I haven’t! It means some nonsense.”

“Well, what was the word then?”

“As if I were going to disgrace myself before a visitor! Most likely it means something shameful. Strike me dumb if I’ll say it!”

“Well, you have forgotten then.”

“Well, I haven’t then, penates!… love your penates, that’s what he invents! Perhaps there never were any penates. An why should one love them? He’s always talking nonsense!”

“But at Mme. Bubnov’s….”

“Foo! You and your Bubnov!”

And Alexandra Semyonovna ran out of the room in great indignation.

“It’s time to go. Good-bye, Alexandra Semyonovna.”

We went out.

“Look here, Vanya, first let’s get into this cab. That’s right And secondly, I found out something after I had said good-by to you yesterday, and not by guesswork, but for a certainty I spent, a whole hour in Vassilyevsky Island. That fat man an awful scoundrel, a nasty, filthy brute, up to all sorts of trick and with vile tastes of all kinds. This Bubnov has long been notorious for some shifty doings in the same line. She was almost caught over a little girl of respectable family the other day. The muslin dress she dressed that orphan up in (as you described this morning) won’t let me rest, because I’ve heard something of the sort already. I learnt something else this morning, quite by chance, but I think I can rely on it. How old is she?”

“From her face I should say thirteen.”

“But small for her age. Well, this is how she’ll do, then. When need be she’ll say she’s eleven, and another time that she’s fifteen.

And as the poor child has no one to protect her she’s….”

“Is it possible!”

“What do you suppose? Mme. Bubnov wouldn’t have adopted an orphan simply out of compassion. And if the fat man’s hanging round, you may be sure it’s that. He saw her yesterday. And that blockhead Sizobryuhov’s been promised a beauty to-day, a married woman, an officer’s wife, a woman of rank. These profligate merchants’ sons are always keen on that; they’re

always on the look-out for rank. It's like that rule in the Latin grammar, do you remember: the significance takes precedence of the ending. But I believe I'm still drunk from this morning. But Bubnov had better not dare meddle in such doings. She wants to dupe the police, too; but that's rot! And so I'll give her a scare, for she knows that for the sake of old scores… and all the rest of it, do you understand?"

I was terribly shocked. All these revelations alarmed me. I kept being afraid we were too late and urged on the cabman.

"Don't be uneasy. Measures have been taken," said Masloboev. "Mitroshka's there. Sizobryulov will pay for it with money; but the fat scoundrel with his skin. That was settled this morning. Well, and Bubnov comes to my share … for don't let her dare…."

We drew up at the eating-house; but the man called Mitroshka was not there. Telling the cabman to wait for us at the eating-house steps, we walked to Mme. Bubnov's. Mitroshka was waiting for us at the gate. There was a bright light in the windows, and we heard Sizobryuhov's drunken, giggling laugh.

"They're all here, have been a quarter of an hour," Mitroshka announced; "now's the very time."

"But how shall we get in?" I asked.

"As visitors," replied Masloboev. "She knows me, and she knows Mitroshka, too. It's true it's all locked up, but not for us."

He tapped softly at the gate, and it was immediately opened. The porter opened it and exchanged a signal with Mitroshka. We went in quietly; we were not heard from the house. The porter led us up the steps and knocked. His name was called from within. He answered that a gentleman said he wanted to speak to her.

The door was opened and we all went in together. The porter vanished.

"Aie, who's this?" screamed Mme. Bubnov, standing drunken and dishevelled in the tiny entry with the candle in her hand.

"Who?" answered Masloboev quickly. "How can you ask, Anna Trifonovna. Don't you know your honoured guests? Who, if not me? Filip Filippitch."

"Ah, Filip Filippitch! It's you … very welcome…. But how is it you…. I don't know … please walk in."

She was completely taken aback.

“Where? Here? But there’s a partition here! No, you must give us a better reception. We’ll have a drop of champagne. But aren’t there any little mam’zelles?”

The woman regained her confidence at once.

“Why, for such honoured guests I’d get them if I had to dig for them underground. I’d send for them from the kingdom of China.”

“Two words, Anna Trifonovna, darling; is Sizobryuhov here?

“Yes.”

“He’s just the man I want. How dare he go off on the spree without me, the rascal?”

“I expect he has not forgotten you. He seems expecting someone; it must be you.”

Masloboev pushed the door, and we found ourselves in a small room with two windows with geraniums in them, with wicker-work chairs, and a wretched-looking piano; all as one would expect. But even before we went in, while we were still talking in the passage, Mitroshka had disappeared. I learned afterwards that he had not come in, but had been waiting behind the door. He had someone to open it to him afterwards. The dishevelled and painted woman I had seen peeping over Mme. Bubnov’s shoulder that morning was a pal of his.

Sizobryuhov was sitting on a skimpy little sofa of imitation mahogany, before a round table with a cloth on it. On the table were two bottles of tepid champagne, and a bottle of horrible rum; and there were plates of sweets from the confectioner’s, biscuits, and nuts of three sorts. At the table facing Sizobryuhov sat a repulsive-looking, pock-marked female of forty wearing a black taffeta dress and a bronze brooch and bracelets. This was the “officer’s wife,” unmistakably a sham. Sizobryuhov was drunk and perfectly satisfied. His fat friend was nor with him.

“That’s how people behave!” Masloboev bawled at the top of his voice. “After inviting one to Dussot’s, too!”

“Filip Filippitch, doing us the pleasure?” muttered Sizobryuhov, getting up to meet us with a blissful air.

“Are you drinking?

“Excuse me.”

“Don’t apologize, but invite your guests to join you. We’ve come to keep it up with you. Here, I’ve brought a friend to join us.”

Masloboev pointed to me.

“Delighted, that is, you do me pleasure…. K-k-k-he!”

“Ugh, do you call this champagne? It’s more like kvas.”

“You insult me.”

“So you don’t dare show yourself at Dussot’s! And after inviting one!”

“He’s just been telling me he’s been in Paris,” put in the officer’s wife. “He must be fibbing.”

“Fedosya Titishna, don’t insult me. I have been there. I’ve travelled.”

“A peasant like him in Paris!”

“We have been! We could! Me and Karp Vassilitch — we cut a dash there. Do you know Karp Vassilitch?”

“What do I want with your Karp Vassilitch?”

“Why, it’s only just … it might be worth your while. Why, it was there, in Paris, at Mme. Joubert’s, we broke an English pier-glass.”

“What did you break?”

A pier-glass. There was a looking-glass over the whole wall and Karp Vassilitch was that drunk that he began jabbering Russian to Mme. Joubert. He stood by that pier-glass and leaned his elbow against it. And Joubert screamed at him in her own way, that the pier-glass cost seven hundred francs (that is four hundred roubles), and that he’d break it! He grinned and looked at me. And I was sitting on a sofa opposite, and a beauty beside me, not a mug like this one here, but a stunner, that’s the only word for it. He cries out, ‘ Stepan Terentyitch, hi, Stepan Terentyitch! We’ll go halves, shall we?’ And I said ‘Done!’ And then he banged his fist on the looking-glass, crash! The glass was all in splinters. Joubert squealed and went for him straight in the face: ‘What are you about, you ruffian?’ (In her own lingo, that is.) ‘Mme. Joubert,’ says he, ‘here’s the price of it and don’t disperse my character.’ And on the spot he forked out six hundred and fifty francs. They haggled over the other fifty.”

At that moment a terrible, piercing shriek was heard two or three rooms away from the one in which we were. I shuddered, and I, too, cried out. I recognized that shriek: it was the voice of Elena. Immediately after that pitiful shriek we heard other outcries, oaths, a scuffle, and finally the loud, resonant, distinct sound of a slap in the face. It was probably Mitroshka inflicting retribution in his own fashion. Suddenly the door was violently flung open and Elena rushed into the room with a white face and dazed eyes in a white muslin dress, crumpled and torn, and her hair, which had been carefully arranged, dishevelled as though by a struggle. I stood facing the

door, and she rushed straight to me and flung her arms round me. Everyone jumped up. Everybody was alarmed. There were shouts and exclamations when she appeared. Then Mitroshka appeared in the doorway, dragging after him by the hair his fat enemy, who was in a hopelessly dishevelled condition. He dragged him up to the door and flung him into the room.

“Here he is! Take him!” Mitroshka brought out with an air of complete satisfaction.

“I say,” said Masloboev, coming quietly up to me and tapping me on the shoulder, “take our cab, take the child with you and drive home; there’s nothing more for you to do here. We’ll arrange the rest to-morrow.”

I did not need telling twice. I seized Elena by the arm and took her out of that den. I don’t know how things ended there — No one stopped us. Mme. Bubnov was panic-stricken. Everything had passed so quickly that she did not know how to interfere. The cab was waiting for us, and in twenty minutes we were at my lodgings.

Elena seemed half-dead. I unfastened the hooks of her dress, sprinkled her with water, and laid her on the sofa. She began to be feverish and delirious. I looked at her white little face, at her colourless lips, at her black hair, which had been done up carefully and pomaded, though it had come down on one side, at her whole get-up, at the pink bows which still remained here and there on her dress — and I had no doubt at all about the revolting facts. Poor little thing!

She grew worse and worse. I did not leave her, and I made up my mind not to go to Natasha’s that evening. From time to time Elena raised her long, arrow-like eyelashes to look at me, and gazed long and intently as though she recognize me. It was late, past midnight, when at last she fell asleep. I slept on the floor not far from her.

CHAPTER VIII

I GOT UP VERY EARLY. I had waked up almost every half hour through the night, and gone up to look intently at my poor little visitor. She was in a fever and slightly delirious. But towards morning she fell into a sound sleep. A good sign, I thought, but when I waked in the morning I decided to run for the doctor' while the poor little thing was still asleep. I knew a doctor, a very good-natured old bachelor, who with his German house-keeper had lived in Vladimirsky Street from time immemorial. I set off to him. He promised to be with me at ten o'clock. It was eight when I reached him. I felt much inclined to call in at Masloboev's on the way, but I thought better of it. He was sure not to be awake yet after yesterday; besides, Elena might wake up and be frightened at finding herself alone in my room. In her feverish state she might well forget how and when she had come there.

She waked up at the moment when I went into the room. I went up to her and cautiously asked her how she felt. She did not answer, but bent a long, long, intent look upon me with her expressive black eyes. I thought from the look in her eyes that she was fully conscious and understood what had happened. Her not answering me perhaps was just her invariable habit. Both on the previous day and on the day before that when she had come to see me she had not uttered a word in answer to some of my questions, but had only looked into my face with her slow, persistent stare, in which there was a strange pride as well as wonder and wild curiosity. Now I noticed a severity, even a sort of mistrustfulness in her eyes. I was putting my hand on her forehead to feel whether she were still feverish, but quietly, without a word, she put back my hand with her little one and turned away from me to the wall. I walked away that I might not worry her.

I had a big copper kettle. I had long used it instead of a samovar, for boiling water. I had wood, the porter had brought me up enough to last for five days. I lighted the stove, fetched some water and put the tea-pot on. I laid the tea-things on the table. Elena turned towards me and watched it all with curiosity. I asked her whether she would not have something. But again she turned away from me and made no answer.

"Why is she angry with me?" I wondered. "Queer little girl!"

My old doctor came at ten o'clock as he had promised. He examined the patient with German thoroughness, and greatly cheered me by saying that

though she was feverish there was no special danger. He added that she probably had another chronic disease, some irregularity in the action of the heart, “but that point would want special watching, for now she’s out of danger.” More from habit than necessity he prescribed her a mixture and some powders, and at once proceeded to ask me how she came to be with me. At the same time he looked about my room wanderingly. The old man was an awful chatterbox. He was struck with Elena. She pulled her hand away when he tried to feel her pulse, and would not show him her tongue; to all his questions she did not answer one word. All the while she stared intently at the enormous Stanislav Order that hung upon his neck.

“Most likely her head is aching badly,” said the old man, but how she does stare!”

I did not think it necessary to tell him all about Elena, so I put him off, saying it was a long story.

“Let me know if there’s any need,” said he as he went away “But at present there’s no danger.”

I made up my mind to stay all day with Elena, and to leave her alone as rarely as possible till she was quite well. But knowing that Natasha and Anna Andreyevna would be worried if they expected me in vain, I decided to let Natasha know by post that I could not be with her that day. I could not write to Anna Andreyevna. She had asked me herself once for all not to send her letters, after I had once sent her news when Natasha was ill.

“My old man scowls when he sees a letter from you,” she said. “He wants to know, poor dear, what’s in the letter, and he can’t ask, he can’t bring himself to. And so he’s upset for the whole day. And besides, my dear, you only tantalize me with letters. What’s the use of a dozen lines? One wants to ask the details and you’re not there.” And so I wrote only to Natasha, and when I took the prescription to the chemist’s I posted the letter.

Meanwhile Elena fell asleep again. She moaned faintly and started in her sleep. The doctor had guessed right, she had a bad headache. From time to time she cried out and woke up. She looked at me with positive vexation, as though my attention was particularly irksome. I must confess this wounded me.

At eleven o’clock Masloboev turned up. He was preoccupied and seemed absentminded; he only came in for a minute, and was in a great hurry to get away.

“Well, brother, I didn’t expect that you lived in great style, he observed, looking round, “but I didn’t think I should find you in such a box. This is a box, not a lodging. But that’s nothing though what does matter is that all these outside worries take you off your work. I thought of that yesterday when we were driving to Bubnov’s. By natural temperament, brother, and by social position I’m one of those people who can do nothing sensible themselves, but can read sermons to other people. Now, listen, I’ll look in, perhaps, to-morrow or next day, and you be sure to come and see me on Sunday morning. I hope by then the problem of this child will be completely settled; then we’ll talk things over seriously, for you need looking after in earnest. You can’t go on living like this. I only dropped a hint yesterday, but now I’ll put it before you logically. And tell me, in short, do you look on it as a dishonour to take money from me for a time?”

“Come, don’t quarrel,” I interrupted. “You’d better tell me how things ended there yesterday.”

“Well, they ended most satisfactorily. My object was attained you understand. I’ve no time now. I only looked in for a minute to tell you I’m busy and have no time for you, and to find out by the way whether you’re going to place her somewhere, or whether you mean to keep her yourself. Because it wants thinking over and settling.”

“That I don’t know for certain yet, and I must own I was waiting to ask your advice. How could I keep her?”

“Why, as a servant….”

“Please don’t speak so loud. Though she’s ill she’s quite conscious, and I noticed she started when she saw you. No doubt she remembered yesterday.”

Then I told him about her behaviour and all the peculiarities I had noticed in her. Masloboev was interested in what I told him. I added that perhaps I could place her in a household, and told him briefly about my old friends. To my astonishment he knew something of Natasha’s story, and when I asked him how he had heard of it:

“Oh,” he said, “I heard something about it long ago in connexion with some business. I’ve told you already that I know Prince Valkovsky. That’s a good idea of yours to send her to those old people. She’d only be in your way. And another thing, she wants some sort of a passport. Don’t you worry about that. I’ll undertake it. Good-bye. Come and see me often. Is she asleep now?”

“I think so,” I answered.

But as soon as he had gone Elena called to me.

“Who’s that?” she asked. Her voice shook, but she looked at me with the same intent and haughty expression. I can find no other word for it.

I told her Masloboev’s name, and said that it was by his help I got her away from Mme. Bubnov’s, and that Mme. Bubnov was very much afraid of him. Her cheeks suddenly flushed fiery red, probably at the recollection of the past.

“And she will never come here?” asked Elena, with a searching look at me.

I made haste to reassure her. She remained silent, and was taking my hand in her burning fingers, but she dropped it again at once as though recollecting herself.

“It cannot be that she really feels such an aversion for me,” I thought. “It’s her manner, or else … or else the poor little thing has had so much trouble that she mistrusts everyone.”

At the hour fixed I went out to fetch the medicine, and at the same time went into a restaurant where they knew me and gave me credit. I took a pot with me, and brought back some chicken broth for Elena. But she would not eat, and the soup remained for the time on the stove.

I gave her her medicine and sat down to my work. I though she was asleep, but chancing to look round at her I saw that she had raised her head, and was intently watching me write. I pretended not to notice her.

At last she really did fall asleep, and to my great delight she slept quietly without delirium or moaning. I fell into a reverie Natasha, not knowing what was the matter, might well be angry with me for not coming to-day, would be sure, indeed, I reflected to be hurt at my neglect, just when, perhaps, she needed me most.

She might at this moment have special worries, perhaps some service to ask of me, and I was staying away as though expressly.

As for Anna Andreyevna, I was completely at a loss as to how I should excuse myself to her next day. I thought it over and suddenly made up my mind to run round to both of them. I should only be absent about two hours. Elena was asleep and would not hear me go out. I jumped up, took my coat and cap but just as I was going out Elena called me. I was surprised. Could she have been pretending to be asleep?

I may remark in parenthesis that, though Elena made a show of not wanting to speak to me, these rather frequent appeals this desire to apply to me in every difficulty, showed a contrary feeling, and I confess it really pleased me.

“Where do you mean to send me?” she asked when I went up to her.

She generally asked her questions all of a sudden, when I did not expect them. This time I did not take in her meaning at first.

“You were telling your friend just now that you meant to place me in some household. I don’t want to go.”

I bent down to her; she was hot all over, another attack of fever had come on. I began trying to soothe and pacify her assuring her that if she cared to remain with me I would not send her away anywhere. Saying this, I took off my coat and cap I could not bring myself to leave her alone in such a condition.

“No, go,” she said, realizing at once that I was meaning to stay. “I’m sleepy; I shall go to sleep directly.”

“But how will you get on alone?” I said, uncertainly. “Though I’d be sure to be back in two hours’ time….”

“Well, go then. Suppose I’m ill for a whole year, you can’t stay at home all the time.”

And she tried to smile, and looked strangely at me as though struggling with some kindly feeling stirring in her heart. Poor little thing! Her gentle, tender heart showed itself in glimpses in spite of her aloofness and evident mistrust.

First I ran round to Anna Andreyevna. She was waiting for me with feverish impatience and she greeted me with reproaches; she was in terrible anxiety. Nikolay Sergeyitch had gone out immediately after dinner, and she did not know where. I had a presentiment that she had not been able to resist telling him everything in hints, of course, as she always did. She practically admitted it herself, telling me that she could not resist sharing such joyful tidings with him, but that Nikolay Sergeyitch had become, to use her expression, “blacker than night, that he had said nothing. He wouldn’t speak, wouldn’t even answer my questions, and suddenly after dinner had got ready and gone out.”

When she told me this Anna Andreyevna was almost trembling with dismay, and besought me to stay with her until Nikolay Sergeyitch came back. I excused myself and told her almost flatly that perhaps I should not

come next day either, and that I had really hurried to her now to tell her so; this time we almost quarrelled. She shed tears, reproached me harshly and bitterly, and only when I was just going out at the door she suddenly threw herself on my neck, held me tight in both arms and told me not to be angry with a lonely creature like her, and not to resent her words.

Contrary to my expectations, I found Natasha again alone. And, strange to say, it seemed to me that she was by no means so pleased to see me as she had been the day before and on other occasions; as though I were in the way or somehow annoying her. When I asked whether Alyosha had been there that day she answered:

"Of course he has, but he didn't stay long. He promised to look in this evening," she went on, hesitating.

And yesterday evening, was he here?"

"N-no. He was detained," she added quickly. "Well, Vanya, how are things going with you?"

I saw that she wanted to stave off our conversation and begin a fresh subject. I looked at her more intently. She was evidently upset. But noticing that I was glancing at her and watching her closely, she looked at me rapidly and, as it were, wrathfully and with such intensity that her eyes seemed to blaze at me. "She is miserable again," I thought, "but she doesn't want to speak to me about it."

In answer to her question about my work I told her the whole story of Elena in full detail. She was extremely interested and even impressed by my story.

"Good heavens! And you could leave her alone, and ill! she cried.

I told her that I had meant not to come at all that day, but that I was afraid she would be angry with me and that she might be in need of me.

"Need," she said to herself as though pondering. "Perhaps I do need you, Vanya, but that had better be another time. Have you been to my people?"

I told her.

"Yes, God only knows how my father will take the news. Though what is there to take after all? …"

"What is there to take?" I repeated. "A transformation like this!"

"I don't know about that…. Where can he have gone again? That time before, you thought he was coming to me. Do you know, Vanya, come to me to-morrow if you can. I shall tell you something perhaps…. Only I'm

ashamed to trouble you. But now you'd better be going home to your visitor. I expect it's two hours since you came out."

"Yes, it is. Good-bye, Natasha. Well, and how was Alyosha with you to-day?"

"Oh, Alyosha. All right…. I wonder at your curiosity."

"Good-bye for now, my friend."

"Good-bye."

She gave me her hand carelessly and turned away from my last, farewell look. I went out somewhat surprised. "She has plenty to think about, though," I thought. "It's no jesting matter. To-morrow she'll be the first to tell me all about it."

I went home sorrowful, and was dreadfully shocked as soon as I opened the door. By now it was dark. I could make out Elena sitting on the sofa, her head sunk on her breast as though plunged in deep thought. She didn't even glance at me. She seemed lost to everything. I went up to her. She was muttering something to herself. "Isn't she delirious?" I thought.

"Elena, my, dear, what's the matter?" I asked, sitting beside her and putting my arm round her.

"I want to go away…. I'd better go to her," she said, not raising her head to look at me.

"Where? To whom?" I asked in surprise.

"To her. To Bubnov. She's always saying I owe her a lot of money; that she buried mother at her expense. I don't want her to say nasty things about mother. I want to work there, and pay her back…. Then I'll go away of myself. But now I'm going back to her."

"Be quiet, Elena, you can't go back to her," I said. "She'll torment you. She'll ruin you."

"Let her ruin me, let her torment me." Elena caught up the words feverishly. "I'm not the first. Others better than I are tormented. A beggar woman in the street told me that. I'm poor and I want to be poor. I'll be poor all my life. My mother told me so when she was dying. I'll work…. I don't want to wear this dress…."

"I'll buy you another one to-morrow. And I'll get you your books. You shall stay with me. I won't send you away to any — unless you want to go. Don't worry yourself."

"I'll be a work-girl!"

"Very well, very well. Only be quiet. Lie down. Go to sleep."

But the poor child burst into tears. By degrees her tears passed to sobs. I didn’t know what to do with her. I offered her water and moistened her temples and her head. At last she sank on the sofa completely exhausted, and she was overcome by feverish shivering. I wrapped her up in what I could find and she fell into an uneasy sleep, starting and waking up continually. Though I had not walked far that day, I was awfully tired, and I decided to go to bed as early as possible. Tormenting doubts swarmed in my brain. I foresaw that I should have a lot of trouble with this child. But my chief anxiety was about Natasha and her troubles. Altogether, as I remember now, I have rarely been in a mood of such deep dejection as when I fell asleep that unhappy night.

CHAPTER IX

I WAKED UP LATE, at ten o’clock in the morning, feeling ill. I felt giddy and my head was aching; I glanced towards Elena’s bed. The bed was empty. At the same moment from my little room on the right sounds reached me as though someone were sweeping with a broom. I went to look. Elena had a broom in her hand and holding up her smart dress which she had kept on ever since at evening, she was sweeping the floor. The wood for the stove was piled up in the corner. The table had been scrubbed, the kettle had been cleaned. In a word, Elena was doing the housework.

“Listen, Elena,” I cried. “Who wants you to sweep the floor? I don’t wish it, you’re ill. Have you come here to be a drudge for me?”

“Who is going to sweep the floor here?” she answered, drawing herself up and looking straight at me. “I’m not ill now.”

“But I didn’t take you to make you work, Elena. You seem to be afraid I shall scold you like Mme. Bubnov for living with me for nothing. And where did you get that horrid broom? I had no broom,” I added, looking at her in wonder.

“It’s my broom. I brought it here myself, I used to sweep the floor here for grandfather too. And the broom’s been lying here ever since under the stove.”

I went back to the other room musing. Perhaps I may have been in error, but it seemed to me that she felt oppressed by my hospitality and that she wanted in every possible way to show me that she was doing something for her living.

“What an embittered character, if so,” I thought. Two minutes later she came in and without a word sat down on the sofa in the same place as yesterday, looking inquisitively at me. Meanwhile I boiled the kettle, made the tea, poured out a cup for her and handed it her with a slice of white bread. She took it in silence and without opposition. She had had nothing for twenty-four hours.

“See, you’ve dirtied your pretty dress with that broom,” I said, noticing a streak of dirt on her skirt.

She looked down and suddenly, to my intense astonishment, she put down her cup, and, apparently calm and composed, she picked up a breadth of the muslin skirt in both hands and with one rip tore it from top to bottom.

When she had done this she raised her stubborn, flashing eyes to me in silence. Her face was pale.

“What are you about, Elena?” I cried, feeling sure the child was mad.

“It’s a horrid dress,” she cried, almost gasping with excitement. “Why do you say it’s a nice dress? I don’t want to wear it!” she cried suddenly, jumping up from her place. “I’ll tear it up. I didn’t ask her to dress me up. She did it herself, by force. I’ve torn one dress already. I’ll tear this one! I’ll tear it, I’ll tear it, I’ll tear it!…”

And she fell upon her luckless dress with fury. In one moment she had torn it almost into rags. When she had finished she was so pale she could hardly stand. I looked with surprise at such rage. She looked at me with a defiant air as though I too had somehow offended her. But I knew now what to do.

I made up my mind to buy her a new dress that morning. This wild, embittered little creature must be tamed by kindness. She looked as though she had never met anyone kind. If once already in spite of severe punishment she had torn another similar dress to rags, with what fury she must look on this one now, when it recalled to her those awful moments.

In Tolkutchy Market one could buy a good, plain dress very cheaply. Unfortunately at that moment I had scarcely any money. But as I went to bed the night before I had made up my mind to go that morning to a place where I had hopes of getting some. It was fortunately not far from the market. I took my hat. Elena watched me intently as though expecting something.

“Are you going to lock me in again?” she asked when I took up the key to lock the door behind me, as I had done the day before and the day before that.

“My dear,” I said, going up to her. “Don’t be angry at that. I lock the door because someone might come. You are ill, and you’d perhaps be frightened. And there’s no knowing who might not come. Perhaps Bubnov might take it into her head to….”

I said this on purpose. I locked her in because I didn’t trust her. I was afraid that she might suddenly take it into her head to leave me. I determined to be cautious for a time. Elena said nothing and I locked her in again.

I knew a publisher who had been for the last twelve years bringing out a compilation in many volumes. I often used to get work from him when I

was obliged to make money somehow. He paid regularly. I applied to him, and he gave me twenty-five roubles in advance, engaging me to compile an article by the end of the week. But I hoped to pick up time on my novel. I often did this when it came to the last necessity. Having got the money I set off to the market. There I soon found an old woman I knew who sold old clothes of all sorts. I gave her Elena's size approximately, and she instantly picked me out a light-coloured cotton dress priced extremely cheaply, though it was quite strong and had not been washed more than once. While I was about it I took a neckerchief too. As I paid for them I reflected that Elena would need a coat, mantle, or something of that kind. It was cold weather and she had absolutely nothing. But I put off that purchase for another time. Elena was so proud and ready to take offence. Goodness knows, I thought, how she'll take this dress even though I purposely picked out the most ordinary garment as plain and unattractive as possible. I did, however, buy her two pairs of thread stockings and one pair of woollen. Those I could give her on the ground that she was ill and that it was cold in the room. She would need underclothes too. But all that I left till I should get to know her better. Then I bought some old curtains for the bed. They were necessary and might be a great satisfaction to Elena.

With all these things I returned home at one o'clock in the afternoon. My key turned almost noiselessly in the lock, so that Elena did not at once hear me come in. I noticed that she was standing at the table turning over my books and papers. Hearing me she hurriedly closed the book she was reading, and moved away from the table, flushing all over. I glanced at the book. It was my first novel, which had been republished in book form and had my name on the title-page.

"Someone knocked here while you were away!" she said in a tone which seemed to taunt me for having locked her in.

"Wasn't it the doctor?" I said. "Didn't you call to him, Elena?"

"No!

I made no answer, but took my parcel, untied it, and took out the dress I had bought.

"Here, Elena, my dear!" I said going up to her. "You can't go about in such rags as you've got on now. So I've bought you a dress, an everyday one, very cheap. So there's no need for you to worry about it. It only cost one rouble twenty kopecks. Wear it with my best wishes."

I put the dress down beside her. She flushed crimson and looked at me for some time with open eyes.

She was extremely surprised and at the same time it seemed to me that she was horribly ashamed for some reason. But there was a light of something soft and tender in her eyes. Seeing that she said nothing I turned away to the table. What I had done had evidently impressed her, but she controlled herself with an effort, and sat with her eyes cast down.

My head was going round and aching more and more. The fresh air had done me no good. Meanwhile I had to go to Natasha's. My anxiety about her was no less than yesterday. On the contrary it kept growing more and more. Suddenly I fancied that Elena called me. I turned to her.

"Don't lock me in when you go out," she said, looking away and picking at the border of the sofa, as though she were entirely absorbed in doing so. "I will not go away from you."

"Very well, Elena, I agree, But what if some stranger comes? There's no knowing who may!"

"Then leave me the key and I'll lock myself in and if they knock I shall say, 'not at home.'" And she looked slyly at me as much as to say, "See how simply that's done!"

"Who washes your clothes?" she asked suddenly, before I had had

time to answer her.

"There's a woman here, in this house."

"I know how to wash clothes. And where did you get the food yesterday?"

"At a restaurant."

"I know how to cook, too. I will do your cooking."

"That will do, Elena. What can you know about cooking? You're talking nonsense…."

Elena looked down and was silent. She was evidently wounded at my remark. Ten minutes at least passed. We were both silent.

"Soup!" she said suddenly, without raising her head.

"What about soup? What soup?" I asked, surprised.

"I can make soup. I used to make it for mother when she was ill. I used to go to market too."

"See, Elena, just see how proud you are," I said, going up to her and sitting down beside her on the sofa. "I treat you as my heart prompts me. You are all alone, without relations, and unhappy. I want to help you. You'd

help me in the same way if I were in trouble. But you won't look at it like that, and it's disagreeable to you to take the smallest present from me. You want to repay it at once, to pay for it by work, as though I were Mme. Bubnov and would taunt you with it. If that is so, it's a shame, Elena."

She made no answer. Her lips quivered. I believe she wanted to say something; but she controlled herself and was silent. I got up to go to Natasha. That time I left Elena the key, begging her if anybody should come and knock, to call out and ask who was there. I felt perfectly sure that something dreadful was happening to Natasha, and that she was keeping it dark from me for the time, as she had done more than once before. I resolved in any case to look in only for one moment for fear of irritating her by my persistence.

And it turned out I was right. She met me again with a look of harsh displeasure. I ought to have left her at once but my legs were giving way under me.

"I've only come for a minute, Natasha," I began, "to ask your advice what I'm to do with my visitor."

And I began briefly telling her all about Elena. Natasha listened to me in silence.

"I don't know what to advise you, Vanya," she said. "Everything shows that she's a very strange little creature. Perhaps she has been dreadfully ill-treated and frightened. Give her time to get well, anyway. You think of my people for her?"

"She keeps saying that she won't go anywhere away from me. And goodness knows how they'll take her, so I don't know what to do. Well, tell me, dear, how you are. You didn't seem quite well yesterday," I said timidly.

"Yes…my head aches rather to-day, too," she answered absentmindedly. "Haven't you seen any of our people?"

"No. I shall go to-morrow. To-morrow's Saturday, you know…."

"Well, what of it?"

"The prince is coming in the evening."

"Well? I've not forgotten."

"No, I only…."

She stood still, exactly opposite me, and looked for a long time intently into my face. There was a look of determination, of obstinacy, in her eyes, something feverish and wrathful.

“Look here, Vanya,” she said, “be kind, go away, you worry me.”

I got up from my chair and looked at her, unutterably astonished.

“Natasha, dear, what’s the matter? What has happened?” I cried in alarm.

“Nothing’s happened. You’ll know all about it to-morrow, but now I want to be alone. Do you hear, Vanya? Go away at once. I can’t bear, I can’t bear to look at you!”

“But tell me at least ….”

“You’ll know all about it to-morrow! Oh, my God! Are you going?”

I went out. I was so overcome that I hardly knew what I was doing. Mavra started out into the passage to meet me.

“What, is she angry?” she asked me. “I’m afraid to go near her.”

“But what’s the matter with her “‘Why, our young gentleman hasn’t shown his nose here for the last three days!”

“Three days! “I repeated in amazement. “Why, she told me yesterday that he had been here in the morning and was coming again in the evening….”

“She did? He never came near us in the morning! I tell you we haven’t set eyes on him for three days. You don’t say she told you yesterday that he’d been in the morning?”

“Yes, she said so.”

“Well,” said Mavra, musing, “it must have cut her to the quick if she won’t own it even to you. Well, he’s a pretty one!”

“But what does it mean?” I cried.

“It means I don’t know what to do with her,” said Mavra, throwing up her hands. “She was sending me to him yesterday, but twice she turned me back as I was starting. And to-day she won’t even speak to me. If only you could see him. I daren’t leave her now.”

I rushed down the staircase, beside myself.

“Will you be here this evening?” Mavra called after me.

“We’ll see then,” I called up to her. “I may just run in to you to ask how she is. If only I’m alive myself.”

I really felt as though something had struck me to the very heart.

CHAPTER X

I WENT STRAIGHT to Alyosha's. He lived with his father in Little Morskaya. Prince Valkovsky had a rather large flat, though he lived alone. Alyosha had two splendid rooms in the flat. I had very rarely been to see him, only once before, I believe, in fact. He had come to see me much oftener, especially at first, during the early period of his connexion with Natasha.

He was not at home. I went straight to his rooms and wrote him the following note:

"Alyosha, you seem to have gone out of your mind. As on Tuesday evening your father himself asked Natasha to do you the honour of becoming your wife, and you were delighted at his doing so, as I saw myself, you must admit that your behaviour is somewhat strange. Do you know what you are doing to Natasha? In any case this note will remind you that your behaviour towards your future wife is unworthy and frivolous in the extreme. I am very well aware that I have no right to lecture you, but I don't care about that in the least.

"P.S. — She knows nothing about this letter, and in fact it was not she who told me about you."

I sealed up the letter and left it on his table. In answer to my question the servant said that Alexey Petrovitch was hardly ever at home, and that he would not be back now till the small hours of the morning.

I could hardly get home. I was overcome with giddiness, and my legs were weak and trembling. My door was open. Nikolay Sergeyitch Ichmenyev was sitting waiting for me. He was sitting at the table watching Elena in silent wonder, and she, too, was watching him with no less wonder, though she was obstinately silent. "To be sure," I thought, "he must think her queer."

"Well, my boy, I've been waiting for you for a good hour, and I must confess I had never expected to find things … like this," he went on, looking round the room, with a scarcely perceptible sign towards Elena.

His face expressed his astonishment. But looking at him more closely I noticed in him signs of agitation and distress. His face was paler than usual.

"Sit down, sit down," he said with a preoccupied and anxious air. "I've come round to you in a hurry. I've something to say to you. But what's the

matter? You don’t look yourself.”

“I’m not well. I’ve been giddy all day.”

“Well, mind, you mustn’t neglect that. Have you caught cold, or what?”

“No, it’s simply a nervous attack. I sometimes have them. But aren’t you unwell?”

“No, no! It’s nothing; it’s excitement. I’ve something to say. Sit down.”

I moved a chair over and sat down at the table, facing him. The old man bent forward to me, and said in a half whisper:

“Mind, don’t look at her, but seem as though we were speaking of something else. What sort of visitor is this you’ve got here?”

“I’ll explain to you afterwards, Nikolay Sergeyitch. This poor girl is absolutely alone in the world. She’s the grandchild of that old Smith who used to live here and died at the confectioner’s.”

“Ah, so he had a grandchild! Well, my boy, she’s a queer little thing! How she stares, how she stares! I tell you plainly if you hadn’t come in I couldn’t have stood it another five minutes. She would hardly open the door, and all this time not a word! It’s quite uncanny; she’s not like a human being. But how did she come here? I suppose she came to see her grandfather, not knowing he was died?”

“Yes, she has been very unfortunate. The old man thought of her when he was dying.”

“Hm! She seems to take after her grandfather. You’ll tell me all about that later. Perhaps one could help her somehow, in some way, if she’s so unfortunate. But now, my boy, can’t you tell her to go away, for I want to talk to you of something serious.”

“But she’s nowhere to go. She’s living here.”

I explained in a few words as far as I could, adding that he could speak before her, that she was only a child.

“To be sure … she’s a child. But you have surprised me, my boy. She’s staying with you! Good heavens!

And the old man looked at her again in amazement.

Elena, feeling that we were talking about her, sat silent, with her head bent, picking at the edge of the sofa with her fingers. She had already had time to put on her new dress, which fitted her perfectly. Her hair had been brushed more carefully than usual, perhaps in honour of the new dress. Altogether, if it had not been for the strange wildness of her expression, she would have been a very pretty child.

“Short and clear, that’s what I have to tell you,” the old man began again. “It’s a long business, an important business.”

He sat looking down, with a grave and meditative air and in spite of his haste and his “short and clear,” he could find no words to begin. “What’s coming?” I wondered.

“Do you know, Vanya, I’ve come to you to ask a very great favour. But first … as I realize now myself, I must explain to you certain circumstances … very delicate circumstances.”

He cleared his throat and stole a look at me; looked and flushed red; flushed and was angry with himself for his awkwardness; he was angry and pressed on.

“Well, what is there to explain! You understand yourself The long and short of it is, I am challenging Prince Valkovsky to a duel, and I beg you to make the arrangements and be my second.”

I fell back in my chair and gazed at him, beside myself with astonishment.

“Well, what are you staring at? I’ve not gone out of my mind.”

“But, excuse me, Nikolay Sergeyitch! On what pretext P With what object? And, in fact, how is it possible?”

“Pretext! Object!” cried the old man. “That’s good!”

“Very well, very well. I know what you’ll say; but what good will you do by your action? What will be gained by the duel! I must own I don’t understand it.”

“I thought you wouldn’t understand. Listen, our lawsuit over (that is, it will be over in a few days, There are only a few formalities to come). I have lost the case. I’ve to pay ten thousand; that’s the decree of the court. Ichmenyevka is the security for it. So now this base man is secure of his money, and giving up Ichmenyevka I have paid him the damages and become a free man. Now I can hold up my head and say, ‘You’ve been insulting me one way and another, honoured prince, for the last two years; you have sullied my name and the honour of my family, and I have been obliged to bear all this! I could not then challenge you to a duel. You’d have said openly then, ‘You cunning fellow, you want to kill me in order not to pay me the money which you foresee you’ll be sentenced to pay sooner or later. No, first let’s see how the case ends and then you can challenge me.’ Now, honoured prince, the case is settled, you are secure, so now there are no difficulties, and so now will you be pleased to meet me at the barrier?’

That’s what I have to say to you. What, to your thinking haven’t I the right to avenge myself, for everything, for everything?”

His eyes glittered. I looked at him for a long time without speaking. I wanted to penetrate to his secret thought.

“Listen, Nikolay Sergeyitch,” I said at last, making up my mind to speak out on the real point without which we could not understand each other. “Can you be perfectly open with me?

“I can,” he answered firmly.

“Tell me plainly. Is it only the feeling of revenge that prompts you to challenge him, or have you other objects in view?”

“Vanya,” he answered, “you know that I allow no one to touch on certain points with me, but I’ll make an exception in the present case. For you, with your clear insight, have seen at once that we can’t avoid the point. Yes, I have another aim. That aim is to save my lost daughter and to rescue her from the path of ruin to which recent events are driving her now.”

“But how will you save her by this duel? That’s the question.”

“By hindering all that is being plotted among them now. Listen; don’t imagine that I am actuated by fatherly tenderness or any weakness of that sort. All that’s nonsense! I don’t display my inmost heart to anyone. Even you don’t know it. My daughter has abandoned me, has left my house with a lover, and I have cast her out of my heart — I cast her out once for all that very evening — you remember? If you have seen me sobbing over her portrait, it doesn’t follow that I want to forgive her. I did not forgive her then. I wept for my lost happiness, for my vain dreams, but not for her as she is now. I often weep perhaps. I’m not ashamed to own it, just as I’m not ashamed to own that I once loved my child more than anything on earth. All this seems to belie my conduct now. You may say to me ‘If it’s so, if you are indifferent to the fate of her whom you no longer look on as a daughter, why do you interfere in what they are plotting there?’ I answer: in the first place that I don’t want to let that base and crafty man triumph, and secondly, from a common feeling of humanity. If she’s no longer my daughter she’s a weak creature, defenceless and deceived, who is being still more deceived, that she may be utterly ruined. I can’t meddle directly, but indirectly, by a duel, I can. If I am killed or my blood is shed, surely she won’t step over our barrier, perhaps over my corpse, and stand at the altar beside the son of my murderer, like the daughter of that king (do you remember in the book you learnt to read out of?) who rode in her chariot

over her father’s body? And, besides, if it comes to a duel, our princes won’t care for the marriage themselves. In short, I don’t want that marriage, and I’ll do everything I can to prevent it. Do you understand me now?”

“No. If you wish Natasha well, how can you make up your mind to hinder her marriage, that is, the one thing that can establish her good name? She has all her life before her; she will have need of her good name.”

“She ought to spit on the opinion of the world. That’s how she ought to look at it. She ought to realize that the greatest disgrace of all for her lies in that marriage, in being connected with those vile people, with that paltry society. A noble pride — that should be her answer to the world. Then perhaps I might consent to hold out a hand to her, and then we would see who dared cry shame on my child!”

Such desperate idealism amazed me. But I saw at once that he was not himself and was speaking in anger.

“That’s too idealistic,” I answered, “and therefore cruel. You’re demanding of her a strength which perhaps you did not give her at her birth. Do you suppose that she is consenting to this marriage because she wants to be a princess? Why, she’s in love; it’s passion; it’s fate. You expect of her a contempt for public opinion while you bow down before it yourself! The prince has insulted you, has publicly accused you of a base scheme to ally yourself with his princely house, and now you are reasoning that if she refuses them now after a formal offer of marriage from their side it will, of course, be the fullest and plainest refutation of the old calumny. That’s what you will gain by it. You are deferring to the opinion of the prince himself, and you’re struggling to make him recognize his mistake. You’re longing to turn him into derision, to revenge yourself on him, and for that you will sacrifice your daughter’s happiness. Isn’t that egoism?”

The old man sat gloomy and frowning, and for a long time he answered not a word.

“You’re unjust to me, Vanya,” he said at last, and a tear glistened on his eyelashes. “I swear you are unjust. But let us leave that! I can’t turn my heart inside out before you,” he went on, getting up and taking his hat. “One thing I will say — you spoke just now of my daughter’s happiness. I have absolutely and literally no faith in that happiness. Besides which, the marriage will never come off, apart from my interference.”

“How so? What makes you think so? Perhaps you know something?” I cried with curiosity.

“No. I know nothing special. But that cursed fox can never have brought himself to such a thing. It’s all nonsense, all a trap. I’m convinced of that, and, mark my words, it will turn out so. And secondly, even if this marriage did take place, which could only happen if that scoundrel has some special, mysterious interests to be served by it — interests which no one knows anything about, and I’m utterly at a loss to understand — tell me, ask your own heart, will she be happy in that marriage? Taunts, humiliations, with the partner of her life a wretched boy who is weary of her love already, and who will begin to neglect her, insult her, and humiliate her as soon as he is married. At the same time her own passion growing stronger as his grows cooler; jealousy, tortures, hell, divorce, perhaps crime itself…. No, Vanya! If you’re all working for that end, and you have a hand in it, you’ll have to answer to God for it. I warn you, though it will be too late then! Good-bye.”

I stopped him.

“Listen, Nikolay Sergeyitch. Let us decide to wait a bit. Let me assure you that more than one pair of eyes is watching over this affair. And perhaps it will be settled of itself in the best possible way without violence and artificial interference, such as a duel, for instance. Time is the very best arbiter. And, finally, let me tell you, your whole plan is utterly impossible. Could you for a moment suppose that Prince Valkovsky would accept your challenge?”

“Not accept it? What do you mean by that?”

“I swear he wouldn’t; and believe me, he’d find a perfectly satisfactory way out of it; he would do it all with pedantic dignity and meanwhile you would be an object of derision…”

“Upon my word, my boy, upon my word! You simply overwhelm me! How could he refuse to accept it? No, Vanya, you’re simply a romancer, a regular romancer! Why, do you suppose there is anything unbecoming in his fighting me? I’m just as good as he is. I’m an old man, ail insulted father. You’re a Russian author, and therefore also a respectable person. You can be a second and … and … I can’t make out what more you want …”

“Well, you’ll see. He’ll bring forward such excuses that you’ll be the first to see that it will be utterly impossible for you to fight him.”

“Hm! … very well, my friend. Have it your own way wait, for a certain time, that is. We’ll see what time will do. But one thing, my dear, give me your word of honour that you’ll not speak of this conversation there, nor to Anna Andreyevna.”

“I promise.”

“Do me another favour, Vanya: never begin upon the subject again.”

“Very well. I promise.”

“And one more request: I know, my dear, that it’s dull for you perhaps, but come and see us as often as ever you can. My poor Anna Andreyevna is so fond of you, and…and… she’s so wretched without you…. You understand, Vanya.”

And he pressed my hand warmly. I promised him with all my heart.

“And now, Vanya, the last delicate question. Have you any money?

“Money?” I repeated with surprise.

“Yes.” (And the old man flushed and looked down.) “I look at you, my boy, at your lodgings…at your circumstances… and when I think that you may have other, outside expenses (and that you may have them just now), then…. Here, my boy, a hundred and fifty roubles as a first instalment….”

“A hundred and fifty! As a first instalment. And you’ve just lost your case!”

“Vanya, I see you didn’t understand me at all! You may have exceptional calls on you, understand that. In some cases money may help to an independent position, an independent decision. Perhaps you don’t need it now, but won’t you need it for something in the future? In any case I shall leave it with you. It’s all I’ve been able to get together. If you don’t spend it you can give it back. And now good-bye. My God, how pale you are! Why, you’re quite ill …”

I took the money without protest. It was quite clear why he left it with me.

“I can scarcely stand up,” I answered.

“You must take care of yourself, Vanya, darling! Don’t go out today. I shall tell Anna Andreyevna what a state you’re in. Oughtn’t you to have a doctor? I’ll see how you are to-morrow; I’ll try my best to come, anyway, if only I can drag my legs along myself. Now you’d better lie down…. Well, good-bye. Good-bye, little girl; she’s turned her back! Listen, my dear, here are another five roubles. That’s for the child, but don’t tell her I gave it her. Simply spend it for her. Get her some shoes or underclothes. She must need all sorts of things. Good-bye, my dear….”

I went down to the gate with him. I had to ask the porter to go out to get some food for me. Elena had had no dinner.

CHAPTER XI

BUT AS SOON AS I came in again I felt my head going round and fell down in the middle of the room. I remember nothing but Elena's shriek. She clasped her hands and flew to support me. That is the last moment that remains in my memory….

When I regained consciousness I found myself in bed. Elena told me later on that, with the help of the porter who came in with some eatables, she had carried me to the sofa.

I woke up several times, and always saw Elena's compassionate and anxious little face leaning over me. But I remember all that as in a dream, as through a mist, and the sweet face of the poor child came to me in glimpses, through my stupor, like a vision, like a picture. She brought me something to drink, arranged my bedclothes, or sat looking at me with a distressed and frightened face, and smoothing my hair with her fingers. Once I remember her gentle kiss on my face. Another time, suddenly waking up in the night, by the light of the smouldering candle that had been set on a little table by my bedside I saw Elena lying with her face on my pillow with her warm cheek resting on her hand, and her pale lips half parted in an uneasy sleep. But it was only early next morning that I fully regained consciousness. The candle had completely burnt out. The vivid rosy beams of early sunrise were already playing on the wall. Elena was sitting at the table, asleep, with her tired little head pillowed on her left arm, and I remember I gazed a long time at her childish face, full, even in sleep, of an unchildlike sadness and a sort of strange, sickly beauty. It was pale, with long arrowy eyelashes lying on the thin cheeks, and pitch-black hair that fell thick and heavy in a careless knot on one side. Her other arm lay on my pillow. Very softly I kissed that thin little arm. But the poor child did not wake, though there was a faint glimmer of a smile on her pale lips. I went on gazing at her, and so quietly fell into a sound healing sleep. This time I slept almost till midday. When I woke up I felt almost well again. A feeling of weakness and heaviness in my limbs was the only trace left of my illness, I had had such sudden nervous attacks before; I knew them very well. The attack generally passed off within twenty-four hours, though the symptoms were acute and violent for that time.

It was nearly midday. The first thing I saw was the curtain I had bought the day before, which was hanging on a string across the corner. Elena had arranged it, screening off the corner as a separate room for herself. She was sitting before the stove boiling the kettle. Noticing that I was awake she smiled cheerfully and at once came up to me.

“My dear,” I said, taking her hand, “you’ve been looking after me all night. I didn’t know you were so kind.”

“And how do you know I’ve been looking after you? Perhaps I’ve been asleep all night,” she said, looking at me with shy and good-humoured slyness, and at the same time flushing shame-facedly at her own words.

“I woke up and saw you. You only fell asleep at day break.”

“Would you like some tea?” she interrupted, as though feeling it difficult to continue the conversation, as all delicately modest and sternly truthful people are apt to when they are praised.

“I should,” I answered, “but did you have any dinner yesterday?”

“I had no dinner but I had some supper. The porter brought it. But don’t you talk. Lie still. You’re not quite well yet,” she added, bringing me some tea and sitting down on my bed.

“Lie still, indeed! I will lie still, though, till it gets dark, and then I’m going out. I really must, Lenotchka.”

“Oh, you must, must you! Who is it you’re going to see? Not the gentleman who was here yesterday?”

“No, I’m not going to him.”

“Well, I’m glad you’re not. It was he upset you yesterday. To his daughter then?”

“What do you know about his daughter?

“I heard all you said yesterday,” she answered, looking down. Her face clouded over. She frowned.

“He’s a horrid old man,” she added.

“You know nothing about him. On the contrary, he’s a very kind man.”

“No, no, he’s wicked. I heard,” she said with conviction.

“Why, what did you hear?”

“He won’t forgive his daughter…”

“But he loves her. She has behaved badly to him; and he is anxious and worried about her.”

“Why doesn’t he forgive her? If he does forgive her now she shouldn’t go back to him.”

“How so? Why not?”

“Because he doesn’t deserve that she should love him,” she answered hotly. “Let her leave him for ever and let her go begging, and let him see his daughter begging, and be miserable.”

Her eyes flashed and her cheeks glowed. “There must be something behind her words,” I thought.

“Was it to his home you meant to send me?” she added after a pause.

“Yes, Elena.”

“No. I’d better get a place as a servant.”

“Ah, how wrong is all that you’re saying, Lenotchka! And what nonsense! Who would take you as a servant?”

“Any peasant,” she answered impatiently, looking more and more downcast.

She was evidently hot-tempered.

“A peasant doesn’t want a girl like you to work for him,” I said, laughing.

“Well, a gentleman’s family, then.”

“You live in a gentleman’s family, with your temper?”

“Yes.”

The more irritated she became, the more abrupt were her answers

“But you’d never stand it.”

“Yes I would. They’d scold me, but I’d say nothing on purpose. They’d beat me, but I wouldn’t speak, I wouldn’t speak. Let them beat me — I wouldn’t cry for anything. That would annoy them even more if I didn’t cry.”

“Really, Elena! What bitterness, and how proud you are! You must have seen a lot of trouble….”

I got up and went to my big table. Elena remained on the sofa, looking dreamily at the floor and picking at the edge of the sofa. She did not speak. I wondered whether she were angry at what I had said.

Standing by the table I mechanically opened the books I had brought the day before, for the compilation, and by degrees I became absorbed in them. It often happens to me that I go and open a book to look up something, and go on reading so that I forget everything.

“What are you always writing?” Elena asked with a timid smile, coming quietly to the table.

“All sorts of things, Lenotchka. They give me money for it.”

“Petitions?”

“No, not petitions.”

And I explained to her as far as I could that I wrote all sorts of stories about different people, and that out of them were made books that are called novels. She listened with great curiosity.

“Is it all true — what you write?”

“No, I make it up.”

“Why do you write what isn’t true?”

“Why, here, read it. You see this book; you’ve looked at it already. You can read, can’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Well, you’ll see then. I wrote this book.”

“You? I’ll read it ….”

She was evidently longing to say something, but found it difficult, and was in great excitement. Something lay hidden under her questions.

“And are you paid much for this?” she asked at last.

“It’s as it happens. Sometimes a lot, sometimes nothing, because the work doesn’t come off. It’s difficult work, Lenotchka.”

“Then you’re not rich?”

“No, not rich.”

“Then I shall work and help you.”

She glanced at me quickly, flushed, dropped her eyes, and taking two steps towards me suddenly threw her arms round me, and pressed her face tightly against my breast; I looked at her with amazement.

“I love you … I’m not proud,” she said. “You said I was proud yesterday. No, no, I’m not like that. I love you. You are the only person who cares for me… .”

But her tears choked her. A minute later they burst out with as much violence as the day before. She fell on her knees before me, kissed my hands, my feet….

“You care for me!” she repeated. “You’re the only one, the only one.”

She embraced my knees convulsively. All the feeling which she had repressed for so long broke out at once, in an uncontrollable outburst, and I understood the strange stubbornness of a heart that for a while shrinkingly masked its feeling, the more harshly, the more stubbornly as the need for expression and utterance grew stronger, till the inevitable outburst came, when the whole being forgot itself and gave itself up to the craving for love,

to gratitude, to affection and to tears. She sobbed till she became hysterical. With an effort I loosened her arms, lifted her up and carried her to the sofa. For a long time she went on sobbing, hiding her face in the pillow as though ashamed to look at me. But she held my hand tight, and kept it pressed to her heart.

By degrees she grew calmer, but still did not raise her face to me. Twice her eyes flitted over my face, and there was a great softness and a sort of timorous and shrinking emotion in them.

At last she flushed and smiled.

“Are you better?” I asked, “my sensitive little Lenotchka, my sick little child!”

“Not Lenotchka, no…” she whispered, still hiding her face from me.

“Not Lenotchka? What then?”

“Nellie.”

“Nellie? Why must it be Nellie? If you like; it’s a very pretty name. I’ll call you so if that’s what you wish.”

“That’s what mother called me. And no one else ever called me that, no one but she…. And I would not have anyone call me so but mother. But you call me so. I want you to. I will always love you, always.”

“A loving and proud little heart,” I thought. “And how long it has taken me to win the right to call you Nellie!”

But now I knew her heart was gained for ever.

“Nellie, listen,” I said, as soon as she was calmer. “You say that no one has ever loved you but your mother. Is it true your grandfather didn’t love you?”

“No, he didn’t.”

“Yet you cried for him; do you remember, here, on the stairs?”

For a minute she did not speak.

“No, he didn’t love me…. He was wicked.”

A look of pain came into her face.

“But we mustn’t judge him too harshly, Nellie, I think he had grown quite childish with age. He seemed out of his mind when he died. I told you how he died.”

“Yes. But he had only begun to be quite forgetful in the last month. He would sit here all day long, and if I didn’t come to him he would sit on for two or three days without eating or drinking. He used to be much better before.”

“What do you mean by ‘before’?”

“Before mother died.”

“Then it was you brought him food and drink, Nellie?”

“Yes, I used to.”

“Where did you get it? From Mme. Bubnov?”

“No, I never took anything from Bubnov,” she said emphatically, with a shaking voice.

“Where did you get it? You had nothing, had you?”

Nellie turned fearfully pale and said nothing; she bent a long, long look upon me.

“I used to beg in the streets…. When I had five kopecks I used to buy him bread and snuff… .”

“And he let you! Nellie! Nellie!”

“At first I did it without telling him, But when he found out he used to send me out himself. I used to stand on the bridge and beg of passers-by, and he used to walk up and down near the bridge, and when he saw me given anything he used to rush at me and take the money, as though I wanted to hide it from him, and were not getting it for him.”

As she said this she smiled a sarcastic, bitter smile.

“That was all when mother was dead,” she added. “Then he seemed to have gone quite out of his mind.”

“So he must have loved your mother very much. How was it he didn’t live with her?

“No, he didn’t love her…. He was wicked and didn’t forgive her … like that wicked old man yesterday,” she said quietly, almost in a whisper, and grew paler and paler.

I started. The plot of a whole drama seemed to flash before my eyes. That poor woman dying in a cellar at the coffin-maker’s, her orphan child who visited from time to time the old grandfather who had cursed her mother, the queer crazy old fellow who had been dying in the confectioner’s shop after his dog’s death.

“And Azorka used to be mother’s dog,” said Nellie suddenly, smiling at some reminiscence. “Grandfather used to be very fond of mother once, and when mother went away from him she left Azorka behind. And that’s why he was so fond of Azorka. He didn’t forgive mother, but when the dog died he died too,” Nellie added harshly, and the smile vanished from her face.

“What was he in old days, Nellie?” I asked her after a brief pause.

“He used to be rich…. I don’t know what he was,” she answered. “He had some sort of factory. So mother told me. At first she used to think I was too little and didn’t tell me everything. She used to kiss me and say, ‘You’ll know everything, the time will come when you’ll know everything, poor, unhappy child!’ She was always calling me poor and unhappy. And sometimes at night when she thought I was asleep (though I was only pretending to be asleep on purpose) she used to be always crying over me, she would kiss me and say ‘poor, unhappy child’!”

“What did your mother die of?”

“Of consumption; it’s six weeks ago.”

“And you do remember the time when your grandfather was rich?”

“But I wasn’t born then. Mother went away from grandfather before I was born.”

“With whom did she go?

“I don’t know,” said Nellie softly, as though hesitating. “She went abroad and I was born there.”

“Abroad? Where?”

“In Switzerland. I’ve been everywhere. I’ve been in Italy and in Paris too.”

I was surprised.

“And do you remember it all, Nellie?”

“I remember a great deal.”

“How is it you know Russian so well, Nellie?

“Mother used to teach me Russian even then. She was Russian because her mother was Russian. But grandfather was English, but he was just like a Russian too. And when we came to Russia a year and a half ago I learnt it thoroughly. Mother was ill even then. Then we got poorer and poorer. Mother was always crying. At first she was a long time looking for grandfather here in Petersburg, and always crying and saying that she had behaved badly to him. How she used to cry! And when she knew grandfather was poor she cried more than ever. She often wrote letters to him, and he never answered.”

“Why did your mother come back here? Was it only to see her father?”

“I don’t know. But there we were so happy.” And Nellie’s eyes sparkled. “Mother used to live alone, with me. She had one friend, a kind man like you. He used to know her before she went away. But he died out there and mother came back….”

“So it was with him that your mother went away from your grandfather?”

“No, not with him. Mother went away with someone else, and he left her….”

“Who was he, Nellie?”

Nellie glanced at me and said nothing. She evidently knew the name of the man with whom her mother had gone away and who was probably her father. It was painful to her to speak that name even to me.

I did not want to worry her with questions. Hers was a strange character, nervous and fiery, though she suppressed her impulses, lovable, though she entrenched herself behind a barrier of pride and reserve. Although she loved me with her whole heart, with the most candid and ingenuous love, almost as she had loved the dead mother of whom she could not speak without pain, yet all the while I knew her she was rarely open with me, and except on that day she rarely felt moved to speak to me of her past; on the contrary, she was, as it were, austerely reserved with me, but on that day through convulsive sobs of misery that interrupted her story, she told me in the course of several hours all that most distressed and tortured her in her memories, and I shall never forget that terrible story, but the greater part of it will be told later….

It was a fearful story. It was the story of a woman abandoned and living on after the wreck of her happiness, sick, worn out and forsaken by everyone, rejected by the last creature to whom she could look — her father, once wronged by her and crazed by intolerable sufferings and humiliations. It was the story of a woman driven to despair, wandering through the cold, filthy streets of Petersburg, begging alms with the little girl whom she regarded as a baby; of a woman who lay dying for months in a damp cellar, while her father, refusing to forgive her to the last moment of her life, and only at the last moment relenting, hastened to forgive her only to find a cold corpse instead of the woman he loved above everything on earth.

It was a strange story of the mysterious, hardly comprehensible relations of the crazy old man with the little grandchild who already understood him, who already, child as she was, understood many things that some men do not attain to in long years of their smooth and carefully guarded lives. It was a gloomy story, one of those gloomy and distressing dramas which are so often played out unseen, almost mysterious, under the heavy sky of

Petersburg, in the dark secret corners of the vast town, in the midst of the giddy ferment of life, of dull egoism, of clashing interests, of gloomy vice and secret crimes, in that lowest hell of senseless and abnormal life….

But that story will be told later….

PART III

CHAPTER I

TWILIGHT HAD FALLEN, the evening had come on before I roused myself from the gloomy nightmare and came back to the present.
“Nellie,” I said, “you’re ill and upset, and I must leave you alone, in tears and distress. My dear! Forgive me, and let me tell you that there’s someone else who has been loved and not forgiven, who is unhappy, insulted and forsaken. She is expecting me. And I feel drawn to her now after your story, so that I can’t bear not to see her at once, this very minute.”

I don’t know whether she understood all that I said. I was upset both by her story and by my illness, but I rushed to Natasha’s. It was late, nine o’clock, when I arrived.

In the street I noticed a carriage at the gate of the house where Natasha lodged, and I fancied that it was the prince’s carriage. The entry was across the courtyard. As soon as I began to mount the stairs I heard, a flight above me, someone carefully feeling his way, evidently unfamiliar with the place. I imagined this must be the prince, but I soon began to doubt it. The stranger kept grumbling and cursing the stairs as he climbed up, his language growing stronger and more violent as he proceeded. Of course the staircase was narrow, filthy, steep, and never lighted; but the language I heard on the third floor was such that I could not believe it to be the prince: the ascending gentleman was swearing like a cabman. But there was a glimmer of light on the third floor; a little lamp was burning at Natasha’s door. I overtook the stranger at the door, and what was my astonishment when I recognized him as Prince Valkovsky! I fancied he was extremely annoyed at running up against me so unexpectedly. At the first moment he did not recognize me, but suddenly his whole face changed. His first glance of anger and hatred relaxed into an affable, good-humoured expression, and he held out both hands to me with extraordinary delight.

“Ach, that’s you! And I was just about to kneel down to thank God my life was safe! Did you hear me swearing?”

And he laughed in the most good-natured way. But suddenly his face assumed an earnest and anxious expression.

“How could Alyosha let Natalya Nikolaevna live in such a place!” he said, shaking his head. “It’s just these so-called trifles that show what a man’s made of. I’m anxious about him. He is good-natured, he has a generous heart, but here you have an example: he’s frantically in love, yet he puts the girl he loves in a hole like this. I’ve even heard she has sometimes been short of food,” he added in a whisper, feeling for the bell-handle. “My head aches when I think about his future and still more of the future of Anna Nikolaevna when she is his wife….

He used the wrong name, and did not notice it in his evident vexation at not finding the bell-handle. But there was no bell.

I tugged at the door-handle and Mavra at once opened the door to us, and met us fussily. In the kitchen, which was divided off from the tiny entry by a wooden screen, through an open door some preparations could be seen; everything seemed somehow different from usual, cleaned and polished; there was a fire in the stove, and some new crockery on the table. It was evident that we were expected. Mavra flew to help us off with our coats.

“Is Alyosha here?” I asked her.

“He has not been,” she whispered mysteriously. We went in to Natasha. There was no sign of special preparation in her room. Everything was as usual. But everything in her room was always so neat and charming that there was no need to arrange it. Natasha met us, facing the door. I was struck by the wasted look in her face, and its extreme pallor, though there was a flush of colour for a moment on her wan cheeks. Her eyes were feverish. Hastily she held out her hand to the prince without speaking, visibly confused and agitated. She did not even glance at me. I stood and waited in silence.

“Here I am!” said the prince with friendly gaiety. “I’ve only been back a few hours. You’ve never been out of my mind all these days” (he kissed her hand tenderly) “and how much, how much I have thought about you. How much I have thought of to say to you…. Well, we can talk to our hearts’ content! In the first place my feather-headed youngster who is not here yet….”

“Excuse me, prince,” Natasha interrupted, flushing and embarrassed, “I have to say a word to Ivan Petrovitch. Vanya, come along…two words….”

She seized my hand and drew me behind the screen.

“Vanya,” she said in a whisper, leading me to the furthest corner, “will you forgive me?”

“Hush, Natasha, what do you mean?”

“No, no, Vanya, you have forgiven me too much, and too often. But there’s an end to all patience. You will never leave off caring for me, I know. But you’ll call me ungrateful. And I was ungrateful to you yesterday and the day before yesterday, selfish, cruel …”

She suddenly burst into tears and pressed her face on my shoulder.

“Hush, Natasha,” I hastened to reassure her. “I’ve been very ill all night, and I can hardly stand now; that’s why I didn’t come yesterday or to-day, and you’ve been thinking I was angry. Dearest, do you suppose I don’t understand what’s going on in your heart now?”

“Well, that’s right then…then you’ve forgiven me as you always do,” she said, smiling through her tears, and squeezing my hand till it hurt. “The rest later. I’ve a lot I must say to you, Vanya. But now come back to him…”

“Make haste, Natasha, we left him so suddenly…”

“You’ll see, you’ll see what’s coming directly,” she whispered to me. “Now I understand it all, I see through it all. It’s all his doing. A great deal will be decided this evening. Come along!”

I didn’t understand, but there was no time to ask. Natasha came up to the prince with a serene expression. He was still standing with his hat in his hand. She apologized goodhumouredly, took his hat from him, moved up a chair for him and we three sat down round her little table.

“I was beginning about my feather-headed boy,” the prince went on. “I’ve only seen him for a moment and that was in the street when he was getting into his carriage to drive to the Countess Zinaida Fyodorovna. He was in a terrible hurry and, would you believe it, wouldn’t even stop to come to my room, after four days of absence, and I believe it’s my fault, Natalya Nikolaevna, that he’s not here and that we’ve arrived before him. I seized the chance. As I couldn’t be at the countess’s myself to-day, I gave him a message to her. But he will be here in a minute or two.”

“I supposed he promised you to come to-day?” asked Natasha, looking at the prince with a look of perfect simplicity.

“Good heavens, as though he wouldn’t have come anyway! How can you ask!” he exclaimed, looking at her in wonder. I understand though, you are angry with him. Indeed, it does seem wrong of him to be the last to come. But I repeat that it’s my fault. Don’t be angry with him. He’s shallow,

frivolous I don’t defend him, but certain special circumstances make it necessary that he should not give up the countess and some other connexions, but, on the contrary, should go to see them as often as possible. And as now he never leaves your side, I expect, and has forgotten everything else on earth, please do not be angry if I sometimes take him off for an hour or two, not more, to do things for me. I dare say he has not been to see Princess A. once since that evening, and I’m vexed that I have not had time to question him yet! …”

I glanced towards Natasha. She was listening to Prince Valkovsky with a slight, half-mocking smile. But he spoke so frankly, so naturally. It seemed impossible to suspect him.

“And did you really not know that he has not been near me all these days?” asked Natasha in a quiet and gentle voice, as though she were talking of the most ordinary matter.

“What? not been here once? Good heavens, what are you saying!” said the prince, apparently in extreme astonishment.

“You were with me late on Tuesday evening. Next morning he came in to see me for half an hour, and I’ve not seen him once since then.”

“But that’s incredible! (He was more and more astonished.) “I expected that he would never leave your side, Excuse me, this is so strange … it’s simply beyond belief.”

“But it’s true, though, and I’m so sorry. I was looking forward to seeing you. I was expecting to learn from you where he has been.”

“Upon my soul! But he’ll be here directly. But what you tell me is such a surprise to me that…I confess I was prepared for anything from him, but this, this!”

“How it surprises you! While I thought that, so far from being surprised, you knew beforehand that it would be so.”

“Knew! I? But I assure you, Natalya Nikolaevna, that I’ve only seen him for one moment to-day, and I’ve questioned no one about him. And it strikes me as odd that you don’t seem to believe me,” he went on, scanning us both.

“God forbid! “ Natasha exclaimed. “I’m quite convinced that what you say is true.”

And she laughed again, right in Prince Valkovsky’s face, so that he almost winced.

“Explain yourself!” he said in confusion.

“Why, there’s nothing to explain. I speak very simply. You know how heedless and forgetful he is. And now that he has been given complete liberty he is carried away.”

“But to be carried away like that is impossible. There something behind it, and as soon as he comes in I’ll make him explain what it is. But what surprises me most of all is that you seem to think me somehow to blame, when I’ve not even been here. But I see, Natalya Nikolaevna, that you are very angry with him — and I can quite understand. You’ve every right to be so, and of course I’m the first person to blame if only that I’m the first to turn up. That’s how it is, isn’t it?” went on, turning to me, with angry derision.

Natasha flushed red.

“Certainly, Natalya Nikolaevna,” he continued with dignity “I’ll admit I am to blame, but only for going away the day after I made your acquaintance; so with the suspiciousness of character I observe in you, you have already changed your opinion of me circumstances, of course, have given some grounds for this. Had I not gone away, you would have known me better, and Alyosha would not have been so heedless with me to look after him. You shall hear yourself what I say to him this evening.”

“That is, you’ll manage to make him begin to feel me a burden. Surely, with your cleverness, you can’t imagine that that would be any help to me.”

“Do you mean to hint that I would intentionally try to make him feel you a burden? You insult me, Natalya Nikolaevna.”

“I try to speak without hints when I can, whoever the person may be I am speaking to,” answered Natasha. “I always try, on the contrary, to be as open as I can, and you will perhaps be convinced of that this evening. I don’t wish to insult you and there’s no reason I should; if only because you won’t be insulted by my words, whatever I may say. Of that I am quite certain, for I quite realize the relation in which we stand to one another. You can’t take it seriously, can you? But if I really have been rude to you, I am ready to ask your pardon that I may not be lacking in any of the obligations of…hospitality.”

In spite of the light and even jesting tone with which she uttered these words, and the smile on her lips, I had never seen Natasha so intensely irritated. It was only now that I realized what her heartache must have been during those three days. Her enigmatic saying that she knew everything now and that she guessed it all frightened me; it referred directly to Prince

Valkovsky. She had changed her opinion of him and looked upon him as her enemy; that was evident. She apparently attributed her discomfiture with Alyosha to his influence and had perhaps some grounds for this belief. I was afraid there might be a scene between them at any moment. Her mocking tone was too manifest, too undisguised. Her last words to the prince that he could not take their relations seriously, the phrase about the obligations of hospitality, her promise, that looked like a threat, to show him that she knew how to be open — all this was so biting, so unmistakable, that it was impossible that the prince should not understand it. I saw his face change, but he was well able to control himself. He at once pretended not to have noticed these words, not to have seen their significance, and took refuge course in raillery.

"God forbid I should ask for apologies!" he cried, laughing. That's not at all what I wanted, and indeed it's against my rules to ask apologies from a woman. At our first interview I warned you what I was like, so you're not likely to be angry with me for one observation, especially as it applies to all women. You probably agree with this remark," he went on, politely turning to me. "I have noticed as a trait in the female character that if woman is in fault in any way, she will sooner smooth over her offence with a thousand caresses later on than admit her fault and ask forgiveness at the moment when she is confronted with it. And so, supposing even that I have been insulted by you, I am not anxious for an apology. It will be all the better for me later on when you own your mistake and want to make it up to me … with a thousand caresses. And you are so sweet, so pure, so fresh, so open, that the moment of your penitence will, I foresee, be enchanting. You had better, instead of apologizing, tell me now whether I cannot do something this evening to show you that I am behaving much more sincerely and straightforwardly than you suppose."

Natasha flushed. I, too, fancied that there was somewhat too flippant, even too casual, a tone in Prince Valkovsky's answer, a rather unseemly jocosity.

"You want to prove that you are simple and straightforward with me?" asked Natasha, looking at him with a challenging air.

"Yes."

"If so, do what I ask."

"I promise beforehand."

“And that is, not by one word, one hint, to worry Alyosha about me, either to-day or to-morrow. No reproof for having forgotten me; no remonstrance. I want to meet him as though nothing had happened, so that he may notice nothing. That’s what I want. Will you make me such a promise?”

“With the greatest pleasure,” answered Prince Valkovsky and allow me to add with all my heart that I have rarely met more sensible and clear-sighted attitude in such circumstances… But I believe this is Alyosha.”

A sound was in fact heard in the passage. Natasha started and seemed to prepare herself for something, Prince Valkovsky sat with a serious face waiting to see what would happen. He watching Natasha intently. But the door opened and Alyosha flew in.

CHAPTER II

HE LITERALLY FLEW in with a beaming face, gay and joyous. It was evident that he had spent those four days gaily and happily. One could see from his face that he had something he was longing to tell us.

“Here I am!” he cried out, addressing us all, “I, who ought to have been here before anyone. But I’ll tell you everything directly, everything, everything! I hadn’t time to say two words to you this morning, daddy, and I had so much to say to you. It’s only in his sweet moments he lets me speak to him like that,” he interrupted himself, addressing me. “I assure you at other times he forbids it! And I’ll tell you what he does. He begins to use my full name. But from this day I want him always to have good minutes, and I shall manage it! I’ve become quite a different person in these last four days, utterly, utterly different, and I’ll tell you all about it. But that will be presently. The great thing now is that she’s here. Her she is! Again! Natasha, darling, how are you, my angel!” he said, sitting down beside her and greedily kissing her hand. How I’ve been missing you all this time! But there it is! I couldn’t help it! I wasn’t able to manage it, my darling! You look a little thinner, you’ve grown so pale….”

He rapturously covered her hands with kisses, and looked eagerly at her with his beautiful eyes, as though he could never look enough. I glanced at Natasha, and from her face I guessed that our thoughts were the same: he was absolutely innocent. And indeed when and how could this innocent be to blame? A bright flush suddenly overspread Natasha’s pale cheeks, as though all the blood had suddenly rushed from her heart to her head. Her eyes flashed and she looked proudly at Prince Valkovsky.

“But where … have you been so many days?” she said in a suppressed and breaking voice. She was breathing in hard uneven gasps. My God, how she loved him!”

“To be sure I must have seemed to blame, and it’s not only seeming, indeed! Of course I’ve been to blame, and I know it myself, and I’ve come knowing it. Katya told me yesterday to-day that no woman could forgive such negligence (she knows all that happened here on Tuesday; I told her next day): I argued with her, I maintained that there is such a woman and her name is Natasha, and that perhaps there was only one other woman equal to her in the world and that was Katya; and I came here of course

knowing I'd won the day. Could an angel like you refuse to forgive? 'He's not come, so something must have kept him. It's not that he doesn't love me!' — that's what my Natasha will think! As though one could leave off loving you! As though it were possible! My whole heart has been aching for you. I'm to blame all the same. But when you know all about it you'll be the first to stand up for me. I'll tell you all about it directly; I want to open my heart to you all; that's what I've come for. I wanted to fly to you to-day (I was free for half a minute) to give you a flying kiss, but I didn't succeed even in that. Katya sent for me on important business. That was before you saw me in the carriage, father. That was the second time I was driving to Katya after a second note. Messengers are running all day long with notes between the two houses. Ivan Petrovitch, I only had time to read your note last night and you are quite right in all you say in it. But what could I do? It was a physical impossibility! And so I thought 'tomorrow evening I'll set it all straight,' for it was impossible for me not to come to you this evening, Natasha."

"What note?" asked Natasha.

"He went to my rooms and didn't find me. Of course he pitched into me roundly in the letter he left for me for not having been to see you. And he's quite right. It was yesterday."

Natasha glanced at me.

"But if you had time to be with Katerina Fyodorovna from morning till night…." Prince Valkovsky began.

"I know, I know what you'll say," Alyosha interrupted. "If I could be at Katya's I ought to have had twice as much reason to be here. I quite agree with you and will add for myself not twice as much reason but a million times as much. But, to begin with, there are strange unexpected events in life which upset everything and turn it topsy-turvy, and it's just things of that sort that have been happening to me. I tell you I've become an utterly different person during the last days. New all over to the tips of my fingers. So they must have been important events!"

"Oh, dear me, but what has happened to you? Don't keep us in suspense, please!" cried Natasha, smiling at Alyosha's heat.

He really was rather absurd, he talked very fast, his words rushed out pell-mell in a quick, continual patter. He was longing to tell us everything, to speak, to talk. But as he talked he still held Natasha's hand and continually raised it to his lips as though he could never kiss it enough.

“That’s the whole point — what has happened to me,” Alyosha went on. “Ah, my friends, the things I’ve been seeing and doing, the people I’ve got to know! To begin with Katya! Such a perfect creature! I didn’t know her a bit, not a bit till now. Even the other day, that Tuesday when I talked about her, do you remember, Natasha, with such enthusiasm, even then I hardly knew her a bit. She hasn’t shown her real self to me till now. But now we’ve got to know each other thoroughly. We call each other Katya and Alyosha. But I’ll begin at the beginning. To begin with, Natasha, if only you could hear all that she said to me when I spoke to her about you the other day, Wednesday it was, and told her all that had happened here…. And by the way, I remember how stupid I was when I came to see you on Wednesday! You greeted me with enthusiasm, you were full of our new position; you wanted to talk to me about it all; you were sad, and at the same time you were full of mischief and playing with me; while I was trying to be dignified. Oh, fool, fool that I was! Would you believe it, I was longing to show off, to boast that I was soon to be a husband, a dignified person, and to think of my showing off to you! Ah, how you must have laughed at me, and how I deserved your ridicule!

Prince Valkovsky sat in silence, looking with a sort of triumphantly ironical smile at Alyosha. He seemed to be glad that his son was showing himself so flighty and even ridiculous.

I watched him carefully all that evening, and came to the conclusion that he was not at all fond of his son, though he was always talking of his warm fatherly devotion to him.

“From you I went to Katya,” Alyosha rattled on. “I’ve told you already that it was only that morning we got to know each other thoroughly, and it’s queer how it happened…I don’t remember how it was…some warm words, some feelings, thoughts frankly uttered and we were friends for ever. You must know her, you must, Natasha. How she talked to me, how she interpreted you to me. How she explained to me what a treasure you are. By degrees she made me understand all her ideas, all her views of life; she’s such an earnest, such an enthusiastic girl! She talked of duty, of our mission in life, of how we all ought to serve humanity and, as we thoroughly agreed, after five or six hours of conversation, we ended by swearing eternal friendship, and that we would work together all our lives!

“Work at what?” asked his father in astonishment.

“I’m so changed, father, that all this must surprise you. I know all your objections beforehand,” Alyosha responded triumphantly. “You are all practical people, you have so many grave, severe principles that are out of date. You look with mistrust, with hostility, with derision at everything new, everything young and fresh. But I’m not the same now as you knew me a few days ago. I’m a different man! I look everything and everyone in the world boldly in the face. If I know that my conviction is right I will follow it up to its utmost limit, and if I’m not turned aside from my path I’m an honest man. That’s enough for me. You can say what you like after that. I believe in myself.”

“Oh-ho!” said the prince jeeringly.

Natasha looked round at us uneasily. She was afraid for Alyosha. It often happened that he showed to great disadvantage in conversation, and she knew it. She did not want Alyosha to make himself ridiculous before us, and especially before his father.

“What are you saying, Alyosha? I suppose it’s some sort of philosophy,” she said. “Someone’s been lecturing you … You’d much better tell us what you’ve been doing.”

“But I am telling you! “ cried Alyosha. “You see, Katya has two distant relations, cousins of some sort, called Levinka and Borinka. One’s a student, the other’s simply a young man. She’s on friendly terms with them, and they’re simply extraordinary men. They hardly ever go to the countess’s, on principle. When Katya and I talked of the destiny of man, of our mission in life and all that, she mentioned them to me, and gave me a note to them at once; I flew immediately to make their acquaintance. We became close friends that very evening. There were about twelve fellows of different sorts there. Students, officers, artists. There was one author. They all know you, Ivan Petrovitch. That is, they’ve read your books and expect great things of you in the future. They told me so themselves. I told them I knew you and promised to introduce them to you. They all received me with open arms like a brother. I told them straight off that I should soon be a married man, so they received me as a married man. They live on the fifth storey right under the roof. They meet as often as they can, chiefly on Wednesdays at Levinka’s and Borinka’s. They’re all fresh young people filled with ardent love for all humanity. We all talked of our present, of our future, of science and literature, and talked so well, so frankly and simply…. There’s, a high school boy who comes too. You should see how

they behave to one another, how generous they are! I've never seen men like them before! Where have I been all this time? What have I seen? What ideas have I grown up in? You're the only one Natasha, who has ever told me anything of this sort. Ah, Natasha, you simply must get to know them; Katya knows them already. They speak of her almost with reverence. And Katya's told Levinka and Borinka already that when she comes into her property she'll subscribe a million to the common cause at once."

"And I suppose Levinka and Borinka and all their crew will be the trustees for that million?" Prince Valkovsky asked.

"That's false, that's false! It's a shame to talk like that, father!" Alyosha cried with heat. "I suspect what you're thinking! We certainly have talked about that million, and spent a long time discussing how to use it. We decided at last on public enlightenment before everything else…."

"Yes, I see that I did not quite know Katerina Fyodorovna, certainly," Prince Valkovsky observed as it were to himself, still with the same mocking smile. "I was prepared for many things from her, but this…."

"Why this?" Alyosha broke in. "Why do you think it so odd?

Because it goes somewhat beyond your established routine? because no one has subscribed a million before, and she subscribes it? What of it! What if she doesn't want to live at the expense of others, for living on those millions means living at the expense of others (I've only just found that out). She wants to be of service to her country and all, and to give her mite to the common cause. We used to read of that mite in our copy-books, and when that mite means a million you think there's something wrong about it! And what does it all rest on, this common sense that's so much praised and that I believed in so? Why do you look at me like that, father? As though you were looking at a buffoon, a fool! What does it matter my being a fool? Natasha, you should have heard what Katya said about that, 'It's not the brains that matter most, but that which guides them — the character, the heart, generous qualities, progressive ideas.' But better still, Bezmygin has a saying about that that's full of genius. Bezmygin is a friend of Levinka's and Borinka's, and between ourselves he is a man of brains and a real leader of genius. Only yesterday he said in conversation, 'The fool who recognizes that he is a fool is no longer a fool.' How true that is! One hears utterances like that from him every minute. He positively scatters truths."

"A sign of genius, certainly," observed Prince Valkovsky. "You do nothing but laugh. But I've never heard anything like that from you, and

I’ve never heard anything like it from any of your friends either. On the contrary, in your circle you seem to be hiding all this, to be grovelling on the ground, so that all figures, all noses may follow precisely certain measurements, certain rules — as though that were possible; as though that were not a thousand times more impossible than what we talk about and what we think. And yet they call us Utopian! You should have heard what they said to me yesterday….”

“Well, but what is it you talk and think about? Tell us, Alyosha. I can’t quite understand yet,” said Natasha.

“Of everything in general that leads up to progress, to humanity, to love, it’s all in relation to contemporary questions. We talk about the need of a free press, of the reforms that are beginning, of the love of humanity, of the leaders of to-day; we criticize them and read them. But above all we’ve promised to be perfectly open with one another and to tell everything about ourselves, plainly, openly, without hesitation. Nothing but openness and straightforwardness can attain our object. That’s what Bezmygin is striving most for. I told Katya about that and she is in complete sympathy with Bezmygin. And so all of us, under Bezmygin’s leadership, have promised to act honestly and straightforwardly all our lives, and not to be disconcerted in any way, not to be ashamed of our enthusiasm, our fervour, our mistakes, and to go straight forward whatever may be said of us and however we may be judged. If you want to be respected by others, the great thing is to respect yourself. Only by that, only by self-respect, will you compel others to respect you. That’s what Bezmygin says, and Katya agrees with him entirely. We’re agreeing now upon our convictions in general, and have resolved to pursue the study of ourselves severally, and when we meet to explain ourselves to each other.”

“What a string of nonsense!” cried Prince Valkovsky uneasily. “And who is this Bezmygin? No, it can’t be left like this….”

“What can’t be left?” cried Alyosha. “Listen, father, why I say all this before you. It’s because I want and hope to bring you, too, into our circle. I’ve pledged myself in your name already. You laugh; well, I knew you’d laugh! But hear me out. You are kind and generous, you’ll understand. You don’t know, you’ve never seen these people, you haven’t heard them. Supposing you have heard of all this and have studied it all, you are horribly learned, yet you haven’t seen them themselves, have not been in their house, and so how can you judge of them correctly? You only imagine

that you know them. You be with them, listen to them, and then — then I'll give you my word you'll be one of us. Above all I want to use every means I can to rescue you from ruin in the circle to which you have so attached yourself, and so save you from your convictions."

Prince Valkovsky listened to this sally in silence, with a malignant sneer; there was malice in his face. Natasha was watching him with unconcealed repulsion. He saw it, but pretended not to notice it. But as soon as Alyosha had finished, his father broke into a peal of laughter. He fell back in his chair as though he could not control himself. But the laughter was certainly not genuine. He was quite unmistakably laughing simply to wound and to humiliate his son as deeply as possible. Alyosha was certainly mortified. His whole face betrayed intense sadness. But he waited patiently until his father's merriment was over.

"Father," he began mournfully, "why are you laughing at me? I have come to you frankly and openly. If, in your opinion, what I say is silly, teach me better, and don't laugh at me. And what do you find to laugh at? At what is for me good and holy now? Why, suppose I am in error, suppose this is all wrong, mistaken, suppose I am a little fool as you've called me several times; if I am making a mistake I'm sincere and honest in it; I've done nothing ignoble. I am enthusiastic over lofty ideas. They may be mistaken, but what they rest upon is holy. I've told you that you and all your friends have never yet said anything to me that could guide me, or influence me. Refute them, tell me something better than they have said, and I will follow you, but do not laugh at me, for that grieves me very much."

Alyosha pronounced these words with extreme sincerity and a sort of severe dignity. Natasha watched him sympathetically. The prince heard his son with genuine amazement, and instantly changed his tone.

"I did not mean to grieve you, my dear," he answered. "0n the contrary I am sorry for you. You are preparing to take such a step in life that it is only seemly for you to leave off being such a feather-headed boy. That's what is in my mind. I could not help laughing, and had no wish to hurt your feelings."

"Why was it that I thought so?" said Alyosha, with bitter feeling. "Why has it seemed for a long time past that you look at me as though you were antagonistic to me, with cold mockery, not like a father? Why is it I feel that if I were in your place I should not laugh so offensively as you do at me? Listen, let us speak openly with one another, at once, and for ever, that there

may be no further misunderstanding. And … I want to tell you the whole truth. I thought when I came here that there was some misunderstanding. It was not like this that I expected to meet you all together. Am I right? If I am, wouldn't it be better for each of us to say openly what he feels. How much evil may be averted by openness!"

"Speak, speak, Alyosha," said Prince Valkovsky. "What you propose is very sensible. Perhaps you ought to have begun with that," he added, glancing at Natasha.

"Don't be angry with my perfect frankness," began Alyosha. "You desire it and call for it yourself. Listen, you have agreed to my marriage with Natasha; you've made us happy by doing so, and for the sake of it you have overcome your own feelings. You have been magnanimous and we have all appreciated your generosity. But why is it now that with a sort of glee you keep hinting that I'm a ridiculous boy, and am not fit to be a husband? What's more, you seem to want to humiliate me and make me ridiculous, and even contemptible, in Natasha's eyes. You are always delighted when you can make me look absurd. I've noticed that before now, for a long time past. As though you were trying for some reason to show us that our marriage is absurd and foolish, and that we are not fitted for one another. It's really as though you didn't believe yourself in what you design for us; as though you look upon it all as a joke, as an absurd fancy, as a comic farce. I don't think so only from what you've said to-day. That very evening, that Tuesday when I came back to you from here, I heard some strange expressions from you which surprised and hurt me. And on Wednesday, too, as you were going away you made some allusions to our present position, and spoke of her, not slightingly, quite the contrary, but yet not as I would like to hear you speak, somehow too lightly, without affection, without the respect for her…. It's difficult to describe, but the tone was clear; one feels it in one's heart. Tell me that I'm mistaken. Reassure me, comfort me and … and her, for you've wounded her too. I guessed that from the first moment I came in…."

Alyosha said this with warmth and resolution. Natasha listened to him with a certain triumph, and, her face glowing with excitement, she said, as though to herself, once or twice during his speech, "Yes, yes. That's true." Prince Valkovsky was taken aback.

"My dear boy," he answered, "of course I can't remember everything I've said to you; but it's very strange you should have taken my words in

that way. I’m quite ready to reassure you in every way I can. If I laughed just now that was quite natural. I tell you that I tried to hide under a laugh my bitter feeling. When I imagine that you are about to be a husband it seems to me now so utterly incredible, so absurd, excuse my saying so, even ludicrous. You reproach me for that laugh, but I tell you that it is all your doing. I am to blame, too. Perhaps I haven’t been looking after you enough of late, and so it’s only this evening that I have found out of what you are capable. Now I tremble when I think of your future with Natalya Nikolaevna. I have been in too great a hurry; I see that there is a great disparity between you. Love always passes, but incompatibility remains for ever. I’m not speaking now of your fate, but if your intentions are honest, do consider; you will ruin Natalya Nikolaevna as well as yourself, you certainly will! Here you’ve been talking for an hour of love for humanity, of the loftiness of your convictions, of the noble people you’ve made friends with. But ask Ivan Petrovitch what I said to him just now as we climbed up that nasty staircase to the fourth storey, and were standing at the door, thanking God that our lives and limbs were safe. Do you know the feeling that came into my mind in spite of myself? I was surprised that with your love for Natalya Nikolaevna you could bear to let her live in such a flat. How is it you haven’t realized that, if you have no means, if you are not in a position to do your duty, you have no right to be a husband, you have no right to undertake any responsibilities? Love alone is a small matter; love shows itself in deeds, but your motto is ‘live with me if you have to suffer with me’ — that’s not humane, you know, not honourable, to talk of love for all humanity, to go into raptures over the problems of the universe, and at the same time to sin against love without noticing it — it’s incomprehensible! Don’t interrupt me, Natalya Nikolaevna, let me finish. I feel it too bitterly, I must speak out. You’ve been telling us, Alyosha, that during these last days you’ve been attracted by everything that’s honourable, fine and noble, and you have reproached me that among my friends there are no such attractions, nothing but cold common sense. Only imagine, to be attracted by everything lofty and fine, and, after what happened here on Tuesday, to neglect for four whole days the woman who, one would have thought, must be more precious to you than anything on earth. You positively confess that you argued with with Katerina Fyodorovna that Natalya Nikolaevna is so generous and loves you so much that she will forgive you your behaviour. But what right have you to reckon

on such forgiveness, and make bets about it? And is it possible you haven't once reflected what distress, what bitter feelings, what doubts, what suspicions you've been inflicting on Natalya Nikolaevna all this time? Do you think that because you've been fascinated there by new ideas, you had the right to neglect your first duty? Forgive me, Natalya Nikolaevna, for breaking my word. But the present position is more important than any promise, you will realize that yourself… . Do you know, Alyosha, that I found Natalya Nikolaevna in such agonies of distress that it was plain what a hell you had made of these four days for her, which should, one would have thought, have been the happiest in her life. Such conduct on one side, and on the other — words, words, words…am I not right? And you can blame me when it's entirely your own fault?"

Prince Valkovsky finished. He was really carried away by his own eloquence and could not conceal his triumph from us. When Alyosha heard of Natasha's distress he looked at her with painful anxiety, but Natasha had already come to a decision.

"Never mind, Alyosha, don't be unhappy," she said. "Others are more to blame than you. Sit down and listen to what I have to say to your father. It's time to make an end of it!"

"Explain yourself, Natalya Nikolaevna!" cried the prince. "I beg you most earnestly! For the last two hours I have been listening to these mysterious hints. It is becoming intolerable, and I must admit I didn't expect such a welcome here."

"Perhaps; because you expected so to fascinate us with words that we should not notice your secret intentions. What is there to explain to you? You know it all and understand it all yourself. Alyosha is right. Your first desire is to separate us. You knew beforehand, almost by heart, everything that would happen here, after last Tuesday, and you were reckoning on it all. I have told you already that you don't take me seriously, nor the marriage you have planned. You are making fun of us, you are playing, and you have your own objects. Your game is a safe one. Alyosha was right when he reproached you for looking on all this as a farce. You ought, on the contrary, to be delighted and not scold Alyosha, for without knowing anything about it he has done all that you expected of him, and perhaps even more."

I was petrified with astonishment, I had expected some catastrophe that evening. But I was utterly astounded at Natasha's ruthless plain speaking and her frankly contemptuous tone. Then she really must know something, I

thought, and has irrevocably determined upon a rupture. Perhaps she had been impatiently expecting the prince in order to tell him everything to his face. Prince Valkovsky turned a little pale. Alyosha's face betrayed naive alarm and agonizing expectation.

"Think what you have just accused me of," cried the prince, "and consider your words a little … I can make nothing of it!"

"Ah! So you don't care to understand at a word," said Natasha. "Even he, even Alyosha, understood you as I did, and we are not in any agreement about it. We have not even seen each other! He, too, fancied that you were playing an ignoble and insulting game with us, and he loves you and believes in you as though you were a god. You haven't thought it necessary to be cautious and hypocritical enough with him, you reckoned that he would not see through you. But he has a tender, sensitive, impressionable heart, and your words, your tone, as he says, have left a trace in his heart…."

"I don't understand a word of it, not a word of it," repeated Prince Valkovsky, turning to me with an air of the utmost perplexity, as though he were calling me to witness. He was hot and angry.

"You are suspicious, you are agitated," he went on, addressing her. "The fact is you are jealous of Katerina Fyodorovna, and so you're ready to find fault with everyone, and me especially…and, allow me to say, you give one a strange idea of your character…. I am not accustomed to such scenes. I would not remain here another moment if it were not for my son's interests. I am still waiting. Will you condescend to explain?"

"So you still persist and will not understand though you know all this by heart. Do you really want me to speak out?

"That is all I am anxious for."

"Very well then, listen," cried Natasha, her eyes flashing with anger. "I'll tell you everything, everything."

CHAPTER III

SHE GOT UP and began to speak standing, unconscious of doing so in her excitement. After listening for a time, Prince Valkovsky too, stood up. The whole scene became quite solemn.

“Remember your own words on Tuesday.” Natasha began. “You said you wanted money, to follow the beaten track, importance in the world — do you remember?”

“I remember.”

“Well, to gain that money, to win all that success which was slipping out of your hands, you came here on Tuesday and made up this match, calculating that this practical joke would help you to capture what was eluding you.”

“Natasha!” I cried. “Think what you’re saying!”

“Joke! Calculating!” repeated the prince with an air of insulted dignity.

Alyosha sat crushed with grief and gazed scarcely comprehending.

“Yes, yes, don’t stop me. I have sworn to speak out,” Natasha went on, irritated. “Remember, Alyosha was not obeying you. For six whole months you had been doing your utmost to draw him away from me. He held out against you. And at last the time came when you could not afford to lose a moment. If you let it pass, the heiress, the money — above all the money, the three millions of dowry — would slip through your fingers. Only one course was left you, to make Alyosha love the girl you destined for him; you thought that if he fell in love with her he would abandon me.”

“Natasha! Natasha!” Alyosha cried in distress, “what are you saying?”

“And you have acted accordingly,” she went on, not heeding Alyosha’s exclamation, “but — it was the same old story again! Everything might have gone well, but I was in the way again. There was only one thing to give you hope. A man of your cunning and experience could not help seeing even then that Alyosha seemed at times weary of his old attachment. You could not fail to notice that he was beginning to neglect me, to be bored, to stay away for five days at a time. You thought he might get tired of it altogether and give me up, when suddenly on Tuesday Alyosha’s decided action came as a shock to you. What were you to do!”

“Excuse me,” cried Prince Valkovsky, “on the contrary, that fact….”

“I say,” Natasha went on emphatically, “you asked yourself that evening what you were to do, and resolved to sanction his marrying me not in reality but only in words, simply to soothe him. The date of the wedding could be deferred, you thought, indefinitely, and meanwhile the new feeling was growing; you saw that. And on the growth of this new love you rested all your hopes.”

“Novels, novels,” the prince pronounced, in an undertone, as though speaking to himself, “solitude, brooding, and novel-reading.”

“Yes, on this new love you rested everything,” Natasha repeated, without listening or attending to his words, more and more carried away in a fever of excitement. “And the chances in favour of this new love! It had begun before he knew all the girl’s perfections. At the very moment when he disclosed to her that evening that he could not love her, that duty and another love forbade it — the girl suddenly displayed such nobility of character, such sympathy for him and for her rival, such spontaneous forgiveness, that though he had believed in her beauty, he only realized then how splendid she was. When he came to me he talked of nothing but her, she had made such an impression upon him. Yes, he was bound next day to feel an irresistible impulse to see this noble being again, if only from gratitude. And, indeed, why shouldn’t he go to her? His old love was not in distress now, her future was secured, his whole life was to be given up to her, while the other would have only a minute. And how ungrateful Natasha would be if she were jealous even of that minute. And so without noticing it he robs his Natasha not of a minute, but of one day, two days, three…. And meantime, in those three days, the girl shows herself to him in a new and quite unexpected light. She is so noble, so enthusiastic, and at the same time such a naive child, and in fact so like himself in character. They vow eternal friendship and brotherhood, they wish never to be parted. In five or six hours of conversation his soul is opened to new sensations and his whole heart is won. The time will come at last, you reckon, when he will compare his old feeling with his new, fresh sensations. There everything is familiar and the same as usual; there it’s all serious and exacting; there he finds jealousy and reproaches; there he finds tears…. Or if there is lightness and playfulness, he is treated liked a child not an equal…. But worst of all, its all familiar, the same as ever….”

Tears and a spasm of bitterness choked her, but Natasha controlled herself for a minute longer.

“And what besides! Why, time. The wedding with Natasha is not fixed yet, you think; there’s plenty of time and all will change…. And then your words, hints, arguments, eloquence…. You may even be able to trump up something against that troublesome Natasha. You may succeed in putting her in an unfavourable light and … there’s no telling how it will be done; but the victory is yours! Alyosha! Don’t blame me, my dear! Don’t say that I don’t understand your love and don’t appreciate it. I know you love me even now, and that perhaps at this moment you don’t understand what I complain of. I know I’ve done very wrong to say all this. But what am I to do, understanding all this, and loving you more and more… simply madly!”

She hid her face in her hands, fell back in her chair, and sobbed like a child. Alyosha rushed to her with a loud exclamation. He could never see her cry without crying too.

Her sobs were, I think, of great service to the prince; Natasha’s vehemence during this long explanation, the violence of her attack on him which he was bound, if only from decorum, to resent, all this might be set down to an outburst of insane jealousy, to wounded love, even to illness. It was positively appropriate to show sympathy.

“Calm yourself, don’t distress yourself, Natalya Nikolaevna,” Prince Valkovsky encouraged her. “This is frenzy, imagination, the fruits of solitude. You have been so exasperated by his thoughtless behaviour. It is only thoughtlessness on his part, you know. The most important fact on which you lay so much stress, what happened on Tuesday, ought rather to prove to you the depth of his love for you, while you have been imagining on the contrary….”

“Oh, don’t speak to me, don’t torture me even now!” cried Natasha, weeping bitterly. “My heart has told me everything, has told me long ago! Do you suppose I don’t understand that our old love is over here in this room, alone … when he left me, forgot me I have been through everything, thought over everything What else have I to do? I don’t blame you, Alyosha…. Why are you deceiving me? Do you suppose I haven’t tried to deceive myself? Oh how often, how often! Haven’t I listened to every tone of his voice? Haven’t I learnt to read his face, his eyes? It’s all, all over. It’s all buried…. Oh! how wretched I am!”

Alyosha was crying on his knees before her.

“Yes, yes, it’s my fault! It’s all my doing!” he repeated through his sobs.

“No, don’t blame yourself, Alyosha. It’s other people our enemies…. It’s their doing…theirs!”

“But excuse me,” the prince began at last with some impatience, “what grounds have you for ascribing to me all these…crimes? These are all your conjectures. There’s no proof of them…”

“No proof!” cried Natasha, rising swiftly from her easy chair. “You want proof, treacherous man. You could have had no other motive, no other motive when you came here with your project! You had to soothe your son, to appease his conscience-pricks that he might give himself up to Katya with a freer and easier mind. Without that he would always have remembered me, he would have held out against you, and you have got tired of waiting. Isn’t that true?”

“I confess,” said the prince, with a sarcastic smile, “if I had wanted to deceive you that would certainly have been my calculation. You are very … quick-witted, but you ought to have proofs before you insult people with such reproaches.”

“Proofs! But all your behaviour in the past when you were trying to get him away from me. A man who trains his son to disregard such obligations, and to play with them for the sake of worldly advantage, for the sake of money, is corrupting him! What was it you said just now about the staircase and the poorness of my lodging? Didn’t you stop the allowance you used to give him, to force us to part through poverty and hunger? This lodging and the staircase are your fault, and now you reproach him with it double-faced man! And what was it roused in you that night such warmth, such new and uncharacteristic convictions? And why was I so necessary to you? I’ve been walking up and down here for these four days; I’ve thought over everything, I have weighed every word you uttered, every expression of your face, and I’m certain that it has all been a pretence, a sham, a mean, insulting and unworthy farce…. I know you, I’ve known you for a long time. Whenever Alyosha came from seeing you I could read from his face all that you had been saying to him, all that you had been impressing on him. No, you can’t deceive me! Perhaps you have some other calculations now; perhaps I haven’t said the worst yet; but no matter! You have deceived me — that’s the chief thing. I had to tell you that straight to your face!”

“Is that all? Is that all the proof you have? But think, you frantic woman: by that farce, as you call my proposal on Tuesday, I bound myself too much, it would be too irresponsible on my part….

“How, how did you bind yourself! What does it mean for you to deceive me? And what does it signify to insult a girl in my position? A wretched runaway, cast off by her father, defenceless, who has disgraced herself, immoral! Is there any need to be squeamish with her if this joke can be of the very smallest use!”

“Only think what a position you are putting yourself into, Natalya Nikolaevna. You insist that you have been insulted by me. But such an insult is so great, so humiliating, that I can’t understand how you can even imagine it, much less insist on it. What must you be accustomed to, to be able to suppose this so easily, if you will excuse my saying so. I have the right to reproach you, because you are setting my son against me. If he does not attack me now on your account his heart is against me.

“No, father, no!” cried Alyosha, “If I haven’t attacked you it’s because I don’t believe you could be guilty of such an insult, and I can’t believe that such an insult is possible!”

“Do you hear?” cried Prince Valkovsky.

“Natasha, it’s all my fault! Don’t blame him. It’s wicked and horrible.”

“Do you hear, Vanya? He is already against me!” cried Natasha. “Enough!” said the prince. “We must put an end to this painful scene. This blind and savage outburst of unbridled jealousy shows your character in quite a new light. I am forewarned. We have been in too great a hurry. We certainly have been in too great a hurry. You

have not even noticed how you have insulted me. That’s nothing to you. We were in too great a hurry…too great a hurry…my word ought to be sacred of course, but… I am a father, and I desire the happiness of my son….”

“You go back from your word!” cried Natasha, beside herself.

“You are glad of the opportunity. But let me tell you that here, alone, I made up my mind two days ago to give him back his promise, and now I repeat it before every one. I give him up!”

“That is, perhaps, you want to reawaken his old anxieties again, his feeling of duty, all this worrying about his obligations (as you expressed it just now yourself), so as to bind him to you again. This is the explanation on your own theory. That is why I say so; but enough, time will decide. I will await a calmer moment for an explanation with you. I hope we may not break off all relations. I hope, too, that you may learn to appreciate me better. I meant today to tell you of my projects for your family, which would

have shown you…. But enough! Ivan Petrovitch," he added, coming up to me, "I have always wanted to know you better, and now, more than ever, I should appreciate it. I hope you understand me. I shall come and see you in a day or two if you will allow me."

I bowed. It seemed to me, too, that now I could not avoid making his acquaintance. He pressed my hand, bowed to Natasha without a word, and went out with an air of affronted dignity.

CHAPTER IV

FOR SOME MINUTES we all said nothing. Natasha sat in thought, sorrowful and exhausted. All her energy had suddenly left her. She looked straight before her seeing nothing, holding Alyosha's hand in hers and seeming lost in oblivion. He was quietly giving vent to his grief in tears, looking at her from time to time with timorous curiosity.

At last he began timidly trying to comfort her, besought her not to be angry, blamed himself; it was evident that he was very anxious to defend his father, and that this was very much on his mind. He began on the subject several times, but did not dare to speak out, afraid of rousing Natasha's wrath again. He protested his eternal unchanging love, and hotly justified his devotion to Katya, continually repeating that he only loved Katya as a sister, a dear, kind sister, whom he could not abandon altogether; that that would be really coarse and cruel on his part, declaring that if Natasha knew Katya they would be friends at once, so much so that they would never part and never quarrel. This idea pleased him particularly. The poor fellow was perfectly truthful. He did not understand her apprehensions, and indeed had no clear understanding of what she had just said to his father. All he understood was that they had quarrelled, and that above all lay like a stone on his heart.

"You are blaming me on your father's account?" asked Natasha.

"How can I blame you?" he said with bitter feeling, "when I'm the cause, and it's all my fault? It's I who have driven you into such a fury, and in your anger you blamed him too, because you wanted to defend me. You always stand up for me, and I don't deserve it. You had to fix the blame on someone, so you fixed it on him. And he's really not to blame!" cried Alyosha, warming up. "And was it with that thought he came here? Was that what he expected?"

But seeing that Natasha was looking at him with distress and reproach, he was abashed at once.

"Forgive me, I won't, I won't," he said. "It's all my fault!"

"Yes, Alyosha," she went on with bitter feeling. "Now he has come between us and spoilt all our peace, for all our lives. You always believed in me more than in anyone. Now he has poured distrust and suspicion of me

into your heart; you blame me; he has already taken from me half your heart. The black cat has run between us."

"Don't speak like that, Natasha. Why, do you talk of the black cat?"

He was hurt by the expression.

"He's won you by his false kindness, his false generosity," Natasha continued. "And now he will set you more and more against me."

"I swear that it isn't so," said Alyosha with still greater heat. "He was irritated when he said he was 'in too great a hurry.' You will see to-morrow, in a day or two, he'll think better of it; and if he's so angry that he really won't have our marriage I swear I won't obey him. I shall have the strength, perhaps, for that. And do you know who will help us?" he cried, delighted with his idea. "Katya will help us! And you will see, you will see what a wonderful creature she is! You will see whether she wants to be your rival and part us. And how unfair you were just now when you said that I was one of those who might change the day after marriage! It was bitter to me to hear that! No, I'm not like that, and if I went often to see Katya…."

"Hush, Alyosha! Go and see her whenever you like. That wasn't what I meant just now. You didn't understand it all. Be happy with anyone you like. I can't ask more of your heart than it can give me…."

Mavra came in.

"Am I to bring in the tea? It's no joke to keep the samovar boiling for two hours. It's eleven o'clock."

She spoke rudely and crossly. She was evidently out of humour and angry with Natasha. The fact was that ever since Tuesday she had been in the greatest delight that her young lady (whom she was very fond of) was to be married, and had already had time to proclaim it all over the house and neighbourhood, in the shop, and to the porter. She had been boasting of it and relating triumphantly that a prince, a man of consequence, and a general, awfully rich, had come himself to beg her young lady's consent, and she, Mavra, had heard it with her own cars; and now, suddenly, it had all ended in smoke. The prince had gone away furious, and no tea had been offered to him, and of course it was all her young lady's fault. Mavra had heard her speaking disrespectfully to him.

"Oh … yes," answered Natasha.

"And the savouries?"

"Yes, bring them too."

Natasha was confused.

“We’ve been making such preparations, such preparations,” Mavra went on. “I’ve been run off my feet ever since yesterday. I ran to the Nevsky for wine, and here …”

And she went out, slamming the door angrily.

Natasha reddened and looked at me rather strangely.

Meanwhile tea was served, and with it savouries. There was game, fish of some sort, two bottles of excellent wine from Eliseyev. What were all these preparations for, I wondered.

“You see what I am, Vanya,” said Natasha, going up to the table, and she was ashamed even to face me. “I foresaw it would all end as it has ended, you know; and still I thought that perhaps it wouldn’t end so. I thought Alyosha might come, and begin to make peace, and we should be reconciled. All my suspicions would turn out to be unjust. I should be convinced … and I got a supper ready on the chance. I thought perhaps we should sit and talk till late.”

Poor Natasha! She blushed so deeply as she said this. Alyosha was delighted.

“There, you see, Natasha! “ he cried. “You didn’t believe it yourself. Two hours ago you didn’t believe in your suspicions yourself. Yes, it must all be set right. I’m to blame. It’s all my fault and I’ll make it all right. Natasha, let me go straight to my father. I must see him; he is hurt, he is offended; I must comfort him. I will tell him everything, speaking only for myself, only for myself! You shan’t be mixed up in it. And I’ll settle everything. Don’t be angry with me for being so anxious to get to him and ready to leave you. It’s not that at all. I am sorry for him; he will justify himself to you, you will see. To-morrow I’ll be with you as soon as it’s light, and I’ll spend the whole day with you. I won’t go to Katya’s.”

Natasha did not detain him; she even urged him to go. She was dreadfully afraid that Alyosha would now force himself to stay with her from morning till night, and would weary of her. She only begged him to say nothing in her name, and tried to smile at him more cheerfully at parting. He was just on the point of going, but he suddenly went up to her, took her by both hands and sat down beside her. He looked at her with indescribable tenderness.

“Natasha, my darling, my angel, don’t be angry with me, and don’t let us ever quarrel. And give me your word that you’ll always believe me, and I will believe you. There, my angel, I’ll tell you now. We quarrelled once; I

don’t remember what about: it was my fault. We wouldn’t speak to one another. I didn’t want to be the first to beg pardon and I was awfully miserable. I wandered all over the town, lounged about everywhere, went to see my friends, and my heart was so heavy, so heavy…. And then the thought came into my mind, what if you fell ill, for instance, and died? And when I imagined that, I suddenly felt such despair as though I had really lost you for ever. My thoughts grew more and more oppressive and terrible. And little by little I began to imagine going to your tomb, falling upon it in despair, embracing it, and swooning with anguish. I imagined how I would kiss that tomb, and call you out of it, if only for a moment, and pray God for a miracle that for one moment you might rise up before me; I imagined how I would rush to embrace you, press you to me, kiss you, and die, it seemed, with bliss at being able once more for one instant to hold you in my arms as before. And as I was imagining that, the thought suddenly came to me: why, I shall pray to God for one minute of you, and meanwhile you have been with me six months, and during those six months how many times we’ve quarrelled, how many days we wouldn’t speak to one another. For whole days we’ve been on bad terms and despised our happiness, and here I’m praying you to come for one minute from the tomb, and I’m ready to give my whole life for that minute…. When I fancied all that I couldn’t restrain myself, but rushed to you as fast as I could; I ran here, and you were expecting me, and when we embraced after that quarrel I remember I held you in my arms as tightly as though I were really losing you, Natasha. Don’t let us ever quarrel! It always hurts me so. And, good heavens, how could you imagine that I could leave you!”

Natasha was crying. They embraced each other warmly, and Alyosha swore once more that he would never leave her. Then he flew off to his father. He was firmly convinced that he would settle everything, that he would make everything come right.

“It’s all ended! It’s all over!” said Natasha, pressing my hand convulsively. “He loves me and he will never cease to love me. But he loves Katya, too, and in a little time he’ll love her more than me. And that viper, the prince, will keep his eyes open, and then….”

“Natasha! I, too, believe that the prince is not acting straightforwardly, but….”

“You don’t believe all I’ve said to him! I saw that from your face. But wait a little, you’ll see for yourself whether I’m right. I was only speaking

generally, but heaven knows what else he has in his mind! He's an awful man. I've been walking up and down this room for the last four days, and I see through it all. He had to set Alyosha free, to relieve his heart from the burden of sadness that's weighing on his life, from the duty of loving me. He thought of this project of marriage with the idea, too, of worming his way in between us and influencing us, and of captivating Alyosha by his generosity and magnanimity. That's the truth, that's the truth, Vanya! Alyosha's just that sort of character. His mind would be set at rest about me, his uneasiness on my account would be over. He would think, 'why, she's my wife now, and mine for life,' and would unconsciously pay more attention to Katya. The prince has evidently studied Katya, and realizes that she's suited to him, and that she may attract him more than I can. Ach, Vanya, you are my only hope now! He wants for some reason to approach you, to get to know you. Don't oppose this, and for goodness' sake, dear, try to find some way of going to the countess's soon; make friends with this Katya, study her thoroughly and tell me what she is like. I want to know what you think of her. No one knows me as you do, and you will understand what I want. Find out, too, how far their friendship goes, how much there is between them, what they talk about. It's Katya, Katya, you must observe chiefly. Show me this once more, dear, darling Vanya, show me this once more what a true friend you are to me! You are my hope, my only hope now."

IT WAS NEARLY one o'clock by the time I got home. Nellie opened the door to me with a sleepy face. She smiled and looked at me brightly. The poor child was very much vexed with herself for having fallen asleep. She had been very anxious to sit up for me. She told me someone had been and inquired for me, had sat and waited for a time, and had left a note on the table for me. The note was from Masloboev. He asked me to go to him next day between twelve and one. I wanted to question Nellie, but I put it off till next morning, insisting that she should go to bed at once. The poor child was tired as it was with sitting up for me, and had only fallen asleep half an hour before I came in.

CHAPTER V

IN THE MORNING Nellie told me some rather strange details about the visit of the previous evening. Indeed, the very fact that Masloboev had taken it into his head to come that evening at all was strange. He knew for a fact that I should not be at home. I had warned him of it myself at our last meeting, and I remembered it distinctly. Nellie told me that at first she had been unwilling to open the door, because she was afraid — it was eight o'clock in the evening. But he persuaded her to do so through the door, assuring her that if he did not leave a note for me that evening it would be very bad for me next day. When she let him in he wrote the note at once, went up to her, and sat down beside her on the sofa.

"I got up, and didn't want to talk to him," said Nellie. "I was very much afraid of him; he began to talk of Mme. Bubnov, telling me how angry she was, that now she wouldn't dare to take me, and began praising you; said that he was a great friend of yours and had known you as a little boy. Then I began to talk to him. He brought out some sweets, and asked me to take some. I didn't want to; then he began to assure me he was a goodnatured man, and that he could sing and dance. He jumped up and began dancing. It made me laugh. Then he said he'd stay a little longer—'I'll wait for Vanya, maybe he'll come in'; and he did his best to persuade me not to be afraid of him, but to sit down beside him. I sat down, but I didn't want to say anything to him. Then he told me he used to know mother and grandfather and then I began to talk, And he stayed a long time…."

"What did you talk about?"

"About mother … Mme. Bubnov … grandfather. He stayed two hours."

Nellie seemed unwilling to say what they had talked about. I did not question her, hoping to hear it all from Masloboev. But it struck me that Masloboev had purposely come when I was out, in order to find Nellie alone. "What did he do that for?" I wondered.

She showed me three sweetmeats he had given her. They were fruit-drops done up in green and red paper, very nasty ones, probably bought at a greengrocer's shop. Nellie laughed as she showed me them.

"Why didn't you eat them?" I asked.

"I don't want to," she answered seriously, knitting her brows. "I didn't take them from him; he left them on the sofa himself…."

I had to run about a great deal that day. I began saying good-bye to Nellie.

“Will you be dull all alone?” I asked her as I went away. “Dull and not dull. I shall be dull because you won’t be here for a long while.”

And with what love she looked at me as she said this. She had been looking at me tenderly all that morning, and she seemed so gay, so affectionate, and at the same time there was something shamefaced, even timid, in her manner, as though she were afraid of vexing me in some way, and losing my affection and … and of showing her feelings too strongly, as though she were ashamed of them.

“And why aren’t you dull then? You said you were ‘dull and not dull.’” I could not help asking, smiling to her — she had grown sweet and precious to me.

“I know why,” she answered laughing and for some reason abashed again.

We were talking in the open doorway. Nellie was standing before me with her eyes cast down, with one hand on my shoulder, and with the other pinching my sleeve.

“What is it, a secret?” I asked.

“No … it’s nothing…. I’ve … I’ve begun reading your book while you were away,” she brought out in a low voice, and turning a tender, penetrating look upon me she flushed crimson.

“Ah, that’s it! Well, do you like it?”

I felt the embarrassment of an author praised to his face, but I don’t know what I would have given to have kissed her at that moment. But it seemed somehow impossible to kiss her. Nellie was silent for a moment.

“Why, why did he die?” she asked with an expression of the deepest sadness, stealing a glance at me and then dropping her eyes again.

“Who?”

“Why, that young man in consumption … in the book.”

“It couldn’t be helped. It had to be so, Nellie.”

“It didn’t have to at all,” she answered, hardly above a whisper, but suddenly, abruptly, almost angrily, pouting and staring still more obstinately at the floor.

Another minute passed.

“And she…they…the girl and the old man,” she whispered, still plucking at my sleeve, more hurriedly than before. Will they live together?

And will they leave off being poor?”

“No, Nellie, she’ll go far away; she’ll marry a country gentleman, and he’ll be left alone,” I answered with extreme regret, really sorry that I could not tell her something more comforting.

“Oh, dear!… How dreadful! Ach, what people! I don’t want to read it now!”

And she pushed away my arm angrily, turned her back on me quickly, walked away to the table and stood with her face to the corner, and her eyes on the ground… She was flushed all over, and breathed unsteadily, as though from some terrible disappointment.

“Come, Nellie, you’re angry,” I said, going up to her. “You know, it’s not true what’s written in it, it’s all made up; what is there to be angry about! You’re such a sensitive little girl!”

“I’m not angry,” she said timidly, looking up at me with clear and loving eyes; then she suddenly snatched my hand, pressed her face to my breast, and for some reason began crying,

But at the same moment she laughed — laughed and cried together. I, too, felt it was funny, and somehow … sweet. But nothing would make her lift her head, and when I began pulling her little face away from my shoulder she pressed it more and more closely against me, and laughed more and more.

At last this sentimental scene was over. We parted. I was in a hurry. Nellie, flushed, and still seeming as it were shamefaced, with eyes that shone like stars, ran after me out on the stairs, and begged me to come back early. I promised to be sure to be back to dinner, and as early as possible.

To begin with I went to the Ichmenyevs. They were both in Anna Andreyevna was quite ill; Nikolay Sergeyitch was sitting in his study. He heard that I had come, but I knew that, a usual, he would not come out for a quarter of an hour, so as to give us time to talk. I did not want to upset Anna Andreyevna too much, and so I softened my account of the previous evening as far as I could, but I told the truth. To my surprise, though my old friend was disappointed, she was not astonished to hear the possibility of a rupture.

“Well, my dear boy, it’s just as I thought,” she said. “When you’d gone I pondered over it, and made up my mind that it wouldn’t come to pass. We’ve not deserved such a blessing, besides he’s such a mean man; one can’t expect anything good to come from him. It shows what he is that he’s

taking ten thousand roubles from us for nothing. He knows it's for nothing, but he takes it all the same. He's robbing us of our last crust of bread. Ichmenyevka will be sold. And Natasha's right and sensible not to believe him. But do you know, my dear boy," she went on dropping her voice, "my poor man! My poor man! He's absolutely against this marriage. He let it out. 'I won't have it,' said he. At first I thought it was only foolishness; no, meant it. What will happen to her then, poor darling? The he'll curse her utterly. And how about Alyosha? What does he say?"

And she went on questioning me for a long time, and as usual she sighed and moaned over every answer I gave her. Of late I noticed that she seemed to have quite lost her balance. Every piece of news upset her. Her anxiety over Natasha was ruining her health and her nerves.

The old man came in in his dressing-gown and slippers. He complained of being feverish, but looked fondly at his wife, and all the time that I was there he was looking after her like a nurse peeping into her face, and seeming a little timid with her in fact There was a great deal of tenderness in the way he looked at her. He was frightened at her illness; he felt he would be bereaved of everything on earth if he lost her.

I sat with them for an hour. When I took leave he came into the passage with me and began speaking of Nellie. He seriously thought of taking her into his house to fill the place of his daughter, Natasha. He began consulting me how to predispose Anna Andreyevna in favour of the plan. With special curiosity he questioned me about Nellie, asking whether I had found out anything fresh about her. I told him briefly, my story made an impression on him.

"We'll speak of it again," he said decisively. "And meanwhile…but I'll come to you myself, as soon as I'm a little better. Then we'll settle things."

At twelve o'clock precisely I reached Masloboev's. To my intense amazement the first person I met when I went in was Prince Valkovsky. He was putting on his overcoat in the entry, and Masloboev was officiously helping him and handing him his cane. He had already told me that he was acquainted with the prince, but yet this meeting astonished me extremely.

Prince Valkovsky seemed confused when he saw me.

"Ach, that's you!" he cried, with somewhat exaggerated warmth. "What a meeting, only fancy! But I have just heard from Mr. Masloboev that he knew you. I'm glad, awfully glad to have met you. I was just wishing to see you, and hoping to call on you as soon as possible. You will allow me? I

have a favour to ask of you. Help me, explain our present position. You understand, of course, that I am referring to what happened yesterday…. You are an intimate friend; you have followed the whole course of the affair; you have influence… I'm awfully sorry that I can't stay now…. Business…. But in a few days, and perhaps sooner, I shall have the pleasure of calling on you. But now…."

He shook my hand with exaggerated heartiness, exchanged a glance with Masloboev, and went away.

"Tell me for mercy's sake…," I began, as I went into the room.

"I won't tell you anything," Masloboev interrupted, hurriedly snatching up his cap and going towards the entry. "I've business. I must run, too, my boy. I'm late."

"Why, you wrote to me yourself to come at twelve o'clock!"

"What if I did write twelve o'clock? I wrote to you yesterday, but to-day I've been written to myself, and such a piece of business that my head's in a whirl! They're waiting for me. Forgive me, Vanya, the only thing I can suggest to you by way of satisfaction is to punch my head for having troubled you for nothing. If you want satisfaction, punch it; only, for Christ's sake, make haste! Don't keep me.

I've business. I'm late…."

"What should I punch your head for? Make haste then if you've business…things unforeseen may happen to anyone. Only…."

"Yes, as for that only, let me tell you," he interrupted, dashing out into the entry and putting on his coat (I followed his example). "I have business with you, too; very important business; that's why I asked you to come; it directly concerns you and your interests. And as it's impossible to tell you about it in one minute now, for goodness' sake promise me to come to me to-day at seven o'clock, neither before nor after. I'll be at home."

"To-day," I said uncertainly. "Well, old man, I did mean this evening to go…."

"Go at once, dear boy. where you meant to go this evening, and come this evening to me. For you can't imagine, Vanya, the things I have to tell you."

"But I say, what is it? I confess you make me curious."

Meanwhile we had come out of the gate and were standing on the pavement.

"So you'll come?" he asked insistently.

“I’ve told you I will.”

“No, give me your word of honour.”

“Foo! what a fellow! Very well, my word of honour.”

“Noble and excellent. Which way are you going?”

“This way,” I answered, pointing to the right.

“Well, this is my way,” said he, pointing to the left. “Good-bye, Vanya. Remember, seven o’clock.”

“Strange,” thought I, looking after him.

I had meant to be at Natasha’s in the evening. But as now I had given my word to Masloboev, I decided to call on Natasha at once. I felt sure I should find Alyosha there. And, as a fact, he was there, and was greatly delighted when I came in.

He was very charming, extremely tender with Natasha, and seemed positively to brighten up at my arrival. Though Natasha tried to be cheerful it was obviously an effort. Her face looked pale and ill, and she had slept badly. To Alyosha she showed an exaggerated tenderness.

Though Alyosha said a great deal and told her all sorts of things, evidently trying to cheer her up and to bring a smile to her lips, which seemed set in unsmiling gravity, he obviously avoided speaking of Katya or of his father. Evidently his efforts at reconciliation had not succeeded.

“Do you know what? He wants dreadfully to get away from me,” Natasha whispered to me hurriedly when he went out for a minute to give some order to Mavra. “But he’s afraid. And I’m afraid to tell him to go myself, for then perhaps he’ll stay on purpose; but what I’m most afraid of is his being bored with me, and getting altogether cold to me through that! What am I to do?”

“Good heavens, what a position you’ve put yourselves in! And how suspicious, how watchful you are of one another. Simply explain to him and have done with it. Why, he may well be weary of such a position.”

“What’s to be done?” she cried, panic-stricken.

“Wait a minute. I’ll arrange it all for you.”

And I went into the kitchen on the pretext of asking Mavra to clean one of my overshoes which was covered with mud.

“Be careful, Vanya,” she cried after me.

As soon as I went out to Mavra, Alyosha flew up to me as though he had been waiting for me.

“Ivan Petrovitch, my dear fellow, what am I to do? Do advise me. I promised yesterday to be at Katya’s just at this time to-day. I can’t avoid going. I love Natasha beyond expression; I would go through the fire for her, but you’ll admit that I can’t throw up everything over there….”

“Well, go then.”

“But what about Natasha? I shall grieve her, you know. Ivan Petrovitch, do get me out of it somehow….”

“I think you’d much better go. You know how she loves you; she will be thinking all the while that you are bored with her and staying with her against your will. It’s better to be more unconstrained. Come along, though. I’ll help you.”

“Dear Ivan Petrovitch, how kind you are!”

We went back; a minute later I said to him:

“I saw your father just now.”

“Where?” he cried, frightened.

“In the street, by chance. He stopped to speak to me a minute, and asked again to become better acquainted with me. He was asking about you, whether I knew where you were now. He was very anxious to see you, to tell you something.”

“Ach, Alyosha, you’d better go and show yourself,” Natasha put in, understanding what I was leading up to.

“But where shall I meet him now? Is he at home?”

“No, I remember he said he was going to the countess’s.”

“What shall I do, then?” Alyosha asked naively, looking mournfully at Natasha.

“Why, Alyosha, what’s wrong?” she said. “Do you really mean to give up that acquaintance to set my mind at rest? Why, that’s childish. To begin with, it’s impossible, and secondly, it would be ungrateful to Katya. You are friends — it’s impossible to break off relations so rudely. You’ll offend me at last if you think I’m so jealous. Go at once, go, I beg you, and satisfy your father.”

“Natasha, you’re an angel, and I’m not worth your little finger,” cried Alyosha rapturously and remorsefully. “You are so kind, while I…I…well, let me tell you, I’ve just been asking Ivan Petrovitch out there in the kitchen to help me to get away. And this was his plan. But don’t be hard on me, Natasha, my angel! I’m not altogether to blame, for I love you a thousand times more than anything on earth, and so I’ve made a new plan — to tell

Katya everything and describe to her our present position and all that happened here yesterday. She'll think of something to save us; she's devoted to us, heart and soul…."

"Well, go along," said Natasha, smiling. "And I tell you what, I am very anxious to make Katya's acquaintance myself. How can we arrange it?"

Alyosha's enthusiasm was beyond all bounds. He began at once making plans for bringing about a meeting. To his mind it was very simple; Katya would find a way. He enlarged on his idea warmly, excitedly. He promised to bring an answer that day, within a couple of hours, and to spend the evening with Natasha.

"Will you really come?" asked Natasha, as she let him out.

"Can you doubt it? Good-bye, Natasha, good-bye my darling, my beloved for ever. Good-bye, Vanya. Ach, I called you Vanya by mistake. Listen, Ivan Petrovitch, I love you. Let me call you Vanya.

Let's drop formality."

"Yes, let us."

"Thank goodness! It's been in my mind a hundred times, but I've never somehow dared to speak of it. Ivan Petrovitch — there I've done it again. You know, it's so difficult to say Vanya all at once. I think that's been described somewhere by Tolstoy: two people promise to call each other by their pet names, but they can't do it and keep avoiding using any name at all. Ach, Natasha, do let's read over 'Childhood and Boyhood' together. It is so fine."

"Come, be off, be off I" Natasha drove him away, laughing. "He's babbling with delight…."

"Good-bye. In two hours time I shall be with you."

He kissed her hand and hastened away.

"You see, you see, Vanya," said she, and melted into tears.

I stayed with her for about two hours, tried to comfort her and succeeded in reassuring her. Of course, she was right about everything, in all her apprehensions. My heart was wrung with anguish when I thought of her present position. I was afraid but what could I do?

Alyosha seemed strange to me, too. He loved her no less than before; perhaps, indeed, his feeling was stronger, more poignant than ever, from remorse and gratitude. But at the same time, his new passion was taking a strong hold on his heart. It was impossible to see how it would end. I felt

very inquisitive to see Katya. I promised Natasha again that I would make her acquaintance.

Natasha seemed to be almost cheerful at last. Among other things I told her all about Nellie, about Masloboev, and Mme. Bubnov, about my meeting Prince Valkovsky that morning at Masloboev's, and the appointment I had made with the latter at seven o'clock. All this interested her extremely. I talked a little about her parents, but I said nothing for the present about her father's visit to me; his project of a duel with the prince might have frightened her. She, too, thought it very strange that the prince should have anything to do with Masloboev, and that he should display such a great desire to make friends with me, though this could be to some extent explained by the position of affairs….

At three o'clock I returned home. Nellie met me with her bright little face.

Chapter VI

AT SEVEN O'CLOCK punctually I was at Masloboev's. He greeted me with loud exclamations and open arms. He was, of course, half drunk. But what stuck me most was the extraordinary preparation that had been made for my visit. It was evident that I was expected. A pretty brass samovar was boiling on a little round table covered with a handsome and expensive tablecloth. The tea-table glittered with crystal, silver and china. On another table, which was covered with a tablecloth of a different kind, but no less gorgeous, stood plates of excellent sweets, Kiev preserves both dried and liquid, fruit-paste, jelly, French preserves, oranges, apples, and three or four sorts of nuts; in fact, a regular fruit-shop. On a third table, covered with a snow-white cloth, there were savouries of different sorts — caviar, cheese, a pie, sausage, smoked ham, fish and a row of fine glass decanters containing spirits of many sorts, and of the most attractive colours — green, ruby, brown and gold. Finally on a little table on one side — also covered with a white cloth — there were two bottles of champagne. On a table before the sofa there were three bottles containing Sauterne, Lafitte, and Cognac, very expensive brands from Eliseyev's. Alexandra Semyonovna was sitting at the tea-table, and though her dress and general get-up was simple, they had evidently been the subject of thought and attention, and the result was indeed very successful. She knew what suited her, and evidently took pride in it. She got up to meet me with some ceremony. Her fresh little face beamed with pleasure and satisfaction. Masloboev was wearing gorgeous

Chinese slippers, a sumptuous dressing-gown, and dainty clean linen. Fashionable studs and buttons were conspicuous on his shirt everywhere where they could possibly be attached. His hair had been pomaded, and combed with a fashionable side parting.

I was so much taken aback that I stopped short in the middle of the room and gazed open-mouthed, first at Masloboev and then at Alexandra Semyonovna, who was in a state of blissful satisfaction.

“What’s the meaning of this, Masloboev? Have you got a party this evening?” I cried with some uneasiness.

“No, only you!” he answered solemnly.

“But why is this?” I asked (pointing to the savouries). “Why, you’ve food enough for a regiment!”

“And drink enough! You’ve forgotten the chief thing — drink!” added Masloboev.

“And is this only on my account?

“And Alexandra Semyonovna’s. It was her pleasure to get it all up.”

“Well, upon my word. I knew that’s how it would be,” exclaimed Alexandra Semyonovna, flushing, though she looked just as satisfied. “I can’t receive a visitor decently, or I’m in fault at once.”

“Ever since the morning, would you believe it, as soon as she knew you were coming for the evening, she’s been bustling about; she’s been in agonies….”

“And that’s a fib! It’s not since early morning, it’s since last night. When you came in last night you told me the gentleman was coming to spend the whole evening.”

“You misunderstood me.”

“Not a bit of it. That’s what you said. I never tell lies. And why shouldn’t I welcome a guest? We go on and on, and no one ever comes to see us, though we’ve plenty of everything. Let our friends see that we know how to live like other people.”

“And above all see what a good hostess and housekeeper you are,” added Masloboev. “Only fancy, my friend, I’ve come in for something too. She’s crammed me into a linen shirt, stuck in studs — slippers, Chinese dressing-gown — she combed my hair herself and pomaded it with bergamot; she wanted to sprinkle me with scent — creme brulee, but I couldn’t stand that. I rebelled and asserted my conjugal authority.”

“It wasn’t bergamot. It was the best French pomatum out of a painted china pot,” retorted Alexandra Semyonovna, firing up. “You judge, Ivan Petrovitch; he never lets me go to a theatre, or a dance, he only gives me dresses, and what do I want with dresses? I put them on and walk about the room alone. The other day I persuaded him and we were all ready to go to the theatre. As soon as I turned to fasten my brooch he went to the cupboard, took one glass after another until he was tipsy. So we stayed at home. No one, no one, no one ever comes to see us. Only of a morning people of a sort come about business, and I’m sent away. Yet we’ve samovars, and a dinner service and good cups — we’ve everything, all presents. And they bring us things to eat too. We scarcely buy anything but the spirits; and the pomade and the savouries there, the pie, the ham and sweets we bought for you. If anyone could see how we live! I’ve been thinking for a whole year: if a visitor would come, a real visitor, we could show him all this and entertain him. And folks would praise things and we should be pleased. And as for my pomading him, the stupid, he doesn’t deserve it. He’d always go about in dirty clothes. Look what a dress-ing-gown he’s got on. It was a present. But does he deserve a dressing-gown like that? He’d rather be tippling than anything. You’ll see. He’ll ask you to take vodka before tea.”

“Well! That’s sense indeed! Let’s have some of the silver seal and some of the gold, Vanya, and then with souls refreshed we’ll fall upon the other beverages.”

“There, I knew that’s how it would be!

“Don’t be anxious, Sashenka. We’ll drink a cup of tea, too, with brandy in it, to your health.”

“Well, there it is! “ she cried, clasping her hands. “It’s caravan tea, six roubles the pound, a merchant made us a present of it the day before yesterday, and he wants to drink it with brandy. Don’t listen to him, Ivan Petrovitch, I’ll pour you out a cup directly. You’ll see … you’ll see for yourself what it’s like!”

And she busied herself at the samovar,

I realized that they were reckoning on keeping me for the whole evening. Alexandra Semyonovna had been expecting visitors for a whole year, and was now prepared to work it all off on me This did not suit me at all.

“Listen, Masloboev,” I said, sitting down. “I’ve not come to pay you a visit. I’ve come on business; you invited me yourself to tell me

something….”

“Well, business is business, but there’s a time for friendly conversation too.”

“No, my friend, don’t reckon upon me. At half-past eight I must say good-bye. I’ve an appointment. It’s a promise.”

“Not likely. Good gracious, what a way to treat me! What a way to treat Alexandra Semyonovna. Just look at her, she’s overwhelmed. What has she been pomading me for: why I’m. covered with bergamot. Just think!”

“You do nothing but make jokes, Masloboev. I swear to Alexandra Semyonovna that. I’ll dine with you next week, or Friday if you like. But now, my boy, I’ve given my word; or rather it’s absolutely necessary for me to be at a certain place, You’d better explain what you meant to tell me.”

“Then can you really only stay till half-past eight?” cried Alexandra Semyonovna in a timid and plaintive voice, almost weeping as she handed me a cup of excellent tea.

“Don’t be uneasy, Sashenka; that’s all nonsense” Masloboev put in. “He’ll stay. That’s nonsense. But I’ll tell you what, Vanya, you’d much better let me know where it is you always go. What is your business? May I know? You keep running off somewhere every day. You don’t work….”

“But why do you want to know? I’ll tell you perhaps afterwards. You’d better explain why you came to see me yesterday when I told you myself I shouldn’t be at home.”

“I remembered afterwards. But I forgot at the time. I really did want to speak to you about something. But before everything I had to comfort Alexandra Semyonovna. ‘Here,’ says she, ‘is a person, a friend, who has turned up. Why not invite him?’ And here she’s been pestering me about you for the last four days. No doubt they’ll let me off forty sins for the bergamot in the next world, but I thought why shouldn’t he spend an evening with us in a friendly way? So I had recourse to strategy: I wrote to you that I had such business that if you didn’t come it would quite upset our apple-cart.”

I begged him not to do like this in the future, but to speak to me directly. But this explanation did not altogether satisfy me.

“Well, but why did you run away from me this morning?” I asked.

“This morning I really had business. I’m not telling the least little fib.”

“Not with the prince?”

“Do you like our tea?” Alexandra Semyonovna asked, in honied accents. For the last five minutes she had been waiting for me to praise the tea, but it never occurred to me.

“It’s splendid, Alexandra Semyonovna, superb. I have never drunk anything like it.”

Alexandra Semyonovna positively glowed with satisfaction and flew to pour me out some more.

“The prince!” cried Masloboev, “the prince! That prince, my boy, is a rogue, a rascal such as …. Well! I can tell you, my boy, though I’m a rogue myself, from a mere sense of decency I shouldn’t care to be in his skin. But enough. Mum’s the word! That’s all I can tell you about him.”

“But I’ve come, among other things, on purpose to ask you about him. But that will do later. Why did you give my Elena sweetmeats and dance for her when I was away yesterday? And what can you have been talking about for an hour and a half!”

“Elena is a little girl of twelve, or perhaps eleven, who is living for the time at Ivan Petrovitch’s,” Masloboev exclaimed, suddenly addressing Alexandra Semyonovna. “Look, Vanya, look,” he went on, pointing at her, “how she flushed up when she heard I had taken sweets to an unknown girl. Didn’t she give a start and turn red as though we’d fired a pistol at her? … I say, her eyes are flashing like coals of fire! It’s no use, Alexandra Semyonovna, it’s no use to try and hide it! She’s jealous. If I hadn’t explained that it was a child of eleven she’d have pulled my hair and the bergamot wouldn’t have saved me!”

“It won’t save you as it is!”

And with these words Alexandra Semyonovna darted at one bound from behind the tea-table, and before Masloboev had time to protect his head she snatched at a tuft of his hair and gave it a good pull.

“So there! So there! Don’t dare to say I’m jealous before a visitor! Don’t you dare! Don’t you dare! Don’t you dare!”

She was quite crimson, and though she laughed, Masloboev caught it pretty hotly.

“He talks of all sorts of shameful things,” she added seriously turning to me.

“Well, Vanya, you see the sort of life I lead! That’s I must have a drop of vodka,” Masloboev concluded, setting his hair straight and going almost at a trot to the decanter But Alexandra Semyonovna was beforehand with him.

She skipped up to the table, poured some out herself, handed it him, and even gave him a friendly pat on the cheek. Masloboev winked at me, triumphantly clicked with his tongue, an solemnly emptied his glass.

"As for the sweets, it's difficult to say," he began, sitting down on the sofa beside me. "I bought them at a greengrocer's shop the other day when I was drunk, I don't know why. Perhaps it was to support home industries and manufactures, don't know for sure. I only remember that I was walking along the street drunk, fell in the mud, clutched at my hair and cried at being unfit for anything. I forgot about the sweets, of course so they remained in my pocket till yesterday when I sat down on your sofa and sat on them. The dances, too, were a question of inebriety. Yesterday I was rather drunk, and when I'm drunk, if I'm contented with my lot I sometimes dance. That's all. Except, perhaps, that that little orphan excited my pity besides, she wouldn't talk to me, she seemed cross. And so danced to cheer her up and gave her the fruit-drops."

"And you weren't bribing her to try and find something out from her? Own up, honestly, didn't you come then on purpose knowing I shouldn't be at home, to talk to her tete-a-tete, to get something out of her? You see, I know you spent an hour and a half with her, declared that you had known her dead mother, and that you questioned her about something." Masloboev screwed up his eyes and laughed roguishly.

"Well, it wouldn't have been a bad idea," he said. "Vanya, that was not so. Though, indeed, why shouldn't I question her if I got a chance; but it wasn't that. Listen, my friend, though as usual I'm rather drunk now, yet you may be sure that with evil intent Filip will never deceive you, with evil intent, that is."

"Yes, but without evil intent?

"Well … even without evil intent. But, damn it all, let's have a drink and then to business. It's not a matter of much consequence," he went on after a drink; "that Bubnov woman had no sort of right to keep the girl. I've gone into it all. There was no adoption or anything of that sort. The mother owed her money, and so she got hold of the child. Though the Bubnov woman's a sly hag and a wicked wretch, she's a silly woman like all women. The dead woman had a good passport and so everything was all right. Elena can live with you, though it would be a very good thing if some benevolent people with a family would take her for good and bring her up. But meanwhile, let her stay with you. That's all right. I'll arrange it all for you. The Bubnov

woman won’t dare to stir a finger. I’ve found out scarcely anything certain about Elena’s mother. She was a woman of the name of Salzmann.”

“Yes, so Nellie told me.”

“Well, so there the matter ends. Now, Vanya,” he began with a certain solemnity, “I’ve one great favour to ask of you. Mind you grant it. Tell me as fully as you can what it is you’re busy about, where you’re going, and where you spend whole days at a time. Though I have heard something, I want to know about it much more fully.”

Such solemnity surprised me and even made me uneasy.

“But what is it? Why do you want to know? You ask so solemnly.”

“Well, Vanya, without wasting words, I want to do you a service. You see, my dear boy, if I weren’t straight with you I could get it all out of you without being so solemn. But you suspect me of not being straight — just now, those fruit-drops; I understood. But since I’m speaking with such seriousness, you may be sure it’s not my interest but yours I’m thinking of. So don’t have any doubts, but speak out the whole truth.”

“But what sort of service? Listen, Masloboev, why won’t you tell me anything about the prince? That’s what I want. That would be a service to me.”

“About the prince? H’m! Very well, I’ll tell you straight out. I’m going to question you in regard to the prince now.”

“How so?”

“I’ll tell you how. I’ve noticed, my boy, that he seems to be somehow mixed up in your affairs; for instance, he questioned me about you. How he found out that we knew each other is not your business. The only thing that matters is that you should be on your guard against that man. He’s a treacherous Judas, and worse than that too. And so, when I saw that he was mixed up in your affairs I trembled for you. But of course I knew nothing about it; that’s why I asked you to tell me, that I may judge…. And that’s why I asked you to come her to-day. That’s what the important business is. I tell you straight out.”

“You must tell me something, anyway, if only why I need to be afraid of the prince.”

“Very good, so be it. I am sometimes employed, my boy, in certain affairs. But I’m trusted by certain persons just because I’m not a chatterbox. Judge for yourself whether I should talk to you. So you mustn’t mind if I

speak somewhat generally, very generally in fact, simply to show what a scoundrel he is. Well, to begin with, you tell your story.”

I decided there was really no need to conceal anything in my affairs from Masloboev. Natasha’s affairs were not a secret; moreover I might expect to get some help for her from Masloboev. Of course I passed over certain points as far as possible in my story. Masloboev listened particularly attentively to all that related to Prince Valkovsky; he stopped me in many places, asked me about several points over again, so that in the end I told him the story rather fully. The telling of it lasted half an hour.

“H’m! That girl’s got a head,” Masloboev commented. “If she hasn’t guessed quite correctly about the prince, it’s a good thing anyway that she recognized from the first the sort of man she had to deal with, and broke off all relations with him. Bravo, Natalya Nikolaevna! I drink to her health.” (He took a drink.) “It’s not only brains, it must have been her heart too, that saved her from being deceived. And her heart didn’t mislead her. Of course her game is lost. The prince will get his way and Alyosha will give her up. I’m only sorry for Ichmenyev — to pay ten thousand to that scoundrel. Why, who took up his case, who acted for him? Managed it himself, I bet! E-ech! just like all these noble, exalted people! They’re no good for anything! That’s not the way to deal with the prince. I’d have found a nice little lawyer for Ichmenyev — ech!”

And he thumped on the table with vexation.

“Well, now about Prince Valkovsky?”

“Ah, you’re still harping on the prince. But what am I to say about him? I’m sorry I’ve offered to, I only wanted, Vanya, to warn you against that swindler, to protect you, so to say, from his influence. No one is safe who comes in contact with him. So keep your eyes open, that’s all. And here you’ve been imagining I had some mysteries of Paris I wanted to reveal to you. One can see you’re a novelist. Well, what am I to tell you about the villain? The villain’s a villain…. Well, for example, I’ll tell you one little story, of course without mentioning places, towns, or persons, that is, without the exactitude of a calendar. You know that when he was very young and had to live on his official salary, he married a very rich merchant’s daughter. Well, he didn’t treat that lady very ceremoniously, and though we’re not discussing her case now, I may mention in passing, friend Vanya, that he has all his life been particularly fond of turning such affairs to profit. Here’s another example of it. He went abroad. There… .”

“Stop, Masloboev, what journey abroad are you speaking of? In what year?”

“Just ninety-nine years and three months ago. Well, there he seduced the daughter of a certain father, and carried her off with him to Paris. And this is what he did! The father was some sort of a manufacturer, or was a partner in some enterprise of that sort. I don’t know for sure. What I tell you is what I’ve gathered from my own conjectures, and what I’ve concluded from other facts. Well, the prince cheated him, worming himself into his business too. He swindled him out and out, and got hold of his money. The old man, of course, had some legal documents to prove that the prince had had the money from him. The prince didn’t want to give it back; that is, in plain Russian, wanted to steal it. The old man had a daughter, and she was a beauty, and she had an ideal lover, one of the Schiller brotherhood, a poet, and at the same time a merchant, a young dreamer; in short a regular German, one Pfefferkuchen.”

“Do you mean to say Pfefferkuchen was his surname?”

“Well, perhaps it wasn’t Pfefferkuchen. Hang the man, he doesn’t matter. But the prince made up to the daughter, and so successfully that she fell madly in love with him. The prince wanted two things at that time, first to possess the daughter, and secondly the documents relating to the money he had had from the old man. All the old man’s keys were in his daughter’s keeping. The old man was passionately fond of his daughter, so much so that he didn’t want her to be married. Yes, really. He was jealous of every suitor she had, he didn’t contemplate parting with her, and he turned Pfefferkuchen out. He was a queer fish the father, an Englishman… .”

“An Englishman? But where did it all happen?”

“I only called him an Englishman, speaking figuratively, and you catch me up. It happened in the town of Santa-fe-da-Bogota, or perhaps it was Cracow, but more likely it was in the principality of Nassau, like the label on the seltzer-water bottles; certainly it was Nassau. Is that enough for you? Well, so the prince seduced the girl and carried her off from her father, and managed to induce the girl to lay hands on the documents and take them with her. There are cases of love like that, you know, Vanya. Fugh! God have mercy upon us! She was an honest girl, you know, noble, exalted. It’s true she very likely didn’t know much about the documents. The only thing that troubled her was that her father might curse her. The prince was equal to the occasion this time too; he gave her a formal, legal promise of

marriage in writing. By so doing he persuaded her that they were only going abroad for a time, for a holiday tour, and that when the old father's anger had subsided they would return to him married, and would, the three of them, live happy ever after, and so on, to infinity. She ran away, the old father cursed her and went bankrupt. She was followed to Paris by Frauenmilch, who chucked up everything, chucked up his business even; he was very much in love with her."

"Stop, who's Frauenmilch?"

"Why, that fellow! Feurbach, wasn't it? Damn the fellow, Pfefferkuchen! Well, of course, the prince couldn't marry her: what would Countess Hlestov* have said? What would Baron Slops have thought? So he had to deceive her. And he did deceive her, too brutally. To begin with, he almost beat her, and secondly, he purposely invited Pfefferkuchen to visit them. Well, he used to go and see them and became her friend. They would spend whole evenings alone, whimpering together, weeping over their troubles, and he would comfort her. To be sure, dear, simple souls! The prince brought things to this pass on purpose. Once, he found them late at night, and pretended that they had an intrigue, caught at some pretext; said he'd seen it with his own eyes. Well, he turned them both out of the house, and took his departure to London for a time. She was

*The Russian "Mrs. Grundy." — Translator's note.

just on the eve of her confinement; when he turned her out she gave birth to a daughter, that is, not a daughter but a son, to be sure, a little son. He was christened Volodka. Pfefferkuchen stood godfather. Well, so she went off with Pfefferkuchen. He had a little money. She travelled in Switzerland and Italy, through all the poetical places to be sure, most appropriately. She cried all the time, and Pfefferkuchen whimpered, and many years passed like that, and the baby grew into a little girl. And everything went right for the prince, only one thing was wrong, he hadn't succeeded in getting back the promise of marriage. 'You're a base man,' she had said to him at parting. 'You have robbed me, you have dishonoured me and now you abandon me. Good-bye. But I won't give you back your promise. Not because I ever want to marry you, but because you're afraid of that document. So I shall always keep it in my hands.' She lost her temper in fact, but the prince felt quite easy. Such scoundrels always come off well in their dealings with so-called lofty souls. They're so noble that it's always easy to deceive them, and besides they invariably confine themselves to

lofty and noble contempt instead of practically applying the law to the case if it can be applied. That young mother, for instance, she took refuge in haughty contempt, and though she kept the promise of marriage, the prince knew, of course, that she'd sooner hang herself than make use of it; so he felt secure for the time. And though she spat in his nasty face, she had her Volodka left on her hands; if she had died what would have become of him? But she didn't think about that. Bruderschaft, too, encouraged her and didn't think about it. They read Schiller. At last Bruderschaft sickened of something and died."

"You mean Pfefferkuchen?"

"To be sure — hang him! And she …"

"Stay. How many years had they been travelling?"

"Exactly two hundred. Well, she went back to Cracow. Her father wouldn't receive her, cursed her. She died, and the prince crossed himself for joy. I was there too, drank goblets not a few, our ears full of mead, but our mouths full of need; they gave me a flip, and I gave them the slip…. Let's drink, brother Vanya."

"I suspect that you are helping him in that business, Masloboev."

"You will have it so, will you?

"Only I can't understand what you can do in it."

"Why, you see, when she went back under another name to Madrid after being away for ten years, all this had to be verified, and about Bruderschaft too, and about the old man and about the kid, and whether she was dead, and whether she'd any papers, and so on, to infinity. And something else besides, too. He's a horrid man, be on your guard, Vanya, and remember one thing about Masloboev, don't let anything make you call him a scoundrel. Though he's a scoundrel (to my thinking there's no man who isn't) he's not a scoundrel in his dealings with you. I'm very drunk, but listen. If ever, sooner or later, now or next year, it seems to you that Masloboev has hoodwinked you (and please don't forget that word hoodwinked), rest assured that it's with no evil intent. Masloboev is watching over you. And so don't believe your suspicions, but come to Masloboev and have it out with him like a friend. Well, now, will you have a drink?"

"No."

"Something to eat?"

"No, brother, excuse me."

“Well then, get along with you. It’s a quarter to nine and you’re in a hurry. It’s time for you to go.”

“Well, what next? He’s been drinking till he’s drunk and now he sends away a guest. He’s always like that. Ach, you shameless fellow!” cried Alexandra Semyonovna, almost in tears.

“A man on foot’s poor company for a man on horseback, Alexandra Semyonovna; we shall be left alone to adore on another. And this is a general! No, Vanya, I’m lying, you’re not a general, but I’m a scoundrel! Only see what I look like now! What am I beside you? Forgive me, Vanya, don’t judge me and let me pour out….”

He embraced me and burst into tears. I prepared to go away.

“Good heavens! And we’ve prepared supper for you!” cried Alexandra Semyonovna in terrible distress. “And will you come to us on Friday?”

“I will, Alexandra Semyonovna. Honour bright, I will.”

“Perhaps you look down on him because he’s so…tipsy. Don’t look down upon him, Ivan Petrovitch! He’s a good-hearted man, such a good-hearted man, and how he loves you. He talks to me about you day and night, nothing but you. He bought your books on purpose for me. I haven’t read the yet. I’m going to begin tomorrow. And how glad I shall be when you come! I never see anyone. No one ever comes to sit with us. We’ve everything we can want, but we’re always alone. Here I’ve been sitting listening all the while you’ve been talking, and how nice it’s been…. So good-by till Friday.”

CHAPTER VII

I went out and hurried home. Masloboev's words had made a great impression on me. All sorts of ideas occurred to me…. As luck would have it, at home an incident awaited me whic startled me like an electric shock. Exactly opposite the gate of the house where I lodged stood a street-lamp. just as I was in the gateway a strange figure rushed out from under the street-lamp, so strange that I uttered a cry. It was a living thing, terror-stricken, shaking, half-crazed, and it caught at my hand with a scream. I was over-whelmed with horror. It was Nellie.

"Nellie, what is it?" I cried. "What's the matter?"

"There, upstairs … he's in our … rooms."

"Who is it? Come along, come with me."

"I won't, I won't. I'll wait till he's gone away … in the passage …I won't."

I went up to my room with a strange foreboding in my heart, opened the door and saw Prince Valkovsky. He was sitting at the table reading my novel. At least, the book was open.

"Ivan Petrovitch," he cried, delighted. "I'm so glad you've come back at last. I was on the very point of going away. I've been waiting over an hour for you. I promised the countess at her earnest and particular wish to take you to see her this evening. She begged me so specially, she's so anxious to make your acquaintance. So as you had already promised me I thought I would come and see you earlier before you'd had time to go out anywhere, and invite you to come with me. Imagine my distress. When I arrived your servant told me you were not at home. What could I do? I had given my word of honour that I'd take you with me. And so I sat down to wait for you, making up my mind to wait a quarter of an hour for you. But it's been a long quarter of an hour! I opened your novel and forgot the time, reading it. Ivan Petrovitch! It's a masterpiece!

They don't appreciate you enough! You've drawn tears from me, do you know? Yes, I've been crying, and I don't often cry,"

"So you want me to come? I must confess that just now… not that I'm against it, but…."

"For God's sake let us go! What a way to treat me! Why, I have been waiting an hour and a half for you… . Besides, I do so want to talk to you.

You know what about. You understand the whole affair better than I do… . Perhaps we shall decide on something, come to some conclusion. Only think of it For God's sake, don't refuse."

I reflected that sooner or later I should have to go. Of course Natasha was alone now, and needed me, but she had herself charged me to get to know Katya as soon as possible. Besides, Alyosha might be there. I knew that Natasha would not be satisfied till I had brought her news of Katya, and I decided to go. But I was worried about Nellie.

"Wait a minute," I said to the prince, and I went out on the stairs. Nellie was standing there in a dark corner.

"Why won't you come in, Nellie? What did he do? What did he say to you?"

"Nothing…. I don't want to, I won't…," she repeated. "I'm afraid."

I tried hard to persuade her, but nothing was any use. I agreed with her that as soon as I had gone out with the prince she should return and lock herself in.

"And don't let anyone in, Nellie, however much they try and persuade you."

"But are you going with him?"

"Yes."

She shuddered and clutched at my arm, as though to beg me not to go, but she didn't utter one word. I made up my mind to question her more minutely next day.

Apologizing to the prince, I began to dress. He began assuring me that I had no need to dress, no need to get myself up to go to the countess.

"Perhaps something a little more spruce," he added, eyeing me inquisitively from head to foot. "You know … these conventional prejudices…it's impossible to be rid of them altogether. It'll be a long time before we get to that ideal state in our society," he concluded, seeing with satisfaction that I had a dress-coat.

We went out. But I left him on the stairs, went back into the room into which Nellie had already slipped, and said good-bye to her again. She was terribly agitated. Her face looked livid. I was worried about her; I disliked having to leave her.

"That's a queer servant of yours," the prince said as we went downstairs. "I suppose that little girl is your servant?

"No … she … is staying with me for the time."

“Queer little girl. I’m sure she’s mad. Only fancy, at first she answered me civilly, but afterwards when she’d looked at me she rushed at me, screaming and trembling, clung to me…tried to say something, but couldn’t. I must own I was scared. I wanted to escape from her, but thank God she ran away herself. I was astounded. How do you manage to get on with her?”

“She has epileptic fits,” I answered.

“Ah, so that’s it! Well, it’s no wonder then…if she has fits.”

The idea suddenly struck me that Masloboev’s visit of the previous day when he knew I was not at home, my visit to Masloboev that morning, the story that Masloboev had just told me, when he was drunk and against his will, his pressing invitation for me to come at seven o’clock that evening, his urging me not to believe in his hoodwinking me and, finally, the prince’s waiting for an hour and a half for me while perhaps he knew I was at Masloboev’s, and while Nellie had rushed away from him into the street, that all these facts were somehow connected. I had plenty to think about.

Prince Valkovsky’s carriage was waiting at the gate. We got in and drove off.

CHAPTER VIII

WE HAD NOT far to go, to the Torgovoy Bridge. For the first minute we were silent. I kept wondering how he would begin. I fancied that he would try me, sound me, probe me. But he spoke without any beating about the bush, and went straight to the point.

“I am very uneasy about one circumstance, Ivan Petrovitch,” he began, “about which I want to speak to you first of all, and to ask your advice. I made up my mind some time ago to forgo what I have won from my lawsuit and to give up the disputed ten thousand to Ichmenyev. How am I to do this?”

“It cannot be that you really don’t know how to act,” was the thought that flashed through my mind. “Aren’t you making fun of me?”

“I don’t know, prince,” I answered as simply as I could; “in something else, that is, anything concerning Natalya Nikolaevna, I am ready to give you any information likely to be of use to you or to us, but in this matter you must know better than I do.”

“No, no, I don’t know so well, of course not. You know them, and perhaps Natalya Nikolaevna may have given you her views on the subject more than once, and they would be my guiding principle. You can be a great help to me. It’s an extremely difficult matter. I am prepared to make a concession. I’m even determined to make a concession, however other matters may end. You understand? But how, and in what form, to make that concession? That’s the question. The old man’s proud and obstinate. Very likely he’ll insult me for my good-nature, and throw the money in my face.”

“But excuse me. How do you look upon that money? As your own or as his?”

“I won the lawsuit, so the money’s mine.”

“But in your conscience?”

“Of course I regard it as mine,” he answered, somewhat piqued at my unceremoniousness. “But I believe you don’t know all the facts of the case. I don’t accuse the old man of intentional duplicity, and I will confess I’ve never accused him. It was his own choice to take it as an insult. He was to blame for carelessness, for not looking more sharply after business entrusted to him. And by our agreement he was bound to be responsible for some of his mistakes. But, do you know, even that’s not really the point.

What was really at the bottom of it was our quarrelling, our mutual recriminations at the time, in fact, wounded vanity on both sides. I might not have taken any notice of that paltry ten thousand, but you know, of course, how the whole case began and what it arose from. I'm ready to admit that I was suspicious and perhaps unjust (that is, unjust at the time), but I wasn't aware of it, and in my vexation and resentment of his rudeness I was unwilling to let the chance slip, and began the lawsuit. You may perhaps think all that not very generous on my part. I don't defend myself; only I may observe that anger, or, still more, wounded pride is not the same as lack of generosity, but is a natural human thing, and I confess, I repeat again, that I did not know Ichmenyev at all, and quite believed in those rumours about Alyosha and his daughter, and so was able to believe that the money had been intentionally stolen…. But putting that aside, the real question is, what am I to do now? I might refuse the money, but if at the same time I say that I still consider my claim was a just one, it comes to my giving him the money, and, add to that the delicate position in regard to Natalya Nikolaevna, he'll certainly fling the money in my face…."

"There, you see, you say yourself he'll fling it in your face so you do consider him an honest man, and that's why you can be perfectly certain that he did not steal your money. And if so, why shouldn't you go to him and tell him straight out that you consider your claim as unjustified. That would be honourable, and Ichmenyev would not perhaps find it difficult then to accept his money."

"Hm! His money…that's just the question; what sort of position do you put me into? Go to him and tell him I consider my claim illegal. 'Why did you make it then, if you considered it illegal?' that's what every one would say to my face. And I've not deserved it, for my claim was legal. I have never said and never written that he stole the money, but I am still convinced of his carelessness, his negligence, and incapacity in managing business. That money is undoubtedly mine, and therefore it would be mortifying to make a false charge against myself, and finally, I repeat, the old man brought the ignominy of it upon himself, and you want to force me to beg his pardon for that ignominy — that's hard."

"It seems to me that if two men wanted to be reconciled, then…."

"You think it's easy?

"Yes."

"No, sometimes it's very far from easy, especially…."

“Especially if there are other circumstances connected with it. Yes, there I agree with you, prince. The position of Natalya Nikolaevna and of your son ought to be settled by you in all those points that depend upon you, and settled so as to be fully satisfactory to the Ichmenyevs. Only then can you be quite sincere with Ichmenyev about the lawsuit too. Now, while nothing has been settled, you have only one course open to you: to acknowledge the injustice of your claim, and to acknowledge it openly, and if necessary even publicly, that’s my opinion. I tell you so frankly because you asked me my opinion yourself. And probably you do not wish me to be insincere with you. And this gives me the courage to ask you why you are troubling your head about returning this money to Ichmenyev? If you consider that you were just in your claim, why return it? Forgive my being so inquisitive, but this has such an intimate bearing upon other circumstances.”

“And what do you think?” he asked suddenly, as though he had not heard my question. “Are you so sure that old Ichmenyev would refuse the ten thousand if it were handed to him without any of these evasions and… and…and blandishments?”

“Of course he would refuse it.”

I flushed crimson and positively trembled with indignation. This impudently sceptical question affected me as though he had spat into my face. My resentment was increased by something else: the coarse, aristocratic manner in which, without answering my question, and apparently without noticing it, he interrupted it with another, probably to give me to understand that I had gone too far and had been too familiar in venturing to ask him such a question. I detested, I loathed that aristocratic manoeuvre and had done my utmost in the past to get Alyosha out of it.

“Hm! You are too impulsive, and things are not done in real life as you imagine,” the prince observed calmly, at my exclamation. “But I think that Natalya Nikolaevna might do something to decide the question; you tell her that she might give some advice.”

“Not a bit of it,” I answered roughly. “You did not deign to listen to what I was saying to you just now, but interrupted me. Natalya Nikolaevna will understand that if you return the money without frankness and without all those blandishments, as you call them, it amounts to your paying the father for the loss of his daughter, and her for the loss of Alyosha — in other words your giving them money compensation….”

“Hm! … so that’s how you understand me, my excellent Ivan Petrovitch,” the prince laughed. Why did he laugh?

“And meanwhile,” he went on, “there are so many, many things we have to talk over together. But now there’s no time. I only beg you to understand one thing: Natalya Nikolaevna and her whole future are involved in the matter, and all this depends to some extent on what we decide. You are indispensable, you’ll see for yourself. So if you are still devoted to Natalya Nikolaevna, you can’t refuse to go frankly into things with me, however little sympathy you may feel for me. But here we are … a bientot.”

CHAPTER IX

THE COUNTESS LIVED in good style. The rooms were furnished comfortably and with taste, though not at all luxuriously. Everything, however, had the special character of a temporary residence, not the permanent established habitation of a wealthy family with all the style of the aristocracy, and all the whims that they take for necessities. There was a rumour that the countess was going in the summer to her ruined and mortgaged property in the province of Simbirsk, and that the prince would accompany her. I had heard this already, and wondered uneasily how Alyosha would behave when Katya went away with the countess, I had not vet spoken of this to Natasha. I was afraid to. But from some signs I had noticed, I fancied that she, too, knew of the rumour. But she was silent and suffered in secret.

The countess gave me an excellent reception, held out her hand to me cordially, and repeated that she had long wished to, make my acquaintance. She made tea herself from a handsome silver samovar, round which we all sat, the prince, and I and another gentleman, elderly and extremely aristocratic wearing a star on his breast, somewhat starchy and diplomatic in his manners. This visitor seemed an object of great respect. The countess had not, since her return from abroad, had time that winter to make a large circle of acquaintances in Petersburg and to establish her position as she had hoped and reckoned upon doing. There was no one besides this gentleman, and no one else came in all the evening. I looked about for Katerina Fyodorovna; she was in the next room with Alyosha, but hearing that we had arrived she came in at once. The prince kissed her hand politely, and the countess motioned her towards me. The prince at once introduced us. I looked at her with impatient attention. She was a short, soft little blonde dressed in a white frock, with a mild and serene expression of face, with eyes of perfect blue, as Alyosha had said, she had the beauty of youth, that was all. I had expected to meet the perfection of beauty, but it was not a case of beauty. The regular, softly outlined oval of the face, the fairly correct features, the thick and really splendid hair, the simple and homely style in which it was arranged, the gentle, attentive expression — all this I should have passed by without paying special attention to it if I had met her elsewhere. But this was only the first impression, and I succeeded in getting

a fuller insight into her in the course of that evening. The very way in which she shook hands with me, standing looking into my face with a sort of naively exaggerated intentness, without saying a word, impressed me by its strangeness, and I could not help smiling at her. It was evident, I felt at once, that I had before me a creature of the purest heart. The countess watched her intently. After shaking hands Katya walked away from me somewhat hurriedly, and sat down at the other end of the room with Alyosha. As he greeted me Alyosha whispered: “I’m only here for a minute. I’m just going there.”

The “diplomat,” I don’t know his name and call him a diplomat simply to call him something, talked calmly and majestically, developing some idea. The countess listened to him attentively. The prince gave him an encouraging and flattering smile. The orator often addressed himself to him, apparently appreciating him as a listener worthy of his attention. They gave me some tea and left me in peace, for which I was very thankful. Meanwhile I was looking at the countess. At first sight she attracted me in spite of myself. Perhaps she was no longer young, but she seemed to me not more than twenty-eight. Her face was still fresh, and in her first youth she must have been very beautiful. Her dark. brown hair was still fairly thick; her expression was extremely kindly, but frivolous, and mischievously mocking. But just now she was evidently keeping herself in check. There was a look of great intelligence, too, in her eyes, but even more of good-nature and gaiety. It seemed to me that her predominant characteristic was a certain levity, an eagerness for enjoyment, and a sort of good-natured egoism; a great deal of egoism, perhaps, She was absolutely guided by the prince, who had an extraordinary influence on her. I knew that they had a liaison; I had heard, too, that he had been anything but a jealous lover while they had been abroad; but I kept fancying, and I think so still, that apart from their former relations there was something else, some rather mysterious tie binding them together, something like a mutual obligation resting upon motives of self-interest…in fact there certainly was something of the sort. I knew, too, that by now the prince was tired of her, and yet their relations had not been broken off. Perhaps what kept them together especially was their design for Katya,, which must have owed its initiative to the prince. By persuading her to help him bring about Alyosha’s marriage with her stepdaughter, the prince had good reasons for getting out of marriage with the countess, which she really had urged upon him. So, at

least, I concluded from facts dropped in all simplicity by Alyosha; even he could not help noticing something. I kept fancying, too, partly from Alyosha's talk, that although the countess was completely under the prince's control he had some reason for being afraid of her. Even Alyosha had noticed this. I learnt afterwards that the prince was very anxious to get the countess married to someone else, and that it was partly with that object he was sending her off to Simbirsk, hoping to pick up a suitable husband for her in the province.

I sat still and listened, not knowing how I could quickly secure a tete-a-tete interview with Katerina Fyodorovna. The diplomat was answering some questions of the countess's about the present political position, about the reforms that were being instituted, and whether they were to be dreaded or not. He said a great deal at great length, calmly, like one having authority. He developed his idea subtly and cleverly, but the idea was a repulsive one. He kept insisting that the whole spirit of reform and improvement would only too soon bring forth certain results, that seeing those results "they would come to their senses," and that not only in society (that is, of course, in a certain part of it) would this spirit of reform pass away, but they would learn their mistake from experience, and then with redoubled energy would return to the old traditions; that the experience, though distressing, would be of great benefit, because it would teach them to maintain that salutary tradition, would give fresh grounds for doing so, and that consequently it was to be hoped that the extreme limit of recklessness would be reached as soon as possible. "They cannot get on without us," he concluded that no society has ever stood its ground without us. We shall lose nothing. On the contrary we stand to win. We shall rise to the surface, and our motto at the moment should be 'pire ca va, mieux ca est!' Prince Valkovsky smiled to him with revolting sympathy. The orator was completely satisfied with himself. I was so stupid as to want to protest; my heart was boiling. But what checked me was the malignant expression of the prince; he stole a glance in my direction, and it seemed to me that he was just expecting some strange and youthful outburst from me. Perhaps he even wanted this in order to enjoy my compromising myself. Meanwhile I felt convinced that the diplomat would not notice my protest, nor perhaps me either. It was revolting for me to sit with them; but Alyosha rescued me.

He came up to me quietly, touched me on the shoulder, and asked to have a few words with me. I guessed he came with a message from Katya.

And so it was. A minute later I was sitting beside her. At first she kept watching me intently as though saying to herself: “So that’s what you’re like,” and for the first minute neither of us could find words to begin our conversation. I felt sure though that when once she began she would be ready to go on without stopping till next morning. The “five or six hours talk” of which Alyosha had spoken came back to my mind. Alyosha sat by us, waiting impatiently for us to begin.

“Why don’t you say something?” he began, looking at us with a smile. “They come together and sit silent.”

“Ach, Alyosha, how can you … we’ll begin directly,” answered Katya. “We have so much to talk over together, Ivan Petrovitch, that I don’t know where to begin. We’ve been late in getting to know one another; we ought to have met long ago, though I’ve known you for ages. And I was very anxious to see you! I was even thinking of writing you a letter… .”

“What about?” I asked, smiling involuntarily.

“Ever so many things,” she answered earnestly. “Why, if only to know whether it’s true what Alyosha says, that Natalya Nikolaevna is not hurt at his leaving her alone at such a time. Can anyone behave as he does? Why are you here now, tell me that, please?”

“Why, good heavens, I’m just going! I just said that I should only be here for a minute, simply to look at you two and see how you talk to one another, and then I’ll be off to Natasha.”

“Well, here we are together, we’re sitting here, do you see? He’s always like that,” she added, flushing a little and pointing her finger at him. “‘One minute,’ he always says, ‘just one minute’ and, mind, he’ll stay on till midnight and then it’s too late to go there. ‘She won’t be angry,’ he says, ‘she’s kind.’ That’s how he looks at it. Is that right? Is that generous?”

“Well, I’ll go if you like,” Alyosha responded plaintively, “but I do want dreadfully to stay with you two….”

“What do you want with us? On the contrary we must talk of lots of things alone. Listen, don’t be cross. It’s necessary — take that in thoroughly.”

“If it’s necessary I’ll be off at once — what is there to be cross at? I’ll just look in for a minute on Levinka, and then go on to her at once. I say, Ivan Petrovitch,” he added, taking up his hat to go, “do you know that my father wants to refuse to take the money he won by his lawsuit with Ichmenyev?”

“I know. He told me.”

“How generous he is in doing that. Katya won’t believe that he’s acting generously. Talk to her about that. Good-bye, Katya, and please don’t doubt that I love Natasha. And why do you both always tie me down like this, scold me, and look after me — as though you had to watch over me? She knows how I love her, and is sure of me, and I’m sure that she’s sure of me. I love her, apart from anything, apart from any obligations. I don’t know how I love her, I simply love her. And so there’s no need to question me as though I were to blame. You can ask Ivan Petrovitch, he’s here now and he will confirm what I say, that Natasha’s jealous, and though she loves me so much there’s a great deal of egoism in her love, for she will never sacrifice anything for me.”

“What’s that?” I asked in amazement, hardly able to believe my ears.

“What are you saying, Alyosha?” Katya almost screamed, clasping her hands.

“Why, what is there so surprising in that? Ivan Petrovitch knows it. She’s always insisting that I should stay with her. Not that she insists, exactly, but one can see that’s what she wants.”

“Aren’t you ashamed? Aren’t you ashamed?” said Katya, turning crimson with anger.

“What is there to be ashamed of? What a person you are, really, Katya! I love her more than she thinks, and if she really loves me as I love her, she certainly would sacrifice her pleasure to me. It’s true she lets me go herself, but I see from her face that she hates doing it, so that it comes to the same thing as if she didn’t let me.”

“Oh, there’s something behind that,” cried Katya, turning to me again with flashing, angry eyes. “Own up, Alyosha, own up at once, it’s your father who has put all that into your head. He’s been talking to you to-day, hasn’t he? And please don’t try and deceive me: I shall find out directly! Is it so or not?”

“Yes, he has been talking,” Alyosha answered in confusion, “what of it? He talked in such a kind and friendly way to-day, and kept praising her to me. I was quite surprised, in fact, that he should praise her like that after she had insulted him so.”

“And you, you believed it?” said I. “You, for whom she has given up everything she could give up! And even now, this very day, all her anxiety was on your account, that you might not be bored, that you might not be

deprived of the possibility of seeing Katerina Fyodorovna. She said that to me to-day herself. And you believe those false insinuations at once. Aren't you ashamed?"

"Ungrateful boy! But that's just it. He's never ashamed of anything," said Katya, dismissing him with a wave of her hand, as though he were lost beyond all hope.

"But really, how you talk!" Alyosha continued in a plaintive voice. "And you're always like that, Katya! You're always suspecting me of something bad…. I don't count, Ivan Petrovitch! You think I don't love Natasha. I didn't mean that when I said she was an egoist. I only meant that she loves me too much, so that it's all out of proportion, and I suffer for it, and she too. And my father never does influence me, though he's tried to. I don't let him. He didn't say she was an egoist in any bad sense; I understood him. He said exactly what I said just now: that she loves me so much, too much, so intensely, that it amounts to simple egoism and that that makes me suffer and her too, and that I shall suffer even more hereafter. He told the truth, and spoke from love of me, and it doesn't at all follow that he meant anything offensive to Natasha; on the contrary, he saw the strength of her love, her immense, almost incredible love…."

But Katya interrupted him and would not let him finish. She began hotly upbraiding him, and maintaining that the prince had only praised Natasha to deceive him by a show of kindness, all in order to destroy their attachment, with the idea of invisibly and imperceptibly turning Alyosha against her. Warmly and cleverly she argued that Natasha loved him, that no love could forgive the way he was treating her, and that he himself, Alyosha, was the real egoist. Little by little Katya reduced him to utter misery and complete penitence. He sat beside us, utterly crushed, staring at the floor with a look of suffering on his face and gave up attempting to answer. But Katya was relentless. I kept looking at her with the greatest interest. I was eager to get to know this strange girl. She was quite a child, but a strange child, a child of convictions, with steadfast principles, and with a passionate, innate love of goodness and justice. If one really might call her a child she belonged to that class of thinking children who are fairly numerous in our Russian families. It was evident that she had pondered on many subjects. It would have been interesting to peep into that little pondering head and to see the mixture there of quite childish images and fancies with serious ideas and notions gained from experience of life (for Katya really had lived), and at

the same time with ideas of which she had no real knowledge or experience, abstract theories she had got out of books, though she probably mistook them for generalizations gained by her own experience. These abstract ideas must have been very numerous. In the course of that evening and subsequently I studied her, I believe, pretty thoroughly; her heart was ardent and receptive. In some cases she, as it were, disdained self-control, putting genuineness before everything, and looking upon every restraint on life as a conventional prejudice. And she seemed to pride herself on that conviction, which is often the case indeed with persons of ardent temperament, even in those who are not very young. But it was just that that gave her a peculiar charm. She was very fond of thinking and getting at the truth of things, but was so far from being pedantic, so full of youthful ways that from the first moment one began to love all these originalities in her, and to accept them. I thought of Levinka and Borinka, and it seemed to me that that was all in the natural order of things. And, strange to say, her face, in which I had seen nothing particularly handsome at first sight, seemed that evening to grow finer and more attractive every minute. This naive combination in her of the child and the thinking woman, this childlike and absolutely genuine thirst for truth and justice, and absolute faith in her impulses — all this lighted up her face with a fine glow of sincerity, giving it a lofty, spiritual beauty, and one began to understand that it was not so easy to gauge the full significance of that beauty which was not all at once apparent to every ordinary unsympathetic eye. And I realized that Alyosha was bound to be passionately attached to her. If he was himself incapable of thought and reasoning he was especially attracted by those who could do his thinking, and even wishing, for him, and Katya had already taken him under her wing. His heart was generous, and it instantly surrendered without a struggle to everything that was fine and honourable. And Katya had spoken openly of many things before him already with sympathy and all the sincerity of a child. He was absolutely without a will of his own. She had a very great deal of strong, insistent, and fervidly concentrated will; and Alyosha would only attach himself to one who could dominate and even command him. It was partly through this that Natasha had attracted him at the beginning of their relations, but Katya had a great advantage over Natasha in the fact that she was still a child herself and seemed likely to remain so for a long time. This childishness, her bright intelligence, and at the same time a certain lack of judgement, all this made her more akin to

Alyosha. He felt this, and so Katya attracted him more and more. I am certain that when they talked alone together, in the midst of Katya's earnest discussion of "propaganda" they sometimes relapsed into childish trivialities. And though Katya probably often lectured Alyosha and already had him under her thumb, he was evidently more at home with her than with Natasha. They were more equals, and that meant a great deal.

"Stop, Katya, stop. That's enough; you always have the best of it, and I'm always wrong, That's because your heart is purer than mine," said Alyosha, getting up and giving her his hand at parting. I'm going straight to her and I won't look in on Levinka…."

"There's nothing for you to do at Levinka's. But you're very sweet to obey and go now."

"And you're a thousand times sweeter than anybody," answered Alyosha sadly. "Ivan Petrovitch, I've a word or two I want to say to you."

We moved a couple of paces away.

"I've behaved shamefully to-day," he whispered to me. "I've behaved vilely, I've sinned against everyone in the world, and these two more than all. After dinner to-day father introduced me to Mlle. Alexandrine (a French girl) — a fascinating creature. I…was carried away and…but what's the good of talking…. I'm unworthy to be with them…. Good-bye, Ivan Petrovitch!"

"He's a kind, noble-hearted boy," Katya began hurriedly, when I had sat down beside her again, "but we'll talk a great deal about him later; first of all we must come to an understanding; what is your opinion of the prince?"

"He's a very horrid man."

"I think so too. So we're agreed about that, and so we shall be able to decide better. Now, of Natalya Nikolaevna…. Do you know, Ivan Petrovitch, I am still, as it were, in the dark; I've been looking forward to you to bring me light. You must make it all clear to me, for about many of the chief points I can judge only by guesswork from what Alyosha tells me. There is no one else from whom I can learn anything. Tell me, in the first place (this is the chief point) what do you think: will Alyosha and Natasha be happy together or not? That's what I must know before everything, that I may make up my mind once for all how I must act."

"How can one tell that with any certainty?"

"No, of course, not with certainty," she interrupted, "but what do you think, for you are a very clever man?"

“I think that they can’t be happy.”

“Why?”

“They’re not suited.”

“That’s just what I thought”

And she clasped her hands as though deeply distressed.

“Tell me more fully. Listen, I’m awfully anxious to see Natasha, for there’s a great deal I must talk over with her, and it seems to me that she and I can settle everything together. I keep picturing her to myself now. She must be very clever, serious, truthful, and beautiful. Isn’t she?”

“Yes.”

“I was sure of it. Well, if she is like that how could she love a baby like Alyosha? Explain that. I often wonder about it.”

“That can’t be explained, Katerina Fyodorovna. It’s difficult to imagine how people can fall in love and what makes them. Yes, he’s a child. But you know how one may love a child.” (My heart melted looking at her and at her eyes fastened upon me intently with profound, earnest and impatient attention.) “And the less Natasha herself is like a child, the more serious she is, the more readily she might fall in love with him. He’s truthful, sincere, awfully naive, and sometimes charmingly naive! Perhaps she fell in love with him — how shall I express it? — as it were from a sort of compassion. A generous heart may love from compassion. I feel though that I can’t give any explanation, but I’ll ask you instead: do you love him?”

I boldly asked her this question and felt that I could not disturb the infinite childlike purity of her candid soul by the abruptness of such a question.

“I really don’t know yet,” she answered me quietly, looking me serenely in the face, “but I think I love him very much….”

“There, you see. And can you explain why you love him?”

“There’s no falsehood in him,” she answered after thinking a moment, “and I like it when he looks into my eyes and says something. Tell me, Ivan Petrovitch, here I’m talking about this to you, I’m a girl and you’re a man, am I doing right in this, or not?”

“Why, what is there in it?”

“Nothing. Of course there’s nothing in it. But they,” she glanced at the group sitting round the samovar, “they would certainly say it was wrong. Are they right or not?”

“No. Why, you don’t feel in your heart you’ve done wrong, so….”

“That’s how I always do,” she broke in, evidently in haste to get in as much talk with me as she could. “When I’m confused about anything I always look into my own heart, and when it’s at ease then I’m at ease. That’s how I must always behave. And I speak as frankly to you as I would speak to myself because for one thing you are a splendid man and I know about your past, with Natasha, before Alyosha’s time, and I cried when I heard about it.”

“Why, who told you?”

“Alyosha, of course, and he had tears in his eyes himself when he told me. That was very nice of him, and I liked him for it. I think he likes you better than you like him, Ivan Petrovitch. It’s in things like that I like him. And another reason why I am so open with you is that you’re a very clever man, and you can give me advice and teach me about a great many things.”

“How do you know that I’m clever enough to teach you?”

“Oh, well, you needn’t ask!”

She grew thoughtful.

“I didn’t mean to talk about that really. Let’s talk of what matters most. Tell me, Ivan Petrovitch; here I feel now that I’m Natasha’s rival, I know I am, how am I to act? That’s why I asked you: would they be happy. I think about it day and night. Natasha’s position is awful, awful! He has quite left off loving her, you know, and he loves me more and more. That is so, isn’t it?”

“It seems so.”

“Yet he is not deceiving her. He doesn’t know that he is ceasing to love her, but no doubt she knows it. How miserable she must be!”

“What do you want to do, Katerina Fyodorovna?”

“I have a great many plans,” she answered seriously, “and meanwhile I’m all in a muddle. That’s why I’ve been so impatient to see you, for you to make it all clear to me. You know all that so much better than I do. You’re a sort of divinity to me now, you know. Listen, this is what I thought at first: if they love one another they must be happy, and so I ought to sacrifice myself and help them — oughtn’t I?”

“I know you did sacrifice yourself.”

“Yes, I did. But afterwards when he began coming to me and caring more and more for me, I began hesitating, and I’m still hesitating whether I ought to sacrifice myself or not. That’s very wrong, isn’t it?”

“That’s natural,” I answered, “that’s bound to be so and it’s not your fault.”

“I think it is. You say that because you are very kind. I think it is because my heart is not quite pure. If I had a pure heart I should know how to behave. But let us leave that. Afterwards I heard more about their attitude to one another, from the prince, from maman, from Alyosha himself, and guessed they were not suited, and now you’ve confirmed it. I hesitated more than ever, and now I’m uncertain what to do. If they’re going to be unhappy, you know, why, they had better part. And so I made up my mind to ask you more fully about it, and to go myself to Natasha, and to settle it all with her.”

“But settle it how? That’s the question.”

“I shall say to her, ‘You love him more than anything, don’t you, and so you must care more for his happiness than your own, and therefore you must part from him.’”

“Yes, but how will she receive that? And even if she agrees with you will she be strong enough to act on it?”

“That’s what I think about day and night, and…and….” And she suddenly burst into tears.

“You don’t know how sorry I am for Natasha,” she whispered, her lips quivering with tears.

There was nothing more to be said. I was silent, and I too felt inclined to cry as I watched her, for no particular reason, from a vague feeling like tenderness. what a charming child she was! I no longer felt it necessary to ask her why she thought she could make Alyosha happy.

“Are you fond of music?” she asked, growing a little calmer, though she was still subdued by her recent tears.

“Yes,” I answered, with some surprise.

“If there were time I’d play you Beethoven’s third concerto. That’s what I’m playing now. All those feelings are in it…just as I feel them now. So it seems to me. But that must be another time, now we must talk.”

We began discussing how she could meet Natasha, and how it was all to be arranged. She told me that they kept a watch on her, and though her stepmother was kind and fond of her, she would never allow her to make friends with Natalya Nikolaevna, and so she had decided to have recourse to deception. She sometimes went a drive in the morning, but almost always with the countess. Sometimes the countess didn’t go with her but sent her

out alone with a French lady, who was ill just now. Sometimes the countess had headaches, and so she would have to wait until she had one. And meanwhile she would over-persuade her Frenchwoman (an old lady who was some sort of companion), for the latter was very good-natured. The upshot of it was that it was impossible to fix beforehand what day she would be able to visit Natasha.

“You won’t regret making Natasha’s acquaintance,” I said. “She is very anxious to know you too, and she must, if only to know to whom she is giving up Alyosha. Don’t worry too much about it all. Time will settle it all, without your troubling You are going into the country, aren’t you?”

“Quite soon. In another month perhaps,” she answered. “And I know the prince is insisting on it.”

“What do you think — will Alyosha go with you?

“I’ve thought about that,” she said, looking intently at me. “He will go, won’t he?”

“Yes, he will.”

“Good heavens, how it will all end I don’t know. I tell you what, Ivan Petrovitch, I’ll write to you about everything, I’ll write to you often, fully. Now I’m going to worry you, too. Will you often come and see us?”

“I don’t know, Katerina Fyodorovna. That depends upon circumstances. Perhaps I may not come at all.”

“Why not?”

“It will depend on several considerations, and chiefly what terms I am on with the prince.”

“He’s a dishonest man,” said Katya with decision. “I tell you what, Ivan Petrovitch, how if I should come to see you? Will that be a good thing, or not?”

“What do you think yourself?”

“I think it would be a good thing. In that way I could bring you news,” she added with a smile. “And I say this because I like you very much as well as respect you. And could learn a great deal from you. And I like you…. And it’s not disgraceful my speaking of it, is it?”

“Why should it be? You’re as dear to me already as on of my own family.”

“Then you want to be my friend?

“Oh yes, yes!” I answered.

“And they would certainly say it was disgraceful and that a young girl ought not to behave like this,” she observed, again indicating the group in conversation at the tea-table.

I may mention here that the prince seemed purposely to leave us alone that we might talk to our heart’s content.

“I know very well,” she added, “that the prince wants my money. They think I’m a perfect baby, and in fact they tell me so openly. But I don’t think so. I’m not a child now. They’re strange people: they’re like children themselves What are they in such a fuss about?”

“Katerina Fyodorovna, I forgot to ask you, who are these Levinka and Borinka whom Alyosha goes to see so often?”

“They’re distant relations. They’re very clever and very honest, but they do a dreadful lot of talking…. I know them….”

And she smiled.

“Is it true that you mean to give them a million later on?

“Oh, well, you see, what if I do? They chatter so much about that million that it’s growing quite unbearable. Of course I shall be delighted to contribute to everything useful; what’s the good of such an immense fortune? But what though I am going to give it some day, they’re already dividing it, discussing it, shouting, disputing what’s the best use to make of it, they even quarrel about it, so that it’s quite queer. They’re in too great a hurry. But they’re honest all the same and clever. They are studying. That’s better than going on as other people do. Isn’t it?”

And we talked a great deal more. She told me almost her whole life, and listened eagerly to what I told her. She kept insisting that I should tell her more about Natasha and Alyosha. It was twelve o’clock when Prince Valkovsky came and let me know it was time to take leave. I said good-bye. Katya pressed my hand warmly and looked at me expressively. The countess asked me to come again; the prince and I went out.

I cannot refrain from one strange and perhaps quite inappropriate remark. From my three hours’ conversation with Katya I carried away among other impressions the strange but positive conviction that she was still such a child that she had no idea of the inner significance of the relations of the sexes. This gave an extraordinarily comic flavour to some of her reflections, and in general to the serious tone in which she talked of many very important matters.

CHAPTER X

“I TELL YOU WHAT,” said Prince Valkovsky, as he seated himself beside me in the carriage, “what if we were to go to supper now, hein? What do you say to that?”

“I don’t know, prince,” I answered, hesitating, “I never eat supper.”

“Well, of course, we’ll have a talk, too, over supper,” he added, looking intently and slyly into my face. There was no misunderstanding! “He means to speak out,” I thought; “and that’s just what I want.” I agreed.

“That’s settled, then. To B.’s, in Great Morskaya.”

“A restaurant?” I asked with some hesitation.

“Yes, why not? I don’t often have supper at home. Surely you won’t refuse to be my guest?”

“But I’ve told you already that I never take supper.”

“But once in a way doesn’t matter; especially as I’m inviting you….”

Which meant he would pay for me. I am certain that he added that intentionally. I allowed myself to be taken, but made up my mind to pay for myself in the restaurant. We arrived. The prince engaged a private room, and with the taste of a connoisseur selected two or three dishes. They were expensive and so was the bottle of delicate wine which he ordered. All this was beyond my means. I looked at the bill of fare and ordered half a woodcock and a glass of Lafitte. The prince looked at this.

“You won’t sup with me! Why, this is positively ridiculous! Pardon, mon ami, but this is … revolting punctiliousness. It’s the paltriest vanity. There’s almost a suspicion of class feeling about this. I don’t mind betting that’s it. I assure you you’re offending me.”

But I stuck to my point.

“But, as you like,” he added. “I won’t insist…. Tell me, Ivan Petrovitch, may I speak to you as a friend?”

“I beg you to do so.”

“Well, then, to my thinking such punctiliousness stands in your way. All you people stand in your own light in that way. You are a literary man; you ought to know the world, and you hold yourself aloof from everything. I’m not talking of your woodcock now, but you are ready to refuse to associate with our circle altogether, and that’s against your interests. Apart from the

fact that you lose a great deal, a career, in fact, if only that you ought to know what you're describing, and in novels we have counts and princes and boudoirs…. But what am I saying! Poverty is all the fashion with you now, lost coats,* inspectors, quarrelsome officers, clerks, old times, dissenters, I know, I know…."

"But you are mistaken, prince. If I don't want to get into your so-called 'higher circle,' it's because in the first place it's boring, and in the second I've nothing to do there; though, after all, I do sometimes…."

"I know; at Prince R.'s, once a year. I've met you there. But for the rest of the year you stagnate in your democratic pride, and languish in your garrets, though not all of you behave like that. Some of them are such adventurers that they sicken me…."

"I beg you, prince, to change the subject and not to return to our garrets."

"Dear me, now you're offended. But you know you gave me permission to speak to you as a friend. But it's my fault; I have done nothing to merit your friendship. The wine's very decent. Try it."

He poured me out half a glass from his bottle.

"You see, my dear Ivan Petrovitch, I quite understand that to force one's friendship upon anyone is bad manners. We're not all rude and insolent with you as you imagine. I quite understand that you are not sitting here from affection for me, but simply because I promised to talk to you. That's so, isn't it?"

He laughed.

"And as you're watching over the interests of a certain person you want to hear what I am going to say. That's it, isn't it?" he added with a malicious smile.

*The reference is to Gogol's story "The Lost Coat." — Translator's note.

"You are not mistaken," I broke in impatiently. (I saw that he was one of those men who if anyone is ever so little in their power cannot resist making him feel it. I was in his power. I could not get away without hearing what he intended to say, and he knew that very well. His tone suddenly changed and became more and more insolently familiar and sneering.) "You're not mistaken, prince, that's just what I've come for, otherwise I should not be sitting here…so late."

I had wanted to say "I would not on any account have been supping with you," but I didn't say this, and finished my phrase differently, not from timidity, but from my cursed weakness and delicacy. And really, how can

one be rude to a man to his face, even if he deserves it, and even though one may wish to be rude to him? I fancied the prince detected this from my eyes, and looked at me ironically as I finished my sentence, as though enjoying my faintheartedness, and as it were challenging me with his eyes: “So you don’t dare to be rude; that’s it, my boy!” This must have been so, for as I finished he chuckled, and with patronizing friendliness slapped me on the knee.

“You’re amusing, my boy!” was what I read in his eyes.

“Wait a bit!” I thought to myself.

“I feel very lively to-night!” said he,” and I really don’t know why. Yes, yes, my boy! It was just that young person I wanted to talk to you about. We must speak quite frankly; talk till we reach some conclusion, and I hope that this time you will thoroughly understand me. I talked to you just now about that money and that old fogey of a father, that babe of sixteen summers…. Well! It’s not worth mentioning it now. That was only talk, you know! Ha-ha-ha! You’re a literary man, you ought to have guessed that.”

I looked at him with amazement, I don’t think he was drunk.

“As for that girl, I respect her, I assure you; I like her in fact. She’s a little capricious but ‘there’s no rose without thorn,’ as they used to say fifty years ago, and it was well said too: thorns prick. But that’s alluring and though my Alexey’s a fool, I’ve forgiven him to some extent already for his good taste. In short, I like such young ladies, and I have” (and he compressed his lips with immense significance) “views of my own, in fact…. But of that later….”

“Prince! Listen, prince! “ I cried. “I don’t understand your quick change of front but … change the subject, if you please.”

“You’re getting hot again! Very good…. I’ll change it, I’ll change it! But I’ll tell you what I want to ask you, my good friend: have you a very great respect for her?”

“Of course,” I answered, with gruff impatience.

“Ah, indeed. And do you love her?” he continued, grinning revoltingly and screwing up his eyes.

“You are forgetting yourself!” I cried.

“There, there, I won’t! Don’t put yourself out! I’m in wonderful spirits to-day. I haven’t felt so gay for a long time. Shall we have some champagne? What do you say, my poet?

“I won’t have any. I don’t want it.”

“You don’t say so! You really must keep me company to-day. I feel so jolly, and as I’m soft-hearted to sentimentality I can’t bear to be happy alone. Who knows, we may come to drinking to our eternal friendship. Ha-ha-ha! No, my young friend, you don’t know me yet! I’m certain you’ll grow to love me. I want you this evening to share my grief and my joy, my tears and my laughter, though I hope that I at least may not shed any. Come, what do you say, Ivan Petrovitch? You see, you must consider that if I don’t get what I want, all my inspiration may pass, be wasted and take wing and you’ll hear nothing. And you know you’re only sitting here in the hope of hearing something. Aren’t you?” he added, winking at me insolently again. “So make your choice.”

The threat was a serious one. I consented. “Surely he doesn’t want to make me drunk?” I thought. This is the place, by the way, to mention a rumour about the prince which had reached me long before. It was said that though he was so elegant and decorous in society he sometimes was fond of getting drunk at night, of drinking like a fish, of secret debauchery, of loathsome and mysterious vices…. I had heard awful rumours about him. It was said that Alyosha knew his father sometimes drank, and tried to conceal the fact from everyone, especially from Natasha. Once he let something slip before me, but immediately changed the subject and would not answer my questions. I had not heard it from him, however, and I must admit I had not believed it. Now I waited to see what was coming.

The champagne was brought; the prince poured out a glass for himself and another for me.

“A sweet, sweet girl, though she did scold me,” he went on, sipping his wine with relish, “but these sweet creatures are particularly sweet just at those moments…. And, you know, she thought no doubt she had covered me with shame; do you remember that evening when she crushed me to atoms? Ha-ha-ha! And how a blush suits her! Are you a connoisseur in women? Sometimes a sudden flush is wonderfully becoming to a pale cheek. Have you noticed that? Oh dear, I believe

you’re angry again!”

“Yes, I am angry!” I cried, unable to restrain myself. “And I won’t have you speak of Natalya Nikolaevna…that is, speak in that tone…I…I won’t allow you to do it!”

“Oho! Well, as you like, I’ll humour you and change the conversation. I am as yielding and soft as dough. Let’s talk of you. I like you, Ivan

Petrovitch. If only you knew what a friendly, what a sincere interest I take in you."

"Prince, wouldn't it be better to keep to the point?" I interrupted.

"You mean talk of our affair. I understand you with half a word, mon ami, but you don't know how closely we are touching on the point if we speak of you and you don't interrupt me of course. And so I'll go on. I wanted to tell you, my priceless Ivan Petrovitch, that to live as you're living is simply self-destruction, Allow me to touch on this delicate subject; I speak as a friend. You are poor, you ask your publisher for money in advance, you pay your trivial debts, with what's left you live for six months on tea, and shiver in your garret while you wait for your novel to be written for your publisher's magazine. That's so, isn't it?

"If it is so, anyway it's…."

"More creditable than stealing, cringing, taking bribes, intriguing and so on, and so on. I know, I know what you want to say, all that's been printed long ago."

"And so there's no need for you to talk about my affairs. Surely, prince, I needn't give you a lesson in delicacy!"

"Well, certainly you needn't. But what's to be done if it's just that delicate chord we must touch upon? There's no avoiding it. But there, let's leave garrets alone. I'm by no means fond of them, except in certain cases," he added with a loathsome laugh. "But what surprises me is that you should be so set on playing a secondary part. Certainly one of you authors, I remember, said somewhere that the greatest achievement is for a man to know how to restrict himself to a secondary role in life… . I believe it's something of that sort. I've heard talk of that somewhere too, but you know Alyosha has carried off your fiancee. I know that, and you, like some Schiller, are ready to go to the stake for them, you're waiting upon them, and almost at their beck and call…. You must excuse me, my dear fellow, but it's rather a sickening show of noble feeling. I should have thought you must be sick of it! It's really shameful! I believe I should die of vexation in your place, and worst of all the shame of it, the shame of it!"

"Prince, you seem to have brought me here on purpose to insult me!" I cried, beside myself with anger.

"Oh no, my dear boy, not at all. At this moment I am simply a matter-of-fact person, and wish for nothing but your happiness. In fact I want to put everything right. But let's lay all that aside for a moment; you hear me to

the end, try not to lose your temper if only for two minutes. Come, what do you think, how would it be for you to get married? You see, I'm talking of quite extraneous matters now. Why do you look at me in such astonishment?"

"I'm waiting for you to finish," I said, staring at him indeed with astonishment.

"But there's no need to enlarge. I simply wanted to know what you'd say if any one of your friends, anxious to secure your genuine permanent welfare, not a mere ephemeral happiness, were to offer you a girl, Young and pretty, but … of some little experience; I speak allegorically but you'll understand, after the style of Natalya Nikolaevna, say, of course with a suitable compensation (observe I am speaking of an irrelevant case, not of our affair); well, what would you say?"

"I say you're…mad."

"Ha-ha-ha! Bah! Why, you're almost ready to beat me!"

I really was ready to fall upon him. I could not have restrained myself longer. He produced on me the impression of some sort of reptile, some huge spider, which I felt an intense desire to crush. He was enjoying his taunts at me. He was playing with me like a cat with a mouse, supposing that I was altogether in his power. It seemed to me (and I understood it) that he took a certain pleasure, found a certain sensual gratification in the shamelessness, in the insolence, in the cynicism with which at last he threw off his mask before me. He wanted to enjoy my surprise, my horror. He had a genuine contempt for me and was laughing at me.

I had a foreboding from the very beginning that this was all premeditated, and that there was some motive behind it, but I was in such a position that whatever happened I was bound to listen to him. It was in Natasha's interests and I was obliged to make up my mind to everything and endure it, for perhaps the whole affair was being settled at that moment. But how could I listen to his base, cynical jeers at her expense, how could I endure this coolly! And, to make things worse, he quite realized that I could not avoid listening to him, and that redoubled the offensiveness of it. Yet he is in need of me himself, I reflected, and I began answering him abruptly and rudely. He understood it.

"Look here, my young friend," he began, looking at me seriously, "we can't go on like this, you and I, and so we'd better come to an understanding. I have been intending, you see, to speak openly to you about

something, and you are bound to be so obliging as to listen, whatever I may say. I want to speak as I choose and as I prefer; yes, in the present case that's necessary. So how is it to be, my young friend, will you be so obliging?"

I controlled myself and was silent, although he was looking at me with such biting mockery, as though he were challenging me to the most outspoken protest. But he realized that I had already agreed not to go, and he went on,

"Don't be angry with me, my friend! You are angry at something, aren't you? Merely at something external, isn't it? Why, you expected nothing else of me in substance, however I might have spoken to you, with perfumed courtesy, or as now; so the drift would have been the same in any case. You despise me, don't you? You see how much charming simplicity there is in me, what candour, what bonhomie! I confess everything to you, even my childish caprices. Yes, mon cher, yes, a little more bonhomie on your side too, and we should agree and get on famously, and understand one another perfectly in the end. Don't wonder at me. I am so sick of all this innocence, all these pastoral idyllics of Alyosha's, all this Schillerism, all the loftiness of this damnable intrigue with this Natasha (not that she's not a very taking little girl) that I am, so to speak, glad of an opportunity to have my fling at them. Well, the opportunity has come. Besides, I am longing to pour out my heart to you. Ha! ha! ha!"

"You surprise me, prince, and I hardly recognize you. You are sinking to the level of a Polichinello. These unexpected revelations…."

"Ha! ha! ha! to be sure that's partly true! A charming comparison, ha-ha-ha! I'm out for a spree, my boy, I'm out for a spree! I'm enjoying myself! And you, my poet, must show me every possible indulgence. But we'd better drink," he concluded filling up his glass, perfectly satisfied with himself. "I tell you what, my boy, that stupid evening at Natasha's, do you remember, was enough to finish me off completely. It's true she was very charming in herself, but I came away feeling horribly angry, and I don't want to forget it. Neither to forget it nor to conceal it. Of course our time will come too, and it's coming quickly indeed, but we'll leave that for now. And among other things, I wanted to explain to you that I have one peculiarity of which you don't know yet, that is my hatred for all these vulgar and worthless naivities and idyllic nonsense; and one of the enjoyments I relish most has always been putting on that style myself,

falling in with that tone, making much of some ever-young Schiller, and egging him on, and then, suddenly, all at once, crushing him at one blow, suddenly taking off my mask before him, and suddenly distorting my ecstatic countenance into a grimace, putting out my tongue at him when he is least of all expecting such a surprise. What? You don't understand that, you think it nasty, stupid, undignified perhaps, is that it?"

"Of course it is."

"You are candid. I dare say, but what am I to do if they plague me? I'm stupidly candid too, but such is my character. But I want to tell you some characteristic incidents in my life. It will make you understand me better, and it will be very interesting. Yes, I really am, perhaps, like a Polichinello today, but a Polichinello is candid, isn't he?"

"Listen, prince, it's late now, and really…."

"What? Good heavens, what impatience! Besides what's the hurry? You think I'm drunk. Never mind. So much the better. Ha-ha-ha! These friendly interviews are always remembered so long afterwards, you know, one recalls them with such enjoyment. You're not a good-natured man, Ivan Petrovitch. There's no sentimentality, no feeling about you. What is a paltry hour or two to you for the sake of a friend like me? Besides, it has a bearing on a certain affair…. Of course you must realize that, and you a literary man too; yes, you ought to bless the chance. You might create a type from me, ha-haha! My word, how sweetly candid I am to-day!"

He was evidently drunk. His face changed and began to assume a spiteful expression. He was obviously longing to wound, to sting, to bite, to jeer. "In a way it's better he's drunk," I thought, "men always let things out when they're drunk." But he knew what he was about.

"My young friend," he began, unmistakably enjoying himself, "I made you a confession just now, perhaps an inappropriate one, that I sometimes have an irresistible desire to put out my tongue at people in certain cases. For this naive and simple-hearted frankness you compare me to Polichinello, which really amuses me. But if you wonder or reproach me for being rude to you now, and perhaps as unmannerly as a peasant, with having changed my tone to you in fact, in that case you are quite unjust. In the first place it happens to suit me, and secondly I am not at home, but out with you…by which I mean we're out for a spree together like good friends, and thirdly I'm awfully given to acting on my fancies. Do you know that once I had a fancy to become a metaphysician and a philanthropist, and

came round almost to the same ideas as you? But that was ages ago, in the golden days of my youth. I remember at that time going to my home in the country with humane intentions, and was, of course, bored to extinction. And you wouldn't believe what happened to me then. In my boredom I began to make the acquaintance of some pretty little girls…. What, you're not making faces already? Oh, my young friend! Why, we're talking as friends now! One must sometimes enjoy oneself, one must sometimes let oneself go! I have the Russian temperament, you know, a genuine Russian temperament, I'm a patriot, I love to throw off everything; besides one must snatch the moment to enjoy life.. We shall die — and what comes then! Well, so I took to dangling after the girls. I remember one little shepherdess had a husband, a handsome lad he was. I gave him a sound thrashing and meant to send him for a soldier (past pranks, my poet), but I didn't send him for a soldier. He died in my hospital. I had a hospital in the village, with twelve beds, splendidly fitted up; such cleanliness, parquet floors. I abolished it long ago though, but at that time I was proud of it: I was a philanthropist. Well, I nearly flogged the peasant to death on his wife's account…. Why are you making faces again? It disgusts you to hear about it? It revolts your noble feelings? There, there, don't upset yourself! All that's a thing of the past. I did that when I was in my romantic stage. I wanted to be a benefactor of humanity, to found a philanthropic society… . That was the groove I was in at that time. And then it was I went in for thrashing. Now I never do it; now one has to grimace about it; now we all grimace about it — such are the times…. But what amuses me most of all now is that fool Ichmenyev. I'm convinced that he knew all about that episode with the peasant…and what do you think? In the goodness of his heart, which is made, I do believe, of treacle, and because he was in love with me at that time, and was cracking me up to himself, he made up his mind not to believe a word of it, and he didn't believe a word of it; that is, he refused to believe in the fact and for twelve years he stood firm as a rock for me, till he was touched himself. Ha-ha-ha! But all that's nonsense! Let us drink, my young friend. Listen: are you fond of women?"

I made no answer. I only listened to him. He was already beginning the second bottle.

"Well, I'm fond of talking about them over supper. I could introduce you after supper to a Mlle. Philiberte I know. Hein? What do you say? But what's the matter? You won't even look at me…hm!"

He seemed to ponder. But he suddenly raised his head, glanced at me as it were significantly, and went on: “I tell you what, my poet, I want to reveal to you a mystery of nature of which it seems to me you are not in the least aware, I’m certain that you’re calling me at this moment a sinner, perhaps even a scoundrel, a monster of vice and corruption. But I can tell you this. If it were only possible (which, however, from the laws of human nature never can be possible), if it were possible for every one of us to describe all his secret thoughts, without hesitating to disclose what he is afraid to tell and would not on any account tell other people, what he is afraid to tell his best friends, what, indeed, he is even at times afraid to confess to himself, the world would be filled with such a stench that we should all be suffocated. That’s why, I may observe in parenthesis, our social proprieties and conventions are so good. They have a profound value, I won’t say for morality, but simply for self-preservation, for comfort, which, of course, is even more, since morality is really that same comfort, that is, it’s invented simply for the sake of comfort. But we’ll talk of the proprieties later; I’m wandering from the point, remind me later. I will conclude by saying: you charge me with vice, corruption, immorality, but perhaps I’m only to blame for being more open than other people, that’s all; for not concealing what other people hide even from themselves, as I said before.… It’s horrid of me but it’s what I want to do just now. But don’t be uneasy,” he added with an ironical smile, “I said ‘to blame’ but I’m not asking forgiveness. Note this too: I’m not putting you to the blush. I’m not asking you whether you haven’t yourself some such secrets, in order to justify myself. I am behaving quite nicely and honourably. I always behave like a gentleman….”

“This is simply silly talk,” I said, looking at him with contempt.

“Silly talk! Ha-ha-ha! But shall I tell you what you’re thinking? You’re wondering why I brought you here, and am suddenly, without rhyme or reason, beginning to be so open with you. Isn’t that it?”

“Yes.”

“Well, that you will find out later.”

“The simplest explanation is that you’ve drunk two bottles and … are not sober.”

“You mean I’m simply drunk. That maybe, too. ‘Not sober!’ That’s a milder way of putting it than drunk. Oh, youth, brimming over with delicacy! But … we seem to have begun abusing one another again, and we

were talking of something so interesting. Yes, my poet, if there is anything sweet and pretty left in the world it's women."

"Do you know, prince, I still can't understand why you have selected me as a confidant of your secrets and your amorous propensities."

"Hm! But I told you that you'd learn that later on, Don't excite yourself; but what if I've no reason; you're a poet, you'll understand me, but I've told you that already. There's a peculiar gratification in suddenly removing the mask, in the cynicism with which a man suddenly exposes himself before another without even deigning to consider decency in his presence. I'll tell you an anecdote. There was a crazy official in Paris, who was afterwards put into a madhouse when it was realized that he was mad. Well, when he went out of his mind this is what he thought of to amuse himself. He undressed at home, altogether, like Adam, only keeping on his shoes and socks, put on an ample cloak that came down to his heels, wrapped himself round in it, and with a grave and majestic air went out into the street. Well, if he's looked at sideways — he's a man like anyone else, going for a walk in a long cloak to please himself. But whenever he met anyone in a lonely place where there was no one else about, he walked up to him in silence, and with the most serious and profoundly thoughtful air suddenly stopped before him, threw open his cloak and displayed himself in all the…purity of his heart! That used to last for a minute, then he would wrap himself up again, and in silence, without moving a muscle of his face, he would stalk by the petrified spectator, as grave and majestic as the ghost in Hamlet. That was how he used to behave with everyone, men, women, and children, and that was his only pleasure. Well, some degree of the same pleasure may be experienced when one flabbergasts some romantic Schiller, by putting out one's tongue at him when he least expects it. Flabbergast — what a word! I met it somewhere in one of you modern writers!"

"Well, that was a madman, but you…."

"I'm in my right mind?"

"Yes."

Prince Valkovsky chuckled.

"You're right there, my boy!" he added, with a most insolent expression of face.

"Prince," I said, angered by his insolence, "you hate us all, including me, and you're revenging yourself on me for everyone and everything. It all comes from your petty vanity. You're spiteful, and petty in your spite. We

have enraged you, and perhaps what you are most angry about is that evening. Of course, there's no way in which you could pay me out more effectually than by this absolute contempt. You throw off the most ordinary, universally obligatory civility which we all owe to one another. You want to show me clearly that you don't even deign to consider decency before me, so openly and unexpectedly throwing off your filthy mask before me, and exhibiting yourself in such moral cynicism …"

"Why are you saying all this to me?" he asked, looking rudely and maliciously at me. "To show your insight?"

"To show that I understand you, and to put it plainly before you."

"Quelle idle, mon cher," he went on, changing his note and suddenly reverting to his former light-hearted, chatty and good-humoured tone. "You are simply turning me from my subject. Buvons, mon ami, allow me to fill your glass. I only wanted to tell you about a charming and most curious adventure. I will tell it you in outline. I used at one time to know a lady; she was not in her first youth, but about twenty-seven or twenty-eight. She was a beauty of the first rank. What a bust, what a figure, what a carriage! Her eyes were as keen as an eagle's, but always stem and forbidding; her manner was majestic and unapproachable. She was reputed to be as cold as the driven snow, and frightened everyone by her immaculate, her menacing virtue. Menacing's the word. There was no one in the whole neighbourhood so harsh in judgement as she. She punished not only vice, but the faintest weakness in other women, and punished it inflexibly, relentlessly. She had great influence in her circle. The proudest and most terribly virtuous old women respected her and even made up to her. She looked upon everyone with impartial severity, like the abbess of a mediaeval convent. Young women trembled before her glances and her criticism. A single remark, a single hint, from her was able to ruin a reputation, so great was her influence in society; even men were afraid of her. Finally she threw herself into a sort of contemplative mysticism of the same calm dignified character…. And, would you believe? You couldn't have found a sinner more profligate than she was, and I was so happy as to gain her complete confidence. I was, in fact, her secret and mysterious lover. Our meetings were contrived in such a clever, masterly fashion that none even of her own household could have the slightest suspicion of them. Only her maid, a very charming French girl, was initiated into all her secrets, but one could rely on that girl absolutely. She had her share in the proceedings — in what

way? — I won’t enter into that now. My lady’s sensuality was such that even the Marquis de Sade might have taken lessons from her. But the intensest, the most poignant thrill in this sensuality was its secrecy, the audacity of the deception. This jeering at everything which in public the countess preached as being lofty, transcendent and inviolable, this diabolic inward chuckle, in fact, and conscious trampling on everything held sacred, and all this unbridled and carried to the utmost pitch of licentiousness such as even the warmest imagination could scarcely conceive — in that, above all, lay the keenness of the gratification. Yes, she was the devil incarnate, but it was a devil supremely fascinating. I can’t think of her now without ecstasy. In the very heat of voluptuousness she would suddenly laugh like one possessed, and I understood it thoroughly, I understood that laughter and laughed too. It makes me sigh now when I think of it, though it’s long ago now. She threw me over in a year. If I had wanted to injure her I couldn’t have. Who would have believed me? A character like hers. What do you say, my young friend?”

“Foo, how disgusting!” I answered, listening to this avowal with repulsion.

“You wouldn’t be my young friend if your answer were different. I knew you’d say that. Ha-ha-ha! Wait a bit, mon ami, live longer and you’ll understand, but now, now you still need gilt on your gingerbread. No, you’re not a poet if that’s what you say. That woman understood life and knew how to make the most of it.”

“But why descend to such beastliness?”

“What beastliness?”

“To which that woman descended, and you with her.”

“Ah, you call that beastliness — a sign that you are still in bonds and leading-strings. Of course, I recognize that independence may be shown in quite an opposite direction. Let’s talk more straightforwardly, my friend…. you must admit yourself that all that’s nonsense.”

“What isn’t nonsense?”

“What isn’t nonsense is personality — myself. All is for me, the whole world is created for me. Listen, my friend, I still believe that it’s possible to live happily on earth. And that’s the best faith, for without it one can’t even live unhappily: there’s nothing left but to poison oneself. They say that this was what some fool did. He philosophised till he destroyed everything, everything, even the obligation of all normal and natural human duties, till

at last he had nothing left. The sum total came to nil, and so he declared that the best thing in life was prussic acid. You say that's Hamlet. That's terrible despair in fact, something so grand that we could never dream of it. But you're a poet, and I'm a simple mortal, and so I say one must look at the thing from the simplest, most practical point of view. I, for instance, have long since freed myself from all shackles, and even obligations. I only recognize obligations when I see I have something to gain by them. You, of course, can't look at things like that, your legs are in fetters, and your taste is morbid. You talk of the ideal, of virtue. Well, my dear fellow, I am ready to admit anything you tell me to, but what am I to do if I know for a fact that at the root of all human virtues lies the completest egoism? And the more virtuous anything is, the more egoism there is in it. Love yourself, that's the one rule I recognize. Life is a commercial transaction, don't waste your money, but kindly pay for your entertainment, and you will be doing your whole duty to your neighbour. Those are my morals, if you really want to know them, though I confess that to my thinking it is better not to pay one's neighbour, but to succeed in making him do things for nothing. I have no ideals and I don't want to have them; I've never felt a yearning for them. One can live such a gay and charming life without ideals…and, en somme, I'm very glad that I can get on without prussic acid. If I were a little more virtuous I could not perhaps get on without it, like that fool philosopher (no doubt a German). No! There's still so much that's good left in life! I love consequence, rank, a mansion, a huge stake at cards (I'm awfully fond of cards). But best of all, best of all — woman…and woman in all her aspects: I'm even fond of secret, hidden vice, a bit more strange and original, even a little filthy for variety, ha-ha-ha! I'm looking at your face: with what contempt you are looking at me now!"

"You are right," I answered.

"Well, supposing you are right, anyway filth is better than prussic acid, isn't it?"

"No. Prussic acid is better."

"I asked you 'isn't it' on purpose to enjoy your answer knew what you'd say. No, my young friend. If you're a genuine lover of humanity, wish all sensible men the same taste as mine, even with a little filth, or sensible men will soon have nothing to do in the world and there'll be none but the fools left. It will be good luck for them. Though, indeed, there's a proverb even now that fools are lucky. And do you know there's nothing pleasanter than

to live with fools and to back them up; it pays! You needn't wonder at my valuing convention, keeping up certain traditions, struggling for influence; I see, of course, that I'm living in a worthless world; but meanwhile it's snug there and I back it up, and show I stand firm for it. Though I'd be the first to leave it if occasion arose. I know all your modern ideas, though I've never worried about them, and had no reason to. I've never had any conscience-pricks about anything. I'll agree to anything so long as I'm all right, and there are legions like me, and we really are all right. Everything in the world may perish, but we shall not perish. We shall exist as long as the world exists. All the world may sink, but we shall float, we shall always float to the top. Consider, by the way, one thing: how full of life people like us are. We are pre-eminently, phenomenally tenacious of life; has that ever struck you? We live to be eighty, ninety. So nature itself protects us, he-he-he! I particularly want to live to be ninety. I'm not fond of death, and I'm afraid of it. The devil only knows what dying will be like. But why talk of it? It's that philosopher who poisoned himself that has put me on that track. Damn philosophy! Buvons, mon cher. We began talking about pretty girls… Where are you off to?"

"I'm going home, and it's time for you to go."

"Nonsense, nonsense! I've, so to speak, opened my whole heart to you, and you don't seem to feel what a great proof of friendship it is. He-he-he! There's not much love in you, my poet. But wait a minute, I want another bottle …"

"A third?"

"Yes, As for virtue, my young hopeful (you will allow me to call you by that sweet name), who knows, maybe my precepts may come in useful one day. And so, my young hopeful, about virtue I have said already: the more virtuous virtue is, the more egoism there is in it. I should like to tell you a very pretty story apropos of that. I once loved a young girl, and loved her almost genuinely. She even sacrificed a great deal for me."

"Is that the one you robbed?" I asked rudely, unwilling to restrain myself longer.

Prince Valkovsky started, his face changed, and he fixed his bloodshot eyes on me. There was amazement and fury in them.

"Wait a minute, wait a minute," he said as though to himself, "let me consider, I really am drunk, and it's difficult for me to reflect."

He paused, and looked searchingly, with the same spitefulness, at me, holding my hand in his as though afraid I should go away. I am convinced that at that moment he was going over things in his mind, trying to discover where I could have heard of this affair which scarcely anyone knew; and whether there were any danger in my knowing of it. This lasted for a minute; but suddenly his face changed quickly. The same mocking, drunken, good-humoured expression appeared in his eyes. He laughed.

"Ha-ha-ha! You're a Talleyrand, there's no other word for you. Why, I really stood before her dumbfounded when she sprang it upon me that I had robbed her! How she shrieked then, how she scolded! She was a violent woman and with no self-control. But, judge for yourself: in the first place I hadn't robbed her as you expressed it just now. She gave me her money herself, and it was mine. Suppose you were to give me your best dress-coat" (as he said this he looked at my only and rather unshapely dress-coat which had been made for me three years ago by a tailor called Ivan Skornyagin), "that I thanked you and wore it and suddenly a year later you quarrel with me and ask for it back again when I've worn it out…. That would be ungentlemanly; why give it at all? And, secondly, though the money was mine I should certainly have returned it, but think: where could I have got hold of such a sum all at once? And, above all, I can't endure all this Schillerism and idyllic nonsense: I've told you so already — and that was at the back of it all. You can't imagine how she posed for my benefit, protesting that she would give me the money (which was mine already). I got angry at last and I suddenly succeeded in judging the position quite correctly, for I never lose my presence of mind; I reflected that by giving her back the money I should perhaps make her unhappy. I should have deprived her of the enjoyment of being miserable entirely owing to me, and of cursing me for it all her life. Believe me, my young friend, there is positively a lofty ecstasy in unhappiness of that kind, in feeling oneself magnanimous and absolutely in the right, and in having every right to call one's opponent a scoundrel. This ecstasy of spite is often to be met with in these Schilleresque people, of course; afterwards perhaps she may have had nothing to cat, but I am convinced that she was happy. I did not want to deprive her of that happiness and I did not send her back the money. And this fully justified my maxim that the louder and more conspicuous a person's magnanimity, the greater the amount of revolting egoism

underlying it… Surely that's clear to you… But … you wanted to catch me, ha-ha-ha! … Come, confess you were trying to catch me…. Oh, Talleyrand!

"Good-bye," I slid, getting up.

"One minute! Two words in conclusion!" he shouted, suddenly dropping his disgusting tone and speaking seriously. "Listen to my last words: from all I have said to you it follows clearly and unmistakably (I imagine you have observed it yourself) that I will never give up what's to my advantage for anyone. I'm fond of money and I need it. Katerina Fyodorovna has plenty. Her father held a contract for the vodka tax for ten years. She has three millions and those three millions would be very useful to me. Alyosha and Katya are a perfect match for one another; they are both utter fools; and that just suits me. And, therefore, I desire and intend their marriage to take place as soon as possible. In a fortnight or three weeks the countess and Katya are going to the country. Alyosha must escort them. Warn Natalya Nikolaevna that there had better be no idyllic nonsense, no Schillerism, that they had better not oppose me. I'm revengeful and malicious; I shall stand up for myself. I'm not afraid of her. Everything will no doubt be as I wish it, and therefore if I warn her now it is really more for her sake. Mind there's no silliness, and that she behaves herself sensibly. Otherwise it will be a bad look-out for her, very. She ought to be grateful to me that I haven't treated her as I ought to have done, by law. Let me tell you, my poet, that the law protects the peace of the family, it guaranteed a son's obedience to his father, and that those who seduce children from their most sacred duties to their parents are not encouraged by the laws. Remember, too, that I have connexions, that she has none, and … surely you must realize what I might do to her…. But I have not done it, for so far she has behaved reasonably. Don't be uneasy. Every moment for the last six months, every action they have taken has been watched by sharp eyes. And I have known everything to the smallest trifle. And so I have waited quietly for Alyosha to drop her of himself, and that process is beginning and meanwhile it has been a charming distraction for him. I have remained a humane father in his imagination, and I must have him think of me like that. Ha-ha-ha! When I remember that I was almost paying her compliments the other evening for having been so magnanimous and disinterested as not to marry him! I should like to know how she could have married him. As for my visit to her then, all that was simply because the time had come to put an end to the connexion. But I wanted to verify everything with my own eyes, my own

experience. Well, is that enough for you? Or perhaps you want to know too why I brought you here, why I have carried on like this before you, why I have been so simple and frank with you, when all this might have been said without any such frank avowals — yes?"

"Yes."

I controlled myself and listened eagerly. I had no need to answer more.

"Solely, my young friend, that I have noticed in you more common sense and clear-sightedness about things than in either of our young fools. You might have known before the sort of man I am, have made surmises and conjectures about me, but I wanted to save you the trouble, and resolved to show you face to face who it is you hare to deal with. A first-hand impression is a great thing. Understand me, mon ami: you know whom you have to deal with, you love her, and so I hope now that you will use all your influence (and you have an influence over her) to save her from certain* unpleasantness. Otherwise there will be such unpleasantness, and I assure you, I assure you it will be no joking matter. Finally, the third reason for my openness with you … (but of course you've guessed that, my dear boy) yes, I really did want to spit upon the whole business and to spit upon it before your eyes, too!"

"And you've attained your object, too," said I, quivering with excitement. "I agree that you could not have shown your spite and your contempt for me and for all of us better than by your frankness to me. Far from being apprehensive that your frankness might compromise you in my eyes, you are not even ashamed to expose yourself before me. You have certainly been like that madman in the cloak. You have not considered me as a human being."

"You have guessed right, my young friend," he said, getting up, "you have seen through it all. You are not an author for nothing. I hope that we are parting as friends. Shan't we drink bruderschaft together?"

"You are drunk, and that is the only reason that I don't answer you as you deserve…."

"Again a figure of silence! — you haven't said all you might have said. Ha-ha-ha! You won't allow me to pay for you?"

"Don't trouble yourself. I'll pay for myself."

"Ah, no doubt of it. Aren't we going the same way?"

"I am not coming with you."

"Farewell, my poet. I hope you've understood me…."

He went out, stepping rather unsteadily and not turning to me again. The footman helped him into his carriage. I went my way. It was nearly three o’clock in the morning. It was raining The night was dark….

*Under the Russian system of regulation a girl in an irregular positionmay easily become the object of persecution and blackmail on the part ofthe police de moeurs, and this is what is suggested here. — Translator’s note.

PART IV

CHAPTER I

I WON'T ATTEMPT to describe my exasperation. Though I might have expected anything, it was a blow; it was as though he had appeared before me quite suddenly in all his hideousness. But I remember my sensations were confused, as though I had been knocked down, crushed by something, and black misery gnawed more and more painfully at my heart. I was afraid for Natasha. I foresaw much suffering for her in the future, and I cast about in perplexity for some way by which to avoid it, to soften these last moments for her, before the final catastrophe. Of that catastrophe there could be no doubt. It was near at hand, and it was impossible not to see the form it would take.

I did not notice how I reached home, though I was getting wet with the rain all the way. It was three o'clock in the morning. I had hardly knocked at the door of my room when I heard a moan, and the door was hurriedly unlocked, as though Nellie had not gone to bed but had been watching for me all the time at the door. There was a candle alight. I glanced into Nellie's face and was dismayed; it was completely transformed; her eyes were burning as though in fever, and had a wild look as though she did not recognize me. She was in a high fever.

"Nellie, what's the matter, are you ill?" I asked, bending down and putting my arm round her.

She nestled up to me tremulously as though she were afraid of something, said something, rapidly and impetuously, as though she had only been waiting for me to come to tell me it. But her words were strange and incoherent; I could understand nothing. She was in delirium.

I led her quickly to bed. But she kept starting up and clinging to me as though in terror, as though begging me to protect her from someone, and even when she was lying in bed she kept seizing my hand and holding it tightly as though afraid that I might go away again. I was so upset and my nerves were so shaken that I actually began to cry as I looked at her. I was ill myself. Seeing my tears she looked fixedly at me for some time with

strained, concentrated attention, as though trying to grasp and understand something. It was evident that this cost her great effort. At last something like a thought was apparent in her face. After a violent epileptic fit she was usually for some time unable to collect her thoughts or to articulate distinctly. And so it was now. After making an immense effort to say something to me and realizing that I did not understand, she held out her little hand and began to wipe away my tears, then put her arm round my neck, drew me down to her and kissed me. It was clear that she had had a fit in my absence, and it had taken place at the moment when she had been standing at the door. Probably on recovery she had been for a long time unable come to herself. At such times reality is mixed up with delirium and she had certainly imagined something awful, some horror. At the same time she must have been dimly aware that I was to come back and should knock at the door, and so, lying right in the doorway on the floor, she had been on the alert for my coming and had stood up at my first tap.

“But why was she just at the door,” I wondered, and suddenly I noticed with amazement that she was wearing her little wadded coat. (I had just got it for her from an old pedlar woman I knew who sometimes came to my room to offer me goods in repayment of money I had lent her.) So she must have been meaning to go out, and had probably been already unlocking the door when she was suddenly struck down by the fit. Where could she have been meaning to go? Was she already in delirium?

Meanwhile the fever did not leave her, and she soon sank into delirium and unconsciousness. She had twice already had a fit in my flat, but it had always passed off harmlessly; now, however, she seemed in a high fever. After sitting beside her for half an hour I pushed a chair up to the sofa and lay down, as I was, without undressing, close beside her that I might wake the more readily if she called me. I did not even put the candle out. I looked at her many times again before I fell asleep myself. She was pale; her lips were parched with fever and stained with blood, probably from the fall. Her face still retained the look of terror and a sort of poignant anguish which seemed to be still haunting her in her sleep, I made up my mind to go as early as possible next morning for the doctor, if she were worse. I was afraid that it might end in actual brain fever.

“It must have been the prince frightened her!” I thought, with a shudder, and I thought of his story of the woman who had thrown the money in his face.

CHAPTER II

A FORTNIGHT PASSED BY. Nellie was recovering. She did not develop brain fever but she was seriously ill. She began to get up again on a bright sunny day at the end of April. It was Passion Week.

Poor little creature. I cannot go on with my story in the same consecutive way. Now that I am describing all this it is long past, but to this very minute I recall with an oppressive heart, rending anguish that pale, thin little face, the searching, intent gaze of her black eyes when we were sometimes left alone together and she fixed upon me from her bed a prolonged gaze as though challenging me to guess what was in her mind; but seeing that I did not guess and was still puzzled she would smile gently, as it were, to herself, and would suddenly hold out to me her hot little hand, with its thin, wasted little fingers. Now it is all over, and everything is understood, but to this day I do not know the secrets of that sick, tortured and outraged little heart.

I feel that I am digressing, but at this moment I want to think only of Nellie. Strange to say, now that I am lying alone on a hospital bed, abandoned by all whom I loved so fondly and intensely, some trivial incident of that past, often unnoticed at the time and soon forgotten, comes back all at once to my mind and suddenly takes quite a new significance, completing and explaining to me what I had failed to understand till now.

For the first four days of her illness, we, the doctor and I, were in great alarm about her, but on the fifth day the doctor took me aside and told me that there was no reason for anxiety and she would certainly recover. This doctor was the one I had known so long, a good-natured and eccentric old bachelor whom I had called in in Nellie’s first illness, and who had so impressed her by the huge Stanislav Cross on his breast.

“So there’s no reason for anxiety,” I said, greatly relieved.

“No, she’ll get well this time, but afterwards she will soon die.”

“Die! But why?” I cried, overwhelmed at this death sentence.

“Yes, she is certain to die very soon. The patient has an organic defect of the heart, and at the slightest unfavourable circumstance she’ll be laid up again. She will perhaps get better, but then she’ll be ill again and at last she’ll die.”

“Do you mean nothing can be done to save her? Surely that’s impossible.”

“But it’s inevitable. However, with the removal of unfavourable circumstances, with a quiet and easy life with more pleasure in it, the patient might yet be kept from death and there even are cases… unexpected…strange and exceptional… in fact the patient may be saved by a concatenation of favourable conditions, but radically cured — never.”

“But, good heavens, what’s to be done now?”

“Follow my advice, lead a quiet life, and take the powders regularly. I have noticed this girl’s capricious, of a nervous temperament, and fond of laughing. She much dislikes taking her powders regularly and she has just refused them absolutely.”

“Yes, doctor. She certainly is strange, but I put it all down to her invalid state. Yesterday she was very obedient; to-day, when I gave her her medicine she pushed the spoon as though by accident and it was all spilt over. When I wanted to mix another powder she snatched the box away from me, threw it on the ground and then burst into tears. Only I don’t think it was because I was making her take the powders,” I added, after a moment’s thought.

“Hm! Irritation! Her past great misfortunes.” (I had told the doctor fully and frankly much of Nellie’s history and my story had struck him very much.) “All that in conjunction, and from it this illness. For the time the only remedy is to take the powders, and she must take the powders. I will go and try once more to impress on her the duty to obey medical instructions, and…that is, speaking generally…take the powders.”

We both came out of the kitchen (in which our interview had taken place) and the doctor went up to the sick child’s bedside again. But I think Nellie must have overheard. Anyway she had raised her head from the pillow and turned her ear in our direction, listening keenly all the time. I noticed this through the crack of the half-opened door. When we went up to her the rogue ducked under the quilt, and peeped out at us with a mocking smile. The poor child had grown much thinner during the four days of her illness. Her eyes were sunken and she was still feverish, so that the mischievous expression and glittering, defiant glances so surprising to the doctor, who was one of the most good-natured Germans in Petersburg, looked all the more incongruous on her face.

Gravely, though trying to soften his voice as far as he could, he began in a kind and caressing voice to explain how essential and efficacious the powders were, and consequently how incumbent it was on every invalid to take them. Nellie was raising her head, but suddenly, with an apparently quite accidental movement of her arm, she jerked the spoon, and all the medicine was spilt on the floor again. No doubt she did it on purpose.

“That’s very unpleasant carelessness,” said the old man quietly, “and I suspect that you did it on purpose; that’s very reprehensible. But…we can set that right and prepare another powder.”

Nellie laughed straight in his face. The doctor shook his head methodically. “That’s very wrong,” he said, opening another powder, “very, very reprehensible.”

“Don’t be angry with me,” answered Nellie, and vainly tried not to laugh again. “I’ll certainly take it…. But do you like me?”

“If you will behave yourself becomingly I shall like you very much.”

“Very much?”

“Very much.”

“But now, don’t you like me?”

“Yes, I like you even now.”

“And will you kiss me if I want to kiss you?”

“Yes, if you desire it.”

At this Nellie could not control herself and laughed again.

“The patient has a merry disposition, but now this is nerves and caprice,” the doctor whispered to me with a most serious air.

“All right, I’ll take the powder,” Nellie cried suddenly, in her weak little voice. “But when I am big and grown up will you marry me?”

Apparently the invention of this new fancy greatly delighted her; her eyes positively shone and her lips twitched with laughter as she waited for a reply from the somewhat astonished doctor.

“Very well,” he answered, smiling in spite of himself at this new whim, “very well, if you turn out a good, well-brought-up young lady, and will be obedient and will…”

“Take my powders?” put in Nellie.

“0-ho! To he sure, take your powders. A good girl,” he whispered to me again; “there’s a great deal, a great deal in her … that’s good and clever but … to get married … what a strange caprice….”

And he took her the medicine again. But this time she made no pretence about it but simply jerked the spoon up from below with her hand and all the medicine was splashed on the poor doctor's shirt-front and in his face. Nellie laughed aloud, but not with the same merry, good-humoured laugh as before. There was a look of something cruel and malicious in her face. All this time she seemed to avoid my eyes, only looked at the doctor, and with mockery, through which some uneasiness was discernible, waited to see what the "funny" old man would do next.

"Oh! You've done it again! …What a misfortune! But…I can mix you another powder! " said the old man, wiping his face and his shirt-front with his handkerchief. This made a tremendous impression on Nellie. She had been prepared for our anger, thought that we should begin to scold and reprove her, and perhaps she was unconsciously longing at that moment for some excuse to cry, to sob hysterically, to upset some more powders as she had just now and even to break something in her vexation, and with all this to relieve her capricious and aching little heart. Such capricious humours are to be found not only in the sick and not only in Nellie. How often I have walked up and down the room with the unconscious desire for someone to insult me or to utter some word that I could interpret as an insult in order to vent my anger upon someone. Women, venting their anger in that way, begin to cry, shedding the most genuine tears, and the more emotional of them even go into hysterics. It's a very simple and everyday experience, and happens most often when there is some other, often a secret, grief in the heart, to which one longs to give utterance but cannot.

But, struck by the angelic kindness of the old doctor and the patience with which he set to work to mix her another powder without uttering one word of reproach, Nellie suddenly subsided. The look of mockery vanished from her lips, the colour rushed to her face, her eyes grew moist. She stole a look at me and turned away at once. The doctor brought her the medicine. She took it meekly and shyly, seized the old man's plump red hand, and looked slowly into his face.

"You … are angry that I'm horrid," she tried to say, but could not finish; she ducked under the quilt, hid her head and burst into loud, hysterical sobs.

"Oh, my child, don't weep! … It is nothing … It's nerves, drink some water."

But Nellie did not hear.

“Be comforted … don’t upset yourself,” he went on, almost whimpering over her, for he was a very sensitive man. “I’ll forgive you and be married to you if, like a good, well-brought-up girl, you’ll….”

“Take my powders,” came from under the quilt with a little nervous laugh that tinkled like a bell, and was broken by sobs — a laugh I knew very well.

“A good-hearted, grateful child!” said the doctor triumphantly, almost with tears in his eyes. “Poor girl!”

And a strange and wonderful affection sprang up from that day between him and Nellie. With me, on the contrary, Nellie became more and more sullen, nervous, and irritable. I didn’t know what to ascribe this to, and wondered at her, especially as this change in her seemed to happen suddenly. During the first days of her illness she was particularly tender and caressing with me; it seemed as though she could not take her eyes off me; she would not let me leave her side, clutched my hand in her feverish little hand and made me sit beside her, and if she noticed that I was gloomy and anxious she tried to cheer me up, made jokes, played with me and smiled at me, evidently making an effort to overcome her own sufferings. She did not want me to work at night, or to sit up to look after her, and was grieved because I would not listen to her. Sometimes I noticed an anxious look in her face; she began to question me, and tried to find out why I was sad, what was in my mind. But strange to say, when Natasha’s name was mentioned she immediately dropped the conversation or began to speak of something else. She seemed to avoid speaking of Natasha, and that struck me. When I came home she was delighted. When I took up my hat she looked at me dejectedly and rather strangely, following me with her eyes, as it were reproachfully.

On the fourth day of her illness, I spent the whole evening with Natasha and stayed long after midnight. There was something we had to discuss. As I went out I said to my invalid that I should be back very soon, as indeed I reckoned on being. Being detained almost unexpectedly at Natasha’s, I felt quite easy in my mind about Nellie. Alexandra Semyonovna was sitting up with her, having heard from Masloboev, who came in to see me for a moment, that Nellie was ill and that I was in great difficulties and absolutely without help. Good heavens, what a fuss kind-hearted Alexandra Semyonovna was in!

“So of course he won’t come to dinner with us now! Ach, mercy on us! And he’s all alone, poor fellow, all alone! Well, now we can show how kindly we feel to him. Here’s the opportunity. We mustn’t let it slip.”

She immediately appeared at my flat, bringing with her in a cab a regular hamper. Declaring at the first word that she was going to stay and had come to help me in my trouble, she undid her parcels. In them there were syrups and preserves for the invalid, chickens and a fowl in case the patient began to be convalescent, apples for baking, oranges, dry Kiev preserves (in case the doctor would allow them) and finally linen, sheets, dinner napkins, nightgowns, bandages, compresses — an outfit for a whole hospital.

“We’ve got everything,” she said to me, articulating every word as though in haste, “and, you see, you live like a bachelor. You’ve not much of all this. So please allow me … and Filip Filippovitch told me to. Well, what now … make haste, make haste, what shall I do now? How is she? Conscious? Ah, how uncomfortably she is lying! I must put her pillow straight that she may lie with her head low, and, what do you think, wouldn’t a leather pillow be better? The leather is cooler. Ah, what a fool I am! It never occurred to me to bring one. I’ll go and get it. Oughtn’t we to light a fire? I’ll send my old woman to you. I know an old woman. You’ve no servant, have you?…Well, what shall I do now? What’s that? Herbs… did the doctor prescribe them? For some herb tea, I suppose? I’ll go at once and light the fire.”

But I reassured her, and she was much surprised and even rather chagrined that there turned out to be not so very much to do. But this did not discourage her altogether. She made friends with Nellie at once and was a great help to me all through her illness. She visited us almost every day and she always used to come in looking as though something had been lost or had gone astray and she must hasten to catch it up. She always added that Filip Filippovitch had told her to come. Nellie liked her very much. They took to each other like two sisters, and I fancy that in many things Alexandra Semyonovna was as much of a baby as Nellie. She used to tell the child stories and amuse her, and Nellie often missed her when she had gone home. Her first appearance surprised my invalid, but she quickly guessed why the uninvited visitor had come, and as usual frowned and became silent and ungracious.

“Why did she come to see us?” asked Nellie, with an air of displeasure after Alexandra Semyonovna had gone away.

“To help you Nellie, and to look after you.”

“Why? What for? I’ve never done anything like that for her.”

“Kind people don’t wait for that, Nellie. They like to help people who need it, without that. That’s enough, Nellie; there are lots of kind people in the world. It’s only your misfortune that you haven’t met them and didn’t meet them when you needed them.”

Nellie did not speak. I walked away from her. But a quarter of an hour later she called me to her in a weak voice, asked for something to drink, and all at once warmly embraced me and for a long while would not let go of me. Next day, when Alexandra Semyonovna appeared, she welcomed her with a joyful smile I though she still seemed for some reason shamefaced with her.

CHAPTER III

IT WAS ON THAT DAY that I was the whole evening at Natasha's I arrived home late. Nellie was asleep. Alexandra Semyonovna was sleepy too, but she was still sitting up with the invalid waiting for me to come in. At once in a hurried whisper she began to tell me that Nellie had at first been in very good spirits, even laughing a great deal, but afterwards she was depressed and, as I did not come back, grew silent and thoughtful. "Then she began complaining that her head ached, began to cry, and sobbed so that I really didn't know what to do with her," Alexandra Semyonovna added. "She began talking to me about Natalya Nikolaevna, but I could not tell her anything. She left off questioning me but went on crying afterwards, so that she fell asleep in tears. Well, good-bye, Ivan Petrovitch. She's better anyway, I can see that, and I must go home. Filip Filippovitch told me to. I must confess that this time he only let me come for two hours but I stayed on of myself. But never mind, don't worry about me. He doesn't dare to be angry…. Only perhaps…. Ach, my goodness, Ivan Petrovitch, darling, what am I to do? He always comes home tipsy now! He's very busy over something, he doesn't talk to me, he's worried, he's got some important business in his mind; I can see that; but yet he is drunk every evening…. What I'm thinking is, if he has come home, who will put him to bed? Well, I'm going, I'm going, good-bye. Good-bye Ivan Petrovitch. I've been looking at your books here. What a lot of books you've got, and they must all be clever. And I'm such a fool I've never read anything… Well, till to-morrow…" But next morning Nellie woke up depressed and sullen, and answered me unwillingly. She did not speak to me of her own accord, but seemed to be angry with me. Yet I noticed some looks bent upon me stealthily, as it were, on the sly; in those looks there was so much concealed and heart-felt pain, yet there was in them an unmistakable tenderness which was not apparent when she looked at me directly. It was on that day that the scene over the medicine took place with the doctor. I did not know what to think.

But Nellie was entirely changed to me. Her strange ways, her caprices, at times almost hatred for me, continued up to the day when she ceased to live with me, till the catastrophe which was the end of our romance, But of that later.

It happened, however, sometimes that she would be for an hour as affectionate to me as at first. Her tenderness was redoubled at such moments; most often at such times she wept bitterly. But these hours soon passed and she sank back into the same misery as before, and looked at me with hostility again or was as capricious as she had been with the doctor, or suddenly noticing that I did not like some new naughtiness on her part, she would begin laughing, and almost always end in tears.

She once quarrelled even with Alexandra Semyonovna, and told her that she wanted nothing from her. When I began to scold her in Alexandra Semyonovna's presence she grew angry, answered with an outburst of accumulated spite, but suddenly relapsed into silence and did not say another word to me for two days, would not take one of her medicines, was unwilling even to eat and drink and no one but the old doctor was able to bring her round and make her ashamed.

I have mentioned already that from the day of the scene over the medicine a surprising affection had sprung up between the doctor and her. Nellie was very fond of him and always greeted him with a good-humoured smile however sad she had been before he came. For his part the old man began coming to us every day and sometimes even twice a day even when Nellie had begun to get up and had quite recovered, and she seemed to have so bewitched him that he could not spend a day without hearing her laugh and make fun of him, sometimes very amusingly. He began bringing her picture-books, always of an edifying character. One of them he bought on purpose for her. Then he began bringing her dainties, sweetmeats in pretty boxes. On such occasions he would come in with an air of triumph, as though it were his birthday, and Nellie guessed at once that he had come with a present. But he did not display the presents, but only laughed slyly, seated himself beside Nellie, hinting that if a certain young lady knew how to behave herself and had been deserving of commendation in his absence the young lady in question would merit a handsome reward. And all the while he looked at her so simply and good-naturedly that though Nellie laughed at him in the frankest way, at the same time there was a glow of sincere and affectionate devotion in her beaming eyes at that moment. At last the old man solemnly got up from his chair, took out a box of sweets and as he handed it to Nellie invariably added: "To my future amiable spouse." At that moment he was certainly even happier than Nellie. Then

they began to talk, and every time he earnestly and persuasively exhorted her to take care of her health and gave her impressive medical advice.

“Above all one must preserve one’s health,” he declared dogmatically, “firstly and chiefly in order to remain alive, and secondly in order to be always healthy and so to attain happiness in life. If you have any sorrows, my dear child, forget them, and best of all try not to think of them. If you have no sorrows…well, then too, don’t think about them, but try to think only of pleasant things … of something cheerful and amusing.”

“And what shall I think of that’s cheerful and amusing?” Nellie would ask.

The doctor was at once nonplussed.

“Well…of some innocent game appropriate to your age or, well… something of that….”

“I don’t want to play games, I don’t like games,” said Nellie. “I like new dresses better.”

“New dresses! Hm! Well, that’s not so good. We should in all things be content with a modest lot in life. However… maybe…there’s no harm in being fond of new dresses.”

“And will you give me a lot of dresses when I’m married to you?”

“What an idea!” said the doctor and he could not help frowning. Nellie smiled slyly and, even forgetting herself for a minute, glanced at me.

“However, I’ll give you a dress if you deserve it by your conduct,” the doctor went on.

“And must I take my medicine every day when I’m married to you?”

“Well, then, perhaps you may not have to take medicine always.”

And the doctor began to smile.

Nellie interrupted the conversation by laughing. The old man laughed with her, and watched her merriment affectionately.

“A playful sportive mind!” he observed, turning to me. “But still one can see signs of caprice and a certain whimsicalness and irritability.”

He was right. I could not make out what was happening to her. She seemed utterly unwilling to speak to me, as though I had treated her badly in some way. This was very bitter to me. I frowned myself, and once I did not speak to her for a whole day, but next day I felt ashamed. She was often crying and I hadn’t a notion how to comfort her. On one occasion, however, she broke her silence with me.

One afternoon I returned home just before dusk and saw Nellie hurriedly hide a book under the pillow. It was my novel which she had taken from the table and was reading in my absence. What need had she to hide it from me?" just as though she were ashamed," I thought, but I showed no sign of having noticed anything. A quarter of an hour later when I went out for a minute into the kitchen she quickly jumped out of bed and put the novel back where it had been before; when I came back I saw it lying on the table. A minute later she called me to her; there was a ring of some emotion in her voice. For the last four days she had hardly spoken to me.

"Are you … to-day … going to see Natasha?" she asked me in a breaking voice,

"Yes, Nellie. It's very necessary for me to see her to-day." Nellie did not speak.

"You…are very…fond of her?" she asked again, in a faint voice.

"Yes, Nellie, I'm very fond of her."

"I love her too," she added softly.

A silence followed again.

"I want to go to her and to live with her," Nellie began again, looking at me timidly.

"That's impossible, Nellie," I answered, looking at her with some surprise. "Are you so badly off with me?"

"Why is it impossible?" And she flushed crimson. "Why, you were persuading me to go and live with her father; I don't want to go there. Has she a servant?

"Yes."

"Well, let her send her servant away, and I'll be her servant. I'll do everything for her and not take any wages. I'll love her, and do her cooking. You tell her so to-day."

"But what for? What a notion, Nellie! And what an idea you must have of her; do you suppose she would take you as a cook? If she did take you she would take you as an equal, as her younger sister."

"No, I don't want to be an equal. I don't want it like that…."

"Why?"

Nellie was silent. Her lips were twitching. She was on the point of crying.

"The man she loves now is going away from her and leaving her alone now?" she asked at last.

I was surprised.

“Why, how do you know, Nellie?”

“You told me all about it yourself; and the day before yesterday when Alexandra Semyonovna’s husband came in the morning I asked him; he told me everything.”

“Why, did Masloboev come in the morning?”

“Yes,” she answered, dropping her eyes.

“Why didn’t you tell me he’d been here?”

“I don’t know….”

I reflected for a moment. “Goodness only knows why Masloboev is turning up with his mysteriousness. What sort of terms has he got on to with her? I ought to see him,” I thought.

“Well, what is it to you, Nellie, if he does desert her?”

“Why, you love her so much,” said Nellie, not lifting her eyes to me. “And if you love her you’ll marry her when he goes away.”

“No, Nellie, she doesn’t love me as I love her, and I … no, that won’t happen, Nellie.”

“And I would work for you both as your servant and you’d live and be happy,” she said, almost in a whisper, not looking at me.

“What’s the matter with her? What’s the matter with her?” I thought, and I had a disturbing pang at my heart. Nellie was silent and she didn’t say another word all the evening. When I went out she had been crying, and cried the whole evening, as Alexandra Semyonovna told me, and so fell asleep, crying. She even cried and kept saying something at night in her sleep. But from that day she became even more sullen and silent, and didn’t speak to me at all. It is true I caught two or three glances stolen at me on the sly, and there was such tenderness in those glances. But this passed, together with the moment that called forth that sudden tenderness, and as though in opposition to this impulse Nellie grew every hour more gloomy even with the doctor, who was amazed at the change in her character. Meanwhile she had almost completely recovered, and the doctor, at last allowed her to go for a walk in the open air, but only for a very short time. It was settled weather, warm and bright. It was Passion Week, which fell that year very late; I went out in the morning; I was obliged to be at Natasha’s and I intended to return earlier in order to take Nellie out for a walk. Meantime I left her alone at home.

I cannot describe what a blow was awaiting me at home. I hurried back. When I arrived I saw that the key was sticking in the outside of the lock. I went in. There was no one there. I was numb with horror. I looked, and on the table was a piece of paper, and written in pencil in a big, uneven handwriting:

“I have gone away, and I shall never come back to you. But I love you very much. — Your faithful Nellie.”

I uttered a cry of horror and rushed out of the flat.

CHAPTER IV

BEFORE I HAD TIME to run out into the street, before I had time to consider how to act, or what to do, I suddenly saw a droshky standing at the gate of our buildings, and Alexandra Semyonovna getting out of it leading Nellie by the arm. She was holding her tightly as though she were afraid she might run away again. I rushed up to them.

“Nellie, what’s the matter?” I cried, “where have you been, why did you go?”

“Stop a minute, don’t be in a hurry; let’s make haste upstairs. There you shall hear all about it,” twittered Alexandra Semyonovna. “The things I have to tell you, Ivan Petrovitch,” she whispered hurriedly on the way. “One can only wonder …Come along, you shall hear immediately.”

Her face showed that she had extremely important news.

“Go along, Nellie, go along. Lie down a little,” she said as soon as we got into the room, “you’re tired, you know; it’s no joke running about so far, and it’s too much after an illness; lie down, darling, lie down. And we’ll go out of the room for a little, we won’t get in her way; let her have a sleep.”

And she signed to me to go into the kitchen with her.

But Nellie didn’t lie down, she sat down on the sofa and hid her face in her hands.

We went into the other room, and Alexandra Semyonovna told me briefly what had happened. Afterwards I heard about it more in detail. This is how it had been.

Going out of the flat a couple of hours before my return and leaving the note for me, Nellie had run first to the old doctor’s. She had managed to find out his address beforehand. The doctor told me that he was absolutely petrified when he saw her, and “could not believe his eyes” all the while she was there. “I can’t believe it even now,” he added, as he finished his story “and I never shall believe it.” And yet Nellie actually had been at his house. He had been sitting quietly in the armchair in his study in his dressing-gown, drinking his coffee, when she ran in and threw herself on his neck before he had time to realize it. She was crying, she embraced and kissed him, kissed his hands, and earnestly though incoherently begged him to let her stay with him, declaring that she wouldn’t and couldn’t live with me any longer, and that’s why she had left me; that she was unhappy; that she

wouldn’t laugh at him again or talk about new dresses, but would behave well and learn her lessons, that she would learn to “wash and get up his shirt-front” (probably she had thought over her whole speech on the way or perhaps even before), and that, in fact, she would be obedient and would take as many powders as he liked every day; and that as for her saying she wanted to marry him that had only been a joke, and she had no idea of the kind. The old German was so dumbfounded that he sat open-mouthed the whole time, forgetting the cigar he held in his hand till it went out.

“Mademoiselle,” he brought out at last, recovering his powers of speech, “so far as I can understand you, you ask me to give you a situation in my household. But that’s impossible. As you see, I’m very much cramped and have not a very considerable income … and, in fact, to act so rashly without reflection … is awful! And, in fact, you, so far as I can see, have run away from home. That is reprehensible and impossible…. And what’s more, I only allowed you to take a short walk in charge of your benefactor, and you abandon your benefactor, and run off to me when you ought to be taking care of yourself and … and … taking your medicine. And, in fact … in fact … I can make nothing of it …”

Nellie did not let him finish. She began to cry and implored him again, but nothing was of use. The old man was more and more bewildered, and less and less able to understand. At last Nellie gave him up and crying “Oh, dear!” ran out of the room.

“I was ill all that day,” the old doctor said in conclusion, “and had taken a decoction in the evening….”

Nellie rushed off to the Masloboevs. She had provided herself with their address too, and she succeeded in finding them, though not without trouble. Masloboev was at home. Alexandra Semyonovna clasped her hands in amazement when she heard Nellie beg them to take her in. When she asked her why she wanted it, what was wrong, whether she was unhappy with me, Nellie had made no answer, but flung herself sobbing on a chair.

“She sobbed so violently, so violently,” said Alexandra Semyonovna, “that I thought she would have died.” Nellie begged to be taken if only as a housemaid or a cook, said she would sweep the floors and learn to do the washing (she seemed to rest her hopes especially on the washing and seemed for some reason to think this a great inducement for them to take her). Alexandra Semyonovna’s idea was to keep her till the matter was cleared up, meanwhile letting me know. But Filip Filippovitch had

absolutely forbidden it, and had told her to bring the runaway to me at once. On the way Alexandra Semyonovna had kissed and embraced her, which had made Nellie cry more than ever.

Looking at her, Alexandra Semyonovna too had shed tears. So both of them had been crying all the way in the cab.

“But why, Nellie, why don’t you want to go on staying with him? What has he done. Is he unkind to you?” Alexandra Semyonovna asked, melting into tears.

“No.”

“Well, why then?”

“Nothing … I don’t want to stay with him … I’m always so nasty with him and he’s so kind … but with you I won’t be nasty, I’ll work,” she declared, sobbing as though she were in hysterics.

“Why are you so nasty to him, Nellie?”

“Nothing….”

And that was all I could get out of her,” said Alexandra Semyonovna, wiping her tears. “Why is she such an unhappy little thing? Is it her fits? What do you think, Ivan Petrovitch?”

We went in to Nellie. She lay with her face hidden in the pillow, crying. I knelt down beside her, took her hands, and began to kiss them. She snatched her hands from me and sobbed more violently than ever. I did not know what to say. At that moment old Ichmenyev walked in.

“I’ve come to see you on business, Ivan, how do you do? he said, staring at us all, and observing with surprise that I was on my knees.

The old man had been ill of late. He was pale and thin, but as though in defiance of someone, he neglected his illness, refused to listen to Anna Andreyevna’s exhortations, went about his daily affairs as usual, and would not take to his bed.

“Good-bye for the present,” said Alexandra Semyonovna, staring at the old man. “Filip Filippovitch told me to be back as quickly as possible. We are busy. But in the evening at dusk I’ll look in on you, and stay an hour or two.”

“Who’s that?” the old man whispered to me, evidently thinking of something else.

I explained.

“Hm! Well, I’ve come on business, Ivan.”

I knew on what business he had come, and had been expecting his visit. He had come to talk to me and Nellie and to beg her to go to them. Anna Andreyevna had consented at last to adopt an orphan girl. This was a result of secret confabulations between us. I had persuaded the old lady, telling her that the sight of the child, whose mother, too, had been cursed by an unrelenting father, might turn our old friend's heart to other feelings. I explained my plan so clearly that now she began of herself to urge her husband to take the child. The old man readily fell in with it; in the first place he wanted to please his Anna Andreyevna, and he had besides motives of his own…. But all this I will explain later and more fully. I have mentioned already that Nellie had taken a dislike to the old man at his first visit. Afterwards I noticed that there was a gleam almost of hatred in her face when Ichmenyev's name was pronounced in her presence. My old friend began upon the subject at once, without beating about the bush. He went straight up to Nellie, who was still lying down, hiding her head in the pillow, and taking her by the hand asked her whether she would like to come and live with him and take the place of his daughter.

"I had a daughter. I loved her more than myself," the old man finished up, "but now she is not with me. She is dead. Would you like to take her place in my house and … in my heart?" And in his eyes that looked dry and inflamed from fever there gleamed a tear.

"No, I shouldn't," Nellie answered, without raising her head.

"Why not, my child? You have nobody belonging to you. Ivan cannot keep you with him for ever, and with me you'd be as in your own home."

"I won't, because you're wicked. Yes, wicked, wicked," she added, lifting up her head, and facing the old man. "I am wicked, we're all wicked, but you're more wicked than anyone."

As she said this Nellie turned pale, her eyes flashed; even her quivering lips turned pale, and were distorted by a rush of strong feeling. The old man looked at her in perplexity.

"Yes, more wicked than I am, because you won't forgive your daughter. You want to forget her altogether and take another child. How can you forget your own child? How can you love me? Whenever you look at me you'll remember I'm a stranger and that you had a daughter of your own whom you'd forgotten, for you're a cruel man. And I don't want to live with cruel people. I won't! I won't!"

Nellie gave a sob and glanced at me.

“The day after to-morrow is Easter; all the people will be kissing and embracing one another, they all make peace, they all forgive one another…I know…. But you…only you…ugh, cruel man! Go away!”

She melted into tears. She must have made up that speech beforehand and have learnt it by heart in case my old friend should ask her again.

My old friend was affected and he turned pale. His face betrayed the pain he was feeling.

“And why, why does everybody make such a fuss over me? I won’t have it, I won’t have it!” Nellie cried suddenly, in a sort of frenzy. “I’ll go and beg in the street.”

“Nellie, what’s the matter? Nellie, darling,” I cried involuntarily, but my exclamation only added fuel to the flames, “Yes, I’d better go into the street and beg. I won’t stay here!” she shrieked sobbing. “My mother begged in the street too, and when she was dying she said to me, ‘Better be poor and beg in the street than …”It’s not shameful to beg. I beg of all, and that’s not the same as begging from one. To beg of one is shameful, but it’s not shameful to beg of all’; that’s what one beggar-girl said to me. I’m little, I’ve no means of earning money. I’ll ask from all. I won’t! I won’t! I’m wicked, I’m wickeder than anyone. See how wicked I am!”

And suddenly Nellie quite unexpectedly seized a cup from the table and threw it on the floor.

“There, now it’s broken,” she added, looking at me with a sort of defiant triumph. “There are only two cups,” she added, “I’ll break the other … and then how will you drink your tea?”

She seemed as though possessed by fury, and seemed to get enjoyment from that fury, as though she were conscious that it was shameful and wrong, and at the same time were spurring herself on to further violence.

“She’s ill, Vanya, that’s what it is,” said the old man, “or… or I don’t understand the child. Good-bye!”

He took his cap and shook hands with me. He seemed crushed. Nellie had insulted him horribly. Everything was in a turmoil within me.

“You had no pity on him, Nellie!” I cried when we were left alone. “And aren’t you ashamed? Aren’t you ashamed No, you’re not a good girl! You really are wicked!”

And just as I was, without my hat, I ran after the old man, I wanted to escort him to the gate, and to say at least a few words to comfort him. As I

ran down the staircase I was haunted by Nellie's face, which had turned terribly white at my reproaches.

I quickly overtook my old friend.

"The poor girl has been ill-treated, and has sorrow of her own, believe me, Ivan, and I began to tell her of mine," he said with a bitter smile. "I touched upon her sore place. They say that the well-fed cannot understand the hungry, but I would add that the hungry do not always understand the hungry. Well, good-bye!"

I would have spoken of something else; but the old man waved me off.

"Don't try to comfort me. You'd much better look out that your girl doesn't run away from you. She looks like it," he added with a sort of exasperation, and he walked away from me with rapid steps, brandishing his stick and tapping it on the pavement.

He had no idea of being a prophet.

What were my feelings when, on returning to my room, I found, to my horror, that Nellie had vanished again! I rushed into the passage, looked for her on the stairs, called her name, even knocked at the neighbours' doors and inquired about her. I could not and would not believe that she had run away again. And how could she have run away? There was only one gate way to the buildings; she must have slipped by us when I was talking to my old friend. But I soon reflected, to my great distress, that she might first have hidden somewhere on the stairs till I had gone back, and then have slipped off so that I should not meet her. In any case she could not have gone far.

In great anxiety I rushed off to search for her again, leaving my rooms unfastened in case she should return.

First of all I went to the Masloboevs'. I did not find either of them at home. Leaving a note for them in which I informed them of this fresh calamity, and begging them if Nellie came to let me know at once, I went to the doctor's. He was not at home either. The servant told me that there had been no visit since that of the day before. What was to be done? I set off for Mme. Bubnov's and learnt from my friend, the coffin-maker's wife, that her landlady had for some reason been detained at the police-station for the last two days; and Nellie had not been seen there since that day. Weary and exhausted I went back to the Masloboevs'. The same answer, no one had come, and they had not returned home themselves. My note lay on the table. What was I to do?

In deadly dejection I returned home late in the evening. I ought to have been at Natasha's that evening; she had asked me in the morning. But I had not even tasted food that day. The thought of Nellie set my whole soul in a turmoil.

"What does it mean?" I wondered. "Could it be some strange consequence of her illness? Wasn't she mad, or going out of her mind? But, good God, where was she now? Where should I look for her?" I had hardly said this to myself when I caught sight of Nellie a few steps from me on the V-m Bridge. She was standing under a street lamp and she did not see me. I was on the point of running to her but I checked myself. "What can she be doing here now?" I wondered in perplexity, and convinced that now I should not lose her, I resolved to wait and watch her. Ten minutes passed. She was still standing, watching the passers-by. At last a well-dressed old gentleman passed and Nellie went up to him. Without stopping he took something out of his pocket and gave it to her. She curtsied to him. I cannot describe what I felt at that instant. It sent an agonizing pang to my heart, as if something precious, something I loved, had fondled and cherished, was disgraced and spat upon at that minute before my very eyes. At the same time I felt tears dropping.

Yes, tears for poor Nellie, though at the same time I felt great indignation; she was not begging through need; she was not forsaken, not abandoned by someone to the caprice of destiny. She was not escaping from cruel oppressors, but from friends who loved and cherished her. It was as though she wanted to shock or alarm someone by her exploits, as though she were showing off before someone. But there was something secret maturing in her heart…. Yes, my old friend was right; she had been ill-treated; her hurt could not be healed, and she seemed purposely trying to aggravate her wound by this mysterious behaviour, this mistrustfulness of us all; as though she enjoyed her own pain by this egoism of suffering, if I may so express it. This aggravation of suffering and this rebelling in it I could understand; it is the enjoyment of man, of the insulted and injured, oppressed by destiny, and smarting under the sense of its injustice. But of what injustice in us could Nellie complain? She seemed trying to astonish and alarm us by her exploits, her caprices and wild pranks, as though she really were asserting herself against us…. But no! Now she was alone. None of us could see that she was begging. Could she possibly have found enjoyment in it on her own account? Why did she want charity? What need

had she of money? After receiving the gift she left the bridge and walked to the brightly lighted window of a shop. There she proceeded to count her gains. I was standing a dozen paces from her. She had a fair amount of money in her hand already. She had evidently been begging since the morning. Closing her hand over it she crossed the road and went into a small fancy shop. I went up at once to the door of the shop, which stood wide open, and looked to see what she was doing there.

I saw that she laid the money on the counter and was handed a cup, a plain tea-cup, very much like the one she had broken that morning, to show Ichmenyev and me how wicked she was. The cup was worth about fourpence, perhaps even less. The shopman wrapped it in paper, tied it up and gave it to Nellie, who walked hurriedly out of the shop, looking satisfied.

"Nellie!" I cried when she was close to me, "Nellie!" She started, glanced at me, the cup slipped from her hands, fell on the pavement and was broken. Nellie was pale; but looking at me and realizing that I had seen and understood everything she suddenly blushed. In that blush could be detected an intolerable, agonizing shame. I took her hand and led her home. We had not far to go. We did not utter one word on the way. On reaching home I sat down. Nellie stood before me, brooding and confused, as pale as before, with her eyes fixed on the floor. She could not look at me.

"Nellie, you were begging?"

"Yes," she whispered and her head drooped lower than ever. "You wanted to get money to buy a cup for the one broken this morning?

"Yes…."

"But did I blame you, did I scold you, about that cup? Surely, Nellie, you must see what naughtiness there is in your behaviour? Is it right? Aren't you ashamed? Surely…."

"Yes," she whispered, in a voice hardly audible, and a tear trickled down her cheek.

"Yes…," I repeated after her. "Nellie, darling, if I've not been good to you, forgive me and let us make friends."

She looked at me, tears gushed from her eyes, and she flung herself on my breast.

At that instant Alexandra Semyonovna darted in.

"What? She's home? Again? Ach, Nellie, Nellie, what is the matter with you? Well, it's a good thing you're at home, anyway. Where did you find

her, Ivan Petrovitch?”

I signed to Alexandra Semyonovna not to ask questions and she understood me. I parted tenderly from Nellie, who was still weeping bitterly, and asking kind-hearted Alexandra Semyonovna to stay with her till I returned home, I ran off to Natasha’s. I was late and in a hurry.

That evening our fate was being decided. There was a great deal for Natasha and me to talk over. Yet I managed to slip in a word about Nellie and told her all that had happened in full detail. My story greatly interested Natasha and made a great impression on her, in fact.

“Do you know what, Vanya,” she said to me after a moment’s thought. “I believe she’s in love with you.”

“What … how can that be?” I asked, wondering.

“Yes, it’s the beginning of love, real grown-up love.”

“How can you, Natasha! Nonsense! Why, she’s a child!”

“A child who will soon be fourteen. This exasperation is at your not understanding her love; and probably she doesn’t understand it herself. It’s an exasperation in which there’s a great deal that’s childish, but it’s in earnest, agonizing. Above all she’s jealous of me. You love me so that probably even when you’re at home you’re always worrying, thinking and talking about me, and so don’t take much notice of her. She has seen that and it has stung her. She wants perhaps to talk to you, longs to open her heart to you, doesn’t know how to do it, is ashamed, and doesn’t understand herself; she is waiting for an opportunity, and instead of giving her such an opportunity you keep away from her, run off to me, and even when she was ill left her alone for whole days together. She cries about it; she misses you, and what hurts her most of all is that you don’t notice it. Now, at a moment like this, you have left her alone for my sake. Yes, she’ll be ill to-morrow because of it. And how could you leave her? Go back to her at once….”

“I should not have left her, but….”

“Yes, I know. I begged you to come, myself. But now go.”

“I will, but of course I don’t believe a word of it.”

“Because it’s all so different from other people. Remember her story, think it all over and you will believe, it. She has not grown up as you and I did.”

I got home late, however. Alexandra Semyonovna told me that again Nellie had, as on the previous evening, been crying a great deal and “had fallen asleep in tears,” as before.

“And now I’m going, Ivan Petrovitch, as Filip Filippovitch told me. He’s expecting me, poor fellow.”

I thanked her and sat down by Nellie’s pillow. It seemed dreadful to me myself that I could have left her at such a moment. For a long time, right into the night, I sat beside her, lost in thought…. It was a momentous time for us all.

But I must describe what had been happening during that fortnight.

CHAPTER V

AFTER THE MEMORABLE EVENING I had spent with Prince Valkovsky at the restaurant, I was for some days in continual apprehension on Natasha's account. With what evil was that cursed prince threatening her, and in what way did he mean to revenge himself on her, I asked myself every minute, and I was distracted by suppositions of all sorts. I came at last to the conclusion that his menaces were not empty talk, not mere bluster, and that as long as she was living with Alyosha, the prince might really bring about much unpleasantness for her. He was petty, vindictive, malicious, and calculating, I reflected. It would be difficult for him to forget an insult and to let pass any chance of avenging it. He had in any case brought out one point, and had expressed himself pretty clearly on that point: he insisted absolutely on Alyosha's breaking off his connexion with Natasha, and was expecting me to prepare her for the approaching separation, and so to prepare her that there should be "no scenes, no idyllic nonsense, no Schillerism." Of course, what he was most solicitous for was that Alyosha should remain on good terms with him, and should still consider him an affectionate father. This was very necessary to enable him the more conveniently to get control of Katya's money. And so it was my task to prepare Natasha for the approaching separation. But I noticed a great change in Natasha; there was not a trace now of her old frankness with me; in fact, she seemed to have become actually mistrustful of me. My efforts to console her only worried her; my questions annoyed her more and more, and even vexed her. I would sit beside her sometimes, watching her. She would pace from one corner of the room to the other with her arms folded, pale and gloomy, as though oblivious of everything, even forgetting that I was there beside her. When she Happened to look at me (and she even avoided my eves), there was a gleam of impatient vexation in her face, and she turned away quickly.

I realized that she was perhaps herself revolving some plan of her own for the approaching separation, and how could she think of it without pain and bitterness? And I was convinced that she had already made up her mind to the separation. Yet I was worried and alarmed by her gloomy despair. Moreover sometimes I did not dare to talk to her or try to comfort her, and so waited with terror for the end.

As for her harsh and forbidding manner with me, though that worried me and made me uneasy, yet I had faith in my Natasha’s heart. I saw that she was terribly wretched and that she was terribly overwrought. Any outside interference only excited vexation and annoyance. In such cases, especially, the intervention of friends who know one’s secrets is more annoying than anything. But I very well knew, too, that at the last minute Natasha would come back to me, and would seek comfort in my affection.

Of my conversation with the prince I said nothing, of course; my story would only have excited and upset her more. I only mentioned casually that I had been with the prince at the countess’s and was convinced that he was an awful scoundrel. She did not even question me about him, of which I was very glad; but she listened eagerly to what I told her of my interview with Katya. When she heard my account of it she said nothing about her either, but her pale face flushed, and on that day she seemed especially agitated. I concealed nothing about Katya, and openly confessed that even upon me she had made an excellent impression. Yes, and what was the use of hiding it? Natasha would have guessed, of course, that I was hiding something, and would only have been angry with me. And so I purposely told her everything as fully as possible, trying to anticipate her questions, for in her position I should have felt it hard to ask them; it could scarcely be an easy task to inquire with an air of unconcern into the perfections of one’s rival.

I fancied that she did not know yet that the prince was insisting on Alyosha’s accompanying the countess and Katya into the country, and took great pains to break this to her so as to soften the blow. But what was my amazement when Natasha stopped me at the first word and said that there was no need to comfort her and that she had known of this for the last five days.

“Good heavens!” I cried, “why, who told you?”

“Alyosha!”

“What? He has told you so already?”

“Yes, and I have made up my mind about everything, Vanya,” she added, with a look which clearly, and, as it were, impatiently warned me not to continue the conversation.

Alyosha came pretty often to Natasha’s, but always only for a minute; only on one occasion he stayed with her for several hours at a time, but that was when I was not there. He usually came in melancholy and looked at her

with timid tenderness; but Natasha met him so warmly and affectionately that he always forgot it instantly and brightened up. He had taken to coming to see me very frequently too, almost every day. He was indeed terribly harassed and he could not remain a single moment alone with his distress, and kept running to me every minute for consolation.

What could I say to him? He accused me of coldness, of indifference, even of ill-feeling towards him; he grieved, he shed tears, went off to Katya's, and there was comforted.

On the day that Natasha told me that she knew that Alyosha was going away (it was a week after my conversation with the prince) he ran in to me in despair, embraced me, fell on my neck, and sobbed like a child. I was silent, and waited to see what he would say.

"I'm a low, abject creature, Vanya," he began. "Save me from myself. I'm not crying because I'm low and abject, but because through me Natasha will be miserable. I am leaving her to misery … Vanya, my dear, tell me, decide for me, which of them do I love most, Natasha or Katya?"

"That I can't decide, Alyosha," I answered. "You ought to know better than I…."

"No, Vanya, that's not it; I'm not so stupid as to ask such a question; but the worst of it is that I can't tell myself. I ask myself and I can't answer. But you look on from outside and may see more clearly than I do…. Well, even though you don't know, tell me how it strikes you?"

"It seems to me you love Katya best."

"You think that! No, no, not at all! You've not guessed right. I love Natasha beyond everything. I can never leave her, nothing would induce me; I've told Katya so, and she thoroughly agrees with me. Why are you silent? I saw you smile just now. Ech Vanya, you have never comforted me when I've been too miserable, as I am now…. Good-bye!"

He ran out of the room, having made an extraordinary impression on the astonished Nellie, who had been listening to our conversation in silence. At the time she was still ill, and was lying in bed and taking medicine. Alyosha never addressed her, and scarcely took any notice of her on his visits.

Two hours later he turned up again, and I was amazed at his joyous countenance. He threw himself on my neck again and embraced me.

"The thing's settled," he cried, "all misunderstandings are over. I went straight from you to Natasha. I was upset, I could not exist without her. When I went in I fell at her feet and kissed them; I had to do that, I longed

to do it. If I hadn’t I should have died of misery. She embraced me in silence, crying. Then I told her straight out that I loved Katya more than I love her.”

“What did she say?

“She said nothing, she only caressed me and comforted me — me, after I had told her that! She knows how to comfort one, Ivan Petrovitch! Oh, I wept away all my sadness with her — I told her everything. I told her straight out that I was awfully fond of Katya, but however much I loved her, and whomever I loved, I never could exist without her, Natasha, that I should die without her. No, Vanya, I could not live without her, I feel that; no! And so we made up our minds to be married at once, and as it can’t be done before I go away because it’s Lent now, and we can’t get married in Lent, it shall be when I come back, and that will be the first of June. My father will allow it, there can be no doubt of that. And as for Katya, well, what of it! I can’t live without Natasha, you know…. We’ll be married, and go off there at once to Katya’s …”

Poor Natasha! What it must have cost her to comfort this boy, to bend over him, listen to his confession and invent the fable of their speedy marriage to comfort the naive egoist. Alyosha really was comforted for some days. He used to fly round to Natasha’s because his faint heart was not equal to bearing his grief alone. But yet, as the time of their separation grew nearer, he relapsed into tears and fretting again, and would again dash round to me and pour out his sorrow. Of late he had become so bound up with Natasha that he could not leave her for a single day, much less for six weeks. He was fully convinced, however, up to the very last minute, that he was only leaving her for six weeks and that their wedding would take place on his return. As for Natasha, she fully realized that her whole life was to be transformed, that Alyosha would never come back to her, and that this was how it must be.

The day of their separation was approaching. Natasha was ill, pale, with feverish eyes and parched lips. From time to time she talked to herself, from time to time threw a rapid and searching glance at me. She shed no tears, did not answer my questions, and quivered like a leaf on a tree when she heard Alyosha’s ringing voice; she glowed like a sunset and flew to meet him; kissed and embraced him hysterically, laughed….

Alyosha gazed at her, asking with anxiety after her health, tried to comfort her by saying that he was not going for long, and that then they

would be married. Natasha made a visible effort, controlled herself, and suppressed her tears. She did not cry before him.

Once he said that he must leave her money enough for all the time he was away, and that she need not worry, because his father had promised to give him plenty for the journey. Natasha frowned. When we were left alone I told her I had a hundred and fifty roubles for her in case of need. She did not ask where the money came from. This was two days before Alyosha's departure, and the day before the first and last meeting between Natasha and Katya. Katya had sent a note by Alyosha in which she asked Natasha's permission to visit her next day, and at the same time she wrote to me and begged me, too, to be present at their interview.

I made up my mind that I would certainly be at Natasha's by twelve o'clock (the hour fixed by Katya) regardless of all obstacles; and there were many difficulties and delays. Apart from Nellie, I had for the last week had a great deal of worry with the Ichmenyevs.

Anna Andreyevna sent for me one morning, begging me to throw aside everything and hasten to her at once on account of a matter of urgency which admitted of no delay. When I arrived I found her alone. She was walking about the room in a fever of agitation and alarm, in tremulous expectation of her husband's return. As usual it was a long time before I could get out of her what was the matter and why she was in such a panic, and at the same time it was evident that every moment was precious.

At last after heated and irrelevant reproaches such as "Why didn't I come, why did I leave her all alone in her sorrow?" so that "Goodness knows what had been happening in my absence," she told me that for the last three days Nikolay Sergeyitch had been in a state of agitation "that was beyond all description."

"He's simply not like himself," she said, "he's in a fever, at night he prays in secret on his knees before the ikons. He babbles in his sleep, and by day he's like some one half crazy. We were having soup yesterday, and he couldn't find the spoon set beside him; you ask him one thing and he answers another. He has taken to running out of the house every minute, he always says 'I'm going out on business, I must see the lawyer,' and this morning he locked himself up in his study. 'I have to write an important statement relating to my legal business,' he said. Well, thinks I, how are you going to write a legal statement when you can't find your spoon? I looked through the keyhole, though he was sitting writing, and he all the while

crying his eyes out. A queer sort of business statement he'll write like that, thinks I. Though maybe he's grieving for our Ichmenyevka. So it's quite lost then! While I was thinking that, he suddenly jumped up from the table and flung the pen down on the table; he turned crimson and his eyes flashed, he snatched up his cap and came out to me. 'I'm coming back directly, Anna Andreyevna,' he said. He went out and I went at once to his writing-table. There's such a mass of papers relating to our lawsuit lying there that he never lets me touch it. How many times have I asked him: 'Do let me lift up those papers, if it's only for once, I want to dust the table', 'Don't you dare!' he shouts, and waves his arms. He's become so impatient here in Petersburg and so taken to shouting, So I went up to the table and began to look what paper it was he had been writing. For I knew for a fact he had not taken it with him but had thrust it under another paper when he got up from the table. And here, look, Ivan Petrovitch, dear, what I have found."

And she gave me a sheet of notepaper half covered with writing but so blotted that in some places it was illegible.

Poor old man! From the first line one could tell what and to whom he was writing. It was a letter to Natasha, his adored Natasha. He began warmly and tenderly, he approached her with forgiveness, and urged her to come to him. It was difficult to make out the whole letter, it was written jerkily and unevenly, with numerous blots. It was only evident that the intense feeling which had led him to take up the pen and to write the first lines, full of tenderness, was quickly followed by other emotions. The old man began to reproach his daughter, describing her wickedness in the bitterest terms, indignantly reminding her of her obstinacy, reproaching her for heartlessness in not having once, perhaps, considered how she was treating her father and mother. He threatened her with retribution and a curse for her pride, and ended by insisting that she should return home promptly and submissively, "and only then perhaps after a new life of humility and exemplary behaviour in the bosom of your family we will decide to forgive you," he wrote. It was evident that after the first few lines he had taken his first generous feeling for weakness, had begun to be ashamed of it, and finally, suffering from tortures of wounded pride, he had ended in anger and threats. Anna Andreyevna stood facing me with her hand clasped, waiting in an agony of suspense to hear what I should say about the letter.

I told her quite truly how it struck me, that is that her husband could not bear to go on living without Natasha, and that one might say with certainty that their speedy reconciliation was inevitable, though everything depended on circumstances, expressed at the same time my conjecture that probably the failure of his lawsuit had been a great blow and shock to him, to say nothing of the mortification of his pride at the prince's triumph over him, and his indignation at the way the case had been decided. At such a moment the heart cannot help seeking for sympathy, and he thought with a still more passionate longing of her whom he had always loved more than anyone on earth. And perhaps too he might have heard (for he was on the alert and knew all about Natasha) that Alyosha was about to abandon her. He might realize what she was going through now and how much she needed to be comforted. But yet he could not control himself, considering that he had been insulted and injured by his daughter. It had probably occurred to him that she would not take the first step, that possibly she was not thinking of him and felt no longing for reconciliation. "That's what he must have thought," I said in conclusion, "and that's why he didn't finish his letter, and perhaps it would only lead to fresh mortification which would be felt even more keenly than the first, and might, who knows, put off the reconciliation indefinitely…."

Anna Andreyevna cried as she listened to me. At last, when I said that I had to go at once to Natasha's, and that I was late, she started, and informed me that she had forgotten the chief thing. When she took the paper from the table she had upset the ink over it. One corner was indeed covered with ink, and the old lady was terribly afraid that her husband would find out from this blot that she had been rummaging among his paper when he was out and had read his letter to Natasha. There were good grounds for her alarm; the very fact that we knew his secret might lead him through shame and vexation to persist in his anger, and through pride to be stubborn and unforgiving.

But on thinking it over I told my old friend not to worry herself. He had got up from his letter in such excitement that he might well have no clear recollection of details and would probably now think that he had blotted the letter himself. Comforting Anna Andreyevna in this way, I helped her to put the letter back where it had been before, and I bethought me to speak to her seriously about Nellie. It occurred to me that the poor forsaken orphan whose own mother had been cursed by an unforgiving father might, by the

sad and tragic story of her life and of her mother's death, touch the old man and move him to generous feelings. Everything was ready: everything was ripe in his heart; the longing for his daughter had already begun to get the upper hand of his pride and his wounded sanity. All that was needed was a touch, a favourable chance, and that chance might be provided by Nellie, My old friend listened to me with extreme attention. Her whole face lighted up with hope and enthusiasm. She began at once to reproach me for not having told her before; began impatiently questioning me about Nellie and ended by solemnly promising that she would of her own accord urge her husband to take the orphan girl into their house. She began to feel a genuine affection for Nellie, was sorry to hear that she was ill, questioned me about her, forced me to take the child a pot of jam which she ran herself to fetch from the store-room, brought me five roubles, thinking I shouldn't have enough money for the doctor, and could hardly be pacified when I refused to take it, but consoled herself with the thought that Nellie needed clothes, so that she could be of use to her in that way. Then she proceeded to ransack all her chests and to overhaul all her wardrobe, picking out things she might give to the orphan.

I went off to Natasha's. As I mounted the last flight of the staircase, which, as I have said, went round in a spiral, I noticed at her door a man who was on the point of knocking, but hearing my step he checked himself. Then, after some hesitation he apparently abandoned his intention and ran downstairs. I came upon him at the turn of the stairs, and what was my astonishment when I recognized Ichmenyev. It was very dark on the stairs even in the daytime. He shrank back against the wall to let me pass; and I remember the strange glitter in his eyes as he looked at me intently. I fancied that he flushed painfully. But anyway he was terribly taken aback, and even overcome with confusion.

"Ech, Vanya, why, it's you!" he brought out in a shaky voice. "I've come here to see someone …a copying-clerk…on business…he's lately moved… somewhere this way…but he doesn't live here it seems…I've made a mistake…good-bye."

And he ran quickly down the stairs.

I decided not to tell Natasha as yet of this meeting, but to wait at any rate till Alyosha had gone and she was alone. At the moment she was so unhinged that, though she would have understood and have realized the full importance of the fact, she would not have been capable of taking it in and

feeling it as she would do at the moment of the last overwhelming misery and despair. This was not the moment.

I might have gone to the Ichmenyevs' again that day and I felt a great inclination to do so. But I did not. I fancied my old friend would feel uncomfortable at the sight of me. He might even imagine that my coming was the result of having met him. I did not go to see them till two days later; my old friend was depressed, but he met me with a fairly unconcerned air and talked of nothing but his case.

"And I say, who was it you were going to see so high up, when we met, do you remember — when was it? — the day before yesterday, I fancy," he asked suddenly, somewhat carelessly, though he avoided looking at me.

"A friend of mine lives there," I answered, also keeping my eyes turned away.

"Ah! And I was looking for my clerk, Astafyev; I was told it was that house … but it was a mistake. Well, as I was just telling you…in the Senate the decision…," and so on, and so on.

He positively crimsoned as he turned the subject.

I repeated all this to Anna Andreyevna the same day, to cheer her up. I besought her among other things not to look at him just now with a significant air, not to sigh, or drop hints; in fact, not to betray in any way that she knew of this last exploit of his. My old friend was so surprised and delighted that at first she would not even believe me. She, for her part, told me that she had already dropped a hint to Nikolay Sergeyitch about the orphan, but that he had said nothing, though till then he had always been begging her to let them adopt the child. We decided that next day she should speak to him openly, without any hints or beating about the bush. But next day we were both in terrible alarm and anxiety.

What happened was that Ichmenyev had an interview in the morning with the man who had charge of his case, and the latter had informed him that he had seen the prince, and that, though the prince was retaining possession of Ichmenyevka, yet, "in consequence of certain family affairs," he had decided to compensate the old man and to allow him the sum of ten thousand roubles. The old man came straight from this visit to me, in a terrible state of excitement, his eyes were flashing with fury. He called me, I don't know why, out of my flat on to the stairs and began to insist that I should go at once to the prince and take him a challenge to a duel.

I was so overwhelmed that for a long time I could not collect my ideas. I began trying to dissuade him, But my old friend became so furious that he was taken ill. I rushed into the flat for a glass of water, but when I came back I found Ichmenyev no longer on the stairs.

Next day I went to see him, but he was not at home. He disappeared for three whole days.

On the third day we learnt what had happened. He had hurried off from me straight to the prince's, had not found him at home and had left a note for him. In his letter he said he had heard of the prince's intentions, that he looked upon them as a deadly insult, and on the prince as a low scoundrel, and that he therefore challenged him to a duel, warning him not to dare decline the challenge or he should be publicly disgraced.

Anna Andreyevna told me that he returned home in such a state of perturbation and excitement that he had to go to bed. He had been very tender with her, but scarcely answered her questions, and was evidently in feverish expectation of something. Next morning a letter came by the post. On reading it he had cried out aloud and clutched at his head. Anna Andreyevna was numb with terror. But he at once snatched up his hat and stick and rushed out.

The letter was from the prince. Dryly, briefly, and courteously he informed Ichmenyev that he, Prince Valkovsky, was not bound to give any account to anyone of what he had said to the lawyer, that though he felt great sympathy with Ichmenyev for the loss of his case, he could not feel it just for the man who had lost a case to be entitled to challenge his rival to a duel by way of revenge. As for the "public disgrace" with which he was threatened, the prince begged Ichmenyev not to trouble himself about it, for there would be, and could be, no public disgrace, that the letter would be at once sent to the proper quarter, and that the police would no doubt be equal to taking steps for preserving law and order.

Tchmenyev with the letter in his hand set off at once for he

prince's. Again he was not at home, but the old man learnt from the footman that the prince was probably at Count Nainsky's. Without wasting time on thought he ran to the count's. The count's porter stopped him as he was running up the staircase. Infuriated to the utmost the old man hit him a blow with his stick. He was at once seized, dragged out on to the steps and handed over to a police officer, who took him to the police station. The count was informed.

When the prince, who was present, explained to the old profligate that this was Ichmenyev, the father of the charming young person (the prince had more than once been of service to the old count in such enterprises), the great gentleman only laughed and his wrath was softened. The order was given that Ichmenyev should be discharged. But he was not released till two days after, when (no doubt by the prince's orders) Ichmenyev was informed that the prince had himself begged the count to be lenient to him.

The old man returned home in a state bordering on insanity, rushed to his bed and lay for a whole hour without moving. At last he got up, and to Anna Andreyevna's horror announced that he should curse his daughter for ever and deprive her of his fatherly blessing.

Anna Andreyevna was horrified, but she had to look after the old man, and, hardly knowing what she was doing, she waited upon him all that day and night, wetting his head with vinegar and putting ice on it. He was feverish and delirious. It was past two o'clock in the night when I left them. But next morning Ichmenyev got up, and he came the same day to me to take Nellie home with him for good. I have already described his scene with Nellie. This scene shattered him completely. When he got home he went to bed. All this happened on Good Friday, the day fixed for Katya to see Natasha, and the day before Alyosha and Katya were to leave Petersburg. I was present at the interview. It took place early in the morning, before Ichmenyev's visit, and before Nellie ran away the first time.

CHAPTER VI

ALYOSHA HAD COME an hour before the interview to prepare Natasha. I arrived at the very moment when Katya's carriage drew up at the gate. Katya was accompanied by an old French lady, who after many persuasions and much hesitation had consented at last to accompany her. She had even agreed to let Katya go up to Natasha without her, but only on condition that Alyosha escorted her while she remained in the carriage. Katya beckoned to me, and without getting out of the carriage asked me to call Alyosha down. I found Natasha in tears. Alyosha and she were both crying. Hearing that Katya was already there, she got up from the chair, wiped her eyes, and in great excitement stood up, facing the door. She was dressed that morning all in white. Her dark brown hair was smoothly parted and gathered back in a thick knot. I particularly liked that way of doing her hair. Seeing that I was remaining with her, Natasha asked me, too, to go and meet the visitor.

"I could not get to Natasha's before," said Katya as she mounted the stairs. "I've been so spied on that it's awful. I've been persuading Mme. Albert for a whole fortnight, and at last she consented. And you have never once been to see me, Ivan Petrovitch! I couldn't write to you either, and I don't feel inclined to. One can't explain anything in a letter. And how I wanted to see you…. Good heavens, how my heart is beating."

"The stairs are steep," I answered.

"Yes…the stairs…tell me, what do you think, won't Natasha be angry with me?"

"No, why?"

"Well…why should she after all? I shall see for myself directly. There's no need to ask questions."

I gave her my arm. She actually turned pale, and I believe she was very much frightened. On the last landing she stopped to take breath; but she looked at me and went up resolutely. She stopped once more at the door and whispered to me. "I shall simply go in and say I had such faith in her that I was not afraid to come…. But why am I talking? I'm certain that Natasha is the noblest creature, Isn't she?"

She went in timidly as though she were a culprit, and looked intently at Natasha, who at once smiled at her. Then Katya ran swiftly to her, seized

her hand and pressed her plump little lips to Natasha's. Then without saying a word to Natasha, she turned earnestly and even sternly to Alyosha and asked him to leave us for half an hour alone.

"Don't be cross, Alyosha," she added, "it's because I have a great deal to talk about with Natasha, of very important and serious things, that you ought not to hear. Be good, and go away. But you stay, Ivan Petrovitch. You must hear all our conversation."

"Let us sit down," she said to Natasha when Alyosha had left the room. "I'll sit like this, opposite you, I want to look at you first."

She sat down almost exactly opposite Natasha, and gazed at her for some minutes. Natasha responded with an involuntary smile.

"I have seen your photograph already," said Katya. "Alyosha showed it to me."

"Well, am I like my portrait?"

"You are nicer," said Katya earnestly and decisively. "And I thought you would be nicer."

"Really? And I keep looking at you. How pretty you are!" "Me! How can you…! You darling!" she added, taking Natasha's hand with her own, which trembled, and both relapsed into silence, gazing at each other.

"I must tell you, my angel," Katya broke the silence, "we have only half an hour to be together; Mme. Albert would hardly consent to that, and we have a great deal to discuss…. I want…I must…. Well, I'll simply ask you — do you care very much for Alyosha?"

"Yes, very much."

"If so … if you care very much for Alyosha … then … you must care for his happiness too," she added timidly, in a whisper.

"Yes. I want him to be happy…."

"Yes…. But this is the question — shall I make him happy? Have I the right to say so, for I'm taking him away from you. If you think, and we decide now, that he will be happier with you, then…then…."

"That's settled already, Katya dear. You see yourself that it's all settled," Natasha answered softly, and she bowed her head. It was evidently difficult for her to continue the conversation.

Katya, I fancy, was prepared for a lengthy discussion on the question which of them would make Alyosha happy and which of them ought to give him up. But after Natasha's answer she understood that everything was settled already and there was nothing to discuss. With her pretty lips half

opened, she gazed with sorrow and perplexity at Natasha, still holding her hand.

"And you love him very much?" Natasha asked suddenly. "Yes; and there's another thing I wanted to ask you, and I came on purpose: tell me, what do you love him for exactly?" "I don't know," answered Natasha, and there was a note of bitter impatience in her voice.

"Is he clever; what do you think?" asked Katya.

"No, I simply love him…."

"And I too. I always feel somehow sorry for him."

"So do I," answered Natasha.

"What's to be done with him now? And how he could leave you for me I can't understand!" cried Katya. "Now that I've seen you I can't understand!"

Natasha looked on the ground and did not answer. Katya was silent for a time, and then getting up from her chair she gently embraced her. They embraced each other and both shed tears. Katya sat on the arm of Natasha's chair still holding her in her embrace, and began kissing her hands.

"If you only knew how I love you! " she said, weeping. "Let us be sisters, let us always write to one another … and I will always love you…. I shall love you so…love you so…."

"Did he speak to you of our marriage in June?" asked Natasha.

"Yes. He said you'd consented. That's all just…to comfort him, isn't it?"

"Of course."

"That's how I understood it. I will love him truly, Natasha, and write to you about everything. It seems as though he will soon be my husband; it's coming to that; and they all say so. Darling Natasha,

surely you will go … home now?"

Natasha did not answer, but kissed her warmly in silence.

"Be happy!" she said.

"And … and you … and you too!" said Katya.

At that moment the door opened and Alyosha came in. He had been unable to wait the whole half-hour, and seeing them in each other's arms and both crying, he fell on his knees before Natasha and Katya in impotent anguish.

"Why are you crying?" Natasha said to him. "Because you're parting from me? But it's not for long. Won't you be back in June?"

“And then your marriage,” Katya hastened to add through her tears, also to comfort Alyosha.

“But I can’t leave you, I can’t leave you for one day, Natasha. I shall die without you … You don’t know how precious you are to me now! especially now!”

“Well, then, this is what you must do,” said Natasha, suddenly reviving, “the countess will stay for a little while in Moscow, won’t she?”

“Yes, almost a week,” put in Katya.

“A week! Then what could be better: you’ll escort her to Moscow tomorrow; that will only take one day and then you can come back here at once. When they have to leave Moscow, we will part finally for a month and you will go back to Moscow to accompany them.”

“Yes, that’s it, that’s it … and you will have an extra four days to be together, anyway,” said Katya, enchanted, exchanging a significant glance with Natasha.

I cannot describe Alyosha’s rapture at this new project. He was at once completely comforted. His face was radiant with delight, he embraced Natasha, kissed Katya’s hands, embraced me. Natasha looked at him with a mournful smile, but Katya could not endure it. She looked at me with feverish and glittering eyes, embraced Natasha, and got up to go. At that moment the Frenchwoman appropriately sent a servant to request her to cut the interview short and to tell her that the half-hour agreed upon was over.

Natasha got up. The two stood facing one another, holding hands, and seemed trying to convey with their eyes all that was stored up in their souls.

“We shall never see each other again, I suppose,” said Katya.

“Never, Katya,” answered Natasha.

“Well, then, let us say good-bye!

They embraced each other.

“Do not curse me,” Katya whispered hurriedly, I’ll… always…you may trust me…he shall be happy…. Come, Alyosha, take me down!” she articulated rapidly, taking his arm.

“Vanya,” Natasha said to me in agitation and distress when they had gone, “you follow them … and don’t come back. Alyosha will be with me till the evening, till eight o’clock.But

he can’t stay after. He’s going away. I shall be left alone come at nine o’clock, please!”

When at nine o’clock, leaving Nellie with Alexandra Semyonovna (after the incident with the broken cup), I reached Natasha’s, she was alone and impatiently expecting me. Mavra set the samovar for us. Natasha poured me out tea, sat down on the sofa, and motioned me to come near her. “So everything is over,” she said, looking intently at me. Never shall I forget that look.

“Now our love, too, is over. Half a year of life! And it’s my whole life,” she added, gripping my hands.

Her hand was burning. I began persuading her to wrap herself up and go to bed.

“Presently, Vanya, presently, dear friend. Let me talk and recall things a little. I feel as though I were broken to pieces now…tomorrow I shall see him for the last time at ten o’clock, for the last time!”

“Natasha, you’re in a fever. You’ll be shivering directly.… Do think of yourself.”

“Well, I’ve been waiting for you now, Vanya, for this half-hour, since he went away. And what do you think I’ve been thinking about? What do you think I’ve been wondering? I’ve been wondering, did I love him? Or didn’t I? And what sort of thing our love was? What, do you think it’s absurd, Vanya, that I should only ask myself that now?”

“Don’t agitate yourself, Natasha.”

“You see, Vanya, I decided that I didn’t love him as an equal, as a woman usually loves a man. I loved him like… almost like a mother…. I even fancy that there’s no love in the world in which two love each other like equals. What do you think?”

I looked at her with anxiety, and was afraid that it might be the beginning of brain-fever. Something seemed to carry her away. She seemed to be impelled to speech. Some of her words were quite incoherent, and at times she even pronounced them indistinctly. I was very much alarmed.

“He was mine,” she went on. “Almost from the first time I met him I had an overwhelming desire that he should be mine, mine at once, and that he should not look at anyone, should not know anyone but me…. Katya expressed it very well this morning. I loved him, too, as though I were always sorry for him…. I always had an intense longing, a perfect agony of longing when I was alone that he should be always happy, awfully happy. His face (you know the expression of his face, Vanya), I can’t look at it

without being moved; no one else has such an expression, and when he laughs it makes me turn cold and shudder… Really!…”

“Natasha, listen….”

“People say about him…and you’ve said it, that he has no will and that he’s…not very clever, like a child. And that’s what I loved in him more than anything…. would you believe it? I don’t know, though, whether I loved that one thing; I just simply loved him altogether, and if he’d been different in some way, if he’d had will or been cleverer, perhaps I shouldn’t have loved him so. Do you know, Vanya, I’ll confess one thing to you. Do you remember we had a quarrel three months ago when he’d been to see that — what’s her name — that Minna … I knew of it, I found it out, and would you believe it, it hurt me horribly, and yet at the same time I was somehow pleased at it…. I don’t know why … the very thought that he was amusing himself — or no, it’s not that — that, like a grown-up man together with other men he was running after pretty girls, that he too went to Minnas! I … what bliss I got out of that quarrel; and then forgiving him… oh, my dear one!”

She looked into my face and laughed strangely. Then she sank into thought as though recalling everything. And for a long time she sat like that with a smile on her face, dreaming of the past.

“I loved forgiving him, Vanya,” she went on. Do you know when he left me alone I used to walk about the room, fretting and crying, and then I would think that the worse he treated me the better…yes! And do you know, I always picture him as a little boy. I sit and he lays his head on my knees and falls asleep, and I stroke his head softly and caress him … I always imagined him like that when he was not with me … Listen, Vanya,” she added suddenly, “what a charming creature Katya is!”

It seemed to me that she was lacerating her own wounds on purpose, impelled to this by a sort of yearning, the yearning of despair and suffering…. and how often that is so with a heart that has suffered great loss.

“Katya, I believe, can make him happy,” she went on. She has character and speaks as though she had such conviction, and with him she’s so grave and serious — and always talks to him about such clever things, as though she were grown up. And all the while she’s a perfect child herself! The little dear, the little dear! Oh, I hope they’ll be happy! I hope so, I hope so!”

And her tears and sobs burst out in a perfect torrent. It was quite half an hour before she came to herself and recovered some degree of self-control.

My sweet angel, Natasha! Even that evening in spite of her own grief she could sympathize with my anxieties, when, seeing that she was a little calmer, or, rather, wearied out, thinking to distract her mind I told her about Nellie. We parted that evening late. I stayed till she fell asleep, and as I went out I begged Mavra not to leave her suffering mistress all night.

“Oh … for the end of this misery,” I cried as I walked home.”To have it over quickly, quickly! Any end, anyhow, if only it can be quick!”

Next morning at nine o’clock precisely I was with her again. Alyosha arrived at the same time … to say good-bye. I will not describe this scene, I don’t want to recall it. Natasha seemed to have resolved to control herself, to appear cheerful and unconcerned, but she could not. She embraced Alyosha passionately, convulsively. She did not say much to him, but for a long while she looked intently at him with an agonizing and almost frantic gaze. She hung greedily on every word he uttered, and yet seemed to take in nothing that he said. I remember he begged her to forgive him, to forgive him for his love, and for all the injury he had done her, to forgive his infidelities, his love for Katya, his going away…he spoke incoherently, his tears choked him. He sometimes began suddenly trying to comfort her, saying that he was only going away for a month, or at the most five weeks; that he would be back in the summer, when they would be married, and that his father would consent, and above all that the day after to-morrow he would come back from Moscow, and then they would have four whole days together again, so now they were only being parted for one day…. It was strange! He fully believed in what he said, and that he would certainly return from Moscow in two days…. My then was he so miserable and crying?

At last eleven o’clock struck. It was with difficulty I persuaded him to go. The Moscow train left exactly at midday. There was only an hour left. Natasha said afterwards that she did not remember how she had looked at him for the last time. I remember that she made the sign of the cross over him, kissed him, and hiding her face in her hands rushed back into the room. I had to see Alyosha all the way downstairs to his carriage, or he would certainly have returned and never have reached the bottom.

“You are our only hope,” he said, as we went downstairs. “Dear Vanya! I have injured you, and can never deserve your love; but always be a

brother to me; love her, do not abandon her, write to me about everything as fully, as minutely as possible, write as much as you can. The day after tomorrow I shall be here again for certain; for certain; for certain! But afterwards, when I go away, write to me!”

I helped him into his carriage.

“Till the day after to-morrow,” he shouted to me as he drove off. “For certain!”

With a sinking heart I went upstairs, back to Natasha. She was standing in the middle of the room with her arms folded, gazing at me with a bewildered look, as though she didn’t recognize me. Her coil of hair had fallen to one side; her eyes looked vacant and wandering. Mavra stood in the doorway gazing at her, panic-stricken.

Suddenly Natasha’s eyes flashed.

“Ah! That’s you! You!” she screamed at me. “Now you are left alone! You hate him! You never could forgive him for my loving him… Now you are with me again! He’s come to comfort me again, to persuade me to go back to my father, who flung me off and cursed me. I knew it would be so, yesterday, two months ago…. I won’t, I won’t. I curse them, too… Go away! I can’t bear the sight of you! Go away! Go away!”

I realized that she was frantic, and that the sight of me roused her anger to an intense pitch, I realized that this was bound to be so, and thought it better to go. I sat down. on the top stair outside and waited. From time to time I got up, opened the door, beckoned to Mavra and questioned her. Mavra was in tears.

An hour and a half passed like this. I cannot describe what I went through in that time. My heart sank and ached with an intolerable pain. Suddenly the door opened and Natasha ran out with her cape and hat on. She hardly seemed to know what she was doing, and told me herself afterwards that she did not know where she was running, or with what object.

Before I had time to jump up and hide myself, she saw me and stopped before me as though suddenly struck by something. “I realized all at once,” she told me afterwards, “that in my cruelty and madness I had actually driven you away, you, my friend, my brother, my saviour! And when I saw that you, poor boy, after being insulted by me had not gone away, but were sitting on the stairs, waiting till I should call you back, my God! if you knew, Vanya, what I felt then! It was like a stab at my heart….”

“Vanya, Vanya!” she cried, holding out her hands to me. “You are here!”

And she fell into my arms.

I caught her up and carried her into the room. She was fainting! “What shall I do?” I thought. “She’ll have brain-fever for certain!”

I decided to run for a doctor; something must be done to check the illness. I could drive there quickly. My old German was always at home till two o’clock. I flew to him, begging Mavra not for one minute, not for one second, to leave Natasha, and not to let her go out. Fortune favoured me. A little later and I should not have found my old friend at home. He was already in the street, just coming out of his house, when I met him. Instantly I put him in my cab, before he had time to be surprised, and we hastened back to Natasha.

Yes, fortune did favour me! During the half-hour of my absence something had happened to Natasha which might have killed her outright if the doctor and I had not arrived in the nick of time. Not a quarter of an hour after I had gone Prince Valkovsky had walked in. He had just been seeing the others off and had come to Natasha’s straight from the railway station. This visit had probably been planned and thought out by him long before. Natasha told me that for the first minute she was not even surprised to see the prince. “My brain was in a whirl” she said.

He sat facing her, looking at her with a caressing and pathetic expression.

“My dear,” he said, sighing, “I understand your grief; I know how hard it must be for you at this moment, and so I felt it my duty to come to you. Be comforted, if you can, if only that by renouncing Alyosha you have secured his happiness. But you understand that better than I, for you resolved on your noble action….”

“I sat and listened,” Natasha told me, “but at first I really did not understand him. I only remember that I stared and stared at him. He took my hand and began to press it in his. He seemed to find this very agreeable. I was so beside myself that I never thought of pulling my hand away.”

“You realized,” he went on, “that by becoming Alyosha’s wife you might become an object of hatred to him later on, and you had honourable pride enough to recognize this, and make up your mind…but — I haven’t come here to praise you. I only wanted to tell you that you will never, anywhere, find a truer friend than me! I sympathize with you and am sorry for you. I have been forced to have a share in all this against my will, but I have only

done my duty. Your excellent heart will realize that and make peace with mine…. But it has been harder for me than for you — believe me.”

“Enough, prince,” said Natasha, “leave me in peace.”

“Certainly, I will go directly,” he answered, “but I love you as though you were my own daughter, and you must allow me to come and see you. Look upon me now as though I were your father and allow me be of use to you.”

“I want nothing. Leave me alone,” Natasha interrupted again.

“I know you are proud … But I’m speaking sincerely, from my heart. What do you intend to do now? To make peace with your parents? That would be a good thing. But your father is unjust, proud and tyrannical; forgive me, but that is so. At home you would meet now nothing but reproaches and fresh suffering. But you must be independent, and it is my obligation, my sacred duty to look after you and help you now. Alyosha begged me not to leave you but to be a friend to you. But besides me there are people prepared to be genuinely devoted to you. You will, I hope, allow me to present to you Count Nainsky. He has the best of hearts, he is a kinsman of ours, and I may even say has been the protector of our whole family. He had done a great deal for Alyosha. Alyosha had the greatest respect and affection for him. He is a very powerful man with great influence, an old man, and it is quite possible for a girl, like you, to receive him. I have talked to him about you already. He can establish you, and, if you wish it, find you an excellent position … with one of his relations. I gave him a full and straightforward account of our affair long ago, and I so enlisted his kind and generous feelings that now he keeps begging me to introduce him to you as soon as possible…. He is a man who has a feeling for everything beautiful, believe me — he is a generous old man, highly respected, able to recognize true worth, and indeed, not long ago he behaved in a most generous way to your father in certain case.”

Natasha jumped up as though she had been stung. Now, at last, she understood him.

“Leave me, leave me at once!” she cried.

“But, my dear, you forget, the count may be of use to you father too….”

“My father will take nothing from you. Leave me!” Natasha cried again.

“Oh, how unjust and mistrustful you are! How have I deserved this!” exclaimed the prince, looking about him with some uneasiness. “You will allow me in any case,” he went on taking a large roll out of his pocket, “you

will allow me in any case to leave with you this proof of my sympathy, and especially the sympathy of Count Nainsky, on whose suggestion I am acting. This roll contains ten thousand roubles. Wait a moment, my dear," he said hurriedly, seeing that Natasha had jumped up from her seat angrily. "Listen patiently to everything. You know your father lost a lawsuit against me. This ten thousand will serve as a compensation which…."

"Go away!" cried Natasha, "take your money away! I see through you! Oh, base, base, base, man!"

Prince Valkovsky got up from his chair, pale with anger.

Probably he had come to feel his way, to survey the position, and no doubt was building a great deal on the effect of the ten thousand roubles on Natasha, destitute, and abandoned by everyone. The vile and brutal man had often been of service to Count Nainsky, a licentious old reprobate, in enterprises of this kind. But he hated Natasha, and realizing that things were not going smoothly he promptly changed his tone, and with spiteful joy hastened to insult her, that he might anyway not have come for nothing.

"That's not the right thing at all, my dear, for you to lose you temper," he brought out in a voice quivering with impatience to enjoy the effect of his insult, "that's not the right thing at all You are offered protection and you turn up your little nose… Don't you realize that you ought to be grateful to me? I might have put you in a penitentiary long ago, as the father of the young man you have led astray, but I haven't done it, he-he-he!

But by now we had come in. Hearing the voices while still in the kitchen, I stopped the doctor for a second and overheard the prince's last sentence. It was followed by his loathsome chuckle and a despairing cry from Natasha. "Oh, my God!" At that moment I opened the door and rushed at the prince.

I spat in his face, and slapped him on the cheek with all my might. He would have flung himself upon me, but seeing that there were two of us he took to his heels snatching up the roll of notes from the table. Yes, he did that. I saw it myself. I threw after him the rolling-pin, which I snatched from the kitchen table…. When I ran back into the room I saw the doctor was supporting Natasha, who was writhing and struggling out of his arms as though in convulsions. For a long time we could not soothe her; at last we succeeded in getting her to bed; she seemed to be in the delirium of brain-fever.

"Doctor, what's the matter with her? I asked with a sinking heart.

“Wait a little,” he answered, “I must watch the attack more closely and then form my conclusions… but speaking generally things are very bad. It may even end in brain-fever…. But we will take measures however….”

A new idea had dawned upon me. I begged the doctor to remain with Natasha for another two or three hours, and made him promise not to leave her for one minute. He promised me and I ran home.

Nellie was sitting in a corner, depressed and uneasy, and she looked at me strangely. I must have looked strange myself.

I took her hand, sat down on the sofa, took her on my knee, and kissed her warmly. She flushed.

“Nellie, my angel!” I said to her, “would you like to be our salvation? Would you like to save us all?”

She looked at me in amazement.

“Nellie, you are my one hope now! There is a father, you’ve seen him and know him. He has cursed his daughter, and he came yesterday to ask you to take his daughter’s place. Now she, Natasha (and you said you loved her), has been abandoned by the man she loved, for whose sake she left her father. He’s the son of that prince who came, do you remember one evening, to see me, and found you alone, and you ran away from him and were ill afterwards…you know him, don’t you? He’s a wicked man!”

“I know,” said Nellie, trembling and turning pale.

“Yes, he’s a wicked man. He hates Natasha because his son Alyosha wanted to marry her. Alyosha went away to-day, and an hour later his father went to Natasha and insulted her, and threatened to put her in a penitentiary, and laughed at her. Do you understand me, Nellie?”

Her black eyes flashed, but she dropped them at once.

“I understand,” she whispered, hardly audibly.

“Now Natasha is alone, ill. I’ve left her with our doctor while I ran to you myself. Listen, Nellie, let us go to Natasha’s father. You don’t like him, you didn’t want to go to him. But now let us go together. We’ll go in and I’ll tell them that you want to stay with them now and to take the place of their daughter Natasha. Her father is ill now, because he has cursed Natasha, and because Alyosha’s father sent him a deadly insult the other day. He won’t hear of his daughter now, but he loves her, he loves her, Nellie, and wants to make peace with her. I know that. I know all that! That is so. Do you hear, Nellie?”

“I hear,” she said in the same whisper.

I spoke to her with my tears flowing. She looked timidly at me.

“Do you believe it?”

“Yes.”

“So I’ll go in with you, I’ll take you in and they’ll receive you, make much of you and begin to question you. Then I’ll turn the conversation so that they will question you about your past life; about your mother and your grandfather. Tell them, Nellie, everything, just as you told it to me. Tell them simply, and don’t keep anything back. Tell them how your mother was abandoned by a wicked man, how she died in a cellar at Mme. Bubnov’s, how your mother and you used to go about the streets begging, what she said, and what she asked you to do when she was dying… Tell them at the same time about your grandfather, how he wouldn’t forgive your mother, and how she sent you to him just before her death how she died. Tell them everything, everything! And when you tell them all that, the old man will feel it all, in his heart, too. You see, he knows Alyosha has left her to-day and she is left insulted and injured, alone and helpless, with no one to protect her from the insults of her enemy. He knows all that … Nellie, save Natasha! Will you go?”

“Yes,” she answered, drawing a painful breath, and she looked at me with a strange, prolonged gaze. There was something like reproach in that gaze, and I felt it in my heart.

But I could not give up my idea. I had too much faith in it. I took Nellie by the arm and we went out. It was past two o’clock in the afternoon. A storm was coming on. For some time past the weather had been hot and stifling, but now we heard in the distance the first rumble of early spring thunder. The wind swept through the dusty streets.

We got into a droshky. Nellie did not utter a word all the way, she only looked at me from time to time with the same strange and enigmatic eyes. Her bosom was heaving, and, holding her on the droshky, I felt against my hand the thumping of her little heart, which seemed as though it would leap out of her body.

CHAPTER VII

THE WAY SEEMED endless to me. At last we arrived and I went in to my old friends with a sinking at my heart. I did not know what my leave-taking would be like, but I knew that at all costs I must not leave their house without having won forgiveness and reconciliation.

It was by now past three. My old friends were, as usual, sitting alone. Nikolay Sergeyitch was unnerved and ill, and lay pale and exhausted, half reclining in his comfortable easy-chair, with his head tied up in a kerchief. Anna Andreyevna was sitting beside him, from time to time moistening his forehead with vinegar, and continually peeping into his face with a questioning and commiserating expression, which seemed to worry and even annoy the old man. He was obstinately silent, and she dared not be the first to speak. Our sudden arrival surprised them both. Anna Andreyevna, for some reason, took fright at once on seeing me with Nellie, and for the first minute looked at us as though she suddenly felt guilty.

“You see, I’ve brought you my Nellie,” I said, going in.

She has made up her mind, and now she has come to you of her own accord. Receive her and love her….”

The old man looked at me suspiciously, and from his eyes alone one could divine that he knew all, that is that Natasha was now alone, deserted, abandoned, and by now perhaps insulted. He was very anxious to learn the meaning of our arrival, and he looked inquiringly at both of us. Nellie was trembling, and tightly squeezing my hand in hers she kept her eyes on the ground and only from time to time stole frightened glances about her like a little wild creature in a snare. But Anna Andreyevna soon recovered herself and grasped the situation. She positively pounced on Nellie, kissed her, petted her, even cried over her, and tenderly made her sit beside her, keeping the child’s hand in hers. Nellie looked at her askance with curiosity and a sort of wonder. But after fondling Nellie and making her sit beside her, the old lady did not know what to do next and began looking at me with naive expectation. The old man frowned, almost suspecting why I had brought Nellie. Seeing that I was noticing his fretful expression and frowning brows, he put his hand to his head and said:

“My head aches, Vanya.”

All this time we sat without speaking. I was considering how to begin. It was twilight in the room, a black storm-cloud was coming over the sky, and there came again a rumble of thunder in the distance.

“We’re getting thunder early this spring,” said the old man. But I remember in ‘37 there were thunderstorms even earlier.”

Anna Andreyevna sighed.

“Shall we have the samovar?” she asked timidly, but no one answered, and she turned to Nellie again.

“What is your name, my darling?” she asked.

Nellie uttered her name in a faint voice, and her head drooped lower than ever. The old man looked at her intently.

“The same as Elena, isn’t it?” Anna Andreyevna went on with more animation.

“Yes,” answered Nellie.

And again a moment of silence followed.

“Praskovya Andreyevna’s sister had a niece whose name was Elena; and she used to be called Nellie, too, I remember,” observed Nikolay Sergeyitch.

“And have you no relations, my darling, neither father nor mother?” Anna Andreyevna asked again.

“No,” Nellie jerked out in a timid whisper.

“I’d heard so, I’d heard so. Is it long since your mother died?”

“No, not long.”

“Poor darling, poor little orphan,” Anna Andreyevna went on, looking at her compassionately.

The old man was impatiently drumming on the table with his fingers.

“Your mother was a foreigner, wasn’t she? You told me so, didn’t you, Ivan Petrovitch?” the old lady persisted timidly. Nellie stole a glance at me out of her black eyes, as though begging me to help her. She was breathing in hard, irregular gasps.

“Her mother was the daughter of an Englishman and a Russian woman; so she was more a Russian, Anna Andreyevna. Nellie was born abroad.”

“Why, did her mother go to live abroad when she was married?”

Nellie suddenly flushed crimson. My old friend guessed at once, that she had blundered, and trembled under a wrathful glance from her husband. He looked at her severely and turned away to the window.

“Her mother was deceived by a base, bad man,” he brought out suddenly, addressing Anna Andreyevna. “She left her father on his account, and gave her father’s money into her lover’s keeping; and he got it from her by a trick, took her abroad, robbed and deserted her. A good friend remained true to her and helped her up to the time of his death. And when he died she came, two years ago, back to Russia, to her father. Wasn’t that what you told us, Vanya?” he asked me abruptly.

Nellie got up in great agitation, and tried to move towards the door.

“Come here, Nellie,” said the old man, holding out his hand to her at last. “Sit here, sit beside me, here, sit down.”

He bent down, kissed her and began softly stroking her head. Nellie was quivering all over, but she controlled herself. Anna Andreyevna with emotion and joyful hope saw how her Nikolay Sergeyitch was at last beginning to take to the orphan.

“I know, Nellie, that a wicked man, a wicked, unprincipled man ruined your mother, but I know, too, that she loved and honoured her father,” the old man, still stroking Nellie’s head, brought out with some excitement, unable to resist throwing down this challenge to us.

A faint flush suffused his pale cheeks, but he tried not to look at us.

“Mother loved grandfather better than he loved her,” Nellie asserted timidly but firmly. She, too, tried to avoid looking at anyone.

“How do you know?” the old man asked sharply, as impulsive as a child, though he seemed ashamed of his impatience.

“I know,” Nellie answered jerkily. “He would not receive mother, and … turned her away….”

I saw that Nikolay Sergeyitch was on the point of saying something, making some reply such as that the father had good reason not to receive her, but he glanced at us and was silent.

“Why, where were you living when your grandfather wouldn’t receive you?” asked Anna Andreyevna, who showed a sudden obstinacy and desire to continue the conversation on that subject.

“When we arrived we were a long while looking for grandfather,” answered Nellie; “but we couldn’t find him anyhow. Mother told me then that grandfather had once been very rich, and meant to build a factory, but that now he was very poor because the man that mother went away with had taken all grandfather’s money from her and wouldn’t give it back. She told me that herself.”

“Hm!” responded the old man.

“And she told me, too,” Nellie went on, growing more and more earnest, and seeming anxious to answer Nikolay Sergeyitch, though she addressed Anna Andreyevna, “she told me that grandfather was very angry with her, and that she had behaved very wrongly to him; and that she had no one in the whole world but grandfather. And when she told me this she cried. ‘He will never forgive me,’ she said when first we arrived, but perhaps he will see you and love you, and for your sake he will forgive me,’ Mother was very fond of me, and she always used to kiss me when she said this, and she was very much afraid of going to grandfather. She taught me to pray for grandfather, she used to pray herself, and she told me a great deal of how she used to live in old days with grandfather, and how grandfather used to love her above everything. She used to play the piano to him and read to him in the evening, and grandfather used to kiss her and give her lots of presents. He used to give her everything; so that one day they had a quarrel on mother’s nameday, because grandfather thought mother didn’t know what present he was going to give her, and mother had found out long before. Mother wanted ear-rings, and grandfather tried to deceive her and told her it was going to be a brooch, not ear-rings; and when he gave her the earrings and saw that mother knew that it was going to be ear-rings and not a brooch, he was angry that mother had found out and wouldn’t speak to her for half the day, but afterwards he came of his own accord to kiss her and ask her forgiveness.”

Nellie was carried away by her story, and there was a flush on her pale, wan little cheek. It was evident that more than once in their corner in the basement the mother had talked to her little Nellie of her happy days in the past, embracing and kissing the little girl who was all that was left to her in life, and weeping over her, never suspecting what a powerful effect these stories had on the frail child’s morbidly sensitive and prematurely developed feelings.

But Nellie seemed suddenly to check herself. She looked mistrustfully around and was mute again. The old man frowned and drummed on the table again. A tear glistened in Anna Andreyevna’s eye, and she silently wiped it away with her handkerchief.

“Mother came here very ill,” Nellie went on in a low voice. Her chest was very bad. We were looking for grandfather a long time and we couldn’t find him; and we took a corner in an underground room.”

“A corner, an invalid!” cried Anna Andreyevna.

“Yes…a corner…,” answered Nellie. “Mother was poor. Mother told me,” she added with growing earnestness, “that it’s no sin to be poor, but it’s a sin to be rich and insult people, and that God was punishing her.”

“It was in Vassilyevsky Island you lodged? At Mme. Bubnov’s, wasn’t it?” the old man asked, turning to me, trying to throw a note of unconcern into his question. He spoke as though he felt it awkward to remain sitting silent.

“No, not there. At first it was in Myestchansky Street,” Nellie answered. “It was very dark and damp there,” she added after a pause, “and mother got very ill there, though she was still walking about then. I used to wash the clothes for her, and she used to cry. There used to be an old woman living there, too, the widow of a captain; and there was a retired clerk, and he always came in drunk and made a noise every night. I was dreadfully afraid of him. Mother used to take me into her bed and hug me, and she trembled all over herself while he used to shout and swear. Once he tried to beat the captain’s widow, and she was a very old lady and walked with a stick. Mother was sorry for her, and she stood up for her; the man hit mother, too, and I hit him….”

Nellie stopped. The memory agitated her; her eyes were blazing.

“Good heavens!” cried Anna Andreyevna, entirely absorbed in the story and keeping her eyes fastened upon Nellie, who addressed her principally.

“Then mother went away from there,” Nellie went on, “and took me with her. That was in the daytime. We were walking about the streets till it was quite evening, and mother was walking about and crying all the time, and holding my hand. I was very tired. We had nothing to eat that day. And mother kept talking to herself and saying to me: ‘Be poor, Nellie, and when I die don’t listen to anyone or anything. Don’t go to anyone, be alone and poor, and work, and if you can’t get work beg alms, don’t go to him.’ It was dusk when we crossed a big street; suddenly mother cried out, ‘Azorka! Azorka!’ And a big dog, whose hair had all come off, ran up to mother, whining and jumping up to her. And mother was frightened; she turned pale, cried out, and fell on her knees before a tall old man, who walked with a stick, looking at the ground. And the tall old man was grandfather, and he was so thin and in such poor clothes. That was the first time I saw grandfather. Grandfather was very much frightened, too, and turned very pale, and when he saw mother kneeling before him and embracing his feet

he tore himself away, pushed mother off, struck the pavement with his stick, and walked quickly away from us. Azorka stayed behind and kept whining and licking mother, and then ran after grandfather and took him by his coat-tail and tried to pull him back. And grandfather hit him with his stick. Azorka was going to run back to us, but grandfather called to him; he ran after grandfather and kept whining. And mother lay as though she were dead; a crowd came round and the police came. I kept calling out and trying to get mother up. She got up, looked round her, and followed me. I led her home. People looked at us a long while and kept shaking their heads."

Nellie stopped to take breath and make a fresh effort. She was very pale, but there was a gleam of determination in her eyes. It was evident that she had made up her mind at last to tell all. There was something defiant about her at this moment.

"Well," observed Nikolay Sergeyitch in an unsteady voice, with a sort of irritable harshness. "Well, your mother had injured her father, and he had reason to repulse her."

"Mother told me that, too," Nellie retorted sharply; "and as she walked home she kept saying 'That's your grandfather, Nellie, and I sinned against him; and he cursed me, and that's why God has punished me.' And all that evening and all the next day she kept saying this. And she talked as though she didn't know what she was saying…."

The old man remained silent.

"And how was it you moved into another lodging? " asked Anna Andreyevna, still crying quietly.

"That night mother fell ill, and the captain's widow found her a lodging at Mme. Bubnov's, and two days later we moved, and the captain's widow with us; and after we'd moved mother was quite ill and in bed for three weeks, and I looked after her. All our money had gone, and we were helped by the captain's widow and Ivan Alexandritch."

"The coffin-maker, their landlord," I explained.

"And when mother got up and began to go about she told me all about Azorka."

Nellie paused. The old man seemed relieved to turn the conversation to the dog.

"What did she tell you about Azorka?" he asked, bending lower in his chair, so as to look down and hide his face more completely.

“She kept talking to me about grandfather,” answered Nellie; and when she was ill she kept talking about him, and as soon as she began to get better she used to tell me how she used to live… Then she told me about Azorka, because some horrid boys tried once to drown Azorka in the river outside the town, and mother gave them some money and bought Azorka. And when grandfather saw Azorka he laughed very much. Only Azorka ran away. Mother cried; grandfather was frightened and promised a hundred roubles to anyone who would bring back Azorka. Two days after, Azorka was brought back. Grandfather gave a hundred roubles for him, and from that time he got fond of Azorka. And mother was so fond of him that she used even to take him to bed with her. She told me that Azorka had been used to performing in the street with some actors, and knew how to do his part, and used to have a monkey riding on his back, and knew how to use a gun and lots of other things. And when mother left him, grandfather kept Azorka with him and always went out with him, so that as soon as mother saw Azorka in the street she guessed at once that grandfather was close by.”

The old man had evidently not expected this about Azorka, and he scowled more and more. He asked no more questions.

“So you didn’t see your grandfather again?” asked Anna Andreyevna.

“Yes, when mother had begun to get better I met grandfather again. I was going to the shop to get some bread. Suddenly I saw a man with Azorka; I looked closer and saw it was grandfather. I stepped aside and squeezed up against the wall, Grandfather looked at me; he looked so hard at me and was so terrible that I was awfully afraid of him, and walked by. Azorka remembered me, and began to jump about me and lick my hands. I went home quickly, looked back, and grandfather went into the shop. Then I thought, ‘he’s sure to make inquiries,’ and I was more frightened than ever, and when I went home I said nothing to mother for fear she should be ill again. I didn’t go to the shop next day; I said I had a headache; and when I went the day after I, met no one; I was terribly frightened so that I ran fast. But a day later I went, and I’d hardly got round the corner when grandfather stood before me with Azorka. I ran and turned into another street and went to the shop a different way; but I suddenly came across him again, and was so frightened that I stood quite still and couldn’t move. Grandfather stood before me and looked at me a long time and afterwards stroked my head, took me by the hand and led me along, while Azorka followed behind wagging his tail. Then I saw that grandfather couldn’t walk properly, but

kept leaning on his stick, and his hands were trembling all the time. He took me to a stall at the corner of the street where ginger-bread and apples were sold. Grandfather bought a ginger-bread cock and a fish, and a sweetmeat, and an apple; and when he took the money out of his leather purse, his hands shook dreadfully and he dropped a penny, and I picked it up. He gave me that penny and gave me the ginger-bread, and stroked me on the head; but still he said nothing, but walked away.

"Then I went to mother and told her all about grandfather, and how frightened I had been of him at first and had hidden from him. At first mother didn't believe me, but afterwards she was so delighted that she asked me questions all the evening, kissed me and cried; and when I had told her all about it she told me for the future not to be afraid of him, and that grandfather must love me since he came up to me on purpose. And she told me to be nice to grandfather and to talk to him. And next day she sent me out several times in the morning, though I told her that grandfather never went out except in the evening. She followed me at a distance, hiding behind a corner. Next day she did the same, but grandfather didn't come, and it rained those days, and mother caught a bad cold coming down to the gate with me, and had to go to bed again.

"Grandfather came a week later, and again bought me a gingerbread, fish and an apple, and said nothing that time either. And when he walked away I followed him quietly, because I had made up my mind beforehand that I'd find out where grandfather lived and tell mother. I walked a long way behind on the other side of the street so that grandfather didn't see me. And he lived very far away, not where he lived afterwards and died, but in another big house in Gorohovoy Street, on the fourth storey. I found out all that, and it was late when I got home. Mother was horribly frightened, for she didn't know where I was. When I told her she was delighted again and wanted to go to see grandfather next day, The next day she began to think and be afraid, and went on being afraid for three whole days, so she didn't go at all. And then she called me and said, 'Listen, Nellie, I'm ill now and can't go, but I've written a letter to your grandfather, go to him and give him the letter. And see, Nellie, how he reads it, and what he says, and what he'll do; and you kneel down and kiss him and beg him to forgive your mother.' And mother cried dreadfully and kept kissing me, and making the sign of the cross and praying, and she made me kneel down with her before

the ikon, and though she was very ill she went with me as far as the gate; and when I looked round she was still standing watching me go…

"I went to grandfather's and opened the door; the door had no latch. Grandfather was sitting at the table eating bread and potatoes; and Azorka stood watching him eat and wagging his tail. In that lodging, too, the windows were low and dark, and there, too, there was only one table and one chair. And he lived alone. I went in, and he was so frightened that he turned white and began to tremble. I was frightened, too, and didn't say a word. I only went up to the table and put down the letter. When grandfather saw the letter he was so angry that he jumped up, lifted his stick and shook it at me; but he didn't hit me, he only led me into the passage and pushed me. Before I had got down the first flight of stairs he opened the door again and threw the letter after me without opening it. I went home and told mother all about it. Then mother was ill in bed again…."

CHAPTER VIII

AT THAT MOMENT there was a rather loud peal of thunder, and heavy raindrops pattered on the window-panes. The room grew dark. Anna Andreyevna seemed alarmed and crossed herself. We were all startled.

"It will soon be over," said the old man, looking towards the window. Then he got up and began walking up and down the room.

Nellie looked askance at him. She was in a state of extreme abnormal excitement. I saw that, though she seemed to avoid looking at me.

"Well, what next?" asked the old man, sitting down in his easy-chair again.

Nellie looked round timidly.

"So you didn't see your grandfather again?"

"Yes, I did…"

"Yes, yes! Tell us, darling, tell us," Anna Andreyevna put in hastily.

"I didn't see him for three weeks," said Nellie, "not till it was quite winter. It was winter then and the snow had fallen. When I met grandfather again at the same place I was awfully pleased…for mother was grieving that he didn't come. When I saw him I ran to the other side of the street on purpose that he might see I ran away from him. Only I looked round and saw that grandfather was following me quickly, and then ran to overtake me, and began calling out to me, 'Nellie, Nellie!' And Azorka was running after me. I felt sorry for him and I stopped. Grandfather came up, took me by the hand and led me along, and when he saw I was crying, he stood still, looked at me, bent down and kissed me. Then he saw that my shoes were old, and he asked me if I had no others. I told him as quickly as I could that mother had no money, and that the people at our lodging only gave us something to eat out of pity. Grandfather said nothing, but he took me to the market and bought me some shoes and told me to put them on at once, and then he took me home with him, and went first into a shop and bought a pie and two sweetmeats, and when we arrived he told me to eat the pie; and he looked at me while I ate it, and then gave me the sweetmeats. And Azorka put his paws on the table and asked for some pie, too; I gave him some, and grandfather laughed. Then he took me, made me stand beside him, began stroking my head, and asked me whether I had learnt anything and what I knew. I answered him, and he told me whenever I could to come at three

o’clock in the afternoon, and that he would teach me himself. Then he told me to turn away and look out of the window till he told me to look round again. I did as he said, but I peeped round on the sly, and I saw him unpick the bottom corner of his pillow and take out four roubles. Then he brought them to me and said, ‘That’s only for you.’ I was going to take them, but then I changed my mind and said, ‘If it’s only for me I won’t take them.’ Grandfather was suddenly angry, and said to me, ‘Well do as you please, go away.’ I went away, and he didn’t kiss me.

“When I got home I told mother everything. And mother kept getting worse and worse. A medical student used to come and see the coffin-maker; he saw mother and told her to take medicine.

“I used to go and see grandfather often. Mother told me to. Grandfather bought a New Testament and a geography book, and began to teach me; and sometimes he used to tell me what countries there are, and what sort of people live in them, and all the seas, and how it used to be in old times, and how Christ forgave us all. When I asked him questions he was very much pleased, and so I often asked him questions, and he kept telling me things, and he talked a lot about God. And sometimes we didn’t have lessons, but played with Azorka. Azorka began to get fond of me and I taught him to jump over a stick, and grandfather used to laugh and pat me on the head. Only grandfather did not often laugh. One time he would talk a great deal, and then he would suddenly be quiet and seem to fall asleep, though his eyes were open. And so he would sit till it was dark, and when it was dark he would become so dreadful, so old…. Another time I’d come and find him sitting in his chair thinking, and he’d hear nothing; and Azorka would be lying near him. I would wait and wait and cough; and still grandfather wouldn’t look round. And so I’d go away. And at home mother would be waiting for me.

She would he there, and I would tell her everything, everything, so that night would come on — while I’d still be telling her and she’d still be listening about grandfather; what he’d done that day, and what he’d said to me, the stories he had told and the lessons he’d given me. And when I told her how I’d made Azorka jump over a stick and how grandfather had laughed, she suddenly laughed, too, and she would laugh and be glad for a long time and make me repeat it again and then begin to pray. And I was always thinking that mother loved grandfather so much and grandfather didn’t love her at all, and when I went to grandfather’s I told him on

purpose how much mother loved him and was always asking about him. He listened, looking so angry, but still he listened and didn't say a word. Then I asked him why it was that mother loved him so much that she was always asking about him, while he never asked about mother. Grandfather got angry and turned me out of the room. I stood outside the door for a little while; and he suddenly opened the door and called me in again; and still he was angry and silent. And afterwards when we began reading the Gospel I asked him again why Jesus Christ said 'Love one another and forgive injuries' and yet he wouldn't forgive mother. Then he jumped up and said that mother had told me that, put me out again and told me never to dare come and see him again. And I said that I wouldn't come and see him again anyhow, and went away…. And next day grandfather moved from his lodgings."

"I said the rain would soon he over; see it is over, the sun's come out… look, Vanya," said Nikolay Sergeyitch, turning to the window.

Anna Andreyevna turned to him with extreme surprise, and suddenly there was a flash of indignation in the eyes of the old lady, who had till then been so meek and over-awed. Silently she took Nellie's hand and made her sit on her knee.

"Tell me, my angel" she said, "I will listen to you. Let the hardhearted…."

She burst into tears without finishing. Nellie looked questioningly at me, as though in hesitation and dismay. The old man looked at me, seemed about to shrug his shoulders, but at once turned away.

"Go on, Nellie," I said.

"For three days I didn't go to grandfather," Nellie began again; "and at that time mother got worse. All our money was gone and we had nothing to buy medicine with, and nothing to eat, for the coffin-maker and his wife had nothing either, and they began to scold us for living at their expense. Then on the third day I got up and dressed. Mother asked where I was going. I said to grandfather to ask for money, and she was glad, for I had told mother already about how he had turned me out, and had told her that I didn't want to go to him again, though she cried and tried to persuade me to go. I went and found out that grandfather had moved, so I went to look for him in the new house. As soon as I went in to see him in his new lodging he jumped up, rushed at me and stamped; and I told him at once that mother was very ill, that we couldn't get medicine without money, fifty kopecks,

and that we'd nothing to eat…. Grandfather shouted and drove me out on to the stairs and latched the door behind me. But when he turned me out I told him I should sit on the stairs and not go away until he gave me the money. And I sat down on the stairs. In a little while he opened the door, and seeing I was sitting there he shut it again. Then, after a long time he opened it again, saw me, and shut it again. And after that he opened it several times and looked out. Afterwards he came out with Azorka, shut the door and passed by me without saying a word. And I didn't say a word, but went on sitting there and sat there till it got dark."

"My darling!" cried Anna Andreyevna, "but it must have been so cold on the staircase!"

"I had on a warm coat," Nellie answered.

"A coat, indeed! … Poor darling, what miseries you've been through! What did he do then, your grandfather?"

Nellie's lips began to quiver, but she made an extraordinary effort and controlled herself.

"He came back when it was quite dark and stumbled against me as he came up, and cried out, 'Who is it?' I said it was I. He must have thought I'd gone away long ago, and when he saw I was still there he was very much surprised, and for a long while he stood still before me. Suddenly he hit the steps with his stick, ran and opened his door, and a minute later brought me out some coppers and threw them to me on the stairs.

"'Here, take this!' he cried. 'That's all I have, take it and tell your mother that I curse her.' And then he slammed the door. The money rolled down the stairs. I began picking it up in the dark. And grandfather seemed to understand that he'd thrown the money about on the stairs, and that it was difficult for me to find it in the dark; he opened the door and brought out a candle, and by candlelight I soon picked it up. And grandfather picked some up, too, and told me that it was seventy kopecks altogether, and then he went away. When I got home I gave mother the money and told her everything; and mother was worse, and I was ill all night myself, and next day, too, I was all in a fever. I was angry with grandfather. I could think of nothing else; and when mother was asleep I went out to go to his lodging, and before I got there I stopped on the bridge, and then he passed by…."

"Arhipov," I said. "The man I told you about, Nikolay Sergeyitch — the man who was with the young merchant at Mme. Bubnov's and who got a beating there. Nellie saw him then for the first time…. Go on, Nellie."

“I stopped him and asked him for some money, a silver rouble. He said, ‘A silver rouble?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ Then he laughed and said, ‘Come with me.’ I didn’t know whether to go. An old man in gold spectacles came up and heard me ask for the silver rouble. He stooped down and asked me why I wanted so much. I told him that mother was ill and that I wanted as much for medicine. He asked where we lived and wrote down the address, and gave me a rouble note. And when the other man saw the gentleman in spectacles he walked away and didn’t ask me to come with him any more. I went into a shop and changed the rouble. Thirty kopecks I wrapped up in paper and put apart for mother, and seventy kopecks I didn’t put in paper, but held it in my hand on purpose and went to grandfather’s. When I got there I opened the door, stood in the doorway, and threw all the money into the room, so that it rolled about the floor.

“‘There, take your money’ I said to him. ‘Mother doesn’t want it since you curse her.’ Then I slammed the door and ran away at once.”

Her eyes flashed, and she looked with naive defiance at the old man.

“Quite right, too,” said Anna Andreyevna, not looking at Nikolay Sergeyitch and pressing Nellie in her arms. “It served him right. Your grandfather was wicked and cruel-hearted….”

“H’m!” responded Nikolay Sergeyitch.

“Well, what then, what then?” Anna Andreyevna asked impatiently.

“I left off going to see grandfather and he left off coming to meet me,” said Nellie.

“Well, how did you get on then — your mother and you? Ah, poor things, poor things!”

“And mother got worse still, and she hardly ever got up,” Nellie went on, and her voice quivered and broke. “We had no more money, and I began to go out with the captain’s widow. She used to go from house to house, and stop good people in the street, too, begging; that was how she lived. She used to tell me she wasn’t a beggar, that she had papers to show her rank, and to show that she was poor, too. She used to show these papers, and people used to give her money for that. She used to tell me that there was no disgrace in begging from all. I used to go out with her, and people gave us money, and that’s how we lived. Mother found out about it because the other lodgers blamed her for being a beggar, and Mme. Bubnov herself came to mother and said she’d better let me go for her instead of begging in the street. She’d been to see mother before and brought her money, and

when mother wouldn’t take it from her she said why was she so proud, and sent her things to eat. And when she said this about me mother was frightened and began to cry; and Mme. Bubnov began to swear at her, for she was drunk, and told her that I was a beggar anyway and used to go out with the captain’s widow,’ and that evening she turned the captain’s widow out of the house. When mother heard about it she began to cry; then she suddenly got out of bed, dressed, took my hand and led me out with her. Ivan Alexandritch tried to stop her, but she wouldn’t listen to him, and we went out. Mother could scarcely walk, and had to sit down every minute or two in the street, and I supported her. Mother kept saying that she would go to grandfather and that I was to take her there, and by then it was quite night. Suddenly we came into a big street; there a lot of carriages were waiting outside one of the houses, and a great many people were coming out; there were lights in all the windows and one could hear music. Mother stopped, clutched me and said to me then, ‘Nellie, be poor, be poor all your life; don’t go to him, whoever calls you, whoever comes to you. You might be there, rich and finely dressed, but I don’t want that. They are cruel and wicked, and this is what I bid you: remain poor, work, and ask for alms, and if anyone comes after you say ‘I won’t go with you!’ That’s what mother said to me when she was ill, and I want to obey her all my life,” Nellie added, quivering with emotion, her little face glowing; “and I’ll work and be a servant all my life, and I’ve come to you, too, to work and be a servant. I don’t want to be like a daughter….”

“Hush, hush, my darling, hush!” cried Anna Andreyevna, clasping Nellie warmly. “Your mother was ill, you know, when she said that.”

“She was out of her mind,” said the old man sharply.

“What if she were!” cried Nellie, turning quickly to him. “If she were out of her mind she told me so, and I shall do it all my life. And when she said that to me she fell down fainting.”

“Merciful heavens!” cried Anna Andreyevna. “Ill, in the street, in winter!”

“They would have taken us to the police, but a gentleman took our part, asked me our address, gave me ten roubles, and told them to drive mother to our lodging in his carriage, Mother never got up again after that, and three weeks afterwards she died….”

“And her father? He didn’t forgive her after all, then?” cried Anna Andreyevna.

“He didn’t forgive her,” answered Nellie, mastering herself with a painful effort. “A week before her death mother called me to her and said, ‘Nellie, go once more to your grandfather, the last time, and ask him to come to me and forgive me. Tell him in a few days I shall be dead, leaving you all alone in the world. And tell him, too, that it’s hard for me to die….’ I went and knocked at grandfather’s door. He opened it, and as soon as he saw me he meant to shut it again, but I seized the door with both hands and cried out to him:

“‘Mother’s dying, she’s asking for you; come along.’ But he pushed me away and slammed the door. I went back to mother, lay down beside her, hugged her in my arms and said nothing. Mother hugged me, too, and asked no questions.”

At this point Nikolay Sergeyitch leant his hands heavily on the table and stood up, but after looking at us all with strange, lustreless eyes, sank back into his easy-chair helplessly. Anna Andreyevna no longer looked at him. She was, sobbing over Nellie….

“The last day before mother died, towards evening she called me to her, took me by the hand and said:

“‘I shall die to-day, Nellie.’”

“She tried to say something more, but she couldn’t. I looked at her, but she seemed not to see me, only she held my hand tight in hers. I softly pulled away my hand and ran out of the house, and ran all the way to grandfather’s. When he saw me he jumped up from his chair and looked at me, and was so frightened that he turned quite pale and trembled. I seized his hand and only said:

“‘She’s just dying.’

“‘Then all of a sudden in a flurry he picked up his stick and ran after me; he even forgot his hat, and it was cold. I picked up his hat and put it on him, and we ran off together. I hurried him and told him to take a sledge because mother was just dying, but grandfather only had seven kopecks, that was all he had. He stopped a cab and began to bargain, but they only laughed at him and laughed at Azorka; Azorka was running with us, and we all ran on and on. Grandfather was tired and breathing hard, but he still hurried on, running. Suddenly he fell down, and his hat fell off. I helped him up and put his hat on, and led him by the hand, and only towards night we got home. But mother was already lying dead. When grandfather saw her he flung up

his hands, trembled, and stood over her, but said nothing. Then I went up to my dead mother, seized grandfather's hand and cried out to him:

"'See, you wicked, cruel man. Look! … Look!

"Then grandfather screamed and fell down as though he were dead…."

Nellie jumped up, freed herself from Anna Andreyevna's arms, and stood in the midst of us, pale, exhausted, and terrified. But Anna Andreyevna flew to her, and embracing her again cried as though she were inspired.

"I'll be a mother to you now, Nellie, and you shall be my child. Yes, Nellie, let us go, let us give up these cruel, wicked people.. Let them mock at people; God will requite them. Come, Nellie, come away from here, come!"

I have never, before or since, seen her so agitated, and I had never thought she could be so excited. Nikolay Sergeyitch sat up in his chair, stood up, and in a breaking voice asked:

"Where are you going, Anna Andreyevna?"

"To her, to my daughter, to Natasha!" she exclaimed, drawing Nellie after her to the door.

"Stay, stay! Wait!"

"No need to wait, you cruel, cold-hearted man! I have waited too long, and she has waited, but now, good-bye! …"

Saying this, Anna Andreyevna turned away, glanced at her husband, and stopped, petrified. Nikolay Sergeyitch was reaching for his hat, and with feeble, trembling hands was pulling on his coat.

"You, too! … You coming with us, too!" she cried, clasping her hands in supplication, looking at him incredulously as though she dared not believe in such happiness.

"Natasha! Where is my Natasha? Where is she? Where's my daughter?" broke at last from the old man's lips. "Give me back my Natasha! Where, where is she?"

And seizing his stick, which I handed him, he rushed to the door.

"He has forgiven! Forgiven!" cried Anna Andreyevna. But the old man did not get to the door. The door opened quickly and Natasha dashed into the room, pale, with flashing eyes as though she were in a fever. Her dress was crumpled and soaked with rain. The handkerchief with which she had covered her head had slipped on to her neck, and her thick, curly hair

glistened with big raindrops. She ran in, saw her father, and falling on her knees before him, stretched out her hands to him.

CHAPTER IX

BUT HE WAS already holding her in his arms!
He lifted her up like a child and carried her to his chair, sat her down, and fell on his knees before her. He kissed her hands and her feet, he hastened to kiss her, hastened to gaze at her as though he could not yet believe that she was with him, that he saw and heard her again — her, his daughter, his Natasha. Anna Andreyevna embraced her, sobbing, pressed her head to her bosom and seemed almost swooning in these embraces and unable to utter a word.

"My dear!… My life!… My joy!…" the old man exclaimed incoherently, clasping Natasha's hands and gazing like a lover at her pale, thin, but lovely face, and into her eyes which glistened with tears. "My joy, my child!" he repeated, and paused again, and with reverent Transports gazed at her. "Why, why did you tell me she was thinner?" he said, turning to us with a hurried, childlike smile, though he was still on his knees before her. "She's thin, it's true, she's pale, but look how pretty she is! Lovelier than she used to be, yes, even lovelier!" he added, his voice breaking from the joyful anguish which seemed rending his heart in two.

"Get up, father. Oh, do get up," said Natasha. "I want to kiss you, too…."

"Oh, the darling! Do you hear, Annushka, do you hear how sweetly she said that."

And he embraced her convulsively.

"No, Natasha, it's for me, for me to lie at your feet, till my heart tells me that you've forgiven me, for I can never, never deserve your forgiveness now! I cast you off, I cursed you; do you hear, Natasha, I cursed you! I was capable of that! …And you, you, Natasha, could you believe that I had cursed you! She did believe it, yes, she did! She ought not to have believed it! She shouldn't have believed it, she simply shouldn't! Cruel little heart! why didn't you come to me?

You must have known I should receive you…. Oh, Natasha, you must remember how I used to love you! Well, now I've loved you all this time twice as much, a thousand times as much as before. I've loved you with every drop of my blood. I would have torn my heart out, torn it into shreds and laid it at your feet. Oh! my joy!"

“Well, kiss me then, you cruel man, kiss me on any lips, on my face, as mother kisses me!” exclaimed Natasha in a faint, weak voice, full of joyful tears.

“And on your dear eyes, too! Your dear eyes! As I used to, do you remember?” repeated the old man after a long, sweet embrace. “Oh, Natasha! Did you sometimes dream of us? I dreamed of you almost every night, and every night you came to me and I cried over you. Once you came as a little thing, as you were when you were ten years old and were just beginning to have music lessons, do you remember? I dreamed you came in a short frock, with pretty little shoes on, and red little hands … she used to have such red little hands then, do you remember, Annushka? She came up to me, sat on my knee and put her arms round me… And you, you bad girl! You could believe I cursed you, that I wouldn’t have welcomed you if you’d come? Why, I…listen Natasha, why, I often went to see you, and your mother didn’t know, and no one knew; sometimes I’d stand under your windows, sometimes I’d wait half a day, somewhere on the pavement near your gate, on the chance of seeing you in the distance if you came out! Often in the evening there would be a light burning in your window; how often I went to your window, Natasha, only to watch your light, only to see your shadow on the window-pane, to bless you for the night. And did you bless me at night, did you think of me? Did your heart tell you that I was at the window? And how often in the winter I went up your stairs, and stood on the dark landing listening at your door, hoping to hear your voice. Aren’t you laughing? Me curse you? Why, one evening I came to you; I wanted to forgive you, and only turned back at the door…. Oh, Natasha!”

He got up, lifted her out of the chair and held her close, close to his heart.

“She is here, near my heart again!” he cried. “Oh Lord, I thank Thee for all, for all, for Thy wrath and for Thy mercy!

…And for Thy sun which is shining upon us again after the storm! For all this minute I thank Thee! Oh, we may be insulted and injured, but we’re together again, and now the proud and haughty who have insulted and injured us may triumph! Let them throw stones at us! Have no fear, Natasha…. We will go hand in hand and I will say to them, ‘This is my darling, this is my beloved daughter, my innocent daughter whom you have insulted and injured, but whom I love and bless for ever and ever!’”

“Vanya, Vanya,” Natasha cried in a weak voice, holding out her hand to me from her father’s arms.

Oh, I shall never forget that at that moment she thought of me and called to me!

“Where is Nellie?” asked the old man, looking round.

“Ah, where is she?” cried his wife. “My darling! We’re forgetting her!”

But she was not in the room. She had slipped away unnoticed into the bedroom. We all went in. Nellie was standing in the corner behind the door, hiding from us in a frightened way.

“Nellie, what’s the matter with you, my child?” cried the old man, trying to put his arm round her.

But she bent on him a strange, long gaze.

“Mother, where’s mother?” she brought out, as though in delirium. “Mere is my mother?” she cried once more, stretching out her trembling hands to us.

And suddenly a fearful, unearthly shriek broke from her bosom; her face worked convulsively, and she fell on the floor in a terrible fit.

EPILOGUE
LAST RECOLLECTIONS

IT WAS THE BEGINNING of June. The day was hot and stifling; it was impossible to remain in town, where all was dust, plaster, scaffolding, burning pavements, and tainted atmosphere…. But now! Oh joy! — there was the rumble of thunder in the distance; there came a breath of wind driving clouds of town dust before it. A few big raindrops fell on the ground, and then the whole sky seemed to open and torrents of water streamed upon the town. When, half an hour later, the sun came out again I opened my garret window and greedily drew the fresh air into my exhausted lungs. In my exhilaration I felt ready to throw up my writing, my work, and my publisher, and to rush off to my friends at Vassilyevsky Island. But great as the temptation was, I succeeded in mastering myself and fell upon my work again with a sort of fury. At all costs I had to finish it. My publisher had demanded it and would not pay me without. I was expected there, but, on the other hand, by the evening I should be free, absolutely free as the wind, and that evening would make up to me for the last two days and nights, during which I had written three and a half signatures.

And now at last the work was finished. I threw down my pen and got up, with a pain in my chest and my back and a heaviness in my head. I knew that at that moment my nerves were strained to the utmost pitch, and I seemed to hear the last words my old doctor had said to me.

“No, no health could stand such a strain, because it’s impossible.”

So far, however, it had been possible! My head was going round, I could scarcely stand upright, but my heart was filled with joy, infinite joy. My novel was finished and, although I owed my publisher a great deal, he would certainly give me something when he found the prize in his hands — if only fifty roubles, and it was ages since I had had so much as that. Freedom and money! I snatched up my hat in delight, and with my manuscript under my arm I ran at full speed to find our precious Alexandr Petrovitch at home.

I found him, but he was on the point of going out. He, too, had just completed a very profitable stroke of business, though not a literary one, and as he was at last escorting to the door a swarthy-faced Jew with whom he had been sitting for the last two hours in his study, he shook hands with me affably, and in his soft pleasant bass inquired after my health. He was a very kind-hearted man, and, joking apart, I was deeply indebted to him. Was it his fault that he was all his life only a publisher? He quite understood that literature needs Publishers, and understood it very opportunely, all honour and glory to him for it!

With an agreeable smile he heard that the novel was finished and that therefore the next number of his journal was safe as far as its principal item was concerned, and wondered how I could ever end anything and made a very amiable joke on the subject. Then he went to his iron strong-box to get me the fifty roubles he had promised me, and in the meantime held out to me another thick, hostile journal and pointed to a few lines in the critical column, where there were a few words about my last novel.

I looked: it was an article by “Copyist.” He neither directly abused me nor praised me, and I was very glad. But “Copyist,” said among other things that my works generally “smelt of sweat”; that is, that I so sweated and struggled over them, so worked them up and worked them over, that the result was mawkish.

The publisher and I laughed. I informed him that my last story had been written in two nights, and that I had now written three and a half signatures

in two days and two nights, and if only “Copyist,” who blamed me for the excessive laboriousness and solid deliberation of my work, knew that!

“It’s your own fault though, Ivan Petrovitch,” said he. “Why do you get so behindhand with your work that you have to sit up at night?”

Alexandr Petrovitch is a most charming person, of course, though he has one particular weakness — that is, boasting of his literary judgement, especially before those whom he suspects of knowing him through and through. But I had no desire to discuss literature with him; I took the money and picked up my hat. Alexandr Petrovitch was going to his villa on the Island, and hearing that I, too, was bound for Vassilyevsky, he amiably offered to take me in his carriage.

“I’ve got a new carriage,” he said, “you’ve not seen it. It’s very nice.”

We set off. The carriage was certainly delightful, and in the early days of his possession of it Alexandr Petrovitch took particular pleasure in driving his friends in it and even felt a spiritual craving to do so.

In the carriage Alexandr Petrovitch several times fell to criticizing contemporary literature again. He was quite at his ease with me, and calmly enunciated various second-hand opinions which he had heard a day or two before from literary people whom he believed in and whose ideas he respected. This led him sometimes to repeat very extraordinary notions. It sometimes happened, too, that he got an idea wrong or misapplied it, so that he made nonsense of it. I sat listening in silence, marvelling at the versatility and whimsicality of the passions of mankind. “Here’s a man,” I thought to myself, “who might make money and has made it; but no, he must have fame too, literary fame, the fame of a leading publisher, a critic!”

At the actual moment he was trying to expound minutely a literary theory which he had heard three days before from me myself, which he had argued against then, though now he was giving it out as his own. But such forgetfulness is a frequent phenomenon in Alexandr Petrovitch, and he is famous for this innocent weakness among all who know him. How happy he was then, holding forth in his own carriage, how satisfied with his lot, how benign! He was maintaining a highly cultured, literary conversation, even his soft, decorous bass had the note of culture. Little by little he drifted into liberalism, and then passed to the mildly sceptical proposition that no honesty or modesty was possible in our literature, or indeed in any other, that there could be nothing but “slashing at one another,” especially where the system of signed articles was prevalent. I reflected to myself that

Alexandr Petrovitch was inclined to regard every honest and sincere writer as a simpleton, if not a fool, on account of is very sincerity and honesty. No doubt such an opinion was the direct result of his extreme guilelessness.

But I had left off listening to him. When we reached Vassilyevsky Island he let me get out of the carriage, and I ran to my friends. Now I had reached Thirteenth Street; here was their little house. Seeing me Anna Andreyevna shook her finger at me, waved her hand, and said "Ssh!" to me, to be quiet.

"Nellie's only just fallen asleep, poor little thing!" she whispered to me hurriedly. "For mercy's sake, don't wake her! But she's very worn, poor darling! We're very anxious about her. The doctor says it's nothing for the time, One can get nothing out of your doctor. And isn't it a shame of you, Ivan Petrovitch! We've been expecting you! We expected you to dinner…. You've not been here for two days!"

"But I told you the day before yesterday that I shouldn't be here for two days," I whispered to Anna Andreyevna. "I had to finish my work…."

"But you know you promised to be here to dinner to-day! Why didn't you come? Nellie got up on purpose, the little angel! — and we put her in the easy-chair, and carried her in to dinner. 'I want to wait for Vanya with you,' she said; but our Vanya never came. Why, it'll soon be six o'clock! Where have you been gadding, you sinner? She was so upset that I didn't know how to appease her…. Happily, she's gone to sleep, poor darling. And here's Nikolay Sergeyitch gone to town, too (he'll be back to tea). I'm fretting all alone…. A post has turned up for him, Ivan Petrovitch; only when I think it's in Perm it sends a cold chill to my heart…."

"And where's Natasha?"

"In the garden, the darling! Go to her…. There's something wrong with her, too…. I can't make her out…. Oh, Ivan Petrovitch, my heart's very heavy! She declares she's cheerful and content, but I don't believe her. Go to her, Vanya, and tell me quietly what's the matter with her…. Do you hear?"

But I was no longer listening to Anna Andreyevna. I was running to the garden. The little garden belonged to the house. It was twenty-five paces long and as much in breadth, and it was all overgrown with green. There were three old spreading trees, a few young birch-trees, a few bushes of lilac and of honeysuckle; there was a patch of raspberries in the corner, two beds of strawberries, and two narrow, winding paths crossing the garden both ways. The old man declared with delight that it would soon grow

mushrooms. The great thing was that Nellie was fond of the garden and she was often carried out in the easy-chair on to the garden path. Nellie was by now the idol of the house.

But now I came upon Natasha. She met me joyfully, holding out her hands. How thin she was, how pale! She, too, had only just recovered from an illness.

“Have you quite finished, Vanya?” she asked me.

“Quite, quite! And I am free for the whole evening.”

“Well, thank God! Did you hurry? Have you spoilt it?”

“What could I do? It’s all right, though. My nerves get strung up to a peculiar tension by working at such a strain; I imagine more clearly, I feel more vividly and deeply, and even my style is more under my control, so that work done under pressure always turns out better. It’s all right….”

“Ah, Vanya, Vanya! …”

I had noticed that of late Natasha had been keeping a jealous and devoted watch over my literary success and reputation. She read over everything I had published in the last year, was constantly asking me about my plans for the future, was interested in every criticism, was angry at some; and was desperately anxious that I should take a high place in the literary world. Her desire was expressed so strongly and insistently that I was positively astonished at her feeling.

“You’ll simply write yourself out, Vanya,” she said to me. “You’re overstraining yourself, and you’ll write yourself out; and what’s more, you’re ruining your health. S. now only writes a novel a year, and

N. has only written one novel in ten years. See how polished, how finished, their work is. You won’t find one oversight.”

“Yes, but they are prosperous and don’t write up to time; while I’m a hack. But that’s no matter! Let’s drop that, my dear. Well, is there no news?”

“A great deal. In the first place a letter from him.”

“Again?” I

“Yes, again.”

And she gave me a letter from Alyosha. It was the third she had had since their separation. The first was written from Moscow, and seemed to be written in a kind of frenzy. He informed her that things had turned out so that it was impossible for him to come from Moscow to Petersburg, as they

had planned at parting. In the second letter he announced that he was coming to us in a few days to hasten his marriage to Natasha, that this was settled and that nothing could prevent it. And yet it was clear from the whole tone of the letter that he was in despair, that outside influences were weighing heavily upon him, and that he did not believe what he said. He mentioned among other things that Katya was his Providence and she was his only support and comfort. I eagerly opened this third letter.

It covered two sheets of paper and was written disconnectedly and untidily in a hurried, illegible scrawl, smudged with ink and tears. It began with Alyosha's renouncing Natasha, and begging her to forget him. He attempted to show that their marriage was impossible, that outside, hostile influences were stronger than anything, and that, in fact, it must be so; and that Natasha and he would be unhappy together because they were not equals. But he could not keep it up, and suddenly abandoning his arguments and reasoning, without tearing up or discarding the first half of his letter, he confessed that he had behaved criminally to Natasha, that he was a lost soul, and was incapable of standing out against his father, who had come down to the country. He wrote that he could not express his anguish, admitted among other things that he felt confident he could make Natasha happy, began to prove that they were absolutely equals and obstinately and angrily refuted his father's arguments; he drew a despairing picture of the blissful existence that might have been in store for them both, himself and Natasha, if they had married; cursed himself for his cowardice, and said farewell for ever! The letter had been written in distress; he had evidently been beside himself when he wrote. Tears started to my eyes. Natasha handed me another letter, from Katya. This letter had come in the same envelope as Alyosha's, though it was sealed up separately. Somewhat briefly in a few lines, Katya informed Natasha that Alyosha really was much depressed, that he cried a great deal and seemed in despair, was even rather unwell, but that she was with him and that he would be happy. Among other things, Katya endeavoured to persuade Natasha not to believe that Alyosha could be so quickly comforted and that his grief was not serious. "He will never forget you," added Katya; "indeed, he never can forget you, for his heart is not like that. He loves you immeasurably; he will always love you, so that if he ever ceased to love you, if he ever left off grieving at the thought of you, I should cease to love him for that, at once…."

I gave both letters back to Natasha; we looked at one another and said nothing; it had been the same with the other two letters; and in general we avoided talking of the past, as though this had been agreed upon between us. She was suffering intolerably, I saw that, but she did not want to express it even before me. After her return to her father's house she had been in bed for three weeks with a feverish attack, and was only just getting over it. We did not talk much either of the change in store for us, though she knew her father had obtained a situation and that we soon had to part. In spite of that she was so tender to me all that time, so attentive, and took such interest in all that I was doing; she listened with such persistence, such obstinate attention, to all I had to tell her about myself that at first it rather weighed upon me; it seemed to me that she was trying to make up to me for the past. But this feeling soon passed off. I realized that she wanted something quite different, that it was simply that she loved me, loved me immensely, could not live without me and without being interested in everything that concerned me; and I believed that no sister ever loved a brother as Natasha loved me. I knew quite well that our approaching separation was a load on her heart, that Natasha was miserable; she knew, too, that I could not live without her; but of that we said nothing, though we did talk in detail of the events before us.

I asked after Nikolay Sergeyitch.

"I believe he'll soon be back," said Natasha; "he promised to be in to tea."

"He's still trying to get that job?"

"Yes; but there's no doubt about the job now; and I don't think there's really any reason for him to go to-day," she added, musing.

"He might have gone to-morrow."

"Why did he go, then?"

"Because I got a letter… . He's so ill over me," Natasha added, "that it's really painful to me, Vanya. He seems to dream of nothing but me. I believe that he never thinks of anything except how I'm getting on, how I'm feeling, what I'm thinking. Every anxiety I have raises an echo in his heart. I see how awkwardly he sometimes tries to control himself, and to make a pretence of not grieving about me, how he affects to be cheerful, tries to laugh and amuse us. Mother is not herself either at such moments and doesn't believe in his laugh either, and sighs…. She's so awkward … an upright soul," she added with a laugh. "So when I got a letter to-day he had

to run off at once to avoid meeting my eyes. I love him more than myself, more than anyone in the world, Vanya," she added, dropping her head and pressing my hand, "even more than you…"

We had walked twice up and down the garden before she began to speak.

"Masloboev was here to-day, and yesterday too," she said.

"Yes, he has been to see you very often lately."

"And do you know why he comes here? Mother believes in him beyond everything. She thinks he understands all this sort of thing so well (the laws and all that), that he can arrange anything. You could never imagine what an idea is brewing in mother! In her heart of hearts she is very sore and sad that I haven't become a princess. That idea gives her no peace, and I believe she has opened her heart to Masloboev. She is afraid to speak to father about it and wonders whether Masloboev couldn't do something for her, whether nothing could be done through the law. I fancy Masloboev doesn't contradict her, and she regales him with wine," Natasha added with a laugh.

"That's enough for the rogue! But how do you know?"

"Why, mother has let it out to me herself … in hints."

"What about Nellie? How is she?" I asked.

"I wonder at you, Vanya. You haven't asked about her till now," said Natasha reproachfully.

Nellie was the idol of the whole household. Natasha had become tremendously fond of her, and Nellie was absolutely devoted to her. Poor, child! She had never expected to find such friends, to win such love, and I saw with joy that her embittered little heart was softening and her soul was opening to us all. She responded with painful and feverish eagerness to the love with which she was surrounded in such contrast to all her past, which had developed mistrust, resentment, and obstinacy. Though even now Nellie held out for a long time; for a long time she intentionally concealed from us her tears of reconciliation, and only at last surrendered completely. She grew very fond of Natasha, and later on of Nikolay Sergeyitch. I had become so necessary to her that she grew worse when I stayed away. When last time I parted from her for two days in order to finish my novel I had much ado to soothe her … indirectly, of course. Nellie was still ashamed to express her feelings too openly, too unrestrainedly.

She made us all very uneasy. Without any discussion it was tacitly settled that she should remain for ever in Nikolay Sergeyitch's family; and meantime the day of departure was drawing nearer, and she was getting

worse and worse. She had been ill from the day when I took her to Nikolay Sergeyitch's, the day of his reconciliation with Natasha, though, indeed, she had always been ill. The disease had been gradually gaining ground before, but now it grew worse with extraordinary rapidity. I don't understand and can't exactly explain her complaint. Her fits, it is true, did occur somewhat more frequently than before, but the most serious symptom was a sort of exhaustion and failure of strength, a perpetual state of fever and nervous exhaustion, which had been so bad of late that she had been obliged to stay in bed. And, strange to say, the more the disease gained upon her, the softer, sweeter and more open she became with us. Three days before, as I passed her bedside, she held out her hand to me and drew me to her. There was no one in the room. She had grown terribly thin, her face was flushed, her eyes burned with a glow of fever. She pressed me to her convulsively, and when I bent down to her she clasped me tightly round the neck with her dark-skinned little arms, and kissed me warmly, and then at once she asked for Natasha to come to her. I called her; Nellie insisted on Natasha sitting down on the bed, and gazed at her….

"I want to look at you," she said. "I dreamed of you last night and I shall dream of you again to-night…I often dream of you…every night…."

She evidently wanted to say something; she was overcome by feeling, but she did not understand her own feelings and could not express them…

She loved Nikolay Sergeyitch almost more than anyone except me. It must be said that Nikolay Sergeyitch loved her almost as much as Natasha. He had a wonderful faculty for cheering and amusing Nellie. As soon as he came near her there were sounds of laughter and even mischief. The sick girl was as playful as a little child, coquetted with the old man, laughed at him, told him her dreams, always had some new invention and made him tell her stories, too; and the old man was so pleased, so happy, looking at his "little daughter, Nellie," that he was more and more delighted with her every day.

"God has sent her to us to make up to us all for our suffering," he said to me once as he left Nellie at night, after making the sign of the cross over her as usual.

In the evenings, when we were all together (Masloboev was there too, almost every evening), our old doctor often dropped in. He had become warmly attached to the Ichmenyevs. Nellie was carried up to the round table in her easy-chair. The door was opened on to the veranda. We had a full

view of the green garden in the light of the setting sun, and from it came the fragrance of the fresh leaves and the opening lilac. Nellie sat in her easy-chair, watching us all affectionately and listening to our talk; sometimes she grew more animated, and gradually joined in the conversation, too. But at such moments we all usually listened to her with uneasiness, because in her reminiscences there were subjects we did not want touched upon. Natasha and I and the Ichmenyevs all felt guilty and recognized the wrong we had done her that day when, tortured and quivering, she had been forced to tell us all her story. The doctor was particularly opposed to these reminiscences and usually tried to change the conversation. At such times Nellie tried to seem as though she did not notice our efforts, and would begin laughing with the doctor or with Nikolay Sergeyitch.

And yet she grew worse and worse. We became extraordinarily impressionable. Her heart was beating irregularly. The doctor told me, indeed, that she might easily die at any moment.

I did not tell the Ichmenyevs this for fear of distressing them, Nikolay Sergeyitch was quite sure that she would recover in time for the journey.

“There’s father come in,” said Natasha, hearing his voice. “Let us go, Vanya.”

Nikolay Sergeyitch, as usual, began talking loudly as soon as he had crossed the threshold. Anna Andreyevna was gesticulating at him. The old man subsided at once and, seeing Natasha and me, began with a hurried air telling us in a whisper of the result of his expedition. He had received the post he was trying for and was much pleased.

“In a fortnight we can set off,” he said, rubbing his hands and anxiously glancing askance at Natasha.

But she responded with a smile and embraced him so that his doubts were instantly dissipated.

“We’ll be off, we’ll be off, my dears!” he said joyfully. It’s only you, Vanya, leaving you, that’s the rub… (I may add that he never once suggested that I should go with them, which, from what I know of his character, he certainly would have done … under other circumstances, that is, if he had not been aware of my love for Natasha.)

“Well, it can’t be helped, friends, it can’t be helped! It grieves me, Vanya; but a change of place will give us all new life…. A change of place means a change of everything!” he added, glancing once more at his daughter.

He believed that and was glad to believe it.

“And Nellie?” said Anna Andreyevna.

“Nellie? Why…the little darling’s still poorly, but by that time she’ll certainly be well again. She’s better already, what do you think, Vanya?” he said, as though alarmed, and he looked at me uneasily, as though it was for me to set his doubts at rest.

“How is she? How has she slept? Has anything gone wrong with her? Isn’t she awake now? Do you know what, Anna Andreyevna, we’ll move the little table out on to the veranda, we’ll take out the samovar; our friends will be coming, we’ll all sit there and Nellie can come out to us…. That’ll be nice. Isn’t she awake yet? I’ll go in to her. I’ll only have a look at her. I won’t wake her. Don’t be uneasy!” he added, seeing that Anna Andreyevna was making signals to him again. But Nellie was already awake. A quarter of an hour later we were all sitting as usual round the samovar at evening tea. Nellie was carried out in her chair. The doctor and Masloboev made their appearance. The latter brought a big bunch of lilac for Nellie, but he seemed anxious and annoyed about something, Masloboev, by the way, came in almost every evening. I have mentioned already that all of them liked him very much, especially Anna Andreyevna, but not a word was spoken among us about Alexandra Semyonovna. Masloboev himself made no allusion to her. Anna Andreyevna, having learned from me that Alexandra Semyonovna had not yet succeeded in becoming his legal wife, had made up her mind that it was impossible to receive her or speak of her in the house. This decision was maintained, and was very characteristic of Anna Andreyevna. But for Natasha’s being with her, and still more for all that had happened, she would perhaps not have been so squeamish.

Nellie was particularly depressed that evening and even preoccupied. It was as though she had had a bad dream and was brooding over it. But she was much delighted with Masloboev’s present and looked with pleasure at the flowers, which we put in a glass before her.

“So you’re very fond of flowers, Nellie,” said the old man. “just wait,” he said eagerly. “Tomorrow…well, you shall see.….”

“I am fond of them,” answered Nellie, “and I remember how we used to meet mother with flowers. When we were out there, (“out there” meant now abroad) “mother was very ill once for a whole month. Heinrich and I agreed that when she got up and came for the first time out of her bedroom, which she had not left for a whole month, we would decorate all the rooms

with flowers. And so we did. Mother told us overnight that she would be sure to come down to lunch next day. We got up very, very early. Heinrich brought in a lot of flowers, and we decorated all the rooms with green leaves and garlands. There was ivy and something else with broad leaves I don't know the name of, and some other leaves that caught in everything, and there were big white flowers and narcissus — and I like them better than any other flower — and there were roses, such splendid loses, and lots and lots of flowers, We hung them all up in wreaths or put them in pots, and there were flowers that were like whole trees in big tubs; we put them in the corners and by mother's chair, and when mother came in she was astonished and awfully delighted, and Heinrich was glad… I remember that now…."

That evening Nellie was particularly weak and nervous. The doctor looked at her uneasily. But she was very eager to talk. And for a long time, till it was dark, she told us about her former life out there; we did not interrupt her. She and her mother and Heinrich had travelled a great deal together, and recollections of those days remained vivid in her memory. She talked eagerly of the blue skies, of the high mountains with snow and ice on them which she had seen and passed through, of the waterfalls in the mountains; and then of the lakes and valleys of Italy, of the flowers and trees, of the villagers, of their dress, their dark faces, and black eyes. She told us about various incidents and adventures with them. Then she talked of great tombs and palaces, of a tall church with a dome, which was suddenly illuminated with lights of different colours; then of a hot, southern town with blue skies and a blue sea…. Never had Nellie talked to us with such detail of what she remembered. We listened to her with intense interest. Till then we had heard only of her experiences of a different kind, in a dark, gloomy town, with its crushing, stupefying atmosphere, its pestilential air, its costly palaces, always begrimed with dirt; with its pale dim sunlight, and its evil, half-crazy inhabitants, at whose hands she and her mother had suffered so much. And I pictured how on damp, gloomy evenings in their filthy cellar, lying together on their poor bed, they had recalled past days, their lost Heinrich, and the marvels of other lands. I pictured Nellie alone, too, without her mother, remembering all this, while Mme. Bubnov was trying by blows and brutal cruelty to break her spirit and force her into a vicious life….

But at last Nellie felt faint, and she was carried indoors. Nikolay Sergeyitch was much alarmed and vexed that we had let her talk so much. She had a sort of attack or fainting-fit. She had had such attacks several times. When it was over Nellie asked earnestly to see me. She wanted to say something to me alone. She begged so earnestly for this that this time the doctor himself insisted that her wish should be granted, and they all went out of the room.

“Listen, Vanya,” said Nellie, when we were left alone. “I know they think that I’m going with them, but I’m not going because I can’t and I shall stay for the time with you. I wanted to tell you so….”

I tried to dissuade her. I told her that the Ichmenyevs loved her and looked on her as a daughter; that they would all be very sorry to lose her. That, on the other hand, it would be hard for her to live with me; and that, much as I loved her, there was no hope for it — we must part.

“No, it’s impossible!” Nellie answered emphatically; “for I often dream of mother now, and she tells me not to go with them but to stay here. She tells me that I was very sinful to leave grandfather alone, and she always cries when she says that. I want to stay here and look after grandfather, Vanya.”

“But you know your grandfather is dead, Nellie,” I answered, listening to her with amazement.

She thought a little and looked at me intently.

“Tell me, Vanya, tell me again how grandfather died,” she said. “Tell me all about it, don’t leave anything out.”

I was surprised at this request, but I proceeded to tell her the story in every detail. I suspected that she was delirious, or at least that after her attack her brain was not quite clear.

She listened attentively to all I told her, and I remember how her black eyes, glittering with the light of fever, watched me intently and persistently all the while I was talking. It was dark by now in the room.

“No, Vanya, he’s not dead,” she said positively, when she had heard it all and reflected for a while. “Mother often tells me about grandfather, and when I said to her yesterday, ‘but grandfather’s dead,’ she was dreadfully grieved; she cried and told me he wasn’t, that I had been told so on purpose, and that he was walking about the streets now, begging ‘just as we used to beg,’ mother said to me; ‘and he keeps walking about the place where we first met him, and I fell down before him, and Azorka knew me….’”

“That was a dream, Nellie, a dream that comes from illness, for you are ill,” I said to her.

“I kept thinking it was only a dream myself,” said Nellie, “and I didn’t speak of it to anyone. I only wanted to tell you. But to-day when you didn’t come, and I fell asleep, I dreamed of grandfather himself. He was sitting at home, waiting for me, and was so thin and dreadful; and he told me he’d had nothing to eat for two days, nor Azorka either, and he was very angry with me, and scolded me. He told me, too, that he had no snuff at all, and that he couldn’t live without it. And he did really say that to me once before, Vanya, after mother died, when I went to see him. Then he was quite ill and hardly understood anything. When I heard him say that today, I thought I would go on to the bridge and beg for alms, and then buy him bread and baked potatoes and snuff. So I went and stood there, and then I saw grandfather walking near, and he lingered a little and then came up to me, and looked how much I’d got and took it. ‘That will do for bread,’ he said; ‘now get some for snuff.’ I begged the money, and he came up and took it from me. I told him that I’d give it him all, anyway, and not hide anything from him. ‘No’ he said, ‘you steal from me. Mme. Bubnov told me you were a thief; that’s why I shall never take you to live with me. Where have you put that other copper?’ I cried because he didn’t believe me, but he wouldn’t listen to me and kept shouting, ‘You’ve stolen a penny!’ And he began to beat me there on the bridge, and hurt me. And I cried very much…. And so I’ve begun to think, Vanya, that he must be alive, and that he must be walking about somewhere waiting for me to come.”

I tried once more to soothe her and to persuade her she was wrong, and at last I believe I succeeded in convincing her. She said that she was afraid to go to sleep now because she would dream of her grandfather. At last she embraced me warmly. “But anyway, I can’t leave you, Vanya,” she said, pressing her little face to mine. “Even if it weren’t for grandfather I wouldn’t leave you.”

Everyone in the house was alarmed at Nellie’s attack. I told the doctor apart all her sick fancies, and asked him what he thought of her state.

“Nothing is certain yet,” he answered, considering. “So far, I can only surmise, watch, and observe; but nothing is certain. Recovery is impossible, anyway. She will die. I don’t tell them because you begged me not to, but I am sorry and I shall suggest a consultation to-morrow. Perhaps the disease

will take a different turn after a consultation. But I'm very sorry for the little girl, as though she were my own child… She's a dear, dear child! And with such a playful mind!"

Nikolay Sergeyitch was particularly excited.

"I tell you what I've thought of, Vanya," he said. "She's very fond of flowers. Do you know what? Let us prepare for her to-morrow when she wakes up a welcome with towers such as she and that Heinrich prepared for her mother, as she described to-day…. She spoke of it with such emotion…."

"I dare say she did," I said. "But emotion's just what's bad for her now."

"Yes, but pleasant emotion is a different matter. Believe me, my boy, trust my experience; pleasurable emotion does no harm; it may even cure, it is conducive to health."

The old man was, in fact, so fascinated by his own idea that he was in a perfect ecstasy about it. It was impossible to dissuade him, I questioned the doctor about it, but before the latter had time to consider the matter, Nikolay Sergeyitch had taken his cap and was running to make arrangements.

"You know," he said to me as he went out, "there's a hot-house near here, a magnificent shop. The nurserymen sell flowers; one can get them cheap. It's surprising how cheap they are, really…. You impress that on Anna Andreyevna, or else she'll be angry directly at the expense. So, I tell you what…. I tell you what, my dear boy, where are you off to now? You are free now, you've finished your work, so why need you hurry home? Sleep the night here, upstairs in the attic; where you slept before, do you remember. The bedstead's there and the mattress just as it was before… nothing's been touched. You'll sleep like the King of France. Eh? Do stay. Tomorrow we'll get up early. They'll bring the flowers, and by eight o'clock we'll arrange the whole room together. Natasha will help us. She'll have more taste than you and I. Well, do you agree? Will you stay the night?"

It was settled that I should stay the night. Nikolay Sergeyitch went off to make his arrangements. The doctor and Masloboev said good-bye and went away. The Ichmenyevs went to bed early, at eleven o'clock. As he was going, Masloboev seemed hesitating and on the point of saying something, but he put it off. But when after saying good-night to the old people I went up to my attic, to my surprise I found him there. He was sitting at the little table, turning over the leaves of a book and waiting for me.

“I turned back on the way, Vanya, because it’s better to tell you now. Sit down. It’s a stupid business, you see, vexatiously so, in fact.”

“Why, what’s the matter?”

“Why, your scoundrel of a prince flew into a rage a fortnight ago; and such a rage that I’m angry still.”

“Why, what’s the matter? Surely you’re not still on terms with the prince?”

“There you go with your ‘what’s the matter?’ as though something extraordinary had happened. You’re for all the world like my Alexandra Semyonovna and all these insufferable females! … I can’t endure females… If a crow calls, it’s ‘what’s the matter? ‘ with them.”

“Don’t be angry.”

“I’m not a bit angry; but every sort of affair ought to be looked at reasonably, and not exaggerated … that’s what I say.”

He paused a little, as though he were still feeling vexed with me. I did not interrupt him.

“You see, Vanya,” he began again, “I’ve come upon a clue. That’s to say, I’ve not really come upon it, and it’s not really a clue. But that’s how it struck me … that is, from certain considerations I gather that Nellie … perhaps … well, in fact, is the prince’s legitimate daughter.”

“What are you saying?”

“There you go roaring again, ‘what are you saying?’ So that one really can’t say anything to people like this!” he shouted, waving his hand frantically. Have I told you anything positive, you featherhead? Did I tell you she’s been proved to be the prince’s legitimate daughter? Did I, or did I not?”

“Listen, my dear fellow,” I said to him in great excitement. For God’s sake don’t shout, but explain things clearly and precisely.

I swear I shall understand you. You must realize how important the matter is, and what consequences….”

“Consequences, indeed, of what? Where are the proofs? Things aren’t done like that, and I’m telling you a secret now. And why I’m telling you I’ll explain later. You may be sure there’s a reason for it. Listen and hold your tongue and understand that all this is a secret…. This is how it was, you see. As soon as the prince came back from Warsaw in the winter, before Smith died, he began to go into this business. That is, he had begun it much earlier, during the previous year. But at that time he was on the look-out for

one thing, and later he was on the look-out for something else. What mattered was that he'd lost the thread. It was thirteen years since he parted from Nellie's mother in Paris and abandoned her, but all that time he had kept an incessant watch on her; he knew that she was living with Heinrich, whom Nellie was talking about to-day; he knew she had Nellie, he knew she was ill; he knew everything, in fact, but then he suddenly lost the thread. And this seems to have happened soon after the death of Heinrich, when she came to Petersburg. In Petersburg, of course, he would very soon have found her, whatever name she went by in Russia; but the thing was that his agents abroad misled him with false information, informing him that she was living in an out-of-the-way little town in South Germany. They deceived him through carelessness. They mistook another woman for her. So it went on for a year or more. But during the previous year the prince had begun to have doubts; certain facts had led him even earlier to suspect that it was not the right woman. Then the question arose: where was the real lady? And it occurred to him (though he'd nothing to go upon) to wonder whether she were not in Petersburg. Inquiries were being made meanwhile abroad, and he set other inquiries on foot here; but apparently he did not care to make use of the official channels, and he became acquainted with me. He was recommended to me: he was told this and that about me, that I took up detective work as an amateur, and so on, and so on… Well, so he explained the business to me; only vaguely, damn the fellow; he explained it vaguely and ambiguously. He made a lot of mistakes, repeated himself several times; he represented facts in different lights at the same time…. Well, as we all know, if you're ever so cunning you can't hide every track. Well, of course, I began, all obsequiousness and simplicity of heart, slavishly devoted, in fact. But I acted on a principle I've adopted once for all, and a law of nature, too (for it is a law of nature), and considered in the first place whether he had told me what he really wanted, and secondly whether, under what he had told me, there lay concealed something else he hadn't told me. For in the latter case, as probably even you, dear son, with your poetical brain, can grasp, he was cheating me: for while one job is worth a rouble, say, another may be worth four times as much; so I should be a fool if I gave him for a rouble what was worth four. I began to look into it and make my conjectures, and bit by bit I began to come upon traces, one thing I'd get out of him, another out of some outsider, and I'd get at a third by my own wits. If you ask me what was my idea in so doing, I'll

answer, well, for one thing that the prince seemed somewhat too keen about it; he seemed in a great panic about something. For after all, what had he to be frightened of? He'd carried a girl off from her father, and when she was with child he had abandoned her. What was there remarkable in that? A charming, pleasant bit of mischief, and nothing more. That was nothing for a man like the prince to be afraid of! Yet he was afraid… And that made me suspicious. I came on some very interesting traces, my boy, through Heinrich, among other things. He was dead, of course, but from one of his cousins (now married to a baker here, in Petersburg) who had been passionately in love with him in old days, and had gone on loving him for fifteen years, regardless of the stout papa baker to whom she had incidentally borne eight children — from this cousin, I say, I managed by means of many and various manoeuvres to learn an important fact, that Heinrich, after the German habit, used to write her letters and diaries, and before his death he sent her some of his papers. She was a fool. She didn't understand what was important in the letters, and only understood the parts where he talked of the moon, of 'mein lieber Augustin,' and of Wieland, too, I believe. But I got hold of the necessary facts, and through those letters I hit on a new clue. I found out, too, about Mr. Smith, about the money filched from him by his daughter, and about the prince's getting hold of that money; at last, in the midst of exclamations, rigmaroles, and allegories of all sorts, I got a glimpse of the essential truth; that is, Vanya, you understand, nothing positive. Silly Heinrich purposely concealed that, and only hinted at it; well, and these hints, all this taken together, began to blend into a heavenly harmony in my mind. The prince was legally married to the young lady. Where they were married, how, when precisely, whether abroad or here, the whereabouts of the documents is all unknown. In fact, friend Vanya, I've torn my hair out in despair, searching for them in vain; in fact, I've hunted day and night. I unearthed Smith at last, but he went and died. I hadn't even time to get a look at him. Then, through chance, I suddenly learned that a woman I had suspicions of had died in Vassilyevsky Island. I made inquiries and got on the track. I rushed off to Vassilyevsky, and there it was, do, you remember, we met. I made a big haul that time. In short, Nellie was a great help to me at that point…."

"Listen," I interrupted, "surely you don't suppose that Nellie knows?"

"What?"

"That she is Prince Valkovsky's daughter?

“Why, you know yourself that she’s the prince’s daughter,” he answered, looking at me with a sort of angry reproach. “Why ask such idle questions, you foolish fellow? What matters is not simply that she’s the prince’s daughter, but that she’s his legitimate daughter — do you understand that?”

“Impossible!” I cried.

“I told myself it was ‘impossible’ at first. But it turns out that it is possible and in all probability is true,”

“No, Masloboev, that’s not so, your fancy is running away with you!” I cried. “She doesn’t know anything about it, and what’s more she’s his illegitimate daughter. If the mother had had any sort of documentary evidence to produce, would she have put up with the awful life she led here in Petersburg, and what’s more, have left her child to such an utterly forlorn fate Nonsense! It’s impossible!”

“I’ve thought the same myself; in fact, it’s a puzzle to me this day. But then, again, the thing is that Nellie’s mother was the craziest and most senseless woman in the world. She was extraordinary woman; consider all the circumstances, her romanticism, all that star-gazing nonsense in it’s wildest and craziest form. Take one point: from the very beginning she dreamed of something like a heaven upon earth, of angels; her love was boundless, her faith was limitless, and I’m convinced that she went mad afterwards, not because he got tired of her and cast her off, but because she was deceived in him, because he was capable of deceiving her and abandoning her, because her idol was turned into clay, had spat on her, and humiliated her Her romantic and irrational soul could not endure this transformation, and the insult besides. Do you realize what an insult it was? In her horror and, above all, her pride, she drew back from him with infinite contempt. She broke all ties, tore up her papers, spat upon his money, forgetting that it was not her money, but her father’s, refused it as so much dirt in order to crush her seducer by her spiritual grandeur, to look upon him having robbed her, and to have the right to despise him all her life. And very likely she said that she considered it a dishonour to call herself his wife. We have no divorce in Russia, but de facto they were separated, and how could she ask him for her after that! Remember that the mad creature said to Nellie on her death-bed, ‘Don’t go to him; work, perish, but don’t go to him, whoever may try to take you.’ So that even then she was dreaming that she would be sought out, and so would be able once more to avenge herself by crushing the seeker with her contempt. In short, she fed on evil

dreams instead of bread. I've got a great deal out of Nellie, brother; in fact, I get a good deal still. Her mother was ill, of course, in consumption;, the disease specially develops bitterness and every sort of irritability yet I know for certain, through a crony of the woman Bubnov's that she did write to the prince, yes, to the prince, actually to the prince…."

"She wrote! And did he get the letter?" I cried.

"That's just it. I don't know whether he did or not. On one occasion Nellie's mother approached that crony. (Do you remember that painted wench? Now she's in the penitentiary.) Well, she'd written the letter and she gave it to her to take, but didn't send it after all and took it back. That was three weeks before her death… a significant fact; if once she brought herself to send it, even though she did take it back, she might have sent it again — I don't know; but there is one reason for believing that she really did not send it, for the prince, I fancy, only found out for certain that she had been in Petersburg, and where she'd been living, after her death. He must have been relieved!"

"Yes, I remember Alyosha mentioned some letter that his father was very much pleased about, but that was quite lately, not more than two months ago. Well, go on, go on. What of your dealings with the prince?

"My dealings with the prince? Understand, I had a complete moral conviction, but not a single positive proof, not a single one, in spite of all my efforts. A critical position! I should have had to make inquiries abroad. But where? — I didn't know. I realized, of course, that there I should have a hard fight for it, that I could only scare him by hints, pretend I knew more than I really did…."

"Well, what then?"

"He wasn't taken in, though he was scared; so scared that he's in a funk even now. We had several meetings. What a leper he made himself out! Once in a moment of effusion he fell to telling me the whole story. That was when he thought I knew all about it. He told it well, frankly, with feeling — of course he was lying shamelessly. It was then I took the measure of his fear for me. I played the simpleton one time to him, and let him see I was shamming. I played the part awkwardly — that is, awkwardly on purpose. I purposely treated him to a little rudeness, began to threaten him, all that he might take me for a simpleton and somehow let things out. He saw through it, the scoundrel! Another time I pretended to be drunk. That didn't answer either — he's cunning. You can understand that, Vanya. I had to find out

how far he was afraid of me; and at the same time to make him believe I knew more than I did."

"Well, and what was the end of it?"

"Nothing came of it. I needed proofs and I hadn't got them. He only realized one thing, that I might make a scandal. And, of course, a scandal was the one thing he was afraid of, and he was the more afraid of it because he had began to form ties here. You know he's going to be married, of course?"

"No."

"Next year. He looked out for his bride when he was here last year; she was only fourteen then. She's fifteen by now, still in pinafores, poor thing! Her parents were delighted. You can imagine how anxious he must have been for his wife to die. She's a general's daughter, a girl with money — heaps of money! You and I will never make a marriage like that, friend Vanya…Only there's something I shall never forgive myself for as long as I live!" cried Masloboev, bringing his fist down on the table. That he got the better of me a fortnight ago … the scoundrel!"

"How so?"

"It was like this. I saw he knew I'd nothing positive to go upon; and I felt at last that the longer the thing dragged on the more he'd realize my helplessness. Well, so I consented to take two thousand from him."

"You took two thousand!"

"In silver, Vanya; it was against the grain, but I took it. As though such a job were worth no more than two thousand! It was humiliating to take it. I felt as though he'd spat upon me. He said to me: 'I haven't paid you yet, Masloboev, for the work you did before.' (But he had paid long ago the hundred and fifty roubles we'd agreed upon.) 'Well, now I'm going away; here's two thousand, and so I hope everything's settled between us.' So I answered, 'Finally settled, prince,' and I didn't dare to look into his ugly face. I thought it was plainly written upon it, 'Well, he's got enough. I'm simply giving it to the fool out of good-nature.' I don't remember how I got away from him!"

"But that was disgraceful, Masloboev," I cried. "What about Nellie!"

"It wasn't simply disgraceful … it was criminal … it was loathsome. It was … it was … there's no word to describe it!"

"Good heavens! He ought at least to provide for Nellie!"

“Of course he ought! But how’s one to force him to? Frighten him? Not a bit of it, he won’t be frightened; you see, I’ve taken the money. I admitted to him myself that all he had to fear from me was only worth two thousand roubles. I fixed that price on myself! How’s one going to frighten him now?”

“And can it be that everything’s lost for Nellie?” I cried, almost in despair.

“Not a bit of it! “ cried Masloboev hotly, starting up. “No, I won’t let him off like that. I shall begin all over again, Vanya. I’ve made up my mind to. What if I have taken two thousand? Hang it all! I took it for the insult, because he cheated me, the rascal; he must have been laughing at me. He cheated me and laughed at me, too! No, I’m not going to let myself be laughed at…. Now, I shall start with Nellie, Vanya. From things I’ve noticed I’m perfectly sure that she has the key to the whole situation. She knows all — all about it! Her mother told her. In delirium, in despondency, she might well have told her. She had no one to complain to. Nellie was at hand, so she told Nellie. And maybe we may come upon some documents,” he added gleefully, rubbing his hands. “You understand now, Vanya, why I’m always hanging about here? In the first place, because I’m so fond of you, of course; but chiefly to keep a watch on Nellie; and another thing, Vanya, whether you like it or not, you must help me, for you have an influence on Nellie!…”

“To be sure I will, I swear!” I cried. “And I hope, Masloboev, that you’ll do your best for Nellie’s sake, for the sake of the poor, injured orphan, and not only for your own advantage.”

“What difference does it make to you whose advantage I do my best for, you blessed innocent? As long as it’s done, that’s what matters! Of course it’s for the orphan’s sake, that’s only common humanity. But don’t you judge me too finally, Vanya, if I do think of myself. I’m a poor man, and he mustn’t dare to insult the poor. He’s robbing me of my own, and he’s cheated me into the bargain, the scoundrel. So am I to consider a swindler like that, to your thinking? Morgen fruh!”

BUT OUR FLOWER FESTIVAL did not come off next day. Nellie was worse and could not leave her room.

And she never did leave that room again.

She died a fortnight later. In that fortnight of her last agony she never quite came to herself, or escaped from her strange fantasies. Her intellect

was, as it were, clouded. She was firmly convinced up to the day of her death that her grandfather was calling her and was angry with her for not coming, was rapping with his stick at her, and was telling her to go begging to get bread and snuff for him. She often began crying in her sleep, and when she waked said that she had seen her mother.

Only at times she seemed fully to regain her faculties. Once we were left alone together. She turned to me and clutched my hand

with her thin, feverishly hot little hand.

“Vanya,” she said, “when I die, marry Natasha.”

I believe this idea had been constantly in her mind for a long time. I smiled at her without speaking. Seeing my smile, she smiled too; with a mischievous face she shook her little finger at me and at once began kissing me.

On an exquisite summer evening three days before her death she asked us to draw the blinds and open the windows in her bedroom. The windows looked into the garden. She gazed a long while at the thick, green foliage, at the setting sun, and suddenly asked the others to leave us alone.

“Vanya,” she said in a voice hardly audible, for she was very weak by now, “I shall die soon, very soon. I should like you to remember me. I’ll leave you this as a keepsake.” (And she showed me a little bag which hung with a cross on her breast.) “Mother left it me when she was dying. So when I die you take this from me, take it and read what’s in it. I shall tell them all to-day to give it to you and no one else. And when you read what’s written in it, go to him and tell him that I’m dead, and that I haven’t forgiven him. Tell him, too, that I’ve been reading the Gospel lately. There it says we must forgive all our enemies. Well, I’ve read that, but I’ve not forgiven him all the same; for when mother was dying and still could talk, the last thing she said was: ‘I curse him.’ And so I curse him, not on my own account but on mother’s. Tell him how mother died, how I was left alone at Mme. Bubnov’s; tell him how you saw me there, tell him all, all, and tell him I liked better to be at Mme. Bubnov’s than to go to him…”

As she said this, Nellie turned pale, her eyes flashed, her heart began beating so violently that she sank back on the pillow, and for two minutes she could not utter a word.

“Call them, Vanya,” she said at last in a faint voice. “I want to say good-bye to them all. Good-bye, Vanya!”

She embraced me warmly for the last time. All the others came in. Nikolay Sergeyitch could not realize that she was dying; he could not admit the idea. Up to the last moment he refused to agree with us, maintaining that she would certainly get well. He was quite thin with anxiety; he sat by Nellie's bedside for days and even nights together. The last night he didn't sleep at all. He tried to anticipate Nellie's slightest wishes, and wept bitterly when he came out to us from her, but he soon began hoping again that she would soon get well. He filled her room with flowers. Once he bought her a great bunch of exquisite white and red roses; he went a long way to get them and bring them to his little Nellie… He excited her very much by all this. She could not help responding with her whole heart to the love that surrounded her on all sides. That evening, the evening of her good-bye to us, the old man could not bring himself to say good-bye to her for ever. Nellie smiled at him, and all the evening tried to seem cheerful; she joked with him and even laughed…. We left her room, feeling almost hopeful, but next day she could not speak. And two days later she died.

I remember how the old man decked her little coffin with flowers, and gazed in despair at her wasted little face, smiling in death, and at her hands crossed on her breast. He wept over her as though she had been his own child. Natasha and all of us tried to comfort him, but nothing could comfort him, and he was seriously ill after her funeral.

Anna Andreyevna herself gave me the little bag off Nellie's neck. In it was her mother's letter to Prince Valkovsky. I read it on the day of Nellie's death. She cursed the prince, said she could not forgive him, described all the latter part of her life, all the horrors to which she was leaving Nellie, and besought him to do something for the child.

"She is yours," she wrote. "She is your daughter, and you know that she is really your daughter, I have told her to go to you when I am dead and to give you this letter. If you do not repulse Nellie, perhaps then I shall forgive you, and at the judgement day I will stand before the throne of God and pray for your sins to be forgiven. Nellie knows what is in this letter. I have read it to her, I have told her all; she knows everything, everything.

But Nellie had not done her mother's bidding. She knew all, but she had not gone to the prince, and had died unforgiving.

When we returned from Nellie's funeral, Natasha and I went out into the garden. It was a hot, sunny day. A week later they were to set off. Natasha turned a long, strange look upon me.

“Vanya,” she said, “Vanya, it was a dream, you know.”

“What was a dream?” I asked.

“All, all,” she answered, “everything, all this year. Vanya, why did I destroy your happiness?”

And in her eyes I read:

“We might have been happy together for ever.”

THE END

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD



Translated by Constance Garnett

The House of the Dead was published in 1862 and portrays the life of convicts in a Siberian prison camp. The novel is a loosely-knit collection of facts and events connected to life in a Siberian prison, organised by “theme” rather than as a continuous story. Dostoyevsky himself spent four years in exile in such a camp following his conviction for involvement in the Petrashevsky circle. This experience allowed him to describe with great authenticity the conditions of prison life and the characters of the convicts.

The narrator, Aleksandr Petrovich Goryanchikov, has been sentenced to deportation to Siberia and ten years of hard labour. Life in prison is particularly hard for Aleksandr Petrovich, since he is a “gentleman” and suffers the malice of the other prisoners, nearly all of whom belong to the peasantry. Gradually Goryanchikov overcomes his revulsion at his situation and his fellow convicts, undergoing a spiritual re-awakening that culminates with his release from the camp. *The House of the Dead* is a work of great humanity, as Dostoyevsky portrays the inmates of the prison with sympathy for their plight, expressing admiration for their energy, ingenuity and talent, regardless of their social background. He concludes that the existence of the prison, with its absurd practices and savage corporal punishments is a tragic fact, both for the prisoners and for Russia itself.



Prisoners at an Amur Cart Road camp, Katorga — near where Dostoyevsky was imprisoned for four years

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD

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PART I

CHAPTER I

TEN YEARS A CONVICT

Among the mountains and impenetrable forests of the Siberian desert one comes from time to time across little towns of a thousand or two inhabitants. They are built entirely of wood and are very ugly, with two churches-one in the centre of the town, the other in the cemetery. These places are, in fact, much more like good-sized villages on the outskirts of Moscow than towns properly so called, and are generally administered by an inspector of police, a body of assessors, and some minor officials. It is cold in Siberia, but the great advantages of Government service compensate for that. The inhabitants are simple folk without liberal ideas; their manners are old-fashioned, solid, and unchanged by time. The officials who, of course, form the nobility in Siberia, either belong to the country, deep-rooted Siberians, or have migrated from Russia. The latter come straight from the large cities, tempted by the high pay, the extra allowance for travelling expenses, and by hopes (not less seductive) for the future. Those who know how to adapt themselves to conditions in Siberia almost always remain there; the abundant and richly flavoured fruit which they gather recompenses them amply for what they lose.

As for the others, light-minded persons who are unable to deal with the problem, they are soon bored in Siberia, and ask themselves with regret why they were so foolish as to come. They impatiently kill the three years for which they are obliged by their sentence to remain, and as soon as their time is up they ask to be sent back, and return to their original homes, decrying and ridiculing Siberia. They are wrong; for it is a happy country, not only as regards the Government service, but also from many other points of view.

The climate is excellent, the merchants are rich and hospitable, the Europeans in easy circumstances are numerous. As for the girls, they are like roses and their morality is irreproachable. Game is to be found in the streets, and throws itself upon the sportsman’s gun. People drink

champagne in prodigious quantities. The caviare is astonishingly good and most abundant. In a word, it is a blessed land, out of which it is only necessary to be able to make profit; and much profit is in fact made.

It was in one of these little towns-gay and perfectly self-satisfied, whose population left upon me the most agreeable impression-that I met an exile, Alexander Petrovitch Goriantchikoff, formerly a landed proprietor in Russia. He had been condemned to hard labour of the second degree for assassinating his wife. After undergoing his punishment often years' hard labour, he lived quietly and unnoticed as a colonist in the little town of K. To tell the truth, he was on the register of a neighbouring district; but he resided at K, where he managed to get a living by giving lessons to children. In the towns of Siberia one often meets exiles thus engaged: they are not looked down upon, for they teach the French language which is so necessary in life, and of which without them no one in the distant parts of Siberia would have the least idea.

I saw Alexander Petrovitch for the first time at the house of an official, Ivan Ivanitch Gvosdikof, a venerable old man, very hospitable, and the father of five daughters for whom the highest hopes were entertained. Four times a week Alexander Petrovitch gave them lessons, at the rate of thirty silver kopecks a lesson. His external appearance interested me. He was excessively pale and thin, still young-about thirty-five years of age-short and weak, and always very neatly dressed in the European style. When you spoke to him he looked at you most attentively, listening to your words with strict politeness and a reflective air, as though you had set him a problem or wished to extract a secret from him. He replied clearly and shortly; but in doing so weighed each word, so that one felt ill at ease without knowing why, and was glad when the conversation came to an end. I asked Ivan Gvosdikof about him. He told me that Goriantchikoff was of irreproachable morals, otherwise he would not have entrusted him with the education of his children; but that he was a terrible misanthrope, who avoided all society; that he was very learned, a great reader, and that he spoke but little, and never entered freely into a conversation. Some people said he was mad; but that was not looked upon as a very serious defect. Accordingly, the most important persons in the town were ready to treat Alexander Petrovitch with respect, for he could be useful to them in writing petitions. It was believed that he was well connected in Russia. Perhaps, among his relations, there were some who were highly placed; but it was known that since his exile he

had broken off all contact with them. In a word, he was his own executioner. Everyone knew his story, and was aware that he had killed his wife through jealousy less than a year after his marriage and that he had given himself up to justice, which had made his punishment much less severe. Such crimes are always looked upon as misfortunes, which must be treated with pity. Nevertheless, this extraordinary man kept himself obstinately apart, and never showed himself except to give lessons. In the first instance I paid no attention to him; then, without knowing why, I found myself interested in him. He was rather enigmatic; to converse with him was quite impossible. Certainly he replied to all my questions, he seemed to regard it as a duty to do so; but when once he had answered I was afraid to question him further.

After such conversations one could observe on his countenance signs of suffering and exhaustion. I remember one fine summer's evening leaving Gvosdikof's house in his company. It suddenly occurred to me to invite him to come in and smoke a cigarette. I can scarcely describe the fright which showed itself in his countenance. He became confused, muttered incoherently, gave me an angry look, then suddenly fled in the opposite direction. I was astonished afterwards when he met me: he seemed to experience, on seeing me, a sort of terror, but I did not lose courage. There was something in him which attracted me.

A month later I called on Petrovitch without pretext, and it is evident that, in doing so, I behaved foolishly and without the least delicacy. He lived in one of the farthest points of the town with an old woman whose daughter suffered from tuberculosis and had a little girl about ten years old, very pretty and very lively.

When I entered Alexander Petrovitch was seated beside the child, teaching her to read. When he saw me he became confused, as if I had detected him in a crime. Losing all self-control, he jumped up and looked at me with awe and astonishment. Then we both of us sat down. He followed attentively all my looks, as if I suspected him of some mysterious intention. I realized that he was horribly mistrustful. He looked at me as if I were some kind of spy, and seemed to be on the point of saying: ' Are you not going soon?'

I spoke to him of our little town, of the news of the day; but he was silent, or smiled with an air of displeasure. I could see that he was absolutely ignorant of all that went on in the town, and that he was in no

way curious to know. I spoke to him next of the country generally, and of its men. He listened to me in silence, fixing his eyes upon me in such a strange way that I felt ashamed of what I was doing. I apparently offended him by offering him some books and newspapers which I had just received by post. He cast a greedy look upon them, but seemed to alter his mind, and declined my offer, giving his want of leisure as a pretext.

At last I wished him good-bye, and felt a weight fall from my shoulders as I left the house. I regretted having harassed a man whose tastes kept him apart from the rest of the world, but the mistake had been made. I noticed that he possessed very few books: it was not true, then, that he read so much. Nevertheless, on two occasions when I drove past I saw a light in his lodging. What could make him sit up so late? Was he writing; and if that were so, what was he writing?

I was absent from town for about three months, and on my return in the winter I learned that Petrovitch was dead. He had not even sent for a doctor. He was already forgotten, and his lodging was unoccupied. I at once made the acquaintance of his landlady, in the hope of learning from her what her lodger had been writing. For twenty kopecks she brought me a basket full of papers left by the deceased, and confessed that she had already used four sheets to light her fire. She was a morose and taciturn old woman and I could elicit nothing of interest. She could tell me nothing about her lodger. She gave me to understand all the same that he scarcely ever worked, and that he remained for months together without opening a book or touching a pen. On the other hand, he walked all night up and down his room, given up to his reflections. Sometimes, indeed, he spoke aloud. He was very fond of her little grandchild, Katia, above all when he knew her name; on her name-day-the feast of St Catherine -he always had a requiem mass said in the parish church for somebody’s soul. He detested receiving visits, and never went out except to give lessons. Even his landlady he looked upon with an unfriendly eye when, once a week, she came into his room to put it in order.

During the three years he had lived under her roof, he had scarcely ever spoken to her. I asked Katia if she remembered him. She looked at me in silence, and turned weeping to the wall. This man, then, was loved by someone! I took away the papers and spent the day examining them. They were for the most part of no importance, merely children’s exercises. At last I came to a rather thick packet: the sheets were covered with delicate handwriting which ended abruptly. It had perhaps been forgotten by the

writer. It was the narrative- incoherent and fragmentary-of the ten years Alexander Petrovitch had passed in hard labour. The story was interrupted here and there by anecdotes or strange, terrible recollections thrown in convulsively as if torn from the writer. I read some of these fragments again and again and began to suspect that they had been written in moments of madness. But his memories of the convict prison-*Recollections of the House of the Dead*, as he himself called them somewhere in his manuscript-seemed to me not without interest. They revealed quite a new world unknown till then; and in the strangeness of his facts, together with his singular remarks on this fallen people, there was enough to tempt me to go on. I may perhaps be wrong, but I shall publish some chapters from this narrative, and the public may judge for itself.

CHAPTER II

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD

Our prison was at the far end of the citadel behind the ramparts. Peering through the crevices in the palisade in the hope of glimpsing something, one sees nothing but a little corner of the sky, and a high earthwork covered with the long grass of the steppe. Night and day sentries walk to and fro upon it. Then one suddenly realizes that whole years will pass during which one will see, through those same crevices in the palisade, the same sentinels pacing the same earthwork, and the same little corner of the sky, not just above the prison, but far and far away. Imagine a courtyard two hundred feet long and one hundred and fifty feet broad, enclosed by an irregular hexagonal palisade formed of stakes thrust deep into the ground. So much for the external surroundings of the prison. On one side of the palisade is a great gate, solid and nearly always shut; watched perpetually by the sentries, and never opened except when the convicts go out to work. Beyond this there are light and liberty, the life of free people! Beyond the palisade one thought of the marvellous world, fantastic as a fairy-tale. It was not the same on our side. Here there was no resemblance to anything. Habits, customs, laws were all precisely fixed. It was the house of living death. It is this corner that I have undertaken to describe. Entering the enclosure, one sees a few buildings. On two sides of a vast courtyard are long wooden buildings made of logs, and only one storey high. These are convict barracks. Here the prisoners are confined, divided into several classes. At the end of the enclosure may be seen a house, which serves as a kitchen, divided into two compartments. Behind it is another building, which does duty at once as cellar, loft, and barn. The centre of the enclosure, completely barren, is a large open space. Here the prisoners are drawn up in ranks three times a day. They are identified and must answer to their names morning, noon, and evening, besides several times in the course of the day if the soldiers on guard are suspicious and clever at counting. All around, between the palisade and the buildings, there remains a fairly wide space, where some of the prisoners who are misanthropes, or of a sombre turn of mind, like to walk about when they are not at work.

There they go turning over their favourite thoughts, shielded from all observation.

Meeting them on those walks, I took pleasure in observing their sad, deeply marked countenances, and in guessing their thoughts. The favourite occupation of one convict, during the moments allowed him from hard labour, was to count the palisades. There were fifteen hundred of them. He had counted them all, and knew them nearly by heart. Every one of them represented to him a day of confinement; and, numbering them daily in this manner, he knew exactly the number of days that he had still to pass in prison. He was sincerely happy when he had finished one side of the hexagon, although he had to wait many long years for his liberation. But one learns patience in a prison.

One day I saw a prisoner who had undergone his punishment take leave of his comrades. He had done twenty years' hard labour. More than one convict remembered seeing him arrive, quite young, careless, thinking neither of his crime nor of his punishment. He was now an old man with grey hair, his countenance sad and morose. He walked in silence through our six barracks. As he entered each of them he prayed before the icon, made a deep bow to his former companions, and begged them to remember him kindly.

I also remember a prisoner who was supposed to have been a well-to-do Siberian peasant. Six years before he had had news of his" wife's remarrying, which had caused him great pain. One evening she came to the prison and asked for him in order to give him a present! They talked together for two minutes, wept together, and then separated never to meet again. I saw the expression on that man's face when he reentered the barracks. There, indeed, one learns to endure all.

When darkness set in we had to be indoors and were shut up for the night. I always found it painful to leave the courtyard for the barrack-room. Think of a long, low, stifling room, dimly lit by tallow candles, and full of heavy, disgusting odours. I cannot now understand how I lived there for ten whole years. My camp bedstead was made of three boards. It was the only place in the room that belonged to me. More than thirty of us were herded together in one room. It was, indeed, no wonder that we were shut up early. At least four hours passed before everyone was asleep, and until then there was a tumult of laughter and oaths; rattling of chains and a poisonous

atmosphere of thick smoke; a confusion of shaved heads, branded foreheads, and clothes that were no more than filthy rags.

Yes, man is a pliable animal-he must be so defined: a being who grows accustomed to everything! That would be, perhaps, the best definition that could be given of him. There were altogether two hundred and fifty of us in the same; prison, and that number remained almost invariably the same. Whenever some of us had done our time, other criminals arrived; and there were a few deaths. The population of that prison included all sorts of people: I believe that each region of Russia had furnished its representatives. There were foreigners, too, and even mountaineers from the Caucasus.

All these people were divided into different classes according to the gravity of their crimes; and consequently the length of their sentences was reflected in the class to which they were i assigned. The majority had been condemned to hard labour of the civil class-' strongly condemned,' as the prisoners used to say. They were criminals deprived of all civil rights, men rejected by society, vomited forth, whose brows were marked by the iron to testify for ever to their disgrace. They were incarcerated for periods of from eight to ten years, and at the expiration of their punishment they were sent as colonists to various parts of Siberia.

As to the criminals of the military section, they were not deprived of their civil rights-as is generally the case in Russian disciplinary companies-and were punished for a relatively short period. As soon as they had undergone their punishment they had to return to their units, whence they were posted to battalions of the Siberian Line.[1]

1 Goriantchikoff himself became a soldier in Siberia when he had finished his term of imprisonment.

Many of them came back to us later for serious crimes, this time not for a short spell, but for twenty years at least. They then formed part of the *in perpetuo* section. Nevertheless, the 'perpetuals' were not deprived of their civil rights. There was another and sufficiently numerous class, composed of the worst malefactors. These were nearly all veterans in crime, and were called the Special section. It included convicts from all the Russias. They looked upon one another with reason as imprisoned for ever, for the term of their confinement was indefinite: the law required them to receive double

and treble tasks, and they remained in prison until work of the most painful character had to be undertaken in Siberia.

‘You are only here for a fixed time,’ they used to tell the other convicts; ‘we, on the contrary, are here for life.’ I have heard that this section has since been abolished.

At the same time, civil convicts are still kept apart, in order that the military convicts may be organized by themselves into a homogeneous ‘disciplinary company.’ The administration, too, had of course been changed; consequently what I describe are the customs and practices of another time- things which have since been abolished. Yes, it was a long time ago; it all seems to me like a dream. I remember entering the prison one December evening as darkness fell. The convicts were returning from work, and the roll was about to be called. An under-officer with large moustaches opened to me the gate of this strange house where I was to remain so many years, to experience so many emotions, of which I could not form even an approximate idea if I had not gone through them. Thus, for example, could I ever have imagined the poignant and terrible suffering of never being alone even for one minute during ten years? Working under escort in the barracks together with two hundred ‘companions’: never alone, never!

However, I was obliged to get accustomed to it. Among them there were men guilty of wilful murder and manslaughter, burglars, master pickpockets, cutpurses, petty thieves, and shoplifters.

It would have been difficult, however, to say why and how certain convicts found themselves in prison. Each of them had his history, confused and heavy, painful as the morning after a debauch.

The convicts, as a rule, spoke very little of their past life, which they did not like to think of. They endeavoured, even, to dismiss it from their memory.

Among my companions in chains I have known murderers who were so gay and so carefree that one might have made a bet that their consciences never for a moment reproached them. But there were also men of sombre countenance, who remained almost always silent. It was very rarely anyone told his history: that sort of thing was not done. Indeed, it was not tolerated. Every now and again, however, by way of a change, one prisoner would tell another his life story, and the other would listen coldly to the narrative. No

one, to tell the truth, could have said anything to astonish his neighbour. ‘We’re not fools,’ they would sometimes say with singular pride.

I remember one day an intoxicated ruffian-it was sometimes possible for the convicts to obtain drink-relating how he had killed and cut up a child of five. He had first tempted the child with a toy, and then taking it to a loft had cut it up to pieces. The entire barrack, which generally speaking laughed at his jokes, uttered one unanimous cry. The blackguard was obliged to shut up. But if the convicts interrupted him, it was not by any means because his recital had aroused their indignation, but because it was forbidden to speak of such things.

I must here observe that the convicts as a community possessed a certain degree of education. Half of them, if not more, knew how to read and write. Where in Russia, in no matter what district, could two hundred and fifty men be found able to read and write? Since then I have heard people say, and conclude on the strength of the literate criminal, that education demoralizes the people. This is a mistake. Education has nothing whatever to do with moral deterioration; and if one must admit that it develops a resolute spirit among the people, that is far from being a defect.

Each section was differently dressed. The uniform of one consisted of a cloth vest, half brown and half grey, and trousers with one leg brown, the other grey. One day while we were at work, a little girl who sold scones of white bread came towards the convicts. She looked at them for a time and then burst into a laugh. ‘Oh, how ugly they are!’ she cried; ‘they have not even enough grey cloth or brown cloth to make their clothes.’ Every convict wore a vest made of grey cloth, except the sleeves, which were brown. Their heads, too, were shaved in different styles. The crown was bared sometimes longitudinally, sometimes latitudinally, from the nape of the neck to the forehead, or from one ear to another.

This strange family had a general likeness so pronounced that it could be recognized at a glance.

Even the most striking personalities, those who involuntarily dominated their fellow convicts, could not help taking the general tone of the house.

All, with the exception of a few who were childishly gay and by that alone drew upon themselves general contempt, were morose, envious, atrociously vain, presumptuous, susceptible, and excessively ceremonious. To be astonished at nothing was in their eyes the first and indispensable quality: accordingly, their first aim was to bear themselves with dignity. But

often the most composed demeanour vanished with Lightning rapidity. Together with grovelling humility, however, some possessed genuine strength: these were naturally all sincere. But strangely enough they were for the most part excessively and morbidly vain. Vanity was always their salient quality.

The majority of the prisoners were depraved and perverted, so that calumny and detraction rained amongst them like hail. Our life was a constant hell, a perpetual damnation; but no one would have dared to raise a voice against the internal regulations of the prison or established usage. Accordingly, willingly or unwillingly, they had to be obeyed. Certain indomitable characters yielded with difficulty, but they yielded all the same. Men who had run amok and, urged by overweening pride, had committed the most terrible crimes as it were unconsciously and in delirium, men who had terrorized whole towns, were quickly subdued by our prison system. The ‘new boy,’ taking stock of his surroundings, soon found that he could astonish no one. Insensibly he submitted, took the general tone, and assumed a sort of personal dignity which almost all maintained, as if the denomination of convict were a title of honour. Not the least sign of shame or of repentance, but a kind of external submission which seemed to have been reasoned out as the best line of conduct to pursue. ‘ We are lost men,’ they said to themselves. ‘We were unable to live as free men, and we must now go to Green Street.’[1]

‘You would not obey your father and mother; you will now obey leather thongs.”The man who would not sow must now break stones.’

These things were said and repeated as moral aphorisms, sentences, and proverbs, but without anyone taking them seriously. They were but words in the air. There was not one man among us who admitted his iniquity. Let a stranger who was not a convict endeavour to reproach one with his crime, and he would meet with an endless storm of abuse. And how refined are convicts in the matter of insults! They insult delicately, like artists; insult with the most delicate science. They endeavour not so much to offend by the expression as by the meaning, the spirit of an envenomed phrase. Their incessant quarrels developed this method into a fine art.

As they worked only under threat of the big stick, they were idle and depraved. Those who were not already corrupt when they arrived were very soon perverted. Brought together in spite of themselves, they were perfect strangers to one another. ‘The devil wore out three pairs of shoes before he

rounded us up,' they would say. Intrigue, calumny, scandal of all kinds, envy, and hatred reigned above all else. In this slothful life no ordinary spiteful tongue could make headway against these murderers with insults constantly in their mouths.

As I said before, there were to be found among them men of open character, resolute, intrepid, accustomed to self-command. These were held involuntarily in esteem. Although they were very jealous of their reputation, they endeavoured to annoy no one, and never insulted one another without a motive. Their conduct was on all points full of

1 An allusion to the two rows of soldiers, armed with green rods, between which convicts condemned to corporal punishment had to pass.

dignity. They were rational, and almost always obedient, not on principle, or from any respect for duty, but as if in virtue of a mutual convention between themselves and the administration-a convention of which the advantages were plain enough.

The officials, moreover, behaved prudently towards them. I remember that one prisoner of the resolute and intrepid -type, known to possess the instincts of a wild beast, was summoned one day to be whipped. It was during the summer, and no work was being done. The governor of the prison was in the orderly room near the principal entrance, ready to assist at the punishment. This officer was dreaded by the prisoners, whom he had brought to such a state that they trembled before him. Severe to the point of insanity, 'he threw himself upon them,' to use their expression. But it was above all his look, as penetrating as that of a lynx, that was feared. It was impossible to conceal anything from him: he saw, so to say, without looking. On entering the prison, he knew at once what was going on. Accordingly the convicts one and all called him the man with eight eyes. His system was bad, for it had the effect of irritating men who were already irascible. But for the deputy governor, a well-bred and reasonable man who moderated the savage onslaughts of his superior, the latter would have caused sad misfortunes by his incompetent administration. I do not understand how he managed to retire from the service safe and sound. It is true that he left after being called before a court martial.

A prisoner, though he turned pale when summoned, generally lay down courageously and without uttering a word to receive the terrible rods; then he got up and shook himself. He bore the misfortune calmly,

philosophically, it is true, though he was never punished at random, nor before careful inquiries had been made. But this time the victim considered himself innocent. Pale with fear, he walked quietly towards the escort of soldiers, but as he did so he managed to conceal in his sleeve a shoemaker’s awl. Now the prisoners were strictly forbidden to carry sharp instruments about them; examinations were frequently, minutely, and unexpectedly made, and all infractions of the rule were severely punished.

But as it is difficult to deprive a criminal of what he is determined to conceal, and as, moreover, sharp instruments are necessarily used in the prison, they were never destroyed. If an official managed to confiscate them the convicts very soon procured new ones.

On the occasion in question all the convicts were pressed against the palisade, with palpitating hearts, peering through the crevices. It was known that this time Petroff would not allow himself to be flogged, that the governor’s end had come. But at the critical moment the latter got into his carriage and departed, leaving the direction of the punishment to a subordinate. ‘God has saved him!’said the convicts. As for Petroff, he underwent his punishment quietly. Once the governor had gone his anger abated. Prisoners are submissive and obedient up to a point, but there is a limit which must not be crossed. Nothing is more curious than these strange outbursts of disobedience and rage. Often a man who has for years endured the cruellest punishment will revolt for a trifle, for a mere nothing. He might pass for a madman; that, in fact, is what is said of him.

I have already stated that during many years I never remarked the least sign of repentance nor even the slightest uneasiness in a man with regard to his crime, and that most of the convicts considered neither honour nor conscience, holding that they had a right to art as they thought fit. Certainly vanity, bad example, deceitfulness, and false shame were responsible for much. On the other hand, who can claim to have sounded the depths of those hearts given over to perdition, and to have found them closed to all light? It would seem indeed that during all those years I should have been able to detect some indication, however fugitive, of some regret, of some moral suffering. I positively saw nothing of the kind. One cannot judge of crime with ready-made; opinions: its philosophy is a little more complicated than people think. It is acknowledged that neither convict prisons, nor the hulks, nor any system of hard labour ever reformed a criminal. These forms of chastisement only punish him and reassure society against the offences

he might commit. Confinement, regulation, and excessive work have no effect but to develop in these men profound hatred, a thirst for forbidden enjoyment, and frightful recalcitration. On the other hand I am convinced that the celebrated cellular system gives results which are specious and deceitful. It deprives a criminal of his initiative, of his energy, enervates his soul by weakening and frightening it, and at last exhibits a dried-up mummy as a model of repentance and amendment.

The criminal who has revolted against society hates it, and considers himself in the right; society was wrong, not he. Has he not, moreover, undergone his punishment? Accordingly he is absolved, acquitted in his own eyes. In spite of different opinions, everyone will acknowledge that there are acts which everywhere and always, under no matter what legal system, are beyond doubt criminal, and should be regarded as such so long as man is man. It is only in prison that I have heard related with childish, unrestrained laughter the strangest, most atrocious offences. I shall never forget a certain parricide, formerly a nobleman and a public functionary. A true prodigal son, he had caused his father great grief. The old man had tried in vain to restrain him by remonstrance on the fatal slope down which he was sliding. But the son was heavily in debt, and as his father was suspected of having, besides an estate, a sum of ready money, he killed him in order to enter more quickly into the inheritance. This crime was not discovered until a month afterwards, during which time the murderer, who meanwhile had informed the police of his father's disappearance, continued his debauches. At last, during his absence, the police discovered the old man's corpse in a drain. The grey head was severed from the trunk, but replaced in its original position. The body was entirely dressed. Beneath, as if in derision, the assassin had placed a cushion.

The young man confessed nothing. He was degraded, deprived of his nobiliary privileges, and condemned to twenty years' hard labour. As long as I knew him I always found him to be indifferent to his position. He was the most light-minded, inconsiderate man that I ever met, although he was far from being a fool. I never observed in him any strong tendency to cruelty. The other convicts despised him, not on account of his crime, of which there was never any question, but because he was without dignity. He sometimes spoke of his father. One day for instance, boasting of the hereditary good health of his family, he said: 'My father, for example, until his death was never ill.'

Animal insensibility carried to such a point is most remarkable-it is, indeed, phenomenal. There must have been in this case some organic defect in the man, some physical and moral monstrosity hitherto unknown to science, and not simply crime. Naturally I did not believe so atrocious a crime; but people from the same town as himself, who knew all the details of his history, told me of it. The facts were so clear that it would have been madness not to accept them. The prisoners once heard him cry out during his sleep: ‘ Hold him! hold him! Cut his head off, his head, his head!’

Nearly all the convicts dreamed aloud, or were delirious in their sleep. Insults, words of slang, knives, hatchets, seemed constantly present in their dreams. ‘ We are crushed!’ they would say; ‘we are without entrails; that is why we shriek at night.’

Hard labour in our fortress was not an occupation, but an obligation. The convicts did their job; they worked the number of hours fixed by law, and then returned to the prison. They hated their free time. If a convict did not do some voluntary work, he could not have endured his con finement. How could these men, all strongly constituted who had lived sumptuously and desired so to live again, who had been brought together against their will after society had cast them off-how could they live in a normal and natural manner? Man cannot exist without work, without legal, natural property. Depart from these conditions, and he becomes perverted and changed into a wild beast. Accordingly, every convict, through natural requirements and by the instinct of self-preservation, had a trade-an occupation of some kind.

The long summer days were occupied almost entirely by hard labour. The night was so short that we had only just time to sleep. It was not the same in winter. According to regulations, prisoners had to be shut up in the barracks at nightfall. What was to be done during these long, sad evenings but work? Consequently each barrack, though locked and bolted, assumed the appearance of a large workshop. That work was not, of course, forbidden in itself; but it was forbidden to have tools, without which work is evidently impossible. But we laboured in secret, and the administration seemed to shut its eyes. Many prisoners arrived without knowing how to make use of their ten fingers; but they learnt a trade from some of their companions, and became excellent workmen.

We had among us cobblers, bootmakers, tailors, masons, locksmiths, and gilders. A Jew named Esau Boumstein was at the same time a jeweller and a usurer. Everyone worked, and so earned a few pence-for many orders

came from the town. Money is a kind of freedom that can be felt and heard; it is an inestimable treasure for a man entirely deprived of true liberty. If he feels some money in his pocket, he consoles himself a little, even though he cannot spend it: but one can always and everywhere spend money, the more so as forbidden fruit is doubly sweet. One can often buy spirits in prison. Although pipes are severely forbidden, everyone smokes. Money and tobacco protect the convicts against scurvy, as work protects them from crime; for without work they would mutually have destroyed one another like spiders shut up in a closed bottle. Work and money were nevertheless forbidden. Often during the night strict searches were made, during which everything that was not legally authorized was confiscated. However successfully the little hoards had been concealed, they were sometimes discovered, which was one of the reasons why they were not kept very long. They were exchanged as soon as possible for drink, and that is how it was that spirits penetrated into the prison. The delinquent was not only deprived of his hoard, but was also cruelly flogged.

After every search, however, it was not long before the convicts procured again the objects which had been confiscated, and things returned to normal. The administration knew it; and although the condition of the convicts was a good deal like that of the inhabitants of Vesuvius, they never murmured at the punishment inflicted for these peccadilloes. Those who had no manual skill did business somehow or other. The modes of buying and selling were original enough: things changed hands which no one expected a convict would ever have thought of selling or buying, or even of regarding as of any value whatever. The least rag had its value, and might be turned to account. In consequence, however, of the convicts' poverty, money acquired in their eyes a superior value to that really belonging to it.

Long and painful tasks, sometimes of a very complicated kind, brought in a few kopecks. Several of the prisoners lent by the week, and did good business that way. The prisoner who was ruined and insolvent carried to the usurer the few things belonging to him and pledged them for some halfpence, which were advanced at a fabulous rate of interest. If he did not redeem them at the fixed time the usurer sold them pitilessly by auction, and without the least delay.

Usury flourished so well in our prison that money was lent even on Government property: linen, boots, etc.-things that were always in demand. When the lender accepted such pledges the affair might take an unexpected

turn. The proprietor would go, immediately after he had received his money, and tell the under-officer in charge that objects belonging to the State were being concealed; upon which everything was taken away from the usurer without even the formality of a report to the higher authority. But never was there any quarrel-and that is very curious indeed-between the usurer and the owner. The first gave up in silence, with a morose air, the things demanded from him, as if he had been waiting for the request. Sometimes, perhaps, he confessed to himself that, in the borrower's position, he would not have acted differently. Accordingly, if he felt aggrieved after this restitution, it was less from hatred than simply as a matter of conscience.

The convicts robbed one another without shame. Each prisoner had his little box fitted with a padlock, in which he kept the things entrusted to him by the administration. Although these boxes were authorized, that did not prevent them from being broken into. The reader can easily imagine what clever thieves were found among us. A prisoner who was sincerely devoted to me-I say it without boasting-stole my Bible, the only book allowed in prison. He told me of it the same day, not from repentance, but because he pitied me when he saw me looking for it everywhere. Among our companions in chains there were several convicts known as 'innkeepers,' who sold spirits and thereby became comparatively rich. I shall speak of this further on, for the liquor traffic deserves special consideration.

A great number of prisoners had been deported for smuggling, which explains how it was that drink was brought secretly into the prison under so severe a surveillance as ours was. In passing it may be remarked that smuggling is an offence apart. Would it be believed that money, the solid profit from the affair, possesses often only secondary importance for the smuggler? It is none the less true. He works by vocation. In his way he is a poet. He risks all he possesses and exposes himself to terrible dangers; he intrigues, invents, gets out of a scrape, and brings everything to a happy end as it were by inspiration. This passion is as violent as that of play.

I knew a prisoner of colossal stature, who was the mildest, the most peaceable, and the most manageable of men. Indeed, we often asked one another why he had been deported. He had such a calm, sociable character that during the whole period of his imprisonment he never quarrelled with anyone. Born in western Russia, where he lived on the frontier, he had been sent to hard labour for smuggling. Naturally, then, he could not resist his

desire to smuggle spirits into the prison. He was punished for it time and again, and heaven knows he was terrified of the rods. This dangerous trade brought him in but slender profits: it was the speculator who got rich at his expense. Each time he was punished he wept like an old woman, and swore by all that was holy that he would never be caught at such things again. He kept his vow for a whole month, but ended by yielding once more to his passion. Thanks to these amateur smugglers, spirits were always to be had.

Another source of income which, without enriching the prisoners, was constantly and beneficently turned to account, was alms-giving. The upper classes of our Russian society do not know to what an extent merchants, shopkeepers, and our people generally commiserate with the 'Unfortunate.'[1] Alms were always forthcoming: they consisted generally of little

1 Men condemned to hard labour, and exiles generally, were so called by the Russian peasantry.

white loaves, and sometimes, though very seldom, of money. Without alms, the existence of the convicts, and above all that of those awaiting sentence (who are badly fed) would be too painful. These alms are shared equally between all the prisoners. If they are not sufficient the little loaves are divided into halves, and sometimes into six pieces, so that each man may have his share. I remember the first alms, a small piece of money, that I received. One morning soon after my arrival, as I was returning from work under military escort, I met a woman and her daughter, a child of ten, who was beautiful as an angel. I had already seen them once before. The mother was the widow of a poor soldier who, while still young, had been sentenced by court martial and had died in the prison infirmary while I was there. They wept hot tears when they came to bid him good-bye. On seeing me the little girl blushed, and murmured a few words into her mother's ear. The woman stopped, and took from a basket a kopeck which she gave to the little girl. The little girl ran after me. ' Here, poor man,' she said, ' take this in the name of Christ.' I took the money which she slipped into my hand. The little girl returned joyfully to her mother. I kept that kopeck for a long time.

CHAPTER III

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Those first few weeks, and indeed all the early part of my imprisonment, made a deep impression on my imagination. The following years, on the other hand, are all mixed up together, and leave but a confused recollection. Whole periods, in fact, have been effaced from my memory. Generally speaking, however, I remember the life as the same-always painful, monotonous, and stifling. What I experienced during the first days of my imprisonment seems to me as if it took place but yesterday. Nor is that unnatural. I remember so well in the first place my surprise that prison routine afforded no outstanding feature, nothing extraordinary, or, perhaps I should say, unexpected. It was only when I had been there for some time that I took notice of all that was strange and unimagined. The discovery was astonishing: I confess that this sense of wonder never left me during the remainder of my time, and I never became fully acclimatized to my surroundings.

First of all, I experienced an invincible repugnance on arriving; but oddly enough the life seemed to me less painful than I had imagined on the journey.

Indeed, prisoners, though encumbered by their irons, moved about quite freely. They abused one another, sang, worked, smoked their pipes, and drank spirits. But there were not many drinkers. There were also regular card parties during the night. The labour did not seem to me particularly arduous; I fancied, indeed, that it could not be the real ‘ hard labour.’ I did not understand till long afterwards what in fact made it hard and even excessive. It was less by reason of its difficulty than because it was forced, imposed, obligatory; and because it was done only through fear of the stick. The peasant certainly works harder than the convict, for during the summer he works night and day. But it is in his own interest that he fatigues himself. His aim is reasonable, so that he suffers less than the convict who performs hard labour from which he derives no profit. It once occurred to me that if one desired to reduce a man to nothing-to punish him atrociously, to crush him in such a manner that the most hardened murderer would tremble

before such a punishment and take fright beforehand-one need only render his work completely useless, even to the point of absurdity.

Hard labour, as it is now organized, affords the convict no interest; but it has its utility. The convict makes bricks, digs the earth, builds; and all his occupations have a meaning and an end. Sometimes the prisoner may even take an interest in what he is doing. He then wishes to work more skilfully, more advantageously. But let him be constrained to pour water from one vessel into another, or to transport a quantity of earth from one place to another, in order to perform the contrary operation immediately afterwards, then I am persuaded that at the end of a few days he would strangle himself or commit a thousand capital offences rather than live in so abject a condition and endure such torment. It is evident that such punishment would be torture, atrocious: vengeance, rather than correction. It would be absurd, for it would have no natural end.

I did not, however, arrive until the winter-in the month of December-and the labour was then unimportant in our fortress. I had no idea of the summer labour-five times as fatiguing. During the winter season we worked on the Irtitch, breaking up old boats belonging to the Government, found occupation in the workshops, cleared the buildings from snow-drifts, or burned and pounded alabaster. As the days were very short, work ended early, and everyone returned to the prison, where there was scarcely anything to do except the supplementary work which the convicts did for themselves.

Scarcely a third of the convicts worked seriously: the others idled their time and wandered about without aim in the barracks, scheming and insulting one another. Those who had a little money got drunk on spirits, or lost what they had saved at gambling. And all this from idleness, weariness, and want of something to do.

I experienced, moreover, one form of suffering which is perhaps the sharpest, the most painful that can be experienced in a house of detention cut off from law and liberty. I mean forced association. Association with one’s fellow men is to some extent forced everywhere and always; but nowhere is it so horrible as in a prison, where there are men with whom no one would consent to live. I am certain that every convict, unconsciously perhaps, has suffered from this.

Our food seemed to me not too bad; some even declared that it was incomparably better than in any Russian prison, I cannot confirm this, for I

was never in prison anywhere else. Many of us, besides, were allowed to procure whatever nourishment we wished. Those who always had money allowed themselves the luxury of eating fresh meat, which cost only three kopecks a pound; but the majority of the prisoners were contented with the regular ration.

Those who praised the diet were thinking chiefly of the bread, which was distributed at the rate of so much per room, and not individually or by weight. This latter system would have been terribly severe, for a third of the men at least would have been constantly hungry; but under the existing regulation everyone was satisfied. Our bread was particularly good, and was even renowned in the town. Its quality was attributed to the excellent construction of the prison ovens. As for our cabbage soup, it was cooked and thickened with Hour, and had not an appetizing appearance. On working days it was clear and thin; but what particularly disgusted me was the way it was served. The other prisoners, however, paid no attention to that.

During the three days following my arrival I did not go to work. Some respite was always given to convicts just arrived, in order to allow them to recover from their fatigue. On the second day I had to go outside the prison in order to be ironed. My chain was not of the regulation pattern; it was composed of rings, which gave forth a clear sound, so I heard other convicts say. I had to wear them externally over my clothes, whereas my companions had chains formed not of rings, but of four links, as thick as the finger, and fastened together by three links which were worn beneath the trousers. To the central ring was fastened a strip of leather, tied in its turn to a girdle fastened over the shirt.

I can see again my first morning in prison. A drum beat in the orderly room near the principal entrance. Ten minutes later the under-officer opened the barracks. The convicts woke up one after another and rose trembling with cold from their plank bedsteads by the dim light of a tallow candle. Nearly all of them were morose; they yawned and stretched themselves. Their foreheads, marked by the iron, were con-tracted. Some made the sign of the Cross; others began to talk nonsense. The cold air from outside rushed in as soon as the door was opened. Then the prisoners hurried round the pails full of water, and one after another took a mouthful of water, spat it out into their hands, and washed their faces. Those pails had been brought in on the previous night by a prisoner specially appointed, according to the

rules, to clean the barrack. The convicts chose him themselves. He did not work with the others, for it was his business to examine the camp bedsteads and floors, and also to fetch and carry the water used in the morning for the prisoners' ablutions, and during the rest of the day for drinking. That very morning there were disputes on the subject of one of the pitchers.

'What are you doing there with your branded forehead?' grumbled one of the prisoners, tall, dry, and sallow.

He was remarkable for the strange protuberances which; covered his skull; and now he pushed against another con-vict, round and small, with a lively rubicund face.

'Just wait.'

'What are you shouting about? You know there's a fine to be paid when others are kept waiting. Get out of the way. What a monument, my brethren.'

' A little calf,' he went on muttering. ' See, the white bread of the prison has fattened him.'

'What do you take yourself for? A fine bird, indeed!'

'You're about right.'

'What kind of bird?'

'You needn't ask.'

'How so?'

'Find out.'

They devoured one another with their eyes. The little man, waiting for a reply with clenched fists, was apparently ready to fight. I thought they would come to blows: it was all quite new to me, and I watched the scene with curiosity. Later on I learned that such quarrels were perfectly harmless, that they served for entertainment. Like an amusing comedy, such episodes scarcely ever ended in violence, and this fact taught me a great deal about the character of my fellow prisoners.

The tall fellow remained calm and majestic. He felt that some answer was expected from him if he was not to be dishonoured and covered with ridicule. He had to show that he was a wonderful bird, a personage. Accordingly, he cast a sidelong glance at his adversary, endeavouring, with inexpressible contempt, to irritate him by looking at him over his shoulder, up and down, as he would have done an insect. At last the little fat man was so irritated that he would have thrown himself upon his antagonist had not his companions surrounded the combatants to prevent a serious quarrel.

‘Fight with your fists not with your tongues,’ cried a spectator from a corner of the room.

‘No, hold them,’ answered another, ‘they are going to fight. We are fine fellows, one against seven is our style.’

Fine fighting men! One was here for having sneaked a pound of bread, the other was a pot-stealer; he was whipped by the executioner for stealing a pot of curdled milk from an old woman.

‘Enough, keep quiet!’ cried a retired soldier, whose business it was to keep order in the barrack, and who slept in a corner of the room on a bedstead of his own.

‘Water, my children, water for Nevalid Petrovitch, water for our little brother, who has just woken up.’

‘Your brother! Am I your brother? Did we ever drink a rouble’s worth of spirits together? ‘ muttered the old soldier as he passed his arms through the sleeves of his greatcoat.

The roll was about to be called, for it was already late. The prisoners were hurrying towards the kitchen. They had to put on their pelisses, and then go to receive in their particoloured caps the bread which one of the cooks-one of the bakers, that is to say-was distributing. These cooks, like the men who did the household work, were chosen by the prisoners themselves. There were two for the kitchen making four servants in all for the prison. They had at their disposal the only kitchen knife authorized in the prison, which was used for cutting up the bread and meat. The prisoners arranged themselves in groups around the tables as best they could in caps and pelisses, with leather girdles round their waists, all ready to begin work. Some of the convicts had *kyas* before them, in which they steeped pieces of bread. The noise was insupportable. Many of the convicts, however, were talking together in corners with a steady, tranquil air.

‘Good morning and good appetite, Antonitch,’ said a young prisoner, sitting down by the side of an old man who had lost his teeth.

‘If you are not joking, well, good morning,’ said the latter without raising his eyes, and endeavouring to masticate a piece of bread with his toothless gums.

‘I declare I fancied you were dead, Antonitch.’

‘You die first; I’ll follow you.’

I sat down beside them. On my right two convicts were conversing with an attempt at dignity.

‘I’m not likely to be robbed,’ said one of them. ‘I’m more afraid of stealing myself.’

‘It wouldn’t be a good idea to rob me. The devil! I’d pay the man out.’

‘But what would you do? You’re only a convict. We have no other name. You’ll see she’ll rob you, the wretch, without even saying “Thank you.” The money I gave her was wasted. Just fancy, she was here a few days ago! Where were we to go? Shall I ask permission to go into the house of Theodore, the executioner? He has still his house in the suburb, the one he bought from that Solomon, you know, that scurvy Jew who hanged himself not long ago.’

‘Yes, I know him, the one who sold liquor here three years ago, and who was called Grichka-the secret drinking-shop.’

‘I know.’

‘*All* brag. You don’t know. In the first place it’s another drinking-shop.’

‘What do you mean, another? You don’t know what you’re talking about. I’ll bring you as many witnesses as you like.’

‘Oh, you will, will you? Who are you? Do you know to whom you are speaking?’

‘Yes, indeed.’

‘I’ve thrashed you often enough, though I don’t boast of it. Don’t give yourself airs then.’

‘You’ve thrashed *me?* The man who’ll thrash me has yet to be born; and the man who did is six feet below ground.’

‘Plague-stricken rascal of Bender!’

‘May the Siberian leprosy devour you with ulcers!’

‘May a chopper cleave your dog of a head.’

Insults were falling like rain.

‘Come, now, they’re going to fight. When men can’t behave properly they should keep quiet. They’re only too glad to come and eat Government bread, the rascals!’

They were soon separated. They fight with their tongues as much as they wish; that is allowed. It is a diversion at everyone’s disposal. But no blows. It was, indeed, only in extraordinary cases that blows were exchanged. If there was a fight, it was reported to the governor, who ordered an inquiry or directed one himself; and then woe to the culprits! Accordingly the prisoners set their faces against anything like a serious quarrel; besides, they insulted one another chiefly to pass the time, as an oratorical exercise. They

get excited; the quarrel takes on a furious, ferocious character; they seem about to slaughter one another. But nothing of the kind happens: as soon as their anger has reached a certain pitch they separate.

That astonished me much, and if I relate certain conversations between the convicts I do so with a purpose. Could I have imagined that people could have insulted one another for pleasure, that they could find enjoyment in it?

We must not forget the gratification of vanity. A dialectician who knows how to insult artistically is respected. A little more, and he would be applauded like an actor.

Already on the previous night I had noticed some glances in my direction, and several convicts had even hung around me as if they had suspected that I had brought money with me. They endeavoured to get into my good graces by teaching me how to carry my irons without inconvenience, and gave me-of course in return for money-a box with a lock, in which to keep the equipment entrusted to me by the authorities, and the few shirts that I had been allowed to bring with me. Yet the very next morning those same prisoners stole my box, and drank the money which they had taken out of it.

One of them afterwards became a great friend of mine, though he robbed me whenever opportunity offered. He was, all the same, vexed at what he had done. He committed these thefts almost unconsciously, as if in the way of a duty. Consequently I bore him no grudge.

These convicts let me know that one could have tea, and that I should do well to get myself a teapot. They found me one, which I hired for a certain time. They also recommended me a cook, who, for thirty kopecks a month, would arrange the dishes I might desire, if it was my intention to buy provisions and take my meals apart. Of course they borrowed money from me. The day of my arrival I was asked for a loan on three separate occasions.

We noblemen who had been degraded and incarcerated here were frowned upon by our fellow prisoners; although we had lost all our rights like the other convicts, we were not regarded as comrades.

In this instinctive repugnance there was an element of reason. To them we were always gentlemen, although they often jeered at our fall.

‘Ah! it’s all over now. Mossieu’s carriage formerly crushed the passers-by at Moscow. Now Mossieu picks hemp!’

They knew our sufferings, though we hid them as much as possible. It was principally when we were all working together that we had most to endure, for our strength was not so great as theirs, and we were really not of much assistance to them. Nothing is more difficult than to gain the confidence of the common people, especially such people as these!

There were only a few of us in the whole prison who were of noble birth. First, there were five Poles, of whom I shall later speak in detail. They were detested by the convicts more, perhaps, than the Russian nobles. The Poles-I speak only of the political convicts-always behaved to them with a constrained and offensive politeness, scarcely ever speaking to them, and making no endeavour to conceal the disgust which they experienced in such company. The convicts understood all this, and paid them back in their own coin.

Two years passed before I could gain the goodwill of my companions; but the greater part of them liked me, and declared that I was a good fellow.

There were altogether-counting myself-five Russian nobles in the convict prison. I had heard of one of them even before my arrival as a vile and base creature, horribly corrupt, doing the work of spy and informer. Accordingly, from the very first day I refused to enter into relations with this man. The second was the parricide to whom I have already referred. The third was Akimitch. I have seldom met such an extraordinary man, and I have still a lively recollection of him.

Tall, thin, weak-minded, and terribly ignorant, he was as argumentative and as meticulous as a German. The convicts laughed at him; but they feared him on account of his susceptible, excitable, and quarrelsome disposition. As soon as he arrived he was on a footing of perfect equality with them. He insulted them and beat them. Phenomenally just, it was sufficient for him that there was injustice to interfere in a matter which did not concern him. He was, moreover, extremely simple. When he quarrelled with the convicts he reproached them with being thieves, and exhorted them in all sincerity to steal no more. He had served as a sublieutenant in the Caucasus. I made friends with him the first day, and he related to me his ‘affair.’ He had begun as a cadet in a Line regiment. After waiting some time for his commission as sub-lieutenant, he at last received it, and was sent into the mountains to command a small fort. Some tributary princeling in the neighbourhood set fire to the fort, and made an unsuccessful attack.

Akimitch was very cunning, and pretended not to know who was the author of the attack, which he attributed to some insurgents wandering about the mountains. A month later, he extended a friendly invitation to the prince to call and see him. The prince, suspecting nothing, arrived on horseback. Akimitch drew up the garrison in fine of battle, and harangued his troops upon the treason and villainy of his visitor. He reproached him with his conduct; proved to him that to set fire to the fort was a shameful crime; explained to him minutely the duties of a tributary prince; and then, by way of peroration to his harangue, had him shot. He at once informed his superior officers of this execution, with all the details necessary. Thereupon Akimitch was brought to trial. He appeared before a court martial, and was condemned to death; but his sentence was commuted, and he was sent to Siberia as a convict of the second class-condemned, that is to say, to twelve years' hard labour and imprisonment in a fortress. He readily admitted that he had acted illegally, and that the prince ought to have been tried in a civil court and not by a court martial. Nevertheless, he could not understand that his action was a crime.

'He had burned my fort; what was I to do? Was I to thank him for it?' he answered to my objections.

Although the convicts laughed at Akimitch, and pretended that he was a little mad, they yet esteemed him by reason of his cleverness and his precision.

He knew all possible trades, and could do whatever you wished. He was cobbler, bootmaker, painter, carver, gilder, and locksmith. He had acquired these talents in prison, for it was sufficient for him to see an object in order to imitate it. He sold in the town, or caused to be sold, baskets, lanterns, and toys. Thanks to his work, he had always some money, which he employed in buying shirts, pillows, and so on. He had himself made a mattress, and as he slept in the same room as myself he was very useful to me at the beginning of my imprisonment.

Before leaving prison to go to work, the convicts were drawn up in two ranks before the orderly-room, surrounded by an escort of soldiers with loaded muskets. An officer of Engineers then arrived with the superintendent of the works and a few soldiers, who watched operations. The superintendent counted the convicts, and sent them in parties to their places of work.

I went with some other prisoners to the engineers' workshop-a low brick building in the centre of a large courtyard full of materials. There was a forge there, and carpenters', locksmiths', and painters' workshops. Akimitch was assigned to the last. He boiled the oil for the varnish, mixed the colours, and painted tables and other pieces of furniture in imitation walnut.

While I was waiting to have additional irons put on, I communicated to him my first impressions.

'Yes,' he said, 'they do not like nobles, above all those who have been condemned for political offences, and they take a pleasure in wounding their feelings. Surely that is understandable? We do not belong to them, wo do not suit them. They have all been serfs or soldiers. Tell me, what sympathy can they have for us? The life here is hard, but it is nothing in comparison with that of the disciplinary companies in Russia. There it is hell, those who have been in them praise our prison: it is as paradise compared with purgatory. Not that the work is harder. It is said that towards the convicts of the first class the authorities, who are not exclusively military as here, act quite differently from what they do towards us. They have their little houses, or so I have been told, for I have not seen for myself. They wear no uniform, nor are their heads shaved, though, in my opinion, uniforms and shaved heads are not bad things. All is neater, and also it is more agreeable to the eye, yet these men do not like it. Oh, what a Babel this place is! Soldiers, Circassians, Old Believers, peasants who have left their wives and families, Jews, gipsies, people come from heaven knows where, and all this variety of men are to live quietly together side by side, eat from the same dish, and sleep on the same planks. Not a moment's liberty, no enjoyment except in secret; they must hide their money in their boots; and then there are always the prison walls-perpetual imprisonment! Involuntarily wild ideas come to one.'

As I already knew all this, I was above all anxious to question Akimitch in regard to our governor. He concealed nothing, and the impression which his story left upon me was far from agreeable.

I had to live for two years under the authority of this officer; all that Akimitch told me about him was strictly true. He was a spiteful, ill-regulated man, terrible above all things because he possessed almost unlimited power over two hundred human beings. He looked upon the prisoners as his personal enemies-his first (and a very serious) fault. His

rare capacity, and, perhaps, even his good qualities, were perverted by his intemperance and his spitefulness. He sometimes descended like a bombshell upon the barracks in the middle of the night. If he noticed a prisoner asleep on his back or his left side, he awoke him and said: ‘You must sleep as I ordered!’ The convicts detested him and feared him like the plague. His repulsive, crimson countenance made everyone tremble. We all knew that the governor was entirely in the hands of his servant Fedka, and that he had nearly gone mad when his dog Treasure fell ill. He preferred this dog to every other living creature.

When Fedka told him that a certain convict, who had picked up some veterinary knowledge, made wonderful cures, he immediately sent for him and said: ‘I entrust my dog to your care. If you cure Treasure I will reward you royally.’ The man, a very intelligent Siberian peasant, was indeed a good veterinary surgeon, but he was above all a cunning peasant. Long afterwards he used to tell his comrades the story of his visit to the governor.

‘I looked at Treasure, who lay on a sofa with his head on a white cushion. I saw at once that he had inflammation, and that he wanted bleeding. I think I could have cured him, but I said to myself: “What will happen if the dog dies? It will be my fault.”

“No, your highness,” I said to him, “you have called me too late. If I had seen your dog yesterday or the day before, he would now be restored to health; but I can do nothing. He will die.” And Treasure died.’

I was told one day that a convict had tried to assassinate the governor. This prisoner had for several years been noted for his submissive attitude and for his silence: he was even regarded as a madman. As he was not altogether illiterate he spent his nights reading the Bible. When everybody was asleep he rose, climbed up on to the stove, lit a church taper, opened his Gospel, and began to read. He did this for a whole year.

One fine day, however, he left the ranks and declared that he would not go to work. He was reported to the governor, who flew into a rage and hurried to the barracks. The convict rushed forward, hurled a brick at him, which he had procured beforehand, and missed. He was seized, tried, and whipped-it was a matter of a few moments-and was carried to the hospital, where he died three days later. He declared during his last moments that he hated no one, and that, although he had wished to suffer he belonged to no sect of fanatics. Afterwards, whenever his name was mentioned in the barracks, it was always with respect.

At last they put new irons on me. While they were being soldered a number of young women, selling little white loaves, came into the forge one after another. They were, for the most part, quite little girls who came to sell the loaves that their mothers had baked. As they got older they still continued to hang about us, but they no longer brought bread. There were always some of them about together with a number of married women. Each roll cost two kopecks, and nearly all the prisoners bought them. I noticed one convict who worked as a carpenter. He was already growing grey, but had a ruddy, smiling complexion. He was joking with the vendors of rolls. Before they arrived he had tied a red handkerchief round his neck. A fat woman, much marked with the small-pox, put down her basket on the carpenter's table, and they began to talk.

'Why didn't you come yesterday?' asked the convict with a self-satisfied smile.

'I did come; but you had gone,' replied the woman boldly.

'Yes; they marched us off, otherwise we should have met. The day before yesterday they all came to see me.'

'Who did?'

'Why, Mariashka, Khavroshka, Tchekunda, Dougrochva.' This last woman charged four kopecks.

'What,' I said to Akimitch, 'is it possible that?'

'Yes; it happens sometimes,' he replied, lowering his eyes, for he was a very proper man.

Yes; it happened sometimes, but rarely, and with unheard-of difficulties. The convicts preferred to spend their money on drink. It was very difficult to meet these women. One had to agree on place and time, arrange a meeting, find solitude, and, most difficult of all, avoid the escort-almost an impossibility-and spend relatively prodigious sums. I have sometimes, however, witnessed love scenes. One day three of us were heating a brick-kiln on the banks of the Irtitch. The soldiers of the escort were good-natured fellows. Two ' blowers,' as they were called, soon appeared.

'What kept you so long?' asked one fellow who had evidently been expecting them. 'Was it at the Zvierkoffs that you were detained?'

' At the Zvierkoffs? It will be fine weather, and the fowls will have teeth, when I go to see them,' replied one of the women.

She was the dirtiest woman imaginable. She was called Tchekunda, and had arrived in company with her friend (she of the four kopecks), who was

beyond all description.

‘ It’s a long time since we saw anything of you,’ says the gallant to Miss Four Kopecks; ‘you seem to have grown thinner.’

‘Perhaps. I was once good-looking and plump, but now you might fancy I had swallowed eels.’

‘And you still run after the soldiers, eh?’

‘ That’s all wicked gossip; in any case, if I was to be flogged to death for it, I like soldiers.’

‘Never mind your soldiers, we’re the people to love; we have money.’

Imagine this gallant with his shaved crown, with fetters on his ankles, dressed in a coat of two colours, and watched by an escort.

My irons had now been fixed, and I had to return to the prison. I wished Akimitch good-bye and moved off, escorted by a soldier. Those who do task work return first, and, when I got back to the barracks, a good number of convicts were already there.

As the kitchen could not have held the whole barrack-full at once, we did not all dine together. Those who came in first were first served. I tasted the cabbage soup, but, not being used to it, could not eat it, so I prepared myself some tea. I sat down at one end of the table with a convict of noble birth like myself. The prisoners were going in and out; but there was no want of room, for there were not many of them. Five men sat down apart from the large table. The cook gave each of them two ladles full of soup, and brought them a plate of fried fish. These men were having a holiday. They looked at us in a friendly manner. One of the Poles came in and took his seat by our side.

‘I was not with you, but I know that you are having a feast,’ exclaimed a tall convict who now came in.

He was a man of about fifty years, thin and muscular. His face indicated cunning and, at the same time, liveliness. His lower Up, fleshy and pendent, gave him a soft expression.

‘Well, have you slept well? Why don’t you say how do you do? Well, now my friend of Kursk,’ he said, sitting down by the side of the diners, ‘good appetite? Here’s a new guest for you.’

‘We are not from the province of Kursk.’

‘Then my friends from Tambof, shall we say?’

‘We are not from Tambof either. You’ve no claim on us; if you want to enjoy yourself go to some rich peasant.’

‘ I have Maria Ikotishna[1] in my belly, otherwise I should die of hunger. But where is your peasant to be found?’

‘Good heavens! We mean Gazin. Go to him.’

‘Gazin is on the drink to-day; he’s devouring his capital.’

‘He has at least twenty roubles,’ says another convict. ‘It’s profitable keeping a drinking-shop.’

‘You won’t have me? Then I must eat Government food.’

‘Will you have some tea? If so, ask these noblemen for some.’

‘ What noblemen? They’re no longer noblemen. They’re no better than us,’ droned a convict who was seated in the corner and had not yet ventured a word.

‘ I should like a cup of tea, but I ‘m ashamed to ask for it. I have self-respect,’ said the fellow with the heavy Up, looking at me with a good-humoured air.

‘I’ll give you some if you like,’ I said. ‘Will you have some?’

‘What do you mean-will I have some? Who wouldn’t have some?’ he said, coming towards the table.

‘Only think! When he was free he ate nothing but cabbage soup and black bread, but now he’s in prison he must have tea like a perfect gentleman,’ continued the convict with the sombre air.

1 From ikot, hiccough.

‘Does no one here drink tea?’ I asked him; but he did not think me worthy of a reply.

‘White rolls, white rolls. Who’ll buy?’

A young prisoner was carrying in a net a load of calachi (scones), which he proposed to sell in the prison. For every ten that he sold the baker gave him one for his trouble. It was precisely on this tenth scone that he counted for his dinner.

‘White rolls, white rolls,’ he cried, as he entered the kitchen, ‘white Moscow rolls, all hot. I’ld eat the lot of them, but I want money, lots of money. Come, lads, there’s only one apiece for every mother’s son.’

This appeal to filial love made everyone laugh, and several of his white rolls were purchased.

‘Well,’ he said, ‘Gazin has drunk in such a style, it’s downright sinful. He’s chosen the right moment too. If the man with eight eyes should arrive-we shall hide him.’

‘Is he very drunk?’

‘Yes, and ill-tempered too-unmanageable.’

‘There’ll be some fighting, then?’

‘Of whom are they speaking?’ I asked the Pole who sat next to me.

‘ Of Gazin. He is a prisoner who sells spirits. When he has gained a little money by his trade he drinks it to the last kopeck; a cruel, malicious brute when he has been drinking. When sober he is quiet enough, but when he is in drink he shows himself in his true character. He attacks people with a knife until it is taken from him.’

‘How do they manage that?’

‘Ten men throw themselves upon him and beat him like sack, without mercy, until he loses consciousness. When he is half dead with the beating, they lay him down on his plank bedstead and cover him over with his pelisse.’

‘But they might kill him.’

‘Anyone else would die of it, but not he. He is excessively robust; he is the strongest of all the convicts. His constitu-tion is so hard that the day after one of these punishment he gets up perfectly sound.’

‘Tell me, please,’ I continued, still addressing the Pole, ‘why these people keep their food to themselves, and at the same time seem to envy me my tea.’

‘Your tea has nothing to do with it. They are envious of you. Are you not a gentleman? You in no way resemble them. They would be glad to pick a quarrel with you in order to humiliate you. You don’t know what you will have to put up with. It is martyrdom for men like us to be here. Our life is doubly painful, and great strength of character alone can accustom us to it. You will be vexed and tormented in all sorts of ways on account of your food and your tea. Although quite a number of men buy their own food and drink tea daily, they have a right to do so; you have not!’

A few minutes later he rose and left the table. His predictions were very soon fulfilled.

CHAPTER IV

FIRST IMPRESSIONS (continued)

Hardly had M. cki, the Pole to whom I had been
speaking, gone out when Gazin, completely drunk, threw himself all in a heap into the kitchen.

To see a convict drunk in the middle of the day, when everyone was about to be sent out to work, and considering the well-known severity of the governor, who at any moment might visit the barracks; the watchfulness of the under-officer, who never left the prison; the presence of the old soldiers and the sentinels; all this quite upset the ideas I had formed of our prison. A long time passed before I was able to understand and explain to myself the effects, which in the first instance were indeed strange.

I have already said that all convicts had a private occupation, and that this occupation was for them a natural and imperious one. They are passionately fond of money, and think more of it than of anything else-almost as much as of liberty. A convict is half-consoled if he can ring a few kopecks in his pocket. On the contrary, he is sad, restless, and despondent if he has no money. He is ready then to commit no matter what crime in order to get some. Nevertheless, in spite of its importance in convicts' eyes, money does not remain long in their pockets. It is difficult to keep it. Sometimes it is confiscated, sometimes stolen. When the governor, on one of his sudden raids, discovered a small sum that had been amassed with great trouble, he confiscated it. It may be that he laid it out in improving the food of the prisoners, for all money taken from them went into his hands. But generally speaking it was stolen. A means of preserving it was however, discovered. An old man from Starodoub, one of the Old Believers, took upon himself to conceal the convicts savings.

I cannot resist the desire to say a few words about this man, although it will interrupt my narrative. He was about sixty years old, thin, and growing very grey. He excited my curiosity the first time I saw him, for he was not like any of the others; his look was so tranquil and mild, and I always saw with pleasure his clear and limpid eyes, surrounded by a number of little wrinkles. I often talked with him, and rarely have I met with so kind, so benevolent a being. He had been condemned to hard labour for a serious

crime. A certain number of the Old Believers at Starodoub had been converted to the orthodox religion. The Government had done everything to encourage them, and, at the same time, to convert the remaining dissenters. This old man and some other fanatics had resolved to ‘defend the faith.’ When the Orthodox church was being constructed in their town they set fire to the building, and this offence had brought upon its author the sentence of deportation. This well-to-do shopkeeper-he was in trade-had left a wife and family whom he loved, and had gone off courageously into exile, believing in his ignorance that he was ‘suffering for the faith.’

When one had lived some time by the side of this kind old man, one could not help asking the question, How could he have rebelled? I spoke to him several times about his faith. He gave up none of his convictions, but in his answers I never noticed the slightest hatred; and yet he had destroyed a church, and was far from denying it. In his view, the offence he had committed and his martyrdom were things to be proud of.

There were other Old Believers among the convicts- Siberians for the most part-men of well-developed intelligence, and as cunning as all peasants. Dialecticians in their way, they followed blindly their law, and delighted in discussing it. But they had great faults: they were haughty, proud, and very intolerant. The old man in no way resembled them. With far more belief in religious exposition than others of the same faith, he avoided all controversy. As he was of a gay and expansive disposition he often laughed-not with the coarse cynical laugh of the other convicts, but with a clarity and simplicity in which there was something of the child, and which harmonized perfectly with his grey head. I may perhaps be wrong, but it seems to me that a man’s character may be recognized by his mere laugh. If you know a man whose laugh inspires you with sympathy, be assured he is an honest man.

The old fellow had won the respect of all the prisoner! without exception; but he was not proud of it. They called him grandad, and he took no offence. I thus understood what an influence he must have exercised on his co-religionists.

In spite of the fortitude with which he endured prison life, one felt that he was tormented by a profound, incurable melancholy. I slept in the same barrack with him. One night, towards three o’clock in the morning, I woke up and heard a slow, stifled sob. The old man was sitting on the stove-the same place where the convict who had wished to kill the governor used to

pray-and was reading from his manuscript prayer-book. As he wept I heard him repeating ‘Lord, do not forsake me. Master, strengthen me. My poor little children, my dear little children, we shall never see one another again.’ I cannot say how much this moved me.

We used, then, to entrust our money to this old man. Heaven knows how the idea got abroad in our barrack that he could not be robbed. It was well known that he hid the savings deposited with him, but no one had been able to discover where. He revealed it to us-to the Poles and myself. One of the stakes in the palisade bore a branch which appeared to belong to it, but which could be removed and put back again. When it was removed a hole could be seen, and this was his hiding-place.

But to return to my story. Why is it that a convict never saves his money? Well, not only is it difficult for him to keep it, but prison life is so miserable that a man, of his very nature, thirsts for freedom of action. His position in society makes him so irregular a being that the idea of swallowing up his capital in orgies, of intoxicating himself with revelry seems to him quite natural if only he can procure himself one moment’s forgetfulness. It was strange to see certain individuals bent over their labour with the sole object of spending their earnings in a single day, even to the last kopeck. Then they would set to work again until they could afford another debauch, which was looked forward to months beforehand.

Some convicts were fond of new clothes, more or less singular in style, such as fancy trousers and waistcoats; but it was above all for coloured shirts that they had a pronounced taste; also for belts with metal clasps.

On holidays the prison dandies wore their Sunday best. They were worth seeing as they strutted about their part of the barracks. Their pleasure in feeling themselves well dressed amounted to childishness; indeed, in many things convicts are only children. Their fine clothes, however, disappeared very soon, often in the evening of the very day on which they had been bought. Their owners pledged them or sold them again for a trifle.

Merry-making generally took place at fixed times. It coincided with religious festivals, or with the name-day of some bibulous convict. On getting up in the morning he would place a wax taper before the ikon; then he said his prayers, dressed, and ordered his dinner. He had previously bought meat, fish, and little patties, which he gorged like an ox and almost always alone. It was very rare to see one convict invite another to share his repast. At dinner vodka was produced. The convict would suck it up like the

sole of a boot, and then walk through the barracks swaggering and tottering. He was anxious to show his companions that although he was drunk* he was carrying on, and thus obtain their particular esteem.

The Russians always feel a measure of sympathy for a drunken man; among us it amounted really to esteem. In prison intoxication was regarded as a sort of aristocratic distinction.

As soon as he felt himself in high spirits the convict sent for a musician. We had among us a little fellow-a deserter from the army-very ugly, but who was the happy possessor of a violin on which he could play. As he had no trade he was always ready to follow the festive convia from barrack to barrack grinding out dance tunes for him with all his strength. His countenance often expressed the fatigue and disgust which his music-always the same-caused hum; but when his employer shouted at him, ‘Go on playing, aren’t you paid for it?’ he attacked his violin more strenuously than ever. These drunkards felt sure that they would be taken care of, and in case of the governor arriving would be concealed from his watchful eye. This service we rendered in the most disinterested spirit. On their side the under-office and the old soldiers who remained in the prison to keep order, were perfectly reassured. The drunkard would cause no disturbance. At the least scare of revolt or riot he would have been silenced and tied up. Accordingly the subordinate officials closed their eyes; they knew that if vodka was forbidden all would go wrong. How was this vodka procured?

It was bought in the prison itself from drink-sellers, as they were called, who followed this trade-a very lucrative one, although the tipplers were not very numerous, for revelry was expensive, especially when it is considered how hardly money was earned. The drink business began, continued, and ended in rather an original manner. A prisoner who knew no trade, who would not work, but who, nevertheless, desired to get rich quickly, made up his mind, when he possessed a little money, to buy and sell vodka. The enterprise was risky and required great daring, for the speculator hazarded his skin as well as his liquor. But the drink-seller hesitated before no obstacles. At the outset he brought the vodka himself to the prison and got rid of it on the most advantageous terms. He repeated this operation a second and a third time. If he had not been discovered by the officials, he now possessed a sum which enabled him to extend his business. He became a capitalist with agents and assistants; he risked much less and gained much more. Then his assistants incurred the risk instead of him.

Prisons are always full of degraded types who have never learned to work, but who are endowed with skill and daring: their only capital is their back. They often decide to put it into circulation, and propose to the drink-seller to introduce vodka into the barracks. There is always in the town a soldier, a shopkeeper, or some loose woman who, for a stipulated sum-quite a small one-buys vodka with the drink-seller's money, hides it in a place known to the convictsmuggler, near the workshop where he is employed. The person who supplies the vodka almost always tastes the precious liquid as he is carrying it to the hiding-place, and never hesitates to replace what he has drunk with pure water. The purchaser may take it or leave it, but he cannot take a high hand. Rather, he thinks himself very lucky that his money has not been stolen, and that he has received some kind of vodka in exchange. The man who is to take it into the prison-to whom the drink-seller has made known the hiding-place-goes to the source of supply with bullock's intestines (which have been washed and ruled with water, and which thus preserve their softness and suppleness), fills them with vodka, and rolls them round his body. Now all the cunning, the adroitness of this daring convict is shown. The man's honour is at stake. It is necessary for him to deceive the escort and sentry; and deceive them he will. If the carrier is artful, the escort-sometimes a mere recruit- notices nothing unusual, for the prisoner has studied him thoroughly and has artfully combined the hour and the place of meeting. If the convict-a bricklayer, for example- climbs up on a wall that he is building, the escort will certainly not climb up after him to watch his movements. Who then, will see what he is about? On nearing the prison, he gets ready a piece of fifteen or twenty kopecks, and waits at the gate for the corporal on guard.

The corporal examines, feels, and searches each convict on his return to barracks, "and then opens the gate to him. The smuggler hopes he will be too modest to search him too much in detail. But if the corporal is a cunning fellow, that is just what he will do: and in that case he finds the contraband vodka. The convict has now only one chance of salvation. He slips into the corporal's hand the coin which he holds ready, and often, thanks to this manuvre, the vodka arrives safely in the hands of the drink-seller. Sometimes, however, the trick does not succeed, and it is then that the smuggler's sole capital really enters into circulation. A report is made to the governor, who sentences the unhappy culprit to a thorough flogging. As for the vodka, it is confiscated. The smuggler undergoes his punishment

without betraying the speculator, not because such a denunciation would disgrace him, but because it would bring him nothing. He would be flogged all the same, and his only consolation would be that the drink-seller would share his punishment; but as he needs him he does not denounce him, although, having allowed himself to be surprised, he will receive no payment.

Denunciation, however, flourishes in prison. Far from hating spies or keeping apart from them, the convicts often make friends of them. If anyone had taken it into his head to try and prove to them the baseness of betraying a fellow prisoner, no one would have understood. The former nobleman of whom I have already spoken, that cowardly and violent creature with whom I had broken off all relations immediately after my arrival in the fortress, was a friend of Fedka, the governor's body-servant. He used to tell him everything that went on, all of which was naturally passed on to the servant's master. Everyone knew it, but no one thought of showing any ill will against the man, or of reproaching him with his conduct. When the vodka arrived without accident, the speculator paid the smuggler and made up his accounts. His merchandise had already cost him sufficiently dear; and in order that his profit might be greater, he diluted it still further by adding fifty per cent water. He was then ready, and had only to wait for customers.

On the first holiday, or perhaps even on a week-day, he would be approached by a convict who had been working like a Negro for many months in order to save up, kopeck by kopeck, the small sum which he was resolved to spend all at once. He had for long looked forward to days of rejoicing, dreamed of them during the endless winter nights, during his hardest labour; and the prospect had supported him under the severest trials. The dawn of this day so impatiently awaited has just appeared. He has some money in his pocket. It has been neither stolen from him nor confiscated. He is free to spend it. Accordingly he takes his savings to the drink-seller, who, to begin with, gives vodka which is almost pure-it has been only twice baptized-but gradually, as the bottle gets more and more empty, he fills it up with water. Accordingly the convict pays for his vodka five or six times as much as he would in a tavern.

It may be imagined how many glasses, and, above all, what sums of money are required before he is drunk. However, as he has lost the habit of drinking the little alcohol which remains in the liquid intoxicates him

rapidly enough. He goes on drinking until there is nothing left; he pledges or sells all his new clothes-for the drink-seller is at the same time a pawnbroker. As his personal garments are not very numerous he next pledges the clothes supplied to him by the Government. When the drink has made away with his last shirt, his last rag, he lies down and wakes up the next morning with a fearful headache. In vain he begs the drink-seller to give him credit for a drop of vodka in order to remove his de-pression; he meets with a direct refusal. So that very day he sets to work again, and for several months together he will weary himself out while looking forward to one more debauch like that which has now vanished into the past. Little by little he regains courage while waiting for such another day which is still far off, but which will ultimately arrive. As for he drink-seller, if he has gained a large sum-perhaps a dozen roubles or so-he procures some more vodka, but this time he does not baptize it, because he intends it for himself. Enough of trade! it is time for him to amuse himself. Accord-ingly he eats, drinks, pays for a little music-his means allow him to grease the palm of the junior officials. This festival lasts sometimes for several days. When his stock of vodka is exhausted, he goes and drinks with the other drink-sellers who are waiting for him. There he swallows his last kopeck. However careful the convicts may be in watching over their companions in debauchery, it sometimes happens that the governor or the officer on guard notices what is going on. The drunkard is then dragged to the orderly-room, his money is confiscated if he has any left, and he is flogged. The convict shakes himself like a beaten dog, returns to barracks, and, after a few days, resumes his trade as a drink-seller.

It sometimes happens that among the convicts there are admirers of the fair sex. For a sufficiently large sum of money they succeed, accompanied by a soldier whom they have corrupted, in getting secretly out of the fortress into a suburb instead of going to work. There, in an apparently quiet house, a banquet is held, at which large sums of money are spent. The convicts’ money is not to be despised; accordingly the soldiers will sometimes arrange these temporary escapes beforehand, sure as they are of being generously recompensed. Generally speaking, these soldiers are themselves candidates for the convict prison. The escapades are scarcely ever discovered. I must add that they are very rare, for they are very expensive, and the admirers of the fair sex are obliged to have recourse to other less costly means.

Soon after my arrival, a young convict with very regular features excited my curiosity. His name was Sirotkin, and he was in many respects an enigmatic being. It was his face that particularly interested me. He was not more than twenty three years of age, and he belonged to the special section; that is to say, he was condemned to hard labour for life. He was accordingly to be looked upon as one of the most dangerous of military criminals; yet he was mild and tranquil, spoke little, and rarely laughed. His blue eyes, clear complexion and fair hair gave him a soft expression, which even his shaver crown did not destroy. Although he had no trade, he managed to obtain money from time to time. He was re markably lazy, and always slovenly dressed; but if anyone was generous enough to present him with a red shirt he was beside himself with joy at having a new garment, and exhibited it everywhere. Sirotkin neither drank nor played, and scarcely ever quarrelled with other convicts. He walked about with his hands in his pockets, peacefully and with a pensive air. What he was thinking of I cannot say. When anyone called to him and asked him a question, he answered with deference precisely, and without chattering like the others. He had in his eyes the expression of a child often. When he had money he bought none of those things which others looked upon as indispensable. His vest might be torn, but he did not get it mended, any more than he bought himself new boots. He was particularly fond of the little white rolls and also of gingerbread, which he would eat with the satisfaction of a child of seven. When not at work he wandered about the barracks; when everyone else was occupied, he stood with his arms hanging at his sides; if anyone joked with him or laughed at him-which happened often enough-he turned on his heel without speaking and went elsewhere. If the pleasantry was too strong he blushed. I often asked myself for what crime he could have been condemned to hard labour. One day, when I was ill and lying in hospital, Sirotkin was also there, stretched out on a bedstead not far from me.

I struck up a conversation with him; he became animated, and told me freely how he had been conscripted, how his mother had followed him in tears, and what treatment he had suffered in the army. He added that he had never been able to accustom himself to this life; everyone was severe and angry with him about nothing, his officers were always against him.

‘But why did they send you here-and into the special section above all-eh, Sirotkin?’

‘Yes, Alexander Petrovitch, although I was only one year with the battalion, I was sent here for killing my captain, Gregory Petrovitch.’

‘I heard about that, but I did not believe it; how was it that you killed him?’

‘All you heard was true; my life was insupportable.’

‘But other recruits stuck it well enough. It’s very hard at the beginning, but men get accustomed to it and end by becoming excellent soldiers. Your mother must have pampered and spoiled you. I ‘m sure that she fed you on gingerbread and sweet milk until you were eighteen.’

‘Yes, mother was very fond of me. When I left her she look to her bed and remained there. My life in the army was terrible, and everything went wrong from the start. I was always being punished; but *why}* I obeyed every order, I was smart and efficient. I didn’t drink or borrow money- it’s all up with a man when he begins to borrow-and yet everyone around me was harsh and cruel. I sometimes hid myself in a corner and did nothing but sob. One day, or rather one night, I was on guard. It was autumn: there was a strong wind, it was so dark you couldn’t see, and I was sad, so sad! I unfixed my bayonet and laid it by my side. Then I put the musket to my breast, and with my big toe-I had taken my boot off-pressed the trigger. It missed fire. I examined it and reloaded it with a charge of fresh powder. Then I broke off the corner of my flint, and once more placed the muzzle against my breast. Again there was a misfire. What was I to do, I asked myself. I put my boot on, fixed bayonet, sloped, and then paced up and down. Let them do what they like, I said to myself; but I will not be a soldier any longer. Half an hour afterwards the captain arrived, making his rounds. He came straight up to me. “Is that the way you carry yourself when you ‘re on guard?” I gripped the musket, and drove the bayonet into him. Then I had to walk forty-six versts. That is how I came to be in the special section.’

He was not lying, but I did not understand how they could have sent him there: such crimes deserve much less severe punishment. Sirotkin was the only one of the convicts who was really handsome. As for his companions of the special section-to the number of fifteen-they were frightful to behold with their hideous, disgusting physiognomies. Grey heads were plentiful among them. I shall speak of these men again. Sirotkin was often on good terms with Gazin, the drink-seller whom I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

This Gazin was a terrible man: the impression he made on everyone was confusing or appalling. It seemed to me that a more ferocious, a more monstrous creature could not exist. Yet at Tobolsk I had seen the notorious brigand Kameneff. Later, I saw Sokoloff, the escaped convict, formerly a deserter who was a ferocious creature. Neither of them, however filled me with so much disgust as did Gazin. I often fancied that I had before my eyes an enormous, gigantic spider the size of a man. He was a Tartar, and there was no convict so strong as he. It was less by his great height and his herculear build, than by his enormous deformed head, that he inspired terror. The strangest reports were current about him. Some said that he had been a soldier, others that he had escapee from Nertchinsk, and that he had been exiled several time to Siberia but had always succeeded in getting away. He ended at last in our prison, where he belonged to the special section. It appeared that he used to delight in luring small children to some lonely spot. There he would frighten and torture them, gloat over the terror and convulsions of the poor little things, and finally dispatch them with fiendish glee. These horrors had perhaps been imagined because of the revolting impression that the monster produced upon us; but they seemed probable, and harmonized with his physiognomy Nevertheless, when Gazin was not drunk he conducted himself well enough.

He was always quiet, never quarrelled, avoided all disputes as if from contempt for his companions, just as though he had entertained a high opinion of himself. He spoke very little, and all his movements were measured, calm, resolute. His look was not without intelligence, but its expression was cruel and derisive like his smile. Of all the convicts who sold vodka he was the richest. Twice a year he got completely drunk, and it was then that all his brutal ferocity was laid bare. Little by little he became excited, and began to tease his fellow prisoners with venomous satire thought out long beforehand. At length when he was quite drunk, he had attacks of furious rage, and, seizing a knife, would rush upon his companions. The convicts, who knew his herculean strength, avoided him and protected themselves against him, for he would throw himself on the first person he met. A means of disarming him had been discovered. Some dozen prisoners would rush suddenly upon Gazin, and give him violent blows in the pit of the stomach, in the belly, and generally below the region of the heart, until he lost consciousness. Anyone else would have died under such treatment, but Gazin soon recovered. When he had been well beaten

they would wrap him up in his pelisse, and throw him upon his plank bedstead, leaving him to digest his drink. The next day he woke up almost well, and went about his work silent and sombre. Every time Gazin got drunk, the whole prison knew how his day would finish. He knew also, but he drank all the same. Several years passed in this way. Then it was noticed that Gazin had lost his energy, and that he was beginning to weaken. He did nothing but groan, complaining of all kinds of illness. His visits to the hospital became more and more frequent. ‘He is giving in,’ said the prisoners.

On one occasion Gazin had gone into the kitchen followed by the little fellow who scraped the violin, and whom the convicts, during their festivities, used to hire to play for them. He stopped in the middle of the hall, silently examining his companions one after another.. No one breathed a word. When he saw me with my companions, he looked at us in his malicious, jeering way, and smiled horribly with the air of a man pleased with a good joke that had just occurred to him. He tottered over to our table.

‘Might I ask,’ he said, ‘where you get the money which enables you to drink tea?’

I exchanged a look with my neighbour. I realized that the best thing for us was to be silent, and not to answer. The least contradiction would have thrown Gazin in a passion.

‘You must have money,’ he continued, ‘you must have a good deal of money to drink tea; but, tell me, are you sent to hard labour to drink tea; I say, did you come here for that purpose? Please answer, I should like to know.’

Seeing that we were resolved on silence and that we had determined not to pay any attention to him, he ran towards us, livid and trembling with rage. A couple of yards away, he caught sight of a heavy box which ordinarily contained loaves for issue at dinner and supper, and held enough bread for the meal of half the prisoners. At this moment, however, it was empty. Gazin seized it with both hands and brandished it above our heads. Although murder, or attempted murder, was a source of endless trouble for the convicts-examinations, counter-examinations, and inquiries without end would be the natural consequence-and though quarrels were generally cut short when they did not lead to such serious results, yet everyone remained silent and waited.

Not one word in our favour, not one cry against Gazin. The hatred felt for all who were of gentle birth was so great that everyone was evidently pleased to see us in danger. But a fortunate incident cut short this scene which must otherwise have a tragic ending. Gazin was about to let fly the enormous box, which he was turning and twisting above his head, when a convict ran in from the barracks and cried out:

‘Gazin, they’ve stolen your vodka!’

The terrible brigand let fall the box with a frightful oath, and ran out of the kitchen.

‘Well, God has saved them,’ said the prisoners among themselves, repeating the words several times.

I never knew whether his vodka had been stolen, or whether it was only a stratagem invented to save us.

That same evening, before the barracks were locked up but when it was already dark, I walked to the side of the palisade. A heavy feeling of sadness weighed upon my soul. During the whole period of my imprisonment I never felt so miserable as on that evening, though the first day is always the hardest, whether at hard labour or confined to the prison. One thought in particular had left me no respite since my deportation- a question insoluble then and insoluble now. I reflected on the inequality of the punishments inflicted for the same crimes. Often, indeed, one crime cannot be compared even approximately with another. Two murderers kill a man under circumstances which in each case are minutely examined and weighed. They each receive the same punishment; and yet by what an abyss are their two actions separated! One has committed a murder for a trifle-for an onion. He has killed a passing yokel on the high-road and found on him no more than an onion.

‘Well, I was sent to hard labour for killing a peasant who had nothing but an onion!’

‘Well, you’re a fool! An onion is worth a kopeck. If you’d killed a hundred peasants you would have had a hundred kopecks, or one rouble.’ The foregoing is a prison joke.

Another criminal has killed a debauchee who was oppressing or dishonouring his wife, his sister, or his daughter.

A third, a vagabond half dead with hunger and pursued by a whole band of police, was defending his liberty, his life. He is to be regarded as on an equal footing with the brigand who assassinates children for amusement, for

the pleasure of feeling their warm blood flow over his hands, of seeing them shudder in a last bird-like palpitation beneath the knife which tears their flesh!

They will all alike be sent to hard labour, though the sentence will perhaps not be for the same number of years. Degrees of punishment, however, are not very numerous, whereas different kinds of crime may be reckoned by thousands. There are as many crimes as there are characters.

Let us admit that it is impossible to get rid of this first inequality of punishment, that the problem is insoluble and, in the sphere of penal law, like trying to square the circle. Let all that be admitted; but even if this inequality cannot be avoided, there is another thing to be thought of-the consequences of the punishment. Here is a man who is wasting away like a candle; there is another, on the contrary, who had no idea before going into exile that there could be such a gay, such an idle life, where he would find a circle of such agreeable friends. Individuals of this latter class are to be found in every prison.

Now take a man who is sensitive, cultured, and of delicate conscience. What he feels kills him more surely than the material punishment. The judgment which he himself pronounces on his crime is more pitiless than that of the most severe tribunal, the most Draconian law. He lives side by side with another convict, who has not once during all his time in prison reflected on the murder he is expiating. He may even consider himself innocent. Are there not, also, poor devils who commit crimes in order to be sent to hard labour, and thus to escape from a freedom which is much more painful than confinement? So-and-so has led a miserable life; he has never, perhaps, been able to satisfy his hunger. He is worked to death in order to enrich his master. In prison his work will be less severe, less crushing. He will eat as much as he wants, better than he could ever have hoped to eat had he remained free. On holidays he will have meat, and fine people will give him alms, and his evening’s work will bring him in some money. And then again, is prison society to be counted for nothing? The convicts are clever, wide-awake people, who are up to everything. The new arrival can scarcely conceal the admiration he feels for his companions in labour. He has seen nothing like it before, and he will consider himself in the best company possible.

Is it possible that men so differently situated can feel in an equal degree the punishment inflicted? But why think about questions that are insoluble?

The drum beats, and we must return to barracks.

CHAPTER V

FIRST IMPRESSIONS (continued)

We were inside once more. The doors of the barracks were locked, each with a special padlock, and the prisoners remained shut up until next morning.

The roll was checked by a non-commissioned officer accompanied by two soldiers. When an officer happened to be present, the convicts were drawn up in the courtyard, but generally speaking they were identified in the buildings. As the soldiers often made mistakes, they went out and came back in order to count us again and again, until their reckoning was satisfactory; then the barracks were closed. Each one housed about thirty prisoners, and we were very closely packed on our camp bedsteads. As it was too early to go to sleep, the convicts occupied themselves with work.

Besides the old soldier (of whom I have spoken) who slept in our dormitory and represented the prison authority, there was in our barrack another veteran who wore a good-conduct badge. It happened not infrequently, however, that the good-conduct men themselves committed offences for which they were sentenced to be whipped. They then lost their rank, and were immediately replaced by comrades whose behaviour was considered satisfactory.

Our good-conduct man was none other than Akim Aki-mitch. To my great astonishment, he was very hard on the prisoners, but they only retaliated with jests. The other old soldier was more prudent and interfered with no one; if he opened his mouth it was only as a matter of form, as an affair of duty. For the most part he remained silent, seated on his little bedstead, occupied in mending his own boots.

That day I could not help remarking to myself-and the accuracy of my observation afterwards became apparent- that all those, whoever they be, who are not convicts but have dealings with convicts, beginning with the soldiers of the escort and the sentinels, look upon their charges in a false and exaggerated light, expecting that for a yes or a no, these men will throw themselves upon them knife in hand. The prisoners, perfectly conscious of the fear they inspire, show a certain arrogance. Accordingly, the best prison director is the one who shows no emotion in their presence. In spite of the

airs they give themselves, the convicts prefer that confidence should be placed in them. By such means, indeed they may be conciliated. I have more than once had occasion to notice their astonishment at an official entering their prison without an escort, and certainly their astonishment was not unflattering. A visitor who is intrepid imposes respect. If anything unfortunate happens, it will not be in his presence. The terror inspired by convicts is general, and yet I saw no foundation for it. Is it their appearance, their brigand-like looks, that causes a certain repugnance? Is it not rather the feeling that overwhelms you directly you enter the prison that in spite of all efforts, all precautions, it is impossible to turn a living man into a corpse, to stifle his feelings, his thirst for vengeance and for life, his passions, and his imperious desire to satisfy them? However that may be, I declare that there is no reason to fear the convicts. A man does not throw himself so quickly nor so easily upon his fellow man, knife in hand. Few accidents happen; they are, indeed, so rare that the danger may be considered non-existent.

I speak, it must be understood, only of prisoners already condemned, who are undergoing their punishment, and some of whom are almost happy to find themselves in prison; so attractive under any circumstances is a new form of life. These men live quiet and contented. As for the turbulent ones, the convicts themselves keep them in restraint, and their arrogance never goes too far. A condemned criminal, audacious and reckless as he may be, is afraid of every prison official. It is by no means the same with an accused person whose fate has not been decided. Such a one is quite capable of attacking no matter whom, without any motive of hatred but solely because he is to be whipped next day. If, indeed, he commits a fresh crime his offence becomes complicated punishment is delayed, and he gains time. The act of aggression is explained: it has a cause, an object. The convict wishes at all hazards to change his fate, and that as soon as possible. In connection with this, I myself have witnessed a physiological fact of the strangest kind.

In the military section was an old soldier who had been condemned to two years’ hard labour. He was a great boaster, and at the same time a coward. Generally speaking, the Russian soldier does not boast; he has no time to do so, even had he the inclination. But when such a one does appear among a crowd of others, he is always a coward and a rogue. Dutoff-that was the name of the prisoner of whom I am speaking-underwent his

punishment, and then returned to his battalion in the Line; but, like all who are sent to prison to be corrected, he had been thoroughly corrupted. A ‘return horse’ reappears after two or three weeks’ liberty, not for a comparatively short time, but for fifteen or twenty years. So it happened in the case of Dutoff. Three weeks after he had been set at liberty he robbed one of his comrades, and was, moreover, mutinous. He was taken before a court martial and sentenced to a severe form of corporal punishment. Horribly frightened, like the coward that he was, at the prospect of punishment, he attacked the officer of the guard with a knife as the latter entered his cell on the day before he was to run the gauntlet of his company. He quite understood that he was aggravating his offence, and that the duration of his punishment would be increased; but all he wanted was to postpone for some days, or at least for some hours, a terrible moment. He was such a coward that the officer was not even wounded. He had, indeed, only committed this assault in order to add a new crime to the last already against him, and thus defer the sentence.

The moment preceding punishment is terrible for a man condemned to the rods. I have seen many of them on the eve of the fatal day: I generally met with them in the hospital when I was ill, which happened often enough. In Russia the people who show most compassion for the convicts are certainly the doctors, who never draw those distinctions between the prisoners which are observed by other persons brought into direct relations with them. In this respect the common people can alone be compared with the doctors, for they never reproach a criminal with the crime that he has committed, whatever it may be. They forgive him in consideration of the sentence passed upon him.

It is well known that the common people throughout Russia call crime a ‘misfortune,’ and the criminal an ‘unfortunate.’ This definition is expressive and profound, though unconscious and instinctive. To the doctor the convicts have naturally recourse, above all when they are to undergo corporal punishment. The prisoner who has been before a court martial knows almost to the hour when his sentence will be executed. To escape it he gets himself sent to the hospital, in order to postpone for some days the terrible moment. When he is, declared restored to health, he knows that the day after he leaves the hospital this moment will arrive. Accordingly, on quitting the hospital the convict is always in a state of agitation. Some of them may endeavour from vanity to conceal their anxiety, but no one is

taken in by that; everyone understands the cruelty of such a moment, and is silent from motives of humanity.

I knew one young convict, an ex-soldier, sentenced for. murder, who was to undergo the maximum punishment. On the eve of the day on which he was to suffer, he had resolved to drink a bottle of vodka into which he had infused a quantity of snuff.

A prisoner condemned to the rods always drinks, before the critical moment arrives, a certain amount of spirits which he has procured long beforehand, and often at a fabulous price. He would deprive himself of the necessaries of life for six months rather than not be in a position to swallow half a pint of vodka before the flogging. The convicts are convinced that a drunken man suffers less from the rods or the whip than one who is stone-cold sober.

To return to my narrative. A few moments after swallowing his bottle of vodka the poor devil felt sick. He coughed up blood, and was carried unconscious to the hospital. His lungs were so much injured by this accident that phthisis set in and carried him off within a few months. The doctors who had attended him never discovered the origin of his malady.

If examples of cowardice are not rare among the prisoners, it must be added that there are some whose intrepidity is quite astounding. I remember many instances of extraordinary courage. The arrival of a terrible bandit in hospital remains fixed in my memory.

One fine summer day word went round the infirmary that the notorious prisoner Orloff was to be flogged the same evening, and that he would be brought into hospital afterwards. The patients already there said that the punishment would be a cruel one, and all-including myself, I must admit-awaited with curiosity the arrival of this villain, about whom the most unheard-of tales were told. He was a malefactor of a rare kind, capable of assassinating old men and children in cold blood. He possessed an indomitable force of will, and was fully conscious of his power. He had been found guilty of several crimes and condemned to be flogged through the ranks.

Towards evening he was brought, or, rather carried in. The place was already dark, and candles were lighted. Orloff was excessively pale, almost unconscious, with his thick curly hair of dull, lack-lustre black. His back was torn and swollen, blue, and stained with blood. The prisoners nursed him throughout the night; they changed his poultices, placed him on his

side, prepared the lotion ordered by the doctor; in a word, they showed as much solicitude for him as for a relation or benefactor.

Next day he had fully recovered his faculties, and took one or two turns round the room. I was much astonished, for he was broken down and powerless when he was brought in. He had received only half the number of blows ordered by the sentence when the doctor stopped the punishment, convinced that if it were continued Orloff's death would inevitably ensue.

This criminal was of a feeble constitution, weakened by long imprisonment. Anyone who has seen convicts after Hogging will remember their thin, drawn features and feverish looks. Orloff soon recovered his powerful energy, which enabled him to overcome his physical weakness. He was no ordinary man. From curiosity I made his acquaintance, and was able to study him at leisure for an entire week. Never in my life did I meet a man whose will was more firm or inflexible.

I had seen at Tobolsk just such another celebrity of the same kind-a brigand chief. This fellow was a veritable wild beast; one had only to be near him, without even knowing him, in order to recognize him as a dangerous man. What scared me above all was his utter lack of intelligence. In his case matter had won such an ascendancy over mind, that one could see at a glance that he cared for nothing in the world but the brutal satisfaction of his physical desires. And yet I felt certain that Kareneff (for such was his name) would have fainted on being condemned to the severe corporal punishment which Orloff had undergone, but that he would have murdered the nearest man to him without blinking.

Orloff, on the contrary, was a brilliant example of the triumph of spirit over matter. He had a perfect command over himself. He despised punishment, and feared nothing in the world. His dominant characteristic was boundless energy, a thirst for vengeance, and an inflexible will when he had some object to attain.

I was not astonished at his haughty air. He looked down upon all around him from the height of his grandeur. Not that he took the trouble to pose, for bis pride was an innate quality. I don't believe anything had the least influence over him. He looked upon everything with the calmest eye, as if nothing in the world could surprise him. He knew well that the other prisoners respected him but he never took advantage of it or gave himself airs.

Nevertheless, vanity and conceit are defects from which scarcely any convict is exempt. Orloff was intelligent and strangely frank in talking too much about himself. He replied point-blank to all the questions I put to him, and confessed that he was waiting impatiently for his return to health in order to take the remainder of the punishment he was to undergo.

‘Now,’ he said to me with a wink, ‘it is all over. I shall take the remainder, and then be sent to Nertchinsk with a convoy of prisoners. I shall use the opportunity to escape, and am confident I shall succeed. If only my back would heal a little quicker!’

For five days he was burning with impatience to be in a condition to leave hospital. At times he was gay and in the best of humours, and I profited by those rare occasions to ask him about his adventures.

He would contract his eyebrows a little, but always answered my questions straightforwardly. When he realized that I was endeavouring to see through him and discover in him some trace of repentence, he looked at me with a haughty and contemptuous air, as if I were a foolish little boy whom he honoured too highly with his conversation.

I detected in his countenance a sort of compassion for me. After a moment’s pause he would laugh out loud, but without the least irony, and I fancy he must, more than once, have laughed in the same manner when my words returned to his memory. At last he signed himself out as cured, although his back was not yet completely healed. As I too was almost well again, we left the infirmary together. I returned to barracks, while he was shut up in the guard-room, where he had been formerly detained. On parting he shook hands with me, which in his eyes was a signal mark of favour. I fancy he did so because at that moment he was in a good humour; but in reality he must have despised me, for I was a feeble being, in all respects contemptible, and guilty above all of resignation. Next day he underwent the second half of his punishment.

When the doors of our barrack had been locked at night there was, in less than no time, a different atmosphere: the air of a private house, almost indeed of home. It was only then that I saw my comrades at their ease. For during the day the under-officers, or some other official, might suddenly arrive, so that the prisoners were always on the alert and never quite relaxed. As soon, however, as the bolts had been shot and the doors padlocked, everyone sat down in his place and began to ply his trade. The room was lighted up in an unexpected manner: each convict had his candle

in its wooden sconce. Some of them stitched boots, others sewed various kinds of garment. The air, already poisonous, became more and more impure.

Some of the prisoners, huddled together in a corner, played at cards on a piece of carpet. In each barrack there was a prisoner who possessed a small piece of carpet, a candle, and a pack of horribly greasy cards. The owner of the cards received from the players fifteen kopecks (about sixpence) a night. They generally played at ‘three leaves’-Gorka, that is to say-a game of chance. Each player placed before him a pile of copper money-all that he possessed-and did not get up until he had either lost it or broken the bank.

Play continued far into the night, and daybreak sometimes found the gamblers still at their game. Often, in fact, they did not cease until a few minutes before the doors were opened. In our room, as in every room, there were beggars ruined by drink and play, beggars by nature. I purposely say ‘by nature’; for in every class of Russians there are, and always will be, strange easy-going people whose destiny it is always to remain beggars. They are poor devils all their lives, creatures broken down who remain under the domination or guardianship of someone, generally a prodigal or a man who has suddenly made his fortune. All initiative is for them an intolerable burden. They only exist on condition of undertaking nothing for themselves, of serving and living perpetually subject to another’s will. They are destined to act by and through others. Under no circumstances, even of the most unexpected kind, can they get rich; they are always beggars. I have met these persons in all classes of society, in all coteries, in all associations, including the literary world.

As soon as a card party was made up, one of these beggars (who were quite indispensable to the game) was summoned. He received five kopecks for a whole night’s employment- and what employment! His duty was to keep guard in the corridor, in thirty degrees (Reaumur) of frost and in total darkness, for six or seven hours. The man on watch had to listen for the slightest noise; for the governor or one of the officers of the guard would sometimes make a round quite late at night. They used to arrive unexpectedly, and sometimes caught players and the watchers in the act-thanks to the candle-light which could be seen from the courtyard.

When the key was heard grating in the padlock it was too late to put the lights out and he down on the plank bedsteads. Such surprises were,

however, rare. Five kopecks was a ridiculous payment even in prison, and the gamblers' harsh demands astonished me in these as in many other cases:

'You are paid, you must do what you are told.' This was the argument, and it admitted of no reply. If you paid someone a few kopecks you had the right to turn him to the best possible account, and even a claim to his gratitude. More than once I saw convicts spend their money extravagantly, throwing it around, and at the same time cheating the man employed to watch. I have witnessed this kind of thing in several barracks on numerous occasions.

I have already said that, with the exception of the gamblers, everyone worked. Five only of the convicts remained completely idle, and went to bed at the first opportunity. My bed was near the door. Next to me was Akim Akimitch, and when we were lying down our heads touched. He used to work until ten or eleven o'clock, pasting together pieces of paper to make multicoloured lanterns which had been ordered by someone in the town, and for which he was well paid. He excelled in this kind of work, and did it methodically and regularly. When he had finished he carefully put away his tools, unfolded his mattress, said his prayers, and slept the sleep of the just. He carried his love of order even to pedantry, and must have secretly believed himself a man of brains, as do most narrow, mediocre persons. I did not like him the first day, although he afforded me plenty of food for thought: I was astonished to find such a man in prison. I shall have occasion to speak of Akimitch again.

But I must proceed with my description of those with whom I was to live for years. They were to be my companions every moment of that time, and it will be understood that I regarded them with anxious curiosity.

On my left slept a group of mountaineers from the Caucasus, nearly all of them exiled for brigandage, but condemned to different punishments. There were two Lesghians, a Circassian, and three Tartars from Daghestan. The Circassian was a morose and sombre fellow. He scarcely ever spoke, and looked at you sideways with a sly, sulky, wild-beast expression. One of the Lesghians, an old man with an aquiline nose, tall and thin, looked a real brigand, but the other (Nourra was his name) impressed me most favourably. He was of middle height, still young, built like a Hercules, with fair hair and violet eyes; his nose was slightly turned up, while his features were somewhat of a Finnish cast. Like all horsemen, he walked with his toes in. His body was striped with scars, ploughed by bayonet wounds and

bullets. Although he belonged to the conquered region of the Caucasus, he had joined the rebels, with whom he used to make continual incursions into our territory. Everyone in prison liked him because of his gaiety and affability. He worked without murmuring, always calm and peaceful. Thieving, cheating, and drunkenness filled him with disgust, or threw him into a rage-not that he wished to quarrel with anyone; he simply turned away with indignation. During his confinement he committed no breach of the rules. Fervently pious, he said his prayers every evening, observed all the Mohammedan fasts like a true fanatic, and passed whole nights in prayer. Everyone liked him, and considered him a thoroughly honest man. ‘Nourra is a lion,’ they used to say; and the name ‘Lion’ stuck to him. He was quite convinced that as soon as he had finished his sentence he would be sent back to the Caucasus. Indeed, this hope alone kept him alive, and I believe he would have died had he been deprived of it. I noticed it the very day of my arrival. One could not but be struck by that calm, honest countenance in the midst of so many sombre, sardonic, and repulsive faces.

Before I had been half an hour in the prison he passed by and touched me gently on the shoulder, smiling innocently. I did not at first understand what he meant, for he spoke Russian very badly; but soon afterwards he passed again, and, with a friendly smile, again touched me on the shoulder. For three days running he repeated this strange proceeding. As I soon found out, he wished to show that he pitied me, and that he felt how painful my first hours of imprisonment must be. He wished to testify his sympathy, to keep up my spirits, and to assure me of his good will. Kind innocent Nourra!

Of the three Daghestan Tartars, all brothers, the elder two were well-developed men, while the youngest, Ali, was not more than twenty-two and looked still younger. He slept by my side, and when I observed his frank, intelligent countenance, thoroughly natural, I was at once attracted to him and thanked my fate that I had him for a neighbour and not some other prisoner. His whole soul could be read in his beaming countenance. His confident smile had a certain childish simplicity. His large black eyes expressed such friendliness, such tender feeling, that I always took pleasure in looking at him: it was a relief to me in moments of sadness and anguish. One day his eldest brother-he had five, of whom two were working in the mines of Siberia-had ordered him to take his yataghan, mount on horseback, and follow him. The respect of the mountaineers for their elders is so great

that young Ali dared not ask the object of the expedition. He probably knew nothing about it, nor did his brothers consider it necessary to tell him. They were going to plunder the caravan of a rich Armenian merchant, and they succeeded in their enterprise. They assassinated the merchant and stole his goods. Unhappily for them, their crime was discovered. They were tried, flogged, and sent to hard labour in Siberia. The court admitted no extenuating circumstances, except in the case of Ali. He was condemned to the minimum punishment-four years' imprisonment. His brothers loved him, with a father's rather than a brother's love. He was the only consolation of their exile. Dull and sad as a rule, they had always a smile for him. When they spoke to him (which they rarely did for they looked upon him as a child to whom it would be useless to speak seriously) their forbidding countenances lightened up. I always used to fancy they addressed him in a jocular tone, as they would an infant. When he replied the brothers exchanged glances and smiled good-naturedly.

His respect for them forbade him to speak to them first. How this young man preserved his tender heart, his native honesty, his frank cordiality without becoming perverted and corrupted during bis period of hard labour is quite inexplicable. In spite of his gentleness, however, he had a strong stoical nature, as I later discovered. Chaste as a young girl, everything that was foul, cynical, shameful, or unjust filled his fine black eyes with indignation, and made them finer than ever. Although no coward, he would allow himself to be insulted with impunity. He avoided quarrels and abuse, and maintained his dignity. With whom, indeed, was he to quarrel? Everyone loved and cherished him.

At first he was only polite to me; but little by little we got into the habit of talking together in the evening. In a few months he had learnt to speak Russian perfectly, whereas his brothers never gained a correct knowledge of the language. He was intelligent, and at the same time modest and full of delicate feeling.

Ah was an exceptional being, and I always think of my meeting him as one of the lucky events of my life. There are some natures so spontaneously good, and endowed by God with such great qualities, that the idea of their perversion seems absurd. One is never anxious about them. Accordingly I never feared for Ah. Where is he now?

One day, some considerable time after my arrival at the prison, I was stretched out on my camp-bedstead agitated by painful thoughts. Ali,

though always industrious, was not working at that moment. It was not yet time for him to retire to bed. His brothers, who were celebrating some Mussulman festival, were also at rest. Ali lay with his head in his hands in a state of reverie. Suddenly he said to me:

‘Well, you’re very sad!’

I gazed at him in astonishment. Such a remark from Ali, who was always so delicate, so full of tact, seemed strange. But on looking closer I saw so much grief, so much repressed suffering in his countenance-suffering caused no doubt by sudden memories-that I understood his anguish and told him so. He sighed deeply, and smiled with a melancholy air. I always liked his charming smile: it showed two rows of teeth which the world’s greatest beauty might have envied.

‘Ah, I suppose you were thinking how this festival is celebrated in Daghestan. Ah, you were happy there.’

‘Yes,’ he replied with enthusiasm, and his eyes sparkled. ‘How did you know I was thinking of such things?’

‘How could I fail to know? You were much better off than you are here.’

‘Why do you say that?’

‘What beautiful flowers there are in your country! Yes, it’s a real paradise.’’Please, say no more.’

He was much agitated.

‘Listen, Ali. Have you a sister?’

‘Yes. Why do you ask?’

‘She must have been very beautiful if she is like you?’

‘Oh, there’s no comparison between us. In all Daghestan you’d never meet so beautiful a girl. My sister is, indeed, charming. I am sure that you’ve never seen anyone like her. My mother also is very handsome.’

‘And your mother was fond of you?’

‘What do you mean? Of course she was. I’m sure she has died of grief, she was so fond of me. I was her favourite child. Yes, she loved me more than my sister, more than all the others. This very night she appeared to me in a dream and shed tears for me.’

He was silent, and never spoke again for the rest of the night; but from that moment he sought my company and my conversation, although he remained most respectful and never ventured to address me first. On the other hand he was happy when I spoke to him. He often talked of the Caucasus and of his past life. His brothers did not forbid him to converse

with me; in fact I think they even encouraged him to do so, and when they saw that I was fond of him they became more affable towards me.

Ali often helped me in my work. In barracks he did everything he could to please me and save me trouble. In bis attentions there was neither servility nor the hope of any advantage, but only a warm, cordial feeling which he did not try to hide. He had an extraordinary aptitude for the mechanical arts: he had learnt to sew very tolerably and to mend boots, and even understood something of carpentry -everything, in short, that could be learnt in prison. His brothers were proud of him.

‘Listen, Ali,’ I said to him one day, ‘why don’t you learn to read and write Russian? It might be very useful to you here in Siberia.’

‘I should like to, but who would teach me?’

‘There are plenty of people here who can read and write. I’ll teach you myself if you like.’

‘Oh, do teach me, please,’ said Ali, raising himself up in bed. He joined his hands and looked at me with a suppliant air.

We set to work the very next evening. I had a Russian translation of the New Testament, the only book that was not forbidden in prison. With that book alone, and without an alphabet, Ali learned to read in a few weeks, and after a few months he could do so perfectly. He brought an extraordinary zeal and warmth to his studies.

One day we were reading together the Sermon on the Mount. I noticed that he read certain passages with much feeling and I asked him if he liked the Gospel. He glanced up at me, and his face suddenly lighted up.

‘Yes, yes, Jesus is a holy prophet. He speaks the language of God. How beautiful it is!’

‘But tell me what it is that particularly pleases you.’

‘The passage which says, “Forgive those that hate you!” Ah! how divinely He speaks!’

He turned towards his brothers, who were listening to our conversation, and said a few eager words. They talked together seriously for some time, approving what their young brother had said by a nodding of their heads. Then with a grave, kindly smile, quite a Mussulman smile (I liked its gravity), they assured me that Isu (Jesus) was a great prophet. He had done great miracles. He had created a bird with a little clay into which He breathed the breath of life, and the bird had flown away. That, they said, was written in their books. They were convinced that they would please me

much by praising Jesus. As for Ali, he was happy to see that his brothers approved of our friendship, and that they were saying what he thought would gratify. My success in teaching Ali to write was quite extraordinary. He had obtained paper at his own expense (for he would not allow me to buy any), also pens and ink; and in less than two months he had learned to write. His brothers were astonished at such rapid progress. Their satisfaction and their pride were without bounds, and they were at a loss to express their gratitude. If we happened to be together in the workshop, they disputed as to which of them should help me. I am not, of course, speaking of Ali, who felt more affection for me than for his own brothers. I shall never forget the day of his release. He took me outside, threw himself on my neck and sobbed. He had never before embraced me, and never before wept in my presence.

‘You have done so much for me,’ he said; ‘neither my father nor my mother have ever been kinder. You have made a man of me. God will bless you, I shall never forget you, never!’

Where is he now, where is my good, kind, dear Ali?

Besides the Circassians, we had a certain number of Poles, who formed a separate group. They had scarcely any relations with the other convicts. I have already said that, thanks to their hatred of the Russian prisoners, they were detested by everyone. All six of them were of a restless, morbid disposition; some were men of education, of whom I shall have more to say later.

It was from them that during the last days of my imprisonment I obtained a few books, and indeed the first work I read made a profound impression on me. I shall speak further on of that experience, which I look upon as very curious, though it will be difficult for the reader to understand. Of this I am certain, for there are certain things of which one cannot judge without having experienced them oneself. It will be enough for me to say that intellectual privation is more difficult to support than the most dreadful physical torture.

A common man sent to hard labour finds himself in kindred society, perhaps even in more interesting society than he has been accustomed to. He loses his native place and family, but his ordinary surroundings are much the same as before. An educated man, condemned by law to the same punishment as the other, suffers incomparably more. He must stifle all his needs, all his habits; he must descend into a lower sphere, must breathe

another air. He is like a fish thrown upon the sand. The punishment which he undergoes, equal in the eyes of the law for all criminals, is ten times more severe and more painful for him than for the common man. This is an incontestable truth, even if one thinks only of material comforts that must be sacrificed.

I was saying that the Poles formed a group by themselves. They lived together and took no notice of any of their fellow convicts, except a Jew, and that for no other reason than because he amused them. Our Jew was generally liked, although everyone laughed at him. We only had one, and even now I cannot think of him without a smile. Whenever I looked at him I thought of the Jew Jankel in Gogol's *Tarass Boulba*, who, when undressed and ready to go to bed with his wife in a sort of cupboard, resembled a fowl; for Isaiah Fomitch Bumstein and a plucked fowl were as like one another as two drops of water. He was already about fifty years of age, small, feeble, cunning, and at the same time very stupid, bold, and boastful, though a horrible coward. His face was covered with wrinkles; his forehead and cheeks were scarred from the burning he had received in the pillory. I never understood how he had been able to live through the sixty strokes to which he had been condemned for murder.

He carried on his person a medical prescription given him by other Jews immediately after his exposure in the pillory. They had promised that with the aid of that ointment his scars would disappear in less than a fortnight; but he had been afraid to use it, and was waiting for the end of his twenty years' penal servitude, when he would become a colonist and put the famous remedy to better use.

'Otherwise I shall not be able to get married,' he would say; 'and it is essential that I marry.'

We were great friends, for his good humour was inexhaustible. Prison life did not seem to disagree with him. A goldsmith by trade, he received more orders than he could execute, for there was no jeweller's shop in the town. He thus escaped hard labour, and as a matter of course he lent money on pledges to the convicts, who paid him heavy interest. He had arrived at the prison before me, but one of the Poles described to me his triumphal entry. It is quite a history, and I shall relate it further on, for there is much to tell of Isaiah Fomitch Bumstein.

As for the other prisoners there were, first of all, four Old Believers, among whom were the old man from Staradoub, two or three Little

Russians (very morose persons), and a young convict with delicate features and a finely chiselled nose. He was only about twenty-three years of age, but had already committed eight murders. Then there was a band of coiners, one of whom was the buffoon of our barrack, and, finally, some sombre, sour-tempered convicts, shorn and disfigured, always silent, and full of envy. They looked askance at all who came near them, and must have been doing so for many years. I noticed all these people at a glance on the first night of my arrival. They were veiled in thick smoke; the atmosphere was poisonous, and vibrant with obscene oaths, the rattling of chains, insults, and cynical laughter. I stretched myself out on the bare planks, my head resting on my coat, rolled up to do duty for a pillow, with which I had not yet been supplied. Then I covered myself with my sheepskin, but, owing to the painful impressions of the evening, I was unable for some time to get to sleep. My new life was only just beginning. The future held much that I had not foreseen, of which I had never had the least idea.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST MONTH

Three days after my arrival I was ordered to go to work. The impression made upon me by my surroundings remain to this day very clear. There was nothing particularly striking about them, unless one considers that my position was in itself extraordinary. First sensations count for a good deal, and as yet everything was unfamiliar. The first three days were certainly the most unpleasant in the whole term of imprisonment.

I told myself over and over again that I had reached my journey's end. I was now in prison, my home for many years. Here I would have to live. I had arrived overwhelmed with grief. Who knew but when I left I should do so with regret? I told myself all this as one touches a wound, the better to feel its pain. That I might regret my stay was a terrible thought: already I felt to what an intolerable degree man is a creature of habit. But that belonged to the future. The present, meanwhile, was sufficiently grim.

The eager curiosity with which my fellow convicts examined me, their harshness towards a former nobleman now joining their society, a harshness which sometimes took the form of hatred-all this tormented me to such a degree that I was only too glad to go to work in order to measure at one stroke the whole extent of my misfortune, to begin at once to share the common life, and to fall with my companions into the abyss.

But all convicts are not alike, and I had not yet begun to distinguish from the general hostility a certain sympathy which here and there was manifested towards me.

After a time the affability and goodwill shown by several of the prisoners gave me a little courage and restored my spirits. Most friendly among them was Akim Akimitch, and I soon noticed other kind, good-natured faces in the dark and hateful crowd. I consoled myself with the thought that bad men are to be found everywhere, but even among the worst there may be something good. Who knows? These fellows may be no worse than others who are free. Reflecting thus, I felt some doubt, but how right I proved to be!

There was Suchiloff, for example, a man whose acquaintance I did not make until long afterwards, although he was a near neighbour during almost

the whole period of my confinement. Whenever I speak of the better type of convict who is no worse than other men, my thoughts turn involuntarily to him. He acted as my servant, together with another prisoner named Osip whom Akim Akimitch had recommended to me immediately after my arrival. For thirty kopecks a month this man agreed to cook me a separate dinner, since I could pay for my own food and might not be able to stomach the ordinary prison fare. Osip was one of the four cooks chosen by the prisoners to work in our two kitchens. Incidentally, they were at liberty to refuse these duties, and to give them up whenever they thought fit. The cooks were men who were not expected to do hard labour: they had to bake bread and prepare the cabbage soup. They were called ‘cook-maids,’ not from contempt (for the men chosen were always the most intelligent) but merely in fun, and they took no offence at the name.

For many years past Osip had been regularly chosen as one of the ‘cook-maids.’ He never refused the duty except when he was out of sorts, or when he saw an opportunity of smuggling vodka into the barracks. Although he had been condemned as a smuggler, he was remarkably honest and good-tempered, as I have already observed; at the same time he was a dreadful coward, and feared the rod above all things. Of a peaceful, patient disposition, affable towards everyone, he never became involved in quarrels. But he could never resist the temptation of bringing in spirits, notwithstanding his cowardice: it was simply his love of the game. Like the other cooks he dealt in spirits, but on a far smaller scale than Gazin because he was afraid of the risks involved. I always lived on good terms with Osip. To have a separate table it was not necessary to be very rich; it cost me only one rouble a month apart from the bread, which was supplied free. Sometimes when I was very hungry I determined to eat the cabbage soup, in spite of the disgust with which it invariably filled me, until after a time my revulsion entirely disappeared. I generally bought one pound of meat a day, which cost me two kopecks.

The old soldiers who watched over the internal discipline o:f the barracks were kindly souls, ready to go every day to market and make purchases for the convicts. For this they received nothing except a small gift from time to time. They did it for the sake of peace, for had they refused their life in the prison would have been a perpetual torment. They used to bring in tobacco, tea, meat-anything, in short, that was desired, always excepting spirits.

For many years Osip prepared for me every day a piece of roast meat. How he managed to cook it remained a secret. The strangest part of the arrangement was that during all this time I scarcely exchanged two words with him. I tried many times to make him talk, but he was incapable of keeping up a conversation. He would only smile and answer my questions with ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ He was of Herculean stature, but had no more intelligence than a child of seven.

Suchiloff was also one of those who helped me. I had never asked him for his assistance; he attached himself to me of his own accord, and I scarcely remember when he began to do so. His principal duty consisted in washing my linen. For this purpose there was a basin in the middle of the courtyard, round which the convicts washed their clothes in prison buckets.

Suchiloff found means of rendering me a number of small services. He boiled my samovar, ran to perform various commissions for me, got me all kinds of things, mended my clothes, and greased my boots four times a month. He did all this with the utmost zeal, with a business-like air, as if he was conscious of the importance of what he performed. He seemed to have linked his fate to mine, and interested himself in all my affairs. He never said, for instance, ‘You have so many shirts,’ or ‘your waistcoat is torn’; but ‘We have so many shirts,”our waistcoat is torn.’ I had somehow inspired him with admiration, and I really believe I was his sole concern in life. As he knew no trade whatever, his only source of income was from me. It must be understood that I paid him very little, but he was always delighted with whatever he received. He would have been destitute had he not been my servant; he preferred me to others because of my greater affability, and, above all, my larger generosity. He was one of those fellows who never get rich, and never know how to manage their affairs; one of those who were hired by the gamblers to watch all night in the corridor, listening for the least noise that might announce the arrival of the governor, and who, in the event of a night inspection received nothing, unless it were a flogging for their lack of watchfulness. One characteristic of this type is a complete lack of personality, which seems altogether to have deserted them.

Suchiloff was a poor, meek fellow; all the courage seemed to have been beaten out of him, although he had in fact been born like that. On no account whatever would he have raised his hand against anyone in the prison. I always pitied him without knowing why, and I could not look at him without feeling the deepest compassion. If asked to explain this, I

should find it impossible to do so. I could never get him to talk, and he never became animated except when, to put an end to all attempts at conversation, I gave him something to do or sent him on an errand. I soon found that he loved to be ordered about. Neither tall nor short, neither ugly nor handsome, neither stupid nor intelligent, neither old nor young, it would be difficult accurately to describe this man, except that his face was slightly pitted after small-pox, and that he had fair hair. He belonged, as far as I could make out, to the same company as Sirotkin. The prisoners sometimes laughed at him because he had ‘exchanged.’ During the march to Siberia he had ‘exchanged’ for a red shirt and a silver rouble. It was thought comic that he should have sold himself for such a small sum, to take the name of another prisoner in place of his own, and consequently to accept the other’s sentence. Strange as it may appear, it was nevertheless true. This custom, which had become traditional and was still practised at the time I was sent to Siberia, I at first refused to believe, but found afterwards that it really existed. This is how the exchange was effected:

A company of prisoners starts for Siberia. Among them there are exiles of all kinds, some condemned to hard labour, others to labour in the mines, others to simple colonization. On the way out, no matter at what stage of the journey, in the Government of Perm, for instance, a prisoner wishes to exchange. Let us say his name is Mikhailoff, that he has been condemned to hard labour for a capital offence and does not like the prospect of passing long years in captivity. He is a cunning fellow and knows just what to do. He looks among his comrades for some simple, weak-minded fellow whose punishment is less severe, who has been condemned for a few years to the mines or hard labour, or has perhaps been simply exiled. At last he finds someone like Suchiloff, a former serf, sentenced only to become a colonist. The man has travelled fifteen hundred versts (about one thousand miles) without a kopeck, for the good reason that he and his kind are always without money. Fatigued and exhausted, he can get nothing to eat beyond the fixed rations, nothing to wear apart from his convict’s uniform.

Mikhailoff strikes up a conversation with Suchiloff; they suit one another, and are soon on friendly terms. Finally, at some station, Mikhailoff makes his comrade drunk, and then asks him to exchange.

‘My name is Mikhailoff,’ he says, ‘I’m condemned to hard labour but in my case it will be nothing of the kind, as I am to enter a particular special

section. I’m classed with the hard-labour men, but in this special division the work is not so severe.’

Before the special section was abolished many persons, even in the official world of St Petersburg, were unaware of its existence. It was stationed in some remote corner of one of the most distant regions of Siberia, and one was unlikely to hear much about it. It was insignificant, moreover, on account of its limited numbers, which in my time did not exceed seventy. I have since met men who have served in Siberia and know the country well, and yet have never heard of the ‘special section.’ In the rules and regulations there are only six lines about this institution.

Now, attached to the convict establishment at is a special section reserved for the most dangerous criminals, and where the severest forms of labour await them. The prisoners themselves know nothing of this section. Was it a temporary or permanent institution? Neither Suchiloff nor any of his companions, nor Mikhailoff himself even can guess the significance of those two words. Mikhailoff, however, has his suspicions as to the true character of the section: from the gravity of the crime for which he is forced to march three or four thousand versts on foot. It is certain he is on his way to no soft spot. Suchiloff, on the other hand, is to be a colonist, and what could Mikhailoff desire better than that?

‘ Won’t you exchange? ‘ he asks. Suchiloff is a little drunk, he is a simple-minded man, full of gratitude to the comrade who entertains him, and dare not refuse; he has heard, moreover, from other prisoners, that these exchanges are made, and understands, therefore, that there is nothing extraordinary or outlandish in the proposition made to him. An agreement is reached: the cunning Mikhailoff, profiting by Suchiloff’s simplicity, buys his name for a red shirt and a silver rouble which are handed over before witnesses. Next day Suchiloff is sober, but he is given more liquor; he drinks up his own rouble, and after a while the red shirt suffers the same fate.

‘If you don’t like the bargain we made, give me back my money,’ says Mikhailoff. But where is Suchiloff to get a rouble? If he does not give it back, the convicts’ association will force him to keep his promise. The prisoners are most sensitive on such points; he must carry out his obligations. The association requires it, and in case of disobedience woe to the offender! He will be killed, or at least seriously intimidated. Indeed, if the association once showed mercy to men who had broken their word, it

would cease to exist. if a promise can be revoked, and a contract voided after the stipulated sum has been paid, who would be bound by such an agreement? It is a question of life or death for the association, and prisoners in consequence adhere strictly to the rule.

Suchiloff accordingly finds it impossible to with draw, that nothing can save him, and he therefore agrees to all that is required of him. The bargain is then made known to the whole convoy, and if denunciation is feared those whose loyalty is suspect are liberally treated. In any case, what does it matter to others whether Mikhailoff or Suchiloff goes to the devil? They have had free drinks, they have been entertained without cost to themselves, and none reveals the secret.

At the next station there is a roll-call. When Mikhailoff's name is called, Suchiloff answers 'Present,' Mikhailoff does the same for Suchiloff, and the journey is continued. The matter is now as good as forgotten. At Tobolsk the convoy breaks up: Mikhailoff becomes a colonist, while Suchiloff is sent to the special section under double escort. It would be useless now to cry out and protest. What proof would there be? It would take years to decide the case, and what benefit would the complainant derive? Where, moreover, are the witnesses? They would deny everything, even if they could be found.

This is how Suchiloff, for a silver rouble and a red shirt, landed up in the special section. He was a laughing-stock, not because he had exchanged-though in general the convicts despised a man who had been foolish enough to exchange an easy task for a harder one-but simply because he had received nothing for the bargain except a red shirt and a rouble, which was certainly a ridiculous consideration.

As a rule those exchanges were made for relatively large sums: several ten-rouble notes sometimes changed hands. But Suchiloff was so devoid of character, so insignificant, such a perfect nonentity, that one could scarcely even laugh at him. He and I had lived a considerable time together, I had grown accustomed to him, and he had formed an attach-ment for me, when one day-I can never forgive myself for what I did-he failed to carry out an order. When he came to ask for his money I had the cruelty to say: 'You don't forget to ask for your money, but you don't do what you're told.' Suchiloff remained silent and hastened to do as he was bid, but he suddenly became very sad. Two days passed, and I could scarcely believe that my remark had affected him so deeply. I knew that someone named Vassilieff

was con-stantly dunning him for a small debt; he was probably short of money, and dared not ask me for any.

‘ Suchiloff,’ I said, ‘you’re in need of cash, to pay Vassilieff. Take this.’

I was seated on my camp-bedstead. Suchiloff remained standing before me, amazed that I had myself proposed giving him money, and that I had remembered his difficult position; the more so as he had recently on several occasions asked me to advance him money, and scarcely hoped that I would oblige him once again. He stared at the paper I held out to him, then looked at me, turned sharply on his heel, and went out. Astonished at his behaviour, I followed, and discovered him behind the barrack. He was standing with his head against the palisade and his arms resting on the stakes.

‘What’s the matter, Suchiloff?’ I asked.

He made no reply, and to my great surprise I saw that he was on the verge of tears.

‘You think, Alexander Petrovitch,’ he said, in a trembling voice and trying not to look at me, ‘that I care only for your money, but I’

He turned away from me, laid his forehead against the palisade, and began to sob. It was the first time I had seen a man weep in prison. I had much trouble consoling him, and thenceforward he served me, if possible, more diligently than ever. He was always on the alert for my orders, but by almost imperceptible signs I could tell that in his heart he would never forgive my reproach. The others continued to laugh at him, pull his leg, and even insult him at every opportunity. But he never lost his temper; on the contrary, he remained on good terms with all. It is indeed difficult really to know a man, even when you have lived with him for years.

It was some time before I began to understand the significance of prison life. Although I kept my eyes open I did not at first appreciate a number of facts that stared me in the face: I was looking at them from the wrong angle, and the only impression I received was one of unmitigated gloom. What contributed more than anything else to this view was

my meeting with Af, a convict who had entered the prison

before me, and whose character had shocked me in those first few days. His baseness increased my mental suffering, which was already sufficiently acute. He offered the most repulsive example of that degradation to which a man may fall when all feeling of honour has died within him. This young man of noble birth-I have spoken of him before-used to inform the

governor, through his servant Fedka, of everything that went on in barracks. Here is the man’s history.

While still a student, his evil ways had led to a quarrel with his parents. He went to St Petersburg and earned his living as a common informer, never hesitating to sell the blood of ten men in order to gratify his insatiable thirst for the grossest and most licentious pleasures. He was not without intelligence; but he gradually became so perverted in the taverns and brothels of St Petersburg that he finally took part in an affair which he knew must lead to disaster. He was condemned to exile and ten years’ hard labour in Siberia. One might have thought that such a frightful blow would have brought him to his senses, that it would have caused some reaction, some change of heart, and brought about a crisis; but he accepted his fate without the least concern. It did not frighten him; the only thing he disliked was the necessity of working and of abandoning for ever his evil life. The label of convict had no effect but to prepare him for new acts of baseness and more hideous villainies than any of which he had previously been guilty.

‘ I am now a convict, and can crawl at ease, without shame.’ That was the light in which he regarded his new condition. I think of this disgusting creature as of some monstrous! phenomenon. During the many years I lived with murderers, debauchees, and proved rascals, I never met a case of such complete moral abasement, determined corruption, and shameless wickedness. Among us there was a parricide of noble birth, to whom I have already alluded. Yet there was plenty of evidence that he was much better, far more humane than Af. During the whole term of my imprisonment, Af was never anything more in my eyes than a lump of flesh furnished with teeth and stomach, greedy for the most vile and bestial enjoyments, for the satisfaction of which he was prepared even to commit murder I do not exaggerate in the least. I recognized in him one of the most perfect specimens of animal passion, restrained by no principles, no rule. How his eternal smile disgusted me! He was a monster-a moral Quasimodo. At the same time he was intelligent, cunning, good-looking, had received some education, and possessed considerable ability. Fire, plague, famine, no matter what scourge, is preferable to the presence of such a man in human society. I have already said that espionage and denunciation flourished in prison as the natural product of degradation, without the convicts thinking much of it. On the contrary, they maintained friendly relations with A-f. They were more affable with him than with anyone

else. The favour shown towards him by our drunken friend, the governor, gave him a certain importance and even moral superiority in the eyes of the convicts. Later on this cowardly wretch escaped with another convict and their escort; but of that I shall speak at the proper time and place. At first he hung about me, thinking I did not know his story. I repeat, he poisoned the first days of my imprisonment so as to drive me nearly to despair. I was terrified by the mass of baseness and cowardice into the midst of which I had been thrown. I imagined that everyone else was as foul and cowardly as he, but I made a mistake in supposing that everyone resembled A-f.

During the first three days, when I was not lying stretched out on my bed, I did nothing but wander about the prison. The authorities had supplied me with a piece of linen, and I entrusted it to a reliable man to be made up into shirts. On the advice of Akim Akimitch, too, I obtained a folding mattress: it was of felt, covered with linen, as thin as a pancake, and very hard to anyone who was not accustomed to it. Akim Akimitch promised to get me all the most essential things, and with his own hands made me a patchwork blanket from a pile of old trousers and waistcoats which I had bought from various prisoners. Clothes issued to convicts become their property when they have been worn the regulation time. Then they are sold without delay; for however much worn an article of clothing may be, it always possesses a certain value. All this surprised me, especially at my first contact with this strange new world. I became as low as my companions, as typical a convict as they. Their customs, their habits, their ideas influenced me thoroughly and externally became my own, without, however, affecting my inner self. I was astonished and confused as though I had never heard of or suspected anything of the kind before; and yet I had known, or at least been told, what to expect. Direct experience, however, made a different impression on me from the mere description. How could I suppose, for instance, that old rags still possessed some value? And yet my blanket was made entirely of tatters. It is difficult to describe the cloth used for prison uniform. It resembled that thick, grey cloth manufactured for the army, but after being worn some little time it became threadbare and tore with abominable ease. The uniform was supposed to last for a whole year, but it never did so. The prisoner works and carries heavy burdens, and the cloth naturally wears out, and is soon full of holes. Our sheepskins were intended to be worn for three years. During the whole of that time they served as overcoats, blankets, and pillows; they were very durable.

Nevertheless, at the end of the third year, it was not uncommon to see them mended with ordinary linen. Although they were now very much worn, it was always possible to sell them at the rate of forty kopecks apiece. The better preserved ones even fetched sixty kopecks, which was a very large sum in prison.

Money, as I have said, has a sovereign value in those places, and a prisoner who has some pecuniary resources certainly suffers ten times less than one who has nothing.

‘When the Government supplies all the convict’s needs, what can he want with money?’ reasoned our chief.

Nevertheless, I maintain that if the prisoners had not been allowed to possess anything of their own, they would have gone mad or died like flies. They would have committed unheard-of crimes-some from weariness or grief, the rest in order to get sooner punished and, as they say, ‘ have a change.’ If a convict earns a few kopecks by the sweat of his brow or at considerable risk spends his money recklessly, like a silly child, that does not prove, as might be thought, he does not appreciate its value. The convict is greedy for money, to the point of madness, and if he throws it away he does so in order to procure what he values far above money-liberty, or at least a semblance of liberty.

Convicts are dreamers; I will speak of that further on in more detail. At present I will only remark that I have heard men condemned to twenty years’ hard labour say quietly: ‘When I’ve finished my time, please God I’ll-’ The very words hard labour, or forced labour, indicate that the man has lost his freedom; and when he spends his money he is merely satisfying a natural craving.

In spite of the branding-iron and chains, in spite of the palisade which hides the free world from his eyes, and encloses him in a cage like some wild beast, he can still obtain vodka and other delights. He may even, on rare occasions, manage to bribe his immediate superiors, the veteran soldiers and non-commissioned officers, and persuade them to close their eyes to his breaches of prison discipline. He loves, moreover, to swagger, that is to say, impress his companions and persuade himself for a time that he enjoys more liberty than in fact he does. In short, the poor devil longs to convince himself of the impossible. This is why convicts take such pleasure in boasting and exaggerating their own unhappy personalities to the point of burlesque.

They find in boasting the one thing they long for-a semblance of life and liberty. A millionaire, indeed, with a rope round his neck would surely give all his millions for one breath of air. Yet there is danger in boasting. Suppose a prisoner has lived quietly for several years and by good conduct won certain privileges. Suddenly, to the astonishment of his superiors, he becomes mutinous, plays the very devil, and even ventures upon some capital crime such as murder, violation, etc. All wonder at the cause of this extraordinary conduct on the part of a man believed to be incapable of such a thing; but it is simply the convulsive manifestation of his personality, an instinctive melancholia, an uncontrollable desire for self-assertion which obscures his reason. It is a sort of epileptic fit, a spasm. Even so must a man who is buried alive and suddenly wakes up strike against the lid of his coffin. He tries to rise, to push it from him, though reason must convince him that his efforts are useless.

Reason, however, has no part in this convulsion. It must not be forgotten that almost every act of self-assertion on the part of a convia is regarded as a crime. Accordingly, he takes no account of the importance or triviality of his act: a debauch is a debauch, danger is danger; as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb. It is the first step that counts.

Little by little the man becomes excited, intoxicated, and can no longer contain himself. For that reason it would be better not to drive him to extremes; everybody would be much better for it.

But how can that be managed?

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST MONTH {continued)

When I first entered the prison I possessed a small sum of money; but I carried very little of it about with me lest it should be confiscated. I had gummed some bank-notes into the binding of my New Testament, which had been given to me at Tobolsk by someone who had been exiled many years previously, and who was accustomed to regard other ‘unfortunates’ as his brethren.

There are men in Siberia who spend their lives giving brotherly assistance to the ‘unfortunates.’ They feel the same sympathy for them as they would for their own children: their compassion is something sacred and wholly disinterested. I cannot help here relating quite briefly an encounter which I had at about this time.

In the neighbouring town there lived a widow, Nastasia Ivanovna. None of us. of course, was in direct contact with this woman. She had made it the object of her life to assist all those in exile, and particularly us convicts. Had there been some misfortune in her family? Had someone dear to her suffered punishment similar to ours? I do not know. In any case, she did what she could for us, though it was little enough for she was very poor. But we felt, when shut up in prison, that we had a devoted friend outside. She often brought us news, which we were very glad to hear, for nothing of the kind reached us.

When I left the prison to be taken to another town I had the opportunity of calling upon her and making her acquaintance. She lived in one of the suburbs, at the house of a near relation.

Nastasia Ivanovna was neither old nor young, neither pretty nor ugly. It was difficult, impossible even, to know whether she was intelligent and well-bred. But through her actions there shone an infinite compassion, an irresistible desire to please, to solace, to be in some way helpful. All this could be read in the sweetness of her smile.

I spent a whole evening at her house with other prisoners She looked us straight in the face, laughed when we laughed, did everything we asked her, agreed with all we said, and did her best in every way to entertain us. She gave us tea and various little delicacies. We felt sure that she would have

enjoyed being rich only in order to entertain us the better and offer us more substantial consolation.

When we wished her good-bye, she presented each of us with a cardboard cigar-case as a souvenir. She had made them herself-heaven knows how-with coloured paper, the paper with which schoolboys' copy-books are covered. All round this cardboard cigar-case she had gummed, by way of ornament, a narrow fringe of gilt paper.

' As you smoke, these cigar-cases will perhaps be of use to you,' she said, as if excusing herself for making such a present.

I have both read and heard it said that love of one's neighbour is only a form of selfishness. What selfishness could there have been in this woman's charity? That I could never understand.

Although I had not much money when I arrived at the prison, I could never feel seriously annoyed with men who, after borrowing and letting me down in the first few days, expected me to lend a second, a third time, and even oftener. What I did not like was the thought that these people, with their smiling knavery, took me for a fool and laughed at me just because I lent money for the fifth time. I must have seemed to them a veritable dupe. If, on the contrary, I had refused and sent them away, I am certain that they would have had much more respect for me. Still, though it vexed me very much, I could not refuse them.

I was rather anxious during the first days to discover where I stood, and to decide what rule of conduct I should follow in my relations with others. I felt and perfectly understood that, the place being in every way new to me, I was walking in darkness, and that it would be impossible to live ten years in darkness. I decided to act frankly, according to the dictates of my conscience and personal feeling. But I also realized that while this decision might be all very well in theory, I should, in practice, be guided by events as yet unforeseen. Therefore, in addition to all the petty annoyances caused to me by my confinement, one terrible anguish laid hold of me and tormented me more and more.

'The house of the dead!' I said to myself as night fell and watched from the doorway of our barrack the prisoners just come from work walking about the courtyard, passing between the kitchen and the barracks. As I studied their movements and their faces I tried to guess what sort of men they were, and what their dispositions might be.

They lounged about there, some with lowered brows, others full of gaiety-one of those two expressions was seen on very convict's face-exchanged insults, or talked of trivialities. Sometimes, too, they wandered about alone, apparently occupied with their own reflections; some of them with a worn-out, pathetic look, others with the conceited air of superiority. Yes, here, even here!-caps balanced on the side of their heads, their sheepskin coats flung picturesquely over their shoulders, insolence in their eyes, and mockery on their lips.

'Here is the world to which I am condemned, in which, despite myself, I must somehow live,' I said.

I endeavoured to question Akim Akimitch, with whom, for the sake of company, I liked to take my tea; for I wanted to know something about the different convicts. In parenthesis we may say that tea was almost my only nourishment in the early days of my imprisonment. Akim Akimitch never refused to share it with me, and he himself heated our tin samovars, which were made in prison and hired out by M-.

Akim Akimitch generally drank a glass of tea (he had classes of his own) calmly and silently, then thanked me and at once went to work on my blanket; but he had not been able to tell me what I wanted to know, and could not even understand my desire to know the characters of the men around me. He merely listened with a cunning smile which is still vivid in my memory. 'No,' I thought, 'I must find out for myself; it is useless to interrogate others.'

Early on the morning of the fourth day, the convicts were drawn up in two ranks in the courtyard before the guardhouse, close to the prison gates. Before and behind them were soldiers with loaded muskets and fixed bayonets.

A soldier has the right to fire on any convict who tries to escape, but he is answerable for his shot if there is no absolute necessity to open fire. The same thing applies to mutiny. But who would think of openly taking to flight?

The engineer officer arrived accompanied by the so-called conductor and some non-commissioned officers of the Line, together with sappers and soldiers told off to superintend the work.

The roll was called, and the convicts who were going to the tailors' shop were marched off first. These men worked inside the prison, and made clothes for all the inmates. Others went to the outer workshops, until it was

the turn of those detailed for field labour. I was of this group: there were altogether twenty of us. Behind the fortress on the frozen river were two Government barges. They were useless, and had to be broken up so that the timber might not be lost. This timber was itself almost worthless, for fire-wood can be bought in the town at a nominal price, the whole countryside being covered with forests.

The work was simply intended to give us something to do, as was understood on both sides; and accordingly we went to it apathetically. Things were very different when there was a useful job or some definite scheme to be carried out. In that case, although the men themselves derived no profit, they tried to get it done as soon as possible, and took a pride in doing it quickly. But when the labour was a matter of form rather than of necessity, no high-powered effort could be expected. We had to work until the eleven o'clock drum told us to cease.

The day was warm and foggy, the snow was on the point of melting. Our group walked towards the bank behind the fortress, our chains rattling beneath our garments; the sound was clear and ringing. Two or three convicts went to collect tools from the depot.

I walked ahead with the others, rather excited, for I was anxious to discover in what this field labour consisted, to what sort of work I was condemned, and how I should do it for the first time in my life.

I remember the smallest particulars. As we walked along we met a townsman with a long beard, who stopped and slipped his hand into his pocket. One man fell out, took off his cap and received alms-to the extent of five kopecks- then hurried back. The townsman made the sign of the cross and went his way. Those five kopecks were spent the same morning in buying scones of white bread which were shared equally amongst us. Some of my squad were gloomy and taciturn, others indifferent and indolent. There were some who kept up a perpetual chatter One of them was extremely gay, heaven knows why; he sang and danced as we went along, shaking and ringing his chains at every step. He was a huge fat man, the same who, on the day of my arrival at washing time, had quarrelled with one of his companions about the water, and had ventured to compare him to some sort of bird. His name was Scuratoff. He finished by shouting out a lively song of which I remember the burden:

'They married me without my consent, When I was at the mill.'

Nothing was wanting but a balalaika.

His extraordinary good humour was justly reproved by several of the prisoners, who took offence at it.

‘ Listen to his row,’ said one of the convicts, ‘ why can’t he shut up?’

‘ The wolf has but one song, and this Tuliak is stealing it from him,’ said another whose accent proclaimed him a Little Russian.

‘Of course I’m from Tula,’ replied Scuratoff; ‘but we don’t stuff ourselves to bursting as you do in Pultava.’

‘Liar! What did you eat yourself? Bark shoes and cabbage soup?’

‘You talk as if the devil fed you on sweet almonds,’ broke in a third.

‘I admit, my friend, that I’m softly nurtured,’ said Scura-toff with a gentle sigh, as though he were really reproaching himself for his softness. ‘I was lapped in luxury from earliest childhood, fed on plums and dainty cakes. My brothers even now have a large business at Moscow: they’re wholesale dealers in the wind that blows-immensely rich men, as you may imagine.’

‘And what did you sell?’

‘I was very successful, and when I received my first two hundred’

‘Roubles? Impossible!’ interrupted one of the prisoners, struck with amazement at hearing of so large a sum.

‘No, my good fellow, not two hundred roubles, two hundred strokes. Luka! I say Luka!’

‘ Some have the right to call me Luka, but to you I’m Luka Kouzmitch,’ retorted a small, feeble convict with a pointed nose.

‘The devil take you, you’re really not worth speaking to; yet I wanted to be civil to you. But to continue my story. This is how it happened that I left Moscow. I received my last fifteen strokes and was then sent off, and was at’

‘But what were you sent for?’ asked another convict who had been listening attentively.

‘Don’t ask stupid questions. I was explaining to you how it was I did not make my fortune at Moscow; and yet you can’t imagine how anxious I was to be rich.’

Several prisoners began to laugh. Scuratoff was one of those lively persons, full of animal spirits, who take a pleasure in amusing their graver companions, and who, as a matter of course, received no reward except insults. He belonged to a type of men of whose characteristics I shall, perhaps, have occasion to say more.

‘And what a fellow he is now!’ observed Luka Kouzmitch. ‘His clothes alone must be worth a hundred roubles.’

Scuratoff had the oldest and greasiest sheepskin imaginable. It was patched in many different places with pieces that scarcely hung together. He looked at Luka attentively from head to foot.

‘It’s my head, friend,’ he said, ‘my head that’s worth the money. When I said good-bye to Moscow I felt that at any rate my head was going to make the journey on my shoulders. Farewell, Moscow, I shall never forget your free air, nor the tremendous flogging I got. As for my sheepskin, you’re not! obliged to look at it.’

‘ Perhaps you ‘d like me to look at your head?’

‘If it was really his own natural property, but it was given him in charity,’ cried Luka Kouzmitch. ‘It was a gift made; to him at Tumen when the convoy was passing through the town.’

‘Scuratoff, had you a workshop?’

‘Workshop! He was only a cobbler,’ said one of the convicts.

‘It’s true,’ said Scuratoff, without noticing the caustic tone of the speaker. ‘ I tried to mend boots, but never got beyond a single pair.’

‘And were you paid for them?’

‘Well, I found a fellow who certainly neither feared God nor honoured either his father or his mother, and as a punishment Providence made him buy the work of my hands.’

The group round Scuratoff burst out laughing.

‘I also worked once at the prison,’ continued Scuratoff, with imperturbable coolness. ‘I mended boots for Stepan Fedoritch, the lieutenant.’

‘And was he satisfied?’

‘No, my dear fellows, indeed he wasn’t; he blackguarded me enough to last me for the rest of my life. He kicked my backside, too. What a rage he was in! Ah! my life’s been a failure. I see no fun whatever in prison.’ He began to sing again.

‘Akolina’s husband is in the courtyard. There he waits.’

Again he sang, and again he danced and leaped.

‘Most unbecoming!’ murmured the Little Russian, who was walking by my side.

‘Frivolous man!’ said another in a serious, decided tone.

I could not make out why they insulted Scuratoff, nor why they despised those convicts who were light-hearted, as they seemed to do. I attributed the anger of the Little Russian and the others to a feeling of personal hostility, but in this I was wrong. They were vexed that Scuratoff had not that puffed-up air of false dignity with which the whole prison was impregnated.

They did not, however, disapprove of all the jokers, nor treat them all like Scuratoff. Some of them were men who would stand no nonsense, and neither forgive nor forget. It was necessary to treat them with respect. One of these fellows was a good-natured, lively type, whom I did not see in his true colours until later on. He was a tall young man, with pleasant manners and not without good looks. His face, too, wore a comic expression. He was known as the Sapper because he had served in the Engineers. He belonged to the special section.

But all the serious-minded convicts were not so particular as the Little Russian, who could not bear to see people gay.

There were several prisoners who wished to be thought superior, either by virtue of their manual skill, of their general ingenuity, of their character, or of their wit. Many of them were intelligent and energetic, and achieved what they desired -a reputation for pre-eminence, that is to say, and the enjoyment of moral influence over their companions. They often hated one another, and were envied by the remainder of their fellow prisoners, upon whom they looked down with an air of dignity and condescension, never deigning to quarrel without good cause. Enjoying the favour of officialdom, they exercised some measure of authority at the place of work, and none of them would have lowered himself so far as to quarrel about a song. These men were most polite to me throughout my imprisonment, though by no means communicative.

At last we reached the river bank; a little lower down lay the old hulk which we were to break up, stuck fast in the ice. On the other side of the water was the blue steppe and the sad horizon. I expected to see the whole party set to work. Nothing of the kind happened: some immediately sat down casually on logs of wood that lay near the bank, and nearly all took from their pockets pouches of native tobacco-which was sold in leaf at the market at the rate of three kopecks a pound-and short wooden pipes. They lighted them while the soldiers encircled us and looked on with obvious boredom.

‘Who the devil had the idea of sinking this barge? ‘ asked one of the convicts in a loud voice, without addressing anyone in particular.

‘Were they very anxious, then, to have it broken up?’

‘The people were not afraid to give us work,’ said another.

‘Where are all those peasants going to work?’ said the first, after a short silence. He had not even heard his companion’s answer, and was pointing to the distance, where a troop of peasants were marching in file across the virgin snow.

All the convicts turned slowly in that direction, and began from mere idleness to laugh at the peasants as they approached.

One of them, the last of the line, was the source of particular amusement: he walked with his arms apart, his head on one side, and wore a tall pointed cap. His shadow was cast in clear outline on the white snow.

‘ Look at Petrovitch,’ said one of my companions, imitating the local accent. Oddly enough, the convicts looked down on the peasants, although they were for the most part peasants themselves.

‘Look at that fellow on the end, he looks as if he were planting radishes.’

‘He’s an important chap, he has lots of money,’ said a third.

They all began to laugh without, however, seeming genuinely amused.

Meanwhile a scone-seller had approached. She was a brisk, lively person, and it was with her that the five kopecks given by the townsman were spent.

The young fellow who sold white bread in the prison took two dozen of her scones, and then tried beating down the price. She would not, however, agree to his terms.

At this point the sergeant in charge arrived, cane in hand.

‘What are you sitting down for? Get on with your work.’

‘Detail us off, Ivan Matveitch,’ said one of our so-called foremen, as he slowly got up.

‘You know your jobs. Dismantle that barge and quick about it.’

At last the convicts rose and made their way slowly down to the river. Instructions now fell thick and fast. The barge, it seemed, was not to be actually broken up: the skeleton of the hull was to be left intact, and this was not an easy thing to manage.

‘Pull this beam out, that’s the first thing to do,’ cried one convict, a mere navvy who knew nothing whatever about it. This man, very quiet and a little stupid, had not previously spoken. He now bent down, took hold of a

heavy beam with both hands, and waited for someone to help him. No one, however, seemed inclined to do so.

‘You! You’ll never manage it; not even your grandad the bear could do it,’ muttered someone between his teeth.

‘Well, chum, are we going to make a start? I can’t carry on alone,’ said the other morosely, and he stood upright.

‘Well, what’s the hurry unless you’re going to do the whole job on your own?’

‘ I was only making a remark,’ said the poor fellow, excusing himself for his forwardness.

‘Must you have blankets to keep yourselves warm, or do you want to be otherwise heated this winter?’ bellowed a corporal at the twenty men who seemed to loathe to begin work. ‘Get on with it at once.’

‘It’s never any use being in a hurry, Ivan Matveitch.’

‘Look here, Savelieff, you’re doing nothing at all. What are you looking about for? Are your eyes for sale, by any chance? Come along now.’

‘But I can’t do the work single-handed.’

‘Tell each of us what to do, Ivan Matveitch.’

‘I told you before that I have no special tasks to give you. Get to work on the barge, and when you’ve finished we’ll go back home. Get on with your work, I tell you.’

The prisoners began work, but without much vigour or goodwill, and the sergeant in charge was understandably furious. While the first rivet was being drawn it suddenly snapped.

‘It broke in pieces,’ said a convict in self-justification. Impossible, they all clamoured, to carry on like this. What was to be done? A long discussion took place between the prisoners, and little by little they began to quarrel; nor did this seem likely to be the end of it. The sergeant was yelling and brandishing his cane, but the second rivet snapped like the first. It was then agreed that hatchets were of no use, and that other tools must be procured. Accordingly, two prisoners were sent under escort to the fortress to get the proper instruments. Awaiting their return, the others quite calmly sat down on the bank, pulled out their pipes, and began once more to smoke. Finally, the sergeant spat with contempt.

‘Well,’ he exclaimed, ‘*you* people won’t die from overwork. My God, what a crowd! ‘ he grumbled, ill-humouredly. He shrugged his shoulders and went off towards the fortress, waving his stick.

An hour later the clerk of works arrived. He listened quietly to what the convicts had to say, told them that the job he wanted them to do was only to detach four rivets without breaking them, and partially dismantle the barge. As soon as this was done, they could go home. The task was not easy, but, lord! how the convicts now set to work! Where now was their idleness, their want of skill? Hatchets began to dance, and the rivets were quickly sprung. Those who had no hatchets made use of thick sticks to push beneath the rivets, and thus in due time and in artistic fashion they levered them out. The convicts seemed suddenly to have become intelligent in their conversation, and no more insults were heard. Everyone knew perfectly what to say, to do, and what to advise. Exactly half an hour before the beating of the drum, the appointed task was finished, and we returned to the prison fatigued, but pleased to have knocked off thirty minutes from the regular working hours.

As regards myself, I have only one remark to make: I seemed all the time to be in somebody's way, I was told to ' get out of the light,' and generally abused. Any one of the ragged lot, the most miserable, numbskull, ham-handed navvy, who would not have dared to utter a syllable to the other convicts, took upon himself to swear at me if I approached him, under pretext that I interfered with him in his work. At last one of the better types said to me frankly but coarsely:

'What are you doing here? Clear off! No one asked for your help.'

'Hear, hear!' added another.

'You'd do better to take a pitcher,' said a third, 'and carry water to the building site, or go to the tobacco factory. You're no use here.'

I was obliged to keep apart. To remain idle while others were working seemed a shame; but when I moved to the opposite end of the barge I was insulted anew.

'A fine crew we've got!' they cried. 'What can you do with fellows like him?'

Nor was this good-natured fun: they were delighted with the opportunity of scoffing at a gentleman.

The reader will now understand why in those early days I was at a loss to know how I should ever manage to get on with such people. I foresaw that such incidents would often recur; but I resolved not to alter my line of conduct in any way, whatever the result might be. I had decided to live simply and intelligently, without manifesting the least desire to be on

familiar terms with my fellow prisoners, but also without repelling them if they sought my company; to appear indifferent to their hatred and their threats; and to pretend as far as possible not to notice them. Such was my plan for I realized from the outset that they would despise me if I adopted any other course.

When I returned to prison in the evening, fatigued and harassed at the end of an afternoon's Work, a deep sadness took possession of me. How many thousand days must I pass like this one? That thought was constantly in my mind. Towards nightfall I was wandering about alone near the palisade at the rear of our barrack, deep in meditation, when I suddenly caught sight of my friend Bull running to meet me.

Bull was the prison dog. Every prison has its dog as companies of infantry, batteries of artillery, and squadrons of cavalry have theirs. He had been there for a long time, belonged to no one, looked upon everyone as his master, and lived on scraps from the kitchen. He was a large black-and-white dog, not very old, with intelligent eyes and a bushy tail. No one ever caressed him or paid the least attention to him; but as soon as I arrived I made friends with him by giving him a piece of bread. When I patted his back he stood motionless, looked at me with a pleased expression, and gently wagged his tail.

That evening, not having seen me the whole day-me, the first person who in so many years had thought of stroking him- he ran towards me, leaping and barking. I was so deeply moved that I could not help embracing him. I laid his head against my body; he placed his paws on my shoulders and looked me in the face.

'Here is a heaven-sent friend,' I told myself, and during those first unhappy weeks my first act on returning from work was to hurry with Bull to the back of the barrack, where he leaped around me with joy. I took his head in my hands and kissed it. At the same time a troubled, bitter feeling pressed my heart. I well remember thinking (and taking pleasure in the thought) that this was my one, my only friend in the world-my faithful dog, Bull.

CHAPTER VIII

NEW ACQUAINTANCES-PETROFF

Time passed, and little by little I accustomed myself to my new life. The scenes I witnessed day by day no longer afflicted me so keenly. In a word, the prison, its inhabitants, and its manners left me indifferent. To grow completely reconciled to the life was impossible, but I had to accept it as an inevitable fact. I had thrown off my earlier anxiety: I no longer wandered about the prison like a lost soul, and no longer allowed myself to be obsessed with worry. The ill-mannered curiosity of the convicts had somewhat abated, and I was no longer looked upon with that affectation of insolence previously displayed. They were no longer interested in me, and I was very glad of it. I began to feel at home in the barrack. I knew where to he down and sleep at night; I gradually became accustomed to things the very idea of which would formerly have repelled me. I went regularly every week to have my head shaved. We were called every Saturday, one after another, to the guard-house, where the regimental barbers lathered our skulls with cold water and soap, and then scraped us with their saw-like razors.

The bare memory of this torture makes me shudder. However, I soon discovered a remedy, for Akim Akimitch introduced me to a prisoner in the military section who for one kopeck shaved his customers with his own razor. It was his trade. Many of the prisoners went to him merely to avoid the military barbers, though the latter were not men of weak nerves. Our barber was known as ‘the governor.’ Why, I cannot say; for so far as I could see he bore no resemblance whatever to any such official. As I write these Unes I can see him clearly with his thin, drawn face. He was a tall fellow, silent, rather stupid, and entirely absorbed in his business. He was never to be seen without a strop, upon which day and night he sharpened a razor which was always in admirable condition. He had certainly made this work the supreme object of his life; he was really happy when his razor was quite sharp and his services in demand. His lather was always warm, and he had a very light hand-a hand of velvet. He was proud of his skill, and used to take his kopeck with an air of nonchalance; one might have thought that he worked for love of his art, and not for material gain.

One Af was severely reprimanded by the prison governor because he had the misfortune to use the word ‘governor’ when referring to the barber who shaved him. The governor was in a violent rage.

‘ Blackguard,’ he shouted, ‘ don’t you know who is governor?’

and according to his habit he shook Af violently. ‘The idea of calling a low-down convict “governor” in my presence!’

From the first day of my imprisonment I began to dream of my release. My favourite occupation was to count thousands and thousands of times, in a thousand different ways, the number of days that I had still to spend in prison. To regain my freedom; that was my one ambition, as I am sure it is of every man deprived of his liberty. I cannot affirm that every convict entertained the same degree of hope, but their sanguine disposition often surprised me. Hope in a prisoner differs essentially from that enjoyed by a free man. The latter may desire to improve his condition, or to succeed in some enterprise which he has undertaken, but meanwhile he goes about his business and is swept away in the whirlwind of daily life. It is very different with a convict under life sentence. He too may be said to live, but having been condemned to an indefinite term, he takes a more indefinite view of his situation than does one who knows how many years he has to serve. The man condemned to a comparatively short period feels that he is temporarily away from home; he considers himself, so to speak, as on a visit; he regards the twenty years of his punishment as two years at most; he is sure that at fifty, when he has finished his sentence, he will be as young and as lively as at thirty-five. ‘I have time before me,’ he thinks, and strives obstinately to dispel discouraging thoughts. Even a man condemned for life believes that some day an order may arrive from St Petersburg: ‘Transport So-and-so to the mines at Nertchinsk and fix a term for his detention.’ That would be grand, first because it takes six months to get to Nertchinsk, and life on the road is a hundred times preferable to the prison. He will serve his time at Nertchinsk, and then. More than one grey-haired old man speculates in this way.

At Tobolsk I saw men fastened to the wall at the bedside by a chain about two yards long. That is the punishment for serious crime committed on the way to Siberia; they are kept chained up for five or even ten years. They are nearly all brigands, and I saw only one who looked like a man of good breeding. He had been in some branch of the civil service, and spoke softly with a lisp; his smile was sweet but sickly. He showed us his chain,

and pointed out the most convenient way of lying down. He must have been a pleasant fellow! All these poor wretches are perfectly well-behaved; they all seem satisfied, and yet they are eaten up with desire to finish their period in chains. Why? it will be asked. Simply because they will then leave their low, damp, stifling cells for the prison courtyard. But they will never be released from prison; they are aware that those who have once been chained up will never regain their freedom and will die in irons. They know all this, and yet they look forward anxiously to the day when they are no longer chained. Without that hope they could never remain five or six years fastened to a wall, without dying or going mad.

I soon understood that work alone could save me, by fortifying my bodily health, whereas incessant restlessness of mind, nervous irritation, and the close air of the barrack would ruin it completely. I should leave prison vigorous and resilient. I did not deceive myself, work and movement were invaluable.

I was horrified to see one of my comrades melt away like a piece of wax. At the beginning of my sentence he was young, handsome, and full of vigour; yet when he left his health was ruined, and his legs could no longer support him. His chest, too, was oppressed by asthma.

‘No,’ I said to myself as I watched him. ‘I wish to live, and I will live.’

My love of work exposed me at first to the contempt and bitter sarcasm of my comrades; but I paid no attention to them, and went with a light heart to every task. Sometimes, for instance, I was ordered to calcine and pound alabaster. This work, the first I was given, is easy. The engineers did their utmost not to overtax a gentleman; it was not indulgence, but simple justice. It would have been ridiculous to expect the same work from a labourer as from a man whose strength was less by half, and who had never worked with his hands. But this never meant that we were spoilt, for the leniency was unofficial, and we were strictly supervised. As really heavy work was by no means uncommon, it often happened that the task was beyond the strength of a gentleman, who thus suffered twice as much as his comrades.

Generally three or four men were sent to pound the alabaster, and old, feeble men were nearly always chosen. We were of the latter class. A skilled workman accompanied us, and for several years he was always the same one, Almazoff. He was stern, already advanced in years, sunburnt, and very thin; by no means communicative, moreover, and difficult to get on with. He despised us profoundly, but was of such a reserved disposition that

he never broke into open abuse.’ The shed in which we calcined the alabaster was built on a sloping and deserted bank of the river. On a foggy winter’s day the view on the river and far beyond the opposite bank; was gloomy. There was something heart-rending in this dull, naked landscape; but it was still more depressing when a brilliant sun shone above the boundless white plain. How! one would have liked to fly away beyond this steppe which, beginning on the opposite shore, stretched like a huge tablecloth for fifteen hundred versts to the south.

Almazoff went to work silently, with a disagreeable air. We were ashamed not to be able to help him more effectually, but he managed to do his work without our assistance, and seemed to wish us to understand that we were unfair towards him, and that we ought to repent our uselessness. Our work was to heat the oven for calcining the alabaster which we had gathered into heaps.

Next day, when the alabaster was fully calcined, we turned it out. Each man filled a box with the stuff which he then proceeded to crush; it was not an unpleasant job. The fragile stone soon became a brilliant white dust. We brandished our heavy hammers, and dealt such formidable blows that we admired our own strength. When we were tired we felt lighter, our cheeks were red, the blood circulated more rapidly in our veins. Almazoff would then look at us in a condescending manner, as he would have at little children. He smoked his pipe with an indulgent air, unable, however, to prevent himself from grumbling. He never opened his mouth except to complain; he was the same with everyone. At bottom, I believe, he was a kindly soul.

I had another job: it consisted in working the lathe wheel. This wheel was large and heavy; great strength was necessary to make it revolve, especially when the fellows in the engineering shop were making the balustrade of a staircase, or the foot of a large table, from a length of tree-trunk. No one man could have done the work alone. B(a gentleman) and I were regularly appointed to this task during several years.

B, though still young, was weak, but very friendly. He had been sent to prison a year before me, with two companions who were also of noble birth. One of them, an old man, used to pray day and night, and was greatly respected for it. He died in prison. The other was quite a young fellow, fresh-coloured, strong, and courageous. He had carried his companion B for

several hundred versts, when, at the end of the first half-stage, he collapsed through fatigue. Their mutual love was worth seeing.

Bwas a perfectly well-bred man, of noble and generous disposition, but spoiled and irritated by illness. We used to turn the wheel well together, and the work interested us. Indeed, I found the exercise most beneficial.

I was, moreover, very fond of shovelling away the snow, which we generally did after the frequent gales of the winter. When a hurricane had been raging for an entire day, more than one house would be covered to the windows, if not completely buried. The wind died down, the sun reappeared, and we were ordered to dig out the buildings from the snowdrifts.

We were told off in large groups which sometimes consisted of the entire prison population. Each man received a shovel, and had to move a given quantity of snow, which sometimes appeared an impossible task. But we all set to work with a good will. The light powdery snow had not yet congealed, and was frozen only on the surface. We removed it in enormous shovelfuls, and scattered it over a wider area. In the air the snow-dust was as brilliant as diamonds; the shovel sank easily into the white glittering mass. The convicts almost always appeared happy at this work, animated by exercise and the cold wintry air. Everyone felt himself in better spirits, laughter and jokes were heard, snowballs were exchanged. After a time this excited the indignation of the serious-minded convicts, who liked neither laughter nor gaiety, and the performance was generally concluded in showers of abuse.

Little by little my circle increased, although I never intentionally made new acquaintances. I was always restless, morose, and mistrustful; but one seemed to make friends involuntarily. The first who came to visit me was a man named Petroff. I purposely say visit, because he belonged to the special division which was housed at the opposite end of the courtyard. It seemed as if no understanding could exist between us, for we had nothing in common.

Nevertheless, during the early days of my imprisonment, Petroff thought it his duty to call on me nearly every day, or at least to stop me at the rear of our barrack where, after a day’s work, I used to stroll as far as possible from the eyes of men. His persistence was disagreeable to me; but he managed so well that his visits became at last a pleasing diversion, although he was by no means of a communicative disposition. He was short, strongly built,

agile, and skilful. He had quite a pleasing voice, high cheek-bones, a bold look, and white, regular teeth. He had always a quid of tobacco in his mouth between the lower lip and the gums. Many of the convicts had the habit of chewing. He seemed to me younger than he really was, for although forty years of age, he looked no more than thirty. He addressed me without ceremony, and behaved with civility and attention as though we were on an equal footing. If, for instance, he saw that I wished to be alone, he would talk to me for about two minutes and then go away. He thanked me, moreover, each time for my kindness in conversing with him, a thing he never did to anyone else. I must add that his relationship with me remained unaltered during the first period of my story and for several years afterwards; that they never became more intimate, although he was in fact my friend. I could never properly understand what he expected from my society, nor why he came every day to see me. He sometimes robbed me, but it was almost an involuntary act. He never came to me to borrow money; so that what attracted him was not personal interest.

It seemed to me, I know not why, that this man was not a fellow convict, but lived some distance away in the town. It was as if he had come to the prison by chance in search of news, to inquire after me, in fact, to see how I was getting on. He was always in a hurry, as though he had momentarily left someone who was waiting for him, or as if he had left his business for an hour or so. And yet he never hurried himself. He wore a fixed look, with a slight air of levity and irony. He had a habit of gazing into the distance high above the objects nearer at hand, as though he were trying to get a glimpse of something behind the person to whom he was talking. He always seemed absent-minded. I sometimes asked myself where he went when he left me, and where he could be so anxiously expected. He would simply go with a light step to one of the barracks or to the kitchen, sit down and listen to the conversation. He would listen attentively, join in with eagerness, and then suddenly fall silent. But whether he spoke or kept silent, one seemed always to discern in his countenance that he had business somewhere else, and that someone was waiting for him in the neighbouring town. The most astonishing thing was that he never had any business-apart, of course, from the hard labour assigned to him. He knew no trade, and had scarcely ever any money; but that did not seem to upset him. Why did he speak to me? His conversation was as strange as he himself was singular. When he noticed me walking alone behind the barrack he stopped and turned towards

me. He walked very fast, and when I turned he was suddenly on his heel. He approached me at a walking pace, but so quickly that he seemed to be running.

‘Good evening.’

‘Good evening.’

‘I’m not disturbing you?’

‘No.’

‘ I want to ask you something about Napoleon. Is he any relation of the one who invaded Russia in 1812?’

Petroff was a soldier’s son, and knew how to read and write.

‘ Of course he is.’

‘ People say he is President. How President-and of what?’

His questions were always rapid and abrupt, as though he required an immediate answer. I explained Napoleon’s position and added that he might become emperor.

‘How will that be?’

I explained it to him as well as I could; Petroff listened with attention. He understood perfectly all I told him, and then, leaning towards me, said:

‘Er, can you tell me, Alexander Petrovitch, if there are really monkeys that have hands instead of feet, and are as tall as men?’

‘Yes.’

‘What are they like?’

I described them to him, and told him what I knew on the subject.

‘And where do they live?’

‘In warm climates. There are some to be found in the island of Sumatra.’

‘ Is that in America? I have heard that people there walk with their heads downwards.’

‘No, no; you are thinking of the Antipodes.’ I explained to him as well as I could what America was, and what the Antipodes. He listened to me as attentively as if the question of the Antipodes alone had caused him to approach me.

‘ I see. Now I read last year the story of the Countess de la Vallière; Arevieff borrowed the book from the adjutant. Is it truth or fiction? It’s by Dumas.’

‘ Fiction, of course.’

‘Really? Well, good-bye, I’m much obliged to you.’

And he disappeared. The above may be taken as a fair specimen of our conversation.

I made inquiries about PetrofF. M- decided he ought to speak to me on the subject when he learned what an acquaintance I had made. He told me that many convicts had excited his horror on their arrival; but not one of them, not even Gazin, had made upon him so bad an impression as had this fellow Petroff.

‘He is the most determined and unreliable villain in the place,’ said M-. ‘ He’s capable of anything, nothing can withstand his whims. He’ll assassinate you if the fancy takes him, without hesitation and without the least remorse. I often think he is not in his right senses.’

This declaration was most interesting; but M- was never able to tell me why he entertained so low an opinion of Petroff. Strangely enough, I used to see and talk with this man almost every day for years; he was always my sincere friend, though I could not at the time tell why, and during all that time he lived very quietly and did nothing extraordinary. And yet I feel sure that M- was right, that

Petroff may after all have been a violent character and the most difficult of any of the convicts to restrain.

I do not know why I should believe that; but Petroff was the man who, when called up to receive his punishment, had tried to kill the governor. I have already explained how the governor was saved as by a miracle, having left a moment before the sentence was carried out.

Once when he was still a soldier, before his arrival at the prison, his colonel had struck him on parade. He had no doubt often been beaten before, but that day he was in no humour to endure an insult in broad daylight in front of the whole battalion drawn up in fine. He killed the colonel. I do not know all the details of the story, for he never told it to me himself. It must be understood, however, that these outbursts occurred only when nature within him spoke too loudly, and such occasions were rare; as a rule he was serious and even quiet. His strong, ardent passions had not burned out, but smouldered like burning coals beneath ashes.

I never noticed that he was vain or given to bragging like so many other convicts. He scarcely ever quarrelled, but he was friendly towards very few, except, perhaps, Sirotkin, and then only when he had need of him. One day, however, I saw him thoroughly roused. Someone had offended him by refusing a request. He was arguing the point with a tall convict, as vigorous

as an athlete, named Vassili Antonoff, who was known for his nagging, spiteful disposition. But this man belonged to the class of civil convicts and was certainly no coward. They shouted at one another for some time, and I thought the quarrel would finish like so many others of the same kind, by simple exchange of abuse. As it was, the affair took an unexpected turn. Petroff suddenly turned pale, his lips trembled and turned blue, his respiration became difficult. He got up, and slowly, very slowly, with imperceptible steps-he liked to walk about with his feet naked-approached Antonoff. The shouting at once gave place to deathly silence-a passing fly might have been heard -and everyone waited anxiously to see what happened. Antonoff pointed to his adversary; his face was no longer human. I was unable to endure the scene, and left the room. I was certain that before I reached the staircase I would hear the shrieks of a dying man, but nothing of the kind took place. Before Petroff could lay hands on him, Antonoff threw him the object which had caused the quarrel-a miserable rag, a worn-out piece of lining.

Later, of course, Antonoff made a point of abusing Petroff, but rather as a matter of honour, from a sense of duty, in order to show that he had not really been afraid. Petroff, however, paid no attention to his insults, and did not reply. He had won the day, and insults went by almost unnoticed; he was glad to have obtained his rag.

A quarter of an hour later he was strolling leisurely about the barracks, looking for some group whose conversation might perhaps gratify his curiosity. Everything seemed to interest him, and yet he appeared to be indifferent to all he heard. He might have been compared to a labourer, one of those fellows who are such devils for work but who is for the moment idle, and therefore condescends to spend a little while playing with his children. I could never understand why he stayed in prison, why he did not escape. He would not have hesitated to run for it had he really wished to do so. Reason has no power over men like Petroff when they take the bit between their teeth. If they desire something they allow no obstacle to stand in their way. I am certain that he would have been sufficiently clever to escape, that he could have deceived everyone, and remained for a time, without food, bidden in the forest or a patch of bulrushes; but the idea had evidently not occurred to him. I never observed him to have much judgment or common sense. Men like him are born with one idea, which, without their being aware of it, pursues them all their lives. They wander

about until they spy some object which excites their cupidity, and are then prepared to risk their heads. I was sometimes astonished that a man who had assassinated his colonel for striking him was ready to bow down before the rods, for Petroff was regularly flogged for smuggling vodka into prison. Like all those with no definite occupation, he traded in spirits, and, if caught, admitted himself in the wrong and took a flogging as though he welcomed punishment; otherwise he would have died rather than submit. More than once I was surprised to catch him robbing me in spite of his affection for me; but so it happened from time to time. On one occasion, for instance, he stole my Bible, which I had asked him to restore to its place. He had only a few yards to go; but on the way he met a purchaser, to whom he sold the book, and immediately spent the money on vodka. He probably felt a violent craving for drink that day, for when he desired something he had to have it. A man like Petroff will commit murder for twenty-five kopecks, simply in order to buy himself a pint of vodka; yet on other occasions he will despise hundreds and thousands of roubles. He confessed his theft the same evening, non-chalandy, without a trace of remorse or embarrassment, and as if he were relating some commonplace incident. I did my best to reprove him as he deserved, for I was annoyed at the loss of my Bible. He listened attentively, agreed that the Bible was a very useful book, and sincerely regretted that I no longer had it; but not for one moment was he sorry for having stolen it. He looked at me with such assurance that I left off scolding. He bore my reproaches because he believed I could not do otherwise. He knew he deserved to be punished for his act, and consequently presumed that it was my duty to reprimand him in order to vent my feelings and to console myself for my loss. But deep down in his heart he considered the whole thing nonsense, something to which an intelligent man would be ashamed to descend. I even believe that he regarded me as a little child, who does not yet understand the simplest things in the world. If I spoke to him of anything, except books and learning, he would answer me, but only from politeness and in laconic phrases. I wondered what made him question me so much on the subject of books, and watched him closely during our conversation in order to assure myself that he was not laughing at me; but no, he listened gravely, and with an attention which was genuine, if not always sustained, a fact which sometimes irritated me. However, the questions he asked were clear and precise, and he seemed always anxious for my reply. He had made up his

mind once for all that it was useless speaking to me about anything except books, apart from which I knew nothing. I am certain, and indeed was often surprised, that he was attached to me; but he looked upon me as a child, or at least as not yet quite grown up. He felt towards me that sort of compassion which the stronger always feels for the weaker; he took me for- I really don't know for what! Although this compassion did not prevent him robbing me, I am sure that even while he did so he felt sorry for me.

' What a strange fellow! ' he must have told himself, as he laid hands on my property. 'He doesn't even know how to take care of his own belongings.' That, I think, is why he liked me.

One day he suddenly remarked: 'You're too good-natured, you're so simple, so simple that one cannot help pitying you.' And a moment later he added: 'Don't be offended at what I said just now, Alexander Petrovitch, I didn't mean it like that.'

Fellows like Petroff often express themselves forcibly when they are upset or excited. At such times they come as it were to life, though ordinarily they are men of few words. They could never incite or plan a rebellion, but they are well fitted to carry out another's order; they act deliberately, and hurl themselves against an obstacle without thought or trace of fear. All will follow them to the foot of the wall, where, however, they generally lay down their lives. I do not think Petroff can have, however, met any but a violent end. If he is still alive, it only means he has never yet been in the neighbourhood of death. But who knows? He may, perhaps, die in extreme old age, quite quietly, after having wandered aimlessly through life. Yes, I still believe Mwas right, and that Petroff was the most determined man in the whole of that prison.

CHAPTER IX

DANGEROUS CHARACTERS-LUKA

It is hard to describe a certain type which is as rare in prison as elsewhere. They may be recognized by the terror they inspire, and are instinctively avoided. My first reaction was to shun their company; but later on I took a different view, even of the most loathsome murderers. Some men have never gone so far as to kill, but are more repulsive than others who have taken half a dozen lives; for there are crimes so strange as to baffle the imagination.

One sometimes comes across a man who has led a perfectly decent life under the most trying circumstances: a serf, maybe, a domestic, a shopkeeper, or a soldier. At last his patience is exhausted; his resistance vanishes, and he plunges a knife into his enemy. He does not stop there: the first murder is understandable-he was provoked beyond endurance, but now he kills for pleasure and at sight. He deals out death in return for a harsh word, for a look, perhaps simply to make an equal number of victims, or merely because someone stands in his way. He behaves like a drunken man, like one in delirium. Having once crossed the border-line, he is himself astonished to find that he holds nothing sacred. He violates every law, defies the highest authority, and indulges his blood-lust without restraint. He enjoys the turmoil of his own soul and the terror he inspires, knowing all the while that fearful punishment awaits him. His emotions are probably like those of a man who, looking down from a high tower into the abyss yawning at his feet, feels the urge to throw himself headlong and put an end to his life. That may happen to the meekest and most commonplace of men. There are some who even take pride in their ungovernable passion. The quieter and more self-effacing they have been, the more they swagger and seek to inspire fear. These desperate characters revel in the horror which they cause; they gloat over the disgust which they excite; they take part in the most outrageous acts from sheer despair, and either care nothing for their inevitable fate, or seem impatient to meet their end as soon as possible. The most curious thing is that their excitement, their exaltation, will last until they stand in the pillory. Then the thread is broken; that moment is decisive, and the man becomes suddenly calm or, rather, lifeless, a thing

devoid of feeling. In the pillory all his strength fails him, and he begs pardon of the people. Once in prison, he is quite different: no one would ever imagine that this lily-livered, chicken-hearted creature had killed five or six men.

There are, however, some whom prison life does not so easily subdue; they preserve a degree of swagger, a spirit of bravado.

‘I say, I’m not what you take me for; I’ve sent six fellows out of the world,’ you will hear them boast; but sooner or later they must all submit. From time to time a murderer will amuse himself by recalling his audacity, his lawlessness when he was in a state of despair. He likes at such moments to have some silly fellow before whom he can brag, and to whom he will relate his heroic deeds, as if there were nothing extraordinary. ‘That’s the sort of man I am,’ he says.

And with what cultivated yet reserved conceit he watches his companion while he tells his tale! It can be observed in his accent, in his every word. Where did he learn this artfulness?

During the long evening on one of the first days of my confinement I was listening to one of these conversations. Owing to my inexperience I took the criminal who spun his narrative for a man of iron character, with whom Petroff was not to be compared. He was a man named Luka Kouzmitch, who had knocked down an officer for no other reason than that it pleased him to do so. This Luka Kouzmitch was the smallest and thinnest man in our barrack. He came from the south, and had been a serf, one of those not attached to the soil but who serve their masters as domestics. There was something cold and aloof in his demeanour. He was quite a little bird, but with beak and talons. Convicts sum up a man instinctively, and they had no very high opinion of Luka, who was too easily offended and too conceited.

On the evening in question he was seated on his camp-bedstead stitching a shirt. Close by him was a narrow-minded, stupid, but good-natured and obliging fellow, a sort of Colossus, named Kobylin. Luka often quarrelled with him in a neighbourly way, and treated him with a haughtiness which, thanks to his good nature, Kobylin did not notice in the least. He was knitting a stocking, and listening to Luka with an indifferent air. Luka spoke in a loud voice and very distinctly. He wished everyone to hear him, though he was apparently speaking only to Kobylin.

‘I was deported,’ said Luka, sticking his needle in the shirt, ‘as a brigand.’

‘How long ago?’ asked Kobylin.

‘When the peas are ripe it will be just a year. Well, we reached Kv, and I was imprisoned. Around me there were a dozen men from Little Russia, well-built, solid, robust fellows, like oxen, and how quiet! The food was bad, and the governor did what he liked. The days went by, and I soon realized that all these fellows were cowards.

“‘You’re afraid of an idiot like So-and-so?” I would ask them.

“‘Go and talk to him yourself,” and they burst out laughing like the brutes they were. I held my tongue.

‘There was one fellow so droll, so droll,’ added the narrator, now leaving Kobylin to address all who chose to listen.

‘This droll fellow was telling them how he had been tried, what he had said, and how he had wept hot tears.

“‘There was a dog of a clerk there,” he said, “who did nothing but write and take down every word I said. I told him to go to hell, and he actually wrote that down! He troubled me so, that I quite lost my head.”

‘Give me some thread, Vassili; the prison thread’s bad, rotten.’

‘Here’s some from the tailor’s shop,’ replied Vassili, handing it to him.

‘Well, but about this governor?’ said Kobylin, who had been quite forgotten.

Luka was only waiting for that. He did not go on at once with his story, as though Kobylin were not worth notice. He threaded his needle quietly, tucked his legs lazily underneath him, and then continued as follows:

‘ I excited the fellows to such an extent that they all complained of the governor. That same morning I had borrowed the *rascal* (prison slang for knife) from my neighbour, and hidden it, so as to be ready for anything. When the governor arrived, he was mad with rage. “Come now, you Little Russians,” I whispered to them, “this is not the time for fear.” But, Lord! all their courage had slipped down to the soles of their feet; they trembled! The governor entered the room. He was quite drunk.

‘“What’s all this about? How dare you? I am your tsar, your God,” he yelled.

‘When he said that he was the tsar and God, I went up to him with the knife in my sleeve.

‘“No, Excellency,” I said, drawing nearer and nearer to him, “that cannot be. Your Excellency cannot be tsar and God.”

‘ “ Ah, you ‘re the fellow then,” cried the governor. “ You’re the ringleader.”

‘“No,” I replied, and came still closer. “No, your Excellency, as everyone knows, and as you yourself know, there is only one Almighty God, and He’s in heaven. And there’s only one tsar set over us all by God Himself; he’s our monarch, your Excellency. And, your Excellency, you are as yet only the governor of this prison, and you’re our chief only by the grace of the tsar and because of your own merits.”

‘“How? How? How?” stammered the governor, speechless with amazement.

‘My answer was to throw myself at him and thrust my knife into his belly up to the hilt. It was soon over; the governor tottered, turned, and fell.

‘I had thrown my life away.

‘“Now, you fellows,” I cried, “it’s for you to pick him up.’”

Here I must interrupt my narrative. Expressions like ‘I am the tsar! I am God!’ were, unfortunately, too often in the good old times heard on the lips of senior officials. Their usage is far less frequent to-day, and ‘I am God’ is probably quite obsolete. Moreover, I should point out that those who used such expressions were chiefly men who had risen from the ranks. Promotion seems to have disordered their brains. After having laboured long years beneath the knapsack, they suddenly found themselves with rank and authority. Their new-found dignity and the first flush of excitement aroused by their advancement gave them an exaggerated idea of their power and importance in relation to their subordinates. Such men are abjectly servile in the presence of their superiors; they will even go so far as to assure the latter that they have been common soldiers, and have not forgotten their place. But towards an inferior they are merciless despots. Nothing irritates a convict so much as abuse of this kind. This overweening confidence in their own importance, this exaggerated idea of their immunity from natural obligations, rouses hatred in the hearts of the most submissive men, and drives the most patient to excess. Fortunately, such conduct belongs to an almost forgotten past; and even then the superior authorities dealt very severely with abuse of power, I know from several examples. What exasperates convicts above all is the manifestation of contempt or repugnance in the behaviour of their officers. Those who think it is only

necessary to feed and clothe a prisoner, and to treat him strictly according to law, are much mistaken. Howsoever debased, a man instinctively demands respect for his humanity as such. Every prisoner is well aware that he has been condemned as a reprobate, and knows the distance which separates him from his superiors; but neither branding iron nor chains will make him forget that he is a man. He must, therefore, be humanely treated. Humane treatment may raise up one in whom the divine image has long been obscured. The Unfortunate, above all men, needs a light hand. It is his salvation, his only joy. I have met with some officials kind and indeed noble characters, and I have seen what a beneficent influence they exercised over the poor, humiliated men entrusted to their care. A few affable words have a splendid moral effect upon the prisoners, making them happy as children and sincerely grateful to their masters.

On the other hand, convicts have no time for undue familiarity on an officer's part. They wish to respect him, and familiarity destroys respect. A convict will feel proud, for instance, if the prison governor has a number of decorations, if he has good manners,- if he enjoys the esteem of some higher authority, if he tempers justice with mercy, and if he is conscious of his own dignity. Better by far a man who recognizes his worth without insulting others.

'You got well skinned for that, I suppose,' said Kobylin

'As for being skinned, indeed, there's no denying it. Ali, pass me the scissors. But, what next. Aren't we playing cards to-night?'

'We drank the cards up long ago,' remarked Vassili. 'If we hadn't sold them to buy drink they'd be here now.'

'If!-Ifs fetch a hundred roubles apiece on the Moscow market.'

'Well, Luka, what did you get for sticking him?' asked Kobylin.

'It earned me five hundred strokes, my friend. It did indeed. They almost killed me,' said Luka, once more addressing the assembly and without heeding his neighbour Kobylin. 'When they gave me those five hundred strokes I was treated with great ceremony. I had never been flogged before. What a mass of people came to see me! The whole town turned out to see the brigand, the murderer, take his punishment: I can't tell you how stupid the populace is. Timoshka the executioner stripped me and laid me down crying, "Now tien, I'm going to grill you!" I waited for the first stroke. I wanted to cry out, but couldn't. It was no use opening my mouth, my voice had gone. At the second stroke-you needn't believe me unless you please- I

never heard them count two. When I regained consciousness I heard “seventeen.” Four times they untied me to let me breathe for half an hour, and to souse me with cold water. I stared at them with eyes starting from my head and told myself “ I shall die here.”‘

‘ But you didn’t die,’ remarked Kobylin innocently.

Luka looked at him contemptuously, and everyone burst out laughing.

‘What an idiot! Is he wrong in the upper storey?’ said Luka, as if he regretted that he had condescended to speak to such a fool.

‘He is a little mad,’ said Vassili.

Although Luka had killed six men, no one in prison was ever afraid of him, although he liked to be regarded as a dangerous character.

CHAPTER X

ISAIAH FOMITCH-THE BATH-BAKLOUCHIN

The Christmas holidays were approaching, and the convicts looked forward to them with eager anticipation. From their mere appearance it was easy to see that something extraordinary was about to happen. Four days before the holiday we were to be taken to the bath; everyone was pleased and was making preparations. We were to go there after dinner, for on that day there was no afternoon work. The best pleased and most active man in the whole prison was a certain Isaiah Fomitch Bumstein, a Jew, of whom I spoke in my fifth chapter. He liked to remain stewing in the bath until he dropped off to sleep. Whenever I think of those baths (and they are unforgettable), the first thought which presents itself to my memory is that of the glorious and ever-memorable Isaiah Fomitch Bumstein, my fellow prisoner. Good Lord! What a strange fellow he was! I have already said a few words about his personal appearance. He was fifty years old, his face was wrinkled, with frightful scars on his cheeks and forehead, and he had the thin, weak body of a fowl. His look expressed undying self-confidence and, I may almost say, perfect happiness. I do not think he was at all sorry to be condemned to hard labour. He was a jeweller by trade, and as there was no other in the town, he had always plenty of work to do, and was more or less well paid. He wanted nothing, and lived, one might almost say, sumptuously and without spending all that he earned, for he saved money and lent it out to other convicts at interest. He possessed a samovar, a mattress, a tea-cup, and a blanket. Nor did the local Jews refuse him their patronage; every Saturday he went under escort to the synagogue as was authorized by law. Although he lived like a fighting cock, he looked forward to the expiration of his term of imprisonment, when he intended to marry. He was the most comic mixture of simplicity, stupidity, cunning, timidity, and bashfulness; but the strangest thing was that the convicts never held him up to serious ridicule-they only teased him for amusement. Isaiah Fomitch was a source of distraction and entertainment for everyone.

‘We have only one Isaiah Fomitch, and we’ll take care of him,’ they seemed to say; and as if understanding this, he was proud of his own

importance. From what I was told, it appeared he had entered the prison in the most laughable manner some time before my arrival. Suddenly one evening a report began to circulate that a Jew had been brought there, and was at that moment being shaved in the guard-house, and that he would immediately afterwards be taken to the barracks. As there was not a single Jew in the prison, the convicts looked forward to his entry with impatience, and surrounded him as soon as he passed the great gates. The officer on duty took him to the civil prison and pointed out the place where his plank bedstead would stand.

Isaiah Fomitch carried a bag containing his prison kit and a few things of his own. He set down the bag, and sat down on his bedstead with his legs crossed and without daring to raise his eyes. The other fellows were all laughing at him simply because he was a Jew. Suddenly a young man left the group and came up to him, carrying in his hand an old pair of summer trousers which were dirty, torn, and mended with old rags. He sat down by the side of Isaiah Fomitch, and clapped him on the shoulder.

‘Well, my dear fellow,’ said he, ‘I’ve been waiting for the last six years; look up and tell me how much you’ll give for this article,’ holding up his rags for him to see.

Isaiah Fomitch was so dumbfounded that he dared not look at the mocking crowd, whose scarred and hideous faces were now gathered round him. He was so scared that he could not utter a word. When he saw who was speaking to him he shuddered, and began to examine the rags carefully. All waited to hear him speak.

‘Well, can’t you give me a silver rouble for it? It’s certainly worth that,’ said the would-be vendor, smiling and looking towards Isaiah Fomitch with a wink.

‘A silver rouble? No; but I’ll give you seven kopecks.’

These were the first words Isaiah ever spoke in prison. Loud laughter broke out on all sides.

‘Seven kopecks! Well, let’s have them; you’re certainly a lucky man. Look! Take care of the pledge, you’ll answer for it with your head.’

‘The interest will be three kopecks; that will make ten kopecks you owe me,’ said the Jew, at the same time slipping his hand into his pocket for the sum agreed upon.

‘Three kopecks interest-for a year?’

‘No, not for a year, for a month.’

‘You’re a terrible screw. What’s your name?’

‘Isaiah Fomitch.’

‘Well, Isaiah Fomitch, you ought to get on. Good-bye.’

The Jew once more examined the rags on which he had lent seven kopecks, folded them up, and put them carefully away in his bag. The convicts continued to laugh at him.

Indeed everyone was always laughing at him; but, although everyone owed him,money, no one insulted him. And when he saw they were all well disposed towards him, he gave himself great airs; but he was so comic that they were at once forgiven.

Luka, who before his imprisonment had known many Jews, often teased him, less from malice than for amusement, as one plays with a dog or a parrot. Isaiah Fomitch knew this and took no offence.

‘You’ll see, Jew, how I’ll flog you.’

‘If you give me one blow I will return you ten,’ replied Isaiah Fomitch valiantly.

‘Scurvy Jew!’

‘As scurvy as you like, but I have plenty of money.’

‘Bravo! Isaiah Fomitch. We must take care of you. You’re the only Jew we have; but they’ll send you to Siberia all the same.’

‘I am already in Siberia.’

‘They’ll send you still further.’

‘Will not the Lord God be there?’

‘Of course, He’s everywhere.’

‘Well, then! With the Lord God, and money, one has all that is necessary.’

‘What a fellow he is!’ they all cried.

The Jew saw that he was being laughed at, but did not lose heart. He strutted about, delighted with the false flattery that greeted him, and began to sing in that high, squeaky falsetto that one hears in every barrack room, ‘La, la, la, la.’ The tune was absurd, but it was the only song he was heard to sing during the whole of his imprisonment. When he made my acquaintance he assured me solemnly that it was the song, and the very air, that was sung by 600,000 Jews, small and great, when they crossed the Red Sea, and that every Israelite was ordered to sing it after a victory gained over an enemy.

Every Friday evening men came over from the other barracks expressly to see Isaiah Fomitch celebrate the Sabbath. He was so vain, so innocently conceited, that this general curiosity flattered him immensely. He covered the table in his little corner with a pedantic self-importance, opened a book, lighted two candles, muttered some mysterious words, and clothed himself in a kind of striped chasuble with sleeves, which he kept carefully stowed away at the bottom of his trunk. He fastened leather bracelets on his wrists, and finally attached to his forehead, by means of a ribbon, a little box, which looked like a horn starting from his head. Then he began to pray. He read in a drawling voice, shouted, spat, and threw himself about with wild fantastic gestures. All this was prescribed by the ceremonial of his religion. There was nothing ridiculous or even strange about it, except the vanity Isaiah Fomitch himself displayed as he performed his rites. He would suddenly cover his head with both hands, and begin to read with many sobs. His tears increased, and in his grief he almost laid his head with its little ark upon the book, howling all the while. But all at once he would break off in the middle of his lamentation, burst into a laugh, and recite with a nasal twang a hymn of triumph, as if he were overwhelmed by an excess of happiness.

‘Can’t understand it,’ the convicts would sometimes say to one another. One day I asked Isaiah Fomitch what these sobs signified, and why he passed so suddenly from despair to triumphant happiness. He was delighted at my questions, and at once explained. The sobs and tears, he told me, were provoked by the destruction of Jerusalem, and the law ordered every pious Jew to groan and strike his breast; but at the moment of his most acute grief he was suddenly to remember that a prophecy had foretold the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, and he was therefore to manifest overflowing joy by singing, laughing, and reciting his prayers with happiness expressed in voice and look. This sudden passage from one emotion to another pleased Isaiah Fomitch, and he expounded the ingenious prescription of his faith with the greatest satisfaction.

One evening, while he was at his prayers, the governor entered, followed by the officer of the guard and an escort of soldiers. The prisoners immediately lined up in front of their beds; Isaiah Fomitch alone continued to shriek and gesticulate. He knew that his form of worship was authorized and that no one might interrupt him, so that he ran no risk by howling in the presence of the governor. He liked to perform under the eyes of the chief.

The governor approached to within a few steps. Isaiah Fomitch turned round, and began to sing his hymn of triumph in the officer's face, gesticulating and drawling out certain syllables. When he came to the part where he had to assume an expresion of extreme happiness, he did so by blinking, laughing, and nodding his head in the governor's direction. The latter was at first much astonished; then he burst out laughing, shouted 'Idiot!' and went away, while the Jew continued to shriek. An hour later, when he had finished, I asked him what he would have done if the governor had been so wicked or so foolish as to lose his temper.

'What governor?' he said.

'The governor, man. Didn't you see him? He was only two steps from you, and watching you all the time.' But Isaiah Fomitch assured me in all seriousness that he had not seen the governor, for while he was saying his prayers he was in such a state of ecstasy that he neither saw nor heard anything that was taking place around him.

I can see Isaiah Fomitch wandering about the prison on Saturday endeavouring to do nothing, as the Law ordains every Jew. What improbable anecdotes he told me! Every time he returned from the synagogue he always brought me some news of St Petersburg and the most absurd rumours imaginable from his fellow Jews of the town, who were supposed to have it at first hand. But enough of Isaiah Fomitch.

There were only two public baths in the town. One, kept by a Jew, was divided into compartments, for which one paid fifty kopecks. It was frequented by the local aristocracy.

The other was old, dirty, and stuffy; it was for the use of the common people, and it was there that the convicts were taken. The air was cold and clear, the prisoners were delighted to leave the fortress and take a walk through the town. During that walk their laughter and jokes never ceased. A platoon of soldiers with loaded muskets accompanied us, which provided quite a sight for the townsfolk. On reaching our destination, we found the bath so small that we could not all enter at once. We were divided into two groups, one of which waited in the cold room while the other bathed in the hot one. But the room was so narrow that it was hard to understand how even half our number managed to pile in.

Petroff kept close to me; of his own accord he remained at my side without having been asked to do so, and offered to rub me down. Baklouchin, a convict in the special section, also offered me his services. I

remember him (he was known as the ‘Sapper’) as the gayest and most agreeable of all my companions. We had become intimate friends. Petroff helped me to undress, because I was generally a long time getting my things off, not being yet accustomed to the operation, and it was almost as cold in the dressing-room as out of doors.

It is very difficult for a convict who is still a novice to get his things off. He must first learn how to undo the leather straps with which his chains are fastened. These straps are buckled over the ankle, underneath the ring which encloses the leg. One pair of straps costs sixty kopecks, and each convict is obliged to buy himself a pair, for it would be impossible to walk without their assistance. The ring does not grip the leg too tightly. One can pass a finger between the iron and the flesh, but the ring chafes the ankle, and any convict who walks without leather straps for a single day will find his skin raw.

To remove the straps presents no serious difficulty. It is a different matter with the clothes. Taking off one’s trousers is in itself a most elaborate operation, and the same may be said of the shirt whenever it has to be changed. The first to give us lessons in this art was Koreneff, a former brigand chief who had once been condemned to be chained up for five years. The convicts are very skilful at the work, and manage it with ease.

I gave a few kopecks to Petroff to buy soap and a bunch of the twigs with which one rubs oneself down in the bath. Bits of soap were issued to the convicts, but they were no larger than two-kopeck pieces. The soap was sold in the dressing-room, as well as mead and cakes of white flour. Each convict received one pailful of boiling water according to an agreement between the proprietor of the bath and the prison authorities. Convicts who wished to make themselves thoroughly clean could for two kopecks buy a second pailful, which the proprietor handed through a window pierced in the wall for that purpose. As soon as I was undressed Petroff took me by the arm and remarked that I should find it difficult to walk with my chains.

‘Pull them up on to your calves,’ he said, holding me by the arms as if I were an old man. I was ashamed at his attention, and assured him that I could walk well enough by myself, but he did not believe me. He took the same care of me as one does of an awkward child. Petroff was no servant in any sense of the word; if I had offended him he would have known how to deal with me. I had promised him nothing for his assistance, nor had he asked me for anything. I wonder what inspired his extraordinary solicitude.

Imagine a room of twelve feet long and of equal width, in which a hundred men are crowded together; or say eighty, for we were in all two hundred divided into two sections. The steam blinded us; the sweat, the dirt, and lack of space were such that we could hardly find room to stand. I was frightened and wished to leave, but Petroff hastened to reassure me. With great difficulty we managed to climb on to the benches, by stepping over the heads of convicts whom we persuaded to bend down and let us pass. The benches, however, were already occupied, and Petroff informed me that I would have to buy a place. He at once entered into negotiation with the convict who was near the window, and for a kopeck this man consented to cede me his place. After receiving the money, which Petroff held tight in his hand, and with which he had wisely provided himself beforehand, the man crept into a dark and dirty corner just below me, where there was at least half an inch of filth. Even the places above the benches were occupied; the convicts swarmed everywhere. As for the floor there was not a place as large as the palm of the hand which was not occupied by the convicts. They tossed the water from their pails; those who were standing up poured it over themselves, and the dirty water, running down their bodies, fell on the shaved heads of those who were sitting down. Other convicts crowded on the upper bench and the steps leading to it. They washed themselves more thoroughly, but there were relatively few of them. The common people do not care to wash with soap and water; they prefer the horrible method of stewing and then douching themselves with cold water. Below I could see fifty bundles of twigs rising and falling; the holders were whipping themselves into a state akin to intoxication. The steam became thicker and thicker every minute, so that what one now felt was not a warm but a burning sensation, as from boiling pitch. The convicts shouted and howled to the accompaniment of the hundred chains shaking on the floor. Those who tried to move from one position to another got their chains mixed up with those of their neighbours, and knocked against the heads of the men who were lower down than they. There were volleys of abuse as those who fell dragged down those whose chains had become entangled in theirs. They were all in a state of frenzy, of wild exultation. Cries and shrieks were heard on all sides. There was much crowding and crushing at the window of the dressing-room through which the hot water was delivered, and a good deal was spilt on the heads of those seated on the floor before it reached its destination. We seemed to be quite free; but from time to time one could see

through the dressing-room or the open door the moustached face of a soldier with his musket at his feet, watching that no serious disorder took place.

The shaved heads of the convicts, and their red bodies, which the steam had turned to the colour of blood, seemed more monstrous than ever. On their backs stood out in striking relief the scars left by whips or rods-scars made long before, but so thoroughly that the flesh seemed to have been torn quite recently. Strange marks; a shudder passed through me at the mere sight of them. Again the volume of steam increased, and the bath-room was now covered with a thick, burning cloud, concealing movement, stifling cries. Through this cloud emerged torn backs, shaved heads, and, to complete the picture, Isaiah Fomitch howling with joy on the highest bench. He was saturating himself with steam. Any other man would have fainted away, but no temperature is too high for him; he engages the services of a rubber for a kopeck but after a few moments the latter is unable toi continue, throws away his bunch of twigs, and runs to douche himself with cold water. Isaiah Fomitch is undaunted, he quickly hires a second rubber, then a third; on these occasions he thinks nothing of expense, and changes his rubber four or five times. ‘He stews well, the gallant Isaiah Fomitch,’ cry the convicts from below. The Jew feels that he surpasses all the others, that he has beaten them; he triumphs with his hoarse falsetto voice, and sings out his favourite air, which rises above the general hubbub. It seemed to me that if ever we met in hell we should be reminded of this place. I could not help saying so to Petroff, who looked all round him but made no answer.

I wanted to buy him a place at my side on the bench, but he sat down at my feet and declared that he felt quite at ease. Baklouchin meanwhile had bought us some more hot water and offered to bring it to us as soon as we required it. Petroff offered to clean me from head to foot, and he begged me to go through the preliminary stewing process, but I could not bring myself to do so. At last he rubbed me all over with soap. I tried to make him understand that I could wash myself, but it was no use contradicting him and I let him have his way.

When he had finished he took me back to the dressing-room, holding me up and telling me at each step to take care, as if I had been made of porcelain. He helped me to dress, and when he had finished his kindly work he rushed back to the bath to have a good stew.

When we returned to the barracks I offered him a glass of tea, which he did not refuse. He drank it and thanked me. I wished to go to the expense of a glass of vodka in his honour, and I succeeded in obtaining some without difficulty. Petroff was exceedingly pleased. He swallowed his vodka with a murmur of satisfaction, declared that I had restored him to life, and then suddenly rushed to the kitchen as if the men who were talking there could decide nothing of importance without him.

And now another man came and chatted with me. This was Baklouchin, of whom I have already spoken and whom I had also invited to take tea.

I never knew a man of a more agreeable disposition than Baklouchin. It must be admitted that he never forgave a wrong, and that he often became involved in disputes. Above all, he could not tolerate others meddling in his affairs. He knew, in a word, how to take care of himself; but his quarrels never lasted long, and I believe he was generally liked. Wherever he went he was well received, and even in the town he was looked upon as the most amusing man in the world. He was a man of lofty stature, thirty years old, with a frank, determined countenance, and rather good-looking with his tuft of hair on his chin. He possessed the art of changing his expression to imitate the first person he happened to see, so that he kept his fellow prisoners in fits of laughter. He was a professed joker, but never allowed himself to be slighted by those who did not enjoy his fun. Accordingly, no one ever spoke disparagingly of him. He was full of life and high-spirited. Baklouchin made my acquaintance at the very beginning of my imprisonment, and told me of his military career as a sapper in the Engineers, to whom he had been posted through the influence of friends. He asked me a number of questions about St Petersburg, and even read books when he came to tea with me. He amused the whole company by describing how roughly Lieutenant Khad that morning handled the governor. He told me, moreover, with a satisfied air, as he took his seat by my side, that we should probably have a theatrical performance in the prison. The convicts proposed to stage a play during the Christmas holiday. Suitable actors were found and little by little the scenery was prepared. Some persons in the town had promised to lend women’s clothes for the performance, and hopes were even entertained of obtaining, through the medium of an officer’s servant, a uniform with epaulettes, provided the governor did not decide to forbid the performance, as he had done last year. On that occasion he was disgruntled through having lost at cards; he had been annoyed by something

that had occurred in the prison, and in a fit of ill humour had forbidden the performance. It was possible, however, that this year he would allow it. Baklouchin was in a state of exultation. It was clear that he would be one of the principal supporters of the show. I made up my mind to be present at the performance. The ingenuous joy which Baklouchin manifested when he spoke of the undertaking was quite touching, and from vague hints we gradually proceeded to discuss his past quite openly. He told me, among other things, that he had not served only at St Petersburg; he had been sent to R with the rank of non-commissioned officer in a garrison battalion.

‘ From there they sent me on here,’ he added.

‘What for?’ I asked him.

‘What for? You’d never guess, Alexander Petrovitch. Because I was in love.’

‘Come, now. A man is not exiled for that,’ I said with a laugh.

‘I should have added,’ continued Baklouchin, ‘that it led me to shoot a German. Was it fair to condemn me to hard labour for killing a German? Just think.’

‘How did it happen? Tell me the story. It must be a strange one.’

‘An amusing story indeed, Alexander Petrovitch.’

‘ So much the better. Tell me.’

‘You wish me to? Well, then, listen.’

And he told me the story of his crime. It was not amusing, but it was certainly strange.

‘This is how it happened,’ began Baklouchin. ‘I had been sent to Riga, a fine, handsome city, which has only one fault -there are too many Germans there. I was still a young man, and was respected by my officers. I wore my cap at a jaunty angle and led a most agreeable life and made love to the German girls, one of whom, named Luisa, pleased me very much. She and her aunt were dressers of fine linen. The old woman was a real caricature, but she had money. At first I used merely to pass under the young lady’s window; but I soon made her acquaintance. Luisa spoke Russian well enough, though with a slight accent. She was charming; I never saw anyone like her. I was most pressing in my advances, but she only replied that she would preserve her innocence, that as a wife she might prove worthy of me. She was an affectionate, smiling girl, and wonderfully neat. In fact, I can assure you that I never met anyone like her. She herself had suggested that I should marry her, and how could I do otherwise? One day she failed to keep

an appointment. It happened a second and a third time. I wrote her a letter, but she did not reply. “ What’s to be done?” I asked myself. If she had been deceiving me she could easily have done so once more; she could have answered my letter and kept the appointment; but she was incapable of falsehood. She had simply jilted me. “This is her aunt’s work,” I said to myself. I was afraid to call on her.

‘Although she recognized our engagement, she acted as if she were ignorant of it. I wrote a fine letter and told her: “If you don’t come, I will come to your aunt’s for you.” She was afraid and came. Then she began to weep, and told me that a rich, middle-aged German named Schultz, a distant relation of theirs, a clockmaker by trade, had expressed a wish to marry her, in order to make her happy, as he said, and that he himself might not find himself without a wife in his old age. He had loved her for a long time, so she told me, and had been nourishing this idea for years; but he had kept it a secret, and had never ventured to speak out. “You see, Sasha,” she said to me, “it’s a question of happiness. He’s rich. Surely you wouldn’t prevent my happiness.” I looked her in the face; she wept, embraced me, clasped me in her arms.

‘“Well, she’s quite right,” I said to myself, “what good is there in marrying a soldier-even a non-commissioned officer? So farewell, Luisa. God protect you. I have no right to stand in the way of your happiness.”

‘“What sort of fellow is he?” I asked. “Good-looking?” ‘“No, he’s old, and has ever such a long nose.” ‘ She burst into a fit of laughter. I left her. It was just my luck. She had told me where Schultz lived, and next day I passed his shop. I looked through the window and saw a German mending a watch. He was forty-five years of age, with aquiline nose, protruding eyes, and a dress-coat with a very high collar. I spat with contempt as I watched him. At that moment I could gladly have broken the shop window, but “What’s the use?” I asked myself. “There’s nothing more to be done; it’s over, all over.” I returned to barracks as darkness fell, lay down on my bed, and-will you believe it, Alexander Petrovitch?-began to sob-yes, to sob. One day passed, then a second, then a third. I saw Luisa no more. I had learned, however, from an old woman (she too was a washerwoman, and the girl I loved used sometimes to visit her) that this German knew of our relations, and had therefore made up his mind to marry her as soon as possible, otherwise he would have waited two years longer. He had made Luisa swear that she would see me no more. It appeared that on account of

me he had refused to loosen his purse-strings, and was keeping Luisa and her aunt very short of money. He might yet change his mind, for he was not very resolute. The old woman told me that he had invited them to take coffee with him the next day, Sunday, and that another relation, a former shopkeeper, now very poor, and an assistant in some liquor store, would also be there. When I realized that the business was to be settled on Sunday, I was so furious that I could not regain my equanimity, and the following day I did nothing but reflect. I believe I could have devoured that German. By Sunday morning I had still come to no decision. Immediately after mass I ran out, put on my greatcoat, and went to the German's house. I thought I should find them all there. Why I went to the German, and what I meant to say to him, I had no idea.

' I slipped a pistol into my pocket to be ready for everything -a little pistol that was not worth a curse, with an old-fashioned lock-a thing I had used as a boy, and which was really quite useless. I loaded it, however, because I thought they would try to kick me out and that the German would insult me. In that case I would pull out my pistol and scare them. When I arrived there was no one on the staircase; they were all in the workroom. The one servant-girl who waited upon them was absent. I walked through the shop and saw that the door was closed-an old door fastened from the inside. My heart beat; I stopped and listened. They were speaking German. I kicked the door open and looked around. The table was laid; on it stood a large coffee-pot with a spirit-lamp underneath, and a plate of biscuits. Standing on a tray there was a small decanter of brandy with some herrings, sausages, and a bottle of wine. Luisa and her aunt, both in their Sunday best, were seated on a sofa. Opposite them the German sprawled in his chair, dressed like a bridegroom in his high-collared coat and his hair carefully combed. On the other side there was another German, old, fat, and grey, but he took no part in the conversation. When I entered, Luisa turned very pale. The aunt jumped up and sat down again. The German became angry. What a rage he was in! He rose, and, walking towards me, said:

"'What do you want?"

'I should have lost my self-possession if anger had not supported me.

'"What do I want? Is this the way to receive a guest? Why don't you offer me a drink? I've come to pay you a visit."

'The German reflected a moment, and then said: "Sit down."

‘I sat down.

‘“Here’s some vodka. Do help yourself.”

‘“And let it be good,” I cried, my anger rising.

‘“It is good.”

‘ I was enraged to see him looking me up and down. The most frightful part of it was that Luisa was looking on. I took a drink and said to him:

‘“Look here, German, why be rude to me? Let’s get better acquainted. I’ve come to see you as friends.”

‘“I cannot be your friend,” he replied. “You are a private soldier.’

‘Then I lost control of myself.

‘“You damned German! You sausage-seller! You’re completely in my power. Look here; do you wish me to break your head with this?”

‘ I drew out my pistol, got up, and struck him on the forehead. The women were more dead than alive; they were afraid to breathe. The elder of the two men, quite white, was trembling like a leaf.

‘The German seemed much astonished. But he soon recovered himself.

‘“I am not afraid of you,” he said, “and I beg of you, as a well-bred man, to make an end of this pleasantry. I am not afraid of you!”

‘“You *are* afraid! You dare not move while this pistol is pointed at you.”

‘“You dare not do such a thing!” he cried.

‘“And why should I not dare?”

‘“Because you would be severely punished.”

‘May the devil take that idiot of a German! If he had not goaded me he would have been alive to-day.

‘“So you think I dare not?”

‘“No.”

‘“I dare not, you think?”

‘“You would not dare!”

‘“Wouldn’t I, sausage-maker?” I fired the pistol, and he sank down in his chair. The others screamed. I put the pistol in my pocket, but on returning to the fortress I threw it among some weeds near the principal entrace.

‘I lay on my bed and thought: “I shall soon be arrested.” An hour passed, then another, but no one came for me.

‘Towards evening I felt so sad that I went out intending to see Luisa at all costs. I passed by the clockmaker’s house; there were a number of people there, including the police. I ran on to the old woman’s and said:

‘“Call Luisa!”

‘I had only a moment to wait. She came immediately, and threw herself on my neck in tears.

‘“It is my fault,” she said. “I should not have listened to my aunt.”

‘She then told me that her aunt had returned home immediately after the assassination. She was in such a fright that she collapsed without speaking a word; she had said nothing. On the contrary, she had ordered her niece to be as silent as herself.

‘“No one has seen her since,” said Luisa.

‘The clockmaker had previously sent his servant away: he was afraid of her, for she was jealous, and would have scratched his eyes out had she known that he intended to get married.

‘There were no workmen in the house; he had sent them all away. He had himself prepared the coffee and collation. As for the relative, he had scarcely spoken a word all his life: he took his hat and departed without opening his mouth.

‘“He is quite sure to be silent,” added Luisa.

‘ So, indeed, he was. For two weeks I was neither arrested nor even suspected.

‘You needn’t believe me if you don’t wish, Alexander Petrovitch.

‘Those two weeks were the happiest in my life. I saw Luisa every day. And how devoted she had become!

‘ She said to me through her tears: “ If you are exiled, I will go with you. I will leave everything to follow you.”

‘ I thought of making away with myself, so much had she moved me; but at the end of the fortnight I was arrested. The old man and the aunt had agreed to denounce me.’

‘But Baklouchin,’ I interrupted, ‘for that they would only have given you ten to twelve years’ hard labour, and in the civil section; yet you are in the special section. How is that?’

‘That’s another matter,’ said Baklouchin. ‘When I appeared before the court martial the captain appointed to conduct the case began by insulting me, and calling me names before the tribunal. I could not stand it, and shouted: “Why do you insult me? Don’t you see, you scoundrel, that you’re only looking at yourself in the glass?”

‘This resulted in a second charge against me. I was tried a second time, and for the two crimes was condemned to four thousand strokes and the special section. As I was led out to receive my punishment in “ Green

Street, “ that captain left. He had been degraded from his rank, and was dispatched to the Caucasus as a private soldier. Good-bye, Alexander Petrovitch. Don’t fail to come to our performance.’

CHAPTER XI

THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

The holidays were approaching. On the eve of the great day only a few convicts went to work. Those who had beer assigned to the tailors' shop, and a few others, did so as usual, but they returned almost immediately, separately or in groups. There was no work at all after dinner. From early morning the majority were occupied with their own affairs, not with those of the administration. Some were arranging to bring in spirits, while others sought permission to visit their friends or to collect small accounts due to them for services rendered. Baklouchin and others who were to take part in the theatrical performance were trying to persuade some of their acquaintance, mostly officers' servants, to procure for them the necessary costumes. Some bustled about with a businesslike air simply because others were genuinely occupied. They had no money to collect, and yet seemed to expect payment. Everyone, in short, seemed to be looking for some kind of change. Towards evening the guards, who executed the convicts' commissions, brought them all kinds of victuals-meat, sucking-pigs, and geese. Many of the simplest and least extravagant fellows, who had saved their kopecks for a whole year, decided to spend something on that day, and to celebrate Christmas Eve in a worthy manner. Christmas Day itself was an even greater festival, their right to celebrate which was recognized by the regulations. Prisoners could not be sent to work on that day, and there were not three occasions like it in all the year.

What memories, too, must have troubled the souls of those reprobates at the approach of so solemn a festival! The common people always retain their childhood memories of Christmas, and these men must have recalled with anguish the days when work was laid aside and they rested in the bosom of the family. There was something impressive about the convicts' respect for Christmas. There were few cases of drunkenness; nearly everyone was serious, and even preoccupied, though there was little enough to do. Even those who did themselves really well were quieter than usual; laughter seemed out of place. A sort of intolerant susceptibility reigned throughout the prison, and if anyone interfered, even accidentally,

with the general repose, he was quickly reminded of the fact with shouts of abuse. He was condemned as though he lacked respect to the festival itself.

This attitude was as touching as it was remarkable. Apart from the innate veneration they have for the feast, they feel that by observing it they enter into communion with the rest of mankind; that they are not altogether reprobates, lost and cast off by society. The rejoicings that took place in prison were the same as those outside. That was the general feeling: I saw it, and experienced it myself.

Akim Akimitch had made great preparations for the festival. He had no memories of family life, being an orphan, born in a strange house, and sent into the army at the age of fifteen. He could never have experienced any profound joy, having always and everywhere lived in the dread of infringing regulations. Nor was he very religious; for his acquired formality had stifled in him all human feeling, all passion and prejudice, good or evil. He therefore prepared to spend Christmas without undue excitement. He was saddened by no painful and fruitless recollection. He did everything with the punctuality required in the execution of his duty, in order to get through the ceremony as quickly as was compatible with decorum. Moreover, he did not trouble to reflect upon the significance of the day; he had never given it a thought, even punctiliously while he fulfilled his religious duties. Had he been ordered next day to do the opposite of what he had done the previous evening, he would have shown himself no less submissive. Once, and once only in his life he had followed his own will- and had been sent to hard labour in consequence.

This lesson had not been lost upon him, though fate had ordained that he should never understand his fault. He had yet learned the salutary moral principle, that he must never reason about anything because his mind was not equal to the task of forming a judgment. Blindly devoted to ceremonies, he looked with respect at the sucking-pig which he had stuffed with millet-seed, and which he had roasted himself (for he had some culinary skill), just as if it had been no ordinary sucking-pig which could have been bought and roasted at any time, but a particular kind of animal born specially for Christmas Day. Perhaps he had been accustomed from earliest years to see a sucking-pig served up on that day, and concluded that a sucking-pig was indispensable for the proper celebration of the festival. I am certain that if through some mischance he had failed to eat that particular dish on that particular day, he would have been troubled all his life with remorse for

having failed in his duty. Until Christmas morning he wore his old vest and his old trousers, which had long been threadbare. I then learned that he kept carefully in his box some new clothes which had been given to him four months before; he had not worn them before, as he wished to do so for the first time on Christmas Day. It was perfectly true. On the previous evening he took the new clothes out of his trunk, unfolded, examined, and cleaned them; then he blew on them to remove the dust, and being convinced that they were in good order, probably tried them on. They suited him admirably, and all the garments matched. The coat buttoned up to the neck; the collar, straight and stiff like cardboard, kept his chin in place. There was a military cut about those clothes, and Akim Akimitch smiled with satisfaction, turning himself round and round, not without swagger, before a little mirror adorned with a gilt border.

One of the buttons alone seemed out of place. Akim Akimitch noticed it, and at once made the necessary alteration. He tried on the coat once more and found it irreproachable. Then he folded everything up as before, and with a satisfied mind locked them up in his box until the following day. His head was well shaved, but after careful examination he decided that it was not good enough; his hair had grown imperceptibly. Accordingly he hurried off to his barber. In point of fact no one would have dreamed of looking at him on Christmas morning, but he was acting conscientiously so as to do his duty. This care lest the smallest button, the least thread of an epaulette, the slightest string of a tassel should be out of place was engraved upon his mind as an imperious obligation. He looked upon it as the reflection of perfect order. As one of the ‘old hands’ he made himself responsible for seeing that hay was brought and strewed on our barrack floor, as was done in the other buildings. I do not know why, but hay was always strewed on the ground at Christmas time.

As soon as Akim Akimitch had finished his work he said his prayers, lay down on his bed, and went to sleep. He slept like a child, determined to wake up as early as possible next day. The other convicts did the same; in fact they retired much earlier than usual. No one plied his customary evening task; and as for playing cards, no one would have dared even to mention such a thing. All looked forward anxiously to the morning.

At last that morning arrived. At an early hour, even before it was light, the drum beat, and the under-officer whose duty it was to count the prisoners wished them a happy Christmas. They returned his greeting in a

cheerful and friendly manner. Akim Akimitch, and many others who had their geese and sucking-pigs, went to the kitchen, after saying their prayers in a hurried manner, to see where their victuals were and how they were being cooked.

Through the little windows of our barrack-room, obscured by snow and ice, we could see flaring the bright light from the two kitchens where six stoves had been lighted. Across the courtyard, which was still plunged in darkness, convicts, each with a half pelisse round his shoulders or perhaps fully dressed, hurried towards the kitchens. A very few had already visited the drink-sellers. They were the impatient ones, but they were quite well behaved; better, perhaps, than on ordinary days. There was no quarrelling or abuse; all realized that this was a great festival. Some even went to visit other barracks in order to wish the inmates a happy Christmas, for a sort of friendship seemed to exist between them all. I should mention in passing that anything like close friendship is almost unknown in convict establishments. It was very rare to see a man on confidential terms with another as in the world outside. We were generally harsh and abrupt towards one another. With some rare exceptions that was the general tone purposely adopted and rigidly maintained.

I went outside with the others. Day was breaking, the stars were paling; a light, cold mist was rising from the earth, and spirals of smoke were ascending from the chimneys. Several convicts whom I met smiled and wished me a happy Christmas. I thanked them and returned their wishes. Some of them had never spoken to me before.

On my way to the kitchen a prisoner from the military barracks, with his sheepskin on his shoulder, recognized me, and called out from the middle of the courtyard, ‘Alexander Petrovitch!’ He ran towards me and I waited for him. He was a young fellow, with a round face and soft eyes, and not at all communicative as a rule. He had not spoken to me since my arrival, and appeared never even to have noticed me. As for me, I did not know so much as his name. He came up and stood before me, smiling with a vacuous but none the less a happy expression.

‘What do you want?’ I asked, not without surprise.

He remained standing there, still smiling and staring, but without replying to my question.

‘Why, it’s Christmas Day,’ he muttered.

He discovered that he had nothing more to say, and hurried away to the kitchen.

Incidentally, we scarcely ever met again, and he never afterwards spoke another word to me.

Around the flaming kitchen stoves the convicts pushed and jostled. Everyone was watching his own property. The cooks were preparing dinner, which was to be served a little earlier than usual. No one began eating before the appointed time, though a good many would have liked to do so; but one had to behave properly in company! We were waiting for the priest, and the fast preceding Christmas would not be over until he arrived.

It was not quite light when the corporal, standing just inside the main gate, shouted:

‘Kitchens!’

This call was repeated at intervals for about two hours. The cooks were wanted in order to receive gifts brought from all parts of the town in enormous numbers: loaves of white bread, scones, rusks, pancakes, and pastry of various kinds. I do not think there was a shopkeeper in the whole town who did not send something to the Unfortunates. Some of these gifts were magnificent, and included a good many cakes of the finest flour. Others were very humble, such as rolls worth two kopecks apiece, and a couple of brown loaves covered lightly with sour cream. These were offerings from the poor to the poor, who had in many cases spent their last kopeck to procure them.

All these gifts were accepted with equal gratitude, without reference to the value or to the giver. When a convict received anything he took off his cap and thanked the donor with a low bow wishing him a happy Christmas, and then carried his present to the kitchen.

As soon as a number of loaves and cakes had been collected, the senior men of each barrack assembled and distributed the heap in equal portions among all the various sections. The distribution excited neither envy nor protest: it was made honestly and equitably. Akim Akimitch, with the help of another prisoner, distributed the share allotted to our barrack, and gave to each his due. All were satisfied: no objection was made by anyone, there was not the smallest sign of envy, and no one dreamed of deceiving his neighbour.

When Akim Akimitch had finished in the kitchen he proceeded with the solemn rite of dressing. He fastened his coat punctiliously, button by button,

and thus arrayed he began his prayers, which lasted for a considerable time. The numerous convicts who fulfilled their religious duties were for the most part old men. The younger men scarcely ever prayed; at best they made the sign of the cross on rising from table, and then only on festival days.

When he had finished praying, Akim Akimitch came and offered me the usual good wishes. I invited him to take tea, and he returned the compliment by offering me some of his sucking-pig. Later Petroff came and wished me a happy Christmas. I think he had been drinking, for although he seemed to have much to say, he scarcely uttered a word. He stood there for some moments, and then went back to the kitchen. The priest was now expected in the military section. Their barrack was arranged differently from the rest. Bedsteads stood against the walls, and not in the middle of the room. The idea was probably to facilitate the parading of convicts in an emergency.

A small table had been prepared in the middle of the room; on it stood an ikon before which burned a little lamp. At last the priest arrived with the cross and holy water. He prayed and chanted before the ikon, and then turned towards the convicts, who came and kissed the crucifix one after another. The priest then walked through each barrack, sprinkling it with holy water. When he entered the kitchen he remarked on the excellence of prison bread, which had, indeed, quite a reputation in town. The convicts at once volunteered to send him a couple of fresh loaves straight from the oven, and a soldier was detailed to take them to his house forthwith. The convicts escorted the cross on its return journey with the same respect as that with which they had received it.

Very soon afterwards, the governor and deputy governor arrived. The deputy was liked, and even respected. He accompanied his chief on a tour of inspection, wished the convicts a happy Christmas, and then went into the kitchen where he tasted the cabbage soup. It was excellent that day; each convict was entitled to nearly a pound of meat in addition to which there was millet-seed, and the butter had certainly not been spared. The governor saw his deputy to the door, and then ordered the convicts to start dinner. Each man tried to avoid his notice; they hated his spiteful, inquisitorial look from behind his spectacles as he strode up and down, apparently looking for some disorder to repress, some crime to punish.

We dined. Akim Akimitch’s sucking-pig was admirably roasted. I could never understand how it was that within five minutes of the governor’s

departure the room was full of drunken men, all of whom had appeared stone-cold sober as long as he remained. Ruddy, radiant faces were now everywhere, and balalaiki (Russian banjoes) were soon produced. Next came the little Polish fiddler whom some convivial fellow had engaged for the day to play lively dance-tunes. The conversation became more animated and more noisy, but dinner ended without serious trouble. Everyone had had enough, and some of the older, more serious-minded convicts went straight to bed. So did Akim Akimitch, who probably thought it his duty to sleep after dinner on festival days.

The Old Believer from Starodoub took forty winks and then climbed on to the stove, where he opened his book and continued to pray until late in the evening. He declared himself shocked at the sight of so shameless an orgy. All the Cir-cassions left the table. They looked with curiosity, but with a touch of disgust, at this drunken crowd. I met Nourra.

‘Aman, aman,’ he said, with a burst of honest indignation, and shaking his head. ‘What an offence to Allah!’ Isaiah Fomitch with an arrogant and obstinate air lit a candle in his favourite corner, and set to work in order to show that in his eyes this was no holiday. Here and there card parties were arranged. The players were not worried about the soldiers, but men were placed on the look-out in case the officer of the guard came along. He, however, was careful to turn a blind eye to what was going on. He made altogether three rounds: the prisoners, if they were drunk, promptly hid themselves, and the cards disappeared in the twinkling of an eye. I believe he had resolved to overlook minor breaches of regulations, for drunkenness was not treated as an offence that day. Little by little everyone became more or less gay. There were occasional quarrels, but the majority of prisoners remained calm, amusing themselves with the spectacle of their drunken companions, some of whom had put away enormous quantities of liquor.

Gazin was triumphant. He strutted about with a self-satisfied air by the side of his bed, underneath which he had hidden a store of vodka. Until Christmas Day he had kept it concealed in the snow behind our barrack-room. He smiled knowingly when he saw customers arrive in crowds. He was perfectly sober; indeed he had drunk nothing at all, for he intended to regale himself on the last day of the holidays after he had emptied everyone else’s pocket. The prison was becoming an inferno of drunkenness. Singing was heard, and songs gradually gave way to tears. Some of the prisoners walked about in bands, sheepskins on shoulders, proudly plucking the

strings of their balalaiki. A chorus of from eight to ten men had been formed in the special section; the singing here was excellent, with its accompaniment of balalaiki and guitars.

Songs of a truly popular kind were rare. I remember one which was admirably sung:

Yesterday I, a young girl, Went to the feast.

A variation hitherto unknown to me was introduced, and at the end of the song the following lines were added:

At my house, the house of a young girl,
Everything is in order.
I have washed the spoons,
I have turned out the cabbage-soup.
I have wiped down the panels of the door,
I have cooked the patties.

But for the most part they sang prison songs, one of them called ‘ As it happened,’ which was most amusing. It told how a man amused himself and lived like a prince until he was sent to prison, where he fared very differently. Another very popular number explained how the hero had once owned capital, but now possessed nothing but captivity. Here is a true convict song:

The day breaks in the heavens,
We are waked up by the drum.
The old man opens the door,
The warder comes and calls us.
No one sees us behind the prison walls,
Nor how we live in this place.
But God, the Heavenly Creator, is with us.
He will not let us perish.

Another, still more melancholy but set to glorious music, was spoiled by its tame and inaccurate wording. I can remember a few of the verses:

My eyes no more will see the land,
Where I was born;
To suffer torments undeserved,
Will be my punishment.
The owl will shriek upon the roof,
And raise the echoes of the forest.
My heart is broken down with grief.

No, never more shall I return.

This is a favourite solo piece, and is seldom sung in chorus. When the day's work is done, a prisoner will go outside, squat on the doorstep, and meditate with his chin in his hand. Presently he begins to drawl a song in high falsetto. We listen, and the effect is heart-rending. Some of the men had beautiful voices.

Dusk was closing in. Wearisomeness and general depression were making themselves felt after drunkenness and debauchery. One fellow, who an hour beforehand was holding his sides with laughter, now sat in a corner maudlin drunk; others fought or tottered about the barracks, pale, very pale, and looking for someone with whom to quarrel. The poor creatures had meant to spend a merry Christmas, but for most of them it had proved an unhappy day. They had looked vaguely for a joy that was beyond their reach. For instance, on the two occasions that I ran across Petroff he was sober enough, having drunk next to nothing. Yet right up to the last he was expecting something extraordinary to happen. He did not say so, but you could read it in his eyes. He ran tirelessly from one barrack to another, but found nothing but general intoxication, the meaningless abuse of drunken men, and the giddiness of overheated brains.

Sirotkin too wandered about the barracks, dressed in a brand new red shirt and good-looking as ever. He too was on the watch for something to happen. The spectacle was most unpleasant; indeed, it became quite nauseating. There were some amusing incidents, but I was too sad to be entertained. I felt a deep pity for all these men, whose company seemed to strangle, stifle me. Here are two convicts disputing as to which of them should treat the other. The argument lasts long; they have almost come to blows. One of them has for long borne a grudge against the other. Stammering with indignation, he tries to prove his companion acted dishonestly a year before by selling a pelisse for him and keeping back the money. Nor is this the end of it. The complainant is a tall, well-developed young fellow, quiet, by no means stupid, but who, when drunk, wishes to make friends with everyone and to pour out his grief. He insults his adversary for the sake of the reconciliation that he hopes will follow. The other man, a big, massive person with a round face and as cunning as a fox, has perhaps drunk more than his companion, but he appears only slightly intoxicated. He is supposed to be rich and may therefore be presumed to

have no ulterior motive in irritating his companion, whom he accordingly leads to one of the drink-sellers. The other fellow declares that his companion owes him money in any case, and is therefore bound to stand him a drink ‘ if he has any pretensions to be considered an honest man.’

The drink-seller, not without respect for the customer and a touch of contempt for his argumentative friend who was going to drink at someone else’s expense, took a glass and filled it with vodka.

‘No, Stepka, you’ll have to pay; after all, you owe me money.’

‘ I won’t tire my tongue talking to you any longer,’ replied Stepka.

‘ No, Stepka, you lie,’ continued his friend, seizing the glass offered by the drink-seller. ‘You owe me money, you can’t have any conscience. You haven’t a thing on you that’s not borrowed, I don’t believe your very eyes are your own. In fact, Stepka, you’re a blackguard.’

‘What are you whining about? Look, you’re spilling your vodka.’

‘Since you’re being treated, why don’t you drink up?’ cries the drink-seller to the argumentative friend. ‘I can’t wait here all night.’

‘I’ll drink up, don’t you fear. What are you worrying about? My best wishes for the day. My best wishes for the day, Stepka Doroveitch,’ and he bows, glass in hand, towards Stepka whom a moment ago he called a blackguard. ‘Good health to you, and may you live another hundred years.’ He drinks, gives a grunt of satisfaction, and wipes his mouth. ‘What a lot of brandy I’ve drunk,’ he says, gravely speaking to everyone but without addressing anyone in particular, ‘ but I’ve finished now. Say thank you, Stepka Doroveitch.’

‘ There’s nothing to thank you for.’

‘Ah! you won’t thank me. Then I’ll tell everyone what you did to me, and that you’re a scoundrel.’

‘Then I shall have something to tell you, you drunkard,’ interrupts Stepka, who at last loses patience. ‘Listen to me now. Let us divide the world in two. You shall take one half, I the other. Then I shall have peace.’

‘Then you’ll not give me back my money?’

‘What money, you drunken sot?’

‘My money that I earned with the sweat of my brow and the labour of my hands. You’ll be sorry for it in the next world. You’ll be roasted for those five kopecks.’

‘Go to the devil.’

‘What are you driving me for? Am I a horse?’

‘Be off, be off.’

‘Blackguard!’

‘ Convict!’

And the insults exchanged were worse than they had been before the visit to the drink-seller.

Another couple of friends are seated, each on his own bed. One is tall, vigorous, fleshy, with a red face-a regular butcher. He is on the verge of weeping, for he has been deeply moved. The other is tall, thin, conceited, with an immense nose which always seems to have a cold, and little blue eyes fixed upon the ground. He is a clever, well-bred man, and was formerly a secretary. He treats his friend with a trace of contempt which the latter cannot endure. They have been drinking together all day.

‘You’ve taken a liberty with me,’ cried the stout one, shaking his companion’s head with his left hand. To take a liberty means, in prison slang, to strike. This convict, formerly a non-commissioned officer, secretly envies his neighbour’s elegance, and endeavours to make up for his material grossness by refined conversation.

‘ I tell you, you are wrong,’ says the secretary, in a dogmatic tone, with his eyes obstinately fixed on the ground, and without looking at his companion.

‘You struck me. Do you hear?’ continued the other, still shaking his dear friend. ‘You’re the only man in the world I care for, but you shan’t take a liberty with me.’

‘Confess, my dear fellow,’ replies the secretary, ‘that all this is the result of too much drink.’

The corpulent friend staggers backward, peers drunkenly at the secretary, whom he suddenly hits with all his strength right between the eyes. Thus terminates the day’s friendship. The victim disappears unconscious beneath the bedstead.

An acquaintance of mine now entered the room. He belonged to the special section and was a very good-natured,; gay fellow, far from stupid, and jocular without malice. He was the man who, on my arrival at the prison, was looking out for a rich peasant, the man who spoke so much of his self-respect and ended by drinking my tea. He was forty years old, had enormous lips, and a fat, fleshy, red nose. He held a balalaika, and idly plucked its strings. He was followed by a little convict with a large head, whom I knew very little and to whom no one paid any attention. Now that

he was drunk he had attached himself to Vermaloff and followed him about like his shadow, at the same time gesticulating and striking the wall and bedsteads. He was almost in tears. Vermaloff took as much notice of him as if he had not existed. The most curious fact was that these two men had absolutely nothing in common; they were utterly different in outlook and occupation. They belonged to different sections, and lived in separate barracks. The little fellow's name was Bulkin.

Vermaloff smiled when he saw me seated by the stove. He stopped at some distance from me, reflected for a moment, tottered, and then came towards me with an affected swagger. Then he swept the strings of his instrument and sang, or rather recited, beating time with the toe of his boot:

My darling!
With her full, fair face,
Sings like a nightingale;
In her satin dress,
With its brilliant trimming,
She is very fair.

This song roused Bulkin to an extraordinary pitch of excitement. He waved his arms, and shouted for the benefit of all and sundry: 'He lies, my friends; he lies like a quack doctor. There is not a shadow of truth in what he sings!'

'My respects to the venerable Alexander Petrovitch,' said Vermaloff, looking at me with a knowing smile. I fancied he was even going to embrace me. He was drunk. That expression, 'My respects to the venerable So-and-so,' is used by the common people throughout Siberia, and may refer even to a young man of twenty. To call a man 'old' is a sign of respect, and may amount even to flattery.

'Well, Vermaloff, how are you?' I replied.

'So, so. Nothing to boast of. Those who really enjoy the holiday have been drinking since early morning…'

The rest of the sentence was inaudible.

'He lies; he lies again,' said Bulkin, striking the beds as if in despair.

Still Vermaloff ignored him, so deliberately that he might have sworn on oath to do so. That was really the most comic thing about it, for Bulkin had not quitted his side the whole day, finding fault with every word he spoke, wringing his hands, and striking his fists against the wall and the beds till he made them bleed, he suffered visibly from his conviction that Vermaloff

‘lied like a quack doctor.’ If Bulkin had had any hair on his head he would certainly have torn it out in a fury of disappointment. One might have thought he had assumed responsibility for Vermaloff’s behaviour, and that all Vermaloff’s faults troubled his conscience. The amusing part of it was that Vermaloff continued as before.

‘He lies! He lies! He lies!’ cried Bulkin.

‘What can it matter to you?’ replied the convicts, with a laugh.

‘I must tell you, Alexander Petrovitch, that I was very good-looking when I was a young man, and the young girls were very fond of me,’ said Vermaloff suddenly.

‘ He lies! He lies! ‘ interrupted Bulkin with a groan. The convicts burst out laughing.

‘And I dressed to kill, too: red shirt and broad trousers of cotton velvet. I was happy in those days. I got up when I liked and did whatever I pleased. In fact’

‘He lies,’ declared Bulkin.

‘ I inherited from my father a house built of stone and two storeys high. Within two years I had spent both storeys; nothing remained to me but the street door. But what of it? Money comes and goes like a bird.’

‘He lies!’ declared Bulkin, more resolutely than before.

‘When I had spent all my money I wrote and asked my relations for more. They considered that I had defied them and been disrespectful. It is now seven years since I posted that letter.’

‘Any answer?’ I asked, with a smile.

‘No,’ he replied, also laughing and thrusting his face close to mine.

He then informed me that he had a sweetheart.

‘You a sweetheart?’

‘Onufrield said to me the other day: “My girl’s marked with small-pox-ugly as hell; but she has plenty of dresses. Yours may be pretty, but she’s a beggar.”’

‘Is that so?’

‘ Certainly, she is a beggar,’ he answered.

He roared with laughter, and everyone joined in, for they all knew he had a liaison with a beggar woman, to whom he gave ten kopecks every six months.

‘Well, what do you want with me?’ I asked, wishing now to get rid of him.

He remained silent, and then, looking at me in a most insinuating manner, said:

‘Couldn’t you let me have enough to buy half a pint? I’ve drunk nothing but tea the whole day,’ he added, taking the money I offered him, ‘and tea doesn’t agree with me, I’m afraid of becoming asthmatic. Besides, it gives me wind.’

When Bulkin saw him accept the money, his indignation knew no bounds. He gesticulated like a man possessed.

‘Good people all,’ he cried, ‘the man lies. Everything he says-it’s all a lie.’

‘What’s that to do with you?’ the convicts shouted, astonished at his behaviour. ‘You’re possessed.’

‘I will not allow him to he,’ continued Bulkin, rolling his eyes, and striking his fist with energy on the bed-boards. ‘He shall not lie.’

There was more laughter. Vermaloff had obtained what he wanted; he bowed and ran off grimacing to the drink seller. Then only did he notice Bulkin.

‘ Come! ‘ he said, as if Bulkin were indispensable for the execution of some design. ‘ Idiot! ‘ he added contemptuously as his companion passed before him.

Enough of this tumultuous scene, which was soon over.

The convicts turned in and slept heavily, talking and raving in their sleep more than on other nights. A few continued playing cards. The festival looked forward to with such impatience was now over, and to-morrow the daily round, the hard labour, would begin again.

CHAPTER XII

THE PLAY

On the evening of the third day of the holidays there took place our first theatrical performance. Its organization had caused endless trouble, but those who were to act had undertaken full responsibility, and the other convicts knew nothing about the show except that it was to take place. We were not even told the name of the piece. The principal concern of the actors was to obtain the largest possible number of costumes. Whenever I met Baklouchin he snapped his fingers with satisfaction, but told me nothing. I think the governor was well disposed; but we were not certain whether he knew what was going on or not, whether he had authorized it, or whether he had determined to shut his eyes and say nothing, after assuring himself that there would be no disturbance. I fancy he must have known what was afoot but said nothing about it for fear of worse consequences. The soldiers would give trouble, or at least get drunk, unless they had something to divert them. That was a natural conclusion. Indeed, if the convicts themselves had not organized some form of entertainment during the holidays, the authorities would have been obliged to do so. However, the governor was full of idiosyncrasies, and I may be quite wrong in assuming that he both knew and had authorized our project. A man like him must be for ever interfering and disappointing others, taking something away, depriving someone of his rights. He was known far and wide as a kill-joy and a martinet.

It mattered nothing to the governor that his severity made the men rebellious. For such offences there were suitable punishments (there are some people who reason in this way), and the only way to deal with a rascally gang of convicts was to treat them harshly and with the full rigour of the law. An incompetent officer can never understand that to apply the law without understanding its spirit is to invite opposition. He is surprised if you tell him that, besides invoking regulations, he should display a measure of common sense. He looks upon sweet reasonableness as superfluous; to expect such a thing is in his eyes vexatious, intolerant.

However this may be, no objection was made to the performance, and that was all the convicts hoped for. I will go so far as to say that if there

were no disorders, no violence, no robberies throughout the holiday period, it was only because the prisoners were allowed to organize their own amusement. I saw with my own eyes how they avoided anyone who was drunk, and how they prevented quarrels on the grounds that their play would be forbidden. They were asked to give their word of honour that they would behave well and that all would go off quietly. They gave it with pleasure, and religiously kept that promise. They took it as a compliment that they were trusted in this way. Let me add that the show cost the authorities nothing whatsoever. The theatre could be erected and taken down within a quarter of an hour, and, in case an order stopping the performance suddenly arrived, the scenery could have been put away in a few minutes. Costumes were stowed in the convicts' boxes. Let me say a word or two about the programme. There was no written playbill, not, at any rate, for the first performance; it was ready only for the second and third. Baklouchin composed it for the officers and other distinguished visitors who might deign to honour the performance with their presence, including the officer of the guard, the officer of the watch, and an Engineer officer. It was in their honour that the thing was written out at all.

It was supposed that the reputation of our theatre would extend to the whole fortress, and even to the town, for at N there was no theatre except a few amateur performances. The convicts delighted in the smallest success, and boasted of it like children.

'Who knows?' they said to one another; 'when the officers hear of it they will perhaps come and see. Then they'll realize what convicts are worth. This is no mere sketch done by soldiers, but genuine theatre played by genuine actors; nothing like it could be seen anywhere in the town. General Abrosimoff had a show at his house, and they say he's going to have another. Well, they may beat us in the matter of costumes, but as for the dialogue, that's a very different matter. The commander-in-chief himself will perhaps hear of it, and-who knows?-he may come himself.'

There was certainly no theatre in the town, and the convicts, especially after their initial success, went so far as to imagine that they would be rewarded and that their period of hard labour might be shortened. A moment later they were the first to laugh at the idea. In a word, they were children, real children, at the age of forty! I knew something about the various pieces in spite of the fact that there was as yet no bill. The title of the first was *Philatka and Miroshka, Rivals.* Baklouchin boasted to me at

least a week before the performance that the part of Philatka for which he had cast himself would be played as it had never been played before, even on the St Petersburg stage. He strutted about the barracks puffed up with boundless self-importance. Now and again he would declaim a speech from his part, and everyone would burst out laughing, regardless of whether it was amusing or not; they laughed at the fellow's absent-mindedness. It must be admitted that the convicts as a whole were restrained and full of dignity; the only ones who showed themselves enthusiastic over Baklouchin's tirades were the young ones, who had no false modesty, or those who were as greatly respected, and whose authority was so firmly established, that they were not afraid to commit themselves. The others listened in silence, without blaming or contradicting; but they did their best to show that the performance left them indifferent.

It was not until the very last moment, the very day of the first performance, that all showed a genuine interest in what their companions had undertaken. 'What,' they asked, 'will the governor say? Will the show succeed as well as that one two years ago? ' etc. etc. Baklouchin assured me that all the actors would be quite at home on the stage, and that there would even be a curtain. Sirotkin was to play a woman's part. 'You'll see how well I look in women's clothes,' he said. The Lady Bountiful was to have a dress with skirts and trimmings, as well as a parasol; while her husband, the Lord of the Manor, was to wear an officer's uniform with epaulettes, and carry a cane.

The second piece was entitled *Kedril the Glutton.* The title intrigued, but it was useless to ask questions. I could only learn that the piece had never been printed; it was to be acted from a manuscript copy lent by a retired non-com-missioned officer in the town, who had no doubt once taken part in it on some military stage. There are, indeed, in the more remote towns and governments, a number of such pieces, which, I believe, are perfectly unknown and have never been printed, but which appear to have grown up of themselves in connection with the popular theatre in certain ones of Russia. Speaking of the popular theatre, it would be a good thing if students of folk literature would take the trouble to investigate its history, for it certainly exists, and is, perhaps, not so insignificant as may be thought.

I cannot believe that everything I saw on the prison stage was the work of the convicts. It must have sprung from old traditions handed down from

generation to generation, and preserved among soldiers, among workmen in industrial towns,

and even among shopkeepers in some poor, out-of-the-way places. These traditions have been preserved in certain villages and Government towns by the servants of the large landed proprietors, whom I believe to have made numerous copies of these ancient pieces.

The old Muscovite landowners and nobles had their private theatres in which their own servants used to perform. Our present-day popular theatre has developed from them; but its true origins are lost in antiquity. As for *Kedril the Glutton*, in spite of my lively curiosity I could learn nothing about it, except that demons appeared on the stage and carried Kedril off to hell. What did the name of Kedril signify? Why was he called Kedril and not Cyril? Was the name Russian or foreign? I could not resolve those questions.

It was announced that the performance would end with a musical pantomime. All this promised to be most interesting. There were fifteen actors, all intelligent fellows. They were wonderfully energetic, held several rehearsals, which sometimes took place behind the barracks, kept away from the others, and gave themselves mysterious airs. They evidently wished to surprise us with something extraordinary and quite unexpected.

On work days the barracks were shut in the early evening, but an exception was made during the Christmas holidays, when we were not locked up until nine o’clock. This favour had been granted specially in view of the play. During the whole duration of the holidays a deputation was sent every evening to the officer of the guard humbly requesting him ‘to allow the performance and not to shut at the usual hour.’ It was pointed out that on previous nights there had been no disorderly conduct.

The officer of the guard must have reasoned as follows: There was no disorder, no breach of discipline at the last performance; from the moment they give their word that at to-night’s show they will be equally well behaved, they mean to act as their own police force-the most rigorous police of all. Moreover, it was certain that if he forbade the performance, these fellows (convicts are always unpredictable) might commit some offence which would place him in a very difficult position. One final reason insured his consent: guard-duty is a wearisome job, and if he authorized the performance he would at least see a play, acted not by soldiers, but by

convicts-a curious set of people. It would certainly be interesting, and he had a right to be present.

If his superior officer arrived and asked for the officer of the guard, he would be told that the latter had gone to count the prisoners and close the barracks; it was a straightforward answer which could not be disproved. That is why our masters authorized the entertainment and allowed the barracks to remain unlocked until evening throughout the Christmas holiday. The convicts already knew that they would meet with no opposition from the officer of the guard, and they gave him no trouble.

Towards six o'clock Petroff came to fetch me, and we went together to the theatre. Every prisoner in our barrack was there, with the exception of the Old Believer from Tchernigoff, and the Poles. The latter decided not to attend until the last performance on 4th January, after they had been assured that there would be no unseemliness. The haughtiness of these Poles irritated the other convicts. Accordingly they were received on 4th January with frigid politeness, and conducted to the best places. As for the Circassians and Isaiah Fomitch, they took genuine delight in the play. Isaiah Fomitch gave three kopecks at each performance, except the last, when he placed ten kopecks in the plate; and how happy he looked!

The actors had decided that each spectator should give what he thought fit. The receipts were to cover expenses, and anything beyond was to go to the actors. Petroff assured me that I should be allowed to have one of the best places, however full the theatre might be; first, because being richer than the others, there was a probability of my giving more; and, secondly, because I knew more about acting than anyone else. And so it turned out. But let me first describe the theatre.

The barrack-room of the military section, which had been turned into a theatre, was fifteen feet long. From the courtyard one entered, first, an ante-chamber, and then the barrack itself. The interior, as I have already mentioned, was laid out in a peculiar manner, the beds being placed against the wall so as to leave an open space in the middle. One half of the room was reserved for the spectators, while the other, which communicated with a second building, formed the stage. What astonished me, directly I entered, was the curtain, which was about ten feet long. It was indeed a marvel, for it was painted in oils, and represented trees, tunnels, ponds, and stars.

It was made of pieces of linen, old and new (shirts, bandages which the Russian peasant wears round his feet in lieu of socks, etc. etc.), given by the

convicts and all sewn together, well, or ill, to form an immense sheet. Where there was not enough linen, it had been replaced by writing paper, gathered sheet by sheet from various office desks. Our painters (among whom was one Bruloff) had painted it all over, and the effect was very remarkable.

This luxurious curtain delighted even the most sombre and morose of the convicts. These, like the rest, showed themselves mere children as soon as the play began. They all felt pleased and were satisfied, not without a touch of vanity. The theatre was lighted with candle-ends. Two benches, which had been brought from the kitchen, were placed before the curtain, together with three or four large chairs borrowed from the non-commissioned officers' mess. These chairs were for the officers, should they think fit to honour the performance. As for the benches, they were for any noncommissioned officers, engineers, clerks, directors of the works, and other minor officials who might care to look in on the show. In fact, there was no lack of visitors. They came in greater or smaller numbers, according to the day, but for the last performance there was not a single place unoccupied on the benches.

Behind them the convicts stood crowded together; they remained standing up out of respect to the visitors, and were dressed in their coats or short pelisses, in spite of the suffocating heat. As might have been expected, the place was too small and the prisoners in the audience stood closely packed, especially in the last few rows. The bedsteads were all occupied, and some enthusiasts could be seen arguing in the room beyond the stage, where they viewed the performance from behind. Petroff and I were invited to stand in the front row near the benches, whence a good view could be obtained. They looked upon me as a good judge, a connoisseur, a regular playgoer. The convicts remarked that Baklouchin had often consulted me and taken my advice. Consequently they decided that I should be treated with respect and given one of the best places. These men are vain and frivolous, but only on the surface. They laughed at me when I was at work because I was an unskilled workman. Almazoff, for instance, had a right to despise us gentlemen and to boast of his superior skill in pounding alabaster. His laughter and raillery were directed against our origin, for we belonged by birth to the caste of his former masters, of whom he retained no single happy memory. But here in the theatre these same men made way for me, for they knew that on this subject I knew more than they did. Even

those who were not at all well disposed towards me were glad to hear me praise the performance, and gave way to me without the least servility. Looking back, I realize that this temporary change of heart involved no self-abasement. Rather, it implied a sense of their own dignity.

The most striking characteristic of the Russians is their conscientiousness and love of justice. There is no false vanity, no sly ambition to rise without merit: such faults are alien to our people. Take them from their rough shell, and you will perceive, if you study them closely, attentively, and without prejudice, qualities which you would never have suspected. Our philosophers have very little to teach the common folk. I will go further and say that those sages might even take lessons from them.

Before escorting me to the theatre, Petroff had told me in all simplicity that they would pass me to the front because they expected a handsome donation from me. There were no fixed prices for a place: each one gave what he liked and what he could afford. Nearly everyone placed a piece of money in the plate when it was handed round. Even if they had invited me forward in the hope that I would give more than others, was there not in that a sense of personal dignity?

‘You are richer than I am. Go to the front row. We are all equal here, it is true; but you pay more, and the actors prefer a spectator like you. Take first place then, for we have no money, and must sort ourselves out anyhow.’

What noble pride appears in this their method! In the final analysis it implies not love of money, but self-respect. There was little esteem for money among us. I do not remember that one of us ever lowered himself for the sake of money. Some used to fawn on me, but it was from love of cunning and of fun rather than in the hope of obtaining any benefit. I do not know whether I make myself clear. I am, in any case, forgetting the performance. Let me return to it.

Before the curtain rose, the room presented a strange and animated appearance. In the first place there was the crowd -pressed, crushed, jammed together on all sides, but impatient, full of expectation, and every face glowing with delight. At the back was a grovelling, confused mass of convicts, many of whom had brought logs of wood on which they stood leaning against the wall. They relieved the fatigue consequent on this awkward position by placing both hands upon the shoulders of their companions, who seemed quite at ease. Others stood on tiptoe with their

heels against the stove, and thus remained throughout the performance, supported by their neighbours. Massed against the beds was another compact crowd, for here were some of the best places of all. Five convicts had hoisted themselves to the top of the stove, whence they had a commanding view. These fortunates were extremely happy. Elsewhere swarmed the late arrivals, unable to find good places.

Everyone was well behaved, and made no noise. Each man wished to show to advantage before the distinguished visitors. Simple and natural was the expression on these ruddy faces, damp with perspiration, as the rise of the curtain was eagerly awaited. What a strange look of infinite delight, of unalloyed pleasure, was painted on these scarred countenances, these branded foreheads, so dark and menacing at ordinary times! They were all without their caps, and as I looked back at them from my place, it seemed to me that their heads were entirely shaved.

Suddenly the signal is given, and the orchestra begins to play. This orchestra deserves special attention. It consisted of eight musicians: two violins, one of which was the property of a convict while the other had been borrowed from outside; three balalaiki made by the convicts themselves; two guitars, and a tambourine. The violins sighed and shrieked, and the guitars were worthless, but the balalaiki were remarkably good, and the agile fingering of the artists would have done honour to the cleverest executant.

They played scarcely anything but dance tunes. At the most exciting passages they struck with their fingers on the body of their instruments. The tone, the execution, were always original and distinctive. One of the guitarists knew his instrument thoroughly. He was the gentleman who had killed his father. As for the tambourinist, he really did wonders. Now he twirled the instrument on one finger; now he rubbed the parchment with his thumb and brought from it a countless multitude of notes, now dull, now brilliant.

At last two mouth-organs joined the orchestra. I had no idea until then of what these popular and vulgar instruments could do. I was astonished. The harmony and, above all, the expression, the very conception of the motif, were admirably rendered. I then understood perfectly, and for the first time, the remarkable boldness, the striking abandonment, which are expressed in our popular dance tunes and our folk-songs.

At last the curtain rose. Everyone stirred. Those at the back raised themselves on tiptoe; someone tumbled off his log, and at once there were looks enjoining silence. The performance now began.

I was not far from Ah, who was in the midst of a group formed by his brothers and the other Circassians. They had a passionate love of the stage, and did not miss a single evening. I have noticed that all Mohammedans, Circassians, and others of their kind are fond of all kinds of theatrical performance. Near them was Isaiah Fomitch, almost in ecstasy. As soon as the curtain rose he was all ears and eyes; his countenance revealed his expectation of some marvel, and I should have been sorry had he been disappointed. Ali's charming face shone with a childish joy, so pure that I was quite happy to behold it. Involuntarily, whenever a general laugh echoed an amusing remark, I turned towards him to watch his expression. He did not notice me; he was too intent upon the play.

Not far to his left stood a convict, already advanced in years, sombre, discontented, and always grumbling. Yet he too had noticed Ali, and more than once I saw him cast furtive glances, so charming was the young Circassian. For some reason unknown to me, the prisoners always called him Ali Simeonitch.

In the first piece, *Philatka and Miroshka*, Baklouchin, in the part of Philatka, was really marvellous. He played his role to perfection. It was obvious that he had weighed every speech and every movement. He managed to give to each word, each gesture, a meaning which agreed perfectly with the character he represented. Apart from the conscientious study he had made of the part, he was gay, simple, natural, irresistible. If you had seen Baklouchin you would certainly have said that he was a born actor, an actor by vocation, and of great talent. I have seen Philatka several times at the St Petersburg and Moscow theatres, and I declare that none of our celebrated actors was equal to Baklouchin in this part. They were not real peasants, not true Russian moujiks, and their artificiality was all too apparent. Baklouchin was spurred by rivalry; for it was known that in the second piece Kedril would be played by a convict named Potsiakin. I do not know why, but it was assumed that he would prove more talented than Baklouchin. The latter was childishly annoyed at this supposition, and had opened his heart to me on several occasions during the last few days. Two hours before the performance he was in a state of feverish anxiety; but when the audience burst out laughing and shouted 'Bravo, Baklouchin!

Well done!' his face was radiant with joy, and real inspiration shone in his eyes. The love scene between Kiroshka and Philatka, where they kiss and Philatka tells the girl 'Wipe your mouth,' and then wipes his own, was extremely amusing. It evoked loud laughter.

I was particularly interested in the spectators. They were all at their ease, and gave themselves up frankly to their mirth. Cries of approbation became more and more numerous. A convict would nudge his companion and make a hurried comment without even troubling to find out who was by his side. When a comic song began one man might be seen waving his arms as if inviting his companions to laugh; after which he would suddenly turn again towards the stage. A third smacked his tongue against his palate, and could not keep quiet for a moment; but as there was not room for him to change his position, he hopped first on one leg and then on the other. Towards the end of the piece the general gaiety reached its climax. I am in no way exaggerating. Imagine the prison, the chains, the captivity, the long years of confinement, the hard labour, the monotony, falling away drop by drop like rain on an autumn day; imagine all this despair alleviated by permission given to the convicts to amuse themselves, to breathe freely for an hour, to forget their nightmare, and to organize a play-and what a play! One that excited the envy and admiration of our town.

'Fancy those convicts!' people said. They were certainly interested in everything: take the costumes, for example. You see, it would be quite an event to watch Nietsvitaeff or Baklouchin in a costume so different from that which they had worn for years on end.

Imagine a convict, a genuine convict, whose chains ring when he walks; and there he is, out on the stage, with a frock-coat and a round hat and a cloak, like any ordinary civilian. He is wearing a false moustache. He takes a red handkerchief from his pocket and shakes it, like a real nobleman. What enthusiasm! The lord of the manor arrives in an aide-de-camp's uniform, a very old one, it is true, but with epaulettes, and a cocked hat. The effect produced is indescribable. There had been two candidates for this costume, and-will it be believed?-they had quarrelled like two little schoolboys as to which of them should play the part. Both wanted to appear in military uniform with epaulettes. The other actors separated them, and by a majority of voices the part was allotted to Nietsvitaeff; not because he was a better actor or because he bore a greater resemblance to a nobleman, but simply because he had assured them all that he would carry a cane, and that

he would twirl it and rap it on the ground like a real nobleman-a dandy of the latest fashion- which was more than Vanka and Ospiety could do, seeing they had never met a nobleman. In fact, when Nietsvitaeff appeared on the stage with his ‘wife’ he did nothing but draw circles on the floor with his light bamboo cane, evidently thinking that that was a sign of good breeding, of supreme elegance. Probably in his childhood, when he still ran barefooted, he had been impressed by the skill of some landowner in twirling his cane, and this impression had remained in his memory for more than thirty years.

Nietsvitaeff was so engrossed in his part that he saw no one, and recited his part of the dialogue without even raising his eyes. The most important thing for him was the end of his cane and the circles he drew with it. The Lady Bountiful was also most remarkable; she came on in an old worn-out muslin dress, which looked like a rag. Her arms and neck were bare. She had a little calico cap on her head, with strings under her chin, an umbrella in one hand, and in the other a fan of coloured paper, with which she constantly fanned herself. This great lady was welcomed with a howl of laughter; she, too, was unable to restrain herself, and burst out more than once. The part was taken by a man named Ivanoff. As for Sirotkin, he looked exceedingly well, dressed as a girl. The couplets were all well sung. In a word, the piece was played to the satisfaction of everyone; not a word of hostile criticism was passed-who, indeed, was there to criticize? The air ‘Sieni moi Sieni’ was played again by way of overture, and the curtain once more rose.

Kedril the Glutton was the next piece. Kedril is a sort of Don Juan. The comparison is fair enough, for master and servant are both carried off by devils at the end of the play. So far as the convicts knew, the drama was complete; but the beginning and the end must have been lost, for it had neither head nor tail. The scene is laid in an inn somewhere in Russia. The landlord enters with a nobleman wearing a cloak and a battered round hat. The valet, Kedril, follows his master; he carries a valise and a fowl wrapped up in blue paper; he wears a short pelisse and a footman’s cap. This fellow is the glutton. The part was played by Potsiakin, Baklouchin’s rival, while the part of the nobleman was filled by the same Ivanoff who played Lady Bountiful in the first piece. The innkeeper (Nietsvitaeff) warns the nobleman that the room is haunted by demons, and withdraws. The nobleman is interested and preoccupied; he murmurs aloud that he has

known that for a long time, and orders Kedril to unpack his things and prepare supper.

Kedril is a coward as well as a glutton. When he hears tell of devils he turns pale and trembles like a leaf; he would like to run away, but is afraid of his master; besides, he is hungry, he is voluptuous, he is sensual, stupid, though cunning in his way, and, as I have said, a poltroon. He is constantly cheating his master, though he fears him like fire. He belongs to a well-known type of servant in whom may be recognized the principal characteristics of Leporello, but indistinctly and confusedly. The part was played in really superior style by Potsiakin, whose talent was beyond discussion, surpassing as it did in my opinion that of Baklouchin himself. But when I spoke to Baklouchin next day I concealed my impression from him, knowing that it would cause him bitter disappointment. As for the convict who played the nobleman, he was not at all bad. Everything he said was meaningless and unlike anything I had ever heard before, but his enunciation was clear and his gestures becoming.

While Kedril is busy with the valise, his master paces up and down, and announces that from that day forth he means to lead a quiet life. Kedril listens, makes grimaces, and amuses the spectators with his asides. He has no pity for his master; but he has heard of devils, would like to know what they are like, and thereupon questions him. The nobleman replies that some time ago, being in danger of death, he had asked the aid of hell. The devils had come to his assistance and delivered him, but the term of his liberty has now expired; and if the devils come that evening, it will be to demand his soul, as was agreed in their compact. Kedril begins to tremble in earnest, but his master does not lose courage, and orders him to prepare supper. At mention of victuals, Kedril revives, and, taking out a bottle of wine, he marks it for his own benefit. The audience shakes with laughter; but the door grates on its hinges, the wind shakes the shutters, Kedril trembles, and hastily, almost unconsciously, puts into his mouth an enormous piece of fowl, which he is unable to swallow. There is another gust of wind.

‘Is supper ready?’ cries his master, still striding about the room.

‘Directly, sir. I am preparing it,’ says Kedril, who sits down and, taking care that his master does not see him, begins to eat the supper himself. The audience show their approval of the cunning of a servant who so cleverly makes game of a nobleman, and it must be admitted that Potsiakin, who

played the part, deserved high praise. His pronunciation of the words ‘Directly, sir. I-am-preparing-it’ was admirable.

Kedril eats slowly, and trembles at every mouthful lest his master sees him. Every time the nobleman turns round Kedril hides under the table, holding the fowl in his hand. When he has appeased his hunger he begins to think of his master.

‘Kedril, will it soon be ready?’ cries the nobleman.

‘ It is ready now,’ replies Kedril boldly, when all at once he perceives that there is scarcely anything left. Nothing remains but one leg. The master, still sombre and preoccupied, notices nothing and takes his seat while Kedril places himself behind the chair with a napkin over his arm. Every word, every gesture, every grimace from the servant, as he turns towards the audience to laugh at his master’s expense, excites the greatest mirth among the convicts. Just at the moment, as the young nobleman begins to eat, the devils arrive. They resemble nothing human or terrestrial. A side-door opens, and the phantoms appear dressed entirely in white, with lighted lanterns in lieu of heads, and scythes in their hands. Why the white dress, the scythe, and the lantern? No one could tell me, and the matter did not trouble the convicts. They were sure that this was how it should be done. The master comes forward courageously to meet the apparitions, and calls out to them that he is ready and they may take him. But Kedril, as timid as a hare, hides under the table, not forgetting, in spite of his terror, to take a bottle with him. The devils disappear, Kedril comes out of his hiding-place, and the master begins to eat his fowl. Three devils now re-enter and seize him.

‘Save me, Kedril!’ he cries. But Kedril has something else to think of. He has with him in his hiding-place not only the bottle, but also the plate of fowl and the bread. He is alone. The demons are far away, and his master also. Kedril emerges from beneath the table, looks around, and his face suddenly lights up. He winks like the rogue he is, sits down in his master’s place, and whispers to the audience: ‘Now I’ve no master but myself.’

Everyone laughs at seeing him masterless, and he says, always in an undertone and with a confidential air: ‘The devils have carried him off!’

The enthusiasm of the spectators is now without limits. The last phrase was uttered with such roguery, with such a triumphant grimace, that it was impossible not to applaud. But Kedril’s happiness does not last long. Hardly has he taken up the bottle of wine, poured himself out a large glass, and

carried it to his lips, than the devils return, slip behind, and seize him. Kedril howls like one possessed, but he dare not turn round. He wishes to defend himself, but cannot, for in his hands he holds the bottle and the glass, from which he will not be separated. His eyes starting from his head, his mouth gaping with horror, he remains for a moment looking at the audience with a comic expression of cowardice that might have been painted. At last he too is dragged away. His arms and legs wave in all directions, but he still sticks to his bottle. He begins to shriek, and his cries can still be heard after he has been carried from the stage.

The curtain falls amid general laughter, and everyone is delighted. The orchestra now attacks the famous dance tune ‘Kamarinskaia.’ First it is played softly, *pianissimo;* but the motive is gradually developed and played more lightly. The tempo increases, and the wood-wind joins the balalaiki sound. The musicians enter thoroughly into the spirit of the dance. Glinka, who arranged ‘Kamarinskaia’ in the most ingenious manner and with harmonies of his own devising for full orchestra, should have heard it as it was performed in our prison.

It forms the accompaniment of the musical pantomime and is played throughout. The stage represents the interior of a hut. A miller and his wife are seated, one mending clothes, the other spinning flax. Sirotkin plays the part of the wife, and Nietsvitaeff that of the husband. Our scenery was very poor, and in this piece, as in the preceding ones, imagination had to supply what was wanting. Instead of a wall at the back of the stage, there was a carpet or blanket; to the right, shabby screens; to the left, where the stage was not enclosed, the bedsteads could be seen; but the spectators were not exacting, and were well able to imagine all that lacked. It was an easy task, for all convicts are great dreamers. Directly they are told ‘this is a garden,’ it is, so far as they are concerned, a garden. Informed that ‘this is a hut,’ they accept the description without difficulty: to them it is a hut. Sirotkin was charming in woman’s dress. The miller finishes his work, takes his cap and whip, goes up to his wife, and gives her to understand by signs, that if during his absence she is so foolish as to receive anyone, she will answer for it-and he shows her his whip. The wife listens and nods her head affirmatively. She has evidently had a taste of that whip; the hussy has often deserved it. Exit her husband. Hardly has he turned upon his heel than his wife shakes her fist after him. There is a knock; the door opens, and in comes a neighbour who is also a miller by trade. He is bearded, is in a

caftan, and brings her a red handkerchief as a present. The woman smiles. Another knock is heard at the door. Where shall she hide him? She conceals him under the table, and resumes her distaff. Another admirer now presents himself-a farrier in the uniform of a non-commissioned officer.

Until now the pantomime had proceeded splendidly. The gestures of the actors were beyond criticism, and it was astounding to see these amateur actors perform their parts so correctly. Involuntarily one thought: ‘What a deal of talent is lost to Russia, left to stagnate in prisons and other places of exile!’

The convict who played the farrier had doubtless taken part in a performance at some provincial theatre, or had played with amateurs. It seemed to me, however, that these fellows knew nothing of acting *as an art*, and their movements were *gauche* beyond words. When it was his turn to appear, he came on like one of the classical heroes of the old repertory - taking a long stride with one foot before he raised the other from the ground, throwing back his head on his shoulders and casting proud looks around him. If such a gait was ridiculous on the part of classical heroes, still more so was it when the actor was representing a comic character. But the audience thought it quite natural, and accepted the actor’s triumphant walk as a necessary fact, without criticizing.

A moment after the entry of the second admirer there is yet another knock. The wife loses her head. Where is the farrier to be concealed? In the chest. Fortunately it is open. The farrier jumps in, and the lid falls upon him.

The new arrival is a Brahmin in full costume. His entry is hailed by the spectators with a roar of laughter. This character is played by the convict Cutchin, who fills the role to perfection, thanks largely to a suitable physiognomy. He explains in pantomime his love of the miller’s wife, raises his hands to heaven, and then clasps them on his breast.

There is now a fourth knock-a vigorous one this time. There can be no mistake: it is the master of the house. The miller’s wife loses her head; the Brahmin runs about frantically, begging to be hidden. She helps him to slip behind the cupboard, begins to spin, and continues to do so without thinking to open the door. In her fright she gets the thread twisted, drops the spindle, and, in her agitation, pretends to turn it when it is, in fact, lying on the floor. Sirotkin’s representation of her alarm was perfect.

Then the miller kicks open the door and approaches his wife, whip in hand. He has seen everything, for he was spying outside, and he informs his wife by signs that she has three lovers concealed in the house. He proceeds to search for them.

First, he finds the neighbour, whom he drives out with his fist. The frightened farrier tries to escape. He raises the lid of the chest with his head, and is immediately spotted. The miller thrashes him with his whip, and for once this gallant does not march in the classical style.

The only one now remaining is the Brahmin, for whom the husband seeks for some time without finding him. He is at length discovered in his corner behind the cupboard. The miller bows to him politely, and then draws him by his beard into the middle of the stage. The Brahmin tries to defend himself, and cries out, ‘Accursed, accursed!’-the only words pronounced throughout the pantomime. But the husband will not listen, and, after settling accounts with him, turns to his wife. Seeing that her turn has come, she throws away both wheel and spindle and runs out, causing an earthen pot to fall as she shakes the room in her fright. The convicts burst out laughing, and Ah, without looking at me, takes my hand, and calls out, ‘See, see the Brahmin!’ He is bent double with laughter. The curtain falls and another song begins.

There were two or three more, all broadly humorous and very droll. They were not composed by the convicts, but the latter had contributed something to them. Every actor improvised to such purpose that the text was different each evening. The pantomime ended with a ballet, in which there was a burial. The Brahmin went through various incantations over the corpse, and with effect. The dead man returns to life, and in their joy all present begin to dance. The Brahmin dances in Brahminical style with the dead man. That was the finale. The convicts now separated, happy, delighted, and full of praise for the actors and of gratitude towards the non-commissioned officers. There was not the least disorder, and they all went to bed with peaceful hearts to sleep a less troubled sleep than usual.

This is no mere imagination on my part, but the truth, the very truth. These unhappy men had been permitted to live their own lives for a few brief hours, to amuse themselves as human beings, to escape for a short while from their miserable status as convicts; and a moral change was effected, at least temporarily.

The night is now quite dark. Something makes me stir, and I awake. The Old Believer is still praying on top of the high porcelain stove, and he will continue so to pray until dawn. Ali is sleeping peacefully by my side. I remember that when he went to bed he was still laughing and talking with his brothers about the theatre. Little by little I began to remember everything: the preceding day, the holiday period, and all the month of December. Fearfully I raise my head and in the fitful candlelight gaze at my slumbering companions. I watch their unhappy countenances, their miserable beds. I view their nakedness, their wretchedness, and then convince myself that it is no nightmare but simple reality. Yes, it is reality. I hear a groan. Someone has moved his arm and caused his chains to rattle. Another is troubled in his dreams and speaks aloud, while the old grandfather prays for the ‘Orthodox Christians.’ I listen to his prayer, uttered regularly and in soft, rather drawling tones: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.’

‘Well, I am not here for ever, but only for a few years,’ I said to myself, and again laid down my head upon my pillow.

PART II

CHAPTER I

THE HOSPITAL

Shortly after the Christmas holidays I fell sick, and was sent to the military hospital, which was situated about half a verst from the fortress. It was a one-storey building, very long, and painted yellow. Every summer a great quantity of ochre was expended in brightening it up. In the great courtyard there were buildings, including the doctors' residences. The main block contained only wards. There were a good many of them, but as only two were reserved for convicts, these were nearly always full, especially in summer, and it was often necessary to crowd the beds. The two convict wards were occupied by Unfortunates of various classes: there were the civilians, then the military prisoners who had previously been incarcerated in the guard-houses. There were others, again, who were awaiting trial, or who were merely passing through the place. In this hospital, too, were invalids from the Disciplinary Company, a melancholy institution for bringing together soldiers of bad conduct with a view to their correction. At the end of a year or two they come back the most thorough-going rascals on earth.

When a convict felt sick, he told a non-commissioned officer, who wrote the man's name down on a card, which he then gave to him and sent him to the hospital under escort. On arrival the patient was examined by a doctor, who authorized the convict, if he were really ill, to remain in hospital. My name was duly written down, and towards one o'clock, when my companions had started for their afternoon work, I went to the hospital. Every prisoner took with him such money and bread as he could (for food was not to be expected the first day), a little pipe, and a pouch of tobacco with flint, steel, and match-paper. He concealed these articles in his boots. On entering the hospital I was curious to learn something about this new aspect of life.

The day was hot, cloudy, sad-one of those days when places like a hospital assume a particularly disagreeable and repulsive look. Together

with the soldier escorting me I entered the reception hall, where there were two copper baths. Two other convicts and their escorts waited there. An assistant-surgeon came in, looked at us with a careless and patronizing air, and went away still more indifferently to inform the physician on duty of our arrival. It was not long before the doctor arrived. He was most affable, examineed me, and gave me a paper on which my name was inscribed. The physician-in-ordinary of the convict wards was to diagnose my trouble, and prescribe treatment and diet. I had already heard the convicts say that the doctors could not be too highly praised. ‘They’re fathers to us,’ they used to say.

The three of us next changed our clothes. Our uniforms and linen were taken away, and we were supplied with hospital linen, to which were added long stockings, slippers, cotton nightcaps, and a dressing-gown made of very thick brown cloth which was lined, not with linen, but with filth. The dressing-gown was certainly foul but I soon discovered its utility. We were afterwards taken to the convict wards which were at the end of a long corridor; they were very high, and spotlessly clean. The external cleanliness was quite satisfactory: everything visible shone; so, at least, it seemed to me after the dirtiness of the convict prison.

The two prisoners whom I had found in the entrance hall turned to the left of the corridor while I entered another room. A sentry with musket on shoulder marched up and down before the padlocked door; not far off was his relief The sergeant of the hospital guard ordered him to let me pass, and suddenly I found myself in the middle of a long narrow room, with twenty-two beds arranged against the walls. Three or four of them were as yet unoccupied. These wooden beds were painted green, and, as is notoriously the case with all hospital beds in Russia, were doubtless inhabited by bugs. I was allotted one in a corner near the windows. There were very few prisoners dangerously ill and confined to bed.

The patients were mostly convalescent or men who were slightly indisposed. My new companions lay on their couches, or walked up and down between the rows of beds. There was just space enough for them to do so. The atmosphere of the ward was stifling, and had the odour peculiar to hospitals. It was composed of various emanations, each more disagreeable than the other, and of the smell of drugs. My bed was covered with a counterpane, but as the stove was kept well heated all day long I removed it. The bed itself consisted of a cloth blanket lined with linen, and

coarse sheets of more than doubtful cleanliness. By the side of the bed was a little table with a pitcher and pewter mug, together with a diminutive napkin. The table could also hold a samovar if the patient were rich enough to drink tea. These men of means, however, were not very numerous. The pipes and tobacco pouches-for all the patients, even the consumptives, smoked -could be hidden under the mattress. The doctors and other officials scarcely ever made a search, and when they caught a man with a pipe in his mouth, they pretended not to have seen. The patients, however, were very cautious, and always smoked at the back of the stove. They never smoked in bed except at night, when the officers in charge made no rounds.

I had never before been a patient in any hospital, and everything was quite new to me. I noticed that my entry had a strange effect on some of the prisoners: they had heard of me, and all the inmates now looked upon me with that slight shade of superiority which recognized members of no matter what society show towards a newcomer. On my right lay a man who had been committed for trial on a charge of coining. An ex-secretary and the illegitimate son of a retired captain, he had been in the hospital for almost a year. There was nothing whatever wrong with him, but he had assured the doctors that he had an aneurism, and he so thoroughly deceived them that he escaped both the hard labour and the corporal punishment to which he had been sentenced. Twelve months later he was transferred to an asylum at Tk. He was a vigorous young fellow of eight-and-twenty, cunning, a self-confessed rogue, and something of a lawyer. He was intelligent, had easy manners, but was very presumptuous and suffered from morbid self esteem. Convinced that there was no one on earth more honest or just than himself, he considered himself innocent and made no secret of his opinion.

This personage was the first to address me, and he questioned me with much curiosity. He initiated me into the ways of the hospital, and, of course, began by telling me that he was the son of a captain. He was very anxious that I should take him for a noble or at least for someone well connected.

Soon afterwards an invalid from the Disciplinary Company came and told me that he knew a great many noblemen in exile, and, to convince me, he rolled off their Christian names and their patronymics. It was only necessary to watch the face of this soldier to understand that he was an abominable liar. His name was Tchekounoff, and he took an interest in me simply because he suspected me of having money. When he saw that I

possessed a packet of tea and some sugar, he at once offered me his services to procure me a samovar and boil the water. M. D. S. Khad promised to send me my own by one of the prisoners who worked in the hospital, but Tchekounoff arranged to get me one forthwith. He obtained one made of tin, boiled my water, and, in a word, showed such extraordinary zeal that he drew down upon himself the scorn of a consumptive patient whose bed was just opposite mine. This man was named Usteantseff; he was the soldier who, when condemned to the rods, stricken with terror, swallowed a bottle of vodka in which he had infused tobacco and thus brought on lung disease.

I have already spoken of him. He had remained silent until now, stretched out on his bed and breathing with diffi-culty. His serious look was always turned in my direction and he never lifted his gaze from Tchekounoff, whose civility irritated him. His extraordinary gravity rendered his in dignation comic. At last he could stand it no longer.

‘Look at that fellow! He’s found his master,’ he said stammering out the words in a voice strangled by weakness for he had now not long to live.

Tchekounoff, much annoyed, turned round.

‘Who is the fellow?’ he asked, looking at Usteantseff with contempt.

‘Why, you’re a flunkey,’ replied Usteantseff, as confidently us if he had the right to call Tchekounoff to order.

‘I a flunkey?’

‘Yes, you’re a flunkey; a true flunkey. Listen, my good friends. He won’t believe me. He’s quite astonished, the brave fellow.’

‘Well, what of it? It’s obvious when a man doesn’t know how to make use of his hands that he’s not used to being without servants. Why shouldn’t I give him a hand, you buffoon with a hairy snout?’

‘Who has a hairy snout?’

‘You!’

‘I have a hairy snout?’

‘Yes, you certainly have.’

‘You’re a nice fellow, you are. If I have a hairy snout, you have a face like a crow’s egg.’

‘ Hairy snout! The merciful Lord has settled your account. You’d do much better to keep quiet and die.’

‘Why? I’d rather prostrate myself before a boot than a slipper. My father never kowtowed himself, and never made me do so.’

He would have continued, but an attack of coughing convulsed him for some minutes. He spat blood, and a cold sweat broke out on his low forehead. If his cough had not prevented him from speaking, he would have continued to declaim. One could see that from “his look; but he was powerless to do more than move his hand, with the result that Tchekounoff spoke no more about the matter.

I quite understood that the consumptive patient hated me far more bitterly than Tchekounoff. No one would have thought of being angry with him or of despising him for the services he rendered me and the few kopecks that he tried to earn from me. It was generally recognized that he did it all in order to obtain a little money. The Russian people are not at all susceptible in such matters, and know perfectly well how to take them.

I had displeased Usteantseff, just as my tea had displeased him. What irritated him was that, in spite of all, I was a gentleman, even with my chains; that I could not do without a servant, though I neither asked for nor desired one. In fact I tried to do everything for myself, so as not to appear a white-handed, effeminate person, and not to play a part which excited so much envy.

I even felt a little pride on this point, but, in spite of everything-I don’t known why-I was always surrounded by officious, complaisant folk who attached themselves to me of their own free will, and who ended by ruling me. It was I, rather, who was their servant; so that, whether I liked it or not, I was made to appear a nobleman, who could not do without the services of others and who gave himself airs. This exasperated me.

Usteantseff was consumptive and, therefore, irascible. The other patients showed me nothing more than indifference tinged with a shade of contempt. They were preoccupied with a circumstance which I can still recall.

I learned, as I listened to their conversation, that then was to be brought into hospital that evening a convict who at that moment was being flogged. They were looking forward with keen curiosity to this new arrival, but they said that his punishment was not severe-only five hundred strokes.

I looked round the ward. The majority of genuine patient were, as far as I could see, suffering from scurvy and disease of the eyes-both peculiar to this country. The remainder suffered from fever, tuberculosis, and other illnesses. There was no segregation of the various diseases; all the patient were together in the same room.

I have spoken of ‘genuine patients,’ for certain convict had come in merely to get a little rest. The doctors admitted them simply from compassion, particularly if there were any vacant beds. Life in the guard-house and in the prison was so hard compared with that of the hospital, that many preferred to remain lying down in spite of the stifling atmosphere and the rules against leaving the room.

There were even men who took pleasure in this kind of life. They nearly all belonged to the Disciplinary Company, examined my new companions with curiosity, and one of then puzzled me very much. He was consumptive, and was dying. His bed was a little way beyond Usteantseff’s and almost next to mine. His name was Mikhailoff. I had seen him in the prison two weeks before, when he was already seriously ill. He ought to have been under treatment long before, but he bore up against his malady with surprising courage. He did not go to the hospital until just before the Christmas holidays, and died three weeks later of galloping consumption. He seemed to have burned out like a candle. What astonished me most was the terrible change in his countenance. I had noticed him on the very first day of my imprisonment. Next to him lay a soldier of the Disciplinary Company-an old man with an evil expression, and whose general appearance was disgusting.

But I am not going to describe every patient. I refer to this old man simply because he made an impression on me, and at once initiated me into certain peculiarities of the ward. He had a severe cold in the head, which caused him to sneeze every few moments. This he did even in his sleep, as if firing a salute of five or six guns, while each time he called out, ‘My God, what torture!’

Seated on his bed he crammed his nose eagerly with snuff from a paper bag, in order to sneeze more strongly and with greater regularity. He sneezed into a checked cotton pocket-handkerchief which was his own property and which had lost its colour through perpetual washing. His little nose then became puckered in a most peculiar manner with a multitude of wrinkles, and his open mouth revealed broken teeth, decayed and black, and red gums moist with saliva. When he sneezed into his handkerchief he unfolded it and wiped it on the lining of his dressing-gown. His proceeding disgusted me so much that I involuntarily examined the dressing-gown which I had just put on. It exhaled a most offensive odour which contact with my body helped to bring out. It smelt of plasters and medicaments of

all kinds, and seemed as though it had been worn by patients from time immemorial; the lining had, perhaps, been washed once, but I would not swear to it. Certainly at the time I put it on it was saturated with lotions and stained by contact with poultices and plasters of every imaginable kind.

Prisoners condemned to the rods, having undergone their punishment, were brought straight to the hospital with their backs still bleeding. As compresses and poultices were placed on their wounds, the dressing-gowns they wore over their wet shirts received and retained the droppings.

During the period of my imprisonment I was in hospital on several occasions, and it was always with mistrust and abhorrence that I put on the dressing-gown provided for me. As soon as Tchekounoff had given me my tea (I may say in parenthesis that the water brought in in the morning, and not renewed throughout the day, was soon corrupted, soon poisoned by the fetid air), the door opened, and the soldier who had received the rods was brought in under double escort. I saw for the first time a man who had just been whipped. The event was by no means infrequent, but whenever it happened it caused great distress to the other patients. These unfortunate men were received with grave composure, but the nature of their reception usually depended on the enormity of their crime, and consequently on the number of strokes administered.

The criminals most cruelly whipped, and who were celebrated as first-rate villains, enjoyed more respect and attention than a simple deserter, a mere recruit, like the one who had just been brought in. But in neither case was any particular sympathy manifested, nor were any annoying remarks made. The unhappy man was attended to in silence, above all if he was incapable of attending to himself. The assistant-surgeon knew that they were entrusting their patients to skilful and experienced hands. The usual treatment consisted in frequent application to the poor fellow’s back of a shirt or piece of linen steeped in cold water. It was also necessary to extract from his wounds the splinters of the rods which had been broken on his back. This last operation was particularly painful to the victims, and the extraordinary stoicism with which they supported their sufferings astonished me greatly.

I have seen many convicts who had been frequently and cruelly whipped, but I do not remember one of them uttering a groan. After such an experience, however, the countenance is pale and distorted, the eyes glitter,

the look wanders, and the lips tremble so that a patient sometimes bites them till they bleed.

The soldier who had just come in was twenty-three years of age. He was a well-built and rather fine-looking man, tall, splendidly proportioned, with a bronzed skin. His back, uncovered down to the waist, was terribly lacerated, and his body now trembled with fever beneath the damp sheet with which his back was covered. For about an hour and a half he did nothing but walk up and down the room. I watched his face: he seemed to be thinking of nothing; his eyes had a strange expression, at once wild and timid; they seemed to fix themselves with difficulty on the various objects. I fancied I saw him looking attentively at my hot tea; the steam was rising from the full cup, and the poor devil was shivering and clattering his teeth. I invited him to have some; he turned towards me without saying a word, and taking up the cup, swallowed the tea at one gulp without adding sugar. He tried not to look at me, and when he had finished he returned the cup in silence without making a sign, and then began pacing up and down as before. He was in too much pain to think of speaking to me or thanking me. As for the other prisoners, they refrained from questioning him; when once they had applied compresses they paid no more attention to him, thinking, probably, that it would be better to leave him alone and not worry him with their questions or their sympathy. The soldier seemed quite satisfied with this arrangement.

Meanwhile it grew dark and the lamp was lighted; some of the patients possessed candlesticks of their own, but they were not many. In the evening the doctor came round, after which a non-commissioned officer on guard counted the patients and locked the room.

The prisoners could not speak too highly of the doctors. They looked upon them as true fathers and held them in great respect. Those doctors had always something pleasant to say, a kindly word even for reprobates, who appreciated it all the more because they knew it was spoken in sincerity.

Yes, those kindly words were indeed sincere, for no one would have thought of blaming the doctors had they shown themselves ill-tempered or even quite inhuman. They were gentle purely from compassion. They understood perfectly that a convict who is sick has as much right to breathe pure air as anyone else, even though the latter be a great personage. The convalescents were allowed to walk freely through the corridors for

exercise, and to breathe air less pestilential than that of the ward, which was close and saturated with poisonous exhalations.

Once the doors had been locked in the evening, they had to remain so throughout the night, and under no pretext was anyone allowed to leave the room.

For many years I was unable to understand a certain fact which plagued me like an insoluble problem. I must speak of it before continuing my narrative. I am thinking of the chains which every convict is obliged to wear, however ill he may be; even consumptives have died beneath my eyes, their legs weighed down with irons.

Everybody was accustomed to it and regarded it as an inevitable fact. I do not think the doctors themselves would have thought of demanding the removal of the irons from convicts who were seriously ill, not even from the consumptives. The chains, it is true, were not extraordinarily heavy they did not in general weigh more than eight or ten pounds, which is an endurable burden for a man in good health. I have been told, however, that after some years the legs of the convicts dry up and waste away. I do not know whether that is true. I am inclined to think it is; for the weight, however light it may be (say not more than ten pounds), if it is permanently fixed to the leg, increases the weight of the limb abnormally, and at the end of a certain time must have a disastrous effect on its development.

The danger to a healthy convict is not so great, but the same cannot be said of the sick. For those who were seriously ill, for the consumptives, whose arms and legs dry up of themselves, this additional burden is insupportable. Even if the medical authorities claimed exemption for the consumptive patients only, I am certain that it would prove an immense benefit. I shall be told that convicts are malefactors, unworthy of compassion; but ought we to show increased severity towards those on which the hand of God already weighs? No one will believe that the object of this aggravation is to reform the criminal, and after all, the consumptive prisoners are exempted by the courts from corpora] punishment.

There must be some mysterious and important reason for the present system, but what it is, it is impossible to understand. No one believes-indeed, one cannot believe-that a consumptive man will run away. Who could even imagine such a thing, especially if the disease has reached a certain point? It is impossible to deceive the doctors and lead them to mistake a convict in good health for a consumptive, for this particular

malady can be recognized at a glance. Do irons help to prevent a sick convict from escaping? Not in the least. The irons are degrading and shameful, a physical and moral burden; but they will not hinder a man attempting to escape. The most awkward and least intelligent convict can saw through them, or break the rivets by hammering at them with a stone. Chains, then, are a useless precaution, and if they are worn as a punishment, should not that punishment be spared to dying men?

As I write these lines, one face stands out in my memory: that of a dying man, a man who died in consumption, the same Mikhailoff whose bed was nearly opposite to mine, and who expired, I think, four days after my arrival in hospital. When I spoke above of the consumptive patients, I was only reviving involuntarily ideas and sensations which occurred to me at the time of this death. I knew Mikhailoff very little; he was a young man of twenty-five at most, not very tall, thin, and with a fine face. He belonged to the special section, and was remarkable for his strange, but soft and sad taciturnity; he seemed to have ‘dried up’ in prison, to use an expression of the convicts who remembered him well. For some strange reason I recall that he had very fine eyes.

He died at three o’clock in the afternoon on a clear, dry day. The sun shed its brilliant rays obliquely through the greenish, frozen panes of our room. A torrent of light inundated the unhappy patient, who had lost consciousness and was several hours dying. Early in the morning his sight began to fail, and he was unable to recognize those who approached him. The convicts would gladly have done anything to relieve him, for they saw he was in great suffering. His respiration was painful, deep, and irregular; his breast rose and fell violently, as though he were in want of air; he cast off his blanket and his clothes. Then he began to tear up his shirt, which seemed to him a terrible burden. It was taken off, and I was horrified to see that immensely long body, with fleshless arms and legs, with beating breast, and ribs which were as clearly marked as those of a skeleton. There was nothing now on this living corpse but a crucifix and the irons, from which his dried-up legs might easily have freed themselves. A quarter of an hour before he died all was silent in the ward; the patients spoke only in whispers and walked on tiptoe. From time to time they exchanged remarks on other subjects, and cast a furtive glance at the dying man. The rattling in his throat grew more and more painful. At last, with a trembling hand, he felt for the cross on his breast and endeavoured to tear it off; it was too heavy

and suffocated him. It was removed. Ten minutes later he died. Someone then knocked on the door in order to warn the sentinel; the warder entered, looked at the dead man with a vacant air, and went away to fetch the assistant-surgeon. The latter was quite a good fellow, but a little too preoccupied with his personal appearance; otherwise he was most agreeable. He soon arrived, approached the corpse with long strides which re-echoed in the silent ward, and felt the dead man's pulse with an unconcerned air which seemed to have been assumed for the occasion. He then made a vague gesture with his hand and went out.

The guard-house was notified of this death: the man belonged to the special section, and certain formalities had to be carried out in the registration of his death. While we were awaiting the hospital guard, one of the prisoners said in a whisper: 'The eyes of the deceased might as well be closed.' Another took heed of this remark, and approaching Mikhailoff in silence, closed his eyes; then, noticing the cross which had been taken from his neck lying on the pillow, he took it up and looked at it, put it down, and crossed himself. The face of the dead man was becoming ossified; a ray of white light was playing on the surface and illuminated two rows of fine white teeth which gleamed between his thin drawn lips.

The sergeant of the guard at last arrived, musket on shoulder and helmet on head, accompanied by two soldiers; he approached the corpse, slackening his pace as if uncertain what he should do next. He looked furtively at the prisoners, but they remained silent and gazed at him with a sombre expression. A yard or so from the dead man he stopped short, as if suddenly nailed to the spot; the naked, dried-up body, loaded with irons, had impressed him. He undid his chin-strap, removed his helmet (which he was not bound to do), and made the sign of the cross; he had a grey head, the head of a soldier who had seen much service. I remember that by his side stood Tchekounoff, an old man who was also grey. He kept his eyes upon the sergeant and followed his every movement with strange attention. They glanced across, and I saw that Tchekounoff also trembled. He clenched his teeth, nodded in the direction of the dead man, murmured almost involuntarily to the sergeant: 'He too had a mother!' Those words went to my heart. Why had he uttered them, and why had the idea occurred to him? The corpse was raised on its mattress and the straw creaked. The chains dragged on the floor with a sharp ring; they were taken up and the body was carried out. Everyone suddenly began to talk again. The sergeant

could be heard in the corridor calling to someone to go for the blacksmith, who would remove the dead man’s irons. But I have digressed from my subject.

CHAPTER II

THE HOSPITAL (*continued)*

The doctors used to visit the wards at about eleven o'clock in the morning; they appeared all together and formed a procession which was headed by the chief physician. An hour and a half earlier, the ordinary physician had made his round. He was a quiet young man, always affable and kind, much liked by the prisoners, and thoroughly versed in his art. His patients found only one fault with him-he was 'too soft.' He was, in fact, by no means communicative: he seemed embarrassed in our presence, blushed sometimes, and changed the quantity of food as soon as he was asked to do so. I think he would have given them any medicine they liked. In other respects he was an excellent young man.

A Russian doctor often enjoys the affection and respect of the people, and with reason, as far as I have been able to see. I know that my words may seem paradoxical, especially when one remembers the mistrust in which the Russian people hold foreign drugs and foreign doctors. They prefer, even when seriously ill, to address themselves year after year to a witch, or to employ old women's remedies (which, however, are by no means to be despised), rather than to consult a doctor or go into hospital. In truth, these prejudices may be chiefly ascribed to causes which have nothing to do with medicine, namely, the popular mistrust of anything which bears an official and administrative character; nor must it be forgotten that the common people are frightened and prejudiced in regard to the hospitals by the stories, which are often absurd, of fantastic horrors said to take place within them. There may, however, be an element of truth in some of these tales.

But what repels them more than anything else is the 'Germanism' of the hospitals-the idea that they will be attended in sickness by foreigners, the severity of the diet, the heartlessness of the surgeons and physicians, the dissection and autopsy of the bodies, etc. The lower classes imagine, moreover, that they will be treated by noblemen-for in their view the doctors belong to the nobility; but with the exception of a few rare cases, once they have made their acquaintance, their fears vanish. This success must be attributed to the doctors themselves, especially the young ones

who, for the most part, know how to win the respect and affection of the people. I speak now of what I myself have seen and experienced on many occasions and in many places, and I think the same holds good everywhere. In some remote localities the doctors are said to receive presents, make profit out of their hospitals, neglect the patients, and sometimes even forget their art. All this may be true; but I am speaking of the majority, inspired as they are by that wave of generosity which is regenerating the medical art. As for the apostates, the wolves in the sheep-fold, they may excuse themselves and blame the circumstances in which they live. But they are foolish as well as inexcusable, especially if they are no longer humane, for it is precisely the humanity, affability, and brotherly compassion of a doctor which prove the most efficacious remedies for his patients. It is time these useless lamentations about circumstances were ended. There may be truth in what is alleged, but a cunning rogue who knows how to take care of himself never fails to blame his environment when he wishes to excuse his faults-above all, if he is a good writer or speaker.

I have again wandered from my subject. I wish only to say that the common people mistrust and dislike officialdom and doctors as representatives of the Government, rather than the doctors themselves; but, as I have said, on personal acquaintance many prejudices disappear.

Our doctor generally stopped before the bed of each patient, examined him carefully, and then prescribed the remedies, potions, etc. He sometimes noticed that a pretended invalid was not ill at all: he had come to take a rest after hard labour, and to sleep on a mattress in a warm room, which was so much better than bare boards in a damp guard-house among a mass of pale, broken-down men awaiting trial. The inhabitants of a Russian guard-house are almost always in bad health, which proves their condition, both moral and material, to be worse than that of the convicts.

In cases of malingering our doctor would describe the patient as suffering from *febris catharalis,* and sometimes allow him to remain a week in hospital. Everyone laughed at this *febris catharalis,* for it was known to be a formula agreed upon by both doctor and patient to indicate no malady at all. A malingerer would often take advantage of the doctor’s compassion and remain in hospital until he was turned out by force. Our doctor was worth seeing on such an occasion. Embarrassed by the prisoner’s obstinacy, he did not like to tell him plainly that he was cured and hand him his discharge, although he had the right to send him out without explanation by

writing the words, *sanat. est.* He would first drop a hint that it was time to leave, and would then politely request him to do so.

‘You must go; you know you are cured now, and we have no room for you; we’re terribly overcrowded,’ etc.

At last, ashamed to remain any longer, the patient would consent to go. The physician-in-chief, although compassionate and just (the patients were much attached to him), was incomparably more severe and more firm than our ordinary physician. In certain cases he showed merciless severity which only gained for him the respect of the convicts. He always entered the room accompanied by every doctor on the staff, and leaving his assistants to call at every bed and diagnose the various cases, he would stop longest at the bedsides of those who were seriously ill, and had an encouraging word for each. He never threw out those who arrived with *febris catharalis;* but if one of them appeared determined to remain in hospital, he certified the man as cured. ‘Come,’ he would say, ‘you have had your rest. Now go, you must not take advantage.’

Those who insisted on remaining were principally the convicts who were worn out by field labour during the great summer heat, or prisoners who had been sentenced to be whipped. I remember one occasion upon which the hospital staff were obliged to be particularly severe in order to get rid of one such man. He was suffering from acute inflammation of the eyes, and complained of a sharp pain in his eyelids.

He was incurable: plasters, blisters, leeches, nothing did him any good, and the diseased organ remained in the same condition.

It then occurred to the doctors that there was nothing at all wrong with him, for the inflammation became neither worse nor better, and despite the man’s refusal to admit it they soon realized that the whole thing was a complete farce. He was a fine young fellow, not bad-looking, though his companions found him disagreeable. He was suspicious, sombre, full of dissimulation, and never looked anyone straight in the face; he also kept himself apart as if he mistrusted us all. I remember that many were afraid he would do someone harm.

Having committed some small theft in the army, he had been arrested and condemned to receive a thousand strokes, and afterwards to pass into a penal battalion.

I have already explained that in order to postpone their punishment, convicts will do incredible things. On the eve of the fatal day they will stab

one of their officers or a comrade, which will necessitate their being tried again for this new offence, and thereby delay the punishment for a month or two. It matters little to them that they will ultimately suffer a fate twice or three times as terrible if only they can escape this time. What they desire is to put off temporarily the dreaded moment at whatever cost, so utterly does their heart fail them.

Many of the patients thought the man with the sore eyes should be watched, lest in his despair he should assassinate someone during the night; but no precaution was taken, not even by those who slept next to him. It was remarked, however, that he rubbed his eyes with plaster from the wall and with something else besides, in order that they might appear red when the doctor came round. At last the surgeon threatened to cure him by means of an operation, for when the malady will not yield to ordinary treatment, the practice is to try some more drastic and painful remedy. But the poor devil did not wish to get well-he was either too obstinate or too cowardly, for, however painful the process may be, it cannot be compared with the rods.

The operation consists in seizing the patient by the nape of the neck, taking up the skin, drawing it up as far as possible, and making a double incision, through which is passed a skein of cotton about as thick as the finger. Every day at a fixed hour this skein is pulled backwards and forwards in order that the wound may continually suppurate and not heal. The wretched man endured this torture, which caused him horrible suffering, for several days.

At last he agreed to his discharge, and in less than a day his eyes had quite recovered. As soon as his neck was healed he was sent to the guard-house, which he left next day to receive his first thousand strokes.

The moments preceding that punishment are so appalling that I may be wrong in charging those who fear it with cowardice.

It must indeed be terrible for a man to risk a double or even triple sentence merely in order to postpone it. I have made mention, however, in an earlier chapter, of convicts who have been anxious to leave hospital before the wounds caused by the first instalment of the flogging were healed, and get the whole thing over. Life in the guard-room is certainly worse than in a convict prison.

In some cases flogging tends to embolden a convict. Those who have been often flogged are hardened both in body and mind, and come at last to

regard the punishment as no more than a disagreeable incident no longer to be feared.

One of our fellows in the special section was a converted Tartar; his name was Alexander, though the prisoners used to call him Alexandrina in fun. This man told me that he once received four thousand strokes. He never referred to the incident except with amusement and laughter, but he swore emphatically that if his horde had not reared him on the whip from his earliest years (as was testified by the scars which covered his back and refused to disappear), he would never have been able to endure those four thousand strokes. He blessed his education under the rod.

‘I was beaten for the least thing, Alexander Petrovitch,’ he said one evening as we sat down before the fire. ‘I was beaten without reason for fifteen years, as long as I can remember, and several times a day. Anyone beat me who cared to do so, until at last it made no impression upon me.’

I do not know how it was that he became a soldier; perhaps he was lying, and had always been a deserter and vagabond. Hut I do remember his telling me on that occasion how terrified he was when they condemned him to receive four thousand strokes for having killed one of his officers.

‘I know that they’ll punish me severely,’ he told himself. ‘ Accustomed as I am to being flogged, I may die under it. The devil!’ he said to me, ‘four thousand strokes is no trifle-and every officer in the regiment had his knife into me over this affair. I knew well that it would not be rose-water. I even believed I should die under the rods so I determined to get baptized. Like that there was just a chance they would not flog me: at any rate it was worth trying. My comrades told me it would be no good; but one could never tell, there was always that faint hope of a pardon; they were more lenient to a Christian than a Mohammedan. Anyway, they baptized me and gave me the name of Alexander, but in spite of that I had to take my flogging-I was not spared a single stroke. I was enraged and said to myself: “Wait a bit, and I’ll take you all in”; and, would you believe it, Alexander? I did take them all in. I knew how to look like a dead man; not that I appeared altogether without life, but I certainly appeared to be on the point of breathing my last. They led me in front of the battalion to receive my first thousand; my skin was burning, I began to howl. They gave me my second thousand, and I said to myself: “It’s all over now.” I was frantic and my legs seemed broken, so I fell to the ground with the eyes of a dead man. My face blue, and frothing at the mouth, I no longer breathed. When the doctor came

he said I was on the point of death. I was carried to the hospital and at once returned to life. Twice again they flogged me. What a rage they were in! I took them all in on each occasion. I received my third thousand, and “died” again. On my word, when they gave me the last thousand each stroke ought to have counted for three, it was like a knife in my heart. Oh, how they beat me! They were so severe with me. Oh, that cursed fourth thousand! It was as bad as the first three together. If I had pretended to be dead when I had still two hundred to receive, I think they would have finished me off; but they did not get the better of me.

I had them again and again, for they always thought it was all over with me, and how could they have thought otherwise? The doctor was sure of it. But as for those two hundred, they might have struck as hard as they liked-two hundred or two thousand, it was all the same to me; I only laughed at them. Why? Because, when I was a youngster, I had grown up under the whip. Well, I’m alive and well now, but I have been beaten in the course of my life,’ he murmured indifferently as he ended his story. He seemed to remember it all and to be counting once again the blows he had received.

After a brief silence he said: ‘I can’t count them, nor can anyone else; there are not figures enough.’ He looked at me and burst into a laugh, so simple and natural, that I could not help smiling in return.

‘Do you know, Alexander Petrovitch, when I dream at night I always dream that I’m being flogged. I dream of nothing else.’ He did in fact talk in his sleep, and woke up the other prisoners.

‘What are you yelling about, you demon?’ they would ask him.

This strong, robust fellow was short in stature, about forty-four years of age, active, and good-looking. He lived on good terms with everyone, though he was very fond of taking what did not belong to him, and afterwards got beaten for it. But any convict who stole got beaten for his theft.

For the rest, I will only remark that I was always surprised at the extraordinary good nature, the absence of rancour with which these unhappy men spoke of their punishment and of the officers superintending it. In these stories, which often gave me palpitation of the heart, not a shadow of hatred or bitterness could be detected; they laughed like children at their sufferings.

There was, however, an exception-Mtski. As he was not of the nobility, he had been sentenced to be flogged but had never mentioned the fact to

me. When I asked him if it were true, he replied affirmatively in two brief words but with evident pain and without looking at me. He flushed and when he raised his eyes I saw flames burning in them while his lips, trembled with indignation. I felt that he would not forget, that he could never forget this page of his history. But generally speaking my companions recalled their misfortunes in quite a different spirit. ‘It is impossible,’ I sometimes thought, ‘that they can be conscious of their guilt and not acknowledge the justice of their punishment, especially when their offences were against their own fellows and not against a superior.’ Most, however, did not acknowledge their guilt. I have already said that I never observed in them the least remorse, even for a crime committed against people of their own station. As for those against a superior, they were simply not mentioned. It seems to me that they took a peculiar view of such cases, regarding them as accidents caused by fate, into which they had fallen unwittingly as the result of some extraordinary impulse. The convict always justifies the crimes he has committed against his superiors; he does not trouble himself about the matter. But he admits that the victim cannot share his view, and consequently that proper punishment will restore the balance.

The struggle between authority and the prisoner is very bitter on both sides. What in great measure justifies the criminal in his own eyes is his conviction that the people among whom he has been born and has lived will acquit him. He is certain that the common people will not consider him a renegade, unless, indeed, he has sinned against persons of his own class, against his brethren. In that respect his mind is quite at rest: supported by his conscience, his heart will remain tranquil, and that is the principal thing. He feels himself on firm ground, and has no particular hatred for the knout when once the punishment is over. He knows that it was inevitable, and consoles himself with the knowledge that he was not the first and will not be the last to receive it. Does the soldier detest the Turk whom he fights? Not in the least! Yet he sabres him, hacks him to pieces, kills him.

It must not be thought, however, that all of these stories were told with indifference and in cold blood. When the name of Jerebiatnikof was mentioned it was always with indignation. I made the acquaintance of this officer during my first stay in hospital-though, of course, only by hearsay. Some time later I saw him in command of the prison guard. He was about thirty years old, very stout and very strong, with pendulous red cheeks, white teeth, and a formidable laugh. One could see at once that he was by

no means intelligent. He took the greatest pleasure in whipping and flogging whenever he had to superintend the punishment. I must hasten to add that the other officers looked upon Jerebiatnikof as a monster, and the convicts did the same. That was in the good old days of not so very long ago, when (though it is hard to believe) the executioner delighted in his office, but the strokes were usually administered without enthusiasm.

This lieutenant was an exception: he took real pleasure and satisfaction from inflicting punishment. He had a passion for it, and liked it for its own sake; he looked to this art for unnatural delights in order to excite the base passions of his soul. A prisoner is conducted to the place of punishment; Jerebiatnikof is the officer superintending the execution. After posting two long ranks of soldiers armed with heavy rods, he walks down the line with a satisfied air, and exhorts each one to do his duty conscientiously, otherwise. The soldiers know what ‘otherwise’ means! The criminal is brought out. If he does not yet know Jerebiatnikof, if he is not yet initiated into the mystery, the lieutenant plays him the following trick: it is one of his own inventions, for he is most ingenious in this kind of thing. The prisoner is stripped to the waist, and non-commissioned officers fasten him to the butt end of a musket preparatory to dragging him through the whole length of ‘ Green Street.’ He begs the officer in charge with a plaintive and tearful voice not to have him thrashed too hard, not to double the punishment by any undue severity.

‘Your Excellency!’ cries the unhappy wretch, ‘have pity on me, treat me like a brother, and I’ll pray for you as long as I live. Don’t kill me, show some mercy!’

Jerebiatnikof has been waiting for this. He now suspends the execution and engages the prisoner in conversation, addressing him with a show of feeling and compassion.

‘But, my good fellow,’ he says, ‘what am I to do? It is the law that punishes you-it is the law.’

‘Your Excellency! Your word can make all the difference; have pity upon me.’

‘Do you really think that I feel no pity for you? Do you think it’s any pleasure to me to see you whipped? I’m a man, am I not? Answer me, am I not a man?’

‘Certainly, your Excellency. We know that the officers are our fathers and we their children. Be a venerable father to me,’ the prisoner would cry,

seeing some possibility of escaping punishment.

‘Then, my friend, judge for yourself. You’ve a brain to think with, you know I’m human, and it’s my duty to take compassion on you, sinner though you be.’

‘Your Excellency is absolutely right.’

‘Yes, I ought to show mercy however guilty you may be. But it’s not I who punish you, it’s the law. I serve God and my country, and consequently I commit a grave sin if I mitigate the punishment fixed by law. Just think of that!’

‘Your Excellency!’

‘Well, what am I to do? Well, listen; I know I’m doing wrong, but I’ll do as you wish. I’ll have mercy on you, you shall be punished lightly. But if I do so on this one occasion, if I show mercy, if I punish you lightly, you’ll rely on my doing so another time, and you’ll repeat your folly, what?’

‘Your Excellency, preserve me! Before the throne of the heavenly Creator, I’

‘No, no. You swear you’ll behave yourself?’

‘May the Lord strike me dead here and hereafter.’

‘Don’t swear like that, it’s sinful. I shall believe you if you give me your word.’

‘Your Excellency.’

‘Very well, I’ll have mercy on you because of your tears, your orphan’s tears-you are an orphan, aren’t you?’

‘Orphan on both sides, your Excellency; I’m alone in the world.’

‘Well, because of your orphan’s tears I have pity on you,’ he adds, in a voice so full of emotion that the prisoner could not sufficiently thank God for having sent him so good an officer.

The procession moves forward, the drum rolls, the soldiers brandish their rods. ‘Flog him!’ Jerebiatnikof roars at the top of his voice, ‘ flog him! burn him! skin him alive! Harder! harder! Lay in to the orphan! Give it to him, the rogue.’

The soldiers lay in to the back of the unhappy wretch, whose eyes dart fire, and who howls while Jerebiatnikof runs down the line after him, holding his sides with laughter-he puffs and blows so that he can scarcely hold himself upright. He is happy. He thinks it droll. From time to time his raucous laugh is heard, as he keeps repeating: ‘Flog him! thrash him! the brigand! the orphan!’

He had devised a variation on this theme. Suppose a prisoner has been brought out to undergo his punishment. He begs the lieutenant to have pity on him. This time Jerebiatnikof does not play the hypocrite, but is frank with him.

‘Look, my dear fellow, I shall punish you as you deserve,’ but I can do you one good turn: I’ll not have you fastened to the musket. We’ll try a new arrangement: you run as hard as you can between the lines; each rod will strike you as a matter of course, but it will be over sooner. What do you say to that? Will you try?’

The prisoner, who has listened, full of mistrust and doubt, says to himself: ‘Perhaps this way will not be so bad as the other. If I really put on speed, it won’t last quite so long, and perhaps some of the rods will miss me.’

‘Right, your Excellency, I will.’

‘Good! Carry on!’ cries the lieutenant to the soldiers. He is quite sure that not one rod will spare the back of the unfortunate wretch; the soldier who misses knows what to expect.

The condemned man tries to run the gauntlet, but he has not passed fifteen files before the rods rain upon his poor spine like hail; the hapless wretch shrieks, and falls as if struck by a bullet.

‘ No, your Excellency, I prefer to be flogged in the ordinary way,’ he says, struggling to his feet, pale and frightened. Jerebiatnikof, who has foreseen how the affair will end, holds his sides and bursts out laughing.

It would, however, be impossible to relate all the diversions invented by this man, and all the stories told about him.

My companions used also to speak of a Lieutenant Smekaloff who fulfilled the functions of governor before the arrival of our present chief. They spoke of Jerebiatnikof with indifference-without hatred, but also without exalting his achievements. They did not praise him, they simply despised him; but at the name of Smekaloff the whole prison burst into a chorus of acclaim. The lieutenant was by no means fond of administering the rods; there was nothing in him of Jerebiatnikof’s disposition. How was it, then, that the convicts remembered his punishments, stern as they were, with sweet satisfaction? How did he manage to please them? How did he win the popularity he certainly enjoyed?

My fellow convicts, like most Russians, were ready to forget their tortures if a kind word was said to them; I state the fact without attempting

to analyse or examine it. It is not difficult, then, to gain the affections of such a people and become popular. Lieutenant Smekaloff had achieved popularity in this way, and when the punishments which he had directed were referred to it was always with a measure of appreciation.

‘He was as kind as a father,’ the convicts would often sigh, comparing him with his successor.

He was a simple-minded man, and good-hearted in his own way. There are some officers who are naturally kind and merciful, but who are both unpopular and objects of scorn. Smekaloff, on the other hand, had so conducted himself that all the prisoners had a special regard for him. This was due to certain innate qualities which those who possess them do not understand. Strange as it seems, there are men who, though far from kind, yet have the gift of making themselves popular. They do not despise those under their authority; that, I think, is the cause of their success. They do not lord it over others; they have no sense of caste; they have the common touch although they are high-born, and the people immediately sense it. They will do anything for that type; they will gladly exchange the mildest and most humane of men for the sternest master. And if with those gifts he has a genial way about him, why, then he is beyond price.

Lieutenant Smekaloff, as I have said, sometimes dealt out very severe punishments. But he seemed to do so in such a way that the prisoners felt no rancour against him. On the contrary, they recalled his whippings with laughter. He did not punish frequently, for he had no artistic imagination, and had invented only one practical joke, which amused him for almost a whole year. He was proud of that joke, probably because it was his sole achievement, and indeed it was not without an element of humour.

Smekaloff himself assisted at the executions, joking all the time, and laughing at the victim, whom he questioned about most out-of-the-way things such as his private life. He did this without any evil motive but simply because he really wished to know something of the man’s affairs. A chair is brought, together with the rods which are to be used. The lieutenant sits down and lights his long pipe; the prisoner implores mercy.

‘No, comrade, lie down. What’s the matter with you?’

The convict stretches himself on the ground with a sigh.

‘Can you read fluently?’

‘Of course, your Excellency. I’m baptized, and I was taught to read when I was a child.’

‘Then read this.’

The convict already knows what it is he is asked to read; he knows, too, how the reading will end, because this joke has been repeated more than thirty times. Smekaloff, how-’ ever, knows also that the convict is not his dupe any more than is the soldier who now holds the rod suspended over the unhappy victim’s back. The convict begins to read; the soldier, armed with his rod, stands motionless. Smekaloff ceases even to smoke, raises bis hand, and waits for a word agreed upon beforehand. At that word, which from some double meaning might be interpreted as the order to start, the lieutenant lets fall his hand and the flogging begins. The officer bursts into fits of laughter, and the troops all laugh with him; the executioner laughs too, as does the victim himself.

CHAPTER III

THE HOSPITAL (continued)

I have spoken of corporal punishment and those responsible for its administration, because I obtained a very clear idea of the subject during my stay in hospital. Until then my knowledge was entirely dependent upon hearsay. In our room were confined all military prisoners who were to receive the rods, as well as those from the local garrison.

During my first few days I watched all that went on around me with such greedy eyes that these strange customs, these men who had just been flogged, or were about to be flogged, left upon me a terrible impression. I was worried and frightened.

As I listened to the conversation or narratives of other prisoners on the subject, I asked myself questions which I tried in vain to solve. I wanted to know all about the various kinds of punishment and their degrees, and to learn what the convicts themselves thought about it. I tried to imagine the psychological condition of a man who had been flogged.

It rarely happened, as I have already said, that the prisoner approached the fatal moment in cold blood, even if he had been beaten several times before. The condemned man experiences a fear which is very terrible, but purely physical-an unconscious fear which disturbs his moral nature.

During my years of imprisonment I was able to study at leisure those prisoners who were anxious to leave the hospital and undergo the remainder of their sentence. This interruption of the punishment is always required by the doctor assisting at the execution.

If the number of strokes to be received is too great for them to be administered all at once, it is divided according to

1 What I have written about corporal punishment took place during my time in prison. I am told that things are now very different and that further reforms are contemplated.

advice given by the doctor on the spot. It is for him to decide whether a prisoner is in a condition to undergo the whole of his punishment, or if his life is in danger.

Five hundred, one thousand, and even one thousand five hundred strokes with the stick may be administered at once; but if there is question of two or three thousand the sentence is carried out in two or three doses.

Those whose backs had healed after the first series, and who were to undergo a second, were sad, sombre, and silent on the day they went out and the evening before. They were in a state bordering on torpor; they engaged in no conversation, and remained perfectly silent.

It is worthy of remark that prisoners avoid speaking to those who are going to be flogged, and certainly never make any allusion to the subject, either by way of consolation or in superfluous words. No attention whatever is paid to them,! which is certainly the best thing for the prisoners. There are, however, exceptions.

One convict named Orloff, of whom I have already spoken, was sorry that his back did not heal more quickly: he was anxious to obtain his discharge and take the rest of his flogging, after which he would have to join a convoy and intended to escape during the journey. He had a passionate, ardent nature which was concentrated upon that single object.

A cunning rascal, he seemed very pleased when he entered hospital; he was, however, in a state of abnormal excitement, though he endeavoured to conceal it. He had been afraid of being left on the ground and of dying before he had undergone half of his punishment. While standing his trial he had heard that the authorities were taking certain measures in his case, as a result of which, he thought, he could not survive. But having received the first dose, his courage revived.

When he arrived at the hospital I had never seen such wounds, but he was in the best spirits. He now hoped to be able to live. The stories which had reached him were untrue, or the execution would not have been interrupted.

He now began to think of a long Siberian journey, possibly of escaping to freedom in the fields and forests.

Two days after leaving hospital he returned to die-on the very couch which he had occupied during my stay there. He had been unable to support the second half of his punishment. For the rest, I have already spoken of this man.

All the prisoners without exception, even the most pusillanimous, even those who were tormented beforehand night and day with dread, faced suffering courageously when it came. I scarcely ever heard groans during

the night following an execution; our people, as a rule, knew how to endure pain.

I frequently questioned my companions about this pain in an attempt to discover with what kind of suffering it might be compared. It was no idle curiosity that urged me. I repeat, I was moved and frightened. But it was all in vain; I could get no satisfactory reply.

‘It burns like fire!’ was the general answer. They all said the same thing.

First I tried to question Mtski. ‘It burns like fire!

Like hell! It seems as if one’s back were in a furnace.’

One day I reached an interesting conclusion which may or may not have been well founded, although the opinion of the convicts themselves confirms my view, namely, that the rods are the most terrible punishment in use among us.

At first it seems absurd, impossible, yet five hundred strokes of the rods, four hundred even, are enough to kill a man. Beyond five hundred death is almost certain. The most robust man will be unable to survive a thousand strokes, whereas five hundred with the stick are endured without much inconvenience, and without the least risk in the world of losing one’s life. A man of ordinary build can take up to a thousand with the stick without danger, and even two thousand will not kill a man of ordinary strength and constitution. All the convicts declared that rods were worse than sticks or ramrods.

‘Rods hurt more and for longer!’ they said.

They must hurt more than sticks, that is quite certain, for they cause a far greater shock to the nervous system, which they excite beyond measure. I do not know whether such people exist to-day, but not long ago there were some who derived such pleasure from the whipping of a victim that they reminded one of the Marquis de Sade or the Marchioness Brinvilliers. I think such delight must consist in a kind of horror, and that these noble ladies and gentlemen must have experienced pain and pleasure at the same time.

There are people who, like tigers, are greedy for blood. Those who enjoy unlimited power over the flesh, blood, and soul of their fellow creatures, of the brethren in Christ; those, I say, who enjoy that power and can so utterly degrade another being made in the image of God, are incapable of resisting their desires and their thirst for excitement. Tyranny is a habit which may be developed until at last it becomes a disease. I declare that the noblest nature

can become so hardened and bestial that nothing distinguishes it from that of a wild animal. Blood and power intoxicate; they help to develop callousness and debauchery. The mind then becomes capable of the most abnormal cruelty, which it regards as pleasure; the man and the citizen are swallowed up in the tyrant; and then a return to human dignity, repentance, moral resurrection, becomes almost impossible.

It cannot be denied that the possibility of such licence has a contagious effect on the whole of society. A society which looks upon such things with an indifferent eye is already infected to the marrow. In a word, the right granted to a man of inflicting corporal punishment on his fellows is one of the plague-spots of our nation. It is the means of annihilating all civic spirit; it contains in germ the elements of inevitable, imminent decomposition.

Society despises the professional executioner, but not one who is of gentle blood. Every manufacturer, every foreman, must feel a measure of satisfaction when he reflects that the workman and his family are entirely dependent upon him. A generation does not, I am sure, soon extirpate from itself what is hereditary. A man cannot renounce what is in his blood, what has been transmitted to him with his mother’s milk; these revolutions are not quickly accomplished. It is not enough to confess one’s fault-that is very little; very little indeed. It must be rooted out, and that takes time.

I have spoken of the executioners. The instincts of an executioner exist potentially in almost every one of my contemporaries, but those animal propensities have not developed in all alike. When they stifle all other faculties, the man becomes a hideous monster.

There are two kinds of executioner, those who choose the function and those upon whom it is imposed by duty or in virtue of their office. The former is in all respects more vile than the salaried executioner, upon whom, nevertheless, men look with repugnance, and who inspires them with disgust, with an instinctive, an almost mystical terror. Whence comes this almost superstitious horror for the one, when the other is regarded with indifference if not with indulgence?

I know strange examples of honourable men, kindly and esteemed by all their friends, who yet saw fit to have a culprit whipped until he begged for mercy; it seemed quite natural to them, a measure recognized as indispensable. If the victim did not choose to cry out, his executioner, whom in other respects I should consider a good man, looked upon it as a personal affront. He meant, in the first instance, to inflict only a light

punishment, but directly he failed to hear the habitual supplication: ‘Your Excellency! Have mercy! Be a father to me. Let me thank God for you all my life!’ he became furious, and ordered fifty more strokes, hoping thus at last to force the desired appropriate howls and supplications; and at last they came. ‘Impossible! The man is too insolent,’ he cries in all seriousness.

As for the official executioner, he is a convict chosen for this purpose. He is apprenticed to an old hand, and as soon as he knows his trade he resides in the prison, where he lives alone. He has a room, which he shares with no one. Sometimes, indeed, he has a separate establishment, but he is always under guard. A man is not a machine. Although he whips by virtue of his office, he is sometimes maddened, and beats for pleasure. Although he entertains no malice towards his victim, a desire to show his skill in the art of whipping may sharpen his vanity. He works as an artist; he knows well that he is a reprobate and that he excites universal, superstitious dread. That very fact is bound to influence him and arouse his brutal instincts.

Even little children say that the executioner has neither father nor mother. Strange!

All the executioners I have known were intelligent men with a degree of self-conceit. The latter had developed as a result of that contempt with which they invariably met, and was strengthened, perhaps, by their consciousness of that fear with which they inspired their victims, and of their power over such unfortunate wretches as fell into their hands.

It may well be, moreover, that the theatrical paraphernalia surrounding them gave rise to a certain arrogance. I had an opportunity over a period of time to meet and observe at close quarters an ordinary executioner. He was a man about forty, muscular, dry, and with an agreeable, intelligent face surrounded by long curly hair. His manners were quiet and grave, and his general demeanour was in no way objectionable. He replied clearly and sensibly to every question I asked him, but with an air of condescension as if he were in some way my superior. The officers of the guard addressed him with a respect which he fully appreciated; for which reason, in presence of his superiors, he became polite and more dignified than ever.

He was never anything but studiously polite, though I am sure that when I spoke to him he felt immeasurably superior to his interlocutor. I could read that in his countenance. Sometimes in summer, when it was very hot, he would be sent under escort to kill dogs in the town with a long, very thin spear. These wandering animals multiplied with such prodigious rapidity,

and became so dangerous during the dog days, that the authorities decided that the executioner be ordered to destroy them. This degrading office in no way injured his dignity. It was worth observing with what gravity he walked through the streets accompanied by his escort; how, with a single glance, he frightened the women and children; and how, from the height of his grandeur, he looked down upon the passers-by.

Executioners enjoy a leisured existence. They have money to travel in comfort and drink vodka. They derive most of their income from presents slipped into their hands by condemned prisoners before execution. When they have to deal with a convict who is rich, they fix a sum to be paid in proportion to the victim's wealth, and will sometimes exact thirty roubles or more. The executioner has no right to spare his victim, and he does so at the risk of his own back; but for a suitable present he will agree not to strike too hard. He almost always receives what he asks, for in the event of refusal he will flog without mercy-as, indeed, he has the right to do. He may sometimes demand a large sum from a poor man. Then all the victim's relatives bestir themselves. They bargain, try to beat him down, and implore his leniency; but woe betide if they fail to satisfy him. In such a case the superstitious fear inspired by the executioner stands him in good stead. I had been told the most wonderful things- that, for instance, the executioner can kill his man with a single blow.

'Is this your experience?' I asked.

'Maybe. Who knows?' If any doubt remained, their tone seemed to convey the answer. They also told me that an executioner can strike in such a way that the victim will not feel the least pain, and without leaving a scar.

Even when he has been bribed not to whip too severely, he administers the first stroke with all his might. It is the custom! He continues with less severity, especially if he has been paid handsomely.

I do not know why this is done. It may be in order, as it were, to prepare the condemned for the succeeding blows, which will appear less painful by comparison; or it may be intended to frighten the criminal, so that he may understand with whom he has to deal; or it may be no more than vanity, to display the executioner's own strength. In any case, he is pleased with himself before an execution, and conscious of his power and vigour. He is the central figure of the drama; the public admires him and is filled with terror. Accordingly, it is not without satisfaction that he cries out to his

victim: ‘Now then, you’re for it!’-traditional and fatal words preceding the first blow.

It is difficult to imagine a human being degraded to such a point.

On my first day in hospital I listened attentively to the convicts’ stories which broke the monotony of the long days.

In the morning, the doctor’s visit was the first diversion. Then came dinner, which it will be believed was the most important episode of our daily routine. The portions varied according to each man’s condition: some received nothing but broth with groats in it; others only gruel; others a kind of semolina, which was much liked. The convicts ended by becoming soft and fastidious. The convalescents received a piece of boiled beef. The best food, which was reserved for the scorbutic patients, consisted of roast beef with onions, horse-radish, and sometimes a small glass of spirits. The bread was, according to one’s illness, black or brown; the precision observed in distributing the rations would make the patients laugh.

There were some who took absolutely nothing. Portions were exchanged in such a way that the food intended for one patient was eaten by another; those who were on low diet and received only small rations bought those of the scorbutic patients; others would give any price for meat. There were some who ate two entire portions, but it cost them a good deal, for the usual price was five kopecks apiece. If no one in our room had meat to sell the warder was sent to another section, and if he could obtain none there he was asked to get some from the military infirmary-the free infirmary, as we called it.

There were always patients ready to sell their rations. Poverty was the rule, and those who possessed a few kopecks used to send out to buy cakes and white bread, or other delicacies, at the market. Warders executed these commissions without reward. The most unpleasant period was that following dinner. Some went to sleep, if they had no other way of passing their time, others either wrangled or told stories in a loud voice.

When no new patients were brought in, things became exceedingly dull. The arrival of a new patient always caused a certain amount of excitement, especially when no one knew anything about him; he was questioned about his past life.

The most interesting ones were the birds of passage: they always had something to tell.

Of course, they never spoke of their own ‘peccadilloes’: if a prisoner did not volunteer information on that subject no one asked questions. All he was asked was, where he came from, who were with him on the road, what state the road was in, where he was being taken to, etc. Stimulated by the stories of the newcomers, our comrades in their turn began to tell what they had seen and done. The principal topics of conversation were the convoys, those in command of them, and the men who carried out sentences.

About this time, that is to say, towards evening, convicts who had been scourged came up. As I have said, their arrival always created something of a sensation; but it was not every day that we welcomed one of these, and everybody was bored to extinction when nothing happened to relieve the general sense of boredom. It seemed, then, as though the sick themselves were exasperated at the very sight of those near them. Sometimes they squabbled violently.

The convicts were in high glee when a ‘madman’ was taken off for medical examination. Those who had been sentenced to scourging sometimes feigned insanity in hope of escaping punishment. The trick was perhaps found out, or they themselves might voluntarily abandon the pretence. When that happened, men who for several days had done all sorts of wild things suddenly became steady and sensible people, quieted down, and, with a gloomy smile, asked to be discharged from hospital. Neither their fellow convicts nor the doctors spoke a word of protest against their deceit, or made the least reference to their mad pranks. Their names were put down on a list without a word being said, and they were simply taken elsewhere; after the lapse of some days they returned with their backs all wounds and blood.

On the other hand, the arrival of a genuine lunatic was one of the most distressing sights. A mental patient who was gay and lively, who shouted, danced and sang, was at first greeted with enthusiasm.

‘Here’s fun!’ said they, as they watched the grimaces and contortions of the unhappy wretch. But the sight was horrible and depressing-I have never been able to look upon a madman calmly or with indifference. There was one who spent three weeks in our room; we would have hidden ourselves, had there been any place in which to hide. When things were at the worst another case was brought in and he affected me profoundly.

In the first year, or, to be more exact, during the first month of my exile, I went to work with a gang of kiln men to the tileries which were situated

two versts from prison. Our job was to repair the kiln in which the bricks were baked during the summer. That morning Mtski and B. pointed out to me a non-commissioned officer who was superintendent of the works. This man was a Pole already well on in years (he was at least sixty). Tall, lean, of decent and even somewhat imposing exterior, he had done long service in Siberia Although he belonged to the lower classes he had been a soldier at the time of the 1830 rising; Mtski and B. loved and esteemed him. He was always reading the Vulgate. I spoke to him, and found his conversation agreeable and intelligent; he could tell an interesting story; he was straightforward and of excellent temper. For two years I never saw him again, but only heard that he had become a ‘case,’ and that they were inquiring into it. And then one fine day they brought him into our room; he had gone raving mad.

He came in yelling, shouting with laughter, and began to dance in the middle of the room with indecent gestures which recalled the dance known as Kamarinskaia.

The convicts were wild with enthusiasm; but, for my part, account for it as you will, I felt utterly miserable. Three days later there was utter confusion: he picked violent quarrels with everyone, fought, groaned, and sang in the dead of night; his aberrations were so outlandish and disgusting as to make our very stomachs turn.

He feared nobody. They put him in a strait jacket, but we were no better off, for he went on quarrelling and fighting all round. At the end of three weeks we unanimously petitioned the chief physician to have the fellow transferred to the other convict ward. But after two days the patients there had him moved back again. As there were now two madmen, each ward continually passed them from one to the other until it was agreed that each should take one at a time, turn and turn about. Everyone breathed more freely when they were removed altogether.

There was another lunatic whom I remember-a very remarkable creature. During the summer they had brought in a condemned man who looked like a solid and vigorous fellow of about forty-five years. His face was sombre and sad, pitted with small-pox, and with little red swollen eyes. He settled in next to me. He was extremely quiet, and spoke to nobody, and seemed utterly absorbed in his own deep reflections.

When night fell he addressed me, and, without a word of preface, told me in a hurried and excited way-as if he were confiding some awful secret-

that he was to have two thousand strokes with the rod; but that he had nothing to fear, as Colonel G.'s daughter was taking steps on his behalf.

I looked at him with surprise, feeling sure that a colonel's daughter could be of little use in such a matter. I had not yet realized what was wrong with him, for he had been admitted to hospital as physically sick, not as a mental case. I then asked him from what illness he suffered.

He answered that he knew nothing about it; that he had been sent here for some reason or other; but that he was in good health, and that the colonel's daughter had fallen in love with him. Two weeks before she had passed in a carriage before the guard-house, where he was looking through the barred window, and had fallen head over ears in love at the mere sight of him.

After that she had visited the guard-house three times on various pretexts. The first time she had come with her father, ostensibly to visit her brother who was the officer on duty; on the second occasion she had accompanied her mother, to distribute alms to the prisoners. As she passed by she had muttered that she loved him and would get him out of prison.

He told me all this nonsense with minute and exact details; all of it pure figment of his poor disordered brain. He believed whole-heartedly that his punishment would be graciously remitted. He spoke quite calmly and with full assurance of the passionate love he had inspired in the young lady.

That odd, romantic delusion about a young gentlewoman's love for a man of nearly fifty years, afflicted with a gloomy and disfigured face, only proved the terrible effect produced by fear of the punishment he was to receive upon this poor, timid creature.

It may be that he had really seen someone through the bars of the window, and insanity, germinating under excess of fear, had taken shape and form in the present delusion.

This unfortunate soldier, who, you may be certain, had never given a thought to young ladies, had begotten this romance in his diseased imagination, and clung convulsively to this desperate hope. I listened without interrupting him, and then repeated the story to other patients. They were naturally curious, and questioned him; but he preserved a chastely discreet silence.

Next day the doctor examined him. As the poor mat swore there was nothing wrong with him, he was entered on the list of those to be discharged. When we learned that the physician had scribbled '*Sanat. est*'

against his name it was much too late to warn him. Besides, we were far from certain ourselves what was really the matter with the man.

The error lay with the authorities who had sent him to us without specifying the reason for requiring his admittance to hospital-an unpardonable oversight.

However, two days later the unhappy creature was taken out to be scourged. We understood that he was dumb founded by finding, contrary to his fixed expectation, that he really was to take his punishment. To the last moment he thought he would be pardoned, and when marched out in front of the battalion he began to cry for help.

As there was no longer room in our ward they sent him to the infirmary. I heard that for eight entire days he did not utter a single word, paralysed with misery and bewilderment When his back was healed they took him away, and I neve heard any more about him.

As to the treatment of the sick and the remedies prescribed those who were but slightly indisposed paid no attention whatever to doctor’s orders, and never took their medicine. Generally speaking, those who were more seriously ill were strict in their observance of medical advice. They took their mixtures and powders, and looked after themselves with the greatest care. But they preferred external to internal remedies

Cupping-glasses, leeches, cataplasms, blood-lettings-in all which things the common people have so blind a confidence -were held in high honour in our hospital. Inflictions of that sort were regarded with approval.

I noticed a curious phenomenon which interested me Men who could endure without a murmur the frightful tortures caused by the rods and scourges, howled, grimaced and moaned at the least little ailment. Whether it was all pretence or not I really cannot say.

We had cuppings of a quite peculiar kind. The machine with which instantaneous incisions are made was out of order, so they had to use the lancet.

Twelve incisions are necessary for a cupping; with a machine these are not painful at all, for it makes them instantaneously; with the lancet it is a different matter altogether -the lancet cuts slowly, and causes the patient to suffer. If you have to make ten openings there will be about one hundred and twenty pricks, and these are very painful. I myself had 10 undergo it: besides pain, it caused great nervous irritation, hut the suffering was not so great that one could not help groaning if one tried.

It was laughable to see great, hulking fellows wriggling and howling. One could not help comparing them with a certain type of man who is firm and calm enough in a crisis, but ill-tempered and capricious in the bosom of their families for no reason at all. If dinner is late, for example, they'll scold and swear; everything annoys them and they fall out with everyone; the more comfort they have, the more troublesome are they to other people. Characters of this sort, which are common enough among the lower orders, were all too numerous in prison because each man's company was forced upon his neighbour.

Sometimes the prisoners chaffed or insulted the tetchy fellows of whom I have been speaking. These would then hide their discontent: it seemed that a word of abuse was enough to bridle their tongues.

Oustiantsef had no use for a man who whined under the lancet and never let slip an opportunity of rebuking the delinquent. Besides, he was fond of scolding; it was a sort of necessity with him, engendered by illness and also his stupidity. He would gaze at you fixedly for some time, and then treat you to a long speech of threatening and warning, all in a tone of calm and impartial conviction. It seemed as though he thought his function in this world was to watch over order and morality in general.

'He must poke his nose into everything,' the prisoners used to laugh, for they pitied him, and did what they could to avoid conflict with him.

'Can he talk? Why, three wagons wouldn't be too many to carry away all his chatter.'

'Well, why not? No one's going to put up with a mere idiot. What's there to cry out about at the mere touch of a lancet? What harm in the world do you fancy *that* is going to do you?'

'Hear, hear!' another man interrupts. 'Cupping's a mere nothing. I know by experience. But the most horrid thing is when they keep pulling your ears. That just shuts you up.'

All the prisoners burst out laughing.

'Have you had them pulled?'

'By Jove, yes, I should think he had.'

'That's why they stick upright, like hop-poles.'

The fellow in question, Chapkin by name, certainly had long, pointed ears. He had led a vagabond life, but was still quite young, intelligent, and quiet. He used to talk with a sort of dry humour and a show of gravity which made his stories most amusing.

‘How in the world was I to know you had had your ears pulled and lengthened, your brainless idiot? ‘ began Oustiantsef, once more wrathfully addressing Chapkin, who, however, vouchsafed no attention to his companion’s obliging apostrophe.

‘ Well, who did pull your ears for you? ‘ someone asked.

‘Why, the police superintendent, of course! Our offence was wandering abroad and sleeping in the open. We had just arrived at K, I and another tramp called Eptinie; he had no surname, that fellow. On the way we had stayed a little while in the hamlet of Tolmina; yes, there’s actually a hamlet called Tolmina. Well, we get to the town, and are just looking around to see if there’s any business doing, after which we mean to flit. You know, out in the open country you’re as free as air, but it’s not exactly the same thing in the town. First we go into a public-house, and as we open the door we give a sharp look round. What should we see but a sunburnt fellow in a German coat all out at elbows. He walks straight up to us. After chatting about one thing and another he asks us:

‘“Excuse my asking, but have you passports?”

‘“No, we haven’t.”

‘“Nor have we. Incidentally, I’ve a couple of mates with me, also in the service of General Cuckoo.[1] We’ve been seeing a bit of life, and just now haven’t a penny to bless ourselves with. May I take the liberty of asking you to be so good as to order a quart of brandy?”

“‘With the greatest pleasure,” we answer. So we drink together, and they tell us of a place where there’s a real good stroke of business to be done-a house at the end of the town belonging to a wealthy merchant fellow; lots of good things there, so we make up our minds to have a shot at it during the night. There are five of us, and just as we’re starting on the job they nab us, take us to the police-station, and then before the superintendent. “I shall examine them myself,” he says. He lights his pipe, and they bring him in a cup of tea. He was a sturdy fellow with whiskers. Besides us five, there were three other tramps just brought in. You know, comrades, that there’s nothing in this world more funny than a tramp, because he always forgets everything he’s done. You may cudgel his head till you’re tired, but you’ll always get the same answer, that he’s forgotten all about everything.

‘The police superintendent then turns to me and asks me squarely:

‘“Who are you?”

‘I answer just like all the rest of them:

‘“I’ve forgotten all about it, sir.”

‘“Just you wait; I’ve a word or two more to say to you. I know your face.”

‘Then he gives me a good long stare; but I hadn’t seen him anywhere before, that’s a fact.

‘Then he asks another of them: “Who are you?”

‘“Mizzle-and-scud, sir.”

‘“They call you Mizzle-and-scud?”

‘“Precisely that, sir.”

‘“Right, you’re Mizzle-and-scud! And you?” to a third.

‘“Along-o’-him, sir.”

‘“But what’s your name-your name?”

‘“Me? I’m called Along-o’-him, sir.”

‘“Who gave you that name, hound?”

1 i.e. tramps like himself who wander through the forests and hear the birds sing.

‘ “ Very worthy people, sir. There are lots of worthy people about; nobody knows that better than you, sir.”

‘“And who may these *worthy people* be?”

‘“O Lord! It’s slipped my memory, sir. Please, please forgive me.”

‘“So you’ve forgotten them, all of them, these *worthy people?”*

‘“Every mother’s son of them, sir.”

‘“But you must have had relations-a father, a mother. Do you remember them?”

‘“I suppose I must have had, sir; but I’ve forgotten about ‘em, my memory’s so bad. Now I come to think about it, I’m sure I had some, sir.”

‘“But where have you been living till now?”

‘ “ In the woods, sir.”

‘“Always in the woods?”

‘“Always in the woods.”

“‘Winter too?”

‘“Never saw any winter, sir.”

‘ “ Get along with you! And you-what’s your name?”

‘ “ Hatchets-and-axes, sir.”

‘“And yours?”

‘ “ Sharp-and-mum, sir.”

‘“And you?”

‘ “ Keen-and-spry, sir.”

‘“And not a soul of you remembers anything that ever happened to you.”

‘“Not a mother’s son of us anything whatever.”

‘He couldn’t help it; he laughed out loud. Then all the others began to laugh at seeing him laugh! But that doesn’t always happen. Sometimes they lay about them, these police, with their fists, till every tooth in your jaw is smashed. Devilish big and strong these fellows, I can tell you.

‘“Take them off to the lock-up,” said he. “I’ll see to them in a bit. As for you” (meaning me), “you wait here! Just sit down over there, will you.”

‘“Over there” was paper, a pen, and ink; so thinks I, “What’s he up to now?”

‘“Sit down,” he says again. “Take the pen and write.”

‘And then he goes and seizes my ear and gives it a good pull.

I looked at him in the sort of way the devil may look at a priest.

‘“I can’t write, sir.”

‘“Write, write!”

‘“Have mercy on me, sir!”

‘“Write your best. Write, write!”

‘And all the while he keeps pulling my ear, pulling and twisting. Pals, I ‘d rather have had three hundred strokes of the cat; I tell you it was hell.

‘“Write, write!” was all he said.’

‘ Had the fellow gone mad? What the hell was he up to?’

‘No, he wasn’t mad. A little while before, a secretary had done a “job” at Tobolsk: he had robbed the local treasury and gone off with the money. He had very big ears, just as 1 have. They had published the fact all over the country. I answered to that description; that’s why he tormented me with his “Write, write!” He wanted to find out if I could write, and to see my hand.’

‘A regular sharp chap that! Did it hurt?’

‘O Lord! Don’t say a word about it, I beg.’

Everybody burst out laughing.

‘Well, you did write?’

‘What the deuce was there to write? I set my pen going over the paper, and did it to such good account that he left off torturing me. He just gave me a dozen thumps, regula-tion allowance, and then let me go about my business: to prison, that is.’

‘Do you really know how to write?’

‘Of course I did. What d’ye mean? Used to very well; forgotten the whole blessed thing, though, ever since pens came into fashion.’

Thanks to the patients’ gossip time passed fairly quickly. But even so, Lord, how wearied and bored we were! Those long days were suffocating in their monotony-one exactly like another. If only I had had a single book!

For all that, I often went into hospital, especially in the early days of my imprisonment, either because I was ill or because I needed rest, just to get out of the barrack where life was indeed made burdensome and which was far worse even than the hospital, especially as regards its effect upon moral sentiment and good feeling. We gentlemen were the abiding objects of envious dislike: incessant quarrels picked with us, ourselves for ever in the wrong, and looks filled with menacing hate unceasingly directed at us! Here, in the sick-rooms, one lived on a sort of footing of equality, there was something of comradeship.

The most melancholy moment of the twenty-four hours was evening, when night set in. We went to bed very early. A smoky lamp just gave us one point of light at the far end of the room, near the door. In our corner we were in almost complete darkness. The air was pestilential, stifling. Some of the patients could not get to sleep; they would rise and remain for an hour together sitting on their beds, with their heads bent, as though in deep reflection. I used to watch them closely, trying to guess of what they might be thinking; thus I tried to kill time. Then I became lost in my own reverie; the past came before me, showing itself to my imagination in large powerful outlines filled with highlights and massive shadows; details that at any other time would have remained forgotten presented themselves with vivid force, leaving upon me an impression that would have been impossible under any other circumstances.

Then I would begin to muse dreamily on the future. When should I leave this confinement, this dreadful prison? Whither betake myself? What would then happen to me? Would I return to the place of my birth? So I brooded and brooded until hope revived in my soul.

Another time I would begin to count, one, two, three, etc. to see if sleep could be won that way. I would sometimes get as far as three thousand and still be as wakeful as ever. Then someone would turn in his bed.

Then there was Oustiantsef’s coughing, that cough of the advanced consumptive. He would groan feebly, and stammer: ‘My God, I’ve sinned, I’ve sinned!’

How frightful it was, that voice of the sick man, that broken, dying voice, in the midst of that silence so dead and so complete! In a corner there are some patients not yet asleep, stretched on their pallets, and talking in low voices. One of them is telling the story of his life, all about things infinitely far away-things that are for ever fled. He is talking of his wandering through the world, of his children, his wife, and his life in the old days. And the very accent of the man’s voice tells you that all those things belong to an irrevocable past, that he is as a limb cut off from the body of mankind and cast aside. There is another, listening intently to what he is saying. A weak, feeble sort of muttering and murmuring comes to one’s ear from far off in the dreary room, a sound as of some distant river… I remember how, one winter’s night that seemed as if it would never end, I heard a story which seemed at first like the stammerings of a soul in nightmare or the delirium of fever. Here it is.

CHAPTER IV

AKOULKA’S HUSBAND

Late one night at about eleven o’clock I had been sleeping some time and woke up with a start. The wan, fitful flame of the distant lamp barely illumined the room. Nearly everyone was fast asleep, even Oustiantsef; in the quiet of the night I heard his laboured respiration, the rattling in his throat with every breath. Outside, in the corridor, sounded the muffled tread of an approaching patrol. A rifle-butt struck the floor with a low, dull sound.

The door opened; the corporal entered and counted the sick, stepping softly about the room. After a minute or so he withdrew, leaving a fresh sentry at the door; the patrol went off, and silence reigned once more. It was only then that I noticed not far from me two prisoners who were not asleep; they seemed to be holding a muttered conversation. That was by no means uncommon, for it often happened that a couple of patients whose beds adjoined and who had not exchanged a word for weeks, would all of a sudden break out into conversation in the dead of night, and one of them would tell the other his life-story.

They had probably been talking for some considerable time. I had not heard the beginning of it, and could not at first grasp what they were saying; but little by little I grew familiar with the muttered sounds, and understood all that was going on. I had not the least desire to sleep, and could not but listen.

One man was telling his story with some warmth, propped up on his elbow and leaning towards his companion. He was plainly excited to no little degree; the necessity of speech was upon him.

The other sat on his pallet with a gloomy and indifferent air, his legs stretched out flat on the mattress. Now and again he murmured some reply, more out of politeness than interest, and continually took snuff from a horn box. This was a soldier named Tchérévine from the penal battalion, a morose, cold-reasoning pedant, an idiot full of self-esteem. The narrator was one Chichkof: he was about thirty years old, a civilian convict whom I had never observed; indeed, during the whole time I was in prison I could never work up the smallest interest in him, for he was a conceited, heady fellow.

Sometimes he would hold his tongue for weeks together, and look sulky and brutal enough for anything; then all of a sudden he would interrupt a conversation, behave outrageously, fly into a white-hot rage about nothing at all, and tell long, ridiculous yarns about one barrack or another, blowing abuse on all the world, and acting like a man beside himself. Then someone would give him a hiding, and he would have another fit of silence. He was a mean and cowardly fellow, and the object of general contempt. Short of stature, he had little flesh on him, but his wandering gaze sometimes became abstracted and seemed to reflect some vague form of thought. When he told you anything he worked himself into a fever of excitement, gesticulated wildly, broke off suddenly and passed to another subject, lost himself in fresh details, and at last forgot altogether what he was talking about. He was often embroiled in argument, was Chichkof, and as he poured abuse on his adversary, he spoke with a sentimental whine and was affected almost to tears. He was not a bad hand at playing the balalaika, and had a weakness for it; on festival days he would display his prowess as a dancer when encouraged by others, and he danced by no means badly. It was quite easy to make him do what you wanted-not that he was compliant by nature, but he liked to please and to strike up an intimacy.

For some considerable while that night I could not follow Chichkof's story. It seemed to me as though he were constantly rambling from the point to talk of something else. Perhaps he noticed that Tchérévine paid little attention to his narrative, but I fancy that he was minded to overlook this indifference so as not to take offence.

'… When he went out on business,' he continued, 'everyone saluted him politely, paid him every respect-a fellow with money, that.'

'You say he was in some trade or other.'

'Yes; trade indeed! The trading class in my country is wretchedly poor-poverty-stricken, in fact. The women walk miles to the river to fetch water for their gardens. They wear themselves to the bone, and yet when winter comes they haven't enough to make even cabbage soup. I tell you it's starvation. But that fellow had a good parcel of land, which was cultivated by his three serfs. He had bee-hives, too, and sold his honey; he was also a cattle-dealer, and was a much respected man in the neighbourhood. He was aged and quite grey; his seventy years lay heavy on his old bones. When he came to market in his fox-fur pelisse everyone saluted him.

'"Good day, Aukoudim Trophimtych!"

‘ “ Good day,” he’d return. “How are you getting along?” He never despised any man.

‘“God keep you, Aukoudim Trophimtych!”

‘“How goes business with you?”

‘“Business is as good as tallow’s white with me; and how’s yours, dad?”

‘“We’ve just got a sufficient livelihood to pay the price of sin; always sweating over our bit of land.”

‘“Lord preserve you, Aukoudim Trophimtych!”

‘He never despised any man. His advice was always worth having; every one of his words was worth a rouble. A great reader he was-quite a scholar; but he stuck to religious books. He would call his wife and say to her: “Listen, woman, mark well what I say”; then he would embark on some explanation. Marie Stépanovna was not exactly an old woman. She was his second wife, and he had married her in order to beget the children whom his first wife had failed to bear him. He had two boys who were still quite young, for the second of them was born when his father was close on sixty. His daughter, Akoulka, was eighteen years old, and she was the eldest.’

‘Your wife, eh?’

‘Wait a bit, wait a bit. Anyway Philka Marosof begins to kick up a row. Says he to Aukoudim: “Let’s split the difference. Give me back my four hundred roubles. I’m not your beast of burden; I don’t want to do any more business with you, and I don’t want to marry your Akoulka. I want to have my fling now that my parents are dead. I’ll drink my money and then join the army. In ten years I’ll come back here a field-marshal! “ Aukoudim gave him back his money-all he had of his. You see, he and Philka’s father had been business partners.

‘“You’re a lost man,” he said to Philka.

‘“Whether I’m a lost man or not, old greybeard, you’re the biggest cheat I know. You’d try to screw a fortune out of four farthings, and pick up all the dirt to do it with. Bah! Look at you, piling up here, digging deep there, the devil only knows why. I’ve got a will of my own, I tell you. All the same I won’t take your Akoulka; I’ve slept with her already.”

‘“How dare you insult a respectable father, a respectable girl! When did you sleep with her, you spawn of a sucker,

you dog, you hound, you?” cried Abkoudim, shaking with wrath. (Philka told us all this later.)

‘“I’ll not only not marry your daughter, but I’ll take good care that no one else does, not even Mikita Grigoritch, the disreputable wench. We had a fine time together, she and I, all last autumn; but I don’t want her at any price. All the money in the world wouldn’t make me take her.”

‘Then the fellow went and had high jinks for a while, and the town was unanimous in condemning him. He gathered a whole lot of other fellows round him, for he had a heap of money. He carried on like that for three months-such recklessness as you never heard of. Every penny went.

‘“I want to see the end of this money,” he said. “I’ll sell the house, everything; then I’ll enlist or go on the tramp.”

‘He was drunk from morning to night, and went about with a carriage and pair.

‘The girls liked him well, I tell you, for he played the guitar very nicely.’

‘Then it’s true that he had been intimate with this girl Akoulka?’

‘Wait, wait, can’t you? I had just buried my father. My mother lived by baking gingerbread. We got our livelihood by working for Aukoudim; barely enough to eat, a precious hard life it was. We had a bit of land the other side of the woods, and grew corn there; but when my father died I went on the spree. I made my mother give me money, but I had to give her a good hiding first.’

‘You were very wrong to beat her; that’s a great sin.’

‘ Sometimes I was drunk the whole blessed day. We had a house that was just tumbling to pieces with dry rot; still it was our own. We were as near famished as could be; for weeks together we had nothing but rags to chew. Mother nearly killed me with one stupid trick or another, but I didn’t care a curse. Philka Marosof and I were always together day and night. “Play the guitar to me,” he’d say, “and, I’ll lie in bed the while. I’ll throw money to you, for I’m the richest chap in the world!” The fellow could not speak without lying. There was only one thing: he wouldn’t touch a thing if it had been stolen. “I’m no thief, I’m an honest man. Let’s go and daub Akoulka’s door with pitch,[1] for I won’t have her marry Mikita Grigoritch, I’ll stick to that.”

‘The old man had long meant to give his daughter to this Mikita Grigoritch. He was a man well on in life, in trade too, and wore spectacles. When he heard the story of Akoulka’s bad conduct, he said to her old father: “That would be a terrible disgrace to me, Aukoudim Trophimtych. On the whole, I’ve made up my mind not to marry-it’s too late.”

‘ So we went and daubed Akoulka’s door all over with pitch. When we’d done that her folks almost beat her to death.

‘Her mother, Marie Stépanovna, cried “I shall die of it,” while the old man said, “ If we were living in the days of the patriarchs, I’d have hacked her to pieces on a block. But now everything in this world is rottenness and corruption.” Sometimes the neighbours from one end of the street to the other heard Akoulka’s screams. She was whipped from morning to evening, and Philka would cry out in the marketplace before everybody: “Akoulka’s a jolly girl to get drunk with. I’ve given it those people between the eyes; they won’t forget me in a hurry.”

1 Daubing the door of a house where a young girl lives is done to show that she has been dishonoured.

‘Well, one day I met Akoulka. She was going for water with her bucket, so I cried out to her: “A fine morning, Akoulka Koudimovna, my pet! You’re the girl who knows how to please the chaps. Who’s living with you now, and where do you get the money for your finery?” That’s just what I said to her; she opened her eyes as wide as you please. No more flesh on her than on a log of wood. She had only just given me a look, but her mother thought she was larking with me, and cried from her doorstep: “Impudent hussy, what do you mean by talking with that fellow?” And from that moment they began to beat her again. Sometimes they thrashed her for an hour on end. Her mother said: “I give her the whip because she isn’t my daughter any more.”’

‘So she was as bad as they said?’

‘Now you just listen to my story, nunky, will you? Well, Philka and I were always drunk. One day when I was abed, mother comes and says:

‘“What d’ ye mean by lying in bed, you hound, you thief! “ She abused me for some time, and then said: “Marry Akoulka. They’ll be glad to give her to you, and they’ll give three hundred roubles with her.”

‘“But,” says I, “all the world knows that she’s a bad girl”

‘“Tush! The marriage ceremony cures all that; besides, she’ll always be in fear of her life from you, so you’ll be in clover together. Their money would make us comfortable. I’ve spoken about the marriage already to Marie Stépanovna; we’re of one mind about it.”

‘So I say: “Let’s have twenty roubles down, and I’ll take her.”

‘Well, believe it or not, but I was drunk right up to the wedding-day. Philka Marosof was threatening me all the time.

‘“I’ll break every bone in your body. A nice fellow you are to be engaged-and to Akoulka. If I like I’ll sleep every blessed night with her when she’s your wife.”

‘“You’re a hound, and a liar,” I replied. But he insulted me so in the street, before everybody, that I ran to Aukoudim’s and said: “I won’t marry her unless I have fifty roubles down this moment.”

‘And did they really let you have her?’

‘Me? Why not, indeed? We were quite respectable people. Father was ruined by a fire shortly before he died; he’s been a richer man than Aukoudim Trophimtych.’

‘“A fellow like you, without a shirt to his back, ought to be only too happy to marry my daughter,” retorted Aukoudim.

‘“Just remember your door and its coat of pitch,” I answered back.

‘“ Stuff and nonsense,” said he. “There’s no proof whatever that the girl’s done wrong.”

‘“Please yourself. There’s the door, and you can go about your business; but give back the money you’ve had!”

‘Then Philka Marosof and I agreed to send Mitri Bykoff to old Aukoudim to tell him that we’d insult him to his face in front of everyone. Well, as I say, I was full of drink right up to the wedding-day; I wasn’t sober till I got into church. As they were escorting us home from church the girl’s uncle, Mitrophone Stépanytch, said:

‘“This isn’t a nice business, but it’s over and done with now.”

‘Old Aukoudim was sitting there crying, the tears rolling down his grey beard. Comrade, shall I tell you what I’d done? I’d put a whip in my pocket before we went to church, and I ‘d made up my mind to have it out of her with that, so that all the world might know how I ‘d been swindled into the marriage, and not think me a bigger fool than I am.’

‘I see, and you wanted her to know what was in store for her. Er, was?’

‘Quiet, nunky, quiet! I’ll tell you how it is with us. Directly after the marriage ceremony they take the couple to a room apart, and the others remain drinking till they return. So I ‘m left alone with Akoulka. She was pale, not a bit of colour on her cheeks; frightened out of her wits. She had fine hair, supple and bright as flax, and great big eyes. She was scarcely ever heard to speak; ycu might have thought she was dumb; an odd

creature, Akoulka, if ever there was one. Well, you can just imagine the scene. My whip was ready on the bed. Well, she was as pure a girl as ever was; not a word of it was true.'

'Impossible!'

'True, I swear; as honest a girl as any good family could wish for.'

'Then, brother, why-why-why had she had to undergo all that torture? Why had Philka Marosof slandered her so?'

'Yes, why, indeed? Well, I got down from the bed, and went on my knees before her, and put my hands together as if I were praying, and just said to her: "Little mother, my pet, Akoulka Koudimovna, forgive me for having been such an idiot as to believe all that slander; forgive me. I'm a hound!"

'She was seated on the bed, and gazed at me fixedly. Putting both her hands on my shoulders, she began to laugh, but the tears were running down her cheeks. She cried and laughed together.

'Then I went out and said to the people in the other room: "Let Philka look to himself: if I come across him he won't be long for this world."

'The old people were beside themselves with delight. Akoulka's mother was ready to throw herself at her daughter's feet, and sobbed.

'Then the old man said: "If we had known the truth, my dearest child, we wouldn't have given you a husband of that sort."

'You ought to have seen how we were dressed the first Sunday after our marriage-when we left church! I'd got a long coat of fine cloth, a fur cap, and plush breeches. She wore a pelisse of hareskin, quite new, and a silk kerchief on her head. One was as fine as the other. Everybody admired us. I must say I looked well, and little Akoulka did too. One oughtn't to boast, but one mustn't sing small. I tell you, people like us are not turned out by the dozen.'

'I don't doubt it.'

'Just you listen, now. The day after the wedding I left my guests, drunk as I was, and ran about the streets crying: "Where's that scoundrel Philka Marosof? Just let him come near me, the hound, that's all!" I went all through the market-place yelling like that. I was only just able to stand.

'They came after me and caught me close to Vlassof's place. It took three men to get me back to the house.

'Well, the whole thing was the talk of the village. The girls said, when they met in the market-place: "Well, you've heard the news-Akoulka was all right!"

‘Not long afterwards I ran across Philka Marosof, who said to me before everybody, strangers included: “Sell your wife, and spend the money on drink. Jackka the soldier only married for that; he didn’t sleep one night with his wife, but he got enough drink to keep his skin full for three years.”

‘I answered: “You hound!”

‘“But,” says he, “you’re an idiot! You didn’t know what you were doing when you married-you were drunk. How could you know anything about it?”

‘So off I went to the house, and shouted at them: “You married me when I was drunk.”

‘Akoulka’s mother tried to fasten herself on me, but I cried: “Mother, you know nothing about anything except money. You bring me Akoulka!”

‘And didn’t I beat her! I tell you, I beat her for two hours running, till I dropped on the floor with fatigue. She couldn’t leave her bed for three weeks.’

‘It’s a dead sure thing,’ said Tchérévine phlegmatically,

‘if you don’t beat them they Did you find her with her lover?’

‘No. To tell the truth, I never actually caught her,’ said Chichkoff after a pause, speaking with an effort; ‘but I was hurt, a good deal hurt, because everyone made fun of me. The cause of it all was Philka. “Your wife’s just made to be looked at,” said he.

‘One day he invited us round to his place and started in: “Do just look what a good little wife he has! Isn’t she tender, isn’t she fine, nicely brought up, affectionate, and full of kindness for all the world? I say, my lad, have you forgotten how we daubed their door with pitch?” At the moment I was hopelessly drunk; he seized me by the hair and had me on the floor before I knew where I was. “ Come along-dance. Aren’t you Akoulka’s husband? I’ll hold your hair for you, and you shall dance. It’ll be good fun.”

“Dog! ‘ I said. “ I’ll bring some jolly fellows to your house,” he went on, “and I’ll whip your Akoulka before your very eyes just as long as I please.” Would you believe it? For a whole month I daren’t go out of the house, I was so afraid he’d come and drag my wife through the dirt. And how I beat her for it!’

‘What was the use of beating her? You can tie a woman’s hands, but not her tongue. You oughtn’t to thrash them too often. Beat ’em a bit, then scold ’em well, then fondle ‘em; that’s what a woman’s made for.’

Chichkoff remained quite silent for a few moments.

‘I was very much hurt,’ he continued. ‘I began it again just as before-beating her from morning till night for nothing; because she didn’t get up from her seat the way I liked; because she didn’t walk to suit me. When I wasn’t hiding her time hung heavy on my hands. Sometimes she sat by the window crying silently-it hurt my feelings sometimes to see her cry, but I beat her all die same. Sometimes her mother abused me for it: “You’re a scoundrel, a gallows-bird!”

“Don’t say a word or I’ll kill you. You made me marry her when I was drunk; you swindled me.” Old Aukoudim wanted at first to have his finger in the pie. Said he to me one day: “Look here, you’re not such a tremendous fellow that one can’t put you down”; but he didn’t get far on that track. Marie Stépanovna had become as sweet as milk. One day she came to me, crying her eyes out, and said: “My heart is almost broken, Ivan Semionytch. What I’m going to ask of you is only a little thing for you, but it means a good deal to me. Let her go, let her leave you, Ivan.” Then she threw herself at my feet. “Do give up being so angry! Wicked people slander her. You know quite well she was good when you married her.” Once again she knelt before me and cried. But I was as hard as nails. “ I won’t hear a word you have to say. What I choose to do, I do, to you or anybody, for I’m crazed with it all. As for Philka Marosof, he’s my best and dearest friend.”’

‘You’d begun to play your pranks together again, had you?’

‘No, by Jove! He was out of the way by this time; he was killing himself with drink, nothing less. He’d spent all he had on drink, and had joined the army as substitute for another citizen. In my part of the world, when a lad makes up his mind to enlist as substitute for another, he is master of the latter’s house and everybody in it until he’s called to the colours. He receives an agreed sum on the day he leaves, but until then he lives in the house of the man who pays him, sometimes for six whole months, and there isn’t a horror in the whole world those fellows are not guilty of. It’s enough to make folks remove the ikons from the house. From the moment he consents to be substitute for a son of the family he considers himself their patron and benefactor, and makes them dance as he pipes, otherwise he calls off the bargain.

‘ So Philka Marosof played merry hell in the home of this citizen. He slept with the daughter, pulled the master of the house by the beard after dinner, and, in fact, did anything that came into his head. They had to heat the bath for him every day, and, what’s more, give him brandy fumes with

the steam of the bath; and he'd have the women lead him by the arms to the bath-room.[1]

'When he came back to the man's house after a revel elsewhere, he would stop right in the middle of the road and shout:

'"I won't go in by the gate-pull down the fence!"

'And they actually *had* to pull down the fence, though there was the gate right in front of him. But all that came to an end the day he joined the regiment. That day he was perfectly sober. The crowd gathered all along the street.

'"They're taking away Philka Marosof!"

'He saluted right and left. Just at that moment Akoulka was returning from the kitchen garden, and immediately Philka saw her he cried out:

'"Stop!" and down he jumped from the cart and threw himself at her feet.

'"My soul, my sweet little strawberry. I've loved you two long years. Now they're taking me off to the regiment with the band playing. Forgive me, good honest daughter of a good honest father, for I 'm nothing but a hound, and all you've gone through is my fault."

'Then he flings himself down before her a second time. At first Akoulka was exceedingly frightened, but she made him a low bow, bending almost double.

'"Forgive me, too, dear boy; but I am really not at all angry with you."

'As she re-entered the house I was at her heels.

1 Once a mark of respect in Russia, but no longer used.

'"What did you say to him, you she-devil, you?"

'Now would you believe it, she looked at me as bold as you please, and answered:

'"I love him better than anything or anybody in this world."

'"I say!'"

'For the rest of that day I never uttered one single word. Only towards evening I said to her: "Akoulka, I'm going to kill you now." I didn't close an eye the whole night. I went into the little room leading off ours and drank kvass. At daybreak I returned. "Akoulka, get ready and come into the fields." I had already arranged to go there, and my wife knew it.

'"You are right," said she. "It's quite time to begin reaping. I've heard that our labourer is ill and not working."

‘I harnessed the cart without another word. As you go out of the town there’s a forest fifteen versts long; at the end of it is our field. When we had gone about three versts through the wood I stopped the horse.

‘“Come, get up, Akoulka; your end is come.”

‘ She looked at me in terror, but got up without a word.

‘“You’ve tormented me enough. Say your prayers.”

‘I seized her by the hair-she had long, thick tresses- I rolled them round my arm. I held her between my knees, took out my knife, threw her head back, and cut her throat. She screamed, the blood gushed out. Then I threw away my knife. I pressed her with all my might in my arms. I put her on the ground and embraced her, yelling at the top of my voice. She screamed; I yelled; she struggled and struggled. The blood-her blood-splashed my face, my hands. It was stronger than I was-stronger. Then I took fright. I left her-left my horse and began to run; ran back to the house.

‘ I went in the back way, and hid myself in an old ramshackle bath-house which we never used now. I lay myself down under the seat, and remained hidden till dead of night.’

‘And Akoulka?’

‘She got up to come back to the house. They found her later, a hundred yards from the place.’

‘So you hadn’t finished her off?’

‘No.’ Chichkoff was silent for a while.

‘Yes,’ said Tchérévine, ‘there’s a particular artery; if you don’t sever it at once the victim will continue struggling; the blood may flow fast enough, but he won’t die.’

‘But she was dead all the same. They found her in the evening, and she was cold. They told the police, and searched for me. They found me at night in the old bath.

‘And there you have it. I’ve been four years here already,’ he added, after a pause.

‘Yes, if you don’t beat ’em you make no way at all,’ said Tchérévine sententiously, taking out his snuff-box once again. He took his pinches very slowly, with long pauses. ‘For all that, my lad, you behaved like a fool. Why, I myself-I caught my wife with a lover. I called her into the shed, doubled a halter, and said:

‘“To whom did you swear to be faithful? To whom did you swear it in church? Tell me that?”

‘And then I gave it her with my halter-beat her and beat her for an hour and a half, till at last she was quite spent, and cried out:

‘“I’ll wash your feet and drink the water afterwards.”

‘Her name was Crodotia.’

CHAPTER V

THE SUMMER SEASON

April is here; Holy Week is not far off. We set about our summer tasks. The sun becomes hotter and more brilliant every day; there is spring in the air, and it has a powerful effect upon one’s nervous system. The convict in his chains feels the trembling influence of the lovely days, just like any other creature; it rouses desires in him, inexpressible longings for his home, and many other things. I think a man misses his liberty and yearns for freedom more when the day is filled with sunlight than during the rainy and melancholy days of autumn and winter. You may observe this clearly in prison; if the convicts experience a little happiness on a beautiful clear day, they react more readily towards impatience and irritability.

I noticed that in spring there was much more squabbling and more noise; the men shouted louder, and fought more frequently. During working hours one would sometimes notice a man apparently deep in meditation. His gaze seemed lost somewhere in the blue distance on the far bank of the Irtych, where the boundless plain stretched for hundreds of versts, the free Kirghiz Steppe. One would hear long, deep-drawn sighs, as if the air of those wide and free regions, haunted by the convict’s thought, forced him to breathe deeply, and was a kind of solace to his crushed and fettered soul.

At length one poor fellow cries out ‘Ah!’-a long wailing sound-then seizes his pick-axe or gathers up his load of bricks. After a few moments he seems to have forgotten his unhappiness: he begins laughing, or insulting his fellow workers, so fitful in his humour. Then he sets furiously to work with unwonted vigour; he labours for all he is worth, as if hoping that fatigue will stifle the grief which has him by the throat. You see, these convicts are all able-bodied men, all in the flower of their age, with every faculty still unimpaired.

How heavy the irons are during this season! What I say is not sentimentality, it is the report of careful observation. During the hot season, under a fiery sun, when all one’s being, all one’s soul, is vividly conscious of, and feels intimately, the immense force of nature’s resurrection all around, it is more difficult to support the confinement, the perpetual surveillance, the tyranny of a will other than one’s own.

Besides this, it is in spring with the first song of the lark that throughout all Siberia and Russia men set out on the tramp; God’s creatures do their best to escape from prison into the woods. After working in some suffocating ditch or at the boats, after enduring the irons, the rods and whips, they wander where they please, wherever their footsteps lead them; they eat and drink what they can get (it is always pot-luck with them); and by night they sleep undisturbed in field or forest without a care, without the agony of knowing themselves in prison, as if they were God’s own birds; their ‘good night’ is whispered to the stars, and the eye that watches them is the eye of God. Not altogether a rosy life, by any means; sometimes hunger and fatigue are heavy on them ‘in the service of General Cuckoo.’ Often enough the wanderers have not a morsel of bread to chew for days on end. They have to hide from everybody, run to earth like marmots. Sometimes they are driven to robbery, pillage- nay, even murder.

‘Send a man there and he becomes a child, and throws himself on all he sees’; that is what people say of those transported to Siberia. The saying may be applied even more fitly to tramps. They are almost all brigands and thieves, of necessity rather than by inclination. Many of them are hardened to the life, beyond reclaim. There are convicts who take to the road after serving their time, even after being given land of their own. They ought to be happy in their new state, with their daily bread assured» But it is not so; an irresistible impulse drives them to wander.

This life in the woods, wretched and fearful as it is, yet still free and adventurous, has a mysterious allure for those who have experienced it. Among these fugitives you may be surprised to find people of sound judgment and peaceable temper, who had shown every promise of becoming good husbandmen. A convict will marry, have children, and live for five years in the same place; then all of a sudden, one fine morning, he will disappear to the astonishment of his family and the whole neighbourhood, abandoning bis wife and children.

When I was in prison one of these fugitives from house and home was pointed out to me. He had committed no crime-at least, he was under suspicion of none-but throughout his life he had deserted post after post. He had visited the southern frontiers of the empire, he had journeyed beyond the Danube, in the Kirghiz Steppe, in Eastern Siberia, the Caucasus, and many other regions. Who knows but that under other conditions the fellow might have been a Robinson Crusoe, so strong a hold the passion of travel

had over him. These details I learned from other convicts, for he did not like talking, and never opened his mouth except when absolutely necessary. He was a peasant, short of stature, about fifty years old, and very quiet in demeanour, with a face so still as to seem quite vacant, so impassive as to suggest weak-mindedness. His delight was to sit for hours in the sun humming a sort of song between his teeth so softly that he was inaudible five yards away. His “features were, so to speak, petrified; he ate little, principally black bread; he never bought white bread or spirits. My belief is that he never had had any money, and that he couldn’t have counted it if he had. He was indifferent to everything. Sometimes he fed the prison dogs with his own hand, a thing no one else was known to do (speaking generally, Russians don’t like feeding dogs from the hand). It was said that he had been twice married, and that he had children somewhere. Why he had been sent to Siberia as a convict I have not the least idea. We fellows were always fancying that he would escape, but his hour did not come, or perhaps had come and gone; anyhow, he went through with his punishment without resistance. He seemed an element quite foreign to the medium wherein he had his being, an alien, self-concentrated creature. Still, there was nothing in that deep surface-calm that one could trust, although to escape would have profited him little.

Compared with prison life, roaming through the forests is as the joys of Paradise. The tramp’s lot is wretched enough, but it is at least free. So it is that every prisoner in Russia becomes restless with the first rays of smiling spring.

Comparatively few make any settled plans for flight, they fear the obstacles with which they will meet and the punishment that may ensue. Only one in a hundred, certainly not more, makes up his mind to escape, but the means of doing so never cease to haunt the minds of the other ninety-nine. Filled as their thoughts are with this longing, anything that looks like offering a chance of success consoles them, and they set about comparing the facts with cases of successful escape. I speak only of those prisoners who have already been sentenced, for those awaiting trial are much more ready to attempt escape. A condemned man rarely manages to get away unless he attempts it in early days of his imprisonment. After two or three years a convict credits the time he has then served to a sort of mental banking account, and concludes that it is better to pay off the law and settle on the land as a free man, rather than forfeit that period if he fails to escape,

which is always possible. Certainly not more than one convict in ten succeeds in *changing his lot.* Those who do have almost invariably been sentenced to a very long term of imprisonment, perhaps even for life: fifteen, twenty years seem like an eternity to them. Even so, branding makes it extremely difficult to escape detection.

'Changing one's lot' is prison jargon. When a convict is caught trying to escape, he is subjected to formal interrogation, and will say that he wished to 'change his lot.' This somewhat literary formula exactly describes the act in question. No escaped prisoner ever hopes to become a perfectly free man, for he knows that it is almost impossible; what he hopes for is to be sent to some other convict establishment or put on the land, or tried again for some offence committed while on the tramp; in a word, to be sent somewhere else, no matter where, provided he can leave his present place of confinement, which has become unendurable. All these fugitives, unless they find some unexpected shelter for the winter, unless they meet someone ready to conceal them, or unless, as a last resort, they can procure (even at the cost of murder) a passport, flock to the towns in autumn, present themselves at the prison gates, and give themselves up as escaped convicts. They spend the winter in jail, hoping to get away again in the following summer.

I too felt the influence of spring. I well remember how eagerly I gazed at the horizon through gaps in the fence; I would stand for hours on end with my head glued to the palings, watching intently the grass grow green in the moat, and the deepening blue of the distant sky. My anguish, my melancholy, were heavier on me; as each day wore away the jail became odious, detestable. Hatred towards me as a gentleman filled the convicts' hearts during those first years, and their animosity poisoned my whole life. I often begged to be sent to the hospital, though there was no need of it, simply to escape from the barrack-room and feel myself out of range of that unrelenting and implacable hostility.

'You nobles have beaks of iron; you tore us to pieces when we were serfs,' my neighbours used to say. How I envied prisoners from the lower classes! It was so different for them, they were mates with everyone from the start. So it was that in springtime, when Freedom showed herself as it were a phantom of the season, and joy was diffused throughout Nature, they roused in my soul redoubled melancholy and nervous irritability.

As the sixth week of Lent approached I had to fulfil my religious duties. The convicts were divided by the authorities into seven groups of about thirty men-answering to the weeks in Lent-each of which had to perform its devotions in turn. That week was a great solace to me; we went two or three times a day to the church not far from the prison. I had not been in church for a long time. The Lenten services, familiar to me from early childhood in my father's house- the solemn prayers, the prostrations-all stirred in me the memory of things long, long past, and awoke my earliest impressions to fresh life. I remember so clearly how happy I was when in the morning we were marched off to God's house, treading the frozen earth under an escort of soldiers with loaded muskets; the escort remained outside the church.

Once within, we were massed close to the door, so that we could scarcely hear anything except the deep voice of the deacon; now and again we caught a glimpse of a black chasuble or the bare head of the priest. Then I recalled how, as a! child, I used to look at the common people who stood huddled at the door; how they made way in servile fashion for some important fellow with epaulettes, some nobleman with a big paunch. Or it might be some pious lady in her splendid gown hurrying for a front seat and ready to make trouble if there was any unwillingness to honour her with the best place. As it seemed to me then, it was only *there*, near the church door, just inside the porch, that prayer was offered with genuine fervour and humility; only there that folk prostrated with true self-abasement and a full sense of their unworthiness.

And now I myself ranked with the common people; no, not even that, for we were outcast and in chains. Everyone shunned us. We were feared, and alms were slipped into our hands as if we were beggars. I remember that all this gave me the strange sensation of a refined and subtle pleasure. 'So be it!' was my thought. The convicts prayed with deep fervour; every one of them had with him his poor farthing for a little candle or for the collection for church expenses. ' I too, I am a man,' each one of them perhaps said, as he made his offering. 'Before God we are all equal.'

At the end of six o'clock mass we went up to communion. When the priest, *ciborium* in hand, recited the words 'Have mercy on me as Thou had'st on the thief whom Thou didst save,' nearly all the convicts prostrated themselves, and their chains rattled. I think they took these words literally as applied to themselves, and not as being from Scripture.

Holy Week came. The authorities presented each of us with an Easter egg and a small piece of wheaten bread. The townspeople loaded us with kindness. As at Christmas, there was the priest's visitation with the cross, inspection by heads of departments, larded cabbage, general enlargement of soul, and unlimited lounging. The only difference was that one could now walk about in the courtyard, and warm oneself in the sun. Everything seemed filled with more light, larger than in winter, but also more fraught with sadness. The long, endless summer days seemed peculiarly unbearable on Church holidays. Work days seemed at least to pass more rapidly owing to the fatigue of labour.

Our tasks were now far more trying than in winter; they consisted principally in engineering work. Some of us were set to building, digging, bricklaying, or repairing Government premises, to locksmith's work, carpentering, or painting. Others went into the brick-fields, and that was considered the hardest of all jobs. The brick-fields were situated about four versts from the prison, and throughout the summer a gang of fifty men set out every morning at six o'clock. This gang was chosen from workmen who had no special trade. We took with us a day's ration of bread. The distance was too great for us to travel eight useless versts there and back simply in order to dine with the others, so we had a meal when we returned in the evening.

We were each told off to do a definite amount of work, but there was so much of it that one could scarcely, if ever, manage to get through it. First, we had to dig and carry the clay, moisten it, and mould it in the trough, and then make a goodly quantity of bricks, two hundred or so, and sometimes fifty more than that. I was only twice sent to the brick-field. Those detailed for the work used to come back in the evening dead tired; everyone complained that the others were slack and that he himself had had to do most of the work. I believe that they found some pleasure and consolation in these reproaches. Some, however, enjoyed the brick-field because it took them away from the town to the banks of the Irtych where the country was open and the sky shone overhead; the surroundings were more agreeable than those frightful Government buildings. They were quite free to smoke and to lie down for half an hour or so, which was delightful.

As for me, I was generally sent to one of the shops, or else to pound alabaster or to carry bricks, which last job I once did for two months on end. I had to carry my load of bricks from the river bank for a distance of

about a hundred and forty yards, over the moat of the fortress to a barrack which they were putting up. This work suited me well enough, although the cord used for carrying bricks cut my shoulders; what particularly pleased me was that my strength sensibly increased. At first I could not carry more than eight bricks at once-each of them weighed about twelve pounds; but I was eventually able to carry twelve, or even fifteen, which afforded me great satisfaction. You wanted physical as well as moral strength to be able to support all the discomforts of that accursed life.

There was another consideration: I wanted, when I left the place, to be able really to live and not just exist. I took pleasure in carrying my bricks then; it was not merely that the work strengthened my body, but it took me so frequently to the banks of the Irtych. I refer to this spot: it was the only place where we saw God's world-a pure and bright horizon, the free desert steppes whose bareness always made a strange impression on me. All the other work-yards were in the fortress itself, or in its immediate neighbourhood; and from the earliest days of my imprisonment I loathed the fortress, especially its surrounding buildings. The governor's house seemed to me a repulsive, accursed place: I could never pass without turning upon it a look of detestation. But on the river-bank I could forget my miserable self as I gazed over the immense stretch of desert, just as a prisoner may do when he looks at the world of freedom through the barred window of his dungeon. Everything there was dear and gracious to my eyes: the sun shining in the infinite blue of heaven, the distant song of the Kirghiz that came from the opposite bank.

Sometimes I would stand for a long time watching the poor smoky cabin of some *baïgouch*; I would study the bluish smoke as it curled in the air, the Kirghiz woman busy with her two sheep… The things I saw were wild, savage, poverty-stricken; but they were free. I would follow the flight of a bird threading its way in the pure transparent air; now it skims the water, now disappears in the azure sky, now suddenly comes to view again, a mere point in space. Even the poor little spring flower fading in a cleft of the bank fixed my attention and would draw my tears… The melancholy of that first year of prison life and its hard labour was unendurable. The anguish of it was so great, that I hardly noticed my immediate surroundings; I merely shut my eyes and would not see. Among the broken-down creatures with whom I was obliged to live, I had not yet recognized those who were capable of thinking and feeling in spite of their repulsive appearance. I

never heard (or if one was spoken I was not aware of it) one kindly word amidst the constant hail of venom. Still, there was one such utterance, simple, straightforward, and pure in motive; it came from the heart of a man who had suffered and endured more than myself. But it is useless to enlarge on that.

The great fatigue which I suffered was a source of content, for it gave me hope of sound sleep. In summer sleep was a torment, more intolerable than the closeness and infection winter brought in its train. Some nights were certainly very beautiful. The sun, which had not ceased all day to flood the courtyard, hid itself at last. The air freshened, and night, the night of the steppe, became comparatively cool. The convicts, until it was time to lock them in, walked about in groups, especially on the kitchen side, for that was where questions of general interest were by preference discussed. Comments were exchanged upon rumours from the outside world, often absurd indeed, but always keenly exciting to these poor creatures cut off from their fellow men. For example, we suddenly hear that the governor has been summarily dismissed. Convicts are as credulous as children; they know the news to be false, or most unlikely, and that Kvassoff, who brings it, is a past master in the art of lying; for all that they clutch at the nonsensical story, exult over it, express their satisfaction, but at last are quite ashamed of having been duped by a man like Kvassoff.

‘I should like to know who’ll show *him* the door?’ cries one convict. ‘Don’t you fear, he’s a fellow who knows how to stick on.’

‘But,’ says another, ‘he has his superiors over him.’ This fellow is a warm controversialist and has seen the world.

‘Wolves don’t feed on one another,’ says a third gloomily, half to himself. *This* one’s an old fellow, growing grey; he always takes his sour cabbage soup into a corner and eats it there.’

‘Do you think his superiors will take *your* advice as to whether they should show him the door or not?’ adds a fourth, twanging his balalaika and seeming quite indifferent.

‘Well, why not?’ replied the second angrily. ‘If you *are* asked, answer what’s in your mind. But no, with us fellows it’s all mere talk, and when we ought to go to it with a will, we all slink away.’

‘That’s so!’ says the balalaika player. ‘What with hard labour and prison life that can’t be helped.’

‘It was like that the other day,’ says the second man, without having heard that last remark. ‘There was a little wheat left, sweepings, a mere nothing. There was some idea of turning the refuse into money. Well, look here, they took it to him, and he confiscated it. All economy, you see. Was that so, and was it right-yes or no?’

‘But to whom can you complain?’

‘To whom? Why, the inspector who’ll be here soon.’

‘What inspector?’

‘It’s true, pals, an inspector’s coming soon,’ said a young convict who had had a smattering of education, had read the *Duchesse de la Valliere* or some such book, and who had been quartermaster in a regiment. He was a bit of a wag, and was held in some sort of respect as a knowing fellow. Without paying the least attention to the exciting debate, he goes straight to the cook and asks him for some fiver. Our cooks often deal in victuals of that kind; they used to buy a whole liver, cut it in pieces, and sell it to the other convicts.

‘Two kopecks’ worth, or four?’ asks the cook.

‘A four-kopeck cut; I’ll eat, the others can watch me and feel hungry,’ he says… ‘Yes, pals,’ he resumes, ‘a general, a real general’s coming from Petersburg to inspect Siberia. It’s so, heard it at the governor’s place.’

This news produces an extraordinary effect. For a quarter of an hour they ask each other who this general can be? What’s his title? Whether his grade is higher than that of the generals in our town? The convicts delight in discussing ranks and degrees, in finding out who’s at the head of things, who can make the other officials crook their backs, and to whom he crooks his own, so they start an argument and quarrel about their generals. Curses fly, all in honour of these high officers-and there is fighting, too, sometimes. What interest can they possibly have in such things? When one hears convicts speaking of generals and high officials one begins to understand just how much intelligence they had when they were free. It cannot be concealed that in Russia, even in much higher circles, talk about generals and high officials is looked upon as the most serious and refined conversation.

‘Well, you see, they *have* given our governor the right about, don’t you?’ observes Kvassoff, a little rubicund, choleric, small-brained fellow.

‘He’ll just grease their palms for them,’ this in staccato tones from a morose old fellow in the corner who had finished his sour cabbage soup.

‘I should think he would grease their palms, by Jove,’ says another; ‘he’s stolen money enough, the scoundrel. And, think, he was only a major in the army before he came here. He’s feathered his nest. Why, a little while ago he was engaged to the head priest’s daughter.’

‘But he didn’t get married; they turned him off, and that shows he’s a poor specimen. A fine type to get engaged! He’s got nothing but the coat on his back. Last year, Easter time, he lost all he had at cards. Fedka told me so.’

‘Well, well, pals, I’ve been married myself, but it’s a bad thing for a poor devil. Taking a wife is soon done, but the fun of it’s more like an inch than a mile,’ observes Skouratoff, who had just joined in the conversation.

‘Don’t fancy we’re going to amuse ourselves by discussing *you*?’ says the ex-quartermaster in a superior tone. ‘ Kvassoff, I tell you you’re a big idiot! If you fancy the governor can grease the palm of an inspector-general you’ve got things hopelessly muddled. Do you fancy they send a man from Petersburg just to inspect your governor? You’re a precious dolt, my lad, take it from me.’

‘And you fancy because he’s a general he doesn’t take what’s offered?’ someone says in a sceptical tone.

‘I should think he does indeed, and plenty of it whenever he can.’

‘Sure thing; gets bigger, and more, and worse, the higher the rank.’

‘A general *always* has his palm greased,’ says Kvassoff, sententiously.

‘Did *you* ever give one anything, seeing you’re so sure of it?’ asks Baklouchin, suddenly chiming in on a note of contempt. Come, now, did you ever see a general in all your life?’

‘Yes.’

‘Liar!’

‘Liar yourself!’

‘Well, boys, as he *has* seen a general, let him tell us which one. Come, quick about it. I know ’em all, every man jack of ‘em.’

‘ I’ve seen General Zibert,’ says Kvassoff, far from sure of himself.

‘Zibert! There’s no general of that name. That’s the general, perhaps, who watched your back while they gave you the cat. This Zibert was probably a lieutenant-colonel, but you were in such a fright just then, you took him for a general.’

‘No! Just hear me,’ cries Skouratoff, ‘for I’ve got a wife. There really was a general of that name, a German but a Russian subject. He confessed

to the bishop every year, all about his peccadilloes with gay women, and drank water like a duck-at least forty glasses of Moskva water one after the other; that was the way he cured himself of some disease. I had it from his valet.'

'I say! And the carp didn't swim in his belly?' this from the convict with the balalaika.

'Be quiet, you fellows, can't you-one tries to talk seriously, and there you are beginning your nonsense again. Who's the inspector that's coming?' asked a convict named Martinof who always seemed full of business, an old man who had been in the Hussars.

'Lying crowd!' said one of the doubters. 'Lord knows where they get it all from; it's all empty talk.'

'It's nothing of the sort,' observes Koulikoff dogmatically. He had remained majestically silent until now. 'The man who's coming is big and fat, about fifty years old, with regular features and proud, contemptuous manners on which he prides himself.'

Koulikoff is a Tsigan, a sort of veterinary surgeon; he makes money by treating horses in the town, and sells wine in prison. He is no fool, but has plenty of brain. His memory is well stocked, and he lets his words fall as carefully as if every one of them was worth a rouble.

'It's true,' he went on very calmly; 'I heard it only last week. He's a general with bigger epaulettes than most, and he's going to inspect every prison in Siberia. They grease his palm well, that's sure enough, but not our governor with eight eyes in his head. The general won't dare to touch *him;* you see, there are generals and generals, as there are faggots and faggots. That's how it is, and you may take it from me our governor will remain where he is. As for us, we're fellows with no tongues, we've no right to speak; and as for our officers, they 're not going to say a word against him. The inspector will arrive, take a look round, and clear off at once. He'll say everything's all right.'

'Yes, but the governor's in a fright; he's been drunk since morning.'

'And this evening he had two van-loads of things taken away-Fedka says so.'

'You may scrub a nigger, he'll never be white. Is it the first time you've seen him drunk, hey?'

'No! It'll be a devil of a shame if the general does nothing about him,' said the convicts, and began to grow highly excited.

News of the arrival of the inspector went through the prison, and the convicts went about the courtyard retailing this important fact. Some held their tongues and kept cool, trying to look important; some were quite indifferent. Some sat on the doorstep and played the balalaika, while others went on gossiping. Some groups were singing in a drawling voice, but the whole courtyard was astir and generally excited. About nine o'clock they counted us, ordered us indoors, and locked us up for the night. A short summer's night it was, so we were roused up at five o'clock in the morning. No one, however, had managed to sleep before eleven, for until that hour there was conversation and restless movement; some of the men even played cards as in winter. The heat was intolerable, stifling. True, the open window let in some of the cool night air, but the convicts kept tossing and turning on their wooden beds as if delirious.

Fleas swarmed everywhere. There were enough of them in winter, but when spring came they multiplied in proportions so formidable that I could not have believed it, had I not endured them. And as summer advanced the situation grew worse. I discovered that one can get used to fleas; but for all that they are such a nuisance that they throw you into a frenzy. Even when you manage to doze off you are not properly asleep; you are half delirious, and well aware of it.

At last, towards morning, when the enemy is tired and you are enjoying a sound slumber in the freshness of the early hours, suddenly you hear the pitiless morning drum-call. How you curse as you he listening to those short, sharp beats. You cower in your shirt, and then-one can't help it-comes the thought that it will be the same to-morrow and the day after for many, many years, until you are set free. When *will* it come, this freedom, freedom? Where is it to be found in this world? Where is it hiding? You are obliged to get up, the others are walking about the room. The usual noisy row beings. The convicts dress, and hurry to their work. It's true you can take a nap at midday.

What we had been told about the inspector was perfectly true; the reports became more certain every day. At last it was clear that a high-ranking general was coming from Petersburg to inspect all Siberia, that he was already at Tobolsk. Every day we learned something fresh about him. These rumours came from the town. It appeared that there was alarm in all quarters, and that everyone was making preparations to show himself in as favourable a light as possible. The authorities were organizing receptions,

balls, fêtes of every kind. Gangs of convicts were sent to level the paths in the fortress and to smooth away hummocks in the ground, paint the palings and other woodwork, to plaster, do up, and generally repair everything that was conspicuous.

The prisoners understood clearly the object of this labour, and their discussions became all the more animated and excited. Their imaginations passed all bounds. They even set about formulating certain demands to be set before the general on his arrival, but that did not prevent their continuing to quarrel and make violent speeches. The governor was on hot bricks! He was constantly visiting the jail, shouting and threatening us with unwonted regularity, sending us to the guard-room and dealing out punishment for mere trifles. He also watched very strictly over the cleanliness and good order of the barracks. It was at this time that there occurred a little event which was by no means as unwelcome to the governor as one might have expected. On the contrary, it caused him lively satisfaction. One of the convicts struck another with an awl right in the chest, quite close to the heart.

The culprit’s name was Lomof. The victim was known in prison as Gavrilka. He was one of those seasoned tramps about whom I have already spoken. Whether he had another name, I do not know. I never heard him referred to by any other than Gavrilka.

Lomof had been a fairly wealthy peasant in the Government of T, *and district of K*. There were five members of his family living together, two brothers Lomof, and three sons. They were quite comfortably off, and local rumour had it that they had more than 300,000 roubles in paper money. They were curriers and tanners by trade, but their principal business was usury, harbouring tramps, and receiving stolen goods-all sorts of petty irregularities. Half the peasants of their district owed them money, and so were in their power. They passed as being intelligent and full of cunning, and gave themselves extraordinary airs. Some great personage of the province had once called at their father’s house and taken a fancy to him because of his rough and unscrupulous talk. From that time they considered it safe to do exactly as they pleased, and became more deeply involved in criminal practices. Everyone had a grudge against them, and would like to have seen them a hundred feet underground; but they grew bolder and bolder every day. They were not afraid of the local police or of the district tribunals.

Fortune at length betrayed them. Ruin overtook them, not as a result of their secret crimes, but in consequence of an accusation which was in fact false and calumnious. Ten versts from their hamlet they had a farm where six Kirghiz labourers, whom they had long since reduced to the condition of slaves, used to spend the autumn. One fine day these Kirghiz were found murdered. A prolonged inquiry followed, thanks to which innumerable atrocities were brought to light. The Lomofs were accused of having assassinated their workmen. They had themselves told their story to the convicts, the whole prison knew it by heart: they were suspected of owing a great deal of money to the Kirghiz, and, as they were greedy and avaricious in spite of their large fortunes, it was believed they had paid the debt by taking the poor fellows lives. While the inquiry and trial dragged on, their property dwindled to nothing. The father died and his sons were transported; one of them, together with his uncle, was condemned to fifteen years' hard labour.

Now, they were perfectly innocent of the crime imputed to them. One day Gavrilka, who was a thorough-going rascal, known as a tramp but of very gay and lively disposition was revealed as the author of the crime. I am not certain whether he actually confessed, but the convicts undoubtedly held him to have murdered the Kirghiz.

This man Gavrilka, while still on the road, had been mixed up in some way with the Lomofs (he had been imprisoned for quite a short term on a charge of deserting from the army and wandering abroad). He had cut the throats of the Kirghiz-three other rogues had been his accomplices-in the hope of establishing themselves with plunder from the farm.

The Lomofs were unpopular in prison, though I really don't know why. One of them, the nephew, was a sturdy fellow, intelligent and sociable; but his uncle, the fellow who stabbed Gavrilka, was a choleric, stupid rustic, always quarrelling with the convicts, who knocked him about like plaster. We all liked Gavrilka for his gaiety and good humour. The Lomofs had also learned that he was guilty of the crime for which they had been condemned. They had never quarrelled with him, however, and Gavrilka had so far paid no attention whatsoever to them.

The row with Uncle Lomof started over some disreputable girl. Gavrilka had boasted of her favour; the peasant, mad with jealousy, ended by driving an awl into his chest.

Although the Lomofs had been ruined by their trial and sentence, they passed in the jail as very rich. They had money, a samovar, and drank tea. The governor knew all about it, and hated them both, and spared them no vexation.: The victims of his hatred explained it by a desire to have them grease his palm, but they could not, or would not, bring themselves to do so.

If Uncle Lomofs awl had penetrated one hair's breadth deeper into Gavrilka's breast he would certainly have killed him; as it was, the wound was not serious. The affair was reported to the governor. I can seem him now as he came up, out of breath but with visible satisfaction. He addressed Gavrilka in an affable, fatherly way:

'Tell me, lad, can you walk to the hospital or must they carry you? No, I think it will be better to have a horse. Let them harness a horse this moment!' he shouted to a junior officer.

'But I don't feel it at all, your Excellency. He's only given me a bit of a prick, your Excellency.'

'You don't know, my dear fellow, you don't know. You'll see. A nasty place he's struck you in. All depends upon the place. He's caught you just below the heart, the scoundrel. Wait, wait!' he roared at Lomof. 'You're under arrest. Take him to the guard-house.'

He kept his promise. Lomof was tried, and, though the wound was slight, there was plainly malice aforethought. His sentence was extended by several years, and they gave him a thousand strokes with the rod. The governor was delighted.

The inspector arrived at last.

The day after his arrival in town he came to inspect the prison. It was a regular festival. For some days everything had been brilliantly clean, washed with the utmost care. The convicts were all newly shaven, their linen spotlessly white. (According to the regulations, their summer dress consisted of jackets and canvas pantaloons. Everyone had a circle of black material sewn on to the back of his jacket.) The prisoners had been given an hour's careful instructions is to what answers they should give, the very words they should use if the high functionary addressed them.

There had even been regular rehearsals. The governor seemed to have lost his head. An hour before the inspector's arrival all the convicts were at their posts, stiff as statues, with their little fingers on the seams of their pantaloons. At last, at about one o'clock, he entered. He was a general, with a look of great self-importance, so much so, indeed, that the mere sight of

him must have sent a tremor through the heart of every official in Western Siberia.

He came in with a stern, majestic air, followed by a crowd of generals and colonels from the local garrison. There was a civilian, too, a tall man with regular features, wearing a frock-coat and shoes. This personage bore himself with an air of independence, and the general always addressed him with exquisite politeness. He too had come from Petersburg. All the convicts were terribly curious as to who he could be, that such an important general should show him such deference. We learned later who he was and what was his office, but he was the object of much conversation until we knew the truth.

The governor, spick and span in his orange-coloured collar, made none too favourable an impression upon the general; the bloodshot eyes and fiery rubicund complexion told their story all too plainly. Out of respect for his superior he had removed his spectacles, and stood some way off, as straight as a dart in feverish expectation of being asked to do something when he would run and carry out his excellency’s wish; but there seemed to be no particular demand for his services.

The general went all through every barrack without saying a word, and glanced into the kitchen, where he tasted the sour cabbage soup. They pointed me out to him, telling him that I was an ex-nobleman who had been guilty of this, that, and the other.

‘Ah!’replied the general. ‘And how does he behave?”Satisfactorily at present, your Excellency, satisfactorily.’ The general nodded, and left the jail after a couple of minutes or so. The convicts were dazzled and disappointed and did not know what to make of it. As to laying complaints against the governor, that was forgotten, unthinkable He had, no doubt, been well assured of this beforehand.

CHAPTER VI

PRISON ANIMALS

Gniedko, a bay horse, was bought a little while afterwards, and the event furnished the convicts with a much more agreeable and interesting diversion than the visit of the high personage of whom I have been speaking. We required a horse for carrying water, refuse, etc. He was put in the charge of a prisoner, who drove him, of course, under escort. Our horse had plenty to do all day. He was a worthy beast, but almost worn out, having been in service for a long time.

One fine morning, the eve of St Peter's Day, our bay, Gniedko, who was dragging a barrel of water, fell all of a heap, and in a few minutes gave up the ghost. He was much regretted, and everyone gathered round to discuss his death. Ex-cavalrymen, gipsies, veterinary surgeons, and others showed a profound knowledge of horses in general and fiercely argued the question; but they could not bring the bay to life again; there he was stretched out and dead, with his belly all swollen. Everyone thought it his duty to handle the poor corpse. The governor was ultimately informed of what Providence had done to the horse, and it was decided that another should be bought at once.

On St Peter's Day, quite soon after mass when the convicts were assembled, a number of horses that were for sale were brought in. It was left to the prisoners to choose an animal, for there were some thorough experts among them, and it would have been difficult to deceive two hundred and fifty men who had been horse-dealers by trade. Gipsies, Lesghians, professional horse-copers, and townsmen arrived to bargain. The convicts showed extraordinary keenness as each fresh horse was brought up, and were as delighted as children. It seemed to tickle their fancy very much, that they had to buy a horse like free men, just as if the animal were to be their own property and the money was to come out of their own pockets. Three horses were brought and taken away before purchase; the fourth proved satisfactory. The dealers seemed astonished and a little awed by the soldiers of the escort who watched the business. Two hundred men, clean shaven and branded as they were, with chains on their feet, were well calculated to inspire respect, all the more as they were on their own ground,

at home so to speak, in their own convict's den, where nobody was ever allowed to come.

Our fellows seemed up to no end of tricks for discovering the real worth of a horse. They examined it carefully, handled it gravely, and behaved as if the welfare of the establishment depended upon the purchase of this beast. The Circassians took the liberty of jumping upon his back; their eyes shone wildly, they chatted rapidly in their incomprehensible dialect, showed their white teeth, dilating the nostrils of their hooked, copper-coloured noses. There were some Russians who paid the most lively attention to their discussion, and seemed ready to jump down their throats. They did not understand a word, but it was plain that they were doing their best to read from the fellows' eyes whether or not the horse was good. But what could it matter to a convict, especially to some of them, who were utterly abandoned creatures, and who never ventured to utter a single word to the others? What *could* it matter to such as these whether one horse or another was bought? Yet it seemed to do so. The opinion of the Circassians appeared to be principally relied upon, and next to them those gipsies who had formerly been horse-dealers were most prominently in the debate.

There was a regular duel between two convicts-the gipsy Koulikoff, who had been a horse-dealer and thief, and Jolkin, who had been a professional veterinary surgeon, a tricky Siberian peasant who had been doing hard labour for some considerable time, and who had succeeded in getting all Koulikoff's practice in the town. I should mention that our veterinary surgeons, though without diploma, were very much sought after, and that not only the townsfolk and tradesmen, but also high officials in the city took their advice when their horses fell ill, rather than that of several properly qualified practitioners whose services were available.

Before Jolkin came, the Siberian peasant Koulikoff had had numerous clients from whom he had taken fees in good hard cash. Looked upon as being the head of his profession, he was a typical gipsy, a liar, a cheat, and by no means the master of his art he claimed to be. His earnings had raised him to almost aristocratic rank among the prisoners. He was listened to and obeyed, but he spoke little and expressed his opinion only in great emergencies. He blew his own trumpet loudly, but he was really a most energetic fellow, of ripe age and marked intelligence. When he spoke of the aristocracy, it was with exquisite politeness and perfect dignity. I am sure that if he had been suitably dressed, and introduced as a count to a

Petersburg club, he would have lived up to the part, played whist, talked to admiration like a man used to command, but who knew when to hold his tongue. I am sure that a whole evening might have passed without anyone guessing that the ‘count’ was nothing but a vagabond. He had very probably had a large and varied experience of life, but we knew nothing about his past. He lived apart, segregated with the special section.

No sooner had Jolkin arrived-he was a simple peasant, one of the Old Believers, but just as cunning as it was possible for a moujik to be-than Koulikoff’s veterinary glory sensibly declined. In less than two months the Siberian had won all his practice in town, for he cured in a very short time horses which Koulikoff had declared incurable, and which had been given up by the regular practitioners. Jolkin had been condemned to hard labour for coining. It is odd that he should ever have ventured into that line of business. He told us all about it, and joked about the fact that three genuine gold coins were required to make one false one.

Koulikoff was not a little annoyed by this peasant’s success, while his own glory so rapidly declined. There was he who had had a mistress in the suburbs, who used to wear a plush jacket and top-boots, and was now obliged to turn tavern-keeper; so everyone expected a regular row when the new horse was bought. It was most interesting: each had his partisans, and the more zealous among them came to angry words without delay. Jolkin’s cunning face was wrinkled into a sarcastic smile, but things turned out quite differently from what was anticipated. Koulikoff had not the least desire for argument or dispute, he managed cunningly without that, At first he gave way on every point, and listened deferentially to his rival’s criticisms; then he took him up sharply on some chance remark, and pointed out to him modestly but firmly that he was all wrong. In a word, Jolkin was utterly discomfited in a surprisingly clever way, at which Koulikoff’s party was delighted.

‘I say, boys, it’s no use talking; you can’t trip *him* up. He knows what he’s about,’ said one.

‘Jolkin knows more about the matter than he does,’ said others, but without offence. Both sides were prepared to make concessions.

‘Then, he’s got a lighter hand, besides having more in his head. I tell you, when it comes to stock, horses or anything else, Koulikoff needn’t duck under to anybody.’

‘Nor need Jolkin, I tell you.’

‘There’s nobody like Koulikoff.’

The new horse was selected and bought. It was a capital gelding-young, vigorous, and handsome; an absolutely irreproachable beast. When the bargaining began, the owner asked thirty roubles; the convicts would not give more than twenty-five. The higgling continued for long and with much heat. At length the convicts began to laugh.

‘Does the money come out of your own purse?’ said one. ‘What’s the good of all this?’

‘Do you want to help the Treasury?’ cried others.

‘But it’s money that belongs to all of us, pals,’ said one.

‘All of us! It’s plain enough that you needn’t trouble to cultivate idiots, they’ll grow of themselves without that.’

At last the business was settled at twenty-eight roubles, The governor was informed and the purchase sanctioned, Bread and salt were brought at once, and the new boarder led in triumph into the jail. There was not one convict, I think, who did not pat his neck or stroke his head.

He was set the same day to carting water. All the convicts watched with curiosity as he pulled at the barrel.

Our waterman, a convict named Roman, kept his eyes on the beast with a kind of stupid satisfaction. Formerly a peasant, he was about fifty years of age, serious and silent like all Russian coachmen, whose grave demeanour appears to be enhanced by their constant companionship of horses.

Roman was a quiet creature, affable to all; he said little and took snuff from a box. He had tended the prison horse for some considerable time. The new acquisition was the third entrusted to his care since his arrival.

The horseman’s job fell as a matter of course to Roman; nobody would have dreamed of contesting his right to it. When the bay horse dropped dead, no one, not even the governor, thought of accusing Roman of carelessness. It was the will of God, that was all; as for Roman, well, he knew his business.

That bay horse became at once the prison pet. The convicts were not particularly tender-hearted, but they could not help frequently going up to stroke him.

Sometimes when Roman returned from the river and shut the great gate which a junior officer had opened, Gniedko would stand quite still waiting for his driver, and turning to him as if for orders.

‘Get along, you know the way,’ Roman would cry. Then Gniedko would go off peaceably to the kitchen and wait while the cooks and other servants filled their buckets with water, which Gniedko seemed to expect.

‘Gniedko, you’re a trump! Why, he’s brought his water-barrel himself. He’s a delight to see!’ they would cry.

‘That’s true. He’s only an animal, but he understands everything that’s said to him.’

‘No end of a horse, our Gniedko!’

At which the horse would shake his head and snort, just as if he really understood that he was being praised; then someone would bring him bread and salt. When he had finished he would once more shake his head, as if to say: ‘I know you; I know you. I’m a good horse, and you’re a good fellow.’

I quite enjoyed regaling Gniedko with bread. It was a pleasure to look at his handsome mouth, and to feel his warm, moist lips licking up the crumbs from the palm of my hand.

The convicts were fond of living things, and, if they had been allowed, would have filled the barracks with birds and domestic animals. What could have been better calculated to soften and ennoble their fierce tempers than to look after such creatures? But it was not permitted, it was not in the regulations; and, indeed, there was no room for many animals.

However, during my time there a number of animals had established themselves in the jail. Besides Gniedko, we had some dogs, geese, a billy-goat called Vaska, and an eagle, which latter remained for only a short time.

I believe I have already mentioned that our dog was known as Bull, and that he and I had struck up a friendship, but as the lower classes regard dogs as impure beasts unworthy of attention, nobody cared for him. He lived in the jail itself, slept in the courtyard, ate the leavings of the kitchen, and had no hold whatever on the prisoners’ sympathy. He knew them all, however, and regarded them as his masters and owners. When the men returned from work, he would hear their cry ‘Corporal!’ come running to the great gate, and gaily welcome the gang, wagging his tail and looking into each man’s eyes, as though he expected a caress. But for several years his little efforts were as useless as they were engaging. Nobody but myself caressed him, so that he preferred me to all others. By some means, of which I am uncertain, we got another dog. He was called Snow. Finally there was a third, named Koultiapka, whom I myself brought into prison when he was only a puppy.

Snow was an odd creature. A telega had gone over him and crushed his spine, making it curve which, when you saw him running at a distance, made him look like twin-dogs born with a ligament. He was very mangy, too, with bleary eyes, his tail was hairless, and always hung between bis legs.

A victim of ill fate, he seemed to have made up his mind to remain always quite impassive; he never barked at anyone, seeming to be afraid of getting into fresh trouble. He was nearly always lurking at the back of the buildings, and if anybody approached he would immediately roll on his back, as though he meant to say: ‘Do what you like with me; I’ve not the least idea of resisting.’ As the dog lay there with his legs in the air, every prisoner felt obliged to give him a passing kick. ‘Ough! the dirty brute!’ they would say. But Snow dared not so much as utter a groan; if he were very much hurt, he would only utter a little dull, strangled yelp. He threw himself down in just the same way before Bull or any other member of the species when he went to try his luck at the kitchen, and he would stretch himself out flat if a mastiff or other large dog came barking at him. Dogs like submission and humility in other dogs; so the angry brute immediately quietened down and stopped short reflectively before the poor, humble beast, and then sniffed him curiously all over.

I wonder what poor Snow was thinking of at such moments as he trembled with fright. ‘Is this brigand going to bite me?’-something of the kind, no doubt. Having sniffed his fill without discovering anything of interest, the big brute would wander off. Snow used then to jump to his feet, and join a crowd of his own tribe, chasing some yutchka.

Snow knew full well that no yutchka would ever condescend to such as he, that she was too proud for that, but it was some consolation to him in his troubles to be able to limp after her. He had but the vaguest notion of anything like decent behaviour. Being devoid of hope for his future, his highest aim was to get a bellyful of victuals, and he was cynical enough in making that fact known.

I once tried to caress him. This was the very last thing that he expected; he dropped on the ground quite helpless, quivering and whimpering with delight. As I was really sorry for him I used often to caress him and, as soon as he caught sight of me he began to whine in a plaintive, tearful way. He met his end in a ditch at the back of the jail; some dogs tore him to pieces.

Koultiapka was quite a different type of dog. I don’t know why I brought him in from one of the workshops, where he had just been born, but it gave me pleasure to feed him and watch him grow. Bull took Koultiapka under his protection and slept with him. When the puppy began to grow up Bull was remarkably patient with him, allowing him to bite bis ears and take his skin in his teeth; he played with him as mature dogs generally do with youngsters. It was a strange thing, but Koultiapka never grew in height but only in length and breadth. His hide was fluffy and mouse-coloured; one of his ears hung down, while the other was always cocked up. He was, like all young dogs, ardent and enthusiastic, yelping with pleasure when he saw his master, and jumping up to lick his face, precisely as if trying to say: ‘As long as he sees how delighted I am, I don’t care; let etiquette go to the devil!’

Wherever I was, I had only to call ‘Koultiapka’ for him to leave his corner and come towards me with noisy satisfaction, curling up into a ball and rolling over and over. I was exceedingly fond of to: little wretch, and I used to fancy that destiny had reserved for him only joy and pleasure in this world of ours; but one fine day a prisoner named Neustroief, who made women’s shoes and prepared skins, cast his eye on him. Something had evidently occurred to him, for he called Koultiapka, felt his skin, and turned him over on the ground in a friendly way. The unsuspicious dog barked with pleasure, but next day he was nowhere to be found. I hunted for him for some time, but in vain; at last, after two weeks, all was explained. Koultiapka’s natural cloak had been too much for Neustroief, who had flayed him and used his skin to make some boots of fur-lined velvet ordered by the young wife of an official. He showed them to me when they were finished: the inside lining was magnificent-all Koultiapka, poor fellow!

A good many convicts worked at tanning, and often brought in dogs with a nice skin. These animals had been bought or stolen, and thus quickly vanished. I remember one day seeing a couple of prisoners behind the kitchens laying their heads together. One of them held on a leash a very fine black dog of particularly good breed. A rascally footman had stolen it from his master and sold it to our shoemakers for thirty kopecks. They were going to hang it; that was their way of disposing of dogs. Then they would remove the skin and throw the body into a rubbish-dump in the farthest corner of the courtyard, which stank most horribly during the summer heat, for it was rarely attended to.

I think the poor beast understood the fate in store for him. He looked at us one after another with curiosity and obvious distress. At intervals he gave a timid little wag with his bushy tail that lay between his legs, as though trying to reach our hearts by a show of confidence. I hurried away, and left the others to finish their vile work.

As to the prison geese, they had established themselves quite by chance. Who took care of them? To whom did they belong? I really don't know; but they were a huge delight to the convicts, and acquired a certain fame throughout the town.

They had been hatched somewhere in the jail, and their headquarters was the kitchen, whence they used to emerge in gaggles when the men went out to work. But as soon as the drum beat and the prisoners assembled at the great gate, out ran the geese after them, cackling, flapping their wings, and finally jumping over one another over the raised threshold of the gateway. While the convicts were at work, the geese pecked about at a little distance from them. As soon as they had done and set out for the jail, the geese rejoined the procession, and the passers-by would cry out: 'I say, look! There are the prisoners with their friends the geese!"How did you teach them to follow you?' someone would ask. 'Here's some money for your geese,' another might say, putting his hand in his pocket. In spite of their devotion to the convicts, however, they had their necks twisted one year to make a feast at the end of Lent.

Nobody would ever have decided to kill our goat Vaska had not something extraordinary happened. I don't know how it came to be in the prison, or who had brought it. It was a white kid, and very pretty. After some days it had won all hearts with its diverting and winning ways. As some excuse was needed for keeping it in the jail, it was given out that it was absolutely necessary to have a goat in the stables. Vaska did not, however, live there, but chiefly in the kitchen, and after a while he used to roam about all over the place. The creature was full of grace and as playful as could be; he jumped on the tables, wrestled with the convicts, came when called, and was always full of fun and high spirits.

One evening the Lesghian Babaï, who was seated with a crowd of fellows on the stone steps at the door of the barrack, took it into his head to have a wrestling bout with Vaska, whose horns were fairly long.

They were butting one another with their foreheads, a procedure whereby the men used often to amuse themselves, when all of a sudden

Vaska jumped on the highest step, reared on his hind legs, drew up his forefeet, and managed to strike the Lesghian on the back of the neck with all his might, and with such effect that Babai went headlong down the steps, to the great delight of all the bystanders, as well as of Babai himself.

Yes, we all adored our Vaska. When he reached the age of puberty a solemn conclave was held, as a result of which he was subjected to an operation performed with great skill by one of the prison vets.

‘Well,’ said the convicts, ‘he won’t have any goat-smell about him, that’s one comfort.’

Vaska then began to put on fat in the most surprising manner, though I must confess that we overfed him. He became a most beautiful fellow with magnificent horns, and corpulent beyond words. Sometimes as he walked he rolled over heavily on the ground through sheer obesity. He used to accompany us to work, which amused the convicts and everyone else who watched. There was nobody who was unacquainted with Vaska, the jail-bird.

Whilst at work on the river bank, the prisoners used to cut willow branches and other foliage, and gather flowers in the ditches to ornament Vaska. They used to twine the branches and flowers round his horns and decorate his body with garlands. Vaska would return at the head of the gang splendidly arrayed; we followed, full of pride at seeing him so beautiful.

Love for our goat went so far that prisoners raised the foolish question whether Vaska ought not to have his horns gilded. It was a vain idea, and nothing came of it. I asked Akim Akimitch, the best gilder in the jail, whether it were possible to gild a goat’s horns. He examined Vaska’s closely, thought a bit, and then said that it could be done but that it would not last, and would be quite useless. So nothing more was done. Vaska would have lived for many years more, and, no doubt, have died of asthma at the last, if, one day as he returned from work at the head of the procession, his path had not been crossed by the governor, who was seated in his carriage. Vaska was in particularly gorgeous array.

‘Halt!’ yelled the governor. ‘Whose goat is that?’

They told him.

‘What, a goat in the prison! and without my leave? Sergeant!’

The sergeant was ordered to kill the goat without a moment’s delay; flay him, and sell his skin, and put the proceeds to the prisoners’ account. As to the meat, he ordered it to be cooked with the cabbage soup.

The occurrence was much discussed and the goat was much mourned, but nobody dared disobey the governor. Vaska was put to death close to the rubbish-dump to which I have alluded. One of the convicts bought the carcase, paying a rouble and fifty kopecks, and with this money white bread was bought for everybody. The man who had purchased the goat afterwards sold it at retail when it had been roasted. The meat was delicious.

We also kept for some time a steppe eagle, quite a small species. A convict brought it in, wounded and half dead. Everyone gathered round. The bird could not fly, its right wing being quite powerless and one of its legs was badly hurt. It gazed angrily upon the curious crowd, and opened its crooked beak as if prepared to sell its life dearly. After watching it for some time the crowd dispersed; the lamed bird went off, hopping on one leg and flapping his wing, hid itself in the farthest corner of the prison which it could find, and there cowered against the palings.

During the three months that he remained in the courtyard he never left that corner. At first we went to look at him fairly often. Bull was sometimes set at him: furiously he would rush, but was frightened to go too near, which greatly amused the convicts. ‘A wild chap that! He won’t stand any nonsense!’ But after a while Bull overcame his fear, and began to worry the eagle. When roused, the dog would catch hold of his broken wing. The creature would defend itself with beak and claws, and then huddle even closer in its corner with the proud, savage look of a wounded king, fixing his gaze steadily upon those who beheld his misery.

The men tired of this sport after a while, and the eagle seemed quite forgotten; but there was someone who every day set by him a piece of fresh meat and a vessel with some water. At first, and for several days, the eagle would touch nothing; but at last he decided to take what was left for him, though he would never be persuaded to take anything from the hand or in public. Sometimes I managed to observe his proceedings from some distance.

When he saw nobody and thought he was alone, he ventured out of his corner, limped along the palisade for a dozen yards or so, and then returned. So he would go, backward and forward, as if he were taking exercise for his health under doctor’s orders. As soon as he caught sight of me he would make for his corner as quickly as possible, limping and hopping. He would then throw back his head, open his mouth, ruffle himself, and apparently prepare to fight.

In vain I tried to caress him. He bit and struggled as soon as he was touched. Not once did he take the meat I offered him, and all the time I remained near him he kept his wicked, piercing eye upon me. Lonely and revengeful he waited for death, defiant and refusing to be reconciled.

At last, after two months of oblivion, the convicts remembered him; then they showed a sympathy which I had not expected of them. It was unanimously agreed to carry him outside.

‘Let him die, but let him die in freedom,’ said they.

‘Sure enough, a free and independent bird like that will never get used to the prison,’ added others.

‘He’s not like us,’ said one.

‘Oh, well, he’s a bird, and we’re human beings.’

‘The eagle, pals, is the king of the woods,’ began Skouratof; but that day nobody paid any-attention to him.

One afternoon, when the drum beat for work, they took the eagle, tied his beak (for he assumed a desperate attitude), and took him out on to the ramparts. The twelve convicts forming the gang were extremely anxious to know where he would go. It was a strange thing; they all seemed as happy as though they had themselves obtained their freedom.

‘ Oh, the wretched brute. One wants to do him a kindness, and he tears your hand for you by way of thanks,’ said the man who held him, looking almost lovingly at the spiteful bird.

‘Let him go, Mikitka!’

‘ It doesn’t suit *him* being a prisoner. Give him his freedom, his jolly freedom.’

They threw him from the ramparts on to the steppe. It was the end of autumn, a grey, cold day. The wind whistled on the bare steppe and went groaning through the yellow dried-up grass. The eagle made off at once, flapping his wounded wing, as if in a hurry to quit us and find shelter from our inquisitive gaze. The convicts watched him intently as he went along with his head just above the grass.

‘ Do you see him, eh?’ said one very pensively.

‘He doesn’t look round,’ said another; ‘he hasn’t looked behind once.’

‘Did you by any chance imagine he’d come back to thank us?’ said a third.

‘Ay, he’s free; he feels it. It’s *freedom!’*

‘Yes, freedom.’

‘You won’t see him any more, pals.’

‘What are you loitering about for? March, march!’ yelled the escort, and all went slowly to their work.

CHAPTER VII

GRIEVANCES

At the outset of this chapter, the editor of this work by the late Alexander Petrovitch Goriantchikoff thinks it his duty to communicate what follows to his readers.

In the first chapter of the *Recollections of the House of the Dead*, something was said about a parricide of noble birth. He was put forward as an instance of the insensibility with which convicts speak of their crimes. It was also stated that he refused altogether to confess to the authorities and the court, but that, thanks to the statements of persons who knew all the details of his case and history, his guilt was proved beyond all doubt. These persons informed the author of the *Recollections* that the criminal had been of dissolute life and overwhelmed with debts, and that he had murdered his father in order to inherit his property. Besides, the whole town where this parricide was imprisoned told exactly the same story, a fact of which the editor of these *Recollections* has fully satisfied himself. It was further stated that the murderer, even when in jail, was of quite a joyous and cheerful frame of mind, a sort of inconsiderate giddy-pated person although intelligent, and that the author of the *Recollections* had never observed any particular signs of cruelty about him; to which he added: ‘So I, for my part, could never bring myself to believe him guilty.’

Some time ago the present editor had word from Siberia concerning the discovery that the ‘parricide’ was in fact innocent and had done ten years’ hard labour for nothing. That was recognized and avowed by the authorities. The real criminals had been discovered and had confessed, and the unfortunate man in question set at liberty. All this stands upon unimpeachable and authoritative testimony.

To say more would be useless: the tragic facts speak too clearly for themselves. Words fail in such cases, when a life has been ruined by an accusation of this kind. Such mistakes as these are among the dreadful possibilities of life, and such possibilities impart a keener and more vivid interest to the *Recollections of the House of the Dead*, which dreadful place, as we see, may contain innocent as well as guilty men.

To continue. I have said that I at last became accustomed, if not reconciled, to the conditions of prison life; but it was a long and dreadful time before I did. It took me almost a year to get used to the prison, and I shall always regard those months as the most terrible in my life: they are graven deep in my memory, down to the very smallest details. I think I could recall every single event and the emotions of each successive hour in it.

I have said that other prisoners, too, found it equally difficult to get used to the life they were obliged to lead. During the whole of that first year I used to ask myself whether they were really as calm as they seemed to be. Questions of this kind pressed themselves upon me. As I have already said, every convict felt himself in an alien element to which he could not reconcile himself. The sense of home was an impossibility; he felt as if he were lodging at some vile inn, a mere stage upon a journey. These men, exiles for and from life, seemed to be either in a perpetual smouldering agitation, or else in deep depression; but there was not one who had not his own everyday ideas about one thing and another. That restlessness which, if it did not come to the surface, was still unmistakable; those vague hopes which the poor creatures entertained in spite of themselves, hopes so ill founded that they were more like the illusions of approaching insanity than anything else; all stamped the place with a character, an originality, peculiarly its own. One could not but feel that there was nothing like it anywhere else in the world. Everybody moved in a sort of waking dream; nor was there anything to relieve or qualify the impression made by the place on each man’s personality. All seemed to suffer from a sort of remote hypersensitivity, and this dreaming of impossibilities gave to the majority of the convicts a sombre and morose aspect for which the word morbid is not strong enough. Nearly all were taciturn and irascible, preferring to keep to themselves the hopes they cherished in secret and in vain. The result was that anything like ingenuousness or truthfulness was the object of general contempt. Precisely because these wild hopes were impossible of fulfilment and, in spite of everything, well known and confessed to their more lucid selves to be so, they kept them jealously concealed in the most secret recesses of their hearts. Yet to renounce them was beyond the power of self-control. It may be they were ashamed of their imagination. God knows. The Russian character is normally so positive and sober in its way of looking at life, so pitiless in criticism of its own weaknesses.

Perhaps it was this inward misery of self-dissatisfaction which underlay the impatience and intolerance shown by the convicts towards one another, and the cruel biting words they spoke to each other. If one of them, more naïve or confiding than the rest, put into words what every one of them had in his mind, painted his castles in the air, told his dreams of liberty or plans of escape, they silenced him with brutal promptitude, and made the poor fellow's life a burden with their sarcasms and jests. And I think those who did so most unscrupulously had perhaps themselves gone furthest in cherishing futile hopes, indulging senseless aspirations. I have said more than once that those among them who were noticeable for their simplicity and candour tended to be considered stupid and idiotic; they earned nothing but contempt. The convicts were so soured and hypersensitive that they positively hated anything resembling amiability or unselfishness. I should be disposed to classify them all broadly as either good or bad men, morose or cheerful, and to recognize as a class apart those ingenuous fellows who could not hold their tongues. But the sour-tempered were in far the greatest majority. Some of them were talkative, but these were usually of slanderous and envious disposition, always poking their noses into other people's business, though they took good care not to let anyone catch a glimpse of their own secret thoughts; that would have been against the fashion and convention of this strange little world. As to the fellows who were really good-very few indeed were they-they were always very quiet and peaceable, and buried their hopes (if they had any) in strict silence; but those hopes were accompanied by more real faith than was the case with the gloomy-minded. There was, however, yet another category which ought not to be forgotten-the men who had lost all hope, the despairing and the desperate, such, for example, as the old man from Starodoub. But they were very few indeed.

That old man from Starodoub! He was extraordinarily subdued and quiet; but there were certain indications of what went on in his mind, indications which he could not hide and from which I could not but see that his inward life was one of intolerable anguish. Nevertheless, he had one source of help and consolation-prayer, and the belief in his own martyrdom. The convict who was always reading the Bible, of whom I spoke earlier-the one who went mad and attacked the governor with a brickbat-was also probably one of those whom hope had altogether abandoned; and, as it is quite impossible to go on living without hope of some sort, he threw away

his life as a sort of voluntary sacrifice. He declared that he attacked the governor though he had no particular grievance; all he wanted was to suffer torment.

Now, what sort of psychological process had been going on in that man's soul? No man lives, or can live, without having *some* object in view, and without making efforts to attain that object. But when there is no such object and hope is entirely fled, anguish often turns a man into a monster. The object we all had in view was liberty, the remission of our confinement and hard labour.

I have tried to separate the convicts into sharply defined classes and categories, but it cannot be done satisfactorily. Reality is a thing of infinite diversity, and defies the most ingenious deductions and definitions of abstract thought, nay, abhors the clear and precise classifications in which we so delight. Reality tends to infinite subdivision of things, and truth is a matter of infinite shadings and. differentiations. Every one of us in that prison had his own peculiar, interior, strictly personal life which lay altogether outside the world of regulations and official superintendence.

But, as I have said before, I could not penetrate the depths of this interior life in the early part of my prison career, for everything that met my eyes, or challenged my attention in any way, filled me with a sadness for which there are no words. Sometimes I felt nothing short of hatred for those poor creatures whose martyrdom was at least as great as mine. In those first days I envied them, because they were among persons of their own sort and understood one another; so I thought, but the truth was that their enforced companionship, their comradeship, where the word of command went with the whip or the rod, was as much an object of aversion to them as it was to me, and every one of them tried to keep himself as much as possible to himself. This envious hatred of them, which came to me in moments of irritation, was at least excusable, for those who tell you so confidently that a cultured man of the upper class does not suffer as a mere peasant does are utterly wrong. That is a thing I have often heard said, and read too. In the abstract, the notion seems correct and is founded in generous sentiment, for all convicts are human beings. But in reality it is different. At the heart of the problem lie a number of practical complications upon which experience alone can pronounce, experience which I have had. I do not mean to lay it down peremptorily that the nobleman and the man of culture feel more acutely, sensitively, deeply, because of their more highly developed

conditions of being. On the other hand, it is impossible to reduce all souls alike to one common level or standard; neither the grade of education nor anything else furnishes a standard according to which punishment can be meted out.

It is a great satisfaction to me to be able to say that among those men who suffered so terribly under a vile and barbarous system, I found abundant proof that the elements of moral development were not wanting. In our prison there were men with whom I was familiar for several years, upon whom I looked as wild beasts and abhorred as such. Well, all of a sudden, when I least expected it, those very men would manifest such a wealth of fine feeling, so keen a comprehension of the sufferings of others, seen in the light of the consciousness of their own, that one could almost fancy that scales had fallen from one's eyes. It was so sudden as to be astonishing; one could scarcely believe one's eyes or ears. Sometimes, however, it was just the other way about: well bred and educated men would occasionally display a savage, cynical brutality which nearly turned one's stomach. Their conduct was such that it could be neither excused nor justified, however charitably one might feel disposed.

I lay no stress on the fundamental change in habits of life, the food, etc. in respect of which a gentleman suffers so much more keenly than the peasant or working man, who often goes hungry when free, but whose belly is always filled in prison. I will not emphasize that, for it must be admitted that for a man with any strength of character these external things are trifling when compared with privations of a very different kind. None the less, such total change of material conditions and habits is neither inconsiderable nor easy to endure. On the other hand, the status of a convict involves considerations before which all other horrors pale, even the ubiquitous mud and filth, the scantiness and uncleanness of the food, the irons, and the suffocating sense of being always gripped as in a vice.

The capital, the most important point of all, is that after a couple of hours or so every newcomer from the lower classes shakes down into equality with the rest: he is *at home* among them, he has the 'freedom' of this city of slaves, this criminal community in which one man is superficially like every other man. He understands and is understood, he is looked upon by everybody as *one of themselves.* Now it is quite otherwise with a gentleman. However kindly, fair-minded, and intelligent such a man may be, he will be hated and despised by all for years; he will never be understood or trusted.

He will be considered neither as friend nor comrade. If he can persuade the others to stop insulting him it will be as much as he can do, for he will be alien to them from first to last, he is doomed to experience the grief of unending, hopeless, causeless solitude and sequestration. It may sometimes be that this state of affairs is not due to any malice on the part of his fellow prisoners: it simple cannot be helped; the gentleman is not one of the gang, and therein lies the whole secret.

There is nothing more terrible than to have to live outside the social sphere to which you properly belong. The peasant, transported from Taganrog to Petropavlosk, finds there other Russian peasants like himself; between him and them there can be mutual understanding; within the hour they will be friends, and live comfortably together in the same izba or the same barrack. With the gentleman it is wholly otherwise: a great gulf separates him from the lower classes. How deep and impassible that gulf is appears only when he forfeits his position and becomes as one of the common herd. You may perhaps spend your whole life in daily contact with the peasant, during forty years your official position or other duties may lead you to do business with him as regularly as day follows night. You may be his benefactor, all but a father to him-but you will never know what lies at the bottom of the man’s mind or heart. You may think you know something about him, but it is all illusion, nothing more. My readers will no doubt charge me with exaggeration, but I am convinced that I speak the literal truth. I do not found my judgment upon theory or book-reading; the realities of life have given me only too ample time and opportunity to review and correct my ideas, which in this matter have become unshakable convictions. Perhaps my fellow men will some day learn how well founded are my assertions.

At the beginning of my imprisonment these truths still required demonstration, but events and close observation quickly confirmed my views, and what I experienced so affected me as to undermine my health. During the first summer I wandered about the place, so far as I was free to move, a solitary, friendless man. My moral situation was such that I could not distinguish those convicts who, in the sequel, managed to care for me a little in spite of the gulf that always remained between us. There *were* there men of my own position, ex-noblemen like myself, but I found their companionship repugnant.

Here is one incident which forced me to realize from the outset how solitary a creature I was, and all the strangeness of my position. On a fine, warm August day, at about one o'clock in the afternoon, a time when, as a rule, everyone took a nap before resuming work, the convicts rose as one man and assembled in the courtyard. I had not the slightest idea until then that anything unusual was afoot. So deeply had I been sunk in my own thoughts, that I had scarcely noticed what was going on around me. It seems, however, that the convicts had been smouldering with unwonted discontent for three days. It may have started even earlier; so, at any rate, I thought later when I recalled stray remarks, snatches of conversation that had reached my ears, the palpable increase of ill humour among the prisoners, and their unusual irritability for some time past. I had attributed it all to the trying summer work, the insufferably long days; to their dreaming about the woods and freedom, which the season revived; to the nights too short for rest. It may be that all these things combined to generate a ferment of discontent that only needed a tolerably good reason to explode. That reason was found in the food.

For several days a good deal of plain speaking in barracks had revealed their dissatisfaction, to which they gave voice when assembled for dinner or supper. One of the cooks had been changed, but after a couple of days the newcomer was sacked and his predecessor brought back. The restlessness and ill humour were general; mischief was brewing.

'Here are we slaving to death, and they give us nothing but filth to eat,' grumbled one in the kitchen.

'If you don't like it, why don't you order jellies and blancmange?' said another.

'Sour cabbage soup, why, that's *good*. I love it; there's nothing more juicy,' exclaimed a third.

'Well, if they gave you nothing but beef, beef, beef, for ever and ever, would you like *that?'*

' Yes, yes, they ought to give us meat,' said a fourth. 'One's almost killed at the workshops; and, by heaven! when you're through with the work there you're hungry, hungry, and you don't get anything to satisfy your hunger.'

'It's true, the food's simply damnable.'

'He fills his pockets, don't you fear!'

'It's none of your business.'

‘Whose business is it, then? My belly’s my own. If we were all to make a row about it together, you’d soon see.’

‘Yes.’

‘ Haven’t we been beaten enough for complaining, you fool?’

‘ True enough! What’s done in a hurry is never well done. And how would you set about making a fuss, tell me that?’

‘ I’ll tell you, by God! If everybody will go, I’ll go too; I’m just dying of hunger. It’s all very well for those who eat apart at a better table to keep quiet, but those who eat the regulation food’

‘There’s a fellow with eyes that do their job, bursting with envy *he* is. Don’t his eyes glisten when he sees something that doesn’t belong to him?’

‘Well, pals, why don’t we make up our minds? Have we gone through enough? They flay us, the rogues! Let’s have a go at them.’

‘What’s the good? I tell you you must chew what they give you, and stuff your mouth full of it. Look at the fellow, he wants people to chew his food for him. We’re in prison, and have got to put up with it.’

‘Yes, that’s it; we’re in prison.’

‘That’s it always; the people die of hunger and the Government fills its belly.’

‘That’s true. Old Eight Eyes has got nice and fat on it; he’s bought a pair of grey horses.’

‘He doesn’t like his glass at all, that fellow,’ said a convict ironically.

‘He had a bout at cards a little while ago with the vet; for two hours he played without a halfpenny in his pocket. Fedka told me so.’

‘That’s why we get cabbage soup that’s fit for nothing.’

‘You’re all idiots! It doesn’t matter; *nothing* matters.’

‘I tell you if we all join in complaining we shall see what he has to say for himself. Let’s make up our minds.’

‘Speak for yourself! You’ll get his fist on your pate; that’s all.’

‘I tell you they’ll have him up, and try him.’

All the prisoners were in a state of acute agitation. The truth is, the food was execrable. The general anguish, suffering, and suspense seemed to be coming to a head. Convicts are naturally quarrelsome and rebellious, but a general revolt is rare, for they can never agree among themselves. We all of us felt that, because there was, as a rule, more violent talk than action.

This time, however, the agitation did not die down. The men gathered in groups in their barracks, talking things over excitedly, reciting in detail the

governor’s misdeeds and trying to get to the bottom of them. In every affair of this kind there are ringleaders and firebrands. The ringleaders are generally rather remarkable fellows, not only in convict establishments, but among all large organizations of workmen, military detachments, etc. They are always people of a peculiar type, enthusiastic men with a thirst for justice, very naïve, simple, strong, and convinced that their ambitions can be fully realized. They have as much sense as other people, but some, though of high intelligence, are too full of warmth and zeal to exercise self-control. When you come across men who really know how to lead the masses and get what they want, you are face to face with a very different type: one that is extremely uncommon in Russia. The more usual type of leader, the one I first alluded to, does certainly in one sense fulfil his purpose, so far as instigating rebellion is concerned, but in the end he succeeds only in filling the prisons. Because of his impetuosity he always comes off second best, but it is this very impetuosity that gives him influence over the masses whose ardent, honest indignation does its work, and encourages the less resolute. His blind confidence of success seduces even the most hardened sceptics, although this confidence is generally based on such uncertain, childish reasons that it is wonderful how people can put faith in them.

The secret of such a man’s influence is that he takes the lead and forges ahead without flinching. He rushes forward, head down and often without any real understanding of what he is about. He has nothing about him of practical outlook in virtue of which a vile and worthless man often achieves his end, and even emerges white from a tub of ink. He inevitably dashes his skull against a stone wall. Under ordinary circumstances these fellows are bilious, irascible, intolerant, contemptuous, and often passionate, which, after all, is part of the secret of their strength. The deplorable thing is that they never aim at what is the essential, the vital part of their task; they invariably concern themselves from the outset with details instead of with essentials, and that is their ruin. But they and the mob understand one another, which makes them formidable.

I must say a few words about this particular ‘grievance.’

Some of the convicts had been transported as the result of a ‘grievance,’ and these were the most articulate, especially one Martinoff, who had formerly served in the Hussars, an eager, restless, and choleric, but worthy and truthful fellow. Another, Vassili Antonoff, could work himself up into a

rage coolly and collectedly; he generally wore an impudent expression and smiled sarcastically, but he, too, was honest, a man of his word, and of no mean education. I will not describe them all; they were numerous. Petroff hurried from one group to another. He spoke few words, but he was quite as excited as anyone else, for he was the first to run out of the barrack when the others assembled in the courtyard.

Our sergeant, who was acting sergeant-major, was quickly on the scene, and quite alarmed. The convicts fell into ranks, and politely asked him to inform the governor that they wished to speak with him and ask him a few questions. Behind the sergeant stood all the invalids, in rank and facing the convicts. The sergeant, on hearing their request, was frightened almost out of his wits; but he dared not refuse to go and report to the governor, for if the convicts mutinied, God only knew what might happen. All our officers had proved themselves completely incompetent in handling prisoners. Besides, even if nothing worse happened, if the convicts thought better of it and dispersed, the sergeant remained in duty bound to inform the authorities of the occurrence. Pale, and trembling with fright, he hurried off to the governor, without attempting to reason with the convicts. He realized, no doubt, that they were not inclined to listen.

Without having the least idea of what was going on, I joined the ranks (it was only later that I heard the earlier details of the story). I thought there was going to be a roll-call, but could not see the soldiers who checked the lists. Surprised, I began to look about me. The men’s faces were working with emotion, and some were ghostly pale. They were sternly silent, and seemed to be thinking of what they should say to the governor. I observed that many of them seemed to wonder at my presence among them, but they looked away from me. No doubt they thought it strange that I should come and take part in their demonstrations, and could scarcely believe their eyes. But they turned again to look at me with curiosity.

‘What are you doing here?’ said Vassili Antonoff, in a loud, rude voice; he happened to be close to me, and a little apart from the rest. He had always hitherto been scrupulously polite.

I looked at him perplexed and trying to understand what he meant; I began to see that something unusual was afoot in the prison.

‘Yes, indeed, what are you about here? Get back to barracks,’ said a young soldier-convict whom I had never met till then, a good, quiet lad. ‘This has nothing to do with you,’ he added.

‘Haven’t we fallen in?’ I answered. ‘Isn’t there going to be a roll-call?’

‘Why, *he’s* here, too,’ cried one of them.

‘Iron-nose,’[1] said another.

‘Fly-killer,’ added a third, with inexpressible contempt for me in his voice. This new nickname caused a general burst of laughter.

‘These fellows are in clover everywhere. We’re in prison doing hard labour, I rather fancy; they get wheat bread and sucking-pig, like the great lords they are. Don’t you get private supplies of food? What are you doing here?’

‘You’ve no business here,’ said Koulikoff brusquely, taking me by the hand and leading me out of the ranks.

He was himself very pale; his dark eyes sparkled with fire, and he had bitten bis under Up till the blood came. He was not one of those who awaited the governor’s arrival without losing his self-possession.

I liked to look at Koulikoff battling in circumstances like these; he appeared in his true colours in all his strength and weakness. He struck an attitude, but he did know how to act. I think he would have gone to his death with a certain affected elegance. While everybody was insulting me by their words or tone of voice, his politeness was greater than ever; but he spoke in firm and resolute accents which admitted of no reply.

‘We are here on business of our own, Alexander Petrovitch,

1 An insulting phrase which is untranslatable.

and you’ve got to keep out of it. Go where you like and wait till it’s over… here, your people are in the kitchens, go there.’

‘They’re in hot quarters down there.’

I did in fact see the Poles at the open window of the kitchen, in company with a good many other convicts. I hardly knew what to do but went there followed by laughter, abuse, and those muffled growls that are the prison substitute for the hissings and cat-calls of the world outside.

‘He doesn’t like it at all! Chu, chu, chu! Seize him!’

I had never been so bitterly insulted since my arrival. It was a very painful situation, but no more than was to be expected in the abnormal excitement under which the men were labouring. In the ante-room I met Tvski, a young nobleman of not much information but of firm, generous character. The others excepted him from the hatred they entertained for

convicts of noble birth; they were almost fond of him. His every gesture denoted a brave and upright man.

‘What are you doing, Goriantchikoff?’ he called out. ‘Come here, come here!’

‘But what’s it all about?’

‘They are going to make a formal complaint. Haven’t you heard? It won’t do them a bit of good. Who’ll pay any attention to convicts? They’ll try to find out the ringleaders, and if we’re among them they’ll blame it all on us. Just remember what we’ve been transported for. They’ll only get a whipping, but we shall be put on trial. The governor detests us all, and would be only too happy to ruin us; all their sins will fall on our shoulders.’

‘The convicts would bind us hand and foot and sell us outright,’ added Mtski, when we reached the kitchen.

‘They’d never have mercy on *us,’* added Tvski.

Besides the noblemen there were in the kitchen about thirty other prisoners who did not wish to join in the general complaint, some because they were afraid, others because of their conviction that the whole proceeding would prove quite useless. Akim Akimitch, who was a decided opponent of everything that savoured of complaint, or that could interfere with discipline and the usual routine, waited with keen interest to see the end of the business, about which he did not care a jot. He was perfectly convinced that the authorities would suppress it on the spot.

Isaiah Fomitch’s nose drooped visibly as he listened with a sort of fearful curiosity to our conversation; he was much disturbed. With the Polish nobles were some inferior persons of the same nation, as well as some Russians-timid, dull, silent fellows, who had not dared to join the rest, and who waited with melancholy looks to see what the issue would be. There were also some morose, discontented convicts who remained in the kitchen not because they were afraid, but because they believed this half-revolt an absurdity which could not succeed. It seemed to me that these fellows were considerably disturbed, and their faces were quite unsteady. They saw clearly that they were in the right and that the issue of the movement would be what they had foretold, but they had a sort of feeling that they were traitors who had sold their comrades to the governor. Jolkin-the long-headed Siberian peasant who had been sent to hard labour for coining, the man who obtained for himself Koulikoff ‘s veterinary practice-was also there, as well as the old man from Starodoub. None of the cooks had left

their post, perhaps because they looked upon themselves as being more closely related to the authorities of the place, whom it would therefore be unbecoming to oppose.

‘For all that,’ said I to Mtski, ‘with the exception of these fellows, everyone’s involved’; and no doubt I spoke in a way which betrayed my misgivings.

‘I wonder what in the world *we* have to do with it?’ growled B.

‘We should have risked a good deal more than they if we’d joined them, shouldn’t we? *Je haïs ces brigands.* Why, do you think they’ll manage to pull it off? I can’t see what they want, putting their heads in the lion’s mouth, the fools.’

‘It’ll all come to nothing,’ said someone, an obstinate, sour-tempered old fellow. With which Almazoff, who was also with us, heartily agreed.

‘Some fifty of them will get a good beating, and that’s all the good they’ll get out of it.’

‘Here’s the governor!’ cried someone, and everybody ran to the windows.

The governor had arrived, spectacles and all, looking evil as might be, towering with rage, and red as a turkey-cock. He strode in silence right up to the line. In crises like this he showed uncommon pluck and presence of mind, but it ought not to be overlooked that he was nearly always half-seas over. Just then his greasy cap, with its yellow border, and his tarnished silver epaulettes, gave him a Mephisto-phelian appearance in my excited fancy. Behind him came the quartermaster, Diatloff, who was quite a personage in the establishment, for he was really at the back of all official proceedings. He was an extremely capable and cunning fellow, and enjoyed great influence with the governor. He was by no means a bad sort, and the convicts were generally well inclined towards him. The sergeant followed with three or four soldiers, no more. He had already been severely reprimanded, and there was plenty more of the same to come, if he had only known it. The convicts, who had remained uncovered, caps in hand, from the moment they sent for the governor, stiffened to attention, every man shifting his weight to the other leg. They remained there, motionless, and awaited his first word, or rather his first shout.

They had not long to wait. Before he had uttered a single coherent word, the governor began yelling at the top of his voice; he was beside himself with rage. We saw him from the windows storming down their line, every

now and again shooting an angry question. As we were a fair distance off, we could not hear what he said or their replies. We only heard his shouts, or rather what seemed like shouting, groaning, and grunting all beautifully blended.

‘Scoundrels, mutineers! To the cat with ye! Whips and sticks! The ringleaders? *You’*re a ringleader!’ throwing himself at one of them.

We did not hear the answer, but a minute later we saw this convict leave the ranks and make for the guard-house.

Another followed, then a third.

‘I’ll have you up, every man of you. I’ll Who’s in the kitchen there?’ he bawled, as he saw us. at the open windows. ‘Come here, the lot of you! Drive ’em all out, every man!’

Diatloff, the quartermaster, came towards the kitchens.

When we told him that *we* were making no complaint he returned and reported to the governor at once.

‘Ah, those fellows are not in it,’ said he, lowering his tone a bit, and much pleased. ‘Never mind, bring them along here.’

We left the kitchen. I could not help feeling humiliated; all of us went along with our heads down.

‘Ah, Prokofief! Jolkin too; and you, Almazof! Here, come here, the whole crowd of you! ‘ cried the governor with a gasp; but he was somewhat softened, his tone was almost affable. ‘Mtski, you’re here too?… Take their names. Diatloff, take down all the names, the grumblers in one list and the contented ones in another-all, without exception; you’ll give me the list. I’ll have you all before the prison commissionars… I’ll… scoundrels!’

This word list had its effect.

‘We’ve nothing to complain of!’ cried one of the malcontents in a half-strangled voice.

‘Ah, you’ve nothing to complain of? Who’s that? Let all those who have nothing to complain of step out of the ranks.’

‘ All of us, all of us! ‘ others exclaimed.

‘ Ah, the food is all right, then? You’ve been put up to it. Ringleaders, mutineers, eh? So much the worse for them.’

‘What do you mean by that?’ cried a voice in the crowd.

‘Where is the fellow who said that?’ roared the governor, turning quickly in the direction from which the voice had come. ‘ It was you, Rastorgoulef, you. To the guard-house with you.’

Rastorgoulef, a young, chubby fellow of tall stature, left the ranks and went with slow steps to the guard-house. It was not he who had spoken, but as he was called out he dared not contradict.

‘You fellows are too fat. That’s what makes you unruly!’ roared the governor. ‘ You wait, you hulking rascal, in three days you’ll Wait! I’ll have it out with you all. Fall out all those who have no complaint.’

‘We’re not complaining of anything, your Excellency,’ said some of the men dejectedly; the rest preserved an obstinate silence. But the governor wished to hear no more; it was to his own interest to terminate the affair with as little friction as possible.

‘Ah, *now* I see! No one has anything to complain of,’ said he. ‘I knew it, I saw it all. It’s the ringleaders. There are ringleaders, by God,’ he went on, addressing Diadoff. ‘ We must lay our hands on them, every man of them. And now -now-it’s time to go to your work. Drummer, there; drummer, a roll!’

He told them off himself in small detachments. The convicts dispersed sadly and silently, only too glad to get out of his sight. Immediately after the gangs had left, the governor betook himself to the guard-house, where he proceeded to deal with the ‘ringleaders’; but he did not push matters far. It was easy to see that he wanted to be done with the whole business as soon as possible. One of the accused told us later that he had begged for forgiveness, and that the officer had let him go immediately. There can be no doubt that our governor did not feel firm in the saddle; he had had a fright, I fancy; for a mutiny is always a ticklish thing, and although this complaint about the food did not amount really to mutiny (it had been reported only to the govenor and the commanding officer), yet it was an uncomfortable and dangerous affair. What caused him most anxiety was that the prisoners had been unanimous in their movement, so their discontent had to be pacified somehow, at any price. The ringleaders were soon set free. Next day the food was passable, but the improvement did not last long; on the days immediately following the Governor visited the prison more often than usual, and always found some irregularity to be stopped and punished. The sergeant came and went in a puzzled, dazed sort of way, as if he could not get over his stupefaction at what had happened. As to the convicts, it took them a long time to settle down again, but their agitation seemed to wear quite a different character-they were restless and perplexed. Some went about with their heads down, without saying a word;

others discussed the event, grumbling and conscious of their helplessness. A good many said biting things about their own proceedings, as though they were thoroughly dissatisfied with themselves.

‘I say, pal, take and eat!’ said one.

‘Where’s the mouse that was so ready to bell the cat?’

‘ Let’s consider ourselves lucky he didn’t have us all soundly thrashed.’

‘ It would be a good deal better if you thought more and chattered less.’

‘What do *you* mean by lecturing me? Are you schoolmaster here, I’d like to know?’

‘Oh, clear off.’

‘Who are you, I’d like to know?’

‘I’m a man! What are you?’

‘A man! You’re’

‘You’re’

‘I say! Shut up, do! What’s the good of all this row?’ was the cry from all sides.

After work on the evening of the day the ‘mutiny’ took place, I met Petroff behind the barracks. He was looking for me. As he approached I heard him muttering something which I did not understand; he said no more, but walked by my side in a listless, mechanical fashion.

‘I say, Petroff, your fellows are not annoyed with us, are they?’

‘ Who’s annoyed?’ he asked, as if waking from a dream.

‘The convicts with us-with us noblemen.’

‘Why should they be annoyed?’

‘Well, because we didn’t back them up.’

‘ Oh, why should *you* have kicked up a dust?’ he answered, as if trying to understand my meaning. ‘You have a table to yourselves, you fellows.’

‘Oh, well, there are some of you who are not nobles and who don’t eat the regulation food, and yet they sided with you. We ought to have backed you up. We’re all in prison, and we should all be comrades.’

‘Heavens! You our comrades?’ he asked, with unfeigned astonishment.

I looked at him; it was clear that he had not the least idea of what I meant; I, on the other hand, understood him thoroughly. I now saw quite clearly something of which I had before only a confused idea. What I had previously guessed was now a sad certainty.

I was forced to realize that any sort of true fellowship between the convicts and myself could never be, even if I remained for the rest of my

life in the place. I belonged to a kind of ‘special section,’ I was a creature for ever apart. The expression on Petroff’s face when he said, ‘ Are we com-rades, how can that be?’ remains, and will always remain before my eyes. It was a look of such frank, naïve surprise, such ingenuous astonishment, that I could not help asking myself if there was not some lurking irony in the man, a slight shade of sarcasm. Not at all, he was quite sincere. I was not their comrade, and could never be; that was all. Go you to the right, we’ll go to the left! Your business is yours, ours is ours.

After the mutiny I honestly believed they would show us as little mercy as they dared and could, and that our life would become hell. But nothing of the sort happened. We heard not the slightest reproach, there was not the least criticism of what had occurred, it was simply passed over. They went on teasing us as before whenever they had an opportunity, but no more frequently. No one seemed to bear malice against those who stayed in the kitchen and who had not taken part, or against those who had been the first to back down and proclaim that they had no complaint. To my astonishment, it was all forgotten.

CHAPTER VIII

MY COMPANIONS

It will be understood that those to whom I was most drawn, especially in the early days, were men of my own class, that is, men of gentle birth. But of the three Russian ex-nobles in the place, I knew and spoke to only one, Akim Akimitch; the other two were the spy An and the supposed parricide. Even with Akim I never exchanged a word except when I felt at the end of my tether, in moments when my sadness was simply unendurable, and when I really thought I should never again have the chance of getting close to another human being.

In the last chapter I have tried to show that the convicts were of different types, and to classify them accordingly; but when I think of Akim Akimitch I cannot place him satisfactorily. He was *sui generis* in that establishment so far as I was able to observe.

There may have been elsewhere other men like him, to whom it seemed a matter of complete indifference whether they were free or in jail doing hard labour. In our prison Akim was unique by his curious imperturbability of temperament. He had settled down in jail as if he was going to pass his whole life there and didn’t mind it at all. All his belongings-mattress, cushions, utensils-were so arranged as to give the impression that he was living in a furnished house of his own; there was nothing provisional, temporary, transitory, about him, either in speech or behaviour. He had still a good many years of his sentence to run, but I much doubt whether he ever gave a thought to the day when he would be set free. He was entirely reconciled to his condition, not as the result of conscious effort, but simply out of natural submissiveness; as far as his own comfort was concerned, it was all the same to him. He was not at all a bad fellow, and in the early days I found his advice and assistance most useful, though I must confess that his peculiarities sometimes deepened my natural melancholy until it became almost intolerable anguish.

When I became desperate with silence and solitude of soul, I would make conversation with him. I longed to hear and to reply to human speech in any form; and the more filled with gall and hatred of our surroundings that speech had been, the more closely it would have been in sympathy with

my wretched mood. But he never said much; he would continue quietly sizing his lanterns, and then begin to tell me some story of how he had taken part in a review of troops in 18-: their divisional commander was So-and-so, the manoeuvring was neatly performed, that there had been a change in the skirmisher's system of signalling, and so on. It was all told in level imperturbable tones, like water falling drop by drop. He put no life into his descriptions, even when he told me of a sharp skirmish at which he had been present in the Caucasus, after which his sword was decorated with the Ribbon of St Anne. The only difference was that his voice became a little more measured and grave: he lowered his tone when he pronounced the words 'St Anne,' as though he were revealing a great secret. Then he remained silent for at least three minutes, looking solemn but not uttering a word.

During the whole of that first year there were moments when I felt only bitter hatred towards Akim Akimitch. I simply cannot say why, but at such times I would despairingly curse the fate which had set his bed next to mine, so close indeed that our heads nearly touched. An hour afterwards I deeply regretted such extravagance. It was, however, only during the first year of my confinement that these violent feelings overpowered me. As time went on, I got used to Akim Akimitch's singular character, and was ashamed of my former explosions. I do not remember that he and I ever become involved in anything like an open quarrel.

Besides the three Russians of whom I have spoken, there were eight other noblemen in the prison while I was there. Some of them became close friends of mine. Even the best of them, however, were morbid, aloof, and intolerant to the very last degree, and with two of them I was obliged to discontinue all spoken intercourse. There were only three who had any education: B*ski, Mtski, and the old manJ*ski who had formerly been a professor of mathematics, an excellent fellow, but highly eccentric and of very narrow mental horizon in spite of his learning. Mtski and Bski were of a very different mould. Mtski and I were on the best of terms from the start. We never disagreed, but although I had the greatest respect for him, I never managed to become sincerely attached to him. He was sour, embittered, mistrustful, and most reserved. That tended to repel me; the man had a closed soul, closed against all the world, and he made one feel it. Indeed, I was so conscious of the fact that I may have judged him unfairly. After all, his character bore the stamp of nobility and strength. His

ineradicable scepticism made him very reserved when in company, and he guarded his own droughts with extraordinary skill. Sceptic as he was, there was another and a reverse side to his nature, for in some respects he was a profound and unalterable believer, with unshakable faith and hope. In spite of his tact in dealing with others, he quarrelled openly with B*ski and his friend T*ski.

The first of these, Bski, was a man of poor health, tending to consumption, irascible, and of a weak, nervous disposition; but he was, for all that, a good and generous man. His nervous irritability made him capricious as a child; that kind of temperament was too much for me under those conditions, and I soon began to see as little as possible of Bski, though I never ceased to like him very much.

It was just the other way about with Mtski: with him I was always on easy terms, though I did not care for him at all.

When I began to avoid Bski, I had more or less to break also with Tski, of whom I spoke in the last chapter.

I much regretted that for, though not well educated, he had an excellent heart; a worthy, and deeply spiritual man. He loved and respected Bski, so much so that he regarded those who broke with his friend as personal enemies. He quarrelled with M*tski on account of B*ski, and it was a long time before the breach was healed. All these people were as ill-humoured as they could be, tetchy and mistrustful, morally and physically hypersensitive. It is not to be wondered at; their situation was trying in the extreme, far more so than ours. They had been exiled and transported for ten or twelve years, and what made their imprisonment yet more difficult to endure was their rooted, ingrained prejudice, especially the unfortunate but insuperable disgust with which they viewed their fellow prisoners. In their eyes the poor fellows were no more than wild beasts, without a single quality that could be recognized as human. Everything in their previous careers and their present circumstances combined to produce this unhappy aversion.

Their life in jail was a perpetual torment. They were kindly and talkative with the Circassians, the Tartars, and Isaiah Fomitch; but for the other prisoners they had nothing but contempt and dislike. The only one for whom they had any respect was the aged Old Believer. Nevertheless, I never heard a single prisoner reproach them with their birth, their religious beliefs, or their convictions, as the Russian peasant so often does to persons of different condition, especially if they happen to be foreigners. The fact is,

he cannot take a foreigner seriously: to him the foreigner seems no more than a grotesque figure of fun. The convicts manifested far more respect for the Polish nobles than for us Russians, but I don’t think the Poles cared one way or the other, or took any notice of the fact.

I spoke just now of Tski, and have something more to say of him. When he and B-ski were ordered from their first place of exile to our fortress, he carried his friend nearly the whole way. Bski was frail and in bad health: he became exhausted before they had accomplished half the first stage of the journey. They had first been banished to Ygorsk, where they lived in tolerable comfort and whereconditions were far less severe than with us. But in consequence of a correspondence with some exiles in another town-a quite innocent exchange of letters-it was decided to remove them to our jail, where they would be under more direct Government surveillance. Before their arrival M — tski

had been quite alone, and his sufferings in that first year of his banishment must have been terrible.

Jski was the old man, always deep in prayer, to whom I referred above. Most political prisoners were comparatively young men while Jski was at least fifty years old.

He was a worthy, gentlemanly fellow, if a little eccentric.

T*ski and B*ski detested him and never spoke to him;

they insisted that he was obstinate and troublesome beyond endurance, and I was obliged to admit the truth of their opinion. I believe that in prison-as in every place where men are obliged to live in one another’s company, whether they like it or not-quarrelling and personal hatreds are more common than under normal circumstances. Many causes contributed to those squabbles that were, alas! all too common.

Jski was really disagreeable and narrow-minded; not one of his companions was on good terms with him. He and I never came to open rupture, but we were never really friendly. I fancy that he was a good mathematician. One day he explained to me in his half-Russian, half-Polish jargon an astronomical system of his own invention. I have been told that he had written a work upon the subject, which the learned world had received with derision, and I believe his reason was partially deranged. He used sometimes to spend a whole day on his knees in prayer, which earned the convicts’ respect during the remainder of his imprisonment. He died in my presence after a very painful illness. He had won the esteem of the prisoners

from the first moment of his arrival in consequence of an incident between the governor and himself. They had not been shaved once on the road from Ygorsk, and their hair and beards had grown very long by the time they met the governor. That worthy raged like a madman; he was wild with indignation at such a breach of discipline, though it was not their fault.

‘My God! Did you ever see anything like it?’ he roared. ‘They’re vagabonds, brigands!’

Jski knew very little Russian, and thought that he was asking them if they were brigands or vagabonds, so he answered:

‘We are political prisoners, not rogues and vagabonds.’

‘So-o-o! You mean impudence. Clod!’ howled the governor. ‘ To the guard-house with him. A hundred strokes of the rod, this instant, I say!’

They gave the old man his punishment. He lay flat on the ground under the strokes without the slightest resistance, kept his hand between his teeth, and bore it all without a murmur, without moving a muscle. B*ski and T*ski reached the jail while this was in progress. Mski was waiting for them at the principal gate, having heard of their arrival, and threw himself on their necks, although he had never seen them before. Utterly disgusted at the way the governor had received them, they told Mski all about the cruel business that had just occurred. Mski told me later that he was beside himself with rage when he heard it.

‘ I could not contain my wrath,’ he said, ‘ I shook as though with fever. I waited for Jski at the main gate, through which he would come from the guard-house after his punishment. The gate was opened, and there I saw Jski pass before me, his lips all white and trembling, his face pale as death. He looked neither to right nor left, but passed through the groups of convicts assembled in the courtyard-they knew a nobleman had just been flogged-entered the barrack-room, went straight to his place, and, without a word, dropped down on his knees in prayer. The prisoners were surprised and touched. When I saw that old man with his white hairs, who had left behind him a wife and children, kneeling and praying after that scandalous treatment, I fled from the barrack, and for a couple of hours felt as if I were stark, staring, raving mad, or blind drunk… From that first day the convicts showed a marked deference to and consideration for Jski.

What particularly pleased them was that he had not uttered a cry while undergoing his punishment.’

But one must be fair and truthful in this matter; the distressing story is not an example of the usual treatment accorded by the authorities to transported noblemen, Russian or Polish; and this isolated case affords no basis for passing judgment upon the system as a whole. My anecdote merely shows that you may meet a bad man anywhere and everywhere. If that type of man happens to be in absolute command of a jail, and if he happens to have a grudge against a prisoner, the poor fellow's lot will be indeed very far from enviable. But the prison commissioners who regulate and supervise convict labour in Siberia, and from whom subordinates take their tone as well as their orders, are careful to exercise discrimination when dealing with persons of noble birth, and sometimes allow them special privilèges not granted to convicts of lower condition. There are obvious reasons for this: the commissioners are themselves gentlemen, they know that men of that class must not be driven to extremes. Cases have been known where noblemen have refused to submit to corporal punishment, and flung themselves in desperation upon their tormentors with the gravest consequences indeed. Moreover-and this, I think, is the principal cause of leniency-some thirty-five years ago a large party of Russian nobles[1] was transported to Siberia: their behaviour was so correct, they bore themselves with such dignity, that the authorities adopted the practice, which they never abandoned, of treating criminals of gentle birth quite differently from ordinary convicts; and subordinate officials took their cue from them.

Many of these underlings, no doubt, were little pleased with the attitude of their superiors; they were only happy when they were free to behave exactly as they liked in the matter. But they had few chances to do so, for they were kept strictly within the rules; I have reason to know this, as I shall now explain. I was put in the second category, which consisted mainly of convicts who had been serfs. We were under military supervision. Now this second category, or class, was much harder than either the first, which worked in the mines, or the third, which was employed in manufacture. It was harder, not only for the nobles but for the other convicts too, because the governing and administrative system and *personnel* in it were military throughout, and were pretty much the same in type as those of the convict establishments in Russia itself. The officials were more severe, and the general treatment more rigorous than in the two other classes; the men were never out of irons, an escort of soldiers was always present, and you were always or nearly always within stone walls. Things were quite different in

the other categories, so, at least, I was told by the convicts, many of whom had every reason to know. They would all gladly have gone to the mines, which the law classified as the extreme penalty: indeed it was their constant dream and desire to do

1 The Decembrists.

so. All those who had been in Russian convict establishments spoke of them with horror, and declared that there was no hell like them, that Siberia was a paradise compared with confinement in the fortresses in Russia.

If, then, it is the case that we nobles were treated with special consideration in the prison where I served my sentence under direct control of the commander-in-chief, and where the administration was entirely on military lines, there must have been even greater leniency shown convicts of the first and third categories. I think I can speak with some authority about conditions in Siberia; for the rest I base my views upon what I learned from convicts who had experience of all three classes. We, in our prison, were under much more rigorous surveillance than elsewhere; we enjoyed no sort of exemption from the ordinary rules as regards work, confinement, and the wearing of chains; we could do nothing to obtain relaxation of those. I at any rate was well aware that in the ‘good old days’ not so very long ago there had been so much intrigue to undermine the reputation of officials that the authorities were terrified of informers, and that, under existing circumstances, to show indulgence to a convict was regarded as a crime. Everyone, therefore, authorities and convicts alike, lived in constant fear, and we aristocrats were reduced to the common level. The only point on which we were favoured was that of corporal punishment. Even so I do not think we should have been spared that, had we done anything for which it was prescribed, for equality of punishment was strictly enjoined or at least practised. What I am trying to make clear is that we were not wantonly, causelessly ill-treated as were so many prisoners.

When the commander-in-chief heard of the punishment inflicted on Jski, he was extremely angry with the governor, and ordered him to be more careful in future. The facts became widely known. We learned also that the commander-in-chief, who had great confidence in our governor, liked him because of his exact observance of regulations, and regarded him as a most efficient officer, sternly reprimanded him. The governor had taken the lesson to heart, and I have no doubt it was that which prevented his having

Mski flogged, as he would have much liked to do, influenced as he was by the slanderous things A*f said about M*ski.

But he could never find a pretext for inflicting the punishment, however much he persecuted or set spies upon his intended victim. He had to deny himself that pleasure. The Jski affair was noised abroad, and public opinion condemned the governor; some persons openly reproached him for what he had done, and some even abused him to his face.

I may as well describe my first encounter with the governor. Another gentleman and myself had heard, while still at Tobolsk, of the governor's atrocious character. Certain noblemen who had been condemned a long while before to twenty-five years of this living death, kindly visited us in the transit prison and warned us of the type of man under whom we should find ourselves. They also promised to use what influence they could with their friends in order to ensure that we suffered as little ill-treatment as possible. And, in fact, they did write to the three daughters of the commander-in-chief, who, I believe, interceded on our behalf with their father. But what could he do? No more, of course, than tell the governor to be fair in applying the rules and regulations. It was about three in the afternoon that my companion and I reached the town; the escort took us at once before the tyrant. We awaited his arrival in an ante-room while the deputy was summoned. No sooner had that gentleman entered, than in walked the governor. We saw an inflamed scarlet face that boded no good and filled us with alarm; he seemed like some kind of spider about to hurl itself at a poor fly struggling in its web.

'What's your name, man?' he asked my companion, speaking in a harsh, jerky voice as if he wanted to overawe us.

My friend gave his name.

'And you?' he said, turning to me and glaring at me from behind his spectacles.

I gave mine.

'Sergeant! Take 'em to the prison, have 'em shaved at the guard-house, civilian-fashion-hair off half their skulls- and put 'em in irons to-morrow. Why, what sort of cloaks have you got there?' he said brutally, when he saw the grey cloaks with yellow patches at the back which had been issued to us at Tobolsk. 'Why, that's a new uniform, begad-a new uniform! They're always inventing something or other. That's a Petersburg trick,' he said, as

he inspected us one after the other. ‘Got anything with ‘em?’ he said abruptly to the sentry who escorted us.

‘They’ve got their own clothes, your Excellency,’ replied he, and the man presented arms, just as if he were on parade, but not without a nervous tremor. Everyone knew the governor and feared him.

‘Take away their clothes: they can’t keep anything but their white linen. Confiscate all coloured articles if they’ve got any, sell them off at the next sale and put the money to the prison account. A convict has no property,’ said he, looking at us severely. ‘Listen! See you behave yourselves; don’t let me hear any complaints. If I do-cat-’o-nine-tails! The smallest offence, and I’ll have you flogged!’

The manner of my reception, which was so different from anything I had ever known, almost made me ill that night. It was a terrible experience on my very first day in the infernal place. But I have already told that part of my story.

Thus we had no sort of exemption or immunity from any of the miseries they inflicted on us, no relaxtion from the common lot, but friends tried to help Bski and me by getting us sent for three months to the Engineers’ office to do copying work. This was done quietly and without comment, a kindness we owed to the head engineer during the short time that Lieutenant-Colonel Gkof was commander-in-chief. This gentleman held his command for only six months: he soon went back to Russia. He seemed to us all like an angel sent from heaven: the convicts were absolutely devoted to him. It was not mere respect, but something akin to worship. I cannot help saying so. How he managed it I do not know, but their hearts went out to him from the moment they set eyes on him.

‘He’s more like a father than anything else,’ the prisoners would often repeat during all the time he was there at the head of the engineering department. He was a brilliant, joyous fellow. Short of stature, and with a bold, confident expression, he was kindness itself to the convicts, for whom he appeared to entertain a sort of paternal affection. Why was he so fond of them? It is hard to say, but he seemed never to be able to pass a prisoner without stopping for a chat, a laugh, and a joke. There was nothing that smacked of authority in his pleasantries, nothing that reminded one of his official status. He behaved just as if he was one of ourselves. In spite of this kindness and condescension, I don’t remember anyone failing in respect towards him or taking the slightest liberty-quite the opposite. The convict’s

face would suddenly light up in an extraordinary manner when he met the chief; it was odd to see how the man's face smiled all over, and his hand went to his cap, when he saw the chief approaching. A' word from him was regarded as a signal honour. There are some people like that, who know how to win all hearts.

Gkof had a bold, jaunty air, walked with long strides, and held himself erect; 'a regular eagle,' the convicts used to call him. He could not do much to lighten their lot materially, for his duty was to superintend the engineering work, the manner and quantity of which was absolutely and unalterably fixed by the regulations. But if he happened to notice a gang of convicts who had finished their task, he allowed them to be back to quarters before the drum beat to mark the end of work. The prisoners loved him for the confidence he placed in them, and because of his aversion for all those mean, trifling, and exasperating interferences on the part of officious overseers. I am absolutely certain that if he had lost a thousand roubles in notes, and the most hardened thief in prison had found them, the fellow would not have hesitated to return them. I am quite sure of that.

The prisoners all sympathized with him when they learned that he was at daggers drawn with our detested governor, which happened about a month after his arrival. Their delight knew no bounds. The governor had formerly served with him in the same regiment, so, when they met after a long separation they were at first boon companions; but the intimacy could not and did not last. They came to blows-figuratively-and Gkof became the governor's sworn enemy. Some would have it that it was *more* than figuratively, that they came to actual fisticuffs, a likely enough occurrence as far as the Governor was concerned, for the man had no objection to a scrimmage.

When the convicts heard of the quarrel they simply could not contain their delight.

'Old Eight-eyes and the chief get on finely together! *He's* an eagle, but the other's a *bad 'uni'*

Those who believed in the fight were mighty curious to know which of the two had had the worst of it and got a good drubbing. If it had been proved that they had never actually come to blows, I think the convicts would have been bitterly disappointed.

'The chief gave him fits, you may bet your life on it,' they said; 'he's a little 'un, but as bold as a Hon. The other one got into a blue funk, and hid

under the bed.’

But Gkof left all too soon, and was keenly regretted.

Our engineers were all most excellent fellows; we had three or four of them while I was there.

‘Our eagles never remain very long with us,’ said the prisoners; ‘especially when they’re good, kind fellows.’

It was G*kof who sent B*ski and myself to work in his office, for he was partial to exiled nobles. When he left, our condition was still fairly endurable, for his successor showed us much sympathy and friendship. We spent some time copying reports, and our handwriting was becoming excellent, when an order came from the authorities that we were to return to hard labour as before; some spiteful person had been at work. At bottom, however, we were rather pleased, for we had grown tired of copying.

For two whole years I worked in company with Bski in the shops, and many a gossip we had about our hopes for the future, our ideas, and our beliefs. Bski had a very odd mind, which worked in a strange, unconventional way. There are some very intelligent folk who indulge in endless paradox; but when they have endured great suffering and made great sacrifices for their ideals it is not easy, in fact it is cruel, to try to alter their outlook. When you objected to any of Bski’s propositions he was really hurt, and answered you with much heat.. He was, perhaps, more in the right than I was as to some things wherein we differed; but we were obliged to cut short our friendship. I was sorry, for we had many thoughts in common.

As years went on Mtski became more and more sombre and melancholy, a prey to despair. In the early period of my imprisonment he was communicative enough, and shared his thoughts with me. When I arrived he had just finished his second year. At first he took a lively interest in the news I brought, for he knew nothing of what had been going on in the outer world. He asked questions, listened eagerly, and showed emotion. Little by little, however, his reserve grew on him and there was no getting at his thoughts. The glowing coals were covered up with ashes, but it was plain that his temper grew increasingly sour. ‘Je haïs ces brigands,’ he would say, speaking of convicts whose acquaintance I had made; I could never make him see any good in them. He never seemed to enter fully into the meaning of anything I said in their favour, though he would sometimes appear to yield a listless assent. Next day, however, it would be just as before: ‘Je haïs

ces brigands.’ As we often used to converse in French, one of the overseers of the works, a soldier named Dranichnikof, used always to call us *aides chirurgiens*,

God knows why! Mtski never seemed to shake off his usual apathy except when he spoke of his mother.

‘ She is old and infirm,’ he said. ‘ She loved me better than anything in the world, and I don’t even know if she’s still alive. If she learns that I’ve been whipped…’

Mtski was not of noble birth, and had been whipped before he was transported. When he recalled the episode he would gnash his teeth, and could not look anybody in the face. Towards the end of his imprisonment he used to walk to and fro, generally quite alone. One day, at noon, he was summoned by the chief, who received him with a smile.

‘Well, Mtski, what did you dream about last night?’ he asked.

Mtski afterwards told me: ‘When he said that a shudder ran through me; I felt stricken at heart.’

He replied: ‘I dreamed that I had a letter from my mother.’

‘Better than that, much better!’ said the chief. ‘You’re free; your mother has petitioned the emperor, and he has granted her prayer. Here, here’s her letter, and the order for your discharge. You’re to leave prison immediately.’

He came back to us pale, scarcely able to believe his good fortune.

We congratulated him. He took our hands in his, which were quite cold and trembled violently. Many of the convicts wished him joy; they were really glad to see his happiness.

He settled in Siberia, establishing himself in our town, where he was shortly given some land of his own. He used often to visit the jail, bring us news, and keep us informed of all that went on, as often as he was allowed to talk with us. It was mainly political news that interested him.

Besides the four Polish political prisoners, of whom I have already spoken, there were two others of that nation, who had been sentenced for very short periods. They were not well educated, but were good, simple, straightforward fellows.

Then there was Atchoukooski, an utterly colourless type.

Nor must I forget Bin, a man well on in years, who impressed us all most unfavourably. I do not know for what he had been condemned, although he used quite often to tell us some story in that connection. He was a vulgar, mean creature, with the coarse manners of a shopkeeper grown rich. He was

quite without education, and seemed to take interest in nothing except what concerned his trade. He was a kind of scene-painter and showed a good deal of talent in his work. The authorities soon heard of his ability, and he was regularly employed in the town to decorate walls and ceilings. In two years he adorned the rooms of every prison official. He was well paid and was able to live fairly comfortably. He was sent to work with three other prisoners, two of whom learned the business thoroughly. One of them, in fact, a man named T*jwoski, painted nearly as well as B*in himself. The governor, who had rooms in one of the official residences, sent for B-in and gave him a commission to decorate the walls and ceilings there, which he did so effectively that the commander-in-chief's apartments were far surpassed by those of the governor. The house itself was a ramshackle old place, while the interior, thanks to Bin, was as gay as a palace. Our worthy governor was hugely delighted, went about rubbing his hands, and told everybody that he should look out for a wife at once: 'a fellow *can't* remain single when he lives in a place like that,' he said-and meant it! Bin and his assistants advanced in the governor's good graces. They took a month to complete the work at his house. During those memorable days the governor seemed to regard us in a new light, and began to be quite kind to us political prisoners. One day he sent for Jski.

'Jski,' said he, 'I've done you wrong; I had you beaten for nothing. I'm very sorry. Do you understand? I'm very sorry. I, the governor.'

Jski answered that he understood perfectly.

'Do you understand? I, your superior, have sent for you to ask your pardon. You can hardly realize it, I suppose. What are you to me, fellow? A worm, less than a crawling worm; you're a convict, while I, by God's grace,[1] am governor. Governor, do you understand?'

Jski answered that he understood perfectly.

'Well, I want to be friends with you. But can you realize what I'm doing? Can you appreciate my magnanimity- feel and appreciate it? Just think of it. I, I, the governor!' etc. etc.

Jski told me of this scene. There was, after all, some human feeling left in this drunken, licentious, and tormenting brute. Allowing for the man's outlook and feeble-minded-ness, one cannot deny that this was generosity indeed on his part. Perhaps he was a little less drunk than usual, perhaps more. Who can tell?

The governor’s glorious idea of taking a wife proved abortive; the rooms were arrayed in all their splendour, but the wife was not forthcoming. Instead of taking that blissful journey to the altar, he was summoned before the authorities, committed for trial, and was ordered to send in his resignation. It appears that some of his old sins had found him out, irregularities of which he had been guilty while superintendent of police in the neighbouring town. This crushing blow fell upon him quite suddenly and without notice. All the convicts were delighted when they heard the great news; there was rejoicing and holiday throughout the jail. The story went abroad that the governor sobbed, and cried, and howled like an old woman. But he was helpless in the matter. He lost his job, had to sell his two grey horses and everything he

1 The Governor was not the only officer who spoke of himself in that lofty way; many others did the same, especially those who had risen from the ranks.

had in the world, and fell into complete destitution. Later on we used to meet him occasionally in threadbare civilian clothes, and wearing a cap with a cockade; he would glance at us convicts with all the spite and malice at his command. But all his glory was fled with his uniform. As prison governor he used to give himself the airs of a god in coat and breeches; now that was all over, he looked like the lackey he was, and a disgraced lackey at that.

With fellows of that sort, a uniform is the only saving grace; lose it, and they lose all.

CHAPTER IX

ESCAPE

Soon after the governor’s resignation the prison was reorganized throughout. The hard labour hitherto inflicted, and other regulations were abolished, and the place put upon the footing of the military convict establishments in Russia. Consequently, prisoners of the second category were no longer sent there; that category would in future consist of prisoners who were regarded as still on the military footing, men, that is to say, who, in spite of their sentence, did not forfeit for ever their civic status. They were still soldiers, but had undergone corporal punishment; they were sentenced for comparatively short periods, six years at most; and when they had served their time, or in case of pardon, they rejoined their regiments. Men guilty of a second offence were condemned to twenty years of imprisonment. Up to the time of which I speak we had amongst us a section of soldier-prisoners, but only because there was nowhere else to send them. Now the place was to be occupied exclusively by soldiers. As to the civilian convicts who were stripped of all civic rights, branded, cropped, and shaven, they were to remain in the fortress to finish their time; but as no fresh prisoners of this class were to come in, and those already there would be gradually discharged, at the end of ten years there would be no civilian convicts left in the place. The line of division between the classes of prisoners was maintained; from time to time other high-ranking military criminals were sent to our place for security on their way to Eastern Siberia and the more severe penalties that awaited them.

There was no change-in our general way of life. The work we had to do, and the discipline observed were the same as before; but the administrative system was entirely altered, and made more complex. A military commandant was placed in charge of the prison; under his orders were four junior officers who mounted guard by turns. The ‘invalids’ were superseded by twelve non-commissioned officers and an arsenal superintendent. The convicts were divided into sections of ten, and corporals chosen from among them; their authority over the others, as may be supposed, was only nominal. Akim Akimitch, of course, was thus promoted.

The carrying out of these new arrangements was entrusted to the commander-in-chief, who retained his general command over the whole establishment. There were no other changes. At first the convicts were not a little excited by these reforms, and discussed their new superiors a good deal among themselves, trying to make out what sort of fellows they were; but when they saw that everything went on very much as usual they quieted down, and life resumed its normal course. We had got rid of the governor, and that was something for which to be thankful; everyone drew fresh breath and his courage revived. The fear that inspired all hearts grew less; we had some assurance that in case of need we could go to our superiors and lodge our complaint, and that a man could not be punished without cause, and would not be, unless by mistake.

Spirits were smuggled in as before, although we now had non-commissioned officers in place of ‘invalids.’ These noncommissioned officers were all worthy, conscientious men, who knew their place and business. There were some among them who had the idea that they might exceed their authority and treat us like common soldiers, but they soon gave it up and behaved like the others. Those who seemed unable to understand our prison customs received more than one sharp reminder from the convicts themselves, which led to some lively scenes. One of them was given brandy, which was of course too much for him. When he was sober again we had a little chat with him, pointed out that he had been drinking with prisoners, and that, accordingly, etc. etc. He became quite tractable. The end of it was that the non-commissioned officers closed their eyes to the brandy traffic: they went to market for us, just as the ‘invalids’ used to do, and brought the prisoners white bread, meat, anything that could be smuggled in without too much risk. I never could understand, therefore, why they had gone to the trouble of turning the place into a military prison. The change was made two years before my discharge; I still had that amount of time to serve.

I see little use in recording all I saw and experiences in prison day by day. If I were to attempt a diary of those hours and days, dus book would contain twice or thrice as many chapters as my space allows.- Not only that, but I should simply tire the reader and myself. The substance of my recollections is already embodied in the foregoing pages, and the reader has been able to obtain a fair idea of what the life of a convict in the second category was like. I have tried to present an accurate and vivid picture of

conditions as seen through my own eyes. Whether I have succeeded others must judge. I cannot pronounce upon my own work, but I think I should bring it to a close; for as I move among these recollections of a dreadful past, the old suffering revives and all but strangles me.

Besides, I cannot be sure of my memory as to all I saw in those last years, for my faculties seem blunted in respect of the latter period of my imprisonment: I feel sure there is much I have forgotten. However, I remember only too well how very, very slowly these last two years passed, how sadly, and how the days seemed as if they would never fade into evening, like water falling drop by drop. I remember, too, that I was filled with a mighty longing for my resurrection from that grave, a longing which gave me strength to endure, to wait, and to hope. And so I became hardened and long-suffering; I lived on expectation, and counted every day as it passed; if there had been a thousand more, I would have found satisfaction in dunking that one of them was gone, only nine hundred and ninety-nine remained. I remember, too, that although I had a hundred neighbours in exactly the same situation as myself, I felt more and more solitary, and though the solitude was terrible I came to love it. Isolated among the convict-crowd, I meditated upon my past life, analysing minutely its events and thoughts. I reviewed my former activity, and was sometimes pitiless in condemning myself. Sometimes I went so far as to thank destiny for the privilege of such loneliness, for only in solitude could I have scrutinized my past so carefully, or examined so closely my interior and outward life. What strong and strange new germs of hope were born in my soul during those memorable hours! I weighed and decided all sorts of issues, I entered into a compact with myself to avoid the errors of former years and the rocks on which I had been wrecked; I laid down a programme for the future, and vowed that I would strictly adhere to it. I had a sort of blind and overwhelming conviction that, once away from that place, I should be able to carry out all my resolutions. I looked forward to my freedom with transports of eager desire. I wished to try my strength in a renewed struggle with life; sometimes I was clutched, as by fangs, by an impatience which rose to fever heat. It is painful to recall these things, most painful. No one, I am sure, can be greatly interested, other than myself; but I write because I think people will understand, and because there are those who have been, those who yet will be, like myself, condemned, imprisoned, cut off from life in the flower of their youth and in the full enjoyment of their faculties.

Enough. Let me end my memoirs with an interesting story and avoid too abrupt an ending.

What shall it be? Well, I may, perhaps, be asked whether it was quite impossible to escape from jail, and whether such an attempt was made while I was there. I have already said that a prisoner who has served two or three years thinks a good deal about escaping, but generally concludes that it is best to finish his sentence without running more risks, so that he may settle on the land or elsewhere after his discharge. Those, however, who reckon in this way are convicts sentenced for comparatively short periods; those who have many years to serve are always ready to take a chance. For all that, attempts at escape were by no means frequent. Whether that was attributable to want of spirit on the convicts' part, to the severity of military discipline, or, rather, to the situation of the town (being in the midst of the open steppe, it made escape difficult), I really cannot say. All these considerations no doubt contributed to make a man think twice. It was hard enough to leave the prison at all. During my time it was tried by two famous criminals.

After the governor's dismissal, the spy Av found himself alone with no support. He was still quite young, but his character grew more forceful with every year; he was a bold, self-assertive fellow, of considerable intelligence. I believe that if he had been set free he would have continued to spy and obtain money by every shameful means, but I don't think he would have allowed himself to be caught a second time. He would have turned his prison experience to much better account. One trick he practised was that of forging passports, at least so I heard from some of the convicts. I think the fellow was ready to risk everything if only he could improve his lot. Circumstances enabled me to probe this fellow's mind and discover its true ugliness; his cold, deep wickedness was revolting, and my disgust at him was invincible. I believe that if he had wanted a drink of brandy which he could obtain only by murder, he would not have hesitated one moment, provided he was reasonably sure his crime would not be detected. He had learned in prison to view everything in the coolest, calculating way. It was on him that Koulikoff's choice fell, as we shall see.

I have already mentioned Koulikoff of the special section. He was no longer young, but full of ardour, life, and vigour, and endowed with extraordinary faculties. He was conscious of his strength, and still yearned to lead his own life: some men, indeed, crave for rich, abundant life, even

when old age has them in its grip. I should have been a good deal surprised if Koulikoff had *not* tried to escape; as it was, he did.

Which of the two, Koulikoff or Av, had the greater influence over the other I cannot say; they were a goodly pair, and exactly suited to each other, and were soon as thick as thieves. I fancy that Koulikoff relied upon Av to forge him a passport; besides, Av belonged to the upper classes and had moved in good society, a circumstance which might mean a great deal if they managed to get back into Russia. Heaven only knows what compacts they made, what plans and hopes they formed; if they got as far as Russia they would at all events leave behind them Siberia and destitution. Koulikoff was a versatile man, capable of playing many different parts on the stage of life; and had plenty of ability, whatever direction his efforts might take. Such men are strangled, suffocated by life in jail, so the two set about plotting their escape.

But to leave the prison walls except under escort was quite impossible: a soldier must be bribed. In one of the units stationed at our fortress there was a middle-aged Pole, an energetic fellow worthy of a better fate-serious, courageous. When he first arrived in Siberia as a young man he had deserted from the army, being unable to endure the anguish of nostalgia. He was recaptured and flogged; then, after serving two years in a penal battalion, he rejoined his regiment and proved himself so efficient a soldier that he was rewarded with promotion to the rank of corporal. He had a good deal of pride, and spoke like a man who had no small opinion of himself.

I sometimes watched this man closely when he was on escort duty, for the Poles had told me something about him. I became convinced that longing for his native land had taken the form of a chill, fixed, deadly hatred for those who prevented his return. He was the sort of fellow to stick at nothing, and Koulikoff showed sound judgment when he picked upon this man as an accomplice of his flight. The corporal’s name was Kohler. Koulikoff and he settled their plans and fixed the day. “ It was the month of June, the hottest of the year. The climate of our town and its immediate neighbourhood was fairly equable, especially in summer, which is fortunate for tramps and vagabonds. It was out of the question to travel far after getting clear of the fortress, which was situated on rising ground in open country: the encircling forest is some considerable distance away. A disguise was indispensable, and to procure it they must manage to reach the outskirts of the town, where Koulikoff had taken care some time before to

provide a hiding-place. I don’t know whether his worthy friends in that part of the town were in the secret. We may presume that they were, though there is no evidence to prove it. That year, however, a young woman who led a gay life and was very pretty had settled herself in that same part of the city, on the edge of the country. She attracted a good deal of notice, and her career promised to be something quite remarkable; her nickname was ‘Fire and Flame.’ I think that she and the fugitives planned the escape together, for Koulikoff lavished a good deal of attention and money upon her for more than a year.

When the working parties were formed each morning Koulikoff and Av managed to get themselves sent out with a convict named Chilkin, whose trade was that of stove-maker and plasterer, to repair the empty barracks when the soldiers went into camp. Av and Koulikoff were to help in carrying the necessary materials. Kohler saw to it that he formed part of the escort; as the regulations required two soldiers to act as escort for three prisoners, he was accompanied by a young recruit from his own training squad. Our fugitives must have exercised a powerful influence over Kohler in order to persuade him to cast in his lot with them, for he was a serious, intelligent, and reflective man, with only a few more years of military service before him.

They reached the barracks about six o’clock in the morning; there was no one else with them. After having worked about an hour, Koulikoff and Av told Chilkin that they were going to the workshop to see someone and fetch a tool they wanted. They had to go carefully to work with Chilkin, and speak in as natural a tone as they could. The man was from Moscow, by trade a stove-maker, sharp and cunning, keen-sighted, taciturn, fragile in appearance, and with little flesh on his bones. He was the sort of person who might have been expected to spend his life in honest working dress in some Moscow shop, yet here he was in the special section, after many wanderings and transfers, among the most formidable military criminals; so fate had ordained.

What had he done to deserve such severe punishment? I had not the slightest idea; he never showed the least resentment or bitterness, and went his own quiet, inoffensive way. Now and then he got as drunk as a lord, but apart from that his conduct was excellent. He was not, of course, in the secret and had to be thrown off the scent. Koulikoff told him, with a wink, that they were going to get some brandy which had been hidden the day

before in the workshop. That suited Chilkin to perfection; he had not the least notion of what was afoot, and remained alone with the young recruit while Koulikoff, Av, and Kohler made off to the suburbs of the town.

Half an hour passed; the men had not come back. Chilkin began to think, and the truth dawned upon him. He remembered that Koulikoff had not seemed at all like himself, that he had seen him whispering and winking to Av; he was

sure of that, and the whole thing seemed to him suspicious. Kohler's behaviour had struck him, too: when he left with the two convicts, the corporal had instructed the recruit what to do in his absence, which he had never before known him to do. The more Chilkin thought over the matter the less he liked it. Time passed; the convicts did not return. His anxiety was great; he foresaw that the authorities would suspect him of connivance with the fugitives and realized that his own skin was in danger. If he delayed in reporting the matter suspicion would grow into certainty that he knew what his companions intended when they left him, and he would be dealt with as their accomplice. There was no time to lose.

It then occurred to him that Koulikoff and Av had been markedly intimate for some time, and that they had often been seen with heads together behind the barracks, all by themselves. He remembered, too, that he had more than once fancied that they were up to something.

He looked attentively at his escort; the fellow was leaning on his musket, yawning and scratching his nose in the most innocent manner imaginable. Chilkin therefore decided that it was not necessary to reveal his anxiety to this man: he simply asked him to accompany him to the engineers' workshops. His object was to ask if anybody there had seen his companions; but nobody had, and Chilkin's suspicions grew stronger and stronger. If only he could believe that they had gone to get drunk and have a spree in the suburbs, as Kouhkoff often did. No, thought Chilkin, that was *not* so. They would have told him, for there was no need to make a mystery of that. Chilkin left his work, and went straight back to the jail.

It was about nine o'clock when he found the sergeant-major and mentioned his suspicions. That officer was alarmed, and at first could not believe there was anything wrong. Chilkin had, in fact, expressed no more than a vague misgiving that all was not as it should be. The sergeant-major ran to the governor, who in his turn ran to the commanding officer.

In a quarter of an hour all necessary measures had been taken and the commander-in-chief informed. As the convicts in question were persons of importance, it might be expected that a serious view would be taken of the matter at St Petersburg. Av was classed as a political prisoner, for no very clear reason it would seem; Koulikoff was a convict of the special section, that is to say, a criminal of the blackest dye and, what was worse, an ex-soldier. It then appeared that according to the regulations each convict of the special section should have an escort of two soldiers when he went to work; the regulations had not been observed in this case, and everybody was exposed to serious trouble. Express messengers were sent off to all the district offices of the municipality and all the little neighbouring towns, to warn the authorities of the escape of the two convicts, and to give a full description of their persons. Cossacks were sent to hunt them down; letters went to the authorities of all adjoining governmental districts; and everyone was scared to death.

There was no less excitement among the prisoners; as they returned from work they heard the tremendous news, which spread rapidly from man to man; all received it with deep, though secret satisfaction. Their emotion was as natural as it was profound. The affair broke the monotony of their lives and gave them something to think about; but, above all, it was an escape and, as such, something to evoke their sympathy and stir fibres that had long been without exciting stimulus; something like hope and a disposition to confront their fate set their hearts beating faster, for the incident seemed to show that their hard lot was not hopelessly unchangeable.

‘Well, you see *they’ve* managed to get away! Why shouldn’t we?’

The same thought was in every man’s mind, and made him stiffen his back and look defiantly at his neighbours. All the convicts seemed to grow an inch taller on the strength of it, and to look down condescendingly upon the non-commissioned officers. Senior officials hurried on the scene, and the commander-in-chief now arrived in person. We fellows looked at them all with some assurance, with a touch of contempt, and with hard-set faces, as though to say: ‘Well, you there! We can get out of your clutches when we’ve a mind to.’

All the men were quite sure there would be a general search of everything and everybody; so all contraband goods were carefully hidden, for the authorities would want to show their precious wisdom, which may be relied upon after the event. The expectation was verified; there was a

mighty turning of everything upside down and topsy-turvy, a general rummage- the discovery of exactly nothing, as they might have known.

When the time came for afternoon work the usual escorts were doubled. When night came, the officers and N.C.O.s on duty came pouncing in upon us ever few minutes to see if they could catch us off our guard, and obtain any information from us; an extra roll was called, and the additional muster only gave them more trouble for nothing. We were hunted out on to the courtyard to have our names checked again. Then, when we were indoors, they counted us yet once more, as if they were incapable of stopping the process.

The convicts were in no way disturbed by all this absurd bustle. They looked quite unconcerned, and, as always happens in such cases, were on their best behaviour all that evening and night. ‘We won’t give them any handle at all,’ was the general feeling. The authorities were asking themselves whether some of us were not in league with the fugitives, so a careful watch was kept upon our actions, and an attentive ear listened to our conversations; but without success.

‘Not such fools, those fellows, as to leave anybody behind who was in the secret!’

‘When you try that sort of game you lie low and play low!’

‘Koulikoff and Av are clever enough to have covered up their tracks. They’ve done the trick in first-rate style, keeping the secret to themselves; they’ve mizzled, the, rascals; clever chaps, those, they could get through closed doors!’

The glory of Koulikoff and Av had grown a hundred cubits higher than it was. Everyone was proud of them. Their exploit, it was felt, would be handed down to the most distant posterity, and outlive the jail itself.

‘Rattling fellows, those!’ said one.

‘Can’t get away from here, eh? *That’s* their notion, is it? Just look at those chaps!’

‘Yes,’ said a third, looking very superior, ‘but *who’s* got away? Tip-top fellows. *You* can’t hold a candle to them.’

At any other time a man to whom such a remark was made would have flared up in anger, and defended himself; now the observation was met with modest silence.

‘True enough,’ they said. ‘Everybody’s not a Koulikoff or an Av. You’ve got to show what you’re made of before you’ve a right to boast.’

‘I say, pals, after all, why do we stay here?’ exclaimed a prisoner seated by the kitchen window. He spoke in a drawling voice, but you could see he was enjoying himself; he rubbed his cheek slowly with the palm of his hand. ‘ Why do we stay? It’s no life at all; we’ve been buried alive now, haven’t we?’

‘Dammit! You can’t get out of prison as easy as shaking off an old boot. I tell you it sticks to your calves. What’s the good of lamenting the fact?’

‘But, look, there’s Koulikoff now,’ began one of the most eager, a mere lad.

‘Koulikoff!’ exclaimed another, looking askance at the young fellow. ‘Koulikoff! They don’t turn out Koulikoffs by the dozen.’

‘And Av, pals, there’s a lad for you!’

‘Aye, aye, he’ll get Koulikoff just where he wants him, and as often as he wants him. He’s up to everything, he is.’

‘I wonder how far they’ve got; that’s what *I* want to know,’ said one.

Then the talk turned to details: Had they got far from the town? What direction did they take? Which road would give them the best chance? Then they discussed distances, and those convicts who knew the neighbourhood well were listened to attentively.

Next, they talked about the inhabitants of neighbouring villages, of whom they seemed to have a very low opinion. There was nobody in the neighbourhood, the convicts believed, who would hesitate as to the course to be pursued. Nothing would induce them to help the runaways; on the contrary, they would hunt them down.

‘If you only knew what scoundrels these peasants are! Rascally brutes!’

‘Peasants, indeed! Worthless rogues!’

‘These Siberians are rotten types. They think nothing of killing a man.’

‘Oh, well, our fellows’

‘Yes, that’s it, they may come off second best. Our fellows are as plucky as plucky can be.’

‘Well, if we live long enough, we shall hear something about them soon.’

‘Well, now, what do you think? Do you think they’ll get clean away?’

‘I’m dead certain they’ll never be caught,’ said one of the most excited, giving the table a great blow with his fist.

‘Hm! That’s as things turn out.’

‘I’ll tell you what, friends,’ said Skouratof, ‘if I once got out, I’d stake my life they’d never get me again.’

‘ *You?’*

Everyone burst out laughing. They would hardly condescend to listen to him; but Skouratof was not to be silenced.

‘I tell you I’d stake my life on it!’ he cried. ‘Why, I made up my mind about that long ago. I’d find means of going through a key-hole rather than let them catch me.’

‘Oh, don’t you fear, when your belly got empty you ‘d just go creeping to a peasant and ask him for a morsel of something.’

Fresh laughter.

‘I ask him for food? You’re a liar!’

‘Hold your tongue, can’t you? We know what you were sent here for. You and your Uncle Varia killed a peasant for bewitching your cattle.’

More laughter. The more serious among them seemed very angry and indignant.

‘You’re a liar!’ cried Skouratof. ‘It’s Mikitka who told you that; I wasn’t in that at all, it was Uncle Varia; don’t you mix my name up in it. I’m a Moscow man, and I’ve been on the tramp ever since I was quite a small boy. Look here, when the priest taught me to read the liturgy he used to pinch my ears and say, “Repeat this after me: ‘Have pity on me, Lord, out of Thy great goodness’”; then he used to make me say with him, “They’ve taken me up and brought me to the police-station out of Thy great goodness,” etc.

I tell you that’s what used to happen when I was quite a little fellow.’

All laughed heartily again: that was what Skouratof wanted, he liked playing the clown. Soon the talk became serious again, especially among the older men and those who knew something about escapes. Those among the younger convicts who controlled themselves and listened seemed highly delighted. A great crowd was assembled in and about the kitchen. There was no patrol about, so everybody could give vent to his feelings in conversation or otherwise. I noticed one man enjoying himself particularly, a little Tartar with high cheek-bones and a remarkably droll face. His name was Mametka. He could scarcely speak Russian at all, but it was odd to see the way he craned his neck forward into the crowd, and the childish delight he showed.

‘Well, Mametka, my lad, *iakchi.’*

‘Iakchi, ouk, iakchi!’ said Mametka as well as he could, shaking his grotesque head. *‘Iakchi.’*

‘They’ll never catch them, eh? *Iok.’*

‘Iok, iok!’ and Mametka wagged his head and brandished his arms.

‘You’re a liar, then, and I don’t know what you’re talking about. Hey!’

‘That’s it, that’s it, *iakchi!’* answered poor Mametka.

‘All right, good, *iakchi* it is!’

Skouratof gave him a thump on the head, which forced his cap down over his eyes, and went out in high glee, and Mametka was quite crestfallen.

For a week or so a very tight hand was kept on everyone in jail, and the whole neighbourhood was repeatedly and carefully searched. How they managed it I cannot tell, but the prisoners always seemed to know exactly what steps were being taken to recapture the fugitives. For some days, according to all we heard, fortune favoured them; no trace of them could be found. The convicts made very light of official measures, and were quite at their ease about their friends. They repeated over and over again that the two runaways would never be found.

All the local peasantry were said to have been enrolled and were watching all likely places, woods, ravines, etc.

‘Rubbish!’ said our fellows, grinning broadly. ‘They’ve hidden at some friend’s place.’

‘That’s certain. They’re not the fellows to run risks, they’ve made their plans.’

The general idea was, in fact, that they were still concealed in a suburban cellar, waiting till the hue and cry died down and their hair had grown; that they might remain for as long as six months, and then quietly move. Imaginations had run riot when suddenly, eight days after the escape, a rumour spread that the authorities were on their track. This rumour was at first treated with contempt, but towards evening it seemed to be confirmed. The convicts were wildly excited. Next morning it was reported in town that the runaways had been caught, and were being brought back. After dinner there were further details: the story was that they had been seized at a hamlet seventy versts from the town. At last we learned the truth. Our sergeant-major positively asserted, immediately after an interview with the governor, that they would be brought into the guard-house that very night. They had been recaptured; there could be no doubt of that.

It is difficult to convey an adequate idea of the effect which this news had upon the convicts. At first they were angry, then hopelessly dejected. Finally they began to be bitter and sarcastic, pouring their scorn not on the

authorities, but on the runaways who had been such fools as to get caught. It began with a few, then all joined in, except a handful of the more serious and thoughtful types who held their tongues, and seemed to regard the rest with supreme contempt.

Poor Koulikoff and Av were now just as heartily abused as they had been previously extolled; the men seemed to take a delight in running them down, as though their recapture was an insult to their mates. It was said contemptuously that the fellows had probably got hungry, couldn't stand it, and had entered a village to beg bread. According to the etiquette of the road, to do that is to descend very low in the social scale. The rumour, however, proved untrue: what had happened was that the fugitives' tracks had been picked up and followed. They led to a wood which was forthwith surrounded, so that the poor fellows had no recourse but to give themselves up.

They were brought in that night, bound hand and foot, under armed escort. All hurried to the palisades to see what would happen, but they saw nothing except the carriages of the commander-in-chief and the governor, which were waiting in front of the guard-house. The fugitives were ironed and locked up separately, their punishment being adjourned till next day. The prisoners began to sympathize with the hapless wretches when they heard how they had been taken despite all their precautions, and the anxiety about the issue was keen.

'They'll get a thousand at least.'

'A thousand? I tell you they'll have the life beaten out of them. Av may get off with a thousand, but they'll kill the other chap. Why, he's in the special section.'

They were wrong. Av was sentenced to five hundred strokes: his previous good conduct told in his favour, and this was his first prison offence. Koulikoff, I believe, had fifteen hundred. The punishment, upon the whole, was mild rather than severe.

The two men showed good sense and feeling, for they revealed no one's name as having helped them, and declared that they had made straight for the wood without entering a house. I was very sorry for Koulikoff; to say nothing of the heavy beating he received, he had thrown away all his chances of having his burden lightened. Later he was sent to another prison. Av's sentence was remitted; the physicians interfered, and he was released. But as soon as he was safe in hospital he began bragging again, said he

would stick at nothing now, and that they would soon see what he would do. Koulikoff was not one whit altered: suave as ever, he continued his pose, and even after his punishment there was nothing in his manner or words to show that he had had such an adventure. But the convicts no longer admired him; he seemed to have fallen a good deal in their estimation, and to be on their own level instead of a superior being. So it was that poor Koulikoff's star waned; success is everything in this world.

CHAPTER X

FREEDOM

This incident occurred during the last year of my imprisonment. My recollection of those last months is as vivid as that of the first years, but I have given a sufficiently detailed account of my experiences. In spite of my impatience to be free, this year was the least trying of all those I spent there.: I had many friends and acquaintances among the convicts, who had by this time come to regard me with favour. Many of them, indeed, held me in sincere and genuine affection. The soldier appointed to escort my friend and myself-we were released simultaneously-out of the prison very nearly cried when the time came to part. And when at last we were in full possession of our freedom, and were staying in rooms placed at our disposal in the Government building for the month we had yet to spend in town, this man came to see us almost every day. On the other hand, there were some men whose hatred I could never soften, whose regard I could never win. God knows why, but they showed the same hard aversion for me at the last as at the first; some insuperable obstacle stood between us.

I had more privileges during my last year. I found some old acquaintances and even some old schoolfellows among the officers of the garrison, and the renewal of intercourse with them helped me. Thanks to them I got permission to keep some money, to write to my family, and even to have a certain number of books. For some years I had not had a single volume, and no words can describe the strange, deep emotion and excitement caused by the first book that I read in jail. I began to devour it at night, when the doors were locked, and read till break of day. It was a copy of some review, and it seemed to me like a messenger from the other world. As I read, my old life seemed to rise up before me in sharp outline, as it were of some independent being, some other soul than mine. I tried to get some clear idea of my relation to current events and things: my arrears of knowledge and experience were too great to be made up. The free world had lived through many stirring events during my absence, but my chief anxiety was thoroughly to understand what was going on now, that I could at last know something about it. All the words I read were as tangible things, which I desired rather to feel sensibly than to use as mere media of

knowledge; I tried to see more in the text than could be found there. I imagined it to contain mysterious meanings, and tried to see on every page allusions to the past with which my mind was familiar, whether they were there or not. As I turned each leaf I sought for traces of what had moved men deeply before the days of my bondage, and I was extremely depressed when I realized that a new state of things had arisen; a new kind of human existence which was alien to my knowledge and my sentiments. I felt like a straggler, left behind and lost in the onward march of mankind.

Yes, there were indeed ‘arrears,’ if that word is not too weak.

For the truth is that another generation had come into being: I knew it not, and it knew not me. At the foot of one article I saw the name of an old friend; with what avidity I scanned it! But the other names were nearly all new to me; new workers had come upon the scene, and I was eager to learn something of themselves and their achievements. It made me feel almost desperate to have so few books, and to know how hard it would be to get more. At an earlier date, in the old governor’s time, it was a very dangerous thing to bring books into the jail. If one was found during one of his regular general searches there was trouble, and no efforts were spared to find out how they had been smuggled in, and who was privy to the offence. I did not wish to be subjected to a humiliating scrutiny, and, if I had, it would have been useless. I was obliged to live without books, and spent years shut up within myself, tormented with many a question and problem upon which I had no means of throwing light. But I can never tell the whole dreadful story.

It was in winter that I arrived at the prison, and it was on the anniversary of that winter’s day that I was to be released.

Oh, with what impatience I looked forward to that thrice-blessed winter! How gladly I watched the summer fade, the leaves turn yellow on the trees, and the grass dry out over the wide steppe! Summer is gone at last! The winds of autumn howl and groan, the first snow falls in whirling flakes. The winter, so long, long prayed for, is come, come at last. Oh, how the heart beats with the thought that freedom is really, at last, at last, close at hand. Yet, strange to say, as the time; of times, the day of days, drew near, so did my soul become more tranquil. I was annoyed at myself, and even reproached myself with being cold, indifferent. Many of the convicts whom I met in the courtyard when the day’s work was done used to stop and talk with me to wish me joy.

‘Ah, Alexander Petrovitch, you’ll soon be free now! And you’ll be leaving us poor devils behind!’

‘Well, Mertynof, have you long to wait?’ I asked the man’ who spoke.

‘I! Oh, good Lord, I’ve seven years of it yet to weary through.’

The poor fellow sighed with a far-away, wandering look, as if gazing into those intolerable days to come… Yes, many of my companions congratulated me in a way that showed they really meant what they said. I saw, too, that they were more ready to address me as man to man; they drew nearer to me as I was about to leave them. The halo of freedom began to surround me, and because of that they esteemed me the more. It was in this spirit that they bade me farewell.

Kschniski, a young Polish noble, a sweet and amiable person, was very fond, at about this time, of walking in the courtyard with me. The stifling nights in barracks did him much harm, so he tried to preserve his health by taking all the exercise and fresh air he could.

‘I am looking forward impatiently to the day of your; release,’ he said with a smile one day, ‘for when you go I shall realize that I have just one more year to do.’

I need hardly say, though say it I must, that the prospect of freedom was for us prisoners something more than the reality. That was because our fancy constantly dwelt upon it. Prisoners always exaggerate when they think of freedom and see a free man. We certainly did: the poorest servant of one of the officers seemed to us like a king; compared with ourselves he was our ideal of the free man. He had no irons on his limbs, his head was not shaven, he could go where and when he liked with no soldiers to watch and escort him.

The day before my release, as night fell, I went *for the last time* all through and all round the prison. How many thousand times had I made the circuit of those palisades during those ten years! There, at the rear of the barracks, I had walked to and fro during the whole of that first year, a solitary, despairing man. I remember how I used to reckon up the days I had still to pass there-thousands, thousands! God, how long ago it seemed! Here the corner where the poor wounded eagle pined away; Petroff used often to join me there. It seemed now as if he would never leave me; he would walk along at my side without speaking a word, as though he knew all my thoughts as well as myself, and there was always a strange, inexplicable, wondering look on the man’s face.

How many a secret farewell I took of the black, squared beams in our barrack-room! Alas! how much joyless youth, how much fruitless strength was lost and buried in those walls!-youth and strength of which the world might surely have made some use. I cannot help expressing my conviction that amongst that hapless throng there were perhaps the strongest and, in some respects, the most gifted of our people. There was all that strength of body and of mind lost, hopelessly lost. Whose fault is that?

Yes. Whose fault is that?

Early next day, before the men were mustered for work, I went through every barrack to bid them a last farewell. Many a vigorous, horny hand was held out to me with right goodwill. Some grasped and shook my hand as though all their hearts were in the act; they were the more generous souls. Most of the poor fellows seemed to consider me as already changed by my impending good fortune, and, indeed, they could scarcely have felt otherwise. They knew that I had friends in the town, that I was leaving at once to mix with *gentlemen,* at whose tables I should sit as their equal. Of this the poor fellows were acutely conscious, and, although they did their best as they took my hand, that hand could never be the hand of an equal. No; I, too, was a gentleman from now. Some turned their back on me, and made no reply to my parting words. I think, moreover, that I saw unfriendly looks on certain faces.

The drum beat; the convicts went to work, and I was left to myself. Souchiloff had risen before anyone else that morning, and now set himself tremblingly to the task of preparing me a final cup of tea. Poor Souchiloff! How he cried when I gave him my clothes, my shirts, my trouser straps, and some money.

“Tain’t that, ‘tain’t that,’ he said, and bit his trembling lips, ‘it’s that I am going to lose you, Alexander Petrovitch. What shall I do without you?’

Then there was Akim Akimitch; him, also, I bade farewell

‘Your turn will come soon, I hope,’ said I.

‘Ah, no! I shall remain here long, long, very long yet, he just managed to say as he pressed my hand. I threw myself on his neck; we kissed.

Ten minutes after the convicts had departed, my companion and I left the jail ‘for ever.’ We went to the blacksmith’s shop, where our irons were struck off. We had no armed escort, but were attended by a single N.C.O. Convicts struck off our irons in the engineers’ workshop. I let them do it for my friend first, then went to the anvil myself. The smiths made me turn

round, seized my leg, and stretched it on the anvil. Then they went about their business methodically, as though they wanted to make a perfect job of it.

‘The rivet, man, turn the rivet first,’ I heard the master smith say; ‘there, so, so. Now, a stroke of the hammer!’

The irons fell. I lifted them up. Some strange impulse made me long to have them in my hands for the last time. I could not realize that only a moment before they had encircled my limbs.

‘Good-bye! Good-bye! Good-bye!’ said the convicts in their broken voices; but they seemed pleased as they said it.

Yes, farewell!

Liberty! New life! Resurrection from the dead!

Unspeakable moment!

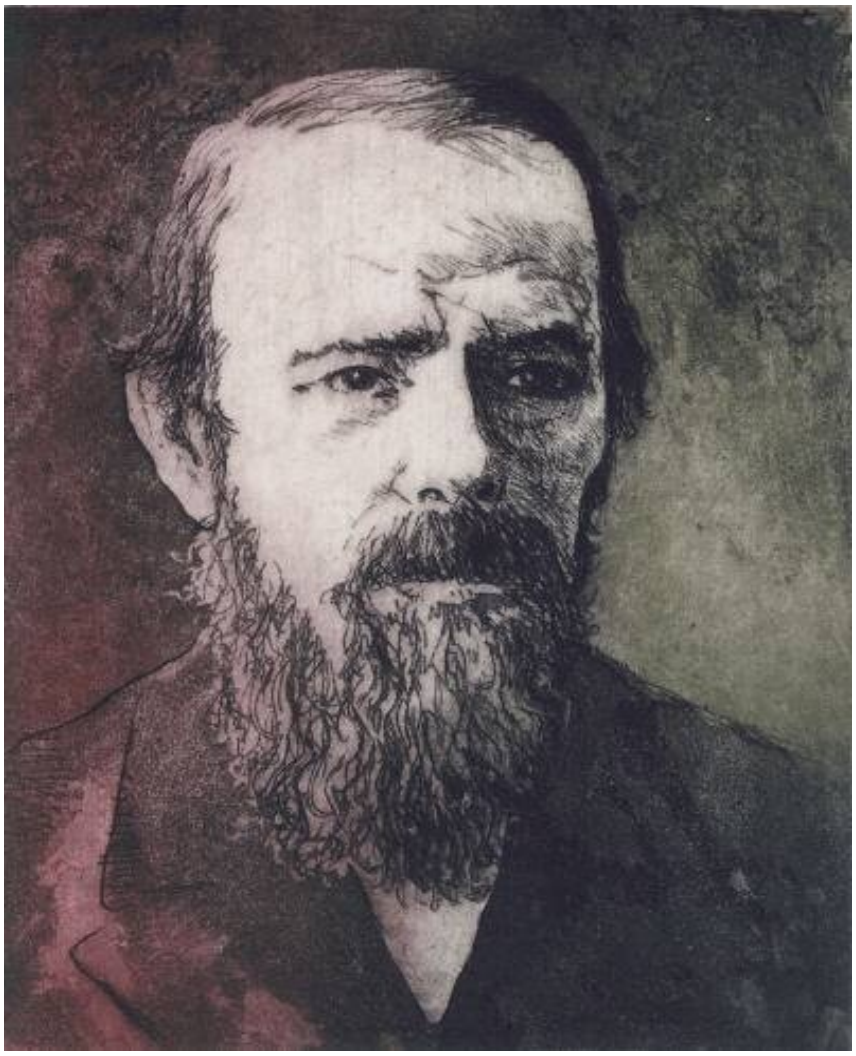
THE END

NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND



Translated by Constance Garnett

The Notes from Underground was published in 1864 and is considered by many to be the world’s first existentialist novel. It presents itself as an excerpt from the rambling memoirs of a bitter, isolated, unnamed narrator (generally referred to by critics as the Underground Man) who is a retired civil servant living in St. Petersburg. The first part of the story is related in monologue form, savagely attacking emerging Western philosophy, especially Nikolay Chernyshevsky's *What Is to Be Done?* The second part of the novella is called *Àpropos of the Wet Snow* and describes certain events that, it seems, are destroying and sometimes renewing the Underground Man, who acts as a first person, unreliable narrator.



An illustration of Dostoyevsky, c. 1865

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PART I. UNDERGROUND

*The author of the diary and the diary itself are, of course, imaginary. Nevertheless it is clear that such persons as the writer of these notes not only may, but positively must, exist in our society, when we consider the circumstances in the midst of which our society is formed. I have tried to expose to the view of the public more distinctly than is commonly done, one of the characters of the recent past. He is one of the representatives of a generation still living. In this fragment, entitled “Underground,” this person introduces himself and his views, and, as it were, tries to explain the causes owing to which he has made his appearance and was bound to make his appearance in our midst. In the second fragment there are added the actual notes of this person concerning certain events in his life. — AUTHOR’S NOTE.

CHAPTER I

I am a sick man.... I am a spiteful man. I am an unattractive man. I believe my liver is diseased. However, I know nothing at all about my disease, and do not know for certain what ails me. I don’t consult a doctor for it, and never have, though I have a respect for medicine and doctors. Besides, I am extremely superstitious, sufficiently so to respect medicine, anyway (I am well-educated enough not to be superstitious, but I am superstitious). No, I refuse to consult a doctor from spite. That you probably will not understand. Well, I understand it, though. Of course, I can’t explain who it is precisely that I am mortifying in this case by my spite: I am perfectly well aware that I cannot “pay out” the doctors by not consulting them; I know better than anyone that by all this I am only injuring myself and no one else. But still, if I don’t consult a doctor it is from spite. My liver is bad, well — let it get worse!

I have been going on like that for a long time — twenty years. Now I am forty. I used to be in the government service, but am no longer. I was a spiteful official. I was rude and took pleasure in being so. I did not take bribes, you see, so I was bound to find a recompense in that, at least. (A poor jest, but I will not scratch it out. I wrote it thinking it would sound very witty; but now that I have seen myself that I only wanted to show off in a despicable way, I will not scratch it out on purpose!)

When petitioners used to come for information to the table at which I sat, I used to grind my teeth at them, and felt intense enjoyment when I succeeded in making anybody unhappy. I almost did succeed. For the most part they were all timid people — of course, they were petitioners. But of the uppish ones there was one officer in particular I could not endure. He simply would not be humble, and clanked his sword in a disgusting way. I carried on a feud with him for eighteen months over that sword. At last I got the better of him. He left off clanking it. That happened in my youth, though.

But do you know, gentlemen, what was the chief point about my spite? Why, the whole point, the real sting of it lay in the fact that continually, even in the moment of the acutest spleen, I was inwardly conscious with shame that I was not only not a spiteful but not even an embittered man, that I was simply scaring sparrows at random and amusing myself by it. I

might foam at the mouth, but bring me a doll to play with, give me a cup of tea with sugar in it, and maybe I should be appeased. I might even be genuinely touched, though probably I should grind my teeth at myself afterwards and lie awake at night with shame for months after. That was my way.

I was lying when I said just now that I was a spiteful official. I was lying from spite. I was simply amusing myself with the petitioners and with the officer, and in reality I never could become spiteful. I was conscious every moment in myself of many, very many elements absolutely opposite to that. I felt them positively swarming in me, these opposite elements. I knew that they had been swarming in me all my life and craving some outlet from me, but I would not let them, would not let them, purposely would not let them come out. They tormented me till I was ashamed: they drove me to convulsions and — sickened me, at last, how they sickened me! Now, are not you fancying, gentlemen, that I am expressing remorse for something now, that I am asking your forgiveness for something? I am sure you are fancying that ... However, I assure you I do not care if you are....

It was not only that I could not become spiteful, I did not know how to become anything; neither spiteful nor kind, neither a rascal nor an honest man, neither a hero nor an insect. Now, I am living out my life in my corner, taunting myself with the spiteful and useless consolation that an intelligent man cannot become anything seriously, and it is only the fool who becomes anything. Yes, a man in the nineteenth century must and morally ought to be pre-eminently a characterless creature; a man of character, an active man is pre-eminently a limited creature. That is my conviction of forty years. I am forty years old now, and you know forty years is a whole lifetime; you know it is extreme old age. To live longer than forty years is bad manners, is vulgar, immoral. Who does live beyond forty? Answer that, sincerely and honestly I will tell you who do: fools and worthless fellows. I tell all old men that to their face, all these venerable old men, all these silver-haired and reverend seniors! I tell the whole world that to its face! I have a right to say so, for I shall go on living to sixty myself. To seventy! To eighty! ... Stay, let me take breath ...

You imagine no doubt, gentlemen, that I want to amuse you. You are mistaken in that, too. I am by no means such a mirthful person as you imagine, or as you may imagine; however, irritated by all this babble (and I feel that you are irritated) you think fit to ask me who I am — then my

answer is, I am a collegiate assessor. I was in the service that I might have something to eat (and solely for that reason), and when last year a distant relation left me six thousand roubles in his will I immediately retired from the service and settled down in my corner. I used to live in this corner before, but now I have settled down in it. My room is a wretched, horrid one in the outskirts of the town. My servant is an old country-woman, ill-natured from stupidity, and, moreover, there is always a nasty smell about her. I am told that the Petersburg climate is bad for me, and that with my small means it is very expensive to live in Petersburg. I know all that better than all these sage and experienced counsellors and monitors.... But I am remaining in Petersburg; I am not going away from Petersburg! I am not going away because ... ech! Why, it is absolutely no matter whether I am going away or not going away.

But what can a decent man speak of with most pleasure?

Answer: Of himself.

Well, so I will talk about myself.

CHAPTER II

I want now to tell you, gentlemen, whether you care to hear it or not, why I could not even become an insect. I tell you solemnly, that I have many times tried to become an insect. But I was not equal even to that. I swear, gentlemen, that to be too conscious is an illness — a real thorough-going illness. For man's everyday needs, it would have been quite enough to have the ordinary human consciousness, that is, half or a quarter of the amount which falls to the lot of a cultivated man of our unhappy nineteenth century, especially one who has the fatal ill-luck to inhabit Petersburg, the most theoretical and intentional town on the whole terrestrial globe. (There are intentional and unintentional towns.) It would have been quite enough, for instance, to have the consciousness by which all so-called direct persons and men of action live. I bet you think I am writing all this from affectation, to be witty at the expense of men of action; and what is more, that from ill-bred affectation, I am clanking a sword like my officer. But, gentlemen, whoever can pride himself on his diseases and even swagger over them?

Though, after all, everyone does do that; people do pride themselves on their diseases, and I do, may be, more than anyone. We will not dispute it; my contention was absurd. But yet I am firmly persuaded that a great deal of consciousness, every sort of consciousness, in fact, is a disease. I stick to that. Let us leave that, too, for a minute. Tell me this: why does it happen that at the very, yes, at the very moments when I am most capable of feeling every refinement of all that is "sublime and beautiful," as they used to say at one time, it would, as though of design, happen to me not only to feel but to do such ugly things, such that ... Well, in short, actions that all, perhaps, commit; but which, as though purposely, occurred to me at the very time when I was most conscious that they ought not to be committed. The more conscious I was of goodness and of all that was "sublime and beautiful," the more deeply I sank into my mire and the more ready I was to sink in it altogether. But the chief point was that all this was, as it were, not accidental in me, but as though it were bound to be so. It was as though it were my most normal condition, and not in the least disease or depravity, so that at last all desire in me to struggle against this depravity passed. It ended by my almost believing (perhaps actually believing) that this was perhaps my normal condition. But at first, in the beginning, what agonies I endured

in that struggle! I did not believe it was the same with other people, and all my life I hid this fact about myself as a secret. I was ashamed (even now, perhaps, I am ashamed): I got to the point of feeling a sort of secret abnormal, despicable enjoyment in returning home to my corner on some disgusting Petersburg night, acutely conscious that that day I had committed a loathsome action again, that what was done could never be undone, and secretly, inwardly gnawing, gnawing at myself for it, tearing and consuming myself till at last the bitterness turned into a sort of shameful accursed sweetness, and at last — into positive real enjoyment! Yes, into enjoyment, into enjoyment! I insist upon that. I have spoken of this because I keep wanting to know for a fact whether other people feel such enjoyment? I will explain; the enjoyment was just from the too intense consciousness of one's own degradation; it was from feeling oneself that one had reached the last barrier, that it was horrible, but that it could not be otherwise; that there was no escape for you; that you never could become a different man; that even if time and faith were still left you to change into something different you would most likely not wish to change; or if you did wish to, even then you would do nothing; because perhaps in reality there was nothing for you to change into.

And the worst of it was, and the root of it all, that it was all in accord with the normal fundamental laws of over-acute consciousness, and with the inertia that was the direct result of those laws, and that consequently one was not only unable to change but could do absolutely nothing. Thus it would follow, as the result of acute consciousness, that one is not to blame in being a scoundrel; as though that were any consolation to the scoundrel once he has come to realise that he actually is a scoundrel. But enough.... Ech, I have talked a lot of nonsense, but what have I explained? How is enjoyment in this to be explained? But I will explain it. I will get to the bottom of it! That is why I have taken up my pen....

I, for instance, have a great deal of AMOUR PROPRE. I am as suspicious and prone to take offence as a humpback or a dwarf. But upon my word I sometimes have had moments when if I had happened to be slapped in the face I should, perhaps, have been positively glad of it. I say, in earnest, that I should probably have been able to discover even in that a peculiar sort of enjoyment — the enjoyment, of course, of despair; but in despair there are the most intense enjoyments, especially when one is very acutely conscious of the hopelessness of one's position. And when one is

slapped in the face — why then the consciousness of being rubbed into a pulp would positively overwhelm one. The worst of it is, look at it which way one will, it still turns out that I was always the most to blame in everything. And what is most humiliating of all, to blame for no fault of my own but, so to say, through the laws of nature. In the first place, to blame because I am cleverer than any of the people surrounding me. (I have always considered myself cleverer than any of the people surrounding me, and sometimes, would you believe it, have been positively ashamed of it. At any rate, I have all my life, as it were, turned my eyes away and never could look people straight in the face.) To blame, finally, because even if I had had magnanimity, I should only have had more suffering from the sense of its uselessness. I should certainly have never been able to do anything from being magnanimous — neither to forgive, for my assailant would perhaps have slapped me from the laws of nature, and one cannot forgive the laws of nature; nor to forget, for even if it were owing to the laws of nature, it is insulting all the same. Finally, even if I had wanted to be anything but magnanimous, had desired on the contrary to revenge myself on my assailant, I could not have revenged myself on any one for anything because I should certainly never have made up my mind to do anything, even if I had been able to. Why should I not have made up my mind? About that in particular I want to say a few words.

CHAPTER III

With people who know how to revenge themselves and to stand up for themselves in general, how is it done? Why, when they are possessed, let us suppose, by the feeling of revenge, then for the time there is nothing else but that feeling left in their whole being. Such a gentleman simply dashes straight for his object like an infuriated bull with its horns down, and nothing but a wall will stop him. (By the way: facing the wall, such gentlemen — that is, the “direct” persons and men of action — are genuinely nonplussed. For them a wall is not an evasion, as for us people who think and consequently do nothing; it is not an excuse for turning aside, an excuse for which we are always very glad, though we scarcely believe in it ourselves, as a rule. No, they are nonplussed in all sincerity. The wall has for them something tranquillising, morally soothing, final — maybe even something mysterious ... but of the wall later.)

Well, such a direct person I regard as the real normal man, as his tender mother nature wished to see him when she graciously brought him into being on the earth. I envy such a man till I am green in the face. He is stupid. I am not disputing that, but perhaps the normal man should be stupid, how do you know? Perhaps it is very beautiful, in fact. And I am the more persuaded of that suspicion, if one can call it so, by the fact that if you take, for instance, the antithesis of the normal man, that is, the man of acute consciousness, who has come, of course, not out of the lap of nature but out of a retort (this is almost mysticism, gentlemen, but I suspect this, too), this retort-made man is sometimes so nonplussed in the presence of his antithesis that with all his exaggerated consciousness he genuinely thinks of himself as a mouse and not a man. It may be an acutely conscious mouse, yet it is a mouse, while the other is a man, and therefore, et caetera, et caetera. And the worst of it is, he himself, his very own self, looks on himself as a mouse; no one asks him to do so; and that is an important point. Now let us look at this mouse in action. Let us suppose, for instance, that it feels insulted, too (and it almost always does feel insulted), and wants to revenge itself, too. There may even be a greater accumulation of spite in it than in L’HOMME DE LA NATURE ET DE LA VERITE. The base and nasty desire to vent that spite on its assailant rankles perhaps even more nastily in it than in L’HOMME DE LA NATURE ET DE LA VERITE. For

through his innate stupidity the latter looks upon his revenge as justice pure and simple; while in consequence of his acute consciousness the mouse does not believe in the justice of it. To come at last to the deed itself, to the very act of revenge. Apart from the one fundamental nastiness the luckless mouse succeeds in creating around it so many other nastinesses in the form of doubts and questions, adds to the one question so many unsettled questions that there inevitably works up around it a sort of fatal brew, a stinking mess, made up of its doubts, emotions, and of the contempt spat upon it by the direct men of action who stand solemnly about it as judges and arbitrators, laughing at it till their healthy sides ache. Of course the only thing left for it is to dismiss all that with a wave of its paw, and, with a smile of assumed contempt in which it does not even itself believe, creep ignominiously into its mouse-hole. There in its nasty, stinking, underground home our insulted, crushed and ridiculed mouse promptly becomes absorbed in cold, malignant and, above all, everlasting spite. For forty years together it will remember its injury down to the smallest, most ignominious details, and every time will add, of itself, details still more ignominious, spitefully teasing and tormenting itself with its own imagination. It will itself be ashamed of its imaginings, but yet it will recall it all, it will go over and over every detail, it will invent unheard of things against itself, pretending that those things might happen, and will forgive nothing. Maybe it will begin to revenge itself, too, but, as it were, piecemeal, in trivial ways, from behind the stove, incognito, without believing either in its own right to vengeance, or in the success of its revenge, knowing that from all its efforts at revenge it will suffer a hundred times more than he on whom it revenges itself, while he, I daresay, will not even scratch himself. On its deathbed it will recall it all over again, with interest accumulated over all the years and ...

But it is just in that cold, abominable half despair, half belief, in that conscious burying oneself alive for grief in the underworld for forty years, in that acutely recognised and yet partly doubtful hopelessness of one’s position, in that hell of unsatisfied desires turned inward, in that fever of oscillations, of resolutions determined for ever and repented of again a minute later — that the savour of that strange enjoyment of which I have spoken lies. It is so subtle, so difficult of analysis, that persons who are a little limited, or even simply persons of strong nerves, will not understand a single atom of it. “Possibly,” you will add on your own account with a grin,

“people will not understand it either who have never received a slap in the face,” and in that way you will politely hint to me that I, too, perhaps, have had the experience of a slap in the face in my life, and so I speak as one who knows. I bet that you are thinking that. But set your minds at rest, gentlemen, I have not received a slap in the face, though it is absolutely a matter of indifference to me what you may think about it. Possibly, I even regret, myself, that I have given so few slaps in the face during my life. But enough ... not another word on that subject of such extreme interest to you.

I will continue calmly concerning persons with strong nerves who do not understand a certain refinement of enjoyment. Though in certain circumstances these gentlemen bellow their loudest like bulls, though this, let us suppose, does them the greatest credit, yet, as I have said already, confronted with the impossible they subside at once. The impossible means the stone wall! What stone wall? Why, of course, the laws of nature, the deductions of natural science, mathematics. As soon as they prove to you, for instance, that you are descended from a monkey, then it is no use scowling, accept it for a fact. When they prove to you that in reality one drop of your own fat must be dearer to you than a hundred thousand of your fellow-creatures, and that this conclusion is the final solution of all so-called virtues and duties and all such prejudices and fancies, then you have just to accept it, there is no help for it, for twice two is a law of mathematics. Just try refuting it.

“Upon my word, they will shout at you, it is no use protesting: it is a case of twice two makes four! Nature does not ask your permission, she has nothing to do with your wishes, and whether you like her laws or dislike them, you are bound to accept her as she is, and consequently all her conclusions. A wall, you see, is a wall ... and so on, and so on.”

Merciful Heavens! but what do I care for the laws of nature and arithmetic, when, for some reason I dislike those laws and the fact that twice two makes four? Of course I cannot break through the wall by battering my head against it if I really have not the strength to knock it down, but I am not going to be reconciled to it simply because it is a stone wall and I have not the strength.

As though such a stone wall really were a consolation, and really did contain some word of conciliation, simply because it is as true as twice two makes four. Oh, absurdity of absurdities! How much better it is to understand it all, to recognise it all, all the impossibilities and the stone

wall; not to be reconciled to one of those impossibilities and stone walls if it disgusts you to be reconciled to it; by the way of the most inevitable, logical combinations to reach the most revolting conclusions on the everlasting theme, that even for the stone wall you are yourself somehow to blame, though again it is as clear as day you are not to blame in the least, and therefore grinding your teeth in silent impotence to sink into luxurious inertia, brooding on the fact that there is no one even for you to feel vindictive against, that you have not, and perhaps never will have, an object for your spite, that it is a sleight of hand, a bit of juggling, a card-sharper's trick, that it is simply a mess, no knowing what and no knowing who, but in spite of all these uncertainties and jugglings, still there is an ache in you, and the more you do not know, the worse the ache.

CHAPTER IV

“Ha, ha, ha! You will be finding enjoyment in toothache next,” you cry, with a laugh.

“Well, even in toothache there is enjoyment,” I answer. I had toothache for a whole month and I know there is. In that case, of course, people are not spiteful in silence, but moan; but they are not candid moans, they are malignant moans, and the malignancy is the whole point. The enjoyment of the sufferer finds expression in those moans; if he did not feel enjoyment in them he would not moan. It is a good example, gentlemen, and I will develop it. Those moans express in the first place all the aimlessness of your pain, which is so humiliating to your consciousness; the whole legal system of nature on which you spit disdainfully, of course, but from which you suffer all the same while she does not. They express the consciousness that you have no enemy to punish, but that you have pain; the consciousness that in spite of all possible Wagenheims you are in complete slavery to your teeth; that if someone wishes it, your teeth will leave off aching, and if he does not, they will go on aching another three months; and that finally if you are still contumacious and still protest, all that is left you for your own gratification is to thrash yourself or beat your wall with your fist as hard as you can, and absolutely nothing more. Well, these mortal insults, these jeers on the part of someone unknown, end at last in an enjoyment which sometimes reaches the highest degree of voluptuousness. I ask you, gentlemen, listen sometimes to the moans of an educated man of the nineteenth century suffering from toothache, on the second or third day of the attack, when he is beginning to moan, not as he moaned on the first day, that is, not simply because he has toothache, not just as any coarse peasant, but as a man affected by progress and European civilisation, a man who is “divorced from the soil and the national elements,” as they express it now-a-days. His moans become nasty, disgustingly malignant, and go on for whole days and nights. And of course he knows himself that he is doing himself no sort of good with his moans; he knows better than anyone that he is only lacerating and harassing himself and others for nothing; he knows that even the audience before whom he is making his efforts, and his whole family, listen to him with loathing, do not put a ha’porth of faith in him, and inwardly understand that he might moan differently, more simply, without

trills and flourishes, and that he is only amusing himself like that from ill-humour, from malignancy. Well, in all these recognitions and disgraces it is that there lies a voluptuous pleasure. As though he would say: “I am worrying you, I am lacerating your hearts, I am keeping everyone in the house awake. Well, stay awake then, you, too, feel every minute that I have toothache. I am not a hero to you now, as I tried to seem before, but simply a nasty person, an impostor. Well, so be it, then! I am very glad that you see through me. It is nasty for you to hear my despicable moans: well, let it be nasty; here I will let you have a nastier flourish in a minute....” You do not understand even now, gentlemen? No, it seems our development and our consciousness must go further to understand all the intricacies of this pleasure. You laugh? Delighted. My jests, gentlemen, are of course in bad taste, jerky, involved, lacking self-confidence. But of course that is because I do not respect myself. Can a man of perception respect himself at all?

CHAPTER V

Come, can a man who attempts to find enjoyment in the very feeling of his own degradation possibly have a spark of respect for himself? I am not saying this now from any mawkish kind of remorse. And, indeed, I could never endure saying, “Forgive me, Papa, I won’t do it again,” not because I am incapable of saying that — on the contrary, perhaps just because I have been too capable of it, and in what a way, too. As though of design I used to get into trouble in cases when I was not to blame in any way. That was the nastiest part of it. At the same time I was genuinely touched and penitent, I used to shed tears and, of course, deceived myself, though I was not acting in the least and there was a sick feeling in my heart at the time.... For that one could not blame even the laws of nature, though the laws of nature have continually all my life offended me more than anything. It is loathsome to remember it all, but it was loathsome even then. Of course, a minute or so later I would realise wrathfully that it was all a lie, a revolting lie, an affected lie, that is, all this penitence, this emotion, these vows of reform. You will ask why did I worry myself with such antics: answer, because it was very dull to sit with one’s hands folded, and so one began cutting

capers. That is really it. Observe yourselves more carefully, gentlemen, then you will understand that it is so. I invented adventures for myself and made up a life, so as at least to live in some way. How many times it has happened to me — well, for instance, to take offence simply on purpose, for nothing; and one knows oneself, of course, that one is offended at nothing; that one is putting it on, but yet one brings oneself at last to the point of being really offended. All my life I have had an impulse to play such pranks, so that in the end I could not control it in myself. Another time, twice, in fact, I tried hard to be in love. I suffered, too, gentlemen, I assure you. In the depth of my heart there was no faith in my suffering, only a faint stir of mockery, but yet I did suffer, and in the real, orthodox way; I was jealous, beside myself ... and it was all from ENNUI, gentlemen, all from ENNUI; inertia overcame me. You know the direct, legitimate fruit of consciousness is inertia, that is, conscious sitting-with-the-hands-folded. I have referred to this already. I repeat, I repeat with emphasis: all “direct” persons and men of action are active just because they are stupid and limited. How explain that? I will tell you: in consequence of their limitation they take immediate and secondary causes for primary ones, and in that way persuade themselves more quickly and easily than other people do that they have found an infallible foundation for their activity, and their minds are at ease and you know that is the chief thing. To begin to act, you know, you must first have your mind completely at ease and no trace of doubt left in it. Why, how am I, for example, to set my mind at rest? Where are the primary causes on which I am to build? Where are my foundations? Where am I to get them from? I exercise myself in reflection, and consequently with me every primary cause at once draws after itself another still more primary, and so on to infinity. That is just the essence of every sort of consciousness and reflection. It must be a case of the laws of nature again. What is the result of it in the end? Why, just the same. Remember I spoke just now of vengeance. (I am sure you did not take it in.) I said that a man revenges himself because he sees justice in it. Therefore he has found a primary cause, that is, justice. And so he is at rest on all sides, and consequently he carries out his revenge calmly and successfully, being persuaded that he is doing a just and honest thing. But I see no justice in it, I find no sort of virtue in it either, and consequently if I attempt to revenge myself, it is only out of spite. Spite, of course, might overcome everything, all my doubts, and so might serve quite successfully in place of a primary cause, precisely

because it is not a cause. But what is to be done if I have not even spite (I began with that just now, you know). In consequence again of those accursed laws of consciousness, anger in me is subject to chemical disintegration. You look into it, the object flies off into air, your reasons evaporate, the criminal is not to be found, the wrong becomes not a wrong but a phantom, something like the toothache, for which no one is to blame, and consequently there is only the same outlet left again — that is, to beat the wall as hard as you can. So you give it up with a wave of the hand because you have not found a fundamental cause. And try letting yourself be carried away by your feelings, blindly, without reflection, without a primary cause, repelling consciousness at least for a time; hate or love, if only not to sit with your hands folded. The day after tomorrow, at the latest, you will begin despising yourself for having knowingly deceived yourself. Result: a soap-bubble and inertia. Oh, gentlemen, do you know, perhaps I consider myself an intelligent man, only because all my life I have been able neither to begin nor to finish anything. Granted I am a babbler, a harmless vexatious babbler, like all of us. But what is to be done if the direct and sole vocation of every intelligent man is babble, that is, the intentional pouring of water through a sieve?

CHAPTER VI

Oh, if I had done nothing simply from laziness! Heavens, how I should have respected myself, then. I should have respected myself because I should at least have been capable of being lazy; there would at least have been one quality, as it were, positive in me, in which I could have believed myself. Question: What is he? Answer: A sluggard; how very pleasant it would have been to hear that of oneself! It would mean that I was positively defined, it would mean that there was something to say about me. “Sluggard” — why, it is a calling and vocation, it is a career. Do not jest, it is so. I should then be a member of the best club by right, and should find my occupation in continually respecting myself. I knew a gentleman who prided himself all his life on being a connoisseur of Lafitte. He considered this as his positive virtue, and never doubted himself. He died, not simply with a tranquil, but with a triumphant conscience, and he was quite right, too. Then I should have chosen a career for myself, I should have been a sluggard and a glutton, not a simple one, but, for instance, one with sympathies for everything sublime and beautiful. How do you like that? I have long had visions of it. That “sublime and beautiful” weighs heavily on my mind at forty But that is at forty; then — oh, then it would have been different! I should have found for myself a form of activity in keeping with it, to be precise, drinking to the health of everything “sublime and beautiful.” I should have snatched at every opportunity to drop a tear into my glass and then to drain it to all that is “sublime and beautiful.” I should then have turned everything into the sublime and the beautiful; in the nastiest, unquestionable trash, I should have sought out the sublime and the beautiful. I should have exuded tears like a wet sponge. An artist, for instance, paints a picture worthy of Gay. At once I drink to the health of the artist who painted the picture worthy of Gay, because I love all that is “sublime and beautiful.” An author has written AS YOU WILL: at once I drink to the health of “anyone you will” because I love all that is “sublime and beautiful.”

I should claim respect for doing so. I should persecute anyone who would not show me respect. I should live at ease, I should die with dignity, why, it is charming, perfectly charming! And what a good round belly I should have grown, what a treble chin I should have established, what a

ruby nose I should have coloured for myself, so that everyone would have said, looking at me: “Here is an asset! Here is something real and solid!” And, say what you like, it is very agreeable to hear such remarks about oneself in this negative age.

CHAPTER VII

But these are all golden dreams. Oh, tell me, who was it first announced, who was it first proclaimed, that man only does nasty things because he does not know his own interests; and that if he were enlightened, if his eyes were opened to his real normal interests, man would at once cease to do nasty things, would at once become good and noble because, being enlightened and understanding his real advantage, he would see his own advantage in the good and nothing else, and we all know that not one man can, consciously, act against his own interests, consequently, so to say, through necessity, he would begin doing good? Oh, the babe! Oh, the pure, innocent child! Why, in the first place, when in all these thousands of years has there been a time when man has acted only from his own interest? What is to be done with the millions of facts that bear witness that men, CONSCIOUSLY, that is fully understanding their real interests, have left them in the background and have rushed headlong on another path, to meet peril and danger, compelled to this course by nobody and by nothing, but, as it were, simply disliking the beaten track, and have obstinately, wilfully, struck out another difficult, absurd way, seeking it almost in the darkness. So, I suppose, this obstinacy and perversity were pleasanter to them than any advantage.... Advantage! What is advantage? And will you take it upon yourself to define with perfect accuracy in what the advantage of man consists? And what if it so happens that a man’s advantage, SOMETIMES, not only may, but even must, consist in his desiring in certain cases what is harmful to himself and not advantageous. And if so, if there can be such a case, the whole principle falls into dust. What do you think — are there such cases? You laugh; laugh away, gentlemen, but only answer me: have man’s advantages been reckoned up with perfect certainty? Are there not some which not only have not been included but cannot possibly be included under any classification? You see, you gentlemen have, to the best of my knowledge, taken your whole register of human advantages from the averages of statistical figures and politico-economical formulas. Your advantages are prosperity, wealth, freedom, peace — and so on, and so on. So that the man who should, for instance, go openly and knowingly in opposition to all that list would to your thinking, and indeed mine, too, of course, be an obscurantist or an absolute madman: would not he? But, you

know, this is what is surprising: why does it so happen that all these statisticians, sages and lovers of humanity, when they reckon up human advantages invariably leave out one? They don't even take it into their reckoning in the form in which it should be taken, and the whole reckoning depends upon that. It would be no greater matter, they would simply have to take it, this advantage, and add it to the list. But the trouble is, that this strange advantage does not fall under any classification and is not in place in any list. I have a friend for instance ... Ech! gentlemen, but of course he is your friend, too; and indeed there is no one, no one to whom he is not a friend! When he prepares for any undertaking this gentleman immediately explains to you, elegantly and clearly, exactly how he must act in accordance with the laws of reason and truth. What is more, he will talk to you with excitement and passion of the true normal interests of man; with irony he will upbraid the short-sighted fools who do not understand their own interests, nor the true significance of virtue; and, within a quarter of an hour, without any sudden outside provocation, but simply through something inside him which is stronger than all his interests, he will go off on quite a different tack — that is, act in direct opposition to what he has just been saying about himself, in opposition to the laws of reason, in opposition to his own advantage, in fact in opposition to everything ... I warn you that my friend is a compound personality and therefore it is difficult to blame him as an individual. The fact is, gentlemen, it seems there must really exist something that is dearer to almost every man than his greatest advantages, or (not to be illogical) there is a most advantageous advantage (the very one omitted of which we spoke just now) which is more important and more advantageous than all other advantages, for the sake of which a man if necessary is ready to act in opposition to all laws; that is, in opposition to reason, honour, peace, prosperity — in fact, in opposition to all those excellent and useful things if only he can attain that fundamental, most advantageous advantage which is dearer to him than all. "Yes, but it's advantage all the same," you will retort. But excuse me, I'll make the point clear, and it is not a case of playing upon words. What matters is, that this advantage is remarkable from the very fact that it breaks down all our classifications, and continually shatters every system constructed by lovers of mankind for the benefit of mankind. In fact, it upsets everything. But before I mention this advantage to you, I want to compromise myself personally, and therefore I boldly declare that all these

fine systems, all these theories for explaining to mankind their real normal interests, in order that inevitably striving to pursue these interests they may at once become good and noble — are, in my opinion, so far, mere logical exercises! Yes, logical exercises. Why, to maintain this theory of the regeneration of mankind by means of the pursuit of his own advantage is to my mind almost the same thing ... as to affirm, for instance, following Buckle, that through civilisation mankind becomes softer, and consequently less bloodthirsty and less fitted for warfare. Logically it does seem to follow from his arguments. But man has such a predilection for systems and abstract deductions that he is ready to distort the truth intentionally, he is ready to deny the evidence of his senses only to justify his logic. I take this example because it is the most glaring instance of it. Only look about you: blood is being spilt in streams, and in the merriest way, as though it were champagne. Take the whole of the nineteenth century in which Buckle lived. Take Napoleon — the Great and also the present one. Take North America — the eternal union. Take the farce of Schleswig-Holstein.... And what is it that civilisation softens in us? The only gain of civilisation for mankind is the greater capacity for variety of sensations — and absolutely nothing more. And through the development of this many-sidedness man may come to finding enjoyment in bloodshed. In fact, this has already happened to him. Have you noticed that it is the most civilised gentlemen who have been the subtlest slaughterers, to whom the Attilas and Stenka Razins could not hold a candle, and if they are not so conspicuous as the Attilas and Stenka Razins it is simply because they are so often met with, are so ordinary and have become so familiar to us. In any case civilisation has made mankind if not more bloodthirsty, at least more vilely, more loathsomely bloodthirsty. In old days he saw justice in bloodshed and with his conscience at peace exterminated those he thought proper. Now we do think bloodshed abominable and yet we engage in this abomination, and with more energy than ever. Which is worse? Decide that for yourselves. They say that Cleopatra (excuse an instance from Roman history) was fond of sticking gold pins into her slave-girls' breasts and derived gratification from their screams and writhings. You will say that that was in the comparatively barbarous times; that these are barbarous times too, because also, comparatively speaking, pins are stuck in even now; that though man has now learned to see more clearly than in barbarous ages, he is still far from having learnt to act as reason and science would dictate. But yet you

are fully convinced that he will be sure to learn when he gets rid of certain old bad habits, and when common sense and science have completely re-educated human nature and turned it in a normal direction. You are confident that then man will cease from INTENTIONAL error and will, so to say, be compelled not to want to set his will against his normal interests. That is not all; then, you say, science itself will teach man (though to my mind it's a superfluous luxury) that he never has really had any caprice or will of his own, and that he himself is something of the nature of a piano-key or the stop of an organ, and that there are, besides, things called the laws of nature; so that everything he does is not done by his willing it, but is done of itself, by the laws of nature. Consequently we have only to discover these laws of nature, and man will no longer have to answer for his actions and life will become exceedingly easy for him. All human actions will then, of course, be tabulated according to these laws, mathematically, like tables of logarithms up to 108,000, and entered in an index; or, better still, there would be published certain edifying works of the nature of encyclopaedic lexicons, in which everything will be so clearly calculated and explained that there will be no more incidents or adventures in the world.

Then — this is all what you say — new economic relations will be established, all ready-made and worked out with mathematical exactitude, so that every possible question will vanish in the twinkling of an eye, simply because every possible answer to it will be provided. Then the "Palace of Crystal" will be built. Then ... In fact, those will be halcyon days. Of course there is no guaranteeing (this is my comment) that it will not be, for instance, frightfully dull then (for what will one have to do when everything will be calculated and tabulated), but on the other hand everything will be extraordinarily rational. Of course boredom may lead you to anything. It is boredom sets one sticking golden pins into people, but all that would not matter. What is bad (this is my comment again) is that I dare say people will be thankful for the gold pins then. Man is stupid, you know, phenomenally stupid; or rather he is not at all stupid, but he is so ungrateful that you could not find another like him in all creation. I, for instance, would not be in the least surprised if all of a sudden, A PROPOS of nothing, in the midst of general prosperity a gentleman with an ignoble, or rather with a reactionary and ironical, countenance were to arise and, putting his arms akimbo, say to us all: "I say, gentleman, hadn't we better kick over the whole show and scatter rationalism to the winds, simply to

send these logarithms to the devil, and to enable us to live once more at our own sweet foolish will!" That again would not matter, but what is annoying is that he would be sure to find followers — such is the nature of man. And all that for the most foolish reason, which, one would think, was hardly worth mentioning: that is, that man everywhere and at all times, whoever he may be, has preferred to act as he chose and not in the least as his reason and advantage dictated. And one may choose what is contrary to one's own interests, and sometimes one POSITIVELY OUGHT (that is my idea). One's own free unfettered choice, one's own caprice, however wild it may be, one's own fancy worked up at times to frenzy — is that very "most advantageous advantage" which we have overlooked, which comes under no classification and against which all systems and theories are continually being shattered to atoms. And how do these wiseacres know that man wants a normal, a virtuous choice? What has made them conceive that man must want a rationally advantageous choice? What man wants is simply INDEPENDENT choice, whatever that independence may cost and wherever it may lead. And choice, of course, the devil only knows what choice.

CHAPTER VIII

"Ha! ha! ha! But you know there is no such thing as choice in reality, say what you like," you will interpose with a chuckle. "Science has succeeded in so far analysing man that we know already that choice and what is called freedom of will is nothing else than—"

Stay, gentlemen, I meant to begin with that myself I confess, I was rather frightened. I was just going to say that the devil only knows what choice depends on, and that perhaps that was a very good thing, but I remembered the teaching of science ... and pulled myself up. And here you have begun upon it. Indeed, if there really is some day discovered a formula for all our desires and caprices — that is, an explanation of what they depend upon, by what laws they arise, how they develop, what they are aiming at in one case and in another and so on, that is a real mathematical formula — then, most likely, man will at once cease to feel desire, indeed, he will be certain to.

For who would want to choose by rule? Besides, he will at once be transformed from a human being into an organ-stop or something of the sort; for what is a man without desires, without free will and without choice, if not a stop in an organ? What do you think? Let us reckon the chances — can such a thing happen or not?

“H’m!” you decide. “Our choice is usually mistaken from a false view of our advantage. We sometimes choose absolute nonsense because in our foolishness we see in that nonsense the easiest means for attaining a supposed advantage. But when all that is explained and worked out on paper (which is perfectly possible, for it is contemptible and senseless to suppose that some laws of nature man will never understand), then certainly so-called desires will no longer exist. For if a desire should come into conflict with reason we shall then reason and not desire, because it will be impossible retaining our reason to be SENSELESS in our desires, and in that way knowingly act against reason and desire to injure ourselves. And as all choice and reasoning can be really calculated — because there will some day be discovered the laws of our so-called free will — so, joking apart, there may one day be something like a table constructed of them, so that we really shall choose in accordance with it. If, for instance, some day they calculate and prove to me that I made a long nose at someone because I could not help making a long nose at him and that I had to do it in that particular way, what FREEDOM is left me, especially if I am a learned man and have taken my degree somewhere? Then I should be able to calculate my whole life for thirty years beforehand. In short, if this could be arranged there would be nothing left for us to do; anyway, we should have to understand that. And, in fact, we ought unwearyingly to repeat to ourselves that at such and such a time and in such and such circumstances nature does not ask our leave; that we have got to take her as she is and not fashion her to suit our fancy, and if we really aspire to formulas and tables of rules, and well, even ... to the chemical retort, there’s no help for it, we must accept the retort too, or else it will be accepted without our consent....”

Yes, but here I come to a stop! Gentlemen, you must excuse me for being over-philosophical; it’s the result of forty years underground! Allow me to indulge my fancy. You see, gentlemen, reason is an excellent thing, there’s no disputing that, but reason is nothing but reason and satisfies only the rational side of man’s nature, while will is a manifestation of the whole life, that is, of the whole human life including reason and all the impulses. And

although our life, in this manifestation of it, is often worthless, yet it is life and not simply extracting square roots. Here I, for instance, quite naturally want to live, in order to satisfy all my capacities for life, and not simply my capacity for reasoning, that is, not simply one twentieth of my capacity for life. What does reason know? Reason only knows what it has succeeded in learning (some things, perhaps, it will never learn; this is a poor comfort, but why not say so frankly?) and human nature acts as a whole, with everything that is in it, consciously or unconsciously, and, even if it goes wrong, it lives. I suspect, gentlemen, that you are looking at me with compassion; you tell me again that an enlightened and developed man, such, in short, as the future man will be, cannot consciously desire anything disadvantageous to himself, that that can be proved mathematically. I thoroughly agree, it can — by mathematics. But I repeat for the hundredth time, there is one case, one only, when man may consciously, purposely, desire what is injurious to himself, what is stupid, very stupid — simply in order to have the right to desire for himself even what is very stupid and not to be bound by an obligation to desire only what is sensible. Of course, this very stupid thing, this caprice of ours, may be in reality, gentlemen, more advantageous for us than anything else on earth, especially in certain cases. And in particular it may be more advantageous than any advantage even when it does us obvious harm, and contradicts the soundest conclusions of our reason concerning our advantage — for in any circumstances it preserves for us what is most precious and most important — that is, our personality, our individuality. Some, you see, maintain that this really is the most precious thing for mankind; choice can, of course, if it chooses, be in agreement with reason; and especially if this be not abused but kept within bounds. It is profitable and sometimes even praiseworthy. But very often, and even most often, choice is utterly and stubbornly opposed to reason ... and ... and ... do you know that that, too, is profitable, sometimes even praiseworthy? Gentlemen, let us suppose that man is not stupid. (Indeed one cannot refuse to suppose that, if only from the one consideration, that, if man is stupid, then who is wise?) But if he is not stupid, he is monstrously ungrateful! Phenomenally ungrateful. In fact, I believe that the best definition of man is the ungrateful biped. But that is not all, that is not his worst defect; his worst defect is his perpetual moral obliquity, perpetual — from the days of the Flood to the Schleswig-Holstein period. Moral obliquity and consequently lack of good sense; for it has long been accepted

that lack of good sense is due to no other cause than moral obliquity. Put it to the test and cast your eyes upon the history of mankind. What will you see? Is it a grand spectacle? Grand, if you like. Take the Colossus of Rhodes, for instance, that's worth something. With good reason Mr. Anaevsky testifies of it that some say that it is the work of man's hands, while others maintain that it has been created by nature herself. Is it many-coloured? May be it is many-coloured, too: if one takes the dress uniforms, military and civilian, of all peoples in all ages — that alone is worth something, and if you take the undress uniforms you will never get to the end of it; no historian would be equal to the job. Is it monotonous? May be it's monotonous too: it's fighting and fighting; they are fighting now, they fought first and they fought last — you will admit, that it is almost too monotonous. In short, one may say anything about the history of the world — anything that might enter the most disordered imagination. The only thing one can't say is that it's rational. The very word sticks in one's throat. And, indeed, this is the odd thing that is continually happening: there are continually turning up in life moral and rational persons, sages and lovers of humanity who make it their object to live all their lives as morally and rationally as possible, to be, so to speak, a light to their neighbours simply in order to show them that it is possible to live morally and rationally in this world. And yet we all know that those very people sooner or later have been false to themselves, playing some queer trick, often a most unseemly one. Now I ask you: what can be expected of man since he is a being endowed with strange qualities? Shower upon him every earthly blessing, drown him in a sea of happiness, so that nothing but bubbles of bliss can be seen on the surface; give him economic prosperity, such that he should have nothing else to do but sleep, eat cakes and busy himself with the continuation of his species, and even then out of sheer ingratitude, sheer spite, man would play you some nasty trick. He would even risk his cakes and would deliberately desire the most fatal rubbish, the most uneconomical absurdity, simply to introduce into all this positive good sense his fatal fantastic element. It is just his fantastic dreams, his vulgar folly that he will desire to retain, simply in order to prove to himself — as though that were so necessary — that men still are men and not the keys of a piano, which the laws of nature threaten to control so completely that soon one will be able to desire nothing but by the calendar. And that is not all: even if man really were nothing but a piano-key, even if this were proved to him by natural science and

mathematics, even then he would not become reasonable, but would purposely do something perverse out of simple ingratitude, simply to gain his point. And if he does not find means he will contrive destruction and chaos, will contrive sufferings of all sorts, only to gain his point! He will launch a curse upon the world, and as only man can curse (it is his privilege, the primary distinction between him and other animals), may be by his curse alone he will attain his object — that is, convince himself that he is a man and not a piano-key! If you say that all this, too, can be calculated and tabulated — chaos and darkness and curses, so that the mere possibility of calculating it all beforehand would stop it all, and reason would reassert itself, then man would purposely go mad in order to be rid of reason and gain his point! I believe in it, I answer for it, for the whole work of man really seems to consist in nothing but proving to himself every minute that he is a man and not a piano-key! It may be at the cost of his skin, it may be by cannibalism! And this being so, can one help being tempted to rejoice that it has not yet come off, and that desire still depends on something we don’t know?

You will scream at me (that is, if you condescend to do so) that no one is touching my free will, that all they are concerned with is that my will should of itself, of its own free will, coincide with my own normal interests, with the laws of nature and arithmetic.

Good heavens, gentlemen, what sort of free will is left when we come to tabulation and arithmetic, when it will all be a case of twice two make four? Twice two makes four without my will. As if free will meant that!

CHAPTER IX

Gentlemen, I am joking, and I know myself that my jokes are not brilliant, but you know one can take everything as a joke. I am, perhaps, jesting against the grain. Gentlemen, I am tormented by questions; answer them for me. You, for instance, want to cure men of their old habits and reform their will in accordance with science and good sense. But how do you know, not only that it is possible, but also that it is DESIRABLE to reform man in that way? And what leads you to the conclusion that man's inclinations NEED reforming? In short, how do you know that such a reformation will be a benefit to man? And to go to the root of the matter, why are you so positively convinced that not to act against his real normal interests guaranteed by the conclusions of reason and arithmetic is certainly always advantageous for man and must always be a law for mankind? So far, you know, this is only your supposition. It may be the law of logic, but not the law of humanity. You think, gentlemen, perhaps that I am mad? Allow me to defend myself. I agree that man is pre-eminently a creative animal, predestined to strive consciously for an object and to engage in engineering — that is, incessantly and eternally to make new roads, WHEREVER THEY MAY LEAD. But the reason why he wants sometimes to go off at a tangent may just be that he is PREDESTINED to make the road, and perhaps, too, that however stupid the "direct" practical man may be, the thought sometimes will occur to him that the road almost always does lead SOMEWHERE, and that the destination it leads to is less important than the process of making it, and that the chief thing is to save the well-conducted child from despising engineering, and so giving way to the fatal idleness, which, as we all know, is the mother of all the vices. Man likes to make roads and to create, that is a fact beyond dispute. But why has he such a passionate love for destruction and chaos also? Tell me that! But on that point I want to say a couple of words myself. May it not be that he loves chaos and destruction (there can be no disputing that he does sometimes love it) because he is instinctively afraid of attaining his object and completing the edifice he is constructing? Who knows, perhaps he only loves that edifice from a distance, and is by no means in love with it at close quarters; perhaps he only loves building it and does not want to live in it, but will leave it, when completed, for the use of LES ANIMAUX

DOMESTIQUES — such as the ants, the sheep, and so on. Now the ants have quite a different taste. They have a marvellous edifice of that pattern which endures for ever — the ant-heap.

With the ant-heap the respectable race of ants began and with the ant-heap they will probably end, which does the greatest credit to their perseverance and good sense. But man is a frivolous and incongruous creature, and perhaps, like a chess player, loves the process of the game, not the end of it. And who knows (there is no saying with certainty), perhaps the only goal on earth to which mankind is striving lies in this incessant process of attaining, in other words, in life itself, and not in the thing to be attained, which must always be expressed as a formula, as positive as twice two makes four, and such positiveness is not life, gentlemen, but is the beginning of death. Anyway, man has always been afraid of this mathematical certainty, and I am afraid of it now. Granted that man does nothing but seek that mathematical certainty, he traverses oceans, sacrifices his life in the quest, but to succeed, really to find it, dreads, I assure you. He feels that when he has found it there will be nothing for him to look for. When workmen have finished their work they do at least receive their pay, they go to the tavern, then they are taken to the police-station — and there is occupation for a week. But where can man go? Anyway, one can observe a certain awkwardness about him when he has attained such objects. He loves the process of attaining, but does not quite like to have attained, and that, of course, is very absurd. In fact, man is a comical creature; there seems to be a kind of jest in it all. But yet mathematical certainty is after all, something insufferable. Twice two makes four seems to me simply a piece of insolence. Twice two makes four is a pert coxcomb who stands with arms akimbo barring your path and spitting. I admit that twice two makes four is an excellent thing, but if we are to give everything its due, twice two makes five is sometimes a very charming thing too.

And why are you so firmly, so triumphantly, convinced that only the normal and the positive — in other words, only what is conducive to welfare — is for the advantage of man? Is not reason in error as regards advantage? Does not man, perhaps, love something besides well-being? Perhaps he is just as fond of suffering? Perhaps suffering is just as great a benefit to him as well-being? Man is sometimes extraordinarily, passionately, in love with suffering, and that is a fact. There is no need to appeal to universal history to prove that; only ask yourself, if you are a man

and have lived at all. As far as my personal opinion is concerned, to care only for well-being seems to me positively ill-bred. Whether it’s good or bad, it is sometimes very pleasant, too, to smash things. I hold no brief for suffering nor for well-being either. I am standing for ... my caprice, and for its being guaranteed to me when necessary. Suffering would be out of place in vaudevilles, for instance; I know that. In the “Palace of Crystal” it is unthinkable; suffering means doubt, negation, and what would be the good of a “palace of crystal” if there could be any doubt about it? And yet I think man will never renounce real suffering, that is, destruction and chaos. Why, suffering is the sole origin of consciousness. Though I did lay it down at the beginning that consciousness is the greatest misfortune for man, yet I know man prizes it and would not give it up for any satisfaction. Consciousness, for instance, is infinitely superior to twice two makes four. Once you have mathematical certainty there is nothing left to do or to understand. There will be nothing left but to bottle up your five senses and plunge into contemplation. While if you stick to consciousness, even though the same result is attained, you can at least flog yourself at times, and that will, at any rate, liven you up. Reactionary as it is, corporal punishment is better than nothing.

CHAPTER X

You believe in a palace of crystal that can never be destroyed — a palace at which one will not be able to put out one's tongue or make a long nose on the sly. And perhaps that is just why I am afraid of this edifice, that it is of crystal and can never be destroyed and that one cannot put one's tongue out at it even on the sly.

You see, if it were not a palace, but a hen-house, I might creep into it to avoid getting wet, and yet I would not call the hen-house a palace out of gratitude to it for keeping me dry. You laugh and say that in such circumstances a hen-house is as good as a mansion. Yes, I answer, if one had to live simply to keep out of the rain.

But what is to be done if I have taken it into my head that that is not the only object in life, and that if one must live one had better live in a mansion? That is my choice, my desire. You will only eradicate it when you have changed my preference. Well, do change it, allure me with something else, give me another ideal. But meanwhile I will not take a hen-house for a mansion. The palace of crystal may be an idle dream, it may be that it is inconsistent with the laws of nature and that I have invented it only through my own stupidity, through the old-fashioned irrational habits of my generation. But what does it matter to me that it is inconsistent? That makes no difference since it exists in my desires, or rather exists as long as my desires exist. Perhaps you are laughing again? Laugh away; I will put up with any mockery rather than pretend that I am satisfied when I am hungry. I know, anyway, that I will not be put off with a compromise, with a recurring zero, simply because it is consistent with the laws of nature and actually exists. I will not accept as the crown of my desires a block of buildings with tenements for the poor on a lease of a thousand years, and perhaps with a sign-board of a dentist hanging out. Destroy my desires, eradicate my ideals, show me something better, and I will follow you. You will say, perhaps, that it is not worth your trouble; but in that case I can give you the same answer. We are discussing things seriously; but if you won't deign to give me your attention, I will drop your acquaintance. I can retreat into my underground hole.

But while I am alive and have desires I would rather my hand were withered off than bring one brick to such a building! Don't remind me that I

have just rejected the palace of crystal for the sole reason that one cannot put out one’s tongue at it. I did not say because I am so fond of putting my tongue out. Perhaps the thing I resented was, that of all your edifices there has not been one at which one could not put out one’s tongue. On the contrary, I would let my tongue be cut off out of gratitude if things could be so arranged that I should lose all desire to put it out. It is not my fault that things cannot be so arranged, and that one must be satisfied with model flats. Then why am I made with such desires? Can I have been constructed simply in order to come to the conclusion that all my construction is a cheat? Can this be my whole purpose? I do not believe it.

But do you know what: I am convinced that we underground folk ought to be kept on a curb. Though we may sit forty years underground without speaking, when we do come out into the light of day and break out we talk and talk and talk....

CHAPTER XI

The long and the short of it is, gentlemen, that it is better to do nothing! Better conscious inertia! And so hurrah for underground! Though I have said that I envy the normal man to the last drop of my bile, yet I should not care to be in his place such as he is now (though I shall not cease envying him). No, no; anyway the underground life is more advantageous. There, at any rate, one can ... Oh, but even now I am lying! I am lying because I know myself that it is not underground that is better, but something different, quite different, for which I am thirsting, but which I cannot find! Damn underground!

I will tell you another thing that would be better, and that is, if I myself believed in anything of what I have just written. I swear to you, gentlemen, there is not one thing, not one word of what I have written that I really believe. That is, I believe it, perhaps, but at the same time I feel and suspect that I am lying like a cobbler.

“Then why have you written all this?” you will say to me. “I ought to put you underground for forty years without anything to do and then come to you in your cellar, to find out what stage you have reached! How can a man be left with nothing to do for forty years?”

“Isn’t that shameful, isn’t that humiliating?” you will say, perhaps, wagging your heads contemptuously. “You thirst for life and try to settle the problems of life by a logical tangle. And how persistent, how insolent are your sallies, and at the same time what a scare you are in! You talk nonsense and are pleased with it; you say impudent things and are in continual alarm and apologising for them. You declare that you are afraid of nothing and at the same time try to ingratiate yourself in our good opinion. You declare that you are gnashing your teeth and at the same time you try to be witty so as to amuse us. You know that your witticisms are not witty, but you are evidently well satisfied with their literary value. You may, perhaps, have really suffered, but you have no respect for your own suffering. You may have sincerity, but you have no modesty; out of the pettiest vanity you expose your sincerity to publicity and ignominy. You doubtlessly mean to say something, but hide your last word through fear, because you have not the resolution to utter it, and only have a cowardly impudence. You boast of consciousness, but you are not sure of your ground, for though your mind

works, yet your heart is darkened and corrupt, and you cannot have a full, genuine consciousness without a pure heart. And how intrusive you are, how you insist and grimace! Lies, lies, lies!”

Of course I have myself made up all the things you say. That, too, is from underground. I have been for forty years listening to you through a crack under the floor. I have invented them myself, there was nothing else I could invent. It is no wonder that I have learned it by heart and it has taken a literary form....

But can you really be so credulous as to think that I will print all this and give it to you to read too? And another problem: why do I call you “gentlemen,” why do I address you as though you really were my readers? Such confessions as I intend to make are never printed nor given to other people to read. Anyway, I am not strong-minded enough for that, and I don’t see why I should be. But you see a fancy has occurred to me and I want to realise it at all costs. Let me explain.

Every man has reminiscences which he would not tell to everyone, but only to his friends. He has other matters in his mind which he would not reveal even to his friends, but only to himself, and that in secret. But there are other things which a man is afraid to tell even to himself, and every decent man has a number of such things stored away in his mind. The more decent he is, the greater the number of such things in his mind. Anyway, I have only lately determined to remember some of my early adventures. Till now I have always avoided them, even with a certain uneasiness. Now, when I am not only recalling them, but have actually decided to write an account of them, I want to try the experiment whether one can, even with oneself, be perfectly open and not take fright at the whole truth. I will observe, in parenthesis, that Heine says that a true autobiography is almost an impossibility, and that man is bound to lie about himself. He considers that Rousseau certainly told lies about himself in his confessions, and even intentionally lied, out of vanity. I am convinced that Heine is right; I quite understand how sometimes one may, out of sheer vanity, attribute regular crimes to oneself, and indeed I can very well conceive that kind of vanity. But Heine judged of people who made their confessions to the public. I write only for myself, and I wish to declare once and for all that if I write as though I were addressing readers, that is simply because it is easier for me to write in that form. It is a form, an empty form — I shall never have readers. I have made this plain already ...

I don’t wish to be hampered by any restrictions in the compilation of my notes. I shall not attempt any system or method. I will jot things down as I remember them.

But here, perhaps, someone will catch at the word and ask me: if you really don’t reckon on readers, why do you make such compacts with yourself — and on paper too — that is, that you won’t attempt any system or method, that you jot things down as you remember them, and so on, and so on? Why are you explaining? Why do you apologise?

Well, there it is, I answer.

There is a whole psychology in all this, though. Perhaps it is simply that I am a coward. And perhaps that I purposely imagine an audience before me in order that I may be more dignified while I write. There are perhaps thousands of reasons. Again, what is my object precisely in writing? If it is not for the benefit of the public why should I not simply recall these incidents in my own mind without putting them on paper?

Quite so; but yet it is more imposing on paper. There is something more impressive in it; I shall be better able to criticise myself and improve my style. Besides, I shall perhaps obtain actual relief from writing. Today, for instance, I am particularly oppressed by one memory of a distant past. It came back vividly to my mind a few days ago, and has remained haunting me like an annoying tune that one cannot get rid of. And yet I must get rid of it somehow. I have hundreds of such reminiscences; but at times some one stands out from the hundred and oppresses me. For some reason I believe that if I write it down I should get rid of it. Why not try?

Besides, I am bored, and I never have anything to do. Writing will be a sort of work. They say work makes man kind-hearted and honest. Well, here is a chance for me, anyway.

Snow is falling today, yellow and dingy. It fell yesterday, too, and a few days ago. I fancy it is the wet snow that has reminded me of that incident which I cannot shake off now. And so let it be a story A PROPOS of the falling snow.

PART II. A PROPOS OF THE WET SNOW

When from dark error’s subjugation
My words of passionate exhortation
  Had wrenched thy fainting spirit free;
    And writhing prone in thine affliction
    Thou didst recall with malediction
      The vice that had encompassed thee:
    And when thy slumbering conscience, fretting
      By recollection’s torturing flame,
    Thou didst reveal the hideous setting
      Of thy life’s current ere I came:
    When suddenly I saw thee sicken,
      And weeping, hide thine anguished face,
    Revolted, maddened, horror-stricken,
      At memories of foul disgrace.

NEKRASSOV

(translated by Juliet Soskice).

CHAPTER I

AT THAT TIME I was only twenty-four. My life was even then gloomy, ill-regulated, and as solitary as that of a savage. I made friends with no one and positively avoided talking, and buried myself more and more in my hole. At work in the office I never looked at anyone, and was perfectly well aware that my companions looked upon me, not only as a queer fellow, but even looked upon me — I always fancied this — with a sort of loathing. I sometimes wondered why it was that nobody except me fancied that he was looked upon with aversion? One of the clerks had a most repulsive, pock-marked face, which looked positively villainous. I believe I should not have dared to look at anyone with such an unsightly countenance. Another had such a very dirty old uniform that there was an unpleasant odour in his proximity. Yet not one of these gentlemen showed the slightest self-consciousness — either about their clothes or their countenance or their character in any way. Neither of them ever imagined that they were looked at with repulsion; if they had imagined it they would not have minded — so long as their superiors did not look at them in that way. It is clear to me now that, owing to my unbounded vanity and to the high standard I set for myself, I often looked at myself with furious discontent, which verged on loathing, and so I inwardly attributed the same feeling to everyone. I hated my face, for instance: I thought it disgusting, and even suspected that there was something base in my expression, and so every day when I turned up at the office I tried to behave as independently as possible, and to assume a lofty expression, so that I might not be suspected of being abject. “My face may be ugly,” I thought, “but let it be lofty, expressive, and, above all, EXTREMELY intelligent.” But I was positively and painfully certain that it was impossible for my countenance ever to express those qualities. And what was worst of all, I thought it actually stupid looking, and I would have been quite satisfied if I could have looked intelligent. In fact, I would even have put up with looking base if, at the same time, my face could have been thought strikingly intelligent.

Of course, I hated my fellow clerks one and all, and I despised them all, yet at the same time I was, as it were, afraid of them. In fact, it happened at times that I thought more highly of them than of myself. It somehow happened quite suddenly that I alternated between despising them and

thinking them superior to myself. A cultivated and decent man cannot be vain without setting a fearfully high standard for himself, and without despising and almost hating himself at certain moments. But whether I despised them or thought them superior I dropped my eyes almost every time I met anyone. I even made experiments whether I could face so and so's looking at me, and I was always the first to drop my eyes. This worried me to distraction. I had a sickly dread, too, of being ridiculous, and so had a slavish passion for the conventional in everything external. I loved to fall into the common rut, and had a whole-hearted terror of any kind of eccentricity in myself. But how could I live up to it? I was morbidly sensitive as a man of our age should be. They were all stupid, and as like one another as so many sheep. Perhaps I was the only one in the office who fancied that I was a coward and a slave, and I fancied it just because I was more highly developed. But it was not only that I fancied it, it really was so. I was a coward and a slave. I say this without the slightest embarrassment. Every decent man of our age must be a coward and a slave. That is his normal condition. Of that I am firmly persuaded. He is made and constructed to that very end. And not only at the present time owing to some casual circumstances, but always, at all times, a decent man is bound to be a coward and a slave. It is the law of nature for all decent people all over the earth. If anyone of them happens to be valiant about something, he need not be comforted nor carried away by that; he would show the white feather just the same before something else. That is how it invariably and inevitably ends. Only donkeys and mules are valiant, and they only till they are pushed up to the wall. It is not worth while to pay attention to them for they really are of no consequence.

Another circumstance, too, worried me in those days: that there was no one like me and I was unlike anyone else. "I am alone and they are EVERYONE," I thought — and pondered.

From that it is evident that I was still a youngster.

The very opposite sometimes happened. It was loathsome sometimes to go to the office; things reached such a point that I often came home ill. But all at once, A PROPOS of nothing, there would come a phase of scepticism and indifference (everything happened in phases to me), and I would laugh myself at my intolerance and fastidiousness, I would reproach myself with being ROMANTIC. At one time I was unwilling to speak to anyone, while at other times I would not only talk, but go to the length of contemplating

making friends with them. All my fastidiousness would suddenly, for no rhyme or reason, vanish. Who knows, perhaps I never had really had it, and it had simply been affected, and got out of books. I have not decided that question even now. Once I quite made friends with them, visited their homes, played preference, drank vodka, talked of promotions.... But here let me make a digression.

We Russians, speaking generally, have never had those foolish transcendental “romantics” — German, and still more French — on whom nothing produces any effect; if there were an earthquake, if all France perished at the barricades, they would still be the same, they would not even have the decency to affect a change, but would still go on singing their transcendental songs to the hour of their death, because they are fools. We, in Russia, have no fools; that is well known. That is what distinguishes us from foreign lands. Consequently these transcendental natures are not found amongst us in their pure form. The idea that they are is due to our “realistic” journalists and critics of that day, always on the look out for Kostanzhoglos and Uncle Pyotr Ivanitchs and foolishly accepting them as our ideal; they have slandered our romantics, taking them for the same transcendental sort as in Germany or France. On the contrary, the characteristics of our “romantics” are absolutely and directly opposed to the transcendental European type, and no European standard can be applied to them. (Allow me to make use of this word “romantic” — an old-fashioned and much respected word which has done good service and is familiar to all.) The characteristics of our romantic are to understand everything, TO SEE EVERYTHING AND TO SEE IT OFTEN INCOMPARABLY MORE CLEARLY THAN OUR MOST REALISTIC MINDS SEE IT; to refuse to accept anyone or anything, but at the same time not to despise anything; to give way, to yield, from policy; never to lose sight of a useful practical object (such as rent-free quarters at the government expense, pensions, decorations), to keep their eye on that object through all the enthusiasms and volumes of lyrical poems, and at the same time to preserve “the sublime and the beautiful” inviolate within them to the hour of their death, and to preserve themselves also, incidentally, like some precious jewel wrapped in cotton wool if only for the benefit of “the sublime and the beautiful.” Our “romantic” is a man of great breadth and the greatest rogue of all our rogues, I assure you.... I can assure you from experience, indeed. Of course, that is, if he is intelligent. But what am I saying! The romantic is always

intelligent, and I only meant to observe that although we have had foolish romantics they don’t count, and they were only so because in the flower of their youth they degenerated into Germans, and to preserve their precious jewel more comfortably, settled somewhere out there — by preference in Weimar or the Black Forest.

I, for instance, genuinely despised my official work and did not openly abuse it simply because I was in it myself and got a salary for it. Anyway, take note, I did not openly abuse it. Our romantic would rather go out of his mind — a thing, however, which very rarely happens — than take to open abuse, unless he had some other career in view; and he is never kicked out. At most, they would take him to the lunatic asylum as “the King of Spain” if he should go very mad. But it is only the thin, fair people who go out of their minds in Russia. Innumerable “romantics” attain later in life to considerable rank in the service. Their many-sidedness is remarkable! And what a faculty they have for the most contradictory sensations! I was comforted by this thought even in those days, and I am of the same opinion now. That is why there are so many “broad natures” among us who never lose their ideal even in the depths of degradation; and though they never stir a finger for their ideal, though they are arrant thieves and knaves, yet they tearfully cherish their first ideal and are extraordinarily honest at heart. Yes, it is only among us that the most incorrigible rogue can be absolutely and loftily honest at heart without in the least ceasing to be a rogue. I repeat, our romantics, frequently, become such accomplished rascals (I use the term “rascals” affectionately), suddenly display such a sense of reality and practical knowledge that their bewildered superiors and the public generally can only ejaculate in amazement.

Their many-sidedness is really amazing, and goodness knows what it may develop into later on, and what the future has in store for us. It is not a poor material! I do not say this from any foolish or boastful patriotism. But I feel sure that you are again imagining that I am joking. Or perhaps it’s just the contrary and you are convinced that I really think so. Anyway, gentlemen, I shall welcome both views as an honour and a special favour. And do forgive my digression.

I did not, of course, maintain friendly relations with my comrades and soon was at loggerheads with them, and in my youth and inexperience I even gave up bowing to them, as though I had cut off all relations. That, however, only happened to me once. As a rule, I was always alone.

In the first place I spent most of my time at home, reading. I tried to stifle all that was continually seething within me by means of external impressions. And the only external means I had was reading. Reading, of course, was a great help — exciting me, giving me pleasure and pain. But at times it bored me fearfully. One longed for movement in spite of everything, and I plunged all at once into dark, underground, loathsome vice of the pettiest kind. My wretched passions were acute, smarting, from my continual, sickly irritability I had hysterical impulses, with tears and convulsions. I had no resource except reading, that is, there was nothing in my surroundings which I could respect and which attracted me. I was overwhelmed with depression, too; I had an hysterical craving for incongruity and for contrast, and so I took to vice. I have not said all this to justify myself.... But, no! I am lying. I did want to justify myself. I make that little observation for my own benefit, gentlemen. I don’t want to lie. I vowed to myself I would not.

And so, furtively, timidly, in solitude, at night, I indulged in filthy vice, with a feeling of shame which never deserted me, even at the most loathsome moments, and which at such moments nearly made me curse. Already even then I had my underground world in my soul. I was fearfully afraid of being seen, of being met, of being recognised. I visited various obscure haunts.

One night as I was passing a tavern I saw through a lighted window some gentlemen fighting with billiard cues, and saw one of them thrown out of the window. At other times I should have felt very much disgusted, but I was in such a mood at the time, that I actually envied the gentleman thrown out of the window — and I envied him so much that I even went into the tavern and into the billiard-room. “Perhaps,” I thought, “I’ll have a fight, too, and they’ll throw me out of the window.”

I was not drunk — but what is one to do — depression will drive a man to such a pitch of hysteria? But nothing happened. It seemed that I was not even equal to being thrown out of the window and I went away without having my fight.

An officer put me in my place from the first moment.

I was standing by the billiard-table and in my ignorance blocking up the way, and he wanted to pass; he took me by the shoulders and without a word — without a warning or explanation — moved me from where I was standing to another spot and passed by as though he had not noticed me. I

could have forgiven blows, but I could not forgive his having moved me without noticing me.

Devil knows what I would have given for a real regular quarrel — a more decent, a more LITERARY one, so to speak. I had been treated like a fly. This officer was over six foot, while I was a spindly little fellow. But the quarrel was in my hands. I had only to protest and I certainly would have been thrown out of the window. But I changed my mind and preferred to beat a resentful retreat.

I went out of the tavern straight home, confused and troubled, and the next night I went out again with the same lewd intentions, still more furtively, abjectly and miserably than before, as it were, with tears in my eyes — but still I did go out again. Don’t imagine, though, it was cowardice made me slink away from the officer; I never have been a coward at heart, though I have always been a coward in action. Don’t be in a hurry to laugh — I assure you I can explain it all.

Oh, if only that officer had been one of the sort who would consent to fight a duel! But no, he was one of those gentlemen (alas, long extinct!) who preferred fighting with cues or, like Gogol’s Lieutenant Pirogov, appealing to the police. They did not fight duels and would have thought a duel with a civilian like me an utterly unseemly procedure in any case — and they looked upon the duel altogether as something impossible, something free-thinking and French. But they were quite ready to bully, especially when they were over six foot.

I did not slink away through cowardice, but through an unbounded vanity. I was afraid not of his six foot, not of getting a sound thrashing and being thrown out of the window; I should have had physical courage enough, I assure you; but I had not the moral courage. What I was afraid of was that everyone present, from the insolent marker down to the lowest little stinking, pimply clerk in a greasy collar, would jeer at me and fail to understand when I began to protest and to address them in literary language. For of the point of honour — not of honour, but of the point of honour (POINT D’HONNEUR) — one cannot speak among us except in literary language. You can’t allude to the “point of honour” in ordinary language. I was fully convinced (the sense of reality, in spite of all my romanticism!) that they would all simply split their sides with laughter, and that the officer would not simply beat me, that is, without insulting me, but would certainly

prod me in the back with his knee, kick me round the billiard-table, and only then perhaps have pity and drop me out of the window.

Of course, this trivial incident could not with me end in that. I often met that officer afterwards in the street and noticed him very carefully. I am not quite sure whether he recognised me, I imagine not; I judge from certain signs. But I — I stared at him with spite and hatred and so it went on ... for several years! My resentment grew even deeper with years. At first I began making stealthy inquiries about this officer. It was difficult for me to do so, for I knew no one. But one day I heard someone shout his surname in the street as I was following him at a distance, as though I were tied to him — and so I learnt his surname. Another time I followed him to his flat, and for ten kopecks learned from the porter where he lived, on which storey, whether he lived alone or with others, and so on — in fact, everything one could learn from a porter. One morning, though I had never tried my hand with the pen, it suddenly occurred to me to write a satire on this officer in the form of a novel which would unmask his villainy. I wrote the novel with relish. I did unmask his villainy, I even exaggerated it; at first I so altered his surname that it could easily be recognised, but on second thoughts I changed it, and sent the story to the OTETCHESTVENNIYA ZAPISKI. But at that time such attacks were not the fashion and my story was not printed. That was a great vexation to me.

Sometimes I was positively choked with resentment. At last I determined to challenge my enemy to a duel. I composed a splendid, charming letter to him, imploring him to apologise to me, and hinting rather plainly at a duel in case of refusal. The letter was so composed that if the officer had had the least understanding of the sublime and the beautiful he would certainly have flung himself on my neck and have offered me his friendship. And how fine that would have been! How we should have got on together! “He could have shielded me with his higher rank, while I could have improved his mind with my culture, and, well ... my ideas, and all sorts of things might have happened.” Only fancy, this was two years after his insult to me, and my challenge would have been a ridiculous anachronism, in spite of all the ingenuity of my letter in disguising and explaining away the anachronism. But, thank God (to this day I thank the Almighty with tears in my eyes) I did not send the letter to him. Cold shivers run down my back when I think of what might have happened if I had sent it.

And all at once I revenged myself in the simplest way, by a stroke of genius! A brilliant thought suddenly dawned upon me. Sometimes on holidays I used to stroll along the sunny side of the Nevsky about four o’clock in the afternoon. Though it was hardly a stroll so much as a series of innumerable miseries, humiliations and resentments; but no doubt that was just what I wanted. I used to wriggle along in a most unseemly fashion, like an eel, continually moving aside to make way for generals, for officers of the guards and the hussars, or for ladies. At such minutes there used to be a convulsive twinge at my heart, and I used to feel hot all down my back at the mere thought of the wretchedness of my attire, of the wretchedness and abjectness of my little scurrying figure. This was a regular martyrdom, a continual, intolerable humiliation at the thought, which passed into an incessant and direct sensation, that I was a mere fly in the eyes of all this world, a nasty, disgusting fly — more intelligent, more highly developed, more refined in feeling than any of them, of course — but a fly that was continually making way for everyone, insulted and injured by everyone. Why I inflicted this torture upon myself, why I went to the Nevsky, I don’t know. I felt simply drawn there at every possible opportunity.

Already then I began to experience a rush of the enjoyment of which I spoke in the first chapter. After my affair with the officer I felt even more drawn there than before: it was on the Nevsky that I met him most frequently, there I could admire him. He, too, went there chiefly on holidays, He, too, turned out of his path for generals and persons of high rank, and he too, wriggled between them like an eel; but people, like me, or even better dressed than me, he simply walked over; he made straight for them as though there was nothing but empty space before him, and never, under any circumstances, turned aside. I gloated over my resentment watching him and ... always resentfully made way for him. It exasperated me that even in the street I could not be on an even footing with him.

“Why must you invariably be the first to move aside?” I kept asking myself in hysterical rage, waking up sometimes at three o’clock in the morning. “Why is it you and not he? There’s no regulation about it; there’s no written law. Let the making way be equal as it usually is when refined people meet; he moves half-way and you move half-way; you pass with mutual respect.”

But that never happened, and I always moved aside, while he did not even notice my making way for him. And lo and behold a bright idea

dawned upon me! “What,” I thought, “if I meet him and don’t move on one side? What if I don’t move aside on purpose, even if I knock up against him? How would that be?” This audacious idea took such a hold on me that it gave me no peace. I was dreaming of it continually, horribly, and I purposely went more frequently to the Nevsky in order to picture more vividly how I should do it when I did do it. I was delighted. This intention seemed to me more and more practical and possible.

“Of course I shall not really push him,” I thought, already more good-natured in my joy. “I will simply not turn aside, will run up against him, not very violently, but just shouldering each other — just as much as decency permits. I will push against him just as much as he pushes against me.” At last I made up my mind completely. But my preparations took a great deal of time. To begin with, when I carried out my plan I should need to be looking rather more decent, and so I had to think of my get-up. “In case of emergency, if, for instance, there were any sort of public scandal (and the public there is of the most RECHERCHE: the Countess walks there; Prince D. walks there; all the literary world is there), I must be well dressed; that inspires respect and of itself puts us on an equal footing in the eyes of the society.”

With this object I asked for some of my salary in advance, and bought at Tchurkin’s a pair of black gloves and a decent hat. Black gloves seemed to me both more dignified and BON TON than the lemon-coloured ones which I had contemplated at first. “The colour is too gaudy, it looks as though one were trying to be conspicuous,” and I did not take the lemon-coloured ones. I had got ready long beforehand a good shirt, with white bone studs; my overcoat was the only thing that held me back. The coat in itself was a very good one, it kept me warm; but it was wadded and it had a raccoon collar which was the height of vulgarity. I had to change the collar at any sacrifice, and to have a beaver one like an officer’s. For this purpose I began visiting the Gostiny Dvor and after several attempts I pitched upon a piece of cheap German beaver. Though these German beavers soon grow shabby and look wretched, yet at first they look exceedingly well, and I only needed it for the occasion. I asked the price; even so, it was too expensive. After thinking it over thoroughly I decided to sell my raccoon collar. The rest of the money — a considerable sum for me, I decided to borrow from Anton Antonitch Syetotchkin, my immediate superior, an unassuming person, though grave and judicious. He never lent money to anyone, but I had, on entering the

service, been specially recommended to him by an important personage who had got me my berth. I was horribly worried. To borrow from Anton Antonitch seemed to me monstrous and shameful. I did not sleep for two or three nights. Indeed, I did not sleep well at that time, I was in a fever; I had a vague sinking at my heart or else a sudden throbbing, throbbing, throbbing! Anton Antonitch was surprised at first, then he frowned, then he reflected, and did after all lend me the money, receiving from me a written authorisation to take from my salary a fortnight later the sum that he had lent me.

In this way everything was at last ready. The handsome beaver replaced the mean-looking raccoon, and I began by degrees to get to work. It would never have done to act offhand, at random; the plan had to be carried out skilfully, by degrees. But I must confess that after many efforts I began to despair: we simply could not run into each other. I made every preparation, I was quite determined — it seemed as though we should run into one another directly — and before I knew what I was doing I had stepped aside for him again and he had passed without noticing me. I even prayed as I approached him that God would grant me determination. One time I had made up my mind thoroughly, but it ended in my stumbling and falling at his feet because at the very last instant when I was six inches from him my courage failed me. He very calmly stepped over me, while I flew on one side like a ball. That night I was ill again, feverish and delirious.

And suddenly it ended most happily. The night before I had made up my mind not to carry out my fatal plan and to abandon it all, and with that object I went to the Nevsky for the last time, just to see how I would abandon it all. Suddenly, three paces from my enemy, I unexpectedly made up my mind — I closed my eyes, and we ran full tilt, shoulder to shoulder, against one another! I did not budge an inch and passed him on a perfectly equal footing! He did not even look round and pretended not to notice it; but he was only pretending, I am convinced of that. I am convinced of that to this day! Of course, I got the worst of it — he was stronger, but that was not the point. The point was that I had attained my object, I had kept up my dignity, I had not yielded a step, and had put myself publicly on an equal social footing with him. I returned home feeling that I was fully avenged for everything. I was delighted. I was triumphant and sang Italian arias. Of course, I will not describe to you what happened to me three days later; if you have read my first chapter you can guess for yourself. The officer was

afterwards transferred; I have not seen him now for fourteen years. What is the dear fellow doing now? Whom is he walking over?

CHAPTER II

But the period of my dissipation would end and I always felt very sick afterwards. It was followed by remorse — I tried to drive it away; I felt too sick. By degrees, however, I grew used to that too. I grew used to everything, or rather I voluntarily resigned myself to enduring it. But I had a means of escape that reconciled everything — that was to find refuge in "the sublime and the beautiful," in dreams, of course. I was a terrible dreamer, I would dream for three months on end, tucked away in my corner, and you may believe me that at those moments I had no resemblance to the gentleman who, in the perturbation of his chicken heart, put a collar of German beaver on his great-coat. I suddenly became a hero. I would not have admitted my six-foot lieutenant even if he had called on me. I could not even picture him before me then. What were my dreams and how I could satisfy myself with them — it is hard to say now, but at the time I was satisfied with them. Though, indeed, even now, I am to some extent satisfied with them. Dreams were particularly sweet and vivid after a spell of dissipation; they came with remorse and with tears, with curses and transports. There were moments of such positive intoxication, of such happiness, that there was not the faintest trace of irony within me, on my honour. I had faith, hope, love. I believed blindly at such times that by some miracle, by some external circumstance, all this would suddenly open out, expand; that suddenly a vista of suitable activity — beneficent, good, and, above all, READY MADE (what sort of activity I had no idea, but the great thing was that it should be all ready for me) — would rise up before me — and I should come out into the light of day, almost riding a white horse and crowned with laurel. Anything but the foremost place I could not conceive for myself, and for that very reason I quite contentedly occupied the lowest in reality. Either to be a hero or to grovel in the mud — there was nothing between. That was my ruin, for when I was in the mud I comforted myself with the thought that at other times I was a hero, and the hero was a cloak for the mud: for an ordinary man it was shameful to defile himself, but a hero was too lofty to be utterly defiled, and so he might defile himself. It is worth noting that these attacks of the "sublime and the beautiful" visited me even during the period of dissipation and just at the times when I was touching the bottom. They came in separate spurts, as though reminding me

of themselves, but did not banish the dissipation by their appearance. On the contrary, they seemed to add a zest to it by contrast, and were only sufficiently present to serve as an appetising sauce. That sauce was made up of contradictions and sufferings, of agonising inward analysis, and all these pangs and pin-pricks gave a certain piquancy, even a significance to my dissipation — in fact, completely answered the purpose of an appetising sauce. There was a certain depth of meaning in it. And I could hardly have resigned myself to the simple, vulgar, direct debauchery of a clerk and have endured all the filthiness of it. What could have allured me about it then and have drawn me at night into the street? No, I had a lofty way of getting out of it all.

And what loving-kindness, oh Lord, what loving-kindness I felt at times in those dreams of mine! in those “flights into the sublime and the beautiful”; though it was fantastic love, though it was never applied to anything human in reality, yet there was so much of this love that one did not feel afterwards even the impulse to apply it in reality; that would have been superfluous. Everything, however, passed satisfactorily by a lazy and fascinating transition into the sphere of art, that is, into the beautiful forms of life, lying ready, largely stolen from the poets and novelists and adapted to all sorts of needs and uses. I, for instance, was triumphant over everyone; everyone, of course, was in dust and ashes, and was forced spontaneously to recognise my superiority, and I forgave them all. I was a poet and a grand gentleman, I fell in love; I came in for countless millions and immediately devoted them to humanity, and at the same time I confessed before all the people my shameful deeds, which, of course, were not merely shameful, but had in them much that was “sublime and beautiful” something in the Manfred style. Everyone would kiss me and weep (what idiots they would be if they did not), while I should go barefoot and hungry preaching new ideas and fighting a victorious Austerlitz against the obscurantists. Then the band would play a march, an amnesty would be declared, the Pope would agree to retire from Rome to Brazil; then there would be a ball for the whole of Italy at the Villa Borghese on the shores of Lake Como, Lake Como being for that purpose transferred to the neighbourhood of Rome; then would come a scene in the bushes, and so on, and so on — as though you did not know all about it? You will say that it is vulgar and contemptible to drag all this into public after all the tears and transports which I have myself confessed. But why is it contemptible? Can you

imagine that I am ashamed of it all, and that it was stupider than anything in your life, gentlemen? And I can assure you that some of these fancies were by no means badly composed.... It did not all happen on the shores of Lake Como. And yet you are right — it really is vulgar and contemptible. And most contemptible of all it is that now I am attempting to justify myself to you. And even more contemptible than that is my making this remark now. But that's enough, or there will be no end to it; each step will be more contemptible than the last....

I could never stand more than three months of dreaming at a time without feeling an irresistible desire to plunge into society. To plunge into society meant to visit my superior at the office, Anton Antonitch Syetotchkin. He was the only permanent acquaintance I have had in my life, and I wonder at the fact myself now. But I only went to see him when that phase came over me, and when my dreams had reached such a point of bliss that it became essential at once to embrace my fellows and all mankind; and for that purpose I needed, at least, one human being, actually existing. I had to call on Anton Antonitch, however, on Tuesday — his at-home day; so I had always to time my passionate desire to embrace humanity so that it might fall on a Tuesday.

This Anton Antonitch lived on the fourth storey in a house in Five Corners, in four low-pitched rooms, one smaller than the other, of a particularly frugal and sallow appearance. He had two daughters and their aunt, who used to pour out the tea. Of the daughters one was thirteen and another fourteen, they both had snub noses, and I was awfully shy of them because they were always whispering and giggling together. The master of the house usually sat in his study on a leather couch in front of the table with some grey-headed gentleman, usually a colleague from our office or some other department. I never saw more than two or three visitors there, always the same. They talked about the excise duty; about business in the senate, about salaries, about promotions, about His Excellency, and the best means of pleasing him, and so on. I had the patience to sit like a fool beside these people for four hours at a stretch, listening to them without knowing what to say to them or venturing to say a word. I became stupefied, several times I felt myself perspiring, I was overcome by a sort of paralysis; but this was pleasant and good for me. On returning home I deferred for a time my desire to embrace all mankind.

I had however one other acquaintance of a sort, Simonov, who was an old schoolfellow. I had a number of schoolfellows, indeed, in Petersburg, but I did not associate with them and had even given up nodding to them in the street. I believe I had transferred into the department I was in simply to avoid their company and to cut off all connection with my hateful childhood. Curses on that school and all those terrible years of penal servitude! In short, I parted from my schoolfellows as soon as I got out into the world. There were two or three left to whom I nodded in the street. One of them was Simonov, who had in no way been distinguished at school, was of a quiet and equable disposition; but I discovered in him a certain independence of character and even honesty I don't even suppose that he was particularly stupid. I had at one time spent some rather soulful moments with him, but these had not lasted long and had somehow been suddenly clouded over. He was evidently uncomfortable at these reminiscences, and was, I fancy, always afraid that I might take up the same tone again. I suspected that he had an aversion for me, but still I went on going to see him, not being quite certain of it.

And so on one occasion, unable to endure my solitude and knowing that as it was Thursday Anton Antonitch's door would be closed, I thought of Simonov. Climbing up to his fourth storey I was thinking that the man disliked me and that it was a mistake to go and see him. But as it always happened that such reflections impelled me, as though purposely, to put myself into a false position, I went in. It was almost a year since I had last seen Simonov.

CHAPTER III

I found two of my old schoolfellows with him. They seemed to be discussing an important matter. All of them took scarcely any notice of my entrance, which was strange, for I had not met them for years. Evidently they looked upon me as something on the level of a common fly. I had not been treated like that even at school, though they all hated me. I knew, of course, that they must despise me now for my lack of success in the service, and for my having let myself sink so low, going about badly dressed and so on — which seemed to them a sign of my incapacity and insignificance. But I had not expected such contempt. Simonov was positively surprised at my turning up. Even in old days he had always seemed surprised at my coming. All this disconcerted me: I sat down, feeling rather miserable, and began listening to what they were saying.

They were engaged in warm and earnest conversation about a farewell dinner which they wanted to arrange for the next day to a comrade of theirs called Zverkov, an officer in the army, who was going away to a distant province. This Zverkov had been all the time at school with me too. I had begun to hate him particularly in the upper forms. In the lower forms he had simply been a pretty, playful boy whom everybody liked. I had hated him, however, even in the lower forms, just because he was a pretty and playful boy. He was always bad at his lessons and got worse and worse as he went on; however, he left with a good certificate, as he had powerful interests. During his last year at school he came in for an estate of two hundred serfs, and as almost all of us were poor he took up a swaggering tone among us. He was vulgar in the extreme, but at the same time he was a good-natured fellow, even in his swaggering. In spite of superficial, fantastic and sham notions of honour and dignity, all but very few of us positively grovelled before Zverkov, and the more so the more he swaggered. And it was not from any interested motive that they grovelled, but simply because he had been favoured by the gifts of nature. Moreover, it was, as it were, an accepted idea among us that Zverkov was a specialist in regard to tact and the social graces. This last fact particularly infuriated me. I hated the abrupt self-confident tone of his voice, his admiration of his own witticisms, which were often frightfully stupid, though he was bold in his language; I hated his handsome, but stupid face (for which I would, however, have gladly

exchanged my intelligent one), and the free-and-easy military manners in fashion in the "'forties." I hated the way in which he used to talk of his future conquests of women (he did not venture to begin his attack upon women until he had the epaulettes of an officer, and was looking forward to them with impatience), and boasted of the duels he would constantly be fighting. I remember how I, invariably so taciturn, suddenly fastened upon Zverkov, when one day talking at a leisure moment with his schoolfellows of his future relations with the fair sex, and growing as sportive as a puppy in the sun, he all at once declared that he would not leave a single village girl on his estate unnoticed, that that was his DROIT DE SEIGNEUR, and that if the peasants dared to protest he would have them all flogged and double the tax on them, the bearded rascals. Our servile rabble applauded, but I attacked him, not from compassion for the girls and their fathers, but simply because they were applauding such an insect. I got the better of him on that occasion, but though Zverkov was stupid he was lively and impudent, and so laughed it off, and in such a way that my victory was not really complete; the laugh was on his side. He got the better of me on several occasions afterwards, but without malice, jestingly, casually. I remained angrily and contemptuously silent and would not answer him. When we left school he made advances to me; I did not rebuff them, for I was flattered, but we soon parted and quite naturally. Afterwards I heard of his barrack-room success as a lieutenant, and of the fast life he was leading. Then there came other rumours — of his successes in the service. By then he had taken to cutting me in the street, and I suspected that he was afraid of compromising himself by greeting a personage as insignificant as me. I saw him once in the theatre, in the third tier of boxes. By then he was wearing shoulder-straps. He was twisting and twirling about, ingratiating himself with the daughters of an ancient General. In three years he had gone off considerably, though he was still rather handsome and adroit. One could see that by the time he was thirty he would be corpulent. So it was to this Zverkov that my schoolfellows were going to give a dinner on his departure. They had kept up with him for those three years, though privately they did not consider themselves on an equal footing with him, I am convinced of that.

Of Simonov's two visitors, one was Ferfitchkin, a Russianised German — a little fellow with the face of a monkey, a blockhead who was always deriding everyone, a very bitter enemy of mine from our days in the lower

forms — a vulgar, impudent, swaggering fellow, who affected a most sensitive feeling of personal honour, though, of course, he was a wretched little coward at heart. He was one of those worshippers of Zverkov who made up to the latter from interested motives, and often borrowed money from him. Simonov's other visitor, Trudolyubov, was a person in no way remarkable — a tall young fellow, in the army, with a cold face, fairly honest, though he worshipped success of every sort, and was only capable of thinking of promotion. He was some sort of distant relation of Zverkov's, and this, foolish as it seems, gave him a certain importance among us. He always thought me of no consequence whatever; his behaviour to me, though not quite courteous, was tolerable.

"Well, with seven roubles each," said Trudolyubov, "twenty-one roubles between the three of us, we ought to be able to get a good dinner. Zverkov, of course, won't pay."

"Of course not, since we are inviting him," Simonov decided.

"Can you imagine," Ferfitchkin interrupted hotly and conceitedly, like some insolent flunkey boasting of his master the General's decorations, "can you imagine that Zverkov will let us pay alone? He will accept from delicacy, but he will order half a dozen bottles of champagne."

"Do we want half a dozen for the four of us?" observed Trudolyubov, taking notice only of the half dozen.

"So the three of us, with Zverkov for the fourth, twenty-one roubles, at the Hotel de Paris at five o'clock tomorrow," Simonov, who had been asked to make the arrangements, concluded finally.

"How twenty-one roubles?" I asked in some agitation, with a show of being offended; "if you count me it will not be twenty-one, but twenty-eight roubles."

It seemed to me that to invite myself so suddenly and unexpectedly would be positively graceful, and that they would all be conquered at once and would look at me with respect.

"Do you want to join, too?" Simonov observed, with no appearance of pleasure, seeming to avoid looking at me. He knew me through and through.

It infuriated me that he knew me so thoroughly.

"Why not? I am an old schoolfellow of his, too, I believe, and I must own I feel hurt that you have left me out," I said, boiling over again.

"And where were we to find you?" Ferfitchkin put in roughly.

“You never were on good terms with Zverkov,” Trudolyubov added, frowning.

But I had already clutched at the idea and would not give it up.

“It seems to me that no one has a right to form an opinion upon that,” I retorted in a shaking voice, as though something tremendous had happened. “Perhaps that is just my reason for wishing it now, that I have not always been on good terms with him.”

“Oh, there’s no making you out ... with these refinements,” Trudolyubov jeered.

“We’ll put your name down,” Simonov decided, addressing me. “Tomorrow at five-o’clock at the Hotel de Paris.”

“What about the money?” Ferfitchkin began in an undertone, indicating me to Simonov, but he broke off, for even Simonov was embarrassed.

“That will do,” said Trudolyubov, getting up. “If he wants to come so much, let him.”

“But it’s a private thing, between us friends,” Ferfitchkin said crossly, as he, too, picked up his hat. “It’s not an official gathering.”

“We do not want at all, perhaps ...”

They went away. Ferfitchkin did not greet me in any way as he went out, Trudolyubov barely nodded. Simonov, with whom I was left TETE-A-TETE, was in a state of vexation and perplexity, and looked at me queerly. He did not sit down and did not ask me to.

“H’m ... yes ... tomorrow, then. Will you pay your subscription now? I just ask so as to know,” he muttered in embarrassment.

I flushed crimson, as I did so I remembered that I had owed Simonov fifteen roubles for ages — which I had, indeed, never forgotten, though I had not paid it.

“You will understand, Simonov, that I could have no idea when I came here.... I am very much vexed that I have forgotten....”

“All right, all right, that doesn’t matter. You can pay tomorrow after the dinner. I simply wanted to know.... Please don’t...”

He broke off and began pacing the room still more vexed. As he walked he began to stamp with his heels.

“Am I keeping you?” I asked, after two minutes of silence.

“Oh!” he said, starting, “that is — to be truthful — yes. I have to go and see someone ... not far from here,” he added in an apologetic voice, somewhat abashed.

“My goodness, why didn’t you say so?” I cried, seizing my cap, with an astonishingly free-and-easy air, which was the last thing I should have expected of myself.

“It’s close by ... not two paces away,” Simonov repeated, accompanying me to the front door with a fussy air which did not suit him at all. “So five o’clock, punctually, tomorrow,” he called down the stairs after me. He was very glad to get rid of me. I was in a fury.

“What possessed me, what possessed me to force myself upon them?” I wondered, grinding my teeth as I strode along the street, “for a scoundrel, a pig like that Zverkov! Of course I had better not go; of course, I must just snap my fingers at them. I am not bound in any way. I’ll send Simonov a note by tomorrow’s post....”

But what made me furious was that I knew for certain that I should go, that I should make a point of going; and the more tactless, the more unseemly my going would be, the more certainly I would go.

And there was a positive obstacle to my going: I had no money. All I had was nine roubles, I had to give seven of that to my servant, Apollon, for his monthly wages. That was all I paid him — he had to keep himself.

Not to pay him was impossible, considering his character. But I will talk about that fellow, about that plague of mine, another time.

However, I knew I should go and should not pay him his wages.

That night I had the most hideous dreams. No wonder; all the evening I had been oppressed by memories of my miserable days at school, and I could not shake them off. I was sent to the school by distant relations, upon whom I was dependent and of whom I have heard nothing since — they sent me there a forlorn, silent boy, already crushed by their reproaches, already troubled by doubt, and looking with savage distrust at everyone. My schoolfellows met me with spiteful and merciless jibes because I was not like any of them. But I could not endure their taunts; I could not give in to them with the ignoble readiness with which they gave in to one another. I hated them from the first, and shut myself away from everyone in timid, wounded and disproportionate pride. Their coarseness revolted me. They laughed cynically at my face, at my clumsy figure; and yet what stupid faces they had themselves. In our school the boys’ faces seemed in a special way to degenerate and grow stupider. How many fine-looking boys came to us! In a few years they became repulsive. Even at sixteen I wondered at them morosely; even then I was struck by the pettiness of their thoughts, the

stupidity of their pursuits, their games, their conversations. They had no understanding of such essential things, they took no interest in such striking, impressive subjects, that I could not help considering them inferior to myself. It was not wounded vanity that drove me to it, and for God's sake do not thrust upon me your hackneyed remarks, repeated to nausea, that "I was only a dreamer," while they even then had an understanding of life. They understood nothing, they had no idea of real life, and I swear that that was what made me most indignant with them. On the contrary, the most obvious, striking reality they accepted with fantastic stupidity and even at that time were accustomed to respect success. Everything that was just, but oppressed and looked down upon, they laughed at heartlessly and shamefully. They took rank for intelligence; even at sixteen they were already talking about a snug berth. Of course, a great deal of it was due to their stupidity, to the bad examples with which they had always been surrounded in their childhood and boyhood. They were monstrously depraved. Of course a great deal of that, too, was superficial and an assumption of cynicism; of course there were glimpses of youth and freshness even in their depravity; but even that freshness was not attractive, and showed itself in a certain rakishness. I hated them horribly, though perhaps I was worse than any of them. They repaid me in the same way, and did not conceal their aversion for me. But by then I did not desire their affection: on the contrary, I continually longed for their humiliation. To escape from their derision I purposely began to make all the progress I could with my studies and forced my way to the very top. This impressed them. Moreover, they all began by degrees to grasp that I had already read books none of them could read, and understood things (not forming part of our school curriculum) of which they had not even heard. They took a savage and sarcastic view of it, but were morally impressed, especially as the teachers began to notice me on those grounds. The mockery ceased, but the hostility remained, and cold and strained relations became permanent between us. In the end I could not put up with it: with years a craving for society, for friends, developed in me. I attempted to get on friendly terms with some of my schoolfellows; but somehow or other my intimacy with them was always strained and soon ended of itself. Once, indeed, I did have a friend. But I was already a tyrant at heart; I wanted to exercise unbounded sway over him; I tried to instil into him a contempt for his surroundings; I required of him a disdainful and complete break with those surroundings. I

frightened him with my passionate affection; I reduced him to tears, to hysterics. He was a simple and devoted soul; but when he devoted himself to me entirely I began to hate him immediately and repulsed him — as though all I needed him for was to win a victory over him, to subjugate him and nothing else. But I could not subjugate all of them; my friend was not at all like them either, he was, in fact, a rare exception. The first thing I did on leaving school was to give up the special job for which I had been destined so as to break all ties, to curse my past and shake the dust from off my feet.... And goodness knows why, after all that, I should go trudging off to Simonov's!

Early next morning I roused myself and jumped out of bed with excitement, as though it were all about to happen at once. But I believed that some radical change in my life was coming, and would inevitably come that day. Owing to its rarity, perhaps, any external event, however trivial, always made me feel as though some radical change in my life were at hand. I went to the office, however, as usual, but sneaked away home two hours earlier to get ready. The great thing, I thought, is not to be the first to arrive, or they will think I am overjoyed at coming. But there were thousands of such great points to consider, and they all agitated and overwhelmed me. I polished my boots a second time with my own hands; nothing in the world would have induced Apollon to clean them twice a day, as he considered that it was more than his duties required of him. I stole the brushes to clean them from the passage, being careful he should not detect it, for fear of his contempt. Then I minutely examined my clothes and thought that everything looked old, worn and threadbare. I had let myself get too slovenly. My uniform, perhaps, was tidy, but I could not go out to dinner in my uniform. The worst of it was that on the knee of my trousers was a big yellow stain. I had a foreboding that that stain would deprive me of nine-tenths of my personal dignity. I knew, too, that it was very poor to think so. "But this is no time for thinking: now I am in for the real thing," I thought, and my heart sank. I knew, too, perfectly well even then, that I was monstrously exaggerating the facts. But how could I help it? I could not control myself and was already shaking with fever. With despair I pictured to myself how coldly and disdainfully that "scoundrel" Zverkov would meet me; with what dull-witted, invincible contempt the blockhead Trudolyubov would look at me; with what impudent rudeness the insect Ferfitchkin would snigger at me in order to curry favour with Zverkov; how

completely Simonov would take it all in, and how he would despise me for the abjectness of my vanity and lack of spirit — and, worst of all, how paltry, UNLITERARY, commonplace it would all be. Of course, the best thing would be not to go at all. But that was most impossible of all: if I feel impelled to do anything, I seem to be pitchforked into it. I should have jeered at myself ever afterwards: “So you funked it, you funked it, you funked the REAL THING!” On the contrary, I passionately longed to show all that “rabble” that I was by no means such a spiritless creature as I seemed to myself. What is more, even in the acutest paroxysm of this cowardly fever, I dreamed of getting the upper hand, of dominating them, carrying them away, making them like me — if only for my “elevation of thought and unmistakable wit.” They would abandon Zverkov, he would sit on one side, silent and ashamed, while I should crush him. Then, perhaps, we would be reconciled and drink to our everlasting friendship; but what was most bitter and humiliating for me was that I knew even then, knew fully and for certain, that I needed nothing of all this really, that I did not really want to crush, to subdue, to attract them, and that I did not care a straw really for the result, even if I did achieve it. Oh, how I prayed for the day to pass quickly! In unutterable anguish I went to the window, opened the movable pane and looked out into the troubled darkness of the thickly falling wet snow. At last my wretched little clock hissed out five. I seized my hat and, trying not to look at Apollon, who had been all day expecting his month’s wages, but in his foolishness was unwilling to be the first to speak about it, I slipped between him and the door and, jumping into a high-class sledge, on which I spent my last half rouble, I drove up in grand style to the Hotel de Paris.

CHAPTER IV

I had been certain the day before that I should be the first to arrive. But it was not a question of being the first to arrive. Not only were they not there, but I had difficulty in finding our room. The table was not laid even. What did it mean? After a good many questions I elicited from the waiters that the dinner had been ordered not for five, but for six o'clock. This was confirmed at the buffet too. I felt really ashamed to go on questioning them. It was only twenty-five minutes past five. If they changed the dinner hour they ought at least to have let me know — that is what the post is for, and not to have put me in an absurd position in my own eyes and ... and even before the waiters. I sat down; the servant began laying the table; I felt even more humiliated when he was present. Towards six o'clock they brought in candles, though there were lamps burning in the room. It had not occurred to the waiter, however, to bring them in at once when I arrived. In the next room two gloomy, angry-looking persons were eating their dinners in silence at two different tables. There was a great deal of noise, even shouting, in a room further away; one could hear the laughter of a crowd of people, and nasty little shrieks in French: there were ladies at the dinner. It was sickening, in fact. I rarely passed more unpleasant moments, so much so that when they did arrive all together punctually at six I was overjoyed to see them, as though they were my deliverers, and even forgot that it was incumbent upon me to show resentment.

Zverkov walked in at the head of them; evidently he was the leading spirit. He and all of them were laughing; but, seeing me, Zverkov drew himself up a little, walked up to me deliberately with a slight, rather jaunty bend from the waist. He shook hands with me in a friendly, but not over-friendly, fashion, with a sort of circumspect courtesy like that of a General, as though in giving me his hand he were warding off something. I had imagined, on the contrary, that on coming in he would at once break into his habitual thin, shrill laugh and fall to making his insipid jokes and witticisms. I had been preparing for them ever since the previous day, but I had not expected such condescension, such high-official courtesy. So, then, he felt himself ineffably superior to me in every respect! If he only meant to insult me by that high-official tone, it would not matter, I thought — I could pay him back for it one way or another. But what if, in reality, without the

least desire to be offensive, that sheepshead had a notion in earnest that he was superior to me and could only look at me in a patronising way? The very supposition made me gasp.

“I was surprised to hear of your desire to join us,” he began, lisping and drawling, which was something new. “You and I seem to have seen nothing of one another. You fight shy of us. You shouldn’t. We are not such terrible people as you think. Well, anyway, I am glad to renew our acquaintance.”

And he turned carelessly to put down his hat on the window.

“Have you been waiting long?” Trudolyubov inquired.

“I arrived at five o’clock as you told me yesterday,” I answered aloud, with an irritability that threatened an explosion.

“Didn’t you let him know that we had changed the hour?” said Trudolyubov to Simonov.

“No, I didn’t. I forgot,” the latter replied, with no sign of regret, and without even apologising to me he went off to order the HORS D’OEUVRE.

“So you’ve been here a whole hour? Oh, poor fellow!” Zverkov cried ironically, for to his notions this was bound to be extremely funny. That rascal Ferfitchkin followed with his nasty little snigger like a puppy yapping. My position struck him, too, as exquisitely ludicrous and embarrassing.

“It isn’t funny at all!” I cried to Ferfitchkin, more and more irritated. “It wasn’t my fault, but other people’s. They neglected to let me know. It was ... it was ... it was simply absurd.”

“It’s not only absurd, but something else as well,” muttered Trudolyubov, naively taking my part. “You are not hard enough upon it. It was simply rudeness — unintentional, of course. And how could Simonov ... h’m!”

“If a trick like that had been played on me,” observed Ferfitchkin, “I should ...”

“But you should have ordered something for yourself,” Zverkov interrupted, “or simply asked for dinner without waiting for us.”

“You will allow that I might have done that without your permission,” I rapped out. “If I waited, it was ...”

“Let us sit down, gentlemen,” cried Simonov, coming in. “Everything is ready; I can answer for the champagne; it is capitally frozen.... You see, I did not know your address, where was I to look for you?” he suddenly

turned to me, but again he seemed to avoid looking at me. Evidently he had something against me. It must have been what happened yesterday.

All sat down; I did the same. It was a round table. Trudolyubov was on my left, Simonov on my right, Zverkov was sitting opposite, Ferfitchkin next to him, between him and Trudolyubov.

“Tell me, are you ... in a government office?” Zverkov went on attending to me. Seeing that I was embarrassed he seriously thought that he ought to be friendly to me, and, so to speak, cheer me up.

“Does he want me to throw a bottle at his head?” I thought, in a fury. In my novel surroundings I was unnaturally ready to be irritated.

“In the N —— office,” I answered jerkily, with my eyes on my plate.

“And ha-ave you a go-od berth? I say, what ma-a-de you leave your original job?”

“What ma-a-de me was that I wanted to leave my original job,” I drawled more than he, hardly able to control myself. Ferfitchkin went off into a guffaw. Simonov looked at me ironically. Trudolyubov left off eating and began looking at me with curiosity.

Zverkov winced, but he tried not to notice it.

“And the remuneration?”

“What remuneration?”

“I mean, your sa-a-lary?”

“Why are you cross-examining me?” However, I told him at once what my salary was. I turned horribly red.

“It is not very handsome,” Zverkov observed majestically.

“Yes, you can’t afford to dine at cafes on that,” Ferfitchkin added insolently.

“To my thinking it’s very poor,” Trudolyubov observed gravely.

“And how thin you have grown! How you have changed!” added Zverkov, with a shade of venom in his voice, scanning me and my attire with a sort of insolent compassion.

“Oh, spare his blushes,” cried Ferfitchkin, sniggering.

“My dear sir, allow me to tell you I am not blushing,” I broke out at last; “do you hear? I am dining here, at this cafe, at my own expense, not at other people’s — note that, Mr. Ferfitchkin.”

“Wha-at? Isn’t every one here dining at his own expense? You would seem to be ...” Ferfitchkin flew out at me, turning as red as a lobster, and looking me in the face with fury.

“Tha-at,” I answered, feeling I had gone too far, “and I imagine it would be better to talk of something more intelligent.”

“You intend to show off your intelligence, I suppose?”

“Don’t disturb yourself, that would be quite out of place here.”

“Why are you clacking away like that, my good sir, eh? Have you gone out of your wits in your office?”

“Enough, gentlemen, enough!” Zverkov cried, authoritatively.

“How stupid it is!” muttered Simonov.

“It really is stupid. We have met here, a company of friends, for a farewell dinner to a comrade and you carry on an altercation,” said Trudolyubov, rudely addressing himself to me alone. “You invited yourself to join us, so don’t disturb the general harmony.”

“Enough, enough!” cried Zverkov. “Give over, gentlemen, it’s out of place. Better let me tell you how I nearly got married the day before yesterday....”

And then followed a burlesque narrative of how this gentleman had almost been married two days before. There was not a word about the marriage, however, but the story was adorned with generals, colonels and kammer-junkers, while Zverkov almost took the lead among them. It was greeted with approving laughter; Ferfitchkin positively squealed.

No one paid any attention to me, and I sat crushed and humiliated.

“Good Heavens, these are not the people for me!” I thought. “And what a fool I have made of myself before them! I let Ferfitchkin go too far, though. The brutes imagine they are doing me an honour in letting me sit down with them. They don’t understand that it’s an honour to them and not to me! I’ve grown thinner! My clothes! Oh, damn my trousers! Zverkov noticed the yellow stain on the knee as soon as he came in.... But what’s the use! I must get up at once, this very minute, take my hat and simply go without a word ... with contempt! And tomorrow I can send a challenge. The scoundrels! As though I cared about the seven roubles. They may think.... Damn it! I don’t care about the seven roubles. I’ll go this minute!”

Of course I remained. I drank sherry and Lafitte by the glassful in my discomfiture. Being unaccustomed to it, I was quickly affected. My annoyance increased as the wine went to my head. I longed all at once to insult them all in a most flagrant manner and then go away. To seize the moment and show what I could do, so that they would say, “He’s clever, though he is absurd,” and ... and ... in fact, damn them all!

I scanned them all insolently with my drowsy eyes. But they seemed to have forgotten me altogether. They were noisy, vociferous, cheerful. Zverkov was talking all the time. I began listening. Zverkov was talking of some exuberant lady whom he had at last led on to declaring her love (of course, he was lying like a horse), and how he had been helped in this affair by an intimate friend of his, a Prince Kolya, an officer in the hussars, who had three thousand serfs.

“And yet this Kolya, who has three thousand serfs, has not put in an appearance here tonight to see you off,” I cut in suddenly.

For one minute every one was silent. “You are drunk already.” Trudolyubov deigned to notice me at last, glancing contemptuously in my direction. Zverkov, without a word, examined me as though I were an insect. I dropped my eyes. Simonov made haste to fill up the glasses with champagne.

Trudolyubov raised his glass, as did everyone else but me.

“Your health and good luck on the journey!” he cried to Zverkov. “To old times, to our future, hurrah!”

They all tossed off their glasses, and crowded round Zverkov to kiss him. I did not move; my full glass stood untouched before me.

“Why, aren’t you going to drink it?” roared Trudolyubov, losing patience and turning menacingly to me.

“I want to make a speech separately, on my own account ... and then I’ll drink it, Mr. Trudolyubov.”

“Spiteful brute!” muttered Simonov. I drew myself up in my chair and feverishly seized my glass, prepared for something extraordinary, though I did not know myself precisely what I was going to say.

“SILENCE!” cried Ferfitchkin. “Now for a display of wit!”

Zverkov waited very gravely, knowing what was coming.

“Mr. Lieutenant Zverkov,” I began, “let me tell you that I hate phrases, phrasemongers and men in corsets ... that’s the first point, and there is a second one to follow it.”

There was a general stir.

“The second point is: I hate ribaldry and ribald talkers. Especially ribald talkers! The third point: I love justice, truth and honesty.” I went on almost mechanically, for I was beginning to shiver with horror myself and had no idea how I came to be talking like this. “I love thought, Monsieur Zverkov; I love true comradeship, on an equal footing and not ... H’m ... I love ... But,

however, why not? I will drink your health, too, Mr. Zverkov. Seduce the Circassian girls, shoot the enemies of the fatherland and ... and ... to your health, Monsieur Zverkov!”

Zverkov got up from his seat, bowed to me and said:

“I am very much obliged to you.” He was frightfully offended and turned pale.

“Damn the fellow!” roared Trudolyubov, bringing his fist down on the table.

“Well, he wants a punch in the face for that,” squealed Ferfitchkin.

“We ought to turn him out,” muttered Simonov.

“Not a word, gentlemen, not a movement!” cried Zverkov solemnly, checking the general indignation. “I thank you all, but I can show him for myself how much value I attach to his words.”

“Mr. Ferfitchkin, you will give me satisfaction tomorrow for your words just now!” I said aloud, turning with dignity to Ferfitchkin.

“A duel, you mean? Certainly,” he answered. But probably I was so ridiculous as I challenged him and it was so out of keeping with my appearance that everyone including Ferfitchkin was prostrate with laughter.

“Yes, let him alone, of course! He is quite drunk,” Trudolyubov said with disgust.

“I shall never forgive myself for letting him join us,” Simonov muttered again.

“Now is the time to throw a bottle at their heads,” I thought to myself. I picked up the bottle ... and filled my glass.... “No, I’d better sit on to the end,” I went on thinking; “you would be pleased, my friends, if I went away. Nothing will induce me to go. I’ll go on sitting here and drinking to the end, on purpose, as a sign that I don’t think you of the slightest consequence. I will go on sitting and drinking, because this is a public-house and I paid my entrance money. I’ll sit here and drink, for I look upon you as so many pawns, as inanimate pawns. I’ll sit here and drink ... and sing if I want to, yes, sing, for I have the right to ... to sing ... H’m!”

But I did not sing. I simply tried not to look at any of them. I assumed most unconcerned attitudes and waited with impatience for them to speak FIRST. But alas, they did not address me! And oh, how I wished, how I wished at that moment to be reconciled to them! It struck eight, at last nine. They moved from the table to the sofa. Zverkov stretched himself on a lounge and put one foot on a round table. Wine was brought there. He did,

as a fact, order three bottles on his own account. I, of course, was not invited to join them. They all sat round him on the sofa. They listened to him, almost with reverence. It was evident that they were fond of him. “What for? What for?” I wondered. From time to time they were moved to drunken enthusiasm and kissed each other. They talked of the Caucasus, of the nature of true passion, of snug berths in the service, of the income of an hussar called Podharzhevsky, whom none of them knew personally, and rejoiced in the largeness of it, of the extraordinary grace and beauty of a Princess D. whom none of them had ever seen; then it came to Shakespeare’s being immortal.

I smiled contemptuously and walked up and down the other side of the room, opposite the sofa, from the table to the stove and back again. I tried my very utmost to show them that I could do without them, and yet I purposely made a noise with my boots, thumping with my heels. But it was all in vain. They paid no attention. I had the patience to walk up and down in front of them from eight o’clock till eleven, in the same place, from the table to the stove and back again. “I walk up and down to please myself and no one can prevent me.” The waiter who came into the room stopped, from time to time, to look at me. I was somewhat giddy from turning round so often; at moments it seemed to me that I was in delirium. During those three hours I was three times soaked with sweat and dry again. At times, with an intense, acute pang I was stabbed to the heart by the thought that ten years, twenty years, forty years would pass, and that even in forty years I would remember with loathing and humiliation those filthiest, most ludicrous, and most awful moments of my life. No one could have gone out of his way to degrade himself more shamelessly, and I fully realised it, fully, and yet I went on pacing up and down from the table to the stove. “Oh, if you only knew what thoughts and feelings I am capable of, how cultured I am!” I thought at moments, mentally addressing the sofa on which my enemies were sitting. But my enemies behaved as though I were not in the room. Once — only once — they turned towards me, just when Zverkov was talking about Shakespeare, and I suddenly gave a contemptuous laugh. I laughed in such an affected and disgusting way that they all at once broke off their conversation, and silently and gravely for two minutes watched me walking up and down from the table to the stove, TAKING NO NOTICE OF THEM. But nothing came of it: they said nothing, and two minutes later they ceased to notice me again. It struck eleven.

“Friends,” cried Zverkov getting up from the sofa, “let us all be off now, THERE!”

“Of course, of course,” the others assented. I turned sharply to Zverkov. I was so harassed, so exhausted, that I would have cut my throat to put an end to it. I was in a fever; my hair, soaked with perspiration, stuck to my forehead and temples.

“Zverkov, I beg your pardon,” I said abruptly and resolutely. “Ferfitchkin, yours too, and everyone’s, everyone’s: I have insulted you all!”

“Aha! A duel is not in your line, old man,” Ferfitchkin hissed venomously.

It sent a sharp pang to my heart.

“No, it’s not the duel I am afraid of, Ferfitchkin! I am ready to fight you tomorrow, after we are reconciled. I insist upon it, in fact, and you cannot refuse. I want to show you that I am not afraid of a duel. You shall fire first and I shall fire into the air.”

“He is comforting himself,” said Simonov.

“He’s simply raving,” said Trudolyubov.

“But let us pass. Why are you barring our way? What do you want?” Zverkov answered disdainfully.

They were all flushed, their eyes were bright: they had been drinking heavily.

“I ask for your friendship, Zverkov; I insulted you, but...”

“Insulted? YOU insulted ME? Understand, sir, that you never, under any circumstances, could possibly insult ME.”

“And that’s enough for you. Out of the way!” concluded Trudolyubov.

“Olympia is mine, friends, that’s agreed!” cried Zverkov.

“We won’t dispute your right, we won’t dispute your right,” the others answered, laughing.

I stood as though spat upon. The party went noisily out of the room. Trudolyubov struck up some stupid song. Simonov remained behind for a moment to tip the waiters. I suddenly went up to him.

“Simonov! give me six roubles!” I said, with desperate resolution.

He looked at me in extreme amazement, with vacant eyes. He, too, was drunk.

“You don’t mean you are coming with us?”

“Yes.”

“I’ve no money,” he snapped out, and with a scornful laugh he went out of the room.

I clutched at his overcoat. It was a nightmare.

“Simonov, I saw you had money. Why do you refuse me? Am I a scoundrel? Beware of refusing me: if you knew, if you knew why I am asking! My whole future, my whole plans depend upon it!”

Simonov pulled out the money and almost flung it at me.

“Take it, if you have no sense of shame!” he pronounced pitilessly, and ran to overtake them.

I was left for a moment alone. Disorder, the remains of dinner, a broken wine-glass on the floor, spilt wine, cigarette ends, fumes of drink and delirium in my brain, an agonising misery in my heart and finally the waiter, who had seen and heard all and was looking inquisitively into my face.

“I am going there!” I cried. “Either they shall all go down on their knees to beg for my friendship, or I will give Zverkov a slap in the face!”

CHAPTER V

“So this is it, this is it at last — contact with real life,” I muttered as I ran headlong downstairs. “This is very different from the Pope’s leaving Rome and going to Brazil, very different from the ball on Lake Como!”

“You are a scoundrel,” a thought flashed through my mind, “if you laugh at this now.”

“No matter!” I cried, answering myself. “Now everything is lost!”

There was no trace to be seen of them, but that made no difference — I knew where they had gone.

At the steps was standing a solitary night sledge-driver in a rough peasant coat, powdered over with the still falling, wet, and as it were warm, snow. It was hot and steamy. The little shaggy piebald horse was also covered with snow and coughing, I remember that very well. I made a rush for the roughly made sledge; but as soon as I raised my foot to get into it, the recollection of how Simonov had just given me six roubles seemed to double me up and I tumbled into the sledge like a sack.

“No, I must do a great deal to make up for all that,” I cried. “But I will make up for it or perish on the spot this very night. Start!”

We set off. There was a perfect whirl in my head.

“They won’t go down on their knees to beg for my friendship. That is a mirage, cheap mirage, revolting, romantic and fantastical — that’s another ball on Lake Como. And so I am bound to slap Zverkov’s face! It is my duty to. And so it is settled; I am flying to give him a slap in the face. Hurry up!”

The driver tugged at the reins.

“As soon as I go in I’ll give it him. Ought I before giving him the slap to say a few words by way of preface? No. I’ll simply go in and give it him. They will all be sitting in the drawing-room, and he with Olympia on the sofa. That damned Olympia! She laughed at my looks on one occasion and refused me. I’ll pull Olympia’s hair, pull Zverkov’s ears! No, better one ear, and pull him by it round the room. Maybe they will all begin beating me and will kick me out. That’s most likely, indeed. No matter! Anyway, I shall first slap him; the initiative will be mine; and by the laws of honour that is everything: he will be branded and cannot wipe off the slap by any blows, by nothing but a duel. He will be forced to fight. And let them beat me now.

Let them, the ungrateful wretches! Trudolyubov will beat me hardest, he is so strong; Ferfitchkin will be sure to catch hold sideways and tug at my hair. But no matter, no matter! That's what I am going for. The blockheads will be forced at last to see the tragedy of it all! When they drag me to the door I shall call out to them that in reality they are not worth my little finger. Get on, driver, get on!" I cried to the driver. He started and flicked his whip, I shouted so savagely.

"We shall fight at daybreak, that's a settled thing. I've done with the office. Ferfitchkin made a joke about it just now. But where can I get pistols? Nonsense! I'll get my salary in advance and buy them. And powder, and bullets? That's the second's business. And how can it all be done by daybreak? and where am I to get a second? I have no friends. Nonsense!" I cried, lashing myself up more and more. "It's of no consequence! The first person I meet in the street is bound to be my second, just as he would be bound to pull a drowning man out of water. The most eccentric things may happen. Even if I were to ask the director himself to be my second tomorrow, he would be bound to consent, if only from a feeling of chivalry, and to keep the secret! Anton Antonitch...."

The fact is, that at that very minute the disgusting absurdity of my plan and the other side of the question was clearer and more vivid to my imagination than it could be to anyone on earth. But ....

"Get on, driver, get on, you rascal, get on!"

"Ugh, sir!" said the son of toil.

Cold shivers suddenly ran down me. Wouldn't it be better ... to go straight home? My God, my God! Why did I invite myself to this dinner yesterday? But no, it's impossible. And my walking up and down for three hours from the table to the stove? No, they, they and no one else must pay for my walking up and down! They must wipe out this dishonour! Drive on!

And what if they give me into custody? They won't dare! They'll be afraid of the scandal. And what if Zverkov is so contemptuous that he refuses to fight a duel? He is sure to; but in that case I'll show them ... I will turn up at the posting station when he's setting off tomorrow, I'll catch him by the leg, I'll pull off his coat when he gets into the carriage. I'll get my teeth into his hand, I'll bite him. "See what lengths you can drive a desperate man to!" He may hit me on the head and they may belabour me from behind. I will shout to the assembled multitude: "Look at this young

puppy who is driving off to captivate the Circassian girls after letting me spit in his face!”

Of course, after that everything will be over! The office will have vanished off the face of the earth. I shall be arrested, I shall be tried, I shall be dismissed from the service, thrown in prison, sent to Siberia. Never mind! In fifteen years when they let me out of prison I will trudge off to him, a beggar, in rags. I shall find him in some provincial town. He will be married and happy. He will have a grown-up daughter.... I shall say to him: “Look, monster, at my hollow cheeks and my rags! I’ve lost everything — my career, my happiness, art, science, THE WOMAN I LOVED, and all through you. Here are pistols. I have come to discharge my pistol and ... and I ... forgive you. Then I shall fire into the air and he will hear nothing more of me....”

I was actually on the point of tears, though I knew perfectly well at that moment that all this was out of Pushkin’s SILVIO and Lermontov’s MASQUERADE. And all at once I felt horribly ashamed, so ashamed that I stopped the horse, got out of the sledge, and stood still in the snow in the middle of the street. The driver gazed at me, sighing and astonished.

What was I to do? I could not go on there — it was evidently stupid, and I could not leave things as they were, because that would seem as though ... Heavens, how could I leave things! And after such insults! “No!” I cried, throwing myself into the sledge again. “It is ordained! It is fate! Drive on, drive on!”

And in my impatience I punched the sledge-driver on the back of the neck.

“What are you up to? What are you hitting me for?” the peasant shouted, but he whipped up his nag so that it began kicking.

The wet snow was falling in big flakes; I unbuttoned myself, regardless of it. I forgot everything else, for I had finally decided on the slap, and felt with horror that it was going to happen NOW, AT ONCE, and that NO FORCE COULD STOP IT. The deserted street lamps gleamed sullenly in the snowy darkness like torches at a funeral. The snow drifted under my great-coat, under my coat, under my cravat, and melted there. I did not wrap myself up — all was lost, anyway.

At last we arrived. I jumped out, almost unconscious, ran up the steps and began knocking and kicking at the door. I felt fearfully weak, particularly in my legs and knees. The door was opened quickly as though

they knew I was coming. As a fact, Simonov had warned them that perhaps another gentleman would arrive, and this was a place in which one had to give notice and to observe certain precautions. It was one of those “millinery establishments” which were abolished by the police a good time ago. By day it really was a shop; but at night, if one had an introduction, one might visit it for other purposes.

I walked rapidly through the dark shop into the familiar drawing-room, where there was only one candle burning, and stood still in amazement: there was no one there. “Where are they?” I asked somebody. But by now, of course, they had separated. Before me was standing a person with a stupid smile, the “madam” herself, who had seen me before. A minute later a door opened and another person came in.

Taking no notice of anything I strode about the room, and, I believe, I talked to myself. I felt as though I had been saved from death and was conscious of this, joyfully, all over: I should have given that slap, I should certainly, certainly have given it! But now they were not here and ... everything had vanished and changed! I looked round. I could not realise my condition yet. I looked mechanically at the girl who had come in: and had a glimpse of a fresh, young, rather pale face, with straight, dark eyebrows, and with grave, as it were wondering, eyes that attracted me at once; I should have hated her if she had been smiling. I began looking at her more intently and, as it were, with effort. I had not fully collected my thoughts. There was something simple and good-natured in her face, but something strangely grave. I am sure that this stood in her way here, and no one of those fools had noticed her. She could not, however, have been called a beauty, though she was tall, strong-looking, and well built. She was very simply dressed. Something loathsome stirred within me. I went straight up to her.

I chanced to look into the glass. My harassed face struck me as revolting in the extreme, pale, angry, abject, with dishevelled hair. “No matter, I am glad of it,” I thought; “I am glad that I shall seem repulsive to her; I like that.”

CHAPTER VI

... Somewhere behind a screen a clock began wheezing, as though oppressed by something, as though someone were strangling it. After an unnaturally prolonged wheezing there followed a shrill, nasty, and as it were unexpectedly rapid, chime — as though someone were suddenly jumping forward. It struck two. I woke up, though I had indeed not been asleep but lying half-conscious.

It was almost completely dark in the narrow, cramped, low-pitched room, cumbered up with an enormous wardrobe and piles of cardboard boxes and all sorts of frippery and litter. The candle end that had been burning on the table was going out and gave a faint flicker from time to time. In a few minutes there would be complete darkness.

I was not long in coming to myself; everything came back to my mind at once, without an effort, as though it had been in ambush to pounce upon me again. And, indeed, even while I was unconscious a point seemed continually to remain in my memory unforgotten, and round it my dreams moved drearily. But strange to say, everything that had happened to me in that day seemed to me now, on waking, to be in the far, far away past, as though I had long, long ago lived all that down.

My head was full of fumes. Something seemed to be hovering over me, rousing me, exciting me, and making me restless. Misery and spite seemed surging up in me again and seeking an outlet. Suddenly I saw beside me two wide open eyes scrutinising me curiously and persistently. The look in those eyes was coldly detached, sullen, as it were utterly remote; it weighed upon me.

A grim idea came into my brain and passed all over my body, as a horrible sensation, such as one feels when one goes into a damp and mouldy cellar. There was something unnatural in those two eyes, beginning to look at me only now. I recalled, too, that during those two hours I had not said a single word to this creature, and had, in fact, considered it utterly superfluous; in fact, the silence had for some reason gratified me. Now I suddenly realised vividly the hideous idea — revolting as a spider — of vice, which, without love, grossly and shamelessly begins with that in which true love finds its consummation. For a long time we gazed at each

other like that, but she did not drop her eyes before mine and her expression did not change, so that at last I felt uncomfortable.

“What is your name?” I asked abruptly, to put an end to it.

“Liza,” she answered almost in a whisper, but somehow far from graciously, and she turned her eyes away.

I was silent.

“What weather! The snow ... it’s disgusting!” I said, almost to myself, putting my arm under my head despondently, and gazing at the ceiling.

She made no answer. This was horrible.

“Have you always lived in Petersburg?” I asked a minute later, almost angrily, turning my head slightly towards her.

“No.”

“Where do you come from?”

“From Riga,” she answered reluctantly.

“Are you a German?”

“No, Russian.”

“Have you been here long?”

“Where?”

“In this house?”

“A fortnight.”

She spoke more and more jerkily. The candle went out; I could no longer distinguish her face.

“Have you a father and mother?”

“Yes ... no ... I have.”

“Where are they?”

“There ... in Riga.”

“What are they?”

“Oh, nothing.”

“Nothing? Why, what class are they?”

“Tradespeople.”

“Have you always lived with them?”

“Yes.”

“How old are you?”

“Twenty.”

“Why did you leave them?”

“Oh, for no reason.”

That answer meant “Let me alone; I feel sick, sad.”

We were silent.

God knows why I did not go away. I felt myself more and more sick and dreary. The images of the previous day began of themselves, apart from my will, flitting through my memory in confusion. I suddenly recalled something I had seen that morning when, full of anxious thoughts, I was hurrying to the office.

“I saw them carrying a coffin out yesterday and they nearly dropped it,” I suddenly said aloud, not that I desired to open the conversation, but as it were by accident.

“A coffin?”

“Yes, in the Haymarket; they were bringing it up out of a cellar.”

“From a cellar?”

“Not from a cellar, but a basement. Oh, you know ... down below ... from a house of ill-fame. It was filthy all round ... Egg-shells, litter ... a stench. It was loathsome.”

Silence.

“A nasty day to be buried,” I began, simply to avoid being silent.

“Nasty, in what way?”

“The snow, the wet.” (I yawned.)

“It makes no difference,” she said suddenly, after a brief silence.

“No, it’s horrid.” (I yawned again). “The gravediggers must have sworn at getting drenched by the snow. And there must have been water in the grave.”

“Why water in the grave?” she asked, with a sort of curiosity, but speaking even more harshly and abruptly than before.

I suddenly began to feel provoked.

“Why, there must have been water at the bottom a foot deep. You can’t dig a dry grave in Volkovo Cemetery.”

“Why?”

“Why? Why, the place is waterlogged. It’s a regular marsh. So they bury them in water. I’ve seen it myself ... many times.”

(I had never seen it once, indeed I had never been in Volkovo, and had only heard stories of it.)

“Do you mean to say, you don’t mind how you die?”

“But why should I die?” she answered, as though defending herself.

“Why, some day you will die, and you will die just the same as that dead woman. She was ... a girl like you. She died of consumption.”

“A wench would have died in hospital ...” (She knows all about it already: she said “wench,” not “girl.”)

“She was in debt to her madam,” I retorted, more and more provoked by the discussion; “and went on earning money for her up to the end, though she was in consumption. Some sledge-drivers standing by were talking about her to some soldiers and telling them so. No doubt they knew her. They were laughing. They were going to meet in a pot-house to drink to her memory.”

A great deal of this was my invention. Silence followed, profound silence. She did not stir.

“And is it better to die in a hospital?”

“Isn’t it just the same? Besides, why should I die?” she added irritably.

“If not now, a little later.”

“Why a little later?”

“Why, indeed? Now you are young, pretty, fresh, you fetch a high price. But after another year of this life you will be very different — you will go off.”

“In a year?”

“Anyway, in a year you will be worth less,” I continued malignantly. “You will go from here to something lower, another house; a year later — to a third, lower and lower, and in seven years you will come to a basement in the Haymarket. That will be if you were lucky. But it would be much worse if you got some disease, consumption, say ... and caught a chill, or something or other. It’s not easy to get over an illness in your way of life. If you catch anything you may not get rid of it. And so you would die.”

“Oh, well, then I shall die,” she answered, quite vindictively, and she made a quick movement.

“But one is sorry.”

“Sorry for whom?”

“Sorry for life.” Silence.

“Have you been engaged to be married? Eh?”

“What’s that to you?”

“Oh, I am not cross-examining you. It’s nothing to me. Why are you so cross? Of course you may have had your own troubles. What is it to me? It’s simply that I felt sorry.”

“Sorry for whom?”

“Sorry for you.”

“No need,” she whispered hardly audibly, and again made a faint movement.

That incensed me at once. What! I was so gentle with her, and she....

“Why, do you think that you are on the right path?”

“I don’t think anything.”

“That’s what’s wrong, that you don’t think. Realise it while there is still time. There still is time. You are still young, good-looking; you might love, be married, be happy....”

“Not all married women are happy,” she snapped out in the rude abrupt tone she had used at first.

“Not all, of course, but anyway it is much better than the life here. Infinitely better. Besides, with love one can live even without happiness. Even in sorrow life is sweet; life is sweet, however one lives. But here what is there but ... foulness? Phew!”

I turned away with disgust; I was no longer reasoning coldly. I began to feel myself what I was saying and warmed to the subject. I was already longing to expound the cherished ideas I had brooded over in my corner. Something suddenly flared up in me. An object had appeared before me.

“Never mind my being here, I am not an example for you. I am, perhaps, worse than you are. I was drunk when I came here, though,” I hastened, however, to say in self-defence. “Besides, a man is no example for a woman. It’s a different thing. I may degrade and defile myself, but I am not anyone’s slave. I come and go, and that’s an end of it. I shake it off, and I am a different man. But you are a slave from the start. Yes, a slave! You give up everything, your whole freedom. If you want to break your chains afterwards, you won’t be able to; you will be more and more fast in the snares. It is an accursed bondage. I know it. I won’t speak of anything else, maybe you won’t understand, but tell me: no doubt you are in debt to your madam? There, you see,” I added, though she made no answer, but only listened in silence, entirely absorbed, “that’s a bondage for you! You will never buy your freedom. They will see to that. It’s like selling your soul to the devil.... And besides ... perhaps, I too, am just as unlucky — how do you know — and wallow in the mud on purpose, out of misery? You know, men take to drink from grief; well, maybe I am here from grief. Come, tell me, what is there good here? Here you and I ... came together ... just now and did not say one word to one another all the time, and it was only afterwards you began staring at me like a wild creature, and I at you. Is that loving? Is

that how one human being should meet another? It’s hideous, that’s what it is!”

“Yes!” she assented sharply and hurriedly.

I was positively astounded by the promptitude of this “Yes.” So the same thought may have been straying through her mind when she was staring at me just before. So she, too, was capable of certain thoughts? “Damn it all, this was interesting, this was a point of likeness!” I thought, almost rubbing my hands. And indeed it’s easy to turn a young soul like that!

It was the exercise of my power that attracted me most.

She turned her head nearer to me, and it seemed to me in the darkness that she propped herself on her arm. Perhaps she was scrutinising me. How I regretted that I could not see her eyes. I heard her deep breathing.

“Why have you come here?” I asked her, with a note of authority already in my voice.

“Oh, I don’t know.”

“But how nice it would be to be living in your father’s house! It’s warm and free; you have a home of your own.”

“But what if it’s worse than this?”

“I must take the right tone,” flashed through my mind. “I may not get far with sentimentality.” But it was only a momentary thought. I swear she really did interest me. Besides, I was exhausted and moody. And cunning so easily goes hand-in-hand with feeling.

“Who denies it!” I hastened to answer. “Anything may happen. I am convinced that someone has wronged you, and that you are more sinned against than sinning. Of course, I know nothing of your story, but it’s not likely a girl like you has come here of her own inclination....”

“A girl like me?” she whispered, hardly audibly; but I heard it.

Damn it all, I was flattering her. That was horrid. But perhaps it was a good thing.... She was silent.

“See, Liza, I will tell you about myself. If I had had a home from childhood, I shouldn’t be what I am now. I often think that. However bad it may be at home, anyway they are your father and mother, and not enemies, strangers. Once a year at least, they’ll show their love of you. Anyway, you know you are at home. I grew up without a home; and perhaps that’s why I’ve turned so ... unfeeling.”

I waited again. “Perhaps she doesn’t understand,” I thought, “and, indeed, it is absurd — it’s moralising.”

“If I were a father and had a daughter, I believe I should love my daughter more than my sons, really,” I began indirectly, as though talking of something else, to distract her attention. I must confess I blushed.

“Why so?” she asked.

Ah! so she was listening!

“I don’t know, Liza. I knew a father who was a stern, austere man, but used to go down on his knees to his daughter, used to kiss her hands, her feet, he couldn’t make enough of her, really. When she danced at parties he used to stand for five hours at a stretch, gazing at her. He was mad over her: I understand that! She would fall asleep tired at night, and he would wake to kiss her in her sleep and make the sign of the cross over her. He would go about in a dirty old coat, he was stingy to everyone else, but would spend his last penny for her, giving her expensive presents, and it was his greatest delight when she was pleased with what he gave her. Fathers always love their daughters more than the mothers do. Some girls live happily at home! And I believe I should never let my daughters marry.”

“What next?” she said, with a faint smile.

“I should be jealous, I really should. To think that she should kiss anyone else! That she should love a stranger more than her father! It’s painful to imagine it. Of course, that’s all nonsense, of course every father would be reasonable at last. But I believe before I should let her marry, I should worry myself to death; I should find fault with all her suitors. But I should end by letting her marry whom she herself loved. The one whom the daughter loves always seems the worst to the father, you know. That is always so. So many family troubles come from that.”

“Some are glad to sell their daughters, rather than marrying them honourably.”

Ah, so that was it!

“Such a thing, Liza, happens in those accursed families in which there is neither love nor God,” I retorted warmly, “and where there is no love, there is no sense either. There are such families, it’s true, but I am not speaking of them. You must have seen wickedness in your own family, if you talk like that. Truly, you must have been unlucky. H’m! ... that sort of thing mostly comes about through poverty.”

“And is it any better with the gentry? Even among the poor, honest people who live happily?”

“H’m ... yes. Perhaps. Another thing, Liza, man is fond of reckoning up his troubles, but does not count his joys. If he counted them up as he ought, he would see that every lot has enough happiness provided for it. And what if all goes well with the family, if the blessing of God is upon it, if the husband is a good one, loves you, cherishes you, never leaves you! There is happiness in such a family! Even sometimes there is happiness in the midst of sorrow; and indeed sorrow is everywhere. If you marry YOU WILL FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF. But think of the first years of married life with one you love: what happiness, what happiness there sometimes is in it! And indeed it’s the ordinary thing. In those early days even quarrels with one’s husband end happily. Some women get up quarrels with their husbands just because they love them. Indeed, I knew a woman like that: she seemed to say that because she loved him, she would torment him and make him feel it. You know that you may torment a man on purpose through love. Women are particularly given to that, thinking to themselves ‘I will love him so, I will make so much of him afterwards, that it’s no sin to torment him a little now.’ And all in the house rejoice in the sight of you, and you are happy and gay and peaceful and honourable.... Then there are some women who are jealous. If he went off anywhere — I knew one such woman, she couldn’t restrain herself, but would jump up at night and run off on the sly to find out where he was, whether he was with some other woman. That’s a pity. And the woman knows herself it’s wrong, and her heart fails her and she suffers, but she loves — it’s all through love. And how sweet it is to make up after quarrels, to own herself in the wrong or to forgive him! And they both are so happy all at once — as though they had met anew, been married over again; as though their love had begun afresh. And no one, no one should know what passes between husband and wife if they love one another. And whatever quarrels there may be between them they ought not to call in their own mother to judge between them and tell tales of one another. They are their own judges. Love is a holy mystery and ought to be hidden from all other eyes, whatever happens. That makes it holier and better. They respect one another more, and much is built on respect. And if once there has been love, if they have been married for love, why should love pass away? Surely one can keep it! It is rare that one cannot keep it. And if the husband is kind and straightforward, why should not love last? The first phase of married love will pass, it is true, but then there will come a love that is better still. Then there will be the union of

souls, they will have everything in common, there will be no secrets between them. And once they have children, the most difficult times will seem to them happy, so long as there is love and courage. Even toil will be a joy, you may deny yourself bread for your children and even that will be a joy, They will love you for it afterwards; so you are laying by for your future. As the children grow up you feel that you are an example, a support for them; that even after you die your children will always keep your thoughts and feelings, because they have received them from you, they will take on your semblance and likeness. So you see this is a great duty. How can it fail to draw the father and mother nearer? People say it's a trial to have children. Who says that? It is heavenly happiness! Are you fond of little children, Liza? I am awfully fond of them. You know — a little rosy baby boy at your bosom, and what husband's heart is not touched, seeing his wife nursing his child! A plump little rosy baby, sprawling and snuggling, chubby little hands and feet, clean tiny little nails, so tiny that it makes one laugh to look at them; eyes that look as if they understand everything. And while it sucks it clutches at your bosom with its little hand, plays. When its father comes up, the child tears itself away from the bosom, flings itself back, looks at its father, laughs, as though it were fearfully funny, and falls to sucking again. Or it will bite its mother's breast when its little teeth are coming, while it looks sideways at her with its little eyes as though to say, 'Look, I am biting!' Is not all that happiness when they are the three together, husband, wife and child? One can forgive a great deal for the sake of such moments. Yes, Liza, one must first learn to live oneself before one blames others!"

"It's by pictures, pictures like that one must get at you," I thought to myself, though I did speak with real feeling, and all at once I flushed crimson. "What if she were suddenly to burst out laughing, what should I do then?" That idea drove me to fury. Towards the end of my speech I really was excited, and now my vanity was somehow wounded. The silence continued. I almost nudged her.

"Why are you—" she began and stopped. But I understood: there was a quiver of something different in her voice, not abrupt, harsh and unyielding as before, but something soft and shamefaced, so shamefaced that I suddenly felt ashamed and guilty.

"What?" I asked, with tender curiosity.

"Why, you..."

“What?”

“Why, you ... speak somehow like a book,” she said, and again there was a note of irony in her voice.

That remark sent a pang to my heart. It was not what I was expecting.

I did not understand that she was hiding her feelings under irony, that this is usually the last refuge of modest and chaste-souled people when the privacy of their soul is coarsely and intrusively invaded, and that their pride makes them refuse to surrender till the last moment and shrink from giving expression to their feelings before you. I ought to have guessed the truth from the timidity with which she had repeatedly approached her sarcasm, only bringing herself to utter it at last with an effort. But I did not guess, and an evil feeling took possession of me.

“Wait a bit!” I thought.

CHAPTER VII

“Oh, hush, Liza! How can you talk about being like a book, when it makes even me, an outsider, feel sick? Though I don’t look at it as an outsider, for, indeed, it touches me to the heart.... Is it possible, is it possible that you do not feel sick at being here yourself? Evidently habit does wonders! God knows what habit can do with anyone. Can you seriously think that you will never grow old, that you will always be good-looking, and that they will keep you here for ever and ever? I say nothing of the loathsomeness of the life here.... Though let me tell you this about it — about your present life, I mean; here though you are young now, attractive, nice, with soul and feeling, yet you know as soon as I came to myself just now I felt at once sick at being here with you! One can only come here when one is drunk. But if you were anywhere else, living as good people live, I should perhaps be more than attracted by you, should fall in love with you, should be glad of a look from you, let alone a word; I should hang about your door, should go down on my knees to you, should look upon you as my betrothed and think it an honour to be allowed to. I should not dare to have an impure thought about you. But here, you see, I know that I have only to whistle and you have to come with me whether you like it or not. I don’t consult your wishes, but you mine. The lowest labourer hires himself as a workman, but he doesn’t make a slave of himself altogether; besides, he knows that he will be free again presently. But when are you free? Only think what you are giving up here? What is it you are making a slave of? It is your soul, together with your body; you are selling your soul which you have no right to dispose of! You give your love to be outraged by every drunkard! Love! But that’s everything, you know, it’s a priceless diamond, it’s a maiden’s treasure, love — why, a man would be ready to give his soul, to face death to gain that love. But how much is your love worth now? You are sold, all of you, body and soul, and there is no need to strive for love when you can have everything without love. And you know there is no greater insult to a girl than that, do you understand? To be sure, I have heard that they comfort you, poor fools, they let you have lovers of your own here. But you know that’s simply a farce, that’s simply a sham, it’s just laughing at you, and you are taken in by it! Why, do you suppose he really loves you, that lover of yours? I don’t believe it. How can he love you when he knows you may be

called away from him any minute? He would be a low fellow if he did! Will he have a grain of respect for you? What have you in common with him? He laughs at you and robs you — that is all his love amounts to! You are lucky if he does not beat you. Very likely he does beat you, too. Ask him, if you have got one, whether he will marry you. He will laugh in your face, if he doesn't spit in it or give you a blow — though maybe he is not worth a bad halfpenny himself. And for what have you ruined your life, if you come to think of it? For the coffee they give you to drink and the plentiful meals? But with what object are they feeding you up? An honest girl couldn't swallow the food, for she would know what she was being fed for. You are in debt here, and, of course, you will always be in debt, and you will go on in debt to the end, till the visitors here begin to scorn you. And that will soon happen, don't rely upon your youth — all that flies by express train here, you know. You will be kicked out. And not simply kicked out; long before that she'll begin nagging at you, scolding you, abusing you, as though you had not sacrificed your health for her, had not thrown away your youth and your soul for her benefit, but as though you had ruined her, beggared her, robbed her. And don't expect anyone to take your part: the others, your companions, will attack you, too, win her favour, for all are in slavery here, and have lost all conscience and pity here long ago. They have become utterly vile, and nothing on earth is viler, more loathsome, and more insulting than their abuse. And you are laying down everything here, unconditionally, youth and health and beauty and hope, and at twenty-two you will look like a woman of five-and-thirty, and you will be lucky if you are not diseased, pray to God for that! No doubt you are thinking now that you have a gay time and no work to do! Yet there is no work harder or more dreadful in the world or ever has been. One would think that the heart alone would be worn out with tears. And you won't dare to say a word, not half a word when they drive you away from here; you will go away as though you were to blame. You will change to another house, then to a third, then somewhere else, till you come down at last to the Haymarket. There you will be beaten at every turn; that is good manners there, the visitors don't know how to be friendly without beating you. You don't believe that it is so hateful there? Go and look for yourself some time, you can see with your own eyes. Once, one New Year's Day, I saw a woman at a door. They had turned her out as a joke, to give her a taste of the frost because she had been crying so much, and they shut the door behind her. At nine o'clock in the

morning she was already quite drunk, dishevelled, half-naked, covered with bruises, her face was powdered, but she had a black-eye, blood was trickling from her nose and her teeth; some cabman had just given her a drubbing. She was sitting on the stone steps, a salt fish of some sort was in her hand; she was crying, wailing something about her luck and beating with the fish on the steps, and cabmen and drunken soldiers were crowding in the doorway taunting her. You don't believe that you will ever be like that? I should be sorry to believe it, too, but how do you know; maybe ten years, eight years ago that very woman with the salt fish came here fresh as a cherub, innocent, pure, knowing no evil, blushing at every word. Perhaps she was like you, proud, ready to take offence, not like the others; perhaps she looked like a queen, and knew what happiness was in store for the man who should love her and whom she should love. Do you see how it ended? And what if at that very minute when she was beating on the filthy steps with that fish, drunken and dishevelled — what if at that very minute she recalled the pure early days in her father's house, when she used to go to school and the neighbour's son watched for her on the way, declaring that he would love her as long as he lived, that he would devote his life to her, and when they vowed to love one another for ever and be married as soon as they were grown up! No, Liza, it would be happy for you if you were to die soon of consumption in some corner, in some cellar like that woman just now. In the hospital, do you say? You will be lucky if they take you, but what if you are still of use to the madam here? Consumption is a queer disease, it is not like fever. The patient goes on hoping till the last minute and says he is all right. He deludes himself And that just suits your madam. Don't doubt it, that's how it is; you have sold your soul, and what is more you owe money, so you daren't say a word. But when you are dying, all will abandon you, all will turn away from you, for then there will be nothing to get from you. What's more, they will reproach you for cumbering the place, for being so long over dying. However you beg you won't get a drink of water without abuse: 'Whenever are you going off, you nasty hussy, you won't let us sleep with your moaning, you make the gentlemen sick.' That's true, I have heard such things said myself. They will thrust you dying into the filthiest corner in the cellar — in the damp and darkness; what will your thoughts be, lying there alone? When you die, strange hands will lay you out, with grumbling and impatience; no one will bless you, no one will sigh for you, they only want to get rid of you as soon as may be; they will buy a

coffin, take you to the grave as they did that poor woman today, and celebrate your memory at the tavern. In the grave, sleet, filth, wet snow — no need to put themselves out for you—'Let her down, Vanuha; it's just like her luck — even here, she is head-foremost, the hussy. Shorten the cord, you rascal."It's all right as it is."All right, is it? Why, she's on her side! She was a fellow-creature, after all! But, never mind, throw the earth on her.' And they won't care to waste much time quarrelling over you. They will scatter the wet blue clay as quick as they can and go off to the tavern ... and there your memory on earth will end; other women have children to go to their graves, fathers, husbands. While for you neither tear, nor sigh, nor remembrance; no one in the whole world will ever come to you, your name will vanish from the face of the earth — as though you had never existed, never been born at all! Nothing but filth and mud, however you knock at your coffin lid at night, when the dead arise, however you cry: 'Let me out, kind people, to live in the light of day! My life was no life at all; my life has been thrown away like a dish-clout; it was drunk away in the tavern at the Haymarket; let me out, kind people, to live in the world again.'"

And I worked myself up to such a pitch that I began to have a lump in my throat myself, and ... and all at once I stopped, sat up in dismay and, bending over apprehensively, began to listen with a beating heart. I had reason to be troubled.

I had felt for some time that I was turning her soul upside down and rending her heart, and — and the more I was convinced of it, the more eagerly I desired to gain my object as quickly and as effectually as possible. It was the exercise of my skill that carried me away; yet it was not merely sport....

I knew I was speaking stiffly, artificially, even bookishly, in fact, I could not speak except "like a book." But that did not trouble me: I knew, I felt that I should be understood and that this very bookishness might be an assistance. But now, having attained my effect, I was suddenly panic-stricken. Never before had I witnessed such despair! She was lying on her face, thrusting her face into the pillow and clutching it in both hands. Her heart was being torn. Her youthful body was shuddering all over as though in convulsions. Suppressed sobs rent her bosom and suddenly burst out in weeping and wailing, then she pressed closer into the pillow: she did not want anyone here, not a living soul, to know of her anguish and her tears. She bit the pillow, bit her hand till it bled (I saw that afterwards), or,

thrusting her fingers into her dishevelled hair, seemed rigid with the effort of restraint, holding her breath and clenching her teeth. I began saying something, begging her to calm herself, but felt that I did not dare; and all at once, in a sort of cold shiver, almost in terror, began fumbling in the dark, trying hurriedly to get dressed to go. It was dark; though I tried my best I could not finish dressing quickly. Suddenly I felt a box of matches and a candlestick with a whole candle in it. As soon as the room was lighted up, Liza sprang up, sat up in bed, and with a contorted face, with a half insane smile, looked at me almost senselessly. I sat down beside her and took her hands; she came to herself, made an impulsive movement towards me, would have caught hold of me, but did not dare, and slowly bowed her head before me.

“Liza, my dear, I was wrong ... forgive me, my dear,” I began, but she squeezed my hand in her fingers so tightly that I felt I was saying the wrong thing and stopped.

“This is my address, Liza, come to me.”

“I will come,” she answered resolutely, her head still bowed.

“But now I am going, good-bye ... till we meet again.”

I got up; she, too, stood up and suddenly flushed all over, gave a shudder, snatched up a shawl that was lying on a chair and muffled herself in it to her chin. As she did this she gave another sickly smile, blushed and looked at me strangely. I felt wretched; I was in haste to get away — to disappear.

“Wait a minute,” she said suddenly, in the passage just at the doorway, stopping me with her hand on my overcoat. She put down the candle in hot haste and ran off; evidently she had thought of something or wanted to show me something. As she ran away she flushed, her eyes shone, and there was a smile on her lips — what was the meaning of it? Against my will I waited: she came back a minute later with an expression that seemed to ask forgiveness for something. In fact, it was not the same face, not the same look as the evening before: sullen, mistrustful and obstinate. Her eyes now were imploring, soft, and at the same time trustful, caressing, timid. The expression with which children look at people they are very fond of, of whom they are asking a favour. Her eyes were a light hazel, they were lovely eyes, full of life, and capable of expressing love as well as sullen hatred.

Making no explanation, as though I, as a sort of higher being, must understand everything without explanations, she held out a piece of paper to

me. Her whole face was positively beaming at that instant with naive, almost childish, triumph. I unfolded it. It was a letter to her from a medical student or someone of that sort — a very high-flown and flowery, but extremely respectful, love-letter. I don't recall the words now, but I remember well that through the high-flown phrases there was apparent a genuine feeling, which cannot be feigned. When I had finished reading it I met her glowing, questioning, and childishly impatient eyes fixed upon me. She fastened her eyes upon my face and waited impatiently for what I should say. In a few words, hurriedly, but with a sort of joy and pride, she explained to me that she had been to a dance somewhere in a private house, a family of "very nice people, WHO KNEW NOTHING, absolutely nothing, for she had only come here so lately and it had all happened ... and she hadn't made up her mind to stay and was certainly going away as soon as she had paid her debt..," and at that party there had been the student who had danced with her all the evening. He had talked to her, and it turned out that he had known her in old days at Riga when he was a child, they had played together, but a very long time ago — and he knew her parents, but ABOUT THIS he knew nothing, nothing whatever, and had no suspicion! And the day after the dance (three days ago) he had sent her that letter through the friend with whom she had gone to the party ... and ... well, that was all.

She dropped her shining eyes with a sort of bashfulness as she finished.

The poor girl was keeping that student's letter as a precious treasure, and had run to fetch it, her only treasure, because she did not want me to go away without knowing that she, too, was honestly and genuinely loved; that she, too, was addressed respectfully. No doubt that letter was destined to lie in her box and lead to nothing. But none the less, I am certain that she would keep it all her life as a precious treasure, as her pride and justification, and now at such a minute she had thought of that letter and brought it with naive pride to raise herself in my eyes that I might see, that I, too, might think well of her. I said nothing, pressed her hand and went out. I so longed to get away ... I walked all the way home, in spite of the fact that the melting snow was still falling in heavy flakes. I was exhausted, shattered, in bewilderment. But behind the bewilderment the truth was already gleaming. The loathsome truth.

CHAPTER VIII

It was some time, however, before I consented to recognise that truth. Waking up in the morning after some hours of heavy, leaden sleep, and immediately realising all that had happened on the previous day, I was positively amazed at my last night's SENTIMENTALITY with Liza, at all those "outcries of horror and pity."

"To think of having such an attack of womanish hysteria, pah!" I concluded. And what did I thrust my address upon her for? What if she comes? Let her come, though; it doesn't matter.... But OBVIOUSLY, that was not now the chief and the most important matter: I had to make haste and at all costs save my reputation in the eyes of Zverkov and Simonov as quickly as possible; that was the chief business. And I was so taken up that morning that I actually forgot all about Liza.

First of all I had at once to repay what I had borrowed the day before from Simonov. I resolved on a desperate measure: to borrow fifteen roubles straight off from Anton Antonitch. As luck would have it he was in the best of humours that morning, and gave it to me at once, on the first asking. I was so delighted at this that, as I signed the IOU with a swaggering air, I told him casually that the night before "I had been keeping it up with some friends at the Hotel de Paris; we were giving a farewell party to a comrade, in fact, I might say a friend of my childhood, and you know — a desperate rake, fearfully spoilt — of course, he belongs to a good family, and has considerable means, a brilliant career; he is witty, charming, a regular Lovelace, you understand; we drank an extra 'half-dozen' and ..."

And it went off all right; all this was uttered very easily, unconstrainedly and complacently.

On reaching home I promptly wrote to Simonov.

To this hour I am lost in admiration when I recall the truly gentlemanly, good-humoured, candid tone of my letter. With tact and good-breeding, and, above all, entirely without superfluous words, I blamed myself for all that had happened. I defended myself, "if I really may be allowed to defend myself," by alleging that being utterly unaccustomed to wine, I had been intoxicated with the first glass, which I said, I had drunk before they arrived, while I was waiting for them at the Hotel de Paris between five and six o'clock. I begged Simonov's pardon especially; I asked him to convey

my explanations to all the others, especially to Zverkov, whom “I seemed to remember as though in a dream” I had insulted. I added that I would have called upon all of them myself, but my head ached, and besides I had not the face to. I was particularly pleased with a certain lightness, almost carelessness (strictly within the bounds of politeness, however), which was apparent in my style, and better than any possible arguments, gave them at once to understand that I took rather an independent view of “all that unpleasantness last night”; that I was by no means so utterly crushed as you, my friends, probably imagine; but on the contrary, looked upon it as a gentleman serenely respecting himself should look upon it. “On a young hero’s past no censure is cast!”

“There is actually an aristocratic playfulness about it!” I thought admiringly, as I read over the letter. “And it’s all because I am an intellectual and cultivated man! Another man in my place would not have known how to extricate himself, but here I have got out of it and am as jolly as ever again, and all because I am ‘a cultivated and educated man of our day.’ And, indeed, perhaps, everything was due to the wine yesterday. H’m!” ... No, it was not the wine. I did not drink anything at all between five and six when I was waiting for them. I had lied to Simonov; I had lied shamelessly; and indeed I wasn’t ashamed now.... Hang it all though, the great thing was that I was rid of it.

I put six roubles in the letter, sealed it up, and asked Apollon to take it to Simonov. When he learned that there was money in the letter, Apollon became more respectful and agreed to take it. Towards evening I went out for a walk. My head was still aching and giddy after yesterday. But as evening came on and the twilight grew denser, my impressions and, following them, my thoughts, grew more and more different and confused. Something was not dead within me, in the depths of my heart and conscience it would not die, and it showed itself in acute depression. For the most part I jostled my way through the most crowded business streets, along Myeshtchansky Street, along Sadovy Street and in Yusupov Garden. I always liked particularly sauntering along these streets in the dusk, just when there were crowds of working people of all sorts going home from their daily work, with faces looking cross with anxiety. What I liked was just that cheap bustle, that bare prose. On this occasion the jostling of the streets irritated me more than ever, I could not make out what was wrong with me, I could not find the clue, something seemed rising up continually

in my soul, painfully, and refusing to be appeased. I returned home completely upset, it was just as though some crime were lying on my conscience.

The thought that Liza was coming worried me continually. It seemed queer to me that of all my recollections of yesterday this tormented me, as it were, especially, as it were, quite separately. Everything else I had quite succeeded in forgetting by the evening; I dismissed it all and was still perfectly satisfied with my letter to Simonov. But on this point I was not satisfied at all. It was as though I were worried only by Liza. “What if she comes,” I thought incessantly, “well, it doesn’t matter, let her come! H’m! it’s horrid that she should see, for instance, how I live. Yesterday I seemed such a hero to her, while now, h’m! It’s horrid, though, that I have let myself go so, the room looks like a beggar’s. And I brought myself to go out to dinner in such a suit! And my American leather sofa with the stuffing sticking out. And my dressing-gown, which will not cover me, such tatters, and she will see all this and she will see Apollon. That beast is certain to insult her. He will fasten upon her in order to be rude to me. And I, of course, shall be panic-stricken as usual, I shall begin bowing and scraping before her and pulling my dressing-gown round me, I shall begin smiling, telling lies. Oh, the beastliness! And it isn’t the beastliness of it that matters most! There is something more important, more loathsome, viler! Yes, viler! And to put on that dishonest lying mask again! ...”

When I reached that thought I fired up all at once.

“Why dishonest? How dishonest? I was speaking sincerely last night. I remember there was real feeling in me, too. What I wanted was to excite an honourable feeling in her.... Her crying was a good thing, it will have a good effect.”

Yet I could not feel at ease. All that evening, even when I had come back home, even after nine o’clock, when I calculated that Liza could not possibly come, still she haunted me, and what was worse, she came back to my mind always in the same position. One moment out of all that had happened last night stood vividly before my imagination; the moment when I struck a match and saw her pale, distorted face, with its look of torture. And what a pitiful, what an unnatural, what a distorted smile she had at that moment! But I did not know then, that fifteen years later I should still in my imagination see Liza, always with the pitiful, distorted, inappropriate smile which was on her face at that minute.

Next day I was ready again to look upon it all as nonsense, due to over-excited nerves, and, above all, as EXAGGERATED. I was always conscious of that weak point of mine, and sometimes very much afraid of it. “I exaggerate everything, that is where I go wrong,” I repeated to myself every hour. But, however, “Liza will very likely come all the same,” was the refrain with which all my reflections ended. I was so uneasy that I sometimes flew into a fury: “She’ll come, she is certain to come!” I cried, running about the room, “if not today, she will come tomorrow; she’ll find me out! The damnable romanticism of these pure hearts! Oh, the vileness — oh, the silliness — oh, the stupidity of these ‘wretched sentimental souls!’ Why, how fail to understand? How could one fail to understand? ...”

But at this point I stopped short, and in great confusion, indeed.

And how few, how few words, I thought, in passing, were needed; how little of the idyllic (and affectedly, bookishly, artificially idyllic too) had sufficed to turn a whole human life at once according to my will. That’s virginity, to be sure! Freshness of soil!

At times a thought occurred to me, to go to her, “to tell her all,” and beg her not to come to me. But this thought stirred such wrath in me that I believed I should have crushed that “damned” Liza if she had chanced to be near me at the time. I should have insulted her, have spat at her, have turned her out, have struck her!

One day passed, however, another and another; she did not come and I began to grow calmer. I felt particularly bold and cheerful after nine o’clock, I even sometimes began dreaming, and rather sweetly: I, for instance, became the salvation of Liza, simply through her coming to me and my talking to her.... I develop her, educate her. Finally, I notice that she loves me, loves me passionately. I pretend not to understand (I don’t know, however, why I pretend, just for effect, perhaps). At last all confusion, transfigured, trembling and sobbing, she flings herself at my feet and says that I am her saviour, and that she loves me better than anything in the world. I am amazed, but.... “Liza,” I say, “can you imagine that I have not noticed your love? I saw it all, I divined it, but I did not dare to approach you first, because I had an influence over you and was afraid that you would force yourself, from gratitude, to respond to my love, would try to rouse in your heart a feeling which was perhaps absent, and I did not wish that ... because it would be tyranny ... it would be indelicate (in short, I launch off at that point into European, inexplicably lofty subtleties a la

George Sand), but now, now you are mine, you are my creation, you are pure, you are good, you are my noble wife.

‘Into my house come bold and free,
Its rightful mistress there to be’.”

Then we begin living together, go abroad and so on, and so on. In fact, in the end it seemed vulgar to me myself, and I began putting out my tongue at myself.

Besides, they won’t let her out, “the hussy!” I thought. They don’t let them go out very readily, especially in the evening (for some reason I fancied she would come in the evening, and at seven o’clock precisely). Though she did say she was not altogether a slave there yet, and had certain rights; so, h’m! Damn it all, she will come, she is sure to come!

It was a good thing, in fact, that Apollon distracted my attention at that time by his rudeness. He drove me beyond all patience! He was the bane of my life, the curse laid upon me by Providence. We had been squabbling continually for years, and I hated him. My God, how I hated him! I believe I had never hated anyone in my life as I hated him, especially at some moments. He was an elderly, dignified man, who worked part of his time as a tailor. But for some unknown reason he despised me beyond all measure, and looked down upon me insufferably. Though, indeed, he looked down upon everyone. Simply to glance at that flaxen, smoothly brushed head, at the tuft of hair he combed up on his forehead and oiled with sunflower oil, at that dignified mouth, compressed into the shape of the letter V, made one feel one was confronting a man who never doubted of himself. He was a pedant, to the most extreme point, the greatest pedant I had met on earth, and with that had a vanity only befitting Alexander of Macedon. He was in love with every button on his coat, every nail on his fingers — absolutely in love with them, and he looked it! In his behaviour to me he was a perfect tyrant, he spoke very little to me, and if he chanced to glance at me he gave me a firm, majestically self-confident and invariably ironical look that drove me sometimes to fury. He did his work with the air of doing me the greatest favour, though he did scarcely anything for me, and did not, indeed, consider himself bound to do anything. There could be no doubt that he looked upon me as the greatest fool on earth, and that “he did not get rid of me” was simply that he could get wages from me every month. He consented to do nothing for me for seven roubles a month. Many sins should be forgiven me for what I suffered from him. My hatred reached

such a point that sometimes his very step almost threw me into convulsions. What I loathed particularly was his lisp. His tongue must have been a little too long or something of that sort, for he continually lisped, and seemed to be very proud of it, imagining that it greatly added to his dignity. He spoke in a slow, measured tone, with his hands behind his back and his eyes fixed on the ground. He maddened me particularly when he read aloud the psalms to himself behind his partition. Many a battle I waged over that reading! But he was awfully fond of reading aloud in the evenings, in a slow, even, sing-song voice, as though over the dead. It is interesting that that is how he has ended: he hires himself out to read the psalms over the dead, and at the same time he kills rats and makes blacking. But at that time I could not get rid of him, it was as though he were chemically combined with my existence. Besides, nothing would have induced him to consent to leave me. I could not live in furnished lodgings: my lodging was my private solitude, my shell, my cave, in which I concealed myself from all mankind, and Apollon seemed to me, for some reason, an integral part of that flat, and for seven years I could not turn him away.

To be two or three days behind with his wages, for instance, was impossible. He would have made such a fuss, I should not have known where to hide my head. But I was so exasperated with everyone during those days, that I made up my mind for some reason and with some object to PUNISH Apollon and not to pay him for a fortnight the wages that were owing him. I had for a long time — for the last two years — been intending to do this, simply in order to teach him not to give himself airs with me, and to show him that if I liked I could withhold his wages. I purposed to say nothing to him about it, and was purposely silent indeed, in order to score off his pride and force him to be the first to speak of his wages. Then I would take the seven roubles out of a drawer, show him I have the money put aside on purpose, but that I won’t, I won’t, I simply won’t pay him his wages, I won’t just because that is “what I wish,” because “I am master, and it is for me to decide,” because he has been disrespectful, because he has been rude; but if he were to ask respectfully I might be softened and give it to him, otherwise he might wait another fortnight, another three weeks, a whole month....

But angry as I was, yet he got the better of me. I could not hold out for four days. He began as he always did begin in such cases, for there had been such cases already, there had been attempts (and it may be observed I

knew all this beforehand, I knew his nasty tactics by heart). He would begin by fixing upon me an exceedingly severe stare, keeping it up for several minutes at a time, particularly on meeting me or seeing me out of the house. If I held out and pretended not to notice these stares, he would, still in silence, proceed to further tortures. All at once, A PROPOS of nothing, he would walk softly and smoothly into my room, when I was pacing up and down or reading, stand at the door, one hand behind his back and one foot behind the other, and fix upon me a stare more than severe, utterly contemptuous. If I suddenly asked him what he wanted, he would make me no answer, but continue staring at me persistently for some seconds, then, with a peculiar compression of his lips and a most significant air, deliberately turn round and deliberately go back to his room. Two hours later he would come out again and again present himself before me in the same way. It had happened that in my fury I did not even ask him what he wanted, but simply raised my head sharply and imperiously and began staring back at him. So we stared at one another for two minutes; at last he turned with deliberation and dignity and went back again for two hours.

If I were still not brought to reason by all this, but persisted in my revolt, he would suddenly begin sighing while he looked at me, long, deep sighs as though measuring by them the depths of my moral degradation, and, of course, it ended at last by his triumphing completely: I raged and shouted, but still was forced to do what he wanted.

This time the usual staring manoeuvres had scarcely begun when I lost my temper and flew at him in a fury. I was irritated beyond endurance apart from him.

“Stay,” I cried, in a frenzy, as he was slowly and silently turning, with one hand behind his back, to go to his room. “Stay! Come back, come back, I tell you!” and I must have bawled so unnaturally, that he turned round and even looked at me with some wonder. However, he persisted in saying nothing, and that infuriated me.

“How dare you come and look at me like that without being sent for? Answer!”

After looking at me calmly for half a minute, he began turning round again.

“Stay!” I roared, running up to him, “don’t stir! There. Answer, now: what did you come in to look at?”

“If you have any order to give me it’s my duty to carry it out,” he answered, after another silent pause, with a slow, measured lisp, raising his eyebrows and calmly twisting his head from one side to another, all this with exasperating composure.

“That’s not what I am asking you about, you torturer!” I shouted, turning crimson with anger. “I’ll tell you why you came here myself: you see, I don’t give you your wages, you are so proud you don’t want to bow down and ask for it, and so you come to punish me with your stupid stares, to worry me and you have no sus-pic-ion how stupid it is — stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid! ...”

He would have turned round again without a word, but I seized him.

“Listen,” I shouted to him. “Here’s the money, do you see, here it is,” (I took it out of the table drawer); “here’s the seven roubles complete, but you are not going to have it, you ... are ... not ... going ... to ... have it until you come respectfully with bowed head to beg my pardon. Do you hear?”

“That cannot be,” he answered, with the most unnatural self-confidence.

“It shall be so,” I said, “I give you my word of honour, it shall be!”

“And there’s nothing for me to beg your pardon for,” he went on, as though he had not noticed my exclamations at all. “Why, besides, you called me a ‘torturer,’ for which I can summon you at the police-station at any time for insulting behaviour.”

“Go, summon me,” I roared, “go at once, this very minute, this very second! You are a torturer all the same! a torturer!”

But he merely looked at me, then turned, and regardless of my loud calls to him, he walked to his room with an even step and without looking round.

“If it had not been for Liza nothing of this would have happened,” I decided inwardly. Then, after waiting a minute, I went myself behind his screen with a dignified and solemn air, though my heart was beating slowly and violently.

“Apollon,” I said quietly and emphatically, though I was breathless, “go at once without a minute’s delay and fetch the police-officer.”

He had meanwhile settled himself at his table, put on his spectacles and taken up some sewing. But, hearing my order, he burst into a guffaw.

“At once, go this minute! Go on, or else you can’t imagine what will happen.”

“You are certainly out of your mind,” he observed, without even raising his head, lisping as deliberately as ever and threading his needle. “Whoever

heard of a man sending for the police against himself? And as for being frightened — you are upsetting yourself about nothing, for nothing will come of it.”

“Go!” I shrieked, clutching him by the shoulder. I felt I should strike him in a minute.

But I did not notice the door from the passage softly and slowly open at that instant and a figure come in, stop short, and begin staring at us in perplexity I glanced, nearly swooned with shame, and rushed back to my room. There, clutching at my hair with both hands, I leaned my head against the wall and stood motionless in that position.

Two minutes later I heard Apollon’s deliberate footsteps. “There is some woman asking for you,” he said, looking at me with peculiar severity. Then he stood aside and let in Liza. He would not go away, but stared at us sarcastically.

“Go away, go away,” I commanded in desperation. At that moment my clock began whirring and wheezing and struck seven.

CHAPTER IX

“Into my house come bold and free,
Its rightful mistress there to be.”

I stood before her crushed, crestfallen, revoltingly confused, and I believe I smiled as I did my utmost to wrap myself in the skirts of my ragged wadded dressing-gown — exactly as I had imagined the scene not long before in a fit of depression. After standing over us for a couple of minutes Apollon went away, but that did not make me more at ease. What made it worse was that she, too, was overwhelmed with confusion, more so, in fact, than I should have expected. At the sight of me, of course.

“Sit down,” I said mechanically, moving a chair up to the table, and I sat down on the sofa. She obediently sat down at once and gazed at me open-eyed, evidently expecting something from me at once. This naivete of expectation drove me to fury, but I restrained myself.

She ought to have tried not to notice, as though everything had been as usual, while instead of that, she ... and I dimly felt that I should make her pay dearly for ALL THIS.

“You have found me in a strange position, Liza,” I began, stammering and knowing that this was the wrong way to begin. “No, no, don’t imagine anything,” I cried, seeing that she had suddenly flushed. “I am not ashamed of my poverty.... On the contrary, I look with pride on my poverty. I am poor but honourable.... One can be poor and honourable,” I muttered. “However ... would you like tea?....”

“No,” she was beginning.

“Wait a minute.”

I leapt up and ran to Apollon. I had to get out of the room somehow.

“Apollon,” I whispered in feverish haste, flinging down before him the seven roubles which had remained all the time in my clenched fist, “here are your wages, you see I give them to you; but for that you must come to my rescue: bring me tea and a dozen rusks from the restaurant. If you won’t go, you’ll make me a miserable man! You don’t know what this woman is.... This is — everything! You may be imagining something.... But you don’t know what that woman is! ...”

Apollon, who had already sat down to his work and put on his spectacles again, at first glanced askance at the money without speaking or putting down his needle; then, without paying the slightest attention to me or making any answer, he went on busying himself with his needle, which he had not yet threaded. I waited before him for three minutes with my arms crossed A LA NAPOLEON. My temples were moist with sweat. I was pale, I felt it. But, thank God, he must have been moved to pity, looking at me. Having threaded his needle he deliberately got up from his seat, deliberately moved back his chair, deliberately took off his spectacles, deliberately counted the money, and finally asking me over his shoulder: “Shall I get a whole portion?” deliberately walked out of the room. As I was going back to Liza, the thought occurred to me on the way: shouldn’t I run away just as I was in my dressing-gown, no matter where, and then let happen what would?

I sat down again. She looked at me uneasily. For some minutes we were silent.

“I will kill him,” I shouted suddenly, striking the table with my fist so that the ink spurted out of the inkstand.

“What are you saying!” she cried, starting.

“I will kill him! kill him!” I shrieked, suddenly striking the table in absolute frenzy, and at the same time fully understanding how stupid it was to be in such a frenzy. “You don’t know, Liza, what that torturer is to me. He is my torturer.... He has gone now to fetch some rusks; he ...”

And suddenly I burst into tears. It was an hysterical attack. How ashamed I felt in the midst of my sobs; but still I could not restrain them.

She was frightened.

“What is the matter? What is wrong?” she cried, fussing about me.

“Water, give me water, over there!” I muttered in a faint voice, though I was inwardly conscious that I could have got on very well without water and without muttering in a faint voice. But I was, what is called, PUTTING IT ON, to save appearances, though the attack was a genuine one.

She gave me water, looking at me in bewilderment. At that moment Apollon brought in the tea. It suddenly seemed to me that this commonplace, prosaic tea was horribly undignified and paltry after all that had happened, and I blushed crimson. Liza looked at Apollon with positive alarm. He went out without a glance at either of us.

“Liza, do you despise me?” I asked, looking at her fixedly, trembling with impatience to know what she was thinking.

She was confused, and did not know what to answer.

“Drink your tea,” I said to her angrily. I was angry with myself, but, of course, it was she who would have to pay for it. A horrible spite against her suddenly surged up in my heart; I believe I could have killed her. To revenge myself on her I swore inwardly not to say a word to her all the time. “She is the cause of it all,” I thought.

Our silence lasted for five minutes. The tea stood on the table; we did not touch it. I had got to the point of purposely refraining from beginning in order to embarrass her further; it was awkward for her to begin alone. Several times she glanced at me with mournful perplexity. I was obstinately silent. I was, of course, myself the chief sufferer, because I was fully conscious of the disgusting meanness of my spiteful stupidity, and yet at the same time I could not restrain myself.

“I want to... get away ... from there altogether,” she began, to break the silence in some way, but, poor girl, that was just what she ought not to have spoken about at such a stupid moment to a man so stupid as I was. My heart positively ached with pity for her tactless and unnecessary straightforwardness. But something hideous at once stifled all compassion in me; it even provoked me to greater venom. I did not care what happened. Another five minutes passed.

“Perhaps I am in your way,” she began timidly, hardly audibly, and was getting up.

But as soon as I saw this first impulse of wounded dignity I positively trembled with spite, and at once burst out.

“Why have you come to me, tell me that, please?” I began, gasping for breath and regardless of logical connection in my words. I longed to have it all out at once, at one burst; I did not even trouble how to begin. “Why have you come? Answer, answer,” I cried, hardly knowing what I was doing. “I’ll tell you, my good girl, why you have come. You’ve come because I talked sentimental stuff to you then. So now you are soft as butter and longing for fine sentiments again. So you may as well know that I was laughing at you then. And I am laughing at you now. Why are you shuddering? Yes, I was laughing at you! I had been insulted just before, at dinner, by the fellows who came that evening before me. I came to you, meaning to thrash one of them, an officer; but I didn’t succeed, I didn’t find

him; I had to avenge the insult on someone to get back my own again; you turned up, I vented my spleen on you and laughed at you. I had been humiliated, so I wanted to humiliate; I had been treated like a rag, so I wanted to show my power.... That's what it was, and you imagined I had come there on purpose to save you. Yes? You imagined that? You imagined that?"

I knew that she would perhaps be muddled and not take it all in exactly, but I knew, too, that she would grasp the gist of it, very well indeed. And so, indeed, she did. She turned white as a handkerchief, tried to say something, and her lips worked painfully; but she sank on a chair as though she had been felled by an axe. And all the time afterwards she listened to me with her lips parted and her eyes wide open, shuddering with awful terror. The cynicism, the cynicism of my words overwhelmed her....

"Save you!" I went on, jumping up from my chair and running up and down the room before her. "Save you from what? But perhaps I am worse than you myself. Why didn't you throw it in my teeth when I was giving you that sermon: 'But what did you come here yourself for? was it to read us a sermon?' Power, power was what I wanted then, sport was what I wanted, I wanted to wring out your tears, your humiliation, your hysteria — that was what I wanted then! Of course, I couldn't keep it up then, because I am a wretched creature, I was frightened, and, the devil knows why, gave you my address in my folly. Afterwards, before I got home, I was cursing and swearing at you because of that address, I hated you already because of the lies I had told you. Because I only like playing with words, only dreaming, but, do you know, what I really want is that you should all go to hell. That is what I want. I want peace; yes, I'd sell the whole world for a farthing, straight off, so long as I was left in peace. Is the world to go to pot, or am I to go without my tea? I say that the world may go to pot for me so long as I always get my tea. Did you know that, or not? Well, anyway, I know that I am a blackguard, a scoundrel, an egoist, a sluggard. Here I have been shuddering for the last three days at the thought of your coming. And do you know what has worried me particularly for these three days? That I posed as such a hero to you, and now you would see me in a wretched torn dressing-gown, beggarly, loathsome. I told you just now that I was not ashamed of my poverty; so you may as well know that I am ashamed of it; I am more ashamed of it than of anything, more afraid of it than of being found out if I were a thief, because I am as vain as though I had been

skinned and the very air blowing on me hurt. Surely by now you must realise that I shall never forgive you for having found me in this wretched dressing-gown, just as I was flying at Apollon like a spiteful cur. The saviour, the former hero, was flying like a mangy, unkempt sheep-dog at his lackey, and the lackey was jeering at him! And I shall never forgive you for the tears I could not help shedding before you just now, like some silly woman put to shame! And for what I am confessing to you now, I shall never forgive you either! Yes — you must answer for it all because you turned up like this, because I am a blackguard, because I am the nastiest, stupidest, absurdest and most envious of all the worms on earth, who are not a bit better than I am, but, the devil knows why, are never put to confusion; while I shall always be insulted by every louse, that is my doom! And what is it to me that you don't understand a word of this! And what do I care, what do I care about you, and whether you go to ruin there or not? Do you understand? How I shall hate you now after saying this, for having been here and listening. Why, it's not once in a lifetime a man speaks out like this, and then it is in hysterics! ... What more do you want? Why do you still stand confronting me, after all this? Why are you worrying me? Why don't you go?"

But at this point a strange thing happened. I was so accustomed to think and imagine everything from books, and to picture everything in the world to myself just as I had made it up in my dreams beforehand, that I could not all at once take in this strange circumstance. What happened was this: Liza, insulted and crushed by me, understood a great deal more than I imagined. She understood from all this what a woman understands first of all, if she feels genuine love, that is, that I was myself unhappy.

The frightened and wounded expression on her face was followed first by a look of sorrowful perplexity. When I began calling myself a scoundrel and a blackguard and my tears flowed (the tirade was accompanied throughout by tears) her whole face worked convulsively. She was on the point of getting up and stopping me; when I finished she took no notice of my shouting: "Why are you here, why don't you go away?" but realised only that it must have been very bitter to me to say all this. Besides, she was so crushed, poor girl; she considered herself infinitely beneath me; how could she feel anger or resentment? She suddenly leapt up from her chair with an irresistible impulse and held out her hands, yearning towards me, though still timid and not daring to stir.... At this point there was a revulsion

in my heart too. Then she suddenly rushed to me, threw her arms round me and burst into tears. I, too, could not restrain myself, and sobbed as I never had before.

“They won’t let me ... I can’t be good!” I managed to articulate; then I went to the sofa, fell on it face downwards, and sobbed on it for a quarter of an hour in genuine hysterics. She came close to me, put her arms round me and stayed motionless in that position. But the trouble was that the hysterics could not go on for ever, and (I am writing the loathsome truth) lying face downwards on the sofa with my face thrust into my nasty leather pillow, I began by degrees to be aware of a far-away, involuntary but irresistible feeling that it would be awkward now for me to raise my head and look Liza straight in the face. Why was I ashamed? I don’t know, but I was ashamed. The thought, too, came into my overwrought brain that our parts now were completely changed, that she was now the heroine, while I was just a crushed and humiliated creature as she had been before me that night — four days before.... And all this came into my mind during the minutes I was lying on my face on the sofa.

My God! surely I was not envious of her then.

I don’t know, to this day I cannot decide, and at the time, of course, I was still less able to understand what I was feeling than now. I cannot get on without domineering and tyrannising over someone, but ... there is no explaining anything by reasoning and so it is useless to reason.

I conquered myself, however, and raised my head; I had to do so sooner or later ... and I am convinced to this day that it was just because I was ashamed to look at her that another feeling was suddenly kindled and flamed up in my heart ... a feeling of mastery and possession. My eyes gleamed with passion, and I gripped her hands tightly. How I hated her and how I was drawn to her at that minute! The one feeling intensified the other. It was almost like an act of vengeance. At first there was a look of amazement, even of terror on her face, but only for one instant. She warmly and rapturously embraced me.

CHAPTER X

A quarter of an hour later I was rushing up and down the room in frenzied impatience, from minute to minute I went up to the screen and peeped through the crack at Liza. She was sitting on the ground with her head leaning against the bed, and must have been crying. But she did not go away, and that irritated me. This time she understood it all. I had insulted her finally, but ... there's no need to describe it. She realised that my outburst of passion had been simply revenge, a fresh humiliation, and that to my earlier, almost causeless hatred was added now a PERSONAL HATRED, born of envy.... Though I do not maintain positively that she understood all this distinctly; but she certainly did fully understand that I was a despicable man, and what was worse, incapable of loving her.

I know I shall be told that this is incredible — but it is incredible to be as spiteful and stupid as I was; it may be added that it was strange I should not love her, or at any rate, appreciate her love. Why is it strange? In the first place, by then I was incapable of love, for I repeat, with me loving meant tyrannising and showing my moral superiority. I have never in my life been able to imagine any other sort of love, and have nowadays come to the point of sometimes thinking that love really consists in the right — freely given by the beloved object — to tyrannise over her.

Even in my underground dreams I did not imagine love except as a struggle. I began it always with hatred and ended it with moral subjugation, and afterwards I never knew what to do with the subjugated object. And what is there to wonder at in that, since I had succeeded in so corrupting myself, since I was so out of touch with "real life," as to have actually thought of reproaching her, and putting her to shame for having come to me to hear "fine sentiments"; and did not even guess that she had come not to hear fine sentiments, but to love me, because to a woman all reformation, all salvation from any sort of ruin, and all moral renewal is included in love and can only show itself in that form.

I did not hate her so much, however, when I was running about the room and peeping through the crack in the screen. I was only insufferably oppressed by her being here. I wanted her to disappear. I wanted "peace," to be left alone in my underground world. Real life oppressed me with its novelty so much that I could hardly breathe.

But several minutes passed and she still remained, without stirring, as though she were unconscious. I had the shamelessness to tap softly at the screen as though to remind her.... She started, sprang up, and flew to seek her kerchief, her hat, her coat, as though making her escape from me.... Two minutes later she came from behind the screen and looked with heavy eyes at me. I gave a spiteful grin, which was forced, however, to KEEP UP APPEARANCES, and I turned away from her eyes.

“Good-bye,” she said, going towards the door.

I ran up to her, seized her hand, opened it, thrust something in it and closed it again. Then I turned at once and dashed away in haste to the other corner of the room to avoid seeing, anyway....

I did mean a moment since to tell a lie — to write that I did this accidentally, not knowing what I was doing through foolishness, through losing my head. But I don’t want to lie, and so I will say straight out that I opened her hand and put the money in it ... from spite. It came into my head to do this while I was running up and down the room and she was sitting behind the screen. But this I can say for certain: though I did that cruel thing purposely, it was not an impulse from the heart, but came from my evil brain. This cruelty was so affected, so purposely made up, so completely a product of the brain, of books, that I could not even keep it up a minute — first I dashed away to avoid seeing her, and then in shame and despair rushed after Liza. I opened the door in the passage and began listening.

“Liza! Liza!” I cried on the stairs, but in a low voice, not boldly. There was no answer, but I fancied I heard her footsteps, lower down on the stairs.

“Liza!” I cried, more loudly.

No answer. But at that minute I heard the stiff outer glass door open heavily with a creak and slam violently; the sound echoed up the stairs.

She had gone. I went back to my room in hesitation. I felt horribly oppressed.

I stood still at the table, beside the chair on which she had sat and looked aimlessly before me. A minute passed, suddenly I started; straight before me on the table I saw.... In short, I saw a crumpled blue five-rouble note, the one I had thrust into her hand a minute before. It was the same note; it could be no other, there was no other in the flat. So she had managed to fling it from her hand on the table at the moment when I had dashed into the further corner.

Well! I might have expected that she would do that. Might I have expected it? No, I was such an egoist, I was so lacking in respect for my fellow-creatures that I could not even imagine she would do so. I could not endure it. A minute later I flew like a madman to dress, flinging on what I could at random and ran headlong after her. She could not have got two hundred paces away when I ran out into the street.

It was a still night and the snow was coming down in masses and falling almost perpendicularly, covering the pavement and the empty street as though with a pillow. There was no one in the street, no sound was to be heard. The street lamps gave a disconsolate and useless glimmer. I ran two hundred paces to the cross-roads and stopped short.

Where had she gone? And why was I running after her?

Why? To fall down before her, to sob with remorse, to kiss her feet, to entreat her forgiveness! I longed for that, my whole breast was being rent to pieces, and never, never shall I recall that minute with indifference. But — what for? I thought. Should I not begin to hate her, perhaps, even tomorrow, just because I had kissed her feet today? Should I give her happiness? Had I not recognised that day, for the hundredth time, what I was worth? Should I not torture her?

I stood in the snow, gazing into the troubled darkness and pondered this.

“And will it not be better?” I mused fantastically, afterwards at home, stifling the living pang of my heart with fantastic dreams. “Will it not be better that she should keep the resentment of the insult for ever? Resentment — why, it is purification; it is a most stinging and painful consciousness! Tomorrow I should have defiled her soul and have exhausted her heart, while now the feeling of insult will never die in her heart, and however loathsome the filth awaiting her — the feeling of insult will elevate and purify her ... by hatred ... h’m! ... perhaps, too, by forgiveness.... Will all that make things easier for her though? ...”

And, indeed, I will ask on my own account here, an idle question: which is better — cheap happiness or exalted sufferings? Well, which is better?

So I dreamed as I sat at home that evening, almost dead with the pain in my soul. Never had I endured such suffering and remorse, yet could there have been the faintest doubt when I ran out from my lodging that I should turn back half-way? I never met Liza again and I have heard nothing of her. I will add, too, that I remained for a long time afterwards pleased with the

phrase about the benefit from resentment and hatred in spite of the fact that I almost fell ill from misery.

Even now, so many years later, all this is somehow a very evil memory. I have many evil memories now, but ... hadn't I better end my "Notes" here? I believe I made a mistake in beginning to write them, anyway I have felt ashamed all the time I've been writing this story; so it's hardly literature so much as a corrective punishment. Why, to tell long stories, showing how I have spoiled my life through morally rotting in my corner, through lack of fitting environment, through divorce from real life, and rankling spite in my underground world, would certainly not be interesting; a novel needs a hero, and all the traits for an anti-hero are EXPRESSLY gathered together here, and what matters most, it all produces an unpleasant impression, for we are all divorced from life, we are all cripples, every one of us, more or less. We are so divorced from it that we feel at once a sort of loathing for real life, and so cannot bear to be reminded of it. Why, we have come almost to looking upon real life as an effort, almost as hard work, and we are all privately agreed that it is better in books. And why do we fuss and fume sometimes? Why are we perverse and ask for something else? We don't know what ourselves. It would be the worse for us if our petulant prayers were answered. Come, try, give any one of us, for instance, a little more independence, untie our hands, widen the spheres of our activity, relax the control and we ... yes, I assure you ... we should be begging to be under control again at once. I know that you will very likely be angry with me for that, and will begin shouting and stamping. Speak for yourself, you will say, and for your miseries in your underground holes, and don't dare to say all of us — excuse me, gentlemen, I am not justifying myself with that "all of us." As for what concerns me in particular I have only in my life carried to an extreme what you have not dared to carry halfway, and what's more, you have taken your cowardice for good sense, and have found comfort in deceiving yourselves. So that perhaps, after all, there is more life in me than in you. Look into it more carefully! Why, we don't even know what living means now, what it is, and what it is called? Leave us alone without books and we shall be lost and in confusion at once. We shall not know what to join on to, what to cling to, what to love and what to hate, what to respect and what to despise. We are oppressed at being men — men with a real individual body and blood, we are ashamed of it, we think it a disgrace and

try to contrive to be some sort of impossible generalised man. We are stillborn, and for generations past have been begotten, not by living fathers, and that suits us better and better. We are developing a taste for it. Soon we shall contrive to be born somehow from an idea. But enough; I don’t want to write more from “Underground.”

[The notes of this paradoxalist do not end here, however. He could not refrain from going on with them, but it seems to us that we may stop here.]

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT



Translated by Constance Garnett

Crime and Punishment was first published in the literary journal *The Russian Messenger* in twelve monthly instalments in 1866 and was later published the same year in a single volume. It is the second of Dostoyevsky's full-length novels after he returned from his exile in Siberia and regarded as the first great novel of his mature period.

The novel focuses on the mental anguish and moral dilemmas of Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov, an impoverished St. Petersburg ex-student, who formulates and executes a plan to kill a despised pawnbroker for her money, thereby solving his financial problems and at the same time, he argues, ridding the world of an evil and worthless parasite. Raskolnikov also strives to be an extraordinary being, similar to Napoleon, believing that murder is permissible when in pursuit of a higher purpose.

Dostoyevsky conceived the idea of *Crime and Punishment* in the summer of 1865. Having gambled away much of his fortune, he was unable to pay his bills or afford proper meals. At the time he owed large sums of money to creditors, and was trying to help the family of his brother Mikhail, who had died in early 1864. The project was initially titled *The Drunkards* and was intended to deal with the question of drunkenness. However, once Dostoyevsky conceived the character of Raskolnikov and his crime, he was also inspired by the case of Pierre François Lacenaire, and the alcohol theme became ancillary, being relocated to the story of the Marmeladov family.

Dostoyevsky offered his novella (at the time he was not planning a full-length novel) to the publisher Mikhail Katkov, whose monthly journal, *The Russian Messenger*, was a prestigious publication of its kind, and the outlet for both Ivan Turgenev and Leo Tolstoy. In a letter to Katkov written in September 1865, Dostoyevsky explained to him that the work was to be about a young man who yields to "certain strange, 'unfinished' ideas, yet floating in the air"; he had thus embarked on his plan to explore the moral and psychological dangers of the ideology of "radicalism". In letters written in November 1865 an important conceptual change occurred: the "story" became a "novel".

As the deadline loomed, Dostoyevsky had to race against time, in order to finish both *The Gambler* and *Crime and Punishment*. Anna Snitkina, a stenographer who would soon become his second wife, was a great help to the author during this difficult task. The first part of the novel appeared in the January 1866 issue of *The Russian Messenger*, and the last part was published in December 1866. The first part met with instant public success. An anonymous reviewer wrote that "the novel promises to be one of the most important works of the author of *The House of the Dead*". In his memoirs, the conservative belletrist Nikolay Strakhov recalled that in Russia *Crime and Punishment* was the literary sensation of 1866.

ПРЕСТУПЛЕНІЕ

И

НАКАЗАНІЕ

РОМАНЪ

ВЪ ШЕСТИ ЧАСТЯХЪ СЪ ЭПИЛОГОМЪ

Ѳ. М. ДОСТОЕВСКАГО

ИЗДАНІЕ ИСПРАВЛЕННОЕ

ТОМЪ II

ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ

Изданіе А. Базунова, Э. Праца и Я. Вейденштрауха

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The title page of the 1867 edition

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

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Anna Snitkina, who helped Dostoyevsky with writing this novel, and later became his second wife

PART I

CHAPTER I

On an exceptionally hot evening early in July a young man came out of the garret in which he lodged in S. Place and walked slowly, as though in hesitation, towards K. bridge.

He had successfully avoided meeting his landlady on the staircase. His garret was under the roof of a high, five-storied house and was more like a cupboard than a room. The landlady who provided him with garret, dinners, and attendance, lived on the floor below, and every time he went out he was obliged to pass her kitchen, the door of which invariably stood open. And each time he passed, the young man had a sick, frightened feeling, which made him scowl and feel ashamed. He was hopelessly in debt to his landlady, and was afraid of meeting her.

This was not because he was cowardly and abject, quite the contrary; but for some time past he had been in an overstrained irritable condition, verging on hypochondria. He had become so completely absorbed in himself, and isolated from his fellows that he dreaded meeting, not only his landlady, but anyone at all. He was crushed by poverty, but the anxieties of his position had of late ceased to weigh upon him. He had given up attending to matters of practical importance; he had lost all desire to do so. Nothing that any landlady could do had a real terror for him. But to be stopped on the stairs, to be forced to listen to her trivial, irrelevant gossip, to pestering demands for payment, threats and complaints, and to rack his brains for excuses, to prevaricate, to lie — no, rather than that, he would creep down the stairs like a cat and slip out unseen.

This evening, however, on coming out into the street, he became acutely aware of his fears.

“I want to attempt a thing *like that* and am frightened by these trifles,” he thought, with an odd smile. “Hm... yes, all is in a man’s hands and he lets it all slip from cowardice, that’s an axiom. It would be interesting to know what it is men are most afraid of. Taking a new step, uttering a new word is what they fear most.... But I am talking too much. It’s because I chatter that I do nothing. Or perhaps it is that I chatter because I do nothing. I’ve learned to chatter this last month, lying for days together in my den thinking... of Jack the Giant-killer. Why am I going there now? Am I

capable of *that*? Is *that* serious? It is not serious at all. It’s simply a fantasy to amuse myself; a plaything! Yes, maybe it is a plaything.”

The heat in the street was terrible: and the airlessness, the bustle and the plaster, scaffolding, bricks, and dust all about him, and that special Petersburg stench, so familiar to all who are unable to get out of town in summer — all worked painfully upon the young man’s already overwrought nerves. The insufferable stench from the pot-houses, which are particularly numerous in that part of the town, and the drunken men whom he met continually, although it was a working day, completed the revolting misery of the picture. An expression of the profoundest disgust gleamed for a moment in the young man’s refined face. He was, by the way, exceptionally handsome, above the average in height, slim, well-built, with beautiful dark eyes and dark brown hair. Soon he sank into deep thought, or more accurately speaking into a complete blankness of mind; he walked along not observing what was about him and not caring to observe it. From time to time, he would mutter something, from the habit of talking to himself, to which he had just confessed. At these moments he would become conscious that his ideas were sometimes in a tangle and that he was very weak; for two days he had scarcely tasted food.

He was so badly dressed that even a man accustomed to shabbiness would have been ashamed to be seen in the street in such rags. In that quarter of the town, however, scarcely any shortcoming in dress would have created surprise. Owing to the proximity of the Hay Market, the number of establishments of bad character, the preponderance of the trading and working class population crowded in these streets and alleys in the heart of Petersburg, types so various were to be seen in the streets that no figure, however queer, would have caused surprise. But there was such accumulated bitterness and contempt in the young man’s heart, that, in spite of all the fastidiousness of youth, he minded his rags least of all in the street. It was a different matter when he met with acquaintances or with former fellow students, whom, indeed, he disliked meeting at any time. And yet when a drunken man who, for some unknown reason, was being taken somewhere in a huge waggon dragged by a heavy dray horse, suddenly shouted at him as he drove past: “Hey there, German hatter” bawling at the top of his voice and pointing at him — the young man stopped suddenly and clutched tremulously at his hat. It was a tall round hat from Zimmerman’s, but completely worn out, rusty with age, all torn and

bespattered, brimless and bent on one side in a most unseemly fashion. Not shame, however, but quite another feeling akin to terror had overtaken him.

“I knew it,” he muttered in confusion, “I thought so! That’s the worst of all! Why, a stupid thing like this, the most trivial detail might spoil the whole plan. Yes, my hat is too noticeable.... It looks absurd and that makes it noticeable.... With my rags I ought to wear a cap, any sort of old pancake, but not this grotesque thing. Nobody wears such a hat, it would be noticed a mile off, it would be remembered.... What matters is that people would remember it, and that would give them a clue. For this business one should be as little conspicuous as possible.... Trifles, trifles are what matter! Why, it’s just such trifles that always ruin everything....”

He had not far to go; he knew indeed how many steps it was from the gate of his lodging house: exactly seven hundred and thirty. He had counted them once when he had been lost in dreams. At the time he had put no faith in those dreams and was only tantalising himself by their hideous but daring recklessness. Now, a month later, he had begun to look upon them differently, and, in spite of the monologues in which he jeered at his own impotence and indecision, he had involuntarily come to regard this “hideous” dream as an exploit to be attempted, although he still did not realise this himself. He was positively going now for a “rehearsal” of his project, and at every step his excitement grew more and more violent.

With a sinking heart and a nervous tremor, he went up to a huge house which on one side looked on to the canal, and on the other into the street. This house was let out in tiny tenements and was inhabited by working people of all kinds — tailors, locksmiths, cooks, Germans of sorts, girls picking up a living as best they could, petty clerks, etc. There was a continual coming and going through the two gates and in the two courtyards of the house. Three or four door-keepers were employed on the building. The young man was very glad to meet none of them, and at once slipped unnoticed through the door on the right, and up the staircase. It was a back staircase, dark and narrow, but he was familiar with it already, and knew his way, and he liked all these surroundings: in such darkness even the most inquisitive eyes were not to be dreaded.

“If I am so scared now, what would it be if it somehow came to pass that I were really going to do it?” he could not help asking himself as he reached the fourth storey. There his progress was barred by some porters who were engaged in moving furniture out of a flat. He knew that the flat had been

occupied by a German clerk in the civil service, and his family. This German was moving out then, and so the fourth floor on this staircase would be untenanted except by the old woman. “That’s a good thing anyway,” he thought to himself, as he rang the bell of the old woman’s flat. The bell gave a faint tinkle as though it were made of tin and not of copper. The little flats in such houses always have bells that ring like that. He had forgotten the note of that bell, and now its peculiar tinkle seemed to remind him of something and to bring it clearly before him.... He started, his nerves were terribly overstrained by now. In a little while, the door was opened a tiny crack: the old woman eyed her visitor with evident distrust through the crack, and nothing could be seen but her little eyes, glittering in the darkness. But, seeing a number of people on the landing, she grew bolder, and opened the door wide. The young man stepped into the dark entry, which was partitioned off from the tiny kitchen. The old woman stood facing him in silence and looking inquiringly at him. She was a diminutive, withered up old woman of sixty, with sharp malignant eyes and a sharp little nose. Her colourless, somewhat grizzled hair was thickly smeared with oil, and she wore no kerchief over it. Round her thin long neck, which looked like a hen’s leg, was knotted some sort of flannel rag, and, in spite of the heat, there hung flapping on her shoulders, a mangy fur cape, yellow with age. The old woman coughed and groaned at every instant. The young man must have looked at her with a rather peculiar expression, for a gleam of mistrust came into her eyes again.

“Raskolnikov, a student, I came here a month ago,” the young man made haste to mutter, with a half bow, remembering that he ought to be more polite.

“I remember, my good sir, I remember quite well your coming here,” the old woman said distinctly, still keeping her inquiring eyes on his face.

“And here... I am again on the same errand,” Raskolnikov continued, a little disconcerted and surprised at the old woman’s mistrust. “Perhaps she is always like that though, only I did not notice it the other time,” he thought with an uneasy feeling.

The old woman paused, as though hesitating; then stepped on one side, and pointing to the door of the room, she said, letting her visitor pass in front of her:

“Step in, my good sir.”

The little room into which the young man walked, with yellow paper on the walls, geraniums and muslin curtains in the windows, was brightly lighted up at that moment by the setting sun.

“So the sun will shine like this *then* too!” flashed as it were by chance through Raskolnikov’s mind, and with a rapid glance he scanned everything in the room, trying as far as possible to notice and remember its arrangement. But there was nothing special in the room. The furniture, all very old and of yellow wood, consisted of a sofa with a huge bent wooden back, an oval table in front of the sofa, a dressing-table with a looking-glass fixed on it between the windows, chairs along the walls and two or three half-penny prints in yellow frames, representing German damsels with birds in their hands — that was all. In the corner a light was burning before a small ikon. Everything was very clean; the floor and the furniture were brightly polished; everything shone.

“Lizaveta’s work,” thought the young man. There was not a speck of dust to be seen in the whole flat.

“It’s in the houses of spiteful old widows that one finds such cleanliness,” Raskolnikov thought again, and he stole a curious glance at the cotton curtain over the door leading into another tiny room, in which stood the old woman’s bed and chest of drawers and into which he had never looked before. These two rooms made up the whole flat.

“What do you want?” the old woman said severely, coming into the room and, as before, standing in front of him so as to look him straight in the face.

“I’ve brought something to pawn here,” and he drew out of his pocket an old-fashioned flat silver watch, on the back of which was engraved a globe; the chain was of steel.

“But the time is up for your last pledge. The month was up the day before yesterday.”

“I will bring you the interest for another month; wait a little.”

“But that’s for me to do as I please, my good sir, to wait or to sell your pledge at once.”

“How much will you give me for the watch, Alyona Ivanovna?”

“You come with such trifles, my good sir, it’s scarcely worth anything. I gave you two roubles last time for your ring and one could buy it quite new at a jeweler’s for a rouble and a half.”

“Give me four roubles for it, I shall redeem it, it was my father’s. I shall be getting some money soon.”

“A rouble and a half, and interest in advance, if you like!”

“A rouble and a half!” cried the young man.

“Please yourself” — and the old woman handed him back the watch. The young man took it, and was so angry that he was on the point of going away; but checked himself at once, remembering that there was nowhere else he could go, and that he had had another object also in coming.

“Hand it over,” he said roughly.

The old woman fumbled in her pocket for her keys, and disappeared behind the curtain into the other room. The young man, left standing alone in the middle of the room, listened inquisitively, thinking. He could hear her unlocking the chest of drawers.

“It must be the top drawer,” he reflected. “So she carries the keys in a pocket on the right. All in one bunch on a steel ring.... And there’s one key there, three times as big as all the others, with deep notches; that can’t be the key of the chest of drawers... then there must be some other chest or strong-box... that’s worth knowing. Strong-boxes always have keys like that... but how degrading it all is.”

The old woman came back.

“Here, sir: as we say ten copecks the rouble a month, so I must take fifteen copecks from a rouble and a half for the month in advance. But for the two roubles I lent you before, you owe me now twenty copecks on the same reckoning in advance. That makes thirty-five copecks altogether. So I must give you a rouble and fifteen copecks for the watch. Here it is.”

“What! only a rouble and fifteen copecks now!”

“Just so.”

The young man did not dispute it and took the money. He looked at the old woman, and was in no hurry to get away, as though there was still something he wanted to say or to do, but he did not himself quite know what.

“I may be bringing you something else in a day or two, Alyona Ivanovna — a valuable thing — silver — a cigarette-box, as soon as I get it back from a friend..,” he broke off in confusion.

“Well, we will talk about it then, sir.”

“Good-bye — are you always at home alone, your sister is not here with you?” He asked her as casually as possible as he went out into the passage.

“What business is she of yours, my good sir?”

“Oh, nothing particular, I simply asked. You are too quick.... Good-day, Alyona Ivanovna.”

Raskolnikov went out in complete confusion. This confusion became more and more intense. As he went down the stairs, he even stopped short, two or three times, as though suddenly struck by some thought. When he was in the street he cried out, “Oh, God, how loathsome it all is! and can I, can I possibly.... No, it’s nonsense, it’s rubbish!” he added resolutely. “And how could such an atrocious thing come into my head? What filthy things my heart is capable of. Yes, filthy above all, disgusting, loathsome, loathsome! — and for a whole month I’ve been....” But no words, no exclamations, could express his agitation. The feeling of intense repulsion, which had begun to oppress and torture his heart while he was on his way to the old woman, had by now reached such a pitch and had taken such a definite form that he did not know what to do with himself to escape from his wretchedness. He walked along the pavement like a drunken man, regardless of the passers-by, and jostling against them, and only came to his senses when he was in the next street. Looking round, he noticed that he was standing close to a tavern which was entered by steps leading from the pavement to the basement. At that instant two drunken men came out at the door, and abusing and supporting one another, they mounted the steps. Without stopping to think, Raskolnikov went down the steps at once. Till that moment he had never been into a tavern, but now he felt giddy and was tormented by a burning thirst. He longed for a drink of cold beer, and attributed his sudden weakness to the want of food. He sat down at a sticky little table in a dark and dirty corner; ordered some beer, and eagerly drank off the first glassful. At once he felt easier; and his thoughts became clear.

“All that’s nonsense,” he said hopefully, “and there is nothing in it all to worry about! It’s simply physical derangement. Just a glass of beer, a piece of dry bread — and in one moment the brain is stronger, the mind is clearer and the will is firm! Phew, how utterly petty it all is!”

But in spite of this scornful reflection, he was by now looking cheerful as though he were suddenly set free from a terrible burden: and he gazed round in a friendly way at the people in the room. But even at that moment he had a dim foreboding that this happier frame of mind was also not normal.

There were few people at the time in the tavern. Besides the two drunken men he had met on the steps, a group consisting of about five men and a girl with a concertina had gone out at the same time. Their departure left the room quiet and rather empty. The persons still in the tavern were a man who appeared to be an artisan, drunk, but not extremely so, sitting before a pot of beer, and his companion, a huge, stout man with a grey beard, in a short full-skirted coat. He was very drunk: and had dropped asleep on the bench; every now and then, he began as though in his sleep, cracking his fingers, with his arms wide apart and the upper part of his body bounding about on the bench, while he hummed some meaningless refrain, trying to recall some such lines as these:

“His wife a year he fondly loved His wife a — a year he — fondly loved.”

Or suddenly waking up again:

“Walking along the crowded row He met the one he used to know.”

But no one shared his enjoyment: his silent companion looked with positive hostility and mistrust at all these manifestations. There was another man in the room who looked somewhat like a retired government clerk. He was sitting apart, now and then sipping from his pot and looking round at the company. He, too, appeared to be in some agitation.

CHAPTER II

Raskolnikov was not used to crowds, and, as we said before, he avoided society of every sort, more especially of late. But now all at once he felt a desire to be with other people. Something new seemed to be taking place within him, and with it he felt a sort of thirst for company. He was so weary after a whole month of concentrated wretchedness and gloomy excitement that he longed to rest, if only for a moment, in some other world, whatever it might be; and, in spite of the filthiness of the surroundings, he was glad now to stay in the tavern.

The master of the establishment was in another room, but he frequently came down some steps into the main room, his jaunty, tarred boots with red turn-over tops coming into view each time before the rest of his person. He wore a full coat and a horribly greasy black satin waistcoat, with no cravat, and his whole face seemed smeared with oil like an iron lock. At the counter stood a boy of about fourteen, and there was another boy somewhat younger who handed whatever was wanted. On the counter lay some sliced cucumber, some pieces of dried black bread, and some fish, chopped up small, all smelling very bad. It was insufferably close, and so heavy with the fumes of spirits that five minutes in such an atmosphere might well make a man drunk.

There are chance meetings with strangers that interest us from the first moment, before a word is spoken. Such was the impression made on Raskolnikov by the person sitting a little distance from him, who looked like a retired clerk. The young man often recalled this impression afterwards, and even ascribed it to presentiment. He looked repeatedly at the clerk, partly no doubt because the latter was staring persistently at him, obviously anxious to enter into conversation. At the other persons in the room, including the tavern-keeper, the clerk looked as though he were used to their company, and weary of it, showing a shade of condescending contempt for them as persons of station and culture inferior to his own, with whom it would be useless for him to converse. He was a man over fifty, bald and grizzled, of medium height, and stoutly built. His face, bloated from continual drinking, was of a yellow, even greenish, tinge, with swollen eyelids out of which keen reddish eyes gleamed like little chinks. But there was something very strange in him; there was a light in his eyes as though

of intense feeling — perhaps there were even thought and intelligence, but at the same time there was a gleam of something like madness. He was wearing an old and hopelessly ragged black dress coat, with all its buttons missing except one, and that one he had buttoned, evidently clinging to this last trace of respectability. A crumpled shirt front, covered with spots and stains, protruded from his canvas waistcoat. Like a clerk, he wore no beard, nor moustache, but had been so long unshaven that his chin looked like a stiff greyish brush. And there was something respectable and like an official about his manner too. But he was restless; he ruffled up his hair and from time to time let his head drop into his hands dejectedly resting his ragged elbows on the stained and sticky table. At last he looked straight at Raskolnikov, and said loudly and resolutely:

“May I venture, honoured sir, to engage you in polite conversation? Forasmuch as, though your exterior would not command respect, my experience admonishes me that you are a man of education and not accustomed to drinking. I have always respected education when in conjunction with genuine sentiments, and I am besides a titular counsellor in rank. Marmeladov — such is my name; titular counsellor. I make bold to inquire — have you been in the service?”

“No, I am studying,” answered the young man, somewhat surprised at the grandiloquent style of the speaker and also at being so directly addressed. In spite of the momentary desire he had just been feeling for company of any sort, on being actually spoken to he felt immediately his habitual irritable and uneasy aversion for any stranger who approached or attempted to approach him.

“A student then, or formerly a student,” cried the clerk. “Just what I thought! I’m a man of experience, immense experience, sir,” and he tapped his forehead with his fingers in self-approval. “You’ve been a student or have attended some learned institution!... But allow me....” He got up, staggered, took up his jug and glass, and sat down beside the young man, facing him a little sideways. He was drunk, but spoke fluently and boldly, only occasionally losing the thread of his sentences and drawling his words. He pounced upon Raskolnikov as greedily as though he too had not spoken to a soul for a month.

“Honoured sir,” he began almost with solemnity, “poverty is not a vice, that’s a true saying. Yet I know too that drunkenness is not a virtue, and that that’s even truer. But beggary, honoured sir, beggary is a vice. In poverty

you may still retain your innate nobility of soul, but in beggary — never — no one. For beggary a man is not chased out of human society with a stick, he is swept out with a broom, so as to make it as humiliating as possible; and quite right, too, forasmuch as in beggary I am ready to be the first to humiliate myself. Hence the pot-house! Honoured sir, a month ago Mr. Lebeziatnikov gave my wife a beating, and my wife is a very different matter from me! Do you understand? Allow me to ask you another question out of simple curiosity: have you ever spent a night on a hay barge, on the Neva?"

"No, I have not happened to," answered Raskolnikov. "What do you mean?"

"Well, I've just come from one and it's the fifth night I've slept so...." He filled his glass, emptied it and paused. Bits of hay were in fact clinging to his clothes and sticking to his hair. It seemed quite probable that he had not undressed or washed for the last five days. His hands, particularly, were filthy. They were fat and red, with black nails.

His conversation seemed to excite a general though languid interest. The boys at the counter fell to sniggering. The innkeeper came down from the upper room, apparently on purpose to listen to the "funny fellow" and sat down at a little distance, yawning lazily, but with dignity. Evidently Marmeladov was a familiar figure here, and he had most likely acquired his weakness for high-flown speeches from the habit of frequently entering into conversation with strangers of all sorts in the tavern. This habit develops into a necessity in some drunkards, and especially in those who are looked after sharply and kept in order at home. Hence in the company of other drinkers they try to justify themselves and even if possible obtain consideration.

"Funny fellow!" pronounced the innkeeper. "And why don't you work, why aren't you at your duty, if you are in the service?"

"Why am I not at my duty, honoured sir," Marmeladov went on, addressing himself exclusively to Raskolnikov, as though it had been he who put that question to him. "Why am I not at my duty? Does not my heart ache to think what a useless worm I am? A month ago when Mr. Lebeziatnikov beat my wife with his own hands, and I lay drunk, didn't I suffer? Excuse me, young man, has it ever happened to you... hm... well, to petition hopelessly for a loan?"

"Yes, it has. But what do you mean by hopelessly?"

“Hopelessly in the fullest sense, when you know beforehand that you will get nothing by it. You know, for instance, beforehand with positive certainty that this man, this most reputable and exemplary citizen, will on no consideration give you money; and indeed I ask you why should he? For he knows of course that I shan’t pay it back. From compassion? But Mr. Lebeziatnikov who keeps up with modern ideas explained the other day that compassion is forbidden nowadays by science itself, and that that’s what is done now in England, where there is political economy. Why, I ask you, should he give it to me? And yet though I know beforehand that he won’t, I set off to him and...”

“Why do you go?” put in Raskolnikov.

“Well, when one has no one, nowhere else one can go! For every man must have somewhere to go. Since there are times when one absolutely must go somewhere! When my own daughter first went out with a yellow ticket, then I had to go... (for my daughter has a yellow passport),” he added in parenthesis, looking with a certain uneasiness at the young man. “No matter, sir, no matter!” he went on hurriedly and with apparent composure when both the boys at the counter guffawed and even the innkeeper smiled — “No matter, I am not confounded by the wagging of their heads; for everyone knows everything about it already, and all that is secret is made open. And I accept it all, not with contempt, but with humility. So be it! So be it! ‘Behold the man!’ Excuse me, young man, can you.... No, to put it more strongly and more distinctly; not *can* you but *dare* you, looking upon me, assert that I am not a pig?”

The young man did not answer a word.

“Well,” the orator began again stolidly and with even increased dignity, after waiting for the laughter in the room to subside. “Well, so be it, I am a pig, but she is a lady! I have the semblance of a beast, but Katerina Ivanovna, my spouse, is a person of education and an officer’s daughter. Granted, granted, I am a scoundrel, but she is a woman of a noble heart, full of sentiments, refined by education. And yet... oh, if only she felt for me! Honoured sir, honoured sir, you know every man ought to have at least one place where people feel for him! But Katerina Ivanovna, though she is magnanimous, she is unjust.... And yet, although I realise that when she pulls my hair she only does it out of pity — for I repeat without being ashamed, she pulls my hair, young man,” he declared with redoubled dignity, hearing the sniggering again— “but, my God, if she would but

once.... But no, no! It’s all in vain and it’s no use talking! No use talking! For more than once, my wish did come true and more than once she has felt for me but... such is my fate and I am a beast by nature!”

“Rather!” assented the innkeeper yawning. Marmeladov struck his fist resolutely on the table.

“Such is my fate! Do you know, sir, do you know, I have sold her very stockings for drink? Not her shoes — that would be more or less in the order of things, but her stockings, her stockings I have sold for drink! Her mohair shawl I sold for drink, a present to her long ago, her own property, not mine; and we live in a cold room and she caught cold this winter and has begun coughing and spitting blood too. We have three little children and Katerina Ivanovna is at work from morning till night; she is scrubbing and cleaning and washing the children, for she’s been used to cleanliness from a child. But her chest is weak and she has a tendency to consumption and I feel it! Do you suppose I don’t feel it? And the more I drink the more I feel it. That’s why I drink too. I try to find sympathy and feeling in drink.... I drink so that I may suffer twice as much!” And as though in despair he laid his head down on the table.

“Young man,” he went on, raising his head again, “in your face I seem to read some trouble of mind. When you came in I read it, and that was why I addressed you at once. For in unfolding to you the story of my life, I do not wish to make myself a laughing-stock before these idle listeners, who indeed know all about it already, but I am looking for a man of feeling and education. Know then that my wife was educated in a high-class school for the daughters of noblemen, and on leaving she danced the shawl dance before the governor and other personages for which she was presented with a gold medal and a certificate of merit. The medal... well, the medal of course was sold — long ago, hm... but the certificate of merit is in her trunk still and not long ago she showed it to our landlady. And although she is most continually on bad terms with the landlady, yet she wanted to tell someone or other of her past honours and of the happy days that are gone. I don’t condemn her for it, I don’t blame her, for the one thing left her is recollection of the past, and all the rest is dust and ashes. Yes, yes, she is a lady of spirit, proud and determined. She scrubs the floors herself and has nothing but black bread to eat, but won’t allow herself to be treated with disrespect. That’s why she would not overlook Mr. Lebeziatnikov’s rudeness to her, and so when he gave her a beating for it, she took to her

bed more from the hurt to her feelings than from the blows. She was a widow when I married her, with three children, one smaller than the other. She married her first husband, an infantry officer, for love, and ran away with him from her father’s house. She was exceedingly fond of her husband; but he gave way to cards, got into trouble and with that he died. He used to beat her at the end: and although she paid him back, of which I have authentic documentary evidence, to this day she speaks of him with tears and she throws him up to me; and I am glad, I am glad that, though only in imagination, she should think of herself as having once been happy.... And she was left at his death with three children in a wild and remote district where I happened to be at the time; and she was left in such hopeless poverty that, although I have seen many ups and downs of all sort, I don’t feel equal to describing it even. Her relations had all thrown her off. And she was proud, too, excessively proud.... And then, honoured sir, and then, I, being at the time a widower, with a daughter of fourteen left me by my first wife, offered her my hand, for I could not bear the sight of such suffering. You can judge the extremity of her calamities, that she, a woman of education and culture and distinguished family, should have consented to be my wife. But she did! Weeping and sobbing and wringing her hands, she married me! For she had nowhere to turn! Do you understand, sir, do you understand what it means when you have absolutely nowhere to turn? No, that you don’t understand yet.... And for a whole year, I performed my duties conscientiously and faithfully, and did not touch this” (he tapped the jug with his finger), “for I have feelings. But even so, I could not please her; and then I lost my place too, and that through no fault of mine but through changes in the office; and then I did touch it!... It will be a year and a half ago soon since we found ourselves at last after many wanderings and numerous calamities in this magnificent capital, adorned with innumerable monuments. Here I obtained a situation.... I obtained it and I lost it again. Do you understand? This time it was through my own fault I lost it: for my weakness had come out.... We have now part of a room at Amalia Fyodorovna Lippevechsel’s; and what we live upon and what we pay our rent with, I could not say. There are a lot of people living there besides ourselves. Dirt and disorder, a perfect Bedlam... hm... yes... And meanwhile my daughter by my first wife has grown up; and what my daughter has had to put up with from her step-mother whilst she was growing up, I won’t speak of. For, though Katerina Ivanovna is full of generous feelings, she is a

spirited lady, irritable and short — tempered.... Yes. But it’s no use going over that! Sonia, as you may well fancy, has had no education. I did make an effort four years ago to give her a course of geography and universal history, but as I was not very well up in those subjects myself and we had no suitable books, and what books we had... hm, anyway we have not even those now, so all our instruction came to an end. We stopped at Cyrus of Persia. Since she has attained years of maturity, she has read other books of romantic tendency and of late she had read with great interest a book she got through Mr. Lebeziatnikov, Lewes’ Physiology — do you know it? — and even recounted extracts from it to us: and that’s the whole of her education. And now may I venture to address you, honoured sir, on my own account with a private question. Do you suppose that a respectable poor girl can earn much by honest work? Not fifteen farthings a day can she earn, if she is respectable and has no special talent and that without putting her work down for an instant! And what’s more, Ivan Ivanitch Klopstock the civil counsellor — have you heard of him? — has not to this day paid her for the half-dozen linen shirts she made him and drove her roughly away, stamping and reviling her, on the pretext that the shirt collars were not made like the pattern and were put in askew. And there are the little ones hungry.... And Katerina Ivanovna walking up and down and wringing her hands, her cheeks flushed red, as they always are in that disease: ‘Here you live with us,’ says she, ‘you eat and drink and are kept warm and you do nothing to help.’ And much she gets to eat and drink when there is not a crust for the little ones for three days! I was lying at the time... well, what of it! I was lying drunk and I heard my Sonia speaking (she is a gentle creature with a soft little voice... fair hair and such a pale, thin little face). She said: ‘Katerina Ivanovna, am I really to do a thing like that?’ And Darya Frantsovna, a woman of evil character and very well known to the police, had two or three times tried to get at her through the landlady. ‘And why not?’ said Katerina Ivanovna with a jeer, ‘you are something mighty precious to be so careful of!’ But don’t blame her, don’t blame her, honoured sir, don’t blame her! She was not herself when she spoke, but driven to distraction by her illness and the crying of the hungry children; and it was said more to wound her than anything else.... For that’s Katerina Ivanovna’s character, and when children cry, even from hunger, she falls to beating them at once. At six o’clock I saw Sonia get up, put on her kerchief and her cape, and go out of the room and about nine o’clock she came back.

She walked straight up to Katerina Ivanovna and she laid thirty roubles on the table before her in silence. She did not utter a word, she did not even look at her, she simply picked up our big green *drap de dames* shawl (we have a shawl, made of *drap de dames*), put it over her head and face and lay down on the bed with her face to the wall; only her little shoulders and her body kept shuddering.... And I went on lying there, just as before.... And then I saw, young man, I saw Katerina Ivanovna, in the same silence go up to Sonia's little bed; she was on her knees all the evening kissing Sonia's feet, and would not get up, and then they both fell asleep in each other's arms... together, together... yes... and I... lay drunk."

Marmeladov stopped short, as though his voice had failed him. Then he hurriedly filled his glass, drank, and cleared his throat.

"Since then, sir," he went on after a brief pause— "Since then, owing to an unfortunate occurrence and through information given by evil-intentioned persons — in all which Darya Frantsovna took a leading part on the pretext that she had been treated with want of respect — since then my daughter Sofya Semyonovna has been forced to take a yellow ticket, and owing to that she is unable to go on living with us. For our landlady, Amalia Fyodorovna would not hear of it (though she had backed up Darya Frantsovna before) and Mr. Lebeziatnikov too... hm.... All the trouble between him and Katerina Ivanovna was on Sonia's account. At first he was for making up to Sonia himself and then all of a sudden he stood on his dignity: 'how,' said he, 'can a highly educated man like me live in the same rooms with a girl like that?' And Katerina Ivanovna would not let it pass, she stood up for her... and so that's how it happened. And Sonia comes to us now, mostly after dark; she comforts Katerina Ivanovna and gives her all she can.... She has a room at the Kapernaumovs' the tailors, she lodges with them; Kapernaumov is a lame man with a cleft palate and all of his numerous family have cleft palates too. And his wife, too, has a cleft palate. They all live in one room, but Sonia has her own, partitioned off.... Hm... yes... very poor people and all with cleft palates... yes. Then I got up in the morning, and put on my rags, lifted up my hands to heaven and set off to his excellency Ivan Afanasyvitch. His excellency Ivan Afanasyvitch, do you know him? No? Well, then, it's a man of God you don't know. He is wax... wax before the face of the Lord; even as wax melteth!... His eyes were dim when he heard my story. 'Marmeladov, once already you have deceived my expectations... I'll take you once more on my own responsibility' — that's

what he said, ‘remember,’ he said, ‘and now you can go.’ I kissed the dust at his feet — in thought only, for in reality he would not have allowed me to do it, being a statesman and a man of modern political and enlightened ideas. I returned home, and when I announced that I’d been taken back into the service and should receive a salary, heavens, what a to-do there was!...”

Marmeladov stopped again in violent excitement. At that moment a whole party of revellers already drunk came in from the street, and the sounds of a hired concertina and the cracked piping voice of a child of seven singing “The Hamlet” were heard in the entry. The room was filled with noise. The tavern-keeper and the boys were busy with the new-comers. Marmeladov paying no attention to the new arrivals continued his story. He appeared by now to be extremely weak, but as he became more and more drunk, he became more and more talkative. The recollection of his recent success in getting the situation seemed to revive him, and was positively reflected in a sort of radiance on his face. Raskolnikov listened attentively.

“That was five weeks ago, sir. Yes.... As soon as Katerina Ivanovna and Sonia heard of it, mercy on us, it was as though I stepped into the kingdom of Heaven. It used to be: you can lie like a beast, nothing but abuse. Now they were walking on tiptoe, hushing the children. ‘Semyon Zaharovitch is tired with his work at the office, he is resting, shh!’ They made me coffee before I went to work and boiled cream for me! They began to get real cream for me, do you hear that? And how they managed to get together the money for a decent outfit — eleven roubles, fifty copecks, I can’t guess. Boots, cotton shirt-fronts — most magnificent, a uniform, they got up all in splendid style, for eleven roubles and a half. The first morning I came back from the office I found Katerina Ivanovna had cooked two courses for dinner — soup and salt meat with horse radish — which we had never dreamed of till then. She had not any dresses... none at all, but she got herself up as though she were going on a visit; and not that she’d anything to do it with, she smartened herself up with nothing at all, she’d done her hair nicely, put on a clean collar of some sort, cuffs, and there she was, quite a different person, she was younger and better looking. Sonia, my little darling, had only helped with money ‘for the time,’ she said, ‘it won’t do for me to come and see you too often. After dark maybe when no one can see.’ Do you hear, do you hear? I lay down for a nap after dinner and what do you think: though Katerina Ivanovna had quarrelled to the last degree with our landlady Amalia Fyodorovna only a week before, she could not

resist then asking her in to coffee. For two hours they were sitting, whispering together. ‘Semyon Zaharovitch is in the service again, now, and receiving a salary,’ says she, ‘and he went himself to his excellency and his excellency himself came out to him, made all the others wait and led Semyon Zaharovitch by the hand before everybody into his study.’ Do you hear, do you hear? ‘To be sure,’ says he, ‘Semyon Zaharovitch, remembering your past services,’ says he, ‘and in spite of your propensity to that foolish weakness, since you promise now and since moreover we’ve got on badly without you,’ (do you hear, do you hear;) ‘and so,’ says he, ‘I rely now on your word as a gentleman.’ And all that, let me tell you, she has simply made up for herself, and not simply out of wantonness, for the sake of bragging; no, she believes it all herself, she amuses herself with her own fancies, upon my word she does! And I don’t blame her for it, no, I don’t blame her!... Six days ago when I brought her my first earnings in full — twenty-three roubles forty copecks altogether — she called me her poppet: ‘poppet,’ said she, ‘my little poppet.’ And when we were by ourselves, you understand? You would not think me a beauty, you would not think much of me as a husband, would you?... Well, she pinched my cheek, ‘my little poppet,’ said she.”

Marmeladov broke off, tried to smile, but suddenly his chin began to twitch. He controlled himself however. The tavern, the degraded appearance of the man, the five nights in the hay barge, and the pot of spirits, and yet this poignant love for his wife and children bewildered his listener. Raskolnikov listened intently but with a sick sensation. He felt vexed that he had come here.

“Honoured sir, honoured sir,” cried Marmeladov recovering himself— “Oh, sir, perhaps all this seems a laughing matter to you, as it does to others, and perhaps I am only worrying you with the stupidity of all the trivial details of my home life, but it is not a laughing matter to me. For I can feel it all.... And the whole of that heavenly day of my life and the whole of that evening I passed in fleeting dreams of how I would arrange it all, and how I would dress all the children, and how I should give her rest, and how I should rescue my own daughter from dishonour and restore her to the bosom of her family.... And a great deal more.... Quite excusable, sir. Well, then, sir” (Marmeladov suddenly gave a sort of start, raised his head and gazed intently at his listener) “well, on the very next day after all those dreams, that is to say, exactly five days ago, in the evening, by a cunning

trick, like a thief in the night, I stole from Katerina Ivanovna the key of her box, took out what was left of my earnings, how much it was I have forgotten, and now look at me, all of you! It’s the fifth day since I left home, and they are looking for me there and it’s the end of my employment, and my uniform is lying in a tavern on the Egyptian bridge. I exchanged it for the garments I have on... and it’s the end of everything!”

Marmeladov struck his forehead with his fist, clenched his teeth, closed his eyes and leaned heavily with his elbow on the table. But a minute later his face suddenly changed and with a certain assumed slyness and affectation of bravado, he glanced at Raskolnikov, laughed and said:

“This morning I went to see Sonia, I went to ask her for a pick-me-up! He-he-he!”

“You don’t say she gave it to you?” cried one of the new-comers; he shouted the words and went off into a guffaw.

“This very quart was bought with her money,” Marmeladov declared, addressing himself exclusively to Raskolnikov. “Thirty copecks she gave me with her own hands, her last, all she had, as I saw.... She said nothing, she only looked at me without a word.... Not on earth, but up yonder... they grieve over men, they weep, but they don’t blame them, they don’t blame them! But it hurts more, it hurts more when they don’t blame! Thirty copecks yes! And maybe she needs them now, eh? What do you think, my dear sir? For now she’s got to keep up her appearance. It costs money, that smartness, that special smartness, you know? Do you understand? And there’s pomatum, too, you see, she must have things; petticoats, starched ones, shoes, too, real jaunty ones to show off her foot when she has to step over a puddle. Do you understand, sir, do you understand what all that smartness means? And here I, her own father, here I took thirty copecks of that money for a drink! And I am drinking it! And I have already drunk it! Come, who will have pity on a man like me, eh? Are you sorry for me, sir, or not? Tell me, sir, are you sorry or not? He-he-he!”

He would have filled his glass, but there was no drink left. The pot was empty.

“What are you to be pitied for?” shouted the tavern-keeper who was again near them.

Shouts of laughter and even oaths followed. The laughter and the oaths came from those who were listening and also from those who had heard

nothing but were simply looking at the figure of the discharged government clerk.

“To be pitied! Why am I to be pitied?” Marmeladov suddenly declaimed, standing up with his arm outstretched, as though he had been only waiting for that question.

“Why am I to be pitied, you say? Yes! there’s nothing to pity me for! I ought to be crucified, crucified on a cross, not pitied! Crucify me, oh judge, crucify me but pity me! And then I will go of myself to be crucified, for it’s not merry-making I seek but tears and tribulation!... Do you suppose, you that sell, that this pint of yours has been sweet to me? It was tribulation I sought at the bottom of it, tears and tribulation, and have found it, and I have tasted it; but He will pity us Who has had pity on all men, Who has understood all men and all things, He is the One, He too is the judge. He will come in that day and He will ask: ‘Where is the daughter who gave herself for her cross, consumptive step-mother and for the little children of another? Where is the daughter who had pity upon the filthy drunkard, her earthly father, undismayed by his beastliness?’ And He will say, ‘Come to me! I have already forgiven thee once.... I have forgiven thee once.... Thy sins which are many are forgiven thee for thou hast loved much....’ And he will forgive my Sonia, He will forgive, I know it... I felt it in my heart when I was with her just now! And He will judge and will forgive all, the good and the evil, the wise and the meek.... And when He has done with all of them, then He will summon us. ‘You too come forth,’ He will say, ‘Come forth ye drunkards, come forth, ye weak ones, come forth, ye children of shame!’ And we shall all come forth, without shame and shall stand before him. And He will say unto us, ‘Ye are swine, made in the Image of the Beast and with his mark; but come ye also!’ And the wise ones and those of understanding will say, ‘Oh Lord, why dost Thou receive these men?’ And He will say, ‘This is why I receive them, oh ye wise, this is why I receive them, oh ye of understanding, that not one of them believed himself to be worthy of this.’ And He will hold out His hands to us and we shall fall down before him... and we shall weep... and we shall understand all things! Then we shall understand all!... and all will understand, Katerina Ivanovna even... she will understand.... Lord, Thy kingdom come!” And he sank down on the bench exhausted, and helpless, looking at no one, apparently oblivious of his surroundings and plunged in deep thought. His words had

created a certain impression; there was a moment of silence; but soon laughter and oaths were heard again.

“That’s his notion!”

“Talked himself silly!”

“A fine clerk he is!”

And so on, and so on.

“Let us go, sir,” said Marmeladov all at once, raising his head and addressing Raskolnikov— “come along with me... Kozel’s house, looking into the yard. I’m going to Katerina Ivanovna — time I did.”

Raskolnikov had for some time been wanting to go and he had meant to help him. Marmeladov was much unsteadier on his legs than in his speech and leaned heavily on the young man. They had two or three hundred paces to go. The drunken man was more and more overcome by dismay and confusion as they drew nearer the house.

“It’s not Katerina Ivanovna I am afraid of now,” he muttered in agitation — “and that she will begin pulling my hair. What does my hair matter! Bother my hair! That’s what I say! Indeed it will be better if she does begin pulling it, that’s not what I am afraid of... it’s her eyes I am afraid of... yes, her eyes... the red on her cheeks, too, frightens me... and her breathing too.... Have you noticed how people in that disease breathe... when they are excited? I am frightened of the children’s crying, too.... For if Sonia has not taken them food... I don’t know what’s happened! I don’t know! But blows I am not afraid of.... Know, sir, that such blows are not a pain to me, but even an enjoyment. In fact I can’t get on without it.... It’s better so. Let her strike me, it relieves her heart... it’s better so... There is the house. The house of Kozel, the cabinet-maker... a German, well-to-do. Lead the way!”

They went in from the yard and up to the fourth storey. The staircase got darker and darker as they went up. It was nearly eleven o’clock and although in summer in Petersburg there is no real night, yet it was quite dark at the top of the stairs.

A grimy little door at the very top of the stairs stood ajar. A very poor-looking room about ten paces long was lighted up by a candle-end; the whole of it was visible from the entrance. It was all in disorder, littered up with rags of all sorts, especially children’s garments. Across the furthest corner was stretched a ragged sheet. Behind it probably was the bed. There was nothing in the room except two chairs and a sofa covered with American leather, full of holes, before which stood an old deal kitchen-

table, unpainted and uncovered. At the edge of the table stood a smoldering tallow-candle in an iron candlestick. It appeared that the family had a room to themselves, not part of a room, but their room was practically a passage. The door leading to the other rooms, or rather cupboards, into which Amalia Lippevechsel’s flat was divided stood half open, and there was shouting, uproar and laughter within. People seemed to be playing cards and drinking tea there. Words of the most unceremonious kind flew out from time to time.

Raskolnikov recognised Katerina Ivanovna at once. She was a rather tall, slim and graceful woman, terribly emaciated, with magnificent dark brown hair and with a hectic flush in her cheeks. She was pacing up and down in her little room, pressing her hands against her chest; her lips were parched and her breathing came in nervous broken gasps. Her eyes glittered as in fever and looked about with a harsh immovable stare. And that consumptive and excited face with the last flickering light of the candle-end playing upon it made a sickening impression. She seemed to Raskolnikov about thirty years old and was certainly a strange wife for Marmeladov.... She had not heard them and did not notice them coming in. She seemed to be lost in thought, hearing and seeing nothing. The room was close, but she had not opened the window; a stench rose from the staircase, but the door on to the stairs was not closed. From the inner rooms clouds of tobacco smoke floated in, she kept coughing, but did not close the door. The youngest child, a girl of six, was asleep, sitting curled up on the floor with her head on the sofa. A boy a year older stood crying and shaking in the corner, probably he had just had a beating. Beside him stood a girl of nine years old, tall and thin, wearing a thin and ragged chemise with an ancient cashmere pelisse flung over her bare shoulders, long outgrown and barely reaching her knees. Her arm, as thin as a stick, was round her brother’s neck. She was trying to comfort him, whispering something to him, and doing all she could to keep him from whimpering again. At the same time her large dark eyes, which looked larger still from the thinness of her frightened face, were watching her mother with alarm. Marmeladov did not enter the door, but dropped on his knees in the very doorway, pushing Raskolnikov in front of him. The woman seeing a stranger stopped indifferently facing him, coming to herself for a moment and apparently wondering what he had come for. But evidently she decided that he was going into the next room, as he had to pass through hers to get there. Taking

no further notice of him, she walked towards the outer door to close it and uttered a sudden scream on seeing her husband on his knees in the doorway.

“Ah!” she cried out in a frenzy, “he has come back! The criminal! the monster!... And where is the money? What’s in your pocket, show me! And your clothes are all different! Where are your clothes? Where is the money! Speak!”

And she fell to searching him. Marmeladov submissively and obediently held up both arms to facilitate the search. Not a farthing was there.

“Where is the money?” she cried— “Mercy on us, can he have drunk it all? There were twelve silver roubles left in the chest!” and in a fury she seized him by the hair and dragged him into the room. Marmeladov seconded her efforts by meekly crawling along on his knees.

“And this is a consolation to me! This does not hurt me, but is a positive con-so-la-tion, ho-nou-red sir,” he called out, shaken to and fro by his hair and even once striking the ground with his forehead. The child asleep on the floor woke up, and began to cry. The boy in the corner losing all control began trembling and screaming and rushed to his sister in violent terror, almost in a fit. The eldest girl was shaking like a leaf.

“He’s drunk it! he’s drunk it all,” the poor woman screamed in despair— “and his clothes are gone! And they are hungry, hungry!” — and wringing her hands she pointed to the children. “Oh, accursed life! And you, are you not ashamed?” — she pounced all at once upon Raskolnikov— “from the tavern! Have you been drinking with him? You have been drinking with him, too! Go away!”

The young man was hastening away without uttering a word. The inner door was thrown wide open and inquisitive faces were peering in at it. Coarse laughing faces with pipes and cigarettes and heads wearing caps thrust themselves in at the doorway. Further in could be seen figures in dressing gowns flung open, in costumes of unseemly scantiness, some of them with cards in their hands. They were particularly diverted, when Marmeladov, dragged about by his hair, shouted that it was a consolation to him. They even began to come into the room; at last a sinister shrill outcry was heard: this came from Amalia Lippevechsel herself pushing her way amongst them and trying to restore order after her own fashion and for the hundredth time to frighten the poor woman by ordering her with coarse abuse to clear out of the room next day. As he went out, Raskolnikov had time to put his hand into his pocket, to snatch up the coppers he had

received in exchange for his rouble in the tavern and to lay them unnoticed on the window. Afterwards on the stairs, he changed his mind and would have gone back.

“What a stupid thing I’ve done,” he thought to himself, “they have Sonia and I want it myself.” But reflecting that it would be impossible to take it back now and that in any case he would not have taken it, he dismissed it with a wave of his hand and went back to his lodging. “Sonia wants pomatum too,” he said as he walked along the street, and he laughed malignantly— “such smartness costs money.... Hm! And maybe Sonia herself will be bankrupt to-day, for there is always a risk, hunting big game... digging for gold... then they would all be without a crust to-morrow except for my money. Hurrah for Sonia! What a mine they’ve dug there! And they’re making the most of it! Yes, they are making the most of it! They’ve wept over it and grown used to it. Man grows used to everything, the scoundrel!”

He sank into thought.

“And what if I am wrong,” he cried suddenly after a moment’s thought. “What if man is not really a scoundrel, man in general, I mean, the whole race of mankind — then all the rest is prejudice, simply artificial terrors and there are no barriers and it’s all as it should be.”

CHAPTER III

He waked up late next day after a broken sleep. But his sleep had not refreshed him; he waked up bilious, irritable, ill-tempered, and looked with hatred at his room. It was a tiny cupboard of a room about six paces in length. It had a poverty-stricken appearance with its dusty yellow paper peeling off the walls, and it was so low-pitched that a man of more than average height was ill at ease in it and felt every moment that he would knock his head against the ceiling. The furniture was in keeping with the room: there were three old chairs, rather rickety; a painted table in the corner on which lay a few manuscripts and books; the dust that lay thick upon them showed that they had been long untouched. A big clumsy sofa occupied almost the whole of one wall and half the floor space of the room; it was once covered with chintz, but was now in rags and served Raskolnikov as a bed. Often he went to sleep on it, as he was, without undressing, without sheets, wrapped in his old student's overcoat, with his head on one little pillow, under which he heaped up all the linen he had, clean and dirty, by way of a bolster. A little table stood in front of the sofa.

It would have been difficult to sink to a lower ebb of disorder, but to Raskolnikov in his present state of mind this was positively agreeable. He had got completely away from everyone, like a tortoise in its shell, and even the sight of a servant girl who had to wait upon him and looked sometimes into his room made him writhe with nervous irritation. He was in the condition that overtakes some monomaniacs entirely concentrated upon one thing. His landlady had for the last fortnight given up sending him in meals, and he had not yet thought of expostulating with her, though he went without his dinner. Nastasya, the cook and only servant, was rather pleased at the lodger's mood and had entirely given up sweeping and doing his room, only once a week or so she would stray into his room with a broom. She waked him up that day.

"Get up, why are you asleep?" she called to him. "It's past nine, I have brought you some tea; will you have a cup? I should think you're fairly starving?"

Raskolnikov opened his eyes, started and recognised Nastasya.

"From the landlady, eh?" he asked, slowly and with a sickly face sitting up on the sofa.

“From the landlady, indeed!”

She set before him her own cracked teapot full of weak and stale tea and laid two yellow lumps of sugar by the side of it.

“Here, Nastasya, take it please,” he said, fumbling in his pocket (for he had slept in his clothes) and taking out a handful of coppers— “run and buy me a loaf. And get me a little sausage, the cheapest, at the pork-butcher’s.”

“The loaf I’ll fetch you this very minute, but wouldn’t you rather have some cabbage soup instead of sausage? It’s capital soup, yesterday’s. I saved it for you yesterday, but you came in late. It’s fine soup.”

When the soup had been brought, and he had begun upon it, Nastasya sat down beside him on the sofa and began chatting. She was a country peasant-woman and a very talkative one.

“Praskovya Pavlovna means to complain to the police about you,” she said.

He scowled.

“To the police? What does she want?”

“You don’t pay her money and you won’t turn out of the room. That’s what she wants, to be sure.”

“The devil, that’s the last straw,” he muttered, grinding his teeth, “no, that would not suit me... just now. She is a fool,” he added aloud. “I’ll go and talk to her to-day.”

“Fool she is and no mistake, just as I am. But why, if you are so clever, do you lie here like a sack and have nothing to show for it? One time you used to go out, you say, to teach children. But why is it you do nothing now?”

“I am doing...” Raskolnikov began sullenly and reluctantly.

“What are you doing?”

“Work...”

“What sort of work?”

“I am thinking,” he answered seriously after a pause.

Nastasya was overcome with a fit of laughter. She was given to laughter and when anything amused her, she laughed inaudibly, quivering and shaking all over till she felt ill.

“And have you made much money by your thinking?” she managed to articulate at last.

“One can’t go out to give lessons without boots. And I’m sick of it.”

“Don’t quarrel with your bread and butter.”

“They pay so little for lessons. What’s the use of a few coppers?” he answered, reluctantly, as though replying to his own thought.

“And you want to get a fortune all at once?”

He looked at her strangely.

“Yes, I want a fortune,” he answered firmly, after a brief pause.

“Don’t be in such a hurry, you quite frighten me! Shall I get you the loaf or not?”

“As you please.”

“Ah, I forgot! A letter came for you yesterday when you were out.”

“A letter? for me! from whom?”

“I can’t say. I gave three copecks of my own to the postman for it. Will you pay me back?”

“Then bring it to me, for God’s sake, bring it,” cried Raskolnikov greatly excited— “good God!”

A minute later the letter was brought him. That was it: from his mother, from the province of R —— . He turned pale when he took it. It was a long while since he had received a letter, but another feeling also suddenly stabbed his heart.

“Nastasya, leave me alone, for goodness’ sake; here are your three copecks, but for goodness’ sake, make haste and go!”

The letter was quivering in his hand; he did not want to open it in her presence; he wanted to be left *alone* with this letter. When Nastasya had gone out, he lifted it quickly to his lips and kissed it; then he gazed intently at the address, the small, sloping handwriting, so dear and familiar, of the mother who had once taught him to read and write. He delayed; he seemed almost afraid of something. At last he opened it; it was a thick heavy letter, weighing over two ounces, two large sheets of note paper were covered with very small handwriting.

“My dear Rodya,” wrote his mother— “it’s two months since I last had a talk with you by letter which has distressed me and even kept me awake at night, thinking. But I am sure you will not blame me for my inevitable silence. You know how I love you; you are all we have to look to, Dounia and I, you are our all, our one hope, our one stay. What a grief it was to me when I heard that you had given up the university some months ago, for want of means to keep yourself and that you had lost your lessons and your other work! How could I help you out of my hundred and twenty roubles a year pension? The fifteen roubles I sent you four months ago I borrowed, as

you know, on security of my pension, from Vassily Ivanovitch Vahrushin a merchant of this town. He is a kind-hearted man and was a friend of your father's too. But having given him the right to receive the pension, I had to wait till the debt was paid off and that is only just done, so that I've been unable to send you anything all this time. But now, thank God, I believe I shall be able to send you something more and in fact we may congratulate ourselves on our good fortune now, of which I hasten to inform you. In the first place, would you have guessed, dear Rodya, that your sister has been living with me for the last six weeks and we shall not be separated in the future. Thank God, her sufferings are over, but I will tell you everything in order, so that you may know just how everything has happened and all that we have hitherto concealed from you. When you wrote to me two months ago that you had heard that Dounia had a great deal to put up with in the Svidrigraïlovs' house, when you wrote that and asked me to tell you all about it — what could I write in answer to you? If I had written the whole truth to you, I dare say you would have thrown up everything and have come to us, even if you had to walk all the way, for I know your character and your feelings, and you would not let your sister be insulted. I was in despair myself, but what could I do? And, besides, I did not know the whole truth myself then. What made it all so difficult was that Dounia received a hundred roubles in advance when she took the place as governess in their family, on condition of part of her salary being deducted every month, and so it was impossible to throw up the situation without repaying the debt. This sum (now I can explain it all to you, my precious Rodya) she took chiefly in order to send you sixty roubles, which you needed so terribly then and which you received from us last year. We deceived you then, writing that this money came from Dounia's savings, but that was not so, and now I tell you all about it, because, thank God, things have suddenly changed for the better, and that you may know how Dounia loves you and what a heart she has. At first indeed Mr. Svidrigaïlov treated her very rudely and used to make disrespectful and jeering remarks at table.... But I don't want to go into all those painful details, so as not to worry you for nothing when it is now all over. In short, in spite of the kind and generous behaviour of Marfa Petrovna, Mr. Svidrigaïlov's wife, and all the rest of the household, Dounia had a very hard time, especially when Mr. Svidrigaïlov, relapsing into his old regimental habits, was under the influence of Bacchus. And how do you think it was all explained later on? Would you believe that the crazy fellow

had conceived a passion for Dounia from the beginning, but had concealed it under a show of rudeness and contempt. Possibly he was ashamed and horrified himself at his own flighty hopes, considering his years and his being the father of a family; and that made him angry with Dounia. And possibly, too, he hoped by his rude and sneering behaviour to hide the truth from others. But at last he lost all control and had the face to make Dounia an open and shameful proposal, promising her all sorts of inducements and offering, besides, to throw up everything and take her to another estate of his, or even abroad. You can imagine all she went through! To leave her situation at once was impossible not only on account of the money debt, but also to spare the feelings of Marfa Petrovna, whose suspicions would have been aroused: and then Dounia would have been the cause of a rupture in the family. And it would have meant a terrible scandal for Dounia too; that would have been inevitable. There were various other reasons owing to which Dounia could not hope to escape from that awful house for another six weeks. You know Dounia, of course; you know how clever she is and what a strong will she has. Dounia can endure a great deal and even in the most difficult cases she has the fortitude to maintain her firmness. She did not even write to me about everything for fear of upsetting me, although we were constantly in communication. It all ended very unexpectedly. Marfa Petrovna accidentally overheard her husband imploring Dounia in the garden, and, putting quite a wrong interpretation on the position, threw the blame upon her, believing her to be the cause of it all. An awful scene took place between them on the spot in the garden; Marfa Petrovna went so far as to strike Dounia, refused to hear anything and was shouting at her for a whole hour and then gave orders that Dounia should be packed off at once to me in a plain peasant’s cart, into which they flung all her things, her linen and her clothes, all pell-mell, without folding it up and packing it. And a heavy shower of rain came on, too, and Dounia, insulted and put to shame, had to drive with a peasant in an open cart all the seventeen versts into town. Only think now what answer could I have sent to the letter I received from you two months ago and what could I have written? I was in despair; I dared not write to you the truth because you would have been very unhappy, mortified and indignant, and yet what could you do? You could only perhaps ruin yourself, and, besides, Dounia would not allow it; and fill up my letter with trifles when my heart was so full of sorrow, I could not. For a whole month the town was full of gossip about this scandal, and it came to

such a pass that Dounia and I dared not even go to church on account of the contemptuous looks, whispers, and even remarks made aloud about us. All our acquaintances avoided us, nobody even bowed to us in the street, and I learnt that some shopmen and clerks were intending to insult us in a shameful way, smearing the gates of our house with pitch, so that the landlord began to tell us we must leave. All this was set going by Marfa Petrovna who managed to slander Dounia and throw dirt at her in every family. She knows everyone in the neighbourhood, and that month she was continually coming into the town, and as she is rather talkative and fond of gossiping about her family affairs and particularly of complaining to all and each of her husband — which is not at all right — so in a short time she had spread her story not only in the town, but over the whole surrounding district. It made me ill, but Dounia bore it better than I did, and if only you could have seen how she endured it all and tried to comfort me and cheer me up! She is an angel! But by God's mercy, our sufferings were cut short: Mr. Svidrigaïlov returned to his senses and repented and, probably feeling sorry for Dounia, he laid before Marfa Petrovna a complete and unmistakable proof of Dounia's innocence, in the form of a letter Dounia had been forced to write and give to him, before Marfa Petrovna came upon them in the garden. This letter, which remained in Mr. Svidrigaïlov's hands after her departure, she had written to refuse personal explanations and secret interviews, for which he was entreating her. In that letter she reproached him with great heat and indignation for the baseness of his behaviour in regard to Marfa Petrovna, reminding him that he was the father and head of a family and telling him how infamous it was of him to torment and make unhappy a defenceless girl, unhappy enough already. Indeed, dear Rodya, the letter was so nobly and touchingly written that I sobbed when I read it and to this day I cannot read it without tears. Moreover, the evidence of the servants, too, cleared Dounia's reputation; they had seen and known a great deal more than Mr. Svidrigaïlov had himself supposed — as indeed is always the case with servants. Marfa Petrovna was completely taken aback, and 'again crushed' as she said herself to us, but she was completely convinced of Dounia's innocence. The very next day, being Sunday, she went straight to the Cathedral, knelt down and prayed with tears to Our Lady to give her strength to bear this new trial and to do her duty. Then she came straight from the Cathedral to us, told us the whole story, wept bitterly and, fully penitent, she embraced Dounia and

besought her to forgive her. The same morning without any delay, she went round to all the houses in the town and everywhere, shedding tears, she asserted in the most flattering terms Dounia's innocence and the nobility of her feelings and her behavior. What was more, she showed and read to everyone the letter in Dounia's own handwriting to Mr. Svidrigaïlov and even allowed them to take copies of it — which I must say I think was superfluous. In this way she was busy for several days in driving about the whole town, because some people had taken offence through precedence having been given to others. And therefore they had to take turns, so that in every house she was expected before she arrived, and everyone knew that on such and such a day Marfa Petrovna would be reading the letter in such and such a place and people assembled for every reading of it, even many who had heard it several times already both in their own houses and in other people's. In my opinion a great deal, a very great deal of all this was unnecessary; but that's Marfa Petrovna's character. Anyway she succeeded in completely re-establishing Dounia's reputation and the whole ignominy of this affair rested as an indelible disgrace upon her husband, as the only person to blame, so that I really began to feel sorry for him; it was really treating the crazy fellow too harshly. Dounia was at once asked to give lessons in several families, but she refused. All of a sudden everyone began to treat her with marked respect and all this did much to bring about the event by which, one may say, our whole fortunes are now transformed. You must know, dear Rodya, that Dounia has a suitor and that she has already consented to marry him. I hasten to tell you all about the matter, and though it has been arranged without asking your consent, I think you will not be aggrieved with me or with your sister on that account, for you will see that we could not wait and put off our decision till we heard from you. And you could not have judged all the facts without being on the spot. This was how it happened. He is already of the rank of a counsellor, Pyotr Petrovitch Luzhin, and is distantly related to Marfa Petrovna, who has been very active in bringing the match about. It began with his expressing through her his desire to make our acquaintance. He was properly received, drank coffee with us and the very next day he sent us a letter in which he very courteously made an offer and begged for a speedy and decided answer. He is a very busy man and is in a great hurry to get to Petersburg, so that every moment is precious to him. At first, of course, we were greatly surprised, as it had all happened so quickly and unexpectedly. We thought and talked it

over the whole day. He is a well-to-do man, to be depended upon, he has two posts in the government and has already made his fortune. It is true that he is forty-five years old, but he is of a fairly prepossessing appearance and might still be thought attractive by women, and he is altogether a very respectable and presentable man, only he seems a little morose and somewhat conceited. But possibly that may only be the impression he makes at first sight. And beware, dear Rodya, when he comes to Petersburg, as he shortly will do, beware of judging him too hastily and severely, as your way is, if there is anything you do not like in him at first sight. I give you this warning, although I feel sure that he will make a favourable impression upon you. Moreover, in order to understand any man one must be deliberate and careful to avoid forming prejudices and mistaken ideas, which are very difficult to correct and get over afterwards. And Pyotr Petrovitch, judging by many indications, is a thoroughly estimable man. At his first visit, indeed, he told us that he was a practical man, but still he shares, as he expressed it, many of the convictions ‘of our most rising generation’ and he is an opponent of all prejudices. He said a good deal more, for he seems a little conceited and likes to be listened to, but this is scarcely a vice. I, of course, understood very little of it, but Dounia explained to me that, though he is not a man of great education, he is clever and seems to be good-natured. You know your sister’s character, Rodya. She is a resolute, sensible, patient and generous girl, but she has a passionate heart, as I know very well. Of course, there is no great love either on his side, or on hers, but Dounia is a clever girl and has the heart of an angel, and will make it her duty to make her husband happy who on his side will make her happiness his care. Of that we have no good reason to doubt, though it must be admitted the matter has been arranged in great haste. Besides he is a man of great prudence and he will see, to be sure, of himself, that his own happiness will be the more secure, the happier Dounia is with him. And as for some defects of character, for some habits and even certain differences of opinion — which indeed are inevitable even in the happiest marriages — Dounia has said that, as regards all that, she relies on herself, that there is nothing to be uneasy about, and that she is ready to put up with a great deal, if only their future relationship can be an honourable and straightforward one. He struck me, for instance, at first, as rather abrupt, but that may well come from his being an outspoken man, and that is no doubt how it is. For instance, at his second visit, after he had received

Dounia's consent, in the course of conversation, he declared that before making Dounia's acquaintance, he had made up his mind to marry a girl of good reputation, without dowry and, above all, one who had experienced poverty, because, as he explained, a man ought not to be indebted to his wife, but that it is better for a wife to look upon her husband as her benefactor. I must add that he expressed it more nicely and politely than I have done, for I have forgotten his actual phrases and only remember the meaning. And, besides, it was obviously not said of design, but slipped out in the heat of conversation, so that he tried afterwards to correct himself and smooth it over, but all the same it did strike me as somewhat rude, and I said so afterwards to Dounia. But Dounia was vexed, and answered that 'words are not deeds,' and that, of course, is perfectly true. Dounia did not sleep all night before she made up her mind, and, thinking that I was asleep, she got out of bed and was walking up and down the room all night; at last she knelt down before the ikon and prayed long and fervently and in the morning she told me that she had decided.

"I have mentioned already that Pyotr Petrovitch is just setting off for Petersburg, where he has a great deal of business, and he wants to open a legal bureau. He has been occupied for many years in conducting civil and commercial litigation, and only the other day he won an important case. He has to be in Petersburg because he has an important case before the Senate. So, Rodya dear, he may be of the greatest use to you, in every way indeed, and Dounia and I have agreed that from this very day you could definitely enter upon your career and might consider that your future is marked out and assured for you. Oh, if only this comes to pass! This would be such a benefit that we could only look upon it as a providential blessing. Dounia is dreaming of nothing else. We have even ventured already to drop a few words on the subject to Pyotr Petrovitch. He was cautious in his answer, and said that, of course, as he could not get on without a secretary, it would be better to be paying a salary to a relation than to a stranger, if only the former were fitted for the duties (as though there could be doubt of your being fitted!) but then he expressed doubts whether your studies at the university would leave you time for work at his office. The matter dropped for the time, but Dounia is thinking of nothing else now. She has been in a sort of fever for the last few days, and has already made a regular plan for your becoming in the end an associate and even a partner in Pyotr Petrovitch's business, which might well be, seeing that you are a student of law. I am in

complete agreement with her, Rodya, and share all her plans and hopes, and think there is every probability of realising them. And in spite of Pyotr Petrovitch's evasiveness, very natural at present (since he does not know you), Dounia is firmly persuaded that she will gain everything by her good influence over her future husband; this she is reckoning upon. Of course we are careful not to talk of any of these more remote plans to Pyotr Petrovitch, especially of your becoming his partner. He is a practical man and might take this very coldly, it might all seem to him simply a day-dream. Nor has either Dounia or I breathed a word to him of the great hopes we have of his helping us to pay for your university studies; we have not spoken of it in the first place, because it will come to pass of itself, later on, and he will no doubt without wasting words offer to do it of himself, (as though he could refuse Dounia that) the more readily since you may by your own efforts become his right hand in the office, and receive this assistance not as a charity, but as a salary earned by your own work. Dounia wants to arrange it all like this and I quite agree with her. And we have not spoken of our plans for another reason, that is, because I particularly wanted you to feel on an equal footing when you first meet him. When Dounia spoke to him with enthusiasm about you, he answered that one could never judge of a man without seeing him close, for oneself, and that he looked forward to forming his own opinion when he makes your acquaintance. Do you know, my precious Rodya, I think that perhaps for some reasons (nothing to do with Pyotr Petrovitch though, simply for my own personal, perhaps old-womanish, fancies) I should do better to go on living by myself, apart, than with them, after the wedding. I am convinced that he will be generous and delicate enough to invite me and to urge me to remain with my daughter for the future, and if he has said nothing about it hitherto, it is simply because it has been taken for granted; but I shall refuse. I have noticed more than once in my life that husbands don't quite get on with their mothers-in-law, and I don't want to be the least bit in anyone's way, and for my own sake, too, would rather be quite independent, so long as I have a crust of bread of my own, and such children as you and Dounia. If possible, I would settle somewhere near you, for the most joyful piece of news, dear Rodya, I have kept for the end of my letter: know then, my dear boy, that we may, perhaps, be all together in a very short time and may embrace one another again after a separation of almost three years! It is settled *for certain* that Dounia and I are to set off for Petersburg, exactly when I don't know, but very, very soon,

possibly in a week. It all depends on Pyotr Petrovitch who will let us know when he has had time to look round him in Petersburg. To suit his own arrangements he is anxious to have the ceremony as soon as possible, even before the fast of Our Lady, if it could be managed, or if that is too soon to be ready, immediately after. Oh, with what happiness I shall press you to my heart! Dounia is all excitement at the joyful thought of seeing you, she said one day in joke that she would be ready to marry Pyotr Petrovitch for that alone. She is an angel! She is not writing anything to you now, and has only told me to write that she has so much, so much to tell you that she is not going to take up her pen now, for a few lines would tell you nothing, and it would only mean upsetting herself; she bids me send you her love and innumerable kisses. But although we shall be meeting so soon, perhaps I shall send you as much money as I can in a day or two. Now that everyone has heard that Dounia is to marry Pyotr Petrovitch, my credit has suddenly improved and I know that Afanasy Ivanovitch will trust me now even to seventy-five roubles on the security of my pension, so that perhaps I shall be able to send you twenty-five or even thirty roubles. I would send you more, but I am uneasy about our travelling expenses; for though Pyotr Petrovitch has been so kind as to undertake part of the expenses of the journey, that is to say, he has taken upon himself the conveyance of our bags and big trunk (which will be conveyed through some acquaintances of his), we must reckon upon some expense on our arrival in Petersburg, where we can’t be left without a halfpenny, at least for the first few days. But we have calculated it all, Dounia and I, to the last penny, and we see that the journey will not cost very much. It is only ninety versts from us to the railway and we have come to an agreement with a driver we know, so as to be in readiness; and from there Dounia and I can travel quite comfortably third class. So that I may very likely be able to send to you not twenty-five, but thirty roubles. But enough; I have covered two sheets already and there is no space left for more; our whole history, but so many events have happened! And now, my precious Rodya, I embrace you and send you a mother’s blessing till we meet. Love Dounia your sister, Rodya; love her as she loves you and understand that she loves you beyond everything, more than herself. She is an angel and you, Rodya, you are everything to us — our one hope, our one consolation. If only you are happy, we shall be happy. Do you still say your prayers, Rodya, and believe in the mercy of our Creator and our Redeemer? I am afraid in my heart that you may have been

visited by the new spirit of infidelity that is abroad to-day; If it is so, I pray for you. Remember, dear boy, how in your childhood, when your father was living, you used to lisp your prayers at my knee, and how happy we all were in those days. Good-bye, till we meet then — I embrace you warmly, warmly, with many kisses.

"Yours till death,

"PULCHERIA RASKOLNIKOV."

Almost from the first, while he read the letter, Raskolnikov's face was wet with tears; but when he finished it, his face was pale and distorted and a bitter, wrathful and malignant smile was on his lips. He laid his head down on his threadbare dirty pillow and pondered, pondered a long time. His heart was beating violently, and his brain was in a turmoil. At last he felt cramped and stifled in the little yellow room that was like a cupboard or a box. His eyes and his mind craved for space. He took up his hat and went out, this time without dread of meeting anyone; he had forgotten his dread. He turned in the direction of the Vassilyevsky Ostrov, walking along Vassilyevsky Prospect, as though hastening on some business, but he walked, as his habit was, without noticing his way, muttering and even speaking aloud to himself, to the astonishment of the passers-by. Many of them took him to be drunk.

CHAPTER IV

His mother’s letter had been a torture to him, but as regards the chief fact in it, he had felt not one moment’s hesitation, even whilst he was reading the letter. The essential question was settled, and irrevocably settled, in his mind: “Never such a marriage while I am alive and Mr. Luzhin be damned!”

“The thing is perfectly clear,” he muttered to himself, with a malignant smile anticipating the triumph of his decision. “No, mother, no, Dounia, you won’t deceive me! and then they apologise for not asking my advice and for taking the decision without me! I dare say! They imagine it is arranged now and can’t be broken off; but we will see whether it can or not! A magnificent excuse: ‘Pyotr Petrovitch is such a busy man that even his wedding has to be in post-haste, almost by express.’ No, Dounia, I see it all and I know what you want to say to me; and I know too what you were thinking about, when you walked up and down all night, and what your prayers were like before the Holy Mother of Kazan who stands in mother’s bedroom. Bitter is the ascent to Golgotha.... Hm... so it is finally settled; you have determined to marry a sensible business man, Avdotya Romanovna, one who has a fortune (has *already* made his fortune, that is so much more solid and impressive) a man who holds two government posts and who shares the ideas of our most rising generation, as mother writes, and who *seems* to be kind, as Dounia herself observes. That *seems* beats everything! And that very Dounia for that very ‘*seems*’ is marrying him! Splendid! splendid!

“... But I should like to know why mother has written to me about ‘our most rising generation’? Simply as a descriptive touch, or with the idea of prepossessing me in favour of Mr. Luzhin? Oh, the cunning of them! I should like to know one thing more: how far they were open with one another that day and night and all this time since? Was it all put into *words*, or did both understand that they had the same thing at heart and in their minds, so that there was no need to speak of it aloud, and better not to speak of it. Most likely it was partly like that, from mother’s letter it’s evident: he struck her as rude *a little*, and mother in her simplicity took her observations to Dounia. And she was sure to be vexed and ‘answered her angrily.’ I should think so! Who would not be angered when it was quite

clear without any naïve questions and when it was understood that it was useless to discuss it. And why does she write to me, ‘love Dounia, Rodya, and she loves you more than herself’? Has she a secret conscience-prick at sacrificing her daughter to her son? ‘You are our one comfort, you are everything to us.’ Oh, mother!”

His bitterness grew more and more intense, and if he had happened to meet Mr. Luzhin at the moment, he might have murdered him.

“Hm... yes, that’s true,” he continued, pursuing the whirling ideas that chased each other in his brain, “it is true that ‘it needs time and care to get to know a man,’ but there is no mistake about Mr. Luzhin. The chief thing is he is ‘a man of business and *seems* kind,’ that was something, wasn’t it, to send the bags and big box for them! A kind man, no doubt after that! But his *bride* and her mother are to drive in a peasant’s cart covered with sacking (I know, I have been driven in it). No matter! It is only ninety versts and then they can ‘travel very comfortably, third class,’ for a thousand versts! Quite right, too. One must cut one’s coat according to one’s cloth, but what about you, Mr. Luzhin? She is your bride.... And you must be aware that her mother has to raise money on her pension for the journey. To be sure it’s a matter of business, a partnership for mutual benefit, with equal shares and expenses; — food and drink provided, but pay for your tobacco. The business man has got the better of them, too. The luggage will cost less than their fares and very likely go for nothing. How is it that they don’t both see all that, or is it that they don’t want to see? And they are pleased, pleased! And to think that this is only the first blossoming, and that the real fruits are to come! But what really matters is not the stinginess, is not the meanness, but the *tone* of the whole thing. For that will be the tone after marriage, it’s a foretaste of it. And mother too, why should she be so lavish? What will she have by the time she gets to Petersburg? Three silver roubles or two ‘paper ones’ as *she* says.... that old woman... hm. What does she expect to live upon in Petersburg afterwards? She has her reasons already for guessing that she *could not* live with Dounia after the marriage, even for the first few months. The good man has no doubt let slip something on that subject also, though mother would deny it: ‘I shall refuse,’ says she. On whom is she reckoning then? Is she counting on what is left of her hundred and twenty roubles of pension when Afanasy Ivanovitch’s debt is paid? She knits woollen shawls and embroiders cuffs, ruining her old eyes. And all her shawls don’t add more than twenty roubles a year to her hundred and

twenty, I know that. So she is building all her hopes all the time on Mr. Luzhin's generosity; 'he will offer it of himself, he will press it on me.' You may wait a long time for that! That's how it always is with these Schilleresque noble hearts; till the last moment every goose is a swan with them, till the last moment, they hope for the best and will see nothing wrong, and although they have an inkling of the other side of the picture, yet they won't face the truth till they are forced to; the very thought of it makes them shiver; they thrust the truth away with both hands, until the man they deck out in false colours puts a fool's cap on them with his own hands. I should like to know whether Mr. Luzhin has any orders of merit; I bet he has the Anna in his buttonhole and that he puts it on when he goes to dine with contractors or merchants. He will be sure to have it for his wedding, too! Enough of him, confound him!

"Well,... mother I don't wonder at, it's like her, God bless her, but how could Dounia? Dounia darling, as though I did not know you! You were nearly twenty when I saw you last: I understood you then. Mother writes that 'Dounia can put up with a great deal.' I know that very well. I knew that two years and a half ago, and for the last two and a half years I have been thinking about it, thinking of just that, that 'Dounia can put up with a great deal.' If she could put up with Mr. Svidrigaïlov and all the rest of it, she certainly can put up with a great deal. And now mother and she have taken it into their heads that she can put up with Mr. Luzhin, who propounds the theory of the superiority of wives raised from destitution and owing everything to their husband's bounty — who propounds it, too, almost at the first interview. Granted that he 'let it slip,' though he is a sensible man, (yet maybe it was not a slip at all, but he meant to make himself clear as soon as possible) but Dounia, Dounia? She understands the man, of course, but she will have to live with the man. Why! she'd live on black bread and water, she would not sell her soul, she would not barter her moral freedom for comfort; she would not barter it for all Schleswig-Holstein, much less Mr. Luzhin's money. No, Dounia was not that sort when I knew her and... she is still the same, of course! Yes, there's no denying, the Svidrigaïlovs are a bitter pill! It's a bitter thing to spend one's life a governess in the provinces for two hundred roubles, but I know she would rather be a nigger on a plantation or a Lett with a German master than degrade her soul, and her moral dignity, by binding herself for ever to a man whom she does not respect and with whom she has nothing in common

— for her own advantage. And if Mr. Luzhin had been of unalloyed gold, or one huge diamond, she would never have consented to become his legal concubine. Why is she consenting then? What's the point of it? What's the answer? It's clear enough: for herself, for her comfort, to save her life she would not sell herself, but for someone else she is doing it! For one she loves, for one she adores, she will sell herself! That's what it all amounts to; for her brother, for her mother, she will sell herself! She will sell everything! In such cases, 'we overcome our moral feeling if necessary,' freedom, peace, conscience even, all, all are brought into the market. Let my life go, if only my dear ones may be happy! More than that, we become casuists, we learn to be Jesuitical and for a time maybe we can soothe ourselves, we can persuade ourselves that it is one's duty for a good object. That's just like us, it's as clear as daylight. It's clear that Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov is the central figure in the business, and no one else. Oh, yes, she can ensure his happiness, keep him in the university, make him a partner in the office, make his whole future secure; perhaps he may even be a rich man later on, prosperous, respected, and may even end his life a famous man! But my mother? It's all Rodya, precious Rodya, her first born! For such a son who would not sacrifice such a daughter! Oh, loving, over-partial hearts! Why, for his sake we would not shrink even from Sonia's fate. Sonia, Sonia Marmeladov, the eternal victim so long as the world lasts. Have you taken the measure of your sacrifice, both of you? Is it right? Can you bear it? Is it any use? Is there sense in it? And let me tell you, Dounia, Sonia's life is no worse than life with Mr. Luzhin. 'There can be no question of love,' mother writes. And what if there can be no respect either, if on the contrary there is aversion, contempt, repulsion, what then? So you will have to 'keep up your appearance,' too. Is not that so? Do you understand what that smartness means? Do you understand that the Luzhin smartness is just the same thing as Sonia's and may be worse, viler, baser, because in your case, Dounia, it's a bargain for luxuries, after all, but with Sonia it's simply a question of starvation. It has to be paid for, it has to be paid for, Dounia, this smartness. And what if it's more than you can bear afterwards, if you regret it? The bitterness, the misery, the curses, the tears hidden from all the world, for you are not a Marfa Petrovna. And how will your mother feel then? Even now she is uneasy, she is worried, but then, when she sees it all clearly? And I? Yes, indeed, what have you taken me

for? I won’t have your sacrifice, Dounia, I won’t have it, mother! It shall not be, so long as I am alive, it shall not, it shall not! I won’t accept it!”

He suddenly paused in his reflection and stood still.

“It shall not be? But what are you going to do to prevent it? You’ll forbid it? And what right have you? What can you promise them on your side to give you such a right? Your whole life, your whole future, you will devote to them *when you have finished your studies and obtained a post*? Yes, we have heard all that before, and that’s all *words*, but now? Now something must be done, now, do you understand that? And what are you doing now? You are living upon them. They borrow on their hundred roubles pension. They borrow from the Svidrigaïlovs. How are you going to save them from Svidrigaïlovs, from Afanasy Ivanovitch Vahrushin, oh, future millionaire Zeus who would arrange their lives for them? In another ten years? In another ten years, mother will be blind with knitting shawls, maybe with weeping too. She will be worn to a shadow with fasting; and my sister? Imagine for a moment what may have become of your sister in ten years? What may happen to her during those ten years? Can you fancy?”

So he tortured himself, fretting himself with such questions, and finding a kind of enjoyment in it. And yet all these questions were not new ones suddenly confronting him, they were old familiar aches. It was long since they had first begun to grip and rend his heart. Long, long ago his present anguish had its first beginnings; it had waxed and gathered strength, it had matured and concentrated, until it had taken the form of a fearful, frenzied and fantastic question, which tortured his heart and mind, clamouring insistently for an answer. Now his mother’s letter had burst on him like a thunderclap. It was clear that he must not now suffer passively, worrying himself over unsolved questions, but that he must do something, do it at once, and do it quickly. Anyway he must decide on something, or else...

“Or throw up life altogether!” he cried suddenly, in a frenzy— “accept one’s lot humbly as it is, once for all and stifle everything in oneself, giving up all claim to activity, life and love!”

“Do you understand, sir, do you understand what it means when you have absolutely nowhere to turn?” Marmeladov’s question came suddenly into his mind, “for every man must have somewhere to turn....”

He gave a sudden start; another thought, that he had had yesterday, slipped back into his mind. But he did not start at the thought recurring to him, for he knew, he had *felt beforehand*, that it must come back, he was

expecting it; besides it was not only yesterday's thought. The difference was that a month ago, yesterday even, the thought was a mere dream: but now... now it appeared not a dream at all, it had taken a new menacing and quite unfamiliar shape, and he suddenly became aware of this himself.... He felt a hammering in his head, and there was a darkness before his eyes.

He looked round hurriedly, he was searching for something. He wanted to sit down and was looking for a seat; he was walking along the K —— Boulevard. There was a seat about a hundred paces in front of him. He walked towards it as fast he could; but on the way he met with a little adventure which absorbed all his attention. Looking for the seat, he had noticed a woman walking some twenty paces in front of him, but at first he took no more notice of her than of other objects that crossed his path. It had happened to him many times going home not to notice the road by which he was going, and he was accustomed to walk like that. But there was at first sight something so strange about the woman in front of him, that gradually his attention was riveted upon her, at first reluctantly and, as it were, resentfully, and then more and more intently. He felt a sudden desire to find out what it was that was so strange about the woman. In the first place, she appeared to be a girl quite young, and she was walking in the great heat bareheaded and with no parasol or gloves, waving her arms about in an absurd way. She had on a dress of some light silky material, but put on strangely awry, not properly hooked up, and torn open at the top of the skirt, close to the waist: a great piece was rent and hanging loose. A little kerchief was flung about her bare throat, but lay slanting on one side. The girl was walking unsteadily, too, stumbling and staggering from side to side. She drew Raskolnikov's whole attention at last. He overtook the girl at the seat, but, on reaching it, she dropped down on it, in the corner; she let her head sink on the back of the seat and closed her eyes, apparently in extreme exhaustion. Looking at her closely, he saw at once that she was completely drunk. It was a strange and shocking sight. He could hardly believe that he was not mistaken. He saw before him the face of a quite young, fair-haired girl — sixteen, perhaps not more than fifteen, years old, pretty little face, but flushed and heavy looking and, as it were, swollen. The girl seemed hardly to know what she was doing; she crossed one leg over the other, lifting it indecorously, and showed every sign of being unconscious that she was in the street.

Raskolnikov did not sit down, but he felt unwilling to leave her, and stood facing her in perplexity. This boulevard was never much frequented; and now, at two o'clock, in the stifling heat, it was quite deserted. And yet on the further side of the boulevard, about fifteen paces away, a gentleman was standing on the edge of the pavement. He, too, would apparently have liked to approach the girl with some object of his own. He, too, had probably seen her in the distance and had followed her, but found Raskolnikov in his way. He looked angrily at him, though he tried to escape his notice, and stood impatiently biding his time, till the unwelcome man in rags should have moved away. His intentions were unmistakable. The gentleman was a plump, thickly-set man, about thirty, fashionably dressed, with a high colour, red lips and moustaches. Raskolnikov felt furious; he had a sudden longing to insult this fat dandy in some way. He left the girl for a moment and walked towards the gentleman.

"Hey! You Svidrigaïlov! What do you want here?" he shouted, clenching his fists and laughing, spluttering with rage.

"What do you mean?" the gentleman asked sternly, scowling in haughty astonishment.

"Get away, that's what I mean."

"How dare you, you low fellow!"

He raised his cane. Raskolnikov rushed at him with his fists, without reflecting that the stout gentleman was a match for two men like himself. But at that instant someone seized him from behind, and a police constable stood between them.

"That's enough, gentlemen, no fighting, please, in a public place. What do you want? Who are you?" he asked Raskolnikov sternly, noticing his rags.

Raskolnikov looked at him intently. He had a straight-forward, sensible, soldierly face, with grey moustaches and whiskers.

"You are just the man I want," Raskolnikov cried, catching at his arm. "I am a student, Raskolnikov.... You may as well know that too," he added, addressing the gentleman, "come along, I have something to show you."

And taking the policeman by the hand he drew him towards the seat.

"Look here, hopelessly drunk, and she has just come down the boulevard. There is no telling who and what she is, she does not look like a professional. It's more likely she has been given drink and deceived somewhere... for the first time... you understand? and they've put her out

into the street like that. Look at the way her dress is torn, and the way it has been put on: she has been dressed by somebody, she has not dressed herself, and dressed by unpractised hands, by a man's hands; that's evident. And now look there: I don't know that dandy with whom I was going to fight, I see him for the first time, but he, too, has seen her on the road, just now, drunk, not knowing what she is doing, and now he is very eager to get hold of her, to get her away somewhere while she is in this state... that's certain, believe me, I am not wrong. I saw him myself watching her and following her, but I prevented him, and he is just waiting for me to go away. Now he has walked away a little, and is standing still, pretending to make a cigarette.... Think how can we keep her out of his hands, and how are we to get her home?"

The policeman saw it all in a flash. The stout gentleman was easy to understand, he turned to consider the girl. The policeman bent over to examine her more closely, and his face worked with genuine compassion.

"Ah, what a pity!" he said, shaking his head— "why, she is quite a child! She has been deceived, you can see that at once. Listen, lady," he began addressing her, "where do you live?" The girl opened her weary and sleepy-looking eyes, gazed blankly at the speaker and waved her hand.

"Here," said Raskolnikov feeling in his pocket and finding twenty copecks, "here, call a cab and tell him to drive her to her address. The only thing is to find out her address!"

"Missy, missy!" the policeman began again, taking the money. "I'll fetch you a cab and take you home myself. Where shall I take you, eh? Where do you live?"

"Go away! They won't let me alone," the girl muttered, and once more waved her hand.

"Ach, ach, how shocking! It's shameful, missy, it's a shame!" He shook his head again, shocked, sympathetic and indignant.

"It's a difficult job," the policeman said to Raskolnikov, and as he did so, he looked him up and down in a rapid glance. He, too, must have seemed a strange figure to him: dressed in rags and handing him money!

"Did you meet her far from here?" he asked him.

"I tell you she was walking in front of me, staggering, just here, in the boulevard. She only just reached the seat and sank down on it."

"Ah, the shameful things that are done in the world nowadays, God have mercy on us! An innocent creature like that, drunk already! She has been

deceived, that’s a sure thing. See how her dress has been torn too.... Ah, the vice one sees nowadays! And as likely as not she belongs to gentlefolk too, poor ones maybe.... There are many like that nowadays. She looks refined, too, as though she were a lady,” and he bent over her once more.

Perhaps he had daughters growing up like that, “looking like ladies and refined” with pretensions to gentility and smartness....

“The chief thing is,” Raskolnikov persisted, “to keep her out of this scoundrel’s hands! Why should he outrage her! It’s as clear as day what he is after; ah, the brute, he is not moving off!”

Raskolnikov spoke aloud and pointed to him. The gentleman heard him, and seemed about to fly into a rage again, but thought better of it, and confined himself to a contemptuous look. He then walked slowly another ten paces away and again halted.

“Keep her out of his hands we can,” said the constable thoughtfully, “if only she’d tell us where to take her, but as it is.... Missy, hey, missy!” he bent over her once more.

She opened her eyes fully all of a sudden, looked at him intently, as though realising something, got up from the seat and walked away in the direction from which she had come. “Oh shameful wretches, they won’t let me alone!” she said, waving her hand again. She walked quickly, though staggering as before. The dandy followed her, but along another avenue, keeping his eye on her.

“Don’t be anxious, I won’t let him have her,” the policeman said resolutely, and he set off after them.

“Ah, the vice one sees nowadays!” he repeated aloud, sighing.

At that moment something seemed to sting Raskolnikov; in an instant a complete revulsion of feeling came over him.

“Hey, here!” he shouted after the policeman.

The latter turned round.

“Let them be! What is it to do with you? Let her go! Let him amuse himself.” He pointed at the dandy, “What is it to do with you?”

The policeman was bewildered, and stared at him open-eyed. Raskolnikov laughed.

“Well!” ejaculated the policeman, with a gesture of contempt, and he walked after the dandy and the girl, probably taking Raskolnikov for a madman or something even worse.

“He has carried off my twenty copecks,” Raskolnikov murmured angrily when he was left alone. “Well, let him take as much from the other fellow to allow him to have the girl and so let it end. And why did I want to interfere? Is it for me to help? Have I any right to help? Let them devour each other alive — what is to me? How did I dare to give him twenty copecks? Were they mine?”

In spite of those strange words he felt very wretched. He sat down on the deserted seat. His thoughts strayed aimlessly.... He found it hard to fix his mind on anything at that moment. He longed to forget himself altogether, to forget everything, and then to wake up and begin life anew....

“Poor girl!” he said, looking at the empty corner where she had sat— “She will come to herself and weep, and then her mother will find out.... She will give her a beating, a horrible, shameful beating and then maybe, turn her out of doors.... And even if she does not, the Darya Frantsovnas will get wind of it, and the girl will soon be slipping out on the sly here and there. Then there will be the hospital directly (that’s always the luck of those girls with respectable mothers, who go wrong on the sly) and then... again the hospital... drink... the taverns... and more hospital, in two or three years — a wreck, and her life over at eighteen or nineteen.... Have not I seen cases like that? And how have they been brought to it? Why, they’ve all come to it like that. Ugh! But what does it matter? That’s as it should be, they tell us. A certain percentage, they tell us, must every year go... that way... to the devil, I suppose, so that the rest may remain chaste, and not be interfered with. A percentage! What splendid words they have; they are so scientific, so consolatory.... Once you’ve said ‘percentage’ there’s nothing more to worry about. If we had any other word... maybe we might feel more uneasy.... But what if Dounia were one of the percentage! Of another one if not that one?

“But where am I going?” he thought suddenly. “Strange, I came out for something. As soon as I had read the letter I came out.... I was going to Vassilyevsky Ostrov, to Razumihin. That’s what it was... now I remember. What for, though? And what put the idea of going to Razumihin into my head just now? That’s curious.”

He wondered at himself. Razumihin was one of his old comrades at the university. It was remarkable that Raskolnikov had hardly any friends at the university; he kept aloof from everyone, went to see no one, and did not welcome anyone who came to see him, and indeed everyone soon gave him

up. He took no part in the students' gatherings, amusements or conversations. He worked with great intensity without sparing himself, and he was respected for this, but no one liked him. He was very poor, and there was a sort of haughty pride and reserve about him, as though he were keeping something to himself. He seemed to some of his comrades to look down upon them all as children, as though he were superior in development, knowledge and convictions, as though their beliefs and interests were beneath him.

With Razumihin he had got on, or, at least, he was more unreserved and communicative with him. Indeed it was impossible to be on any other terms with Razumihin. He was an exceptionally good-humoured and candid youth, good-natured to the point of simplicity, though both depth and dignity lay concealed under that simplicity. The better of his comrades understood this, and all were fond of him. He was extremely intelligent, though he was certainly rather a simpleton at times. He was of striking appearance — tall, thin, blackhaired and always badly shaved. He was sometimes uproarious and was reputed to be of great physical strength. One night, when out in a festive company, he had with one blow laid a gigantic policeman on his back. There was no limit to his drinking powers, but he could abstain from drink altogether; he sometimes went too far in his pranks; but he could do without pranks altogether. Another thing striking about Razumihin, no failure distressed him, and it seemed as though no unfavourable circumstances could crush him. He could lodge anywhere, and bear the extremes of cold and hunger. He was very poor, and kept himself entirely on what he could earn by work of one sort or another. He knew of no end of resources by which to earn money. He spent one whole winter without lighting his stove, and used to declare that he liked it better, because one slept more soundly in the cold. For the present he, too, had been obliged to give up the university, but it was only for a time, and he was working with all his might to save enough to return to his studies again. Raskolnikov had not been to see him for the last four months, and Razumihin did not even know his address. About two months before, they had met in the street, but Raskolnikov had turned away and even crossed to the other side that he might not be observed. And though Razumihin noticed him, he passed him by, as he did not want to annoy him.

CHAPTER V

“Of course, I’ve been meaning lately to go to Razumihin’s to ask for work, to ask him to get me lessons or something...” Raskolnikov thought, “but what help can he be to me now? Suppose he gets me lessons, suppose he shares his last farthing with me, if he has any farthings, so that I could get some boots and make myself tidy enough to give lessons... hm... Well and what then? What shall I do with the few coppers I earn? That’s not what I want now. It’s really absurd for me to go to Razumihin....”

The question why he was now going to Razumihin agitated him even more than he was himself aware; he kept uneasily seeking for some sinister significance in this apparently ordinary action.

“Could I have expected to set it all straight and to find a way out by means of Razumihin alone?” he asked himself in perplexity.

He pondered and rubbed his forehead, and, strange to say, after long musing, suddenly, as if it were spontaneously and by chance, a fantastic thought came into his head.

“Hm... to Razumihin’s,” he said all at once, calmly, as though he had reached a final determination. “I shall go to Razumihin’s of course, but... not now. I shall go to him... on the next day after It, when It will be over and everything will begin afresh....”

And suddenly he realised what he was thinking.

“After It,” he shouted, jumping up from the seat, “but is It really going to happen? Is it possible it really will happen?” He left the seat, and went off almost at a run; he meant to turn back, homewards, but the thought of going home suddenly filled him with intense loathing; in that hole, in that awful little cupboard of his, all *this* had for a month past been growing up in him; and he walked on at random.

His nervous shudder had passed into a fever that made him feel shivering; in spite of the heat he felt cold. With a kind of effort he began almost unconsciously, from some inner craving, to stare at all the objects before him, as though looking for something to distract his attention; but he did not succeed, and kept dropping every moment into brooding. When with a start he lifted his head again and looked round, he forgot at once what he had just been thinking about and even where he was going. In this way he walked right across Vassilyevsky Ostrov, came out on to the Lesser

Neva, crossed the bridge and turned towards the islands. The greenness and freshness were at first restful to his weary eyes after the dust of the town and the huge houses that hemmed him in and weighed upon him. Here there were no taverns, no stifling closeness, no stench. But soon these new pleasant sensations passed into morbid irritability. Sometimes he stood still before a brightly painted summer villa standing among green foliage, he gazed through the fence, he saw in the distance smartly dressed women on the verandahs and balconies, and children running in the gardens. The flowers especially caught his attention; he gazed at them longer than at anything. He was met, too, by luxurious carriages and by men and women on horseback; he watched them with curious eyes and forgot about them before they had vanished from his sight. Once he stood still and counted his money; he found he had thirty copecks. “Twenty to the policeman, three to Nastasya for the letter, so I must have given forty-seven or fifty to the Marmeladovs yesterday,” he thought, reckoning it up for some unknown reason, but he soon forgot with what object he had taken the money out of his pocket. He recalled it on passing an eating-house or tavern, and felt that he was hungry.... Going into the tavern he drank a glass of vodka and ate a pie of some sort. He finished eating it as he walked away. It was a long while since he had taken vodka and it had an effect upon him at once, though he only drank a wineglassful. His legs felt suddenly heavy and a great drowsiness came upon him. He turned homewards, but reaching Petrovsky Ostrov he stopped completely exhausted, turned off the road into the bushes, sank down upon the grass and instantly fell asleep.

In a morbid condition of the brain, dreams often have a singular actuality, vividness, and extraordinary semblance of reality. At times monstrous images are created, but the setting and the whole picture are so truth-like and filled with details so delicate, so unexpectedly, but so artistically consistent, that the dreamer, were he an artist like Pushkin or Turgenev even, could never have invented them in the waking state. Such sick dreams always remain long in the memory and make a powerful impression on the overwrought and deranged nervous system.

Raskolnikov had a fearful dream. He dreamt he was back in his childhood in the little town of his birth. He was a child about seven years old, walking into the country with his father on the evening of a holiday. It was a grey and heavy day, the country was exactly as he remembered it; indeed he recalled it far more vividly in his dream than he had done in

memory. The little town stood on a level flat as bare as the hand, not even a willow near it; only in the far distance, a copse lay, a dark blur on the very edge of the horizon. A few paces beyond the last market garden stood a tavern, a big tavern, which had always aroused in him a feeling of aversion, even of fear, when he walked by it with his father. There was always a crowd there, always shouting, laughter and abuse, hideous hoarse singing and often fighting. Drunken and horrible-looking figures were hanging about the tavern. He used to cling close to his father, trembling all over when he met them. Near the tavern the road became a dusty track, the dust of which was always black. It was a winding road, and about a hundred paces further on, it turned to the right to the graveyard. In the middle of the graveyard stood a stone church with a green cupola where he used to go to mass two or three times a year with his father and mother, when a service was held in memory of his grandmother, who had long been dead, and whom he had never seen. On these occasions they used to take on a white dish tied up in a table napkin a special sort of rice pudding with raisins stuck in it in the shape of a cross. He loved that church, the old-fashioned, unadorned ikons and the old priest with the shaking head. Near his grandmother's grave, which was marked by a stone, was the little grave of his younger brother who had died at six months old. He did not remember him at all, but he had been told about his little brother, and whenever he visited the graveyard he used religiously and reverently to cross himself and to bow down and kiss the little grave. And now he dreamt that he was walking with his father past the tavern on the way to the graveyard; he was holding his father's hand and looking with dread at the tavern. A peculiar circumstance attracted his attention: there seemed to be some kind of festivity going on, there were crowds of gaily dressed townspeople, peasant women, their husbands, and riff-raff of all sorts, all singing and all more or less drunk. Near the entrance of the tavern stood a cart, but a strange cart. It was one of those big carts usually drawn by heavy cart-horses and laden with casks of wine or other heavy goods. He always liked looking at those great cart-horses, with their long manes, thick legs, and slow even pace, drawing along a perfect mountain with no appearance of effort, as though it were easier going with a load than without it. But now, strange to say, in the shafts of such a cart he saw a thin little sorrel beast, one of those peasants' nags which he had often seen straining their utmost under a heavy load of wood or hay, especially when the wheels were stuck in the mud or in a rut.

And the peasants would beat them so cruelly, sometimes even about the nose and eyes, and he felt so sorry, so sorry for them that he almost cried, and his mother always used to take him away from the window. All of a sudden there was a great uproar of shouting, singing and the balalaïka, and from the tavern a number of big and very drunken peasants came out, wearing red and blue shirts and coats thrown over their shoulders.

“Get in, get in!” shouted one of them, a young thick-necked peasant with a fleshy face red as a carrot. “I’ll take you all, get in!”

But at once there was an outbreak of laughter and exclamations in the crowd.

“Take us all with a beast like that!”

“Why, Mikolka, are you crazy to put a nag like that in such a cart?”

“And this mare is twenty if she is a day, mates!”

“Get in, I’ll take you all,” Mikolka shouted again, leaping first into the cart, seizing the reins and standing straight up in front. “The bay has gone with Matvey,” he shouted from the cart— “and this brute, mates, is just breaking my heart, I feel as if I could kill her. She’s just eating her head off. Get in, I tell you! I’ll make her gallop! She’ll gallop!” and he picked up the whip, preparing himself with relish to flog the little mare.

“Get in! Come along!” The crowd laughed. “D’you hear, she’ll gallop!”

“Gallop indeed! She has not had a gallop in her for the last ten years!”

“She’ll jog along!”

“Don’t you mind her, mates, bring a whip each of you, get ready!”

“All right! Give it to her!”

They all clambered into Mikolka’s cart, laughing and making jokes. Six men got in and there was still room for more. They hauled in a fat, rosy-cheeked woman. She was dressed in red cotton, in a pointed, beaded headdress and thick leather shoes; she was cracking nuts and laughing. The crowd round them was laughing too and indeed, how could they help laughing? That wretched nag was to drag all the cartload of them at a gallop! Two young fellows in the cart were just getting whips ready to help Mikolka. With the cry of “now,” the mare tugged with all her might, but far from galloping, could scarcely move forward; she struggled with her legs, gasping and shrinking from the blows of the three whips which were showered upon her like hail. The laughter in the cart and in the crowd was redoubled, but Mikolka flew into a rage and furiously thrashed the mare, as though he supposed she really could gallop.

“Let me get in, too, mates,” shouted a young man in the crowd whose appetite was aroused.

“Get in, all get in,” cried Mikolka, “she will draw you all. I’ll beat her to death!” And he thrashed and thrashed at the mare, beside himself with fury.

“Father, father,” he cried, “father, what are they doing? Father, they are beating the poor horse!”

“Come along, come along!” said his father. “They are drunken and foolish, they are in fun; come away, don’t look!” and he tried to draw him away, but he tore himself away from his hand, and, beside himself with horror, ran to the horse. The poor beast was in a bad way. She was gasping, standing still, then tugging again and almost falling.

“Beat her to death,” cried Mikolka, “it’s come to that. I’ll do for her!”

“What are you about, are you a Christian, you devil?” shouted an old man in the crowd.

“Did anyone ever see the like? A wretched nag like that pulling such a cartload,” said another.

“You’ll kill her,” shouted the third.

“Don’t meddle! It’s my property, I’ll do what I choose. Get in, more of you! Get in, all of you! I will have her go at a gallop!...”

All at once laughter broke into a roar and covered everything: the mare, roused by the shower of blows, began feebly kicking. Even the old man could not help smiling. To think of a wretched little beast like that trying to kick!

Two lads in the crowd snatched up whips and ran to the mare to beat her about the ribs. One ran each side.

“Hit her in the face, in the eyes, in the eyes,” cried Mikolka.

“Give us a song, mates,” shouted someone in the cart and everyone in the cart joined in a riotous song, jingling a tambourine and whistling. The woman went on cracking nuts and laughing.

... He ran beside the mare, ran in front of her, saw her being whipped across the eyes, right in the eyes! He was crying, he felt choking, his tears were streaming. One of the men gave him a cut with the whip across the face, he did not feel it. Wringing his hands and screaming, he rushed up to the grey-headed old man with the grey beard, who was shaking his head in disapproval. One woman seized him by the hand and would have taken him away, but he tore himself from her and ran back to the mare. She was almost at the last gasp, but began kicking once more.

“I’ll teach you to kick,” Mikolka shouted ferociously. He threw down the whip, bent forward and picked up from the bottom of the cart a long, thick shaft, he took hold of one end with both hands and with an effort brandished it over the mare.

“He’ll crush her,” was shouted round him. “He’ll kill her!”

“It’s my property,” shouted Mikolka and brought the shaft down with a swinging blow. There was a sound of a heavy thud.

“Thrash her, thrash her! Why have you stopped?” shouted voices in the crowd.

And Mikolka swung the shaft a second time and it fell a second time on the spine of the luckless mare. She sank back on her haunches, but lurched forward and tugged forward with all her force, tugged first on one side and then on the other, trying to move the cart. But the six whips were attacking her in all directions, and the shaft was raised again and fell upon her a third time, then a fourth, with heavy measured blows. Mikolka was in a fury that he could not kill her at one blow.

“She’s a tough one,” was shouted in the crowd.

“She’ll fall in a minute, mates, there will soon be an end of her,” said an admiring spectator in the crowd.

“Fetch an axe to her! Finish her off,” shouted a third.

“I’ll show you! Stand off,” Mikolka screamed frantically; he threw down the shaft, stooped down in the cart and picked up an iron crowbar. “Look out,” he shouted, and with all his might he dealt a stunning blow at the poor mare. The blow fell; the mare staggered, sank back, tried to pull, but the bar fell again with a swinging blow on her back and she fell on the ground like a log.

“Finish her off,” shouted Mikolka and he leapt beside himself, out of the cart. Several young men, also flushed with drink, seized anything they could come across — whips, sticks, poles, and ran to the dying mare. Mikolka stood on one side and began dealing random blows with the crowbar. The mare stretched out her head, drew a long breath and died.

“You butchered her,” someone shouted in the crowd.

“Why wouldn’t she gallop then?”

“My property!” shouted Mikolka, with bloodshot eyes, brandishing the bar in his hands. He stood as though regretting that he had nothing more to beat.

“No mistake about it, you are not a Christian,” many voices were shouting in the crowd.

But the poor boy, beside himself, made his way, screaming, through the crowd to the sorrel nag, put his arms round her bleeding dead head and kissed it, kissed the eyes and kissed the lips.... Then he jumped up and flew in a frenzy with his little fists out at Mikolka. At that instant his father, who had been running after him, snatched him up and carried him out of the crowd.

“Come along, come! Let us go home,” he said to him.

“Father! Why did they... kill... the poor horse!” he sobbed, but his voice broke and the words came in shrieks from his panting chest.

“They are drunk.... They are brutal... it’s not our business!” said his father. He put his arms round his father but he felt choked, choked. He tried to draw a breath, to cry out — and woke up.

He waked up, gasping for breath, his hair soaked with perspiration, and stood up in terror.

“Thank God, that was only a dream,” he said, sitting down under a tree and drawing deep breaths. “But what is it? Is it some fever coming on? Such a hideous dream!”

He felt utterly broken: darkness and confusion were in his soul. He rested his elbows on his knees and leaned his head on his hands.

“Good God!” he cried, “can it be, can it be, that I shall really take an axe, that I shall strike her on the head, split her skull open... that I shall tread in the sticky warm blood, break the lock, steal and tremble; hide, all spattered in the blood... with the axe.... Good God, can it be?”

He was shaking like a leaf as he said this.

“But why am I going on like this?” he continued, sitting up again, as it were in profound amazement. “I knew that I could never bring myself to it, so what have I been torturing myself for till now? Yesterday, yesterday, when I went to make that... *experiment*, yesterday I realised completely that I could never bear to do it.... Why am I going over it again, then? Why am I hesitating? As I came down the stairs yesterday, I said myself that it was base, loathsome, vile, vile... the very thought of it made me feel sick and filled me with horror.

“No, I couldn’t do it, I couldn’t do it! Granted, granted that there is no flaw in all that reasoning, that all that I have concluded this last month is

clear as day, true as arithmetic.... My God! Anyway I couldn’t bring myself to it! I couldn’t do it, I couldn’t do it! Why, why then am I still...?”

He rose to his feet, looked round in wonder as though surprised at finding himself in this place, and went towards the bridge. He was pale, his eyes glowed, he was exhausted in every limb, but he seemed suddenly to breathe more easily. He felt he had cast off that fearful burden that had so long been weighing upon him, and all at once there was a sense of relief and peace in his soul. “Lord,” he prayed, “show me my path — I renounce that accursed... dream of mine.”

Crossing the bridge, he gazed quietly and calmly at the Neva, at the glowing red sun setting in the glowing sky. In spite of his weakness he was not conscious of fatigue. It was as though an abscess that had been forming for a month past in his heart had suddenly broken. Freedom, freedom! He was free from that spell, that sorcery, that obsession!

Later on, when he recalled that time and all that happened to him during those days, minute by minute, point by point, he was superstitiously impressed by one circumstance, which, though in itself not very exceptional, always seemed to him afterwards the predestined turning-point of his fate. He could never understand and explain to himself why, when he was tired and worn out, when it would have been more convenient for him to go home by the shortest and most direct way, he had returned by the Hay Market where he had no need to go. It was obviously and quite unnecessarily out of his way, though not much so. It is true that it happened to him dozens of times to return home without noticing what streets he passed through. But why, he was always asking himself, why had such an important, such a decisive and at the same time such an absolutely chance meeting happened in the Hay Market (where he had moreover no reason to go) at the very hour, the very minute of his life when he was just in the very mood and in the very circumstances in which that meeting was able to exert the gravest and most decisive influence on his whole destiny? As though it had been lying in wait for him on purpose!

It was about nine o’clock when he crossed the Hay Market. At the tables and the barrows, at the booths and the shops, all the market people were closing their establishments or clearing away and packing up their wares and, like their customers, were going home. Rag pickers and costermongers of all kinds were crowding round the taverns in the dirty and stinking courtyards of the Hay Market. Raskolnikov particularly liked this place and

the neighbouring alleys, when he wandered aimlessly in the streets. Here his rags did not attract contemptuous attention, and one could walk about in any attire without scandalising people. At the corner of an alley a huckster and his wife had two tables set out with tapes, thread, cotton handkerchiefs, etc. They, too, had got up to go home, but were lingering in conversation with a friend, who had just come up to them. This friend was Lizaveta Ivanovna, or, as everyone called her, Lizaveta, the younger sister of the old pawnbroker, Alyona Ivanovna, whom Raskolnikov had visited the previous day to pawn his watch and make his *experiment*.... He already knew all about Lizaveta and she knew him a little too. She was a single woman of about thirty-five, tall, clumsy, timid, submissive and almost idiotic. She was a complete slave and went in fear and trembling of her sister, who made her work day and night, and even beat her. She was standing with a bundle before the huckster and his wife, listening earnestly and doubtfully. They were talking of something with special warmth. The moment Raskolnikov caught sight of her, he was overcome by a strange sensation as it were of intense astonishment, though there was nothing astonishing about this meeting.

“You could make up your mind for yourself, Lizaveta Ivanovna,” the huckster was saying aloud. “Come round to-morrow about seven. They will be here too.”

“To-morrow?” said Lizaveta slowly and thoughtfully, as though unable to make up her mind.

“Upon my word, what a fright you are in of Alyona Ivanovna,” gabbled the huckster’s wife, a lively little woman. “I look at you, you are like some little babe. And she is not your own sister either-nothing but a step-sister and what a hand she keeps over you!”

“But this time don’t say a word to Alyona Ivanovna,” her husband interrupted; “that’s my advice, but come round to us without asking. It will be worth your while. Later on your sister herself may have a notion.”

“Am I to come?”

“About seven o’clock to-morrow. And they will be here. You will be able to decide for yourself.”

“And we’ll have a cup of tea,” added his wife.

“All right, I’ll come,” said Lizaveta, still pondering, and she began slowly moving away.

Raskolnikov had just passed and heard no more. He passed softly, unnoticed, trying not to miss a word. His first amazement was followed by a thrill of horror, like a shiver running down his spine. He had learnt, he had suddenly quite unexpectedly learnt, that the next day at seven o'clock Lizaveta, the old woman's sister and only companion, would be away from home and that therefore at seven o'clock precisely the old woman *would be left alone*.

He was only a few steps from his lodging. He went in like a man condemned to death. He thought of nothing and was incapable of thinking; but he felt suddenly in his whole being that he had no more freedom of thought, no will, and that everything was suddenly and irrevocably decided.

Certainly, if he had to wait whole years for a suitable opportunity, he could not reckon on a more certain step towards the success of the plan than that which had just presented itself. In any case, it would have been difficult to find out beforehand and with certainty, with greater exactness and less risk, and without dangerous inquiries and investigations, that next day at a certain time an old woman, on whose life an attempt was contemplated, would be at home and entirely alone.

CHAPTER VI

Later on Raskolnikov happened to find out why the huckster and his wife had invited Lizaveta. It was a very ordinary matter and there was nothing exceptional about it. A family who had come to the town and been reduced to poverty were selling their household goods and clothes, all women's things. As the things would have fetched little in the market, they were looking for a dealer. This was Lizaveta's business. She undertook such jobs and was frequently employed, as she was very honest and always fixed a fair price and stuck to it. She spoke as a rule little and, as we have said already, she was very submissive and timid.

But Raskolnikov had become superstitious of late. The traces of superstition remained in him long after, and were almost ineradicable. And in all this he was always afterwards disposed to see something strange and mysterious, as it were, the presence of some peculiar influences and coincidences. In the previous winter a student he knew called Pokorev, who had left for Harkov, had chanced in conversation to give him the address of Alyona Ivanovna, the old pawnbroker, in case he might want to pawn anything. For a long while he did not go to her, for he had lessons and managed to get along somehow. Six weeks ago he had remembered the address; he had two articles that could be pawned: his father's old silver watch and a little gold ring with three red stones, a present from his sister at parting. He decided to take the ring. When he found the old woman he had felt an insurmountable repulsion for her at the first glance, though he knew nothing special about her. He got two roubles from her and went into a miserable little tavern on his way home. He asked for tea, sat down and sank into deep thought. A strange idea was pecking at his brain like a chicken in the egg, and very, very much absorbed him.

Almost beside him at the next table there was sitting a student, whom he did not know and had never seen, and with him a young officer. They had played a game of billiards and began drinking tea. All at once he heard the student mention to the officer the pawnbroker Alyona Ivanovna and give him her address. This of itself seemed strange to Raskolnikov; he had just come from her and here at once he heard her name. Of course it was a chance, but he could not shake off a very extraordinary impression, and

here someone seemed to be speaking expressly for him; the student began telling his friend various details about Alyona Ivanovna.

“She is first-rate,” he said. “You can always get money from her. She is as rich as a Jew, she can give you five thousand roubles at a time and she is not above taking a pledge for a rouble. Lots of our fellows have had dealings with her. But she is an awful old harpy....”

And he began describing how spiteful and uncertain she was, how if you were only a day late with your interest the pledge was lost; how she gave a quarter of the value of an article and took five and even seven percent a month on it and so on. The student chattered on, saying that she had a sister Lizaveta, whom the wretched little creature was continually beating, and kept in complete bondage like a small child, though Lizaveta was at least six feet high.

“There’s a phenomenon for you,” cried the student and he laughed.

They began talking about Lizaveta. The student spoke about her with a peculiar relish and was continually laughing and the officer listened with great interest and asked him to send Lizaveta to do some mending for him. Raskolnikov did not miss a word and learned everything about her. Lizaveta was younger than the old woman and was her half-sister, being the child of a different mother. She was thirty-five. She worked day and night for her sister, and besides doing the cooking and the washing, she did sewing and worked as a charwoman and gave her sister all she earned. She did not dare to accept an order or job of any kind without her sister’s permission. The old woman had already made her will, and Lizaveta knew of it, and by this will she would not get a farthing; nothing but the movables, chairs and so on; all the money was left to a monastery in the province of N —— , that prayers might be said for her in perpetuity. Lizaveta was of lower rank than her sister, unmarried and awfully uncouth in appearance, remarkably tall with long feet that looked as if they were bent outwards. She always wore battered goatskin shoes, and was clean in her person. What the student expressed most surprise and amusement about was the fact that Lizaveta was continually with child.

“But you say she is hideous?” observed the officer.

“Yes, she is so dark-skinned and looks like a soldier dressed up, but you know she is not at all hideous. She has such a good-natured face and eyes. Strikingly so. And the proof of it is that lots of people are attracted by her.

She is such a soft, gentle creature, ready to put up with anything, always willing, willing to do anything. And her smile is really very sweet."

"You seem to find her attractive yourself," laughed the officer.

"From her queerness. No, I'll tell you what. I could kill that damned old woman and make off with her money, I assure you, without the faintest conscience-prick," the student added with warmth. The officer laughed again while Raskolnikov shuddered. How strange it was!

"Listen, I want to ask you a serious question," the student said hotly. "I was joking of course, but look here; on one side we have a stupid, senseless, worthless, spiteful, ailing, horrid old woman, not simply useless but doing actual mischief, who has not an idea what she is living for herself, and who will die in a day or two in any case. You understand? You understand?"

"Yes, yes, I understand," answered the officer, watching his excited companion attentively.

"Well, listen then. On the other side, fresh young lives thrown away for want of help and by thousands, on every side! A hundred thousand good deeds could be done and helped, on that old woman's money which will be buried in a monastery! Hundreds, thousands perhaps, might be set on the right path; dozens of families saved from destitution, from ruin, from vice, from the Lock hospitals — and all with her money. Kill her, take her money and with the help of it devote oneself to the service of humanity and the good of all. What do you think, would not one tiny crime be wiped out by thousands of good deeds? For one life thousands would be saved from corruption and decay. One death, and a hundred lives in exchange — it's simple arithmetic! Besides, what value has the life of that sickly, stupid, ill-natured old woman in the balance of existence! No more than the life of a louse, of a black-beetle, less in fact because the old woman is doing harm. She is wearing out the lives of others; the other day she bit Lizaveta's finger out of spite; it almost had to be amputated."

"Of course she does not deserve to live," remarked the officer, "but there it is, it's nature."

"Oh, well, brother, but we have to correct and direct nature, and, but for that, we should drown in an ocean of prejudice. But for that, there would never have been a single great man. They talk of duty, conscience — I don't want to say anything against duty and conscience; — but the point is, what do we mean by them. Stay, I have another question to ask you. Listen!"

"No, you stay, I'll ask you a question. Listen!"

“Well?”

“You are talking and speechifying away, but tell me, would you kill the old woman *yourself*?”

“Of course not! I was only arguing the justice of it.... It’s nothing to do with me....”

“But I think, if you would not do it yourself, there’s no justice about it.... Let us have another game.”

Raskolnikov was violently agitated. Of course, it was all ordinary youthful talk and thought, such as he had often heard before in different forms and on different themes. But why had he happened to hear such a discussion and such ideas at the very moment when his own brain was just conceiving... *the very same ideas*? And why, just at the moment when he had brought away the embryo of his idea from the old woman had he dropped at once upon a conversation about her? This coincidence always seemed strange to him. This trivial talk in a tavern had an immense influence on him in his later action; as though there had really been in it something preordained, some guiding hint....

On returning from the Hay Market he flung himself on the sofa and sat for a whole hour without stirring. Meanwhile it got dark; he had no candle and, indeed, it did not occur to him to light up. He could never recollect whether he had been thinking about anything at that time. At last he was conscious of his former fever and shivering, and he realised with relief that he could lie down on the sofa. Soon heavy, leaden sleep came over him, as it were crushing him.

He slept an extraordinarily long time and without dreaming. Nastasya, coming into his room at ten o’clock the next morning, had difficulty in rousing him. She brought him in tea and bread. The tea was again the second brew and again in her own tea-pot.

“My goodness, how he sleeps!” she cried indignantly. “And he is always asleep.”

He got up with an effort. His head ached, he stood up, took a turn in his garret and sank back on the sofa again.

“Going to sleep again,” cried Nastasya. “Are you ill, eh?”

He made no reply.

“Do you want some tea?”

“Afterwards,” he said with an effort, closing his eyes again and turning to the wall.

Nastasya stood over him.

“Perhaps he really is ill,” she said, turned and went out. She came in again at two o’clock with soup. He was lying as before. The tea stood untouched. Nastasya felt positively offended and began wrathfully rousing him.

“Why are you lying like a log?” she shouted, looking at him with repulsion.

He got up, and sat down again, but said nothing and stared at the floor.

“Are you ill or not?” asked Nastasya and again received no answer. “You’d better go out and get a breath of air,” she said after a pause. “Will you eat it or not?”

“Afterwards,” he said weakly. “You can go.”

And he motioned her out.

She remained a little longer, looked at him with compassion and went out.

A few minutes afterwards, he raised his eyes and looked for a long while at the tea and the soup. Then he took the bread, took up a spoon and began to eat.

He ate a little, three or four spoonfuls, without appetite, as it were mechanically. His head ached less. After his meal he stretched himself on the sofa again, but now he could not sleep; he lay without stirring, with his face in the pillow. He was haunted by day-dreams and such strange day-dreams; in one, that kept recurring, he fancied that he was in Africa, in Egypt, in some sort of oasis. The caravan was resting, the camels were peacefully lying down; the palms stood all around in a complete circle; all the party were at dinner. But he was drinking water from a spring which flowed gurgling close by. And it was so cool, it was wonderful, wonderful, blue, cold water running among the parti-coloured stones and over the clean sand which glistened here and there like gold.... Suddenly he heard a clock strike. He started, roused himself, raised his head, looked out of the window, and seeing how late it was, suddenly jumped up wide awake as though someone had pulled him off the sofa. He crept on tiptoe to the door, stealthily opened it and began listening on the staircase. His heart beat terribly. But all was quiet on the stairs as if everyone was asleep.... It seemed to him strange and monstrous that he could have slept in such

forgetfulness from the previous day and had done nothing, had prepared nothing yet.... And meanwhile perhaps it had struck six. And his drowsiness and stupefaction were followed by an extraordinary, feverish, as it were distracted haste. But the preparations to be made were few. He concentrated all his energies on thinking of everything and forgetting nothing; and his heart kept beating and thumping so that he could hardly breathe. First he had to make a noose and sew it into his overcoat — a work of a moment. He rummaged under his pillow and picked out amongst the linen stuffed away under it, a worn out, old unwashed shirt. From its rags he tore a long strip, a couple of inches wide and about sixteen inches long. He folded this strip in two, took off his wide, strong summer overcoat of some stout cotton material (his only outer garment) and began sewing the two ends of the rag on the inside, under the left armhole. His hands shook as he sewed, but he did it successfully so that nothing showed outside when he put the coat on again. The needle and thread he had got ready long before and they lay on his table in a piece of paper. As for the noose, it was a very ingenious device of his own; the noose was intended for the axe. It was impossible for him to carry the axe through the street in his hands. And if hidden under his coat he would still have had to support it with his hand, which would have been noticeable. Now he had only to put the head of the axe in the noose, and it would hang quietly under his arm on the inside. Putting his hand in his coat pocket, he could hold the end of the handle all the way, so that it did not swing; and as the coat was very full, a regular sack in fact, it could not be seen from outside that he was holding something with the hand that was in the pocket. This noose, too, he had designed a fortnight before.

When he had finished with this, he thrust his hand into a little opening between his sofa and the floor, fumbled in the left corner and drew out the *pledge*, which he had got ready long before and hidden there. This pledge was, however, only a smoothly planed piece of wood the size and thickness of a silver cigarette case. He picked up this piece of wood in one of his wanderings in a courtyard where there was some sort of a workshop. Afterwards he had added to the wood a thin smooth piece of iron, which he had also picked up at the same time in the street. Putting the iron which was a little the smaller on the piece of wood, he fastened them very firmly, crossing and re-crossing the thread round them; then wrapped them carefully and daintily in clean white paper and tied up the parcel so that it would be very difficult to untie it. This was in order to divert the attention

of the old woman for a time, while she was trying to undo the knot, and so to gain a moment. The iron strip was added to give weight, so that the woman might not guess the first minute that the “thing” was made of wood. All this had been stored by him beforehand under the sofa. He had only just got the pledge out when he heard someone suddenly about in the yard.

“It struck six long ago.”

“Long ago! My God!”

He rushed to the door, listened, caught up his hat and began to descend his thirteen steps cautiously, noiselessly, like a cat. He had still the most important thing to do — to steal the axe from the kitchen. That the deed must be done with an axe he had decided long ago. He had also a pocket pruning-knife, but he could not rely on the knife and still less on his own strength, and so resolved finally on the axe. We may note in passing, one peculiarity in regard to all the final resolutions taken by him in the matter; they had one strange characteristic: the more final they were, the more hideous and the more absurd they at once became in his eyes. In spite of all his agonising inward struggle, he never for a single instant all that time could believe in the carrying out of his plans.

And, indeed, if it had ever happened that everything to the least point could have been considered and finally settled, and no uncertainty of any kind had remained, he would, it seems, have renounced it all as something absurd, monstrous and impossible. But a whole mass of unsettled points and uncertainties remained. As for getting the axe, that trifling business cost him no anxiety, for nothing could be easier. Nastasya was continually out of the house, especially in the evenings; she would run in to the neighbours or to a shop, and always left the door ajar. It was the one thing the landlady was always scolding her about. And so, when the time came, he would only have to go quietly into the kitchen and to take the axe, and an hour later (when everything was over) go in and put it back again. But these were doubtful points. Supposing he returned an hour later to put it back, and Nastasya had come back and was on the spot. He would of course have to go by and wait till she went out again. But supposing she were in the meantime to miss the axe, look for it, make an outcry — that would mean suspicion or at least grounds for suspicion.

But those were all trifles which he had not even begun to consider, and indeed he had no time. He was thinking of the chief point, and put off trifling details, until *he could believe in it all*. But that seemed utterly

unattainable. So it seemed to himself at least. He could not imagine, for instance, that he would sometime leave off thinking, get up and simply go there.... Even his late experiment (i.e. his visit with the object of a final survey of the place) was simply an attempt at an experiment, far from being the real thing, as though one should say “come, let us go and try it — why dream about it!” — and at once he had broken down and had run away cursing, in a frenzy with himself. Meanwhile it would seem, as regards the moral question, that his analysis was complete; his casuistry had become keen as a razor, and he could not find rational objections in himself. But in the last resort he simply ceased to believe in himself, and doggedly, slavishly sought arguments in all directions, fumbling for them, as though someone were forcing and drawing him to it.

At first — long before indeed — he had been much occupied with one question; why almost all crimes are so badly concealed and so easily detected, and why almost all criminals leave such obvious traces? He had come gradually to many different and curious conclusions, and in his opinion the chief reason lay not so much in the material impossibility of concealing the crime, as in the criminal himself. Almost every criminal is subject to a failure of will and reasoning power by a childish and phenomenal heedlessness, at the very instant when prudence and caution are most essential. It was his conviction that this eclipse of reason and failure of will power attacked a man like a disease, developed gradually and reached its highest point just before the perpetration of the crime, continued with equal violence at the moment of the crime and for longer or shorter time after, according to the individual case, and then passed off like any other disease. The question whether the disease gives rise to the crime, or whether the crime from its own peculiar nature is always accompanied by something of the nature of disease, he did not yet feel able to decide.

When he reached these conclusions, he decided that in his own case there could not be such a morbid reaction, that his reason and will would remain unimpaired at the time of carrying out his design, for the simple reason that his design was “not a crime....” We will omit all the process by means of which he arrived at this last conclusion; we have run too far ahead already.... We may add only that the practical, purely material difficulties of the affair occupied a secondary position in his mind. “One has but to keep all one’s will-power and reason to deal with them, and they will all be overcome at the time when once one has familiarised oneself with the

minutest details of the business....” But this preparation had never been begun. His final decisions were what he came to trust least, and when the hour struck, it all came to pass quite differently, as it were accidentally and unexpectedly.

One trifling circumstance upset his calculations, before he had even left the staircase. When he reached the landlady’s kitchen, the door of which was open as usual, he glanced cautiously in to see whether, in Nastasya’s absence, the landlady herself was there, or if not, whether the door to her own room was closed, so that she might not peep out when he went in for the axe. But what was his amazement when he suddenly saw that Nastasya was not only at home in the kitchen, but was occupied there, taking linen out of a basket and hanging it on a line. Seeing him, she left off hanging the clothes, turned to him and stared at him all the time he was passing. He turned away his eyes, and walked past as though he noticed nothing. But it was the end of everything; he had not the axe! He was overwhelmed.

“What made me think,” he reflected, as he went under the gateway, “what made me think that she would be sure not to be at home at that moment! Why, why, why did I assume this so certainly?”

He was crushed and even humiliated. He could have laughed at himself in his anger.... A dull animal rage boiled within him.

He stood hesitating in the gateway. To go into the street, to go a walk for appearance’ sake was revolting; to go back to his room, even more revolting. “And what a chance I have lost for ever!” he muttered, standing aimlessly in the gateway, just opposite the porter’s little dark room, which was also open. Suddenly he started. From the porter’s room, two paces away from him, something shining under the bench to the right caught his eye.... He looked about him — nobody. He approached the room on tiptoe, went down two steps into it and in a faint voice called the porter. “Yes, not at home! Somewhere near though, in the yard, for the door is wide open.” He dashed to the axe (it was an axe) and pulled it out from under the bench, where it lay between two chunks of wood; at once, before going out, he made it fast in the noose, he thrust both hands into his pockets and went out of the room; no one had noticed him! “When reason fails, the devil helps!” he thought with a strange grin. This chance raised his spirits extraordinarily.

He walked along quietly and sedately, without hurry, to avoid awakening suspicion. He scarcely looked at the passers-by, tried to escape looking at their faces at all, and to be as little noticeable as possible. Suddenly he

thought of his hat. “Good heavens! I had the money the day before yesterday and did not get a cap to wear instead!” A curse rose from the bottom of his soul.

Glancing out of the corner of his eye into a shop, he saw by a clock on the wall that it was ten minutes past seven. He had to make haste and at the same time to go someway round, so as to approach the house from the other side....

When he had happened to imagine all this beforehand, he had sometimes thought that he would be very much afraid. But he was not very much afraid now, was not afraid at all, indeed. His mind was even occupied by irrelevant matters, but by nothing for long. As he passed the Yusupov garden, he was deeply absorbed in considering the building of great fountains, and of their refreshing effect on the atmosphere in all the squares. By degrees he passed to the conviction that if the summer garden were extended to the field of Mars, and perhaps joined to the garden of the Mihailovsky Palace, it would be a splendid thing and a great benefit to the town. Then he was interested by the question why in all great towns men are not simply driven by necessity, but in some peculiar way inclined to live in those parts of the town where there are no gardens nor fountains; where there is most dirt and smell and all sorts of nastiness. Then his own walks through the Hay Market came back to his mind, and for a moment he waked up to reality. “What nonsense!” he thought, “better think of nothing at all!”

“So probably men led to execution clutch mentally at every object that meets them on the way,” flashed through his mind, but simply flashed, like lightning; he made haste to dismiss this thought.... And by now he was near; here was the house, here was the gate. Suddenly a clock somewhere struck once. “What! can it be half-past seven? Impossible, it must be fast!”

Luckily for him, everything went well again at the gates. At that very moment, as though expressly for his benefit, a huge waggon of hay had just driven in at the gate, completely screening him as he passed under the gateway, and the waggon had scarcely had time to drive through into the yard, before he had slipped in a flash to the right. On the other side of the waggon he could hear shouting and quarrelling; but no one noticed him and no one met him. Many windows looking into that huge quadrangular yard were open at that moment, but he did not raise his head — he had not the strength to. The staircase leading to the old woman’s room was close by, just on the right of the gateway. He was already on the stairs....

Drawing a breath, pressing his hand against his throbbing heart, and once more feeling for the axe and setting it straight, he began softly and cautiously ascending the stairs, listening every minute. But the stairs, too, were quite deserted; all the doors were shut; he met no one. One flat indeed on the first floor was wide open and painters were at work in it, but they did not glance at him. He stood still, thought a minute and went on. “Of course it would be better if they had not been here, but... it’s two storeys above them.”

And there was the fourth storey, here was the door, here was the flat opposite, the empty one. The flat underneath the old woman’s was apparently empty also; the visiting card nailed on the door had been torn off — they had gone away!... He was out of breath. For one instant the thought floated through his mind “Shall I go back?” But he made no answer and began listening at the old woman’s door, a dead silence. Then he listened again on the staircase, listened long and intently... then looked about him for the last time, pulled himself together, drew himself up, and once more tried the axe in the noose. “Am I very pale?” he wondered. “Am I not evidently agitated? She is mistrustful.... Had I better wait a little longer... till my heart leaves off thumping?”

But his heart did not leave off. On the contrary, as though to spite him, it throbbed more and more violently. He could stand it no longer, he slowly put out his hand to the bell and rang. Half a minute later he rang again, more loudly.

No answer. To go on ringing was useless and out of place. The old woman was, of course, at home, but she was suspicious and alone. He had some knowledge of her habits... and once more he put his ear to the door. Either his senses were peculiarly keen (which it is difficult to suppose), or the sound was really very distinct. Anyway, he suddenly heard something like the cautious touch of a hand on the lock and the rustle of a skirt at the very door. Someone was standing stealthily close to the lock and just as he was doing on the outside was secretly listening within, and seemed to have her ear to the door.... He moved a little on purpose and muttered something aloud that he might not have the appearance of hiding, then rang a third time, but quietly, soberly, and without impatience, Recalling it afterwards, that moment stood out in his mind vividly, distinctly, for ever; he could not make out how he had had such cunning, for his mind was as it were clouded

at moments and he was almost unconscious of his body.... An instant later he heard the latch unfastened.

CHAPTER VII

The door was as before opened a tiny crack, and again two sharp and suspicious eyes stared at him out of the darkness. Then Raskolnikov lost his head and nearly made a great mistake.

Fearing the old woman would be frightened by their being alone, and not hoping that the sight of him would disarm her suspicions, he took hold of the door and drew it towards him to prevent the old woman from attempting to shut it again. Seeing this she did not pull the door back, but she did not let go the handle so that he almost dragged her out with it on to the stairs. Seeing that she was standing in the doorway not allowing him to pass, he advanced straight upon her. She stepped back in alarm, tried to say something, but seemed unable to speak and stared with open eyes at him.

“Good evening, Alyona Ivanovna,” he began, trying to speak easily, but his voice would not obey him, it broke and shook. “I have come... I have brought something... but we’d better come in... to the light....”

And leaving her, he passed straight into the room uninvited. The old woman ran after him; her tongue was unloosed.

“Good heavens! What it is? Who is it? What do you want?”

“Why, Alyona Ivanovna, you know me... Raskolnikov... here, I brought you the pledge I promised the other day...” And he held out the pledge.

The old woman glanced for a moment at the pledge, but at once stared in the eyes of her uninvited visitor. She looked intently, maliciously and mistrustfully. A minute passed; he even fancied something like a sneer in her eyes, as though she had already guessed everything. He felt that he was losing his head, that he was almost frightened, so frightened that if she were to look like that and not say a word for another half minute, he thought he would have run away from her.

“Why do you look at me as though you did not know me?” he said suddenly, also with malice. “Take it if you like, if not I’ll go elsewhere, I am in a hurry.”

He had not even thought of saying this, but it was suddenly said of itself. The old woman recovered herself, and her visitor’s resolute tone evidently restored her confidence.

“But why, my good sir, all of a minute.... What is it?” she asked, looking at the pledge.

“The silver cigarette case; I spoke of it last time, you know.”

She held out her hand.

“But how pale you are, to be sure... and your hands are trembling too? Have you been bathing, or what?”

“Fever,” he answered abruptly. “You can’t help getting pale... if you’ve nothing to eat,” he added, with difficulty articulating the words.

His strength was failing him again. But his answer sounded like the truth; the old woman took the pledge.

“What is it?” she asked once more, scanning Raskolnikov intently, and weighing the pledge in her hand.

“A thing... cigarette case.... Silver.... Look at it.”

“It does not seem somehow like silver.... How he has wrapped it up!”

Trying to untie the string and turning to the window, to the light (all her windows were shut, in spite of the stifling heat), she left him altogether for some seconds and stood with her back to him. He unbuttoned his coat and freed the axe from the noose, but did not yet take it out altogether, simply holding it in his right hand under the coat. His hands were fearfully weak, he felt them every moment growing more numb and more wooden. He was afraid he would let the axe slip and fall.... A sudden giddiness came over him.

“But what has he tied it up like this for?” the old woman cried with vexation and moved towards him.

He had not a minute more to lose. He pulled the axe quite out, swung it with both arms, scarcely conscious of himself, and almost without effort, almost mechanically, brought the blunt side down on her head. He seemed not to use his own strength in this. But as soon as he had once brought the axe down, his strength returned to him.

The old woman was as always bareheaded. Her thin, light hair, streaked with grey, thickly smeared with grease, was plaited in a rat’s tail and fastened by a broken horn comb which stood out on the nape of her neck. As she was so short, the blow fell on the very top of her skull. She cried out, but very faintly, and suddenly sank all of a heap on the floor, raising her hands to her head. In one hand she still held “the pledge.” Then he dealt her another and another blow with the blunt side and on the same spot. The blood gushed as from an overturned glass, the body fell back. He stepped back, let it fall, and at once bent over her face; she was dead. Her eyes

seemed to be starting out of their sockets, the brow and the whole face were drawn and contorted convulsively.

He laid the axe on the ground near the dead body and felt at once in her pocket (trying to avoid the streaming body) — the same right-hand pocket from which she had taken the key on his last visit. He was in full possession of his faculties, free from confusion or giddiness, but his hands were still trembling. He remembered afterwards that he had been particularly collected and careful, trying all the time not to get smeared with blood.... He pulled out the keys at once, they were all, as before, in one bunch on a steel ring. He ran at once into the bedroom with them. It was a very small room with a whole shrine of holy images. Against the other wall stood a big bed, very clean and covered with a silk patchwork wadded quilt. Against a third wall was a chest of drawers. Strange to say, so soon as he began to fit the keys into the chest, so soon as he heard their jingling, a convulsive shudder passed over him. He suddenly felt tempted again to give it all up and go away. But that was only for an instant; it was too late to go back. He positively smiled at himself, when suddenly another terrifying idea occurred to his mind. He suddenly fancied that the old woman might be still alive and might recover her senses. Leaving the keys in the chest, he ran back to the body, snatched up the axe and lifted it once more over the old woman, but did not bring it down. There was no doubt that she was dead. Bending down and examining her again more closely, he saw clearly that the skull was broken and even battered in on one side. He was about to feel it with his finger, but drew back his hand and indeed it was evident without that. Meanwhile there was a perfect pool of blood. All at once he noticed a string on her neck; he tugged at it, but the string was strong and did not snap and besides, it was soaked with blood. He tried to pull it out from the front of the dress, but something held it and prevented its coming. In his impatience he raised the axe again to cut the string from above on the body, but did not dare, and with difficulty, smearing his hand and the axe in the blood, after two minutes’ hurried effort, he cut the string and took it off without touching the body with the axe; he was not mistaken — it was a purse. On the string were two crosses, one of Cyprus wood and one of copper, and an image in silver filigree, and with them a small greasy chamois leather purse with a steel rim and ring. The purse was stuffed very full; Raskolnikov thrust it in his pocket without looking at it, flung the crosses on the old

woman’s body and rushed back into the bedroom, this time taking the axe with him.

He was in terrible haste, he snatched the keys, and began trying them again. But he was unsuccessful. They would not fit in the locks. It was not so much that his hands were shaking, but that he kept making mistakes; though he saw for instance that a key was not the right one and would not fit, still he tried to put it in. Suddenly he remembered and realised that the big key with the deep notches, which was hanging there with the small keys could not possibly belong to the chest of drawers (on his last visit this had struck him), but to some strong box, and that everything perhaps was hidden in that box. He left the chest of drawers, and at once felt under the bedstead, knowing that old women usually keep boxes under their beds. And so it was; there was a good-sized box under the bed, at least a yard in length, with an arched lid covered with red leather and studded with steel nails. The notched key fitted at once and unlocked it. At the top, under a white sheet, was a coat of red brocade lined with hareskin; under it was a silk dress, then a shawl and it seemed as though there was nothing below but clothes. The first thing he did was to wipe his blood-stained hands on the red brocade. “It’s red, and on red blood will be less noticeable,” the thought passed through his mind; then he suddenly came to himself. “Good God, am I going out of my senses?” he thought with terror.

But no sooner did he touch the clothes than a gold watch slipped from under the fur coat. He made haste to turn them all over. There turned out to be various articles made of gold among the clothes — probably all pledges, unredeemed or waiting to be redeemed — bracelets, chains, ear-rings, pins and such things. Some were in cases, others simply wrapped in newspaper, carefully and exactly folded, and tied round with tape. Without any delay, he began filling up the pockets of his trousers and overcoat without examining or undoing the parcels and cases; but he had not time to take many....

He suddenly heard steps in the room where the old woman lay. He stopped short and was still as death. But all was quiet, so it must have been his fancy. All at once he heard distinctly a faint cry, as though someone had uttered a low broken moan. Then again dead silence for a minute or two. He sat squatting on his heels by the box and waited holding his breath. Suddenly he jumped up, seized the axe and ran out of the bedroom.

In the middle of the room stood Lizaveta with a big bundle in her arms. She was gazing in stupefaction at her murdered sister, white as a sheet and seeming not to have the strength to cry out. Seeing him run out of the bedroom, she began faintly quivering all over, like a leaf, a shudder ran down her face; she lifted her hand, opened her mouth, but still did not scream. She began slowly backing away from him into the corner, staring intently, persistently at him, but still uttered no sound, as though she could not get breath to scream. He rushed at her with the axe; her mouth twitched piteously, as one sees babies' mouths, when they begin to be frightened, stare intently at what frightens them and are on the point of screaming. And this hapless Lizaveta was so simple and had been so thoroughly crushed and scared that she did not even raise a hand to guard her face, though that was the most necessary and natural action at the moment, for the axe was raised over her face. She only put up her empty left hand, but not to her face, slowly holding it out before her as though motioning him away. The axe fell with the sharp edge just on the skull and split at one blow all the top of the head. She fell heavily at once. Raskolnikov completely lost his head, snatching up her bundle, dropped it again and ran into the entry.

Fear gained more and more mastery over him, especially after this second, quite unexpected murder. He longed to run away from the place as fast as possible. And if at that moment he had been capable of seeing and reasoning more correctly, if he had been able to realise all the difficulties of his position, the hopelessness, the hideousness and the absurdity of it, if he could have understood how many obstacles and, perhaps, crimes he had still to overcome or to commit, to get out of that place and to make his way home, it is very possible that he would have flung up everything, and would have gone to give himself up, and not from fear, but from simple horror and loathing of what he had done. The feeling of loathing especially surged up within him and grew stronger every minute. He would not now have gone to the box or even into the room for anything in the world.

But a sort of blankness, even dreaminess, had begun by degrees to take possession of him; at moments he forgot himself, or rather, forgot what was of importance, and caught at trifles. Glancing, however, into the kitchen and seeing a bucket half full of water on a bench, he bethought him of washing his hands and the axe. His hands were sticky with blood. He dropped the axe with the blade in the water, snatched a piece of soap that lay in a broken saucer on the window, and began washing his hands in the bucket. When

they were clean, he took out the axe, washed the blade and spent a long time, about three minutes, washing the wood where there were spots of blood rubbing them with soap. Then he wiped it all with some linen that was hanging to dry on a line in the kitchen and then he was a long while attentively examining the axe at the window. There was no trace left on it, only the wood was still damp. He carefully hung the axe in the noose under his coat. Then as far as was possible, in the dim light in the kitchen, he looked over his overcoat, his trousers and his boots. At the first glance there seemed to be nothing but stains on the boots. He wetted the rag and rubbed the boots. But he knew he was not looking thoroughly, that there might be something quite noticeable that he was overlooking. He stood in the middle of the room, lost in thought. Dark agonising ideas rose in his mind — the idea that he was mad and that at that moment he was incapable of reasoning, of protecting himself, that he ought perhaps to be doing something utterly different from what he was now doing. “Good God!” he muttered “I must fly, fly,” and he rushed into the entry. But here a shock of terror awaited him such as he had never known before.

He stood and gazed and could not believe his eyes: the door, the outer door from the stairs, at which he had not long before waited and rung, was standing unfastened and at least six inches open. No lock, no bolt, all the time, all that time! The old woman had not shut it after him perhaps as a precaution. But, good God! Why, he had seen Lizaveta afterwards! And how could he, how could he have failed to reflect that she must have come in somehow! She could not have come through the wall!

He dashed to the door and fastened the latch.

“But no, the wrong thing again! I must get away, get away....”

He unfastened the latch, opened the door and began listening on the staircase.

He listened a long time. Somewhere far away, it might be in the gateway, two voices were loudly and shrilly shouting, quarrelling and scolding. “What are they about?” He waited patiently. At last all was still, as though suddenly cut off; they had separated. He was meaning to go out, but suddenly, on the floor below, a door was noisily opened and someone began going downstairs humming a tune. “How is it they all make such a noise?” flashed through his mind. Once more he closed the door and waited. At last all was still, not a soul stirring. He was just taking a step towards the stairs when he heard fresh footsteps.

The steps sounded very far off, at the very bottom of the stairs, but he remembered quite clearly and distinctly that from the first sound he began for some reason to suspect that this was someone coming *there*, to the fourth floor, to the old woman. Why? Were the sounds somehow peculiar, significant? The steps were heavy, even and unhurried. Now *he* had passed the first floor, now he was mounting higher, it was growing more and more distinct! He could hear his heavy breathing. And now the third storey had been reached. Coming here! And it seemed to him all at once that he was turned to stone, that it was like a dream in which one is being pursued, nearly caught and will be killed, and is rooted to the spot and cannot even move one's arms.

At last when the unknown was mounting to the fourth floor, he suddenly started, and succeeded in slipping neatly and quickly back into the flat and closing the door behind him. Then he took the hook and softly, noiselessly, fixed it in the catch. Instinct helped him. When he had done this, he crouched holding his breath, by the door. The unknown visitor was by now also at the door. They were now standing opposite one another, as he had just before been standing with the old woman, when the door divided them and he was listening.

The visitor panted several times. "He must be a big, fat man," thought Raskolnikov, squeezing the axe in his hand. It seemed like a dream indeed. The visitor took hold of the bell and rang it loudly.

As soon as the tin bell tinkled, Raskolnikov seemed to be aware of something moving in the room. For some seconds he listened quite seriously. The unknown rang again, waited and suddenly tugged violently and impatiently at the handle of the door. Raskolnikov gazed in horror at the hook shaking in its fastening, and in blank terror expected every minute that the fastening would be pulled out. It certainly did seem possible, so violently was he shaking it. He was tempted to hold the fastening, but *he* might be aware of it. A giddiness came over him again. "I shall fall down!" flashed through his mind, but the unknown began to speak and he recovered himself at once.

"What's up? Are they asleep or murdered? D-damn them!" he bawled in a thick voice, "Hey, Alyona Ivanovna, old witch! Lizaveta Ivanovna, hey, my beauty! open the door! Oh, damn them! Are they asleep or what?"

And again, enraged, he tugged with all his might a dozen times at the bell. He must certainly be a man of authority and an intimate acquaintance.

At this moment light hurried steps were heard not far off, on the stairs. Someone else was approaching. Raskolnikov had not heard them at first.

“You don’t say there’s no one at home,” the new-comer cried in a cheerful, ringing voice, addressing the first visitor, who still went on pulling the bell. “Good evening, Koch.”

“From his voice he must be quite young,” thought Raskolnikov.

“Who the devil can tell? I’ve almost broken the lock,” answered Koch. “But how do you come to know me?

“Why! The day before yesterday I beat you three times running at billiards at Gambrinus’.”

“Oh!”

“So they are not at home? That’s queer. It’s awfully stupid though. Where could the old woman have gone? I’ve come on business.”

“Yes; and I have business with her, too.”

“Well, what can we do? Go back, I suppose, Aie — aie! And I was hoping to get some money!” cried the young man.

“We must give it up, of course, but what did she fix this time for? The old witch fixed the time for me to come herself. It’s out of my way. And where the devil she can have got to, I can’t make out. She sits here from year’s end to year’s end, the old hag; her legs are bad and yet here all of a sudden she is out for a walk!”

“Hadn’t we better ask the porter?”

“What?”

“Where she’s gone and when she’ll be back.”

“Hm.... Damn it all!... We might ask.... But you know she never does go anywhere.”

And he once more tugged at the door-handle.

“Damn it all. There’s nothing to be done, we must go!”

“Stay!” cried the young man suddenly. “Do you see how the door shakes if you pull it?”

“Well?”

“That shows it’s not locked, but fastened with the hook! Do you hear how the hook clanks?”

“Well?”

“Why, don’t you see? That proves that one of them is at home. If they were all out, they would have locked the door from the outside with the key and not with the hook from inside. There, do you hear how the hook is

clanking? To fasten the hook on the inside they must be at home, don’t you see. So there they are sitting inside and don’t open the door!”

“Well! And so they must be!” cried Koch, astonished. “What are they about in there?” And he began furiously shaking the door.

“Stay!” cried the young man again. “Don’t pull at it! There must be something wrong.... Here, you’ve been ringing and pulling at the door and still they don’t open! So either they’ve both fainted or...”

“What?”

“I tell you what. Let’s go fetch the porter, let him wake them up.”

“All right.”

Both were going down.

“Stay. You stop here while I run down for the porter.”

“What for?”

“Well, you’d better.”

“All right.”

“I’m studying the law you see! It’s evident, e-vi-dent there’s something wrong here!” the young man cried hotly, and he ran downstairs.

Koch remained. Once more he softly touched the bell which gave one tinkle, then gently, as though reflecting and looking about him, began touching the door-handle pulling it and letting it go to make sure once more that it was only fastened by the hook. Then puffing and panting he bent down and began looking at the keyhole: but the key was in the lock on the inside and so nothing could be seen.

Raskolnikov stood keeping tight hold of the axe. He was in a sort of delirium. He was even making ready to fight when they should come in. While they were knocking and talking together, the idea several times occurred to him to end it all at once and shout to them through the door. Now and then he was tempted to swear at them, to jeer at them, while they could not open the door! “Only make haste!” was the thought that flashed through his mind.

“But what the devil is he about?...” Time was passing, one minute, and another — no one came. Koch began to be restless.

“What the devil?” he cried suddenly and in impatience deserting his sentry duty, he, too, went down, hurrying and thumping with his heavy boots on the stairs. The steps died away.

“Good heavens! What am I to do?”

Raskolnikov unfastened the hook, opened the door — there was no sound. Abruptly, without any thought at all, he went out, closing the door as thoroughly as he could, and went downstairs.

He had gone down three flights when he suddenly heard a loud voice below — where could he go! There was nowhere to hide. He was just going back to the flat.

“Hey there! Catch the brute!”

Somebody dashed out of a flat below, shouting, and rather fell than ran down the stairs, bawling at the top of his voice.

“Mitka! Mitka! Mitka! Mitka! Mitka! Blast him!”

The shout ended in a shriek; the last sounds came from the yard; all was still. But at the same instant several men talking loud and fast began noisily mounting the stairs. There were three or four of them. He distinguished the ringing voice of the young man. “They!”

Filled with despair he went straight to meet them, feeling “come what must!” If they stopped him — all was lost; if they let him pass — all was lost too; they would remember him. They were approaching; they were only a flight from him — and suddenly deliverance! A few steps from him on the right, there was an empty flat with the door wide open, the flat on the second floor where the painters had been at work, and which, as though for his benefit, they had just left. It was they, no doubt, who had just run down, shouting. The floor had only just been painted, in the middle of the room stood a pail and a broken pot with paint and brushes. In one instant he had whisked in at the open door and hidden behind the wall and only in the nick of time; they had already reached the landing. Then they turned and went on up to the fourth floor, talking loudly. He waited, went out on tiptoe and ran down the stairs.

No one was on the stairs, nor in the gateway. He passed quickly through the gateway and turned to the left in the street.

He knew, he knew perfectly well that at that moment they were at the flat, that they were greatly astonished at finding it unlocked, as the door had just been fastened, that by now they were looking at the bodies, that before another minute had passed they would guess and completely realise that the murderer had just been there, and had succeeded in hiding somewhere, slipping by them and escaping. They would guess most likely that he had been in the empty flat, while they were going upstairs. And meanwhile he dared not quicken his pace much, though the next turning was still nearly a

hundred yards away. “Should he slip through some gateway and wait somewhere in an unknown street? No, hopeless! Should he fling away the axe? Should he take a cab? Hopeless, hopeless!”

At last he reached the turning. He turned down it more dead than alive. Here he was half way to safety, and he understood it; it was less risky because there was a great crowd of people, and he was lost in it like a grain of sand. But all he had suffered had so weakened him that he could scarcely move. Perspiration ran down him in drops, his neck was all wet. “My word, he has been going it!” someone shouted at him when he came out on the canal bank.

He was only dimly conscious of himself now, and the farther he went the worse it was. He remembered however, that on coming out on to the canal bank, he was alarmed at finding few people there and so being more conspicuous, and he had thought of turning back. Though he was almost falling from fatigue, he went a long way round so as to get home from quite a different direction.

He was not fully conscious when he passed through the gateway of his house! he was already on the staircase before he recollected the axe. And yet he had a very grave problem before him, to put it back and to escape observation as far as possible in doing so. He was of course incapable of reflecting that it might perhaps be far better not to restore the axe at all, but to drop it later on in somebody’s yard. But it all happened fortunately, the door of the porter’s room was closed but not locked, so that it seemed most likely that the porter was at home. But he had so completely lost all power of reflection that he walked straight to the door and opened it. If the porter had asked him, “What do you want?” he would perhaps have simply handed him the axe. But again the porter was not at home, and he succeeded in putting the axe back under the bench, and even covering it with the chunk of wood as before. He met no one, not a soul, afterwards on the way to his room; the landlady’s door was shut. When he was in his room, he flung himself on the sofa just as he was — he did not sleep, but sank into blank forgetfulness. If anyone had come into his room then, he would have jumped up at once and screamed. Scraps and shreds of thoughts were simply swarming in his brain, but he could not catch at one, he could not rest on one, in spite of all his efforts....

PART II

CHAPTER I

So he lay a very long while. Now and then he seemed to wake up, and at such moments he noticed that it was far into the night, but it did not occur to him to get up. At last he noticed that it was beginning to get light. He was lying on his back, still dazed from his recent oblivion. Fearful, despairing cries rose shrilly from the street, sounds which he heard every night, indeed, under his window after two o'clock. They woke him up now.

"Ah! the drunken men are coming out of the taverns," he thought, "it's past two o'clock," and at once he leaped up, as though someone had pulled him from the sofa.

"What! Past two o'clock!"

He sat down on the sofa — and instantly recollected everything! All at once, in one flash, he recollected everything.

For the first moment he thought he was going mad. A dreadful chill came over him; but the chill was from the fever that had begun long before in his sleep. Now he was suddenly taken with violent shivering, so that his teeth chattered and all his limbs were shaking. He opened the door and began listening — everything in the house was asleep. With amazement he gazed at himself and everything in the room around him, wondering how he could have come in the night before without fastening the door, and have flung himself on the sofa without undressing, without even taking his hat off. It had fallen off and was lying on the floor near his pillow.

"If anyone had come in, what would he have thought? That I'm drunk but..."

He rushed to the window. There was light enough, and he began hurriedly looking himself all over from head to foot, all his clothes; were there no traces? But there was no doing it like that; shivering with cold, he began taking off everything and looking over again. He turned everything over to the last threads and rags, and mistrusting himself, went through his search three times.

But there seemed to be nothing, no trace, except in one place, where some thick drops of congealed blood were clinging to the frayed edge of his trousers. He picked up a big claspknife and cut off the frayed threads. There seemed to be nothing more.

Suddenly he remembered that the purse and the things he had taken out of the old woman's box were still in his pockets! He had not thought till then of taking them out and hiding them! He had not even thought of them while he was examining his clothes! What next? Instantly he rushed to take them out and fling them on the table. When he had pulled out everything, and turned the pocket inside out to be sure there was nothing left, he carried the whole heap to the corner. The paper had come off the bottom of the wall and hung there in tatters. He began stuffing all the things into the hole under the paper: "They're in! All out of sight, and the purse too!" he thought gleefully, getting up and gazing blankly at the hole which bulged out more than ever. Suddenly he shuddered all over with horror; "My God!" he whispered in despair: "what's the matter with me? Is that hidden? Is that the way to hide things?"

He had not reckoned on having trinkets to hide. He had only thought of money, and so had not prepared a hiding-place.

"But now, now, what am I glad of?" he thought, "Is that hiding things? My reason's deserting me — simply!"

He sat down on the sofa in exhaustion and was at once shaken by another unbearable fit of shivering. Mechanically he drew from a chair beside him his old student's winter coat, which was still warm though almost in rags, covered himself up with it and once more sank into drowsiness and delirium. He lost consciousness.

Not more than five minutes had passed when he jumped up a second time, and at once pounced in a frenzy on his clothes again.

"How could I go to sleep again with nothing done? Yes, yes; I have not taken the loop off the armhole! I forgot it, forgot a thing like that! Such a piece of evidence!"

He pulled off the noose, hurriedly cut it to pieces and threw the bits among his linen under the pillow.

"Pieces of torn linen couldn't rouse suspicion, whatever happened; I think not, I think not, any way!" he repeated, standing in the middle of the room, and with painful concentration he fell to gazing about him again, at the floor and everywhere, trying to make sure he had not forgotten anything. The conviction that all his faculties, even memory, and the simplest power of reflection were failing him, began to be an insufferable torture.

“Surely it isn’t beginning already! Surely it isn’t my punishment coming upon me? It is!”

The frayed rags he had cut off his trousers were actually lying on the floor in the middle of the room, where anyone coming in would see them!

“What is the matter with me!” he cried again, like one distraught.

Then a strange idea entered his head; that, perhaps, all his clothes were covered with blood, that, perhaps, there were a great many stains, but that he did not see them, did not notice them because his perceptions were failing, were going to pieces... his reason was clouded.... Suddenly he remembered that there had been blood on the purse too. “Ah! Then there must be blood on the pocket too, for I put the wet purse in my pocket!”

In a flash he had turned the pocket inside out and, yes! — there were traces, stains on the lining of the pocket!

“So my reason has not quite deserted me, so I still have some sense and memory, since I guessed it of myself,” he thought triumphantly, with a deep sigh of relief; “it’s simply the weakness of fever, a moment’s delirium,” and he tore the whole lining out of the left pocket of his trousers. At that instant the sunlight fell on his left boot; on the sock which poked out from the boot, he fancied there were traces! He flung off his boots; “traces indeed! The tip of the sock was soaked with blood;” he must have unwarily stepped into that pool.... “But what am I to do with this now? Where am I to put the sock and rags and pocket?”

He gathered them all up in his hands and stood in the middle of the room.

“In the stove? But they would ransack the stove first of all. Burn them? But what can I burn them with? There are no matches even. No, better go out and throw it all away somewhere. Yes, better throw it away,” he repeated, sitting down on the sofa again, “and at once, this minute, without lingering...”

But his head sank on the pillow instead. Again the unbearable icy shivering came over him; again he drew his coat over him.

And for a long while, for some hours, he was haunted by the impulse to “go off somewhere at once, this moment, and fling it all away, so that it may be out of sight and done with, at once, at once!” Several times he tried to rise from the sofa, but could not.

He was thoroughly waked up at last by a violent knocking at his door.

“Open, do, are you dead or alive? He keeps sleeping here!” shouted Nastasya, banging with her fist on the door. “For whole days together he’s snoring here like a dog! A dog he is too. Open I tell you. It’s past ten.”

“Maybe he’s not at home,” said a man’s voice.

“Ha! that’s the porter’s voice.... What does he want?”

He jumped up and sat on the sofa. The beating of his heart was a positive pain.

“Then who can have latched the door?” retorted Nastasya. “He’s taken to bolting himself in! As if he were worth stealing! Open, you stupid, wake up!”

“What do they want? Why the porter? All’s discovered. Resist or open? Come what may!...”

He half rose, stooped forward and unlatched the door.

His room was so small that he could undo the latch without leaving the bed. Yes; the porter and Nastasya were standing there.

Nastasya stared at him in a strange way. He glanced with a defiant and desperate air at the porter, who without a word held out a grey folded paper sealed with bottle-wax.

“A notice from the office,” he announced, as he gave him the paper.

“From what office?”

“A summons to the police office, of course. You know which office.”

“To the police?... What for?...”

“How can I tell? You’re sent for, so you go.”

The man looked at him attentively, looked round the room and turned to go away.

“He’s downright ill!” observed Nastasya, not taking her eyes off him. The porter turned his head for a moment. “He’s been in a fever since yesterday,” she added.

Raskolnikov made no response and held the paper in his hands, without opening it. “Don’t you get up then,” Nastasya went on compassionately, seeing that he was letting his feet down from the sofa. “You’re ill, and so don’t go; there’s no such hurry. What have you got there?”

He looked; in his right hand he held the shreds he had cut from his trousers, the sock, and the rags of the pocket. So he had been asleep with them in his hand. Afterwards reflecting upon it, he remembered that half waking up in his fever, he had grasped all this tightly in his hand and so fallen asleep again.

“Look at the rags he’s collected and sleeps with them, as though he has got hold of a treasure...”

And Nastasya went off into her hysterical giggle.

Instantly he thrust them all under his great coat and fixed his eyes intently upon her. Far as he was from being capable of rational reflection at that moment, he felt that no one would behave like that with a person who was going to be arrested. “But... the police?”

“You’d better have some tea! Yes? I’ll bring it, there’s some left.”

“No... I’m going; I’ll go at once,” he muttered, getting on to his feet.

“Why, you’ll never get downstairs!”

“Yes, I’ll go.”

“As you please.”

She followed the porter out.

At once he rushed to the light to examine the sock and the rags.

“There are stains, but not very noticeable; all covered with dirt, and rubbed and already discoloured. No one who had no suspicion could distinguish anything. Nastasya from a distance could not have noticed, thank God!” Then with a tremor he broke the seal of the notice and began reading; he was a long while reading, before he understood. It was an ordinary summons from the district police-station to appear that day at half-past nine at the office of the district superintendent.

“But when has such a thing happened? I never have anything to do with the police! And why just to-day?” he thought in agonising bewilderment. “Good God, only get it over soon!”

He was flinging himself on his knees to pray, but broke into laughter — not at the idea of prayer, but at himself.

He began, hurriedly dressing. “If I’m lost, I am lost, I don’t care! Shall I put the sock on?” he suddenly wondered, “it will get dustier still and the traces will be gone.”

But no sooner had he put it on than he pulled it off again in loathing and horror. He pulled it off, but reflecting that he had no other socks, he picked it up and put it on again — and again he laughed.

“That’s all conventional, that’s all relative, merely a way of looking at it,” he thought in a flash, but only on the top surface of his mind, while he was shuddering all over, “there, I’ve got it on! I have finished by getting it on!”

But his laughter was quickly followed by despair.

“No, it’s too much for me..,” he thought. His legs shook. “From fear,” he muttered. His head swam and ached with fever. “It’s a trick! They want to decoy me there and confound me over everything,” he mused, as he went out on to the stairs— “the worst of it is I’m almost light-headed... I may blurt out something stupid...”

On the stairs he remembered that he was leaving all the things just as they were in the hole in the wall, “and very likely, it’s on purpose to search when I’m out,” he thought, and stopped short. But he was possessed by such despair, such cynicism of misery, if one may so call it, that with a wave of his hand he went on. “Only to get it over!”

In the street the heat was insufferable again; not a drop of rain had fallen all those days. Again dust, bricks and mortar, again the stench from the shops and pot-houses, again the drunken men, the Finnish pedlars and half-broken-down cabs. The sun shone straight in his eyes, so that it hurt him to look out of them, and he felt his head going round — as a man in a fever is apt to feel when he comes out into the street on a bright sunny day.

When he reached the turning into *the* street, in an agony of trepidation he looked down it... at *the* house... and at once averted his eyes.

“If they question me, perhaps I’ll simply tell,” he thought, as he drew near the police-station.

The police-station was about a quarter of a mile off. It had lately been moved to new rooms on the fourth floor of a new house. He had been once for a moment in the old office but long ago. Turning in at the gateway, he saw on the right a flight of stairs which a peasant was mounting with a book in his hand. “A house-porter, no doubt; so then, the office is here,” and he began ascending the stairs on the chance. He did not want to ask questions of anyone.

“I’ll go in, fall on my knees, and confess everything..,” he thought, as he reached the fourth floor.

The staircase was steep, narrow and all sloppy with dirty water. The kitchens of the flats opened on to the stairs and stood open almost the whole day. So there was a fearful smell and heat. The staircase was crowded with porters going up and down with their books under their arms, policemen, and persons of all sorts and both sexes. The door of the office, too, stood wide open. Peasants stood waiting within. There, too, the heat was stifling and there was a sickening smell of fresh paint and stale oil from the newly decorated rooms.

After waiting a little, he decided to move forward into the next room. All the rooms were small and low-pitched. A fearful impatience drew him on and on. No one paid attention to him. In the second room some clerks sat writing, dressed hardly better than he was, and rather a queer-looking set. He went up to one of them.

“What is it?”

He showed the notice he had received.

“You are a student?” the man asked, glancing at the notice.

“Yes, formerly a student.”

The clerk looked at him, but without the slightest interest. He was a particularly unkempt person with the look of a fixed idea in his eye.

“There would be no getting anything out of him, because he has no interest in anything,” thought Raskolnikov.

“Go in there to the head clerk,” said the clerk, pointing towards the furthest room.

He went into that room — the fourth in order; it was a small room and packed full of people, rather better dressed than in the outer rooms. Among them were two ladies. One, poorly dressed in mourning, sat at the table opposite the chief clerk, writing something at his dictation. The other, a very stout, buxom woman with a purplish-red, blotchy face, excessively smartly dressed with a brooch on her bosom as big as a saucer, was standing on one side, apparently waiting for something. Raskolnikov thrust his notice upon the head clerk. The latter glanced at it, said: “Wait a minute,” and went on attending to the lady in mourning.

He breathed more freely. “It can’t be that!”

By degrees he began to regain confidence, he kept urging himself to have courage and be calm.

“Some foolishness, some trifling carelessness, and I may betray myself! Hm... it’s a pity there’s no air here,” he added, “it’s stifling.... It makes one’s head dizzier than ever... and one’s mind too...”

He was conscious of a terrible inner turmoil. He was afraid of losing his self-control; he tried to catch at something and fix his mind on it, something quite irrelevant, but he could not succeed in this at all. Yet the head clerk greatly interested him, he kept hoping to see through him and guess something from his face.

He was a very young man, about two and twenty, with a dark mobile face that looked older than his years. He was fashionably dressed and

foppish, with his hair parted in the middle, well combed and pomaded, and wore a number of rings on his well-scrubbed fingers and a gold chain on his waistcoat. He said a couple of words in French to a foreigner who was in the room, and said them fairly correctly.

“Luise Ivanovna, you can sit down,” he said casually to the gaily-dressed, purple-faced lady, who was still standing as though not venturing to sit down, though there was a chair beside her.

“Ich danke,” said the latter, and softly, with a rustle of silk she sank into the chair. Her light blue dress trimmed with white lace floated about the table like an air-balloon and filled almost half the room. She smelt of scent. But she was obviously embarrassed at filling half the room and smelling so strongly of scent; and though her smile was impudent as well as cringing, it betrayed evident uneasiness.

The lady in mourning had done at last, and got up. All at once, with some noise, an officer walked in very jauntily, with a peculiar swing of his shoulders at each step. He tossed his cockaded cap on the table and sat down in an easy-chair. The small lady positively skipped from her seat on seeing him, and fell to curtsying in a sort of ecstasy; but the officer took not the smallest notice of her, and she did not venture to sit down again in his presence. He was the assistant superintendent. He had a reddish moustache that stood out horizontally on each side of his face, and extremely small features, expressive of nothing much except a certain insolence. He looked askance and rather indignantly at Raskolnikov; he was so very badly dressed, and in spite of his humiliating position, his bearing was by no means in keeping with his clothes. Raskolnikov had unwarily fixed a very long and direct look on him, so that he felt positively affronted.

“What do you want?” he shouted, apparently astonished that such a ragged fellow was not annihilated by the majesty of his glance.

“I was summoned... by a notice...” Raskolnikov faltered.

“For the recovery of money due, from *the student*,” the head clerk interfered hurriedly, tearing himself from his papers. “Here!” and he flung Raskolnikov a document and pointed out the place. “Read that!”

“Money? What money?” thought Raskolnikov, “but... then... it’s certainly not *that*.”

And he trembled with joy. He felt sudden intense indescribable relief. A load was lifted from his back.

“And pray, what time were you directed to appear, sir?” shouted the assistant superintendent, seeming for some unknown reason more and more aggrieved. “You are told to come at nine, and now it’s twelve!”

“The notice was only brought me a quarter of an hour ago,” Raskolnikov answered loudly over his shoulder. To his own surprise he, too, grew suddenly angry and found a certain pleasure in it. “And it’s enough that I have come here ill with fever.”

“Kindly refrain from shouting!”

“I’m not shouting, I’m speaking very quietly, it’s you who are shouting at me. I’m a student, and allow no one to shout at me.”

The assistant superintendent was so furious that for the first minute he could only splutter inarticulately. He leaped up from his seat.

“Be silent! You are in a government office. Don’t be impudent, sir!”

“You’re in a government office, too,” cried Raskolnikov, “and you’re smoking a cigarette as well as shouting, so you are showing disrespect to all of us.”

He felt an indescribable satisfaction at having said this.

The head clerk looked at him with a smile. The angry assistant superintendent was obviously disconcerted.

“That’s not your business!” he shouted at last with unnatural loudness. “Kindly make the declaration demanded of you. Show him. Alexandr Grigorievitch. There is a complaint against you! You don’t pay your debts! You’re a fine bird!”

But Raskolnikov was not listening now; he had eagerly clutched at the paper, in haste to find an explanation. He read it once, and a second time, and still did not understand.

“What is this?” he asked the head clerk.

“It is for the recovery of money on an I O U, a writ. You must either pay it, with all expenses, costs and so on, or give a written declaration when you can pay it, and at the same time an undertaking not to leave the capital without payment, and nor to sell or conceal your property. The creditor is at liberty to sell your property, and proceed against you according to the law.”

“But I... am not in debt to anyone!”

“That’s not our business. Here, an I O U for a hundred and fifteen roubles, legally attested, and due for payment, has been brought us for recovery, given by you to the widow of the assessor Zarnitsyn, nine months

ago, and paid over by the widow Zarnitsyn to one Mr. Tchebarov. We therefore summon you, hereupon.”

“But she is my landlady!”

“And what if she is your landlady?”

The head clerk looked at him with a condescending smile of compassion, and at the same time with a certain triumph, as at a novice under fire for the first time — as though he would say: “Well, how do you feel now?” But what did he care now for an I O U, for a writ of recovery! Was that worth worrying about now, was it worth attention even! He stood, he read, he listened, he answered, he even asked questions himself, but all mechanically. The triumphant sense of security, of deliverance from overwhelming danger, that was what filled his whole soul that moment without thought for the future, without analysis, without suppositions or surmises, without doubts and without questioning. It was an instant of full, direct, purely instinctive joy. But at that very moment something like a thunderstorm took place in the office. The assistant superintendent, still shaken by Raskolnikov’s disrespect, still fuming and obviously anxious to keep up his wounded dignity, pounced on the unfortunate smart lady, who had been gazing at him ever since he came in with an exceedingly silly smile.

“You shameful hussy!” he shouted suddenly at the top of his voice. (The lady in mourning had left the office.) “What was going on at your house last night? Eh! A disgrace again, you’re a scandal to the whole street. Fighting and drinking again. Do you want the house of correction? Why, I have warned you ten times over that I would not let you off the eleventh! And here you are again, again, you... you...!”

The paper fell out of Raskolnikov’s hands, and he looked wildly at the smart lady who was so unceremoniously treated. But he soon saw what it meant, and at once began to find positive amusement in the scandal. He listened with pleasure, so that he longed to laugh and laugh... all his nerves were on edge.

“Ilya Petrovitch!” the head clerk was beginning anxiously, but stopped short, for he knew from experience that the enraged assistant could not be stopped except by force.

As for the smart lady, at first she positively trembled before the storm. But, strange to say, the more numerous and violent the terms of abuse became, the more amiable she looked, and the more seductive the smiles

she lavished on the terrible assistant. She moved uneasily, and curtsied incessantly, waiting impatiently for a chance of putting in her word: and at last she found it.

“There was no sort of noise or fighting in my house, Mr. Captain,” she pattered all at once, like peas dropping, speaking Russian confidently, though with a strong German accent, “and no sort of scandal, and his honour came drunk, and it’s the whole truth I am telling, Mr. Captain, and I am not to blame.... Mine is an honourable house, Mr. Captain, and honourable behaviour, Mr. Captain, and I always, always dislike any scandal myself. But he came quite tipsy, and asked for three bottles again, and then he lifted up one leg, and began playing the pianoforte with one foot, and that is not at all right in an honourable house, and he *ganz* broke the piano, and it was very bad manners indeed and I said so. And he took up a bottle and began hitting everyone with it. And then I called the porter, and Karl came, and he took Karl and hit him in the eye; and he hit Henriette in the eye, too, and gave me five slaps on the cheek. And it was so ungentlemanly in an honourable house, Mr. Captain, and I screamed. And he opened the window over the canal, and stood in the window, squealing like a little pig; it was a disgrace. The idea of squealing like a little pig at the window into the street! Fie upon him! And Karl pulled him away from the window by his coat, and it is true, Mr. Captain, he tore *sein rock*. And then he shouted that *man muss* pay him fifteen roubles damages. And I did pay him, Mr. Captain, five roubles for *sein rock*. And he is an ungentlemanly visitor and caused all the scandal. ‘I will show you up,’ he said, ‘for I can write to all the papers about you.’”

“Then he was an author?”

“Yes, Mr. Captain, and what an ungentlemanly visitor in an honourable house....”

“Now then! Enough! I have told you already...”

“Ilya Petrovitch!” the head clerk repeated significantly.

The assistant glanced rapidly at him; the head clerk slightly shook his head.

“... So I tell you this, most respectable Luise Ivanovna, and I tell it you for the last time,” the assistant went on. “If there is a scandal in your honourable house once again, I will put you yourself in the lock-up, as it is called in polite society. Do you hear? So a literary man, an author took five

roubles for his coat-tail in an ‘honourable house’? A nice set, these authors!”

And he cast a contemptuous glance at Raskolnikov. “There was a scandal the other day in a restaurant, too. An author had eaten his dinner and would not pay; ‘I’ll write a satire on you,’ says he. And there was another of them on a steamer last week used the most disgraceful language to the respectable family of a civil councillor, his wife and daughter. And there was one of them turned out of a confectioner’s shop the other day. They are like that, authors, literary men, students, town-criers.... Pfoo! You get along! I shall look in upon you myself one day. Then you had better be careful! Do you hear?”

With hurried deference, Luise Ivanovna fell to curtsying in all directions, and so curtsied herself to the door. But at the door, she stumbled backwards against a good-looking officer with a fresh, open face and splendid thick fair whiskers. This was the superintendent of the district himself, Nikodim Fomitch. Luise Ivanovna made haste to curtsy almost to the ground, and with mincing little steps, she fluttered out of the office.

“Again thunder and lightning — a hurricane!” said Nikodim Fomitch to Ilya Petrovitch in a civil and friendly tone. “You are aroused again, you are fuming again! I heard it on the stairs!”

“Well, what then!” Ilya Petrovitch drawled with gentlemanly nonchalance; and he walked with some papers to another table, with a jaunty swing of his shoulders at each step. “Here, if you will kindly look: an author, or a student, has been one at least, does not pay his debts, has given an I O U, won’t clear out of his room, and complaints are constantly being lodged against him, and here he has been pleased to make a protest against my smoking in his presence! He behaves like a cad himself, and just look at him, please. Here’s the gentleman, and very attractive he is!”

“Poverty is not a vice, my friend, but we know you go off like powder, you can’t bear a slight, I daresay you took offence at something and went too far yourself,” continued Nikodim Fomitch, turning affably to Raskolnikov. “But you were wrong there; he is a capital fellow, I assure you, but explosive, explosive! He gets hot, fires up, boils over, and no stopping him! And then it’s all over! And at the bottom he’s a heart of gold! His nickname in the regiment was the Explosive Lieutenant....”

“And what a regiment it was, too,” cried Ilya Petrovitch, much gratified at this agreeable banter, though still sulky.

Raskolnikov had a sudden desire to say something exceptionally pleasant to them all. “Excuse me, Captain,” he began easily, suddenly addressing Nikodim Fomitch, “will you enter into my position?... I am ready to ask pardon, if I have been ill-mannered. I am a poor student, sick and shattered (shattered was the word he used) by poverty. I am not studying, because I cannot keep myself now, but I shall get money.... I have a mother and sister in the province of X. They will send it to me, and I will pay. My landlady is a good-hearted woman, but she is so exasperated at my having lost my lessons, and not paying her for the last four months, that she does not even send up my dinner... and I don’t understand this I O U at all. She is asking me to pay her on this I O U. How am I to pay her? Judge for yourselves!...”

“But that is not our business, you know,” the head clerk was observing.

“Yes, yes. I perfectly agree with you. But allow me to explain...” Raskolnikov put in again, still addressing Nikodim Fomitch, but trying his best to address Ilya Petrovitch also, though the latter persistently appeared to be rummaging among his papers and to be contemptuously oblivious of him. “Allow me to explain that I have been living with her for nearly three years and at first... at first... for why should I not confess it, at the very beginning I promised to marry her daughter, it was a verbal promise, freely given... she was a girl... indeed, I liked her, though I was not in love with her... a youthful affair in fact... that is, I mean to say, that my landlady gave me credit freely in those days, and I led a life of... I was very heedless...”

“Nobody asks you for these personal details, sir, we’ve no time to waste,” Ilya Petrovitch interposed roughly and with a note of triumph; but Raskolnikov stopped him hotly, though he suddenly found it exceedingly difficult to speak.

“But excuse me, excuse me. It is for me to explain... how it all happened... In my turn... though I agree with you... it is unnecessary. But a year ago, the girl died of typhus. I remained lodging there as before, and when my landlady moved into her present quarters, she said to me... and in a friendly way... that she had complete trust in me, but still, would I not give her an I O U for one hundred and fifteen roubles, all the debt I owed her. She said if only I gave her that, she would trust me again, as much as I liked, and that she would never, never — those were her own words — make use of that I O U till I could pay of myself... and now, when I have lost my lessons and have nothing to eat, she takes action against me. What am I to say to that?”

“All these affecting details are no business of ours.” Ilya Petrovitch interrupted rudely. “You must give a written undertaking but as for your love affairs and all these tragic events, we have nothing to do with that.”

“Come now... you are harsh,” muttered Nikodim Fomitch, sitting down at the table and also beginning to write. He looked a little ashamed.

“Write!” said the head clerk to Raskolnikov.

“Write what?” the latter asked, gruffly.

“I will dictate to you.”

Raskolnikov fancied that the head clerk treated him more casually and contemptuously after his speech, but strange to say he suddenly felt completely indifferent to anyone’s opinion, and this revulsion took place in a flash, in one instant. If he had cared to think a little, he would have been amazed indeed that he could have talked to them like that a minute before, forcing his feelings upon them. And where had those feelings come from? Now if the whole room had been filled, not with police officers, but with those nearest and dearest to him, he would not have found one human word for them, so empty was his heart. A gloomy sensation of agonising, everlasting solitude and remoteness, took conscious form in his soul. It was not the meanness of his sentimental effusions before Ilya Petrovitch, nor the meanness of the latter’s triumph over him that had caused this sudden revulsion in his heart. Oh, what had he to do now with his own baseness, with all these petty vanities, officers, German women, debts, police-offices? If he had been sentenced to be burnt at that moment, he would not have stirred, would hardly have heard the sentence to the end. Something was happening to him entirely new, sudden and unknown. It was not that he understood, but he felt clearly with all the intensity of sensation that he could never more appeal to these people in the police-office with sentimental effusions like his recent outburst, or with anything whatever; and that if they had been his own brothers and sisters and not police-officers, it would have been utterly out of the question to appeal to them in any circumstance of life. He had never experienced such a strange and awful sensation. And what was most agonising — it was more a sensation than a conception or idea, a direct sensation, the most agonising of all the sensations he had known in his life.

The head clerk began dictating to him the usual form of declaration, that he could not pay, that he undertook to do so at a future date, that he would not leave the town, nor sell his property, and so on.

“But you can’t write, you can hardly hold the pen,” observed the head clerk, looking with curiosity at Raskolnikov. “Are you ill?”

“Yes, I am giddy. Go on!”

“That’s all. Sign it.”

The head clerk took the paper, and turned to attend to others.

Raskolnikov gave back the pen; but instead of getting up and going away, he put his elbows on the table and pressed his head in his hands. He felt as if a nail were being driven into his skull. A strange idea suddenly occurred to him, to get up at once, to go up to Nikodim Fomitch, and tell him everything that had happened yesterday, and then to go with him to his lodgings and to show him the things in the hole in the corner. The impulse was so strong that he got up from his seat to carry it out. “Hadn’t I better think a minute?” flashed through his mind. “No, better cast off the burden without thinking.” But all at once he stood still, rooted to the spot. Nikodim Fomitch was talking eagerly with Ilya Petrovitch, and the words reached him:

“It’s impossible, they’ll both be released. To begin with, the whole story contradicts itself. Why should they have called the porter, if it had been their doing? To inform against themselves? Or as a blind? No, that would be too cunning! Besides, Pestryakov, the student, was seen at the gate by both the porters and a woman as he went in. He was walking with three friends, who left him only at the gate, and he asked the porters to direct him, in the presence of the friends. Now, would he have asked his way if he had been going with such an object? As for Koch, he spent half an hour at the silversmith’s below, before he went up to the old woman and he left him at exactly a quarter to eight. Now just consider...”

“But excuse me, how do you explain this contradiction? They state themselves that they knocked and the door was locked; yet three minutes later when they went up with the porter, it turned out the door was unfastened.”

“That’s just it; the murderer must have been there and bolted himself in; and they’d have caught him for a certainty if Koch had not been an ass and gone to look for the porter too. *He* must have seized the interval to get downstairs and slip by them somehow. Koch keeps crossing himself and saying: ‘If I had been there, he would have jumped out and killed me with his axe.’ He is going to have a thanksgiving service — ha, ha!”

“And no one saw the murderer?”

“They might well not see him; the house is a regular Noah’s Ark,” said the head clerk, who was listening.

“It’s clear, quite clear,” Nikodim Fomitch repeated warmly.

“No, it is anything but clear,” Ilya Petrovitch maintained.

Raskolnikov picked up his hat and walked towards the door, but he did not reach it....

When he recovered consciousness, he found himself sitting in a chair, supported by someone on the right side, while someone else was standing on the left, holding a yellowish glass filled with yellow water, and Nikodim Fomitch standing before him, looking intently at him. He got up from the chair.

“What’s this? Are you ill?” Nikodim Fomitch asked, rather sharply.

“He could hardly hold his pen when he was signing,” said the head clerk, settling back in his place, and taking up his work again.

“Have you been ill long?” cried Ilya Petrovitch from his place, where he, too, was looking through papers. He had, of course, come to look at the sick man when he fainted, but retired at once when he recovered.

“Since yesterday,” muttered Raskolnikov in reply.

“Did you go out yesterday?”

“Yes.”

“Though you were ill?”

“Yes.”

“At what time?”

“About seven.”

“And where did you go, my I ask?”

“Along the street.”

“Short and clear.”

Raskolnikov, white as a handkerchief, had answered sharply, jerkily, without dropping his black feverish eyes before Ilya Petrovitch’s stare.

“He can scarcely stand upright. And you...” Nikodim Fomitch was beginning.

“No matter,” Ilya Petrovitch pronounced rather peculiarly.

Nikodim Fomitch would have made some further protest, but glancing at the head clerk who was looking very hard at him, he did not speak. There was a sudden silence. It was strange.

“Very well, then,” concluded Ilya Petrovitch, “we will not detain you.”

Raskolnikov went out. He caught the sound of eager conversation on his departure, and above the rest rose the questioning voice of Nikodim Fomitch. In the street, his faintness passed off completely.

“A search — there will be a search at once,” he repeated to himself, hurrying home. “The brutes! they suspect.”

His former terror mastered him completely again.

CHAPTER II

“And what if there has been a search already? What if I find them in my room?”
But here was his room. Nothing and no one in it. No one had peeped in. Even Nastasya had not touched it. But heavens! how could he have left all those things in the hole?

He rushed to the corner, slipped his hand under the paper, pulled the things out and lined his pockets with them. There were eight articles in all: two little boxes with ear-rings or something of the sort, he hardly looked to see; then four small leather cases. There was a chain, too, merely wrapped in newspaper and something else in newspaper, that looked like a decoration.... He put them all in the different pockets of his overcoat, and the remaining pocket of his trousers, trying to conceal them as much as possible. He took the purse, too. Then he went out of his room, leaving the door open. He walked quickly and resolutely, and though he felt shattered, he had his senses about him. He was afraid of pursuit, he was afraid that in another half-hour, another quarter of an hour perhaps, instructions would be issued for his pursuit, and so at all costs, he must hide all traces before then. He must clear everything up while he still had some strength, some reasoning power left him.... Where was he to go?

That had long been settled: “Fling them into the canal, and all traces hidden in the water, the thing would be at an end.” So he had decided in the night of his delirium when several times he had had the impulse to get up and go away, to make haste, and get rid of it all. But to get rid of it, turned out to be a very difficult task. He wandered along the bank of the Ekaterininsky Canal for half an hour or more and looked several times at the steps running down to the water, but he could not think of carrying out his plan; either rafts stood at the steps’ edge, and women were washing clothes on them, or boats were moored there, and people were swarming everywhere. Moreover he could be seen and noticed from the banks on all sides; it would look suspicious for a man to go down on purpose, stop, and throw something into the water. And what if the boxes were to float instead of sinking? And of course they would. Even as it was, everyone he met seemed to stare and look round, as if they had nothing to do but to watch him. “Why is it, or can it be my fancy?” he thought.

At last the thought struck him that it might be better to go to the Neva. There were not so many people there, he would be less observed, and it would be more convenient in every way, above all it was further off. He wondered how he could have been wandering for a good half-hour, worried and anxious in this dangerous past without thinking of it before. And that half-hour he had lost over an irrational plan, simply because he had thought of it in delirium! He had become extremely absent and forgetful and he was aware of it. He certainly must make haste.

He walked towards the Neva along V —— Prospect, but on the way another idea struck him. “Why to the Neva? Would it not be better to go somewhere far off, to the Islands again, and there hide the things in some solitary place, in a wood or under a bush, and mark the spot perhaps?” And though he felt incapable of clear judgment, the idea seemed to him a sound one. But he was not destined to go there. For coming out of V —— Prospect towards the square, he saw on the left a passage leading between two blank walls to a courtyard. On the right hand, the blank unwhitewashed wall of a four-storied house stretched far into the court; on the left, a wooden hoarding ran parallel with it for twenty paces into the court, and then turned sharply to the left. Here was a deserted fenced-off place where rubbish of different sorts was lying. At the end of the court, the corner of a low, smutty, stone shed, apparently part of some workshop, peeped from behind the hoarding. It was probably a carriage builder’s or carpenter’s shed; the whole place from the entrance was black with coal dust. Here would be the place to throw it, he thought. Not seeing anyone in the yard, he slipped in, and at once saw near the gate a sink, such as is often put in yards where there are many workmen or cab-drivers; and on the hoarding above had been scribbled in chalk the time-honoured witticism, “Standing here strictly forbidden.” This was all the better, for there would be nothing suspicious about his going in. “Here I could throw it all in a heap and get away!”

Looking round once more, with his hand already in his pocket, he noticed against the outer wall, between the entrance and the sink, a big unhewn stone, weighing perhaps sixty pounds. The other side of the wall was a street. He could hear passers-by, always numerous in that part, but he could not be seen from the entrance, unless someone came in from the street, which might well happen indeed, so there was need of haste.

He bent down over the stone, seized the top of it firmly in both hands, and using all his strength turned it over. Under the stone was a small hollow in the ground, and he immediately emptied his pocket into it. The purse lay at the top, and yet the hollow was not filled up. Then he seized the stone again and with one twist turned it back, so that it was in the same position again, though it stood a very little higher. But he scraped the earth about it and pressed it at the edges with his foot. Nothing could be noticed.

Then he went out, and turned into the square. Again an intense, almost unbearable joy overwhelmed him for an instant, as it had in the police-office. “I have buried my tracks! And who, who can think of looking under that stone? It has been lying there most likely ever since the house was built, and will lie as many years more. And if it were found, who would think of me? It is all over! No clue!” And he laughed. Yes, he remembered that he began laughing a thin, nervous noiseless laugh, and went on laughing all the time he was crossing the square. But when he reached the K —— Boulevard where two days before he had come upon that girl, his laughter suddenly ceased. Other ideas crept into his mind. He felt all at once that it would be loathsome to pass that seat on which after the girl was gone, he had sat and pondered, and that it would be hateful, too, to meet that whiskered policeman to whom he had given the twenty copecks: “Damn him!”

He walked, looking about him angrily and distractedly. All his ideas now seemed to be circling round some single point, and he felt that there really was such a point, and that now, now, he was left facing that point — and for the first time, indeed, during the last two months.

“Damn it all!” he thought suddenly, in a fit of ungovernable fury. “If it has begun, then it has begun. Hang the new life! Good Lord, how stupid it is!... And what lies I told to-day! How despicably I fawned upon that wretched Ilya Petrovitch! But that is all folly! What do I care for them all, and my fawning upon them! It is not that at all! It is not that at all!”

Suddenly he stopped; a new utterly unexpected and exceedingly simple question perplexed and bitterly confounded him.

“If it all has really been done deliberately and not idiotically, if I really had a certain and definite object, how is it I did not even glance into the purse and don’t know what I had there, for which I have undergone these agonies, and have deliberately undertaken this base, filthy degrading

business? And here I wanted at once to throw into the water the purse together with all the things which I had not seen either... how's that?"

Yes, that was so, that was all so. Yet he had known it all before, and it was not a new question for him, even when it was decided in the night without hesitation and consideration, as though so it must be, as though it could not possibly be otherwise.... Yes, he had known it all, and understood it all; it surely had all been settled even yesterday at the moment when he was bending over the box and pulling the jewel-cases out of it.... Yes, so it was.

"It is because I am very ill," he decided grimly at last, "I have been worrying and fretting myself, and I don't know what I am doing.... Yesterday and the day before yesterday and all this time I have been worrying myself.... I shall get well and I shall not worry.... But what if I don't get well at all? Good God, how sick I am of it all!"

He walked on without resting. He had a terrible longing for some distraction, but he did not know what to do, what to attempt. A new overwhelming sensation was gaining more and more mastery over him every moment; this was an immeasurable, almost physical, repulsion for everything surrounding him, an obstinate, malignant feeling of hatred. All who met him were loathsome to him — he loathed their faces, their movements, their gestures. If anyone had addressed him, he felt that he might have spat at him or bitten him....

He stopped suddenly, on coming out on the bank of the Little Neva, near the bridge to Vassilyevsky Ostrov. "Why, he lives here, in that house," he thought, "why, I have not come to Razumihin of my own accord! Here it's the same thing over again.... Very interesting to know, though; have I come on purpose or have I simply walked here by chance? Never mind, I said the day before yesterday that I would go and see him the day *after*; well, and so I will! Besides I really cannot go further now."

He went up to Razumihin's room on the fifth floor.

The latter was at home in his garret, busily writing at the moment, and he opened the door himself. It was four months since they had seen each other. Razumihin was sitting in a ragged dressing-gown, with slippers on his bare feet, unkempt, unshaven and unwashed. His face showed surprise.

"Is it you?" he cried. He looked his comrade up and down; then after a brief pause, he whistled. "As hard up as all that! Why, brother, you've cut

me out!” he added, looking at Raskolnikov’s rags. “Come sit down, you are tired, I’ll be bound.”

And when he had sunk down on the American leather sofa, which was in even worse condition than his own, Razumihin saw at once that his visitor was ill.

“Why, you are seriously ill, do you know that?” He began feeling his pulse. Raskolnikov pulled away his hand.

“Never mind,” he said, “I have come for this: I have no lessons.... I wanted,... but I don’t really want lessons....”

“But I say! You are delirious, you know!” Razumihin observed, watching him carefully.

“No, I am not.”

Raskolnikov got up from the sofa. As he had mounted the stairs to Razumihin’s, he had not realised that he would be meeting his friend face to face. Now, in a flash, he knew, that what he was least of all disposed for at that moment was to be face to face with anyone in the wide world. His spleen rose within him. He almost choked with rage at himself as soon as he crossed Razumihin’s threshold.

“Good-bye,” he said abruptly, and walked to the door.

“Stop, stop! You queer fish.”

“I don’t want to,” said the other, again pulling away his hand.

“Then why the devil have you come? Are you mad, or what? Why, this is... almost insulting! I won’t let you go like that.”

“Well, then, I came to you because I know no one but you who could help... to begin... because you are kinder than anyone — cleverer, I mean, and can judge... and now I see that I want nothing. Do you hear? Nothing at all... no one’s services... no one’s sympathy. I am by myself... alone. Come, that’s enough. Leave me alone.”

“Stay a minute, you sweep! You are a perfect madman. As you like for all I care. I have no lessons, do you see, and I don’t care about that, but there’s a bookseller, Heruvimov — and he takes the place of a lesson. I would not exchange him for five lessons. He’s doing publishing of a kind, and issuing natural science manuals and what a circulation they have! The very titles are worth the money! You always maintained that I was a fool, but by Jove, my boy, there are greater fools than I am! Now he is setting up for being advanced, not that he has an inkling of anything, but, of course, I encourage him. Here are two signatures of the German text — in my

opinion, the crudest charlatanism; it discusses the question, ‘Is woman a human being?’ And, of course, triumphantly proves that she is. Heruvimov is going to bring out this work as a contribution to the woman question; I am translating it; he will expand these two and a half signatures into six, we shall make up a gorgeous title half a page long and bring it out at half a rouble. It will do! He pays me six roubles the signature, it works out to about fifteen roubles for the job, and I’ve had six already in advance. When we have finished this, we are going to begin a translation about whales, and then some of the dullest scandals out of the second part of *Les Confessions* we have marked for translation; somebody has told Heruvimov, that Rousseau was a kind of Radishchev. You may be sure I don’t contradict him, hang him! Well, would you like to do the second signature of ‘*Is woman a human being?*’ If you would, take the German and pens and paper — all those are provided, and take three roubles; for as I have had six roubles in advance on the whole thing, three roubles come to you for your share. And when you have finished the signature there will be another three roubles for you. And please don’t think I am doing you a service; quite the contrary, as soon as you came in, I saw how you could help me; to begin with, I am weak in spelling, and secondly, I am sometimes utterly adrift in German, so that I make it up as I go along for the most part. The only comfort is, that it’s bound to be a change for the better. Though who can tell, maybe it’s sometimes for the worse. Will you take it?”

Raskolnikov took the German sheets in silence, took the three roubles and without a word went out. Razumihin gazed after him in astonishment. But when Raskolnikov was in the next street, he turned back, mounted the stairs to Razumihin’s again and laying on the table the German article and the three roubles, went out again, still without uttering a word.

“Are you raving, or what?” Razumihin shouted, roused to fury at last. “What farce is this? You’ll drive me crazy too... what did you come to see me for, damn you?”

“I don’t want... translation,” muttered Raskolnikov from the stairs.

“Then what the devil do you want?” shouted Razumihin from above. Raskolnikov continued descending the staircase in silence.

“Hey, there! Where are you living?”

No answer.

“Well, confound you then!”

But Raskolnikov was already stepping into the street. On the Nikolaevsky Bridge he was roused to full consciousness again by an unpleasant incident. A coachman, after shouting at him two or three times, gave him a violent lash on the back with his whip, for having almost fallen under his horses' hoofs. The lash so infuriated him that he dashed away to the railing (for some unknown reason he had been walking in the very middle of the bridge in the traffic). He angrily clenched and ground his teeth. He heard laughter, of course.

"Serves him right!"

"A pickpocket I dare say."

"Pretending to be drunk, for sure, and getting under the wheels on purpose; and you have to answer for him."

"It's a regular profession, that's what it is."

But while he stood at the railing, still looking angry and bewildered after the retreating carriage, and rubbing his back, he suddenly felt someone thrust money into his hand. He looked. It was an elderly woman in a kerchief and goatskin shoes, with a girl, probably her daughter wearing a hat, and carrying a green parasol.

"Take it, my good man, in Christ's name."

He took it and they passed on. It was a piece of twenty copecks. From his dress and appearance they might well have taken him for a beggar asking alms in the streets, and the gift of the twenty copecks he doubtless owed to the blow, which made them feel sorry for him.

He closed his hand on the twenty copecks, walked on for ten paces, and turned facing the Neva, looking towards the palace. The sky was without a cloud and the water was almost bright blue, which is so rare in the Neva. The cupola of the cathedral, which is seen at its best from the bridge about twenty paces from the chapel, glittered in the sunlight, and in the pure air every ornament on it could be clearly distinguished. The pain from the lash went off, and Raskolnikov forgot about it; one uneasy and not quite definite idea occupied him now completely. He stood still, and gazed long and intently into the distance; this spot was especially familiar to him. When he was attending the university, he had hundreds of times — generally on his way home — stood still on this spot, gazed at this truly magnificent spectacle and almost always marvelled at a vague and mysterious emotion it roused in him. It left him strangely cold; this gorgeous picture was for him blank and lifeless. He wondered every time at his sombre and enigmatic

impression and, mistrusting himself, put off finding the explanation of it. He vividly recalled those old doubts and perplexities, and it seemed to him that it was no mere chance that he recalled them now. It struck him as strange and grotesque, that he should have stopped at the same spot as before, as though he actually imagined he could think the same thoughts, be interested in the same theories and pictures that had interested him... so short a time ago. He felt it almost amusing, and yet it wrung his heart. Deep down, hidden far away out of sight all that seemed to him now — all his old past, his old thoughts, his old problems and theories, his old impressions and that picture and himself and all, all.... He felt as though he were flying upwards, and everything were vanishing from his sight. Making an unconscious movement with his hand, he suddenly became aware of the piece of money in his fist. He opened his hand, stared at the coin, and with a sweep of his arm flung it into the water; then he turned and went home. It seemed to him, he had cut himself off from everyone and from everything at that moment.

Evening was coming on when he reached home, so that he must have been walking about six hours. How and where he came back he did not remember. Undressing, and quivering like an overdriven horse, he lay down on the sofa, drew his greatcoat over him, and at once sank into oblivion....

It was dusk when he was waked up by a fearful scream. Good God, what a scream! Such unnatural sounds, such howling, wailing, grinding, tears, blows and curses he had never heard.

He could never have imagined such brutality, such frenzy. In terror he sat up in bed, almost swooning with agony. But the fighting, wailing and cursing grew louder and louder. And then to his intense amazement he caught the voice of his landlady. She was howling, shrieking and wailing, rapidly, hurriedly, incoherently, so that he could not make out what she was talking about; she was beseeching, no doubt, not to be beaten, for she was being mercilessly beaten on the stairs. The voice of her assailant was so horrible from spite and rage that it was almost a croak; but he, too, was saying something, and just as quickly and indistinctly, hurrying and spluttering. All at once Raskolnikov trembled; he recognised the voice — it was the voice of Ilya Petrovitch. Ilya Petrovitch here and beating the landlady! He is kicking her, banging her head against the steps — that’s clear, that can be told from the sounds, from the cries and the thuds. How is it, is the world topsy-turvy? He could hear people running in crowds from

all the storeys and all the staircases; he heard voices, exclamations, knocking, doors banging. “But why, why, and how could it be?” he repeated, thinking seriously that he had gone mad. But no, he heard too distinctly! And they would come to him then next, “for no doubt... it’s all about that... about yesterday.... Good God!” He would have fastened his door with the latch, but he could not lift his hand... besides, it would be useless. Terror gripped his heart like ice, tortured him and numbed him.... But at last all this uproar, after continuing about ten minutes, began gradually to subside. The landlady was moaning and groaning; Ilya Petrovitch was still uttering threats and curses.... But at last he, too, seemed to be silent, and now he could not be heard. “Can he have gone away? Good Lord!” Yes, and now the landlady is going too, still weeping and moaning... and then her door slammed.... Now the crowd was going from the stairs to their rooms, exclaiming, disputing, calling to one another, raising their voices to a shout, dropping them to a whisper. There must have been numbers of them — almost all the inmates of the block. “But, good God, how could it be! And why, why had he come here!”

Raskolnikov sank worn out on the sofa, but could not close his eyes. He lay for half an hour in such anguish, such an intolerable sensation of infinite terror as he had never experienced before. Suddenly a bright light flashed into his room. Nastasya came in with a candle and a plate of soup. Looking at him carefully and ascertaining that he was not asleep, she set the candle on the table and began to lay out what she had brought — bread, salt, a plate, a spoon.

“You’ve eaten nothing since yesterday, I warrant. You’ve been trudging about all day, and you’re shaking with fever.”

“Nastasya... what were they beating the landlady for?”

She looked intently at him.

“Who beat the landlady?”

“Just now... half an hour ago, Ilya Petrovitch, the assistant superintendent, on the stairs.... Why was he ill-treating her like that, and... why was he here?”

Nastasya scrutinised him, silent and frowning, and her scrutiny lasted a long time. He felt uneasy, even frightened at her searching eyes.

“Nastasya, why don’t you speak?” he said timidly at last in a weak voice.

“It’s the blood,” she answered at last softly, as though speaking to herself.

“Blood? What blood?” he muttered, growing white and turning towards the wall.

Nastasya still looked at him without speaking.

“Nobody has been beating the landlady,” she declared at last in a firm, resolute voice.

He gazed at her, hardly able to breathe.

“I heard it myself.... I was not asleep... I was sitting up,” he said still more timidly. “I listened a long while. The assistant superintendent came.... Everyone ran out on to the stairs from all the flats.”

“No one has been here. That’s the blood crying in your ears. When there’s no outlet for it and it gets clotted, you begin fancying things.... Will you eat something?”

He made no answer. Nastasya still stood over him, watching him.

“Give me something to drink... Nastasya.”

She went downstairs and returned with a white earthenware jug of water. He remembered only swallowing one sip of the cold water and spilling some on his neck. Then followed forgetfulness.

CHAPTER III

He was not completely unconscious, however, all the time he was ill; he was in a feverish state, sometimes delirious, sometimes half conscious. He remembered a great deal afterwards. Sometimes it seemed as though there were a number of people round him; they wanted to take him away somewhere, there was a great deal of squabbling and discussing about him. Then he would be alone in the room; they had all gone away afraid of him, and only now and then opened the door a crack to look at him; they threatened him, plotted something together, laughed, and mocked at him. He remembered Nastasya often at his bedside; he distinguished another person, too, whom he seemed to know very well, though he could not remember who he was, and this fretted him, even made him cry. Sometimes he fancied he had been lying there a month; at other times it all seemed part of the same day. But of *that* — of *that* he had no recollection, and yet every minute he felt that he had forgotten something he ought to remember. He worried and tormented himself trying to remember, moaned, flew into a rage, or sank into awful, intolerable terror. Then he struggled to get up, would have run away, but someone always prevented him by force, and he sank back into impotence and forgetfulness. At last he returned to complete consciousness.

It happened at ten o’clock in the morning. On fine days the sun shone into the room at that hour, throwing a streak of light on the right wall and the corner near the door. Nastasya was standing beside him with another person, a complete stranger, who was looking at him very inquisitively. He was a young man with a beard, wearing a full, short-waisted coat, and looked like a messenger. The landlady was peeping in at the half-opened door. Raskolnikov sat up.

“Who is this, Nastasya?” he asked, pointing to the young man.

“I say, he’s himself again!” she said.

“He is himself,” echoed the man.

Concluding that he had returned to his senses, the landlady closed the door and disappeared. She was always shy and dreaded conversations or discussions. She was a woman of forty, not at all bad-looking, fat and buxom, with black eyes and eyebrows, good-natured from fatness and laziness, and absurdly bashful.

“Who... are you?” he went on, addressing the man. But at that moment the door was flung open, and, stooping a little, as he was so tall, Razumihin came in.

“What a cabin it is!” he cried. “I am always knocking my head. You call this a lodging! So you are conscious, brother? I’ve just heard the news from Pashenka.”

“He has just come to,” said Nastasya.

“Just come to,” echoed the man again, with a smile.

“And who are you?” Razumihin asked, suddenly addressing him. “My name is Vrazumihin, at your service; not Razumihin, as I am always called, but Vrazumihin, a student and gentleman; and he is my friend. And who are you?”

“I am the messenger from our office, from the merchant Shelopaev, and I’ve come on business.”

“Please sit down.” Razumihin seated himself on the other side of the table. “It’s a good thing you’ve come to, brother,” he went on to Raskolnikov. “For the last four days you have scarcely eaten or drunk anything. We had to give you tea in spoonfuls. I brought Zossimov to see you twice. You remember Zossimov? He examined you carefully and said at once it was nothing serious — something seemed to have gone to your head. Some nervous nonsense, the result of bad feeding, he says you have not had enough beer and radish, but it’s nothing much, it will pass and you will be all right. Zossimov is a first-rate fellow! He is making quite a name. Come, I won’t keep you,” he said, addressing the man again. “Will you explain what you want? You must know, Rodya, this is the second time they have sent from the office; but it was another man last time, and I talked to him. Who was it came before?”

“That was the day before yesterday, I venture to say, if you please, sir. That was Alexey Semyonovitch; he is in our office, too.”

“He was more intelligent than you, don’t you think so?”

“Yes, indeed, sir, he is of more weight than I am.”

“Quite so; go on.”

“At your mamma’s request, through Afanasy Ivanovitch Vahrushin, of whom I presume you have heard more than once, a remittance is sent to you from our office,” the man began, addressing Raskolnikov. “If you are in an intelligible condition, I’ve thirty-five roubles to remit to you, as Semyon Semyonovitch has received from Afanasy Ivanovitch at your mamma’s

request instructions to that effect, as on previous occasions. Do you know him, sir?”

“Yes, I remember... Vahrushin,” Raskolnikov said dreamily.

“You hear, he knows Vahrushin,” cried Razumihin. “He is in ‘an intelligible condition’! And I see you are an intelligent man too. Well, it’s always pleasant to hear words of wisdom.”

“That’s the gentleman, Vahrushin, Afanasy Ivanovitch. And at the request of your mamma, who has sent you a remittance once before in the same manner through him, he did not refuse this time also, and sent instructions to Semyon Semyonovitch some days since to hand you thirty-five roubles in the hope of better to come.”

“That ‘hoping for better to come’ is the best thing you’ve said, though ‘your mamma’ is not bad either. Come then, what do you say? Is he fully conscious, eh?”

“That’s all right. If only he can sign this little paper.”

“He can scrawl his name. Have you got the book?”

“Yes, here’s the book.”

“Give it to me. Here, Rodya, sit up. I’ll hold you. Take the pen and scribble ‘Raskolnikov’ for him. For just now, brother, money is sweeter to us than treacle.”

“I don’t want it,” said Raskolnikov, pushing away the pen.

“Not want it?”

“I won’t sign it.”

“How the devil can you do without signing it?”

“I don’t want... the money.”

“Don’t want the money! Come, brother, that’s nonsense, I bear witness. Don’t trouble, please, it’s only that he is on his travels again. But that’s pretty common with him at all times though.... You are a man of judgment and we will take him in hand, that is, more simply, take his hand and he will sign it. Here.”

“But I can come another time.”

“No, no. Why should we trouble you? You are a man of judgment.... Now, Rodya, don’t keep your visitor, you see he is waiting,” and he made ready to hold Raskolnikov’s hand in earnest.

“Stop, I’ll do it alone,” said the latter, taking the pen and signing his name.

The messenger took out the money and went away.

“Bravo! And now, brother, are you hungry?”

“Yes,” answered Raskolnikov.

“Is there any soup?”

“Some of yesterday’s,” answered Nastasya, who was still standing there.

“With potatoes and rice in it?”

“Yes.”

“I know it by heart. Bring soup and give us some tea.”

“Very well.”

Raskolnikov looked at all this with profound astonishment and a dull, unreasoning terror. He made up his mind to keep quiet and see what would happen. “I believe I am not wandering. I believe it’s reality,” he thought.

In a couple of minutes Nastasya returned with the soup, and announced that the tea would be ready directly. With the soup she brought two spoons, two plates, salt, pepper, mustard for the beef, and so on. The table was set as it had not been for a long time. The cloth was clean.

“It would not be amiss, Nastasya, if Praskovya Pavlovna were to send us up a couple of bottles of beer. We could empty them.”

“Well, you are a cool hand,” muttered Nastasya, and she departed to carry out his orders.

Raskolnikov still gazed wildly with strained attention. Meanwhile Razumihin sat down on the sofa beside him, as clumsily as a bear put his left arm round Raskolnikov’s head, although he was able to sit up, and with his right hand gave him a spoonful of soup, blowing on it that it might not burn him. But the soup was only just warm. Raskolnikov swallowed one spoonful greedily, then a second, then a third. But after giving him a few more spoonfuls of soup, Razumihin suddenly stopped, and said that he must ask Zossimov whether he ought to have more.

Nastasya came in with two bottles of beer.

“And will you have tea?”

“Yes.”

“Cut along, Nastasya, and bring some tea, for tea we may venture on without the faculty. But here is the beer!” He moved back to his chair, pulled the soup and meat in front of him, and began eating as though he had not touched food for three days.

“I must tell you, Rodya, I dine like this here every day now,” he mumbled with his mouth full of beef, “and it’s all Pashenka, your dear little landlady, who sees to that; she loves to do anything for me. I don’t ask for

it, but, of course, I don’t object. And here’s Nastasya with the tea. She is a quick girl. Nastasya, my dear, won’t you have some beer?”

“Get along with your nonsense!”

“A cup of tea, then?”

“A cup of tea, maybe.”

“Pour it out. Stay, I’ll pour it out myself. Sit down.”

He poured out two cups, left his dinner, and sat on the sofa again. As before, he put his left arm round the sick man’s head, raised him up and gave him tea in spoonfuls, again blowing each spoonful steadily and earnestly, as though this process was the principal and most effective means towards his friend’s recovery. Raskolnikov said nothing and made no resistance, though he felt quite strong enough to sit up on the sofa without support and could not merely have held a cup or a spoon, but even perhaps could have walked about. But from some queer, almost animal, cunning he conceived the idea of hiding his strength and lying low for a time, pretending if necessary not to be yet in full possession of his faculties, and meanwhile listening to find out what was going on. Yet he could not overcome his sense of repugnance. After sipping a dozen spoonfuls of tea, he suddenly released his head, pushed the spoon away capriciously, and sank back on the pillow. There were actually real pillows under his head now, down pillows in clean cases, he observed that, too, and took note of it.

“Pashenka must give us some raspberry jam to-day to make him some raspberry tea,” said Razumihin, going back to his chair and attacking his soup and beer again.

“And where is she to get raspberries for you?” asked Nastasya, balancing a saucer on her five outspread fingers and sipping tea through a lump of sugar.

“She’ll get it at the shop, my dear. You see, Rodya, all sorts of things have been happening while you have been laid up. When you decamped in that rascally way without leaving your address, I felt so angry that I resolved to find you out and punish you. I set to work that very day. How I ran about making inquiries for you! This lodging of yours I had forgotten, though I never remembered it, indeed, because I did not know it; and as for your old lodgings, I could only remember it was at the Five Corners, Harlamov’s house. I kept trying to find that Harlamov’s house, and afterwards it turned out that it was not Harlamov’s, but Buch’s. How one muddles up sound sometimes! So I lost my temper, and I went on the

chance to the address bureau next day, and only fancy, in two minutes they looked you up! Your name is down there.”

“My name!”

“I should think so; and yet a General Kobelev they could not find while I was there. Well, it’s a long story. But as soon as I did land on this place, I soon got to know all your affairs — all, all, brother, I know everything; Nastasya here will tell you. I made the acquaintance of Nikodim Fomitch and Ilya Petrovitch, and the house-porter and Mr. Zametov, Alexandr Grigorievitch, the head clerk in the police office, and, last, but not least, of Pashenka; Nastasya here knows....”

“He’s got round her,” Nastasya murmured, smiling slyly.

“Why don’t you put the sugar in your tea, Nastasya Nikiforovna?”

“You are a one!” Nastasya cried suddenly, going off into a giggle. “I am not Nikiforovna, but Petrovna,” she added suddenly, recovering from her mirth.

“I’ll make a note of it. Well, brother, to make a long story short, I was going in for a regular explosion here to uproot all malignant influences in the locality, but Pashenka won the day. I had not expected, brother, to find her so... prepossessing. Eh, what do you think?”

Raskolnikov did not speak, but he still kept his eyes fixed upon him, full of alarm.

“And all that could be wished, indeed, in every respect,” Razumihin went on, not at all embarrassed by his silence.

“Ah, the sly dog!” Nastasya shrieked again. This conversation afforded her unspeakable delight.

“It’s a pity, brother, that you did not set to work in the right way at first. You ought to have approached her differently. She is, so to speak, a most unaccountable character. But we will talk about her character later.... How could you let things come to such a pass that she gave up sending you your dinner? And that I O U? You must have been mad to sign an I O U. And that promise of marriage when her daughter, Natalya Yegorovna, was alive?... I know all about it! But I see that’s a delicate matter and I am an ass; forgive me. But, talking of foolishness, do you know Praskovya Pavlovna is not nearly so foolish as you would think at first sight?”

“No,” mumbled Raskolnikov, looking away, but feeling that it was better to keep up the conversation.

“She isn’t, is she?” cried Razumihin, delighted to get an answer out of him. “But she is not very clever either, eh? She is essentially, essentially an unaccountable character! I am sometimes quite at a loss, I assure you.... She must be forty; she says she is thirty-six, and of course she has every right to say so. But I swear I judge her intellectually, simply from the metaphysical point of view; there is a sort of symbolism sprung up between us, a sort of algebra or what not! I don’t understand it! Well, that’s all nonsense. Only, seeing that you are not a student now and have lost your lessons and your clothes, and that through the young lady’s death she has no need to treat you as a relation, she suddenly took fright; and as you hid in your den and dropped all your old relations with her, she planned to get rid of you. And she’s been cherishing that design a long time, but was sorry to lose the I O U, for you assured her yourself that your mother would pay.”

“It was base of me to say that.... My mother herself is almost a beggar... and I told a lie to keep my lodging... and be fed,” Raskolnikov said loudly and distinctly.

“Yes, you did very sensibly. But the worst of it is that at that point Mr. Tchebarov turns up, a business man. Pashenka would never have thought of doing anything on her own account, she is too retiring; but the business man is by no means retiring, and first thing he puts the question, ‘Is there any hope of realising the I O U?’ Answer: there is, because he has a mother who would save her Rodya with her hundred and twenty-five roubles pension, if she has to starve herself; and a sister, too, who would go into bondage for his sake. That’s what he was building upon.... Why do you start? I know all the ins and outs of your affairs now, my dear boy — it’s not for nothing that you were so open with Pashenka when you were her prospective son-in-law, and I say all this as a friend.... But I tell you what it is; an honest and sensitive man is open; and a business man ‘listens and goes on eating’ you up. Well, then she gave the I O U by way of payment to this Tchebarov, and without hesitation he made a formal demand for payment. When I heard of all this I wanted to blow him up, too, to clear my conscience, but by that time harmony reigned between me and Pashenka, and I insisted on stopping the whole affair, engaging that you would pay. I went security for you, brother. Do you understand? We called Tchebarov, flung him ten roubles and got the I O U back from him, and here I have the honour of presenting it to you. She trusts your word now. Here, take it, you see I have torn it.”

Razumihin put the note on the table. Raskolnikov looked at him and turned to the wall without uttering a word. Even Razumihin felt a twinge.

“I see, brother,” he said a moment later, “that I have been playing the fool again. I thought I should amuse you with my chatter, and I believe I have only made you cross.”

“Was it you I did not recognise when I was delirious?” Raskolnikov asked, after a moment’s pause without turning his head.

“Yes, and you flew into a rage about it, especially when I brought Zametov one day.”

“Zametov? The head clerk? What for?” Raskolnikov turned round quickly and fixed his eyes on Razumihin.

“What’s the matter with you?... What are you upset about? He wanted to make your acquaintance because I talked to him a lot about you.... How could I have found out so much except from him? He is a capital fellow, brother, first-rate... in his own way, of course. Now we are friends — see each other almost every day. I have moved into this part, you know. I have only just moved. I’ve been with him to Luise Ivanovna once or twice.... Do you remember Luise, Luise Ivanovna?

“Did I say anything in delirium?”

“I should think so! You were beside yourself.”

“What did I rave about?”

“What next? What did you rave about? What people do rave about.... Well, brother, now I must not lose time. To work.” He got up from the table and took up his cap.

“What did I rave about?”

“How he keeps on! Are you afraid of having let out some secret? Don’t worry yourself; you said nothing about a countess. But you said a lot about a bulldog, and about ear-rings and chains, and about Krestovsky Island, and some porter, and Nikodim Fomitch and Ilya Petrovitch, the assistant superintendent. And another thing that was of special interest to you was your own sock. You whined, ‘Give me my sock.’ Zametov hunted all about your room for your socks, and with his own scented, ring-bedecked fingers he gave you the rag. And only then were you comforted, and for the next twenty-four hours you held the wretched thing in your hand; we could not get it from you. It is most likely somewhere under your quilt at this moment. And then you asked so piteously for fringe for your trousers. We tried to find out what sort of fringe, but we could not make it out. Now to

business! Here are thirty-five roubles; I take ten of them, and shall give you an account of them in an hour or two. I will let Zossimov know at the same time, though he ought to have been here long ago, for it is nearly twelve. And you, Nastasya, look in pretty often while I am away, to see whether he wants a drink or anything else. And I will tell Pashenka what is wanted myself. Good-bye!”

“He calls her Pashenka! Ah, he’s a deep one!” said Nastasya as he went out; then she opened the door and stood listening, but could not resist running downstairs after him. She was very eager to hear what he would say to the landlady. She was evidently quite fascinated by Razumihin.

No sooner had she left the room than the sick man flung off the bedclothes and leapt out of bed like a madman. With burning, twitching impatience he had waited for them to be gone so that he might set to work. But to what work? Now, as though to spite him, it eluded him.

“Good God, only tell me one thing: do they know of it yet or not? What if they know it and are only pretending, mocking me while I am laid up, and then they will come in and tell me that it’s been discovered long ago and that they have only... What am I to do now? That’s what I’ve forgotten, as though on purpose; forgotten it all at once, I remembered a minute ago.”

He stood in the middle of the room and gazed in miserable bewilderment about him; he walked to the door, opened it, listened; but that was not what he wanted. Suddenly, as though recalling something, he rushed to the corner where there was a hole under the paper, began examining it, put his hand into the hole, fumbled — but that was not it. He went to the stove, opened it and began rummaging in the ashes; the frayed edges of his trousers and the rags cut off his pocket were lying there just as he had thrown them. No one had looked, then! Then he remembered the sock about which Razumihin had just been telling him. Yes, there it lay on the sofa under the quilt, but it was so covered with dust and grime that Zametov could not have seen anything on it.

“Bah, Zametov! The police office! And why am I sent for to the police office? Where’s the notice? Bah! I am mixing it up; that was then. I looked at my sock then, too, but now... now I have been ill. But what did Zametov come for? Why did Razumihin bring him?” he muttered, helplessly sitting on the sofa again. “What does it mean? Am I still in delirium, or is it real? I believe it is real.... Ah, I remember; I must escape! Make haste to escape. Yes, I must, I must escape! Yes... but where? And where are my clothes?

I’ve no boots. They’ve taken them away! They’ve hidden them! I understand! Ah, here is my coat — they passed that over! And here is money on the table, thank God! And here’s the I O U... I’ll take the money and go and take another lodging. They won’t find me!... Yes, but the address bureau? They’ll find me, Razumihin will find me. Better escape altogether... far away... to America, and let them do their worst! And take the I O U... it would be of use there.... What else shall I take? They think I am ill! They don’t know that I can walk, ha-ha-ha! I could see by their eyes that they know all about it! If only I could get downstairs! And what if they have set a watch there — policemen! What’s this tea? Ah, and here is beer left, half a bottle, cold!”

He snatched up the bottle, which still contained a glassful of beer, and gulped it down with relish, as though quenching a flame in his breast. But in another minute the beer had gone to his head, and a faint and even pleasant shiver ran down his spine. He lay down and pulled the quilt over him. His sick and incoherent thoughts grew more and more disconnected, and soon a light, pleasant drowsiness came upon him. With a sense of comfort he nestled his head into the pillow, wrapped more closely about him the soft, wadded quilt which had replaced the old, ragged greatcoat, sighed softly and sank into a deep, sound, refreshing sleep.

He woke up, hearing someone come in. He opened his eyes and saw Razumihin standing in the doorway, uncertain whether to come in or not. Raskolnikov sat up quickly on the sofa and gazed at him, as though trying to recall something.

“Ah, you are not asleep! Here I am! Nastasya, bring in the parcel!” Razumihin shouted down the stairs. “You shall have the account directly.”

“What time is it?” asked Raskolnikov, looking round uneasily.

“Yes, you had a fine sleep, brother, it’s almost evening, it will be six o’clock directly. You have slept more than six hours.”

“Good heavens! Have I?”

“And why not? It will do you good. What’s the hurry? A tryst, is it? We’ve all time before us. I’ve been waiting for the last three hours for you; I’ve been up twice and found you asleep. I’ve called on Zossimov twice; not at home, only fancy! But no matter, he will turn up. And I’ve been out on my own business, too. You know I’ve been moving to-day, moving with my uncle. I have an uncle living with me now. But that’s no matter, to

business. Give me the parcel, Nastasya. We will open it directly. And how do you feel now, brother?”

“I am quite well, I am not ill. Razumihin, have you been here long?”

“I tell you I’ve been waiting for the last three hours.”

“No, before.”

“How do you mean?”

“How long have you been coming here?”

“Why I told you all about it this morning. Don’t you remember?”

Raskolnikov pondered. The morning seemed like a dream to him. He could not remember alone, and looked inquiringly at Razumihin.

“Hm!” said the latter, “he has forgotten. I fancied then that you were not quite yourself. Now you are better for your sleep.... You really look much better. First-rate! Well, to business. Look here, my dear boy.”

He began untying the bundle, which evidently interested him.

“Believe me, brother, this is something specially near my heart. For we must make a man of you. Let’s begin from the top. Do you see this cap?” he said, taking out of the bundle a fairly good though cheap and ordinary cap. “Let me try it on.”

“Presently, afterwards,” said Raskolnikov, waving it off pettishly.

“Come, Rodya, my boy, don’t oppose it, afterwards will be too late; and I shan’t sleep all night, for I bought it by guess, without measure. Just right!” he cried triumphantly, fitting it on, “just your size! A proper head-covering is the first thing in dress and a recommendation in its own way. Tolstyakov, a friend of mine, is always obliged to take off his pudding basin when he goes into any public place where other people wear their hats or caps. People think he does it from slavish politeness, but it’s simply because he is ashamed of his bird’s nest; he is such a boastful fellow! Look, Nastasya, here are two specimens of headgear: this Palmerston” — he took from the corner Raskolnikov’s old, battered hat, which for some unknown reason, he called a Palmerston— “or this jewel! Guess the price, Rodya, what do you suppose I paid for it, Nastasya!” he said, turning to her, seeing that Raskolnikov did not speak.

“Twenty copecks, no more, I dare say,” answered Nastasya.

“Twenty copecks, silly!” he cried, offended. “Why, nowadays you would cost more than that — eighty copecks! And that only because it has been worn. And it’s bought on condition that when’s it’s worn out, they will give you another next year. Yes, on my word! Well, now let us pass to the United

States of America, as they called them at school. I assure you I am proud of these breeches," and he exhibited to Raskolnikov a pair of light, summer trousers of grey woollen material. "No holes, no spots, and quite respectable, although a little worn; and a waistcoat to match, quite in the fashion. And its being worn really is an improvement, it's softer, smoother.... You see, Rodya, to my thinking, the great thing for getting on in the world is always to keep to the seasons; if you don't insist on having asparagus in January, you keep your money in your purse; and it's the same with this purchase. It's summer now, so I've been buying summer things — warmer materials will be wanted for autumn, so you will have to throw these away in any case... especially as they will be done for by then from their own lack of coherence if not your higher standard of luxury. Come, price them! What do you say? Two roubles twenty-five copecks! And remember the condition: if you wear these out, you will have another suit for nothing! They only do business on that system at Fedyaev's; if you've bought a thing once, you are satisfied for life, for you will never go there again of your own free will. Now for the boots. What do you say? You see that they are a bit worn, but they'll last a couple of months, for it's foreign work and foreign leather; the secretary of the English Embassy sold them last week — he had only worn them six days, but he was very short of cash. Price — a rouble and a half. A bargain?"

"But perhaps they won't fit," observed Nastasya.

"Not fit? Just look!" and he pulled out of his pocket Raskolnikov's old, broken boot, stiffly coated with dry mud. "I did not go empty-handed — they took the size from this monster. We all did our best. And as to your linen, your landlady has seen to that. Here, to begin with are three shirts, hempen but with a fashionable front.... Well now then, eighty copecks the cap, two roubles twenty-five copecks the suit — together three roubles five copecks — a rouble and a half for the boots — for, you see, they are very good — and that makes four roubles fifty-five copecks; five roubles for the underclothes — they were bought in the lo — which makes exactly nine roubles fifty-five copecks. Forty-five copecks change in coppers. Will you take it? And so, Rodya, you are set up with a complete new rig-out, for your overcoat will serve, and even has a style of its own. That comes from getting one's clothes from Sharmer's! As for your socks and other things, I leave them to you; we've twenty-five roubles left. And as for Pashenka and paying for your lodging, don't you worry. I tell you she'll trust you for

anything. And now, brother, let me change your linen, for I daresay you will throw off your illness with your shirt.”

“Let me be! I don’t want to!” Raskolnikov waved him off. He had listened with disgust to Razumihin’s efforts to be playful about his purchases.

“Come, brother, don’t tell me I’ve been trudging around for nothing,” Razumihin insisted. “Nastasya, don’t be bashful, but help me — that’s it,” and in spite of Raskolnikov’s resistance he changed his linen. The latter sank back on the pillows and for a minute or two said nothing.

“It will be long before I get rid of them,” he thought. “What money was all that bought with?” he asked at last, gazing at the wall.

“Money? Why, your own, what the messenger brought from Vahrushin, your mother sent it. Have you forgotten that, too?”

“I remember now,” said Raskolnikov after a long, sullen silence. Razumihin looked at him, frowning and uneasy.

The door opened and a tall, stout man whose appearance seemed familiar to Raskolnikov came in.

CHAPTER IV

Zossimov was a tall, fat man with a puffy, colourless, clean-shaven face and straight flaxen hair. He wore spectacles, and a big gold ring on his fat finger. He was twenty-seven. He had on a light grey fashionable loose coat, light summer trousers, and everything about him loose, fashionable and spick and span; his linen was irreproachable, his watch-chain was massive. In manner he was slow and, as it were, nonchalant, and at the same time studiously free and easy; he made efforts to conceal his self-importance, but it was apparent at every instant. All his acquaintances found him tedious, but said he was clever at his work.

“I’ve been to you twice to-day, brother. You see, he’s come to himself,” cried Razumihin.

“I see, I see; and how do we feel now, eh?” said Zossimov to Raskolnikov, watching him carefully and, sitting down at the foot of the sofa, he settled himself as comfortably as he could.

“He is still depressed,” Razumihin went on. “We’ve just changed his linen and he almost cried.”

“That’s very natural; you might have put it off if he did not wish it.... His pulse is first-rate. Is your head still aching, eh?”

“I am well, I am perfectly well!” Raskolnikov declared positively and irritably. He raised himself on the sofa and looked at them with glittering eyes, but sank back on to the pillow at once and turned to the wall. Zossimov watched him intently.

“Very good.... Going on all right,” he said lazily. “Has he eaten anything?”

They told him, and asked what he might have.

“He may have anything... soup, tea... mushrooms and cucumbers, of course, you must not give him; he’d better not have meat either, and... but no need to tell you that!” Razumihin and he looked at each other. “No more medicine or anything. I’ll look at him again to-morrow. Perhaps, to-day even... but never mind...”

“To-morrow evening I shall take him for a walk,” said Razumihin. “We are going to the Yusupov garden and then to the Palais de Crystal.”

“I would not disturb him to-morrow at all, but I don’t know... a little, maybe... but we’ll see.”

“Ach, what a nuisance! I’ve got a house-warming party to-night; it’s only a step from here. Couldn’t he come? He could lie on the sofa. You are coming?” Razumihin said to Zossimov. “Don’t forget, you promised.”

“All right, only rather later. What are you going to do?”

“Oh, nothing — tea, vodka, herrings. There will be a pie... just our friends.”

“And who?”

“All neighbours here, almost all new friends, except my old uncle, and he is new too — he only arrived in Petersburg yesterday to see to some business of his. We meet once in five years.”

“What is he?”

“He’s been stagnating all his life as a district postmaster; gets a little pension. He is sixty-five — not worth talking about.... But I am fond of him. Porfiry Petrovitch, the head of the Investigation Department here... But you know him.”

“Is he a relation of yours, too?”

“A very distant one. But why are you scowling? Because you quarrelled once, won’t you come then?”

“I don’t care a damn for him.”

“So much the better. Well, there will be some students, a teacher, a government clerk, a musician, an officer and Zametov.”

“Do tell me, please, what you or he” — Zossimov nodded at Raskolnikov— “can have in common with this Zametov?”

“Oh, you particular gentleman! Principles! You are worked by principles, as it were by springs; you won’t venture to turn round on your own account. If a man is a nice fellow, that’s the only principle I go upon. Zametov is a delightful person.”

“Though he does take bribes.”

“Well, he does! and what of it? I don’t care if he does take bribes,” Razumihin cried with unnatural irritability. “I don’t praise him for taking bribes. I only say he is a nice man in his own way! But if one looks at men in all ways — are there many good ones left? Why, I am sure I shouldn’t be worth a baked onion myself... perhaps with you thrown in.”

“That’s too little; I’d give two for you.”

“And I wouldn’t give more than one for you. No more of your jokes! Zametov is no more than a boy. I can pull his hair and one must draw him not repel him. You’ll never improve a man by repelling him, especially a

boy. One has to be twice as careful with a boy. Oh, you progressive dullards! You don’t understand. You harm yourselves running another man down.... But if you want to know, we really have something in common.”

“I should like to know what.”

“Why, it’s all about a house-painter.... We are getting him out of a mess! Though indeed there’s nothing to fear now. The matter is absolutely self-evident. We only put on steam.”

“A painter?”

“Why, haven’t I told you about it? I only told you the beginning then about the murder of the old pawnbroker-woman. Well, the painter is mixed up in it...”

“Oh, I heard about that murder before and was rather interested in it... partly... for one reason.... I read about it in the papers, too....”

“Lizaveta was murdered, too,” Nastasya blurted out, suddenly addressing Raskolnikov. She remained in the room all the time, standing by the door listening.

“Lizaveta,” murmured Raskolnikov hardly audibly.

“Lizaveta, who sold old clothes. Didn’t you know her? She used to come here. She mended a shirt for you, too.”

Raskolnikov turned to the wall where in the dirty, yellow paper he picked out one clumsy, white flower with brown lines on it and began examining how many petals there were in it, how many scallops in the petals and how many lines on them. He felt his arms and legs as lifeless as though they had been cut off. He did not attempt to move, but stared obstinately at the flower.

“But what about the painter?” Zossimov interrupted Nastasya’s chatter with marked displeasure. She sighed and was silent.

“Why, he was accused of the murder,” Razumihin went on hotly.

“Was there evidence against him then?”

“Evidence, indeed! Evidence that was no evidence, and that’s what we have to prove. It was just as they pitched on those fellows, Koch and Pestryakov, at first. Foo! how stupidly it’s all done, it makes one sick, though it’s not one’s business! Pestryakov may be coming to-night.... By the way, Rodya, you’ve heard about the business already; it happened before you were ill, the day before you fainted at the police office while they were talking about it.”

Zossimov looked curiously at Raskolnikov. He did not stir.

“But I say, Razumihin, I wonder at you. What a busybody you are!” Zossimov observed.

“Maybe I am, but we will get him off anyway,” shouted Razumihin, bringing his fist down on the table. “What’s the most offensive is not their lying — one can always forgive lying — lying is a delightful thing, for it leads to truth — what is offensive is that they lie and worship their own lying.... I respect Porfiry, but... What threw them out at first? The door was locked, and when they came back with the porter it was open. So it followed that Koch and Pestryakov were the murderers — that was their logic!”

“But don’t excite yourself; they simply detained them, they could not help that.... And, by the way, I’ve met that man Koch. He used to buy unredeemed pledges from the old woman? Eh?”

“Yes, he is a swindler. He buys up bad debts, too. He makes a profession of it. But enough of him! Do you know what makes me angry? It’s their sickening rotten, petrified routine.... And this case might be the means of introducing a new method. One can show from the psychological data alone how to get on the track of the real man. ‘We have facts,’ they say. But facts are not everything — at least half the business lies in how you interpret them!”

“Can you interpret them, then?”

“Anyway, one can’t hold one’s tongue when one has a feeling, a tangible feeling, that one might be a help if only.... Eh! Do you know the details of the case?”

“I am waiting to hear about the painter.”

“Oh, yes! Well, here’s the story. Early on the third day after the murder, when they were still dandling Koch and Pestryakov — though they accounted for every step they took and it was as plain as a pikestaff-an unexpected fact turned up. A peasant called Dushkin, who keeps a dram-shop facing the house, brought to the police office a jeweller’s case containing some gold ear-rings, and told a long rigamarole. ‘The day before yesterday, just after eight o’clock’ — mark the day and the hour!—’a journeyman house-painter, Nikolay, who had been in to see me already that day, brought me this box of gold ear-rings and stones, and asked me to give him two roubles for them. When I asked him where he got them, he said that he picked them up in the street. I did not ask him anything more.’ I am telling you Dushkin’s story. ‘I gave him a note’ — a rouble that is—’for I

thought if he did not pawn it with me he would with another. It would all come to the same thing — he'd spend it on drink, so the thing had better be with me. The further you hide it the quicker you will find it, and if anything turns up, if I hear any rumours, I'll take it to the police.' Of course, that's all taradiddle; he lies like a horse, for I know this Dushkin, he is a pawnbroker and a receiver of stolen goods, and he did not cheat Nikolay out of a thirty-rouble trinket in order to give it to the police. He was simply afraid. But no matter, to return to Dushkin's story. 'I've known this peasant, Nikolay Dementyev, from a child; he comes from the same province and district of Zaraïsk, we are both Ryazan men. And though Nikolay is not a drunkard, he drinks, and I knew he had a job in that house, painting work with Dmitri, who comes from the same village, too. As soon as he got the rouble he changed it, had a couple of glasses, took his change and went out. But I did not see Dmitri with him then. And the next day I heard that someone had murdered Alyona Ivanovna and her sister, Lizaveta Ivanovna, with an axe. I knew them, and I felt suspicious about the ear-rings at once, for I knew the murdered woman lent money on pledges. I went to the house, and began to make careful inquiries without saying a word to anyone. First of all I asked, "Is Nikolay here?" Dmitri told me that Nikolay had gone off on the spree; he had come home at daybreak drunk, stayed in the house about ten minutes, and went out again. Dmitri didn't see him again and is finishing the job alone. And their job is on the same staircase as the murder, on the second floor. When I heard all that I did not say a word to anyone' — that's Dushkin's tale—'but I found out what I could about the murder, and went home feeling as suspicious as ever. And at eight o'clock this morning' — that was the third day, you understand—'I saw Nikolay coming in, not sober, though not to say very drunk — he could understand what was said to him. He sat down on the bench and did not speak. There was only one stranger in the bar and a man I knew asleep on a bench and our two boys. "Have you seen Dmitri?" said I. "No, I haven't," said he. "And you've not been here either?"

"Not since the day before yesterday," said he. "And where did you sleep last night?"

"In Peski, with the Kolomensky men."

"And where did you get those ear-rings?" I asked. "I found them in the street," and the way he said it was a bit queer; he did not look at me. "Did you hear what happened that very evening, at that very hour, on that same

staircase?” said I. “No,” said he, “I had not heard,” and all the while he was listening, his eyes were staring out of his head and he turned as white as chalk. I told him all about it and he took his hat and began getting up. I wanted to keep him. “Wait a bit, Nikolay,” said I, “won’t you have a drink?” And I signed to the boy to hold the door, and I came out from behind the bar; but he darted out and down the street to the turning at a run. I have not seen him since. Then my doubts were at an end — it was his doing, as clear as could be....’”

“I should think so,” said Zossimov.

“Wait! Hear the end. Of course they sought high and low for Nikolay; they detained Dushkin and searched his house; Dmitri, too, was arrested; the Kolomensky men also were turned inside out. And the day before yesterday they arrested Nikolay in a tavern at the end of the town. He had gone there, taken the silver cross off his neck and asked for a dram for it. They gave it to him. A few minutes afterwards the woman went to the cowshed, and through a crack in the wall she saw in the stable adjoining he had made a noose of his sash from the beam, stood on a block of wood, and was trying to put his neck in the noose. The woman screeched her hardest; people ran in. ‘So that’s what you are up to!”Take me,’ he says, ‘to such-and-such a police officer; I’ll confess everything.’ Well, they took him to that police station — that is here — with a suitable escort. So they asked him this and that, how old he is, ‘twenty-two,’ and so on. At the question, ‘When you were working with Dmitri, didn’t you see anyone on the staircase at such-and-such a time?’ — answer: ‘To be sure folks may have gone up and down, but I did not notice them.”And didn’t you hear anything, any noise, and so on?”We heard nothing special.”And did you hear, Nikolay, that on the same day Widow So-and-so and her sister were murdered and robbed?”I never knew a thing about it. The first I heard of it was from Afanasy Pavlovitch the day before yesterday.”And where did you find the ear-rings?”I found them on the pavement.”Why didn’t you go to work with Dmitri the other day?”Because I was drinking.”And where were you drinking?”Oh, in such-and-such a place.”Why did you run away from Dushkin’s?”Because I was awfully frightened.”What were you frightened of?”That I should be accused.”How could you be frightened, if you felt free from guilt?’ Now, Zossimov, you may not believe me, that question was put literally in those words. I know it for a fact, it was repeated to me exactly! What do you say to that?”

“Well, anyway, there’s the evidence.”

“I am not talking of the evidence now, I am talking about that question, of their own idea of themselves. Well, so they squeezed and squeezed him and he confessed: ‘I did not find it in the street, but in the flat where I was painting with Dmitri.”And how was that?”Why, Dmitri and I were painting there all day, and we were just getting ready to go, and Dmitri took a brush and painted my face, and he ran off and I after him. I ran after him, shouting my hardest, and at the bottom of the stairs I ran right against the porter and some gentlemen — and how many gentlemen were there I don’t remember. And the porter swore at me, and the other porter swore, too, and the porter’s wife came out, and swore at us, too; and a gentleman came into the entry with a lady, and he swore at us, too, for Dmitri and I lay right across the way. I got hold of Dmitri’s hair and knocked him down and began beating him. And Dmitri, too, caught me by the hair and began beating me. But we did it all not for temper but in a friendly way, for sport. And then Dmitri escaped and ran into the street, and I ran after him; but I did not catch him, and went back to the flat alone; I had to clear up my things. I began putting them together, expecting Dmitri to come, and there in the passage, in the corner by the door, I stepped on the box. I saw it lying there wrapped up in paper. I took off the paper, saw some little hooks, undid them, and in the box were the ear-rings....’”

“Behind the door? Lying behind the door? Behind the door?” Raskolnikov cried suddenly, staring with a blank look of terror at Razumihin, and he slowly sat up on the sofa, leaning on his hand.

“Yes... why? What’s the matter? What’s wrong?” Razumihin, too, got up from his seat.

“Nothing,” Raskolnikov answered faintly, turning to the wall. All were silent for a while.

“He must have waked from a dream,” Razumihin said at last, looking inquiringly at Zossimov. The latter slightly shook his head.

“Well, go on,” said Zossimov. “What next?”

“What next? As soon as he saw the ear-rings, forgetting Dmitri and everything, he took up his cap and ran to Dushkin and, as we know, got a rouble from him. He told a lie saying he found them in the street, and went off drinking. He keeps repeating his old story about the murder: ‘I know nothing of it, never heard of it till the day before yesterday.”And why didn’t you come to the police till now?”I was frightened.”And why did you try to

hang yourself?”From anxiety.”What anxiety?”That I should be accused of it.’ Well, that’s the whole story. And now what do you suppose they deduced from that?”

“Why, there’s no supposing. There’s a clue, such as it is, a fact. You wouldn’t have your painter set free?”

“Now they’ve simply taken him for the murderer. They haven’t a shadow of doubt.”

“That’s nonsense. You are excited. But what about the ear-rings? You must admit that, if on the very same day and hour ear-rings from the old woman’s box have come into Nikolay’s hands, they must have come there somehow. That’s a good deal in such a case.”

“How did they get there? How did they get there?” cried Razumihin. “How can you, a doctor, whose duty it is to study man and who has more opportunity than anyone else for studying human nature — how can you fail to see the character of the man in the whole story? Don’t you see at once that the answers he has given in the examination are the holy truth? They came into his hand precisely as he has told us — he stepped on the box and picked it up.”

“The holy truth! But didn’t he own himself that he told a lie at first?”

“Listen to me, listen attentively. The porter and Koch and Pestryakov and the other porter and the wife of the first porter and the woman who was sitting in the porter’s lodge and the man Kryukov, who had just got out of a cab at that minute and went in at the entry with a lady on his arm, that is eight or ten witnesses, agree that Nikolay had Dmitri on the ground, was lying on him beating him, while Dmitri hung on to his hair, beating him, too. They lay right across the way, blocking the thoroughfare. They were sworn at on all sides while they ‘like children’ (the very words of the witnesses) were falling over one another, squealing, fighting and laughing with the funniest faces, and, chasing one another like children, they ran into the street. Now take careful note. The bodies upstairs were warm, you understand, warm when they found them! If they, or Nikolay alone, had murdered them and broken open the boxes, or simply taken part in the robbery, allow me to ask you one question: do their state of mind, their squeals and giggles and childish scuffling at the gate fit in with axes, bloodshed, fiendish cunning, robbery? They’d just killed them, not five or ten minutes before, for the bodies were still warm, and at once, leaving the flat open, knowing that people would go there at once, flinging away their

booty, they rolled about like children, laughing and attracting general attention. And there are a dozen witnesses to swear to that!”

“Of course it is strange! It’s impossible, indeed, but...”

“No, brother, no *buts*. And if the ear-rings being found in Nikolay’s hands at the very day and hour of the murder constitutes an important piece of circumstantial evidence against him — although the explanation given by him accounts for it, and therefore it does not tell seriously against him — one must take into consideration the facts which prove him innocent, especially as they are facts that *cannot be denied*. And do you suppose, from the character of our legal system, that they will accept, or that they are in a position to accept, this fact — resting simply on a psychological impossibility — as irrefutable and conclusively breaking down the circumstantial evidence for the prosecution? No, they won’t accept it, they certainly won’t, because they found the jewel-case and the man tried to hang himself, ‘which he could not have done if he hadn’t felt guilty.’ That’s the point, that’s what excites me, you must understand!”

“Oh, I see you are excited! Wait a bit. I forgot to ask you; what proof is there that the box came from the old woman?”

“That’s been proved,” said Razumihin with apparent reluctance, frowning. “Koch recognised the jewel-case and gave the name of the owner, who proved conclusively that it was his.”

“That’s bad. Now another point. Did anyone see Nikolay at the time that Koch and Pestryakov were going upstairs at first, and is there no evidence about that?”

“Nobody did see him,” Razumihin answered with vexation. “That’s the worst of it. Even Koch and Pestryakov did not notice them on their way upstairs, though, indeed, their evidence could not have been worth much. They said they saw the flat was open, and that there must be work going on in it, but they took no special notice and could not remember whether there actually were men at work in it.”

“Hm!... So the only evidence for the defence is that they were beating one another and laughing. That constitutes a strong presumption, but... How do you explain the facts yourself?”

“How do I explain them? What is there to explain? It’s clear. At any rate, the direction in which explanation is to be sought is clear, and the jewel-case points to it. The real murderer dropped those ear-rings. The murderer was upstairs, locked in, when Koch and Pestryakov knocked at the door.

Koch, like an ass, did not stay at the door; so the murderer popped out and ran down, too; for he had no other way of escape. He hid from Koch, Pestryakov and the porter in the flat when Nikolay and Dmitri had just run out of it. He stopped there while the porter and others were going upstairs, waited till they were out of hearing, and then went calmly downstairs at the very minute when Dmitri and Nikolay ran out into the street and there was no one in the entry; possibly he was seen, but not noticed. There are lots of people going in and out. He must have dropped the ear-rings out of his pocket when he stood behind the door, and did not notice he dropped them, because he had other things to think of. The jewel-case is a conclusive proof that he did stand there.... That’s how I explain it.”

“Too clever! No, my boy, you’re too clever. That beats everything.”

“But, why, why?”

“Why, because everything fits too well... it’s too melodramatic.”

“A-ach!” Razumihin was exclaiming, but at that moment the door opened and a personage came in who was a stranger to all present.

CHAPTER V

This was a gentleman no longer young, of a stiff and portly appearance, and a cautious and sour countenance. He began by stopping short in the doorway, staring about him with offensive and undisguised astonishment, as though asking himself what sort of place he had come to. Mistrustfully and with an affectation of being alarmed and almost affronted, he scanned Raskolnikov's low and narrow "cabin." With the same amazement he stared at Raskolnikov, who lay undressed, dishevelled, unwashed, on his miserable dirty sofa, looking fixedly at him. Then with the same deliberation he scrutinised the uncouth, unkempt figure and unshaven face of Razumihin, who looked him boldly and inquiringly in the face without rising from his seat. A constrained silence lasted for a couple of minutes, and then, as might be expected, some scene-shifting took place. Reflecting, probably from certain fairly unmistakable signs, that he would get nothing in this "cabin" by attempting to overawe them, the gentleman softened somewhat, and civilly, though with some severity, emphasising every syllable of his question, addressed Zossimov:

"Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov, a student, or formerly a student?"

Zossimov made a slight movement, and would have answered, had not Razumihin anticipated him.

"Here he is lying on the sofa! What do you want?"

This familiar "what do you want" seemed to cut the ground from the feet of the pompous gentleman. He was turning to Razumihin, but checked himself in time and turned to Zossimov again.

"This is Raskolnikov," mumbled Zossimov, nodding towards him. Then he gave a prolonged yawn, opening his mouth as wide as possible. Then he lazily put his hand into his waistcoat-pocket, pulled out a huge gold watch in a round hunter's case, opened it, looked at it and as slowly and lazily proceeded to put it back.

Raskolnikov himself lay without speaking, on his back, gazing persistently, though without understanding, at the stranger. Now that his face was turned away from the strange flower on the paper, it was extremely pale and wore a look of anguish, as though he had just undergone an agonising operation or just been taken from the rack. But the new-comer gradually began to arouse his attention, then his wonder, then suspicion and

even alarm. When Zossimov said “This is Raskolnikov” he jumped up quickly, sat on the sofa and with an almost defiant, but weak and breaking, voice articulated:

“Yes, I am Raskolnikov! What do you want?”

The visitor scrutinised him and pronounced impressively:

“Pyotr Petrovitch Luzhin. I believe I have reason to hope that my name is not wholly unknown to you?”

But Raskolnikov, who had expected something quite different, gazed blankly and dreamily at him, making no reply, as though he heard the name of Pyotr Petrovitch for the first time.

“Is it possible that you can up to the present have received no information?” asked Pyotr Petrovitch, somewhat disconcerted.

In reply Raskolnikov sank languidly back on the pillow, put his hands behind his head and gazed at the ceiling. A look of dismay came into Luzhin’s face. Zossimov and Razumihin stared at him more inquisitively than ever, and at last he showed unmistakable signs of embarrassment.

“I had presumed and calculated,” he faltered, “that a letter posted more than ten days, if not a fortnight ago...”

“I say, why are you standing in the doorway?” Razumihin interrupted suddenly. “If you’ve something to say, sit down. Nastasya and you are so crowded. Nastasya, make room. Here’s a chair, thread your way in!”

He moved his chair back from the table, made a little space between the table and his knees, and waited in a rather cramped position for the visitor to “thread his way in.” The minute was so chosen that it was impossible to refuse, and the visitor squeezed his way through, hurrying and stumbling. Reaching the chair, he sat down, looking suspiciously at Razumihin.

“No need to be nervous,” the latter blurted out. “Rodya has been ill for the last five days and delirious for three, but now he is recovering and has got an appetite. This is his doctor, who has just had a look at him. I am a comrade of Rodya’s, like him, formerly a student, and now I am nursing him; so don’t you take any notice of us, but go on with your business.”

“Thank you. But shall I not disturb the invalid by my presence and conversation?” Pyotr Petrovitch asked of Zossimov.

“N-no,” mumbled Zossimov; “you may amuse him.” He yawned again.

“He has been conscious a long time, since the morning,” went on Razumihin, whose familiarity seemed so much like unaffected good-nature

that Pyotr Petrovitch began to be more cheerful, partly, perhaps, because this shabby and impudent person had introduced himself as a student.

“Your mamma,” began Luzhin.

“Hm!” Razumihin cleared his throat loudly. Luzhin looked at him inquiringly.

“That’s all right, go on.”

Luzhin shrugged his shoulders.

“Your mamma had commenced a letter to you while I was sojourning in her neighbourhood. On my arrival here I purposely allowed a few days to elapse before coming to see you, in order that I might be fully assured that you were in full possession of the tidings; but now, to my astonishment...”

“I know, I know!” Raskolnikov cried suddenly with impatient vexation. “So you are the *fiancé*? I know, and that’s enough!”

There was no doubt about Pyotr Petrovitch’s being offended this time, but he said nothing. He made a violent effort to understand what it all meant. There was a moment’s silence.

Meanwhile Raskolnikov, who had turned a little towards him when he answered, began suddenly staring at him again with marked curiosity, as though he had not had a good look at him yet, or as though something new had struck him; he rose from his pillow on purpose to stare at him. There certainly was something peculiar in Pyotr Petrovitch’s whole appearance, something which seemed to justify the title of “fiancé” so unceremoniously applied to him. In the first place, it was evident, far too much so indeed, that Pyotr Petrovitch had made eager use of his few days in the capital to get himself up and rig himself out in expectation of his betrothed — a perfectly innocent and permissible proceeding, indeed. Even his own, perhaps too complacent, consciousness of the agreeable improvement in his appearance might have been forgiven in such circumstances, seeing that Pyotr Petrovitch had taken up the rôle of fiancé. All his clothes were fresh from the tailor’s and were all right, except for being too new and too distinctly appropriate. Even the stylish new round hat had the same significance. Pyotr Petrovitch treated it too respectfully and held it too carefully in his hands. The exquisite pair of lavender gloves, real Louvain, told the same tale, if only from the fact of his not wearing them, but carrying them in his hand for show. Light and youthful colours predominated in Pyotr Petrovitch’s attire. He wore a charming summer jacket of a fawn shade, light thin trousers, a waistcoat of the same, new and fine linen, a cravat of

the lightest cambric with pink stripes on it, and the best of it was, this all suited Pyotr Petrovitch. His very fresh and even handsome face looked younger than his forty-five years at all times. His dark, mutton-chop whiskers made an agreeable setting on both sides, growing thickly upon his shining, clean-shaven chin. Even his hair, touched here and there with grey, though it had been combed and curled at a hairdresser’s, did not give him a stupid appearance, as curled hair usually does, by inevitably suggesting a German on his wedding-day. If there really was something unpleasing and repulsive in his rather good-looking and imposing countenance, it was due to quite other causes. After scanning Mr. Luzhin unceremoniously, Raskolnikov smiled malignantly, sank back on the pillow and stared at the ceiling as before.

But Mr. Luzhin hardened his heart and seemed to determine to take no notice of their oddities.

“I feel the greatest regret at finding you in this situation,” he began, again breaking the silence with an effort. “If I had been aware of your illness I should have come earlier. But you know what business is. I have, too, a very important legal affair in the Senate, not to mention other preoccupations which you may well conjecture. I am expecting your mamma and sister any minute.”

Raskolnikov made a movement and seemed about to speak; his face showed some excitement. Pyotr Petrovitch paused, waited, but as nothing followed, he went on:

“... Any minute. I have found a lodging for them on their arrival.”

“Where?” asked Raskolnikov weakly.

“Very near here, in Bakaleyev’s house.”

“That’s in Voskresensky,” put in Razumihin. “There are two storeys of rooms, let by a merchant called Yushin; I’ve been there.”

“Yes, rooms...”

“A disgusting place — filthy, stinking and, what’s more, of doubtful character. Things have happened there, and there are all sorts of queer people living there. And I went there about a scandalous business. It’s cheap, though...”

“I could not, of course, find out so much about it, for I am a stranger in Petersburg myself,” Pyotr Petrovitch replied huffily. “However, the two rooms are exceedingly clean, and as it is for so short a time... I have already taken a permanent, that is, our future flat,” he said, addressing Raskolnikov,

“and I am having it done up. And meanwhile I am myself cramped for room in a lodging with my friend Andrey Semyonovitch Lebeziatnikov, in the flat of Madame Lippevechsel; it was he who told me of Bakaleyev’s house, too...”

“Lebeziatnikov?” said Raskolnikov slowly, as if recalling something.

“Yes, Andrey Semyonovitch Lebeziatnikov, a clerk in the Ministry. Do you know him?”

“Yes... no,” Raskolnikov answered.

“Excuse me, I fancied so from your inquiry. I was once his guardian.... A very nice young man and advanced. I like to meet young people: one learns new things from them.” Luzhin looked round hopefully at them all.

“How do you mean?” asked Razumihin.

“In the most serious and essential matters,” Pyotr Petrovitch replied, as though delighted at the question. “You see, it’s ten years since I visited Petersburg. All the novelties, reforms, ideas have reached us in the provinces, but to see it all more clearly one must be in Petersburg. And it’s my notion that you observe and learn most by watching the younger generation. And I confess I am delighted...”

“At what?”

“Your question is a wide one. I may be mistaken, but I fancy I find clearer views, more, so to say, criticism, more practicality...”

“That’s true,” Zossimov let drop.

“Nonsense! There’s no practicality.” Razumihin flew at him. “Practicality is a difficult thing to find; it does not drop down from heaven. And for the last two hundred years we have been divorced from all practical life. Ideas, if you like, are fermenting,” he said to Pyotr Petrovitch, “and desire for good exists, though it’s in a childish form, and honesty you may find, although there are crowds of brigands. Anyway, there’s no practicality. Practicality goes well shod.”

“I don’t agree with you,” Pyotr Petrovitch replied, with evident enjoyment. “Of course, people do get carried away and make mistakes, but one must have indulgence; those mistakes are merely evidence of enthusiasm for the cause and of abnormal external environment. If little has been done, the time has been but short; of means I will not speak. It’s my personal view, if you care to know, that something has been accomplished already. New valuable ideas, new valuable works are circulating in the place of our old dreamy and romantic authors. Literature is taking a maturer

form, many injurious prejudice have been rooted up and turned into ridicule.... In a word, we have cut ourselves off irrevocably from the past, and that, to my thinking, is a great thing...”

“He’s learnt it by heart to show off!” Raskolnikov pronounced suddenly.

“What?” asked Pyotr Petrovitch, not catching his words; but he received no reply.

“That’s all true,” Zossimov hastened to interpose.

“Isn’t it so?” Pyotr Petrovitch went on, glancing affably at Zossimov. “You must admit,” he went on, addressing Razumihin with a shade of triumph and superciliousness — he almost added “young man”— “that there is an advance, or, as they say now, progress in the name of science and economic truth...”

“A commonplace.”

“No, not a commonplace! Hitherto, for instance, if I were told, ‘love thy neighbour,’ what came of it?” Pyotr Petrovitch went on, perhaps with excessive haste. “It came to my tearing my coat in half to share with my neighbour and we both were left half naked. As a Russian proverb has it, ‘Catch several hares and you won’t catch one.’ Science now tells us, love yourself before all men, for everything in the world rests on self-interest. You love yourself and manage your own affairs properly and your coat remains whole. Economic truth adds that the better private affairs are organised in society — the more whole coats, so to say — the firmer are its foundations and the better is the common welfare organised too. Therefore, in acquiring wealth solely and exclusively for myself, I am acquiring, so to speak, for all, and helping to bring to pass my neighbour’s getting a little more than a torn coat; and that not from private, personal liberality, but as a consequence of the general advance. The idea is simple, but unhappily it has been a long time reaching us, being hindered by idealism and sentimentality. And yet it would seem to want very little wit to perceive it...”

“Excuse me, I’ve very little wit myself,” Razumihin cut in sharply, “and so let us drop it. I began this discussion with an object, but I’ve grown so sick during the last three years of this chattering to amuse oneself, of this incessant flow of commonplaces, always the same, that, by Jove, I blush even when other people talk like that. You are in a hurry, no doubt, to exhibit your acquirements; and I don’t blame you, that’s quite pardonable. I only wanted to find out what sort of man you are, for so many unscrupulous

people have got hold of the progressive cause of late and have so distorted in their own interests everything they touched, that the whole cause has been dragged in the mire. That’s enough!”

“Excuse me, sir,” said Luzhin, affronted, and speaking with excessive dignity. “Do you mean to suggest so unceremoniously that I too...”

“Oh, my dear sir... how could I?... Come, that’s enough,” Razumihin concluded, and he turned abruptly to Zossimov to continue their previous conversation.

Pyotr Petrovitch had the good sense to accept the disavowal. He made up his mind to take leave in another minute or two.

“I trust our acquaintance,” he said, addressing Raskolnikov, “may, upon your recovery and in view of the circumstances of which you are aware, become closer... Above all, I hope for your return to health...”

Raskolnikov did not even turn his head. Pyotr Petrovitch began getting up from his chair.

“One of her customers must have killed her,” Zossimov declared positively.

“Not a doubt of it,” replied Razumihin. “Porfiry doesn’t give his opinion, but is examining all who have left pledges with her there.”

“Examining them?” Raskolnikov asked aloud.

“Yes. What then?”

“Nothing.”

“How does he get hold of them?” asked Zossimov.

“Koch has given the names of some of them, other names are on the wrappers of the pledges and some have come forward of themselves.”

“It must have been a cunning and practised ruffian! The boldness of it! The coolness!”

“That’s just what it wasn’t!” interposed Razumihin. “That’s what throws you all off the scent. But I maintain that he is not cunning, not practised, and probably this was his first crime! The supposition that it was a calculated crime and a cunning criminal doesn’t work. Suppose him to have been inexperienced, and it’s clear that it was only a chance that saved him — and chance may do anything. Why, he did not foresee obstacles, perhaps! And how did he set to work? He took jewels worth ten or twenty roubles, stuffing his pockets with them, ransacked the old woman’s trunks, her rags — and they found fifteen hundred roubles, besides notes, in a box in the top drawer of the chest! He did not know how to rob; he could only

murder. It was his first crime, I assure you, his first crime; he lost his head. And he got off more by luck than good counsel!”

“You are talking of the murder of the old pawnbroker, I believe?” Pyotr Petrovitch put in, addressing Zossimov. He was standing, hat and gloves in hand, but before departing he felt disposed to throw off a few more intellectual phrases. He was evidently anxious to make a favourable impression and his vanity overcame his prudence.

“Yes. You’ve heard of it?”

“Oh, yes, being in the neighbourhood.”

“Do you know the details?”

“I can’t say that; but another circumstance interests me in the case — the whole question, so to say. Not to speak of the fact that crime has been greatly on the increase among the lower classes during the last five years, not to speak of the cases of robbery and arson everywhere, what strikes me as the strangest thing is that in the higher classes, too, crime is increasing proportionately. In one place one hears of a student’s robbing the mail on the high road; in another place people of good social position forge false banknotes; in Moscow of late a whole gang has been captured who used to forge lottery tickets, and one of the ringleaders was a lecturer in universal history; then our secretary abroad was murdered from some obscure motive of gain.... And if this old woman, the pawnbroker, has been murdered by someone of a higher class in society — for peasants don’t pawn gold trinkets — how are we to explain this demoralisation of the civilised part of our society?”

“There are many economic changes,” put in Zossimov.

“How are we to explain it?” Razumihin caught him up. “It might be explained by our inveterate impracticality.”

“How do you mean?”

“What answer had your lecturer in Moscow to make to the question why he was forging notes? ‘Everybody is getting rich one way or another, so I want to make haste to get rich too.’ I don’t remember the exact words, but the upshot was that he wants money for nothing, without waiting or working! We’ve grown used to having everything ready-made, to walking on crutches, to having our food chewed for us. Then the great hour struck, [*] and every man showed himself in his true colours.”

[*] The emancipation of the serfs in 1861 is meant. — TRANSLATOR’S NOTE.

“But morality? And so to speak, principles...”

“But why do you worry about it?” Raskolnikov interposed suddenly. “It’s in accordance with your theory!”

“In accordance with my theory?”

“Why, carry out logically the theory you were advocating just now, and it follows that people may be killed...”

“Upon my word!” cried Luzhin.

“No, that’s not so,” put in Zossimov.

Raskolnikov lay with a white face and twitching upper lip, breathing painfully.

“There’s a measure in all things,” Luzhin went on superciliously. “Economic ideas are not an incitement to murder, and one has but to suppose...”

“And is it true,” Raskolnikov interposed once more suddenly, again in a voice quivering with fury and delight in insulting him, “is it true that you told your *fiancée*... within an hour of her acceptance, that what pleased you most... was that she was a beggar... because it was better to raise a wife from poverty, so that you may have complete control over her, and reproach her with your being her benefactor?”

“Upon my word,” Luzhin cried wrathfully and irritably, crimson with confusion, “to distort my words in this way! Excuse me, allow me to assure you that the report which has reached you, or rather, let me say, has been conveyed to you, has no foundation in truth, and I... suspect who... in a word... this arrow... in a word, your mamma... She seemed to me in other things, with all her excellent qualities, of a somewhat high-flown and romantic way of thinking.... But I was a thousand miles from supposing that she would misunderstand and misrepresent things in so fanciful a way.... And indeed... indeed...”

“I tell you what,” cried Raskolnikov, raising himself on his pillow and fixing his piercing, glittering eyes upon him, “I tell you what.”

“What?” Luzhin stood still, waiting with a defiant and offended face. Silence lasted for some seconds.

“Why, if ever again... you dare to mention a single word... about my mother... I shall send you flying downstairs!”

“What’s the matter with you?” cried Razumihin.

“So that’s how it is?” Luzhin turned pale and bit his lip. “Let me tell you, sir,” he began deliberately, doing his utmost to restrain himself but breathing hard, “at the first moment I saw you you were ill-disposed to me,

but I remained here on purpose to find out more. I could forgive a great deal in a sick man and a connection, but you... never after this...”

“I am not ill,” cried Raskolnikov.

“So much the worse...”

“Go to hell!”

But Luzhin was already leaving without finishing his speech, squeezing between the table and the chair; Razumihin got up this time to let him pass. Without glancing at anyone, and not even nodding to Zossimov, who had for some time been making signs to him to let the sick man alone, he went out, lifting his hat to the level of his shoulders to avoid crushing it as he stooped to go out of the door. And even the curve of his spine was expressive of the horrible insult he had received.

“How could you — how could you!” Razumihin said, shaking his head in perplexity.

“Let me alone — let me alone all of you!” Raskolnikov cried in a frenzy. “Will you ever leave off tormenting me? I am not afraid of you! I am not afraid of anyone, anyone now! Get away from me! I want to be alone, alone, alone!”

“Come along,” said Zossimov, nodding to Razumihin.

“But we can’t leave him like this!”

“Come along,” Zossimov repeated insistently, and he went out. Razumihin thought a minute and ran to overtake him.

“It might be worse not to obey him,” said Zossimov on the stairs. “He mustn’t be irritated.”

“What’s the matter with him?”

“If only he could get some favourable shock, that’s what would do it! At first he was better.... You know he has got something on his mind! Some fixed idea weighing on him.... I am very much afraid so; he must have!”

“Perhaps it’s that gentleman, Pyotr Petrovitch. From his conversation I gather he is going to marry his sister, and that he had received a letter about it just before his illness....”

“Yes, confound the man! he may have upset the case altogether. But have you noticed, he takes no interest in anything, he does not respond to anything except one point on which he seems excited — that’s the murder?”

“Yes, yes,” Razumihin agreed, “I noticed that, too. He is interested, frightened. It gave him a shock on the day he was ill in the police office; he fainted.”

“Tell me more about that this evening and I’ll tell you something afterwards. He interests me very much! In half an hour I’ll go and see him again.... There’ll be no inflammation though.”

“Thanks! And I’ll wait with Pashenka meantime and will keep watch on him through Nastasya....”

Raskolnikov, left alone, looked with impatience and misery at Nastasya, but she still lingered.

“Won’t you have some tea now?” she asked.

“Later! I am sleepy! Leave me.”

He turned abruptly to the wall; Nastasya went out.

CHAPTER VI

But as soon as she went out, he got up, latched the door, undid the parcel which Razumihin had brought in that evening and had tied up again and began dressing. Strange to say, he seemed immediately to have become perfectly calm; not a trace of his recent delirium nor of the panic fear that had haunted him of late. It was the first moment of a strange sudden calm. His movements were precise and definite; a firm purpose was evident in them. “To-day, to-day,” he muttered to himself. He understood that he was still weak, but his intense spiritual concentration gave him strength and self-confidence. He hoped, moreover, that he would not fall down in the street. When he had dressed in entirely new clothes, he looked at the money lying on the table, and after a moment’s thought put it in his pocket. It was twenty-five roubles. He took also all the copper change from the ten roubles spent by Razumihin on the clothes. Then he softly unlatched the door, went out, slipped downstairs and glanced in at the open kitchen door. Nastasya was standing with her back to him, blowing up the landlady’s samovar. She heard nothing. Who would have dreamed of his going out, indeed? A minute later he was in the street.

It was nearly eight o’clock, the sun was setting. It was as stifling as before, but he eagerly drank in the stinking, dusty town air. His head felt rather dizzy; a sort of savage energy gleamed suddenly in his feverish eyes and his wasted, pale and yellow face. He did not know and did not think where he was going, he had one thought only: “that all *this* must be ended to-day, once for all, immediately; that he would not return home without it, because he *would not go on living like that*.” How, with what to make an end? He had not an idea about it, he did not even want to think of it. He drove away thought; thought tortured him. All he knew, all he felt was that everything must be changed “one way or another,” he repeated with desperate and immovable self-confidence and determination.

From old habit he took his usual walk in the direction of the Hay Market. A dark-haired young man with a barrel organ was standing in the road in front of a little general shop and was grinding out a very sentimental song. He was accompanying a girl of fifteen, who stood on the pavement in front of him. She was dressed up in a crinoline, a mantle and a straw hat with a flame-coloured feather in it, all very old and shabby. In a strong and rather

agreeable voice, cracked and coarsened by street singing, she sang in hope of getting a copper from the shop. Raskolnikov joined two or three listeners, took out a five copeck piece and put it in the girl's hand. She broke off abruptly on a sentimental high note, shouted sharply to the organ grinder "Come on," and both moved on to the next shop.

"Do you like street music?" said Raskolnikov, addressing a middle-aged man standing idly by him. The man looked at him, startled and wondering.

"I love to hear singing to a street organ," said Raskolnikov, and his manner seemed strangely out of keeping with the subject— "I like it on cold, dark, damp autumn evenings — they must be damp — when all the passers-by have pale green, sickly faces, or better still when wet snow is falling straight down, when there's no wind — you know what I mean? — and the street lamps shine through it..."

"I don't know.... Excuse me..," muttered the stranger, frightened by the question and Raskolnikov's strange manner, and he crossed over to the other side of the street.

Raskolnikov walked straight on and came out at the corner of the Hay Market, where the huckster and his wife had talked with Lizaveta; but they were not there now. Recognising the place, he stopped, looked round and addressed a young fellow in a red shirt who stood gaping before a corn chandler's shop.

"Isn't there a man who keeps a booth with his wife at this corner?"

"All sorts of people keep booths here," answered the young man, glancing superciliously at Raskolnikov.

"What's his name?"

"What he was christened."

"Aren't you a Zaraïsky man, too? Which province?"

The young man looked at Raskolnikov again.

"It's not a province, your excellency, but a district. Graciously forgive me, your excellency!"

"Is that a tavern at the top there?"

"Yes, it's an eating-house and there's a billiard-room and you'll find princesses there too.... La-la!"

Raskolnikov crossed the square. In that corner there was a dense crowd of peasants. He pushed his way into the thickest part of it, looking at the faces. He felt an unaccountable inclination to enter into conversation with people. But the peasants took no notice of him; they were all shouting in

groups together. He stood and thought a little and took a turning to the right in the direction of V.

He had often crossed that little street which turns at an angle, leading from the market-place to Sadovy Street. Of late he had often felt drawn to wander about this district, when he felt depressed, that he might feel more so.

Now he walked along, thinking of nothing. At that point there is a great block of buildings, entirely let out in dram shops and eating-houses; women were continually running in and out, bare-headed and in their indoor clothes. Here and there they gathered in groups, on the pavement, especially about the entrances to various festive establishments in the lower storeys. From one of these a loud din, sounds of singing, the tinkling of a guitar and shouts of merriment, floated into the street. A crowd of women were thronging round the door; some were sitting on the steps, others on the pavement, others were standing talking. A drunken soldier, smoking a cigarette, was walking near them in the road, swearing; he seemed to be trying to find his way somewhere, but had forgotten where. One beggar was quarrelling with another, and a man dead drunk was lying right across the road. Raskolnikov joined the throng of women, who were talking in husky voices. They were bare-headed and wore cotton dresses and goatskin shoes. There were women of forty and some not more than seventeen; almost all had blackened eyes.

He felt strangely attracted by the singing and all the noise and uproar in the saloon below.... someone could be heard within dancing frantically, marking time with his heels to the sounds of the guitar and of a thin falsetto voice singing a jaunty air. He listened intently, gloomily and dreamily, bending down at the entrance and peeping inquisitively in from the pavement.

“Oh, my handsome soldier Don’t beat me for nothing,”

trilled the thin voice of the singer. Raskolnikov felt a great desire to make out what he was singing, as though everything depended on that.

“Shall I go in?” he thought. “They are laughing. From drink. Shall I get drunk?”

“Won’t you come in?” one of the women asked him. Her voice was still musical and less thick than the others, she was young and not repulsive — the only one of the group.

“Why, she’s pretty,” he said, drawing himself up and looking at her.

She smiled, much pleased at the compliment.

“You’re very nice looking yourself,” she said.

“Isn’t he thin though!” observed another woman in a deep bass. “Have you just come out of a hospital?”

“They’re all generals’ daughters, it seems, but they have all snub noses,” interposed a tipsy peasant with a sly smile on his face, wearing a loose coat. “See how jolly they are.”

“Go along with you!”

“I’ll go, sweetie!”

And he darted down into the saloon below. Raskolnikov moved on.

“I say, sir,” the girl shouted after him.

“What is it?”

She hesitated.

“I’ll always be pleased to spend an hour with you, kind gentleman, but now I feel shy. Give me six copecks for a drink, there’s a nice young man!”

Raskolnikov gave her what came first — fifteen copecks.

“Ah, what a good-natured gentleman!”

“What’s your name?”

“Ask for Duclida.”

“Well, that’s too much,” one of the women observed, shaking her head at Duclida. “I don’t know how you can ask like that. I believe I should drop with shame....”

Raskolnikov looked curiously at the speaker. She was a pock-marked wench of thirty, covered with bruises, with her upper lip swollen. She made her criticism quietly and earnestly. “Where is it,” thought Raskolnikov. “Where is it I’ve read that someone condemned to death says or thinks, an hour before his death, that if he had to live on some high rock, on such a narrow ledge that he’d only room to stand, and the ocean, everlasting darkness, everlasting solitude, everlasting tempest around him, if he had to remain standing on a square yard of space all his life, a thousand years, eternity, it were better to live so than to die at once! Only to live, to live and live! Life, whatever it may be!... How true it is! Good God, how true! Man is a vile creature!... And vile is he who calls him vile for that,” he added a moment later.

He went into another street. “Bah, the Palais de Cristal! Razumihin was just talking of the Palais de Cristal. But what on earth was it I wanted? Yes, the newspapers.... Zossimov said he’d read it in the papers. Have you the

papers?” he asked, going into a very spacious and positively clean restaurant, consisting of several rooms, which were, however, rather empty. Two or three people were drinking tea, and in a room further away were sitting four men drinking champagne. Raskolnikov fancied that Zametov was one of them, but he could not be sure at that distance. “What if it is?” he thought.

“Will you have vodka?” asked the waiter.

“Give me some tea and bring me the papers, the old ones for the last five days, and I’ll give you something.”

“Yes, sir, here’s to-day’s. No vodka?”

The old newspapers and the tea were brought. Raskolnikov sat down and began to look through them.

“Oh, damn... these are the items of intelligence. An accident on a staircase, spontaneous combustion of a shopkeeper from alcohol, a fire in Peski... a fire in the Petersburg quarter... another fire in the Petersburg quarter... and another fire in the Petersburg quarter.... Ah, here it is!” He found at last what he was seeking and began to read it. The lines danced before his eyes, but he read it all and began eagerly seeking later additions in the following numbers. His hands shook with nervous impatience as he turned the sheets. Suddenly someone sat down beside him at his table. He looked up, it was the head clerk Zametov, looking just the same, with the rings on his fingers and the watch-chain, with the curly, black hair, parted and pomaded, with the smart waistcoat, rather shabby coat and doubtful linen. He was in a good humour, at least he was smiling very gaily and good-humouredly. His dark face was rather flushed from the champagne he had drunk.

“What, you here?” he began in surprise, speaking as though he’d known him all his life. “Why, Razumihin told me only yesterday you were unconscious. How strange! And do you know I’ve been to see you?”

Raskolnikov knew he would come up to him. He laid aside the papers and turned to Zametov. There was a smile on his lips, and a new shade of irritable impatience was apparent in that smile.

“I know you have,” he answered. “I’ve heard it. You looked for my sock.... And you know Razumihin has lost his heart to you? He says you’ve been with him to Luise Ivanovna’s — you know, the woman you tried to befriend, for whom you winked to the Explosive Lieutenant and he would

not understand. Do you remember? How could he fail to understand — it was quite clear, wasn't it?"

"What a hot head he is!"

"The explosive one?"

"No, your friend Razumihin."

"You must have a jolly life, Mr. Zametov; entrance free to the most agreeable places. Who's been pouring champagne into you just now?"

"We've just been... having a drink together.... You talk about pouring it into me!"

"By way of a fee! You profit by everything!" Raskolnikov laughed, "it's all right, my dear boy," he added, slapping Zametov on the shoulder. "I am not speaking from temper, but in a friendly way, for sport, as that workman of yours said when he was scuffling with Dmitri, in the case of the old woman...."

"How do you know about it?"

"Perhaps I know more about it than you do."

"How strange you are.... I am sure you are still very unwell. You oughtn't to have come out."

"Oh, do I seem strange to you?"

"Yes. What are you doing, reading the papers?"

"Yes."

"There's a lot about the fires."

"No, I am not reading about the fires." Here he looked mysteriously at Zametov; his lips were twisted again in a mocking smile. "No, I am not reading about the fires," he went on, winking at Zametov. "But confess now, my dear fellow, you're awfully anxious to know what I am reading about?"

"I am not in the least. Mayn't I ask a question? Why do you keep on...?"

"Listen, you are a man of culture and education?"

"I was in the sixth class at the gymnasium," said Zametov with some dignity.

"Sixth class! Ah, my cock-sparrow! With your parting and your rings — you are a gentleman of fortune. Foo! what a charming boy!" Here Raskolnikov broke into a nervous laugh right in Zametov's face. The latter drew back, more amazed than offended.

"Foo! how strange you are!" Zametov repeated very seriously. "I can't help thinking you are still delirious."

“I am delirious? You are fibbing, my cock-sparrow! So I am strange? You find me curious, do you?”

“Yes, curious.”

“Shall I tell you what I was reading about, what I was looking for? See what a lot of papers I’ve made them bring me. Suspicious, eh?”

“Well, what is it?”

“You prick up your ears?”

“How do you mean—’prick up my ears’?”

“I’ll explain that afterwards, but now, my boy, I declare to you... no, better ‘I confess’... No, that’s not right either; ‘I make a deposition and you take it.’ I depose that I was reading, that I was looking and searching...,” he screwed up his eyes and paused. “I was searching — and came here on purpose to do it — for news of the murder of the old pawnbroker woman,” he articulated at last, almost in a whisper, bringing his face exceedingly close to the face of Zametov. Zametov looked at him steadily, without moving or drawing his face away. What struck Zametov afterwards as the strangest part of it all was that silence followed for exactly a minute, and that they gazed at one another all the while.

“What if you have been reading about it?” he cried at last, perplexed and impatient. “That’s no business of mine! What of it?”

“The same old woman,” Raskolnikov went on in the same whisper, not heeding Zametov’s explanation, “about whom you were talking in the police-office, you remember, when I fainted. Well, do you understand now?”

“What do you mean? Understand... what?” Zametov brought out, almost alarmed.

Raskolnikov’s set and earnest face was suddenly transformed, and he suddenly went off into the same nervous laugh as before, as though utterly unable to restrain himself. And in one flash he recalled with extraordinary vividness of sensation a moment in the recent past, that moment when he stood with the axe behind the door, while the latch trembled and the men outside swore and shook it, and he had a sudden desire to shout at them, to swear at them, to put out his tongue at them, to mock them, to laugh, and laugh, and laugh!

“You are either mad, or..,” began Zametov, and he broke off, as though stunned by the idea that had suddenly flashed into his mind.

“Or? Or what? What? Come, tell me!”

“Nothing,” said Zametov, getting angry, “it’s all nonsense!”

Both were silent. After his sudden fit of laughter Raskolnikov became suddenly thoughtful and melancholy. He put his elbow on the table and leaned his head on his hand. He seemed to have completely forgotten Zametov. The silence lasted for some time.

“Why don’t you drink your tea? It’s getting cold,” said Zametov.

“What! Tea? Oh, yes....” Raskolnikov sipped the glass, put a morsel of bread in his mouth and, suddenly looking at Zametov, seemed to remember everything and pulled himself together. At the same moment his face resumed its original mocking expression. He went on drinking tea.

“There have been a great many of these crimes lately,” said Zametov. “Only the other day I read in the *Moscow News* that a whole gang of false coiners had been caught in Moscow. It was a regular society. They used to forge tickets!”

“Oh, but it was a long time ago! I read about it a month ago,” Raskolnikov answered calmly. “So you consider them criminals?” he added, smiling.

“Of course they are criminals.”

“They? They are children, simpletons, not criminals! Why, half a hundred people meeting for such an object — what an idea! Three would be too many, and then they want to have more faith in one another than in themselves! One has only to blab in his cups and it all collapses. Simpletons! They engaged untrustworthy people to change the notes — what a thing to trust to a casual stranger! Well, let us suppose that these simpletons succeed and each makes a million, and what follows for the rest of their lives? Each is dependent on the others for the rest of his life! Better hang oneself at once! And they did not know how to change the notes either; the man who changed the notes took five thousand roubles, and his hands trembled. He counted the first four thousand, but did not count the fifth thousand — he was in such a hurry to get the money into his pocket and run away. Of course he roused suspicion. And the whole thing came to a crash through one fool! Is it possible?”

“That his hands trembled?” observed Zametov, “yes, that’s quite possible. That, I feel quite sure, is possible. Sometimes one can’t stand things.”

“Can’t stand that?”

“Why, could you stand it then? No, I couldn’t. For the sake of a hundred roubles to face such a terrible experience? To go with false notes into a bank where it’s their business to spot that sort of thing! No, I should not have the face to do it. Would you?”

Raskolnikov had an intense desire again “to put his tongue out.” Shivers kept running down his spine.

“I should do it quite differently,” Raskolnikov began. “This is how I would change the notes: I’d count the first thousand three or four times backwards and forwards, looking at every note and then I’d set to the second thousand; I’d count that half-way through and then hold some fifty-rouble note to the light, then turn it, then hold it to the light again — to see whether it was a good one. ‘I am afraid,’ I would say, ‘a relation of mine lost twenty-five roubles the other day through a false note,’ and then I’d tell them the whole story. And after I began counting the third, ‘No, excuse me,’ I would say, ‘I fancy I made a mistake in the seventh hundred in that second thousand, I am not sure.’ And so I would give up the third thousand and go back to the second and so on to the end. And when I had finished, I’d pick out one from the fifth and one from the second thousand and take them again to the light and ask again, ’Change them, please,’ and put the clerk into such a stew that he would not know how to get rid of me. When I’d finished and had gone out, I’d come back, ‘No, excuse me,’ and ask for some explanation. That’s how I’d do it.”

“Foo! what terrible things you say!” said Zametov, laughing. “But all that is only talk. I dare say when it came to deeds you’d make a slip. I believe that even a practised, desperate man cannot always reckon on himself, much less you and I. To take an example near home — that old woman murdered in our district. The murderer seems to have been a desperate fellow, he risked everything in open daylight, was saved by a miracle — but his hands shook, too. He did not succeed in robbing the place, he couldn’t stand it. That was clear from the...”

Raskolnikov seemed offended.

“Clear? Why don’t you catch him then?” he cried, maliciously gibing at Zametov.

“Well, they will catch him.”

“Who? You? Do you suppose you could catch him? You’ve a tough job! A great point for you is whether a man is spending money or not. If he had

no money and suddenly begins spending, he must be the man. So that any child can mislead you.”

“The fact is they always do that, though,” answered Zametov. “A man will commit a clever murder at the risk of his life and then at once he goes drinking in a tavern. They are caught spending money, they are not all as cunning as you are. You wouldn’t go to a tavern, of course?”

Raskolnikov frowned and looked steadily at Zametov.

“You seem to enjoy the subject and would like to know how I should behave in that case, too?” he asked with displeasure.

“I should like to,” Zametov answered firmly and seriously. Somewhat too much earnestness began to appear in his words and looks.

“Very much?”

“Very much!”

“All right then. This is how I should behave,” Raskolnikov began, again bringing his face close to Zametov’s, again staring at him and speaking in a whisper, so that the latter positively shuddered. “This is what I should have done. I should have taken the money and jewels, I should have walked out of there and have gone straight to some deserted place with fences round it and scarcely anyone to be seen, some kitchen garden or place of that sort. I should have looked out beforehand some stone weighing a hundredweight or more which had been lying in the corner from the time the house was built. I would lift that stone — there would sure to be a hollow under it, and I would put the jewels and money in that hole. Then I’d roll the stone back so that it would look as before, would press it down with my foot and walk away. And for a year or two, three maybe, I would not touch it. And, well, they could search! There’d be no trace.”

“You are a madman,” said Zametov, and for some reason he too spoke in a whisper, and moved away from Raskolnikov, whose eyes were glittering. He had turned fearfully pale and his upper lip was twitching and quivering. He bent down as close as possible to Zametov, and his lips began to move without uttering a word. This lasted for half a minute; he knew what he was doing, but could not restrain himself. The terrible word trembled on his lips, like the latch on that door; in another moment it will break out, in another moment he will let it go, he will speak out.

“And what if it was I who murdered the old woman and Lizaveta?” he said suddenly and — realised what he had done.

Zametov looked wildly at him and turned white as the tablecloth. His face wore a contorted smile.

“But is it possible?” he brought out faintly. Raskolnikov looked wrathfully at him.

“Own up that you believed it, yes, you did?”

“Not a bit of it, I believe it less than ever now,” Zametov cried hastily.

“I’ve caught my cock-sparrow! So you did believe it before, if now you believe less than ever?”

“Not at all,” cried Zametov, obviously embarrassed. “Have you been frightening me so as to lead up to this?”

“You don’t believe it then? What were you talking about behind my back when I went out of the police-office? And why did the explosive lieutenant question me after I fainted? Hey, there,” he shouted to the waiter, getting up and taking his cap, “how much?”

“Thirty copecks,” the latter replied, running up.

“And there is twenty copecks for vodka. See what a lot of money!” he held out his shaking hand to Zametov with notes in it. “Red notes and blue, twenty-five roubles. Where did I get them? And where did my new clothes come from? You know I had not a copeck. You’ve cross-examined my landlady, I’ll be bound.... Well, that’s enough! *Assez causé!* Till we meet again!”

He went out, trembling all over from a sort of wild hysterical sensation, in which there was an element of insufferable rapture. Yet he was gloomy and terribly tired. His face was twisted as after a fit. His fatigue increased rapidly. Any shock, any irritating sensation stimulated and revived his energies at once, but his strength failed as quickly when the stimulus was removed.

Zametov, left alone, sat for a long time in the same place, plunged in thought. Raskolnikov had unwittingly worked a revolution in his brain on a certain point and had made up his mind for him conclusively.

“Ilya Petrovitch is a blockhead,” he decided.

Raskolnikov had hardly opened the door of the restaurant when he stumbled against Razumihin on the steps. They did not see each other till they almost knocked against each other. For a moment they stood looking each other up and down. Razumihin was greatly astounded, then anger, real anger gleamed fiercely in his eyes.

“So here you are!” he shouted at the top of his voice— “you ran away from your bed! And here I’ve been looking for you under the sofa! We went up to the garret. I almost beat Nastasya on your account. And here he is after all. Rodya! What is the meaning of it? Tell me the whole truth! Confess! Do you hear?”

“It means that I’m sick to death of you all and I want to be alone,” Raskolnikov answered calmly.

“Alone? When you are not able to walk, when your face is as white as a sheet and you are gasping for breath! Idiot!... What have you been doing in the Palais de Cristal? Own up at once!”

“Let me go!” said Raskolnikov and tried to pass him. This was too much for Razumihin; he gripped him firmly by the shoulder.

“Let you go? You dare tell me to let you go? Do you know what I’ll do with you directly? I’ll pick you up, tie you up in a bundle, carry you home under my arm and lock you up!”

“Listen, Razumihin,” Raskolnikov began quietly, apparently calm— “can’t you see that I don’t want your benevolence? A strange desire you have to shower benefits on a man who... curses them, who feels them a burden in fact! Why did you seek me out at the beginning of my illness? Maybe I was very glad to die. Didn’t I tell you plainly enough to-day that you were torturing me, that I was... sick of you! You seem to want to torture people! I assure you that all that is seriously hindering my recovery, because it’s continually irritating me. You saw Zossimov went away just now to avoid irritating me. You leave me alone too, for goodness’ sake! What right have you, indeed, to keep me by force? Don’t you see that I am in possession of all my faculties now? How, how can I persuade you not to persecute me with your kindness? I may be ungrateful, I may be mean, only let me be, for God’s sake, let me be! Let me be, let me be!”

He began calmly, gloating beforehand over the venomous phrases he was about to utter, but finished, panting for breath, in a frenzy, as he had been with Luzhin.

Razumihin stood a moment, thought and let his hand drop.

“Well, go to hell then,” he said gently and thoughtfully. “Stay,” he roared, as Raskolnikov was about to move. “Listen to me. Let me tell you, that you are all a set of babbling, posing idiots! If you’ve any little trouble you brood over it like a hen over an egg. And you are plagiarists even in that! There isn’t a sign of independent life in you! You are made of

spermaceti ointment and you've lymph in your veins instead of blood. I don't believe in anyone of you! In any circumstances the first thing for all of you is to be unlike a human being! Stop!" he cried with redoubled fury, noticing that Raskolnikov was again making a movement— "hear me out! You know I'm having a house-warming this evening, I dare say they've arrived by now, but I left my uncle there — I just ran in — to receive the guests. And if you weren't a fool, a common fool, a perfect fool, if you were an original instead of a translation... you see, Rodya, I recognise you're a clever fellow, but you're a fool! — and if you weren't a fool you'd come round to me this evening instead of wearing out your boots in the street! Since you have gone out, there's no help for it! I'd give you a snug easy chair, my landlady has one... a cup of tea, company.... Or you could lie on the sofa — any way you would be with us.... Zossimov will be there too. Will you come?"

"No."

"R-rubbish!" Razumihin shouted, out of patience. "How do you know? You can't answer for yourself! You don't know anything about it.... Thousands of times I've fought tooth and nail with people and run back to them afterwards.... One feels ashamed and goes back to a man! So remember, Potchinkov's house on the third storey...."

"Why, Mr. Razumihin, I do believe you'd let anybody beat you from sheer benevolence."

"Beat? Whom? Me? I'd twist his nose off at the mere idea! Potchinkov's house, 47, Babushkin's flat...."

"I shall not come, Razumihin." Raskolnikov turned and walked away.

"I bet you will," Razumihin shouted after him. "I refuse to know you if you don't! Stay, hey, is Zametov in there?"

"Yes."

"Did you see him?"

"Yes."

"Talked to him?"

"Yes."

"What about? Confound you, don't tell me then. Potchinkov's house, 47, Babushkin's flat, remember!"

Raskolnikov walked on and turned the corner into Sadovy Street. Razumihin looked after him thoughtfully. Then with a wave of his hand he went into the house but stopped short of the stairs.

“Confound it,” he went on almost aloud. “He talked sensibly but yet... I am a fool! As if madmen didn’t talk sensibly! And this was just what Zossimov seemed afraid of.” He struck his finger on his forehead. “What if... how could I let him go off alone? He may drown himself.... Ach, what a blunder! I can’t.” And he ran back to overtake Raskolnikov, but there was no trace of him. With a curse he returned with rapid steps to the Palais de Cristal to question Zametov.

Raskolnikov walked straight to X —— Bridge, stood in the middle, and leaning both elbows on the rail stared into the distance. On parting with Razumihin, he felt so much weaker that he could scarcely reach this place. He longed to sit or lie down somewhere in the street. Bending over the water, he gazed mechanically at the last pink flush of the sunset, at the row of houses growing dark in the gathering twilight, at one distant attic window on the left bank, flashing as though on fire in the last rays of the setting sun, at the darkening water of the canal, and the water seemed to catch his attention. At last red circles flashed before his eyes, the houses seemed moving, the passers-by, the canal banks, the carriages, all danced before his eyes. Suddenly he started, saved again perhaps from swooning by an uncanny and hideous sight. He became aware of someone standing on the right side of him; he looked and saw a tall woman with a kerchief on her head, with a long, yellow, wasted face and red sunken eyes. She was looking straight at him, but obviously she saw nothing and recognised no one. Suddenly she leaned her right hand on the parapet, lifted her right leg over the railing, then her left and threw herself into the canal. The filthy water parted and swallowed up its victim for a moment, but an instant later the drowning woman floated to the surface, moving slowly with the current, her head and legs in the water, her skirt inflated like a balloon over her back.

“A woman drowning! A woman drowning!” shouted dozens of voices; people ran up, both banks were thronged with spectators, on the bridge people crowded about Raskolnikov, pressing up behind him.

“Mercy on it! it’s our Afrosinya!” a woman cried tearfully close by. “Mercy! save her! kind people, pull her out!”

“A boat, a boat” was shouted in the crowd. But there was no need of a boat; a policeman ran down the steps to the canal, threw off his great coat and his boots and rushed into the water. It was easy to reach her: she floated within a couple of yards from the steps, he caught hold of her clothes with

his right hand and with his left seized a pole which a comrade held out to him; the drowning woman was pulled out at once. They laid her on the granite pavement of the embankment. She soon recovered consciousness, raised her head, sat up and began sneezing and coughing, stupidly wiping her wet dress with her hands. She said nothing.

“She’s drunk herself out of her senses,” the same woman’s voice wailed at her side. “Out of her senses. The other day she tried to hang herself, we cut her down. I ran out to the shop just now, left my little girl to look after her — and here she’s in trouble again! A neighbour, gentleman, a neighbour, we live close by, the second house from the end, see yonder....”

The crowd broke up. The police still remained round the woman, someone mentioned the police station.... Raskolnikov looked on with a strange sensation of indifference and apathy. He felt disgusted. “No, that’s loathsome... water... it’s not good enough,” he muttered to himself. “Nothing will come of it,” he added, “no use to wait. What about the police office...? And why isn’t Zametov at the police office? The police office is open till ten o’clock....” He turned his back to the railing and looked about him.

“Very well then!” he said resolutely; he moved from the bridge and walked in the direction of the police office. His heart felt hollow and empty. He did not want to think. Even his depression had passed, there was not a trace now of the energy with which he had set out “to make an end of it all.” Complete apathy had succeeded to it.

“Well, it’s a way out of it,” he thought, walking slowly and listlessly along the canal bank. “Anyway I’ll make an end, for I want to.... But is it a way out? What does it matter! There’ll be the square yard of space — ha! But what an end! Is it really the end? Shall I tell them or not? Ah... damn! How tired I am! If I could find somewhere to sit or lie down soon! What I am most ashamed of is its being so stupid. But I don’t care about that either! What idiotic ideas come into one’s head.”

To reach the police office he had to go straight forward and take the second turning to the left. It was only a few paces away. But at the first turning he stopped and, after a minute’s thought, turned into a side street and went two streets out of his way, possibly without any object, or possibly to delay a minute and gain time. He walked, looking at the ground; suddenly someone seemed to whisper in his ear; he lifted his head and saw that he was standing at the very gate of *the* house. He had not passed it, he

had not been near it since *that* evening. An overwhelming, unaccountable prompting drew him on. He went into the house, passed through the gateway, then into the first entrance on the right, and began mounting the familiar staircase to the fourth storey. The narrow, steep staircase was very dark. He stopped at each landing and looked round him with curiosity; on the first landing the framework of the window had been taken out. “That wasn’t so then,” he thought. Here was the flat on the second storey where Nikolay and Dmitri had been working. “It’s shut up and the door newly painted. So it’s to let.” Then the third storey and the fourth. “Here!” He was perplexed to find the door of the flat wide open. There were men there, he could hear voices; he had not expected that. After brief hesitation he mounted the last stairs and went into the flat. It, too, was being done up; there were workmen in it. This seemed to amaze him; he somehow fancied that he would find everything as he left it, even perhaps the corpses in the same places on the floor. And now, bare walls, no furniture; it seemed strange. He walked to the window and sat down on the window-sill. There were two workmen, both young fellows, but one much younger than the other. They were papering the walls with a new white paper covered with lilac flowers, instead of the old, dirty, yellow one. Raskolnikov for some reason felt horribly annoyed by this. He looked at the new paper with dislike, as though he felt sorry to have it all so changed. The workmen had obviously stayed beyond their time and now they were hurriedly rolling up their paper and getting ready to go home. They took no notice of Raskolnikov’s coming in; they were talking. Raskolnikov folded his arms and listened.

“She comes to me in the morning,” said the elder to the younger, “very early, all dressed up. ‘Why are you preening and prinking?’ says I. ‘I am ready to do anything to please you, Tit Vassilitch!’ That’s a way of going on! And she dressed up like a regular fashion book!”

“And what is a fashion book?” the younger one asked. He obviously regarded the other as an authority.

“A fashion book is a lot of pictures, coloured, and they come to the tailors here every Saturday, by post from abroad, to show folks how to dress, the male sex as well as the female. They’re pictures. The gentlemen are generally wearing fur coats and for the ladies’ fluffles, they’re beyond anything you can fancy.”

“There’s nothing you can’t find in Petersburg,” the younger cried enthusiastically, “except father and mother, there’s everything!”

“Except them, there’s everything to be found, my boy,” the elder declared sententiously.

Raskolnikov got up and walked into the other room where the strong box, the bed, and the chest of drawers had been; the room seemed to him very tiny without furniture in it. The paper was the same; the paper in the corner showed where the case of ikons had stood. He looked at it and went to the window. The elder workman looked at him askance.

“What do you want?” he asked suddenly.

Instead of answering Raskolnikov went into the passage and pulled the bell. The same bell, the same cracked note. He rang it a second and a third time; he listened and remembered. The hideous and agonisingly fearful sensation he had felt then began to come back more and more vividly. He shuddered at every ring and it gave him more and more satisfaction.

“Well, what do you want? Who are you?” the workman shouted, going out to him. Raskolnikov went inside again.

“I want to take a flat,” he said. “I am looking round.”

“It’s not the time to look at rooms at night! and you ought to come up with the porter.”

“The floors have been washed, will they be painted?” Raskolnikov went on. “Is there no blood?”

“What blood?”

“Why, the old woman and her sister were murdered here. There was a perfect pool there.”

“But who are you?” the workman cried, uneasy.

“Who am I?”

“Yes.”

“You want to know? Come to the police station, I’ll tell you.”

The workmen looked at him in amazement.

“It’s time for us to go, we are late. Come along, Alyoshka. We must lock up,” said the elder workman.

“Very well, come along,” said Raskolnikov indifferently, and going out first, he went slowly downstairs. “Hey, porter,” he cried in the gateway.

At the entrance several people were standing, staring at the passers-by; the two porters, a peasant woman, a man in a long coat and a few others. Raskolnikov went straight up to them.

“What do you want?” asked one of the porters.

“Have you been to the police office?”

“I’ve just been there. What do you want?”

“Is it open?”

“Of course.”

“Is the assistant there?”

“He was there for a time. What do you want?”

Raskolnikov made no reply, but stood beside them lost in thought.

“He’s been to look at the flat,” said the elder workman, coming forward.

“Which flat?”

“Where we are at work. ‘Why have you washed away the blood?’ says he. ‘There has been a murder here,’ says he, ‘and I’ve come to take it.’ And he began ringing at the bell, all but broke it. ‘Come to the police station,’ says he. ‘I’ll tell you everything there.’ He wouldn’t leave us.”

The porter looked at Raskolnikov, frowning and perplexed.

“Who are you?” he shouted as impressively as he could.

“I am Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov, formerly a student, I live in Shil’s house, not far from here, flat Number 14, ask the porter, he knows me.” Raskolnikov said all this in a lazy, dreamy voice, not turning round, but looking intently into the darkening street.

“Why have you been to the flat?”

“To look at it.”

“What is there to look at?”

“Take him straight to the police station,” the man in the long coat jerked in abruptly.

Raskolnikov looked intently at him over his shoulder and said in the same slow, lazy tones:

“Come along.”

“Yes, take him,” the man went on more confidently. “Why was he going into *that*, what’s in his mind, eh?”

“He’s not drunk, but God knows what’s the matter with him,” muttered the workman.

“But what do you want?” the porter shouted again, beginning to get angry in earnest— “Why are you hanging about?”

“You funk the police station then?” said Raskolnikov jeeringly.

“How funk it? Why are you hanging about?”

“He’s a rogue!” shouted the peasant woman.

“Why waste time talking to him?” cried the other porter, a huge peasant in a full open coat and with keys on his belt. “Get along! He is a rogue and no mistake. Get along!”

And seizing Raskolnikov by the shoulder he flung him into the street. He lurched forward, but recovered his footing, looked at the spectators in silence and walked away.

“Strange man!” observed the workman.

“There are strange folks about nowadays,” said the woman.

“You should have taken him to the police station all the same,” said the man in the long coat.

“Better have nothing to do with him,” decided the big porter. “A regular rogue! Just what he wants, you may be sure, but once take him up, you won’t get rid of him.... We know the sort!”

“Shall I go there or not?” thought Raskolnikov, standing in the middle of the thoroughfare at the cross-roads, and he looked about him, as though expecting from someone a decisive word. But no sound came, all was dead and silent like the stones on which he walked, dead to him, to him alone.... All at once at the end of the street, two hundred yards away, in the gathering dusk he saw a crowd and heard talk and shouts. In the middle of the crowd stood a carriage.... A light gleamed in the middle of the street. “What is it?” Raskolnikov turned to the right and went up to the crowd. He seemed to clutch at everything and smiled coldly when he recognised it, for he had fully made up his mind to go to the police station and knew that it would all soon be over.

CHAPTER VII

An elegant carriage stood in the middle of the road with a pair of spirited grey horses; there was no one in it, and the coachman had got off his box and stood by; the horses were being held by the bridle.... A mass of people had gathered round, the police standing in front. One of them held a lighted lantern which he was turning on something lying close to the wheels. Everyone was talking, shouting, exclaiming; the coachman seemed at a loss and kept repeating:

“What a misfortune! Good Lord, what a misfortune!”

Raskolnikov pushed his way in as far as he could, and succeeded at last in seeing the object of the commotion and interest. On the ground a man who had been run over lay apparently unconscious, and covered with blood; he was very badly dressed, but not like a workman. Blood was flowing from his head and face; his face was crushed, mutilated and disfigured. He was evidently badly injured.

“Merciful heaven!” wailed the coachman, “what more could I do? If I’d been driving fast or had not shouted to him, but I was going quietly, not in a hurry. Everyone could see I was going along just like everybody else. A drunken man can’t walk straight, we all know.... I saw him crossing the street, staggering and almost falling. I shouted again and a second and a third time, then I held the horses in, but he fell straight under their feet! Either he did it on purpose or he was very tipsy.... The horses are young and ready to take fright... they started, he screamed... that made them worse. That’s how it happened!”

“That’s just how it was,” a voice in the crowd confirmed.

“He shouted, that’s true, he shouted three times,” another voice declared.

“Three times it was, we all heard it,” shouted a third.

But the coachman was not very much distressed and frightened. It was evident that the carriage belonged to a rich and important person who was awaiting it somewhere; the police, of course, were in no little anxiety to avoid upsetting his arrangements. All they had to do was to take the injured man to the police station and the hospital. No one knew his name.

Meanwhile Raskolnikov had squeezed in and stooped closer over him. The lantern suddenly lighted up the unfortunate man’s face. He recognised him.

“I know him! I know him!” he shouted, pushing to the front. “It’s a government clerk retired from the service, Marmeladov. He lives close by in Kozel’s house.... Make haste for a doctor! I will pay, see?” He pulled money out of his pocket and showed it to the policeman. He was in violent agitation.

The police were glad that they had found out who the man was. Raskolnikov gave his own name and address, and, as earnestly as if it had been his father, he besought the police to carry the unconscious Marmeladov to his lodging at once.

“Just here, three houses away,” he said eagerly, “the house belongs to Kozel, a rich German. He was going home, no doubt drunk. I know him, he is a drunkard. He has a family there, a wife, children, he has one daughter.... It will take time to take him to the hospital, and there is sure to be a doctor in the house. I’ll pay, I’ll pay! At least he will be looked after at home... they will help him at once. But he’ll die before you get him to the hospital.” He managed to slip something unseen into the policeman’s hand. But the thing was straightforward and legitimate, and in any case help was closer here. They raised the injured man; people volunteered to help.

Kozel’s house was thirty yards away. Raskolnikov walked behind, carefully holding Marmeladov’s head and showing the way.

“This way, this way! We must take him upstairs head foremost. Turn round! I’ll pay, I’ll make it worth your while,” he muttered.

Katerina Ivanovna had just begun, as she always did at every free moment, walking to and fro in her little room from window to stove and back again, with her arms folded across her chest, talking to herself and coughing. Of late she had begun to talk more than ever to her eldest girl, Polenka, a child of ten, who, though there was much she did not understand, understood very well that her mother needed her, and so always watched her with her big clever eyes and strove her utmost to appear to understand. This time Polenka was undressing her little brother, who had been unwell all day and was going to bed. The boy was waiting for her to take off his shirt, which had to be washed at night. He was sitting straight and motionless on a chair, with a silent, serious face, with his legs stretched out straight before him — heels together and toes turned out.

He was listening to what his mother was saying to his sister, sitting perfectly still with pouting lips and wide-open eyes, just as all good little boys have to sit when they are undressed to go to bed. A little girl, still

younger, dressed literally in rags, stood at the screen, waiting for her turn. The door on to the stairs was open to relieve them a little from the clouds of tobacco smoke which floated in from the other rooms and brought on long terrible fits of coughing in the poor, consumptive woman. Katerina Ivanovna seemed to have grown even thinner during that week and the hectic flush on her face was brighter than ever.

“You wouldn’t believe, you can’t imagine, Polenka,” she said, walking about the room, “what a happy luxurious life we had in my papa’s house and how this drunkard has brought me, and will bring you all, to ruin! Papa was a civil colonel and only a step from being a governor; so that everyone who came to see him said, ‘We look upon you, Ivan Mihailovitch, as our governor!’ When I... when..,” she coughed violently, “oh, cursed life,” she cried, clearing her throat and pressing her hands to her breast, “when I... when at the last ball... at the marshal’s... Princess Bezzemelny saw me — who gave me the blessing when your father and I were married, Polenka — she asked at once ‘Isn’t that the pretty girl who danced the shawl dance at the breaking-up?’ (You must mend that tear, you must take your needle and darn it as I showed you, or to-morrow — cough, cough, cough — he will make the hole bigger,” she articulated with effort.) “Prince Schegolskoy, a kammerjunker, had just come from Petersburg then... he danced the mazurka with me and wanted to make me an offer next day; but I thanked him in flattering expressions and told him that my heart had long been another’s. That other was your father, Polya; papa was fearfully angry.... Is the water ready? Give me the shirt, and the stockings! Lida,” said she to the youngest one, “you must manage without your chemise to-night... and lay your stockings out with it... I’ll wash them together.... How is it that drunken vagabond doesn’t come in? He has worn his shirt till it looks like a dish-clout, he has torn it to rags! I’d do it all together, so as not to have to work two nights running! Oh, dear! (Cough, cough, cough, cough!) Again! What’s this?” she cried, noticing a crowd in the passage and the men, who were pushing into her room, carrying a burden. “What is it? What are they bringing? Mercy on us!”

“Where are we to put him?” asked the policeman, looking round when Marmeladov, unconscious and covered with blood, had been carried in.

“On the sofa! Put him straight on the sofa, with his head this way,” Raskolnikov showed him.

“Run over in the road! Drunk!” someone shouted in the passage.

Katerina Ivanovna stood, turning white and gasping for breath. The children were terrified. Little Lida screamed, rushed to Polenka and clutched at her, trembling all over.

Having laid Marmeladov down, Raskolnikov flew to Katerina Ivanovna.

“For God’s sake be calm, don’t be frightened!” he said, speaking quickly, “he was crossing the road and was run over by a carriage, don’t be frightened, he will come to, I told them bring him here... I’ve been here already, you remember? He will come to; I’ll pay!”

“He’s done it this time!” Katerina Ivanovna cried despairingly and she rushed to her husband.

Raskolnikov noticed at once that she was not one of those women who swoon easily. She instantly placed under the luckless man’s head a pillow, which no one had thought of and began undressing and examining him. She kept her head, forgetting herself, biting her trembling lips and stifling the screams which were ready to break from her.

Raskolnikov meanwhile induced someone to run for a doctor. There was a doctor, it appeared, next door but one.

“I’ve sent for a doctor,” he kept assuring Katerina Ivanovna, “don’t be uneasy, I’ll pay. Haven’t you water?... and give me a napkin or a towel, anything, as quick as you can.... He is injured, but not killed, believe me.... We shall see what the doctor says!”

Katerina Ivanovna ran to the window; there, on a broken chair in the corner, a large earthenware basin full of water had been stood, in readiness for washing her children’s and husband’s linen that night. This washing was done by Katerina Ivanovna at night at least twice a week, if not oftener. For the family had come to such a pass that they were practically without change of linen, and Katerina Ivanovna could not endure uncleanliness and, rather than see dirt in the house, she preferred to wear herself out at night, working beyond her strength when the rest were asleep, so as to get the wet linen hung on a line and dry by the morning. She took up the basin of water at Raskolnikov’s request, but almost fell down with her burden. But the latter had already succeeded in finding a towel, wetted it and began washing the blood off Marmeladov’s face.

Katerina Ivanovna stood by, breathing painfully and pressing her hands to her breast. She was in need of attention herself. Raskolnikov began to realise that he might have made a mistake in having the injured man brought here. The policeman, too, stood in hesitation.

“Polenka,” cried Katerina Ivanovna, “run to Sonia, make haste. If you don’t find her at home, leave word that her father has been run over and that she is to come here at once... when she comes in. Run, Polenka! there, put on the shawl.”

“Run your fastest!” cried the little boy on the chair suddenly, after which he relapsed into the same dumb rigidity, with round eyes, his heels thrust forward and his toes spread out.

Meanwhile the room had become so full of people that you couldn’t have dropped a pin. The policemen left, all except one, who remained for a time, trying to drive out the people who came in from the stairs. Almost all Madame Lippevechsel’s lodgers had streamed in from the inner rooms of the flat; at first they were squeezed together in the doorway, but afterwards they overflowed into the room. Katerina Ivanovna flew into a fury.

“You might let him die in peace, at least,” she shouted at the crowd, “is it a spectacle for you to gape at? With cigarettes! (Cough, cough, cough!) You might as well keep your hats on.... And there is one in his hat!... Get away! You should respect the dead, at least!”

Her cough choked her — but her reproaches were not without result. They evidently stood in some awe of Katerina Ivanovna. The lodgers, one after another, squeezed back into the doorway with that strange inner feeling of satisfaction which may be observed in the presence of a sudden accident, even in those nearest and dearest to the victim, from which no living man is exempt, even in spite of the sincerest sympathy and compassion.

Voices outside were heard, however, speaking of the hospital and saying that they’d no business to make a disturbance here.

“No business to die!” cried Katerina Ivanovna, and she was rushing to the door to vent her wrath upon them, but in the doorway came face to face with Madame Lippevechsel who had only just heard of the accident and ran in to restore order. She was a particularly quarrelsome and irresponsible German.

“Ah, my God!” she cried, clasping her hands, “your husband drunken horses have trampled! To the hospital with him! I am the landlady!”

“Amalia Ludwigovna, I beg you to recollect what you are saying,” Katerina Ivanovna began haughtily (she always took a haughty tone with the landlady that she might “remember her place” and even now could not deny herself this satisfaction). “Amalia Ludwigovna...”

“I have you once before told that you to call me Amalia Ludwigovna may not dare; I am Amalia Ivanovna.”

“You are not Amalia Ivanovna, but Amalia Ludwigovna, and as I am not one of your despicable flatterers like Mr. Lebeziatnikov, who’s laughing behind the door at this moment (a laugh and a cry of ‘they are at it again’ was in fact audible at the door) so I shall always call you Amalia Ludwigovna, though I fail to understand why you dislike that name. You can see for yourself what has happened to Semyon Zaharovitch; he is dying. I beg you to close that door at once and to admit no one. Let him at least die in peace! Or I warn you the Governor-General, himself, shall be informed of your conduct to-morrow. The prince knew me as a girl; he remembers Semyon Zaharovitch well and has often been a benefactor to him. Everyone knows that Semyon Zaharovitch had many friends and protectors, whom he abandoned himself from an honourable pride, knowing his unhappy weakness, but now (she pointed to Raskolnikov) a generous young man has come to our assistance, who has wealth and connections and whom Semyon Zaharovitch has known from a child. You may rest assured, Amalia Ludwigovna...”

All this was uttered with extreme rapidity, getting quicker and quicker, but a cough suddenly cut short Katerina Ivanovna’s eloquence. At that instant the dying man recovered consciousness and uttered a groan; she ran to him. The injured man opened his eyes and without recognition or understanding gazed at Raskolnikov who was bending over him. He drew deep, slow, painful breaths; blood oozed at the corners of his mouth and drops of perspiration came out on his forehead. Not recognising Raskolnikov, he began looking round uneasily. Katerina Ivanovna looked at him with a sad but stern face, and tears trickled from her eyes.

“My God! His whole chest is crushed! How he is bleeding,” she said in despair. “We must take off his clothes. Turn a little, Semyon Zaharovitch, if you can,” she cried to him.

Marmeladov recognised her.

“A priest,” he articulated huskily.

Katerina Ivanovna walked to the window, laid her head against the window frame and exclaimed in despair:

“Oh, cursed life!”

“A priest,” the dying man said again after a moment’s silence.

“They’ve gone for him,” Katerina Ivanovna shouted to him, he obeyed her shout and was silent. With sad and timid eyes he looked for her; she returned and stood by his pillow. He seemed a little easier but not for long.

Soon his eyes rested on little Lida, his favourite, who was shaking in the corner, as though she were in a fit, and staring at him with her wondering childish eyes.

“A-ah,” he signed towards her uneasily. He wanted to say something.

“What now?” cried Katerina Ivanovna.

“Barefoot, barefoot!” he muttered, indicating with frenzied eyes the child’s bare feet.

“Be silent,” Katerina Ivanovna cried irritably, “you know why she is barefooted.”

“Thank God, the doctor,” exclaimed Raskolnikov, relieved.

The doctor came in, a precise little old man, a German, looking about him mistrustfully; he went up to the sick man, took his pulse, carefully felt his head and with the help of Katerina Ivanovna he unbuttoned the blood-stained shirt, and bared the injured man’s chest. It was gashed, crushed and fractured, several ribs on the right side were broken. On the left side, just over the heart, was a large, sinister-looking yellowish-black bruise — a cruel kick from the horse’s hoof. The doctor frowned. The policeman told him that he was caught in the wheel and turned round with it for thirty yards on the road.

“It’s wonderful that he has recovered consciousness,” the doctor whispered softly to Raskolnikov.

“What do you think of him?” he asked.

“He will die immediately.”

“Is there really no hope?”

“Not the faintest! He is at the last gasp.... His head is badly injured, too... Hm... I could bleed him if you like, but... it would be useless. He is bound to die within the next five or ten minutes.”

“Better bleed him then.”

“If you like.... But I warn you it will be perfectly useless.”

At that moment other steps were heard; the crowd in the passage parted, and the priest, a little, grey old man, appeared in the doorway bearing the sacrament. A policeman had gone for him at the time of the accident. The doctor changed places with him, exchanging glances with him. Raskolnikov

begged the doctor to remain a little while. He shrugged his shoulders and remained.

All stepped back. The confession was soon over. The dying man probably understood little; he could only utter indistinct broken sounds. Katerina Ivanovna took little Lida, lifted the boy from the chair, knelt down in the corner by the stove and made the children kneel in front of her. The little girl was still trembling; but the boy, kneeling on his little bare knees, lifted his hand rhythmically, crossing himself with precision and bowed down, touching the floor with his forehead, which seemed to afford him especial satisfaction. Katerina Ivanovna bit her lips and held back her tears; she prayed, too, now and then pulling straight the boy's shirt, and managed to cover the girl's bare shoulders with a kerchief, which she took from the chest without rising from her knees or ceasing to pray. Meanwhile the door from the inner rooms was opened inquisitively again. In the passage the crowd of spectators from all the flats on the staircase grew denser and denser, but they did not venture beyond the threshold. A single candle-end lighted up the scene.

At that moment Polenka forced her way through the crowd at the door. She came in panting from running so fast, took off her kerchief, looked for her mother, went up to her and said, "She's coming, I met her in the street." Her mother made her kneel beside her.

Timidly and noiselessly a young girl made her way through the crowd, and strange was her appearance in that room, in the midst of want, rags, death and despair. She, too, was in rags, her attire was all of the cheapest, but decked out in gutter finery of a special stamp, unmistakably betraying its shameful purpose. Sonia stopped short in the doorway and looked about her bewildered, unconscious of everything. She forgot her fourth-hand, gaudy silk dress, so unseemly here with its ridiculous long train, and her immense crinoline that filled up the whole doorway, and her light-coloured shoes, and the parasol she brought with her, though it was no use at night, and the absurd round straw hat with its flaring flame-coloured feather. Under this rakishly-tilted hat was a pale, frightened little face with lips parted and eyes staring in terror. Sonia was a small thin girl of eighteen with fair hair, rather pretty, with wonderful blue eyes. She looked intently at the bed and the priest; she too was out of breath with running. At last whispers, some words in the crowd probably, reached her. She looked down and took a step forward into the room, still keeping close to the door.

The service was over. Katerina Ivanovna went up to her husband again. The priest stepped back and turned to say a few words of admonition and consolation to Katerina Ivanovna on leaving.

“What am I to do with these?” she interrupted sharply and irritably, pointing to the little ones.

“God is merciful; look to the Most High for succour,” the priest began.

“Ach! He is merciful, but not to us.”

“That’s a sin, a sin, madam,” observed the priest, shaking his head.

“And isn’t that a sin?” cried Katerina Ivanovna, pointing to the dying man.

“Perhaps those who have involuntarily caused the accident will agree to compensate you, at least for the loss of his earnings.”

“You don’t understand!” cried Katerina Ivanovna angrily waving her hand. “And why should they compensate me? Why, he was drunk and threw himself under the horses! What earnings? He brought us in nothing but misery. He drank everything away, the drunkard! He robbed us to get drink, he wasted their lives and mine for drink! And thank God he’s dying! One less to keep!”

“You must forgive in the hour of death, that’s a sin, madam, such feelings are a great sin.”

Katerina Ivanovna was busy with the dying man; she was giving him water, wiping the blood and sweat from his head, setting his pillow straight, and had only turned now and then for a moment to address the priest. Now she flew at him almost in a frenzy.

“Ah, father! That’s words and only words! Forgive! If he’d not been run over, he’d have come home to-day drunk and his only shirt dirty and in rags and he’d have fallen asleep like a log, and I should have been sousing and rinsing till daybreak, washing his rags and the children’s and then drying them by the window and as soon as it was daylight I should have been darning them. That’s how I spend my nights!... What’s the use of talking of forgiveness! I have forgiven as it is!”

A terrible hollow cough interrupted her words. She put her handkerchief to her lips and showed it to the priest, pressing her other hand to her aching chest. The handkerchief was covered with blood. The priest bowed his head and said nothing.

Marmeladov was in the last agony; he did not take his eyes off the face of Katerina Ivanovna, who was bending over him again. He kept trying to

say something to her; he began moving his tongue with difficulty and articulating indistinctly, but Katerina Ivanovna, understanding that he wanted to ask her forgiveness, called peremptorily to him:

“Be silent! No need! I know what you want to say!” And the sick man was silent, but at the same instant his wandering eyes strayed to the doorway and he saw Sonia.

Till then he had not noticed her: she was standing in the shadow in a corner.

“Who’s that? Who’s that?” he said suddenly in a thick gasping voice, in agitation, turning his eyes in horror towards the door where his daughter was standing, and trying to sit up.

“Lie down! Lie do-own!” cried Katerina Ivanovna.

With unnatural strength he had succeeded in propping himself on his elbow. He looked wildly and fixedly for some time on his daughter, as though not recognising her. He had never seen her before in such attire. Suddenly he recognised her, crushed and ashamed in her humiliation and gaudy finery, meekly awaiting her turn to say good-bye to her dying father. His face showed intense suffering.

“Sonia! Daughter! Forgive!” he cried, and he tried to hold out his hand to her, but losing his balance, he fell off the sofa, face downwards on the floor. They rushed to pick him up, they put him on the sofa; but he was dying. Sonia with a faint cry ran up, embraced him and remained so without moving. He died in her arms.

“He’s got what he wanted,” Katerina Ivanovna cried, seeing her husband’s dead body. “Well, what’s to be done now? How am I to bury him! What can I give them to-morrow to eat?”

Raskolnikov went up to Katerina Ivanovna.

“Katerina Ivanovna,” he began, “last week your husband told me all his life and circumstances.... Believe me, he spoke of you with passionate reverence. From that evening, when I learnt how devoted he was to you all and how he loved and respected you especially, Katerina Ivanovna, in spite of his unfortunate weakness, from that evening we became friends.... Allow me now... to do something... to repay my debt to my dead friend. Here are twenty roubles, I think — and if that can be of any assistance to you, then... I... in short, I will come again, I will be sure to come again... I shall, perhaps, come again to-morrow.... Good-bye!”

And he went quickly out of the room, squeezing his way through the crowd to the stairs. But in the crowd he suddenly jostled against Nikodim Fomitch, who had heard of the accident and had come to give instructions in person. They had not met since the scene at the police station, but Nikodim Fomitch knew him instantly.

“Ah, is that you?” he asked him.

“He’s dead,” answered Raskolnikov. “The doctor and the priest have been, all as it should have been. Don’t worry the poor woman too much, she is in consumption as it is. Try and cheer her up, if possible... you are a kind-hearted man, I know..,” he added with a smile, looking straight in his face.

“But you are spattered with blood,” observed Nikodim Fomitch, noticing in the lamplight some fresh stains on Raskolnikov’s waistcoat.

“Yes... I’m covered with blood,” Raskolnikov said with a peculiar air; then he smiled, nodded and went downstairs.

He walked down slowly and deliberately, feverish but not conscious of it, entirely absorbed in a new overwhelming sensation of life and strength that surged up suddenly within him. This sensation might be compared to that of a man condemned to death who has suddenly been pardoned. Halfway down the staircase he was overtaken by the priest on his way home; Raskolnikov let him pass, exchanging a silent greeting with him. He was just descending the last steps when he heard rapid footsteps behind him. Someone overtook him; it was Polenka. She was running after him, calling “Wait! wait!”

He turned round. She was at the bottom of the staircase and stopped short a step above him. A dim light came in from the yard. Raskolnikov could distinguish the child’s thin but pretty little face, looking at him with a bright childish smile. She had run after him with a message which she was evidently glad to give.

“Tell me, what is your name?... and where do you live?” she said hurriedly in a breathless voice.

He laid both hands on her shoulders and looked at her with a sort of rapture. It was such a joy to him to look at her, he could not have said why.

“Who sent you?”

“Sister Sonia sent me,” answered the girl, smiling still more brightly.

“I knew it was sister Sonia sent you.”

“Mamma sent me, too... when sister Sonia was sending me, mamma came up, too, and said ‘Run fast, Polenka.’”

“Do you love sister Sonia?”

“I love her more than anyone,” Polenka answered with a peculiar earnestness, and her smile became graver.

“And will you love me?”

By way of answer he saw the little girl’s face approaching him, her full lips naïvely held out to kiss him. Suddenly her arms as thin as sticks held him tightly, her head rested on his shoulder and the little girl wept softly, pressing her face against him.

“I am sorry for father,” she said a moment later, raising her tear-stained face and brushing away the tears with her hands. “It’s nothing but misfortunes now,” she added suddenly with that peculiarly sedate air which children try hard to assume when they want to speak like grown-up people.

“Did your father love you?”

“He loved Lida most,” she went on very seriously without a smile, exactly like grown-up people, “he loved her because she is little and because she is ill, too. And he always used to bring her presents. But he taught us to read and me grammar and scripture, too,” she added with dignity. “And mother never used to say anything, but we knew that she liked it and father knew it, too. And mother wants to teach me French, for it’s time my education began.”

“And do you know your prayers?”

“Of course, we do! We knew them long ago. I say my prayers to myself as I am a big girl now, but Kolya and Lida say them aloud with mother. First they repeat the ‘Ave Maria’ and then another prayer: ‘Lord, forgive and bless sister Sonia,’ and then another, ‘Lord, forgive and bless our second father.’ For our elder father is dead and this is another one, but we do pray for the other as well.”

“Polenka, my name is Rodion. Pray sometimes for me, too. ‘And Thy servant Rodion,’ nothing more.”

“I’ll pray for you all the rest of my life,” the little girl declared hotly, and suddenly smiling again she rushed at him and hugged him warmly once more.

Raskolnikov told her his name and address and promised to be sure to come next day. The child went away quite enchanted with him. It was past ten when he came out into the street. In five minutes he was standing on the bridge at the spot where the woman had jumped in.

“Enough,” he pronounced resolutely and triumphantly. “I’ve done with fancies, imaginary terrors and phantoms! Life is real! haven’t I lived just now? My life has not yet died with that old woman! The Kingdom of Heaven to her — and now enough, madam, leave me in peace! Now for the reign of reason and light... and of will, and of strength... and now we will see! We will try our strength!” he added defiantly, as though challenging some power of darkness. “And I was ready to consent to live in a square of space!

“I am very weak at this moment, but... I believe my illness is all over. I knew it would be over when I went out. By the way, Potchinkov’s house is only a few steps away. I certainly must go to Razumihin even if it were not close by... let him win his bet! Let us give him some satisfaction, too — no matter! Strength, strength is what one wants, you can get nothing without it, and strength must be won by strength — that’s what they don’t know,” he added proudly and self-confidently and he walked with flagging footsteps from the bridge. Pride and self-confidence grew continually stronger in him; he was becoming a different man every moment. What was it had happened to work this revolution in him? He did not know himself; like a man catching at a straw, he suddenly felt that he, too, ‘could live, that there was still life for him, that his life had not died with the old woman.’ Perhaps he was in too great a hurry with his conclusions, but he did not think of that.

“But I did ask her to remember ‘Thy servant Rodion’ in her prayers,” the idea struck him. “Well, that was... in case of emergency,” he added and laughed himself at his boyish sally. He was in the best of spirits.

He easily found Razumihin; the new lodger was already known at Potchinkov’s and the porter at once showed him the way. Half-way upstairs he could hear the noise and animated conversation of a big gathering of people. The door was wide open on the stairs; he could hear exclamations and discussion. Razumihin’s room was fairly large; the company consisted of fifteen people. Raskolnikov stopped in the entry, where two of the landlady’s servants were busy behind a screen with two samovars, bottles, plates and dishes of pie and savouries, brought up from the landlady’s kitchen. Raskolnikov sent in for Razumihin. He ran out delighted. At the first glance it was apparent that he had had a great deal to drink and, though no amount of liquor made Razumihin quite drunk, this time he was perceptibly affected by it.

“Listen,” Raskolnikov hastened to say, “I’ve only just come to tell you you’ve won your bet and that no one really knows what may not happen to him. I can’t come in; I am so weak that I shall fall down directly. And so good evening and good-bye! Come and see me to-morrow.”

“Do you know what? I’ll see you home. If you say you’re weak yourself, you must...”

“And your visitors? Who is the curly-headed one who has just peeped out?”

“He? Goodness only knows! Some friend of uncle’s, I expect, or perhaps he has come without being invited... I’ll leave uncle with them, he is an invaluable person, pity I can’t introduce you to him now. But confound them all now! They won’t notice me, and I need a little fresh air, for you’ve come just in the nick of time — another two minutes and I should have come to blows! They are talking such a lot of wild stuff... you simply can’t imagine what men will say! Though why shouldn’t you imagine? Don’t we talk nonsense ourselves? And let them... that’s the way to learn not to!... Wait a minute, I’ll fetch Zossimov.”

Zossimov pounced upon Raskolnikov almost greedily; he showed a special interest in him; soon his face brightened.

“You must go to bed at once,” he pronounced, examining the patient as far as he could, “and take something for the night. Will you take it? I got it ready some time ago... a powder.”

“Two, if you like,” answered Raskolnikov. The powder was taken at once.

“It’s a good thing you are taking him home,” observed Zossimov to Razumihin— “we shall see how he is to-morrow, to-day he’s not at all amiss — a considerable change since the afternoon. Live and learn...”

“Do you know what Zossimov whispered to me when we were coming out?” Razumihin blurted out, as soon as they were in the street. “I won’t tell you everything, brother, because they are such fools. Zossimov told me to talk freely to you on the way and get you to talk freely to me, and afterwards I am to tell him about it, for he’s got a notion in his head that you are... mad or close on it. Only fancy! In the first place, you’ve three times the brains he has; in the second, if you are not mad, you needn’t care a hang that he has got such a wild idea; and thirdly, that piece of beef whose specialty is surgery has gone mad on mental diseases, and what’s brought

him to this conclusion about you was your conversation to-day with Zametov.”

“Zametov told you all about it?”

“Yes, and he did well. Now I understand what it all means and so does Zametov.... Well, the fact is, Rodya... the point is... I am a little drunk now.... But that’s... no matter... the point is that this idea... you understand? was just being hatched in their brains... you understand? That is, no one ventured to say it aloud, because the idea is too absurd and especially since the arrest of that painter, that bubble’s burst and gone for ever. But why are they such fools? I gave Zametov a bit of a thrashing at the time — that’s between ourselves, brother; please don’t let out a hint that you know of it; I’ve noticed he is a ticklish subject; it was at Luise Ivanovna’s. But to-day, to-day it’s all cleared up. That Ilya Petrovitch is at the bottom of it! He took advantage of your fainting at the police station, but he is ashamed of it himself now; I know that...”

Raskolnikov listened greedily. Razumihin was drunk enough to talk too freely.

“I fainted then because it was so close and the smell of paint,” said Raskolnikov.

“No need to explain that! And it wasn’t the paint only: the fever had been coming on for a month; Zossimov testifies to that! But how crushed that boy is now, you wouldn’t believe! ‘I am not worth his little finger,’ he says. Yours, he means. He has good feelings at times, brother. But the lesson, the lesson you gave him to-day in the Palais de Cristal, that was too good for anything! You frightened him at first, you know, he nearly went into convulsions! You almost convinced him again of the truth of all that hideous nonsense, and then you suddenly — put out your tongue at him: ‘There now, what do you make of it?’ It was perfect! He is crushed, annihilated now! It was masterly, by Jove, it’s what they deserve! Ah, that I wasn’t there! He was hoping to see you awfully. Porfiry, too, wants to make your acquaintance...”

“Ah!... he too... but why did they put me down as mad?”

“Oh, not mad. I must have said too much, brother.... What struck him, you see, was that only that subject seemed to interest you; now it’s clear why it did interest you; knowing all the circumstances... and how that irritated you and worked in with your illness... I am a little drunk, brother,

only, confound him, he has some idea of his own... I tell you, he’s mad on mental diseases. But don’t you mind him...”

For half a minute both were silent.

“Listen, Razumihin,” began Raskolnikov, “I want to tell you plainly: I’ve just been at a death-bed, a clerk who died... I gave them all my money... and besides I’ve just been kissed by someone who, if I had killed anyone, would just the same... in fact I saw someone else there... with a flame-coloured feather... but I am talking nonsense; I am very weak, support me... we shall be at the stairs directly...”

“What’s the matter? What’s the matter with you?” Razumihin asked anxiously.

“I am a little giddy, but that’s not the point, I am so sad, so sad... like a woman. Look, what’s that? Look, look!”

“What is it?”

“Don’t you see? A light in my room, you see? Through the crack...”

They were already at the foot of the last flight of stairs, at the level of the landlady’s door, and they could, as a fact, see from below that there was a light in Raskolnikov’s garret.

“Queer! Nastasya, perhaps,” observed Razumihin.

“She is never in my room at this time and she must be in bed long ago, but... I don’t care! Good-bye!”

“What do you mean? I am coming with you, we’ll come in together!”

“I know we are going in together, but I want to shake hands here and say good-bye to you here. So give me your hand, good-bye!”

“What’s the matter with you, Rodya?”

“Nothing... come along... you shall be witness.”

They began mounting the stairs, and the idea struck Razumihin that perhaps Zossimov might be right after all. “Ah, I’ve upset him with my chatter!” he muttered to himself.

When they reached the door they heard voices in the room.

“What is it?” cried Razumihin. Raskolnikov was the first to open the door; he flung it wide and stood still in the doorway, dumbfoundered.

His mother and sister were sitting on his sofa and had been waiting an hour and a half for him. Why had he never expected, never thought of them, though the news that they had started, were on their way and would arrive immediately, had been repeated to him only that day? They had spent that hour and a half plying Nastasya with questions. She was standing before

them and had told them everything by now. They were beside themselves with alarm when they heard of his “running away” to-day, ill and, as they understood from her story, delirious! “Good Heavens, what had become of him?” Both had been weeping, both had been in anguish for that hour and a half.

A cry of joy, of ecstasy, greeted Raskolnikov’s entrance. Both rushed to him. But he stood like one dead; a sudden intolerable sensation struck him like a thunderbolt. He did not lift his arms to embrace them, he could not. His mother and sister clasped him in their arms, kissed him, laughed and cried. He took a step, tottered and fell to the ground, fainting.

Anxiety, cries of horror, moans... Razumihin who was standing in the doorway flew into the room, seized the sick man in his strong arms and in a moment had him on the sofa.

“It’s nothing, nothing!” he cried to the mother and sister— “it’s only a faint, a mere trifle! Only just now the doctor said he was much better, that he is perfectly well! Water! See, he is coming to himself, he is all right again!”

And seizing Dounia by the arm so that he almost dislocated it, he made her bend down to see that “he is all right again.” The mother and sister looked on him with emotion and gratitude, as their Providence. They had heard already from Nastasya all that had been done for their Rodya during his illness, by this “very competent young man,” as Pulcheria Alexandrovna Raskolnikov called him that evening in conversation with Dounia.

PART III

CHAPTER I

Raskolnikov got up, and sat down on the sofa. He waved his hand weakly to Razumihin to cut short the flow of warm and incoherent consolations he was addressing to his mother and sister, took them both by the hand and for a minute or two gazed from one to the other without speaking. His mother was alarmed by his expression. It revealed an emotion agonisingly poignant, and at the same time something immovable, almost insane. Pulcheria Alexandrovna began to cry.

Avdotya Romanovna was pale; her hand trembled in her brother's.

"Go home... with him," he said in a broken voice, pointing to Razumihin, "good-bye till to-morrow; to-morrow everything... Is it long since you arrived?"

"This evening, Rodya," answered Pulcheria Alexandrovna, "the train was awfully late. But, Rodya, nothing would induce me to leave you now! I will spend the night here, near you..."

"Don't torture me!" he said with a gesture of irritation.

"I will stay with him," cried Razumihin, "I won't leave him for a moment. Bother all my visitors! Let them rage to their hearts' content! My uncle is presiding there."

"How, how can I thank you!" Pulcheria Alexandrovna was beginning, once more pressing Razumihin's hands, but Raskolnikov interrupted her again.

"I can't have it! I can't have it!" he repeated irritably, "don't worry me! Enough, go away... I can't stand it!"

"Come, mamma, come out of the room at least for a minute," Dounia whispered in dismay; "we are distressing him, that's evident."

"Mayn't I look at him after three years?" wept Pulcheria Alexandrovna.

"Stay," he stopped them again, "you keep interrupting me, and my ideas get muddled.... Have you seen Luzhin?"

"No, Rodya, but he knows already of our arrival. We have heard, Rodya, that Pyotr Petrovitch was so kind as to visit you today," Pulcheria Alexandrovna added somewhat timidly.

"Yes... he was so kind... Dounia, I promised Luzhin I'd throw him downstairs and told him to go to hell...."

“Rodya, what are you saying! Surely, you don’t mean to tell us...” Pulcheria Alexandrovna began in alarm, but she stopped, looking at Dounia.

Avdotya Romanovna was looking attentively at her brother, waiting for what would come next. Both of them had heard of the quarrel from Nastasya, so far as she had succeeded in understanding and reporting it, and were in painful perplexity and suspense.

“Dounia,” Raskolnikov continued with an effort, “I don’t want that marriage, so at the first opportunity to-morrow you must refuse Luzhin, so that we may never hear his name again.”

“Good Heavens!” cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna.

“Brother, think what you are saying!” Avdotya Romanovna began impetuously, but immediately checked herself. “You are not fit to talk now, perhaps; you are tired,” she added gently.

“You think I am delirious? No... You are marrying Luzhin for *my* sake. But I won’t accept the sacrifice. And so write a letter before to-morrow, to refuse him... Let me read it in the morning and that will be the end of it!”

“That I can’t do!” the girl cried, offended, “what right have you...”

“Dounia, you are hasty, too, be quiet, to-morrow... Don’t you see..,” the mother interposed in dismay. “Better come away!”

“He is raving,” Razumihin cried tipsily, “or how would he dare! To-morrow all this nonsense will be over... to-day he certainly did drive him away. That was so. And Luzhin got angry, too.... He made speeches here, wanted to show off his learning and he went out crest-fallen....”

“Then it’s true?” cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna.

“Good-bye till to-morrow, brother,” said Dounia compassionately— “let us go, mother... Good-bye, Rodya.”

“Do you hear, sister,” he repeated after them, making a last effort, “I am not delirious; this marriage is — an infamy. Let me act like a scoundrel, but you mustn’t... one is enough... and though I am a scoundrel, I wouldn’t own such a sister. It’s me or Luzhin! Go now....”

“But you’re out of your mind! Despot!” roared Razumihin; but Raskolnikov did not and perhaps could not answer. He lay down on the sofa, and turned to the wall, utterly exhausted. Avdotya Romanovna looked with interest at Razumihin; her black eyes flashed; Razumihin positively started at her glance.

Pulcheria Alexandrovna stood overwhelmed.

“Nothing would induce me to go,” she whispered in despair to Razumihin. “I will stay somewhere here... escort Dounia home.”

“You’ll spoil everything,” Razumihin answered in the same whisper, losing patience— “come out on to the stairs, anyway. Nastasya, show a light! I assure you,” he went on in a half whisper on the stairs-”that he was almost beating the doctor and me this afternoon! Do you understand? The doctor himself! Even he gave way and left him, so as not to irritate him. I remained downstairs on guard, but he dressed at once and slipped off. And he will slip off again if you irritate him, at this time of night, and will do himself some mischief....”

“What are you saying?”

“And Avdotya Romanovna can’t possibly be left in those lodgings without you. Just think where you are staying! That blackguard Pyotr Petrovitch couldn’t find you better lodgings... But you know I’ve had a little to drink, and that’s what makes me... swear; don’t mind it....”

“But I’ll go to the landlady here,” Pulcheria Alexandrovna insisted, “Ill beseech her to find some corner for Dounia and me for the night. I can’t leave him like that, I cannot!”

This conversation took place on the landing just before the landlady’s door. Nastasya lighted them from a step below. Razumihin was in extraordinary excitement. Half an hour earlier, while he was bringing Raskolnikov home, he had indeed talked too freely, but he was aware of it himself, and his head was clear in spite of the vast quantities he had imbibed. Now he was in a state bordering on ecstasy, and all that he had drunk seemed to fly to his head with redoubled effect. He stood with the two ladies, seizing both by their hands, persuading them, and giving them reasons with astonishing plainness of speech, and at almost every word he uttered, probably to emphasise his arguments, he squeezed their hands painfully as in a vise. He stared at Avdotya Romanovna without the least regard for good manners. They sometimes pulled their hands out of his huge bony paws, but far from noticing what was the matter, he drew them all the closer to him. If they’d told him to jump head foremost from the staircase, he would have done it without thought or hesitation in their service. Though Pulcheria Alexandrovna felt that the young man was really too eccentric and pinched her hand too much, in her anxiety over her Rodya she looked on his presence as providential, and was unwilling to notice all his peculiarities. But though Avdotya Romanovna shared her anxiety, and

was not of timorous disposition, she could not see the glowing light in his eyes without wonder and almost alarm. It was only the unbounded confidence inspired by Nastasya's account of her brother's queer friend, which prevented her from trying to run away from him, and to persuade her mother to do the same. She realised, too, that even running away was perhaps impossible now. Ten minutes later, however, she was considerably reassured; it was characteristic of Razumihin that he showed his true nature at once, whatever mood he might be in, so that people quickly saw the sort of man they had to deal with.

"You can't go to the landlady, that's perfect nonsense!" he cried. "If you stay, though you are his mother, you'll drive him to a frenzy, and then goodness knows what will happen! Listen, I'll tell you what I'll do: Nastasya will stay with him now, and I'll conduct you both home, you can't be in the streets alone; Petersburg is an awful place in that way.... But no matter! Then I'll run straight back here and a quarter of an hour later, on my word of honour, I'll bring you news how he is, whether he is asleep, and all that. Then, listen! Then I'll run home in a twinkling — I've a lot of friends there, all drunk — I'll fetch Zossimov — that's the doctor who is looking after him, he is there, too, but he is not drunk; he is not drunk, he is never drunk! I'll drag him to Rodya, and then to you, so that you'll get two reports in the hour — from the doctor, you understand, from the doctor himself, that's a very different thing from my account of him! If there's anything wrong, I swear I'll bring you here myself, but, if it's all right, you go to bed. And I'll spend the night here, in the passage, he won't hear me, and I'll tell Zossimov to sleep at the landlady's, to be at hand. Which is better for him: you or the doctor? So come home then! But the landlady is out of the question; it's all right for me, but it's out of the question for you: she wouldn't take you, for she's... for she's a fool... She'd be jealous on my account of Avdotya Romanovna and of you, too, if you want to know... of Avdotya Romanovna certainly. She is an absolutely, absolutely unaccountable character! But I am a fool, too!... No matter! Come along! Do you trust me? Come, do you trust me or not?"

"Let us go, mother," said Avdotya Romanovna, "he will certainly do what he has promised. He has saved Rodya already, and if the doctor really will consent to spend the night here, what could be better?"

"You see, you... you... understand me, because you are an angel!" Razumihin cried in ecstasy, "let us go! Nastasya! Fly upstairs and sit with

him with a light; I'll come in a quarter of an hour."

Though Pulcheria Alexandrovna was not perfectly convinced, she made no further resistance. Razumihin gave an arm to each and drew them down the stairs. He still made her uneasy, as though he was competent and good-natured, was he capable of carrying out his promise? He seemed in such a condition....

"Ah, I see you think I am in such a condition!" Razumihin broke in upon her thoughts, guessing them, as he strolled along the pavement with huge steps, so that the two ladies could hardly keep up with him, a fact he did not observe, however. "Nonsense! That is... I am drunk like a fool, but that's not it; I am not drunk from wine. It's seeing you has turned my head... But don't mind me! Don't take any notice: I am talking nonsense, I am not worthy of you.... I am utterly unworthy of you! The minute I've taken you home, I'll pour a couple of pailfuls of water over my head in the gutter here, and then I shall be all right.... If only you knew how I love you both! Don't laugh, and don't be angry! You may be angry with anyone, but not with me! I am his friend, and therefore I am your friend, too, I want to be... I had a presentiment... Last year there was a moment... though it wasn't a presentiment really, for you seem to have fallen from heaven. And I expect I shan't sleep all night... Zossimov was afraid a little time ago that he would go mad... that's why he mustn't be irritated."

"What do you say?" cried the mother.

"Did the doctor really say that?" asked Avdotya Romanovna, alarmed.

"Yes, but it's not so, not a bit of it. He gave him some medicine, a powder, I saw it, and then your coming here.... Ah! It would have been better if you had come to-morrow. It's a good thing we went away. And in an hour Zossimov himself will report to you about everything. He is not drunk! And I shan't be drunk.... And what made me get so tight? Because they got me into an argument, damn them! I've sworn never to argue! They talk such trash! I almost came to blows! I've left my uncle to preside. Would you believe, they insist on complete absence of individualism and that's just what they relish! Not to be themselves, to be as unlike themselves as they can. That's what they regard as the highest point of progress. If only their nonsense were their own, but as it is..."

"Listen!" Pulcheria Alexandrovna interrupted timidly, but it only added fuel to the flames.

“What do you think?” shouted Razumihin, louder than ever, “you think I am attacking them for talking nonsense? Not a bit! I like them to talk nonsense. That’s man’s one privilege over all creation. Through error you come to the truth! I am a man because I err! You never reach any truth without making fourteen mistakes and very likely a hundred and fourteen. And a fine thing, too, in its way; but we can’t even make mistakes on our own account! Talk nonsense, but talk your own nonsense, and I’ll kiss you for it. To go wrong in one’s own way is better than to go right in someone else’s. In the first case you are a man, in the second you’re no better than a bird. Truth won’t escape you, but life can be cramped. There have been examples. And what are we doing now? In science, development, thought, invention, ideals, aims, liberalism, judgment, experience and everything, everything, everything, we are still in the preparatory class at school. We prefer to live on other people’s ideas, it’s what we are used to! Am I right, am I right?” cried Razumihin, pressing and shaking the two ladies’ hands.

“Oh, mercy, I do not know,” cried poor Pulcheria Alexandrovna.

“Yes, yes... though I don’t agree with you in everything,” added Avdotya Romanovna earnestly and at once uttered a cry, for he squeezed her hand so painfully.

“Yes, you say yes... well after that you... you..,” he cried in a transport, “you are a fount of goodness, purity, sense... and perfection. Give me your hand... you give me yours, too! I want to kiss your hands here at once, on my knees..,” and he fell on his knees on the pavement, fortunately at that time deserted.

“Leave off, I entreat you, what are you doing?” Pulcheria Alexandrovna cried, greatly distressed.

“Get up, get up!” said Dounia laughing, though she, too, was upset.

“Not for anything till you let me kiss your hands! That’s it! Enough! I get up and we’ll go on! I am a luckless fool, I am unworthy of you and drunk... and I am ashamed.... I am not worthy to love you, but to do homage to you is the duty of every man who is not a perfect beast! And I’ve done homage.... Here are your lodgings, and for that alone Rodya was right in driving your Pyotr Petrovitch away.... How dare he! how dare he put you in such lodgings! It’s a scandal! Do you know the sort of people they take in here? And you his betrothed! You are his betrothed? Yes? Well, then, I’ll tell you, your *fiancé* is a scoundrel.”

“Excuse me, Mr. Razumihin, you are forgetting...” Pulcheria Alexandrovna was beginning.

“Yes, yes, you are right, I did forget myself, I am ashamed of it,” Razumihin made haste to apologise. “But... but you can’t be angry with me for speaking so! For I speak sincerely and not because... hm, hm! That would be disgraceful; in fact not because I’m in... hm! Well, anyway, I won’t say why, I daren’t.... But we all saw to-day when he came in that that man is not of our sort. Not because he had his hair curled at the barber’s, not because he was in such a hurry to show his wit, but because he is a spy, a speculator, because he is a skin-flint and a buffoon. That’s evident. Do you think him clever? No, he is a fool, a fool. And is he a match for you? Good heavens! Do you see, ladies?” he stopped suddenly on the way upstairs to their rooms, “though all my friends there are drunk, yet they are all honest, and though we do talk a lot of trash, and I do, too, yet we shall talk our way to the truth at last, for we are on the right path, while Pyotr Petrovitch... is not on the right path. Though I’ve been calling them all sorts of names just now, I do respect them all... though I don’t respect Zametov, I like him, for he is a puppy, and that bullock Zossimov, because he is an honest man and knows his work. But enough, it’s all said and forgiven. Is it forgiven? Well, then, let’s go on. I know this corridor, I’ve been here, there was a scandal here at Number 3.... Where are you here? Which number? eight? Well, lock yourselves in for the night, then. Don’t let anybody in. In a quarter of an hour I’ll come back with news, and half an hour later I’ll bring Zossimov, you’ll see! Good-bye, I’ll run.”

“Good heavens, Dounia, what is going to happen?” said Pulcheria Alexandrovna, addressing her daughter with anxiety and dismay.

“Don’t worry yourself, mother,” said Dounia, taking off her hat and cape. “God has sent this gentleman to our aid, though he has come from a drinking party. We can depend on him, I assure you. And all that he has done for Rodya....”

“Ah. Dounia, goodness knows whether he will come! How could I bring myself to leave Rodya?... And how different, how different I had fancied our meeting! How sullen he was, as though not pleased to see us....”

Tears came into her eyes.

“No, it’s not that, mother. You didn’t see, you were crying all the time. He is quite unhinged by serious illness — that’s the reason.”

“Ah, that illness! What will happen, what will happen? And how he talked to you, Dounia!” said the mother, looking timidly at her daughter, trying to read her thoughts and, already half consoled by Dounia’s standing up for her brother, which meant that she had already forgiven him. “I am sure he will think better of it to-morrow,” she added, probing her further.

“And I am sure that he will say the same to-morrow... about that,” Avdotya Romanovna said finally. And, of course, there was no going beyond that, for this was a point which Pulcheria Alexandrovna was afraid to discuss. Dounia went up and kissed her mother. The latter warmly embraced her without speaking. Then she sat down to wait anxiously for Razumihin’s return, timidly watching her daughter who walked up and down the room with her arms folded, lost in thought. This walking up and down when she was thinking was a habit of Avdotya Romanovna’s and the mother was always afraid to break in on her daughter’s mood at such moments.

Razumihin, of course, was ridiculous in his sudden drunken infatuation for Avdotya Romanovna. Yet apart from his eccentric condition, many people would have thought it justified if they had seen Avdotya Romanovna, especially at that moment when she was walking to and fro with folded arms, pensive and melancholy. Avdotya Romanovna was remarkably good looking; she was tall, strikingly well-proportioned, strong and self-reliant — the latter quality was apparent in every gesture, though it did not in the least detract from the grace and softness of her movements. In face she resembled her brother, but she might be described as really beautiful. Her hair was dark brown, a little lighter than her brother’s; there was a proud light in her almost black eyes and yet at times a look of extraordinary kindness. She was pale, but it was a healthy pallor; her face was radiant with freshness and vigour. Her mouth was rather small; the full red lower lip projected a little as did her chin; it was the only irregularity in her beautiful face, but it gave it a peculiarly individual and almost haughty expression. Her face was always more serious and thoughtful than gay; but how well smiles, how well youthful, lighthearted, irresponsible, laughter suited her face! It was natural enough that a warm, open, simple-hearted, honest giant like Razumihin, who had never seen anyone like her and was not quite sober at the time, should lose his head immediately. Besides, as chance would have it, he saw Dounia for the first time transfigured by her love for her brother and her joy at meeting him. Afterwards he saw her

lower lip quiver with indignation at her brother’s insolent, cruel and ungrateful words — and his fate was sealed.

He had spoken the truth, moreover, when he blurted out in his drunken talk on the stairs that Praskovya Pavlovna, Raskolnikov’s eccentric landlady, would be jealous of Pulcheria Alexandrovna as well as of Avdotya Romanovna on his account. Although Pulcheria Alexandrovna was forty-three, her face still retained traces of her former beauty; she looked much younger than her age, indeed, which is almost always the case with women who retain serenity of spirit, sensitiveness and pure sincere warmth of heart to old age. We may add in parenthesis that to preserve all this is the only means of retaining beauty to old age. Her hair had begun to grow grey and thin, there had long been little crow’s foot wrinkles round her eyes, her cheeks were hollow and sunken from anxiety and grief, and yet it was a handsome face. She was Dounia over again, twenty years older, but without the projecting underlip. Pulcheria Alexandrovna was emotional, but not sentimental, timid and yielding, but only to a certain point. She could give way and accept a great deal even of what was contrary to her convictions, but there was a certain barrier fixed by honesty, principle and the deepest convictions which nothing would induce her to cross.

Exactly twenty minutes after Razumihin’s departure, there came two subdued but hurried knocks at the door: he had come back.

“I won’t come in, I haven’t time,” he hastened to say when the door was opened. “He sleeps like a top, soundly, quietly, and God grant he may sleep ten hours. Nastasya’s with him; I told her not to leave till I came. Now I am fetching Zossimov, he will report to you and then you’d better turn in; I can see you are too tired to do anything....”

And he ran off down the corridor.

“What a very competent and... devoted young man!” cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna exceedingly delighted.

“He seems a splendid person!” Avdotya Romanovna replied with some warmth, resuming her walk up and down the room.

It was nearly an hour later when they heard footsteps in the corridor and another knock at the door. Both women waited this time completely relying on Razumihin’s promise; he actually had succeeded in bringing Zossimov. Zossimov had agreed at once to desert the drinking party to go to Raskolnikov’s, but he came reluctantly and with the greatest suspicion to see the ladies, mistrusting Razumihin in his exhilarated condition. But his

vanity was at once reassured and flattered; he saw that they were really expecting him as an oracle. He stayed just ten minutes and succeeded in completely convincing and comforting Pulcheria Alexandrovna. He spoke with marked sympathy, but with the reserve and extreme seriousness of a young doctor at an important consultation. He did not utter a word on any other subject and did not display the slightest desire to enter into more personal relations with the two ladies. Remarking at his first entrance the dazzling beauty of Avdotya Romanovna, he endeavoured not to notice her at all during his visit and addressed himself solely to Pulcheria Alexandrovna. All this gave him extraordinary inward satisfaction. He declared that he thought the invalid at this moment going on very satisfactorily. According to his observations the patient's illness was due partly to his unfortunate material surroundings during the last few months, but it had partly also a moral origin, "was, so to speak, the product of several material and moral influences, anxieties, apprehensions, troubles, certain ideas... and so on." Noticing stealthily that Avdotya Romanovna was following his words with close attention, Zossimov allowed himself to enlarge on this theme. On Pulcheria Alexandrovna's anxiously and timidly inquiring as to "some suspicion of insanity," he replied with a composed and candid smile that his words had been exaggerated; that certainly the patient had some fixed idea, something approaching a monomania — he, Zossimov, was now particularly studying this interesting branch of medicine — but that it must be recollected that until to-day the patient had been in delirium and... and that no doubt the presence of his family would have a favourable effect on his recovery and distract his mind, "if only all fresh shocks can be avoided," he added significantly. Then he got up, took leave with an impressive and affable bow, while blessings, warm gratitude, and entreaties were showered upon him, and Avdotya Romanovna spontaneously offered her hand to him. He went out exceedingly pleased with his visit and still more so with himself.

"We'll talk to-morrow; go to bed at once!" Razumihin said in conclusion, following Zossimov out. "I'll be with you to-morrow morning as early as possible with my report."

"That's a fetching little girl, Avdotya Romanovna," remarked Zossimov, almost licking his lips as they both came out into the street.

"Fetching? You said fetching?" roared Razumihin and he flew at Zossimov and seized him by the throat. "If you ever dare.... Do you

understand? Do you understand?” he shouted, shaking him by the collar and squeezing him against the wall. “Do you hear?”

“Let me go, you drunken devil,” said Zossimov, struggling and when he had let him go, he stared at him and went off into a sudden guffaw. Razumihin stood facing him in gloomy and earnest reflection.

“Of course, I am an ass,” he observed, sombre as a storm cloud, “but still... you are another.”

“No, brother, not at all such another. I am not dreaming of any folly.”

They walked along in silence and only when they were close to Raskolnikov’s lodgings, Razumihin broke the silence in considerable anxiety.

“Listen,” he said, “you’re a first-rate fellow, but among your other failings, you’re a loose fish, that I know, and a dirty one, too. You are a feeble, nervous wretch, and a mass of whims, you’re getting fat and lazy and can’t deny yourself anything — and I call that dirty because it leads one straight into the dirt. You’ve let yourself get so slack that I don’t know how it is you are still a good, even a devoted doctor. You — a doctor — sleep on a feather bed and get up at night to your patients! In another three or four years you won’t get up for your patients... But hang it all, that’s not the point!... You are going to spend to-night in the landlady’s flat here. (Hard work I’ve had to persuade her!) And I’ll be in the kitchen. So here’s a chance for you to get to know her better.... It’s not as you think! There’s not a trace of anything of the sort, brother...!”

“But I don’t think!”

“Here you have modesty, brother, silence, bashfulness, a savage virtue... and yet she’s sighing and melting like wax, simply melting! Save me from her, by all that’s unholy! She’s most prepossessing... I’ll repay you, I’ll do anything....”

Zossimov laughed more violently than ever.

“Well, you are smitten! But what am I to do with her?”

“It won’t be much trouble, I assure you. Talk any rot you like to her, as long as you sit by her and talk. You’re a doctor, too; try curing her of something. I swear you won’t regret it. She has a piano, and you know, I strum a little. I have a song there, a genuine Russian one: ‘I shed hot tears.’ She likes the genuine article — and well, it all began with that song; Now you’re a regular performer, a *maître*, a Rubinstein.... I assure you, you won’t regret it!”

“But have you made her some promise? Something signed? A promise of marriage, perhaps?”

“Nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of the kind! Besides she is not that sort at all.... Tchebarov tried that....”

“Well then, drop her!”

“But I can’t drop her like that!”

“Why can’t you?”

“Well, I can’t, that’s all about it! There’s an element of attraction here, brother.”

“Then why have you fascinated her?”

“I haven’t fascinated her; perhaps I was fascinated myself in my folly. But she won’t care a straw whether it’s you or I, so long as somebody sits beside her, sighing.... I can’t explain the position, brother... look here, you are good at mathematics, and working at it now... begin teaching her the integral calculus; upon my soul, I’m not joking, I’m in earnest, it’ll be just the same to her. She will gaze at you and sigh for a whole year together. I talked to her once for two days at a time about the Prussian House of Lords (for one must talk of something) — she just sighed and perspired! And you mustn’t talk of love — she’s bashful to hysterics — but just let her see you can’t tear yourself away — that’s enough. It’s fearfully comfortable; you’re quite at home, you can read, sit, lie about, write. You may even venture on a kiss, if you’re careful.”

“But what do I want with her?”

“Ach, I can’t make you understand! You see, you are made for each other! I have often been reminded of you!... You’ll come to it in the end! So does it matter whether it’s sooner or later? There’s the feather-bed element here, brother — ach! and not only that! There’s an attraction here — here you have the end of the world, an anchorage, a quiet haven, the navel of the earth, the three fishes that are the foundation of the world, the essence of pancakes, of savoury fish-pies, of the evening samovar, of soft sighs and warm shawls, and hot stoves to sleep on — as snug as though you were dead, and yet you’re alive — the advantages of both at once! Well, hang it, brother, what stuff I’m talking, it’s bedtime! Listen. I sometimes wake up at night; so I’ll go in and look at him. But there’s no need, it’s all right. Don’t you worry yourself, yet if you like, you might just look in once, too. But if you notice anything — delirium or fever — wake me at once. But there can’t be....”

CHAPTER II

Razumihin waked up next morning at eight o'clock, troubled and serious. He found himself confronted with many new and unlooked-for perplexities. He had never expected that he would ever wake up feeling like that. He remembered every detail of the previous day and he knew that a perfectly novel experience had befallen him, that he had received an impression unlike anything he had known before. At the same time he recognised clearly that the dream which had fired his imagination was hopelessly unattainable — so unattainable that he felt positively ashamed of it, and he hastened to pass to the other more practical cares and difficulties bequeathed him by that "thrice accursed yesterday."

The most awful recollection of the previous day was the way he had shown himself "base and mean," not only because he had been drunk, but because he had taken advantage of the young girl's position to abuse her *fiancé* in his stupid jealousy, knowing nothing of their mutual relations and obligations and next to nothing of the man himself. And what right had he to criticise him in that hasty and unguarded manner? Who had asked for his opinion? Was it thinkable that such a creature as Avdotya Romanovna would be marrying an unworthy man for money? So there must be something in him. The lodgings? But after all how could he know the character of the lodgings? He was furnishing a flat... Foo! how despicable it all was! And what justification was it that he was drunk? Such a stupid excuse was even more degrading! In wine is truth, and the truth had all come out, "that is, all the uncleanness of his coarse and envious heart"! And would such a dream ever be permissible to him, Razumihin? What was he beside such a girl — he, the drunken noisy braggart of last night? Was it possible to imagine so absurd and cynical a juxtaposition? Razumihin blushed desperately at the very idea and suddenly the recollection forced itself vividly upon him of how he had said last night on the stairs that the landlady would be jealous of Avdotya Romanovna... that was simply intolerable. He brought his fist down heavily on the kitchen stove, hurt his hand and sent one of the bricks flying.

"Of course," he muttered to himself a minute later with a feeling of self-abasement, "of course, all these infamies can never be wiped out or smoothed over... and so it's useless even to think of it, and I must go to

them in silence and do my duty... in silence, too... and not ask forgiveness, and say nothing... for all is lost now!”

And yet as he dressed he examined his attire more carefully than usual. He hadn’t another suit — if he had had, perhaps he wouldn’t have put it on. “I would have made a point of not putting it on.” But in any case he could not remain a cynic and a dirty sloven; he had no right to offend the feelings of others, especially when they were in need of his assistance and asking him to see them. He brushed his clothes carefully. His linen was always decent; in that respect he was especially clean.

He washed that morning scrupulously — he got some soap from Nastasya — he washed his hair, his neck and especially his hands. When it came to the question whether to shave his stubbly chin or not (Praskovya Pavlovna had capital razors that had been left by her late husband), the question was angrily answered in the negative. “Let it stay as it is! What if they think that I shaved on purpose to...? They certainly would think so! Not on any account!”

“And... the worst of it was he was so coarse, so dirty, he had the manners of a pothouse; and... and even admitting that he knew he had some of the essentials of a gentleman... what was there in that to be proud of? Everyone ought to be a gentleman and more than that... and all the same (he remembered) he, too, had done little things... not exactly dishonest, and yet.... And what thoughts he sometimes had; hm... and to set all that beside Avdotya Romanovna! Confound it! So be it! Well, he’d make a point then of being dirty, greasy, pothouse in his manners and he wouldn’t care! He’d be worse!”

He was engaged in such monologues when Zossimov, who had spent the night in Praskovya Pavlovna’s parlour, came in.

He was going home and was in a hurry to look at the invalid first. Razumihin informed him that Raskolnikov was sleeping like a dormouse. Zossimov gave orders that they shouldn’t wake him and promised to see him again about eleven.

“If he is still at home,” he added. “Damn it all! If one can’t control one’s patients, how is one to cure them? Do you know whether *he* will go to them, or whether *they* are coming here?”

“They are coming, I think,” said Razumihin, understanding the object of the question, “and they will discuss their family affairs, no doubt. I’ll be off. You, as the doctor, have more right to be here than I.”

“But I am not a father confessor; I shall come and go away; I’ve plenty to do besides looking after them.”

“One thing worries me,” interposed Razumihin, frowning. “On the way home I talked a lot of drunken nonsense to him... all sorts of things... and amongst them that you were afraid that he... might become insane.”

“You told the ladies so, too.”

“I know it was stupid! You may beat me if you like! Did you think so seriously?”

“That’s nonsense, I tell you, how could I think it seriously? You, yourself, described him as a monomaniac when you fetched me to him... and we added fuel to the fire yesterday, you did, that is, with your story about the painter; it was a nice conversation, when he was, perhaps, mad on that very point! If only I’d known what happened then at the police station and that some wretch... had insulted him with this suspicion! Hm... I would not have allowed that conversation yesterday. These monomaniacs will make a mountain out of a mole-hill... and see their fancies as solid realities.... As far as I remember, it was Zametov’s story that cleared up half the mystery, to my mind. Why, I know one case in which a hypochondriac, a man of forty, cut the throat of a little boy of eight, because he couldn’t endure the jokes he made every day at table! And in this case his rags, the insolent police officer, the fever and this suspicion! All that working upon a man half frantic with hypochondria, and with his morbid exceptional vanity! That may well have been the starting-point of illness. Well, bother it all!... And, by the way, that Zametov certainly is a nice fellow, but hm... he shouldn’t have told all that last night. He is an awful chatterbox!”

“But whom did he tell it to? You and me?”

“And Porfiry.”

“What does that matter?”

“And, by the way, have you any influence on them, his mother and sister? Tell them to be more careful with him to-day....”

“They’ll get on all right!” Razumihin answered reluctantly.

“Why is he so set against this Luzhin? A man with money and she doesn’t seem to dislike him... and they haven’t a farthing, I suppose? eh?”

“But what business is it of yours?” Razumihin cried with annoyance. “How can I tell whether they’ve a farthing? Ask them yourself and perhaps you’ll find out....”

“Foo! what an ass you are sometimes! Last night’s wine has not gone off yet.... Good-bye; thank your Praskovya Pavlovna from me for my night’s lodging. She locked herself in, made no reply to my *bonjour* through the door; she was up at seven o’clock, the samovar was taken into her from the kitchen. I was not vouchsafed a personal interview....”

At nine o’clock precisely Razumihin reached the lodgings at Bakaleyev’s house. Both ladies were waiting for him with nervous impatience. They had risen at seven o’clock or earlier. He entered looking as black as night, bowed awkwardly and was at once furious with himself for it. He had reckoned without his host: Pulcheria Alexandrovna fairly rushed at him, seized him by both hands and was almost kissing them. He glanced timidly at Avdotya Romanovna, but her proud countenance wore at that moment an expression of such gratitude and friendliness, such complete and unlooked-for respect (in place of the sneering looks and ill-disguised contempt he had expected), that it threw him into greater confusion than if he had been met with abuse. Fortunately there was a subject for conversation, and he made haste to snatch at it.

Hearing that everything was going well and that Rodya had not yet waked, Pulcheria Alexandrovna declared that she was glad to hear it, because “she had something which it was very, very necessary to talk over beforehand.” Then followed an inquiry about breakfast and an invitation to have it with them; they had waited to have it with him. Avdotya Romanovna rang the bell: it was answered by a ragged dirty waiter, and they asked him to bring tea which was served at last, but in such a dirty and disorderly way that the ladies were ashamed. Razumihin vigorously attacked the lodgings, but, remembering Luzhin, stopped in embarrassment and was greatly relieved by Pulcheria Alexandrovna’s questions, which showered in a continual stream upon him.

He talked for three quarters of an hour, being constantly interrupted by their questions, and succeeded in describing to them all the most important facts he knew of the last year of Raskolnikov’s life, concluding with a circumstantial account of his illness. He omitted, however, many things, which were better omitted, including the scene at the police station with all its consequences. They listened eagerly to his story, and, when he thought he had finished and satisfied his listeners, he found that they considered he had hardly begun.

“Tell me, tell me! What do you think...? Excuse me, I still don’t know your name!” Pulcheria Alexandrovna put in hastily.

“Dmitri Prokofitch.”

“I should like very, very much to know, Dmitri Prokofitch... how he looks... on things in general now, that is, how can I explain, what are his likes and dislikes? Is he always so irritable? Tell me, if you can, what are his hopes and, so to say, his dreams? Under what influences is he now? In a word, I should like...”

“Ah, mother, how can he answer all that at once?” observed Dounia.

“Good heavens, I had not expected to find him in the least like this, Dmitri Prokofitch!”

“Naturally,” answered Razumihin. “I have no mother, but my uncle comes every year and almost every time he can scarcely recognise me, even in appearance, though he is a clever man; and your three years’ separation means a great deal. What am I to tell you? I have known Rodion for a year and a half; he is morose, gloomy, proud and haughty, and of late — and perhaps for a long time before — he has been suspicious and fanciful. He has a noble nature and a kind heart. He does not like showing his feelings and would rather do a cruel thing than open his heart freely. Sometimes, though, he is not at all morbid, but simply cold and inhumanly callous; it’s as though he were alternating between two characters. Sometimes he is fearfully reserved! He says he is so busy that everything is a hindrance, and yet he lies in bed doing nothing. He doesn’t jeer at things, not because he hasn’t the wit, but as though he hadn’t time to waste on such trifles. He never listens to what is said to him. He is never interested in what interests other people at any given moment. He thinks very highly of himself and perhaps he is right. Well, what more? I think your arrival will have a most beneficial influence upon him.”

“God grant it may,” cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna, distressed by Razumihin’s account of her Rodya.

And Razumihin ventured to look more boldly at Avdotya Romanovna at last. He glanced at her often while he was talking, but only for a moment and looked away again at once. Avdotya Romanovna sat at the table, listening attentively, then got up again and began walking to and fro with her arms folded and her lips compressed, occasionally putting in a question, without stopping her walk. She had the same habit of not listening to what was said. She was wearing a dress of thin dark stuff and she had a white

transparent scarf round her neck. Razumihin soon detected signs of extreme poverty in their belongings. Had Avdotya Romanovna been dressed like a queen, he felt that he would not be afraid of her, but perhaps just because she was poorly dressed and that he noticed all the misery of her surroundings, his heart was filled with dread and he began to be afraid of every word he uttered, every gesture he made, which was very trying for a man who already felt diffident.

“You’ve told us a great deal that is interesting about my brother’s character... and have told it impartially. I am glad. I thought that you were too uncritically devoted to him,” observed Avdotya Romanovna with a smile. “I think you are right that he needs a woman’s care,” she added thoughtfully.

“I didn’t say so; but I daresay you are right, only...”

“What?”

“He loves no one and perhaps he never will,” Razumihin declared decisively.

“You mean he is not capable of love?”

“Do you know, Avdotya Romanovna, you are awfully like your brother, in everything, indeed!” he blurted out suddenly to his own surprise, but remembering at once what he had just before said of her brother, he turned as red as a crab and was overcome with confusion. Avdotya Romanovna couldn’t help laughing when she looked at him.

“You may both be mistaken about Rodya,” Pulcheria Alexandrovna remarked, slightly piqued. “I am not talking of our present difficulty, Dounia. What Pyotr Petrovitch writes in this letter and what you and I have supposed may be mistaken, but you can’t imagine, Dmitri Prokofitch, how moody and, so to say, capricious he is. I never could depend on what he would do when he was only fifteen. And I am sure that he might do something now that nobody else would think of doing... Well, for instance, do you know how a year and a half ago he astounded me and gave me a shock that nearly killed me, when he had the idea of marrying that girl — what was her name — his landlady’s daughter?”

“Did you hear about that affair?” asked Avdotya Romanovna.

“Do you suppose — —” Pulcheria Alexandrovna continued warmly. “Do you suppose that my tears, my entreaties, my illness, my possible death from grief, our poverty would have made him pause? No, he would calmly have disregarded all obstacles. And yet it isn’t that he doesn’t love us!”

“He has never spoken a word of that affair to me,” Razumihin answered cautiously. “But I did hear something from Praskovya Pavlovna herself, though she is by no means a gossip. And what I heard certainly was rather strange.”

“And what did you hear?” both the ladies asked at once.

“Well, nothing very special. I only learned that the marriage, which only failed to take place through the girl’s death, was not at all to Praskovya Pavlovna’s liking. They say, too, the girl was not at all pretty, in fact I am told positively ugly... and such an invalid... and queer. But she seems to have had some good qualities. She must have had some good qualities or it’s quite inexplicable.... She had no money either and he wouldn’t have considered her money.... But it’s always difficult to judge in such matters.”

“I am sure she was a good girl,” Avdotya Romanovna observed briefly.

“God forgive me, I simply rejoiced at her death. Though I don’t know which of them would have caused most misery to the other — he to her or she to him,” Pulcheria Alexandrovna concluded. Then she began tentatively questioning him about the scene on the previous day with Luzhin, hesitating and continually glancing at Dounia, obviously to the latter’s annoyance. This incident more than all the rest evidently caused her uneasiness, even consternation. Razumihin described it in detail again, but this time he added his own conclusions: he openly blamed Raskolnikov for intentionally insulting Pyotr Petrovitch, not seeking to excuse him on the score of his illness.

“He had planned it before his illness,” he added.

“I think so, too,” Pulcheria Alexandrovna agreed with a dejected air. But she was very much surprised at hearing Razumihin express himself so carefully and even with a certain respect about Pyotr Petrovitch. Avdotya Romanovna, too, was struck by it.

“So this is your opinion of Pyotr Petrovitch?” Pulcheria Alexandrovna could not resist asking.

“I can have no other opinion of your daughter’s future husband,” Razumihin answered firmly and with warmth, “and I don’t say it simply from vulgar politeness, but because... simply because Avdotya Romanovna has of her own free will deigned to accept this man. If I spoke so rudely of him last night, it was because I was disgustingly drunk and... mad besides; yes, mad, crazy, I lost my head completely... and this morning I am ashamed of it.”

He crimsoned and ceased speaking. Avdotya Romanovna flushed, but did not break the silence. She had not uttered a word from the moment they began to speak of Luzhin.

Without her support Pulcheria Alexandrovna obviously did not know what to do. At last, faltering and continually glancing at her daughter, she confessed that she was exceedingly worried by one circumstance.

“You see, Dmitri Prokofitch,” she began. “I’ll be perfectly open with Dmitri Prokofitch, Dounia?”

“Of course, mother,” said Avdotya Romanovna emphatically.

“This is what it is,” she began in haste, as though the permission to speak of her trouble lifted a weight off her mind. “Very early this morning we got a note from Pyotr Petrovitch in reply to our letter announcing our arrival. He promised to meet us at the station, you know; instead of that he sent a servant to bring us the address of these lodgings and to show us the way; and he sent a message that he would be here himself this morning. But this morning this note came from him. You’d better read it yourself; there is one point in it which worries me very much... you will soon see what that is, and... tell me your candid opinion, Dmitri Prokofitch! You know Rodya’s character better than anyone and no one can advise us better than you can. Dounia, I must tell you, made her decision at once, but I still don’t feel sure how to act and I... I’ve been waiting for your opinion.”

Razumihin opened the note which was dated the previous evening and read as follows:

“Dear Madam, Pulcheria Alexandrovna, I have the honour to inform you that owing to unforeseen obstacles I was rendered unable to meet you at the railway station; I sent a very competent person with the same object in view. I likewise shall be deprived of the honour of an interview with you to-morrow morning by business in the Senate that does not admit of delay, and also that I may not intrude on your family circle while you are meeting your son, and Avdotya Romanovna her brother. I shall have the honour of visiting you and paying you my respects at your lodgings not later than to-morrow evening at eight o’clock precisely, and herewith I venture to present my earnest and, I may add, imperative request that Rodion Romanovitch may not be present at our interview — as he offered me a gross and unprecedented affront on the occasion of my visit to him in his illness yesterday, and, moreover, since I desire from you personally an indispensable and circumstantial explanation upon a certain point, in regard

to which I wish to learn your own interpretation. I have the honour to inform you, in anticipation, that if, in spite of my request, I meet Rodion Romanovitch, I shall be compelled to withdraw immediately and then you have only yourself to blame. I write on the assumption that Rodion Romanovitch who appeared so ill at my visit, suddenly recovered two hours later and so, being able to leave the house, may visit you also. I was confirmed in that belief by the testimony of my own eyes in the lodging of a drunken man who was run over and has since died, to whose daughter, a young woman of notorious behaviour, he gave twenty-five roubles on the pretext of the funeral, which gravely surprised me knowing what pains you were at to raise that sum. Herewith expressing my special respect to your estimable daughter, Avdotya Romanovna, I beg you to accept the respectful homage of

“Your humble servant,

“P. LUZHIN.”

“What am I to do now, Dmitri Prokofitch?” began Pulcheria Alexandrovna, almost weeping. “How can I ask Rodya not to come? Yesterday he insisted so earnestly on our refusing Pyotr Petrovitch and now we are ordered not to receive Rodya! He will come on purpose if he knows, and... what will happen then?”

“Act on Avdotya Romanovna’s decision,” Razumihin answered calmly at once.

“Oh, dear me! She says... goodness knows what she says, she doesn’t explain her object! She says that it would be best, at least, not that it would be best, but that it’s absolutely necessary that Rodya should make a point of being here at eight o’clock and that they must meet.... I didn’t want even to show him the letter, but to prevent him from coming by some stratagem with your help... because he is so irritable.... Besides I don’t understand about that drunkard who died and that daughter, and how he could have given the daughter all the money... which...”

“Which cost you such sacrifice, mother,” put in Avdotya Romanovna.

“He was not himself yesterday,” Razumihin said thoughtfully, “if you only knew what he was up to in a restaurant yesterday, though there was sense in it too.... Hm! He did say something, as we were going home yesterday evening, about a dead man and a girl, but I didn’t understand a word.... But last night, I myself...”

“The best thing, mother, will be for us to go to him ourselves and there I assure you we shall see at once what’s to be done. Besides, it’s getting late — good heavens, it’s past ten,” she cried looking at a splendid gold enamelled watch which hung round her neck on a thin Venetian chain, and looked entirely out of keeping with the rest of her dress. “A present from her *fiancé*,” thought Razumihin.

“We must start, Dounia, we must start,” her mother cried in a flutter. “He will be thinking we are still angry after yesterday, from our coming so late. Merciful heavens!”

While she said this she was hurriedly putting on her hat and mantle; Dounia, too, put on her things. Her gloves, as Razumihin noticed, were not merely shabby but had holes in them, and yet this evident poverty gave the two ladies an air of special dignity, which is always found in people who know how to wear poor clothes. Razumihin looked reverently at Dounia and felt proud of escorting her. “The queen who mended her stockings in prison,” he thought, “must have looked then every inch a queen and even more a queen than at sumptuous banquets and levées.”

“My God!” exclaimed Pulcheria Alexandrovna, “little did I think that I should ever fear seeing my son, my darling, darling Rodya! I am afraid, Dmitri Prokofitch,” she added, glancing at him timidly.

“Don’t be afraid, mother,” said Dounia, kissing her, “better have faith in him.”

“Oh, dear, I have faith in him, but I haven’t slept all night,” exclaimed the poor woman.

They came out into the street.

“Do you know, Dounia, when I dozed a little this morning I dreamed of Marfa Petrovna... she was all in white... she came up to me, took my hand, and shook her head at me, but so sternly as though she were blaming me.... Is that a good omen? Oh, dear me! You don’t know, Dmitri Prokofitch, that Marfa Petrovna’s dead!”

“No, I didn’t know; who is Marfa Petrovna?”

“She died suddenly; and only fancy...”

“Afterwards, mamma,” put in Dounia. “He doesn’t know who Marfa Petrovna is.”

“Ah, you don’t know? And I was thinking that you knew all about us. Forgive me, Dmitri Prokofitch, I don’t know what I am thinking about these last few days. I look upon you really as a providence for us, and so I took it

for granted that you knew all about us. I look on you as a relation.... Don’t be angry with me for saying so. Dear me, what’s the matter with your right hand? Have you knocked it?”

“Yes, I bruised it,” muttered Razumihin overjoyed.

“I sometimes speak too much from the heart, so that Dounia finds fault with me.... But, dear me, what a cupboard he lives in! I wonder whether he is awake? Does this woman, his landlady, consider it a room? Listen, you say he does not like to show his feelings, so perhaps I shall annoy him with my... weaknesses? Do advise me, Dmitri Prokofitch, how am I to treat him? I feel quite distracted, you know.”

“Don’t question him too much about anything if you see him frown; don’t ask him too much about his health; he doesn’t like that.”

“Ah, Dmitri Prokofitch, how hard it is to be a mother! But here are the stairs.... What an awful staircase!”

“Mother, you are quite pale, don’t distress yourself, darling,” said Dounia caressing her, then with flashing eyes she added: “He ought to be happy at seeing you, and you are tormenting yourself so.”

“Wait, I’ll peep in and see whether he has waked up.”

The ladies slowly followed Razumihin, who went on before, and when they reached the landlady’s door on the fourth storey, they noticed that her door was a tiny crack open and that two keen black eyes were watching them from the darkness within. When their eyes met, the door was suddenly shut with such a slam that Pulcheria Alexandrovna almost cried out.

CHAPTER III

“He is well, quite well!” Zossimov cried cheerfully as they entered.

He had come in ten minutes earlier and was sitting in the same place as before, on the sofa. Raskolnikov was sitting in the opposite corner, fully dressed and carefully washed and combed, as he had not been for some time past. The room was immediately crowded, yet Nastasya managed to follow the visitors in and stayed to listen.

Raskolnikov really was almost well, as compared with his condition the day before, but he was still pale, listless, and sombre. He looked like a wounded man or one who has undergone some terrible physical suffering. His brows were knitted, his lips compressed, his eyes feverish. He spoke little and reluctantly, as though performing a duty, and there was a restlessness in his movements.

He only wanted a sling on his arm or a bandage on his finger to complete the impression of a man with a painful abscess or a broken arm. The pale, sombre face lighted up for a moment when his mother and sister entered, but this only gave it a look of more intense suffering, in place of its listless dejection. The light soon died away, but the look of suffering remained, and Zossimov, watching and studying his patient with all the zest of a young doctor beginning to practise, noticed in him no joy at the arrival of his mother and sister, but a sort of bitter, hidden determination to bear another hour or two of inevitable torture. He saw later that almost every word of the following conversation seemed to touch on some sore place and irritate it. But at the same time he marvelled at the power of controlling himself and hiding his feelings in a patient who the previous day had, like a monomaniac, fallen into a frenzy at the slightest word.

“Yes, I see myself now that I am almost well,” said Raskolnikov, giving his mother and sister a kiss of welcome which made Pulcheria Alexandrovna radiant at once. “And I don’t say this *as I did yesterday*,” he said, addressing Razumihin, with a friendly pressure of his hand.

“Yes, indeed, I am quite surprised at him to-day,” began Zossimov, much delighted at the ladies’ entrance, for he had not succeeded in keeping up a conversation with his patient for ten minutes. “In another three or four days, if he goes on like this, he will be just as before, that is, as he was a month ago, or two... or perhaps even three. This has been coming on for a long

while.... eh? Confess, now, that it has been perhaps your own fault?" he added, with a tentative smile, as though still afraid of irritating him.

"It is very possible," answered Raskolnikov coldly.

"I should say, too," continued Zossimov with zest, "that your complete recovery depends solely on yourself. Now that one can talk to you, I should like to impress upon you that it is essential to avoid the elementary, so to speak, fundamental causes tending to produce your morbid condition: in that case you will be cured, if not, it will go from bad to worse. These fundamental causes I don't know, but they must be known to you. You are an intelligent man, and must have observed yourself, of course. I fancy the first stage of your derangement coincides with your leaving the university. You must not be left without occupation, and so, work and a definite aim set before you might, I fancy, be very beneficial."

"Yes, yes; you are perfectly right.... I will make haste and return to the university: and then everything will go smoothly...."

Zossimov, who had begun his sage advice partly to make an effect before the ladies, was certainly somewhat mystified, when, glancing at his patient, he observed unmistakable mockery on his face. This lasted an instant, however. Pulcheria Alexandrovna began at once thanking Zossimov, especially for his visit to their lodging the previous night.

"What! he saw you last night?" Raskolnikov asked, as though startled. "Then you have not slept either after your journey."

"Ach, Rodya, that was only till two o'clock. Dounia and I never go to bed before two at home."

"I don't know how to thank him either," Raskolnikov went on, suddenly frowning and looking down. "Setting aside the question of payment — forgive me for referring to it (he turned to Zossimov) — I really don't know what I have done to deserve such special attention from you! I simply don't understand it... and... and... it weighs upon me, indeed, because I don't understand it. I tell you so candidly."

"Don't be irritated." Zossimov forced himself to laugh. "Assume that you are my first patient — well — we fellows just beginning to practise love our first patients as if they were our children, and some almost fall in love with them. And, of course, I am not rich in patients."

"I say nothing about him," added Raskolnikov, pointing to Razumihin, "though he has had nothing from me either but insult and trouble."

“What nonsense he is talking! Why, you are in a sentimental mood to-day, are you?” shouted Razumihin.

If he had had more penetration he would have seen that there was no trace of sentimentality in him, but something indeed quite the opposite. But Avdotya Romanovna noticed it. She was intently and uneasily watching her brother.

“As for you, mother, I don’t dare to speak,” he went on, as though repeating a lesson learned by heart. “It is only to-day that I have been able to realise a little how distressed you must have been here yesterday, waiting for me to come back.”

When he had said this, he suddenly held out his hand to his sister, smiling without a word. But in this smile there was a flash of real unfeigned feeling. Dounia caught it at once, and warmly pressed his hand, overjoyed and thankful. It was the first time he had addressed her since their dispute the previous day. The mother’s face lighted up with ecstatic happiness at the sight of this conclusive unspoken reconciliation. “Yes, that is what I love him for,” Razumihin, exaggerating it all, muttered to himself, with a vigorous turn in his chair. “He has these movements.”

“And how well he does it all,” the mother was thinking to herself. “What generous impulses he has, and how simply, how delicately he put an end to all the misunderstanding with his sister — simply by holding out his hand at the right minute and looking at her like that.... And what fine eyes he has, and how fine his whole face is!... He is even better looking than Dounia.... But, good heavens, what a suit — how terribly he’s dressed!... Vasya, the messenger boy in Afanasy Ivanitch’s shop, is better dressed! I could rush at him and hug him... weep over him — but I am afraid.... Oh, dear, he’s so strange! He’s talking kindly, but I’m afraid! Why, what am I afraid of?...”

“Oh, Rodya, you wouldn’t believe,” she began suddenly, in haste to answer his words to her, “how unhappy Dounia and I were yesterday! Now that it’s all over and done with and we are quite happy again — I can tell you. Fancy, we ran here almost straight from the train to embrace you and that woman — ah, here she is! Good morning, Nastasya!... She told us at once that you were lying in a high fever and had just run away from the doctor in delirium, and they were looking for you in the streets. You can’t imagine how we felt! I couldn’t help thinking of the tragic end of Lieutenant Potanchikov, a friend of your father’s — you can’t remember him, Rodya — who ran out in the same way in a high fever and fell into the

well in the court-yard and they couldn’t pull him out till next day. Of course, we exaggerated things. We were on the point of rushing to find Pyotr Petrovitch to ask him to help.... Because we were alone, utterly alone,” she said plaintively and stopped short, suddenly, recollecting it was still somewhat dangerous to speak of Pyotr Petrovitch, although “we are quite happy again.”

“Yes, yes.... Of course it’s very annoying....” Raskolnikov muttered in reply, but with such a preoccupied and inattentive air that Dounia gazed at him in perplexity.

“What else was it I wanted to say?” He went on trying to recollect. “Oh, yes; mother, and you too, Dounia, please don’t think that I didn’t mean to come and see you to-day and was waiting for you to come first.”

“What are you saying, Rodya?” cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna. She, too, was surprised.

“Is he answering us as a duty?” Dounia wondered. “Is he being reconciled and asking forgiveness as though he were performing a rite or repeating a lesson?”

“I’ve only just waked up, and wanted to go to you, but was delayed owing to my clothes; I forgot yesterday to ask her... Nastasya... to wash out the blood... I’ve only just dressed.”

“Blood! What blood?” Pulcheria Alexandrovna asked in alarm.

“Oh, nothing — don’t be uneasy. It was when I was wandering about yesterday, rather delirious, I chanced upon a man who had been run over... a clerk...”

“Delirious? But you remember everything!” Razumihin interrupted.

“That’s true,” Raskolnikov answered with special carefulness. “I remember everything even to the slightest detail, and yet — why I did that and went there and said that, I can’t clearly explain now.”

“A familiar phenomenon,” interposed Zossimov, “actions are sometimes performed in a masterly and most cunning way, while the direction of the actions is deranged and dependent on various morbid impressions — it’s like a dream.”

“Perhaps it’s a good thing really that he should think me almost a madman,” thought Raskolnikov.

“Why, people in perfect health act in the same way too,” observed Dounia, looking uneasily at Zossimov.

“There is some truth in your observation,” the latter replied. “In that sense we are certainly all not infrequently like madmen, but with the slight difference that the deranged are somewhat madder, for we must draw a line. A normal man, it is true, hardly exists. Among dozens — perhaps hundreds of thousands — hardly one is to be met with.”

At the word “madman,” carelessly dropped by Zossimov in his chatter on his favourite subject, everyone frowned.

Raskolnikov sat seeming not to pay attention, plunged in thought with a strange smile on his pale lips. He was still meditating on something.

“Well, what about the man who was run over? I interrupted you!” Razumihin cried hastily.

“What?” Raskolnikov seemed to wake up. “Oh... I got spattered with blood helping to carry him to his lodging. By the way, mamma, I did an unpardonable thing yesterday. I was literally out of my mind. I gave away all the money you sent me... to his wife for the funeral. She’s a widow now, in consumption, a poor creature... three little children, starving... nothing in the house... there’s a daughter, too... perhaps you’d have given it yourself if you’d seen them. But I had no right to do it I admit, especially as I knew how you needed the money yourself. To help others one must have the right to do it, or else *Crevez, chiens, si vous n’êtes pas contents*.” He laughed, “That’s right, isn’t it, Dounia?”

“No, it’s not,” answered Dounia firmly.

“Bah! you, too, have ideals,” he muttered, looking at her almost with hatred, and smiling sarcastically. “I ought to have considered that.... Well, that’s praiseworthy, and it’s better for you... and if you reach a line you won’t overstep, you will be unhappy... and if you overstep it, maybe you will be still unhappier.... But all that’s nonsense,” he added irritably, vexed at being carried away. “I only meant to say that I beg your forgiveness, mother,” he concluded, shortly and abruptly.

“That’s enough, Rodya, I am sure that everything you do is very good,” said his mother, delighted.

“Don’t be too sure,” he answered, twisting his mouth into a smile.

A silence followed. There was a certain constraint in all this conversation, and in the silence, and in the reconciliation, and in the forgiveness, and all were feeling it.

“It is as though they were afraid of me,” Raskolnikov was thinking to himself, looking askance at his mother and sister. Pulcheria Alexandrovna

was indeed growing more timid the longer she kept silent.

“Yet in their absence I seemed to love them so much,” flashed through his mind.

“Do you know, Rodya, Marfa Petrovna is dead,” Pulcheria Alexandrovna suddenly blurted out.

“What Marfa Petrovna?”

“Oh, mercy on us — Marfa Petrovna Svidrigaïlov. I wrote you so much about her.”

“A-a-h! Yes, I remember.... So she’s dead! Oh, really?” he roused himself suddenly, as if waking up. “What did she die of?”

“Only imagine, quite suddenly,” Pulcheria Alexandrovna answered hurriedly, encouraged by his curiosity. “On the very day I was sending you that letter! Would you believe it, that awful man seems to have been the cause of her death. They say he beat her dreadfully.”

“Why, were they on such bad terms?” he asked, addressing his sister.

“Not at all. Quite the contrary indeed. With her, he was always very patient, considerate even. In fact, all those seven years of their married life he gave way to her, too much so indeed, in many cases. All of a sudden he seems to have lost patience.”

“Then he could not have been so awful if he controlled himself for seven years? You seem to be defending him, Dounia?”

“No, no, he’s an awful man! I can imagine nothing more awful!” Dounia answered, almost with a shudder, knitting her brows, and sinking into thought.

“That had happened in the morning,” Pulcheria Alexandrovna went on hurriedly. “And directly afterwards she ordered the horses to be harnessed to drive to the town immediately after dinner. She always used to drive to the town in such cases. She ate a very good dinner, I am told....”

“After the beating?”

“That was always her... habit; and immediately after dinner, so as not to be late in starting, she went to the bath-house.... You see, she was undergoing some treatment with baths. They have a cold spring there, and she used to bathe in it regularly every day, and no sooner had she got into the water when she suddenly had a stroke!”

“I should think so,” said Zossimov.

“And did he beat her badly?”

“What does that matter!” put in Dounia.

“H’m! But I don’t know why you want to tell us such gossip, mother,” said Raskolnikov irritably, as it were in spite of himself.

“Ah, my dear, I don’t know what to talk about,” broke from Pulcheria Alexandrovna.

“Why, are you all afraid of me?” he asked, with a constrained smile.

“That’s certainly true,” said Dounia, looking directly and sternly at her brother. “Mother was crossing herself with terror as she came up the stairs.”

His face worked, as though in convulsion.

“Ach, what are you saying, Dounia! Don’t be angry, please, Rodya.... Why did you say that, Dounia?” Pulcheria Alexandrovna began, overwhelmed— “You see, coming here, I was dreaming all the way, in the train, how we should meet, how we should talk over everything together.... And I was so happy, I did not notice the journey! But what am I saying? I am happy now.... You should not, Dounia.... I am happy now — simply in seeing you, Rodya....”

“Hush, mother,” he muttered in confusion, not looking at her, but pressing her hand. “We shall have time to speak freely of everything!”

As he said this, he was suddenly overwhelmed with confusion and turned pale. Again that awful sensation he had known of late passed with deadly chill over his soul. Again it became suddenly plain and perceptible to him that he had just told a fearful lie — that he would never now be able to speak freely of everything — that he would never again be able to *speak* of anything to anyone. The anguish of this thought was such that for a moment he almost forgot himself. He got up from his seat, and not looking at anyone walked towards the door.

“What are you about?” cried Razumihin, clutching him by the arm.

He sat down again, and began looking about him, in silence. They were all looking at him in perplexity.

“But what are you all so dull for?” he shouted, suddenly and quite unexpectedly. “Do say something! What’s the use of sitting like this? Come, do speak. Let us talk.... We meet together and sit in silence.... Come, anything!”

“Thank God; I was afraid the same thing as yesterday was beginning again,” said Pulcheria Alexandrovna, crossing herself.

“What is the matter, Rodya?” asked Avdotya Romanovna, distrustfully.

“Oh, nothing! I remembered something,” he answered, and suddenly laughed.

“Well, if you remembered something; that’s all right!... I was beginning to think..,” muttered Zossimov, getting up from the sofa. “It is time for me to be off. I will look in again perhaps... if I can...” He made his bows, and went out.

“What an excellent man!” observed Pulcheria Alexandrovna.

“Yes, excellent, splendid, well-educated, intelligent,” Raskolnikov began, suddenly speaking with surprising rapidity, and a liveliness he had not shown till then. “I can’t remember where I met him before my illness.... I believe I have met him somewhere —— ... And this is a good man, too,” he nodded at Razumihin. “Do you like him, Dounia?” he asked her; and suddenly, for some unknown reason, laughed.

“Very much,” answered Dounia.

“Foo! — what a pig you are!” Razumihin protested, blushing in terrible confusion, and he got up from his chair. Pulcheria Alexandrovna smiled faintly, but Raskolnikov laughed aloud.

“Where are you off to?”

“I must go.”

“You need not at all. Stay. Zossimov has gone, so you must. Don’t go. What’s the time? Is it twelve o’clock? What a pretty watch you have got, Dounia. But why are you all silent again? I do all the talking.”

“It was a present from Marfa Petrovna,” answered Dounia.

“And a very expensive one!” added Pulcheria Alexandrovna.

“A-ah! What a big one! Hardly like a lady’s.”

“I like that sort,” said Dounia.

“So it is not a present from her *fiancé,*” thought Razumihin, and was unreasonably delighted.

“I thought it was Luzhin’s present,” observed Raskolnikov.

“No, he has not made Dounia any presents yet.”

“A-ah! And do you remember, mother, I was in love and wanted to get married?” he said suddenly, looking at his mother, who was disconcerted by the sudden change of subject and the way he spoke of it.

“Oh, yes, my dear.”

Pulcheria Alexandrovna exchanged glances with Dounia and Razumihin.

“H’m, yes. What shall I tell you? I don’t remember much indeed. She was such a sickly girl,” he went on, growing dreamy and looking down again. “Quite an invalid. She was fond of giving alms to the poor, and was always dreaming of a nunnery, and once she burst into tears when she began

talking to me about it. Yes, yes, I remember. I remember very well. She was an ugly little thing. I really don’t know what drew me to her then — I think it was because she was always ill. If she had been lame or hunchback, I believe I should have liked her better still,” he smiled dreamily. “Yes, it was a sort of spring delirium.”

“No, it was not only spring delirium,” said Dounia, with warm feeling.

He fixed a strained intent look on his sister, but did not hear or did not understand her words. Then, completely lost in thought, he got up, went up to his mother, kissed her, went back to his place and sat down.

“You love her even now?” said Pulcheria Alexandrovna, touched.

“Her? Now? Oh, yes.... You ask about her? No... that’s all now, as it were, in another world... and so long ago. And indeed everything happening here seems somehow far away.” He looked attentively at them. “You, now... I seem to be looking at you from a thousand miles away... but, goodness knows why we are talking of that! And what’s the use of asking about it?” he added with annoyance, and biting his nails, fell into dreamy silence again.

“What a wretched lodging you have, Rodya! It’s like a tomb,” said Pulcheria Alexandrovna, suddenly breaking the oppressive silence. “I am sure it’s quite half through your lodging you have become so melancholy.”

“My lodging,” he answered, listlessly. “Yes, the lodging had a great deal to do with it.... I thought that, too.... If only you knew, though, what a strange thing you said just now, mother,” he said, laughing strangely.

A little more, and their companionship, this mother and this sister, with him after three years’ absence, this intimate tone of conversation, in face of the utter impossibility of really speaking about anything, would have been beyond his power of endurance. But there was one urgent matter which must be settled one way or the other that day — so he had decided when he woke. Now he was glad to remember it, as a means of escape.

“Listen, Dounia,” he began, gravely and drily, “of course I beg your pardon for yesterday, but I consider it my duty to tell you again that I do not withdraw from my chief point. It is me or Luzhin. If I am a scoundrel, you must not be. One is enough. If you marry Luzhin, I cease at once to look on you as a sister.”

“Rodya, Rodya! It is the same as yesterday again,” Pulcheria Alexandrovna cried, mournfully. “And why do you call yourself a scoundrel? I can’t bear it. You said the same yesterday.”

“Brother,” Dounia answered firmly and with the same dryness. “In all this there is a mistake on your part. I thought it over at night, and found out the mistake. It is all because you seem to fancy I am sacrificing myself to someone and for someone. That is not the case at all. I am simply marrying for my own sake, because things are hard for me. Though, of course, I shall be glad if I succeed in being useful to my family. But that is not the chief motive for my decision....”

“She is lying,” he thought to himself, biting his nails vindictively. “Proud creature! She won’t admit she wants to do it out of charity! Too haughty! Oh, base characters! They even love as though they hate.... Oh, how I... hate them all!”

“In fact,” continued Dounia, “I am marrying Pyotr Petrovitch because of two evils I choose the less. I intend to do honestly all he expects of me, so I am not deceiving him.... Why did you smile just now?” She, too, flushed, and there was a gleam of anger in her eyes.

“All?” he asked, with a malignant grin.

“Within certain limits. Both the manner and form of Pyotr Petrovitch’s courtship showed me at once what he wanted. He may, of course, think too well of himself, but I hope he esteems me, too.... Why are you laughing again?”

“And why are you blushing again? You are lying, sister. You are intentionally lying, simply from feminine obstinacy, simply to hold your own against me.... You cannot respect Luzhin. I have seen him and talked with him. So you are selling yourself for money, and so in any case you are acting basely, and I am glad at least that you can blush for it.”

“It is not true. I am not lying,” cried Dounia, losing her composure. “I would not marry him if I were not convinced that he esteems me and thinks highly of me. I would not marry him if I were not firmly convinced that I can respect him. Fortunately, I can have convincing proof of it this very day... and such a marriage is not a vileness, as you say! And even if you were right, if I really had determined on a vile action, is it not merciless on your part to speak to me like that? Why do you demand of me a heroism that perhaps you have not either? It is despotism; it is tyranny. If I ruin anyone, it is only myself.... I am not committing a murder. Why do you look at me like that? Why are you so pale? Rodya, darling, what’s the matter?”

“Good heavens! You have made him faint,” cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna.

“No, no, nonsense! It’s nothing. A little giddiness — not fainting. You have fainting on the brain. H’m, yes, what was I saying? Oh, yes. In what way will you get convincing proof to-day that you can respect him, and that he... esteems you, as you said. I think you said to-day?”

“Mother, show Rodya Pyotr Petrovitch’s letter,” said Dounia.

With trembling hands, Pulcheria Alexandrovna gave him the letter. He took it with great interest, but, before opening it, he suddenly looked with a sort of wonder at Dounia.

“It is strange,” he said, slowly, as though struck by a new idea. “What am I making such a fuss for? What is it all about? Marry whom you like!”

He said this as though to himself, but said it aloud, and looked for some time at his sister, as though puzzled. He opened the letter at last, still with the same look of strange wonder on his face. Then, slowly and attentively, he began reading, and read it through twice. Pulcheria Alexandrovna showed marked anxiety, and all indeed expected something particular.

“What surprises me,” he began, after a short pause, handing the letter to his mother, but not addressing anyone in particular, “is that he is a business man, a lawyer, and his conversation is pretentious indeed, and yet he writes such an uneducated letter.”

They all started. They had expected something quite different.

“But they all write like that, you know,” Razumihin observed, abruptly.

“Have you read it?”

“Yes.”

“We showed him, Rodya. We... consulted him just now,” Pulcheria Alexandrovna began, embarrassed.

“That’s just the jargon of the courts,” Razumihin put in. “Legal documents are written like that to this day.”

“Legal? Yes, it’s just legal — business language — not so very uneducated, and not quite educated — business language!”

“Pyotr Petrovitch makes no secret of the fact that he had a cheap education, he is proud indeed of having made his own way,” Avdotya Romanovna observed, somewhat offended by her brother’s tone.

“Well, if he’s proud of it, he has reason, I don’t deny it. You seem to be offended, sister, at my making only such a frivolous criticism on the letter, and to think that I speak of such trifling matters on purpose to annoy you. It is quite the contrary, an observation apropos of the style occurred to me that is by no means irrelevant as things stand. There is one expression, ‘blame

yourselves' put in very significantly and plainly, and there is besides a threat that he will go away at once if I am present. That threat to go away is equivalent to a threat to abandon you both if you are disobedient, and to abandon you now after summoning you to Petersburg. Well, what do you think? Can one resent such an expression from Luzhin, as we should if he (he pointed to Razumihin) had written it, or Zossimov, or one of us?"

"N-no," answered Dounia, with more animation. "I saw clearly that it was too naïvely expressed, and that perhaps he simply has no skill in writing... that is a true criticism, brother. I did not expect, indeed..."

"It is expressed in legal style, and sounds coarser than perhaps he intended. But I must disillusion you a little. There is one expression in the letter, one slander about me, and rather a contemptible one. I gave the money last night to the widow, a woman in consumption, crushed with trouble, and not 'on the pretext of the funeral,' but simply to pay for the funeral, and not to the daughter — a young woman, as he writes, of notorious behaviour (whom I saw last night for the first time in my life) — but to the widow. In all this I see a too hasty desire to slander me and to raise dissension between us. It is expressed again in legal jargon, that is to say, with a too obvious display of the aim, and with a very naïve eagerness. He is a man of intelligence, but to act sensibly, intelligence is not enough. It all shows the man and... I don't think he has a great esteem for you. I tell you this simply to warn you, because I sincerely wish for your good..."

Dounia did not reply. Her resolution had been taken. She was only awaiting the evening.

"Then what is your decision, Rodya?" asked Pulcheria Alexandrovna, who was more uneasy than ever at the sudden, new businesslike tone of his talk.

"What decision?"

"You see Pyotr Petrovitch writes that you are not to be with us this evening, and that he will go away if you come. So will you... come?"

"That, of course, is not for me to decide, but for you first, if you are not offended by such a request; and secondly, by Dounia, if she, too, is not offended. I will do what you think best," he added, drily.

"Dounia has already decided, and I fully agree with her," Pulcheria Alexandrovna hastened to declare.

"I decided to ask you, Rodya, to urge you not to fail to be with us at this interview," said Dounia. "Will you come?"

“Yes.”

“I will ask you, too, to be with us at eight o’clock,” she said, addressing Razumihin. “Mother, I am inviting him, too.”

“Quite right, Dounia. Well, since you have decided,” added Pulcheria Alexandrovna, “so be it. I shall feel easier myself. I do not like concealment and deception. Better let us have the whole truth.... Pyotr Petrovitch may be angry or not, now!”

CHAPTER IV

At that moment the door was softly opened, and a young girl walked into the room, looking timidly about her. Everyone turned towards her with surprise and curiosity. At first sight, Raskolnikov did not recognise her. It was Sofya Semyonovna Marmeladov. He had seen her yesterday for the first time, but at such a moment, in such surroundings and in such a dress, that his memory retained a very different image of her. Now she was a modestly and poorly-dressed young girl, very young, indeed, almost like a child, with a modest and refined manner, with a candid but somewhat frightened-looking face. She was wearing a very plain indoor dress, and had on a shabby old-fashioned hat, but she still carried a parasol. Unexpectedly finding the room full of people, she was not so much embarrassed as completely overwhelmed with shyness, like a little child. She was even about to retreat. “Oh... it’s you!” said Raskolnikov, extremely astonished, and he, too, was confused. He at once recollected that his mother and sister knew through Luzhin’s letter of “some young woman of notorious behaviour.” He had only just been protesting against Luzhin’s calumny and declaring that he had seen the girl last night for the first time, and suddenly she had walked in. He remembered, too, that he had not protested against the expression “of notorious behaviour.” All this passed vaguely and fleetingly through his brain, but looking at her more intently, he saw that the humiliated creature was so humiliated that he felt suddenly sorry for her. When she made a movement to retreat in terror, it sent a pang to his heart.

“I did not expect you,” he said, hurriedly, with a look that made her stop. “Please sit down. You come, no doubt, from Katerina Ivanovna. Allow me — not there. Sit here....”

At Sonia’s entrance, Razumihin, who had been sitting on one of Raskolnikov’s three chairs, close to the door, got up to allow her to enter. Raskolnikov had at first shown her the place on the sofa where Zossimov had been sitting, but feeling that the sofa which served him as a bed, was too *familiar* a place, he hurriedly motioned her to Razumihin’s chair.

“You sit here,” he said to Razumihin, putting him on the sofa.

Sonia sat down, almost shaking with terror, and looked timidly at the two ladies. It was evidently almost inconceivable to herself that she could sit

down beside them. At the thought of it, she was so frightened that she hurriedly got up again, and in utter confusion addressed Raskolnikov.

“I... I... have come for one minute. Forgive me for disturbing you,” she began falteringly. “I come from Katerina Ivanovna, and she had no one to send. Katerina Ivanovna told me to beg you... to be at the service... in the morning... at Mitrofanievsky... and then... to us... to her... to do her the honour... she told me to beg you...” Sonia stammered and ceased speaking.

“I will try, certainly, most certainly,” answered Raskolnikov. He, too, stood up, and he, too, faltered and could not finish his sentence. “Please sit down,” he said, suddenly. “I want to talk to you. You are perhaps in a hurry, but please, be so kind, spare me two minutes,” and he drew up a chair for her.

Sonia sat down again, and again timidly she took a hurried, frightened look at the two ladies, and dropped her eyes. Raskolnikov’s pale face flushed, a shudder passed over him, his eyes glowed.

“Mother,” he said, firmly and insistently, “this is Sofya Semyonovna Marmeladov, the daughter of that unfortunate Mr. Marmeladov, who was run over yesterday before my eyes, and of whom I was just telling you.”

Pulcheria Alexandrovna glanced at Sonia, and slightly screwed up her eyes. In spite of her embarrassment before Rodya’s urgent and challenging look, she could not deny herself that satisfaction. Dounia gazed gravely and intently into the poor girl’s face, and scrutinised her with perplexity. Sonia, hearing herself introduced, tried to raise her eyes again, but was more embarrassed than ever.

“I wanted to ask you,” said Raskolnikov, hastily, “how things were arranged yesterday. You were not worried by the police, for instance?”

“No, that was all right... it was too evident, the cause of death... they did not worry us... only the lodgers are angry.”

“Why?”

“At the body’s remaining so long. You see it is hot now. So that, to-day, they will carry it to the cemetery, into the chapel, until to-morrow. At first Katerina Ivanovna was unwilling, but now she sees herself that it’s necessary...”

“To-day, then?”

“She begs you to do us the honour to be in the church to-morrow for the service, and then to be present at the funeral lunch.”

“She is giving a funeral lunch?”

“Yes... just a little.... She told me to thank you very much for helping us yesterday. But for you, we should have had nothing for the funeral.”

All at once her lips and chin began trembling, but, with an effort, she controlled herself, looking down again.

During the conversation, Raskolnikov watched her carefully. She had a thin, very thin, pale little face, rather irregular and angular, with a sharp little nose and chin. She could not have been called pretty, but her blue eyes were so clear, and when they lighted up, there was such a kindliness and simplicity in her expression that one could not help being attracted. Her face, and her whole figure indeed, had another peculiar characteristic. In spite of her eighteen years, she looked almost a little girl — almost a child. And in some of her gestures, this childishness seemed almost absurd.

“But has Katerina Ivanovna been able to manage with such small means? Does she even mean to have a funeral lunch?” Raskolnikov asked, persistently keeping up the conversation.

“The coffin will be plain, of course... and everything will be plain, so it won’t cost much. Katerina Ivanovna and I have reckoned it all out, so that there will be enough left... and Katerina Ivanovna was very anxious it should be so. You know one can’t... it’s a comfort to her... she is like that, you know....”

“I understand, I understand... of course... why do you look at my room like that? My mother has just said it is like a tomb.”

“You gave us everything yesterday,” Sonia said suddenly, in reply, in a loud rapid whisper; and again she looked down in confusion. Her lips and chin were trembling once more. She had been struck at once by Raskolnikov’s poor surroundings, and now these words broke out spontaneously. A silence followed. There was a light in Dounia’s eyes, and even Pulcheria Alexandrovna looked kindly at Sonia.

“Rodya,” she said, getting up, “we shall have dinner together, of course. Come, Dounia.... And you, Rodya, had better go for a little walk, and then rest and lie down before you come to see us.... I am afraid we have exhausted you....”

“Yes, yes, I’ll come,” he answered, getting up fussily. “But I have something to see to.”

“But surely you will have dinner together?” cried Razumihin, looking in surprise at Raskolnikov. “What do you mean?”

“Yes, yes, I am coming... of course, of course! And you stay a minute. You do not want him just now, do you, mother? Or perhaps I am taking him from you?”

“Oh, no, no. And will you, Dmitri Prokofitch, do us the favour of dining with us?”

“Please do,” added Dounia.

Razumihin bowed, positively radiant. For one moment, they were all strangely embarrassed.

“Good-bye, Rodya, that is till we meet. I do not like saying good-bye. Good-bye, Nastasya. Ah, I have said good-bye again.”

Pulcheria Alexandrovna meant to greet Sonia, too; but it somehow failed to come off, and she went in a flutter out of the room.

But Avdotya Romanovna seemed to await her turn, and following her mother out, gave Sonia an attentive, courteous bow. Sonia, in confusion, gave a hurried, frightened curtsy. There was a look of poignant discomfort in her face, as though Avdotya Romanovna’s courtesy and attention were oppressive and painful to her.

“Dounia, good-bye,” called Raskolnikov, in the passage. “Give me your hand.”

“Why, I did give it to you. Have you forgotten?” said Dounia, turning warmly and awkwardly to him.

“Never mind, give it to me again.” And he squeezed her fingers warmly.

Dounia smiled, flushed, pulled her hand away, and went off quite happy.

“Come, that’s capital,” he said to Sonia, going back and looking brightly at her. “God give peace to the dead, the living have still to live. That is right, isn’t it?”

Sonia looked surprised at the sudden brightness of his face. He looked at her for some moments in silence. The whole history of the dead father floated before his memory in those moments....

“Heavens, Dounia,” Pulcheria Alexandrovna began, as soon as they were in the street, “I really feel relieved myself at coming away — more at ease. How little did I think yesterday in the train that I could ever be glad of that.”

“I tell you again, mother, he is still very ill. Don’t you see it? Perhaps worrying about us upset him. We must be patient, and much, much can be forgiven.”

“Well, you were not very patient!” Pulcheria Alexandrovna caught her up, hotly and jealously. “Do you know, Dounia, I was looking at you two. You are the very portrait of him, and not so much in face as in soul. You are both melancholy, both morose and hot-tempered, both haughty and both generous.... Surely he can’t be an egoist, Dounia. Eh? When I think of what is in store for us this evening, my heart sinks!”

“Don’t be uneasy, mother. What must be, will be.”

“Dounia, only think what a position we are in! What if Pyotr Petrovitch breaks it off?” poor Pulcheria Alexandrovna blurted out, incautiously.

“He won’t be worth much if he does,” answered Dounia, sharply and contemptuously.

“We did well to come away,” Pulcheria Alexandrovna hurriedly broke in. “He was in a hurry about some business or other. If he gets out and has a breath of air... it is fearfully close in his room.... But where is one to get a breath of air here? The very streets here feel like shut-up rooms. Good heavens! what a town!... stay... this side... they will crush you — carrying something. Why, it is a piano they have got, I declare... how they push!... I am very much afraid of that young woman, too.”

“What young woman, mother?

“Why, that Sofya Semyonovna, who was there just now.”

“Why?”

“I have a presentiment, Dounia. Well, you may believe it or not, but as soon as she came in, that very minute, I felt that she was the chief cause of the trouble....”

“Nothing of the sort!” cried Dounia, in vexation. “What nonsense, with your presentiments, mother! He only made her acquaintance the evening before, and he did not know her when she came in.”

“Well, you will see.... She worries me; but you will see, you will see! I was so frightened. She was gazing at me with those eyes. I could scarcely sit still in my chair when he began introducing her, do you remember? It seems so strange, but Pyotr Petrovitch writes like that about her, and he introduces her to us — to you! So he must think a great deal of her.”

“People will write anything. We were talked about and written about, too. Have you forgotten? I am sure that she is a good girl, and that it is all nonsense.”

“God grant it may be!”

“And Pyotr Petrovitch is a contemptible slanderer,” Dounia snapped out, suddenly.

Pulcheria Alexandrovna was crushed; the conversation was not resumed.

“I will tell you what I want with you,” said Raskolnikov, drawing Razumihin to the window.

“Then I will tell Katerina Ivanovna that you are coming,” Sonia said hurriedly, preparing to depart.

“One minute, Sofya Semyonovna. We have no secrets. You are not in our way. I want to have another word or two with you. Listen!” he turned suddenly to Razumihin again. “You know that... what’s his name... Porfiry Petrovitch?”

“I should think so! He is a relation. Why?” added the latter, with interest.

“Is not he managing that case... you know, about that murder?... You were speaking about it yesterday.”

“Yes... well?” Razumihin’s eyes opened wide.

“He was inquiring for people who had pawned things, and I have some pledges there, too — trifles — a ring my sister gave me as a keepsake when I left home, and my father’s silver watch — they are only worth five or six roubles altogether... but I value them. So what am I to do now? I do not want to lose the things, especially the watch. I was quaking just now, for fear mother would ask to look at it, when we spoke of Dounia’s watch. It is the only thing of father’s left us. She would be ill if it were lost. You know what women are. So tell me what to do. I know I ought to have given notice at the police station, but would it not be better to go straight to Porfiry? Eh? What do you think? The matter might be settled more quickly. You see, mother may ask for it before dinner.”

“Certainly not to the police station. Certainly to Porfiry,” Razumihin shouted in extraordinary excitement. “Well, how glad I am. Let us go at once. It is a couple of steps. We shall be sure to find him.”

“Very well, let us go.”

“And he will be very, very glad to make your acquaintance. I have often talked to him of you at different times. I was speaking of you yesterday. Let us go. So you knew the old woman? So that’s it! It is all turning out splendidly.... Oh, yes, Sofya Ivanovna...”

“Sofya Semyonovna,” corrected Raskolnikov. “Sofya Semyonovna, this is my friend Razumihin, and he is a good man.”

“If you have to go now,” Sonia was beginning, not looking at Razumihin at all, and still more embarrassed.

“Let us go,” decided Raskolnikov. “I will come to you to-day, Sofya Semyonovna. Only tell me where you live.”

He was not exactly ill at ease, but seemed hurried, and avoided her eyes. Sonia gave her address, and flushed as she did so. They all went out together.

“Don’t you lock up?” asked Razumihin, following him on to the stairs.

“Never,” answered Raskolnikov. “I have been meaning to buy a lock for these two years. People are happy who have no need of locks,” he said, laughing, to Sonia. They stood still in the gateway.

“Do you go to the right, Sofya Semyonovna? How did you find me, by the way?” he added, as though he wanted to say something quite different. He wanted to look at her soft clear eyes, but this was not easy.

“Why, you gave your address to Polenka yesterday.”

“Polenka? Oh, yes; Polenka, that is the little girl. She is your sister? Did I give her the address?”

“Why, had you forgotten?”

“No, I remember.”

“I had heard my father speak of you... only I did not know your name, and he did not know it. And now I came... and as I had learnt your name, I asked to-day, ‘Where does Mr. Raskolnikov live?’ I did not know you had only a room too.... Good-bye, I will tell Katerina Ivanovna.”

She was extremely glad to escape at last; she went away looking down, hurrying to get out of sight as soon as possible, to walk the twenty steps to the turning on the right and to be at last alone, and then moving rapidly along, looking at no one, noticing nothing, to think, to remember, to meditate on every word, every detail. Never, never had she felt anything like this. Dimly and unconsciously a whole new world was opening before her. She remembered suddenly that Raskolnikov meant to come to her that day, perhaps at once!

“Only not to-day, please, not to-day!” she kept muttering with a sinking heart, as though entreating someone, like a frightened child. “Mercy! to me... to that room... he will see... oh, dear!”

She was not capable at that instant of noticing an unknown gentleman who was watching her and following at her heels. He had accompanied her from the gateway. At the moment when Razumihin, Raskolnikov, and she

stood still at parting on the pavement, this gentleman, who was just passing, started on hearing Sonia's words: "and I asked where Mr. Raskolnikov lived?" He turned a rapid but attentive look upon all three, especially upon Raskolnikov, to whom Sonia was speaking; then looked back and noted the house. All this was done in an instant as he passed, and trying not to betray his interest, he walked on more slowly as though waiting for something. He was waiting for Sonia; he saw that they were parting, and that Sonia was going home.

"Home? Where? I've seen that face somewhere," he thought. "I must find out."

At the turning he crossed over, looked round, and saw Sonia coming the same way, noticing nothing. She turned the corner. He followed her on the other side. After about fifty paces he crossed over again, overtook her and kept two or three yards behind her.

He was a man about fifty, rather tall and thickly set, with broad high shoulders which made him look as though he stooped a little. He wore good and fashionable clothes, and looked like a gentleman of position. He carried a handsome cane, which he tapped on the pavement at each step; his gloves were spotless. He had a broad, rather pleasant face with high cheek-bones and a fresh colour, not often seen in Petersburg. His flaxen hair was still abundant, and only touched here and there with grey, and his thick square beard was even lighter than his hair. His eyes were blue and had a cold and thoughtful look; his lips were crimson. He was a remarkedly well-preserved man and looked much younger than his years.

When Sonia came out on the canal bank, they were the only two persons on the pavement. He observed her dreaminess and preoccupation. On reaching the house where she lodged, Sonia turned in at the gate; he followed her, seeming rather surprised. In the courtyard she turned to the right corner. "Bah!" muttered the unknown gentleman, and mounted the stairs behind her. Only then Sonia noticed him. She reached the third storey, turned down the passage, and rang at No. 9. On the door was inscribed in chalk, "Kapernaumov, Tailor."

"Bah!" the stranger repeated again, wondering at the strange coincidence, and he rang next door, at No. 8. The doors were two or three yards apart.

"You lodge at Kapernaumov's," he said, looking at Sonia and laughing. "He altered a waistcoat for me yesterday. I am staying close here at

Madame Resslich’s. How odd!” Sonia looked at him attentively.

“We are neighbours,” he went on gaily. “I only came to town the day before yesterday. Good-bye for the present.”

Sonia made no reply; the door opened and she slipped in. She felt for some reason ashamed and uneasy.

On the way to Porfiry’s, Razumihin was obviously excited.

“That’s capital, brother,” he repeated several times, “and I am glad! I am glad!”

“What are you glad about?” Raskolnikov thought to himself.

“I didn’t know that you pledged things at the old woman’s, too. And... was it long ago? I mean, was it long since you were there?”

“What a simple-hearted fool he is!”

“When was it?” Raskolnikov stopped still to recollect. “Two or three days before her death it must have been. But I am not going to redeem the things now,” he put in with a sort of hurried and conspicuous solicitude about the things. “I’ve not more than a silver rouble left... after last night’s accursed delirium!”

He laid special emphasis on the delirium.

“Yes, yes,” Razumihin hastened to agree — with what was not clear. “Then that’s why you... were stuck... partly... you know in your delirium you were continually mentioning some rings or chains! Yes, yes... that’s clear, it’s all clear now.”

“Hullo! How that idea must have got about among them. Here this man will go to the stake for me, and I find him delighted at having it *cleared up* why I spoke of rings in my delirium! What a hold the idea must have on all of them!”

“Shall we find him?” he asked suddenly.

“Oh, yes,” Razumihin answered quickly. “He is a nice fellow, you will see, brother. Rather clumsy, that is to say, he is a man of polished manners, but I mean clumsy in a different sense. He is an intelligent fellow, very much so indeed, but he has his own range of ideas.... He is incredulous, sceptical, cynical... he likes to impose on people, or rather to make fun of them. His is the old, circumstantial method.... But he understands his work... thoroughly.... Last year he cleared up a case of murder in which the police had hardly a clue. He is very, very anxious to make your acquaintance!”

“On what grounds is he so anxious?”

“Oh, it’s not exactly... you see, since you’ve been ill I happen to have mentioned you several times.... So, when he heard about you... about your being a law student and not able to finish your studies, he said, ‘What a pity!’ And so I concluded... from everything together, not only that; yesterday Zametov... you know, Rodya, I talked some nonsense on the way home to you yesterday, when I was drunk... I am afraid, brother, of your exaggerating it, you see.”

“What? That they think I am a madman? Maybe they are right,” he said with a constrained smile.

“Yes, yes.... That is, pooh, no!... But all that I said (and there was something else too) it was all nonsense, drunken nonsense.”

“But why are you apologising? I am so sick of it all!” Raskolnikov cried with exaggerated irritability. It was partly assumed, however.

“I know, I know, I understand. Believe me, I understand. One’s ashamed to speak of it.”

“If you are ashamed, then don’t speak of it.”

Both were silent. Razumihin was more than ecstatic and Raskolnikov perceived it with repulsion. He was alarmed, too, by what Razumihin had just said about Porfiry.

“I shall have to pull a long face with him too,” he thought, with a beating heart, and he turned white, “and do it naturally, too. But the most natural thing would be to do nothing at all. Carefully do nothing at all! No, *carefully* would not be natural again.... Oh, well, we shall see how it turns out.... We shall see... directly. Is it a good thing to go or not? The butterfly flies to the light. My heart is beating, that’s what’s bad!”

“In this grey house,” said Razumihin.

“The most important thing, does Porfiry know that I was at the old hag’s flat yesterday... and asked about the blood? I must find that out instantly, as soon as I go in, find out from his face; otherwise... I’ll find out, if it’s my ruin.”

“I say, brother,” he said suddenly, addressing Razumihin, with a sly smile, “I have been noticing all day that you seem to be curiously excited. Isn’t it so?”

“Excited? Not a bit of it,” said Razumihin, stung to the quick.

“Yes, brother, I assure you it’s noticeable. Why, you sat on your chair in a way you never do sit, on the edge somehow, and you seemed to be

writhing all the time. You kept jumping up for nothing. One moment you were angry, and the next your face looked like a sweetmeat. You even blushed; especially when you were invited to dinner, you blushed awfully."

"Nothing of the sort, nonsense! What do you mean?"

"But why are you wriggling out of it, like a schoolboy? By Jove, there he's blushing again."

"What a pig you are!"

"But why are you so shamefaced about it? Romeo! Stay, I'll tell of you to-day. Ha-ha-ha! I'll make mother laugh, and someone else, too..."

"Listen, listen, listen, this is serious.... What next, you fiend!" Razumihin was utterly overwhelmed, turning cold with horror. "What will you tell them? Come, brother... foo! what a pig you are!"

"You are like a summer rose. And if only you knew how it suits you; a Romeo over six foot high! And how you've washed to-day — you cleaned your nails, I declare. Eh? That's something unheard of! Why, I do believe you've got pomatum on your hair! Bend down."

"Pig!"

Raskolnikov laughed as though he could not restrain himself. So laughing, they entered Porfiry Petrovitch's flat. This is what Raskolnikov wanted: from within they could be heard laughing as they came in, still guffawing in the passage.

"Not a word here or I'll... brain you!" Razumihin whispered furiously, seizing Raskolnikov by the shoulder.

CHAPTER V

Raskolnikov was already entering the room. He came in looking as though he had the utmost difficulty not to burst out laughing again. Behind him Razumihin strode in gawky and awkward, shamefaced and red as a peony, with an utterly crestfallen and ferocious expression. His face and whole figure really were ridiculous at that moment and amply justified Raskolnikov's laughter. Raskolnikov, not waiting for an introduction, bowed to Porfiry Petrovitch, who stood in the middle of the room looking inquiringly at them. He held out his hand and shook hands, still apparently making desperate efforts to subdue his mirth and utter a few words to introduce himself. But he had no sooner succeeded in assuming a serious air and muttering something when he suddenly glanced again as though accidentally at Razumihin, and could no longer control himself: his stifled laughter broke out the more irresistibly the more he tried to restrain it. The extraordinary ferocity with which Razumihin received this "spontaneous" mirth gave the whole scene the appearance of most genuine fun and naturalness. Razumihin strengthened this impression as though on purpose.

"Fool! You fiend," he roared, waving his arm which at once struck a little round table with an empty tea-glass on it. Everything was sent flying and crashing.

"But why break chairs, gentlemen? You know it's a loss to the Crown," Porfiry Petrovitch quoted gaily.

Raskolnikov was still laughing, with his hand in Porfiry Petrovitch's, but anxious not to overdo it, awaited the right moment to put a natural end to it. Razumihin, completely put to confusion by upsetting the table and smashing the glass, gazed gloomily at the fragments, cursed and turned sharply to the window where he stood looking out with his back to the company with a fiercely scowling countenance, seeing nothing. Porfiry Petrovitch laughed and was ready to go on laughing, but obviously looked for explanations. Zametov had been sitting in the corner, but he rose at the visitors' entrance and was standing in expectation with a smile on his lips, though he looked with surprise and even it seemed incredulity at the whole scene and at Raskolnikov with a certain embarrassment. Zametov's unexpected presence struck Raskolnikov unpleasantly.

“I’ve got to think of that,” he thought. “Excuse me, please,” he began, affecting extreme embarrassment. “Raskolnikov.”

“Not at all, very pleasant to see you... and how pleasantly you’ve come in.... Why, won’t he even say good-morning?” Porfiry Petrovitch nodded at Razumihin.

“Upon my honour I don’t know why he is in such a rage with me. I only told him as we came along that he was like Romeo... and proved it. And that was all, I think!”

“Pig!” ejaculated Razumihin, without turning round.

“There must have been very grave grounds for it, if he is so furious at the word,” Porfiry laughed.

“Oh, you sharp lawyer!... Damn you all!” snapped Razumihin, and suddenly bursting out laughing himself, he went up to Porfiry with a more cheerful face as though nothing had happened. “That’ll do! We are all fools. To come to business. This is my friend Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov; in the first place he has heard of you and wants to make your acquaintance, and secondly, he has a little matter of business with you. Bah! Zametov, what brought you here? Have you met before? Have you known each other long?”

“What does this mean?” thought Raskolnikov uneasily.

Zametov seemed taken aback, but not very much so.

“Why, it was at your rooms we met yesterday,” he said easily.

“Then I have been spared the trouble. All last week he was begging me to introduce him to you. Porfiry and you have sniffed each other out without me. Where is your tobacco?”

Porfiry Petrovitch was wearing a dressing-gown, very clean linen, and trodden-down slippers. He was a man of about five and thirty, short, stout even to corpulence, and clean shaven. He wore his hair cut short and had a large round head, particularly prominent at the back. His soft, round, rather snub-nosed face was of a sickly yellowish colour, but had a vigorous and rather ironical expression. It would have been good-natured except for a look in the eyes, which shone with a watery, mawkish light under almost white, blinking eyelashes. The expression of those eyes was strangely out of keeping with his somewhat womanish figure, and gave it something far more serious than could be guessed at first sight.

As soon as Porfiry Petrovitch heard that his visitor had a little matter of business with him, he begged him to sit down on the sofa and sat down

himself on the other end, waiting for him to explain his business, with that careful and over-serious attention which is at once oppressive and embarrassing, especially to a stranger, and especially if what you are discussing is in your opinion of far too little importance for such exceptional solemnity. But in brief and coherent phrases Raskolnikov explained his business clearly and exactly, and was so well satisfied with himself that he even succeeded in taking a good look at Porfiry. Porfiry Petrovitch did not once take his eyes off him. Razumihin, sitting opposite at the same table, listened warmly and impatiently, looking from one to the other every moment with rather excessive interest.

“Fool,” Raskolnikov swore to himself.

“You have to give information to the police,” Porfiry replied, with a most businesslike air, “that having learnt of this incident, that is of the murder, you beg to inform the lawyer in charge of the case that such and such things belong to you, and that you desire to redeem them... or... but they will write to you.”

“That’s just the point, that at the present moment,” Raskolnikov tried his utmost to feign embarrassment, “I am not quite in funds... and even this trifling sum is beyond me... I only wanted, you see, for the present to declare that the things are mine, and that when I have money....”

“That’s no matter,” answered Porfiry Petrovitch, receiving his explanation of his pecuniary position coldly, “but you can, if you prefer, write straight to me, to say, that having been informed of the matter, and claiming such and such as your property, you beg...”

“On an ordinary sheet of paper?” Raskolnikov interrupted eagerly, again interested in the financial side of the question.

“Oh, the most ordinary,” and suddenly Porfiry Petrovitch looked with obvious irony at him, screwing up his eyes and, as it were, winking at him. But perhaps it was Raskolnikov’s fancy, for it all lasted but a moment. There was certainly something of the sort, Raskolnikov could have sworn he winked at him, goodness knows why.

“He knows,” flashed through his mind like lightning.

“Forgive my troubling you about such trifles,” he went on, a little disconcerted, “the things are only worth five roubles, but I prize them particularly for the sake of those from whom they came to me, and I must confess that I was alarmed when I heard...”

“That’s why you were so much struck when I mentioned to Zossimov that Porfiry was inquiring for everyone who had pledges!” Razumihin put in with obvious intention.

This was really unbearable. Raskolnikov could not help glancing at him with a flash of vindictive anger in his black eyes, but immediately recollected himself.

“You seem to be jeering at me, brother?” he said to him, with a well-feigned irritability. “I dare say I do seem to you absurdly anxious about such trash; but you mustn’t think me selfish or grasping for that, and these two things may be anything but trash in my eyes. I told you just now that the silver watch, though it’s not worth a cent, is the only thing left us of my father’s. You may laugh at me, but my mother is here,” he turned suddenly to Porfiry, “and if she knew,” he turned again hurriedly to Razumihin, carefully making his voice tremble, “that the watch was lost, she would be in despair! You know what women are!”

“Not a bit of it! I didn’t mean that at all! Quite the contrary!” shouted Razumihin distressed.

“Was it right? Was it natural? Did I overdo it?” Raskolnikov asked himself in a tremor. “Why did I say that about women?”

“Oh, your mother is with you?” Porfiry Petrovitch inquired.

“Yes.”

“When did she come?”

“Last night.”

Porfiry paused as though reflecting.

“Your things would not in any case be lost,” he went on calmly and coldly. “I have been expecting you here for some time.”

And as though that was a matter of no importance, he carefully offered the ash-tray to Razumihin, who was ruthlessly scattering cigarette ash over the carpet. Raskolnikov shuddered, but Porfiry did not seem to be looking at him, and was still concerned with Razumihin’s cigarette.

“What? Expecting him? Why, did you know that he had pledges *there*?” cried Razumihin.

Porfiry Petrovitch addressed himself to Raskolnikov.

“Your things, the ring and the watch, were wrapped up together, and on the paper your name was legibly written in pencil, together with the date on which you left them with her...”

“How observant you are!” Raskolnikov smiled awkwardly, doing his very utmost to look him straight in the face, but he failed, and suddenly added:

“I say that because I suppose there were a great many pledges... that it must be difficult to remember them all.... But you remember them all so clearly, and... and...”

“Stupid! Feeble!” he thought. “Why did I add that?”

“But we know all who had pledges, and you are the only one who hasn’t come forward,” Porfiry answered with hardly perceptible irony.

“I haven’t been quite well.”

“I heard that too. I heard, indeed, that you were in great distress about something. You look pale still.”

“I am not pale at all.... No, I am quite well,” Raskolnikov snapped out rudely and angrily, completely changing his tone. His anger was mounting, he could not repress it. “And in my anger I shall betray myself,” flashed through his mind again. “Why are they torturing me?”

“Not quite well!” Razumihin caught him up. “What next! He was unconscious and delirious all yesterday. Would you believe, Porfiry, as soon as our backs were turned, he dressed, though he could hardly stand, and gave us the slip and went off on a spree somewhere till midnight, delirious all the time! Would you believe it! Extraordinary!”

“Really delirious? You don’t say so!” Porfiry shook his head in a womanish way.

“Nonsense! Don’t you believe it! But you don’t believe it anyway,” Raskolnikov let slip in his anger. But Porfiry Petrovitch did not seem to catch those strange words.

“But how could you have gone out if you hadn’t been delirious?” Razumihin got hot suddenly. “What did you go out for? What was the object of it? And why on the sly? Were you in your senses when you did it? Now that all danger is over I can speak plainly.”

“I was awfully sick of them yesterday.” Raskolnikov addressed Porfiry suddenly with a smile of insolent defiance, “I ran away from them to take lodgings where they wouldn’t find me, and took a lot of money with me. Mr. Zametov there saw it. I say, Mr. Zametov, was I sensible or delirious yesterday; settle our dispute.”

He could have strangled Zametov at that moment, so hateful were his expression and his silence to him.

“In my opinion you talked sensibly and even artfully, but you were extremely irritable,” Zametov pronounced dryly.

“And Nikodim Fomitch was telling me to-day,” put in Porfiry Petrovitch, “that he met you very late last night in the lodging of a man who had been run over.”

“And there,” said Razumihin, “weren’t you mad then? You gave your last penny to the widow for the funeral. If you wanted to help, give fifteen or twenty even, but keep three roubles for yourself at least, but he flung away all the twenty-five at once!”

“Maybe I found a treasure somewhere and you know nothing of it? So that’s why I was liberal yesterday.... Mr. Zametov knows I’ve found a treasure! Excuse us, please, for disturbing you for half an hour with such trivialities,” he said, turning to Porfiry Petrovitch, with trembling lips. “We are boring you, aren’t we?”

“Oh no, quite the contrary, quite the contrary! If only you knew how you interest me! It’s interesting to look on and listen... and I am really glad you have come forward at last.”

“But you might give us some tea! My throat’s dry,” cried Razumihin.

“Capital idea! Perhaps we will all keep you company. Wouldn’t you like... something more essential before tea?”

“Get along with you!”

Porfiry Petrovitch went out to order tea.

Raskolnikov’s thoughts were in a whirl. He was in terrible exasperation.

“The worst of it is they don’t disguise it; they don’t care to stand on ceremony! And how if you didn’t know me at all, did you come to talk to Nikodim Fomitch about me? So they don’t care to hide that they are tracking me like a pack of dogs. They simply spit in my face.” He was shaking with rage. “Come, strike me openly, don’t play with me like a cat with a mouse. It’s hardly civil, Porfiry Petrovitch, but perhaps I won’t allow it! I shall get up and throw the whole truth in your ugly faces, and you’ll see how I despise you.” He could hardly breathe. “And what if it’s only my fancy? What if I am mistaken, and through inexperience I get angry and don’t keep up my nasty part? Perhaps it’s all unintentional. All their phrases are the usual ones, but there is something about them.... It all might be said, but there is something. Why did he say bluntly, ‘With her’? Why did Zametov add that I spoke artfully? Why do they speak in that tone? Yes, the tone.... Razumihin is sitting here, why does he see nothing? That innocent

blockhead never does see anything! Feverish again! Did Porfiry wink at me just now? Of course it’s nonsense! What could he wink for? Are they trying to upset my nerves or are they teasing me? Either it’s ill fancy or they know! Even Zametov is rude.... Is Zametov rude? Zametov has changed his mind. I foresaw he would change his mind! He is at home here, while it’s my first visit. Porfiry does not consider him a visitor; sits with his back to him. They’re as thick as thieves, no doubt, over me! Not a doubt they were talking about me before we came. Do they know about the flat? If only they’d make haste! When I said that I ran away to take a flat he let it pass.... I put that in cleverly about a flat, it may be of use afterwards.... Delirious, indeed... ha-ha-ha! He knows all about last night! He didn’t know of my mother’s arrival! The hag had written the date on in pencil! You are wrong, you won’t catch me! There are no facts... it’s all supposition! You produce facts! The flat even isn’t a fact but delirium. I know what to say to them.... Do they know about the flat? I won’t go without finding out. What did I come for? But my being angry now, maybe is a fact! Fool, how irritable I am! Perhaps that’s right; to play the invalid.... He is feeling me. He will try to catch me. Why did I come?”

All this flashed like lightning through his mind.

Porfiry Petrovitch returned quickly. He became suddenly more jovial.

“Your party yesterday, brother, has left my head rather.... And I am out of sorts altogether,” he began in quite a different tone, laughing to Razumihin.

“Was it interesting? I left you yesterday at the most interesting point. Who got the best of it?”

“Oh, no one, of course. They got on to everlasting questions, floated off into space.”

“Only fancy, Rodya, what we got on to yesterday. Whether there is such a thing as crime. I told you that we talked our heads off.”

“What is there strange? It’s an everyday social question,” Raskolnikov answered casually.

“The question wasn’t put quite like that,” observed Porfiry.

“Not quite, that’s true,” Razumihin agreed at once, getting warm and hurried as usual. “Listen, Rodion, and tell us your opinion, I want to hear it. I was fighting tooth and nail with them and wanted you to help me. I told them you were coming.... It began with the socialist doctrine. You know their doctrine; crime is a protest against the abnormality of the social

organisation and nothing more, and nothing more; no other causes admitted!...”

“You are wrong there,” cried Porfiry Petrovitch; he was noticeably animated and kept laughing as he looked at Razumihin, which made him more excited than ever.

“Nothing is admitted,” Razumihin interrupted with heat.

“I am not wrong. I’ll show you their pamphlets. Everything with them is ‘the influence of environment,’ and nothing else. Their favourite phrase! From which it follows that, if society is normally organised, all crime will cease at once, since there will be nothing to protest against and all men will become righteous in one instant. Human nature is not taken into account, it is excluded, it’s not supposed to exist! They don’t recognise that humanity, developing by a historical living process, will become at last a normal society, but they believe that a social system that has come out of some mathematical brain is going to organise all humanity at once and make it just and sinless in an instant, quicker than any living process! That’s why they instinctively dislike history, ‘nothing but ugliness and stupidity in it,’ and they explain it all as stupidity! That’s why they so dislike the *living* process of life; they don’t want a *living soul*! The living soul demands life, the soul won’t obey the rules of mechanics, the soul is an object of suspicion, the soul is retrograde! But what they want though it smells of death and can be made of India-rubber, at least is not alive, has no will, is servile and won’t revolt! And it comes in the end to their reducing everything to the building of walls and the planning of rooms and passages in a phalanstery! The phalanstery is ready, indeed, but your human nature is not ready for the phalanstery — it wants life, it hasn’t completed its vital process, it’s too soon for the graveyard! You can’t skip over nature by logic. Logic presupposes three possibilities, but there are millions! Cut away a million, and reduce it all to the question of comfort! That’s the easiest solution of the problem! It’s seductively clear and you musn’t think about it. That’s the great thing, you mustn’t think! The whole secret of life in two pages of print!”

“Now he is off, beating the drum! Catch hold of him, do!” laughed Porfiry. “Can you imagine,” he turned to Raskolnikov, “six people holding forth like that last night, in one room, with punch as a preliminary! No, brother, you are wrong, environment accounts for a great deal in crime; I can assure you of that.”

“Oh, I know it does, but just tell me: a man of forty violates a child of ten; was it environment drove him to it?”

“Well, strictly speaking, it did,” Porfiry observed with noteworthy gravity; “a crime of that nature may be very well ascribed to the influence of environment.”

Razumihin was almost in a frenzy. “Oh, if you like,” he roared. “I’ll prove to you that your white eyelashes may very well be ascribed to the Church of Ivan the Great’s being two hundred and fifty feet high, and I will prove it clearly, exactly, progressively, and even with a Liberal tendency! I undertake to! Will you bet on it?”

“Done! Let’s hear, please, how he will prove it!”

“He is always humbugging, confound him,” cried Razumihin, jumping up and gesticulating. “What’s the use of talking to you? He does all that on purpose; you don’t know him, Rodion! He took their side yesterday, simply to make fools of them. And the things he said yesterday! And they were delighted! He can keep it up for a fortnight together. Last year he persuaded us that he was going into a monastery: he stuck to it for two months. Not long ago he took it into his head to declare he was going to get married, that he had everything ready for the wedding. He ordered new clothes indeed. We all began to congratulate him. There was no bride, nothing, all pure fantasy!”

“Ah, you are wrong! I got the clothes before. It was the new clothes in fact that made me think of taking you in.”

“Are you such a good dissembler?” Raskolnikov asked carelessly.

“You wouldn’t have supposed it, eh? Wait a bit, I shall take you in, too. Ha-ha-ha! No, I’ll tell you the truth. All these questions about crime, environment, children, recall to my mind an article of yours which interested me at the time. ‘On Crime’... or something of the sort, I forget the title, I read it with pleasure two months ago in the *Periodical Review*.”

“My article? In the *Periodical Review*?” Raskolnikov asked in astonishment. “I certainly did write an article upon a book six months ago when I left the university, but I sent it to the *Weekly Review*.”

“But it came out in the *Periodical*.”

“And the *Weekly Review* ceased to exist, so that’s why it wasn’t printed at the time.”

“That’s true; but when it ceased to exist, the *Weekly Review* was amalgamated with the *Periodical*, and so your article appeared two months

ago in the latter. Didn’t you know?”

Raskolnikov had not known.

“Why, you might get some money out of them for the article! What a strange person you are! You lead such a solitary life that you know nothing of matters that concern you directly. It’s a fact, I assure you.”

“Bravo, Rodya! I knew nothing about it either!” cried Razumihin. “I’ll run to-day to the reading-room and ask for the number. Two months ago? What was the date? It doesn’t matter though, I will find it. Think of not telling us!”

“How did you find out that the article was mine? It’s only signed with an initial.”

“I only learnt it by chance, the other day. Through the editor; I know him.... I was very much interested.”

“I analysed, if I remember, the psychology of a criminal before and after the crime.”

“Yes, and you maintained that the perpetration of a crime is always accompanied by illness. Very, very original, but... it was not that part of your article that interested me so much, but an idea at the end of the article which I regret to say you merely suggested without working it out clearly. There is, if you recollect, a suggestion that there are certain persons who can... that is, not precisely are able to, but have a perfect right to commit breaches of morality and crimes, and that the law is not for them.”

Raskolnikov smiled at the exaggerated and intentional distortion of his idea.

“What? What do you mean? A right to crime? But not because of the influence of environment?” Razumihin inquired with some alarm even.

“No, not exactly because of it,” answered Porfiry. “In his article all men are divided into ‘ordinary’ and ‘extraordinary.’ Ordinary men have to live in submission, have no right to transgress the law, because, don’t you see, they are ordinary. But extraordinary men have a right to commit any crime and to transgress the law in any way, just because they are extraordinary. That was your idea, if I am not mistaken?”

“What do you mean? That can’t be right?” Razumihin muttered in bewilderment.

Raskolnikov smiled again. He saw the point at once, and knew where they wanted to drive him. He decided to take up the challenge.

“That wasn’t quite my contention,” he began simply and modestly. “Yet I admit that you have stated it almost correctly; perhaps, if you like, perfectly so.” (It almost gave him pleasure to admit this.) “The only difference is that I don’t contend that extraordinary people are always bound to commit breaches of morals, as you call it. In fact, I doubt whether such an argument could be published. I simply hinted that an ‘extraordinary’ man has the right... that is not an official right, but an inner right to decide in his own conscience to overstep... certain obstacles, and only in case it is essential for the practical fulfilment of his idea (sometimes, perhaps, of benefit to the whole of humanity). You say that my article isn’t definite; I am ready to make it as clear as I can. Perhaps I am right in thinking you want me to; very well. I maintain that if the discoveries of Kepler and Newton could not have been made known except by sacrificing the lives of one, a dozen, a hundred, or more men, Newton would have had the right, would indeed have been in duty bound... to *eliminate* the dozen or the hundred men for the sake of making his discoveries known to the whole of humanity. But it does not follow from that that Newton had a right to murder people right and left and to steal every day in the market. Then, I remember, I maintain in my article that all... well, legislators and leaders of men, such as Lycurgus, Solon, Mahomet, Napoleon, and so on, were all without exception criminals, from the very fact that, making a new law, they transgressed the ancient one, handed down from their ancestors and held sacred by the people, and they did not stop short at bloodshed either, if that bloodshed — often of innocent persons fighting bravely in defence of ancient law — were of use to their cause. It’s remarkable, in fact, that the majority, indeed, of these benefactors and leaders of humanity were guilty of terrible carnage. In short, I maintain that all great men or even men a little out of the common, that is to say capable of giving some new word, must from their very nature be criminals — more or less, of course. Otherwise it’s hard for them to get out of the common rut; and to remain in the common rut is what they can’t submit to, from their very nature again, and to my mind they ought not, indeed, to submit to it. You see that there is nothing particularly new in all that. The same thing has been printed and read a thousand times before. As for my division of people into ordinary and extraordinary, I acknowledge that it’s somewhat arbitrary, but I don’t insist upon exact numbers. I only believe in my leading idea that men are *in general* divided by a law of nature into two categories, inferior (ordinary),

that is, so to say, material that serves only to reproduce its kind, and men who have the gift or the talent to utter *a new word*. There are, of course, innumerable sub-divisions, but the distinguishing features of both categories are fairly well marked. The first category, generally speaking, are men conservative in temperament and law-abiding; they live under control and love to be controlled. To my thinking it is their duty to be controlled, because that's their vocation, and there is nothing humiliating in it for them. The second category all transgress the law; they are destroyers or disposed to destruction according to their capacities. The crimes of these men are of course relative and varied; for the most part they seek in very varied ways the destruction of the present for the sake of the better. But if such a one is forced for the sake of his idea to step over a corpse or wade through blood, he can, I maintain, find within himself, in his conscience, a sanction for wading through blood — that depends on the idea and its dimensions, note that. It's only in that sense I speak of their right to crime in my article (you remember it began with the legal question). There's no need for such anxiety, however; the masses will scarcely ever admit this right, they punish them or hang them (more or less), and in doing so fulfil quite justly their conservative vocation. But the same masses set these criminals on a pedestal in the next generation and worship them (more or less). The first category is always the man of the present, the second the man of the future. The first preserve the world and people it, the second move the world and lead it to its goal. Each class has an equal right to exist. In fact, all have equal rights with me — and *vive la guerre éternelle* — till the New Jerusalem, of course!"

"Then you believe in the New Jerusalem, do you?"

"I do," Raskolnikov answered firmly; as he said these words and during the whole preceding tirade he kept his eyes on one spot on the carpet.

"And... and do you believe in God? Excuse my curiosity."

"I do," repeated Raskolnikov, raising his eyes to Porfiry.

"And... do you believe in Lazarus' rising from the dead?"

"I... I do. Why do you ask all this?"

"You believe it literally?"

"Literally."

"You don't say so.... I asked from curiosity. Excuse me. But let us go back to the question; they are not always executed. Some, on the contrary..."

“Triumph in their lifetime? Oh, yes, some attain their ends in this life, and then...”

“They begin executing other people?”

“If it’s necessary; indeed, for the most part they do. Your remark is very witty.”

“Thank you. But tell me this: how do you distinguish those extraordinary people from the ordinary ones? Are there signs at their birth? I feel there ought to be more exactitude, more external definition. Excuse the natural anxiety of a practical law-abiding citizen, but couldn’t they adopt a special uniform, for instance, couldn’t they wear something, be branded in some way? For you know if confusion arises and a member of one category imagines that he belongs to the other, begins to ‘eliminate obstacles’ as you so happily expressed it, then...”

“Oh, that very often happens! That remark is wittier than the other.”

“Thank you.”

“No reason to; but take note that the mistake can only arise in the first category, that is among the ordinary people (as I perhaps unfortunately called them). In spite of their predisposition to obedience very many of them, through a playfulness of nature, sometimes vouchsafed even to the cow, like to imagine themselves advanced people, ‘destroyers,’ and to push themselves into the ‘new movement,’ and this quite sincerely. Meanwhile the really *new* people are very often unobserved by them, or even despised as reactionaries of grovelling tendencies. But I don’t think there is any considerable danger here, and you really need not be uneasy for they never go very far. Of course, they might have a thrashing sometimes for letting their fancy run away with them and to teach them their place, but no more; in fact, even this isn’t necessary as they castigate themselves, for they are very conscientious: some perform this service for one another and others chastise themselves with their own hands.... They will impose various public acts of penitence upon themselves with a beautiful and edifying effect; in fact you’ve nothing to be uneasy about.... It’s a law of nature.”

“Well, you have certainly set my mind more at rest on that score; but there’s another thing worries me. Tell me, please, are there many people who have the right to kill others, these extraordinary people? I am ready to bow down to them, of course, but you must admit it’s alarming if there are a great many of them, eh?”

“Oh, you needn’t worry about that either,” Raskolnikov went on in the same tone. “People with new ideas, people with the faintest capacity for saying something *new*, are extremely few in number, extraordinarily so in fact. One thing only is clear, that the appearance of all these grades and sub-divisions of men must follow with unfailing regularity some law of nature. That law, of course, is unknown at present, but I am convinced that it exists, and one day may become known. The vast mass of mankind is mere material, and only exists in order by some great effort, by some mysterious process, by means of some crossing of races and stocks, to bring into the world at last perhaps one man out of a thousand with a spark of independence. One in ten thousand perhaps — I speak roughly, approximately — is born with some independence, and with still greater independence one in a hundred thousand. The man of genius is one of millions, and the great geniuses, the crown of humanity, appear on earth perhaps one in many thousand millions. In fact I have not peeped into the retort in which all this takes place. But there certainly is and must be a definite law, it cannot be a matter of chance.”

“Why, are you both joking?” Razumihin cried at last. “There you sit, making fun of one another. Are you serious, Rodya?”

Raskolnikov raised his pale and almost mournful face and made no reply. And the unconcealed, persistent, nervous, and *discourteous* sarcasm of Porfiry seemed strange to Razumihin beside that quiet and mournful face.

“Well, brother, if you are really serious... You are right, of course, in saying that it’s not new, that it’s like what we’ve read and heard a thousand times already; but what is really original in all this, and is exclusively your own, to my horror, is that you sanction bloodshed *in the name of conscience*, and, excuse my saying so, with such fanaticism.... That, I take it, is the point of your article. But that sanction of bloodshed *by conscience* is to my mind... more terrible than the official, legal sanction of bloodshed....”

“You are quite right, it is more terrible,” Porfiry agreed.

“Yes, you must have exaggerated! There is some mistake, I shall read it. You can’t think that! I shall read it.”

“All that is not in the article, there’s only a hint of it,” said Raskolnikov.

“Yes, yes.” Porfiry couldn’t sit still. “Your attitude to crime is pretty clear to me now, but... excuse me for my impertinence (I am really ashamed

to be worrying you like this), you see, you've removed my anxiety as to the two grades getting mixed, but... there are various practical possibilities that make me uneasy! What if some man or youth imagines that he is a Lycurgus or Mahomet — a future one of course — and suppose he begins to remove all obstacles.... He has some great enterprise before him and needs money for it... and tries to get it... do you see?"

Zametov gave a sudden guffaw in his corner. Raskolnikov did not even raise his eyes to him.

"I must admit," he went on calmly, "that such cases certainly must arise. The vain and foolish are particularly apt to fall into that snare; young people especially."

"Yes, you see. Well then?"

"What then?" Raskolnikov smiled in reply; "that's not my fault. So it is and so it always will be. He said just now (he nodded at Razumihin) that I sanction bloodshed. Society is too well protected by prisons, banishment, criminal investigators, penal servitude. There's no need to be uneasy. You have but to catch the thief."

"And what if we do catch him?"

"Then he gets what he deserves."

"You are certainly logical. But what of his conscience?"

"Why do you care about that?"

"Simply from humanity."

"If he has a conscience he will suffer for his mistake. That will be his punishment — as well as the prison."

"But the real geniuses," asked Razumihin frowning, "those who have the right to murder? Oughtn't they to suffer at all even for the blood they've shed?"

"Why the word *ought*? It's not a matter of permission or prohibition. He will suffer if he is sorry for his victim. Pain and suffering are always inevitable for a large intelligence and a deep heart. The really great men must, I think, have great sadness on earth," he added dreamily, not in the tone of the conversation.

He raised his eyes, looked earnestly at them all, smiled, and took his cap. He was too quiet by comparison with his manner at his entrance, and he felt this. Everyone got up.

"Well, you may abuse me, be angry with me if you like," Porfiry Petrovitch began again, "but I can't resist. Allow me one little question (I

know I am troubling you). There is just one little notion I want to express, simply that I may not forget it.”

“Very good, tell me your little notion,” Raskolnikov stood waiting, pale and grave before him.

“Well, you see... I really don’t know how to express it properly.... It’s a playful, psychological idea.... When you were writing your article, surely you couldn’t have helped, he-he! fancying yourself... just a little, an ‘extraordinary’ man, uttering a *new word* in your sense.... That’s so, isn’t it?”

“Quite possibly,” Raskolnikov answered contemptuously.

Razumihin made a movement.

“And, if so, could you bring yourself in case of worldly difficulties and hardship or for some service to humanity — to overstep obstacles?... For instance, to rob and murder?”

And again he winked with his left eye, and laughed noiselessly just as before.

“If I did I certainly should not tell you,” Raskolnikov answered with defiant and haughty contempt.

“No, I was only interested on account of your article, from a literary point of view...”

“Foo! how obvious and insolent that is!” Raskolnikov thought with repulsion.

“Allow me to observe,” he answered dryly, “that I don’t consider myself a Mahomet or a Napoleon, nor any personage of that kind, and not being one of them I cannot tell you how I should act.”

“Oh, come, don’t we all think ourselves Napoleons now in Russia?” Porfiry Petrovitch said with alarming familiarity.

Something peculiar betrayed itself in the very intonation of his voice.

“Perhaps it was one of these future Napoleons who did for Alyona Ivanovna last week?” Zametov blurted out from the corner.

Raskolnikov did not speak, but looked firmly and intently at Porfiry. Razumihin was scowling gloomily. He seemed before this to be noticing something. He looked angrily around. There was a minute of gloomy silence. Raskolnikov turned to go.

“Are you going already?” Porfiry said amiably, holding out his hand with excessive politeness. “Very, very glad of your acquaintance. As for your request, have no uneasiness, write just as I told you, or, better still,

come to me there yourself in a day or two... to-morrow, indeed. I shall be there at eleven o’clock for certain. We’ll arrange it all; we’ll have a talk. As one of the last to be *there*, you might perhaps be able to tell us something,” he added with a most good-natured expression.

“You want to cross-examine me officially in due form?” Raskolnikov asked sharply.

“Oh, why? That’s not necessary for the present. You misunderstand me. I lose no opportunity, you see, and... I’ve talked with all who had pledges.... I obtained evidence from some of them, and you are the last.... Yes, by the way,” he cried, seemingly suddenly delighted, “I just remember, what was I thinking of?” he turned to Razumihin, “you were talking my ears off about that Nikolay... of course, I know, I know very well,” he turned to Raskolnikov, “that the fellow is innocent, but what is one to do? We had to trouble Dmitri too.... This is the point, this is all: when you went up the stairs it was past seven, wasn’t it?”

“Yes,” answered Raskolnikov, with an unpleasant sensation at the very moment he spoke that he need not have said it.

“Then when you went upstairs between seven and eight, didn’t you see in a flat that stood open on a second storey, do you remember? two workmen or at least one of them? They were painting there, didn’t you notice them? It’s very, very important for them.”

“Painters? No, I didn’t see them,” Raskolnikov answered slowly, as though ransacking his memory, while at the same instant he was racking every nerve, almost swooning with anxiety to conjecture as quickly as possible where the trap lay and not to overlook anything. “No, I didn’t see them, and I don’t think I noticed a flat like that open.... But on the fourth storey” (he had mastered the trap now and was triumphant) “I remember now that someone was moving out of the flat opposite Alyona Ivanovna’s.... I remember... I remember it clearly. Some porters were carrying out a sofa and they squeezed me against the wall. But painters... no, I don’t remember that there were any painters, and I don’t think that there was a flat open anywhere, no, there wasn’t.”

“What do you mean?” Razumihin shouted suddenly, as though he had reflected and realised. “Why, it was on the day of the murder the painters were at work, and he was there three days before? What are you asking?”

“Foo! I have muddled it!” Porfiry slapped himself on the forehead. “Deuce take it! This business is turning my brain!” he addressed

Raskolnikov somewhat apologetically. “It would be such a great thing for us to find out whether anyone had seen them between seven and eight at the flat, so I fancied you could perhaps have told us something.... I quite muddled it.”

“Then you should be more careful,” Razumihin observed grimly.

The last words were uttered in the passage. Porfiry Petrovitch saw them to the door with excessive politeness.

They went out into the street gloomy and sullen, and for some steps they did not say a word. Raskolnikov drew a deep breath.

CHAPTER VI

“I don’t believe it, I can’t believe it!” repeated Razumihin, trying in perplexity to refute Raskolnikov’s arguments.

They were by now approaching Bakaleyev’s lodgings, where Pulcheria Alexandrovna and Dounia had been expecting them a long while. Razumihin kept stopping on the way in the heat of discussion, confused and excited by the very fact that they were for the first time speaking openly about *it*.

“Don’t believe it, then!” answered Raskolnikov, with a cold, careless smile. “You were noticing nothing as usual, but I was weighing every word.”

“You are suspicious. That is why you weighed their words... h’m... certainly, I agree, Porfiry’s tone was rather strange, and still more that wretch Zametov!... You are right, there was something about him — but why? Why?”

“He has changed his mind since last night.”

“Quite the contrary! If they had that brainless idea, they would do their utmost to hide it, and conceal their cards, so as to catch you afterwards.... But it was all impudent and careless.”

“If they had had facts — I mean, real facts — or at least grounds for suspicion, then they would certainly have tried to hide their game, in the hope of getting more (they would have made a search long ago besides). But they have no facts, not one. It is all mirage — all ambiguous. Simply a floating idea. So they try to throw me out by impudence. And perhaps, he was irritated at having no facts, and blurted it out in his vexation — or perhaps he has some plan... he seems an intelligent man. Perhaps he wanted to frighten me by pretending to know. They have a psychology of their own, brother. But it is loathsome explaining it all. Stop!”

“And it’s insulting, insulting! I understand you. But... since we have spoken openly now (and it is an excellent thing that we have at last — I am glad) I will own now frankly that I noticed it in them long ago, this idea. Of course the merest hint only — an insinuation — but why an insinuation even? How dare they? What foundation have they? If only you knew how furious I have been. Think only! Simply because a poor student, unhinged by poverty and hypochondria, on the eve of a severe delirious illness (note

that), suspicious, vain, proud, who has not seen a soul to speak to for six months, in rags and in boots without soles, has to face some wretched policemen and put up with their insolence; and the unexpected debt thrust under his nose, the I.O.U. presented by Tchebarov, the new paint, thirty degrees Reaumur and a stifling atmosphere, a crowd of people, the talk about the murder of a person where he had been just before, and all that on an empty stomach — he might well have a fainting fit! And that, that is what they found it all on! Damn them! I understand how annoying it is, but in your place, Rodya, I would laugh at them, or better still, spit in their ugly faces, and spit a dozen times in all directions. I'd hit out in all directions, neatly too, and so I'd put an end to it. Damn them! Don't be downhearted. It's a shame!"

"He really has put it well, though," Raskolnikov thought.

"Damn them? But the cross-examination again, to-morrow?" he said with bitterness. "Must I really enter into explanations with them? I feel vexed as it is, that I condescended to speak to Zametov yesterday in the restaurant...."

"Damn it! I will go myself to Porfiry. I will squeeze it out of him, as one of the family: he must let me know the ins and outs of it all! And as for Zametov..."

"At last he sees through him!" thought Raskolnikov.

"Stay!" cried Razumihin, seizing him by the shoulder again. "Stay! you were wrong. I have thought it out. You are wrong! How was that a trap? You say that the question about the workmen was a trap. But if you had done *that*, could you have said you had seen them painting the flat... and the workmen? On the contrary, you would have seen nothing, even if you had seen it. Who would own it against himself?"

"If I had done *that thing*, I should certainly have said that I had seen the workmen and the flat," Raskolnikov answered, with reluctance and obvious disgust.

"But why speak against yourself?"

"Because only peasants, or the most inexperienced novices deny everything flatly at examinations. If a man is ever so little developed and experienced, he will certainly try to admit all the external facts that can't be avoided, but will seek other explanations of them, will introduce some special, unexpected turn, that will give them another significance and put them in another light. Porfiry might well reckon that I should be sure to

answer so, and say I had seen them to give an air of truth, and then make some explanation."

"But he would have told you at once that the workmen could not have been there two days before, and that therefore you must have been there on the day of the murder at eight o'clock. And so he would have caught you over a detail."

"Yes, that is what he was reckoning on, that I should not have time to reflect, and should be in a hurry to make the most likely answer, and so would forget that the workmen could not have been there two days before."

"But how could you forget it?"

"Nothing easier. It is in just such stupid things clever people are most easily caught. The more cunning a man is, the less he suspects that he will be caught in a simple thing. The more cunning a man is, the simpler the trap he must be caught in. Porfiry is not such a fool as you think...."

"He is a knave then, if that is so!"

Raskolnikov could not help laughing. But at the very moment, he was struck by the strangeness of his own frankness, and the eagerness with which he had made this explanation, though he had kept up all the preceding conversation with gloomy repulsion, obviously with a motive, from necessity.

"I am getting a relish for certain aspects!" he thought to himself. But almost at the same instant he became suddenly uneasy, as though an unexpected and alarming idea had occurred to him. His uneasiness kept on increasing. They had just reached the entrance to Bakaleyev's.

"Go in alone!" said Raskolnikov suddenly. "I will be back directly."

"Where are you going? Why, we are just here."

"I can't help it.... I will come in half an hour. Tell them."

"Say what you like, I will come with you."

"You, too, want to torture me!" he screamed, with such bitter irritation, such despair in his eyes that Razumihin's hands dropped. He stood for some time on the steps, looking gloomily at Raskolnikov striding rapidly away in the direction of his lodging. At last, gritting his teeth and clenching his fist, he swore he would squeeze Porfiry like a lemon that very day, and went up the stairs to reassure Pulcheria Alexandrovna, who was by now alarmed at their long absence.

When Raskolnikov got home, his hair was soaked with sweat and he was breathing heavily. He went rapidly up the stairs, walked into his unlocked

room and at once fastened the latch. Then in senseless terror he rushed to the corner, to that hole under the paper where he had put the things; put his hand in, and for some minutes felt carefully in the hole, in every crack and fold of the paper. Finding nothing, he got up and drew a deep breath. As he was reaching the steps of Bakaleyev's, he suddenly fancied that something, a chain, a stud or even a bit of paper in which they had been wrapped with the old woman's handwriting on it, might somehow have slipped out and been lost in some crack, and then might suddenly turn up as unexpected, conclusive evidence against him.

He stood as though lost in thought, and a strange, humiliated, half senseless smile strayed on his lips. He took his cap at last and went quietly out of the room. His ideas were all tangled. He went dreamily through the gateway.

"Here he is himself," shouted a loud voice.

He raised his head.

The porter was standing at the door of his little room and was pointing him out to a short man who looked like an artisan, wearing a long coat and a waistcoat, and looking at a distance remarkably like a woman. He stooped, and his head in a greasy cap hung forward. From his wrinkled flabby face he looked over fifty; his little eyes were lost in fat and they looked out grimly, sternly and discontentedly.

"What is it?" Raskolnikov asked, going up to the porter.

The man stole a look at him from under his brows and he looked at him attentively, deliberately; then he turned slowly and went out of the gate into the street without saying a word.

"What is it?" cried Raskolnikov.

"Why, he there was asking whether a student lived here, mentioned your name and whom you lodged with. I saw you coming and pointed you out and he went away. It's funny."

The porter too seemed rather puzzled, but not much so, and after wondering for a moment he turned and went back to his room.

Raskolnikov ran after the stranger, and at once caught sight of him walking along the other side of the street with the same even, deliberate step with his eyes fixed on the ground, as though in meditation. He soon overtook him, but for some time walked behind him. At last, moving on to a level with him, he looked at his face. The man noticed him at once, looked

at him quickly, but dropped his eyes again; and so they walked for a minute side by side without uttering a word.

“You were inquiring for me... of the porter?” Raskolnikov said at last, but in a curiously quiet voice.

The man made no answer; he didn’t even look at him. Again they were both silent.

“Why do you... come and ask for me... and say nothing.... What’s the meaning of it?”

Raskolnikov’s voice broke and he seemed unable to articulate the words clearly.

The man raised his eyes this time and turned a gloomy sinister look at Raskolnikov.

“Murderer!” he said suddenly in a quiet but clear and distinct voice.

Raskolnikov went on walking beside him. His legs felt suddenly weak, a cold shiver ran down his spine, and his heart seemed to stand still for a moment, then suddenly began throbbing as though it were set free. So they walked for about a hundred paces, side by side in silence.

The man did not look at him.

“What do you mean... what is.... Who is a murderer?” muttered Raskolnikov hardly audibly.

“*You* are a murderer,” the man answered still more articulately and emphatically, with a smile of triumphant hatred, and again he looked straight into Raskolnikov’s pale face and stricken eyes.

They had just reached the cross-roads. The man turned to the left without looking behind him. Raskolnikov remained standing, gazing after him. He saw him turn round fifty paces away and look back at him still standing there. Raskolnikov could not see clearly, but he fancied that he was again smiling the same smile of cold hatred and triumph.

With slow faltering steps, with shaking knees, Raskolnikov made his way back to his little garret, feeling chilled all over. He took off his cap and put it on the table, and for ten minutes he stood without moving. Then he sank exhausted on the sofa and with a weak moan of pain he stretched himself on it. So he lay for half an hour.

He thought of nothing. Some thoughts or fragments of thoughts, some images without order or coherence floated before his mind — faces of people he had seen in his childhood or met somewhere once, whom he would never have recalled, the belfry of the church at V. the billiard table in

a restaurant and some officers playing billiards, the smell of cigars in some underground tobacco shop, a tavern room, a back staircase quite dark, all sloppy with dirty water and strewn with egg-shells, and the Sunday bells floating in from somewhere.... The images followed one another, whirling like a hurricane. Some of them he liked and tried to clutch at, but they faded and all the while there was an oppression within him, but it was not overwhelming, sometimes it was even pleasant.... The slight shivering still persisted, but that too was an almost pleasant sensation.

He heard the hurried footsteps of Razumihin; he closed his eyes and pretended to be asleep. Razumihin opened the door and stood for some time in the doorway as though hesitating, then he stepped softly into the room and went cautiously to the sofa. Raskolnikov heard Nastasya's whisper:

"Don't disturb him! Let him sleep. He can have his dinner later."

"Quite so," answered Razumihin. Both withdrew carefully and closed the door. Another half-hour passed. Raskolnikov opened his eyes, turned on his back again, clasping his hands behind his head.

"Who is he? Who is that man who sprang out of the earth? Where was he, what did he see? He has seen it all, that's clear. Where was he then? And from where did he see? Why has he only now sprung out of the earth? And how could he see? Is it possible? Hm..," continued Raskolnikov, turning cold and shivering, "and the jewel case Nikolay found behind the door — was that possible? A clue? You miss an infinitesimal line and you can build it into a pyramid of evidence! A fly flew by and saw it! Is it possible?" He felt with sudden loathing how weak, how physically weak he had become. "I ought to have known it," he thought with a bitter smile. "And how dared I, knowing myself, knowing how I should be, take up an axe and shed blood! I ought to have known beforehand.... Ah, but I did know!" he whispered in despair. At times he came to a standstill at some thought.

"No, those men are not made so. The real *Master* to whom all is permitted storms Toulon, makes a massacre in Paris, *forgets* an army in Egypt, *wastes* half a million men in the Moscow expedition and gets off with a jest at Vilna. And altars are set up to him after his death, and so *all* is permitted. No, such people, it seems, are not of flesh but of bronze!"

One sudden irrelevant idea almost made him laugh. Napoleon, the pyramids, Waterloo, and a wretched skinny old woman, a pawnbroker with a red trunk under her bed — it's a nice hash for Porfiry Petrovitch to digest!

How can they digest it! It’s too inartistic. “A Napoleon creep under an old woman’s bed! Ugh, how loathsome!”

At moments he felt he was raving. He sank into a state of feverish excitement. “The old woman is of no consequence,” he thought, hotly and incoherently. “The old woman was a mistake perhaps, but she is not what matters! The old woman was only an illness.... I was in a hurry to overstep.... I didn’t kill a human being, but a principle! I killed the principle, but I didn’t overstep, I stopped on this side.... I was only capable of killing. And it seems I wasn’t even capable of that... Principle? Why was that fool Razumihin abusing the socialists? They are industrious, commercial people; ‘the happiness of all’ is their case. No, life is only given to me once and I shall never have it again; I don’t want to wait for ‘the happiness of all.’ I want to live myself, or else better not live at all. I simply couldn’t pass by my mother starving, keeping my rouble in my pocket while I waited for the ‘happiness of all.’ I am putting my little brick into the happiness of all and so my heart is at peace. Ha-ha! Why have you let me slip? I only live once, I too want.... Ech, I am an æsthetic louse and nothing more,” he added suddenly, laughing like a madman. “Yes, I am certainly a louse,” he went on, clutching at the idea, gloating over it and playing with it with vindictive pleasure. “In the first place, because I can reason that I am one, and secondly, because for a month past I have been troubling benevolent Providence, calling it to witness that not for my own fleshly lusts did I undertake it, but with a grand and noble object — ha-ha! Thirdly, because I aimed at carrying it out as justly as possible, weighing, measuring and calculating. Of all the lice I picked out the most useless one and proposed to take from her only as much as I needed for the first step, no more nor less (so the rest would have gone to a monastery, according to her will, ha-ha!). And what shows that I am utterly a louse,” he added, grinding his teeth, “is that I am perhaps viler and more loathsome than the louse I killed, and *I felt beforehand* that I should tell myself so *after* killing her. Can anything be compared with the horror of that? The vulgarity! The abjectness! I understand the ‘prophet’ with his sabre, on his steed: Allah commands and ‘trembling’ creation must obey! The ‘prophet’ is right, he is right when he sets a battery across the street and blows up the innocent and the guilty without deigning to explain! It’s for you to obey, trembling creation, and not *to have desires*, for that’s not for you!... I shall never, never forgive the old woman!”

His hair was soaked with sweat, his quivering lips were parched, his eyes were fixed on the ceiling.

“Mother, sister — how I loved them! Why do I hate them now? Yes, I hate them, I feel a physical hatred for them, I can’t bear them near me.... I went up to my mother and kissed her, I remember.... To embrace her and think if she only knew... shall I tell her then? That’s just what I might do.... *She* must be the same as I am,” he added, straining himself to think, as it were struggling with delirium. “Ah, how I hate the old woman now! I feel I should kill her again if she came to life! Poor Lizaveta! Why did she come in?... It’s strange though, why is it I scarcely ever think of her, as though I hadn’t killed her? Lizaveta! Sonia! Poor gentle things, with gentle eyes.... Dear women! Why don’t they weep? Why don’t they moan? They give up everything... their eyes are soft and gentle.... Sonia, Sonia! Gentle Sonia!”

He lost consciousness; it seemed strange to him that he didn’t remember how he got into the street. It was late evening. The twilight had fallen and the full moon was shining more and more brightly; but there was a peculiar breathlessness in the air. There were crowds of people in the street; workmen and business people were making their way home; other people had come out for a walk; there was a smell of mortar, dust and stagnant water. Raskolnikov walked along, mournful and anxious; he was distinctly aware of having come out with a purpose, of having to do something in a hurry, but what it was he had forgotten. Suddenly he stood still and saw a man standing on the other side of the street, beckoning to him. He crossed over to him, but at once the man turned and walked away with his head hanging, as though he had made no sign to him. “Stay, did he really beckon?” Raskolnikov wondered, but he tried to overtake him. When he was within ten paces he recognised him and was frightened; it was the same man with stooping shoulders in the long coat. Raskolnikov followed him at a distance; his heart was beating; they went down a turning; the man still did not look round. “Does he know I am following him?” thought Raskolnikov. The man went into the gateway of a big house. Raskolnikov hastened to the gate and looked in to see whether he would look round and sign to him. In the court-yard the man did turn round and again seemed to beckon him. Raskolnikov at once followed him into the yard, but the man was gone. He must have gone up the first staircase. Raskolnikov rushed after him. He heard slow measured steps two flights above. The staircase seemed strangely familiar. He reached the window on the first floor; the

moon shone through the panes with a melancholy and mysterious light; then he reached the second floor. Bah! this is the flat where the painters were at work... but how was it he did not recognise it at once? The steps of the man above had died away. “So he must have stopped or hidden somewhere.” He reached the third storey, should he go on? There was a stillness that was dreadful.... But he went on. The sound of his own footsteps scared and frightened him. How dark it was! The man must be hiding in some corner here. Ah! the flat was standing wide open, he hesitated and went in. It was very dark and empty in the passage, as though everything had been removed; he crept on tiptoe into the parlour which was flooded with moonlight. Everything there was as before, the chairs, the looking-glass, the yellow sofa and the pictures in the frames. A huge, round, copper-red moon looked in at the windows. “It’s the moon that makes it so still, weaving some mystery,” thought Raskolnikov. He stood and waited, waited a long while, and the more silent the moonlight, the more violently his heart beat, till it was painful. And still the same hush. Suddenly he heard a momentary sharp crack like the snapping of a splinter and all was still again. A fly flew up suddenly and struck the window pane with a plaintive buzz. At that moment he noticed in the corner between the window and the little cupboard something like a cloak hanging on the wall. “Why is that cloak here?” he thought, “it wasn’t there before....” He went up to it quietly and felt that there was someone hiding behind it. He cautiously moved the cloak and saw, sitting on a chair in the corner, the old woman bent double so that he couldn’t see her face; but it was she. He stood over her. “She is afraid,” he thought. He stealthily took the axe from the noose and struck her one blow, then another on the skull. But strange to say she did not stir, as though she were made of wood. He was frightened, bent down nearer and tried to look at her; but she, too, bent her head lower. He bent right down to the ground and peeped up into her face from below, he peeped and turned cold with horror: the old woman was sitting and laughing, shaking with noiseless laughter, doing her utmost that he should not hear it. Suddenly he fancied that the door from the bedroom was opened a little and that there was laughter and whispering within. He was overcome with frenzy and he began hitting the old woman on the head with all his force, but at every blow of the axe the laughter and whispering from the bedroom grew louder and the old woman was simply shaking with mirth. He was rushing away, but the passage was full of people, the doors of the flats stood open and on the

landing, on the stairs and everywhere below there were people, rows of heads, all looking, but huddled together in silence and expectation. Something gripped his heart, his legs were rooted to the spot, they would not move.... He tried to scream and woke up.

He drew a deep breath — but his dream seemed strangely to persist: his door was flung open and a man whom he had never seen stood in the doorway watching him intently.

Raskolnikov had hardly opened his eyes and he instantly closed them again. He lay on his back without stirring.

“Is it still a dream?” he wondered and again raised his eyelids hardly perceptibly; the stranger was standing in the same place, still watching him.

He stepped cautiously into the room, carefully closing the door after him, went up to the table, paused a moment, still keeping his eyes on Raskolnikov, and noiselessly seated himself on the chair by the sofa; he put his hat on the floor beside him and leaned his hands on his cane and his chin on his hands. It was evident that he was prepared to wait indefinitely. As far as Raskolnikov could make out from his stolen glances, he was a man no longer young, stout, with a full, fair, almost whitish beard.

Ten minutes passed. It was still light, but beginning to get dusk. There was complete stillness in the room. Not a sound came from the stairs. Only a big fly buzzed and fluttered against the window pane. It was unbearable at last. Raskolnikov suddenly got up and sat on the sofa.

“Come, tell me what you want.”

“I knew you were not asleep, but only pretending,” the stranger answered oddly, laughing calmly. “Arkady Ivanovitch Svidrigaïlov, allow me to introduce myself....”

PART IV

CHAPTER I

“Can this be still a dream?” Raskolnikov thought once more.

He looked carefully and suspiciously at the unexpected visitor.

“Svidrigaïlov! What nonsense! It can’t be!” he said at last aloud in bewilderment.

His visitor did not seem at all surprised at this exclamation.

“I’ve come to you for two reasons. In the first place, I wanted to make your personal acquaintance, as I have already heard a great deal about you that is interesting and flattering; secondly, I cherish the hope that you may not refuse to assist me in a matter directly concerning the welfare of your sister, Avdotya Romanovna. For without your support she might not let me come near her now, for she is prejudiced against me, but with your assistance I reckon on...”

“You reckon wrongly,” interrupted Raskolnikov.

“They only arrived yesterday, may I ask you?”

Raskolnikov made no reply.

“It was yesterday, I know. I only arrived myself the day before. Well, let me tell you this, Rodion Romanovitch, I don’t consider it necessary to justify myself, but kindly tell me what was there particularly criminal on my part in all this business, speaking without prejudice, with common sense?”

Raskolnikov continued to look at him in silence.

“That in my own house I persecuted a defenceless girl and ‘insulted her with my infamous proposals’ — is that it? (I am anticipating you.) But you’ve only to assume that I, too, am a man *et nihil humanum*... in a word, that I am capable of being attracted and falling in love (which does not depend on our will), then everything can be explained in the most natural manner. The question is, am I a monster, or am I myself a victim? And what if I am a victim? In proposing to the object of my passion to elope with me to America or Switzerland, I may have cherished the deepest respect for her and may have thought that I was promoting our mutual happiness! Reason is the slave of passion, you know; why, probably, I was doing more harm to myself than anyone!”

“But that’s not the point,” Raskolnikov interrupted with disgust. “It’s simply that whether you are right or wrong, we dislike you. We don’t want

to have anything to do with you. We show you the door. Go out!”

Svidrigaïlov broke into a sudden laugh.

“But you’re... but there’s no getting round you,” he said, laughing in the frankest way. “I hoped to get round you, but you took up the right line at once!”

“But you are trying to get round me still!”

“What of it? What of it?” cried Svidrigaïlov, laughing openly. “But this is what the French call *bonne guerre*, and the most innocent form of deception!... But still you have interrupted me; one way or another, I repeat again: there would never have been any unpleasantness except for what happened in the garden. Marfa Petrovna...”

“You have got rid of Marfa Petrovna, too, so they say?” Raskolnikov interrupted rudely.

“Oh, you’ve heard that, too, then? You’d be sure to, though.... But as for your question, I really don’t know what to say, though my own conscience is quite at rest on that score. Don’t suppose that I am in any apprehension about it. All was regular and in order; the medical inquiry diagnosed apoplexy due to bathing immediately after a heavy dinner and a bottle of wine, and indeed it could have proved nothing else. But I’ll tell you what I have been thinking to myself of late, on my way here in the train, especially: didn’t I contribute to all that... calamity, morally, in a way, by irritation or something of the sort. But I came to the conclusion that that, too, was quite out of the question.”

Raskolnikov laughed.

“I wonder you trouble yourself about it!”

“But what are you laughing at? Only consider, I struck her just twice with a switch — there were no marks even... don’t regard me as a cynic, please; I am perfectly aware how atrocious it was of me and all that; but I know for certain, too, that Marfa Petrovna was very likely pleased at my, so to say, warmth. The story of your sister had been wrung out to the last drop; for the last three days Marfa Petrovna had been forced to sit at home; she had nothing to show herself with in the town. Besides, she had bored them so with that letter (you heard about her reading the letter). And all of a sudden those two switches fell from heaven! Her first act was to order the carriage to be got out.... Not to speak of the fact that there are cases when women are very, very glad to be insulted in spite of all their show of indignation. There are instances of it with everyone; human beings in

general, indeed, greatly love to be insulted, have you noticed that? But it's particularly so with women. One might even say it's their only amusement."

At one time Raskolnikov thought of getting up and walking out and so finishing the interview. But some curiosity and even a sort of prudence made him linger for a moment.

"You are fond of fighting?" he asked carelessly.

"No, not very," Svidrigaïlov answered, calmly. "And Marfa Petrovna and I scarcely ever fought. We lived very harmoniously, and she was always pleased with me. I only used the whip twice in all our seven years (not counting a third occasion of a very ambiguous character). The first time, two months after our marriage, immediately after we arrived in the country, and the last time was that of which we are speaking. Did you suppose I was such a monster, such a reactionary, such a slave driver? Ha, ha! By the way, do you remember, Rodion Romanovitch, how a few years ago, in those days of beneficent publicity, a nobleman, I've forgotten his name, was put to shame everywhere, in all the papers, for having thrashed a German woman in the railway train. You remember? It was in those days, that very year I believe, the 'disgraceful action of the *Age*' took place (you know, 'The Egyptian Nights,' that public reading, you remember? The dark eyes, you know! Ah, the golden days of our youth, where are they?). Well, as for the gentleman who thrashed the German, I feel no sympathy with him, because after all what need is there for sympathy? But I must say that there are sometimes such provoking 'Germans' that I don't believe there is a progressive who could quite answer for himself. No one looked at the subject from that point of view then, but that's the truly humane point of view, I assure you."

After saying this, Svidrigaïlov broke into a sudden laugh again. Raskolnikov saw clearly that this was a man with a firm purpose in his mind and able to keep it to himself.

"I expect you've not talked to anyone for some days?" he asked.

"Scarcely anyone. I suppose you are wondering at my being such an adaptable man?"

"No, I am only wondering at your being too adaptable a man."

"Because I am not offended at the rudeness of your questions? Is that it? But why take offence? As you asked, so I answered," he replied, with a surprising expression of simplicity. "You know, there's hardly anything I take interest in," he went on, as it were dreamily, "especially now, I've

nothing to do.... You are quite at liberty to imagine though that I am making up to you with a motive, particularly as I told you I want to see your sister about something. But I'll confess frankly, I am very much bored. The last three days especially, so I am delighted to see you.... Don't be angry, Rodion Romanovitch, but you seem to be somehow awfully strange yourself. Say what you like, there's something wrong with you, and now, too... not this very minute, I mean, but now, generally.... Well, well, I won't, I won't, don't scowl! I am not such a bear, you know, as you think."

Raskolnikov looked gloomily at him.

"You are not a bear, perhaps, at all," he said. "I fancy indeed that you are a man of very good breeding, or at least know how on occasion to behave like one."

"I am not particularly interested in anyone's opinion," Svidrigaïlov answered, dryly and even with a shade of haughtiness, "and therefore why not be vulgar at times when vulgarity is such a convenient cloak for our climate... and especially if one has a natural propensity that way," he added, laughing again.

"But I've heard you have many friends here. You are, as they say, 'not without connections.' What can you want with me, then, unless you've some special object?"

"That's true that I have friends here," Svidrigaïlov admitted, not replying to the chief point. "I've met some already. I've been lounging about for the last three days, and I've seen them, or they've seen me. That's a matter of course. I am well dressed and reckoned not a poor man; the emancipation of the serfs hasn't affected me; my property consists chiefly of forests and water meadows. The revenue has not fallen off; but... I am not going to see them, I was sick of them long ago. I've been here three days and have called on no one.... What a town it is! How has it come into existence among us, tell me that? A town of officials and students of all sorts. Yes, there's a great deal I didn't notice when I was here eight years ago, kicking up my heels.... My only hope now is in anatomy, by Jove, it is!"

"Anatomy?"

"But as for these clubs, Dussauts, parades, or progress, indeed, maybe — well, all that can go on without me," he went on, again without noticing the question. "Besides, who wants to be a card-sharper?"

"Why, have you been a card-sharper then?"

“How could I help being? There was a regular set of us, men of the best society, eight years ago; we had a fine time. And all men of breeding, you know, poets, men of property. And indeed as a rule in our Russian society the best manners are found among those who’ve been thrashed, have you noticed that? I’ve deteriorated in the country. But I did get into prison for debt, through a low Greek who came from Nezhin. Then Marfa Petrovna turned up; she bargained with him and bought me off for thirty thousand silver pieces (I owed seventy thousand). We were united in lawful wedlock and she bore me off into the country like a treasure. You know she was five years older than I. She was very fond of me. For seven years I never left the country. And, take note, that all my life she held a document over me, the IOU for thirty thousand roubles, so if I were to elect to be restive about anything I should be trapped at once! And she would have done it! Women find nothing incompatible in that.”

“If it hadn’t been for that, would you have given her the slip?”

“I don’t know what to say. It was scarcely the document restrained me. I didn’t want to go anywhere else. Marfa Petrovna herself invited me to go abroad, seeing I was bored, but I’ve been abroad before, and always felt sick there. For no reason, but the sunrise, the bay of Naples, the sea — you look at them and it makes you sad. What’s most revolting is that one is really sad! No, it’s better at home. Here at least one blames others for everything and excuses oneself. I should have gone perhaps on an expedition to the North Pole, because *j’ai le vin mauvais* and hate drinking, and there’s nothing left but wine. I have tried it. But, I say, I’ve been told Berg is going up in a great balloon next Sunday from the Yusupov Garden and will take up passengers at a fee. Is it true?”

“Why, would you go up?”

“I... No, oh, no,” muttered Svidrigaïlov really seeming to be deep in thought.

“What does he mean? Is he in earnest?” Raskolnikov wondered.

“No, the document didn’t restrain me,” Svidrigaïlov went on, meditatively. “It was my own doing, not leaving the country, and nearly a year ago Marfa Petrovna gave me back the document on my name-day and made me a present of a considerable sum of money, too. She had a fortune, you know. ‘You see how I trust you, Arkady Ivanovitch’ — that was actually her expression. You don’t believe she used it? But do you know I managed the estate quite decently, they know me in the neighbourhood. I

ordered books, too. Marfa Petrovna at first approved, but afterwards she was afraid of my over-studying.”

“You seem to be missing Marfa Petrovna very much?”

“Missing her? Perhaps. Really, perhaps I am. And, by the way, do you believe in ghosts?”

“What ghosts?”

“Why, ordinary ghosts.”

“Do you believe in them?”

“Perhaps not, *pour vous plaire*.... I wouldn’t say no exactly.”

“Do you see them, then?”

Svidrigaïlov looked at him rather oddly.

“Marfa Petrovna is pleased to visit me,” he said, twisting his mouth into a strange smile.

“How do you mean ‘she is pleased to visit you’?”

“She has been three times. I saw her first on the very day of the funeral, an hour after she was buried. It was the day before I left to come here. The second time was the day before yesterday, at daybreak, on the journey at the station of Malaya Vishera, and the third time was two hours ago in the room where I am staying. I was alone.”

“Were you awake?”

“Quite awake. I was wide awake every time. She comes, speaks to me for a minute and goes out at the door — always at the door. I can almost hear her.”

“What made me think that something of the sort must be happening to you?” Raskolnikov said suddenly.

At the same moment he was surprised at having said it. He was much excited.

“What! Did you think so?” Svidrigaïlov asked in astonishment. “Did you really? Didn’t I say that there was something in common between us, eh?”

“You never said so!” Raskolnikov cried sharply and with heat.

“Didn’t I?”

“No!”

“I thought I did. When I came in and saw you lying with your eyes shut, pretending, I said to myself at once, ‘Here’s the man.’”

“What do you mean by ‘the man?’ What are you talking about?” cried Raskolnikov.

“What do I mean? I really don’t know....” Svidrigaïlov muttered ingenuously, as though he, too, were puzzled.

For a minute they were silent. They stared in each other’s faces.

“That’s all nonsense!” Raskolnikov shouted with vexation. “What does she say when she comes to you?”

“She! Would you believe it, she talks of the silliest trifles and — man is a strange creature — it makes me angry. The first time she came in (I was tired you know: the funeral service, the funeral ceremony, the lunch afterwards. At last I was left alone in my study. I lighted a cigar and began to think), she came in at the door. ‘You’ve been so busy to-day, Arkady Ivanovitch, you have forgotten to wind the dining-room clock,’ she said. All those seven years I’ve wound that clock every week, and if I forgot it she would always remind me. The next day I set off on my way here. I got out at the station at daybreak; I’d been asleep, tired out, with my eyes half open, I was drinking some coffee. I looked up and there was suddenly Marfa Petrovna sitting beside me with a pack of cards in her hands. ‘Shall I tell your fortune for the journey, Arkady Ivanovitch?’ She was a great hand at telling fortunes. I shall never forgive myself for not asking her to. I ran away in a fright, and, besides, the bell rang. I was sitting to-day, feeling very heavy after a miserable dinner from a cookshop; I was sitting smoking, all of a sudden Marfa Petrovna again. She came in very smart in a new green silk dress with a long train. ‘Good day, Arkady Ivanovitch! How do you like my dress? Aniska can’t make like this.’ (Aniska was a dressmaker in the country, one of our former serf girls who had been trained in Moscow, a pretty wench.) She stood turning round before me. I looked at the dress, and then I looked carefully, very carefully, at her face. ‘I wonder you trouble to come to me about such trifles, Marfa Petrovna.”Good gracious, you won’t let one disturb you about anything!’ To tease her I said, ‘I want to get married, Marfa Petrovna.”That’s just like you, Arkady Ivanovitch; it does you very little credit to come looking for a bride when you’ve hardly buried your wife. And if you could make a good choice, at least, but I know it won’t be for your happiness or hers, you will only be a laughing-stock to all good people.’ Then she went out and her train seemed to rustle. Isn’t it nonsense, eh?”

“But perhaps you are telling lies?” Raskolnikov put in.

“I rarely lie,” answered Svidrigaïlov thoughtfully, apparently not noticing the rudeness of the question.

“And in the past, have you ever seen ghosts before?”

“Y-yes, I have seen them, but only once in my life, six years ago. I had a serf, Filka; just after his burial I called out forgetting ‘Filka, my pipe!’ He came in and went to the cupboard where my pipes were. I sat still and thought ‘he is doing it out of revenge,’ because we had a violent quarrel just before his death. ‘How dare you come in with a hole in your elbow?’ I said. ‘Go away, you scamp!’ He turned and went out, and never came again. I didn’t tell Marfa Petrovna at the time. I wanted to have a service sung for him, but I was ashamed.”

“You should go to a doctor.”

“I know I am not well, without your telling me, though I don’t know what’s wrong; I believe I am five times as strong as you are. I didn’t ask you whether you believe that ghosts are seen, but whether you believe that they exist.”

“No, I won’t believe it!” Raskolnikov cried, with positive anger.

“What do people generally say?” muttered Svidrigaïlov, as though speaking to himself, looking aside and bowing his head. “They say, ‘You are ill, so what appears to you is only unreal fantasy.’ But that’s not strictly logical. I agree that ghosts only appear to the sick, but that only proves that they are unable to appear except to the sick, not that they don’t exist.”

“Nothing of the sort,” Raskolnikov insisted irritably.

“No? You don’t think so?” Svidrigaïlov went on, looking at him deliberately. “But what do you say to this argument (help me with it): ghosts are, as it were, shreds and fragments of other worlds, the beginning of them. A man in health has, of course, no reason to see them, because he is above all a man of this earth and is bound for the sake of completeness and order to live only in this life. But as soon as one is ill, as soon as the normal earthly order of the organism is broken, one begins to realise the possibility of another world; and the more seriously ill one is, the closer becomes one’s contact with that other world, so that as soon as the man dies he steps straight into that world. I thought of that long ago. If you believe in a future life, you could believe in that, too.”

“I don’t believe in a future life,” said Raskolnikov.

Svidrigaïlov sat lost in thought.

“And what if there are only spiders there, or something of that sort,” he said suddenly.

“He is a madman,” thought Raskolnikov.

“We always imagine eternity as something beyond our conception, something vast, vast! But why must it be vast? Instead of all that, what if it’s one little room, like a bath house in the country, black and grimy and spiders in every corner, and that’s all eternity is? I sometimes fancy it like that.”

“Can it be you can imagine nothing juster and more comforting than that?” Raskolnikov cried, with a feeling of anguish.

“Juster? And how can we tell, perhaps that is just, and do you know it’s what I would certainly have made it,” answered Svidrigaïlov, with a vague smile.

This horrible answer sent a cold chill through Raskolnikov. Svidrigaïlov raised his head, looked at him, and suddenly began laughing.

“Only think,” he cried, “half an hour ago we had never seen each other, we regarded each other as enemies; there is a matter unsettled between us; we’ve thrown it aside, and away we’ve gone into the abstract! Wasn’t I right in saying that we were birds of a feather?”

“Kindly allow me,” Raskolnikov went on irritably, “to ask you to explain why you have honoured me with your visit... and... and I am in a hurry, I have no time to waste. I want to go out.”

“By all means, by all means. Your sister, Avdotya Romanovna, is going to be married to Mr. Luzhin, Pyotr Petrovitch?”

“Can you refrain from any question about my sister and from mentioning her name? I can’t understand how you dare utter her name in my presence, if you really are Svidrigaïlov.”

“Why, but I’ve come here to speak about her; how can I avoid mentioning her?”

“Very good, speak, but make haste.”

“I am sure that you must have formed your own opinion of this Mr. Luzhin, who is a connection of mine through my wife, if you have only seen him for half an hour, or heard any facts about him. He is no match for Avdotya Romanovna. I believe Avdotya Romanovna is sacrificing herself generously and imprudently for the sake of... for the sake of her family. I fancied from all I had heard of you that you would be very glad if the match could be broken off without the sacrifice of worldly advantages. Now I know you personally, I am convinced of it.”

“All this is very naïve... excuse me, I should have said impudent on your part,” said Raskolnikov.

“You mean to say that I am seeking my own ends. Don’t be uneasy, Rodion Romanovitch, if I were working for my own advantage, I would not have spoken out so directly. I am not quite a fool. I will confess something psychologically curious about that: just now, defending my love for Avdotya Romanovna, I said I was myself the victim. Well, let me tell you that I’ve no feeling of love now, not the slightest, so that I wonder myself indeed, for I really did feel something...”

“Through idleness and depravity,” Raskolnikov put in.

“I certainly am idle and depraved, but your sister has such qualities that even I could not help being impressed by them. But that’s all nonsense, as I see myself now.”

“Have you seen that long?”

“I began to be aware of it before, but was only perfectly sure of it the day before yesterday, almost at the moment I arrived in Petersburg. I still fancied in Moscow, though, that I was coming to try to get Avdotya Romanovna’s hand and to cut out Mr. Luzhin.”

“Excuse me for interrupting you; kindly be brief, and come to the object of your visit. I am in a hurry, I want to go out...”

“With the greatest pleasure. On arriving here and determining on a certain... journey, I should like to make some necessary preliminary arrangements. I left my children with an aunt; they are well provided for; and they have no need of me personally. And a nice father I should make, too! I have taken nothing but what Marfa Petrovna gave me a year ago. That’s enough for me. Excuse me, I am just coming to the point. Before the journey which may come off, I want to settle Mr. Luzhin, too. It’s not that I detest him so much, but it was through him I quarrelled with Marfa Petrovna when I learned that she had dished up this marriage. I want now to see Avdotya Romanovna through your mediation, and if you like in your presence, to explain to her that in the first place she will never gain anything but harm from Mr. Luzhin. Then, begging her pardon for all past unpleasantness, to make her a present of ten thousand roubles and so assist the rupture with Mr. Luzhin, a rupture to which I believe she is herself not disinclined, if she could see the way to it.”

“You are certainly mad,” cried Raskolnikov not so much angered as astonished. “How dare you talk like that!”

“I knew you would scream at me; but in the first place, though I am not rich, this ten thousand roubles is perfectly free; I have absolutely no need

for it. If Avdotya Romanovna does not accept it, I shall waste it in some more foolish way. That’s the first thing. Secondly, my conscience is perfectly easy; I make the offer with no ulterior motive. You may not believe it, but in the end Avdotya Romanovna and you will know. The point is, that I did actually cause your sister, whom I greatly respect, some trouble and unpleasantness, and so, sincerely regretting it, I want — not to compensate, not to repay her for the unpleasantness, but simply to do something to her advantage, to show that I am not, after all, privileged to do nothing but harm. If there were a millionth fraction of self-interest in my offer, I should not have made it so openly; and I should not have offered her ten thousand only, when five weeks ago I offered her more, Besides, I may, perhaps, very soon marry a young lady, and that alone ought to prevent suspicion of any design on Avdotya Romanovna. In conclusion, let me say that in marrying Mr. Luzhin, she is taking money just the same, only from another man. Don’t be angry, Rodion Romanovitch, think it over coolly and quietly.”

Svidrigaïlov himself was exceedingly cool and quiet as he was saying this.

“I beg you to say no more,” said Raskolnikov. “In any case this is unpardonable impertinence.”

“Not in the least. Then a man may do nothing but harm to his neighbour in this world, and is prevented from doing the tiniest bit of good by trivial conventional formalities. That’s absurd. If I died, for instance, and left that sum to your sister in my will, surely she wouldn’t refuse it?”

“Very likely she would.”

“Oh, no, indeed. However, if you refuse it, so be it, though ten thousand roubles is a capital thing to have on occasion. In any case I beg you to repeat what I have said to Avdotya Romanovna.”

“No, I won’t.”

“In that case, Rodion Romanovitch, I shall be obliged to try and see her myself and worry her by doing so.”

“And if I do tell her, will you not try to see her?”

“I don’t know really what to say. I should like very much to see her once more.”

“Don’t hope for it.”

“I’m sorry. But you don’t know me. Perhaps we may become better friends.”

“You think we may become friends?”

“And why not?” Svidrigaïlov said, smiling. He stood up and took his hat. “I didn’t quite intend to disturb you and I came here without reckoning on it... though I was very much struck by your face this morning.”

“Where did you see me this morning?” Raskolnikov asked uneasily.

“I saw you by chance.... I kept fancying there is something about you like me.... But don’t be uneasy. I am not intrusive; I used to get on all right with card-sharpers, and I never bored Prince Svirbey, a great personage who is a distant relation of mine, and I could write about Raphael’s *Madonna* in Madam Prilukov’s album, and I never left Marfa Petrovna’s side for seven years, and I used to stay the night at Viazemsky’s house in the Hay Market in the old days, and I may go up in a balloon with Berg, perhaps.”

“Oh, all right. Are you starting soon on your travels, may I ask?”

“What travels?”

“Why, on that ‘journey’; you spoke of it yourself.”

“A journey? Oh, yes. I did speak of a journey. Well, that’s a wide subject.... if only you knew what you are asking,” he added, and gave a sudden, loud, short laugh. “Perhaps I’ll get married instead of the journey. They’re making a match for me.”

“Here?”

“Yes.”

“How have you had time for that?”

“But I am very anxious to see Avdotya Romanovna once. I earnestly beg it. Well, good-bye for the present. Oh, yes. I have forgotten something. Tell your sister, Rodion Romanovitch, that Marfa Petrovna remembered her in her will and left her three thousand roubles. That’s absolutely certain. Marfa Petrovna arranged it a week before her death, and it was done in my presence. Avdotya Romanovna will be able to receive the money in two or three weeks.”

“Are you telling the truth?”

“Yes, tell her. Well, your servant. I am staying very near you.”

As he went out, Svidrigaïlov ran up against Razumihin in the doorway.

CHAPTER II

It was nearly eight o’clock. The two young men hurried to Bakaleyev’s, to arrive before Luzhin.

“Why, who was that?” asked Razumihin, as soon as they were in the street.

“It was Svidrigaïlov, that landowner in whose house my sister was insulted when she was their governess. Through his persecuting her with his attentions, she was turned out by his wife, Marfa Petrovna. This Marfa Petrovna begged Dounia’s forgiveness afterwards, and she’s just died suddenly. It was of her we were talking this morning. I don’t know why I’m afraid of that man. He came here at once after his wife’s funeral. He is very strange, and is determined on doing something.... We must guard Dounia from him... that’s what I wanted to tell you, do you hear?”

“Guard her! What can he do to harm Avdotya Romanovna? Thank you, Rodya, for speaking to me like that.... We will, we will guard her. Where does he live?”

“I don’t know.”

“Why didn’t you ask? What a pity! I’ll find out, though.”

“Did you see him?” asked Raskolnikov after a pause.

“Yes, I noticed him, I noticed him well.”

“You did really see him? You saw him clearly?” Raskolnikov insisted.

“Yes, I remember him perfectly, I should know him in a thousand; I have a good memory for faces.”

They were silent again.

“Hm!... that’s all right,” muttered Raskolnikov. “Do you know, I fancied... I keep thinking that it may have been an hallucination.”

“What do you mean? I don’t understand you.”

“Well, you all say,” Raskolnikov went on, twisting his mouth into a smile, “that I am mad. I thought just now that perhaps I really am mad, and have only seen a phantom.”

“What do you mean?”

“Why, who can tell? Perhaps I am really mad, and perhaps everything that happened all these days may be only imagination.”

“Ach, Rodya, you have been upset again!... But what did he say, what did he come for?”

Raskolnikov did not answer. Razumihin thought a minute.

“Now let me tell you my story,” he began, “I came to you, you were asleep. Then we had dinner and then I went to Porfiry’s, Zametov was still with him. I tried to begin, but it was no use. I couldn’t speak in the right way. They don’t seem to understand and can’t understand, but are not a bit ashamed. I drew Porfiry to the window, and began talking to him, but it was still no use. He looked away and I looked away. At last I shook my fist in his ugly face, and told him as a cousin I’d brain him. He merely looked at me, I cursed and came away. That was all. It was very stupid. To Zametov I didn’t say a word. But, you see, I thought I’d made a mess of it, but as I went downstairs a brilliant idea struck me: why should we trouble? Of course if you were in any danger or anything, but why need you care? You needn’t care a hang for them. We shall have a laugh at them afterwards, and if I were in your place I’d mystify them more than ever. How ashamed they’ll be afterwards! Hang them! We can thrash them afterwards, but let’s laugh at them now!”

“To be sure,” answered Raskolnikov. “But what will you say to-morrow?” he thought to himself. Strange to say, till that moment it had never occurred to him to wonder what Razumihin would think when he knew. As he thought it, Raskolnikov looked at him. Razumihin’s account of his visit to Porfiry had very little interest for him, so much had come and gone since then.

In the corridor they came upon Luzhin; he had arrived punctually at eight, and was looking for the number, so that all three went in together without greeting or looking at one another. The young men walked in first, while Pyotr Petrovitch, for good manners, lingered a little in the passage, taking off his coat. Pulcheria Alexandrovna came forward at once to greet him in the doorway, Dounia was welcoming her brother. Pyotr Petrovitch walked in and quite amiably, though with redoubled dignity, bowed to the ladies. He looked, however, as though he were a little put out and could not yet recover himself. Pulcheria Alexandrovna, who seemed also a little embarrassed, hastened to make them all sit down at the round table where a samovar was boiling. Dounia and Luzhin were facing one another on opposite sides of the table. Razumihin and Raskolnikov were facing Pulcheria Alexandrovna, Razumihin was next to Luzhin and Raskolnikov was beside his sister.

A moment’s silence followed. Pyotr Petrovitch deliberately drew out a cambric handkerchief reeking of scent and blew his nose with an air of a

benevolent man who felt himself slighted, and was firmly resolved to insist on an explanation. In the passage the idea had occurred to him to keep on his overcoat and walk away, and so give the two ladies a sharp and emphatic lesson and make them feel the gravity of the position. But he could not bring himself to do this. Besides, he could not endure uncertainty, and he wanted an explanation: if his request had been so openly disobeyed, there was something behind it, and in that case it was better to find it out beforehand; it rested with him to punish them and there would always be time for that.

“I trust you had a favourable journey,” he inquired officially of Pulcheria Alexandrovna.

“Oh, very, Pyotr Petrovitch.”

“I am gratified to hear it. And Avdotya Romanovna is not over-fatigued either?”

“I am young and strong, I don’t get tired, but it was a great strain for mother,” answered Dounia.

“That’s unavoidable! our national railways are of terrible length. ‘Mother Russia,’ as they say, is a vast country.... In spite of all my desire to do so, I was unable to meet you yesterday. But I trust all passed off without inconvenience?”

“Oh, no, Pyotr Petrovitch, it was all terribly disheartening,” Pulcheria Alexandrovna hastened to declare with peculiar intonation, “and if Dmitri Prokofitch had not been sent us, I really believe by God Himself, we should have been utterly lost. Here, he is! Dmitri Prokofitch Razumihin,” she added, introducing him to Luzhin.

“I had the pleasure... yesterday,” muttered Pyotr Petrovitch with a hostile glance sidelong at Razumihin; then he scowled and was silent.

Pyotr Petrovitch belonged to that class of persons, on the surface very polite in society, who make a great point of punctiliousness, but who, directly they are crossed in anything, are completely disconcerted, and become more like sacks of flour than elegant and lively men of society. Again all was silent; Raskolnikov was obstinately mute, Avdotya Romanovna was unwilling to open the conversation too soon. Razumihin had nothing to say, so Pulcheria Alexandrovna was anxious again.

“Marfa Petrovna is dead, have you heard?” she began having recourse to her leading item of conversation.

“To be sure, I heard so. I was immediately informed, and I have come to make you acquainted with the fact that Arkady Ivanovitch Svidrigaïlov set off in haste for Petersburg immediately after his wife’s funeral. So at least I have excellent authority for believing.”

“To Petersburg? here?” Dounia asked in alarm and looked at her mother.

“Yes, indeed, and doubtless not without some design, having in view the rapidity of his departure, and all the circumstances preceding it.”

“Good heavens! won’t he leave Dounia in peace even here?” cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna.

“I imagine that neither you nor Avdotya Romanovna have any grounds for uneasiness, unless, of course, you are yourselves desirous of getting into communication with him. For my part I am on my guard, and am now discovering where he is lodging.”

“Oh, Pyotr Petrovitch, you would not believe what a fright you have given me,” Pulcheria Alexandrovna went on: “I’ve only seen him twice, but I thought him terrible, terrible! I am convinced that he was the cause of Marfa Petrovna’s death.”

“It’s impossible to be certain about that. I have precise information. I do not dispute that he may have contributed to accelerate the course of events by the moral influence, so to say, of the affront; but as to the general conduct and moral characteristics of that personage, I am in agreement with you. I do not know whether he is well off now, and precisely what Marfa Petrovna left him; this will be known to me within a very short period; but no doubt here in Petersburg, if he has any pecuniary resources, he will relapse at once into his old ways. He is the most depraved, and abjectly vicious specimen of that class of men. I have considerable reason to believe that Marfa Petrovna, who was so unfortunate as to fall in love with him and to pay his debts eight years ago, was of service to him also in another way. Solely by her exertions and sacrifices, a criminal charge, involving an element of fantastic and homicidal brutality for which he might well have been sentenced to Siberia, was hushed up. That’s the sort of man he is, if you care to know.”

“Good heavens!” cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna. Raskolnikov listened attentively.

“Are you speaking the truth when you say that you have good evidence of this?” Dounia asked sternly and emphatically.

“I only repeat what I was told in secret by Marfa Petrovna. I must observe that from the legal point of view the case was far from clear. There was, and I believe still is, living here a woman called Resslich, a foreigner, who lent small sums of money at interest, and did other commissions, and with this woman Svidrigaïlov had for a long while close and mysterious relations. She had a relation, a niece I believe, living with her, a deaf and dumb girl of fifteen, or perhaps not more than fourteen. Resslich hated this girl, and grudged her every crust; she used to beat her mercilessly. One day the girl was found hanging in the garret. At the inquest the verdict was suicide. After the usual proceedings the matter ended, but, later on, information was given that the child had been... cruelly outraged by Svidrigaïlov. It is true, this was not clearly established, the information was given by another German woman of loose character whose word could not be trusted; no statement was actually made to the police, thanks to Marfa Petrovna’s money and exertions; it did not get beyond gossip. And yet the story is a very significant one. You heard, no doubt, Avdotya Romanovna, when you were with them the story of the servant Philip who died of ill treatment he received six years ago, before the abolition of serfdom.”

“I heard, on the contrary, that this Philip hanged himself.”

“Quite so, but what drove him, or rather perhaps disposed him, to suicide was the systematic persecution and severity of Mr. Svidrigaïlov.”

“I don’t know that,” answered Dounia, dryly. “I only heard a queer story that Philip was a sort of hypochondriac, a sort of domestic philosopher, the servants used to say, ‘he read himself silly,’ and that he hanged himself partly on account of Mr. Svidrigaïlov’s mockery of him and not his blows. When I was there he behaved well to the servants, and they were actually fond of him, though they certainly did blame him for Philip’s death.”

“I perceive, Avdotya Romanovna, that you seem disposed to undertake his defence all of a sudden,” Luzhin observed, twisting his lips into an ambiguous smile, “there’s no doubt that he is an astute man, and insinuating where ladies are concerned, of which Marfa Petrovna, who has died so strangely, is a terrible instance. My only desire has been to be of service to you and your mother with my advice, in view of the renewed efforts which may certainly be anticipated from him. For my part it’s my firm conviction, that he will end in a debtor’s prison again. Marfa Petrovna had not the slightest intention of settling anything substantial on him, having regard for his children’s interests, and, if she left him anything, it would only be the

merest sufficiency, something insignificant and ephemeral, which would not last a year for a man of his habits.”

“Pyotr Petrovitch, I beg you,” said Dounia, “say no more of Mr. Svidrigaïlov. It makes me miserable.”

“He has just been to see me,” said Raskolnikov, breaking his silence for the first time.

There were exclamations from all, and they all turned to him. Even Pyotr Petrovitch was roused.

“An hour and a half ago, he came in when I was asleep, waked me, and introduced himself,” Raskolnikov continued. “He was fairly cheerful and at ease, and quite hopes that we shall become friends. He is particularly anxious, by the way, Dounia, for an interview with you, at which he asked me to assist. He has a proposition to make to you, and he told me about it. He told me, too, that a week before her death Marfa Petrovna left you three thousand roubles in her will, Dounia, and that you can receive the money very shortly.”

“Thank God!” cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna, crossing herself. “Pray for her soul, Dounia!”

“It’s a fact!” broke from Luzhin.

“Tell us, what more?” Dounia urged Raskolnikov.

“Then he said that he wasn’t rich and all the estate was left to his children who are now with an aunt, then that he was staying somewhere not far from me, but where, I don’t know, I didn’t ask....”

“But what, what does he want to propose to Dounia?” cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna in a fright. “Did he tell you?”

“Yes.”

“What was it?”

“I’ll tell you afterwards.”

Raskolnikov ceased speaking and turned his attention to his tea.

Pyotr Petrovitch looked at his watch.

“I am compelled to keep a business engagement, and so I shall not be in your way,” he added with an air of some pique and he began getting up.

“Don’t go, Pyotr Petrovitch,” said Dounia, “you intended to spend the evening. Besides, you wrote yourself that you wanted to have an explanation with mother.”

“Precisely so, Avdotya Romanovna,” Pyotr Petrovitch answered impressively, sitting down again, but still holding his hat. “I certainly

desired an explanation with you and your honoured mother upon a very important point indeed. But as your brother cannot speak openly in my presence of some proposals of Mr. Svidrigaïlov, I, too, do not desire and am not able to speak openly... in the presence of others... of certain matters of the greatest gravity. Moreover, my most weighty and urgent request has been disregarded....”

Assuming an aggrieved air, Luzhin relapsed into dignified silence.

“Your request that my brother should not be present at our meeting was disregarded solely at my instance,” said Dounia. “You wrote that you had been insulted by my brother; I think that this must be explained at once, and you must be reconciled. And if Rodya really has insulted you, then he *should* and *will* apologise.”

Pyotr Petrovitch took a stronger line.

“There are insults, Avdotya Romanovna, which no goodwill can make us forget. There is a line in everything which it is dangerous to overstep; and when it has been overstepped, there is no return.”

“That wasn’t what I was speaking of exactly, Pyotr Petrovitch,” Dounia interrupted with some impatience. “Please understand that our whole future depends now on whether all this is explained and set right as soon as possible. I tell you frankly at the start that I cannot look at it in any other light, and if you have the least regard for me, all this business must be ended to-day, however hard that may be. I repeat that if my brother is to blame he will ask your forgiveness.”

“I am surprised at your putting the question like that,” said Luzhin, getting more and more irritated. “Esteeming, and so to say, adoring you, I may at the same time, very well indeed, be able to dislike some member of your family. Though I lay claim to the happiness of your hand, I cannot accept duties incompatible with...”

“Ah, don’t be so ready to take offence, Pyotr Petrovitch,” Dounia interrupted with feeling, “and be the sensible and generous man I have always considered, and wish to consider, you to be. I’ve given you a great promise, I am your betrothed. Trust me in this matter and, believe me, I shall be capable of judging impartially. My assuming the part of judge is as much a surprise for my brother as for you. When I insisted on his coming to our interview to-day after your letter, I told him nothing of what I meant to do. Understand that, if you are not reconciled, I must choose between you — it must be either you or he. That is how the question rests on your side

and on his. I don’t want to be mistaken in my choice, and I must not be. For your sake I must break off with my brother, for my brother’s sake I must break off with you. I can find out for certain now whether he is a brother to me, and I want to know it; and of you, whether I am dear to you, whether you esteem me, whether you are the husband for me.”

“Avdotya Romanovna,” Luzhin declared huffily, “your words are of too much consequence to me; I will say more, they are offensive in view of the position I have the honour to occupy in relation to you. To say nothing of your strange and offensive setting me on a level with an impertinent boy, you admit the possibility of breaking your promise to me. You say ‘you or he,’ showing thereby of how little consequence I am in your eyes... I cannot let this pass considering the relationship and... the obligations existing between us.”

“What!” cried Dounia, flushing. “I set your interest beside all that has hitherto been most precious in my life, what has made up the *whole* of my life, and here you are offended at my making too *little* account of you.”

Raskolnikov smiled sarcastically, Razumihin fidgeted, but Pyotr Petrovitch did not accept the reproof; on the contrary, at every word he became more persistent and irritable, as though he relished it.

“Love for the future partner of your life, for your husband, ought to outweigh your love for your brother,” he pronounced sententiously, “and in any case I cannot be put on the same level.... Although I said so emphatically that I would not speak openly in your brother’s presence, nevertheless, I intend now to ask your honoured mother for a necessary explanation on a point of great importance closely affecting my dignity. Your son,” he turned to Pulcheria Alexandrovna, “yesterday in the presence of Mr. Razsudkin (or... I think that’s it? excuse me I have forgotten your surname,” he bowed politely to Razumihin) “insulted me by misrepresenting the idea I expressed to you in a private conversation, drinking coffee, that is, that marriage with a poor girl who has had experience of trouble is more advantageous from the conjugal point of view than with one who has lived in luxury, since it is more profitable for the moral character. Your son intentionally exaggerated the significance of my words and made them ridiculous, accusing me of malicious intentions, and, as far as I could see, relied upon your correspondence with him. I shall consider myself happy, Pulcheria Alexandrovna, if it is possible for you to convince me of an opposite conclusion, and thereby considerately reassure

me. Kindly let me know in what terms precisely you repeated my words in your letter to Rodion Romanovitch."

"I don't remember," faltered Pulcheria Alexandrovna. "I repeated them as I understood them. I don't know how Rodya repeated them to you, perhaps he exaggerated."

"He could not have exaggerated them, except at your instigation."

"Pyotr Petrovitch," Pulcheria Alexandrovna declared with dignity, "the proof that Dounia and I did not take your words in a very bad sense is the fact that we are here."

"Good, mother," said Dounia approvingly.

"Then this is my fault again," said Luzhin, aggrieved.

"Well, Pyotr Petrovitch, you keep blaming Rodion, but you yourself have just written what was false about him," Pulcheria Alexandrovna added, gaining courage.

"I don't remember writing anything false."

"You wrote," Raskolnikov said sharply, not turning to Luzhin, "that I gave money yesterday not to the widow of the man who was killed, as was the fact, but to his daughter (whom I had never seen till yesterday). You wrote this to make dissension between me and my family, and for that object added coarse expressions about the conduct of a girl whom you don't know. All that is mean slander."

"Excuse me, sir," said Luzhin, quivering with fury. "I enlarged upon your qualities and conduct in my letter solely in response to your sister's and mother's inquiries, how I found you, and what impression you made on me. As for what you've alluded to in my letter, be so good as to point out one word of falsehood, show, that is, that you didn't throw away your money, and that there are not worthless persons in that family, however unfortunate."

"To my thinking, you, with all your virtues, are not worth the little finger of that unfortunate girl at whom you throw stones."

"Would you go so far then as to let her associate with your mother and sister?"

"I have done so already, if you care to know. I made her sit down to-day with mother and Dounia."

"Rodya!" cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna. Dounia crimsoned, Razumihin knitted his brows. Luzhin smiled with lofty sarcasm.

“You may see for yourself, Avdotya Romanovna,” he said, “whether it is possible for us to agree. I hope now that this question is at an end, once and for all. I will withdraw, that I may not hinder the pleasures of family intimacy, and the discussion of secrets.” He got up from his chair and took his hat. “But in withdrawing, I venture to request that for the future I may be spared similar meetings, and, so to say, compromises. I appeal particularly to you, honoured Pulcheria Alexandrovna, on this subject, the more as my letter was addressed to you and to no one else.”

Pulcheria Alexandrovna was a little offended.

“You seem to think we are completely under your authority, Pyotr Petrovitch. Dounia has told you the reason your desire was disregarded, she had the best intentions. And indeed you write as though you were laying commands upon me. Are we to consider every desire of yours as a command? Let me tell you on the contrary that you ought to show particular delicacy and consideration for us now, because we have thrown up everything, and have come here relying on you, and so we are in any case in a sense in your hands.”

“That is not quite true, Pulcheria Alexandrovna, especially at the present moment, when the news has come of Marfa Petrovna’s legacy, which seems indeed very apropos, judging from the new tone you take to me,” he added sarcastically.

“Judging from that remark, we may certainly presume that you were reckoning on our helplessness,” Dounia observed irritably.

“But now in any case I cannot reckon on it, and I particularly desire not to hinder your discussion of the secret proposals of Arkady Ivanovitch Svidrigaïlov, which he has entrusted to your brother and which have, I perceive, a great and possibly a very agreeable interest for you.”

“Good heavens!” cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna.

Razumihin could not sit still on his chair.

“Aren’t you ashamed now, sister?” asked Raskolnikov.

“I am ashamed, Rodya,” said Dounia. “Pyotr Petrovitch, go away,” she turned to him, white with anger.

Pyotr Petrovitch had apparently not at all expected such a conclusion. He had too much confidence in himself, in his power and in the helplessness of his victims. He could not believe it even now. He turned pale, and his lips quivered.

“Avdotya Romanovna, if I go out of this door now, after such a dismissal, then, you may reckon on it, I will never come back. Consider what you are doing. My word is not to be shaken.”

“What insolence!” cried Dounia, springing up from her seat. “I don’t want you to come back again.”

“What! So that’s how it stands!” cried Luzhin, utterly unable to the last moment to believe in the rupture and so completely thrown out of his reckoning now. “So that’s how it stands! But do you know, Avdotya Romanovna, that I might protest?”

“What right have you to speak to her like that?” Pulcheria Alexandrovna intervened hotly. “And what can you protest about? What rights have you? Am I to give my Dounia to a man like you? Go away, leave us altogether! We are to blame for having agreed to a wrong action, and I above all....”

“But you have bound me, Pulcheria Alexandrovna,” Luzhin stormed in a frenzy, “by your promise, and now you deny it and... besides... I have been led on account of that into expenses....”

This last complaint was so characteristic of Pyotr Petrovitch, that Raskolnikov, pale with anger and with the effort of restraining it, could not help breaking into laughter. But Pulcheria Alexandrovna was furious.

“Expenses? What expenses? Are you speaking of our trunk? But the conductor brought it for nothing for you. Mercy on us, we have bound you! What are you thinking about, Pyotr Petrovitch, it was you bound us, hand and foot, not we!”

“Enough, mother, no more please,” Avdotya Romanovna implored. “Pyotr Petrovitch, do be kind and go!”

“I am going, but one last word,” he said, quite unable to control himself. “Your mamma seems to have entirely forgotten that I made up my mind to take you, so to speak, after the gossip of the town had spread all over the district in regard to your reputation. Disregarding public opinion for your sake and reinstating your reputation, I certainly might very well reckon on a fitting return, and might indeed look for gratitude on your part. And my eyes have only now been opened! I see myself that I may have acted very, very recklessly in disregarding the universal verdict....”

“Does the fellow want his head smashed?” cried Razumihin, jumping up.

“You are a mean and spiteful man!” cried Dounia.

“Not a word! Not a movement!” cried Raskolnikov, holding Razumihin back; then going close up to Luzhin, “Kindly leave the room!” he said

quietly and distinctly, “and not a word more or...”

Pyotr Petrovitch gazed at him for some seconds with a pale face that worked with anger, then he turned, went out, and rarely has any man carried away in his heart such vindictive hatred as he felt against Raskolnikov. Him, and him alone, he blamed for everything. It is noteworthy that as he went downstairs he still imagined that his case was perhaps not utterly lost, and that, so far as the ladies were concerned, all might “very well indeed” be set right again.

CHAPTER III

The fact was that up to the last moment he had never expected such an ending; he had been overbearing to the last degree, never dreaming that two destitute and defenceless women could escape from his control. This conviction was strengthened by his vanity and conceit, a conceit to the point of fatuity. Pyotr Petrovitch, who had made his way up from insignificance, was morbidly given to self-admiration, had the highest opinion of his intelligence and capacities, and sometimes even gloated in solitude over his image in the glass. But what he loved and valued above all was the money he had amassed by his labour, and by all sorts of devices: that money made him the equal of all who had been his superiors.

When he had bitterly reminded Dounia that he had decided to take her in spite of evil report, Pyotr Petrovitch had spoken with perfect sincerity and had, indeed, felt genuinely indignant at such “black ingratitude.” And yet, when he made Dounia his offer, he was fully aware of the groundlessness of all the gossip. The story had been everywhere contradicted by Marfa Petrovna, and was by then disbelieved by all the townspeople, who were warm in Dounia’a defence. And he would not have denied that he knew all that at the time. Yet he still thought highly of his own resolution in lifting Dounia to his level and regarded it as something heroic. In speaking of it to Dounia, he had let out the secret feeling he cherished and admired, and he could not understand that others should fail to admire it too. He had called on Raskolnikov with the feelings of a benefactor who is about to reap the fruits of his good deeds and to hear agreeable flattery. And as he went downstairs now, he considered himself most undeservedly injured and unrecognised.

Dounia was simply essential to him; to do without her was unthinkable. For many years he had had voluptuous dreams of marriage, but he had gone on waiting and amassing money. He brooded with relish, in profound secret, over the image of a girl — virtuous, poor (she must be poor), very young, very pretty, of good birth and education, very timid, one who had suffered much, and was completely humbled before him, one who would all her life look on him as her saviour, worship him, admire him and only him. How many scenes, how many amorous episodes he had imagined on this seductive and playful theme, when his work was over! And, behold, the

dream of so many years was all but realised; the beauty and education of Avdotya Romanovna had impressed him; her helpless position had been a great allurement; in her he had found even more than he dreamed of. Here was a girl of pride, character, virtue, of education and breeding superior to his own (he felt that), and this creature would be slavishly grateful all her life for his heroic condescension, and would humble herself in the dust before him, and he would have absolute, unbounded power over her!... Not long before, he had, too, after long reflection and hesitation, made an important change in his career and was now entering on a wider circle of business. With this change his cherished dreams of rising into a higher class of society seemed likely to be realised.... He was, in fact, determined to try his fortune in Petersburg. He knew that women could do a very great deal. The fascination of a charming, virtuous, highly educated woman might make his way easier, might do wonders in attracting people to him, throwing an aureole round him, and now everything was in ruins! This sudden horrible rupture affected him like a clap of thunder; it was like a hideous joke, an absurdity. He had only been a tiny bit masterful, had not even time to speak out, had simply made a joke, been carried away — and it had ended so seriously. And, of course, too, he did love Dounia in his own way; he already possessed her in his dreams — and all at once! No! The next day, the very next day, it must all be set right, smoothed over, settled. Above all he must crush that conceited milksop who was the cause of it all. With a sick feeling he could not help recalling Razumihin too, but, he soon reassured himself on that score; as though a fellow like that could be put on a level with him! The man he really dreaded in earnest was Svidrigaïlov.... He had, in short, a great deal to attend to....

“No, I, I am more to blame than anyone!” said Dounia, kissing and embracing her mother. “I was tempted by his money, but on my honour, brother, I had no idea he was such a base man. If I had seen through him before, nothing would have tempted me! Don’t blame me, brother!”

“God has delivered us! God has delivered us!” Pulcheria Alexandrovna muttered, but half consciously, as though scarcely able to realise what had happened.

They were all relieved, and in five minutes they were laughing. Only now and then Dounia turned white and frowned, remembering what had passed. Pulcheria Alexandrovna was surprised to find that she, too, was

glad: she had only that morning thought rupture with Luzhin a terrible misfortune. Razumihin was delighted. He did not yet dare to express his joy fully, but he was in a fever of excitement as though a ton-weight had fallen off his heart. Now he had the right to devote his life to them, to serve them.... Anything might happen now! But he felt afraid to think of further possibilities and dared not let his imagination range. But Raskolnikov sat still in the same place, almost sullen and indifferent. Though he had been the most insistent on getting rid of Luzhin, he seemed now the least concerned at what had happened. Dounia could not help thinking that he was still angry with her, and Pulcheria Alexandrovna watched him timidly.

“What did Svidrigaïlov say to you?” said Dounia, approaching him.

“Yes, yes!” cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna.

Raskolnikov raised his head.

“He wants to make you a present of ten thousand roubles and he desires to see you once in my presence.”

“See her! On no account!” cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna. “And how dare he offer her money!”

Then Raskolnikov repeated (rather dryly) his conversation with Svidrigaïlov, omitting his account of the ghostly visitations of Marfa Petrovna, wishing to avoid all unnecessary talk.

“What answer did you give him?” asked Dounia.

“At first I said I would not take any message to you. Then he said that he would do his utmost to obtain an interview with you without my help. He assured me that his passion for you was a passing infatuation, now he has no feeling for you. He doesn’t want you to marry Luzhin.... His talk was altogether rather muddled.”

“How do you explain him to yourself, Rodya? How did he strike you?”

“I must confess I don’t quite understand him. He offers you ten thousand, and yet says he is not well off. He says he is going away, and in ten minutes he forgets he has said it. Then he says is he going to be married and has already fixed on the girl.... No doubt he has a motive, and probably a bad one. But it’s odd that he should be so clumsy about it if he had any designs against you.... Of course, I refused this money on your account, once for all. Altogether, I thought him very strange.... One might almost think he was mad. But I may be mistaken; that may only be the part he assumes. The death of Marfa Petrovna seems to have made a great impression on him.”

“God rest her soul,” exclaimed Pulcheria Alexandrovna. “I shall always, always pray for her! Where should we be now, Dounia, without this three thousand! It’s as though it had fallen from heaven! Why, Rodya, this morning we had only three roubles in our pocket and Dounia and I were just planning to pawn her watch, so as to avoid borrowing from that man until he offered help.”

Dounia seemed strangely impressed by Svidrigaïlov’s offer. She still stood meditating.

“He has got some terrible plan,” she said in a half whisper to herself, almost shuddering.

Raskolnikov noticed this disproportionate terror.

“I fancy I shall have to see him more than once again,” he said to Dounia.

“We will watch him! I will track him out!” cried Razumihin, vigorously. “I won’t lose sight of him. Rodya has given me leave. He said to me himself just now. ‘Take care of my sister.’ Will you give me leave, too, Avdotya Romanovna?”

Dounia smiled and held out her hand, but the look of anxiety did not leave her face. Pulcheria Alexandrovna gazed at her timidly, but the three thousand roubles had obviously a soothing effect on her.

A quarter of an hour later, they were all engaged in a lively conversation. Even Raskolnikov listened attentively for some time, though he did not talk. Razumihin was the speaker.

“And why, why should you go away?” he flowed on ecstatically. “And what are you to do in a little town? The great thing is, you are all here together and you need one another — you do need one another, believe me. For a time, anyway.... Take me into partnership, and I assure you we’ll plan a capital enterprise. Listen! I’ll explain it all in detail to you, the whole project! It all flashed into my head this morning, before anything had happened... I tell you what; I have an uncle, I must introduce him to you (a most accommodating and respectable old man). This uncle has got a capital of a thousand roubles, and he lives on his pension and has no need of that money. For the last two years he has been bothering me to borrow it from him and pay him six per cent. interest. I know what that means; he simply wants to help me. Last year I had no need of it, but this year I resolved to borrow it as soon as he arrived. Then you lend me another thousand of your

three and we have enough for a start, so we'll go into partnership, and what are we going to do?"

Then Razumihin began to unfold his project, and he explained at length that almost all our publishers and booksellers know nothing at all of what they are selling, and for that reason they are usually bad publishers, and that any decent publications pay as a rule and give a profit, sometimes a considerable one. Razumihin had, indeed, been dreaming of setting up as a publisher. For the last two years he had been working in publishers' offices, and knew three European languages well, though he had told Raskolnikov six days before that he was "schwach" in German with an object of persuading him to take half his translation and half the payment for it. He had told a lie then, and Raskolnikov knew he was lying.

"Why, why should we let our chance slip when we have one of the chief means of success — money of our own!" cried Razumihin warmly. "Of course there will be a lot of work, but we will work, you, Avdotya Romanovna, I, Rodion.... You get a splendid profit on some books nowadays! And the great point of the business is that we shall know just what wants translating, and we shall be translating, publishing, learning all at once. I can be of use because I have experience. For nearly two years I've been scuttling about among the publishers, and now I know every detail of their business. You need not be a saint to make pots, believe me! And why, why should we let our chance slip! Why, I know — and I kept the secret — two or three books which one might get a hundred roubles simply for thinking of translating and publishing. Indeed, and I would not take five hundred for the very idea of one of them. And what do you think? If I were to tell a publisher, I dare say he'd hesitate — they are such blockheads! And as for the business side, printing, paper, selling, you trust to me, I know my way about. We'll begin in a small way and go on to a large. In any case it will get us our living and we shall get back our capital."

Dounia's eyes shone.

"I like what you are saying, Dmitri Prokofitch!" she said.

"I know nothing about it, of course," put in Pulcheria Alexandrovna, "it may be a good idea, but again God knows. It's new and untried. Of course, we must remain here at least for a time." She looked at Rodya.

"What do you think, brother?" said Dounia.

"I think he's got a very good idea," he answered. "Of course, it's too soon to dream of a publishing firm, but we certainly might bring out five or

six books and be sure of success. I know of one book myself which would be sure to go well. And as for his being able to manage it, there's no doubt about that either. He knows the business.... But we can talk it over later...."

"Hurrah!" cried Razumihin. "Now, stay, there's a flat here in this house, belonging to the same owner. It's a special flat apart, not communicating with these lodgings. It's furnished, rent moderate, three rooms. Suppose you take them to begin with. I'll pawn your watch to-morrow and bring you the money, and everything can be arranged then. You can all three live together, and Rodya will be with you. But where are you off to, Rodya?"

"What, Rodya, you are going already?" Pulcheria Alexandrovna asked in dismay.

"At such a minute?" cried Razumihin.

Dounia looked at her brother with incredulous wonder. He held his cap in his hand, he was preparing to leave them.

"One would think you were burying me or saying good-bye for ever," he said somewhat oddly. He attempted to smile, but it did not turn out a smile. "But who knows, perhaps it is the last time we shall see each other..," he let slip accidentally. It was what he was thinking, and it somehow was uttered aloud.

"What is the matter with you?" cried his mother.

"Where are you going, Rodya?" asked Dounia rather strangely.

"Oh, I'm quite obliged to..," he answered vaguely, as though hesitating what he would say. But there was a look of sharp determination in his white face.

"I meant to say... as I was coming here... I meant to tell you, mother, and you, Dounia, that it would be better for us to part for a time. I feel ill, I am not at peace.... I will come afterwards, I will come of myself... when it's possible. I remember you and love you.... Leave me, leave me alone. I decided this even before... I'm absolutely resolved on it. Whatever may come to me, whether I come to ruin or not, I want to be alone. Forget me altogether, it's better. Don't inquire about me. When I can, I'll come of myself or... I'll send for you. Perhaps it will all come back, but now if you love me, give me up... else I shall begin to hate you, I feel it.... Good-bye!"

"Good God!" cried Pulcheria Alexandrovna. Both his mother and his sister were terribly alarmed. Razumihin was also.

"Rodya, Rodya, be reconciled with us! Let us be as before!" cried his poor mother.

He turned slowly to the door and slowly went out of the room. Dounia overtook him.

“Brother, what are you doing to mother?” she whispered, her eyes flashing with indignation.

He looked dully at her.

“No matter, I shall come.... I’m coming,” he muttered in an undertone, as though not fully conscious of what he was saying, and he went out of the room.

“Wicked, heartless egoist!” cried Dounia.

“He is insane, but not heartless. He is mad! Don’t you see it? You’re heartless after that!” Razumihin whispered in her ear, squeezing her hand tightly. “I shall be back directly,” he shouted to the horror-stricken mother, and he ran out of the room.

Raskolnikov was waiting for him at the end of the passage.

“I knew you would run after me,” he said. “Go back to them — be with them... be with them to-morrow and always.... I... perhaps I shall come... if I can. Good-bye.”

And without holding out his hand he walked away.

“But where are you going? What are you doing? What’s the matter with you? How can you go on like this?” Razumihin muttered, at his wits’ end.

Raskolnikov stopped once more.

“Once for all, never ask me about anything. I have nothing to tell you. Don’t come to see me. Maybe I’ll come here.... Leave me, but *don’t leave* them. Do you understand me?”

It was dark in the corridor, they were standing near the lamp. For a minute they were looking at one another in silence. Razumihin remembered that minute all his life. Raskolnikov’s burning and intent eyes grew more penetrating every moment, piercing into his soul, into his consciousness. Suddenly Razumihin started. Something strange, as it were, passed between them.... Some idea, some hint, as it were, slipped, something awful, hideous, and suddenly understood on both sides.... Razumihin turned pale.

“Do you understand now?” said Raskolnikov, his face twitching nervously. “Go back, go to them,” he said suddenly, and turning quickly, he went out of the house.

I will not attempt to describe how Razumihin went back to the ladies, how he soothed them, how he protested that Rodya needed rest in his illness, protested that Rodya was sure to come, that he would come every

day, that he was very, very much upset, that he must not be irritated, that he, Razumihin, would watch over him, would get him a doctor, the best doctor, a consultation.... In fact from that evening Razumihin took his place with them as a son and a brother.

CHAPTER IV

Raskolnikov went straight to the house on the canal bank where Sonia lived. It was an old green house of three storeys. He found the porter and obtained from him vague directions as to the whereabouts of Kapernaumov, the tailor. Having found in the corner of the courtyard the entrance to the dark and narrow staircase, he mounted to the second floor and came out into a gallery that ran round the whole second storey over the yard. While he was wandering in the darkness, uncertain where to turn for Kapernaumov's door, a door opened three paces from him; he mechanically took hold of it.

"Who is there?" a woman's voice asked uneasily.

"It's I... come to see you," answered Raskolnikov and he walked into the tiny entry.

On a broken chair stood a candle in a battered copper candlestick.

"It's you! Good heavens!" cried Sonia weakly, and she stood rooted to the spot.

"Which is your room? This way?" and Raskolnikov, trying not to look at her, hastened in.

A minute later Sonia, too, came in with the candle, set down the candlestick and, completely disconcerted, stood before him inexpressibly agitated and apparently frightened by his unexpected visit. The colour rushed suddenly to her pale face and tears came into her eyes... She felt sick and ashamed and happy, too.... Raskolnikov turned away quickly and sat on a chair by the table. He scanned the room in a rapid glance.

It was a large but exceedingly low-pitched room, the only one let by the Kapernaumovs, to whose rooms a closed door led in the wall on the left. In the opposite side on the right hand wall was another door, always kept locked. That led to the next flat, which formed a separate lodging. Sonia's room looked like a barn; it was a very irregular quadrangle and this gave it a grotesque appearance. A wall with three windows looking out on to the canal ran aslant so that one corner formed a very acute angle, and it was difficult to see in it without very strong light. The other corner was disproportionately obtuse. There was scarcely any furniture in the big room: in the corner on the right was a bedstead, beside it, nearest the door, a chair. A plain, deal table covered by a blue cloth stood against the same wall, close to the door into the other flat. Two rush-bottom chairs stood by the

table. On the opposite wall near the acute angle stood a small plain wooden chest of drawers looking, as it were, lost in a desert. That was all there was in the room. The yellow, scratched and shabby wall-paper was black in the corners. It must have been damp and full of fumes in the winter. There was every sign of poverty; even the bedstead had no curtain.

Sonia looked in silence at her visitor, who was so attentively and unceremoniously scrutinising her room, and even began at last to tremble with terror, as though she was standing before her judge and the arbiter of her destinies.

“I am late.... It’s eleven, isn’t it?” he asked, still not lifting his eyes.

“Yes,” muttered Sonia, “oh yes, it is,” she added, hastily, as though in that lay her means of escape. “My landlady’s clock has just struck... I heard it myself....”

“I’ve come to you for the last time,” Raskolnikov went on gloomily, although this was the first time. “I may perhaps not see you again...”

“Are you... going away?”

“I don’t know... to-morrow....”

“Then you are not coming to Katerina Ivanovna to-morrow?” Sonia’s voice shook.

“I don’t know. I shall know to-morrow morning.... Never mind that: I’ve come to say one word....”

He raised his brooding eyes to her and suddenly noticed that he was sitting down while she was all the while standing before him.

“Why are you standing? Sit down,” he said in a changed voice, gentle and friendly.

She sat down. He looked kindly and almost compassionately at her.

“How thin you are! What a hand! Quite transparent, like a dead hand.”

He took her hand. Sonia smiled faintly.

“I have always been like that,” she said.

“Even when you lived at home?”

“Yes.”

“Of course, you were,” he added abruptly and the expression of his face and the sound of his voice changed again suddenly.

He looked round him once more.

“You rent this room from the Kapernaumovs?”

“Yes....”

“They live there, through that door?”

“Yes.... They have another room like this.”

“All in one room?”

“Yes.”

“I should be afraid in your room at night,” he observed gloomily.

“They are very good people, very kind,” answered Sonia, who still seemed bewildered, “and all the furniture, everything... everything is theirs. And they are very kind and the children, too, often come to see me.”

“They all stammer, don’t they?”

“Yes.... He stammers and he’s lame. And his wife, too.... It’s not exactly that she stammers, but she can’t speak plainly. She is a very kind woman. And he used to be a house serf. And there are seven children... and it’s only the eldest one that stammers and the others are simply ill... but they don’t stammer.... But where did you hear about them?” she added with some surprise.

“Your father told me, then. He told me all about you.... And how you went out at six o’clock and came back at nine and how Katerina Ivanovna knelt down by your bed.”

Sonia was confused.

“I fancied I saw him to-day,” she whispered hesitatingly.

“Whom?”

“Father. I was walking in the street, out there at the corner, about ten o’clock and he seemed to be walking in front. It looked just like him. I wanted to go to Katerina Ivanovna....”

“You were walking in the streets?”

“Yes,” Sonia whispered abruptly, again overcome with confusion and looking down.

“Katerina Ivanovna used to beat you, I dare say?”

“Oh no, what are you saying? No!” Sonia looked at him almost with dismay.

“You love her, then?”

“Love her? Of course!” said Sonia with plaintive emphasis, and she clasped her hands in distress. “Ah, you don’t.... If you only knew! You see, she is quite like a child.... Her mind is quite unhinged, you see... from sorrow. And how clever she used to be... how generous... how kind! Ah, you don’t understand, you don’t understand!”

Sonia said this as though in despair, wringing her hands in excitement and distress. Her pale cheeks flushed, there was a look of anguish in her

eyes. It was clear that she was stirred to the very depths, that she was longing to speak, to champion, to express something. A sort of *insatiable* compassion, if one may so express it, was reflected in every feature of her face.

“Beat me! how can you? Good heavens, beat me! And if she did beat me, what then? What of it? You know nothing, nothing about it.... She is so unhappy... ah, how unhappy! And ill.... She is seeking righteousness, she is pure. She has such faith that there must be righteousness everywhere and she expects it.... And if you were to torture her, she wouldn’t do wrong. She doesn’t see that it’s impossible for people to be righteous and she is angry at it. Like a child, like a child. She is good!”

“And what will happen to you?”

Sonia looked at him inquiringly.

“They are left on your hands, you see. They were all on your hands before, though.... And your father came to you to beg for drink. Well, how will it be now?”

“I don’t know,” Sonia articulated mournfully.

“Will they stay there?”

“I don’t know.... They are in debt for the lodging, but the landlady, I hear, said to-day that she wanted to get rid of them, and Katerina Ivanovna says that she won’t stay another minute.”

“How is it she is so bold? She relies upon you?”

“Oh, no, don’t talk like that.... We are one, we live like one.” Sonia was agitated again and even angry, as though a canary or some other little bird were to be angry. “And what could she do? What, what could she do?” she persisted, getting hot and excited. “And how she cried to-day! Her mind is unhinged, haven’t you noticed it? At one minute she is worrying like a child that everything should be right to-morrow, the lunch and all that.... Then she is wringing her hands, spitting blood, weeping, and all at once she will begin knocking her head against the wall, in despair. Then she will be comforted again. She builds all her hopes on you; she says that you will help her now and that she will borrow a little money somewhere and go to her native town with me and set up a boarding school for the daughters of gentlemen and take me to superintend it, and we will begin a new splendid life. And she kisses and hugs me, comforts me, and you know she has such faith, such faith in her fancies! One can’t contradict her. And all the day long she has been washing, cleaning, mending. She dragged the wash tub

into the room with her feeble hands and sank on the bed, gasping for breath. We went this morning to the shops to buy shoes for Polenka and Lida for theirs are quite worn out. Only the money we'd reckoned wasn't enough, not nearly enough. And she picked out such dear little boots, for she has taste, you don't know. And there in the shop she burst out crying before the shopmen because she hadn't enough.... Ah, it was sad to see her...."

"Well, after that I can understand your living like this," Raskolnikov said with a bitter smile.

"And aren't you sorry for them? Aren't you sorry?" Sonia flew at him again. "Why, I know, you gave your last penny yourself, though you'd seen nothing of it, and if you'd seen everything, oh dear! And how often, how often I've brought her to tears! Only last week! Yes, I! Only a week before his death. I was cruel! And how often I've done it! Ah, I've been wretched at the thought of it all day!"

Sonia wrung her hands as she spoke at the pain of remembering it.

"You were cruel?"

"Yes, I — I. I went to see them," she went on, weeping, "and father said, 'read me something, Sonia, my head aches, read to me, here's a book.' He had a book he had got from Andrey Semyonovitch Lebeziatnikov, he lives there, he always used to get hold of such funny books. And I said, 'I can't stay,' as I didn't want to read, and I'd gone in chiefly to show Katerina Ivanovna some collars. Lizaveta, the pedlar, sold me some collars and cuffs cheap, pretty, new, embroidered ones. Katerina Ivanovna liked them very much; she put them on and looked at herself in the glass and was delighted with them. 'Make me a present of them, Sonia,' she said, 'please do."*Please do*,' she said, she wanted them so much. And when could she wear them? They just reminded her of her old happy days. She looked at herself in the glass, admired herself, and she has no clothes at all, no things of her own, hasn't had all these years! And she never asks anyone for anything; she is proud, she'd sooner give away everything. And these she asked for, she liked them so much. And I was sorry to give them. 'What use are they to you, Katerina Ivanovna?' I said. I spoke like that to her, I ought not to have said that! She gave me such a look. And she was so grieved, so grieved at my refusing her. And it was so sad to see.... And she was not grieved for the collars, but for my refusing, I saw that. Ah, if only I could bring it all back, change it, take back those words! Ah, if I... but it's nothing to you!"

"Did you know Lizaveta, the pedlar?"

“Yes.... Did you know her?” Sonia asked with some surprise.

“Katerina Ivanovna is in consumption, rapid consumption; she will soon die,” said Raskolnikov after a pause, without answering her question.

“Oh, no, no, no!”

And Sonia unconsciously clutched both his hands, as though imploring that she should not.

“But it will be better if she does die.”

“No, not better, not at all better!” Sonia unconsciously repeated in dismay.

“And the children? What can you do except take them to live with you?”

“Oh, I don’t know,” cried Sonia, almost in despair, and she put her hands to her head.

It was evident that that idea had very often occurred to her before and he had only roused it again.

“And, what, if even now, while Katerina Ivanovna is alive, you get ill and are taken to the hospital, what will happen then?” he persisted pitilessly.

“How can you? That cannot be!”

And Sonia’s face worked with awful terror.

“Cannot be?” Raskolnikov went on with a harsh smile. “You are not insured against it, are you? What will happen to them then? They will be in the street, all of them, she will cough and beg and knock her head against some wall, as she did to-day, and the children will cry.... Then she will fall down, be taken to the police station and to the hospital, she will die, and the children...”

“Oh, no.... God will not let it be!” broke at last from Sonia’s overburdened bosom.

She listened, looking imploringly at him, clasping her hands in dumb entreaty, as though it all depended upon him.

Raskolnikov got up and began to walk about the room. A minute passed. Sonia was standing with her hands and her head hanging in terrible dejection.

“And can’t you save? Put by for a rainy day?” he asked, stopping suddenly before her.

“No,” whispered Sonia.

“Of course not. Have you tried?” he added almost ironically.

“Yes.”

“And it didn’t come off! Of course not! No need to ask.”

And again he paced the room. Another minute passed.

“You don’t get money every day?”

Sonia was more confused than ever and colour rushed into her face again.

“No,” she whispered with a painful effort.

“It will be the same with Polenka, no doubt,” he said suddenly.

“No, no! It can’t be, no!” Sonia cried aloud in desperation, as though she had been stabbed. “God would not allow anything so awful!”

“He lets others come to it.”

“No, no! God will protect her, God!” she repeated beside herself.

“But, perhaps, there is no God at all,” Raskolnikov answered with a sort of malignance, laughed and looked at her.

Sonia’s face suddenly changed; a tremor passed over it. She looked at him with unutterable reproach, tried to say something, but could not speak and broke into bitter, bitter sobs, hiding her face in her hands.

“You say Katerina Ivanovna’s mind is unhinged; your own mind is unhinged,” he said after a brief silence.

Five minutes passed. He still paced up and down the room in silence, not looking at her. At last he went up to her; his eyes glittered. He put his two hands on her shoulders and looked straight into her tearful face. His eyes were hard, feverish and piercing, his lips were twitching. All at once he bent down quickly and dropping to the ground, kissed her foot. Sonia drew back from him as from a madman. And certainly he looked like a madman.

“What are you doing to me?” she muttered, turning pale, and a sudden anguish clutched at her heart.

He stood up at once.

“I did not bow down to you, I bowed down to all the suffering of humanity,” he said wildly and walked away to the window. “Listen,” he added, turning to her a minute later. “I said just now to an insolent man that he was not worth your little finger... and that I did my sister honour making her sit beside you.”

“Ach, you said that to them! And in her presence?” cried Sonia, frightened. “Sit down with me! An honour! Why, I’m... dishonourable.... Ah, why did you say that?”

“It was not because of your dishonour and your sin I said that of you, but because of your great suffering. But you are a great sinner, that’s true,” he added almost solemnly, “and your worst sin is that you have destroyed and

betrayed yourself *for nothing*. Isn’t that fearful? Isn’t it fearful that you are living in this filth which you loathe so, and at the same time you know yourself (you’ve only to open your eyes) that you are not helping anyone by it, not saving anyone from anything? Tell me,” he went on almost in a frenzy, “how this shame and degradation can exist in you side by side with other, opposite, holy feelings? It would be better, a thousand times better and wiser to leap into the water and end it all!”

“But what would become of them?” Sonia asked faintly, gazing at him with eyes of anguish, but not seeming surprised at his suggestion.

Raskolnikov looked strangely at her. He read it all in her face; so she must have had that thought already, perhaps many times, and earnestly she had thought out in her despair how to end it and so earnestly, that now she scarcely wondered at his suggestion. She had not even noticed the cruelty of his words. (The significance of his reproaches and his peculiar attitude to her shame she had, of course, not noticed either, and that, too, was clear to him.) But he saw how monstrously the thought of her disgraceful, shameful position was torturing her and had long tortured her. “What, what,” he thought, “could hitherto have hindered her from putting an end to it?” Only then he realised what those poor little orphan children and that pitiful half-crazy Katerina Ivanovna, knocking her head against the wall in her consumption, meant for Sonia.

But, nevertheless, it was clear to him again that with her character and the amount of education she had after all received, she could not in any case remain so. He was still confronted by the question, how could she have remained so long in that position without going out of her mind, since she could not bring herself to jump into the water? Of course he knew that Sonia’s position was an exceptional case, though unhappily not unique and not infrequent, indeed; but that very exceptionalness, her tinge of education, her previous life might, one would have thought, have killed her at the first step on that revolting path. What held her up — surely not depravity? All that infamy had obviously only touched her mechanically, not one drop of real depravity had penetrated to her heart; he saw that. He saw through her as she stood before him....

“There are three ways before her,” he thought, “the canal, the madhouse, or... at last to sink into depravity which obscures the mind and turns the heart to stone.”

The last idea was the most revolting, but he was a sceptic, he was young, abstract, and therefore cruel, and so he could not help believing that the last end was the most likely.

“But can that be true?” he cried to himself. “Can that creature who has still preserved the purity of her spirit be consciously drawn at last into that sink of filth and iniquity? Can the process already have begun? Can it be that she has only been able to bear it till now, because vice has begun to be less loathsome to her? No, no, that cannot be!” he cried, as Sonia had just before. “No, what has kept her from the canal till now is the idea of sin and they, the children.... And if she has not gone out of her mind... but who says she has not gone out of her mind? Is she in her senses? Can one talk, can one reason as she does? How can she sit on the edge of the abyss of loathsomeness into which she is slipping and refuse to listen when she is told of danger? Does she expect a miracle? No doubt she does. Doesn’t that all mean madness?”

He stayed obstinately at that thought. He liked that explanation indeed better than any other. He began looking more intently at her.

“So you pray to God a great deal, Sonia?” he asked her.

Sonia did not speak; he stood beside her waiting for an answer.

“What should I be without God?” she whispered rapidly, forcibly, glancing at him with suddenly flashing eyes, and squeezing his hand.

“Ah, so that is it!” he thought.

“And what does God do for you?” he asked, probing her further.

Sonia was silent a long while, as though she could not answer. Her weak chest kept heaving with emotion.

“Be silent! Don’t ask! You don’t deserve!” she cried suddenly, looking sternly and wrathfully at him.

“That’s it, that’s it,” he repeated to himself.

“He does everything,” she whispered quickly, looking down again.

“That’s the way out! That’s the explanation,” he decided, scrutinising her with eager curiosity, with a new, strange, almost morbid feeling. He gazed at that pale, thin, irregular, angular little face, those soft blue eyes, which could flash with such fire, such stern energy, that little body still shaking with indignation and anger — and it all seemed to him more and more strange, almost impossible. “She is a religious maniac!” he repeated to himself.

There was a book lying on the chest of drawers. He had noticed it every time he paced up and down the room. Now he took it up and looked at it. It was the New Testament in the Russian translation. It was bound in leather, old and worn.

“Where did you get that?” he called to her across the room.

She was still standing in the same place, three steps from the table.

“It was brought me,” she answered, as it were unwillingly, not looking at him.

“Who brought it?”

“Lizaveta, I asked her for it.”

“Lizaveta! strange!” he thought.

Everything about Sonia seemed to him stranger and more wonderful every moment. He carried the book to the candle and began to turn over the pages.

“Where is the story of Lazarus?” he asked suddenly.

Sonia looked obstinately at the ground and would not answer. She was standing sideways to the table.

“Where is the raising of Lazarus? Find it for me, Sonia.”

She stole a glance at him.

“You are not looking in the right place.... It’s in the fourth gospel,” she whispered sternly, without looking at him.

“Find it and read it to me,” he said. He sat down with his elbow on the table, leaned his head on his hand and looked away sullenly, prepared to listen.

“In three weeks’ time they’ll welcome me in the madhouse! I shall be there if I am not in a worse place,” he muttered to himself.

Sonia heard Raskolnikov’s request distrustfully and moved hesitatingly to the table. She took the book however.

“Haven’t you read it?” she asked, looking up at him across the table.

Her voice became sterner and sterner.

“Long ago.... When I was at school. Read!”

“And haven’t you heard it in church?”

“I... haven’t been. Do you often go?”

“N-no,” whispered Sonia.

Raskolnikov smiled.

“I understand.... And you won’t go to your father’s funeral to-morrow?”

“Yes, I shall. I was at church last week, too... I had a requiem service.”

“For whom?”

“For Lizaveta. She was killed with an axe.”

His nerves were more and more strained. His head began to go round.

“Were you friends with Lizaveta?”

“Yes.... She was good... she used to come... not often... she couldn’t.... We used to read together and... talk. She will see God.”

The last phrase sounded strange in his ears. And here was something new again: the mysterious meetings with Lizaveta and both of them — religious maniacs.

“I shall be a religious maniac myself soon! It’s infectious!”

“Read!” he cried irritably and insistently.

Sonia still hesitated. Her heart was throbbing. She hardly dared to read to him. He looked almost with exasperation at the “unhappy lunatic.”

“What for? You don’t believe?..,” she whispered softly and as it were breathlessly.

“Read! I want you to,” he persisted. “You used to read to Lizaveta.”

Sonia opened the book and found the place. Her hands were shaking, her voice failed her. Twice she tried to begin and could not bring out the first syllable.

“Now a certain man was sick named Lazarus of Bethany..,” she forced herself at last to read, but at the third word her voice broke like an overstrained string. There was a catch in her breath.

Raskolnikov saw in part why Sonia could not bring herself to read to him and the more he saw this, the more roughly and irritably he insisted on her doing so. He understood only too well how painful it was for her to betray and unveil all that was her *own*. He understood that these feelings really were her *secret treasure*, which she had kept perhaps for years, perhaps from childhood, while she lived with an unhappy father and a distracted stepmother crazed by grief, in the midst of starving children and unseemly abuse and reproaches. But at the same time he knew now and knew for certain that, although it filled her with dread and suffering, yet she had a tormenting desire to read and to read to *him* that he might hear it, and to read *now* whatever might come of it!... He read this in her eyes, he could see it in her intense emotion. She mastered herself, controlled the spasm in her throat and went on reading the eleventh chapter of St. John. She went on to the nineteenth verse:

“And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother.

“Then Martha as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming went and met Him: but Mary sat still in the house.

“Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

“But I know that even now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee....”

Then she stopped again with a shamefaced feeling that her voice would quiver and break again.

“Jesus said unto her, thy brother shall rise again.

“Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection, at the last day.

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me though he were dead, yet shall he live.

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?

“She saith unto Him,”

(And drawing a painful breath, Sonia read distinctly and forcibly as though she were making a public confession of faith.)

“Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God Which should come into the world.”

She stopped and looked up quickly at him, but controlling herself went on reading. Raskolnikov sat without moving, his elbows on the table and his eyes turned away. She read to the thirty-second verse.

“Then when Mary was come where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, Lord if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

“When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled,

“And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see.

“Jesus wept.

“Then said the Jews, behold how He loved him!

“And some of them said, could not this Man which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?”

Raskolnikov turned and looked at her with emotion. Yes, he had known it! She was trembling in a real physical fever. He had expected it. She was getting near the story of the greatest miracle and a feeling of immense triumph came over her. Her voice rang out like a bell; triumph and joy gave it power. The lines danced before her eyes, but she knew what she was reading by heart. At the last verse “Could not this Man which opened the eyes of the blind..,” dropping her voice she passionately reproduced the doubt, the reproach and censure of the blind disbelieving Jews, who in another moment would fall at His feet as though struck by thunder, sobbing and believing.... “And *he, he* — too, is blinded and unbelieving, he, too, will hear, he, too, will believe, yes, yes! At once, now,” was what she was dreaming, and she was quivering with happy anticipation.

“Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

“Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him, Lord by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.”

She laid emphasis on the word *four*.

“Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

“Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me.

“And I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.

“And when He thus had spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

“And he that was dead came forth.”

(She read loudly, cold and trembling with ecstasy, as though she were seeing it before her eyes.)

“Bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him and let him go.

“Then many of the Jews which came to Mary and had seen the things which Jesus did believed on Him.”

She could read no more, closed the book and got up from her chair quickly.

“That is all about the raising of Lazarus,” she whispered severely and abruptly, and turning away she stood motionless, not daring to raise her eyes to him. She still trembled feverishly. The candle-end was flickering out in the battered candlestick, dimly lighting up in the poverty-stricken room the murderer and the harlot who had so strangely been reading together the eternal book. Five minutes or more passed.

“I came to speak of something,” Raskolnikov said aloud, frowning. He got up and went to Sonia. She lifted her eyes to him in silence. His face was particularly stern and there was a sort of savage determination in it.

“I have abandoned my family to-day,” he said, “my mother and sister. I am not going to see them. I’ve broken with them completely.”

“What for?” asked Sonia amazed. Her recent meeting with his mother and sister had left a great impression which she could not analyse. She heard his news almost with horror.

“I have only you now,” he added. “Let us go together.... I’ve come to you, we are both accursed, let us go our way together!”

His eyes glittered “as though he were mad,” Sonia thought, in her turn.

“Go where?” she asked in alarm and she involuntarily stepped back.

“How do I know? I only know it’s the same road, I know that and nothing more. It’s the same goal!”

She looked at him and understood nothing. She knew only that he was terribly, infinitely unhappy.

“No one of them will understand, if you tell them, but I have understood. I need you, that is why I have come to you.”

“I don’t understand,” whispered Sonia.

“You’ll understand later. Haven’t you done the same? You, too, have transgressed... have had the strength to transgress. You have laid hands on yourself, you have destroyed a life... *your own* (it’s all the same!). You might have lived in spirit and understanding, but you’ll end in the Hay Market.... But you won’t be able to stand it, and if you remain alone you’ll go out of your mind like me. You are like a mad creature already. So we must go together on the same road! Let us go!”

“What for? What’s all this for?” said Sonia, strangely and violently agitated by his words.

“What for? Because you can’t remain like this, that’s why! You must look things straight in the face at last, and not weep like a child and cry that God won’t allow it. What will happen, if you should really be taken to the

hospital to-morrow? She is mad and in consumption, she'll soon die and the children? Do you mean to tell me Polenka won't come to grief? Haven't you seen children here at the street corners sent out by their mothers to beg? I've found out where those mothers live and in what surroundings. Children can't remain children there! At seven the child is vicious and a thief. Yet children, you know, are the image of Christ: 'theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.' He bade us honour and love them, they are the humanity of the future...."

"What's to be done, what's to be done?" repeated Sonia, weeping hysterically and wringing her hands.

"What's to be done? Break what must be broken, once for all, that's all, and take the suffering on oneself. What, you don't understand? You'll understand later.... Freedom and power, and above all, power! Over all trembling creation and all the ant-heap!... That's the goal, remember that! That's my farewell message. Perhaps it's the last time I shall speak to you. If I don't come to-morrow, you'll hear of it all, and then remember these words. And some day later on, in years to come, you'll understand perhaps what they meant. If I come to-morrow, I'll tell you who killed Lizaveta.... Good-bye."

Sonia started with terror.

"Why, do you know who killed her?" she asked, chilled with horror, looking wildly at him.

"I know and will tell... you, only you. I have chosen you out. I'm not coming to you to ask forgiveness, but simply to tell you. I chose you out long ago to hear this, when your father talked of you and when Lizaveta was alive, I thought of it. Good-bye, don't shake hands. To-morrow!"

He went out. Sonia gazed at him as at a madman. But she herself was like one insane and felt it. Her head was going round.

"Good heavens, how does he know who killed Lizaveta? What did those words mean? It's awful!" But at the same time *the idea* did not enter her head, not for a moment! "Oh, he must be terribly unhappy!... He has abandoned his mother and sister.... What for? What has happened? And what had he in his mind? What did he say to her? He had kissed her foot and said... said (yes, he had said it clearly) that he could not live without her.... Oh, merciful heavens!"

Sonia spent the whole night feverish and delirious. She jumped up from time to time, wept and wrung her hands, then sank again into feverish sleep

and dreamt of Polenka, Katerina Ivanovna and Lizaveta, of reading the gospel and him... him with pale face, with burning eyes... kissing her feet, weeping.

On the other side of the door on the right, which divided Sonia’s room from Madame Resslich’s flat, was a room which had long stood empty. A card was fixed on the gate and a notice stuck in the windows over the canal advertising it to let. Sonia had long been accustomed to the room’s being uninhabited. But all that time Mr. Svidrigaïlov had been standing, listening at the door of the empty room. When Raskolnikov went out he stood still, thought a moment, went on tiptoe to his own room which adjoined the empty one, brought a chair and noiselessly carried it to the door that led to Sonia’s room. The conversation had struck him as interesting and remarkable, and he had greatly enjoyed it — so much so that he brought a chair that he might not in the future, to-morrow, for instance, have to endure the inconvenience of standing a whole hour, but might listen in comfort.

CHAPTER V

When next morning at eleven o’clock punctually Raskolnikov went into the department of the investigation of criminal causes and sent his name in to Porfiry Petrovitch, he was surprised at being kept waiting so long: it was at least ten minutes before he was summoned. He had expected that they would pounce upon him. But he stood in the waiting-room, and people, who apparently had nothing to do with him, were continually passing to and fro before him. In the next room which looked like an office, several clerks were sitting writing and obviously they had no notion who or what Raskolnikov might be. He looked uneasily and suspiciously about him to see whether there was not some guard, some mysterious watch being kept on him to prevent his escape. But there was nothing of the sort: he saw only the faces of clerks absorbed in petty details, then other people, no one seemed to have any concern with him. He might go where he liked for them. The conviction grew stronger in him that if that enigmatic man of yesterday, that phantom sprung out of the earth, had seen everything, they would not have let him stand and wait like that. And would they have waited till he elected to appear at eleven? Either the man had not yet given information, or... or simply he knew nothing, had seen nothing (and how could he have seen anything?) and so all that had happened to him the day before was again a phantom exaggerated by his sick and overstrained imagination. This conjecture had begun to grow strong the day before, in the midst of all his alarm and despair. Thinking it all over now and preparing for a fresh conflict, he was suddenly aware that he was trembling — and he felt a rush of indignation at the thought that he was trembling with fear at facing that hateful Porfiry Petrovitch. What he dreaded above all was meeting that man again; he hated him with an intense, unmitigated hatred and was afraid his hatred might betray him. His indignation was such that he ceased trembling at once; he made ready to go in with a cold and arrogant bearing and vowed to himself to keep as silent as possible, to watch and listen and for once at least to control his overstrained nerves. At that moment he was summoned to Porfiry Petrovitch.

He found Porfiry Petrovitch alone in his study. His study was a room neither large nor small, furnished with a large writing-table, that stood before a sofa, upholstered in checked material, a bureau, a bookcase in the

corner and several chairs — all government furniture, of polished yellow wood. In the further wall there was a closed door, beyond it there were no doubt other rooms. On Raskolnikov's entrance Porfiry Petrovitch had at once closed the door by which he had come in and they remained alone. He met his visitor with an apparently genial and good-tempered air, and it was only after a few minutes that Raskolnikov saw signs of a certain awkwardness in him, as though he had been thrown out of his reckoning or caught in something very secret.

"Ah, my dear fellow! Here you are... in our domain"... began Porfiry, holding out both hands to him. "Come, sit down, old man... or perhaps you don't like to be called 'my dear fellow' and 'old man!' — *tout court*? Please don't think it too familiar.... Here, on the sofa."

Raskolnikov sat down, keeping his eyes fixed on him. "In our domain," the apologies for familiarity, the French phrase *tout court*, were all characteristic signs.

"He held out both hands to me, but he did not give me one — he drew it back in time," struck him suspiciously. Both were watching each other, but when their eyes met, quick as lightning they looked away.

"I brought you this paper... about the watch. Here it is. Is it all right or shall I copy it again?"

"What? A paper? Yes, yes, don't be uneasy, it's all right," Porfiry Petrovitch said as though in haste, and after he had said it he took the paper and looked at it. "Yes, it's all right. Nothing more is needed," he declared with the same rapidity and he laid the paper on the table.

A minute later when he was talking of something else he took it from the table and put it on his bureau.

"I believe you said yesterday you would like to question me... formally... about my acquaintance with the murdered woman?" Raskolnikov was beginning again. "Why did I put in 'I believe'" passed through his mind in a flash. "Why am I so uneasy at having put in that '*I believe*'?" came in a second flash. And he suddenly felt that his uneasiness at the mere contact with Porfiry, at the first words, at the first looks, had grown in an instant to monstrous proportions, and that this was fearfully dangerous. His nerves were quivering, his emotion was increasing. "It's bad, it's bad! I shall say too much again."

"Yes, yes, yes! There's no hurry, there's no hurry," muttered Porfiry Petrovitch, moving to and fro about the table without any apparent aim, as it

were making dashes towards the window, the bureau and the table, at one moment avoiding Raskolnikov's suspicious glance, then again standing still and looking him straight in the face.

His fat round little figure looked very strange, like a ball rolling from one side to the other and rebounding back.

"We've plenty of time. Do you smoke? have you your own? Here, a cigarette!" he went on, offering his visitor a cigarette. "You know I am receiving you here, but my own quarters are through there, you know, my government quarters. But I am living outside for the time, I had to have some repairs done here. It's almost finished now.... Government quarters, you know, are a capital thing. Eh, what do you think?"

"Yes, a capital thing," answered Raskolnikov, looking at him almost ironically.

"A capital thing, a capital thing," repeated Porfiry Petrovitch, as though he had just thought of something quite different. "Yes, a capital thing," he almost shouted at last, suddenly staring at Raskolnikov and stopping short two steps from him.

This stupid repetition was too incongruous in its ineptitude with the serious, brooding and enigmatic glance he turned upon his visitor.

But this stirred Raskolnikov's spleen more than ever and he could not resist an ironical and rather incautious challenge.

"Tell me, please," he asked suddenly, looking almost insolently at him and taking a kind of pleasure in his own insolence. "I believe it's a sort of legal rule, a sort of legal tradition — for all investigating lawyers — to begin their attack from afar, with a trivial, or at least an irrelevant subject, so as to encourage, or rather, to divert the man they are cross-examining, to disarm his caution and then all at once to give him an unexpected knock-down blow with some fatal question. Isn't that so? It's a sacred tradition, mentioned, I fancy, in all the manuals of the art?"

"Yes, yes.... Why, do you imagine that was why I spoke about government quarters... eh?"

And as he said this Porfiry Petrovitch screwed up his eyes and winked; a good-humoured, crafty look passed over his face. The wrinkles on his forehead were smoothed out, his eyes contracted, his features broadened and he suddenly went off into a nervous prolonged laugh, shaking all over and looking Raskolnikov straight in the face. The latter forced himself to laugh, too, but when Porfiry, seeing that he was laughing, broke into such a

guffaw that he turned almost crimson, Raskolnikov's repulsion overcame all precaution; he left off laughing, scowled and stared with hatred at Porfiry, keeping his eyes fixed on him while his intentionally prolonged laughter lasted. There was lack of precaution on both sides, however, for Porfiry Petrovitch seemed to be laughing in his visitor's face and to be very little disturbed at the annoyance with which the visitor received it. The latter fact was very significant in Raskolnikov's eyes: he saw that Porfiry Petrovitch had not been embarrassed just before either, but that he, Raskolnikov, had perhaps fallen into a trap; that there must be something, some motive here unknown to him; that, perhaps, everything was in readiness and in another moment would break upon him...

He went straight to the point at once, rose from his seat and took his cap.

"Porfiry Petrovitch," he began resolutely, though with considerable irritation, "yesterday you expressed a desire that I should come to you for some inquiries" (he laid special stress on the word "inquiries"). "I have come and if you have anything to ask me, ask it, and if not, allow me to withdraw. I have no time to spare.... I have to be at the funeral of that man who was run over, of whom you... know also," he added, feeling angry at once at having made this addition and more irritated at his anger. "I am sick of it all, do you hear? and have long been. It's partly what made me ill. In short," he shouted, feeling that the phrase about his illness was still more out of place, "in short, kindly examine me or let me go, at once. And if you must examine me, do so in the proper form! I will not allow you to do so otherwise, and so meanwhile, good-bye, as we have evidently nothing to keep us now."

"Good heavens! What do you mean? What shall I question you about?" cackled Porfiry Petrovitch with a change of tone, instantly leaving off laughing. "Please don't disturb yourself," he began fidgeting from place to place and fussily making Raskolnikov sit down. "There's no hurry, there's no hurry, it's all nonsense. Oh, no, I'm very glad you've come to see me at last... I look upon you simply as a visitor. And as for my confounded laughter, please excuse it, Rodion Romanovitch. Rodion Romanovitch? That is your name?... It's my nerves, you tickled me so with your witty observation; I assure you, sometimes I shake with laughter like an india-rubber ball for half an hour at a time.... I'm often afraid of an attack of paralysis. Do sit down. Please do, or I shall think you are angry..."

Raskolnikov did not speak; he listened, watching him, still frowning angrily. He did sit down, but still held his cap.

“I must tell you one thing about myself, my dear Rodion Romanovitch,” Porfiry Petrovitch continued, moving about the room and again avoiding his visitor’s eyes. “You see, I’m a bachelor, a man of no consequence and not used to society; besides, I have nothing before me, I’m set, I’m running to seed and... and have you noticed, Rodion Romanovitch, that in our Petersburg circles, if two clever men meet who are not intimate, but respect each other, like you and me, it takes them half an hour before they can find a subject for conversation — they are dumb, they sit opposite each other and feel awkward. Everyone has subjects of conversation, ladies for instance... people in high society always have their subjects of conversation, *c’est de rigueur*, but people of the middle sort like us, thinking people that is, are always tongue-tied and awkward. What is the reason of it? Whether it is the lack of public interest, or whether it is we are so honest we don’t want to deceive one another, I don’t know. What do you think? Do put down your cap, it looks as if you were just going, it makes me uncomfortable... I am so delighted...”

Raskolnikov put down his cap and continued listening in silence with a serious frowning face to the vague and empty chatter of Porfiry Petrovitch. “Does he really want to distract my attention with his silly babble?”

“I can’t offer you coffee here; but why not spend five minutes with a friend?” Porfiry pattered on, “and you know all these official duties... please don’t mind my running up and down, excuse it, my dear fellow, I am very much afraid of offending you, but exercise is absolutely indispensable for me. I’m always sitting and so glad to be moving about for five minutes... I suffer from my sedentary life... I always intend to join a gymnasium; they say that officials of all ranks, even Privy Councillors, may be seen skipping gaily there; there you have it, modern science... yes, yes.... But as for my duties here, inquiries and all such formalities... you mentioned inquiries yourself just now... I assure you these interrogations are sometimes more embarrassing for the interrogator than for the interrogated.... You made the observation yourself just now very aptly and wittily.” (Raskolnikov had made no observation of the kind.) “One gets into a muddle! A regular muddle! One keeps harping on the same note, like a drum! There is to be a reform and we shall be called by a different name, at least, he-he-he! And as for our legal tradition, as you so wittily called it, I thoroughly agree with

you. Every prisoner on trial, even the rudest peasant, knows that they begin by disarming him with irrelevant questions (as you so happily put it) and then deal him a knock-down blow, he-he-he! — your felicitous comparison, he-he! So you really imagined that I meant by ‘government quarters’... he-he! You are an ironical person. Come. I won’t go on! Ah, by the way, yes! One word leads to another. You spoke of formality just now, apropos of the inquiry, you know. But what’s the use of formality? In many cases it’s nonsense. Sometimes one has a friendly chat and gets a good deal more out of it. One can always fall back on formality, allow me to assure you. And after all, what does it amount to? An examining lawyer cannot be bounded by formality at every step. The work of investigation is, so to speak, a free art in its own way, he-he-he!”

Porfiry Petrovitch took breath a moment. He had simply babbled on uttering empty phrases, letting slip a few enigmatic words and again reverting to incoherence. He was almost running about the room, moving his fat little legs quicker and quicker, looking at the ground, with his right hand behind his back, while with his left making gesticulations that were extraordinarily incongruous with his words. Raskolnikov suddenly noticed that as he ran about the room he seemed twice to stop for a moment near the door, as though he were listening.

“Is he expecting anything?”

“You are certainly quite right about it,” Porfiry began gaily, looking with extraordinary simplicity at Raskolnikov (which startled him and instantly put him on his guard); “certainly quite right in laughing so wittily at our legal forms, he-he! Some of these elaborate psychological methods are exceedingly ridiculous and perhaps useless, if one adheres too closely to the forms. Yes... I am talking of forms again. Well, if I recognise, or more strictly speaking, if I suspect someone or other to be a criminal in any case entrusted to me... you’re reading for the law, of course, Rodion Romanovitch?”

“Yes, I was...”

“Well, then it is a precedent for you for the future — though don’t suppose I should venture to instruct you after the articles you publish about crime! No, I simply make bold to state it by way of fact, if I took this man or that for a criminal, why, I ask, should I worry him prematurely, even though I had evidence against him? In one case I may be bound, for instance, to arrest a man at once, but another may be in quite a different

position, you know, so why shouldn't I let him walk about the town a bit? he-he-he! But I see you don't quite understand, so I'll give you a clearer example. If I put him in prison too soon, I may very likely give him, so to speak, moral support, he-he! You're laughing?"

Raskolnikov had no idea of laughing. He was sitting with compressed lips, his feverish eyes fixed on Porfiry Petrovitch's.

"Yet that is the case, with some types especially, for men are so different. You say 'evidence'. Well, there may be evidence. But evidence, you know, can generally be taken two ways. I am an examining lawyer and a weak man, I confess it. I should like to make a proof, so to say, mathematically clear. I should like to make a chain of evidence such as twice two are four, it ought to be a direct, irrefutable proof! And if I shut him up too soon — even though I might be convinced *he* was the man, I should very likely be depriving myself of the means of getting further evidence against him. And how? By giving him, so to speak, a definite position, I shall put him out of suspense and set his mind at rest, so that he will retreat into his shell. They say that at Sevastopol, soon after Alma, the clever people were in a terrible fright that the enemy would attack openly and take Sevastopol at once. But when they saw that the enemy preferred a regular siege, they were delighted, I am told and reassured, for the thing would drag on for two months at least. You're laughing, you don't believe me again? Of course, you're right, too. You're right, you're right. These are special cases, I admit. But you must observe this, my dear Rodion Romanovitch, the general case, the case for which all legal forms and rules are intended, for which they are calculated and laid down in books, does not exist at all, for the reason that every case, every crime, for instance, so soon as it actually occurs, at once becomes a thoroughly special case and sometimes a case unlike any that's gone before. Very comic cases of that sort sometimes occur. If I leave one man quite alone, if I don't touch him and don't worry him, but let him know or at least suspect every moment that I know all about it and am watching him day and night, and if he is in continual suspicion and terror, he'll be bound to lose his head. He'll come of himself, or maybe do something which will make it as plain as twice two are four — it's delightful. It may be so with a simple peasant, but with one of our sort, an intelligent man cultivated on a certain side, it's a dead certainty. For, my dear fellow, it's a very important matter to know on what side a man is cultivated. And then there are nerves, there are nerves, you have overlooked them! Why, they are

all sick, nervous and irritable!... And then how they all suffer from spleen! That I assure you is a regular gold-mine for us. And it’s no anxiety to me, his running about the town free! Let him, let him walk about for a bit! I know well enough that I’ve caught him and that he won’t escape me. Where could he escape to, he-he? Abroad, perhaps? A Pole will escape abroad, but not here, especially as I am watching and have taken measures. Will he escape into the depths of the country perhaps? But you know, peasants live there, real rude Russian peasants. A modern cultivated man would prefer prison to living with such strangers as our peasants. He-he! But that’s all nonsense, and on the surface. It’s not merely that he has nowhere to run to, he is *psychologically* unable to escape me, he-he! What an expression! Through a law of nature he can’t escape me if he had anywhere to go. Have you seen a butterfly round a candle? That’s how he will keep circling and circling round me. Freedom will lose its attractions. He’ll begin to brood, he’ll weave a tangle round himself, he’ll worry himself to death! What’s more he will provide me with a mathematical proof — if I only give him long enough interval.... And he’ll keep circling round me, getting nearer and nearer and then — flop! He’ll fly straight into my mouth and I’ll swallow him, and that will be very amusing, he-he-he! You don’t believe me?”

Raskolnikov made no reply; he sat pale and motionless, still gazing with the same intensity into Porfiry’s face.

“It’s a lesson,” he thought, turning cold. “This is beyond the cat playing with a mouse, like yesterday. He can’t be showing off his power with no motive... prompting me; he is far too clever for that... he must have another object. What is it? It’s all nonsense, my friend, you are pretending, to scare me! You’ve no proofs and the man I saw had no real existence. You simply want to make me lose my head, to work me up beforehand and so to crush me. But you are wrong, you won’t do it! But why give me such a hint? Is he reckoning on my shattered nerves? No, my friend, you are wrong, you won’t do it even though you have some trap for me... let us see what you have in store for me.”

And he braced himself to face a terrible and unknown ordeal. At times he longed to fall on Porfiry and strangle him. This anger was what he dreaded from the beginning. He felt that his parched lips were flecked with foam, his heart was throbbing. But he was still determined not to speak till the right moment. He realised that this was the best policy in his position, because instead of saying too much he would be irritating his enemy by his

silence and provoking him into speaking too freely. Anyhow, this was what he hoped for.

“No, I see you don’t believe me, you think I am playing a harmless joke on you,” Porfiry began again, getting more and more lively, chuckling at every instant and again pacing round the room. “And to be sure you’re right: God has given me a figure that can awaken none but comic ideas in other people; a buffoon; but let me tell you, and I repeat it, excuse an old man, my dear Rodion Romanovitch, you are a man still young, so to say, in your first youth and so you put intellect above everything, like all young people. Playful wit and abstract arguments fascinate you and that’s for all the world like the old Austrian *Hof-kriegsrath*, as far as I can judge of military matters, that is: on paper they’d beaten Napoleon and taken him prisoner, and there in their study they worked it all out in the cleverest fashion, but look you, General Mack surrendered with all his army, he-he-he! I see, I see, Rodion Romanovitch, you are laughing at a civilian like me, taking examples out of military history! But I can’t help it, it’s my weakness. I am fond of military science. And I’m ever so fond of reading all military histories. I’ve certainly missed my proper career. I ought to have been in the army, upon my word I ought. I shouldn’t have been a Napoleon, but I might have been a major, he-he! Well, I’ll tell you the whole truth, my dear fellow, about this *special case*, I mean: actual fact and a man’s temperament, my dear sir, are weighty matters and it’s astonishing how they sometimes deceive the sharpest calculation! I — listen to an old man — am speaking seriously, Rodion Romanovitch” (as he said this Porfiry Petrovitch, who was scarcely five-and-thirty, actually seemed to have grown old; even his voice changed and he seemed to shrink together) “Moreover, I’m a candid man... am I a candid man or not? What do you say? I fancy I really am: I tell you these things for nothing and don’t even expect a reward for it, he-he! Well, to proceed, wit in my opinion is a splendid thing, it is, so to say, an adornment of nature and a consolation of life, and what tricks it can play! So that it sometimes is hard for a poor examining lawyer to know where he is, especially when he’s liable to be carried away by his own fancy, too, for you know he is a man after all! But the poor fellow is saved by the criminal’s temperament, worse luck for him! But young people carried away by their own wit don’t think of that ‘when they overstep all obstacles,’ as you wittily and cleverly expressed it yesterday. He will lie — that is, the man who is a *special case*, the

incognito, and he will lie well, in the cleverest fashion; you might think he would triumph and enjoy the fruits of his wit, but at the most interesting, the most flagrant moment he will faint. Of course there may be illness and a stuffy room as well, but anyway! Anyway he's given us the idea! He lied incomparably, but he didn't reckon on his temperament. That's what betrays him! Another time he will be carried away by his playful wit into making fun of the man who suspects him, he will turn pale as it were on purpose to mislead, but his paleness will be *too natural*, too much like the real thing, again he has given us an idea! Though his questioner may be deceived at first, he will think differently next day if he is not a fool, and, of course, it is like that at every step! He puts himself forward where he is not wanted, speaks continually when he ought to keep silent, brings in all sorts of allegorical allusions, he-he! Comes and asks why didn't you take me long ago? he-he-he! And that can happen, you know, with the cleverest man, the psychologist, the literary man. The temperament reflects everything like a mirror! Gaze into it and admire what you see! But why are you so pale, Rodion Romanovitch? Is the room stuffy? Shall I open the window?"

"Oh, don't trouble, please," cried Raskolnikov and he suddenly broke into a laugh. "Please don't trouble."

Porfiry stood facing him, paused a moment and suddenly he too laughed. Raskolnikov got up from the sofa, abruptly checking his hysterical laughter.

"Porfiry Petrovitch," he began, speaking loudly and distinctly, though his legs trembled and he could scarcely stand. "I see clearly at last that you actually suspect me of murdering that old woman and her sister Lizaveta. Let me tell you for my part that I am sick of this. If you find that you have a right to prosecute me legally, to arrest me, then prosecute me, arrest me. But I will not let myself be jeered at to my face and worried..."

His lips trembled, his eyes glowed with fury and he could not restrain his voice.

"I won't allow it!" he shouted, bringing his fist down on the table. "Do you hear that, Porfiry Petrovitch? I won't allow it."

"Good heavens! What does it mean?" cried Porfiry Petrovitch, apparently quite frightened. "Rodion Romanovitch, my dear fellow, what is the matter with you?"

"I won't allow it," Raskolnikov shouted again.

"Hush, my dear man! They'll hear and come in. Just think, what could we say to them?" Porfiry Petrovitch whispered in horror, bringing his face

close to Raskolnikov’s.

“I won’t allow it, I won’t allow it,” Raskolnikov repeated mechanically, but he too spoke in a sudden whisper.

Porfiry turned quickly and ran to open the window.

“Some fresh air! And you must have some water, my dear fellow. You’re ill!” and he was running to the door to call for some when he found a decanter of water in the corner. “Come, drink a little,” he whispered, rushing up to him with the decanter. “It will be sure to do you good.”

Porfiry Petrovitch’s alarm and sympathy were so natural that Raskolnikov was silent and began looking at him with wild curiosity. He did not take the water, however.

“Rodion Romanovitch, my dear fellow, you’ll drive yourself out of your mind, I assure you, ach, ach! Have some water, do drink a little.”

He forced him to take the glass. Raskolnikov raised it mechanically to his lips, but set it on the table again with disgust.

“Yes, you’ve had a little attack! You’ll bring back your illness again, my dear fellow,” Porfiry Petrovitch cackled with friendly sympathy, though he still looked rather disconcerted. “Good heavens, you must take more care of yourself! Dmitri Prokofitch was here, came to see me yesterday — I know, I know, I’ve a nasty, ironical temper, but what they made of it!... Good heavens, he came yesterday after you’d been. We dined and he talked and talked away, and I could only throw up my hands in despair! Did he come from you? But do sit down, for mercy’s sake, sit down!”

“No, not from me, but I knew he went to you and why he went,” Raskolnikov answered sharply.

“You knew?”

“I knew. What of it?”

“Why this, Rodion Romanovitch, that I know more than that about you; I know about everything. I know how you went *to take a flat* at night when it was dark and how you rang the bell and asked about the blood, so that the workmen and the porter did not know what to make of it. Yes, I understand your state of mind at that time... but you’ll drive yourself mad like that, upon my word! You’ll lose your head! You’re full of generous indignation at the wrongs you’ve received, first from destiny, and then from the police officers, and so you rush from one thing to another to force them to speak out and make an end of it all, because you are sick of all this suspicion and foolishness. That’s so, isn’t it? I have guessed how you feel, haven’t I? Only

in that way you'll lose your head and Razumihin's, too; he's too *good* a man for such a position, you must know that. You are ill and he is good and your illness is infectious for him... I'll tell you about it when you are more yourself.... But do sit down, for goodness' sake. Please rest, you look shocking, do sit down."

Raskolnikov sat down; he no longer shivered, he was hot all over. In amazement he listened with strained attention to Porfiry Petrovitch who still seemed frightened as he looked after him with friendly solicitude. But he did not believe a word he said, though he felt a strange inclination to believe. Porfiry's unexpected words about the flat had utterly overwhelmed him. "How can it be, he knows about the flat then," he thought suddenly, "and he tells it me himself!"

"Yes, in our legal practice there was a case almost exactly similar, a case of morbid psychology," Porfiry went on quickly. "A man confessed to murder and how he kept it up! It was a regular hallucination; he brought forward facts, he imposed upon everyone and why? He had been partly, but only partly, unintentionally the cause of a murder and when he knew that he had given the murderers the opportunity, he sank into dejection, it got on his mind and turned his brain, he began imagining things and he persuaded himself that he was the murderer. But at last the High Court of Appeal went into it and the poor fellow was acquitted and put under proper care. Thanks to the Court of Appeal! Tut-tut-tut! Why, my dear fellow, you may drive yourself into delirium if you have the impulse to work upon your nerves, to go ringing bells at night and asking about blood! I've studied all this morbid psychology in my practice. A man is sometimes tempted to jump out of a window or from a belfry. Just the same with bell-ringing.... It's all illness, Rodion Romanovitch! You have begun to neglect your illness. You should consult an experienced doctor, what's the good of that fat fellow? You are lightheaded! You were delirious when you did all this!"

For a moment Raskolnikov felt everything going round.

"Is it possible, is it possible," flashed through his mind, "that he is still lying? He can't be, he can't be." He rejected that idea, feeling to what a degree of fury it might drive him, feeling that that fury might drive him mad.

"I was not delirious. I knew what I was doing," he cried, straining every faculty to penetrate Porfiry's game, "I was quite myself, do you hear?"

“Yes, I hear and understand. You said yesterday you were not delirious, you were particularly emphatic about it! I understand all you can tell me! A-ach!... Listen, Rodion Romanovitch, my dear fellow. If you were actually a criminal, or were somehow mixed up in this damnable business, would you insist that you were not delirious but in full possession of your faculties? And so emphatically and persistently? Would it be possible? Quite impossible, to my thinking. If you had anything on your conscience, you certainly ought to insist that you were delirious. That’s so, isn’t it?”

There was a note of slyness in this inquiry. Raskolnikov drew back on the sofa as Porfiry bent over him and stared in silent perplexity at him.

“Another thing about Razumihin — you certainly ought to have said that he came of his own accord, to have concealed your part in it! But you don’t conceal it! You lay stress on his coming at your instigation.”

Raskolnikov had not done so. A chill went down his back.

“You keep telling lies,” he said slowly and weakly, twisting his lips into a sickly smile, “you are trying again to show that you know all my game, that you know all I shall say beforehand,” he said, conscious himself that he was not weighing his words as he ought. “You want to frighten me... or you are simply laughing at me...”

He still stared at him as he said this and again there was a light of intense hatred in his eyes.

“You keep lying,” he said. “You know perfectly well that the best policy for the criminal is to tell the truth as nearly as possible... to conceal as little as possible. I don’t believe you!”

“What a wily person you are!” Porfiry tittered, “there’s no catching you; you’ve a perfect monomania. So you don’t believe me? But still you do believe me, you believe a quarter; I’ll soon make you believe the whole, because I have a sincere liking for you and genuinely wish you good.”

Raskolnikov’s lips trembled.

“Yes, I do,” went on Porfiry, touching Raskolnikov’s arm genially, “you must take care of your illness. Besides, your mother and sister are here now; you must think of them. You must soothe and comfort them and you do nothing but frighten them...”

“What has that to do with you? How do you know it? What concern is it of yours? You are keeping watch on me and want to let me know it?”

“Good heavens! Why, I learnt it all from you yourself! You don’t notice that in your excitement you tell me and others everything. From Razumihin,

too, I learnt a number of interesting details yesterday. No, you interrupted me, but I must tell you that, for all your wit, your suspiciousness makes you lose the common-sense view of things. To return to bell-ringing, for instance. I, an examining lawyer, have betrayed a precious thing like that, a real fact (for it is a fact worth having), and you see nothing in it! Why, if I had the slightest suspicion of you, should I have acted like that? No, I should first have disarmed your suspicions and not let you see I knew of that fact, should have diverted your attention and suddenly have dealt you a knock-down blow (your expression) saying: ‘And what were you doing, sir, pray, at ten or nearly eleven at the murdered woman’s flat and why did you ring the bell and why did you ask about blood? And why did you invite the porters to go with you to the police station, to the lieutenant?’ That’s how I ought to have acted if I had a grain of suspicion of you. I ought to have taken your evidence in due form, searched your lodging and perhaps have arrested you, too... so I have no suspicion of you, since I have not done that! But you can’t look at it normally and you see nothing, I say again.”

Raskolnikov started so that Porfiry Petrovitch could not fail to perceive it.

“You are lying all the while,” he cried, “I don’t know your object, but you are lying. You did not speak like that just now and I cannot be mistaken!”

“I am lying?” Porfiry repeated, apparently incensed, but preserving a good-humoured and ironical face, as though he were not in the least concerned at Raskolnikov’s opinion of him. “I am lying... but how did I treat you just now, I, the examining lawyer? Prompting you and giving you every means for your defence; illness, I said, delirium, injury, melancholy and the police officers and all the rest of it? Ah! He-he-he! Though, indeed, all those psychological means of defence are not very reliable and cut both ways: illness, delirium, I don’t remember — that’s all right, but why, my good sir, in your illness and in your delirium were you haunted by just those delusions and not by any others? There may have been others, eh? He-he-he!”

Raskolnikov looked haughtily and contemptuously at him.

“Briefly,” he said loudly and imperiously, rising to his feet and in so doing pushing Porfiry back a little, “briefly, I want to know, do you acknowledge me perfectly free from suspicion or not? Tell me, Porfiry Petrovitch, tell me once for all and make haste!”

“What a business I’m having with you!” cried Porfiry with a perfectly good-humoured, sly and composed face. “And why do you want to know, why do you want to know so much, since they haven’t begun to worry you? Why, you are like a child asking for matches! And why are you so uneasy? Why do you force yourself upon us, eh? He-he-he!”

“I repeat,” Raskolnikov cried furiously, “that I can’t put up with it!”

“With what? Uncertainty?” interrupted Porfiry.

“Don’t jeer at me! I won’t have it! I tell you I won’t have it. I can’t and I won’t, do you hear, do you hear?” he shouted, bringing his fist down on the table again.

“Hush! Hush! They’ll overhear! I warn you seriously, take care of yourself. I am not joking,” Porfiry whispered, but this time there was not the look of old womanish good nature and alarm in his face. Now he was peremptory, stern, frowning and for once laying aside all mystification.

But this was only for an instant. Raskolnikov, bewildered, suddenly fell into actual frenzy, but, strange to say, he again obeyed the command to speak quietly, though he was in a perfect paroxysm of fury.

“I will not allow myself to be tortured,” he whispered, instantly recognising with hatred that he could not help obeying the command and driven to even greater fury by the thought. “Arrest me, search me, but kindly act in due form and don’t play with me! Don’t dare!”

“Don’t worry about the form,” Porfiry interrupted with the same sly smile, as it were, gloating with enjoyment over Raskolnikov. “I invited you to see me quite in a friendly way.”

“I don’t want your friendship and I spit on it! Do you hear? And, here, I take my cap and go. What will you say now if you mean to arrest me?”

He took up his cap and went to the door.

“And won’t you see my little surprise?” chuckled Porfiry, again taking him by the arm and stopping him at the door.

He seemed to become more playful and good-humoured which maddened Raskolnikov.

“What surprise?” he asked, standing still and looking at Porfiry in alarm.

“My little surprise, it’s sitting there behind the door, he-he-he!” (He pointed to the locked door.) “I locked him in that he should not escape.”

“What is it? Where? What?...”

Raskolnikov walked to the door and would have opened it, but it was locked.

“It’s locked, here is the key!”

And he brought a key out of his pocket.

“You are lying,” roared Raskolnikov without restraint, “you lie, you damned punchinello!” and he rushed at Porfiry who retreated to the other door, not at all alarmed.

“I understand it all! You are lying and mocking so that I may betray myself to you...”

“Why, you could not betray yourself any further, my dear Rodion Romanovitch. You are in a passion. Don’t shout, I shall call the clerks.”

“You are lying! Call the clerks! You knew I was ill and tried to work me into a frenzy to make me betray myself, that was your object! Produce your facts! I understand it all. You’ve no evidence, you have only wretched rubbishly suspicions like Zametov’s! You knew my character, you wanted to drive me to fury and then to knock me down with priests and deputies.... Are you waiting for them? eh! What are you waiting for? Where are they? Produce them?”

“Why deputies, my good man? What things people will imagine! And to do so would not be acting in form as you say, you don’t know the business, my dear fellow.... And there’s no escaping form, as you see,” Porfiry muttered, listening at the door through which a noise could be heard.

“Ah, they’re coming,” cried Raskolnikov. “You’ve sent for them! You expected them! Well, produce them all: your deputies, your witnesses, what you like!... I am ready!”

But at this moment a strange incident occurred, something so unexpected that neither Raskolnikov nor Porfiry Petrovitch could have looked for such a conclusion to their interview.

CHAPTER VI

When he remembered the scene afterwards, this is how Raskolnikov saw it.

The noise behind the door increased, and suddenly the door was opened a little.

“What is it?” cried Porfiry Petrovitch, annoyed. “Why, I gave orders...”

For an instant there was no answer, but it was evident that there were several persons at the door, and that they were apparently pushing somebody back.

“What is it?” Porfiry Petrovitch repeated, uneasily.

“The prisoner Nikolay has been brought,” someone answered.

“He is not wanted! Take him away! Let him wait! What’s he doing here? How irregular!” cried Porfiry, rushing to the door.

“But he..,” began the same voice, and suddenly ceased.

Two seconds, not more, were spent in actual struggle, then someone gave a violent shove, and then a man, very pale, strode into the room.

This man’s appearance was at first sight very strange. He stared straight before him, as though seeing nothing. There was a determined gleam in his eyes; at the same time there was a deathly pallor in his face, as though he were being led to the scaffold. His white lips were faintly twitching.

He was dressed like a workman and was of medium height, very young, slim, his hair cut in round crop, with thin spare features. The man whom he had thrust back followed him into the room and succeeded in seizing him by the shoulder; he was a warder; but Nikolay pulled his arm away.

Several persons crowded inquisitively into the doorway. Some of them tried to get in. All this took place almost instantaneously.

“Go away, it’s too soon! Wait till you are sent for!... Why have you brought him so soon?” Porfiry Petrovitch muttered, extremely annoyed, and as it were thrown out of his reckoning.

But Nikolay suddenly knelt down.

“What’s the matter?” cried Porfiry, surprised.

“I am guilty! Mine is the sin! I am the murderer,” Nikolay articulated suddenly, rather breathless, but speaking fairly loudly.

For ten seconds there was silence as though all had been struck dumb; even the warder stepped back, mechanically retreated to the door, and stood immovable.

“What is it?” cried Porfiry Petrovitch, recovering from his momentary stupefaction.

“I... am the murderer,” repeated Nikolay, after a brief pause.

“What... you... what... whom did you kill?” Porfiry Petrovitch was obviously bewildered.

Nikolay again was silent for a moment.

“Alyona Ivanovna and her sister Lizaveta Ivanovna, I... killed... with an axe. Darkness came over me,” he added suddenly, and was again silent.

He still remained on his knees. Porfiry Petrovitch stood for some moments as though meditating, but suddenly roused himself and waved back the uninvited spectators. They instantly vanished and closed the door. Then he looked towards Raskolnikov, who was standing in the corner, staring wildly at Nikolay and moved towards him, but stopped short, looked from Nikolay to Raskolnikov and then again at Nikolay, and seeming unable to restrain himself darted at the latter.

“You’re in too great a hurry,” he shouted at him, almost angrily. “I didn’t ask you what came over you.... Speak, did you kill them?”

“I am the murderer.... I want to give evidence,” Nikolay pronounced.

“Ach! What did you kill them with?”

“An axe. I had it ready.”

“Ach, he is in a hurry! Alone?”

Nikolay did not understand the question.

“Did you do it alone?”

“Yes, alone. And Mitka is not guilty and had no share in it.”

“Don’t be in a hurry about Mitka! A-ach! How was it you ran downstairs like that at the time? The porters met you both!”

“It was to put them off the scent... I ran after Mitka,” Nikolay replied hurriedly, as though he had prepared the answer.

“I knew it!” cried Porfiry, with vexation. “It’s not his own tale he is telling,” he muttered as though to himself, and suddenly his eyes rested on Raskolnikov again.

He was apparently so taken up with Nikolay that for a moment he had forgotten Raskolnikov. He was a little taken aback.

“My dear Rodion Romanovitch, excuse me!” he flew up to him, “this won’t do; I’m afraid you must go... it’s no good your staying... I will... you see, what a surprise!... Good-bye!”

And taking him by the arm, he showed him to the door.

“I suppose you didn’t expect it?” said Raskolnikov who, though he had not yet fully grasped the situation, had regained his courage.

“You did not expect it either, my friend. See how your hand is trembling! He-he!”

“You’re trembling, too, Porfiry Petrovitch!”

“Yes, I am; I didn’t expect it.”

They were already at the door; Porfiry was impatient for Raskolnikov to be gone.

“And your little surprise, aren’t you going to show it to me?” Raskolnikov said, sarcastically.

“Why, his teeth are chattering as he asks, he-he! You are an ironical person! Come, till we meet!”

“I believe we can say *good-bye*!”

“That’s in God’s hands,” muttered Porfiry, with an unnatural smile.

As he walked through the office, Raskolnikov noticed that many people were looking at him. Among them he saw the two porters from *the* house, whom he had invited that night to the police station. They stood there waiting. But he was no sooner on the stairs than he heard the voice of Porfiry Petrovitch behind him. Turning round, he saw the latter running after him, out of breath.

“One word, Rodion Romanovitch; as to all the rest, it’s in God’s hands, but as a matter of form there are some questions I shall have to ask you... so we shall meet again, shan’t we?”

And Porfiry stood still, facing him with a smile.

“Shan’t we?” he added again.

He seemed to want to say something more, but could not speak out.

“You must forgive me, Porfiry Petrovitch, for what has just passed... I lost my temper,” began Raskolnikov, who had so far regained his courage that he felt irresistibly inclined to display his coolness.

“Don’t mention it, don’t mention it,” Porfiry replied, almost gleefully. “I myself, too... I have a wicked temper, I admit it! But we shall meet again. If it’s God’s will, we may see a great deal of one another.”

“And will get to know each other through and through?” added Raskolnikov.

“Yes; know each other through and through,” assented Porfiry Petrovitch, and he screwed up his eyes, looking earnestly at Raskolnikov. “Now you’re going to a birthday party?”

“To a funeral.”

“Of course, the funeral! Take care of yourself, and get well.”

“I don’t know what to wish you,” said Raskolnikov, who had begun to descend the stairs, but looked back again. “I should like to wish you success, but your office is such a comical one.”

“Why comical?” Porfiry Petrovitch had turned to go, but he seemed to prick up his ears at this.

“Why, how you must have been torturing and harassing that poor Nikolay psychologically, after your fashion, till he confessed! You must have been at him day and night, proving to him that he was the murderer, and now that he has confessed, you’ll begin vivisecting him again. ‘You are lying,’ you’ll say. ‘You are not the murderer! You can’t be! It’s not your own tale you are telling!’ You must admit it’s a comical business!”

“He-he-he! You noticed then that I said to Nikolay just now that it was not his own tale he was telling?”

“How could I help noticing it!”

“He-he! You are quick-witted. You notice everything! You’ve really a playful mind! And you always fasten on the comic side... he-he! They say that was the marked characteristic of Gogol, among the writers.”

“Yes, of Gogol.”

“Yes, of Gogol.... I shall look forward to meeting you.”

“So shall I.”

Raskolnikov walked straight home. He was so muddled and bewildered that on getting home he sat for a quarter of an hour on the sofa, trying to collect his thoughts. He did not attempt to think about Nikolay; he was stupefied; he felt that his confession was something inexplicable, amazing — something beyond his understanding. But Nikolay’s confession was an actual fact. The consequences of this fact were clear to him at once, its falsehood could not fail to be discovered, and then they would be after him again. Till then, at least, he was free and must do something for himself, for the danger was imminent.

But how imminent? His position gradually became clear to him. Remembering, sketchily, the main outlines of his recent scene with Porfiry, he could not help shuddering again with horror. Of course, he did not yet know all Porfiry’s aims, he could not see into all his calculations. But he had already partly shown his hand, and no one knew better than Raskolnikov how terrible Porfiry’s “lead” had been for him. A little more

and he *might* have given himself away completely, circumstantially. Knowing his nervous temperament and from the first glance seeing through him, Porfiry, though playing a bold game, was bound to win. There's no denying that Raskolnikov had compromised himself seriously, but no *facts* had come to light as yet; there was nothing positive. But was he taking a true view of the position? Wasn't he mistaken? What had Porfiry been trying to get at? Had he really some surprise prepared for him? And what was it? Had he really been expecting something or not? How would they have parted if it had not been for the unexpected appearance of Nikolay?

Porfiry had shown almost all his cards — of course, he had risked something in showing them — and if he had really had anything up his sleeve (Raskolnikov reflected), he would have shown that, too. What was that "surprise"? Was it a joke? Had it meant anything? Could it have concealed anything like a fact, a piece of positive evidence? His yesterday's visitor? What had become of him? Where was he to-day? If Porfiry really had any evidence, it must be connected with him....

He sat on the sofa with his elbows on his knees and his face hidden in his hands. He was still shivering nervously. At last he got up, took his cap, thought a minute, and went to the door.

He had a sort of presentiment that for to-day, at least, he might consider himself out of danger. He had a sudden sense almost of joy; he wanted to make haste to Katerina Ivanovna's. He would be too late for the funeral, of course, but he would be in time for the memorial dinner, and there at once he would see Sonia.

He stood still, thought a moment, and a suffering smile came for a moment on to his lips.

"To-day! To-day," he repeated to himself. "Yes, to-day! So it must be...."

But as he was about to open the door, it began opening of itself. He started and moved back. The door opened gently and slowly, and there suddenly appeared a figure — yesterday's visitor *from underground*.

The man stood in the doorway, looked at Raskolnikov without speaking, and took a step forward into the room. He was exactly the same as yesterday; the same figure, the same dress, but there was a great change in his face; he looked dejected and sighed deeply. If he had only put his hand up to his cheek and leaned his head on one side he would have looked exactly like a peasant woman.

“What do you want?” asked Raskolnikov, numb with terror. The man was still silent, but suddenly he bowed down almost to the ground, touching it with his finger.

“What is it?” cried Raskolnikov.

“I have sinned,” the man articulated softly.

“How?”

“By evil thoughts.”

They looked at one another.

“I was vexed. When you came, perhaps in drink, and bade the porters go to the police station and asked about the blood, I was vexed that they let you go and took you for drunken. I was so vexed that I lost my sleep. And remembering the address we came here yesterday and asked for you....”

“Who came?” Raskolnikov interrupted, instantly beginning to recollect.

“I did, I’ve wronged you.”

“Then you come from that house?”

“I was standing at the gate with them... don’t you remember? We have carried on our trade in that house for years past. We cure and prepare hides, we take work home... most of all I was vexed....”

And the whole scene of the day before yesterday in the gateway came clearly before Raskolnikov’s mind; he recollected that there had been several people there besides the porters, women among them. He remembered one voice had suggested taking him straight to the police-station. He could not recall the face of the speaker, and even now he did not recognise it, but he remembered that he had turned round and made him some answer....

So this was the solution of yesterday’s horror. The most awful thought was that he had been actually almost lost, had almost done for himself on account of such a *trivial* circumstance. So this man could tell nothing except his asking about the flat and the blood stains. So Porfiry, too, had nothing but that *delirium*, no facts but this *psychology* which *cuts both ways*, nothing positive. So if no more facts come to light (and they must not, they must not!) then... then what can they do to him? How can they convict him, even if they arrest him? And Porfiry then had only just heard about the flat and had not known about it before.

“Was it you who told Porfiry... that I’d been there?” he cried, struck by a sudden idea.

“What Porfiry?”

“The head of the detective department?”

“Yes. The porters did not go there, but I went.”

“To-day?”

“I got there two minutes before you. And I heard, I heard it all, how he worried you.”

“Where? What? When?”

“Why, in the next room. I was sitting there all the time.”

“What? Why, then you were the surprise? But how could it happen? Upon my word!”

“I saw that the porters did not want to do what I said,” began the man; “for it’s too late, said they, and maybe he’ll be angry that we did not come at the time. I was vexed and I lost my sleep, and I began making inquiries. And finding out yesterday where to go, I went to-day. The first time I went he wasn’t there, when I came an hour later he couldn’t see me. I went the third time, and they showed me in. I informed him of everything, just as it happened, and he began skipping about the room and punching himself on the chest. ‘What do you scoundrels mean by it? If I’d known about it I should have arrested him!’ Then he ran out, called somebody and began talking to him in the corner, then he turned to me, scolding and questioning me. He scolded me a great deal; and I told him everything, and I told him that you didn’t dare to say a word in answer to me yesterday and that you didn’t recognise me. And he fell to running about again and kept hitting himself on the chest, and getting angry and running about, and when you were announced he told me to go into the next room. ‘Sit there a bit,’ he said. ‘Don’t move, whatever you may hear.’ And he set a chair there for me and locked me in. ‘Perhaps,’ he said, ‘I may call you.’ And when Nikolay’d been brought he let me out as soon as you were gone. ‘I shall send for you again and question you,’ he said.”

“And did he question Nikolay while you were there?”

“He got rid of me as he did of you, before he spoke to Nikolay.”

The man stood still, and again suddenly bowed down, touching the ground with his finger.

“Forgive me for my evil thoughts, and my slander.”

“May God forgive you,” answered Raskolnikov.

And as he said this, the man bowed down again, but not to the ground, turned slowly and went out of the room.

“It all cuts both ways, now it all cuts both ways,” repeated Raskolnikov, and he went out more confident than ever.

“Now we’ll make a fight for it,” he said, with a malicious smile, as he went down the stairs. His malice was aimed at himself; with shame and contempt he recollected his “cowardice.”

PART V

CHAPTER I

The morning that followed the fateful interview with Dounia and her mother brought sobering influences to bear on Pyotr Petrovitch. Intensely unpleasant as it was, he was forced little by little to accept as a fact beyond recall what had seemed to him only the day before fantastic and incredible. The black snake of wounded vanity had been gnawing at his heart all night. When he got out of bed, Pyotr Petrovitch immediately looked in the looking-glass. He was afraid that he had jaundice. However his health seemed unimpaired so far, and looking at his noble, clear-skinned countenance which had grown fattish of late, Pyotr Petrovitch for an instant was positively comforted in the conviction that he would find another bride and, perhaps, even a better one. But coming back to the sense of his present position, he turned aside and spat vigorously, which excited a sarcastic smile in Andrey Semyonovitch Lebeziatnikov, the young friend with whom he was staying. That smile Pyotr Petrovitch noticed, and at once set it down against his young friend's account. He had set down a good many points against him of late. His anger was redoubled when he reflected that he ought not to have told Andrey Semyonovitch about the result of yesterday's interview. That was the second mistake he had made in temper, through impulsiveness and irritability.... Moreover, all that morning one unpleasantness followed another. He even found a hitch awaiting him in his legal case in the senate. He was particularly irritated by the owner of the flat which had been taken in view of his approaching marriage and was being redecorated at his own expense; the owner, a rich German tradesman, would not entertain the idea of breaking the contract which had just been signed and insisted on the full forfeit money, though Pyotr Petrovitch would be giving him back the flat practically redecorated. In the same way the upholsterers refused to return a single rouble of the instalment paid for the furniture purchased but not yet removed to the flat.

"Am I to get married simply for the sake of the furniture?" Pyotr Petrovitch ground his teeth and at the same time once more he had a gleam of desperate hope. "Can all that be really so irrevocably over? Is it no use to make another effort?" The thought of Dounia sent a voluptuous pang through his heart. He endured anguish at that moment, and if it had been

possible to slay Raskolnikov instantly by wishing it, Pyotr Petrovitch would promptly have uttered the wish.

“It was my mistake, too, not to have given them money,” he thought, as he returned dejectedly to Lebeziatnikov’s room, “and why on earth was I such a Jew? It was false economy! I meant to keep them without a penny so that they should turn to me as their providence, and look at them! foo! If I’d spent some fifteen hundred roubles on them for the trousseau and presents, on knick-knacks, dressing-cases, jewellery, materials, and all that sort of trash from Knopp’s and the English shop, my position would have been better and... stronger! They could not have refused me so easily! They are the sort of people that would feel bound to return money and presents if they broke it off; and they would find it hard to do it! And their conscience would prick them: how can we dismiss a man who has hitherto been so generous and delicate?.... H’m! I’ve made a blunder.”

And grinding his teeth again, Pyotr Petrovitch called himself a fool — but not aloud, of course.

He returned home, twice as irritated and angry as before. The preparations for the funeral dinner at Katerina Ivanovna’s excited his curiosity as he passed. He had heard about it the day before; he fancied, indeed, that he had been invited, but absorbed in his own cares he had paid no attention. Inquiring of Madame Lippevechsel who was busy laying the table while Katerina Ivanovna was away at the cemetery, he heard that the entertainment was to be a great affair, that all the lodgers had been invited, among them some who had not known the dead man, that even Andrey Semyonovitch Lebeziatnikov was invited in spite of his previous quarrel with Katerina Ivanovna, that he, Pyotr Petrovitch, was not only invited, but was eagerly expected as he was the most important of the lodgers. Amalia Ivanovna herself had been invited with great ceremony in spite of the recent unpleasantness, and so she was very busy with preparations and was taking a positive pleasure in them; she was moreover dressed up to the nines, all in new black silk, and she was proud of it. All this suggested an idea to Pyotr Petrovitch and he went into his room, or rather Lebeziatnikov’s, somewhat thoughtful. He had learnt that Raskolnikov was to be one of the guests.

Andrey Semyonovitch had been at home all the morning. The attitude of Pyotr Petrovitch to this gentleman was strange, though perhaps natural. Pyotr Petrovitch had despised and hated him from the day he came to stay with him and at the same time he seemed somewhat afraid of him. He had

not come to stay with him on his arrival in Petersburg simply from parsimony, though that had been perhaps his chief object. He had heard of Andrey Semyonovitch, who had once been his ward, as a leading young progressive who was taking an important part in certain interesting circles, the doings of which were a legend in the provinces. It had impressed Pyotr Petrovitch. These powerful omniscient circles who despised everyone and showed everyone up had long inspired in him a peculiar but quite vague alarm. He had not, of course, been able to form even an approximate notion of what they meant. He, like everyone, had heard that there were, especially in Petersburg, progressives of some sort, nihilists and so on, and, like many people, he exaggerated and distorted the significance of those words to an absurd degree. What for many years past he had feared more than anything was *being shown up* and this was the chief ground for his continual uneasiness at the thought of transferring his business to Petersburg. He was afraid of this as little children are sometimes panic-stricken. Some years before, when he was just entering on his own career, he had come upon two cases in which rather important personages in the province, patrons of his, had been cruelly shown up. One instance had ended in great scandal for the person attacked and the other had very nearly ended in serious trouble. For this reason Pyotr Petrovitch intended to go into the subject as soon as he reached Petersburg and, if necessary, to anticipate contingencies by seeking the favour of “our younger generation.” He relied on Andrey Semyonovitch for this and before his visit to Raskolnikov he had succeeded in picking up some current phrases. He soon discovered that Andrey Semyonovitch was a commonplace simpleton, but that by no means reassured Pyotr Petrovitch. Even if he had been certain that all the progressives were fools like him, it would not have allayed his uneasiness. All the doctrines, the ideas, the systems, with which Andrey Semyonovitch pestered him had no interest for him. He had his own object — he simply wanted to find out at once what was happening *here*. Had these people any power or not? Had he anything to fear from them? Would they expose any enterprise of his? And what precisely was now the object of their attacks? Could he somehow make up to them and get round them if they really were powerful? Was this the thing to do or not? Couldn’t he gain something through them? In fact hundreds of questions presented themselves.

Andrey Semyonovitch was an anæmic, scrofulous little man, with strangely flaxen mutton-chop whiskers of which he was very proud. He was

a clerk and had almost always something wrong with his eyes. He was rather soft-hearted, but self-confident and sometimes extremely conceited in speech, which had an absurd effect, incongruous with his little figure. He was one of the lodgers most respected by Amalia Ivanovna, for he did not get drunk and paid regularly for his lodgings. Andrey Semyonovitch really was rather stupid; he attached himself to the cause of progress and “our younger generation” from enthusiasm. He was one of the numerous and varied legion of dullards, of half-animate abortions, conceited, half-educated coxcombs, who attach themselves to the idea most in fashion only to vulgarise it and who caricature every cause they serve, however sincerely.

Though Lebeziatnikov was so good-natured, he, too, was beginning to dislike Pyotr Petrovitch. This happened on both sides unconsciously. However simple Andrey Semyonovitch might be, he began to see that Pyotr Petrovitch was duping him and secretly despising him, and that “he was not the right sort of man.” He had tried expounding to him the system of Fourier and the Darwinian theory, but of late Pyotr Petrovitch began to listen too sarcastically and even to be rude. The fact was he had begun instinctively to guess that Lebeziatnikov was not merely a commonplace simpleton, but, perhaps, a liar, too, and that he had no connections of any consequence even in his own circle, but had simply picked things up third-hand; and that very likely he did not even know much about his own work of propaganda, for he was in too great a muddle. A fine person he would be to show anyone up! It must be noted, by the way, that Pyotr Petrovitch had during those ten days eagerly accepted the strangest praise from Andrey Semyonovitch; he had not protested, for instance, when Andrey Semyonovitch belauded him for being ready to contribute to the establishment of the new “commune,” or to abstain from christening his future children, or to acquiesce if Dounia were to take a lover a month after marriage, and so on. Pyotr Petrovitch so enjoyed hearing his own praises that he did not disdain even such virtues when they were attributed to him.

Pyotr Petrovitch had had occasion that morning to realise some five-per-cent bonds and now he sat down to the table and counted over bundles of notes. Andrey Semyonovitch who hardly ever had any money walked about the room pretending to himself to look at all those bank notes with indifference and even contempt. Nothing would have convinced Pyotr Petrovitch that Andrey Semyonovitch could really look on the money

unmoved, and the latter, on his side, kept thinking bitterly that Pyotr Petrovitch was capable of entertaining such an idea about him and was, perhaps, glad of the opportunity of teasing his young friend by reminding him of his inferiority and the great difference between them.

He found him incredibly inattentive and irritable, though he, Andrey Semyonovitch, began enlarging on his favourite subject, the foundation of a new special “commune.” The brief remarks that dropped from Pyotr Petrovitch between the clicking of the beads on the reckoning frame betrayed unmistakable and discourteous irony. But the “humane” Andrey Semyonovitch ascribed Pyotr Petrovitch’s ill-humour to his recent breach with Dounia and he was burning with impatience to discourse on that theme. He had something progressive to say on the subject which might console his worthy friend and “could not fail” to promote his development.

“There is some sort of festivity being prepared at that... at the widow’s, isn’t there?” Pyotr Petrovitch asked suddenly, interrupting Andrey Semyonovitch at the most interesting passage.

“Why, don’t you know? Why, I was telling you last night what I think about all such ceremonies. And she invited you too, I heard. You were talking to her yesterday...”

“I should never have expected that beggarly fool would have spent on this feast all the money she got from that other fool, Raskolnikov. I was surprised just now as I came through at the preparations there, the wines! Several people are invited. It’s beyond everything!” continued Pyotr Petrovitch, who seemed to have some object in pursuing the conversation. “What? You say I am asked too? When was that? I don’t remember. But I shan’t go. Why should I? I only said a word to her in passing yesterday of the possibility of her obtaining a year’s salary as a destitute widow of a government clerk. I suppose she has invited me on that account, hasn’t she? He-he-he!”

“I don’t intend to go either,” said Lebeziatnikov.

“I should think not, after giving her a thrashing! You might well hesitate, he-he!”

“Who thrashed? Whom?” cried Lebeziatnikov, flustered and blushing.

“Why, you thrashed Katerina Ivanovna a month ago. I heard so yesterday... so that’s what your convictions amount to... and the woman question, too, wasn’t quite sound, he-he-he!” and Pyotr Petrovitch, as though comforted, went back to clicking his beads.

“It’s all slander and nonsense!” cried Lebeziatnikov, who was always afraid of allusions to the subject. “It was not like that at all, it was quite different. You’ve heard it wrong; it’s a libel. I was simply defending myself. She rushed at me first with her nails, she pulled out all my whiskers.... It’s permissable for anyone, I should hope, to defend himself and I never allow anyone to use violence to me on principle, for it’s an act of despotism. What was I to do? I simply pushed her back.”

“He-he-he!” Luzhin went on laughing maliciously.

“You keep on like that because you are out of humour yourself.... But that’s nonsense and it has nothing, nothing whatever to do with the woman question! You don’t understand; I used to think, indeed, that if women are equal to men in all respects, even in strength (as is maintained now) there ought to be equality in that, too. Of course, I reflected afterwards that such a question ought not really to arise, for there ought not to be fighting and in the future society fighting is unthinkable... and that it would be a queer thing to seek for equality in fighting. I am not so stupid... though, of course, there is fighting... there won’t be later, but at present there is... confound it! How muddled one gets with you! It’s not on that account that I am not going. I am not going on principle, not to take part in the revolting convention of memorial dinners, that’s why! Though, of course, one might go to laugh at it.... I am sorry there won’t be any priests at it. I should certainly go if there were.”

“Then you would sit down at another man’s table and insult it and those who invited you. Eh?”

“Certainly not insult, but protest. I should do it with a good object. I might indirectly assist the cause of enlightenment and propaganda. It’s a duty of every man to work for enlightenment and propaganda and the more harshly, perhaps, the better. I might drop a seed, an idea.... And something might grow up from that seed. How should I be insulting them? They might be offended at first, but afterwards they’d see I’d done them a service. You know, Terebyeva (who is in the community now) was blamed because when she left her family and... devoted... herself, she wrote to her father and mother that she wouldn’t go on living conventionally and was entering on a free marriage and it was said that that was too harsh, that she might have spared them and have written more kindly. I think that’s all nonsense and there’s no need of softness; on the contrary, what’s wanted is protest. Varents had been married seven years, she abandoned her two children, she

told her husband straight out in a letter: ‘I have realised that I cannot be happy with you. I can never forgive you that you have deceived me by concealing from me that there is another organisation of society by means of the communities. I have only lately learned it from a great-hearted man to whom I have given myself and with whom I am establishing a community. I speak plainly because I consider it dishonest to deceive you. Do as you think best. Do not hope to get me back, you are too late. I hope you will be happy.’ That’s how letters like that ought to be written!”

“Is that Terebyeva the one you said had made a third free marriage?”

“No, it’s only the second, really! But what if it were the fourth, what if it were the fifteenth, that’s all nonsense! And if ever I regretted the death of my father and mother, it is now, and I sometimes think if my parents were living what a protest I would have aimed at them! I would have done something on purpose... I would have shown them! I would have astonished them! I am really sorry there is no one!”

“To surprise! He-he! Well, be that as you will,” Pyotr Petrovitch interrupted, “but tell me this; do you know the dead man’s daughter, the delicate-looking little thing? It’s true what they say about her, isn’t it?”

“What of it? I think, that is, it is my own personal conviction that this is the normal condition of women. Why not? I mean, *distinguons*. In our present society it is not altogether normal, because it is compulsory, but in the future society it will be perfectly normal, because it will be voluntary. Even as it is, she was quite right: she was suffering and that was her asset, so to speak, her capital which she had a perfect right to dispose of. Of course, in the future society there will be no need of assets, but her part will have another significance, rational and in harmony with her environment. As to Sofya Semyonovna personally, I regard her action as a vigorous protest against the organisation of society, and I respect her deeply for it; I rejoice indeed when I look at her!”

“I was told that you got her turned out of these lodgings.”

Lebeziatnikov was enraged.

“That’s another slander,” he yelled. “It was not so at all! That was all Katerina Ivanovna’s invention, for she did not understand! And I never made love to Sofya Semyonovna! I was simply developing her, entirely disinterestedly, trying to rouse her to protest.... All I wanted was her protest and Sofya Semyonovna could not have remained here anyway!”

“Have you asked her to join your community?”

“You keep on laughing and very inappropriately, allow me to tell you. You don’t understand! There is no such rôle in a community. The community is established that there should be no such rôles. In a community, such a rôle is essentially transformed and what is stupid here is sensible there, what, under present conditions, is unnatural becomes perfectly natural in the community. It all depends on the environment. It’s all the environment and man himself is nothing. And I am on good terms with Sofya Semyonovna to this day, which is a proof that she never regarded me as having wronged her. I am trying now to attract her to the community, but on quite, quite a different footing. What are you laughing at? We are trying to establish a community of our own, a special one, on a broader basis. We have gone further in our convictions. We reject more! And meanwhile I’m still developing Sofya Semyonovna. She has a beautiful, beautiful character!”

“And you take advantage of her fine character, eh? He-he!”

“No, no! Oh, no! On the contrary.”

“Oh, on the contrary! He-he-he! A queer thing to say!”

“Believe me! Why should I disguise it? In fact, I feel it strange myself how timid, chaste and modern she is with me!”

“And you, of course, are developing her... he-he! trying to prove to her that all that modesty is nonsense?”

“Not at all, not at all! How coarsely, how stupidly — excuse me saying so — you misunderstand the word development! Good heavens, how... crude you still are! We are striving for the freedom of women and you have only one idea in your head.... Setting aside the general question of chastity and feminine modesty as useless in themselves and indeed prejudices, I fully accept her chastity with me, because that’s for her to decide. Of course if she were to tell me herself that she wanted me, I should think myself very lucky, because I like the girl very much; but as it is, no one has ever treated her more courteously than I, with more respect for her dignity... I wait in hopes, that’s all!”

“You had much better make her a present of something. I bet you never thought of that.”

“You don’t understand, as I’ve told you already! Of course, she is in such a position, but it’s another question. Quite another question! You simply despise her. Seeing a fact which you mistakenly consider deserving of contempt, you refuse to take a humane view of a fellow creature. You don’t

know what a character she is! I am only sorry that of late she has quite given up reading and borrowing books. I used to lend them to her. I am sorry, too, that with all the energy and resolution in protesting — which she has already shown once — she has little self-reliance, little, so to say, independence, so as to break free from certain prejudices and certain foolish ideas. Yet she thoroughly understands some questions, for instance about kissing of hands, that is, that it's an insult to a woman for a man to kiss her hand, because it's a sign of inequality. We had a debate about it and I described it to her. She listened attentively to an account of the workmen's associations in France, too. Now I am explaining the question of coming into the room in the future society."

"And what's that, pray?"

"We had a debate lately on the question: Has a member of the community the right to enter another member's room, whether man or woman, at any time... and we decided that he has!"

"It might be at an inconvenient moment, he-he!"

Lebeziatnikov was really angry.

"You are always thinking of something unpleasant," he cried with aversion. "Tfoo! How vexed I am that when I was expounding our system, I referred prematurely to the question of personal privacy! It's always a stumbling-block to people like you, they turn it into ridicule before they understand it. And how proud they are of it, too! Tfoo! I've often maintained that that question should not be approached by a novice till he has a firm faith in the system. And tell me, please, what do you find so shameful even in cesspools? I should be the first to be ready to clean out any cesspool you like. And it's not a question of self-sacrifice, it's simply work, honourable, useful work which is as good as any other and much better than the work of a Raphael and a Pushkin, because it is more useful."

"And more honourable, more honourable, he-he-he!"

"What do you mean by 'more honourable'? I don't understand such expressions to describe human activity. 'More honourable,"nobler' — all those are old-fashioned prejudices which I reject. Everything which is *of use* to mankind is honourable. I only understand one word: *useful*! You can snigger as much as you like, but that's so!"

Pyotr Petrovitch laughed heartily. He had finished counting the money and was putting it away. But some of the notes he left on the table. The "cesspool question" had already been a subject of dispute between them.

What was absurd was that it made Lebeziatnikov really angry, while it amused Luzhin and at that moment he particularly wanted to anger his young friend.

“It’s your ill-luck yesterday that makes you so ill-humoured and annoying,” blurted out Lebeziatnikov, who in spite of his “independence” and his “protests” did not venture to oppose Pyotr Petrovitch and still behaved to him with some of the respect habitual in earlier years.

“You’d better tell me this,” Pyotr Petrovitch interrupted with haughty displeasure, “can you... or rather are you really friendly enough with that young person to ask her to step in here for a minute? I think they’ve all come back from the cemetery... I heard the sound of steps... I want to see her, that young person.”

“What for?” Lebeziatnikov asked with surprise.

“Oh, I want to. I am leaving here to-day or to-morrow and therefore I wanted to speak to her about... However, you may be present during the interview. It’s better you should be, indeed. For there’s no knowing what you might imagine.”

“I shan’t imagine anything. I only asked and, if you’ve anything to say to her, nothing is easier than to call her in. I’ll go directly and you may be sure I won’t be in your way.”

Five minutes later Lebeziatnikov came in with Sonia. She came in very much surprised and overcome with shyness as usual. She was always shy in such circumstances and was always afraid of new people, she had been as a child and was even more so now.... Pyotr Petrovitch met her “politely and affably,” but with a certain shade of bantering familiarity which in his opinion was suitable for a man of his respectability and weight in dealing with a creature so young and so *interesting* as she. He hastened to “reassure” her and made her sit down facing him at the table. Sonia sat down, looked about her — at Lebeziatnikov, at the notes lying on the table and then again at Pyotr Petrovitch and her eyes remained riveted on him. Lebeziatnikov was moving to the door. Pyotr Petrovitch signed to Sonia to remain seated and stopped Lebeziatnikov.

“Is Raskolnikov in there? Has he come?” he asked him in a whisper.

“Raskolnikov? Yes. Why? Yes, he is there. I saw him just come in.... Why?”

“Well, I particularly beg you to remain here with us and not to leave me alone with this... young woman. I only want a few words with her, but God

knows what they may make of it. I shouldn’t like Raskolnikov to repeat anything.... You understand what I mean?”

“I understand!” Lebeziatnikov saw the point. “Yes, you are right.... Of course, I am convinced personally that you have no reason to be uneasy, but... still, you are right. Certainly I’ll stay. I’ll stand here at the window and not be in your way... I think you are right...”

Pyotr Petrovitch returned to the sofa, sat down opposite Sonia, looked attentively at her and assumed an extremely dignified, even severe expression, as much as to say, “don’t you make any mistake, madam.” Sonia was overwhelmed with embarrassment.

“In the first place, Sofya Semyonovna, will you make my excuses to your respected mamma.... That’s right, isn’t it? Katerina Ivanovna stands in the place of a mother to you?” Pyotr Petrovitch began with great dignity, though affably.

It was evident that his intentions were friendly.

“Quite so, yes; the place of a mother,” Sonia answered, timidly and hurriedly.

“Then will you make my apologies to her? Through inevitable circumstances I am forced to be absent and shall not be at the dinner in spite of your mamma’s kind invitation.”

“Yes... I’ll tell her... at once.”

And Sonia hastily jumped up from her seat.

“Wait, that’s not all,” Pyotr Petrovitch detained her, smiling at her simplicity and ignorance of good manners, “and you know me little, my dear Sofya Semyonovna, if you suppose I would have ventured to trouble a person like you for a matter of so little consequence affecting myself only. I have another object.”

Sonia sat down hurriedly. Her eyes rested again for an instant on the grey-and-rainbow-coloured notes that remained on the table, but she quickly looked away and fixed her eyes on Pyotr Petrovitch. She felt it horribly indecorous, especially for *her*, to look at another person’s money. She stared at the gold eye-glass which Pyotr Petrovitch held in his left hand and at the massive and extremely handsome ring with a yellow stone on his middle finger. But suddenly she looked away and, not knowing where to turn, ended by staring Pyotr Petrovitch again straight in the face. After a pause of still greater dignity he continued.

“I chanced yesterday in passing to exchange a couple of words with Katerina Ivanovna, poor woman. That was sufficient to enable me to ascertain that she is in a position — preternatural, if one may so express it.”

“Yes... preternatural...” Sonia hurriedly assented.

“Or it would be simpler and more comprehensible to say, ill.”

“Yes, simpler and more comprehen... yes, ill.”

“Quite so. So then from a feeling of humanity and so to speak compassion, I should be glad to be of service to her in any way, foreseeing her unfortunate position. I believe the whole of this poverty-stricken family depends now entirely on you?”

“Allow me to ask,” Sonia rose to her feet, “did you say something to her yesterday of the possibility of a pension? Because she told me you had undertaken to get her one. Was that true?”

“Not in the slightest, and indeed it’s an absurdity! I merely hinted at her obtaining temporary assistance as the widow of an official who had died in the service — if only she has patronage... but apparently your late parent had not served his full term and had not indeed been in the service at all of late. In fact, if there could be any hope, it would be very ephemeral, because there would be no claim for assistance in that case, far from it.... And she is dreaming of a pension already, he-he-he!... A go-ahead lady!”

“Yes, she is. For she is credulous and good-hearted, and she believes everything from the goodness of her heart and... and... and she is like that... yes... You must excuse her,” said Sonia, and again she got up to go.

“But you haven’t heard what I have to say.”

“No, I haven’t heard,” muttered Sonia.

“Then sit down.” She was terribly confused; she sat down again a third time.

“Seeing her position with her unfortunate little ones, I should be glad, as I have said before, so far as lies in my power, to be of service, that is, so far as is in my power, not more. One might for instance get up a subscription for her, or a lottery, something of the sort, such as is always arranged in such cases by friends or even outsiders desirous of assisting people. It was of that I intended to speak to you; it might be done.”

“Yes, yes... God will repay you for it,” faltered Sonia, gazing intently at Pyotr Petrovitch.

“It might be, but we will talk of it later. We might begin it to-day, we will talk it over this evening and lay the foundation so to speak. Come to me at

seven o’clock. Mr. Lebeziatnikov, I hope, will assist us. But there is one circumstance of which I ought to warn you beforehand and for which I venture to trouble you, Sofya Semyonovna, to come here. In my opinion money cannot be, indeed it’s unsafe to put it into Katerina Ivanovna’s own hands. The dinner to-day is a proof of that. Though she has not, so to speak, a crust of bread for to-morrow and... well, boots or shoes, or anything; she has bought to-day Jamaica rum, and even, I believe, Madeira and... and coffee. I saw it as I passed through. To-morrow it will all fall upon you again, they won’t have a crust of bread. It’s absurd, really, and so, to my thinking, a subscription ought to be raised so that the unhappy widow should not know of the money, but only you, for instance. Am I right?”

“I don’t know... this is only to-day, once in her life.... She was so anxious to do honour, to celebrate the memory.... And she is very sensible... but just as you think and I shall be very, very... they will all be... and God will reward... and the orphans...”

Sonia burst into tears.

“Very well, then, keep it in mind; and now will you accept for the benefit of your relation the small sum that I am able to spare, from me personally. I am very anxious that my name should not be mentioned in connection with it. Here... having so to speak anxieties of my own, I cannot do more...”

And Pyotr Petrovitch held out to Sonia a ten-rouble note carefully unfolded. Sonia took it, flushed crimson, jumped up, muttered something and began taking leave. Pyotr Petrovitch accompanied her ceremoniously to the door. She got out of the room at last, agitated and distressed, and returned to Katerina Ivanovna, overwhelmed with confusion.

All this time Lebeziatnikov had stood at the window or walked about the room, anxious not to interrupt the conversation; when Sonia had gone he walked up to Pyotr Petrovitch and solemnly held out his hand.

“I heard and *saw* everything,” he said, laying stress on the last verb. “That is honourable, I mean to say, it’s humane! You wanted to avoid gratitude, I saw! And although I cannot, I confess, in principle sympathise with private charity, for it not only fails to eradicate the evil but even promotes it, yet I must admit that I saw your action with pleasure — yes, yes, I like it.”

“That’s all nonsense,” muttered Pyotr Petrovitch, somewhat disconcerted, looking carefully at Lebeziatnikov.

“No, it’s not nonsense! A man who has suffered distress and annoyance as you did yesterday and who yet can sympathise with the misery of others, such a man... even though he is making a social mistake — is still deserving of respect! I did not expect it indeed of you, Pyotr Petrovitch, especially as according to your ideas... oh, what a drawback your ideas are to you! How distressed you are for instance by your ill-luck yesterday,” cried the simple-hearted Lebeziatnikov, who felt a return of affection for Pyotr Petrovitch. “And, what do you want with marriage, with *legal* marriage, my dear, noble Pyotr Petrovitch? Why do you cling to this *legality* of marriage? Well, you may beat me if you like, but I am glad, positively glad it hasn’t come off, that you are free, that you are not quite lost for humanity.... you see, I’ve spoken my mind!”

“Because I don’t want in your free marriage to be made a fool of and to bring up another man’s children, that’s why I want legal marriage,” Luzhin replied in order to make some answer.

He seemed preoccupied by something.

“Children? You referred to children,” Lebeziatnikov started off like a warhorse at the trumpet call. “Children are a social question and a question of first importance, I agree; but the question of children has another solution. Some refuse to have children altogether, because they suggest the institution of the family. We’ll speak of children later, but now as to the question of honour, I confess that’s my weak point. That horrid, military, Pushkin expression is unthinkable in the dictionary of the future. What does it mean indeed? It’s nonsense, there will be no deception in a free marriage! That is only the natural consequence of a legal marriage, so to say, its corrective, a protest. So that indeed it’s not humiliating... and if I ever, to suppose an absurdity, were to be legally married, I should be positively glad of it. I should say to my wife: ‘My dear, hitherto I have loved you, now I respect you, for you’ve shown you can protest!’ You laugh! That’s because you are of incapable of getting away from prejudices. Confound it all! I understand now where the unpleasantness is of being deceived in a legal marriage, but it’s simply a despicable consequence of a despicable position in which both are humiliated. When the deception is open, as in a free marriage, then it does not exist, it’s unthinkable. Your wife will only prove how she respects you by considering you incapable of opposing her happiness and avenging yourself on her for her new husband. Damn it all! I sometimes dream if I were to be married, pfoo! I mean if I were to marry,

legally or not, it’s just the same, I should present my wife with a lover if she had not found one for herself. ‘My dear,’ I should say, ‘I love you, but even more than that I desire you to respect me. See!’ Am I not right?”

Pyotr Petrovitch sniggered as he listened, but without much merriment. He hardly heard it indeed. He was preoccupied with something else and even Lebeziatnikov at last noticed it. Pyotr Petrovitch seemed excited and rubbed his hands. Lebeziatnikov remembered all this and reflected upon it afterwards.

CHAPTER II

It would be difficult to explain exactly what could have originated the idea of that senseless dinner in Katerina Ivanovna's disordered brain. Nearly ten of the twenty roubles, given by Raskolnikov for Marmeladov's funeral, were wasted upon it. Possibly Katerina Ivanovna felt obliged to honour the memory of the deceased "suitably," that all the lodgers, and still more Amalia Ivanovna, might know "that he was in no way their inferior, and perhaps very much their superior," and that no one had the right "to turn up his nose at him." Perhaps the chief element was that peculiar "poor man's pride," which compels many poor people to spend their last savings on some traditional social ceremony, simply in order to do "like other people," and not to "be looked down upon." It is very probable, too, that Katerina Ivanovna longed on this occasion, at the moment when she seemed to be abandoned by everyone, to show those "wretched contemptible lodgers" that she knew "how to do things, how to entertain" and that she had been brought up "in a genteel, she might almost say aristocratic colonel's family" and had not been meant for sweeping floors and washing the children's rags at night. Even the poorest and most broken-spirited people are sometimes liable to these paroxysms of pride and vanity which take the form of an irresistible nervous craving. And Katerina Ivanovna was not broken-spirited; she might have been killed by circumstance, but her spirit could not have been broken, that is, she could not have been intimidated, her will could not be crushed. Moreover Sonia had said with good reason that her mind was unhinged. She could not be said to be insane, but for a year past she had been so harassed that her mind might well be overstrained. The later stages of consumption are apt, doctors tell us, to affect the intellect.

There was no great variety of wines, nor was there Madeira; but wine there was. There was vodka, rum and Lisbon wine, all of the poorest quality but in sufficient quantity. Besides the traditional rice and honey, there were three or four dishes, one of which consisted of pancakes, all prepared in Amalia Ivanovna's kitchen. Two samovars were boiling, that tea and punch might be offered after dinner. Katerina Ivanovna had herself seen to purchasing the provisions, with the help of one of the lodgers, an unfortunate little Pole who had somehow been stranded at Madame Lippevechsel's. He promptly put himself at Katerina Ivanovna's disposal

and had been all that morning and all the day before running about as fast as his legs could carry him, and very anxious that everyone should be aware of it. For every trifle he ran to Katerina Ivanovna, even hunting her out at the bazaar, at every instant called her "*Pani*." She was heartily sick of him before the end, though she had declared at first that she could not have got on without this "serviceable and magnanimous man." It was one of Katerina Ivanovna's characteristics to paint everyone she met in the most glowing colours. Her praises were so exaggerated as sometimes to be embarrassing; she would invent various circumstances to the credit of her new acquaintance and quite genuinely believe in their reality. Then all of a sudden she would be disillusioned and would rudely and contemptuously repulse the person she had only a few hours before been literally adoring. She was naturally of a gay, lively and peace-loving disposition, but from continual failures and misfortunes she had come to desire so *keenly* that all should live in peace and joy and should not *dare* to break the peace, that the slightest jar, the smallest disaster reduced her almost to frenzy, and she would pass in an instant from the brightest hopes and fancies to cursing her fate and raving, and knocking her head against the wall.

Amalia Ivanovna, too, suddenly acquired extraordinary importance in Katerina Ivanovna's eyes and was treated by her with extraordinary respect, probably only because Amalia Ivanovna had thrown herself heart and soul into the preparations. She had undertaken to lay the table, to provide the linen, crockery, etc. and to cook the dishes in her kitchen, and Katerina Ivanovna had left it all in her hands and gone herself to the cemetery. Everything had been well done. Even the table-cloth was nearly clean; the crockery, knives, forks and glasses were, of course, of all shapes and patterns, lent by different lodgers, but the table was properly laid at the time fixed, and Amalia Ivanovna, feeling she had done her work well, had put on a black silk dress and a cap with new mourning ribbons and met the returning party with some pride. This pride, though justifiable, displeased Katerina Ivanovna for some reason: "as though the table could not have been laid except by Amalia Ivanovna!" She disliked the cap with new ribbons, too. "Could she be stuck up, the stupid German, because she was mistress of the house, and had consented as a favour to help her poor lodgers! As a favour! Fancy that! Katerina Ivanovna's father who had been a colonel and almost a governor had sometimes had the table set for forty

persons, and then anyone like Amalia Ivanovna, or rather Ludwigovna, would not have been allowed into the kitchen."

Katerina Ivanovna, however, put off expressing her feelings for the time and contented herself with treating her coldly, though she decided inwardly that she would certainly have to put Amalia Ivanovna down and set her in her proper place, for goodness only knew what she was fancying herself. Katerina Ivanovna was irritated too by the fact that hardly any of the lodgers invited had come to the funeral, except the Pole who had just managed to run into the cemetery, while to the memorial dinner the poorest and most insignificant of them had turned up, the wretched creatures, many of them not quite sober. The older and more respectable of them all, as if by common consent, stayed away. Pyotr Petrovitch Luzhin, for instance, who might be said to be the most respectable of all the lodgers, did not appear, though Katerina Ivanovna had the evening before told all the world, that is Amalia Ivanovna, Polenka, Sonia and the Pole, that he was the most generous, noble-hearted man with a large property and vast connections, who had been a friend of her first husband's, and a guest in her father's house, and that he had promised to use all his influence to secure her a considerable pension. It must be noted that when Katerina Ivanovna exalted anyone's connections and fortune, it was without any ulterior motive, quite disinterestedly, for the mere pleasure of adding to the consequence of the person praised. Probably "taking his cue" from Luzhin, "that contemptible wretch Lebeziatnikov had not turned up either. What did he fancy himself? He was only asked out of kindness and because he was sharing the same room with Pyotr Petrovitch and was a friend of his, so that it would have been awkward not to invite him."

Among those who failed to appear were "the genteel lady and her old-maidish daughter," who had only been lodgers in the house for the last fortnight, but had several times complained of the noise and uproar in Katerina Ivanovna's room, especially when Marmeladov had come back drunk. Katerina Ivanovna heard this from Amalia Ivanovna who, quarrelling with Katerina Ivanovna, and threatening to turn the whole family out of doors, had shouted at her that they "were not worth the foot" of the honourable lodgers whom they were disturbing. Katerina Ivanovna determined now to invite this lady and her daughter, "whose foot she was not worth," and who had turned away haughtily when she casually met them, so that they might know that "she was more noble in her thoughts and

feelings and did not harbour malice," and might see that she was not accustomed to her way of living. She had proposed to make this clear to them at dinner with allusions to her late father's governorship, and also at the same time to hint that it was exceedingly stupid of them to turn away on meeting her. The fat colonel-major (he was really a discharged officer of low rank) was also absent, but it appeared that he had been "not himself" for the last two days. The party consisted of the Pole, a wretched looking clerk with a spotty face and a greasy coat, who had not a word to say for himself, and smelt abominably, a deaf and almost blind old man who had once been in the post office and who had been from immemorial ages maintained by someone at Amalia Ivanovna's.

A retired clerk of the commissariat department came, too; he was drunk, had a loud and most unseemly laugh and only fancy — was without a waistcoat! One of the visitors sat straight down to the table without even greeting Katerina Ivanovna. Finally one person having no suit appeared in his dressing-gown, but this was too much, and the efforts of Amalia Ivanovna and the Pole succeeded in removing him. The Pole brought with him, however, two other Poles who did not live at Amalia Ivanovna's and whom no one had seen here before. All this irritated Katerina Ivanovna intensely. "For whom had they made all these preparations then?" To make room for the visitors the children had not even been laid for at the table; but the two little ones were sitting on a bench in the furthest corner with their dinner laid on a box, while Polenka as a big girl had to look after them, feed them, and keep their noses wiped like well-bred children's.

Katerina Ivanovna, in fact, could hardly help meeting her guests with increased dignity, and even haughtiness. She stared at some of them with special severity, and loftily invited them to take their seats. Rushing to the conclusion that Amalia Ivanovna must be responsible for those who were absent, she began treating her with extreme nonchalance, which the latter promptly observed and resented. Such a beginning was no good omen for the end. All were seated at last.

Raskolnikov came in almost at the moment of their return from the cemetery. Katerina Ivanovna was greatly delighted to see him, in the first place, because he was the one "educated visitor, and, as everyone knew, was in two years to take a professorship in the university," and secondly because he immediately and respectfully apologised for having been unable to be at the funeral. She positively pounced upon him, and made him sit on her left

hand (Amalia Ivanovna was on her right). In spite of her continual anxiety that the dishes should be passed round correctly and that everyone should taste them, in spite of the agonising cough which interrupted her every minute and seemed to have grown worse during the last few days, she hastened to pour out in a half whisper to Raskolnikov all her suppressed feelings and her just indignation at the failure of the dinner, interspersing her remarks with lively and uncontrollable laughter at the expense of her visitors and especially of her landlady.

“It’s all that cuckoo’s fault! You know whom I mean? Her, her!” Katerina Ivanovna nodded towards the landlady. “Look at her, she’s making round eyes, she feels that we are talking about her and can’t understand. Pfoo, the owl! Ha-ha! (Cough-cough-cough.) And what does she put on that cap for? (Cough-cough-cough.) Have you noticed that she wants everyone to consider that she is patronising me and doing me an honour by being here? I asked her like a sensible woman to invite people, especially those who knew my late husband, and look at the set of fools she has brought! The sweeps! Look at that one with the spotty face. And those wretched Poles, ha-ha-ha! (Cough-cough-cough.) Not one of them has ever poked his nose in here, I’ve never set eyes on them. What have they come here for, I ask you? There they sit in a row. Hey, *pan*!” she cried suddenly to one of them, “have you tasted the pancakes? Take some more! Have some beer! Won’t you have some vodka? Look, he’s jumped up and is making his bows, they must be quite starved, poor things. Never mind, let them eat! They don’t make a noise, anyway, though I’m really afraid for our landlady’s silver spoons... Amalia Ivanovna!” she addressed her suddenly, almost aloud, “if your spoons should happen to be stolen, I won’t be responsible, I warn you! Ha-ha-ha!” She laughed turning to Raskolnikov, and again nodding towards the landlady, in high glee at her sally. “She didn’t understand, she didn’t understand again! Look how she sits with her mouth open! An owl, a real owl! An owl in new ribbons, ha-ha-ha!”

Here her laugh turned again to an insufferable fit of coughing that lasted five minutes. Drops of perspiration stood out on her forehead and her handkerchief was stained with blood. She showed Raskolnikov the blood in silence, and as soon as she could get her breath began whispering to him again with extreme animation and a hectic flush on her cheeks.

“Do you know, I gave her the most delicate instructions, so to speak, for inviting that lady and her daughter, you understand of whom I am speaking?

It needed the utmost delicacy, the greatest nicety, but she has managed things so that that fool, that conceited baggage, that provincial nonentity, simply because she is the widow of a major, and has come to try and get a pension and to fray out her skirts in the government offices, because at fifty she paints her face (everybody knows it)... a creature like that did not think fit to come, and has not even answered the invitation, which the most ordinary good manners required! I can't understand why Pyotr Petrovitch has not come? But where's Sonia? Where has she gone? Ah, there she is at last! what is it, Sonia, where have you been? It's odd that even at your father's funeral you should be so unpunctual. Rodion Romanovitch, make room for her beside you. That's your place, Sonia... take what you like. Have some of the cold entrée with jelly, that's the best. They'll bring the pancakes directly. Have they given the children some? Polenka, have you got everything? (Cough-cough-cough.) That's all right. Be a good girl, Lida, and, Kolya, don't fidget with your feet; sit like a little gentleman. What are you saying, Sonia?"

Sonia hastened to give her Pyotr Petrovitch's apologies, trying to speak loud enough for everyone to hear and carefully choosing the most respectful phrases which she attributed to Pyotr Petrovitch. She added that Pyotr Petrovitch had particularly told her to say that, as soon as he possibly could, he would come immediately to discuss *business* alone with her and to consider what could be done for her, etc. etc.

Sonia knew that this would comfort Katerina Ivanovna, would flatter her and gratify her pride. She sat down beside Raskolnikov; she made him a hurried bow, glancing curiously at him. But for the rest of the time she seemed to avoid looking at him or speaking to him. She seemed absent-minded, though she kept looking at Katerina Ivanovna, trying to please her. Neither she nor Katerina Ivanovna had been able to get mourning; Sonia was wearing dark brown, and Katerina Ivanovna had on her only dress, a dark striped cotton one.

The message from Pyotr Petrovitch was very successful. Listening to Sonia with dignity, Katerina Ivanovna inquired with equal dignity how Pyotr Petrovitch was, then at once whispered almost aloud to Raskolnikov that it certainly would have been strange for a man of Pyotr Petrovitch's position and standing to find himself in such "extraordinary company," in spite of his devotion to her family and his old friendship with her father.

“That’s why I am so grateful to you, Rodion Romanovitch, that you have not disdained my hospitality, even in such surroundings,” she added almost aloud. “But I am sure that it was only your special affection for my poor husband that has made you keep your promise.”

Then once more with pride and dignity she scanned her visitors, and suddenly inquired aloud across the table of the deaf man: “Wouldn’t he have some more meat, and had he been given some wine?” The old man made no answer and for a long while could not understand what he was asked, though his neighbours amused themselves by poking and shaking him. He simply gazed about him with his mouth open, which only increased the general mirth.

“What an imbecile! Look, look! Why was he brought? But as to Pyotr Petrovitch, I always had confidence in him,” Katerina Ivanovna continued, “and, of course, he is not like..,” with an extremely stern face she addressed Amalia Ivanovna so sharply and loudly that the latter was quite disconcerted, “not like your dressed up draggletails whom my father would not have taken as cooks into his kitchen, and my late husband would have done them honour if he had invited them in the goodness of his heart.”

“Yes, he was fond of drink, he was fond of it, he did drink!” cried the commissariat clerk, gulping down his twelfth glass of vodka.

“My late husband certainly had that weakness, and everyone knows it,” Katerina Ivanovna attacked him at once, “but he was a kind and honourable man, who loved and respected his family. The worst of it was his good nature made him trust all sorts of disreputable people, and he drank with fellows who were not worth the sole of his shoe. Would you believe it, Rodion Romanovitch, they found a gingerbread cock in his pocket; he was dead drunk, but he did not forget the children!”

“A cock? Did you say a cock?” shouted the commissariat clerk.

Katerina Ivanovna did not vouchsafe a reply. She sighed, lost in thought.

“No doubt you think, like everyone, that I was too severe with him,” she went on, addressing Raskolnikov. “But that’s not so! He respected me, he respected me very much! He was a kind-hearted man! And how sorry I was for him sometimes! He would sit in a corner and look at me, I used to feel so sorry for him, I used to want to be kind to him and then would think to myself: ‘Be kind to him and he will drink again,’ it was only by severity that you could keep him within bounds.”

“Yes, he used to get his hair pulled pretty often,” roared the commissariat clerk again, swallowing another glass of vodka.

“Some fools would be the better for a good drubbing, as well as having their hair pulled. I am not talking of my late husband now!” Katerina Ivanovna snapped at him.

The flush on her cheeks grew more and more marked, her chest heaved. In another minute she would have been ready to make a scene. Many of the visitors were sniggering, evidently delighted. They began poking the commissariat clerk and whispering something to him. They were evidently trying to egg him on.

“Allow me to ask what are you alluding to,” began the clerk, “that is to say, whose... about whom... did you say just now... But I don’t care! That’s nonsense! Widow! I forgive you.... Pass!”

And he took another drink of vodka.

Raskolnikov sat in silence, listening with disgust. He only ate from politeness, just tasting the food that Katerina Ivanovna was continually putting on his plate, to avoid hurting her feelings. He watched Sonia intently. But Sonia became more and more anxious and distressed; she, too, foresaw that the dinner would not end peaceably, and saw with terror Katerina Ivanovna’s growing irritation. She knew that she, Sonia, was the chief reason for the ‘genteel’ ladies’ contemptuous treatment of Katerina Ivanovna’s invitation. She had heard from Amalia Ivanovna that the mother was positively offended at the invitation and had asked the question: “How could she let her daughter sit down beside *that young person*?” Sonia had a feeling that Katerina Ivanovna had already heard this and an insult to Sonia meant more to Katerina Ivanovna than an insult to herself, her children, or her father, Sonia knew that Katerina Ivanovna would not be satisfied now, “till she had shown those draggletails that they were both...” To make matters worse someone passed Sonia, from the other end of the table, a plate with two hearts pierced with an arrow, cut out of black bread. Katerina Ivanovna flushed crimson and at once said aloud across the table that the man who sent it was “a drunken ass!”

Amalia Ivanovna was foreseeing something amiss, and at the same time deeply wounded by Katerina Ivanovna’s haughtiness, and to restore the good-humour of the company and raise herself in their esteem she began, apropos of nothing, telling a story about an acquaintance of hers “Karl from the chemist’s,” who was driving one night in a cab, and that “the cabman

wanted him to kill, and Karl very much begged him not to kill, and wept and clasped hands, and frightened and from fear pierced his heart." Though Katerina Ivanovna smiled, she observed at once that Amalia Ivanovna ought not to tell anecdotes in Russian; the latter was still more offended, and she retorted that her "*Vater aus Berlin* was a very important man, and always went with his hands in pockets." Katerina Ivanovna could not restrain herself and laughed so much that Amalia Ivanovna lost patience and could scarcely control herself.

"Listen to the owl!" Katerina Ivanovna whispered at once, her good-humour almost restored, "she meant to say he kept his hands in his pockets, but she said he put his hands in people's pockets. (Cough-cough.) And have you noticed, Rodion Romanovitch, that all these Petersburg foreigners, the Germans especially, are all stupider than we! Can you fancy anyone of us telling how 'Karl from the chemist's"pierced his heart from fear' and that the idiot, instead of punishing the cabman, 'clasped his hands and wept, and much begged.' Ah, the fool! And you know she fancies it's very touching and does not suspect how stupid she is! To my thinking that drunken commissariat clerk is a great deal cleverer, anyway one can see that he has addled his brains with drink, but you know, these foreigners are always so well behaved and serious.... Look how she sits glaring! She is angry, ha-ha! (Cough-cough-cough.)"

Regaining her good-humour, Katerina Ivanovna began at once telling Raskolnikov that when she had obtained her pension, she intended to open a school for the daughters of gentlemen in her native town T —— . This was the first time she had spoken to him of the project, and she launched out into the most alluring details. It suddenly appeared that Katerina Ivanovna had in her hands the very certificate of honour of which Marmeladov had spoken to Raskolnikov in the tavern, when he told him that Katerina Ivanovna, his wife, had danced the shawl dance before the governor and other great personages on leaving school. This certificate of honour was obviously intended now to prove Katerina Ivanovna's right to open a boarding-school; but she had armed herself with it chiefly with the object of overwhelming "those two stuck-up draggletails" if they came to the dinner, and proving incontestably that Katerina Ivanovna was of the most noble, "she might even say aristocratic family, a colonel's daughter and was far superior to certain adventuresses who have been so much to the fore of late." The certificate of honour immediately passed into the hands of the

drunken guests, and Katerina Ivanovna did not try to retain it, for it actually contained the statement *en toutes lettres*, that her father was of the rank of a major, and also a companion of an order, so that she really was almost the daughter of a colonel.

Warming up, Katerina Ivanovna proceeded to enlarge on the peaceful and happy life they would lead in T —— , on the gymnasium teachers whom she would engage to give lessons in her boarding-school, one a most respectable old Frenchman, one Mangot, who had taught Katerina Ivanovna herself in old days and was still living in T —— , and would no doubt teach in her school on moderate terms. Next she spoke of Sonia who would go with her to T —— and help her in all her plans. At this someone at the further end of the table gave a sudden guffaw.

Though Katerina Ivanovna tried to appear to be disdainfully unaware of it, she raised her voice and began at once speaking with conviction of Sonia's undoubted ability to assist her, of "her gentleness, patience, devotion, generosity and good education," tapping Sonia on the cheek and kissing her warmly twice. Sonia flushed crimson, and Katerina Ivanovna suddenly burst into tears, immediately observing that she was "nervous and silly, that she was too much upset, that it was time to finish, and as the dinner was over, it was time to hand round the tea."

At that moment, Amalia Ivanovna, deeply aggrieved at taking no part in the conversation, and not being listened to, made one last effort, and with secret misgivings ventured on an exceedingly deep and weighty observation, that "in the future boarding-school she would have to pay particular attention to *die Wäsche*, and that there certainly must be a good *dame* to look after the linen, and secondly that the young ladies must not novels at night read."

Katerina Ivanovna, who certainly was upset and very tired, as well as heartily sick of the dinner, at once cut short Amalia Ivanovna, saying "she knew nothing about it and was talking nonsense, that it was the business of the laundry maid, and not of the directress of a high-class boarding-school to look after *die Wäsche*, and as for novel-reading, that was simply rudeness, and she begged her to be silent." Amalia Ivanovna fired up and getting angry observed that she only "meant her good," and that "she had meant her very good," and that "it was long since she had paid her *gold* for the lodgings."

Katerina Ivanovna at once “set her down,” saying that it was a lie to say she wished her good, because only yesterday when her dead husband was lying on the table, she had worried her about the lodgings. To this Amalia Ivanovna very appropriately observed that she had invited those ladies, but “those ladies had not come, because those ladies *are* ladies and cannot come to a lady who is not a lady.” Katerina Ivanovna at once pointed out to her, that as she was a slut she could not judge what made one really a lady. Amalia Ivanovna at once declared that her “*Vater aus Berlin* was a very, very important man, and both hands in pockets went, and always used to say: ‘Poof! poof!’” and she leapt up from the table to represent her father, sticking her hands in her pockets, puffing her cheeks, and uttering vague sounds resembling “poof! poof!” amid loud laughter from all the lodgers, who purposely encouraged Amalia Ivanovna, hoping for a fight.

But this was too much for Katerina Ivanovna, and she at once declared, so that all could hear, that Amalia Ivanovna probably never had a father, but was simply a drunken Petersburg Finn, and had certainly once been a cook and probably something worse. Amalia Ivanovna turned as red as a lobster and squealed that perhaps Katerina Ivanovna never had a father, “but she had a *Vater aus Berlin* and that he wore a long coat and always said poof-poof-poof!”

Katerina Ivanovna observed contemptuously that all knew what her family was and that on that very certificate of honour it was stated in print that her father was a colonel, while Amalia Ivanovna’s father — if she really had one — was probably some Finnish milkman, but that probably she never had a father at all, since it was still uncertain whether her name was Amalia Ivanovna or Amalia Ludwigovna.

At this Amalia Ivanovna, lashed to fury, struck the table with her fist, and shrieked that she was Amalia Ivanovna, and not Ludwigovna, “that her *Vater* was named Johann and that he was a burgomeister, and that Katerina Ivanovna’s *Vater* was quite never a burgomeister.” Katerina Ivanovna rose from her chair, and with a stern and apparently calm voice (though she was pale and her chest was heaving) observed that “if she dared for one moment to set her contemptible wretch of a father on a level with her papa, she, Katerina Ivanovna, would tear her cap off her head and trample it under foot.” Amalia Ivanovna ran about the room, shouting at the top of her voice, that she was mistress of the house and that Katerina Ivanovna should leave the lodgings that minute; then she rushed for some reason to collect the

silver spoons from the table. There was a great outcry and uproar, the children began crying. Sonia ran to restrain Katerina Ivanovna, but when Amalia Ivanovna shouted something about “the yellow ticket,” Katerina Ivanovna pushed Sonia away, and rushed at the landlady to carry out her threat.

At that minute the door opened, and Pyotr Petrovitch Luzhin appeared on the threshold. He stood scanning the party with severe and vigilant eyes. Katerina Ivanovna rushed to him.

CHAPTER III

“Pyotr Petrovitch,” she cried, “protect me... you at least! Make this foolish woman understand that she can’t behave like this to a lady in misfortune... that there is a law for such things.... I’ll go to the governor-general himself.... She shall answer for it.... Remembering my father’s hospitality protect these orphans.”

“Allow me, madam.... Allow me.” Pyotr Petrovitch waved her off. “Your papa as you are well aware I had not the honour of knowing” (someone laughed aloud) “and I do not intend to take part in your everlasting squabbles with Amalia Ivanovna.... I have come here to speak of my own affairs... and I want to have a word with your stepdaughter, Sofya... Ivanovna, I think it is? Allow me to pass.”

Pyotr Petrovitch, edging by her, went to the opposite corner where Sonia was.

Katerina Ivanovna remained standing where she was, as though thunderstruck. She could not understand how Pyotr Petrovitch could deny having enjoyed her father’s hospitality. Though she had invented it herself, she believed in it firmly by this time. She was struck too by the businesslike, dry and even contemptuous menacing tone of Pyotr Petrovitch. All the clamour gradually died away at his entrance. Not only was this “serious business man” strikingly incongruous with the rest of the party, but it was evident, too, that he had come upon some matter of consequence, that some exceptional cause must have brought him and that therefore something was going to happen. Raskolnikov, standing beside Sonia, moved aside to let him pass; Pyotr Petrovitch did not seem to notice him. A minute later Lebeziatnikov, too, appeared in the doorway; he did not come in, but stood still, listening with marked interest, almost wonder, and seemed for a time perplexed.

“Excuse me for possibly interrupting you, but it’s a matter of some importance,” Pyotr Petrovitch observed, addressing the company generally. “I am glad indeed to find other persons present. Amalia Ivanovna, I humbly beg you as mistress of the house to pay careful attention to what I have to say to Sofya Ivanovna. Sofya Ivanovna,” he went on, addressing Sonia, who was very much surprised and already alarmed, “immediately after your visit I found that a hundred-rouble note was missing from my table, in the

room of my friend Mr. Lebeziatnikov. If in any way whatever you know and will tell us where it is now, I assure you on my word of honour and call all present to witness that the matter shall end there. In the opposite case I shall be compelled to have recourse to very serious measures and then... you must blame yourself.”

Complete silence reigned in the room. Even the crying children were still. Sonia stood deadly pale, staring at Luzhin and unable to say a word. She seemed not to understand. Some seconds passed.

“Well, how is it to be then?” asked Luzhin, looking intently at her.

“I don’t know.... I know nothing about it,” Sonia articulated faintly at last.

“No, you know nothing?” Luzhin repeated and again he paused for some seconds. “Think a moment, mademoiselle,” he began severely, but still, as it were, admonishing her. “Reflect, I am prepared to give you time for consideration. Kindly observe this: if I were not so entirely convinced I should not, you may be sure, with my experience venture to accuse you so directly. Seeing that for such direct accusation before witnesses, if false or even mistaken, I should myself in a certain sense be made responsible, I am aware of that. This morning I changed for my own purposes several five-per-cent securities for the sum of approximately three thousand roubles. The account is noted down in my pocket-book. On my return home I proceeded to count the money — as Mr. Lebeziatnikov will bear witness — and after counting two thousand three hundred roubles I put the rest in my pocket-book in my coat pocket. About five hundred roubles remained on the table and among them three notes of a hundred roubles each. At that moment you entered (at my invitation) — and all the time you were present you were exceedingly embarrassed; so that three times you jumped up in the middle of the conversation and tried to make off. Mr. Lebeziatnikov can bear witness to this. You yourself, mademoiselle, probably will not refuse to confirm my statement that I invited you through Mr. Lebeziatnikov, solely in order to discuss with you the hopeless and destitute position of your relative, Katerina Ivanovna (whose dinner I was unable to attend), and the advisability of getting up something of the nature of a subscription, lottery or the like, for her benefit. You thanked me and even shed tears. I describe all this as it took place, primarily to recall it to your mind and secondly to show you that not the slightest detail has escaped my recollection. Then I took a ten-rouble note from the table and handed it to you by way of first

instalment on my part for the benefit of your relative. Mr. Lebeziatnikov saw all this. Then I accompanied you to the door — you being still in the same state of embarrassment — after which, being left alone with Mr. Lebeziatnikov I talked to him for ten minutes — then Mr. Lebeziatnikov went out and I returned to the table with the money lying on it, intending to count it and to put it aside, as I proposed doing before. To my surprise one hundred-rouble note had disappeared. Kindly consider the position. Mr. Lebeziatnikov I cannot suspect. I am ashamed to allude to such a supposition. I cannot have made a mistake in my reckoning, for the minute before your entrance I had finished my accounts and found the total correct. You will admit that recollecting your embarrassment, your eagerness to get away and the fact that you kept your hands for some time on the table, and taking into consideration your social position and the habits associated with it, I was, so to say, with horror and positively against my will, *compelled* to entertain a suspicion — a cruel, but justifiable suspicion! I will add further and repeat that in spite of my positive conviction, I realise that I run a certain risk in making this accusation, but as you see, I could not let it pass. I have taken action and I will tell you why: solely, madam, solely, owing to your black ingratitude! Why! I invite you for the benefit of your destitute relative, I present you with my donation of ten roubles and you, on the spot, repay me for all that with such an action. It is too bad! You need a lesson. Reflect! Moreover, like a true friend I beg you — and you could have no better friend at this moment — think what you are doing, otherwise I shall be immovable! Well, what do you say?”

“I have taken nothing,” Sonia whispered in terror, “you gave me ten roubles, here it is, take it.”

Sonia pulled her handkerchief out of her pocket, untied a corner of it, took out the ten-rouble note and gave it to Luzhin.

“And the hundred roubles you do not confess to taking?” he insisted reproachfully, not taking the note.

Sonia looked about her. All were looking at her with such awful, stern, ironical, hostile eyes. She looked at Raskolnikov... he stood against the wall, with his arms crossed, looking at her with glowing eyes.

“Good God!” broke from Sonia.

“Amalia Ivanovna, we shall have to send word to the police and therefore I humbly beg you meanwhile to send for the house porter,” Luzhin said softly and even kindly.

“*Gott der Barmherzige*! I knew she was the thief,” cried Amalia Ivanovna, throwing up her hands.

“You knew it?” Luzhin caught her up, “then I suppose you had some reason before this for thinking so. I beg you, worthy Amalia Ivanovna, to remember your words which have been uttered before witnesses.”

There was a buzz of loud conversation on all sides. All were in movement.

“What!” cried Katerina Ivanovna, suddenly realising the position, and she rushed at Luzhin. “What! You accuse her of stealing? Sonia? Ah, the wretches, the wretches!”

And running to Sonia she flung her wasted arms round her and held her as in a vise.

“Sonia! how dared you take ten roubles from him? Foolish girl! Give it to me! Give me the ten roubles at once — here!”

And snatching the note from Sonia, Katerina Ivanovna crumpled it up and flung it straight into Luzhin’s face. It hit him in the eye and fell on the ground. Amalia Ivanovna hastened to pick it up. Pyotr Petrovitch lost his temper.

“Hold that mad woman!” he shouted.

At that moment several other persons, besides Lebeziatnikov, appeared in the doorway, among them the two ladies.

“What! Mad? Am I mad? Idiot!” shrieked Katerina Ivanovna. “You are an idiot yourself, pettifogging lawyer, base man! Sonia, Sonia take his money! Sonia a thief! Why, she’d give away her last penny!” and Katerina Ivanovna broke into hysterical laughter. “Did you ever see such an idiot?” she turned from side to side. “And you too?” she suddenly saw the landlady, “and you too, sausage eater, you declare that she is a thief, you trashy Prussian hen’s leg in a crinoline! She hasn’t been out of this room: she came straight from you, you wretch, and sat down beside me, everyone saw her. She sat here, by Rodion Romanovitch. Search her! Since she’s not left the room, the money would have to be on her! Search her, search her! But if you don’t find it, then excuse me, my dear fellow, you’ll answer for it! I’ll go to our Sovereign, to our Sovereign, to our gracious Tsar himself, and throw myself at his feet, to-day, this minute! I am alone in the world! They would let me in! Do you think they wouldn’t? You’re wrong, I will get in! I will get in! You reckoned on her meekness! You relied upon that! But I am

not so submissive, let me tell you! You've gone too far yourself. Search her, search her!"

And Katerina Ivanovna in a frenzy shook Luzhin and dragged him towards Sonia.

"I am ready, I'll be responsible... but calm yourself, madam, calm yourself. I see that you are not so submissive!... Well, well, but as to that..." Luzhin muttered, "that ought to be before the police... though indeed there are witnesses enough as it is.... I am ready.... But in any case it's difficult for a man... on account of her sex.... But with the help of Amalia Ivanovna... though, of course, it's not the way to do things.... How is it to be done?"

"As you will! Let anyone who likes search her!" cried Katerina Ivanovna. "Sonia, turn out your pockets! See! Look, monster, the pocket is empty, here was her handkerchief! Here is the other pocket, look! D'you see, d'you see?"

And Katerina Ivanovna turned — or rather snatched — both pockets inside out. But from the right pocket a piece of paper flew out and describing a parabola in the air fell at Luzhin's feet. Everyone saw it, several cried out. Pyotr Petrovitch stooped down, picked up the paper in two fingers, lifted it where all could see it and opened it. It was a hundred-rouble note folded in eight. Pyotr Petrovitch held up the note showing it to everyone.

"Thief! Out of my lodging. Police, police!" yelled Amalia Ivanovna. "They must to Siberia be sent! Away!"

Exclamations arose on all sides. Raskolnikov was silent, keeping his eyes fixed on Sonia, except for an occasional rapid glance at Luzhin. Sonia stood still, as though unconscious. She was hardly able to feel surprise. Suddenly the colour rushed to her cheeks; she uttered a cry and hid her face in her hands.

"No, it wasn't I! I didn't take it! I know nothing about it," she cried with a heartrending wail, and she ran to Katerina Ivanovna, who clasped her tightly in her arms, as though she would shelter her from all the world.

"Sonia! Sonia! I don't believe it! You see, I don't believe it!" she cried in the face of the obvious fact, swaying her to and fro in her arms like a baby, kissing her face continually, then snatching at her hands and kissing them, too, "you took it! How stupid these people are! Oh dear! You are fools, fools," she cried, addressing the whole room, "you don't know, you don't know what a heart she has, what a girl she is! She take it, she? She'd sell

her last rag, she'd go barefoot to help you if you needed it, that's what she is! She has the yellow passport because my children were starving, she sold herself for us! Ah, husband, husband! Do you see? Do you see? What a memorial dinner for you! Merciful heavens! Defend her, why are you all standing still? Rodion Romanovitch, why don't you stand up for her? Do you believe it, too? You are not worth her little finger, all of you together! Good God! Defend her now, at least!"

The wail of the poor, consumptive, helpless woman seemed to produce a great effect on her audience. The agonised, wasted, consumptive face, the parched blood-stained lips, the hoarse voice, the tears unrestrained as a child's, the trustful, childish and yet despairing prayer for help were so piteous that everyone seemed to feel for her. Pyotr Petrovitch at any rate was at once moved to *compassion*.

"Madam, madam, this incident does not reflect upon you!" he cried impressively, "no one would take upon himself to accuse you of being an instigator or even an accomplice in it, especially as you have proved her guilt by turning out her pockets, showing that you had no previous idea of it. I am most ready, most ready to show compassion, if poverty, so to speak, drove Sofya Semyonovna to it, but why did you refuse to confess, mademoiselle? Were you afraid of the disgrace? The first step? You lost your head, perhaps? One can quite understand it.... But how could you have lowered yourself to such an action? Gentlemen," he addressed the whole company, "gentlemen! Compassionate and, so to say, commiserating these people, I am ready to overlook it even now in spite of the personal insult lavished upon me! And may this disgrace be a lesson to you for the future," he said, addressing Sonia, "and I will carry the matter no further. Enough!"

Pyotr Petrovitch stole a glance at Raskolnikov. Their eyes met, and the fire in Raskolnikov's seemed ready to reduce him to ashes. Meanwhile Katerina Ivanovna apparently heard nothing. She was kissing and hugging Sonia like a madwoman. The children, too, were embracing Sonia on all sides, and Polenka — though she did not fully understand what was wrong — was drowned in tears and shaking with sobs, as she hid her pretty little face, swollen with weeping, on Sonia's shoulder.

"How vile!" a loud voice cried suddenly in the doorway.

Pyotr Petrovitch looked round quickly.

"What vileness!" Lebeziatnikov repeated, staring him straight in the face.

Pyotr Petrovitch gave a positive start — all noticed it and recalled it afterwards. Lebeziatnikov strode into the room.

“And you dared to call me as witness?” he said, going up to Pyotr Petrovitch.

“What do you mean? What are you talking about?” muttered Luzhin.

“I mean that you... are a slanderer, that’s what my words mean!” Lebeziatnikov said hotly, looking sternly at him with his short-sighted eyes.

He was extremely angry. Raskolnikov gazed intently at him, as though seizing and weighing each word. Again there was a silence. Pyotr Petrovitch indeed seemed almost dumbfounded for the first moment.

“If you mean that for me,..,” he began, stammering. “But what’s the matter with you? Are you out of your mind?”

“I’m in my mind, but you are a scoundrel! Ah, how vile! I have heard everything. I kept waiting on purpose to understand it, for I must own even now it is not quite logical.... What you have done it all for I can’t understand.”

“Why, what have I done then? Give over talking in your nonsensical riddles! Or maybe you are drunk!”

“You may be a drunkard, perhaps, vile man, but I am not! I never touch vodka, for it’s against my convictions. Would you believe it, he, he himself, with his own hands gave Sofya Semyonovna that hundred-rouble note — I saw it, I was a witness, I’ll take my oath! He did it, he!” repeated Lebeziatnikov, addressing all.

“Are you crazy, milksop?” squealed Luzhin. “She is herself before you — she herself here declared just now before everyone that I gave her only ten roubles. How could I have given it to her?”

“I saw it, I saw it,” Lebeziatnikov repeated, “and though it is against my principles, I am ready this very minute to take any oath you like before the court, for I saw how you slipped it in her pocket. Only like a fool I thought you did it out of kindness! When you were saying good-bye to her at the door, while you held her hand in one hand, with the other, the left, you slipped the note into her pocket. I saw it, I saw it!”

Luzhin turned pale.

“What lies!” he cried impudently, “why, how could you, standing by the window, see the note? You fancied it with your short-sighted eyes. You are raving!”

“No, I didn’t fancy it. And though I was standing some way off, I saw it all. And though it certainly would be hard to distinguish a note from the window — that’s true — I knew for certain that it was a hundred-rouble note, because, when you were going to give Sofya Semyonovna ten roubles, you took up from the table a hundred-rouble note (I saw it because I was standing near then, and an idea struck me at once, so that I did not forget you had it in your hand). You folded it and kept it in your hand all the time. I didn’t think of it again until, when you were getting up, you changed it from your right hand to your left and nearly dropped it! I noticed it because the same idea struck me again, that you meant to do her a kindness without my seeing. You can fancy how I watched you and I saw how you succeeded in slipping it into her pocket. I saw it, I saw it, I’ll take my oath.”

Lebeziatnikov was almost breathless. Exclamations arose on all hands chiefly expressive of wonder, but some were menacing in tone. They all crowded round Pyotr Petrovitch. Katerina Ivanovna flew to Lebeziatnikov.

“I was mistaken in you! Protect her! You are the only one to take her part! She is an orphan. God has sent you!”

Katerina Ivanovna, hardly knowing what she was doing, sank on her knees before him.

“A pack of nonsense!” yelled Luzhin, roused to fury, “it’s all nonsense you’ve been talking! ‘An idea struck you, you didn’t think, you noticed’ — what does it amount to? So I gave it to her on the sly on purpose? What for? With what object? What have I to do with this...?”

“What for? That’s what I can’t understand, but that what I am telling you is the fact, that’s certain! So far from my being mistaken, you infamous criminal man, I remember how, on account of it, a question occurred to me at once, just when I was thanking you and pressing your hand. What made you put it secretly in her pocket? Why you did it secretly, I mean? Could it be simply to conceal it from me, knowing that my convictions are opposed to yours and that I do not approve of private benevolence, which effects no radical cure? Well, I decided that you really were ashamed of giving such a large sum before me. Perhaps, too, I thought, he wants to give her a surprise, when she finds a whole hundred-rouble note in her pocket. (For I know, some benevolent people are very fond of decking out their charitable actions in that way.) Then the idea struck me, too, that you wanted to test her, to see whether, when she found it, she would come to thank you. Then, too, that you wanted to avoid thanks and that, as the saying is, your right

hand should not know... something of that sort, in fact. I thought of so many possibilities that I put off considering it, but still thought it indelicate to show you that I knew your secret. But another idea struck me again that Sofya Semyonovna might easily lose the money before she noticed it, that was why I decided to come in here to call her out of the room and to tell her that you put a hundred roubles in her pocket. But on my way I went first to Madame Kobilatnikov's to take them the 'General Treatise on the Positive Method' and especially to recommend Piderit's article (and also Wagner's); then I come on here and what a state of things I find! Now could I, could I, have all these ideas and reflections if I had not seen you put the hundred-rouble note in her pocket?"

When Lebeziatnikov finished his long-winded harangue with the logical deduction at the end, he was quite tired, and the perspiration streamed from his face. He could not, alas, even express himself correctly in Russian, though he knew no other language, so that he was quite exhausted, almost emaciated after this heroic exploit. But his speech produced a powerful effect. He had spoken with such vehemence, with such conviction that everyone obviously believed him. Pyotr Petrovitch felt that things were going badly with him.

"What is it to do with me if silly ideas did occur to you?" he shouted, "that's no evidence. You may have dreamt it, that's all! And I tell you, you are lying, sir. You are lying and slandering from some spite against me, simply from pique, because I did not agree with your free-thinking, godless, social propositions!"

But this retort did not benefit Pyotr Petrovitch. Murmurs of disapproval were heard on all sides.

"Ah, that's your line now, is it!" cried Lebeziatnikov, "that's nonsense! Call the police and I'll take my oath! There's only one thing I can't understand: what made him risk such a contemptible action. Oh, pitiful, despicable man!"

"I can explain why he risked such an action, and if necessary, I, too, will swear to it," Raskolnikov said at last in a firm voice, and he stepped forward.

He appeared to be firm and composed. Everyone felt clearly, from the very look of him that he really knew about it and that the mystery would be solved.

“Now I can explain it all to myself,” said Raskolnikov, addressing Lebeziatnikov. “From the very beginning of the business, I suspected that there was some scoundrelly intrigue at the bottom of it. I began to suspect it from some special circumstances known to me only, which I will explain at once to everyone: they account for everything. Your valuable evidence has finally made everything clear to me. I beg all, all to listen. This gentleman (he pointed to Luzhin) was recently engaged to be married to a young lady — my sister, Avdotya Romanovna Raskolnikov. But coming to Petersburg he quarrelled with me, the day before yesterday, at our first meeting and I drove him out of my room — I have two witnesses to prove it. He is a very spiteful man.... The day before yesterday I did not know that he was staying here, in your room, and that consequently on the very day we quarrelled — the day before yesterday — he saw me give Katerina Ivanovna some money for the funeral, as a friend of the late Mr. Marmeladov. He at once wrote a note to my mother and informed her that I had given away all my money, not to Katerina Ivanovna but to Sofya Semyonovna, and referred in a most contemptible way to the... character of Sofya Semyonovna, that is, hinted at the character of my attitude to Sofya Semyonovna. All this you understand was with the object of dividing me from my mother and sister, by insinuating that I was squandering on unworthy objects the money which they had sent me and which was all they had. Yesterday evening, before my mother and sister and in his presence, I declared that I had given the money to Katerina Ivanovna for the funeral and not to Sofya Semyonovna and that I had no acquaintance with Sofya Semyonovna and had never seen her before, indeed. At the same time I added that he, Pyotr Petrovitch Luzhin, with all his virtues, was not worth Sofya Semyonovna’s little finger, though he spoke so ill of her. To his question — would I let Sofya Semyonovna sit down beside my sister, I answered that I had already done so that day. Irritated that my mother and sister were unwilling to quarrel with me at his insinuations, he gradually began being unpardonably rude to them. A final rupture took place and he was turned out of the house. All this happened yesterday evening. Now I beg your special attention: consider: if he had now succeeded in proving that Sofya Semyonovna was a thief, he would have shown to my mother and sister that he was almost right in his suspicions, that he had reason to be angry at my putting my sister on a level with Sofya Semyonovna, that, in attacking me, he was protecting and preserving the honour of my sister, his betrothed. In fact he might even,

through all this, have been able to estrange me from my family, and no doubt he hoped to be restored to favour with them; to say nothing of revenging himself on me personally, for he has grounds for supposing that the honour and happiness of Sofya Semyonovna are very precious to me. That was what he was working for! That's how I understand it. That's the whole reason for it and there can be no other!"

It was like this, or somewhat like this, that Raskolnikov wound up his speech which was followed very attentively, though often interrupted by exclamations from his audience. But in spite of interruptions he spoke clearly, calmly, exactly, firmly. His decisive voice, his tone of conviction and his stern face made a great impression on everyone.

"Yes, yes, that's it," Lebeziatnikov assented gleefully, "that must be it, for he asked me, as soon as Sofya Semyonovna came into our room, whether you were here, whether I had seen you among Katerina Ivanovna's guests. He called me aside to the window and asked me in secret. It was essential for him that you should be here! That's it, that's it!"

Luzhin smiled contemptuously and did not speak. But he was very pale. He seemed to be deliberating on some means of escape. Perhaps he would have been glad to give up everything and get away, but at the moment this was scarcely possible. It would have implied admitting the truth of the accusations brought against him. Moreover, the company, which had already been excited by drink, was now too much stirred to allow it. The commissariat clerk, though indeed he had not grasped the whole position, was shouting louder than anyone and was making some suggestions very unpleasant to Luzhin. But not all those present were drunk; lodgers came in from all the rooms. The three Poles were tremendously excited and were continually shouting at him: "The *pan* is a *lajdak*!" and muttering threats in Polish. Sonia had been listening with strained attention, though she too seemed unable to grasp it all; she seemed as though she had just returned to consciousness. She did not take her eyes off Raskolnikov, feeling that all her safety lay in him. Katerina Ivanovna breathed hard and painfully and seemed fearfully exhausted. Amalia Ivanovna stood looking more stupid than anyone, with her mouth wide open, unable to make out what had happened. She only saw that Pyotr Petrovitch had somehow come to grief.

Raskolnikov was attempting to speak again, but they did not let him. Everyone was crowding round Luzhin with threats and shouts of abuse. But

Pyotr Petrovitch was not intimidated. Seeing that his accusation of Sonia had completely failed, he had recourse to insolence:

“Allow me, gentlemen, allow me! Don’t squeeze, let me pass!” he said, making his way through the crowd. “And no threats, if you please! I assure you it will be useless, you will gain nothing by it. On the contrary, you’ll have to answer, gentlemen, for violently obstructing the course of justice. The thief has been more than unmasked, and I shall prosecute. Our judges are not so blind and... not so drunk, and will not believe the testimony of two notorious infidels, agitators, and atheists, who accuse me from motives of personal revenge which they are foolish enough to admit.... Yes, allow me to pass!”

“Don’t let me find a trace of you in my room! Kindly leave at once, and everything is at an end between us! When I think of the trouble I’ve been taking, the way I’ve been expounding... all this fortnight!”

“I told you myself to-day that I was going, when you tried to keep me; now I will simply add that you are a fool. I advise you to see a doctor for your brains and your short sight. Let me pass, gentlemen!”

He forced his way through. But the commissariat clerk was unwilling to let him off so easily: he picked up a glass from the table, brandished it in the air and flung it at Pyotr Petrovitch; but the glass flew straight at Amalia Ivanovna. She screamed, and the clerk, overbalancing, fell heavily under the table. Pyotr Petrovitch made his way to his room and half an hour later had left the house. Sonia, timid by nature, had felt before that day that she could be ill-treated more easily than anyone, and that she could be wronged with impunity. Yet till that moment she had fancied that she might escape misfortune by care, gentleness and submissiveness before everyone. Her disappointment was too great. She could, of course, bear with patience and almost without murmur anything, even this. But for the first minute she felt it too bitter. In spite of her triumph and her justification — when her first terror and stupefaction had passed and she could understand it all clearly — the feeling of her helplessness and of the wrong done to her made her heart throb with anguish and she was overcome with hysterical weeping. At last, unable to bear any more, she rushed out of the room and ran home, almost immediately after Luzhin’s departure. When amidst loud laughter the glass flew at Amalia Ivanovna, it was more than the landlady could endure. With a shriek she rushed like a fury at Katerina Ivanovna, considering her to blame for everything.

“Out of my lodgings! At once! Quick march!”

And with these words she began snatching up everything she could lay her hands on that belonged to Katerina Ivanovna, and throwing it on the floor. Katerina Ivanovna, pale, almost fainting, and gasping for breath, jumped up from the bed where she had sunk in exhaustion and darted at Amalia Ivanovna. But the battle was too unequal: the landlady waved her away like a feather.

“What! As though that godless calumny was not enough — this vile creature attacks me! What! On the day of my husband’s funeral I am turned out of my lodging! After eating my bread and salt she turns me into the street, with my orphans! Where am I to go?” wailed the poor woman, sobbing and gasping. “Good God!” she cried with flashing eyes, “is there no justice upon earth? Whom should you protect if not us orphans? We shall see! There is law and justice on earth, there is, I will find it! Wait a bit, godless creature! Polenka, stay with the children, I’ll come back. Wait for me, if you have to wait in the street. We will see whether there is justice on earth!”

And throwing over her head that green shawl which Marmeladov had mentioned to Raskolnikov, Katerina Ivanovna squeezed her way through the disorderly and drunken crowd of lodgers who still filled the room, and, wailing and tearful, she ran into the street — with a vague intention of going at once somewhere to find justice. Polenka with the two little ones in her arms crouched, terrified, on the trunk in the corner of the room, where she waited trembling for her mother to come back. Amalia Ivanovna raged about the room, shrieking, lamenting and throwing everything she came across on the floor. The lodgers talked incoherently, some commented to the best of their ability on what had happened, others quarrelled and swore at one another, while others struck up a song....

“Now it’s time for me to go,” thought Raskolnikov. “Well, Sofya Semyonovna, we shall see what you’ll say now!”

And he set off in the direction of Sonia’s lodgings.

CHAPTER IV

Raskolnikov had been a vigorous and active champion of Sonia against Luzhin, although he had such a load of horror and anguish in his own heart. But having gone through so much in the morning, he found a sort of relief in a change of sensations, apart from the strong personal feeling which impelled him to defend Sonia. He was agitated too, especially at some moments, by the thought of his approaching interview with Sonia: he *had* to tell her who had killed Lizaveta. He knew the terrible suffering it would be to him and, as it were, brushed away the thought of it. So when he cried as he left Katerina Ivanovna's, "Well, Sofya Semyonovna, we shall see what you'll say now!" he was still superficially excited, still vigorous and defiant from his triumph over Luzhin. But, strange to say, by the time he reached Sonia's lodging, he felt a sudden impotence and fear. He stood still in hesitation at the door, asking himself the strange question: "Must he tell her who killed Lizaveta?" It was a strange question because he felt at the very time not only that he could not help telling her, but also that he could not put off the telling. He did not yet know why it must be so, he only *felt* it, and the agonising sense of his impotence before the inevitable almost crushed him. To cut short his hesitation and suffering, he quickly opened the door and looked at Sonia from the doorway. She was sitting with her elbows on the table and her face in her hands, but seeing Raskolnikov she got up at once and came to meet him as though she were expecting him.

"What would have become of me but for you?" she said quickly, meeting him in the middle of the room.

Evidently she was in haste to say this to him. It was what she had been waiting for.

Raskolnikov went to the table and sat down on the chair from which she had only just risen. She stood facing him, two steps away, just as she had done the day before.

"Well, Sonia?" he said, and felt that his voice was trembling, "it was all due to 'your social position and the habits associated with it.' Did you understand that just now?"

Her face showed her distress.

"Only don't talk to me as you did yesterday," she interrupted him. "Please don't begin it. There is misery enough without that."

She made haste to smile, afraid that he might not like the reproach.

“I was silly to come away from there. What is happening there now? I wanted to go back directly, but I kept thinking that... you would come.”

He told her that Amalia Ivanovna was turning them out of their lodging and that Katerina Ivanovna had run off somewhere “to seek justice.”

“My God!” cried Sonia, “let’s go at once....”

And she snatched up her cape.

“It’s everlastingly the same thing!” said Raskolnikov, irritably. “You’ve no thought except for them! Stay a little with me.”

“But... Katerina Ivanovna?”

“You won’t lose Katerina Ivanovna, you may be sure, she’ll come to you herself since she has run out,” he added peevishly. “If she doesn’t find you here, you’ll be blamed for it....”

Sonia sat down in painful suspense. Raskolnikov was silent, gazing at the floor and deliberating.

“This time Luzhin did not want to prosecute you,” he began, not looking at Sonia, “but if he had wanted to, if it had suited his plans, he would have sent you to prison if it had not been for Lebeziatnikov and me. Ah?”

“Yes,” she assented in a faint voice. “Yes,” she repeated, preoccupied and distressed.

“But I might easily not have been there. And it was quite an accident Lebeziatnikov’s turning up.”

Sonia was silent.

“And if you’d gone to prison, what then? Do you remember what I said yesterday?”

Again she did not answer. He waited.

“I thought you would cry out again ‘don’t speak of it, leave off.’” Raskolnikov gave a laugh, but rather a forced one. “What, silence again?” he asked a minute later. “We must talk about something, you know. It would be interesting for me to know how you would decide a certain ‘problem’ as Lebeziatnikov would say.” (He was beginning to lose the thread.) “No, really, I am serious. Imagine, Sonia, that you had known all Luzhin’s intentions beforehand. Known, that is, for a fact, that they would be the ruin of Katerina Ivanovna and the children and yourself thrown in — since you don’t count yourself for anything — Polenka too... for she’ll go the same way. Well, if suddenly it all depended on your decision whether he or they should go on living, that is whether Luzhin should go on living and doing

wicked things, or Katerina Ivanovna should die? How would you decide which of them was to die? I ask you?”

Sonia looked uneasily at him. There was something peculiar in this hesitating question, which seemed approaching something in a roundabout way.

“I felt that you were going to ask some question like that,” she said, looking inquisitively at him.

“I dare say you did. But how is it to be answered?”

“Why do you ask about what could not happen?” said Sonia reluctantly.

“Then it would be better for Luzhin to go on living and doing wicked things? You haven’t dared to decide even that!”

“But I can’t know the Divine Providence.... And why do you ask what can’t be answered? What’s the use of such foolish questions? How could it happen that it should depend on my decision — who has made me a judge to decide who is to live and who is not to live?”

“Oh, if the Divine Providence is to be mixed up in it, there is no doing anything,” Raskolnikov grumbled morosely.

“You’d better say straight out what you want!” Sonia cried in distress. “You are leading up to something again.... Can you have come simply to torture me?”

She could not control herself and began crying bitterly. He looked at her in gloomy misery. Five minutes passed.

“Of course you’re right, Sonia,” he said softly at last. He was suddenly changed. His tone of assumed arrogance and helpless defiance was gone. Even his voice was suddenly weak. “I told you yesterday that I was not coming to ask forgiveness and almost the first thing I’ve said is to ask forgiveness.... I said that about Luzhin and Providence for my own sake. I was asking forgiveness, Sonia....”

He tried to smile, but there was something helpless and incomplete in his pale smile. He bowed his head and hid his face in his hands.

And suddenly a strange, surprising sensation of a sort of bitter hatred for Sonia passed through his heart. As it were wondering and frightened of this sensation, he raised his head and looked intently at her; but he met her uneasy and painfully anxious eyes fixed on him; there was love in them; his hatred vanished like a phantom. It was not the real feeling; he had taken the one feeling for the other. It only meant that *that* minute had come.

He hid his face in his hands again and bowed his head. Suddenly he turned pale, got up from his chair, looked at Sonia, and without uttering a word sat down mechanically on her bed.

His sensations that moment were terribly like the moment when he had stood over the old woman with the axe in his hand and felt that “he must not lose another minute.”

“What’s the matter?” asked Sonia, dreadfully frightened.

He could not utter a word. This was not at all, not at all the way he had intended to “tell” and he did not understand what was happening to him now. She went up to him, softly, sat down on the bed beside him and waited, not taking her eyes off him. Her heart throbbed and sank. It was unendurable; he turned his deadly pale face to her. His lips worked, helplessly struggling to utter something. A pang of terror passed through Sonia’s heart.

“What’s the matter?” she repeated, drawing a little away from him.

“Nothing, Sonia, don’t be frightened.... It’s nonsense. It really is nonsense, if you think of it,” he muttered, like a man in delirium. “Why have I come to torture you?” he added suddenly, looking at her. “Why, really? I keep asking myself that question, Sonia....”

He had perhaps been asking himself that question a quarter of an hour before, but now he spoke helplessly, hardly knowing what he said and feeling a continual tremor all over.

“Oh, how you are suffering!” she muttered in distress, looking intently at him.

“It’s all nonsense.... Listen, Sonia.” He suddenly smiled, a pale helpless smile for two seconds. “You remember what I meant to tell you yesterday?”

Sonia waited uneasily.

“I said as I went away that perhaps I was saying good-bye for ever, but that if I came to-day I would tell you who... who killed Lizaveta.”

She began trembling all over.

“Well, here I’ve come to tell you.”

“Then you really meant it yesterday?” she whispered with difficulty. “How do you know?” she asked quickly, as though suddenly regaining her reason.

Sonia’s face grew paler and paler, and she breathed painfully.

“I know.”

She paused a minute.

“Have they found him?” she asked timidly.

“No.”

“Then how do you know about *it*?” she asked again, hardly audibly and again after a minute’s pause.

He turned to her and looked very intently at her.

“Guess,” he said, with the same distorted helpless smile.

A shudder passed over her.

“But you... why do you frighten me like this?” she said, smiling like a child.

“I must be a great friend of *his*... since I know,” Raskolnikov went on, still gazing into her face, as though he could not turn his eyes away. “He... did not mean to kill that Lizaveta... he... killed her accidentally.... He meant to kill the old woman when she was alone and he went there... and then Lizaveta came in... he killed her too.”

Another awful moment passed. Both still gazed at one another.

“You can’t guess, then?” he asked suddenly, feeling as though he were flinging himself down from a steeple.

“N-no..,” whispered Sonia.

“Take a good look.”

As soon as he had said this again, the same familiar sensation froze his heart. He looked at her and all at once seemed to see in her face the face of Lizaveta. He remembered clearly the expression in Lizaveta’s face, when he approached her with the axe and she stepped back to the wall, putting out her hand, with childish terror in her face, looking as little children do when they begin to be frightened of something, looking intently and uneasily at what frightens them, shrinking back and holding out their little hands on the point of crying. Almost the same thing happened now to Sonia. With the same helplessness and the same terror, she looked at him for a while and, suddenly putting out her left hand, pressed her fingers faintly against his breast and slowly began to get up from the bed, moving further from him and keeping her eyes fixed even more immovably on him. Her terror infected him. The same fear showed itself on his face. In the same way he stared at her and almost with the same *childish* smile.

“Have you guessed?” he whispered at last.

“Good God!” broke in an awful wail from her bosom.

She sank helplessly on the bed with her face in the pillows, but a moment later she got up, moved quickly to him, seized both his hands and,

gripping them tight in her thin fingers, began looking into his face again with the same intent stare. In this last desperate look she tried to look into him and catch some last hope. But there was no hope; there was no doubt remaining; it was all true! Later on, indeed, when she recalled that moment, she thought it strange and wondered why she had seen at once that there was no doubt. She could not have said, for instance, that she had foreseen something of the sort — and yet now, as soon as he told her, she suddenly fancied that she had really foreseen this very thing.

“Stop, Sonia, enough! don’t torture me,” he begged her miserably.

It was not at all, not at all like this he had thought of telling her, but this is how it happened.

She jumped up, seeming not to know what she was doing, and, wringing her hands, walked into the middle of the room; but quickly went back and sat down again beside him, her shoulder almost touching his. All of a sudden she started as though she had been stabbed, uttered a cry and fell on her knees before him, she did not know why.

“What have you done — what have you done to yourself?” she said in despair, and, jumping up, she flung herself on his neck, threw her arms round him, and held him tightly.

Raskolnikov drew back and looked at her with a mournful smile.

“You are a strange girl, Sonia — you kiss me and hug me when I tell you about that.... You don’t think what you are doing.”

“There is no one — no one in the whole world now so unhappy as you!” she cried in a frenzy, not hearing what he said, and she suddenly broke into violent hysterical weeping.

A feeling long unfamiliar to him flooded his heart and softened it at once. He did not struggle against it. Two tears started into his eyes and hung on his eyelashes.

“Then you won’t leave me, Sonia?” he said, looking at her almost with hope.

“No, no, never, nowhere!” cried Sonia. “I will follow you, I will follow you everywhere. Oh, my God! Oh, how miserable I am!... Why, why didn’t I know you before! Why didn’t you come before? Oh, dear!”

“Here I have come.”

“Yes, now! What’s to be done now?... Together, together!” she repeated as it were unconsciously, and she hugged him again. “I’ll follow you to Siberia!”

He recoiled at this, and the same hostile, almost haughty smile came to his lips.

“Perhaps I don’t want to go to Siberia yet, Sonia,” he said.

Sonia looked at him quickly.

Again after her first passionate, agonising sympathy for the unhappy man the terrible idea of the murder overwhelmed her. In his changed tone she seemed to hear the murderer speaking. She looked at him bewildered. She knew nothing as yet, why, how, with what object it had been. Now all these questions rushed at once into her mind. And again she could not believe it: “He, he is a murderer! Could it be true?”

“What’s the meaning of it? Where am I?” she said in complete bewilderment, as though still unable to recover herself. “How could you, you, a man like you.... How could you bring yourself to it?... What does it mean?”

“Oh, well — to plunder. Leave off, Sonia,” he answered wearily, almost with vexation.

Sonia stood as though struck dumb, but suddenly she cried:

“You were hungry! It was... to help your mother? Yes?”

“No, Sonia, no,” he muttered, turning away and hanging his head. “I was not so hungry.... I certainly did want to help my mother, but... that’s not the real thing either.... Don’t torture me, Sonia.”

Sonia clasped her hands.

“Could it, could it all be true? Good God, what a truth! Who could believe it? And how could you give away your last farthing and yet rob and murder! Ah,” she cried suddenly, “that money you gave Katerina Ivanovna... that money.... Can that money...”

“No, Sonia,” he broke in hurriedly, “that money was not it. Don’t worry yourself! That money my mother sent me and it came when I was ill, the day I gave it to you.... Razumihin saw it... he received it for me.... That money was mine — my own.”

Sonia listened to him in bewilderment and did her utmost to comprehend.

“And *that* money.... I don’t even know really whether there was any money,” he added softly, as though reflecting. “I took a purse off her neck, made of chamois leather... a purse stuffed full of something... but I didn’t look in it; I suppose I hadn’t time.... And the things — chains and trinkets

— I buried under a stone with the purse next morning in a yard off the V —— Prospect. They are all there now....”

Sonia strained every nerve to listen.

“Then why... why, you said you did it to rob, but you took nothing?” she asked quickly, catching at a straw.

“I don’t know.... I haven’t yet decided whether to take that money or not,” he said, musing again; and, seeming to wake up with a start, he gave a brief ironical smile. “Ach, what silly stuff I am talking, eh?”

The thought flashed through Sonia’s mind, wasn’t he mad? But she dismissed it at once. “No, it was something else.” She could make nothing of it, nothing.

“Do you know, Sonia,” he said suddenly with conviction, “let me tell you: if I’d simply killed because I was hungry,” laying stress on every word and looking enigmatically but sincerely at her, “I should be *happy* now. You must believe that! What would it matter to you,” he cried a moment later with a sort of despair, “what would it matter to you if I were to confess that I did wrong? What do you gain by such a stupid triumph over me? Ah, Sonia, was it for that I’ve come to you to-day?”

Again Sonia tried to say something, but did not speak.

“I asked you to go with me yesterday because you are all I have left.”

“Go where?” asked Sonia timidly.

“Not to steal and not to murder, don’t be anxious,” he smiled bitterly. “We are so different.... And you know, Sonia, it’s only now, only this moment that I understand *where* I asked you to go with me yesterday! Yesterday when I said it I did not know where. I asked you for one thing, I came to you for one thing — not to leave me. You won’t leave me, Sonia?”

She squeezed his hand.

“And why, why did I tell her? Why did I let her know?” he cried a minute later in despair, looking with infinite anguish at her. “Here you expect an explanation from me, Sonia; you are sitting and waiting for it, I see that. But what can I tell you? You won’t understand and will only suffer misery... on my account! Well, you are crying and embracing me again. Why do you do it? Because I couldn’t bear my burden and have come to throw it on another: you suffer too, and I shall feel better! And can you love such a mean wretch?”

“But aren’t you suffering, too?” cried Sonia.

Again a wave of the same feeling surged into his heart, and again for an instant softened it.

“Sonia, I have a bad heart, take note of that. It may explain a great deal. I have come because I am bad. There are men who wouldn’t have come. But I am a coward and... a mean wretch. But... never mind! That’s not the point. I must speak now, but I don’t know how to begin.”

He paused and sank into thought.

“Ach, we are so different,” he cried again, “we are not alike. And why, why did I come? I shall never forgive myself that.”

“No, no, it was a good thing you came,” cried Sonia. “It’s better I should know, far better!”

He looked at her with anguish.

“What if it were really that?” he said, as though reaching a conclusion. “Yes, that’s what it was! I wanted to become a Napoleon, that is why I killed her.... Do you understand now?”

“N-no,” Sonia whispered naïvely and timidly. “Only speak, speak, I shall understand, I shall understand *in myself*!” she kept begging him.

“You’ll understand? Very well, we shall see!” He paused and was for some time lost in meditation.

“It was like this: I asked myself one day this question — what if Napoleon, for instance, had happened to be in my place, and if he had not had Toulon nor Egypt nor the passage of Mont Blanc to begin his career with, but instead of all those picturesque and monumental things, there had simply been some ridiculous old hag, a pawnbroker, who had to be murdered too to get money from her trunk (for his career, you understand). Well, would he have brought himself to that if there had been no other means? Wouldn’t he have felt a pang at its being so far from monumental and... and sinful, too? Well, I must tell you that I worried myself fearfully over that ‘question’ so that I was awfully ashamed when I guessed at last (all of a sudden, somehow) that it would not have given him the least pang, that it would not even have struck him that it was not monumental... that he would not have seen that there was anything in it to pause over, and that, if he had had no other way, he would have strangled her in a minute without thinking about it! Well, I too... left off thinking about it... murdered her, following his example. And that’s exactly how it was! Do you think it funny? Yes, Sonia, the funniest thing of all is that perhaps that’s just how it was.”

Sonia did not think it at all funny.

“You had better tell me straight out... without examples,” she begged, still more timidly and scarcely audibly.

He turned to her, looked sadly at her and took her hands.

“You are right again, Sonia. Of course that’s all nonsense, it’s almost all talk! You see, you know of course that my mother has scarcely anything, my sister happened to have a good education and was condemned to drudge as a governess. All their hopes were centered on me. I was a student, but I couldn’t keep myself at the university and was forced for a time to leave it. Even if I had lingered on like that, in ten or twelve years I might (with luck) hope to be some sort of teacher or clerk with a salary of a thousand roubles” (he repeated it as though it were a lesson) “and by that time my mother would be worn out with grief and anxiety and I could not succeed in keeping her in comfort while my sister... well, my sister might well have fared worse! And it’s a hard thing to pass everything by all one’s life, to turn one’s back upon everything, to forget one’s mother and decorously accept the insults inflicted on one’s sister. Why should one? When one has buried them to burden oneself with others — wife and children — and to leave them again without a farthing? So I resolved to gain possession of the old woman’s money and to use it for my first years without worrying my mother, to keep myself at the university and for a little while after leaving it — and to do this all on a broad, thorough scale, so as to build up a completely new career and enter upon a new life of independence.... Well... that’s all.... Well, of course in killing the old woman I did wrong.... Well, that’s enough.”

He struggled to the end of his speech in exhaustion and let his head sink.

“Oh, that’s not it, that’s not it,” Sonia cried in distress. “How could one... no, that’s not right, not right.”

“You see yourself that it’s not right. But I’ve spoken truly, it’s the truth.”

“As though that could be the truth! Good God!”

“I’ve only killed a louse, Sonia, a useless, loathsome, harmful creature.”

“A human being — a louse!”

“I too know it wasn’t a louse,” he answered, looking strangely at her. “But I am talking nonsense, Sonia,” he added. “I’ve been talking nonsense a long time.... That’s not it, you are right there. There were quite, quite other causes for it! I haven’t talked to anyone for so long, Sonia.... My head aches dreadfully now.”

His eyes shone with feverish brilliance. He was almost delirious; an uneasy smile strayed on his lips. His terrible exhaustion could be seen through his excitement. Sonia saw how he was suffering. She too was growing dizzy. And he talked so strangely; it seemed somehow comprehensible, but yet... “But how, how! Good God!” And she wrung her hands in despair.

“No, Sonia, that’s not it,” he began again suddenly, raising his head, as though a new and sudden train of thought had struck and as it were roused him— “that’s not it! Better... imagine — yes, it’s certainly better — imagine that I am vain, envious, malicious, base, vindictive and... well, perhaps with a tendency to insanity. (Let’s have it all out at once! They’ve talked of madness already, I noticed.) I told you just now I could not keep myself at the university. But do you know that perhaps I might have done? My mother would have sent me what I needed for the fees and I could have earned enough for clothes, boots and food, no doubt. Lessons had turned up at half a rouble. Razumihin works! But I turned sulky and wouldn’t. (Yes, sulkiness, that’s the right word for it!) I sat in my room like a spider. You’ve been in my den, you’ve seen it.... And do you know, Sonia, that low ceilings and tiny rooms cramp the soul and the mind? Ah, how I hated that garret! And yet I wouldn’t go out of it! I wouldn’t on purpose! I didn’t go out for days together, and I wouldn’t work, I wouldn’t even eat, I just lay there doing nothing. If Nastasya brought me anything, I ate it, if she didn’t, I went all day without; I wouldn’t ask, on purpose, from sulkiness! At night I had no light, I lay in the dark and I wouldn’t earn money for candles. I ought to have studied, but I sold my books; and the dust lies an inch thick on the notebooks on my table. I preferred lying still and thinking. And I kept thinking.... And I had dreams all the time, strange dreams of all sorts, no need to describe! Only then I began to fancy that... No, that’s not it! Again I am telling you wrong! You see I kept asking myself then: why am I so stupid that if others are stupid — and I know they are — yet I won’t be wiser? Then I saw, Sonia, that if one waits for everyone to get wiser it will take too long.... Afterwards I understood that that would never come to pass, that men won’t change and that nobody can alter it and that it’s not worth wasting effort over it. Yes, that’s so. That’s the law of their nature, Sonia,... that’s so!... And I know now, Sonia, that whoever is strong in mind and spirit will have power over them. Anyone who is greatly daring is right in their eyes. He who despises most things will be a lawgiver among them

and he who dares most of all will be most in the right! So it has been till now and so it will always be. A man must be blind not to see it!”

Though Raskolnikov looked at Sonia as he said this, he no longer cared whether she understood or not. The fever had complete hold of him; he was in a sort of gloomy ecstasy (he certainly had been too long without talking to anyone). Sonia felt that his gloomy creed had become his faith and code.

“I divined then, Sonia,” he went on eagerly, “that power is only vouchsafed to the man who dares to stoop and pick it up. There is only one thing, one thing needful: one has only to dare! Then for the first time in my life an idea took shape in my mind which no one had ever thought of before me, no one! I saw clear as daylight how strange it is that not a single person living in this mad world has had the daring to go straight for it all and send it flying to the devil! I... I wanted *to have the daring*... and I killed her. I only wanted to have the daring, Sonia! That was the whole cause of it!”

“Oh hush, hush,” cried Sonia, clasping her hands. “You turned away from God and God has smitten you, has given you over to the devil!”

“Then Sonia, when I used to lie there in the dark and all this became clear to me, was it a temptation of the devil, eh?”

“Hush, don’t laugh, blasphemer! You don’t understand, you don’t understand! Oh God! He won’t understand!”

“Hush, Sonia! I am not laughing. I know myself that it was the devil leading me. Hush, Sonia, hush!” he repeated with gloomy insistence. “I know it all, I have thought it all over and over and whispered it all over to myself, lying there in the dark.... I’ve argued it all over with myself, every point of it, and I know it all, all! And how sick, how sick I was then of going over it all! I have kept wanting to forget it and make a new beginning, Sonia, and leave off thinking. And you don’t suppose that I went into it headlong like a fool? I went into it like a wise man, and that was just my destruction. And you mustn’t suppose that I didn’t know, for instance, that if I began to question myself whether I had the right to gain power — I certainly hadn’t the right — or that if I asked myself whether a human being is a louse it proved that it wasn’t so for me, though it might be for a man who would go straight to his goal without asking questions.... If I worried myself all those days, wondering whether Napoleon would have done it or not, I felt clearly of course that I wasn’t Napoleon. I had to endure all the agony of that battle of ideas, Sonia, and I longed to throw it off: I wanted to murder without casuistry, to murder for my own sake, for myself alone! I

didn’t want to lie about it even to myself. It wasn’t to help my mother I did the murder — that’s nonsense — I didn’t do the murder to gain wealth and power and to become a benefactor of mankind. Nonsense! I simply did it; I did the murder for myself, for myself alone, and whether I became a benefactor to others, or spent my life like a spider catching men in my web and sucking the life out of men, I couldn’t have cared at that moment.... And it was not the money I wanted, Sonia, when I did it. It was not so much the money I wanted, but something else.... I know it all now.... Understand me! Perhaps I should never have committed a murder again. I wanted to find out something else; it was something else led me on. I wanted to find out then and quickly whether I was a louse like everybody else or a man. Whether I can step over barriers or not, whether I dare stoop to pick up or not, whether I am a trembling creature or whether I have the *right*...”

“To kill? Have the right to kill?” Sonia clasped her hands.

“Ach, Sonia!” he cried irritably and seemed about to make some retort, but was contemptuously silent. “Don’t interrupt me, Sonia. I want to prove one thing only, that the devil led me on then and he has shown me since that I had not the right to take that path, because I am just such a louse as all the rest. He was mocking me and here I’ve come to you now! Welcome your guest! If I were not a louse, should I have come to you? Listen: when I went then to the old woman’s I only went to *try*.... You may be sure of that!”

“And you murdered her!”

“But how did I murder her? Is that how men do murders? Do men go to commit a murder as I went then? I will tell you some day how I went! Did I murder the old woman? I murdered myself, not her! I crushed myself once for all, for ever.... But it was the devil that killed that old woman, not I. Enough, enough, Sonia, enough! Let me be!” he cried in a sudden spasm of agony, “let me be!”

He leaned his elbows on his knees and squeezed his head in his hands as in a vise.

“What suffering!” A wail of anguish broke from Sonia.

“Well, what am I to do now?” he asked, suddenly raising his head and looking at her with a face hideously distorted by despair.

“What are you to do?” she cried, jumping up, and her eyes that had been full of tears suddenly began to shine. “Stand up!” (She seized him by the shoulder, he got up, looking at her almost bewildered.) “Go at once, this very minute, stand at the cross-roads, bow down, first kiss the earth which

you have defiled and then bow down to all the world and say to all men aloud, ‘I am a murderer!’ Then God will send you life again. Will you go, will you go?” she asked him, trembling all over, snatching his two hands, squeezing them tight in hers and gazing at him with eyes full of fire.

He was amazed at her sudden ecstasy.

“You mean Siberia, Sonia? I must give myself up?” he asked gloomily.

“Suffer and expiate your sin by it, that’s what you must do.”

“No! I am not going to them, Sonia!”

“But how will you go on living? What will you live for?” cried Sonia, “how is it possible now? Why, how can you talk to your mother? (Oh, what will become of them now?) But what am I saying? You have abandoned your mother and your sister already. He has abandoned them already! Oh, God!” she cried, “why, he knows it all himself. How, how can he live by himself! What will become of you now?”

“Don’t be a child, Sonia,” he said softly. “What wrong have I done them? Why should I go to them? What should I say to them? That’s only a phantom.... They destroy men by millions themselves and look on it as a virtue. They are knaves and scoundrels, Sonia! I am not going to them. And what should I say to them — that I murdered her, but did not dare to take the money and hid it under a stone?” he added with a bitter smile. “Why, they would laugh at me, and would call me a fool for not getting it. A coward and a fool! They wouldn’t understand and they don’t deserve to understand. Why should I go to them? I won’t. Don’t be a child, Sonia....”

“It will be too much for you to bear, too much!” she repeated, holding out her hands in despairing supplication.

“Perhaps I’ve been unfair to myself,” he observed gloomily, pondering, “perhaps after all I am a man and not a louse and I’ve been in too great a hurry to condemn myself. I’ll make another fight for it.”

A haughty smile appeared on his lips.

“What a burden to bear! And your whole life, your whole life!”

“I shall get used to it,” he said grimly and thoughtfully. “Listen,” he began a minute later, “stop crying, it’s time to talk of the facts: I’ve come to tell you that the police are after me, on my track....”

“Ach!” Sonia cried in terror.

“Well, why do you cry out? You want me to go to Siberia and now you are frightened? But let me tell you: I shall not give myself up. I shall make a struggle for it and they won’t do anything to me. They’ve no real evidence.

Yesterday I was in great danger and believed I was lost; but to-day things are going better. All the facts they know can be explained two ways, that's to say I can turn their accusations to my credit, do you understand? And I shall, for I've learnt my lesson. But they will certainly arrest me. If it had not been for something that happened, they would have done so to-day for certain; perhaps even now they will arrest me to-day.... But that's no matter, Sonia; they'll let me out again... for there isn't any real proof against me, and there won't be, I give you my word for it. And they can't convict a man on what they have against me. Enough.... I only tell you that you may know.... I will try to manage somehow to put it to my mother and sister so that they won't be frightened.... My sister's future is secure, however, now, I believe... and my mother's must be too.... Well, that's all. Be careful, though. Will you come and see me in prison when I am there?"

"Oh, I will, I will."

They sat side by side, both mournful and dejected, as though they had been cast up by the tempest alone on some deserted shore. He looked at Sonia and felt how great was her love for him, and strange to say he felt it suddenly burdensome and painful to be so loved. Yes, it was a strange and awful sensation! On his way to see Sonia he had felt that all his hopes rested on her; he expected to be rid of at least part of his suffering, and now, when all her heart turned towards him, he suddenly felt that he was immeasurably unhappier than before.

"Sonia," he said, "you'd better not come and see me when I am in prison."

Sonia did not answer, she was crying. Several minutes passed.

"Have you a cross on you?" she asked, as though suddenly thinking of it.

He did not at first understand the question.

"No, of course not. Here, take this one, of cypress wood. I have another, a copper one that belonged to Lizaveta. I changed with Lizaveta: she gave me her cross and I gave her my little ikon. I will wear Lizaveta's now and give you this. Take it... it's mine! It's mine, you know," she begged him. "We will go to suffer together, and together we will bear our cross!"

"Give it me," said Raskolnikov.

He did not want to hurt her feelings. But immediately he drew back the hand he held out for the cross.

"Not now, Sonia. Better later," he added to comfort her.

“Yes, yes, better,” she repeated with conviction, “when you go to meet your suffering, then put it on. You will come to me, I’ll put it on you, we will pray and go together.”

At that moment someone knocked three times at the door.

“Sofya Semyonovna, may I come in?” they heard in a very familiar and polite voice.

Sonia rushed to the door in a fright. The flaxen head of Mr. Lebeziatnikov appeared at the door.

CHAPTER V

Lebeziatnikov looked perturbed.

“I’ve come to you, Sofya Semyonovna,” he began. “Excuse me... I thought I should find you,” he said, addressing Raskolnikov suddenly, “that is, I didn’t mean anything... of that sort... But I just thought... Katerina Ivanovna has gone out of her mind,” he blurted out suddenly, turning from Raskolnikov to Sonia.

Sonia screamed.

“At least it seems so. But... we don’t know what to do, you see! She came back — she seems to have been turned out somewhere, perhaps beaten.... So it seems at least,... She had run to your father’s former chief, she didn’t find him at home: he was dining at some other general’s.... Only fancy, she rushed off there, to the other general’s, and, imagine, she was so persistent that she managed to get the chief to see her, had him fetched out from dinner, it seems. You can imagine what happened. She was turned out, of course; but, according to her own story, she abused him and threw something at him. One may well believe it.... How it is she wasn’t taken up, I can’t understand! Now she is telling everyone, including Amalia Ivanovna; but it’s difficult to understand her, she is screaming and flinging herself about.... Oh yes, she shouts that since everyone has abandoned her, she will take the children and go into the street with a barrel-organ, and the children will sing and dance, and she too, and collect money, and will go every day under the general’s window... ‘to let everyone see well-born children, whose father was an official, begging in the street.’ She keeps beating the children and they are all crying. She is teaching Lida to sing ‘My Village,’ the boy to dance, Polenka the same. She is tearing up all the clothes, and making them little caps like actors; she means to carry a tin basin and make it tinkle, instead of music.... She won’t listen to anything.... Imagine the state of things! It’s beyond anything!”

Lebeziatnikov would have gone on, but Sonia, who had heard him almost breathless, snatched up her cloak and hat, and ran out of the room, putting on her things as she went. Raskolnikov followed her and Lebeziatnikov came after him.

“She has certainly gone mad!” he said to Raskolnikov, as they went out into the street. “I didn’t want to frighten Sofya Semyonovna, so I said ‘it

seemed like it,’ but there isn’t a doubt of it. They say that in consumption the tubercles sometimes occur in the brain; it’s a pity I know nothing of medicine. I did try to persuade her, but she wouldn’t listen.”

“Did you talk to her about the tubercles?”

“Not precisely of the tubercles. Besides, she wouldn’t have understood! But what I say is, that if you convince a person logically that he has nothing to cry about, he’ll stop crying. That’s clear. Is it your conviction that he won’t?”

“Life would be too easy if it were so,” answered Raskolnikov.

“Excuse me, excuse me; of course it would be rather difficult for Katerina Ivanovna to understand, but do you know that in Paris they have been conducting serious experiments as to the possibility of curing the insane, simply by logical argument? One professor there, a scientific man of standing, lately dead, believed in the possibility of such treatment. His idea was that there’s nothing really wrong with the physical organism of the insane, and that insanity is, so to say, a logical mistake, an error of judgment, an incorrect view of things. He gradually showed the madman his error and, would you believe it, they say he was successful? But as he made use of douches too, how far success was due to that treatment remains uncertain.... So it seems at least.”

Raskolnikov had long ceased to listen. Reaching the house where he lived, he nodded to Lebeziatnikov and went in at the gate. Lebeziatnikov woke up with a start, looked about him and hurried on.

Raskolnikov went into his little room and stood still in the middle of it. Why had he come back here? He looked at the yellow and tattered paper, at the dust, at his sofa.... From the yard came a loud continuous knocking; someone seemed to be hammering... He went to the window, rose on tiptoe and looked out into the yard for a long time with an air of absorbed attention. But the yard was empty and he could not see who was hammering. In the house on the left he saw some open windows; on the window-sills were pots of sickly-looking geraniums. Linen was hung out of the windows... He knew it all by heart. He turned away and sat down on the sofa.

Never, never had he felt himself so fearfully alone!

Yes, he felt once more that he would perhaps come to hate Sonia, now that he had made her more miserable.

“Why had he gone to her to beg for her tears? What need had he to poison her life? Oh, the meanness of it!”

“I will remain alone,” he said resolutely, “and she shall not come to the prison!”

Five minutes later he raised his head with a strange smile. That was a strange thought.

“Perhaps it really would be better in Siberia,” he thought suddenly.

He could not have said how long he sat there with vague thoughts surging through his mind. All at once the door opened and Dounia came in. At first she stood still and looked at him from the doorway, just as he had done at Sonia; then she came in and sat down in the same place as yesterday, on the chair facing him. He looked silently and almost vacantly at her.

“Don’t be angry, brother; I’ve only come for one minute,” said Dounia.

Her face looked thoughtful but not stern. Her eyes were bright and soft. He saw that she too had come to him with love.

“Brother, now I know all, *all*. Dmitri Prokofitch has explained and told me everything. They are worrying and persecuting you through a stupid and contemptible suspicion.... Dmitri Prokofitch told me that there is no danger, and that you are wrong in looking upon it with such horror. I don’t think so, and I fully understand how indignant you must be, and that that indignation may have a permanent effect on you. That’s what I am afraid of. As for your cutting yourself off from us, I don’t judge you, I don’t venture to judge you, and forgive me for having blamed you for it. I feel that I too, if I had so great a trouble, should keep away from everyone. I shall tell mother nothing *of this*, but I shall talk about you continually and shall tell her from you that you will come very soon. Don’t worry about her; *I* will set her mind at rest; but don’t you try her too much — come once at least; remember that she is your mother. And now I have come simply to say” (Dounia began to get up) “that if you should need me or should need... all my life or anything... call me, and I’ll come. Good-bye!”

She turned abruptly and went towards the door.

“Dounia!” Raskolnikov stopped her and went towards her. “That Razumihin, Dmitri Prokofitch, is a very good fellow.”

Dounia flushed slightly.

“Well?” she asked, waiting a moment.

“He is competent, hardworking, honest and capable of real love.... Good-bye, Dounia.”

Dounia flushed crimson, then suddenly she took alarm.

“But what does it mean, brother? Are we really parting for ever that you... give me such a parting message?”

“Never mind.... Good-bye.”

He turned away, and walked to the window. She stood a moment, looked at him uneasily, and went out troubled.

No, he was not cold to her. There was an instant (the very last one) when he had longed to take her in his arms and *say good-bye* to her, and even *to tell* her, but he had not dared even to touch her hand.

“Afterwards she may shudder when she remembers that I embraced her, and will feel that I stole her kiss.”

“And would *she* stand that test?” he went on a few minutes later to himself. “No, she wouldn’t; girls like that can’t stand things! They never do.”

And he thought of Sonia.

There was a breath of fresh air from the window. The daylight was fading. He took up his cap and went out.

He could not, of course, and would not consider how ill he was. But all this continual anxiety and agony of mind could not but affect him. And if he were not lying in high fever it was perhaps just because this continual inner strain helped to keep him on his legs and in possession of his faculties. But this artificial excitement could not last long.

He wandered aimlessly. The sun was setting. A special form of misery had begun to oppress him of late. There was nothing poignant, nothing acute about it; but there was a feeling of permanence, of eternity about it; it brought a foretaste of hopeless years of this cold leaden misery, a foretaste of an eternity “on a square yard of space.” Towards evening this sensation usually began to weigh on him more heavily.

“With this idiotic, purely physical weakness, depending on the sunset or something, one can’t help doing something stupid! You’ll go to Dounia, as well as to Sonia,” he muttered bitterly.

He heard his name called. He looked round. Lebeziatnikov rushed up to him.

“Only fancy, I’ve been to your room looking for you. Only fancy, she’s carried out her plan, and taken away the children. Sofya Semyonovna and I

have had a job to find them. She is rapping on a frying-pan and making the children dance. The children are crying. They keep stopping at the cross-roads and in front of shops; there's a crowd of fools running after them. Come along!"

"And Sonia?" Raskolnikov asked anxiously, hurrying after Lebeziatnikov.

"Simply frantic. That is, it's not Sofya Semyonovna's frantic, but Katerina Ivanovna, though Sofya Semyonova's frantic too. But Katerina Ivanovna is absolutely frantic. I tell you she is quite mad. They'll be taken to the police. You can fancy what an effect that will have.... They are on the canal bank, near the bridge now, not far from Sofya Semyonovna's, quite close."

On the canal bank near the bridge and not two houses away from the one where Sonia lodged, there was a crowd of people, consisting principally of gutter children. The hoarse broken voice of Katerina Ivanovna could be heard from the bridge, and it certainly was a strange spectacle likely to attract a street crowd. Katerina Ivanovna in her old dress with the green shawl, wearing a torn straw hat, crushed in a hideous way on one side, was really frantic. She was exhausted and breathless. Her wasted consumptive face looked more suffering than ever, and indeed out of doors in the sunshine a consumptive always looks worse than at home. But her excitement did not flag, and every moment her irritation grew more intense. She rushed at the children, shouted at them, coaxed them, told them before the crowd how to dance and what to sing, began explaining to them why it was necessary, and driven to desperation by their not understanding, beat them.... Then she would make a rush at the crowd; if she noticed any decently dressed person stopping to look, she immediately appealed to him to see what these children "from a genteel, one may say aristocratic, house" had been brought to. If she heard laughter or jeering in the crowd, she would rush at once at the scoffers and begin squabbling with them. Some people laughed, others shook their heads, but everyone felt curious at the sight of the madwoman with the frightened children. The frying-pan of which Lebeziatnikov had spoken was not there, at least Raskolnikov did not see it. But instead of rapping on the pan, Katerina Ivanovna began clapping her wasted hands, when she made Lida and Kolya dance and Polenka sing. She too joined in the singing, but broke down at the second note with a fearful cough, which made her curse in despair and even shed tears. What

made her most furious was the weeping and terror of Kolya and Lida. Some effort had been made to dress the children up as street singers are dressed. The boy had on a turban made of something red and white to look like a Turk. There had been no costume for Lida; she simply had a red knitted cap, or rather a night cap that had belonged to Marmeladov, decorated with a broken piece of white ostrich feather, which had been Katerina Ivanovna's grandmother's and had been preserved as a family possession. Polenka was in her everyday dress; she looked in timid perplexity at her mother, and kept at her side, hiding her tears. She dimly realised her mother's condition, and looked uneasily about her. She was terribly frightened of the street and the crowd. Sonia followed Katerina Ivanovna, weeping and beseeching her to return home, but Katerina Ivanovna was not to be persuaded.

"Leave off, Sonia, leave off," she shouted, speaking fast, panting and coughing. "You don't know what you ask; you are like a child! I've told you before that I am not coming back to that drunken German. Let everyone, let all Petersburg see the children begging in the streets, though their father was an honourable man who served all his life in truth and fidelity, and one may say died in the service." (Katerina Ivanovna had by now invented this fantastic story and thoroughly believed it.) "Let that wretch of a general see it! And you are silly, Sonia: what have we to eat? Tell me that. We have worried you enough, I won't go on so! Ah, Rodion Romanovitch, is that you?" she cried, seeing Raskolnikov and rushing up to him. "Explain to this silly girl, please, that nothing better could be done! Even organ-grinders earn their living, and everyone will see at once that we are different, that we are an honourable and bereaved family reduced to beggary. And that general will lose his post, you'll see! We shall perform under his windows every day, and if the Tsar drives by, I'll fall on my knees, put the children before me, show them to him, and say 'Defend us father.' He is the father of the fatherless, he is merciful, he'll protect us, you'll see, and that wretch of a general.... Lida, *tenez vous droite*! Kolya, you'll dance again. Why are you whimpering? Whimpering again! What are you afraid of, stupid? Goodness, what am I to do with them, Rodion Romanovitch? If you only knew how stupid they are! What's one to do with such children?"

And she, almost crying herself — which did not stop her uninterrupted, rapid flow of talk — pointed to the crying children. Raskolnikov tried to persuade her to go home, and even said, hoping to work on her vanity, that

it was unseemly for her to be wandering about the streets like an organ-grinder, as she was intending to become the principal of a boarding-school.

“A boarding-school, ha-ha-ha! A castle in the air,” cried Katerina Ivanovna, her laugh ending in a cough. “No, Rodion Romanovitch, that dream is over! All have forsaken us!... And that general.... You know, Rodion Romanovitch, I threw an inkpot at him — it happened to be standing in the waiting-room by the paper where you sign your name. I wrote my name, threw it at him and ran away. Oh, the scoundrels, the scoundrels! But enough of them, now I’ll provide for the children myself, I won’t bow down to anybody! She has had to bear enough for us!” she pointed to Sonia. “Polenka, how much have you got? Show me! What, only two farthings! Oh, the mean wretches! They give us nothing, only run after us, putting their tongues out. There, what is that blockhead laughing at?” (She pointed to a man in the crowd.) “It’s all because Kolya here is so stupid; I have such a bother with him. What do you want, Polenka? Tell me in French, *parlez-moi français*. Why, I’ve taught you, you know some phrases. Else how are you to show that you are of good family, well brought-up children, and not at all like other organ-grinders? We aren’t going to have a Punch and Judy show in the street, but to sing a genteel song.... Ah, yes,... What are we to sing? You keep putting me out, but we... you see, we are standing here, Rodion Romanovitch, to find something to sing and get money, something Kolya can dance to.... For, as you can fancy, our performance is all impromptu.... We must talk it over and rehearse it all thoroughly, and then we shall go to Nevsky, where there are far more people of good society, and we shall be noticed at once. Lida knows ‘My Village’ only, nothing but ‘My Village,’ and everyone sings that. We must sing something far more genteel.... Well, have you thought of anything, Polenka? If only you’d help your mother! My memory’s quite gone, or I should have thought of something. We really can’t sing ‘An Hussar.’ Ah, let us sing in French, ‘Cinq sous,’ I have taught it you, I have taught it you. And as it is in French, people will see at once that you are children of good family, and that will be much more touching.... You might sing ‘Marlborough s’en va-t-en guerre,’ for that’s quite a child’s song and is sung as a lullaby in all the aristocratic houses.

“*Marlborough s’en va-t-en guerre Ne sait quand reviendra..*,” she began singing. “But no, better sing ‘Cinq sous.’ Now, Kolya, your hands on your

hips, make haste, and you, Lida, keep turning the other way, and Polenka and I will sing and clap our hands!

“*Cinq sous, cinq sous Pour monter notre menage*.”

(Cough-cough-cough!) “Set your dress straight, Polenka, it’s slipped down on your shoulders,” she observed, panting from coughing. “Now it’s particularly necessary to behave nicely and genteelly, that all may see that you are well-born children. I said at the time that the bodice should be cut longer, and made of two widths. It was your fault, Sonia, with your advice to make it shorter, and now you see the child is quite deformed by it.... Why, you’re all crying again! What’s the matter, stupids? Come, Kolya, begin. Make haste, make haste! Oh, what an unbearable child!

“Cinq sous, cinq sous.

“A policeman again! What do you want?”

A policeman was indeed forcing his way through the crowd. But at that moment a gentleman in civilian uniform and an overcoat — a solid-looking official of about fifty with a decoration on his neck (which delighted Katerina Ivanovna and had its effect on the policeman) — approached and without a word handed her a green three-rouble note. His face wore a look of genuine sympathy. Katerina Ivanovna took it and gave him a polite, even ceremonious, bow.

“I thank you, honoured sir,” she began loftily. “The causes that have induced us (take the money, Polenka: you see there are generous and honourable people who are ready to help a poor gentlewoman in distress). You see, honoured sir, these orphans of good family — I might even say of aristocratic connections — and that wretch of a general sat eating grouse... and stamped at my disturbing him. ‘Your excellency,’ I said, ‘protect the orphans, for you knew my late husband, Semyon Zaharovitch, and on the very day of his death the basest of scoundrels slandered his only daughter.’... That policeman again! Protect me,” she cried to the official. “Why is that policeman edging up to me? We have only just run away from one of them. What do you want, fool?”

“It’s forbidden in the streets. You mustn’t make a disturbance.”

“It’s you’re making a disturbance. It’s just the same as if I were grinding an organ. What business is it of yours?”

“You have to get a licence for an organ, and you haven’t got one, and in that way you collect a crowd. Where do you lodge?”

“What, a license?” wailed Katerina Ivanovna. “I buried my husband to-day. What need of a license?”

“Calm yourself, madam, calm yourself,” began the official. “Come along; I will escort you.... This is no place for you in the crowd. You are ill.”

“Honoured sir, honoured sir, you don’t know,” screamed Katerina Ivanovna. “We are going to the Nevsky.... Sonia, Sonia! Where is she? She is crying too! What’s the matter with you all? Kolya, Lida, where are you going?” she cried suddenly in alarm. “Oh, silly children! Kolya, Lida, where are they off to?...”

Kolya and Lida, scared out of their wits by the crowd, and their mother’s mad pranks, suddenly seized each other by the hand, and ran off at the sight of the policeman who wanted to take them away somewhere. Weeping and wailing, poor Katerina Ivanovna ran after them. She was a piteous and unseemly spectacle, as she ran, weeping and panting for breath. Sonia and Polenka rushed after them.

“Bring them back, bring them back, Sonia! Oh stupid, ungrateful children!... Polenka! catch them.... It’s for your sakes I...”

She stumbled as she ran and fell down.

“She’s cut herself, she’s bleeding! Oh, dear!” cried Sonia, bending over her.

All ran up and crowded around. Raskolnikov and Lebeziatnikov were the first at her side, the official too hastened up, and behind him the policeman who muttered, “Bother!” with a gesture of impatience, feeling that the job was going to be a troublesome one.

“Pass on! Pass on!” he said to the crowd that pressed forward.

“She’s dying,” someone shouted.

“She’s gone out of her mind,” said another.

“Lord have mercy upon us,” said a woman, crossing herself. “Have they caught the little girl and the boy? They’re being brought back, the elder one’s got them.... Ah, the naughty imps!”

When they examined Katerina Ivanovna carefully, they saw that she had not cut herself against a stone, as Sonia thought, but that the blood that stained the pavement red was from her chest.

“I’ve seen that before,” muttered the official to Raskolnikov and Lebeziatnikov; “that’s consumption; the blood flows and chokes the patient.

I saw the same thing with a relative of my own not long ago... nearly a pint of blood, all in a minute.... What's to be done though? She is dying."

"This way, this way, to my room!" Sonia implored. "I live here!... See, that house, the second from here.... Come to me, make haste," she turned from one to the other. "Send for the doctor! Oh, dear!"

Thanks to the official's efforts, this plan was adopted, the policeman even helping to carry Katerina Ivanovna. She was carried to Sonia's room, almost unconscious, and laid on the bed. The blood was still flowing, but she seemed to be coming to herself. Raskolnikov, Lebeziatnikov, and the official accompanied Sonia into the room and were followed by the policeman, who first drove back the crowd which followed to the very door. Polenka came in holding Kolya and Lida, who were trembling and weeping. Several persons came in too from the Kapernaumovs' room; the landlord, a lame one-eyed man of strange appearance with whiskers and hair that stood up like a brush, his wife, a woman with an everlastingly scared expression, and several open-mouthed children with wonder-struck faces. Among these, Svidrigaïlov suddenly made his appearance. Raskolnikov looked at him with surprise, not understanding where he had come from and not having noticed him in the crowd. A doctor and priest wore spoken of. The official whispered to Raskolnikov that he thought it was too late now for the doctor, but he ordered him to be sent for. Kapernaumov ran himself.

Meanwhile Katerina Ivanovna had regained her breath. The bleeding ceased for a time. She looked with sick but intent and penetrating eyes at Sonia, who stood pale and trembling, wiping the sweat from her brow with a handkerchief. At last she asked to be raised. They sat her up on the bed, supporting her on both sides.

"Where are the children?" she said in a faint voice. "You've brought them, Polenka? Oh the sillies! Why did you run away.... Och!"

Once more her parched lips were covered with blood. She moved her eyes, looking about her.

"So that's how you live, Sonia! Never once have I been in your room."

She looked at her with a face of suffering.

"We have been your ruin, Sonia. Polenka, Lida, Kolya, come here! Well, here they are, Sonia, take them all! I hand them over to you, I've had enough! The ball is over." (Cough!) "Lay me down, let me die in peace."

They laid her back on the pillow.

“What, the priest? I don’t want him. You haven’t got a rouble to spare. I have no sins. God must forgive me without that. He knows how I have suffered.... And if He won’t forgive me, I don’t care!”

She sank more and more into uneasy delirium. At times she shuddered, turned her eyes from side to side, recognised everyone for a minute, but at once sank into delirium again. Her breathing was hoarse and difficult, there was a sort of rattle in her throat.

“I said to him, your excellency,” she ejaculated, gasping after each word. “That Amalia Ludwigovna, ah! Lida, Kolya, hands on your hips, make haste! *Glissez, glissez! pas de basque!* Tap with your heels, be a graceful child!

“*Du hast Diamanten und Perlen*

“What next? That’s the thing to sing.

“*Du hast die schonsten Augen Madchen, was willst du mehr?*

“What an idea! *Was willst du mehr?* What things the fool invents! Ah, yes!

“In the heat of midday in the vale of Dagestan.

“Ah, how I loved it! I loved that song to distraction, Polenka! Your father, you know, used to sing it when we were engaged.... Oh those days! Oh that’s the thing for us to sing! How does it go? I’ve forgotten. Remind me! How was it?”

She was violently excited and tried to sit up. At last, in a horribly hoarse, broken voice, she began, shrieking and gasping at every word, with a look of growing terror.

“In the heat of midday!... in the vale!... of Dagestan!... With lead in my breast!...”

“Your excellency!” she wailed suddenly with a heart-rending scream and a flood of tears, “protect the orphans! You have been their father’s guest... one may say aristocratic....” She started, regaining consciousness, and gazed at all with a sort of terror, but at once recognised Sonia.

“Sonia, Sonia!” she articulated softly and caressingly, as though surprised to find her there. “Sonia darling, are you here, too?”

They lifted her up again.

“Enough! It’s over! Farewell, poor thing! I am done for! I am broken!” she cried with vindictive despair, and her head fell heavily back on the pillow.

She sank into unconsciousness again, but this time it did not last long. Her pale, yellow, wasted face dropped back, her mouth fell open, her leg moved convulsively, she gave a deep, deep sigh and died.

Sonia fell upon her, flung her arms about her, and remained motionless with her head pressed to the dead woman's wasted bosom. Polenka threw herself at her mother's feet, kissing them and weeping violently. Though Kolya and Lida did not understand what had happened, they had a feeling that it was something terrible; they put their hands on each other's little shoulders, stared straight at one another and both at once opened their mouths and began screaming. They were both still in their fancy dress; one in a turban, the other in the cap with the ostrich feather.

And how did "the certificate of merit" come to be on the bed beside Katerina Ivanovna? It lay there by the pillow; Raskolnikov saw it.

He walked away to the window. Lebeziatnikov skipped up to him.

"She is dead," he said.

"Rodion Romanovitch, I must have two words with you," said Svidrigaïlov, coming up to them.

Lebeziatnikov at once made room for him and delicately withdrew. Svidrigaïlov drew Raskolnikov further away.

"I will undertake all the arrangements, the funeral and that. You know it's a question of money and, as I told you, I have plenty to spare. I will put those two little ones and Polenka into some good orphan asylum, and I will settle fifteen hundred roubles to be paid to each on coming of age, so that Sofya Semyonovna need have no anxiety about them. And I will pull her out of the mud too, for she is a good girl, isn't she? So tell Avdotya Romanovna that that is how I am spending her ten thousand."

"What is your motive for such benevolence?" asked Raskolnikov.

"Ah! you sceptical person!" laughed Svidrigaïlov. "I told you I had no need of that money. Won't you admit that it's simply done from humanity? She wasn't 'a louse,' you know" (he pointed to the corner where the dead woman lay), "was she, like some old pawnbroker woman? Come, you'll agree, is Luzhin to go on living, and doing wicked things or is she to die? And if I didn't help them, Polenka would go the same way."

He said this with an air of a sort of gay winking slyness, keeping his eyes fixed on Raskolnikov, who turned white and cold, hearing his own phrases, spoken to Sonia. He quickly stepped back and looked wildly at Svidrigaïlov.

“How do you know?” he whispered, hardly able to breathe.

“Why, I lodge here at Madame Resslich’s, the other side of the wall. Here is Kapernaumov, and there lives Madame Resslich, an old and devoted friend of mine. I am a neighbour.”

“You?”

“Yes,” continued Svidrigaïlov, shaking with laughter. “I assure you on my honour, dear Rodion Romanovitch, that you have interested me enormously. I told you we should become friends, I foretold it. Well, here we have. And you will see what an accommodating person I am. You’ll see that you can get on with me!”

PART VI

CHAPTER I

A strange period began for Raskolnikov: it was as though a fog had fallen upon him and wrapped him in a dreary solitude from which there was no escape. Recalling that period long after, he believed that his mind had been clouded at times, and that it had continued so, with intervals, till the final catastrophe. He was convinced that he had been mistaken about many things at that time, for instance as to the date of certain events. Anyway, when he tried later on to piece his recollections together, he learnt a great deal about himself from what other people told him. He had mixed up incidents and had explained events as due to circumstances which existed only in his imagination. At times he was a prey to agonies of morbid uneasiness, amounting sometimes to panic. But he remembered, too, moments, hours, perhaps whole days, of complete apathy, which came upon him as a reaction from his previous terror and might be compared with the abnormal insensibility, sometimes seen in the dying. He seemed to be trying in that latter stage to escape from a full and clear understanding of his position. Certain essential facts which required immediate consideration were particularly irksome to him. How glad he would have been to be free from some cares, the neglect of which would have threatened him with complete, inevitable ruin.

He was particularly worried about Svidrigaïlov, he might be said to be permanently thinking of Svidrigaïlov. From the time of Svidrigaïlov's too menacing and unmistakable words in Sonia's room at the moment of Katerina Ivanovna's death, the normal working of his mind seemed to break down. But although this new fact caused him extreme uneasiness, Raskolnikov was in no hurry for an explanation of it. At times, finding himself in a solitary and remote part of the town, in some wretched eating-house, sitting alone lost in thought, hardly knowing how he had come there, he suddenly thought of Svidrigaïlov. He recognised suddenly, clearly, and with dismay that he ought at once to come to an understanding with that man and to make what terms he could. Walking outside the city gates one day, he positively fancied that they had fixed a meeting there, that he was waiting for Svidrigaïlov. Another time he woke up before daybreak lying on the ground under some bushes and could not at first understand how he had come there.

But during the two or three days after Katerina Ivanovna’s death, he had two or three times met Svidrigaïlov at Sonia’s lodging, where he had gone aimlessly for a moment. They exchanged a few words and made no reference to the vital subject, as though they were tacitly agreed not to speak of it for a time.

Katerina Ivanovna’s body was still lying in the coffin, Svidrigaïlov was busy making arrangements for the funeral. Sonia too was very busy. At their last meeting Svidrigaïlov informed Raskolnikov that he had made an arrangement, and a very satisfactory one, for Katerina Ivanovna’s children; that he had, through certain connections, succeeded in getting hold of certain personages by whose help the three orphans could be at once placed in very suitable institutions; that the money he had settled on them had been of great assistance, as it is much easier to place orphans with some property than destitute ones. He said something too about Sonia and promised to come himself in a day or two to see Raskolnikov, mentioning that “he would like to consult with him, that there were things they must talk over....”

This conversation took place in the passage on the stairs. Svidrigaïlov looked intently at Raskolnikov and suddenly, after a brief pause, dropping his voice, asked: “But how is it, Rodion Romanovitch; you don’t seem yourself? You look and you listen, but you don’t seem to understand. Cheer up! We’ll talk things over; I am only sorry, I’ve so much to do of my own business and other people’s. Ah, Rodion Romanovitch,” he added suddenly, “what all men need is fresh air, fresh air... more than anything!”

He moved to one side to make way for the priest and server, who were coming up the stairs. They had come for the requiem service. By Svidrigaïlov’s orders it was sung twice a day punctually. Svidrigaïlov went his way. Raskolnikov stood still a moment, thought, and followed the priest into Sonia’s room. He stood at the door. They began quietly, slowly and mournfully singing the service. From his childhood the thought of death and the presence of death had something oppressive and mysteriously awful; and it was long since he had heard the requiem service. And there was something else here as well, too awful and disturbing. He looked at the children: they were all kneeling by the coffin; Polenka was weeping. Behind them Sonia prayed, softly and, as it were, timidly weeping.

“These last two days she hasn’t said a word to me, she hasn’t glanced at me,” Raskolnikov thought suddenly. The sunlight was bright in the room;

the incense rose in clouds; the priest read, “Give rest, oh Lord....” Raskolnikov stayed all through the service. As he blessed them and took his leave, the priest looked round strangely. After the service, Raskolnikov went up to Sonia. She took both his hands and let her head sink on his shoulder. This slight friendly gesture bewildered Raskolnikov. It seemed strange to him that there was no trace of repugnance, no trace of disgust, no tremor in her hand. It was the furthest limit of self-abnegation, at least so he interpreted it.

Sonia said nothing. Raskolnikov pressed her hand and went out. He felt very miserable. If it had been possible to escape to some solitude, he would have thought himself lucky, even if he had to spend his whole life there. But although he had almost always been by himself of late, he had never been able to feel alone. Sometimes he walked out of the town on to the high road, once he had even reached a little wood, but the lonelier the place was, the more he seemed to be aware of an uneasy presence near him. It did not frighten him, but greatly annoyed him, so that he made haste to return to the town, to mingle with the crowd, to enter restaurants and taverns, to walk in busy thoroughfares. There he felt easier and even more solitary. One day at dusk he sat for an hour listening to songs in a tavern and he remembered that he positively enjoyed it. But at last he had suddenly felt the same uneasiness again, as though his conscience smote him. “Here I sit listening to singing, is that what I ought to be doing?” he thought. Yet he felt at once that that was not the only cause of his uneasiness; there was something requiring immediate decision, but it was something he could not clearly understand or put into words. It was a hopeless tangle. “No, better the struggle again! Better Porfiry again... or Svidrigaïlov.... Better some challenge again... some attack. Yes, yes!” he thought. He went out of the tavern and rushed away almost at a run. The thought of Dounia and his mother suddenly reduced him almost to a panic. That night he woke up before morning among some bushes in Krestovsky Island, trembling all over with fever; he walked home, and it was early morning when he arrived. After some hours’ sleep the fever left him, but he woke up late, two o’clock in the afternoon.

He remembered that Katerina Ivanovna’s funeral had been fixed for that day, and was glad that he was not present at it. Nastasya brought him some food; he ate and drank with appetite, almost with greediness. His head was

fresher and he was calmer than he had been for the last three days. He even felt a passing wonder at his previous attacks of panic.

The door opened and Razumihin came in.

“Ah, he’s eating, then he’s not ill,” said Razumihin. He took a chair and sat down at the table opposite Raskolnikov.

He was troubled and did not attempt to conceal it. He spoke with evident annoyance, but without hurry or raising his voice. He looked as though he had some special fixed determination.

“Listen,” he began resolutely. “As far as I am concerned, you may all go to hell, but from what I see, it’s clear to me that I can’t make head or tail of it; please don’t think I’ve come to ask you questions. I don’t want to know, hang it! If you begin telling me your secrets, I dare say I shouldn’t stay to listen, I should go away cursing. I have only come to find out once for all whether it’s a fact that you are mad? There is a conviction in the air that you are mad or very nearly so. I admit I’ve been disposed to that opinion myself, judging from your stupid, repulsive and quite inexplicable actions, and from your recent behavior to your mother and sister. Only a monster or a madman could treat them as you have; so you must be mad.”

“When did you see them last?”

“Just now. Haven’t you seen them since then? What have you been doing with yourself? Tell me, please. I’ve been to you three times already. Your mother has been seriously ill since yesterday. She had made up her mind to come to you; Avdotya Romanovna tried to prevent her; she wouldn’t hear a word. ‘If he is ill, if his mind is giving way, who can look after him like his mother?’ she said. We all came here together, we couldn’t let her come alone all the way. We kept begging her to be calm. We came in, you weren’t here; she sat down, and stayed ten minutes, while we stood waiting in silence. She got up and said: ‘If he’s gone out, that is, if he is well, and has forgotten his mother, it’s humiliating and unseemly for his mother to stand at his door begging for kindness.’ She returned home and took to her bed; now she is in a fever. ‘I see,’ she said, ‘that he has time for *his girl*.’ She means by *your girl* Sofya Semyonovna, your betrothed or your mistress, I don’t know. I went at once to Sofya Semyonovna’s, for I wanted to know what was going on. I looked round, I saw the coffin, the children crying, and Sofya Semyonovna trying them on mourning dresses. No sign of you. I apologised, came away, and reported to Avdotya Romanovna. So that’s all nonsense and you haven’t got a girl; the most likely thing is that you are

mad. But here you sit, guzzling boiled beef as though you'd not had a bite for three days. Though as far as that goes, madmen eat too, but though you have not said a word to me yet... you are not mad! That I'd swear! Above all, you are not mad! So you may go to hell, all of you, for there's some mystery, some secret about it, and I don't intend to worry my brains over your secrets. So I've simply come to swear at you," he finished, getting up, "to relieve my mind. And I know what to do now."

"What do you mean to do now?"

"What business is it of yours what I mean to do?"

"You are going in for a drinking bout."

"How... how did you know?"

"Why, it's pretty plain."

Razumihin paused for a minute.

"You always have been a very rational person and you've never been mad, never," he observed suddenly with warmth. "You're right: I shall drink. Good-bye!"

And he moved to go out.

"I was talking with my sister — the day before yesterday, I think it was — about you, Razumihin."

"About me! But... where can you have seen her the day before yesterday?" Razumihin stopped short and even turned a little pale.

One could see that his heart was throbbing slowly and violently.

"She came here by herself, sat there and talked to me."

"She did!"

"Yes."

"What did you say to her... I mean, about me?"

"I told her you were a very good, honest, and industrious man. I didn't tell her you love her, because she knows that herself."

"She knows that herself?"

"Well, it's pretty plain. Wherever I might go, whatever happened to me, you would remain to look after them. I, so to speak, give them into your keeping, Razumihin. I say this because I know quite well how you love her, and am convinced of the purity of your heart. I know that she too may love you and perhaps does love you already. Now decide for yourself, as you know best, whether you need go in for a drinking bout or not."

"Rodya! You see... well.... Ach, damn it! But where do you mean to go? Of course, if it's all a secret, never mind.... But I... I shall find out the

secret... and I am sure that it must be some ridiculous nonsense and that you've made it all up. Anyway you are a capital fellow, a capital fellow!..."

"That was just what I wanted to add, only you interrupted, that that was a very good decision of yours not to find out these secrets. Leave it to time, don't worry about it. You'll know it all in time when it must be. Yesterday a man said to me that what a man needs is fresh air, fresh air, fresh air. I mean to go to him directly to find out what he meant by that."

Razumihin stood lost in thought and excitement, making a silent conclusion.

"He's a political conspirator! He must be. And he's on the eve of some desperate step, that's certain. It can only be that! And... and Dounia knows," he thought suddenly.

"So Avdotya Romanovna comes to see you," he said, weighing each syllable, "and you're going to see a man who says we need more air, and so of course that letter... that too must have something to do with it," he concluded to himself.

"What letter?"

"She got a letter to-day. It upset her very much — very much indeed. Too much so. I began speaking of you, she begged me not to. Then... then she said that perhaps we should very soon have to part... then she began warmly thanking me for something; then she went to her room and locked herself in."

"She got a letter?" Raskolnikov asked thoughtfully.

"Yes, and you didn't know? hm..."

They were both silent.

"Good-bye, Rodion. There was a time, brother, when I.... Never mind, good-bye. You see, there was a time.... Well, good-bye! I must be off too. I am not going to drink. There's no need now.... That's all stuff!"

He hurried out; but when he had almost closed the door behind him, he suddenly opened it again, and said, looking away:

"Oh, by the way, do you remember that murder, you know Porfiry's, that old woman? Do you know the murderer has been found, he has confessed and given the proofs. It's one of those very workmen, the painter, only fancy! Do you remember I defended them here? Would you believe it, all that scene of fighting and laughing with his companions on the stairs while the porter and the two witnesses were going up, he got up on purpose to disarm suspicion. The cunning, the presence of mind of the young dog! One

can hardly credit it; but it’s his own explanation, he has confessed it all. And what a fool I was about it! Well, he’s simply a genius of hypocrisy and resourcefulness in disarming the suspicions of the lawyers — so there’s nothing much to wonder at, I suppose! Of course people like that are always possible. And the fact that he couldn’t keep up the character, but confessed, makes him easier to believe in. But what a fool I was! I was frantic on their side!”

“Tell me, please, from whom did you hear that, and why does it interest you so?” Raskolnikov asked with unmistakable agitation.

“What next? You ask me why it interests me!... Well, I heard it from Porfiry, among others... It was from him I heard almost all about it.”

“From Porfiry?”

“From Porfiry.”

“What... what did he say?” Raskolnikov asked in dismay.

“He gave me a capital explanation of it. Psychologically, after his fashion.”

“He explained it? Explained it himself?”

“Yes, yes; good-bye. I’ll tell you all about it another time, but now I’m busy. There was a time when I fancied... But no matter, another time!... What need is there for me to drink now? You have made me drunk without wine. I am drunk, Rodya! Good-bye, I’m going. I’ll come again very soon.”

He went out.

“He’s a political conspirator, there’s not a doubt about it,” Razumihin decided, as he slowly descended the stairs. “And he’s drawn his sister in; that’s quite, quite in keeping with Avdotya Romanovna’s character. There are interviews between them!... She hinted at it too... So many of her words.... and hints... bear that meaning! And how else can all this tangle be explained? Hm! And I was almost thinking... Good heavens, what I thought! Yes, I took leave of my senses and I wronged him! It was his doing, under the lamp in the corridor that day. Pfoo! What a crude, nasty, vile idea on my part! Nikolay is a brick, for confessing.... And how clear it all is now! His illness then, all his strange actions... before this, in the university, how morose he used to be, how gloomy.... But what’s the meaning now of that letter? There’s something in that, too, perhaps. Whom was it from? I suspect...! No, I must find out!”

He thought of Dounia, realising all he had heard and his heart throbbed, and he suddenly broke into a run.

As soon as Razumihin went out, Raskolnikov got up, turned to the window, walked into one corner and then into another, as though forgetting the smallness of his room, and sat down again on the sofa. He felt, so to speak, renewed; again the struggle, so a means of escape had come.

“Yes, a means of escape had come! It had been too stifling, too cramping, the burden had been too agonising. A lethargy had come upon him at times. From the moment of the scene with Nikolay at Porfiry’s he had been suffocating, penned in without hope of escape. After Nikolay’s confession, on that very day had come the scene with Sonia; his behaviour and his last words had been utterly unlike anything he could have imagined beforehand; he had grown feebler, instantly and fundamentally! And he had agreed at the time with Sonia, he had agreed in his heart he could not go on living alone with such a thing on his mind!

“And Svidrigaïlov was a riddle... He worried him, that was true, but somehow not on the same point. He might still have a struggle to come with Svidrigaïlov. Svidrigaïlov, too, might be a means of escape; but Porfiry was a different matter.

“And so Porfiry himself had explained it to Razumihin, had explained it *psychologically*. He had begun bringing in his damned psychology again! Porfiry? But to think that Porfiry should for one moment believe that Nikolay was guilty, after what had passed between them before Nikolay’s appearance, after that tête-à-tête interview, which could have only *one* explanation? (During those days Raskolnikov had often recalled passages in that scene with Porfiry; he could not bear to let his mind rest on it.) Such words, such gestures had passed between them, they had exchanged such glances, things had been said in such a tone and had reached such a pass, that Nikolay, whom Porfiry had seen through at the first word, at the first gesture, could not have shaken his conviction.

“And to think that even Razumihin had begun to suspect! The scene in the corridor under the lamp had produced its effect then. He had rushed to Porfiry.... But what had induced the latter to receive him like that? What had been his object in putting Razumihin off with Nikolay? He must have some plan; there was some design, but what was it? It was true that a long time had passed since that morning — too long a time — and no sight nor sound of Porfiry. Well, that was a bad sign....”

Raskolnikov took his cap and went out of the room, still pondering. It was the first time for a long while that he had felt clear in his mind, at least.

“I must settle Svidrigaïlov,” he thought, “and as soon as possible; he, too, seems to be waiting for me to come to him of my own accord.” And at that moment there was such a rush of hate in his weary heart that he might have killed either of those two — Porfiry or Svidrigaïlov. At least he felt that he would be capable of doing it later, if not now.

“We shall see, we shall see,” he repeated to himself.

But no sooner had he opened the door than he stumbled upon Porfiry himself in the passage. He was coming in to see him. Raskolnikov was dumbfounded for a minute, but only for one minute. Strange to say, he was not very much astonished at seeing Porfiry and scarcely afraid of him. He was simply startled, but was quickly, instantly, on his guard. “Perhaps this will mean the end? But how could Porfiry have approached so quietly, like a cat, so that he had heard nothing? Could he have been listening at the door?”

“You didn’t expect a visitor, Rodion Romanovitch,” Porfiry explained, laughing. “I’ve been meaning to look in a long time; I was passing by and thought why not go in for five minutes. Are you going out? I won’t keep you long. Just let me have one cigarette.”

“Sit down, Porfiry Petrovitch, sit down.” Raskolnikov gave his visitor a seat with so pleased and friendly an expression that he would have marvelled at himself, if he could have seen it.

The last moment had come, the last drops had to be drained! So a man will sometimes go through half an hour of mortal terror with a brigand, yet when the knife is at his throat at last, he feels no fear.

Raskolnikov seated himself directly facing Porfiry, and looked at him without flinching. Porfiry screwed up his eyes and began lighting a cigarette.

“Speak, speak,” seemed as though it would burst from Raskolnikov’s heart. “Come, why don’t you speak?”

CHAPTER II

“Ah these cigarettes!” Porfiry Petrovitch ejaculated at last, having lighted one. “They are pernicious, positively pernicious, and yet I can’t give them up! I cough, I begin to have tickling in my throat and a difficulty in breathing. You know I am a coward, I went lately to Dr. B —— n; he always gives at least half an hour to each patient. He positively laughed looking at me; he sounded me: ‘Tobacco’s bad for you,’ he said, ‘your lungs are affected.’ But how am I to give it up? What is there to take its place? I don’t drink, that’s the mischief, he-he-he, that I don’t. Everything is relative, Rodion Romanovitch, everything is relative!”

“Why, he’s playing his professional tricks again,” Raskolnikov thought with disgust. All the circumstances of their last interview suddenly came back to him, and he felt a rush of the feeling that had come upon him then.

“I came to see you the day before yesterday, in the evening; you didn’t know?” Porfiry Petrovitch went on, looking round the room. “I came into this very room. I was passing by, just as I did to-day, and I thought I’d return your call. I walked in as your door was wide open, I looked round, waited and went out without leaving my name with your servant. Don’t you lock your door?”

Raskolnikov’s face grew more and more gloomy. Porfiry seemed to guess his state of mind.

“I’ve come to have it out with you, Rodion Romanovitch, my dear fellow! I owe you an explanation and must give it to you,” he continued with a slight smile, just patting Raskolnikov’s knee.

But almost at the same instant a serious and careworn look came into his face; to his surprise Raskolnikov saw a touch of sadness in it. He had never seen and never suspected such an expression in his face.

“A strange scene passed between us last time we met, Rodion Romanovitch. Our first interview, too, was a strange one; but then... and one thing after another! This is the point: I have perhaps acted unfairly to you; I feel it. Do you remember how we parted? Your nerves were unhinged and your knees were shaking and so were mine. And, you know, our behaviour was unseemly, even ungentlemanly. And yet we are gentlemen, above all, in any case, gentlemen; that must be understood. Do you remember what we came to?... and it was quite indecorous.”

“What is he up to, what does he take me for?” Raskolnikov asked himself in amazement, raising his head and looking with open eyes on Porfiry.

“I’ve decided openness is better between us,” Porfiry Petrovitch went on, turning his head away and dropping his eyes, as though unwilling to disconcert his former victim and as though disdaining his former wiles. “Yes, such suspicions and such scenes cannot continue for long. Nikolay put a stop to it, or I don’t know what we might not have come to. That damned workman was sitting at the time in the next room — can you realise that? You know that, of course; and I am aware that he came to you afterwards. But what you supposed then was not true: I had not sent for anyone, I had made no kind of arrangements. You ask why I hadn’t? What shall I say to you? it had all come upon me so suddenly. I had scarcely sent for the porters (you noticed them as you went out, I dare say). An idea flashed upon me; I was firmly convinced at the time, you see, Rodion Romanovitch. Come, I thought — even if I let one thing slip for a time, I shall get hold of something else — I shan’t lose what I want, anyway. You are nervously irritable, Rodion Romanovitch, by temperament; it’s out of proportion with other qualities of your heart and character, which I flatter myself I have to some extent divined. Of course I did reflect even then that it does not always happen that a man gets up and blurts out his whole story. It does happen sometimes, if you make a man lose all patience, though even then it’s rare. I was capable of realising that. If I only had a fact, I thought, the least little fact to go upon, something I could lay hold of, something tangible, not merely psychological. For if a man is guilty, you must be able to get something substantial out of him; one may reckon upon most surprising results indeed. I was reckoning on your temperament, Rodion Romanovitch, on your temperament above all things! I had great hopes of you at that time.”

“But what are you driving at now?” Raskolnikov muttered at last, asking the question without thinking.

“What is he talking about?” he wondered distractedly, “does he really take me to be innocent?”

“What am I driving at? I’ve come to explain myself, I consider it my duty, so to speak. I want to make clear to you how the whole business, the whole misunderstanding arose. I’ve caused you a great deal of suffering, Rodion Romanovitch. I am not a monster. I understand what it must mean

for a man who has been unfortunate, but who is proud, imperious and above all, impatient, to have to bear such treatment! I regard you in any case as a man of noble character and not without elements of magnanimity, though I don’t agree with all your convictions. I wanted to tell you this first, frankly and quite sincerely, for above all I don’t want to deceive you. When I made your acquaintance, I felt attracted by you. Perhaps you will laugh at my saying so. You have a right to. I know you disliked me from the first and indeed you’ve no reason to like me. You may think what you like, but I desire now to do all I can to efface that impression and to show that I am a man of heart and conscience. I speak sincerely.”

Porfiry Petrovitch made a dignified pause. Raskolnikov felt a rush of renewed alarm. The thought that Porfiry believed him to be innocent began to make him uneasy.

“It’s scarcely necessary to go over everything in detail,” Porfiry Petrovitch went on. “Indeed, I could scarcely attempt it. To begin with there were rumours. Through whom, how, and when those rumours came to me... and how they affected you, I need not go into. My suspicions were aroused by a complete accident, which might just as easily not have happened. What was it? Hm! I believe there is no need to go into that either. Those rumours and that accident led to one idea in my mind. I admit it openly — for one may as well make a clean breast of it — I was the first to pitch on you. The old woman’s notes on the pledges and the rest of it — that all came to nothing. Yours was one of a hundred. I happened, too, to hear of the scene at the office, from a man who described it capitally, unconsciously reproducing the scene with great vividness. It was just one thing after another, Rodion Romanovitch, my dear fellow! How could I avoid being brought to certain ideas? From a hundred rabbits you can’t make a horse, a hundred suspicions don’t make a proof, as the English proverb says, but that’s only from the rational point of view — you can’t help being partial, for after all a lawyer is only human. I thought, too, of your article in that journal, do you remember, on your first visit we talked of it? I jeered at you at the time, but that was only to lead you on. I repeat, Rodion Romanovitch, you are ill and impatient. That you were bold, headstrong, in earnest and... had felt a great deal I recognised long before. I, too, have felt the same, so that your article seemed familiar to me. It was conceived on sleepless nights, with a throbbing heart, in ecstasy and suppressed enthusiasm. And that proud suppressed enthusiasm in young people is dangerous! I jeered at

you then, but let me tell you that, as a literary amateur, I am awfully fond of such first essays, full of the heat of youth. There is a mistiness and a chord vibrating in the mist. Your article is absurd and fantastic, but there's a transparent sincerity, a youthful incorruptible pride and the daring of despair in it. It's a gloomy article, but that's what's fine in it. I read your article and put it aside, thinking as I did so 'that man won't go the common way.' Well, I ask you, after that as a preliminary, how could I help being carried away by what followed? Oh, dear, I am not saying anything, I am not making any statement now. I simply noted it at the time. What is there in it? I reflected. There's nothing in it, that is really nothing and perhaps absolutely nothing. And it's not at all the thing for the prosecutor to let himself be carried away by notions: here I have Nikolay on my hands with actual evidence against him — you may think what you like of it, but it's evidence. He brings in his psychology, too; one has to consider him, too, for it's a matter of life and death. Why am I explaining this to you? That you may understand, and not blame my malicious behaviour on that occasion. It was not malicious, I assure you, he-he! Do you suppose I didn't come to search your room at the time? I did, I did, he-he! I was here when you were lying ill in bed, not officially, not in my own person, but I was here. Your room was searched to the last thread at the first suspicion; but *umsonst*! I thought to myself, now that man will come, will come of himself and quickly, too; if he's guilty, he's sure to come. Another man wouldn't, but he will. And you remember how Mr. Razumihin began discussing the subject with you? We arranged that to excite you, so we purposely spread rumours, that he might discuss the case with you, and Razumihin is not a man to restrain his indignation. Mr. Zametov was tremendously struck by your anger and your open daring. Think of blurting out in a restaurant 'I killed her.' It was too daring, too reckless. I thought so myself, if he is guilty he will be a formidable opponent. That was what I thought at the time. I was expecting you. But you simply bowled Zametov over and... well, you see, it all lies in this — that this damnable psychology can be taken two ways! Well, I kept expecting you, and so it was, you came! My heart was fairly throbbing. Ach!

"Now, why need you have come? Your laughter, too, as you came in, do you remember? I saw it all plain as daylight, but if I hadn't expected you so specially, I should not have noticed anything in your laughter. You see what influence a mood has! Mr. Razumihin then — ah, that stone, that stone

under which the things were hidden! I seem to see it somewhere in a kitchen garden. It was in a kitchen garden, you told Zametov and afterwards you repeated that in my office? And when we began picking your article to pieces, how you explained it! One could take every word of yours in two senses, as though there were another meaning hidden.

“So in this way, Rodion Romanovitch, I reached the furthest limit, and knocking my head against a post, I pulled myself up, asking myself what I was about. After all, I said, you can take it all in another sense if you like, and it’s more natural so, indeed. I couldn’t help admitting it was more natural. I was bothered! ‘No, I’d better get hold of some little fact’ I said. So when I heard of the bell-ringing, I held my breath and was all in a tremor. ‘Here is my little fact,’ thought I, and I didn’t think it over, I simply wouldn’t. I would have given a thousand roubles at that minute to have seen you with my own eyes, when you walked a hundred paces beside that workman, after he had called you murderer to your face, and you did not dare to ask him a question all the way. And then what about your trembling, what about your bell-ringing in your illness, in semi-delirium?

“And so, Rodion Romanovitch, can you wonder that I played such pranks on you? And what made you come at that very minute? Someone seemed to have sent you, by Jove! And if Nikolay had not parted us... and do you remember Nikolay at the time? Do you remember him clearly? It was a thunderbolt, a regular thunderbolt! And how I met him! I didn’t believe in the thunderbolt, not for a minute. You could see it for yourself; and how could I? Even afterwards, when you had gone and he began making very, very plausible answers on certain points, so that I was surprised at him myself, even then I didn’t believe his story! You see what it is to be as firm as a rock! No, thought I, *Morgenfrüh*. What has Nikolay got to do with it!”

“Razumihin told me just now that you think Nikolay guilty and had yourself assured him of it....”

His voice failed him, and he broke off. He had been listening in indescribable agitation, as this man who had seen through and through him, went back upon himself. He was afraid of believing it and did not believe it. In those still ambiguous words he kept eagerly looking for something more definite and conclusive.

“Mr. Razumihin!” cried Porfiry Petrovitch, seeming glad of a question from Raskolnikov, who had till then been silent. “He-he-he! But I had to put

Mr. Razumihin off; two is company, three is none. Mr. Razumihin is not the right man, besides he is an outsider. He came running to me with a pale face.... But never mind him, why bring him in? To return to Nikolay, would you like to know what sort of a type he is, how I understand him, that is? To begin with, he is still a child and not exactly a coward, but something by way of an artist. Really, don't laugh at my describing him so. He is innocent and responsive to influence. He has a heart, and is a fantastic fellow. He sings and dances, he tells stories, they say, so that people come from other villages to hear him. He attends school too, and laughs till he cries if you hold up a finger to him; he will drink himself senseless — not as a regular vice, but at times, when people treat him, like a child. And he stole, too, then, without knowing it himself, for 'How can it be stealing, if one picks it up?' And do you know he is an Old Believer, or rather a dissenter? There have been Wanderers[*] in his family, and he was for two years in his village under the spiritual guidance of a certain elder. I learnt all this from Nikolay and from his fellow villagers. And what's more, he wanted to run into the wilderness! He was full of fervour, prayed at night, read the old books, 'the true' ones, and read himself crazy.

[*] A religious sect. — TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

"Petersburg had a great effect upon him, especially the women and the wine. He responds to everything and he forgot the elder and all that. I learnt that an artist here took a fancy to him, and used to go and see him, and now this business came upon him.

"Well, he was frightened, he tried to hang himself! He ran away! How can one get over the idea the people have of Russian legal proceedings? The very word 'trial' frightens some of them. Whose fault is it? We shall see what the new juries will do. God grant they do good! Well, in prison, it seems, he remembered the venerable elder; the Bible, too, made its appearance again. Do you know, Rodion Romanovitch, the force of the word 'suffering' among some of these people! It's not a question of suffering for someone's benefit, but simply, 'one must suffer.' If they suffer at the hands of the authorities, so much the better. In my time there was a very meek and mild prisoner who spent a whole year in prison always reading his Bible on the stove at night and he read himself crazy, and so crazy, do you know, that one day, apropos of nothing, he seized a brick and flung it at the governor; though he had done him no harm. And the way he threw it too: aimed it a yard on one side on purpose, for fear of hurting him.

Well, we know what happens to a prisoner who assaults an officer with a weapon. So ‘he took his suffering.’

“So I suspect now that Nikolay wants to take his suffering or something of the sort. I know it for certain from facts, indeed. Only he doesn’t know that I know. What, you don’t admit that there are such fantastic people among the peasants? Lots of them. The elder now has begun influencing him, especially since he tried to hang himself. But he’ll come and tell me all himself. You think he’ll hold out? Wait a bit, he’ll take his words back. I am waiting from hour to hour for him to come and abjure his evidence. I have come to like that Nikolay and am studying him in detail. And what do you think? He-he! He answered me very plausibly on some points, he obviously had collected some evidence and prepared himself cleverly. But on other points he is simply at sea, knows nothing and doesn’t even suspect that he doesn’t know!

“No, Rodion Romanovitch, Nikolay doesn’t come in! This is a fantastic, gloomy business, a modern case, an incident of to-day when the heart of man is troubled, when the phrase is quoted that blood ‘renews,’ when comfort is preached as the aim of life. Here we have bookish dreams, a heart unhinged by theories. Here we see resolution in the first stage, but resolution of a special kind: he resolved to do it like jumping over a precipice or from a bell tower and his legs shook as he went to the crime. He forgot to shut the door after him, and murdered two people for a theory. He committed the murder and couldn’t take the money, and what he did manage to snatch up he hid under a stone. It wasn’t enough for him to suffer agony behind the door while they battered at the door and rung the bell, no, he had to go to the empty lodging, half delirious, to recall the bell-ringing, he wanted to feel the cold shiver over again.... Well, that we grant, was through illness, but consider this: he is a murderer, but looks upon himself as an honest man, despises others, poses as injured innocence. No, that’s not the work of a Nikolay, my dear Rodion Romanovitch!”

All that had been said before had sounded so like a recantation that these words were too great a shock. Raskolnikov shuddered as though he had been stabbed.

“Then... who then... is the murderer?” he asked in a breathless voice, unable to restrain himself.

Porfiry Petrovitch sank back in his chair, as though he were amazed at the question.

“Who is the murderer?” he repeated, as though unable to believe his ears. “Why, *you*, Rodion Romanovitch! You are the murderer,” he added, almost in a whisper, in a voice of genuine conviction.

Raskolnikov leapt from the sofa, stood up for a few seconds and sat down again without uttering a word. His face twitched convulsively.

“Your lip is twitching just as it did before,” Porfiry Petrovitch observed almost sympathetically. “You’ve been misunderstanding me, I think, Rodion Romanovitch,” he added after a brief pause, “that’s why you are so surprised. I came on purpose to tell you everything and deal openly with you.”

“It was not I murdered her,” Raskolnikov whispered like a frightened child caught in the act.

“No, it was you, you Rodion Romanovitch, and no one else,” Porfiry whispered sternly, with conviction.

They were both silent and the silence lasted strangely long, about ten minutes. Raskolnikov put his elbow on the table and passed his fingers through his hair. Porfiry Petrovitch sat quietly waiting. Suddenly Raskolnikov looked scornfully at Porfiry.

“You are at your old tricks again, Porfiry Petrovitch! Your old method again. I wonder you don’t get sick of it!”

“Oh, stop that, what does that matter now? It would be a different matter if there were witnesses present, but we are whispering alone. You see yourself that I have not come to chase and capture you like a hare. Whether you confess it or not is nothing to me now; for myself, I am convinced without it.”

“If so, what did you come for?” Raskolnikov asked irritably. “I ask you the same question again: if you consider me guilty, why don’t you take me to prison?”

“Oh, that’s your question! I will answer you, point for point. In the first place, to arrest you so directly is not to my interest.”

“How so? If you are convinced you ought....”

“Ach, what if I am convinced? That’s only my dream for the time. Why should I put you in safety? You know that’s it, since you ask me to do it. If I confront you with that workman for instance and you say to him ‘were you drunk or not? Who saw me with you? I simply took you to be drunk, and you were drunk, too.’ Well, what could I answer, especially as your story is a more likely one than his? for there’s nothing but psychology to support his

evidence — that's almost unseemly with his ugly mug, while you hit the mark exactly, for the rascal is an inveterate drunkard and notoriously so. And I have myself admitted candidly several times already that that psychology can be taken in two ways and that the second way is stronger and looks far more probable, and that apart from that I have as yet nothing against you. And though I shall put you in prison and indeed have come — quite contrary to etiquette — to inform you of it beforehand, yet I tell you frankly, also contrary to etiquette, that it won't be to my advantage. Well, secondly, I've come to you because..."

"Yes, yes, secondly?" Raskolnikov was listening breathless.

"Because, as I told you just now, I consider I owe you an explanation. I don't want you to look upon me as a monster, as I have a genuine liking for you, you may believe me or not. And in the third place I've come to you with a direct and open proposition — that you should surrender and confess. It will be infinitely more to your advantage and to my advantage too, for my task will be done. Well, is this open on my part or not?"

Raskolnikov thought a minute.

"Listen, Porfiry Petrovitch. You said just now you have nothing but psychology to go on, yet now you've gone on mathematics. Well, what if you are mistaken yourself, now?"

"No, Rodion Romanovitch, I am not mistaken. I have a little fact even then, Providence sent it me."

"What little fact?"

"I won't tell you what, Rodion Romanovitch. And in any case, I haven't the right to put it off any longer, I must arrest you. So think it over: it makes no difference to me *now* and so I speak only for your sake. Believe me, it will be better, Rodion Romanovitch."

Raskolnikov smiled malignantly.

"That's not simply ridiculous, it's positively shameless. Why, even if I were guilty, which I don't admit, what reason should I have to confess, when you tell me yourself that I shall be in greater safety in prison?"

"Ah, Rodion Romanovitch, don't put too much faith in words, perhaps prison will not be altogether a restful place. That's only theory and my theory, and what authority am I for you? Perhaps, too, even now I am hiding something from you? I can't lay bare everything, he-he! And how can you ask what advantage? Don't you know how it would lessen your sentence? You would be confessing at a moment when another man has

taken the crime on himself and so has muddled the whole case. Consider that! I swear before God that I will so arrange that your confession shall come as a complete surprise. We will make a clean sweep of all these psychological points, of a suspicion against you, so that your crime will appear to have been something like an aberration, for in truth it was an aberration. I am an honest man, Rodion Romanovitch, and will keep my word."

Raskolnikov maintained a mournful silence and let his head sink dejectedly. He pondered a long while and at last smiled again, but his smile was sad and gentle.

"No!" he said, apparently abandoning all attempt to keep up appearances with Porfiry, "it's not worth it, I don't care about lessening the sentence!"

"That's just what I was afraid of!" Porfiry cried warmly and, as it seemed, involuntarily. "That's just what I feared, that you wouldn't care about the mitigation of sentence."

Raskolnikov looked sadly and expressively at him.

"Ah, don't disdain life!" Porfiry went on. "You have a great deal of it still before you. How can you say you don't want a mitigation of sentence? You are an impatient fellow!"

"A great deal of what lies before me?"

"Of life. What sort of prophet are you, do you know much about it? Seek and ye shall find. This may be God's means for bringing you to Him. And it's not for ever, the bondage...."

"The time will be shortened," laughed Raskolnikov.

"Why, is it the bourgeois disgrace you are afraid of? It may be that you are afraid of it without knowing it, because you are young! But anyway *you* shouldn't be afraid of giving yourself up and confessing."

"Ach, hang it!" Raskolnikov whispered with loathing and contempt, as though he did not want to speak aloud.

He got up again as though he meant to go away, but sat down again in evident despair.

"Hang it, if you like! You've lost faith and you think that I am grossly flattering you; but how long has your life been? How much do you understand? You made up a theory and then were ashamed that it broke down and turned out to be not at all original! It turned out something base, that's true, but you are not hopelessly base. By no means so base! At least you didn't deceive yourself for long, you went straight to the furthest point

at one bound. How do I regard you? I regard you as one of those men who would stand and smile at their torturer while he cuts their entrails out, if only they have found faith or God. Find it and you will live. You have long needed a change of air. Suffering, too, is a good thing. Suffer! Maybe Nikolay is right in wanting to suffer. I know you don't believe in it — but don't be over-wise; fling yourself straight into life, without deliberation; don't be afraid — the flood will bear you to the bank and set you safe on your feet again. What bank? How can I tell? I only believe that you have long life before you. I know that you take all my words now for a set speech prepared beforehand, but maybe you will remember them after. They may be of use some time. That's why I speak. It's as well that you only killed the old woman. If you'd invented another theory you might perhaps have done something a thousand times more hideous. You ought to thank God, perhaps. How do you know? Perhaps God is saving you for something. But keep a good heart and have less fear! Are you afraid of the great expiation before you? No, it would be shameful to be afraid of it. Since you have taken such a step, you must harden your heart. There is justice in it. You must fulfil the demands of justice. I know that you don't believe it, but indeed, life will bring you through. You will live it down in time. What you need now is fresh air, fresh air, fresh air!"

Raskolnikov positively started.

"But who are you? what prophet are you? From the height of what majestic calm do you proclaim these words of wisdom?"

"Who am I? I am a man with nothing to hope for, that's all. A man perhaps of feeling and sympathy, maybe of some knowledge too, but my day is over. But you are a different matter, there is life waiting for you. Though, who knows? maybe your life, too, will pass off in smoke and come to nothing. Come, what does it matter, that you will pass into another class of men? It's not comfort you regret, with your heart! What of it that perhaps no one will see you for so long? It's not time, but yourself that will decide that. Be the sun and all will see you. The sun has before all to be the sun. Why are you smiling again? At my being such a Schiller? I bet you're imagining that I am trying to get round you by flattery. Well, perhaps I am, he-he-he! Perhaps you'd better not believe my word, perhaps you'd better never believe it altogether — I'm made that way, I confess it. But let me add, you can judge for yourself, I think, how far I am a base sort of man and how far I am honest."

“When do you mean to arrest me?”

“Well, I can let you walk about another day or two. Think it over, my dear fellow, and pray to God. It’s more in your interest, believe me.”

“And what if I run away?” asked Raskolnikov with a strange smile.

“No, you won’t run away. A peasant would run away, a fashionable dissenter would run away, the flunkey of another man’s thought, for you’ve only to show him the end of your little finger and he’ll be ready to believe in anything for the rest of his life. But you’ve ceased to believe in your theory already, what will you run away with? And what would you do in hiding? It would be hateful and difficult for you, and what you need more than anything in life is a definite position, an atmosphere to suit you. And what sort of atmosphere would you have? If you ran away, you’d come back to yourself. *You can’t get on without us.* And if I put you in prison — say you’ve been there a month, or two, or three — remember my word, you’ll confess of yourself and perhaps to your own surprise. You won’t know an hour beforehand that you are coming with a confession. I am convinced that you will decide, ‘to take your suffering.’ You don’t believe my words now, but you’ll come to it of yourself. For suffering, Rodion Romanovitch, is a great thing. Never mind my having grown fat, I know all the same. Don’t laugh at it, there’s an idea in suffering, Nokolay is right. No, you won’t run away, Rodion Romanovitch.”

Raskolnikov got up and took his cap. Porfiry Petrovitch also rose.

“Are you going for a walk? The evening will be fine, if only we don’t have a storm. Though it would be a good thing to freshen the air.”

He, too, took his cap.

“Porfiry Petrovitch, please don’t take up the notion that I have confessed to you to-day,” Raskolnikov pronounced with sullen insistence. “You’re a strange man and I have listened to you from simple curiosity. But I have admitted nothing, remember that!”

“Oh, I know that, I’ll remember. Look at him, he’s trembling! Don’t be uneasy, my dear fellow, have it your own way. Walk about a bit, you won’t be able to walk too far. If anything happens, I have one request to make of you,” he added, dropping his voice. “It’s an awkward one, but important. If anything were to happen (though indeed I don’t believe in it and think you quite incapable of it), yet in case you were taken during these forty or fifty hours with the notion of putting an end to the business in some other way, in some fantastic fashion — laying hands on yourself — (it’s an absurd

proposition, but you must forgive me for it) do leave a brief but precise note, only two lines, and mention the stone. It will be more generous. Come, till we meet! Good thoughts and sound decisions to you!”

Porfiry went out, stooping and avoiding looking at Raskolnikov. The latter went to the window and waited with irritable impatience till he calculated that Porfiry had reached the street and moved away. Then he too went hurriedly out of the room.

CHAPTER III

He hurried to Svidrigaïlov's. What he had to hope from that man he did not know. But that man had some hidden power over him. Having once recognised this, he could not rest, and now the time had come.

On the way, one question particularly worried him: had Svidrigaïlov been to Porfiry's?

As far as he could judge, he would swear to it, that he had not. He pondered again and again, went over Porfiry's visit; no, he hadn't been, of course he hadn't.

But if he had not been yet, would he go? Meanwhile, for the present he fancied he couldn't. Why? He could not have explained, but if he could, he would not have wasted much thought over it at the moment. It all worried him and at the same time he could not attend to it. Strange to say, none would have believed it perhaps, but he only felt a faint vague anxiety about his immediate future. Another, much more important anxiety tormented him — it concerned himself, but in a different, more vital way. Moreover, he was conscious of immense moral fatigue, though his mind was working better that morning than it had done of late.

And was it worth while, after all that had happened, to contend with these new trivial difficulties? Was it worth while, for instance, to manoeuvre that Svidrigaïlov should not go to Porfiry's? Was it worth while to investigate, to ascertain the facts, to waste time over anyone like Svidrigaïlov?

Oh, how sick he was of it all!

And yet he was hastening to Svidrigaïlov; could he be expecting something *new* from him, information, or means of escape? Men will catch at straws! Was it destiny or some instinct bringing them together? Perhaps it was only fatigue, despair; perhaps it was not Svidrigaïlov but some other whom he needed, and Svidrigaïlov had simply presented himself by chance. Sonia? But what should he go to Sonia for now? To beg her tears again? He was afraid of Sonia, too. Sonia stood before him as an irrevocable sentence. He must go his own way or hers. At that moment especially he did not feel equal to seeing her. No, would it not be better to try Svidrigaïlov? And he could not help inwardly owning that he had long felt that he must see him for some reason.

But what could they have in common? Their very evil-doing could not be of the same kind. The man, moreover, was very unpleasant, evidently depraved, undoubtedly cunning and deceitful, possibly malignant. Such stories were told about him. It is true he was befriending Katerina Ivanovna’s children, but who could tell with what motive and what it meant? The man always had some design, some project.

There was another thought which had been continually hovering of late about Raskolnikov’s mind, and causing him great uneasiness. It was so painful that he made distinct efforts to get rid of it. He sometimes thought that Svidrigaïlov was dogging his footsteps. Svidrigaïlov had found out his secret and had had designs on Dounia. What if he had them still? Wasn’t it practically certain that he had? And what if, having learnt his secret and so having gained power over him, he were to use it as a weapon against Dounia?

This idea sometimes even tormented his dreams, but it had never presented itself so vividly to him as on his way to Svidrigaïlov. The very thought moved him to gloomy rage. To begin with, this would transform everything, even his own position; he would have at once to confess his secret to Dounia. Would he have to give himself up perhaps to prevent Dounia from taking some rash step? The letter? This morning Dounia had received a letter. From whom could she get letters in Petersburg? Luzhin, perhaps? It’s true Razumihin was there to protect her, but Razumihin knew nothing of the position. Perhaps it was his duty to tell Razumihin? He thought of it with repugnance.

In any case he must see Svidrigaïlov as soon as possible, he decided finally. Thank God, the details of the interview were of little consequence, if only he could get at the root of the matter; but if Svidrigaïlov were capable... if he were intriguing against Dounia — then...

Raskolnikov was so exhausted by what he had passed through that month that he could only decide such questions in one way; “then I shall kill him,” he thought in cold despair.

A sudden anguish oppressed his heart, he stood still in the middle of the street and began looking about to see where he was and which way he was going. He found himself in X. Prospect, thirty or forty paces from the Hay Market, through which he had come. The whole second storey of the house on the left was used as a tavern. All the windows were wide open; judging from the figures moving at the windows, the rooms were full to

overflowing. There were sounds of singing, of clarionet and violin, and the boom of a Turkish drum. He could hear women shrieking. He was about to turn back wondering why he had come to the X. Prospect, when suddenly at one of the end windows he saw Svidrigaïlov, sitting at a tea-table right in the open window with a pipe in his mouth. Raskolnikov was dreadfully taken aback, almost terrified. Svidrigaïlov was silently watching and scrutinising him and, what struck Raskolnikov at once, seemed to be meaning to get up and slip away unobserved. Raskolnikov at once pretended not to have seen him, but to be looking absent-mindedly away, while he watched him out of the corner of his eye. His heart was beating violently. Yet, it was evident that Svidrigaïlov did not want to be seen. He took the pipe out of his mouth and was on the point of concealing himself, but as he got up and moved back his chair, he seemed to have become suddenly aware that Raskolnikov had seen him, and was watching him. What had passed between them was much the same as what happened at their first meeting in Raskolnikov's room. A sly smile came into Svidrigaïlov's face and grew broader and broader. Each knew that he was seen and watched by the other. At last Svidrigaïlov broke into a loud laugh.

"Well, well, come in if you want me; I am here!" he shouted from the window.

Raskolnikov went up into the tavern. He found Svidrigaïlov in a tiny back room, adjoining the saloon in which merchants, clerks and numbers of people of all sorts were drinking tea at twenty little tables to the desperate bawling of a chorus of singers. The click of billiard balls could be heard in the distance. On the table before Svidrigaïlov stood an open bottle and a glass half full of champagne. In the room he found also a boy with a little hand organ, a healthy-looking red-cheeked girl of eighteen, wearing a tucked-up striped skirt, and a Tyrolese hat with ribbons. In spite of the chorus in the other room, she was singing some servants' hall song in a rather husky contralto, to the accompaniment of the organ.

"Come, that's enough," Svidrigaïlov stopped her at Raskolnikov's entrance. The girl at once broke off and stood waiting respectfully. She had sung her guttural rhymes, too, with a serious and respectful expression in her face.

"Hey, Philip, a glass!" shouted Svidrigaïlov.

"I won't drink anything," said Raskolnikov.

“As you like, I didn’t mean it for you. Drink, Katia! I don’t want anything more to-day, you can go.” He poured her out a full glass, and laid down a yellow note.

Katia drank off her glass of wine, as women do, without putting it down, in twenty gulps, took the note and kissed Svidrigaïlov’s hand, which he allowed quite seriously. She went out of the room and the boy trailed after her with the organ. Both had been brought in from the street. Svidrigaïlov had not been a week in Petersburg, but everything about him was already, so to speak, on a patriarchal footing; the waiter, Philip, was by now an old friend and very obsequious.

The door leading to the saloon had a lock on it. Svidrigaïlov was at home in this room and perhaps spent whole days in it. The tavern was dirty and wretched, not even second-rate.

“I was going to see you and looking for you,” Raskolnikov began, “but I don’t know what made me turn from the Hay Market into the X. Prospect just now. I never take this turning. I turn to the right from the Hay Market. And this isn’t the way to you. I simply turned and here you are. It is strange!”

“Why don’t you say at once ‘it’s a miracle’?”

“Because it may be only chance.”

“Oh, that’s the way with all you folk,” laughed Svidrigaïlov. “You won’t admit it, even if you do inwardly believe it a miracle! Here you say that it may be only chance. And what cowards they all are here, about having an opinion of their own, you can’t fancy, Rodion Romanovitch. I don’t mean you, you have an opinion of your own and are not afraid to have it. That’s how it was you attracted my curiosity.”

“Nothing else?”

“Well, that’s enough, you know,” Svidrigaïlov was obviously exhilarated, but only slightly so, he had not had more than half a glass of wine.

“I fancy you came to see me before you knew that I was capable of having what you call an opinion of my own,” observed Raskolnikov.

“Oh, well, it was a different matter. Everyone has his own plans. And apropos of the miracle let me tell you that I think you have been asleep for the last two or three days. I told you of this tavern myself, there is no miracle in your coming straight here. I explained the way myself, told you where it was, and the hours you could find me here. Do you remember?”

“I don’t remember,” answered Raskolnikov with surprise.

“I believe you. I told you twice. The address has been stamped mechanically on your memory. You turned this way mechanically and yet precisely according to the direction, though you are not aware of it. When I told you then, I hardly hoped you understood me. You give yourself away too much, Rodion Romanovitch. And another thing, I’m convinced there are lots of people in Petersburg who talk to themselves as they walk. This is a town of crazy people. If only we had scientific men, doctors, lawyers and philosophers might make most valuable investigations in Petersburg each in his own line. There are few places where there are so many gloomy, strong and queer influences on the soul of man as in Petersburg. The mere influences of climate mean so much. And it’s the administrative centre of all Russia and its character must be reflected on the whole country. But that is neither here nor there now. The point is that I have several times watched you. You walk out of your house — holding your head high — twenty paces from home you let it sink, and fold your hands behind your back. You look and evidently see nothing before nor beside you. At last you begin moving your lips and talking to yourself, and sometimes you wave one hand and declaim, and at last stand still in the middle of the road. That’s not at all the thing. Someone may be watching you besides me, and it won’t do you any good. It’s nothing really to do with me and I can’t cure you, but, of course, you understand me.”

“Do you know that I am being followed?” asked Raskolnikov, looking inquisitively at him.

“No, I know nothing about it,” said Svidrigaïlov, seeming surprised.

“Well, then, let us leave me alone,” Raskolnikov muttered, frowning.

“Very good, let us leave you alone.”

“You had better tell me, if you come here to drink, and directed me twice to come here to you, why did you hide, and try to get away just now when I looked at the window from the street? I saw it.”

“He-he! And why was it you lay on your sofa with closed eyes and pretended to be asleep, though you were wide awake while I stood in your doorway? I saw it.”

“I may have had... reasons. You know that yourself.”

“And I may have had my reasons, though you don’t know them.”

Raskolnikov dropped his right elbow on the table, leaned his chin in the fingers of his right hand, and stared intently at Svidrigaïlov. For a full

minute he scrutinised his face, which had impressed him before. It was a strange face, like a mask; white and red, with bright red lips, with a flaxen beard, and still thick flaxen hair. His eyes were somehow too blue and their expression somehow too heavy and fixed. There was something awfully unpleasant in that handsome face, which looked so wonderfully young for his age. Svidrigaïlov was smartly dressed in light summer clothes and was particularly dainty in his linen. He wore a huge ring with a precious stone in it.

“Have I got to bother myself about you, too, now?” said Raskolnikov suddenly, coming with nervous impatience straight to the point. “Even though perhaps you are the most dangerous man if you care to injure me, I don’t want to put myself out any more. I will show you at once that I don’t prize myself as you probably think I do. I’ve come to tell you at once that if you keep to your former intentions with regard to my sister and if you think to derive any benefit in that direction from what has been discovered of late, I will kill you before you get me locked up. You can reckon on my word. You know that I can keep it. And in the second place if you want to tell me anything — for I keep fancying all this time that you have something to tell me — make haste and tell it, for time is precious and very likely it will soon be too late.”

“Why in such haste?” asked Svidrigaïlov, looking at him curiously.

“Everyone has his plans,” Raskolnikov answered gloomily and impatiently.

“You urged me yourself to frankness just now, and at the first question you refuse to answer,” Svidrigaïlov observed with a smile. “You keep fancying that I have aims of my own and so you look at me with suspicion. Of course it’s perfectly natural in your position. But though I should like to be friends with you, I shan’t trouble myself to convince you of the contrary. The game isn’t worth the candle and I wasn’t intending to talk to you about anything special.”

“What did you want me, for, then? It was you who came hanging about me.”

“Why, simply as an interesting subject for observation. I liked the fantastic nature of your position — that’s what it was! Besides you are the brother of a person who greatly interested me, and from that person I had in the past heard a very great deal about you, from which I gathered that you had a great influence over her; isn’t that enough? Ha-ha-ha! Still I must

admit that your question is rather complex, and is difficult for me to answer. Here, you, for instance, have come to me not only for a definite object, but for the sake of hearing something new. Isn't that so? Isn't that so?" persisted Svidrigaïlov with a sly smile. "Well, can't you fancy then that I, too, on my way here in the train was reckoning on you, on your telling me something new, and on my making some profit out of you! You see what rich men we are!"

"What profit could you make?"

"How can I tell you? How do I know? You see in what a tavern I spend all my time and it's my enjoyment, that's to say it's no great enjoyment, but one must sit somewhere; that poor Katia now — you saw her?... If only I had been a glutton now, a club gourmand, but you see I can eat this."

He pointed to a little table in the corner where the remnants of a terrible-looking beef-steak and potatoes lay on a tin dish.

"Have you dined, by the way? I've had something and want nothing more. I don't drink, for instance, at all. Except for champagne I never touch anything, and not more than a glass of that all the evening, and even that is enough to make my head ache. I ordered it just now to wind myself up, for I am just going off somewhere and you see me in a peculiar state of mind. That was why I hid myself just now like a schoolboy, for I was afraid you would hinder me. But I believe," he pulled out his watch, "I can spend an hour with you. It's half-past four now. If only I'd been something, a landowner, a father, a cavalry officer, a photographer, a journalist... I am nothing, no specialty, and sometimes I am positively bored. I really thought you would tell me something new."

"But what are you, and why have you come here?"

"What am I? You know, a gentleman, I served for two years in the cavalry, then I knocked about here in Petersburg, then I married Marfa Petrovna and lived in the country. There you have my biography!"

"You are a gambler, I believe?"

"No, a poor sort of gambler. A card-sharper — not a gambler."

"You have been a card-sharper then?"

"Yes, I've been a card-sharper too."

"Didn't you get thrashed sometimes?"

"It did happen. Why?"

"Why, you might have challenged them... altogether it must have been lively."

“I won’t contradict you, and besides I am no hand at philosophy. I confess that I hastened here for the sake of the women.”

“As soon as you buried Marfa Petrovna?”

“Quite so,” Svidrigaïlov smiled with engaging candour. “What of it? You seem to find something wrong in my speaking like that about women?”

“You ask whether I find anything wrong in vice?”

“Vice! Oh, that’s what you are after! But I’ll answer you in order, first about women in general; you know I am fond of talking. Tell me, what should I restrain myself for? Why should I give up women, since I have a passion for them? It’s an occupation, anyway.”

“So you hope for nothing here but vice?”

“Oh, very well, for vice then. You insist on its being vice. But anyway I like a direct question. In this vice at least there is something permanent, founded indeed upon nature and not dependent on fantasy, something present in the blood like an ever-burning ember, for ever setting one on fire and, maybe, not to be quickly extinguished, even with years. You’ll agree it’s an occupation of a sort.”

“That’s nothing to rejoice at, it’s a disease and a dangerous one.”

“Oh, that’s what you think, is it! I agree, that it is a disease like everything that exceeds moderation. And, of course, in this one must exceed moderation. But in the first place, everybody does so in one way or another, and in the second place, of course, one ought to be moderate and prudent, however mean it may be, but what am I to do? If I hadn’t this, I might have to shoot myself. I am ready to admit that a decent man ought to put up with being bored, but yet...”

“And could you shoot yourself?”

“Oh, come!” Svidrigaïlov parried with disgust. “Please don’t speak of it,” he added hurriedly and with none of the bragging tone he had shown in all the previous conversation. His face quite changed. “I admit it’s an unpardonable weakness, but I can’t help it. I am afraid of death and I dislike its being talked of. Do you know that I am to a certain extent a mystic?”

“Ah, the apparitions of Marfa Petrovna! Do they still go on visiting you?”

“Oh, don’t talk of them; there have been no more in Petersburg, confound them!” he cried with an air of irritation. “Let’s rather talk of that... though... H’m! I have not much time, and can’t stay long with you, it’s a pity! I should have found plenty to tell you.”

“What’s your engagement, a woman?”

“Yes, a woman, a casual incident.... No, that’s not what I want to talk of.”

“And the hideousness, the filthiness of all your surroundings, doesn’t that affect you? Have you lost the strength to stop yourself?”

“And do you pretend to strength, too? He-he-he! You surprised me just now, Rodion Romanovitch, though I knew beforehand it would be so. You preach to me about vice and æsthetics! You — a Schiller, you — an idealist! Of course that’s all as it should be and it would be surprising if it were not so, yet it is strange in reality.... Ah, what a pity I have no time, for you’re a most interesting type! And, by-the-way, are you fond of Schiller? I am awfully fond of him.”

“But what a braggart you are,” Raskolnikov said with some disgust.

“Upon my word, I am not,” answered Svidrigaïlov laughing. “However, I won’t dispute it, let me be a braggart, why not brag, if it hurts no one? I spent seven years in the country with Marfa Petrovna, so now when I come across an intelligent person like you — intelligent and highly interesting — I am simply glad to talk and, besides, I’ve drunk that half-glass of champagne and it’s gone to my head a little. And besides, there’s a certain fact that has wound me up tremendously, but about that I... will keep quiet. Where are you off to?” he asked in alarm.

Raskolnikov had begun getting up. He felt oppressed and stifled and, as it were, ill at ease at having come here. He felt convinced that Svidrigaïlov was the most worthless scoundrel on the face of the earth.

“A-ach! Sit down, stay a little!” Svidrigaïlov begged. “Let them bring you some tea, anyway. Stay a little, I won’t talk nonsense, about myself, I mean. I’ll tell you something. If you like I’ll tell you how a woman tried ‘to save’ me, as you would call it? It will be an answer to your first question indeed, for the woman was your sister. May I tell you? It will help to spend the time.”

“Tell me, but I trust that you...”

“Oh, don’t be uneasy. Besides, even in a worthless low fellow like me, Avdotya Romanovna can only excite the deepest respect.”

CHAPTER IV

“You know perhaps — yes, I told you myself,” began Svidrigaïlov, “that I was in the debtors’ prison here, for an immense sum, and had not any expectation of being able to pay it. There’s no need to go into particulars how Marfa Petrovna bought me out; do you know to what a point of insanity a woman can sometimes love? She was an honest woman, and very sensible, although completely uneducated. Would you believe that this honest and jealous woman, after many scenes of hysterics and reproaches, condescended to enter into a kind of contract with me which she kept throughout our married life? She was considerably older than I, and besides, she always kept a clove or something in her mouth. There was so much swinishness in my soul and honesty too, of a sort, as to tell her straight out that I couldn’t be absolutely faithful to her. This confession drove her to frenzy, but yet she seems in a way to have liked my brutal frankness. She thought it showed I was unwilling to deceive her if I warned her like this beforehand and for a jealous woman, you know, that’s the first consideration. After many tears an unwritten contract was drawn up between us: first, that I would never leave Marfa Petrovna and would always be her husband; secondly, that I would never absent myself without her permission; thirdly, that I would never set up a permanent mistress; fourthly, in return for this, Marfa Petrovna gave me a free hand with the maidservants, but only with her secret knowledge; fifthly, God forbid my falling in love with a woman of our class; sixthly, in case I — which God forbid — should be visited by a great serious passion I was bound to reveal it to Marfa Petrovna. On this last score, however, Marfa Petrovna was fairly at ease. She was a sensible woman and so she could not help looking upon me as a dissolute profligate incapable of real love. But a sensible woman and a jealous woman are two very different things, and that’s where the trouble came in. But to judge some people impartially we must renounce certain preconceived opinions and our habitual attitude to the ordinary people about us. I have reason to have faith in your judgment rather than in anyone’s. Perhaps you have already heard a great deal that was ridiculous and absurd about Marfa Petrovna. She certainly had some very ridiculous ways, but I tell you frankly that I feel really sorry for the innumerable woes of which I was the cause. Well, and that’s enough, I think, by way of a

decorous *oraison funèbre* for the most tender wife of a most tender husband. When we quarrelled, I usually held my tongue and did not irritate her and that gentlemanly conduct rarely failed to attain its object, it influenced her, it pleased her, indeed. These were times when she was positively proud of me. But your sister she couldn’t put up with, anyway. And however she came to risk taking such a beautiful creature into her house as a governess. My explanation is that Marfa Petrovna was an ardent and impressionable woman and simply fell in love herself — literally fell in love — with your sister. Well, little wonder — look at Avdotya Romanovna! I saw the danger at the first glance and what do you think, I resolved not to look at her even. But Avdotya Romanovna herself made the first step, would you believe it? Would you believe it too that Marfa Petrovna was positively angry with me at first for my persistent silence about your sister, for my careless reception of her continual adoring praises of Avdotya Romanovna. I don’t know what it was she wanted! Well, of course, Marfa Petrovna told Avdotya Romanovna every detail about me. She had the unfortunate habit of telling literally everyone all our family secrets and continually complaining of me; how could she fail to confide in such a delightful new friend? I expect they talked of nothing else but me and no doubt Avdotya Romanovna heard all those dark mysterious rumours that were current about me.... I don’t mind betting that you too have heard something of the sort already?”

“I have. Luzhin charged you with having caused the death of a child. Is that true?”

“Don’t refer to those vulgar tales, I beg,” said Svidrigaïlov with disgust and annoyance. “If you insist on wanting to know about all that idiocy, I will tell you one day, but now...”

“I was told too about some footman of yours in the country whom you treated badly.”

“I beg you to drop the subject,” Svidrigaïlov interrupted again with obvious impatience.

“Was that the footman who came to you after death to fill your pipe?... you told me about it yourself.” Raskolnikov felt more and more irritated.

Svidrigaïlov looked at him attentively and Raskolnikov fancied he caught a flash of spiteful mockery in that look. But Svidrigaïlov restrained himself and answered very civilly:

“Yes, it was. I see that you, too, are extremely interested and shall feel it my duty to satisfy your curiosity at the first opportunity. Upon my soul! I see that I really might pass for a romantic figure with some people. Judge how grateful I must be to Marfa Petrovna for having repeated to Avdotya Romanovna such mysterious and interesting gossip about me. I dare not guess what impression it made on her, but in any case it worked in my interests. With all Avdotya Romanovna’s natural aversion and in spite of my invariably gloomy and repellent aspect — she did at least feel pity for me, pity for a lost soul. And if once a girl’s heart is moved to *pity*, it’s more dangerous than anything. She is bound to want to ‘save him,’ to bring him to his senses, and lift him up and draw him to nobler aims, and restore him to new life and usefulness — well, we all know how far such dreams can go. I saw at once that the bird was flying into the cage of herself. And I too made ready. I think you are frowning, Rodion Romanovitch? There’s no need. As you know, it all ended in smoke. (Hang it all, what a lot I am drinking!) Do you know, I always, from the very beginning, regretted that it wasn’t your sister’s fate to be born in the second or third century A.D. as the daughter of a reigning prince or some governor or pro-consul in Asia Minor. She would undoubtedly have been one of those who would endure martyrdom and would have smiled when they branded her bosom with hot pincers. And she would have gone to it of herself. And in the fourth or fifth century she would have walked away into the Egyptian desert and would have stayed there thirty years living on roots and ecstasies and visions. She is simply thirsting to face some torture for someone, and if she can’t get her torture, she’ll throw herself out of a window. I’ve heard something of a Mr. Razumihin — he’s said to be a sensible fellow; his surname suggests it, indeed. He’s probably a divinity student. Well, he’d better look after your sister! I believe I understand her, and I am proud of it. But at the beginning of an acquaintance, as you know, one is apt to be more heedless and stupid. One doesn’t see clearly. Hang it all, why is she so handsome? It’s not my fault. In fact, it began on my side with a most irresistible physical desire. Avdotya Romanovna is awfully chaste, incredibly and phenomenally so. Take note, I tell you this about your sister as a fact. She is almost morbidly chaste, in spite of her broad intelligence, and it will stand in her way. There happened to be a girl in the house then, Parasha, a black-eyed wench, whom I had never seen before — she had just come from another village — very pretty, but incredibly stupid: she burst into tears, wailed so that she could be

heard all over the place and caused scandal. One day after dinner Avdotya Romanovna followed me into an avenue in the garden and with flashing eyes *insisted* on my leaving poor Parasha alone. It was almost our first conversation by ourselves. I, of course, was only too pleased to obey her wishes, tried to appear disconcerted, embarrassed, in fact played my part not badly. Then came interviews, mysterious conversations, exhortations, entreaties, supplications, even tears — would you believe it, even tears? Think what the passion for propaganda will bring some girls to! I, of course, threw it all on my destiny, posed as hungering and thirsting for light, and finally resorted to the most powerful weapon in the subjection of the female heart, a weapon which never fails one. It's the well-known resource — flattery. Nothing in the world is harder than speaking the truth and nothing easier than flattery. If there's the hundredth part of a false note in speaking the truth, it leads to a discord, and that leads to trouble. But if all, to the last note, is false in flattery, it is just as agreeable, and is heard not without satisfaction. It may be a coarse satisfaction, but still a satisfaction. And however coarse the flattery, at least half will be sure to seem true. That's so for all stages of development and classes of society. A vestal virgin might be seduced by flattery. I can never remember without laughter how I once seduced a lady who was devoted to her husband, her children, and her principles. What fun it was and how little trouble! And the lady really had principles — of her own, anyway. All my tactics lay in simply being utterly annihilated and prostrate before her purity. I flattered her shamelessly, and as soon as I succeeded in getting a pressure of the hand, even a glance from her, I would reproach myself for having snatched it by force, and would declare that she had resisted, so that I could never have gained anything but for my being so unprincipled. I maintained that she was so innocent that she could not foresee my treachery, and yielded to me unconsciously, unawares, and so on. In fact, I triumphed, while my lady remained firmly convinced that she was innocent, chaste, and faithful to all her duties and obligations and had succumbed quite by accident. And how angry she was with me when I explained to her at last that it was my sincere conviction that she was just as eager as I. Poor Marfa Petrovna was awfully weak on the side of flattery, and if I had only cared to, I might have had all her property settled on me during her lifetime. (I am drinking an awful lot of wine now and talking too much.) I hope you won't be angry if I mention now that I was beginning to produce the same effect on Avdotya

Romanovna. But I was stupid and impatient and spoiled it all. Avdotya Romanovna had several times — and one time in particular — been greatly displeased by the expression of my eyes, would you believe it? There was sometimes a light in them which frightened her and grew stronger and stronger and more unguarded till it was hateful to her. No need to go into detail, but we parted. There I acted stupidly again. I fell to jeering in the coarsest way at all such propaganda and efforts to convert me; Parasha came on to the scene again, and not she alone; in fact there was a tremendous to-do. Ah, Rodion Romanovitch, if you could only see how your sister's eyes can flash sometimes! Never mind my being drunk at this moment and having had a whole glass of wine. I am speaking the truth. I assure you that this glance has haunted my dreams; the very rustle of her dress was more than I could stand at last. I really began to think that I might become epileptic. I could never have believed that I could be moved to such a frenzy. It was essential, indeed, to be reconciled, but by then it was impossible. And imagine what I did then! To what a pitch of stupidity a man can be brought by frenzy! Never undertake anything in a frenzy, Rodion Romanovitch. I reflected that Avdotya Romanovna was after all a beggar (ach, excuse me, that's not the word... but does it matter if it expresses the meaning?), that she lived by her work, that she had her mother and you to keep (ach, hang it, you are frowning again), and I resolved to offer her all my money — thirty thousand roubles I could have realised then — if she would run away with me here, to Petersburg. Of course I should have vowed eternal love, rapture, and so on. Do you know, I was so wild about her at that time that if she had told me to poison Marfa Petrovna or to cut her throat and to marry herself, it would have been done at once! But it ended in the catastrophe of which you know already. You can fancy how frantic I was when I heard that Marfa Petrovna had got hold of that scoundrelly attorney, Luzhin, and had almost made a match between them — which would really have been just the same thing as I was proposing. Wouldn't it? Wouldn't it? I notice that you've begun to be very attentive... you interesting young man...."

Svidrigaïlov struck the table with his fist impatiently. He was flushed. Raskolnikov saw clearly that the glass or glass and a half of champagne that he had sipped almost unconsciously was affecting him — and he resolved to take advantage of the opportunity. He felt very suspicious of Svidrigaïlov.

“Well, after what you have said, I am fully convinced that you have come to Petersburg with designs on my sister,” he said directly to Svidrigaïlov, in order to irritate him further.

“Oh, nonsense,” said Svidrigaïlov, seeming to rouse himself. “Why, I told you... besides your sister can’t endure me.”

“Yes, I am certain that she can’t, but that’s not the point.”

“Are you so sure that she can’t?” Svidrigaïlov screwed up his eyes and smiled mockingly. “You are right, she doesn’t love me, but you can never be sure of what has passed between husband and wife or lover and mistress. There’s always a little corner which remains a secret to the world and is only known to those two. Will you answer for it that Avdotya Romanovna regarded me with aversion?”

“From some words you’ve dropped, I notice that you still have designs — and of course evil ones — on Dounia and mean to carry them out promptly.”

“What, have I dropped words like that?” Svidrigaïlov asked in naïve dismay, taking not the slightest notice of the epithet bestowed on his designs.

“Why, you are dropping them even now. Why are you so frightened? What are you so afraid of now?”

“Me — afraid? Afraid of you? You have rather to be afraid of me, *cher ami*. But what nonsense.... I’ve drunk too much though, I see that. I was almost saying too much again. Damn the wine! Hi! there, water!”

He snatched up the champagne bottle and flung it without ceremony out of the window. Philip brought the water.

“That’s all nonsense!” said Svidrigaïlov, wetting a towel and putting it to his head. “But I can answer you in one word and annihilate all your suspicions. Do you know that I am going to get married?”

“You told me so before.”

“Did I? I’ve forgotten. But I couldn’t have told you so for certain for I had not even seen my betrothed; I only meant to. But now I really have a betrothed and it’s a settled thing, and if it weren’t that I have business that can’t be put off, I would have taken you to see them at once, for I should like to ask your advice. Ach, hang it, only ten minutes left! See, look at the watch. But I must tell you, for it’s an interesting story, my marriage, in its own way. Where are you off to? Going again?”

“No, I’m not going away now.”

“Not at all? We shall see. I’ll take you there, I’ll show you my betrothed, only not now. For you’ll soon have to be off. You have to go to the right and I to the left. Do you know that Madame Resslich, the woman I am lodging with now, eh? I know what you’re thinking, that she’s the woman whose girl they say drowned herself in the winter. Come, are you listening? She arranged it all for me. You’re bored, she said, you want something to fill up your time. For, you know, I am a gloomy, depressed person. Do you think I’m light-hearted? No, I’m gloomy. I do no harm, but sit in a corner without speaking a word for three days at a time. And that Resslich is a sly hussy, I tell you. I know what she has got in her mind; she thinks I shall get sick of it, abandon my wife and depart, and she’ll get hold of her and make a profit out of her — in our class, of course, or higher. She told me the father was a broken-down retired official, who has been sitting in a chair for the last three years with his legs paralysed. The mamma, she said, was a sensible woman. There is a son serving in the provinces, but he doesn’t help; there is a daughter, who is married, but she doesn’t visit them. And they’ve two little nephews on their hands, as though their own children were not enough, and they’ve taken from school their youngest daughter, a girl who’ll be sixteen in another month, so that then she can be married. She was for me. We went there. How funny it was! I present myself — a landowner, a widower, of a well-known name, with connections, with a fortune. What if I am fifty and she is not sixteen? Who thinks of that? But it’s fascinating, isn’t it? It is fascinating, ha-ha! You should have seen how I talked to the papa and mamma. It was worth paying to have seen me at that moment. She comes in, curtseys, you can fancy, still in a short frock — an unopened bud! Flushing like a sunset — she had been told, no doubt. I don’t know how you feel about female faces, but to my mind these sixteen years, these childish eyes, shyness and tears of bashfulness are better than beauty; and she is a perfect little picture, too. Fair hair in little curls, like a lamb’s, full little rosy lips, tiny feet, a charmer!... Well, we made friends. I told them I was in a hurry owing to domestic circumstances, and the next day, that is the day before yesterday, we were betrothed. When I go now I take her on my knee at once and keep her there.... Well, she flushes like a sunset and I kiss her every minute. Her mamma of course impresses on her that this is her husband and that this must be so. It’s simply delicious! The present betrothed condition is perhaps better than marriage. Here you have what is called *la nature et la vérité*, ha-ha! I’ve talked to her twice, she is

far from a fool. Sometimes she steals a look at me that positively scorches me. Her face is like Raphael's Madonna. You know, the Sistine Madonna's face has something fantastic in it, the face of mournful religious ecstasy. Haven't you noticed it? Well, she's something in that line. The day after we'd been betrothed, I bought her presents to the value of fifteen hundred roubles — a set of diamonds and another of pearls and a silver dressing-case as large as this, with all sorts of things in it, so that even my Madonna's face glowed. I sat her on my knee, yesterday, and I suppose rather too unceremoniously — she flushed crimson and the tears started, but she didn't want to show it. We were left alone, she suddenly flung herself on my neck (for the first time of her own accord), put her little arms round me, kissed me, and vowed that she would be an obedient, faithful, and good wife, would make me happy, would devote all her life, every minute of her life, would sacrifice everything, everything, and that all she asks in return is my *respect*, and that she wants 'nothing, nothing more from me, no presents.' You'll admit that to hear such a confession, alone, from an angel of sixteen in a muslin frock, with little curls, with a flush of maiden shyness in her cheeks and tears of enthusiasm in her eyes is rather fascinating! Isn't it fascinating? It's worth paying for, isn't it? Well... listen, we'll go to see my betrothed, only not just now!"

"The fact is this monstrous difference in age and development excites your sensuality! Will you really make such a marriage?"

"Why, of course. Everyone thinks of himself, and he lives most gaily who knows best how to deceive himself. Ha-ha! But why are you so keen about virtue? Have mercy on me, my good friend. I am a sinful man. Ha-ha-ha!"

"But you have provided for the children of Katerina Ivanovna. Though... though you had your own reasons.... I understand it all now."

"I am always fond of children, very fond of them," laughed Svidrigaïlov. "I can tell you one curious instance of it. The first day I came here I visited various haunts, after seven years I simply rushed at them. You probably notice that I am not in a hurry to renew acquaintance with my old friends. I shall do without them as long as I can. Do you know, when I was with Marfa Petrovna in the country, I was haunted by the thought of these places where anyone who knows his way about can find a great deal. Yes, upon my soul! The peasants have vodka, the educated young people, shut out from activity, waste themselves in impossible dreams and visions and are

crippled by theories; Jews have sprung up and are amassing money, and all the rest give themselves up to debauchery. From the first hour the town reeked of its familiar odours. I chanced to be in a frightful den — I like my dens dirty — it was a dance, so called, and there was a *cancan* such as I never saw in my day. Yes, there you have progress. All of a sudden I saw a little girl of thirteen, nicely dressed, dancing with a specialist in that line, with another one *vis-à-vis*. Her mother was sitting on a chair by the wall. You can't fancy what a *cancan* that was! The girl was ashamed, blushed, at last felt insulted, and began to cry. Her partner seized her and began whirling her round and performing before her; everyone laughed and — I like your public, even the *cancan* public — they laughed and shouted, 'Serves her right — serves her right! Shouldn't bring children!' Well, it's not my business whether that consoling reflection was logical or not. I at once fixed on my plan, sat down by the mother, and began by saying that I too was a stranger and that people here were ill-bred and that they couldn't distinguish decent folks and treat them with respect, gave her to understand that I had plenty of money, offered to take them home in my carriage. I took them home and got to know them. They were lodging in a miserable little hole and had only just arrived from the country. She told me that she and her daughter could only regard my acquaintance as an honour. I found out that they had nothing of their own and had come to town upon some legal business. I proffered my services and money. I learnt that they had gone to the dancing saloon by mistake, believing that it was a genuine dancing class. I offered to assist in the young girl's education in French and dancing. My offer was accepted with enthusiasm as an honour — and we are still friendly.... If you like, we'll go and see them, only not just now."

"Stop! Enough of your vile, nasty anecdotes, depraved vile, sensual man!"

"Schiller, you are a regular Schiller! *O la vertu va-t-elle se nicher?* But you know I shall tell you these things on purpose, for the pleasure of hearing your outcries!"

"I dare say. I can see I am ridiculous myself," muttered Raskolnikov angrily.

Svidrigaïlov laughed heartily; finally he called Philip, paid his bill, and began getting up.

"I say, but I am drunk, *assez causé*," he said. "It's been a pleasure."

“I should rather think it must be a pleasure!” cried Raskolnikov, getting up. “No doubt it is a pleasure for a worn-out profligate to describe such adventures with a monstrous project of the same sort in his mind — especially under such circumstances and to such a man as me.... It’s stimulating!”

“Well, if you come to that,” Svidrigaïlov answered, scrutinising Raskolnikov with some surprise, “if you come to that, you are a thorough cynic yourself. You’ve plenty to make you so, anyway. You can understand a great deal... and you can do a great deal too. But enough. I sincerely regret not having had more talk with you, but I shan’t lose sight of you.... Only wait a bit.”

Svidrigaïlov walked out of the restaurant. Raskolnikov walked out after him. Svidrigaïlov was not however very drunk, the wine had affected him for a moment, but it was passing off every minute. He was preoccupied with something of importance and was frowning. He was apparently excited and uneasy in anticipation of something. His manner to Raskolnikov had changed during the last few minutes, and he was ruder and more sneering every moment. Raskolnikov noticed all this, and he too was uneasy. He became very suspicious of Svidrigaïlov and resolved to follow him.

They came out on to the pavement.

“You go to the right, and I to the left, or if you like, the other way. Only *adieu, mon plaisir*, may we meet again.”

And he walked to the right towards the Hay Market.

CHAPTER V

Raskolnikov walked after him.

“What’s this?” cried Svidrigaïlov turning round, “I thought I said...”

“It means that I am not going to lose sight of you now.”

“What?”

Both stood still and gazed at one another, as though measuring their strength.

“From all your half tipsy stories,” Raskolnikov observed harshly, “I am *positive* that you have not given up your designs on my sister, but are pursuing them more actively than ever. I have learnt that my sister received a letter this morning. You have hardly been able to sit still all this time.... You may have unearthed a wife on the way, but that means nothing. I should like to make certain myself.”

Raskolnikov could hardly have said himself what he wanted and of what he wished to make certain.

“Upon my word! I’ll call the police!”

“Call away!”

Again they stood for a minute facing each other. At last Svidrigaïlov’s face changed. Having satisfied himself that Raskolnikov was not frightened at his threat, he assumed a mirthful and friendly air.

“What a fellow! I purposely refrained from referring to your affair, though I am devoured by curiosity. It’s a fantastic affair. I’ve put it off till another time, but you’re enough to rouse the dead.... Well, let us go, only I warn you beforehand I am only going home for a moment, to get some money; then I shall lock up the flat, take a cab and go to spend the evening at the Islands. Now, now are you going to follow me?”

“I’m coming to your lodgings, not to see you but Sofya Semyonovna, to say I’m sorry not to have been at the funeral.”

“That’s as you like, but Sofya Semyonovna is not at home. She has taken the three children to an old lady of high rank, the patroness of some orphan asylums, whom I used to know years ago. I charmed the old lady by depositing a sum of money with her to provide for the three children of Katerina Ivanovna and subscribing to the institution as well. I told her too the story of Sofya Semyonovna in full detail, suppressing nothing. It produced an indescribable effect on her. That’s why Sofya Semyonovna has

been invited to call to-day at the X. Hotel where the lady is staying for the time.”

“No matter, I’ll come all the same.”

“As you like, it’s nothing to me, but I won’t come with you; here we are at home. By the way, I am convinced that you regard me with suspicion just because I have shown such delicacy and have not so far troubled you with questions... you understand? It struck you as extraordinary; I don’t mind betting it’s that. Well, it teaches one to show delicacy!”

“And to listen at doors!”

“Ah, that’s it, is it?” laughed Svidrigaïlov. “Yes, I should have been surprised if you had let that pass after all that has happened. Ha-ha! Though I did understand something of the pranks you had been up to and were telling Sofya Semyonovna about, what was the meaning of it? Perhaps I am quite behind the times and can’t understand. For goodness’ sake, explain it, my dear boy. Expound the latest theories!”

“You couldn’t have heard anything. You’re making it all up!”

“But I’m not talking about that (though I did hear something). No, I’m talking of the way you keep sighing and groaning now. The Schiller in you is in revolt every moment, and now you tell me not to listen at doors. If that’s how you feel, go and inform the police that you had this mischance: you made a little mistake in your theory. But if you are convinced that one mustn’t listen at doors, but one may murder old women at one’s pleasure, you’d better be off to America and make haste. Run, young man! There may still be time. I’m speaking sincerely. Haven’t you the money? I’ll give you the fare.”

“I’m not thinking of that at all,” Raskolnikov interrupted with disgust.

“I understand (but don’t put yourself out, don’t discuss it if you don’t want to). I understand the questions you are worrying over — moral ones, aren’t they? Duties of citizen and man? Lay them all aside. They are nothing to you now, ha-ha! You’ll say you are still a man and a citizen. If so you ought not to have got into this coil. It’s no use taking up a job you are not fit for. Well, you’d better shoot yourself, or don’t you want to?”

“You seem trying to enrage me, to make me leave you.”

“What a queer fellow! But here we are. Welcome to the staircase. You see, that’s the way to Sofya Semyonovna. Look, there is no one at home. Don’t you believe me? Ask Kapernaumov. She leaves the key with him. Here is Madame de Kapernaumov herself. Hey, what? She is rather deaf.

Has she gone out? Where? Did you hear? She is not in and won't be till late in the evening probably. Well, come to my room; you wanted to come and see me, didn't you? Here we are. Madame Resslich's not at home. She is a woman who is always busy, an excellent woman I assure you.... She might have been of use to you if you had been a little more sensible. Now, see! I take this five-per-cent bond out of the bureau — see what a lot I've got of them still — this one will be turned into cash to-day. I mustn't waste any more time. The bureau is locked, the flat is locked, and here we are again on the stairs. Shall we take a cab? I'm going to the Islands. Would you like a lift? I'll take this carriage. Ah, you refuse? You are tired of it! Come for a drive! I believe it will come on to rain. Never mind, we'll put down the hood....”

Svidrigaïlov was already in the carriage. Raskolnikov decided that his suspicions were at least for that moment unjust. Without answering a word he turned and walked back towards the Hay Market. If he had only turned round on his way he might have seen Svidrigaïlov get out not a hundred paces off, dismiss the cab and walk along the pavement. But he had turned the corner and could see nothing. Intense disgust drew him away from Svidrigaïlov.

“To think that I could for one instant have looked for help from that coarse brute, that depraved sensualist and blackguard!” he cried.

Raskolnikov's judgment was uttered too lightly and hastily: there was something about Svidrigaïlov which gave him a certain original, even a mysterious character. As concerned his sister, Raskolnikov was convinced that Svidrigaïlov would not leave her in peace. But it was too tiresome and unbearable to go on thinking and thinking about this.

When he was alone, he had not gone twenty paces before he sank, as usual, into deep thought. On the bridge he stood by the railing and began gazing at the water. And his sister was standing close by him.

He met her at the entrance to the bridge, but passed by without seeing her. Dounia had never met him like this in the street before and was struck with dismay. She stood still and did not know whether to call to him or not. Suddenly she saw Svidrigaïlov coming quickly from the direction of the Hay Market.

He seemed to be approaching cautiously. He did not go on to the bridge, but stood aside on the pavement, doing all he could to avoid Raskolnikov's seeing him. He had observed Dounia for some time and had been making

signs to her. She fancied he was signalling to beg her not to speak to her brother, but to come to him.

That was what Dounia did. She stole by her brother and went up to Svidrigaïlov.

“Let us make haste away,” Svidrigaïlov whispered to her, “I don’t want Rodion Romanovitch to know of our meeting. I must tell you I’ve been sitting with him in the restaurant close by, where he looked me up and I had great difficulty in getting rid of him. He has somehow heard of my letter to you and suspects something. It wasn’t you who told him, of course, but if not you, who then?”

“Well, we’ve turned the corner now,” Dounia interrupted, “and my brother won’t see us. I have to tell you that I am going no further with you. Speak to me here. You can tell it all in the street.”

“In the first place, I can’t say it in the street; secondly, you must hear Sofya Semyonovna too; and, thirdly, I will show you some papers.... Oh well, if you won’t agree to come with me, I shall refuse to give any explanation and go away at once. But I beg you not to forget that a very curious secret of your beloved brother’s is entirely in my keeping.”

Dounia stood still, hesitating, and looked at Svidrigaïlov with searching eyes.

“What are you afraid of?” he observed quietly. “The town is not the country. And even in the country you did me more harm than I did you.”

“Have you prepared Sofya Semyonovna?”

“No, I have not said a word to her and am not quite certain whether she is at home now. But most likely she is. She has buried her stepmother to-day: she is not likely to go visiting on such a day. For the time I don’t want to speak to anyone about it and I half regret having spoken to you. The slightest indiscretion is as bad as betrayal in a thing like this. I live there in that house, we are coming to it. That’s the porter of our house — he knows me very well; you see, he’s bowing; he sees I’m coming with a lady and no doubt he has noticed your face already and you will be glad of that if you are afraid of me and suspicious. Excuse my putting things so coarsely. I haven’t a flat to myself; Sofya Semyonovna’s room is next to mine — she lodges in the next flat. The whole floor is let out in lodgings. Why are you frightened like a child? Am I really so terrible?”

Svidrigaïlov’s lips were twisted in a condescending smile; but he was in no smiling mood. His heart was throbbing and he could scarcely breathe.

He spoke rather loud to cover his growing excitement. But Dounia did not notice this peculiar excitement, she was so irritated by his remark that she was frightened of him like a child and that he was so terrible to her.

“Though I know that you are not a man... of honour, I am not in the least afraid of you. Lead the way,” she said with apparent composure, but her face was very pale.

Svidrigaïlov stopped at Sonia’s room.

“Allow me to inquire whether she is at home.... She is not. How unfortunate! But I know she may come quite soon. If she’s gone out, it can only be to see a lady about the orphans. Their mother is dead.... I’ve been meddling and making arrangements for them. If Sofya Semyonovna does not come back in ten minutes, I will send her to you, to-day if you like. This is my flat. These are my two rooms. Madame Resslich, my landlady, has the next room. Now, look this way. I will show you my chief piece of evidence: this door from my bedroom leads into two perfectly empty rooms, which are to let. Here they are... You must look into them with some attention.”

Svidrigaïlov occupied two fairly large furnished rooms. Dounia was looking about her mistrustfully, but saw nothing special in the furniture or position of the rooms. Yet there was something to observe, for instance, that Svidrigaïlov’s flat was exactly between two sets of almost uninhabited apartments. His rooms were not entered directly from the passage, but through the landlady’s two almost empty rooms. Unlocking a door leading out of his bedroom, Svidrigaïlov showed Dounia the two empty rooms that were to let. Dounia stopped in the doorway, not knowing what she was called to look upon, but Svidrigaïlov hastened to explain.

“Look here, at this second large room. Notice that door, it’s locked. By the door stands a chair, the only one in the two rooms. I brought it from my rooms so as to listen more conveniently. Just the other side of the door is Sofya Semyonovna’s table; she sat there talking to Rodion Romanovitch. And I sat here listening on two successive evenings, for two hours each time — and of course I was able to learn something, what do you think?”

“You listened?”

“Yes, I did. Now come back to my room; we can’t sit down here.”

He brought Avdotya Romanovna back into his sitting-room and offered her a chair. He sat down at the opposite side of the table, at least seven feet from her, but probably there was the same glow in his eyes which had once frightened Dounia so much. She shuddered and once more looked about her

distrustfully. It was an involuntary gesture; she evidently did not wish to betray her uneasiness. But the secluded position of Svidrigaïlov's lodging had suddenly struck her. She wanted to ask whether his landlady at least were at home, but pride kept her from asking. Moreover, she had another trouble in her heart incomparably greater than fear for herself. She was in great distress.

"Here is your letter," she said, laying it on the table. "Can it be true what you write? You hint at a crime committed, you say, by my brother. You hint at it too clearly; you daren't deny it now. I must tell you that I'd heard of this stupid story before you wrote and don't believe a word of it. It's a disgusting and ridiculous suspicion. I know the story and why and how it was invented. You can have no proofs. You promised to prove it. Speak! But let me warn you that I don't believe you! I don't believe you!"

Dounia said this, speaking hurriedly, and for an instant the colour rushed to her face.

"If you didn't believe it, how could you risk coming alone to my rooms? Why have you come? Simply from curiosity?"

"Don't torment me. Speak, speak!"

"There's no denying that you are a brave girl. Upon my word, I thought you would have asked Mr. Razumihin to escort you here. But he was not with you nor anywhere near. I was on the look-out. It's spirited of you, it proves you wanted to spare Rodion Romanovitch. But everything is divine in you.... About your brother, what am I to say to you? You've just seen him yourself. What did you think of him?"

"Surely that's not the only thing you are building on?"

"No, not on that, but on his own words. He came here on two successive evenings to see Sofya Semyonovna. I've shown you where they sat. He made a full confession to her. He is a murderer. He killed an old woman, a pawnbroker, with whom he had pawned things himself. He killed her sister too, a pedlar woman called Lizaveta, who happened to come in while he was murdering her sister. He killed them with an axe he brought with him. He murdered them to rob them and he did rob them. He took money and various things.... He told all this, word for word, to Sofya Semyonovna, the only person who knows his secret. But she has had no share by word or deed in the murder; she was as horrified at it as you are now. Don't be anxious, she won't betray him."

“It cannot be,” muttered Dounia, with white lips. She gasped for breath. “It cannot be. There was not the slightest cause, no sort of ground.... It’s a lie, a lie!”

“He robbed her, that was the cause, he took money and things. It’s true that by his own admission he made no use of the money or things, but hid them under a stone, where they are now. But that was because he dared not make use of them.”

“But how could he steal, rob? How could he dream of it?” cried Dounia, and she jumped up from the chair. “Why, you know him, and you’ve seen him, can he be a thief?”

She seemed to be imploring Svidrigaïlov; she had entirely forgotten her fear.

“There are thousands and millions of combinations and possibilities, Avdotya Romanovna. A thief steals and knows he is a scoundrel, but I’ve heard of a gentleman who broke open the mail. Who knows, very likely he thought he was doing a gentlemanly thing! Of course I should not have believed it myself if I’d been told of it as you have, but I believe my own ears. He explained all the causes of it to Sofya Semyonovna too, but she did not believe her ears at first, yet she believed her own eyes at last.”

“What... were the causes?”

“It’s a long story, Avdotya Romanovna. Here’s... how shall I tell you? — A theory of a sort, the same one by which I for instance consider that a single misdeed is permissible if the principal aim is right, a solitary wrongdoing and hundreds of good deeds! It’s galling too, of course, for a young man of gifts and overweening pride to know that if he had, for instance, a paltry three thousand, his whole career, his whole future would be differently shaped and yet not to have that three thousand. Add to that, nervous irritability from hunger, from lodging in a hole, from rags, from a vivid sense of the charm of his social position and his sister’s and mother’s position too. Above all, vanity, pride and vanity, though goodness knows he may have good qualities too.... I am not blaming him, please don’t think it; besides, it’s not my business. A special little theory came in too — a theory of a sort — dividing mankind, you see, into material and superior persons, that is persons to whom the law does not apply owing to their superiority, who make laws for the rest of mankind, the material, that is. It’s all right as a theory, *une théorie comme une autre*. Napoleon attracted him tremendously, that is, what affected him was that a great many men of

genius have not hesitated at wrongdoing, but have overstepped the law without thinking about it. He seems to have fancied that he was a genius too — that is, he was convinced of it for a time. He has suffered a great deal and is still suffering from the idea that he could make a theory, but was incapable of boldly overstepping the law, and so he is not a man of genius. And that’s humiliating for a young man of any pride, in our day especially....”

“But remorse? You deny him any moral feeling then? Is he like that?”

“Ah, Avdotya Romanovna, everything is in a muddle now; not that it was ever in very good order. Russians in general are broad in their ideas, Avdotya Romanovna, broad like their land and exceedingly disposed to the fantastic, the chaotic. But it’s a misfortune to be broad without a special genius. Do you remember what a lot of talk we had together on this subject, sitting in the evenings on the terrace after supper? Why, you used to reproach me with breadth! Who knows, perhaps we were talking at the very time when he was lying here thinking over his plan. There are no sacred traditions amongst us, especially in the educated class, Avdotya Romanovna. At the best someone will make them up somehow for himself out of books or from some old chronicle. But those are for the most part the learned and all old fogeys, so that it would be almost ill-bred in a man of society. You know my opinions in general, though. I never blame anyone. I do nothing at all, I persevere in that. But we’ve talked of this more than once before. I was so happy indeed as to interest you in my opinions.... You are very pale, Avdotya Romanovna.”

“I know his theory. I read that article of his about men to whom all is permitted. Razumihin brought it to me.”

“Mr. Razumihin? Your brother’s article? In a magazine? Is there such an article? I didn’t know. It must be interesting. But where are you going, Avdotya Romanovna?”

“I want to see Sofya Semyonovna,” Dounia articulated faintly. “How do I go to her? She has come in, perhaps. I must see her at once. Perhaps she...”

Avdotya Romanovna could not finish. Her breath literally failed her.

“Sofya Semyonovna will not be back till night, at least I believe not. She was to have been back at once, but if not, then she will not be in till quite late.”

“Ah, then you are lying! I see... you were lying... lying all the time.... I don’t believe you! I don’t believe you!” cried Dounia, completely losing her head.

Almost fainting, she sank on to a chair which Svidrigaïlov made haste to give her.

“Avdotya Romanovna, what is it? Control yourself! Here is some water. Drink a little....”

He sprinkled some water over her. Dounia shuddered and came to herself.

“It has acted violently,” Svidrigaïlov muttered to himself, frowning. “Avdotya Romanovna, calm yourself! Believe me, he has friends. We will save him. Would you like me to take him abroad? I have money, I can get a ticket in three days. And as for the murder, he will do all sorts of good deeds yet, to atone for it. Calm yourself. He may become a great man yet. Well, how are you? How do you feel?”

“Cruel man! To be able to jeer at it! Let me go...”

“Where are you going?”

“To him. Where is he? Do you know? Why is this door locked? We came in at that door and now it is locked. When did you manage to lock it?”

“We couldn’t be shouting all over the flat on such a subject. I am far from jeering; it’s simply that I’m sick of talking like this. But how can you go in such a state? Do you want to betray him? You will drive him to fury, and he will give himself up. Let me tell you, he is already being watched; they are already on his track. You will simply be giving him away. Wait a little: I saw him and was talking to him just now. He can still be saved. Wait a bit, sit down; let us think it over together. I asked you to come in order to discuss it alone with you and to consider it thoroughly. But do sit down!”

“How can you save him? Can he really be saved?”

Dounia sat down. Svidrigaïlov sat down beside her.

“It all depends on you, on you, on you alone,” he began with glowing eyes, almost in a whisper and hardly able to utter the words for emotion.

Dounia drew back from him in alarm. He too was trembling all over.

“You... one word from you, and he is saved. I... I’ll save him. I have money and friends. I’ll send him away at once. I’ll get a passport, two passports, one for him and one for me. I have friends... capable people.... If you like, I’ll take a passport for you... for your mother.... What do you want with Razumihin? I love you too.... I love you beyond everything.... Let me

kiss the hem of your dress, let me, let me.... The very rustle of it is too much for me. Tell me, ‘do that,’ and I’ll do it. I’ll do everything. I will do the impossible. What you believe, I will believe. I’ll do anything — anything! Don’t, don’t look at me like that. Do you know that you are killing me?...”

He was almost beginning to rave.... Something seemed suddenly to go to his head. Dounia jumped up and rushed to the door.

“Open it! Open it!” she called, shaking the door. “Open it! Is there no one there?”

Svidrigaïlov got up and came to himself. His still trembling lips slowly broke into an angry mocking smile.

“There is no one at home,” he said quietly and emphatically. “The landlady has gone out, and it’s waste of time to shout like that. You are only exciting yourself uselessly.”

“Where is the key? Open the door at once, at once, base man!”

“I have lost the key and cannot find it.”

“This is an outrage,” cried Dounia, turning pale as death. She rushed to the furthest corner, where she made haste to barricade herself with a little table.

She did not scream, but she fixed her eyes on her tormentor and watched every movement he made.

Svidrigaïlov remained standing at the other end of the room facing her. He was positively composed, at least in appearance, but his face was pale as before. The mocking smile did not leave his face.

“You spoke of outrage just now, Avdotya Romanovna. In that case you may be sure I’ve taken measures. Sofya Semyonovna is not at home. The Kapernaumovs are far away — there are five locked rooms between. I am at least twice as strong as you are and I have nothing to fear, besides. For you could not complain afterwards. You surely would not be willing actually to betray your brother? Besides, no one would believe you. How should a girl have come alone to visit a solitary man in his lodgings? So that even if you do sacrifice your brother, you could prove nothing. It is very difficult to prove an assault, Avdotya Romanovna.”

“Scoundrel!” whispered Dounia indignantly.

“As you like, but observe I was only speaking by way of a general proposition. It’s my personal conviction that you are perfectly right — violence is hateful. I only spoke to show you that you need have no remorse even if... you were willing to save your brother of your own accord, as I

suggest to you. You would be simply submitting to circumstances, to violence, in fact, if we must use that word. Think about it. Your brother's and your mother's fate are in your hands. I will be your slave... all my life... I will wait here."

Svidrigaïlov sat down on the sofa about eight steps from Dounia. She had not the slightest doubt now of his unbending determination. Besides, she knew him. Suddenly she pulled out of her pocket a revolver, cocked it and laid it in her hand on the table. Svidrigaïlov jumped up.

"Aha! So that's it, is it?" he cried, surprised but smiling maliciously. "Well, that completely alters the aspect of affairs. You've made things wonderfully easier for me, Avdotya Romanovna. But where did you get the revolver? Was it Mr. Razumihin? Why, it's my revolver, an old friend! And how I've hunted for it! The shooting lessons I've given you in the country have not been thrown away."

"It's not your revolver, it belonged to Marfa Petrovna, whom you killed, wretch! There was nothing of yours in her house. I took it when I began to suspect what you were capable of. If you dare to advance one step, I swear I'll kill you." She was frantic.

"But your brother? I ask from curiosity," said Svidrigaïlov, still standing where he was.

"Inform, if you want to! Don't stir! Don't come nearer! I'll shoot! You poisoned your wife, I know; you are a murderer yourself!" She held the revolver ready.

"Are you so positive I poisoned Marfa Petrovna?"

"You did! You hinted it yourself; you talked to me of poison.... I know you went to get it... you had it in readiness.... It was your doing.... It must have been your doing.... Scoundrel!"

"Even if that were true, it would have been for your sake... you would have been the cause."

"You are lying! I hated you always, always...."

"Oho, Avdotya Romanovna! You seem to have forgotten how you softened to me in the heat of propaganda. I saw it in your eyes. Do you remember that moonlight night, when the nightingale was singing?"

"That's a lie," there was a flash of fury in Dounia's eyes, "that's a lie and a libel!"

"A lie? Well, if you like, it's a lie. I made it up. Women ought not to be reminded of such things," he smiled. "I know you will shoot, you pretty

wild creature. Well, shoot away!”

Dounia raised the revolver, and deadly pale, gazed at him, measuring the distance and awaiting the first movement on his part. Her lower lip was white and quivering and her big black eyes flashed like fire. He had never seen her so handsome. The fire glowing in her eyes at the moment she raised the revolver seemed to kindle him and there was a pang of anguish in his heart. He took a step forward and a shot rang out. The bullet grazed his hair and flew into the wall behind. He stood still and laughed softly.

“The wasp has stung me. She aimed straight at my head. What’s this? Blood?” he pulled out his handkerchief to wipe the blood, which flowed in a thin stream down his right temple. The bullet seemed to have just grazed the skin.

Dounia lowered the revolver and looked at Svidrigaïlov not so much in terror as in a sort of wild amazement. She seemed not to understand what she was doing and what was going on.

“Well, you missed! Fire again, I’ll wait,” said Svidrigaïlov softly, still smiling, but gloomily. “If you go on like that, I shall have time to seize you before you cock again.”

Dounia started, quickly cocked the pistol and again raised it.

“Let me be,” she cried in despair. “I swear I’ll shoot again. I... I’ll kill you.”

“Well... at three paces you can hardly help it. But if you don’t... then.” His eyes flashed and he took two steps forward. Dounia shot again: it missed fire.

“You haven’t loaded it properly. Never mind, you have another charge there. Get it ready, I’ll wait.”

He stood facing her, two paces away, waiting and gazing at her with wild determination, with feverishly passionate, stubborn, set eyes. Dounia saw that he would sooner die than let her go. “And... now, of course she would kill him, at two paces!” Suddenly she flung away the revolver.

“She’s dropped it!” said Svidrigaïlov with surprise, and he drew a deep breath. A weight seemed to have rolled from his heart — perhaps not only the fear of death; indeed he may scarcely have felt it at that moment. It was the deliverance from another feeling, darker and more bitter, which he could not himself have defined.

He went to Dounia and gently put his arm round her waist. She did not resist, but, trembling like a leaf, looked at him with suppliant eyes. He tried

to say something, but his lips moved without being able to utter a sound.

“Let me go,” Dounia implored. Svidrigaïlov shuddered. Her voice now was quite different.

“Then you don’t love me?” he asked softly. Dounia shook her head.

“And... and you can’t? Never?” he whispered in despair.

“Never!”

There followed a moment of terrible, dumb struggle in the heart of Svidrigaïlov. He looked at her with an indescribable gaze. Suddenly he withdrew his arm, turned quickly to the window and stood facing it. Another moment passed.

“Here’s the key.”

He took it out of the left pocket of his coat and laid it on the table behind him, without turning or looking at Dounia.

“Take it! Make haste!”

He looked stubbornly out of the window. Dounia went up to the table to take the key.

“Make haste! Make haste!” repeated Svidrigaïlov, still without turning or moving. But there seemed a terrible significance in the tone of that “make haste.”

Dounia understood it, snatched up the key, flew to the door, unlocked it quickly and rushed out of the room. A minute later, beside herself, she ran out on to the canal bank in the direction of X. Bridge.

Svidrigaïlov remained three minutes standing at the window. At last he slowly turned, looked about him and passed his hand over his forehead. A strange smile contorted his face, a pitiful, sad, weak smile, a smile of despair. The blood, which was already getting dry, smeared his hand. He looked angrily at it, then wetted a towel and washed his temple. The revolver which Dounia had flung away lay near the door and suddenly caught his eye. He picked it up and examined it. It was a little pocket three-barrel revolver of old-fashioned construction. There were still two charges and one capsule left in it. It could be fired again. He thought a little, put the revolver in his pocket, took his hat and went out.

CHAPTER VI

He spent that evening till ten o’clock going from one low haunt to another. Katia too turned up and sang another gutter song, how a certain “villain and tyrant,”

“began kissing Katia.”

Svidrigaïlov treated Katia and the organ-grinder and some singers and the waiters and two little clerks. He was particularly drawn to these clerks by the fact that they both had crooked noses, one bent to the left and the other to the right. They took him finally to a pleasure garden, where he paid for their entrance. There was one lanky three-year-old pine-tree and three bushes in the garden, besides a “Vauxhall,” which was in reality a drinking-bar where tea too was served, and there were a few green tables and chairs standing round it. A chorus of wretched singers and a drunken but exceedingly depressed German clown from Munich with a red nose entertained the public. The clerks quarrelled with some other clerks and a fight seemed imminent. Svidrigaïlov was chosen to decide the dispute. He listened to them for a quarter of an hour, but they shouted so loud that there was no possibility of understanding them. The only fact that seemed certain was that one of them had stolen something and had even succeeded in selling it on the spot to a Jew, but would not share the spoil with his companion. Finally it appeared that the stolen object was a teaspoon belonging to the Vauxhall. It was missed and the affair began to seem troublesome. Svidrigaïlov paid for the spoon, got up, and walked out of the garden. It was about six o’clock. He had not drunk a drop of wine all this time and had ordered tea more for the sake of appearances than anything.

It was a dark and stifling evening. Threatening storm-clouds came over the sky about ten o’clock. There was a clap of thunder, and the rain came down like a waterfall. The water fell not in drops, but beat on the earth in streams. There were flashes of lightning every minute and each flash lasted while one could count five.

Drenched to the skin, he went home, locked himself in, opened the bureau, took out all his money and tore up two or three papers. Then, putting the money in his pocket, he was about to change his clothes, but, looking out of the window and listening to the thunder and the rain, he gave

up the idea, took up his hat and went out of the room without locking the door. He went straight to Sonia. She was at home.

She was not alone: the four Kapernaumov children were with her. She was giving them tea. She received Svidrigaïlov in respectful silence, looking wonderingly at his soaking clothes. The children all ran away at once in indescribable terror.

Svidrigaïlov sat down at the table and asked Sonia to sit beside him. She timidly prepared to listen.

“I may be going to America, Sofya Semyonovna,” said Svidrigaïlov, “and as I am probably seeing you for the last time, I have come to make some arrangements. Well, did you see the lady to-day? I know what she said to you, you need not tell me.” (Sonia made a movement and blushed.) “Those people have their own way of doing things. As to your sisters and your brother, they are really provided for and the money assigned to them I’ve put into safe keeping and have received acknowledgments. You had better take charge of the receipts, in case anything happens. Here, take them! Well now, that’s settled. Here are three 5-per-cent bonds to the value of three thousand roubles. Take those for yourself, entirely for yourself, and let that be strictly between ourselves, so that no one knows of it, whatever you hear. You will need the money, for to go on living in the old way, Sofya Semyonovna, is bad, and besides there is no need for it now.”

“I am so much indebted to you, and so are the children and my stepmother,” said Sonia hurriedly, “and if I’ve said so little... please don’t consider...”

“That’s enough! that’s enough!”

“But as for the money, Arkady Ivanovitch, I am very grateful to you, but I don’t need it now. I can always earn my own living. Don’t think me ungrateful. If you are so charitable, that money....”

“It’s for you, for you, Sofya Semyonovna, and please don’t waste words over it. I haven’t time for it. You will want it. Rodion Romanovitch has two alternatives: a bullet in the brain or Siberia.” (Sonia looked wildly at him, and started.) “Don’t be uneasy, I know all about it from himself and I am not a gossip; I won’t tell anyone. It was good advice when you told him to give himself up and confess. It would be much better for him. Well, if it turns out to be Siberia, he will go and you will follow him. That’s so, isn’t it? And if so, you’ll need money. You’ll need it for him, do you understand? Giving it to you is the same as my giving it to him. Besides, you promised

Amalia Ivanovna to pay what’s owing. I heard you. How can you undertake such obligations so heedlessly, Sofya Semyonovna? It was Katerina Ivanovna’s debt and not yours, so you ought not to have taken any notice of the German woman. You can’t get through the world like that. If you are ever questioned about me — to-morrow or the day after you will be asked — don’t say anything about my coming to see you now and don’t show the money to anyone or say a word about it. Well, now good-bye.” (He got up.) “My greetings to Rodion Romanovitch. By the way, you’d better put the money for the present in Mr. Razumihin’s keeping. You know Mr. Razumihin? Of course you do. He’s not a bad fellow. Take it to him to-morrow or... when the time comes. And till then, hide it carefully.”

Sonia too jumped up from her chair and looked in dismay at Svidrigaïlov. She longed to speak, to ask a question, but for the first moments she did not dare and did not know how to begin.

“How can you... how can you be going now, in such rain?”

“Why, be starting for America, and be stopped by rain! Ha, ha! Good-bye, Sofya Semyonovna, my dear! Live and live long, you will be of use to others. By the way... tell Mr. Razumihin I send my greetings to him. Tell him Arkady Ivanovitch Svidrigaïlov sends his greetings. Be sure to.”

He went out, leaving Sonia in a state of wondering anxiety and vague apprehension.

It appeared afterwards that on the same evening, at twenty past eleven, he made another very eccentric and unexpected visit. The rain still persisted. Drenched to the skin, he walked into the little flat where the parents of his betrothed lived, in Third Street in Vassilyevsky Island. He knocked some time before he was admitted, and his visit at first caused great perturbation; but Svidrigaïlov could be very fascinating when he liked, so that the first, and indeed very intelligent surmise of the sensible parents that Svidrigaïlov had probably had so much to drink that he did not know what he was doing vanished immediately. The decrepit father was wheeled in to see Svidrigaïlov by the tender and sensible mother, who as usual began the conversation with various irrelevant questions. She never asked a direct question, but began by smiling and rubbing her hands and then, if she were obliged to ascertain something — for instance, when Svidrigaïlov would like to have the wedding — she would begin by interested and almost eager questions about Paris and the court life there, and only by degrees brought the conversation round to Third Street. On

other occasions this had of course been very impressive, but this time Arkady Ivanovitch seemed particularly impatient, and insisted on seeing his betrothed at once, though he had been informed, to begin with, that she had already gone to bed. The girl of course appeared.

Svidrigaïlov informed her at once that he was obliged by very important affairs to leave Petersburg for a time, and therefore brought her fifteen thousand roubles and begged her accept them as a present from him, as he had long been intending to make her this trifling present before their wedding. The logical connection of the present with his immediate departure and the absolute necessity of visiting them for that purpose in pouring rain at midnight was not made clear. But it all went off very well; even the inevitable ejaculations of wonder and regret, the inevitable questions were extraordinarily few and restrained. On the other hand, the gratitude expressed was most glowing and was reinforced by tears from the most sensible of mothers. Svidrigaïlov got up, laughed, kissed his betrothed, patted her cheek, declared he would soon come back, and noticing in her eyes, together with childish curiosity, a sort of earnest dumb inquiry, reflected and kissed her again, though he felt sincere anger inwardly at the thought that his present would be immediately locked up in the keeping of the most sensible of mothers. He went away, leaving them all in a state of extraordinary excitement, but the tender mamma, speaking quietly in a half whisper, settled some of the most important of their doubts, concluding that Svidrigaïlov was a great man, a man of great affairs and connections and of great wealth — there was no knowing what he had in his mind. He would start off on a journey and give away money just as the fancy took him, so that there was nothing surprising about it. Of course it was strange that he was wet through, but Englishmen, for instance, are even more eccentric, and all these people of high society didn’t think of what was said of them and didn’t stand on ceremony. Possibly, indeed, he came like that on purpose to show that he was not afraid of anyone. Above all, not a word should be said about it, for God knows what might come of it, and the money must be locked up, and it was most fortunate that Fedosya, the cook, had not left the kitchen. And above all not a word must be said to that old cat, Madame Resslich, and so on and so on. They sat up whispering till two o’clock, but the girl went to bed much earlier, amazed and rather sorrowful.

Svidrigaïlov meanwhile, exactly at midnight, crossed the bridge on the way back to the mainland. The rain had ceased and there was a roaring

wind. He began shivering, and for one moment he gazed at the black waters of the Little Neva with a look of special interest, even inquiry. But he soon felt it very cold, standing by the water; he turned and went towards Y. Prospect. He walked along that endless street for a long time, almost half an hour, more than once stumbling in the dark on the wooden pavement, but continually looking for something on the right side of the street. He had noticed passing through this street lately that there was a hotel somewhere towards the end, built of wood, but fairly large, and its name he remembered was something like Adrianople. He was not mistaken: the hotel was so conspicuous in that God-forsaken place that he could not fail to see it even in the dark. It was a long, blackened wooden building, and in spite of the late hour there were lights in the windows and signs of life within. He went in and asked a ragged fellow who met him in the corridor for a room. The latter, scanning Svidrigaïlov, pulled himself together and led him at once to a close and tiny room in the distance, at the end of the corridor, under the stairs. There was no other, all were occupied. The ragged fellow looked inquiringly.

“Is there tea?” asked Svidrigaïlov.

“Yes, sir.”

“What else is there?”

“Veal, vodka, savouries.”

“Bring me tea and veal.”

“And you want nothing else?” he asked with apparent surprise.

“Nothing, nothing.”

The ragged man went away, completely disillusioned.

“It must be a nice place,” thought Svidrigaïlov. “How was it I didn’t know it? I expect I look as if I came from a café chantant and have had some adventure on the way. It would be interesting to know who stay here?”

He lighted the candle and looked at the room more carefully. It was a room so low-pitched that Svidrigaïlov could only just stand up in it; it had one window; the bed, which was very dirty, and the plain-stained chair and table almost filled it up. The walls looked as though they were made of planks, covered with shabby paper, so torn and dusty that the pattern was indistinguishable, though the general colour — yellow — could still be made out. One of the walls was cut short by the sloping ceiling, though the room was not an attic but just under the stairs.

Svidrigaïlov set down the candle, sat down on the bed and sank into thought. But a strange persistent murmur which sometimes rose to a shout in the next room attracted his attention. The murmur had not ceased from the moment he entered the room. He listened: someone was upbraiding and almost tearfully scolding, but he heard only one voice.

Svidrigaïlov got up, shaded the light with his hand and at once he saw light through a crack in the wall; he went up and peeped through. The room, which was somewhat larger than his, had two occupants. One of them, a very curly-headed man with a red inflamed face, was standing in the pose of an orator, without his coat, with his legs wide apart to preserve his balance, and smiting himself on the breast. He reproached the other with being a beggar, with having no standing whatever. He declared that he had taken the other out of the gutter and he could turn him out when he liked, and that only the finger of Providence sees it all. The object of his reproaches was sitting in a chair, and had the air of a man who wants dreadfully to sneeze, but can't. He sometimes turned sheepish and befogged eyes on the speaker, but obviously had not the slightest idea what he was talking about and scarcely heard it. A candle was burning down on the table; there were wine-glasses, a nearly empty bottle of vodka, bread and cucumber, and glasses with the dregs of stale tea. After gazing attentively at this, Svidrigaïlov turned away indifferently and sat down on the bed.

The ragged attendant, returning with the tea, could not resist asking him again whether he didn't want anything more, and again receiving a negative reply, finally withdrew. Svidrigaïlov made haste to drink a glass of tea to warm himself, but could not eat anything. He began to feel feverish. He took off his coat and, wrapping himself in the blanket, lay down on the bed. He was annoyed. "It would have been better to be well for the occasion," he thought with a smile. The room was close, the candle burnt dimly, the wind was roaring outside, he heard a mouse scratching in the corner and the room smelt of mice and of leather. He lay in a sort of reverie: one thought followed another. He felt a longing to fix his imagination on something. "It must be a garden under the window," he thought. "There's a sound of trees. How I dislike the sound of trees on a stormy night, in the dark! They give one a horrid feeling." He remembered how he had disliked it when he passed Petrovsky Park just now. This reminded him of the bridge over the Little Neva and he felt cold again as he had when standing there. "I never have liked water," he thought, "even in a landscape," and he suddenly

smiled again at a strange idea: “Surely now all these questions of taste and comfort ought not to matter, but I’ve become more particular, like an animal that picks out a special place... for such an occasion. I ought to have gone into the Petrovsky Park! I suppose it seemed dark, cold, ha-ha! As though I were seeking pleasant sensations!... By the way, why haven’t I put out the candle?” he blew it out. “They’ve gone to bed next door,” he thought, not seeing the light at the crack. “Well, now, Marfa Petrovna, now is the time for you to turn up; it’s dark, and the very time and place for you. But now you won’t come!”

He suddenly recalled how, an hour before carrying out his design on Dounia, he had recommended Raskolnikov to trust her to Razumihin’s keeping. “I suppose I really did say it, as Raskolnikov guessed, to tease myself. But what a rogue that Raskolnikov is! He’s gone through a good deal. He may be a successful rogue in time when he’s got over his nonsense. But now he’s *too* eager for life. These young men are contemptible on that point. But, hang the fellow! Let him please himself, it’s nothing to do with me.”

He could not get to sleep. By degrees Dounia’s image rose before him, and a shudder ran over him. “No, I must give up all that now,” he thought, rousing himself. “I must think of something else. It’s queer and funny. I never had a great hatred for anyone, I never particularly desired to avenge myself even, and that’s a bad sign, a bad sign, a bad sign. I never liked quarrelling either, and never lost my temper — that’s a bad sign too. And the promises I made her just now, too — Damnation! But — who knows? — perhaps she would have made a new man of me somehow....”

He ground his teeth and sank into silence again. Again Dounia’s image rose before him, just as she was when, after shooting the first time, she had lowered the revolver in terror and gazed blankly at him, so that he might have seized her twice over and she would not have lifted a hand to defend herself if he had not reminded her. He recalled how at that instant he felt almost sorry for her, how he had felt a pang at his heart...

“Aïe! Damnation, these thoughts again! I must put it away!”

He was dozing off; the feverish shiver had ceased, when suddenly something seemed to run over his arm and leg under the bedclothes. He started. “Ugh! hang it! I believe it’s a mouse,” he thought, “that’s the veal I left on the table.” He felt fearfully disinclined to pull off the blanket, get up, get cold, but all at once something unpleasant ran over his leg again. He

pulled off the blanket and lighted the candle. Shaking with feverish chill he bent down to examine the bed: there was nothing. He shook the blanket and suddenly a mouse jumped out on the sheet. He tried to catch it, but the mouse ran to and fro in zigzags without leaving the bed, slipped between his fingers, ran over his hand and suddenly darted under the pillow. He threw down the pillow, but in one instant felt something leap on his chest and dart over his body and down his back under his shirt. He trembled nervously and woke up.

The room was dark. He was lying on the bed and wrapped up in the blanket as before. The wind was howling under the window. “How disgusting,” he thought with annoyance.

He got up and sat on the edge of the bedstead with his back to the window. “It’s better not to sleep at all,” he decided. There was a cold damp draught from the window, however; without getting up he drew the blanket over him and wrapped himself in it. He was not thinking of anything and did not want to think. But one image rose after another, incoherent scraps of thought without beginning or end passed through his mind. He sank into drowsiness. Perhaps the cold, or the dampness, or the dark, or the wind that howled under the window and tossed the trees roused a sort of persistent craving for the fantastic. He kept dwelling on images of flowers, he fancied a charming flower garden, a bright, warm, almost hot day, a holiday — Trinity day. A fine, sumptuous country cottage in the English taste overgrown with fragrant flowers, with flower beds going round the house; the porch, wreathed in climbers, was surrounded with beds of roses. A light, cool staircase, carpeted with rich rugs, was decorated with rare plants in china pots. He noticed particularly in the windows nosegays of tender, white, heavily fragrant narcissus bending over their bright, green, thick long stalks. He was reluctant to move away from them, but he went up the stairs and came into a large, high drawing-room and again everywhere — at the windows, the doors on to the balcony, and on the balcony itself — were flowers. The floors were strewn with freshly-cut fragrant hay, the windows were open, a fresh, cool, light air came into the room. The birds were chirruping under the window, and in the middle of the room, on a table covered with a white satin shroud, stood a coffin. The coffin was covered with white silk and edged with a thick white frill; wreaths of flowers surrounded it on all sides. Among the flowers lay a girl in a white muslin dress, with her arms crossed and pressed on her bosom, as though carved

out of marble. But her loose fair hair was wet; there was a wreath of roses on her head. The stern and already rigid profile of her face looked as though chiselled of marble too, and the smile on her pale lips was full of an immense unchildish misery and sorrowful appeal. Svidrigaïlov knew that girl; there was no holy image, no burning candle beside the coffin; no sound of prayers: the girl had drowned herself. She was only fourteen, but her heart was broken. And she had destroyed herself, crushed by an insult that had appalled and amazed that childish soul, had smirched that angel purity with unmerited disgrace and torn from her a last scream of despair, unheeded and brutally disregarded, on a dark night in the cold and wet while the wind howled....

Svidrigaïlov came to himself, got up from the bed and went to the window. He felt for the latch and opened it. The wind lashed furiously into the little room and stung his face and his chest, only covered with his shirt, as though with frost. Under the window there must have been something like a garden, and apparently a pleasure garden. There, too, probably there were tea-tables and singing in the daytime. Now drops of rain flew in at the window from the trees and bushes; it was dark as in a cellar, so that he could only just make out some dark blurs of objects. Svidrigaïlov, bending down with elbows on the window-sill, gazed for five minutes into the darkness; the boom of a cannon, followed by a second one, resounded in the darkness of the night. “Ah, the signal! The river is overflowing,” he thought. “By morning it will be swirling down the street in the lower parts, flooding the basements and cellars. The cellar rats will swim out, and men will curse in the rain and wind as they drag their rubbish to their upper storeys. What time is it now?” And he had hardly thought it when, somewhere near, a clock on the wall, ticking away hurriedly, struck three.

“Aha! It will be light in an hour! Why wait? I’ll go out at once straight to the park. I’ll choose a great bush there drenched with rain, so that as soon as one’s shoulder touches it, millions of drops drip on one’s head.”

He moved away from the window, shut it, lighted the candle, put on his waistcoat, his overcoat and his hat and went out, carrying the candle, into the passage to look for the ragged attendant who would be asleep somewhere in the midst of candle-ends and all sorts of rubbish, to pay him for the room and leave the hotel. “It’s the best minute; I couldn’t choose a better.”

He walked for some time through a long narrow corridor without finding anyone and was just going to call out, when suddenly in a dark corner between an old cupboard and the door he caught sight of a strange object which seemed to be alive. He bent down with the candle and saw a little girl, not more than five years old, shivering and crying, with her clothes as wet as a soaking house-flannel. She did not seem afraid of Svidrigaïlov, but looked at him with blank amazement out of her big black eyes. Now and then she sobbed as children do when they have been crying a long time, but are beginning to be comforted. The child's face was pale and tired, she was numb with cold. "How can she have come here? She must have hidden here and not slept all night." He began questioning her. The child suddenly becoming animated, chattered away in her baby language, something about "mammy" and that "mammy would beat her," and about some cup that she had "bwoken." The child chattered on without stopping. He could only guess from what she said that she was a neglected child, whose mother, probably a drunken cook, in the service of the hotel, whipped and frightened her; that the child had broken a cup of her mother's and was so frightened that she had run away the evening before, had hidden for a long while somewhere outside in the rain, at last had made her way in here, hidden behind the cupboard and spent the night there, crying and trembling from the damp, the darkness and the fear that she would be badly beaten for it. He took her in his arms, went back to his room, sat her on the bed, and began undressing her. The torn shoes which she had on her stockingless feet were as wet as if they had been standing in a puddle all night. When he had undressed her, he put her on the bed, covered her up and wrapped her in the blanket from her head downwards. She fell asleep at once. Then he sank into dreary musing again.

"What folly to trouble myself," he decided suddenly with an oppressive feeling of annoyance. "What idiocy!" In vexation he took up the candle to go and look for the ragged attendant again and make haste to go away. "Damn the child!" he thought as he opened the door, but he turned again to see whether the child was asleep. He raised the blanket carefully. The child was sleeping soundly, she had got warm under the blanket, and her pale cheeks were flushed. But strange to say that flush seemed brighter and coarser than the rosy cheeks of childhood. "It's a flush of fever," thought Svidrigaïlov. It was like the flush from drinking, as though she had been given a full glass to drink. Her crimson lips were hot and glowing; but what

was this? He suddenly fancied that her long black eyelashes were quivering, as though the lids were opening and a sly crafty eye peeped out with an unchildlike wink, as though the little girl were not asleep, but pretending. Yes, it was so. Her lips parted in a smile. The corners of her mouth quivered, as though she were trying to control them. But now she quite gave up all effort, now it was a grin, a broad grin; there was something shameless, provocative in that quite unchildish face; it was depravity, it was the face of a harlot, the shameless face of a French harlot. Now both eyes opened wide; they turned a glowing, shameless glance upon him; they laughed, invited him.... There was something infinitely hideous and shocking in that laugh, in those eyes, in such nastiness in the face of a child. “What, at five years old?” Svidrigaïlov muttered in genuine horror. “What does it mean?” And now she turned to him, her little face all aglow, holding out her arms.... “Accursed child!” Svidrigaïlov cried, raising his hand to strike her, but at that moment he woke up.

He was in the same bed, still wrapped in the blanket. The candle had not been lighted, and daylight was streaming in at the windows.

“I’ve had nightmare all night!” He got up angrily, feeling utterly shattered; his bones ached. There was a thick mist outside and he could see nothing. It was nearly five. He had overslept himself! He got up, put on his still damp jacket and overcoat. Feeling the revolver in his pocket, he took it out and then he sat down, took a notebook out of his pocket and in the most conspicuous place on the title page wrote a few lines in large letters. Reading them over, he sank into thought with his elbows on the table. The revolver and the notebook lay beside him. Some flies woke up and settled on the untouched veal, which was still on the table. He stared at them and at last with his free right hand began trying to catch one. He tried till he was tired, but could not catch it. At last, realising that he was engaged in this interesting pursuit, he started, got up and walked resolutely out of the room. A minute later he was in the street.

A thick milky mist hung over the town. Svidrigaïlov walked along the slippery dirty wooden pavement towards the Little Neva. He was picturing the waters of the Little Neva swollen in the night, Petrovsky Island, the wet paths, the wet grass, the wet trees and bushes and at last the bush.... He began ill-humouredly staring at the houses, trying to think of something else. There was not a cabman or a passer-by in the street. The bright yellow, wooden, little houses looked dirty and dejected with their closed shutters.

The cold and damp penetrated his whole body and he began to shiver. From time to time he came across shop signs and read each carefully. At last he reached the end of the wooden pavement and came to a big stone house. A dirty, shivering dog crossed his path with its tail between its legs. A man in a greatcoat lay face downwards; dead drunk, across the pavement. He looked at him and went on. A high tower stood up on the left. “Bah!” he shouted, “here is a place. Why should it be Petrovsky? It will be in the presence of an official witness anyway....”

He almost smiled at this new thought and turned into the street where there was the big house with the tower. At the great closed gates of the house, a little man stood with his shoulder leaning against them, wrapped in a grey soldier’s coat, with a copper Achilles helmet on his head. He cast a drowsy and indifferent glance at Svidrigaïlov. His face wore that perpetual look of peevish dejection, which is so sourly printed on all faces of Jewish race without exception. They both, Svidrigaïlov and Achilles, stared at each other for a few minutes without speaking. At last it struck Achilles as irregular for a man not drunk to be standing three steps from him, staring and not saying a word.

“What do you want here?” he said, without moving or changing his position.

“Nothing, brother, good morning,” answered Svidrigaïlov.

“This isn’t the place.”

“I am going to foreign parts, brother.”

“To foreign parts?”

“To America.”

“America.”

Svidrigaïlov took out the revolver and cocked it. Achilles raised his eyebrows.

“I say, this is not the place for such jokes!”

“Why shouldn’t it be the place?”

“Because it isn’t.”

“Well, brother, I don’t mind that. It’s a good place. When you are asked, you just say he was going, he said, to America.”

He put the revolver to his right temple.

“You can’t do it here, it’s not the place,” cried Achilles, rousing himself, his eyes growing bigger and bigger.

Svidrigaïlov pulled the trigger.

CHAPTER VII

The same day, about seven o’clock in the evening, Raskolnikov was on his way to his mother’s and sister’s lodging — the lodging in Bakaleyev’s house which Razumihin had found for them. The stairs went up from the street. Raskolnikov walked with lagging steps, as though still hesitating whether to go or not. But nothing would have turned him back: his decision was taken.

“Besides, it doesn’t matter, they still know nothing,” he thought, “and they are used to thinking of me as eccentric.”

He was appallingly dressed: his clothes torn and dirty, soaked with a night’s rain. His face was almost distorted from fatigue, exposure, the inward conflict that had lasted for twenty-four hours. He had spent all the previous night alone, God knows where. But anyway he had reached a decision.

He knocked at the door which was opened by his mother. Dounia was not at home. Even the servant happened to be out. At first Pulcheria Alexandrovna was speechless with joy and surprise; then she took him by the hand and drew him into the room.

“Here you are!” she began, faltering with joy. “Don’t be angry with me, Rodya, for welcoming you so foolishly with tears: I am laughing not crying. Did you think I was crying? No, I am delighted, but I’ve got into such a stupid habit of shedding tears. I’ve been like that ever since your father’s death. I cry for anything. Sit down, dear boy, you must be tired; I see you are. Ah, how muddy you are.”

“I was in the rain yesterday, mother....” Raskolnikov began.

“No, no,” Pulcheria Alexandrovna hurriedly interrupted, “you thought I was going to cross-question you in the womanish way I used to; don’t be anxious, I understand, I understand it all: now I’ve learned the ways here and truly I see for myself that they are better. I’ve made up my mind once for all: how could I understand your plans and expect you to give an account of them? God knows what concerns and plans you may have, or what ideas you are hatching; so it’s not for me to keep nudging your elbow, asking you what you are thinking about? But, my goodness! why am I running to and fro as though I were crazy...? I am reading your article in the magazine for the third time, Rodya. Dmitri Prokofitch brought it to me.

Directly I saw it I cried out to myself: ‘There, foolish one,’ I thought, ‘that’s what he is busy about; that’s the solution of the mystery! Learned people are always like that. He may have some new ideas in his head just now; he is thinking them over and I worry him and upset him.’ I read it, my dear, and of course there was a great deal I did not understand; but that’s only natural — how should I?”

“Show me, mother.”

Raskolnikov took the magazine and glanced at his article. Incongruous as it was with his mood and his circumstances, he felt that strange and bitter sweet sensation that every author experiences the first time he sees himself in print; besides, he was only twenty-three. It lasted only a moment. After reading a few lines he frowned and his heart throbbed with anguish. He recalled all the inward conflict of the preceding months. He flung the article on the table with disgust and anger.

“But, however foolish I may be, Rodya, I can see for myself that you will very soon be one of the leading — if not the leading man — in the world of Russian thought. And they dared to think you were mad! You don’t know, but they really thought that. Ah, the despicable creatures, how could they understand genius! And Dounia, Dounia was all but believing it — what do you say to that? Your father sent twice to magazines — the first time poems (I’ve got the manuscript and will show you) and the second time a whole novel (I begged him to let me copy it out) and how we prayed that they should be taken — they weren’t! I was breaking my heart, Rodya, six or seven days ago over your food and your clothes and the way you are living. But now I see again how foolish I was, for you can attain any position you like by your intellect and talent. No doubt you don’t care about that for the present and you are occupied with much more important matters....”

“Dounia’s not at home, mother?”

“No, Rodya. I often don’t see her; she leaves me alone. Dmitri Prokofitch comes to see me, it’s so good of him, and he always talks about you. He loves you and respects you, my dear. I don’t say that Dounia is very wanting in consideration. I am not complaining. She has her ways and I have mine; she seems to have got some secrets of late and I never have any secrets from you two. Of course, I am sure that Dounia has far too much sense, and besides she loves you and me... but I don’t know what it will all lead to. You’ve made me so happy by coming now, Rodya, but she has

missed you by going out; when she comes in I'll tell her: 'Your brother came in while you were out. Where have you been all this time?' You mustn't spoil me, Rodya, you know; come when you can, but if you can't, it doesn't matter, I can wait. I shall know, anyway, that you are fond of me, that will be enough for me. I shall read what you write, I shall hear about you from everyone, and sometimes you'll come yourself to see me. What could be better? Here you've come now to comfort your mother, I see that."

Here Pulcheria Alexandrovna began to cry.

"Here I am again! Don't mind my foolishness. My goodness, why am I sitting here?" she cried, jumping up. "There is coffee and I don't offer you any. Ah, that's the selfishness of old age. I'll get it at once!"

"Mother, don't trouble, I am going at once. I haven't come for that. Please listen to me."

Pulcheria Alexandrovna went up to him timidly.

"Mother, whatever happens, whatever you hear about me, whatever you are told about me, will you always love me as you do now?" he asked suddenly from the fullness of his heart, as though not thinking of his words and not weighing them.

"Rodya, Rodya, what is the matter? How can you ask me such a question? Why, who will tell me anything about you? Besides, I shouldn't believe anyone, I should refuse to listen."

"I've come to assure you that I've always loved you and I am glad that we are alone, even glad Dounia is out," he went on with the same impulse. "I have come to tell you that though you will be unhappy, you must believe that your son loves you now more than himself, and that all you thought about me, that I was cruel and didn't care about you, was all a mistake. I shall never cease to love you.... Well, that's enough: I thought I must do this and begin with this...."

Pulcheria Alexandrovna embraced him in silence, pressing him to her bosom and weeping gently.

"I don't know what is wrong with you, Rodya," she said at last. "I've been thinking all this time that we were simply boring you and now I see that there is a great sorrow in store for you, and that's why you are miserable. I've foreseen it a long time, Rodya. Forgive me for speaking about it. I keep thinking about it and lie awake at nights. Your sister lay talking in her sleep all last night, talking of nothing but you. I caught something, but I couldn't make it out. I felt all the morning as though I were

going to be hanged, waiting for something, expecting something, and now it has come! Rodya, Rodya, where are you going? You are going away somewhere?”

“Yes.”

“That’s what I thought! I can come with you, you know, if you need me. And Dounia, too; she loves you, she loves you dearly — and Sofya Semyonovna may come with us if you like. You see, I am glad to look upon her as a daughter even... Dmitri Prokofitch will help us to go together. But... where... are you going?”

“Good-bye, mother.”

“What, to-day?” she cried, as though losing him for ever.

“I can’t stay, I must go now....”

“And can’t I come with you?”

“No, but kneel down and pray to God for me. Your prayer perhaps will reach Him.”

“Let me bless you and sign you with the cross. That’s right, that’s right. Oh, God, what are we doing?”

Yes, he was glad, he was very glad that there was no one there, that he was alone with his mother. For the first time after all those awful months his heart was softened. He fell down before her, he kissed her feet and both wept, embracing. And she was not surprised and did not question him this time. For some days she had realised that something awful was happening to her son and that now some terrible minute had come for him.

“Rodya, my darling, my first born,” she said sobbing, “now you are just as when you were little. You would run like this to me and hug me and kiss me. When your father was living and we were poor, you comforted us simply by being with us and when I buried your father, how often we wept together at his grave and embraced, as now. And if I’ve been crying lately, it’s that my mother’s heart had a foreboding of trouble. The first time I saw you, that evening, you remember, as soon as we arrived here, I guessed simply from your eyes. My heart sank at once, and to-day when I opened the door and looked at you, I thought the fatal hour had come. Rodya, Rodya, you are not going away to-day?”

“No!”

“You’ll come again?”

“Yes... I’ll come.”

“Rodya, don’t be angry, I don’t dare to question you. I know I mustn’t. Only say two words to me — is it far where you are going?”

“Very far.”

“What is awaiting you there? Some post or career for you?”

“What God sends... only pray for me.” Raskolnikov went to the door, but she clutched him and gazed despairingly into his eyes. Her face worked with terror.

“Enough, mother,” said Raskolnikov, deeply regretting that he had come.

“Not for ever, it’s not yet for ever? You’ll come, you’ll come to-morrow?”

“I will, I will, good-bye.” He tore himself away at last.

It was a warm, fresh, bright evening; it had cleared up in the morning. Raskolnikov went to his lodgings; he made haste. He wanted to finish all before sunset. He did not want to meet anyone till then. Going up the stairs he noticed that Nastasya rushed from the samovar to watch him intently. “Can anyone have come to see me?” he wondered. He had a disgusted vision of Porfiry. But opening his door he saw Dounia. She was sitting alone, plunged in deep thought, and looked as though she had been waiting a long time. He stopped short in the doorway. She rose from the sofa in dismay and stood up facing him. Her eyes, fixed upon him, betrayed horror and infinite grief. And from those eyes alone he saw at once that she knew.

“Am I to come in or go away?” he asked uncertainly.

“I’ve been all day with Sofya Semyonovna. We were both waiting for you. We thought that you would be sure to come there.”

Raskolnikov went into the room and sank exhausted on a chair.

“I feel weak, Dounia, I am very tired; and I should have liked at this moment to be able to control myself.”

He glanced at her mistrustfully.

“Where were you all night?”

“I don’t remember clearly. You see, sister, I wanted to make up my mind once for all, and several times I walked by the Neva, I remember that I wanted to end it all there, but... I couldn’t make up my mind,” he whispered, looking at her mistrustfully again.

“Thank God! That was just what we were afraid of, Sofya Semyonovna and I. Then you still have faith in life? Thank God, thank God!”

Raskolnikov smiled bitterly.

“I haven’t faith, but I have just been weeping in mother’s arms; I haven’t faith, but I have just asked her to pray for me. I don’t know how it is, Dounia, I don’t understand it.”

“Have you been at mother’s? Have you told her?” cried Dounia, horror-stricken. “Surely you haven’t done that?”

“No, I didn’t tell her... in words; but she understood a great deal. She heard you talking in your sleep. I am sure she half understands it already. Perhaps I did wrong in going to see her. I don’t know why I did go. I am a contemptible person, Dounia.”

“A contemptible person, but ready to face suffering! You are, aren’t you?”

“Yes, I am going. At once. Yes, to escape the disgrace I thought of drowning myself, Dounia, but as I looked into the water, I thought that if I had considered myself strong till now I’d better not be afraid of disgrace,” he said, hurrying on. “It’s pride, Dounia.”

“Pride, Rodya.”

There was a gleam of fire in his lustreless eyes; he seemed to be glad to think that he was still proud.

“You don’t think, sister, that I was simply afraid of the water?” he asked, looking into her face with a sinister smile.

“Oh, Rodya, hush!” cried Dounia bitterly. Silence lasted for two minutes. He sat with his eyes fixed on the floor; Dounia stood at the other end of the table and looked at him with anguish. Suddenly he got up.

“It’s late, it’s time to go! I am going at once to give myself up. But I don’t know why I am going to give myself up.”

Big tears fell down her cheeks.

“You are crying, sister, but can you hold out your hand to me?”

“You doubted it?”

She threw her arms round him.

“Aren’t you half expiating your crime by facing the suffering?” she cried, holding him close and kissing him.

“Crime? What crime?” he cried in sudden fury. “That I killed a vile noxious insect, an old pawnbroker woman, of use to no one!... Killing her was atonement for forty sins. She was sucking the life out of poor people. Was that a crime? I am not thinking of it and I am not thinking of expiating it, and why are you all rubbing it in on all sides? ‘A crime! a crime!’ Only now I see clearly the imbecility of my cowardice, now that I have decided

to face this superfluous disgrace. It’s simply because I am contemptible and have nothing in me that I have decided to, perhaps too for my advantage, as that... Porfiry... suggested!”

“Brother, brother, what are you saying? Why, you have shed blood?” cried Dounia in despair.

“Which all men shed,” he put in almost frantically, “which flows and has always flowed in streams, which is spilt like champagne, and for which men are crowned in the Capitol and are called afterwards benefactors of mankind. Look into it more carefully and understand it! I too wanted to do good to men and would have done hundreds, thousands of good deeds to make up for that one piece of stupidity, not stupidity even, simply clumsiness, for the idea was by no means so stupid as it seems now that it has failed.... (Everything seems stupid when it fails.) By that stupidity I only wanted to put myself into an independent position, to take the first step, to obtain means, and then everything would have been smoothed over by benefits immeasurable in comparison.... But I... I couldn’t carry out even the first step, because I am contemptible, that’s what’s the matter! And yet I won’t look at it as you do. If I had succeeded I should have been crowned with glory, but now I’m trapped.”

“But that’s not so, not so! Brother, what are you saying?”

“Ah, it’s not picturesque, not æsthetically attractive! I fail to understand why bombarding people by regular siege is more honourable. The fear of appearances is the first symptom of impotence. I’ve never, never recognised this more clearly than now, and I am further than ever from seeing that what I did was a crime. I’ve never, never been stronger and more convinced than now.”

The colour had rushed into his pale exhausted face, but as he uttered his last explanation, he happened to meet Dounia’s eyes and he saw such anguish in them that he could not help being checked. He felt that he had, anyway, made these two poor women miserable, that he was, anyway, the cause...

“Dounia darling, if I am guilty forgive me (though I cannot be forgiven if I am guilty). Good-bye! We won’t dispute. It’s time, high time to go. Don’t follow me, I beseech you, I have somewhere else to go.... But you go at once and sit with mother. I entreat you to! It’s my last request of you. Don’t leave her at all; I left her in a state of anxiety, that she is not fit to bear; she will die or go out of her mind. Be with her! Razumihin will be with you.

I’ve been talking to him.... Don’t cry about me: I’ll try to be honest and manly all my life, even if I am a murderer. Perhaps I shall some day make a name. I won’t disgrace you, you will see; I’ll still show.... Now good-bye for the present,” he concluded hurriedly, noticing again a strange expression in Dounia’s eyes at his last words and promises. “Why are you crying? Don’t cry, don’t cry: we are not parting for ever! Ah, yes! Wait a minute, I’d forgotten!”

He went to the table, took up a thick dusty book, opened it and took from between the pages a little water-colour portrait on ivory. It was the portrait of his landlady’s daughter, who had died of fever, that strange girl who had wanted to be a nun. For a minute he gazed at the delicate expressive face of his betrothed, kissed the portrait and gave it to Dounia.

“I used to talk a great deal about it to her, only to her,” he said thoughtfully. “To her heart I confided much of what has since been so hideously realised. Don’t be uneasy,” he returned to Dounia, “she was as much opposed to it as you, and I am glad that she is gone. The great point is that everything now is going to be different, is going to be broken in two,” he cried, suddenly returning to his dejection. “Everything, everything, and am I prepared for it? Do I want it myself? They say it is necessary for me to suffer! What’s the object of these senseless sufferings? shall I know any better what they are for, when I am crushed by hardships and idiocy, and weak as an old man after twenty years’ penal servitude? And what shall I have to live for then? Why am I consenting to that life now? Oh, I knew I was contemptible when I stood looking at the Neva at daybreak to-day!”

At last they both went out. It was hard for Dounia, but she loved him. She walked away, but after going fifty paces she turned round to look at him again. He was still in sight. At the corner he too turned and for the last time their eyes met; but noticing that she was looking at him, he motioned her away with impatience and even vexation, and turned the corner abruptly.

“I am wicked, I see that,” he thought to himself, feeling ashamed a moment later of his angry gesture to Dounia. “But why are they so fond of me if I don’t deserve it? Oh, if only I were alone and no one loved me and I too had never loved anyone! *Nothing of all this would have happened.* But I wonder shall I in those fifteen or twenty years grow so meek that I shall humble myself before people and whimper at every word that I am a criminal? Yes, that’s it, that’s it, that’s what they are sending me there for,

that’s what they want. Look at them running to and fro about the streets, every one of them a scoundrel and a criminal at heart and, worse still, an idiot. But try to get me off and they’d be wild with righteous indignation. Oh, how I hate them all!”

He fell to musing by what process it could come to pass, that he could be humbled before all of them, indiscriminately — humbled by conviction. And yet why not? It must be so. Would not twenty years of continual bondage crush him utterly? Water wears out a stone. And why, why should he live after that? Why should he go now when he knew that it would be so? It was the hundredth time perhaps that he had asked himself that question since the previous evening, but still he went.

CHAPTER VIII

When he went into Sonia’s room, it was already getting dark. All day Sonia had been waiting for him in terrible anxiety. Dounia had been waiting with her. She had come to her that morning, remembering Svidrigaïlov’s words that Sonia knew. We will not describe the conversation and tears of the two girls, and how friendly they became. Dounia gained one comfort at least from that interview, that her brother would not be alone. He had gone to her, Sonia, first with his confession; he had gone to her for human fellowship when he needed it; she would go with him wherever fate might send him. Dounia did not ask, but she knew it was so. She looked at Sonia almost with reverence and at first almost embarrassed her by it. Sonia was almost on the point of tears. She felt herself, on the contrary, hardly worthy to look at Dounia. Dounia’s gracious image when she had bowed to her so attentively and respectfully at their first meeting in Raskolnikov’s room had remained in her mind as one of the fairest visions of her life.

Dounia at last became impatient and, leaving Sonia, went to her brother’s room to await him there; she kept thinking that he would come there first. When she had gone, Sonia began to be tortured by the dread of his committing suicide, and Dounia too feared it. But they had spent the day trying to persuade each other that that could not be, and both were less anxious while they were together. As soon as they parted, each thought of nothing else. Sonia remembered how Svidrigaïlov had said to her the day before that Raskolnikov had two alternatives — Siberia or... Besides she knew his vanity, his pride and his lack of faith.

“Is it possible that he has nothing but cowardice and fear of death to make him live?” she thought at last in despair.

Meanwhile the sun was setting. Sonia was standing in dejection, looking intently out of the window, but from it she could see nothing but the unwhitewashed blank wall of the next house. At last when she began to feel sure of his death — he walked into the room.

She gave a cry of joy, but looking carefully into his face she turned pale.

“Yes,” said Raskolnikov, smiling. “I have come for your cross, Sonia. It was you told me to go to the cross-roads; why is it you are frightened now it’s come to that?”

Sonia gazed at him astonished. His tone seemed strange to her; a cold shiver ran over her, but in a moment she guessed that the tone and the words were a mask. He spoke to her looking away, as though to avoid meeting her eyes.

“You see, Sonia, I’ve decided that it will be better so. There is one fact.... But it’s a long story and there’s no need to discuss it. But do you know what angers me? It annoys me that all those stupid brutish faces will be gaping at me directly, pestering me with their stupid questions, which I shall have to answer — they’ll point their fingers at me.... Tfoo! You know I am not going to Porfiry, I am sick of him. I’d rather go to my friend, the Explosive Lieutenant; how I shall surprise him, what a sensation I shall make! But I must be cooler; I’ve become too irritable of late. You know I was nearly shaking my fist at my sister just now, because she turned to take a last look at me. It’s a brutal state to be in! Ah! what am I coming to! Well, where are the crosses?”

He seemed hardly to know what he was doing. He could not stay still or concentrate his attention on anything; his ideas seemed to gallop after one another, he talked incoherently, his hands trembled slightly.

Without a word Sonia took out of the drawer two crosses, one of cypress wood and one of copper. She made the sign of the cross over herself and over him, and put the wooden cross on his neck.

“It’s the symbol of my taking up the cross,” he laughed. “As though I had not suffered much till now! The wooden cross, that is the peasant one; the copper one, that is Lizaveta’s — you will wear yourself, show me! So she had it on... at that moment? I remember two things like these too, a silver one and a little ikon. I threw them back on the old woman’s neck. Those would be appropriate now, really, those are what I ought to put on now.... But I am talking nonsense and forgetting what matters; I’m somehow forgetful.... You see I have come to warn you, Sonia, so that you might know... that’s all — that’s all I came for. But I thought I had more to say. You wanted me to go yourself. Well, now I am going to prison and you’ll have your wish. Well, what are you crying for? You too? Don’t. Leave off! Oh, how I hate it all!”

But his feeling was stirred; his heart ached, as he looked at her. “Why is she grieving too?” he thought to himself. “What am I to her? Why does she weep? Why is she looking after me, like my mother or Dounia? She’ll be my nurse.”

“Cross yourself, say at least one prayer,” Sonia begged in a timid broken voice.

“Oh certainly, as much as you like! And sincerely, Sonia, sincerely....”

But he wanted to say something quite different.

He crossed himself several times. Sonia took up her shawl and put it over her head. It was the green *drap de dames* shawl of which Marmeladov had spoken, “the family shawl.” Raskolnikov thought of that looking at it, but he did not ask. He began to feel himself that he was certainly forgetting things and was disgustingly agitated. He was frightened at this. He was suddenly struck too by the thought that Sonia meant to go with him.

“What are you doing? Where are you going? Stay here, stay! I’ll go alone,” he cried in cowardly vexation, and almost resentful, he moved towards the door. “What’s the use of going in procession?” he muttered going out.

Sonia remained standing in the middle of the room. He had not even said good-bye to her; he had forgotten her. A poignant and rebellious doubt surged in his heart.

“Was it right, was it right, all this?” he thought again as he went down the stairs. “Couldn’t he stop and retract it all... and not go?”

But still he went. He felt suddenly once for all that he mustn’t ask himself questions. As he turned into the street he remembered that he had not said good-bye to Sonia, that he had left her in the middle of the room in her green shawl, not daring to stir after he had shouted at her, and he stopped short for a moment. At the same instant, another thought dawned upon him, as though it had been lying in wait to strike him then.

“Why, with what object did I go to her just now? I told her — on business; on what business? I had no sort of business! To tell her I was *going*; but where was the need? Do I love her? No, no, I drove her away just now like a dog. Did I want her crosses? Oh, how low I’ve sunk! No, I wanted her tears, I wanted to see her terror, to see how her heart ached! I had to have something to cling to, something to delay me, some friendly face to see! And I dared to believe in myself, to dream of what I would do! I am a beggarly contemptible wretch, contemptible!”

He walked along the canal bank, and he had not much further to go. But on reaching the bridge he stopped and turning out of his way along it went to the Hay Market.

He looked eagerly to right and left, gazed intently at every object and could not fix his attention on anything; everything slipped away. “In another week, another month I shall be driven in a prison van over this bridge, how shall I look at the canal then? I should like to remember this!” slipped into his mind. “Look at this sign! How shall I read those letters then? It’s written here ‘Campany,’ that’s a thing to remember, that letter *a*, and to look at it again in a month — how shall I look at it then? What shall I be feeling and thinking then?... How trivial it all must be, what I am fretting about now! Of course it must all be interesting... in its way... (Ha-ha-ha! What am I thinking about?) I am becoming a baby, I am showing off to myself; why am I ashamed? Foo! how people shove! that fat man — a German he must be — who pushed against me, does he know whom he pushed? There’s a peasant woman with a baby, begging. It’s curious that she thinks me happier than she is. I might give her something, for the incongruity of it. Here’s a five copeck piece left in my pocket, where did I get it? Here, here... take it, my good woman!”

“God bless you,” the beggar chanted in a lachrymose voice.

He went into the Hay Market. It was distasteful, very distasteful to be in a crowd, but he walked just where he saw most people. He would have given anything in the world to be alone; but he knew himself that he would not have remained alone for a moment. There was a man drunk and disorderly in the crowd; he kept trying to dance and falling down. There was a ring round him. Raskolnikov squeezed his way through the crowd, stared for some minutes at the drunken man and suddenly gave a short jerky laugh. A minute later he had forgotten him and did not see him, though he still stared. He moved away at last, not remembering where he was; but when he got into the middle of the square an emotion suddenly came over him, overwhelming him body and mind.

He suddenly recalled Sonia’s words, “Go to the cross-roads, bow down to the people, kiss the earth, for you have sinned against it too, and say aloud to the whole world, ‘I am a murderer.’” He trembled, remembering that. And the hopeless misery and anxiety of all that time, especially of the last hours, had weighed so heavily upon him that he positively clutched at the chance of this new unmixed, complete sensation. It came over him like a fit; it was like a single spark kindled in his soul and spreading fire through him. Everything in him softened at once and the tears started into his eyes. He fell to the earth on the spot....

He knelt down in the middle of the square, bowed down to the earth, and kissed that filthy earth with bliss and rapture. He got up and bowed down a second time.

“He’s boozed,” a youth near him observed.

There was a roar of laughter.

“He’s going to Jerusalem, brothers, and saying good-bye to his children and his country. He’s bowing down to all the world and kissing the great city of St. Petersburg and its pavement,” added a workman who was a little drunk.

“Quite a young man, too!” observed a third.

“And a gentleman,” someone observed soberly.

“There’s no knowing who’s a gentleman and who isn’t nowadays.”

These exclamations and remarks checked Raskolnikov, and the words, “I am a murderer,” which were perhaps on the point of dropping from his lips, died away. He bore these remarks quietly, however, and, without looking round, he turned down a street leading to the police office. He had a glimpse of something on the way which did not surprise him; he had felt that it must be so. The second time he bowed down in the Hay Market he saw, standing fifty paces from him on the left, Sonia. She was hiding from him behind one of the wooden shanties in the market-place. She had followed him then on his painful way! Raskolnikov at that moment felt and knew once for all that Sonia was with him for ever and would follow him to the ends of the earth, wherever fate might take him. It wrung his heart... but he was just reaching the fatal place.

He went into the yard fairly resolutely. He had to mount to the third storey. “I shall be some time going up,” he thought. He felt as though the fateful moment was still far off, as though he had plenty of time left for consideration.

Again the same rubbish, the same eggshells lying about on the spiral stairs, again the open doors of the flats, again the same kitchens and the same fumes and stench coming from them. Raskolnikov had not been here since that day. His legs were numb and gave way under him, but still they moved forward. He stopped for a moment to take breath, to collect himself, so as to enter *like a man*. “But why? what for?” he wondered, reflecting. “If I must drink the cup what difference does it make? The more revolting the better.” He imagined for an instant the figure of the “explosive lieutenant,” Ilya Petrovitch. Was he actually going to him? Couldn’t he go to someone

else? To Nikodim Fomitch? Couldn’t he turn back and go straight to Nikodim Fomitch’s lodgings? At least then it would be done privately.... No, no! To the “explosive lieutenant”! If he must drink it, drink it off at once.

Turning cold and hardly conscious, he opened the door of the office. There were very few people in it this time — only a house porter and a peasant. The doorkeeper did not even peep out from behind his screen. Raskolnikov walked into the next room. “Perhaps I still need not speak,” passed through his mind. Some sort of clerk not wearing a uniform was settling himself at a bureau to write. In a corner another clerk was seating himself. Zametov was not there, nor, of course, Nikodim Fomitch.

“No one in?” Raskolnikov asked, addressing the person at the bureau.

“Whom do you want?”

“A-ah! Not a sound was heard, not a sight was seen, but I scent the Russian... how does it go on in the fairy tale... I’ve forgotten! ‘At your service!’” a familiar voice cried suddenly.

Raskolnikov shuddered. The Explosive Lieutenant stood before him. He had just come in from the third room. “It is the hand of fate,” thought Raskolnikov. “Why is he here?”

“You’ve come to see us? What about?” cried Ilya Petrovitch. He was obviously in an exceedingly good humour and perhaps a trifle exhilarated. “If it’s on business you are rather early.[*] It’s only a chance that I am here... however I’ll do what I can. I must admit, I... what is it, what is it? Excuse me....”

> [*] Dostoyevsky appears to have forgotten that it is after sunset, and that the last time Raskolnikov visited the police office at two in the afternoon he was reproached for coming too late. — TRANSLATOR.

“Raskolnikov.”

“Of course, Raskolnikov. You didn’t imagine I’d forgotten? Don’t think I am like that... Rodion Ro — Ro — Rodionovitch, that’s it, isn’t it?”

“Rodion Romanovitch.”

“Yes, yes, of course, Rodion Romanovitch! I was just getting at it. I made many inquiries about you. I assure you I’ve been genuinely grieved since that... since I behaved like that... it was explained to me afterwards that you were a literary man... and a learned one too... and so to say the first steps... Mercy on us! What literary or scientific man does not begin by some originality of conduct! My wife and I have the greatest respect for literature,

in my wife it’s a genuine passion! Literature and art! If only a man is a gentleman, all the rest can be gained by talents, learning, good sense, genius. As for a hat — well, what does a hat matter? I can buy a hat as easily as I can a bun; but what’s under the hat, what the hat covers, I can’t buy that! I was even meaning to come and apologise to you, but thought maybe you’d... But I am forgetting to ask you, is there anything you want really? I hear your family have come?”

“Yes, my mother and sister.”

“I’ve even had the honour and happiness of meeting your sister — a highly cultivated and charming person. I confess I was sorry I got so hot with you. There it is! But as for my looking suspiciously at your fainting fit — that affair has been cleared up splendidly! Bigotry and fanaticism! I understand your indignation. Perhaps you are changing your lodging on account of your family’s arriving?”

“No, I only looked in... I came to ask... I thought that I should find Zametov here.”

“Oh, yes! Of course, you’ve made friends, I heard. Well, no, Zametov is not here. Yes, we’ve lost Zametov. He’s not been here since yesterday... he quarrelled with everyone on leaving... in the rudest way. He is a feather-headed youngster, that’s all; one might have expected something from him, but there, you know what they are, our brilliant young men. He wanted to go in for some examination, but it’s only to talk and boast about it, it will go no further than that. Of course it’s a very different matter with you or Mr. Razumihin there, your friend. Your career is an intellectual one and you won’t be deterred by failure. For you, one may say, all the attractions of life *nihil est* — you are an ascetic, a monk, a hermit!... A book, a pen behind your ear, a learned research — that’s where your spirit soars! I am the same way myself.... Have you read Livingstone’s Travels?”

“No.”

“Oh, I have. There are a great many Nihilists about nowadays, you know, and indeed it is not to be wondered at. What sort of days are they? I ask you. But we thought... you are not a Nihilist of course? Answer me openly, openly!”

“N-no...”

“Believe me, you can speak openly to me as you would to yourself! Official duty is one thing but... you are thinking I meant to say *friendship* is quite another? No, you’re wrong! It’s not friendship, but the feeling of a

man and a citizen, the feeling of humanity and of love for the Almighty. I may be an official, but I am always bound to feel myself a man and a citizen.... You were asking about Zametov. Zametov will make a scandal in the French style in a house of bad reputation, over a glass of champagne... that’s all your Zametov is good for! While I’m perhaps, so to speak, burning with devotion and lofty feelings, and besides I have rank, consequence, a post! I am married and have children, I fulfil the duties of a man and a citizen, but who is he, may I ask? I appeal to you as a man ennobled by education... Then these midwives, too, have become extraordinarily numerous.”

Raskolnikov raised his eyebrows inquiringly. The words of Ilya Petrovitch, who had obviously been dining, were for the most part a stream of empty sounds for him. But some of them he understood. He looked at him inquiringly, not knowing how it would end.

“I mean those crop-headed wenches,” the talkative Ilya Petrovitch continued. “Midwives is my name for them. I think it a very satisfactory one, ha-ha! They go to the Academy, study anatomy. If I fall ill, am I to send for a young lady to treat me? What do you say? Ha-ha!” Ilya Petrovitch laughed, quite pleased with his own wit. “It’s an immoderate zeal for education, but once you’re educated, that’s enough. Why abuse it? Why insult honourable people, as that scoundrel Zametov does? Why did he insult me, I ask you? Look at these suicides, too, how common they are, you can’t fancy! People spend their last halfpenny and kill themselves, boys and girls and old people. Only this morning we heard about a gentleman who had just come to town. Nil Pavlitch, I say, what was the name of that gentleman who shot himself?”

“Svidrigaïlov,” someone answered from the other room with drowsy listlessness.

Raskolnikov started.

“Svidrigaïlov! Svidrigaïlov has shot himself!” he cried.

“What, do you know Svidrigaïlov?”

“Yes... I knew him.... He hadn’t been here long.”

“Yes, that’s so. He had lost his wife, was a man of reckless habits and all of a sudden shot himself, and in such a shocking way.... He left in his notebook a few words: that he dies in full possession of his faculties and that no one is to blame for his death. He had money, they say. How did you come to know him?”

“I... was acquainted... my sister was governess in his family.”

“Bah-bah-bah! Then no doubt you can tell us something about him. You had no suspicion?”

“I saw him yesterday... he... was drinking wine; I knew nothing.”

Raskolnikov felt as though something had fallen on him and was stifling him.

“You’ve turned pale again. It’s so stuffy here...”

“Yes, I must go,” muttered Raskolnikov. “Excuse my troubling you....”

“Oh, not at all, as often as you like. It’s a pleasure to see you and I am glad to say so.”

Ilya Petrovitch held out his hand.

“I only wanted... I came to see Zametov.”

“I understand, I understand, and it’s a pleasure to see you.”

“I... am very glad... good-bye,” Raskolnikov smiled.

He went out; he reeled, he was overtaken with giddiness and did not know what he was doing. He began going down the stairs, supporting himself with his right hand against the wall. He fancied that a porter pushed past him on his way upstairs to the police office, that a dog in the lower storey kept up a shrill barking and that a woman flung a rolling-pin at it and shouted. He went down and out into the yard. There, not far from the entrance, stood Sonia, pale and horror-stricken. She looked wildly at him. He stood still before her. There was a look of poignant agony, of despair, in her face. She clasped her hands. His lips worked in an ugly, meaningless smile. He stood still a minute, grinned and went back to the police office.

Ilya Petrovitch had sat down and was rummaging among some papers. Before him stood the same peasant who had pushed by on the stairs.

“Hulloa! Back again! have you left something behind? What’s the matter?”

Raskolnikov, with white lips and staring eyes, came slowly nearer. He walked right to the table, leaned his hand on it, tried to say something, but could not; only incoherent sounds were audible.

“You are feeling ill, a chair! Here, sit down! Some water!”

Raskolnikov dropped on to a chair, but he kept his eyes fixed on the face of Ilya Petrovitch, which expressed unpleasant surprise. Both looked at one another for a minute and waited. Water was brought.

“It was I..,” began Raskolnikov.

“Drink some water.”

Raskolnikov refused the water with his hand, and softly and brokenly, but distinctly said:

“*It was I killed the old pawnbroker woman and her sister Lizaveta with an axe and robbed them.*”

Ilya Petrovitch opened his mouth. People ran up on all sides.

Raskolnikov repeated his statement.

EPILOGUE

I

Siberia. On the banks of a broad solitary river stands a town, one of the administrative centres of Russia; in the town there is a fortress, in the fortress there is a prison. In the prison the second-class convict Rodion Raskolnikov has been confined for nine months. Almost a year and a half has passed since his crime.

There had been little difficulty about his trial. The criminal adhered exactly, firmly, and clearly to his statement. He did not confuse nor misrepresent the facts, nor soften them in his own interest, nor omit the smallest detail. He explained every incident of the murder, the secret of *the pledge* (the piece of wood with a strip of metal) which was found in the murdered woman's hand. He described minutely how he had taken her keys, what they were like, as well as the chest and its contents; he explained the mystery of Lizaveta's murder; described how Koch and, after him, the student knocked, and repeated all they had said to one another; how he afterwards had run downstairs and heard Nikolay and Dmitri shouting; how he had hidden in the empty flat and afterwards gone home. He ended by indicating the stone in the yard off the Voznesensky Prospect under which the purse and the trinkets were found. The whole thing, in fact, was perfectly clear. The lawyers and the judges were very much struck, among other things, by the fact that he had hidden the trinkets and the purse under a stone, without making use of them, and that, what was more, he did not now remember what the trinkets were like, or even how many there were. The fact that he had never opened the purse and did not even know how much was in it seemed incredible. There turned out to be in the purse three hundred and seventeen roubles and sixty copecks. From being so long under the stone, some of the most valuable notes lying uppermost had suffered from the damp. They were a long while trying to discover why the accused man should tell a lie about this, when about everything else he had made a truthful and straightforward confession. Finally some of the lawyers more versed in psychology admitted that it was possible he had really not looked into the purse, and so didn't know what was in it when he hid it under the stone. But they immediately drew the deduction that the crime could only have been committed through temporary mental derangement, through homicidal mania, without object or the pursuit of gain. This fell in with the

most recent fashionable theory of temporary insanity, so often applied in our days in criminal cases. Moreover Raskolnikov's hypochondriacal condition was proved by many witnesses, by Dr. Zossimov, his former fellow students, his landlady and her servant. All this pointed strongly to the conclusion that Raskolnikov was not quite like an ordinary murderer and robber, but that there was another element in the case.

To the intense annoyance of those who maintained this opinion, the criminal scarcely attempted to defend himself. To the decisive question as to what motive impelled him to the murder and the robbery, he answered very clearly with the coarsest frankness that the cause was his miserable position, his poverty and helplessness, and his desire to provide for his first steps in life by the help of the three thousand roubles he had reckoned on finding. He had been led to the murder through his shallow and cowardly nature, exasperated moreover by privation and failure. To the question what led him to confess, he answered that it was his heartfelt repentance. All this was almost coarse....

The sentence however was more merciful than could have been expected, perhaps partly because the criminal had not tried to justify himself, but had rather shown a desire to exaggerate his guilt. All the strange and peculiar circumstances of the crime were taken into consideration. There could be no doubt of the abnormal and poverty-stricken condition of the criminal at the time. The fact that he had made no use of what he had stolen was put down partly to the effect of remorse, partly to his abnormal mental condition at the time of the crime. Incidentally the murder of Lizaveta served indeed to confirm the last hypothesis: a man commits two murders and forgets that the door is open! Finally, the confession, at the very moment when the case was hopelessly muddled by the false evidence given by Nikolay through melancholy and fanaticism, and when, moreover, there were no proofs against the real criminal, no suspicions even (Porfiry Petrovitch fully kept his word) — all this did much to soften the sentence. Other circumstances, too, in the prisoner's favour came out quite unexpectedly. Razumihin somehow discovered and proved that while Raskolnikov was at the university he had helped a poor consumptive fellow student and had spent his last penny on supporting him for six months, and when this student died, leaving a decrepit old father whom he had maintained almost from his thirteenth year, Raskolnikov had got the old man into a hospital and paid for his funeral

when he died. Raskolnikov's landlady bore witness, too, that when they had lived in another house at Five Corners, Raskolnikov had rescued two little children from a house on fire and was burnt in doing so. This was investigated and fairly well confirmed by many witnesses. These facts made an impression in his favour.

And in the end the criminal was, in consideration of extenuating circumstances, condemned to penal servitude in the second class for a term of eight years only.

At the very beginning of the trial Raskolnikov's mother fell ill. Dounia and Razumihin found it possible to get her out of Petersburg during the trial. Razumihin chose a town on the railway not far from Petersburg, so as to be able to follow every step of the trial and at the same time to see Avdotya Romanovna as often as possible. Pulcheria Alexandrovna's illness was a strange nervous one and was accompanied by a partial derangement of her intellect.

When Dounia returned from her last interview with her brother, she had found her mother already ill, in feverish delirium. That evening Razumihin and she agreed what answers they must make to her mother's questions about Raskolnikov and made up a complete story for her mother's benefit of his having to go away to a distant part of Russia on a business commission, which would bring him in the end money and reputation.

But they were struck by the fact that Pulcheria Alexandrovna never asked them anything on the subject, neither then nor thereafter. On the contrary, she had her own version of her son's sudden departure; she told them with tears how he had come to say good-bye to her, hinting that she alone knew many mysterious and important facts, and that Rodya had many very powerful enemies, so that it was necessary for him to be in hiding. As for his future career, she had no doubt that it would be brilliant when certain sinister influences could be removed. She assured Razumihin that her son would be one day a great statesman, that his article and brilliant literary talent proved it. This article she was continually reading, she even read it aloud, almost took it to bed with her, but scarcely asked where Rodya was, though the subject was obviously avoided by the others, which might have been enough to awaken her suspicions.

They began to be frightened at last at Pulcheria Alexandrovna's strange silence on certain subjects. She did not, for instance, complain of getting no letters from him, though in previous years she had only lived on the hope of

letters from her beloved Rodya. This was the cause of great uneasiness to Dounia; the idea occurred to her that her mother suspected that there was something terrible in her son’s fate and was afraid to ask, for fear of hearing something still more awful. In any case, Dounia saw clearly that her mother was not in full possession of her faculties.

It happened once or twice, however, that Pulcheria Alexandrovna gave such a turn to the conversation that it was impossible to answer her without mentioning where Rodya was, and on receiving unsatisfactory and suspicious answers she became at once gloomy and silent, and this mood lasted for a long time. Dounia saw at last that it was hard to deceive her and came to the conclusion that it was better to be absolutely silent on certain points; but it became more and more evident that the poor mother suspected something terrible. Dounia remembered her brother’s telling her that her mother had overheard her talking in her sleep on the night after her interview with Svidrigaïlov and before the fatal day of the confession: had not she made out something from that? Sometimes days and even weeks of gloomy silence and tears would be succeeded by a period of hysterical animation, and the invalid would begin to talk almost incessantly of her son, of her hopes of his future.... Her fancies were sometimes very strange. They humoured her, pretended to agree with her (she saw perhaps that they were pretending), but she still went on talking.

Five months after Raskolnikov’s confession, he was sentenced. Razumihin and Sonia saw him in prison as often as it was possible. At last the moment of separation came. Dounia swore to her brother that the separation should not be for ever, Razumihin did the same. Razumihin, in his youthful ardour, had firmly resolved to lay the foundations at least of a secure livelihood during the next three or four years, and saving up a certain sum, to emigrate to Siberia, a country rich in every natural resource and in need of workers, active men and capital. There they would settle in the town where Rodya was and all together would begin a new life. They all wept at parting.

Raskolnikov had been very dreamy for a few days before. He asked a great deal about his mother and was constantly anxious about her. He worried so much about her that it alarmed Dounia. When he heard about his mother’s illness he became very gloomy. With Sonia he was particularly reserved all the time. With the help of the money left to her by Svidrigaïlov, Sonia had long ago made her preparations to follow the party of convicts in

which he was despatched to Siberia. Not a word passed between Raskolnikov and her on the subject, but both knew it would be so. At the final leave-taking he smiled strangely at his sister’s and Razumihin’s fervent anticipations of their happy future together when he should come out of prison. He predicted that their mother’s illness would soon have a fatal ending. Sonia and he at last set off.

Two months later Dounia was married to Razumihin. It was a quiet and sorrowful wedding; Porfiry Petrovitch and Zossimov were invited however. During all this period Razumihin wore an air of resolute determination. Dounia put implicit faith in his carrying out his plans and indeed she could not but believe in him. He displayed a rare strength of will. Among other things he began attending university lectures again in order to take his degree. They were continually making plans for the future; both counted on settling in Siberia within five years at least. Till then they rested their hopes on Sonia.

Pulcheria Alexandrovna was delighted to give her blessing to Dounia’s marriage with Razumihin; but after the marriage she became even more melancholy and anxious. To give her pleasure Razumihin told her how Raskolnikov had looked after the poor student and his decrepit father and how a year ago he had been burnt and injured in rescuing two little children from a fire. These two pieces of news excited Pulcheria Alexandrovna’s disordered imagination almost to ecstasy. She was continually talking about them, even entering into conversation with strangers in the street, though Dounia always accompanied her. In public conveyances and shops, wherever she could capture a listener, she would begin the discourse about her son, his article, how he had helped the student, how he had been burnt at the fire, and so on! Dounia did not know how to restrain her. Apart from the danger of her morbid excitement, there was the risk of someone’s recalling Raskolnikov’s name and speaking of the recent trial. Pulcheria Alexandrovna found out the address of the mother of the two children her son had saved and insisted on going to see her.

At last her restlessness reached an extreme point. She would sometimes begin to cry suddenly and was often ill and feverishly delirious. One morning she declared that by her reckoning Rodya ought soon to be home, that she remembered when he said good-bye to her he said that they must expect him back in nine months. She began to prepare for his coming, began to do up her room for him, to clean the furniture, to wash and put up

new hangings and so on. Dounia was anxious, but said nothing and helped her to arrange the room. After a fatiguing day spent in continual fancies, in joyful day-dreams and tears, Pulcheria Alexandrovna was taken ill in the night and by morning she was feverish and delirious. It was brain fever. She died within a fortnight. In her delirium she dropped words which showed that she knew a great deal more about her son’s terrible fate than they had supposed.

For a long time Raskolnikov did not know of his mother’s death, though a regular correspondence had been maintained from the time he reached Siberia. It was carried on by means of Sonia, who wrote every month to the Razumihins and received an answer with unfailing regularity. At first they found Sonia’s letters dry and unsatisfactory, but later on they came to the conclusion that the letters could not be better, for from these letters they received a complete picture of their unfortunate brother’s life. Sonia’s letters were full of the most matter-of-fact detail, the simplest and clearest description of all Raskolnikov’s surroundings as a convict. There was no word of her own hopes, no conjecture as to the future, no description of her feelings. Instead of any attempt to interpret his state of mind and inner life, she gave the simple facts — that is, his own words, an exact account of his health, what he asked for at their interviews, what commission he gave her and so on. All these facts she gave with extraordinary minuteness. The picture of their unhappy brother stood out at last with great clearness and precision. There could be no mistake, because nothing was given but facts.

But Dounia and her husband could get little comfort out of the news, especially at first. Sonia wrote that he was constantly sullen and not ready to talk, that he scarcely seemed interested in the news she gave him from their letters, that he sometimes asked after his mother and that when, seeing that he had guessed the truth, she told him at last of her death, she was surprised to find that he did not seem greatly affected by it, not externally at any rate. She told them that, although he seemed so wrapped up in himself and, as it were, shut himself off from everyone — he took a very direct and simple view of his new life; that he understood his position, expected nothing better for the time, had no ill-founded hopes (as is so common in his position) and scarcely seemed surprised at anything in his surroundings, so unlike anything he had known before. She wrote that his health was satisfactory; he did his work without shirking or seeking to do more; he was almost indifferent about food, but except on Sundays and holidays the food

was so bad that at last he had been glad to accept some money from her, Sonia, to have his own tea every day. He begged her not to trouble about anything else, declaring that all this fuss about him only annoyed him. Sonia wrote further that in prison he shared the same room with the rest, that she had not seen the inside of their barracks, but concluded that they were crowded, miserable and unhealthy; that he slept on a plank bed with a rug under him and was unwilling to make any other arrangement. But that he lived so poorly and roughly, not from any plan or design, but simply from inattention and indifference.

Sonia wrote simply that he had at first shown no interest in her visits, had almost been vexed with her indeed for coming, unwilling to talk and rude to her. But that in the end these visits had become a habit and almost a necessity for him, so that he was positively distressed when she was ill for some days and could not visit him. She used to see him on holidays at the prison gates or in the guard-room, to which he was brought for a few minutes to see her. On working days she would go to see him at work either at the workshops or at the brick kilns, or at the sheds on the banks of the Irtish.

About herself, Sonia wrote that she had succeeded in making some acquaintances in the town, that she did sewing, and, as there was scarcely a dressmaker in the town, she was looked upon as an indispensable person in many houses. But she did not mention that the authorities were, through her, interested in Raskolnikov; that his task was lightened and so on.

At last the news came (Dounia had indeed noticed signs of alarm and uneasiness in the preceding letters) that he held aloof from everyone, that his fellow prisoners did not like him, that he kept silent for days at a time and was becoming very pale. In the last letter Sonia wrote that he had been taken very seriously ill and was in the convict ward of the hospital.

II

He was ill a long time. But it was not the horrors of prison life, not the hard labour, the bad food, the shaven head, or the patched clothes that crushed him. What did he care for all those trials and hardships! he was even glad of the hard work. Physically exhausted, he could at least reckon on a few hours of quiet sleep. And what was the food to him — the thin cabbage soup with beetles floating in it? In the past as a student he had often not had even that. His clothes were warm and suited to his manner of life. He did not even feel the fetters. Was he ashamed of his shaven head and parti-coloured coat? Before whom? Before Sonia? Sonia was afraid of him, how could he be ashamed before her? And yet he was ashamed even before Sonia, whom he tortured because of it with his contemptuous rough manner. But it was not his shaven head and his fetters he was ashamed of: his pride had been stung to the quick. It was wounded pride that made him ill. Oh, how happy he would have been if he could have blamed himself! He could have borne anything then, even shame and disgrace. But he judged himself severely, and his exasperated conscience found no particularly terrible fault in his past, except a simple *blunder* which might happen to anyone. He was ashamed just because he, Raskolnikov, had so hopelessly, stupidly come to grief through some decree of blind fate, and must humble himself and submit to “the idiocy” of a sentence, if he were anyhow to be at peace.

Vague and objectless anxiety in the present, and in the future a continual sacrifice leading to nothing — that was all that lay before him. And what comfort was it to him that at the end of eight years he would only be thirty-two and able to begin a new life! What had he to live for? What had he to look forward to? Why should he strive? To live in order to exist? Why, he had been ready a thousand times before to give up existence for the sake of an idea, for a hope, even for a fancy. Mere existence had always been too little for him; he had always wanted more. Perhaps it was just because of the strength of his desires that he had thought himself a man to whom more was permissible than to others.

And if only fate would have sent him repentance — burning repentance that would have torn his heart and robbed him of sleep, that repentance, the awful agony of which brings visions of hanging or drowning! Oh, he would

have been glad of it! Tears and agonies would at least have been life. But he did not repent of his crime.

At least he might have found relief in raging at his stupidity, as he had raged at the grotesque blunders that had brought him to prison. But now in prison, *in freedom*, he thought over and criticised all his actions again and by no means found them so blundering and so grotesque as they had seemed at the fatal time.

“In what way,” he asked himself, “was my theory stupider than others that have swarmed and clashed from the beginning of the world? One has only to look at the thing quite independently, broadly, and uninfluenced by commonplace ideas, and my idea will by no means seem so... strange. Oh, sceptics and halfpenny philosophers, why do you halt half-way!”

“Why does my action strike them as so horrible?” he said to himself. “Is it because it was a crime? What is meant by crime? My conscience is at rest. Of course, it was a legal crime, of course, the letter of the law was broken and blood was shed. Well, punish me for the letter of the law... and that’s enough. Of course, in that case many of the benefactors of mankind who snatched power for themselves instead of inheriting it ought to have been punished at their first steps. But those men succeeded and so *they were right*, and I didn’t, and so I had no right to have taken that step.”

It was only in that that he recognised his criminality, only in the fact that he had been unsuccessful and had confessed it.

He suffered too from the question: why had he not killed himself? Why had he stood looking at the river and preferred to confess? Was the desire to live so strong and was it so hard to overcome it? Had not Svidrigaïlov overcome it, although he was afraid of death?

In misery he asked himself this question, and could not understand that, at the very time he had been standing looking into the river, he had perhaps been dimly conscious of the fundamental falsity in himself and his convictions. He didn’t understand that that consciousness might be the promise of a future crisis, of a new view of life and of his future resurrection.

He preferred to attribute it to the dead weight of instinct which he could not step over, again through weakness and meanness. He looked at his fellow prisoners and was amazed to see how they all loved life and prized it. It seemed to him that they loved and valued life more in prison than in freedom. What terrible agonies and privations some of them, the tramps for

instance, had endured! Could they care so much for a ray of sunshine, for the primeval forest, the cold spring hidden away in some unseen spot, which the tramp had marked three years before, and longed to see again, as he might to see his sweetheart, dreaming of the green grass round it and the bird singing in the bush? As he went on he saw still more inexplicable examples.

In prison, of course, there was a great deal he did not see and did not want to see; he lived as it were with downcast eyes. It was loathsome and unbearable for him to look. But in the end there was much that surprised him and he began, as it were involuntarily, to notice much that he had not suspected before. What surprised him most of all was the terrible impossible gulf that lay between him and all the rest. They seemed to be a different species, and he looked at them and they at him with distrust and hostility. He felt and knew the reasons of his isolation, but he would never have admitted till then that those reasons were so deep and strong. There were some Polish exiles, political prisoners, among them. They simply looked down upon all the rest as ignorant churls; but Raskolnikov could not look upon them like that. He saw that these ignorant men were in many respects far wiser than the Poles. There were some Russians who were just as contemptuous, a former officer and two seminarists. Raskolnikov saw their mistake as clearly. He was disliked and avoided by everyone; they even began to hate him at last — why, he could not tell. Men who had been far more guilty despised and laughed at his crime.

“You’re a gentleman,” they used to say. “You shouldn’t hack about with an axe; that’s not a gentleman’s work.”

The second week in Lent, his turn came to take the sacrament with his gang. He went to church and prayed with the others. A quarrel broke out one day, he did not know how. All fell on him at once in a fury.

“You’re an infidel! You don’t believe in God,” they shouted. “You ought to be killed.”

He had never talked to them about God nor his belief, but they wanted to kill him as an infidel. He said nothing. One of the prisoners rushed at him in a perfect frenzy. Raskolnikov awaited him calmly and silently; his eyebrows did not quiver, his face did not flinch. The guard succeeded in intervening between him and his assailant, or there would have been bloodshed.

There was another question he could not decide: why were they all so fond of Sonia? She did not try to win their favour; she rarely met them, sometimes only she came to see him at work for a moment. And yet everybody knew her, they knew that she had come out to follow *him*, knew how and where she lived. She never gave them money, did them no particular services. Only once at Christmas she sent them all presents of pies and rolls. But by degrees closer relations sprang up between them and Sonia. She would write and post letters for them to their relations. Relations of the prisoners who visited the town, at their instructions, left with Sonia presents and money for them. Their wives and sweethearts knew her and used to visit her. And when she visited Raskolnikov at work, or met a party of the prisoners on the road, they all took off their hats to her. “Little mother Sofya Semyonovna, you are our dear, good little mother,” coarse branded criminals said to that frail little creature. She would smile and bow to them and everyone was delighted when she smiled. They even admired her gait and turned round to watch her walking; they admired her too for being so little, and, in fact, did not know what to admire her most for. They even came to her for help in their illnesses.

He was in the hospital from the middle of Lent till after Easter. When he was better, he remembered the dreams he had had while he was feverish and delirious. He dreamt that the whole world was condemned to a terrible new strange plague that had come to Europe from the depths of Asia. All were to be destroyed except a very few chosen. Some new sorts of microbes were attacking the bodies of men, but these microbes were endowed with intelligence and will. Men attacked by them became at once mad and furious. But never had men considered themselves so intellectual and so completely in possession of the truth as these sufferers, never had they considered their decisions, their scientific conclusions, their moral convictions so infallible. Whole villages, whole towns and peoples went mad from the infection. All were excited and did not understand one another. Each thought that he alone had the truth and was wretched looking at the others, beat himself on the breast, wept, and wrung his hands. They did not know how to judge and could not agree what to consider evil and what good; they did not know whom to blame, whom to justify. Men killed each other in a sort of senseless spite. They gathered together in armies against one another, but even on the march the armies would begin attacking each other, the ranks would be broken and the soldiers would fall

on each other, stabbing and cutting, biting and devouring each other. The alarm bell was ringing all day long in the towns; men rushed together, but why they were summoned and who was summoning them no one knew. The most ordinary trades were abandoned, because everyone proposed his own ideas, his own improvements, and they could not agree. The land too was abandoned. Men met in groups, agreed on something, swore to keep together, but at once began on something quite different from what they had proposed. They accused one another, fought and killed each other. There were conflagrations and famine. All men and all things were involved in destruction. The plague spread and moved further and further. Only a few men could be saved in the whole world. They were a pure chosen people, destined to found a new race and a new life, to renew and purify the earth, but no one had seen these men, no one had heard their words and their voices.

Raskolnikov was worried that this senseless dream haunted his memory so miserably, the impression of this feverish delirium persisted so long. The second week after Easter had come. There were warm bright spring days; in the prison ward the grating windows under which the sentinel paced were opened. Sonia had only been able to visit him twice during his illness; each time she had to obtain permission, and it was difficult. But she often used to come to the hospital yard, especially in the evening, sometimes only to stand a minute and look up at the windows of the ward.

One evening, when he was almost well again, Raskolnikov fell asleep. On waking up he chanced to go to the window, and at once saw Sonia in the distance at the hospital gate. She seemed to be waiting for someone. Something stabbed him to the heart at that minute. He shuddered and moved away from the window. Next day Sonia did not come, nor the day after; he noticed that he was expecting her uneasily. At last he was discharged. On reaching the prison he learnt from the convicts that Sofya Semyonovna was lying ill at home and was unable to go out.

He was very uneasy and sent to inquire after her; he soon learnt that her illness was not dangerous. Hearing that he was anxious about her, Sonia sent him a pencilled note, telling him that she was much better, that she had a slight cold and that she would soon, very soon come and see him at his work. His heart throbbed painfully as he read it.

Again it was a warm bright day. Early in the morning, at six o’clock, he went off to work on the river bank, where they used to pound alabaster and

where there was a kiln for baking it in a shed. There were only three of them sent. One of the convicts went with the guard to the fortress to fetch a tool; the other began getting the wood ready and laying it in the kiln. Raskolnikov came out of the shed on to the river bank, sat down on a heap of logs by the shed and began gazing at the wide deserted river. From the high bank a broad landscape opened before him, the sound of singing floated faintly audible from the other bank. In the vast steppe, bathed in sunshine, he could just see, like black specks, the nomads' tents. There there was freedom, there other men were living, utterly unlike those here; there time itself seemed to stand still, as though the age of Abraham and his flocks had not passed. Raskolnikov sat gazing, his thoughts passed into day-dreams, into contemplation; he thought of nothing, but a vague restlessness excited and troubled him. Suddenly he found Sonia beside him; she had come up noiselessly and sat down at his side. It was still quite early; the morning chill was still keen. She wore her poor old burnous and the green shawl; her face still showed signs of illness, it was thinner and paler. She gave him a joyful smile of welcome, but held out her hand with her usual timidity. She was always timid of holding out her hand to him and sometimes did not offer it at all, as though afraid he would repel it. He always took her hand as though with repugnance, always seemed vexed to meet her and was sometimes obstinately silent throughout her visit. Sometimes she trembled before him and went away deeply grieved. But now their hands did not part. He stole a rapid glance at her and dropped his eyes on the ground without speaking. They were alone, no one had seen them. The guard had turned away for the time.

How it happened he did not know. But all at once something seemed to seize him and fling him at her feet. He wept and threw his arms round her knees. For the first instant she was terribly frightened and she turned pale. She jumped up and looked at him trembling. But at the same moment she understood, and a light of infinite happiness came into her eyes. She knew and had no doubt that he loved her beyond everything and that at last the moment had come....

They wanted to speak, but could not; tears stood in their eyes. They were both pale and thin; but those sick pale faces were bright with the dawn of a new future, of a full resurrection into a new life. They were renewed by love; the heart of each held infinite sources of life for the heart of the other.

They resolved to wait and be patient. They had another seven years to wait, and what terrible suffering and what infinite happiness before them! But he had risen again and he knew it and felt it in all his being, while she — she only lived in his life.

On the evening of the same day, when the barracks were locked, Raskolnikov lay on his plank bed and thought of her. He had even fancied that day that all the convicts who had been his enemies looked at him differently; he had even entered into talk with them and they answered him in a friendly way. He remembered that now, and thought it was bound to be so. Wasn't everything now bound to be changed?

He thought of her. He remembered how continually he had tormented her and wounded her heart. He remembered her pale and thin little face. But these recollections scarcely troubled him now; he knew with what infinite love he would now repay all her sufferings. And what were all, *all* the agonies of the past! Everything, even his crime, his sentence and imprisonment, seemed to him now in the first rush of feeling an external, strange fact with which he had no concern. But he could not think for long together of anything that evening, and he could not have analysed anything consciously; he was simply feeling. Life had stepped into the place of theory and something quite different would work itself out in his mind.

Under his pillow lay the New Testament. He took it up mechanically. The book belonged to Sonia; it was the one from which she had read the raising of Lazarus to him. At first he was afraid that she would worry him about religion, would talk about the gospel and pester him with books. But to his great surprise she had not once approached the subject and had not even offered him the Testament. He had asked her for it himself not long before his illness and she brought him the book without a word. Till now he had not opened it.

He did not open it now, but one thought passed through his mind: "Can her convictions not be mine now? Her feelings, her aspirations at least...."

She too had been greatly agitated that day, and at night she was taken ill again. But she was so happy — and so unexpectedly happy — that she was almost frightened of her happiness. Seven years, *only* seven years! At the beginning of their happiness at some moments they were both ready to look on those seven years as though they were seven days. He did not know that the new life would not be given him for nothing, that he would have to pay dearly for it, that it would cost him great striving, great suffering.

But that is the beginning of a new story — the story of the gradual renewal of a man, the story of his gradual regeneration, of his passing from one world into another, of his initiation into a new unknown life. That might be the subject of a new story, but our present story is ended.

THE END

THE GAMBLER



Translated by C. J. Hogarth

The Gambler was published in 1867, and tells the tale of a young tutor in the employment of a formerly wealthy Russian General. The novel reflects Dostoyevsky’s own addiction to roulette, which was in more ways than one the inspiration for the book: Dostoyevsky completed the novel under a strict deadline so he could pay off gambling debts.

Following a disastrous streak at the roulette table, Dostoyevsky had agreed to a hazardous contract with F. T. Stellovsky, promising that if he did not deliver a novel of 12 or more signatures by 1 November 1866, Stellovsky would acquire the right to publish the author’s works for nine years without any compensation to the writer. Dostoyevsky noted down parts of his idea for *The Gambler*, then dictated them to his stenographer and his wife-to-be, Anna Grigorevna, who then transcribed them and copied the novel neatly out for him. With her help, he was able to finish the novel in time.

The first-person narrative is told from the point of view of Alexei Ivanovich, a tutor working for a Russian family living in a suite at a German hotel. The patriarch of the family, The General, is greatly in debt to the Frenchman Des Grieux and so has mortgaged his property in Russia to pay only a small amount of his debt. Upon learning of the illness of his wealthy aunt, "Grandmother", he sends many telegrams to Moscow and expectantly awaits the news of her demise, hoping an inheritance will pay his debts and gain Mademoiselle De Cominges's hand in marriage.

Meanwhile, Alexei is hopelessly in love with Polina, the General's stepdaughter, and swears an oath of servitude to her. He told her while on a walk on the Schlangenberg that all she had to do was give the word and he would gladly walk off the edge of the mountain and fall to his death. This leads to her asking him to go to the town's casino and place a bet for her. He refuses at first, but, when goaded and reminded of his oath of undying love and servility, he succumbs and ends up winning at the roulette table. He returns to her the winnings but she will not tell him the reason she needs money. She only laughs in his face, as she does when he professes his love, and treats him with cold indifference.



The casino at Wiesbaden, where Dostoyevsky first played roulette in 1863 and was instantly 'hooked'.

THE GAMBLER

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CHAPTER I

At length I returned from two weeks leave of absence to find that my patrons had arrived three days ago in Roulettenberg. I received from them a welcome quite different to that which I had expected. The General eyed me coldly, greeted me in rather haughty fashion, and dismissed me to pay my respects to his sister. It was clear that from SOMEWHERE money had been acquired. I thought I could even detect a certain shamefacedness in the General's glance. Maria Philipovna, too, seemed distraught, and conversed with me with an air of detachment. Nevertheless, she took the money which I handed to her, counted it, and listened to what I had to tell. To luncheon there were expected that day a Monsieur Mezentsov, a French lady, and an Englishman; for, whenever money was in hand, a banquet in Muscovite style was always given. Polina Alexandrovna, on seeing me, inquired why I had been so long away. Then, without waiting for an answer, she departed. Evidently this was not mere accident, and I felt that I must throw some light upon matters. It was high time that I did so.

I was assigned a small room on the fourth floor of the hotel (for you must know that I belonged to the General's suite). So far as I could see, the party had already gained some notoriety in the place, which had come to look upon the General as a Russian nobleman of great wealth. Indeed, even before luncheon he charged me, among other things, to get two thousand-franc notes changed for him at the hotel counter, which put us in a position to be thought millionaires at all events for a week! Later, I was about to take Mischa and Nadia for a walk when a summons reached me from the staircase that I must attend the General. He began by deigning to inquire of me where I was going to take the children; and as he did so, I could see that he failed to look me in the eyes. He WANTED to do so, but each time was met by me with such a fixed, disrespectful stare that he desisted in confusion. In pompous language, however, which jumbled one sentence into another, and at length grew disconnected, he gave me to understand that I was to lead the children altogether away from the Casino, and out into the park. Finally his anger exploded, and he added sharply:

"I suppose you would like to take them to the Casino to play roulette? Well, excuse my speaking so plainly, but I know how addicted you are to

gambling. Though I am not your mentor, nor wish to be, at least I have a right to require that you shall not actually compromise me."

"I have no money for gambling," I quietly replied.

"But you will soon be in receipt of some," retorted the General, reddening a little as he dived into his writing desk and applied himself to a memorandum book. From it he saw that he had 120 roubles of mine in his keeping.

"Let us calculate," he went on. "We must translate these roubles into thalers. Here — take 100 thalers, as a round sum. The rest will be safe in my hands."

In silence I took the money.

"You must not be offended at what I say," he continued. "You are too touchy about these things. What I have said I have said merely as a warning. To do so is no more than my right."

When returning home with the children before luncheon, I met a cavalcade of our party riding to view some ruins. Two splendid carriages, magnificently horsed, with Mlle. Blanche, Maria Philipovna, and Polina Alexandrovna in one of them, and the Frenchman, the Englishman, and the General in attendance on horseback! The passers-by stopped to stare at them, for the effect was splendid — the General could not have improved upon it. I calculated that, with the 4000 francs which I had brought with me, added to what my patrons seemed already to have acquired, the party must be in possession of at least 7000 or 8000 francs — though that would be none too much for Mlle. Blanche, who, with her mother and the Frenchman, was also lodging in our hotel. The latter gentleman was called by the lacqueys "Monsieur le Comte," and Mlle. Blanche's mother was dubbed "Madame la Comtesse." Perhaps in very truth they WERE "Comte et Comtesse."

I knew that "Monsieur le Comte" would take no notice of me when we met at dinner, as also that the General would not dream of introducing us, nor of recommending me to the "Comte." However, the latter had lived awhile in Russia, and knew that the person referred to as an "uchitel" is never looked upon as a bird of fine feather. Of course, strictly speaking, he knew me; but I was an uninvited guest at the luncheon — the General had forgotten to arrange otherwise, or I should have been dispatched to dine at the table d'hote. Nevertheless, I presented myself in such guise that the General looked at me with a touch of approval; and, though the good Maria

Philipovna was for showing me my place, the fact of my having previously met the Englishman, Mr. Astley, saved me, and thenceforward I figured as one of the company.

This strange Englishman I had met first in Prussia, where we had happened to sit vis-a-vis in a railway train in which I was travelling to overtake our party; while, later, I had run across him in France, and again in Switzerland — twice within the space of two weeks! To think, therefore, that I should suddenly encounter him again here, in Roulettenberg! Never in my life had I known a more retiring man, for he was shy to the pitch of imbecility, yet well aware of the fact (for he was no fool). At the same time, he was a gentle, amiable sort of an individual, and, even on our first encounter in Prussia I had contrived to draw him out, and he had told me that he had just been to the North Cape, and was now anxious to visit the fair at Nizhni Novgorod. How he had come to make the General's acquaintance I do not know, but, apparently, he was much struck with Polina. Also, he was delighted that I should sit next him at table, for he appeared to look upon me as his bosom friend.

During the meal the Frenchman was in great feather: he was discursive and pompous to every one. In Moscow too, I remembered, he had blown a great many bubbles. Interminably he discoursed on finance and Russian politics, and though, at times, the General made feints to contradict him, he did so humbly, and as though wishing not wholly to lose sight of his own dignity.

For myself, I was in a curious frame of mind. Even before luncheon was half finished I had asked myself the old, eternal question: "WHY do I continue to dance attendance upon the General, instead of having left him and his family long ago?" Every now and then I would glance at Polina Alexandrovna, but she paid me no attention; until eventually I became so irritated that I decided to play the boor.

First of all I suddenly, and for no reason whatever, plunged loudly and gratuitously into the general conversation. Above everything I wanted to pick a quarrel with the Frenchman; and, with that end in view I turned to the General, and exclaimed in an overbearing sort of way — indeed, I think that I actually interrupted him — that that summer it had been almost impossible for a Russian to dine anywhere at tables d'hote. The General bent upon me a glance of astonishment.

“If one is a man of self-respect,” I went on, “one risks abuse by so doing, and is forced to put up with insults of every kind. Both at Paris and on the Rhine, and even in Switzerland — there are so many Poles, with their sympathisers, the French, at these tables d’hote that one cannot get a word in edgeways if one happens only to be a Russian.”

This I said in French. The General eyed me doubtfully, for he did not know whether to be angry or merely to feel surprised that I should so far forget myself.

“Of course, one always learns SOMETHING EVERYWHERE,” said the Frenchman in a careless, contemptuous sort of tone.

“In Paris, too, I had a dispute with a Pole,” I continued, “and then with a French officer who supported him. After that a section of the Frenchmen present took my part. They did so as soon as I told them the story of how once I threatened to spit into Monsignor’s coffee.”

“To spit into it?” the General inquired with grave disapproval in his tone, and a stare, of astonishment, while the Frenchman looked at me unbelievingly.

“Just so,” I replied. “You must know that, on one occasion, when, for two days, I had felt certain that at any moment I might have to depart for Rome on business, I repaired to the Embassy of the Holy See in Paris, to have my passport visaed. There I encountered a sacristan of about fifty, and a man dry and cold of mien. After listening politely, but with great reserve, to my account of myself, this sacristan asked me to wait a little. I was in a great hurry to depart, but of course I sat down, pulled out a copy of L’Opinion Nationale, and fell to reading an extraordinary piece of invective against Russia which it happened to contain. As I was thus engaged I heard some one enter an adjoining room and ask for Monsignor; after which I saw the sacristan make a low bow to the visitor, and then another bow as the visitor took his leave. I ventured to remind the good man of my own business also; whereupon, with an expression of, if anything, increased dryness, he again asked me to wait. Soon a third visitor arrived who, like myself, had come on business (he was an Austrian of some sort); and as soon as ever he had stated his errand he was conducted upstairs! This made me very angry. I rose, approached the sacristan, and told him that, since Monsignor was receiving callers, his lordship might just as well finish off my affair as well. Upon this the sacristan shrunk back in astonishment. It simply passed his understanding that any insignificant Russian should dare

to compare himself with other visitors of Monsignor's! In a tone of the utmost effrontery, as though he were delighted to have a chance of insulting me, he looked me up and down, and then said: "Do you suppose that Monsignor is going to put aside his coffee for YOU?" But I only cried the louder: "Let me tell you that I am going to SPIT into that coffee! Yes, and if you do not get me my passport visaed this very minute, I shall take it to Monsignor myself."

"What? While he is engaged with a Cardinal?" screeched the sacristan, again shrinking back in horror. Then, rushing to the door, he spread out his arms as though he would rather die than let me enter.

Thereupon I declared that I was a heretic and a barbarian— "Je suis heretique et barbare," I said, "and that these archbishops and cardinals and monsignors, and the rest of them, meant nothing at all to me. In a word, I showed him that I was not going to give way. He looked at me with an air of infinite resentment. Then he snatched up my passport, and departed with it upstairs. A minute later the passport had been visaed! Here it is now, if you care to see it," — and I pulled out the document, and exhibited the Roman visa.

"But—" the General began.

"What really saved you was the fact that you proclaimed yourself a heretic and a barbarian," remarked the Frenchman with a smile. "Cela n'etait pas si bete."

"But is that how Russian subjects ought to be treated? Why, when they settle here they dare not utter even a word — they are ready even to deny the fact that they are Russians! At all events, at my hotel in Paris I received far more attention from the company after I had told them about the fracas with the sacristan. A fat Polish nobleman, who had been the most offensive of all who were present at the table d'hote, at once went upstairs, while some of the Frenchmen were simply disgusted when I told them that two years ago I had encountered a man at whom, in 1812, a French 'hero' fired for the mere fun of discharging his musket. That man was then a boy of ten and his family are still residing in Moscow."

"Impossible!" the Frenchman spluttered. "No French soldier would fire at a child!"

"Nevertheless the incident was as I say," I replied. "A very respected ex-captain told me the story, and I myself could see the scar left on his cheek."

The Frenchman then began chattering volubly, and the General supported him; but I recommended the former to read, for example, extracts from the memoirs of General Perovski, who, in 1812, was a prisoner in the hands of the French. Finally Maria Philipovna said something to interrupt the conversation. The General was furious with me for having started the altercation with the Frenchman. On the other hand, Mr. Astley seemed to take great pleasure in my brush with Monsieur, and, rising from the table, proposed that we should go and have a drink together. The same afternoon, at four o'clock, I went to have my customary talk with Polina Alexandrovna; and, the talk soon extended to a stroll. We entered the Park, and approached the Casino, where Polina seated herself upon a bench near the fountain, and sent Nadia away to a little distance to play with some other children. Mischa also I dispatched to play by the fountain, and in this fashion we — that is to say, Polina and myself — contrived to find ourselves alone.

Of course, we began by talking on business matters. Polina seemed furious when I handed her only 700 gulden, for she had thought to receive from Paris, as the proceeds of the pledging of her diamonds, at least 2000 gulden, or even more.

"Come what may, I MUST have money," she said. "And get it somehow I will — otherwise I shall be ruined."

I asked her what had happened during my absence.

"Nothing; except that two pieces of news have reached us from St. Petersburg. In the first place, my grandmother is very ill, and unlikely to last another couple of days. We had this from Timothy Petrovitch himself, and he is a reliable person. Every moment we are expecting to receive news of the end."

"All of you are on the tiptoe of expectation?" I queried.

"Of course — all of us, and every minute of the day. For a year-and-a-half now we have been looking for this."

"Looking for it?"

"Yes, looking for it. I am not her blood relation, you know — I am merely the General's step-daughter. Yet I am certain that the old lady has remembered me in her will."

"Yes, I believe that you WILL come in for a good deal," I said with some assurance.

"Yes, for she is fond of me. But how come you to think so?"

I answered this question with another one. “That Marquis of yours,” I said, “ — is HE also familiar with your family secrets?”

“And why are you yourself so interested in them?” was her retort as she eyed me with dry grimness.

“Never mind. If I am not mistaken, the General has succeeded in borrowing money of the Marquis.”

“It may be so.”

“Is it likely that the Marquis would have lent the money if he had not known something or other about your grandmother? Did you notice, too, that three times during luncheon, when speaking of her, he called her ‘La Baboulenka’? [Dear little Grandmother]. What loving, friendly behaviour, to be sure!”

“Yes, that is true. As soon as ever he learnt that I was likely to inherit something from her he began to pay me his addresses. I thought you ought to know that.”

“Then he has only just begun his courting? Why, I thought he had been doing so a long while!”

“You KNOW he has not,” retorted Polina angrily. “But where on earth did you pick up this Englishman?” She said this after a pause.

“I KNEW you would ask about him!” Whereupon I told her of my previous encounters with Astley while travelling.

“He is very shy,” I said, “and susceptible. Also, he is in love with you. __”

“Yes, he is in love with me,” she replied.

“And he is ten times richer than the Frenchman. In fact, what does the Frenchman possess? To me it seems at least doubtful that he possesses anything at all.”

“Oh, no, there is no doubt about it. He does possess some chateau or other. Last night the General told me that for certain. NOW are you satisfied?”

“Nevertheless, in your place I should marry the Englishman.”

“And why?” asked Polina.

“Because, though the Frenchman is the handsomer of the two, he is also the baser; whereas the Englishman is not only a man of honour, but ten times the wealthier of the pair.”

“Yes? But then the Frenchman is a marquis, and the cleverer of the two,” remarked Polina imperturbably.

“Is that so?” I repeated.

“Yes; absolutely.”

Polina was not at all pleased at my questions; I could see that she was doing her best to irritate me with the brusquerie of her answers. But I took no notice of this.

“It amuses me to see you grow angry,” she continued. “However, inasmuch as I allow you to indulge in these questions and conjectures, you ought to pay me something for the privilege.”

“I consider that I have a perfect right to put these questions to you,” was my calm retort; “for the reason that I am ready to pay for them, and also care little what becomes of me.”

Polina giggled.

“Last time you told me — when on the Shlangenberg — that at a word from me you would be ready to jump down a thousand feet into the abyss. Some day I may remind you of that saying, in order to see if you will be as good as your word. Yes, you may depend upon it that I shall do so. I hate you because I have allowed you to go to such lengths, and I also hate you and still more — because you are so necessary to me. For the time being I want you, so I must keep you.”

Then she made a movement to rise. Her tone had sounded very angry. Indeed, of late her talks with me had invariably ended on a note of temper and irritation — yes, of real temper.

“May I ask you who is this Mlle. Blanche?” I inquired (since I did not wish Polina to depart without an explanation).

“You KNOW who she is — just Mlle. Blanche. Nothing further has transpired. Probably she will soon be Madame General — that is to say, if the rumours that Grandmamma is nearing her end should prove true. Mlle. Blanche, with her mother and her cousin, the Marquis, know very well that, as things now stand, we are ruined.”

“And is the General at last in love?”

“That has nothing to do with it. Listen to me. Take these 700 florins, and go and play roulette with them. Win as much for me as you can, for I am badly in need of money.”

So saying, she called Nadia back to her side, and entered the Casino, where she joined the rest of our party. For myself, I took, in musing astonishment, the first path to the left. Something had seemed to strike my brain when she told me to go and play roulette. Strangely enough, that

something had also seemed to make me hesitate, and to set me analysing my feelings with regard to her. In fact, during the two weeks of my absence I had felt far more at my ease than I did now, on the day of my return; although, while travelling, I had moped like an imbecile, rushed about like a man in a fever, and actually beheld her in my dreams. Indeed, on one occasion (this happened in Switzerland, when I was asleep in the train) I had spoken aloud to her, and set all my fellow-travellers laughing. Again, therefore, I put to myself the question: “Do I, or do I not love her?” and again I could return myself no answer or, rather, for the hundredth time I told myself that I detested her. Yes, I detested her; there were moments (more especially at the close of our talks together) when I would gladly have given half my life to have strangled her! I swear that, had there, at such moments, been a sharp knife ready to my hand, I would have seized that knife with pleasure, and plunged it into her breast. Yet I also swear that if, on the Shlangenberg, she had REALLY said to me, “Leap into that abyss,” I should have leapt into it, and with equal pleasure. Yes, this I knew well. One way or the other, the thing must soon be ended. She, too, knew it in some curious way; the thought that I was fully conscious of her inaccessibility, and of the impossibility of my ever realising my dreams, afforded her, I am certain, the keenest possible pleasure. Otherwise, is it likely that she, the cautious and clever woman that she was, would have indulged in this familiarity and openness with me? Hitherto (I concluded) she had looked upon me in the same light that the old Empress did upon her servant — the Empress who hesitated not to unrobe herself before her slave, since she did not account a slave a man. Yes, often Polina must have taken me for something less than a man!”

Still, she had charged me with a commission — to win what I could at roulette. Yet all the time I could not help wondering WHY it was so necessary for her to win something, and what new schemes could have sprung to birth in her ever-fertile brain. A host of new and unknown factors seemed to have arisen during the last two weeks. Well, it behoved me to divine them, and to probe them, and that as soon as possible. Yet not now: at the present moment I must repair to the roulette-table.

CHAPTER II

I confess I did not like it. Although I had made up my mind to play, I felt averse to doing so on behalf of some one else. In fact, it almost upset my balance, and I entered the gaming rooms with an angry feeling at my heart. At first glance the scene irritated me. Never at any time have I been able to bear the flunkeyishness which one meets in the Press of the world at large, but more especially in that of Russia, where, almost every evening, journalists write on two subjects in particular namely, on the splendour and luxury of the casinos to be found in the Rhenish towns, and on the heaps of gold which are daily to be seen lying on their tables. Those journalists are not paid for doing so: they write thus merely out of a spirit of disinterested complaisance. For there is nothing splendid about the establishments in question; and, not only are there no heaps of gold to be seen lying on their tables, but also there is very little money to be seen at all. Of course, during the season, some madman or another may make his appearance — generally an Englishman, or an Asiatic, or a Turk — and (as had happened during the summer of which I write) win or lose a great deal; but, as regards the rest of the crowd, it plays only for petty gulden, and seldom does much wealth figure on the board.

When, on the present occasion, I entered the gaming-rooms (for the first time in my life), it was several moments before I could even make up my mind to play. For one thing, the crowd oppressed me. Had I been playing for myself, I think I should have left at once, and never have embarked upon gambling at all, for I could feel my heart beginning to beat, and my heart was anything but cold-blooded. Also, I knew, I had long ago made up my mind, that never should I depart from Roulettenberg until some radical, some final, change had taken place in my fortunes. Thus, it must and would be. However ridiculous it may seem to you that I was expecting to win at roulette, I look upon the generally accepted opinion concerning the folly and the grossness of hoping to win at gambling as a thing even more absurd. For why is gambling a whit worse than any other method of acquiring money? How, for instance, is it worse than trade? True, out of a hundred persons, only one can win; yet what business is that of yours or of mine?

At all events, I confined myself at first simply to looking on, and decided to attempt nothing serious. Indeed, I felt that, if I began to do anything at all, I should do it in an absent-minded, haphazard sort of way — of that I felt certain. Also, it behoved me to learn the game itself; since, despite a thousand descriptions of roulette which I had read with ceaseless avidity, I knew nothing of its rules, and had never even seen it played.

In the first place, everything about it seemed to me so foul — so morally mean and foul. Yet I am not speaking of the hungry, restless folk who, by scores nay, even by hundreds — could be seen crowded around the gaming-tables. For in a desire to win quickly and to win much I can see nothing sordid; I have always applauded the opinion of a certain dead and gone, but cocksure, moralist who replied to the excuse that “one may always gamble moderately”, by saying that to do so makes things worse, since, in that case, the profits too will always be moderate.

Insignificant profits and sumptuous profits do not stand on the same footing. No, it is all a matter of proportion. What may seem a small sum to a Rothschild may seem a large sum to me, and it is not the fault of stakes or of winnings that everywhere men can be found winning, can be found depriving their fellows of something, just as they do at roulette. As to the question whether stakes and winnings are, in themselves, immoral is another question altogether, and I wish to express no opinion upon it. Yet the very fact that I was full of a strong desire to win caused this gambling for gain, in spite of its attendant squalor, to contain, if you will, something intimate, something sympathetic, to my eyes: for it is always pleasant to see men dispensing with ceremony, and acting naturally, and in an unbuttoned mood....

Yet, why should I so deceive myself? I could see that the whole thing was a vain and unreasoning pursuit; and what, at the first glance, seemed to me the ugliest feature in this mob of roulette players was their respect for their occupation — the seriousness, and even the humility, with which they stood around the gaming tables. Moreover, I had always drawn sharp distinctions between a game which is de mauvais genre and a game which is permissible to a decent man. In fact, there are two sorts of gaming — namely, the game of the gentleman and the game of the plebs — the game for gain, and the game of the herd. Herein, as said, I draw sharp distinctions. Yet how essentially base are the distinctions! For instance, a gentleman may stake, say, five or ten louis d’or — seldom more, unless he

is a very rich man, when he may stake, say, a thousand francs; but, he must do this simply for the love of the game itself — simply for sport, simply in order to observe the process of winning or of losing, and, above all things, as a man who remains quite uninterested in the possibility of his issuing a winner. If he wins, he will be at liberty, perhaps, to give vent to a laugh, or to pass a remark on the circumstance to a bystander, or to stake again, or to double his stake; but, even this he must do solely out of curiosity, and for the pleasure of watching the play of chances and of calculations, and not because of any vulgar desire to win. In a word, he must look upon the gaming-table, upon roulette, and upon trente et quarante, as mere relaxations which have been arranged solely for his amusement. Of the existence of the lures and gains upon which the bank is founded and maintained he must profess to have not an inkling. Best of all, he ought to imagine his fellow-gamblers and the rest of the mob which stands trembling over a coin to be equally rich and gentlemanly with himself, and playing solely for recreation and pleasure. This complete ignorance of the realities, this innocent view of mankind, is what, in my opinion, constitutes the truly aristocratic. For instance, I have seen even fond mothers so far indulge their guileless, elegant daughters — misses of fifteen or sixteen — as to give them a few gold coins and teach them how to play; and though the young ladies may have won or have lost, they have invariably laughed, and departed as though they were well pleased. In the same way, I saw our General once approach the table in a stolid, important manner. A lacquey darted to offer him a chair, but the General did not even notice him. Slowly he took out his money bags, and slowly extracted 300 francs in gold, which he staked on the black, and won. Yet he did not take up his winnings — he left them there on the table. Again the black turned up, and again he did not gather in what he had won; and when, in the third round, the RED turned up he lost, at a stroke, 1200 francs. Yet even then he rose with a smile, and thus preserved his reputation; yet I knew that his money bags must be chafing his heart, as well as that, had the stake been twice or thrice as much again, he would still have restrained himself from venting his disappointment.

On the other hand, I saw a Frenchman first win, and then lose, 30,000 francs cheerfully, and without a murmur. Yes; even if a gentleman should lose his whole substance, he must never give way to annoyance. Money must be so subservient to gentility as never to be worth a thought. Of course, the SUPREMELY aristocratic thing is to be entirely oblivious of the

mire of rabble, with its setting; but sometimes a reverse course may be aristocratic to remark, to scan, and even to gape at, the mob (for preference, through a lorgnette), even as though one were taking the crowd and its squalor for a sort of raree show which had been organised specially for a gentleman's diversion. Though one may be squeezed by the crowd, one must look as though one were fully assured of being the observer — of having neither part nor lot with the observed. At the same time, to stare fixedly about one is unbecoming; for that, again, is ungentlemanly, seeing that no spectacle is worth an open stare — are no spectacles in the world which merit from a gentleman too pronounced an inspection.

However, to me personally the scene DID seem to be worth undisguised contemplation — more especially in view of the fact that I had come there not only to look at, but also to number myself sincerely and wholeheartedly with, the mob. As for my secret moral views, I had no room for them amongst my actual, practical opinions. Let that stand as written: I am writing only to relieve my conscience. Yet let me say also this: that from the first I have been consistent in having an intense aversion to any trial of my acts and thoughts by a moral standard. Another standard altogether has directed my life....

As a matter of fact, the mob was playing in exceedingly foul fashion. Indeed, I have an idea that sheer robbery was going on around that gaming-table. The croupiers who sat at the two ends of it had not only to watch the stakes, but also to calculate the game — an immense amount of work for two men! As for the crowd itself — well, it consisted mostly of Frenchmen. Yet I was not then taking notes merely in order to be able to give you a description of roulette, but in order to get my bearings as to my behaviour when I myself should begin to play. For example, I noticed that nothing was more common than for another's hand to stretch out and grab one's winnings whenever one had won. Then there would arise a dispute, and frequently an uproar; and it would be a case of "I beg of you to prove, and to produce witnesses to the fact, that the stake is yours."

At first the proceedings were pure Greek to me. I could only divine and distinguish that stakes were hazarded on numbers, on "odd" or "even," and on colours. Polina's money I decided to risk, that evening, only to the amount of 100 gulden. The thought that I was not going to play for myself quite unnerved me. It was an unpleasant sensation, and I tried hard to banish it. I had a feeling that, once I had begun to play for Polina, I should

wreck my own fortunes. Also, I wonder if any one has EVER approached a gaming-table without falling an immediate prey to superstition? I began by pulling out fifty gulden, and staking them on “even.” The wheel spun and stopped at 13. I had lost! With a feeling like a sick qualm, as though I would like to make my way out of the crowd and go home, I staked another fifty gulden — this time on the red. The red turned up. Next time I staked the 100 gulden just where they lay — and again the red turned up. Again I staked the whole sum, and again the red turned up. Clutching my 400 gulden, I placed 200 of them on twelve figures, to see what would come of it. The result was that the croupier paid me out three times my total stake! Thus from 100 gulden my store had grown to 800! Upon that such a curious, such an inexplicable, unwonted feeling overcame me that I decided to depart. Always the thought kept recurring to me that if I had been playing for myself alone I should never have had such luck. Once more I staked the whole 800 gulden on the “even.” The wheel stopped at 4. I was paid out another 800 gulden, and, snatching up my pile of 1600, departed in search of Polina Alexandrovna.

I found the whole party walking in the park, and was able to get an interview with her only after supper. This time the Frenchman was absent from the meal, and the General seemed to be in a more expansive vein. Among other things, he thought it necessary to remind me that he would be sorry to see me playing at the gaming-tables. In his opinion, such conduct would greatly compromise him — especially if I were to lose much. “And even if you were to WIN much I should be compromised,” he added in a meaning sort of way. “Of course I have no RIGHT to order your actions, but you yourself will agree that...” As usual, he did not finish his sentence. I answered drily that I had very little money in my possession, and that, consequently, I was hardly in a position to indulge in any conspicuous play, even if I did gamble. At last, when ascending to my own room, I succeeded in handing Polina her winnings, and told her that, next time, I should not play for her.

“Why not?” she asked excitedly.

“Because I wish to play FOR MYSELF,” I replied with a feigned glance of astonishment. “That is my sole reason.”

“Then are you so certain that your roulette-playing will get us out of our difficulties?” she inquired with a quizzical smile.

I said very seriously, “Yes,” and then added: “Possibly my certainty about winning may seem to you ridiculous; yet, pray leave me in peace.”

Nonetheless she insisted that I ought to go halves with her in the day’s winnings, and offered me 800 gulden on condition that henceforth, I gambled only on those terms; but I refused to do so, once and for all — stating, as my reason, that I found myself unable to play on behalf of any one else, “I am not unwilling so to do,” I added, “but in all probability I should lose.”

“Well, absurd though it be, I place great hopes on your playing of roulette,” she remarked musingly; “wherefore, you ought to play as my partner and on equal shares; wherefore, of course, you will do as I wish.”

Then she left me without listening to any further protests on my part.

CHAPTER III

On the morrow she said not a word to me about gambling. In fact, she purposely avoided me, although her old manner to me had not changed: the same serene coolness was hers on meeting me — a coolness that was mingled even with a spice of contempt and dislike. In short, she was at no pains to conceal her aversion to me. That I could see plainly. Also, she did not trouble to conceal from me the fact that I was necessary to her, and that she was keeping me for some end which she had in view. Consequently there became established between us relations which, to a large extent, were incomprehensible to me, considering her general pride and aloofness. For example, although she knew that I was madly in love with her, she allowed me to speak to her of my passion (though she could not well have showed her contempt for me more than by permitting me, unhindered and unrebuked, to mention to her my love).

"You see," her attitude expressed, "how little I regard your feelings, as well as how little I care for what you say to me, or for what you feel for me." Likewise, though she spoke as before concerning her affairs, it was never with complete frankness. In her contempt for me there were refinements. Although she knew well that I was aware of a certain circumstance in her life of something which might one day cause her trouble, she would speak to me about her affairs (whenever she had need of me for a given end) as though I were a slave or a passing acquaintance — yet tell them me only in so far as one would need to know them if one were going to be made temporary use of. Had I not known the whole chain of events, or had she not seen how much I was pained and disturbed by her teasing insistency, she would never have thought it worthwhile to soothe me with this frankness — even though, since she not infrequently used me to execute commissions that were not only troublesome, but risky, she ought, in my opinion, to have been frank in ANY case. But, forsooth, it was not worth her while to trouble about MY feelings — about the fact that I was uneasy, and, perhaps, thrice as put about by her cares and misfortunes as she was herself!

For three weeks I had known of her intention to take to roulette. She had even warned me that she would like me to play on her behalf, since it was unbecoming for her to play in person; and, from the tone of her words I had

gathered that there was something on her mind besides a mere desire to win money. As if money could matter to HER! No, she had some end in view, and there were circumstances at which I could guess, but which I did not know for certain. True, the slavery and abasement in which she held me might have given me (such things often do so) the power to question her with abrupt directness (seeing that, inasmuch as I figured in her eyes as a mere slave and nonentity, she could not very well have taken offence at any rude curiosity); but the fact was that, though she let me question her, she never returned me a single answer, and at times did not so much as notice me. That is how matters stood.

Next day there was a good deal of talk about a telegram which, four days ago, had been sent to St. Petersburg, but to which there had come no answer. The General was visibly disturbed and moody, for the matter concerned his mother. The Frenchman, too, was excited, and after dinner the whole party talked long and seriously together — the Frenchman's tone being extraordinarily presumptuous and offhand to everybody. It almost reminded one of the proverb, "Invite a man to your table, and soon he will place his feet upon it." Even to Polina he was brusque almost to the point of rudeness. Yet still he seemed glad to join us in our walks in the Casino, or in our rides and drives about the town. I had long been aware of certain circumstances which bound the General to him; I had long been aware that in Russia they had hatched some scheme together although I did not know whether the plot had come to anything, or whether it was still only in the stage of being talked of. Likewise I was aware, in part, of a family secret — namely, that, last year, the Frenchman had bailed the General out of debt, and given him 30,000 roubles wherewith to pay his Treasury dues on retiring from the service. And now, of course, the General was in a vice — although the chief part in the affair was being played by Mlle. Blanche. Yes, of this last I had no doubt.

But WHO was this Mlle. Blanche? It was said of her that she was a Frenchwoman of good birth who, living with her mother, possessed a colossal fortune. It was also said that she was some relation to the Marquis, but only a distant one a cousin, or cousin-german, or something of the sort. Likewise I knew that, up to the time of my journey to Paris, she and the Frenchman had been more ceremonious towards our party — they had stood on a much more precise and delicate footing with them; but that now their acquaintanceship — their friendship, their intimacy — had taken on a

much more off-hand and rough-and-ready air. Perhaps they thought that our means were too modest for them, and, therefore, unworthy of politeness or reticence. Also, for the last three days I had noticed certain looks which Astley had kept throwing at Mlle. Blanche and her mother; and it had occurred to me that he must have had some previous acquaintance with the pair. I had even surmised that the Frenchman too must have met Mr. Astley before. Astley was a man so shy, reserved, and taciturn in his manner that one might have looked for anything from him. At all events the Frenchman accorded him only the slightest of greetings, and scarcely even looked at him. Certainly he did not seem to be afraid of him; which was intelligible enough. But why did Mlle. Blanche also never look at the Englishman? — particularly since, a propos of something or another, the Marquis had declared the Englishman to be immensely and indubitably rich? Was not that a sufficient reason to make Mlle. Blanche look at the Englishman? Anyway the General seemed extremely uneasy; and, one could well understand what a telegram to announce the death of his mother would mean for him!

Although I thought it probable that Polina was avoiding me for a definite reason, I adopted a cold and indifferent air; for I felt pretty certain that it would not be long before she herself approached me. For two days, therefore, I devoted my attention to Mlle. Blanche. The poor General was in despair! To fall in love at fifty-five, and with such vehemence, is indeed a misfortune! And add to that his widowerhood, his children, his ruined property, his debts, and the woman with whom he had fallen in love! Though Mlle. Blanche was extremely good-looking, I may or may not be understood when I say that she had one of those faces which one is afraid of. At all events, I myself have always feared such women. Apparently about twenty-five years of age, she was tall and broad-shouldered, with shoulders that sloped; yet though her neck and bosom were ample in their proportions, her skin was dull yellow in colour, while her hair (which was extremely abundant — sufficient to make two coiffures) was as black as Indian ink. Add to that a pair of black eyes with yellowish whites, a proud glance, gleaming teeth, and lips which were perennially pomaded and redolent of musk. As for her dress, it was invariably rich, effective, and chic, yet in good taste. Lastly, her feet and hands were astonishing, and her voice a deep contralto. Sometimes, when she laughed, she displayed her teeth, but at ordinary times her air was taciturn and haughty — especially in

the presence of Polina and Maria Philipovna. Yet she seemed to me almost destitute of education, and even of wits, though cunning and suspicious. This, apparently, was not because her life had been lacking in incident. Perhaps, if all were known, the Marquis was not her kinsman at all, nor her mother, her mother; but there was evidence that, in Berlin, where we had first come across the pair, they had possessed acquaintances of good standing. As for the Marquis himself, I doubt to this day if he was a Marquis — although about the fact that he had formerly belonged to high society (for instance, in Moscow and Germany) there could be no doubt whatever. What he had formerly been in France I had not a notion. All I knew was that he was said to possess a chateau. During the last two weeks I had looked for much to transpire, but am still ignorant whether at that time anything decisive ever passed between Mademoiselle and the General. Everything seemed to depend upon our means — upon whether the General would be able to flourish sufficient money in her face. If ever the news should arrive that the grandmother was not dead, Mlle. Blanche, I felt sure, would disappear in a twinkling. Indeed, it surprised and amused me to observe what a passion for intrigue I was developing. But how I loathed it all! With what pleasure would I have given everybody and everything the go-by! Only — I could not leave Polina. How, then, could I show contempt for those who surrounded her? Espionage is a base thing, but — what have I to do with that?

Mr. Astley, too, I found a curious person. I was only sure that he had fallen in love With Polina. A remarkable and diverting circumstance is the amount which may lie in the mien of a shy and painfully modest man who has been touched with the divine passion — especially when he would rather sink into the earth than betray himself by a single word or look. Though Mr. Astley frequently met us when we were out walking, he would merely take off his hat and pass us by, though I knew he was dying to join us. Even when invited to do so, he would refuse. Again, in places of amusement — in the Casino, at concerts, or near the fountain — he was never far from the spot where we were sitting. In fact, WHEREVER we were in the Park, in the forest, or on the Shlangenberg — one needed but to raise one’s eyes and glance around to catch sight of at least a PORTION of Mr. Astley’s frame sticking out — whether on an adjacent path or behind a bush. Yet never did he lose any chance of speaking to myself; and, one

morning when we had met, and exchanged a couple of words, he burst out in his usual abrupt way, without saying “Good-morning.”

“That Mlle. Blanche,” he said. “Well, I have seen a good many women like her.”

After that he was silent as he looked me meaningly in the face. What he meant I did not know, but to my glance of inquiry he returned only a dry nod, and a reiterated “It is so.” Presently, however, he resumed:

“Does Mlle. Polina like flowers?”

“I really cannot say,” was my reply.

“What? You cannot say?” he cried in great astonishment.

“No; I have never noticed whether she does so or not,” I repeated with a smile.

“Hm! Then I have an idea in my mind,” he concluded. Lastly, with a nod, he walked away with a pleased expression on his face. The conversation had been carried on in execrable French.

CHAPTER IV

Today has been a day of folly, stupidity, and ineptness. The time is now eleven o'clock in the evening, and I am sitting in my room and thinking. It all began, this morning, with my being forced to go and play roulette for Polina Alexandrovna. When she handed me over her store of six hundred gulden I exacted two conditions — namely, that I should not go halves with her in her winnings, if any (that is to say, I should not take anything for myself), and that she should explain to me, that same evening, why it was so necessary for her to win, and how much was the sum which she needed. For, I could not suppose that she was doing all this merely for the sake of money. Yet clearly she did need some money, and that as soon as possible, and for a special purpose. Well, she promised to explain matters, and I departed. There was a tremendous crowd in the gaming-rooms. What an arrogant, greedy crowd it was! I pressed forward towards the middle of the room until I had secured a seat at a croupier's elbow. Then I began to play in timid fashion, venturing only twenty or thirty gulden at a time. Meanwhile, I observed and took notes. It seemed to me that calculation was superfluous, and by no means possessed of the importance which certain other players attached to it, even though they sat with ruled papers in their hands, whereon they set down the coups, calculated the chances, reckoned, staked, and — lost exactly as we more simple mortals did who played without any reckoning at all.

However, I deduced from the scene one conclusion which seemed to me reliable — namely, that in the flow of fortuitous chances there is, if not a system, at all events a sort of order. This, of course, is a very strange thing. For instance, after a dozen middle figures there would always occur a dozen or so outer ones. Suppose the ball stopped twice at a dozen outer figures; it would then pass to a dozen of the first ones, and then, again, to a dozen of the middle ciphers, and fall upon them three or four times, and then revert to a dozen outers; whence, after another couple of rounds, the ball would again pass to the first figures, strike upon them once, and then return thrice to the middle series — continuing thus for an hour and a half, or two hours. One, three, two: one, three, two. It was all very curious. Again, for the whole of a day or a morning the red would alternate with the black, but almost without any order, and from moment to moment, so that scarcely

two consecutive rounds would end upon either the one or the other. Yet, next day, or, perhaps, the next evening, the red alone would turn up, and attain a run of over two score, and continue so for quite a length of time — say, for a whole day. Of these circumstances the majority were pointed out to me by Mr. Astley, who stood by the gaming-table the whole morning, yet never once staked in person.

For myself, I lost all that I had on me, and with great speed. To begin with, I staked two hundred gulden on “even,” and won. Then I staked the same amount again, and won: and so on some two or three times. At one moment I must have had in my hands — gathered there within a space of five minutes — about 4000 gulden. That, of course, was the proper moment for me to have departed, but there arose in me a strange sensation as of a challenge to Fate — as of a wish to deal her a blow on the cheek, and to put out my tongue at her. Accordingly I set down the largest stake allowed by the rules — namely, 4000 gulden — and lost. Fired by this mishap, I pulled out all the money left to me, staked it all on the same venture, and — again lost! Then I rose from the table, feeling as though I were stupefied. What had happened to me I did not know; but, before luncheon I told Polina of my losses — until which time I walked about the Park.

At luncheon I was as excited as I had been at the meal three days ago. Mlle. Blanche and the Frenchman were lunching with us, and it appeared that the former had been to the Casino that morning, and had seen my exploits there. So now she showed me more attention when talking to me; while, for his part, the Frenchman approached me, and asked outright if it had been my own money that I had lost. He appeared to be suspicious as to something being on foot between Polina and myself, but I merely fired up, and replied that the money had been all my own.

At this the General seemed extremely surprised, and asked me whence I had procured it; whereupon I replied that, though I had begun only with 100 gulden, six or seven rounds had increased my capital to 5000 or 6000 gulden, and that subsequently I had lost the whole in two rounds.

All this, of course, was plausible enough. During my recital I glanced at Polina, but nothing was to be discerned on her face. However, she had allowed me to fire up without correcting me, and from that I concluded that it was my cue to fire up, and to conceal the fact that I had been playing on her behalf. “At all events,” I thought to myself, “she, in her turn, has

promised to give me an explanation to-night, and to reveal to me something or another."

Although the General appeared to be taking stock of me, he said nothing. Yet I could see uneasiness and annoyance in his face. Perhaps his straitened circumstances made it hard for him to have to hear of piles of gold passing through the hands of an irresponsible fool like myself within the space of a quarter of an hour. Now, I have an idea that, last night, he and the Frenchman had a sharp encounter with one another. At all events they closeted themselves together, and then had a long and vehement discussion; after which the Frenchman departed in what appeared to be a passion, but returned, early this morning, to renew the combat. On hearing of my losses, however, he only remarked with a sharp, and even a malicious, air that "a man ought to go more carefully." Next, for some reason or another, he added that, "though a great many Russians go in for gambling, they are no good at the game."

"I think that roulette was devised specially for Russians," I retorted; and when the Frenchman smiled contemptuously at my reply I further remarked that I was sure I was right; also that, speaking of Russians in the capacity of gamblers, I had far more blame for them than praise — of that he could be quite sure.

"Upon what do you base your opinion?" he inquired.

"Upon the fact that to the virtues and merits of the civilised Westerner there has become historically added — though this is not his chief point — a capacity for acquiring capital; whereas, not only is the Russian incapable of acquiring capital, but also he exhausts it wantonly and of sheer folly. None the less we Russians often need money; wherefore, we are glad of, and greatly devoted to, a method of acquisition like roulette — whereby, in a couple of hours, one may grow rich without doing any work. This method, I repeat, has a great attraction for us, but since we play in wanton fashion, and without taking any trouble, we almost invariably lose."

"To a certain extent that is true," assented the Frenchman with a self-satisfied air.

"Oh no, it is not true," put in the General sternly. "And you," he added to me, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself for traducing your own country!"

"I beg pardon," I said. "Yet it would be difficult to say which is the worst of the two — Russian ineptitude or the German method of growing rich through honest toil."

“What an extraordinary idea,” cried the General.

“And what a RUSSIAN idea!” added the Frenchman.

I smiled, for I was rather glad to have a quarrel with them.

“I would rather live a wandering life in tents,” I cried, “than bow the knee to a German idol!”

“To WHAT idol?” exclaimed the General, now seriously angry.

“To the German method of heaping up riches. I have not been here very long, but I can tell you that what I have seen and verified makes my Tartar blood boil. Good Lord! I wish for no virtues of that kind. Yesterday I went for a walk of about ten versts; and, everywhere I found that things were even as we read of them in good German picture-books — that every house has its ‘Fater,’ who is horribly beneficent and extraordinarily honourable. So honourable is he that it is dreadful to have anything to do with him; and I cannot bear people of that sort. Each such ‘Fater’ has his family, and in the evenings they read improving books aloud. Over their roof-trees there murmur elms and chestnuts; the sun has sunk to his rest; a stork is roosting on the gable; and all is beautifully poetic and touching. Do not be angry, General. Let me tell you something that is even more touching than that. I can remember how, of an evening, my own father, now dead, used to sit under the lime trees in his little garden, and to read books aloud to myself and my mother. Yes, I know how things ought to be done. Yet every German family is bound to slavery and to submission to its ‘Fater.’ They work like oxen, and amass wealth like Jews. Suppose the ‘Fater’ has put by a certain number of gulden which he hands over to his eldest son, in order that the said son may acquire a trade or a small plot of land. Well, one result is to deprive the daughter of a dowry, and so leave her among the unwedded. For the same reason, the parents will have to sell the younger son into bondage or the ranks of the army, in order that he may earn more towards the family capital. Yes, such things ARE done, for I have been making inquiries on the subject. It is all done out of sheer rectitude — out of a rectitude which is magnified to the point of the younger son believing that he has been RIGHTLY sold, and that it is simply idyllic for the victim to rejoice when he is made over into pledge. What more have I to tell? Well, this — that matters bear just as hardly upon the eldest son. Perhaps he has his Gretchen to whom his heart is bound; but he cannot marry her, for the reason that he has not yet amassed sufficient gulden. So, the pair wait on in a mood of sincere and virtuous expectation, and smilingly deposit

themselves in pawn the while. Gretchen's cheeks grow sunken, and she begins to wither; until at last, after some twenty years, their substance has multiplied, and sufficient gulden have been honourably and virtuously accumulated. Then the 'Fater' blesses his forty-year-old heir and the thirty-five-year-old Gretchen with the sunken bosom and the scarlet nose; after which he bursts, into tears, reads the pair a lesson on morality, and dies. In turn the eldest son becomes a virtuous 'Fater,' and the old story begins again. In fifty or sixty years' time the grandson of the original 'Fater' will have amassed a considerable sum; and that sum he will hand over to, his son, and the latter to HIS son, and so on for several generations; until at length there will issue a Baron Rothschild, or a 'Hoppe and Company,' or the devil knows what! Is it not a beautiful spectacle — the spectacle of a century or two of inherited labour, patience, intellect, rectitude, character, perseverance, and calculation, with a stork sitting on the roof above it all? What is more; they think there can never be anything better than this; wherefore, from their point of view they begin to judge the rest of the world, and to censure all who are at fault — that is to say, who are not exactly like themselves. Yes, there you have it in a nutshell. For my own part, I would rather grow fat after the Russian manner, or squander my whole substance at roulette. I have no wish to be 'Hoppe and Company' at the end of five generations. I want the money for MYSELF, for in no way do I look upon my personality as necessary to, or meet to be given over to, capital. I may be wrong, but there you have it. Those are MY views."

"How far you may be right in what you have said I do not know," remarked the General moodily; "but I DO know that you are becoming an insufferable farceur whenever you are given the least chance."

As usual, he left his sentence unfinished. Indeed, whenever he embarked upon anything that in the least exceeded the limits of daily small-talk, he left unfinished what he was saying. The Frenchman had listened to me contemptuously, with a slight protruding of his eyes; but, he could not have understood very much of my harangue. As for Polina, she had looked on with serene indifference. She seemed to have heard neither my voice nor any other during the progress of the meal.

CHAPTER V

Yes, she had been extraordinarily meditative. Yet, on leaving the table, she immediately ordered me to accompany her for a walk. We took the children with us, and set out for the fountain in the Park.

I was in such an irritated frame of mind that in rude and abrupt fashion I blurted out a question as to "why our Marquis de Griers had ceased to accompany her for strolls, or to speak to her for days together."

"Because he is a brute," she replied in rather a curious way. It was the first time that I had heard her speak so of De Griers: consequently, I was momentarily awed into silence by this expression of resentment.

"Have you noticed, too, that today he is by no means on good terms with the General?" I went on.

"Yes — and I suppose you want to know why," she replied with dry captiousness. "You are aware, are you not, that the General is mortgaged to the Marquis, with all his property? Consequently, if the General's mother does not die, the Frenchman will become the absolute possessor of everything which he now holds only in pledge."

"Then it is really the case that everything is mortgaged? I have heard rumours to that effect, but was unaware how far they might be true."

"Yes, they ARE true. What then?"

"Why, it will be a case of 'Farewell, Mlle. Blanche,'" I remarked; "for in such an event she would never become Madame General. Do you know, I believe the old man is so much in love with her that he will shoot himself if she should throw him over. At his age it is a dangerous thing to fall in love."

"Yes, something, I believe, WILL happen to him," assented Polina thoughtfully.

"And what a fine thing it all is!" I continued. "Could anything be more abominable than the way in which she has agreed to marry for money alone? Not one of the decencies has been observed; the whole affair has taken place without the least ceremony. And as for the grandmother, what could be more comical, yet more dastardly, than the sending of telegram after telegram to know if she is dead? What do you think of it, Polina Alexandrovna?"

"Yes, it is very horrible," she interrupted with a shudder. "Consequently, I am the more surprised that YOU should be so cheerful. What are YOU so

pleased about? About the fact that you have gone and lost my money?”

“What? The money that you gave me to lose? I told you I should never win for other people — least of all for you. I obeyed you simply because you ordered me to; but you must not blame me for the result. I warned you that no good would ever come of it. You seem much depressed at having lost your money. Why do you need it so greatly?”

“Why do YOU ask me these questions?”

“Because you promised to explain matters to me. Listen. I am certain that, as soon as ever I ‘begin to play for myself’ (and I still have 120 gulden left), I shall win. You can then take of me what you require.”

She made a contemptuous grimace.

“You must not be angry with me,” I continued, “for making such a proposal. I am so conscious of being only a nonentity in your eyes that you need not mind accepting money from me. A gift from me could not possibly offend you. Moreover, it was I who lost your gulden.”

She glanced at me, but, seeing that I was in an irritable, sarcastic mood, changed the subject.

“My affairs cannot possibly interest you,” she said. “Still, if you DO wish to know, I am in debt. I borrowed some money, and must pay it back again. I have a curious, senseless idea that I am bound to win at the gaming-tables. Why I think so I cannot tell, but I do think so, and with some assurance. Perhaps it is because of that assurance that I now find myself without any other resource.”

“Or perhaps it is because it is so NECESSARY for you to win. It is like a drowning man catching at a straw. You yourself will agree that, unless he were drowning he would not mistake a straw for the trunk of a tree.”

Polina looked surprised.

“What?” she said. “Do not you also hope something from it? Did you not tell me again and again, two weeks ago, that you were certain of winning at roulette if you played here? And did you not ask me not to consider you a fool for doing so? Were you joking? You cannot have been, for I remember that you spoke with a gravity which forbade the idea of your jesting.”

“True,” I replied gloomily. “I always felt certain that I should win. Indeed, what you say makes me ask myself — Why have my absurd, senseless losses of today raised a doubt in my mind? Yet I am still positive that, so soon as ever I begin to play for myself, I shall infallibly win.”

“And why are you so certain?”

“To tell the truth, I do not know. I only know that I must win — that it is the one resource I have left. Yes, why do I feel so assured on the point?”

“Perhaps because one cannot help winning if one is fanatically certain of doing so.”

“Yet I dare wager that you do not think me capable of serious feeling in the matter?”

“I do not care whether you are so or not,” answered Polina with calm indifference. “Well, since you ask me, I DO doubt your ability to take anything seriously. You are capable of worrying, but not deeply. You are too ill-regulated and unsettled a person for that. But why do you want money? Not a single one of the reasons which you have given can be looked upon as serious.”

“By the way,” I interrupted, “you say you want to pay off a debt. It must be a large one. Is it to the Frenchman?”

“What do you mean by asking all these questions? You are very clever today. Surely you are not drunk?”

“You know that you and I stand on no ceremony, and that sometimes I put to you very plain questions. I repeat that I am your slave — and slaves cannot be shamed or offended.”

“You talk like a child. It is always possible to comport oneself with dignity. If one has a quarrel it ought to elevate rather than to degrade one.”

“A maxim straight from the copybook! Suppose I CANNOT comport myself with dignity. By that I mean that, though I am a man of self-respect, I am unable to carry off a situation properly. Do you know the reason? It is because we Russians are too richly and multifariously gifted to be able at once to find the proper mode of expression. It is all a question of mode. Most of us are so bounteously endowed with intellect as to require also a spice of genius to choose the right form of behaviour. And genius is lacking in us for the reason that so little genius at all exists. It belongs only to the French — though a few other Europeans have elaborated their forms so well as to be able to figure with extreme dignity, and yet be wholly undignified persons. That is why, with us, the mode is so all-important. The Frenchman may receive an insult — a real, a venomous insult: yet, he will not so much as frown. But a tweaking of the nose he cannot bear, for the reason that such an act is an infringement of the accepted, of the time-hallowed order of decorum. That is why our good ladies are so fond of Frenchmen — the Frenchman’s manners, they say, are perfect! But in my

opinion there is no such thing as a Frenchman's manners. The Frenchman is only a bird — the coq gaulois. At the same time, as I am not a woman, I do not properly understand the question. Cocks may be excellent birds. If I am wrong you must stop me. You ought to stop and correct me more often when I am speaking to you, for I am too apt to say everything that is in my head.

"You see, I have lost my manners. I agree that I have none, nor yet any dignity. I will tell you why. I set no store upon such things. Everything in me has undergone a cheek. You know the reason. I have not a single human thought in my head. For a long while I have been ignorant of what is going on in the world — here or in Russia. I have been to Dresden, yet am completely in the dark as to what Dresden is like. You know the cause of my obsession. I have no hope now, and am a mere cipher in your eyes; wherefore, I tell you outright that wherever I go I see only you — all the rest is a matter of indifference.

"Why or how I have come to love you I do not know. It may be that you are not altogether fair to look upon. Do you know, I am ignorant even as to what your face is like. In all probability, too, your heart is not comely, and it is possible that your mind is wholly ignoble."

"And because you do not believe in my nobility of soul you think to purchase me with money?" she said.

"WHEN have I thought to do so?" was my reply.

"You are losing the thread of the argument. If you do not wish to purchase me, at all events you wish to purchase my respect."

"Not at all. I have told you that I find it difficult to explain myself. You are hard upon me. Do not be angry at my chattering. You know why you ought not to be angry with me — that I am simply an imbecile. However, I do not mind if you ARE angry. Sitting in my room, I need but to think of you, to imagine to myself the rustle of your dress, and at once I fall almost to biting my hands. Why should you be angry with me? Because I call myself your slave? Revel, I pray you, in my slavery — revel in it. Do you know that sometimes I could kill you? — not because I do not love you, or am jealous of you, but, because I feel as though I could simply devour you... You are laughing!"

"No, I am not," she retorted. "But I order you, nevertheless, to be silent."

She stopped, well nigh breathless with anger. God knows, she may not have been a beautiful woman, yet I loved to see her come to a halt like this,

and was therefore, the more fond of arousing her temper. Perhaps she divined this, and for that very reason gave way to rage. I said as much to her.

“What rubbish!” she cried with a shudder.

“I do not care,” I continued. “Also, do you know that it is not safe for us to take walks together? Often I have a feeling that I should like to strike you, to disfigure you, to strangle you. Are you certain that it will never come to that? You are driving me to frenzy. Am I afraid of a scandal, or of your anger? Why should I fear your anger? I love without hope, and know that hereafter I shall love you a thousand times more. If ever I should kill you I should have to kill myself too. But I shall put off doing so as long as possible, for I wish to continue enjoying the unbearable pain which your coldness gives me. Do you know a very strange thing? It is that, with every day, my love for you increases — though that would seem to be almost an impossibility. Why should I not become a fatalist? Remember how, on the third day that we ascended the Shlangenberg, I was moved to whisper in your ear: ‘Say but the word, and I will leap into the abyss.’ Had you said it, I should have leapt. Do you not believe me?”

“What stupid rubbish!” she cried.

“I care not whether it be wise or stupid,” I cried in return. “I only know that in your presence I must speak, speak, speak. Therefore, I am speaking. I lose all conceit when I am with you, and everything ceases to matter.”

“Why should I have wanted you to leap from the Shlangenberg?” she said drily, and (I think) with wilful offensiveness. “THAT would have been of no use to me.”

“Splendid!” I shouted. “I know well that you must have used the words ‘of no use’ in order to crush me. I can see through you. ‘Of no use,’ did you say? Why, to give pleasure is ALWAYS of use; and, as for barbarous, unlimited power — even if it be only over a fly — why, it is a kind of luxury. Man is a despot by nature, and loves to torture. You, in particular, love to do so.”

I remember that at this moment she looked at me in a peculiar way. The fact is that my face must have been expressing all the maze of senseless, gross sensations which were seething within me. To this day I can remember, word for word, the conversation as I have written it down. My eyes were suffused with blood, and the foam had caked itself on my lips. Also, on my honour I swear that, had she bidden me cast myself from the

summit of the Shlangenberg, I should have done it. Yes, had she bidden me in jest, or only in contempt and with a spit in my face, I should have cast myself down.

“Oh no! Why so? I believe you,” she said, but in such a manner — in the manner of which, at times, she was a mistress — and with such a note of disdain and viperish arrogance in her tone, that God knows I could have killed her.

Yes, at that moment she stood in peril. I had not lied to her about that.

“Surely you are not a coward?” suddenly she asked me.

“I do not know,” I replied. “Perhaps I am, but I do not know. I have long given up thinking about such things.”

“If I said to you, ‘Kill that man,’ would you kill him?”

“Whom?”

“Whomsoever I wish?”

“The Frenchman?”

“Do not ask me questions; return me answers. I repeat, whomsoever I wish? I desire to see if you were speaking seriously just now.”

She awaited my reply with such gravity and impatience that I found the situation unpleasant.

“Do YOU, rather, tell me,” I said, “what is going on here? Why do you seem half-afraid of me? I can see for myself what is wrong. You are the step-daughter of a ruined and insensate man who is smitten with love for this devil of a Blanche. And there is this Frenchman, too, with his mysterious influence over you. Yet, you actually ask me such a question! If you do not tell me how things stand, I shall have to put in my oar and do something. Are you ashamed to be frank with me? Are you shy of me?”

“I am not going to talk to you on that subject. I have asked you a question, and am waiting for an answer.”

“Well, then — I will kill whomsoever you wish,” I said. “But are you REALLY going to bid me do such deeds?”

“Why should you think that I am going to let you off? I shall bid you do it, or else renounce me. Could you ever do the latter? No, you know that you couldn’t. You would first kill whom I had bidden you, and then kill ME for having dared to send you away!”

Something seemed to strike upon my brain as I heard these words. Of course, at the time I took them half in jest and half as a challenge; yet, she had spoken them with great seriousness. I felt thunderstruck that she should

so express herself, that she should assert such a right over me, that she should assume such authority and say outright: “Either you kill whom I bid you, or I will have nothing more to do with you.” Indeed, in what she had said there was something so cynical and unveiled as to pass all bounds. For how could she ever regard me as the same after the killing was done? This was more than slavery and abasement; it was sufficient to bring a man back to his right senses. Yet, despite the outrageous improbability of our conversation, my heart shook within me.

Suddenly, she burst out laughing. We were seated on a bench near the spot where the children were playing — just opposite the point in the alley-way before the Casino where the carriages drew up in order to set down their occupants.

“Do you see that fat Baroness?” she cried. “It is the Baroness Burmergelm. She arrived three days ago. Just look at her husband — that tall, wizened Prussian there, with the stick in his hand. Do you remember how he stared at us the other day? Well, go to the Baroness, take off your hat to her, and say something in French.”

“Why?”

“Because you have sworn that you would leap from the Shlangenberg for my sake, and that you would kill any one whom I might bid you kill. Well, instead of such murders and tragedies, I wish only for a good laugh. Go without answering me, and let me see the Baron give you a sound thrashing with his stick.”

“Then you throw me out a challenge? — you think that I will not do it?”

“Yes, I do challenge you. Go, for such is my will.”

“Then I WILL go, however mad be your fancy. Only, look here: shall you not be doing the General a great disservice, as well as, through him, a great disservice to yourself? It is not about myself I am worrying — it is about you and the General. Why, for a mere fancy, should I go and insult a woman?”

“Ah! Then I can see that you are only a trifler,” she said contemptuously. “Your eyes are swimming with blood — but only because you have drunk a little too much at luncheon. Do I not know that what I have asked you to do is foolish and wrong, and that the General will be angry about it? But I want to have a good laugh, all the same. I want that, and nothing else. Why should you insult a woman, indeed? Well, you will be given a sound thrashing for so doing.”

I turned away, and went silently to do her bidding. Of course the thing was folly, but I could not get out of it. I remember that, as I approached the Baroness, I felt as excited as a schoolboy. I was in a frenzy, as though I were drunk.

CHAPTER VI

Two days have passed since that day of lunacy. What a noise and a fuss and a chattering and an uproar there was! And what a welter of unseemliness and disorder and stupidity and bad manners! And I the cause of it all! Yet part of the scene was also ridiculous — at all events to myself it was so. I am not quite sure what was the matter with me — whether I was merely stupefied or whether I purposely broke loose and ran amok. At times my mind seems all confused; while at other times I seem almost to be back in my childhood, at the school desk, and to have done the deed simply out of mischief.

It all came of Polina — yes, of Polina. But for her, there might never have been a fracas. Or perhaps I did the deed in a fit of despair (though it may be foolish of me to think so)? What there is so attractive about her I cannot think. Yet there IS something attractive about her — something passing fair, it would seem. Others besides myself she has driven to distraction. She is tall and straight, and very slim. Her body looks as though it could be tied into a knot, or bent double, like a cord. The imprint of her foot is long and narrow. It is, a maddening imprint — yes, simply a maddening one! And her hair has a reddish tint about it, and her eyes are like cat's eyes — though able also to glance with proud, disdainful mien. On the evening of my first arrival, four months ago, I remember that she was sitting and holding an animated conversation with De Griers in the salon. And the way in which she looked at him was such that later, when I retired to my own room upstairs, I kept fancying that she had smitten him in the face — that she had smitten him right on the cheek, so peculiar had been her look as she stood confronting him. Ever since that evening I have loved her.

But to my tale.

I stepped from the path into the carriage-way, and took my stand in the middle of it. There I awaited the Baron and the Baroness. When they were but a few paces distant from me I took off my hat, and bowed.

I remember that the Baroness was clad in a voluminous silk dress, pale grey in colour, and adorned with flounces and a crinoline and train. Also, she was short and inordinately stout, while her gross, flabby chin completely concealed her neck. Her face was purple, and the little eyes in it

had an impudent, malicious expression. Yet she walked as though she were conferring a favour upon everybody by so doing. As for the Baron, he was tall, wizened, bony-faced after the German fashion, spectacled, and, apparently, about forty-five years of age. Also, he had legs which seemed to begin almost at his chest — or, rather, at his chin! Yet, for all his air of peacock-like conceit, his clothes sagged a little, and his face wore a sheepish air which might have passed for profundity.

These details I noted within a space of a few seconds.

At first my bow and the fact that I had my hat in my hand barely caught their attention. The Baron only scowled a little, and the Baroness swept straight on.

"Madame la Baronne," said I, loudly and distinctly — embroidering each word, as it were— "j'ai l'honneur d'etre votre esclave."

Then I bowed again, put on my hat, and walked past the Baron with a rude smile on my face.

Polina had ordered me merely to take off my hat: the bow and the general effrontery were of my own invention. God knows what instigated me to perpetrate the outrage! In my frenzy I felt as though I were walking on air.

"Hein!" ejaculated — or, rather, growled — the Baron as he turned towards me in angry surprise.

I too turned round, and stood waiting in pseudo-courteous expectation. Yet still I wore on my face an impudent smile as I gazed at him. He seemed to hesitate, and his brows contracted to their utmost limits. Every moment his visage was growing darker. The Baroness also turned in my direction, and gazed at me in wrathful perplexity, while some of the passers-by also began to stare at us, and others of them halted outright.

"Hein!" the Baron vociferated again, with a redoubled growl and a note of growing wrath in his voice.

"Ja wohl!" I replied, still looking him in the eyes.

"Sind sie rasend?" he exclaimed, brandishing his stick, and, apparently, beginning to feel nervous. Perhaps it was my costume which intimidated him, for I was well and fashionably dressed, after the manner of a man who belongs to indisputably good society.

"Ja wo-o-ohl!" cried I again with all my might with a longdrawn rolling of the "ohl" sound after the fashion of the Berliners (who constantly use the phrase "Ja wohl!" in conversation, and more or less prolong the syllable

“ohl” according as they desire to express different shades of meaning or of mood).

At this the Baron and the Baroness faced sharply about, and almost fled in their alarm. Some of the bystanders gave vent to excited exclamations, and others remained staring at me in astonishment. But I do not remember the details very well.

Wheeling quietly about, I returned in the direction of Polina Alexandrovna. But, when I had got within a hundred paces of her seat, I saw her rise and set out with the children towards the hotel.

At the portico I caught up to her.

“I have perpetrated the — the piece of idiocy,” I said as I came level with her.

“Have you? Then you can take the consequences,” she replied without so much as looking at me. Then she moved towards the staircase.

I spent the rest of the evening walking in the park. Thence I passed into the forest, and walked on until I found myself in a neighbouring principality. At a wayside restaurant I partook of an omelette and some wine, and was charged for the idyllic repast a thaler and a half.

Not until eleven o’clock did I return home — to find a summons awaiting me from the General.

Our party occupied two suites in the hotel; each of which contained two rooms. The first (the larger suite) comprised a salon and a smoking-room, with, adjoining the latter, the General’s study. It was here that he was awaiting me as he stood posed in a majestic attitude beside his writing-table. Lolling on a divan close by was De Griers.

“My good sir,” the General began, “may I ask you what this is that you have gone and done?”

“I should be glad,” I replied, “if we could come straight to the point. Probably you are referring to my encounter of today with a German?”

“With a German? Why, the German was the Baron Burmergelm — a most important personage! I hear that you have been rude both to him and to the Baroness?”

“No, I have not.”

“But I understand that you simply terrified them, my good sir?” shouted the General.

“Not in the least,” I replied. “You must know that when I was in Berlin I frequently used to hear the Berliners repeat, and repellently prolong, a

certain phrase — namely, ‘Ja wohl!’; and, happening to meet this couple in the carriage-drive, I found, for some reason or another, that this phrase suddenly recurred to my memory, and exercised a rousing effect upon my spirits. Moreover, on the three previous occasions that I have met the Baroness she has walked towards me as though I were a worm which could easily be crushed with the foot. Not unnaturally, I too possess a measure of self-respect; wherefore, on THIS occasion I took off my hat, and said politely (yes, I assure you it was said politely): ‘Madame, j’ai l’honneur d’etre votre esclave.’ Then the Baron turned round, and said ‘Hein!’; whereupon I felt moved to ejaculate in answer ‘Ja wohl!’ Twice I shouted it at him — the first time in an ordinary tone, and the second time with the greatest prolonging of the words of which I was capable. That is all.”

I must confess that this puerile explanation gave me great pleasure. I felt a strong desire to overlay the incident with an even added measure of grossness; so, the further I proceeded, the more did the gusto of my proceeding increase.

“You are only making fun of me!” vociferated the General as, turning to the Frenchman, he declared that my bringing about of the incident had been gratuitous. De Griers smiled contemptuously, and shrugged his shoulders.

“Do not think THAT,” I put in. “It was not so at all. I grant you that my behaviour was bad — I fully confess that it was so, and make no secret of the fact. I would even go so far as to grant you that my behaviour might well be called stupid and indecent tomfoolery; but, MORE than that it was not. Also, let me tell you that I am very sorry for my conduct. Yet there is one circumstance which, in my eyes, almost absolves me from regret in the matter. Of late — that is to say, for the last two or three weeks — I have been feeling not at all well. That is to say, I have been in a sick, nervous, irritable, fanciful condition, so that I have periodically lost control over myself. For instance, on more than one occasion I have tried to pick a quarrel even with Monsieur le Marquise here; and, under the circumstances, he had no choice but to answer me. In short, I have recently been showing signs of ill-health. Whether the Baroness Burmergelm will take this circumstance into consideration when I come to beg her pardon (for I do intend to make her amends) I do not know; but I doubt if she will, and the less so since, so far as I know, the circumstance is one which, of late, has begun to be abused in the legal world, in that advocates in criminal cases have taken to justifying their clients on the ground that, at the moment of

the crime, they (the clients) were unconscious of what they were doing — that, in short, they were out of health. ‘My client committed the murder — that is true; but he has no recollection of having committed it.’ And doctors actually support these advocates by affirming that there really is such a malady — that there really can arise temporary delusions which make a man remember nothing of a given deed, or only a half or a quarter of it! But the Baron and Baroness are members of an older generation, as well as Prussian Junkers and landowners. To them such a process in the medico-judicial world will be unknown, and therefore, they are the more unlikely to accept any such explanation. What is YOUR opinion about it, General?”

“Enough, sir!” he thundered with barely restrained fury. “Enough, I say! Once and for all I must endeavour to rid myself of you and your impertinence. To justify yourself in the eyes of the Baron and Baroness will be impossible. Any intercourse with you, even though it be confined to a begging of their pardons, they would look upon as a degradation. I may tell you that, on learning that you formed part of, my household, the Baron approached me in the Casino, and demanded of me additional satisfaction. Do you understand, then, what it is that you have entailed upon me — upon ME, my good sir? You have entailed upon me the fact of my being forced to sue humbly to the Baron, and to give him my word of honour that this very day you shall cease to belong to my establishment!”

“Excuse me, General,” I interrupted, “but did he make an express point of it that I should ‘cease to belong to your establishment,’ as you call it?”

“No; I, of my own initiative, thought that I ought to afford him that satisfaction; and, with it he was satisfied. So we must part, good sir. It is my duty to hand over to you forty gulden, three florins, as per the accompanying statement. Here is the money, and here the account, which you are at liberty to verify. Farewell. From henceforth we are strangers. From you I have never had anything but trouble and unpleasantness. I am about to call the landlord, and explain to him that from tomorrow onwards I shall no longer be responsible for your hotel expenses. Also I have the honour to remain your obedient servant.”

I took the money and the account (which was indicted in pencil), and, bowing low to the General, said to him very gravely:

“The matter cannot end here. I regret very much that you should have been put to unpleasantness at the Baron’s hands; but, the fault (pardon me) is your own. How came you to answer for me to the Baron? And what did

you mean by saying that I formed part of your household? I am merely your family tutor — not a son of yours, nor yet your ward, nor a person of any kind for whose acts you need be responsible. I am a judicially competent person, a man of twenty-five years of age, a university graduate, a gentleman, and, until I met yourself, a complete stranger to you. Only my boundless respect for your merits restrains me from demanding satisfaction at your hands, as well as a further explanation as to the reasons which have led you to take it upon yourself to answer for my conduct."

So struck was he with my words that, spreading out his hands, he turned to the Frenchman, and interpreted to him that I had challenged himself (the General) to a duel. The Frenchman laughed aloud.

"Nor do I intend to let the Baron off," I continued calmly, but with not a little discomfiture at De Griers' merriment. "And since you, General, have today been so good as to listen to the Baron's complaints, and to enter into his concerns — since you have made yourself a participator in the affair — I have the honour to inform you that, tomorrow morning at the latest, I shall, in my own name, demand of the said Baron a formal explanation as to the reasons which have led him to disregard the fact that the matter lies between him and myself alone, and to put a slight upon me by referring it to another person, as though I were unworthy to answer for my own conduct."

Then there happened what I had foreseen. The General on hearing of this further intended outrage, showed the white feather.

"What?" he cried. "Do you intend to go on with this damned nonsense? Do you not realise the harm that it is doing me? I beg of you not to laugh at me, sir — not to laugh at me, for we have police authorities here who, out of respect for my rank, and for that of the Baron... In short, sir, I swear to you that I will have you arrested, and marched out of the place, to prevent any further brawling on your part. Do you understand what I say?" He was almost breathless with anger, as well as in a terrible fright.

"General," I replied with that calmness which he never could abide, "one cannot arrest a man for brawling until he has brawled. I have not so much as begun my explanations to the Baron, and you are altogether ignorant as to the form and time which my intended procedure is likely to assume. I wish but to disabuse the Baron of what is, to me, a shameful supposition — namely, that I am under the guardianship of a person who is qualified to exercise control over my free will. It is vain for you to disturb and alarm yourself."

“For God’s sake, Alexis Ivanovitch, do put an end to this senseless scheme of yours!” he muttered, but with a sudden change from a truculent tone to one of entreaty as he caught me by the hand. “Do you know what is likely to come of it? Merely further unpleasantness. You will agree with me, I am sure, that at present I ought to move with especial care — yes, with very especial care. You cannot be fully aware of how I am situated. When we leave this place I shall be ready to receive you back into my household; but, for the time being I — Well, I cannot tell you all my reasons.” With that he wound up in a despairing voice: “O Alexis Ivanovitch, Alexis Ivanovitch!”

I moved towards the door — begging him to be calm, and promising that everything should be done decently and in order; whereafter I departed.

Russians, when abroad, are over-apt to play the poltroon, to watch all their words, and to wonder what people are thinking of their conduct, or whether such and such a thing is ‘comme il faut.’ In short, they are over-apt to cosset themselves, and to lay claim to great importance. Always they prefer the form of behaviour which has once and for all become accepted and established. This they will follow slavishly whether in hotels, on promenades, at meetings, or when on a journey. But the General had avowed to me that, over and above such considerations as these, there were circumstances which compelled him to “move with especial care at present”, and that the fact had actually made him poor-spirited and a coward — it had made him altogether change his tone towards me. This fact I took into my calculations, and duly noted it, for, of course, he MIGHT apply to the authorities tomorrow, and it behoved me to go carefully.

Yet it was not the General but Polina that I wanted to anger. She had treated me with such cruelty, and had got me into such a hole, that I felt a longing to force her to beseech me to stop. Of course, my tomfoolery might compromise her; yet certain other feelings and desires had begun to form themselves in my brain. If I was never to rank in her eyes as anything but a nonentity, it would not greatly matter if I figured as a draggle-tailed cockerel, and the Baron were to give me a good thrashing; but, the fact was that I desired to have the laugh of them all, and to come out myself unscathed. Let people see what they WOULD see. Let Polina, for once, have a good fright, and be forced to whistle me to heel again. But, however much she might whistle, she should see that I was at least no draggle-tailed cockerel!

I have just received a surprising piece of news. I have just met our chambermaid on the stairs, and been informed by her that Maria Philipovna departed today, by the night train, to stay with a cousin at Carlsbad. What can that mean? The maid declares that Madame packed her trunks early in the day. Yet how is it that no one else seems to have been aware of the circumstance? Or is it that I have been the only person to be unaware of it? Also, the maid has just told me that, three days ago, Maria Philipovna had some high words with the General. I understand, then! Probably the words were concerning Mlle. Blanche. Certainly something decisive is approaching.

CHAPTER VII

In the morning I sent for the maitre d'hotel, and explained to him that, in future, my bill was to be rendered to me personally. As a matter of fact, my expenses had never been so large as to alarm me, nor to lead me to quit the hotel; while, moreover, I still had 160 gulden left to me, and — in them — yes, in them, perhaps, riches awaited me. It was a curious fact, that, though I had not yet won anything at play, I nevertheless acted, thought, and felt as though I were sure, before long, to become wealthy — since I could not imagine myself otherwise.

Next, I bethought me, despite the earliness of the hour, of going to see Mr. Astley, who was staying at the Hotel de l'Angleterre (a hostelry at no great distance from our own). But suddenly De Griers entered my room. This had never before happened, for of late that gentleman and I had stood on the most strained and distant of terms — he attempting no concealment of his contempt for me (he even made an express, point of showing it), and I having no reason to desire his company. In short, I detested him. Consequently, his entry at the present moment the more astounded me. At once I divined that something out of the way was on the carpet.

He entered with marked affability, and began by complimenting me on my room. Then, perceiving that I had my hat in my hands, he inquired whither I was going so early; and, no sooner did he hear that I was bound for Mr. Astley's than he stopped, looked grave, and seemed plunged in thought.

He was a true Frenchman insofar as that, though he could be lively and engaging when it suited him, he became insufferably dull and wearisome as soon as ever the need for being lively and engaging had passed. Seldom is a Frenchman NATURALLY civil: he is civil only as though to order and of set purpose. Also, if he thinks it incumbent upon him to be fanciful, original, and out of the way, his fancy always assumes a foolish, unnatural vein, for the reason that it is compounded of trite, hackneyed forms. In short, the natural Frenchman is a conglomeration of commonplace, petty, everyday positiveness, so that he is the most tedious person in the world. — Indeed, I believe that none but greenhorns and excessively Russian people feel an attraction towards the French; for, to any man of sensibility, such a compendium of outworn forms — a compendium which is built up of

drawing-room manners, expansiveness, and gaiety — becomes at once over-noticeable and unbearable.

“I have come to see you on business,” De Griers began in a very off-hand, yet polite, tone; “nor will I seek to conceal from you the fact that I have come in the capacity of an emissary, of an intermediary, from the General. Having small knowledge of the Russian tongue, I lost most of what was said last night; but, the General has now explained matters, and I must confess that—”

“See here, Monsieur de Griers,” I interrupted. “I understand that you have undertaken to act in this affair as an intermediary. Of course I am only ‘un utchitel,’ a tutor, and have never claimed to be an intimate of this household, nor to stand on at all familiar terms with it. Consequently, I do not know the whole of its circumstances. Yet pray explain to me this: have you yourself become one of its members, seeing that you are beginning to take such a part in everything, and are now present as an intermediary?”

The Frenchman seemed not over-pleased at my question. It was one which was too outspoken for his taste — and he had no mind to be frank with me.

“I am connected with the General,” he said drily, “partly through business affairs, and partly through special circumstances. My principal has sent me merely to ask you to forego your intentions of last evening. What you contemplate is, I have no doubt, very clever; yet he has charged me to represent to you that you have not the slightest chance of succeeding in your end, since not only will the Baron refuse to receive you, but also he (the Baron) has at his disposal every possible means for obviating further unpleasantness from you. Surely you can see that yourself? What, then, would be the good of going on with it all? On the other hand, the General promises that at the first favourable opportunity he will receive you back into his household, and, in the meantime, will credit you with your salary — with ‘vos appointements.’ Surely that will suit you, will it not?”

Very quietly I replied that he (the Frenchman) was labouring under a delusion; that perhaps, after all, I should not be expelled from the Baron’s presence, but, on the contrary, be listened to; finally, that I should be glad if Monsieur de Griers would confess that he was now visiting me merely in order to see how far I intended to go in the affair.

“Good heavens!” cried de Griers. “Seeing that the General takes such an interest in the matter, is there anything very unnatural in his desiring also to

know your plans?”

Again I began my explanations, but the Frenchman only fidgeted and rolled his head about as he listened with an expression of manifest and unconcealed irony on his face. In short, he adopted a supercilious attitude. For my own part, I endeavoured to pretend that I took the affair very seriously. I declared that, since the Baron had gone and complained of me to the General, as though I were a mere servant of the General’s, he had, in the first place, lost me my post, and, in the second place, treated me like a person to whom, as to one not qualified to answer for himself, it was not even worth while to speak. Naturally, I said, I felt insulted at this. Yet, comprehending as I did, differences of years, of social status, and so forth (here I could scarcely help smiling), I was not anxious to bring about further scenes by going personally to demand or to request satisfaction of the Baron. All that I felt was that I had a right to go in person and beg the Baron’s and the Baroness’s pardon — the more so since, of late, I had been feeling unwell and unstrung, and had been in a fanciful condition. And so forth, and so forth. Yet (I continued) the Baron’s offensive behaviour to me of yesterday (that is to say, the fact of his referring the matter to the General) as well as his insistence that the General should deprive me of my post, had placed me in such a position that I could not well express my regret to him (the Baron) and to his good lady, for the reason that in all probability both he and the Baroness, with the world at large, would imagine that I was doing so merely because I hoped, by my action, to recover my post. Hence, I found myself forced to request the Baron to express to me HIS OWN regrets, as well as to express them in the most unqualified manner — to say, in fact, that he had never had any wish to insult me. After the Baron had done THAT, I should, for my part, at once feel free to express to him, whole-heartedly and without reserve, my own regrets. “In short,” I declared in conclusion, “my one desire is that the Baron may make it possible for me to adopt the latter course.”

“Oh fie! What refinements and subtleties!” exclaimed De Griers. “Besides, what have you to express regret for? Confess, Monsieur, Monsieur — pardon me, but I have forgotten your name — confess, I say, that all this is merely a plan to annoy the General? Or perhaps, you have some other and special end in view? Eh?”

“In return you must pardon ME, mon cher Marquis, and tell me what you have to do with it.”

“The General—”

“But what of the General? Last night he said that, for some reason or another, it behoved him to ‘move with especial care at present;’ wherefore, he was feeling nervous. But I did not understand the reference.”

“Yes, there DO exist special reasons for his doing so,” assented De Griers in a conciliatory tone, yet with rising anger. “You are acquainted with Mlle. de Cominges, are you not?”

“Mlle. Blanche, you mean?”

“Yes, Mlle. Blanche de Cominges. Doubtless you know also that the General is in love with this young lady, and may even be about to marry her before he leaves here? Imagine, therefore, what any scene or scandal would entail upon him!”

“I cannot see that the marriage scheme need, be affected by scenes or scandals.”

“Mais le Baron est si irascible — un caractere prussien, vous savez! Enfin il fera une querelle d’Allemand.”

“I do not care,” I replied, “seeing that I no longer belong to his household” (of set purpose I was trying to talk as senselessly as possible). “But is it quite settled that Mlle. is to marry the General? What are they waiting for? Why should they conceal such a matter — at all events from ourselves, the General’s own party?”

“I cannot tell you. The marriage is not yet a settled affair, for they are awaiting news from Russia. The General has business transactions to arrange.”

“Ah! Connected, doubtless, with madame his mother?”

De Griers shot at me a glance of hatred.

“To cut things short,” he interrupted, “I have complete confidence in your native politeness, as well as in your tact and good sense. I feel sure that you will do what I suggest, even if it is only for the sake of this family which has received you as a kinsman into its bosom and has always loved and respected you.”

“Be so good as to observe,” I remarked, “that the same family has just EXPELLED me from its bosom. All that you are saying you are saying but for show; but, when people have just said to you, ‘Of course we do not wish to turn you out, yet, for the sake of appearance’s, you must PERMIT yourself to be turned out,’ nothing can matter very much.”

“Very well, then,” he said, in a sterner and more arrogant tone. “Seeing that my solicitations have had no effect upon you, it is my duty to mention that other measures will be taken. There exist here police, you must remember, and this very day they shall send you packing. Que diable! To think of a blanc bec like yourself challenging a person like the Baron to a duel! Do you suppose that you will be ALLOWED to do such things? Just try doing them, and see if any one will be afraid of you! The reason why I have asked you to desist is that I can see that your conduct is causing the General annoyance. Do you believe that the Baron could not tell his lacquey simply to put you out of doors?”

“Nevertheless I should not GO out of doors,” I retorted with absolute calm. “You are labouring under a delusion, Monsieur de Griers. The thing will be done in far better trim than you imagine. I was just about to start for Mr. Astley’s, to ask him to be my intermediary — in other words, my second. He has a strong liking for me, and I do not think that he will refuse. He will go and see the Baron on MY behalf, and the Baron will certainly not decline to receive him. Although I am only a tutor — a kind of subaltern, Mr. Astley is known to all men as the nephew of a real English lord, the Lord Piebroch, as well as a lord in his own right. Yes, you may be pretty sure that the Baron will be civil to Mr. Astley, and listen to him. Or, should he decline to do so, Mr. Astley will take the refusal as a personal affront to himself (for you know how persistent the English are?) and thereupon introduce to the Baron a friend of his own (and he has many friends in a good position). That being so, picture to yourself the issue of the affair — an affair which will not quite end as you think it will.”

This caused the Frenchman to bethink him of playing the coward. “Really things may be as this fellow says,” he evidently thought. “Really he MIGHT be able to engineer another scene.”

“Once more I beg of you to let the matter drop,” he continued in a tone that was now entirely conciliatory. “One would think that it actually PLEASED you to have scenes! Indeed, it is a brawl rather than genuine satisfaction that you are seeking. I have said that the affair may prove to be diverting, and even clever, and that possibly you may attain something by it; yet none the less I tell you” (he said this only because he saw me rise and reach for my hat) “that I have come hither also to hand you these few words from a certain person. Read them, please, for I must take her back an answer.”

So saying, he took from his pocket a small, compact, wafer-sealed note, and handed it to me. In Polina's handwriting I read:

"I hear that you are thinking of going on with this affair. You have lost your temper now, and are beginning to play the fool! Certain circumstances, however, I may explain to you later. Pray cease from your folly, and put a check upon yourself. For folly it all is. I have need of you, and, moreover, you have promised to obey me. Remember the Shlangenberg. I ask you to be obedient. If necessary, I shall even BID you be obedient. — Your own —— POLINA.

"P.S. — If so be that you still bear a grudge against me for what happened last night, pray forgive me."

Everything, to my eyes, seemed to change as I read these words. My lips grew pale, and I began to tremble. Meanwhile, the cursed Frenchman was eyeing me discreetly and askance, as though he wished to avoid witnessing my confusion. It would have been better if he had laughed outright.

"Very well," I said, "you can tell Mlle. not to disturb herself. But," I added sharply, "I would also ask you why you have been so long in handing me this note? Instead of chattering about trifles, you ought to have delivered me the missive at once — if you have really come commissioned as you say."

"Well, pardon some natural haste on my part, for the situation is so strange. I wished first to gain some personal knowledge of your intentions; and, moreover, I did not know the contents of the note, and thought that it could be given you at any time."

"I understand," I replied. "So you were ordered to hand me the note only in the last resort, and if you could not otherwise appease me? Is it not so? Speak out, Monsieur de Griers."

"Perhaps," said he, assuming a look of great forbearance, but gazing at me in a meaning way.

I reached for my hat; whereupon he nodded, and went out. Yet on his lips I fancied that I could see a mocking smile. How could it have been otherwise?

"You and I are to have a reckoning later, Master Frenchman," I muttered as I descended the stairs. "Yes, we will measure our strength together." Yet my thoughts were all in confusion, for again something seemed to have struck me dizzy. Presently the air revived me a little, and, a couple of

minutes later, my brain had sufficiently cleared to enable two ideas in particular to stand out in it. Firstly, I asked myself, which of the absurd, boyish, and extravagant threats which I had uttered at random last night had made everybody so alarmed? Secondly, what was the influence which this Frenchman appeared to exercise over Polina? He had but to give the word, and at once she did as he desired — at once she wrote me a note to beg of me to forbear! Of course, the relations between the pair had, from the first, been a riddle to me — they had been so ever since I had first made their acquaintance. But of late I had remarked in her a strong aversion for, even a contempt for — him, while, for his part, he had scarcely even looked at her, but had behaved towards her always in the most churlish fashion. Yes, I had noted that. Also, Polina herself had mentioned to me her dislike for him, and delivered herself of some remarkable confessions on the subject. Hence, he must have got her into his power somehow — somehow he must be holding her as in a vice.

CHAPTER VIII

All at once, on the Promenade, as it was called — that is to say, in the Chestnut Avenue — I came face to face with my Englishman.
“I was just coming to see you,” he said; “and you appear to be out on a similar errand. So you have parted with your employers?”

“How do you know that?” I asked in astonishment. “Is EVERY ONE aware of the fact?”

“By no means. Not every one would consider such a fact to be of moment. Indeed, I have never heard any one speak of it.”

“Then how come you to know it?”

“Because I have had occasion to do so. Whither are you bound? I like you, and was therefore coming to pay you a visit.”

“What a splendid fellow you are, Mr. Astley!” I cried, though still wondering how he had come by his knowledge. “And since I have not yet had my coffee, and you have, in all probability, scarcely tasted yours, let us adjourn to the Casino Cafe, where we can sit and smoke and have a talk.”

The cafe in question was only a hundred paces away; so, when coffee had been brought, we seated ourselves, and I lit a cigarette. Astley was no smoker, but, taking a seat by my side, he prepared himself to listen.

“I do not intend to go away,” was my first remark. “I intend, on the contrary, to remain here.”

“That I never doubted,” he answered good-humouredly.

It is a curious fact that, on my way to see him, I had never even thought of telling him of my love for Polina. In fact, I had purposely meant to avoid any mention of the subject. Nor, during our stay in the place, had I ever made aught but the scantiest reference to it. You see, not only was Astley a man of great reserve, but also from the first I had perceived that Polina had made a great impression upon him, although he never spoke of her. But now, strangely enough, he had no sooner seated himself and bent his steely gaze upon me, than, for some reason or another, I felt moved to tell him everything — to speak to him of my love in all its phases. For an hour and a half did I discourse on the subject, and found it a pleasure to do so, even though this was the first occasion on which I had referred to the matter. Indeed, when, at certain moments, I perceived that my more ardent passages confused him, I purposely increased my ardour of narration. Yet one thing I

regret: and that is that I made references to the Frenchman which were a little over-personal.

Mr. Astley sat without moving as he listened to me. Not a word nor a sound of any kind did he utter as he stared into my eyes. Suddenly, however, on my mentioning the Frenchman, he interrupted me, and inquired sternly whether I did right to speak of an extraneous matter (he had always been a strange man in his mode of propounding questions).

"No, I fear not," I replied.

"And concerning this Marquis and Mlle. Polina you know nothing beyond surmise?"

Again I was surprised that such a categorical question should come from such a reserved individual.

"No, I know nothing FOR CERTAIN about them" was my reply. "No — nothing."

"Then you have done very wrong to speak of them to me, or even to imagine things about them."

"Quite so, quite so," I interrupted in some astonishment. "I admit that. Yet that is not the question." Whereupon I related to him in detail the incident of two days ago. I spoke of Polina's outburst, of my encounter with the Baron, of my dismissal, of the General's extraordinary pusillanimity, and of the call which De Griers had that morning paid me. In conclusion, I showed Astley the note which I had lately received.

"What do you make of it?" I asked. "When I met you I was just coming to ask you your opinion. For myself, I could have killed this Frenchman, and am not sure that I shall not do so even yet."

"I feel the same about it," said Mr. Astley. "As for Mlle. Polina — well, you yourself know that, if necessity drives, one enters into relation with people whom one simply detests. Even between this couple there may be something which, though unknown to you, depends upon extraneous circumstances. For, my own part, I think that you may reassure yourself — or at all events partially. And as for Mlle. Polina's proceedings of two days ago, they were, of course, strange; not because she can have meant to get rid of you, or to earn for you a thrashing from the Baron's cudgel (which for some curious reason, he did not use, although he had it ready in his hands), but because such proceedings on the part of such — well, of such a refined lady as Mlle. Polina are, to say the least of it, unbecoming. But she cannot have guessed that you would carry out her absurd wish to the letter?"

“Do you know what?” suddenly I cried as I fixed Mr. Astley with my gaze. “I believe that you have already heard the story from some one — very possibly from Mlle. Polina herself?”

In return he gave me an astonished stare.

“Your eyes look very fiery,” he said with a return of his former calm, “and in them I can read suspicion. Now, you have no right whatever to be suspicious. It is not a right which I can for a moment recognise, and I absolutely refuse to answer your questions.”

“Enough! You need say no more,” I cried with a strange emotion at my heart, yet not altogether understanding what had aroused that emotion in my breast. Indeed, when, where, and how could Polina have chosen Astley to be one of her confidants? Of late I had come rather to overlook him in this connection, even though Polina had always been a riddle to me — so much so that now, when I had just permitted myself to tell my friend of my infatuation in all its aspects, I had found myself struck, during the very telling, with the fact that in my relations with her I could specify nothing that was explicit, nothing that was positive. On the contrary, my relations had been purely fantastic, strange, and unreal; they had been unlike anything else that I could think of.

“Very well, very well,” I replied with a warmth equal to Astley’s own. “Then I stand confounded, and have no further opinions to offer. But you are a good fellow, and I am glad to know what you think about it all, even though I do not need your advice.”

Then, after a pause, I resumed:

“For instance, what reason should you assign for the General taking fright in this way? Why should my stupid clowning have led the world to elevate it into a serious incident? Even De Griers has found it necessary to put in his oar (and he only interferes on the most important occasions), and to visit me, and to address to me the most earnest supplications. Yes, HE, De Griers, has actually been playing the suppliant to ME! And, mark you, although he came to me as early as nine o’clock, he had ready-prepared in his hand Mlle. Polina’s note. When, I would ask, was that note written? Mlle. Polina must have been aroused from sleep for the express purpose of writing it. At all events the circumstance shows that she is an absolute slave to the Frenchman, since she actually begs my pardon in the note — actually begs my pardon! Yet what is her personal concern in the matter? Why is she interested in it at all? Why, too, is the whole party so afraid of this precious

Baron? And what sort of a business do you call it for the General to be going to marry Mlle. Blanche de Cominges? He told me last night that, because of the circumstance, he must ‘move with especial care at present.’ What is your opinion of it all? Your look convinces me that you know more about it than I do.”

Mr. Astley smiled and nodded.

“Yes, I think I DO know more about it than you do,” he assented. “The affair centres around this Mlle. Blanche. Of that I feel certain.”

“And what of Mlle. Blanche?” I cried impatiently (for in me there had dawned a sudden hope that this would enable me to discover something about Polina).

“Well, my belief is that at the present moment Mlle. Blanche has, in very truth, a special reason for wishing to avoid any trouble with the Baron and the Baroness. It might lead not only to some unpleasantness, but even to a scandal.”

“Oh, oh!”

“Also I may tell you that Mlle. Blanche has been in Roulettenberg before, for she was staying here three seasons ago. I myself was in the place at the time, and in those days Mlle. Blanche was not known as Mlle. de Cominges, nor was her mother, the Widow de Cominges, even in existence. In any case no one ever mentioned the latter. De Griers, too, had not materialised, and I am convinced that not only do the parties stand in no relation to one another, but also they have not long enjoyed one another’s acquaintance. Likewise, the Marquisate de Griers is of recent creation. Of that I have reason to be sure, owing to a certain circumstance. Even the name De Griers itself may be taken to be a new invention, seeing that I have a friend who once met the said ‘Marquis’ under a different name altogether.”

“Yet he possesses a good circle of friends?”

“Possibly. Mlle. Blanche also may possess that. Yet it is not three years since she received from the local police, at the instance of the Baroness, an invitation to leave the town. And she left it.”

“But why?”

“Well, I must tell you that she first appeared here in company with an Italian — a prince of some sort, a man who bore an historic name (Barberini or something of the kind). The fellow was simply a mass of rings and diamonds — real diamonds, too — and the couple used to drive out in a

marvellous carriage. At first Mlle. Blanche played ‘trente et quarante’ with fair success, but, later, her luck took a marked change for the worse. I distinctly remember that in a single evening she lost an enormous sum. But worse was to ensue, for one fine morning her prince disappeared — horses, carriage, and all. Also, the hotel bill which he left unpaid was enormous. Upon this Mlle. Zelma (the name which she assumed after figuring as Madame Barberini) was in despair. She shrieked and howled all over the hotel, and even tore her clothes in her frenzy. In the hotel there was staying also a Polish count (you must know that ALL travelling Poles are counts!), and the spectacle of Mlle. Zelma tearing her clothes and, catlike, scratching her face with her beautiful, scented nails produced upon him a strong impression. So the pair had a talk together, and, by luncheon time, she was consoled. Indeed, that evening the couple entered the Casino arm-in-arm — Mlle. Zelma laughing loudly, according to her custom, and showing even more expansiveness in her manners than she had before shown. For instance, she thrust her way into the file of women roulette-players in the exact fashion of those ladies who, to clear a space for themselves at the tables, push their fellow-players roughly aside. Doubtless you have noticed them?”

“Yes, certainly.”

“Well, they are not worth noticing. To the annoyance of the decent public they are allowed to remain here — at all events such of them as daily change 4000 franc notes at the tables (though, as soon as ever these women cease to do so, they receive an invitation to depart). However, Mlle. Zelma continued to change notes of this kind, but her play grew more and more unsuccessful, despite the fact that such ladies’ luck is frequently good, for they have a surprising amount of cash at their disposal. Suddenly, the Count too disappeared, even as the Prince had done, and that same evening Mlle. Zelma was forced to appear in the Casino alone. On this occasion no one offered her a greeting. Two days later she had come to the end of her resources; whereupon, after staking and losing her last louis d’or she chanced to look around her, and saw standing by her side the Baron Burmergelm, who had been eyeing her with fixed disapproval. To his distaste, however, Mlle. paid no attention, but, turning to him with her well-known smile, requested him to stake, on her behalf, ten louis on the red. Later that evening a complaint from the Baroness led the authorities to request Mlle. not to re-enter the Casino. If you feel in any way surprised

that I should know these petty and unedifying details, the reason is that I had them from a relative of mine who, later that evening, drove Mlle. Zelma in his carriage from Roulettenberg to Spa. Now, mark you, Mlle. wants to become Madame General, in order that, in future, she may be spared the receipt of such invitations from Casino authorities as she received three years ago. At present she is not playing; but that is only because, according to the signs, she is lending money to other players. Yes, that is a much more paying game. I even suspect that the unfortunate General is himself in her debt, as well as, perhaps, also De Griers. Or, it may be that the latter has entered into a partnership with her. Consequently you yourself will see that, until the marriage shall have been consummated, Mlle. would scarcely like to have the attention of the Baron and the Baroness drawn to herself. In short, to any one in her position, a scandal would be most detrimental. You form a member of the menage of these people; wherefore, any act of yours might cause such a scandal — and the more so since daily she appears in public arm in arm with the General or with Mlle. Polina. NOW do you understand?"

"No, I do not!" I shouted as I banged my fist down upon the table — banged it with such violence that a frightened waiter came running towards us. "Tell me, Mr. Astley, why, if you knew this history all along, and, consequently, always knew who this Mlle. Blanche is, you never warned either myself or the General, nor, most of all, Mlle. Polina" (who is accustomed to appear in the Casino — in public everywhere with Mlle. Blanche). "How could you do it?"

"It would have done no good to warn you," he replied quietly, "for the reason that you could have effected nothing. Against what was I to warn you? As likely as not, the General knows more about Mlle. Blanche even than I do; yet the unhappy man still walks about with her and Mlle. Polina. Only yesterday I saw this Frenchwoman riding, splendidly mounted, with De Griers, while the General was careering in their wake on a roan horse. He had said, that morning, that his legs were hurting him, yet his riding-seat was easy enough. As he passed I looked at him, and the thought occurred to me that he was a man lost for ever. However, it is no affair of mine, for I have only recently had the happiness to make Mlle. Polina's acquaintance. Also" — he added this as an afterthought— "I have already told you that I do not recognise your right to ask me certain questions, however sincere be my liking for you."

“Enough,” I said, rising. “To me it is as clear as day that Mlle. Polina knows all about this Mlle. Blanche, but cannot bring herself to part with her Frenchman; wherefore, she consents also to be seen in public with Mlle. Blanche. You may be sure that nothing else would ever have induced her either to walk about with this Frenchwoman or to send me a note not to touch the Baron. Yes, it is THERE that the influence lies before which everything in the world must bow! Yet she herself it was who launched me at the Baron! The devil take it, but I was left no choice in the matter.”

“You forget, in the first place, that this Mlle. de Cominges is the General’s inamorata, and, in the second place, that Mlle. Polina, the General’s step-daughter, has a younger brother and sister who, though they are the General’s own children, are completely neglected by this madman, and robbed as well.”

“Yes, yes; that is so. For me to go and desert the children now would mean their total abandonment; whereas, if I remain, I should be able to defend their interests, and, perhaps, to save a moiety of their property. Yes, yes; that is quite true. And yet, and yet — Oh, I can well understand why they are all so interested in the General’s mother!”

“In whom?” asked Mr. Astley.

“In the old woman of Moscow who declines to die, yet concerning whom they are for ever expecting telegrams to notify the fact of her death.”

“Ah, then of course their interests centre around her. It is a question of succession. Let that but be settled, and the General will marry, Mlle. Polina will be set free, and De Griers—”

“Yes, and De Griers?”

“Will be repaid his money, which is what he is now waiting for.”

“What? You think that he is waiting for that?”

“I know of nothing else,” asserted Mr. Astley doggedly.

“But, I do, I do!” I shouted in my fury. “He is waiting also for the old woman’s will, for the reason that it awards Mlle. Polina a dowry. As soon as ever the money is received, she will throw herself upon the Frenchman’s neck. All women are like that. Even the proudest of them become abject slaves where marriage is concerned. What Polina is good for is to fall head over ears in love. That is MY opinion. Look at her — especially when she is sitting alone, and plunged in thought. All this was pre-ordained and foretold, and is accursed. Polina could perpetrate any mad act. She — she — But who called me by name?” I broke off. “Who is shouting for me? I

heard some one calling in Russian, ‘Alexis Ivanovitch!’ It was a woman’s voice. Listen!”

At the moment, we were approaching my hotel. We had left the cafe long ago, without even noticing that we had done so.

“Yes, I DID hear a woman’s voice calling, but whose I do not know. The someone was calling you in Russian. Ah! NOW I can see whence the cries come. They come from that lady there — the one who is sitting on the settee, the one who has just been escorted to the verandah by a crowd of lacqueys. Behind her see that pile of luggage! She must have arrived by train.”

“But why should she be calling ME? Hear her calling again! See! She is beckoning to us!”

“Yes, so she is,” assented Mr. Astley.

“Alexis Ivanovitch, Alexis Ivanovitch! Good heavens, what a stupid fellow!” came in a despairing wail from the verandah.

We had almost reached the portico, and I was just setting foot upon the space before it, when my hands fell to my sides in limp astonishment, and my feet glued themselves to the pavement!

CHAPTER IX

For on the topmost tier of the hotel verandah, after being carried up the steps in an armchair amid a bevy of footmen, maid-servants, and other menials of the hotel, headed by the landlord (that functionary had actually run out to meet a visitor who arrived with so much stir and din, attended by her own retinue, and accompanied by so great a pile of trunks and portmanteaux) — on the topmost tier of the verandah, I say, there was sitting — THE GRANDMOTHER! Yes, it was she — rich, and imposing, and seventy-five years of age — Antonida Vassilievna Tarassevitcha, landowner and grande dame of Moscow — the "La Baboulenka" who had caused so many telegrams to be sent off and received — who had been dying, yet not dying — who had, in her own person, descended upon us even as snow might fall from the clouds! Though unable to walk, she had arrived borne aloft in an armchair (her mode of conveyance for the last five years), as brisk, aggressive, self-satisfied, bolt-upright, loudly imperious, and generally abusive as ever. In fact, she looked exactly as she had on the only two occasions when I had seen her since my appointment to the General's household. Naturally enough, I stood petrified with astonishment. She had sighted me a hundred paces off! Even while she was being carried along in her chair she had recognised me, and called me by name and surname (which, as usual, after hearing once, she had remembered ever afterwards).

"And this is the woman whom they had thought to see in her grave after making her will!" I thought to myself. "Yet she will outlive us, and every one else in the hotel. Good Lord! what is going to become of us now? What on earth is to happen to the General? She will turn the place upside down!"

"My good sir," the old woman continued in a stentorian voice, "what are you standing THERE for, with your eyes almost falling out of your head? Cannot you come and say how-do-you-do? Are you too proud to shake hands? Or do you not recognise me? Here, Potapitch!" she cried to an old servant who, dressed in a frock coat and white waistcoat, had a bald, red head (he was the chamberlain who always accompanied her on her journeys). "Just think! Alexis Ivanovitch does not recognise me! They have buried me for good and all! Yes, and after sending hosts of telegrams to

know if I were dead or not! Yes, yes, I have heard the whole story. I am very much alive, though, as you may see."

"Pardon me, Antonida Vassilievna," I replied good humouredly as I recovered my presence of mind. "I have no reason to wish you ill. I am merely rather astonished to see you. Why should I not be so, seeing how unexpected—"

"WHY should you be astonished? I just got into my chair, and came. Things are quiet enough in the train, for there is no one there to chatter. Have you been out for a walk?"

"Yes. I have just been to the Casino."

"Oh? Well, it is quite nice here," she went on as she looked about her. "The place seems comfortable, and all the trees are out. I like it very well. Are your people at home? Is the General, for instance, indoors?"

"Yes; and probably all of them."

"Do they observe the convenances, and keep up appearances? Such things always give one tone. I have heard that they are keeping a carriage, even as Russian gentlefolks ought to do. When abroad, our Russian people always cut a dash. Is Prascovia here too?"

"Yes. Polina Alexandrovna is here."

"And the Frenchwoman? However, I will go and look for them myself. Tell me the nearest way to their rooms. Do you like being here?"

"Yes, I thank you, Antonida Vassilievna."

"And you, Potapitch, you go and tell that fool of a landlord to reserve me a suitable suite of rooms. They must be handsomely decorated, and not too high up. Have my luggage taken up to them. But what are you tumbling over yourselves for? Why are you all tearing about? What scullions these fellows are! — Who is that with you?" she added to myself.

"A Mr. Astley," I replied.

"And who is Mr. Astley?"

"A fellow-traveller, and my very good friend, as well as an acquaintance of the General's."

"Oh, an Englishman? Then that is why he stared at me without even opening his lips. However, I like Englishmen. Now, take me upstairs, direct to their rooms. Where are they lodging?"

Madame was lifted up in her chair by the lacqueys, and I preceded her up the grand staircase. Our progress was exceedingly effective, for everyone whom we met stopped to stare at the cortege. It happened that the hotel had

the reputation of being the best, the most expensive, and the most aristocratic in all the spa, and at every turn on the staircase or in the corridors we encountered fine ladies and important-looking Englishmen — more than one of whom hastened downstairs to inquire of the awestruck landlord who the newcomer was. To all such questions he returned the same answer — namely, that the old lady was an influential foreigner, a Russian, a Countess, and a grande dame, and that she had taken the suite which, during the previous week, had been tenanted by the Grande Duchesse de N.

Meanwhile the cause of the sensation — the Grandmother — was being borne aloft in her armchair. Every person whom she met she scanned with an inquisitive eye, after first of all interrogating me about him or her at the top of her voice. She was stout of figure, and, though she could not leave her chair, one felt, the moment that one first looked at her, that she was also tall of stature. Her back was as straight as a board, and never did she lean back in her seat. Also, her large grey head, with its keen, rugged features, remained always erect as she glanced about her in an imperious, challenging sort of way, with looks and gestures that clearly were unstudied. Though she had reached her seventy-sixth year, her face was still fresh, and her teeth had not decayed. Lastly, she was dressed in a black silk gown and white mobcap.

"She interests me tremendously," whispered Mr. Astley as, still smoking, he walked by my side. Meanwhile I was reflecting that probably the old lady knew all about the telegrams, and even about De Griers, though little or nothing about Mlle. Blanche. I said as much to Mr. Astley.

But what a frail creature is man! No sooner was my first surprise abated than I found myself rejoicing in the shock which we were about to administer to the General. So much did the thought inspire me that I marched ahead in the gayest of fashions.

Our party was lodging on the third floor. Without knocking at the door, or in any way announcing our presence, I threw open the portals, and the Grandmother was borne through them in triumph. As though of set purpose, the whole party chanced at that moment to be assembled in the General's study. The time was eleven o'clock, and it seemed that an outing of some sort (at which a portion of the party were to drive in carriages, and others to ride on horseback, accompanied by one or two extraneous acquaintances) was being planned. The General was present, and also Polina, the children, the latter's nurses, De Griers, Mlle. Blanche (attired in a riding-habit), her

mother, the young Prince, and a learned German whom I beheld for the first time. Into the midst of this assembly the lacqueys conveyed Madame in her chair, and set her down within three paces of the General!

Good heavens! Never shall I forget the spectacle which ensued! Just before our entry, the General had been holding forth to the company, with De Griers in support of him. I may also mention that, for the last two or three days, Mlle. Blanche and De Griers had been making a great deal of the young Prince, under the very nose of the poor General. In short, the company, though decorous and conventional, was in a gay, familiar mood. But no sooner did the Grandmother appear than the General stopped dead in the middle of a word, and, with jaw dropping, stared hard at the old lady — his eyes almost starting out of his head, and his expression as spellbound as though he had just seen a basilisk. In return, the Grandmother stared at him silently and without moving — though with a look of mingled challenge, triumph, and ridicule in her eyes. For ten seconds did the pair remain thus eyeing one another, amid the profound silence of the company; and even De Griers sat petrified — an extraordinary look of uneasiness dawning on his face. As for Mlle. Blanche, she too stared wildly at the Grandmother, with eyebrows raised and her lips parted — while the Prince and the German savant contemplated the tableau in profound amazement. Only Polina looked anything but perplexed or surprised. Presently, however, she too turned as white as a sheet, and then reddened to her temples. Truly the Grandmother's arrival seemed to be a catastrophe for everybody! For my own part, I stood looking from the Grandmother to the company, and back again, while Mr. Astley, as usual, remained in the background, and gazed calmly and decorously at the scene.

"Well, here I am — and instead of a telegram, too!" the Grandmother at last ejaculated, to dissipate the silence. "What? You were not expecting me?"

"Antonida Vassilievna! O my dearest mother! But how on earth did you, did you — ?" The mutterings of the unhappy General died away.

I verily believe that if the Grandmother had held her tongue a few seconds longer she would have had a stroke.

"How on earth did I WHAT?" she exclaimed. "Why, I just got into the train and came here. What else is the railway meant for? But you thought that I had turned up my toes and left my property to the lot of you. Oh, I know ALL about the telegrams which you have been dispatching. They

must have cost you a pretty sum, I should think, for telegrams are not sent from abroad for nothing. Well, I picked up my heels, and came here. Who is this Frenchman? Monsieur de Griers, I suppose?"

"Oui, madame," assented De Griers. "Et, croyez, je suis si enchante! Votre sante — c'est un miracle vous voir ici. Une surprise charmante!"

"Just so. 'Charmante!' I happen to know you as a mountebank, and therefore trust you no more than THIS." She indicated her little finger. "And who is THAT?" she went on, turning towards Mlle. Blanche. Evidently the Frenchwoman looked so becoming in her riding-habit, with her whip in her hand, that she had made an impression upon the old lady. "Who is that woman there?"

"Mlle. de Cominges," I said. "And this is her mother, Madame de Cominges. They also are staying in the hotel."

"Is the daughter married?" asked the old lady, without the least semblance of ceremony.

"No," I replied as respectfully as possible, but under my breath.

"Is she good company?"

I failed to understand the question.

"I mean, is she or is she not a bore? Can she speak Russian? When this De Griers was in Moscow he soon learnt to make himself understood."

I explained to the old lady that Mlle. Blanche had never visited Russia.

"Bonjour, then," said Madame, with sudden brusquerie.

"Bonjour, madame," replied Mlle. Blanche with an elegant, ceremonious bow as, under cover of an unwonted modesty, she endeavoured to express, both in face and figure, her extreme surprise at such strange behaviour on the part of the Grandmother.

"How the woman sticks out her eyes at me! How she mows and minces!" was the Grandmother's comment. Then she turned suddenly to the General, and continued: "I have taken up my abode here, so am going to be your next-door neighbour. Are you glad to hear that, or are you not?"

"My dear mother, believe me when I say that I am sincerely delighted," returned the General, who had now, to a certain extent, recovered his senses; and inasmuch as, when occasion arose, he could speak with fluency, gravity, and a certain effect, he set himself to be expansive in his remarks, and went on: "We have been so dismayed and upset by the news of your indisposition! We had received such hopeless telegrams about you! Then suddenly—"

“Fibs, fibs!” interrupted the Grandmother.

“How on earth, too, did you come to decide upon the journey?” continued the General, with raised voice as he hurried to overlook the old lady’s last remark. “Surely, at your age, and in your present state of health, the thing is so unexpected that our surprise is at least intelligible. However, I am glad to see you (as indeed, are we all” — he said this with a dignified, yet conciliatory, smile), “and will use my best endeavours to render your stay here as pleasant as possible.”

“Enough! All this is empty chatter. You are talking the usual nonsense. I shall know quite well how to spend my time. How did I come to undertake the journey, you ask? Well, is there anything so very surprising about it? It was done quite simply. What is every one going into ecstasies about? — How do you do, Prascovia? What are YOU doing here?”

“And how are YOU, Grandmother?” replied Polina, as she approached the old lady. “Were you long on the journey?”.

“The most sensible question that I have yet been asked! Well, you shall hear for yourself how it all happened. I lay and lay, and was doctored and doctored, until at last I drove the physicians from me, and called in an apothecary from Nicolai who had cured an old woman of a malady similar to my own — cured her merely with a little hayseed. Well, he did me a great deal of good, for on the third day I broke into a sweat, and was able to leave my bed. Then my German doctors held another consultation, put on their spectacles, and told me that if I would go abroad, and take a course of the waters, the indisposition would finally pass away. ‘Why should it not?’ I thought to myself. So I had got things ready, and on the following day, a Friday, set out for here. I occupied a special compartment in the train, and where ever I had to change I found at the station bearers who were ready to carry me for a few coppers. You have nice quarters here,” she went on as she glanced around the room. “But where on earth did you get the money for them, my good sir? I thought that everything of yours had been mortgaged? This Frenchman alone must be your creditor for a good deal. Oh, I know all about it, all about it.”

“I-I am surprised at you, my dearest mother,” said the General in some confusion. “I-I am greatly surprised. But I do not need any extraneous control of my finances. Moreover, my expenses do not exceed my income, and we—”

“They do not exceed it? Fie! Why, you are robbing your children of their last kopeck — you, their guardian!”

“After this,” said the General, completely taken aback, “ — after what you have just said, I do not know whether—”

“You do not know what? By heavens, are you never going to drop that roulette of yours? Are you going to whistle all your property away?”

This made such an impression upon the General that he almost choked with fury.

“Roulette, indeed? I play roulette? Really, in view of my position — Recollect what you are saying, my dearest mother. You must still be unwell.”

“Rubbish, rubbish!” she retorted. “The truth is that you CANNOT be got away from that roulette. You are simply telling lies. This very day I mean to go and see for myself what roulette is like. Prascovia, tell me what there is to be seen here; and do you, Alexis Ivanovitch, show me everything; and do you, Potapitch, make me a list of excursions. What IS there to be seen?” again she inquired of Polina.

“There is a ruined castle, and the Shlangenberg.”

“The Shlangenberg? What is it? A forest?”

“No, a mountain on the summit of which there is a place fenced off. From it you can get a most beautiful view.”

“Could a chair be carried up that mountain of yours?”

“Doubtless we could find bearers for the purpose,” I interposed.

At this moment Theodosia, the nursemaid, approached the old lady with the General’s children.

“No, I DON’T want to see them,” said the Grandmother. “I hate kissing children, for their noses are always wet. How are you getting on, Theodosia?”

“I am very well, thank you, Madame,” replied the nursemaid. “And how is your ladyship? We have been feeling so anxious about you!”

“Yes, I know, you simple soul — But who are those other guests?” the old lady continued, turning again to Polina. “For instance, who is that old rascal in the spectacles?”

“Prince Nilski, Grandmamma,” whispered Polina.

“Oh, a Russian? Why, I had no idea that he could understand me! Surely he did not hear what I said? As for Mr. Astley, I have seen him already, and

I see that he is here again. How do you do?" she added to the gentleman in question.

Mr. Astley bowed in silence

"Have you NOTHING to say to me?" the old lady went on. "Say something, for goodness' sake! Translate to him, Polina."

Polina did so.

"I have only to say," replied Mr. Astley gravely, but also with alacrity, "that I am indeed glad to see you in such good health." This was interpreted to the Grandmother, and she seemed much gratified.

"How well English people know how to answer one!" she remarked. "That is why I like them so much better than French. Come here," she added to Mr. Astley. "I will try not to bore you too much. Polina, translate to him that I am staying in rooms on a lower floor. Yes, on a lower floor," she repeated to Astley, pointing downwards with her finger.

Astley looked pleased at receiving the invitation.

Next, the old lady scanned Polina, from head to foot with minute attention.

"I could almost have liked you, Prascovia," suddenly she remarked, "for you are a nice girl — the best of the lot. You have some character about you. I too have character. Turn round. Surely that is not false hair that you are wearing?"

"No, Grandmamma. It is my own."

"Well, well. I do not like the stupid fashions of today. You are very good looking. I should have fallen in love with you if I had been a man. Why do you not get married? It is time now that I was going. I want to walk, yet I always have to ride. Are you still in a bad temper?" she added to the General.

"No, indeed," rejoined the now mollified General.

"I quite understand that at your time of life—"

"Cette vieille est tombee en enfance," De Griers whispered to me.

"But I want to look round a little," the old lady added to the General. Will you lend me Alexis Ivanovitch for the purpose?

"As much as you like. But I myself — yes, and Polina and Monsieur de Griers too — we all of us hope to have the pleasure of escorting you."

"Mais, madame, cela sera un plaisir," De Griers commented with a bewitching smile.

“‘Plaisir’ indeed! Why, I look upon you as a perfect fool, monsieur.” Then she remarked to the General: “I am not going to let you have any of my money. I must be off to my rooms now, to see what they are like. Afterwards we will look round a little. Lift me up.”

Again the Grandmother was borne aloft and carried down the staircase amid a perfect bevy of followers — the General walking as though he had been hit over the head with a cudgel, and De Griers seeming to be plunged in thought. Endeavouring to be left behind, Mlle. Blanche next thought better of it, and followed the rest, with the Prince in her wake. Only the German savant and Madame de Cominges did not leave the General’s apartments.

CHAPTER X

At spas — and, probably, all over Europe — hotel landlords and managers are guided in their allotment of rooms to visitors, not so much by the wishes and requirements of those visitors, as by their personal estimate of the same. It may also be said that these landlords and managers seldom make a mistake. To the Grandmother, however, our landlord, for some reason or another, allotted such a sumptuous suite that he fairly overreached himself; for he assigned her a suite consisting of four magnificently appointed rooms, with bathroom, servants' quarters, a separate room for her maid, and so on. In fact, during the previous week the suite had been occupied by no less a personage than a Grand Duchess: which circumstance was duly explained to the new occupant, as an excuse for raising the price of these apartments. The Grandmother had herself carried — or, rather, wheeled — through each room in turn, in order that she might subject the whole to a close and attentive scrutiny; while the landlord — an elderly, bald-headed man — walked respectfully by her side.

What every one took the Grandmother to be I do not know, but it appeared, at least, that she was accounted a person not only of great importance, but also, and still more, of great wealth; and without delay they entered her in the hotel register as "Madame la Generale, Princesse de Tarassevitcheva," although she had never been a princess in her life. Her retinue, her reserved compartment in the train, her pile of unnecessary trunks, portmanteaux, and strong-boxes, all helped to increase her prestige; while her wheeled chair, her sharp tone and voice, her eccentric questions (put with an air of the most overbearing and unbridled imperiousness), her whole figure — upright, rugged, and commanding as it was — completed the general awe in which she was held. As she inspected her new abode she ordered her chair to be stopped at intervals in order that, with finger extended towards some article of furniture, she might ply the respectfully smiling, yet secretly apprehensive, landlord with unexpected questions. She addressed them to him in French, although her pronunciation of the language was so bad that sometimes I had to translate them. For the most part, the landlord's answers were unsatisfactory, and failed to please her; nor were the questions themselves of a practical nature, but related, generally, to God knows what.

For instance, on one occasion she halted before a picture which, a poor copy of a well-known original, had a mythological subject.

“Of whom is this a portrait?” she inquired.

The landlord explained that it was probably that of a countess.

“But how know you that?” the old lady retorted.

“You live here, yet you cannot say for certain! And why is the picture there at all? And why do its eyes look so crooked?”

To all these questions the landlord could return no satisfactory reply, despite his floundering endeavours.

“The blockhead!” exclaimed the Grandmother in Russian.

Then she proceeded on her way — only to repeat the same story in front of a Saxon statuette which she had sighted from afar, and had commanded, for some reason or another, to be brought to her. Finally, she inquired of the landlord what was the value of the carpet in her bedroom, as well as where the said carpet had been manufactured; but, the landlord could do no more than promise to make inquiries.

“What donkeys these people are!” she commented. Next, she turned her attention to the bed.

“What a huge counterpane!” she exclaimed. “Turn it back, please.” The lacqueys did so.

“Further yet, further yet,” the old lady cried. “Turn it RIGHT back. Also, take off those pillows and bolsters, and lift up the feather bed.”

The bed was opened for her inspection.

“Mercifully it contains no bugs,” she remarked.

“Pull off the whole thing, and then put on my own pillows and sheets. The place is too luxurious for an old woman like myself. It is too large for any one person. Alexis Ivanovitch, come and see me whenever you are not teaching your pupils.”

“After tomorrow I shall no longer be in the General’s service,” I replied, “but merely living in the hotel on my own account.”

“Why so?”

“Because, the other day, there arrived from Berlin a German and his wife — persons of some importance; and, it chanced that, when taking a walk, I spoke to them in German without having properly compassed the Berlin accent.”

“Indeed?”

“Yes: and this action on my part the Baron held to be an insult, and complained about it to the General, who yesterday dismissed me from his employ.”

“But I suppose you must have threatened that precious Baron, or something of the kind? However, even if you did so, it was a matter of no moment.”

“No, I did not. The Baron was the aggressor by raising his stick at me.”

Upon that the Grandmother turned sharply to the General.

“What? You permitted yourself to treat your tutor thus, you nincompoop, and to dismiss him from his post? You are a blockhead — an utter blockhead! I can see that clearly.”

“Do not alarm yourself, my dear mother,” the General replied with a lofty air — an air in which there was also a tinge of familiarity. “I am quite capable of managing my own affairs. Moreover, Alexis Ivanovitch has not given you a true account of the matter.”

“What did you do next?” The old lady inquired of me.

“I wanted to challenge the Baron to a duel,” I replied as modestly as possible; “but the General protested against my doing so.”

“And WHY did you so protest?” she inquired of the General. Then she turned to the landlord, and questioned him as to whether HE would not have fought a duel, if challenged. “For,” she added, “I can see no difference between you and the Baron; nor can I bear that German visage of yours.” Upon this the landlord bowed and departed, though he could not have understood the Grandmother’s compliment.

“Pardon me, Madame,” the General continued with a sneer, “but are duels really feasible?”

“Why not? All men are crowing cocks, and that is why they quarrel. YOU, though, I perceive, are a blockhead — a man who does not even know how to carry his breeding. Lift me up. Potapitch, see to it that you always have TWO bearers ready. Go and arrange for their hire. But we shall not require more than two, for I shall need only to be carried upstairs. On the level or in the street I can be WHEELED along. Go and tell them that, and pay them in advance, so that they may show me some respect. You too, Potapitch, are always to come with me, and YOU, Alexis Ivanovitch, are to point out to me this Baron as we go along, in order that I may get a squint at the precious ‘Von.’ And where is that roulette played?”

I explained to her that the game was carried on in the salons of the Casino; whereupon there ensued a string of questions as to whether there were many such salons, whether many people played in them, whether those people played a whole day at a time, and whether the game was managed according to fixed rules. At length, I thought it best to say that the most advisable course would be for her to go and see it for herself, since a mere description of it would be a difficult matter.

“Then take me straight there,” she said, “and do you walk on in front of me, Alexis Ivanovitch.”

“What, mother? Before you have so much as rested from your journey?” the General inquired with some solicitude. Also, for some reason which I could not divine, he seemed to be growing nervous; and, indeed, the whole party was evincing signs of confusion, and exchanging glances with one another. Probably they were thinking that it would be a ticklish — even an embarrassing — business to accompany the Grandmother to the Casino, where, very likely, she would perpetrate further eccentricities, and in public too! Yet on their own initiative they had offered to escort her!

“Why should I rest?” she retorted. “I am not tired, for I have been sitting still these past five days. Let us see what your medicinal springs and waters are like, and where they are situated. What, too, about that, that — what did you call it, Prascovia? — oh, about that mountain top?”

“Yes, we are going to see it, Grandmamma.”

“Very well. Is there anything else for me to see here?”

“Yes! Quite a number of things,” Polina forced herself to say.

“Martha, YOU must come with me as well,” went on the old lady to her maid.

“No, no, mother!” ejaculated the General. “Really she cannot come. They would not admit even Potapitch to the Casino.”

“Rubbish! Because she is my servant, is that a reason for turning her out? Why, she is only a human being like the rest of us; and as she has been travelling for a week she might like to look about her. With whom else could she go out but myself? She would never dare to show her nose in the street alone.”

“But, mother—”

“Are you ashamed to be seen with me? Stop at home, then, and you will be asked no questions. A pretty General YOU are, to be sure! I am a general’s widow myself. But, after all, why should I drag the whole party

with me? I will go and see the sights with only Alexis Ivanovitch as my escort."

De Griers strongly insisted that EVERY ONE ought to accompany her. Indeed, he launched out into a perfect shower of charming phrases concerning the pleasure of acting as her cicerone, and so forth. Every one was touched with his words.

"Mais elle est tombee en enfance," he added aside to the General. "Seule, elle fera des betises." More than this I could not overhear, but he seemed to have got some plan in his mind, or even to be feeling a slight return of his hopes.

The distance to the Casino was about half a verst, and our route led us through the Chestnut Avenue until we reached the square directly fronting the building. The General, I could see, was a trifle reassured by the fact that, though our progress was distinctly eccentric in its nature, it was, at least, correct and orderly. As a matter of fact, the spectacle of a person who is unable to walk is not anything to excite surprise at a spa. Yet it was clear that the General had a great fear of the Casino itself: for why should a person who had lost the use of her limbs — more especially an old woman — be going to rooms which were set apart only for roulette? On either side of the wheeled chair walked Polina and Mlle. Blanche — the latter smiling, modestly jesting, and, in short, making herself so agreeable to the Grandmother that in the end the old lady relented towards her. On the other side of the chair Polina had to answer an endless flow of petty questions — such as "Who was it passed just now?"

"Who is that coming along?"

"Is the town a large one?"

"Are the public gardens extensive?"

"What sort of trees are those?"

"What is the name of those hills?"

"Do I see eagles flying yonder?"

"What is that absurd-looking building?" and so forth. Meanwhile Astley whispered to me, as he walked by my side, that he looked for much to happen that morning. Behind the old lady's chair marched Potapitch and Martha — Potapitch in his frockcoat and white waistcoat, with a cloak over all, and the forty-year-old and rosy, but slightly grey-headed, Martha in a mobcap, cotton dress, and squeaking shoes. Frequently the old lady would twist herself round to converse with these servants. As for De Griers, he

spoke as though he had made up his mind to do something (though it is also possible that he spoke in this manner merely in order to hearten the General, with whom he appeared to have held a conference). But, alas, the Grandmother had uttered the fatal words, “I am not going to give you any of my money;” and though De Griers might regard these words lightly, the General knew his mother better. Also, I noticed that De Griers and Mlle. Blanche were still exchanging looks; while of the Prince and the German savant I lost sight at the end of the Avenue, where they had turned back and left us.

Into the Casino we marched in triumph. At once, both in the person of the commissionaire and in the persons of the footmen, there sprang to life the same reverence as had arisen in the lacqueys of the hotel. Yet it was not without some curiosity that they eyed us.

Without loss of time, the Grandmother gave orders that she should be wheeled through every room in the establishment; of which apartments she praised a few, while to others she remained indifferent. Concerning everything, however, she asked questions. Finally we reached the gaming-salons, where a lacquey who was, acting as guard over the doors, flung them open as though he were a man possessed.

The Grandmother’s entry into the roulette-salon produced a profound impression upon the public. Around the tables, and at the further end of the room where the trente-et-quarante table was set out, there may have been gathered from 150 to 200 gamblers, ranged in several rows. Those who had succeeded in pushing their way to the tables were standing with their feet firmly planted, in order to avoid having to give up their places until they should have finished their game (since merely to stand looking on — thus occupying a gambler’s place for nothing — was not permitted). True, chairs were provided around the tables, but few players made use of them — more especially if there was a large attendance of the general public; since to stand allowed of a closer approach; and, therefore, of greater facilities for calculation and staking. Behind the foremost row were herded a second and a third row of people awaiting their turn; but sometimes their impatience led these people to stretch a hand through the first row, in order to deposit their stakes. Even third-row individuals would dart forward to stake; whence seldom did more than five or ten minutes pass without a scene over disputed money arising at one or another end of the table. On the other hand, the police of the Casino were an able body of men; and though to

escape the crush was an impossibility, however much one might wish it, the eight croupiers apportioned to each table kept an eye upon the stakes, performed the necessary reckoning, and decided disputes as they arose.

In the last resort they always called in the Casino police, and the disputes would immediately come to an end. Policemen were stationed about the Casino in ordinary costume, and mingled with the spectators so as to make it impossible to recognise them. In particular they kept a lookout for pickpockets and swindlers, who simply swanned in the roulette salons, and reaped a rich harvest. Indeed, in every direction money was being filched from pockets or purses — though, of course, if the attempt miscarried, a great uproar ensued. One had only to approach a roulette table, begin to play, and then openly grab some one else's winnings, for a din to be raised, and the thief to start vociferating that the stake was HIS; and, if the coup had been carried out with sufficient skill, and the witnesses wavered at all in their testimony, the thief would as likely as not succeed in getting away with the money, provided that the sum was not a large one — not large enough to have attracted the attention of the croupiers or some fellow-player. Moreover, if it were a stake of insignificant size, its true owner would sometimes decline to continue the dispute, rather than become involved in a scandal. Conversely, if the thief was detected, he was ignominiously expelled the building.

Upon all this the Grandmother gazed with open-eyed curiosity; and, on some thieves happening to be turned out of the place, she was delighted. Trente-et-quarante interested her but little; she preferred roulette, with its ever-revolving wheel. At length she expressed a wish to view the game closer; whereupon in some mysterious manner, the lacqueys and other officious agents (especially one or two ruined Poles of the kind who keep offering their services to successful gamblers and foreigners in general) at once found and cleared a space for the old lady among the crush, at the very centre of one of the tables, and next to the chief croupier; after which they wheeled her chair thither. Upon this a number of visitors who were not playing, but only looking on (particularly some Englishmen with their families), pressed closer forward towards the table, in order to watch the old lady from among the ranks of the gamblers. Many a lorgnette I saw turned in her direction, and the croupiers' hopes rose high that such an eccentric player was about to provide them with something out of the common. An old lady of seventy-five years who, though unable to walk, desired to play

was not an everyday phenomenon. I too pressed forward towards the table, and ranged myself by the Grandmother's side; while Martha and Potapitch remained somewhere in the background among the crowd, and the General, Polina, and De Griers, with Mlle. Blanche, also remained hidden among the spectators.

At first the old lady did no more than watch the gamblers, and ply me, in a half-whisper, with sharp-broken questions as to who was so-and-so. Especially did her favour light upon a very young man who was plunging heavily, and had won (so it was whispered) as much as 40,000 francs, which were lying before him on the table in a heap of gold and bank-notes. His eyes kept flashing, and his hands shaking; yet all the while he staked without any sort of calculation — just what came to his hand, as he kept winning and winning, and raking and raking in his gains. Around him lacqueys fussed — placing chairs just behind where he was standing — and clearing the spectators from his vicinity, so that he should have more room, and not be crowded — the whole done, of course, in expectation of a generous largesse. From time to time other gamblers would hand him part of their winnings — being glad to let him stake for them as much as his hand could grasp; while beside him stood a Pole in a state of violent, but respectful, agitation, who, also in expectation of a generous largesse, kept whispering to him at intervals (probably telling him what to stake, and advising and directing his play). Yet never once did the player throw him a glance as he staked and staked, and raked in his winnings. Evidently, the player in question was dead to all besides.

For a few minutes the Grandmother watched him.

"Go and tell him," suddenly she exclaimed with a nudge at my elbow, " — go and tell him to stop, and to take his money with him, and go home. Presently he will be losing — yes, losing everything that he has now won." She seemed almost breathless with excitement.

"Where is Potapitch?" she continued. "Send Potapitch to speak to him. No, YOU must tell him, you must tell him," — here she nudged me again— "for I have not the least notion where Potapitch is. Sortez, sortez," she shouted to the young man, until I leant over in her direction and whispered in her ear that no shouting was allowed, nor even loud speaking, since to do so disturbed the calculations of the players, and might lead to our being ejected.

“How provoking!” she retorted. “Then the young man is done for! I suppose he WISHES to be ruined. Yet I could not bear to see him have to return it all. What a fool the fellow is!” and the old lady turned sharply away.

On the left, among the players at the other half of the table, a young lady was playing, with, beside her, a dwarf. Who the dwarf may have been — whether a relative or a person whom she took with her to act as a foil — I do not know; but I had noticed her there on previous occasions, since, everyday, she entered the Casino at one o’clock precisely, and departed at two — thus playing for exactly one hour. Being well-known to the attendants, she always had a seat provided for her; and, taking some gold and a few thousand-franc notes out of her pocket — would begin quietly, coldly, and after much calculation, to stake, and mark down the figures in pencil on a paper, as though striving to work out a system according to which, at given moments, the odds might group themselves. Always she staked large coins, and either lost or won one, two, or three thousand francs a day, but not more; after which she would depart. The Grandmother took a long look at her.

“THAT woman is not losing,” she said. “To whom does she belong? Do you know her? Who is she?”

“She is, I believe, a Frenchwoman,” I replied.

“Ah! A bird of passage, evidently. Besides, I can see that she has her shoes polished. Now, explain to me the meaning of each round in the game, and the way in which one ought to stake.”

Upon this I set myself to explain the meaning of all the combinations — of “rouge et noir,” of “pair et impair,” of “manque et passe,” with, lastly, the different values in the system of numbers. The Grandmother listened attentively, took notes, put questions in various forms, and laid the whole thing to heart. Indeed, since an example of each system of stakes kept constantly occurring, a great deal of information could be assimilated with ease and celerity. The Grandmother was vastly pleased.

“But what is zero?” she inquired. “Just now I heard the flaxen-haired croupier call out ‘zero!’ And why does he keep raking in all the money that is on the table? To think that he should grab the whole pile for himself! What does zero mean?”

“Zero is what the bank takes for itself. If the wheel stops at that figure, everything lying on the table becomes the absolute property of the bank.

Also, whenever the wheel has begun to turn, the bank ceases to pay out anything."

"Then I should receive nothing if I were staking?"

"No; unless by any chance you had PURPOSELY staked on zero; in which case you would receive thirty-five times the value of your stake."

"Why thirty-five times, when zero so often turns up? And if so, why do not more of these fools stake upon it?"

"Because the number of chances against its occurrence is thirty-six."

"Rubbish! Potapitch, Potapitch! Come here, and I will give you some money." The old lady took out of her pocket a tightly-clasped purse, and extracted from its depths a ten-gulden piece. "Go at once, and stake that upon zero."

"But, Madame, zero has only this moment turned up," I remonstrated; "wherefore, it may not do so again for ever so long. Wait a little, and you may then have a better chance."

"Rubbish! Stake, please."

"Pardon me, but zero might not turn up again until, say, tonight, even though you had staked thousands upon it. It often happens so."

"Rubbish, rubbish! Who fears the wolf should never enter the forest. What? We have lost? Then stake again."

A second ten-gulden piece did we lose, and then I put down a third. The Grandmother could scarcely remain seated in her chair, so intent was she upon the little ball as it leapt through the notches of the ever-revolving wheel. However, the third ten-gulden piece followed the first two. Upon this the Grandmother went perfectly crazy. She could no longer sit still, and actually struck the table with her fist when the croupier cried out, "Trente-six," instead of the desiderated zero.

"To listen to him!" fumed the old lady. "When will that accursed zero ever turn up? I cannot breathe until I see it. I believe that that infernal croupier is PURPOSELY keeping it from turning up. Alexis Ivanovitch, stake TWO golden pieces this time. The moment we cease to stake, that cursed zero will come turning up, and we shall get nothing."

"My good Madame—"

"Stake, stake! It is not YOUR money."

Accordingly I staked two ten-gulden pieces. The ball went hopping round the wheel until it began to settle through the notches. Meanwhile the

Grandmother sat as though petrified, with my hand convulsively clutched in hers.

“Zero!” called the croupier.

“There! You see, you see!” cried the old lady, as she turned and faced me, wreathed in smiles. “I told you so! It was the Lord God himself who suggested to me to stake those two coins. Now, how much ought I to receive? Why do they not pay it out to me? Potapitch! Martha! Where are they? What has become of our party? Potapitch, Potapitch!”

“Presently, Madame,” I whispered. “Potapitch is outside, and they would decline to admit him to these rooms. See! You are being paid out your money. Pray take it.” The croupiers were making up a heavy packet of coins, sealed in blue paper, and containing fifty ten gulden pieces, together with an unsealed packet containing another twenty. I handed the whole to the old lady in a money-shovel.

“Faites le jeu, messieurs! Faites le jeu, messieurs! Rien ne va plus,” proclaimed the croupier as once more he invited the company to stake, and prepared to turn the wheel.

“We shall be too late! He is going to spin again! Stake, stake!” The Grandmother was in a perfect fever. “Do not hang back! Be quick!” She seemed almost beside herself, and nudged me as hard as she could.

“Upon what shall I stake, Madame?”

“Upon zero, upon zero! Again upon zero! Stake as much as ever you can. How much have we got? Seventy ten-gulden pieces? We shall not miss them, so stake twenty pieces at a time.”

“Think a moment, Madame. Sometimes zero does not turn up for two hundred rounds in succession. I assure you that you may lose all your capital.”

“You are wrong — utterly wrong. Stake, I tell you! What a chattering tongue you have! I know perfectly well what I am doing.” The old lady was shaking with excitement.

“But the rules do not allow of more than 120 gulden being staked upon zero at a time.”

“How ‘do not allow’? Surely you are wrong? Monsieur, monsieur—” here she nudged the croupier who was sitting on her left, and preparing to spin— “combien zero? Douze? Douze?”

I hastened to translate.

“Oui, Madame,” was the croupier’s polite reply. “No single stake must exceed four thousand florins. That is the regulation.”

“Then there is nothing else for it. We must risk in gulden.”

“Le jeu est fait!” the croupier called. The wheel revolved, and stopped at thirty. We had lost!

“Again, again, again! Stake again!” shouted the old lady. Without attempting to oppose her further, but merely shrugging my shoulders, I placed twelve more ten-gulden pieces upon the table. The wheel whirled around and around, with the Grandmother simply quaking as she watched its revolutions.

“Does she again think that zero is going to be the winning coup?” thought I, as I stared at her in astonishment. Yet an absolute assurance of winning was shining on her face; she looked perfectly convinced that zero was about to be called again. At length the ball dropped off into one of the notches.

“Zero!” cried the croupier.

“Ah!!!” screamed the old lady as she turned to me in a whirl of triumph.

I myself was at heart a gambler. At that moment I became acutely conscious both of that fact and of the fact that my hands and knees were shaking, and that the blood was beating in my brain. Of course this was a rare occasion — an occasion on which zero had turned up no less than three times within a dozen rounds; yet in such an event there was nothing so very surprising, seeing that, only three days ago, I myself had been a witness to zero turning up THREE TIMES IN SUCCESSION, so that one of the players who was recording the coups on paper was moved to remark that for several days past zero had never turned up at all!

With the Grandmother, as with any one who has won a very large sum, the management settled up with great attention and respect, since she was fortunate to have to receive no less than 4200 gulden. Of these gulden the odd 200 were paid her in gold, and the remainder in bank notes.

This time the old lady did not call for Potapitch; for that she was too preoccupied. Though not outwardly shaken by the event (indeed, she seemed perfectly calm), she was trembling inwardly from head to foot. At length, completely absorbed in the game, she burst out:

“Alexis Ivanovitch, did not the croupier just say that 4000 florins were the most that could be staked at any one time? Well, take these 4000, and stake them upon the red.”

To oppose her was useless. Once more the wheel revolved.

“Rouge!” proclaimed the croupier.

Again 4000 florins — in all 8000!

“Give me them,” commanded the Grandmother, “and stake the other 4000 upon the red again.”

I did so.

“Rouge!” proclaimed the croupier.

“Twelve thousand!” cried the old lady. “Hand me the whole lot. Put the gold into this purse here, and count the bank notes. Enough! Let us go home. Wheel my chair away.”

CHAPTER XI

THE chair, with the old lady beaming in it, was wheeled away towards the doors at the further end of the salon, while our party hastened to crowd around her, and to offer her their congratulations. In fact, eccentric as was her conduct, it was also overshadowed by her triumph; with the result that the General no longer feared to be publicly compromised by being seen with such a strange woman, but, smiling in a condescending, cheerfully familiar way, as though he were soothing a child, he offered his greetings to the old lady. At the same time, both he and the rest of the spectators were visibly impressed. Everywhere people kept pointing to the Grandmother, and talking about her. Many people even walked beside her chair, in order to view her the better while, at a little distance, Astley was carrying on a conversation on the subject with two English acquaintances of his. De Griers was simply overflowing with smiles and compliments, and a number of fine ladies were staring at the Grandmother as though she had been something curious.

"Quelle victoire!" exclaimed De Griers.

"Mais, Madame, c'etait du feu!" added Mlle. Blanche with an elusive smile.

"Yes, I have won twelve thousand florins," replied the old lady. "And then there is all this gold. With it the total ought to come to nearly thirteen thousand. How much is that in Russian money? Six thousand roubles, I think?"

However, I calculated that the sum would exceed seven thousand roubles — or, at the present rate of exchange, even eight thousand.

"Eight thousand roubles! What a splendid thing! And to think of you simpletons sitting there and doing nothing! Potapitch! Martha! See what I have won!"

"How DID you do it, Madame?" Martha exclaimed ecstatically. "Eight thousand roubles!"

"And I am going to give you fifty gulden apiece. There they are."

Potapitch and Martha rushed towards her to kiss her hand.

"And to each bearer also I will give a ten-gulden piece. Let them have it out of the gold, Alexis Ivanovitch. But why is this footman bowing to me,

and that other man as well? Are they congratulating me? Well, let them have ten gulden apiece."

"Madame la princesse — Un pauvre expatrie — Malheur continuel — Les princes russes sont si genereux!" said a man who for some time past had been hanging around the old lady's chair — a personage who, dressed in a shabby frockcoat and coloured waistcoat, kept taking off his cap, and smiling pathetically.

"Give him ten gulden," said the Grandmother. "No, give him twenty. Now, enough of that, or I shall never get done with you all. Take a moment's rest, and then carry me away. Prascovia, I mean to buy a new dress for you tomorrow. Yes, and for you too, Mlle. Blanche. Please translate, Prascovia."

"Merci, Madame," replied Mlle. Blanche gratefully as she twisted her face into the mocking smile which usually she kept only for the benefit of De Griers and the General. The latter looked confused, and seemed greatly relieved when we reached the Avenue.

"How surprised Theodosia too will be!" went on the Grandmother (thinking of the General's nursemaid). "She, like yourselves, shall have the price of a new gown. Here, Alexis Ivanovitch! Give that beggar something" (a crooked-backed ragamuffin had approached to stare at us).

"But perhaps he is NOT a beggar — only a rascal," I replied.

"Never mind, never mind. Give him a gulden."

I approached the beggar in question, and handed him the coin. Looking at me in great astonishment, he silently accepted the gulden, while from his person there proceeded a strong smell of liquor.

"Have you never tried your luck, Alexis Ivanovitch?"

"No, Madame."

"Yet just now I could see that you were burning to do so?"

"I do mean to try my luck presently."

"Then stake everything upon zero. You have seen how it ought to be done? How much capital do you possess?"

"Two hundred gulden, Madame."

"Not very much. See here; I will lend you five hundred if you wish. Take this purse of mine." With that she added sharply to the General: "But YOU need not expect to receive any."

This seemed to upset him, but he said nothing, and De Griers contented himself by scowling.

“Que diable!” he whispered to the General. “C’est une terrible vieille.”

“Look! Another beggar, another beggar!” exclaimed the grandmother. “Alexis Ivanovitch, go and give him a gulden.”

As she spoke I saw approaching us a grey-headed old man with a wooden leg — a man who was dressed in a blue frockcoat and carrying a staff. He looked like an old soldier. As soon as I tendered him the coin he fell back a step or two, and eyed me threateningly.

“Was ist der Teufel!” he cried, and appended thereto a round dozen of oaths.

“The man is a perfect fool!” exclaimed the Grandmother, waving her hand. “Move on now, for I am simply famished. When we have lunched we will return to that place.”

“What?” cried I. “You are going to play again?”

“What else do you suppose?” she retorted. “Are you going only to sit here, and grow sour, and let me look at you?”

“Madame,” said De Griers confidentially, “les chances peuvent tourner. Une seule mauvaise chance, et vous perdrez tout — surtout avec votre jeu. C’etait terrible!”

“Oui; vous perdrez absolument,” put in Mlle. Blanche.

“What has that got to do with YOU?” retorted the old lady. “It is not YOUR money that I am going to lose; it is my own. And where is that Mr. Astley of yours?” she added to myself.

“He stayed behind in the Casino.”

“What a pity! He is such a nice sort of man!”

Arriving home, and meeting the landlord on the staircase, the Grandmother called him to her side, and boasted to him of her winnings — thereafter doing the same to Theodosia, and conferring upon her thirty gulden; after which she bid her serve luncheon. The meal over, Theodosia and Martha broke into a joint flood of ecstasy.

“I was watching you all the time, Madame,” quavered Martha, “and I asked Potapitch what mistress was trying to do. And, my word! the heaps and heaps of money that were lying upon the table! Never in my life have I seen so much money. And there were gentlefolk around it, and other gentlefolk sitting down. So, I asked Potapitch where all these gentry had come from; for, thought I, maybe the Holy Mother of God will help our mistress among them. Yes, I prayed for you, Madame, and my heart died within me, so that I kept trembling and trembling. The Lord be with her, I

thought to myself; and in answer to my prayer He has now sent you what He has done! Even yet I tremble — I tremble to think of it all."

"Alexis Ivanovitch," said the old lady, "after luncheon, — that is to say, about four o'clock — get ready to go out with me again. But in the meanwhile, good-bye. Do not forget to call a doctor, for I must take the waters. Now go and get rested a little."

I left the Grandmother's presence in a state of bewilderment.

Vainly I endeavoured to imagine what would become of our party, or what turn the affair would next take. I could perceive that none of the party had yet recovered their presence of mind — least of all the General. The factor of the Grandmother's appearance in place of the hourly expected telegram to announce her death (with, of course, resultant legacies) had so upset the whole scheme of intentions and projects that it was with a decided feeling of apprehension and growing paralysis that the conspirators viewed any future performances of the old lady at roulette. Yet this second factor was not quite so important as the first, since, though the Grandmother had twice declared that she did not intend to give the General any money, that declaration was not a complete ground for the abandonment of hope. Certainly De Griers, who, with the General, was up to the neck in the affair, had not wholly lost courage; and I felt sure that Mlle. Blanche also — Mlle. Blanche who was not only as deeply involved as the other two, but also expectant of becoming Madame General and an important legatee — would not lightly surrender the position, but would use her every resource of coquetry upon the old lady, in order to afford a contrast to the impetuous Polina, who was difficult to understand, and lacked the art of pleasing.

Yet now, when the Grandmother had just performed an astonishing feat at roulette; now, when the old lady's personality had been so clearly and typically revealed as that of a rugged, arrogant woman who was "tombee en enfance"; now, when everything appeared to be lost, — why, now the Grandmother was as merry as a child which plays with thistle-down. "Good Lord!" I thought with, may God forgive me, a most malicious smile, "every ten-gulden piece which the Grandmother staked must have raised a blister on the General's heart, and maddened De Griers, and driven Mlle. de Cominges almost to frenzy with the sight of this spoon dangling before her lips." Another factor is the circumstance that even when, overjoyed at winning, the Grandmother was distributing alms right and left, and taking every one to be a beggar, she again snapped out to the General that he was

not going to be allowed any of her money — which meant that the old lady had quite made up her mind on the point, and was sure of it. Yes, danger loomed ahead.

All these thoughts passed through my mind during the few moments that, having left the old lady's rooms, I was ascending to my own room on the top storey. What most struck me was the fact that, though I had divined the chief, the stoutest, threads which united the various actors in the drama, I had, until now, been ignorant of the methods and secrets of the game. For Polina had never been completely open with me. Although, on occasions, it had happened that involuntarily, as it were, she had revealed to me something of her heart, I had noticed that in most cases — in fact, nearly always — she had either laughed away these revelations, or grown confused, or purposely imparted to them a false guise. Yes, she must have concealed a great deal from me. But, I had a presentiment that now the end of this strained and mysterious situation was approaching. Another stroke, and all would be finished and exposed. Of my own fortunes, interested though I was in the affair, I took no account. I was in the strange position of possessing but two hundred gulden, of being at a loose end, of lacking both a post, the means of subsistence, a shred of hope, and any plans for the future, yet of caring nothing for these things. Had not my mind been so full of Polina, I should have given myself up to the comical piquancy of the impending denouement, and laughed my fill at it. But the thought of Polina was torture to me. That her fate was settled I already had an inkling; yet that was not the thought which was giving me so much uneasiness. What I really wished for was to penetrate her secrets. I wanted her to come to me and say, "I love you," and, if she would not so come, or if to hope that she would ever do so was an unthinkable absurdity — why, then there was nothing else for me to want. Even now I do not know what I am wanting. I feel like a man who has lost his way. I yearn but to be in her presence, and within the circle of her light and splendour — to be there now, and forever, and for the whole of my life. More I do not know. How can I ever bring myself to leave her?

On reaching the third storey of the hotel I experienced a shock. I was just passing the General's suite when something caused me to look round. Out of a door about twenty paces away there was coming Polina! She hesitated for a moment on seeing me, and then beckoned me to her.

"Polina Alexandrovna!"

“Hush! Not so loud.”

“Something startled me just now,” I whispered, “and I looked round, and saw you. Some electrical influence seems to emanate from your form.”

“Take this letter,” she went on with a frown (probably she had not even heard my words, she was so preoccupied), “and hand it personally to Mr. Astley. Go as quickly as ever you can, please. No answer will be required. He himself—” She did not finish her sentence.

“To Mr. Astley?” I asked, in some astonishment.

But she had vanished again.

Aha! So the two were carrying on a correspondence! However, I set off to search for Astley — first at his hotel, and then at the Casino, where I went the round of the salons in vain. At length, vexed, and almost in despair, I was on my way home when I ran across him among a troop of English ladies and gentlemen who had been out for a ride. Beckoning to him to stop, I handed him the letter. We had barely time even to look at one another, but I suspected that it was of set purpose that he restarted his horse so quickly.

Was jealousy, then, gnawing at me? At all events, I felt exceedingly depressed, despite the fact that I had no desire to ascertain what the correspondence was about. To think that HE should be her confidant! “My friend, mine own familiar friend!” passed through my mind. Yet WAS there any love in the matter? “Of course not,” reason whispered to me. But reason goes for little on such occasions. I felt that the matter must be cleared up, for it was becoming unpleasantly complex.

I had scarcely set foot in the hotel when the commissionaire and the landlord (the latter issuing from his room for the purpose) alike informed me that I was being searched for high and low — that three separate messages to ascertain my whereabouts had come down from the General. When I entered his study I was feeling anything but kindly disposed. I found there the General himself, De Griers, and Mlle. Blanche, but not Mlle.’s mother, who was a person whom her reputed daughter used only for show purposes, since in all matters of business the daughter fended for herself, and it is unlikely that the mother knew anything about them.

Some very heated discussion was in progress, and meanwhile the door of the study was open — an unprecedented circumstance. As I approached the portals I could hear loud voices raised, for mingled with the pert, venomous accents of De Griers were Mlle. Blanche’s excited, impudently abusive

tongue and the General's plaintive wail as, apparently, he sought to justify himself in something. But on my appearance every one stopped speaking, and tried to put a better face upon matters. De Griers smoothed his hair, and twisted his angry face into a smile — into the mean, studiedly polite French smile which I so detested; while the downcast, perplexed General assumed an air of dignity — though only in a mechanical way. On the other hand, Mlle. Blanche did not trouble to conceal the wrath that was sparkling in her countenance, but bent her gaze upon me with an air of impatient expectancy. I may remark that hitherto she had treated me with absolute superciliousness, and, so far from answering my salutations, had always ignored them.

"Alexis Ivanovitch," began the General in a tone of affectionate upbraiding, "may I say to you that I find it strange, exceedingly strange, that — In short, your conduct towards myself and my family — In a word, your — er — extremely—"

"Eh! Ce n'est pas ca," interrupted De Griers in a tone of impatience and contempt (evidently he was the ruling spirit of the conclave). "Mon cher monsieur, notre general se trompe. What he means to say is that he warns you — he begs of you most earnestly — not to ruin him. I use the expression because—"

"Why? Why?" I interjected.

"Because you have taken upon yourself to act as guide to this, to this — how shall I express it? — to this old lady, a cette pauvre terrible vieille. But she will only gamble away all that she has — gamble it away like thistledown. You yourself have seen her play. Once she has acquired the taste for gambling, she will never leave the roulette-table, but, of sheer perversity and temper, will stake her all, and lose it. In cases such as hers a gambler can never be torn away from the game; and then — and then—"

"And then," asseverated the General, "you will have ruined my whole family. I and my family are her heirs, for she has no nearer relatives than ourselves. I tell you frankly that my affairs are in great — very great disorder; how much they are so you yourself are partially aware. If she should lose a large sum, or, maybe, her whole fortune, what will become of us — of my children" (here the General exchanged a glance with De Griers) "or of me?" (here he looked at Mlle. Blanche, who turned her head contemptuously away). "Alexis Ivanovitch, I beg of you to save us."

"Tell me, General, how am I to do so? On what footing do I stand here?"

“Refuse to take her about. Simply leave her alone.”

“But she would soon find some one else to take my place?”

“Ce n’est pas ca, ce n’est pas ca,” again interrupted De Griers. “Que diable! Do not leave her alone so much as advise her, persuade her, draw her away. In any case do not let her gamble; find her some counter-attraction.”

“And how am I to do that? If only you would undertake the task, Monsieur de Griers!” I said this last as innocently as possible, but at once saw a rapid glance of excited interrogation pass from Mlle. Blanche to De Griers, while in the face of the latter also there gleamed something which he could not repress.

“Well, at the present moment she would refuse to accept my services,” said he with a gesture. “But if, later—”

Here he gave Mlle. Blanche another glance which was full of meaning; whereupon she advanced towards me with a bewitching smile, and seized and pressed my hands. Devil take it, but how that devilish visage of hers could change! At the present moment it was a visage full of supplication, and as gentle in its expression as that of a smiling, roguish infant. Stealthily, she drew me apart from the rest as though the more completely to separate me from them; and, though no harm came of her doing so — for it was merely a stupid manoeuvre, and no more — I found the situation very unpleasant.

The General hastened to lend her his support.

“Alexis Ivanovitch,” he began, “pray pardon me for having said what I did just now — for having said more than I meant to do. I beg and beseech you, I kiss the hem of your garment, as our Russian saying has it, for you, and only you, can save us. I and Mlle. de Cominges, we all of us beg of you — But you understand, do you not? Surely you understand?” and with his eyes he indicated Mlle. Blanche. Truly he was cutting a pitiful figure!

At this moment three low, respectful knocks sounded at the door; which, on being opened, revealed a chambermaid, with Potapitch behind her — come from the Grandmother to request that I should attend her in her rooms. “She is in a bad humour,” added Potapitch.

The time was half-past three.

“My mistress was unable to sleep,” explained Potapitch; “so, after tossing about for a while, she suddenly rose, called for her chair, and sent me to look for you. She is now in the verandah.”

“Quelle megere!” exclaimed De Griers.

True enough, I found Madame in the hotel verandah — much put about at my delay, for she had been unable to contain herself until four o’clock.

“Lift me up,” she cried to the bearers, and once more we set out for the roulette-salons.

CHAPTER XII

The Grandmother was in an impatient, irritable frame of mind. Without doubt the roulette had turned her head, for she appeared to be indifferent to everything else, and, in general, seemed much distraught. For instance, she asked me no questions about objects en route, except that, when a sumptuous barouche passed us and raised a cloud of dust, she lifted her hand for a moment, and inquired, “What was that?” Yet even then she did not appear to hear my reply, although at times her abstraction was interrupted by sallies and fits of sharp, impatient fidgeting. Again, when I pointed out to her the Baron and Baroness Burmergelm walking to the Casino, she merely looked at them in an absent-minded sort of way, and said with complete indifference, “Ah!” Then, turning sharply to Potapitch and Martha, who were walking behind us, she rapped out:

“Why have YOU attached yourselves to the party? We are not going to take you with us every time. Go home at once.” Then, when the servants had pulled hasty bows and departed, she added to me: “You are all the escort I need.”

At the Casino the Grandmother seemed to be expected, for no time was lost in procuring her former place beside the croupier. It is my opinion that though croupiers seem such ordinary, humdrum officials — men who care nothing whether the bank wins or loses — they are, in reality, anything but indifferent to the bank’s losing, and are given instructions to attract players, and to keep a watch over the bank’s interests; as also, that for such services, these officials are awarded prizes and premiums. At all events, the croupiers of Roulettenberg seemed to look upon the Grandmother as their lawful prey — whereafter there befell what our party had foretold.

It happened thus:

As soon as ever we arrived the Grandmother ordered me to stake twelve ten-gulden pieces in succession upon zero. Once, twice, and thrice I did so, yet zero never turned up.

“Stake again,” said the old lady with an impatient nudge of my elbow, and I obeyed.

“How many times have we lost?” she inquired — actually grinding her teeth in her excitement.

“We have lost 144 ten-gulden pieces,” I replied. “I tell you, Madame, that zero may not turn up until nightfall.”

“Never mind,” she interrupted. “Keep on staking upon zero, and also stake a thousand gulden upon rouge. Here is a banknote with which to do so.”

The red turned up, but zero missed again, and we only got our thousand gulden back.

“But you see, you see,” whispered the old lady. “We have now recovered almost all that we staked. Try zero again. Let us do so another ten times, and then leave off.”

By the fifth round, however, the Grandmother was weary of the scheme.

“To the devil with that zero!” she exclaimed. “Stake four thousand gulden upon the red.”

“But, Madame, that will be so much to venture!” I remonstrated. “Suppose the red should not turn up?” The Grandmother almost struck me in her excitement. Her agitation was rapidly making her quarrelsome. Consequently, there was nothing for it but to stake the whole four thousand gulden as she had directed.

The wheel revolved while the Grandmother sat as bolt upright, and with as proud and quiet a mien, as though she had not the least doubt of winning.

“Zero!” cried the croupier.

At first the old lady failed to understand the situation; but, as soon as she saw the croupier raking in her four thousand gulden, together with everything else that happened to be lying on the table, and recognised that the zero which had been so long turning up, and on which we had lost nearly two hundred ten-gulden pieces, had at length, as though of set purpose, made a sudden reappearance — why, the poor old lady fell to cursing it, and to throwing herself about, and wailing and gesticulating at the company at large. Indeed, some people in our vicinity actually burst out laughing.

“To think that that accursed zero should have turned up NOW!” she sobbed. “The accursed, accursed thing! And, it is all YOUR fault,” she added, rounding upon me in a frenzy. “It was you who persuaded me to cease staking upon it.”

“But, Madame, I only explained the game to you. How am I to answer for every mischance which may occur in it?”

“You and your mischances!” she whispered threateningly. “Go! Away at once!”

“Farewell, then, Madame.” And I turned to depart.

“No — stay,” she put in hastily. “Where are you going to? Why should you leave me? You fool! No, no... stay here. It is I who was the fool. Tell me what I ought to do.”

“I cannot take it upon myself to advise you, for you will only blame me if I do so. Play at your own discretion. Say exactly what you wish staked, and I will stake it.”

“Very well. Stake another four thousand gulden upon the red. Take this banknote to do it with. I have still got twenty thousand roubles in actual cash.”

“But,” I whispered, “such a quantity of money—”

“Never mind. I cannot rest until I have won back my losses. Stake!”

I staked, and we lost.

“Stake again, stake again — eight thousand at a stroke!”

“I cannot, Madame. The largest stake allowed is four thousand gulden.”

“Well, then; stake four thousand.”

This time we won, and the Grandmother recovered herself a little.

“You see, you see!” she exclaimed as she nudged me. “Stake another four thousand.”

I did so, and lost. Again, and yet again, we lost. “Madame, your twelve thousand gulden are now gone,” at length I reported.

“I see they are,” she replied with, as it were, the calmness of despair. “I see they are,” she muttered again as she gazed straight in front of her, like a person lost in thought. “Ah well, I do not mean to rest until I have staked another four thousand.”

“But you have no money with which to do it, Madame. In this satchel I can see only a few five percent bonds and some transfers — no actual cash.”

“And in the purse?”

“A mere trifle.”

“But there is a money-changer’s office here, is there not? They told me I should be able to get any sort of paper security changed!”

“Quite so; to any amount you please. But you will lose on the transaction what would frighten even a Jew.”

“Rubbish! I am DETERMINED to retrieve my losses. Take me away, and call those fools of bearers.”

I wheeled the chair out of the throng, and, the bearers making their appearance, we left the Casino.

“Hurry, hurry!” commanded the Grandmother. “Show me the nearest way to the money-changer’s. Is it far?”

“A couple of steps, Madame.”

At the turning from the square into the Avenue we came face to face with the whole of our party — the General, De Griers, Mlle. Blanche, and her mother. Only Polina and Mr. Astley were absent.

“Well, well, well!” exclaimed the Grandmother. “But we have no time to stop. What do you want? I can’t talk to you here.”

I dropped behind a little, and immediately was pounced upon by De Griers.

“She has lost this morning’s winnings,” I whispered, “and also twelve thousand gulden of her original money. At the present moment we are going to get some bonds changed.”

De Griers stamped his foot with vexation, and hastened to communicate the tidings to the General. Meanwhile we continued to wheel the old lady along.

“Stop her, stop her,” whispered the General in consternation.

“You had better try and stop her yourself,” I returned — also in a whisper.

“My good mother,” he said as he approached her, “ — my good mother, pray let, let—” (his voice was beginning to tremble and sink) “ — let us hire a carriage, and go for a drive. Near here there is an enchanting view to be obtained. We-we-we were just coming to invite you to go and see it.”

“Begone with you and your views!” said the Grandmother angrily as she waved him away.

“And there are trees there, and we could have tea under them,” continued the General — now in utter despair.

“Nous boirons du lait, sur l’herbe fraiche,” added De Griers with the snarl almost of a wild beast.

“Du lait, de l’herbe fraiche” — the idyll, the ideal of the Parisian bourgeois — his whole outlook upon “la nature et la verite”!

“Have done with you and your milk!” cried the old lady. “Go and stuff YOURSELF as much as you like, but my stomach simply recoils from the

idea. What are you stopping for? I have nothing to say to you."

"Here we are, Madame," I announced. "Here is the moneychanger's office."

I entered to get the securities changed, while the Grandmother remained outside in the porch, and the rest waited at a little distance, in doubt as to their best course of action. At length the old lady turned such an angry stare upon them that they departed along the road towards the Casino.

The process of changing involved complicated calculations which soon necessitated my return to the Grandmother for instructions.

"The thieves!" she exclaimed as she clapped her hands together. "Never mind, though. Get the documents cashed — No; send the banker out to me," she added as an afterthought.

"Would one of the clerks do, Madame?"

"Yes, one of the clerks. The thieves!"

The clerk consented to come out when he perceived that he was being asked for by an old lady who was too infirm to walk; after which the Grandmother began to upbraid him at length, and with great vehemence, for his alleged usuriousness, and to bargain with him in a mixture of Russian, French, and German — I acting as interpreter. Meanwhile, the grave-faced official eyed us both, and silently nodded his head. At the Grandmother, in particular, he gazed with a curiosity which almost bordered upon rudeness. At length, too, he smiled.

"Pray recollect yourself!" cried the old lady. "And may my money choke you! Alexis Ivanovitch, tell him that we can easily repair to someone else."

"The clerk says that others will give you even less than he."

Of what the ultimate calculations consisted I do not exactly remember, but at all events they were alarming. Receiving twelve thousand florins in gold, I took also the statement of accounts, and carried it out to the Grandmother.

"Well, well," she said, "I am no accountant. Let us hurry away, hurry away." And she waved the paper aside.

"Neither upon that accursed zero, however, nor upon that equally accursed red do I mean to stake a cent," I muttered to myself as I entered the Casino.

This time I did all I could to persuade the old lady to stake as little as possible — saying that a turn would come in the chances when she would be at liberty to stake more. But she was so impatient that, though at first she

agreed to do as I suggested, nothing could stop her when once she had begun. By way of prelude she won stakes of a hundred and two hundred gulden.

“There you are!” she said as she nudged me. “See what we have won! Surely it would be worth our while to stake four thousand instead of a hundred, for we might win another four thousand, and then — ! Oh, it was YOUR fault before — all your fault!”

I felt greatly put out as I watched her play, but I decided to hold my tongue, and to give her no more advice.

Suddenly De Griers appeared on the scene. It seemed that all this while he and his companions had been standing beside us — though I noticed that Mlle. Blanche had withdrawn a little from the rest, and was engaged in flirting with the Prince. Clearly the General was greatly put out at this. Indeed, he was in a perfect agony of vexation. But Mlle. was careful never to look his way, though he did his best to attract her notice. Poor General! By turns his face blanched and reddened, and he was trembling to such an extent that he could scarcely follow the old lady’s play. At length Mlle. and the Prince took their departure, and the General followed them.

“Madame, Madame,” sounded the honeyed accents of De Griers as he leant over to whisper in the Grandmother’s ear. “That stake will never win. No, no, it is impossible,” he added in Russian with a writhe. “No, no!”

“But why not?” asked the Grandmother, turning round. “Show me what I ought to do.”

Instantly De Griers burst into a babble of French as he advised, jumped about, declared that such and such chances ought to be waited for, and started to make calculations of figures. All this he addressed to me in my capacity as translator — tapping the table the while with his finger, and pointing hither and thither. At length he seized a pencil, and began to reckon sums on paper until he had exhausted the Grandmother’s patience.

“Away with you!” she interrupted. “You talk sheer nonsense, for, though you keep on saying ‘Madame, Madame,’ you haven’t the least notion what ought to be done. Away with you, I say!”

“Mais, Madame,” cooed De Griers — and straightway started afresh with his fussy instructions.

“Stake just ONCE, as he advises,” the Grandmother said to me, “and then we shall see what we shall see. Of course, his stake MIGHT win.”

As a matter of fact, De Grier’s one object was to distract the old lady from staking large sums; wherefore, he now suggested to her that she should stake upon certain numbers, singly and in groups. Consequently, in accordance with his instructions, I staked a ten-gulden piece upon several odd numbers in the first twenty, and five ten-gulden pieces upon certain groups of numbers-groups of from twelve to eighteen, and from eighteen to twenty-four. The total staked amounted to 160 gulden.

The wheel revolved. “Zero!” cried the croupier.

We had lost it all!

“The fool!” cried the old lady as she turned upon De Griers. “You infernal Frenchman, to think that you should advise! Away with you! Though you fuss and fuss, you don’t even know what you’re talking about.”

Deeply offended, De Griers shrugged his shoulders, favoured the Grandmother with a look of contempt, and departed. For some time past he had been feeling ashamed of being seen in such company, and this had proved the last straw.

An hour later we had lost everything in hand.

“Home!” cried the Grandmother.

Not until we had turned into the Avenue did she utter a word; but from that point onwards, until we arrived at the hotel, she kept venting exclamations of “What a fool I am! What a silly old fool I am, to be sure!”

Arrived at the hotel, she called for tea, and then gave orders for her luggage to be packed.

“We are off again,” she announced.

“But whither, Madame?” inquired Martha.

“What business is that of YOURS? Let the cricket stick to its hearth. [The Russian form of “Mind your own business.”] Potapitch, have everything packed, for we are returning to Moscow at once. I have fooled away fifteen thousand roubles.”

“Fifteen thousand roubles, good mistress? My God!” And Potapitch spat upon his hands — probably to show that he was ready to serve her in any way he could.

“Now then, you fool! At once you begin with your weeping and wailing! Be quiet, and pack. Also, run downstairs, and get my hotel bill.”

“The next train leaves at 9:30, Madame,” I interposed, with a view to checking her agitation.

“And what is the time now?”

“Half-past eight.”

“How vexing! But, never mind. Alexis Ivanovitch, I have not a kopeck left; I have but these two bank notes. Please run to the office and get them changed. Otherwise I shall have nothing to travel with.”

Departing on her errand, I returned half an hour later to find the whole party gathered in her rooms. It appeared that the news of her impending departure for Moscow had thrown the conspirators into consternation even greater than her losses had done. For, said they, even if her departure should save her fortune, what will become of the General later? And who is to repay De Griers? Clearly Mlle. Blanche would never consent to wait until the Grandmother was dead, but would at once elope with the Prince or someone else. So they had all gathered together — endeavouring to calm and dissuade the Grandmother. Only Polina was absent. For her part the Grandmother had nothing for the party but abuse.

“Away with you, you rascals!” she was shouting. “What have my affairs to do with you? Why, in particular, do you” — here she indicated De Griers — “come sneaking here with your goat’s beard? And what do YOU” — here she turned to Mlle. Blanche “want of me? What are YOU finicking for?”

“Diantre!” muttered Mlle. under her breath, but her eyes were flashing. Then all at once she burst into a laugh and left the room — crying to the General as she did so: “Elle vivra cent ans!”

“So you have been counting upon my death, have you?” fumed the old lady. “Away with you! Clear them out of the room, Alexis Ivanovitch. What business is it of THEIRS? It is not THEIR money that I have been squandering, but my own.”

The General shrugged his shoulders, bowed, and withdrew, with De Griers behind him.

“Call Prascovia,” commanded the Grandmother, and in five minutes Martha reappeared with Polina, who had been sitting with the children in her own room (having purposely determined not to leave it that day). Her face looked grave and careworn.

“Prascovia,” began the Grandmother, “is what I have just heard through a side wind true — namely, that this fool of a stepfather of yours is going to marry that silly whirligig of a Frenchwoman — that actress, or something worse? Tell me, is it true?”

“I do not know FOR CERTAIN, Grandmamma,” replied Polina; “but from Mlle. Blanche’s account (for she does not appear to think it necessary to conceal anything) I conclude that—”

“You need not say any more,” interrupted the Grandmother energetically. “I understand the situation. I always thought we should get something like this from him, for I always looked upon him as a futile, frivolous fellow who gave himself unconscionable airs on the fact of his being a general (though he only became one because he retired as a colonel). Yes, I know all about the sending of the telegrams to inquire whether ‘the old woman is likely to turn up her toes soon.’ Ah, they were looking for the legacies! Without money that wretched woman (what is her name? — Oh, De Cominges) would never dream of accepting the General and his false teeth — no, not even for him to be her lacquey — since she herself, they say, possesses a pile of money, and lends it on interest, and makes a good thing out of it. However, it is not you, Prascovia, that I am blaming; it was not you who sent those telegrams. Nor, for that matter, do I wish to recall old scores. True, I know that you are a vixen by nature — that you are a wasp which will sting one if one touches it — yet, my heart is sore for you, for I loved your mother, Katerina. Now, will you leave everything here, and come away with me? Otherwise, I do not know what is to become of you, and it is not right that you should continue living with these people. Nay,” she interposed, the moment that Polina attempted to speak, “I have not yet finished. I ask of you nothing in return. My house in Moscow is, as you know, large enough for a palace, and you could occupy a whole floor of it if you liked, and keep away from me for weeks together. Will you come with me or will you not?”

“First of all, let me ask of YOU,” replied Polina, “whether you are intending to depart at once?”

“What? You suppose me to be jesting? I have said that I am going, and I AM going. Today I have squandered fifteen thousand roubles at that accursed roulette of yours, and though, five years ago, I promised the people of a certain suburb of Moscow to build them a stone church in place of a wooden one, I have been fooling away my money here! However, I am going back now to build my church.”

“But what about the waters, Grandmamma? Surely you came here to take the waters?”

“You and your waters! Do not anger me, Prascovia. Surely you are trying to? Say, then: will you, or will you not, come with me?”

“Grandmamma,” Polina replied with deep feeling, “I am very, very grateful to you for the shelter which you have so kindly offered me. Also, to a certain extent you have guessed my position aright, and I am beholden to you to such an extent that it may be that I will come and live with you, and that very soon; yet there are important reasons why — why I cannot make up my mind just yet. If you would let me have, say, a couple of weeks to decide in — ?”

“You mean that you are NOT coming?”

“I mean only that I cannot come just yet. At all events, I could not well leave my little brother and sister here, since, since — if I were to leave them — they would be abandoned altogether. But if, Grandmamma, you would take the little ones AND myself, then, of course, I could come with you, and would do all I could to serve you” (this she said with great earnestness). “Only, without the little ones I CANNOT come.”

“Do not make a fuss” (as a matter of fact Polina never at any time either fussed or wept). “The Great Foster — Father [Translated literally — The Great Poulterer] can find for all his chicks a place. You are not coming without the children? But see here, Prascovia. I wish you well, and nothing but well: yet I have divined the reason why you will not come. Yes, I know all, Prascovia. That Frenchman will never bring you good of any sort.”

Polina coloured hotly, and even I started. “For,” thought I to myself, “every one seems to know about that affair. Or perhaps I am the only one who does not know about it?”

“Now, now! Do not frown,” continued the Grandmother. “But I do not intend to slur things over. You will take care that no harm befalls you, will you not? For you are a girl of sense, and I am sorry for you — I regard you in a different light to the rest of them. And now, please, leave me. Good-bye.”

“But let me stay with you a little longer,” said Polina.

“No,” replied the other; “you need not. Do not bother me, for you and all of them have tired me out.”

Yet when Polina tried to kiss the Grandmother’s hand, the old lady withdrew it, and herself kissed the girl on the cheek. As she passed me, Polina gave me a momentary glance, and then as swiftly averted her eyes.

“And good-bye to you, also, Alexis Ivanovitch. The train starts in an hour’s time, and I think that you must be weary of me. Take these five hundred gulden for yourself.”

“I thank you humbly, Madame, but I am ashamed to—”

“Come, come!” cried the Grandmother so energetically, and with such an air of menace, that I did not dare refuse the money further.

“If, when in Moscow, you have no place where you can lay your head,” she added, “come and see me, and I will give you a recommendation. Now, Potapitch, get things ready.”

I ascended to my room, and lay down upon the bed. A whole hour I must have lain thus, with my head resting upon my hand. So the crisis had come! I needed time for its consideration. To-morrow I would have a talk with Polina. Ah! The Frenchman! So, it was true? But how could it be so? Polina and De Griers! What a combination!

No, it was too improbable. Suddenly I leapt up with the idea of seeking Astley and forcing him to speak. There could be no doubt that he knew more than I did. Astley? Well, he was another problem for me to solve.

Suddenly there came a knock at the door, and I opened it to find Potapitch awaiting me.

“Sir,” he said, “my mistress is asking for you.”

“Indeed? But she is just departing, is she not? The train leaves in ten minutes’ time.”

“She is uneasy, sir; she cannot rest. Come quickly, sir; do not delay.”

I ran downstairs at once. The Grandmother was just being carried out of her rooms into the corridor. In her hands she held a roll of bank-notes.

“Alexis Ivanovitch,” she cried, “walk on ahead, and we will set out again.”

“But whither, Madame?”

“I cannot rest until I have retrieved my losses. March on ahead, and ask me no questions. Play continues until midnight, does it not?”

For a moment I stood stupefied — stood deep in thought; but it was not long before I had made up my mind.

“With your leave, Madame,” I said, “I will not go with you.”

“And why not? What do you mean? Is every one here a stupid good-for-nothing?”

“Pardon me, but I have nothing to reproach myself with. I merely will not go. I merely intend neither to witness nor to join in your play. I also beg

to return you your five hundred gulden. Farewell."

Laying the money upon a little table which the Grandmother's chair happened to be passing, I bowed and withdrew.

"What folly!" the Grandmother shouted after me. "Very well, then. Do not come, and I will find my way alone. Potapitch, you must come with me. Lift up the chair, and carry me along."

I failed to find Mr. Astley, and returned home. It was now growing late — it was past midnight, but I subsequently learnt from Potapitch how the Grandmother's day had ended. She had lost all the money which, earlier in the day, I had got for her paper securities — a sum amounting to about ten thousand roubles. This she did under the direction of the Pole whom, that afternoon, she had dowered with two ten-gulden pieces. But before his arrival on the scene, she had commanded Potapitch to stake for her; until at length she had told him also to go about his business. Upon that the Pole had leapt into the breach. Not only did it happen that he knew the Russian language, but also he could speak a mixture of three different dialects, so that the pair were able to understand one another. Yet the old lady never ceased to abuse him, despite his deferential manner, and to compare him unfavourably with myself (so, at all events, Potapitch declared). "You," the old chamberlain said to me, "treated her as a gentleman should, but he — he robbed her right and left, as I could see with my own eyes. Twice she caught him at it, and rated him soundly. On one occasion she even pulled his hair, so that the bystanders burst out laughing. Yet she lost everything, sir — that is to say, she lost all that you had changed for her. Then we brought her home, and, after asking for some water and saying her prayers, she went to bed. So worn out was she that she fell asleep at once. May God send her dreams of angels! And this is all that foreign travel has done for us! Oh, my own Moscow! For what have we not at home there, in Moscow? Such a garden and flowers as you could never see here, and fresh air and apple-trees coming into blossom, — and a beautiful view to look upon. Ah, but what must she do but go travelling abroad? Alack, alack!"

CHAPTER XIII

Almost a month has passed since I last touched these notes — notes which I began under the influence of impressions at once poignant and disordered. The crisis which I then felt to be approaching has now arrived, but in a form a hundred times more extensive and unexpected than I had looked for. To me it all seems strange, uncouth, and tragic. Certain occurrences have befallen me which border upon the marvellous. At all events, that is how I view them. I view them so in one regard at least. I refer to the whirlpool of events in which, at the time, I was revolving. But the most curious feature of all is my relation to those events, for hitherto I had never clearly understood myself. Yet now the actual crisis has passed away like a dream. Even my passion for Polina is dead. Was it ever so strong and genuine as I thought? If so, what has become of it now? At times I fancy that I must be mad; that somewhere I am sitting in a madhouse; that these events have merely SEEMED to happen; that still they merely SEEM to be happening.

I have been arranging and re-perusing my notes (perhaps for the purpose of convincing myself that I am not in a madhouse). At present I am lonely and alone. Autumn is coming — already it is mellowing the leaves; and, as I sit brooding in this melancholy little town (and how melancholy the little towns of Germany can be!), I find myself taking no thought for the future, but living under the influence of passing moods, and of my recollections of the tempest which recently drew me into its vortex, and then cast me out again. At times I seem still to be caught within that vortex. At times, the tempest seems once more to be gathering, and, as it passes overhead, to be wrapping me in its folds, until I have lost my sense of order and reality, and continue whirling and whirling and whirling around.

Yet, it may be that I shall be able to stop myself from revolving if once I can succeed in rendering myself an exact account of what has happened within the month just past. Somehow I feel drawn towards the pen; on many and many an evening I have had nothing else in the world to do. But, curiously enough, of late I have taken to amusing myself with the works of M. Paul de Kock, which I read in German translations obtained from a wretched local library. These works I cannot abide, yet I read them, and find myself marvelling that I should be doing so. Somehow I seem to be afraid of any SERIOUS book — afraid of permitting any SERIOUS preoccupation

to break the spell of the passing moment. So dear to me is the formless dream of which I have spoken, so dear to me are the impressions which it has left behind it, that I fear to touch the vision with anything new, lest it should dissolve in smoke. But is it so dear to me? Yes, it IS dear to me, and will ever be fresh in my recollections — even forty years hence....

So let me write of it, but only partially, and in a more abridged form than my full impressions might warrant.

First of all, let me conclude the history of the Grandmother. Next day she lost every gulden that she possessed. Things were bound to happen so, for persons of her type who have once entered upon that road descend it with ever-increasing rapidity, even as a sledge descends a toboggan-slide. All day until eight o'clock that evening did she play; and, though I personally did not witness her exploits, I learnt of them later through report.

All that day Potapitch remained in attendance upon her; but the Poles who directed her play she changed more than once. As a beginning she dismissed her Pole of the previous day — the Pole whose hair she had pulled — and took to herself another one; but the latter proved worse even than the former, and incurred dismissal in favour of the first Pole, who, during the time of his unemployment, had nevertheless hovered around the Grandmother's chair, and from time to time obtruded his head over her shoulder. At length the old lady became desperate, for the second Pole, when dismissed, imitated his predecessor by declining to go away; with the result that one Pole remained standing on the right of the victim, and the other on her left; from which vantage points the pair quarrelled, abused each other concerning the stakes and rounds, and exchanged the epithet "laidak" [Rascal] and other Polish terms of endearment. Finally, they effected a mutual reconciliation, and, tossing the money about anyhow, played simply at random. Once more quarrelling, each of them staked money on his own side of the Grandmother's chair (for instance, the one Pole staked upon the red, and the other one upon the black), until they had so confused and browbeaten the old lady that, nearly weeping, she was forced to appeal to the head croupier for protection, and to have the two Poles expelled. No time was lost in this being done, despite the rascals' cries and protestations that the old lady was in their debt, that she had cheated them, and that her general behaviour had been mean and dishonourable. The same evening the unfortunate Potapitch related the story to me with tears complaining that the two men had filled their pockets with

money (he himself had seen them do it) which had been shamelessly pilfered from his mistress. For instance, one Pole demanded of the Grandmother fifty gulden for his trouble, and then staked the money by the side of her stake. She happened to win; whereupon he cried out that the winning stake was his, and hers the loser. As soon as the two Poles had been expelled, Potapitch left the room, and reported to the authorities that the men's pockets were full of gold; and, on the Grandmother also requesting the head croupier to look into the affair, the police made their appearance, and, despite the protests of the Poles (who, indeed, had been caught redhanded), their pockets were turned inside out, and the contents handed over to the Grandmother. In fact, in, view of the circumstance that she lost all day, the croupiers and other authorities of the Casino showed her every attention; and on her fame spreading through the town, visitors of every nationality — even the most knowing of them, the most distinguished — crowded to get a glimpse of "la vieille comtesse russe, tombee en enfance," who had lost "so many millions."

Yet with the money which the authorities restored to her from the pockets of the Poles the Grandmother effected very, very little, for there soon arrived to take his countrymen's place, a third Pole — a man who could speak Russian fluently, was dressed like a gentleman (albeit in lacqueyish fashion), and sported a huge moustache. Though polite enough to the old lady, he took a high hand with the bystanders. In short, he offered himself less as a servant than as an ENTERTAINER. After each round he would turn to the old lady, and swear terrible oaths to the effect that he was a "Polish gentleman of honour" who would scorn to take a kopeck of her money; and, though he repeated these oaths so often that at length she grew alarmed, he had her play in hand, and began to win on her behalf; wherefore, she felt that she could not well get rid of him. An hour later the two Poles who, earlier in the day, had been expelled from the Casino, made a reappearance behind the old lady's chair, and renewed their offers of service — even if it were only to be sent on messages; but from Potapitch I subsequently had it that between these rascals and the said "gentleman of honour" there passed a wink, as well as that the latter put something into their hands. Next, since the Grandmother had not yet lunched — she had scarcely for a moment left her chair — one of the two Poles ran to the restaurant of the Casino, and brought her thence a cup of soup, and afterwards some tea. In fact, BOTH the Poles hastened to perform this

office. Finally, towards the close of the day, when it was clear that the Grandmother was about to play her last bank-note, there could be seen standing behind her chair no fewer than six natives of Poland — persons who, as yet, had been neither audible nor visible; and as soon as ever the old lady played the note in question, they took no further notice of her, but pushed their way past her chair to the table; seized the money, and staked it — shouting and disputing the while, and arguing with the "gentleman of honour" (who also had forgotten the Grandmother's existence), as though he were their equal. Even when the Grandmother had lost her all, and was returning (about eight o'clock) to the hotel, some three or four Poles could not bring themselves to leave her, but went on running beside her chair and volubly protesting that the Grandmother had cheated them, and that she ought to be made to surrender what was not her own. Thus the party arrived at the hotel; whence, presently, the gang of rascals was ejected neck and crop.

According to Potapitch's calculations, the Grandmother lost, that day, a total of ninety thousand roubles, in addition to the money which she had lost the day before. Every paper security which she had brought with her — five percent bonds, internal loan scrip, and what not — she had changed into cash. Also, I could not but marvel at the way in which, for seven or eight hours at a stretch, she sat in that chair of hers, almost never leaving the table. Again, Potapitch told me that there were three occasions on which she really began to win; but that, led on by false hopes, she was unable to tear herself away at the right moment. Every gambler knows how a person may sit a day and a night at cards without ever casting a glance to right or to left.

Meanwhile, that day some other very important events were passing in our hotel. As early as eleven o'clock — that is to say, before the Grandmother had quitted her rooms — the General and De Griers decided upon their last stroke. In other words, on learning that the old lady had changed her mind about departing, and was bent on setting out for the Casino again, the whole of our gang (Polina only excepted) proceeded en masse to her rooms, for the purpose of finally and frankly treating with her. But the General, quaking and greatly apprehensive as to his possible future, overdid things. After half an hour's prayers and entreaties, coupled with a full confession of his debts, and even of his passion for Mlle. Blanche (yes, he had quite lost his head), he suddenly adopted a tone of menace, and

started to rage at the old lady — exclaiming that she was sullying the family honour, that she was making a public scandal of herself, and that she was smirching the fair name of Russia. The upshot was that the Grandmother turned him out of the room with her stick (it was a real stick, too!). Later in the morning he held several consultations with De Griers — the question which occupied him being: Is it in any way possible to make use of the police — to tell them that "this respected, but unfortunate, old lady has gone out of her mind, and is squandering her last kopeck," or something of the kind? In short, is it in any way possible to engineer a species of supervision over, or of restraint upon, the old lady? De Griers, however, shrugged his shoulders at this, and laughed in the General's face, while the old warrior went on chattering volubly, and running up and down his study. Finally De Griers waved his hand, and disappeared from view; and by evening it became known that he had left the hotel, after holding a very secret and important conference with Mlle. Blanche. As for the latter, from early morning she had taken decisive measures, by completely excluding the General from her presence, and bestowing upon him not a glance. Indeed, even when the General pursued her to the Casino, and met her walking arm in arm with the Prince, he (the General) received from her and her mother not the slightest recognition. Nor did the Prince himself bow. The rest of the day Mlle. spent in probing the Prince, and trying to make him declare himself; but in this she made a woeful mistake. The little incident occurred in the evening. Suddenly Mlle. Blanche realised that the Prince had not even a copper to his name, but, on the contrary, was minded to borrow of her money wherewith to play at roulette. In high displeasure she drove him from her presence, and shut herself up in her room.

The same morning I went to see — or, rather, to look for — Mr. Astley, but was unsuccessful in my quest. Neither in his rooms nor in the Casino nor in the Park was he to be found; nor did he, that day, lunch at his hotel as usual. However, at about five o'clock I caught sight of him walking from the railway station to the Hotel d'Angleterre. He seemed to be in a great hurry and much preoccupied, though in his face I could discern no actual traces of worry or perturbation. He held out to me a friendly hand, with his usual ejaculation of "Ah!" but did not check his stride. I turned and walked beside him, but found, somehow, that his answers forbade any putting of definite questions. Moreover, I felt reluctant to speak to him of Polina; nor, for his part, did he ask me any questions concerning her, although, on my

telling him of the Grandmother's exploits, he listened attentively and gravely, and then shrugged his shoulders.

"She is gambling away everything that she has," I remarked.

"Indeed? She arrived at the Casino even before I had taken my departure by train, so I knew she had been playing. If I should have time I will go to the Casino to-night, and take a look at her. The thing interests me."

"Where have you been today?" I asked — surprised at myself for having, as yet, omitted to put to him that question.

"To Frankfort."

"On business?"

"On business."

What more was there to be asked after that? I accompanied him until, as we drew level with the Hotel des Quatre Saisons, he suddenly nodded to me and disappeared. For myself, I returned home, and came to the conclusion that, even had I met him at two o'clock in the afternoon, I should have learnt no more from him than I had done at five o'clock, for the reason that I had no definite question to ask. It was bound to have been so. For me to formulate the query which I really wished to put was a simple impossibility.

Polina spent the whole of that day either in walking about the park with the nurse and children or in sitting in her own room. For a long while past she had avoided the General and had scarcely had a word to say to him (scarcely a word, I mean, on any SERIOUS topic). Yes, that I had noticed. Still, even though I was aware of the position in which the General was placed, it had never occurred to me that he would have any reason to avoid HER, or to trouble her with family explanations. Indeed, when I was returning to the hotel after my conversation with Astley, and chanced to meet Polina and the children, I could see that her face was as calm as though the family disturbances had never touched her. To my salute she responded with a slight bow, and I retired to my room in a very bad humour.

Of course, since the affair with the Burmergelms I had exchanged not a word with Polina, nor had with her any kind of intercourse. Yet I had been at my wits' end, for, as time went on, there was arising in me an ever-seething dissatisfaction. Even if she did not love me she ought not to have trampled upon my feelings, nor to have accepted my confessions with such contempt, seeing that she must have been aware that I loved her (of her own accord she had allowed me to tell her as much). Of course the situation between us had arisen in a curious manner. About two months ago, I had

noticed that she had a desire to make me her friend, her confidant — that she was making trial of me for the purpose; but, for some reason or another, the desired result had never come about, and we had fallen into the present strange relations, which had led me to address her as I had done. At the same time, if my love was distasteful to her, why had she not FORBIDDEN me to speak of it to her?

But she had not so forbidden me. On the contrary, there had been occasions when she had even INVITED me to speak. Of course, this might have been done out of sheer wantonness, for I well knew — I had remarked it only too often — that, after listening to what I had to say, and angering me almost beyond endurance, she loved suddenly to torture me with some fresh outburst of contempt and aloofness! Yet she must have known that I could not live without her. Three days had elapsed since the affair with the Baron, and I could bear the severance no longer. When, that afternoon, I met her near the Casino, my heart almost made me faint, it beat so violently. She too could not live without me, for had she not said that she had NEED of me? Or had that too been spoken in jest?

That she had a secret of some kind there could be no doubt. What she had said to the Grandmother had stabbed me to the heart. On a thousand occasions I had challenged her to be open with me, nor could she have been ignorant that I was ready to give my very life for her. Yet always she had kept me at a distance with that contemptuous air of hers; or else she had demanded of me, in lieu of the life which I offered to lay at her feet, such escapades as I had perpetrated with the Baron. Ah, was it not torture to me, all this? For could it be that her whole world was bound up with the Frenchman? What, too, about Mr. Astley? The affair was inexplicable throughout. My God, what distress it caused me!

Arrived home, I, in a fit of frenzy, indited the following:

“Polina Alexandrovna, I can see that there is approaching us an exposure which will involve you too. For the last time I ask of you — have you, or have you not, any need of my life? If you have, then make such dispositions as you wish, and I shall always be discoverable in my room if required. If you have need of my life, write or send for me.”

I sealed the letter, and dispatched it by the hand of a corridor lacquey, with orders to hand it to the addressee in person. Though I expected no answer, scarcely three minutes had elapsed before the lacquey returned with “the compliments of a certain person.”

Next, about seven o’clock, I was sent for by the General. I found him in his study, apparently preparing to go out again, for his hat and stick were lying on the sofa. When I entered he was standing in the middle of the room — his feet wide apart, and his head bent down. Also, he appeared to be talking to himself. But as soon as ever he saw me at the door he came towards me in such a curious manner that involuntarily I retreated a step, and was for leaving the room; whereupon he seized me by both hands, and, drawing me towards the sofa, and seating himself thereon, he forced me to sit down on a chair opposite him. Then, without letting go of my hands, he exclaimed with quivering lips and a sparkle of tears on his eyelashes:

“Oh, Alexis Ivanovitch! Save me, save me! Have some mercy upon me!”

For a long time I could not make out what he meant, although he kept talking and talking, and constantly repeating to himself, “Have mercy, mercy!” At length, however, I divined that he was expecting me to give him something in the nature of advice — or, rather, that, deserted by every one, and overwhelmed with grief and apprehension, he had bethought himself of my existence, and sent for me to relieve his feelings by talking and talking and talking.

In fact, he was in such a confused and despondent state of mind that, clasping his hands together, he actually went down upon his knees and begged me to go to Mlle. Blanche, and beseech and advise her to return to him, and to accept him in marriage.

“But, General,” I exclaimed, “possibly Mlle. Blanche has scarcely even remarked my existence? What could I do with her?”

It was in vain that I protested, for he could understand nothing that was said to him, Next he started talking about the Grandmother, but always in a disconnected sort of fashion — his one thought being to send for the police.

“In Russia,” said he, suddenly boiling over with indignation, “or in any well-ordered State where there exists a government, old women like my mother are placed under proper guardianship. Yes, my good sir,” he went on, relapsing into a scolding tone as he leapt to his feet and started to pace the room, “do you not know this” (he seemed to be addressing some imaginary auditor in the corner) “ — do you not know this, that in Russia old women like her are subjected to restraint, the devil take them?” Again he threw himself down upon the sofa.

A minute later, though sobbing and almost breathless, he managed to gasp out that Mlle. Blanche had refused to marry him, for the reason that

the Grandmother had turned up in place of a telegram, and it was therefore clear that he had no inheritance to look for. Evidently, he supposed that I had hitherto been in entire ignorance of all this. Again, when I referred to De Griers, the General made a gesture of despair. “He has gone away,” he said, “and everything which I possess is mortgaged to him. I stand stripped to my skin. Even of the money which you brought me from Paris, I know not if seven hundred francs be left. Of course that sum will do to go on with, but, as regards the future, I know nothing, I know nothing.”

“Then how will you pay your hotel bill?” I cried in consternation. “And what shall you do afterwards?”

He looked at me vaguely, but it was clear that he had not understood — perhaps had not even heard — my questions. Then I tried to get him to speak of Polina and the children, but he only returned brief answers of “Yes, yes,” and again started to maunder about the Prince, and the likelihood of the latter marrying Mlle. Blanche. “What on earth am I to do?” he concluded. “What on earth am I to do? Is this not ingratitude? Is it not sheer ingratitude?” And he burst into tears.

Nothing could be done with such a man. Yet to leave him alone was dangerous, for something might happen to him. I withdrew from his rooms for a little while, but warned the nursemaid to keep an eye upon him, as well as exchanged a word with the corridor lacquey (a very talkative fellow), who likewise promised to remain on the look-out.

Hardly had I left the General, when Potapitch approached me with a summons from the Grandmother. It was now eight o’clock, and she had returned from the Casino after finally losing all that she possessed. I found her sitting in her chair — much distressed and evidently fatigued. Presently Martha brought her up a cup of tea and forced her to drink it; yet, even then I could detect in the old lady’s tone and manner a great change.

“Good evening, Alexis Ivanovitch,” she said slowly, with her head drooping. “Pardon me for disturbing you again. Yes, you must pardon an old, old woman like myself, for I have left behind me all that I possess — nearly a hundred thousand roubles! You did quite right in declining to come with me this evening. Now I am without money — without a single groat. But I must not delay a moment; I must leave by the 9:30 train. I have sent for that English friend of yours, and am going to beg of him three thousand francs for a week. Please try and persuade him to think nothing of it, nor yet to refuse me, for I am still a rich woman who possesses three villages and a

couple of mansions. Yes, the money shall be found, for I have not yet squandered EVERYTHING. I tell you this in order that he may have no doubts about — Ah, but here he is! Clearly he is a good fellow."

True enough, Astley had come hot-foot on receiving the Grandmother's appeal. Scarcely stopping even to reflect, and with scarcely a word, he counted out the three thousand francs under a note of hand which she duly signed. Then, his business done, he bowed, and lost no time in taking his departure.

"You too leave me, Alexis Ivanovitch," said the Grandmother. "All my bones are aching, and I still have an hour in which to rest. Do not be hard upon me, old fool that I am. Never again shall I blame young people for being frivolous. I should think it wrong even to blame that unhappy General of yours. Nevertheless, I do not mean to let him have any of my money (which is all that he desires), for the reason that I look upon him as a perfect blockhead, and consider myself, simpleton though I be, at least wiser than HE is. How surely does God visit old age, and punish it for its presumption! Well, good-bye. Martha, come and lift me up."

However, I had a mind to see the old lady off; and, moreover, I was in an expectant frame of mind — somehow I kept thinking that SOMETHING was going to happen; wherefore, I could not rest quietly in my room, but stepped out into the corridor, and then into the Chestnut Avenue for a few minutes' stroll. My letter to Polina had been clear and firm, and in the present crisis, I felt sure, would prove final. I had heard of De Griers' departure, and, however much Polina might reject me as a FRIEND, she might not reject me altogether as a SERVANT. She would need me to fetch and carry for her, and I was ready to do so. How could it have been otherwise?

Towards the hour of the train's departure I hastened to the station, and put the Grandmother into her compartment — she and her party occupying a reserved family saloon.

"Thanks for your disinterested assistance," she said at parting. "Oh, and please remind Prascovia of what I said to her last night. I expect soon to see her."

Then I returned home. As I was passing the door of the General's suite, I met the nursemaid, and inquired after her master. "There is nothing new to report, sir," she replied quietly. Nevertheless I decided to enter, and was just doing so when I halted thunderstruck on the threshold. For before me I

beheld the General and Mlle. Blanche — laughing gaily at one another! — while beside them, on the sofa, there was seated her mother. Clearly the General was almost out of his mind with joy, for he was talking all sorts of nonsense, and bubbling over with a long-drawn, nervous laugh — a laugh which twisted his face into innumerable wrinkles, and caused his eyes almost to disappear.

Afterwards I learnt from Mlle. Blanche herself that, after dismissing the Prince and hearing of the General's tears, she bethought her of going to comfort the old man, and had just arrived for the purpose when I entered. Fortunately, the poor General did not know that his fate had been decided — that Mlle. had long ago packed her trunks in readiness for the first morning train to Paris!

Hesitating a moment on the threshold I changed my mind as to entering, and departed unnoticed. Ascending to my own room, and opening the door, I perceived in the semi-darkness a figure seated on a chair in the corner by the window. The figure did not rise when I entered, so I approached it swiftly, peered at it closely, and felt my heart almost stop beating. The figure was Polina!

CHAPTER XIV

The shock made me utter an exclamation.

“What is the matter? What is the matter?” she asked in a strange voice. She was looking pale, and her eyes were dim.

“What is the matter?” I re-echoed. “Why, the fact that you are HERE!”

“If I am here, I have come with all that I have to bring,” she said. “Such has always been my way, as you shall presently see. Please light a candle.”

I did so; whereupon she rose, approached the table, and laid upon it an open letter.

“Read it,” she added.

“It is De Griers’ handwriting!” I cried as I seized the document. My hands were so tremulous that the lines on the pages danced before my eyes. Although, at this distance of time, I have forgotten the exact phraseology of the missive, I append, if not the precise words, at all events the general sense.

“Mademoiselle,” the document ran, “certain untoward circumstances compel me to depart in haste. Of course, you have of yourself remarked that hitherto I have always refrained from having any final explanation with you, for the reason that I could not well state the whole circumstances; and now to my difficulties the advent of the aged Grandmother, coupled with her subsequent proceedings, has put the final touch. Also, the involved state of my affairs forbids me to write with any finality concerning those hopes of ultimate bliss upon which, for a long while past, I have permitted myself to feed. I regret the past, but at the same time hope that in my conduct you have never been able to detect anything that was unworthy of a gentleman and a man of honour. Having lost, however, almost the whole of my money in debts incurred by your stepfather, I find myself driven to the necessity of saving the remainder; wherefore, I have instructed certain friends of mine in St. Petersburg to arrange for the sale of all the property which has been mortgaged to myself. At the same time, knowing that, in addition, your frivolous stepfather has squandered money which is exclusively yours, I have decided to absolve him from a certain moiety of the mortgages on his property, in order that you may be in a position to recover of him what you have lost, by suing him in legal fashion. I trust, therefore, that, as matters now stand, this action of mine may bring you some advantage. I trust also

that this same action leaves me in the position of having fulfilled every obligation which is incumbent upon a man of honour and refinement. Rest assured that your memory will for ever remain graven in my heart."

"All this is clear enough," I commented. "Surely you did not expect aught else from him?" Somehow I was feeling annoyed.

"I expected nothing at all from him," she replied — quietly enough, to all outward seeming, yet with a note of irritation in her tone. "Long ago I made up my mind on the subject, for I could read his thoughts, and knew what he was thinking. He thought that possibly I should sue him — that one day I might become a nuisance." Here Polina halted for a moment, and stood biting her lips. "So of set purpose I redoubled my contemptuous treatment of him, and waited to see what he would do. If a telegram to say that we had become legatees had arrived from, St. Petersburg, I should have flung at him a quittance for my foolish stepfather's debts, and then dismissed him. For a long time I have hated him. Even in earlier days he was not a man; and now! — Oh, how gladly I could throw those fifty thousand roubles in his face, and spit in it, and then rub the spittle in!"

"But the document returning the fifty-thousand rouble mortgage — has the General got it? If so, possess yourself of it, and send it to De Griers."

"No, no; the General has not got it."

"Just as I expected! Well, what is the General going to do?" Then an idea suddenly occurred to me. "What about the Grandmother?" I asked.

Polina looked at me with impatience and bewilderment.

"What makes you speak of HER?" was her irritable inquiry. "I cannot go and live with her. Nor," she added hotly, "will I go down upon my knees to ANY ONE."

"Why should you?" I cried. "Yet to think that you should have loved De Griers! The villain, the villain! But I will kill him in a duel. Where is he now?"

"In Frankfort, where he will be staying for the next three days."

"Well, bid me do so, and I will go to him by the first train tomorrow," I exclaimed with enthusiasm.

She smiled.

"If you were to do that," she said, "he would merely tell you to be so good as first to return him the fifty thousand francs. What, then, would be the use of having a quarrel with him? You talk sheer nonsense."

I ground my teeth.

“The question,” I went on, “is how to raise the fifty thousand francs. We cannot expect to find them lying about on the floor. Listen. What of Mr. Astley?” Even as I spoke a new and strange idea formed itself in my brain.

Her eyes flashed fire.

“What? YOU YOURSELF wish me to leave you for him?” she cried with a scornful look and a proud smile. Never before had she addressed me thus.

Then her head must have turned dizzy with emotion, for suddenly she seated herself upon the sofa, as though she were powerless any longer to stand.

A flash of lightning seemed to strike me as I stood there. I could scarcely believe my eyes or my ears. She DID love me, then! It WAS to me, and not to Mr. Astley, that she had turned! Although she, an unprotected girl, had come to me in my room — in an hotel room — and had probably compromised herself thereby, I had not understood!

Then a second mad idea flashed into my brain.

“Polina,” I said, “give me but an hour. Wait here just one hour until I return. Yes, you MUST do so. Do you not see what I mean? Just stay here for that time.”

And I rushed from the room without so much as answering her look of inquiry. She called something after me, but I did not return.

Sometimes it happens that the most insane thought, the most impossible conception, will become so fixed in one’s head that at length one believes the thought or the conception to be reality. Moreover, if with the thought or the conception there is combined a strong, a passionate, desire, one will come to look upon the said thought or conception as something fated, inevitable, and foreordained — something bound to happen. Whether by this there is connoted something in the nature of a combination of presentiments, or a great effort of will, or a self-annulment of one’s true expectations, and so on, I do not know; but, at all events that night saw happen to me (a night which I shall never forget) something in the nature of the miraculous. Although the occurrence can easily be explained by arithmetic, I still believe it to have been a miracle. Yet why did this conviction take such a hold upon me at the time, and remain with me ever since? Previously, I had thought of the idea, not as an occurrence which was ever likely to come about, but as something which NEVER could come about.

The time was a quarter past eleven o’clock when I entered the Casino in such a state of hope (though, at the same time, of agitation) as I had never before experienced. In the gaming-rooms there were still a large number of people, but not half as many as had been present in the morning.

At eleven o’clock there usually remained behind only the real, the desperate gamblers — persons for whom, at spas, there existed nothing beyond roulette, and who went thither for that alone. These gamesters took little note of what was going on around them, and were interested in none of the appurtenances of the season, but played from morning till night, and would have been ready to play through the night until dawn had that been possible. As it was, they used to disperse unwillingly when, at midnight, roulette came to an end. Likewise, as soon as ever roulette was drawing to a close and the head croupier had called “Les trois derniers coups,” most of them were ready to stake on the last three rounds all that they had in their pockets — and, for the most part, lost it. For my own part I proceeded towards the table at which the Grandmother had lately sat; and, since the crowd around it was not very large, I soon obtained standing room among the ring of gamblers, while directly in front of me, on the green cloth, I saw marked the word “Passe.”

“Passe” was a row of numbers from 19 to 36 inclusive; while a row of numbers from 1 to 18 inclusive was known as “Manque.” But what had that to do with me? I had not noticed — I had not so much as heard the numbers upon which the previous coup had fallen, and so took no bearings when I began to play, as, in my place, any SYSTEMATIC gambler would have done. No, I merely extended my stock of twenty ten-gulden pieces, and threw them down upon the space “Passe” which happened to be confronting me.

“Vingt-deux!” called the croupier.

I had won! I staked upon the same again — both my original stake and my winnings.

“Trente-et-un!” called the croupier.

Again I had won, and was now in possession of eighty ten-gulden pieces. Next, I moved the whole eighty on to twelve middle numbers (a stake which, if successful, would bring me in a triple profit, but also involved a risk of two chances to one). The wheel revolved, and stopped at twenty-four. Upon this I was paid out notes and gold until I had by my side a total sum of two thousand gulden.

It was as in a fever that I moved the pile, en bloc, on to the red. Then suddenly I came to myself (though that was the only time during the evening's play when fear cast its cold spell over me, and showed itself in a trembling of the hands and knees). For with horror I had realised that I MUST win, and that upon that stake there depended all my life.

"Rouge!" called the croupier. I drew a long breath, and hot shivers went coursing over my body. I was paid out my winnings in bank-notes — amounting, of course, to a total of four thousand florins, eight hundred gulden (I could still calculate the amounts).

After that, I remember, I again staked two thousand florins upon twelve middle numbers, and lost. Again I staked the whole of my gold, with eight hundred gulden, in notes, and lost. Then madness seemed to come upon me, and seizing my last two thousand florins, I staked them upon twelve of the first numbers — wholly by chance, and at random, and without any sort of reckoning. Upon my doing so there followed a moment of suspense only comparable to that which Madame Blanchard must have experienced when, in Paris, she was descending earthwards from a balloon.

"Quatre!" called the croupier.

Once more, with the addition of my original stake, I was in possession of six thousand florins! Once more I looked around me like a conqueror — once more I feared nothing as I threw down four thousand of these florins upon the black. The croupiers glanced around them, and exchanged a few words; the bystanders murmured expectantly.

The black turned up. After that I do not exactly remember either my calculations or the order of my stakings. I only remember that, as in a dream, I won in one round sixteen thousand florins; that in the three following rounds, I lost twelve thousand; that I moved the remainder (four thousand) on to "Passe" (though quite unconscious of what I was doing — I was merely waiting, as it were, mechanically, and without reflection, for something) and won; and that, finally, four times in succession I lost. Yes, I can remember raking in money by thousands — but most frequently on the twelve, middle numbers, to which I constantly adhered, and which kept appearing in a sort of regular order — first, three or four times running, and then, after an interval of a couple of rounds, in another break of three or four appearances. Sometimes, this astonishing regularity manifested itself in patches; a thing to upset all the calculations of note — taking gamblers who

play with a pencil and a memorandum book in their hands Fortune perpetrates some terrible jests at roulette!

Since my entry not more than half an hour could have elapsed. Suddenly a croupier informed me that I had, won thirty thousand florins, as well as that, since the latter was the limit for which, at any one time, the bank could make itself responsible, roulette at that table must close for the night. Accordingly, I caught up my pile of gold, stuffed it into my pocket, and, grasping my sheaf of bank-notes, moved to the table in an adjoining salon where a second game of roulette was in progress. The crowd followed me in a body, and cleared a place for me at the table; after which, I proceeded to stake as before — that is to say, at random and without calculating. What saved me from ruin I do not know.

Of course there were times when fragmentary reckonings DID come flashing into my brain. For instance, there were times when I attached myself for a while to certain figures and coups — though always leaving them, again before long, without knowing what I was doing.

In fact, I cannot have been in possession of all my faculties, for I can remember the croupiers correcting my play more than once, owing to my having made mistakes of the gravest order. My brows were damp with sweat, and my hands were shaking. Also, Poles came around me to proffer their services, but I heeded none of them. Nor did my luck fail me now. Suddenly, there arose around me a loud din of talking and laughter. “Bravo, bravo!” was the general shout, and some people even clapped their hands. I had raked in thirty thousand florins, and again the bank had had to close for the night!

“Go away now, go away now,” a voice whispered to me on my right. The person who had spoken to me was a certain Jew of Frankfurt — a man who had been standing beside me the whole while, and occasionally helping me in my play.

“Yes, for God’s sake go,” whispered a second voice in my left ear. Glancing around, I perceived that the second voice had come from a modestly, plainly dressed lady of rather less than thirty — a woman whose face, though pale and sickly-looking, bore also very evident traces of former beauty. At the moment, I was stuffing the crumpled bank-notes into my pockets and collecting all the gold that was left on the table. Seizing up my last note for five hundred gulden, I contrived to insinuate it, unperceived, into the hand of the pale lady. An overpowering impulse had

made me do so, and I remember how her thin little fingers pressed mine in token of her lively gratitude. The whole affair was the work of a moment.

Then, collecting my belongings, I crossed to where trente et quarante was being played — a game which could boast of a more aristocratic public, and was played with cards instead of with a wheel. At this diversion the bank made itself responsible for a hundred thousand thalers as the limit, but the highest stake allowable was, as in roulette, four thousand florins. Although I knew nothing of the game — and I scarcely knew the stakes, except those on black and red — I joined the ring of players, while the rest of the crowd massed itself around me. At this distance of time I cannot remember whether I ever gave a thought to Polina; I seemed only to be conscious of a vague pleasure in seizing and raking in the bank-notes which kept massing themselves in a pile before me.

But, as ever, fortune seemed to be at my back. As though of set purpose, there came to my aid a circumstance which not infrequently repeats itself in gaming. The circumstance is that not infrequently luck attaches itself to, say, the red, and does not leave it for a space of say, ten, or even fifteen, rounds in succession. Three days ago I had heard that, during the previous week there had been a run of twenty-two coups on the red — an occurrence never before known at roulette — so that men spoke of it with astonishment. Naturally enough, many deserted the red after a dozen rounds, and practically no one could now be found to stake upon it. Yet upon the black also — the antithesis of the red — no experienced gambler would stake anything, for the reason that every practised player knows the meaning of “capricious fortune.” That is to say, after the sixteenth (or so) success of the red, one would think that the seventeenth coup would inevitably fall upon the black; wherefore, novices would be apt to back the latter in the seventeenth round, and even to double or treble their stakes upon it — only, in the end, to lose.

Yet some whim or other led me, on remarking that the red had come up consecutively for seven times, to attach myself to that colour. Probably this was mostly due to self-conceit, for I wanted to astonish the bystanders with the riskiness of my play. Also, I remember that — oh, strange sensation! — I suddenly, and without any challenge from my own presumption, became obsessed with a DESIRE to take risks. If the spirit has passed through a great many sensations, possibly it can no longer be sated with them, but grows more excited, and demands more sensations, and stronger and

stronger ones, until at length it falls exhausted. Certainly, if the rules of the game had permitted even of my staking fifty thousand florins at a time, I should have staked them. All of a sudden I heard exclamations arising that the whole thing was a marvel, since the red was turning up for the fourteenth time!

"Monsieur a gagne cent mille florins," a voice exclaimed beside me.

I awoke to my senses. What? I had won a hundred thousand florins? If so, what more did I need to win? I grasped the banknotes, stuffed them into my pockets, raked in the gold without counting it, and started to leave the Casino. As I passed through the salons people smiled to see my bulging pockets and unsteady gait, for the weight which I was carrying must have amounted to half a pood! Several hands I saw stretched out in my direction, and as I passed I filled them with all the money that I could grasp in my own. At length two Jews stopped me near the exit.

"You are a bold young fellow," one said, "but mind you depart early tomorrow — as early as you can — for if you do not you will lose everything that you have won."

But I did not heed them. The Avenue was so dark that it was barely possible to distinguish one's hand before one's face, while the distance to the hotel was half a verst or so; but I feared neither pickpockets nor highwaymen. Indeed, never since my boyhood have I done that. Also, I cannot remember what I thought about on the way. I only felt a sort of fearful pleasure — the pleasure of success, of conquest, of power (how can I best express it?). Likewise, before me there flitted the image of Polina; and I kept remembering, and reminding myself, that it was to HER I was going, that it was in HER presence I should soon be standing, that it was SHE to whom I should soon be able to relate and show everything. Scarcely once did I recall what she had lately said to me, or the reason why I had left her, or all those varied sensations which I had been experiencing a bare hour and a half ago. No, those sensations seemed to be things of the past, to be things which had righted themselves and grown old, to be things concerning which we needed to trouble ourselves no longer, since, for us, life was about to begin anew. Yet I had just reached the end of the Avenue when there DID come upon me a fear of being robbed or murdered. With each step the fear increased until, in my terror, I almost started to run. Suddenly, as I issued from the Avenue, there burst upon me the lights of the hotel, sparkling with a myriad lamps! Yes, thanks be to God, I had reached home!

Running up to my room, I flung open the door of it. Polina was still on the sofa, with a lighted candle in front of her, and her hands clasped. As I entered she stared at me in astonishment (for, at the moment, I must have presented a strange spectacle). All I did, however, was to halt before her, and fling upon the table my burden of wealth.

CHAPTER XV

I remember, too, how, without moving from her place, or changing her attitude, she gazed into my face.

"I have won two hundred thousand francs!" cried I as I pulled out my last sheaf of bank-notes. The pile of paper currency occupied the whole table. I could not withdraw my eyes from it. Consequently, for a moment or two Polina escaped my mind. Then I set myself to arrange the pile in order, and to sort the notes, and to mass the gold in a separate heap. That done, I left everything where it lay, and proceeded to pace the room with rapid strides as I lost myself in thought. Then I darted to the table once more, and began to recount the money; until all of a sudden, as though I had remembered something, I rushed to the door, and closed and double-locked it. Finally I came to a meditative halt before my little trunk.

"Shall I put the money there until tomorrow?" I asked, turning sharply round to Polina as the recollection of her returned to me.

She was still in her old place — still making not a sound. Yet her eyes had followed every one of my movements. Somehow in her face there was a strange expression — an expression which I did not like. I think that I shall not be wrong if I say that it indicated sheer hatred.

Impulsively I approached her.

"Polina," I said, "here are twenty-five thousand florins — fifty thousand francs, or more. Take them, and tomorrow throw them in De Griers' face."

She returned no answer.

"Or, if you should prefer," I continued, "let me take them to him myself tomorrow — yes, early tomorrow morning. Shall I?"

Then all at once she burst out laughing, and laughed for a long while. With astonishment and a feeling of offence I gazed at her. Her laughter was too like the derisive merriment which she had so often indulged in of late — merriment which had broken forth always at the time of my most passionate explanations. At length she ceased, and frowned at me from under her eyebrows.

"I am NOT going to take your money," she said contemptuously.

"Why not?" I cried. "Why not, Polina?"

"Because I am not in the habit of receiving money for nothing."

“But I am offering it to you as a FRIEND in the same way I would offer you my very life.”

Upon this she threw me a long, questioning glance, as though she were seeking to probe me to the depths.

“You are giving too much for me,” she remarked with a smile. “The beloved of De Griers is not worth fifty thousand francs.”

“Oh Polina, how can you speak so?” I exclaimed reproachfully. “Am I De Griers?”

“You?” she cried with her eyes suddenly flashing. “Why, I HATE you! Yes, yes, I HATE you! I love you no more than I do De Griers.”

Then she buried her face in her hands, and relapsed into hysterics. I darted to her side. Somehow I had an intuition of something having happened to her which had nothing to do with myself. She was like a person temporarily insane.

“Buy me, would you, would you? Would you buy me for fifty thousand francs as De Griers did?” she gasped between her convulsive sobs.

I clasped her in my arms, kissed her hands and feet, and fell upon my knees before her.

Presently the hysterical fit passed away, and, laying her hands upon my shoulders, she gazed for a while into my face, as though trying to read it — something I said to her, but it was clear that she did not hear it. Her face looked so dark and despondent that I began to fear for her reason. At length she drew me towards herself — a trustful smile playing over her features; and then, as suddenly, she pushed me away again as she eyed me dimly.

Finally she threw herself upon me in an embrace.

“You love me?” she said. “DO you? — you who were willing even to quarrel with the Baron at my bidding?”

Then she laughed — laughed as though something dear, but laughable, had recurred to her memory. Yes, she laughed and wept at the same time. What was I to do? I was like a man in a fever. I remember that she began to say something to me — though WHAT I do not know, since she spoke with a feverish lisp, as though she were trying to tell me something very quickly. At intervals, too, she would break off into the smile which I was beginning to dread. “No, no!” she kept repeating. “YOU are my dear one; YOU are the man I trust.” Again she laid her hands upon my shoulders, and again she gazed at me as she reiterated: “You love me, you love me? Will you ALWAYS love me?” I could not take my eyes off her. Never before had I

seen her in this mood of humility and affection. True, the mood was the outcome of hysteria; but — ! All of a sudden she noticed my ardent gaze, and smiled slightly. The next moment, for no apparent reason, she began to talk of Astley.

She continued talking and talking about him, but I could not make out all she said — more particularly when she was endeavouring to tell me of something or other which had happened recently. On the whole, she appeared to be laughing at Astley, for she kept repeating that he was waiting for her, and did I know whether, even at that moment, he was not standing beneath the window? "Yes, yes, he is there," she said. "Open the window, and see if he is not." She pushed me in that direction; yet, no sooner did I make a movement to obey her behest than she burst into laughter, and I remained beside her, and she embraced me.

"Shall we go away tomorrow?" presently she asked, as though some disturbing thought had recurred to her recollection. "How would it be if we were to try and overtake Grandmamma? I think we should do so at Berlin. And what think you she would have to say to us when we caught her up, and her eyes first lit upon us? What, too, about Mr. Astley? HE would not leap from the Shlangenberg for my sake! No! Of that I am very sure!" — and she laughed. "Do you know where he is going next year? He says he intends to go to the North Pole for scientific investigations, and has invited me to go with him! Ha, ha, ha! He also says that we Russians know nothing, can do nothing, without European help. But he is a good fellow all the same. For instance, he does not blame the General in the matter, but declares that Mlle. Blanche — that love — But no; I do not know, I do not know." She stopped suddenly, as though she had said her say, and was feeling bewildered. "What poor creatures these people are. How sorry I am for them, and for Grandmamma! But when are you going to kill De Griers? Surely you do not intend actually to murder him? You fool! Do you suppose that I should ALLOW you to fight De Griers? Nor shall you kill the Baron." Here she burst out laughing. "How absurd you looked when you were talking to the Burmergelms! I was watching you all the time — watching you from where I was sitting. And how unwilling you were to go when I sent you! Oh, how I laughed and laughed!"

Then she kissed and embraced me again; again she pressed her face to mine with tender passion. Yet I neither saw nor heard her, for my head was in a whirl....

It must have been about seven o’clock in the morning when I awoke. Daylight had come, and Polina was sitting by my side — a strange expression on her face, as though she had seen a vision and was unable to collect her thoughts. She too had just awoken, and was now staring at the money on the table. My head ached; it felt heavy. I attempted to take Polina’s hand, but she pushed me from her, and leapt from the sofa. The dawn was full of mist, for rain had fallen, yet she moved to the window, opened it, and, leaning her elbows upon the window-sill, thrust out her head and shoulders to take the air. In this position did she remain for several minutes, without ever looking round at me, or listening to what I was saying. Into my head there came the uneasy thought: What is to happen now? How is it all to end? Suddenly Polina rose from the window, approached the table, and, looking at me with an expression of infinite aversion, said with lips which quivered with anger:

“Well? Are you going to hand me over my fifty thousand francs?”

“Polina, you say that AGAIN, AGAIN?” I exclaimed.

“You have changed your mind, then? Ha, ha, ha! You are sorry you ever promised them?”

On the table where, the previous night, I had counted the money there still was lying the packet of twenty five thousand florins. I handed it to her.

“The francs are mine, then, are they? They are mine?” she inquired viciously as she balanced the money in her hands.

“Yes; they have ALWAYS been yours,” I said.

“Then TAKE your fifty thousand francs!” and she hurled them full in my face. The packet burst as she did so, and the floor became strewed with bank-notes. The instant that the deed was done she rushed from the room.

At that moment she cannot have been in her right mind; yet, what was the cause of her temporary aberration I cannot say. For a month past she had been unwell. Yet what had brought about this PRESENT condition of mind, above all things, this outburst? Had it come of wounded pride? Had it come of despair over her decision to come to me? Had it come of the fact that, presuming too much on my good fortune, I had seemed to be intending to desert her (even as De Griers had done) when once I had given her the fifty thousand francs? But, on my honour, I had never cherished any such intention. What was at fault, I think, was her own pride, which kept urging her not to trust me, but, rather, to insult me — even though she had not realised the fact. In her eyes I corresponded to De Griers, and therefore had

been condemned for a fault not wholly my own. Her mood of late had been a sort of delirium, a sort of light-headedness — that I knew full well; yet, never had I sufficiently taken it into consideration. Perhaps she would not pardon me now? Ah, but this was THE PRESENT. What about the future? Her delirium and sickness were not likely to make her forget what she had done in bringing me De Griers' letter. No, she must have known what she was doing when she brought it.

Somehow I contrived to stuff the pile of notes and gold under the bed, to cover them over, and then to leave the room some ten minutes after Polina. I felt sure that she had returned to her own room; wherefore, I intended quietly to follow her, and to ask the nursemaid aid who opened the door how her mistress was. Judge, therefore, of my surprise when, meeting the domestic on the stairs, she informed me that Polina had not yet returned, and that she (the domestic) was at that moment on her way to my room in quest of her!

"Mlle. left me but ten minutes ago," I said. "What can have become of her?" The nursemaid looked at me reproachfully.

Already sundry rumours were flying about the hotel. Both in the office of the commissionaire and in that of the landlord it was whispered that, at seven o'clock that morning, the Fraulein had left the hotel, and set off, despite the rain, in the direction of the Hotel d'Angleterre. From words and hints let fall I could see that the fact of Polina having spent the night in my room was now public property. Also, sundry rumours were circulating concerning the General's family affairs. It was known that last night he had gone out of his mind, and paraded the hotel in tears; also, that the old lady who had arrived was his mother, and that she had come from Russia on purpose to forbid her son's marriage with Mlle. de Cominges, as well as to cut him out of her will if he should disobey her; also that, because he had disobeyed her, she had squandered all her money at roulette, in order to have nothing more to leave to him. "Oh, these Russians!" exclaimed the landlord, with an angry toss of the head, while the bystanders laughed and the clerk betook himself to his accounts. Also, every one had learnt about my winnings; Karl, the corridor lacquey, was the first to congratulate me. But with these folk I had nothing to do. My business was to set off at full speed to the Hotel d'Angleterre.

As yet it was early for Mr. Astley to receive visitors; but, as soon as he learnt that it was I who had arrived, he came out into the corridor to meet

me, and stood looking at me in silence with his steel-grey eyes as he waited to hear what I had to say. I inquired after Polina.

“She is ill,” he replied, still looking at me with his direct, unwavering glance.

“And she is in your rooms.”

“Yes, she is in my rooms.”

“Then you are minded to keep her there?”

“Yes, I am minded to keep her there.”

“But, Mr. Astley, that will raise a scandal. It ought not to be allowed. Besides, she is very ill. Perhaps you had not remarked that?”

“Yes, I have. It was I who told you about it. Had she not been ill, she would not have gone and spent the night with you.”

“Then you know all about it?”

“Yes; for last night she was to have accompanied me to the house of a relative of mine. Unfortunately, being ill, she made a mistake, and went to your rooms instead.”

“Indeed? Then I wish you joy, Mr. Astley. Apropos, you have reminded me of something. Were you beneath my window last night? Every moment Mlle. Polina kept telling me to open the window and see if you were there; after which she always smiled.”

“Indeed? No, I was not there; but I was waiting in the corridor, and walking about the hotel.”

“She ought to see a doctor, you know, Mr. Astley.”

“Yes, she ought. I have sent for one, and, if she dies, I shall hold you responsible.”

This surprised me.

“Pardon me,” I replied, “but what do you mean?”

“Never mind. Tell me if it is true that, last night, you won two hundred thousand thalers?”

“No; I won a hundred thousand florins.”

“Good heavens! Then I suppose you will be off to Paris this morning?

“Why?”

“Because all Russians who have grown rich go to Paris,” explained Astley, as though he had read the fact in a book.

“But what could I do in Paris in summer time? — I LOVE her, Mr. Astley! Surely you know that?”

“Indeed? I am sure that you do NOT. Moreover, if you were to stay here, you would lose everything that you possess, and have nothing left with which to pay your expenses in Paris. Well, good-bye now. I feel sure that today will see you gone from here.”

“Good-bye. But I am NOT going to Paris. Likewise — pardon me — what is to become of this family? I mean that the affair of the General and Mlle. Polina will soon be all over the town.”

“I daresay; yet, I hardly suppose that that will break the General’s heart. Moreover, Mlle. Polina has a perfect right to live where she chooses. In short, we may say that, as a family, this family has ceased to exist.”

I departed, and found myself smiling at the Englishman’s strange assurance that I should soon be leaving for Paris. “I suppose he means to shoot me in a duel, should Polina die. Yes, that is what he intends to do.” Now, although I was honestly sorry for Polina, it is a fact that, from the moment when, the previous night, I had approached the gaming-table, and begun to rake in the packets of bank-notes, my love for her had entered upon a new plane. Yes, I can say that now; although, at the time, I was barely conscious of it. Was I, then, at heart a gambler? Did I, after all, love Polina not so very much? No, no! As God is my witness, I loved her! Even when I was returning home from Mr. Astley’s my suffering was genuine, and my self-reproach sincere. But presently I was to go through an exceedingly strange and ugly experience.

I was proceeding to the General’s rooms when I heard a door near me open, and a voice call me by name. It was Mlle.’s mother, the Widow de Cominges who was inviting me, in her daughter’s name, to enter.

I did so; whereupon, I heard a laugh and a little cry proceed from the bedroom (the pair occupied a suite of two apartments), where Mlle. Blanche was just arising.

“Ah, c’est lui! Viens, donc, bete! Is it true that you have won a mountain of gold and silver? J’aimerais mieux l’or.”

“Yes,” I replied with a smile.

“How much?”

“A hundred thousand florins.”

“Bibi, comme tu es bete! Come in here, for I can’t hear you where you are now. Nous ferons bombance, n’est-ce pas?”

Entering her room, I found her lolling under a pink satin coverlet, and revealing a pair of swarthy, wonderfully healthy shoulders — shoulders

such as one sees in dreams — shoulders covered over with a white cambric nightgown which, trimmed with lace, stood out, in striking relief, against the darkness of her skin.

“Mon fils, as-tu du coeur?” she cried when she saw me, and then giggled. Her laugh had always been a very cheerful one, and at times it even sounded sincere.

“Tout autre—” I began, paraphrasing Corneille.

“See here,” she prattled on. “Please search for my stockings, and help me to dress. Aussi, si tu n’es pas trop bete je te prends a Paris. I am just off, let me tell you.”

“This moment?”

“In half an hour.”

True enough, everything stood ready-packed — trunks, portmanteaux, and all. Coffee had long been served.

“Eh bien, tu verras Paris. Dis donc, qu’est-ce que c’est qu’un ‘utchitel’? Tu etais bien bete quand tu etais ‘utchitel.’ Where are my stockings? Please help me to dress.”

And she lifted up a really ravishing foot — small, swarthy, and not misshapen like the majority of feet which look dainty only in bottines. I laughed, and started to draw on to the foot a silk stocking, while Mlle. Blanche sat on the edge of the bed and chattered.

“Eh bien, que feras-tu si je te prends avec moi? First of all I must have fifty thousand francs, and you shall give them to me at Frankfurt. Then we will go on to Paris, where we will live together, et je te ferai voir des etoiles en plein jour. Yes, you shall see such women as your eyes have never lit upon.”

“Stop a moment. If I were to give you those fifty thousand francs, what should I have left for myself?”

“Another hundred thousand francs, please to remember. Besides, I could live with you in your rooms for a month, or even for two; or even for longer. But it would not take us more than two months to get through fifty thousand francs; for, look you, je suis bonne enfante, et tu verras des etoiles, you may be sure.”

“What? You mean to say that we should spend the whole in two months?”

“Certainly. Does that surprise you very much? Ah, vil esclave! Why, one month of that life would be better than all your previous existence. One

month — et apres, le deluge! Mais tu ne peux comprendre. Va! Away, away! You are not worth it. — Ah, que fais-tu?”

For, while drawing on the other stocking, I had felt constrained to kiss her. Immediately she shrunk back, kicked me in the face with her toes, and turned me neck and prop out of the room.

“Eh bien, mon ‘utchitel’,” she called after me, “je t’attends, si tu veux. I start in a quarter of an hour’s time.”

I returned to my own room with my head in a whirl. It was not my fault that Polina had thrown a packet in my face, and preferred Mr. Astley to myself. A few bank-notes were still fluttering about the floor, and I picked them up. At that moment the door opened, and the landlord appeared — a person who, until now, had never bestowed upon me so much as a glance. He had come to know if I would prefer to move to a lower floor — to a suite which had just been tenanted by Count V.

For a moment I reflected.

“No!” I shouted. “My account, please, for in ten minutes I shall be gone.”

“To Paris, to Paris!” I added to myself. “Every man of birth must make her acquaintance.”

Within a quarter of an hour all three of us were seated in a family compartment — Mlle. Blanche, the Widow de Cominges, and myself. Mlle. kept laughing hysterically as she looked at me, and Madame re-echoed her; but I did not feel so cheerful. My life had broken in two, and yesterday had infected me with a habit of staking my all upon a card. Although it might be that I had failed to win my stake, that I had lost my senses, that I desired nothing better, I felt that the scene was to be changed only FOR A TIME. “Within a month from now,” I kept thinking to myself, “I shall be back again in Roulettenberg; and THEN I mean to have it out with you, Mr. Astley!” Yes, as now I look back at things, I remember that I felt greatly depressed, despite the absurd gigglings of the egregious Blanche.

“What is the matter with you? How dull you are!” she cried at length as she interrupted her laughter to take me seriously to task.

“Come, come! We are going to spend your two hundred thousand francs for you, et tu seras heureux comme un petit roi. I myself will tie your tie for you, and introduce you to Hortense. And when we have spent your money you shall return here, and break the bank again. What did those two Jews tell you? — that the thing most needed is daring, and that you possess it?

Consequently, this is not the first time that you will be hurrying to Paris with money in your pocket. Quant ... moi, je veux cinquante mille francs de rente, et alors."

"But what about the General?" I interrupted.

"The General? You know well enough that at about this hour every day he goes to buy me a bouquet. On this occasion, I took care to tell him that he must hunt for the choicest of flowers; and when he returns home, the poor fellow will find the bird flown. Possibly he may take wing in pursuit — ha, ha, ha! And if so, I shall not be sorry, for he could be useful to me in Paris, and Mr. Astley will pay his debts here."

In this manner did I depart for the Gay City.

CHAPTER XVI

Of Paris what am I to say? The whole proceeding was a delirium, a madness. I spent a little over three weeks there, and, during that time, saw my hundred thousand francs come to an end. I speak only of the ONE hundred thousand francs, for the other hundred thousand I gave to Mlle. Blanche in pure cash. That is to say, I handed her fifty thousand francs at Frankfurt, and, three days later (in Paris), advanced her another fifty thousand on note of hand. Nevertheless, a week had not elapsed ere she came to me for more money. “Et les cent mille francs qui nous restent,” she added, “tu les mangeras avec moi, mon utchitel.” Yes, she always called me her “utchitel.” A person more economical, grasping, and mean than Mlle. Blanche one could not imagine. But this was only as regards HER OWN money. MY hundred thousand francs (as she explained to me later) she needed to set up her establishment in Paris, “so that once and for all I may be on a decent footing, and proof against any stones which may be thrown at me — at all events for a long time to come.” Nevertheless, I saw nothing of those hundred thousand francs, for my own purse (which she inspected daily) never managed to amass in it more than a hundred francs at a time; and, generally the sum did not reach even that figure.

“What do you want with money?” she would say to me with air of absolute simplicity; and I never disputed the point. Nevertheless, though she fitted out her flat very badly with the money, the fact did not prevent her from saying when, later, she was showing me over the rooms of her new abode: “See what care and taste can do with the most wretched of means!” However, her “wretchedness” had cost fifty thousand francs, while with the remaining fifty thousand she purchased a carriage and horses.

Also, we gave a couple of balls — evening parties attended by Hortense and Lisette and Cleopatre, who were women remarkable both for the number of their liaisons and (though only in some cases) for their good looks. At these reunions I had to play the part of host — to meet and entertain fat mercantile parvenus who were impossible by reason of their rudeness and braggadocio, colonels of various kinds, hungry authors, and journalistic hacks — all of whom disported themselves in fashionable tailcoats and pale yellow gloves, and displayed such an aggregate of conceit and gasconade as would be unthinkable even in St. Petersburg — which is

saying a great deal! They used to try to make fun of me, but I would console myself by drinking champagne and then lolling in a retiring-room. Nevertheless, I found it deadly work. “C’est un utchitel,” Blanche would say of me, “qui a gagne deux cent mille francs, and but for me, would have had not a notion how to spend them. Presently he will have to return to his tutoring. Does any one know of a vacant post? You know, one must do something for him.”

I had the more frequent recourse to champagne in that I constantly felt depressed and bored, owing to the fact that I was living in the most bourgeois commercial milieu imaginable — a milieu wherein every sou was counted and grudged. Indeed, two weeks had not elapsed before I perceived that Blanche had no real affection for me, even though she dressed me in elegant clothes, and herself tied my tie each day. In short, she utterly despised me. But that caused me no concern. Blase and inert, I spent my evenings generally at the Chateau des Fleurs, where I would get fuddled and then dance the cancan (which, in that establishment, was a very indecent performance) with eclat. At length, the time came when Blanche had drained my purse dry. She had conceived an idea that, during the term of our residence together, it would be well if I were always to walk behind her with a paper and pencil, in order to jot down exactly what she spent, what she had saved, what she was paying out, and what she was laying by. Well, of course I could not fail to be aware that this would entail a battle over every ten francs; so, although for every possible objection that I might make she had prepared a suitable answer, she soon saw that I made no objections, and therefore, had to start disputes herself. That is to say, she would burst out into tirades which were met only with silence as I lolled on a sofa and stared fixedly at the ceiling. This greatly surprised her. At first she imagined that it was due merely to the fact that I was a fool, “un utchitel”; wherefore she would break off her harangue in the belief that, being too stupid to understand, I was a hopeless case. Then she would leave the room, but return ten minutes later to resume the contest. This continued throughout her squandering of my money — a squandering altogether out of proportion to our means. An example is the way in which she changed her first pair of horses for a pair which cost sixteen thousand francs.

“Bibi,” she said on the latter occasion as she approached me, “surely you are not angry?”

“No-o-o: I am merely tired,” was my reply as I pushed her from me. This seemed to her so curious that straightway she seated herself by my side.

“You see,” she went on, “I decided to spend so much upon these horses only because I can easily sell them again. They would go at any time for TWENTY thousand francs.”

“Yes, yes. They are splendid horses, and you have got a splendid turn-out. I am quite content. Let me hear no more of the matter.”

“Then you are not angry?”

“No. Why should I be? You are wise to provide yourself with what you need, for it will all come in handy in the future. Yes, I quite see the necessity of your establishing yourself on a good basis, for without it you will never earn your million. My hundred thousand francs I look upon merely as a beginning — as a mere drop in the bucket.”

Blanche, who had by no means expected such declarations from me, but, rather, an uproar and protests, was rather taken aback.

“Well, well, what a man you are!” she exclaimed. “Mais tu as l’esprit pour comprendre. Sais-tu, mon garcon, although you are a tutor, you ought to have been born a prince. Are you not sorry that your money should be going so quickly?”

“No. The quicker it goes the better.”

“Mais — sais-tu-mais dis donc, are you really rich? Mais sais-tu, you have too much contempt for money. Qu’est-ce que tu feras apres, dis donc?”

“Apres I shall go to Homburg, and win another hundred thousand francs.”

“Oui, oui, c’est ca, c’est magnifique! Ah, I know you will win them, and bring them to me when you have done so. Dis donc — you will end by making me love you. Since you are what you are, I mean to love you all the time, and never to be unfaithful to you. You see, I have not loved you before parce que je croyais que tu n’es qu’un utchitel (quelque chose comme un lacquais, n’est-ce pas?) Yet all the time I have been true to you, parce que je suis bonne fille.”

“You lie!” I interrupted. “Did I not see you, the other day, with Albert — with that black-jowled officer?”

“Oh, oh! Mais tu es—”

“Yes, you are lying right enough. But what makes you suppose that I should be angry? Rubbish! Il faut que jeunesse se passe. Even if that officer

were here now, I should refrain from putting him out of the room if I thought you really cared for him. Only, mind you, do not give him any of my money. You hear?”

“You say, do you, that you would not be angry? Mais tu es un vrai philosophe, sais-tu? Oui, un vrai philosophe! Eh bien, je t’aimerai, je t’aimerai. Tu verras-tu seras content.”

True enough, from that time onward she seemed to attach herself only to me, and in this manner we spent our last ten days together. The promised “etoiles” I did not see, but in other respects she, to a certain extent, kept her word. Moreover, she introduced me to Hortense, who was a remarkable woman in her way, and known among us as Therese Philosophe.

But I need not enlarge further, for to do so would require a story to itself, and entail a colouring which I am loth to impart to the present narrative. The point is that with all my faculties I desired the episode to come to an end as speedily as possible. Unfortunately, our hundred thousand francs lasted us, as I have said, for very nearly a month — which greatly surprised me. At all events, Blanche bought herself articles to the tune of eighty thousand francs, and the rest sufficed just to meet our expenses of living. Towards the close of the affair, Blanche grew almost frank with me (at least, she scarcely lied to me at all) — declaring, amongst other things, that none of the debts which she had been obliged to incur were going to fall upon my head. “I have purposely refrained from making you responsible for my bills or borrowings,” she said, “for the reason that I am sorry for you. Any other woman in my place would have done so, and have let you go to prison. See, then, how much I love you, and how good-hearted I am! Think, too, what this accursed marriage with the General is going to cost me!”

True enough, the marriage took place. It did so at the close of our month together, and I am bound to suppose that it was upon the ceremony that the last remnants of my money were spent. With it the episode — that is to say, my sojourn with the Frenchwoman — came to an end, and I formally retired from the scene.

It happened thus: A week after we had taken up our abode in Paris there arrived thither the General. He came straight to see us, and thenceforward lived with us practically as our guest, though he had a flat of his own as well. Blanche met him with merry badinage and laughter, and even threw her arms around him. In fact, she managed it so that he had to follow everywhere in her train — whether when promenading on the Boulevards,

or when driving, or when going to the theatre, or when paying calls; and this use which she made of him quite satisfied the General. Still of imposing appearance and presence, as well as of fair height, he had a dyed moustache and whiskers (he had formerly been in the cuirassiers), and a handsome, though a somewhat wrinkled, face. Also, his manners were excellent, and he could carry a frockcoat well — the more so since, in Paris, he took to wearing his orders. To promenade the Boulevards with such a man was not only a thing possible, but also, so to speak, a thing advisable, and with this programme the good but foolish General had not a fault to find. The truth is that he had never counted upon this programme when he came to Paris to seek us out. On that occasion he had made his appearance nearly shaking with terror, for he had supposed that Blanche would at once raise an outcry, and have him put from the door; wherefore, he was the more enraptured at the turn that things had taken, and spent the month in a state of senseless ecstasy. Already I had learnt that, after our unexpected departure from Roulettenberg, he had had a sort of a fit — that he had fallen into a swoon, and spent a week in a species of garrulous delirium. Doctors had been summoned to him, but he had broken away from them, and suddenly taken a train to Paris. Of course Blanche's reception of him had acted as the best of all possible cures, but for long enough he carried the marks of his affliction, despite his present condition of rapture and delight. To think clearly, or even to engage in any serious conversation, had now become impossible for him; he could only ejaculate after each word "Hm!" and then nod his head in confirmation. Sometimes, also, he would laugh, but only in a nervous, hysterical sort of a fashion; while at other times he would sit for hours looking as black as night, with his heavy eyebrows knitted. Of much that went on he remained wholly oblivious, for he grew extremely absent-minded, and took to talking to himself. Only Blanche could awake him to any semblance of life. His fits of depression and moodiness in corners always meant either that he had not seen her for some while, or that she had gone out without taking him with her, or that she had omitted to caress him before departing. When in this condition, he would refuse to say what he wanted — nor had he the least idea that he was thus sulking and moping. Next, after remaining in this condition for an hour or two (this I remarked on two occasions when Blanche had gone out for the day — probably to see Albert), he would begin to look about him, and to grow uneasy, and to hurry about with an air as though he had suddenly remembered something, and

must try and find it; after which, not perceiving the object of his search, nor succeeding in recalling what that object had been, he would as suddenly relapse into oblivion, and continue so until the reappearance of Blanche — merry, wanton, half-dressed, and laughing her strident laugh as she approached to pet him, and even to kiss him (though the latter reward he seldom received). Once, he was so overjoyed at her doing so that he burst into tears. Even I myself was surprised.

From the first moment of his arrival in Paris, Blanche set herself to plead with me on his behalf; and at such times she even rose to heights of eloquence — saying that it was for ME she had abandoned him, though she had almost become his betrothed and promised to become so; that it was for HER sake he had deserted his family; that, having been in his service, I ought to remember the fact, and to feel ashamed. To all this I would say nothing, however much she chattered on; until at length I would burst out laughing, and the incident would come to an end (at first, as I have said, she had thought me a fool, but since she had come to deem me a man of sense and sensibility). In short, I had the happiness of calling her better nature into play; for though, at first, I had not deemed her so, she was, in reality, a kind-hearted woman after her own fashion. “You are good and clever,” she said to me towards the finish, “and my one regret is that you are also so wrong-headed. You will NEVER be a rich man!”

“Un vrai Russe — un Kalmuk” she usually called me.

Several times she sent me to give the General an airing in the streets, even as she might have done with a lacquey and her spaniel; but, I preferred to take him to the theatre, to the Bal Mabille, and to restaurants. For this purpose she usually allowed me some money, though the General had a little of his own, and enjoyed taking out his purse before strangers. Once I had to use actual force to prevent him from buying a phaeton at a price of seven hundred francs, after a vehicle had caught his fancy in the Palais Royal as seeming to be a desirable present for Blanche. What could SHE have done with a seven-hundred-franc phaeton? — and the General possessed in the world but a thousand francs! The origin even of those francs I could never determine, but imagined them to have emanated from Mr. Astley — the more so since the latter had paid the family’s hotel bill. As for what view the General took of myself, I think that he never divined the footing on which I stood with Blanche. True, he had heard, in a dim sort of way, that I had won a good deal of money; but more probably he

supposed me to be acting as secretary — or even as a kind of servant — to his inamorata. At all events, he continued to address me, in his old haughty style, as my superior. At times he even took it upon himself to scold me. One morning in particular, he started to sneer at me over our matutinal coffee. Though not a man prone to take offence, he suddenly, and for some reason of which to this day I am ignorant, fell out with me. Of course even he himself did not know the reason. To put things shortly, he began a speech which had neither beginning nor ending, and cried out, a batons rompus, that I was a boy whom he would soon put to rights — and so forth, and so forth. Yet no one could understand what he was saying, and at length Blanche exploded in a burst of laughter. Finally something appeased him, and he was taken out for his walk. More than once, however, I noticed that his depression was growing upon him; that he seemed to be feeling the want of somebody or something; that, despite Blanche's presence, he was missing some person in particular. Twice, on these occasions, did he plunge into a conversation with me, though he could not make himself intelligible, and only went on rambling about the service, his late wife, his home, and his property. Every now and then, also, some particular word would please him; whereupon he would repeat it a hundred times in the day — even though the word happened to express neither his thoughts nor his feelings. Again, I would try to get him to talk about his children, but always he cut me short in his old snappish way, and passed to another subject. "Yes, yes — my children," was all that I could extract from him. "Yes, you are right in what you have said about them." Only once did he disclose his real feelings. That was when we were taking him to the theatre, and suddenly he exclaimed: "My unfortunate children! Yes, sir, they are unfortunate children." Once, too, when I chanced to mention Polina, he grew quite bitter against her. "She is an ungrateful woman!" he exclaimed. "She is a bad and ungrateful woman! She has broken up a family. If there were laws here, I would have her impaled. Yes, I would." As for De Griers, the General would not have his name mentioned. "He has ruined me," he would say. "He has robbed me, and cut my throat. For two years he was a perfect nightmare to me. For months at a time he never left me in my dreams. Do not speak of him again."

It was now clear to me that Blanche and he were on the point of coming to terms; yet, true to my usual custom, I said nothing. At length, Blanche

took the initiative in explaining matters. She did so a week before we parted.

“Il a du chance,” she prattled, “for the Grandmother is now REALLY ill, and therefore, bound to die. Mr. Astley has just sent a telegram to say so, and you will agree with me that the General is likely to be her heir. Even if he should not be so, he will not come amiss, since, in the first place, he has his pension, and, in the second place, he will be content to live in a back room; whereas I shall be Madame General, and get into a good circle of society” (she was always thinking of this) “and become a Russian chatelaine. Yes, I shall have a mansion of my own, and peasants, and a million of money at my back.”

“But, suppose he should prove jealous? He might demand all sorts of things, you know. Do you follow me?”

“Oh, dear no! How ridiculous that would be of him! Besides, I have taken measures to prevent it. You need not be alarmed. That is to say, I have induced him to sign notes of hand in Albert’s name. Consequently, at any time I could get him punished. Isn’t he ridiculous?”

“Very well, then. Marry him.”

And, in truth, she did so — though the marriage was a family one only, and involved no pomp or ceremony. In fact, she invited to the nuptials none but Albert and a few other friends. Hortense, Cleopatre, and the rest she kept firmly at a distance. As for the bridegroom, he took a great interest in his new position. Blanche herself tied his tie, and Blanche herself pomaded him — with the result that, in his frockcoat and white waistcoat, he looked quite comme il faut.

“Il est, pourtant, TRES comme il faut,” Blanche remarked when she issued from his room, as though the idea that he was “TRES comme il faut” had impressed even her. For myself, I had so little knowledge of the minor details of the affair, and took part in it so much as a supine spectator, that I have forgotten most of what passed on this occasion. I only remember that Blanche and the Widow figured at it, not as “de Cominges,” but as “du Placet.” Why they had hitherto been “de Cominges” I do not know — I only know that this entirely satisfied the General, that he liked the name “du Placet” even better than he had liked the name “de Cominges.” On the morning of the wedding, he paced the salon in his gala attire and kept repeating to himself with an air of great gravity and importance: “Mlle. Blanche du Placet! Mlle. Blanche du Placet, du Placet!” He beamed with

satisfaction as he did so. Both in the church and at the wedding breakfast he remained not only pleased and contented, but even proud. She too underwent a change, for now she assumed an air of added dignity.

“I must behave altogether differently,” she confided to me with a serious air. “Yet, mark you, there is a tiresome circumstance of which I had never before thought — which is, how best to pronounce my new family name. Zagorianski, Zagozianski, Madame la Generale de Sago, Madame la Generale de Fourteen Consonants — oh these infernal Russian names! The LAST of them would be the best to use, don’t you think?”

At length the time had come for us to part, and Blanche, the egregious Blanche, shed real tears as she took her leave of me. “Tu etais bon enfant” she said with a sob. “Je te croyais bete et tu en avais l’air, but it suited you.” Then, having given me a final handshake, she exclaimed, “Attends!”; whereafter, running into her boudoir, she brought me thence two thousand-franc notes. I could scarcely believe my eyes! “They may come in handy for you,” she explained, “for, though you are a very learned tutor, you are a very stupid man. More than two thousand francs, however, I am not going to give you, for the reason that, if I did so, you would gamble them all away. Now good-bye. Nous serons toujours bons amis, and if you win again, do not fail to come to me, et tu seras heureux.”

I myself had still five hundred francs left, as well as a watch worth a thousand francs, a few diamond studs, and so on. Consequently, I could subsist for quite a length of time without particularly bestirring myself. Purposely I have taken up my abode where I am now partly to pull myself together, and partly to wait for Mr. Astley, who, I have learnt, will soon be here for a day or so on business. Yes, I know that, and then — and then I shall go to Homburg. But to Roulettenberg I shall not go until next year, for they say it is bad to try one’s luck twice in succession at a table. Moreover, Homburg is where the best play is carried on.

CHAPTER XVII

It is a year and eight months since I last looked at these notes of mine. I do so now only because, being overwhelmed with depression, I wish to distract my mind by reading them through at random. I left them off at the point where I was just going to Homburg. My God, with what a light heart (comparatively speaking) did I write the concluding lines! — though it may be not so much with a light heart, as with a measure of self-confidence and unquenchable hope. At that time had I any doubts of myself? Yet behold me now. Scarcely a year and a half have passed, yet I am in a worse position than the meanest beggar. But what is a beggar? A fig for beggary! I have ruined myself — that is all. Nor is there anything with which I can compare myself; there is no moral which it would be of any use for you to read to me. At the present moment nothing could well be more incongruous than a moral. Oh, you self-satisfied persons who, in your unctuous pride, are forever ready to mouth your maxims — if only you knew how fully I myself comprehend the sordidness of my present state, you would not trouble to wag your tongues at me! What could you say to me that I do not already know? Well, wherein lies my difficulty? It lies in the fact that by a single turn of a roulette wheel everything for me, has become changed. Yet, had things befallen otherwise, these moralists would have been among the first (yes, I feel persuaded of it) to approach me with friendly jests and congratulations. Yes, they would never have turned from me as they are doing now! A fig for all of them! What am I? I am zero — nothing. What shall I be tomorrow? I may be risen from the dead, and have begun life anew. For still, I may discover the man in myself, if only my manhood has not become utterly shattered.

I went, I say, to Homburg, but afterwards went also to Roulettenberg, as well as to Spa and Baden; in which latter place, for a time, I acted as valet to a certain rascal of a Privy Councillor, by name Heintze, who until lately was also my master here. Yes, for five months I lived my life with lacqueys! That was just after I had come out of Roulettenberg prison, where I had lain for a small debt which I owed. Out of that prison I was bailed by — by whom? By Mr. Astley? By Polina? I do not know. At all events, the debt was paid to the tune of two hundred thalers, and I sallied forth a free man. But what was I to do with myself? In my dilemma I had recourse to this

Heintze, who was a young scapegrace, and the sort of man who could speak and write three languages. At first I acted as his secretary, at a salary of thirty gulden a month, but afterwards I became his lacquey, for the reason that he could not afford to keep a secretary — only an unpaid servant. I had nothing else to turn to, so I remained with him, and allowed myself to become his flunkey. But by stinting myself in meat and drink I saved, during my five months of service, some seventy gulden; and one evening, when we were at Baden, I told him that I wished to resign my post, and then hastened to betake myself to roulette.

Oh, how my heart beat as I did so! No, it was not the money that I valued — what I wanted was to make all this mob of Heintzes, hotel proprietors, and fine ladies of Baden talk about me, recount my story, wonder at me, extol my doings, and worship my winnings. True, these were childish fancies and aspirations, but who knows but that I might meet Polina, and be able to tell her everything, and see her look of surprise at the fact that I had overcome so many adverse strokes of fortune. No, I had no desire for money for its own sake, for I was perfectly well aware that I should only squander it upon some new Blanche, and spend another three weeks in Paris after buying a pair of horses which had cost sixteen thousand francs. No, I never believed myself to be a hoarder; in fact, I knew only too well that I was a spendthrift. And already, with a sort of fear, a sort of sinking in my heart, I could hear the cries of the croupiers— “Trente et un, rouge, impair et passe,”

“Quarte, noir, pair et manque.” How greedily I gazed upon the gaming-table, with its scattered louis d’or, ten-gulden pieces, and thalers; upon the streams of gold as they issued from the croupier’s hands, and piled themselves up into heaps of gold scintillating as fire; upon the ell — long rolls of silver lying around the croupier. Even at a distance of two rooms I could hear the chink of that money — so much so that I nearly fell into convulsions.

Ah, the evening when I took those seventy gulden to the gaming table was a memorable one for me. I began by staking ten gulden upon passe. For passe I had always had a sort of predilection, yet I lost my stake upon it. This left me with sixty gulden in silver. After a moment’s thought I selected zero — beginning by staking five gulden at a time. Twice I lost, but the third round suddenly brought up the desired coup. I could almost have died with joy as I received my one hundred and seventy-five gulden. Indeed, I

have been less pleased when, in former times, I have won a hundred thousand gulden. Losing no time, I staked another hundred gulden upon the red, and won; two hundred upon the red, and won; four hundred upon the black, and won; eight hundred upon manque, and won. Thus, with the addition of the remainder of my original capital, I found myself possessed, within five minutes, of seventeen hundred gulden. Ah, at such moments one forgets both oneself and one's former failures! This I had gained by risking my very life. I had dared so to risk, and behold, again I was a member of mankind!

I went and hired a room, I shut myself up in it, and sat counting my money until three o'clock in the morning. To think that when I awoke on the morrow, I was no lacquey! I decided to leave at once for Homburg. There I should neither have to serve as a footman nor to lie in prison. Half an hour before starting, I went and ventured a couple of stakes — no more; with the result that, in all, I lost fifteen hundred florins. Nevertheless, I proceeded to Homburg, and have now been there for a month.

Of course, I am living in constant trepidation, playing for the smallest of stakes, and always looking out for something — calculating, standing whole days by the gaming-tables to watch the play — even seeing that play in my dreams — yet seeming, the while, to be in some way stiffening, to be growing caked, as it were, in mire. But I must conclude my notes, which I finish under the impression of a recent encounter with Mr. Astley. I had not seen him since we parted at Roulettenberg, and now we met quite by accident. At the time I was walking in the public gardens, and meditating upon the fact that not only had I still some fifty olden in my possession, but also I had fully paid up my hotel bill three days ago. Consequently, I was in a position to try my luck again at roulette; and if I won anything I should be able to continue my play, whereas, if I lost what I now possessed, I should once more have to accept a lacquey's place, provided that, in the alternative, I failed to discover a Russian family which stood in need of a tutor. Plunged in these reflections, I started on my daily walk through the Park and forest towards a neighbouring principality. Sometimes, on such occasions, I spent four hours on the way, and would return to Homburg tired and hungry; but, on this particular occasion, I had scarcely left the gardens for the Park when I caught sight of Astley seated on a bench. As soon as he perceived me, he called me by name, and I went and sat down beside him; but, on noticing

that he seemed a little stiff in his manner, I hastened to moderate the expression of joy which the sight of him had called forth.

"YOU here?" he said. "Well, I had an idea that I should meet you. Do not trouble to tell me anything, for I know all — yes, all. In fact, your whole life during the past twenty months lies within my knowledge."

"How closely you watch the doings of your old friends!" I replied. "That does you infinite credit. But stop a moment. You have reminded me of something. Was it you who bailed me out of Roulettenberg prison when I was lying there for a debt of two hundred gulden? SOMEONE did so."

"Oh dear no! — though I knew all the time that you were lying there."

"Perhaps you could tell me who DID bail me out?"

"No; I am afraid I could not."

"What a strange thing! For I know no Russians at all here, so it cannot have been a Russian who befriended me. In Russia we Orthodox folk DO go bail for one another, but in this case I thought it must have been done by some English stranger who was not conversant with the ways of the country."

Mr. Astley seemed to listen to me with a sort of surprise. Evidently he had expected to see me looking more crushed and broken than I was.

"Well," he said — not very pleasantly, "I am none the less glad to find that you retain your old independence of spirit, as well as your buoyancy."

"Which means that you are vexed at not having found me more abased and humiliated than I am?" I retorted with a smile.

Astley was not quick to understand this, but presently did so and laughed.

"Your remarks please me as they always did," he continued. "In those words I see the clever, triumphant, and, above all things, cynical friend of former days. Only Russians have the faculty of combining within themselves so many opposite qualities. Yes, most men love to see their best friend in abasement; for generally it is on such abasement that friendship is founded. All thinking persons know that ancient truth. Yet, on the present occasion, I assure you, I am sincerely glad to see that you are NOT cast down. Tell me, are you never going to give up gambling?"

"Damn the gambling! Yes, I should certainly have given it up, were it not that—"

"That you are losing? I thought so. You need not tell me any more. I know how things stand, for you have said that last in despair, and therefore,

truthfully. Have you no other employment than gambling?”

“No; none whatever.”

Astley gave me a searching glance. At that time it was ages since I had last looked at a paper or turned the pages of a book.

“You are growing blase,” he said. “You have not only renounced life, with its interests and social ties, but the duties of a citizen and a man; you have not only renounced the friends whom I know you to have had, and every aim in life but that of winning money; but you have also renounced your memory. Though I can remember you in the strong, ardent period of your life, I feel persuaded that you have now forgotten every better feeling of that period — that your present dreams and aspirations of subsistence do not rise above pair, impair rouge, noir, the twelve middle numbers, and so forth.”

“Enough, Mr. Astley!” I cried with some irritation — almost in anger. “Kindly do not recall to me any more recollections, for I can remember things for myself. Only for a time have I put them out of my head. Only until I shall have rehabilitated myself, am I keeping my memory dulled. When that hour shall come, you will see me arise from the dead.”

“Then you will have to be here another ten years,” he replied. “Should I then be alive, I will remind you — here, on this very bench — of what I have just said. In fact, I will bet you a wager that I shall do so.”

“Say no more,” I interrupted impatiently. “And to show you that I have not wholly forgotten the past, may I enquire where Mlle. Polina is? If it was not you who bailed me out of prison, it must have been she. Yet never have I heard a word concerning her.”

“No, I do not think it was she. At the present moment she is in Switzerland, and you will do me a favour by ceasing to ask me these questions about her.” Astley said this with a firm, and even an angry, air.

“Which means that she has dealt you a serious wound?” I burst out with an involuntary sneer.

“Mlle. Polina,” he continued, “Is the best of all possible living beings; but, I repeat, that I shall thank you to cease questioning me about her. You never really knew her, and her name on your lips is an offence to my moral feeling.”

“Indeed? On what subject, then, have I a better right to speak to you than on this? With it are bound up all your recollections and mine. However, do not be alarmed: I have no wish to probe too far into your private, your

secret affairs. My interest in Mlle. Polina does not extend beyond her outward circumstances and surroundings. About them you could tell me in two words."

"Well, on condition that the matter shall end there, I will tell you that for a long time Mlle. Polina was ill, and still is so. My mother and sister entertained her for a while at their home in the north of England, and thereafter Mlle. Polina's grandmother (you remember the mad old woman?) died, and left Mlle. Polina a personal legacy of seven thousand pounds sterling. That was about six months ago, and now Mlle. is travelling with my sister's family — my sister having since married. Mlle.'s little brother and sister also benefited by the Grandmother's will, and are now being educated in London. As for the General, he died in Paris last month, of a stroke. Mlle. Blanche did well by him, for she succeeded in having transferred to herself all that he received from the Grandmother. That, I think, concludes all that I have to tell."

"And De Griers? Is he too travelling in Switzerland?"

"No; nor do I know where he is. Also I warn you once more that you had better avoid such hints and ignoble suppositions; otherwise you will assuredly have to reckon with me."

"What? In spite of our old friendship?"

"Yes, in spite of our old friendship."

"Then I beg your pardon a thousand times, Mr. Astley. I meant nothing offensive to Mlle. Polina, for I have nothing of which to accuse her. Moreover, the question of there being anything between this Frenchman and this Russian lady is not one which you and I need discuss, nor even attempt to understand."

"If," replied Astley, "you do not care to hear their names coupled together, may I ask you what you mean by the expressions 'this Frenchman,"this Russian lady,' and 'there being anything between them'? Why do you call them so particularly a 'Frenchman' and a 'Russian lady'?"

"Ah, I see you are interested, Mr. Astley. But it is a long, long story, and calls for a lengthy preface. At the same time, the question is an important one, however ridiculous it may seem at the first glance. A Frenchman, Mr. Astley, is merely a fine figure of a man. With this you, as a Britisher, may not agree. With it I also, as a Russian, may not agree — out of envy. Yet possibly our good ladies are of another opinion. For instance, one may look upon Racine as a broken-down, hobbledehoy, perfumed individual — one

may even be unable to read him; and I too may think him the same, as well as, in some respects, a subject for ridicule. Yet about him, Mr. Astley, there is a certain charm, and, above all things, he is a great poet — though one might like to deny it. Yes, the Frenchman, the Parisian, as a national figure, was in process of developing into a figure of elegance before we Russians had even ceased to be bears. The Revolution bequeathed to the French nobility its heritage, and now every whippersnapper of a Parisian may possess manners, methods of expression, and even thoughts that are above reproach in form, while all the time he himself may share in that form neither in initiative nor in intellect nor in soul — his manners, and the rest, having come to him through inheritance. Yes, taken by himself, the Frenchman is frequently a fool of fools and a villain of villains. Per contra, there is no one in the world more worthy of confidence and respect than this young Russian lady. De Griers might so mask his face and play a part as easily to overcome her heart, for he has an imposing figure, Mr. Astley, and this young lady might easily take that figure for his real self — for the natural form of his heart and soul — instead of the mere cloak with which heredity has dowered him. And even though it may offend you, I feel bound to say that the majority also of English people are uncouth and unrefined, whereas we Russian folk can recognise beauty wherever we see it, and are always eager to cultivate the same. But to distinguish beauty of soul and personal originality there is needed far more independence and freedom than is possessed by our women, especially by our younger ladies. At all events, they need more EXPERIENCE. For instance, this Mlle. Polina — pardon me, but the name has passed my lips, and I cannot well recall it — is taking a very long time to make up her mind to prefer you to Monsieur de Griers. She may respect you, she may become your friend, she may open out her heart to you; yet over that heart there will be reigning that loathsome villain, that mean and petty usurer, De Griers. This will be due to obstinacy and self-love — to the fact that De Griers once appeared to her in the transfigured guise of a marquis, of a disenchanted and ruined liberal who was doing his best to help her family and the frivolous old General; and, although these transactions of his have since been exposed, you will find that the exposure has made no impression upon her mind. Only give her the De Griers of former days, and she will ask of you no more. The more she may detest the present De Griers, the more will she lament the De Griers of

the past — even though the latter never existed but in her own imagination. You are a sugar refiner, Mr. Astley, are you not?”

“Yes, I belong to the well-known firm of Lovell and Co.”

“Then see here. On the one hand, you are a sugar refiner, while, on the other hand, you are an Apollo Belvedere. But the two characters do not mix with one another. I, again, am not even a sugar refiner; I am a mere roulette gambler who has also served as a lacquey. Of this fact Mlle. Polina is probably well aware, since she appears to have an excellent force of police at her disposal.”

“You are saying this because you are feeling bitter,” said Astley with cold indifference. “Yet there is not the least originality in your words.”

“I agree. But therein lies the horror of it all — that, how trepidation, playing ever mean and farcical my accusations may be, they are none the less TRUE. But I am only wasting words.”

“Yes, you are, for you are only talking nonsense!” exclaimed my companion — his voice now trembling and his eyes flashing fire. “Are you aware,” he continued, “that wretched, ignoble, petty, unfortunate man though you are, it was at HER request I came to Homburg, in order to see you, and to have a long, serious talk with you, and to report to her your feelings and thoughts and hopes — yes, and your recollections of her, too?”

“Indeed? Is that really so?” I cried — the tears beginning to well from my eyes. Never before had this happened.

“Yes, poor unfortunate,” continued Astley. “She DID love you; and I may tell you this now for the reason that now you are utterly lost. Even if I were also to tell you that she still loves you, you would none the less have to remain where you are. Yes, you have ruined yourself beyond redemption. Once upon a time you had a certain amount of talent, and you were of a lively disposition, and your good looks were not to be despised. You might even have been useful to your country, which needs men like you. Yet you remained here, and your life is now over. I am not blaming you for this — in my view all Russians resemble you, or are inclined to do so. If it is not roulette, then it is something else. The exceptions are very rare. Nor are you the first to learn what a taskmaster is yours. For roulette is not exclusively a Russian game. Hitherto, you have honourably preferred to serve as a lacquey rather than to act as a thief; but what the future may have in store for you I tremble to think. Now good-bye. You are in want of money, I suppose? Then take these ten louis d’or. More I shall not give you, for you

would only gamble it away. Take care of these coins, and farewell. Once more, TAKE CARE of them."

"No, Mr. Astley. After all that has been said I—"

"TAKE CARE of them!" repeated my friend. "I am certain you are still a gentleman, and therefore I give you the money as one gentleman may give money to another. Also, if I could be certain that you would leave both Homburg and the gaming-tables, and return to your own country, I would give you a thousand pounds down to start life afresh; but, I give you ten louis d'or instead of a thousand pounds for the reason that at the present time a thousand pounds and ten louis d'or will be all the same to you — you will lose the one as readily as you will the other. Take the money, therefore, and good-bye."

"Yes, I WILL take it if at the same time you will embrace me."

"With pleasure."

So we parted — on terms of sincere affection.

But he was wrong. If I was hard and undiscerning as regards Polina and De Griers, HE was hard and undiscerning as regards Russian people generally. Of myself I say nothing. Yet — yet words are only words. I need to ACT. Above all things I need to think of Switzerland. Tomorrow, tomorrow — Ah, but if only I could set things right tomorrow, and be born again, and rise again from the dead! But no — I cannot. Yet I must show her what I can do. Even if she should do no more than learn that I can still play the man, it would be worth it. Today it is too late, but TOMORROW...

Yet I have a presentiment that things can never be otherwise. I have got fifteen louis d'or in my possession, although I began with fifteen gulden. If I were to play carefully at the start — But no, no! Surely I am not such a fool as that? Yet WHY should I not rise from the dead? I should require at first but to go cautiously and patiently and the rest would follow. I should require but to put a check upon my nature for one hour, and my fortunes would be changed entirely. Yes, my nature is my weak point. I have only to remember what happened to me some months ago at Roulettenberg, before my final ruin. What a notable instance that was of my capacity for resolution! On the occasion in question I had lost everything — everything; yet, just as I was leaving the Casino, I heard another gulden give a rattle in my pocket! "Perhaps I shall need it for a meal," I thought to myself; but a hundred paces further on, I changed my mind, and returned. That gulden I

staked upon manque — and there is something in the feeling that, though one is alone, and in a foreign land, and far from one’s own home and friends, and ignorant of whence one’s next meal is to come, one is nevertheless staking one’s very last coin! Well, I won the stake, and in twenty minutes had left the Casino with a hundred and seventy gulden in my pocket! That is a fact, and it shows what a last remaining gulden can do.... But what if my heart had failed me, or I had shrunk from making up my mind? ...

No: tomorrow all shall be ended!

THE END

THE IDIOT



Translated by Constance Garnett

First published serially in *The Russian Messenger* between 1868 and 1869, *The Idiot* is generally regarded as one of Dostoyevsky's most accomplished works. His motives for writing *The Idiot* came from a desire to depict a “positively good man”. This man is naturally likened to Christ in many ways. Dostoyevsky uses the protagonist Prince Myshkin’s introduction to the Petersburg society as a way to contrast the nature of worldly Russian society to the isolation and innocence of this good man.

The narrative opens with the 26-year-old Prince Lev Nikolayevich Myshkin returning to Russia, after spending several years at a Swiss clinic for treatment of his epilepsy and supposed intellectual deficiencies. On the train journey to Russia, Myshkin meets Parfyon Semyonovich Rogozhin and is struck by his passionate intensity, particularly in relation to a beautiful woman with whom he is obsessed.

Myshkin's only relation in St. Petersburg is the very distant Lizaveta Prokofyevna Yepanchin. Madame Yepanchin is the wife of General Yepanchin, a wealthy and respected man in his late fifties. The prince makes the acquaintance of the Yepanchins, who have three daughters—Alexandra, Adelaida, and Aglaya, the last being the youngest and the most beautiful.

General Yepanchin has an ambitious and vain assistant named Gavril Ardalionovich Ivolgin (Ganya) whom Myshkin also meets during his visit to the household. Ganya, though actually in love with Aglaya, is trying to marry Anastassya Filippovna Barashkov, an extraordinarily beautiful woman who was once the mistress of the aristocrat Totsky. Totsky has promised Ganya 75,000 rubles if he marries the "fallen" Nastassya Filippovna instead. As Myshkin is so innocent and naïve, Ganya openly discusses the subject of the proposed marriage in front of the Prince. Nastassya Filippovna is in fact the same woman pursued obsessively by Rogozhin, and Ganya asks the Prince whether Rogozhin would marry her. The Prince replies that he might well marry her and then murder her a week later.



Dostoyevsky, close to the time of publication



The house in Florence where Dostoyevsky wrote ‘The Idiot’

THE IDIOT

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PART ONE

CHAPTER 1

At nine o’clock in the morning, towards the end of November, the Warsaw train was approaching Petersburg at full speed. It was thawing, and so damp and foggy that it was difficult to distinguish anything ten paces from the line to right or left of the carriage windows. Some of the passengers were returning from abroad, but the third-class compartments were most crowded, chiefly with people of humble rank, who had come a shorter distance on business. All of course were tired and shivering, their eyes were heavy after the night’s journey, and all their faces were pale and yellow to match the fog.

In one of the third-class carriages, two passengers had, from early dawn, been sitting facing one another by the window. Both were young men, not very well dressed, and travelling with little luggage; both were of rather striking appearance, and both showed a desire to enter into conversation. If they had both known what was remarkable in one another at that moment, they would have been surprised at the chance which had so strangely brought them opposite one another in a third-class carriage of the Warsaw train. One of them was a short man about twenty-seven, with almost black curly hair and small, grey, fiery eyes. He had a broad and flat nose and high cheek bones. His thin lips were continually curved in an insolent, mocking and even malicious smile. But the high and well-shaped forehead redeemed the ignoble lines of the lower part of the face. What was particularly striking about the young man’s face was its death-like pallor, which gave him a look of exhaustion in spite of his sturdy figure, and at the same time an almost painfully passionate expression, out of keeping with his coarse and insolent smile and the hard and conceited look in his eyes. He was warmly dressed in a full, black, sheepskin-lined overcoat, and had not felt the cold at night, while his shivering neighbour had been exposed to the chill and damp of a Russian November night, for which he was evidently unprepared. He had a fairly thick and full cloak with a big hood, such as is often used in winter by travellers abroad in Switzerland, or the North of Italy, who are not of course proposing such a journey as that from Eydtkuhnen to Petersburg. But what was quite suitable and satisfactory in

Italy turned out not quite sufficient for Russia. The owner of the cloak was a young man, also twenty-six or twenty-seven years old, above the average in height, with very fair thick hair, with sunken cheeks and a thin, pointed, almost white beard. His eyes were large, blue and dreamy; there was something gentle, though heavy-looking in their expression, something of that strange look from which some people can recognise at the first glance a victim of epilepsy. Yet the young man's face was pleasing, thin and clean-cut, though colourless, and at this moment blue with cold. He carried a little bundle tied up in an old faded silk handkerchief, apparently containing all his belongings. He wore thick-soled shoes and gaiters, all in the foreign style. His dark-haired neighbour in the sheepskin observed all this, partly from having nothing to do,

and at last, with an indelicate smile, in which satisfaction at the misfortunes of others is sometimes so unceremoniously and casually expressed, he asked:

"Chilly?"

And he twitched his shoulders.

"Very," answered his neighbour, with extraordinary readiness, "and to think it's thawing too. What if it were freezing? I didn't expect it to be so cold at home. I've got out of the way of it."

"From abroad, eh?"

"Yes, from Switzerland."

"Phew! You don't say so!" The dark-haired man whistled and laughed.

They fell into talk. The readiness of the fair young man in the Swiss cloak to answer all his companion's inquiries was remarkable. He betrayed no suspicion of the extreme impertinence of some of his misplaced and idle questions. He told him he had been a long while, over four years, away from Russia, that he had been sent abroad for his health on account of a strange nervous disease, something of the nature of epilepsy or St. Vitus's dance, attacks of twitching and trembling. The dark man smiled several times as he listened, and laughed, especially when, in answer to his inquiry, "Well, have they cured you?" his companion answered, "No, they haven't."

"Ha! You must have wasted a lot of money over it, and we believe in them over here," the dark man observed sarcastically.

"Perfectly true!" interposed a badly dressed, heavily built man of about forty, with a red nose and pimpled face, sitting beside them.

He seemed to be some sort of petty official, with the typical failings of his class. “Perfectly true, they only absorb all the resources of Russia for nothing!”

“Oh, you are quite mistaken in my case!” the patient from Switzerland replied in a gentle and conciliatory voice. “I can’t dispute your opinion, of course, because I don’t know all about it, but my doctor shared his last penny with me for the journey here; and he’s been keeping me for nearly two years at his expense.”

“Why, had you no one to pay for you?” asked the dark man.

“No; Mr. Pavlishtchev, who used to pay for me there, died two years ago. I’ve written since to Petersburg, to Madame Epanchin, a distant relation of mine, but I’ve had no answer. So I’ve come. . . .”

“Where are you going then?”

“You mean, where am I going to stay? . . . I really don’t know yet. . . . Somewhere. . . .”

“You’ve not made up your mind yet?” And both his listeners laughed again.

“And I shouldn’t wonder if that bundle is all you’ve got in the world?” queried the dark man.

“I wouldn’t mind betting it is,” chimed in the red-nosed official with a gleeful air, “and that he’s nothing else in the luggage van, though poverty is no vice, one must admit.”

It appeared that this was the case; the fair-haired young man acknowledged it at once with peculiar readiness.

“Your bundle has some value, anyway,” the petty official went on, when they had laughed to their heart’s content (strange to say, the owner of the bundle began to laugh too, looking at them, and that increased their mirth), “and though one may safely bet there is no gold in it, neither French, German, nor Dutch — one may be sure of that, if only from the gaiters you have got on over your foreign shoes — yet if you can add to your bundle a relation such as Madame Epanchin, the general’s lady, the bundle acquires a very different value, that is if Madame Epanchin really is related to you, and you are not labouring under a delusion, a mistake that often happens . . . through excess of imagination.”

“Ah, you’ve guessed right again,” the fair young man assented. “It really is almost a mistake, that’s to say, she is almost no relation; so much so that I really was not at all surprised at getting no answer. It was what I expected.”

“You simply wasted the money for the stamps. H’m! . . . anyway you are straightforward and simple-hearted, and that’s to your credit. H’m! . . . I know General Epanchin, for he is a man every one knows; and I used to know Mr. Pavlishtchev, too, who paid your expenses in Switzerland, that is if it was Nikolay Andreyevitch Pavlishtchev, for there were two of them, cousins. The other lives in the Crimea. The late Nikolay Andreyevitch was a worthy man and well connected, and he’d four thousand serfs in his day. .

“That’s right, Nikolay Andreyevitch was his name.” And as he answered, the young man looked intently and searchingly at the omniscient gentleman.

Such omniscient gentlemen are to be found pretty often in a certain stratum of society. They know everything. All the restless curiosity and faculties of their mind are irresistibly bent in one direction, no doubt from lack of more important ideas and interests in life, as the critic of to-day would explain. But the words, “they know everything,” must be taken in a rather limited sense: in what department so-and-so serves, who are his friends, what his income is, where he was governor, who his wife is and what dowry she brought him, who are his first cousins and who are his second cousins, and everything of that sort. For the most part these omniscient gentlemen are out at elbow, and receive a salary of seventeen roubles a month. The people of whose lives they know every detail would be at a loss to imagine their motives. Yet many of them get positive consolation out of this knowledge, which amounts to a complete science, and derive from it self-respect and their highest spiritual gratification. And indeed it is a fascinating science. I have seen learned men, literary men, poets, politicians, who sought and found in that science their loftiest comfort and their ultimate goal, and have indeed made their career only by means of it.

During this part of the conversation the dark young man had been yawning and looking aimlessly out of the window, impatiently expecting the end of the journey. He was preoccupied, extremely so, in fact, almost agitated. His behaviour indeed was somewhat strange; sometimes he seemed to be listening without hearing, and looking without seeing. He would laugh sometimes not knowing, or forgetting, what he was laughing at.

“Excuse me, whom have I the honour” . . . the pimply gentleman said suddenly, addressing the fair young man with the bundle.

“Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch Myshkin is my name,” the latter replied with prompt and unhesitating readiness.

“Prince Myshkin? Lyov Nikolayevitch? I don’t know it. I don’t believe I’ve ever heard it,” the official responded thoughtfully. “I don’t mean the surname, it’s an historical name, it’s to be found in Karamazin’s History, and with good reason; I mean you personally, and indeed there are no Prince Myshkins to be met anywhere, one never hears of them.”

“I should think not,” Myshkin answered at once, “there are no Prince Myshkins now except me; I believe I am the last of them. And as for our fathers and grandfathers, some of them were no more than peasant proprietors. My father was a sublieutenant in the army, yet General Epanchin’s wife was somehow Princess Myshkin; she was the last of her lot, too. . . .”

“He-he-he! The last of her lot! He-he! how funnily you put it,” chuckled the official.

The dark man grinned too. Myshkin was rather surprised that he had perpetrated a joke, and indeed it was a feeble one.

“Believe me, I said it without thinking,” he explained at last, wondering.

“To be sure, to be sure you did,” the official assented good-humouredly.

“And have you been studying, too, with the professor out there, prince?” asked the dark man suddenly.

“Yes . . . I have.”

“But I’ve never studied anything.”

“Well, I only did a little, you know,” added Myshkin almost apologetically. “I couldn’t be taught systematically, because of my illness.”

“Do you know the Rogozhins?” the dark man asked quickly.

“No, I don’t know them at all. I know very few people in Russia. Are you a Rogozhin?”

“Yes, my name is Rogozhin, Parfyon.”

“Parfyon? One of those Rogozhins . . ,” the official began, with increased gravity.

“Yes, one of those, one of the same,” the dark man interrupted quickly, with uncivil impatience. He had not once addressed the pimply gentleman indeed, but from the beginning had spoken only to Myshkin.

“But . . . how is that?” The official was petrified with amazement, and his eyes seemed almost starting out of his head. His whole face immediately assumed an expression of reverence and servility, almost of awe. “Related

to the Semyon Parfenovitch Rogozhin, who died a month ago and left a fortune of two and a half million roubles?”

“And how do you know he left two and a half millions?” the dark man interrupted, not deigning even now to glance towards the official.

“Look at him!” he winked to Myshkin, indicating him. “What do they gain by cringing upon one at once? But it’s true that my father has been dead a month, and here I am, coming home from Pskov almost without boots to my feet. My brother, the rascal, and my mother haven’t sent me a penny nor a word — nothing! As if I were a dog! I’ve been lying ill with fever at Pskov for the last month.”

“And now you are coming in for a tidy million, at the lowest reckoning, oh! Lord!” the official flung up his hands.

“What is it to him, tell me that?” said Rogozhin, nodding irritably and angrily towards him again. “Why, I am not going to give you a farthing of it, you may stand on your head before me, if you like.”

“I will, I will.”

“You see! But I won’t give you anything, I won’t, if you dance for a whole week.”

“Well, don’t! Why should you? Don’t! But I shall dance, I shall leave my wife and little children and dance before you. I must do homage! I must!”

“Hang you!” the dark man spat. “Five weeks ago, like you with nothing but a bundle,” he said,

addressing the prince, “I ran away from my father to my aunt’s at Pskov. And there I fell ill and he died while I was away. He kicked the bucket. Eternal memory to the deceased, but he almost killed me! Would you believe it, prince, yes, by God! If I hadn’t run away then, he would have killed me on the spot.”

“Did you make him very angry?” asked the prince, looking with special interest at the millionaire in the sheepskin. But though there may have been something remarkable in the million and in coming into an inheritance, Myshkin was surprised and interested at something else as well. And Rogozhin himself for some reason talked readily to the prince, though indeed his need of conversation seemed rather physical than mental, arising more from preoccupation than frankness, from agitation and excitement, for the sake of looking at some one and exercising his tongue. He seemed to be still ill or at least feverish. As for the petty official, he was simply hanging

on Rogozhin, hardly daring to breathe, and catching at each word, as though he hoped to find a diamond.

“Angry he certainly was, and perhaps with reason,” answered Rogozhin, “but it was my brother’s doing more than anything. My mother I can’t blame, she is an old woman, spends her time reading the Lives of the Saints, sitting with old women; and what brother Semyon says is law. And why didn’t he let me know in time? I understand it! It’s true, I was unconscious at the time. They say a telegram was sent, too, but it was sent to my aunt. And she has been a widow for thirty years and she spends her time with crazy pilgrims from morning till night. She is not a nun exactly, but something worse. She was frightened by the telegram, and took it to the police station without opening it, and there it lies to this day. Only Vassily Vassilitch Konyov was the saving of me, he wrote me all about it. At night my brother cut off the solid gold tassels from the brocaded pall on my father’s coffin. ‘Think what a lot of money they are worth,’ said he. For that alone he can be sent to Siberia if I like, for it’s sacrilege. Hey there, you scarecrow,” he turned to the official, “is that the law — is it sacrilege?”

“It is sacrilege, it is,” the latter assented at once.

“Is it a matter of Siberia?”

“Siberia, to be sure! Siberia at once.”

“They think I am still ill,” Rogozhin went on to Myshkin, “but without a word to anyone, I got into the carriage, ill as I was, and I am on my way home. You’ll have to open the door to me, brother Semyon Semyonovitch! He turned my father against me, I know. But it’s true I did anger my father over Nastasya Filippovna. That was my own doing. I was in fault there.”

“Over Nastasya Filippovna?” the official pronounced with servility, seeming to deliberate.

“Why, you don’t know her!” Rogozhin shouted impatiently.

“Yes, I do!” answered the man, triumphantly.

“Upon my word! But there are lots of Nastasya Filippovnas. And what an insolent brute you are, let me tell you! I knew some brute like this would hang on to me at once,” he continued to Myshkin.

“But perhaps I do know!” said the official, fidgeting. “Lebedyev knows! You are pleased to reproach me, your excellency, but what if I prove it? Yss, I mean that very Nastasya Filippovna, on account of whom your parent tried to give you a lesson with his stick. Nastasya Filippovna’s name is Barashkov, and she’s a lady, so to speak, of high position, and even a

princess in her own way, and she is connected with a man called Totsky — Afanasy Ivanovitch — with him and no one else, a man of property and great fortune, a member of companies and societies, and he's great friends with General Epanchin on that account. . . ."

"Aha! so that's it, is it?" Rogozhin was genuinely surprised at last. "Ugh, hang it, he actually does know!"

"He knows everything! Lebedyev knows everything! I went about with young Alexandre Lihatchov for two months, your excellency, and it was after his father's death too, and I know my way about, so to say, so that he couldn't stir a step without Lebedyev. Now he is in the debtor's prison; but then I had every opportunity to know Armance and Coralie, and Princess Patsky and Nastasya Filippovna, and much else besides."

"Nastasya Filippovna? Why, did Lihatchov . . ." Rogozhin looked angrily at him. His lips positively twitched and turned white.

"Not at all! Not at all! Not in the least!" the official assured him with nervous haste. "Lihatchov couldn't get at her for any money! No, she is not an Armance.

She has nobody but Totsky. And of an evening she sits in her own box at the Grand or the French Theatre. The officers may talk a lot about her, but even they can say nothing against her. 'That's the famous Nastasya Filippovna,' they say, and that's all. But nothing further, for there is nothing."

"That's all true," Rogozhin confirmed, frowning gloomily. "Zalyozhev said so at the time. I was running across the Nevsky, prince, in my father's three-year-old coat and she came out of a shop and got into her carriage. I was all aflame in an instant. I met Zalyozhev. He is quite another sort — got up like a hair-dresser's assistant, with an eyeglass in his eye, while at my father's house we wear tarred boots and are kept on Lenten soup. 'She's no match for you, my boy,' he said; 'she is a princess. Her name is Nastasya Filippovna Barashkov, and she is living with Totsky, and Totsky doesn't know how to get rid of her, for he's just reached the proper time of life, fifty-five, so that he wants to marry the greatest beauty in Petersburg.' Then he told me that I could see Nastasya Filippovna that day at the Grand Theatre — at the ballet; she'd be in her box in the baignoire. As for going to the ballet, if anyone at home had tried that on, father would have settled it — he would have killed one. But I did slip in for an hour though, and saw Nastasya Filippovna again; I didn't sleep all that night. Next morning my

late father gave me two five per cent bonds for five thousand roubles each. ‘Go and sell them,’ he said, ‘and take seven thousand five hundred to Andreyev’s office, and pay the account, and bring back what’s left of the ten thousand straight to me; I shall wait for you.’ I cashed the bonds, took the money, but I didn’t go to Andreyev’s. I went straight to the English shop, and picked out a pair of earrings with a diamond nearly as big as a nut in each of them. I gave the whole ten thousand for it and left owing four hundred; I gave them my name and they trusted me. I went with the earrings to Zalyozhev; I told him, and said, ‘Let us go to Nastasya Filippovna’s, brother.’ We set off. I don’t know and can’t remember what was under my feet, what was before me or about me. We went straight into her drawing-room, she came in to us herself. I didn’t tell at the time who I was, but Zalyozhev said, ‘This is from Parfyon Rogozhin, in memory of his meeting you yesterday; graciously accept it.’ She opened it, looked and smiled: ‘Thank your friend Mr. Rogozhin for his kind attention.’ She bowed and went out. Well, why didn’t I die on the spot! I went to her because I thought I shouldn’t come back alive. And what mortified me most of all was that that beast Zalyozhev took it all to himself. I am short and badly dressed, and I stood, without a word, staring at her because I was ashamed, and he’s in the height of fashion, curled and pomaded, rosy and in a check tie — he was all bows and graces, and I am sure she must have taken him for me! ‘Well,’ said I, as he went out, ‘don’t you dare dream now of anything, do you understand?’ He laughed. ‘And how are you going to account for the money to your father now?’ I felt like throwing myself into the water, I must own, instead of going home, but I thought ‘What did anything matter after all?’ and I went home in desperation like a damned soul.”

“Ech! Ugh!” The petty official wriggled. He positively shuddered. “And you know the deceased gentleman was ready to do for a man for ten roubles, let alone ten thousand,” he added, nodding to the prince.

Myshkin scrutinised Rogozhin with interest; the latter seemed paler than ever at that moment.

“Ready to do for a man!” repeated Rogozhin. “What do you know about it? He found it all out at once,” he went on, addressing Myshkin, “and Zalyozhev went gossiping about it to everybody. My father took me and locked me up upstairs and was at me for a whole hour. ‘This is only a preface,’ he said, ‘but I’ll come in to say good night to you!’ And what do

you think? The old man went to Nastasya Filippovna's, bowed down to the ground before her, wept and besought her; she brought out the box at last and flung it to him. 'Here are your earrings, you old greybeard,' she said, 'and they are ten times more precious to me now since Parfyon faced such a storm to get them for me. Greet Parfyon Semyonovitch and thank him for me,' she said. And meanwhile I'd obtained twenty roubles from Seryozha Protushin, and with my mother's blessing set off by train to Pskov, and I arrived in a fever. The old women began reading the Lives of the Saints over me, and I sat there drunk. I spent my last farthing in the taverns and lay senseless all night in the street, and by morning I was delirious, and to make matters better the dogs gnawed me in the night. I had a narrow squeak."

"Well, well, now Nastasya Filippovna will sing another tune," the official chuckled, rubbing his hands. "What are earrings now, sir! Now we can make up for it with such earrings . . ."

"But if you say another word about Nastasya Filippovna, as there is a God above, I'll thrash you, though you used to go about with Lihatchov!" cried Rogozhin, seizing him violently by the arm.

"Well, if you thrash me you won't turn me away! Thrash me, that's just how you'll keep me! By thrashing me you'll have put your seal on me . . . Why, here we are!"

They had in fact reached the station. Though Rogozhin said he had come away in secret, several men were waiting for him. They shouted and waved their caps to him.

"I say, Zalyozhev here too!" muttered Rogozhin, gazing at them with a triumphant and almost malicious-looking smile, and he turned suddenly to Myshkin. "Prince, I don't know why I've taken to you. Perhaps because I've met you at such a moment, though I've met him too (he indicated Lebedyev) and I haven't taken to him. Come and see me, prince. We'll take off those gaiters of yours, we'll put you into a first-rate fur coat, I'll get you a first-class dress-coat, a white waistcoat, or what you like, I'll fill your pockets with money! . . . we'll go and see Nastasya Filippovna! Will you come?"

"Listen, Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch!" Lebedyev chimed in solemnly and impressively. "Don't miss the chance, oh, don't miss the chance!"

Prince Myshkin stood up, courteously held out his hand to Rogozhin and said cordially:

“I will come with the greatest of pleasure and thank you very much for liking me. I may come to-day even, if I’ve time. For I tell you frankly I’ve taken a great liking to you myself, I liked you particularly when you were telling about the diamond earrings. I liked you before that, too, though you look gloomy. Thank you, too, for the clothes and the fur coat you promise me, for I certainly shall need clothes and a fur coat directly. As for money, I have scarcely a farthing at the moment.”

“There will be money, there will be money by the evening, come!”

“There will, there will!” the official assented, “by evening, before sunset there will be!”

“And women, prince, are you very keen on them? Let me know to start with!”

“I, n-no! Ybu see. . . . Perhaps you don’t know that, owing to my illness, I know nothing of women.”

“Well, if that’s how it is,” cried Rogozhin, “you are a regular blessed innocent, and God loves such as you.”

“And the Lord God loves such as you,” the official repeated.

“And you follow me,” said Rogozhin to Lebedyev.

And they all got out of the carriage. Lebedyev had ended by gaining his point. The noisy group soon disappeared in the direction of Voznesensky Prospect. The prince had to go towards Liteyny. It was damp and rainy; Myshkin asked his way of passers-by — it appeared that he had two miles to go, and he decided to take a cab.

CHAPTER 2

General EPANCHIN lived in a house of his own not far from Liteyny. Besides this magnificent house — five-sixths of its rooms were let in flats — he had another huge house in Sadovy Street, which was also a large source of revenue to him. He owned also a considerable and profitable estate close to Petersburg, and a factory of some sort in the district. In former days the general, as every one knew, had been a share-holder in government monopolies. Now he had shares and a considerable influence in the control of some well-established companies. He had the reputation of being a very busy man of large fortune and wide connexions. In certain positions he knew how to make himself indispensable; for instance, in his own department of the government.

Yfet it was known that Ivan Fyodorovitch Epanchin was a man of no education and the son of a simple soldier. The latter fact, of course, could only be to his credit; yet though the general was an intelligent man, he was not free from some very pardonable little weaknesses and disliked allusions to certain subjects. But he was unquestionably an intelligent and capable man. He made it a principle, for instance, not to put himself forward, to efface himself where necessary, and he was valued by many people just for his unpretentiousness, just because he always knew his place. But if only those who said this of him could have known what was passing sometimes in the soul of Ivan Fyodorovitch, who knew his place so well! Though he really had practical knowledge and experience and some very remarkable abilities, he preferred to appear to be carrying out the ideas of others rather than the promptings of his own intellect, to pose as a man “disinterestedly devoted” and — to fall in with the spirit of the age — a warm-hearted Russian. There were some amusing stories told about him in this connexion; but the general was never disconcerted by these stories. Besides, he was always successful, even at cards, and he played for very high stakes and far from attempting to conceal this little, as he called it, weakness, which was pecuniarily and in other ways profitable to him, he intentionally made a display of it. He mixed in very varied society, though only, of course, with people of consequence. But he had everything before him, he had plenty of time, plenty of time for everything, and everything was bound to come in its due time. And in years, too, the general was what is called in the prime of

life, fifty-six, not more, and we know that that is the very flower of manhood; the age at which real life begins. His good health, his complexion, his sound though black teeth, his sturdy, solid figure, his preoccupied air at his office in the morning and his good-humoured countenance in the evening at cards or at “his grace’s” — all contributed to his success in the present and in the future, and strewed his excellency’s path with roses.

The general had a family of blooming children. All was not roses there, indeed, but there was much on which his excellency’s fondest hopes and plans had long been earnestly and deeply concentrated. And, after all, what plans are graver and more sacred than a father’s? What should a man cling to, if not to his family?

The general’s family consisted of a wife and three grown-up daughters. The general had married many years before, when only a lieutenant, a girl of almost his own age, who was not distinguished either by beauty or education, and with whom he had received only a dowry of fifty souls, which served, however, as a stepping-stone to his fortune in later days. But the general never in after years complained of his early marriage, he never regarded it as the error of his luckless youth, and he so respected his wife, and at times so feared her, indeed, that he positively loved her. His wife was a Princess Myshkin, of an ancient though by no means brilliant family, and she had a great opinion of herself on account of her birth. An influential person, one of those patrons whose patronage costs them nothing, had consented to interest himself in the young princess’s marriage. He had opened a way for the young officer and had given him a helping hand along it, though indeed no hand was needed, a glance was enough and would not have been thrown away! With few exceptions the husband and wife had spent their whole life in harmony together. At an early age Madame Epanchin, as a princess by birth, the last of her family, possibly, too, through her personal qualities, had succeeded in finding influential friends in the highest circles. In later years, through her husband’s wealth and consequence in the service, she began to feel almost at home in those exalted regions.

It was during these years that the general’s three daughters — Alexandra, Adelaida and Aglaia — had grown up. They were only Epanchins, it’s true, but of noble rank on their mother’s side, with considerable dowries and a father who was expected to rise to a very high position sooner or later, and

what was also an important matter, they were all three remarkably good-looking, even the eldest, Alexandra, who was already turned twenty-five. The second was twenty-three and the youngest, Aglaia, was only just twenty. This youngest one was quite a beauty and was beginning to attract much attention in society. But that was not everything; all three were distinguished by education, cleverness and talent. Every one knew that they were remarkably fond of one another and always hung together. People even talked of sacrifices made by the two elder sisters for the sake of the youngest, who was the idol of the house. They were not fond of showing themselves off in society and were modest to a fault. No one could reproach them with haughtiness or conceit, yet they were known to be proud and to understand their own value. The eldest was a musician, the second painted remarkably well, but this had not been generally known till lately and had only come out accidentally. In a word, a great deal was said in praise of them. But there were hostile critics. People talked with horror of the number of books they had read. They were in no hurry to get married; they valued belonging to a certain circle in society, yet not to excess. This was the more remarkable as every one knew the attitude, the character, the aims and the desi res of thei r father.

It was about eleven o’clock when Myshkin rang at the general’s flat, which was on the first floor, and was a modest one considering his position. A liveried servant opened the door and Myshkin had much ado to explain his appearance to the man who, from the first, looked suspiciously at him and his bundle. At last, on his repeated and definite assertion that he really was Prince Myshkin and that he absolutely must see the general on urgent business, the wondering servant conducted him into a little anteroom leading to the waiting-room that adjoined the general’s study, and handed him over to another servant, whose duty it was to wait in the morning in the anteroom and to announce visitors to the general. This second servant, who wore a tailcoat, was a man over forty, with an anxious countenanance. He was his excellency’s special attendant who ushered visitors into the study and so knew his own importance.

“Step into the waiting-room and leave your bundle here,” he said, seating himself in his armchair with deliberation and dignity, and looking with stern surprise at Myshkin, who had sat down on a chair beside him with his bundle in his hands.

“If you’ll allow me,” said Myshkin, “I’d rather wait here with you; what am I to do in there alone?”

“You can’t stay in the anteroom, for you are a visitor, in other words a guest. Do you want to see the general himself?”

The servant obviously found it difficult to bring himself to admit such a visitor and decided to question him once more.

“Yes, I have business . . .” Myshkin began.

“I don’t ask you what business — my duty is only to announce you. But I’ve told you already, without the secretary’s leave I am not going to announce you.”

The man’s suspicion grew more and more marked: the prince was too unlike the ordinary run of visitors. Though at a certain hour the general used often, almost every day in fact, to receive visitors of the most varied description, especially on business, yet in spite of the latitude of his instructions the attendant felt great hesitation; the secretary’s opinion was essential before he showed him in.

“Are you really . . . from abroad?” he asked, almost in spite of himself, and was confused.

He had been about perhaps to ask, “Are you really Prince Myshkin?”

“Yes, I have only just come from the station. I think you were going to ask, ‘am I really Prince Myshkin?’ but you didn’t ask for politeness.”

“Hm!” grunted the astounded servant.

“I assure you that I haven’t told you a lie and you won’t get into trouble on my account. And you need not be surprised at my looking like this and having a bundle; I am not in very flourishing circumstances just now.”

“Hm! I have no apprehension on that score, you know. It’s my duty to announce you, and the secretary will see you, unless you . . . that’s just the difficulty. . . . You are not asking the general for assistance, if I may make bold to inquire?”

“Oh no, you can rest assured of that. My business is different.”

“You must excuse me, but I asked looking at you. Wait for the secretary; his excellency is engaged with the colonel at present and then the secretary . . . from the company . . . is coming.”

“Then, if I have to wait a long while, I should like to ask you if there is anywhere I could smoke? I’ve got a pipe and tobacco.”

“Smoke?” repeated the attendant, glancing at him with scornful surprise as though he could scarcely believe his ears. “Smoke? No, you can’t smoke

here; you ought to be ashamed to think of such a thing. He-he! It’s a queer business.”

“Oh, I didn’t mean in this room; I know that, I would have gone anywhere else you showed me, for I

haven’t had a smoke for three hours. I am used to it. But it’s as you please, there’s a saying, you know, ‘At Rome one must . . .’”

“Well, how am I going to announce a fellow like you?” the attendant could not help muttering. “In the first place you have no business to be here, you ought to be sitting in the waiting-room, for you are a visitor, in other words a guest, and I shall be blamed for it. . . . You are not thinking of staying with the family?” he added, glancing once more at the bundle, which evidently disturbed him.

“No, I don’t think so. Even if they invite me, I shan’t stay. I’ve simply come to make their acquaintance, that’s all.”

“What? to make their acquaintance?” the attendant repeated with amazement and redoubled suspiciousness. “Why, you said at first you’d come on business?”

“Oh, it’s hardly business. Though I have business, if you like, but only to ask advice; I’ve come chiefly to introduce myself, because I am Prince Myshkin and Madame Epanchin is a Princess Myshkin, the last of them, and there are no Myshkins left but she and I.”

“Then you are a relation?” the startled lackey was positively alarmed.

“Hardly that either. Still, to stretch a point, I am a relation, but so distant that it’s not worth counting. I wrote to Madame Epanchin from abroad, but she didn’t answer me. Yet I thought I must make her acquaintance on my return. I tell you all this that you may have no doubt about me, for I see you are still uneasy. Announce Prince Myshkin, and the name itself will be a sufficient reason for my visit. If I am received — well and good, if not, it’s perhaps just as well. But I don’t think they can refuse to see me. Madame Epanchin will surely want to see the last representative of the elder branch of her family. She thinks a great deal of her family, as I have heard on good authority!”

The prince’s conversation seemed simple enough, yet its very simplicity only made it more inappropriate in the present case, and the experienced attendant could not but feel that what was perfectly suitable from man to man was utterly unsuitable from a visitor to a manservant. And since servants are far more intelligent than their masters usually suppose, it struck

the man that there were two explanations: either the prince was some sort of impostor who had come to beg of the general, or he was simply a little bit soft and had no sense of dignity, for a prince with his wits about him and a sense of his own dignity, would not sit in an anteroom and talk to a servant about his affairs. So in either case he might get into trouble over him.

“Anyway, it would be better if you’d walk into the waiting-room,” he observed, as impressively as possible.

“But if I had been there, I wouldn’t have explained it all to you,” said Myshkin, laughing good-humouredly, “and you would still have been anxious, looking at my cloak and bundle. Now, perhaps, you needn’t wait for the secretary, but can go and announce me to the general.”

“I can’t announce a visitor like you without the secretary; besides, his excellency gave special orders just now that he was not to be disturbed for anyone while he is with the colonel. Gavril Ardalionovitch goes in without being announced.”

“An official?”

“Gavril Ardalionovitch? No. He is in the service of the company. You might put your bundle here.”

“I was meaning to, if I may. And I think I’ll take off my cloak too.”

“Of course, you couldn’t go in in your cloak.”

Myshkin stood up and hurriedly took off his cloak, remaining in a fairly decent, well-cut, though worn, short jacket. A steel chain was visible on his waistcoat, and on the chain was a silver Geneva watch.

Though the prince was a bit soft — the footman had made up his mind that he was so — yet he felt it unseemly to keep up a conversation with a visitor. Moreover, he could not help feeling a sort of liking for the prince, though from another point of view he aroused in him a feeling of strong and coarse indignation.

“And Madame Epanchin, when does she see visitors?” asked Myshkin, sitting down again in the same place.

“That’s not my business. She sees visitors at different times according to who they are. The dressmaker is admitted at eleven even, Gavril Ardalionovitch is admitted earlier than other people, even to early lunch.”

“Your rooms here are kept warmer than abroad,”

observed Myshkin, “but it’s warmer out of doors there than here. A Russian who is not used to it can hardly live in their houses in the winter.”

“Don’t they heat them?”

“No, and the houses are differently built, that is to say the stoves and windows are different.”

“Hm! Have you been away long?”

“Four years. But I was almost all the time at the same place in the country.”

“You’ve grown strange to our ways?”

“Yes, that’s true. Would you believe it, I am surprised to find I haven’t forgotten how to speak Russian. As I talk to you, I keep thinking ‘Why, I am speaking Russian nicely.’ Perhaps that’s why I talk so much. Ever since yesterday I keep longing to talk Russian.”

“Hm! Ha! Used you to live in Petersburg?” In spite of his efforts the lackey could not resist being drawn into such a polite and affable conversation.

“In Petersburg? I’ve scarcely been there at all, only on my way to other places. I knew nothing of the town before, and now I hear there’s so much new in it that anyone who knew it would have to get to know it afresh. People talk a great deal about the new Courts of Justice now.”

“Hm! . . . Courts of Justice. . . . It’s true there are Courts of Justice. And how is it abroad, are their courts better than ours?”

“I don’t know. I’ve heard a great deal that’s good about ours. We’ve no capital punishment, you know.”

“Why, do they execute people there then?”

“Yes. I saw it in France, at Lyons. Dr. Schneider took me with him.”

“Do they hang them?”

“No, in France they always cut off their heads.”

“Do they scream?”

“How could they? It’s done in an instant. They make the man lie down and then a great knife is brought down by a heavy, powerful machine, called the guillotine. . . . The head falls off before one has time to wink. The preparations are horrible. When they read the sentence, get the man ready, bind him, lead him to the scaffold — that’s what’s awful! Crowds assemble, even women, though they don’t like women to look on. . . .”

“It’s not a thing for them!”

“Of course not, of course not! Such a horrible thing! . . . The criminal was an intelligent, middle-

aged man, strong and courageous, called Legros. But I assure you, though you may not believe me, when he mounted the scaffold he was

weeping and was as white as paper. Isn’t it incredible? Isn’t it awful? Who cries for fear? I’d no idea that a grown man, not a child, a man who never cried, a man of forty-five, could cry for fear! What must be passing in the soul at such a moment; to what anguish it must be brought! It’s an outrage on the soul, that’s what it is! It is written ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ so because he has killed, are we to kill him? No, that’s impossible. It’s a month since I saw that, but I seem to see it before my eyes still. I’ve dreamt of it half a dozen times.”

Myshkin was quite moved as he spoke, a faint colour came into his pale face, though his voice was still gentle. The footman followed him with sympathetic interest, so that he seemed sorry for him to stop. He, too, was perhaps a man of imagination and strainings after thought.

“It’s a good thing at least that there is not much pain,” he observed, “when the head falls off.”

“Do you know,” Myshkin answered warmly, “you’ve just made that observation and every one says the same, and the guillotine was invented with that object. But the idea occurred to me at the time that perhaps it made it worse. That will seem to you an absurd and wild idea, but if one has some imagination, one may suppose even that. Think! if there were torture, for instance, there would be suffering and wounds, bodily agony, and so all that would distract the mind from spiritual suffering, so that one would only be tortured by wounds till one died. But the chief and worst pain may not be in the bodily suffering but in one’s knowing for certain that in an hour, and then in ten minutes, and then in half a minute, and then now, at the very moment, the soul will leave the body and that one will cease to be a man and that that’s bound to happen; the worst part of it is that it’s certain. When you lay your head down under the knife and hear the knife slide over your head, that quarter of a second is the most terrible of all. You know this is not only my fancy, many people have said the same. I believe that so thoroughly that I’ll tell you what I think. To kill for murder is a punishment incomparably worse than the crime itself. Murder by legal sentence is immeasurably more terrible than murder by brigands. Anyone murdered by brigands, whose throat is cut at night in a wood, or something of that sort, must surely hope to escape till the very last minute. There have been instances when a man has still hoped for escape, running or begging for mercy after his throat was cut. But in the other case all that last hope, which makes dying ten times as easy, is taken away for certain. There is the

sentence, and the whole awful torture lies in the fact that there is certainly no escape, and there is no torture in the world more terrible. You may lead a soldier out and set him facing the cannon in battle and fire at him and he'll still hope; but read a sentence of certain death over that same soldier, and he will go out of his mind or burst into tears. Who can tell whether human nature is able to bear this without madness? Why this hideous, useless, unnecessary outrage? Perhaps there is some man who has been sentenced to death, been exposed to this torture and has then been told 'you can go, you are pardoned.' Perhaps such a man could tell us. It was of this torture and of this agony that Christ spoke, too. No, you can't treat a man like that!"

Though the footman would not have been able to express himself like Myshkin, he understood most, if not all, of the speech; that was evident from the softened expression of his face.

"If you are so desirous of smoking," he observed, "you might be able to, perhaps, only you would have to make haste about it. For his excellency might ask for you all of a sudden and you wouldn't be here. You see the door under the stairs, go in there and there's a little room on the right; you can smoke there, only you must open the window, for it's against the rules. .

But Myshkin had not time to go and smoke. A young man with papers in his hands suddenly appeared in the anteroom. The footman began helping him off with his coat. The young man looked askance at Myshkin.

"This gentleman, Gavril Ardalionovitch," the footman began confidentially and almost familiarly, "announces himself as Prince Myshkin and a relation of the mistress; he has just arrived from abroad with the bundle in his hand, only. . . ."

Myshkin could not catch the rest. As the footman began to whisper, Gavril Ardalionovitch listened attentively and looked with great interest at the prince. He ceased listening at last and approached him impatiently.

"You are Prince Myshkin?" he asked with extreme politeness and cordiality.

He was a very good-looking, well-built young man, also about eight-and-twenty, of medium height, with fair hair, a small, Napoleonic beard and a clever and very handsome face. Only his smile, with all its affability, was a trifle too subtle; it displayed teeth too pearl-like and even; in spite of his gaiety and apparent good-nature, there was something too intent and searching in his eyes.

“He must look quite different when he is alone and perhaps he never laughs at all,” was what Myshkin felt.

The prince briefly explained all he could, saying almost the same as he had to the footman and before that to Rogozhin. Meanwhile Gavril Ardalionovitch seemed recalling something.

“Was it you,” he asked, “who sent a letter to Lizaveta Prokofyevna a year ago, or even less, from Switzerland, I think?”

“Yes.”

“Then they know about you here and will certainly remember you. You want to see his excellency? I’ll announce you at once. . . . He will be at liberty directly. Only you ought . . . you had better step into the waiting-room. . . . Why is the gentleman here?” he asked the servant sternly.

“I tell you, he wouldn’t himself . . .”

At that moment the door from the study was thrown open and a military man with a portfolio in his hand bowed himself out, talking loudly.

“You are there, Ganya,” cried a voice from the study, “come here.”

Gavril Ardalionovitch nodded to Myshkin and went hastily into the study.

Two minutes later the door was opened again and the musical and affable voice of Gavril Ardalionovitch was heard:

“Prince, please come in.”

CHAPTER 3

General ivan fyodorcmtch epanchin stood in the middle of the room and looked with extreme curiosity at the young man as he entered. He even took two steps towards him. Myshkin went up to him and introduced himself.

“Quite so,” said the general, “what can I do for you?”

“I have no urgent business, my object is simply to make your acquaintance. I should be sorry to disturb you, as I don’t know your arrangements, or when you see visitors. . . . But I have only just come from the station. . . . I’ve come from Switzerland.”

The general was on the point of smiling, but on second thought he checked himself. Then he thought again, screwed up his eyes, scrutinised his visitor again from head to foot, then rapidly motioned him to a chair, sat down himself a little on one side of him, and turned to him in impatient expectation. Ganya was standing in the corner at the bureau, sorting papers.

“I have little time for making acquaintances as a rule,” observed the general, “but as you have no doubt some object. . . .”

“That’s just what I expected,” Myshkin interrupted, “that you would look for some special object in my visit. But I assure you I have no personal object except the pleasure of making your acquaintance.”

“It is of course a great pleasure to me too, but life is not all play, you know, one has work sometimes as well. . . . Moreover, so far, I haven’t been able to discover anything in common between us . . . any reason, so to speak. . . .”

“There certainly is no reason, and very little in common, of course. For my being Prince Myshkin and Madame Epanchin’s being of the same family is no reason, to be sure. I quite understand that. And yet it’s only that that has brought me. It’s more than four years since I was in Russia, and I left in such a state — almost out of my mind. I knew nothing then and less than ever now. I need to know good people; there is also a matter of business I must attend to, and I don’t know to whom to apply. The thought struck me at Berlin that you were almost relations, and so I would begin with you; we might perhaps be of use to one another — you to me and I to you — if you were good people, and I had heard that you were good people.”

“I am very much obliged to you,” said the general, surprised. “Allow me to inquire where are you staying?”

“I am not staying anywhere as yet.”

“So you’ve come straight from the train to me? And . . . with luggage?”

“All the luggage I have is a little bundle of my linen, I’ve nothing else; I generally carry it in my hand. I shall have time to take a room this evening.”

“So you still intend to take a room at a hotel?”

“Oh, yes, of course.”

“From your words I was led to suppose that you had come to stay here.”

“That might be, but only on your invitation. I confess, though, I wouldn’t stay even on your invitation, not for any reason, but simply . . . because I’m like that.”

“Then it’s quite as well that I haven’t invited you, and am not going to invite you. Allow me, prince, so as to make things clear once for all: since we have agreed already that there can be no talk of relationship between us, though it would of course be very flattering for me, there’s nothing but . . .”

“Nothing but to get up and go?” Myshkin got up, laughing with positive mirthfulness, in spite of all the apparent difficulty of his position. “And would you believe it, general, although I know nothing of practical life, nor of the customs here, yet I felt sure that this was how it was bound to be. Perhaps it is better so. And you didn’t answer my letter, then. . . . Well, good-bye, and forgive me for troubling you.”

Myshkin’s face was so cordial at that moment, and his smile so free from the slightest shade of anything like concealed ill-will, that the general was suddenly arrested and seemed suddenly to look at his visitor from a different point of view; the change of attitude took place all in a minute.

“But do you know, prince,” he said in a quite different voice, “I don’t know you, after all, and Lizaveta Prokofyevna will perhaps like to have a look at one who bears her name. . . . Stay a little, if you will, and if you have time.”

“Oh, I’ve plenty of time, my time is entirely my own.” And Myshkin at once laid his soft round hat on the table. “I confess I was expecting that Lizaveta Prokofyevna might remember that I had written to her. Ybur servant, while I was waiting just now, suspected I’d come to beg for assistance. I noticed that, and no doubt you’ve given strict orders on the subject. But I’ve really not come for that, I’ve really only come to get to know people. But I am only afraid I am in your way, and that worries me.”

“Well, prince,” said the general, with a good-humoured smile, “if you really are the sort of person you seem to be, it will be pleasant to make your acquaintance, only I am a busy man, you see, and I’ll sit down again directly to look through and sign some things, and then I’m going to his grace’s, and then to the office, so though I am glad to see people . . . nice ones, that is, but . . . I am so sure, however, that you are a man of very good breeding, that . . . And how old are you, prince?”

“Twenty-six.”

“Oh, I supposed you were much younger.”

“Yes, I am told I look younger than my age. I shall soon learn not to be in your way, for I very much dislike being in the way. And I fancy, besides, that we seem such different people . . . through various circumstances, that we cannot perhaps have many points in common. But yet I don’t believe in that last idea myself, for it often only seems that there are no points in common, when there really are some . . . it’s just laziness that makes people classify themselves according to appearances, and fail to find anything in common. . . . But perhaps I am boring you? You seem ...”

“Two words; have you any means at all? Or do you intend to take up some kind of work? Excuse my asking.”

“Certainly, I quite appreciate and understand your question. I have for the moment no means and no occupation either, but I must have. The money I have had was not my own, it was given me for the journey by Schneider, the professor who has been treating me and teaching me in Switzerland. He gave me just enough for the journey, so that now I have only a few farthings left. There is one thing, though, and I need advice about it, but...”

“Tell me, how do you intend to live meanwhile, and what are your plans?” interrupted the general.

“I wanted to get work of some sort.”

“Oh, so you are a philosopher; but are you aware of any talents, of any ability whatever in yourself, of any sort by which you can earn your living? Excuse me again.”

“Oh, please don’t apologise. No, I fancy I’ve no talents or special abilities; quite the contrary in fact, for I am an invalid and have not had a systematic education. As to my living, I fancy...”

Again the general interrupted, and began questioning him again. The prince told him all that has been told already. It appeared that the general

had heard of his deceased benefactor, Pavlishtchev, and had even known him personally. Why Pavlishtchev had interested himself in his education the prince could not explain; possibly it was simply from a friendship of long standing with his father. Myshkin lost his parents when he was a small child. He had grown up and spent all his life in the country, as his health made country air essential. Pavlishtchev had put him in charge of some old ladies, relations of his, and had engaged for him first a governess and then a tutor. Myshkin said that, although he remembered everything, there was much in his past life he could not explain, because he had never fully understood it. Frequent attacks of his illness had made him almost an idiot (Myshkin used that word “idiot”). He said that Pavlishtchev had met in Berlin Professor Schneider, a Swiss, who was a specialist in such diseases and had an institution in Switzerland in the canton of Valais, where he had patients suffering even from idiocy and insanity, and treated them on his own method with cold water and gymnastics, training them also, and superintending their mental development generally. Pavlishtchev had sent him to Switzerland to this doctor nearly five years ago, and had died suddenly two years ago, making no provision for him. Schneider had kept him and continued his treatment for those two years, and although he had not completely cured him, he had greatly improved his condition. Finally, at his own wish, and in consequence of something that had happened, he had sent him now to Russia.

The qeneral was very much surprised. “And vou have no one in Russia, absolutely no one?” he asked.

“At the moment no one, but I hope ... I have received a letter...”

“Have you, anyway,” the general broke in, not hearing the last phrase, “have you at least been trained for something, and would your affliction not prevent your taking, for instance, some easy post?”

“Oh, it would certainly not prevent me. And I should be very glad of a post, for I want to see what I am fit for. I have been studying for the last four years without a break, though on his special system, not quite on the regular plan. And I managed to read a great deal of Russian, too.”

“Russian? Then you know the Russian grammar and can write without mistakes?”

“Oh, yes, perfectly.”

“That’s good; and your handwriting?”

“My writing is excellent. Perhaps I may call that a talent, I am quite a calligraphist. Let me write you something as a specimen,” said Myshkin warmly.

“By all means. It’s quite essential, in fact. .. .And I like your readiness, prince; you are very nice, I must say.”

“You’ve got such splendid writing materials, and what numbers of pens and pencils, and what splendid thick paper. . . . And what a jolly study! I know that landscape, it’s a view in Switzerland. I am sure the artist painted it from nature, and I am certain I’ve seen the place — it’s in the canton of Uri ...”

“Very probably, though it was bought here. Ganya, give the prince some paper; there are pens and paper, write at that little table. What’s that?” asked the general, turning to Ganya, who had meanwhile taken from his portfolio and handed him a large photograph. “Ah, Nastasya Filippovna! Did she send it you, she, she herself?” he asked Ganya eagerly and with great curiosity.

“She gave it me just now, when I went with my congratulations. I’ve been begging her for it a long time. I don’t know whether it wasn’t a hint on her part at my coming empty-handed on such a day,” added Ganya, with an unpleasant smile.

“Oh, no,” said the general with conviction. “What a way of looking at things you have! She’d not be likely to hint. . . and she is not mercenary either. Besides, what sort of present could you make her, that’s a matter of thousands! You might give her your portrait, perhaps? And, by the way, hasn’t she asked for your portrait yet?”

“No, she hasn’t; and perhaps she never will. You remember the party this evening, Ivan Fyodorovitch, of course? You are one of those particularly invited.”

“Oh, I remember, to be sure I remember, and I am coming. I should think so, it’s her twenty-fifth birthday. Hm! Do you know, Ganya, I don’t mind telling you a secret. Prepare yourself. She promised Afanasy Ivanovitch and me that at the party this evening she would say the final word: to be or not to be. So mind you are prepared.”

Ganya was suddenly so taken aback that he turned a little pale.

“Did she say that positively?” he asked, and there was a quaver in his voice.

“She gave us her promise the day before yesterday. We both pressed her till she gave way. But she asked me not to tell you beforehand.”

The general looked steadily at Ganya; he was evidently not pleased at his discomfiture.

“Remember, Ivan Fyodorovitch,” Ganya said, hesitating and uneasy, “that she has left me quite at liberty till she makes up her mind, and that even then the decision rests with me.”

“Do you mean to say you ... do you mean to say. .,” the general was suddenly alarmed.

“I mean nothing.”

“Good heavens, what sort of position will you put us in?”

“I haven’t refused, you know. I know I have expressed myself badly....”

“The idea of your refusing!” said the general with vexation, which he did not even care to conceal. “It’s not a question of your not refusing, my boy, but of your readiness, of the pleasure and the gladness with which you will receive her promise. . . . How are things going at home?”

“What does that matter? I decide everything at home. Only father is playing the fool as usual, but you know what a perfect disgrace he has become. I never speak to him, but I do keep him in check, and if it were not for my mother I would turn him out of the house. Mother does nothing but cry, of course; my sister is angry, but I told them straight out at last that I can do what I like with myself, and that I wish to be ..

. master in the house. I put it all very clearly to my sister, while my mother was there.”

“I still fail to understand it, my boy,” observed the general meditatively, with a slight motion of his hands and shrug of his shoulders. “Nina Alexandrovna kept sighing and moaning when she came the other day, you remember. What’s the matter? I asked. It appeared that it would mean dishonourto them. Where does the dishonour come in, allow me to ask? What can anyone reproach Nastasya Filippovna with? What can anyone bring up against her? Not that she has been living with Totsky, surely? That’s such nonsense, under the circumstances, especially. ‘You wouldn’t let her be introduced to your daughters,’ she says. Well, what next! She is a person! How can she fail to see, how can she fail to understand....”

“Her own position?” Ganya prompted the embarrassed general. “She does understand it; don’t be angry with her. But I did give her a good lesson not to meddle in other people’s affairs. Yet the only thing that keeps them

quiet at home is that the final word has not yet been said, but there's a storm brewing. If it's finally settled to-day, it will be sure to break out."

Myshkin heard all this conversation sitting in the corner writing his specimen copy. He finished, went to the table and presented his page.

"So that's Nastasya Filippovna!" he observed, looking attentively and curiously at the photograph. "Wonderfully beautiful," he added warmly at once.

The portrait was indeed that of a wonderfully beautiful woman. She had been photographed in a black silk dress of an extremely simple and elegant cut; her hair, which looked as though it were dark brown, was arranged in a simple homely style; her eyes were dark and deep, her brow was pensive; her expression was passionate, and, as it were, disdainful. She was rather thin in the face and perhaps pale.

Ganya and the general stared at Myshkin in surprise.

"Nastasya Filippovna? Surely you don't know Nastasya Filippovna already?" queried the general.

"Yes, I've only been twenty-four hours in Russia, and already I know a beauty like that," answered Myshkin.

And then he described his meetinq with Roqozhin,

and repeated the story he had told him.

"Here's something new!" said the general, uneasy again. He had listened to the story with the greatest attention and looked searchingly at Ganya.

"Most likely nothing but vulgar fooling," muttered Ganya, who was also somewhat disconcerted. "A young merchant's spree. I've heard something about him before."

"And so have I, my boy," put in the general. "Nastasya Filippovna told the whole story of the earrings at the time. But now it's a different matter. It may really mean millions and ... a passion. A low passion, perhaps, but still there's the note of passion about it, and we know what these gentlemen are capable of when they are infatuated. . . . Hm! ... I only hope nothing sensational will come of it," the general concluded thoughtfully.

"You are afraid of his millions?" asked Ganya with a smirk.

"And you are not, of course?"

"How did he strike you, prince," asked Ganya, turning suddenly to him. "Is he a serious person or simply a silly fool? What is your opinion?"

There was something peculiar taking place in Ganya as he was asking his question. It was as though a new and peculiar idea was kindled in his

brain, and flashed impatiently in his eyes. The general, who was simply and genuinely uneasy, also looked askance at the prince, but did not seem to expect much from his answers.

“I don’t know what to tell you,” answered Myshkin, “only I fancied that there was a great deal of passion in him, and even a sort of morbid passion. And he seems still quite ill, too. It’s quite possible that he’ll be laid up in a day or two again, especially if he begins carousing.”

“What? You fancied that?” the general caught at this idea.

“Yes.”

“Yet something sensational may well happen, not in a day or two, but before to-night, something may turn up perhaps to-day,” said Ganya to the general, with a grin.

“Hm! ... Of course. . . . Very likely, and then it will all depend on how it strikes her,” said the general.

“And you know what she is like sometimes?”

“Like what, do you mean?” the general pounced at him, roused to extreme perturbation. “Listen, Ganya, please don’t contradict her much to-day... and try to be, you know ... in fact, to please her. . . Hm! . . . Why are you grinning like that? Listen, Gavril Ardalionovitch, it won’t be out of place, not at all so, to ask now what are we working for? \bu understand that as regards any personal advantage to me in the matter, I am quite at rest; in one way or another I shall settle it. Totsky has made up his mind once for all, so I am perfectly secure, and therefore all I desire now is simply your advantage. \bu can see that for yourself. Can you mistrust me? Besides, you are a man ... a man . . . in fact a man of sense, and I was relying upon you . . . since in the present case . . . that... that...”

“That’s the chief thing,” put in Ganya again, coming to the assistance of the hesitating general, and twisting his lips into a malignant smile, which he did not even try to conceal. He looked the general straight in the face with his feverish eyes, as though he wanted him to read in his eyes all that was in his mind. The general crimsoned and was angry.

“Quite so, sense is the chief thing!” he assented, looking sharply at Ganya. “You are a funny person,

Gavril Ardalionovitch! “Vbu seem pleased about this young merchant, I observe, as though he might be a way out of it for you. But in this affair it’s just by your sense you ought to have been guided from the first. In this affair you ought to understand and to act honestly and straightforwardly

with both sides, or else to have given warning beforehand, to avoid compromising others, especially as you've had plenty of time to do so, and there's still time, indeed, now," (the general raised his eyebrows significantly) "although there are only a few hours left. Do you understand? Do you understand? Will you or won't you? If you won't, say so — and please yourself. Nobody is coercing you, Gavril Ardalionovitch, nobody is dragging you into a trap, that is, if you look on it as a trap."

"I will," said Ganya in a low voice, but firmly. He dropped his eyes and sank into gloomy silence.

The general was satisfied. He had been carried away by anger, but he evidently regretted that he had gone so far. He turned suddenly to Myshkin, and his face seemed to betray an uneasy consciousness that the prince had been there and had at least heard what was said. But he was instantly reassured; a glance at Myshkin was enough to reassure anyone.

"Oho!" cried the general, looking at the specimen of the handwriting presented him by Myshkin. "That's a prize copy! And a splendid one! Look, Ganya, what skill!"

On the thick sheet of vellum the prince had written in mediaeval Russian characters the sentence, "The humble Abbot Pafnuty has put his hand thereto."

"That," Myshkin explained with extraordinary pleasure and eagerness, "that's the precise signature of the Abbot Pafnuty, copied from a fourteenth-century manuscript. Our old abbots and bishops used to sign their names beautifully, and sometimes with what taste, with what exactitude! Haven't you Pogodin's collection, general? And here I've written in another style; this is the large round French writing of last century, some letters were quite different. It was the writing of the market-place, the writing of professional scribes imitated from their samples. I had one. You'll admit that it has points. Look at those round o's and a's. I have adapted the French writing to the Russian alphabet, which was very difficult, but the result is successful. There's another splendid and original writing — see the phrase 'Perseverance overcomes all obstacles' — that's Russian handwriting, a professional or perhaps military scribe's; that's how government instructions to an important person are written. That's a round handwriting, too, a splendid black writing, written thick but with remarkable taste. A specialist in penmanship would disapprove of those flourishes, or rather those attempts at flourishes, those unfinished tails — you see them — but

yet you know they give it a character, and you really see the very soul of the military scribe peeping out in them, the longing to break out in some way and to find expression for his talent, and the military collar tight round his neck, and discipline, too, is in the handwriting — it's lovely! I was so struck with a specimen of it lately. I came on it by chance, and fancy where — in Switzerland! Now this is a simple, ordinary, English handwriting. Art can go no further, it's all exquisite, tiny beads, pearls; it's all finished. But here is a variation, and again a French one, I got it from a French commercial traveller. It's the same style as the English, but the black strokes are a trifle blacker and thicker than in the English, and you see the proportion is spoiled. Notice, too, the oval is a trifle rounder, and the flourish is admitted, too, and a flourish is a most perilous thing! A flourish requires extraordinary taste, but if only it's successful, if symmetry is attained, the writing is so incomparable that one may simply fall in love with it."

"Oho! but you go into such niceties!" laughed the general. "you are not simply a good penman, my dear fellow, you are an artist! Eh, Ganya?"

"Marvellous," said Ganya, "and he recognizes his vocation too," he added, with a sarcastic laugh.

"You may laugh, but there's a career in it," said the general. "Do you know, prince, to what personage we'll get you to write now? Why, you can count on thirty-five roubles a month from the start. But it's half-past twelve," he added, glancing at the clock. "To business, prince, for I must make haste and perhaps I may not see you again to-day. Sit down for a minute. I have explained already that I cannot see you very often, but I am sincerely anxious to help you a little, a little of course, that is, in what's essential, and then for the rest you must do as you please. I'll find you a job in the office, not a difficult one, but needing accuracy. Now for the next thing. In the home, that is, the family of Gavril Ardalionovitch Ivolgin, this young friend of mine with whom I beg you to become acquainted — his mother and sister have set apart two or three furnished rooms, and let them with board and attendance to specially recommended lodgers. I am sure Nina Alexandrovna will accept my recommendation. For you it will be a godsend, prince, for you will not be alone, but, so to speak, in the bosom of a family, and to my thinking you ought not to be alone at first in such a town as Petersburg. Nina Alexandrovna and Varvara Ardalionovna, her daughter, are ladies for whom I have the greatest respect. Nina Alexandrovna is the wife of a retired general who was a comrade of mine

when I was first in the service, though owing to circumstances I've broken off all relations with him. That doesn't prevent me however, from respecting him in a certain sense. I tell you all this, prince, that you may understand that I recommend you personally, and so I make myself in a sense responsible for you. The terms are extremely moderate, and I hope that your salary will soon be quite sufficient to meet them. Of course a man wants pocket-money, too, if only a little, but you won't be angry with me, prince, if I tell you that you'd be better off without pocket-money, and, indeed, without any money in your pocket. I speak from the impression I have of you. But as your purse is quite empty now, allow me to lend you twenty-five roubles for your immediate expenses. \bu can repay me afterwards, of course, and if you are as sincere and genuine a person as you appear to be, no misunderstandings can arise between us. I have a motive for interesting myself in your welfare; you will know of it later. \bu see I am perfectly straightforward with you. I hope, Ganya, you've nothing against the prince's being installed in your house?"

"Oh, quite the contrary. And my mother will be delighted," Ganya assented politely and obligingly.

"You've only one room let, I think. That, what's his name ... Ferd ... ter..."

"Ferdyshtchenko."

"Oh, yes. I don't like your Ferdyshtchenko, he is a dirty clown. And I can't understand why Nastasya Filippovna encourages him so? Is he really a relation of hers?"

"Oh, no, that's only a joke! There's not a trace of relationship."

"Well, hang him! Well, prince, are you satisfied?"

"Thank you, general, you have been very kind to me, especially as I haven't even asked for help; I don't say that from pride; I really didn't know where to lay my head. It's true Rogozhin invited me just now."

"Rogozhin? Oh, no, I would advise you as a father, or, if you prefer, as a friend, to forget Mr. Rogozhin. And altogether I would advise you to stick to the family which you are entering."

"Since you are so kind," began the prince, "I have one piece of business. I have received the news ..."

"Excuse me," broke in the general, "I haven't a minute more now. I'll go and tell Lizaveta Prokofyevna about you; if she wishes to see you at once (I will try to give her a good impression of you) I advise you to make use of

the opportunity and gain her good graces, for Lizaveta Prokofyevna can be of great use to you; you bear her name. If she doesn't wish to, there's nothing for it, some other time perhaps. And you, Ganya, look through these accounts meantime; Fedoseyev and I have been struggling with them. You mustn't forget to include them."

The general went out, and so Myshkin did not succeed in telling him about the business which he had four times essayed to speak of in vain. Ganya lighted a cigarette and offered one to Myshkin. The latter accepted it, but refrained from conversation for fear of interrupting him. He began looking about the study. But Ganya scarcely glanced at the sheet covered with figures, which the general had indicated to him. He was preoccupied; his smile, his expression, his thoughtfulness weighed on Myshkin even more when they were left alone. All at once Ganya approached Myshkin, who was at that moment standing before the portrait of Nastasya Filippovna, gazing at it.

"So you admire a woman like that, prince?" he asked him suddenly, looking searchingly at him and as though with some peculiar intention.

"It's a wonderful face," he answered, "and I feel sure her story is not an ordinary one. The face is cheerful, but she has passed through terrible suffering, hasn't she? Her eyes tell one that, the cheek bones, those points under her eyes. It's a proud face, awfully proud, but I don't know whether she is kindhearted. Ah, if she were! That would redeem it all!"

"And would you marry such a woman?" Ganya went on, his feverish eyes fixed upon him.

"I can't marry any one, I am an invalid," said Myshkin.

"And would Rogozhin marry her? What do you think?"

"Marry her! He might to-morrow; I dare say he'd marry her and in a week perhaps murder her."

He had no sooner uttered this than Ganya shuddered so violently that Myshkin almost cried out.

"What's the matter?" he asked, seizing his hand.

"Your excellency! His excellency begs you to come to her excellency," the footman announced, appearing at the door.

Myshkin followed the footman.

CHAPTER 4

The three daughters of General Epanchin were blooming, healthy, well-grown young women, with magnificent shoulders, well-developed chests and strong, almost masculine, arms; and naturally with their health and strength they were fond of a good dinner and had no desire to conceal the fact. Their mamma sometimes looked askance at the frankness of their appetite, but though her views were always received with a show of respect by her daughters, some of her opinions had long ceased to carry the unquestioned authority of early years; so much so that the three girls, always acting in concert, were continually too strong for their mother, and for the sake of her own dignity she found it more expedient to yield without opposition. Her temperament, it is true, often prevented her from following the dictates of good sense; Lizaveta Prokofyevna was becoming more capricious and impatient every year. She was even becoming rather eccentric, but as her well-trained and submissive husband was always at hand, her pent-up moods were usually vented upon him, and then domestic harmony was restored and all went well again.

Madame Epanchin herself had not lost her appetite, however, and as a rule she joined her daughters at half-past twelve at a substantial lunch almost equivalent to a dinner. The young ladies drank a cup of coffee earlier, in their beds as soon as they waked, at ten o’clock precisely. They liked this custom and had adopted it once for all. At half-past twelve the table was laid in the little dining-room next to their mamma’s apartments, and occasionally when the general had time, he joined this family party at lunch. Besides tea, coffee, cheese, honey, butter, a special sort of fritters beloved by the lady of the house, cutlets, and so on, strong hot soup was also served.

On the morning when our story begins, the whole family was gathered together in the dining-room waiting for the general, who had promised to appear at half-past twelve. If he had been even a moment late, he would have been sent for, but he made his appearance punctually. Going up to his wife to wish her good-morning and kiss her hand, he noticed something special in her face. And although he had had a presentiment the night before that it would be so, owing to an “incident” (his favourite expression), and had been uneasy on this score as he fell asleep, yet now he was alarmed

again. His daughters went up to kiss him; though they were not angry with him, there was something special about them too. The general had, it is true, become excessively suspicious of late. But as he was a husband and father of experience and dexterity, he promptly took his measures.

It will perhaps help to make our story clearer, if we break off here and introduce some direct explanations of the circumstances and relations, in which we find General Epanchin's family at the beginning of our tale. We have just said that the general, though not a man of much education, but, as he expressed it, a self-taught man, was an experienced husband and a dexterous father; he had, for instance, made it a principle not to hurry his daughters into marriage — that is, not to pester and worry them by over anxiety for their happiness, as so many parents unconsciously and naturally do, even in the most sensible families in which grown-up daughters are accumulating. He even succeeded in bringing over Lizaveta Prokofyevna to his principle, though it was difficult to carry out — difficult because it was unnatural. But the general's arguments were exceedingly weighty and founded on palpable facts. Moreover, left to their own will and decision, the girls would inevitably be bound to realise the position themselves, and then things would go smoothly, for they would set to work willingly, give up being capricious and excessively fastidious. All that would be left for the parents to do would be to keep an unflagging and, as far as possible, unnoticeable watch over them, that they might make no strange choice and show no unnatural inclination; and then to seize a fitting moment to come to their assistance with all their strength and influence to bring things to a finish. The mere fact, too, that their fortune and social consequence was growing every year in qeometrical progression made the qirls qain in the marriage market as time went on.

But all these incontestable facts were confronted by another fact. The eldest daughter, Alexandra, suddenly and quite unexpectedly indeed (as always happens) reached the age of twenty-five. Almost at the same moment Afanasy Ivanovitch Totsky, a man in the best society, of the highest connexions, and extraordinary wealth, again expressed his long-cherished desire to marry. He was a man of five-and-fifty, of artistic temperament and extraordinary refinement. He wanted to make a good marriage; he was a great admirer of feminine beauty. As he had been for some time on terms of the closest friendship with General Epanchin, especially since they had both taken part in the same financial enterprises, he had broached the subject, so

to speak, by asking his friendly advice and guidance. Would a proposal of marriage to one of his daughters be considered? A break in the quiet and happy course of the general's family life was evidently at hand.

The beauty of the family was, as we have said already, unquestionably the youngest, Aglaia. But even Totsky, a man of extraordinary egoism, realised that it was useless for him to look in that direction and that Aglaia was not for him. Perhaps the somewhat blind love and the over-ardent affection of the sisters exaggerated the position, but they had settled among themselves in a most simple-hearted fashion that Aglaia's fate was not to be an ordinary fate, but the highest possible ideal of earthly bliss. Aglaia's future husband was to be a paragon of all perfections and achievements, as well as the possessor of vast wealth. The sisters had even agreed between themselves, without saying much about it, that if necessary they would sacrifice their interests for the sake of Aglaia. Her dowry was to be colossal, unheard-of. The parents knew of this compact on the part of the two elder sisters, and so when Totsky asked advice, they scarcely doubted that one of the elder sisters would consent to crown their hopes, especially as Afanasy Ivanovitch would not be exacting on the score of dowry. The general with his knowledge of life attached the greatest value of Totsky's proposal from the first. As owing to certain special circumstances, Totsky was obliged to be extremely circumspect in his behaviour, and was merely feeling his way, the parents only presented the question to their daughters as a remote proposition. They received in response a satisfactory, though not absolutely definite, assurance that the eldest, Alexandra, might perhaps not refuse him. She was a good-natured and sensible girl, very easy to get on with, though she had a will of her own. It was conceivable that she was perfectly ready to marry Totsky; and if she gave her word, she would keep to it honourably. She was not fond of show, with her there would be no risk of violent change and disturbance, and she might well bring sweetness and peace into her husband's life. She was very handsome, though not particularly striking. What could be better for Totsky?

"Vfet the project was still at the tentative stage. It had been mutually agreed in a friendly way between Totsky and the general that they should take no final and irrevocable step for a time. The parents had not even begun to speak quite openly on the subject to their daughters; there were signs of a discordant element: Madame Epanchin, the mother, was for some reason evincing dissatisfaction, and that was a matter of great importance.

There was one serious obstacle, one complicated and troublesome factor, which might ruin the whole business completely.

This complicated and troublesome “factor” had, as Totsky himself expressed it, come on to the scene a long time — some eighteen years — before.

Afanasy Ivanovitch had one of his finest estates in a central province of Russia. His nearest neighbour was the owner of a small and poverty-stricken property, and was a man remarkable for his continual and almost incredible ill-luck. He was a retired officer of good family — better, in fact, than Totsky’s own — by name Filip Alexandrovitch Barashkov. Burdened with debts and mortgages, he managed after working fearfully hard, almost like a peasant, to get his land into a more or less satisfactory condition. At the smallest success he was extraordinarily elated. Radiant with hope, he went for a few days to the little district town to see and, if possible, come to an agreement with one of his chief creditors. He had been two days in the town when the elder of his little village rode in with his beard burnt off and his cheek scarred, and informed him that the place had been burnt down the day before, iust at midday, and “that his lady had graciously been burnt, but his children were unhurt.” This surprise was too much even for Barashkov, accustomed as he was to the buffeting of fortune. He went out of his mind and died in delirium a month later. The ruined property with its beggared peasants was sold to pay his debts. Afanasy Ivanovitch Totsky in the generosity of his heart undertook to bring up and educate Barashkov’s children, two little girls of six and seven. They were brought up with the children of Totsky’s steward, a retired government clerk with a large family, and, moreover, a German. The younger child died of whooping cough, and little Nastasya was left alone. Totsky lived abroad and soon completely forgot her existence. Five years later it occurred to him on his way elsewhere to look in on his estate, and he noticed in the family of his German steward a charming child, a girl about twelve, playful, sweet, clever and promising to become extremely beautiful. On that subject Afanasy Ivanovitch was an unerring connoisseur. He only spent a few days on his estate, but he made arrangements for a great change in the girl’s education. A respectable and cultivated elderly Swiss governess, experienced in the higher education of girls and competent to teach various subjects besides French, was engaged for her. She was installed in Totsky’s country house, and little Nastasya began to receive an education on the

broadest lines. Just four years later this education was over; the governess left, and a lady who lived near another estate of Totsky's in another remote province came, by his instructions, and took Nastasya away. On this estate there was also a small recently built wooden house. It was very elegantly furnished, and the place was appropriately called "The Pleasaunce." The lady brought Nastasya straight to this little house, and as she was a childless widow, living only three-quarters of a mile away, she installed herself in the house with her. An old housekeeper and an experienced young maid were there to wait on Nastasya. In the house she found musical instruments, a choice library for a young girl, pictures, engravings, pencils, paints and brushes, a thoroughbred lap-dog, and within a fortnight Afanasy Ivanovitch himself made his appearance. . . . Since then he had been particularly fond of that remote property in the steppes and had spent two or three months there every summer. So passed a fairly long time — four years, calmly and happily in tasteful and elegant surroundings.

It happened once at the beginning of winter, four months after one of Totsky's summer visits, which had on that occasion lasted only a fortnight, a rumour was circulated, or rather reached Nastasya Filippovna, that Afanasy Ivanovitch was going to be married in Petersburg to a beautiful heiress of good family — that he was, in fact, making a wealthy and brilliant match. The rumour turned out to be not quite correct in some details. The supposed marriage was only a project, still very vague; but it was a turning-point in Nastasya Filippovna's life. She displayed great determination and quite unexpected strength of will. Without wasting time on reflection, she left her little house in the country and suddenly made her appearance in Petersburg, entirely alone, going straight to Totsky. He was amazed, and, as soon as he began to speak to her, he found almost from the first word that he had completely to abandon the language, the intonations, the logic, the subjects of the agreeable and refined conversations that had been so successful hitherto — everything,

everything! He saw sitting before him an entirely different woman, not in the least like the girl he had left only that July.

This new woman turned out, in the first place, to know and understand a great deal — so much that one could not but marvel where she had got such knowledge and how she could have arrived at such definite ideas. (Surely not from her young girl's library!) What was more, she understood many things in their legal aspect and had a positive knowledge, if not of the

world, at least of how some things are done in the world; moreover, she had not the same character as before. There was nothing of the timidity, the schoolgirlish uncertainty, sometimes fascinating in its original simplicity and playfulness, sometimes melancholy and dreamy, astonished, mistrustful, tearful and uneasy.

“Vfes, it was a new and surprising creature who laughed in his face and stung him with venomous sarcasms, openly declaring that she had never had any feeling in her heart for him except contempt — contempt and loathing which had come upon her immediately after her first surprise. This new woman announced that it was a matter of absolute indifference to her if he married at once any one he chose, but she had come to prevent his making that marriage, and would not allow it from spite, simply because she chose not to, and that therefore so it must be— “if only that I may have a good laugh at you, for I too want to laugh now.”

That at least was what she said; she did not perhaps utter all that was in her mind. But while this new Nastasya Filippovna laughed and talked like this, Afanasy Ivanovitch was deliberating on the position and, as far as he could, collecting his somewhat shattered ideas. This deliberation took him some time; he was weighing things and making up his mind for a fortnight. But at the end of that fortnight he had reached a decision.

Afanasy Ivanovitch was at that time a man of fifty, his character was set and his habits formed. His position in the world and in society had long been established on the most secure foundations. He loved and prized himself, his peace and comfort, above everything in the world, as befits a man of the highest breeding. No destructive, no dubious element could be admitted into that splendid edifice which his whole life had been building up. On the other hand, his experience and deep insight told Totsky very quickly and quite correctly that he had to do with a creature quite out of the ordinary — a creature who would not only threaten but certainly act, and, what was more, would stick at nothing, especially as she prized nothing in life and so could not be tempted. Evidently there was something else in it: there were indications of a chaotic ferment at work in mind and heart, something like romantic indignation — God knows why and with whom! — an insatiable and exaggerated passion of contempt; in fact, something highly ridiculous and inadmissible in good society, and bound to be a regular nuisance to any well-bred man. Of course, with Totsky’s wealth and connexions he could at once have got rid of the annoyance by some trifling

and quite pardonable piece of villainy. On the other hand, it was evident that Nastasya Filippovna was hardly in a position to do much harm, in a legal sense, for instance. She could not even create a scandal of any consequence, because it was so easy to circumvent her. But all that only applied if Nastasya Filippovna should think fit to behave as people do behave in such circumstances without departing too widely from the regular course. But here Totsky's keen eye served him well: he was clever enough to see that Nastasya Filippovna fully realised that she could not harm him by means of the law, but that there was something very different in her mind and ... in her flashing eyes. As she valued nothing and herself least of all (it needed much intelligence and insight in a sceptical and worldly cynic, such as he was, to realise that she had long ceased to care what became of her, and to believe in the earnestness of this feeling), Nastasya Filippovna was quite capable of facing hopeless ruin and disgrace, prison and Siberia, only to humiliate the man for whom she cherished such an inhuman aversion. Afanasy Ivanovitch never concealed the fact that he was somewhat a coward, or rather perhaps highly conservative. If he had known, for instance, that he would be murdered at the altar on his wedding day, or that anything of that sort, exceedingly unseemly, ridiculous, impossible in society, would happen, he would certainly have been alarmed; but not so much of being killed or wounded, or of having some one spit in his face in public, or of anything of that kind,

as of the unnatural and vulgar form of the insult. And that was just what Nastasya Filippovna threatened, though she said nothing about it. He knew that she had studied him and understood him thoroughly, and so knew how to wound him. And as his marriage had been merely a project, Afanasy Ivanovitch submitted and gave way to Nastasya Filippovna.

There was another consideration which helped him to this decision: it was difficult to imagine how unlike in face this new Nastasya Filippovna was to the old one. She had been only a very pretty young girl, but now . . . Totsky could not forgive himself for having failed for four years to see what was in that face. Much no doubt was due to the inward and sudden change in their relative attitudes. He remembered, however, that there had been moments even in the past when strange ideas had come into his mind, looking at those eyes. There was a promise in them of something deep. The look in those eyes seemed dark and mysterious. They seemed to be asking a riddle. He had often wondered during the last two years at the change in

Nastasya Filippovna's complexion. She had become fearfully pale and, stranqe to say, was even handsomer for it. Totsky, like all gentlemen who have lived freely in their day, felt contemptuously how cheaply he had obtained this virginal soul. But of late he had been rather shaken in this feeling. He had in any case made up his mind in the previous spring to lose no time in marrying Nastasya Filippovna off with a good dowry to some sensible and decent fellow serving in another province. (Oh, how horribly and maliciously Nastasya Filippovna laughed at the idea now!) But now Afanasy Ivanovitch, fascinated by her novelty, positively imagined that he might again make use of this woman. He decided to settle Nastasya Filippovna in Petersburg and to surround her with luxury and comfort. If not one thing, he would have the other. He might even gratify his vanity and gain glory in a certain circle by means of her. Afanasy Ivanovitch greatly prized his reputation in that line.

Five years of life in Petersburg had followed, and of course many things had become clear in that time. Totsky's position was not an agreeable one. The worst of it was that, having been once intimidated, he could never quite regain his confidence. He was afraid and could not even tell why he was afraid — he was simply afraid of Nastasya Filippovna. For some time during the first two years he suspected that Nastasya Filippovna wanted to marry him herself, but did not speak from her extraordinary pride and was obstinately waiting for him to make an offer. It would have been a strange demand, but he had become suspicious; he frowned and brooded unpleasantly. To his great and (such is the heart of man!) somewhat unpleasant surprise, he was convinced by something that happened that, even if he made the offer, he would not be accepted. It was a long while before he could understand this. It seemed to him that there was only one possible explanation: that the pride of the "offended and fantastic woman" had reached such a pitch of frenzy that she preferred to express her scorn once for all by refusing him, to securing her future position and mounting to inaccessible heights of grandeur. The worst of it was that Nastasya Filippovna got the upper hand of him in a shocking way. She was not influenced by mercenary considerations either, however large the bait, and though she accepted the luxury offered her, she lived very modestly and had scarcely saved anything during those five years. Totsky ventured upon very subtle tactics to break his chains; he began, with skilful assistance, trying to tempt her with all sorts of temptations of the most idealistic kind. But the

ideals in the form of princes, hussars, secretaries from the embassies, poets, novelists, even Socialists — none of them made the least impression on Natasya Filippovna, as though she had a stone for a heart and her feelings had been withered and dried up for ever. She lived a rather secluded life, reading and even studying; she was fond of music. She had few friends; she associated with the wives of petty officials, poor and ridiculous people, was acquainted with two actresses and some old women, was very fond of the family of a respectable teacher, and the numerous members of this family loved her and gave her a warm welcome. She would often have five or six friends to see her in the evening. Totsky visited her frequently and regularly. General Epanchin had with some difficulty made her acquaintance of late. At the same time a young government clerk, called Ferdyshtchenko, a drunken and ill-bred buffoon, who affected to be funny, had made her acquaintance with no difficulty whatever. Another of her circle was a strange young man, called Ptitsyn, modest, precise and of highly polished manners, who had risen from poverty and become a moneylender. At last Gavril Ardalionovitch was introduced to her. . . . Nastasya Filippovna ended by gaining a strange reputation. Every one had heard of her beauty, but that was all. No one could boast of her favours, no one had anything to tell of her. This reputation, her education, her elegant manners, her wit, all confirmed Totsky in a certain plan of his. It was at this moment that General Epanchin began to take so active a part in the affair.

When Totsky had so courteously approached him, asking for his advice as a friend in regard to one of his daughters, he had in the noblest way made the general a full and candid confession. He told him that he had made up his mind not to stick at any means to gain his freedom; that he would not feel safe even if Nastasya Filippovna assured him herself that she would leave him in peace for the future; that words meant little to him, that he needed the fullest guarantees. They talked things over and determined to act toqether. It was decided to try the qentlest means first and to play, so to speak, on the “finer chords of her heart.” They went together to Nastasya Filippovna, and Totsky spoke straight away of the intolerable misery of his position. He blamed himself for everything; he said frankly that he could not repent of his original offence, for he was an inveterate sensualist and could not control himself, but that now he wanted to marry, and the whole possibility of this highly suitable and distinguished marriage was in her hands: in a word, he rested all his hopes on her generous heart. Then

General Epanchin, as the father, began to speak and he talked reasonably, avoiding sentimentality. He only mentioned that he fully admitted her right to decide Afanasy Ivanovitch's fate, and made a clever display of his own humility, pointing out that the fate of his daughter, and perhaps of his two other daughters, was now depending on her decision. To Nastasya Filippovna's question what it was they wanted of her, Totsky with the same bald directness confessed that she had given him such a scare five years before that he could not feel quite safe even now till Nastasya Filippovna was herself married. He added at once that this proposition would, of course, be absurd on his part, if he had not some foundation for it. He had observed and knew for a fact that a young man of good birth and respectable family, Gavril Ardalionovitch Ivolgin, who was an acquaintance she welcomed in her house, loved her and had long loved her passionately, and would of course give half his life for the bare hope of winning her affection. Gavril Ardalionovitch had confessed as much to him — Totsky — in a friendly way long ago, in the simplicity of his pure young heart, and Ivan Fyodorovitch, who had befriended the young man, had long known of his passion. Finally, he said that if he — Totsky — were not mistaken, Nastasya Filippovna must herself have long been aware of the young man's love; and he fancied indeed that she looked on it indulgently. It was of course, he said, harder for him than any one to speak of this; but if Nastasya Filippovna would allow that he — Totsky — had at least some thought for her good, as well as a selfish desire to arrange for his own comfort, she would realise that it had for some time been strange and painful to him to see her loneliness, which was all due to vague depression and complete disbelief in the possibility of a new life, which might spring up with new aims in love and marriage; that it was throwing away talents perhaps of the most brilliant, a wanton brooding over grief — that it was, in fact, a sort of sentimentality unworthy of the good sense and noble heart of Nastasya Filippovna. Repeating that it was harder for him than for any one to speak of it, he finished up by saying he could not help hoping that Nastasya Filippovna would not meet him with contempt, if he expressed a genuine desire to guarantee her future and offered her the sum of seventy-five thousand roubles. He added in explanation that that sum was already secured to her in his will; that, in fact, it was not a question of compensation of any sort . . . though, indeed, why refuse to admit and forgive in him a human desire to do something to ease his conscience — and so on and so

on, as is always said in such circumstances. Afanasy Ivanovitch spoke elegantly and at length. He added, as though in passing, the interesting information that he had not dropped a word about the seventy-five thousand, and that no one, not even Ivan Fyodorovitch sitting here, knew of it.

Nastasya Filippovna's answer astounded the two friends. She showed no trace of her former irony, her former hostility and hatred, of the laughter which even in recollection sent a cold shiver down Totsky's spine; on the contrary, she seemed glad of the opportunity of speaking to some one with frankness and friendliness. She acknowledged that she had long been wanting to ask for friendly advice and that only her pride had hindered her; but once the ice was broken, nothing could be better. At first, with a mournful smile and then with a gay and playful laugh, she confessed that there could in any case be no such storm as in the past; that she had for some time past looked at things differently, and that, although there was no change in her heart, she had been compelled to accept many things as accomplished facts; that what was done could not be undone, that what was past was over, so much so that she wondered at Afanasy Ivanovitch's still being uneasy. Then she turned to Ivan Fyodorovitch and with a very deferential air said that she had long ago heard a great deal about his daughters and entertained a profound and sincere respect for them. The very idea that she could be in any way of service to them would be a source of pride and qladness to her. It was true that she was depressed and dreary, very dreary; Afanasy Ivanovitch had guessed her dreams; she longed to begin a new life, finding new aims in children and home-life, if not in love. As for Gavril Ardalionovitch, she could scarcely speak. She thought it was true that he loved her; she believed that she too might care for him, if she could believe in the reality of his attachment; but even if he were sincere, he was very young; it was hard for her to make up her mind. What she liked best of all about him was that he was working and supporting his family without assistance. She had heard that he was a man of energy and pride, eager to make his way, to make his career. She had heard too that his mother, Nina Alexandrovna, was an excellent woman, highly respected; that his sister, Varvara Ardalionovna, was a very remarkable girl of great character; she had heard a great deal about her from Ptitsyn. She had heard that they had borne their misfortunes bravely. She would be very glad to make their acquaintance, but it was a question whether they would welcome

her into their family. She would say nothing against the possibility of such a marriage, but she must think more about it; she would beg them not to hurry her. As for the seventy-five thousand, there was no need for Afanasy Ivanovitch to make so much of speaking about it. She knew the value of money and would certainly take it. She thanked Afanasy Ivanovitch for his delicacy in not having spoken of the money to Gavril Ardalionovitch, or even to the general; but why should not the young man know about it? There was no need for her to be ashamed of accepting this money on entering their family. In any case she had no intention of apologising to any one for anything, and wished that to be known. She would not marry Gavril Ardalionovitch until she was certain that neither he nor his family had any hidden feeling about her. In any case she did not consider herself to blame in any way; Gavril Ardalionovitch had much better know on what footing she had been living for those five years in Petersburg, on what terms she had been with Afanasy Ivanovitch, and whether she had laid by any money. If she accepted the money now it was not as payment for the loss of her maidenly honour, for which she was in no way to blame, but simply as a compensation for her ruined life.

She grew so hot and angry saying this (which was very natural, however) that General Epanchin was much pleased, and considered the matter settled. But Totsky, having once been so thoroughly scared, was not quite confident even now, and was for a long time afraid that there might be a snake under the flowers. But negotiations had been opened; the point on which the whole scheme of the two friends rested, the possibility of Nastasya Filippovna's being attracted by Ganya, became more and more clear and definite, so that even Totsky began to believe at times in the possibility of success. Meanwhile Nastasya Filippovna came to an understanding with Ganya; very little was said, as though the subject were painful to her delicacy. She recognised and sanctioned his love, however, but insisted that she would not bind herself in anyway; that she reserved for herself till the marriage (if marriage there were) the right to say no up to the very last moment, and she gave Ganya equal freedom. Ganya soon afterwards learned by a lucky chance that Nastasya Filippovna knew in full detail all about his family's hostility to the marriaqe and to her personally, and the scenes at home to which it gave rise. She had not spoken of this to him, though he was expecting it daily.

There is much more to be told of all the gossip and complications arising from the proposed match and the negotiations for it; but we have been anticipating things already, and some of these complications were no more than vague rumours. It was said, for instance, that Totsky had found out that Nastasya Filippovna had some undefined and secret understanding with the general's daughters — a wildly improbable story. But another story he could not help believing, and it haunted him like a nightmare. He heard for a fact that Nastasya Filippovna was fully aware that Ganya was marrying her only for money; that Ganya had a bad, mercenary, impatient, envious heart, and that his vanity was grotesque and beyond all bounds; that though Ganya had really been passionately striving to conquer Nastasya Filippovna, yet after the two elder men had determined to exploit the incipient passion on both sides for their own purposes, and to buy Ganya by selling to him Nastasya Filippovna in lawful wedlock, he began to hate her like a nightmare. Passion and hatred were strangely mingled in his soul, and although he did after painful hesitation give his consent to marry the "disreputable hussy," he swore in his heart to make her pay bitterly for it and "to take it out of her" afterwards, as he was said to have expressed it himself. It was rumoured Nastasya Filippovna knew all this and had some secret plan up her sleeve. Totsky was in such a panic that he even gave up confiding his uneasiness to Epanchin; but there were moments when, like a weak man, he readily regained his spirits and took quite a cheerful view. He was greatly relieved, for instance, when Nastasya Filippovna promised the two friends that she would give them her final decision on the evening of her birthday.

On the other hand, the strangest and most incredible rumour concerning no less honoured a person than Ivan Fyodorovitch appeared, alas! more and more well founded as time went on.

At the first blush it sounded perfectly wild. It was difficult to believe that Ivan Fyodorovitch at his venerable time of life, with his excellent understanding and his practical knowledge of the world, and all the rest of it, could have fallen under Nastasya Filippovna's spell himself, and that it had come to such a pitch that this caprice had almost become a passion. What he was hoping for it was difficult to imagine; possibly for assistance from Ganya himself. Totsky suspected something of the kind, at any rate; he suspected the existence of some tacit agreement between the general and Ganya, resting on their comprehension of each other. But it is well known

that a man carried away by passion, especially a man getting on in years, is quite blind, and prone to find grounds for hope where there are none; what's more, he loses his judgment and acts like a foolish child, however great an intellect he may have. It was known that the general had procured for Nastasya Filippovna's birthday some magnificent pearls, costing an immense sum, as a present from himself, and had thought a great deal about this present, though he knew that Nastasya Filippovna was not mercenary. On the day before the birthday he was in a perfect fever, though he successfully concealed his emotion. It was of those pearls that Madame Epanchin had heard. Lizaveta Prokofyevna had, it is true, many years'

experience of her husband's flightiness, and had in fact got almost accustomed to it, but it was impossible to let such an incident pass; the rumour about the pearls made a great impression upon her. The general detected this beforehand; some words had been uttered on the previous day; he foresaw a momentous explanation coming, and dreaded it. That was why he was particularly unwilling to lunch in the bosom of his family on the morning on which our story begins. Before Myshkin's appearance he had decided to escape on the pretext of urgent business. Making his escape often meant in the general's case simply running away. He wanted to gain that day at least, and above all that evening, undisturbed by unpleasantness. And suddenly the prince had turned up so appropriately. "A perfect god-send!" thought the general to himself, as he went in to meet his wife.

CHAPTER 5

Madame epanchin was jealous of the dignity of her family. What must it have been for her to hear without the slightest preparation that this Prince Myshkin, the last of the family, of whom she had heard something already, was no better than a poor idiot, was almost a beggar, and was ready to accept charity! The general reckoned on making an effect, impressing her at once, turning her attention in another direction and avoiding the question of the pearls under cover of this sensation.

When anything extraordinary happened, Madame Epanchin used to open her eyes very wide, and, throwing back her whole person, she would stare vaguely before her without uttering a word. She was a woman of large build and of the same age as her husband, with dark hair, still thick, though getting very grey. She was rather thin, with a somewhat aquiline nose, sunken yellow cheeks, and thin drawn-in lips. Her forehead was high but narrow; her large grey eyes had sometimes a most unexpected expression. She had once had the weakness to fancy that her eyes were particularly effective, and nothing had been able to efface the conviction.

“Receive him? \bu receive him now, at once?” And the lady opened her eyes to their very widest, gazing at Ivan Fyodorovitch, as he fidgeted before her.

“Oh, as far as that goes, there’s no need of ceremony, if only you don’t mind seeing him, my dear,” the general hastened to explain. “He is quite a child and such a pathetic figure; he has some sort of fits. He has just arrived from Switzerland — came straight from the station. He is queerly dressed, like a German, and not a penny, literally; he is almost crying. I gave him twenty-five roubles, and want to find him some little post as a clerk in our office. And I beg you, mesdames, to offer him lunch, for I think he is hungry too....”

“You amaze me!” Madame Epanchin went on as before. “Hungry and fits! What sort of fits?”

“Oh, they don’t occur so frequently; and, besides, he is like a child, but well educated. I should like to ask you, mesdames” — he addressed his daughters again— “to put him through an examination; it would be as well to know what he is fit for.”

“An ex-am-in-a-tion?” drawled his wife, and in the utmost astonishment she rolled her eyes from her husband to her daughters and back again.

“Oh, my dear, don’t take it in that sense ... but of course it’s just as you please. I was meaning to be friendly to him and introduce him to the family, because it’s almost an act of charity.”

“Introduce him to the family? From Switzerland?”

“That’s no drawback; but, I repeat again, it’s as you like. I thought of it because, in the first place, he is of the same name, and perhaps a relation; and besides, he’s nowhere to lay his head. I supposed it would be rather interesting to you to see him, in fact, because after all he belongs to the same family.”

“Of course, maman, if one needn’t stand on ceremony with him. Besides he must be hungry after the journey; why not give him something to eat, if he has nowhere to go?” said the eldest girl, Alexandra.

“And if he is a perfect child, too. We could have a game of blind man’s buff with him.”

“Blind man’s buff! What do you mean?”

“Oh, maman, please leave off pretending!” Aglaia interrupted in vexation.

The second daughter, Adelaida, who was of mirthful disposition, could not restrain herself and burst out laughing.

“Send for him, papa, maman gives you leave,” Aglaia decided.

The general rang, and told the servant to call the prince.

“But on condition he has a napkin tied round his neck when he sits at the table,” his wife insisted. “Call Fyodor or Mavra ... to stand behind his chair and look after him while he eats. I only trust he is quiet when he has a fit. Does he wave his arms?”

“Oh, quite the opposite, he is very well bred and has charming manners; he is just a little simple sometimes. But here he is. Come, let me introduce Prince Myshkin, the last of the name, your namesake and perhaps your kinsman; make him welcome and be kind to him. Lunch will be served directly, prince,

so do us the honour. . . . But excuse me, I must hurry off, I am late.”

“We know where you are hurrying off to,” observed his wife majestically.

“I am in a hurry — I am in a hurry, my dear; I am late. Give him your albums, mesdames; let him write something there for you, his handwriting

is something exquisite. You should see how he wrote out for me in the old-world characters, The Abbot Pafnuty put his hand thereto.' ... Well, good-bye."

"Pafnuty? The abbot? Stop a minute — stop a minute. Where are you off to, and who is this Pafnuty?" his wife called with distinct annoyance and almost agitation after her escaping spouse.

"Yes, yes, my dear, it was an abbot who lived in old days. . . . But I am off to the count's, I ought to have been there long ago; he fixed the hour himself.. .. Good-bye for the present, prince."

The general retired with rapid steps.

"I know what count he is going to see," Lizaveta Prokofyevna pronounced sharply, and she turned her eyes irritably to the prince. "What was it?" she began peevishly and grumpily, trying to remember. "Well,

what was it? Ah, yes, what about? ..."

"Maman," Alexandra was beginning; and Aglaia even stamped her foot.

"Don't interfere with me, Alexandra Ivanovna," snapped the mother. "I want to know too. Sit here, prince, here on this easy-chair, opposite me; no, here. Move into the sun, nearer the light, so that I may see you. Well, what abbot?"

"The Abbot Pafnuty," answered Myshkin attentively and seriously.

"Pafnuty? That's interesting. Well, what about him?"

The lady asked her questions impatiently, rapidly, sharply, keeping her eyes fixed on the prince; and when Myshkin answered, she nodded her head at every word.

"The Abbot Pafnuty of the fourteenth century," began Myshkin. "He was at the head of a monastery on the Volga in what is now the province of Kostroma. He was famous for his holy life. He visited the Tatars, helped in the management of public affairs, and signed some document. I've seen a copy of the signature. I liked the handwriting and I imitated it. When the general wanted to see my writing just now so as to find me a job, I wrote several phrases in different handwritings, and among others I wrote 'the Abbot Pafnuty put his hand thereto' in the abbot's own handwriting. The general liked it very much, and so he spoke of it just now."

"Aglaia," said Madame Epanchin, "remember Pafnuty, or better write it down, else I always forget. But I thought it would be more interesting. Where is this signature?"

"I think it was left in the general's study, on the table."

“Send at once and fetch it.”

“Hadn’t I betterwrite it again for you, if you like?”

“Of course, maman,” said Alexandra. “But nowwe had better have lunch, we are hungry.”

“Quite so,” assented her mother. “Come along, prince. Are you very hungry?”

“Yes, I’ve begun to be very hungry now, and I am very grateful to you.”

“It’s a very good thing that you are polite, and I notice you are not nearly such a . . . queer creature as you were described. Come along. Sit here, facing me.” She insisted on making Myshkin sit down when they went into the dining-room. “I want to look at you. Alexandra, Adelaida, help the prince to something. He is really not such an . . . invalid, is he? Perhaps the table-napkin is not necessary. . . . Used you to have a napkin tied round your neck at mealtimes, prince?”

“Long ago, when I was seven, I believe I did, but now I usually have my napkin on my knee at mealtimes.”

“Quite right. And your fits?”

“Fits?” The prince was a little surprised. “My fits don’t happen very often now. But I don’t know; I am told the climate here will make me worse.”

“He speaks well,” said the lady, turning to her daughters; she still nodded her head at every word Myshkin uttered. “I didn’t expect it. So it was all stuff and nonsense, as usual. Help yourself, prince, and tell me where you were born and where you’ve been brought up? I want to know all about you; you interest me extremely.”

Myshkin thanked her, and while eating with excellent appetite began again repeating the story he had repeated several times that morning. The lady was more and more pleased with him; the girls too listened rather attentively. They worked out the relationship; it turned out that Myshkin knew his family-tree fairly well. But in spite of their efforts they could make out scarcely any connexion between him and Madame Epanchin. Among the grandfathers and the grandmothers a distant kinship might be discovered. The lady was particularly delighted with this dry subject, for she scarcely ever had a chance of indulging her tastes by discussing her pedigree. So she got up from table quite excited.

“Come, all of you, into our assembly-room,” she said, “and we’ll have coffee there. We have a room where we all meet,” she said to Myshkin, as

she led him there. “My little drawing-room, where we assemble and sit when we are alone and each of us does her work. Alexandra, my eldest daughter here, plays the piano or reads or sews; Adelaida paints landscapes and portraits (and can never finish anything); and Aglaia sits doing nothing. I am not much good at work either; I can never get anything done. Well, here we are. Sit here, prince, by the fire and tell me something. I want to know how you tell a story. I want to be fully convinced, and when I see old Princess Byelokonsky, I shall tell her all about you. I

want them all to be interested in you too. Come, tell me something.”

“But, maman, it’s very queer to tell a story like that,” observed Adelaida, who had by now set up her easel, taken out her brushes and palette, and was setting to work copying from an engraving a landscape she had begun long ago.

Alexandra and Aglaia sat down on a little sofa and, folding their arms, prepared to listen to the conversation. Myshkin observed that he was a centre of attention on all sides.

“I would never say anything if I were told to like that,” observed Aglaia.

“Why not? What is there queer about it? Why shouldn’t he tell me something? He has a tongue. I want to know how he can describe things. Come, anything. Tell us how you liked Switzerland, your first impression of it. You will see, he’ll begin directly, and begin well too.”

“It was a strong impression” . . . Myshkin was beginning.

“There, you see,” the eager lady broke in, addressing her daughters, “he has begun.”

“Do let him speak at least, maman,” said Alexandra, checking her. “This prince may be a great rogue and not an idiot at all,” she whispered to Aglaia.

“No doubt of it; I’ve seen that a long while,” answered Aglaia. “And it’s horrid of him to play a part. Is he trying to gain something by it?”

“My first impression was a very strong one,” Myshkin repeated. “When I was brought from Russia through various German towns, I simply looked about in silence and, I remember, asked no questions. That was after a long series of violent and painful attacks of my illness, and when my complaint was at its worst and my fits frequent, I always sank into complete stupefaction. I lost my memory, and though my brain worked, the logical sequence of ideas seemed broken. I couldn’t connect more than two or three ideas together. That’s how it seems to me. When the fits became less

frequent and violent, I became strong and healthy again as I am now. I remember I was insufferably sad; I wanted to cry. I was all the while lost in wonder and uneasiness. What affected me most was that everything was strange; I realised that. I was crushed bv the strangeness of it. I was finally roused from this gloomy state, I remember, one evening on reaching Switzerland at Bale, and I was roused by the bray of an ass in the market-place. I was immensely struck with the ass, and for some reason extraordinarily pleased with it, and suddenly everything seemed to clear up in my head."

"An ass? That's odd," observed Lizaveta Prokofyevna. "Yet there's nothing odd about it; one of us may even fall in love with an ass," she observed, looking wrathfully at the laughing girls. "It's happened in mythology. Go on, prince."

"I've been awfully fond of asses ever since; they have a special attraction for me. I began to ask about them because I'd never seen one before, and I understood at once what a useful creature it was — industrious, strong, patient, cheap, long-suffering. And so, through the ass, all Switzerland began to attract me, so that my melancholy passed completely."

"That's all very strange, but you can pass over the ass; let's come to something else. Why do you keep laughing, Aglaia? And you, Adelaida? The prince told us splendidly about the ass. He has seen it himself, but what have you seen? "Vbu've never been abroad."

"I have seen an ass, maman," said Adelaida.

"And I've even heard one," asserted Aglaia.

The three girls laughed again. Myshkin laughed with them.

"That's too bad of you," observed the lady. "\bu must excuse them, prince, they are good-natured. I am always quarrelling with them, but I love them. They are flighty, thoughtless madcaps."

"Why?" laughed Myshkin. "I should have done the same in their place. But still I stand up for the ass; the ass is a good-natured and useful creature."

"And are you good-natured, prince? I ask from curiosity," inquired Madame Epanchin.

Theyall laughed again.

"That hateful ass again! I wasn't thinking about it," cried the lady. "Believe me, prince, I spoke without any..."

“Hint? Oh, I believe you certainly.” And Myshkin went on laughing.

“I am glad you are laughing. I see you are a very good-natured young man,” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna.

“Sometimes not good-natured,” answered Myshkin.

“I am good-natured,” the lady put in unexpectedly, “and if you like I am always good-natured, you may say; it’s my one failing, for one oughtn’t to be always good-natured. I get angry often with these girls, and still more with Ivan Fyodorovitch; but the worst of it is that I am always more good-natured when I am angry. Just before you came in I was angry and pretended that I didn’t and couldn’t understand anything. I am like that sometimes; like a child. Aglaia pulled me up. Thank you for the lesson, Aglaia. But it’s all nonsense. I am not quite such a fool as I seem and as my daughters would like to make me out. I have a will of my own and am not easily put to shame. But I say this without malice. Come here, Aglaia, give me a kiss, there . . . that’s fondling enough,” she observed, when Aglaia had with real feeling kissed her on the lips and on the hand. “Go on, prince. Perhaps you will remember something more interesting than an ass.”

“I don’t understand how any one can describe straiqht off like that,” Adelaida observed aqain. “I

couldn’t think of anything.”

“But the prince will think of something, for he is extremely clever — at least ten times as clever as you are, very likely twelve times. I hope you will feel it after this. Prove it to them, prince, go on. \bu really can pass over the ass now. What did you see abroad besides the ass?”

“It was clever about the ass too,” observed Alexandra. “It was interesting what the prince told us of his invalid condition and how one external shock made everything pleasant to him. I’ve always been interested to know how people go out of their minds and recover again. Especially when it happens all of a sudden.”

“Yes, yes,” cried her mother eagerly. “I see that you can be clever sometimes too. Well, come, stop laughing. You were speaking of Swiss scenery, prince, I think. Well?”

“We reached Lucerne and I was taken to the lake. I felt how beautiful it was, but I felt dreadfully depressed by it,” said Myshkin.

“Why?” asked Alexandra.

“I don’t know why. I always feel depressed and uneasy at the sight of such a landscape for the first time; I feel both happy and uneasy. But that

was all while I was still ill."

"I should awfully like to see it," said Adelaida. "I can't understand why we don't go abroad. I haven't been able to find subjects for painting for the last two years. The East and the South have been painted long ago. Find me a subject for a picture, prince."

"I know nothing about it. I should have thought you've only to see and to paint."

"I don't know how to see things."

"Why do you keep talking in riddles? I can't make head or tail of it," interrupted her mother. "What do you mean by not knowing how to see? \bu've got eyes; see with them. If you can't see here, you won't learn how to abroad. Better tell us how you saw things yourself, prince."

"Yes, that would be better," added Adelaida. "The prince has learnt to see things abroad."

"I don't know. I simply got better abroad; I don't know whether I learnt to see things. But I was almost all the time very happy."

"Happy? You know how to be happy?" cried Aglaia. "Then how can you say you didn't learn to see things? You might teach us, even."

"Please do!" laughed Adelaida.

"I can't teach anything," Myshkin laughed too. "I spent almost all my time abroad in the same Swiss village. I rarely went on excursions, and only to a short distance. What could I teach you? At first I was simply not dull; I soon began to grow stronger. Then every day became precious to me, and more precious as time went on, so that I began to notice it. I used to go to bed very happy and get up happier still. But it would be hard to say why."

"So you didn't want to go away? \bu had no desire to go anywhere?" asked Alexandra.

"At the beginning, quite at the beginning, I had, and I used to become very restless. I was continually thinking of the life I would lead. I wanted to know what life had in store for me. I was particularly restless at some moments. You know there are such moments, especially in solitude. There was a small waterfall there; it fell from a height on the the mountain, such a tiny thread, almost perpendicular — foaming, white and splashing. Though it fell from a great height it didn't seem so high; it was the third of a mile away, but it only looked about fifty paces. I used to like listening to the sound of it at night. At such moments I was sometimes overcome with great restlessness; sometimes too at midday I wandered on the mountains, and

stood alone halfway up a mountain surrounded by great ancient resinous pine trees; on the crest of the rock an old mediaeval castle in ruins; our little village far, far below, scarcely visible; bright sunshine, blue sky, and the terrible stillness. At such times I felt something was drawing me away, and I kept fancying that if I walked straight on, far, far away and reached that line where sky and earth meet, there I should find the key to the mystery, there I should see a new life a thousand times richer and more turbulent than ours. I dreamed of some great town like Naples, full of palaces, noise, roar, life. And I dreamed of all sorts of things, indeed. But afterwards I fancied one might find a wealth of life even in prison."

"That last edifying reflection I read when I was twelve in my'Reader,'" said Aglaia.

"That's all philosophy," observed Adelaida. "You are a philosopher perhaps, and — who knows? — perhaps, truly."

"Perhaps vou are riqht," smiled Mvshkin. "I am really a philosopher perhaps, and — who know? — perhaps I really have a notion of instructing. . . . That's possible, truly."

"And your philosophy is just like "Vfevlampia Nikolayevna's," Aglaia put in again. "She is the widow of a clerk, who comes to see us, rather like a poor relation. Cheapness is her one object in life — to live as cheaply as possible, and she talks of nothing but farthings. And yet she has money, you know; she is sly. That's like your wealth of life in prison; perhaps, too, your four years of happiness in the country for which you bartered your Naples; and you seem to have gained by the bargain, though it was a petty one."

"There may be two opinions about life in prison," said Myshkin. "A man who spent twelve years in prison told me something. He was one of the invalids in the care of my professor. He had fits; he was sometimes restless, wept, and even tried to kill himself. His life in prison had been a very sad one, I assure you, but not at all petty. Yet he had no friends but a spider and a tree that grew under his window. . . . But I'd better tell you how I met another man last year. There was one very strange circumstance about it — strange because such things rarely happen. This man had once been led out with others to the scaffold and a sentence of death was read over him. He was to be shot for a political offence. Twenty moments later a reprieve was read to them, and they were condemned to another punishment instead. "Vfet the interval between those two sentences, twenty minutes or at least a quarter of an hour, he passed in the fullest conviction that he would die in a

few minutes. I was always eager to listen when he recalled his sensations at that time, and I often questioned him about it. He remembered it all with extraordinary distinctness and used to say that he never would forget those minutes. Twenty paces from the scaffold, round which soldiers and other people were standing, there were three posts stuck in the ground, as there were several criminals. The three first were led up, bound to the posts, the death-dress (a long white gown) was put on, and white caps were pulled over their eyes so that they should not see the guns; then a company of several soldiers was drawn up against each post. My friend was the eighth on the list, so he had to be one of the third set.

The priest went to each in turn with a cross. He had only five minutes more to live. He told me that those five minutes seemed to him an infinite time, a vast wealth; he felt that he had so many lives left in those five minutes that there was no need yet to think of the last moment, so much so that he divided his time up. He set aside time to take leave of his comrades, two minutes for that; then he kept another two minutes to think for the last time; and then a minute to look about him for the last time. He remembered very well having divided his time like that. He was dying at twenty-seven, strong and healthy. As he took leave of his comrades, he remembered asking one of them a somewhat irrelevant question and being particularly interested in the answer. Then when he had said good-bye, the two minutes came that he had set apart tor thinking to himself. He knew beforehand what he would think about. He wanted to realise as quickly and clearly as possible how it could be that now he existed and was living and in three minutes he would be something — someone or something. But what? Where? He meant to decide all that in those two minutes! Not far off there was a church,

and the gilt roof was glittering in the bright sunshine. He remembered that he stared very persistently at that roof and the light flashing from it; he could not tear himself away from the light. It seemed to him that those rays were his new nature and that in three minutes he would somehow melt into them. . . . The uncertainty and feeling of aversion for that new thing which would be and was just coming was awful. But he said that nothing was so dreadful at that time as the continual thought, ‘What if I were not to die! What if I could go back to life — what eternity! And it would all be mine! I would turn every minute into an age; I would lose nothing, I would count

every minute as it passed, I would not waste one!’ He said that this idea turned to such a fury at last that he longed to be shot quickly.”

Myshkin suddenly ceased speaking; every one expected him to go on and draw some conclusion.

“Have you finished?” asked Aglaia.

“What? Yes,” said Myshkin, rousing himself from a momentary dreaminess.

“But what did you tell that story for?”

“Oh . . . something in our talk reminded me of it. ..

“You are very disconnected,” observed Alexandra. “You probably meant to show, prince, that not one instant of life can be considered petty, and that sometimes five minutes is a precious treasure. That’s all very laudable, but let me ask, how did that friend who told you such horrors ... he was reprieved, so he was presented with that ‘eternity of life.’ What did he do with that wealth afterwards? Did he live counting each moment?”

“Oh no, he told me himself. I asked him about that too. He didn’t live like that at all; he wasted many, many minutes.”

“Well, there you have it tried. So it seems it’s impossible really to live ‘counting each moment.’ For some reason it’s impossible.”

“Yes, for some reason it is impossible,” repeated Myshkin. “I thought so myself . . . and yet I somehow can’t believe it...”

“Then you think you will live more wisely than any one?” said Aglaia.

“Yes, I have thought that too sometimes.”

“And you think so still?”

“Yes ... I think so still,” answered Myshkin, looking at Aglaia with the same gentle and even timid smile;

but he laughed again at once and looked gaily at her.

“That’s modest,” said Aglaia almost irritably.

“But how brave you are, you laugh! But I was so impressed by his story that I dreamt of it afterwards. I ... dreamt of that five minutes ...”

Once more he looked earnestly and searchingly from one to another of his listeners.

“You are not angry with me for anything?” he asked suddenly, seeming embarrassed, but looking them straight in the face.

“What for?” cried the three young ladies in surprise.

“Why, because I seem all the while to be preaching to you.”

They all laughed.

“If you are angry, don’t be,” he said. “I know for myself that I have lived less than others and that I know less of life than any one. Perhaps I talk very queerly at times ...”

And he was overwhelmed with confusion.

“If you’re happy, as you say, you must have lived more, not less, than others. Why do you make a pretence and apoloqise?” Aqlaia persisted naggingly. “And please don’t mind about preaching to us; it’s no sign of superiority on your part. With your quietism one might fill a hundred years of life with happiness. If one shows you an execution or if one holds out one’s finger to you, you will draw equally edifying reflections from both and be quite satisfied. Life is easy like that.”

“I can’t make out why you are so cross,” said Madame Epanchin, who had been watching the speakers’ faces for some time, “and I can’t make out what you are talking about either. Why a finger? What nonsense! The prince talks splendidly, only rather sadly. Why do you discourage him? When he began he was laughing, and now he is quite glum.”

“It’s all right, maman. But it’s a pity you haven’t seen an execution, prince, I should like to have asked you one question.”

“I have seen an execution,” answered Myshkin.

“You have?” cried Aglaia. “I ought to have guessed it. That’s the last straw! If you’ve seen that, how can you say that you were happy all the time? Didn’t I tell you the truth?”

“But do they have executions in your village?”

asked Adelaida.

“I saw it at Lyons. I visited the town with Schneider; he took me with him. We chanced upon it directly we arrived.”

“Well, did you like it? Was there much that was edifying and instructive?” asked Aglaia.

“I did not like it at all and I was rather ill afterwards, but I must confess I was riveted to the spot; I could not take my eyes off it.”

“I couldn’t have taken my eyes off it either,” said Aglaia.

“They don’t like women to look on at it; they even write about such women in the papers.”

“I suppose, if they consider that it’s not fit for women, they mean to infer (and so justify it) that it is fit for men. I congratulate them on their logic. And you think so too, no doubt.”

“Tell us about the execution,” Adelaida interrupted.

“I don’t feel at all inclined to now.” Myshkin was confused and almost frowned.

“You seem to grudge telling us about it,” Aglaia said tauntingly.

“No; but I’ve just been describing that execution.”

“Describing it to whom?”

“To your footman while I was waiting ...”

“To which footman?” he heard on all sides.

“The one who sits in the entry, with grey hair and a red face. I sat in the entry waiting to see Ivan Fyodorovitch.”

“That’s odd,” said the general’s wife.

“The prince is a democrat,” Aglaia rapped out. “Well, if you told Alexey about it, you can’t refuse us.”

“I simply must hear about it,” said Adelaida.

“One thought came into my mind just now,” Myshkin said to her, growing rather more eager again (he seemed easily roused to confiding eagerness), “when you asked me for a subject for a picture, to suggest that you should paint the face of the condemned man the moment before the blade falls, when he is still standing on the scaffold before he lies down on the plank.”

“The face? The face alone?” asked Adelaida. “That would be a strange subject. And what sort of picture would it make?”

“I don’t know. Why not?” Myshkin insisted warmly. “I saw a picture like that at Bale not long ago. I should like to tell you about it. . . . I’ll tell you about it some day.... It struck me very much.”

“You shall certainly tell us afterwards about the picture at Bale,” said Adelaida; “and now explain the picture of this execution. Can you tell me how you imagine it to yourself? How is one to draw the face? Is it to be only the face? What sort of a face is it?”

“It’s practically the minute before death,” Myshkin began with perfect readiness, carried away by his memories and to all appearance instantly forgetting everything else, “that moment when he has just mounted the ladder and has just stepped on to the scaffold. Then he glanced in my direction. I looked at his face and I understood it all. . . . But how can one describe it? I wish, I do wish that you or some one would paint it. It would be best if it were you. I thought at the time that a picture of it would do good. You know one has to imagine everything that has been before — everything, everything. He has been in prison awaiting execution for a week

at least; he has been reckoning on the usual formalities, on the sentence being forwarded somewhere for signature and not coming back again for a week. But now by some chance this business was over sooner. At five o'clock in the morning he was asleep. It was at the end of October; at five o'clock it was still cold and dark. The superintendent of the prison came in quietly with the guard and touched him carefully on the shoulder. He sat up, leaning on his elbow, saw the light, asked 'What's the matter?"The execution is at ten o'clock.' He was half awake and couldn't take it in, and began objecting that the sentence wouldn't be ready for a week. But when he was fully awake he left off protesting and was silent — so I was told. Then he said, 'But it's hard it should be so sudden. . . .' And again he was silent and wouldn't say anything more. The next three or four hours are spent on the usual things: seeing the priest, breakfast at which he is given wine, coffee and beef (isn't that a mockery? Only think how cruel it is! Yet on the other hand, would you believe it, these innocent people act in good faith and are convinced that it's humane); then the toilet (do you know what a criminal's toilet is?); and at last they take him through the town to the scaffold. ... I think that he too must have thought he had an endless time left to live, while he was being driven through the town. He must have thought on the way, 'There's a long time left, three streets more. I shall pass through this one, then through the next, then there's that one left where there's a baker's on the right. . . . It'll be a long time before we get to the baker's!'

"There were crowds of people, there was noise and shouting; ten thousand faces, ten thousand eyes — all that he has had to bear, and, worst of all, the thought, They are ten thousand, but not one of them is being executed, and I am to be executed.' Well, all that is preparatory. There is a ladder to the scaffold. Suddenly at the foot of the ladder he began to cry, and he was a strong manly fellow; he had been a great criminal, I was told. The priest never left him for a moment; he drove with him in the cart and talked with him all the while. I doubt whether he heard; he might begin listening and would not understand more than two words. So it must have been. At last he began going up the ladder; his legs were tied together so that he could only move with tiny steps. The priest, who must have been an intelligent man, left off speaking and only gave him the cross to kiss. At the foot of the ladder he was very pale, and when he was at the top and standing on the scaffold, he became as white as paper, as white as writing paper. His legs must have grown weak and wooden,

and I expect he felt sick — as though something were choking him and that made a sort of tickling in his throat. Have you ever felt that when you were frightened, or in awful moments when all your reason is left, but it has no power? I think that if one is faced by inevitable destruction — if a house is falling upon you, for instance — one must feel a great longing to sit down, close one's eyes and wait, come what may. . . . When that weakness was beginning, the priest with a rapid movement hastily put the cross to his lips — a little plain silver cross — he kept putting it to his lips every minute. And every time the cross touched his lips, he opened his eyes and seemed for a few seconds to come to life again, and his legs moved. He kissed the cross greedily; he made haste to kiss, as though in haste not to forget to provide himself with something in case of need; but I doubt whether he had any religious feeling at the time. And so it was till he was laid on the plank. ... It's strange that people rarely faint at these last moments. On the contrary, the brain is extraordinarily lively and must be working at a tremendous rate — at a tremendous rate, like a machine at full speed. I fancy that there is a continual throbbing of ideas of all sorts, always unfinished and perhaps absurd too, quite irrelevant ideas: That man is looking at me. He has a wart on his forehead. One of the executioner's buttons is rusty.' . . . and yet all the while one knows and remembers everything. There is one point which can never be forgotten, and one can't faint, and everything moves and turns about it, about that point. And only think that it must be like that up to the last quarter of a second, when his head lies on the block and he waits and . . . knows, and suddenly hears above him the clang of the iron! He must hear that! If I were lying there, I should listen on purpose and hear. It may last only the tenth part of a second, but one would be sure to hear it. And only fancy, it's still disputed whether, when the head is cut off, it knows for a second after that it has been cut off! What an idea! And what if it knows it for five seconds!

"Paint the scaffold so that only the last step can be distinctly seen in the foreground and the criminal having just stepped on it; his head, his face as white as paper; the priest holding up the cross, the man greedily putting forward his blue lips and looking — and aware of everything. The cross and the head —

that's the picture. The priest's face and the executioner's, his two attendants and a few heads and eyes below might be painted in the background, in half light, as the setting.... That's the picture!"

Myshkin ceased speaking and looked at them all.

“That’s nothing like quietism, certainly,” said Alexandra to herself.

“And now tell us how you were in love,” said Adelaida.

Myshkin looked at her with astonishment.

“Listen,” Adelaida said, seeming rather hurried. “You promised to tell us about the Bale picture, but now I should like to hear how you have been in love. Don’t deny it, you must have been. Besides, as soon as you begin describing anything, you cease to be a philosopher.”

“As soon as you have finished telling us anything, you seem to be ashamed of what you’ve said,” Aglaia observed suddenly. “Why is that?”

“How stupid that is!” snapped her mother, looking indignantly at Aglaia.

“It’s not clever,” Alexandra assented.

“Don’t believe her, prince,” said Madame Epanchin, turning to him. “She does it on purpose from a sort of malice; she has really not been so badly brought up. Don’t think the worse of them for teasing you like this; they must be up to some mischief. But they like you already, I know. I know their faces.”

“I know their faces too,” said Myshkin with peculiar emphasis.

“What do you mean?” asked Adelaida curiously.

“What do you know about our faces?” the two others inquired too.

But Myshkin did not speak and was grave. They all waited for his answer.

“I’ll tell you afterwards,” he said gently and gravely.

“You are trying to rouse our curiosity,” cried Aglaia. “And what solemnity!”

“Very well,” Adelaida interposed hurriedly again, “but if you are such a connoisseur in faces, you certainly must have been in love, so I guessed right. Tell us about it.”

“I haven’t been in love,” answered Myshkin as gently and gravely as before. “I. . . have been happy in a different way.”

“How? In what?”

“Very well, I’ll tell you,” said Myshkin, as though meditating profoundly.

CHAPTER 6

YOU ARE all looking at me with such interest," began Myshkin, "that if I didn't satisfy it you might be angry with me. No, I am joking," he added quickly, with a smile. "There were lots of children there, and I was always with the children, only with the children. They were the children of the village, a whole crowd of schoolchildren. It was not that I taught them. Oh, no, there was a schoolmaster for that — Jules Thibaut. I did teach them too, perhaps, but for the most part I was simply with them, and all those four years were spent in their company. I wanted nothing else. I used to tell them everything; I concealed nothing from them. Their fathers and relations were all cross with me, for the children couldn't get on without me at last, and were always flocking round me, and the schoolmaster at last became my chief enemy. I made many enemies there, and all on account of the children. Even Schneider reproved me. And what were they afraid of? Children can be told anything — anything. I've always been struck by seeing how little grown-up people understand children, how little parents even understand their own children. Nothing should be concealed from children on the pretext that they are little and that it is too early for them to understand. What a miserable and unfortunate idea! And how readily the children detect that their fathers consider them too little to understand anything, though they understand everything. Grown-up people do not know that a child can give exceedingly good advice even in the most difficult case. Oh, dear! when that pretty little bird looks at you, happy and confiding, it's a shame for you to deceive it. I call them birds because there's nothing better than a bird in the world. What really set all the village against me was something that happened ... but Thibaut was simply envious of me. At first he used to shake his head and wonder how it was the children understood everything from me and scarcely anything from him; and then he began laughing at me when I told him that neither of us could teach them anything, but that they can teach us. And how could he be envious of me and say things against me, when he spent his life with children himself! The soul is healed by being with children. . . . There was one patient in Schneider's institution, a very unhappy man. I doubt whether there could be any unhappiness equal to his. He was there to be treated for insanity. In my opinion he was not mad, it was simply that he was frightfully miserable; that was all that was the

matter with him. And if only you knew what our children were to him in the end. .. . But I'd better tell you about that patient another time. I'll tell you now how it all began. At first the children didn't take to me. I was so big, I am always so clumsy; I know I am ugly too . . . and then I was a foreigner. The children used to laugh at me at first, and they began throwing stones at me after they saw me kiss Marie. And I only kissed her once. . . . No, don't laugh." Myshkin made haste to check the smile on the faces of his listeners. "It was not a question of love. If only you knew what an unhappy being she was, you would be very sorry for her, as I was. She lived in our village. Her mother was an old woman.

One of the two windows of their tumble-down little house was set apart, by permission of the village authorities, and from it the old woman was allowed to sell laces, thread, tobacco and soap. It all came to a few halfpence, and that was what she lived on. She was an invalid; her legs were all swollen so that she could not move from her seat. Marie was her daughter, a girl of twenty, weak and thin. She had been consumptive for a long time, but she went from house to house doing hard work — scrubbing floors, washing, sweeping out yards and minding cattle. A French commercial traveller seduced her and took her away, and a week later deserted her and went off on the sly. She made her way home begging, all mud-stained and in rags, with her shoes coming to pieces. She was a week walking back, spent the nights in the fields and caught a fearful cold. Her feet were covered with sores, her hands were chapped and swollen. She wasn't pretty before, though; only her eyes were gentle, kind and innocent. She was extremely silent. Once when she was at work she began singing, and I remember every one was surprised and began laughing. 'Marie singing! What, Marie sinqinq!' She was fearfully abashed and did not open her lips again. People were still kind to her in those days, but when she came back broken down and ill, no one had any sympathy for her. How cruel people are in that way! What hard ideas they have about such things! Her mother, to begin with, received her with anger and contempt: '\bu have disgraced me.' She was the first to abandon her to shame. As soon as they heard in the village that Marie had come home, every one went to have a look at her, and almost all the village assembled in the old woman's cottage — old men, children, women, girls, everyone — an eager, hurrying crowd. Marie was lying on the ground at the old woman's feet, hungry and in rags, and she was weeping. When they all ran in, she hid her face in her

dishevelled hair and lay face downwards on the floor. They all stared at her, as though she were a reptile; the old people blamed and upbraided her, the young people laughed; the women reviled and abused her and looked at her with loathing, as though she had been a spider. Her mother allowed it all; she sat there nodding her head and approving. The mother was very ill at the time and almost dying: two months later she did die. She knew she was dying, but up to the time of her death she didn't dream of being reconciled to her daughter. She didn't speak one word to her, turned her out to sleep in the entry, scarcely gave her anything to eat. She had to be constantly bathing her bad legs in hot water. Marie bathed her legs every day and waited on her. She accepted all her services in silence and never said a kind word to her. Marie put up with everything and afterwards when I made her acquaintance, I noticed that she thought it all right and looked on herself as the lowest of the low. When the old mother was completely bedridden, the old women of the village came to sit up with her in turns, as their custom is. Then they gave up feeding Marie altogether, and in the village every one drove her away and no one would even give her work, as before. Everyone, as it were, spat on her, and the men no longer looked on her as a woman even; they would say all sorts of nasty things to her. Sometimes, though not often, when the men got drunk on Sunday, they would amuse themselves by throwing farthings to her, just flinging them on the ground. Marie would pick them up without a word. She had begun to spit blood by that time. At last her clothes were in absolute tatters, so that she was ashamed to show herself in the village. She had gone barefoot since she came back. Then the children particularly, the whole troop of them — there were about forty schoolchildren — began jeering, and even throwing dirt at her. She asked the cowherd to let her look after the cows, but he drove her away. Then she began going off for the whole day with the flock of her own accord, without permission. As she was of great use to the cowherd, and he noticed it, he no longer drove her away, and sometimes even gave her bread and cheese, what was left from his dinner. He looked upon this as a great kindness on his part. When her mother died, the pastor did not scruple to heap shame on Marie in church before all the people. Marie stood crying by the coffin, as she was, in her rags. A crowd of people had collected to look at her standing by the coffin and crying. Then the pastor — he was a young man, and his whole ambition was to become a great preacher — pointed to Marie and, addressing them all, said, 'Here you see the cause of this worthy

woman’s death’ (and it was not true, for the woman had been ill for two years); ‘here she stands before you and dares not look at you, for she has been marked out by the finger of God; here she is, barefoot and ragged — a warning to all who lose their virtue! Who is she? Her daughter!’ and so on in the same style. And, would you believe it, this infamy pleased almost everyone! But. .. then things took a different turn. The children took a line of their own, for by then they were all on my side, and had begun to love Marie.

“This was how it happened. ... I wanted to do something for Marie. She was badly in want of money, but I never had a farthing at that time. I had a little diamond pin, and I sold it to a pedlar who went from village to village buying and selling old clothes. He gave me eight francs, and it was certainly worth forty. I was a long time trying to meet Marie alone. At last we met by a hedge outside the village, on a bypath to the mountain, behind a tree. Then I gave her the eight francs and told her to take care of it, because I should have no more. Then I kissed her and said that she mustn’t think I had any evil intent, and that I kissed her not because I was in love with her, but because I was very sorry for her, and that I had never, from the very beqinninq, thouqht of her as guilty but only as unhappy. I wanted very much to comfort her at once and to persuade her that she shouldn’t consider herself below every one, but I think she didn’t understand. I saw that at once, though she scarcely spoke all the time and stood before me looking down and horribly abashed. When I had finished, she kissed my hand, and I at once took her hand and would have kissed it, but she pulled it away. It was then the children saw us, the whole lot of them. I learnt afterwards that they had been keeping watch on me for some time. They began whistling, clapping their hands and laughing, and Marie ran away. I tried to speak to them, but they began throwing stones at me. The same day every one knew of it, the whole village. The whole brunt of it fell on Marie again; they began to dislike her more than ever. I even heard that they wanted to have her punished by the authorities, but, thank goodness, that didn’t come off. But the children gave her no peace: they teased her more than ever and threw dirt at her; they chased her, she ran away from them, she with her weak lungs, panting and gasping for breath. They ran after her, shouting and reviling her. Once I

positively had a fight with them. Then I began talking to them; I talked to them every day as much as I could. They sometimes stopped and

listened, though they still abused me. I told them how unhappy Marie was; soon they left off abusing me and walked away in silence. Little by little, we began talking together. I concealed nothing from them, I told them the whole story. They listened with great interest and soon began to be sorry for Marie. Some of them greeted her in a friendly way when they met. It's the custom there when you meet people, whether you know them or not, to bow and wish them good-morning. I can fancy how astonished Marie was. One day two little girls got some things to eat and gave them to her; they came and told me of it. They told me that Marie cried, and that now they loved her very much. Soon all of them began to love her, and at the same time they began to love me too. They took to coming to see me often, and always asked me to tell them stories. I think I must have told them well, for they were very fond of listening to me. And afterwards I read and studied simply to have things to tell them, and for the remaining three years I used to tell them stories. Later on, when everybody blamed me — and even Schneider — for talking to them like grown-up people and concealing nothing from them, I said that it was a shame to deceive them; that they understood everything anyway, however much things were concealed from them, and that they learnt it perhaps in a bad way; but not so from me. One need only remember one's own childhood. They did not agree. ... I kissed Marie a fortnight before her mother died; by the time the pastor delivered his harangue, all the children had come over to my side. I at once told them of the pastor's action and explained it to them. They were all angry with him, and some of them were so enraged that they threw stones and broke his windows. I stopped them, for that was wrong; but everyone in the village heard of it at once, and they began to accuse me of corrupting the children. Then they all realised that the children loved Marie, and were dreadfully horrified; but Marie was happy. The children were forbidden to meet her, but they ran out to where she kept the herds, nearly half a mile from the village. They carried her dainties, and some simply ran out to hug and kiss her, say 'Je vous aime, Marie,' and ran back as fast as their legs would carry them. Marie was almost beside herself at such unlooked-for happiness; she had never dreamed of the possibility of it. She was shamefaced and joyful. What the children liked doing most, especially the girls, was running to tell her that I loved her and had talked to them a great deal about her. They told her that I told them all about her, and that now they loved her and pitied her and always would feel the same. Then they would run to me, and with such

joyful, busy faces tell me that they had just seen Marie and that Marie sent her greetings to me. In the evenings I used to walk to the waterfall; there was one spot there quite hidden from the village and surrounded by poplars. There they would gather round me in the evening, some even coming secretly. I think they got immense enjoyment out of my love for Marie, and that was the only point in which I deceived them. I didn't tell them that they were mistaken, that I was not in love with Marie, but simply very sorry for her. I saw that they wanted to have it as they imagined and had settled among themselves, and so I said nothing and let it seem that they guessed right. And what delicacy and tenderness were shown by those little hearts! They couldn't bear to think that while their dear Leon loved Marie she should be so badly dressed and without shoes. Would you believe it, they managed to get her shoes and stockings and linen, and even a dress of some sort. How they managed to do it I can't make out. The whole troop worked. When I questioned them, they only laughed merrily, and the girls clapped their hands and kissed me. I sometimes went to see Marie secretly too. She was by that time very ill and could scarcely walk. In the end she gave up working for the herdsman, but yet she went out every morning with the cattle. She used to sit a little apart. There was a ledge jutting out in an overhanging, almost vertical rock there. She used to sit out of sight on the stone, right in the corner, and she sat there almost without moving all day, from early morning till the cattle went home. She was by then so weak from consumption that she sat most of the time with her eyes shut and her head leaning against the rock and dozed, breathing painfully. Her face was as thin as a skeleton's, and the sweat stood out on her brow and temples. That was how I always found her. I used to come for a moment, and I too did not want to be seen. As soon as I appeared,

Marie would start, open her eyes and fall to kissing my hands. I no longer tried to take them away, for it was a happiness to her. All the while I sat with her she trembled and wept. She did indeed try sometimes to speak, but it was difficult to understand her. She seemed like a crazy creature in terrible excitement and delight. Sometimes the children came with me. At such times they generally stood a little way off and kept watch to protect us from any one or anything, and that was an extraordinary pleasure to them. When we went away, Marie was again left alone with her eyes shut and her head leaning against the rock, dreaming perhaps of something. One morning she could no longer go out with the cows and remained at home in

her deserted cottage. The children heard of it at once, and almost all of them went to ask after her that day. She lay in bed, entirely alone. For two days she was tended only by the children, who ran in to her by turns; but when the news reached the village that Marie was really dying, the old women went to sit with her and look after her. I think the villagers had begun to pity Marie; anyway, they left off scolding the children and preventing them from seeing her, as they had done before. Marie was drowsy all the time, but her sleep was broken — she coughed terribly. The old women drove the children away, but they ran under the window sometimes only for a moment, just to say, ‘Bonjour, notre bonne Marie.’ And as soon as she caught sight of them or heard them, she seemed to revive and, regardless of the old women, she would try to raise herself on her elbow, nod to them and thank them. They used to bring her dainties as before, but she scarcely ate anything. I assure you that, thanks to them, she died almost happy. Thanks to them, she forgot her bitter trouble; they brought her, as it were, forgiveness, for up to the very end she looked upon herself as a great sinner. They were like birds beating their wings against her window and calling to her every morning, ‘Nous t’aimons, Marie.’ She died very soon. I had expected her to last much longer. The day before her death I went to her at sunset; I think she knew me, and I pressed her hand for the last time. How wasted it was! And next morning they came to me and said that Marie was dead. Then the children could not be restrained. They decked her coffin with flowers and put a wreath on her head. The pastor did no dishonour to the dead in the church. There were not many people at the funeral, only a few, attracted by curiosity; but when the coffin had to be carried out, the children all rushed forward to carry it themselves. Though they were not strong enough to bear the weight of it alone, they helped to carry it, and all ran after the coffin, crying. Marie’s grave has been kept by the children ever since; they planted roses round it and deck it with flowers every year.

“But it was after the funeral that I was most persecuted by the villagers on account of the children. The pastor and the schoolmaster were at the bottom of it. The children were strictly forbidden even to meet me, and Schneider made it his duty to see that this prohibition was effectual. But we did see each other all the same; we communicated from a distance by signs. They used to send me little notes. In the end things were smoothed over; but it was very nice at that time. This persecution brought me nearer to the children than ever. In the last year I was almost reconciled to Thibaut and

the pastor. And Schneider argued a great deal with me about my pernicious ‘system’ with children. As though I had a system! At last Schneider uttered a very stranqe thought — it was just before I went away. He told me that he had come to the conclusion that I was a complete child myself, altogether a child; that it was only in face and figure that I was like a grown-up person, but that in development, in soul, in character, and perhaps in intelligence, I was not grown up, and that so I should remain, if I lived to be sixty. I laughed very much. He was wrong, of course, for I am not a child. But in one thing he is right: I don’t like being with grown-up people. I’ve known that a long time. I don’t like it because I don’t know how to get on with them. Whatever they say to me, however kind they are to me, I always feel somehow oppressed with them, and I am awfully glad when I can get away to my companions; and my companions have always been children, not because I am a child myself, but simply because I always was attracted by children. When I was first in the village, at the time when I used to take melancholy walks in the mountains alone, when I sometimes, especially at midday, met the whole noisy troop running out of school with their satchels and slates, with shouts and games and laughter, my whole soul went out to them at once. I

don’t know how it was, but I had a sort of intense happy sensation at every meeting with them. I stood still and laughed with happiness, looking at their little legs for ever flying along, at the boys and girls running together, at their laughter and their tears (for many of them managed to fight, cry, make it up and begin playing again on the way home from school), and then I forgot all my mournful thoughts. Afterwards, for the last three years, I couldn’t even understand how and why people are sad. My whole life was centred on the children.

“I never reckoned on leaving the village, and it did not enter my mind that I should one day come back here to Russia. I thought I would always stay there. But I saw at last that Schneider couldn’t go on keeping me; and then something turned up, so important apparently that Schneider himself urged me to go, and answered for me that I was coming. I shall see into it and take advice. My life will perhaps be quite changed; but that doesn’t matter. What does matter is that my whole life is already changed. I left a great deal there — too much. It’s all gone. As I sat in the train, I thought, ‘Now I am going among people. I know nothing, perhaps, but a new life has begun for me.’ I determined to do my work resolutely and honestly. I may

find it dull and difficult among people. In the first place, I resolved to be courteous and open with every one. ‘No one will expect more than that of me. Perhaps here, too, they will look on me as a child; but no matter.’ Everyone looks on me as an idiot, too, for some reason. I was so ill at one time that I really was almost like an idiot. But can I be an idiot now, when I am able to see for myself that people look upon me as an idiot? As I come in, I think, ‘I see they look upon me as an idiot, and yet I am sensible and they don’t guess it.’ ... I often have that thought.

“It was only at Berlin, when I got some little letters which they had already managed to write me, I realised how I loved the children. It’s very painful getting the first letter! How distressed they were seeing me off! They’d been preparing for my going for a month beforehand. ‘Leon s’en va, Leon s’en va pour toujours!’ We met every evening as before at the waterfall and talked of our parting. Sometimes we were as merry as before; only when we separated at night, they kissed and hugged me warmly, which they had not done previously. Some of them ran in secret to see me by themselves, simply to kiss and hug me alone, not before all the others. When I was setting off, they all, the whole flock of them, went with me to the station. The railway station was about a mile from our village. They tried not to cry, but some of them could not control themselves and wailed aloud, especially the girls. We made haste so as not to be late, but every now and then one of them would rush out of the crowd to throw his little arms round me and kiss me, and would stop the whole procession simply for that. And although we were in a hurry, we all stopped and waited for him to say good-bye. When I’d taken my seat and the train had started, they all shouted ‘Hurrah!’ and stood waiting there till the train was out of sight. I gazed at them too. ... Do you know, when I came in here and looked at your sweet faces — I notice people’s faces very much now — and heard your first words, my heart felt light for the first time since then. I thought then that perhaps I really was a lucky person. I know that one doesn’t often meet people whom one likes from the first, yet here I’ve come straight from the railway station and I meet you. I know very well that one’s ashamed to talk of one’s feelinqs to every one, but I

talk to you without feeling ashamed. I am an unsociable person and very likely I may not come to you again for a long time. Don’t take that as a slight. I don’t say it because I don’t value your friendship, and please don’t think that I have taken offence at something. You asked me about your faces

and what I noticed in them. I shall be delighted to tell you that. \bu have a happy face, Adelaida Ivanovna, the most sympathetic of the three. Besides your being very good-looking, one feels when one looks at you, ‘She has the face of a kind sister.’ You approach one simply and gaily, but you are quick to see into the heart. That’s how your face strikes me. You, Alexandra Ivanovna, have a fine and very sweet face too; but perhaps you have some secret trouble. \bur heart is certainly of the kindest, but you are not light-hearted. There’s a peculiar something in your face, such as we see in Holbein’s Madonna in Dresden. Well, so much for your face. Am I good at guessing? \bu took me to be so yourselves. But from your face, Lizaveta Prokofyevna,” he turned suddenly to Madame Epanchin, “from your face I feel positively certain that you are a perfect child in everything,

everything, in good and bad alike, in spite of your age. You are not angry with me for saying so? You know what I think of children. And don’t think it’s from simplicity that I have spoken so openly about your faces. Oh no, not at all! Perhaps I have my own idea in doing it.”

CHAPTER 7

When myshkin ceased speaking, they were all looking at him gaily, even Aglaia, and particularly Lizaveta Prokofyevna.

“Well, they have put you through your examination,” she cried. “Well, young ladies, you thought you were going to patronise him as a poor relation, but he scarcely deigns to accept you, and only with the proviso that he won’t come often! It makes us look silly, especially Ivan Fyodorovitch, and I am glad of it. Bravo, prince! We were told to put you through an examination. And as for what you said about my face, it’s perfectly true: I am a child, and I know it. I knew that before you told me; you put my own thoughts into words for me. I believe your character’s like mine exactly, like two drops of water,

and I am glad of it. Only you are a man and I am a woman and haven’t been to Switzerland: that’s the only difference.”

“Don’t be in a hurry, maman,” cried Aglaia. “The prince admitted that he had a special motive in all he has confessed and was not speaking simply.”

“Yes, yes,” laughed the others.

“Don’t tease him, my dears, he is shrewder maybe than all the three of you together. You will see. But why do you say nothing about Aglaia, prince? Aglaia is waiting, and so am I.”

“I can’t say anything at once: I’ll speak later.”

“Why? I should have thought she couldn’t be overlooked.”

“Oh, no, she couldn’t. \bu are exceedingly beautiful, Aglaia Ivanovna. \bu are so beautiful that one is afraid to look at you.”

“Is that all? What about her qualities?” Madame Epanchin persisted.

“It’s difficult to judge beauty; I am not ready yet. Beauty is a riddle.”

“That’s as good as setting Aglaia a riddle,” said Adelaida. “Guess it, Aglaia. But she is beautiful, prince?”

“Extremely,” answered the prince with warmth, looking enthusiastically at Aglaia. “Almost as beautiful as Nastasya Filippovna, though her face is quite different.”

All looked at one another in surprise.

“As who-o-o?” gasped Madame Epanchin. “As Nastasya Filippovna? Where have you seen Nastasya Filippovna? What Nastasya Filippovna?”

“Gavril Ardalionovitch was showing her portrait to Ivan Fyodorovitch just now.”

“What! he brought Ivan Fydorovitch her portrait?”

“To show it to him. Nastasya Filippovna had given it to Gavril Ardalionovitch to-day, and he brought it to show.”

“I want to see it!” Madame Epanchin cried eagerly. “Where is the photograph? If it was given him, he must have got it, and he must still be in the study. He always comes to work on Wednesdays and never leaves before four. Call him at once. No, I am not dying to see him. Do me a favor, dear prince. Go to the study, take the photograph from him and bring it here. Tell him we want to look at it, please.”

“He is nice, but too simple,” said Adelaida, when the prince had qone.

“Yes, somewhat too much so,” Alexandra agreed; “so that it makes him a little absurd, in fact.”

Neither of them seemed to be saying all she thought.

“He got out of it very well, though, over our faces,” said Aglaia. “He flattered us all, even mamma.”

“Don’t be witty, please,” cried her mother. “He did not flatter me, though I was flattered.”

“You think he was sly?” asked Adelaida.

“I fancy he is not so simple.”

“Get along with you,” said her mother, getting angry. “To my thinking you are more absurd than he is. He is simple, but he’s got all his wits about him, in the most honourable sense, of course. Exactly like me.”

“It was certainly a mistake to have spoken about the photograph,” Myshkin reflected as he went to the study, feeling a little conscience-stricken. “But perhaps it was a good thing I spoke of it....”

A strange, though still vague idea was beginning to take shape in his mind.

Gavril Ardalionovitch was still sitting in the study absorbed in his papers. It was clear he did not receive his salary from the company for nothing. He was terribly disconcerted when the prince asked him for the portrait and told him how they had come to hear about it.

“E-ech! What need had you to chatter about it?” he cried in angry vexation. “\bu know nothing about it.... Idiot!” he muttered to himself.

“I am sorry. I did it without thinking; it happened to come up. I said that Aglaia was almost as handsome as Nastasya Filippovna.”

Ganya begged him to tell him exactly what had happened. Myshkin did so. Ganya looked at him sarcastically again.

“You’ve got Nastasya Filippovna on the brain . . ,” he muttered, but paused and sank into thought.

He was evidently upset. Myshkin reminded him of the photograph.

“Listen, prince,” Ganya said suddenly, as though an idea had struck him. “I want to ask a great favour of you ... but I really don’t know.”

He broke off, embarrassed. He seemed struggling with himself and trying to make up his mind. Myshkin waited in silence. Ganya scanned him once more with intent and searching eyes.

“Prince,” he began again, “they are angry with me now ... in there . . . owing to a strange . . . and absurd incident, for which I am not to blame. In fact, there’s no need to go into it. I think they are rather vexed with me in there, so that for a time I don’t want to go in without being invited. But there is something I absolutely must say to Aglaia Ivanovna. I have written a few words, on the chance” — he held a tiny folded note in his hand— “and I don’t know how to give it to her. Won’t you take it for me and give it to her at once, but to Aglaia Ivanovna alone, so that no one sees it? \bu understand? It’s no very terrible secret, nothing of that sort... but... Will you do it?”

“I don’t quite like doing it,” answered Myshkin.

“Oh, prince, it’s horribly important for me!” Ganya began entreating him. “She will perhaps answer. . . . Believe me, it’s only at the last extremity, at the last extremity that I could have recourse to ... By whom else could I send it? It’s very important. . . dreadfully important....”

Ganya was terribly afraid that Myshkin would not consent, and looked in his eyes with cringing entreaty.

“Very well, I’ll give it her.”

“Only so that no one sees it,” Ganya besought him, delighted. “And another thing, I can rely on your word of honour, of course, prince?”

“I won’t show it to anyone,” said Myshkin.

“The note is not sealed, but . . .” Ganya was beginning in his anxiety, but he broke off in confusion.

“Oh, I won’t read it,” answered Myshkin quite simply. He took the photograph and went out of the study.

As soon as Ganya was left alone, he clutched at his head.

“One word from her and I. . . and I will break it off, perhaps.”

He could not settle down to his papers again for excitement and suspense, and began pacing from one corner of the room to the other.

Myshkin pondered as he went. The task laid upon him impressed him unpleasantly. The thought of a letter from Ganya to Aglaia was unpleasant too. But when he was the length of two rooms from the drawing-room, he stopped short, as though recollecting something. He looked round, went to the window nearer to the liqht, and beqan lookinq at the portrait of Nastasya Filippovna.

He seemed trying to decipher something that had struck him before, hidden in that face. The impression it had made had scarcely left him, and now he was in a hurry to verify it again. He was now even more struck by the face, which was extraordinary from its beauty and from something else in it. There was a look of unbounded pride and contempt, almost hatred, in that face, and at the same time something confiding, something wonderfully simple-hearted. The contrast of these two elements roused a feeling almost of compassion. Her dazzling beauty was positively unbearable — the beauty of a pale face, almost sunken cheeks and glowing eyes — a strange beauty! Myshkin gazed at it for a minute, then started suddenly, looked round him, hurriedly raised the portrait to his lips and kissed it. When he walked into the drawing-room a minute later, his face was perfectly calm.

But he had hardly entered the dining-room (which was separated by one room from the drawing-room) when he almost ran against Aglaia, who was coming out. She was alone.

“Gavril Ardalionovitch asked me to give you this,” said Myshkin, handing her the note.

Aglaia stood still, took the note, and looked strangely at Myshkin. There was not the slightest embarrassment in her expression. There was only a shade of wonder in her eyes, and that seemed only in reference to Myshkin. Aglaia’s eyes seemed to ask him to account for having got mixed up in this affair with Ganya, and to ask him calmly and haughtily. They looked atone anotherfortwo or three seconds. Then something ironical seemed to come into her face; with a slight smile she walked away.

Madame Epanchin gazed for some moments in silence, with a shade of nonchalance, at the photograph of Nastasya Filippovna, which she held affectedly at arm’s length.

“Yes, good-looking,” she pronounced at last, “very good-looking indeed. I’ve seen her twice, only at a distance. That’s the sort of beauty you

appreciate, then?” she suddenly said to Myshkin.

“Yes, it is .. ,” answered Myshkin with some effort.

“You mean, just that sort of beauty?”

“Just that sort.”

“Why?”

“In that face . . . there is so much suffering,” answered Myshkin, as it were involuntarily speaking to himself, not in answer to her question.

“But perhaps you are talking nonsense,” Madame Epanchin concluded, and with a haughty gesture she flung the photograph down on the table.

Alexandra took it. Adelaida went up to her and they looked at it together. At that moment Aglaia came back into the drawing-room.

“What power!” Adelaida cried suddenly, looking eagerly over her sister’s shoulder at the portrait.

“Where? What power?” her mother asked sharply.

“Such beauty is power,” said Adelaida warmly. “With beauty like that one might turn the world upside down.”

She walked thoughtfully away to her easel. Aglaia only glanced cursorily at the portrait, screwed up her eyes, pouted, walked away and sat down clasping her hands.

Madame Epanchin rang the bell.

“Call Gavril Ardalionovitch here; he is in the study,” she told the servant who answered it.

“Maman!’ cried Alexandra siqnificantlv.

“I want to say a few words to him — that’s enough!” her mother snapped out, cutting short her protest. She was evidently irritated. “We have nothing but secrets here, prince, you see — nothing but secrets. It has to be so, it’s a sort of etiquette; it’s stupid. And in a matter which above everything needs frankness, openness and straightforwardness. There are marriages being arranged. I don’t like these marriages....”

“Maman, what are you saying?” Alexandra again made haste to check her.

“What is it, dear daughter? Do you like it yourself? As for the prince’s hearing it, we are friends. He and I are, anyway. God seeks men, good ones of course, but He does not want the wicked and capricious. Capricious especially, who say one thing one day and something else another. Do you understand, Alexandra Ivanovna? They say I am queer, prince, but I can tell what people are like. For the heart is the great thing, and the rest is all

nonsense. One must have sense too, of course . . . perhaps sense is the great thing really. Don’t smile, Aglaia, I am not contradicting myself: a fool with a heart and no sense is just as unhappy as a fool with sense and no heart. It’s an old truth. I am a fool with a heart and no sense, and you are a fool with sense and no heart, and so we are both unhappy and miserable.”

“What are you so unhappy about, maman?” Adelaida could not resist asking. She seemed the only one of the company who had not lost her good-humour.

“Learned daughters, in the first place,” retorted her mother curtly, “and as that’s enough of itself, there’s no need to go into other causes. Words enough have been wasted. We shall see how you two (I don’t count Aglaia) will manage with your sense and your talk, and whether you will be happy with your fine gentleman, most admirable Alexandra Ivanovna. Ah!” she exclaimed, seeing Ganya enter, “here comes another matrimonial alliance. Good-day!” she said in response to Ganya’s bow, without asking him to sit down. “\bu are contemplating marriage?”

“Marriage? How? What marriage?” muttered Gavril Ardalionovitch, dumbfounded. He was terribly disconcerted.

“Are you getting married, I ask you, if you prefer that expression?”

“N-no . . . I. . . n-no . . .” Gavril Ardalionovitch lied, and a flush of shame overspread his face.

He stole a glance at Aglaia who was sitting a little apart, and hurriedly looked away again. Aglaia looked coldly, intently and calmly at him, steadily watching his confusion.

“No? You said no?” the ruthless lady persisted. “Enough. I shall remember that to-day, Wednesday morning, you have said ‘No’ in answer to my question. What is to-day — Wednesday?”

“I think so, maman,” answered Adelaida.

“They never know the days. What day of the month is it?”

“The twenty-seventh,” answered Ganya.

“The twenty-seventh. Just as well for some reasons. Good-bye. I think you’ve a great deal to do, and it’s time for me to dress and go out. Take your photograph. Give my kind regards to your unhappy mother. Good-bye for the present, dear prince. Come and see us often. I am going to see old Princess Byelokonsky on purpose to tell her about you. And listen, my dear, I believe it’s simply for my sake God has brought you to Petersburg from Switzerland. Perhaps you may have other work to do, but it was chiefly for

my sake. That was just God’s design. Good-bye, dears. Alexandra, come to my room, my dear.”

Madame Epanchin went out. Ganya, crestfallen, confused, angry, picked up the photograph from the table and turned with a wry smile to Myshkin.

“Prince, I am just going home. If you’ve not changed your mind about boarding with us, I will take you, for you don’t even know the address.”

“Staya little, prince,” said Aglaia, suddenly getting up from her chair. “\bu must write in my album. Papa said you had a fine handwriting. I’ll bring it you directly.”

And she went out.

“Good-bye for the present, prince, I am going too,” said Adelaida.

She pressed Myshkin’s hand warmly, smiling kindly and cordially to him, and went away. She did not look at Ganya.

“That was your doing,” snarled Ganya, falling upon Myshkin as soon as every one had gone. “You’ve been babbling to them of my getting married!” he muttered in a rapid whisper, with a furious face and an angry gleam in his eyes. “\bu are a shameless chatterbox!”

“I assure you, you are mistaken,” Myshkin answered calmly and politely. “I didn’t even know you were going to be married.”

“You heard Ivan Fyodorovitch say this morning that everything would be settled to-night at Nastasya Filippovna’s. You repeated it. \bu are lying! From whom could they have found out? Damn it all, who could have told them except you? Didn’t the old woman hint it to me?”

“You must know best who told them, if you really think they hinted at it. I haven’t said a word about it.”

“Did you give the note? An answer?” Ganya interrupted with feverish impatience.

But at that very moment Aglaia came back and Myshkin hadn’t time to answer.

“Here, prince,” she said, laying the album on the table, “choose a page and write me something. Here is a pen, a new one too. You don’t mind it’s being a steel one? I hear that calligraphists never use steel pens.”

Talking to Myshkin she seemed not to notice Ganya’s presence. But while the prince was fixing his pen, looking for a page and making ready, Ganya went up to the fireplace where Aglaia was standing, on Myshkin’s right hand. With a quavering, breaking voice he said almost in her ear:

“One word — one word only from you and I am saved.”

Myshkin turned round quickly and looked at them both. There was real despair in Ganya's face; he seemed to have uttered those words in desperation without thinking. Aglaia looked at him for a few seconds with exactly the same calm wonder with which she had looked on the prince. And this calm wonder, this surprise, as though she were completely at a loss to understand what was said to her, seemed more terrible to Ganya at that moment than the most withering contempt.

"What am I to write?" asked Myshkin.

"I will dictate to you," said Aglaia, turning to him. "Are you ready? Write: 'I don't make bargains'; then write the day and the month. Show me."

Myshkin handed her the album.

"Excellent! \bu've written it wonderfully. You have an exquisite handwritinq. Thank vou. Good-bve,

prince. Stay," she added, as though suddenly recollecting something. "Come along, I want to give you something for a keepsake."

Myshkin followed her, but in the dining-room Aglaia stood still.

"Read this," she said, handing him Ganya's note.

Myshkin took the note and looked wonderingly at Aglaia.

"I know you haven't read it, and that man cannot have confided in you. Read it, I want you to read it."

The note had evidently been written in haste.

To-day my fate will be decided, you knowin what my. To-day I must give my word irrevocably. I have no claim on your sympathy; I dare not have any hope. But once you uttered a word — one word, and that word lighted the dark night of my life and has been my beacon ever since. Speak one such word again now and you will save me from ruin! Only say to me, "Break off everything, "and I will break it all off to-day. Oh, what will it cost you to say that! That word I only ask for as a sign of your sympathy and compassion forme. Only that-only that! Nothing more, nothing! I dare not dream of hope, fori am not worthy of it. But after a word from you I can accept my poverty again; I shall joyfully endure my hopeless lot. I shall face the struggle; I shall be glad of it; I shall rise up again with renewed strength.

Send me that word of sympathy (only sympathy, I swear)! Do not be angry with the audacity of a desperate and drowning man for making a last effort to save himself from perdition.

G.I.

“This man assures me,” said Aglaia abruptly, when Myshkin had finished reading it, “that the words ‘break it all off’will not compromise me and will bind me to nothing, and gives me a written guarantee of it, as you see, in this note. Observe how naively he hastened to underline certain words, and how coarsely his secret thought shows through it. “Vfet he knows that if he broke it all off of himself, without a word from me, without even speaking of it to me, without expecting anything from me, I should have felt differently to him and perhaps might have become his friend. He knows that for a fact. But he has a dirty soul. He knows it, but can’t bring himself to it; he knows it, but still he asks for a guarantee. He can’t act on faith. He wants me to give him hope of my hand, to make up for the hundred thousand. As for my words in the past of which he speaks in his note, and which he says have lighted up his life, it’s simply an insolent lie. I merely pitied him once. But he is insolent and shameless. He at once conceived a notion that hope was possible for him. I saw it at once. Since then he has begun trying to catch me; he is trying to catch me even now. But enough. Take the note and give it back to him as soon as you are out of the house; not before, of course.”

“And what answer am I to give him?”

“Nothing, of course. That’s the best answer. So you are going to live in his house?”

“Ivan Fyodorovitch himself advised me to this morning,” said Myshkin.

“Then be on your guard with him, I warn you. He won’t forgive you for taking him back his note.”

Aglaia pressed Myshkin’s hand lightly and walked away. Her face was grave and frowning. She did not even smile when she bowed to him at parting.

“I am just coming; I’ll only get my bundle,” said Myshkin to Ganya, “and we will go.”

Ganya stamped with impatience. His face looked black with fury. At last both went out into the street, Myshkin with his bundle in his hand.

“The answer? The answer?” cried Ganya, pouncing upon him. “What did she say to you? Did you give her the letter?”

Myshkin gave him the note without a word. Ganya was petrified.

“What? My letter?” he cried. “He didn’t give it to her. Ach, I might have expected it! Ach, d-d-damnation! ... I see how it was she didn’t understand

just now. But how could you — how could you have failed to give it? Oh, d-damna ...”

“Excuse me, on the contrary, I succeeded in giving your note at once, the very minute you’d given it me, and exactly as you asked me to. It’s in my hands again because Aglaia Ivanovna gave it back to me just now.”

“When? When?”

“As soon as I’d finished writing in her album, when she called me. \bu heard her? We went into the dining-room, she gave me the note, told me to read it and to give it to you back.”

“To read it?” Ganya shouted almost at the top of his voice. “To read it? You’ve read it?”

And in amazement he stood stock still again in the middle of the pavement, so astounded that he positively gaped.

“Yes, I’ve just read it.”

“And she gave it you — gave it you herself to read? Herself?”

“Yes; and I assure you I shouldn’t have read it unless she’d asked me to.”

Ganya was silent for a minute, reflecting with painful effort. But suddenly he cried:

“Impossible! She couldn’t have told you to read it. You are lying! You read it of yourself.”

“I am speaking the truth,” answered Myshkin in the same perfectly untroubled voice, “and I assure you I am very sorry that it is so distasteful to you.”

“But, you luckless creature, she must have said something at the time. Surely she made some answer?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Tell me, then, tell me! Oh, damn it!”

And Ganya twice stamped his right foot, wearing a golosh, on the pavement.

“When I’d finished reading it, she told me that you were trying to catch her; that you wanted to compromise her so that she might give you hopes of her hand, and that, secure of that, you wouldn’t lose by abandoning your hopes of a hundred thousand. That if you had done so without bargaining with her and had broken it off without asking for a guarantee from her beforehand, she would perhaps have become your friend. I believe that’s all. Oh, something more. When I asked, after I’d taken the letter, what was the answer, she said that no answer was the best answer. I think that was it. \bu

must excuse me if I've forgotten her exact words and only repeat it as I understood it."

Ganya was overcome by intense anger and his fury burst out without restraint.

"Ah, so that's it!" he snarled. "So my notes are thrown out of the window! Ah, she won't make bargains — then I will! And we shall see! I have other things to fall back upon. . . . We shall see! I'll make her smart for it!"

His face was pale and distorted; he foamed at the mouth, he shook his fist. So they walked for some steps. He behaved exactly as though he were alone in his room and made no attempt to keep up appearances before Myshkin, as though he looked upon him as absolutely of no consequence. But suddenly he reflected and pulled himself up.

"But how is it," he said suddenly, addressing Myshkin, "how is it you" — ("an idiot," he added to himself)— "are suddenly trusted with such confidence after two hours' acquaintanceship? How is it?"

Envy was all that was wanted to complete his suffering, and it suddenly stung him to the heart.

"That I can't explain," answered Myshkin.

Ganya looked wrathfully at him.

"Was it to make you a present of her confidence that she called you into the dining-room? She was going to give you something."

"That's just how I understand it."

"But, damn it all, why? What have you done? How have you won their hearts? Listen." He was violently agitated and in a terrible ferment; all his ideas seemed hopelessly scattered. "Listen. Can't you remember what you've been talking about — every word from the beginning, and give some sort of account of it? Don't you remember noticing anything?"

"Certainly I can," answered Myshkin. "At the beginning when I first went in and made their acquaintance, we began talking about Switzerland."

"Confound Switzerland!"

"Then we talked of capital punishment."

"Capital punishment?"

"Yes, something suggested it. . . . Then I told them how I spent three years out there, and the story of a poor village girl...."

"Damn the poor village girl! What else?"

Ganya was raging with impatience.

“Then how Schneider told me his opinion of my character, and how he forced me to ...”

“Hang Schneider and damn his opinion of you! What else?”

“Then something led up to my speaking of faces, or rather of the expression of faces, and I said that Aglaia Ivanovna was almost as beautiful as Nastasya Filippovna. And that was how I came to mention the portrait....”

“But you didn’t repeat — you didn’t repeat what you heard this morning in the study? You didn’t? You didn’t?”

“I tell you again I did not.”

“How the devil then . . . Bah! Did Aglaia show the note to the old lady?”

“I can assure you positively that she did not do that. I was there all the while, and she hadn’t the time to.”

“But perhaps you missed something. . . . Oh, d-damned idiot!” he exclaimed, completely beside himself. “He can’t even tell anything properly.”

Ganya, having once begun to be abusive and meeting no resistance, lost all restraint, as is always the case with certain sorts of people. A little more and he would have begun to spit, he was so furious. But his fury made him blind, or he would have understood long ago that this “idiot,” whom he was treating so rudely, was sometimes rather quick and subtle in understanding and could give an extremely satisfactory account of things. But something unexpected happened all at once.

“I must tell vou, Gavril Ardalionovitch,” Mvshkin said suddenly, “that I was once so ill that I really was almost an idiot; but I’ve got over that long ago, and so I rather dislike it when people call me an idiot to my face. Though I can excuse it in you in consideration of your ill-luck, but in your vexation you’ve been abusive to me twice already. I don’t like that at all, especially so suddenly at first acquaintance; and so, as we are just at the crossroads, hadn’t we better part? You go to the right to your home, and I go to the left. I’ve got twenty-five roubles, and I shall be sure to find some lodging-house.”

Ganya was dreadfully disconcerted, and even flushed with shame at meeting with such an unexpected rebuff.

“Excuse me, prince,” he cried warmly, dropping his offensive tone for one of extreme politeness. “For mercy’s sake, forgive me! \bu see what trouble I’m in. You know scarcely anything of it as yet, but if you knew all,

I am sure you would feel there was some excuse for me. Though, of course, it is inexcusable. .

“Oh, I don’t need so much apology,” Myshkin hastened to answer. “I understand that it’s very horrid for you and that’s why you are rude. Well, let’s go to your house; I’ll come with pleasure.”

“No, I can’t let him go like that now,” Ganya was thinking to himself, looking resentfully at Myshkin on the way. “The rogue got it all out of me, and then removed his mask. . . . There’s something behind it. But we shall see! Everything will be decided — everything! To-day!”

They were by now standing opposite the house.

CHAPTER 8

Ganya's flat was on the third story, on a very clean, light, spacious staircase, and consisted of six or seven rooms, big and little. Though the flat was ordinary enough, it seemed somewhat beyond the means of a clerk with a family, even with an income of two thousand roubles a year. But it had been taken by Ganya and his family not more than two months before with a view to taking boarders, to the intense annoyance of Ganya himself, to satisfy the urgent desires of his mother and sister, who were anxious to be of use and to increase the family income a little. Ganya scowled and called taking boarders degrading. It made him feel ashamed in the society where he was accustomed to appear as a somewhat brilliant young man with a future before him. All such concessions to the inevitable and all the cramped conditions of his life were a deep inner wound. For some time past he had become extremely and quite disproportionately irritable over every trifle, and if he still consented to submit and to put up with it for a time, it was only because he was resolved to change it all in the immediate future. But that very change, that very way of escape on which he had determined, involved a formidable difficulty — a difficulty the solution of which threatened to be more troublesome and harassing than all that had gone before.

The flat was divided by a passage, into which they stepped at once on entering. On one side of the passage were the three rooms which were intended for "specially recommended" boarders. On the same side of the passage, at the farthest end, next to the kitchen, was a fourth room, smaller than the rest, which was occupied by the father of the family, the retired General Ivolgin. He slept on a wide sofa, and was obliged to go in and out of the flat through the kitchen and by the back staircase. Ganya's brother, Kolya, a schoolboy of thirteen, shared the same room. He too had to be packed away in it, to do his lessons there, to sleep in ragged sheets on another sofa, very old, short and narrow, and above all to wait on his father and to keep an eye on him, which was becoming more and more necessary. Myshkin was given the middle one of the three rooms; the first on the right was occupied by Ferdyshtchenko, and the one on the left was empty. But Ganya led Myshkin first into the other half of the flat, which consisted of a dining room, of a drawing-room which was a drawing-room only in the

morning, being transformed later in the day into Ganya's study and bedroom; and of a third room, very small and always shut up, where the mother and daughter slept. It was a tight fit, in fact, in the flat. Ganya could only grind his teeth and say nothing. Though he was and wished to be respectful to his mother, it could be seen from the first minute that he was a great despot in his family.

Nina Alexandrovna was not alone in the drawing-room. Her daughter was with her, and both ladies were busy with some knitting while talking to a visitor, Ivan Petrovitch Ptitsyn. Nina Alexandrovna looked about fifty, with a thin and sunken face and dark rings under her eyes. She looked in delicate health and somewhat melancholy, but her face and expression were rather pleasing. At the first word one could see that she was of an earnest disposition and had genuine dignity. In spite of her melancholy air one felt that she had firmness and even determination. She was very modestly dressed in some dark colour in an elderly style, but her manner, her conversation, all her ways betrayed that she was a woman who had seen better days.

Varvara Ardalionovna was a girl of twenty-three, of middle height, rather thin. Her face, though not very beautiful, possessed the secret of charm without beauty and was extraordinarily attractive. She was very like her mother and was dressed in almost the same way, showing absolutely no desire to be smart. Her grey eyes might have been at times very merry and caressing, if they had not as a rule looked grave and thoughtful; too much so, especially of late. Her face too showed firmness and decision; in fact it suggested an even more vigorous and enterprising determination than her mother's. Varvara Ardalionovna was rather hot-tempered, and her brother was sometimes positively afraid of her temper. The visitor with them now, Ivan Petrovitch Ptitsyn, was a little afraid of her too. He was a young man, not yet thirty, modestly but elegantly dressed, with a pleasant but rather too solemn manner. His dark brown beard showed that he was not in the government service. He could talk cleverly and well, but was more often silent. He made a pleasant impression on the whole. He was obviously attracted by Varvara Ardalionovna and did not conceal his feelings. She treated him in a friendly way, but put off answering certain questions, and did not like them. But Ptitsyn was far from losing courage. Nina Alexandrovna was cordial to him and had of late begun to confide in him. It was known, moreover, that he was trying to make his fortune by lending

money at high interest on more or less good security. He was a great friend of Ganya's.

Ganya greeted his mother very frigidly, did not greet his sister at all, and after abruptly introducing Myshkin and giving a minute account of him, he at once drew Ptitsyn out of the room. Nina Alexandrovna said a few friendly words to Myshkin and told Kolya, who peeped in at the door, to conduct him to the middle room. Kolya was a boy with a merry and rather pleasant face and a confiding and simple manner.

"Where is your luggage?" he asked Myshkin, as they went into the room.

"I have a bundle. I left it in the passage."

"I'll bring it you directly. We have only the cook and Matryona, so I help too. Varya looks after everything and gets cross. Ganya says you've come from Switzerland to-day."

"Yes."

"Is it nice in Switzerland?"

"Very."

"Mountains?"

"Yes."

"I'll bring you your bundles directly."

Varvara Ardalionovna came in.

"Matryona will make your bed directly. Have you a trunk?"

"No, a bundle. Your brother has gone to fetch it; it's in the passage."

"There's no bundle there except this little one. Where have you put it?" asked Kolya, coming back into the room.

"I haven't any but that," answered Myshkin, taking his bundle.

"A-ah! I was wondering whether they hadn't been carried off by Ferdyshtchenko."

"Don't talk nonsense," said Varya sternly. Even to Myshkin she spoke shortly and with bare civility.

"Chere Babette, you might treat me more tenderly, I am not Ptitsyn."

"One can see you still want whipping, Kolya, you are so stupid. \bu can ask Matryona for anything you want. Dinner is at half-past four. You can dine with us or in your own room, as you prefer. Come, Kolya, don't be in the way."

"Let us go, you determined character."

As they went out they came upon Ganya.

“Is father at home?” Ganya asked Kolya, and on receiving an affirmative reply he whispered something in his ear. Kolya nodded and followed his sister out.

“One word, prince. I forgot to mention it with all this . . . business. I’ve a request to make. Be so good, if it won’t be a great bother to you — don’t gossip here of what has just passed between Aglaia and me, nor there of what you’ll find here, because there’s degradation enough here too. Damn it all, though! . . . Restrain yourself for to-day, anyway.”

“I assure you that I gossiped much less than you think,” said Myshkin, with some irritation at Ganya’s reproaches.

Their relations were obviously becoming more and more strained.

“Well, I have had to put up with enough to-day through you. Anyway, I beg you to keep quiet.”

“You must notice besides, Gavril Ardalionovitch, I was not bound in any way; and why shouldn’t I have spoken of the photograph? You didn’t ask me not to.”

“Foo! what a horrid room!” observed Ganya, looking round him contemptuously. “Dark and looking into the yard. \bu’ve come to us at a bad time from every point of view. But that’s not my business, I don’t let the rooms.”

Ptitsyn peeped in and called Ganya, who hurriedly left Myshkin and went out. There was something more he wanted to say, but he was obviously ill at ease and seemed ashamed to say it. He had found fault with the room to cover his embarrassment.

As soon as Myshkin had washed and made himself a little tidier, the door opened again and another person looked in. This was a gentleman about thirty, tall and broad, with a huge curly red head. His face was red and fleshy, his lips were thick, his nose was broad and flat. He had little ironical eyes lost in fat, that looked as if they were always winking. The whole countenance produced an impression of insolence. He was rather dirtily dressed.

He first opened the door only far enough to poke his head in. The head looked about the room for five seconds, then the door began slowly opening and the whole person came into view in the doorway. “Vfet the visitor did not come in, but, screwing up his eyes, still stared at Myshkin from the doorway. At last he closed the door behind him, came nearer, sat down on a chair, took Myshkin’s hand, and made him sit on the sofa near him.

“Ferdyshtchenko,” he said, looking intently and inquiringly at Myshkin.

“What of it?” answered Myshkin, almost laughing.

“A boarder,” said Ferdyshtchenko, looking at him as before.

“Do you want to make my acquaintance?”

“E-ech,” said the visitor, sighing and ruffling up his hair, and he began staring in the opposite corner. “Have you money?” he asked, turning suddenly to Myshkin.

“A little.”

“How much?”

“Twenty-five roubles.”

“Show me.”

Myshkin took the twenty-five-rouble note out of his waistcoat pocket and handed it to Ferdyshtchenko, who unfolded it, looked at it, turned it over, then held it to the light.

“That’s rather strange,” he said, seeming to reflect. “Why do they turn mud colour? These twenty-five-rouble notes often turn an awful colour, while others fade. Take it.”

Myshkin took back his note. Ferdyshtchenko got up from his chair.

“I’ve come in to warn you, in the first place, not to lend me money, for I shall be sure to ask you to.”

“Very well.”

“Do you mean to pay here?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I don’t. Thanks. I’m the next door on the right. Did you notice it? Try not to come and see me too often; I shall come and see you, you needn’t be afraid. Have you seen the general?”

“No.”

“Nor heard him either?”

“Of course not.”

“Well, you’ll see him and hear him. What’s more, he tries to borrow even of me. Avis au lecteur. Good-bye. Can one exist with such a name as Ferdyshtchenko? Eh?”

“Why not?”

“Good-bye.”

And he went to the door. Myshkin learnt later that this gentleman felt it incumbent upon him to amaze everyone by his originality and liveliness, but never succeeded in doing so. Some people he impressed unfavourably,

which was a real mortification to him. “Vfet he did not relinquish his efforts. At the door he succeeded in retrieving his position, so to speak, by stumbling against a gentleman who was coming in. Letting this fresh visitor, who was a stranger to Myshkin, into the room, he winked warningly several times behind his back, and so made a fairly effective exit.

The other gentleman was a tall and corpulent man of fifty-five or more, with a fleshy, bloated, purple-red face, set off by thick grey whiskers and moustache. He had large, rather prominent eyes. His appearance would have been rather impressive, if it had not been for something neglected, slovenly, even unclean about him. He was wearing shabby indoor clothes, an old frock-coat with elbows almost in holes and dirty linen. At close quarters he smelt a little of vodka, but his manner was impressive and rather studied. He betrayed a jealous desire to display his dignity.

The gentleman approached Myshkin deliberately, with an affable smile. He took his hand silently and, holding it for some time in his, looked into Myshkin’s face as though recognising familiarfeatures.

“It’s he! He!” he pronounced softly but solemnly. “His living picture! I heard them utter a dear and familiar name and it brought back a past that is gone forever.... Prince Myshkin?”

“Yes.”

“General Ivolgin, retired from service and unfortunate. \bur name and your father’s, may I

venture to ask?”

“Lyov Nikolayevitch.”

“Yes, yes! Son of my friend, the companion of my childhood, I may say, Nikolay Petrovitch?”

“My father’s name was Nikolay Lvovitch.”

“Lvovitch,” the general corrected himself, but without haste and with complete assurance, as though he had not in the least forgotten it, but had uttered the wrong name by accident. He sat down, and taking Myshkin’s hand he too made him sit down beside him. “I used to carry you in my arms.”

“Is it possible?” said Myshkin. “My father died twenty years ago.”

“Yes, it’s twenty years — twenty years and three months. We were at school together; I went straight into the army.”

“My father was in the army too: sub-lieutenant in the Vassilkovsky regiment.”

“In the Byelomirsky. He was transferred to the Byelomirsky just before his death. I was at his bedside and blessed him for eternity. Your mother. .

The general paused, as though arrested by painful memory.

“Yes, she died six months later from a chill,” said Myshkin.

“It was not a chill — not a chill. You may trust an old man’s words. I was there; I buried her too. It was grief at the loss of her husband; not a chill. Yes, I remember the princess too. Ah, youth! It was for her sake that the prince and I, friends from childhood, were on the point of becoming each other’s murderers.”

Myshkin began to listen with a certain scepticism.

“I was passionately in love with your mother when she was betrothed — betrothed to my friend. The prince observed it and it was a blow to him. He came to me early in the morning, before seven o’clock, and waked me up. I dressed in amazement. There was silence on both sides; I understood it all. He pulled two pistols out of his pocket. Across a handkerchief, without witnesses. What need of witnesses when within five minutes we should have sent each other into eternity? We loaded, stretched the handkerchief, aimed the pistols at each other’s hearts and gazed in each other’s faces. Suddenly tears gushed from the eyes of both; our hands trembled. Of both — of both at once. Then naturally followed embraces and a conflict in mutual generosity. The prince cried, ‘She is yours.’ I cried, ‘No, yours.’ In fact... in fact. . . you’ve come to live with us?”

“Yes, for a little time perhaps,” said Myshkin, seeming to hesitate.

“Mother asks you to come to her, prince,” cried Kolya, looking in at the door.

Myshkin got up to go, but the general put his right hand on his shoulder and affectionately made him sit down again.

“As a true friend of your father’s I want to warn you,” said the general. “You can see for yourself I have suffered, through a tragic catastrophe, but without trial. Without trial! Nina Alexandrovna is a rare woman. Varvara Ardalionovna, my daughter, is a rare daughter. We are driven by circumstances to take boarders — an incredible downfall! I, who was on the eve of becoming a governor-general! . . . But you we shall always be glad to receive. And meanwhile there is a tragedy in my house!”

Myshkin looked at him inquiringly and with great curiosity.

“A marriage is being arranged, and a strange marriage. A marriage between a woman of doubtful character and a young man who might be a

kammeijunker. That woman is to be brought into the house where are my daughter and my wife! But as long as I breathe, she shall not enter it! I will lie down on the threshold and she must walk over me. Ganya I scarcely speak to now; I avoid meeting him, indeed. I warn you beforehand; since you'll be living with us, you'll see it anyway. But you are the son of my friend and I have the right to hope ..."

"Prince, will you be so good as to come into the drawing-room?" Nina Alexandrovna herself appeared in the doorway and called him.

"Only fancy, my dear," cried the general, "it appears that I used to dandle the prince in my arms!"

Nina Alexandrovna glanced reproachfully at the general and searchingly at Myshkin, but did not say a word. Myshkin followed her, but as soon as they had entered the drawing-room and sat down, and Nina Alexandrovna had begun in an undertone and very rapidly telling Myshkin something, the general himself made his appearance. Nina Alexandrovna ceased speaking instantly and, with evident annoyance, bent over her knitting. The general perhaps observed this annoyance, but was still in excellent spirits.

"The son of my friend," he cried, addressing Nina Alexandrovna. "And so unexpectedly! I'd long given up all idea. . . . My dear, surely you must remember Nikolay Lvovitch? He was still at . . . Tver when you were there."

"I don't remember Nikolay Lvovitch. Is that your father?" she asked Myshkin.

"Yes. I don't think it was at Tver he died, though, but at Elisavetgrad," Myshkin observed timidly to the general. "I was told so by Pavlishtchev."

"It was at Tver," persisted the general. "He was transferred to Tver just before his death, and before his illness showed itself, in fact. \bu were too little to remember the removal or the journey. Pavlishtchev may easily have forgotten, though he was an excellent man."

"Did you know Pavlishtchev too?"

"He was a rare man, but I was on the spot. I blessed him on his death-bed."

"My father died while he was awaiting trial," Mvshkin observed aqain; "thouqh I've never been able to find out what he was accused of. He died in a hospital."

"Oh, that was about the case of the private Kolpakov, and there's no doubt that the prince would have been acquitted."

“Was that so? Are you sure?” asked Myshkin with marked interest.

“I should think so!” cried the general. “The court broke up without coming to a decision. It was an incredible case! A mysterious case, one may say. Captain Larionov, the commander of the company, died; the prince was appointed for a time to take his duty. Good. The private Kolpakov committed a theft — stole boot-leather from a comrade and spent it on drink. Good. The prince — in the presence, observe, of the sergeant and the corporal — gave Kolpakov a blowing-up and threatened to have him flogged. Very good. Kolpakov went to the barracks, lay down on his bed, and died a quarter of an hour afterwards. Excellent. But it was so unexpected, it was quite incredible. Anyway, Kolpakov was buried. The prince reported the matter and Kolpakov’s name was removed from the lists. One would have thought it was all right. But just six months later at the brigade review the private Kolpakov turns up, as though nothing had happened, in the third company of the second battalion of the Novozemlyansky infantry regiment of the same brigade and of the same division.”

“What?” cried Myshkin, beside himself with astonishment.

“It’s not so, it’s a mistake,” said Nina Alexandrovna, addressing him suddenly and looking at him almost with anguish. “Mori mari se trompe.”

“But, my dear, se trompe — it’s easy to say. How do you explain a case like that? Every one was dumbfounded. I should have been the first to say quon se trompe. But unhappily I was a witness and was on the commission myself. All who had seen him testified that this was the same private Kolpakov who had been buried six months before with the usual parade and the beating of drums. It was an unusual incident, almost incredible, I admit, but...”

“Father, your dinner is ready,” announced Varvara Ardalionovna, entering the room.

“Ah, that’s capital, excellent! I am certainly hungry.

. . . But it was, one may even say, a psychological incident...”

“The soup will be cold again,” said Varya impatiently.

“I am coming — I am coming,” muttered the general as he went out of the room. “And in spite of all inquiries,” he was heard saying in the corridor.

“You must overlook a great deal in Ardalion Alexandrovitch, if you stay with us,” said Nina Alexandrovna to Myshkin. “But he won’t be much in

your way; he even dines alone. All have their failings, you know, and their. . . peculiarities, some perhaps even more than those who are usually looked down upon for it. One special favour I will ask of you. If my husband ever applies to you for payment, tell him, please, that you've already paid me. Of course, anything you give to Ardalion Alexandrovitch will be taken off your bill, but I ask you simply to avoid muddling our accounts.... What is it, Varya?"

Varya came back into the room and without speaking handed her mother a portrait of Nastasya Filippovna. Nina Alexandrovna started, and examined it for some time — at first, it seemed, with dismay, and then with overwhelming and bitter emotion. At last she looked inquiringly at Varya.

"A present to him to-day from herself," said Varya, "and this evening everything will be settled."

"This evening!" Nina Alexandrovna repeated in a low voice, as though in despair. "Well, there can be no more doubt about it then, and no hope left. She announced her decision by giving the portrait. . . . But did he show it to you himself?" she added with surprise.

"You know that we've scarcely spoken a word for the last month. Ptitsyn told me all about it, and the portrait was lying on the floor by the table; I picked it up."

"Prince," said Nina Alexandrovna, addressing him suddenly, "I wanted to ask you (that was why I asked you to come to me), have you known my son long? I believe he told me you'd only arrived from somewhere to-day."

Myshkin gave a brief account of himself, leaving out the greater part. Nina Alexandrovna and Varya listened.

"I am not trying to find out anything about Gavril Ardalionovitch in questioning you," observed Nina Alexandrovna. "You must make no mistake on that score. If there is anything he can't tell me about himself, I don't want to learn it without his knowledge. I ask you, because just now when you'd gone out, Ganya answered, when I asked him about you: 'He knows everything; you needn't stand on ceremony with him.' What does that mean? That is, I should like to know to what extent..."

Ganya and Ptitsyn suddenly came in. Nina Alexandrovna instantly ceased speaking. Myshkin remained sitting beside her, while Varya moved away. Nastasya Filippovna's photograph was left lying in the most conspicuous place on Nina Alexandrovna's work-table, just in front of her.

Ganya saw it and frowned. He picked it up with an air of annoyance and flung it on his writing-table at the other end of the room.

“Is it to-day, Ganya?” his mother asked suddenly.

“Is what — to-day?” Ganya was startled, and all at once he flew at Myshkin. “Ah, I understand! \bur doing again! It seems to be a regular disease in you. Can’t you keep quiet? But let me tell you, your excellency...”

“It’s my fault, Ganya, no one else’s,” interposed Ptitsvn.

Ganya looked at him inquiringly.

“It’s better so, Ganya, especially as on one side the affair is settled,” muttered Ptitsyn; and moving away, he sat down at the table, and taking out of his pocket a piece of paper covered with writing in pencil, he began looking at it intently.

Ganya stood sullenly, in uneasy expectation of a family scene. It did not even occur to him to apologise to Myshkin.

“If everything is settled, then Ivan Petrovitch is certainly right,” observed Nina Alexandrovna. “Don’t scowl, please, Ganya, and don’t be angry. I am not going to ask you anything you don’t care to tell me of yourself, and I assure you I am completely resigned. Please don’t be uneasy.”

She went on with her work as she said this and seemed to be really calm. Ganya was surprised, but was prudently silent, looking at his mother and waiting for her to say something more definite. He had suffered too much from domestic quarrels already. Nina Alexandrovna noticed this prudence, and added with a bitter smile:

“You are still doubtful and do not believe me. Don’t be uneasy, there shall be no more tears and entreaties, on my part anyway. All I want is that you may be happy, and you know that. I submit to the inevitable, but my heart will always be with you whether we remain together or whether we part. Of course I only answer for myself; you can’t expect the same from your sister....”

“Ah, Varya again!” cried Ganya, looking with hatred and mockery at his sister. “Mother, I swear again what I promised you already! No one shall ever dare to be wanting in respect to you so long as I am here, so long as I am alive. Whoever may be concerned, I shall insist on the utmost respect being shown to you from anyone who enters our doors.”

Ganya was so relieved that he looked with an almost conciliatory, almost affectionate, expression at his mother.

“I was not afraid for myself, Ganya, you know. I’ve not been anxious and worried all this time on my own account. I am told that to-day everything will be settled. What will be settled?”

“She promised to let me know to-night whether she agrees or not,” answered Ganya.

“For almost three weeks we have avoided speaking of it, and it has been better so. Now that everything is settled, I will allow myself to ask one question only. How can she give you her consent and her portrait when you don’t love her? How, with a woman so ... so ...”

“Experienced, you mean?”

“I didn’t mean to put it that way. Can you have hood-winked her so completely?”

A note of intense exasperation was suddenly audible in the question. Ganya stood still, thought a minute, and with undisguised irony said:

“You are carried away, mother, and can’t control yourself again. And that’s how it always begins and then gets hotter and hotter with us. \bu said that there should be no questions asked and no reproaches and they’ve begun already! We’d better drop it; we’d better, really. Your intentions were good, anyway. ... I will never desert you under any circumstances. Any other man would have run away from such a sister. See how she is looking at me now! Let us make an end of it. I was feeling so relieved . . . And how do you know I am deceiving Nastasya Filippovna? As for Varya, she can please herself, and that’s all about it. Well, that’s quite enough now.”

Ganya got hotter with every word and paced aimlessly about the room. Such conversations quickly touched the sore spot in every member of the family.

“I have said that, if she comes into the house, I shall go out of it, and I too shall keep my word,” said Varya.

“Out of obstinacy!” cried Ganya. “And it’s out of obstinacy that you won’t be married either. Don’t snort at me! I don’t care a damn for it, Varvara Ardalionovna! \bu can carry out your plan at once, if you like. I am sick of you. What! You have made up your mind to leave us at last, prince, have you?” he cried to Myshkin, seeing him get up from his place.

Ganya’s voice betrayed that pitch of irritation when a man almost revels in his own irritability, gives himself up to it without restraint and almost

with growing enjoyment, regardless of consequences. Myshkin looked round at the door to answer the insult, but seeing from Ganya's exasperated face that another word would be too much for him, he turned and went out in silence. A few minutes later he heard from their voices in the drawinq-room that the conversation had become even noisier and more unreserved in his absence.

He crossed the dining-room into the hall on the way to his room. As he passed the front door, he heard and noticed some one outside making desperate efforts to ring the bell. But something seemed to have gone wrong with the bell, it only shook without making a sound. Myshkin unbolted the door, opened it, and stepped back in amazement, startled. Nastasya Filippovna stood before him. He knew her at once from her photograph. There was a gleam of annoyance in her eyes when she saw him. She walked quickly into the hall, pushing him out of her way, and said angrily, flinging off her fur coat:

"If you are too lazy to mend the bell, you might at least be in the hall when people knock. Now he's dropped my coat, the duffer!"

The coat was indeed lying on the floor. Nastasya Filippovna, without waiting for him to help her off with it, had flung it on his arm from behind without looking, but Myshkin was not quick enough to catch it.

"They ought to turn you off. Go along and announce me."

Myshkin was about to say something, but was so abashed that he could not, and, carrying the coat which he had picked up from the floor, he walked towards the drawing-room.

"Well, now he is taking my coat with him! Why are you carrying my coat away? Ha, ha, ha! Are you crazy?"

Myshkin went back and stared at her, as though he were petrified. When she laughed he smiled too, but still he could not speak. At the first moment when he opened the door to her, he was pale; now the colour rushed to his face.

"What an idiot!" Nastasya Filippovna cried out, stamping her foot in indignation. "Where are you going now? What name are you going to take in?"

"Nastasya Filippovna," muttered Myshkin.

"How do you know me?" she asked him quickly. "I've never seen you. Go along, take in my name. What's the shouting about in there?"

“They are quarrelling,” said Myshkin, and he went into the drawing-room.

He went in at a rather critical moment. Nina Alexandrovna was on the point of entirely forgetting that “she was resigned to everything”; she was defending Varya, however. Ptitsyn too was standing by Varya’s side; he had left his pencilled note. Varya herself was not overawed; indeed, she was not a girl of the timid sort; but her brother’s rudeness became coarser and more insufferable at every word. In such circumstances she usually left off speaking and only kept her eyes fixed on her brother in ironical silence. By this proceeding she was able, she knew, to drive her brother out of all bounds. At that moment Myshkin entered the room and announced: “Nastasya Filippovna.”

CHAPTER 9

THERE WAS complete silence in the room; every one stared at Myshkin as though they didn't understand him and didn't want to understand him. Ganya was numb with horror. The arrival of Nastasya Filippovna, and especially at this juncture, was the strangest and most disturbing surprise for everyone. The very fact that Nastasya Filippovna had for the first time thought fit to call on them was astounding. Hitherto she had been so haughty that she had not in talking to Ganya even expressed a desire to make the acquaintance of his family, and of late had made no allusion to them at all, as though they were nonexistent. Though Ganya was to some extent relieved at avoiding so difficult a subject, yet in his heart he treasured it up against her. In any case he would rather have expected biting and ironical remarks from her about his family than a visit to them. He knew for a fact that she was aware of all that was going on in his home in regard to his engagement and of the attitude of his family towards her. Her visit now, after the present of her photograph and on her birthday, the day on which she had promised to decide his fate, was almost equivalent to the decision itself.

The stupefaction with which all stared at Myshkin did not last long. Nastasya Filippovna herself appeared at the drawing-room door and again slightly pushed him aside as she entered the room.

"At last I have managed to get in. Why do you tie up the bell?" she said good-humouredly, giving her hand to Ganya, who rushed to meet her. "Why do you look so upset? Introduce me, please."

Ganya, utterly disconcerted, introduced her first to Varya, and the two women exchanged strange looks before holding out their hands to each other. Nastasya Filippovna, however, laughed and masked her feelings with a show of good-humour; but Varya did not care to mask hers, and looked at her with gloomy intensity. Her countenance showed no trace even of the smile required by simple politeness. Ganya was aghast; it was useless to entreat, and there was no time indeed, and he flung at Varya such a menacing glance that she saw from it what the moment meant to her brother. She seemed to make up her mind to give in to him, and faintly smiled at Nastasya Filippovna. (All of the family were still very fond of one another.) The position was somewhat improved by Nina Alexandrovna,

whom Ganya, helplessly confused, introduced after his sister. He even made the introduction to Nastasya Filippovna instead of to his mother. But no sooner had Nina Alexandrovna begun to speak of the “great pleasure,” &c. when Nastasya Filippovna, paying no attention to her, turned hurriedly to Ganya and, sitting down, without waiting to be asked, on a little sofa in the corner by the window, she cried out:

“Where’s your study? And . . . where are the lodgers? You take lodgers, don’t you?”

Ganya flushed horribly and was stammering some answer, but Nastasya Filippovna added at once:

“Wherever do you keep lodgers here? \bu’ve no study even. Does it pay?” she asked, suddenly addressinq Nina Alexandrovna.

“It’s rather troublesome,” the latter replied. “Of course it must pay to some extent, but we’ve only just But Nastasya Filippovna was not listening again: she stared at Ganya, laughed, and shouted to him:

“What do you look like! My goodness! what do you look like at this minute!”

Her laughter lasted several minutes, and Ganya’s face certainly was terribly distorted. His stupefaction, his comic crestfallen confusion had suddenly left him. But he turned fearfully pale, his lips worked convulsively. He bent a silent, intent and evil look on the face of his visitor, who still went on laughing.

There was another observer who had scarcely recovered from his amazement at the sight of Nastasya Filippovna; but though he stood dumbfounded in the same place by the drawing-room door, yet he noticed Ganya’s pallor and the ominous change in his face. That observer was Myshkin. Almost frightened, he instinctively stepped forward.

“Drink some water,” he murmured to Ganya, “and don’t look like that.”

It was evident that he spoke on the impulse of the moment, without ulterior motive or intention. But his words produced an extraordinary effect. All Ganya’s spite seemed suddenly turned against him. He seized him by the shoulder and looked at him in silence with hatred and resentment, as though unable to utter a word. It caused a general commotion; Nina Alexandrovna even uttered a faint cry. Ptitsyn stepped forward uneasily; Kolya and Ferdyshtchenko, who were coming in at the door, stopped short in amazement. Only Varya still looked sullen, yet she was watching intently.

She did not sit down, but stood beside her mother with her arms folded across her bosom.

But Ganya checked himself at once, almost at the first moment, and laughed nervously. He regained his self-possession completely.

“Why, are you a doctor, prince?” he cried as simply and good-humouredly as he could. “He positively frightened me. Nastasya Filippovna, may I introduce? This is a rare personality, though I’ve only known him since the morning.”

Nastasya Filippovna looked at Myshkin in astonishment.

“Prince? He is a prince? Only fancy, I took him for the footman just now and sent him in to announce me! Ha, ha, ha!”

“No harm done — no harm done,” put in Ferdyshtchenko, going up to her quickly, relieved that they had begun to laugh. “No harm: se non e vero”

“And I was almost swearing at you, prince! Forgive me, please. Ferdyshtchenko, how do you come to be here at such an hour? I did not expect to meet you here, anyway. Who? What prince? Myshkin?” she questioned Ganya, who, still holding Myshkin by the shoulder, had by now introduced him.

“Our boarder,” repeated Ganya.

It was obvious that they presented him and almost thrust him upon Nastasya Filippovna as a curiosity, as a means of escape from a false position. Myshkin distinctly caught the word “idiot” pronounced behind his back, probably by Ferdyshtchenko, as though in explanation to Nastasya Filippovna.

“Tell me, why didn’t you undeceive me just now when I made such a dreadful mistake about you?” Nastasya Filippovna went on, scanning Myshkin from head to foot in a most unceremonious fashion.

She waited with impatience for an answer, as though she were sure the answer would be so stupid as to make them laugh.

“I was surprised at seeing you so suddenly,” Myshkin muttered.

“And how did you know it was I? Where have you seen me before? But how is it? Really, it seems as though I had seen him somewhere. And tell me why were you so astonished just now? What is there so amazing about me?”

“Come now, come,” Ferdyshtchenko went on, simpering. “Come now! Oh Lord, the things I’d say in answer to such a question! Come! .. . We shall think you are a duffer next, prince!”

“I should say them too in your place,” said Myshkin, laughing, to Ferdyshtchenko. “I was very much struck to-day by your portrait,” he went on, addressing Nastasya Filippovna. “Then I talked to the Epanchins about you; and early this morning in the train, before I reached Petersburg, Parfyon Rogozhin told me a great deal about you. . . . And at the very minute I opened the door to you, I was thinking about you too, and then suddenly you appeared.”

“And how did you recognise that it was I?”

“From the photograph, and ...”

“And what?”

“And you were just as I had imagined you. ... I feel as though I had seen you somewhere too.”

“Where — where?”

“I feel as though I had seen your eyes somewhere . . . but that’s impossible. That’s nonsense. . . . I’ve never been here before. Perhaps in a dream....”

“Bravo, prince!” cried Ferdyshtchenko. “Yes, I take back my ‘se non e vera! But it’s all his innocence,” he added regretfully.

Myshkin had uttered his few sentences in an uneasy voice, often stopping to take breath. Everything about him suggested strong emotion. Nastasya Filippovna looked at him with interest, but she was not laughing now.

At that moment a new voice, speaking loudly behind the group that stood close round Myshkin and Nastasya Filippovna, seemed to cleave a way through the company and part it in two. Facing Nastasya Filippovna stood the head of the family, General Ivolqin himself. He wore an eveninq coat and had a clean shirt-front; his moustaches were dyed.

This was more than Ganya could endure.

Ambitious and vain to a hyper-sensitive, morbid degree, he had been seeking for the last two months for any sort of means by which he could build up a more presentable and gentlemanly mode of life. Yet he felt himself without experience, and perhaps likely to go astray in the path he had chosen. At home, where he was a despot, he had taken up in despair an attitude of complete cynicism; but he dared not maintain his position before Nastasya Filippovna, who had held him in suspense till the last minute and ruthlessly kept the upper hand of him. “The impatient beggar,” as Nastasya Filippovna had called him, so he had been told, had sworn by every oath

that he would make her pay bitterly for it afterwards. Yet at the same time he had sometimes dreamed like a child of reconciling all incongruities. Now, after all that, he had to drink this bitter cup too, at such a moment above all! One more unforeseen torture — most terrible of all for a vain man — the agony of blushing for his own kindred, in his own house, had fallen to his lot.

“Is the reward itself worth it?” flashed through Ganya’s mind at that moment.

At that instant there was happening what had been his nightmare for those two months, what had frozen him with horror and made him burn with shame: the meeting had come at last between his father and Nastasya Filippovna. He had sometimes tormented himself by trying to imagine the general at the wedding, but he never could fill in the agonising picture and made haste to put it out of his mind. Perhaps he exaggerated his misfortune out of all proportion. But that is always the way with vain people. In the course of those two months he had considered the matter thoroughly and had decided at all costs to suppress his parent for a time at least and to get him, if necessary, out of Petersburg, with or without his mother’s consent. Ten minutes earlier, when Nastasya Filippovna made her entrance, he was so taken aback, so dumbfounded, that he forgot the possibility of Ardalion Alexandrovitch’s appearance on the scene and had taken no steps to prevent it. And behold, here was the general before them all, and solemnly got up for the occasion too in a dress-coat, at the very moment when Nastasya Filippovna was “only seeking some pretext to cover him and his family with ridicule” (of that he felt convinced). Indeed, what could her visit mean, if not that? Had she come to make friends with his mother and sister, or to insult them in his house? But from the attitude of both parties there could be no doubt on that subject: his mother and his sister were sitting on one side like outcasts, while Nastasya Filippovna seemed positively to have forgotten that they were in the same room with her. And if she behaved like that, it was pretty certain she had some object in it.

Ferdyshtchenko took hold of the general and led him up.

“Ardalion Alexandrovitch Ivolgin,” said the general with dignity, bowing and smiling. “An old soldier in misfortune and the father of a family which is happy in the prospect of including such a charming ...”

He did not finish. Ferdyshtchenko quickly set a chair for him, and the general, who was rather weak on his legs at that moment so soon after

dinner, fairly plumped, or rather fell, into it. But that did not disconcert him. He took up his position directly facing Nastasya Filippovna, and with an agreeable simper he deliberately and gallantly raised her fingers to his lips. It was at all times difficult to disconcert the general. Except for a certain slovenliness, his exterior was still fairly presentable, a fact of which he was thoroughly well aware. He had in the past moved at times in very good society, from which he had been finally excluded only two or three years before. Since then he had abandoned himself to some of his weaknesses, unchecked. But he still retained his easy and agreeable manner.

Nastasya Filippovna seemed highly delighted at the advent of General Ivolgin, of whom of course she had heard.

“I’ve heard that my son . . ,” began Ardalion Alexandrovitch.

“Yes, your son! You are a pretty one too, his papa! Why do you never come and see me? Do you shut yourself up, or is it your son’s doing? You at least might come to see me without compromising any one.”

“Children of the nineteenth century and their parents ..,” the general began again.

“Nastasya Filippovna, please excuse Ardalion Alexandrovitch for a moment, some one is askinq to see him,” said Nina Alexandrovna in a loud voice.

“Excuse him! Why, but I’ve heard so much about him, I’ve been wanting to see him for so long! And what business has he? He is retired? \bu won’t leave me, general? You won’t go away?”

“I promise you he shall come and see you, but now he needs rest.”

“Ardalion Alexandrovitch, they say you need rest,” cried Nastasya Filippovna, displeased and pouting like a frivolous and silly woman deprived of a toy.

The general did his best to make his position more foolish than before.

“My dear! My dear!” he said reproachfully, addressing his wife solemnly and laying his hand on his heart.

“Won’t you come away, mother?” said Varya aloud.

“No, Varya, I’ll sit it out to the end.”

Nastasya Filippovna could not have failed to hear the question and the answer, but it seemed only to increase her gaiety. She showered questions upon the general again, and in five minutes the general was in a most triumphant state of mind and holding forth amidst the loud laughter of the company.

Kolya pulled Myshkin by the lapel of his coat.

“You get him away somehow. This is impossible! Please do!” There were tears of indignation in the poor boy’s eyes. “Oh, that beast Ganya!” he muttered to himself.

“I used indeed to be an intimate friend of Ivan Fyodorovitch Epanchin’s,” the general babbled on in reply to Nastasya Filippovna’s question. “He, I, and the late Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch Myshkin, whose son I have embraced to-day after twenty years’ separation, we were three inseparables, a regular cavalcade, so to say — like the three musketeers, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis. But one is in his grave, alas! struck down by slander and a bullet; another is before you and is still struggling with slanders and bullets.”...

“With bullets?” cried Nastasya Filippovna.

“They are here, in my bosom and were received under the walls of Kars, and in bad weather I am conscious of them. In all other respects I live like a philosopher, I walk, I play draughts at my cafe like any bourgeois retired from business, and read the Independance. But with Epanchin, our Porthos, I’ve had nothing to do since the scandal two years ago on the railway about a lap-dog.”

“About a lap-dog? What was it?” asked Nastasya Filippovna with marked curiosity. “About a lap-dog? Let me see . . . and on the railway too,” she repeated, as though recollecting something.

“Oh, it was a stupid affair, not worth repeating. It was all about Princess Byelokonsky’s governess, Mistress Schmidt. But... it’s not worth repeating.”

“But you must tell me!” cried Nastasya Filippovna gaily.

“And I’ve never heard it before,” observed Ferdyshtchenko. “C’estdu nouveau.”

“Ardalion Alexandrovitch!” came again beseechingly from Nina Alexandrovna.

“Father, there’s some one to see you!” cried Kolya.

“It’s a stupid story and can be told in two words,” began the general complacently. “Two years ago — yes, nearly two, just after the opening of the new X. railway — I was already in civilian dress then and busy about an affair of great importance in connection with my giving up the service. I took a first-class ticket, went in, sat down and began to smoke. Or rather I went on smoking; I had lighted my cigar before. I was alone in the

compartment. Smoking was not prohibited, nor was it allowed; it was sort of half allowed, as it usually is. Of course it depends on the person. The window was down. Just before the whistle sounded, two ladies with a lap-dog seated themselves just opposite me. They were late. One of them was dressed in gorgeous style in light blue; the other more soberly in black silk with a cape. They were nice-looking, had a disdainful air, and talked English. I took no notice, of course, and went on smoking. I did hesitate, but I went on smoking close to the window, for the window was open. The lap-dog was lying on the pale blue lady's knee. It was a tiny creature no bigger than my fist, black with white paws, quite a curiosity. It had a silver collar with a motto on it. I did nothing. But I noticed the ladies seemed annoyed, at my cigar, no doubt. One of them stared at me through her tortoise-shell lorgnette. I did nothing again, for they said nothing. If they'd said anything, warned me, asked me — there is such a thing as language after all! But they were silent. . . . Suddenly, without the slightest preface — I assure you without the slightest, as though she had suddenly taken leave of her senses — the pale blue one snatched the cigar out of my hand and flung it out of the window. The train was racing along. I gazed at her aghast. A savage woman, yes, positively a woman of quite a savage type; yet a plump, comfortable-looking, tall, fair woman, with rosy cheeks (too rosy, in fact). Her eyes glared at me. Without uttering a word and with extraordinary courtesy, the most perfect, the most refined courtesy, I delicately picked up the lap-dog by the collar in two fingers and flung it out of the window after the cigar! It uttered one squeal. The train was still racing on."

"You are a monster!" exclaimed Nastasya Filippovna, laughing and clapping her hands like a child.

"Bravo, bravo!" cried Ferdyshtchenko.

Ptitsyn too smiled, though he also had been extremely put out by the general's entrance. Even Kolya laughed and cried "Bravo!" too.

"And I was right, perfectly right," the triumphant general continued warmly. "For if cigars are forbidden in a railway carriage, dogs are even more so."

"Bravo, father!" cried Kolya gleefully. "Splendid! I should certainly, certainly have done the same."

"But what did the lady do?" Nastasya Filippovna asked impatiently.

"She? Ah, that's where the unpleasantness comes in," the general went on, frowning. "Without uttering a word and without the slightest warning

she slapped me on the cheek. A savage woman, quite a savage type."

"And you?"

The general dropped his eyes, raised his eyebrows, shrugged his shoulders, pursed up his lips, flung up his hands, paused, then suddenly pronounced:

"I was carried away."

"And hurt her — hurt her?"

"On my honour, I did not. A scandalous scene followed, butldid not hurt her. I simply waved my arm once, solely to wave her back. But as the devil would have it, the pale blue one turned out to be English, a governess or some sort of family friend of Princess Byelokonsky, and the one in black, as it appeared, was the eldest of the princess's daughters, an old maid of five-and-thirty. And you know what terms Madame Epanchin is on with the Byelokonsky family. All the six princesses fainted, tears, mourning for the pet lap-dog, screams on the part of the English governess — a perfect Bedlam! Of course I went to apologise, to express my penitence, wrote a letter. They refused to see me or my letter. And Epanchin quarrelled with me, refused me admittance, turned me out."

"But allow me. How do you explain this?" Nastasya Filippovna asked suddenly. "Five or six days ago I read in the Independence — I always read t h e Independance — exactly the same story. Precisely the same story! It happened on one of the Rhine railways between a Frenchman and an English-woman. The cigar was snatched in the same way; the lap-dog was thrown out of the window too. It ended in the same way. Her dress was pale blue even!"

The general flushed terribly. Kolya blushed too and squeezed his head in his hands. Ptitsyn turned away quickly. Ferdyshtchenko was the only one who went on laughing. There is no need to speak of Ganya: he had stood all the time in mute and insufferable agony.

"I assure you," muttered the general, "that the very same thing happened to me."

"Father really had some trouble with Mrs. Schmidt, the governess at the Byelokonsky's," cried Kolya. "I remember it."

"What! Exactly the same? The very same story at the opposite ends of Europe and alike in every detail, even to the pale blue dress," persisted the merciless lady. "I'll send you the Independence Beige"

“But note,” the general still persisted, “that the incident occurred to me two years ago.”

“Ah, there is that!” Nastasya Filippovna laughed as though she were in hysterics.

“Father, I beg you, come out and let me have a word with you,” said Ganya in a shaking and harassed voice, mechanically taking his father by the shoulder.

There was a gleam of infinite hatred in his eyes.

At that moment there was a violent ring at the front door — a ring that might well have pulled down the bell. It betokened an exceptional visit. Kolva ran to open the door.

CHAPTER 10

THERE SEEMED a great deal of noise and many people in the entry. From the drawing-room it sounded as though several people had already come in and more were still coming. Several voices were talking and shouting at once. There was shouting and talking on the staircase also; the door opening on it had evidently not been closed. The visit seemed to be a very strange one. They all looked at each other. Ganya rushed into the dining-room, but several visitors had already entered it.

“Ah, here he is, the Judas!” cried a voice that Myshkin knew. “How are you, Ganya, you scoundrel?”

“Here he is, here he is himself,” another voice chimed in.

Myshkin could not be mistaken: the first voice was Rogozhin’s, the second Lebedyev’s.

Ganya stood petrified and gazing at them in silence in the doorway from the drawing-room, not hindering ten or twelve persons from following Parfyon Rogozhin into the dining-room. The party was an exceedingly mixed one, and not only incongruous but disorderly. Some of them walked in as they were, in their overcoats and furs. None was quite drunk, however, though they all seemed extremely exhilarated. They seemed to need each other’s moral support to enter; not one would have had the effrontery to enter alone, but they all seemed to push one another in. Even Rogozhin walked diffidently at the head of the party; but he had some intention, and he seemed in a state of gloomy and irritated preoccupation. The others only made a chorus or band of supporters. Besides Lebedyev, there was Zalyozhev, who had flung off his overcoat in the entry and walked in swaggering and jaunty with his hair curled. There were two or three more of the same sort, evidently young merchants; a man in a semi-military great-coat; a very fat little man who kept laughing continually; an immense man over six feet, also very stout, extremely taciturn and morose, who evidently put his faith in his fists. There was a medical student, and a little Pole who had somehow attached himself to the party. Two unknown ladies peeped in at the front door, but did not venture to come in. Kolya slammed the door in their faces and latched it.

“How are you, Ganya, you scoundrel? “Vbu didn’t expect Parfyon Rogozhin, did you?” repeated Rogozhin, going to the drawing-room door

and facing Ganya.

But at that moment he caught sight of Nastasya Filippovna, who sat facing him in the drawing-room. Evidently nothing was further from his thoughts than meeting her here, for the sight of her had an extraordinary effect on him. He turned so pale that his lips went blue.

“Then it’s true,” he said quietly, as though to himself, looking absolutely distracted. “It’s the end! .. . Well . . . you shall pay for it!” he snarled, suddenly looking with extreme fury at Ganya. “Well... ach!”

He gasped for breath, he could hardly speak. Mechanically he moved into the drawing-room, but as he went in, he suddenly saw Nina Alexandrovna and Varya, and stopped somewhat embarrassed, in spite of his emotion. After him came Lebedyev, who followed him about like a shadow and was very drunk; then the student, the gentleman with the fists, Zalyozhev, bowing to right and left, and last of all the little fat man squeezed himself in. The presence of the ladies was still a check on them, and it was evidently an unwelcome constraint, which would of course have broken down if they had once been set off, if some pretext for shouting and beginning a row had arisen. Then all the ladies in the world would not have hindered them.

“What, you here too, prince?” Rogozhin said absently, somewhat surprised at meeting Myshkin. “Still in your gaiters, e-ech!” he sighed, forgetting Myshkin’s existence and looking towards Nastasya Filippovna again, moving closer to her as though drawn by a magnet.

Nastasya Filippovna too looked with uneasy curiosity at the visitors.

Ganya recovered himself at last.

“But allow me. What does this mean?” he began in a loud voice, looking severely at the newcomers and addressinq himself principallv to Roqozhin. “This isn’t a stable, gentlemen, my mother and sister are here.”

“We see your mother and sister are here,” muttered Rogozhin through his teeth.

“That can be seen, that your mother and sister are here.” Lebedyev felt called upon to second the statement.

The gentleman with the fists, feeling no doubt that the moment had arrived, began growling something.

“But upon my word!” cried Ganya, suddenly exploding and raising his voice immoderately. “First, I beg you all to go into the dining-room, and secondly, kindly let me know ...”

“Fancy, he doesn’t know!” said Rogozhin, with an angry grin, not budging from where he stood. “Don’t you know Rogozhin?”

“I’ve certainly met you somewhere, but...”

“Met me somewhere! Why, I lost two hundred roubles of my father’s money to you three months ago. The old man died without finding it out. You enticed me into it and Kniff cheated. Don’t you recognise me? Ptitsyn was a witness of it. If I were to show you three roubles out of my pocket, you’d crawl on all fours to Vassilyevsky for it — that’s the sort of chap you are! That’s the sort of soul you’ve got! And I’ve come here now to buy you for money. Never mind my having come with such boots on. I’ve got a lot of money now, brother, I can buy the whole of you and your live-stock too. I can buy you all up, if I like! I’ll buy up everything!” Rogozhin grew more and more excited and seemed more and more drunk. “E-ech!” he cried. “Nastasya Filippovna, don’t turn me away. Tell me one thing: are you going to marry him, or not?”

Rogozhin put this question desperately, as though appealing to a deity, but with the courage of a man condemned to death who has nothing to lose. In deadly anguish he awaited her reply.

With haughty and sarcastic eyes, Nastasya Filippovna looked him up and down. But she glanced at Varya and Nina Alexandrovna, looked at Ganya, and suddenly changed her tone.

“Certainly not! What’s the matter with you? And what has put it into your head to ask such a question?” she answered quietly and gravely and as it seemed with some surprise.

“No? No!” cried Rogozhin, almost frantic with delight. “Then you are not? But they told me . . . Ach! . . . Nastasya Filippovna, they say that you are engaged to Ganya. To him! As though that were possible! I told them all it was impossible. I can buy him up for a hundred roubles. If I were to give him a thousand, three thousand, to retire, he would run off on his wedding day and leave his bride to me. That’s right, isn’t it, Ganya, you scoundrel? “Vbu’d take the three thousand, wouldn’t you? Here’s the money — here you have it! I came to get you to sign the agreement to do it. I said I’ll buy him off and I will buy him off!”

“Get out of the room, you are drunk!” cried Ganya, who had been flushing and growing pale by turns.

His outburst was followed by a sudden explosion from several persons at once: the whole crew of Rogozhin’s followers were only awaiting the signal

for battle. With intense solicitude Lebedyev was whispering something in Rogozhin's ear.

"That's true, clerk!" answered Rogozhin. "True, you drunken soul! Ech, here goes! Nastasya Filippovna," he cried, gazing at her like a maniac, passing from timidity to the extreme of audacity, "here are eighteen thousand roubles!" and he tossed on the table before her a roll of notes wrapped in white paper and tied with string. "There! And . . . and there's more to come!"

He did not venture to say what he wanted.

"No, no, no!" Lebedyev whispered to him with an air of dismay.

It could be divined that he was horrified at the magnitude of the sum and was urging him to try his luck with a much smaller one.

"No, brother, you are a fool; you don't know how to behave here . . . and it seems as though I am a fool like you!" Rogozhin started, and checked himself as he met the flashing eyes of Nastasya Filippovna. "E-ech! I've made a mess of it, listening to you," he added with intense regret.

Nastasya Filippovna suddenly laughed as she looked at Rogozhin's downcast face.

"Eighteen thousand to me? Ah, one can see he is a peasant!" she added with insolent familiarity, and she got up from the sofa, as though to go away.

Ganya had watched the whole scene with a sinking heart.

"Forty thousand, then — forty, not eighteen!" cried Roqozhin. "Ptitsvn and Biskup promised to qet me forty thousand by seven o'clock. Forty thousand! Cash down!"

The scene had become scandalous in the extreme, but Nastasya Filippovna stayed on and still went on laughing, as though she were intentionally prolonging it. Nina Alexandrovna and Varya had also risen from their places and waited in silent dismay to see how much further it would go. Varya's eyes glittered but the effect of it all on Nina Alexandrovna was painful; she trembled and seemed on the point of fainting.

"A hundred, then, if that's it! I'll give you a hundred thousand to-day. Ptitsyn, lend it me, it'll be worth your while!"

"You are mad," Ptitsyn whispered suddenly, going up to him quickly and taking him by the hand. "You are mad! They'll send for the police! Where are you?"

“He is drunk and boasting,” said Nastasya Filippovna, as though taunting him.

“I am not boasting, I’ll get the money before evening. Ptitsyn, lend it me, you money-grubber! Ask what you like for it. Get me a hundred thousand this evening! I’ll show that I won’t stick at anything.” Rogozhin was in an ecstasy of excitement.

“What is the meaning of this, pray?” Ardalion Alexandrovitch, deeply stirred, suddenly cried in a menacing voice, going up to Rogozhin.

The suddenness of the old man’s outburst, after his complete silence till that moment, made it very comic. There was laughter.

“Whom have we here?” laughed Rogozhin. “Come along, old fellow, we’ll make you drunk.”

“This is too disgusting!” cried Kolya, shedding tears of shame and vexation.

“Is there no one among you who will take this shameless woman away?” exclaimed Varya, quivering all over with anger.

“They call me a shameless woman,” Nastasya Filippovna answered back with contemptuous gaiety. “And I came like a fool to invite them to my party this evening. That’s how your sister treats me, Gavril Ardalionovitch!”

For some time Ganya stood as though thunderstruck at his sister’s outburst, but seeing that Nastasya Filippovna really was going this time, he rushed frantically at Varya and seized her arm in a fury.

“What have you done?” he cried, looking at her, as though he would have withered her on the spot.

He was utterly beside himself and hardly knew what he was doing.

“What have I done? Where are you dragging me? Is it to beg her pardon for having insulted your mother and for having come here to disgrace your family, you base creature?” Varya cried again, looking with triumphant defiance at her brother.

For an instant they stood so, facing one another. Ganya still kept hold of her arm. Twice Varya tried with all her might to pull herself free but suddenly losing all self-control, she spat in her brother’s face.

“What a girl!” cried Nastasya Filippovna. “Bravo! Ptitsyn, I congratulate you!”

Everything danced before Ganya’s eyes, and, completely forgetting himself, he struck at his sister with all his might. He would have hit her on

the face, but suddenly another hand caught Ganya's. Myshkin stood between him and his sister.

"Don't, that's enough," he brought out insistently, though he was shaking all over with violent emotion.

"Are you always going to get in my way?" roared Ganya. He let go Varya's arm and, mad with rage, gave Myshkin a violent slap in the face with the hand thus freed.

"Ah!" cried Kolya, clasping his hands. "My God!"

Exclamations were heard on all sides. Myshkin turned pale. He looked Ganya straight in the face with strange and reproachful eyes; his lips quivered, trying to articulate something; they were twisted into a sort of strange and utterly incongruous smile.

"Well, you may ... but her... I won't let you," he said softly at last.

But suddenly he broke down, left Ganya, hid his face in his hands, moved away to a corner, stood with his face to the wall, and in a breaking voice said:

"Oh, how ashamed you will be of what you've done!"

Ganya did, indeed, stand looking utterly crushed. Kolya rushed to hug and kiss Myshkin. He was followed by Rogozhin, Varya, Ptitsyn, Nina Alexandrovna — all the party, even the general, who all crowded about Myshkin.

"Never mind, never mind," muttered Myshkin in all directions, still with the same inconqruous smile.

"And he will regret it," cried Rogozhin. "You will be ashamed, Ganya, that you have insulted such a . . . sheep" (he could not find another word). "Prince darling, drop them; curse them and come along. I'll show you what a friend Rogozhin can be."

Nastasya Filippovna too was very much impressed by Ganya's action and Myshkin's answer. Her usually pale and melancholy face, which had seemed all along so out of keeping with her affected laughter, was evidently stirred by a new feeling. "Vfet she still seemed unwilling to betray it and to be trying to maintain a sarcastic expression.

"I certainly have seen his face somewhere," she said, speaking quite earnestly now, suddenly recalling her former question.

"Aren't you ashamed? Surely you are not what you are pretending to be now? It isn't possible!" cried Myshkin suddenly with deep and heartfelt reproach.

Nastasya Filippovna was surprised, and smiled, seeming to hide something under her smile. She looked at Ganya, rather confused, and walked out of the drawing-room. But before reaching the entry, she turned sharply, went quickly up to Nina Alexandrovna, took her hand and raised it to her lips.

“I really am not like this, he is right,” she said in a rapid eager whisper, flushing hotly; and turning around, she walked out so quickly that no one had time to realise what she had come back for. All that was seen was that she whispered something to Nina Alexandrovna and seemed to have kissed her hand. But Varya saw and heard it all, and watched her go out, wondering.

Ganya recovered himself and rushed to see Nastasya Filippovna out. But she had already gone. He overtook her on the stairs.

“Don’t come with me,” she cried to him. “Goodbye till this evening. You must come, do you hear?”

He returned, confused and dejected; a painful uncertainty weighed on his heart, more bitter than ever now. The figure of Myshkin too haunted him. . . . He was so absorbed that he scarcely noticed Rogozhin’s crew passing him and shoving against him in the doorway, as they hurried by on their way out of the flat. They were all loudly discussing something. Rogozhin walked with Ptitsyn, talking of something important and apparently urgent.

“You’ve lost the game, Ganya!” he cried, as he passed him.

Ganya looked after him uneasily.

CHAPTER 11

Myshkin went out of the drawing-room and shut himself up in his room. Kolya ran in at once to try and soothe him. The poor boy seemed unable to keep away from him now.

“You’ve done well to come away,” he said. “There will be a worse upset there now than ever. And it’s like that every day with us; it’s all on account of that Nastasya Filippovna.”

“There are so many sources of distress in your family, Kolya,” Myshkin observed.

“Yes, there are. There’s no denying it. It’s all our own fault. But I have a great friend who is even more unfortunate. Would you like to meet him?”

“Very much. Is he a comrade of yours?”

“Yes, almost like a comrade. I’ll tell you all about it afterwards. . . . But Nastasya Filippovna is handsome, don’t you think? I’ve never seen her before, though I’ve tried hard to. I was simply dazzled. I’d forgive Ganya everything, if he were in love with her. But why is he taking money? That’s what’s horrid.”

“Yes, I don’t much like your brother.”

“Well, I should think not! As if you could, after. . . But you know I can’t endure those ideas. Some madman, or fool, or scoundrel in a fit of madness, gives you a slap in the face and a man is disgraced for life, and cannot wipe out the insult except in blood, unless the other man goes down on his knees and asks his pardon. In my opinion it’s absurd and it’s tyranny. Lermontov’s drama, The Masquerade, is based on that, and I think it’s stupid. Or rather, I mean, not natural. But he wrote it almost in his childhood.”

“I liked your sister very much.”

“The way she spat in Ganya’s mug! She is a plucky one. But you didn’t spit at him, and lam sure it was not for want of pluck. But here she is — speak of the devil ... I knew she’d come. She is generous, though she has faults.”

“You’ve no business here,” said Varya, pouncing on him first of all. “Go to father. Is he bothering you, prince?”

“Not at all, quite the contrary.”

“Now then, elder sister, you are off! That’s the worst of her. And, by the way, I thought that father’d be sure to go off with Rogozhin. He is penitent

now, I expect. I must see what he is about, I suppose," added Kolya, going out.

"Thank God, I got mother away and put her to bed, and there was no fresh trouble! Ganya is ashamed and very depressed. And he may well be. What a lesson! . . . I've come to thank you again and to ask you, did you know Nastasya Filippovna before?"

"No, I didn't."

"Then what made you tell her to her face that she was 'not like this'? And you seem to have guessed right. I believe she really isn't. I can't make her out, though. Of course her object was to insult us, that's clear. I've heard a great deal that's queer about her before. But if she came to invite us, how could she behave like that to mother? Ptitsyn knows her well. He says he would hardly have known her to-day. And with Roqozhin! It's impossible for any one with self-

respect to talk like that in the house of one's . . . Mother too is very worried about you."

"Never mind that!" said Myshkin, with a gesture of his hand.

"And how was it she obeyed you ...?"

"In what way?"

"You told her she ought to be ashamed and she changed at once. \bu have an influence over her, prince," added Varya, with a faint smile.

The door opened and to their great surprise Ganya entered. He did not even hesitate at the sight of Varya. For a moment he stood in the doorway, then resolutely went up to Myshkin.

"Prince, I behaved like a scoundrel. Forgive me, my dearfellow," he said suddenly with strong feeling.

There was a look of great pain in his face. Myshkin looked at him in wonder and did not answer at once.

"Come, forgive me — forgive me!" Ganya urged impatiently. "I am ready to kiss your hand, if you like."

Myshkin was greatly impressed and put both his arms round Ganya without speaking. They kissed each other with sincere feeling.

"I had no idea — no idea you were like this," said Myshkin at last, drawing a deep breath. "I thought you were ... incapable of it."

"Owning my fault? . . . And what made me think this morning you were an idiot! You notice what other people never see. One could talk to you, but . . . better not talk at all."

“Here is some one whose pardon you ought to ask too,” said Myshkin, pointing to Varya.

“No, they are all my enemies. \bu may be sure, prince, I’ve made many attempts. There’s no true forgiveness from them,” broke hotly from Ganya.

And he turned away from Varya.

“Yes, I will forgive you!” said Varya suddenly.

“And will you go to Nastasya Filippovna’s tonight?”

“Yes, I will if you wish it; but you had better judge for yourself whether it’s not out of the question for me to go now.”

“She is not like this, you know. \bu see what riddles she sets us. It’s her tricks.”

And Ganya laughed viciously.

“I know for myself that she is not like this and that this is all her tricks. But what does she mean?

Besides, Ganya, think what does she take you for, herself? She may have kissed mother’s hand, this may all be some sort of trickery; but you know she was laughing at you all the same. It’s not worth seventy-five thousand, it really isn’t, brother! You are still capable of honourable feelings, that’s why I speak to you. Don’t you go either. Be on your guard! It can’t end well.”

Saying this, Varya, much excited, went quickly out of the room.

“That’s how they all are,” said Ganya, smiling. “And can they suppose I don’t know that myself? Why, I know much more than they do.”

So saying, Ganya sat down on the sofa, evidently disposed to prolong his visit.

“If you know it yourself,” asked Myshkin rather timidly, “how can you have chosen such misery, knowing it really is not worth seventy-five thousand?”

“I am not talking of that,” muttered Ganya. “But tell me, by the way, what do you think — I want to know your opinion particularly — is such ‘misery worth seventy-five thousand, or no?”

“I don’t think it’s worth it.”

“Oh, I knew you’d say that! And is such a marriage shameful?”

“Very shameful.”

“Well, let me tell you that I am going to marry her, and there’s no doubt about it now. I was hesitating a little while ago, but there’s no doubt now. Don’t speak! I know what you want to say.”

“I was not going to say what you think. I am greatly surprised at your immense confidence.”

“In what? What confidence?”

“Why, that Nastasya Filippovna is sure to marry you and that the matter is settled, and secondly, that if she does marry you, the seventy-five thousand will come into your pocket. But of course there’s a great deal in it I know nothing about.”

Ganya moved nearer to Myshkin.

“Certainly, you don’t know all,” he said. “Why else should I put on such chains?”

“I think it often happens that people marry for money and the money remains with the wife.”

“N-no, that won’t be so with us. . . . In this case there are . . . there are circumstances,” muttered Ganya, musing uneasily. “But as for her answer, there is no doubt about that,” he added quickly. “What makes vou think that she’ll refuse me?”

“I know nothing about it except what I’ve seen; and what Varvara Ardalionovna said just now...”

“Ah! That was nonsense. They don’t know what else to say. She was laughing at Rogozhin, you may take my word for that. I saw it; that was obvious; at first I was frightened, but now I see through it. Or is it the way she behaved to mother, father and Varya?”

“And to you too.”

“Well, perhaps; but that’s only a feminine paying off of old scores, nothing else. She is a fearfully irritable, touchy and vain woman. Like some clerk who has been passed over in the service. She wanted to show herself and all her contempt for them ... and for me too. That’s true, I don’t deny it.... And yet she will marry me, all the same. \bu don’t know what queer antics human vanity will lead to. You see, she looks on me as a scoundrel because I take her, another man’s mistress, so openly for her money, and doesn’t know that other men would have taken her in after a more scoundrelly fashion than I, would have stuck to her and begun pouring out liberal and progressive ideas to her, dragging in the woman question; and she would have gone into their snares

like a thread into the needle. They would have made the vain little fool believe (and so easily) that she was espoused only ‘for her noble heart and her misfortune,’ though it would have been for moneyjust the same. I don’t

find favour because I don’t care to sham; and that’s what I ought to do. But what is she doing herself? Isn’t it just the same? So what right has she to despise me and to get up games like these? Because I show some pride and won’t give in. Oh well, we shall see!”

“Can you have loved her till this happened?”

“I did love her at first. But that’s enough. There are women who are good for nothing but mistresses. I don’t say that she has been my mistress. If she’ll behave quietly, I’ll behave quietly; but if she’s mutinous, I shall abandon her at once and take the money with me. I don’t want to be ridiculous; above all, I don’t want to be ridiculous.”

“I keep fancying Nastasya Filippovna is clever,” observed Myshkin cautiously. “Why should she go into the trap when she sees beforehand what misery it will mean for her? You see, she might marry some one else. That’s what’s so surprising to me.”

“Well, there are reasons. \bu don’t know everything, prince. ... It’s .. . Besides, she is persuaded that I love her to madness, I assure you. Moreover, I strongly suspect that she loves me too after her own fashion — like the saying, you know, ‘whom I love I chastise.’ She will look on me as a knave all her life (and perhaps that’s what she wants), and yet she’ll love me in her own way. She is preparing herself for that, it’s her character. She is a very Russian woman, I tell you. But I’ve got a little surprise in store for her. That scene with Varya just now happened accidentally, but it’s to my advantage; she’s seen my attachment now and convinced herself of it and of my being ready to break all ties for her sake. So I am not such a fool, you may be sure. By the way, you don’t imagine I am usually such a gossip, do you? Perhaps I really am doing wrong in confiding in you, dear prince. But it’s because you are the first honourable man I’ve come across, that I pounced on you. Don’t think I say that as a joke. You are not angry for what happened just now, are you? This is the first time for the last two years, perhaps, that I have spoken from my heart. There are terribly few honest people here; none more honest than Ptitsyn. I believe you are laughing, aren’t you?

Scoundrels love honest men. Don’t you know that? And of course I am . . . though how am I a scoundrel, tell me that, on your conscience? Why do they all follow her lead in calling me a scoundrel? And, do you know, I follow their example and hers and call myself a scoundrel too! That’s what’s scoundrelly, really scoundrelly!”

“I shall never again look on you as a scoundrel,” said Myshkin. “Just now I thought of you as quite wicked, and you have so rejoiced me all of a sudden. It’s a lesson to me not to judge without experience. Now I see that you can’t be considered wicked, nor even a really demoralised man. In my opinion you are simply one of the most ordinary men that could possibly be, only perhaps very weak and not at all original.”

Ganya smiled sarcastically to himself, but did not speak. Myshkin saw that his opinion displeased him and was embarrassed. He too was silent.

“Has father asked you for money?” Ganya inquired.

“No.”

“If he does, don’t give it him. But he once was a decent person. I remember. He used to visit people of good standing. And how quickly they pass away, these decent people, when they are old! The slightest change of circumstances and there’s nothing left of them, it’s all gone in a flash. He used not to tell such lies in old days, I assure you. In old days he was only rather over-enthusiastic — and see what it’s come to now! Of course drink’s at the bottom of it. Do you know, he keeps a mistress? He has become something worse than a harmless liar now. I can’t understand my mother’s long suffering. Has he told you about the siege of Kars? Or how his grey trace-horse began to talk? He doesn’t even stick at that.”

And Ganya suddenly roared with laughter.

“Why do you look at me like that?” he asked Myshkin suddenly.

“I am surprised at your laughing so genuinely. “Vbu still have the laugh of a child. “Vbu came in to make your peace with me just now and said, ‘if you like I’ll kiss your hand’ — just as a child would make it up. So you are still capable of such phrases and such impulses. And then you begin a regular harangue about this black business and this seventy-five thousand. It all seems somehow absurd and incredible.”

“What do you argue from that?”

“Aren’t you acting too heedlessly? Oughtn’t you to look about you first? Varvara Ardalionovna is right, perhaps.”

“Ah, morality! That I am a silly boy, I know that myself,” Ganya interposed hotly, “if only from my talking about such things with you. It’s not for mercenary reasons I am making this marriage, prince,” he continued, as though, stung by the vanity of youth, he could not resist speaking. “I should certainly be out of my reckoning if so, for I am still too weak in mind and character. It’s because I am carried away by passion, because I

have one chief object. You think that as soon as I get seventy-five thousand I shall run and buy a carriage. No, I shall wear out my coat of the year before last and drop all my club acquaintances. There are few people of perseverance among us, though we are all money-grubbers. And I want to be persevering. The great thing is to do it thoroughly; that's the whole problem. At seventeen Ptitsyn used to sleep in the street and sell penknives. He began with a farthing and now he has sixty thousand; but what toils he went through to get it! But I shall skip those toils and begin straight off with a capital. In fifteen years people will say, There goes Ivolgin, the king of the Jews.' \bu tell me I am not an original person. Observe, dear prince, that nothing offends a man of our day and our race more than to tell him that he is not original, that he is weak-willed, has no particular talents and is an ordinary person. You haven't even given me credit for being a first-rate scoundrel, and you know I was ready to annihilate you for it just now. You offended me more than Epanchin, who, without discussion, without having tried to tempt me, in the simplicity of his heart, note that, believes me capable of selling my wife. That has made me savage for a long time, and I want money. When I have money, I shall become a highly original man. What's most low and hateful about money is that even talent can be bought with it, and will be, till the end of the world. \bu'll say that this is all childish or, perhaps, romantic. Well, it will be the more fun for me, and I shall do what I want. Anyway, I shall persevere and carry it through. Rira bien qui rira le dernier. What makes Epanchin insult me like that? Spite, is it?

Never! It's simply because I am of so little consequence. But then .. . That's enough though, it's time to be off. Kolya has poked his nose in at the door twice already; he is calling you to dinner. And I am going out. I shall look in on you sometimes. You will be all right with us; they will make you quite one of the family now. Mind you don't give me away. I believe that you and I shall either be friends or enemies. And what do you think, prince, if I had kissed your hand (as I sincerely offered to do), would that have made me your enemy afterwards?"

"It would have been sure to, but not for always. You could not have kept it up afterwards, you would have forgiven me," Myshkin decided with a laugh, after a moment's thought.

"Aha! One must be more on one's guard with you. Damn it all, you have put a drop of venom in that too! And who knows, perhaps you are an

enemy? By the way — ha, ha, ha! — I forgot to ask you, was I right in fancying that you were rather too much taken with Nastasya Filippovna, eh?”

“Yes ... I like her.”

“In love with her?”

“N-no.”

“But he is blushing and unhappy. Well, never mind, never mind, I won’t laugh. But do you know she is a woman of virtuous life? Can you believe that? You imagine she is living with that man, Totsky? Not a bit of it. Not for ever so long. And did you notice that she is awfully awkward, and that she was embarrassed for some seconds to-day? Yes, really. It’s just people like that who are fond of dominating others. Well, good-bye.”

Ganya went out in good humour and much more at his ease than he had been when he entered. Myshkin remained motionless for ten minutes, thinking.

Kolya poked his head in at the door again.

“I don’t want any dinner, Kolya, I had such a good lunch at the Epanchins’.”

Kolya came in altogether and gave Myshkin a note. It was folded and sealed and was from the general. Kolya’s face showed how much he disliked giving it him. Myshkin read it, got up and took his hat.

“It’s not two steps away,” said Kolya in confusion. “He is sitting there now over a bottle. How he manages to get credit there I can’t conceive. Prince,

darling, don’t tell my people that I’ve given you the note. I’ve sworn a thousand times not to pass on these notes, but I am sorry for him. And I say, please don’t stand on ceremony with him; give him some trifle and let that be the end of it.”

“I had a notion of going to him myself, Kolya; I want to see your father. . . about something. Come along.”

CHAPTER 12

Kolya LED Myshkin into Liteyny Street, not far away, to a cafe on the ground floor with a billiard-room. Here in a room apart, in the right-hand corner, Ardalion Alexandrovitch was installed, as though an habitual visitor. He had a bottle on a little table before him and was actually holding a copy of the Independance Beige in his hands. He was expecting Myshkin. He laid aside the newspaper as soon as he saw him and began a long and heated explanation, of which Myshkin, however, could make very little, forthe general was alreadyfarfrom sober.

“I haven’t got ten roubles,” Myshkin cut him short, “but here is a note for twenty-five. Change it and give me fifteen, or else I shall be left without a farthing myself.”

“Oh, certainly, and you may be sure I’ll do so immediately.”

“I’ve come to you with a request, too, general. You’ve never been to Nastasya Filippovna’s?”

“Me? Me never been? \bu say that to me? Just occasionally, my dear fellow, several times,” cried the general in an excess of triumphant and complacent mockery. “But I broke off the acquaintance myself, for I don’t wish to encourage an unseemly alliance. You’ve seen for yourself, you’ve been witness this morning. I’ve done all a father can do, a mild and indulgent father, that is. Now a very different father must come on to the scene, and then we shall see whether an old warrior who has served with honour will triumph over the intrigue, or whether a shameless cocotte shall force her way into an honourable family.”

“I was going to ask you whether you could take me as a friend to Nastasya Filippovna’s this evening. I must go to-day, but I don’t know how I can get there. I was introduced to-day, but not invited; this evening she has a party. But I don’t mind disregarding convention a little; I don’t mind being laughed at, if only I can get in.”

“That’s precisely, precisely my own idea, my young friend,” cried the general enthusiastically. “I didn’t ask you to come on account of that trifle,” he went on, appropriating the money, however, and putting it in his pocket. “I sent for you precisely to ask you to be my companion in an expedition to Nastasya Filippovna’s, or rather an expedition against Nastasya Filippovna. General Ivolgin and Prince Myshkin! How will that strike her? On the

pretext of a civility on her name-day, I will announce my will at last — indirectly, not straight out, but it will be just as effective as though directly. Then Ganya will see for himself what he must do. He must choose between his father who has seen honourable service and ... so to say . . . and so on, or. . . But what will be, must be! your idea is a very happy one. At nine o'clock we will start, we've plenty of time."

"Where does she live?"

"A long way from here, close to the Great Theatre, at Mitovtsov's house, almost in the square, on the first floor.... It won't be a large party, though it is her name-day, and it will break up early...."

It was getting on in the evening. Myshkin sat listening and waiting for the general, who began an extraordinary number of anecdotes and did not finish one of them. On Myshkin's arrival he asked for another bottle, and it took him an hour to finish it; then he asked for a third, and finished it too. It may well be believed that by that time the general had narrated almost the whole of his history.

At last Myshkin got up and said he could not wait any longer. The general emptied the last drops out of the bottle, stood up, and walked out of the room very unsteadily. Myshkin was in despair. He could not understand how he could have believed in him so foolishly. As a matter of fact, he never had believed in him; he had simply reckoned on the general as a means of getting to Nastasya Filippovna, even at the cost of some impropriety. But he had not anticipated anything very scandalous. The general turned out to be thoroughly drunk; he was overwhelmingly eloquent and talked without ceasing, with feeling and on the verge of tears. He insisted continually that the misbehaviour of all the members of his family had brought about their ruin, and that it was high time to put a stop to it.

They reached Liteyny Street at last. It was still thawinq. A warm, muqqv, depressing wind whistled up and down the streets; carriages splashed through the mud. The horses' hoofs struck the flags with a metallic ring. Crowds of wet and dejected people slouched along the pavements, here and there a drunken man among them.

"Do you see those first floors lighted up?" said the general. "My old comrades live all about here, and I — I who have seen more service and faced more hardships than any of them, I trudge on foot to the lodging of a woman of doubtful reputation! I, a man who has thirteen bullets in his breast! . . . "Vbu don't believe it? And yet it was solely on my account Dr.

Pirogov telegraphed to Paris and for a while abandoned Sevastopol at the time of the siege, and Nelaton, the Paris court doctor, succeeded in obtaining a free pass in the name of science and got into the besieged city on purpose to examine me. The highest authorities are cognisant of the fact. ‘Ah, that’s the Ivolgin who has thirteen bullets in him!’ . . . That’s how they speak of me. Do you see that house, prince? In the first floor there lives Sokolovitch, an old friend of mine, with his honourable and numerous family. That household and three families living in the Nevsky Prospect and two in Morskaya make up my present circle — that is, of my personal acquaintances. Nina Alexandrovna resigned herself to circumstances long ago. But I still remember the past . . . and still refresh myself, so to speak, in the cultured society of my old comrades and subordinates who worship me to this day. That General Sokolovitch (I haven’t been to call on him for some little time, by the way, and haven’t seen Anna Fyodorovna). . . . You know, dear prince, when one doesn’t entertain oneself, one is apt insensibly to drop out of visiting others. But yet . . . hm! . . . You don’t seem to believe me. . . . But why not introduce the son of the dearest friend of my youth and companion of my childhood into this delightful family? General Ivolgin and Prince Myshkin! You will see an exquisite girl, not one indeed — two, even three ornaments of Petersburg and of society: beauty, culture, enlightenment ... the woman question, poetry — all united in a happy varied combination, to say nothing of a dowry of eighty thousand roubles in hard cash for each of them, which is never a drawback in spite of any feminist or social questions. ... In fact I must, I certainly must introduce you. General Ivolgin and Prince Myshkin! A sensation, in fact.”

“At once? Now? But you’ve forgotten . . ,” began Myshkin.

“I’ve forgotten nothing — nothing. Come along! This way, up this magnificent staircase. I wonder why there’s no porter, but. . . it’s a holiday and the porter has taken himself off. They’ve not dismissed the drunken fellow yet. This Sokolovitch is indebted for the whole happiness of his life and career to me — to me and no one else. But here we are.”

Myshkin made no further protest and to avoid irritating the general he followed him submissively, confidently hoping that General Sokolovitch and all his family would gradually evaporate like a mirage and turn out to be non-existent, so that they could quietly retrace their steps downstairs. But to his horror this hope began to fail him: the general led him up the stairs like a man who really had friends living there, and every minute he

put in some biographical or topographical detail with mathematical exactitude. At last, when they had reached the first floor and stopped on the right before the door of a luxurious flat and the general had hold of the bell, Myshkin made up his mind to make his escape; but one strange circumstance held him for a moment.

“You’ve made a mistake, general,” he said, “the name on the door is Kulakov, and you want Sokolovitch.”

“Kulakov . . . Kulakov means nothing. The flat is Sokolovitch’s, and it’s Sokolovitch I shall ask for. Hang Kulakov! ... Here is some one coming.”

The door was opened indeed. A footman peeped out and announced that the master and mistress were not at home.

“What a pity — what a pity! Just how things always happen,” Ardalion Alexandrovitch repeated several times with profound regret. “Tell them, my boy, that General Ivolgin and Prince Myshkin wished to present their respects in person and regret extremely, extremely...”

At that moment from an inner room another person peeped towards the open door, apparently a housekeeper, or perhaps a governess, a lady about forty in a dark dress. She approached inquisitively and mistrustfully, hearing the names of General Ivolqinand Prince Mvshkin.

“Marya Alexandrovna is not at home,” she pronounced, scrutinising the general carefully. “She has gone out with the young lady, Alexandra Mihailovna, to her grandmother’s.”

“Alexandra Mihailovna too! Good heavens, how unfortunate! Would you believe it, madam, that is always my luck! I humbly beg you to give my compliments, and beg Alexandrova Mihailovna to remember... in fact give her my earnest wishes for what she wished for herself on Thursday evening, listening to a Ballade of Chopin’s; she will remember. My earnest wishes! General Ivolgin and Prince Myshkin!”

“I won’t forget,” said the lady with more confidence, as she bowed them out.

As they went downstairs, the general continued with undiminished warmth regretting that they had not found them in, and that Myshkin had missed making a delightful acquaintance.

“Do you know, my dear boy, I am something of a poet in soul. Have you noticed that? But... but I do believe we may have called at the wrong flat,” he concluded suddenly and quite unexpectedly. “The Sokolovitches, I

remember now, live in a different house; and I fancy, too, they are in Moscow now. Yes, I made a slight mistake, but no matter."

"There's only one thing I want to know," Myshkin observed disconsolately. "Must I give up reckoning on you altogether, and hadn't I better go alone?"

"Give up? Reckoning? Alone? But whatever for, when this is for me a vital undertaking on which so much of the future of my family depends? No, my young friend, you don't know Ivolgin. To say 'Ivolgin' is to say 'a rock'; you can build on Ivolgin as you can on a rock, that's what they used to say in the squadron in which I began my service. I have only just to call in for one minute on the way at the house where my soul has for years found consolation after my trials and anxieties...."

"You want to go home?"

"No! I want to go and see Madame Terentyev, the widow of Captain Terentyev, one of my subordinate officers . . . and a friend of mine, too. Here at Madame Terentyev's I am refreshed in spirit, and here I bring my daily cares and my family troubles ... and as to-day I am weighed down by a heavy moral burden, I..."

"I am afraid I was awfully stupid to have troubled you this evening," murmured Myshkin. "Besides, you're ... Good-bye!"

"But I cannot, I really cannot let you go, my young friend," cried the general. "A widow, a mother of a family, and she draws from her heart strings which re-echo through all my being. A visit to her is a matter of five minutes; I don't stand on ceremony in the house, I almost live there. I will wash, make myself a little tidy, and then we'll drive to the Great Theatre. I assure you I need you the whole evening. Here, in this house, here we are. Ah, Kolya, you here already! Is Marfa Borissovna at home, or have you onlyjust come?"

"Oh no," answered Kolya, who had just met them in the gateway, "I've been here a long time, with Ippolit. He is worse, he was in bed this morning. I've just been to a shop to get some cards. Marfa Borissovna is expecting you. Only, father, you are in a state!" Kolya finished up, watching the way his father walked and stood. "Well, come along."

The meeting with Kolya induced Myshkin to accompany the general to Marfa Borissovna's, but only for one minute. Myshkin wanted Kolya; he made up his mind to give up the general in any case, and could not forgive

himself for having rested his hopes on him. They were a long time climbing up to the fourth storey by a back staircase.

“Do you want to introduce the prince?” Kolya asked on the way.

“Yes, my dear, to introduce him: General Ivolgin and Prince Myshkin. But what is . .. how is . . . Marfa Borissovna? ...”

“Do you know, father, you’d better not go! She’ll give it to you! There has been no sign of you for three days and she is expecting the money. Why did you promise her money? You are always doing things like that! Now you’ve got to get out of it!”

On the fourth storey they stopped before a low door. The general was evidently downcast, and pushed Myshkin in front of him.

“I’ll stay here,” he muttered. “I want to surprise her.”

Kolya went in first. The general’s surprise missed fire, for a lady peeped out of the door. She was heavily rouged and painted, wore slippers and a dressing-jacket, had her hair plaited in pigtails and was about forty. As soon as the lady saw him, she promptly screamed:

“Here he is, the base, viperish man! My heart misgave me it was he!”

“Come in, it’s all right,” the general muttered to Myshkin, still trying to laugh it off with a guileless air.

But it was not all right. They had hardly passed through a dark, low-pitched passage into a narrow sitting-room, furnished with half a dozen rush-bottom chairs and two cardtables, when the lady of the house returned at once to the charge in a peevish tone of habitual complaint.

“Aren’t you ashamed — aren’t you ashamed, you savage and tyrant of my family, tyrant and monster? “Vbu have robbed me of everything! “Vbu have sucked me dry and are still not content, you vampire! I will put up with you no longer, you shameless, dishonourable man!”

“Marfa Borissovna — Marfa Borissovna, this is Prince Myshkin — General Ivolgin and Prince Myshkin,” muttered the general, trembling and overwhelmed.

“Would you believe it,” said the captain’s widow, turning suddenly to Myshkin, “would you believe that this shameless man has not spared my orphan children! He’s robbed us of everything, carried off everything, sold and pawned everything and left us nothing! What am I to do with your lOUs, designing and unscrupulous man? Answer, you deceiver; answer, you devouring monster! How, how am I to nourish my orphan children? And

here he comes in drunk and can’t stand on his legs! . . . What have I done to call down the wrath of God? Answer, base and hideous hypocrite!”

But the general was not equal to the occasion.

“Marfa Borissovna, twenty-five roubles ... all I can, thanks to a generous friend. Prince, I was cruelly mistaken! Such is .. . life. But now .. . excuse me, I feel weak,” said the general, standing in the middle of the room and bowing in all directions, “lam weak, forgive me! Lenotchka, a pillow . . . dear child!”

Lenotchka, a girl about eight years old, ran at once to fetch a pillow and put it on the hard sofa covered with ragged American leather. The general sat down, intending to say much more, but as soon as he touched the sofa, he turned on his side facing the wall, and sank into the sleep of the just. Marfa Borissovna mournfully and ceremoniously motioned Myshkin to a chair at one of the card-tables. She sat down facing him, with her right cheek on her hand, and began looking at Myshkin in silence. Three little children, two girls and a boy, of whom Lenotchka was the eldest, went up to the table, laid their arms on it, and all three also stared at Myshkin.

Kolya made his appearance from the next room.

“I am very glad I’ve met you here, Kolya,” said Myshkin to him. “Can’t you help me? I must be at Nastasya Filippovna’s. I asked Ardalion Alexandrovitch to take me there, but you see he is asleep. Will you take me there, for I don’t know the streets, nor the way? I have the address though, by the Great Theatre, Mytovtsov’s house.”

“Nastasya Filippovna? But she has never lived near the Great Theatre, and father’s never been at Nastasya Filippovna’s, if you care to know. It’s strange you should have expected anything of him. She lives near Vladimirsky Street, at the Five Corners: it’s much nearer here. Do you want to go at once? It’s half-past nine. If you like, I’ll take you there.”

Myshkin and Kolya went out at once. Myshkin (alas!) had nothing with which to pay for a cab, so they had to walk.

“I wanted to introduce you to Ippolit,” said Kolya; “he is the eldest son of the widow in the dressing-jacket. He was in the other room. He is ill and has been in bed all day. But he is so queer. He is frightfully touchy, and I fancied he’d feel ashamed with you because of your coming at such a moment.. . . I am not so much ashamed as he is, anyway, because it’s my father but his mother. It does make a difference, for there’s no dishonour for the male sex in such a position. But maybe it’s only a prejudice that one sex

is more privileged than the other in such cases. Ippolit is a splendid fellow, but he is a slave to certain prejudices."

"You say he is in consumption?"

"Yes; I think the best thing for him would be to die soon. If I were in his place, I should certainly wish I were dead. He is sorry for his brother and sisters, the little ones you saw. If it were possible, if we only had the money, he and I would have taken a flat together and have left our families. That's our dream. And do you know, when I told him just now what happened to you, he flew into a regular rage and said that a man who accepts a blow without fiqhtinq a duel is a scoundrel. But he is frightfully irritable; I've given up arguing with him. So Nastasya Filippovna invited you at once, did she?"

"That's just it, she didn't."

"How is it you are going, then?" cried Kolya, and he stopped short in the middle of the pavement. "And ... in such clothes! "Vbu know, it's an evening party."

"Goodness knows how I shall go in. If they let me in, all right; if they don't, there's no help for it. As for clothes, what can I do?"

"Have you some object in going? Or are you only going just pour passer le temps in 'honourable society?"

"No, I really. . . that is, I am going with an object.. . it's difficult to put into words, but..."

"Oh, well, what it is exactly is your affair. What I care to know is that you are not simply inviting yourself to a party in the fascinating society of cocottes, generals and money-lenders. If it had been so, you must excuse me, prince, I should have laughed at you and despised you. Honest people are terribly scarce here, so that there's really nobody one can respect. One can't help looking down on people, and they all insist on respect; Varya especially. And have you noticed, prince, that we are all adventurers nowadays? And particularly among us, in Russia, in our beloved country. And how it's all come about, I don't understand. The foundations seem so firm, but what do we see now? Everyone is talking and writing about it, showing it up. In Russia everyone is showing things up. Our parents are the first to go back on themselves, and are ashamed of their old morals. \bu have a father in Moscow teaching his son not to stick at anything to get money; we know it from the papers. Just look at my general; what has he come to? And yet you know, it seems to me that my general is an honest

man. Yes, I really think so! It’s nothing but irregularity and wine; it really is so. I feel sorry for him, in fact, only I am afraid to say so, because every one laughs. But I really am sorry for him. And what is there in them, the sensible people? They are all money-grubbers, every one of them. Ippolit justifies usury, he says it’s right; he talks about an economic upheaval, the ebb and flow of capital, confound them! It vexes me to hear it from him, but he is exasperated. Only fancy,

his mother, the captain’s widow, you know, gets money from the general and lends it him at high interest! It’s a horrible disgrace! And do you know that mother — my mother, I mean, Nina Alexandrovna — helps Ippolit with money, clothes and everything, and provides for the children partly too, through Ippolit, because theyare neglected. And Varya helps too.”

“There, you see, you say that there are no strong, honest people, that we are all money-grubbers; but there you have strong people — your mother and Varya. Don’t you think to help like that and in such circumstances is a proof of moral strength?”

“Varya does it from vanity, to show off, so as not to be inferior to mother; but mother really is ... I respect it in her. Yes, I respect that and think it right. Even Ippolit feels it, and he is bitter against almost everyone. At first he laughed, and called it low on my mother’s part; but now he begins to feel it sometimes. Hm! So you call that strength. I shall make a note of that. Ganya doesn’t know it, or he would call it conniving at things.”

“Ganya doesn’t know, then? There seems to be a qreat deal Ganva doesn’t know,” said Mvshkin,

pondering.

“Do you know, prince, I like you very much. I can’t forget what happened to you this afternoon.”

“And I like you very much too, Kolya.”

“Listen. How do you intend to live here? I shall soon get a job and be earning something. Let us live together, you and me and Ippolit. We’ll take a flat and will let the general come and see us.”

“I shall be delighted. But we’ll see. I feel very much upset just now. What? Are we there? Is this the house? What a magnificent entrance! And a hall-porter! Well, Kolya, I don’t know what will come of it.”

Myshkin stood still as though in bewilderment.

“You will tell me about it to-morrow. Don’t be too frightened. God give you good luck, for I think as you do about everything. Good-bye! I’ll go

back there and tell Ippolit. There’s no doubt she will see you, don’t be uneasy. She is very original. It’s the first floor on this staircase, the porter will show you.”

CHAPTER 13

Myshkin FELT very uneasy as he went up, and did all he could to give himself courage. “The worst that can happen,” he thought, “is that she will refuse to see me and will think something bad of me; or perhaps she’ll see me and laugh in my face. ... Eh, never mind.” And in fact the prospect did not alarm him very much, but to the question what he would do and why he was going there he could find no satisfactory answer. It would hardly be altogether the right thing, even if he were to catch a favourable opportunity, to say to Nastasya Filippovna, “Don’t marry that man, don’t be your own destruction. He doesn’t love you, it’s your money he loves, he told me so himself; and Aglaia Epanchin told me so too, and I have come to tell you.”

There was another unanswered question before him, and such a vital one that Myshkin was afraid to consider it; he could not, dared not, even admit it; he did not know how to formulate it, he flushed and trembled at the mere thought of it. But in spite of all these doubts and apprehensions he ended by going in and asking for Nastasya Filippovna.

Nastasya Filippovna lived in a really magnificent, though not very large, flat. There had been one time, at the beginning of her five years in Petersburg, when Afanasy Ivanovitch had been particularly lavish in his expenditure on her. He had still had hopes of her love in those days, and had dreamed of tempting her chiefly by luxury and comfort, knowing how easily habits of luxury are acquired and how difficult they are to give up afterwards, when luxury gradually passes into necessity. In this respect Totsky clung to the good old tradition, without modifying it in any way, having an unbounded respect for the supreme power of the appeal to the senses. Nastasya Filippovna did not refuse luxury — she liked it, indeed — but strange as it seemed, she was not in the least a slave to it; apparently she could have done without it at any moment; she even took the trouble to say so plainly on several occasions, which made an unpleasant impression on Totsky. There was much, however, in Nastasya Filippovna which struck him unpleasantly, and subsequently even moved him to contempt. Apart from the inelegance of the class of people with whom she sometimes associated and to whom she must therefore have been attracted, she displayed other very strange propensities. She showed a sort of savage mingling of two tastes, a capacity for being satisfied and putting up with

things and means of which one would have supposed that a well-bred and refined person would not admit the existence. In fact, if Nastasya Filippovna had displayed an elegant and charming ignorance of the fact, for instance, that peasant women were not in a position to wear the batiste garments that she did, Afanasy Ivanovitch would probably have been extremely pleased. The whole plan of Nastasya Filippovna's education had been from the beginning elaborated with a view to such a result by Totsky, who was a very subtle person in his own line. But, alas! the finished product was a strange one. In spite of that, Nastasya Filippovna had, and always kept, somethinq which at times impressed even Totsky himself by its extraordinary and fascinating originality, by a sort of power. It sometimes enchanted him even now, when all his former designs on Nastasya Filippovna had collapsed.

Myshkin was met by a maid (Nastasya Filippovna kept only women servants). He asked her to take his name in, and to his surprise the girl showed no wonder, and she betrayed no hesitation at the sight of his dirty boots, his wide-brimmed hat, his sleeveless cloak, and his embarrassed air. She took off his cloak, asked him to wait in the reception-room, and went at once to announce him.

Nastasya Filippovna's party consisted of the circle she always had about her. The guests were few in number, indeed, compared with similar birthday parties of previous years. In the first place, Afanasy Ivanovitch Totsky and Ivan Fyodorovitch Epanchin were present. Both were amiable but secretly uneasy and in ill-disguised apprehension of the promised declaration in regard to Ganya. Ganya of course was there too. He too was very gloomy and preoccupied, almost rude in fact. Most of the evening he stood apart at some distance and did not speak. He had not ventured to bring Varya, and Nastasya Filippovna made no reference to her, but immediately after greeting Ganya she alluded to his scene with Myshkin. General Epanchin, who had not heard of it, was much interested. Then Ganya drily and with restraint, but perfectly openly, told what had happened that afternoon and how he had gone to the prince to beg his pardon. He warmly expressed the opinion that it was strange and unaccountable to call the prince "an idiot," that he thought him quite the opposite — a man, in fact, who knew very well what he was about.

Nastasya Filippovna listened to this dictum with great attention and watched Ganya curiously, but the conversation passed immediately to

Rogozhin, as a leading figure in the scene at Ganya's. Totsky and Epanchin were much interested to hear about him too. It appeared that the person who knew most about Rogozhin was Ptitsyn, who had been with him and busy in his service till nine o'clock that evening. Rogozhin had insisted on their obtaining a hundred thousand roubles that day. "It's true he was drunk," observed Ptitsyn, "but I believe he has secured the hundred thousand, difficult as it seems. Only I am not sure whether he will get it to-day, and whether he'll get it all. Several people are at work for him — Kinder, Trepalov, Biskup. He doesn't mind what interest he gives, of course, as he is drunk and in the first flush of fortune," said Ptitsyn in conclusion.

All this information was received with interest, though it seemed to depress some, and Nastasya Filippovna was silent, obviously not caring to say what she felt. Ganya too was mute. Epanchin was secretly almost more uneasy than any one. The pearls he had presented that morning had been accepted with rather a frigid politeness and even a shade of mockery. Ferdyshtchenko alone of all the party was in a festive holiday mood. He laughed aloud at times for no special reason, simply because he had taken up the part of jester. Totsky himself, who had the reputation of a witty and elegant storyteller, and had usually led the conversation at these parties, was evidently out of humour and ill at ease, which was unlike him. The other guests, who were, however, few in number, were not merely incapable of lively conversation, but positively unable at times to say anything at all. One poor old teacher had been invited, goodness knows why; then there was an unknown and very young man, fearfully shy and absolutely mute the whole evening; a lively lady of forty, probably an actress; and an exceedingly handsome, exceedingly well and richly dressed, and extraordinarily taciturn young lady.

Myshkin's appearance therefore was positively welcome. The announcement of his name caused surprise and some queer smiles, especially as from Nastasya Filippovna's air of surprise it was clear that she had not dreamed of inviting him. But after the first moment of wonder she showed at once so much pleasure that most of the party promptly prepared to meet the unexpected visitor with mirth and laughter.

"Though it's his innocence," pronounced Ivan Fyodorovitch Epanchin, "and it's rather dangerous to encourage such tendencies, it's really not amiss at the moment that he has taken it into his head to turn up, even in such an

original manner. He may perhaps amuse us, as far as I can judge of him at least."

"Especially as he has invited himself," Ferdvshtchenko put in at once.

"Well, what of that?" asked the general drily. He detested Ferdyshtchenko.

"Why, that he must pay for his entrance!" explained the latter.

"Oh, Prince Myshkin is not Ferdyshtchenko, anyway," the general could not resist saying. He could never reconcile himself to the thought that he was in the same company and on an equal footing with Ferdyshtchenko.

"Aie, general, spare Ferdyshtchenko," replied the latter, simpering. "I am here in a special position."

"What special position are you in?"

"Last time I had the honour of explaining it exactly to the company. I'll repeat it again to your excellency. "Vbu see, your excellency, every one has wit, but I have no wit. To make up for it I've asked leave to speak the truth, for every one knows that it's only people who have no wit who speak the truth. Besides, I am a very vindictive man, and that is because I have no wit. I put up with every insult, but only till my antagonist comes to grief. As soon as he comes to grief, I remember it, and at once avenge myself in some way. 'I kick,' as Ivan Petrovitch Ptitsyn has said to me; though he, of course, never kicks any one. Do you know Krylov's fable, your excellency, The Lion and the Ass'? Well, that's you and me; it's written about us."

"You are talking nonsense again, I think, Ferdyshtchenko," said the general, boiling over.

"What do you mean, your excellency?" retorted Ferdyshtchenko, who had reckoned on being able to retort and so lengthen out his twaddle. "Don't be uneasy, your excellency, I know my place. If I say, '\bu and I are the lion and the ass in Krylov's fable,' I take the part of the ass on myself, of course, and your excellency is the lion, as in Krylov's fable:

The mighty lion, the terror of the mods, With growing years had lost his youthful strength.

I, your excellency, am the ass."

"There I agree," the general dropped incautiously.

All this, of course, was coarsely and intentionally done, but it seemed to be the accepted thing for Ferdyshtchenko to be allowed to play the fool.

"I am only kept and only received here that I may talk in this way," Ferdyshtchenko had once exclaimed. "Can such a person as I am be

received? I understand that. Can a person like me be set beside a refined gentleman like Afanasy Ivanovitch? One is driven to the only explanation, that they do it because it’s inconceivable.”

But though it was coarse, it was sometimes cutting, very cutting, indeed, and that was what Nastasya Filippovna seemed to like. Those who wanted to visit her had to make up their minds to put up with Ferdyshtchenko. He perhaps guessed the truth, that he was received because his presence had from the first been insufferable to Totsky. Ganya too endured unspeakable misery at his hands, and in that way Ferdyshtchenko was able to be of great use to Nastasya Filippovna.

“The prince will begin by singing us a fashionable song,” Ferdyshtchenko concluded, looking to see what Nastasya Filippovna would say.

“I don’t think so, Ferdyshtchenko, and please don’t get excited,” she said drily.

“A-ah! If he is under special protection, I will be indulgent too.”

But Nastasya Filippovna got up not listening to him, and went forward herself to meet Myshkin.

“I am sorry,” said she, suddenly appearing before him, “that I forgot to invite you this afternoon, and I am very glad that you give me an opportunity of thanking you and telling you how well you’ve done to come.”

As she spoke, she looked intently at Myshkin, trying to find some explanation of his coming.

Myshkin would perhaps have made some reply to her friendly words, but he was so dazzled and overwhelmed that he could not utter a word. Nastasya Filippovna noticed this with satisfaction. That evening she was in full dress and her appearance was very striking. She took him by the hand and led him to the company.

At the door of the drawing-room Myshkin suddenly stopped, and with extraordinary emotion whispered hurriedly:

“Everything is perfection in you . . . even your being thin and pale. . . . One would not like to imagine you different. ... I had such a longing to come to you.... I... forgive me!”

“Don’t ask forgiveness,” laughed Nastasya Filippovna; “that would destroy all the strangeness and originality. It’s true what they say, that you are a strange man. So you look upon me as perfection, do you?”

“Yes.”

“Though you are first-rate at guessing, you are mistaken. I’ll remind you of that to-day....”

She introduced Myshkin to her guests, to more than half of whom he was already known. Totsky at once said something cordial. The whole company seemed to revive, they all began talking and laughing. Nastasya Filippovna made Myshkin sit down beside her.

“But after all what is there wonderful in the prince’s having come?” Ferdyshtchenko cried louder than all of them. “It’s a clear case, it speaks for itself!”

“It’s too clear and speaks too plainly for itself,” put in Ganya, who had been silent till then. “I’ve been observing the prince to-day almost continuously from the very instant when he saw Nastasya Filippovna’s portrait for the first time this morning on Ivan Fyodorovitch’s table. I remember distinctly that I thought of something even then, which I am quite convinced of now, and which the prince confessed himself, by the way.”

This whole speech Ganya uttered quite seriously, without a hint of playfulness, in a gloomy tone which sounded strange.

“I’ve made you no confession,” replied Myshkin, flushing. “I simply answered your question.”

“Bravo! Bravo!” shouted Ferdyshtchenko. “That’s sincere anyway — it’s sly and sincere too!”

Everyone laughed aloud.

“Don’t shout, Ferdyshtchenko,” Ptitsyn observed to him in an undertone, with disgust.

“I should not have expected such an enterprise of you, prince,” remarked Ivan Fyodorovitch. “One wouldn’t have thought you were that sort of fellow. Why, I looked on you as a philosopher. Ah, the sly dog!”

“And to judge from the way the prince blushes at an innocent jest like an innocent young girl, I conclude that, like an honourable young man, he is cherishing the most laudable intentions in his heart,” the aged teacher, a toothless old man of seventy, suddenly said, or rather mumbled, to the general surprise, for no one had expected him to open his lips that evening.

Every one laughed more than ever. The old man, probably imagining that they were laughing at his wit, laughed more and more heartily as he looked at them, till he ended by coughing violently. Nastasya Filippovna, who had an unaccountable affection for all such queer old men and women, and for

crazy people even, began looking after him at once, kissed him, and ordered some more tea for him. She told the servant who came in to bring her a cloak, in which she wrapped herself, and then to put more wood on the fire. She asked what time it was, and the servant answered that it was half-past ten.

“Friends, would you like some champagne?” Nastasya Filippovna suggested suddenly. “I’ve got some ready. Perhaps it will make you more cheerful. Please don’t stand on ceremony.”

The offer of wine, especially in such a naive way, seemed very strange from Nastasya Filippovna. Every one knew the rigid standard of decorum maintained at her previous parties. The company was becoming more lively, but not in the same way as usual. The wine was, however, accepted, first by General Epanchin himself, secondly by the sprightly lady, the old man, Ferdyshtchenko, and after them by the rest. Totsky too took his glass, hoping to modify the novel tone of the company by giving it as far as possible the character of pleasant playfulness. Only Ganya drank nothing.

Nastasya Filippovna had taken a glass of champagne, and declared that she would drink three that evening. It was difficult to understand her strange and at times abrupt and sudden sallies, her hysterical and causeless laughter, alternating with silent and even morose depression. Some of her visitors suspected that she was feverish. They began to notice at last that she too seemed expecting something, frequently looked at her watch, and was becoming impatient and preoccupied.

“You seem to be a little feverish?” asked the sprightly lady.

“Not a little, but very much. That’s why I wrapped myself up in my cloak,” replied Nastasya Filippovna, who really was turning pale and seemed at times trying to suppress a violent shiver.

They were all concerned and made a movement.

“Shouldn’t we let our hostess rest?” said Totsky, looking at Ivan Fyodorovitch.

“Certainly not. I beg you to stay; I need your presence especially to-day,” Nastasya Filippovna observed suddenly, with a significant emphasis.

And as almost all the guests knew that a very important decision was to be made that evening, her words seemed pregnant with meaning. General Epanchin and Totsky exchanged glances once more. Ganya twitched convulsively.

“It would be a good thing to play some petit-jeu,” observed the sprightly lady.

“I know a new splendid petit-jeu” put in Ferdyshtchenko. “Though it was only played once, and even then it was not successful.”

“What was it?” asked the sprightly lady.

“A party of us were together one day — we’d been drinking, it’s true — and suddenly some one made the suggestion that each one of us, without leaving the table, should tell something he had done, something that he himself honestly considered the worst of all the evil actions of his life. But it was to be done honestly, that was the point, that it was to be honest, no lying.”

“A strange idea!” said the general.

“Nothing could be stranger, your excellency; but that’s the best of it.”

“Ridiculous idea,” said Totsky. “But I can understand it — it’s just a form of bragging.”

“Perhaps that was just what we wanted, Afanasy Ivanovitch.”

“But such a petit-jeu would set us crying, instead of laughing,” observed the sprightly lady.

“It’s quite impossible and absurd,” Ptitsyn chimed in.

“Was it successful?” asked Nastasya Filippovna.

“Well, no, it was a failure. Every one certainly did tell something; many of them told the truth, and, would you believe it, some of them positively enjoyed telling it. But afterwards every one was ashamed: they couldn’t keep it up. On the whole, though, it was very amusing, in a way, of course.”

“It really would be nice,” observed Nastasya Filippovna, suddenly growing eager. “Let’s try it, gentlemen. We really are not very lively. If each of us would consent to tell something . . . of that sort... of course, voluntarily. No one is forced to do it, eh? Perhaps we could keep it up. It would be awfully original, anyway.”

“It’s a stroke of genius!” said Ferdyshtchenko. “Ladies are excluded, however; men must begin. We’ll cast lots, as we did then. We must — we must! If anyone really doesn’t want to, of course, he needn’t; but that’s being very disagreeable. Throw your lots into my hat here, gentlemen; the prince shall draw them. Nothing could be simpler — to describe the worst thing you’ve done in your life, that’s awfully easy, gentlemen! “Vbu’ll see. If any one forgets, I’ll undertake to remind him.”

The idea seemed a very queer one and almost every one disliked it. Some frowned, some smiled slyly. Some protested, but faintly; Ivan Fyodorovitch, for instance, who was loth to oppose Nastasya Filippovna, and noticed how attracted she was by this strange idea, perhaps simply because it was strange and almost impossible. Nastasya Filippovna was always self-willed and inconsiderate when once she had expressed a desire, even though it were the veriest caprice, of no benefit to her. And now she seemed hysterical, ran to and fro and laughed spasmodically and violently, especially at Totsky's uneasy protests. Her dark eyes glittered, there was a hectic flush on her pale cheeks. The deiected and disgusted air of some of her visitors possibly increased her ironical desire to play the game. Perhaps the cynicism and the cruelty of the idea was just what attracted her. Some of the party were persuaded that she had a special object in it. Yet they assented; it was curious, anyway, and to many people the prospect was alluring. Ferdyshtchenko was the most excited of all.

"What if it's something one can't tell . . . before ladies?" observed the silent youth timidly.

"Why, don't tell it, then. There are plenty of wicked actions without that," answered Ferdyshtchenko. "Ach, you young people!"

"But I don't know which of my actions I consider the worst," put in the sprightly lady.

"Ladies are exempted from the obligation," repeated Ferdyshtchenko; "but only from the obligation: Anything of their own inspiration will be accepted with gratitude. Men are exempt as well, if they object too much."

"But what proof is there that I shan't tell lies?" inquired Ganya. "And if I do, the whole point of the game is lost. And who wouldn't tell lies? Every one is sure to."

"Why, that's one thing that's fascinating, to see what sort of lies a man will tell. There's no particular danger of your telling lies, Ganya, for we all know your worst action as it is. But just fancy, gentlemen," Ferdyshtchenko cried with sudden inspiration, "only think with what eyes we shall look at one another tomorrow, for instance, after we've told our tales!"

"But is this possible? Are you really in earnest, Nastasya Filippovna?" Totsky asked with dignity.

"If you are afraid of wolves, you mustn't go into the forest," observed Nastasya Filippovna sneeringly.

“But let me ask you, Mr. Ferdyshtchenko, what sort of petit-jeu can one make out of this?” Totsky went on, more and more uneasy. “I assure you that such things are never successful. You say yourself that it has been unsuccessful once already.”

“Unsuccessful! Why last time I told the story of how I stole three roubles, I simply told it straight off.”

“I dare say. But I suppose there was no possibility of your telling it so that it seemed like the truth, and that you were believed? Gavril Ardalionovitch has observed very justly that with the slightest hint of falsehood the whole point of the game is lost. Telling the truth is only possible by accident through a special sort of boastfulness, in the worst possible taste, inconceivable and utterly unsuitable here.”

“But what a subtle person you are, Afanasy Ivanovitch!” cried Ferdyshtchenko. “\bu positively surprise me! Only fancy, gentlemen, by observing that I couldn’t tell the story of my thieving so as to make it like the truth, Afanasy Ivanovitch hints in the subtlest way that I couldn’t really have stolen (for it would have been bad form to have said so aloud); though perhaps he is privately convinced that Ferdyshtchenko may very well have been a thief. But to business, gentlemen, to business. The lots are collected and you’ve put in yours too, Afanasy Ivanovitch; so no one has refused. Prince, draw!”

Without a word Myshkin put his hand into the hat and the first lot he drew was Ferdyshtchenko’s, the second Ptitsyn’s, the third General Epanchin’s, the fourth Totsky’s, the fifth his own, the sixth Ganya’s, and so on. The ladies had not put in lots.

“Good heavens, what a misfortune!” cried Ferdyshtchenko. “I thought that the first would be the prince, and then the general. But, thank God, Ivan Petrovitch comes after me, and I shall be rewarded.

Well, gentlemen, I am bound of course to set a good example; but what I regret most of all at this moment is that I am a person of no consequence and not distinguished in any way — not even of decent rank. Of what interest is it to any one that Ferdyshtchenko should have done something horrid? And what is my worst action? There’s an embarras de richesse. Shall I tell of the same theft again, to convince Afanasy Ivanovitch that one may steal without being a thief?”

“You are also convincing me, Mr. Ferdyshtchenko, that it’s possible to enjoy, even to revel in describing one’s nasty actions, even though one is

not asked about them. ButExcuse me, Mr.

Ferdyshtchenko.”

“Begin, Ferdyshtchenko, you are chattering too much and will never finish,” Nastasya Filippovna insisted with irritable impatience.

Everyone noticed that after her hysterical laughter she had suddenly become actually ill-humoured, peevish and irritable; yet she persisted obstinately and imperiously in her wild caprice. Afanasy Ivanovitch was horribly uncomfortable. He was furious too at Ivan Fyodorovitch, who sat sipping champagne, as though there were nothing the matter; perhaps reckoning on telling something when his turn came.

CHAPTER 14

I'VE NO wit, Nastasya Filippovna, that's what makes me talk too much," cried Ferdyshtchenko, beginning his story. "If I were as witty as Afanasy Ivanovitch or Ivan Petrovitch, I should have sat still and held my tongue tonight, like Afanasy Ivanovitch and Ivan Petrovitch. Prince, let me ask you, what do you think? Don't you think that there are many more men in the world thieves than not thieves, and that there isn't a man in the world so honest that he has never once in his life stolen anything? That's my idea, from which I don't conclude, however, that all men are thieves; though, goodness knows, I've often been tempted to. What do you think?"

"Ugh! how stupidly you tell your story!" commented the sprightly lady, whose name was Darya Alexeyevna. "And what nonsense! It's impossible that every one should have stolen something. I've never stolen anything."

"You've never stolen anything, Darya Alexeyevna; but what will the prince say? He is blushing all over."

"I think what you say is true, only you exaggerate very much," said Myshkin, who really was for some reason blushing.

"And you, prince, have never stolen anything yourself?"

"Foo! how absurd this is! What are you thinking about, Mr. Ferdyshtchenko," the general interposed.

"You are simply ashamed to tell it when it comes to the point, so you try to drag the prince in, because he can't take his own part," Darya Alexeyevna snapped out.

"Ferdyshtchenko, tell your story or hold your tongue, and don't drag in other people. \bu put one out of all patience," said Nastasya Filippovna sharply and irritably.

"In a minute, Nastasya Filippovna; but since the prince has confessed — for I insist that the prince has as good as confessed — what would anyone else (to mention no names) say, if he wanted to tell the truth for once? As for me, gentlemen, there's no need to tell more; it's very simple and stupid and nasty. But I assure you I am not a thief; I don't know how I came to steal. It happened the year before last, one Sunday, at Semyon Ivanovitch's villa; he had friends dining with him. After dinner the gentlemen were sitting over their wine. It occurred to me to ask the daughter, a young lady called Marya Semyonovna, to play the piano. I walked through the corner

room. On Marya Ivanovna’s worktable lay a green paper note for three roubles. She must have taken it out for the housekeeping. There was no one in the room. I took the note and put it in my pocket, what for I can’t say. What came over me I don’t know. Only I hastily went back and sat down at the table. I sat on there, expecting something, in considerable excitement. I chattered away without stopping, told anecdotes, laughed. Afterwards Ijoined the ladies. About half an hour later they missed the note and began questioning the maids. They suspected one called Darya. I showed extraordinary interest and sympathy, and I remember that, when Darya was utterly overcome, I began persuading her to confess, assuring her that her mistress would be kind; and I

did that aloud, before every one. Every one looked on, and I felt extraordinary pleasure in the fact that I was preaching to her while the note lay in my pocket. I spent those three roubles drinking in a restaurant that night. I went in and asked for a bottle of Lafitte. I never asked for a bottle like that, by itself; I wanted to spend the money at once. I felt no particular pangs of conscience at the time, nor have I since. I shouldn’t do it again, certainly; you may believe that or not, as you like, I don’t care. Well, that’s all.”

“But there’s no doubt that’s not the worst thing you’ve ever done,” said Darya Alexeyevna with aversion.

“That’s a pathological incident, not an action,” observed Totsky.

“And the servant?” asked Nastasya Filippovna, not disguising her intense disgust.

“The servant was turned away next day, of course. The family was strict.”

“And you let that happen?”

“That’s good! Why, could I have gone and told of myself?” chuckled Ferdyshtchenko, though he seemed struck by the extremely unpleasant impression made on all bv his story.

“How loathsome!” cried Nastasya Filippovna.

“Why, you want to hear of a man’s worst action, and yet you expect something brilliant! A man’s worst actions are always loathsome, Nastasya Filippovna; we shall hear that directly from Ivan Petrovitch. And a great many people are brilliant on the outside and want to seem virtuous because they have their own carriage. All sorts of people keep a carriage. And by what means? ...”

Ferdyshtchenko, in fact, was quite carried away, and flew into a sudden rage, positively forgetting himself and over-stepping all bounds; his whole face twitched with anger. Strange as it seems, he apparently had expected a very different reception of his story. These errors of taste, this special sort of bragging, as Totsky had called it, happened very frequently with Ferdyshtchenko, and were quite in his character.

Nastasya Filippovna positively quivered with fury and looked intently at Ferdyshtchenko. He was instantly quelled and relapsed into silence, almost cold with fear; he had gone too far.

“Hadn’t we better make an end of it?” Totsky asked artfully.

“It’s my turn, but I claim my right of exemption and shall not speak,” said Ptitsyn resolutely.

“Don’t you want to?”

“I can’t, Nastasya Filippovna; and in fact I look upon such a petit-jeu as out of the question.”

“General, I believe it’s your turn,” said Nastasya Filippovna, turning to Epanchin. “If you refuse, too, you will throw us all out, and I shall be sorry, for I was reckoning on finishing it by telling an incident from my own life. Only I wanted to do that after you and Afanasy Ivanovitch, for you must give me confidence,” she added, laughing.

“Oh, if you promise to,” cried the general fervently, “I am ready to tell you of my whole life; and I confess I have got my story ready for my turn....”

“And from his excellency’s air alone one may judge of the peculiar creative pleasure with which he has worked up his anecdote,” Ferdyshtchenko ventured to observe with a sarcastic smile, though he was still rather ill at ease.

Nastasya Filippovna glanced at the general, and she too smiled to herself. But her depression and irritability were obviously increasing every moment.

Totsky was more alarmed than ever at her promise to tell something herself.

“It has happened to me, friends, as to every one, to commit actions in my life that were not very pretty,” began the general; “but it’s strange that I regard the brief incident which I’ll describe directly as the basest action of my life. It’s almost thirty-five years ago, yet I can never escape a twinge at heart, so to say, at recalling it. It was an extremely foolish business,

however, I was at that time only a lieutenant and was working my way up in the army. Well, we all know what a lieutenant is — young blood and ardour, but a miserable screw. I had an orderly in those days called Nikifor, who was awfully zealous on my behalf. He saved, sewed, scrubbed and cleaned, and even stole right and left anything he could lay his hands on to help our housekeeping. He was a most faithful and honest man. I was strict, of course, but just. We happened to stay for some time in a little town. I had lodgings in a suburb in the house of the widow of a retired sub-lieutenant. The old lady was eighty or thereabouts. She lived in a little ancient tumbledown wooden house, and was so poor she didn't even keep a servant. What was worse, though, she had at one time had a numerous family and relations. Some had died, others were scattered, while others had forgotten the old woman. Her husband she had buried forty-five years before. Some years previously a niece used to live with her, a hunchback woman, as wicked as a witch, so people said; she had even bitten the old woman's finger. But she too was dead; so that the old lady had been struggling on for three years quite alone. I was frightfully bored there, and she was so silly one could get nothing out of her. At last she stole a cock of mine. The matter has never been cleared up to this day, but there was no one else could have done it. We quarrelled over the cock — quarrelled in earnest; and it happened that as soon as I asked, I was transferred to other quarters, to a suburb the other side of the town, in the house of a merchant with a large family and a big beard, as I remember him. Nikifor and I were delighted to move. I left the old lady indignantly. Three days later I came in from drill and Nikifor informed me 'We were wrong, your honour, to leave our bowl at our old lady's; I have nothing to put the soup in.' I was surprised, of course. 'How so? How was it the bowl was left behind?' Nikifor, surprised, went on to report that when we were leaving the landlady had not given him our bowl, because I had broken her pot; that she had kept our bowl in place of her pot, and that she had pretended I had suggested it. Such meanness on her part naturally made me furious; it would make any young officer's blood boil. I leapt up and flew out. I was beside myself, so to say, when I got to the old woman's. I saw her sitting in the passage, huddled up in the corner all alone, as though to get out of the sun, her cheek propped on her hand. I poured out a stream of abuse, calling her all sorts of names, you know, in regular Russian style. Only there seemed something strange as I looked at her: she sat with her face turned to me, her eyes round and staring,

and answered not a word. And she looked at me in such a queer way, she seemed to be swaying. At last I calmed down. I looked at her, I questioned her — not a word. I stood hesitating: flies were buzzing, the sun was setting, there was stillness. Completely disconcerted, I walked away. Before I got home I was summoned to the major's; then I had to go to the company, so I didn't get home till it was quite evening. Nikifor's first words were, 'Do you know, your honour, that our landlady is dead?"When did she die?"Why, this evening, an hour and a half ago. So that at the very time I was abusing her she was passing away. It made such an impression on me that, I assure you, I couldn't get over it. The thought of it haunted me; I dream of it at night. I am not superstitious, of course, but two days after I went to church to the funeral. In fact, as time goes on it seems to haunt me more. Not that it haunts me exactly, but now and then one pictures it and feels uncomfortable. I've come to the conclusion that the sting of it lies in this. In the first place, it was a woman — so to speak, a fellow-creature, a humane creature, as they call it nowadays. She had lived, lived a long life, lived too long. At one time she had had children, a husband, family and relations — all this bubbling, so to say, smiling, so to say, life about her; and then all at once complete blank, everything gone, she left alone like . . . some fly accursed from the beginning of time. And then at last God had brought her to the end, as the sun was setting, on a quiet summer evening my old woman too was passing awav — a theme for pious reflection, to be sure. And then at that very moment, instead of a tear to see her off, so to say, a reckless young lieutenant, swaggering arms akimbo, escorts her from the surface of the earth to the Russian tune of violent swearing over a lost bowl! Of course I was to blame, and, though from the length of years and change in my nature, I've long looked at my action as though it had been another man's, I still regret it. So that, I repeat, it seems positively queer to me; for if I were to blame, I was not altogether so. Why should she have taken it into her head to die at that moment? Of course there is only one explanation, that what I did was in a certain sense pathological. Yet I couldn't be at peace till, fifteen years ago, I provided for two incurable old women in the almshouse, so as to soften the last days of their earthly existence by comfortable surroundings. I think of bequeathing a sum of money to make it a permanent charity. Well, that's all about it. I repeat that I may have done wrong in many things in my life, but this incident I honestly consider my worst action."

“And, instead of the worst, your excellency has described one of your good actions. You’ve cheated Ferdyshtchenko,” commented Ferdyshtchenko.

“Yes, general, I never imagined you had such a good heart after all. I am almost sorry,” Nastasya Filippovna dropped carelessly.

“Sorry! What for?” asked the general with an affable laugh, and not without complacency he sipped his champagne.

But it was Totsky’s turn, and he too had prepared himself. Every one thought that he would not, like Ptitsyn, refuse, and every one for certain reasons awaited his confession with curiosity; at the same time they were watching Nastasya Filippovna.

With an extraordinary air of dignity, which was in keeping with his stately appearance, Afanasy Ivanovitch began in his quiet, polite voice to tell one of his “charming anecdotes.” He was, by the way, a man of fine appearance and dignified carriage, tall, rather stout, a little bald and turning grey. He had soft, pendulous, rosy cheeks and false teeth. He wore his clothes loose and well cut, and his linen was always exquisite. His plump white hands were pleasant to look at. On the first finger of his right hand he wore a costly diamond ring.

All the while he was telling his story, Nastasya Filippovna was staring intently at the lace frill of her sleeve, and kept pinching it with two fingers of her left hand. She didn’t even once glance at the speaker.

“What makes my task easier,” began Afanasy Ivanovitch, “is the absolute obligation of describing the very basest action of my life. In that case there can be no hesitation; conscience and the prompting of the heart dictate at once what one must tell. I confess with bitterness that among all the innumerable, perhaps frivolous and thoughtless actions of my life there is one the impression of which has lain almost too heavily on my mind. It happened nearly twenty years ago. I was staying then in the country with Platon Ordyntsev. He had just been elected marshal of nobility and had come down with his young wife, Anfisa Alexeyevna, to spend his winter holidays there. It was a few days before her birthday and two dances had been arranged. At that time that charming novel of Dumas fils, ‘La Dame aux Camelias,’ was in the height of fashion and was just making a great sensation in society. It’s a work which, in my opinion, is not destined to die or tarnish with aqe. In the provinces all the ladies were in ecstasies over it — those, at least, who had read it. The charm of the novel, the originality of

the situation of the principal character, that enchanting world analysed so subtly, and all the fascinating incidents scattered about the book (for instance, the use of the nosegays of white and pink camellias alternately) — all these charming details, in fact, and the whole ensemble made an overwhelming sensation. Camellias became extraordinarily fashionable, every one wanted them, everyone was trying to get them. I ask you, is it possible to get many camellias in a country district when every one is asking for them for dances, even when there are not many dances? Petya Vorhovsky was breaking his heart at the time, poor fellow, over Anfisa Alexeyevna. I really don't know whether there was anything between them — that is, I mean whether he had any real grounds for hope. The poor fellow was crazy to get camellias for Anfisa Alexeyevna by the night of the ball. The Countess Sotsky, a visitor from Petersburg staying with the governor's wife, and Sofya Bezpalov were, we knew for certain, coming with nosegays of white ones. Anfisa Alexeyevna longed to create a special sensation with red ones. Poor Piaton was almost driven distracted — of course, he was the husband. He promised to procure the flowers; and what do you think? On the very eve of the ball they were snapped up by Katerina Alexandrovna, a terrible rival of Anfisa Alexeyevna in everything. They were at daggers drawn. Of course it was a case of hysterics and fainting fits. It was all over with Piaton. "Vbu may well believe that if Petya had been able to contrive a bouquet somehow at that interesting moment, his chances would have greatly improved. A woman's gratitude in such cases is boundless. He flew about like a madman; but it was an impossible achievement, and it was no use talking about it. All at once I met him at eleven o'clock on the evening before the birthday and the ball given by Madame Zubkov, a neighbor of Ordyntsev's. He was beaming. 'What is it?"I have found it. Eureka!"Well, my dear boy, you do surprise me! Where? How?"At "Vfekshaisk, a little town fifteen miles away, not in our district. There's a merchant of the old style, a rich man called Trepalov, living there with his old wife. Instead of children they keep canaries. They've both a passion for flowers, and he has camellias."Why, it may not be true. And what if he won't give you them?"I shall fall on my knees and grovel at his feet till he does. I won't go away without!"When are you going?"To-morrow at daybreak, at five o'clock."Well, good luck to you!' And, you know, I felt so pleased on his account. I went back to the Ordyntsevs'. One o'clock at night came and, you know, I was still thinking about it. I meant to

go to bed, when suddenly a very original idea came to me. I made my way to the kitchen. I waked Savely, the coachman, gave him fifteen roubles, and said, ‘Let me have the horses in half an hour.’ Half an hour later, of course, the sledge was at the gate. Anfisa Alexeyevna, I was told, had a migraine; she was feverish and delirious. I got in and drove off. Before five o’clock I was at “Vfekshaisk, at the inn. I waited till daybreak, and only till daybreak. By seven o’clock I was at Trepalov’s. I said this and that, and asked, ‘Have you any camellias? My good kind sir, help me, save me! I bow down at your feet!’ The old man was tall, grey-headed, severe — a terrible old man. ‘No, no! On no account. I can’t consent.’ I plumped down at his feet. I positively flopped on the floor. ‘What are you doing, sir? What are you about?’ He was almost alarmed. ‘A human life is at stake!’ I shouted to him. ‘Well, take them if that’s so, in God’s name.’ I did cut those red camellias! They were wonderful, exquisite; there was a little greenhouse full of them. The old man sighed. I pulled out a hundred roubles. ‘No, sir, don’t insult me in such a way.”In that case, my worthy sir, devote that hundred roubles to the hospital here for the food and expenses there.”Well, that,’ said the old man, ‘is a different matter; that’s a good and noble work and pleasing to God. I will present that money to the hospital as a health-offering for you.’ And, you know, I liked that old Russian; he was, so to speak, Russian to the backbone, de la vraie souche! Delighted at my success, I set off homewards. I went back a roundabout way to avoid meeting Petya. As soon as I arrived I sent the bouquet up to Anfisa Alexeyevna to greet her when she waked. “Vbu can imagine her delight, her gratitude, her tears of gratitude. Piaton, who the day before had been at his last gasp, was sobbing on my breast. Alas! all husbands have been the same since the creation of . . . lawful matrimony. I won’t venture to say more, but poor Petya’s chances were completely over after that episode. I expected at first that he would murder me when he found out, and made ready to meet him; but what happened I would never have believed. He fainted; by the evening he was delirious, and next day he had brain fever and was sobbing like a child and in convulsions. A month later, as soon as he was well again, he volunteered for the Caucasus. It turned out quite a romance. It ended by his being killed in the Crimea. By that time his brother, Stepan Vorhovsky, was in command of a regiment; he had distinguished himself. I confess I had pricks of conscience even many years afterwards. Why, with what object had I dealt him such a blow? And it’s not as though I’d been in love

myself at the time. It was simple mischief for the sake of flirtation, nothing more. If I hadn’t snatched that bouquet from him — who knows? — the man might have been alive to this day; he might have been happy, he might have been successful, and it would not have entered his head to go to fight the Turks!”

Afanasy Ivanovitch ceased speaking with the same stately dignity with which he had begun his story. The company noticed that there was a peculiar light in Nastasya Filippovna’s eyes and her lips quivered as he finished. Every one was watching them with curiosity.

“They’ve cheated Ferdyshtchenko! How they have cheated! This really is cheating!” cried Ferdyshtchenko in a lachrymose voice, realising that he could and must say something.

“And whose fault was it that you didn’t know better? \bu should learn from these clever people!” Darya Alexeyevna, an old and faithful friend and ally of Totsky’s, snapped out almost triumphantly.

“You are right, Afanasy Ivanovitch, the game is a very boring one and we must end it quickly,” Nastasya Filippovna commented carelessly. “I’ll tell you myself what I promised, and let us have a game of cards.”

“But the promised anecdote first of all,” the general assented warmly.

“Prince,” Nastasya Filippovna turned sharply and unexpectedly to Myshkin, “my old friends here, General Epanchin and Afanasy Ivanovitch, want me to be married. Tell me what you think. Shall I be married or not? As you say, I will do.”

Afanasy Ivanovitch turned pale; the general was petrified. Every one stared and craned forward. Ganya stood rooted to the spot.

“To ... to whom?” asked Myshkin in a sinking voice.

“To Gavril Ardalionovitch Ivolgin,” Nastasya Filippovna went on in the same harsh, firm and distinct voice.

Several seconds of silence followed. Myshkin seemed struggling to speak and unable to pronounce a word, as though there were some awful weight on his chest.

“N-no . . . don’t marry him,” he whispered at last, and breathed painfully.

“So it shall be then. Gavril Ardalionovitch,” she addressed him imperiously and, as it were, triumphantly, “you have heard the prince’s decision? Well, that is my answer, and let it be the end of the matter once for all!”

“Nastasya Filippovna!” said Totsky in a trembling voice.

“Nastasya Filippovna!” pronounced the general in a persuasive but agitated voice.

There was a general stir and commotion.

“What is the matter, friends?” she went on, lookinq at her guests, as though surprised. “Why are you so upset? And how distressed you all look!”

“But. . . remember, Nastasya Filippovna,” Totsky muttered, faltering, “you have made a promise quite voluntarily, and might have partly spared .. . I am at a loss and . . . of course, perplexed, but. . . in short, at such a minute and before . . . before people . . . and to do it all like this, to end a serious matter by such a petit-jeu — a matter affecting the honour and the heart... a matter involving ...”

“I don’t understand you, Afanasy Ivanovitch. \bu really don’t know what you are saying. In the first place, what do you mean by ‘before people’? Are we not in the company of dear and intimate friends? And why petit-jeu? I really meant to tell my anecdote, and here I have told it. Isn’t it a nice one? And why do you say that it’s not serious? Isn’t this serious? You heard me say to the prince ‘As you say, so it shall be.’ Had he said ‘Yes,’ I would have given my consent at once. But he said ‘No,’ and I refused. Isn’t that serious? My whole life was hanging in the balance. What could be more serious?”

“But the prince — what’s the prince to do with it?

And what is the prince after all?” muttered the general, almost unable to restrain his indignation at the offensive authority given to the prince.

“Why, what the prince has to do with it is that he is the first man I have met in my whole life that I have believed in as a sincere friend. He believed in me at first sight and I in him.”

“I have only to thank Nastasya Filippovna for the extraordinary delicacy with which she . .. has treated me,” Ganya, pale and with twitching lips, articulated at last in a quivering voice. “It was of course the fitting way, but . . . the prince ... the prince in this matter! ...”

“Is after the seventy-five thousand, do you mean?” Nastasya Filippovna broke in suddenly. “Did you mean to say that? Don’t deny it, you certainly meant to say that. Afanasy Ivanovitch, I had forgotten to add, take back that seventy-five thousand, and let me assure you that I set you free for nothing. It’s enough! It’s time you too were free. Nine years and three months! To-morrow, a new leaf; but to-day is my birthday, and I am doing what I like

for the first time in my whole life. General, you too take back your pearls; give them to your wife; here they are. To-

morrow I shall leave this flat for good, and there will be no more parties, friends.”

Saying this, she suddenly got up, as though she meant to go away.

“Nastasya Filippovna! Nastasya Filippovna!” was heard on all sides.

Every one was in excitement, all rose from their seats and surrounded her. All had listened uneasily to her impetuous, feverish, frantic words. They all felt that there was something wrong; no one could explain it, no one could make it out. At that moment there was a violent ring at the bell, exactly as there had been at Ganya’s flat that afternoon.

“A-ah! Here’s the way out! At last! It’s half-past eleven!” cried Nastasya Filippovna. “I beg you to be seated, friends. Here is the way out!”

Saying this, she sat down herself. A strange laugh quivered on her lips. She sat in silent and feverish expectation, looking towards the door.

“Rogozhin and his hundred thousand, not a doubt of it!” Ptitsyn muttered to himself.

CHAPTER 15

Katya, the maid, came in, much alarmed.

“Goodness knows what’s the matter, Nastasya Filippovna! A dozen men have broken in, and they are all drunk. They ask to be shown in. They say it’s Rogozhin, and that you know.”

“That’s right, Katya; show them all in at once.”

“You don’t mean ... all of them, Nastasya Filippovna? They are in a disgraceful state — shocking!”

“Let them all in, Katya, everyone of them; don’t be afraid, or they’ll come in without your showing. What an uproar they are making, just as they did this afternoon! Perhaps you are offended, friends” — she turned to her guests— “at my receiving such company in your presence? I am very sorry, and beg your pardon; but I can’t help it, and I am very, very anxious you should all consent to be my witnesses at this final scene; though, of course, you must please yourselves....”

The guests were still astonished, looking at one another and whispering. But it was perfectly clear that all this had been calculated and arranged beforehand, and that although Nastasya Filippovna had certainly gone out of her senses, she could not be turned from her intention now. Every one was in agonies of curiosity. Besides, there was no one present likely to be alarmed. There were only two ladies in the party: Darya Alexeyevna, a sprightly lady who had seen the seamy side of life and could not be easily put out of countenance, and the handsome but silent stranger. But the silent stranger could hardly have understood what was passing: she was a German who had not long been in Russia and knew not a word of Russian, and she seemed to be as stupid as she was handsome. She was a novelty and it had become a fashion to invite her to certain parties, sumptuously attired, with her hair dressed as though for a show, and to seat her in the drawing-room as a charming decoration, just as people sometimes borrow from their friends for a special occasion a picture, a statue, a vase, or a fire-screen. As for the men, Ptitsyn, for instance, was a friend of Rogozhin’s. Ferdyshtchenko was in his element. Ganya could not recover himself, yet he had a vague but irresistible impulse to stay out his ignominy to the end. The old teacher, who had only a dim notion of what was going forward, was almost in tears and literally trembling with fear, noticing an exceptional

agitation around him and in Nastasya Filippovna, whom he adored as though she had been his grandchild. But he would sooner have died than have deserted her at such a moment. As for Totsky, he would, of course, not have cared to compromise himself by such adventures; but he was too much interested in the matter, though it was taking such a crazy turn. Moreover, Nastasya Filippovna had dropped two or three words for his benefit, which made him feel he could not go home till the matter was cleared up. He resolved to remain to the end and to keep perfectly silent, confining himself to observation, which indeed was the only course consistent with dignity. General Epanchin, who had only just been offended by the unceremonious and ridiculous return of his present, might of course feel still more insulted by these strange eccentricities, or perhaps by the entrance of Rogozhin. A man in his position had indeed demeaned himself too far by sitting down by the side of Ptitsyn and Ferdyshtchenko. For, however much passion might influence him, it might well at last have been overcome by a sense of obligation, by a feeling of duty, of his rank and importance and self-respect generally; so that Rogozhin and his companions were in any case inadmissible in the presence of his excellency.

“Ach! general,” Nastasya Filippovna interrupted him at once, as soon as he made his protest, “I had forgotten! But, believe me, I had thought of you before. If it’s such an offense to you, I won’t insist on keeping you; though I am very anxious to have you particularly beside me at this moment. In any case I thank you very much for your friendship and flattering notice; but if you are afraid ...”

“Allow me, Nastasya Filippovna,” cried the general in a rush of chivalrous feeling. “To whom are you saying this? Only from devotion to you I will remain at vour side now, and if there is any danqer. .

. . Besides, I must confess I am extremely interested. I only meant to say that they will spoil your carpets and perhaps break something.... And you ought not to see them at all, to my thinking, Nastasya Filippovna.”

“Rogozhin himself,” Ferdyshtchenko announced.

“What do you think, Afanasy Ivanovitch,” the general managed to whisper to him in haste, “hasn’t she taken leave of her senses? I mean not allegorically, but in the literal, medical sense. Eh?”

“I’ve told you that she’s always been disposed that way,” Totsky whispered slyly.

“And she is in a fever too....”

Rogozhin was accompanied by almost the same followers as in the afternoon. There were only two additions to the company: one a worthless old man, once the editor of a disreputable, libellous paper, of whom the story went that for drink he had once pawned his false teeth; and a retired sub-lieutenant, the rival by trade and calling of the gentleman with the fists. He was utterly unknown to all Rogozhin's party, but had been picked up in the street on the sunny side of the Nevsky Prospect, where he used to stop the passersby, begging assistance in the language of Marlinsky, slyly alleging that he used to give away as much as fifteen roubles at once in his time. The two rivals at once took up a hostile attitude to one another. The gentleman with the fists considered himself affronted by this addition to the party. Being silent by nature, he merely growled at times like a bear and with profound contempt looked at the tricks by which his rival, who turned out to be a man of the world and a diplomatist, tried to ingratiate himself and win favour. The sub-lieutenant promised, to judge by appearances, more skill and dexterity "at work" than strength, and he was shorter than the fisted gentleman. Delicately and without entering into open competition, though he boasted shockingly he hinted several times at the superiority of English boxing. He seemed, in fact, a thoroughgoing champion of Western culture. The fisted gentleman only smiled contemptuously and huffily, not deigning to contradict his rival openly, though at times he showed him silently, as though by chance, or rather moved into the foreground, a thoroughly national argument — a huge, sinewy, gnarled fist covered with a sort of reddish down. It was made perfectly clear to every one that, if this truly national argument were accurately brought to bear on any subject, it would reduce it to pulp.

Thanks to the efforts of Rogozhin, who had all day long been looking forward to his visit to Nastasya Filippovna, none of the party was completely drunk. He himself was by now nearly sober, but almost stupefied with the number of sensations he had passed through in that chaotic day, that was unlike anything he had experienced in his life before. One thing only had remained constantly in his mind and his heart at every minute, every instant. For the sake of that one thing he had spent the whole time between five o'clock in the afternoon and eleven o'clock at night in continual misery and anxiety, worrying, with Kinders and Biskups, Jews and moneylenders, who were driven almost distracted too, rushing about like mad on his errands. They had, anyway, succeeded in raising the

hundred thousand roubles, of which Nastasya Filippovna had mockingly dropped a passing and quite vague hint. But the money had been lent at a rate of interest of which even Biskup himself did not venture to speak to Kinder above a bashful whisper.

As in the afternoon, Rogozhin stepped forward first; the rest followed him, somewhat uneasy, though fully conscious of their advantages. What they were most frightened of — goodness knows why — was Nastasya Filippovna. Some of them almost expected that they would all be promptly "kicked downstairs"; and among these was the dandy and lady-killer Zalyozhev. But others — and the fisted gentleman was conspicuous among them — cherished at heart profound though unspoken contempt, and even hatred, for Nastasya Filippovna, and had come to her house as though to take it by storm. But the magnificence of the first two rooms, the articles they had never seen or heard of before, the choice furniture and pictures, and the life-size statue of Venus, roused in them an overwhelming sentiment of respect and almost of fear. This did not, however, prevent them all from gradually crowding with insolent curiosity into the drawing-room after Rogozhin. But when the fisted gentleman, his rival, and some of the others noticed General Epanchin among the guests, they were for the first moment so crestfallen that they positively beat a retreat to the other room. Lebedvev, however, was amonq the more fearless and resolute, and he stepped forward almost beside Rogozhin, having grasped the true significance of a fortune of a million four hundred thousand, a hundred thousand of it in hard cash. It must be observed, however, that all of them, even the knowing Lebedyev, were a little uncertain of the precise limits of their powers and did not know whether they were really able to do just as they liked or not. Lebedyev was ready to swear at certain moments that they were, but at other moments he felt uneasily impelled to remind himself of several preeminently cheering and reassuring articles of the legal code.

On Rogozhin himself Nastasya Filippovna made a very different impression from that produced on his companions. As soon as the curtain over the door was raised and he saw her, everything else ceased to exist for him, as it had that morning, and even more completely than it had that morning. He turned pale, and for an instant stopped short. It might be conjectured that his heart was beating violently. He gazed for some seconds timidly and desperately at Nastasya Filippovna without taking his eyes off her.

Suddenly, as though lost to all reason, almost staggering as he moved, he went up to the table. On the way he stumbled against Ptitsyn's chair and trod with his huge dirty boots on the lace trimming of the dumb German beauty's magnificent light blue dress. He did not apologise, and indeed he did not notice it. He laid on the table a strange object, which he was holding before him in both hands when he entered the drawing-room. It was a thick roll of paper, six inches thick and eight inches long, stoutly and tightly wrapped up in a copy of the Financial News, tied round and round and twice across with string, as loaves of sugar are tied up. Then he stood still without uttering a word and let his hands fall, as though awaiting his sentence. He was dressed exactly as before, except for a new bright red and green silk scarf round his neck, a huge diamond pin in the form of a beetle stuck in it, and a massive diamond ring on a finger of his grubby right hand.

Lebedyev stopped short three paces from the table; the others, as I have said, were gradually making their way into the drawing-room. Katya and Pasha, Nastasya Filippovna's maids, had run up too to look under the lifted curtain in qreat amazement and alarm.

"What's this?" asked Nastasya Filippovna, scanning Rogozhin intently and curiously and glancing towards "the object."

"A hundred thousand!" answered Rogozhin almost in a whisper.

"Ah, so he's kept his word! What a man! Sit down, please, here on this chair; I shall have something to say to you later. Who is with you? All the same party? Well, let them come in and sit down; they can sit on that sofa and this other sofa here. Here are two armchairs.... What's the matter with them, don't they want to?"

Some of them were in fact completely overcome with confusion; they beat a retreat and settled down to wait in the other room. But others remained and sat down as they were invited, only rather further from the table, and for the most part in out-of-the-way corners. Some of them still wished to efface themselves, but others regained their effrontery with incredible rapidity, as time went on. Rogozhin too sat down on the chair assigned him, but he did not sit there long; he stood up and did not sit down again. By degrees he began to scrutinise and distinguish the visitors. Seeing Ganya, he smiled malignantly and whispered to himself "Hullo!" He gazed at the general and Totsky without shyness or special interest. But when he noticed Myshkin beside Nastasya Filippovna, he was extremely amazed and could not take his eyes off him for a long time; he seemed at a loss to

explain his presence. It may well have been that he was at moments in actual delirium. Besides the violent emotions he had gone through that day, he had spent all the previous night in the train and had been almost forty-eight hours without sleep.

“This, friends, is a hundred thousand roubles,” said Nastasya Filippovna, addressing the company with a sort of feverish, impatient defiance, “in this dirty bundle. This afternoon he shouted like a madman that he would bring me a hundred thousand this evening, and I’ve been expecting him all the time. He was bidding for me: he began at eighteen, then he suddenly passed at one bound to forty, and then this hundred here. He’s kept his word! Foo! how pale he is! . . . It all happened at Ganya’s this afternoon. I went to pay his mother a visit, in my future home, and there his sister shouted in my face, ‘Won’t they turn this shameless creature out!’ and she spat in her brother Ganya’s face. She is a girl of character!”

“Nastasya Filippovna!” General Epanchin articulated reproachfully.

He was beginning to understand the situation in his own way.

“What’s the matter, general? Is it improper? Let’s give up hum-bugging! What if I used to sit in the box at the French theatre like an inaccessible paragon of virtue; what if I did run like a wild thing from all who have been pursuing me for the last five years, and wore the airs of proud innocence — it was all because I was a silly fool! Here in your presence he has come in and put a hundred thousand on the table, after my five years of innocence, and no doubt they’ve troikas outside waiting for me. He prices me at a hundred thousand. Ganya, I see you are still angry with me. Could you really have meant to make me one of your family? Me, Rogozhin’s woman? What did the prince say just now?”

“I didn’t say you were Rogozhin’s. “Vbu don’t belong to Rogozhin,” Myshkin articulated in a shaking voice.

“Nastasya Filippovna, give over, my dear, give over, darling,” Darya Alexeyevna said suddenly, unable to restrain herself. “If they make you so miserable, why think about them? And can you really mean to go off with a fellow like that, even for a hundred thousand? It’s true it’s a hundred thousand, that’s something. You take the hundred thousand and send him about his business; that’s the way to treat them. Ech! if I were in your place I’d send them all... upon my word!”

Darya Alexeyevna was moved to positive anger. She was a very good-natured and impressionable woman.

“Don’t be angry, Darya Alexeyevna,” Nastasya Filippovna laughed to her. “I did not speak to him in anger. Did I reproach him? I simply can’t understand what folly possessed me to want to enter an honourable family. I’ve seen his mother; I kissed her hand. And the pranks I played at your flat this afternoon, Ganya, were on purpose to see for the last time how far you could go. \bu surprised me, really. I expected a good deal, but not that. Would vou actually have married me, knowinq that he was giving me such pearls almost on the eve of your wedding and I was accepting them? And Rogozhin! why, in your home, in the presence of your mother and sister, he was bidding for me; and even after that you came here to make a match of it and nearly brought your sister! Can Rogozhin have been right when he said that you’d crawl on all fours to the other end of Petersburg for three roubles?”

“Yes, he would too!” Rogozhin brought out suddenly, speaking quietly, but with an air of profound conviction.

“It would be a different matter if you were starving, but I am told you get a good salary. And, apart from the disgrace and everything else, to think of bringing a wife you hate into your house (for you do hate me, I know that)! Yes, now I do believe that such a man would murder any one for money! Every one is possessed with such a greed nowadays, they are all so overwhelmed by the idea of money that they seem to have gone mad. The very children take to moneylending! A man winds silk round his razor, makes it firm, comes from behind and cuts his friend’s throat like a sheep’s, as I read lately. Well,

you are a shameless fellow! I am a shameless woman, but you are worse. I say nothing about that bouquet-holder....”

“Is this you — is this you, Nastasya Filippovna!” General Epanchin clasped his hands in genuine distress. “\bu, so refined, with such delicate ideas — and now! What language! What expressions!”

“I am tipsy now, general,” Nastasya Filippovna laughed suddenly. “I want to have my fling! This is my day, my holiday, my red-letter day; I’ve been waiting for it a long time! Darya Alexeyevna, do you see this bouquet-holder, this monsieur aux camelias? There he sits laughing at us....”

“I am not laughing, Nastasya Filippovna, I am only listening with the greatest attention,” Totsky protested with dignity.

“Why have I been tormenting him for the last five years and not letting him go? Was he worth it? He is just what he ought to be. . . . Most likely he

reckons I have treated him badly too. He gave me education, he kept me like a countess, and the money — the money wasted on me! He looked me out a respectable husband in the country in those days, and now Ganya here; and, would you believe it, I

have not lived with him for the last five years, and yet have taken his money and thought I had a right to! I've been so completely lost to all sense! "Vbu say, take the hundred thousand and get rid of him, if it's horrid. And it really is horrid. ... I might have been married long ago, and not to Ganya either; but that would have been just as horrid too. And why have I wasted five years in my anger? And would you believe it, four years ago I thought at times whether I hadn't better marry my Afanasy Ivanovitch outright? I thought of it out of spite. I had all sorts of ideas in my head at that time; and, you know, I could have brought him to it. He used to urge it himself, though you mayn't believe it. He was lying, it's true; but he is easily tempted, he can't restrain himself. But afterwards, thank God, I thought he wasn't worth such anger! And I suddenly felt so disgusted with him then that, if he had besought me, I wouldn't have married him. And for the last five years I've been keeping up this farce. No, I'd better be in my proper place, in the streets! I must either have a spree with Rogozhin or go out as a washer-woman to-morrow. For I've nothing of my own. If I go away, I shall give up evervthinq of his, I shall leave every raq behind. And who'll take one with nothing? Ask Ganya there if he'll have me! Why, even Ferdyshtchenko wouldn't!"

"Perhaps Ferdyshtchenko wouldn't, Nastasya Filippovna. I am a candid person," interposed Ferdyshtchenko; "but the prince would take you. You sit here and complain, but you should look at the prince. I've been watching him a long time."

Nastasya Filippovna turned with curiosity to Myshkin.

"Is that true?" she asked.

"It's true," whispered Myshkin.

"Will you take me as I am, with nothing?"

"I will, Nastasya Filippovna."

"Here's a new development," muttered the general. "I might have expected it."

Myshkin looked with a stern, mournful and penetrating gaze into the face of Nastasya Filippovna, who was still scanning him.

“Here’s a find!” she said suddenly, turning again to Darya Alexeyevna. “And simply from goodness of heart, too; I know him. I have found a benefactor! But maybe it’s true what they say about him, that he is . . . not quite. What are you going to live on if you are so in love that you, a prince, are ready to marry Rogozhin’s woman?”

“I am going to marry an honest woman, Nastasya Filippovna, not Rogozhin’s woman,” said Myshkin.

“Do you mean that I am an honest woman?”

“Yes.”

“Oh, all those notions . . . come out of novels! Those are old-fashioned fancies, prince darling; nowadays the world has grown wiser. And how can you get married? \bu want a nurse to look after you!”

Myshkin got up and in a shaking, timid voice, but with an air of intense conviction, pronounced:

“I know nothing about it, Nastasya Filippovna. I’ve seen nothing of life. \bu are right there, but ... I consider that you will be doing me an honour, not I you. I am nothing, and you have suffered and have come pure out of that hell, and that is a great deal. Why, then, are you ashamed, and ready to go off with Rogozhin? It’s fever. . . . \bu have given back seventy thousand to Mr. Totsky and you say that you will give up everything — everything here. No one here would do that. I . . . Nastasya Filippovna ... I love you! I would die for you, Nastasya Filippovna! I won’t let any one say a word about you. If we are poor, I’ll work, Nastasya Filippovna....”

At the last word a snigger was heard from Ferdyshtchenko and Lebedyev, and even the general gave a sort of snort of great dissatisfaction. Ptitsyn and Totsky could not help smiling, but controlled themselves. The others simply gaped with astonishment.

“. . . But perhaps we shan’t be poor, but very rich, Nastasya Filippovna,” Myshkin went on in the same timid voice. “I don’t know for certain, and I am sorry that I haven’t been able all day to find out about it; but I had a letter from Moscow while I was in Switzerland, from a certain Mr. Salazkin, and he informed me that I may receive a very large inheritance. Here is the letter....”

Myshkin did in fact produce a letter from his pocket.

“Isn’t he raving!” muttered the general. “This is a perfect madhouse!”

For an instant there was silence.

“I believe you said, prince, that the letter was from Salazkin?” asked Ptitsyn. “He is a man very well known in his own circle; he is a very distinguished lawyer, and, if it is really he who sends you the news,

you may put complete trust in it. Fortunately I know his handwriting, for I had business with him lately. .. . If you would let me have a look at it, I might tell you.”

With a shaking hand Myshkin held out the letter without a word.

“What now? What now?” the general cried, looking at everybody like one possessed. “Can it really be an inheritance?”

Every one fixed their eyes on Ptitsyn as he read the letter. The general curiosity had received a new and violent stimulus. Ferdyshtchenko could not keep still; Rogozhin looked on with amazement and great anxiety, turning his eyes from Myshkin to Ptitsyn. Darya Alexeyevna seemed on tenter-hooks of expectation. Even Lebedyev could not help coming out of his corner and bending himself into a triangle, peeped at the letter over Ptitsyn’s shoulder with the airofa man expecting a blow for doing so.

CHAPTER 16

Irs a genuine thing," Ptitsyn announced at last, folding up the letter and handing it to Myshkin. "By the uncontested will of your aunt you will come into a very large fortune without any difficulty."

"Impossible!" the general fired off like a pistol-shot.

Everyone was agape with astonishment again.

Ptitsyn explained, addressing his remarks chiefly to General Epanchin, that Myshkin had five months previously lost an aunt, whom he had never known personally, the elder sister of his mother and the daughter of a Moscow merchant of the third guild, called Papushin, who had died bankrupt and in poverty. But the elder brother of this Papushin, who had also died lately, had been a well-known rich merchant. His two only sons had both died in the same month a year before. The shock of their loss had led to the old man's illness and death shortly after. He was a widower and had no heirs in the world but his niece, Myshkin's aunt, who was quite a poor woman without a home of her own. At the time she inherited the fortune she was almost dying of dropsy, but she had at once tried to find Myshkin, putting the matter into Salazkin's hands, and she had had time to make her will. Apparently neither Myshkin nor the doctor in whose charge he was in Switzerland had cared to wait for an official notification or to make inquiries, and the prince, with Salazkin's letter in his pocket, had decided to set off himself.

"However, I can only tell you," Ptitsyn concluded, addressing Myshkin, "that this is certainly true and incontestable, and everything Salazkin says to you as to the authenticity and certainly of your fortune you may take as equal to hard cash in your pocket. I congratulate you, prince! "Vbu too will perhaps come in for a million and a half — possibly more. Papushin was a very rich merchant."

"Bravo! the last of the Myshkins!" yelled Ferdyshtchenko.

"Hurrah!" croaked Lebedyev in a drunken voice.

"And I lent him twenty-five roubles this morning, poor fellow! Ha, ha, ha! It's a fairy tale, that's what it is," said the general, almost stupefied with astonishment. "Well, I congratulate you — I congratulate you."

And he got up and went to embrace Myshkin. The others too rose and also pressed round Myshkin. Even those who had retreated behind the

curtain came into the drawing-room. There was a confused hubbub of talk and exclamations, there were even clamours for champagne; every one was in fuss and excitement. For an instant they almost forgot Nastasya Filippovna and that she was, anyway, the hostess. But gradually and almost simultaneously the thought occurred to all that Myshkin had just made her an offer of marriage. So that the position struck them as three times as mad and extraordinary as before. Greatly astonished, Totsky shrugged his shoulders; he was almost the only person still sitting, the rest of the company were crowding round the table in disorder.

People asserted afterwards that it was at this moment Nastasya Filippovna went mad. She was still sitting down, and for some time looked about her with a strange and wondering gaze, as though she could not take it in and were trying to grasp what had happened. Then she suddenly turned to Myshkin and with a menacing frown stared intently at him; but that was only for a moment; perhaps she suddenly fancied that it was all a joke, a mockery. But Myshkin's face reassured her. She pondered, then smiled again vaguely, as though not knowing why.

"Then I am really a princess," she whispered to herself, as it were mockingly, and, chancing to look at Darya Alexeyevna, she laughed. "It's a surprising ending. . . . I. . . didn't expect it. . . . But why are you all standing, friends? Please sit down. Congratulate me and the prince! I think some one asked for champagne, Ferdyshtchenko, go and order it. Katya, Pasha" — she suddenly caught sight of her maids in the doorway— "come here. I am going to be married. Did you hear? To the prince. He has a million and a half; he is Prince Myshkin, and is marrying me."

"And a good thing too, my dear; it's high time! It's not a chance to miss," cried Darya Alexeyevna, tremendously moved by what had passed.

"Sit down beside me, prince," Nastasya Filippovna went on. "That's right. And here they are bringing the wine. Congratulate us, friends!"

"Hurrah!" shouted a number of voices.

Many of them were crowding round the wine, and among these were almost all Rogozhin's followers. But though they shouted and were prepared to shout, yet many of them, in spite of the strangeness of the circumstances and the surroundings, realised that the situation had changed. Others were bewildered and waited mistrustfully. Many whispered to one another that this was quite an ordinary affair, that princes marry all sorts of

women, even girls out of gipsy camps. Rogozhin himself stood staring, his face twisted into a fixed and puzzled smile.

“Prince, my dear fellow, think what you are doing,” General Epanchin whispered with horror, coming up sideways and pulling Myshkin by his sleeve.

Nastasya Filippovna noticed this and laughed.

“No, general! I am a princess myself now, do you hear? The prince won’t let me be insulted. Afanasy Ivanovitch, you too congratulate me. I can sit down beside your wife now everywhere. What do you think,

it’s a good bargain a husband like that? A million and a half, and a prince and an idiot into the bargain, they say. What could be better? Real life is only just beginning for me now. You are too late, Rogozhin! Take away your money; I am marrying the prince, and I am richer than you are!”

But Rogozhin had grasped the situation. There was a look of unspeakable suffering in his face. He clasped his hands and a groan broke from his breast.

“Give her up!” he shouted to Myshkin.

There was laughter.

“Give her up for you?” Darya Alexeyevna pronounced triumphantly. “He plumped the money down on the table, the lout! The prince is marrying her, but you only came in to make an upset!”

“I’ll marry her too! I’ll marry her at once, this minute! I’ll give up everything....”

“Get along! \bu’re a drunkard out of a tavern. You ought to be turned out,” Darya Alexeyevna repeated indignantly.

The laughter was louder than before.

“Do you hear, prince?” said Nastasya Filippovna, turning to him. “That’s how a peasant bids for your bride!”

“He is drunk,” said Myshkin. “He loves you very much.”

“And won’t you feel ashamed afterwards that your bride almost went off with Rogozhin?”

“You were in a fever, you are in a fever now, almost delirious.”

“And won’t you feel ashamed when people tell you afterwards that your wife used to live with Totsky as his kept mistress?”

“No, I shan’t be ashamed. ... It wasn’t your doing that you were with Totsky.”

“And you will never reproach me with it?”

“Never.”

“Be careful; don’t answer for your whole life!”

“Nastasya Filippovna,” said Myshkin softly and as it were with compassion, “I told you just now that I would take your consent as an honour, and that you are doing me an honour, not I you. \bu smiled at those words, and I heard people laughing about us. I may have expressed myself very absurdly and have been absurd myself, but I thought all the time that I. . . understood the meaning of honour, and I am sure I spoke the truth. You wanted to ruin yourself just now irrevocably; for you’d never have forgiven yourself for it afterwards. But you are not to blame for anything. \bur life cannot be altogether ruined. What does it matter that Rogozhin did come to you and Gavril Ardalionovitch tried to deceive you? Why will you go on dwelling on it? Few people would do what you have done, I tell you that again. As for your meaning to go with Rogozhin, you were ill when you meant to do it. “Vbu are ill now, and you had much better go to bed. \bu would have gone off to be a washerwoman next day; you wouldn’t have stayed with Rogozhin. “Vbu are proud, Nastasya Filippovna; but perhaps you are so unhappy as really to think yourself to blame. “Vbu want a lot of looking after, Nastasya Filippovna. I will look after you. I saw your portrait this morning and I felt as though I recognized a face that I knew. I felt as though you had called to me already. . . . I shall respect you all my life, Nastasya Filippovna.”

Myshkin finished suddenly, seeming all at once to recollect himself. He blushed, becoming conscious of the sort of people in whose presence he was saying this.

Ptitsvn bent his head and looked on the qround,

abashed. Totsky thought to himself, “He is an idiot, but he knows that flattery is the best way to get at people; it’s instinct!” Myshkin noticed too in the corner Ganya’s eyes glaring at him, as though they would wither him up.

“There’s a kind-hearted man!” Darya Alexeyevna pronounced, much touched.

“A man of refinement, but doomed to ruin,” the general whispered in an undertone.

Totsky took his hat and was about to get up and slip away. He and the general glanced at one another, meaning to leave together.

“Thank you, prince. No one has ever talked to me like that before,” said Nastasya Filippovna. “They’ve always been trying to buy me, but no decent man has ever thought of marrying me. Did you hear, Afanasy Ivanovitch? What did you think of all the prince said? It was almost improper, don’t you think . . . Rogozhin, don’t go away yet! But you are not going, I see. Perhaps I shall come with you after all. Where did you mean to take me?”

“To Ekaterinhof,” Lebedyev reported from the corner. Rogozhin simply started and gazed open-

eyed at her, as though he could not believe his senses. He was completely stupefied, as though he had had a violent blow on the head.

“What are you thinking about, my dear? “Vbu really are ill. Have you taken leave of your senses?” cried Darya Alexeyevna, alarmed.

“Did you really think I meant it?” laughed Nastasya Filippovna, jumping up from the sofa. “Ruin a child like that? That’s more in Afanasy Ivanovitch’s line: he is fond of children! Come along, Rogozhin! Get your money ready! Never mind about wanting to marry me, let me have the money all the same. Perhaps I shan’t marry you after all. “fou thought if you married me, you’d keep your money? A likely idea! I am a shameless hussy! I’ve been Totsky’s concubine. . . . “Vbu ought to marry Aglaia Epanchin now, prince, instead of Nastasya Filippovna, or you’ll have Ferdyshtchenko pointing the finger of scorn at you! “Vbu may not be afraid, but I shall be afraid of ruining you, and of your reproaching me with it afterwards. As for your saying that I am doing you an honour, Totsky knows all about that. And you’ve just missed Aglaia Epanchin, Ganya, do you know? If you hadn’t haggled with her, she would have married you. “Vbu are all like that; you should make your choice once for all — disreputable women or respectable ones! Or you are sure to get mixed. ... I say, the general is staring; his mouth is open.”

“This is Sodom — Sodom!” said the general, shrugging his shoulders.

He too got up from the sofa. Every one stood up again. Nastasya Filippovna seemed in a perfect frenzy.

“Is it possible?” moaned Myshkin, wringing his hands.

“Did you think I meant it? I am proud myself, perhaps, although I am a shameless hussy. \bu called me perfection this evening; a fine sort of perfection who, simply to boast of trampling on a million and a princedom, is going into the gutter! What sort of wife should I make you after that? Afanasy Ivanovitch, I really have flung away a million, you know! How

could you think I should be glad to marry Ganya for the sake of your seventy-five thousand? \bu can take back your seventy-five thousand, Afanasy Ivanovitch. You didn't rise to a hundred; Rogozhin has cut you out. I'll comfort Ganya myself! I've thought how to. But now I want some fun,

I'm a street wench! I've been ten years in prison, now I'm going to enjoy myself. Come, Rogozhin, get ready, let's go!"

"Let's go!" roared Rogozhin, almost frantic with delight. "Hey, you, wine! Ough!"

"Have plenty of wine ready, I want to drink. And will there be music?"

"Yes, yes. Don't go near her!" cried Rogozhin frantically, seeing Darya Alexeyevna approaching Nastasya Filippovna. "She is mine! It's all mine! My queen! It's the end!"

He was gasping with joy. He walked round Nastasya Filippovna, shouting to every one, "Don't come near her!" His whole retinue had by now flocked into the drawing-room. Some were drinking, some were shouting and laughing, all were in the greatest excitement and completely at their ease. Ferdyshtchenko began trying to fraternise with them. General Epanchin and Totsky again attempted to effect a hasty retreat. Ganya too had his hat in his hand, but he stood in silence and still seemed unable to tear himself away from the scene before him.

"Don't come near her!" cried Roqozhin.

"Why are you bellowing?" Nastasya Filippovna laughed at him. "I am still the mistress here; if I like, I can still kick you out. I haven't taken your money yet, there it lies still; give it here, the whole bundle! Is there a hundred thousand in that bundle? Ough, how nasty! What's the matter with you, Darya Alexeyevna? Would you have had me ruin him?" — she pointed to Myshkin. "How can he be married? He wants a nurse to look after him. The general there will be his nurse; see how he is hanging upon him! Look, prince, your betrothed takes the money because she is a low woman, and you wanted to marry her! But why are you crying? Are you sorry? "Vbu ought to laugh as I do." — Nastasya Filippovna went on, though there were two large tears glistening on her cheeks.— "Trust to time; it will all pass! Better to think twice now than after. . . . But why are you all crying? Here's Katya crying too! What's the matter with you, Katya dear? I'll leave a lot to you and Pasha, I've settled it already; and now good-bye! I've made an honest girl like you wait on a low creature like me. ... It's better so, prince, it's really better; you'd have despised me later on, and we should not have

been happy. Don’t swear, I don’t believe it! And how stupid it would have been! .. . No, better part as friends, or no good would have come of it, for I am something of a dreamer myself, you know. Haven’t I dreamed of you myself? You are right, I dreamed of you long ago, when I lived five years all alone in his country home. I used to think and dream, think and dream, and I was always imagining some one like you, kind, good and honest, and so stupid that he would come forward all of a sudden and say, ‘\bu are not to blame, Nastasya Filippovna, and I adore you.’ I used to dream like that, till I nearly went out of my mind. . . . And then this man would come, stay two months in the year, bringing shame, dishonour, corruption, degradation, and go away. So that a thousand times I wanted to fling myself into the pond, but I was a poor creature, I hadn’t the courage; and now ... Rogozhin, are you ready?”

“Ready! Don’t come near her!”

“Ready!” shouted several voices.

“The troikas are waiting with bells!”

Nastasya Filippovna snatched up the bundle of notes.

“Ganya, an idea has occurred to me. I want to compensate you, for why should you lose everything? Rogozhin, would he crawl on all fours to the other end of Petersburg for three roubles?”

“He would.”

“Then listen, Ganya; I want to see into your soul for the last time. \bu have been torturing me for three months past, now it’s my turn. You see this roll, there are a hundred thousand roubles in it! I’m just going to throw it into the fire, before every one, all are witnesses. As soon as the fire has got it all alight, put your hands into the fire, only without gloves, with your bare hands and turn back your sleeves, and pull the bundle out of the fire. If you can pull it out, it’s yours, the whole hundred thousand. \bu’ll only burn your fingers a little — but it’s a hundred thousand, think of it! It won’t take long to pull out. And I shall admire your spirit, seeing how you put your hands into the fire for my money. All are witnesses that the bundle shall be yours. And if you don’t, then it will burn; I won’t let any one touch it. Stand away! Every one stand back! It’s my money! It’s my wages for a night with Rogozhin. Is it my money, Rogozhin?”

“Yours, my joy! Yours, my queen!”

“Then all stand back, I may do what I like! Don’t interfere! Ferdyshtchenko, make up the fire!”

“Nastasya Filippovna, I can’t raise my hands to it,” answered Ferdyshtchenko, dumbfounded.

“Ech!” cried Nastasya Filippovna. She snatched up the tongs, separated two smouldering chunks of wood, and as soon as the fire flared up, she flung the bundle into it.

There was an outcry from all the party; many even crossed themselves.

“She’s gone out of her mind! She is mad!” they shouted.

“Oughtn’t we . . . oughtn’t we ... to tie her up?” the general whispered to Ptitsyn, “or send for the . . . She is mad, isn’t she, isn’t she?”

“N-no, perhaps it isn’t quite madness,” Ptitsyn whispered, trembling and white as a handkerchief, unable to take his eyes off the smouldering roll of notes.

“She is mad! She’s mad, isn’t she?” the general persisted to Totsky.

“As I told you, she is a woman of glaring effects,” muttered Afanasy Ivanovitch, also somewhat pale.

“But come, you know, it’s a hundred thousand!”

“Good heavens!” was heard on all sides. Every one crowded round the fireplace, everyone pressed forward to see, every one exclaimed. Some even jumped on chairs to look over each other’s heads. Darya Alexeyevna whisked away into the other room and whispered in alarm with Katya and Pasha. The beautiful German had fled.

“Madam! Royal lady! Omnipotent lady!” wailed Lebedyev, crawling on his knees in front of Nastasya Filippovna, stretching out his hands to the fire. “A hundred thousand — a hundred thousand! I saw the notes myself, they were rolled up before me. Lady! Gracious lady! Tell me to pick them out! I’ll get right in, I’ll put my grey head in! . . . My wife is sick and bedridden; I’ve thirteen children, all orphans; I buried my father last week, he had nothing to eat, Nastasya Filippovna!”

And he tried to get to the fire.

“Get away!” cried Nastasya Filippovna, shoving him off. “All stand back! Ganya, why are you standing still? Don’t be shy, pick it out! It’s your luck!”

But Ganya had suffered too much that day and was not ready for this last unexpected ordeal. The crowd parted in front of him and he remained face to face with Nastasya Filippovna, three steps from her. She was standing close by the fire, waiting, with intent, glowing eyes fixed upon him. Ganya stood in his evening dress with his arms folded and his gloves and hat in his

hand, gazing mutely at the fire. A frenzied smile strayed on his chalk-white face. It is true that he couldn't take his eyes off the fire, off the smouldering roll of notes; but something new seemed to have risen up in his soul: he seemed to have vowed to endure the ordeal. He did not move from his place. In a few instants it became clear to everyone that he was not going to touch the notes.

"I say, if it's burnt they'll all cry shame on you!" Nastasya Filippovna shouted to him. "You'll hang yourself afterwards! lam in earnest."

The fire which had flamed up at first between two smouldering brands was smothered by the bundle being thrown onto it. But a little blue flame still lingered on the lower side at the end of one log. At last the long thin tongue of flame licked the bundle too; the fire caught it and ran upwards at the corners. Suddenly the whole bundle flared up in the fireplace and a bright flame shot up. Every one drew a deep breath.

"Lady!" Lebedyev vociferated again, pushing forward; but Rogozhin dragged and pushed him back once more.

Rogozhin seemed petrified in a fixed stare at Nastasya Filippovna. He could not take his eyes off her; he was drunk with delight, he was in the seventh heaven.

"That's like a queen!" he kept repeating, addressing himself to everyone near. "That's style!" he kept shouting, beside himself. "Which of you pickpockets would do a thing like that, eh?"

Myshkin looked on, mournful and silent.

"I'd pull it out with my teeth for a paltry thousand," suggested Ferdyshtchenko.

"I could pull it out with my teeth too," the fisted gentleman groaned in the rear, in genuine despair. "D-damn it all! It's burning, it's all on fire!" he shouted, seeing the flame.

"It's burning — it's burning!" they all cried with one voice, almost every one making a dash to the fire.

"Ganya, don't show off! For the last time I say it!"

"Pick it out!" roared Ferdyshtchenko, rushing to Ganya in a positive frenzy and pulling him by the sleeve. "Pull it out, you conceited jackanapes! It'll be burnt! Oh, d-damn you!"

Ganya pushed Ferdyshtchenko violently away, turned, and walked to the door. But before he had taken two steps, he staggered and fell in a heap on the floor.

“Fainting!” they cried.

“Dear lady, it will be burnt!” wailed Lebedyev.

“It’ll burn for nothing!” they were roaring on all sides.

“Katya, Pasha, water for him, spirit!” shouted Nastasya Filippovna.

She picked up the tongs and pulled out the notes. All the outside wrappings were burnt and in ashes, but it could be seen at once that the inside of the roll was untouched. The bundle was wrapped up in three thicknesses of newspaper and the notes were unhurt. Everyone breathed more freely.

“Only a poor little thousand spoiled perhaps and the rest are all safe,” Lebedyev commented with great feeling.

“It’s all his! The whole roll is his! Do you hear, friends?” Nastasya Filippovna declared, laying the roll of notes beside Ganya. “He wouldn’t do it, he stood the test, so his vanity is even qreater than his love of money. It’s no matter, he’ll come to. But for this he might have murdered some one. . . . There, he’s coming to himself. General, Ivan Petrovitch, Darya Alexeyevna, Katya, Pasha, Rogozhin, do you hear? The notes are his — Ganya’s. I give it him to do as he likes with, as compensation for. . . whatever it is! Tell him! Let it lie there by him. . . . Rogozhin, march! Good-bye, prince! You are the first man I have seen in my life! Good-bye, Afanasy Ivanovitch, mercit’

The crowd of Rogozhin’s followers passed through the rooms to the front door after Rogozhin and Nastasya Filippovna, with hubbub, clamour and shouts. In the hall the maids gave her her fur coat; the cook Marfa ran in from the kitchen. Nastasya Filippovna kissed them all.

“But can you be leaving us altogether, dear lady? But where are you going? And on your birthday, too, such a day!” the weeping girls asked, kissing her hands.

“To the gutter, Katya — you heard that’s my proper place — or else to be a washerwoman. I’ve done with Afanasy Ivanovitch. Greet him for me, and don’t remember evil against me....”

Myshkin rushed headlong to the street door, where all the party were getting into four troikas with bells. General Epanchin succeeded in overtaking him on the staircase.

“Pray think what you are doing, prince!” he said, seizing his arm. “Give it up! You see what she is. I speak as a father.”

Myshkin looked at him, but without uttering a word broke away and ran downstairs.

At the street door, from which the troikas had just started, the general saw Myshkin call the first sledge and shout to the driver: “To Ekaterinhof; follow the troikas!” Then the general’s grey horse drew up and the general drove home with new hopes and plans and the pearls, which in spite of everything he had not forgotten to take with him. Among his plans the fascinating figure of Nastasya Filippovna flitted two or three times. The general sighed.

“I am sorry — genuinely sorry. She is a lost woman! A mad woman! .. . But the prince is not for Nastasya Filippovna now ... so it’s perhaps a good thing it’s turned out as it has.”

A few edifying words summing up the situation were uttered by two guests of Nastasya Filippovna’s, who decided to walk a little way.

“Do you know, Afanasy Ivanovitch, they say something of the sort is done among the Japanese,” observed Ivan Petrovitch Ptitsyn. “They say any one who has received an insult goes to his enemy and says, ‘\bu have wronged me, and in revenge I’ve come to cut open my stomach before you,’ and with those words actually does rip open his stomach before his enemy, and probably feels great satisfaction in doing so, as though it really were a vengeance. There are strange people in the world, Afanasy Ivanovitch!”

“And you think there was something of the sort in this case, too?” Totsky responded, with a smile. “Hm! . . . That’s clever, though . . . and you’ve made an excellent comparison. But you’ve seen for yourself, my dear Ivan Petrovitch, that I’ve done all I could; I can’t do more than I can, you’ll admit. But you must admit too that that woman has some first-rate points .. . some brilliant qualities. I felt tempted to cry out to her, if only I could have demeaned myself to do it in that Bedlam, that she herself is my best apology for all her accusations. Who wouldn’t have been fascinated sometimes by that woman so that he would forget reason and . . . everything? “Vbu see, that lout Rogozhin plumped down his load of money at her feet! True, all that happened just now was something ephemeral, romantic and unseemly; but there was colour in it and originality, you must admit that. My God, what might not be made of such a character, with such beauty! But in spite of all effort, in spite of her education even — it’s all lost! She is an uncut diamond — I’ve said so several times.”

And Afanasy Ivanovitch sighed deeply.

PART TWO

CHAPTER 1

Two DAYS after the strange incident at Nastasya Filippovna's party with which we concluded the first part of our story, Prince Myshkin was hurrying on his way to Moscow to receive his unexpected fortune. It was said that there might be other reasons for his hasty departure; but of this and of Myshkin's adventures during his absence from Petersburg we can give little information. Myshkin was away just six months, and even those who had reason to be interested in his fate could find out very little at that time. Though rumours did reach them indeed at rare intervals, they were for the most part strange ones and almost always contradictory. The Epanchin family, of course, took more interest in Myshkin than any one else, though he went away without even taking leave of them. General Epanchin did see him two or three times; they had some serious conversation. But though the general saw him, he did not mention it to his family. And indeed at first, for almost a month after Myshkin had gone, his name was avoided by the Epanchins altogether. Only Madame Epanchin had pronounced at the very beginning "that she had been cruelly mistaken in the prince." Then two or three days later she added vaguely, not mentioning Myshkin's name, "that the most striking thing in her life was the way she was continually being mistaken in people." And finally, ten days later, she wound up by adding sententiously when she was vexed with her daughters, "We have made mistakes enough. We'll have no more of them."

We must add that for some time there was rather an unpleasant feeling in the house. There was a sense of oppression, of strain, of some unspoken dissension; every one wore a frown. The general was busy day and night, absorbed in his work. His household hardly got a glimpse of him; he had rarely been seen more active and occupied, especially in his official work. As for the young ladies, no word was spoken by them openly. Perhaps even when they were alone together, very little was said. They were proud, haughty girls and reserved even with one another, though they understood each other not only at a word but at a glance, so that sometimes there was no need to say much.

There was only one conclusion that might have been drawn by a disinterested observer, if there had happened to be such a one — namely, that to judge from the above-mentioned facts, few as they were, Myshkin

had succeeded in making a marked impression on the Epanchin family, though he had only been once among them, and then for a short time. Perhaps the feeling he had inspired was simply curiosity aroused by certain eccentric adventures of Myshkin's. However that might be, the impression remained.

Little by little, the rumours that had circulated about the town were lost in the darkness of uncertainty. A story was told indeed of some little prince who was a simpleton (no one could be sure of his name), who had suddenly come into a vast fortune and married a Frenchwoman, a notorious dancer of the cancan from the Chateau-de-Fleurs in Paris. But others declared that it was a general who had come in for a fortune, and that the man who had married the notorious French cancan dancer was a young Russian merchant of untold wealth, and that at his wedding, from pure bravado, he had when drunk burnt in a candle lottery tickets to the value of seven hundred thousand roubles. But all these rumours soon died away, a result to which circumstances greatly contributed. All Rogozhin's followers, for instance, many of whom might have had something to say, had all gone in his wake to Moscow, a week after an awful orgy at the Ekaterinhof Vauxhall, in which Nastasya Filippovna took part. The few persons who were interested in the subject learnt from certain reports that Nastasya Filippovna had run off and disappeared the day after this orgy, and she seems to have been traced to Moscow; so that Rogozhin's departure to Moscow seemed to fall in with this rumour.

There were rumours too with regard to Gavril Ardalionovitch Ivolgin, who was also pretty well known in his own circle. But something happened to him which quickly softened and in the end completely stopped all unpleasant stories about him: he fell seriously ill and unable to go to his office, much less into society. He recovered after a month's illness, but for some reason resigned his position in the office of the joint stock company and was replaced by another man. He had not once been to the Epanchins' house either; so another clerk undertook the duties of secretary to the general. Gavril Ardalionovitch's enemies might have assumed that he was so crestfallen at all that had happened to him as to be ashamed to go out into the street; but he was really ill, and sank into a state of hypochondria; he grew moody and irritable. Varvara Ardalionovna was married to Ptitsyn that winter. All who knew them put the marriage down to the fact that Ganya

was unwilling to return to his duties, and was not only unable to keep his family, but was even in need of assistance and almost of care himself.

It may be observed in parenthesis that no mention was made in the Epanchin family of Gavril Ardalionovitch either, as though such a man had never been seen in their house, nor had indeed existed in the world at all. “Vfet meantime everyone in the family learnt — and very shortly indeed — one remarkable fact concerning him. On the fatal night after his unpleasant experience with Nastasya Filippovna, Ganya did not go to bed on returning home, but awaited Myshkin’s return with feverish impatience. Myshkin, who had gone to Ekaterinhof, came home at six o’clock next morning. Then Ganya went into his room and laid on the table before him the roll of scorched notes presented to him by Nastasya Filippovna while he lay fainting. He begged Myshkin to give this present back to her at the first opportunity. When Ganya went into Myshkin’s room, he was in a hostile and almost desperate mood; but some words must have been exchanged between them, after which Ganya stayed two hours with Myshkin, sobbing bitterly all the time. They parted on affectionate terms.

This story, which reached the Epanchins, turned out to be perfectly correct. It was strange, of course, that such facts could so soon come out and be generally known; all that had happened at Nastasya Filippovna’s, for instance, became known at the Epanchins’ almost the next day, and fairly accurately. As for the facts concerning Gavril Ardalionovitch, it might have been supposed that they had been carried to the Epanchins’ by Varvara Ardalionovna, who suddenly became a frequent visitor and an intimate friend of the girls, to the great astonishment of Lizaveta Prokofyevna. But though Varvara Ardalionovna thought fit for some reason to make such friends with the Epanchins, yet she certainly would not have talked to them about her brother. She too was rather a proud woman in her own way, although she did seek the intimacy of people who had almost turned her brother out. She had been acquainted with the Epanchin girls before, but she had seen them rarely. She hardly ever showed herself in the drawing-room even now, however, and went in, or rather slipped in, by the back staircase. Lizaveta Prokofyevna had never cared for her and did not care for her now, though she had a great respect for her mother, Nina Alexandrovna. She wondered, was angry, and put down their intimacy with Varya to the whims and self-will of her daughters, who “did not know what to think of to

oppose her." But Varya continued to visit them, both before and after her marriage.

A month after Myshkin's departure, however, Madame Epanchin received a letter from old Princess Byelokonsky, who had gone a fortnight before to Moscow to stay with her eldest married daughter, and this letter had a marked effect upon her, though she said nothing of it to her daughters or to Ivan Fyodorovitch, but from various signs it was evident to them that she was much excited, even agitated, by it. She began talking rather strangely to her daughters and always of such extraordinary subjects; she was evidently longing to open her heart, but for some reason restrained herself. She was affectionate to every one on the day she received the letter, she even kissed Adelaida and Aglaia; she owned herself in fault in regard to them, but they could not make out how. She even became indulgent to Ivan Fyodorovitch, who had been in her bad books for the past month. Next day, of course, she was extremely angry at her own sentimentality, and managed to quarrel with every one before dinner, but the horizon cleared again towards the evening. For a whole week she continued to be in a fairly good humour, which had not been the case for a long time past.

But a week later a second letter came from Princess Byelokonsky, and this time Madame Epanchin made up her mind to speak out. She announced solemnly that "old Byelokonsky" (she never called the princess anything else when she spoke of her behind her back) gave her comforting news about that . . . "queer fellow, that prince, you know." The old lady had traced him in Moscow, had inquired about him, and had found out something very good. Myshkin had been to see her himself at last, and had made an extremely good impression on her, as was evident from the fact that she invited him to come and see her every afternoon between one and two. "He has been hanging about there every day, and she is not sick of him yet," Madame Epanchin concluded, adding that through "the old woman" the prince had been received in two or three good families. "It's a good thing that he doesn't stick at home and isn't shy like a noodle."

The girls to whom all this was imparted noticed at once that their mamma was concealing a great deal in the letter. Perhaps they learnt this from Varvara Ardalionovna, who might and probably did know everything Ptitsyn knew about Myshkin and his stay in Moscow. And Ptitsyn was in a position to know more than anyone else. But he was an exceedingly silent man in regard to business matters, though of course he used to talk to Varya.

Madame Epanchin conceived a greater dislike than ever for Varya on account of it.

But anyway the ice was broken, and it became suddenly possible to speak of Myshkin aloud. Moreover, the great interest he had awakened and the extraordinary impression he had left on the Epanchins were once more apparent. The mother was astonished, indeed, at the effect that her news from Moscow had on her daughters. And the daughters too wondered at their mamma, who, after declaring that “the most striking thing in her life was the way she was continually being mistaken in people,” had yet procured for the prince the protection of the “powerful” old Princess Byelokonsky, though it must have cost her much begging and praying, for the “old woman” was difficult to prevail upon in such cases.

But as soon as the ice was broken and there was a change in the wind, the general too hastened to express himself. It appeared that he too had been taking an exceptional interest in Myshkin. But he discussed only “the business aspect of the question.” It appeared that in the interests of the prince he had asked two very trustworthy and, in their own way, influential persons in Moscow to keep an eye on him, and still more on Salazkin, who had charge of his affairs. All that had been said about the fortune— “about the fact of the fortune, that is to say” — had turned out to be true, but the fortune itself had turned out to be much less considerable than had been rumoured at first. The property was partly in an involved condition: there were, it appeared, debts; other claimants turned up too, and in spite of the advice given him Myshkin had behaved in a most unbusinesslike way. “God bless him, of course!” Now, when the ice of silence was broken, the general was glad to express his feelings “in all sincerity of heart,” for though “the fellow was a bit lacking,” still he did deserve it. “Vfet he had done something stupid. Creditors of the late merchant’s had sent in claims, for instance, based on questionable or worthless documents; and some of them, getting wind of the prince’s character, had even come forward without any documents at all; and — would you believe it? — the prince had satisfied almost all of them in spite of his friends’ representations that all these wretches of creditors had absolutely no claim on him; and his only reason for satisfying them was that some of them actually had been unfairly treated.

Madame Epanchin observed that old Byelokonsky had written something of the sort to her, and that “it was stupid, very stupid. There’s no

curing a fool," she added harshly; but it could be seen from her face how pleased she was at the conduct of this "fool." In the end the general saw that his wife cared for Myshkin, as though he were her son, and had begun to be unaccountably affectionate to Aglaia. Seeing this, Ivan Fyodorovitch assumed for a time a peculiarly businesslike air.

But this pleasant state of things did not last long. A fortnight passed and again there was a sudden change. Madame Epanchin looked cross, and, after some shrugging of the shoulders, General Epanchin resigned himself again to the "ice of silence."

The fact was that only a fortnight before he had privately received some brief and not quite clear, though authentic, information that Nastasya Filippovna, who had at first disappeared in Moscow, then been found there by Rogozhin, and had then again disappeared and been found again, had at last almost promised to marry him, and, behold! only a fortnight later his excellency had suddenly learnt that Nastasya Filippovna had run away for the third time, almost on her wedding day, and had disappeared somewhere in the provinces, and that Prince Myshkin had vanished at the same time, leaving all his business in Salazkin's charge, "Whether with her, or simply in pursuit of her, is not known, but there's something in it," the general concluded.

Lizaveta Prokofyevna too had received some unpleasant news. The upshot of it was that two months after the prince had gone almost every rumour about him had died down in Petersburg, and the "ice of silence" was again unbroken in the Epanchin family. Varya, however, still visited the girls.

To make an end of all these rumours and explanations we will add that there were many changes in the Epanchin household in the spring, so that it was difficult not to forget the prince who sent no news of himself and perhaps did not care to do so. During the winter they gradually came to the decision to spend the summer abroad, Lizaveta Prokofyevna and her daughters, that is. It was, of course, impossible for the general to waste his time on "frivolous diversion." This decision was due to the urgent and persistent efforts of the girls, who were thoroughly persuaded that their parents did not want to take them abroad because they were so taken up with trying to marry them and find them husbands. Possibly the parents were convinced at last that husbands might be met with even abroad, and that travel for one summer, far from upsetting plans, might even perhaps

“be of use.” This is the place to mention that the proposed marriage of Afanasy Ivanovitch Totsky and the eldest of the girls had been broken off, and the formal offer of his hand had never been made. This had somehow happened of itself without much talk and without any family quarrel. The project had suddenly been dropped on both sides at the time of Myshkin’s departure. The circumstance had been one of the causes of the ill-humour prevailing in the Epanchin family, though the mother had declared at the time that she was so qlad that “she could have crossed herself with both hands at once.” Though the general was in disfavour and knew that he was to blame, yet he felt aggrieved for a long time. He was sorry to lose Afanasy Ivanovitch— “such a fortune and such a sharp fellow!” Not long afterwards the general learnt that Totsky had been fascinated by a Frenchwoman of the highest society, a marquise, and a legitimists; that they were going to be married, and that Afanasy Ivanovitch was to be taken to Paris and then to Brittany. “Well, with the Frenchwoman he is lost to us,” concluded the general. The Epanchins were preparing to set off before summer, when suddenly a circumstance occurred which changed all their plans, and the tour was put off again, to the great delight of the general and his wife. A certain Prince S. came from Moscow to Petersburg, a well-known man and well known for his excellent qualities. He was one of those modern men, one may even say reformers, who are honest, modest, genuinely and intelligently desirous of the public weal, always working and distinguished by a rare and happy faculty of finding work. Not courting public notice, avoiding the bitterness and verbosity of party strife, the prince had a thorough understanding of contemporary movements, though he did not regard himself as a leader. He had been in the government service; afterwards he had been an active member of a Zemstvo. He was, moreover, a correspondent of several learned societies. In collaboration with a well-known expert, he had collected facts and made inquiries which led to an improvement in the scheme for a very important new railway line. He was about thirty-five. He was a man “of the highest society,” and had, moreover, a “good, serious, and unmistakable fortune,” in the words of General Epanchin, who happened to have to do with Prince S. about rather important business and made his acquaintance in the house of the count who was the chief of General Epanchin’s department. Prince S. had a certain interest in Russian “practical men” and never avoided their society. It came to pass that the prince was introduced to the general’s family.

Adelaida Ivanovna, the second of the sisters, made a considerable impression upon him. Before the end of the winter he made her an offer. Adelaida liked him extremely; Lizaveta Prokofyevna liked him too; General Epanchin was delighted. The foreign tour was of course put off. The wedding was fixed for the spring.

The tour might still have come off in the middle of the summer, or towards the end of it, if only as a brief visit for a month or two to console the mother and the remaining daughters for the loss of Adelaida. But something fresh happened. Towards the end of the spring (Adelaida's wedding was deferred till the middle of the summer) Prince S. introduced to the Epanchins one of his own family, whom he knew very well, though he was only a distant relation. This was "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch Radomsky, a young man of twenty-eight, an Imperial aide-de-camp, extremely handsome and of good family. He was witty, brilliant, "modern,"

"of extreme education," and almost too fabulously wealthy. As to the latter point, General Epanchin was always very careful. He made inquiries: "There does seem to be something in it; though, of course, one ought to make sure." This young and promising aide-de-camp was highly recommended by old Princess Byelokonsky from Moscow. But one rumour about him was rather disturbing: there were tales of liaisons, of "conquests," and broken hearts. Seeinq Aqlaia, he became assiduous in his visits to the Epanchins'. Nothing indeed had been said as yet, no hint even had been dropped, yet it seemed to the parents that it would be out of the question to go abroad that summer. Aglaia herself was of a different opinion.

All this was happening just before our hero's second entry on the scene of our story. By that time, to judge by appearances, poor Prince Myshkin had been completely forgotten in Petersburg. If he had suddenly appeared now among those who had known him, he would seem to have fallen from heaven. We will add one other fact and so complete our introduction.

After Myshkin's departure Kolya Ivolgin had at first spent his time as before — that is to say, he went to school, visited his friend Ippolit, looked after his father, and helped Varya in the house and ran her errands. But the boarders were soon all gone. Ferdyshtchenko went away three days after the evening at Nastasya Filippovna's and soon disappeared completely, so that nothing was known about him; it was said, though not on good authority, that he was drinking. Myshkin had gone away to Moscow, and there were

no more boarders. Later on, when Varya was married, Nina Alexandrovna and Ganya moved with her to Ptitsyn's house at the other end of Petersburg. As for General Ivolgin, a quite unforeseen event befell him about the same time: he was put in the debtors' prison. This was the doing of his friend, the captain's widow, on account of various bills he had given her to the value of two thousand roubles. It was a complete surprise to him, and the poor general was "undoubtedly the victim of his unfounded faith in the generosity of the human heart, speaking generally." Having adopted the soothing habit of signing promises to pay and lOUs, he had never conceived that they could ever lead to anything; he had always supposed that it was all right. It turned out not to be all right. "How can one put faith in mankind after that? How is one to show generous confidence?" he used to exclaim bitterly, sitting with his new friends in prison over a bottle of wine, and telling them anecdotes of the siege of Kars and the soldier who rose from the dead. It suited him capitally, however. Ptitsyn and Varya maintained that it was the very place for him; Ganya quite aqreed with them. Only poor Nina Alexandrovna shed bitter tears in secret (at which her household positively wondered), and, ill as she always was, she dragged herself as often as she could to visit her husband.

But from the time of the "general's mishap," as Kolya expressed it — and, in fact, from the time of his sister's marriage — Kolya had got quite out of hand and things had come to such a pass that he rarely even slept at home. They heard that he had made a number of new acquaintances; moreover, he became far too well known in the debtors' prison. Nina Alexandrovna could not get on there without him; at home now they did not even worry him with questions. Varya, who had been so severe with him before, did not pester him now with the slightest inquiry about his wanderings; and, to the surprise of the rest of the household, Ganya, in spite of his hypochondria, sometimes talked and behaved in quite a friendly way to him; and this was something quite new, for Ganya at twenty-seven had naturally never taken any friendly interest in his fifteen-year-old brother. He had treated him rudely and had insisted on all the family's being severe with him,

and was always threatening to pull his ears, which drove Kolya "beyond the utmost limits of human endurance." One might have imagined that Kolya had become positively indispensable to Ganya. He had been

somewhat impressed by Ganya's returning that money; for that he was ready to forgive him a great deal.

Three months had passed since Myshkin's departure, when the Ivolgin family heard that Kolya had suddenly made the acquaintance of the Epanchins and had been made very welcome by the young ladies. Varya soon heard of this, though it was not through her that Kolya came to know them, but of his own accord. The Epanchins gradually grew fond of him. Lizaveta Prokofyevna did not take to him at all at first, but afterwards she began to make much of him "for his frankness and because he doesn't flatter." That Kolya did not flatter was perfectly true. He managed to be quite independent and on a perfectly equal footing with them, though he sometimes read books and papers to Madame Epanchin; but he was always ready to be of use. Once or twice, however, he quarrelled seriously with Lizaveta Prokofyevna and told her that she was a despot and that he would not set foot again in her house. The first time the quarrel arose on "the woman question," and the second time there was a difference of opinion as to the best time of the year for catching green-finches. Strange as it may appear, two days after the quarrel, Madame Epanchin sent a note round to him by a footman begging him to come. Kolya did not stand on his dignity and went at once. Aglaia alone, for some reason, had no liking for him and kept him at a distance. Yet it was Aglaia that he was destined to astonish. At Easter he seized an opportunity when they were alone, and handed her a letter, saying nothing but that he was told to give it to her alone. Aglaia stared menacingly at the "conceited little upstart," but Kolya went out without waiting further. She opened the letter and read:

Once you honoured me with your confidence. Perhaps you have quite forgotten me now. How has it happened that I am writing to you? I donl know, but I felt an irresistible desire to remind you, just you, of my existence. How often I

have wanted you all three — But of all three I saw only you. / need you — / need you very much. I have nothing to write to you about myself, have nothing to tell. That's not what I want to do; I have a great desire that you should be happy. Are you happy? That was all I wanted to say to you.

Your brother, L. Myshkin.

Reading that brief and rather incoherent letter, Aglaia flushed all over and fell to musing. It would be hard to say what she was thinking of. Among other things she asked herself whether she should show it to any

one. She felt somehow ashamed to. But she ended by throwing the letter into her table drawer with a strange and ironical smile. But the next day she took it out again and put it into a thick, strongly bound book (she always did this with her papers so that she might find them more readily when she wanted them). And not till a week after did she happen to notice what the book was. It was “Don Quixote de la Mancha.” Aglaia burst out laughing for some unknown reason. It is not known whether she showed the note to her sisters.

But even while she was reading the letter she wondered: can that conceited and boastful puppy be chosen as a correspondent by the prince, and perhaps his only correspondent here? With a show of exaggerated carelessness she began to cross-examine Kolya. But though the boy was always quick to take offence, this time he did not in the least notice her carelessness. Very briefly and rather drily he explained that, although he had given Myshkin his permanent address when the latter was leaving Petersburg and had offered to do what he could for him, this was the first commission he had given him, and the first letter he had received from him; and in support of his words he showed her a letter addressed to him from Myshkin. Aglaia did not scruple to read it. The letter to Kolya ran as follows:

Dear Kolya, will you be so good as to give the enclosed sealed letter to Aglaia Ivanovna? Hoping you are all well,

Your loving, L. Myshkin.

“It’s ridiculous to trust a chit like you!” Aglaia said huffily, handing Kolya back his letter; and she walked contemptuously by him.

This was more than Kolya could endure, when he had even asked Ganya, without telling him why, to lend him his new green scarf for the occasion. He was bitterly offended.

CHAPTER 2

It WAS the beginning of June and the weather had been unusually fine in Petersburg for a whole week. The Epanchins had a luxurious summer villa of their own at Pavlovsk. Lizaveta Prokofyevna became suddenly excited and bestirred herself, and after less than two days of bustle they moved there.

Two or three days after they had left, Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch Myshkin arrived by a morning train from Moscow. No one met him at the station, but as he got out of the carriage he suddenly had a vision of strange glowing eyes fixed upon him in the crowd that met the train. When he looked more attentively, he could not discover them again. It could only have been a fancy, but it left an unpleasant impression. And apart from that, Myshkin was sad and thoughtful and seemed worried about something.

The cab drove up to a hotel near Liteyny. The hotel was by no means a good one, and Myshkin took two small, dark and badly furnished rooms in it. He washed and changed his clothes, asked for nothing, and went out hurriedly, as though afraid of losing time or of not finding some one at home.

If anyone who had known him six months before, on his first arrival in Petersburg, had seen him now, he might well have thought him greatly changed for the better in appearance. Yet this was scarcely true. It was only his dress that was quite different; his clothes were all new and had been cut by a good Moscow tailor. But there was something wrong even with his clothes: they were rather too fashionable (as clothes always are from conscientious but not very talented tailors), yet worn by a man who was obviously indifferent to his appearance; so that anyone too prone to laughter might perhaps have found something to smile at in Myshkin’s appearance. But people will laugh at all sorts of things.

Myshkin took a cab and drove to Peski. He had no difficulty in finding a small wooden house in one of the streets there. To his surprise it turned out to be a pretty little house, clean, kept in excellent order, and with a front garden full of flowers. The windows on the street were open, and from them came the continuous sound of a harsh voice, as though some one were reading aloud or making a speech; the voice was sometimes interrupted by a

chorus of ringing laughter. Myshkin went into the yard, mounted the steps and asked for Mr. Lebedyev.

“He is in there,” answered the cook who opened the door to him, with her sleeves tucked up to her elbows. She pointed to the “drawing-room.”

The drawing-room had walls covered with dark blue paper and was furnished neatly with some effort at smartness — that is, it contained a sofa and a round table, a bronze clock under a glass case, a narrow looking-glass on the wall, and a small old-fashioned chandelier hanging by a bronze chain from the ceiling and adorned with lustres. In the middle of the room, with his back to the door, stood Mr. Lebedyev himself. He was wearing a waistcoat, but had discarded his coat in deference to the weather, and, striking himself on the chest, he was declaiming bitterly on some subject. His audience consisted of a boy of fifteen with a merry and intelligent face and a book in his hands; a young girl about twenty, dressed in mourning and carrying a baby in her arms; a girl of thirteen, also in mourning, who was laughing violently with her mouth wide open; and another very strange-looking figure lying on the sofa, a rather handsome, dark lad of twenty with thick long hair, large black eyes, and with just a hint of beard and whiskers on his face. He seemed to be frequently interrupting Lebedyev in his harangue and arguing with him; and this no doubt was what provoked the laughter of the others.

“Lukyan Timofeyitch! Lukyan Timofeyitch, I say! Look here! ... Well, botheration take you!”

And, waving her hands, the cook went out red with anger.

Lebedyev looked round, and seeing Myshkin, stood for some time as though thunderstruck. Then he rushed to him with an ingratiating smile, but before he reached him he stood still again, murmuring:

“ll-il-illustrious prince!”

But suddenly, as though unable to rise to the position, he turned round and, apropos of nothinq,

rushed first at the girl in mourning with the baby in her arms, so that she was startled and drew back; but he left her at once and flew at the younger girl, who was standing in the doorway leading into the next room with traces of laughter still on her smiling lips. She was scared by his shout and bolted to the kitchen. Lebedyev stamped his feet at her to add to her alarm, but meeting the eye of Myshkin, who looked on embarrassed, he brought out in explanation:

“To show... respect. He-he-he!”

“There’s no need of all this . . .” Myshkin was beginning.

“One minute — one minute — one minute ... like a hurricane!”

And Lebedyev vanished quickly from the room. Myshkin looked with surprise at the girl, at the boy, and at the figure on the sofa; they were all laughing. Myshkin laughed too.

“He’s gone to put his coat on,” said the boy.

“How annoying!” Myshkin began, “and I expected . .. Tell me, is he ...”

“You think he is drunk?” cried a voice from the sofa. “Not a bit of it! Three or four glasses, five perhaps; but what’s that? — the regular thing.”

Myshkin turned to the voice from the sofa, but the girl began speaking, and, with a most candid air on her charming face, she said:

“He never drinks much in the morning. If you have come to see him on business, you had better speak to him now, it’s the best time. When he comes back in the evening, he is sometimes drunk; though now he more often cries in the evening and reads the Bible to us, for it’s only five weeks since mother died.”

“He ran away because it was hard for him to answer you,” laughed the young man on the sofa. “I’ll bet anything that he is cheating you already and is hatching something now.”

“Only five weeks! Only five weeks!” Lebedyev said, coming back with his coat on, blinking and pulling his handkerchief out of his pocket to wipe his tears. “We are alone in the world!”

“But why have you come in all in rags?” said the girl. “Why, behind the door there lies your new coat. Didn’t you see it?”

“Hold your tongue, dragon-fly!” Lebedyev shouted at her. “Oo, you!” He stamped his feet at her.

But this time she only laughed.

“Why are you trying to frighten me? I am not Tanya. I shall not run away. But you will wake Lubotchka and frighten her into convulsions. . . . What’s the use of shouting?”

“God forbid! Don’t say such a thing!” Lebedyev was terribly alarmed all at once, and flying up to the baby, who was asleep in his daughter’s arms, made the sign of the cross over it several times with a frightened face. “God save and preserve her! That’s my baby-daughter, Lubov,” he added, addressing Myshkin, “born in most lawful wedlock of my newly departed

wife Elena, who died in childbirth. And this is my daughter Vera in mourning. And that — that — oh, that...”

“What! he can’t go on?” cried the young man. “Go on, don’t be shy!”

“Your excellency,” Lebedyev cried with a sort of rush, “have you read in the papers of the murder of the Zhemarin family?”

“Yes,” answered Myshkin with some surprise.

“Well, that’s the actual murderer of the Zhemarin family, there he is!”

“What do you mean?” said Myshkin.

“That is, allegorically speaking, the future second murderer of a future Zhemarin family, if such there be. He is preparing himself for it....”

Everybody laughed. It occurred to Myshkin that Lebedyev really might be playing the fool because he foresaw the questions he would ask, and, not knowing what answer to make, was trying to gain time.

“He is a rebel! He is plotting!” shouted Lebedyev, as though unable to restrain himself. “Tell me, can I, have I the right to recognise such a foul-mouthed fellow, such a strumpet, so to speak, and monster, as my own nephew, the only son of my deceased sister Anisya?”

“Oh, shut up, you drunken fellow! Would you believe it, prince, he’s going in for being a lawyer now — pleads cases in the court. He’s become so eloquent, he talks in high-flown language to his children at home. He made a speech before the justices of peace five days ago, and whom do you think he defended? Not a poor woman who begged and besought him to, who had been robbed by a rascally moneylender of five hundred roubles, all she had in the world, but that very moneylender, a Jew called Zaidler, just because he promised him fifty roubles....”

“Fifty roubles if I won the case, only five if I lost it,” Lebedyev explained suddenly in quite a different tone, as though he had not been shouting at all.

“Well, he made a fool of himself, of course. Things are different nowadays; they only laughed at him. But he was awfully pleased with himself. ‘Remember, O judges who are no respecters of persons,’ says he, ‘that a sorrowful, bedridden old man living by his honest toil is losing his last crust of bread. Remember the wise words of the lawgiver: “Let mercy prevail in the court.”’ And, would you believe it, he says over that very speech to us here every morning, word for word, just as he spoke it? Just before you came in, he was reading it for the fifth time, he was so pleased with it. He is licking his lips over it. And now he wants to defend some one

else. \bu are Prince Myshkin, I believe? Kolya told me he had never met any one cleverer than you in the world.

“Yes, yes, and there is no one cleverer in the world,” Lebedyev chimed in at once.

“Well, he is lying, we know. Kolya loves you, but this man wants to make up to you. But I don’t intend to flatter you at all, let me assure you. You have some sense — judge between him and me. Would you like the prince to judge between us?” He addressed himself to his uncle. “I am glad you’ve turned up, prince, indeed.”

“Yes,” cried Lebedyev resolutely; and he unconsciously looked round at the audience, which began to gather about him again.

“Why, what is it?” asked Myshkin, frowning a little.

His head ached and he felt more and more convinced that Lebedyev was cheating him and glad to gain time.

“This is the statement of the case. I am his nephew. That was not a lie, though he is always lying. I haven’t finished my studies, but I mean to, and I will, for I have character. Meanwhile I’ve taken a job on the railway at twenty-five roubles a month. I admit, moreover, that he has helped me two or three times. I had twenty roubles and I lost them. Would you believe it, prince, I was so low, so base, that I lost them gambling?”

“To a wretch — a wretch whom you ought not to have paid!” shouted Lebedyev.

“Yes, to a wretch, but whom I ought to have paid,” the young man went on. “That he is a wretch I’ll bear witness to, and not because he beat me. He is an officer who has been turned out of the army, prince — a discharged lieutenant, one of Rogozhin’s crew, and he teaches boxing. They all are scattered now since Rogozhin got rid of them. But the worst of it is that I knew he was a wretch, a scoundrel, and a thief, and yet I sat down to play with him, and when I had lost my last rouble (we were playing palki) I thought to myself, ‘If I lose, I’ll go to my uncle Lukyan and bow down to him; he won’t refuse me.’ That was low — yes, that really was low! That was conscious meanness!”

“Yes, that was certainly conscious meanness,” repeated Lebedyev.

“Well, don’t crow over me; wait a bit,” his nephew shouted testily. “He is only too pleased. I came here to him, prince, and owned up. I acted honourably, I did not spare myself. I abused myself before him all I could — all here are witnesses. In order to take that iob on the railway it is

necessary for me to have some sort of a rig-out, for I am in absolute rags. Just look at my boots! I couldn't turn up like that, and if I don't turn up at the proper time, some one else will get the job, and then I shall be stranded again; and when should I get another chance? Now I am only asking him for fifteen roubles and I promise that I will never ask him for anything else again; and, what's more, before the end of the first three months I'll pay him back every farthing of it. I'll keep my word. I can live on bread and kvas for months together, for I have plenty of will. I shall get seventy-five roubles for three months. With what I borrowed before, I shall owe him thirty-five, so I shall have enough to pay him. Let him fix what interest he likes, damn him! Doesn't he know me? Ask him, prince, when he has helped me before, haven't I paid him back? Why won't he help me now? He is angry because I paid that lieutenant, there's no other reason. You see what he is — a regular dog in the manger!"

"And he won't go away!" cried Lebedyev. "He lies here and won't go away."

"I told you so. I won't go till you give it me. \bu are smiling, prince. \bu seem to think I am in the wrong?"

"I am not smiling; but to my thinking you certainly are rather in the wrong," Myshkin answered unwillingly.

"Say straight out that I am altogether wrong; don't shuffle. What do you mean by 'rather"?"

"If you like, you are altogether wrong."

"If I like! That's absurd! Do you suppose that I don't know myself that it's rather a doubtful line to take; that it's his money, it's for him to decide, and it's an act of violence on my part? But you . . . know nothing much of life, prince. There's no good in sparing men like him a lesson. They need a lesson. My conscience is clear. On my conscience, he will be none the worse for it; I shall pay him back with interest. He has got moral satisfaction out of it too: he has seen my humiliation. What more does he want? What's the use of him if he doesn't help people? Look at what he does himself! Ask him how he treats others and how he takes people in! How did he manage to buy this house? I'll bet you anything he has cheated you before now, and is already scheming to cheat you again. "Vbu smile. Don't you believe it?"

"It seems to me that all this hasn't much to do with your business," observed Myshkin.

“I’ve been lying here for the last three days, and what goings on I’ve seen!” cried the young man, not heeding. “Would you believe it, he suspects that angel, that motherless girl there, my cousin and his daughter, and every night he searches her room for lovers! He comes in here on the sly and peeps under my sofa too. He is crazy with suspiciousness; he sees thieves in every corner. He jumps up every minute in the night, looking at the windows to see if they are properly fastened, trying the doors, peeping into the oven; and he’ll do this half a dozen times in the night. At the court he defends robbers, but he gets up three times in the night to say his prayers on his knees here in the drawing-room, and bangs his forehead on the floor for half an hour at a time. And what prayers for everyone, what pious lamentations, when he is drunk! He prayed for the rest of the soul of the Countess du Barry; I’ve heard it with my own ears; Kolya heard it too. He is perfectly cracked!”

“Do you see, do you hear how he slanders me, prince?” cried Lebedyev, flushing and really angry. “And he doesn’t know that, drunken and degraded swindler and beggar though I may be, my one good deed was that I wrapt that grinning rascal in his swaddling clothes when he was a baby and washed him in his bath, and sat up without a wink of sleep for nights together with my widowed sister Anisya, when she was penniless and I was as poor as she; attended them when they were sick, stole wood from the porter downstairs, used to sing and crack my fingers at him with an empty belly — and this is what my nursing has come to! Here he lies, laughing at me now! What business is it of yours if I really did cross myself once for the soul of the Countess du Barry? Three days ago I read the story of her life for the first time in the dictionary. Do you know what she was, du Barry? Tell me, do you know or not?”

“Oh, of course, nobody knows but you,” the young man muttered sarcastically but unwillingly.

“She was a countess who rose from shame to a position like a queen’s, and to whom a great empress wrote in her own handwriting ‘ma cousine.’ A cardinal, a papal legate at a levee du roi (do you know what a levee du roi was?) himself offered to put the silk stockings on her bare legs, and even thought it an honour — a lofty and sacred personage like that! Do you know that? I see from your face you don’t. Well, and how did she die? Answer if you know.”

“Get away with you! Don’t pester me!”

“The way she died after such honours was that the hangman, Sampson, dragged this great lady, guiltless, to the guillotine for the diversion of Parisian poissardes, and she was in such terror she didn’t know what was happening to her. She saw he was bending her neck down under the knife and kicking her, while the people laughed, and she fell to screaming, ‘Encore un moment, monsieur le bourreau, encore un moment!’ which means ‘Wait one little minute, Mr. bourreau, only one!’ And perhaps for the sake of that prayer God will forgive her; for one cannot imagine a greater misere for a human soul than that. Do you know the meaning of the word misere? Well that’s what misere is. When I read about that countess’s cry for ‘one little minute,’ I felt as though my heart had been pinched with a pair of tongs. And what is it to a worm like you if I did, when I was going to bed, think of mentioning that sinful woman in my prayers? And perhaps the reason I mentioned her was that, ever since the beginning of the world, probably no one has crossed himself for her sake, or even thought of doing so. And it may be pleasant for her to feel in the other world that there is a sinner like herself who has uttered at least one prayer on earth for her. Why are you laughing? Don’t you believe, atheist? How do you know? And you told a lie if you did hear me. I didn’t only pray for the Countess du Barry; my prayer was this: ‘Lord, give rest to the soul of that great sinner the Countess du Barry and all like her.’ And that’s quite a different matter, for there are many such sinful women, examples of the mutability of fortune, who have suffered much and are storm-tossed yonder, moaning and waiting. And I prayed then for you and people like you, insolent and overbearing — since you troubled to listen to my prayers....”

“That’s enough, shut up! Pray for whom you like, damn you, only stop your screaming!” the nephew interrupted with vexation. “He is mightily well read, you see. “Vbu didn’t know it, did you, prince?” he added with an awkward grin. “He is always reading books and memoirs of that sort.”

“Your uncle is anyway not ... a heartless man,” Myshkin observed reluctantly.

He was beginning to feel a great aversion for the young man.

“Why, he’ll be quite puffed up if you praise him like that. Look, he’s licking his lips already with his hand on his heart and his mouth pursed up! He is not heartless perhaps, but he is a rogue, that’s the trouble; and he is a drunkard besides. He is all to pieces, as a man who has been drinking a good many years always is; that’s why nothing goes smoothly with him. He

loves his children, I admit; he respected my late aunt . . . even loves me and has left me a share in his will, you know.”

“I won’t leave you anything!” cried Lebedyev furiously.

“Listen, Lebedyev,” said Myshkin, firmly, turning away from the young man. “I know by experience that you can be a businesslike man when you choose. . . . I have very little time now, and if you .. . Excuse me, what is your name and your patronymic? I have forgotten.”

“Ti-ti-timofey.”

“And?”

“Lukyanovitch.”

Everyone in the room laughed again.

“A lie!” cried the nephew. “He is lying even about that! His name is not Timofey Lukyanovitch, prince, but Lukyan Timofeyevitch. Come, why did you tell a lie? Isn’t it just the same to you if it’s Lukyan or Timofey? And what does it matter to the prince? He tells lies simply from habit, I assure you.”

“Can that be true?” asked Myshkin impatiently.

“Lukyan Timofeyevitch it really is,” Lebedyev admitted, overcome with confusion, dropping his eyes humblyand again putting his hand on his heart.

“But why on earth, then, did you say that?”

“To humble myself,” whispered Lebedyev, bending his head lower and more humbly.

“Ech, what nonsense! If only I knew where to find Kolya now,” said Myshkin, and turned to go away.

“I’ll tell you where Kolya is.” The young man put himself forward again.

“No, no, no!” Lebedyev flared up and flew into great excitement.

“Kolya slept here, but in the morning he went out to look for his father, whom vou, prince, have brouqht out of prison — God only knows why! The general promised yesterday to come here to sleep, but he hasn’t come. Most likely he slept in the hotel, The Pair of Scales,’ close by. Kolya is probably there, or in Pavlovsk at the Epanchins’. He had the money, he meant to go yesterday; so he is probably at the ‘Scales’ or at Pavlovsk.”

“He is at Pavlovsk — at Pavlovsk! ... Let us go this way — this way, into the garden and . . . have some coffee.”

And Lebedyev took Myshkin’s hand and led him away. They went out of the room, crossed the little yard, and went through a gate. Here there was a very tiny and charming garden in which, owing to the fine season, all the

trees were already in leaf. Lebedyev made Myshkin sit down on a green wooden seat by a green table fixed in the ground, and seated himself facing him. A minute later coffee was brought. Myshkin did not refuse it. Lebedyev still looked eagerly and obsequiously into his face.

“I didn’t know you had such an establishment,” said Myshkin with the air of a man thinking of something quite different.

“We are orphans . . .” Lebedyev began, wriggling, but he stopped short.

Myshkin looked absently before him and had no doubt forgotten his remark. A minute passed; Lebedyev watched him and waited.

“Well?” said Myshkin, seeming to wake up. “Ah, yes! You know yourself, Lebedyev, what our business is. I have come in response to your letter. Speak.”

Lebedyev was confused, tried to say something, but only stuttered, no words came. Myshkin waited and smiled mournfully.

“I think I understand you perfectly, Lukyan Timofeyevitch. \bu probably did not expect me, and you thought I shouldn’t come back from the wilds at your first message, and you wrote to clear your conscience. And here I’ve come. Come, give it up, don’t deceive me! Give up serving two masters. Rogozhin has been here for three weeks. I know everything. Have you succeeded in selling her to him, as you did last time? Tell me the truth.”

“The monster found out of himself — of himself.”

“Don’t abuse him. He has treated you badly, of course ...”

“He beat me; he nearly did for me!” Lebedyev interrupted with tremendous heat. “He set his dog on me in Moscow; it was after me the whole length of the street — a hunting bitch, a fearsome beast!”

“You take me for a child, Lebedyev. Tell me seriously, has she left him now, in Moscow?”

“Seriously, seriously, gave him the slip on the very day of the wedding again. He was counting the minutes while she made off here to Petersburg and straight to me: ‘Save me, protect me, Lukyan, and don’t tell the prince!’ . . . She is even more afraid of you, prince; there’s something mysterious about it!”

And Lebedyev slyly put his finger to his forehead.

“And now you have brought them together again?”

“Most illustrious prince, how could I. .. how could I prevent it?”

“Well, that’s enough; I’ll find out for myself. Only tell me, where is she now? With him?”

“Oh, no, not at all! She is still by herself. ‘I am free,’ she says; and you know, prince, she insists strongly on that. ‘I am still perfectly free!’ she says. She is still living at my sister-in-law’s, as I wrote to you.”

“And is she there now?”

“Yes, unless she is at Pavlovsk, as the weather is so fine, at Darya Aiexeyevna’s villa. ‘I am still perfectly free,’ she says. She was boasting only yesterday of her freedom to Nikolay Ardalionovitch.-A bad sign!”

And Lebedyev grinned.

“Is Kolya often with her?”

“He is a heedless, unaccountable fellow; he doesn’t keep things secret.”

“Is it long since you have been there?”

“Every day — every day.”

“Then you were there yesterday?”

“N-no, three days ago.”

“What a pity you’ve been drinking, Lebedyev. Or I might have asked you something.”

“No, no, no, not a bit of it!” Lebedyev positively pricked up his ears.

“Tell me, how did you leave her?”

“S-searching.”

“Searching?”

“As though she were always searching for something, as though she had lost something. She is sick at the thought of the marriage and looks upon it as an insult. She thinks no more of him than of a bit of orange peel. “Vfes, she does though, for she thinks of him with fear and trembling; she won’t hear his name, even, and they don’t meet if it can be helped . . . and he feels it only too well. But there’s no getting out of it. She is restless, sarcastic, double-tongued, violent....

“Yes, violent; for she almost pulled my hair last time over one conversation. I tried to bring her round with the Apocalypse.”

“What do you say?” Myshkin asked, thinking he had not heard him rightly.

“By reading the Apocalypse. She is a lady with a restless imagination. He-he! And I’ve noticed too that she has a great partiality for serious subjects, however remote they may be. She likes such talk — she likes it and takes it as a mark of special respect. “Vfes, I am a great hand at interpreting the Apocalypse; I’ve been interpreting it for the last fifteen years. She agreed with me that we are living in the age of the third horse,

the black one, and the rider who has the balance in his hand, seeing that everything in the present age is weighed in the scales and by agreement, and people are seeking for nothing but their rights—'a measure of wheat for a penny and three measures of barley for a penny"; and yet they want to keep a free spirit and a pure heart and a sound body and all the gifts of God. But by rights alone they won't keep them, and afterwards will follow the pale horse and he whose name was Death and with whom hell followed. . . . We talk about that when we meet and ... it has had a great effect on her."

"Do you believe that yourself?" asked Myshkin, scanning Lebedyev with a strange expression.

"I believe it and explain it so. I am naked and a beggar and an atom in the vortex of humanity. No one respects Lebedyev; he is fair game for every one's wit, and they are all ready to give him a kick. But in interpreting revelation I am equal to the foremost in the land, for I am clever at it. And a grand gentleman trembled before me, sitting in his armchair, as he took it in. His illustrious Excellency Nil Alexeyevitch sent for me the year before last, just before Easter — when I was serving in his department — and purposely sent Pyotr Zaharitch to fetch me from the office to his study. And he asked me when we were alone, 'Is it true that you expound Anti-christ?' And I made no secret of it. 'I do,' said 1.1

explained and interpreted, and did not soften down the horror, but intentionally increased it, as I unfolded the allegory and fitted dates to it. And he laughed, but he began trembling at the dates and correspondences, and asked me to close the book and go away. He rewarded me at Easter, but the week after he gave up his soul to God."

"How so, Lebedyev?"

"He did. He fell out of his carriage after dinner. . . knocked his head against a post, and on the spot he passed away like a babe — a little babe. Seventy-three years old he was. He had a red face, grey hair, and was sprinkled all over with scent, and he was always smiling — smiling like a child. Then Pyotr Zaharitch remembered. 'You foretold it,' he said."

Myshkin began getting up. Lebedyev was surprised and positively puzzled at his moving.

"You don't take much interest in things now. He-he!" he ventured to observe obsequiously.

"I really don't feel quite well; my head is heavy from the journey, perhaps," answered Myshkin, frowning.

“You ought to be out of town,” Lebedyev hazarded timidly.

Myshkin stood pondering.

“In another three days I am going out of town with all my family, for the sake of my newborn nestling, and to have this house done up. We are going to Pavlovsk, too.”

“You are going to Pavlovsk too?” asked Myshkin suddenly. “How is it everyone here is going to Pavlovsk? And you have a villa of your own there, you say?”

“Not every one is going to Pavlovsk. Ivan Petrovitch Ptitsyn has let me have one of the villas he has bought up cheap. It’s nice and high up, and green and cheap and bon ton and musical — and that’s why every one goes to Pavlovsk. I am living in a little lodge, however, and the villa itself is ...”

“Let?”

“N-no ... not quite.”

“Let it to me,” Myshkin proposed suddenly.

That seemed to be all Lebedyev had been working up to. The idea had entered his head three minutes before. And yet he had no need of a tenant, for he already had found some one who had told him he might perhaps take the villa. Lebedyev knew for a fact that it was not a question of “perhaps,” and that he certainly would take the villa. But now he was struck by the idea, likely by his reckoning to be a profitable one, that he might let the villa to Myshkin, taking advantage of the fact that the previous tenant had not been quite definite. “A regular coincidence and quite a new turn of affairs,” rose before his imagination suddenly. He received Myshkin’s proposition with enthusiasm, and at his direct question as to terms he simply waved his hands.

“Well, as you like. I’ll make inquiries; you shan’t be a loser.”

They were both coming out of the garden.

“And I could ... I could . . . if you liked, I could tell you something very interesting, highly honoured prince, relating to the same subject,” muttered Lebedyev, wriggling gleefully on one side of the prince.

Myshkin stopped.

“Darya Alexeyevna has a villa at Pavlovsk too.”

“Well?”

“And a certain person is a friend of hers and evidently intends to visit her frequently there, with an object.”

“Well?”

“Aglaia Ivanovna....”

“Ach, that’s enough, Lebedyev!” Myshkin interrupted, with an unpleasant sensation, as though he had been touched on a tender spot. “All that’s . . . a mistake. I’d rather you’d tell me when are you moving? The sooner the better for me, as I am at a hotel....”

As they talked, they had left the garden and, without going back into the house, crossed the yard and reached the gate.

“Well, what could be better?” Lebedyev suggested at last. “Come straight here to me from the hotel to-day, and the day after to-morrow we will all move to Pavlovsk together.”

“I’ll see,” said Myshkin thoughtfully, and he went out at the gate.

Lebedyev looked after him. He was struck by Myshkin’s sudden absentmindedness. He had forgotten even to say good-bye as he went out; he did not even nod, which seemed out of keeping with what Lebedyev knew of Myshkin’s graciousness and courtesy.

CHAPTER 3

It WAS past eleven. Myshkin knew that he could find at the Epanchins' house no one but the general himself, who might be kept in town by his duties and yet not be at home. He thought that the general might perhaps take him at once to Pavlovsk, but he particularly wanted to make one call before then. At the risk of missing Epanchin and putting off his visit to Pavlovsk till the next day, Myshkin decided to look for the house to which he so particularly wished to go.

This visit was, however, risky for him in one respect. He was perplexed and hesitated. He knew he would find the house in Gorohovy Street, not far from Sadovy Street, and decided to go there, hoping that on his way there he would succeed in making up his mind.

As he approached the point where the two streets intersect, he was surprised himself at his extraordinary emotion; he had not expected his heart to throb so painfully. One house attracted his attention in the distance, no doubt from its peculiar appearance, and Myshkin afterwards remembered saying to himself, "That must be the very house!" With great curiosity he walked towards it to verify his conjecture; he felt that he would for some reason particularly dislike to have guessed right. It was a large gloomy house of three stories, of a dirty green colour and no pretensions to architecture. A few houses of this kind, built at the end of the last century, are still standing almost unchanged in those streets of Petersburg (where everything changes so quickly). They are built solidly with thick walls and very few windows, often with gratings on the ground-floor windows. Usually there is a money-changer's shop below, and the owner, of the sect of Skoptsy,-serves in the shop and lodges above it. Without and within, the house is somehow inhospitable and frigid; it seems to be keeping something dark and hidden; and why it seems so from the mere look of the house it would be hard to explain. Architectural lines have, of course, a secret of their own. These houses are occupied almost entirely by tradespeople.

Going up to the gate and examining the inscription on it, Myshkin read, "The house of the hereditary and honourable citizen Rogozhin." Hesitating no longer, he opened the glass door, which slammed noisily behind him, and went up the great staircase to the first floor. It was a roughly made stone staircase and dark; the walls were painted red. He knew that Rogozhin with

his mother and brother occupied the whole second floor of this dreary house. The servant who opened the door to Myshkin admitted him without taking his name, and led him a long way. They passed through one grand drawing-room with walls painted to look like marble, an oak block floor, and furniture of 1820, coarse and heavy; they passed through some tiny rooms, winding and turning, mounting two or three steps and going down as many, till at last they knocked at a door. The door was opened by Parfyon Semyonovitch himself. Seeing Myshkin, he turned so pale and was so petrified that for a time he stood like a statue, gazing with fixed and frightened eyes and twisting his mouth into a strange smile of utter bewilderment, as though he felt the prince's visit something incredible and almost miraculous. Though Myshkin had expected something of the sort, he was surprised.

"Parfyon, perhaps I've come at the wrong moment? I can go away, you know," he said at last with embarrassment.

"Not at all — not at all!" said Parfyon, recovering himself at last. "You are welcome. Come in."

They addressed one another like intimate friends. In Moscow they had often spent long hours together, and there had been meetings, moments of which had left a lasting memory in their hearts. Now they had not met for over three months.

Rogozhin's face did not lose its pallor and there still was a faint spasmodic twitching to be seen in it. Though he welcomed his guest, his extraordinary confusion still persisted. While he led Myshkin in and had made him sit down in an easy chair, the latter happened to turn to him and stood still, impressed by his strange and heavy gaze. Something seemed to transfix Myshkin, and at the same time some memory came back to him — something recent, painful, and gloomy. Not sitting down but standing motionless, he looked Rogozhin straight in the eyes for some time: at the first moment they seemed to gleam more brightly. At last Rogozhin smiled, though still rather disconcerted and hardly knowing what he was doing.

"Why do you stare so?" he muttered. "Sit down."

Myshkin sat down.

"Parfyon," he said, "tell me plainly, did you know that I was coming to Petersburg to-day or not?"

"I thought you were coming, and, you see, I was not mistaken," Rogozhin added, smiling sarcastically. "But how could I tell you would

come today?”

Myshkin was even more struck by a certain harsh abruptness and strange irritability in the question.

“Even if you had known I should come to-day, why be so cross about it?” murmured Myshkin gently, in confusion.

“But why do you ask?”

“As I got out of the train this morning, I saw two eyes that looked at me just as you did just now from behind.”

“You don’t say so! Whose eyes were they?” Rogozhin muttered suspiciously.

Myshkin fancied that he shuddered.

“I don’t know; I almost think I fancied it in the crowd. I begin to be always fancying things. Do you know, Parfyon, my friend, I feel almost as I did five years ago, when I used to have fits.”

“Well, perhaps it was your fancy; I don’t know,” muttered Parfyon.

The friendly smile on his face was very unbecoming to him at that moment, as though there were something disjointed in it, and however much he tried he could not put it together.

“Are you going abroad again?” he asked, and suddenly added: “And do you remember how we came from Pskov in the same carriage together last autumn? I was coming here, and you ... in your cloak, do you remember, and the gaiters?”

And Rogozhin suddenly laughed, this time with open malice, as though relieved that he had succeeded in expressing it in some way.

“Are you settled here for good?”

“Yes, I am at home. Where else should I be?”

“It’s a lonq time since we’ve met. I’ve heard such things about you, not like yourself.”

“People will say anything.” Rogozhin observed drily.

“You’ve turned off all your followers, and you stay in your old home and live quietly. Well, that’s a good thing. Is it your own house, or does it belong to all of you in common?”

“The house is my mother’s. That’s the way to her rooms across the corridor.”

“And where is your brother living?”

“My brother Semyon Semyonovitch is in the lodge.”

“Is he married?”

“He is a widower. Why do you want to know?”

Myshkin looked at him and did not answer; he was suddenly thoughtful and seemed not to have heard the question. Rogozhin waited and did not insist. They were silent for a little.

“I guessed it was your house a hundred paces away, as I came along,” said Myshkin.

“How was that?”

“I don’t know at all. Your house has a look of your whole family and your Rogozhin manner of life; but if you ask me how I know that, I can’t explain it. A disordered fancy, I suppose. It makes me uneasy indeed that it should trouble me so much. I had an idea before that you lived in such a house, but, as soon as I saw it, I thought at once, That’s just the sort of house he ought to have.’”

“I say!” Rogozhin smiled vaguely, not quite understanding Myshkin’s obscure thought. “It was my grandfather built the house,” he observed. “It was always tenanted by the Hludyakovs, who are Skoptsy, and they are our tenants still.”

“It’s so dark! You are living here in darkness,” said Myshkin, looking round the room.

It was a big room, lofty and dark, filled with furniture of all sorts, for the most part big business tables, bureaux, cupboards, in which were kept business books and papers of some sort. The wide sofa, covered in red morocco, obviously served Rogozhin as a bed. Myshkin noticed two or three books lying on the table, at which Rogozhin had made him sit down; one of them, Solovyev’s “History,” was open and had a book-mark in it. On the walls there were a few oil-paintings in tarnished gold frames. They were dark and grimy, and it was difficult to make out what they represented. One full-length portrait attracted Myshkin’s notice. It was the portrait of a man of fifty, wearing a frock-coat, very long, though of European cut, and two medals round his neck. He had a very scanty short grey beard, a yellow wrinkled face with suspicious, secretive and melancholy eyes.

“Is that your father?” asked Myshkin.

“Yes, it is,” Rogozhin answered with an unpleasant grin, as though expecting some rude jest at his dead father’s expense to follow immediately.

“He wasn’t one of the Old Believers, was he?”

“No, he used to go to church; but it’s true he used to say that the old form of belief was truer. He had a great respect for the Skoptsy too. This

used to be his study. Why do you ask was he an Old Believer?”

“Will you have your wedding here?”

“Y-yes,” answered Rogozhin, almost starting at the unexpected question.

“Will it be soon?”

“You know yourself it doesn’t depend on me.”

“Parfyon, I am not your enemy, and I have no intention of interfering with you in anyway. I tell you that as I’ve told you once before, almost on a similar occasion. When your wedding was arranged in Moscow, I didn’t hinder you, you know that. The first time she rushed to me of herself, almost on the wedding day, begging me ‘to save’ her from you. It’s her own words I am repeating to you. Afterwards she ranawayfrom me too. You found her again and were going to marry her, and now they tell me she ran away from you again here. Is that true? Lebedyev told me so; that’s why I’ve come. But that you’d come together again I learnt for the first time only yesterday in the train from one of your former friends, Zalyozhev, if you care to know. I came here with a purpose. I wanted to persuade her to go abroad for the sake of her health. She is not well physically or mentally — her brain especially; and, to my mind, she needs great care. I didn’t mean to take her abroad myself; it was my plan for her to go without me. I am telling you the absolute truth. If it’s quite true that you’ve made it up again, I shan’t show myself to her, and I’ll never come again to see you either. \bu know I don’t deceive you, because I’ve always been open with you. I have never concealed from you what I think about it, and I have always said that to marry you would be her perdition. \bur perdition too . . . even more perhaps than hers. If you were to part again, I should be very glad; but I don’t intend to disturb or try to part you myself. Don’t worry yourself and don’t suspect me. You know yourself whether I was ever really your rival, even when she ran away to me. Now you are laughing. I know what you are laughing at. Yes, we lived apart, in different towns, and you know all that for a fact. I explained to you before that I don’t love her with love, but with pity. I believe I define it exactly. You said at the time that you understood what I said. Was that true? Did you understand? Here you are looking at me with hatred! I’ve come to reassure you, for you are dear to me too. I am very fond of you, Parfyon. But now I am going away and shall never come again. Good-bye!”

Myshkin got up.

“Stay with me a little,” said Parfyon softly, sitting still in his place with his head resting on his right hand. “It’s a long time since I’ve seen you.”

Myshkin sat down. Both were silent again.

“When you are not before me I feel anger against you at once, Lyov Nikolayevitch. Every minute of these three months that I haven’t seen you I have been angry with you, on my word, I have. I felt I could have poisoned you! I tell you now. \bu haven’t been sitting a quarter of an hour with me, and all my anger is passing away and you are dear to me as you used to be. Stay with me a little....”

“When I am with you, you believe me, but when I am away, you leave off believing me at once and begin suspecting me. \bu are like your father,” Myshkin answered, with a friendly smile, trying to hide his emotion.

“I believe your voice when I am with you. I understand, of course, we can’t be put on a level, you and I....”

“Why do you add that? And now you are irritated again,” said Myshkin, wondering at Rogozhin.

“Well, brother, our opinion is not asked in the matter,” he answered. “It’s settled without consulting us. \bu see, we love in different ways too. There’s a difference in everything,” he went on softly after a pause. “You say you love her with pity. There’s no sort of pity for her in me. And she hates me too, more than anything. I dream of her every night now, always that she is laughing at me with other men. And that’s what she is doinq, brother. She is qoinq to the altar with me and she has forgotten to give me a thought, as though she were changing her shoe. Would you believe it, I haven’t seen her for five days, because I don’t dare to go to her. She’ll ask me, ‘What have you come for?’ She has covered me with shame.”

“Shame? How can you!”

“As though he didn’t know! Why, she ran away with you from me on the very wedding day — you said so yourself just now.”

“Why, you don’t believe yourself that...”

“Didn’t she shame me in Moscow with that officer, Zemtyuzhnikov? I know for certain she did, and even after she had fixed the wedding day.”

“Impossible!” cried Myshkin.

“I know it for a fact,” Rogozhin persisted with conviction. “She is not that sort of woman, you say? It’s no good telling me she is not that sort of woman, brother. That’s nonsense. With you she won’t be that sort of woman, and will be horrified herself, maybe, at such doings. But that’s just

what she is with me. That’s the fact. She looks on me as the lowest refuse. I know for a fact that simply to make a laughingstock of me she got up an affair with Keller, that officer, the man who boxes. . . . “Vbu don’t know, of course, the tricks she played me at Moscow. And the money — the money I’ve wasted! ...”

“And . . . and you are marrying her now? What will you do afterwards?” Myshkin asked in horror.

Rogozhin bent a lowering, terrible gaze on Myshkin and made no answer.

“It’s five days since I’ve been with her,” he went on after a minute’s pause. “I am afraid of her turning me out. ‘lam still mistress in my own house,’ she says. ‘If I choose I will get rid of you altogether and go abroad.’ (She told me that already, that she will go abroad, he observed, as it were in parenthesis, with a peculiar look into Myshkin’s eyes.) Sometimes, it’s true, she only does this to scare me. She is always laughing at me somehow. But another time she really scowls and is sullen and won’t say a word. That’s what I am afraid of. The other day I thought I’d take her something every time I went to see her. It only made her laugh at me, and afterwards she was really angry about it. She made a present to her maid, Katya, of a shawl I gave her, the like of which she may never have seen before, though she did live in luxury. And as to when our wedding is to be, I dare not open my lips. A queer sort of bridegroom when I am afraid to go and see her! So here I sit and when I can bear it no longer, I steal past her house on the sly or hide behind some corner. The other day I was on the watch almost till daybreak at her gate. I fancied there was something going on. And she must have seen me from the window. ‘What would you have done to me,’ she said, ‘if you had found out I’d deceived you?’ I couldn’t stand it, and I said, ‘\bu know yourself.’”

“What does she know?”

“And how do I know?” Rogozhin laughed angrily. “At Moscow I couldn’t catch her with any one, though I was always on the track. I took her aside then and said to her once, ‘\bu promised to marry me; you are entering an honest family, and do you know what you are now?’ I told her what she is.”

“You told her?”

“Yes.”

“Well?”

‘“I wouldn’t take you for a footman now perhaps,’ she said, ‘let alone be your wife!”And I won’t go away with that,’ said I; ‘I am done for anyway.”And I’ll call Keller, then,’ she said. ‘I’ll tell him and he’ll throw you out by the scruff of your neck.’ I flew at her and beat her till she was black and blue.”

“Impossible!” cried Myshkin.

“I tell you it was so,” Rogozhin repeated quietly, but with flashing eyes. “For thirty-six hours on end I didn’t sleep nor eat nor drink — I didn’t leave her room; I was on my knees before her. ‘If I die,’ I said, ‘I won’t go away till you forgive me, and if you tell them to throw me out, I’ll drown myself; for what should I do now without you?’ She was like a mad woman all that day: she went; then she was on the point of killing me with a knife; then she railed at me. She called Zalyozhev, Keller, Zemtyuzhnikov, and all of them, showed me to them, put me to shame. ‘Let’s make up a party and all go to the theatre to-night, gentlemen. Let him stay here if he won’t go; I am not bound to stay for him. They’ll bring you tea, Parfyon Semyonovitch, when I am out; you must be hungry by now.’ She came back from the theatre alone. ‘They are cowards and sneaks,’ she said. ‘They are afraid of you, and they frighten me. They say, “He won’t go away like that. He will cut your throat, maybe.” But I’ll qo into mv bedroom and not even lock the door — so much for my being afraid of you! So that you may see and know it. Have you had any tea?”No,’ I said, ‘and I am not going to.”I’ve done my part, and this behaviour doesn’t suit you at all.’ And she did as she said, she didn’t lock her door. In the morning she came out and laughed. ‘Have you gone crazy?’ she asked. ‘Why, you’ll die of hunger!”Forgive me,’ said I. ‘I don’t want to forgive you. I won’t marry you, I’ve said so. Have you been sitting on that chair all night? Haven’t you been asleep?”No,’ said I, ‘I haven’t been asleep.”How stupid! And you won’t have breakfast or dinner again, I suppose?”I told you I won’t. Forgive me.”If only you knew how ill this suits you! It’s like a saddle on a cow. “Vbu don’t fancy you are going to scare me by that? What does it matter to me that you are hungry? As though that would frighten me!’ She was angry, but not for long, she soon began gibing at me again, and I wondered how it was that there was no anger in her; for she’ll resent a thing a long time, she’ll resent a thing with other people for a long time. Then it entered my head that she thinks so poorly of me that she can’t even feel much resentment against me. And that’s the truth!

‘Do you know what the Pope of Rome is?’ she asked. ‘I’ve heard,’ I said. ‘You’ve never learnt any universal history, Parfyon Semyonovitch,’ said she. ‘I never learnt anything,’ I said. ‘I’ll give you a story to read then,’ she said. ‘There was once a Pope, and he was angry with an emperor, and that emperor knelt barefoot before his palace for three days without eating or drinking till he forgave him. What do you suppose that emperor thought to himself, and what vows did he take while he was kneeling there? Stay,’ she said, ‘I’ll read it to you myself.’ She jumped up and brought the book. ‘It’s poetry,’ she said; and began reading me in verse how that emperor had vowed during those three days to avenge himself on the Pope for it. ‘Don’t you like that, Parfyon Semyonovitch?’ said she. ‘That’s all true,’ said I, ‘that you’ve read.”Aha! you say it’s true yourself. Then perhaps you are making vows: “When she is married to me I’ll make her remember it all! I’ll humble her to my heart’s content!” “I don’t know,’ said I, ‘perhaps I am thinking so.”How can you say you don’t know?”Why, I don’t know,’ said I; ‘I have no thoughts for that now.”What are you thinking of now?”Well, you’ll get up and walk past me, and I’m looking at you and watching you. Your skirt rustles, and my heart sinks; you go out of the room, and I remember every little word of yours, your voice and what you said. And all last night I thought of nothing; I listened all the while how you were breathing in your sleep, and twice you stirred.”And I dare say you don’t think, and you don’t remember, how you beat me?’ she said. ‘Perhaps I do think of it; I don’t know.”And if I don’t forgive you and I won’t marry you?”I’ve told you I’ll drown myself.”Perhaps you’ll murder me first. . .’ she said, and seemed to ponder. Then she was angry and went out. An hour later she came in to me so gloomy. ‘I will marry you, Parfyon Semyonovitch,’ she said, ‘and not because I am afraid of you; there’s nothing but ruin anyway. What’s better? Sit down,’ she said; ‘they’ll bring you dinner directly. And if I marry you I’ll be a faithful wife to you,’ she added; ‘don’t doubt of that and don’t be uneasy.’ Then she was silent, and said, ‘Anyway you are not a flunkey.’ Then she fixed the wedding day, and a week later she ran away from me to Lebedyev here. When I came she said, ‘I don’t give you up altogether; I only want to wait as long as I like, because I am still my own mistress. \bu can wait too if you like.’ That’s how we stand now. . . . What do you think of all that, Lyov Nikolayevitch?”

“What do you think yourself?” Myshkin questioned back, looking sorrowfully at Rogozhin.

“Do you suppose I think?” broke from the latter.

He would have added something, but paused in hopeless dejection.

Myshkin stood up and would again have taken leave.

“I won’t hinder you, anyway,” he said softly, almost dreamily, as though replying to some secret inner thought of his own.

“Do you know what!” said Rogozhin, suddenly more eager, and his eyes kindled. “How is it you give in to me like this? Have you quite got over loving her? You used to be miserable, anyway; I saw that. Then why is it you’ve come here in such haste? From pity?” and his face worked with spiteful mockery. “Ha, ha!”

“You think I am deceiving you now?” Myshkin inquired.

“No, I believe you; but I can’t make it out. One might almost believe that your pity is greater than my love.”

A certain malice and an urgent desire to express himself at once glowed in his face.

“Well, there’s no distinguishing your love from hate,” said Myshkin, smiling. “It will pass, and then perhaps the trouble will be worse. I tell you this, brother Parfyon ...”

“That I shall murder her?”

Myshkin started.

“You will hate her bitterly for this love, for all this torture you are suffering now. What is strangest of all to me is that she can again mean to marry you. When I heard it yesterday, I scarcely believed it, and it made me so unhappy! You see, she has thrown you up twice and run away on the wedding day; so she has some foreboding. What does she find in you now? It’s not your money; that’s nonsense. And no doubt you’ve wasted a good deal of it by now. Can it be simply to get a husband? Why, she could find plenty of others. Any man would be better than you, because you really may murder her; and she knows that only too well now, perhaps. Is it because you love her so passionately? It’s true that may be it. I’ve heard there are women who want just that sort of love. . . . Only . . .” Myshkin stopped and sank into thought.

“Why are you smiling at my father’s portrait again?” asked Rogozhin, who was watching every movement, every change in Myshkin’s face with extraordinary intentness.

“Why did I smile? Oh, it struck me that if it were not for this burden laid upon you, if it were not for this love, you would most likely have become

exactly like your father, and in a very short time too. You would have settled down quietly in this house with an obedient and submissive wife; you would have been stern and sparing of words, trusting no one and feeling no desire to; doing nothing but heap up money in dreary silence. At the most you would sometimes have praised the old books and been interested in the Old Believers' fashion of crossing themselves, and that only in your old age...."

"Laugh away; but, do you know, she said the very same thing not long ago, when she too was looking at that portrait! It's queer how you both say the same thing now."

"Why, has she been in your house?" asked Myshkin with interest.

"Yes. She looked a long time at the portrait and asked me about my father. 'You'd be just such another,' she laughed to me afterwards. 'You have strong passions, Parfyon Semyonovitch,' she said; 'such passions that you might have been carried by them straight off to Siberia, if you weren't intelligent too. For you have a great deal of intelligence,' she said. (Those were her words. Would you believe it? It was the first time I'd heard her say such a thing.) '\bu would have soon given up all this silliness, and as you are quite an uneducated man, you would have begun saving money and have settled down like your father in this house with your Skoptsy. Maybe you would have gone over to their faith in the end, and have grown so fond of your money that you would have heaped up not two but ten million perhaps, and have died of hunger on your bags of money. For you are passionate in everything; you push everything to a passion.' That was just how she talked, almost in those very words. She had never talked to me like that before. You know she always talks nonsense with me, or jeers at me; and, indeed, she began laughing this time; but then she grew so dejected, she walked all over the house, looked at everything, and seemed scared. 'I'll change all this and do it up, or if you like I'll buy another house before we are married."No, no,' she said; 'nothing must be changed here, we'll live like this. I want to live with your mother,' she said, 'when I become your wife.' I took her to my mother. She was respectful to her, as if she had been her own daughter. For the last two years mother has not been quite in her right mind (she is ill), and since my father died she's become quite like a child: she can't talk, she can't walk, and only bows to every one she sees. If we didn't feed her, I believe she wouldn't notice it for three days. I took my mother's right hand, folded her fingers. 'Bless her, mother,' said I; 'she

is going to the altar with me.’ Then she kissed my mother’s hand with feeling. ‘Your mother must have had a great deal of sorrow to bear,’ said she. She saw this book here. ‘What, have you begun reading Russian history?’ (She said to me herself in Moscow once, ‘You should educate yourself. You might at least read Solovyev’s Russian history. \bu know nothing at all.’) ‘That’s right,’ she said, ‘go on reading. I’ll write you a list myself of the books you ought to read first, shall I?’ And never, never before had she talked to me like that, so that I was positively amazed. For the first time I breathed like a living man.”

“lam very glad of that, Parfyon,” said Myshkin with sincere feeling, “very glad. Who knows, after all perhaps God will bring you together.”

“That will never be!” Rogozhin cried hotly.

“Listen, Parfyon. Since you love her so, surely you want to gain her respect? And if you want to, you can’t be without hope? I said just now that I was unable to comprehend what makes her marry you. But though I can’t understand it, I have no doubt that there must be a sufficient, sensible reason. She is convinced of your love, but she must believe in some of your good qualities also. It can’t be otherwise. What you said just now confirms this. You told me yourself that she has found it possible to speak to you in quite a different way from how she has spoken and behaved to you before. \bu are suspicious and jealous, and that has made you exaggerate everything you’ve noticed amiss. Of course she doesn’t think so ill of you as you say. If she did, it would be as good as deliberately going to be drowned or murdered to marry you. Is that possible?

Who would deliberately go to be drowned or murdered?”

Parfyon listened with a bitter smile to Myshkin’s eager words. His conviction, it seemed, was not to be shaken.

“How dreadfully you look at me now, Parfyon!” broke from Myshkin with a feeling of dread.

“To be drowned or murdered!” said Rogozhin at last. “Ha! Why, that’s just why she is marrying me, because she expects to be murdered! Do you mean to say, prince, you’ve never yet had a notion of what’s at the root of it all?”

“I don’t understand you.”

“Well, perhaps you really don’t understand. He, he! They do say you are . . . not quite right. She loves another man — take that in! Just as I love her

now, she loves another man now. And do you know who that other man is? It’s you! What! you didn’t know?”

“Me?”

“You. She has loved you ever since that day — her birthday. Only she thinks it’s out of the question to marry you, because she thinks she would disgrace vou and ruin vour whole life. ‘Everyone knows what I

am,’ she says. She still harps upon that. She told me all this straight out to my face. She is afraid of ruining and of disgracing you; but I don’t matter, she can marry me. So much for what she thinks of me! Notice that too.”

“But why did she run away from you to me and . . . from me ...”

“And from you to me! Ha! Why, all sorts of things come into her head. She is always in a sort of fever now. One day she’ll cry out, ‘I’ll make an end of myself and marry you! Let the wedding be soon.’ She hurries things on, fixes the day, but when the time comes near, she takes fright, or other ideas come to her, God knows! \bu’ve seen it; she cries and laughs and shakes with fever. And what is there strange in her having run away from you? She ran away from you then, because she realised how much she loved you. It was too much for her to stay with you. You said just now that I sought her out in Moscow. That’s not true; she ran to me straight from you of herself. ‘Fix the day,’ she said. ‘I am ready! Give me champagne! Let’s go to the gypsies . . .’ she cries. She would have drowned herself long ago,

if she had not had me; that’s the truth. She doesn’t do that because, perhaps, I am more dreadful than the water. It’s from spite she is marrying me. If she marries me, I tell you for sure it will be from spite. . .

“But how can you .. . how can you!” cried Myshkin, but broke off. He looked at Rogozhin with horror.

“Why don’t you finish?” the latter replied, grinning. “Would you like me to tell you what you are thinking to yourself at this very moment? ‘How can she be his wife after this? How can I let her come to that?’ I know you think that....”

“I didn’t come here with that idea, Parfyon; I tell you it was not that I had in my mind....”

“It may be that you didn’t come with that idea and that wasn’t in your mind, but now it certainly has become your idea. Ha-ha! Well, that’s enough! Why are you so upset? Can you really not have known it? You surprise me!”

“That’s all jealousy, Parfyon; it’s all morbidness. \bu have exaggerated it all immensely,” Myshkin muttered in violent agitation. “What are you doing?”

“Leave it alone,” said Parfyon, and he quickly snatched from Myshkin’s hand a knife which the latter had picked up from the table, and put it back where it had been before, beside the book.

“I feel as though I had known when I was coming to Peters-burg, as though I had foreseen it,” Myshkin went on. “I didn’t want to come here; I wanted to forget everything here, to root it out of my heart! Well, good-bye! ... But what are you doing?”

As he talked Myshkin had absent-mindedly again picked up the same knife from the table, and again Rogozhin took it out of his hands and threw it on the table. It was a plain knife that wouldn’t shut up, with a horn handle, and a blade seven inches long and of about the usual breadth.

Seeing that Myshkin had specially noticed that the knife had been twice taken out of his hands, Rogozhin snatched it up in angry vexation, put it in the book, and flung the book on another table.

“Do you cut the pages with it?” Myshkin asked, but almost mechanically, still apparently absorbed in deep thought.

“Yes.”

“But it’s a garden knife?”

“Yes, it is. Can’t one cut a book with a garden knife?”

“But it’s ... quite a new one.”

“What if it is new? Mayn’t I buy a new knife?” Rogozhin cried in a perfect frenzy at last, growing more exasperated at every word.

Myshkin started and looked intently at Rogozhin. “Ach, we are a set!” he laughed suddenly, rousing himself completely. “Excuse me, brother, when my head is heavy, as it is now, and my illness ... I become utterly, utterly absent-minded and ridiculous. I meant to ask you about something quite different... . I’ve forgotten now. Good-bye! ...”

“Not that way,” said Rogozhin. “I’ve forgotten.”

“This way, this way, come, I’ll show you.”

CHAPTER 4

They went through the same rooms that Myshkin had passed through already; Rogozhin walked a little in front, Myshkin followed him. They went into a big room. On the walls there were several pictures, all of them portraits of bishops or landscapes in which nothing could be distinguished. Over the door leading into the next room there hung a picture of rather strange shape, about two yards in breadth and not more than a foot high. It was a painting of our Saviour who had just been taken from the cross. Myshkin glanced at it as though recalling something, but he was about to pass through the door without stopping. He felt very depressed and wanted to get out of this house as soon as possible. But Rogozhin suddenly stopped before the picture.

“All these pictures here were bought for a rouble or two by my father at auctions,” he said. “He liked pictures. A man who knows about paintings looked at all of them. They are rubbish,’ he said; ‘but that one, that picture over the door there, which was bought for a couple of roubles too,’ he said, ‘was of value.’ When my father was alive one man turned up who was ready to give three hundred and fifty roubles for it; but Savelyev, a merchant who is very fond of pictures, went up to four hundred for it, and last week he offered my brother Semyon Semyonovitch five hundred for it. I’ve kept it for myself.”

“Why, it.. . it’s a copy of a Holbein,” said Myshkin, who had by now examined the picture, “and, though I don’t know much about it, I think it’s a very good copy. I saw the picture abroad and I can’t forget it. But... what’s the matter?”

Rogozhin suddenly turned away from the picture and went on. No doubt his preoccupation and a peculiar, strangely irritable mood which had so suddenly shown itself in him might have explained this abruptness. Yet it seemed strange to Myshkin that the conversation, which had not been begun by him, should have been broken off so suddenly without Rogozhin’s answering him.

“And by the way, Lyov Nikolayevitch, I’ve long meant to ask you, do you believe in God?” said Rogozhin suddenly, after having gone on a few steps.

“How strangely you question me and . . . look after me!” Myshkin could not help observing.

“I like looking at that picture,” Rogozhin muttered after a pause, seeming to have forgotten his question.

“At that picture!” cried Myshkin, struck by a sudden thought. “At that picture! Why, that picture might make some people lose theirfaith.”

“That’s what it is doing,” Rogozhin assented unexpectedly.

They were just at the front door.

“What?” Myshkin stopped short. “What do you mean? I was almost joking, and you are so serious! And why do you ask whether I believe in God?”

“Oh, nothing. I meant to ask you before. Many people don’t believe nowadays. Is it true — you’ve lived abroad — a man told me when he was drunk that there are more who don’t believe in God among us in Russia than in all other countries? ‘It’s easier for us than for them,’ he said, ‘because we have gone further than they have.’ ...”

Rogozhin smiled bitterly. When he had asked his question, he suddenly opened the door and, holding the handle, waited for Myshkin to go out. Myshkin was surprised, but he went out. Rogozhin followed him on to the landing and closed the door behind him. They stood facing one another, as though neither knew where they were and what they had to do next.

“Good-bye, then,” said Myshkin, holding out his hand.

“Good-bye,” said Rogozhin, pressing tightly though mechanically the hand that was held out to him.

Myshkin went down a step and turned round.

“As to the question of faith,” he began, smiling (he evidently did not want to leave Rogozhin like that) and brightening up at a sudden reminiscence, “as to the question of faith, I had four different conversations in two days last week. I came home in the morning by the new railway and talked for four hours with a man in the train; we made friends on the spot. I had heard a great deal about him beforehand and had heard he was an atheist, among other things. He really is a very learned man, and I was delighted at the prospect of talking to a really learned man. What’s more, he is a most unusually well-bred man, so that he talked to me quite as if I were his equal in ideas and attainments. He doesn’t believe in God. Only, one thing struck me: that he seemed not to be talking about that at all, the whole time; and it struck me just because whenever I have met unbelievers before,

or read their books, it always seemed to me that they were speaking and writing in their books about something quite different, although it seemed to be about that on the surface. I said so to him at the time, but I suppose I didn't say so clearly, or did not know how to express it, for he didn't understand. In the evening I stopped for the night at a provincial hotel, and a murder had just been committed there the night before, so that every one was talking about it when I arrived. Two peasants, middle-aged men, friends who had known each other for a long time and were not drunk, had had tea and were meaning to go to bed in the same room. But one had noticed during those last two days that the other was wearing a silver watch on a yellow bead chain, which he seemed not to have seen on him before. The man was not a thief; he was an honest man, in fact, and by a peasant's standard by no means poor. But he was so taken with that watch and so fascinated by it that at last he could not restrain himself. He took a knife, and when his friend had turned away, he approached him cautiously from behind, took aim, turned his eyes heavenwards, crossed himself, and praying fervently 'God forgive me for Christ's sake!' he cut his friend's throat at one stroke like a sheep and took his watch."

Rogozhin went off into peals of laughter; he laughed as though he were in a sort of fit. It was positively strange to see such laughter after the gloomy mood that had preceded it.

"I do like that! "Vfes, that beats everything!" he cried convulsively, gasping for breath. "One man doesn't believe in God at all, while the other believes in Him so thoroughly that he prays as he murders men! . . . "Vbu could never have invented that, brother! Ha-ha-ha! That beats everything."

"Next morning I went out to walk about the town,"

Myshkin went on, as soon as Rogozhin was quiet again, though his lips still quivered with spasmodic convulsive laughter. "I saw a drunken soldier in a terribly disorderly state staggering about the wooden pavement. He came up to me. 'Buy a silver cross, sir?' said he. 'I'll let you have it for twenty kopecks. It's silver.' I saw in his hands a cross — he must have just taken it off — on a very dirty blue ribbon; but one could see at once that it was only tin. It was a big one with eight corners, of a regular Byzantine pattern. I took out twenty kopecks and gave them to him, and at once put the cross round my neck; and I could see from his face how glad he was that he had cheated a stupid gentleman, and he went off immediately to drink what he got for it, there was no doubt about that. At that time, brother, I was

quite carried away by the rush of impressions that burst upon me in Russia; I had understood nothing about Russia before. I had grown up as it were inarticulate, and my memories of my country were somehow fantastic during those five years abroad. Well, I walked on, thinking, ‘Yes, I’ll put off judging that man who sold his Christ. God only knows what’s hidden in those weak and drunken hearts.’ An hour later, when I was going back to the hotel, I came upon a peasant woman with a tiny baby in her arms. She was quite a young woman and the baby was about six weeks old. The baby smiled at herforthe first time in its life. I saw her crossing herself with great devotion. ‘What are you doing, my dear?’ (I was always asking questions in those days.) ‘God has just such gladness every time he sees from heaven that a sinner is praying to Him with all his heart, as a mother has when she sees the first smile on her baby’s face.’ That was what the woman said to me almost in those words, this deep, subtle and truly religious thought — a thought in which all the essence of Christianity finds expression; that is the whole conception of God as our Father and of God’s gladness in man, like a father’s in his own child — the fundamental idea of Christ! A simple peasant woman! It’s true she was a mother . . . and who knows, very likely that woman was the wife of that soldier. Listen, Parfyon. “Vbu asked me a question just now; here is my answer. The essence of religious feeling does not come under any sort of reasoning or atheism, and has nothing to do with any crimes or misdemeanours. There is somethinq else here, and there will always be something else — something that the atheists will for ever slur over; they will always be talking of something else. But the chief thing is that you will notice it more clearly and quickly in the Russian heart than anywhere else. And this is my conclusion. It’s one of the chief convictions which I have gathered from our Russia. There is work to be done, Parfyon! There is work to be done in our Russian world, believe me! Remember how we used to meet in Moscow and talk at one time . . . and I didn’t mean to come back here now, and I thought to meet you not at all like this! Oh, well! . . . Good-bye till we meet! May God be with you!”

He turned and went down the stairs.

“Lyov Nikolayevitch!” Parfyon shouted from above when Myshkin had reached the first half-landing. “Have you that cross you bought from that soldier on you?”

“Yes,” and Myshkin stopped again.

“Show me.”

Something strange again! He thought a moment, went upstairs again, and pulled out the cross to show him without taking it off his neck.

“Give it me,” said Rogozhin.

“Why? Would you ...” Myshkin did not want to part with the cross.

“I’ll wear it, and give you mine for you to wear.”

“You want to change crosses? Certainly, Parfyon, I am delighted. We will be brothers!”

Myshkin took off his tin cross, Parfyon his gold one, and they changed. Parfyon did not speak. With painful surprise Myshkin noticed that the same mistrustfulness, the same bitter, almost ironical smile still lingered on the face of his adopted brother; at moments, anyway, it was plainly to be seen. In silence at last Rogozhin took Myshkin’s hand and stood for some time as though unable to make up his mind. At last he suddenly drew him after him, saying in a scarcely audible voice, “Come along.” They crossed the landing of the first floor and rang at the door facing the one they had come out of. It was soon opened to them. A bent old woman, wearing a black knitted kerchief, bowed low to Rogozhin without speaking. He quickly asked her some question, and, without waiting for an answer, led Myshkin through the rooms. Again they went through dark rooms of an extraordinary chilly cleanliness,

coldly and severely furnished with old-fashioned furniture under clean white covers. Without announcing their arrival, Rogozhin led Myshkin into a small room like a drawing-room, divided in two by a polished mahogany wall with doors at each end, probably leading to a bedroom. In the corner of the drawing-room by the stove a little old woman was sitting in an armchair. She did not look very old; she had a fairly healthy, pleasant round face, but she was quite grey, and it could be seen from the first glance that she had become quite childish. She was wearing a black woollen dress, a large black kerchief on her shoulders, and a clean white cap with black ribbons. Her feet were resting on a footstool. Another clean little old woman, rather older, was with her. She too was in mourning, and she too wore a white cap; she was silent, knitting a stocking, and was probably some sort of a companion. It might be fancied that they were both always silent. The first old woman, seeing Rogozhin and Myshkin, smiled to them, and nodded her head several times to them as a sign of satisfaction.

“Mother,” said Rogozhin, kissing her hand, “this is my great friend, Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch Myshkin.

I’ve exchanged crosses with him. He was like a brother to me at one time in Moscow; he did a great deal for me. Bless him, mother, as though it were your own son you were blessing. Nay, old mother, like this. Let me put your fingers right....”

But before Parfyon had time to touch her, the old woman had raised her right hand, put her two fingers against her thumb, and three times devoutly made the sign of the cross over Myshkin. Then she nodded kindly, affectionately to him again.

“Come along, Lyov Nikolayevitch,” said Parfyon, “I only brought you here for that....”

When they came out on to the staircase again, he added:

“You know she understands nothing that’s said to her, and she didn’t understand a word I said, but she blessed you; so she wanted to do it of herself. . . . Well, good-bye, it’s time you were going, and I too.”

And he opened his door.

“At least let me embrace you at parting, you strange fellow,” cried Myshkin, looking at him with tender reproach; and he would have embraced him.

But Parfyon had scarcely raised his arms when he let them fall aqain. He could not brinq himself to it.

He turned away so as not to look at Myshkin; he didn’t want to embrace him.

“Don’t be afraid! Though I’ve taken your cross, I won’t murder you for your watch!” he muttered indistinctly, with a sudden strange laugh.

But all at once his whole face changed; he turned horribly pale, his lips trembled, his eyes glowed. He raised his arms, embraced Myshkin warmly, and said breathlessly:

“Well, take her then, since it’s fated! She is yours! I give in to you! ... Remember Rogozhin!”

And turning from Myshkin without looking at him, he went hurriedly in and slammed the door after him.

CHAPTER 5

It WAS by now late, almost half-past two, and Myshkin did not find General Epanchin at home. Leaving a card, he made up his mind to go to the hotel “The Scales,” and inquire for Kolya, and if he were not there, to leave a note for him. At “The Scales” they told him that Nikolay Ardalionovitch “had gone out in the morning, but as he went out he left word that if anyone should ask for him, they were to say that he might be back at three o’clock. But if he were not back by half-past three, it would mean that he had taken the train to Pavlovsk to Madame Epanchin’s villa and would dine there.” Myshkin sat down to wait for him, and as he was there, asked for dinner.

Kolya had not made his appearance at half-past three, nor even at four. Myshkin went out and walked away mechanically. At the beginning of summer in Petersburg there are sometimes exquisite days — bright, still and hot. By good fortune this day was one of those rare days. For some time Myshkin wandered aimlessly. He knew the town very little. He stood still sometimes in squares, on bridges, or at cross roads facing certain houses; once he went into a confectioner’s to rest. Sometimes he began watching the passers-by with great interest; but most of the time he scarcely noticed the people in the street, nor where he was going. He was painfully strained and restless, and at the same time he felt an extraordinary craving for solitude. He longed to be alone and to give himself up quite passively to this agonising emotion without seeking to escape from it. He loathed the thought of facing the questions that were surging in his heart and his mind. “Am I to blame for all this?” he muttered to himself, almost unconscious of his own words.

Towards six o’clock he found himself at the railway station of the Tsarskoe Syelo line. Solitude had soon become unbearable; a new warm impulse seized upon his heart, and for one moment the darkness in which his soul was steeped was lighted up by a ray of brightness. He took a ticket to Pavlovsk and was in impatient haste to get off; but, of course, he was pursued by something, and that something was a reality and not a fancy, as he was perhaps inclined to imagine. He had almost taken his seat in the train, when he suddenly flung the ticket he had only just taken on the floor and went back out of the station, pondering and confused. Some time later

in the street he seemed suddenly to recall something; he seemed suddenly to grasp something very strange, something that had long worried him. He suddenly realised that he had been doing something which he had been doing for a long time, though he had not been aware of it till that minute. For some hours previously, even at “The Scales,” and even before he went there, he had at intervals begun suddenly looking for something. He would forget it for a long while, half an hour at a time, and then begin looking about him again uneasily.

But he had no sooner observed in himself this morbid and till then quite unconscious impulse, when there flashed upon his mind another recollection which interested him extremely. He remembered that, at the moment when he became aware that he was absorbed in looking for something, he was standing on the pavement before a shop window, examining with great interest the goods exposed in it. He felt he must find out whether he really had stood before that shop window just now, five minutes, perhaps, before; whether he hadn’t dreamed it; whether he wasn’t mistaken. Did that shop really exist with the goods in its window? He certainly felt specially unwell that day, almost as he used in the past when an attack of his old disease was coming on. He knew that at such times he used to be exceptionally absent-minded, and often mixed up things and people, if he did not look at them with special strained attention. But there was another special reason why he wanted to find out whether he really had been standing then before that shop. Among the things in the shop window was one thing he had looked at, he had even mentally fixed the price of it at sixty kopecks. He remembered that in spite of his absent-mindedness and agitation. If, then, that shop existed and that thing really was in the window, he must have stopped simply to look at that thing. So it must have interested him so much that it attracted his attention, even at the time when he was in such distress and confusion, just after he had come out of the railway station. He walked almost in anguish, looking to the right and his heart beat with uneasy impatience. But here was the shop, he had found it at last! He had been five hundred paces from it when he had felt impelled to turn back. And there was the article worth sixty kopecks. “It would be certainly sixty kopecks, it’s not worth more,” he repeated now and laughed. But his laughter was hysterical; he felt very wretched. He remembered clearly now that just when he had been standing here before this window he had suddenly turned round, as he had done that morning when he caught

Rogozhin’s eyes fixed upon him. Making certain that he was not mistaken (though he had felt quite sure of it before), he left the shop and walked quickly away from it. He must certainly think it all over. It was clear now that it had not been his fancy at the station either, that something real must have happened to him, and that it must be overcome again by a sort of insuperable inner loathing: he did not want to think anything out, and he did not; he fell to musing on something quite different.

He remembered among other things that he always had one minute just before the epileptic fit (if it came on while he was awake), when suddenly in the midst of sadness, spiritual darkness and oppression, there seemed at moments a flash of light in his brain, and with extraordinary impetus all his vital forces suddenly began working at their highest tension. The sense of life, the consciousness of self, were multiplied ten times at these moments which passed like a flash of lightning. His mind and his heart were flooded with extraordinary light; all his uneasiness, all his doubts, all his anxieties were relieved at once; they were all merged in a lofty calm, full of serene, harmonious joy and hope. But these moments, these flashes, were only the prelude of that final second (it was never more than a second) with which the fit began. That second was, of course, unendurable. Thinking of that moment later, when he was all right again, he often said to himself that all these gleams and flashes of the highest sensation of life and self-consciousness, and therefore also of the highest form of existence, were nothing but disease, the interruption of the normal conditions; and if so, it was not at all the highest form of being, but on the contrary must be reckoned the lowest. And yet he came at last to an extremely paradoxical conclusion. “What if it is disease?” he decided at last. “What does it matter that it is an abnormal intensity, if the result, if the minute of sensation, remembered and analysed afterwards in health, turns out to be the acme of harmony and beauty, and gives a feeling, unknown and undivined till then, of completeness, of proportion, of reconciliation, and of ecstatic devotional merging in the highest synthesis of life?” These vague expressions seemed to him very comprehensible, though too weak. That it really was “beauty and worship,” that it really was the “highest synthesis of life” he could not doubt, and could not admit the possibility of doubt. It was not as though he saw abnormal and unreal visions of some sort at that moment, as from hashish, opium, or wine, destroying the reason and distorting the soul. He was quite capable of judging of that when the attack was over. These

moments were only an extraordinary quickening of self-consciousness — if the condition was to be expressed in one word — and at the same time of the direct sensation of existence in the most intense degree. Since at that second, that is at the very last conscious moment before the fit, he had time to say to himself clearly and consciously, “\fes, for this moment one might give one’s whole life!” then without doubt that moment was really worth the whole of life. He did not insist on the dialectical part of his argument, however. Stupefaction, spiritual darkness, idiocy stood before him conspicuously as the consequence of these “higher moments”; seriously, of course, he could not have disputed it. There was undoubtedly a mistake in his conclusion — that is, in his estimate of that minute, but the reality of the sensation somewhat perplexed him. What was he to make of that reality? For the very thing had happened; he actually had said to himself at that second, that, for the infinite happiness he had felt in it, that second really might well be worth the whole of life. “At that moment,” as he told Rogozhin one day in Moscow at the time when they used to meet there, “at that moment I seem somehow to understand the extraordinary saying that there shall be no more time. Probably,” he added, smiling, “this is the very second which was not long enough for the water to be spilt out of Mahomet’s pitcher, though the epileptic prophet had time to gaze at all the habitations of Allah.”

“Vfes, he had often met Rogozhin in Moscow, and they had not talked only of this. “Rogozhin said just now that I had been a brother to him then; he said that for the first time to-day,” Myshkin thought to himself.

He thought this, sitting on a seat under a tree in the Summer Garden. It was about seven o’clock. The Garden was empty; a shadow passed over the setting sun for an instant. It was sultry and there was a feeling in the air like a foreboding of a thunderstorm in the distance. His present contemplative mood had a certain charm for him. His mind and memory seemed to fasten upon every external object about him, and he found pleasure in it. He was yearning all the while to forget something in the present, something grave; but at the first glance about him he was aware again at once of his gloomy thought, the thought he was so longing to get away from. He recalled that he had talked at dinner to the waiter at the restaurant of a very strange murder which had excited much talk and sensation.

But he had no sooner recollected it than something strange happened to him again.

An extraordinary, overwhelming desire, almost a temptation, suddenly paralyzed his will. He got up from the seat, walked straight from the Garden towards the Petersburg Side. Not long ago he had asked a passerby on the bank of the Neva to point out to him across the river the Petersburg Side. It was pointed out to him, but he had not gone there then. And in any case it would have been useless to go that day, he knew it. He had long had the address; he could easily find the house of Lebedyev's relation; but he knew almost for certain that he would not find her at home. "She certainly is gone to Pavlovsk, or Kolya would have left word at The Scales,' as he had agreed." So if he went there now, it was certainly not with the idea of seeing her. A gloomy, tormenting curiosity of another sort allured him now. A sudden new idea had come into his mind.

But it was enough for him that he had set off and that he knew where he was going; though a minute later he was walking along again almost unconscious of his surroundings. Further consideration of his "sudden idea" became all at once intensely distasteful to him, almost impossible. He stared with painfully strained attention at every object that met his eye: he gazed at the sky, at the Neva. He spoke to a little boy he met. Perhaps his epileptic condition was growing more and more acute. The storm was certainly gathering, though slowly. It was beginning to thunder far away. The air had become very sultry....

For some reason he was continually haunted now, as one is sometimes haunted by an annoying and stupidly persistent tune, by the image of Lebedyev's nephew, whom he had seen that morning. Strange to say, he kept seeing him as the murderer of whom Lebedyev had spoken that morning, while introducing his nephew to Myshkin. Yes, he had read quite a little while ago about that murder; he had read and heard much since he had been in Russia of such cases, and always followed them. And that evening he had been extremely interested in his talk with the waiter about that same murder — the murder of the Zhemarins. The waiter agreed with him, he remembered that. He remembered the waiter too. He was an intelligent fellow, staid and careful; thouqh "God only knows what he is like really; it's hard to make new people out in a new country."

"Vfet he was beginning to have a passionate faith in the Russian soul. Oh, in those six months he had passed through a great deal — a great deal that had been quite new to him, unguessed, unknown and unexpected! But the soul of another is a dark place, and the Russian soul is a dark place —

for many it is a dark place. He had long been friends with Rogozhin, for instance, they had been intimate, they had been like brothers; but did he know Rogozhin? And what chaos one found here sometimes in all this! What a muddle, what hideousness! And what a repulsive and self-satisfied pimple that nephew of Lebedyev's was! "What am I saying, though?" (Myshkin went on dreaming.) "Did he kill those creatures, those six people? I seem to be mixing it up.. .. How strange it is! I am rather giddy. . . . And what a charming, what a sweet face Lebedyev's eldest daughter had — the one standing up with the baby! What an innocent, what an almost childish expression! What an almost childish laugh!" Strange that he had nearly forgotten that face and now he could think of nothing else.

Lebedyev, who stamped his feet at them, probably adored them all. But what was certain as that twice two make four was that Lebedyev adored his nephew too!

But how could he venture to criticise them so positively, he who had only come that day? How could he pass such judgments? Why, Lebedyev had been a riddle to him that day. Had he expected a Lebedyev like that? Had he known a Lebedyev like that before? Lebedyev and Du Barry — heavens! If Rogozhin did commit murder, though, at last, it would not be such a senseless murder. There would not be the same chaos. A weapon made to a special pattern and the murder of six people perpetrated in complete delirium. . . . Had Rogozhin a weapon made to a special pattern? Had he .. . But.. . was it certain that Rogozhin would commit murder? Myshkin suddenly started. "Isn't it criminal, isn't it base on my part to make such a supposition with cynical openness!" he cried, and a flush of shame instantly overspread his face. He was astounded; he stood still, as though struck dumb in the road. He remembered all at once the Pavlovsk station that afternoon and the station at which he had arrived that morning, and Rogozhin's question asked to his face about the eyes; and Rogozhin's cross, which he was wearing now; and the blessing of his mother, to whom Rogozhin had taken him himself; and that last convulsive embrace, that last renunciation of Rogozhin's on the stairs — and after all that, to catch himself incessantly looking about him for something, and that shop and that object. . . . What baseness! And, after all that, he was going now with a "special purpose," with a "special sudden idea"! His whole soul was overwhelmed with despair and suffering. Myshkin wanted to turn back at once and go home to the hotel. He even turned and walked that way, but a

minute later he stood still, reflected, and went back again to where he had been going.

“Vfes, he was already on the Petersburg Side; he was near the house. It was not with that same purpose he was going there now; it was not with that special idea! And how could it be? “Vfes, his illness was coming back, there was no doubt of that; perhaps he would even have the fit that day. All this darkness was owing to that; “the idea,” too, was owing to that! Now the darkness was dispelled, the demon had been driven awav, doubt did not exist,

there was joy in his heart! And — it was so long since he had seen her, he wanted to see her, and . . . Yes, he would have liked to meet Rogozhin now; he would have taken him by the hand and they would have gone together. His heart was pure; he was not Rogozhin’s rival! The next day he would go himself and tell Rogozhin that he had seen her. Why, he had flown here, as Rogozhin said, that afternoon simply to see her! Perhaps he would find her! It was not certain after all that she was at Pavlovsk.

Yes, all this must be made clear now, that all might see clearly into each other’s hearts, that there might be no more such gloomy and passionate renunciations as Rogozhin’s that day; and all this must be done in freedom and . . . light. Surely Rogozhin too could walk in the light. He said he did not love her like that; that he had no compassion for her, no “sort of pity.” It is true he had added afterwards that “your pity perhaps is stronger than my love”; but he had been unjust to himself. Hm! . . . Rogozhin reading — was not that “pity”? The beginning of “pity”? Did not the very presence of that book prove that he was fully conscious of his attitude to her? And all he had told him that morning? “Vfes, that was deeper than mere passion. And does her face inspire no more than passion? Can that face indeed inspire passion now? It excites grief, it clutches the whole soul, it . . . and a poignant, agonising memory suddenly passed through Myshkin’s heart.

“Vfes, agonising. He remembered how he had suffered not long ago when first he had noticed in her symptoms of insanity. Then he had been almost in despair. And how could he have left her when she ran away from him to Rogozhin? He ought to have run after her himself without waiting for news of her. But. . . was it possible Rogozhin had not yet noticed insanity in her? Hm! Rogozhin sees other causes for everything, passions! And what insane jealousy! What did he mean by his supposition that

morning? (Myshkin suddenly flushed and there was a sort of shudder at his heart.)

But what use was it to think of that? There was insanity on both sides. And for him, Myshkin, to love that woman with passion was almost unthinkable, would have been almost cruelty, inhumanity. Yes, yes! No, Rogozhin was unfair to himself; he had a great heart which could suffer and be compassionate. When he knew all the truth, when he realised what a piteous creature that broken, insane woman was, wouldn't he forgive her all the past, all his agonies? Wouldn't he become her servant, her brother, her friend, her Providence? Compassion would teach even Rogozhin and awaken his mind. Compassion was the chief and perhaps only law of all human existence. Ah, how unpardonably and dishonourably he had wronged Rogozhin! No, it was not that "the Russian soul was a dark place," but that in his own soul there was darkness, since he could imagine such horrors! Because of a few warm words from the heart in Moscow Rogozhin had called him his brother; while he . . . But that was sickness and delirium. That would all come right! . . . How gloomily Rogozhin had said that morning that he was "losing his faith"! That man must be suffering terribly! He had said that "he liked looking at that picture"; it was not that he liked it, but that he felt drawn to it. Rogozhin was not merely a passionate soul; he was a fighter, anyway: he wanted by force to get back his lost faith. He had an agonising need of it now. . . . Yes, to believe in something! To believe in some one! How strange that picture of Holbein's was, though! . .. Ah, here is the street! And here must be that house. "Vfes, it was it, No. 16, "the house of Madame Filisov." It was here! Myshkin rang and asked for Nastasya Filippovna.

The mistress of the house herself answered him that Nastasya Filippovna had gone to Pavlovsk that morning to stay with Darya Alexeyevna, "and it may be that she will stay there some days." Madame Filisov was a little, keen-eyed, sharp-faced woman about forty, with a sly and watchful expression. She asked his name, and there was an apparently intentional air of mystery in the question. Myshkin was at first unwilling to answer, but immediately turned back and asked her emphatically to give his name to Nastasya Filippovna. Madame Filisov received this emphatic request with great attention and an extraordinary air of secrecy, by which she evidently meant to suggest, "Set your mind at rest; I understand." Myshkin's name obviously made a very great impression on her. He looked absent-mindedly

at her, turned, and went back to his hotel. But he looked quite different now. An extraordinary change had come over him aqain and apparently in one instant. He walked along once more pale, weak, suffering, agitated; his knees trembled and a vague bewildered smile hovered about his blue lips. His “sudden idea” was at once confirmed and justified, and he believed in his demon again.

But was it confirmed? But was it justified? Why that shiver again, that cold sweat, that darkness and chill in his soul? Was it because he had once more seen those eyes? But he had gone out of the Summer Garden on purpose to see them! That was what his “sudden idea” amounted to. He had intensely desired to see “those eyes” again, so as to make quite certain that he would meet them there, at that house. He had desired it passionately, and why was he so crushed and over-whelmed now by the fact that he had actually just seen them? As though he had not expected it! “Vfes, those were the same eyes (and there could be no doubt now that they were the same eyes) which had gleamed at him in the morning, in the crowd when he got out of the train from Moscow; they were the same (absolutely the same) which he had caught looking at him from behind that afternoon just as he was sitting down at Rogozhin’s. Rogozhin had denied it at the time; he had asked with a wry and frozen smile “whose eyes were they?” And not many hours ago, when Myshkin was getting into the Pavlovsk train to go down to see Aglaia, and suddenly caught sight of those eyes again for the third time that day, he had an intense desire to go to Rogozhin and to tell him whose eyes they were. But he had run out of the station and had been hardly conscious of anything, till the moment when he found himself standing at the cutler’s shop and thinking an object with a stag-horn handle would cost sixty kopecks. A strange and dreadful demon had got hold of him for good and would not let him go again. That demon had whispered to him in the Summer Garden, as he sat lost in thought under a limetree, that if Rogozhin had felt obliged to follow him that day and to dog his footsteps, he would certainly, on finding Myshkin had not gone to Pavlovsk (which was of course a terrible fact for Rogozhin) have gone there to Filisov’s house and would certainly have watched there for him, Myshkin, who had given him his word of honour only that morning that he would not see her and that he had not come to Petersburg for that. And here was Myshkin hurrying feverishly to that house! And what if he really did meet Rogozhin there? He had only seen an unhappy man whose state of mind was gloomy, but very

easy to understand. That unhappy man did not even conceal himself now. Yes, that morning Rogozhin had for some reason denied it and told a lie, but at the station he stood almost unconcealed. Indeed, it was rather he, Myshkin, had concealed himself, and now Rogozhin. And now at the house he stood on the other side of the street fifty paces away on the opposite pavement, waiting with his arms folded. There too he had been quite conspicuous and seemed to wish to be conspicuous on purpose. He stood like an accuser and a judge and not like . . . what?

And why had he, Myshkin, not gone up to him now? Why had he turned away from him, as though noticing nothing, though their eyes had met? (Yes, their eyes had met; they had looked at one another.) Why, he himself had wanted to take Rogozhin by the hand and to go there with him. He had meant to go to him next day and to tell him he had been to see her. He had refused to follow his demon when, half way there, joy had suddenly flooded his soul. Or was there really something in Rogozhin — that is, in the whole image of the man that day, in all his words, movements, actions, looks, taken together, that could justify Myshkin's awful misgivings and the revolting promptings of his inner voice? Something that can be seen, but is difficult to analyse and describe; something impossible to justify on sufficient grounds, though it yet, in spite of all that difficulty and impossibility, makes a complete and compelling impression which involuntarily becomes a firm conviction? ...

Conviction — of what? (Oh, how Myshkin was tortured by the hideousness, the "degradingness" of this conviction, of "that base foreboding," and how he had reproached himself!) "Say of what if you dare," he kept telling himself continually with reproach and challenge. "Formulate all your thought, dare to express it clearly, precisely, without faltering! Oh, I am ignoble!" he repeated with indignation and a flush on his face. "With what eyes shall I look upon that man for the rest of my life! Oh, what a day! Oh, God, what a nightmare!"

There was a moment at the end of that long,

miserable walk back from the Petersburg Side when an irresistible desire seized Myshkin to go straightway to Rogozhin, to wait for him, to embrace him with shame, with tears, to tell him everything and to end it all at once. But he was already standing at his hotel. . . . How he had disliked that hotel in the morning, those corridors, all that house, his room — disliked it at first sight! Several times during the day he had thought with disgust that he

would have to return there. . . . “Why, like a sick woman, I am believing in every presentiment to-day!” he thought with irritable irony, standing still at the gate. One circumstance that had happened that day rose before his mind at that moment, but he thought of it “coldly,”

“with perfect composure,”

“without nightmare.” He suddenly recalled the knife he had seen on Rogozhin’s table that morning. “But why shouldn’t Rogozhin have as many knives as he likes on his table?” he asked, greatly astounded at himself and at that point, petrified with amazement, he suddenly recalled how he had stopped at the cutler’s shop. “But what connection can there be in that?” he cried out at last, but stopped short. A new unbearable shock of shame, almost of despair, held him rooted to the spot just outside the gate. He stood still for a minute. People are sometimes held like this by sudden and unbearable memories, especially when they are associated with shame. “Yes, I am a man of no heart and a coward,” he repeated gloomily, and abruptly moved to go on, but ... he stopped short again.

The gateway, which was always dark, was particularly dark at that moment; the storm-cloud had crept over the sky and engulfed the evening light, and at the very moment that Myshkin approached the house the storm broke and there was a downpour. He was just at the entrance of the gateway when he moved on abruptly after his momentary halt. And he suddenly saw in the half dark under the gateway close to the stairs a man. The man seemed to be waiting for something, but he vanished at once. Myshkin had only caught a glimpse of him and could not see him distinctly and could not have told for certain who he was. Besides, numbers of people might be passing here; it was a hotel and people were continually running in and out. But he suddenly felt a complete and overwhelming conviction that he recognised the man and that it was certainly Rogozhin. A moment after, Myshkin rushed after him up the stairs. His heart sank. “Everything will be decided now,” he repeated to himself with strange conviction.

The staircase up which Myshkin ran from the gateway led to the corridors of the first and second floors, on which were the rooms of the hotel. As in all old houses, the staircase was of stone, dark and narrow, and it turned round a thick stone column. On the first half-landing there was a hollow like a niche in the column, not more than half a yard wide and nine inches deep. Yet there was room for a man to stand there. Dark as it was, Myshkin, on reaching the half-landing, at once discovered that a man was

hiding in the niche. Myshkin suddenly wanted to pass by without looking to the right. He had taken one step already, but he could not resist turning round.

Those two eyes, the same tv\o eyes, met his own. The man hidden in the niche had already moved one step from it. For one second they stood facing one another and almost touching. Suddenly Myshkin seized him by the shoulders and turned him back towards the staircase, nearer to the light; he wanted to see his face more clearly.

Rogozhin's eyes flashed and a smile of fury contorted his face. His right hand was raised and something gleamed in it; Myshkin did not think of checking it. He only remembered that he thought he cried out, "Parfyon, I don't believe it!" Then suddenly something seemed torn asunder before him; his soul was flooded with intense inner light. The moment lasted perhaps half a second, yet he clearly and consciously remembered the beginning, the first sound of the fearful scream which broke of itself from his breast and which he could not have checked by any effort. Then his consciousness was instantly extinguished and complete darkness followed.

It was an epileptic fit, the first he had had for a long time. It is well known that epileptic fits come on quite suddenly. At the moment the face is horribly distorted, especially the eyes. The whole body and the features of the face work with convulsive jerks and contortions. A terrible, indescribable scream that is unlike anything else breaks from the sufferer. In that scream everything human seems obliterated and it is impossible, or very difficult, for an observer to realise and admit that it is the man himself screaming. It seems indeed as though it were some one else screaming from within the man. That is how many people at least have described their impression. The sight of a man in an epileptic fit fills many people with positive and unbearable horror, in which there is a certain element of the uncanny. It must be supposed that some such feeling of sudden horror, together with the other terrible sensations of the moment, had suddenly paralysed Rogozhin and so saved Myshkin from the knife with which he would have stabbed him. Then before he had time to grasp that it was a fit, seeing that Myshkin had staggered away from him and fallen backwards downstairs, knocking his head violently against the stone step, Rogozhin flew headlong downstairs, avoiding the prostrate figure, and, not knowing what he was doing, ran out of the hotel.

Struggling in violent convulsions, the sick man slipped down the steps, of which there were about fifteen, to the bottom of the staircase. Very soon, not more than five minutes later, he was noticed and a crowd collected. A pool of blood by his head raised the doubt whether the sick man had hurt himself, or whether there had been some crime. It was soon recognised, however, that it was a case of epilepsy; one of the people at the hotel recognised Myshkin as having arrived that morning. The difficulty was luckily solved bya fortunate circumstance.

Kolya Ivolgin, who had promised to be back at “The Scales” at four and had instead gone to Pavlovsk, had on a sudden impulse refused to dine at Madame Epanchin’s, had come back to Petersburg and hurried to “The Scales,” where he had turned up about seven o’clock. Learning from the note that Myshkin had left for him that the latter was in town, he hastened to find him at the address given in the note. Being informed in the hotel that Myshkin had gone out, he went downstairs to the restaurant and waited for him there, drinking tea and listening to the organ. Happening to overhear that some one had had a fit, he was led by a true presentiment to run out to the spot and recognised Myshkin. Suitable steps were taken at once. Myshkin was carried to his room. Though he regained consciousness, he did not fully come to himself for a long time. A doctor who was sent for to look at his injured head said there was not the least danger,

and ordered a lotion. An hour later, when Myshkin began to be able to understand pretty well what was going on, Kolya took him in a covered carriage from the hotel to Lebedyev’s. Lebedyev received the sick man with bows and extraordinary warmth. For his sake he hastened his removal, and three days later they were all at Pavlovsk.

CHAPTER 6

Lebedyev's VILLA was not a large one, but was comfortable and even pretty. The part of it which was to let had been newly decorated. On the rather spacious verandah by which the house was entered from the street, orange-trees, lemons and jasmines had been placed in large green wooden tubs, which in Lebedyev's opinion gave the place a most seductive appearance. He had bought some of those trees with the villa and was so enchanted by the effect they produced in the verandah that he resolved to take advantage of an opportunity to buy some more of the same kind at an auction. When all the shrubs had been brought to the villa and put in their places, Lebedyev had several times that day run down the steps of the verandah to admire the effect from the street, and every time he mentally increased the sum which he proposed to ask from his future tenant.

Myshkin, worn out, depressed, and physically shattered, was delighted with the villa. But on the day of arriving at Pavlovsk — that is, three days after the fit, Myshkin looked almost well again, though inwardly he still felt ill-effects. He was glad to see every one who was about him during those three days; he was glad of Kolya, who hardly left his side; glad to see the Lebedyev family (the nephew had gone off somewhere); he was glad to see Lebedyev himself, and even welcomed with pleasure General Ivolgin, who had visited him before he left Petersburg. On the evening they arrived at Pavlovsk a good many guests were assembled on the verandah about him. The first to arrive was Ganya, whom Myshkin hardly recognised; he had changed so much and grown so much thinner in those six months. Then came Varya and Ptitsyn, who also had a villa at Pavlovsk. General Ivolgin was almost always at Lebedyev's and had apparently moved in with him. Lebedyev tried to keep him in his own part of the house and to prevent his going to see Myshkin. He treated the general like a friend; they seemed to have known each other a long time. Myshkin noticed during those three days that they were frequently engaged in long conversations together; that they often shouted and argued, even about learned subjects, which evidently gave Lebedyev great satisfaction. One might have thought that the general was necessary to him. From the time they moved to Pavlovsk Lebedyev began to be as careful about his own family as he had been about the general. On the pretext of not disturbing Myshkin, he would not let anyone

go to see him. He stamped his feet, rushed at his daughters and chased them all away, even Vera with the baby, at the least suspicion that they were going on to the verandah where Myshkin was, in spite of Myshkin's begging him not to send anyone away.

"In the first place, there will be no respect shown if you let them do what they like; and, in the second place, it's really improper for them," he explained at last in reply to Myshkin's direct question.

"But why so?" protested Myshkin. "Really you only worry me with all these attentions and watchfulness. It's dull for me alone, I've told you so several times;

and you depress me more than ever by the way you are always waving your hands and walking about on tiptoe."

Myshkin hinted at the fact that, though Lebedyev chased away all his household on the pretext that quiet was necessary for the invalid, he had been coming in himself every minute, and always first opened the door, poked his head in, looked about the room, as though he wished to make sure that he was there and had not run away, and then slowly, on tiptoe, with stealthy steps, approached the armchair, so that he sometimes startled his lodger. He was continually inquiring if he wanted anything, and when Myshkin began asking him at last to leave him alone, he turned away obediently without a word, stole on tiptoe to the door, waving his hands at every step, as though to say that he had only just looked in, that he would not say a word, that he had already gone out and would not come back; yet within ten minutes, or at most a quarter of an hour, he would reappear. The fact that Kolya had free access to Myshkin was a source of the deepest mortification and even of resentful indignation to Lebedyev. Kolya noticed that Lebedvev used to stand at the door for half an hour at a time listening to what he and Myshkin were talking about, and of course he informed Myshkin of the fact.

"You seem to have appropriated me, since you keep me under lock and key," Myshkin protested. "At the villa, anyway, I want it to be different; and, let me tell you, I shall see anyone I like and go anywhere I choose."

"Without the faintest doubt!" Lebedyev protested, waving his hands.

Myshkin scanned him intently from head to foot.

"And have you brought the little cupboard here that was hanging at the head of your bed?"

"No, I haven't."

“Have you left it there?”

“It was impossible to bring it, I should have to wrench it from the wall.... It’s fixed firmly, firmly.”

“But perhaps there’s another one like it here?”

“A better one — a better one! It was there when I bought the villa.”

“A-ah! Who was it you wouldn’t admit to see me an hour ago?”

“It. . . it was the general. It’s true I didn’t let him in,

and he ought not to come. I have a great respect for that man, prince, he ... he is a great man. Don’t you believe me? Well, you will see; but yet. . . it’s better, illustrious prince, for you not to receive him.”

“But why so, allow me to ask? And why are you standing on tiptoe now, Lebedyev, and why do you always approach me as though you wanted to whisper a secret in my ear?”

“I am abject, abject, I feel it,” Lebedyev replied unexpectedly, striking himself on the chest with feeling. “And won’t the general be too hospitable for you?”

“Too hospitable?”

“Yes, hospitable. To begin with, he is intending to live with me; that he might do, but he is always in extremes, he is claiming to be a relation at once. We’ve been into the question of relationship several times already; it appears that we are connected by marriage. You are a second cousin of his too, on the mother’s side; he explained it to me only yesterday. If you are his cousin, then you and I must be relations too, illustrious prince. That’s no matter, it’s a trifling weakness; but he assured me just now that all his life, ever since he was an ensign up to the eleventh of June last year, he had never sat down to dinner with less than two hundred people at his table. He went so far at last as to say they never got up from the table, so they had dinner and supper and tea for fifteen hours out of four-and-twenty for thirty years on end without a break, so that they scarcely had the time to change the tablecloths. One would get up and go, and another would come, and on holidays there would be as many as three hundred, and on the thousandth anniversary of the foundation of Russia he counted seven hundred people. It’s a passion with him; such assertions are a very bad symptom. One is quite afraid to have such hospitable people in one’s house, and I’ve been thinking, ‘Won’t a man like that be too hospitable for you and me?’”

“But you are on excellent terms with him, I believe?”

“We are like brothers, and I take it as a joke. Let us be connections. What does it matter? It’s an honour to me. Even through the two hundred people at dinner and the thousandth anniversary of Russia I can see he is a very remarkable man. I mean it sincerely. “Vbu have spoken about secrets just now —

that is, that I approach you every time as if I had a secret to tell you; and as it happens there is a secret. A person you know of has just sent word that she would very much like to have an interview with you in secret.”

“Why in secret? Not at all. I’ll go and see her myself today, if you like.”

“Not at all, not at all!” Lebedyev waved his hands in protest. “It’s not what you suppose that she is afraid of. By the way, the monster comes every day to ask after your health. Did you know it?”

“You really call him ‘monster’ so often it makes me quite suspicious.”

“You can feel no sort of suspicion — no sort of suspicion at all,” said Lebedyev, hurriedly dismissing the subject. “I only wanted to explain that a certain person is not afraid of him, but of something very different, very different.”

“Why, of what? Tell me quickly!” Myshkin questioned impatiently, looking at Lebedyev’s mysterious contortions.

“That’s the secret.” And Lebedyev laughed.

“Whose secret?”

“Your secret. You forbade me yourself to speak of it before you, most illustrious prince,” Lebedyev muttered; and having thoroughly enjoyed the fact that he had excited his hearer’s curiosity to painful impatience, he suddenly concluded: “She is afraid of Aglaia Ivanovna.”

Myshkin frowned and was silent for a minute.

“Oh dear, Lebedyev, I’ll give up your villa!” he said suddenly. “Where are the Ptitsyns, Gavril Ardalionovitch? You’ve enticed them away too.”

“They are coming — they are coming. And even General Ivolgin after them. I’ll open all the doors and I’ll call my daughters too — every one, every one, at once, at once,” Lebedyev whispered in alarm, brandishing his arms and rushing from one door to another.

At that moment Kolya entered the verandah from the street and announced that visitors — Madame Epanchin and her three daughters — were just coming to call.

“Shall I admit the Ptitsyns and Gavril Ardalionovitch, or not? Shall I admit the general or not?” said Lebedyev, skipping up, impressed by the

news.

“Why not? Let anyone come who likes. I assure you, Lebedyev, you’ve had some wrong idea about my attitude from the very beginning; you are making a mistake all the time. I have not the slightest reason for hiding and concealing myself from anyone,” laughed Myshkin.

Looking at him, Lebedyev felt it his duty to laugh too. In spite of his great agitation, he also seemed extremely pleased.

The news brought by Kolya was true. He had come only a few steps in advance of the Epanchins to announce their arrival, so that the visitors arrived on the verandah from both sides at once: the Epanchins from the street, and the Ptitsyns, Ganya, and General Ivolgin from indoors.

The Epanchins had only just heard from Kolya that Myshkin was ill and that he was in Pavlovsk. Till then Madame Epanchin had been in painful perplexity. Two days before, the general had passed on Myshkin’s card to his family. The sight of that card awakened in Lizaveta Prokofyevna a firm conviction that Myshkin would promptly follow it to Pavlovsk to call on them. It was in vain that her daughters assured her that a man who had not written for six months would perhaps be far from being in such a hurry now, and that he very likely had a great deal to do in Petersburg apart from them. How could they know what he was about? Madame Epanchin was positively angry at these remarks and was ready to wager that Myshkin would make his appearance next day at latest, though even that would be rather late! The next day she had been expecting him all the morning; they expected him to dinner, to spend the evening, and when it got quite dark Lizaveta Prokofyevna was cross with everything and quarrelled with every one, making of course no allusion to Myshkin as the occasion of quarrel. Not one word was spoken of him on the third day either. When at dinner Aglaia let drop the remark that maman was angry because the prince had not come — to which her father immediately replied that it was not his fault — Lizaveta Prokofyevna got up and left the table in wrath. At last towards evening Kolya arrived and gave them a full description of all Myshkin’s adventures so far as he knew them. Lizaveta Prokofyevna was triumphant, but yet Kolya came in for a good scolding. “He hangs about here for days toqether and there’s no qettinq rid of him,

and now he might at least have let us know, if he did not think fit to come himself.” Kolya was on the point of being angry at the words “no getting rid of him,” but he put it off for another time; if the phrase had not

been too offensive, he would perhaps have forgiven it altogether, for he was so pleased with Lizaveta Prokofyevna's agitation and anxiety on hearing of Myshkin's illness. She insisted for a long time on the necessity of sending a special messenger to Petersburg to get hold of a medical celebrity of the first magnitude and to carry him away by the first train. But her daughters dissuaded her from this. They were unwilling, however, to be left behind by their mamma when she instantly got ready to visit the invalid.

"He is on his death-bed," said Lizaveta Prokofyevna in a fluster, "and fancy our standing on ceremony! Is he a friend of the family or not?"

"But we mustn't rush in before we know how the land lies," observed Aglaia.

"Very well, then, don't come. You will do well indeed; if Yevgeny Pavlovitch comes, there will be no one to receive him."

At those words Aglaia, of course, set off at once with the others; though indeed she had intended to do so before. Prince S. who had been sitting with Adelaida, at her request instantly agreed to escort the ladies. He had been much interested when he heard of Myshkin from the Epanchins before, at the very beginning of his acquaintance with them. It appeared that he was acquainted with him; that they had met somewhere lately and had spent a fortnight together in some little town three months before. Prince S. had told them a great deal about Myshkin, indeed, and had spoken of him in a very friendly way; so it was with genuine pleasure that he went to call on him. General Epanchin was not at home that evening; Yevgeny Pavlovitch had not yet arrived either.

It was not more than three hundred paces to Lebedyev's villa. Lizaveta Prokofyevna's first disappointment was to find quite a party of visitors with Myshkin, to say nothing of the fact that among them were two or three persons for whom she had a positive hatred. Her second disappointment was the surprise of finding a young man to all appearance in perfect health and fashionably dressed, who came to meet them laughing, instead of the invalid whom she had expected to find on his death-bed. She actually stopped short in bewilderment, to the intense delight of Kolya, who of course might perfectly well have explained before she set out that no one was dying and that it was not a case of a death-bed. But he had not explained it, slyly foreseeing the comic wrath of Madame Epanchin when, as he reckoned, she would certainly be angry at finding Myshkin, for whom she had real affection, in good health. Kolya was so tactless, indeed, as to

speak of his surmise aloud, so as to put the finishing touch to Lizaveta Prokofyevna's irritation. He was always sparring with her, and sometimes very maliciously, in spite of their affection for one another.

"Wait a bit, my young friend, don't be in a hurry! Don't spoil your triumph," answered Lizaveta Prokofyevna, sitting down in the armchair that Myshkin set for her.

Lebedyev, Ptitsyn and General Ivolgin flew to put chairs for the young ladies. General Ivolgin gave Aglaia a chair. Lebedyev set a chair for Prince S. too, expressing profound respectfulness by the very curve of his back as he did so. Varya greeted the young ladies as usual in an ecstatic whisper.

"It's the truth, prince, that I expected to find you almost in bed. I exaggerated things so in my fright, and I am not going to tell a lie about it. I felt dreadfully vexed just now at the sight of your happy face, but I swear it was only for a minute, before I had time to think. I always act and speak more sensibly when I have time to think. I think it's the same with you. And yet really I should be less pleased perhaps at the recovery of my own son than I am at yours; and if you don't believe me, the shame is yours and not mine. And this spiteful boy dares to play worse jokes than this at my expense. I believe he is a protege of yours; so I warn you that one fine morning I shall deny myself the pleasure of enjoying the honour of his further acquaintance."

"But what have I done?" cried Kolya. "However much I had assured you that the prince was almost well again, you would not have been willing to believe me, because it was much more interesting to imagine him lying on his death-bed."

"Have you come to us for long?" Lizaveta Prokofyevna asked Myshkin.

"The whole summer, and perhaps longer."

"You are alone, aren't you? Not married?"

"No, not married," Myshkin smiled at the simplicity of the taunt.

"There's nothing to smile at; it does happen. I was thinking of this villa. Why haven't you come to us? We have a whole wing empty. But do as you like. Have you hired it from him? That person?" she added in an undertone, nodding at Lebedyev. "Why does he wriggle about like that?"

At that moment Vera came out of the house on to the verandah as usual with the baby in her arms. Lebedyev, who was wriggling around the chairs at a complete loss what to do with himself and desperately anxious not to

go, immediately flew at Vera. He gesticulated at her and chased her off the verandah and, forgetting himself, even stamped with his feet.

“He is mad?” observed Madame Epanchin suddenly.

“No, he is ...”

“Drunk, perhaps? Your party is not attractive,” she snapped, after glancing at the other guests also. “But what a nice girl, though! Who is she?”

“That’s Vera Lukyanovna, the daughter of Lebedyev here.”

“Ah! . . . She is very sweet. I should like to make her acquaintance.”

But Lebedyev, hearing Madame Epanchin’s words of approval, was already dragging his daughter forward to present her.

“My motherless children!” he wailed as he came up. “And this baby in her arms is motherless, her sister, my daughter Lubov — born in most lawful wedlock from my departed wife Elena, who died six weeks ago in childbirth, by the will of God. . . . “Vfes .. . she takes her mother’s place to the baby, though she is a sister and no more ... no more, no more. ..

“And you, sir, are no more than a fool, if you’ll excuse me! That’s enough, you know it yourself, I suppose,” Lizaveta Prokofyevna rapped out in extreme indignation.

“Perfectly true,” Lebedyev assented with a low and respectful bow.

“Listen, Mr. Lebedyev, is it true what they say, that you interpret the Apocalypse?” asked Aglaia.

“Perfectly true ... for fifteen years.”

“I’ve heard about you. I think there was something in the newspapers about you?”

“No, that was about another interpreter, another one; but he is dead. I’ve succeeded him,” said Lebedyev, beside himself with delight.

“Be so good as to interpret it to me some day soon, as we are neighbours. I don’t understand anything in the Apocalypse.”

“I must warn you, Aglaia Ivanovna, that all this is mere charlatanism on his part, believe me,” General Ivolgin put in quickly. He was sitting beside Aglaia, and tingling all over with eagerness to enter into conversation. “Of course there are certain privileges on a holiday,” he went on, “and certain pleasures, and to take up such an extraordinary intrus for the interpretation of the Apocalypse is a diversion like any other, and even a remarkably clever diversion, but I ... I think you are looking at me with surprise?

General Ivolgin. I have the honour to introduce myself. I used to carry you in my arms, Aglaia Ivanovna.”

“Very glad to meet you. I know Varvara Ardalionovna and Nina Alexandrovna,” Aglaia muttered, making desperate efforts not to burst out laughing.

Lizaveta Prokofyevna flushed. The irritation that had been accumulating for a long time in her heart suddenly craved for an outlet. She could not endure General Ivolgin, with whom she had been acquainted, but very long ago.

“You are lying, sir, as usual. \bu have never carried her in your arms,” she snapped out indignantly.

“You’ve forgotten, maman, he really did, at Tver,” Aglaia suddenly asserted. “We were living at Tver then. I was six years old then, I remember. He made me a bow and arrow and taught me to shoot, and I killed a pigeon. Do you remember we killed a pigeon together?”

“And you brought me a helmet made of cardboard, and a wooden sword, I remember, too!” cried Adelaida.

“I remember it too,” Alexandra chimed in. “\bu quarrelled over the wounded pigeon. You were put in separate corners. Adelaida stood in the corner wearing the helmet and the sword.”

When General Ivolgin told Aglaia that he had carried her in his arms, he said it without meaning it, merely to begin the conversation, and because he always began a conversation in that way with young people, if he wanted to make their acquaintance. But this time, as it happened, he was speaking the truth, though, as it happened, he had forgotten it. So when Aglaia declared that they had shot a pigeon together, it revived his memory of the past, and he recalled every detail himself, as elderly people often do remember something in the remote past. It is hard to say what there was in that reminiscence to produce so strong an effect on the poor general, who was, as usual, a little drunk, but he was all at once greatly moved.

“I remember, I remember it all!” he cried. “I was a captain then. “Vbu were such a pretty little mite. . . . Nina Alexandrovna. . . . Ganya ... I used to be ... a guest in your house, Ivan Fyodorovitch ...”

“And see what you’ve come to now!” put in Madame Epanchin. “So you haven’t drunk away all your better feeling, it affects you so much? But you’ve worried your wife to death! Instead of looking after your children, you sit in a debtors’ prison. Go awav, mv friend; stand in some corner

behind the door and have a cry. Remember your innocence in the past, and maybe God will forgive you. Go along, go along, I mean it. Nothing helps a man to reform like thinking of the past with regret."

But to repeat that she was speaking seriously was unnecessary. General Ivolgin, like all drunkards, was very emotional, and, like all drunkards who have sunk very low, he was much upset by memories of the happy past. He got up and walked humbly to the door, so that Lizaveta Prokofyevna was at once sorry for him.

"Ardalion Alexandrovitch, my dear man!" she called after him. "Stop a minute; we are all sinners. When you feel your conscience more at ease, come and see me; we'll sit and chat over the past. I daresay I am fifty times as great a sinner myself. But now, good-bye; go along, it's no use your staying here," she added suddenly, afraid he was coming back.

"You'd better not go after him for a while," said Myshkin, checking Kolya, who was about to run after his father, "or he will be vexed directly and all this minute will be spoiled for him."

"That's true; don't disturb him; go in half an hour," Lizaveta Prokofyevna decided.

"See what comes of speaking the truth for once in his life; it reduced him to tears," Lebedyev ventured to comment.

"You are another pretty one, my man, if what I've heard is true," said Lizaveta Prokofyevna, suppressing him at once.

The mutual relations of the guests about Myshkin gradually became evident. Myshkin was, of course, able to appreciate and did appreciate to the full the sympathy shown to him by Madame Epanchin and her daughters, and he told them with truth that before they came he had intended to have paid them a visit that day in spite of his invalid state and the late hour. Lizaveta Prokofyevna, looking at his visitors, observed that it was still possible to carry out his intention. Ptitsyn, who was a very polite and tactful person, promptly retreated to Lebedyev's quarters, and was very anxious to get Lebedyev away with him. The latter promised to follow him quickly. Varya, meanwhile, had got into talk with the girls, and remained, and she and Ganya were greatly relieved by the departure of the general. Ganya himself withdrew soon after Ptitsyn. For the few minutes that he was in the verandah with the Epanchins, he had behaved modestly and with dignity, and was not in the least disconcerted by the determined air with which Madame Epanchin twice scanned him from head to foot. Anyone

who had known him before would certainly have thought that there was a great change in him. Aglaia was very much pleased at it.

“Was that Gavril Ardalionovitch who went out?” she asked suddenly, as she was fond of doing sometimes, interrupting the general conversation by her loud abrupt question, and addressing no one in particular.

“Yes,” answered Myshkin.

“I hardly knew him. He is very much changed and . .. greatly for the better.”

“I am very glad,” said Myshkin.

“He has been very ill,” added Varya, in a tone of glad commiseration.

“How has he changed for the better?” Lizaveta Prokofyevna asked with angry perplexity and almost in dismay. “What an idea! There’s nothing better. What improvement do you see?”

“There is nothing better than the ‘poor knight,’”

Kolya, who had been standing by Madame Epanchin’s chair, brought out suddenly.

“That’s exactly what I think,” said Prince S. and he laughed.

“I am precisely of the same opinion,” Adelaida declared solemnly.

“What poor knight?” asked Madame Epanchin, staring at all who had spoken, with perplexity and vexation, but seeing that Aglaia flushed hotly, she added angrily, “Some nonsense, of course! Who is this ‘poor knight’?”

“It’s not the first time that urchin, your favourite, has twisted other people’s words awry!” answered Aglaia, with haughty indignation.

In every outburst of anger from Aglaia (and she was very often angry) there was apparent, in spite of her evident seriousness and severity, something childish and impatiently schoolgirlish, so naively disguised that it was sometimes impossible not to laugh when one looked at her, though this was the cause of extreme indignation to Aglaia, who could not understand what people were laughing at, and “how they could, how they dared, laugh.” Her sisters and Prince S. lauqhed now, and even Mvshkin smiled, though he, too, flushed at something. Kolya roared with laughter, and was triumphant. Aglaia was angry in earnest, and looked twice as pretty. Her confusion was very becoming to her, and so was her vexation at her own confusion.

“He has twisted so many of your words awry, too!” she added.

“I based it on your own exclamation!” cried Kolya. “A month ago you were looking through ‘Don Quixote,’ and you cried out those very words,

that there was nothing better than the ‘poor knight.’ I don’t know whom you were talking of, whether it was Don Quixote or Yevgeny Pavlovitch or some other person; but you were talking of some one and the conversation lasted a long while.”

“I see you allow yourself to go too far, young man, with your conjectures,” Lizaveta Prokofyevna checked him with vexation.

“But am I the only one?” Kolya persisted. “Everybody said so, and they are saying so still. Why, Prince S. and Adelaida Ivanovna and every one declared just now that they stood up for the ‘poor knight.’ So there must be a ‘poor knight,’ and he does exist, and I believe if it were not for Adelaida Ivanovna, we should have known long ago who the ‘poor knight’ was.”

“What have I done?” laughed Adelaida.

“You wouldn’t draw his portrait, that’s what you did! Aglaia Ivanovna begged you then to draw the portrait of the ‘poor knight,’ and described the whole subject of the picture. She made the subject up herself, you remember. You wouldn’t.”

“But how could I draw it? According to the poem, that ‘poor knight’

‘no more in sight of any Raised the visor from his face.’

How could I draw the face then? What was I to draw — the visor? — the anonymous hero?”

“I don’t understand what you mean by the visor,” said Madame Epanchin angrily, though she was beginning to have a very clear idea who was meant by the nickname (probably agreed upon long ago) of the “poor knight.” But what specially angered her was that Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch was also disconcerted, and at last quite abashed like a bovof ten.

“Well, will you put a stop to this foolishness or not? Will they explain to me this ‘poor knight’? Is it such an awful secret that one can’t approach it?”

But they only went on laughing.

“The fact is, there is a strange Russian poem about a poor knight,” Prince S. began at last, obviously anxious to suppress the subject and change the conversation, “a fragment without a beginning or an end. About a month ago we were all laughing after dinner and trying as usual to find a subject for Adelaida Ivanovna’s next picture. “Vbu know that the whole family is always trying to find subjects for Adelaida Ivanovna’s pictures. Then we hit on the ‘poor knight,’ which of us first I don’t remember.”

“Aglaia Ivanovna!” cried Kolya.

“Perhaps, I dare say, only I don’t remember,” Prince S. went on. “Some of us laughed at the subject, others declared that nothing could be better, but that to paint the ‘poor knight’ we must find a face for him. We began to go over the faces of all our friends. Not one was suitable, and there we left it,

that was all. I don’t know why Nikolay Ardalionovitch thought fit to recall it all and bring it up again. What was amusing and appropriate at the time is quite uninteresting now.”

“Because some fresh foolishness is meant, mischievous and offensive,” Lizaveta Prokofyevna snapped out.

“There’s no foolishness in it, nothing but the deepest respect,” Aglaia suddenly brought out, quite unexpectedly, in a grave and earnest voice.

She had mastered her confusion by now and completely recovered from it. What’s more, one might, looking at her, have supposed from certain signs that she was positively glad that the jest was going so far; and this revulsion of feeling took place in her at the very moment when Myshkin’s increasing and overwhelming embarrassment had become unmistakably evident to every one.

“At one time they are laughing like mad things, and then they talk of the deepest respect! Crazy creatures! Why respect? Tell me at once, what makes you drag in deepest respect when it’s neither here nor there? ...”

“Deepest respect,” Aglaia went on as gravely and earnestly in response to her mother’s almost spiteful questions, “because that poem simply describes a man who is capable of an ideal, and what’s more, a man who having once set an ideal before him has faith in it, and having faith in it gives up his life blindly to it. This does not always happen in our day. We are not told in that poem exactly what the ‘poor knight’s’ ideal was, but one can see it was some vision, some image of ‘pure beauty,’ and the knight in his loving devotion has put a rosary round his neck instead of a scarf. It’s true that there is some obscure device of which we are not told in full, the letters A.N.B. inscribed on his shield ...”

“A.M.D.” Kolya corrected her.

“But I say A.N.B. and that’s what I want to say,” Aglaia interrupted with vexation. “Anyway, it’s clear that that poor knight did not care what his lady was, or what she did. It was enough for him that he had chosen her and put faith in her ‘pure beauty and then did homage to her for ever. That’s just his merit, that if she became a thief afterwards, he would still be bound to believe in her and be ready to break a spear for her pure beauty. The poet

seems to have meant to unite in one striking figure the grand conception of the piatonic love of mediaeval chivalry, as it was felt by a pure and lofty knight. Of course all that's an ideal. In the 'poor knight' that feeling reaches its utmost limit in asceticism. It must be admitted that to be capable of such a feeling means a great deal, and that such feelings leave behind a profound impression, very, from one point of view, laudable, as with Don Quixote, for instance. The 'poor knight' is the same Don Quixote, only serious and not comic. I didn't understand him at first, and laughed, but now I love the 'poor knight,' and what's more, respect his exploits."

This was how Aglaia concluded, and, looking at her, it was difficult to tell whether she was in earnest or laughing.

"Well, he must have been a fool anyway, he and his exploits," was her mother's comment. "And you are talking nonsense, my girl, a regular tirade. It's not quite nice of you, to my thinking. In any case, it's not good manners. What poem? Read it; no doubt you know it! I must hear it. I've always disliked poetry; I knew no good would come of it. For goodness' sake, put up with it, prince! "Vbu and I have got to put up with thinqs toqether, it seems," she added,

addressing Myshkin.

She was very much annoyed. Myshkin tried to say something, but was still too embarrassed to speak. But Aglaia, who had taken such liberties in her tirade, was not in the least confused, but seemed pleased indeed. She got up at once, still grave and earnest as before, looking as though she had prepared herself and was only waiting to be asked, stepped into the middle of the verandah, and stood facing Myshkin, who was still sitting in his armchair. Every one stared at her with some surprise, and almost all of them, Prince S. her sisters and her mother, looked with an uncomfortable feeling at this new prank, which had already gone too far. But it was evident that what delighted Aglaia was just the affectation with which she was beginning the ceremony of reading. Her mother was on the point of sending her back to her seat, but at the very instant when Aglaia began to recite the well-known ballad, two more visitors entered the verandah from the street, talking loudly. These visitors were General Epanchin and a young man who followed him. Their entrance caused a slight commotion.

CHAPTER 7

THE YOUNG man, accompanying the general, was about twenty-eight, tall and well built, with a fine and intelligent face and a humorous and mocking look in his big shining black eyes. Aglaia did not even look round at him. She went on reciting the verses, still affecting to look at no one but Myshkin and addressing him only. He realised that she was doing it all with some object. But the new arrivals did, at any rate, somewhat lessen the awkwardness of his position. Seeing them, he stood up, nodded cordially to the general from a distance, signed to them not to interrupt the recitation, and succeeded in retreating behind his armchair. Then leaning with his arm on the back of it, he was able to listen to the ballad in a more convenient and less “absurd” position than before. Lizaveta Prokofyevna for her part motioned twice peremptorily to the visitors to stand still. Myshkin was much interested in his new visitor, the young man who was with General Epanchin. He knew he must be Yevgeny Pavlovitch Radomsky, of whom he had heard a good deal already, and thought more than once. He was only perplexed at his civilian dress; he had heard that Yevgeny Pavlovitch was a military man. A mocking smile played about the young man’s lips all the time the poem was being recited, as though he too had heard something about the “poor knight.”

“Perhaps it was his idea,” thought Myshkin to himself.

But it was quite different with Aglaia. The affectation and pompousness with which she began the recitation was replaced by earnestness and a deep consciousness of the spirit and meaning of the poem. She spoke the lines with such noble simplicity that by the end of the recitation she not only held the attention of all, but, by her interpretation of the lofty spirit of the ballad, she had, as it were, to some extent justified the exaggerated, affected gravity with which she had so solemnly stepped into the middle of the verandah. That gravity might now be taken to have been only due to the depth, and perhaps even simplicity, of her respect for the poem she had undertaken to interpret. Her eyes shone and a faint, scarcely perceptible shiver of inspiration and ecstasy passed twice over her handsome face. She recited:

Lived a knight once, poor and simple, Pale of face vuth glance austere, Spare of speech, but with a spirit Proud, intolerant of fear. He had had a wondrous vision: Ne’er could feeble human art Gauge its deep, mysterious

meaning, It was graven on his heart. And since then his soul had quivered With an all-consuming fire, Nevermore he looked on women, Speech with them did not desire. But he dropped his scarf thenceforward, Wore a chaplet in its place, And no more in sight of any Raised the visor from his face. Filled vuth purest love and fervour, Faith which his sweet dream did yield, In his blood he traced the letters N.F.B. upon his shield. When the Paladins proclaiming Ladies' names as true love's sign, Hurled themselves into the battle On the plains of Palestine, Lumen coeli, Sancta Rosa! Shouted he with flaming glance, And the fury of his menace Checked the Mussulman's advance. Then returning to his castle In far distant country side, Silent, sad, bereft of reason, In his solitude he died.

Recalling that moment later, Myshkin was long after greatly perplexed and tormented by a question to which he could find no answer: how could such a genuine and noble feeling be associated with such unmistakable malice and mockery? Of the existence of the mockery he had no doubt; he understood that clearly and had grounds for it. In the course of the recitation Aglaia had taken the liberty of changing the letters A.M.D. into N.F.B. That he had not misunderstood or mis-heard this he could have no doubt (it was proved to him afterwards). In any case Aglaia's performance — a joke of course, though too ruthless and thoughtless — was premeditated. Every one had been talking (and "laughing") about the "poor knight" for the last month. And yet as Myshkin recalled afterwards, Aglaia had pronounced those letters without any trace of jest or sneer, without indeed any special emphasis on those letters to suggest their hidden significance. On the contrary, she had uttered those letters with such unchanged gravity, with such innocent and naive simplicity that one might have supposed that those very letters were in the ballad and printed in the book. Myshkin felt a pang of discomfort and depression.

Lizaveta Prokofyevna, of course, did not notice or understand the change in the letters, nor the allusion in it. General Epanchin understood nothing more than that a poem was being recited. Many of the other listeners understood and were surprised at the boldness of the performance, and also at the motive underlying it, but they were silent and tried to conceal it. But Myshkin was ready to wager that Yevgeny Pavlovitch had not only understood, but was even trying to show he had understood: he smiled with too mocking an air.

“How splendid!” cried Madame Epanchin in genuine enthusiasm, as soon as the recitation was over. “Whose poem is it?”

“Pushkin’s, maman, don’t put us to shame, it’s disgraceful!” cried Adelaida.

“It’s a wonder I am no sillier with such daughters!” Lizaveta Prokofyevna responded bitterly. “It’s a disgrace! Give me that poem of Pushkin’s, as soon as we get home.”

“But I don’t believe we’ve got a Pushkin!”

“There have been two untidy volumes lying about ever since I can remember,” added Alexandra.

“We must send some one, Fyodor or Alexey, by the first train to town to buy one — Alexey would be best. Aglaia, come here! Kiss me, you recited it splendidly, but if you recited it sincerely,” she added almost in a whisper, “lam sorry for you; if you did it to make fun of him, I can’t help blaminq vour feelinqs,

so that in any case it would have been better not to recite it at all. Do you understand? Go along, miss, I shall have something to say to you presently, we’ve stayed too long.”

Meanwhile Myshkin greeted General Epanchin, and the general was introducing “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch Radomsky to him.

“I picked him up on the way here, he was coming from the station, he heard that I was coming here and all the rest were here ...”

“I heard that you were here too,” Yevgeny Pavlovitch interrupted, “and as I had long meant to try and gain not only your acquaintance but your friendship, I didn’t want to lose time. \bu are unwell? I have onlyjust heard ...”

“I am perfectly well and very glad to make your acquaintance. I’ve heard a great deal about you, and even talked about you to Prince S,” answered Myshkin, holding out his hand.

Mutual courtesies were exchanged, they pressed each other’s hands and looked intently into each other’s eyes. At once the conversation became general. Myshkin noticed (and he was noticing everything now, rapidly and eagerly, and possibly noticed what was not there at all) that Yevgeny Pavlovitch’s civilian dress excited general and very marked surprise, so much so, that for a time all other impressions were effaced and forgotten. It might be conjectured that this change implied something of great consequence. Adelaida and Alexandra questioned Yevgeny Pavlovitch in

perplexity, Prince S. his relation, even with great uneasiness, and General Epanchin spoke almost with emotion. Aglaia was the only one who looked with perfect composure though with curiosity at Yevgeny Pavlovitch for a moment, as though she were simply trying to decide whether the civilian dress or the military suited him best, but a minute later she turned away and did not look at him again. Lizaveta Prokofyevna, too, did not care to ask any questions, though perhaps she too was rather uneasy. Myshkin fancied that Yevgeny Pavlovitch was not in her good books.

“He has surprised me, amazed me,” Ivan Fyodorovitch repeated in answer to all inquiries. “I wouldn’t believe him when I met him a little while ago in Petersburg. And why so suddenly, that’s the puzzle! He is always saying himself there’s no need to break the furniture.”

From the conversation that followed, it appeared that Yevgeny Pavlovitch had long ago announced his intention of resigning his commission, but had always spoken of it so flippantly that it had been impossible to take his words seriously. He always talked, indeed, with such a jesting air of serious things that it was impossible to make him out, especially if he didn’t want to be made out.

“It’s only for a time, for some months. A year at most, that I shall be on the retired list,” laughed Radomsky.

“But there is no need of it whatever, as far as I understand your position, at least,” General Epanchin kept urging hotly.

“But to visit my estates? \bu advised it yourself; besides, I want to go abroad....”

But the subject was soon changed; though the over-prominent and still persistent uneasiness seemed excessive to Myshkin, as he watched it and he divined that there was some special reason for it.

“So the ‘poor knight’ is on the scene again,” Yevgeny Pavlovitch queried, approaching Aglaia.

To Myshkin’s surprise she looked at him perplexed and questioning, as though to give him to understand that the “poor knight” was a subject which she could not possibly touch upon with him, and that she did not even comprehend his question.

“But it’s too late, too late to send to town for a copy of Pushkin to-night, it’s too late,” Kolya maintained in exasperation to Lizaveta Prokofyevna. “I’ve told you three thousand times it’s too late.”

“Yes, it really is too late to send to town now,”

“Vfevgeny Pavlovitch intervened here, too, hurriedly leaving Aglaia, “I believe the shops are shut by now in Petersburg, it’s past eight,” he declared, looking at his watch.

“Since you have waited so long without missing it, you can wait till to-morrow,” put in Adelaida.

“And it’s not the thing for people of the best society to be too much interested in literature,” added Kolya. “Ask Yevgeny Pavlovitch. It’s more correct to be keen on a yellow char-a-banc with red wheels.”

“You are talking in quotations again, Kolya,” observed Adelaida.

“But he never speaks except in quotations,”

chimed in Yevgeny Pavlovitch, “he takes whole phrases out of the reviews. I’ve long had the pleasure of knowing Nikolay Ardalionovitch’s conversation, but this time he is not talking in quotations. Nikolay Ardalionovitch is plaintly alluding to my yellow char-a-banc with red wheels. But I have exchanged it, you are behind the times.”

Myshkin listened to what Radomsky was saying. He thought that his manners were excellent, modest and lively, and he was particularly pleased to hear him reply with perfect equality and friendliness to the gibes of Kolya.

“What is it?” asked Lizaveta Prokofyevna, addressing Vera, Lebedyev’s daughter, who was standing before her with some large, almost new and finely bound volumes in her hands.

“Pushkin,” said Vera, “our Pushkin. Father told me to offer it to you.”

“How is this? How can it be?” cried Lizaveta Prokofyevna in surprise.

“Not as a present, not as a present! I wouldn’t take the liberty!” Lebedyev skipped forward from behind his daughter. “At cost price. This is our own Pushkin handed down in the family, Annenkov’s edition, which cannot be bought nowadays — at cost price. I offer it with veneration, wishing to sell it and so to satisfy the honourable impatience of your excellency’s most honourable literary feelings.”

“Well, if you’ll sell it, thank you. \bu won’t be a loser by it, you may be sure. Only don’t play the fool, please, sir. I’ve heard that you are very well read, we’ll have a talk one day. Will you bring them yourself?”

“With veneration and . . . respectfulness!” Lebedyev grimaced with extraordinary satisfaction, taking the books from his daughter.

“Well, mind you don’t lose them! Take them, even without respectfulness, but only on condition,” she added, scanning him carefully,

“that I only admit you to the door and don’t intend to receive you to-day. Send your daughter Vera at once, if you will, I like her very much.”

“Why don’t you tell him about those people?” said Vera, addressing herfather impatiently, “they’ll come in of themselves, if you don’t, they’ve begun to be noisy. Lyov Nikolayevitch,” she said, addressing Myshkin, who had already taken his hat, “there are

four men come to see you, they’ve been waiting a long time, scolding, but father won’t let them in to you!”

“Who are they?” asked Myshkin.

“They’ve come on business, they say, only if you don’t let them in now, they’ll be sure to stop you on the way. “Vbu’d better see them, Lyov Nikolayevitch, and then you’ll be rid of them. Gavril Ardalionovitch and Ptitsyn are talking to them — but they won’t listen to them.”

“The son of Pavlishtchev, the son of Pavlishtchev! They are not worth it, they are not worth it!” said Lebedyev, waving his hands, “they are not worth listening to and it would be out of place for you to disturb yourself on their account, most illustrious prince, theyare not worth it...”

“The son of Pavlishtchev! Good heavens!” cried Myshkin, extremely disconcerted. “I know but. . . you see, I ... I asked Gavril Ardalionovitch to attend to that. Gavril Ardalionovitch told me just now....”

But Gavril Ardalionovitch had already come out of the house on to the verandah. Ptitsyn followed him. In the next room there were sounds of uproar and the loud voice of General Ivolgin who seemed to be trying to shout down several others. Kolya ran indoors at once.

“This is very interesting!” observed Yevgeny Pavlovitch aloud.

“So he knows about it!” thought Myshkin.

“What son of Pavlishtchev? . . . and what son of Pavlishtchev can there be?” General Epanchin asked, in amazement, looking at every one with curiosity, and observing with surprise from their faces that he was the only one who knew nothing about this new development.

The excitement and expectation was general indeed. Myshkin was profoundly astonished that such an entirely personal affair could already have roused so much interest in everyone here.

“It will be a very good thing if you put a stop to this at once and yourself!’ said Aglaia, going up to Myshkin with particular earnestness, “and allow us all to be your witnesses. They are trying to throw mud at you,

prince, you must defend yourself triumphantly, and I am awfully glad for you.”

“I want this disgusting claim to be stopped at last, too,” cried Madame Epanchin. “Give it to them well,

prince, don’t spare them! My ears have been tingling with this business, and it’s been spoiling my temper on your account. Besides, it will be interesting to look at them. Call them in and we’ll sit down. It’s a good idea of Aglaia’s. “Vbu’ve heard something about it, prince?” she added addressing Prince S.

“Of course I have; in your house. But I am particularly anxious to have a look at these young people,” answered Prince S.

“These are what are meant by nihilists, aren’t they?”

“No! they are not to say nihilists,” said Lebedyev, stepping forward, and almost shaking with excitement. “They are different, a special sort. My nephew tells me they have gone far beyond the nihilists. “Vbu are wrong if you think you’ll abash them by your presence, your excellency, they won’t be abashed. Nihilists are sometimes well-informed people, anyway, even learned, but these have gone further because they are first of all men of business. This is a sort of sequel to nihilism, not in a direct line, but obliquely, by hearsay, and they don’t express themselves in newspaper articles, but directly in action. It’s not a question of the irrationality of Pushkin, or some one, for instance, nor the necessity of the breaking up of Russia into parts, no, now they claim as a right that if one wants anything very much, one is not to be checked by any obstacles, even though one might have to do for half a dozen people to gain one’s ends. But all the same, prince, I should not advise you ...”

But Myshkin had already gone to open the door to the visitors.

“You are slandering them, Lebedyev,” he said, smiling, “your nephew has hurt your feelings very much. Don’t believe him, Lizaveta Prokofyevna. I assure you that Gorskys and Danilovs are only exceptions, and these are only . . . mistaken. But I should have preferred not to see them here, before everyone. Excuse me, Lizaveta Prokofyevna, they’ll come in, I’ll show them to you and then take them away. Come in, gentlemen!”

He was more worried by another painful thought. He wondered: had not some one arranged this business beforehand for that time, for that hour, in the presence of those witnesses and perhaps in anticipation of his shame rather than his triumph? But he felt too sad at the thought of his “monstrous

and wicked suspiciousness." He felt that he would have died if anyone had known he had such an idea in his head, and at the moment when his guests walked in, he was genuinely ready to believe that he was lower in a moral sense than the lowest around him.

Five persons entered, four new arrivals followed by General Ivolgin in a state of heated agitation and violent loquacity. "He is on my side, no doubt," thought Myshkin, with a smile. Kolya slipped in among them; he was talking hotly to Ippolit, who was one of the visitors. Ippolit listened grinning.

Myshkin made his visitors sit down. They all looked so young, hardly grown up indeed, that their visit and the attention paid them seemed strange. Ivan Fyodorovitch, for instance, who knew nothing about this "new development," and could not make it out, was quite indignant at the sight of their youthfulness, and would certainly have made some sort of protest, had he not been checked by his wife's unaccountable eagerness on behalf of Myshkin's private affairs. He remained, however, partly out of curiosity, and partly from kind-heartedness, hoping to help, or at least to be of use by the exercise of his authority. But General Ivolgin's bow to him, from the distance, roused his indignation again; he frowned and made up his mind to be consistently silent.

Of the four young men who came in, one, however, was a man of thirty, the retired lieutenant, who had been one of Rogozhin's crew, the boxer, "who had in his time given as much as fifteen roubles each to beggars." It could be guessed that he had come to stand by the others as a faithful friend, and if necessity arose, to support them. The foremost and most prominent of the others was the young man to whom the designation "the son of Pavlishtchev" had been given, though he introduced himself as Antip Burdovsky. He was a young man poorly and untidily dressed. The sleeves of his coat shone like a mirror; his greasy waistcoat was buttoned up to the neck; his linen had disappeared entirely; his incredibly dirty black silk scarf was twisted like a rope. His hands were unwashed, he was fair and his face, which was covered with pimples, had, if one may so express it, an air of innocent insolence. He was about twenty-two, thin and not short. There was not a trace of irony or introspection in his face, nothing but a complete blank conviction of his own rights; and, at the same time, something like a strange and incessant craving to be and feel insulted. He spoke with excitement, hurrying and stuttering, hardly articulating the words, as though

he had an impediment in his speech, or even were a foreigner, though he was, as a fact, entirely Russian by birth. He was accompanied, first, by Lebedyev's nephew, already known to the reader, and, secondly, by Ippolit. The latter was a very young man, seventeen or possibly eighteen, with an intelligent but always irritable expression, and terrible signs of illness in his face. He was thin as a skeleton, pale and yellow, his eyes gleamed and two hectic spots glowed on his cheeks. He coughed incessantly; every word, almost every breath, was followed by gasping. He was evidently in the last stage of consumption. He looked as though he could scarcely live for more than another two or three weeks. He was very tired and before anyone else he sank into a chair. The other visitors were rather ceremonious and even a little embarrassed on entering; they had an important air, however, and were obviously afraid of failing to keep up their dignity in some way, which was strangely out of harmony with their reputation for despising all useless worldly trivialities, conventions and almost everything in the world except their own interests.

"Antip Burdovsky," said "the son of Pavlishtchev," in a hurried stutter.

"Vladimir Doktorenko," Lebedyev's nephew introduced himself clearly, distinctly, as though boasting of the fact that his name was Doktorenko.

"Keller," muttered the retired lieutenant.

"Ippolit Terentyev," squeaked the last of the party in an unexpectedly shrill voice.

All of them were sitting at last on chairs facing Myshkin; they had all introduced themselves, frowned and shifted their caps from one hand to the other to keep themselves in countenance. All of them seemed on the point of speaking, but remained silent, waiting for something with a defiant air, which seemed to say, "no, my friend, you are wrong there, you won't take us in." One felt that some one had only to utter one word to start them, and they would all begin talking at once, interrupting and tripping each other up.

CHAPTER 8

Gentlemen, i did not expect any of you," Myshkin began, "I've been ill to-day, and I asked Gavril Ardalionovitch Ivolgin to deal with your business (he turned to Antip Burdovsky) a month ago, as I informed you at the time. However, I have no objection to a personal explanation, but you must admit that such a time ... I suggest you should go with me into another room, if you won't keep me long. . . . My friends are here now, and believe me . .

"As many friends as you like, but allow us," Lebedyev's nephew broke in, in a very reproving tone, though he did not raise his voice, "allow us to point out that you might have treated us more politely, and not have left us waiting two hours in your servants' room ..."

"And of course ... I too . . . this is behaving like a prince . . . and this is ... I suppose you are the general! But I am not your servant! And I . . . I . . ." Antip Burdovsky muttered, spluttering with extraordinary excitement, with trembling lips and a voice broken with resentment. He seemed suddenly to burst or explode, but was at once in such a hurry that at the tenth word one could not follow him.

"It was like a prince!" Ippolit cried in a shrill cracked voice.

"If I were treated like that," muttered the boxer, "that is, if it were my personal affair, as a man of honour, if I were in Burdovsky's place ... I..."

"Gentlemen, I only heard this minute that you were here. I assure you." Myshkin repeated again.

"We are not afraid of your friends, prince, whoever they may be, for we are within our rights," Lebedyev's nephew declared again.

"But what right had you, let me ask," Ippolit squeaked again, by now extremely excited, "to submit Burdovsky's case to the judgment of your friends; anyone can see what the judgment of your friends would be!"

"But if you don't wish to speak here, Mr. Burdovsky," Myshkin succeeded in interpellating at last, staggered by such an opening, "I tell you, let us go into another room at once, and I repeat that I only heard of you all this very minute ..."

"But you've no right to, you've no right, you've no right! Your friends. ... So there!" Burdovsky gabbled suddenly again, looking wildly and apprehensively about him, and the more shy and mistrustful he was, the more heated he became. "You have no right."

And having uttered those words he stopped abruptly, as it were with a sudden snap, and fixing his short-sighted, extremely prominent and bloodshot eyes on Myshkin, he stared at him with dumb inquiry, his whole body bent forward. This time Myshkin was so surprised that he too was speechless, and gazed open-eyed, unable to utter a word.

“Lyov Nikolayevitch!” Lizaveta Prokofyevna called to him suddenly, “read this at once, this minute, it has to do with your business.”

She hurriedly held out to him a weekly comic paper, and pointed with her finger at the article. As soon as the visitors came in, Lebedyev had skipped sideways up to Lizaveta Prokofyevna, with whom he was trying to ingratiate himself, and without uttering a word he had pulled this paper out of his side-pocket and had put it just before her eyes, pointing to a marked passage. What Lizaveta Prokofyevna had had time to read had excited and upset her extremely.

“But wouldn’t it be better not aloud,” faltered Myshkin, very much embarrassed, “I could read it alone ... afterwards.”

“Then you had better read it, read it at once, aloud!” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna, addressing Kolya, impatiently snatching the paper from Myshkin, almost before he had time to touch it. “Read it aloud to all, so that everyone may hear.”

Lizaveta Prokofyevna was an excitable lady, and readily carried away, so that sometimes she would all of a sudden, without stopping to think, heave all anchors, and launch into the open sea regardless of the weather. Ivan Fyodorovitch moved uneasily. While all involuntarily stopped for the first minute and waited in perplexity, Kolya opened the newspaper and began aloud at the passage which Lebedyev darted up to point out to him:

“Proletarians and noble scions, an episode of daily and everyday robbery! Progress! Reform! Justice!

“Strange things happen in our so-called holy Russia, in our age of reforms and of joint-stock enterprises, the age of national movements and of hundreds of millions of roubles sent abroad every year, the age of encouraging commerce and of the paralysis of industry, and so on and so on, one cannot enumerate all, gentlemen, and so — straight to the point. Here is a strange anecdote about a scion of our decaying nobility (de profundis!), one of those scions whose grandfathers were ruined by roulette, whose fathers have to serve as lieutenants and ensigns in the army, and usually die charged with some innocent misuse of public money; while they

themselves, like the hero of our story, either grow up idiots, or are mixed up in criminal cases, in which, however, they are acquitted by the jury in the hope of their reformation, or else they end by perpetrating one of those pranks which amaze the public and disgrace our already degraded age. Our scion, wearing gaiters like a foreigner, and shivering in an unlined cloak, arrived about six months ago in Russia from Switzerland, where he had been under treatment for idiocy (sic!). It must be confessed that he was a lucky fellow, so that — to say nothing of the interesting malady for which he was undergoing treatment in Switzerland (can there be a treatment for idiocy, just imagine!) — he may serve as an illustration of the truth of the Russian proverb that a certain class of persons are lucky. Only think. Left a baby at his father's death — they say he was a lieutenant, who died while on his trial for a sudden disappearance at cards of all the company's money, or possibly for an excessive use of the rod on some subordinate (you remember what it was like in old days, gentlemen), our baron was taken and brought up by the charity of a very rich Russian landowner. This Russian landowner — we will call him P. — was the owner in the old golden days of four thousand souls. (The owner of four thousand souls! Do you understand, gentlemen, such an expression? I don't. One must consult an explanatory dictionary, 'the tale is new, yet it's hard to believe!') He was apparently one of those drones and sluggards who spend their idle lives abroad, in summer at the waters, and in winter at the Parisian Chateau-de-Fleurs, where in the course of their lives they have left incredible sums. One may say with certainty that at least one third of the tribute paid in old days by the serfs went into the pockets of the proprietors of the Parisian Chateau-de-Fleurs (he must have been a fortunate man!). Be that as it may, the light-hearted P. brought up the noble orphan like a prince, engaged tutors and governesses for him (no doubt pretty ones) whom he brought himself by the way from Paris. But the last scion of the noble house was an idiot. The governesses from the Chateau-de-Fleurs were of no use, and up to his twentieth year our scion could not be taught to speak any language, not even his native Russian; though the latter, of course, is excusable. At last the happy whim entered the heart of the Russian serf-owner P. that the idiot might be taught sense in Switzerland — a logical whim, however: an idle capitalist might naturally suppose that for money one might buy even sense, especially in Switzerland. Five years were spent in Switzerland under the care of a celebrated doctor, and thousands were spent on it. The idiot, of

course, did not become sensible, but still, thev sav, he became like a human beinq, no great shakes, of course. Suddenly P. died, leaving no will of course. His affairs were as usual in disorder. There was a crowd of greedy heirs, who took not the slightest interest in the last scions of noble families who are treated out of charity in Switzerland for congenital idiocy. The scion, though an idiot, made an effort to deceive his doctor, and succeeded in being treated gratis for two years, so we are told, concealing from him the death of his benefactor. But the doctor was a bit of a rogue himself. Alarmed at the absence of cash and still more at the appetite of his twenty-five-year-old do-nothing, he dressed him up in his old gaiters, made him a present of his worn-out cloak, and out of charity sent him third-class nach Russland — to get rid of him. Luck seemed to have turned its back on our hero. But not a bit of it: fortune, which kills off whole provinces with famine, showered all her gifts on this aristocrat, like the cloud in Krylov's fable that passed over the parched fields to empty itself into the ocean. Almost at the very moment of his arrival in Petersburg, a relation of his mother's (who had, of course, been of a merchant's family) died in Moscow, a childless old bachelor, a merchant of the old school and an Old Believer. He left a good round fortune of several millions in hard cash (if it had only been for you and me, readers!) and it all came without dispute to our scion, our baron, who had been cured of idiocy in Switzerland! Well, it was a very different tune then. A crowd of friends and acquaintances gathered about our gaitered baron, who ran after a notorious beauty of easy virtue. He even picked up relations, and above all he was pursued by perfect crowds of young ladies, hungering and thirsting for lawful matrimony. And, indeed, what could be better? An aristocrat, a millionaire and an idiot — all the qualifications at once, a husband you couldn't come across the like of if you searched for him with the lantern of Diogenes."

"That . . . that passes my comprehension!" shouted Ivan Fyodorovitch, roused to the last pitch of indignation.

"Leave off, Kolya!" Myshkin cried in a supplicating voice.

Exclamations were uttered on all sides.

"Read it! Read it, whatever happens!" Lizaveta Prokofyevna rapped out, evidently making a desperate effort to restrain herself. "Prince! If you stop him reading, we shall quarrel!"

There was no help for it. Kolya, heated, flushed and agitated, went on reading in a troubled voice.

“But while our quickly made millionaire was floating, so to speak, in the empyrean, quite a new development came on the scene. One morning a visitor called on him with a composed and stern face, dressed modestly and like a gentleman, and evidently of progressive tendencies. In courteous, but dignified, reasonable language, he briefly explained the reason of his visit. He was a well-known lawyer. He had been instructed by a young man and was appearing on his behalf. This young man was neither more nor less than the son of the deceased P. though he bore a different name. The licentious P. had in his youth seduced a virtuous young girl, a house-serf, but of European education (taking advantage no doubt of his seignorial rights in the old serf days) and remarking the inevitable but approaching consequence of the liaison, he made haste to get her married to a man of honourable character who was engaged in commerce, and even in the service, and had long been in love with the girl. At first he helped the young couple; but soon assistance from him was refused, owing to the honourable character of the husband. Some time passed and P. gradually forgot the girl and the son she had borne him, and afterwards, as we know, he died without making provision for him. Meanwhile his son who was born in lawful wedlock, but grew up under a different name, and completely adopted by the honourable character of his mother’s husband, who had, none the less, in the course of time, also died, was thrown entirely on his own resources with an invalid, bed-ridden, grieving mother, in one of the remote provinces of Russia. He earned his living in the capital by his honourable daily labour, giving lessons in merchant families, and in that way supported himself, first at school, and afterwards while attending courses of profitable lectures with a view to his future advancement; but one can’t earn much by lessons at a few coppers an hour, and with an invalid, bed-ridden mother to keep, though her death at last in the remote province was hardly an alleviation to him. Now the question arises, what would have been a iust decision for our noble scion to make? You would doubtless, reader, expect him to say to himself: ‘I have all my life enjoyed all the gifts of P.; tens of thousands went to Switzerland for my education, governesses and treatment for idiocy; and here I am now with millions while P.’s son is wasting his noble talents giving lessons, though he is not to blame for the misconduct of the wanton father who forgot him. All that has been spent on me ought, by right, to have been spent on him. The vast sums that have been spent on me are, in reality, not mine. It was only the blind mistake of fortune; they ought to

have come to the son of P.; they ought to have been used for his benefit, and not for mine, as was done by the fantastic caprice of the frivolous and forgetful P. If I were quite noble, delicate, just, I ought to give up to his son half of my fortune; but as I am first of all a prudent person, and know only too well that he has no legal claim, I am not going to give him half my millions. But, at any rate, it would be too base and shameless on my part (the scion forgot that it would not be prudent either) if I don't give back now to P.'s son the tens of thousands that were spent by P. on my idiocy. That would only be right and just! For what would have become of me, if P. had not brought me up and had looked after his son instead of me?'

"But no! That is not how such fine gentlemen look at it. In spite of the representations of the young man's lawyer, who had undertaken his cause solely from friendship, and almost against his will, almost by force, in spite of his pointing out the obligations of honesty, honour, justice and even of simple prudence, the Swiss patient remained inflexible, and what do you think? All that would have been nothing, but here we come to what was really unpardonable and not to be excused by any illness, however interesting; this millionaire, who had only just cast off the gaiters of his professor, could not even discern that this noble character, who was wearing himself out giving lessons, was not asking for charity, was not asking for assistance, but for his right and his due, even though he has no legal claim; he does not ask for it even, but his friends demand it on his account. With a majestic air, revelling in the power of using his millions to crush people with impunity, our scion pulls out a fifty-rouble note and sends it to the noble young man by way of insulting charity. "Vbu refuse to believe it. "Vbu are disgusted, you are pained, you utter exclamations of indignation; but that was what he did! The money was, of course, returned to him at once, so to speak, flung back in his face! What resource have we left us? There is no legal claim, there is no resource but publicity. We present the story to the public, guaranteeing its authenticity. One of our well-known humorous writers has perpetrated a charming epigram on the subject which deserves to take a place not only in provincial sketches of Russian life, but even in the capital:

"Dear little Lyov for five long years,
Wrapped warm in Schneider's cloak,
Lived like a child and often played Some simple foolish joke.
Then home he came in gaiters tight, And found himself an heir,

And gaily he the students robbed, The idiot millionaire!”

When Kolya had finished reading, he handed the paper to Myshkin, and without saying a word, rushed away, buried himself in a corner and hid his face in his hands. He felt insufferably ashamed, and his boyish sensitiveness, unaccustomed to such nastiness, was wounded beyond endurance. It seemed to him as though something extraordinary had happened, which had shattered everything, and that he was almost the cause of it by the very fact of having read it aloud.

But everyone seemed to be feeling something of the same sort.

The girls felt very awkward and ashamed. Lizaveta Prokofyevna was struggling with violent anger. She, too, perhaps, was bitterly regretting that she had meddled. Now she was silent. Myshkin felt as over-sensitive people often do in such cases; he was so much ashamed of the conduct of others, he felt such shame for his visitors, that for the first moment he was ashamed to look at them. Ptitsyn, Varya, Ganya, even Lebedyev — all had rather an embarrassed air. The strangest thing was that Ippolit and “the son of Pavlishtchev” both seemed surprised. Lebedyev’s nephew, too, was obviously displeased. The boxer was the only one who sat quite serene, twisting his moustache, with a dignified air and eyes cast down, not from embarrassment, but apparently from modest pride and unmistakable triumph. It was clear that he was delighted with the article.

“This is beyond anything,” General Epanchin muttered in an undertone, “as though fifty lackeys had met together and composed it.”

“Allow me to ask you, my dear sir, how dare you make such insulting suppositions?” cried Ippolit, trembling all over.

“This, this, this for an honourable man . . . you must admit yourself, general, that if it’s an honourable man, it’s insulting!” muttered the boxer, who also seemed suddenly roused, twisting his moustache and twitching his shoulders and body.

“In the first place, I am not ‘your dear sir,’ and in the second place, I have no intention of giving you any explanation,” Ivan Fyodorovitch answered harshly. He was awfully annoyed; he got up from his seat and without saying a word went to the entrance of the verandah and stood on the top step with his back to the party — in violent indignation with his wife,

who even now did not think fit to move.

“Friends, friends, allow me to speak at last,” Myshkin exclaimed in distress and agitation, “and I beg you, let us talk so that we may understand

one another. I say nothing about the article, gentlemen, let it alone; only one thing, friends, it's all untrue, what is said in the article; I say so, because you know that yourselves; it's shameful, in fact, so that I should be greatly surprised if anyone of you has written it."

"I knew nothing about the article till this moment," Ippolit announced. "I don't approve of the article."

"Though I knew it was written, I ... I too wouldn't have advised its being published, because it's premature," added Lebedyev's nephew.

"I knew, but I have the right. . . I. . ," muttered "the son of Pavlishtchev."

"What! Did you make all that up yourself?" asked Myshkin, looking with curiosity at Burdovsky. "But it's impossible!"

"We may refuse to recognise your right to ask such questions!" Lebedyev's nephew put in.

"I only wondered that Mr. Burdovsky could bring himself ... but ... I mean to say, since you have qiven publicity to the case, why were you so offended just now at my talking about it before my friends?"

"At last!" muttered Lizaveta Prokofyevna indignantly.

"And, prince, you are pleased even to forget," Lebedyev, unable to restrain himself, threaded his way between the chairs, almost in a fever. "\bu are pleased to forget that it was only through your kindness, and the infinite goodness of your heart, you received them and listened to them, and that they have no right to demand anything, especially as you have already put the matter into the hands of Gavril Ardalionovitch, and that, too, you did through your excessive kindness. And now, most illustrious prince, in the midst of your chosen friends, you cannot sacrifice such a company to these gentlemen, and you might, so to speak, turn all these gentlemen out at once into the street, and I, as master of the house, would with the greatest pleasure ..."

"Perfectly right!" General Ivolgin thundered suddenly from the back of the room.

"Enough, Lebedyev, enough, enough," Myshkin was beginning, but his words were lost in a perfect explosion of indignation.

"No, excuse me, prince, excuse me, that's not enough now," bawled Lebedyev's nephew, shouting above every one. "Now we must put the case on a firm and clear basis, for it is evidently not understood. There is some legal quibble involved, and on account of that quibble, they threaten to turn us into the street! But is it possible, prince, you can think us such fools as

not to understand that we have no legal claim whatever, and that if the case is analysed from a legal point of view, we have no right to ask for a single rouble? But we thoroughly grasp that, though there is no legal claim, there is a human, natural claim, the claim of common sense and the voice of conscience. And though that claim may not be written in any rotten human code, yet a generous and honest man, in other words, a man of common sense, is bound to remain generous and honest even on points that are not written in the codes. That's why we've come here without any fear of being turned out into the street (as you've threatened just now) because we don't beg but demand, and because of the impropriety of our visit at such a late hour (though we didn't come at a late hour, but you kept us waiting in the servants' room). We came, I say, without fear, because we assumed you to be a man of common sense, that is, of honour and conscience. "Vfes, it's true we came in not humbly, not as beggars or cadgers, but with our heads erect, like free men, not a bit with a petition, but with a free and proud request (you hear, not with a petition, but with a request, take that in) we put the question to you directly and with dignity: do you consider yourself right or wrong in Burdovsky's case? Do you admit that you were benefited and perhaps saved from death by Pavlishtchev? If you admit it (and it's evident), do you, after receiving millions, intend or think it just to compensate Pavlishtchev's son in his poverty, even though he does bear the name of Burdovsky? "Vfes or no? If yes, that is, in other words, if you have what you call in your language honour and conscience, and what we more exactly describe by the term common sense, then satisfy us, and the matter is finished. Satisfy us without entreaties or gratitude on our part; don't expect them of us, for you are doing it not for our sake, but for the sake of iustice. If vou are unwillinq to satisfy us, that is,

answer no, we go away at once and the case is over and we tell you to your face before all your witnesses, that you are a man of coarse intelligence and low development; that for the future you dare not call yourself a man of honour and conscience, and have no right to do so, that you are trying to buy that right too cheap. I've finished. I have put the question. Turn us into the street now, if you dare. "Vbu can do it, you have the power. But remember all the same that we demand and we don't beg. We demand, we do not beg!"

Lebedyev's nephew stopped, much excited.

“We demand, we demand, we demand, we don’t beg,” Burdovsky gabbled thickly and turned red as a crab.

After the speech made by Lebedyev’s nephew, there was a general movement and even a murmur of protest, though every one in the party was evidently anxious to avoid meddling, except perhaps Lebedyev, who seemed in a perfect fever (strange to say, Lebedyev, though evidently on Myshkin’s side, seemed to feel a glow of family pride at the speech of his nephew; anyway, he looked at the company present with a certain peculiar air of satisfaction).

“In my opinion,” Myshkin began in rather a low voice, “in my opinion, Mr. Doktorenko, in half of what you said just now, you are quite right and in the greater half, in fact. And I should agree with you entirely if you hadn’t left something out in your speech. I can’t tell you what you’ve left out exactly, I am not capable, but to make your speech quite just, something more is wanted. But we had better turn to the case, gentlemen; tell me, what made you publish that article? There isn’t a word in it that isn’t slander; so that to my thinking, gentlemen, you’ve done something mean.”

“Excuse me!”

“My dear sir!”

“This . . . this . . . this” was heard at the same time from the excited visitors.

“As for the article,” Ippolit put in, shrilly, “as for that article, I have told you already that I and the rest don’t approve of it! It was written by him here” (he pointed to the boxer, who was sitting beside him); “it’s written disgracefully, I admit, it’s written illiterately, and in the jargon used by retired army men like him. He is stupid, and, besides that, is a mercenary fellow, I

agree. I tell him so to his face every day, but yet in half of it he was right. Publicity is the legal right of all, and therefore of Burdovsky. He must answer himself for his absurdities. As for my protesting in the name of all against the presence of your friends, I think it necessary to inform you, gentlemen, that I protested simply to assert our rights, but in reality we positively prefer that there should be witnesses, and on our way here we all four agreed that whoever your witnesses might be, if even they were your friends, they could not fail to recognise Burdovsky’s claim (because it’s a mathematical certainty) so that it’s even better that these witnesses are your friends; it will make the truth even more evident.”

“That’s true, we agreed about that,” Lebedyev’s nephew assented.

“But why did you begin by making such a fuss and outcry about it, if you wanted it?” asked Myshkin in surprise.

“And as for the article, prince,” put in the boxer, becoming agreeably excited and desperately anxious to put in his word (it might be suspected that the presence of the ladies had a strong and unmistakable effect on him) “as for the article, I

confess that I am the author of it, though my sick friend, whom I am accustomed to excuse on account of his affliction, has just criticised it. But I wrote and I published it in the journal of a friend in the form of a letter. Only the verses are not mine and really come from the pen of a well-known satirist. I only read it through to Mr. Burdovsky, and not all of it, and he at once agreed to let me publish it, but you can see for yourself that I could have published it without his consent. The right to publicity is the right of all, and it’s an honourable and beneficial right. I hope you, prince, are progressive enough not to deny that....”

“I am not going to deny anything, but you must admit that your article ...”

“Is severe, you mean? But you know it’s for the public benefit, so to say, and, besides, how can one let such a flagrant case pass? So much the worse for the guilty, but the public benefit before everything. As for a little inaccuracy, hyperbole so to say, you will admit that what matters most is the motive; the object, the intention comes first. What matters is the beneficial example and one can go into the individual case afterwards. And besides there’s the style and the comic value of it — and in fact,

everybody writes like that, as you know yourself. Ha-ha!”

“But you are quite on a false track, I assure you, gentlemen,” cried Myshkin. “\bu published that article on the supposition that nothing would induce me to satisfy Mr. Burdovsky and so you tried to frighten me and revenge yourselves. But how do you know — I may have decided to satisfy Mr. Burdovsky’s claim. I tell you plainly before every one here that I will...”

“Come, that’s a wise and generous saying from a wise and very generous man!” announced the boxer.

“Heavens!” broke from Lizaveta Prokofyevna.

“This is insufferable,” muttered the general.

“Allow me, friends, allow me, I’ll explain the case,” Myshkin besought them. “\bur agent and representative, Tchebarov, came to see me five weeks ago, Mr. Burdovsky. \bur description of him, Mr. Keller, is much too flattering,” Myshkin added, addressing the boxer, and suddenly laughing. “I didn’t like him at all. I realised from the first moment that this Tchebarov was at the bottom of it and that, to speak candidly, he had taken advantage of your simplicity, Mr. Burdovsky, to set you on to making this claim.”

“You’ve no right to ... I... am not simple ... it’s .. .” Burdovsky stuttered in excitement.

“You’ve no sort of right to make such suppositions,” Lebedyev’s nephew put in sententiously.

“This is insulting in the highest degree,” squeaked Ippolit, “the supposition is insulting, false and irrelevant!”

“I am sorry, gentlemen, I am sorry,” Myshkin apologised hurriedly, “please excuse me; it’s because I thought it might be better for us to be perfectly open with one another; but it’s for you to decide, as you please! I told Tchebarov that, as I was not in Petersburg, I would at once authorise a friend to go into the case, and would let you, Mr. Burdovsky, know. I tell you plainly, gentlemen, that the case struck me as simply a swindle, just because of Tchebarov’s share in it. . . . Oh, don’t take offence, gentlemen! For goodness’ sake, don’t take offence,” Myshkin cried in alarm, seeing again the signs of resentment in Burdovsky and of excitement and protest in his friends. “It can have no reference to you if I do say the case was a swindle. I didn’t know any one of you personally then, I didn’t even know your names; I only judged by Tchebarov; I speak generally because ... if only you knew how horribly I’ve been taken in, since I came into my fortune!”

“Prince, you are wonderfully naive,” Lebedyev’s nephew observed ironically.

“Besides, you are a prince and a millionaire! You may possibly be kind-hearted and simple, but even if you are, you can’t be an exception to the general law,” Ippolit declared.

“Possibly, gentlemen, very possibly,” Myshkin said hurriedly, “though I don’t know what general law you are speaking of. But let me go on and don’t take offence about nothing; I swear I haven’t the faintest wish to insult you. And really, gentlemen, one can’t say one word sincerely without your being offended at once! But in the first place, it was a great shock to

hear of the existence of a son of Pavlishtchev, and in such a terrible situation, as Tchebarov explained to me. Pavlishtchev was my benefactor and my father’s friend. Ach, why did you write such falsehoods about my father in your article, Mr. Keller? There never was any misappropriation of the company’s money, nor ill-treatment of subordinates — of that I am absolutely convinced — and how could you lift your hand to write such a calumny? And what you’ve said about Pavlishtchev is past all endurance. You speak of that noble man as a frivolous libertine, with as much boldness and positiveness as though you were really speaking the truth, and yet he was one of the most virtuous men in the world! He was a remarkably learned man, he used to correspond with numbers of distinguished men of science, and he spent a great deal of money for the advancement of science. As for his heart and his benevolence, oh, no doubt you were quite right in saying that I was almost an idiot at that time and had no understanding of anything (though I could talk Russian and could understand it), but I can now appreciate all I remember at its true value ...”

“Excuse me,” Ippolit squeaked, “isn’t this too sentimental? We are not children. You meant to come straight to the point; it’s going on for ten, remember that.”

“Very well, gentlemen,” Myshkin agreed at once. “After mv first mistrustfulness, I decided that I miqht have made a mistake and that Pavlishtchev might really have had a son. But I was very much amazed that that son should so readily, that is, I mean so publicly, give away the secret of his birth and disgrace his mother’s name. For even at that time Tchebarov threatened me with publicity....”

“How ridiculous!” cried Lebedyev’s nephew.

“You’ve no right . . . you’ve no right!” cried Burdovsky.

“The son is not responsible for the immoral conduct of his father and the mother is not to blame,” Ippolit shrieked hotly.

“All the more reason for sparing her, I should have thought,” Myshkin ventured timidly.

“You are not simply naive, prince, you go beyond that, perhaps,” Lebedyev’s nephew sneered spitefully.

“And what right had you!” Ippolit squeaked in a most unnatural voice.

“None whatever, none whatever,” Myshkin hurriedly put in. “\bu are right there, I admit it, but I couldn’t help it. And I said to myself at once, at the time, that I ought not to let my personal feeling come into the case, for if

I consider myself bound to satisfy Mr. Burdovsky's demands for the sake of my feeling for Pavlishtchev, I ought to satisfy them in any case, that is, whether I respected or did not respect Mr. Burdovsky. I only began about this, gentlemen, because it did all the same seem to me unnatural for a son to betray his mother's secret so publicly ... in fact it was chiefly on that ground that I made up my mind that Tchebarov was a scoundrel and had egged Mr. Burdovsky on to such a fraud by deceit."

"But this is intolerable!" broke from his visitors, some of whom even leapt up from their seats.

"Gentlemen, it was just because of that I decided that poor Mr. Burdovsky must be a simple and helpless person, easily imposed upon by swindlers, and therefore I was all the more bound to help him as a 'son of Pavlishtchev" — first, by opposing Mr. Tchebarov, secondly, by my friendly good offices and guidance, and thirdly, I decided to give him ten thousand roubles, that is all that by my reckoning Pavlishtchev could have spent upon me."

"What, only ten thousand!" shouted Ippolit.

"Well, prince, you are not at all good in arithmetic or else you are too good at it, though you do pretend to be a simpleton," cried Lebedyev's nephew.

"I won't agree to take ten thousand," said Burdovsky.

"Antip, take it!" the boxer prompted him in a clear and rapid whisper, bending across to him over the back of Ippolit's chair. "Take it, and afterwards we shall see."

"Listen, Mr. Myshkin," shrieked Ippolit, "understand that we are not fools, not vulgar fools, as we are probably thought to be by all your visitors, and by these ladies who sneer at us so indignantly, and especially by that grand gentleman" — he pointed to "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch— "whom I have not, of course, the honour of knowing, though I believe I have heard something about him."

"Allow me, gentlemen, you misunderstand me again!" Myshkin addressed them in agitation. "In the first place you, Mr. Keller, in your article have described my fortune very inaccurately; I didn't inherit millions at all. I've only perhaps an eighth or a tenth part of what you suppose, and in the next place, tens of thousands were not spent on me in Switzerland. Schneider was paid six hundred roubles a year and he only received that for the first three years, and Pavlishtchev never went to Paris to find pretty

governesses, that's a calumny again. In my opinion very much less than ten thousand was spent on me altogether, but I propose to give ten thousand, and you'll admit that I could not offer Mr. Burdovsky more in payment of what's due to him, even if I were awfully fond of him, and I could not do so from a feeling of delicacy alone, just because it's paying what is due and not making him a present. I don't know how you can fail to understand that, gentlemen; but still I did mean later on, by my friendship and active sympathy, to compensate the unhappy Mr. Burdovsky, who has evidently been deceived, for he could not otherwise have agreed to anything so low as, for instance, publishing this scandal about his mother in Mr. Keller's article. . . . But why are you getting angry again, gentlemen? We shall completely misunderstand each other. Why, it's turned out to be as I thought! I am convinced now by what I see myself that my guess was correct," Myshkin tried eagerly to persuade them, anxious to pacify their excitement, and not noticing that he was only increasing it.

"Convinced now of what?" Thev fell upon him almost in a fury.

"Why, in the first place, I've had time to see clearly what Mr. Burdovsky is myself, I see now myself what he is. . . . He is an innocent man, taken in by every one! A helpless man . . . and therefore I ought to spare him, and in the second place, Gavril Ardalionovitch — to whom the case has been entrusted and from whom I heard nothing for a long time, because I was travelling, and afterwards was for three days ill in Petersburg — has just now, an hour ago, at our first interview, told me that he has seen through Tchebarov's schemes, that he has proofs, and that Tchebarov is just what I took him to be. I know, gentlemen, that many people look upon me as an idiot and, owing to my reputation for giving away money freely, Tchebarov thought that he could easily impose upon me, and he reckoned just on my feeling for Pavlishtchev. But the chief point is — hear me out, gentlemen, hear me out! — the chief point is that it appears now that Mr. Burdovsky is not a son of Pavlishtchev at all. Gavril Ardalionovitch has just told me, and he assures me that he has positive proof of it. Well, what do you think of that! One can scarcely believe it after all the to-do that has been made! And listen, there are positive proofs! I can't believe it yet, I don't believe it myself, I assure you I am still doubting, because Gavril Ardalionovitch has not had time to give me all the details yet, but that Tchebarov is a scoundrel there can be no doubt at all now! He has imposed upon poor Mr. Burdovsky and on all of you, gentlemen, who have so nobly come to support your

friend (for he obviously needs support, I understand that, of course!); he has imposed upon all of you, and has involved you all in a fraudulent business, for you know it really is fraud, it's swindling!"

"How swindling? . . . Not the son of Pavlishtchev? How is it possible?" exclamations were heard on all sides.

All Burdovsky's party were in inexpressible perturbation.

"Yes, of course, it's swindling! For if Mr. Burdovsky turns out to be not the son of Pavlishtchev, his claim is simply fraudulent (that is, of course, if he knew the truth); but the fact is he has been deceived, that's why I insist on his character's being cleared; that's why I say that he deserves to be pitied for his simplicity, and can't be left without help; if it were not so, he would be a scoundrel too. But I am convinced that he did not understand! I was just in the same state before I went to Switzerland; I too, used to mutter incoherently — one tries to express oneself and can't. Understand that I can sympathise very well because I am almost the same, so I may be allowed to speak of it. And all the same — although there is no 'son of Pavlishtchev,' and it all turns out to be humbug — I haven't changed my mind and am ready to give up ten thousand in memory of Pavlishtchev. Before Mr. Burdovsky came on the scene I meant to devote ten thousand to founding a school in memory of Pavlishtchev, but it makes no difference now whether it's for a school or for Mr. Burdovsky, for though Mr. Burdovsky is not the son of Pavlishtchev, he is almost as good as a son of his, because he has been so wickedly deceived; he genuinely believed himself to be the son of Pavlishtchev! Listen to Gavril Ardalionovitch, friends, let us make an end of this, don't be angry, don't be excited, sit down! Gavril Ardalionovitch will explain everything to us directly, and I confess I shall be very glad to hear all the details myself. He says he has even been to Pskov to see your mother, Mr. Burdovsky, who hasn't died at all, as they've made you say in the article. ... Sit down, gentlemen, sit down!"

Myshkin sat down and succeeded in making Burdovsky and his friends, who had leapt up from their seats, sit down again. For the last ten or twenty minutes he had been talking eagerly and loudly, with impatient haste, carried away and trying to talk above the rest, and he couldn't of course help bitterly regretting afterwards some assumptions and some phrases that escaped him now. If he hadn't himself been worked up and roused almost beyond control, he would not have allowed himself so baldly and hurriedly to utter aloud certain conjectures and unnecessarily candid statements. He

had no sooner sat down in his place than a burning remorse set his heart aching. Besides the fact that he had “insulted” Burdovsky by so publicly assuming that he had suffered from the same disease for which he himself had been treated in Switzerland, the offer of the ten thousand that had been destined for a school had been made to his thinking coarsely and carelessly, like a charity, and just because it had been spoken of aloud before people. “I ought to have waited and offered it to him to-morrow, alone,” Myshkin thought at once, “now, perhaps, there will be no setting it right! Yes, I am an idiot, a real idiot!” he decided in a paroxysm of shame and extreme distress.

Meanwhile Gavril Ardalionovitch, who had hitherto stood on one side persistently silent, came forward at Myshkin’s invitation, took up his stand beside him and began calmly and clearly giving an account of the case that had been entrusted to him by the prince. All talk was instantly silenced. Every one listened with extreme curiosity, especially Burdovsky’s party.

CHAPTER 9

YOU CERTAINLY will not deny," Gavril Ardalionovitch began, directly addressing Burdovsky, who was listening to him intently, and obviously in violent agitation, his eyes round with wonder, "you will not attempt, and will not wish seriously to deny, that you were born just two years after your worthy mother was legally married to Mr. Burdovsky, your father. The date of your birth can be too easily proved, so that the distortion of this fact — so insulting to you and your mother — in Mr. Keller's article must be ascribed simply to the playfulness of Mr. Keller's own imagination; he, no doubt, supposed he was making your claim stronger by this statement, and so promoting your interest. Mr. Keller says that he read some of the article to you beforehand, but not the whole of it . . . there can be no doubt that he did not read so far as that passage.

"No, I didn't as a fact," the boxer interrupted, "but all the facts were given me by a competent person, I

"Excuse me, Mr. Keller," interposed Gavril Ardalionovitch, "allow me to speak. I assure you, your article will have its turn later, and then you can make your explanation, but now we had better take things in their proper order. Quite by chance, with the help of my sister, Varvara Ardalionovna Ptitsyn, I obtained from her intimate friend, Madame Zubkov, a widow lady who has an estate in the country, a letter written to her by the late Mr. Pavlishtchev from abroad, twenty-four years ago. Making Madame Zubkov's acquaintance, I applied, at her suggestion, to a distant relation who was in his day a great friend of Mr. Pavlishtchev, the retired Colonel Vyazovkin. I succeeded in getting from him two more letters of Mr. Pavlishtchev's, also written from abroad. From these three letters, from the facts and dates mentioned in them, it can be positively proved beyond all possibility of doubt or dispute, that he had gone abroad just a year and a half before you were born, Mr. Burdovsky, and that he remained abroad for three years. \bur mother, as you know, has never been out of Russia. For the present I will not read these letters. It's late now; I simply announce the fact. But if you care to fix a time to see me, to-morrow morning if you like, Mr. Burdovsky, and bring your witnesses — as many as you please — and experts to examine the handwriting, I have no doubt that you cannot but be

convinced of the obvious truth of the facts I have laid before you. If this is so, the whole case, of course, falls to the ground and is over."

Again general commotion and intense excitement followed. Burdovsky himself suddenly got up from his chair.

"If it's so, I've been deceived, deceived, not by Tchebarov, but long, long before. I don't want any experts, I don't want to see you, I believe you, I withdraw my claim. ... I won't agree to the ten thousand ... Good-bye."

He took up his cap and pushed away his chair to go out.

"If you can, Mr. Burdovsky," Gavril Ardalionovitch stopped him softly and sweetly, "stay another five minutes. Some other extremely important facts have come to light in this case; for you at any rate they are very interesting. To my thinking, you should not remain in ignorance of them, and perhaps it will be pleasanter for you if the case can be completely cleared up...."

Burdovsky sat down without speaking, with his head bowed, seemingly lost in thought. Lebedyev's nephew, who had got up to follow him, sat down too; though he had not lost his self-possession and his boldness, he seemed greatly perplexed. Ippolit was scowling, dejected, and apparently very much astonished. But at that moment he was coughing so violently that he stained his handkerchief with blood. The boxer was almost in dismay.

"Ech, Antip!" he cried, bitterly. "I told you at the time . . . the day before yesterday, that perhaps you really weren't Pavlishtchev's son!"

There was a sound of smothered laughter, two or three laughed louder than the rest.

"The fact you stated just now, Mr. Keller," Gavril Ardalionovitch caught him up, "is very valuable. Nevertheless, I have a right to assert, on the most precise evidence, that thouqh Mr. Burdovskv of course knew very well the date of his birth, he was in complete ignorance of the circumstance of Mr. Pavlishtchev's residence abroad, where he spent the greater part of his life, only returning to Russia at brief intervals. Besides, the fact of his going away at that time was not so remarkable as to be remembered twenty years after, even by those who knew Pavlishtchev well, to say nothing of Mr. Burdovsky, who was not born at the time. It has turned out, of course, not impossible to establish the fact; but I must own that the facts I've collected came to me quite by chance, and might well not have come into my hands. So that this evidence was really almost impossible for Mr. Burdovsky, or

even Tchebarov, to obtain, even if they had thought of obtaining it. But they may well not have thought of it.

“Allow me, Mr. Ivolgin,” Ippolit suddenly interrupted, irritably, “what’s all this bobbery for, if I may ask. The case has been cleared up, we agree to accept the most important fact, why drag out a tedious and offensive rigmarole about it? “Vbu want, perhaps, to brag of your cleverness in investigation,

to display before us and the prince what a fine detective you are? Or are you undertaking to excuse and justify Mr. Burdovsky by proving that he got mixed up in this business through ignorance? But that’s impudence, sir! Burdovsky has no need of your apologies and your justification, let me tell you! It’s painful for him, it’s trying for him; anyway, he is in an awkward position, you ought to see that and understand it.”

“Enough, Mr. Terentyev, enough,” Gavril Ardalionovitch succeeded in interrupting, “be calm, don’t excite yourself, I am afraid you are not at all well? I feel for you. If you like, I’ve finished, or rather I am obliged to state briefly only those facts which I am convinced it would be a good thing to know in full detail,” he added, noticing a general movement suggestive of impatience. “I only want to state, with proofs, for the information of all that are interested, that Mr. Pavlishtchev bestowed so much kindness and care on your mother, Mr. Burdovsky, only because she was the sister of a serf-girl with whom Mr. Pavlishtchev was in love in his early youth, and so much so that he would certainly have married her if she had not died suddenly. I have proofs that this perfectly true and certain fact is very little known, or perhaps quite forgotten. Further, I could inform you how your mother was taken by Pavlishtchev at ten years old, and brought up by him as though she had been a relation, that she had a considerable dowry set apart for her, and that the trouble he took about her gave rise to extremely disquieting rumours among Pavlishtchev’s numerous relations. It was even thought that he was going to marry his ward, but it ended by her marrying in her twentieth year, by her own choice (and that I can prove in a most certain way) a surveying clerk called Burdovsky. I have collected some well-authenticated facts to prove that your father, Mr. Burdovsky, who was anything but a business man, gave up his post on receiving your mother’s dowry of fifteen thousand roubles, entered upon commercial speculations, was deceived, lost his capital, took to drink to drown his grief, and fell ill in consequence and finally died prematurely, eight years after marrying your

mother. Then, according to your mother's own testimony, she was left utterly destitute, and would have come to grief entirely, if it had not been for the constant and generous assistance of Mr. Pavlishtchev, who allowed her six hundred roubles a year. There is ample evidence, too, that he was extremely fond of you as a child. From this evidence, and from what your mother tells me, it seems that he was fond of you chiefly because you looked like a wretched, miserable child, and had the appearance of a cripple and could not speak plainly, and as I have learnt on well-authenticated evidence, Pavlishtchev had all his life a specially tender feeling for everything afflicted and unfairly treated by nature, particularly children — a fact of great importance in our case, to my thinking. Finally, I can boast of having found out a fact of prime importance, that is, that this extreme fondness of Pavlishtchev for you (by his efforts you were admitted to the gymnasium and taught under special supervision), little by little led the relations of Pavlishtchev and the members of his household to imagine that you were his son, and that your father was deceived by his wife. But it's noteworthy that this idea only grew into a general conviction in the latter years of Pavlishtchev's life when all his relations were alarmed about his will, and when the original facts were forgotten and it was impossible to investiqate them. No doubt that idea came to your ears too, Mr. Burdovsky, and took complete possession of you. \bur mother, whose acquaintance I've had the honour of making, knew of these rumours, but to this day she does not know (I concealed it from her too) that you, her son, were dominated by this idea. I found your much respected mother, Mr. Burdovsky, in Pskov, ill and extremely poor, as she has been ever since the death of Pavlishtchev. She told me with tears of gratitude that she was only supported by you and your help. She expects a great deal of you in the future, and believes earnestly in your future success ..."

"This is really insupportable!" Lebedyev's nephew exclaimed loudly and impatiently. "What's the object of this romance?"

"It's disgusting, it's unseemly!" said Ippolit with an abrupt movement.

But Burdovsky noticed nothing and did not stir.

"What's the object of it? What's it for?" said Gavril Arda li o novi tch wi th sly wo nde r, ma I i ci ously p re pa ri ng for his conclusion. "Why, in the first place, Mr. Burdovsky is perhaps now fully convinced that Mr. Pavlishtchev loved him from generosity and not as his son. This fact alone it was essential that Mr. Burdovsky should know, since he upheld Mr.

Keller and approved of him when his article was read just now. I say this because I look upon you as an honourable man, Mr. Burdovsky. In the second place, it appears that there was not the least intention of robbery or swindling in the case, even in Tchebarov; that's an important point for me too, because the prince, speaking warmly just now, mentioned that I shared his opinion of the dishonest and swindling element in the case. On the contrary, there was absolute faith in it on all sides, and though Tchebarov may really be a great rogue, in this case he appears as nothing worse than a sharp and scheming attorney. He hoped to make a good deal out of it, as a lawyer, and his calculation was not only acute and masterly, it was absolutely safe; it was based on the readiness with which the prince gives away his money and his gratitude and respect for Pavlishtchev, and what is more, on the prince's well-known chivalrous views as to the obligations of honour and conscience. As for Mr. Burdovsky, personally, one may even say that, thanks to certain ideas of his, he was so worked upon by Tchebarov and his other friends that he took up the case hardly from self interest, but almost as a service to truth, progress, and humanity. Now after what I have told you, it has become clear to all that Mr. Burdovsky is an innocent man, in spite of all appearances, and the prince, more readily and zealously than before, will offer him his friendly assistance, and that substantial help to which he referred just now when he spoke of schools and of Pavlishtchev."

"Stay, Gavril Ardalionovitch, stay!" cried Myshkin, in genuine dismay, but it was too late.

"I have said, I have told you three times already," cried Burdovsky irritably, "that I don't want the money, I won't take it. . . why ... I don't want to ... I am going!"

And he was almost running out of the verandah. But Lebedyev's nephew seized him by the arm and whispered something to him. Burdovsky quickly turned back, and pulling a big unsealed envelope out of his pocket, threw it on a table near Myshkin.

"Here is the money! How dared you! How dared you! The money!"

"The two hundred and fifty roubles which you dared to send him as a charity by Tchebarov!"

Doktorenko explained.

"The article said fifty!" cried Kolya.

“It’s my fault,” said Myshkin, going up to Burdovsky. “I’ve done you a wrong, Burdovsky, but I didn’t send it you as a charity, believe me. I am to blame now ... I was to blame before.” (Myshkin was much distressed, he looked weak and exhausted, and his words were disconnected.) “I talked of swindling, but I didn’t mean you, I was mistaken. I said that you . . . were afflicted as I am. But you are not like me, you . . . give lessons, you support your mother. I said that you cast shame on your mother’s name, but you love her, she says so herself ... I didn’t know, Gavril Ardalionovitch had not told me everything. I am to blame. I ventured to offer you ten thousand, but I am to blame, I ought to have done it differently, and now ... it can’t be done because you despise me ...”

“This is a madhouse!” cried Lizaveta Prokofyevna.

“Of course it’s a house of madmen!” Aglaia could not refrain from saying, sharply.

But her words were lost in the general uproar; all were talkinq loudly and discussinq, some disputinq,

others laughing. Ivan Fyodorovitch Epanchin was roused to the utmost pitch of indignation, and with an air of wounded dignity he waited for Lizaveta Prokofyevna. Lebedyev’s nephew put in the last word:

“Yes, prince, one must do you justice, you do know how to make use of your . . . well, illness (to express it politely); you’ve managed to offer your friendship and money in such an ingenious way that now it’s impossible for an honourable man to take it under any circumstances. That’s either a bit too innocent or a bit too clever. .. \bu know best which.”

“Excuse me, gentlemen!” cried Gavril Ardalionovitch, who had meantime opened the envelope, “there are not two hundred and fifty roubles here, there’s only a hundred. I say so, prince, that there maybe no misunderstanding.”

“Let it be, let it be!” cried Myshkin, waving his hands at Gavril Ardalionovitch.

“No, don’t let it be.” Lebedyev’s nephew caught it up at once. “Your ‘let it be’ is an insult to us, prince. We don’t hide ourselves, we declare it openly, yes, there are only a hundred roubles in it, instead of two hundred and fifty, but isn’t it just the same....”

“N-no, it’s not just the same,” Gavril Ardalionovitch managed to interpolate, with an air of naive perplexity.

“Don’t interrupt me; we are not such fools as you think, Mr. Lawyer,” cried Lebedyev’s nephew, with spiteful vexation. “Of course a hundred roubles is not two hundred and fifty, and it’s not just the same, but the principle is what matters. The initiative is the great thing, and that a hundred and fifty roubles are missing is only a detail. What matters is, that Burdovsky does not accept your charity, your excellency, that he throws it in your face, and in that sense it makes no difference whether it’s a hundred or two hundred and fifty. Burdovsky hasn’t accepted the ten thousand, as you’ve seen; he wouldn’t have brought back the hundred roubles if he had been dishonest. That hundred and fifty roubles has gone to Tchebarov for his journey to see the prince. “Vbu may laugh at our awkwardness, at our inexperience in business; you’ve tried your very utmost to make us ridiculous, but don’t dare to say we are dishonest. We’ll all club together, sir, to pay back that hundred and fifty roubles to the prince; we’ll pay it back if it has to be a rouble at a time, and we’ll pay it back with interest. Burdovsky is poor, Burdovsky hasn’t millions, and Tchebarov sent in his account after his journey. We hoped to win the case . .. who would not have done the same thing in his place?”

“Who would not?” exclaimed Prince S.

“I shall go out of my mind here!” cried Madame Epanchin.

“It reminds me,” laughed “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, who had long been standing there watching, “of the celebrated defence made recently by a lawyer who, bringing forward in justification the poverty of his client as an excuse for his having murdered and robbed six people at once, suddenly finished up with something like this: ‘It was natural,’ said he, ‘that in my client’s poverty the idea of murdering six people should have occurred to him; and to whom indeed would it not have occurred in his position?’ Something of that sort, very amusing.”

“Enough!” Lizaveta Prokofyevna announced suddenly, almost shaking with anger. “It’s time to cut short this nonsense.”

She was in terrible excitement; she flung back her head menacingly, and with flashing eyes and an air of haughty, fierce, and impatient defiance, she scanned the whole party, scarcely able at the moment to distinguish between friends and foes. She had reached that pitch of long-suppressed but at last irrepressible wrath when the craving for immediate conflict, for immediate attack on some one becomes the leading impulse. Those who knew Madame Epanchin felt at once that something unusual had happened to her.

Ivan Fyodorovitch told Prince S. next day that “she has these attacks sometimes, but such a pitch as yesterday is unusual, even with her; it happens to her once in three years or so, but not oftener. Not oftener!” he added emphatically.

“Enough, Ivan Fyodorovitch! Let me alone,” cried Lizaveta Prokofyevna, “why are you offering me your arm now? You hadn’t the sense to take me away before! You are the husband, you are the head of the family, you ought to have taken me by the ear and led me out if I were so silly as not to obey you and go. \bu might think of your daughters, anyhow! Now, we can find the way without you! I’ve had shame enough to last me a year. Wait a bit, I must still thank the prince! Thank vou for vour entertainment, prince.

I’ve been staying on to listen to the young people. ... It’s disgraceful, disgraceful! It’s chaos, infamy! It’s worse than a dream. Are there many like them? . . . Be quiet, Aglaia! Be quiet, Alexandra, it’s not your business! Don’t fuss round me. “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, you bother me! ... So you are asking their forgiveness, my dear?” she went on, addressing Myshkin again. ‘“It’s my fault,’ says he, ‘for daring to offer you a fortune.’ . . . And what are you pleased to be laughing at, you braggart?” she pounced suddenly on Lebedyev’s nephew. ‘“We refuse the fortune,’ says he, ‘we demand, we don’t ask!’ As though he didn’t know that this idiot will trail off tomorrow to them to offer his friendship and his money to them again. You will, won’t you? \bu will? Will you or not?”

“I shall,” said Myshkin, in a soft and humble voice.

“You hear! So that’s what you are reckoning on,” she turned again to Doktorenko. “The money is as good as in your pocket, that’s why you boast and try to impress us. . . . No, my good man, you can find other fools, I see through you. ... I see all your game!”

“Lizaveta Prokofyevna!” cried Myshkin.

“Come away, Lizaveta Prokofyevna, it’s time we went, and let us take the prince with us,” Prince S. said, smiling as calmly as he could.

The girls stood on one side, almost scared, General Epanchin was genuinely alarmed, everyone present was amazed. Some of those standing furthest away whispered together and smiled on the sly; Lebedyev’s face wore an expression of perfect rapture.

“There’s chaos and infamy to be found everywhere, madam,” said Lebedyev’s nephew, though he was a good deal disconcerted.

“But not so bad! Not so bad as yours, my man,” Lizaveta Prokofyevna retorted with almost hysterical vindictiveness. “Let me alone!” she cried to those who tried to persuade her. “Well, since you yourself, “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, have just told us that even a lawyer in court declared that nothing is more natural if one is poor than to butcher six people, it simply means the end of all things; I never heard of such a thing. It’s all clear now! And this stuttering fellow, wouldn’t he murder anyone?” (She pointed to Burdovsky, who was gazing at her in extreme bewilderment.) “I am ready to bet that he will murder some one! Maybe he won’t take your money, your ten thousand, maybe he won’t take it for conscience’ sake, but he’ll come at night and murder you and take the money out of your cash box, he’ll take it for conscience’ sake! That’s not dishonest to him. It’s just an outburst of ‘noble indignation,’ it’s a ‘protest,’ or goodness knows what. . . . Tfoo! everything is topsy-turvy, everything is upside down. A girl grows up at home, and suddenly in the middle of the street she jumps into a cab: ‘Mother, I was married the other day to some Karlitch or Ivanitch, good-bye.’-And is it the right thing to behave like that, do you think? Is it natural, is it deserving of respect? The woman question? This silly boy” — she pointed to Kolya— “even he was arguing the other day that that’s what ‘the woman question’ means. Even though the mother was a fool, you must behave like a human being to her! Why did you come in to-night with your heads in the air? ‘Make way, we are coming! Give us every right and don’t you dare breathe a word before us. Pay us every sort of respect, such as no one’s heard of, and we shall treat you worse than the lowest lackey!’ They strive for justice, they stand on their rights, and yet they’ve slandered him like infidels in their article. We demand, we don’t ask, and you will get no gratitude from us, because you are acting for the satisfaction of your own conscience! Queer sort of reasoning! Why, if he’ll get no gratitude from you, the prince may tell you in answer that he feels no gratitude to Pavlishtchev, because Pavlishtchev too did good for the satisfaction of his own conscience, and you know it’s just his gratitude to Pavlishtchev you’ve been reckoning on! He has not borrowed money from you, he doesn’t owe you anything, so what are you reckoning on, if not his gratitude? So how can you repudiate it? Lunatics! They regard society as savage and inhuman, because it cries shame on the seduced girl; but if you think society inhuman, you must think that the girl suffers from the censure of society, and if she does, how is it you expose her to society in the newspapers and expect her

not to suffer? Lunatics! Vain creatures! They don’t believe in God, they don’t believe in Christ! Why, you are so eaten up with pride and vanity that you’ll end by eating up one another, that’s what I prophesy. Isn’t that topsy-turvydom, isn’t that chaos, isn’t it infamy? And after that, this disgraceful creature must needs go and beg their pardon too! Are there many more like you? What are you laughing at? At my disgracing myself with you? Why, I’ve disgraced myself already, there’s no help for it now! Don’t you go grinning, you sweep!” she pounced upon Ippolit. “He is almost at his last gasp, yet he is corrupting others! You’ve corrupted this silly boy” — she pointed to Kolya again— “he does nothing but rave about you, you teach him atheism, you don’t believe in God, and you are not too old for a whipping yourself, sir! Fie upon you! ... So you’ll go to them to-morrow, Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch?” she asked the prince again, almost breathless.

“Yes.”

“Then I don’t want to know you!” she turned quickly to go out, but at once turned back again. “And you’ll go to this atheist too?” she pointed to Ippolit. “How dare you laugh at me!” she cried in an unnatural scream, and darted at Ippolit, unable to endure his sarcastic grin.

“Lizaveta Prokofyevna! Lizaveta Prokofyevna! Lizaveta Prokofyevna!” was heard on all sides at once.

“Maman, this is shameful,” Aglaia cried aloud.

“Don’t worry yourself, Aglaia Ivanovna,” Ippolit answered calmly. Lizaveta Prokofyevna had dashed up to him and had seized him by the arm, and for some inexplicable reason was still holding it tight. She stood before him, her wrathful eyes fastened upon his. “Don’t worry yourself, your maman will see that she cannot attack a dying man. ... I am ready to explain why I laughed ... I shall be very glad of permission to do so.”

Here he coughed terribly and could not leave off for a full minute.

“He is dying, yet he must hold forth!” cried Lizaveta Prokofyevna, letting go his arm, and looking almost with horror at the blood he wiped from his lips. “\bu are not fit for talking! “Vbu simply ought to go and lie down.”

“So I shall,” Ippolit answered in a low husky voice, almost a whisper. “As soon as I get home to-day, I’ll go to bed. ... In another fortnight I shall die, as I

know. B-n himself told me so a week ago.... So that if you allow me, I should like to say two words to you at parting.”

“Are you crazy? Nonsense! \bu want nursing, it’s not the time to talk! Go along, go to bed!” Lizaveta Prokofyevna cried in horror.

“If I go to bed, I shan’t get up again till I die,” said Ippolit, smiling. “I was thinking of going to bed and not getting up again yesterday, but I decided to put it off till the day after to-morrow, since I still could stand on my legs ... so as to come here with them to-day. ... Only I am awfully tired ...”

“Sit down, sit down, why are you standing! Here’s a chair.” Lizaveta Prokofyevna flew up to him and set a chairfor him herself.

“Thank you,” Ippolit went on softly, “and you sit down opposite and we can talk ... we must have a talk, Lizaveta Prokofyevna, I insist on it now,” he smiled at her again. “Think, this is the last time I shall be out in the air and with people, and in a fortnight I shall certainly be underground. So that this will be like a farewell to men and to nature. Though I am not very sentimental, yet would you believe it, I am awfully glad that all this has happened at Pavlovsk; one can see the trees in leaf anyway.”

“You can’t talk now,” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna,

growing more and more alarmed. “You are in a perfect fever. You were screeching and squeaking before, and now you can scarcely breathe, you are gasping!”

“I shall be better in a minute. Why do you want to refuse my last wish? Do you know, I have been dreaming of making your acquaintance for a long time, Lizaveta Prokofyevna? I have heard a great deal about you . . . from Kolya; he is almost the only one who hasn’t given me up. . . . \bu are an original woman, an eccentric woman, I’ve seen that for myself now ... do you know, that I was rather fond of you even.”

“Good heavens, and I was positively on the point of striking him!”

“Aglaia Ivanovna held you back; I am not mistaken, am I? This is your daughter, Aglaia Ivanovna? She is so beautiful that I guessed who she was at first sight, though I’d never seen her. Let me at least look at a beautiful woman for the last time in my life.” Ippolit smiled a sort of awkward, wry smile. “Here, the prince is here, and your husband, and the whole party. Why do you refuse my last wish?”

“A chair!” cried Lizaveta Prokofyevna, but she seized one herself and sat down opposite Ippolit. “Kolya,” she commanded, “you must go with him, take him, and to-morrow I’ll certainly go myself....”

“If you allow me, I would ask the prince for a cup of tea. ... I am very tired. Do you know, Lizaveta Prokofyevna, I believe you meant to take the prince back to tea with you; stay here instead, let us spend the time together, and I am sure the prince will give us all tea. Excuse my arranging it all. . . . But I know you, you are good-natured, the prince is good-natured too ... we are all ridiculously good-natured people.”

Myshkin made haste to give orders. Lebedyev flew head-long out of the room, Vera ran after him.

“That’s true.” Madame Epanchin decided abruptly, “talk, only quietly, don’t get excited. You’ve softened my heart. . . . Prince! You don’t deserve that I should drink tea with you, but so be it, I’ll stay, though I am not going to apologise to any one! Not to any one! It’s nonsense! Still, if I’ve abused you, prince, forgive me — as you like, though. But I am not keeping anyone,” she turned with an expression of extraordinary wrath to her husband and daughters, as thouqh thev had treated her disqracefullv. “I can find my way home alone.”

But they didn’t let her finish. They all drew up around her readily. Myshkin at once began pressing every one to stay to tea and apologised for not having thought of it before. Even General Epanchin was so amiable as to murmur something reassuring, and asked Lizaveta Prokofyevna politely whether it was not too cold for her on the verandah. He almost came to the point of asking Ippolit how long he had been at the university, but he didn’t ask him. “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch and Prince S. became suddenly extremely cordial and good-humoured. A look of pleasure began to mingle with astonishment on the faces of Adelaida and Alexandra; in fact all seemed delighted that Madame Epanchin’s paroxysm was over. Only Aglaia still frowned and sat in silence at a little distance. All the rest of the party remained, no one wanted to go away, not even General Ivolgin, to whom, however, Lebedyev whispered in passing something, probably not quite pleasant, for the general at once effaced himself in the corner. Myshkin included in his invitation Burdovsky and his friends, without exception. They muttered with a constrained air that they would wait for Ippolit, and at once withdrew to the furthest corner of the verandah, where they sat down all in a row again. Probably the tea had been got ready for Lebedyev himself long before, for it was brought in almost immediately! It struck eleven.

CHAPTER 10

Ippolit moistened his lips with the cup of tea handed to him by Vera Lebedyev, put down the cup on the little table, and seemed suddenly embarrassed, and looked about him almost in confusion.

“Look at these cups, Lizaveta Prokofyevna,” he began with a sort of strange haste; “These china cups — and I think they are very good china — are never used and always stand in Lebedyev’s sideboard under glass, locked up, as the custom is; they are part of his wife’s dowry . . . it’s their custom to keep them locked up ... and here he’s brought them out for us — in your honour, of course, he is so pleased to see you....”

He meant to say more but could not think of anything.

“He is feeling awkward; I thought he would,”

“Vfevgeny Pavlovitch whispered suddenly in Myshkin’s ear. “It’s dangerous, isn’t it? It’s a sure sign that now he’ll do something out of spite so eccentric that it will be too much for even Lizaveta Prokofyevna, perhaps.”

Myshkin looked at him inquiringly.

“You are not afraid of eccentricity,” added Yevgeny Pavlovitch, “I am not either; I should like it, in fact. I am only anxious that our dear Lizaveta Prokofyevna should be punished — and to-day too, this minute — and I don’t want to go till she has been. You seem feverish.”

“Afterwards, don’t bother me. “Vfes, I am not well,” Myshkin answered carelessly and even impatiently.

He caught his own name. Ippolit was speaking of him.

“You don’t believe it?” Ippolit laughed hysterically. “You’d be sure not to, but the prince will believe it at once and not be a bit surprised.”

“Do you hear, prince,” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna, turning to him, “do you hear?”

People laughed round them. Lebedyev kept officiously putting himself forward and fussing about Lizaveta Prokofyevna.

“He was saying that this clown here, your landlord . . . corrected the article for this gentleman, the one they read this evening about you.”

Myshkin looked at Lebedyev in surprise.

“Why don’t you speak?” cried Lizaveta Prokofyevna, stamping her foot.

“Well,” muttered Myshkin, scanning Lebedyev, “I see now that he did.”

“Is it true?” Lizaveta Prokofyevna turned quickly to Lebedyev.

“It’s the holy truth, your excellency,” answered Lebedyev firmly, without hesitation, laying his hand on his heart.

“He seems to be proud of it!” she cried, nearly jumping up from her chair.

“I am a poor creature,” muttered Lebedyev. His head sank lower and lower, and he began to smite himself on the breast.

“What do I care if you are a poor creature? He thinks he’ll get out of it by saying he is a poor creature! And aren’t you ashamed, prince, to have to do with such contemptible people, I ask you once again? I shall never forgive you!”

“The prince will forgive me,” said Lebedyev sentimentally and with conviction.

“Simply from good feeling,” Keller said in a loud ringing voice, suddenly darting up to them and addressing Lizaveta Prokofyevna directly, “simply from good feeling, madam, and to avoid giving away a friend who is compromised, I said nothing this evening about the corrections, although he did suggest kicking us downstairs, as you heard yourself. To put things in their true light, I confess that I really did apply to him as a competent person and offered him six roubles, not to correct the style, but simply to give me the facts, which were for the most part unknown to me. The gaiters, the appetite at the Swiss professor’s, the fifty roubles instead of two hundred and fifty; in fact all that arrangement, all that belongs to him. He sold it me for six roubles, but he did not correct the style.”

“I must observe,” Lebedyev interposed with feverish impatience and in a sort of crawling voice, while the laughter grew louder and louder, “that I only corrected the first half of the article, but as we didn’t aqree in the middle and quarrelled over one idea, I

didn’t correct the second half, so that everything that is bad grammar there (and some of it is bad grammar!) mustn’t be set down to me....”

“That’s what he is worried about!” cried Lizaveta Prokofyevna.

“Allow me to ask you,” said “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, addressing Keller, “when was the article corrected?”

“Yesterday morning,” answered Keller, “we met together promising on our honour to keep the secret on both sides.”

“This was while he was crawling before you protesting his devotion. A nice set of people! I don’t want your Pushkin, and don’t let your daughter

come and see me!”

Lizaveta Prokofyevna was on the point of getting up, but suddenly turned irritably to Ippolit, who was laughing.

“Have you put me here to be a laughing-stock, young man?”

“Heaven forbid,” said Ippolit with a wry smile, “but what strikes me most of all is your extraordinary eccentricity, Lizaveta Prokofyevna. I confess I led up the conversation to Lebedyev on purpose; I knew the effect it would have on you and on you only, for the prince will certainly forgive it, and has probably forgiven it already ... he has found an excuse for him in his own mind by now most likely; that’s true, prince, isn’t it?”

He was breathless; his strange excitement grew greater at every word.

“Well!” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna wrathfully, wondering at his tone, “Well?”

“I’ve heard a great deal about you of the same sort of thing . . . with great pleasure. . . . I’ve learnt to respect you extremely,” Ippolit went on.

He said one thing, but said it as though he meant something quite different by the words. He spoke with a shade of mockery; yet, at the same time, was unaccountably excited. He looked about him uneasily. He was obviously muddled, and lost the thread of what he was saying at every word. All this, together with his consumptive appearance and strange, glittering, and almost frenzied eyes, could not fail to hold the general attention.

“I should have been surprised, though I know nothing of the world (I am aware of that), at your not only remaining yourself in our company — though we were not fit company for you — but even allowing these . . . young ladies to listen to a scandalous business, though they have read it all in novels already. Though I don’t know, perhaps . . . because I am muddled, but in any case, who could have stayed except you ... at the request of a boy (well, yes a boy, I confess it again) to spend the evening with him and to take . . . part in everything . . . though you knew you would be ashamed next day ... (I must admit I am not expressing myself properly). I commend all this extremely and respect it profoundly, though one can see from the very countenance of his excellency, your husband, how improper all this seems to him. He-he!” he chuckled, completely at a loss; and he suddenly coughed, so that for two minutes he could not go on.

“Now he is choking!” Lizaveta Prokofyevna pronounced coldly and sharply, scanning him with stern curiosity. “Well, my dear fellow, we’ve

had enough of you. We must be going."

"Allow me too, sir, to tell you for my part," Ivan Fyodorovitch broke out irritably, losing patience, "that my wife is here, visiting Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch, our friend and neighbour, and that in any case it's not for you, young man, to criticise Lizaveta Prokofyevna's actions, nor to refer aloud, and to my face, to what is written on my countenance. No, sir. And if my wife has remained here," he went on, his irritation increasing almost at every word, "it's rather from amazement, sir, and from an interest, comprehensible nowadays to all, in the spectacle of strange young people. I stopped myself, as I sometimes stop in the street when I see something at which one can look as ... as ... as . .

"As a curiosity,"

"Vfevgeny Pavlovitch prompted him.

"Excellent and true." His excellency, rather at a loss for a comparison, was delighted. "Precisely, as a curiosity. But in any case, what is more amazing than anything, and even regrettable to me, if it is grammatical so to express oneself, is that you are not even able, young man, to understand that Lizaveta Prokofyevna has stayed with you now because you are ill — if only you really are dying — so to say from compassion, for the sake of your piteous appeal, sir, and that no kind of slur can in any case attach to her name, character, and consequence. .. .

Lizaveta Prokofyevna!" the general concluded, with a crimson face, "if you mean to go, let us take leave of our dear prince ..."

"Thank you for the lesson, general," Ippolit interrupted suddenly, speaking earnestly and looking thoughtfully at him.

"Let's go, maman. How much longer is this to go on!" Aglaia said wrathfully and impatiently, getting up from her chair.

"Two minutes more, dear Ivan Fyodorovitch, if you allow it," Lizaveta Prokofyevna turned with dignity to her husband. "I believe he is in a fever and simply delirious; I am sure of it from his eyes; he can't be left like this. Lyov Nikolayevitch, could he stay the night with you, that he needn't be dragged to Petersburg to-night? Cher prince, I hope you are not bored," she added, for some reason suddenly addressing Prince S. "Come here, Alexandra; put your hairtidy, my dear."

She did something to Alexandra's hair, which was already perfectly tidy, and kissed her; that was all she had called her for.

"I thought you were capable of development,"

Ippolit began again, coming out of his reverie. “Yes, this was what I meant to say.” He was delighted, as though suddenly remembering something. “Burdovsky here genuinely wants to protect his mother, doesn’t he? And it turns out that he has disgraced her. The prince here wants to help Burdovsky, and in all sincerity offers him his tender friendship and a fortune, and perhaps he is the only one of us who does not feel an aversion for him, and yet they stand facing one another like actual enemies. Ha ha ha! You all hate Burdovsky because to your thinking he has behaved in an ugly and unseemly way to his mother; isn’t that so? Isn’t it? Isn’t it? You are all awfully fond of external beauty and seemliness, and that’s all you care for; that’s true, isn’t it? I’ve suspected that was all you care for, for a long time. Well, let me tell you that very likely not one of you has loved his mother as Burdovsky has! I know, prince, you’ve sent money to Burdovsky’s mother on the sly, through Ganya, and I’ll bet, he he he!” — he laughed hysterically— “I’ll bet that now Burdovsky will accuse you of indelicacy and disrespect to his mother. I swear that’s how it will be. Ha ha ha!”

At this point he choked again and coughed.

“Well, is that all? That’s all now; you’ve said everything? Well, now go to bed; you are in a fever,” Lizaveta Prokofyevna interrupted impatiently, keeping her eyes fixed anxiously on him. “Good heavens, he is speaking again!”

“I think you are laughing. Why do you keep laughing at me? I notice that you are laughing at me all the time,” he said, turning with a sudden and uneasy irritation to Yevgeny Pavlovitch.

The latter really was laughing. “I only wanted to ask you, Mr. . . . Ippolit. . . excuse me, I’ve forgotten your name.”

“Mr. Terentyev,” said Myshkin.

“Yes, Terentyev. Thank you, prince. It was mentioned before, but it escaped my memory. ... I wanted to ask you, Mr. Terentyev, is it true what I’ve heard, that you believe that you have only to talk to the peasants out of the window for a quarter of an hour and they’ll agree with you and follow you at once?”

“It’s quite possible I’ve said so,” answered Ippolit, seeming to recall something. “I certainly did say so,” he added suddenly, growing eager again and looking at Yevgeny Pavlovitch. “What of it?”

“Absolutely nothing; I simply wanted to know, to put the finishing touch.”

“Vfevgeny Pavlovitch was silent, but Ippolit still looked at him in impatient expectation.

“Well, have you finished?” Lizaveta Prokofyevna asked “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch. “Make haste and finish, my friends; he ought to be in bed. Or don’t you know how to?”

She was in terrible vexation.

“I am very much tempted to add,” Yevgeny Pavlovitch went on, smiling, “that everything I’ve heard from your companions, Mr. Terentyev, and everything you’ve said just now, and with such unmistakable talent, amounts in my opinion to the theory of the triumph of right before everything and setting everything aside, and even to the exclusion of everything else, and perhaps even before finding out what that right consists in. Perhaps I am mistaken.”

“Of course you are mistaken; I don’t even understand you.... Further?”

There was a murmur in the corner, too. Lebedyev’s nephew was muttering something in an undertone.

“Why, scarcely anything further,” Yevgeny Pavlovitch went on. “I only meant to observe that from that position one may easily make a jump to the right of might, that is, to the right of the individual fist and of personal caprice, as indeed has often happened in the history of the world. Proudhon arrived at the right of might. In the American War, many of the most advanced Liberals declared themselves on the side of the planters on the ground that Negroes are Negroes, lower than the white race, and therefore that right of might was on the side of the white men..

“Well?”

“So then you don’t deny that might is right?”

“Further?”

“I must say you are logical. I only wanted to observe that from the right of might to the right of tigers and crocodiles, and even to the right of Danilovs and Gorskys, is not a long step.”

“I don’t know. Further?”

Ippolit scarcely heard what “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch said, and asked “Well?” and “Further?” more from a habit he had formed in arguments than from attention or curiosity.

“Nothing more ... that’s all.”

“I am not angry with you, though,” Ippolit concluded suddenly and quite unexpectedly, and, hardly knowing what he was doing, he held out his hand, even smiling.

“Vfevgeny Pavlovitch was surprised at first, but with a most serious air touched the hand which was offered to him as though accepting forgiveness.

“I must add,” he said in the same equivocally respectful tone, “my gratitude to you for the attention with which you have listened to me, for, from my numerous observations, our Liberals are never capable of letting anyone else have a conviction of his own without at once meeting their opponent with abuse or even something worse.”

“You are perfectly right there,” observed General Epanchin, and, folding his hands behind his back, he retreated with a bored air to the steps of the verandah, where he yawned with vexation.

“Well, that’s enough of you, my friend,” Lizaveta Prokofyevna announced suddenly to Yevgeny Pavlovitch, “I am tired of you.”

“It’s late!” Ippolit suddenly got up, looked preoccupied and almost alarmed, gazing about him in perplexity. “I’ve kept you; I wanted to tell you everything. ... I thought that every one for the last time ... that was fancy....”

It was evident that he revived by fits and starts. He would suddenly come to himself from actual delirium for a few minutes; he would remember and talk with complete consciousness, chiefly in disconnected phrases which he had perhaps thought out and learnt by heart in the long weary hours of his illness, in his bed, in sleepless solitude.

“Well, good-bye,” he said suddenly and abruptly. “Do you think it’s easy for me to say good-bye to you? Ha ha!” He laughed angrily at his awkwerd question, and, seeming suddenly to grow furious at continually failing to say what he wanted to say, he said loudly and irritably: “\bur excellency, I have the honour of inviting you to my funeral if only you think me worthy of such an honour, and ... all of you, ladies and gentlemen, in the wake of the general!”

He laughed again, but it was the laugh of a madman. Lizaveta Prokofyevna moved towards him in alarm and took him by the arm. He looked at her intently with the same lauqh which seemed to have stopped short and frozen on his face.

“Do you know I came here to see the trees? These here” — he pointed to the trees in the park— “that’s not ridiculous, is it? There is nothing

ridiculous in it?” he asked Lizaveta Prokofyevna seriously, and suddenly he sank into thought; then a minute later raised his head and began inquisitively looking about in the company. He was looking for “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, who was standing quite near on the right of him in the same place as before, but he had already forgotten and looked round. “Ah, you’ve not gone away!” He found him at last. “\bu were laughing just now at my wanting to talk out of the window for a quarter of an hour. . . . But do you know I am not eighteen? I’ve lain so much on that pillow and looked out of that window and thought so much . . . about every one . . . that... a dead man has no age, you know. I thought that last week when I woke up in the night. . . . And do you know what you are more afraid of than anything? You are more afraid of our sincerity than of anything, though you do despise us! I thought that too, lying on my pillow, that night.... \bu think I meant to laugh at you, Lizaveta Prokofyevna? No, I was not laughing at you, I only wanted to praise you. Kolya told me the prince said you were a child . . . that’s good. . . . “Vfes, what was it? ... I was going to say something more. . . .” He hid his face in his hands and pondered. “Oh, yes, when you were saying ‘Good-bye’ just now I suddenly thought: these people here, there never will be any more of them, never! And the trees too . . . there will be nothing but the red-brick wall, the wall of Meyer’s house . .. opposite my window. .. . Well, tell them about all that... try to tell them; here’s a beauty . . . you are dead, you know. Introduce yourself as a dead man; tell them that the dead may say anything and that the Princess Marya Alexeyevna — . . . won’t find fault. Ha ha! \bu don’t laugh? . . .” He scanned them all mistrustfully. “You know, a great many ideas have come into my head as I lay on the pillow.... Do you know, I am convinced that Nature is very ironical. . . . \bu said just now that I am an atheist, but do you know this Nature . . . Why are you laughing again? \bu are horribly cruel!” he pronounced suddenly with mournful indignation, looking at all of them. “I have not corrupted Kolya,” he concluded in quite a different tone, earnest and convinced, as thouqh remembering something again.

“Nobody, nobody is laughing at you here; don’t worry yourself,” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna in distress. “A new doctor shall come to-morrow; the other one was mistaken. Sit down, you can hardly stand on your legs! \bu are delirious. . . . Ah, what are we to do with him now?” she asked anxiously, making him sit down in an arm-chair.

A tear gleamed on her cheek. Ippolit stopped, almost amazed. He raised his hand, stretched it out timidly, and touched the tear. He smiled a childlike smile.

“I. .. you,” he began joyfully, “you don’t know how I . . . he has always talked to me so enthusiastically about you, he there,” he pointed to Kolya. “I like his enthusiasm. I’ve never corrupted him! He is the only friend I leave behind. ... I should like to have left every one friends, every one ... but I had none. ... I meant to do so much, I had the right. . . . Oh, how much I wanted! Now I want nothing. I don’t want to want anything, I promised myself not to want anything; let them seek the truth without me! Yes, Nature is ironical. Why,” he resumed with heat, “why does she create the best beings only to laugh at them afterwards? It is her doing that the sole creature recognized on earth as perfection ... it is her doing that, showing him to men, she has decreed for him to say words for which so much blood has been shed, that if it had been shed at once, men must have been drowned in it. . . . Ah, it’s a good thing that I am dying! Perhaps I too should utter some horrible lie, Nature would beguile me into it.... I have not corrupted anyone.... I wanted to live for the happiness of all men, to discover and proclaim the truth. ... I gazed out of the window on Meyer’s wall and dreamed of only speaking for a quarter of an hour and convincing every one, every one, and for once in my life I have met . . . you, though I haven’t others, and see what has come of it? Nothing! All that has come of it is that you despise me! So then I am a fool, so then I am not needed, so then it’s time for me to go! And I haven’t succeeded in leaving any memory behind me — not a sound, not a trace, not one deed; I haven’t preached one truth! . . . Don’t laugh at the foolish fellow! Forget! Forget it all. Forget it, please; don’t be so cruel! Do you know that if this consumption hadn’t turned up, I should have killed myself.”

He seemed wanting to say a great deal more but did not say it; he sank back in the chair, covered his face with his hands, and began crying like a little child.

“Well, what are we to do with him now!” exclaimed Lizaveta Prokofyevna. She darted up to him, took his head, and pressed it close to her bosom. He sobbed convulsively. “There, there, there! Come, don’t cry. Come, that’s enough. \bu are a good boy. God will forgive you because of your ignorance! Come, that’s enough; be a man. Besides, you’ll feel ashamed.”

“Up there,” said Ippolit, trying to raise his head, “I’ve a brother and sisters, little children, poor, innocent. . . . She will corrupt them! You are a saint, you . . . are a child yourself — save them! Get them away from that woman . . . she ... a disgrace. . . . Oh, help them, help them! God will repay you a hundred-fold. For God’s sake, for Christ’s sake!”

“Do tell me, Ivan Fyodorovitch, what is to be done now,” Lizaveta Prokofyevna cried irritably. “Be so good as to break your majestic silence. If you don’t decide somethinq, vou may as well know that I shall stay the night here myself; you’ve tyrannised over me enough with your despotism!”

Lizaveta Prokofyevna spoke with excitement and anger, and awaited an immediate reply. But in such cases those present, if there are many of them, usually receive such questions in silence and with passive interest, unwilling to take anything upon themselves, and only express their opinions long afterwards. Among those present on this occasion there were some who were capable of sitting there till morning without uttering a word. Varvara Ardalionovna, for instance, had been sitting at a little distance all the evening, listening in silence with an extraordinary interest, for which there were perhaps special reasons.

“My opinion, my dear,” the general expressed himself at last, “is that a nurse is more needed here than our agitation, and perhaps a trustworthy, sober person for the night. In any case the prince must be asked, and ... the invalid must have rest at once. And to-morrow we can show interest in him again.”

“It’s twelve o’clock. We are going. Is he coming with us or is he staying with you?” Doktorenko asked Myshkin, irritably and angrily.

“If you like, you can stay here with him,” said Myshkin; “there’ll be room.”

“Your excellency!” Mr. Keller suddenly and enthusiastically flew up to General Epanchin. “If a satisfactory man is wanted for the night, I am ready to sacrifice myself for a friend ... he is such a soul! I’ve long considered him a great man, your excellency! My education has been defective, of course, but his criticisms — they are pearls, pearls, your excellency!”

The general turned away in despair.

“I shall be very glad if he will stay, of course; it’s difficult for him to be moved,” Myshkin replied to Lizaveta Prokofyevna’s irritable questions.

“Are you asleep? If you don’t want him, my friend, I’ll take him home with us. My goodness, he can hardly stand upright himself! Why, you are ill?”

Earlier in the evening Lizaveta Prokofyevna, not finding Myshkin at death’s door, had been misled by appearances into exaggerating his strength; but his recent illness, the painful recollections associated with it, the fatigue of this strenuous evening, the incident with “the son of Pavlishtchev,” and the to-do with Ippolit now, all worked upon the morbid sensitiveness of Myshkin and excited him almost into a fever. Another anxiety, almost a fear, could moreover be discerned in his eyes; he looked apprehensively at Ippolit, as though expecting something more from him.

Suddenly Ippolit got up, horribly pale and with an expression of terrible, almost despairing, shame on his distorted face. It was expressed chiefly in his eyes, which looked with fear and hatred at the company, and in the vacant, twisted, and abject grin on his quivering lips. He dropped his eyes at once and strolled, staggering and still with the same smile, up to Burdovsky and Doktorenko, who were standing at the verandah steps; he was going away with them.

“Ah, that’s what I was afraid of!” cried Myshkin; “that was bound to happen!”

Ippolit turned quickly to him with frenzied anger, and every feature in his face seemed to be quivering and speaking.

“Ah, you were afraid of that, were you? That was bound to happen, you say? Then let me tell you, if I hate anyone here,” he yelled, spluttering, with a hoarse shriek, “I hate you all, everyone of you! — it’s you, Jesuitical, treacly soul, idiot, philanthropic millionaire; I hate you more than every one and everything in the world! I understood and hated you long ago, when first I heard of you; I hated you with all the hatred of my soul. . . . This has all been your contriving. \bu led me on to breaking down! You drove a dying man to shame! \bu, you, you are to blame for my abject cowardice! I would kill you if I were going to remain alive! I don’t want your benevolence, I won’t take anything — anything, do you hear? — from anyone! I was in delirium, and don’t you dare to triumph! I curse every one of you, once for all!”

Here he choked completely.

“He is ashamed of his tears,” Lebedyev whispered to Lizaveta Prokofyevna. “That was bound to happen. Bravo, the prince! he saw right

through him.”

But Lizaveta Prokofyevna did not deign to glance at him. She was standing proudly erect, with her head thrown back, scanning “these miserable people” with contemptuous curiosity. When Ippolit had finished, General Epanchin shrugged his shoulders; his wife looked him up and down wrathfully, as though asking an explanation of his movement, and at once turned to Myshkin.

“We must thank you, prince, the eccentric friend of our family, for the agreeable evening you have given us all. I suppose your heart is rejoicing now at having succeeded in dragging us into your foolery. . . . Enough, my dear friend. Thank you for having let us have a clear view at last of what you are, anyway.”

She began indignantly setting straight her mantle, waiting for “those people” to get off. A cab drove up at that moment to take them. Doktorenko had sent Lebedyev’s son, the schoolboy, to fetch it a quarter of an hour before. Immediately after his wife, General Epanchin managed to put in his word too.

“Yes, indeed, prince, I should never have expected it . . . after everything, after all our friendly relations ... and then Lizaveta Prokofyevna ...”

“How can you! How can you!” cried Adelaida. She walked quickly up to Myshkin and gave him her hand.

Myshkin smiled at her with a bewildered face. Suddenly a rapid, excited whisper seemed to scorch his ear.

“If you don’t throw up these nasty people at once, I shall hate you all my life, all my life!” Aglaia whispered to him.

She seemed in a sort of frenzy, but she turned away before he had time to look at her. However, he had by now nothing and no one to throw up: they had by this time succeeded somehow in getting the invalid into the cab, and it had driven away.

“Well, how much longer is this going on, Ivan Fyodorovitch? What do you say to it? How long am I to be tormented by these spiteful boys?”

“Well, my dear... I am ready, of course, and . . . the prince ...”

Ivan Fyodorovitch held out his hand to Myshkin, however, but, without staying to shake hands, ran after Lizaveta Prokofyevna, who descended the terrace steps, rustling and wrathful.

Alexandra, Adelaida, and her betrothed took leave of Myshkin with genuine affection. Yevgeny Pavlovitch did the same, and he alone was in good spirits.

“It happened as I thought it would, only I am sorry you — poor fellow — have had such a bad time!” he whispered, with a most charming smile.

Aglaia went away without saying good-bye.

But the adventures of that evening were not yet over. Lizaveta Prokofyevna had still to face a very unexpected meeting.

Before she had descended the verandah steps to the road, which ran along the edge of the park, a magnificent carriage, drawn by two white horses, came dashing by Myshkin’s villa. Two gorgeously dressed ladies were sitting in it. But the carriage suddenly pulled up not ten paces beyond the house. One of the ladies turned round quickly, as though she had suddenly caught sight of a friend she must speak to.

“Yevgeny Pavlovitch, is that you, dear?” cried a beautiful ringing voice, which made Myshkin, and perhaps some one else too, start. “Oh, how glad I am I’ve found you at last! I sent a messenger to you in town, two of them; they’ve been looking for you all day!”

“Vfevgeny Pavlovitch stood on the verandah steps as though thunderstruck. Lizaveta Prokofyevna too stood still, but not in horror and petrifaction like “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch; she looked at the audacious person with the same pride and cold contempt as she had five minutes before at “these miserable people,” and at once turned her steady gaze on Yevgeny Pavlovitch.

“I have news!” the ringing voice continued. “Don’t worry about Kupfer’s lOUs. Rogozhin has bought them up for thirty; I persuaded him. \bu can be easy for another three months, and we’ll manage Biskup and all those wretches through friends. Do you see? Everything is all right. Keep up your spirits, dear. Till to-morrow.”

The carriage set off and quickly disappeared.

“It’s a madwoman,” exclaimed “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch at last, flushing with indignation and looking round him bewildered. “I haven’t an idea what she was talking about. What lOUs? Who is she?”

Lizaveta Prokofyevna went on looking at him for another two seconds. At last she set off quickly and abruptly towards her villa, and all the rest followed her. One minute later “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch came back to Myshkin on the verandah, extremely agitated.

“Prince, tell the truth. Do you know what it means?”

“I know nothing about it,” answered Myshkin, who was himself in a state of extreme and painful tension.

“No?”

“No.”

“And I don’t know.” Yevgeny Pavlovitch laughed suddenly. “I swear I’ve had nothing to do with any lOUs; you may believe my word of honour! But what’s the matter? You are fainting?”

“Oh, no, no, I assure you, no....”

CHAPTER 11

It WAS not until three days afterwards that the Epanchins were quite gracious again. Though Myshkin, as usual, took a great deal of blame on himself and genuinely expected to be punished, yet he had at first the fullest inward conviction that Lizaveta Prokofyevna could not be seriously angry with him, and was really more angry with herself. And so such a long period of animosity reduced him by the third day to the most gloomy bewilderment. Other circumstances contributed to this, and one especially so. To Myshkin's sensitiveness it went on gaining in significance during those three days (and of late he had blamed himself for two extremes, for his excessive "senseless and impertinent" readiness to trust people and at the same time for his gloomy suspiciousness). In short, by the end of the third day the incident of the eccentric lady who had accosted "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch had taken in his imagination alarming and mysterious proportions. The essence of the riddle, apart from other aspects of the affair, lay for Myshkin in the mortifying question, was he to blame for this new "monstrosity," or was it. . . But he did not say who else. As for the letters "N.F.B," he saw in that nothing but an innocent piece of mischief — the most childish mischief, indeed, so that it would have been a shame, and even in one way almost dishonourable, to think much about it.

However, on the day after the scandalous evening for the disgraceful incidents of which he was the chief "cause," Myshkin had the pleasure of a morning visit from Prince S. and Adelaida. "They had come principally to inquire after his health"; they were out for a walk together. Adelaida had just noticed in the park a tree, a wonderful spreading old tree with long twisted branches, with a big crack and hollow in it, and covered with young green leaves. She must, she positively must paint it! So that they scarcely spoke of anything else for the whole half-hour of their visit. Prince S. was as usual cordial and amiable; he questioned Myshkin about the past, and referred to the circumstances of their first acquaintance, so that hardly anything was said of the events of yesterday.

At last Adelaida could not keep it up and admitted with a smile that they had come incognito. But her confession ended there, though from that word "incognito" it might be judged that he was in special disfavour with her parents, or rather with her mother. But neither Adelaida nor Prince S.

uttered one word about her or Aglaia, or even General Epanchin, during their visit. When they went away to continue their walk, they did not ask Myshkin to accompany them. There was no hint of an invitation to the house either. One very suggestive phrase escaped Adelaida indeed. Telling him about a water-colour she had been painting, she suddenly expressed a great desire to show it to him. “How can that be done soon? Stay! I’ll either send it to you to-day by Kolya, if he comes, or I’ll bring it to you myself to-morrow when I am out for a walk with the prince,” she concluded at last, glad that she had succeeded in getting out of the difficulty so cleverly and comfortably for every one.

At last, as he was about to take leave, Prince S.

seemed suddenly to recollect. “Ah, yes,” he asked, “do you, perhaps, dear Lyov Nikolayevitch, know who that person was who shouted yesterday from the carriage?”

“It was Nastasya Filippovna,” said Myshkin. “Haven’t you found out yet that it was she? But I don’t know who was with her.”

“I know; I’ve heard!” Prince S. caught him up. “But what did that shout mean? It is, I must own, a mystery to me.... to me and to others.”

Prince S. spoke with extreme and evident perplexity.

“She spoke of some bills of Yevgeny Pavlovitch’s,” Myshkin answered very simply, “which by her request had come from some moneylender into Rogozhin’s hand, and that Rogozhin will wait his convenience.”

“I heard, I heard it, my dear prince; but you know that couldn’t be so! Yevgeny Pavlovitch cannot possibly have given any such bills with a fortune like his. ... He has, it is true, been careless in the past; and indeed I have helped him out. . . . But with his fortune to give lOUs to a money-lender and be worried about them is impossible. And he can not be on such familiar and friendly terms with Nastasya Filippovna; that’s what is most mysterious. He swears he knows nothing about it, and I trust him entirely. But the fact is, dear prince, I want to ask you if you know anything, I mean, has no rumour, by some marvel, reached you?”

“No, I know nothing about it, and I assure you I had nothing to do with it.”

“Ach! how strange you are, prince! I really don’t know you to-day. As though I could suppose you had anything to do with an affair of that kind! But you are out of sorts today.”

He embraced and kissed him.

“Had anything to do with an affair of what ‘kind’? I don’t see that it is an ‘affairof that kind.’”

“There is no doubt that person wished to damage “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch in some way by attributing to him in the eyes of those present qualities which he has not and cannot have,” Prince S. answered rather drily.

Myshkin was confused, yet he continued to gaze steadily and inquiringly at Prince S.; but the latter did not speak.

“And weren’t there simply bills? Wasn’t it literally as she said yesterday?” Myshkin muttered at last in a sort of impatience.

“But I tell you — judge for yourself — what can there be in common between Yevgeny Pavlovitch and . . . her, and above all with Rogozhin? I repeat he has an immense fortune, and I know it for a fact, and he expects another fortune from his uncle. It’s simply that Nastasya Filippovna ...”

Prince S. suddenly paused again, obviously because he did not care to go on speaking of Nastasya Filippovna to Myshkin.

“Then he knows her, anyway?” Myshkin asked suddenly after a minute’s silence.

“That was so, I believe; he’s a giddy fellow! But if it was so, it was long ago in the past — that is, two or three years back. \bu see, he used to know Totsky. Now, there could be nothing of the sort; they could never have been on intimate terms! \bu know yourself that she hasn’t been here either; she hasn’t been anywhere. Many people don’t know yet that she has turned up again. I have noticed the carriage for the last three days, not more.”

“A splendid carriage!” said Adelaida.

“Yes, the carriage was splendid.”

They took leave, however, on the most friendly, one might say the most brotherly, terms with Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch.

But there was something of vital importance to our hero in this visit. He had indeed suspected a good deal himself, ever since the previous evening (possibly even earlier), but till their visit he had not brought himself to justify his apprehensions completely. But now it had become clear. Prince S. of course, put a mistaken interpretation on the incident, but still he was not far from the truth; he realised, anyway, that there was an intrigue in it. (“Perhaps though, he understands it quite correctly,” thought Myshkin, “but only does not want to speak out, and so puts a false interpretation on it on purpose.”) What was clearer than anything was that they had come to see him just now (Prince S. certainly had) in the hope of getting some sort of

explanation. If that were so, then they plainly looked on him as being concerned in the intrigue. Besides, if this were so and really were of consequence, then she must have some dreadful object. What object?

Horrible! “And how’s one to stop her? There is no possibility of stopping her when she is determined on her object.” That Myshkin knew by experience. “She is mad! She is mad!”

But that morning was crowded with far too many other unexplained incidents, all coming at once and all requiring to be settled at once; so that Myshkin was very sad. His attention was distracted a little by Vera Lebedyev, who came to see him with Lubotchka, and, laughing, told him a long story. She was followed by her open-mouthed sister. They were followed by the schoolboy, Lebedyev’s son, who informed him that the “star that is called Wormwood” in the Apocalypse, “that fell upon the fountains of waters,” was, by his father’s interpretation, the network of railways spread over Europe. Myshkin did not believe that Lebedyev did interpret it in this way, and resolved to ask him about it at the first convenient opportunity.

From Vera Lebedyev, Myshkin learned that Keller had taken up his quarters with them the previous day and showed every sign of not leaving them for a long time, since he found company in their house and had made friends with General Ivolqin. He declared,

however, he was remaining with them solely to complete his education. On the whole Myshkin began to like Lebedyev’s children more and more every day. Kolya had not been there all day — he had set off to Petersburg early in the morning. Lebedyev, too, had gone away as soon as it was light to see after some little business of his own. But Myshkin impatiently expected a visit from Gavril Ardalionovitch, who was to come to see him without fail that day.

He came just after dinner, about six o’clock in the afternoon. At the first glance at him, the thought struck Myshkin that that gentleman at least must know every detail of the affair thoroughly. How could he fail to, indeed, with people like Varvara Ardalionovna and her husband to help him? But Myshkin’s relations with Ganya were somewhat peculiar. Myshkin had, for instance, entrusted him with the management of Burdovsky’s affair, and particularly asked him to look after it. But in spite of the confidence he put in him over this, and in spite of something that had happened before, certain points always remained between them about which it was,

as it were, mutually agreed not to speak. Myshkin fancied sometimes that Ganya would perhaps for his part have liked the fullest and most friendly candour. Now, for instance, Myshkin felt, as soon as Ganya entered, that he was fully persuaded that that moment was the time to break down the ice between them at all points. Gavril Ardalionovitch was in haste, however. His sister was awaiting him with the Lebedyevs, and they were both in a hurry over something they were doing.

But if Ganya really was expecting a whole series of impatient questions, impulsive confidences, friendly outpourings, he was certainly much mistaken. During the twenty minutes his visit lasted, Myshkin was positively dreamy, almost absent-minded. There was no possibility of the expected questions — or rather of the one principal question Ganya was expecting. Then Ganya too decided to speak with great reserve. He talked away for the whole twenty minutes without stopping, laughed, kept up a very light, charming and rapid chatter, but did not touch on the chief point.

Ganya told him among other things that Nastasya Filippovna had only been four days here in Pavlovsk and was already attracting general attention. She was staying at Darya Alexeyevna's, in a clumsy-looking little house in Matrossky Street; but her carriage was almost the finest in Pavlovsk. A perfect crowd of followers, old and young, had gathered about her already. Her carriage was sometimes escorted by gentlemen on horseback. Nastasya Filippovna was, as she always had been, very capricious in her choice of friends and only received those she fancied. And yet a perfect regiment was forming round her; she had plenty of champions, if she needed them. One gentleman, staying in a summer villa, had already on her account quarrelled with the young lady to whom he was formally betrothed; and one old general had all but cursed his son because of her. She often took out driving with her a charming little girl, a distant relative of Darya Alexeyevna's, who was only just sixteen. This girl sang very well, so their little house attracted general attention in the evenings. Nastasya Filippovna, however, behaved with extreme propriety, dressed quietly but with extraordinarily good taste, and all the ladies were "envying her taste, her beauty and her carriage."

"The eccentric incident yesterday," Ganya ventured, "was, of course, premeditated, and, of course, must not be counted. To find any fault with her, people will have to seek it out on purpose, or to invent it; which they would not be slow to do, however," Ganya concluded, expecting Myshkin

would be sure to ask him at that point why he called yesterday's incident "premeditated," and why they would not be slow to do so.

But Myshkin did not ask it.

Ganya talked freely about Yevgeny Pavlovitch without being questioned, which was very strange, for he brought him into the conversation without any pretext for doing so. In Gavril Ardalionovitch's opinion, Yevgeny Pavlovitch had not known Nastasya Filippovna; he scarcely knew her even now, for he had only been introduced to herfour days ago when out walking, and had probably not been once at her house. As for the lOUs, it might be so too: Ganya knew that for a positive fact. Yevgeny Pavlovitch's fortune was, of course, a large one, but some business connected with his estate really was rather in a muddle. At this interesting point Ganya suddenly broke off. He said nothinq about Nastasya Filippovna's prank of the previous evening, except the passing reference above.

At last Varvara Ardalionovna came in to look for Ganya. She stayed a minute, announced (also without being asked) that Yevgeny Pavlovitch was in Petersburg to-day and would perhaps be there tomorrow too; that her husband, Ivan Petrovitch Ptitsyn, was also in Petersburg and also probably on "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch's business; that something had really happened there. As she was going, she added that Lizaveta Prokofyevna was in a fiendish temper to-day; but, what was most odd, Aglaia had quarrelled with her whole family, not only her father and mother, but even with her two sisters, and "that was anything but a good sign." After giving him, as it were in passing, this last piece of news (which was of extreme importance to Myshkin), the brother and sister departed. Ganya had, possibly from false modesty, possibly to "spare the prince's feelings," not uttered one word about the case of "Pavlishtchev's son." Myshkin thanked him, however, once more for the careful way he had managed the affair.

Myshkin was very glad to be left alone at last. He walked off the verandah, crossed the road and went into the park. He longed to think over and decide upon one step. Yet that "step" was not one of those that can be thought over, but one of those which are simply decided upon without deliberation. A terrible longing came upon him to leave everything here and to go back to the place from which he had come, to go away into the distance to some remote region, to go away at once without even saying good-bye to any one. He had a foreboding that if he remained here even a few days longer he would be drawn into this world irrevocably and that his

life would be bound up with it for ever. But he did not consider it for ten minutes; he decided at once that it would be “impossible” to run away, that it would be almost cowardice, that he was faced with such difficulties that it was his duty now to solve them, or at least to do his utmost to solve them. Absorbed in such thoughts, he returned home after a walk of less than a quarter of an hour. He was utterly unhappy at that moment.

Lebedyev was still away from home, so that towards evening Keller succeeded in bursting in on Myshkin, brimming over with confidences and confessions, though he was not drunk. He openly declared that he had come to tell Myshkin the whole story of his life, and that it was to do so that he had remained in Pavlovsk. There was not the faintest possibility of getting rid of him; nothing would have induced him to go. Keller had come prepared to talk at great length and with great incoherence. But suddenly, almost at the first word, he skipped to the conclusion and announced that he had so completely lost “every trace of morality” (solely through lack of faith in the Almighty) that he had positively become a thief.

“Can you fancy that!”

“Listen, Keller. If I were in your place I wouldn’t confess that without special need,” Myshkin began. “But perhaps you make things up against yourself on purpose?”

“To you, to you alone, and solely to promote my own development. To no one else. I shall die and bear my secret to the coffin! But, prince, if you knew, if only you knew how hard it is to get money nowadays! How is one to get it, allow me to ask you? The answer is always the same: ‘Bring gold or diamonds and we’ll give you something for them.’ That’s just what I haven’t got. Can you fancy that? I lost my temper at last, after waiting and waiting. ‘Will you give me something for emeralds?’ said I. ‘\fes, for emeralds too,’ said he. ‘Well, that’s all right,’ said I, and I put on my hat and walked out. ‘\bu’re a set of scoundrels, damn you! Yes, by Jove!’”

“Had you any emeralds, then?”

“A likely story! Oh, prince, what a sweet and innocent, pastoral, one may say, idea of life you have!”

Myshkin began at last to feel not exactly sorry for him, but, as it were, vaguely ill at ease on his account. It occurred to him to wonder, indeed, whether anything could be made of the man by any good influence. His own influence he considered for various reasons quite unsuitable; and this was not due to self-depreciation, but to a peculiar way of looking at things.

By degrees they got into talk, so much so that they did not want to part. Keller, with extraordinary readiness, confessed to actions of which it seemed inconceivable any one could be willing to speak. At every fresh story he asserted positively that he was penitent and “full of tears”; yet he told it as though he were proud of his action, and sometimes too so absurdly that he and Myshkin laughed at last like madmen.

“The great thing is that you have a sort of childlike trustfulness and extraordinary truthfulness,” said Myshkin at last. “Do you know that by that alone you make up for a very great deal?”

“Generous, chivalrously generous!” Keller assented, much touched. “But you know, prince, it is all in dreams and, so to say, in bravado; it never comes to anything in action! And why is it? I can’t understand.”

“Don’t despair. Now, one can say positively that you have given me a full account of everything. I fancy anyway that it’s impossible to add anything more to what you’ve told me, isn’t it?”

“Impossible?” Keller exclaimed, almost compassionately. “Oh, prince, how completely a la Suisse, if I may say so, you still interpret human nature!”

“Can you really have more to add?” Myshkin brought out, with timid wonder. “Then tell me, please, what did you expect of me, Keller, and why have you come to me with your confession?”

“From you? What did I expect? In the first place, it is pleasant to watch your simplicity; it’s nice to sit and talk to you. I know there is a really virtuous person before me, anyway; and, secondly . . . secondly...” He was confused.

“Perhaps you wanted to borrow money?” Myshkin prompted very gravely and simply, and even rather shyly.

Keller positively started. He glanced quickly with the same wonder straight into Myshkin’s face, and brought his fist down violently on the table.

“Well, that’s how you knock a fellow out completely! Upon my word, prince, such simplicity, such innocence, as was never seen in the Golden Age — yet all at once you pierce right through a fellow like an arrow with such psychological depth of observation. But allow me, prince. This requires explanation, for I’m . . . simply bowled over! Of course, in the long run my object was to borrow money; but you ask me about it as if you saw nothing reprehensible in that, as though it were just as it should be.”

“Yes ... from you it is just as it should be.”

“And you’re not indignant?”

“No.... Why?”

“Listen, prince. I’ve been staying here since yesterday evening: first, from a special respect for the French archbishop Bourdaloue (we were pulling corks in Lebedyev’s room till three in the morning); and secondly, and chiefly (and here I’ll take my oath I am speaking the holy truth!), I stayed because I wanted, by making you a full, heartfelt confession, so to speak, to promote my own development. With that idea I fell asleep, bathed in tears, towards four o’clock. Would you believe on the word of a man of honour, now at the very minute I fell asleep, genuinely filled with inward and, so to say, outward tears (for I really was sobbing, I remember), a hellish thought occurred to me: ‘Why not, when all’s said and done, borrow money of him after my confession?’ So that I prepared my confession, so to say, as though it were a sort of ‘fricassee with tears for sauce,’ to pave the way with those tears so that you might be softened and fork out one hundred and fifty roubles. Don’t you think that was base?”

“But most likely that’s not true; it’s simply both things came at once. The two thoughts came together; that often happens. It’s constantly so with me. I think it’s not a good thing, though; and, do you know, Keller, I reproach myself most of all for it. You might have been telling me about myself just now. I have sometimes even fancied,” Myshkin went on very earnestly, genuinely and profoundly interested, “that all people are like that; so that I was even beginning to excuse myself because it is awfully difficult to struggle against these double thoughts; I’ve tried. God knows how they arise and come into one’s mind. But you call it simply baseness! Now, I’m beginning to be afraid of those thoughts again. Anyway, I am not your judge. “Vfet to my mind one can’t call it simply baseness. What do you think? You were acting deceitfully to obtain my money by your tears; but you swear yourself that there was another motive too for your confession — an honourable motive as well as a mercenary one. As for the money, you want it for riotous living, don’t you? And after such a confession, that’s feebleness, of course. But yet how are you to give up riotous living all in a minute? That’s impossible, I know. What’s to be done? It had better be left to your own conscience,

don’t you think?”

Myshkin looked with great interest at Keller. The problem of double ideas had evidently occupied his mind for some time.

“Well, I don’t understand why they call you an idiot after that!” cried Keller.

Myshkin flushed a little.

“Even the preacher, Bourdaloue, would not have spared a man; but you’ve spared one, and judged me humanely! To punish myself and to show that I am touched, I won’t take a hundred and fifty roubles; give me only twenty-five, and it will be enough! That’s all I want, for a fortnight, at any rate. I won’t come for money within a fortnight. I did mean to treat Agashka; but she’s not worth it. Oh, God bless you, dear prince!”

Lebedyev came in at last immediately on his return from town. Noticing the twenty-five-rouble note in Keller’s hand, he frowned. But the latter was in a hurry to get away as soon as he was provided with funds, and promptly took his departure. Lebedyev at once began to speak ill of him.

“You’re unjust, he really was genuinely penitent,” Myshkin observed at last.

“What does his penitence amount to? It’s just like me saying, ‘I am abject, I am abject!’ yesterday. You know it’s only words.”

“So that was only words? I thought you ...”

“Well, to you, only to you, I will tell the truth, because you see through a man. Words and deeds and lies and truth are all mixed up in me and are perfectly sincere. Deeds and truth come out in my genuine penitence, I swear it, whether you believe it or not; and words and lies in the hellish (and always present) craving to get the better of a man, to make something even out of one’s tears of penitence. It is so, by God! I wouldn’t tell another man — he’d laugh or curse. But you, prince, judge humanely.”

“Why, that’s exactly what he told me just now,” cried Myshkin, “and you both seem to be proud of it! \bu positively surprise me, only he’s more sincere than you are, and you’ve turned it into a regular trade. Come, that’s enough. Don’t crease up your face, Lebedyev, and don’t lay your hands on your heart. Haven’t you something to say to me? You don’t come in for nothing ...”

Lebedyev grimaced and wriggled.

“I’ve been waiting for you all day to put a question to you. Tell me the truth straight off for once in your life. Had you anything to do with that carriage stopping here yesterday or not?”

Lebedyev grimaced again, began tittering, rubbing his hands, even sneezing at last, but still he could not bring himself to speak.

“I see you had.”

“But indirectly, only indirectly! It’s the holy truth I’m telling you! The only part I had in it was letting a certain personage know in good time that I had such a company in my house and that certain persons were present.”

“I knew you sent your son there, he told me so himself just now; but what intrigue is this?” Myshkin cried impatiently.

“It’s not my intrigue, not mine,” Lebedyev protested, gesticulating. “There are others, others in it, and it is rather a fantasy, so to speak, than an intrigue.”

“But what’s the meaning of it? For heaven’s sake, do explain! Is it possible you don’t understand that it concerns me directly? You see, it is blackening Yevgeny Pavlovitch’s character.”

“Prince! Most illustrious prince!” Lebedyev began wriggling again. “\bu won’t allow me to tell the whole truth, you know. I’ve tried to already more than once. You wouldn’t allow me to go on ...”

Myshkin paused, and thought a little.

“Very well, tell the truth,” he said dejectedly, evidently after a severe struggle.

“Aglaia Ivanovna ...” Lebedyev promptly began.

“Be silent, be silent!” Myshkin cried furiously, flushing all over with indignation and perhaps with shame too. “It’s impossible, it’s all nonsense! You invented all that yourself, or some madmen like you. And let me never hear of it from you again!”

Late in the evening, after ten o’clock, Kolya arrived with a whole budget of news. His news was of two kinds: of Petersburg and of Pavlovsk. He hastily related the chief items of the Petersburg news (mainly about Ippolit and the scene of the previous day) and passed quickly to the Pavlovsk tidings, meaning to return to the former subject again later. He had returned from Petersburg three hours before and had gone straight to the Epanchins’ before coming to Myshkin. “It’s awful the to-do there!” Of course the carriage incident was in the foreground,

but no doubt something else had happened — something he and Myshkin knew nothing about. “I didn’t spy, of course, and didn’t care to question any one. They received me well, however, better than I’d expected, indeed; but of you not a word, prince!”

The most important and interesting fact was that Aglaia had been quarrelling with her people about Ganya. He did not know the details of the quarrel but only that it was over Ganya (fancy that!), and it had been a terrible quarrel, so it must be something important. The general had come in late, had come in frowning; had come in with Yevgeny Pavlovitch, who met with an excellent reception, and had been wonderfully gay and charming. The most striking piece of news was that Lizaveta Prokofyevna had without any fuss sent for Varvara Ardalionovna, who was sitting with the young ladies, and had once for all turned her out of the house, in a very polite manner, however. “I heard it from Varya herself.” But when Varya came out of Madame Epanchin’s room and said good-bye to the young ladies, they did not know she had been forbidden the house for ever, and that she was taking leave of them for the last time.

“But Varvara Ardalionovna was here at seven o’clock,” said Myshkin, astonished.

“She was turned out at eight o’clock or just before. I am very sorry for Varya. I am sorry for Ganya. . . . No doubt they have always got some intrigues in hand; they can’t get on without it. I never could make out what they were hatching, and I don’t want to know. But I assure you, my dear, kind prince, that Ganya has a heart. He’s a lost soul in many respects, no doubt, but he has points on other sides worth finding out, and I shall never forgive myself for not having understood him before. ... I don’t know whether to go on now, after the fuss with Varya. It’s true I introduced myself from the very first quite independently and separately; but all the same I must think it over.”

“You need not be too sorry for your brother,” Myshkin observed. “If it has come to that, Gavril Ardalionovitch must be dangerous in Madame Epanchin’s eyes, and that means that certain hopes of his have been encouraged.”

“How, what hopes?” Kolya said in amazement. “Surely you don’t think that Aglaia . . . That’s impossible!”

Myshkin did not speak.

“You’re an awful sceptic, prince,” Kolya added two minutes later. “I have noticed that for some time past you’ve become a great sceptic; you’re beginning to believe in nothing, and are always imagining things.. .. Did I use the word ‘sceptic’ correctly in this case?”

“I believe you did, though I really don’t know for certain myself.”

“But I give up the word sceptic myself, I’ve found another explanation,” Kolya cried suddenly. “\bu’re not a sceptic, but you’re jealous! \bu’re fiendishly jealous of Ganya over a certain proud young lady!”

Saying this, Kolya jumped up and began laughing, as perhaps he had never laughed before. Seeing that Myshkin blushed all over, Kolya laughed more than ever. He was highly delighted with the idea that Myshkin was jealous over Aglaia, but he ceased at once on observing that the prince was really wounded. After that, they talked earnestly and anxiously for another hour or hour and a half.

Next day Myshkin had to spend the whole morning in Petersburg on urgent business. It was past four o’clock in the afternoon when, on the way back to Pavlovsk, he met General Epanchin at the railway station. The latter seized him hurriedly by the arm, looked about him as though in alarm, and drew Myshkin after him into a first-class compartment that they might travel together. He was burning with impatience to discuss something important.

“To begin with, dear prince, don’t be angry with me, and if there’s been anything on my side — forget it. I should have come to see you myself yesterday, but I didn’t know how Lizaveta Prokofyevna would take it . . . It’s simply hell in my home. ... An inscrutable sphinx is settled there, and I wander about and can’t make head or tail of it. As for you, to my thinking you’re less to blame than any of us; though, of course, a great deal has happened through you. \bu see, prince, it’s nice to be a philanthropist, but not too much so. You’ve tasted the fruits of it already, maybe. I like kind-heartedness, of course, and respect Lizaveta Prokofyevna, but...”

The general continued for a long time in this style, but his words were astonishingly incoherent. It was evident that he was extremely upset and puzzled by something utterly beyond his comprehension.

“I have no doubt that you had nothing to do with it,”

he spoke out at last more clearly, “but I beg you as a friend not to visit us for some time, till the wind’s changed. As for “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch,” he cried with extraordinary warmth, “it’s all senseless slander — the most slanderous of slanders! It’s a plot, it’s an intrigue, an attempt to destroy everything and to make us quarrel. \bu see, prince, I’ll whisper in your ear, there hasn’t been a single word said between “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch and us yet. You understand? We’re not bound in any way. But that word may be said, and very shortly, perhaps, in fact! So this is an attempt to spoil it all!

But with what object, what for I can’t make out! She’s a marvellous woman, an eccentric woman. I’m so afraid of her I can hardly sleep at night. And what a carriage! — white horses, real chic. “Vfes, it’s just what is called in French ‘chic’! Who’s provided it? I did wrong, by Jove — the day before yesterday my thoughts fell on Yevgeny Pavlovitch. But it turns out that it can’t be so. And if it can’t, what’s her object in interfering? That’s the riddle, that’s the mystery! To keep Yevgeny Pavlovitch for herself? But I tell you again, and I’m ready to swear it, that he doesn’t know her, and that those lOUs were an invention! And with what insolence she shouted ‘Dear’ to him across the street! It’s a regular plot! It’s clear that we must dismiss it with contempt and treat Yevgeny Pavlovitch with redoubled respect. That’s what I’ve said to Lizaveta Prokofyevna. Now I’ll tell you my private opinion. I’m positively convinced that she’s doing this to revenge herself on me personally for the past, d’you remember, though I’ve never done anything to her. I blush at the very thought of it. Now she’s turned up again, you see; I thought she’d disappeared for good. Where’s this Rogozhin hiding? Tell me that, if you please. I thought she’d been Madame Rogozhin long ago.”

The man was completely bewildered in fact. He talked alone for the whole journey, which lasted almost an hour, asked questions, answered them himself, pressed Myshkin’s hand, and did at any rate convince the prince that he did not dream of suspecting him.

This was what mattered to Myshkin. He finished up by telling him about “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch’s uncle, who was chief of some department in Petersburg. “In a conspicuous position, seventy years old, a viveur,

a gourmand — altogether an old gentleman with habits. ... Ha ha! I know he’d heard of Nastasya Filippovna, and in fact was after her. I went to see him not long ago; he didn’t see me. He was unwell; but he is a wealthy man, very wealthy, a man of consequence and . . . please God, he will go on flourishing for years, but Yevgeny Pavlovitch will come in for his money in the end. “Vfes, yes. . . . But yet I’m afraid, I don’t know why, but I’m afraid. It’s as though there were something in the air, some trouble hovering like a bat, and I’m afraid, I’m afraid! ...”

And it was only on the third day, as we have said already, that the formal reconciliation of the Epanchins with Myshkin took place at last.

CHAPTER 12

It WAS seven o’clock in the evening. Myshkin was getting ready to go into the park. All of a sudden Lizaveta Prokofyevna walked alone on to his verandah.

“To begin with, don’t you dare to imagine,” she began, “that I’ve come to beg your pardon. Nonsense! It was entirely your fault.”

Myshkin did not speak.

“Was it your fault or not?”

“As much mine as yours, though neither I nor you was intentionally to blame. I did think myself to blame the day before yesterday, but now I’ve come to the conclusion that it’s not so.”

“So that’s what you say! Very well; listen and sit down, for I don’t intend to stand.”

They both sat down. “Secondly, not one word about mischievous urchins! I’ll sit and talk to you for ten minutes; I’ve come to make an inquiry (and you are fancying all sorts of things, I expect?). And if you drop a single word about insolent urchins, I shall get up and go away and break with you completely.”

“Very well,” answered Myshkin.

“Allow me to ask you: did you two months or two and a half ago, about Easter, send Aglaia a letter?”

“I did write to her.”

“With what object? What was in the letter? Show me the letter!”

Lizaveta Prokofyevna’s eyes glowed, she was almost quivering with impatience.

“I haven’t got the letter.” Myshkin was surprised and horribly dismayed. “If it still exists, Aglaia Ivanovna has it.”

“Don’t wriggle out of it. What did you write about?”

“I’m not, and I’m not afraid of anything. I don’t see any reason why I shouldn’t write....”

“Hold your tongue! “Vbu shall speak afterwards. What was in the letter? Why are you blushing?”

Myshkin thought a little.

“I don’t know what’s in your mind, Lizaveta Prokofyevna. I only see that you don’t like the letter. “Vbu must admit that I might refuse to answer such

a question; but to show you that I’m not uneasy about the letter and don’t regret having written it, and am not blushing in the least on account of it” — Myshkin blushed at least twice as red— “I’ll repeat that letter to you, for I believe I know it by heart.”

Saying this, Myshkin repeated the letter almost word for word as he had written it.

“What a string of nonsense! What can be the meaning of such twaddle, according to you?” Lizaveta Prokofyevna asked sharply, after listening to the letter with extraordinary attention.

“I can’t quite tell myself; I know that my feeling was sincere. At that time I had moments of intense life and extraordinary hopes.”

“What hopes?”

“It’s hard to explain, but not what you’re thinking of now, perhaps. Hopes ... well, in one word, hopes for the future and joy that perhaps I was not a stranger, not a foreigner, there. I took suddenly a great liking to my own country. One sunny morning I took up a pen and wrote a letter to her; why to her — I don’t know. Sometimes one lonqs for a friend at one’s side, you know; and I suppose I was longing for a friend....” Myshkin added after a pause.

“Are you in love?”

“N-no. I ... I wrote to her as to a sister; I signed myself her brother, indeed.”

“Hm! On purpose; I understand.”

“It’s very unpleasant for me to answer these questions, Lizaveta Prokofyevna.”

“I know it’s unpleasant, but it doesn’t matter to me in the least whether it is unpleasant. Listen, tell me the truth as you would before God. Are you telling me lies or not?”

“I’m not.”

“Are you speaking the truth saying that you are not in love?”

“I believe quite the truth.”

“Upon my word, ‘you believe’! Did the urchin give it her?”

“I asked Nikolay Ardalionovitch ...”

“The urchin! the urchin!” Lizaveta Prokofyevna interrupted vehemently. “I know nothing about any Nikolay Ardalionovitch! The urchin!”

“Nikolay Ardalionovitch ...”

“The urchin, I tell you!”

“No, not the urchin, but Nikolay Ardalionovitch,” Myshkin answered at last, firmly though rather softly.

“Oh, very well, my dear, very well! I shall keep that against you.” For a minute she overcame her emotion and was calm.

“And what’s the meaning of the ‘poor knight’?”

“I don’t know at all; I had nothing to do with it. Some joke.”

“Pleasant to hear it all at once! Only, could she have been interested in you? Why, she has called you a freak and an idiot.”

“You need not have told me that,” Myshkin observed reproachfully, though almost in a whisper.

“Don’t be angry. She’s a wilful, mad, spoilt girl — if she cares for any one she’ll be sure to rail at him aloud and abuse him to his face; I was just such another. Only please don’t be triumphant, my dear fellow, she’s not yours. I won’t believe that, and it never will be! I speak that you may take steps now. Listen, swear you’re not married to that woman.”

“Lizaveta Prokofyevna, what are you saying? Upon my word!” Myshkin almost jumped up in amazement.

“But you were almost marrying her, weren’t you?”

“I was almost marrying her,” Myshkin whispered, and he bowed his head.

“Well, are you in love with her, then? Have you come here on her account — for her sake?”

“I have not come to get married,” answered Myshkin.

“Is there anything in the world you hold sacred?”

“Yes.”

“Swear that it was not to get married to her.”

“I’ll swear by anything you like!”

“I believe you. Kiss me. At last I can breathe freely; but let me tell you: Aglaia doesn’t love you, you must be warned of that, and she won’t marry you while I’m alive; do you hear?”

“I hear.” Myshkin blushed so much that he could not look at Lizaveta Prokofyevna.

“Make a note of it. I’ve been looking for you back as my Providence (you’re not worth it!). I’ve been watering my pillow with my tears at night. Not on your account, my dear — don’t be uneasy. I have my own grief — a very different one, everlasting and always the same. But this is why I’ve been looking for you back with such impatience. I still believe that God

Himself has sent you to me as a friend and brother. I have no one else, except old Princess Byelokonsky, and she's gone away; and besides, she's as stupid as a sheep in her old age. Now answer me simply: yes or no. Do you know why she shouted from her carriage the day before yesterday?"

"On my word of honour, I had nothing to do with it and know nothing about it!"

"That's enough; I believe you. Now I have other ideas about that, but only yesterday morning I put the whole blame of it on "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch — all the day before yesterday and yesterday morning. Now, of course, I can't help agreeing with them. It's perfectly obvious that he was being turned into ridicule like a fool on some account, for some reason, with some object. Anyway, it's suspicious! And it doesn't look well! But Aglaia won't marry him, I can tell you that! He may be a nice man, but that's how it's to be. I was hesitating before, but now I've made up my mind for certain: 'You can lay me in my coffin and bury me in the earth and then you can marry your daughter'; that's what I said straight out to Ivan Fyodorovitch to-day. \bu see that I trust you. D'you see?"

"I see and I understand."

Lizaveta Prokofyevna looked penetratingly at Myshkin. Perhaps she keenly desired to find out what impression this news about "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch made upon him.

"Do you know nothing about Gavril Ivolgin?"

"You mean ... I know a great deal."

"Did you know or didn't you that he was in correspondence with Aglaia."

"I didn't know at all," said Myshkin, surprised and even startled. "What! you say Gavril Ardalionovitch is in correspondence with Aglaia Ivanovna? Impossible!"

"Quite lately. His sister has been paving the way for him here all the winter. She's been working like a rat."

"I don't believe it," Myshkin repeated firmly, after some reflection and uneasiness. "If it had been so I should certainly have known it."

"I daresay he'd have come of himself and made a tearful confession on your bosom! Ach, you're a simpleton, a simpleton! Everyone deceives you like a ... like a .. . And aren't vou ashamed to trust him?

Surely you must see that he's cheating you all round?"

“I know very well he does deceive me sometimes,” Myshkin brought out reluctantly in a low voice, “and he knows that I know it. . ,” and he broke off.

“Knows it and goes on trusting him! That’s the last straw! It’s just what one would expect of you, though, and there’s no need for me to be surprised at it. Good Lord! Was there ever such a man! Tfoo! And do you know that this Ganya or this Varya has put her into correspondence with Nastasya Filippovna?”

“Put whom?”

“Aglaia.”

“I don’t believe it! It’s impossible! With what object?” He leapt up from his chair.

“I don’t believe it either, though there are proofs. She is a wilful girl, a whimsical girl, a mad girl! She’s a wicked girl, wicked, wicked! I’m ready to repeat it for a thousand years — she’s a wicked girl. They are all like that now, even that wet hen, Alexandra, but this one’s out of all bounds. Yet I don’t believe it either! — perhaps because I don’t want to believe it,”

she added, as though to herself. “Why haven’t you been to see us?” She turned again suddenly to Myshkin. “Why haven’t you been for the last three days?” she cried impatiently once more.

Myshkin began telling her his reasons, but she interrupted him again.

“They all look upon you as a fool and deceive you! “Vbu went to town yesterday; I’ll bet you’ve been on your knees, begging that scoundrel to take your money, your ten thousand!”

“Not at all; I never thought of it indeed. I haven’t seen him; and besides, he’s not a scoundrel. I’ve had a letter from him.”

“Show me the letter!”

Myshkin took a note out of his portfolio and handed it to Lizayeta Prokofyevna. The note ran:

“Dear Sir, — I have, of course, in other people’s eyes not the faintest right to have any pride. In people’s opinion I’m too insignificant for that. But that’s in other people’s eyes and not in yours. I am quite persuaded, my dear sir, that you are perhaps better than other men. I don I

agree with Doktorenko, and differ from him in this conviction. I shall never take a farthing from you, but you have helped my mother, and for that I am bound to be grateful to you, even though it be weakness. In any case, I look upon you differently and think it only right to tell you so. And

thereafter I suppose there can be no more relations of any sort between us. — Antip Burdovsky.

“P.S. The missing two hundred roubles will be repaid you correctly in course of time.”

“What stuff and nonsense!” Lizaveta Prokofyevna commented, flinging back the note. “It’s not worth reading. What are you grinning at?”

“You must admit that you were glad to read it, too.”

“What! that pack of nonsense, rotting with vanity! Why, don’t you see they’re all crazy with pride and vanity?”

“Yes, but yet he’s owned himself wrong, has broken with Doktorenko, and the vainer he is, the more it must have cost his vanity. Oh, what a child you are, Lizaveta Prokofyevna!”

“Do you want me to slap you at last?”

“No, not at all. But because you’re glad of the note and conceal it. Why are you ashamed of your feelings? You’re like that in everything.”

“Don’t dare to come a step to see me,” cried Lizaveta Prokofyevna, jumping up and turning pale with anger. “Never let me set eyes upon you again!”

“In another three days you’ll come of your own accord and invite me. . . . Come, aren’t you ashamed? These are your best feelings; why are you ashamed of them? You only torment yourself, you know.”

“I’ll never invite you if I die for it! I’ll forget your name! I have forgotten it!!”

She rushed away from Myshkin.

“I’ve been forbidden to come already, apart from you!” Myshkin called after her.

“Wha-at? Who’s forbidden you?” She turned in a flash, as though pricked with a needle. Myshkin hesitated to answer; he felt he had made a serious slip.

“Who has forbidden you?” Lizaveta Prokofyevna cried violently.

“Aglaia Ivanovna forbids ...”

“When? Do spe-eak!!!”

“She sent word this morning that I must never dare come and see you again.”

Lizaveta Prokofyevna stood as though petrified, but she was reflecting.

“What did she send? Whom did she send? By the urchin? A verbal message?” she exclaimed suddenly again.

“I had a note,” said Myshkin.

“Where? Give it here! At once!”

Myshkin thought a minute, yet he pulled out of his waistcoat pocket an untidy scrap of paper on which was written:

“Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch/ — //; after all that’s happened you propose to astonish me by a visit to our villa, you wont, let me tell you, find me among those pleased to see you.

“AglaiaEpanchin.”

Lizaveta Prokofyevna reflected for a minute; then she rushed at Myshkin, seized him by the hand, and drew him after her.

“Come along! At once! It must be at once, this minute!” she cried in an access of extraordinary excitement and impatience.

“But you’re exposing me to ...”

“To what? You innocent ninny! You’re not like a man! Well, now I shall see it all for myself, with my own eyes.”

“But you might let me take my hat, anyway....”

“Here’s your horrid hat! Come along! Can’t even choose his clothes with taste! . . . She wrote that. . . hm! after what had happened ... in a fever,” muttered Lizaveta Prokofyevna, dragging Myshkin along and not for one minute releasing his hand. “I stood up for you just now — said aloud you were a fool not to come. . . . But for that, she wouldn’t have written such a senseless note! An improper note! Improper, for a well-bred, well-brought-up, clever girl! Hm!” she went on, “Or ... or perhaps . . . perhaps she was vexed herself at your not coming, only she didn’t consider that it wouldn’t do to write like that to an idiot, because he’d take it literally, as he has done. Why are you listening?” she cried, flaring up, realising that she had said too much. “She wants some one to laugh at like you. It’s long since she’s seen such a one, that’s why she’s asking you! And I’m glad, very glad, that she’ll make fun of you now — very glad; it’s just what you deserve. And she knows how to do it. Oh, she knows how! ...”

PART THREE

CHAPTER 1

We ARE constantly hearing complaints that there are no practical people in Russia; that there are plenty of politicians, plenty of generals, that any number of business men of all sorts can be found at a moment's notice, but that there are no practical men — at least, everyone is complaining of the lack of them. There are not even efficient railway servants, we hear, on some of the lines; it's not even possible to get a steamship company decently managed. You hear of a railway collision or of a bridge that breaks under a train on a newly opened railway-line. Or you hear of a train's wintering in a snowdrift; the journey should have lasted a few hours and the train was snowed up for five days. One hears of hundreds of tons of goods lying rotting for two or three months at a time before they are dispatched. And I am told (though it is hardly credible) that a merchant's clerk who persisted in worrying for the dispatch of his goods got a box on the ear from the superintendent, who justified this display of efficiency on his part on the ground that he lost his patience. There are so many government offices that it staggers one to think of them; every one has been in the service, is in the service, or intends to be in the service — so that one wonders how, with such an abundance of material, a decent board of management cannot be made up to run a railway or a line of steamers.

This question is often met by a very simple answer — so simple, in fact, that the explanation seems hardly credible. It's true, we are told, every one has been or is in government service in Russia, and this system has been going on for two hundred years on the most approved German pattern from grandfather to grandson — but officials are the most unpractical of people, and things have come to such a pass that a purely theoretical character and lack of practical knowledge were only lately regarded, even in official circles, as almost the highest qualification and recommendation. But there's no need to discuss officials; we set out to talk about practical men. There's no doubt that diffidence and complete lack of initiative have always been considered the chief sign of a practical man, and indeed are so regarded still. But why blame ourselves only — if this opinion is regarded as an accusation? From the beginning, all the world over, lack of originality has been reckoned the chief characteristic and best recommendation of an active, businesslike and practical man, and at least ninety-nine per cent, of

mankind — and that’s a low estimate — have always held that opinion, and at most one per cent, looks at it differently.

Inventors and geniuses have almost always been looked on as no better than fools at the beginning of their career, and very frequently at the end of it also; this is the most hackneyed observation, familiar to every one. If, for instance, for scores of years, everybody had been putting their money into a bank and millions had been invested in it at 4 per cent. and then the bank ceased to exist and people were left to their own initiative, the greater part of those millions would infallibly be lost in wild speculation or in the hands of swindlers — and in fact this is only in accordance with the dictates of propriety and decorum. Yes, decorum; if a proper diffidence and decorous lack of originality have been universally accepted as the essential characteristics of a practical man and a gentleman, a sudden transformation would be quite ungentlemanly and almost indecent. What tender and devoted mother wouldn’t be dismayed and ill with terror at her son’s or daughter’s stepping one hair’s-breadth off the beaten track. “No, better let him be happy and live in comfort without originality,” is what every mother thinks as she rocks the cradle. And our nurses have from the earliest times sung as they dandle their babies, “He shall dress in gold, the pet — wear a general’s epaulette.” Thus even with our nurses the rank of general has been considered the highest pinnacle of Russian happiness, and so has been the most popular national ideal of peaceful and contented bliss. And, indeed, after passing an examination without distinction and serving thirty-five years, who can fail to become at last a general and to have invested a decent sum in the bank? So that a Russian attains the position of a practical and business man without the slightest effort. The only person among us who can fail to reach the general’s rank is the original man — in other words, the man who won’t be quiet. Possibly there is some mistake about this; but, speaking generally, this is true, and our society has been perfectly correct in its definition of a practical man.

But much of this is superfluous; I had intended simply to say a few words of explanation about our friends the Epanchins. That family, or at any rate the more reflective members of it, suffered continually from a common family characteristic, the very opposite of the virtues we’ve been discussing above. Though they did not clearly understand the fact (for it is difficult to understand it), they yet sometimes suspected that everything in their family was unlike what is found in all other families. In other families everything

went smoothly, with them it was all ups and downs; other people seemed to follow routine — they always seemed to be doing something exceptional. Other people were always decorously timid, but they were not. Lizaveta Prokofyevna was, indeed, liable to alarms — too much so, in fact; but it was not the decorous, worldly timidity for which they longed. But perhaps it was only Lizaveta Prokofyevna who was worried about it; the girls were too young, though they were penetrating and ironical; and though the general penetrated (not without some strain, however), he never said anything more than “Hm” in perplexing circumstances and put all his trust in his wife. So the responsibility rested on her. It was not that this family was distinguished by marked initiative or was drawn out of the common rut by any conscious inclination towards originality, which would have been a complete breach of the proprieties. Oh no! There was really nothing of the sort, that is, there was no conscious purpose in it, and yet, in spite of all, the Epanchin family, though highly respectable, was not quite what every respectable family ought to be. Of late Lizaveta Prokofvevna had begun to blame herself alone and her “unfortunate” character for this state of affairs, which increased her distress. She was continually reproaching herself with being “a silly and eccentric old woman who didn’t know how to behave,” and she worried over imaginary troubles, was in a continual state of perplexity, was at a loss how to act in the most ordinary contingencies, and always magnified every misfortune.

At the beginning of our narrative we mentioned that the Epanchin family enjoyed the sincere esteem of all. Even General Epanchin, although a man of obscure origin, was received everywhere and treated with respect. He did, in fact, deserve respect — in the first place, as a man of wealth and of some standing, and secondly, as a very decent fellow, though by no means of great intellect. But a certain dullness of mind seems an almost necessary qualification, if not for every public man, at least for every one seriously engaged in making money. Finally, General Epanchin had good manners, was modest, knew how to hold his tongue, and yet would not allow himself to be trampled upon, not simply because he was a general, but also because he was an honest and honourable man. As for his wife, she was, as we have explained already, of good family, though that is not a matter of great consideration among us, unless there are powerful friends as well. But she had acquired a circle of such friends; she was respected, and in the end loved by persons of such consequence that it was natural that every one

should follow their example in respecting and receiving her. There could be no doubt that her anxieties about her family were groundless; there was very little cause for them and they were ridiculously exaggerated. But if you have a wart on the forehead or on the nose, you always fancy that no one has anything else to do in the world than stare at your wart, make fun of it, and despise you for it, even though you have discovered America. No doubt Lizaveta Prokofyevna was generally considered “eccentric,” yet there could be no question about her being esteemed; but she came at last to cease to believe in that esteem, and the whole trouble lay in that. Looking at her daughters, she was fretted by the suspicion that she was continually ruining their prospects, that she was ridiculous, insupportable, and did not know how to behave, for which, of course, she was always blaming her daughters and her husband, and quarrelling with them all day long, though she loved them with a self-sacrificing and almost passionate affection.

What worried her most of all was the suspicion that her daughters were becoming just as eccentric as she was and that qirls in society were not and ought not to be like them. “They are growing into nihilists, that’s what it comes to!” she repeated to herself every minute. For the last year, and especially of late, this melancholy notion had grown more and more fixed in her mind. “To begin with, why don’t they get married?” she kept asking herself. “To torment their mother — they make that the object of their existence; and it all comes from these new ideas, these cursed women’s rights! Didn’t Aglaia take it into her head six months ago to cut off her magnificent hair? (Heavens, even I hadn’t hair like that when I was young!) She had the scissors in her hand; I had to go down on my knees to her! . . . Well, she did it out of spite, no doubt, to torment her mother, for she is a spiteful, self-willed, spoiled girl, and above all spiteful, spiteful, spiteful! But didn’t that fat Alexandra mean to follow her example and try to cut off her fleece, and not from spite, not from caprice, but in all simplicity, like a fool, because Aglaia persuaded her that without hair she would sleep better and be free from headache? And the numbers and numbers of suitors they have had in these last five years! And there really were nice men,

first-rate men, among them! What are they waiting for? Why don’t they get married? Simply to annoy their mother — there’s no other reason for it, none whatever!”

At last the sun seemed to be dawning even for her maternal heart; at least one daughter, at least Adelaida, would be settled. “There’s one off our

hands," said Madame Epanchin, when she had occasion to refer to the event aloud (in her thoughts she expressed herself with far greater tenderness). And how well, how suitably, the whole thing had come about! Even in society, it was talked of with respect. He was a distinguished man, a prince, a man of fortune, and a nice man, and, what's more, it was a marriage of inclination. What could be better? But she had always been less anxious about Adelaida than about the other two, though her artistic proclivities sometimes gravely troubled the mother's apprehensive heart. "But she is of a cheerful disposition and has plenty of sense, too — she's a girl that will always fall on her legs," was her consoling reflection. She was more afraid for Aglaia than for any of them. About the eldest girl, Alexandra, her mother could not make up her mind whether to be afraid or not. Sometimes she fancied the girl was "utterly hopeless."

"She is twenty-five, so she will be an old maid; and with her looks!" Lizaveta Prokofyevna positively shed tears at night thinking of her, while Alexandra herself lay sleeping tranquilly. "What is one to make of her? Is she a nihilist or simply a fool?" That she was not a fool even Lizaveta Prokofyevna had no doubt; she had the greatest respect for Alexandra's judgment and was fond of asking her advice. But that she was "a wet hen" she did not doubt for a moment; "so calm that there's no making her out. Though wet hens are not calm — foo, lam quite muddled over them!"

Lizaveta Prokofyevna had an inexplicable feeling of sympathy and commiseration for Alexandra — more, in fact, than for Aglaia, whom she idolised. But the bitter sallies (in which her maternal solicitude and sympathy chiefly showed itself), her taunts and names, such as "wet hen," only amused Alexandra. It came to such a pass that at times the most trivial matters made Madame Epanchin dreadfully angry and drove her to perfect frenzy. Alexandra, for instance, was fond of sleeping late and had a great many dreams; but her dreams were always marked by an extraordinary ineptitude and innocence — they might have been the dreams of a child of seven. And the very innocence of her dreams became a source of irritation to her mother. Once Alexandra dreamed of nine hens, and it had been the cause of a regular quarrel between her and her mother — why it would be difficult to explain. Once, and once only, she had succeeded in dreaming of something that might be called original — she dreamed of a monk who was all alone in a dark room into which she was afraid to go. The dream was at

once reported with triumph to their mother by her two laughing sisters; but their mother was angry again and called them all three a set of fools.

“Hm! she is as calm as a fool and a regular wet hen; there’s no waking her up; and yet she is sad, she looks quite sad sometimes! What is she grieving over? What is it?” Sometimes she put that question to her husband, and, as usual, she asked it hysterically, threateningly, expecting an immediate reply. Ivan Fyodorovitch said “Hm,” frowned, shrugged his shoulders, and with a despairing gesture delivered himself to the dictum:

“She needs a husband.”

“Only God grant her one unlike you, Ivan Fyodorovitch!” Lizaveta Prokofyevna burst out like a bomb at last, “unlike you in his thoughts and judgments, Ivan Fyodorovitch. Not a churlish churl like you, Ivan Fyodorovitch....”

Ivan Fyodorovitch promptly made his escape, and Lizaveta Prokofyevna calmed down after her “explosion.” The same evening, of course, she would invariably be particularly attentive, gentle, affectionate to her husband, “the churlish churl,” Ivan Fyodorovitch, to her kind, dear, and adored Ivan Fyodorovitch, for she had been fond of him and even in love with him all her life — a fact of which he was well aware himself, and he had a boundless respect for her.

But her actual and continual anxiety was Aglaia.

“She is exactly, exactly like me, the very picture of me in every respect,” the mother used to say to herself. “Self-willed, horrid little imp! Nihilist, eccentric, mad and spiteful, spiteful, spiteful! Good Lord, how unhappy she will be!”

But, as we have said already, a spell of sunshine had softened and lighted up everything for a moment. For almost a whole month Lizaveta Prokofyevna had a complete respite from her anxieties. Adelaida’s approaching marriage made people in society talk about Aglaia too, and Aglaia’s manner had been so good, so even, so clever, so enchanting; rather proud, but that suited her so well! She had been so affectionate, so gracious to her mother all that month! (“It’s true it was necessary to be very, very careful about Yevgeny Pavlovitch, to get to the bottom of him, and Aglaia doesn’t seem to favour him much more than the rest.”) Anyway, she had suddenly become such a delightful girl; and how handsome she was — mercy on us, how handsome! She grew more beautiful day by day. And here ...

And here this wretched little prince, this miserable little idiot, had hardly made his appearance and everything was in a turmoil again, everything in the house was topsy-turvy.

What had happened, though?

Nothing would have happened to other people, that was certain. But it was Lizaveta Prokofyevna's peculiarity that in the combinations and concatenations of the most ordinary things she managed to see, through her ever-present anxiety,

something which alarmed her at times till it made her ill and inspired in her a terror absolutely exaggerated and inexplicable, and for that reason all the harder to bear. What must have been her feelings when suddenly now, through the tangle of absurd and groundless worries, something actually became apparent that really seemed important — something that might in all seriousness call for anxiety, hesitation, and suspicion!

"And the insolence of writing me that accursed anonymous letter about that hussy, that she is in communication with Aglaia," Lizaveta Prokofyevna was thinking all the way home, as she drew Myshkin along, and afterwards, as she made him sit down at the round table about which all the family was assembled. "How did they dare to think of such a thing! I should die of shame if I believed a syllable of it, or if I were to show Aglaia that letter. It's making a laughing-stock of us, of the Epanchins! And it's all Ivan Fyodorovitch's fault; it's all your fault, Ivan Fyodorovitch! Ah, why didn't we spend the summer at Yelagin Island? I said we ought to have gone to "Vfelagin. It may be that horrid Varya wrote the letter, or perhaps . . . it's all Ivan Fvodorovitch's fault, it's all his fault! It's for his benefit that hussy got this up, as a souvenir of their former relations, to make him look a fool, just as she made fun of him as a fool before and led him by the nose when he used to be taking her pearls. . . . And yet the long and short of it is that we all are brought into it; your daughters are brought into it, Ivan Fyodorovitch — young girls, young ladies, young ladies moving in the best society, marriageable girls; they were there, they were standing by, they heard it all, and they were dragged into the scene with those nasty boys too. "Vbu may congratulate yourself, they were there too and heard it! I won't forgive, I won't forgive, I'll never forgive this wretched little prince! And why has Aglaia been hysterical for the last three days? Why is it she has been on the point of quarrelling with her sisters, even with Alexandra, whose hands she always kisses as though she were her mother she has such

a respect for her? Why has she behaved so enigmatically with every one for the last three days? What has Gavril Ivolgin to do with it? Why is it that she praised Ivolgin to-day and yesterday too, and burst out crying? Why is it that that cursed ‘poor knight’ is mentioned in that anonymous letter, and she never even showed her sisters the prince’s letter? And why . . . what, what induced me to run to him like a cat in a fit and to drag him here with me! Mercy on us, I must have taken leave of my senses to do this! To talk to a young man about my daughter’s secrets . . . and about secrets that almost concern him! Good heavens, it’s a blessing he is an idiot and . .. and ... a friend of the family. But it is possible Aglaia is fascinated by such a queer fish! Heavens, what am I babbling! Tfoo! We are a set of originals . . . they ought to put us all in a glass case — me especially — and exhibit us at two-pence a head. I shall never forgive you this, Ivan Fyodorovitch, never! And why is it she doesn’t make fun of him now? She declared she’d make fun of him and now she doesn’t! There she is, gazing at him, all eyes; she doesn’t speak, she doesn’t go away, she stands there, yet she told him not to come herself. ... He sits there quite pale. And that confounded chatterbox, Yevgeny Pavlovitch, keeps the whole conversation to himself. How he does run on! — doesn’t let one get a word in edgeways. I could have found out everything at once, if I could only turn the conversation on it....”

Myshkin really was almost pale, as he sat at the round table, and he seemed to be at the same time in a state of great uneasiness, and at moments in a rapture that flooded his soul, though he could not comprehend it himself. Oh, how he feared to glance towards the corner from which two dark eyes were intently watching him, and at the same time how his heart throbbed with delight that he was sitting among them again, that he would hear her familiar voice — after what she had written to him! Heavens, what would she say to him now! He had not uttered one word yet, and he listened with strained attention to the “running on” of Yevgeny Pavlovitch, who had rarely been in such a happy and excited mood as that evening. Myshkin listened to him, but for a long time scarcely took in a word of what he was saying. Except Ivan Fyodorovitch, who had not yet returned from Petersburg, all the family was assembled. Prince S. was there too. They seemed to be meaning in a little time to go and listen to the band before tea. The conversation had evidently begun before Myshkin arrived. A little later Kolya made his appearance on the verandah. “So he is received here as before,” Myshkin thought to himself.

The Epanchins' villa was a luxurious one, built as a Swiss chalet and was picturesquely covered with flowering creepers. It was surrounded on all sides by a small but charming flower garden. They all sat on the verandah as at Myshkin's, only the verandah was rather wider and more sumptuous.

The subject of the conversation appeared to be to the taste of few of the party. It had apparently arisen out of a heated argument, and no doubt every one would have been glad to change the subject. But "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch seemed to persist all the more obstinately, regardless of the impression he was making; Myshkin's arrival seemed to make him even more eager. Lizaveta Prokofyevna frowned, though she did not quite understand it. Aglaia, who was sitting on one side, almost in a corner, remained listening, obstinately si lent.

"Allow me," Yevgeny Pavlovitch was protesting warmly. "I say nothing against Liberalism. Liberalism is not a sin; it is an essential part of the whole, which without it would drop to pieces or perish; Liberalism has just as much right to exist as the most judicious Conservatism. But I am attacking Russian Liberalism, and I repeat aqain I attack it just for the reason that the Russian Liberal is not a Russian Liberal, but an un-Russian Liberal. Show me a Russian Liberal and I'll kiss him in front of you all."

"That is, if he cares to kiss you," said Alexandra, who was exceptionally excited, so much so that her cheeks were redder than usual.

"There," thought Lizaveta Prokofyevna to herself, "she goes on sleeping and eating, and you can't rouse her, and then suddenly, once a year, she pops up and begins talking in such a way that one can only gape at her."

Myshkin momentarily noticed that Alexandra seemed particularly to dislike Yevgeny Pavlovitch's talking too light-heartedly; he was talking about a serious subject, and seemed to be hot about it, and at the same time he seemed to be making a joke of it.

"I was maintaining just now, just before you came in, prince,"

"Vfevgeny Pavlovitch went on, "that Liberals so far have come only from two classes of society — from the old land-owning class, that's now a thing of the past, and from clerical families. And as those two classes have become regular castes,

something quite apart from the nation, and more and more so from generation to generation, so everything they have done and are doing is absolutely non-national."

“What? So everything that has been done is un-Russian?” protested Prince S.

“Non-national; though it’s Russian, it’s not national. The Liberals among us are not Russian, and the Conservatives are not Russian either, any of them. . . . And you may be sure that the nation will accept nothing of what has been done by landowners and divinity students, either now or later.

“Well, that’s too much! How can you maintain such a paradox, that is, if you are speaking in earnest. I must protest against such wild statements about the Russian landowner; you are a Russian landowner yourself,” Prince S. objected warmly.

“But I didn’t speak of the Russian landowner in the sense in which you are taking it. It’s the most respectable class, if only because I belong to it; especially now, since it has ceased to be a caste. . .

“Do you mean to say there has been nothing national in literature?” Alexandra interposed.

“I am not an authority on literature, but even Russian literature is in my opinion not Russian at all, unless perhaps Lomonosov, Pushkin, and Gogol are national.”

“That’s not bad, to begin with; and besides, one of those was a peasant and the other two were landowners,” said Adelaida, laughing.

“Quite so, but don’t be triumphant. As, of all Russian writers, these three are the only ones that have so far been able to say something of their own, something not borrowed, they have by this fact become national. Any Russian who says or writes or does anything of his own — something original, not borrowed — inevitably becomes national, even if he can’t speak Russian properly. That I regard as an axiom. But we were not talking of literature at first; we were talking of Socialists, at the beginning. Well, I maintain that we haven’t one single Russian Socialist; there are none and there have never been, for all our Socialists are also landowners or divinity students. All our notorious and professed Socialists, both here and abroad, are nothing more than Liberals from the landed gentry of the serf-owning days. Why are you laughing? Show me their books, show me their theories, their memories; and, though I am no literary critic, I can write you the most convincing criticism, in which I’ll show you as clear as daylight that every page of their books, pamphlets, and memories has been written by Russian landowners of the old school. Their anger, their indignation, their wit, are all typical of that class, as it was even in pre-Famusov — times; their

raptures, their tears are perhaps real, genuine tears, but they are landowners' tears — landowners' or divinity students'. . . . "Vbu are laughing again, and you are laughing too, prince? "Vbu don't agree either, then?"

They really were all laughing, and Myshkin smiled too.

"I can't say off-hand yet whether I agree or not," Myshkin brought out, suddenly leaving off smiling and starting with the air of a schoolboy caught in a fault, "but I assure you I am listening to you with the greatest pleasure...."

He was almost breathless, as he said this, and cold sweat came out on his forehead. They were the first words he had uttered since he had sat down. He tried to look round at the company and had not the courage; "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch caught his movement and smiled.

"I will tell you a fact, gentlemen," he went on in the same tone as before, that is, with extraordinary gusto and warmth, though at the same time he seemed almost laughing, possibly at his own words— "a fact, the observation and discovery of which I have the honour of ascribing to myself and to myself alone; nothing has been said or written about it, anyway. This fact expresses the whole essence of Russian Liberalism of the sort of which I am speaking. In the first place, what is Liberalism, speaking generally, but an attack (whether judicious or mistaken is another question) on the established order of things? That's so, isn't it? Well, my fact is that Russian Liberalism is not an attack on the existing order of things, but is an attack on the very essence of things, on the things themselves, not merely on the order of things; not on the Russian regime, but on Russia itself. My Liberal goes so far as to deny even Russia itself, that is, he hates and beats his own mother. Every unhappy and disastrous fact in Russia excites his laughter and almost his delight. He hates the national habits, Russian history, everything. If there is any justification for him, it is that he doesn't know what he is about and takes his hatred of Russia for Liberalism of the most fruitful kind. (Oh, you often meet among us Liberals who are applauded by the rest and who are perhaps the most absurd, the most stupid and dangerous of Conservatives, and they are unaware of it themselves.) This hatred of Russia was quite lately almost regarded by some of our Liberals as sincere love for their country. They boasted that they knew better than other people how that love ought to show itself; but now they have become more candid and are ashamed of the very idea of 'loving' one's country; the very conception of it they have dismissed and banished as trivial and

pernicious. This is a fact; I insist on that and . . . and the truth must be told sooner or later fully, simply, and openly. But it’s a fact that has never been heard of and has never existed in any other people since the world began, and so it is an accidental phenomenon and may not be permanent, I admit. There cannot be a Liberal anywhere else who hates his own country.

How can we explain it among us? Why, by the same fact as before, that the Russian Liberal hitherto has not been Russian; nothing else explains it, to my thinking.”

“I take all that you have said as a joke, Yevgeny Pavlovitch,” Prince S. replied earnestly.

“I haven’t seen every Liberal, so I can’t undertake to judge,” said Alexandra, “but I’ve listened to your ideas with indignation; you’ve taken an individual case and generalised from it, and so you’ve been unjust.”

“An individual case? Ah! The word has been uttered,”

“Vfevgeny Pavlovitch caught her up. “Prince, what do you think? Have I taken an individual case or not?”

“I ought to say, too, that I have been very little with Liberals and seen very little of them,” said Myshkin, “but I fancy that you may be partly right and that the sort of Russian Liberalism of which you are speaking really is disposed to hate Russia itself, not only its institutions. Of course, this is only partly true . .. of course, this cannot be true of all.”

He broke off in confusion. In spite of his excitement, he was greatly interested in the conversation. One of Myshkin’s striking characteristics was the extraordinary naivete of the attention, with which he always listened to anything that interested him, and of the answers he gave when any one asked him questions. His face, and even his attitude, somehow reflected that naivete, that good faith, unsuspicious of mockery or humour. But though Yevgeny Pavlovitch had for a long time past always behaved to him with a certain shade of mockery, now, on hearing his answer, he looked very gravely at him, as though he had not expected such ananswerfrom him.

“So . . . how strange it is of you, though!” he said. “Did you really answer me in earnest, prince?”

“Why, didn’t you ask me in earnest?” replied Myshkin in surprise.

Everyone laughed.

“Trust him,” said Adelaida. “\fevgeny Pavlovitch always makes fun of every one! If you only knew what stories he tells sometimes with perfect seriousness!”

“I think this is a tedious conversation and there was no need to have begun it,” Alexandra observed abruptly. “We meant to qo for a walk.”

“And let us go! It’s an exquisite evening,” cried “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch. “But to show you that this time I was speaking quite seriously, and still more to show the prince so (you have interested me extremely, prince, and I assure you I am not quite such a silly fellow as I must seem to you — though I really am a silly fellow!), and if you’ll allow me, ladies and gentleman, I will ask the prince one last question to satisfy my own curiosity, and then we will leave off. This question occurred to me very appropriately two hours ago. “Vbu see, prince, I sometimes think of serious things too. I answered it, but let us see what the prince will say. He spoke just now about an ‘individual case.’ This phrase of ours is a very significant one; one often hears it. Every one has been talking and writing of late about that dreadful murder of six persons by that. . . young man and of the strange speech made by the counsel for the defence, in which it was said that, considering the poverty of the criminal, it must have been natural for him to think of murdering these six people. Those are not precisely the words used, but the sense, I think, is that or very much like it. It’s my private opinion that the lawyer who gave expression to this strange idea was under the conviction that he was expressing the most liberal, the most humane and progressive sentiment that could be uttered in our day. Well, what do you make of it? Is this corruption of ideas and convictions, is the possibility of such a distorted and extraordinary view an ‘individual case’ or a typical example?”

Everyone laughed again.

“Individual, of course, individual,” laughed Alexandra and Adelaida.

“And let me warn you again, Yevgeny Pavlovitch,” said Prince S. “that your joke is growing very stale.”

“What do you think, prince?”

“Vfevgeny Pavlovitch went on, not listening, but catching Myshkin’s earnest and interested eyes fixed on him. “Does it seem to you to be an individual case or typical? I’ll own it was on your account I thought of the question.”

“No, not individual,” Myshkin said gently but firmly.

“Upon my word, Lyov Nikolayevitch,” cried Prince S. with some vexation, “don’t you see that he is trying to catch you? He is certainly in fun and he means to make game of you.”

“I thought Yevgeny Pavlovitch was in earnest,”

said Myshkin, blushing and dropping his eyes.

“My dear prince,” Prince S. went on, “remember what we were talking about once, three months ago; you said that one could point to so many remarkable and talented lawyers in our new-established law courts, and how many highly remarkable verdicts had been given by the juries! How pleased you were about it, and how pleased I was at the time seeing your pleasure! We said that we had a right to be proud. . . . And this inept defence, this strange argument, is, of course, a casual exception, the one among thousands.”

Myshkin thought a moment, but with an air of perfect conviction, though speaking softly and even, it seemed, timidly, he answered:

“I only meant to say that a perversion of ideas and conceptions — as “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch expressed it — is very often to be met with, is, unhappily, far more the general rule than an exceptional case. And so much so that if this perversion were not such a general phenomenon, perhaps there would not be such impossible crimes as these....”

“Impossible crimes! But I assure you that just such crimes, and perhaps still more awful ones, have existed in the past and at all times, and not only among us but everywhere, and, in my opinion, will occur again and again for a very long time. The difference is that there was much less publicity in Russia in the old days, while now people have begun to talk and even to write of such cases, so that it seems as though these criminals were a recent phenomenon. That’s how your mistake arises — an extremely naive mistake, prince, I assure you,” said Prince S. with a mocking smile.

“I know that there were very many crimes and just as awful ones in the past. I have been lately in the prisons and succeeded in making acquaintance with some criminals and convicts. There are even more terrible criminals than that one, men who have committed a dozen murders and feel no remorse whatever. But I tell you what I noticed: that the most hardened and unrepentant murderer knows all the same that he is a ‘criminal,’ that is, he considers in his conscience that he has acted wrongly, even though he is unrepentant. And everyone of them was like that; while those of whom Yevgeny Pavlovitch was speaking refuse even to consider themselves as criminals and think that thev are in the riqht and ..

. that they have even acted well — it almost comes to that. That’s, to my thinking, where the terrible difference lies. And observe, they are all young,

that is, they are all of the age in which one may most easily and helplessly fall under the influence of perverted ideas.”

Prince S. had ceased laughing and listened to Myshkin with a puzzled air. Alexandra, who had been on the point of saying something, held her peace, as though some special thought made her pause. “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch looked at Myshkin in genuine surprise, with no tinge of mockery.

“But why are you so surprised at him, my good sir?” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna, breaking in unexpectedly. “Why did you think he was not so clever as you and could not reason as well as you can?”

“No, I didn’t mean that,” said “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch. “Only, how is it, prince — excuse the question — if you see this so clearly, how is it that you (excuse me again) did not notice the same perversion of ideas and moral convictions in that strange case ... the other day, you know ... of Burdovsky’s, wasn’t it? It’s exactly the same. I fancied at the time that you didn’t see it at all?”

“But let me tell you, my dear man,” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna, getting hot, “we all noticed it. We sit here feeling superior to him. But he got a letter from one of them to-day, from the worst of the lot, the pimply one — do you remember, Alexandra? He begs his pardon in the letter — in a fashion of his own, of course — and says he has broken with the companion who egged him on at the time — do you remember, Alexandra? — and that he puts more faith now in the prince. But we haven’t had such a letter, though we know how to turn up our noses at him.”

“And Ippolit has just moved to our villa, too,” cried Kolya.

“What? Is he there already?” said Myshkin, taken aback.

“He arrived just after you had gone out with Lizaveta Prokofyevna. I brought him.”

“Well, I’ll bet anything,” Lizaveta Prokofyevna fired up suddenly, quite forgetting that she had just been praising Myshkin, “I’ll bet that he went last night to see him in his garret and begged his pardon on his knees, so that that spiteful spitfire might deign to move to his villa. Did you go yesterday? You’ve confessed it yourself. Is it true? Did you go on your knees?”

“He didn’t do anything of the kind,” cried Kolya, “quite the contrary. Ippolit seized the prince’s hand yesterday and kissed it twice. I saw it myself. That’s how the interview ended, except that the prince told him

simply that he would be more comfortable at the villa, and he instantly agreed to come as soon as he felt better.”

“There’s no need, Kolya . . ,” murmured Myshkin, getting up and taking his hat. “Why are you talking about this? I...”

“Where are you going?” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna, stopping him.

“Don’t trouble, prince,” Kolya went on in his excitement. “Don’t go and disturb him; he is having a nap after the journey. He is very pleased, and you know, prince, I think it will be much better if you don’t meet to-day, if you put it off till to-morrow, or else he’ll be uncomfortable again. He said this morning that he hadn’t felt so strong and well for the last six months; he isn’t coughing half so much.”

Myshkin noticed that Aglaia suddenly left her place and came to the table. He dared not look at her, but he felt in his whole being that she was looking at him at that moment and was perhaps looking at him wrathfully, that there must be indignation in her black eyes and that her face was flushed.

“But I think, Nikolay Ardalionovitch, that you made a mistake in bringing him here, if you mean that consumptive boy who cried then and invited us to his funeral,” observed Yevgeny Pavlovitch. “He talked so eloquently of the wall of the house opposite that he will certainly be home-sick for that wall; you may be sure of that.”

“That’s the truth; he will quarrel, break with you and go away — that will be the end of it.”

And Lizaveta Prokofyevna drew her work-basket near her with an air of dignity, forgetting that everyone was preparing to go for a walk.

“I remember that he bragged a lot of that wall,”

“Vfevgeny Pavlovitch put in again. “He can’t die eloquently without that wall, and he is very anxious for an eloquent death-scene.”

“What of it?” muttered Myshkin. “If you won’t forqive him, he’ll die without vour forqiveness. . . .

Now he has come here for the sake of the trees.”

“Oh, for my part I forgive him everything; you can tell him so.”

“That’s not the way to take it,” Myshkin answered softly and, as it were, reluctantly, looking atone spot on the floor and not raising his eyes. “You ought to be ready to receive his forgiveness too.”

“How do I come in? What wrong have I done him?”

“If you don’t understand, then . . . But you do understand; he wanted ... to bless you all then and to receive your blessing, that was all.”

“Dear prince,” Prince S. hastened to interpose somewhat apprehensively, exchanging glances with some of the others, “it’s not easy to reach paradise on earth, but you reckon on finding it; paradise is a difficult matter, prince, much more difficult than it seems to your good heart. We had better drop the subject, or else we may all feel uncomfortable too and then ...”

“Let’s go and hear the band,” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna sharply, getting up from her place angrily.

The others followed her example.

CHAPTER 2

All at once Myshkin went up to “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch. “Yevgeny Pavlovitch,” he said with strange heat, seizing his hand, “believe that I look upon you as the best and most honourable of men in spite of everything. Be sure of that....”

“Vfevgeny Pavlovitch positively drew back a step with surprise. For a moment he was struggling with an irresistible desire to laugh, but looking closer he saw that Myshkin seemed not himself, or at least was in a peculiar state of mind.

“I don’t mind betting, prince,” he cried, “that you didn’t mean to say that, nor perhaps to speak to me at all. But what’s the matter with you? Are you feeling ill?”

“That may be, that may well be. And you were very clever to notice that perhaps it was not you I meant to address.”

He said this with a strange and even absurd smile; but, seeming suddenly excited, he cried:

“Don’t remind me of my conduct three days ago! I’ve been very much ashamed for the last three days. ... I know that I was to blame....”

“But... but what have you done so dreadful?”

“I see that you are perhaps more ashamed of me than any one, “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch. You are blushing; that’s the sign of a good heart. I’m going away directly, you may be sure of that.”

“What’s the matter with him? Do his fits begin like this?” Lizaveta Prokofyevna asked Kolya in alarm.

“Don’t be uneasy, Lizaveta Prokofyevna. I’m not in a fit, and I’m just going. I know that I am . . . afflicted. I’ve been ill for twenty-four years, from my birth till I was twenty-four years old. \bu must take what I say as from a sick man now. I’m going directly — directly. \bu may be sure of that. I’m not ashamed; for it would be strange to be ashamed of that, wouldn’t it? But I’m out of place in society. ... I’m not speaking from wounded vanity. . . . I’ve been reflecting during these three days and I’ve made up my mind that I

ought to explain things sincerely and honourably to you at the first opportunity. There are ideas, very great ideas, of which I ought not to begin to speak, because I should be sure to make every one laugh. Prince S. has

warned me of that very thing just now. . . . My gestures are unsuitable. I've no right sense of proportion. My words are incongruous, not befitting the subject, and that's a degradation for those ideas. And so I have no right. . . . Besides, I'm morbidly sensitive. ... I am certain that no one would hurt my feelings in this house, and that I am more loved here than I deserve. But I know (I know for certain) that twenty years' illness must leave traces, so that it's impossible not to laugh at me ... sometimes.... It is so, isn't it?"

He looked about him as though expecting an answer.

All were standing in painful perplexity at this unexpected, morbid, and in any case apparently causeless, outbreak. But this outbreak gave rise to a strange episode.

"But why are you saying that here?" cried Aglaia suddenly. "Why do you say it to them? Them! Them!"

She seemed to be stirred to the hiqhest pitch of indignation. Her eyes flashed fire. Myshkin stood facing her, dumb and speechless, and he suddenly turned pale.

"There's not one person here who is worth such words," Aglaia burst out. "There's no one here, no one, who is worth your little finger, nor your mind, nor your heart! "Vbu are more honourable than any of them, nobler, better, kinder, cleverer than any of them! Some of them are not worthy to stoop to pick up the handkerchief you have just dropped. . . . Why do you humble yourself and put yourself below them? Why do you distort everything in yourself? Why have you no pride?"

"Mercy on us! Who could have expected this?" cried Lizaveta Prokofyevna, throwing up her hands.

"The poor knight.' Hurrah!" cried Kolya, enchanted.

"Be silent! . . . How dare they insult me in your house!" cried Aglaia, suddenly flying out at her mother. She was by now in that hysterical state when no line is drawn and no check regarded. "Why do you all torture me, every one of you? Why have they been pestering me for the last three days on your account, prince? Nothing will induce me to marry you! Let me tell you that I never will on any consideration. Understand that. As though one could marry an absurd creature like you! Look at yourself in the looking-glass, what do you look like standing there? Why, why do they tease me and say I'm going to marry you? You ought to know that. You are in the plot with them too!"

"No one has ever teased you about it," muttered Adelaida in alarm.

“No one has ever thought of such a thing. No one has said a word about it!” cried Alexandra.

“Who has been teasing her? When has she been teased? Who can have said such a thing? Is she raving?” Lizaveta Prokofyevna addressed the room, quivering with anger.

“Every one has been talking about it, every one, for the last three days! I will never, never marry him!”

As she cried this, Aglaia burst into bitter tears, hiding her face in her handkerchief, and sank into a chair.

“But he hasn’t even ...”

“I haven’t asked you, Aglaia Ivanovna,” broke suddenly from Myshkin.

“Wha-a-t?” Lizaveta Prokofyevna brought out in indignation, amazement and horror. “What’s that?”

She could not believe her ears.

“I meant to say ... I meant to say,” faltered Myshkin, “I only wanted to explain to Aglaia Ivanovna ... to have the honour to make clear to her that I had no intention ... to have the honour of asking for her hand ... at anytime. It’s not my fault — it’s not my fault indeed, Aglaia Ivanovna. I’ve never wanted to, it never entered my head. I never shall want to, you’ll see that for yourself. Be sure of that. Some spiteful person must have slandered me to you. Don’t worry about it!”

As he said this, he went up to Aglaia.

She removed the handkerchief with which she was covering her face, stole a hasty glance at his panic-stricken countenance, took in the meaning of his words, and went off into a sudden fit of laughter in his face, such gay and irresistible laughter, such droll and mocking laughter that Adelaida could not contain herself, especially when she too looked at Myshkin. She rushed up to her sister, embraced her, and broke into the same irresistible school-girlish and merry laughter. Looking at them, Myshkin too began to smile, and with a joyful and happy expression repeated:

“Well, that’s all right! That’s all right!”

At that point Alexandra too gave way and laughed heartily. It seemed as though the three girls would never stop laughing.

“Ah, the mad things!” muttered Lizaveta Prokofyevna. “First they frighten one, and then ...”

But Prince S. was laughing too, and so was “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch. Kolya laughed with stopping, and Myshkin laughed also looking at them

all.

“Let’s go for a walk — let’s go for a walk!” cried Adelaida. “All of us, and the prince must go with us. There’s no need for you to go away, you dear person. Isn’t he a dear, Aglaia? Isn’t he, mother? What’s more, I must, I must kiss him and embrace him for . . . for his explanation to Aglaia just now. Maman dear, will you let me kiss him? Aglaia, let me kiss your prince,” cried the mischievous girl; and she actually skipped up to the prince and kissed him on the forehead.

He snatched her hands, squeezed them so tightly that Adelaida almost cried out, looked at her with infinite gladness, and quickly raised her hand to his lips and kissed it three times.

“Come along!” Aglaia called to them. “Prince, you shall escort me. May he, maman, after refusing me? “Vbu’ve refused me for good, haven’t you, prince? That’s not the way to offer your arm to a lady. Don’t you know how to give your arm to a lady? That’s right. Come along, we’ll lead the way. Would you like us to go on ahead, tete-a-tete?”

She talked incessantly, still laughing spasmodically.

“Thank God — thank God!” repeated Lizaveta Prokofyevna, though she did not know herself what she was rejoicing at.

“Extraordinarily queer people!” thought Prince S. perhaps for the hundredth time since he had known them, but . . . he liked these queer people. As for Myshkin, he was perhaps not greatly attracted by him. Prince S. looked rather gloomy and, as it were, preoccupied, as they set off.

“Vfevgeny Pavlovitch seemed in the liveliest humour. All the way to the railway station — he was amusing Adelaida and Alexandra, who laughed at his jokes with such extreme readiness that he began to be a trifle suspicious that perhaps they were not listening to him at all. At this thought he suddenly broke into violent and perfectly genuine laughter without explaining the reason. His amusement was characteristic of the man. Though the sisters were in the most hilarious mood, they kept looking at Aglaia and Myshkin in front of them. It was evident that their younger sister’s conduct was a complete enigma to them. Prince S. kept trying to talk about other subjects to Lizaveta Prokofyevna, perhaps to distract her mind, and bored her horribly. She seemed completely dazed, answered at random, and sometimes did not answer at all. But that was not the end of Aglaia’s enigmas that evening. The last of them fell to the lot of Myshkin

alone. When they had got about a hundred paces from the house, Aglaia said in a rapid half-whisper to her obstinately silent cavalier:

“Look there, to the right.”

Myshkin looked.

“Look more carefully. Do you see that seat in the park, over there where those three big trees are . . . a green seat?”

Myshkin answered that he did.

“Do you like the place? I sometimes come and sit here alone at seven o’clock in the morning, when everyone else is asleep.”

Myshkin murmured that it was a charming spot.

“And now you can leave me. I don’t want to walk arm-in-arm with you any further. Or, better, walk arm-in-arm with me, but don’t speak to me — not a word. I want to think by myself.”

This warning was unnecessary, however. Myshkin would not have uttered a word in any case. His heart began throbbing violently when she spoke of the seat in the park. After a minute’s deliberation he dismissed the foolish idea with shame.

It is a well-known fact remarked by every one that the public about the Pavlovsk band-stand is more “select” on weekdays than on Sundays and holidays, when “all sorts of people” flock there from town. The ladies, though not in holiday attire, are more elegant. It is the correct thing to gather about the band-stand. The orchestra is about the best of our park bands, and often plays new pieces. There is great decorum and propriety of behaviour in the gardens, though there is a general air of homeliness, and even intimacy. Summer visitors go there to look at their acquaintances. Many do this with genuine pleasure and frequent the gardens for that purpose alone. But there are some who only go for the music. Unpleasant scenes are rare, though of course they occasionally occur even on weekdays. But that, to be sure, is inevitable.

It was an exquisite evening, and there were a good many people in the gardens. All the places round the orchestra were taken. Our party sat down on chairs rather apart, close to the left-hand exit from the station. The crowd and the music revived Lizaveta Prokofyevna a little and diverted the young ladies. They had already exchanged glances with some of the visitors and had already nodded affably to several of their acquaintances; they had scrutinised the dresses, detected some eccentricities, and discussed them with sarcastic smiles, “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch too bowed frequently to

acquaintances. Aglaia and Myshkin, who were still together, had already attracted some attention. Soon several young men went up to the young ladies and their mother; two or three remained to talk to them. Thev were all friends of “Vfevqenv Pavlovitch’s.

Among them was a very handsome, good-humoured and talkative young officer. He hastened to address Aglaia and did his utmost to engage her attention. She was particularly gracious and sprightly with him. “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch asked Myshkin to let him introduce this friend. Myshkin hardly took in what was wanted of him, but the introduction took place, both bowed and shook hands. Yevgeny Pavlovitch’s friend asked a question, but Myshkin either did not answer or mumbled something so strangely to himself that the officer stared at him, then glanced at Yevgeny Pavlovitch, at once saw why the introduction had been made, smiled slightly and turned to Aglaia again. Only “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch noticed that Aglaia suddenly flushed at this.

Myshkin did not even observe that other people were talking and paying attention to Aglaia. He was perhaps at moments even unconscious that he was sitting beside her. Sometimes he longed to get away, to vanish from here altogether. He would have been positively glad to be in some gloomy, deserted place, only that he might be alone with his thoughts and no one might know where he was. Or at least to be at home in the verandah, with no one else there, not Lebedyev nor the children; to throw himself on the sofa and bury his head in the pillow, and to lie like that for a day and a night and another day. At moments he dreamed of the mountains, and especially one familiar spot which he always liked to think of, a spot to which he had been fond of going and from which he used to look down on the village, on the waterfall gleaming like a white thread below, on the white clouds and the old ruined castle. Oh, how he longed to be there now, and to think of one thing! — oh, of nothing else for his whole life, and a thousand years would not be too long! And let him be utterly forgotten here. Oh, that must be! It would have been better indeed if they had never known him, and if it had all been only a dream. And wasn’t it just the same, dream and reality? Sometimes he began looking at Aglaia, and for five minutes at a time did not take his eyes off herface. But the look in his eyes was too strange. He seemed to be looking at her as at an object a mile away, or as at her portrait, not herself.

“Why are you looking at me like that, prince?” she asked him suddenly, interrupting her lively talk and laughter with the group around her. “I am afraid of you; I feel as though you meant to put out your hand and touch my face and feel it with your fingers. He does look like that, doesn’t he, “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch?”

Myshkin seemed surprised to hear that he was being spoken to, pondered, though perhaps he did not quite understand, and did not answer. But seeing that she and all the rest were laughing, he opened his mouth and began to laugh too. The laughter grew louder; the officer, who must have been of a mirthful disposition, simply shook with laughter. Aglaia suddenly whispered to herself wrathfully:

“Idiot!”

“Good heavens! Surely she can’t be ... a man like that... is she utterly mad?” her mother muttered to herself.

“It’s a joke. The same as that about the ‘poor knight,’ nothing more,” Alexandra whispered firmly in her ear. “She’s making fun of him again, as she always does. But the joke has gone too far. We must put a stop to it, maman! She went on like an actress and scared us out of pure mischief....”

“It’s a good thing she’s pitched on an idiot like that,” her mother whispered back.

But her daughter’s remark had relieved her.

Myshkin heard them call him an idiot, however, and started, but not at being called an idiot. He forgot the word immediately. But in the crowd not far from where he was sitting — he could not have pointed out the exact spot — he caught a glimpse of a face — a pale face, with curly black hair, with a familiar, a very familiar smile and expression; he caught a glimpse of it and it vanished. Very likely it was only his fancy; all that remained with him was an impression of a wry smile, the eyes and the jaunty pale green necktie of the apparition. Whether the figure had disappeared in the crowd, or whether it had slipped into the station Myshkin could not decide.

But a minute later he began quickly and uneasily looking about him; this first apparition might be the forerunner of a second. That must certainly be so. Could he have forgotten the possibility of a meeting when he went into the gardens? It is true that when he went to the gardens he had no idea that he was coming there — he was in such a troubled state of mind.

If he had been more capable of observing, he might have noticed for the last quarter of an hour that Aglaia too was looking round uneasily from time

to time; she too seemed to be on the lookout for some one. Now, when his uneasiness had become very marked, Aglaia's excitement and uneasiness also increased, and as soon as he looked round him, she at once looked about too. The explanation of their uneasiness followed quickly.

Quite a number of persons, at least a dozen, suddenly appeared from the side entrance, near which Myshkin and the Epanchins and their friends were sitting. The foremost of the group were three women, two of them remarkably good-looking; and it was not strange that they were followed by so many admirers. But there was something peculiar about the women and the men who were with them, quite unlike the rest of the crowd gathered to listen to the music. They were at once noticed by almost every one, but most people tried to look as though they had not seen them at all, and only some of the young men smiled at them, whispering something to one another. It was impossible to avoid seeing them: they displayed themselves conspicuously, talking loudly and laughing. It might well have been thought that many of them were drunk, though some of them were smartly and fashionably dressed. Yet there were among them persons of very strange appearance, in strange clothes, with strangely flushed faces. There were some officers among them; some were not young; some were solidly dressed in well-cut, comfortably fitting clothes, with rings and studs, and splendid pitch-black wigs and whiskers, with especially stately though rather grumpy dignity in their faces, yet they would have been shunned in society like the plague. Among our suburban places of resort there are, of course, some distinguished for exceptional respectability and enjoying a particularly good reputation. But even the most cautious person may sometimes be struck by a tile from a neighbour's roof. Such a tile was now about to fall on the decorous public who had gathered to listen to the band.

On the way from the station to the band-stand there were three steps. The group stopped just at the top of these steps; they hesitated whether to go down, but one woman stepped forward; only two of her suite ventured to follow her. One was a middle-

aged man of rather modest appearance. He looked like a gentleman in all respects, yet he had the forlorn air of one of those men whom nobody knows and who knows nobody. The other was a most dubious figure, completely out at elbows. Nobody else followed the eccentric lady. But going down the steps she did not look back, as though she did not care whether she were followed or not. She laughed and talked loudly as before.

She was dressed richly and with excellent taste, but somewhat too splendidly. She turned towards the other side of the band-stand, where a private carriage was waiting for somebody.

Myshkin had not seen her for more than three months. Ever since he had arrived in Petersburg, he had been intending to go and see her; but perhaps a secret presentiment had deterred him. He could not in any case gauge what impression meeting her would make upon him, and he often tried with dread to imagine it. One thing was clear to him — that the meeting would be painful. Several times during those six months he had recalled the first impression made on him by that woman's face, when he had only seen it in the photograph. But even the impression made by the photograph was, he remembered, extremely painful. That month in the provinces, when he had been seeing her almost every day, had had a fearful effect upon him, so much so that he sometimes tried to drive away all recollection of it. There was something which always tortured him in the very face of this woman. Talking to Rogozhin, he had put down this sensation to his infinite pity for her, and that was the truth. That face, even in the photograph, had roused in him a perfect agony of pity: the feeling of compassion and even of suffering over this woman never left his heart, and it had not left it now. Oh, no, it was stronger than ever! But Myshkin was dissatisfied with what he had said to Rogozhin; and only now at the moment of her sudden appearance he realised, perhaps through his immediate sensation, what had been lacking in his words. Words had been lacking which might have expressed horror — yes, horror. Now at this moment he felt it fully. He was certain, he was fully convinced for reasons of his own, that that woman was mad. If, loving a woman more than anything in the world, or foreseeing the possibility of loving her thus, one were suddenly to see her in chains behind an iron grating and beneath the rod of a prison warder, one would feel something like what Myshkin felt at that moment.

"What's the matter with you?" Aglaia whispered quickly, looking round at him and naively pulling at his arm.

He turned his head, looked at her, glanced into her black eyes which flashed at that moment with a light he could not understand, tried to smile at her, but immediately, as though forgetting her, turned his eyes to the right and again began watching the startling apparition.

Nastasya Filippovna was at that moment walking close by the young ladies' chairs, "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch went on telling Alexandra something

which must have been very amusing and interesting. He talked rapidly and eagerly. Myshkin remembered that Aglaia had uttered in a whisper the words: “What a ...” — a vague, unfinished phrase.

She instantly checked herself and said no more, but that was enough.

Nastasya Filippovna, who was walking by, seeming to notice no one in particular, suddenly turned towards them, and seemed only now to observe Yevgeny Pavlovitch.

“B-bah! Why, here he is!” she exclaimed, suddenly standing still. “One might have sent a special messenger to look for him and never find him, and here he sits where you’d never expect him. ... I thought you were there at your uncle’s.”

“Vfevgeny Pavlovitch flushed, looked furiously at Nastasya Filippovna but hurriedly turned away from her again.

“What! Don’t you know? Only fancy, he doesn’t know yet! He has shot himself! Your uncle shot himself this morning. I was told this morning at two o’clock, and half the town knows it by now. Three hundred and fifty thousand roubles of government money are missing, they say; some say five hundred. And I always counted on his leaving you a fortune. He’s whisked it all away. He was a dissipated old fellow. Well, good-bye, bonne chance! Aren’t you really going there? \bu sent in your papers in good time, you sly fellow. Nonsense; he knew, he knew! Very likely he knew yesterday.”

Though in her insolent persistence in this public proclamation of an acquaintance and intimacy which did not exist, there was certainly a motive, and of that there could be no doubt now, yet “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch had thought at first of escaping without noticing his assailant. But Nastasya Filippovna’s words fell on him like a thunderbolt. Hearing of his uncle’s death, he grew white as a sheet and turned towards his informant. At that moment Lizaveta Prokofyevna got up quickly from her seat, made everyone behind her get up, and almost ran away. Only Myshkin stayed for a moment in indecision, and Yevgeny Pavlovitch still remained standing, unable to collect himself. But the Epanchins were scarcely twenty paces away, when an outrageously scandalous incident followed.

The officer, who was a great friend of “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch’s and had been talking to Aglaia, was highly indignant.

“One wants a whip, there’s no other way of dealing with such a hussy!” he said almost loudly. (He had apparently been “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch’s confidant in the past.)

Nastasya Filippovna instantly turned to him. Her eyes flashed. She rushed up to a young man, a complete stranger, who was standing a couple of paces from her, snatched a thin plaited riding-whip out of his hand, and struck the offender with all her might across the face. All this happened in one moment. . . . The officer, beside himself, flew at her. Nastasya Filippovna's followers were no longer beside her. The decorous middle-aged gentleman had managed to disappear altogether; while the festive gentleman stood aside, laughing heartily. In another minute the police would have appeared and Nastasya Filippovna would have fared badly, if unexpected help had not been at hand. Myshkin, who was also standing two steps away, succeeded in seizing the officer by the arms from behind. Wresting away his arms, the officer gave him a violent push in the chest. Myshkin was flung three paces back and fell on a chair. But two other champions had come forward to protect Nastasya Filippovna. Facing the attacking officer stood the boxer, the author of the article already known to the reader and formerly one of Rogozhin's retinue.

"Ex-lieutenant Keller!" he introduced himself forcibly. "If you want to fight, captain, I'll replace the weaker sex, at your service. I've been through a course of English boxing. Don't push, captain. I feel for the deadly insult you've received, but I can't allow you to use your fists on a woman in public. If, like an honourable man and a gentleman, you prefer some other method, you know what I mean, captain."

But the captain had recovered himself and was not listening. At that instant Rogozhin made his appearance in the crowd, and seizing Nastasya Filippovna by the arm, led her away. Rogozhin too seemed terribly shaken, he was white and trembling. As he led Nastasya Filippovna away, he had time to laugh malignantly in the officer's face, and with vulgar triumph said, "Whew! He's caught it! His mug's all over blood! Whew!"

Recovering himself and completely realising with whom he had to deal, the officer (though covering his face with his handkerchief) turned politely to Myshkin, who had got up from his chair.

"Prince Myshkin, whose acquaintance I have had the pleasure of making just now?"

"She's mad! She's insane! I assure you!" responded Myshkin in a shaking voice, for some reason holding out his trembling hands to him.

"I, of course, cannot boast of so much knowledge on that subiect. But I had to know vour name."

He nodded and walked away. The police hurried up five seconds after the last of the persons concerned had disappeared. But the scene had not lasted more than two minutes. Some of the audience had got up from their chairs and gone away; some had simply moved from one place to another; while some were delighted at the scene, and others were eagerly talking and inquiring about it. The incident, in fact, passed off in the usual way. The band began playing again. Myshkin followed the Epanchins. If he had thought, or had had time to look to the left as he was sitting there, after he had been pushed away, he might have seen, twenty paces from him, Aglaia, who had stood still to watch the scandalous scene, regardless of her mother's and sisters' calls to her. Prince S. had run up to her and at last persuaded her to come quickly away. Her mother remembered that she had returned to them so excited that she could scarcely have heard their calling her. But within two minutes, when they were walking back into the park, Aglaia said in her usual careless and capricious tones:

"I wanted to see how the farce would end."

CHAPTER 3

The SCENE in the gardens had impressed both mother and daughters almost with horror. Excited and alarmed, Lizaveta Prokofyevna had literally almost run all the way home with her daughters. According to her notions and ideas, so much had happened, and so much had been brought to light by the incident, that certain ideas had taken definite shape in her brain, in spite of her confusion and alarm. But every one realised that something peculiar had happened, and that perhaps, and fortunately too, some extraordinary secret was on the verge of being disclosed. In spite of all Prince S.'s former assurances and explanations, Yevgeny Pavlovitch had been "unmasked," exposed, detected, "and publicly found out in his connection with that creature." So thought the mother and both her elder daughters. The only effect of that conclusion was to intensify the mystery. Though the girls were secretly somewhat indignant with their mother for her extreme alarm and too conspicuous flight, yet they did not venture to worry her with questions during the first shock of the disturbance. Moreover, something made them fancy that their sister Aglaia knew more of the matter than their mother and all of them put together. Prince S. too, looked black as night; he too seemed plunged in thought. Lizaveta Prokofyevna did not say a word to him all the way home, and he did not seem to be aware of it. Adelaida made an attempt to ask him, "What uncle had been spoken of just now and what had happened in Petersburg?" But with a very sour face he muttered something vague in reply about making inquiries, and its being all nonsense.

"No doubt of that," assented Adelaida, and she asked nothing more.

Aglaia became exceptionally quiet, and only observed on the way that they were hurrying too fast. Once she turned round and caught sight of Myshkin, who was hastening after them. She smiled ironically at his efforts to overtake them, and did not look round at him again.

At last, when they were nearly reaching their villa, they saw Ivan Fyodorovitch, who had just arrived from Petersburg, coming to meet them. His first word was to ask after "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch. But his wife walked by him wrathfully, without answering or even looking at him. From the faces of his daughters and Prince S. he guessed at once there was a storm brewing. But apart from this, there was an unusual uneasiness in his expression. He took Prince S.'s arm, stopped him at the entrance, and

exchanged a few words with him almost in a whisper. From the troubled air of both as they walked afterwards on to the verandah and went up to Lizaveta Prokofyevna's room it might be surmised that they had heard some extraordinary news. By degrees, they were all gathered in Lizaveta Prokofyevna's room upstairs, and no one but Myshkin was left at last on the verandah. Though he had no conscious motive for staying, yet he sat on in the corner as though expecting something. It did not occur to him, as they seemed so upset, that he had better go away. He seemed oblivious of the whole universe, and ready to go on sitting for the next two years, wherever he might be put. From time to time, sounds of anxious conversation reached him from above. He could not have said how long he had been sitting there. It had grown late and was quite dark when Aglaia suddenly came out on to the verandah. She looked calm though she was rather pale. Seeing Myshkin, whom she apparently had not expected to find sitting there in the corner, Aglaia smiled, as though perplexed.

"What are you doing here?" she asked, going up to him.

Myshkin muttered something in confusion, and jumped up from his seat. But Aglaia at once sat down beside him, and he sat down again. Suddenly she examined him attentively, then looked as though aimlessly at the window, and then again at him.

"Perhaps she wants to laugh at me," Myshkin thought. "No, she'd have laughed at me then."

"Perhaps you'd like some tea. I'll order some," she said, after a silence.

"N-no. I don't know..."

"How do you mean — you don't know? Oh, by the way, listen. If some one challenged you to a duel, what would vou do? I wanted to ask vou before."

"Why . . . who ... no one will challenge me to a duel."

"But if they did? Would you be very much frightened?"

"I think I should be very... much afraid."

"You mean it? Then you are a coward?"

"N-no. Perhaps not. A coward is a man who's afraid and runs away. If one's afraid and doesn't run away, one's not a coward," said Myshkin, smiling, after a moment's thought.

"And you wouldn't run away?"

"Perhaps I shouldn't run away." He laughed at last at Aglaia's questions.

“Though I’m a woman, nothing would make me run away,” she observed, almost offended. “But you’re laughing at me and pretending, as you usually do, to make yourself more interesting. Tell me, they fire at twelve paces, don’t they, sometimes at ten, so they must be killed or wounded?”

“People are not often killed at duels, I imagine.”

“Not often! Pushkin was killed.”

“That may have been accidental.”

“It wasn’t an accident. It was a duel to the death and he was killed.”

“The bullet struck him so low down that no doubt Dantes aimed higher, at his head or at his chest; no one aims like that, so it’s most likely that the bullet hit Pushkin by accident. People who understand told me so.”

“But a soldier I talked to once told me that they were ordered by the regulations to fire half-way-up, that’s their phrase ‘half-way-up.’ So they’re not ordered to fire at the head or the chest, but ‘half-way-up.’ I asked an officer afterwards and he told me it was perfectly true.”

“That’s probably because they fire from a long distance.”

“But can you shoot?”

“I never have shot.”

“Don’t you even know how to load a pistol?”

“No. That is, I know how it’s done, but I’ve never done it myself.”

“Well, that means you don’t know, for it wants practice. Listen and remember: first you must buy some good gun-powder, not damp (they say it must not be damp, but very dry), very fine powder, you must ask for that sort, not what’s used in cannon. The bullets, I’m told, people make themselves somehow. Have you pistols?”

“No, and I don’t want them,” laughed Myshkin.

“Oh, what nonsense! “Vbu must buy a good one, French or English. I’m told they’re the best. Then take a thimbleful of powder, or two thimblefuls, perhaps, and sprinkle it in. Better put plenty. Ram it in with felt (they say that felt is necessary for some reason); you can get that out of some mattress, or doors are sometimes covered with felt. Then, when you’ve poked the felt in, put in the bullet — do you hear, the bullet afterwards, the powder first, or it won’t shoot. Why are you laughing? I want you to practise shooting every day, and to learn to hit a mark. Will you?”

Myshkin laughed. Aglaia stamped her foot with vexation. The earnest air with which she carried on such a conversation somewhat surprised him. He

rather felt that he must find out something, ask about something; something more serious anyway than the loading of a pistol. But everything had flown out of his head except the one fact, that she was sitting beside him, and that he was looking at her, and it made no difference to him at that moment what she talked about.

Ivan Fyodorovitch, himself, came downstairs and on to the verandah at last. He was going out with a frowning, anxious and resolute face.

“Ah, Lyov Nikolayevitch, that’s you. . . . Where are you going now?” he asked, though Myshkin showed no signs of moving. “Come along, I’ve a word to say to you.”

“Good-bye,” said Aglaia, and held out her hand to Myshkin.

It was rather dark on the verandah by now. He could not make out her face quite clearly. A minute later, when he had left the villa with the general, he suddenly flushed hotly, and squeezed his right hand tightly.

It appeared that Ivan Fyodorovitch had to go the same way. In spite of the late hour, he was hurrying to discuss something with some one. But meanwhile, on the way, he began talking to Myshkin, quickly, excitedly, and somewhat incoherently, frequently mentioning Lizaveta Prokofyevna. If Myshkin could have been more observant at that moment, he might perhaps have guessed that the general wanted to find out something from him, or rather, wanted to ask him a plain question, but could not bring himself to the real point. Myshkin was so absent-minded that at first he heard nothing at all, and when the general stopped before him with some excited question, to his shame he was forced to confess that he had not understood a word.

The general shrugged his shoulders.

“You’re all such queer people all about one,” he began again. “I tell you that I am at a loss to understand the notions and alarms of Lizaveta Prokofyevna. She’s in hysterics, crying and declaring that we’ve been disgraced, shamed. Who? How? By whom? When and why? I confess I am to blame (I recognise it), I’m very much to blame, but the persecutions of . . . this troublesome woman (who’s misconducting herself into the bargain) can be restrained, by the police at the worst, and I intend to see some one to-day and take steps. Everything can be done quietly, gently, kindly even, in a friendly way and without a breath of scandal. I admit that many things may happen in the future, and that there’s a great deal that’s unexplained; there’s an intrigue in it; but if they know nothing about it here, they can

make no explanation there. If I've heard nothing and you've heard nothing, he's heard nothing, and she's heard nothing, who has heard, I should like to ask you? How is it to be explained, do you suppose, except that half of it is mirage, unreal, something like moonshine or some hallucination."

"She is mad," muttered Myshkin, recalling with pain the recent scene.

"That's just what I say, if you're talking of her. That idea has occurred to me too, and I slept peacefully. But now I see that their opinion is more correct, and I don't believe in madness. She's a nonsensical woman, I grant, but she's artful as well, and far from mad. Her freak to-day about Kapiton Alexeyitch shows that too clearly. It's a fraudulent business, or at least a Jesuitical business for objects of her own."

"What Kapiton Alexeyitch?"

"Ah, mercy on us, Lyov Nikolayevitch, you don't listen. I began by telling you about Kapiton Alexeyitch; I was so upset that I'm all of a tremble still. That's what kept me so long in town to-day. Kapiton Alexeyitch Radomsky, Yevgeny Pavlovitch's uncle...."

"Ah!" cried Myshkin.

"Shot himself at daybreak this morning, at seven o'clock. A highly respected old man, seventy, a free-liver. And it's just exactly as she said — a large sum of government money missing."

"Where could she have ..."

"Heard of it? Ha-ha! Why, she had a whole regiment around her, as soon as she arrived here. \bu know what sort of people visit her now and seek 'the honour of her acquaintance.' She might naturally have heard it this morning from some one coming from town; for all Petersburg knows it by now, and half Pavlovsk, or perhaps the whole of it. But what a sly remark it was she made about the uniform, as it was repeated to me, about "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch's having sent in his papers in the nick of time! What a fiendish hint! No, that doesn't smack of madness. I refuse to believe, of course, that Yevgeny Pavlovitch could have known of the catastrophe beforehand, that is, that at seven o'clock on a certain day, and so on. But he may have had a presentiment of it all. And I, and all of us, and Prince S. reckoned that he would leave him a fortune. It's awful! But understand me, I don't charge "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch with anything, and I hasten to make that clear, but still, it's suspicious, I

must say. Prince S. is tremendously struck by it. It's all fallen out so strangely."

“But what is there suspicious about Yevgeny Pavlovitch’s conduct?”

“Nothing. He’s behaved most honourably. I haven’t suggested anything of the sort. His own property, I believe, is untouched. Lizaveta Prokofyevna, of course, won’t listen to anything. But, what’s worse, all this family upset, or rather, all this tittle-tattle, really one doesn’t know what to call it.... You’re a friend of the family in a real sense, Lyov Nikolayevitch, and would you believe it, it appears now, though it’s not known for certain, that “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch made Aglaia an offer a month ago, and that she refused him point-blank.”

“Impossible!” cried Myshkin warmly.

“Why, do you know anything about it? \bu see, my dear fellow,” cried the general, startled and surprised, stopping short as though petrified, “I may have chattered on to you more than I should. That’s because you . . . because you . . . are such an exceptional fellow, one may say. Perhaps you know something?”

“I know nothinq . . . about “Vfevqenv Pavlovitch,”

muttered Myshkin.

“I don’t either. As for me, my boy, they certainly want to see me dead and buried, and they won’t consider how hard it is for a man, and that I can’t stand it. I’ve just been through an awful scene! I speak to you as though you were my son. The worst of it is that Aglaia seems to be laughing at her mother. Her sisters told their mother, as a guess, and a pretty certain one, that she’d refused Yevgeny Pavlovitch and had a rather formal explanation with him a month ago. But she’s such a willful and whimsical creature, it’s beyond words. Generosity and every brilliant quality of mind and heart she has, but capricious, mocking — in fact, a little devil, and full of fancies, too. She laughed at her mother to her face just now, at her sisters too, and at Prince S. I don’t count, of course, for she never does anything but laugh at me. But yet, you know, I love her; I love her laughing even — and I believe she, little devil, loves me specially for it, that is, more than anyone else, I believe. I’ll bet anything she’s made fun of you too. I found her talking to you just now after the storm upstairs; she was sitting with you, as though nothing had happened.”

Myshkin flushed crimson, and squeezed his right hand, but said nothing.

“My dear, good Lyov Nikolayevitch,” the general began with warmth and feeling again, “I . . . and Lizaveta Prokofyevna too (though she’s begun to abuse you again, and me too, on your account, though I don’t understand

why), we love you, we love you truly and respect you, in spite of everything, I mean of all appearances. But you'll admit yourself, my dear boy, that it is mystifying and irritating to hear that cold-blooded little devil suddenly (for she stood before her mother with a look of profound contempt for all our questions, mine especially, for, confound it all, I was fool enough to take it into my head to make a show of sternness, seeing I'm the head of the family — well, I made a fool of myself), that the coldblooded little devil suddenly declared with a laugh that that 'mad woman' (that was her expression, and it strikes me as queer that she agrees with you: 'How can you have failed to see it till now,' she says) 'has taken it into her head at all costs to marry me to Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch, and for that purpose to get "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch turned out of our house.' . . .

She simply said that; she gave no further explanation, she went on laughing and we simply gaped at her; she slammed the door and went out. Then they told me of what passed between her and you this afternoon. And . . . and listen, dear prince, you're a sensible man and not given to taking offence. I've observed that about you, but . . . don't be angry: I'll be bound she's making fun of you. She laughs like a child, so don't be angry with her, but that's certainly it. Don't think anything of it — she's simply making a fool of you and all of us, out for mischief. Well, good-bye. "Vbu know our feelings, our genuine feelings for you, don't you? They'll never change in any respect... but now I must go this way. Good-bye! I've not often been in such a tight hole (what's the expression?) as I am now. ... A pretty summer holiday!"

Left alone at the cross-roads, Myshkin looked round him, rapidly crossed the road, went close up to the lighted window of a villa, unfolded the little piece of paper which he had held tight in his right hand all the time he had been talking to Ivan Fyodorovitch, and by a faint beam of light, read:

"To-morrowmorning at seven o'clock I will be on the green seat in the park waiting for you. I have made up my mind to talk to you about an exceedingly important matter which concerns you directly.

"P.S. I hope you will show no one this letter. Though I'm ashamed to give you such a caution, I think that you deserve it, and I write it, blushing with shame at your absurd character.

"P.P.S. I mean the green seat I pointed out to you this morning. You ought to be ashamed that I should have to write this, too."

The letter had been scribbled in haste and folded anyhow, most likely just before Aglaia came out on to the verandah. In indescribable agitation, that was almost like terror, Myshkin held the paper clenched tightly in his right hand again, and hastily leapt away from the window, from the light, like a frightened thief; but in doing so he ran full-tilt into a gentleman who was standing just behind his back.

“I have been following you, prince,” said the gentleman.

“Is that you, Keller?” cried Myshkin, surprised.

“I was looking for you, prince. I’ve been watching for you by the Epanchins’. Of course, I couldn’t go in. I walked behind you while you were with the general. I am at your service, prince, you may dispose of me. lam ready for any sacrifice, even death, if need be.”

“Oh .. .what for?”

“Why, no doubt a challenge will follow. That Lieutenant. ... I know him, though not personally . . . he won’t accept an affront. The likes of us, that is, Rogozhin and me, he is inclined to look upon as dirt, and perhaps deservedly, so you are the only one called upon. You’ll have to pay the piper, prince. He’s been inquiring about you, I hear, and no doubt, a friend of his will call on you to-morrow, or he may be waiting for you now. If you do me the honour to choose me for your second, I’m ready to be degraded to the ranks for you. That’s why I’ve been looking for you, prince.”

“So you’re talking of a duel too!” laughed Myshkin, to Keller’s great surprise.

He laughed heartily. Keller, who had been on tenterhooks until he had satisfied himself by offering to be Myshkin’s second, was almost offended at the sight of the prince’s light-hearted mirth.

“But you seized him by the arms, this afternoon, prince. That’s hard for a man of honour to put up with in a public place.”

“And he gave me a push in the chest!” cried Myshkin, laughing. “There’s nothing for us to fight about! I’ll beg his pardon, that’s all. But if we must fight, we will! Let him shoot, I should like it. Ha-ha! I know how to load a pistol now. Do you know I’ve been taught how to load a pistol? Can you load a pistol, Keller? First you have to buy powder, pistol powder, not damp, and not as coarse as for cannon. Then you have to put the powder in first, and get some felt off a door. And then you have to put the bullet in afterwards, and not the bullet before the powder, or it won’t go off. Do you hear, Keller? or else it won’t go off. Ha-ha! Isn’t that a magnificent reason,

friend Keller? Ach, Keller, do you know I must hug you and give you a kiss this minute! Ha-ha-ha! How was it that you turned up so suddenly this afternoon? Come and see me some time soon and have some champagne. We'll all get drunk. Do you know I've twelve bottles of champagne at home in Lebedyev's cellar? They came into his hands somehow and he sold them to me the day before yesterday; the very day after I moved into his house, I bought them all. I'll get the whole party together. Are you going to sleep to-night?"

"As I do every night, prince."

"Well, pleasant dreams, then. Ha-ha!"

Myshkin crossed the road and vanished into the park, leaving Keller somewhat perplexed. He had never yet seen Myshkin in such a strange mood, and could not have imagined him like this.

"Fever, perhaps, for he's a nervous man, and all this has affected him; but yet he won't be frightened. I am sure that sort are not cowards, by Jove!" Keller was thinking to himself. "Hm! champagne! an interesting fact, though! Twelve bottles, a dozen; a decent provision. I'll bet that Lebedyev got that champagne as a pledge from some one. Hm! he's rather nice, that prince; I like such fellows; there's no time to lose though, and . . . if there's champagne, it's the moment for it...."

That Myshkin was almost in a fever was, of course, a correct surmise.

He wandered a long while about the dark park, and at last "found himself walkinq alonq an avenue.

The impression was left on his consciousness of having walked thirty or forty times up and down that avenue from the seat to a tall and conspicuous old tree, a distance of a hundred paces. He could not, if he had tried, have remembered what he had been thinking all that time, which must have been at least an hour. He caught himself, however, thinking one thought which made him burst out laughing; though there was nothing to laugh at, he kept wanting to laugh. It occurred to him that the suggestion of a duel might have arisen not only in Keller's mind, and that, therefore, the conversation about the loading of pistols was not without motive.

"Bah!" He stopped suddenly. Another idea dawned upon him. "She came out on to the verandah just now when I was sitting there in the corner, and was awfully surprised to find me there and — how she laughed . . . she talked about tea; and she had that note in her hands all the while, of course.

So she must have known I was sitting on the verandah. Why then was she surprised? Ha-ha!”

He took the letter out of his pocket and kissed it, but at once stopped short and pondered.

“How strange it is! How strange it is!” he said, a minute later, even with a certain sadness. In moments of intense joy he always grew sad, he could not himself have said why. He looked round attentively and was surprised that he had come there. He was very tired; he went to the seat and sat down on it. There was an extraordinary stillness all round. The music in the gardens had ceased, there was perhaps no one left in the park. It must have been at least half-past eleven. It was a soft, warm, clear night — a Petersburg night in early June, but in the thick shady avenue where he was sitting it was almost dark.

If anyone had told him at that moment that he had fallen in love, that he was passionately in love, he would have rejected the idea with surprise and perhaps with indignation. And if anyone had added that Aglaia’s letterwas a love-letter, arranging a tryst with a lover, he would have been hotly ashamed of such a man, and would perhaps have challenged him to a duel. All this was perfectly sincere, and he never once doubted it, or admitted the slightest “double” thought of a possibility of the girl’s loving him or even of his loving her. He would have been ashamed of such an idea. The possibility of love for him, “for such a man as he was,” he would have looked upon as a monstrous thing. He fancied that, if it really meant anything, it was only mischief on her part. But he was quite unconcerned by that consideration, and thought it all in the natural order of things. He was occupied and absorbed with something quite different. He fully believed the statement dropped by the excited general that she was making fun of every one, and of him, Myshkin, particularly. He did not feel in the least insulted at this; to his thinking, it was quite as it should be. To him the chief thing was that to-morrow he would see her again early in the morning, would sit beside her on the green seat, would learn how to load a pistol, and would look at her. He wanted nothing more. It did once or twice occur to him to wonder what she meant to say to him, and what was this important matter which concerned him so directly. Moreover, he never had a moment’s doubt of the real existence of that “important matter” for which he was summoned. But he was far from considering that “important matter” now. He did not feel, indeed, the slightest inclination to think about it.

The crunch of slow footsteps on the sand of the avenue made him raise his head. A man whose face was difficult to distinguish in the dark came up to the seat and sat down beside him. Myshkin turned quickly, almost touching him, and discerned the pale face of Rogozhin.

“I knew you were wandering about here somewhere. I haven’t been long finding you,” Rogozhin muttered through his teeth.

It was the first time they had seen each other since their meeting in the corridor of the hotel. Amazed at Rogozhin’s sudden appearance, Myshkin could not for some time collect his thoughts, and an agonizing sensation rose up again in his heart. Rogozhin saw the effect he had produced, but although he was at first taken aback and talked with an air of studied ease, Myshkin fancied soon that there was nothing studied about him, nor even any special embarrassment. If there were any awkwardness in his gestures and words, it was only on the surface. The man could not change at heart.

“How did . . . you find me here?” asked Myshkin, in order to say something.

“I heard from Keller (I was qoinq to see vou), ‘he’s gone into the park,’ he said. Well, thought I, so that’s how it is.”

“What is?” Myshkin anxiously caught up the phrase he had dropped.

Rogozhin laughed but gave no explanation.

“I got your letter, Lyov Nikolayevitch. It’s all of no use . . . and I wonder at you. But now I’ve come to you from her. She bade me bring you without fail. She is very anxious to say something to you. She wanted to see you to-day.”

“I’ll go to-morrow. I’m going home directly. Are you ... coming to me?”

“Why should I? I’ve said all I had to say. Goodbye.”

“Won’t you come?” Myshkin asked gently.

“You’re a strange fellow, Lyov Nikolayevitch. One can’t help wondering at you.”

Rogozhin laughed malignantly.

“Why so? Why are you so bitter against me now?” asked Myshkin, sadly and warmly. “\bu know yourself now that all you thought was untrue. But yet I fancy that you are still angry with me. And do you know why? You’re still angry because you attacked me. I tell you I only remember that Parfyon Rogozhin, with whom I exchanged crosses that day. I wrote to you last night to forget all that madness and not to speak of it again. Why do you turn away from me? Why do you hide your hand? I tell you, I look upon all

that happened then simply as madness. I understand what you were feeling, that day, as though it were myself. What you fancied did not exist and could not exist. Why should there be anger between us?”

“As though you could feel anger!” Rogozhin laughed again, in response to Myshkin’s sudden and heated speech.

He had moved two steps away, and was actually standing with his face averted from Myshkin and his hands hidden behind him.

“It’s not the thing for me to come and see you now, Lyov Nikolayevitch,” he added, slowly and sententiously in conclusion.

“You still hate me so?”

“I don’t like you, Lyov Nikolayevitch, so why should I come and see you! Ah, prince, you’re like a child; you want a plaything, and you must have it at once, but you don’t understand things. \bu are saying just what you wrote in your letter. Do you suppose I don’t believe you? I believe every word — you never have deceived me, and never will in the future. But I don’t like you all the same. You wrote that you’ve forgotten everything and you only remember the brother Rogozhin with whom you exchanged crosses, and not that Rogozhin who raised his knife against you. But how do you know my feelings?” (Rogozhin smiled again.) “Why, perhaps I’ve never once repented of it, while you’ve already sent me your brotherly forgiveness. Perhaps I was already thinking of something else that evening, but about that....”

“You had forgotten to think!” Myshkin put in. “I should think so! I bet that you went straight then to the train, and flew off here to Pavlovsk, to the bandstand to follow her about in the crowd and watch her as you did to-day. That doesn’t surprise me! If you hadn’t been in such a state at that time, that you could think of nothing else, perhaps you wouldn’t have attacked me with the knife. I had a presentiment from the first, looking at you; do you know what you were like then? When we changed crosses, that idea may have been already at the back of my mind. Why did you take me to your mother then? Did you think to put a check on yourself by that? That no, you cannot have thought of it, but you felt it just as I did. . . . We were feeling just the same. If you had not made that attack (which God averted), what should I have been then? I did suspect you of it, our sin was the same, in fact. (\fes, don’t frown. And why do you laugh?) You’ve ‘not repented’! Perhaps even if you wanted to, you couldn’t regret it, because you don’t like me, besides. And if I were like an innocent angel to you, you’d still detest

me so long as you think she loves me and not you. That must be jealousy. But I've thought something about that this week, Parfyon, and I'll tell it you. Do you know that she may love you now more than anyone, and in such a way that the more she torments you, the more she loves you? She won't tell you so, but you must know how to see it. When all's said and done, why else is she going to marry you? Some day she will tell you so herself. Some women want to be loved like that, and that's just her character. And your love and your character must impress her! Do you know that a woman is capable of torturing a man with her cruelty and mockery without the faintest twinge of conscience, because she'll think every time she looks at vou: 'I'm tormentinq him to death now, but I'll make up for it with my love, later.'"

Rogozhin laughed, as he listened to Myshkin.

"But, I say, prince, have you come in for the same treatment? I've heard something of the sort about you, if it's true."

"What, what could you have heard?" Myshkin started, and stopped in extreme confusion.

Rogozhin went on laughing. He had listened with curiosity and perhaps with some pleasure to Myshkin, whose joyful and impulsive warmth had greatly impressed and encouraged him.

"And I've not merely heard it; I see now it's true," he added. "When have you talked like this before? I never heard you say such things before. If I hadn't heard something of the sort about you, I shouldn't have come here: to a park, too, and at midnight."

"I don't understand you at all, Parfyon Semyonitch."

"She told me about it a long time ago, and I saw it for myself to-day as you sat listening to the band this afternoon with the young lady. She's been vowing, she swore to me to-day and yesterday, that you were head over ears in love with Aglaia Epanchin. That's nothing to me, prince, and it's no business of mine. If you have left off loving her, she still loves you. \bu know that she's set on marrying you to her. She has sworn to do it, ha-ha! She says to me: Tell them I won't marry you without that. When they've gone to church, we'll go to church.' I can't make out what it means, and I never have understood: she either loves you beyond all reckoning, or ... if she does love you, why does she want to marry you to some one else? She says, 'I want to see him happy,' so she must love you."

“I’ve told you and written to you that she’s ... out of her mind,” said Myshkin, who had listened to Rogozhin with distress.

“The Lord knows! You may be mistaken. . . . But to-day she fixed the wedding-day when I brought her home from the gardens: in three weeks’ time or perhaps sooner, she said, we will certainly be married; she swore it, and kissed the ikon. It all rests with you now, it seems, prince. Ha-ha!”

“That’s all madness. What you’ve said about me will never be! I’ll come and see you to-morrow.”

“How can you call her mad?” observed Rogozhin. “How is it she seems sane to every one else, and only mad to you? How could she write letters to her? If she had been mad, they’d have noticed it in her letters!”

“What letters?” asked Myshkin in alarm.

“Why, to her, to the young lady, and she reads them. Don’t you know? Well, then, you’ll find out. Of course she’ll show you them herself.”

“I can’t believe that!” cried Myshkin.

“Ach! Lyov Nikolayevitch! You’ve only gone a little way along that path, as far as I can see. You’re only beginning. Wait a bit: you’ll keep your own detectives yet and be on the watch day and night too; and know of every step she takes, if only....”

“Stop, and never speak of that again!” cried Myshkin. “Listen, Parfyon, just before you appeared I came here and suddenly began laughing — I don’t know what about. The only reason was that I remembered it was my birthday to-morrow. It seems to have come on purpose. It’s almost twelve o’clock. Come, let us meet the day! I’ve got some wine. Let’s drink some. Wish for me what I don’t know how to wish for myself. \bu wish it, and I’ll wish all happiness to you. If not, give back the cross. You didn’t send the cross back to me next dav! You’ve got it on now, haven’t you?”

“Yes,” said Rogozhin.

“Well, then, come along. I don’t want to meet my new life without you, for my new life has begun. You don’t know, Parfyon, that my new life has begun today.”

“I see for myself now, and know that it has begun, and I’ll tell her so. \bu’re not like yourself at all, Lyov Nikolayevitch!”

CHAPTER 4

As HE drew near his villa, Myshkin noticed with great surprise that his verandah was brightly lighted up, and that a large and noisy company was assembled there. The party was a merry one, laughing and shouting; they seemed to be arguing at the top of their voices; the first glance suggested that they were having an hilarious time. And when he mounted to the verandah he found that in fact they had all been drinking, and drinking champagne, and apparently had been drinking for some time, so that many of the revellers had become very agreeably exhilarated by now. They were all people he knew, but it was strange that they should all have come together at once, as though by invitation, though Myshkin had not invited them, and had only by chance recollected that it was his birthday.

"No doubt you told some one you'd uncork the champagne, and so they've all run in," muttered Rogozhin, following Myshkin to the verandah. "We know their ways. You've only to whistle to them. . . ," he added, almost angrily, doubtless recalling his own recent past.

They all greeted Myshkin with shouts and good wishes, and surrounded him. Some were very noisy, others much quieter, but hearing that it was his birthday, all in turn hastened to congratulate him. Myshkin was puzzled at the presence of some persons, for instance, Burdovsky; but what was most surprising was that "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch turned out to be among them. Myshkin could scarcely believe his eyes, and was almost scared at seeing him.

Lebedyev, flushed and almost ecstatic, ran up with explanations; he was pretty far gone already. From his babble it appeared that the party had come together quite naturally, and in fact by chance. First of all, towards the evening, Ippolit had arrived, and feeling much better, had expressed the desire to wait for Myshkin on the verandah. He had installed himself on the sofa; then Lebedyev had gone down to join him and then all his household — that is, his daughters and General Ivolgin. Burdovsky had come with Ippolit, to bring him. Ganya and Ptitsyn seemed to have called in later, as they passed by, at about the time of the incident in the gardens. Then Keller had turned up, told them it was Myshkin's birthday, and asked for champagne. Yevgeny Pavlovitch had only arrived half an hour ago. Kolya

too had insisted vigorously on their bringing champagne and celebrating the occasion. Lebedyev had readily produced the wine.

“But my own! My own!” he murmured to Myshkin. “At my own expense, to celebrate your birthday and congratulate you; and there’ll be some supper, some light refreshments, my daughter is seeing to that. But, prince, if only you knew the subject they’re discussing! Do you remember in ‘Hamlet,”to be or not to be’? The subject of the day! Questions and answers.. .. And Mr. Terentyev’s at the utmost pitch. . . . He won’t go to bed! And he’s only had a sip of the champagne; it won’t hurt him. . . . Come along, prince, you settle it! They’ve all been waiting for you, all been waiting foryour happy wit....”

Myshkin met the sweet and kindly eyes of Vera Lebedyev, who was also trying to get to him through the crowd. Passing over the rest, he held out his hand first to her. She flushed with pleasure, and wished him “a happy life from that day fomard.” Then she rushed full speed to the kitchen; there she was preparing some supper. But even before Myshkin had arrived — whenever she could tear herself for a minute from her work — she had run out to the verandah and listened, all ears, to the heated discussion that never paused among the exhilarated guests concerning subjects of the most abstract nature, mysterious to her. Her open-mouthed younger sister was asleep on a chest in the next room; but the boy, Lebedyev’s son, was standing by Kolya and Ippolit, and the look on his eager face showed that he was ready to stand there, listening and enjoying himself for another ten hours at a stretch.

“I have been waiting particularly to see you, and I’m very glad that you’ve come in such a happy mood,” said Ippolit, when Myshkin went up to shake his hand, immediately after Vera’s.

“How do you know I’m in a happy mood?”

“One can see it from your face. Finish greeting the company and make haste and sit here. I’ve been waiting particularly to see you,” he added, seeming to lay stress on the fact that he had been waiting. In reply to an inquiry from Myshkin whether it were not bad for him to be sitting up so late, he answered that he could not help wondering himself how it was that he had been almost dying three days ago, and yet he had neverfelt better in his life than that evening.

Burdovsky jumped up from his chair and muttered that he “had only brought Ippolit,” and that he was glad; that he had “written nonsense” in his

letter, but now was “simply glad . . .” Without finishing his sentence, he warmly pressed Myshkin’s hand and sat down on a chair.

Last of all Myshkin went up to Yevgeny Pavlovitch; the latter at once took his arm.

“I have a couple of words to say to you,” he whispered, “and about a very important circumstance. Let us move aside for a moment.”

“A couple of words,” whispered another voice in Myshkin’s other ear; and another hand took his arm on the other side.

With surprise Myshkin observed a terribly unkempt figure with a flushed, winking and laughing face, in which he instantly recognized Ferdyshtchenko, who had turned up from goodness knows where.

“Do you remember Ferdyshtchenko?” he asked Myshkin.

“Where have you come from?” cried Myshkin.

“He is sorry,” cried Keller, running up. “He was hiding. He didn’t want to come out to us. He was hiding in the corner there. He’s sorry, prince, he feels himself to blame.”

“But what for? What for?”

“I met him, prince. I met him just now and brought him along. He is one of the rarest men among my friends. But he’s sorry.”

“Delighted, gentlemen; go and sit down with the rest. I’ll come directly,” said Myshkin, getting away at last and hurrying to Yevgeny Pavlovitch.

“It’s very interesting here,” observed the latter. “I’ve enjoyed the half-hour I’ve been waiting for you. Look here, dear Lyov Nikolayevitch, I’ve settled everything with Kurmyshov and I’ve come to set your mind at rest. \bu have no need to be uneasy. He is taking the thing very very sensibly, especially as to my thinking, it was more his fault.”

“What Kurmyshov?”

“Why, the fellow whose arms you held this afternoon. He was so furious that he meant to come to you for an explanation to-morrow.”

“You don’t mean it! What nonsense!”

“Of course it is nonsense, and could only end in nonsense; but these people ...”

“You’ve come about something else, too, perhaps, Yevgeny Pavlovitch?”

“Oh, of course, I have,” replied the other, laughing. “I’m setting off at daybreak to-morrow, dear prince, for Petersburg, about that unhappy business, about my uncle, you know. Would you believe it, it’s all true, and everybody knew it except me. I feel so overwhelmed by it that I haven’t

been able to go to them (the Epanchins). I can’t go to-morrow either, because I shall be in Petersburg. Do you understand? I may not be here for three days perhaps. In short, things are in a bad way with me. Though the matter is of the utmost importance, yet I decided that I must speak quite openly with you about something, and without delay — that is, before I

go. I’ll sit and wait, if you like, till your party has broken up; besides, I’ve nowhere else to go. I’m so excited that I couldn’t go to bed. Moreover, though it’s an unconscionable proceeding, and not at all the thing to pursue a man like this, I tell you straight out, I have come to ask for your friendship, my dear prince. You’re a unique sort of person — that is, you don’t tell a lie at every turn, perhaps not at all, and I want a friend and adviser in a certain matter; for there’s not a doubt I’m one of the unlucky, now....”

He laughed again.

“The trouble is this,” said Myshkin, thinking for an instant. “\bu want to wait till they have gone, but God knows when that will be. Wouldn’t it be better for us to take a walk in the park now? They’ll wait for me, of course; I’ll excuse myself.”

“No, no! I have my own reasons for not letting them suspect that we’re talking apart from some object. There are people here who are very inquisitive about our relations with one another. Don’t you know that, prince? And it will be much better if they see that we are on the most friendly terms without any private understanding. Do you understand? They’ll break up in another two hours; I’ll ask you to give me twenty minutes or half an hour then....”

“By all means, you are very welcome. I am delighted to see you without explanations, and thank you for your kind words about our friendly relations. Pardon me for having been inattentive to-day; do you know, I somehow can’t pay attention just now.”

“I see, I see,” muttered Yevgeny Pavlovitch, with a faint smile.

He was ready to laugh at anything that evening.

“What do you see?” said Myshkin, startled.

“But you don’t suspect, dear prince,” said Yevgeny Pavlovitch, still smiling, and not answering his direct question, “you don’t suspect that I’ve simply come to take you in and, incidentally, to get something out of you, eh?”

“That you have come to get something out of me I have no doubt,” said Myshkin, laughing too at last, “and perhaps you have planned to deceive me a little, too. But what of it? I am not afraid of you. Besides, I somehow don’t mind now. Would you believe it? And . . . and . . . and as I am convinced above all that you’re a splendid fellow, we shall perhaps end by really becoming friends. I like you very much, “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch. \bu are, in my opinion ... a thorough gentleman.”

“Well, anyway, it’s very nice to have to do with you in anything, whatever it may be,” said Yevgeny Pavlovitch in conclusion. “Come, I’ll drink a glass to your health. I’m awfully glad I came to you. Ah!” he stopped suddenly, “that Mr. Ippolit has come to stay with you, hasn’t he?”

“Yes.”

“He isn’t going to die directly, I imagine?”

“Why do you ask?”

“Oh, nothing! I have been spending half an hour with him here....”

Ippolit had been waiting for Myshkin and watching him and “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch all the while they had been talking aside. He became feverishly excited when they came up to the table. He was uneasy and agitated. Sweat stood out on his forehead. In his glittering eyes could be seen a sort of vague impatience, as well as a continual wandering uneasiness. His eyes strayed aimlessly from object to object, from face to face. Though he took a leading part in the noisy general conversation, his excitement was simplv feverishness. He paid little heed to the conversation itself. His arguments were incoherent, ironical and carelessly paradoxical. He broke off in the middle and did not finish what he had begun with fervent heat. To his surprise and regret, Myshkin learnt that he had been allowed without protest that evening to drink two glasses of champagne, and that the glass that stood empty before him was the third. But he learnt this only later; at the moment he was not very observant.

“Do you know I’m awfully glad that your birthday is to-day,” cried Ippolit.

“Why?”

“You’ll see; make haste and sit down. In the first place, because your. . . people have all come here to-night. I’d reckoned there’d be a lot of people; for the first time in my life I’ve been right in my reckoning! It’s a pity I didn’t know it was your birthday. I’d have brought you a present. . . . Ha-ha! But perhaps I have brought you a present! Is it long till daylight?”

“It’s not two hours now to sunrise,” observed Ptitsyn, looking at his watch.

“What need of daylight, when one can read out of doors without it?” remarked some one.

“Because I want to see the sun rise. Can we drink to the health of the sun, prince? What do you think?”

Ippolit spoke abruptly, addressing the whole company unceremoniously, as though he were giving orders, but he was apparently unconscious of doing so himself.

“Let’s drink to it, if you like. Only you ought to keep quieter, Ippolit, oughtn’t you?”

“You’re always for sleep; you might be my nurse, prince! As soon as the sun shows itself and ‘resounds’ in the sky (who was it wrote the verse, ‘the sun resounded in the sky? There’s no sense in it, but it’s good) then we’ll go to bed. Lebedyev, the sun’s the spring of life, isn’t it? What’s the meaning of ‘springs of life’ in the Apocalypse? Have you heard of the ‘star that is called Wormwood,’ prince?”

“I’ve heard that Lebedyev identifies the ‘star that is called Wormwood’ with the network of railways spread over Europe.”

“No, excuse me, that won’t do!” cried Lebedyev, leaping up and waving his arms, as though he were trying to stop the general laughter that followed. “Excuse me! With these gentlemen ... all these gentlemen!” he turned suddenly to Myshkin, “I tell you on certain points, it’s simply this....”

And he rapped the table twice without ceremony, which increased the general mirth.

Though Lebedyev was in his usual “evening” condition, he was on this occasion over-excited and irritated by the long and learned discussion that had taken place, and on such occasions he treated his opponents with undisguised and unbounded contempt.

“That’s not right! Half an hour ago, prince, we made a compact not to interrupt, not to laugh while anyone was speaking, but to leave him free to express himself; and then let the atheists answer him, if they like. We chose the general as president. For else, anyone can be shouted down in a lofty idea, a profound idea....”

“But speak, speak! Nobody is shouting you down,” cried voices.

“Talk, but don’t talk nonsense.”

“What is ‘the star that is called Wormwood’—” asked somebody.

“I haven’t the slightest idea,” answered General Ivolgin, turning with an important air to his former seat as president.

“I’m wonderfully fond of all these arguments and disputations, prince — learned ones, of course,” Keller was muttering meantime, positively fidgeting on his chair with impatience and excitement. “Learned and political,” he added, suddenly and unexpectedly addressing Yevgeny Pavlovitch, who was sitting almost next to him. “Do you know, I’m awfully fond of reading in the papers about the English Parliament. I don’t mean what they discuss (I’m not a politician, you know), but I like the way they speak to one another, and behave like politicians, so to speak: ‘the noble viscount sitting opposite,”the noble earl who is upholding my view,”my honourable opponent who has amazed Europe by his proposal’ — all those expressions, all this parliamentarism of a free people, that’s what’s so fascinating to people like us. I’m enchanted, prince. I’ve always been an artist at the bottom of my soul; I swear I have, Yevgeny Pavlovitch.”

“Why, then,” cried Ganya hotly, in another corner, “it would follow from what you say that railways are a curse, that they are the ruin of mankind, that they are a plaque that has fallen upon the earth to pollute the ‘springs of life’?”

Gavril Ardalionovitch was in a particularly excited state that evening, and in gay, almost triumphant spirits, so Myshkin fancied. He was joking, of course, with Lebedyev, egging him on; but soon he got hot himself.

“Not railways, no,” retorted Lebedyev, who was at the same time losing his temper and enjoying himself tremendously. “The railways alone won’t pollute the ‘springs of life,’ but the whole thing is accursed; the whole tendency of the last few centuries in its general, scientific and materialistic entirety, is perhaps really accursed.”

“Certainly accursed, or only perhaps? It’s important to know that, you know,” queried “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch.

“Accursed, accursed, most certainly accursed!” Lebedyev maintained with heat.

“Don’t be in a hurry, Lebedyev, you’re much milder in the morning,” put in Ptitsyn with a smile.

“But in the evening more open! In the evening more hearty and open!” Lebedyev turned to him warmly. “More open-hearted and definite, more honest and honourable; and although I am exposing my weak side to you, no matter. I challenge you all now, all you atheists. With what will you save

the world, and where have you found a normal line of progress for it, you men of science, of industry, of cooperation, of labour-wage, and all the rest of it? With what? With credit? What's credit? Where will credit take you?"

"Ach! you are inquisitive!" observed Yevgeny Pavlovitch.

"Well, my opinion is that anyone who is not interested in such questions is a fashionable 'chenapan.'"

"But at least it leads to general solidarity and a balance of interests," observed Ptitsyn.

"That's all! That's all! Without recognizing any moral basis except the satisfaction of individual egoism and material necessity! Universal peace, universal happiness, from necessity! Do I understand you right, my dear sir, may I venture to ask?"

"But the universal necessity of living, eating, and drinking, and a complete, scientific in fact, conviction that these necessities are not satisfied without association and solidarity of interests is, I believe, a sufficiently powerful idea to serve as a basis and 'spring of life' for future ages of humanity," observed Ganya, who was excited in earnest.

"The necessity of eating and drinking, that is merely the instinct of self-preservation...."

"But isn't that instinct of self-preservation a sufficient matter? Why, the instinct of self-preservation is the normal law of humanity...."

"Who told you that?" cried Yevgeny Pavlovitch suddenly. "It's a law, that's true; but it's no more normal than the law of destruction, or even self-destruction. Is self-preservation the whole normal law of mankind?"

"A-ha!" cried Ippolit, turning quickly to Yevgeny Pavlovitch and scrutinising him with wild curiosity; but seeing that he was laughing, he too laughed, nudged Kolya who was standing beside him, and asked him again what o'clock it was, and even took hold of Kolya's silver watch himself and looked eagerly at the hands. Then, as though forgetting everything, he stretched himself on the sofa, placed his arms behind his head, and stared at the ceiling; half a minute later, he sat down aqain at the table,

drawing himself up, and listening to the babble of Lebedyev, who was intensely excited.

"An artful and ironical idea, insidious as a larding-needle!" Lebedyev greedily caught up Yevgeny Pavlovitch's paradox; "an idea expressed with the object of provoking opponents to battle — but a true idea! For you, a worldly scoffer and cavalry officer (though not without brains), are not

yourself aware how true and profound your idea is. “Vfes, sir, the law of self-destruction and the law of self-preservation are equally strong in humanity! The devil has equal dominion over humanity till the limit of time which we know not. You laugh? You don’t believe in the devil? Disbelief in the devil is a French idea, a frivolous idea. Do you know who the devil is? Do you know his name? Without even knowing his name, you laugh at the form of him, following Voltaire’s example, at his hoofs, at his tail, at his horns, which you have invented; for the evil spirit is a mighty menacing spirit, but he has not the hoofs and horns you’ve invented for him. But he’s not the point now.”

“How do you know that he’s not the point now?” cried Ippolit suddenly, and laughed as though in hysterics.

“A shrewd and insinuating thought!” Lebedyev approved. “But, again, that’s not the point. Our question is whether the ‘springs of life’ have not grown weaker with the increase of...”

“Railways?” cried Kolya.

“Not railway communication, young but impetuous youth, but all that tendency of which railways may serve, so to speak, as the artistic pictorial expression. They hurry with noise, clamour and haste, for the happiness of humanity, they tell us. ‘Mankind has grown too noisy and commercial; there is little spiritual peace,’ one secluded thinker has complained. ‘So be it; but the rumble of the waggons that bring bread to starving humanity is better, maybe, than spiritual peace,’ another thinker, who is always moving among his fellows, answers him triumphantly, and walks away from him conceitedly. But, vile as I am, I don’t believe in the waggons that bring bread to humanity. For the waggons that bring bread to humanity, without any moral basis for conduct, may coldly exclude a considerable part of humanity from enjoying what is brought; so it has been already....”

“The waggons can coldly exclude?” some one repeated.

“And so it has been already,” repeated Lebedyev, not deigning to notice the question. “We’ve already had Malthus, the friend of humanity. But the friend of humanity with shaky moral principles is the devourer of humanity, to say nothing of his conceit; for, wound the vanity of any one of these numerous friends of humanity, and he’s ready to set fire to the world out of petty revenge — like all the rest of us, though, in that, to be fair; like myself, vilest of all, for I might well be the first to bring the fuel and run away myself. But that’s not the point again!”

“What is it, then?”

“You’re boring us.”

“The points lie in what follows, in an anecdote of the past; for I absolutely must tell you a story of ancient times. In our times, and in our country, which I trust you love, gentlemen, as I do, for I am ready to shed the last drop of my blood for...”

“Get on, get on!”

“In our country, as well as in the rest of Europe, widespread and terrible famines visit humanity, as far as they can be reckoned, and as far as I can remember, not oftener now than four times a century, in other words, every twenty-five years. I won’t dispute the exact number, but they are comparatively rare.”

“Compared with what?”

“Compared with the twelfth century, or those near it, before or after. For then, as they write and as writers assert, widespread famines came usually every two years, or at least every three years, so that in such a position of affairs men even had recourse to cannibalism, though they kept it secret. One of these cannibals announced, without being forced to do so, as he was approaching old age, that in the course of his long and needy life he had killed and eaten by himself in dead secret sixty monks and a few infant laymen, a matter of six, but not more. That is extraordinarily few compared with the immense mass of ecclesiastics he had consumed. Grown-up laymen, it appeared, he had never approached with that object.”

“That can’t be true!” cried the president himself, the general, in an almost resentful voice. “I often reason and dispute with him, gentlemen, always about such thinqs; but usually he brinqs forward such absurd stories, that it makes your ears ache, without a shred of probability.”

“General, remember the siege of Kars! And let me tell you, gentlemen, that my story is the unvarnished truth. I will only observe that every reality, even though it has its unalterable laws, is almost always difficult to believe and improbable, and sometimes, indeed, the more real it is the more improbable it is.”

“But could he eat sixty monks?” they asked, laughing round him.

“He didn’t eat them all at once, that’s evident. But if he consumed them in the course of fifteen or twenty years, it is perfectly comprehensible and natural....”

“Natural?”

“Yes, natural,” Lebedyev repeated, with pedantic persistence. “Besides, a Catholic monk is, from his very nature, easily led and inquisitive, and it wouldn’t be hard to lure him into the forest, or to some hidden place, and there to deal with him as aforesaid. But I don’t deny that the number of persons devoured seems excessive to the point of greediness.”

“It may be true, gentlemen,” observed Myshkin suddenly.

Till then he had listened in silence to the disputants and had taken no part in the conversation; he had often joined heartily in the general outbursts of laughter. He was evidently delighted that they were so gay and so noisy; even that they were drinking so much. He might perhaps not have uttered a word the whole evening, but suddenly he seemed moved to speak. He spoke with marked gravity, so that every one turned to him at once with interest.

“What I mean, gentlemen, is, that famines used to be frequent. I have heard of that, though I know little history. But I think they must have been. When I was among the Swiss mountains I was surprised at the ruins of feudal castles, built on the mountain slopes or precipitous rocks at least half a mile high (which means some miles of mountain path). You know what a castle is: a perfect mountain of stones. They must have meant an awful, incredible labour. And, of course, they were all built by the poor people, the vassals. Besides which, they had to pay all the taxes and support the priesthood. How could they provide for themselves and till the land? They must have been few in number at that time; they died off terribly from famine, and there may have been literally nothing to eat. I’ve sometimes wondered, indeed, how it was that the people didn’t become extinct altogether; how it was that nothing happened to them, and how they managed to endure it and survive. No doubt Lebedyev is right in saying that there were cannibals, and perhaps many of them; only I don’t understand why he brought monks into the story, and what he means by that.”

“Probably because in the twelfth century it was only the monks who were fit to eat, because they were the only people that were fat,” observed Gavril Ardalionovitch.

“A magnificent and true idea!” cried Lebedyev, “seeing he didn’t touch laymen — not one layman to sixty ecclesiastics; and that’s a frightful thought, an historical thought, a statistical thought indeed, and such facts make history for one who understands. For it follows with arithmetical exactitude that the ecclesiastics lived at least sixty times as happily and

comfortably as all the rest of mankind at that period. And perhaps they were at least sixty times as fat. . .

“An exaggeration! An exaggeration, Lebedyev!” they all laughed.

“I agree that is an historical thought; but what are you leading up to?” Myshkin inquired again. (He spoke with such gravity and so absolutely without mocking or jeering at Lebedyev, at whom all the rest were laughing, that in contrast with the general tone his words could not help sounding comic. They were almost on the verge of laughing at him, but he did not notice it.)

“Don’t you see, prince, that he’s a madman?” said “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, bending down to him. “I was told here just now that he’s mad on being a lawyer and making lawyers’ speeches, and wants to go in for an examination. I’m expecting a glorious burlesque.”

“I am leading up to vast issues,” Lebedyev was roaring meanwhile. “But let us first of all analyse the psychological and legal position of the criminal. We see that the criminal, or, as I might call him, my client, in spite of the impossibility of finding any other comestible, several times in the course of his interesting career, showed signs of a desire to repent and shun the clergy. We see this clearly from the facts. It will be remembered that he did at anv rate consume five or six infants — a number relatively insignificant, yet remarkable from another point of view. It is evident that, tormented by terrible pangs of conscience (for my client is a religious man and conscientious, as I shall prove later), and to minimise his sin as far as possible, he, by way of experiment, changed his diet from the clergy to the laity. That it was by way of experiment is beyond doubt again; for had it been simply for the sake of gastronomic variety, the number six would be too insignificant. Why only six? Why not thirty? (Half of one and half of the other.) But if it were only an experiment, arising simply from despair and the fear of sacrilege, and of offending the church, the number six becomes quite intelligible; for six attempts to appease the pangs of conscience are more than enough, as the attempts could not but be unsuccessful. And in the first place, in my opinion, an infant is too small — that is, insufficient, so that he would need three times or five times as many infant laymen for the same period of time as one ecclesiastic. So that the sin, though less on the one side, would be greater on the other — not in quality, but in quantity. In this reflection, gentlemen,

I am of course entering into the feelings of a criminal of the twelfth century. As for me, a man of the nineteenth century, I should have reasoned differently, I beg to inform you; so you need not grin at me, gentlemen, and it's not at all the thing for you to do, general. In the second place, an infant, in my opinion, would be not sufficiently nutritious, and perhaps too sweet and mawkish; so that his appetite would be unsatisfied, while the pangs of conscience would remain. Now for the conclusion, the finale, gentlemen, in which lies the solution of one of the greatest questions of that age and of this! The criminal ends by going and giving information against himself to the clergy and gives himself up to the authorities. One wonders what tortures awaited him in that age — the wheel, the stake and the fire. Who was it urged him to go and inform against himself? Why not simply stop short at sixty and keep the secret till his dying breath? Why not simply relinquish the clergy and live in penitence as a hermit? Why not, indeed, enter a monastery himself? Here is the solution. There must have been something stronger than stake and fire, stronger even than the habit of twenty years! There must have been an idea stronger than any misery, famine, torture, plague, leprosy, and all that hell, which mankind could not have endured without that idea, which bound men together, guided their hearts, and fructified the 'springs of life.' Show me anything like such a force in our age of vices and railways. ... I should say of steamers and railways, but I say vices and railways, because I'm drunk but truthful. Show me any idea binding mankind together to-day with anything like the power it had in those centuries. And dare to tell me that the 'springs of life' have not been weakened and muddied beneath the 'star,' beneath the network in which men are enmeshed. And don't try to frighten me with your prosperity, your wealth, the infrequency of famine, and the rapidity of the means of communication. There is more wealth, but there is less strength. There is no uniting idea; everything has grown softer, everything is limp, and everyone is limp! We've all, all of us grown limp. . . . But that's enough. That's not the point now. The point is, honoured prince, whether we shouldn't see to getting the supper, that's being prepared for your visitors."

Lebedyev had roused several of his hearers to positive indignation. (It must be noted that corks were being drawn incessantly all the time.) But his unexpected reference to supper conciliated all his opponents at once. He called such a conclusion "a smart, lawyer-like wind-up." Good-humoured

laughter rang out again, the guests grew more festive, and they all got up from the table to stretch their legs and take a turn on the verandah. Only Keller was still displeased with Lebedyev's speech, and was much excited.

"He attacks enlightenment and upholds the bigotry of the twelfth century. He's attitudinizing; it's not through simple-heartedness. How did he himself come by this house, allow me to ask?" he said aloud, appealing to each and all.

"I used to know a real interpreter of the Apocalypse," the general was saying in another corner to another group of listeners, among them Ptitsyn, whom he had buttonholed— "the late Grigory Semyonovitch Burmistrov. He used to make your heart glow. First, he'd put on his spectacles, and open a big old book in a black leather binding, and he'd a grey beard and two medals in recognition of his munificent charities. He used to beqin sternlvand severely. Generals would bow down before him, and ladies fell into swoons. But this fellow winds up with supper! It's beyond anything."

Ptitsyn listened to the general, smiled, and made towards his hat, as though meaning to go, but seemed to be undecided, or to have forgotten his intention. Ganya had left off drinking and pushed away his glass even before they got up from the table. A shade of gloom came over his face. When they rose from the table, he went up to Rogozhin and sat down beside him. They might have been supposed to be on the friendliest terms. Rogozhin, who had also at first been several times on the point of getting up and slipping away, sat now motionless with his head bowed. He too seemed to have forgotten his intention. He had not drunk a drop of wine all the evening, and was very thoughtful. From time to time he raised his eyes and gazed at every one. It might have been supposed that he was expecting something of great importance to him and had made up his mind to wait for it.

Myshkin had drunk no more than two or three glasses, and was only light-hearted. As he rose from the table, he caught the eye of Yevgeny Pavlovitch. He remembered the explanation they were to have, and smiled cordially. Yevgeny Pavlovitch nodded to him and indicated Ippolit, whom he was intently watching at the moment. Ippolit was asleep at full length on the sofa.

"Tell me, prince, why has this wretched boy forced himself upon you?" he asked suddenly, with such undisguised annoyance and even malice, that Myshkin was surprised. "I'll bet he's got some mischief in his mind!"

“I have noticed,” said Myshkin, “I have fancied, at any rate, that he is in your thoughts a great deal today, Yevgeny Pavlovitch, isn’t he?”

“And you may say too I’ve enough to think about in my own position, so that I’m surprised myself at not being able to get away from that detestable countenance all the evening.”

“He has a handsome face....”

“Look, look!” cried “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, pulling Myshkin by the arm. “Look! ...”

Myshkin gazed at Yevgeny Pavlovitch with wonder again.

CHAPTER 5

Ippolit, who had suddenly fallen asleep on the sofa, towards the end of Lebedyev's harangue, now as suddenly waked up, as though some one had poked him in the ribs.

He started, sat up, looked round him, and turned pale; he seemed to gaze about him as it were in alarm. There was almost a look of horror on his face when he remembered everything and reflected.

"What, are they going? Is it over? Is it all over? Has the sun risen?" he kept asking in agitation, clutching Myshkin's hand. "What's the time? For God's sake, what's the time? I've overslept myself. Have I been asleep long?" he added, with an almost desperate air, as though he had missed something on which his whole fate at least depended.

"You've been asleep seven or eight minutes," answered Yevgeny Pavlovitch.

Ippolit looked greedily at him and reflected for some moments.

"Ah ... That's all! Then I...."

And he drew a deep, eager breath, as though casting off some heavy weight. He realised at last that nothing "was over," that it was not yet daybreak, that the guests had got up from the table only on account of supper, and that Lebedyev's chatter was the only thing that was over. He smiled and a hectic flush came out in two bright spots on his cheeks.

"And you've been counting the minutes while I was asleep, "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch," he commented, ironically. "\bu couldn't tear yourself away from me all the evening, I've seen that. Ah, Rogozhin! I was dreaming about him just now," he whispered to Myshkin, frowning, and nodding towards Rogozhin, who was sitting at the table. "Ah, yes!" he flew off to another subject, "where's the orator? Where's Lebedyev? Has he finished then? What was he talking about? Is it true, prince, that you said once that 'beauty" would save the world? Gentlemen!" he shouted loudly, addressing the whole company, "the prince asserts that beauty will save the world! But I assert that the reason he has such playful ideas is that he is in love; I was certain of it when he came in just now. Don't blush, prince, it makes me sorry for you. What sort of beauty will save the world? Kolya told me.. .. Are you a zealous Christian? Kolya says that you say you're a Christian yourself."

Myshkin looked at him attentively and made no answer.

“You don’t answer? Perhaps you think I’m very fond of you?” Ippolit added suddenly, abruptly.

“No, I don’t think so. I know you don’t like me.”

“What, after yesterday? Was I honest with you yesterday?”

“I knew yesterday that you didn’t like me.”

“Is that because I envy . . . envy you? You always thought that and think so still, but . . . but why do I speak of that to you? I want some more champagne; pour some out, Keller.”

“You mustn’t drink any more, Ippolit, I won’t let you.

And Myshkin moved away the glass.

“You’re right,” he agreed immediately, as it were, dreamily. “Maybe they’ll say ... it doesn’t matter a damn to me what they say? . .. does it? Does it? Let them say so afterwards, eh, prince? What does it matter to any of us what happens aftemards? But I’m half asleep. What an awful dream I had, I’ve only just remembered it. I don’t wish you such a dream, prince, though perhaps I really don’t like you. But why should one wish a man harm, even if one doesn’t like him, eh? How is it I keep asking questions — I keep asking questions? Give me your hand; I’ll press it warmly, like this. . . . You hold out your hand to me, though! So you know that I shall shake hands sincerely. I won’t drink any more if you like. What time is it? But you needn’t tell me, I know what time it is. The hour has come! Now is the very time. Why are they laying supper over there, in the corner? This table is free, then? Good! Gentlemen, I . . . But all these gentlemen are not listening ... I intend to read an essay, prince; supper, of course, is more interesting, but...”

And suddenly, quite unexpectedly, he pulled out of his breast-pocket a large envelope, sealed with a large red seal. He laid it on the table before him.

This unexpected action produced a sensation in the company, who were unprepared for it, and were by now far from sober, “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch positively started up on his chair. Ganya moved quickly to the table; Rogozhin did the same, but with a sort of peevish vexation, as though he understood what was coming. Lebedyev, who happened to be close by, came up with inquisitive eyes and stared at the envelope, trying to guess what it meant.

“What have you there?” Myshkin asked, uneasily.

“At the first peep of sunshine I shall go to rest, prince. I’ve said so; on my honour, you shall see!” cried Ippolit. “But... but... Do you imagine that I’m not capable of breaking open that envelope?” he added, turning his eyes from one to another, with a sort of challenge, and apparently addressing all without distinction.

Myshkin noticed that he was trembling all over.

“None of us imagine such a thing,” Myshkin answered for all. “And why should you suppose that anyone thinks so? And what. . . what a strange idea to read to us? What have you there, Ippolit?”

“What is it?”

“What’s happened to him now?” they were asking on all hands.

All the party came up, some of them still eating.

The envelope with the red seal drew them all like a magnet.

“I wrote it yesterday, myself, directly after I’d promised I would come to live with you, prince. I was writing it all day yesterday, and all night, and finished it this morning; in the night, towards morning, I had a dream.”

“Wouldn’t it be better to-morrow?” Myshkin interposed timidly.

“To-morrow there will be ‘no more time,’” Ippolit laughed hysterically. “But don’t be uneasy. I’ll read it in forty minutes, or, well — an hour. . . . And see how interested they all are; they’ve all come up, they’re all staring at my seal, and if I hadn’t sealed the article up in an envelope, there’d have been no sensation! Ha-ha! You see what mystery does! Shall I break the seal or not, gentlemen?” he shouted, laughing his strange laugh, and staring at them with glittering eyes. “A secret! A secret! And do you remember, prince, who proclaimed that there will be ‘no more time’? It was proclaimed by the great and mighty angel in the Apocalypse.”

“Better not read it!”

“Vfevgeny Pavlovitch cried suddenly, but with a look of uneasiness so unexpected in him that it struck many persons as strange.

“Don’t read it,” cried Myshkin, too, laying his hand on the envelope.

“Why read? It’s time for supper now,” observed some one.

“An article? A magazine article?” inquired another.

“Dull, perhaps,” added a third.

“What’s it all about?” inquired the rest.

But Myshkin’s timid gesture seemed to have intimidated Ippolit himself.

“So ... I’m not to read it?” he whispered to him, almost apprehensively, with a wry smile on his blue lips, “not to read it?” he muttered, scanning his

whole audience, all their eyes and faces, and as it were catching at them all again, with the same aggressive effusiveness. “Are you ... afraid?” he turned again to Myshkin.

“What of?” asked the latter, his face changing more and more.

“Has any one got a twenty-kopeck piece?” Ippolit leapt up from his chair as though he had been pulled up. “Oranvcoin?”

“Here you are,” Lebedyev gave it him at once.

The idea occurred to him that the invalid had gone out of his mind.

“Vera Lukyanovna!” Ippolit hurriedly begged her, “take it, throw it on the table — heads or tails? Heads — I read it!”

Vera looked in alarm at the coin, at Ippolit, and then at her father, and awkwardly throwing back her head, as though she felt she ought not to look at the coin, she tossed it. It came up heads.

“I read it!” whispered Ippolit, as though crushed by the decision of destiny. He could not have turned more pale, if he had heard his death sentence.

“But,” he started suddenly, after half a minute’s silence, “what? Can I really have tossed up?” With the same appealing frankness he scrutinised the whole circle. “But, you know, that’s an amazing psychological fact!” he cried suddenly, addressing Myshkin in genuine astonishment. “It’s . . . it’s an incredible fact, prince,” he repeated, reviving, and seeming to recover himself. “\bu must make a note of this, prince, remember it, for I believe you are collecting facts relating to capital punishment.... I’ve been told so, ha-ha! Oh, my God, what senseless absurdity!”

He sat down on the sofa, put his elbows on the table, and clutched at his head. “Why, it’s positively shameful! But what the devil do I care if it is shameful!” he raised his head almost at once. “Gentlemen, gentlemen! I will break the seal of my envelope!” he declared, with sudden determination. “I... I don’t compel you to listen though!”

With hands trembling with excitement he opened the envelope, took out several sheets of notepaper covered with small handwriting, put them before him, and began to arrange them.

“What is it? What’s the matter? What’s he going to read?” some people muttered gloomily; others were silent.

But they all sat down and stared inquisitively. Perhaps they really did expect something unusual. Vera caught hold of her father’s chair, and was almost crying with fright. Kolya was hardly less alarmed. Lebedyev, who

had already sat down, rose and moved the candles nearer to Ippolit to give him more light.

“Gentlemen, this . . . you’ll see directly what it is,”

Ippolit added for some reason, and he suddenly began reading: ‘“An essential explanation! Motto: apres moi le deluge.’ Foo! damn it!” he cried out, as though he had been scalded. “Can I seriously have written such a stupid motto? . . . Listen, gentlemen! . . . I assure you that all this is perhaps after all the most fearful nonsense! It’s only some thoughts of mine. ... If you think there’s anything mysterious about it... anything prohibited ... in fact....”

“If you’d only read it without a preface!” interrupted Ganya.

“It’s affectation!” some one added.

“There’s too much talk,” put in Rogozhin, who had been silent till then.

Ippolit suddenly looked at him, and when their eyes met, Rogozhin gave a bitter and morose grin, and slowly pronounced a strange sentence.

“It’s not the way to set about this business, lad, it’s not the way....”

No one, of course, knew what Rogozhin meant, but his words made rather a strange impression on every one; every one seemed to catch a passing glimpse of a common idea. On Ippolit these words made a terrible impression; he trembled so much that Myshkin put out his arm to support him, and he would certainly have cried out but that his voice failed him. For a whole minute he could not speak, and stared at Rogozhin, breathing painfully. At last, gasping for breath, with an immense effort he articulated:

“So it was you ... you ... it was you?”

“What was I? What about me?” answered Rogozhin, amazed.

But Ippolit, firing up and suddenly seized almost with fury, shouted violently:

“You were in my room last week at night, past one o’clock, on the day I had been to you in the morning, you? Confess, it was you.”

“Last week, at night? Have you gone clean out of your senses, lad.”

The “lad” was silent again for a minute, putting his forefinger to his forehead, and seeming to reflect. But there was a gleam of something sly, almost triumphant, in his pale smile that was still distorted by fear.

“It was you!” he repeated, almost in a whisper, but with intense conviction. “You came to me and sat in my room without speaking, on the chair by the window, for a whole hour; more, between twelve and two o’clock at night. Then afterwards, between two and three, you got up and

walked out. ... It was you, it was you! Why did you frighten me. Why did you come to torment me? I don’t understand it, but it was you.”

And there was a sudden flash of intense hatred in his eyes, though he was still trembling with fear.

“You shall know all about it directly, gentlemen ... I ... I... listen....”

Once more, and with desperate haste, he clutched at the sheets of paper. They had slipped and fallen apart. He attempted to put them together. They shook in his shaking hands. It was a long time before he could get them right.

“He’s gone mad, or delirious,” muttered Rogozhin, almost inaudibly.

The reading began at last. At the beginning, for the first five minutes, the author of the unexpected article still gasped for breath, and read jerkily and incoherently; but as he went on his voice grew stronger and began to express the sense of what he was reading. But he was sometimes interrupted by a violent fit of coughing; before he was half way through the article, he was very hoarse. His feverish excitement, which grew greater and greater as he read, reached an intense pitch at last, and so did the painful impression on his audience. Here is the whole article:

“An Essential Explanation.”

“Apres moi le deluge!”

“The prince was here yesterday morning. Among other things he persuaded me to move to his villa. I knew that he would insist upon this, and felt sure that he would blurt straight out that it would be ‘easier to die among people and trees,’ as he expresses it. But to-day, he did not say ‘die,’ but said ‘it will be easier to live,’ which comes to much the same thing, however, in my position. I asked him what he meant by his everlasting ‘trees,’ and why he keeps pestering me with those ‘trees,’ and learnt to my surprise that I had myself said on that evening that I’d come to Pavlovsk to look at the trees for the last time. When I told him I should die just the same,

looking at trees, or looking out of my window at brick walls, and that there was no need to make a fuss about a fortnight, he agreed at once; but the greenness and the fresh air will be sure, according to him, to produce a physical change in me, and my excitement and my dreams will be affected and perhaps relieved. I told him again, laughing, that he spoke like a materialist. He answered with his smile that he had always been a materialist. As he never tells a lie, that saying means something. He has a

nice smile; I have examined him carefully now. I don’t know whether I like him or not; I haven’t time now to bother about it. The hatred I have felt for him for five months has begun to go off this last month, I must observe. Who knows, maybe I came to Pavlovsk chiefly to see him. But . . . why did I leave my room then? A man condemned to death ought not to leave his corner. And if I had not now taken my final decision, but had intended to linger on till the last minute, nothing would have induced me to leave my room, and I should not have accepted his invitation to go to him, to die in Pavlovsk. I must make haste and finish this ‘explanation’ before to-morrow, anyway. So I shan’t have time to read it over and correct it. I shall read it over to-morrow, when I’m going to read it to the prince and two or three witnesses, whom I mean to find there. Since there will not be one word of falsehood in it, but everything is the simple truth, the last and solemn truth, I feel curious to know what impression it will make on myself, at the hour and minute when I shall read it over. I was wrong in writing, though, that it was the ‘last and solemn truth’; it’s not worth telling lies for a fortnight, anyway, for it’s not worth while living a fortnight. That’s the best possible proof that I shall write nothing but the truth. (N.B. — Not to forget the thought: am I not mad at this minute, or rather these minutes? I was told positively that in the last stage consumptives sometimes go out of their minds for a time. Must verify this to-morrow from the impression made on my audience. I must settle that question absolutely, or else I cannot act.)

“I believe I have just written something awfully stupid; but as I said, I’ve no time to correct it; besides, I’ve promised myself on purpose not to correct one line in this manuscript, even if I notice that I contradict myself every five lines. What I want to decide after the readinq to-morrow is iust whether the logical sequence of my ideas is correct; whether I notice my mistakes, and therefore whether all I have thought over in this room for the last six months is true, or delirium.

“If I had had to leave my rooms two months ago and say good-bye to Meyer’s wall, I’m certain I should have been sorry. But now I feel nothing, yet tomorrow I am leaving my room and the wall for ever! So my conviction, that a fortnight is not worth regretting or feeling anything about, has mastered my whole nature, and can dictate to my feelings. But is it true? Is it true that my nature is completely vanquished now? If somebody began torturing me now, I should certainly begin to scream, and I shouldn’t say

that it was not worth while screaming and feeling pain, because I only had a fortnight more to live.

“But is it true that I have only a fortnight left to live,

not more? I told a lie that day at Pavlovsk. B-n told me nothing, and never saw me; but a week ago they brought me a student called Kislorodov; by his convictions he is a materialist, an atheist, and a nihilist, that’s why I sent for him. I wanted a man to tell me the naked truth at last, without any softening or ado about it. And so he did, and not only readily and without any fuss, but with obvious satisfaction (which was going too far to my thinking). He blurted out that I had about a month left to live, perhaps a little more, if my circumstances were favourable, but I may die much sooner. In his opinion I might die suddenly, for instance, to-morrow. There are such cases. Only the day before yesterday in Kolumna a young lady, in consumption, whose condition was similar to mine, was just starting for the market to buy provisions, when she suddenly felt ill, lay down on the sofa, uttered a sigh and died. All this Kislorodov told me with a sort of jauntiness, carelessly and unfeelingly, as though he were doing me an honour by it, that is, as though showing me that he takes me, too, for the same sort of utterly sceptical superior creature, as himself, who, of course, cares nothing about dying. Anyway, the fact is authenticated; a month and no more! I am quite sure he’s not mistaken.

“I wondered very much how the prince guessed that I had ‘bad dreams.’ He used those very words, that in Pavlovsk ‘my excitement and dreams’ would change. And why dreams? He’s either a doctor, or exceptionally intelligent, and able to see things. (But that he is, after all is said and done, an ‘idiot’ there can be no doubt.) Just before he came in, I had, as though purposely, a pretty dream (though, as a matter of fact I have hundreds of dreams like that, now). I fell asleep — I believe about an hour before he came in — and dreamt that I was in a room, but not my own. The room was larger and loftier than mine, better furnished, and lighter. There was a wardrobe, a chest of drawers, a sofa, and my bed, which was big and broad and covered with a green silk quilted counterpane. But in the room I noticed an awful animal, a sort of monster. It was like a scorpion, but was not a scorpion, it was more disgusting, and much more horrible, and it seemed it was so, just because there was nothing like it in nature, and that it had come expressly to me, and that there seemed to be something mysterious in that. I examined it very carefully: it was brown, and was covered with shell, a

crawling reptile, seven inches long, two fingers thick at the head, and tapering down to the tail, so that the point of the tail was only about the sixth of an inch thick. Almost two inches from the head, at an angle of forty-five degrees to the body, grew two legs, one on each side, nearly four inches long, so that the whole creature was in the shape of a trident, if looked at from above. I couldn't make out the head but I saw two whiskers, short, and also brown, looking like two strong needles. There were two whiskers of the same sort at the end of the tail, and at the end of each of the legs, making eight whiskers in all. The beast was running about the room, very quickly, on its legs and its tail, and, when it ran, the body and legs wriggled like little snakes, with extraordinary swiftness in spite of its shell, and that was very horrible to look at. I was awfully afraid it would sting me; I had been told it was poisonous, but what worried me most of all was the question who had sent it into my room, what they meant to do to me, and what was the secret of it? It hid under the chest of drawers, under the cupboard, crawled into corners. I sat on a chair, and drew my legs up under me. It ran quickly right across the room and disappeared near my chair. I looked about in terror, but as I sat with my legs curled up I hoped that it would not crawl up the chair. Suddenly I heard behind me, almost at my head, a sort of scraping rustle. I looked round, and saw that the reptile was crawling up the wall, and was already on a level with my head and was positively touching my hair with its tail, which was twirling and wriggling with extraordinary rapidity. I sprang up, and the creature disappeared. I was afraid to lie down on the bed for fear it should creep under the pillow. My mother came into the room with some friend of hers. They began trying to catch the creature, but were cooler than I was, and were not, in fact, afraid of it. But they didn't understand. Suddenly the reptile crawled out again. It seemed to have some special design and crawled, this time very slowly, across the room towards the door, wriggling slowly, which was more revolting than ever. Then, my mother opened the door and called Norma, our dog — a huge, shaggy, black Newfoundland; it died five years ago. It rushed into the room and stopped short before the reptile. The creature stopped too, but still wriggled and scraped the ground with its paws and tail. Animals cannot feel terror of the mysterious, unless I'm mistaken, but at that moment it seemed to me that there was something very extraordinary in Norma's terror, as though there were something uncanny in it,

as though the dog too felt that there was something ominous, some mystery in it. She moved back slowly facing the reptile, which crept slowly and cautiously towards her, it seemed meaning to dart at her, and sting her. But in spite of her fear, Norma looked very fierce, though she was trembling all over. All at once she slowly bared her terrible teeth and opened her huge red jaws, crouched, prepared for a spring, made up her mind, and suddenly seized the creature with her teeth. The reptile must have struggled to slip away, so that Norma caught it once more as it was escaping, and twice over got it full in her jaws, seeming to gobble it up as it ran. Its shell cracked between her teeth, the tail and legs hanging out of the mouth moved at a tremendous rate. All at once Norma gave a piteous squeal: the reptile had managed to sting her tongue. Whining and yelping she opened her mouth from the pain, and I saw that the creature, though bitten in two, was still wriggling in her mouth, and was emitting, from its crushed body, on to the dog's tongue, a quantity of white fluid such as comes out of a squashed black-beetle. . . . Then I waked up and the prince came in.

"Gentlemen," said Ippolit, suddenly breaking off from his reading, and seeming almost ashamed, "I haven't read this over, but I believe I have really written a great deal that's superfluous. That dream. .

"That's true enough," Ganya hastened to put in.

"There's too much that's personal in it, I must own, that is, about myself...."

As he said this, Ippolit had a weary and exhausted air, and wiped the sweat off his forehead with his handkerchief.

"Yes, you're too much interested in yourself," hissed Lebedyev.

"I don'tforce anyone, let me say again, gentlemen. If anyone doesn't want to hear, he can go away."

"He turns them out ... of another man's house," Rogozhin grumbled, hardly audibly.

"And how if we all get up and go away?" said Ferdyshtchenko suddenly. He had till then not ventured to speak aloud.

Ippolit dropped his eyes suddenly and clutched his manuscript. But at the same second he raised his head again, and with flashing eyes and two patches of red on his cheeks, he said, looking fixedly at Ferdyshtchenko:

"You don't like me at all."

There was laughter; most of the party did not laugh, however. Ippolit flushed horribly.

“Ippolit,” said Myshkin, “fold up your manuscript and give it to me, and go to bed here in my room. We’ll talk before you go to sleep, and to-morrow; but on condition that you never open these pages. Will you?”

“Is that possible?” Ippolit looked at him in positive amazement. “Gentlemen!” he cried, growing feverishly excited again, “this is a stupid episode, in which I haven’t known how to behave. I won’t interrupt the reading again. If anyone wants to listen, let him.”

He took a hurried gulp of water from the glass, hurriedly put his elbows on the table to shield his face from their eyes, and went on, obstinately reading. But his shame soon passed off.

“The idea,” he went on, “that it’s not worth while to live a few weeks began to come over me really, I fancy, a month ago, when I had four weeks to live; but it only took complete possession of me three days ago, when I came back from that evening at Pavlovsk. The first moment that I fully directly grasped that thought was on the prince’s verandah, at the instant when I was meaning to make a last trial of life, when I wanted to see people and trees (granted I said that myself), when I got excited, insisted on the rights of Burdovsky ‘my neighbour,’ and dreamed that they would all fling wide their arms, and clasp me in them, and beg my forgiveness for something, and I theirs; in short, I behaved like a stupid fool. And it was at that time that a ‘last conviction’ sprang up in me. I wondered how I could have lived for six months without that conviction! I knew for a fact that I had consumption and it was incurable. I didn’t deceive myself, and understood the case clearly. But the more clearly I understood it, the more feverishly I longed to live: I clutched at life, I wanted to live, whatever happened. Admitting that I might well have resented the dark and obscure lot which was to crush me like a fly, and, of course, with no reason, yet why couldn’t I have stopped at resentment? Why did I actually begin living, knowing that I couldn’t begin it now? Why did I try it, knowing that it was useless for me to try anything? And yet I could not even read, and gave up books. What use to read, what use to learn for six months? More than once that thought drove me to fling aside a book.

“Yes, that wall of Meyer’s could tell a story! I have written a great deal on it. There isn’t a spot on that filthy wall which I haven’t studied. Cursed

wall! And yet it’s dearer to me than all the trees of Pavlovsk, that is, it would be dearer than all, if everything were not all the same to me now.

“I remember now with what greedy interest I began, at that time, watching their life: I had had no such interest in the past. I used to look forward with cursing and impatience to seeing Kolya, when I was too ill to go out myself. I pried into every detail, and was so interested in every rumour that I believe I became a regular gossip. I couldn’t understand, for instance, why people who had so much life before them did not become rich (and, indeed, I don’t understand it now). I knew one poor fellow, who, I was told afterwards, died of hunger, and I remember that it made me furious: if it had been possible to bring the poor devil back to life, I believe I’d have had him executed. I was sometimes better for weeks at a time and able to go out of doors; but the street exasperated me at last to such a degree that I purposely sat indoors for days together, though I could have gone out like anyone else. I couldn’t endure the scurrying, bustling people, everlastingly dreary, worried and preoccupied, flitting to and fro about me on the pavement. Why their everlasting gloom, uneasiness, and bustle, their everlasting sullen spite (for they are spiteful, spiteful, spiteful). Whose fault is it that they are miserable and don’t know how to live, though they’ve sixty years of life before them? Why did Zarnitzyn let himself die of hunger when he had sixty years of life before him? And each one points to his rags, his toil-worn hands, and cries savagely: ‘We toil like cattle, we labour, we are poor and hungry as dogs! Others don’t toil, and don’t labour, and they are rich!’ (The everlasting story!) Among them, running and struggling from morning to night, is some miserable sniveller like Ivan Fomitch Surikov ‘a gentleman born’ — he lives in our block over my head — always out at elbows, with his buttons dropping off, running errands, and taking messages for all sorts of people, from morning till night. Talk to him — he’s poor, destitute, starving, his wife died, he couldn’t buy medicine for her, his baby was frozen to death in the winter; his elder daughter is a ‘kept mistress’ . . . he’s for ever whimpering and complaining. Oh, I’ve never felt the least, the least pity for these fools, and I don’t now — I say so with pride! Why isn’t he a Rothschild? Whose fault is it that he hasn’t millions, like Rothschild, that he hasn’t a heap of golden imperials and napoleon-d’ors, a perfect mountain, as high as the mounds made in carnival week? If he’s alive he has everything in his power! Whose fault is it he doesn’t understand that?

“Oh, now I don’t care, now I’ve no time to be angry, but then, then I repeat, I literally gnawed my pillow at night and tore my quilt with rage. Oh, how I used to dream then, how I longed to be turned out into the street at eighteen, almost without clothing, almost without covering, to be deserted and utterly alone, without lodging, without work, without a crust of bread, without relations, without one friend in a great town, hungry, beaten (so much the better) but healthy — and then I would show them....

“What would I show?

“Oh, no doubt you think I don’t know how I’ve humilated myself as it is by my ‘Explanation’! Oh, every one of course will look upon me as a sniveller who knows nothing of life, forgetting that I’m not eighteen now, forgetting that to live as I have lived for these six months means as much as living to grey old age! But let them laugh and say that this is all fairy-tales. It’s true, I have told myself fairy-tales, I have filled whole nights in succession with them, I remember them all now.

“But is it for me to tell them now, now when the time for fairy-tales is over, even for me? And to whom? I amused myself with them when I saw clearly that I was forbidden even to learn the Greek grammar, as I once thought of doing. ‘I shall die before I get to the syntax,’ I thought at the first page, and threw the book under the table. It’s lying there still. I’ve forbidden Matryona to pick it up.

“Anyone into whose hands my ‘Explanation’ falls, and who has the patience to read it through, may look upon me as a madman, or as a schoolboy, or, more likely still, as a man condemned to death, for whom it’s natural to believe that every one else thinks too little of life and is apt to waste it too cheaply, and to use it too lazily, too shamelessly, that they’re none, not one of them, worthy of it. Well, I protest that mv reader will be mistaken; and that mv conviction has nothing to do with my being sentenced to death. Ask them, ask them what they all, everyone of them understand by happiness. Oh, you may be sure that Columbus was happy not when he had discovered America, but when he was discovering it. Take my word for it, the highest moment of his happiness was just three days before the discovery of the New World, when the mutinous crew were on the point of returning to Europe in despair. It wasn’t the New World that mattered, even if it had fallen to pieces.

“Columbus died almost without seeing it; and not really knowing what he had discovered. It’s life that matters, nothing but life — the process of

discovering, the everlasting and perpetual process, not the discovery itself, at all. But what's the use of talking! I suspect that all I'm saying now is so like the usual commonplaces that I shall certainly be taken for a lower-form schoolboy sending in his essay on 'sunrise,' or they'll say perhaps that I had something to say, but that I did not know how to 'explain' it. But I'll add though that there is something at the bottom of every new human thought, every thought of genius,

or even every earnest thought that springs up in any brain, which can never be communicated to others, even if one were to write volumes about it and were explaining one's idea for thirty-five years; there's something left which cannot be induced to emerge from your brain, and remains with you for ever; and with it you will die, without communicating to anyone perhaps, the most important of your ideas. But if I too have failed to convey all that has been tormenting me for the last six months, it will, anyway, be understood that I have paid very dearly for attaining my present 'last conviction.' This is what I felt necessary, for certain objects of my own, to put forward in my'Explanation.' However, I will continue."

CHAPTER 6

I DON'T want to tell a lie; reality has caught me too on its hook in the course of these six months, and sometimes so carried me away that I forgot my death sentence, or rather did not care to think of it, and even did work. About my circumstances then, by the way. When eight months ago I became very ill I broke off all my ties and gave up all who had been my comrades. As I had always been a rather glum sort of person, my comrades easily forgot me; of course, they'd have forgotten me even apart from that circumstance. My surroundings at home — that is, in my 'family,' were solitary too. Five months ago I shut myself up once for all and cut myself off completely from the rooms of the family. They always obeyed me, and no one dared to come in to me,

except at a fixed time to tidy my room and bring me my dinner. My mother obeyed me in fear and trembling and did not even dare to whisper in my presence when I made up my mind sometimes to let her come to me. She was continually beating it into the children not to make a noise and disturb me. I'll own I often complained of their shouting; they must be fond of me by now! I think I tormented 'faithful Kolya,' as I called him, pretty thoroughly too. Latterly even he's worried me. All that is natural: men are created to torment one another. But I noticed that he put up with my irritability as though he had determined beforehand not to be hard on an invalid. Naturally that irritated me; but I believe he had taken it into his head to imitate the prince in 'Christian meekness,' which was rather funny. He's a boy, young and eager, and of course imitates everything. But I have felt occasionally that it was high time for him to take his own line. I'm very fond of him. I tormented Surikov too, who lives above us and runs errands from morning till night. I was continually proving to him that he was to blame for his own poverty, so that he was scared at last and gave up coming to see me. He's a very meek man, the meekest of beings. (N.B. They say meekness is a tremendous power. I must ask the prince about that, it's his expression.) But in March, when I went upstairs to see 'the frozen' baby, as he called it, and accidentally smiled at the corpse of his baby, for I began to explain to Surikov again that it was 'his own fault,' the sniveller's lips began trembling, and seizing my shoulder with one hand, he pointed to the door with the other, and softly, almost in a whisper in fact, said: 'Go, sir!'

“I went away, and I liked that very much, liked it at the time, even at the very minute when he showed me out. But for long afterwards his words produced a painful impression on me when I remembered them: a sort of contemptuous pity for him, which I didn’t want to feel at all. Even at the moment of such an insult (I felt that I had insulted him, though I didn’t mean to), even at such a moment he could not get angry! His lips trembled, not from anger, I swear. He seized my arm and uttered his magnificent ‘Go, sir!’ absolutely without anger. There was dignity, a good deal of it, indeed, quite incongruous with him, in fact (so that, to tell the truth, there was something very comical about it), but there was no anger. Perhaps it was simply that he suddenly felt contempt for me. When I’ve met him two or three times on the stairs since then, he began taking off his hat to me, which he never used to do before; but he didn’t stop as he used to, but ran by in confusion. If he did despise me it was in his own fashion: he despised me meekly. But perhaps he simply took off his hat to me as to the son of a creditor. For he always owes my mother money and can never extricate himself from his debts. And, in fact, that’s the most likely explanation. I meant to have it out with him, and I know he would have begged my pardon within ten minutes; but I decided it was better to let him alone.

“It was just at that time — that is, about the time that Surikov ‘froze his baby,’ about the middle of March, I suddenly felt much better, I don’t know why, and it lasted for a fortnight. I began going out, especially at dusk. I loved the March evenings when it began freezing and the gas was lighted. I sometimes walked a long way. One evening I was overtaken in the dark by a ‘gentleman.’ I didn’t see him distinctly. He was carrying something wrapped up in paper and wore some sort of an ugly little overcoat, too short for him, too thin for the time of year. Just as he reached a street lamp ten paces ahead of me, I noticed something fell out of his pocket. I made haste to pick it up, and was only just in the nick of time, for some one in a long kaftan sprang forward, but seeing the thing in my hand did not quarrel over it; he stole a glance at what was in my hand and slipped by. It was an old morocco pocket-book of old-fashioned make, stuffed full; but I guessed at the first glance that it might be with anything else but not with notes. The man who had lost it was already forty paces ahead of me, and was soon lost to sight in the crowd. I ran and began shouting after him, but as I had nothing to shout but ‘hi!’ he did not turn round. Suddenly he whisked round to the left in at the gate of a house. When I turned in at the gateway, which

was very dark, there was no one there. It was a house of immense size — one of those monsters built by speculators for low-class tenements, and sometimes containing as many as a hundred flats. When I ran in at the gate, I fancied I saw a man in the furthest right-hand corner of the huge yard, though in the darkness I could scarcely distinguish him. Running to that corner, I saw the entrance to the stairs. The staircase was narrow, extremely dirty, and not lighted up at all. But I heard a man still on the stairs above, and I mounted the staircase, reckoning that while the door was being opened to him, I should have time to overtake him. And so I did. Each flight of stairs was short; they seemed endless in number, so that I was fearfully out of breath. A door was opened and shut on the fifth storey. I could make that out while I was three flights below. While I ran up, while I was getting my breath and feeling for the bell, several minutes passed. The door was opened at last by a peasant woman, who was blowing up a samovar in a tiny kitchen. She heard my inquiries in silence, not understanding a word I said, of course, and in silence opened the door into the next room, which was also a tiny and fearfully low-pitched room, wretchedly furnished with the barest essentials. There was an immensely wide bed with curtains in it, on which lay ‘Terentyitch’ (as the woman called him), a man apparently drunk. There was a candle-end burning in an iron candlestick on the table, and there was a bottle beside it nearly empty. Terentyitch grunted something and waved towards another door, while the woman went away; so there was nothing for me to do but to open that door. I did so and walked into the next room.

“The next room was even smaller and more cramped than the other, so that I did not know which way to turn; the narrow single bed in the corner took up a great deal of the space. The rest of the furniture consisted of three plain chairs, heaped up with rags of all sorts, and a cheap kitchen table in front of a little old sofa covered with American leather, so that there was scarcely room to pass between the table and the bed. On the table there was a lighted tallow candle in a similar iron candlestick, and on the bed was a tiny baby, crying. It could not have been more than three weeks old, to judge from the sound it made. It was being ‘changed’ by a pale, sickly looking woman. She was apparently young, in complete deshabille, and looked as though she had only just got up after a confinement. But the child was not comforted, but went on crying, clamouring for the emaciated mother’s breast. On the sofa there was another child, a girl about three years

old, asleep, covered, I think, with a man’s dresscoat. At the table stood a gentleman in a very tattered coat (he had taken off the overcoat and it was Ivinq on the bed).

He was undoing a blue paper parcel which contained about two pounds of wheat bread and two little sausages. There was besides a teapot on the table with tea in it, and a few crusts of black bread. A partly opened trunk and two bundles of rags poked out from under the bed.

“In fact, there was the greatest disorder. It struck me at the first glance that the man and the woman were people of some breeding who had been reduced by poverty to that degrading condition when disorder gets the upper hand of every effort to contend with it, and even drives people to a bitter impulse to find in the daily increasing disorder a sort of fierce and, as it were, vindictive satisfaction.

“When I went in, the gentleman, who had only entered just before me and had unwrapped his provisions, was talking rapidly and excitedly to his wife. Though she had not finished attending to the baby, she had already begun whimpering; the news must have been bad as usual. The face of the man, who looked about eight-and-twenty, was dark and lean, with black whiskers and cleanly shaved chin. It struck me as rather refined and even agreeable. The face was morose, with a morose look in the eyes, and with a morbid shade of over-sensitive pride. A strange scene followed my entrance.

“There are people who derive extraordinary enjoyment from their irritable sensitiveness, especially when it reaches a climax, as it very quickly does with them. At that moment I believe they would positively prefer to have been insulted rather than not. These irritable people are always horribly fretted by remorse afterwards, if they have sense, of course, and are capable of realising that they have been ten times as excited as they need have been.

“The gentleman stared at me for some time in amazement, and his wife in alarm, as though there were something monstrous in anyone’s coming to see them. But all at once he flew at me almost with fury. I had not had time to mumble two words, yet seeing I was decently dressed, he felt, I suppose, fearfully insulted at my daring to peep into his den so unceremoniously, and to see the hideous surroundings of which he was so ashamed. He was glad, no doubt, of an opportunity of venting on anyone his rage at his own ill-

luck. For one minute I even thought he would attack me. He turned white as a woman in hysterics, and alarmed his wife dreadfully.

‘“How dare you come in like this? Get out!’ he shouted, trembling, and scarcely able to pronounce the words. But suddenly he saw his pocketbook in my hands.

‘“I believe you dropped this,’ I said as calmly and drily as I could (that was the best thing to do, in fact).

“He stood facing me in absolute terror, and for some time seemed unable to take it in. Then he snatched at his side pocket, opened his mouth in dismay, and clapped his hand to his forehead.

‘“Good God! Where, how did you find it?’

“I explained in the briefest words and, if possible, still more drily how I’d picked up the pocket-book, how I’d run after him, calling, and how at last, on the chance and almost feeling my way, I had followed him up the stairs.

‘“Oh heavens!’ he cried, turning to his wife, ‘here are all our papers, the last of my instruments — everything. . . . Oh, my dear sir, do you know what you’ve done for me? I should have been lost!’

“Meanwhile I had taken hold of the door handle to go out without answering. But I was out of breath myself, and my excitement brought on such a violent fit of coughing that I could scarcely stand. I saw the gentleman rushing from side to side to find an empty chair, and finally snatching the rags off one, he flung them on to the floor, and hurriedly handing it to me, carefully helped me to sit down. But my cough went on without stopping for three minutes and more.

“When I recovered he was sitting beside me on another chair, from which he had also flung the rags on to the floor, looking intently at me.

‘“You seem to be ill,’ he said, in the tone in which doctors usually open proceedings with a patient. ‘I am a medical man myself (he didn’t say ‘doctor’), and as he said it, something made him point to the room, as though protesting against his surroundings. ‘I see that you ...’

‘“I’m in consumption,’ I said as curtly as possible, and I got up.

“He jumped up too at once.

‘“Perhaps you are exaggerating and ... if you take proper care ...’

“He had been so overwhelmed that he still seemed unable to pull himself together; the pocket-book was still in his left hand.

“Oh, don’t trouble yourself,’ I interposed again,

taking hold of the door handle. ‘B-n examined me last week, and my business is settled.’ (I brought B. in again.) ‘Excuse me....’

“I tried again to open the door and leave the embarrassed and grateful doctor crushed with shame, but the cursed cough attacked me once more. Then the doctor insisted that I should sit down again and rest. He turned to his wife, and, without moving from her place, she uttered a few grateful and cordial words. She was so embarrassed as she spoke that a red flush suffused her thin, pale, yellow cheeks. I remained, but with an air of being horribly afraid Iwas in their way (which was the properthing). My doctor began at last to be fretted by remorse, I saw that.

‘“If I . . .’ he began, breaking off and moving restlessly about every moment. ‘I am so grateful to you, and I behaved so badly to you . . . I. .. you see . . .’ again he indicated the room, ‘at the present moment I am placed in such a position ...’

“‘Oh,’ said I, ‘there’s no need to see; it’s the usual thing. I expect you’ve lost your post, and have come up here to go into the case, and try to get another post.’

‘“How did you ... know?’ he asked in surprise.

‘“It’s obvious from the first glance,’ I said with involuntary irony. ‘Lots of people come up from the provinces full of hope and run about and live like this.’

“He suddenly began speaking with warmth and with quivering lips; he began complaining, he began telling his story, and I must own he moved me. I stayed nearly an hour with him. He told me his story, a very common one. He had been a provincial doctor, had a government post, but some intrigues were got up against him, in which even his wife was involved. His pride was touched; he lost his temper. A change in the governing authorities favoured the designs of his enemies; they undermined his reputation, made complaints against him. He lost his post, and had spent all his savings on coming to Petersburg to get the case taken up. Here, of course, for a long time he could get no hearing; then he got a hearing; then he was answered by a refusal; then he was deluded with promises; then he was answered with severity; then he was directed to write something by way of explanation; then they refused to take what he had written, and ordered him to file a petition — in short, he had been driven from pillar to post for the last five months, and had spent his last farthing. His wife’s last rags were in pawn,

and now there was a new baby, and, and . . . ‘to-day a final refusal of my petition, and I’ve hardly bread — nothing — my wife just confined. I... I...’

“He jumped up from his chair and turned away. His wife was crying in the corner, the baby began squealing again. I took out my notebook and began writing in it. When I had finished and stood up, he was standing before me, looking at me with timid curiosity.

‘“I have put down your name,’ I said, ‘and all the rest of it: the place where you served, the name of the governor, the day of the month. I have a comrade, an old schoolfellow called Bahmutov, and his uncle, Pyotr Matvyeitch Bahmutov, is an actual state councillor and director...’

‘“Pyotr Matvyeitch Bahmutov!’ exclaimed my doctor, almost trembling. ‘Why, it almost entirely depends upon him!’

“Everything about my doctor’s story and its successful conclusion, which I chanced to assist in bringing about, fell out and fitted in as though by design, exactly as in a novel. I told these poor people that they must try not to build any hopes on me; that I was a poor schoolboy myself. (I intentionally exaggerated my powerlessness; I finished my studies long ago and am not a schoolboy.) I told them that it was no good for them to know my name, but that I’d go at once to Vassilyevsky Island to my schoolfellow Bahmutov; and as I knew for a fact that his uncle, the actual state councillor, being a bachelor without children, positively worshipped his nephew, loving him passionately as the last representative of the family, ‘My comrade may perhaps be able to do something for you, and for me, with his uncle, of course.’

‘“If only they would allow me an explanation with his excellency! If only they would vouchsafe me the honour of a personal explanation!’ he exclaimed, with glittering eyes, shivering as though he were in a fever.

“That was what he said, ‘vouchsafe.’ Repeating once more that it would be sure to come to nothing, I added that if I didn’t come to see them next morninq,

it would mean that everything was over and they had nothing to expect. They showed me out with bows; they were almost beside themselves. I shall never forget the expression of their faces. I took a cab and at once set off for Vassilyevsky Island.

“At school I had been for years on bad terms with Bahmutov. He was considered an aristocrat among us, or I at least used to call him one. He was very well dressed and drove his own horses, but was not a bit stuck-up. He

was always a good comrade, and exceptionally good-humoured, sometimes even witty. He hadn't a very far-reaching intelligence, though he was always top of the class. I was never top in anything. All his schoolfellows liked him, except me. He had several times made overtures to me during those years, but I had always turned away from him with sullen ill-humour. Now I had not seen him for a year; he was at the university. When towards nine o'clock I went in to him, I was announced with great ceremony. He met me at first with amazement, and far from affably, but he soon brightened up and, looking at me, burst out laughing.

'"What possessed you to come and see me,

Terentyev?' he cried with his invariable good-natured ease, which was sometimes impudent but never offensive, which I liked so much in him and for which I hated him so much. 'But how's this?' he exclaimed with dismay. 'You're very ill!'

"My cough racked me again. I dropped into a chair and could scarcely get my breath.

'"Don't trouble. I'm in consumption,' I said. 'I've come to you with a request.'

"He sat down, wondering, and I told him at once the whole story of the doctor, and explained that, having an influence over his uncle, he might be able to do something.

'"I'll do it. Certainly I'll do it,' he said. 'I'll attack my uncle to-morrow. And indeed I'm glad to do it; and you've told it all so well. . . . But what put it into your head, Terentyev, to come to me?'

'"So much depends upon your uncle in this case. And since we were always enemies, Bahmutov, and as you're an honourable man, I thought you wouldn't refuse an enemy,' I added with irony.

'"As Napoleon appealed to England!' he cried, laughing. 'I'll do it! I'll do it! I'll go at once if I can,' he added hastily, seeing that I was gravely and sternly getting up from my chair.

"And indeed the affair was unexpectedly arranged among us in the most successful way. Within six weeks our doctor was appointed to a post in another province, and had received help in money, as well as his travelling expenses. I suspect that Bahmutov, who had taken to visiting the doctor pretty often (I purposely did not do so, and even received the doctor coolly when he came to see me), I suspect that Bahmutov had induced the doctor to accept a loan from him. I saw Bahmutov about twice in the course of the

six weeks, and we met for the third time when we saw the last of the doctor. Bahmutov got up a dinnerwith champagne for him at parting, at which the doctor’s wife too was present, though she left early to go home to her baby. It was at the beginning of May. It was a fine evening. The huge ball of the sun was sinking on the water. Bahmutov saw me home; we went by the Nikolaevsky Bridge; we were both a little drunk. Bahmutov spoke of his delight at the successful conclusion of the business, thanked me for something, said how happy he felt after a good deed, declared that the credit of it all was mine, and that people were wrong in preaching and maintaining, as many do now, that individual benevolence was of no use. I had a great longing to speak too.

‘“Anyone who attacks individual charity,’ I began, ‘attacks human nature and casts contempt on personal dignity. But the organisation of “public charity” and the problem of individual freedom are two distinct questions, and not mutually exclusive. Individual kindness will always remain, because it’s an individual impulse, the living impulse of one personality to exert a direct influence upon another. There was an old fellow at Moscow, a “General” — that is, an actual state councillor, with a German name. He spent his whole life visiting prisons and prisoners; every party of exiles to Siberia knew beforehand that the “old General” would visit them on the Sparrow Hills. He carried out this good work with the greatest earnestness and devotion. He would turn up, walk through the rows of prisoners, who surrounded him, stop before each, questioning each as to his needs, calling each of them “my dear,” and hardly ever preaching to anyone. He used to give them money, send them the most necessary articles — leq-wrappers, under qarments, linen, and sometimes took them books of devotion, which he distributed among those who could read, firmly persuaded that they would read them on the way, and that those who could read would read them to those who could not. He rarely asked a prisoner about his crime; he simply listened if the criminal began speaking of it. All the criminals were on an equal footing with him, he made no distinction between them. He talked to them as though they were brothers, and they came in the end to look on him as a father. If he saw a woman with a baby among the prisoners, he would go up, fondle the child, and snap his fingers to make it laugh. He visited the prisoners like this for many years, up to the time of his death, so much so that he was known all over Russia and Siberia — that is, by all the criminals. A man who had been in Siberia told me that he had

seen himself how the most hardened criminals remembered the general; yet the latter could rarely give more than twenty farthings to each prisoner on his visits. It's true they spoke of him without any great warmth, or even earnestness. Some one of these "unhappy" creatures, a man who had murdered a dozen people and slaughtered six children solely for his own pleasure (for there are such men, I am told), would suddenly, once in twenty years, apropos of nothing, heave a sigh and say:

"' "What about that old general, is he still alive, I wonder?"

'"Perhaps he smiles as he says it. And that's all. But how can you tell what seed may have been dropped in his soul for ever by that old general, whom he hasn't forgotten for twenty years? How can you tell, Bahmutov, what significance such an association of one personality with another may have on the destiny of those associated? . . . You know it's a matter of a whole lifetime, an infinite multitude of ramifications hidden from us. The most skilful chess-player, the cleverest of them, can only look a few moves ahead; a French player who could reckon out ten moves ahead was written about as a marvel. How many moves there are in this, and how much that is unknown to us! In scattering the seed, scattering your "charity," your kind deeds, you are giving away, in one form or another, part of your personality, and taking into yourself part of another; you are in mutual communion with one another, a little more attention and you will be rewarded with the knowledge of the most unexpected discoveries. You will come at last to look upon your work as a science; it will lay hold of all your life, and may fill up your whole life. On the other hand, all your thoughts, all the seeds scattered by you, perhaps forgotten by you, will grow up and take form. He who has received them from you will hand them on to another. And how can you tell what part you may have in the future determination of the destinies of humanity? If this knowledge and a whole lifetime of this work should make you at last able to sow some mighty seed, to bequeath the world some mighty thought, then ...' and so on. I talked a great deal.

'"And to think that you, talking like this, are condemned to death!' cried Bahmutov, with a warm note of reproach against some one in his voice.

"At that moment we were standing on the bridge, and leaning our elbows on the rail, we looked into the Neva.

'"And do you know what's just struck me?' I said, bending lower over the rail.

‘“Not to throw yourself into the water!’ cried Bahmutov, almost in alarm. Perhaps he read my thought in my face.

‘“No; for the time being, only the following reflection: here I have two or three months left to live, perhaps four; but when I’ve only two months, for instance, left, if I’m terribly anxious to do a good deed which requires a great deal of work, activity, and bother, like our business with the doctor, I ought to refuse it because I haven’t time enough left, and seek some other good work on a smaller scale, and more within my means (if I am still so drawn to good deeds). You must own that’s an amusing idea.’

“Poor Bahmutov was much distressed on my account. He took me home to my very door, and was for the most part silent, having too much tact to attempt to console me. As he said ‘good-bye’ to me he pressed my hand warmly and asked permission to come and see me. I answered that if he came to comfort me (and that, even if he were silent, he would come to comfort me, I explained that to him) each time by doing so, he would remind me of death more than ever. He shrugged his shoulders, but agreed with me. We parted fairly civilly, which was more than I had expected.

“But that eveninq and that niqht there was sown the first seed of my ‘last conviction.’ I clutched eagerly at this new idea and eagerly analysed it in all its branches, in all its aspects. I didn’t sleep all night, and the more deeply I went into it, the more I absorbed it, the more frightened I became. An awful terror came over me and haunted me continually for the following days. Sometimes, thinking of that continual terror of mine, I shivered suddenly with another dread. From that dread I could not but conclude that my ‘last conviction’ had taken too grave a hold upon me, and must lead to its logical conclusion. But I had not resolution enough for that conclusion. Three weeks later it was all over and that resolution came to me, but it was through a very strange circumstance.

“Here in my ‘Explanation’ I note down all these dates and numbers. Of course it will make no difference to me, butnow(and perhaps only for this moment) I should like those who will judge of my action to be able to see what long chain of logical reasoning led to my ‘last conviction.’ I have just written above that the final resoluteness, which I had lacked for carrying out my ‘last conviction,’ seemed to come to me, not from logical reasoning, but from a strange shock, from a strange circumstance, perhaps quite irrelevant. Ten days ago Rogozhin came to see me about an affair of his own, which there is no need to go into. I had never seen Rogozhin before, but I had

heard a great deal about him. I gave him the necessary information. He soon went away, and as he had simply come for the information, our acquaintance might have ended there. But he interested me too much, and all that day I was possessed by strange ideas, so that I made up my mind to go to him next day, to return his visit. Rogozhin was evidently not pleased to see me, and even dropped a ‘delicate’ hint that it was no good for us to continue the acquaintance; yet I spent a very interesting hour, and probably he did the same. The contrast between us was so great that it could not be ignored by us, especially by me. I was a man whose days were numbered, while he was living the fullest, the most actual life, absorbed in the moment, entirely unconcerned about ‘final’ deductions, numbers, or anything whatever except what. .. what. . . what he was mad upon, in fact. Mr. Rogozhin must forgive me that expression, if only because I’m a poor hand at literature and don’t know how to express my ideas. In spite of his unfriendliness, I thought he was a man of intelligence and capable of understanding much, though he had few outside interests. I gave him no hint of my ‘final conviction,’ but yet I fancied that he guessed it as he listened to me. He did not speak; he is awfully silent. As I took leave I hinted that, in spite of all the difference and the contrast between us — les extremites se touchent (I explained that in Russian for him), and that perhaps he was by no means so far from my ‘final conviction’ as he seemed. To that he responded with a very grim and sour grimace, got up, himself handed me my cap, making it appear as though I were going away of my own accord, and without more ado led me out of his gloomy house, pretending to see me out from politeness. His house impressed me; it’s like a graveyard, and I believe he likes it, which is very natural, indeed; such a full, vivid life as he leads is too full in itself to need a setting.

“That visit to Rogozhin exhausted me very much, and I had felt very unwell all that morning. Towards the evening I was very weak and lay down on my bed; from time to time I was in a high fever, and even delirious. Kolya was with me till eleven o’clock. I remember everything he talked of, however, and everything we spoke about. But when at moments a mist passed before my eyes I kept seeing Ivan Fomitch, who seemed to be receiving millions of money and not to know where to put it, to be worried about it, terrified that it would be stolen, and at last he seemed to decide to bury it in the earth. Finally I advised him, instead of digging such a mountain of gold into the earth, to have the whole heap melted down into a

gold coffin for the frozen baby and to have the baby dug up for the purpose. This sarcasm of mine seemed to be accepted by Surikov with tears of gratitude, and he went at once to carry out the plan, and I thought I left him with a curse.

“Kolya assured me, when I was quite myself again, that I had not slept at all, but that I had been talking to him all the time about Surikov. At moments I was in great misery and in a state of collapse, so that Kolya was uneasy when he left me. When I got up myself to lock the door after him, I suddenly recalled a picture I had seen at Rogozhin’s, over the door of one of the dreariest of his rooms. He showed it me himself in passing. I believe I stood before it for five minutes. There was nothing good about it from an artistic point of view, but it produced a strange uneasiness in me.

“The picture represented Christ who has only just been taken from the cross. I believe artists usually paint Christ, both on the cross and after He has been taken from the cross, still with extraordinary beauty of face. They strive to preserve that beauty even in His most terrible agonies. In Rogozhin’s picture there’s no trace of beauty. It is in every detail the corpse of a man who has endured infinite agony before the crucifixion; who has been wounded, tortured, beaten by the guards and the people when He carried the cross on His back and fell beneath its weight, and after that has undergone the agony of crucifixion, lasting for six hours at least (according to my reckoning). It’s true it’s the face of a man only just taken from the cross — that is to say, still bearing traces of warmth and life. Nothing is rigid in it yet, so that there’s still a look of suffering in the face of the dead man, as though he were still feeling it (that has been very well caught by the artist). “Vfet the face has not been spared in the least. It is simply nature, and the corpse of a man, whoever he might be, must really look like that after such suffering. I know that the Christian Church laid it down, even in the early ages, that Christ’s suffering was not symbolical but actual, and that His body was therefore fully and completely subject to the laws of nature on the cross. In the picture the face is fearfully crushed by blows, swollen, covered with fearful, swollen and bloodstained bruises, the eyes are open and squinting: the great wide-open whites of the eyes glitter with a sort of deathly, glassy light. But, strange to say, as one looks at this corpse of a tortured man, a peculiar and curious question arises; if just such a corpse (and it must have been just like that) was seen by all His disciples, by those who were to become His chief apostles, by the women that followed Him

and stood by the cross, by all who believed in Him and worshipped Him, how could they believe that that martyr would rise again? The question instinctively arises: if death is so awful and the laws of nature so mighty, how can they be overcome? How can they be overcome when even He did not conquer them, He who vanquished nature in His lifetime, who exclaimed, ‘Maiden, arise!’ and the maiden arose—’Lazarus, come forth!’ and the dead man came forth? Looking at such a picture, one conceives of nature in the shape of an immense, merciless, dumb beast, or more correctly, much more correctly, speaking, though it sounds strange, in the form of a huge machine of the most modern construction which, dull and insensible, has aimlessly clutched, crushed and swallowed up a great priceless Being, a Being worth all nature and its laws, worth the whole earth, which was created perhaps solely for the sake of the advent of that Being. This picture expresses and unconsciously suggests to one the conception of such a dark, insolent, unreasoning and eternal Power to which everything is in subjection. The people surrounding the dead man, not one of whom is shown in the picture, must have experienced the most terrible anguish and consternation on that evening, which had crushed all their hopes, and almost their convictions. They must have parted in the most awful terror, though each one bore within him a mighty thought which could never be wrested from him. And if the Teacher could have seen Himself on the eve of the crucifixion, would He have gone up to the cross and died as He did? That question too rises involuntarily, as one looks at the picture.

“All this floated before my mind by snatches, perhaps in actual delirium, for fully an hour and a half before Kolya went away, sometimes taking definite shape. Can anything that has no shape appear in a shape? But I seemed to fancy at times that I saw in some strange, incredible form that infinite Power, that dull, dark, dumb force. I remember that some one seemed to lead me by the hand, holding a candle, to show me a huge and loathsome spider, and to assure me, laughing at my indignation, that this was that same dark, dumb and almighty Power. There is always a little lamp lighted at night before the ikon in my room. It is a dim and feeble light, yet one can make out everything, and even read just under the lamp. I believe it must have been after midnight. I had not slept at all and lay with wide-open eyes. Suddenly my door opened and Rogozhin walked in.

“He walked in, shut the door, looked at me without speaking, and went quietly to the chair standing just under the lamp. I was awfully surprised and looked at him in suspense. Rogozhin put his elbows on the little table and began to stare at me without speaking. So passed two or three minutes, and I remember his silence greatly offended and annoyed me. Why wouldn’t he talk? His coming so late at night did strike me as strange, of course, but I remember that I was not so tremendously taken aback by it. Rather the other way, indeed; for though I had not put my thought clearly into words in the morning, I know he understood it; and it was a thought that one might well come to talk over once more, even at a very late hour. I took it for granted he had come for that. Our parting in the morning had been rather unfriendly, and I remember that he looked at me once or twice very sarcastically. I saw the same sarcastic look in his face now, and it was that which offended me. That it actually was Rogozhin and not an apparition, an hallucination, I had not the slightest doubt at the beginning. I never thought of it, in fact.

“Meanwhile he went on sitting there and still staring at me with the same sarcastic look. I turned angrily on my bed, leaned with my elbow on the pillow, and made up mv mind to be silent too, even if we had to sit like that all the time. I was set on his beginning first. I think twenty minutes must have passed in that way. Suddenly the idea occurred to me: what if it’s not Rogozhin, but only an apparition?

“I had never once seen an apparition, during my illness or before it. But I had always felt as a boy, and now too — that is, quite lately — that if I should ever see such a thing I should die on the spot, although I don’t believe in ghosts. Yet when the idea struck me that it was not Rogozhin but only an apparition, I remember I wasn’t in the least frightened. In fact it made me feel angry. Another strange thing was that I was not nearly so concerned and anxious to decide whether it was Rogozhin or an apparition, as I should have been. I believe I was thinking of something else at the time. I was much more interested, for instance, in the question why Rogozhin, who had been in his dressing-gown and slippers earlier in the day, was now wearing a dress-coat, a white waistcoat, and a white tie. The thought struck me too: if it is an apparition and I’m not afraid of it, why not get up, go to him, and make sure? Perhaps I didn’t dare and was afraid. But I’d no sooner thought of being afraid than an icy shiver ran all down me; I felt a cold chill at my spine and my knees trembled. At that very instant, as

though guessing that I was afraid, Rogozhin moved away the hand on which he was leaning, drew himself up, and his lips began to part, as though he were going to laugh; he stared at me persistently. I was seized with such fury that I longed to fall upon him, but as I had vowed not to be the first to speak, I remained in bed. Besides, I was still not sure whether it was Rogozhin or not.

“I don’t remember exactly how long it lasted; I can’t be quite sure either whether I didn’t lose consciousness from time to time. But at last Rogozhin got up and looked at me as deliberately and intently as he had on coming in. He no longer grinned at me, and softly, almost on tip-toe, went to the door, opened it, and went out. I did not get out of bed. I don’t know how long I lay with my eyes open, thinking. Goodness knows what I thought about. I don’t remember either how I lost consciousness. But I waked next morning at ten o’clock when they knocked at my door. I have arranged that, if I don’t open the door myself before ten o’clock and call for tea to be brought to me, Matryona should knock.

When I opened the door to her, the thought occurred to me at once: how could he have come in when the door was locked? I made inquiries, and convinced myself that Rogozhin in the flesh could not have come in, as all our doors are locked at night.

“Well, this peculiar incident which I have described so minutely was the cause of my making up my mind. What helped to bring about that ‘final decision’ was not logic, not a logical conviction, but a feeling of repulsion. I could not go on living a life which was taking such strange, humiliating forms. That apparition degraded me. I am not able to submit to the gloomy power that takes the shape of a spider. And it was only when I felt at last, as it was getting dark, that I had reached the final moment of full determination that I felt better. But that was only the first stage; for the second stage I had to go to Pavlovsk. But all that I have explained sufficiently already.

CHAPTER 7

I HAD a little pocket-pistol; I got it when I was quite a child, at that absurd age when one is delighted at the story of a duel or of an attack by robbers, at imagining how one might be challenged to a duel and how bravely one would face the pistol-shot. A month ago I looked at it, and got it ready. In the box where it lay I found two bullets, and in the powder-horn there was powder enough for three charges. It's a miserable pistol, it doesn't aim straight, and wouldn't kill further than fifteen paces. But, of course, it would blow one's skull off, if one put it right against the temple.

"I decided to die at Pavlovsk at sunrise, and I meant to go into the park, so as not to upset anyone in the villa. My 'Explanation' will explain things sufficiently to the police. Lovers of psychology, and anyone else who likes, are welcome to get anything they can out of it. But I don't want this manuscript to be made public. I beg the prince to keep one copy for himself, and give another to Aglaia Ivanovna Epanchin. Such is my will. I bequeath my skeleton to the Medical Academy, for the good of science.

"I don't admit the right of any man to judge me, and I know that I am now beyond the reach of all judgment. Not long ago I was much amused by imagining — what if the fancy suddenly took me to kill some one, a dozen people at once, or to do something awful, something considered the most awful crime in the world — what a predicament my judges would be in, with my having only a fortnight to live, now that corporal punishment and torture is abolished. I should die comfortably in hospital, warm and snug, with an attentive doctor, and very likely much more snug and comfortable than at home. I wonder that the idea doesn't strike people in my position, if only as a joke. But perhaps it does; there are plenty of people fond of a joke, even among us.

"But though I don't recognise the right of any to judge me, I know that I shall be judged when I am dumb, and have no voice to defend myself. I don't want to go away without leaving some word of defence — a free defence, not forced out of me, not to justify myself — oh, no! I have no one's forgiveness to ask, and nothing to ask forgiveness for — it's simply because I want to.

"Here, at the outset, a strange question arises: by what right, with what motive could anyone presume to dispute my right to dispose of my last

fortnight? Whose business is it to judge? What is it to anyone that I should not only be condemned, but should conscientiously endure my sentence to the end? Can it really matter to anyone? From the ethical point of view? I quite understand that if, in the bloom of health and strength, I were to take my life, which might be ‘of use to my neighbour,’ and all the rest of it, morality might reproach me on traditional lines for disposing of my life without asking leave, or for some other reason of its own. But now, now that the term of my sentence has been pronounced? What moral obligation demands, not only your life, but the last gasp with which you give up your last atom of life, listening to words of comfort from the prince, whose Christian arguments are bound to bring him to the happy thought that it is really for the best that you should die. (Christians like him always do come to that idea. It’s their favourite tack.) And what does he want to bring in his ridiculous ‘trees of Pavlovsk’ for? To soften the last hours of my life? Don’t they understand, that the more I forget myself, the more I give myself up to the last semblance of life and love, with which they are trying to screen from me Meyer’s wall and all that is so openly and simply written on it, the more unhappy they make me? What use to me is your nature, your Pavlovsk park, your sunrises and sunsets, your blue sky, and your contented faces, when all this endless festival has begun by my being excluded from it? What is there for me in this beauty when, every minute, every second I am obliged, forced, to recognise that even the tiny fly, buzzing in the sunlight beside me, has its share in the banquet and the chorus, knows its place, loves it and is happy; and I alone am an outcast, and only my cowardice has made me refuse to realise it till now. Oh, I know how the prince and all of them would have liked, from principle and for the triumph of morality, to lead me on to singing Millevoix’ celebrated classical verse.

Ah, puissent voir longtemps votre beaute sacree Tant d’amis sourds a mes adieux!

Quits meurentpleins de jours, que leurmort soitpleuree,

Qu’un ami leurferme les yeux! —

instead of these ‘corrupting and wicked words.’ But believe me, believe me, simple-hearted souls, that those edifying lines, that academic benediction of the world in French verse, contains so much concealed bitterness, such irreconcilable malice, revelling in rhyme, that perhaps, even the poet himself was muddled and took that malice for tears of tenderness, and died in that faith; peace be to his ashes! Let me tell you, there is a limit

of ignominy in the consciousness of one's own nothingness and impotence beyond which a man cannot go, and beyond which he begins to feel immense satisfaction in his very degradation. . . . Oh, of course humility is a great force in that sense, I admit that — though not in the sense in which religion accepts humility as a force.

"Religion! Eternal life I can admit, and perhaps I always have admitted it. Let consciousness, kindled by the will of a higher Power, have looked round upon the world and have said—'I am!' and let it suddenly be doomed by that Power to annihilation, because it's somehow necessary for some purpose — and even without explanation of the purpose — so be it, I admit it all, but again the eternal question: what need is there of my humility? Can't I simply be devoured without being expected to praise what devours me? Can there really be Somebody up aloft who will be aggrieved by my not going on for a fortnight longer? I don't believe it; and it's a much more likely supposition that all that's needed is my worthless life, the life of an atom, to complete some universal harmony; for some sort of plus and minus, for the sake of some sort of contrast, and so on, just as the life of millions of creatures is needed every day as a sacrifice, as, without their death, the rest of the world couldn't go on (though that's not a very grand idea in itself, I must observe). But so be it! I admit that otherwise, that is without the continual devouring of one another, it would have been impossible to arrange the world. I am even ready to admit that I can't understand anything about that arrangement. But this I do know for certain: that if I have once been allowed to be conscious that 'I am,' it doesn't matter to me that there are mistakes in the construction of the world, and that without them it can't go on. Who will condemn me after that, and on what charge? Say what you like, it's all impossible and unjust.

"And yet, in spite of all my desire to do it, I could never conceive of there being no future life, no Providence. It seems most likely that they do exist, but that we don't understand anything about the future life or its laws. But if this is so difficult and even impossible to understand, surely I shan't be held responsible for not being able to comprehend the inconceivable. It's true, they tell me, and the prince, of course, is with them there, that submissive faith is needed, that one must obey without reasoning, simply from piety, and that I shall certainly be rewarded in the next world for my humility.

“We degrade God too much, ascribing to Him our ideas, in vexation at being unable to understand Him. But, again, if it’s impossible to understand Him,

I repeat it’s hard to have to answer for what it is not given to man to understand. And, if it is so, how shall I be judged for being unable to understand the will and laws of Providence? No, we’d better leave religion on one side.

“And I’ve said enough, indeed. When I reach these lines, the sun will, no doubt, be rising, and ‘resounding in the sky,’ and its vast immeasurable power will be shed upon the earth. So be it! I shall be looking straight at the source of power and life; I do not want this life! If I’d had the power not to be born, I would certainly not have accepted existence upon conditions that are such a mockery. But I still have power to die, though the days I give back are numbered. It’s no great power, it’s no great mutiny.

“My last ‘Explanation’: I am dying, not because I am not equal to bearing these three weeks. Oh, I should have the strength, and, if I cared to, I should be comforted enough by the recognition of the wrong done me; but I’m not a French poet, and I do not care for such consolation. Finally, there’s temptation too. Nature has so limited any activity by its three weeks’ sentence, that perhaps suicide is the only action I still have time to beqin and end bv mv own will. And,

perhaps I want to take advantage of the last possibility of action. A protest is sometimes no small action....”

The “Explanation” was over. Ippolit at last stopped.

There is, in extreme cases, a pitch of cynical frankness when a nervous man, exasperated, and beside himself, shrinks from nothing, and is readyfor any scandal, even glad of it. He falls upon people with a vague but firm determination to fling himself from a belfry a minute later, and so settle any difficulties that may arise. And the approaching physical exhaustion is usually the symptom of this condition. The extreme, almost unnatural tension which had kept Ippolit up till that moment had reached that fatal pitch. This eighteen-year-old boy, exhausted by illness, seemed as weak as a trembling leaf torn from a tree. But as soon as — for the first time in the course of the last hour — he looked round upon his audience, the most haughty, most disdainful and resentful repugnance was at once apparent in his eyes and his smile. He made haste with his challenge. But his listeners too were very indignant. They were all noisily and angrily getting up from

the table. Weariness, wine, nervous strain increased the disorderliness and, as it were, foulness of the impression, if one may so express it.

Suddenly Ippolit leapt up, as though he had been thrust from his seat,

“The sun has risen,” he cried to Myshkin, seeing the treetops lighted up, and pointing to them as though to a marvel. “It has risen!”

“Why, did you think it wasn’t going to rise?” observed Ferdyshtchenko.

“It will be baking hot again, all day,” muttered Ganya, with careless annoyance, stretching and yawning, with his hat in his hands. “What if there’s a month of this drought! . . . Are we going or not, Ptitsyn?”

Ippolit listened with an astonishment that approached stupefaction. He suddenly turned fearfully pale and began trembling all over.

“You act your indifference very awkwardly to insult me,” he said, staring at Ganya. “You’re a cur!”

“Well, that’s beyond anything, to let oneself go like that!” roared Ferdyshtchenko. “What phenomenal feebleness!”

“He’s simplya fool,” said Ganya.

Ippolit pulled himself together a little.

“I understand, gentlemen,” he began, trembling as before, and stuttering at every word— “that I may deserve your personal resentment, and ... I’m sorry I’ve distressed you with these ravings (he pointed to the manuscript), or rather I’m sorry that I haven’t distressed you at all”... (he smiled stupidly). “Have I distressed you, Yevgeny Pavlovitch?” he darted across to him with the question. “Did I distress you or not, tell me?”

“It was rather drawn out, still it was ...”

“Speak out! Don’t tell lies for once in your life!” Ippolit insisted, trembling.

“Oh! It’s absolutely nothing to me! I beg you to be so good as to leave me alone.”

“Vfevgeny Pavlovitch turned awaydisdainfully.

“Good-night, prince,” said Ptitsyn, going up to Myshkin.

“But he’s going to shoot himself directly! What are you thinking of? Look at him,” cried Vera, and she flew to Ippolit in great alarm; she even clutched at his arms. “Why, he said he would shoot himself at sunrise! What are you about!”

“He won’t shoot himself!” several voices, among them Ganya’s, muttered malignantly.

“Gentlemen, take care!” cried Kolya, and he, too, caught at Ippolit’s arm. “Only look at him. Prince, prince, what are you thinking of?”

Ippolit was surrounded by Vera, Kolya, Keller and Burdovsky. They all caught hold of him.

“He has the right ... the right . . .” Burdovsky murmured, though he, too, seemed quite beside himself.

“Excuse me, prince, what arrangements do you propose to make?” said Lebedyev, going up to Myshkin. He was drunk and so enraged that he was insolent.

“What arrangements?”

“No, sir; excuse me; I’m the master of the house, though I don’t wish to be lacking in respect to you. . . . Granting that you are master here too, still I don’t care in my own house....”

“He won’t shoot himself! The wretched boy is fooling!” General Ivolgin cried unexpectedly, with indignation and aplomb.

“Bravo, general!” Ferdyshtchenko applauded.

“I know he won’t shoot himself, qeneral, honoured general, but all the same ... seeing I’m master of the house.”

“Listen, I say. Mr. Terentyev,” said Ptitsyn suddenly, holding out his hand to Ippolit, after saying good-bye to Myshkin. “I believe you speak in your manuscript of your skeleton and leave it to the Academy? You mean your own skeleton, your bones you mean, isn’t it?”

“Yes, my bones....”

“That’s all right then. I asked for fear there should be a mistake; I’ve been told there was such a case.”

“How can you tease him?” cried Myshkin suddenly.

“You’ve made him cry,” added Ferdyshtchenko.

But Ippolit was not crying. He tried to move from his place, but the four standing about him seized his hands at once. There was a sound of laughter.

“That’s what he’s been after, that they should hold his hands; that’s what he read his confession for,” observed Rogozhin. “Good-bye, prince. Ech, we’ve been sitting too long — my bones ache.”

“If you really did mean to shoot yourself, Terentyev,” laughed “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch— “after such compliments, if I were you, I should make a point of not doing it, to tease them.”

“They’re awfully eager to see me shoot myself!” cried Ippolit, flying out at his words.

He spoke as though he were attacking some one. “They’re annoyed that they won’t see it.”

“So you think they won’t see it? I’m not egging you on; quite the contrary; I think it’s very likely you will shoot yourself. The great thing is not to lose your temper. . ,” said “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch in a patronizing drawl.

“I only see now that I made a fearful mistake in reading them my ‘Explanation,’” said Ippolit, looking at Yevgeny Pavlovitch with a sudden trustfulness, as though asking the confidential advice of a friend.

“It’s an absurd position, but... I really don’t know what to advise you,” answered “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, smiling.

Ippolit bent a stern, persistent gaze at him, and did not answer. It might have been supposed that he was unconscious at some moments.

“No, excuse me, it’s a strange way of doing things,” said Lebedyev. ‘“I’ll shoot myself in the park,’” says he, ‘“so as not to upset anyone.’ That’s his notion, that he won’t upset anyone if he goes down three steps a few feet into the park.”

“Gentlemen ..,” began Myshkin.

“No, allow me, honoured prince,” Lebedyev interrupted, furiously, “as you can see for yourself that it’s not a joke, and as half your guests at least are of the same opinion, and are convinced that, after what he has said, he will feel bound in honour to shoot himself, I, as master of the house, and as a witness of it, call upon you to assist me!”

“What’s to be done, Lebedyev? I am ready to assist you.”

“I’ll tell you what. In the first place he must give up the pistol he boasted about before us all, and all the ammunition too. If he gives it up, I consent to let him stay the night in this house, in consideration of his invalid state, under my own supervision, of course. But to-morrow he must certainly go about his business. Excuse me, prince! If he won’t give up his weapon, I shall at once take hold of him, I on one side, the general on the other, and send at once to inform the police; and then the affair can be left for the police to deal with. Mr. Ferdyshtchenko, as a friend, will go for them.”

An uproar followed. Lebedyev was excited, and threw aside all restraint. Ferdyshtchenko prepared to go for the police. Ganya insisted frantically that no one meant to shoot himself. Yevgeny Pavlovitch said nothing.

“Prince, have you ever jumped from a belfry?” Ippolit whispered to him, suddenly.

“N-no,” answered Myshkin, naively.

“Did you imagine that I did not foresee all this hatred!” Ippolit whispered again, looking at Myshkin with flashing eyes, as though he really expected an answer from him.

“Enough!” he cried, suddenly, to the whole party. “It’s my fault . . . more than anyone’s. Lebedyev, here’s the keys (he took out his purse and from it a steel ring with three or four keys upon it). “Here, the last but one. . . . Kolya will show you. . . . Kolya, where is Kolya?” cried he, looking at Kolya, and not seeing him. “\fes . . . he’ll show you. He packed my bag with me, yesterday. Take him, Kolya. In the prince’s study, under the table ... is my bag . . . with this key ... at the bottom in a little box ... my pistol and powder-horn. He packed it himself, Mr. Lebedvev; he’ll show vou. But on condition that to-

morrow, early, when I start for Petersburg, you’ll give me back my pistol. Do you hear? I do it for the prince, not for you.”

“Well, that’s better,” said Lebedyev, snatching at the key; and, laughing viciously, he ran into the next room.

Kolya would have remained, he tried to say something, but Lebedyev drew him away.

Ippolit looked at the laughing revellers. Myshkin noticed that his teeth were chattering, as though he were in a terrible chill.

“What wretches they all are!” Ippolit whispered to Myshkin, in a frenzy.

When he spoke to Myshkin, he bent right over and whispered to him.

“Leave them. You’re very weak....”

“In a minute, in a minute. ... I’m going in a minute.”

Suddenly he put his arms round Myshkin.

“You think I am mad perhaps?” He looked at him strangely, laughing.

“No, but you....”

“In a minute, in a minute, be quiet; don’t say anything, stand still. I want to look you in the eyes. ... Stand like that, and let me look. I say good-bye to man.”

He stood and looked fixedly at Myshkin for ten seconds without speaking. Very pale, his hair soaked with sweat, he caught somehow strangely at Myshkin’s hand with his as though afraid to let him go.

“Ippolit, Ippolit, what is the matter with you?” cried Myshkin.

“Directly.... Enough.... I’m going to bed. I’ll have one drink to greet the sun. ... I want to, I want to . . . let me be.”

He quickly caught up a glass from the table, sprang up from his seat, and in one instant he was at the verandah steps. Myshkin was about to run after him, but it happened, as though by design, that, at that moment “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch held out his hand to say good-bye to him. One second after, there was a general outcry on the verandah. Then followed a minute of extreme consternation.

This was what had happened. On reaching the verandah steps, Ippolit had stopped short, with his left hand holding the glass and his right hand in his coat pocket. Keller afterwards declared that Ippolit had that hand in his righthand pocket before, while he was talking to Myshkin, and clutching at his shoulder and his collar with his left hand, and that right hand in his pocket, so Keller declared, had first raised a faint suspicion in him. However that may have been, some uneasiness made him run after Ippolit. But he was too late. He only saw something suddenly shining in Ippolit’s right hand, and at the same second, a little pocket pistol was against his temple. Keller rushed to seize his hand, but, at that second, Ippolit pressed the trigger. There was the sound of the sharp, short click of the trigger, but no shot followed. When Keller seized Ippolit, the young man fell into his arms, apparently unconscious, perhaps really imagining that he was killed. The pistol was already in Keller’s hand. Ippolit was held up, a chair was brought. They sat him down on it, and all crowded round, shouting and asking questions. All had heard the click of the trigger, and saw the man alive without a scratch. Ippolit himself sat, not understanding what was going on, staring blankly at all around him. Lebedyev and Kolya ran up at that instant.

“Did it miss fire?” people were asking.

“Perhaps it was not loaded?” others surmised.

“It was loaded,” Keller pronounced, examining the pistol, “but...”

“Can it have missed fire?”

“There was no cap in it,” Keller announced.

It is hard to describe the piteous scene that followed. The general pause of the first moment was quickly succeeded by laughter. Some of the party positively roared, and seemed to find a malignant pleasure in the position. Ippolit sobbed as though he were in hysterics, wrung his hands, rushed up to every one, even to Ferdyshtchenko, whom he clutched with both hands, swearing that he had forgotten, “forgotten quite accidentally and not on purpose,” to put in the cap; that “he had all the caps here, in his waistcoat

pocket, a dozen of them (he showed them to everyone about him). But he hadn't put them in before, for fear of its going off by accident in his pocket; that he had counted on always having time to put a cap in, and he had suddenly forgotten it." He rushed up to Myshkin, to "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, besought Keller to give him back the pistol, that he miqht show them all that "his honour, his honour" . . . that he was now "dishonoured forever."

He fell unconscious at last. He was carried into Myshkin's study and Lebedyev, completely sobered, sent at once for a doctor, while he himself remained by the invalid's bedside with his daughter, his son, Burdovsky, and the general. When Ippolit had been carried out unconscious, Keller stood in the middle of the room, and with positive inspiration pronounced, dwelling on every word, and emphasizing it so that all might hear.

"Gentlemen! If any one of you ever once insinuates in my presence that the cap was forgotten intentionally, and maintains that the unhappy young man was acting a farce, he will have to deal with me."

But no one answered him. The guests were at last leaving in a crowd and in haste. Ptitsyn, Ganya, and Rogozhi n set off together.

Myshkin was much surprised that Yevgeny Pavlovitch had changed his mind and was going away without speaking to him.

"You wanted to speak to me when the others had gone, didn't you?" he asked him.

"Just so," said Yevgeny Pavlovitch, suddenly sitting down and making Myshkin sit beside him. "But now I have changed my mind for a time. I confess that I have had rather a shock, and so have you. My thoughts are in a tangle. Besides, what I want to discuss with you is too important a matter to me and to you too. "Vbu see, prince, for once in my life, I want to do something absolutely honest, that is, something absolutely without any ulterior motive; and, well, I think I'm not quite capable of doing anything perfectly honest at this moment, and you too perhaps . . . and so . . . well, we'll discuss it later. Perhaps the matter will be made more plain later to both of us, if we wait another three days which I shall spend now in Petersburg."

Then he got up from his chair again, so that it seemed strange he should have sat down. Myshkin fancied, too, that "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch was annoyed and irritated, that there was a hostile look in his eyes which had not been there before.

"By the way, are you going to the patient now?"

“Yes.... I’m afraid,” said Myshkin.

“Don’t be afraid. He’ll live another six weeks, and he may even get well here. But the best thing you can do is to get rid of him to-morrow.”

“Perhaps I really did egg him on by . . . not saying anything. He may have thought I didn’t believe he would shoot himself? What do you think, Yevgeny Pavlovitch?”

“Not at all. It’s too good-natured of you to worry about it. I’ve heard tell of such things, but I’ve never in real life seen a man shoot himself on purpose to win applause, or from spite because he was not applauded for it. And, what’s more, I wouldn’t have believed in such an open exhibition of feebleness. But you’d better get rid of him to-morrow all the same.”

“Do you think he’ll shoot himself again?”

“No, he won’t do it now. But be on your guard with these home-bred Lasseners of ours. I repeat, crime is only too often the refuge of these mediocre, impatient and greedy nonentities.”

“Is he a Lassener?”

“The essence is the same, though the emplois are different, perhaps. You’ll see whether this gentleman isn’t capable of murdering a dozen people simplv as a ‘feat,’ as he read us just now in his ‘Explanation.’ Those words of his won’t let me sleep now.”

“You are too anxious perhaps.”

“You’re a wonderful person, prince. You don’t believe he’s capable of killing a dozen persons now.”

“I’m afraid to answer you. It’s all very strange; but.

“Well, as you like, as you like!” Yevgeny Pavlovitch concluded irritably. “Besides, you’re such a valiant person. Don’t you be one of the dozen, that’s all!”

“It’s most likely he won’t kill anyone,” said Myshkin, looking dreamily at Yevgeny Pavlovitch.

The latter laughed angrily.

“Good-bye! It’s time I was off. Did you notice he bequeathed a copy of his ‘Explanation’ to Aglaia Ivanovna?”

“Yes, I did, and ... lam thinking about it.”

“That’s right, in case of the ‘dozen,’” laughed Yevgeny Pavlovitch again, and he went out.

An hour later, when it was already past three o’clock, Myshkin went out into the park. He had tried to sleep, but was kept awake by the violent

throbbing of his heart. Everything was quiet in the house, and,

as far as possible, tranquillity had been restored. The sick boy had fallen asleep, and the doctor declared that there was no special danger. Lebedyev, Kolya, and Burdovsky lay down in the invalid's room, so as to take turns in watching him. There was nothing to be afraid of.

But Myshkin's uneasiness grew from moment to moment. He wandered in the park, looking absently about him, and stopped in surprise when he reached the open space before the station, and saw the rows of seats, and the music-stands of the orchestra.

He was impressed by the scene, which struck him as horribly squalid. He turned back, and going by the path along which he had walked the day before with the Epanchins, he reached the green seat which had been fixed as the trysting place; sat down on it, and suddenly laughed out loud, which at once made him feel extremely indignant with himself. His dejection persisted; he longed to go away ... he knew not where. In a tree overhead a bird was singing, and he began looking for it among the leaves. All at once the bird darted out of the tree, and at the same instant he recalled the "fly in the warm sunshine," of which Ippolit had written, that "it knew its place and took part in the general chorus, but he alone was an outcast." The phrase had struck him at the time; and he recalled it now. One long-forgotten memory stirred within him and suddenly rose up clear before him.

It was in Switzerland, during his first year, in the early part of it, in fact. Then he was almost like an idiot; he could not even speak properly — and sometimes could not understand what was wanted of him. He once went up into the mountain-side, on a bright, sunny day, and walked a long time, his mind possessed with an agonizing but unformulated idea. Before him was the brilliant sky, below, the lake, and all around an horizon, bright and boundless which seemed to have no ending. He gazed a long time in distress. He remembered now how he had stretched out his hand to that bright, infinite blue, and had shed tears. What tortured him was that he was utterly outside all this. What was this festival? what was this grand, everlasting pageant to which there was no end, to which he had always, from his earliest childhood, been drawn and in which he could never take part? Every morning the same bright sun rises, every morning the same rainbow in the waterfall;

every evening that highest snow mountain glows, with a flush of purple against the distant sky, every "little fly that buzzes about him in the hot

sunshine has its part in the chorus; knows its place, loves it and is happy." Every blade of grass grows and is happy! Everything has its path, and everything knows its path, and with a song goes forth, and with a song returns. Only he knows nothing, and understands nothing, neither men nor sounds; he is outside it all, and an outcast. Oh, of course he could not say it then in those words, could not utter his question. He suffered dumbly, not comprehending; but now it seemed to him that he had said all this at the time, those very words, and that that phrase about the "fly" Ippolit took from him; from his words then and his tears. He felt sure of it, and for some reason the thought set his heart beating.

He dropped asleep on the seat, but his agitation still persisted. Just as he was falling asleep he remembered that Ippolit was to kill a dozen people, and smiled at the absurdity of the notion. There was an exquisite brightness and stillness all round him, only broken by the rustle of the leaves which seemed to make it even more silent and solitary He had many dreams, and all were disquieting, and at times made him start uneasily. At last a woman came to him; he knew her, and knowing her was torture; he knew her name, and would have known her anywhere — but strange to say — her face now was not the same as he had always known it, and he felt an agonising reluctance to acknowledge her as the same woman. There was such remorse and horror in this face that it seemed as though she must be a fearful criminal, and had just committed some awful crime. Tears quivered on her pale cheeks; she beckoned to him and put her finger to her lips, as though to warn him to follow her quietly. His heart turned cold; nothing, nothing on earth would induce him to admit that she was a criminal; but he felt that something awful was about to happen, that would ruin his whole life. She seemed anxious to show him something not far off, in the park. He got up to follow her, and suddenly he heard beside him the sound of a gay, fresh laugh; he felt a hand in his. He seized the hand, pressed it tight and waked up. Aglaia was standing before him, laughing aloud.

CHAPTER 8

SHE WAS laughing, but she was indignant.

“Asleep! You were asleep!” she cried with disdainful wonder.

“It’s you!” muttered Myshkin, hardly awake, and recognising her with surprise. “Oh, yes! We were going to meet.... I’ve been asleep here.”

“So I see.”

“Did no one wake me but you? Has no one been here but you? I thought there was .. . another woman here.”

“Another woman’s been here?”

At last he was wide awake.

“It was only a dream,” he said pensively. “Strange at such a moment to have such a dream. ... Sit down!”

He took her hand and made her sit down on the seat; he sat beside her and sank into thought. Aglaia did not begin the conversation, but scrutinised her companion intently. He gazed at her too, though sometimes his eyes looked as though he did not see her. She began to flush.

“Oh, yes,” said Myshkin, starting, “Ippolit shot himself.”

“When? In your rooms?” she asked, but without great surprise. “He was alive only yesterday evening, wasn’t he? How could you sleep after such a thing?” she cried, with sudden animation.

“But he’s not dead, you know. The pistol did not go off.”

Aglaia insisted on Myshkin’s at once giving her a minute account of what had happened the previous evening. She continually urged him on in his story, though she kept interrupting him with questions, almost always irrelevant. She listened with great interest to what Yevgeny Pavlovitch had said, and several times asked him to repeat it.

“Well, that’s enough! We must make haste,” she ended, after hearing everything. “We’ve only an hour to be here, till eight o’clock. For at eight I must be at home, so that they mayn’t know I’ve been sitting here, and I’ve come out with an object. I have a great deal to tell you. Only you’ve quite put me out now. About Ippolit, I think that his pistol was bound not to go off. It’s just like him. But you’re sure that he really meant to shoot himself, and that there was no deception about it?”

“There was no deception.”

“That’s more likely, indeed. So he wrote that you were to bring me his confession? Why didn’t you bring it?”

“Why, he’s not dead. I’ll ask him for it.”

“Be sure to bring it. And there is no need to ask him. He’ll certainly be delighted, for perhaps it was with that object he shot at himself, that I might read his confession afterwards. Please don’t laugh at me, I beg you, Lyov Nikolayevitch, because it may very well be so.”

“I’m not laughing, for I’m convinced myself that that may very likely be partly the reason.”

“You’re convinced! Do you really think so, too?”

Aglaia was extremely surprised.

She asked rapid questions, talked quickly, but sometimes seemed confused, and often did not finish her sentences. At times she seemed in haste to warn him of something. Altogether she was in extraordinary agitation, and, though she looked very bold and almost defiant, she was perhaps a little scared too. She was wearing a very plain every-day dress, which suited her extremely well. She was sitting on the edge of the seat, and she often started and blushed. Myshkin’s confirmation of her idea, that Ippolit had shot himself that she might read his confession afterwards, surprised her very much.

“Of course,” Myshkin explained, “he wanted us all to praise him, as well as you....”

“Praise him?”

“That is . . . how shall I tell you ... it is very difficult to explain. Only he certainly wanted every one to come round him and tell him that they loved him very much and respected him; he longed for them all to beg him to remain alive. It may very well be that he had you in his mind more than anyone, because he mentioned you at such a moment . . . though, perhaps, he didn’t know himself that he had you in mind.”

“That I don’t understand at all; that he had it in his mind and didn’t know he had it in his mind. I think I

do understand, though. Do you know that thirty times I dreamed of poisoning myself, when I was only thirteen, and writing it all in a letter to my parents. And I, too, thought how I would lie in my coffin, and they would all weep over me, and blame themselves for having been too cruel to me. . . . Why are you smiling again?” she added quickly, frowning. “What

do you think about when you dream by yourself? Perhaps you fancy yourself a field-marshal, and dream you've conquered Napoleon?"

"Well, honour bright, I do dream of that, especially when I'm dropping asleep," said Myshkin, laughing. "Only it's always the Austrians I conquer, not Napoleon."

"I'm in no mood for joking with you, Lyov Nikolayevitch. I'll see Ippolit myself. I beg you to tell him so. I think it's very horrid on your part, for it's very brutal to look on and judge a man's soul, as you judge Ippolit. "Vbu have no tenderness, nothing but truth, and so you judge unjustly."

Myshkin pondered.

"I think you're unfair to me," he said. "Why, I see no harm in his thinking in that way, because all people are inclined to think like that. Besides, perhaps he didn't think like that at all, but only wanted it. . . . He longed for the last time to come near to men, to win their respect and love. Those are very good feelings, you know. Only it somehow all went wrong. It's his illness, and something else, perhaps! Besides, everything always goes right with some people, while with others nothing ever comes off...."

"You mean that for yourself, I suppose?" observed Aglaia.

"Yes, I do," answered Myshkin, not conscious of any sarcasm in the question.

"But I wouldn't have fallen asleep in your place, anyway. It shows that wherever you pitch you fall asleep on the spot. It's not at all nice of you."

"But I haven't slept all night. I walked and walked afterwards. I've been where the music was."

"What music?"

"Where the band was playing, yesterday. Then I came here, sat down, thought and thought, and fell asleep."

"Oh, so that's how it was! That makes it a little better. But why did you go to the band-stand?"

"I don't know. I happened to."

"Very well, very well, afterwards; you keep interrupting me. And what does it matter to me if you did go to the band-stand? What woman was it you were dreaming about?"

"It was ... you've seen her."

"I understand. I quite understand. "Vbu think a lot. .. . How did you dream of her? What was she doing? Though I don't care to know," she snapped out, with an airof vexation. "Don't interrupt me...."

She waited a little, as though to pluck up her courage or to overcome her vexation.

“I’ll tell you what I asked you to come for; I want to make a proposition that you should be my friend. Why are you staring at me all of a sudden?” she asked, almost wrathfully.

Myshkin certainly was watching her very intently at that moment, observing that she had begun to flush hotly again. In such cases, the more she blushed, the more angry she seemed with herself, and it was unmistakably apparent in her flashing eyes. Usually she transferred her anger to the person she was talking to, whether he were to blame or not, and would begin quarrelling with him. Being aware of her own awkwardness and desperate shyness and very conscious of it, she was, as a rule, not very ready to enter into conversation, and was more silent than her sisters, sometimes too silent, indeed. When, particularly in such delicate cases, she was positively obliged to speak, she would begin the conversation with marked haughtiness and with a sort of defiance. She always felt beforehand when she was beginning or about to begin to blush.

“Perhaps you don’t care to accept my proposition?” She looked haughtily at Myshkin.

“Oh, yes, I should like to. Only it was quite unnecessary.. .. That is, I shouldn’t have thought you need make such a proposition,” said Myshkin in confusion.

“What did you think then? What do you suppose I asked you to come here for? What’s in your mind? But perhaps you look on me as a little fool, as they all do at home?”

“I didn’t know that they look on you as a fool. I... I don’t look on you so.”

“You don’t look on me so? Very clever on your part. Particularly cleverly expressed.”

“I think you may be quite clever at times,” Myshkin went on. “You said somethinq very clever just now.

\bu were speaking of my uncertainty about Ippolit. There’s nothing but truth in it, and so it’s unjust.’ I shall remember that and think it over.”

Aglaia suddenly crimsoned with pleasure. All such transitions of feeling were artlessly apparent in her, and followed one another with extraordinary rapidity. Myshkin, too, was delighted, and positively laughed with pleasure, watching her.

“Listen,” she began again. “I’ve been waiting for a long time to tell you all about it. I’ve been wanting to, ever since you wrote me that letter, and even before then.... You heard half of it yesterday. I consider you the most honest and truthful of men, more honest and truthful than anyone; and if they do say that your mind . . . that is, that you’re sometimes afflicted in your mind, it’s unjust. I made up my mind about that, and disputed with others, because, though you really are mentally afflicted (you won’t be angry at that, of course; I’m speaking from a higher point of view), yet the mind that matters is better in you than in any of them. It’s something, in fact, they have never dreamed of. For there are two sorts of mind: one that matters, and one that doesn’t matter. Is that so? That is so, isn’t it?”

“Perhaps it is,” Myshkin articulated faintly. His heart was trembling and throbbing violently.

“I was sure you would understand,” she went on impressively. “Prince S. and “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch don’t understand about those two sorts of mind, nor Alexandra either, but, only fancy, maman understood.”

“You’re very like Lizaveta Prokofeyvna.”

“How so? Really?” Aglaia asked, surprised.

“Yes, really.”

“Thank you,” she said, after a moment’s thought. “I am very glad I’m like maman. “Vbu have a great respect for her, then?” she added, quite unconscious of the naivete of the question.

“Very great. And I’m glad you saw it so directly.”

“And I’m glad, because I’ve noticed that people sometimes . . . laugh at her. But let me tell you what matters most. I’ve been thinking a long time, and at last I’ve picked you out. I don’t want them to laugh at me at home. I don’t want them to look on me as a little fool. I don’t want them to tease me.... I realized it all at once, and refused Yevgeny Pavlovitch point-

blank, because I don’t want to be continually being married! I want... I want. . . Well, I want to run away from home, and I’ve chosen you to help me.”

“Run away from home!” cried Myshkin.

“Yes, yes, yes! Run away from home,” she cried, at once flaring up with extraordinary anger. “I can’t bear, I can’t bear their continually making me blush there. I don’t want to blush before them, or before Prince S. or before Yevgeny Pavlovitch, or before anyone, and so I’ve chosen you. To you I want to tell everything, everything, even the most important thing, when I

want to, and you must hide nothing from me on your side. I want, with one person at least, to speak freely of everything, as I can to myself. They suddenly began saying that I was waiting for you, and that I loved you. That began before you came here, though I didn't show them the letter. And now they're all talking about it. I want to be bold, and not to be afraid of anything. I don't want to go to their balls. I want to be of use. I've been wanting to get away for a long time. For twenty years I've been bottled up at home, and they keep trying to marry me. I've been thinking of running away since I was fourteen, though I was a silly. Now I've worked it all out, and was waiting for you to ask you all about foreign countries. I have never seen a Gothic cathedral. I want to go to Rome. I want to visit all the learned societies. I want to study in Paris. I was preparing myself and studying all last year, and I've read a great many books. I have read all the forbidden books. Alexandra and Adelaida read any books — they're allowed to. But I am not allowed to read all of them; they supervise me. I don't want to quarrel with my sisters, but I told my father and mother long ago that I want to make a complete change in my social position. I propose to take up teaching, and I've been reckoning on you because you said you were fond of children. Couldn't we go in for education together, not at once perhaps, but in the future? We should be doing good together. I don't want to be a general's daughter. Tell me, are you a very learned person?"

"Oh, not at all."

"That's a pity, for I thought. . . how was it I thought so? "Vbu'll be my guide all the same because I have chosen you."

"That's absurd, Aglaia Ivanovna."

"I want to run away from home — I want to," she cried, and again her eyes flashed. "If you won't consent, I shall marry Gavril Ardalionovitch. I don't want to be looked upon as a horrid girl at home, and be accused of goodness knows what."

"Are you mad!" cried Myshkin, almost leaping up from his seat. "What are you accused of? Who accuses you?"

"Every one at home. Mother, my sisters, father, Prince S. even your horrid Kolya. If they don't say so straight out, they think so. I told them all so to their faces, mother and father too. Maman was ill for a whole day afterwards. And next day Alexandra and papa told me that I didn't understand what nonsense I was talking and what words I was speaking. And I told them straight out that I understood everything; all sorts of words;

that I’m not a little girl; that I read two novels of Paul de Kock two years ago, so as to find out everything. Maman almost fainted when she heard me.”

A strange idea suddenly occurred to Myshkin. He looked intently at Aglaia and smiled.

He could scarcely believe that the haughty girl who had once so proudly and disdainfully read him Gavril Ardalionovitch’s letter was actually sitting before him. He could not conceive that the disdainful, stern beauty could turn out to be such a baby, a baby, who perhaps did not even nowunderstand some words.

“Have you always lived at home, Aglaia Ivanovna?” he asked. “I mean, did you never go to school or study at an institute?”

“I’ve never been anywhere. I’ve always sat at home, as though I were corked up in a bottle, and I’m to be married straight out of the bottle. Why are you laughing again? I notice that you, too, seem to be laughing at me, and taking their part,” she added, frowning menacingly. “Don’t make me angry. I don’t know what’s the matter with me as it is. I’m certain you came here fully persuaded that I am in love with you, and was making a tryst with you,” she snapped out irritably.

“I certainly was afraid of that yesterday,” Myshkin blurted out with simplicity. (He was very much confused.) “But lam convinced to-day that you ...”

“What?” cried Aglaia, and her lower lip began trembling. “You were afraid that I . . . You dared to imagine that I . . . Good heavens! You suspected perhaps that I invited you here to ensnare you, so that we might be found here afterwards, and that you might be forced to marry me.”

“Aglaia Ivanovna! Aren’t you ashamed? How could such a nasty idea arise in your pure, innocent heart? I’d swear that you don’t believe one word of it ... and you don’t know what you’re saying!”

Aglaia sat, looking doggedly at the ground, as though frightened herself at what she had said.

“I’m not ashamed at all,” she muttered. “How do you know that my heart is so innocent? How dared you send me a love-letter, that time?”

“A love-letter? My letter — a love-letter! That letter was most respectful; that letter was the outpouring of my heart at the bitterest moment of my life! I thought of you then as of some light... I...”

“Oh, very well, very well,” she interrupted suddenly, in a quite different, completely penitent and almost frightened tone. She turned to him, though still trying to avoid looking at him, and seemed on the point of touching his shoulder, to beg him more persuasively not to be angry with her.

“It’s all right,” she added, terribly shamefaced. “I feel I used a very stupid expression. I said that just.. . to test vou. Take it as thouqh it were unsaid. If I

offended you, forgive me. Don’t look straight at me, please. Turn away. You said that was a very nasty idea. I said it on purpose to vex you. Sometimes I’m afraid of what I’m going to say myself, then all at once I say it. \bu said just now that you wrote that letter at the most painful moment of your life. I know what moment it was,” she said softly, looking at the ground again.

“Oh, if you could know everything!”

“I do know everything!” she cried, with renewed excitement. “\bu’d been living for a whole month in the same flat with that horrid woman with whom you ran away....”

She did not turn red this time, but turned pale as she uttered the words, and she stood up as though she did not know what she was doing, but recollecting herself, sat down again; for a long time her lip was still quivering. The silence lasted a minute. Myshkin was greatly taken aback by the suddenness of her outburst, and did not know how to account for it.

“I don’t love you at all,” she said suddenly, as though rapping out the phrase.

Myshkin made no answer; again they were silent for a minute.

“I love Gavril Ardalionovitch . . ,” she said, speaking hurriedly, but scarcely audibly, bending her head still lower.

“That’s not true,” answered Myshkin, also almost whispering.

“Then I’m lying? That’s true. I gave him my word the day before yesterday, on this very seat.”

Myshkin was frightened, and pondered a minute.

“That’s not true,” he repeated, with decision. “You’ve invented all that.”

“You’re wonderfully polite. Let me tell you he’s reformed. He loves me more than his life. He burnt his hand before my eyes to show me that he loved me more than his life.”

“Burnt his hand?”

“Yes, his hand. “Vbu may believe it or not — I don’t care.”

Myshkin was silent again. There was no trace of jesting in Aglaia's words. She was angry.

"Why, did he bring a candle with him, if he did it here? I don't see how else he could ..."

"Yes ... he did. What is there unlikelyabout it?"

"A whole one, in a candlestick?"

"Oh, well . . . no . . . half a candle ... a candle-end ... a whole one. It doesn't matter. Let me alone! He brought matches, too, if you like. He lighted the candle, and he left his finger in it for half an hour. Is there anything impossible in that?"

"I saw him yesterday. His fingers were all right."

Aglaia suddenly went off into a peal of laughter, like a child.

"Do you know why I told you that fib, just now?" She suddenly turned to Myshkin with childlike confidence, and the laugh still quivering on her lips. "Because, when you are lying, if you skilfully put in something not quite ordinary, something eccentric, something, you know, that never has happened, or very rarely, it makes the lie sound much more probable. I've noticed that. It didn't answer with me because I didn't do it properly..."

Suddenly she frowned again, as though recollecting herself.

"When," she turned to Myshkin, looking seriously and even mournfully at him, "when I read you about the 'poor knight,' though I did mean to applaud you for one thing, yet I wanted also to put you to shame for your behaviour, and to show you I knew all about it."

"You are very unjust to me ... to that unhappy woman of whom you spoke so horribly just now, Aglaia."

"It's because I know all about it, all about it. That's why I spoke like that! I know that six months ago you offered her your hand in the presence of every one. Don't interrupt me. "Vbu see, I speak without comment. After that she ran away with Rogozhin; then you lived with her in some country place or in the town, and she went away from you to some one else (Aglaia blushed painfully); then she went back again to Rogozhin who loves her like ... like a madman. Then you, a very clever person, too . . . galloped after her here, as soon as you heard she had gone back to Petersburg. Yesterday evening you rushed to defend her, and just now you were dreaming about her. . . . You see, I know all about it; it was for her sake, for her sake you came here, wasn't it?"

“Yes, for her sake,” Myshkin answered softly, looking down mournfully and dreamily, not suspecting with what burninq eves Aqlaia qlared at him.

“For her sake, to find out. ... I don’t believe in her being happy with Rogozhin though. ... In short, I don’t know what I could do for her here, or how I could help her, but I came.”

He started and looked at Aglaia; she was listening to him with a look of hatred.

“If you came, not knowing why, then you love her very much,” she brought out at last.

“No,” answered Myshkin, “no, I don’t love her. Oh, if you only knew with what horror I recall the time I spent with her!”

A shudder ran down him, as he uttered the words.

“Tell me all,” said Aglaia.

“There is nothing in it you might not hear about. Why I wanted to tell you all about it, and only you, I don’t know. Perhaps because I really did love you very much. That unhappy woman is firmly convinced that she is the most fallen, the most vicious creature in the whole world. Oh, don’t cry shame on her, don’t throw stones at her! She has tortured herself too much from the consciousness of her undeserved shame! And, my God, she’s not to blame! Oh, she’s crying out every minute in her frenzy that she doesn’t admit going wrong, that she was the victim of others, the victim of a depraved and wicked man. But whatever she may say to you, believe me, she’s the first to disbelieve it, and to believe with her whole conscience that she is ... to blame. When I tried to dispel that gloomy delusion, it threw her into such misery that my heart will always ache when I remember that awful time. It’s as though my heart had been stabbed once for all. She ran away from me. Do you know what for? Simply to show me that she was a degraded creature. But the most awful thing is that perhaps she didn’t even know herself that she only wanted to prove that to me, but ran away because she had an irresistible inner craving to do something shameful, so as to say to herself at once, There, you’ve done something shameful again, so you’re a degraded creature!’ Oh, perhaps you won’t understand this, Aglaia. Do you know that in that continual consciousness of shame there is perhaps a sort of awful, unnatural enjoyment for her, a sort of revenge on some one. Sometimes I did bring her to seeing light round her once more, as it were. But she would grow restive again at once, and even came to accusing me bitterly of setting myself up above her (though I had no

thought of such a thing) and told me in so many words at last, when I offered her marriage, that she didn’t want condescending sympathy or help from anyone, nor to be elevated to anyone’s level. \bu saw her yesterday. Do you think she’s happy with that set, that they are fitting company for her? \bu don’t know how well educated she is, and what she can understand! She really surprised me sometimes.”

“Did you ever then preach her such . . . sermons?”

“Oh, no,” Myshkin went on dreamily, not observing the tone and the question. “I hardly ever spoke. I often wanted to speak, but I really didn’t know sometimes what to say. You know, in some cases it is better not to speak at all. Oh, I loved her; oh, I loved her very much, but afterwards .. . afterwards .. . afterwards she guessed it all.”

“What did she guess?”

“That I only pitied her, but that I . . . don’t love her any more.”

“How do you know? Perhaps she really fell in love with that... landowner she went away with?”

“No, I know all about it. She was only laughing at him.”

“And did she never laugh at you?”

“N-no. She used to laugh in anger. Oh, then she would reproach me horribly, in a fury — and she was wretched herself! But . . . afterwards . . . Oh, don’t remind me, don’t remind me of that!”

He hid his face in his hands.

“And do you know that she writes letters to me almost everyday?”

“Then it is true!” cried Myshkin, in dismay. “I heard so, but I wouldn’t believe it.”

“From whom did you hear it?” Aglaia asked, scared.

“Rogozhin said so yesterday, but not quite definitely.”

“Yesterday? Yesterday morning? What time yesterday? Before the band played, or after?”

“Afterwards. In the evening, past eleven.”

“Oh, if it was Rogozhin. . . . But do you know what she writes to me in these letters.”

“I shouldn’t be surprised at anything. She’s insane.”

“Here are the letters.” Aglaia pulled three letters in three envelopes out of her pocket and threw them down before Myshkin. “For the last week, she’s been beseeching, imploring, coaxing me to marry you. She . . . Oh, well, she’s clever, though she’s insane. And you’re right in saying she’s

much cleverer than I am. . . . She writes that she's in love with me, that she tries every day to get a chance of seeing me even in the distance. She writes that you love me, that she knows it, that she noticed it long ago, that you used to talk to her about me then. She wants to see you happy. She's certain that only I can make you happy. . . . She writes so wildly... so strangely . . . I haven't shown her letters to anyone. I've been waiting for you. Do you know what this means? Can you guess?"

"It's madness, a proof of her insanity," Myshkin brought out, and his lips began to tremble.

"You're not crying now, are you?"

"No, Aglaia. No. I'm not crying." Myshkin looked at her.

"What am I to do about it? What do you advise me? I can't go on getting these letters!"

"Oh, leave her alone, I entreat you!" cried Myshkin. "What can you do in this darkness? I'll do all I can to prevent her writing to you again."

"Then you're a man of no heart!" cried Aglaia. "Surely you must see that she's not in love with me, but that she loves you, only you. How can you have noticed everything in her and not have seen that? Do you know what it is, what these letters mean? It's jealousy. It's more than jealousy! She ... do you suppose she'd really marry Rogozhin as she writes here in her letters? She'd kill herself the day after our wedding!"

Myshkin started; his heart stood still. But he gazed in amazement at Aglaia. It was strange to him to realize that the child was so fully a woman.

"God knows, Aglaia, that to bring peace back to her and make her happy, I would give up my life. But ... I can't love her now, and she knows it!"

"Then sacrifice yourself, it's just in your line! You're such a charitable person! And don't call me Aglaia .. . \bu called me simply Aglaia just now. \bu ought to raise her up, you are bound to. You ought to go away with her again so as to give peace and calm to her heart. Why, you love her, you know!"

"I can't sacrifice myself like that, though I did want to at one time . . . and perhaps I want to still. But I

know for certain that with me she'll be lost, and so I leave her. I was to have seen her to-day at seven o'clock; but perhaps I won't go now. In her pride she will never forgive me for my love — and we shall both come to ruin. That's abnormal, but everything here is abnormal. "Vbu say she loves

me, but is this love? Can there be such love after what I have gone through? No, it's something else, not love!"

"How pale you've grown!" Aglaia cried, in sudden dismay.

"It's nothing. I've not had much sleep. I'm exhausted . . . We really did talk about you then, Aglaia ..."

"So that's true? You actually could talk to her about me and . . . and how could you care for me when you had only seen me once?"

"I don't know how. In my darkness then I dreamed. ... I had an illusion perhaps of a new dawn. I don't know how I thought of you at first. It was the truth I wrote you then, that I didn't know. All that was only a dream, from the horror then. . . . Afterwards I began to work. I shouldn't have come here for three years. .

"Then you've come for her sake?"

And there was a quiver in Aglaia's voice.

"Yes, for her sake."

Two minutes of gloomy silence on both sides followed. Aglaia got up from the seat.

"You may say," she began in an unsteady voice, "you may believe that that . . . your woman ... is insane, but I have nothing to do with her insane fancies. ... I beg you, Lyov Nikolayevitch, to take these three letters and fling them back to her from me! And if," Aglaia cried suddenly, "and if she dares write me a single line again, tell her I shall complain to my father, and have her put into a House of Correction...."

Myshkin jumped up, and gazed in alarm at Aglaia's sudden fury; a mist seemed to fall before his eyes.

"You can't feel like that. ... It's not true!" he muttered.

"It's the truth! It's the truth!" screamed Aglaia, almost beside herself.

"What's the truth? What truth?" They heard a frightened voice saying near them.

Lizaveta Prokofyevna stood before them.

"It's the truth that I'm going to marry Gavril Ardalionovitch! That I love Gavril Ardalionovitch, and that I'm going to run away from home with him tomorrow!" cried Aglaia, flying out at her. "Do you hear? Is your curiosity satisfied? Is that enough for you?"

And she ran home.

"No, my friend, don't you go away," said Lizaveta Prokofyevna, detaining him, "you'll be so good as to give me an explanation. What have I

done to be so worried? I've been awake all night as it is."

Myshkin followed her.

CHAPTER 9

On REACHING home Lizaveta Prokofyevna stopped in the first room; she could get no further and sank on the couch perfectly limp, forgetting even to ask Myshkin to sit down. It was a rather large room, with a round table in the middle of it, with an open fireplace, with quantities of flowers on an etagere in the window, and with another glass door leading into the garden in the opposite wall. Adelaida and Alexandra came in at once, and looked inquiringly and with perplexity at their mother and Myshkin.

At their summer villa the girls usually got up about nine o'clock; but for the last three days Aglaia had been getting up earlier and going for a walk in the garden, not at seven o'clock, but at eight or even later. Lizaveta Prokofyevna, who really had been kept awake all night by her various worries, got up about eight o'clock on purpose to meet Aglaia in the garden, reckoning on her being up already; but she did not find her either in the garden or in her bedroom. At last she grew thoroughly alarmed and waked her daughters. From the servants she learnt that Aglaia Ivanovna had gone out into the park at seven o'clock. The girls laughed at their whimsical sister's new whim, and observed to their mother that Aglaia might very likely be angry, if she went to look for her in the park, and that she was probably with a book sitting on the green seat of which she had been talking the day before yesterday, and about which she had almost quarrelled with Prince S. because he saw nothing particularly picturesque about it. Coming upon the couple, and hearing her daughter's strange words, Lizaveta Prokofyevna was greatly alarmed for many reasons, but when she brought Myshkin home with her, she felt uneasy at having spoken openly about it. "After all, why should Aglaia not meet the prince in the park and talk to him, even if the interview had been arranged between them beforehand?"

"Don't imagine, my good friend," she braced herself to say, "that I brought you here to cross-examine you. After what happened yesterday I might well not have been anxious to see you for some time.

She could not go on for a moment.

"But you would very much like to know how I came to meet Aglaia Ivanovna this morning?" Myshkin completed her sentence with perfect serenity.

“Well, I did want to!” Lizaveta Prokofyevna flared up at once. “I am not afraid of speaking plainly. For I’m not insulting anyone, and I don’t want to offend anyone....”

“To be sure, you naturally want to know, without any offence; you are her mother. I met Aglaia Ivanovna this morning at the green seat, at seven o’clock, as she invited me to do so yesterday. She let me know by a note yesterday evening that she wanted to meet me to talk of an important matter. We met and had been talking for a whole hour of matters that only concerned Aglaia Ivanovna. That’s all.”

“Of course it’s all, my good sir, and without a shadow of doubt,” Madame Epanchin assented with dignity.

“Capital, prince,” said Aglaia, suddenly entering the room, “I thank you with all my heart for not believing that I would condescend to lie about it. Is that enough, maman, or do you intend to cross-examine him further?”

“You know that I have never yet had to blush for anything before you, though you would perhaps be glad if I had,” Lizaveta Prokofyevna replied impressively. “Good-bye, prince. Forgive me for having troubled you. And I hope you will remain convinced of my unchanged respect for you.”

Myshkin at once bowed to right and to left, and silently withdrew. Alexandra and Adelaida laughed and whispered together. Their mother looked sternly at them.

“Maman,” laughed Adelaida, “it was only that the prince made such magnificent bows; sometimes he’s so clumsy, but he was suddenly just like . . . like Yevgeny Pavlovitch.”

“Delicacy and dignity are taught by the heart and not by the dancing-master,” Lizaveta Prokofyevna summed up sententiously. And she went up to her room without even looking at Aglaia.

When Myshkin got home about nine o’clock he found Vera Lukyanovna and the servant on the verandah. They were sweeping up and clearing away after the disorder of the previous evening.

“Thank goodness, we’ve had time to finish before you came!” said Vera joyfully.

“Good-morning; I feel a little giddy, I didn’t sleep well. I should like a nap.”

“Here, in the verandah, as you did yesterday? Good. I’ll tell them all not to wake you. Father’s gone off somewhere.”

The maid went away. Vera was about to follow her, but she turned and went anxiously up to Myshkin.

“Prince, don’t be hard on that... poorfellow; don’t send him away today.”

“I won’t on any account. It’s as he chooses.”

“He won’t do anything now, and . . . don’t be severe with him.”

“Certainly not, why should I?”

“And don’t laugh at him, that’s the chief thing.”

“Oh, I shouldn’t think of it.”

“I’m silly to speak of it to a man like you,” said Vera, flushing. “Though you’re tired,” she laughed,

half turning to go away, “your eyes are so nice at this moment... they look happy.”

“Do they, really?” Myshkin asked eagerly, and he laughed, delighted.

But Vera, who was as simple-hearted and blunt as a boy, was suddenly overcome with confusion, she turned redder and redder, and, still laughing, she went hurriedly away.

“What a . . . jolly girl,” thought Myshkin, and immediately forgot her. He went to the corner of the verandah where there stood a sofa with a little table beside it; he sat down, hid his face in his hands and sat so for some ten minutes. All at once, with haste and agitation, he took three letters out of his coat-pocket.

But again the door opened and Kolya came out. Myshkin was, as it were, relieved that he had to replace the letters in his pocket and put off the evil moment.

“Well, what an adventure!” said Kolya, sitting down on the sofa and going straight for the subject, as boys like him always do. “What do you think of Ippolit now? Have you no respect for him?”

“Why not. . . but, Kolya, I’m tired. . . . Besides, it’s too sad to begin about that again. . . . How is he, though?”

“He’s asleep and won’t wake for another two hours. I understand; you haven’t slept at home. “Vbu’ve been in the park ... it was the excitement, of course ... and no wonder!”

“How do you know that I have been walking in the park and haven’t been asleep?”

“Vera said so just now. She tried to persuade me not to come, but I couldn’t resist coming for a minute. I’ve been watching for the last two

hours by his bedside; now Kostya Lebedyev is taking his turn. Burdovsky has gone. Then lie down, prince, goodnight ... or rather day! Only, do you know, I'm amazed!"

"Of course ... all this...."

"No, prince, no. I'm amazed at his 'Confession.' Especially the part in which he spoke of Providence and the future life. There's a gigantic thought in it!"

Myshkin looked affectionately at Kolya who had no doubt come in to talk at once about the "gigantic thought."

"But it was not only the thought; it was the whole settinq of it! If it had been written bv Voltaire,

Rousseau, Proudhon, I shouldn't have been so much struck. But for a man who knows for certain that he has only ten minutes to talk like that — isn't that pride? Why, it's the loftiest assertion of personal dignity, it's regular defiance. . . . Yes, it's titanic strength of will! And after that to declare he left the cap out on purpose — it's base, incredible! But you know, he deceived us yesterday; he was sly. I didn't pack his bag with him, and I never saw the pistol. He packed everything up himself, so he took me quite off my guard. Vera says that you're going to let him stay here; I swear there'll be no danger, especially as we shall never leave him."

"And which of you have been with him in the night?"

"Kostya Lebedyev, Burdovsky, and I. Keller was there a little while, but he went off to Lebedyev's part to sleep, because there wasn't room for us all to lie down. Ferdyshtchenko, too, slept in Lebedyev's part of the house. He went off at seven. The general sleeps always at Lebedyev's — he's gone too. . . . Lebedyev will come out to you presently. He's been looking for you, I don't know why; he asked for you twice. Shall I let him in or not, as you want to sleep? I'm going to have a sleep, too. Oh, by the way, I should like to tell you one thing. I was surprised at the general this morning. I came out for a minute and suddenly met the general, and still so drunk that he didn't know me: he stood before me like a post; he fairly flew at me when he came to himself. 'How's the invalid?' said he, 'I came to ask after the invalid. . . .' I reported this and that. 'Well, that's all right,' he said, 'but what I really came out for, what I got up for was to warn you. I have reasons for supposing that one can't say everything before Mr. Ferdyshtchenko and . . . one must be on one's guard.' Do you understand, prince?"

“Really? But... it doesn’t matter to us.”

“Of course it doesn’t. We’re not masons! So I felt surprised at the general’s getting up on purpose in the night to wake me to tell me so.”

“Ferdyshtchenko has gone, you say?”

“At seven o’clock. He came in to see me on the way. I was sitting up with Ippolit. He said he was going to spend the day with Vilkin — there’s a drunken fellow here called Vilkin. Well, I’m off! And here’s Lukyan Timofeyitch. . . . The prince is sleepy,

Lukyan Timofeyitch, right about face!”

“Only for a moment, much honoured prince, on a matter of great consequence to me,” Lebedyev, coming in, pronounced in a forced undertone of great significance, and he bowed with dignity.

He had only just come in, and still held his hat in his hand. His face looked preoccupied and wore a peculiar, unusual expression of personal dignity. Myshkin asked him to sit down.

“You’ve inquired for me twice already? You are still anxious, perhaps, on account of what happened yesterday?”

“You mean on account of that boy, prince? Oh, no; yesterday my ideas were in confusion ... but to-day I don’t intend contrecarrying your propositions in anything whatever.”

“Contre — ? What did you say?”

“I said ‘contrecarrying,’ a French word, like many other words that have entered into the composition of the Russian language, but I don’t defend it.”

“What’s the matter with you this morning, Lebedyev? \bu’re so dignified and formal, and you speak with such solemnity and as if you were spelling it out,” said Myshkin, laughing.

“Nikolay Ardalionovitch!” Lebedyev addressed Kolya in a voice almost of emotion— “having to acquaint the prince with a matter affecting myself alone....”

“Of course, of course, it’s not my business! Goodbye, prince!” Kolya retired at once.

“I like the child for his tact,” pronounced Lebedyev, looking after him, “a quick boy, but inquisitive. I’ve encountered a severe calamity, respected prince, last night or this morning at daybreak; I hesitate to determine the precise hour.”

“What is it?”

“I have lost four hundred roubles from my coat-pocket, much honoured prince. We were keeping the day!” added Lebedyevwith a sour smile.

“You’ve lost four hundred roubles? That’s a pity.”

“Particularly for a poor man honourably maintaining his family by his own labour.”

“Of course, of course. How did it happen?”

“The fruits of drinking. I have come to you as my Providence, much honoured prince. I received a sum of four hundred roubles in silver from a debtor yesterday, at five o’clock in the afternoon, and I came back here bv train. I had mv pocket-book in mv pocket. When I changed my uniform for my indoor-coat, I put the money in the coat-pocket, intending that very evening to meet a call with it. ... I was expecting an agent.”

“By the way, Lukyan Timofeyitch, is it true you put an advertisement in the papers that you would lend money on gold or silver articles?”

“Through an agent; my own name does not appear, nor my address. The sum at my disposal is paltry, and in view of the increase of my family you will admit that a fair rate of interest....”

“Quite so, quite so. I only ask for information; forgive my interrupting.”

“The agent did not turn up. Meantime the wretched boy was brought here. I was already in an over-elevated condition, after dinner; the visitors came, we drank . . . tea, and . . . and I grew merry to my ruin. When Keller came in late and announced your fete day and the order for champagne, since I have a heart, dear and much-honoured prince (which you have probably remarked already, seeing that I have deserved you should), since I have a heart, I will not say feeling, but grateful — and I am proud of it — I

thought, well, to do greater respect to the coming festivity and, in expectation of congratulating you, by going to change my old housecoat, and putting on the uniform I had taken off on my return — which indeed I did, as you, prince, probably observed, seeing me the whole evening in my uniform. Changing my attire, I forgot the pocket-book in the coat-pocket ... so true it is that when God will chastise a man, He first of all deprives him of his reason; and only this morning, at half-past seven, on waking up, I jumped up like a madman, and snatched first thing at my coat — the pocket was empty! The pocket-book had vanished!”

“Ach, that is unpleasant!”

“Unpleasant indeed; and with true tact you have at once found the right word for it,” Lebedyev added, not without slyness.

“Well, but . . .” Myshkin said uneasily, pondering. “It’s serious, you know.”

“Serious indeed. Again, prince, you have found the word to describe....”

“Ach, don’t go on, Lukyan Timofeyitch. What is there to find? Words are not what matter. Do you think you could have dropped it out of your pocket when you were drunk?”

“I might have. Anything may happen when one is drunk, as you so sincerely express it, much honoured prince. But I beg you to consider if I had dropped the article out of my pocket when I changed my coat, the dropped article would have been on the floor. Where is that article?”

“Did you put it away perhaps in a drawer, in a table?”

“I’ve looked through everything, I’ve rummaged everywhere, though I hadn’t hidden it anywhere and hadn’t opened any drawer, as I distinctly remember.”

“Have you looked in your cupboard?”

“The first thing I did was to look in the cupboard, and I’ve looked there several times already. . . .And how could I have put it in the cupboard, truly honoured prince?”

“I must own, Lebedyev, this distresses me. Then some one must have found it on the floor?”

“Or picked it out of my pocket! Two alternatives.”

“This distresses me very much, for who. . . . That’s the question!”

“Not a doubt of it. That is the great question; you find the very word, the very notion, with wonderful exactitude, and you define the position, most illustrious prince.”

“Ach, Lukyan Timofeyitch, give over scoffing, this.

“Scoffing!” cried Lebedyev, clasping his hands.

“Well, well, that’s all right. I’m not angry. It’s quite another matter. ... I’m afraid for people. Whom do you suspect?”

“A most difficult and complicated question! The servant I can’t suspect; she was sitting in the kitchen. Nor my own children either....”

“I should think not!”

“One of the visitors then.”

“But is that possible?”

“Utterly, and in the highest degree impossible, but so it must be. I’m prepared to admit, however, I’m convinced, indeed, that it is a case of theft; it could not have been committed in the evening when we were all together,

but in the night or even in the morning by some one who passed the night here.”

“Ach, my God!”

“Burdovsky and Nikolay Ardalionovitch I naturally exclude; and they didn’t even come into my room.”

“I should think so! Even if thev had come! Who spent the night there?”

“Counting me, there were four of us in two adjoining rooms: the general, Keller, Mr. Ferdyshtchenko, and I. So it must have been one of us four!”

“Of the three, then. But which?”

“I counted myself for correctness and accuracy; but you will admit, prince, that I could hardly have robbed myself, though such cases do happen....”

“Ach, Lebedyev, how wearisome this is!” cried Myshkin. “Come to the point. Why do you drag it out?”

“So that leaves three, and first, Mr. Keller, an unsteady, drunken fellow, and in certain respects liberal, that is, as regards the pocket, but in other respects rather with chivalrous than liberal tendencies. He slept here in the sick man’s room, and only in the night came in here on the pretext of the bare floor being hard to sleep on.”

“You suspect him?”

“I did suspect him. When at eight o’clock I jumped up like a madman and struck myself on the forehead with my hands, I at once waked the general, who was sleeping the sleep of innocence. Taking into consideration the strange disappearance of Ferdyshtchenko, which of itself had aroused our suspicions, we both resolved to search Keller, who was lying sleeping like a top. We searched him thoroughly: he hadn’t a farthing in his pockets, and we couldn’t find one pocket without a hole in it. He’d a blue check cotton handkerchief in a disgusting condition; then a love-letter from a housemaid, threatening him and asking for money, and some bits of the article you heard. The general decided that he was innocent. To complete our investigation we waked the man himself by poking him violently. He could hardly understand what was the matter. He opened his mouth with a drunken air; the expression of his face was absurd and innocent, foolish even — it was not he!”

“Well, I am glad!” Myshkin sighed joyfully. “I was so afraid for him!”

“You were afraid? Then you had some grounds for it?” Lebedyev screwed up his eyes.

“Oh, no, I meant nothing,” faltered Myshkin. “I was very stupid to say I was afraid for him. Do me the favour, Lebedyev, not to repeat it to anyone....”

“Prince, prince! Your words are in my heart... at the bottom of my heart! It is a tomb! . . ,” said Lebedyev ecstatically, pressing his hat to his heart.

“Good, good. . . . Then it must have been Ferdyshtchenko? That is, I mean you suspect Ferdyshtchenko?”

“Who else?” Lebedyev articulated softly, looking intently at Myshkin.

“To be sure. . . . Who else is there ... but I mean again, what evidence is there?”

“There is evidence. First his disappearance at seven o’clock, or before seven in the morning.”

“I know; Kolya told me that he went in to him, and said that he was going to spend the day with. ... I forget with whom ... some friend of his.”

“Vilkin. So Nikolay Ardalionovitch has told you already?”

“He told me nothing about the theft.”

“He doesn’t know, for I’ve kept it secret for the time being. And so he went to Vilkin’s. It would seem there’s nothing strange in a drunken man’s going to see another drunken fellow like himself, even before daybreak, and without any reason. But here we have a clue: as he went he left the address . . . Now,

prince, follow up the question: why did he leave an address? Why did he purposely go out of his way to Nikolay Ardalionovitch to tell him, ‘I’m going to spend the day at Vilkin’s.’ Who would care to know that he was going away and to Vilkin’s? Why announce it? No, here we have the cunning, the cunning of a thief! It’s as much as to say, ‘I purposely don’t cover up my traces, so how can I be a thief? Would a thief leave word where he was going?’ It’s an excess of anxiety to avert suspicion, and to efface, so to say, his footprints in the sand. ... Do you understand me, honoured prince?”

“I understand, I quite understand, but you know that’s not enough.”

“A second clue. The track turns out to be a false one, and the address given was not exact. An hour later, that is, at eight o’clock, I was knocking at Vilkin’s; he lives here in Fifth Street, and I know him too. There was no sign of Ferdyshtchenko, though I did get out of the servant who was stone deaf that some one really had knocked one hour before, and been pretty vigorous, too, so that he broke the bell. But the servant wouldn’t open the

door, not wishing to wake Mr. Vilkin, and perhaps not anxious to qet up herself. It does happen so.”

“And is that all your evidence? It’s not much.”

“Prince, but who is there to suspect? Judge for yourself,” Lebedyev concluded, persuasively, and there was a gleam of something sly in his grin.

“You ought to search your rooms once more and look in every drawer,” Myshkin pronounced anxiously, after some pondering.

“I have searched them,” Lebedyev sighed, still more insinuating.

“H’m! . . . And what did you want to change that coat for?” cried Myshkin, thumping the table in vexation.

“That’s a question from an old-fashioned comedy. But, most kind prince, you take my misfortune too much to heart. I don’t deserve it. I mean I alone don’t deserve it; but you are worried about the criminal.... About that good-for-nothing Mr. Ferdystchenko?”

“Well, yes. You certainly have worried me,” Myshkin cut him short absently and with dissatisfaction. “So what do you intend to do ... if you are so convinced it is Ferdyshtchenko?”

“Prince, honoured prince, who else could it be?”

said Lebedyev, wriggling with growing persuasiveness. “You see, the lack of any other on whom to fix, and, so to say, the complete impossibility of suspecting anybody but Mr. Ferdyshtchenko, is, so to say, another piece of evidence, the third against Mr. Ferdyshtchenko. For, I ask again, who else could it be? “Vbu wouldn’t have me suspect Mr. Burdovsky, I suppose. He-he-he!”

“What nonsense!”

“Nor the general? He-he-he!”

“What folly!” Myshkin said, almost angrily, turning impatiently in his seat.

“Folly, and no mistake! He-he-he! And he amused me, too. I mean the general did! I went with him just now, while the track was fresh, to Vilkin’s .. . and you must note that the general was even more struck than I was when, first thing after finding out my loss, I waked him up. His face changed. He turned red and pale, and at last flew into violent and righteous indignation beyond anything I should have suspected of him. He is a most honourable man! He tells lies continually, from weakness, but he’s a man of the loftiest sentiments. A man, too, of no guile, who inspires the fullest confidence by his artlessness. I

have told you already, honoured prince, that I've more than a weakness, I've an affection for him. He suddenly stopped in the middle of the street, unbuttoned his coat, uncovered his chest. 'Search me!' he said. '\bu searched Keller. Why don't you search me? That's only justice!' said he. And his arms and legs were trembling; he was quite pale; he looked so threatening. I laughed and said, 'Listen, general, if anyone else had said such a thing about you, I'd have taken my head off with my own hands; I'd have put it on a big dish, and would have carried it myself to every one who doubted you: do you see this head? I would say. I'll answer for him with this head, and not only so, but I'd go through fire for him. That's what I'd do,' said I. Then he threw his arms round me, there in the street, burst into tears, trembling, and squeezed me so tight that it made me cough. 'You're the only friend left me in my misfortunes,' said he. He's a man of feeling! Then, of course, he told me an anecdote on the spot, of how he had once been suspected of stealing five hundred thousand roubles in his youth, but that next day he had thrown himself into a house on fire, and had dragged out of the flames the count who had suspected him, and Nina Alexandrovna, who was a girl at the time. The count embraced him, and so his marriage followed with Nina Alexandrovna. And next day, in the ruins of the house, they found a box with the lost money in it. It was an iron box of English make, with a secret lock, and it had somehow got under the floor so that no one noticed it, and it was only found after the fire. A complete lie. But when he spoke of Nina Alexandrovna he positively blubbered. A most honourable lady, Nina Alexandrovna, though she is angry with me."

"You don't know her, do you?"

"Scarcely at all, but I should be heartily glad to, if only to justify myself to her. Nina Alexandrovna has a grievance against me, pretending that I lead her spouse astray into drunkenness. But far from leading him astray, I restrain him. I perhaps entice him away from more pernicious society. Besides, he's my friend and, I confess it to you, I won't desert him now. In fact, it's like this: where he goes there I go. For you can only manage him through his sensibility. He's quite given up visiting his captain's widow now, though he secretly longs for her, and even sometimes moans for her, especially in the morninq when he puts on his boots. I don't know why it's at that time. He's no money, that's the trouble, and there's no going to see her without. Hasn't he asked you for money, honoured prince?"

"No, he hasn't."

“He’s ashamed to. He did mean to. He owned to me, in fact, that he meant to trouble you, but he’s bashful, seeing you obliged him not long ago, and besides he thinks you wouldn’t give it him. He told me this as his friend.”

“But you don’t give him money?”

“Prince! Honoured prince! For that man I’d give not money, alone, but, so to say, my life. . . . But no, I don’t want to exaggerate, not my life, but if it were a case of fever, an abscess, or even a cough, I’d be ready to bear it for him, I really would. For I look upon him as a great, though fallen man! “Yes, indeed, not only money.”

“Then, you do give him money?”

“N-no; money I have not given him, and he knows himself that I won’t give it him. But that’s solely with a view to his elevation and reformation. Now he is insisting on coming to Petersburg with me. “You see,

I’m going to Petersburg to find Mr. Ferdyshtchenko while the tracks are fresh. For I know for a fact that he is there by now. My general is all eagerness, but I suspect that he’ll give me the slip in Petersburg to visit his widow. I’m letting him go on purpose, I must own, as we’ve agreed to go in different directions, as soon as we arrive, so as to catch Mr. Ferdyshtchenko more easily. So I shall let him go, and then fall on him all of a sudden, like snow on the head, at the widow’s — just to put him to shame, as a family man, and as a man, indeed, speaking generally.”

“Only don’t make a disturbance, Lebedyev. For goodness’ sake, don’t make a disturbance,” Myshkin said in an undertone with great uneasiness.

“Oh, no, simply to put him to shame and see what sort of a face he makes, for one can judge a great deal from the face, honoured prince, especially with a man like that! Ah, prince! Great as my own trouble is now, I cannot help thinking of him and the reformation of his morals. I have a great favour to ask of you, prince, and I must confess it was expressly for that I have come to you. You are familiar with their home, you have even lived with them; so, if you would decide to assist me, honoured prince, entirely for the sake of the general and his happiness....”

Lebedyev positively clasped his hands, as though in supplication.

“Assist you? Assist you how? Believe me, I am extremely anxious to understand you, Lebedyev.”

“It was entirely with that conviction I have come to you! We could act through Nina Alexandrovna, constantly watching over, and, so to speak,

tracking his excellency in the bosom of his family. I don’t know them, unluckily. . . moreover, Nikolay Ardalionovitch adores you, so to speak, with every fibre of his youthful heart, he could help, perhaps....”

“No, to bring Nina Alexandrovna into this business . . . Heaven forbid! Nor Kolya either. . . . But perhaps I still fail to understand you, Lebedyev.”

“Why, there’s nothing to understand!” Lebedyev sprang up from his chair. “Sympathy, sympathy, and tenderness — that’s all the treatment our invalid requires. \bu, prince, will allow me to think of him as an invalid?”

“Yes, it shows your delicacy and intelligence.”

“For the sake of clearness, I will explain to you by an example taken from my practice. You see the kind of man he is: his only weakness now is for that widow, who won’t let him come without money, and at whose house I mean to discover him to-day, for his own good; but supposing it were not only the captain’s widow, supposing he had committed an actual crime, or anyway a most dishonourable action (though of course he’s incapable of it), even then, I tell you, you could do anything with him simply by generous tenderness, so to speak, for he is the most sensitive of men! Believe me, he wouldn’t hold out for five days; he would speak out of himself; he would weep and confess, especially if one went to work cleverly, and in an honourable style, by means of his family’s vigilant watch, and yours, over his comings and goings. . . . Oh, most noble-hearted prince!” Lebedyev leapt up in a sort of exaltation. “Of course I’m not asserting that he. ... I am ready to shed my last drop of blood, so to speak, for him at this moment, though his incontinence and drunkenness and the captain’s widow, and all that, taken together, may lead him on to anything.”

“In such a cause I am always ready to assist,” said Mvshkin, qettinq up. “Onlv, I confess, Lebedvev, I am dreadfully uneasy; tell me, do you still. ... In one word you say yourself that you suspect Mr. Ferdyshtchenko.”

“Why, who else? Who else, true-hearted prince?” Again Lebedyev clasped his hands ingratiatingly, with a sugary smile.

Myshkin frowned and got up from his place.

“Look here, Lukyan Timofeyitch, a mistake here would be a dreadful thing. This Ferdyshtchenko. ... I should not like to speak ill of him. . . . This Ferdyshtchenko . . . well, who knows, perhaps it is he! ... I mean to say that perhaps he really is more capable of it than ... anyone else.”

Lebedyev opened his eyes and pricked up his ears.

“You see,” said Myshkin, stumbling and frowning more and more, as he walked up and down the verandah, trying not to look at Lebedyev— “I was given to understand. ... I was told about Mr. Ferdyshtchenko that he was a man before whom one must be careful not to say anything ... too much — you understand? I say this to show that perhaps he really is more capable of it than anyone else ... so as not to make a mistake, that’s the great thing — do you understand?”

“Who told you that about Mr. Ferdyshtchenko?” Lebedyev caught him up instantly.

“Oh, it was whispered to me. I don’t believe it myself, though. ... I’m awfully vexed to be obliged to tell you. ... I assure you I don’t believe it myself . . . it’s some nonsense.... Foo! how stupid I’ve been!”

“You see, prince,” Lebedyev was positively quivering all over, “this is important. This is extremely important now. I don’t mean as to Mr. Ferdyshtchenko, but as to the way this information reached you” — saying this Lebedyev ran backwards and forwards after Myshkin, trying to keep step with him— “I’ve something to tell you now, prince: just now, when I was going with the general to Vilkin’s, after he told me about the fire, he was boiling over, of course, with anger, and suddenly began dropping the same hint to me about Mr. Ferdyshtchenko, but so strangely and incoherently that I couldn’t help asking him some questions, and in the end I was fully convinced that all the whole thing was solely an inspiration of his excellency’s, solely arising, so to speak, from his generous heart. For he lies entirely because he can’t restrain his sentimentality. Now, kindly consider this: if he told a lie, and I’m sure he did, how could you have heard of it? It was the inspiration of the moment, you understand, prince — so who could have told you? That’s important, that... . That’s very important, and ... so to say....”

“Kolya told me it just now, and he was told it this morning by his father whom he met at six o’clock — between six and seven — in the passage, when he came out for something.”

And Myshkin told the story in detail.

“Ah, well, that’s what’s called a clue.” Lebedyev laughed noiselessly, rubbing his hands. “Just as I thought! That means that his excellency waked from his sleep of innocence at six o’clock, expressly to go and wake his darling son and warn him of the great danger of associating with Mr.

Ferdyshtchenko. What a dangerous man Mr. Ferdyshtchenko must be! And what parental solicitude on the part of his excellency!”

“Listen, Lebedyev,” Myshkin was utterly confused, “listen, keep quiet about it! Don’t make an uproar! I beg you, Lebedyev, I entreat you. In that case I swear I’ll help you, but on condition that nobody, nobody knows!”

“Rest assured, most noble-hearted, most sincere and generous prince,” cried Lebedyev in perfect exaltation— “rest assured that all this will be buried in my loyal heart. I’d give every drop of my blood. . . . Illustrious prince, I’m a poor creature in soul and spirit, but ask any poor creature, any scoundrel even, which he’d rather have to do with, a scoundrel like himself, or a noble-hearted man like you, most true-hearted prince, he’ll answer that he prefers the noble-hearted man, and that’s the triumph of virtue! Good-bye honoured prince! Treading softly . . . treading softly, and ... hand in hand.”

CHAPTER 10

Myshkin understood at last why he turned cold every time he touched those three letters, and why he had put off reading them until the evening. When, in the morning, he had sunk into a heavy sleep on the lounge in the verandah without having brought himself to open those three envelopes, he had another painful dream, and again the same “sinful woman” came to him. Again she looked at him with tears sparkling on her long eyelashes, again beckoned him to follow her, and again he waked up, as he had done before, with anguish recalling her face. He wanted to go to her at once, but could not. At last, almost in despair he opened the letters and began reading them.

These letters too were like a dream. Sometimes one dreams strange, impossible and incredible dreams; on awakening you remember them and are amazed at a strange fact. You remember first of all that your reason did not desert you throughout the dream; you remember even that you acted very cunningly and logically through all that long, long time, while you were surrounded by murderers who deceived you, hid their intentions, behaved amicably to you while they had a weapon in readiness, and were only waiting for some signal; you remember how cleverly you deceived them at last, hiding from them; then you guessed that they’d seen through your deception and were only pretending not to know where you were hidden; but you were sly then and deceived them again; all this you remember clearly. But how was it that you could at the same time reconcile your reason to the obvious absurdities and impossibilities with which your dream was overflowing? One of your murderers turned into a woman before your eyes, and the woman into a little, sly, loathsome dwarf — and you accepted it all at once as an accomplished fact, almost without the slightest surprise, at the very time when, on another side, your reason was at its highest tension and showed extraordinary power, cunning, sagacity, and logic? And why, too, on waking up and fully returning to reality, do you feel almost every time, and sometimes with extraordinary intensity, that you have left something unexplained behind with the dream? “Vbu laugh at the absurdities of your dream, and at the same time you feel that interwoven with those absurdities some thought lies hidden, and a thought that is real, something belonging to your actual life, something that exists and has

always existed in your heart. It’s as though something new, prophetic, that you were awaiting, has been told you in your dream. \bur impression is vivid, it may be joyful or agonising, but what it is, and what was said to you, you cannot understand or recall.

It was almost like this, after reading these letters. But even before he had unfolded them, Myshkin felt that the very fact of the existence and the possibility of them was like a nightmare. How could she have brought herself to write to her, he asked himself as he wandered about alone that evening (at times not knowing where he was going). How could she write of that, how could such a mad fantasy have arisen in her mind? But that fantasy had by now taken shape, and the most amazing thing of all for him was that, as he read those letters, he himself almost believed in the possibility and the justification of that fantasy. “Vfet, of course, it was a dream, a nightmare, a madness; but there was something in it tormentingly real, and agonisingly true, which justified the dream and the nightmare and the madness. For several hours together he seemed to be haunted by what he had read, every minute recalling fragments of it; brooding over them, pondering them. Sometimes he was even inclined to tell himself that he had foreseen all this and known it beforehand. It even seemed to him as though he had read it all before, some time very long ago, and that everything that he had grieved over since, everything that had been a pain or a dread to him had all lain hidden in those letters he had read long ago.

“When you open this letter” — so the first epistle began— “you will look first of all at the signature. The signature will tell you all, and explain all, so there’s no need to make any defence or explanation. If I were in any way on a level with you, you might be offended at such impertinence. But, who am I, and who are you?

We are two such opposite extremes and I am so infinitely below you that I cannot insult you, even if I wanted to.”

In another place she wrote:

“Don’t consider my words the sick ecstasy of a sick mind, but you are for me perfection! I have seen you, I see you everyday. I don’t judge you; I have not come by reason to believe that you are perfection; I simply have faith in it. But one wrong I do you: I love you. Perfection should not be loved; one can only look on perfection as perfection. Is that not so? “Vfet I am in love with you. Though love makes equal, yet don’t be uneasy; I have not put myself on an equality with you even in my most secret thought. I

have written, ‘don’t be uneasy.’ Can you possibly be uneasy? I would kiss your footprints if I could. Oh, I don’t put myself on a level with you. . . . Look at my signature, you need only look at my signature!”

“I notice, however,” she wrote in another letter, “that I join your name with his, and I have never once asked myself whether you love him. He loved you, though he had seen you only once. He thought of you as of ‘light.’ Those are his own words, I heard them from him. But without words I knew that you were ‘light’ for him. I’ve lived a whole month beside him, and understood then that you love him too. To me you and he are one.”

“What does this mean?” she wrote again. “Yesterday I passed by you and you seemed to blush. It can’t be so. It was my fancy. If you were brought to the filthiest den and shown vice in its nakedness, you should not blush; you are too lofty to resent an insult. “Vbu can hate every one base and low, not for your own sake, but for the sake of others, those whom they wrong. You no one can wrong. Do you know I think you even ought to love me? You are for me the same as for him — a ray of light. An angel cannot hate, cannot help loving. Can one love every one, all men, all one’s neighbours? I have often asked myself that question. Of course not. It’s unnatural indeed. In abstract love for humanity one almost always loves no one but oneself. But that’s impossible for us and you are different. How could you not love anyone, when you cannot compare yourself with anyone, and when you are above every insult, every personal resentment. You alone can love without egoism, you alone can love, not for yourself, but for the sake of him whom vou love. Oh, how bitter it would be for me to find out that you feel shame or anger on account of me. That would be your ruin. You would sink to my level at once.

“Yesterday, after meeting you I went home and invented a picture. Artists always paint Christ as He appears in the Gospel stories. I would paint Him differently. I would imagine Him alone, His disciples must have sometimes left Him alone. I would leave only a little child beside Him. The child would be playing beside Him, perhaps be telling Him something in his childish words. Christ has been listening, but now He is thoughtful. His hand still resting unconsciously on the child’s fair little head. He is looking into the distance at the horizon; thought, great as the whole world, dwells in His eyes. His face is sorrowful. The child leans silent with his elbow on Christ’s knees, his cheek on his little hand and his head turned upwards, and looks intently at Him, pondering as little children sometimes ponder. The

sun is setting. . . . That is my picture. You are innocent, and in your innocence lies all your perfection. Oh, only remember that! What have you to do with my passion for you? \bu are now altogether mine, I shall be all my life beside you. ... I shall soon die."

Finally, in the very last letter stood the words:

"For God's sake, think nothing of me, and don't think that I am abasing myself by writing to you like this, or that I belong to the class of people who enjoy abasing themselves, even if from pride. No, I have my consolation; but it is difficult for me to explain it to you. It would be difficult for me to explain it clearly even to myself, although it torments me that I cannot. But I know that I cannot abase myself, even from an access of pride; and of self-abasement from purity of heart I am incapable. And so I do not abase myself at all.

"Why do I so want to bring you together — for your sake, or for my own? For my own sake, of course; for myself, of course, it would solve all my difficulties, I have told myself so long ago. I have heard that your sister Adelaida said of my portrait then that with such beauty one might turn the world upside down. But I have renounced the world. Does it amuse you to hear that from me, meeting me decked in lace and diamonds, in the company of drunkards and profligates? Don't mind that, I have almost ceased to exist and I know it. God knows what in my stead lives within me. I read that every day in two terrible eyes which are always gazing at me, even when they are not before me. Those eyes are silent now (they are always silent), but I know their secret. His house is gloomy, and there is a secret in it. I'm sure that he has, hidden in his box, a razor, wrapped in silk like that murderer in Moscow; he too lived in the same house with his mother, and kept a razor wrapped in silk to cut a throat with. All the time I was in their house, I kept fancying that somewhere under the floor there might be a corpse hidden there by his father perhaps, wrapped in American leather, like the corpse in the Moscow case, and surrounded in the same way with jars of Zhdanov's fluid. I could show you the corner. He is always silent: but I know he loves me so much that he can't help hating me. \bur marriage and ours are to take place together: we have fixed that. I have no secrets from him. I should kill him from terror. . . . But he will kill me first. He laughed just now and said I was raving: he knows I am writing to you."

And there was much, much more of the same kind of ravinq in those letters. One of them, the second,

written in a small hand, covered two large sheets of note-paper.

At last Myshkin came out of the darkness of the park, where he had been wandering a long time, as he had the previous night. The clear limpid night seemed to him lighter than ever.

“Can it still be so early?” he thought. (He had forgotten to take his watch.) He fancied he heard music somewhere in the distance. “It must be at the station,” he thought, “they’ve certainly not gone there to-day.” As he made the reflection, he saw that he was standing close to the Epanchins’ villa. He knew quite well that he was bound to find himself there at last, and with a beating heart he went up to the steps of the verandah. No one met him. The verandah was empty. He waited, and opened the door into the room. “They never shut that door,” the thought flickered through his mind, but the room was empty too. It was almost dark in it.

He stood still in the middle of the room in perplexity. Suddenly the door opened and Alexandra came in, with a candle in her hand. On seeing Myshkin she was surprised and stopped short before him inquiringly. Obviously she was simply crossing the room from one door to the other, with no idea of finding anyone there.

“How do you come here?” she asked at last.

“I... came in....”

“Maman is not quite well, nor Aglaia either. Adelaida is going to bed, I’m going too. We’ve been at home by ourselves all the evening. Papa and the prince are in Petersburg.”

“I’ve come ... I’ve come to you ... now....”

“Do you know what the time is?”

“N-no.”

“Half-past twelve. We always go to bed by one.”

“Why, I thought it was half-past nine.”

“It doesn’t matter!” she laughed. “And, why didn’t you come in before? We may have been expecting you.”

“I... thought..,” he faltered, moving away.

“Good-bye. To-morrow I shall make them all laugh.”

He went homewards by the road that encircled the park. His heart was beating, his thoughts were in a maze, and everything round him became like a dream. And suddenly, just as yesterday he had twice waked up at the same dream, the same apparition rose again before him. The same woman came out of the park and stood before him, as though she had been waiting for

him there. He started, and stood still. She snatched his hand and pressed it tight. “No, this was not an apparition!”

And at last she stood before him, face to face for the first time since their parting. She was saying something to him, but he looked at her in silence; his heart was too full, and ached with anguish. Oh, never could he forget that meeting with her and he always remembered it with the same anguish. She sank on her knees before him on the spot, in the street, like one demented. He stepped back in horror, and she tried to catch his hand to kiss it, and just as in his dream that night, the tears glistened on her long eyelashes.

“Stand up! Stand up!” he said in a frightened whisper, raising her. “Stand up, at once!”

“Are you happy? Happy?” she asked. “Only say one word to me, are you happy now? To-day, this minute? Have you been with her? What did she say?”

She did not qet up. She did not hear him. She questioned him hurriedly, and was in haste to speak, as though she were being pursued.

“I’m going to-morrow as you told me. I won’t. . . . It’s the last time I shall see you. The last time! Now it’s absolutely the last time!”

“Calm yourself, stand up!” he said in despair.

She looked greedily at him, clutching at his hands.

“Good-bye,” she said at last; she got up and went quickly away from him, almost running. Myshkin saw that Rogozhin had suddenly appeared beside her, that he had taken her arm, and was leading her away.

“Wait a minute, prince,” cried Rogozhin, “I’ll be back in five minutes.”

Five minutes later he did, in fact, return. Myshkin was waiting for him at the same place.

“I’ve put her in the carriage,” he said. “It’s been waiting there at the corner since ten o’clock. She knew you’d be at the young lady’s all the evening. I told her exactly what you wrote to me to-day. She won’t write to the young lady again, she’s promised; and she’ll go away from here to-morrow as you wish. She wanted to see you for the last time, though you refused her. We’ve been waiting for you here, on that seat there, to catch you as you came back.”

“Did she take you with her of her own accord?”

“Why not?” grinned Rogozhin. “I saw what I knew before. You’ve read the letters I suppose?”

“Have you really read them?” asked Myshkin, struck by that idea.

“Rather! She showed me each one of them herself. About the razor, too, do you remember, ha-ha!”

“She’s mad!” cried Myshkin, wringing his hands.

“Who knows about that? Perhaps not,” Rogozhin said softly, as though to himself. Myshkin did not answer.

“Well, good-bye,” said Rogozhin. “I’m going away to-morrow too: don’t remember evil against me! And I say, brother,” he added, turning quickly, “why didn’t you answer her question: are you happy or not?”

“No, no, no!” cried Myshkin with unspeakable sadness.

“I should think not, indeed,” laughed Rogozhin maliciously as he went away without looking back.

PART FOUR

CHAPTER 1

About a week had passed since the meeting of the two persons of our story on the green seat. One bright morning about half-past ten Varvara Ardalionovna Ptitsyn was returning from visiting some friends, plunged in mournful reflection.

There are people whom it is difficult to describe completely in their typical and characteristic aspect. These are the people who are usually called “ordinary,”

“the majority,” and who do actually make up the vast majority of mankind. Authors for the most part attempt in their tales and novels to select and represent vividly and artistically types rarely met with in actual life in their entirety, though they are nevertheless almost more real than real life itself. Podkolyosin^ as a type is perhaps exaggerated,

but not at all unreal. What numbers of clever people after being introduced by Gogol to Podkolyosin at once discovered that tens and hundreds of their friends and acquaintances were extraordinarily like him. They knew before reading Gogol that their friends were like Podkolyosin, only they did not know what name to give them. In real life, extremely few bridegrooms jump out of windows just before their wedding, for, apart from other considerations, it’s not a convenient mode of escape. Yet how many men, even intelligent and virtuous persons, on the eve of their wedding day have been ready to acknowledge at the bottom of their hearts that they were Podkolyosins. Not all husbands exclaim at every turn “Tu I’a voulu, Georges Dandin!” But how many millions and billions of times that cry from the heart has been uttered by husbands all the world over after the honeymoon, or — who knows? — even perhaps the day after the wedding!

Without entering into deeper considerations, we will simply point out that in actual life typical characteristics are apt to be watered down, and that Georges Dandins and Podkolyosins exist and are moving before our eyes every day, only in a less concentrated form. With the reservation that Georges Dandin in full perfection, as Moliere has portrayed him, may also be met with in real life, though not frequently, we will conclude our reflections, which are beginning to be suggestive of newspaper criticism.

“Vfet the question remains! What is an author to do with ordinary people, absolutely “ordinary,” and how can he put them before his readers

so as to make them at all interesting? It is impossible to leave them out of fiction altogether, for commonplace people are at every moment the chief and essential links in the chain of human affairs; if we leave them out, we lose all semblance of truth. To fill a novel completely with types or, more simply, to make it interesting with strange and incredible characters, would be to make it unreal and even uninteresting. To our thinking a writer ought to seek out interesting and instructive features even among commonplace people. When, for instance, the very nature of some commonplace persons lies just in their perpetual and invariable commonplaceness, or better still, when in spite of the most strenuous efforts to escape from the daily round of commonplaceness and routine, they end by being left invariably for ever chained to the same routine, such people acquire a typical character of their own — the character of a commonplaceness desirous above all things of being independent and original without the faintest possibility of becoming so.

To this class of “commonplace” or “ordinary” people belong certain persons of my tale, who have hitherto, I must confess, been insufficiently explained to the reader. Such were Varvara Ardalionovna Ptitsyn, her husband, Mr. Ptitsyn, and her brother, Gavril Ardalionovitch.

There is, indeed, nothing more annoying than to be, for instance, wealthy, of good family, nice-looking, fairly intelligent, and even good-natured, and yet to have no talents, no special faculty, no peculiarity even, not one idea of one’s own, to be precisely “like other people.” To have a fortune, but not the wealth of Rothschild; to be of an honourable family, but one which has never distinguished itself in anyway; to have a pleasing appearance expressive of nothing in particular; to have a decent education, but to have no idea what use to make of it; to have intelligence, but no ideas of one’s own; to have a good heart, but without any greatness of soul; and so on and so on. There is an extraordinary multitude of such people in the world, far more than appears. They may, like all other people, be divided into two classes: some of limited intelligence; others much cleverer. The first are happier. Nothing is easier for “ordinary” people of limited intelligence than to imagine themselves exceptional and original and to revel in that delusion without the slightest misgiving. Some of our young ladies have only to crop their hair, put on blue spectacles, and dub themselves Nihilists, to persuade themselves at once that they have immediately gained “convictions” of their own. Some men have only to feel

the faintest stirring of some kindly and humanitarian emotion to persuade themselves at once that no one feels as they do, that they stand in the foremost rank of culture. Some have only to meet with some idea by hearsay, or to read some stray page, to believe at once that it is their own opinion and has sprung spontaneously from their own brain. The impudence of simplicity, if one may so express it, is amazing in such cases. It is almost incredible, but yet often to be met with. This impudence of simplicity, this unhesitating confidence of the stupid man in himself and his talents, is superbly depicted by Gogol in the wonderful character of Lieutenant Pirogov. Pirogov has no doubt that he is a genius, superior indeed to any genius. He is so positive of this that he never questions it; and, indeed, he questions nothing. The great writer is forced in the end to chastise him for the satisfaction of the outraged moral feeling of the reader; but, seeing that the great man simply shook himself after the castigation and fortified himself by consuming a pie, he flung up his hands in amazement and left his readers to make the best of it. I always regretted that Gogol took his great Pirogov from so humble a rank; for he was so self-satisfied that nothing could be easier for him than to imagine himself, as his epaulettes grew thicker and more twisted with years and promotion, an extraordinary military genius; or rather, not imagine it, but simply take it for granted. Since he had been made a general, he must have been a military genius! And how many such have made terrible blunders afterwards on the field of battle! And how manv Piroqovs there have been amonq our writers,

savants and propagandists! I say “have been,” but of course we have them still.

Gavril Ardalionovitch Ivolgin belonged to the second category. He belonged to the class of the “much cleverer” people, though he was infected from head to foot with the desire for originality. But that class, as we observed above, is far less happy than the first; for the clever “commonplace” man, even if he occasionally or even always fancies himself a man of genius and originality, yet preserves the worm of doubt gnawing at his heart, which in some cases drives the clever man to utter despair. Even if he submits, he is completely poisoned by his vanity’s being driven inwards. But we have taken an extreme example. In the vast majority of these clever people, things do not end so tragically. Their liver is apt to be affected in their declining years, that’s all. But before giving in and humbling themselves, such men sometimes play the fool for years, all from

the desire of originality. There are strange instances of it, indeed; an honest man is sometimes, for the sake of being original, ready to do something base. It sometimes happens that one of these luckless men is not only honest but good, is the guardian angel of his family, maintains by his labour outsiders as well as his own kindred, and yet can never be at rest all his life! The thought that he has so well fulfilled his duties is no comfort or consolation to him; on the contrary, it irritates him. “This is what I’ve wasted all my life on,” he says; “this is what has fettered me, hand and foot; this is what has hindered me from doing something great! Had it not been for this, I should certainly have discovered — gunpowder or America, I don’t know precisely what, but I would certainly have discovered it!” What is most characteristic of these gentlemen is that they can never find out for certain what it is that they are destined to discover and what they are within an ace of discovering. But their sufferings, their longings for what was to be discovered, would have sufficed for a Columbus or a Galileo.

Gavril Ardalionovitch had taken the first step on that road, but he was only at its beginning; he had many years of playing the fool before him. A profound and continual consciousness of his own lack of talent, and at the same time the overwhelming desire to prove to himself that he was a man of great independence, had rankled in his heart almost from his boyhood up. He was a young man of violent and envious cravings, who seemed to have been positively born with his nerves overwrought. The violence of his desires he took for strength. His passionate craving to distinguish himself sometimes led him to the brink of most ill-considered actions, but our hero was always at the last moment too sensible to take the final plunge. That drove him to despair. He could perhaps have made up his mind to anything extremely base to attain what he dreamed of. But as fate would have it, he always turned out to be too honest for any great meanness. (Small meannesses he was, however, prepared for.) He looked with loathing and hatred on the downfall and poverty of his family. He treated even his mother haughtily and contemptuously, though he knew perfectly well that his mother’s reputation and character were the pivot on which his future rested.

When he entered General Epanchin’s house he said to himself at once, “Since I must be mean, let me be so thoroughly, if only I win my game” — and was scarcely ever thoroughly mean. And why should he imagine that he would certainly need to be mean? Of Aglaia he was simply frightened at the

time, but he kept on with her on the off-chance, though he never seriously believed that she would stoop to him. Afterwards, at the time of his affair with Nastasya Filippovna, he suddenly imagined that money would be the means of attaining everything. “If I must be mean, well then I will,” he repeated to himself every day with satisfaction, but with a certain dismay. “If one must be mean, let us be first-rate at it,” he urged himself continually. “Commonplace people are afraid to be, but lam not.”

Losing Aglaia and crushed by circumstances, he completely lost heart, and actually brought Myshkin the money flung him by a mad woman to whom it had been given by a madman. A thousand times afterwards he regretted having returned that money, though he was continually priding himself upon it. He did actually shed tears for three days while Myshkin was in Petersburg; but in those three days he grew to hate the prince because the latter looked at him too compassionately, though “not every one would have had the strength” for such a deed as returning that money. But the frank confession to himself that his misery was due to nothing but the continual mortification of his vanity distressed him horribly.

Only long afterwards he saw and realised what a different ending an affair with such a strange and innocent creature as Aglaia might have had. He was consumed by regrets; he threw up his post and sank into despondency and dejection. He lived with his father and mother in Ptitsyn’s house and at the latter’s expense, and openly despised Ptitsyn, although he followed his advice and had the sense almost always to ask it. Gavril Ardalionovitch was angry, for instance, with Ptitsyn for not aiming at becoming a Rothschild. “If you go in for usury, do it thoroughly — squeeze people, coin money out of them, show will-power, be a king among the Jews.”

Ptitsyn was unassuming and quiet; he did nothing but smile. But once he thought it necessary to have a serious explanation with Ganya, and he carried out the task with a certain degree of dignity. He had proved to Ganya that he was doing nothing dishonest and that he had no right to call him a grasping Jew; that it was not his fault that money was so valuable; that he was acting honestly and justly,

and that in reality he was only an intermediary in these affairs, and that finally, thanks to his accuracy in business, he was already favourably known to first-rate people and his business was increasing. “I shall never be

a Rothschild, and I don’t want to be,” he said, smiling; “but I shall have a house in Liteyny, perhaps two even, and there I shall stop.”

“And who knows, perhaps even three,” he thought to himself, but he never uttered this aloud, he concealed that day-dream.

Nature loves such people and is kind to them; she will reward Ptitsyn not with three but with four houses, and just because he has realised from childhood that he will never become a Rothschild. But beyond four houses nature will not go, and Ptitsyn’s success will end there.

Gavril Ardalionovitch’s sister was quite a different person. She too was possessed with strong desires, but they were rather persistent than impulsive. She had plenty of common-sense in emergencies, and was not devoid of it indeed in everyday life. It is true that she also was one of the ordinary people who dream of being original; yet she very soon found out that she had no particular originality, and did not take it too much to heart, perhaps — who knows? — from pride of a sort. She took her first practical step with great decision in marrying Ptitsyn. But in getting married she did not say to herself, “If I must be mean, I will be mean so long as I gain my end,” as her brother Ganya would certainly have said to himself, and may possibly have said aloud to her, when he gave his approval as elder brother to the match. Quite the contrary, in fact: Varvara Ardalionovna married after having convinced herself that her future husband was a pleasant, unassuming, almost educated man, who could never be induced to do anything very dishonourable. As for minor acts of meanness, Varvara Ardalionovna did not worry about such trifles; and, in fact, one can find such trifles everywhere. It’s no good looking for an ideal being! She knew, besides, that by marrying she would provide a refuge for her mother, her father and her brothers. Seeing her brother in trouble, she wanted to help him in spite of all their previous misunderstandings.

Ptitsyn sometimes urged Ganya, in a friendly way, of course, to take another post. “You despise qenerals and beinq a qeneral,” he would sav to him sometimes in joke; “but mind, ‘they will all finish by being generals; if you live long enough you will see.”

“But what makes them think that I despise generals and being a general?” Ganya thought ironically to himself.

For her brother’s sake Varvara Ardalionovna made up her mind to enlarge her circle of acquaintance. She managed to get a footing at the Epanchins’. The memories of childhood stood her in good stead there, for

she and Ganya had played with the Epanchins as children. We may observe here that if Varvara Ardalionovna had visited the Epanchins in pursuit of some fantastic dream, by that very fact she would have excluded herself from that class of people with whom she mentally ranked herself. But she was not pursuing a dream; she was working on a fairly firm basis: she was reckoning on the peculiarities of the Epanchin family. She was never tired of studying Aglaia's character. The task she set before herself was to bring those two, Aglaia and her brother, together again. Possibly she actually did attain this object to some extent; possibly she made blunders, building perhaps too much on her brother and expecting from him what he could not under any circumstances have given. In any case she behaved with considerable art at the Epanchins': for weeks together she made no allusion to her brother; she was always extremely truthful and sincere; she behaved simply but with dignity. As for the depths of her conscience, she was not afraid to look into them, and she did not reproach herself for anything in the least. It was that that gave her power. There was only one thing she noticed in herself, that she too was spiteful; that she too had a great deal of amour propre, and one might almost say of mortified vanity. She noticed it particularly at certain moments, especially almost every time she was walking home from the Epanchins'.

And just now she was on her way back from them, and, as we have said already, she was dejected and preoccupied. A shade of bitter mockery was apparent in her dejection. At Pavlovsk Ptitsyn occupied a roomy but not very attractive-looking house in a dusty street, which would within a short period become his own property; so that he was already negotiating for the sale of it. As she was going up the steps, Varvara Ardalionovna heard an extraordinary noise from upstairs and caught the voices of her father and brother shouting at one another. Going to the drawing-room and seeing Ganya running to and fro, white with fury and almost tearing his hair, she frowned and, with a weary air, sank on the sofa without taking off her hat. Knowing that if she let a minute pass without asking her brother why he was in such a state, he would certainly be angry with her, Varya hastened to observe, in the form of a question:

"The usual story?"

"The usual story indeed!" cried Ganya. "The usual story! No! The devil only knows what is happening here, it's not the same as usual. The old man is getting perfectly frantic. . . . Mother's in floods of tears. Upon my word,

Varya, I’ll turn him out, say what you like, or... or I’ll go away myself,” he added, probably recollecting that it was not possible to turn anyone out of another person’s house.

“You must make allowances,” murmured Varya.

“What allowances? For whom?” cried Ganya, firing up. “For his filthy habits? No, you may say what you like, that’s impossible. Impossible, impossible, impossible! And what a wav to behave: he is in fault,

and it makes him all the more stuck up. The gate is not good enough for him, he must pull the wall down!’ Why are you sitting there like that? \bu don’t look yourself.”

“I look as I always do,” Varya answered with displeasure.

Ganya looked at her more carefully.

“Have you been there?” he asked suddenly.

“Yes.”

“Stay, shouting again! What a disgrace, and at such a time too!”

“What sort of time? It’s no such special time.”

Ganya looked more intently than ever at his sister.

“Have you found out something more?” he asked.

“Nothing unexpected, anyway. I found out that it’s all a fact. My husband was nearer the truth than either of us; it’s turned out just as he predicted from the beginning. Where is he?”

“Not at home? What’s turned out?”

“The prince is formally betrothed to her. The thing is settled. The elder girls told me. Aglaia consents; they have even left off keeping it dark. (There’s always been so much mystery till now.) Adelaida’s wedding will be put off again so that the two weddings may be on one day. Such a romantic notion! Quite poetical! You’d better be writing a poem for the occasion than running about the room to no purpose. Princess Byelokonsky will be there this evening; she’s come in the nick of time; there are to be visitors. He is to be presented to the Princess Byelokonsky, though she knows him already. I believe the engagement will be publicly announced. They are only afraid he may let something drop or break something when he walks into the drawing-room, or else flop down himself; it’s quite in his line.”

Ganya listened very attentively, but to his sister’s surprise this news, which ought to have overwhelmed him, seemed to have by no means an overwhelming effect on him.

“Well, that was clear,” he said after a moment’s thought. “So it’s the end,” he added, with a strange smile, glancing slyly into his sister’s face and still walking up and down the room, but much more quietly.

“It’s a good thing you take it like a philosopher. I am glad, really,” said Varya.

“Yes, it’s a load off one’s mind; off yours, anyway.”

“I think I’ve served you sincerely without criticising or annoying you. I didn’t ask you what sort of happiness you expected with Aglaia.”

“Why, was I expecting . . . happiness from Aglaia?”

“Oh, please don’t discuss it philosophically! Of course you were. It’s all over and there’s nothing more for us to do. We’ve been fools. I must own I could never take the thing quite seriously. It was simply on the off-chance that I took it up. I was reckoning on her ridiculous character, and my chief object was to please you. It was ten to one it would come to nothing. I don’t know to this day what you have been hoping for.”

“Now your husband and you will be trying to make me get a job; you’ll give me lectures on perseverance and strength of will, and not despising small profits, and all the rest of it. I know it by heart,” laughed Ganya.

“He has something new in his mind,” Varya thought to herself.

“How are they taking it? Are they pleased, the father and mother?” Ganya asked suddenly.

“N-no, I think not. However, you can judge for yourself. Ivan Fyodorovitch is pleased. The mother is uneasy; she’s always viewed him with dislike as a suitor, we know that.”

“I don’t mean that. He is an impossible suitor, unthinkable, that’s evident. I was talking about their attitude now. What’s their line now? Has she given her formal consent?”

“She hasn’t so far said no, that’s all; but that’s all one could expect from her. You know how insanely shy and bashful she still is. When she was a child she would creep into a cupboard and sit there for two or three hours, simply to escape seeing visitors. Though she has grown such a maypole, she is just the same now. \bu know, I believe there really is something in it, even on her side. They say she is laughing at the prince from morning till night, so as to hide her feelings; but she must manage to say something on the sly to him every day, for he looks as though he were in heaven, he is beaming. He is fearfully funny, they say. I heard it from them. I fancied too that they laughed at me to my face, the elder girls.”

Ganva at last beqan to frown; perhaps Varva went on enlarging on the subject on purpose to get at his real view. But they heard a shout again upstairs.

“I’ll turn him out!” Ganya fairly roared, as though glad to vent his annoyance.

“And then he will go disgracing us everywhere, as he did yesterday.”

“Yesterday? What do you mean? Why, did he . . .” Ganya seemed dreadfully alarmed all of a sudden.

“Oh dear, didn’t you know?” Varya pulled herself up.

“What! Surely it isn’t true that he has been there?” cried Ganya, flushing crimson with shame and anger. “Good heavens! why you’ve come from there! Have you heard something about it? Has the old man been there? Has he, or not?”

And Ganya rushed to the door. Varya flew to him and clutched him with both hands.

“What are you about? Where are you going?” she said. “If you let him out now, he will do more harm than ever; he will go to everyone.”

“What did he do there? What did he say?”

“Well, they couldn’t tell me themselves, they hadn’t understood it; he only frightened them all. He went to see Ivan Fyodorovitch; he was out. He asked to see Lizaveta Prokofyevna. First he asked her about a post — wanted to get a job; and then he began complaining of us, of me, of my husband, of you especially.... He talked a lot of stuff.”

“You couldn’t find out what?” Ganya was quivering hysterically.

“How could I? He scarcely knew what he was saying himself; and perhaps they did not tell me everything.”

Ganya clutched at his head and ran to the window. Varya sat down at the other window.

“Aglaia is an absurd creature,” she observed suddenly. “She stopped me and said ‘Please give your parents my special respects. I shall certainly have an opportunity of seeing your father one of these days.’ And she said that so seriously; it was awfully queer....”

“Not in derision? Not in derision?”

“That’s just it, it wasn’t. That is what was so queer.”

“Does she know about the old man, or not, what do you think?”

“There’s no doubt in my mind that they don’t know in the family. But you’ve given me an idea: Aglaia perhaps does know. She is the only one

who does know perhaps, for her sisters were surprised too when she sent her greeting to father so seriously. And why to him particularly? If she does know, the prince must have told her."

"It's not difficult to guess who told her! A thief! It's the last straw. A thief in our family, 'the head of the house'!"

"That's nonsense!" cried Varya, losing patience. "A drunken prank, that's all. And who made up the story? Lebedyev, the prince . . . they are a nice lot themselves; they are wise people! Don't believe a word of it."

"The old man is a thief and a drunkard," Ganya went on bitterly, "I am a beggar, my sister's husband is a moneylender — an alluring prospect for Aglaia! A lovely state of things and no mistake!"

"That sister's husband who is a moneylender is . .

"Keeping me, you mean? Don't mince matters, please."

"Why are you so cross?" said Varya, restraining herself. "\bu are a regular schoolboy, you don't understand anything. "Vbu think all this might injure you in Aglaia's eyes? "Vbu don't know her. She'd refuse the most eligible suitor and run off delighted with some student to starve in a garret — that's her dream! "Vbu've never been able to understand how interesting you would have become in her eyes, if you had been able to bear our surroundings with pride and fortitude. The prince has hooked her, in the first place, because he wasn't fishing for her; and secondly, because he is looked upon by every one as an idiot. The very fact that she is upsetting her family about him is a joy to her. Ah, you don't understand!"

"Well, we shall see whether I understand or not," Ganya muttered enigmatically. "Still, I shouldn't like her to know about the old man. I thought Myshkin would have been able to hold his tongue. He made Lebedyev keep quiet; he didn't want to speak out to me when I insisted on knowing."

"So you see that, apart from him, it has leaked out. And what does it matter to you now? What are you hoping for? And even if you had any hope left, it would only make her look on you as a martyr."

"Well, even she would be a coward about a scandal, in spite of all her romantic notions. It's all up to a certain point, and every one draws the line somewhere. You are all alike."

"Aglaia would be a coward?" Varya fired up, looking contemptuously at her brother. "\bu've got a mean little soul! You are all a worthless lot. She

may be absurd and eccentric, but she is a thousand times more generous than any of us.”

“Well, never mind, never mind, don’t be cross,” Ganya murmured again complacently.

“I am sorry for mother, that’s all,” Varya went on. “I am so afraid this scandal about father may reach her ears. Ach! I am afraid it will!”

“No doubt it has reached her,” observed Ganya.

Varya had risen to go upstairs to Nina Alexandrovna, but, stopping short, she looked attentively at her brother.

“Who could have told her?”

“Ippolit, most likely. It would have been the greatest satisfaction to him to report the matter to mother, as soon as he moved here, I expect.”

“But how does he know? Tell me that, pray. The prince and Lebedyev made up their minds to tell nobody; Kolya knows nothing.”

“Ippolit? He found it out for himself. You can’t imagine what a sly beast he is; what a gossip he is; how quick he is at sniffing out anything bad, any sort of scandal. \bu may not believe it, but I am sure he has succeeded in getting a hold on Aglaia; and if he hasn’t, he will. Rogozhin has got to know him too. How is it the prince does not notice it? And how eager he is to score off me now! He looks upon me as his personal enemy, I’ve seen that a long time — why and with what object, since he is dying, I can’t make out. But I’ll get the better of him. \bu will see that I’ll score off him, not he off me!”

“What made you, then, entice him here, if you hate him so? And is he worth scoring off?”

“You advised me to entice him here.”

“I thought he would be of use. But do you know that he has fallen in love with Aglaia himself now, and has been writing to her? They asked me about him.. . . He may even have written to Lizaveta Prokofyevna.”

“He is not dangerous in that way,” said Ganya, with a spiteful laugh, “but most likely you are mistaken. It’s very possible he is in love, for he is a boy. But ... he wouldn’t write anonymous letters to the old lady. He is such a spiteful, insignificant, self-satisfied mediocity! ... I am convinced, I know, that he represented me to her as a scheming adventurer; that’s what he began with. I must own that, like a fool, I talked to him freely at first. I thought that, simply to revenge himself on the prince, he’d work in my interests. He is such a sly beast! Ah, I have seen through him now

completely! And he heard about that theft from his mother, the captain’s widow. If the old man did bring himself to it, it was for that woman’s sake. He suddenly told me, apropos of nothing, that the general had promised his mother four hundred roubles; and he told me that without the least ceremony, absolutely apropos of nothing. Then I understood it all. And he peered right in my face with a sort of glee. He’s told mother too, most likely, for the mere pleasure of breaking her heart. And why on earth doesn’t he die, pray? He promised to die in three weeks, and here he is getting fatter! He is coughing less; he said himself last night that he hadn’t brought up blood for two days.”

“Turn him out.”

“I don’t hate him, I despise him!” Ganya pronounced proudly. “Well, yes, I do hate him then, I do,” he shouted suddenly with extraordinary fury, “and I’ll tell him so to his face, even if he lies dying on his bed! If you’d read his confession — good Lord, th e naivete of its insolence! He is a regular Lieutenant Pirogov, a Nozdryov — turned tragic, and, above all, he is a puppy! Oh, how I should have enjoyed thrashing him, simply to surprise him! Now he wants to pay every one out because he failed to . . . But what’s that? A noise again? What can it be, really? I won’t put up with it, Ptitsyn!” he cried to his brother-in-law who came into the room. “What’s the meaning of this? What are we coming to? This is . .. this is ...”

But the noise was quickly coming nearer, the door was suddenly flung open, and old Ivolgin, wrathful, crimson in the face, and beside himself with agitation, attacked Ptitsyn too. The old man was followed by Nina Alexandrovna, Kolya and the last of all Ippolit.

CHAPTER 2

It WAS five days since Ippolit had moved to Ptitsyn's house. This had happened naturally, without any break between him and Myshkin. Far from quarrelling, they appeared to part as friends. Gavril Ardalionovitch, who had been so antagonistic to Ippolit on that evening, came of himself, three days afterwards, however, to see him, probably moved to do so by some sudden idea. Rogozhin too, for some reason, took to visiting the invalid. It seemed to Myshkin at first that it would be better for the "poor boy" himself if he were to move out of his (Myshkin's) house. But at the time of his removal Ippolit observed that he was going to stay with Ptitsyn, "who was so kind as to give him a corner," and, as though purposely, he never once put it that he was going to stay with Ganya, though it was Ganya who had insisted on his being received into the house. Ganya noticed it at the time, and it rankled in his heart.

He was right when he told his sister that the invalid was better. Ippolit was somewhat better than before, and the improvement was evident at the first glance. He came into the room after every one else, with a sarcastic and malignant smile on his face. Nina Alexandrovna came in, very much frightened. She was thinner and had greatly changed during the last six months; since she had moved to her daughter's house on the latter's marriage, she had almost given up outwardly taking any part in her children's affairs. Kolya was worried and seemed puzzled; there was a great deal he did not understand in the "general's madness," as he expressed it, being, of course, unaware of the reasons of this last upset in the house. But it was clear to him that his father was quarreling everywhere and all day long, and had suddenly so changed that he was not like the same man. It made him uneasy, too, to see that the old man had, for the last three days, entirely given up drinking. He knew that his father had fallen out and even quarrelled with Lebedyev and Myshkin. Kolya had just returned home with a pint bottle of vodka, paid for out of his own pocket.

"Really, mother," he had assured Nina Alexandrovna upstairs, "really it's better to let him drink. It's three days since he touched a drop, he must be feeling wretched. It's really better; I used to take it him to the prison."

The general flung the door wide open, and stood in the doorway, seeming to quiver with indignation.

“Sir!” he shouted in a voice of thunderto Ptitsyn. “If you have really decided to sacrifice to a milksop and an atheist a venerable old man, your father, that is, at least, the father of your wife, who has served his sovereign, I will never set my foot within your doors from this hour. Choose, sir, choose at once; it’s either me or that . . . screw! “Vfes, a screw! I said it without thinking, but he is a screw, for he probes into my soul with a screw, and with no sort of respect.. . . What a screw!”

“Don’t you mean a cork-screw?” Ippolit put in.

“No, not a cork-screw! For I stand before you, a general, not a bottle. I have decorations, the rewards of distinction . . . and you have less than nothing. It’s either he or I. Make up your mind, sir, at once, at once!” he shouted frantically again to Ptitsyn.

At that moment Kolya set a chair for him and he sank on to it exhausted.

“You really had better . . . have a nap,” muttered Ptitsyn, overwhelmed.

“Fancy him threatening!” Ganya said to his sister in an undertone.

“Have a nap!” shouted the general. “I am not drunk, sir, and you insult me. I see,” he went on, getting up, “that everything is against me here, everything and everybody. Enough! I am going. . . . But you may be sure, sir, you may be sure ...”

He was not allowed to finish. They made him sit down again; and began begging him to be calm. Ganya, in a fury, retired into a corner. Nina Alexandrovna was trembling and weeping.

“But what have I done to him? What’s he complaining of?” cried Ippolit, grinning.

“As though you had done nothing!” Nina Alexandrovna observed suddenly. “It’s particularly shameful of you . . . and inhuman to torment an old man ... and in your place, too.”

“To begin with, what is my place, madam? I respect vou verv much, vou personally, but...”

“He’s a screw!” bawled the general. “He probes into my soul and heart. He wants me to believe in atheism. Let me tell you, young whippersnapper, that before you were born I was loaded with honours. And you’re only an envious man, torn in two with coughing and dying of spite and infidelity. And why has Gavril brought you here? They’re all against me, even to my own son.”

“Oh, leave off, you’ve got up a tragedy!” cried Ganya. “If you didn’t put us to shame all over the town, it would be better.”

“What, I put you to shame, milksop, you? I can only do you credit, I can’t dishonour you!”

He began shouting, and they could not restrain him, but Gavril Ardalionovitch could not control himself either.

“You talk about honour!” he shouted angrily.

“What do you say?” thundered the general, turning pale and taking a step towards him.

“That I need only open my mouth to . . .” Ganya roared suddenly, and broke off.

They stood facing one another, both excessively agitated, especially Ganya.

“Ganya, what are you about!” cried Nina Alexandrovna, rushing to restrain her son.

“How senseless it is of you all,” Varya snapped out in indignation. “Be quiet, mother,” she said, taking hold of her.

“Only for mother’s sake, I spare him,” Ganya brought out tragically.

“Speak!” roared the general in a perfect frenzy. “Speak, on pain of your father’s curse! Speak! ...”

“As though I were frightened of your curse! And whose fault is it that you’ve been like a madman for the last eight days? Eight days, you see I keep a reckoning. Mind you don’t drive me too far. I’ll tell everything. . . . Why did you go stumping off to the Epanchins’ yesterday? And you call yourself an old man, grey haired, the father of a family! He’s a pretty one!”

“Shut up, Ganya!” shouted Kolya. “Shut up, you fool!”

“But how have I, how have I insulted him?” Ippolit persisted, but still in the same jeering voice. “Why did he call me a screw, you heard him? He came pestering me; he was here just now, talking of some Captain Eropyegov. I don’t desire your company at all, general, I’ve always avoided it, as you know yourself. I have nothing to do with Captain Eropyegov, you will admit. I didn’t come here for the sake of Captain Eropyegov. I simply expressed my opinion that this Captain Eropyegov may possibly never have existed. He raised the devil.”

“He certainly never has existed,” Ganya rapped out.

But the general stood looking stupefied, and gazed blankly about him. His son’s words had impressed him by their extraordinary openness. For the first instant he could not even find words. And at last, only when Ippolit burst out laughing in response to Ganya and cried out: “There, did you hear,

your own son, too, says there was no such person as Captain Eropyegov," the old man muttered, completely disconcerted:

"Kapiton Eropyegov, not Captain . . . Kapiton . . . the retired Lieutenant-Colonel Eropyegov . . . Kapiton."

"And there was never a Kapiton, either," cried Ganya, thoroughly exasperated.

"Why. . . wasn't there?" muttered the general, and a flush overspread his whole face.

"Oh, leave off!" Ptitsyn and Varya tried to repress them.

"Hold your tongue, Ganya!" Kolya shouted again.

But this intercession seemed to bring the general to himself.

"How can you say there wasn't? Why didn't he exist?" he flew out menacingly at his son.

"Oh, because there wasn't. There wasn't and that's all, and there couldn't be! So there. Leave me alone, I tell you."

"And this is my son ... my own son, whom I. . . . Oh, Heavens! ... No such person as Eropyegov, Eroshka Eropyegov!"

"There you are, now he's Eroshka, before he was Kapitoshka!" put in Ippolit.

"Kapitoshka, sir, Kapitoshka, not Eroshka. Kapiton, Kapiton Alexeyevitch, I mean, Kapiton. . . . Lieutenant-Colonel on half-pay... he was married to Marya ... to Marya . . . Petrovna. Su . . . su . . . a friend and comrade . . . Sutogov . . . from the time of the cadets! For his sake I shed ... I screened . . . killed. No such person as Kapitoshka Eropyegov! No such person!" the general shouted wildly, yet it miqht be assumed that what he was shoutinq about was not what really mattered. Another time he would, of course, have put up with something far more insulting than the assertion of Kapiton Eropyegov's absolute non-existence. He would have shouted, made a fuss, been moved to frenzy, but yet, in the end, he would have gone upstairs to bed. But now, such is the fantastic strangeness of the human heart, it happened that a slight, such as the doubt about Eropyegov, was the last drop in his cup. The old man turned crimson, raised his arms and shouted:

"Enough! My curse! . .. Out of this house! Nikolay, bring me my bag ... I am going ... away!"

He went out in haste and extreme wrath. Nina Alexandrovna, Kolya and Ptitsyn rushed after him.

“Well, what have you done now!” Varya said to her brother. “He’ll be off there again most likely. The disgrace of it!”

“He shouldn’t steal,” cried Ganya, almost spluttering with anger. Suddenly his eyes met Ippolit’s. Ganya positively shook. “As for you, sir,” he shouted, “you ought to remember, anyway, that you’re in another person’s house and . . . enjoying his hospitality, and not to irritate an old man who has obviously gone out of his mind.”

Ippolit too felt a qualm, but he instantly controlled himself.

“I don’t quite agree with you that your papa has gone out of his mind,” he answered calmly, “on the contrary, it seems to me that he has had more sense of late, really; don’t you think so? He has become so cautious, suspicious. He pries into everything, weighs every word. He began talking to me about that Kapitoshka with an object, you know. Only fancy, he wanted to lead me on to ...”

“Ai’e, what the devil do I care what he wanted to lead you on to? I beg you not to try your shifty dodges on me, sir,” shrieked Ganya. “If you, too, know the real cause why the old man is in such a state (and you’ve been spying here these five days to such a degree that you certainly do know) you ought not to have irritated ... the unhappy man, and worried my mother by exaggerating the matter; for it’s all nonsense, simply a drunken freak, nothing more, not proved either, and I don’t think it’s worth a thought... but you must sting and spy because you .. . you are .

“A screw!” laughed Ippolit.

“Because you are an abject creature, because you worried people for half an hour, thinking to frighten them by shooting yourself with an unloaded pistol, making such a shameful exhibition of yourself, you walking mass of jaundiced spite who can’t even commit suicide without making a mess of it! I have given you hospitality, you’ve grown fat, you’ve left off coughing, and you repay it...”

“Allow me, two words only; I am in Varvara Ardalionovna’s house, not yours, and I imagine indeed that you yourself are enjoying the hospitality of Mr. Ptitsyn. Four days ago I begged my mother to find lodgings for me in Pavlovsk and to move here herself, because I certainly feel better here, though I have not grown fat at all and am still coughing. Mother let me know yesterday evening that the lodging was ready, and I hasten to inform you on my side, that thanking your mother and sister for their kindness, I

will move there to-day, as I decided to do last night. Excuse me, I interrupted you, I believe you wanted to say a great deal more."

"Oh, if that's so," said Ganya, quivering.

"If that's so, allow me to sit down," added Ippolit, seating himself with perfect composure in the chair where the general had been sitting. "After all I am ill, you know; well, now I'm ready to listen to you, especially as this is our last conversation, perhaps indeed our last meeting."

Ganya suddenly felt ashamed.

"You may be sure I won't demean myself by settling accounts with you," said he, "and if you ..."

"You need not be so lofty," interrupted Ippolit, "on the very first day of my coming here, I vowed I would not deny myself the satisfaction of paying off all scores with you, and in the most thoroughgoing way, when we came to part. I intend to do this now, but after you, of course."

"I beg you to leave the room."

"You'd better speak. You'll only regret not having had it out, you know."

"Leave off, Ippolit, it's all so horribly undignified; do me the favour to be quiet," said Varya.

"Only to oblige a lady," laughed Ippolit, getting up. "Certainly, Varvara Ardalionovna, for you I am ready to cut it short, but only that, for some explanation between me and your brother is absolutely essential, and nothing would induce me to go away leaving a misunderstandinq."

"In plain words you're a scandalmonger," screamed Ganya, "and so you won't go away without a scandal."

"There, you see," Ippolit observed coolly, "you're at it again, already. \bu certainly will regret not speaking out. Once more I make way for you. I await your words."

Gavril Ardalionovitch looked at him contemptuously, without speaking.

"You won't speak. You mean to keep up your part — please yourself. On my side I will be as brief as possible. Two or three times to-day I have been reproached with accepting your hospitality. That's unfair. By inviting me to stay with you, you tried to entrap me yourself, you reckoned I should want to payout the prince. \bu heard, besides, that Aglaia Ivanova had shown sympathy for me and read my confession. Supposing for some reason that I was ready to devote myself altogether to your interests, you hoped that you might get help from me. I won't explain more in detail! I do not demand

assurances or confessions from you either; enough that I leave you to your conscience, and that now we thoroughly understand each other.”

“Goodness knows what you make out of the most ordinary things!” cried Varya.

“I told you: he’s a scandalmonger and a nasty schoolboy,” said Ganya.

“Allow me, Varvara Ardalionovna, I’ll go on. The prince, of course, I can neither like nor respect; but he is certainly a kind man, though . . . rather ridiculous. But I’ve certainly no reason to hate him; I didn’t let on when your brother tried to set me against the prince; I was looking forward to having a laugh at him afterwards. I knew that your brother would make a blunder and give himself away to me shockingly. And so it has turned out... I am ready to spare him now, simply out of respect for you, Varvara Ardalionovna. But since I have made it clear that it is not so easy to catch me, I’ll explain why I was so anxious to make your brother look a fool. You must know that I’ve done it because I hate him, I confess it openly. When I die (for I am dying even if I have grown fatter as you say), when I die, I feel I shall go to paradise with my heart incomparably more at ease, if I succeed in making a fool of one at least of the class of people who have persecuted me all my life, whom I have hated all my life, and of which your excellent brother is a conspicuous example. I hate you, Gavril Ardalionovitch, simply because — this will perhaps seem marvellous to you — simply because you are the type, the incarnation, the acme of the most insolent and self-satisfied, the most vulgar and loathsome commonplaceness. \burs is the commonplaceness of pomposity, of self-satisfaction and Olympian serenity. You are the most ordinary of the ordinary! Not the smallest idea of your own will ever take shape in your heart or your mind. But you are infinitely envious; you are firmly persuaded that you are a great genius; but yet doubt does visit you sometimes at black moments, and you grow spiteful and envious. Oh, there are still black spots on your horizon; they will pass when you become quite stupid, and that’s not far off; but a long and chequered path lies before you! I can’t call it a cheerful one and I’m glad of it. In the first place I predict that you won’t gain a certain lady...”

“Oh, this is unbearable!” cried Varya. “Will you leave off, you horrid, spiteful creature?”

Ganya turned white, quivered and kept silent. Ippolit stopped, looked intentlvand with relish at him,

turned his eyes to Varya, bowed and went out, without adding another word.

Gavril Ardalionovitch might with justice have complained of his lot and of his ill-success. For some time Varya did not venture to speak to him, she did not even glance at him as he paced to and fro before her with long strides; at last he walked away to the window and stood with his back to her. Varya thought of the Russian proverb about “a knife that cuts both ways.” A noise began again overhead.

“Are you going?” Ganya asked suddenly, hearing her get up from her seat. “Wait a bit. Look at this.”

He went up and threw on the chair before her a piece of paperfolded into the shape of a tiny note.

“Good heavens!” cried Varya, clasping her hands.

There were just seven lines in the note:

“Gavril Ardalionovitch! As I am convinced of your friendly feeling for me I venture to ask your advice in a matter of great importance to me. I should like to meet you to-morrow morning at seven o’clock at the green seat. It’s not far from our villa. Varvara Ardalionovna who must accompany you knows the place well. A.E.”

“Good heavens, what will she do next?” Varvara Ardalionovna flung up her hands.

Little as Ganya was inclined to be boastful at that moment, he could not help showing his triumph, especially after Ippolit’s humiliating predictions. A self-satisfied smile lit up his face, and Varya, too, beamed all over with delight.

“And that on the very day when her betrothal is to be announced! Well, there’s no knowing what she’ll do next!”

“What do you think? What does she mean to speak about to-morrow?” asked Ganya.

“That doesn’t matter. What matters is that she wants to see you for the first time after six months. Listen to me, Ganya, whatever’s happened, whatever turn it takes, I tell you it’s important! It’s tremendously important! Don’t swagger, don’t make another blunder, and don’t be faint-hearted either, mind that. She must have guessed why I’ve been trudging off there for the last six months? And fancy, she didn’t say a word to me to-day, she made no sign. I’ve been to them on the sly, you know. The old woman did

not know I was there, or maybe she'd have sent me packing. I risked it for your sake, to find out at all costs....”

Again there was shouting and uproar overhead. Several persons were coming downstairs.

“This mustn't be allowed now on any account!” cried Varya, flurried and alarmed. “Not a shadow of a scandal! Go, ask his forgiveness!”

But the head of the family was already in the street. Kolya was dragging his bag after him. Nina Alexandrovna was standing on the steps, crying; she would have run after him, but Ptitsyn held her back.

“You only make him worse like that,” he said to her. “He has nowhere to go. He'll be brought back again in half an hour. I've spoken to Kolya already; let him play the fool.”

“Why these heroics? Where can you go?” Ganya shouted from the window. “You've nowhere to go!”

“Come back, father!” cried Varya, “the neighbours will hear.”

The general stopped, turned round, stretched out his hand, and exclaimed:

“My curse on this house!”

“He must take that theatrical tone!” muttered Ganya, closing the window with a slam.

The neighbours certainly were listening. Varya ran out of the room.

When Varya had gone out, Ganya took the note from the table, kissed it, gave a click of satisfaction and pirouetted round.

CHAPTER 3

The SCENE with the general would never have come to anything in other circumstances. He had had sudden outbursts of temper of the same kind before, though not often; for, generally speaking, he was a very good-tempered man, and of a rather kindly disposition. A hundred times perhaps he had struggled against the bad habits that had gained the mastery of him of late years. He used suddenly to remember that he was head of a family, would make it up with his wife, and shed genuine tears. He respected and almost worshipped Nina Alexandrovna, for having forgiven him so much in silence, and for loving him, even though he had become a grotesque and degraded figure. But his noble-hearted efforts to overcome his failings did not usually last long. The general was besides of a too "impulsive" character, though in his own peculiar fashion. He could not stand for long his empty mode of life as a penitent in his family and ended by revolting. He flew into a paroxysm of excitement, for which, perhaps he was inwardly reproaching himself at the very moment, though he could not restrain himself: he quarrelled, began talking eloquently and rhetorically, insisting upon being treated with the most exaggerated and impossible respect and finally would disappear from the house, sometimes remaining absent for a long time. For the last two years he had only a vague idea from hearsay of the circumstances of the family. He had given up going further into matters, feeling not the slightest impulse to do so.

But this time there was something exceptional in the "general's outbreak." Every one seemed to be aware of something, and every one seemed afraid to speak of it. The general had "formally" presented himself to his family, that is to Nina Alexandrovna, only three days before, but not humble and penitent as on all previous "reappearances," but on the contrary — with marked irritability. He was loquacious, restless, talked heatedly to all, and, as it were, hurled himself upon every one he met, but always speaking of such irrelevant and unexpected subjects that it was impossible to get to the bottom of what was worrying him. At moments he was cheerful, but for the most part he was thoughtful, though he did not know himself what he was thinking about. He would suddenly begin to talk of something — of the Epanchins, of Myshkin, of Lebedyev — and then he would suddenly break off and cease speaking, and only responded to further

questions with a vacant smile, without being conscious himself that he was being questioned or that he was smiling. He had spent the previous night moaning and groaning and had exhausted Nina Alexandrovna, who had been up all night, preparing fomentations. Towards morning he had suddenly fallen asleep; he slept for four hours and waked up with a most violent and irrational attack of hypochondria, which ended in a quarrel with Ippolit and “a curse on this house.” They noticed, too, that for those three days he had been liable to violent attacks of self-esteem, which made him morbidly ready to take offence. Kolya assured his mother and insisted that this was all due to a craving for drink, and perhaps for Lebedyev, with whom the general had become extraordinarily friendly of late. But, three days before he had suddenly quarrelled with Lebedyev, and had parted from him in a terrible fury. There had even been some sort of a scene with Myshkin. Kolya begged Myshkin for an explanation, and began at last to suspect that he too knew something he did not want to tell him. If, as Ganya, with every possibility of correctness, supposed, some special conversation had taken place between Ippolit and Nina Alexandrovna, it seemed strange that this spiteful youth, whom Ganya called so openly a “scandalmonger,” had not found satisfaction in initiating Kolya into the secret in the same way. It was very possible that he was not such a malicious and nasty “puppy” as Ganya had described him in speaking to his sister, but was malicious in a different way. And he could hardly have informed Nina Alexandrovna of what he had observed simply in order “to break her heart.” Don’t let us forget that the causes of human actions are usually immeasurably more complex and varied than our subsequent explanations of them. And these can rarely be distinctly defined. The best course for the story-teller at times is to confine himself to a simple narrative of events. And this is the line we will adopt in the rest of our account of the present catastrophe with the general; for, do what we may, it is absolutely inevitable we should bestow rather more space and attention than we had originally proposed on this person of secondary importance in our story.

These events had succeeded one another in the following order.

When Lebedyev on the same day returned with the general from his visit to Petersburg to look for Ferdyshtchenko, he told Myshkin nothing particular. If Myshkin had not been at the time too busy and preoccupied with other impressions of great importance to him, he might soon have noticed that during the two following days Lebedyev, far from giving him

any kind of explanation, seemed, for some reason, to be trying to avoid meeting him. When Myshkin did at last turn his attention to the subject, he was surprised that he could not remember during those three days having met Lebedyev in any but the most blissful state of mind,

and almost always in company with the general. They were never apart for a moment. Myshkin sometimes heard the sound of loud and rapid talk and merry laughing dispute from overhead. Once, very late at night, the strains of a martial and Bacchanalian song had suddenly and unexpectedly burst upon his ears, and he recognised at once the husky bass of the general. But the song ceased suddenly before the end. Then for about another hour an extremely animated, and from all signs, drunken conversation followed. It might be conjectured that the friends were embracing one another, and one of them finally began to weep. Then followed a violent quarrel, which also ceased suddenly soon after. All this time Kolya seemed peculiarly preoccupied. Myshkin was generally not at home, and returned sometimes very late. He was always told that Kolya had been looking for him all day, and asking for him. But when they met, Kolya had nothing special to tell him except that he was “dissatisfied” with the general and his goings on at present: “They wander about together, get drunk in a tavern close by, embrace one another and quarrel in the street. They make each other worse, and can’t be parted.” When Myshkin observed that it had been just the same every day before, Kolya was quite unable to find an answer, and could not explain the cause of his present uneasiness.

The morning after the Bacchic song and quarrel, Myshkin was leaving the house about eleven o’clock when he was suddenly confronted by the general, who seemed greatly excited, almost overwhelmed, by something.

“I’ve long been seeking the honour of meeting you, honoured Lyov Nikolayevitch, very long,” he muttered, squeezing Myshkin’s hand very tightly, almost hurting him. “A very, very long time.”

Myshkin begged him to sit down.

“No, I won’t sit down. Besides, I’m keeping you. I’ll come another time. I believe I may take the opportunity of congratulating you on . . . the fulfilment of your heart’s desire.”

“What heart’s desire?”

Myshkin was disconcerted. Like many people in his position he fancied that nobody saw, guessed, or understood anything about him.

“Never mind, never mind! I would not wound your most delicate feelings. I have known them, and I

know what it is when another man . . . pokes his nose ... as the saying is . . . where it isn’t wanted. I feel that every morning. I have come about another matter, an important one. A very important matter, prince.”

Myshkin once more begged him to be seated and sat down himself.

“Perhaps for one second. ... I have come to ask advice. I have, of course, no practical aim in life, but as I respect myself and . . . business habits in which the Russian as a rule, is so conspicuously deficient.. . . Iwishto place myself and my wife and my children in a position ... in fact, prince, I want your advice.”

Myshkin warmly applauded his intention.

“Well, that’s all nonsense,” the general interrupted suddenly, “that’s not what I want to say, but something else, something important. I simply want to explain to you, Lyov Nikolayevitch, as a man in the sincerity of whose heart and the nobility of whose feelings I have complete confidence, as . . . as . . . You are not surprised at my words, prince?”

Myshkin observed his visitor, if not with surprise, at least with extreme attention and curiosity.

The old man was rather pale, his lips quivered slightly at times, his hands seemed unable to find a resting-place. He only remained a few minutes in his seat, and had twice already got up from his chair for some reason, and sat down again, obviously not paying the slightest attention to what he was doing. There were books lying on the table: he took up one, and still talking, glanced at the opened page, shut it again at once, and laid it back on the table, snatched up another book which he did not open, and held it all the rest of the time in his right hand, waving it continually in the air.

“Enough!” he shouted suddenly. “I see that I have been disturbing you shockingly.”

“Oh, not in the least, please go on. Quite the contrary. I’m listening and trying to guess ...”

“Prince! I am anxious to gain for myself a position of respect.... I am anxious to respect myself and ... my rights.”

“A man animated by such a desire is deserving of respect, if only on that ground.”

The prince brought out his copybook phrase in the firm conviction that it would have an excellent effect. He guessed instinctively that some such

hollow but agreeable phrase uttered at the right moment might immediately have an irresistible and soothing influence on the mind of such a man, especially in such a position as the general. In any case it was necessary to send such a visitor away with a lighter heart, and that was the problem.

The phrase flattered and touched and greatly pleased General Ivolgin: he suddenly melted, instantly changed his tone, and went off into a long, enthusiastic explanation. But, however intently Myshkin listened, he could make literally nothing of it. The general talked for ten minutes, heatedly, rapidly, as though he could not get out his crowding thoughts quickly enough. Tears positively shone in his eyes towards the end, yet it was nothing but sentences without beginning or end, unexpected words and unexpected ideas, bursting out rapidly and unexpectedly and stumbling over one another.

“Enough! You have understood me, and I am satisfied,” he concluded, suddenly getting up. “A heart such as yours cannot fail to understand a suffering man. Prince, you are ideally generous. What are other men beside you? But you are young and I bless you. The long and short of it is I came to ask you to appoint an hour for an important conversation with me, and on that I rest my chief hope. I seek for nothing but friendship and sympathy, prince. I have never been able to master the yearnings of my heart.”

“But why not at once? lam ready to listen....”

“No, prince, no!” the general interrupted hotly. “Not now! Now is a vain dream! It is too, too important! Too important! The hour of that conversation will be an hour of irrevocable destiny. That will be my hour, and I should not wish it to be possible for us to be interrupted at such a sacred moment by any chance comer, any impudent fellow, and there are plenty of such impudent fellows.” He bent down suddenly to Myshkin, with a strange, mysterious, and almost frightened whisper. “Such impudent fellows, not worthy the heel.. . of your shoe, adored prince. Oh! I don’t say of my shoe. Note particularly that I don’t refer to my own shoe, for I have too much self-respect to say that straight out. . . but you alone are able to understand that in waiving my heel in such a case I show perhaps the utmost pride of worth. Except you, no one will understand it, he least of all.

He understands nothing, prince; he is utterly, utterly incapable of understanding. One must have a heart to understand!”

At last Myshkin was almost alarmed and he made an appointment with General Ivolgin for the same hour next day.

The latter went out with a confident air, greatly comforted, and almost reassured. In the evening between six and seven Myshkin sent to ask Lebedyev to come to him for a minute.

Lebedyev made his appearance with great alacrity, “esteemed it an honour,” as he began at once on entering. There was not the shadow of a hint that he’d been as it were in hiding for the last three days, and was obviously trying to avoid meeting Myshkin. He sat down on the edge of the chair, with smiles and grimaces, with laughing and watchful little eyes, rubbing his hands and assuming an air of the most naive expectation of hearing something, of receiving some communication of the first importance, long expected and guessed by every one. Myshkin winced again. It became clear to him that every one had suddenly begun to expect something of him, that every one looked at him, as though wanting to congratulate him with hints, smiles, and winks. Keller had run in two or three times for a minute already, also with an evident desire to congratulate him; each time he began vaguely and enthusiastically but did not finish, and quickly disappeared again. (He had been drinking particularly heavily of late, and making a sensation in some billiard-room.)

Even Kolya, in spite of his sadness, had also attempted once or twice to begin upon some subject with Myshkin.

Myshkin asked Lebedyev directly and somewhat irritably what he thought of General Ivolgin’s state of mind, and why the latter seemed so uneasy. In a few words he told him of the scene that morning.

“Every one has his own reasons for uneasiness, prince . . . and . . . especially in our strange and uneasy age, you know,” Lebedyev answered with a certain dryness, and relapsed into offended silence, with the air of a man deeply deceived in his expectations.

“What philosophy!” said Myshkin smiling.

“Philosophy would be useful, very useful in our age in its practical application, but it’s despised, that’s how it is. For my part, honoured prince, though I have respected your confidence to me on a certain point you know of, yet only to a certain degree, and no further than circumstances relating to that point especially . . . that I understand, and I don’t in the least complain.”

“Lebedyev, you seem to be angry about something?”

“Not at all, not in the least, honoured and resplendent prince ... not in the least!” Lebedeyev cried passionately, laying his hand upon his heart. “On

the contrary, I realised at once that, neither by my position in the world, nor by the qualities of my mind or my heart, nor the amount of my fortune, nor my former behaviour, nor my knowledge — in no way do I deserve the confidence with which you honour me, so far above my hopes, and that if I can serve you it is as a slave and hireling. Nothing else. I am not angry, but I'm sad."

"Come, come, Lukyan Timofeyitch!"

"Nothing else! So it is in the present case. Meeting you, fixing my heart and thought upon you, I said to myself: 'I am unworthy of your confidence as a friend, but as the landlord of your house perhaps I may receive at the fitting time, before the anticipated event, so to speak, a warning, or at least an intimation in view of certain changes expected in the future.

As he uttered this, Lebedyev positively fastened his sharp little eyes on Myshkin, who was looking at him in astonishment. He was still in hopes of satisfying his curiosity.

"I don't understand a word!" cried Myshkin, almost with anger, "and . . . you're an awful intriguer!" he suddenly broke into a most genuine laugh. Instantly Lebedyev laughed too, and his beaming face showed clearly that his hopes were confirmed, and even redoubled.

"And do you know what I have to tell you, Lukyan Timofeyitch? Don't be angry with me, but I wonder at your simplicity, and not only yours! You are expecting something of me with such simplicity now, at this very moment, that I feel positively ashamed and conscience-stricken at having nothing to satisfy you with; but I swear that I really have nothing. Can you fancy that?"

Myshkin laughed again.

Lebedyev put on a dignified air. It was true that he was sometimes too naive and intrusive in his curiosity, but at the same time he was a rather cunning and wily man, and in some cases even too artfully silent. Myshkin had almost made an enemy of him by continually putting him off. But Myshkin put him off, not because he despised him, but because the subject of his curiosity was a delicate one. Myshkin had only a few days before looked on some of his own dreams as a crime, while Lukyan Timofeyitch took Myshkin's rebuffs simply as a proof of personal aversion and mistrust, withdrew, cut to the heart and jealous not only of Kolya and of Keller, but even of his own daughter, Vera. Even at that very moment, he could, perhaps, have told Myshkin a piece of news of the greatest interest to him,

and perhaps sincerely desired to do so, but he remained gloomily silent and did not tell him.

“In what way can I be of use to you, honoured prince, since anyway you . . . called me just now,” he said at last after a brief silence.

“Why, I asked you about the general,” Myshkin, who had been musing for a moment, too, answered hurriedly, “and ... in regard to that theft you told me about.”

“In regard to what?”

“Why, as though you don’t understand me now! Oh, dear, Lukyan Timofeyitch, you’re always acting a part! The money, the money, the four hundred roubles you lost that day in your pocket-book, and about which you came to tell me in the morning, as you were setting off for Petersburg. Do you understand at last?”

“Ah, you’re talking about that four hundred roubles!” drawled Lebedyev, as though he had only just guessed. “I thank you, prince, for your sincere sympathy; it is too flattering to me, but. . . I’ve found it some time since.”

“Found it! Ah, thank God!”

“That exclamation is most generous on your part, for four hundred roubles is no small matter for a poor man who lives by his hard work, with a large family of motherless children....”

“But I didn’t mean that! Of course, I am glad you found the money,” Myshkin corrected himself quickly, “but how did you find it?”

“Very simply. Ifound it under the chair on which my coat had been hunq, so that the pocket-book must have slipped out of the pocket on to the floor!”

“Under a chair? It’s impossible! Why, you told me yourself you had hunted in every corner. How was it you came to overlook the most obvious place?”

“I should think I did look! I remember only too well how I looked! I crawled on all fours, felt the place with my hands, moving back the chairs because I couldn’t trust my own eyes: I saw there was nothing there for the place was as smooth and empty as my hands, and yet I went on fumbling. \bu always see that weakness in anyone who is very anxious to find anything, when anything serious and important has been lost. A man sees there’s nothing there, the place is empty, and yet he peeps into it a dozen times.”

“Yes, I daresay; only, how was it seen? ... I still don’t understand,” muttered Myshkin, disconcerted. “You told me before it wasn’t there, and

you had looked in that place, and then it suddenly turned up!”

“And then it suddenly turned up.”

Myshkin looked strangely at Lebedyev.

“And the general?” he asked suddenly.

“What about the general? . . .” Lebedyev seemed at a loss again.

“Oh, dear! I ask you what did the general say when you found the pocket-book under the chair? You looked for it together, you know.”

“We did look together before. But that time, I confess, I held my tongue, and preferred not to tell him that the pocket-book had been found by me and alone.”

“But... why? And the money? Was it all there?”

“I opened the pocket-book. The money was untouched, every rouble of it.”

“You might have come to tell me,” Myshkin observed thoughtfully.

“I was afraid to disturb you, prince, in your personal, and so to say, absorbing interests, and besides, I made as though I had found nothing. I opened the pocket-book and looked at it, then I shut it and put it back under the chair.”

“But what for?”

“Oh, n-nothing, from curiosity,” chuckled Lebedyev, rubbing his hands.

“Then it has been lying there since the day before yesterday?”

“Oh, no; it only lay there for a day and a night. You see, it was partly that I wanted the general to find it. For since I had found it, why should not the general notice the object, which lay conspicuous under the chair, so to speak, catching the eye. I lifted that chair several times and put it so that the pocket-book was completely in view, but the general simply didn’t notice it, and so it went on for twenty-four hours. He seems to be extraordinarily unobservant now, and there’s no making him out. He talks, tells stories, laughs, chuckles, and then flies into a violent temper with me. I don’t know why. At last, as we were going out of the room, I left the door open on purpose; he hesitated, would have said something, most likely he was uneasy about the pocket-book with such a sum of money in it, but suddenly flew into an awful rage and said nothing. Before we had gone two steps in the street, he left me and walked away in the other direction. We only met in the evening in the tavern.”

“But in the end you did take the pocket-book from under the chair?”

“No, it vanished from under the chair that same night.”

“Then where is it now?”

“Oh, here,” cried Lebedyev, laughing suddenly,

drawing himself up to his full height and looking amiably at Myshkin. “It suddenly turned up, here, in the lappet of my coat. Here; won’t you look, feel.”

The left lappet of the coat had indeed been formed into something like a bag in front, in the most conspicuous place, and it was clear at once to the touch that there was a leather pocket-book there that had fallen down from a torn pocket.

“I took it out and looked. The money’s all there. I dropped it in again, and so I’ve been walking about since yesterday morning. I carried it in my coat and it knocks against my legs.”

“And you take no notice of it?”

“And I take no notice of it. He-he! And would you believe it, honoured prince, though the subject is not worthy of so much notice on your part, my pockets were always perfectly good, and then a hole like that, all of a sudden, in one night! I began to look at it more curiously; it’s as though some one had cut it with a pen-knife. Isn’t it almost incredible?”

“And ... the general?”

“He’s been angry all day; both yesterday and today; fearfully ill-humoured. At one time he’d be beaminq and hilarious till he beqan to pav me compliments, then he’d be sentimental to tears, then suddenly angry; so much so, that I’d be frightened really, for I’m not a military man, after all. We were sitting yesterday in the tavern, and the lappet of my coat stood out as though by chance, in the most prominent way; a perfect mountain. He looked at it on the sly, and was angry. He hasn’t looked me straight in the face for a long time, unless he’s very drunk or sentimental; but yesterday he gave me a look that made a shudder run down my spine. Tomorrow, though, I mean to find the pocket-book, but I shall have an evening’s fun with him before then.”

“Why are you tormenting him so?” cried Myshkin.

“I’m not tormenting him, prince, I’m not tormenting him,” Lebedyev replied with warmth. “I sincerely love and . . . respect him; and now, whether you believe it or not, he’s dearer to me than ever. I have come to appreciate him even more.”

Lebedyev said all this so earnestly and sincerely that Myshkin was positively indignant.

“You love him and you torment him like this! Why, by the very act of putting the lost pocket-book where it could be seen under the chair and in your coat, by that alone he shows you that he doesn’t want to deceive you, but with open-hearted simplicity asks your forgiveness. Do you hear? He’s asking your forgiveness! So he relies on the delicacy of your feelings, so he believes in your friendship for him. And yet you reduce to such humiliation a man like that... a most honest man!”

“Most honest, prince, most honest!” Lebedyev assented, with sparkling eyes. “And you, most noble prince, are the only person capable of uttering that true word about him! For that, I am devoted to you and ready to worship you, though I am rotten to the core with vices of all sorts! That’s settled it! I will find the pocket-book now, at once, not to-morrow. Look, I take it out before your eyes; here it is. Here’s the money, untouched, here. Take it, most noble prince, take care of it till to-morrow. To-morrow or next day I’ll have it. And, do you know, prince, it’s evident that it must have been lying somewhere in my garden, hidden under some stone, the first night it was lost. What do you think?”

“Mind you don’t tell him directly to his face that you’ve found the pocket-book. Let him simply see that there’s nothing in the lappet of your coat, and he’ll understand.”

“You think so? Wouldn’t it be better to tell him I have found it, and to pretend I had not guessed about it till now?”

“N-no,” Myshkin pondered, “n-no; it’s too late for that now. That’s more risky. You’d really better not speak of it! Be kind to him, but . . . don’t show too much, and ... and ... you know....”

“I know, prince, I know. That is I know that I shan’t do it properly, perhaps. For one needs to have a heart like yours to do it. Besides, he’s irritable and prone to it himself, he has begun to treat me too superciliously sometimes of late. One minute he is whimpering and embracing me, and then he’ll suddenly begin to snub me, and sneer at me contemptuously, and then I just show him the lappet on purpose. He-he! Good-bye, prince; for it’s clear I’m keeping you and interrupting you in your most interesting feelings, so to say....”

“But for goodness’ sake, the same secrecy as before!”

“Treading softly, treading softly!”

But, though the matter was settled, Myshkin remained almost more puzzled than before. He awaited with impatience his interview with the

general next day.

CHAPTER 4

The HOUR fixed was twelve, but Myshkin was, quite unexpectedly, late. On his return home he found the general waiting for him. He saw at the first glance that the old man was displeased, and very likely, just because he had been kept waiting. Apologising, Myshkin made haste to sit down, but he felt strangely timid, as though his guest were made of porcelain and he were afraid of breaking him. He had never felt timid with the general before; it had never entered his head to feel so. Myshkin soon perceived that he was a perfectly different man from what he had been yesterday. Instead of agitation and incoherence, there was an unmistakable, a visible and marked reserve; it could be seen that this was a man who had taken an irrevocable decision. But his composure was more apparent than real. In any case the visitor displayed a gentlemanly ease of manner, though with reserved dignity. He even treated Myshkin at first with an air of condescension, as proud people who have been gratuitously insulted sometimes do behave with gentlemanly ease. He spoke affably, though with a certain aggrieved intonation.

“Your book, which I borrowed from you the other day,” he said, nodding significantly at a book he had brought which was lying on the table. “I thank you.”

“Oh, yes. Have you read that article, general? How did you like it? It’s interesting, isn’t it?” Myshkin was delighted at the chance of beginning to talk on an irrelevant subject.

“Interesting, perhaps, but crude, and of course absurd. Probably a lie in every sentence.”

The general spoke with aplomb, and even drawled his words a little.

“Ah, it’s such an unpretentious story; the story of an old soldier who was an eye-witness of the arrival of the French in Moscow; some things in it are charming. Besides, every account given by an eyewitness is precious, isn’t it, whoever he may be?”

“Had I been the editor, I would not have printed it; as for the descriptions of eye-witnesses in general, people are more ready to believe crude liars, who are amusing, than a man of worth who has seen service. I know some descriptions of the year 1812 which . . . I’ve come to a determination, prince, I am leaving this house ... the house of Mr. Lebedyev.”

The general looked significantly at Myshkin.

“You have your own rooms at Pavlovsk at ... at your daughter’s . . ,” said Myshkin, not knowing what to say.

He remembered that the general had come to ask his advice about a most important matter, on which his fate depended.

“At my wife’s; in other words, at home, in my daughter’s house.”

“I beg your pardon. I...”

“I am leaving Lebedyev’s house, because, dear prince, because I have broken with that man. I broke with him yesterday evening and regret I did not do so before. I insist on respect, prince, and I wish to receive it even from those, upon whom I bestow, so to speak, my heart. Prince, I often bestow my heart, and I am almost always deceived. That man is not worthy of what I gave him.”

“There’s a great deal in him that’s extravagant,” Myshkin observed discreetly, “and some traits . . . but in the midst of it all one can perceive a good heart, and a sly, and sometimes amusing intelligence.”

The nicety of the expressions and the respectfulness of the tone flattered the general, though he still looked at Myshkin sometimes with sudden mistrustfulness. But Myshkin’s tone was so natural and sincere that he could not suspect it.

“That he has good qualities,” the general assented, “I was the first to declare, when I almost bestowed my friendship on that individual. I have no need of his house and his hospitality, having a family of my own. I do not justify my failings. I am weak; I have drunk with him, and now perhaps I am weeping for it. But it was not for the sake of the drink alone (excuse, prince, the coarseness of candour in an irritated man), it was not for the sake of the drink alone I became friendly with him. What allured me was just, as you say, his qualities. But all only to a certain point, even his qualities; and if he suddenly has the impudence to declare to one’s face, that in 1812, when he was a little child he lost his left leg, and buried it in the Vagankovsky cemetery in Moscow, he is going beyond the limit, showing disrespect and being impertinent....”

“Perhaps it was only a joke to raise a laugh.”

“I understand. An innocent lie, however crude, to raise a laugh, does not wound a human heart. One man will tell a lie, if you like, simply from friendship, to please the man he is talking to; but if there’s a suspicion of disrespect, if he means to show just by such disrespect that he is weary of

the friendship, there's nothing left for a man of honour but to turn away and break off all connection, putting the offender in his proper place."

The general positively flushed as he spoke.

"Why, Lebedyev could not have been in Moscow in 1812. He's not old enough. It's absurd."

"That's the first thing; but even supposing he could have been born then, how can he declare to one's face that the French chasseur aimed a cannon at him and shot off his leg, just for fun; that he picked the leg up and carried it home, and afterwards buried it in the Vagankovsky cemetery; and he says that he put a monument over it with an inscription on one side: 'Here lies the leg of the collegiate secretary, Lebedyev,' and on the other: 'Rest, beloved ashes, till the dawn of a happy resurrection,' and that he had a service read over it every year (which is nothing short of blasphemy), and that he goes to Moscow every year for the occasion. To prove it he invites me to go to Moscow to show me the tomb, and even the very cannon taken from the French, now in the Kremlin. He declares it's the eleventh from the gate, a French falconet of an old-fashioned pattern."

"And besides, he has both his legs, uninjured, apparently," laughed Myshkin. "I assure you it was harmless jest. Don't be angry."

"But allow me to have my own opinion; as for his appearing to have two legs, that's not altogether improbable; he declares that he got his leg from Tchernosvitov...."

"Oh, yes, they say that people can dance with legs from that maker."

"I'm perfectly aware of that; when Tchernosvitov invented his leg, the first thing he did was to run and show it to me. But his legs were invented much later.

. . . What's more, he asserts that his late wife never knew, all the years they were married, that he, her husband, had a wooden leg. When I observed to him how foolish it all was, he said to me: 'If you were a page of Napoleon's in 1812, you might let me bury my leg in Vagankovsky.'"

"But did you really . . ." Myshkin began, and broke off embarrassed.

The general too seemed a shade embarrassed, but at the same instant he looked at Myshkin with distinct condescension, and even irony.

"Go on, prince, go on," he drawled with peculiar suavity. "I can make allowances, speak out; confess that you are amused at the very thought of seeing before you a man in his present degradation and .. . uselessness, and

to hear that that man was an eyewitness of . . . great events. Hasn’t he gossiped to you already?”

“No, I’ve heard nothing from Lebedyev, if it’s Lebedyev you are talking about....”

“Hm! ... I had supposed the contrary. The particular conversation took place between us yesterday apropos of that strange article in the Archives. I remarked on its absurdity, and since I

had myself been an eye-witness . . . you are smiling, prince, you are looking at myface?”

“N-no. I...”

“I am youngish looking,” the general drawled the words— “but I am somewhat older in years than I appear. In 1812 I was in my tenth or eleventh year. I don’t quite know my own age exactly. In my service list my age is less; it has been my weakness all my life to make myself out younger than I am.”

“I assure you, general, that I don’t think it strange that you should have been in Moscow in 1812, and .. . of course you could describe ... like everyone else who was there. One of our writers begins his autobiography by saying that, when he was a baby in arms, in Moscow, in 1812, he was fed with bread by the French soldiers.”

“There, you see,” the general condescendingly approved, “what happened to me was of course out of the ordinary, but there is nothing incredible in it. Truth very often seems impossible. Page! It sounds strange, of course. But the adventure of a ten-year-old boy may perhaps be explained just by his age. It wouldn’t have happened to a boy of fifteen, that’s certain; for at fifteen, I should not, on the day of Napoleon’s entry into Moscow, have run out of the wooden house in Old Bassmann Street, where I was living with my mother, who had not left the town in time and was terror-stricken. At fifteen I too should have been afraid, but at ten I feared nothing, and I forced my way through the crowd to the very steps of the palace just when Napoleon was dismounting from the horse.”

“Certainly, that’s a very true remark, that at ten years old one might not be afraid . . .” Myshkin assented, abashed and distressed byfeeling that he was just going to blush.

“Most certainly, and it all happened as simply and naturally as possible, in reality; set a novelist to work on the subject, he would weave in all sorts of incredible and improbable details.”

“Oh, that’s true!” cried Myshkin. “I was struck by the same idea, quite lately. I know a genuine case of murder for the sake of stealing a watch — it’s appearing in the newspapers now. If some author had invented it, critics and those who know the life of the people would have cried out at once that it was improbable; but reading it in the newspapers as a fact, you feel that in such facts you are studying the reality of Russian life. That’s an excellent observation of yours, general,” Myshkin concluded warmly, greatly relieved at finding a refuge from his blushes.

“Isn’t it? Isn’t it?” cried the general, his eyes sparkling with pleasure. “A boy, a child who knows nothing of fear, makes his way through the crowd to see the fine show, the uniforms, the suite, and the great man about whom he has heard such a lot. For at that time people had talked of nothing else for years. The world was full of that name. I drank it in with my milk, so to speak. Napoleon was two paces away when he chanced to catch my eye. I looked like a little nobleman, they dressed me well. There was no one like me in the crowd you may believe....”

“No doubt it must have struck him and have shown him that every one had not left Moscow, and that there were still some of the nobility there with their children.”

“Just so! Just so! He wanted to win over the boyars! When he bent his eagle glance upon me, my eye must have flashed in response, Vo/’/a un garcon bien eveille! Qui est ton pere?’ I answered him at once, almost breathless with excitement: ‘A general who died in the field for his country.”Le fils d’un boyard et d’un brave par-dessus le marche! J’aime les boyards. M’aimes tu, petit?’ To this rapid question I answered as rapidly: ‘A Russian heart can discern a great man even in the enemy of his country!’ That is, I don’t remember whether I literally used those words. ... I was a child . . . but that was certainly the drift of them! Napoleon was struck, he thought a moment and said to his suite: ‘I like the pride of that child! But if all Russians think like that child, then. . . .’ He said no more, but walked into the palace. I at once mingled with the suite and ran after him. They made way for me, and already looked upon me as a favourite. But all that was only for a moment. ... I only remember that when the Emperor went into the first room he stopped before the portrait of the Empress Catherine, looked at it a long time thoughtfully, and at last pronounced: That was a great woman!’ and passed by. Within two days every one knew me in the palace and the Kremlin and called me: ‘le petit boyard.’ I only went home

to sleep. At home they were almost frantic about it. Two days later, one of Napoleon's pages, Baron de Basencour, died, exhausted by the campaign. Napoleon remembered me; they took me, brought me to him without explanation; they tried on me the uniform of the dead page — a boy of twelve, and when they had brought me, wearing the uniform to the Emperor and he had nodded to me, they announced to me that I had been found worthy of favour and appointed a page-in-waiting to his Majesty. I was glad; I had, in fact, long felt warmly attracted by him . . . and besides, as you know very well, a brilliant uniform means a great deal to a child. ... I wore a dark green dress-coat, with long narrow tails, gold buttons, red edgings worked with gold on the sleeves, and with a high, erect, open-collar, worked in gold, and embroidery on the tails; tight white chamois leather breeches, a white silk waistcoat, silk stockings, and buckled shoes . . . and when the Emperor rode out, if I was one of the suite, I wore high top-boots. Although the situation was anything but promising, and there was a feeling of terrible catastrophe in the air, etiquette was kept up as far as possible, and in fact, the greater the foreboding of catastrophe, the more rigorous was the court punctilio."

"Yes, of course . . ," muttered Myshkin with an almost hopeless air. "\bur memoirs would be . . . extremely i nteresti ng."

The general, of course, had been repeating the story he had already told Lebedyev the day before, and so he repeated it fluently; but at this point he stole a mistrustful glance at Myshkin again.

"My memoirs," he brought out with redoubled dignity— "write my memoirs? That is not a temptation to me, prince! If you will have it, my memoirs are already written, but . . . they are lying in my desk. When my eyes are closed for ever in the grave, then they may be published, and no doubt they will be translated into foreign languages, not for the sake of their literary value, no, but from the importance of the tremendous events of which I have been the eyewitness, though as a child; the more for that indeed. As a child I had the entry into the private bedroom, so to speak, of the 'Great Man.' I heard at night the groans of that 'Titan in agony,' he could not feel ashamed to groan and weep before a child, though I understood even then, that the cause of his distress was the silence of the Emperor Alexander."

"To be sure, he wrote letters . . . with overtures of peace ..." Myshkin assented timidly.

“We don’t know precisely with what overtures he wrote, but he wrote every day, every hour, letter after letter! He was fearfully agitated! One night, when we were alone, I flew to him weeping. (Oh, I loved him!) ‘Beg, beg forgiveness of the Emperor Alexander!’ I cried to him. Of course, I ought to have used the expression: ‘make peace with the Emperor Alexander,’ but, like a child, I naively expressed all I felt. ‘Oh, my child!’ he replied — he paced up and down the room. ‘Oh, my child!’ He did not seem to notice at that time that I was only ten, and liked to talk to me. ‘Oh, my child, lam ready to kiss the feet of the Emperor Alexander, but then the King of Prussia, and then the Austrian Emperor. Oh, for them my hatred is everlasting and ... at last. .. of course you know nothing of politics.’ He seemed suddenly to remember to whom he was speaking and ceased; but there were gleams of fire in his eyes long after. Well, say I describe all these facts — and I was the eye-witness of the greatest events — say I publish my memoirs now, and all the critics, the literary vanities, all the enw, the cliques ... no, vour humble servant!”

“As for cliques, no doubt your observation is a true one, and I agree with you,” Myshkin observed quietly after a moment’s silence. “I read not long ago a book by Charasse, about the Waterloo campaign. It is evidently a genuine book, and experts say that it is written with great knowledge. But on every page one detects glee at the humiliation of Napoleon; and if it had been possible to dispute Napoleon’s genius in every other campaign, Charasse would be extremely glad to do it. And that’s not right in such a serious work, because it’s the spirit of partisanship. Had you much to do in waiting on the Emperor?”

The general was delighted. The earnestness and simplicity of Myshkin’s question dissipated the last traces of his mistrustfulness.

“Charasse! Oh, I was indignant myself. I wrote to him myself, at the time, but ... I don’t remember now. . . . “Vbu ask if I had much to do in Napoleon’s service? Oh, no! I was called a page-in-waiting, but even at the time I did not take it seriously. Besides, Napoleon soon lost all hope of winning over the Russians, and no doubt he would have forgotten me, whom he had adopted from policy, if he had not. .. if he had not taken a personal fancy to me; I say that boldly now. My heart was drawn to him. My duties were not exacting; I had sometimes to be present in the palace and to . . . attend the Emperor when he rode out, that was all. I rode a horse

fairly well. He used to drive out before dinner. Davoust, I, and a mameluke, Rouston, were generally in his suite....”

“Constant.” The name was pronounced almost i nvolunta ri ly by Myshki n.

“N-no, Constant was not there then. He had gone with a letter... to the Empress Josephine. His place was taken by two orderlies and some Polish uhlans . . . and that made up the whole suite, except for the generals and marshals whom Napoleon took with him to explore the neighbourhood, and consult about the position of the troops. The one who was oftenest in attendance was Davoust, as I remember now; a huge, stout, cold-blooded man, in spectacles, with a strange look in his eyes. He was consulted more often than anyone by the Emperor, who appreciated his judgment. I remember they were in consultation for several days; Davoust used to go in to him morning and evening. Often they even argued; at last Napoleon seemed to be brought to agree. They were alone in the Emperor’s study; I was present, scarcely observed by them. Suddenly Napoleon’s eye chanced to fall upon me, a strange thought gleamed in his eye. ‘Child,’ said he to me, ‘what do you think? if I adopt the Orthodox faith, and set free your slaves, will the Russians come over to me or not?”Never!’ I cried indignantly. Napoleon was impressed. ‘In the patriotism shining in that child’s eyes,’ said he, ‘I read the verdict of the whole Russian people. Enough, Davoust! That’s all a fantasy! Explain your other plan.’”

“But there was a great idea in that plan too,” said Myshkin, evidently growing interested. “So you would ascribe that project to Davoust?”

“At any rate, they consulted together. No doubt, the idea was Napoleon’s, the idea of an eagle. But there was an idea too in the other plan. . . . That was the famous ‘conseil du lion,’ as Napoleon himself called that advice of Davoust’s. That advice was to shut himself up in the Kremlin with all the troops, to build barracks, to dig out earthworks, to place cannons, to kill as many horses as possible and salt the flesh, to procure by purchase or pillage as much corn as possible, and to spend the winter there till spring; and in the spring to fight their way through the Russians. This plan fascinated Napoleon. We used to ride round the Kremlin walls everyday; he used to show where to demolish, where to construct lunettes, ravelins, or a row of block-houses — he had a quick eye, swift judgment, a sure aim. Everything was settled at last. Davoust insisted on a final decision. Once more they were alone except for me. Again Napoleon paced the room with

folded arms. I could not take my eyes off his face, my heart throbbed. ‘I am going,’ said Davoust, ‘Where?’ asked Napoleon. ‘To salt horse-flesh,’ said Davoust. Napoleon shuddered, it was the turning-point. ‘Child,’ said he to me, suddenly, ‘what do you think of our intention?’ No doubt he asked me as sometimes a man of the greatest intelligence will at the last moment toss up to decide. I turned to Davoust instead of Napoleon and spoke as though by inspiration: ‘You’d better cut and run home, general!’ The plan was abandoned. Davoust shrugged his shoulders, and went out, muttering in a whisper: ‘Bah, il devient superstitieux!’ And the next day the retreat was ordered.”

“All that is extremely interesting,” Myshkin murmured in a very low voice, “if it really was so. ... I mean to say..,” he hastened to correct himself.

“Oh, prince,” cried the general, so carried away by his own story that perhaps he could not stop short even of the most flagrant indiscretion, “you say, ‘if it really was so’! But there was more, I assure you, far more! These are only paltry political facts. But I repeat I was the witness of the tears and groans of that great man at night; and that no one saw but I! Towards the end, indeed, he ceased to weep, there were no more tears, he only moaned at times; but his face was more and more overcast, as it were, with darkness. As though eternity had already cast its dark wings about it. Sometimes at night we spent whole hours alone together, in silence — the mameluke Roustan would be snoring in the next room, the fellow slept fearfully soundly. ‘But he is devoted to me and to the dynasty,’ Napoleon used to say about him. Once I was dreadfully grieved; and suddenly he noticed tears in my eyes. He looked at me tenderly. ‘\bu feel for me!’ he cried, ‘you, a child, and perhaps another boy will feel for me — my son, le roi de Rome; all the rest, all, all hate me, and mv brothers would be the first to betray me in misfortune!’ I began to sob and flew to him. Then he broke down, he threw his arms round me, and our tears flowed together. ‘Do, do write a letter to the Empress Josephine!’ I sobbed to him. Napoleon started, pondered, and said to me: ‘You remind me of the one other heart that loves me; I thank you, my dear!’ He sat down on the spot, and wrote the letter to the Empress Josephine, which was taken by Constant next day.”

“You did splendidly,” said Myshkin. “In the midst of his evil thoughts you led him to good feelings.”

“Just so, prince, and how well you put it! How like your own good heart!” cried the general rapturously, and, strange to say, genuine tears stood

in his eyes. “Yes, prince, yes, that was a magnificent spectacle. And do you know I very nearly went back with him to Paris, and should no doubt have shared with him his ‘sultry prison isle,’ but alas! — fate severed us! We were parted, he to the ‘sultry prison isle,’ where, who knows, he may have recalled in hours of tragic tribulation the tears of the poor boy who embraced him and forgave him Moscow. I was sent to the cadets’ corps, where I found nothing but strict discipline, the roughness of comrades, and . . . alas! all turned to dust and ashes! ‘I don’t want to part you from your mother, and take you with me,’ he said to me on the day of the retreat, ‘but I should like to do something for you.’ He had already mounted his horse. ‘Write something as a souvenir for me in my sister’s album,’ said I, timidly, for he was very troubled and gloomy. He turned, asked for a pen, took the album. ‘How old is your sister?’ he asked me. ‘Three years old,’ I answered. ‘Une petite fille a/ors/’And he wrote in the album.

7Ve mentezjamais.’

‘Napoleon, votre ami sincere.’

Such advice and in such a moment, prince, you can imagine!”

“Yes, that was remarkable.”

“That page was framed in gold under glass and always used to hang on the wall in my sister’s drawing-room, in the most conspicuous place, it hung there till her death; she died in childbirth; where it is now — I don’t know . . . but. . . Ach, Heaven! It’s two o’clock already! How I have kept you, prince! It’s unpardonable!”

The general got up from his chair.

“Oh, on the contrary,” mumbled Myshkin. “\bu have so entertained me, and ... in fact, it’s so interesting; I am so grateful to you!”

“Prince!” said the general again, squeezing his hand till it hurt, gazing at him with sparkling eyes, as though suddenly thunderstruck at some thought he had recollected. “Prince! you are so kind, so good-hearted, that I’m sometimes positively sorry for you. I am touched when I look at you. Oh, God bless you! May a new life begin for you, blossoming . . . with love. Mine is over! Oh, forgive me. Good-bye!”

He went out quickly, covering his face with his hands. Myshkin could not doubt the genuineness of his emotion. He realised too that the old man had gone away enraptured at his success; yet he had a misgiving that he was one of that class of liars with whom lying has become a blinding passion, though at the very acme of their intoxication they secretly suspect that they

are not believed, and that they cannot be believed. In his present position the old man might be overwhelmed with shame when he returned to the reality of things. He might suspect Myshkin of too great a compassion for him and feel insulted. “Haven’t I made it worse by leading him on to such flights?” Myshkin wondered uneasily, and suddenly he could not restrain himself, and laughed violently for ten minutes. He was nearly beginning to reproach himself for his laughter, but at once realised that he had nothing to reproach himself with, since he had an infinite pity for the general.

His misgiving proved true. In the evening he received a strange letter, brief but resolute. The general informed him that he was parting from him, too, for ever, that he respected him, and was grateful to him, but that even from him he could not accept “proofs of compassion which were derogatory to the dignity of a man who was unhappy enough without that.” When Myshkin heard that the old man had taken refuge with Nina Alexandrovna, he felt almost at ease about him. But we have seen already that the general had caused some sort of trouble at Lizaveta Prokofyevna’s too. Here we cannot go into the details, but we will mention briefly that the upshot of the interview was that the general scared Lizaveta Prokofyevna, and by his bitter insinuations against Ganya had roused her to indignation. He was led out in disgrace. That was why he had spent such a night and such a morning, was completely unhinged and had run out into the street almost in a state of frenzy.

Kolya had not yet fully grasped the position, and even hoped to bring him round by severity.

“Well, where are we off to now, do you suppose, general?” he said. “\bu don’t want to go to the prince’s. You’ve quarrelled with Lebedyev, you’ve no money, and I never have any. We are in a nice mess in the street!”

‘“It’s better to be of a mess than in a mess!’ I made that . . . pun to the admiration of the officers’ mess ... in forty-four. ... In eighteen . . . forty-four, yes! ... I don’t remember... oh, don’t remind me, don’t remind me! ‘Where is my youth, where is my freshness!’ as exclaimed . . . who exclaimed it, Kolya?”

“Gogol, father, in ‘Dead Souls,’” answered Kolya, and he stole a timid glance at his father.

‘“Dead Souls’! Oh, yes, dead! When you bury me, write on the tombstone: ‘Here lies a dead soul!”Disqrace pursues me!’ Who said that, Kolva?”

“I don’t know, father.”

“There was no such person as Eropyegov? Eroshka. Eropyegov . . ,” he cried frantically, stopping short in the street. “And that was said by my son, my own son! Eropyegov, who for eleven months took the place to me of a brother, for whom I fought a duel. . . . Prince Vygoryetsky, our captain said to him over a bottle: ‘Grisha, where did you get your Anna ribbon, tell me that?”On the battlefield of my country, that’s where I got it!’ I shouted: ‘Bravo, Grisha!’ And that led to a duel, and afterwards he was married to Marya Petrovna Su .. . Sutugin, and was killed in the field. ... A bullet glanced off the cross on my breast and hit him straight in the brow. ‘I shall never forget!’ he cried, and fell on the spot. I . . . I’ve served with honour, Kolya; I’ve served nobly, but disgrace—’disgrace pursues me!’ You and Nina will come to my grave. ‘Poor Nina!’ I used to call her so in old days, Kolya, long ago in our early days, and how she loved. . . . Nina, Nina! What have I made of your life! For what can you love me, long-suffering soul! \bur mother has the soul of an angel, Kolya, do you hear, of an angel!”

“I know that, father. Father, darling, let’s go back home to mother! She was running after us! Come, why are you standing still? As though you don’t understand ... Whyare you crying?”

Kolya shed tears himself, and kissed his father’s hands.

“You’re kissing my hands, mine!”

“Yes, yours, yours. What is there to wonder at? Come, why are you crying in the middle of the street? And you call yourself a general, an army man; come, let’s go!”

“May God bless you, dear boy, for having been respectful to a wretched, disgraceful old man. Yes, to a wretched, disgraceful old man, your father. .. . May you, too, have such a boy . . . le roi de Rome. O, ‘a curse a curse on this house!’”

“But why on earth are you going on like this?” cried Kolya, boiling over suddenly, “what has happened? Why won’t you go home now? Why have you gone out of your mind?”

“I’ll explain, I’ll explain to you. . . . I’ll tell you everything; don’t shout, people will hear. . . le roi de Rome. . . . Oh, I’m sick, I’m sad. ‘Nurse, where is thy tomb?’ Who was it cried that, Kolya?”

“I don’t know, I don’t know who cried it! Let’s go home, at once, at once! I’ll give Ganya a hiding if necessary... but where are you off to again?”

But the general drew him to the steps of a house close by.

“Where are you going? That’s a stranger’s house!”

The general sat down on the step, still holding Kolya’s hand, and drawing him to him.

“Bend down, bend down!” he muttered. “I’ll tell you everything . . . disgrace . . . bend down . . . your ear, your ear; I’ll tell you in your ear...”

“But what is it?” cried Kolya, terribly alarmed, yet stooping down to listen.

“Le roi de Rome . . .”whispered the general. He, too, seemed trembling all over.

“What? Why do you keep harping on le roi de Rome? ... What?”

“I . . . I . . ,” whispered the general again, clinging more and more tightly to “his boy’s” shoulder. “I . . . want.. . I’ll tell. .. you everything, Marya . .. Marya .. . Petrovna Su-su-su ...”

Kolya tore himself away, seized the general by the shoulders, and looked at him frantically. The old man flushed crimson, his lips turned blue, faint spasms ran over his face. Suddenly he lurched forward and began slowly sinking into Kolya’s arms.

“A stroke!” the boy shouted aloud in the street, seeing at last what was the matter.

CHAPTER 5

In REALITY Varvara Ardalionovna had in her conversation with her brother somewhat exaggerated the certainty of her news concerning Myshkin’s engagement to Aglaia Epanchin.

Perhaps, like a sharp-sighted woman, she had divined what was bound to come to pass in the immediate future; perhaps, disappointed at her dream (in which, however, she had never really believed) passing off in smoke, she was too human to be able to deny herself the gratification of instilling added bitterness into her brother’s heart, by exaggerating the calamity, even though she loved him sincerely and felt sorry for him. In any case, she could not have received such exact information from her friends, the Epanchins; there were only hints,

half-uttered words, meaningful silences, and surmises. Though, perhaps, Aglaia’s sisters gossiped a little with design, so that they might themselves find out something from Varvara Ardalionovna. It may have been that they, too, could not forgo the feminine pleasure of teasing a friend a little, though they had known her from childhood; they could not in so long a time have failed to get at least a glimpse of what she was aiming at.

On the other hand, Myshkin, too, though he was perfectly right in assuring Lebedyev that he had nothing to tell him, and that nothing special had happened to him, may have been mistaken. Something very strange certainly was happening to all of them; nothing had happened, and yet, at the same time, a great deal had happened. Varvara Ardalionova, with her unfailing feminine instinct, had guessed this last fact.

It is very difficult, however, to explain in proper orderly fashion how it came to pass that every one in the Epanchins’ house was struck at once by the same idea, that something vital had happened to Aglaia, and that her fate was being decided. But as soon as this idea had flashed upon all of them, at once all insisted that they had felt misgivings about it and foreseen it long ago; that it had been clear since the episode of the “poor knight,” and even before, only, at that time, they were unwilling to believe in anything so absurd. So the sisters declared; Lizaveta Prokofyevna, of course, had foreseen and known everything long before anyone, and her “heart had ached about it” long ago; but, whether she had known it long ago or not, the thought of the prince suddenly became very distasteful to her, because it

threw her so completely out of her reckoning. Here was a question which required an immediate answer; but not only was it impossible to answer it, but poor Lizaveta Prokofyevna, however much she struggled, could not even see the question quite clearly. It was a difficult matter. “Was the prince a good match, or not? Was it all a good thing, or not? If it were not a good thing (and undoubtedly it was not) in what way was it not good? And if, perhaps, it were good (and that was also possible) in what way was it good, again?” The head of the family himself, Ivan Fyodorovitch, was of course first of all surprised, but immediately afterwards made the confession that, “By Jove, he’d had an inkling of it all this time, now and again, he seemed to fancy something of the sort.” He relapsed into silence at the threatening glance of his wife; he was silent in the morning, but, in the evening, alone with his wife and compelled to speak, suddenly and, as it were, with unwonted boldness he gave vent to some unexpected opinions. “I say, after all, what did it amount to?” (Silence.) “All this was very strange of course if it were true, and he didn’t dispute it, but. . . .” (Silence again.) “And, on the other hand, if one looked at the thing without prejudice, the prince was a most charming fellow, upon my word, and . . . and, and — well, the name, our family name, all that would have the air, so to say, of keeping up the family name which had fallen low in the eyes of the world, that was, looking at it from that point of view, because they knew what the world was; the world was the world, but still the prince was not without fortune if it was only a middling one; he had . . . and, and, and” (prolonged silence, and a complete collapse). When Lizaveta Prokofyevna heard her husband’s words, her anger was beyond all bounds.

In her opinion all that had happened was “unpardonable and criminal follv, a sort of fantastic vision, stupid and absurd!” In the first place, “this little prince was a sickly idiot, and in the second place — a fool; he knew nothing of the world and had no place in it. To whom could one present him, where was one to put him? He was an impossible sort of democrat; he hadn’t even got a post. . . and . . . and what would Princess Byelokonsky say? And was this, was this the sort of husband they had imagined and planned for Aglaia?” The last argument, of course, was the chief one. At this reflection the mother’s heart shuddered, bleeding and weeping, though, at the same time, something quivered within it, whispering to her, “In what way is the prince not what is wanted?” And that protest of her own heart was what gave Lizaveta Prokofyevna more trouble than anything.

Aglaia's sisters were for some reason pleased at the thought of Myshkin. It didn't even strike them as very strange; in short, they might at any moment have gone over to his side completely. But they both made up their minds to keep quiet. It had been noticed as an invariable rule in the family that the more obstinate and emphatic Lizaveta Prokofyevna's opposition and objection were on any matter of dispute, the surer sign it was for all of them that she was already almost on the point of agreeing about it. But Alexandra did not find it possible to be perfectly silent. Her mother, who had chosen her long ago as her adviser, was calling for her every minute now, and asking for her opinions and still more for her recollections; that is, "How it had all come to pass? How was it nobody saw it? Why did no one say anything? What was the meaning of that horrid 'poor knight'? Why was she alone, Lizaveta Prokofyevna, doomed to worry about everything, to notice and foresee everything, while the others did nothing but count the crows," and so on, and so on. Alexandra was on her guard at first, and confined herself to remarking that she thought her father's idea rather true, that in the eyes of the world the choice of Prince Myshkin as the husband of one of the Epanchins might seem very satisfactory. Gradually getting warmer, she even added that the prince was by no means "a fool," and never had been; and as for his consequence — there was no knowing what a decent man's consequence would depend upon in a few years' time among us in Russia; whether on the successes in the service that were once essential, or on something else. To all this her mamma promptly retorted that Alexandra was "a Nihilist, and this was all their hateful 'woman-question.'" Half an hour later she set off for town and from there to Kamenny Island to find Princess Byelokonsky, who happened, fortunately, to be in Petersburg at the time, though she was soon going away. Princess Byelokonsky was Aglaia's godmother.

The "old princess" listened to Lizaveta Prokofyevna's feverish and desperate outpourings, and was not in the least moved by the tears of the harassed mother; she even looked at her sarcastically. The old lady was a terrible despot; she would not allow even her oldest friends to be on an equal footing with her, and she looked on Lizaveta Prokofyevna simply as her protege, as she had been thirty-five years before, and she never could reconcile herself to the abruptness and independence of her character. She observed among otherthings that "they were, as usual, in much too great a hurry, and were making a mountain out of a molehill; that so far as she

heard, she was not convinced that anything serious had really happened; and wouldn't it be better to wait until there was something to go upon? That the prince, in her opinion, was a nice young man, though sickly, eccentric, and of little consequence. The worst point about him was that he was openly keeping a mistress." Madame Epanchin was well aware that the princess was rather cross at the failure of "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch whom she had introduced to them. She went home to Pavlovsk in a state of greater irritation than when she had set out, and she fell foul of every one at once, chiefly, on the ground that "they'd all gone crazy," and that things were not done like that by anyone whatever except by them. "Why were they in such a hurry? What has happened? So far as I can judge I cannot see that anything has happened! Wait till there's something to go upon! Ivan Fyodorovitch is always fancying things and making mountains out of molehills."

The upshot of it was that they must keep calm, wait and look on coolly. But alas! the calm did not last ten minutes. The first blow to her composure was the news of what had happened during her absence at Kamennv Island. (Madame Epanchin's visit had taken place on the day after Myshkin had paid a vist after midnight instead of at nine o'clock.) In reply to their mother's impatient questions, the sisters answered in detail to begin with that "nothing special had happened during her absence," that the prince had come, that for a long time, quite half an hour, Aglaia had not come down to see him, that afterwards she came down and at once asked Myshkin to play chess; that the prince did not know how to play and Aglaia had beaten him at once; that she was very lively and had scolded the prince, who was horribly ashamed of his ignorance; she had laughed at him dreadfully, so that they were sorry to look at him. Then she suggested a game of cards, "fools." But that had turned out quite the other way. The prince played fools in masterly fashion, like a professor; Aglaia had even cheated and changed cards, and had stolen tricks from under his very nose, and yet he had made a "fool" of her five times running. Aglaia got fearfully angry, quite forgot herself, in fact; she said such biting and horrid things to the prince that at last he left off laughing, and turned quite pale when she told him at last that "she wouldn't set foot in the room as long as he were there, and that it was positively disgraceful of him to come to them, especially at night, past twelve o'clock, after all that had happened" Then she slammed the door and went out. The prince walked out as though from a funeral, in spite of all

their efforts to console him. All of a sudden, a quarter of an hour after the prince had gone, Aglaia had run downstairs to the verandah in such haste that she had not dried her eyes, and they were still wet with tears. She ran down because Kolya had come bringing a hedgehog. They had all begun looking at the hedgehog. Kolya explained that the hedgehog was not his; that he was out for a walk with a schoolfellow, Kostya Lebedyev, who had stayed in the street and was too shy to come in, because he was carrying a hatchet; that they had just bought the hedgehog and the hatchet from a peasant they had met. The peasant had sold them the hedgehog for fifty kopecks, and they had persuaded him to sell the hatchet, too, because “he might just as well,” and it was a very good hatchet. All of a sudden Aglaia had begun worrying Kolya to sell her the hedgehog; she got very excited about it, and even called Kolya “darling.” For a long time Kolya would not consent, but at last he gave way and summoned Kostya Lebedyev, who did in fact come in carrying a hatchet and very much abashed. But then it had suddenly appeared that the hedgehog was not theirs at all, but belonged to another, a third boy, called Petrov, who had given the two of them money to buy Schlosser’s “History” for him from a fourth boy, which, the latter, being in want of money, was selling cheap; that they had been going to buy Schlosser’s “History,” but they hadn’t been able to resist buying the hedgehog, so that it followed that the hedgehog and the hatchet belonged to the third boy, to whom they were carrying them instead of Schlosser’s “History.” But Aglaia had so insisted that at last they made up their minds and sold her the hedgehog. As soon as Aglaia had bought the hedgehog, she had, with Kolya’s help, placed it in a wicker basket, and covered it with a table-napkin, then she began asking Kolya to take it straight to the prince from her, begging him to accept it as a sign of her “profound respect.” Kolya agreed, delighted, and promised to do it without fail, but began immediately pestering her to know “what was meant bv the hedqehoq and by making him such a present?”

Aglaia had answered that it was not his business. He answered that he was convinced there was some allegory in it. Aglaia had been angry, and flew out at him, saying that he was nothing but a “silly boy.” Kolya at once retorted that if it were not that he respected her sex and, what was more, his own convictions, he would have shown her on the spot that he knew how to answer such insults. It had ended, however, in Kolya’s carrying off the hedgehog in delight, and Kostya Lebedyev had run after him. Aglaia, seeing

that Kolya was swinging the basket too much, could not resist calling to him from the verandah: “Please, don’t drop it, Kolya darling!” as though she had not been quarrelling with him just before. Kolya had stopped, and he, too, as though he had not been quarrelling, had shouted with the utmost readiness: “I won’t drop him, Aglaia Ivanovna, don’t you be uneasy!” and had run on again at full speed. After that Aglaia had laughed tremendously and gone up to her own room exceedingly pleased, and had been in high spirits the rest of the day.

Lizaveta Prokofyevna was completely confounded by this account. One might ask why? But she was evidently in a morbid state of mind. Her apprehension was aroused to an extreme point, above all, by the hedgehog. What did the hedgehog mean? What compact underlay it? What was understood by it? What did it stand for? What was its cryptic message? Moreover, the luckless Ivan Fyodorovitch, who happened to be present during the inquisition, spoilt the whole business by his reply. In his opinion there was no cryptic message in it, and the hedgehog “was simply a hedgehog and nothing more — at most it meant a friendly desire to forget the past and make it up; in a word it was all mischief, but harmless and excusable.”

We may note in parenthesis that he had guessed right. Myshkin returned home after being dismissed and ridiculed by Aglaia, and sat for half an hour in the blackest despair, when Kolya suddenly appeared with the hedgehog. The sky cleared at once. Myshkin seemed to rise again from the dead; he questioned Kolya, hung on every word he said, repeated his questions ten times over, laughed like a child, and continually shook hands with the two laughing boys who gazed at him so frankly. The upshot of it was that Aglaia forgave him, and that he could go and see her again that evening, and that was for him not only the chief thing but everything.

“What children we still are, Kolya! and . . . and . . . how nice it is that we are such children,” he cried at last, joyfully.

“The simple fact is she’s in love with you, prince, that’s all about it!” Kolya answered authoritatively and impressively.

Myshkin flushed, but this time he said nothing, and Kolya simply laughed and clapped his hands. A minute later Myshkin laughed too, and he was looking at his watch every five minutes to see how time was going and how long it was till evening.

But Madame Epanchin’s mood got the upper hand of her, and at last she could not help giving way to hysterical excitement. In spite of the protests of her husband and daughters, she immediately sent for Aglaia in order to put the fatal question to her, and to extort from her a perfectly clear and final answer: “To make an end of it once for all, to be rid of it, and not to refer to it again!”

“I can’t exist till evening without knowing!” And only then they all realised to what an absurd pass they had brought things. They could get nothing out of Aglaia except feigned amazement, indignation, laughter and jeers at the prince and at all who questioned her. Lizaveta Prokofyevna lay on her bed and did not come down till evening tea, when Myshkin was expected. She awaited his coming with a tremor, and almost went into hysterics when he appeared.

And Myshkin, for his part, came in timidly, as it were feeling his way, looking into everyone’s eyes, and seeming to question them all because Aglaia was not in the room again, which made him uneasy at once. There were no other guests present that evening; the family was alone. Prince S. was still in Petersburg, busy over the affairs of Yevgeny Pavlovitch’s uncle. “If only he could have been here and said something, anyway,” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna to herself, deploring his absence. Ivan Fyodorovitch sat with a very puzzled air; the sisters were serious, and, as though intentionally, silent. Lizaveta Prokofyevna did not know how to begin the conversation. At last she vigorously abused the railway, and looked with resolute challenge at Myshkin.

Alas! Aqlaia did not come down, and Mvshkin was lost. Losing his head and hardly able to articulate, he began to express the opinion that to improve the line would be exceedingly useful, but Adelaida suddenly laughed, and he was crushed again. At that very instant Aglaia came in. Calmly and with dignity she made Myshkin a ceremonious bow, and solemnly seated herself in the most conspicuous place at the round table. She looked inquiringly at Myshkin. Every one realised that the moment had come when all doubts would be removed.

“Did you get my hedgehog?” Aglaia asked firmly and almost angrily.

“I did,” answered Myshkin, with a sinking heart, and he flushed red.

“Explain at once what you think about it. That’s essential for the peace of mind of mamma and all the family.”

“Come, come, Aglaia . . ,” began the general, suddenly uneasy.

“This is beyond everything!” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna, for some reason suddenly alarmed.

“It’s not beyond anything, maman,” her daughter answered sternly at once. “I sent the prince a hedgehog to-day, and I want to know his opinion. Well, prince?”

“What sort of opinion, Aglaia Ivanovna?”

“Of the hedgehog.”

“That is, I suppose, Aglaia Ivanovna, you want to know how I took ... the hedgehog ... or, rather, how I regarded the . . . sending . . . of the hedgehog, that is ... I imagine in such a case, that is, in fact....”

He gasped and was silent.

“Well, you’ve not said much,” said Aglaia, after waiting five seconds. “Very well, I agree to drop the hedgehog; but I am very glad that I can put an end to all this accumulation of misunderstanding. Let me know from you personally: are you making me an offeror not?”

“Good heavens!” broke from Lizaveta Prokofyevna. Myshkin started and drew back; Ivan Fyodorovitch was petrified; the sisters frowned.

“Don’t lie, prince, tell the truth. I am persecuted with strange questionings on your account. Is there any foundation for these questions? ... Well?”

“I have not made you an offer, Aglaia Ivanovna,” said Myshkin, suddenly reviving. “But you know how I

love you and believe in you ... even now....”

“What I am inquiring is — do you ask for my hand, or not?”

“I do,” Myshkin answered with a sinking heart.

A general stir of agitation followed.

“All this is not the thing, my dear fellow,” said Ivan Fyodorovitch, violently agitated. “This . . . this is almost impossible if it’s like this, Aglaia. . . . Forgive it, prince, forgive it, my dear fellow! . . . Lizaveta Prokofyevna!” he turned to his wife for assistance, “you must... go into it!”

“I refuse, I refuse!” cried Lizaveta Prokofyevna, waving her hands.

“Allow me to speak, maman: I count for something in this business; the extreme moment of my fate is being decided” (this was the expression Aglaia used) “and I want to find out for myself, and I’m glad besides that it’s before everyone. . . .Allow me to ask you, prince, if you ‘cherish such intentions,’ how do you propose to secure my happiness?”

“I really don’t know, Aglaia Ivanovna, how to answer you, in this question . . . What is there to answer? And besides ... is it necessary?”

“You seem to be embarrassed and out of breath; take a rest and pull yourself together; drink a glass of water, though they’ll soon give you some tea.”

“I love you, Aglaia Ivanovna. I love you very much, I love no one but you and .. . don’t jest, I implore you.. .. I love you very much.”

“This is an important matter, though, we are not children; we must look at it practically. . . . Have the goodness now to explain what your fortune is?”

“Come, come, Aglaia! What are you doing! This is not the thing, not the thing,” Ivan Fyodorovitch muttered in dismay.

“Disgraceful!” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna in a loud whisper.

“She’s out of her mind!” Alexandra whispered as loudly.

“My fortune . . . that is, money?” said Myshkin, surprised.

“Just so.”

“I have. ... I have now one hundred and thirty-five thousand,” Myshkin muttered, reddening.

“Is that all?” said Aglaia aloud, in open wonder, without the faintest blush. “It doesn’t matter though,

especially with economy. Do you intend to enter the service?”

“I was thinking of preparing for an examination to become a private tutor....”

“Very appropriate; no doubt that will increase our income. Are you proposing to be a kammer-junker?”

“A kammer-junker? I never imagined such a thing, but....”

But at this point the two sisters could not contain themselves and burst into laughter. Adelaida had long noticed in the twitching features of Aglaia’s face symptoms of imminent and irrepressible laughter, which she was, for the time, controlling with all her might. Aglaia looked menacingly at her laughing sisters, but a second later she, too, broke down, and went off into a frantic, almost hysterical, fit of laughter. At last she leapt up and ran out of the room.

“I knew it was all a joke and nothing more!” cried Adelaida, “from the very beginning, from the hedgehog.”

“No, this I will not allow; I will not,” cried Lizaveta Prokofyevna, suddenly boiling over with anger, and she hastened out after Aglaia. The

sisters ran out immediately after her. Myshkin was left alone in the room with the head of the family.

“This is . . . could you have imagined anything like it, Lyov Nikolayevitch?” General Epanchin cried abruptly, hardly knowing what he wanted to say. “Yes, seriously, speak?”

“I see that Aglaia Ivanovna was laughing at me,” said Myshkin sadly.

“Wait a bit, my boy. I’ll go and you wait a bit, because . . . you at least, you at least, Lyov Nikolayevitch, explain to me how all this happened, and what does it all mean, looked at as a whole, so to say? You must admit, my boy — I’m her father; anyway I’m her father and so I don’t understand anything about it; you at least let me know.”

“I love Aglaia Ivanovna; she knows that . . . and I think she has known it a long time.”

The general shrugged his shoulders.

“Strange, strange! . . . And are you very fond of her?”

“Very.”

“This all seems so strange to me. That is, such a surprise and blow that. .. . You see, my dear boy, it’s not the fortune (though I did expect you had rather more), but. . . my daughter’s happiness . . . in fact. .

. are you in a position to secure . . . her happiness? And ... and ... what does it mean: is it a joke or real on her side? Not on your side, but on hers, I mean?”

Alexandra’s voice was heard at the door, calling her father.

“Wait a bit, my boy, wait a bit! Wait a bit and think it over. I’ll be back directly,” he said hurriedly, and almost in alarm he rushed out in response to the call.

He found his wife and daughter in each other’s arms, mingling their tears. They were tears of bliss, tenderness, and reconciliation. Aglaia was kissing her mother’s hands, cheeks and lips; they were hugging each other closely.

“Here, look at her, Ivan Fyodorovitch! There you have the whole of her,” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna.

Aglaia lifted her happy, tear-stained little face from her mother’s bosom, and looked at her father; she laughed aloud, jumped up to him, embraced him warmly, and kissed him several times. Then she flung herself on her mother again and hid her face completely in her bosom so that no one could

see it, and began crying again at once. Lizaveta Prokofyevna covered her with the end of her shawl.

“What are vou doinq with us, vou cruel qirl — that’s what I want to know,” she said, but joyfully, as though she could breathe more easily now.

“Cruel! Yes, cruel!” Aglaia assented suddenly. “Spoilt! Good-for-nothing! Tell papa that. Oh, yes, he’s here! Papa, you’re here? Do you hear?” she laughed through her tears.

“My dear, my idol!” The general kissed her hand, beaming all over with happiness. (Aglaia did not take her hand away.) “So you love this young man then?”

“No-no-no! I can’t bear. . . your young man, I can’t endure him!” cried Aglaia, boiling over suddenly and raising her head. “And if you ever dare again. ... I mean it, papa, I mean it; do you hear? I mean it.”

And she certainly did mean it; she flushed all over and her eyes gleamed. Her father was nonplussed and alarmed. But Lizaveta Prokofyevna made a signal to him behind her daughter, and he took it to mean: “Don’t ask questions.”

“If it is so, my angel, it’s as you like, it’s for you to decide, he’s waiting there alone. Shouldn’t we give him a delicate hint to go away?”

Ivan Fyodorovitch, in his turn, winked at his wife.

“No, no, that’s not necessary; especially a ‘delicate’ one. You go to him yourself; I’ll come in afterwards, directly. I want to beg that . . . young man’s pardon, because I hurt his feelings.”

“Yes, you did dreadfully,” Ivan Fyodorovitch assented seriously.

“Well, then . . . you all had better stay here, and I’ll go in first alone, you shall come directly after; come the very second after, that’s better.”

She had already reached the door but suddenly turned back.

“I shall laugh! I shall die of laughing!” she declared sorrowfully.

But at the same second she turned and ran in to Myshkin.

“Come, what’s the meaning of it? What do you think?” Ivan Fyodorovitch began quickly.

“I am afraid to say,” Lizaveta Prokofyevna answered as quickly. “But to my mind it’s clear.”

“To mine, too. As clear as day. She loves him.”

“Not only loves; she’s in love with him,” put in Alexandra. “But what a man, when you think of it!”

“God bless her if such is her fate!” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna, crossing herself devoutly.

“It must be her fate,” the general agreed, “and there’s no escaping fate.”

And they all went into the dining-room where a surprise awaited them again.

Aglaia, far from laughing as she had feared on going up to Myshkin, said to him almost shyly:

“Forgive a stupid, nasty, spoilt girl” (she took his hand), “and believe me we all respect you immensely. And if I dared to turn into ridicule your splendid . . . kind simplicity, forgive me as you’d forgive a child for being naughty. Forgive me for persisting in an absurdity, which could not, of course, have the slightest consequence.”

The last words Aglaia uttered with particular emphasis.

The father, mother, and sisters were all in the drawing-room in time to see and hear all this, and all were struck by the words, “absurdity which cannot have the slightest consequence.” And still more so by the earnestness with which Aglaia spoke of that absurdity. They all looked at one another questioningly. But Myshkin did not seem to understand those words and was at the very summit of happiness.

“Why do you talk like that?” he muttered. “Why do you ... ask ... forgiveness?”

He would have said that he wasn’t worthy of her asking his forgiveness. Who knows, perhaps he did notice the meaning of the words, “absurdity which cannot have the slightest consequence,” but, being such a strange man, perhaps he was relieved at those words. There is no doubt that the mere fact that he could come and see Aglaia again without hindrance, that he was allowed to talk to her, sit with her, walk with her was the utmost bliss to him; and who knows, perhaps he would have been satisfied with that for the rest of his life. (It was just this contentment that Lizaveta Prokofyevna secretly dreaded; she understood him; she dreaded many things in secret, which she could not have put into words herself.)

It’s difficult to describe how completely Myshkin regained his spirits and courage that evening. He was so light-hearted that they grew light-hearted watching him — as Aglaia’s sisters expressed it afterwards. He was talkative, and that had not happened to him again since the morning, six months aqo, when he had first made the acquaintance of the Epanchins. On his return to Petersburg he was noticeably and intentionally silent, and had

quite lately said to Prince S. in the presence of all, that he must restrain himself and be silent, that he might not degrade an idea by his expressing it. He was almost the only one who talked that evening, he described many things. He answered questions clearly, minutely, and with pleasure. But there was not a glimpse of a word approaching love-making in his conversation. He expressed earnest, sometimes profound ideas. Myshkin even expounded some of his own views, his own private observations, so that it would have been funny, if it had not been so well expressed; as all who heard him that evening agreed later on. Though General Epanchin liked serious subjects of conversation, yet both he and Lizaveta Prokofyevna secretly thought it was too intellectual, so that they felt actually sad at the end of the evening. But Myshkin went so far at last to tell some very amusing stories, which he was the first to laugh at, so that the others laughed more at his joyful laugh than at the story itself. As for Aglaia, she hardly spoke all the evening; but she listened all the while to Lyov Nikolayevitch, and gazed at him even more than she listened.

“She looks at him and can’t take her eyes off him; she hangs on every word he utters, she catches everything,” Lizaveta Prokofyevna said afterwards to her husband. “But tell her that she loves him and you’ll have the walls about your ears.”

“There’s no help for it, it’s fate!” said the general, shrugging his shoulders.

And long afterwards he kept repeating the phrase which pleased him. We will add that, as a business man, he too disliked a great deal in the present position, above all its indefiniteness. But he, too, resolved for the time to keep quiet, and to take his cue ... from Lizaveta Prokofyevna.

The happy frame of mind of the family did not last long. Next day Aglaia quarrelled with Myshkin again, and things went on like that for several days. For hours together she would jeer at Myshkin and make him almost a laughing-stock. It is true they would sometimes sit for an hour or two together in the arbour in the garden, but it was observed that, at such times, Myshkin almost always read aloud the newspaper or some book to Aglaia.

“Do you know,” Aglaia said one day, interrupting his reading of the newspaper, “I have noticed that you are dreadfully uneducated. “Vbu don’t know anything thoroughly, if one asks you who some one is, or in what year anything happened, or the name of a treaty. You’re much to be pitied.”

“I told you that I have not much learning,” answered Myshkin.

“What have you if you haven’t that? How can I respect you after that? Read on; or rather, don’t. Leave off reading.”

And again, that evening, there was something that mystified them all in her behaviour. Prince S. came back; Aglaia was very cordial to him, she made many inquiries about Yevgeny Pavlovitch. (Myshkin had not yet come in.) Suddenly Prince S. permitted himself an allusion to “another approaching event in the family,” to a few words which had escaped Lizaveta Prokofyevna, suggesting that they might have to put off Adelaida’s wedding again in order that the two weddings might take place together. Aglaia flared up in a way no one could have expected at “these stupid suppositions,” and among other things the phrase broke from her that she had “no intention at present of taking the place of anybody’s mistress.”

These words struck everybody, and above all her parents. In a secret confabulation with her husband, Lizaveta Prokofyevna insisted that he must go into the question of Nastasya Filippovna with Myshkin, once for all.

Ivan Fyodorovitch swore that all this was only “a whim,” and put it down to Aglaia’s “delicacy”; that if Prince S. had not referred to the marriage there would not have been this outburst, because Aglaia knew herself, knew on good authority, that it was all a slander of ill-natured people, and that Nastasya Filippovna was going to marry Rogozhin, that the prince had nothing to do with it, let alone a liaison with her; and never had had, if one’s to speak the whole truth.

“Vfet Myshkin went on being blissful and untroubled by anything. Oh, of course, he too noticed sometimes something gloomy and impatient in Aglaia’s expression; but he had more faith in something different, and the gloom vanished of itself.

Once having faith in anything, he could not waver afterwards. Perhaps he was too much at ease in his mind; so it seemed at least to Ippolit who chanced to meet him in the park.

“Well, didn’t I tell you at the time that you were in love?” he began, going up to Myshkin and stopping him.

Myshkin shook hands with him and congratulated him on his “looking so much better.” The invalid seemed hopeful himself, as consumptives are so apt to be.

He had come up to Myshkin to say something sarcastic about his happy expression, but he soon drifted off the subject and began to talk about

himself. He began complaining, and his complaints were many and long-winded, and rather incoherent.

“You wouldn’t believe,” he concluded, “how irritable they all are there; how petty, how egoistic, vain, and commonplace. Would you believe it, they only took me on condition of my dying as quickly as possible, and now they’re all in a fury that I am not dying, but, on the contrary, better. It’s a farce! I bet you don’t believe me.”

Myshkin had no inclination to reply.

“I sometimes think of moving back to you again,” Ippolit added carelessly. “So you don’t think they’re capable of taking a man in on condition of his dying as quickly as possible?”

“I thought they invited you with other views.”

“Aha! You are by no means so simple as you are reputed to be! Now is not the time, or I’d tell you something about that wretched Ganya and his hopes. They’re undermining your position, prince; they’re doing it mercilessly and . . . it’s quite pitiful to see you so serene. But, alas! you can’t help it!”

“That’s a funny thing to pity me for!” laughed Myshkin; “do you think I should be happier if I were less serene?”

“Better be unhappy and know the truth, than be happy and live . . . like a fool. You don’t seem to believe that you have a rival — and in that quarter?”

“What you say about a rival is rather cynical, Ippolit; I am sorry I have not the right to answer you. As for Gavril Ardalionovitch, judge for yourself whether he can be happy in his mind after all he has lost; that is, if you know anything at all about his affairs? It seems to me better to look at it from that point of view. There’s time for him to change; he has a life before him, and life is rich . . . though . . . though. . . .” Myshkin broke off uncertainly. “As for under-mining I don’t know what you are talking about; let’s drop this conversation, Ippolit.”

“We’ll drop it for the time; besides, you must always go in for being gentlemanly, of course. “Vfes, prince, you’d have to touch it with your finger in order to disbelieve it again. Ha, ha! And do you despise me very much now, what do you think?”

“What for? Because you have suffered and are still suffering more than we?”

“No, but because lam unworthy of my suffering.”

“If anyone is able to suffer more, he must be more worthy of suffering. When Aglaia Ivanovna read your confession, she wanted to see you, but....”

“She’s putting it off . . . she can’t. I understand, I understand ...” Ippolit interrupted, as though anxious to break off the conversation as quickly as possible. “By the way, they tell me that you read all that rigmarole aloud to her yourself; it was literally in delirium that I wrote it and ... did it. And I don’t understand how anyone can be so — I won’t say cruel (it would be humiliating for me), but so childishly vain and revenqeful, as to reproach me with that confession and to use it against me as a weapon. Don’t be uneasy, I’m not talking about you.”

“But I am sorry that you repudiate that manuscript, Ippolit; it is sincere, and you know that even the most absurd points in it, and there are many of them” (Ippolit scowled), “are redeemed by suffering, because to confess them is suffering and . . . perhaps great manliness. The idea that animated you must have had a noble foundation, however it may seem. I see that more clearly as time goes on, I swear I do. I don’t judge you. I speak to say what I think, and I’m sorry that I didn’t speak at the time.”

Ippolit flushed hotly. The thought flashed through his mind that Myshkin was pretending, and taking him in. But, looking into his face he could not help being convinced of his sincerity. His face brightened.

“Yet I must die all the same!” he said, almost adding, “a man like me!”

“And only fancy how your Ganya plagues me; the objection he has trumped up is that three or four who heard my confession will very likely die before I do. What do you say to that! He supposes that’s a comfort to me, ha! ha! In the first place they haven’t died yet. And even if these people did die, you’ll admit that’s no comfort to me. He judges by himself; but he goes further. He simply abuses me now; he says a decent man would die in silence, and that it’s all egoism on my part! What do you say to that! Yes, what about egoism on his part; what refinement, and yet at the same time what ox-like coarseness of egoism, though they can’t see it in themselves! Have you ever read, prince, of the death of Stepan Glyebov in the eighteenth century? I happened to read about it yesterday....”

“What Stepan Glyebov?”

“He was impaled in the time of Peter.”

“Oh dear, yes, I know. He was fifteen hours on the stake, in the frost, in a fur coat, and died with extraordinary grandeur. Yes, I read it... what of it?”

“God grants such deaths to men, but not to us! “Vbu think, perhaps, I’m not capable of dying like Glyebov?”

“Oh, not at all!” Myshkin said, confused. “I only meant to say that you . . . that is, not that you would not be like Glyebov, but . . . that you . . . that you would be more likely then to be....”

“I guess, like Osterman? And not Glyebov — that’s what you meant to say?”

“What Osterman?” said Myshkin, surprised.

“Osterman, the diplomat Osterman, Peter’s Osterman,” muttered Ippolit, suddenly disconcerted.

A certain perplexity followed.

“Oh, n-n-no! I didn’t mean to say that,” Myshkin said emphatically, after a brief silence. “You would never, I think ... have been an Osterman.”

Ippolit frowned.

“The reason I maintain that, though,” Myshkin resumed suddenly, obviously anxious to set things right, “is because the men of those days (I swear I’ve always been struck by it) were absolutely not the same people that we are now; it was not the same race as now, in our age, really, it seems we are a different species. ... In those days they were men of one idea, but now we are more nervous, more developed, more sensitive; men capable of two or three ideas at once. . . . Modern men are broader-minded — and I swear that this prevents their being so all-of-a-piece as they were in those days. I ... I simply said it with that idea, and not...”

“I understand; you’re doing your level best to console me now for the simplicity with which you disagreed with me, ha, ha! \bu’re a perfect child,

prince. I notice though that you all handle me like a china cup. ... I’m not angry, it’s all right, never mind! Anyway, we’ve had an awfully funny conversation; you’re sometimes a perfect child, prince. Let me tell you, though, that I should like perhaps to be something better than Osterman. It would not be worth while to rise from the dead for the sake of Osterman. ... I see I ought to die as soon as possible though, or I, myself, shall. . . . Leave me. Good-bye! Well now, come, tell me what do you think would be the best way for me to die? ... To make a virtuous ending of it as far as may be, that is? Come, tell me!”

“Pass by us, and forgive us our happiness,” said Myshkin in a low voice.

“Ha, ha, ha! Just as I thought! I knew it was sure to be something like that! Though you are . . . you are. . . . Well, well! “Vbu are eloquent people!

Good-bye! Good-bye!”

CHAPTER 6

What VARVARA Ardalionovna had told her brother about the evening party at the Epanchins' at which Princess Byelokonsky was expected was also quite correct; the guests were expected that evening. But in this case too she had expressed herself rather too strongly. It had, indeed, all been arranged with too much hurry, and even with some quite unnecessary excitement, just because in that family "they never could do things like other people." It was all due to the impatience of Lizaveta Prokofyevna, who was "anxious not to be kept longer in suspense," and to the feverish tremors of both parental hearts concerning the happiness of their favourite daughter. Moreover, Princess Byelokonsky really was going away soon, and as her patronage certainly did carry weight in society, and as they hoped she would be well disposed to Myshkin, the parents reckoned that "the world" would accept Aglaia's betrothed straight from the hands of the omnipotent "old princess," and that therefore if there were anything strange about it, it would seem much less strange under such patronage. The real fact was that the parents were quite unable to settle the question themselves whether there was anything strange in the matter, and if so how much. Or whether there were nothing strange about it at all. The candid and friendly opinion of influential and competent persons would be of use just at the present moment when, thanks to Aglaia, nothing had been finally settled. In any case, sooner or later the prince would have to be introduced into society, of which he had so far not the faintest idea. In short, they were intending to "show" him. The party arranged was, however, a simple one. Only "friends of the family" were expected, and not many of them. One other lady besides Princess Byelokonsky was coming, the wife of a very important dignitary. "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch was almost the only young man expected, and he was to escort Princess Byelokonsky.

Myshkin heard that Princess Byelokonsky was coming three days beforehand; of the party he learned only the previous day. He noticed, of course, the busy air of the members of the family, and even from certain insinuating and anxious attempts to broach the subject to him, he perceived that they dreaded the impression he might make. But somehow the Epanchins, all without exception, were possessed by the idea that he was too simple to be capable of guessing that they were uneasy in this way on

his account; and so, looking at him, every one was inwardly troubled. He did in fact, however, attach scarcely any consequence to the approaching event. He was occupied with something quite different. Aglaia was becoming every hour more gloomy and capricious — that was crushing him. When he knew that they were expecting Yevgeny Pavlovitch, he was greatly delighted, and said that he had long been wishing to see him. For some reason no one liked these words. Aglaia went out of the room in vexation, and only late at night, about twelve o'clock, when Myshkin was going away, she seized an opportunity of a few words alone with him,

as she saw him out.

"I should like you not to come and see us all day to-morrow, but to come in the evening when these . . . visitors are here. You know that there are to be visitors?"

She spoke impatiently and with intense severity. It was the first time she had spoken to him of this "party." To her, too, the idea of these visitors was almost insufferable; every one noticed it. She may have felt greatly tempted to quarrel with her parents about it, but pride and modesty kept her from speaking. Myshkin saw at once that she also was afraid on his account (and did not want to admit that she was afraid), and he too felt suddenly frightened.

"Yes, I've been invited," he answered.

She evidently found it difficult to go on.

"Can one speak to you about anything serious? Just for once?" She grew suddenly fearfully angry, not knowing why, and not able to control herself.

"You can, and I am listening. I'm very glad," muttered Myshkin.

Aglaia paused again for a minute, and began with evident repugnance:

"I didn't want to dispute with them about it, for vou can't make them see reason about some things. Some ofmaman's principles have always been revolting to me. I say nothing about papa; it's no use expecting anything from him. Maman is a noble woman, of course; if you dared to propose anything mean to her, you'd see. Yet she bows down before these . . . contemptible creatures. I don't mean the old princess. She's a contemptible old woman, contemptible in character, but clever and knows how to turn them all round her finger — one can say that for her, anyway. Oh, the meanness of it! And it's ludicrous. We've always been people of the middle-class, as middle-class as could possibly be. Why force ourselves into this aristocratic circle? And my sisters are on the same tack. Prince S.

has upset them all. Why are you pleased that Yevgeny Pavlovitch will be here?”

“Listen, Aglaia,” said Myshkin. “It seems to me that you are very much afraid that I shall be floored to-morrow ... in this company.”

“Me afraid? On your account?” Aglaia flushed all over. “Why should I be afraid on your account, even if you . . . even if you do disgrace yourself utterly. What is it to me? And how can you use such words? What do you mean by being ‘floored’? It’s a contemptible word, vulgar!”

“It’s ... a schoolboy word.”

“Quite so, a schoolboy word! Contemptible! You seem to intend to use words like that all the evening to-morrow. You can look up more of them at home in your dictionary; you’ll make a sensation! It’s a pity that you know how to come into the room properly. Where did you learn it? Do you know how to take a cup of tea and drink it properly, when every one’s looking at you on purpose?”

“I believe I do.”

“I’m sorry you do. It would have made me laugh if you didn’t. Mind you break the Chinese vase in the drawing-room, anyway. It was an expensive one. Please do break it; it was a present. Mother would be beside herself and would cry before every one. She’s so fond of it! Gesticulate as you always do, knock it over and break it. Sit near it on purpose.”

“On the contrary, I’ll sit as far from it as I can. Thank you for warning me.”

“Then you are afraid you will wave your arms about. I’ll bet anything you’ll begin talking on some serious, learned, lofty subject. That will be .. . tactful.”

“I think that would be stupid ... if it’s not appropriate.”

“Listen, once for all,” said Aglaia, losing all patience. “If you talk about anything like capital punishment, or the economic position of Russia, or of how ‘beauty will save the world’ ... of course I should be delighted and laugh at it... but I warn you, never show yourself before me again! Do you hear? I’m in earnest! This time I’m in earnest!”

She really was in earnest in her threat. Something exceptional could be heard in her words and seen in her eyes, which Myshkin had never noticed before, and which was not like a joke.

“Now, after what you’ve said I’m sure to talk too much . . . even . . . perhaps break the vase. I wasn’t in the least afraid before, and now I’m

afraid of everything. I shall certainly be floored."

"Then hold your tongue. Sit quiet and hold your tongue."

"I shan't be able to. I'm sure I shall be so alarmed that I shall begin talking and shall break the vase. Perhaps I shall fall down on the slippery floor, or somethinq of that sort, for that has happened to me before. I shall dream about it all night. Why did you talk to me about it!"

Aglaia looked gloomily at him.

"I tell you what: I'd better not come at all tomorrow! I'll report myself ill, and that will be the end of it," he concluded at last.

Aglaia stamped and turned positively white with anger.

"Good God! Did anyone ever see anything like it? He's not coming, when it has all been arranged on purpose for him and . . . my goodness! It's a treat to have to do with a senseless person like you."

"I'll come! I'll come!" Myshkin broke in hastily. "And I give you my word of honour that I'll sit the whole evening without opening my mouth. I'll manage it."

"You'll do well. You said just now you'd 'report yourself ill.' Where do you pick up such expressions? What possesses you to talk to me in such language? Are you trying to tease me?"

"I beg your pardon; that's a schoolboy expression too. I won't use it. I quite understand that you are . . . anxious ... on my account (yes, don't be angry), and I'm awfully glad of it. You don't know how frightened I

am now — and how glad I am of your words. But I assure you, all this panic is petty and nonsensical. It really is, Aglaia. But the joy remains. I'm awfully glad that you're such a child, such a kind good child! Oh, how splendid you can be, Aglaia!"

Aglaia, of course, was on the point of flying into a rage, butsuddenlya rush of quite unexpected feeling took possession of her soul in one instant.

"And you won't reproach me for my coarse words just now . . . some day . . . afterwards?" she asked suddenly.

"How can you? How can you? Why are you flaring up again? And now you're looking gloomy again. "Vbu've taken to looking too gloomy sometimes now, Aglaia, as you never used to look. I know why that is .

"Hush! Hush!"

"No, it's better to speak. I've been wanting to say it a long time. I've said it already, but that's not enough, for you didn't believe me. There's one person who stands between us ..."

“Hush, hush, hush, hush!” Aglaia interrupted suddenly, gripping his hand tightly and looking at him almost in terror.

At that moment her name was called. With an air of relief she left him at once and ran away.

Myshkin was in a fever all night. Strange to say, he had been feverish for several nights running. That night, when he was half delirious, the thought occurred to him: what if he should have a fit tomorrow before everyone? He had had fits in public. He turned cold at the thought. All night he imagined himself in a mysterious and incredible company among strange people. The worst of it was that he “kept talking.” He knew he ought not to talk, but he went on talking all the time; he was trying to persuade them of something. Yevgeny Pavlovitch and Ippolit were of the party, and seemed extremely friendly.

He waked up at nine o’clock with a headache, with confusion in his mind and strange impressions. He felt an intense and unaccountable desire to see Rogozhin, to see him and to say a great deal to him — what about he could not himself have said — then he fully made up his mind to go and see Ippolit. There was some confused sensation in his heart, so much so that, although he felt acutely what happened to him that morning, he could not fully realise it. One thing that happened to him was a visit from Lebedyev.

Lebedyev made his appearance rather early, soon after nine, and was almost completely drunk. Although Myshkin had not been observant of late yet he could not help seeing that ever since General Ivolgin had left them — that is, for the last three days, Lebedyev had been behaving very badly. He seemed to have suddenly become extremely greasy and dirty, his cravat was on one side, and the collar of his coat was torn. In his lodge he kept up a continual storm, which was audible across the little courtyard. Vera had come in on one occasion in tears to tell him about it.

On presenting himself that morning, he talked very strangely, beating himself on the breast and blaming hi mse If fo r so methi ng.

“I have received ... I have received the chastisement for my baseness and treachery — a slap in the face,” he concluded tragically at last.

“A slap in the face! From whom? And so early?”

“So early?” and Lebedyev smiled sarcastically. “Time has nothing to do with it. . . even for physical chastisement ... but I’ve received a moral, not a physical, castigation.”

He suddenly sat down without ceremony and began to tell his story. It was a very incoherent one. Myshkin frowned, and wanted to get away, but all at once some words caught his attention. He was struck dumb with amazement. Mr. Lebedyev was telling of strange things.

He had apparently begun about some letter. Aglaia Ivanovna's name was mentioned. Then Lebedyev began all at once bitterly reproaching Myshkin himself; it could be gathered that he was offended with the prince. At first, he said, the prince had honoured him with his confidence in transactions with a certain "person" (with Nastasya Filippovna), but had afterwards broken with him completely and had dismissed him with ignominy, and had even been so offensive as to repel with rudeness "an innocent question about the approaching changes in the house." With drunken tears, Lebedyev protested that "after that, he could endure no more, especially as he knew a great deal . . . a very great deal . . . from Rogozhin, from Nastasya Filippovna, and from her friend, and from Varvara Ardalionovna . . . herself . . . and from . . . and from even Aglaia Ivanovna; would you believe it, through Vera, through my beloved, my only daughter . . . yes . . . though indeed she's not my only one, for I've three. And who was it informed Lizaveta Prokofyevna by letters, in dead secret, of course? He-he! Who has been writing to her about all the shiftings and changings of the 'personage,' Nastasya Filippovna? He-he-he! Who, who is the anonymous writer, allow me to ask?"

"Can it be you?" cried Myshkin.

"Just so," the drunkard replied with dignity, "and this very morning at half-past eight, only half an hour — no, three-quarters of an hour ago — I informed the noble-hearted mother that I had an incident ... of importance to communicate to her. I informed her by letter through a maid at the back door. She received it."

"You've just seen Lizaveta Prokofyevna!" cried Myshkin, unable to believe his ears.

"I saw her just now and received a blow ... a moral one. She gave me back the letter; in fact she flung it in my face unopened . . . and even kicked me out . . . only morally speaking, not physically . . .

though it was almost physical too, not far off it!"

"What letter was it she flung at you unopened?"

"Why . . . he-he-he! Haven't I told you? I thought I'd said that already. ... It was a letter I had received on purpose to give to ..."

“From whom? From whom?”

It was difficult to make head or tail of some “explanations” of Lebedyev’s, or to understand anything from them. But as far as he could make out, Myshkin gathered that the letter had been brought in the early morning to Vera Lebedyev by the servant girl, to be delivered to the person to whom it was addressed . . . “just as before . . . just as before to a certain personage, and from the same person. (For I designate one of them a ‘person’ and the other only a ‘personage,’ as derogatory and distinguishing; for there is a great distinction between an innocent and high-born young lady of a general’s family . . . and a lady of the other sort.) And so the letter was from that ‘person’ beginning with the letter ‘A’ ...”

“How can that be? To Nastasya Filippovna? Nonsense!” cried Myshkin.

“It was, it was. Or if not to her, to Rogozhin; it’s all the same, to Rogozhin . . . and there was even one to Mr. Terentyev, to be handed on from the person beginning with ‘A,’” said Lebedyev, smiling and winking.

As he was continually mixing one thing up with another and forgetting what he had begun to speak about, Myshkin held his peace to let him speak out. “Vfet it still remained far from clear whether the correspondence had been carried on through him or through Vera. Since he himself declared that “it was just the same whether the letters were for Rogozhin or for Nastasya Filippovna,” it seemed more likely that the letters had not passed through his hands, if there actually had been letters. How this letter had come into his hands remained absolutely inexplicable. The most probable explanation was that he had somehow snatched them from Vera . . . stolen them on the sly and carried them for some object to Lizaveta Prokofyevna. That was what Myshkin gathered and understood at last.

“You’re out of your mind!” he cried in extreme agitation.

“Not quite, honoured prince,” Lebedyev replied, not without malice. “It’s true, I meant to hand it to you, to put it into vour own hands; to do vou a service . . .

but I reflected that it was better to be of use in that quarter by revealing everything to the noble-hearted mother... as I had communicated with her before by letter anonymously; and when I wrote to her just now a preliminary note asking her to see me at twenty minutes past eight I signed myself again ‘your secret correspondent.’ I was admitted promptly with the utmost haste by the back door... to the presence of the illustrious lady.”

“Well?”

“And there, as you know already, she nearly beat me; very nearly, so that one might almost say she practically did beat me. And she threw the letter in my face. It’s true she wanted to keep it — I saw it, I noticed it; but she thought better of it and flung it in my face: ‘Since a fellow like you has been entrusted with it, give it!’ . . . She was positively offended. Since she wasn’t ashamed to say so before me, she must have been offended. She’s a hot-tempered lady!”

“Where is the letter now?”

“Why, I’ve got it still. Here it is.”

And he handed Myshkin Aglaia’s note to Gavril Ardalionovitch, which the latter two hours later showed to his sister with such triumph.

“That letter can’t remain with you.”

“It’s for you, for you. It’s to you I am bringing it,” Lebedyev hastened to declare with warmth. “Now I’m yours again, entirely yours, from head to heart, your servant after my momentary treachery. ‘Punish the heart, spare the beard,’ as Thomas More said ... in England and in Great Britain. ‘Mea culpa, mea culpa,’ as the Romish Pope says — that is, I mean the Pope of Rome, though I call him the Romish Pope.”

“This letter must be sent off at once,” said Myshkin anxiously. “I’ll give it.”

“But wouldn’t it be better, wouldn’t it be better, most highly bred prince,... to do this?”

Lebedyev made a strange, expressive grimace. He fidgeted violently in his place, as though he had been suddenly pricked by a needle, and, winking slyly, made a significant gesture with his hands.

“What do you mean?” Myshkin asked severely.

“Wouldn’t it be better to open it?” he whispered ingratiatinglyand, as it were, confidentially.

Myshkin leapt up with such passion that Lebedyev took to his heels, but he stopped short at the door to see whether he could hope for pardon.

“Ech! Lebedyev, is it possible to sink to such abject degradation as this?” cried Myshkin bitterly.

Lebedyev’s face brightened.

“I’m abject, abject!” he approached at once, with tears, beating himself on the breast.

“You know this is abominable!”

“Abominable it is! That’s the word for it!”

“What a horrid habit it is to behave ... in this queer way! You . . . are simply a spy! Why do you write anonymously and worry such a noble and kind-hearted woman? And why has not Aglaia Ivanovna a right to write to whom she pleases? Did you go to complain of it to-day? Did you hope to receive a reward? What induced you to tell tales?”

“Simply agreeable curiosity and the desire of a generous heart to be of use! Now I am yours again, all yours! You may hang me!”

“Did you go to Lizaveta Prokofyevna in the condition you’re in now?” Myshkin inquired with disgust.

“No, I was fresher, more decent. It was only after my humiliation that I got... into this state.”

“Well, that’s enough. Leave me.”

But he had to repeat this request several times before he could induce his visitor to go. Even after he had opened the door, he came back on tip-toe into the middle of the room and gesticulated with his hands to show how to open the letter. He did not venture to put his advice into words. Then he went out with a suave and amiable smile.

All this had been extremely painful to hear. What was most evident was one striking fact: that Aglaia was in great trouble, great uncertainty, in great distress about something. (“From jealousy,” Myshkin whispered to himself.) It was evident also that she was being worried by ill-intentioned people, and what was very strange was that she trusted them in this way. No doubt that inexperienced but hot and proud little head was hatching some special schemes, perhaps ruinous, and utterly wild. Myshkin was greatly alarmed, and in his perturbation did not know what to decide upon. There was no doubt he must do something, he felt that. He looked once more at the address on the sealed letter. Oh, he had no doubt and no uneasiness on that side, for he trusted her. What made him uneasy about that letter was somethinq different. He did not trust Gavril Ardalionovitch. And yet he was on the point of deciding to restore him the letter himself, and he even left the house with that object, but he changed his mind on the way. Almost at Ptitsyn’s door, by good fortune he met Kolya, and charged him to put the letter into his brother’s hands as though it had come straight from Aglaia Ivanovna. Kolya asked no questions and delivered it, so that Ganya had no suspicion that the letter had halted so many times upon its journey. Returning home, Myshkin asked Vera Lebedyev to come to him, told her what was necessary, and set her mind at rest, for she had been all this time

hunting for the letter, and was in tears. She was horrified when she learned that her father had carried off the letter. (Myshkin found out from her afterwards that she had more than once helped Rogozhin and Aglaia Ivanovna in secret, and it had never occurred to her that she could be injuring Myshkin in doing so.)

And Myshkin was at last so upset that when, two hours later, a messenger from Kolya ran in with the news of his father's illness, for the first minute the prince could not grasp what was the matter. But this event restored him by completely distracting his attention. He stayed at Nina Alexandrovna's (where the invalid, of course, had been carried) right up to the evening. He was scarcely of any use, but there are people whom one is, for some reason, glad to have about one in times of grief. Kolya was terribly distressed, he cried hysterically, but was continually being sent on errands: he ran for a doctor and hunted up three; ran to the chemist's and to the barber's. They succeeded in resuscitating the general, but he did not regain his senses. The doctors opined that the patient was in any case in danger. Varya and Nina Alexandrovna never left the sick man's side. Ganya was disconcerted and overcome, but would not go upstairs, and seemed afraid to see the invalid; he wrung his hands, and in incoherent and disconnected talk with Myshkin he let drop the phrase, "What a calamity, and to come at such a moment!"

Myshkin fancied he understood what he meant by "such a moment." Myshkin did not find Ippolit at Ptitsyn's. Lebedyev, who after the morning's "explanation" had slept all day without waking, ran in towards evening. Now he was almost sober and shed genuine tears over the sick man, as though he had been his own brother. He blamed himself aloud without explaining why, and would not leave Nina Alexandrovna, assuring her every moment that "he, he was the cause of it; he and no one else . .. simply from agreeable curiosity," and that the "departed" (so he persisted in calling the still living general) was positively "a man of genius!" He insisted with great seriousness on his genius, as though it might be of extraordinary service at that moment. Seeing his genuine tears, Nina Alexandrovna said to him at last with a note of reproach, and almost with cordiality, "Well, God bless you! Don't cry. Come, God will forgive you!" Lebedyev was so much impressed by these words and the tone of them that he was unwilling to leave her side all the evening (and all the following days, from early morning till the hour of the general's death, he spent in their house). Twice

during the day a messenger came from Lizaveta Prokofyevna to inquire after the invalid.

When at nine o'clock in the evening Myshkin made his appearance in the Epanchins' drawing-room, which was already full of guests, Lizaveta Prokofyevna at once began questioning him sympathetically and minutely about the patient, and replied with dignity to Princess Byelokonsky's inquiry, "What patient, and who is Nina Alexandrovna?" Myshkin was much pleased at this. Explaining the position to Madame Epanchin he spoke "splendidly," as Aglaia's sisters said afterwards, "modestly, quietly, with dignity and without gestures or too many words." He walked in admirably, was perfectly dressed, and farfrom falling down on the slippery floor, as they had all been afraid the day before, evidently made a favourable impression on everyone.

Sitting down and looking round, he for his part noticed at once that the company were not in the least like the bogies with which Aglaia had tried to frighten him, nor the nightmare figures of his last night's dreams. For the first time in his life he saw a tiny corner of what is called by the dreadful name "society." For some time past certain projects, considerations and inclinations had made him eager to penetrate into that enchanted circle, and so he was deeply interested by his first impression of it. This first impression was fascinating. It somehow seemed to him at once as thouqh these people were, so to speak, born to be together; as though it were not a "party" and no guests had been invited that evening to the Epanchins'; that these were all "their own people," and that he himself had long been their devoted friend and shared their thoughts, and was now returning to them after a brief separation. The charm of elegant manners, of simplicity, and of apparent frankness was almost magical. It could never have entered his head that all this simple frankness and nobility, wit, and refined personal dignity was perhaps only an exquisite artistic veneer. The majority of the guests, in spite of their prepossessing exterior, were rather empty-headed people, who were themselves unaware, however, that much of their superiority was mere veneer, for which they were not responsible indeed, as they had adopted it unconsciously and by inheritance. Myshkin, carried away by the charm of his first impression, had no inclination to suspect this. He saw, for instance, that this important and aged dignitary, who might have been his grandfather, ceased speaking in order to listen to an inexperienced young man like himself; and not only listened to him, but evidently valued

his opinion, was so cordial, so genuinely kind to him, and yet they were strangers, meeting for the first time. Perhaps the refinement of this courtesy was what produced the most effect on Myshkin's eager sensitiveness. He was perhaps prejudiced and predisposed to favourable impression.

And yet all these people — though of course they were "friends of the family" and one another — were by no means such great friends either of the family or of one another as Myshkin took them to be, as soon as he met them and was introduced to them. There were persons of the party who would never on any account have recognised the Epanchins as their equals. There were persons who absolutely detested one another: old Princess Byelokonsky had always "despised" the wife of the "old dignitary"; while the latter for her part had anything but friendly feelings for Lizaveta Prokofyevna. This "dignitary," her husband, who for some reason had been a patron of the Epanchins from their youth up, and was the leading figure present, was a personage of such vast consequence in the eyes of Ivan Fyodorovitch that the latter was incapable of any sensation except reverence and awe in his presence, and he would have had a genuine contempt for himself if he could for one moment have put himself on an equal footing with him, and have thought of him as less than the Olympian Jove. There were people who had not met one another for some years, and felt nothing but indifference if not dislike for one another: yet they greeted each other now as though they had only met yesterday in the most friendly and intimate company. "Vfet the party was not a large one. Besides Princess Byelokonsky and the "old dignitary" — who really was a person of consequence — and his wife, there was in the first place a very solid military general, a count, or baron with a German name — a man of extraordinary taciturnity, with a reputation for a marvellous acquaintance with affairs of government, and almost with a reputation for learning — one of those Olympian administrators who know "everything," except perhaps Russia itself; a man who once in five years made some "extraordinarily profound" remark, which inevitably became a proverb and penetrated even to the loftiest circles; one of those governing officials who usually, after an extremely, even strangely protracted term of service,

die possessed of large fortunes and high honours in leading positions, though they have never performed any great exploits, and in fact have always a certain aversion for exploits. This general was next above Ivan Fyodorovitch in the service, and the latter in the zeal of his grateful heart

and through a peculiar form of vanity regarded him too as his patron. Yet the general by no means considered himself Ivan Fyodorovitch's patron. He treated him with absolute coolness, and, though he gladly availed himself of his numerous services, he would have replaced him by another official at once, if any consideration, even the most trivial, had called for such exchange. There was too an elderly and important gentleman who was supposed to be a relation of Lizaveta Prokofyevna's, though this was quite untrue — a man of high rank and position, of birth and fortune. He was stout, and enjoyed excellent health; he was a great talker, and had the reputation of a discontented man (though only in the most legitimate sense of the word), even a splenetic man (though even this was agreeable in him), with the tricks of the English aristocracy and with English tastes (as reqards roast beef, harness, footmen and so on). He was a great friend of the "dignitary," and amused him. Moreover, Lizaveta Prokofyevna for some reason cherished the strange idea that this elderly gentleman (a somewhat frivolous person with a distinct weakness for the female sex) might suddenly take it into his head to make Alexandra happy with the offer of his hand. Below this top and most solid layer of the assembly came the younger guests, though these too were conspicuous for extremely elegant qualities. To this group belonged Prince S. and "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, and, moreover, the well-known and fascinating Prince N. who had seduced and fascinated female hearts all over Europe, a man of five-and-forty though still of handsome appearance, and a wonderful story-teller; a man whose large fortune was to some extent dissipated and who usually lived abroad. There were people too who made up, indeed, a third special stratum, not belonging themselves to the "inner circle" of society, though, like the Epanchins, they could sometimes be met in that circle. Through a certain sense of fitness which always guided them, the Epanchins liked on the rare occasions of their giving parties to mix the highest society with persons of a rather lower grade, with select representatives of the "middling kind" of people. The Epanchins were praised indeed for doing so, and it was said of them that they understood their position and were people of tact, and they were proud of being thought so. One of the representatives of this "middling sort" was that evening a colonel of engineers, a serious man, a very intimate friend of Prince S. by whom he had been introduced to the Epanchins. He was silent in society, however, and wore on the big forefinger of his right hand a large and conspicuous ring, probably

presented to him. There was present too a poet of German origin, but a Russian poet, and perfectly presentable, moreover, so that he could be introduced into good society without apprehension. He was of handsome, though for some reason repulsive, appearance. He was eight-and-thirty, and was irreproachably dressed. He belonged to an intensely bourgeois but intensely respectable German family. He was successful in taking advantage of every opportunity, gaining the patronage of persons in high places and retaining their favour. He had at one time made a verse translation of some important work of some important German poet, was adroit in dedicating his translations, and adroit in boasting of his friendship with a celebrated but deceased Russian poet (there's a perfect crowd of writers who love to record in print their friendship with great and deceased writers), and he had been quite recently brought to the Epanchins by the wife of the "old dignitary." This lady was celebrated for her patronage of literary and learned men, and had even actually procured one or two writers a pension through powerful personages with whom she had influence. She really had influence of a sort. She was a lady of five-and-forty (and therefore a very young wife for so aged a man as her husband), who had been a beauty and still, like many ladies at forty-five, had a mania for dressing far too gorgeously. She was of small intelligence, and her knowledge of literature was very dubious. But the patronage of literary men was as much a mania with her as was gorgeous array. Many books and translations had been dedicated to her. Two or three writers had, with her permission, printed letters they had written to her on subjects of the greatest importance....

And all this society Myshkin took for true coin, for pure gold without alloy. All these people were too, as though of set purpose, in the happiest frame of mind that evening, and very well pleased with themselves. They all without exception knew that they were doing the Epanchins a great honour by their visit. But, alas! Myshkin had no suspicion of such subtleties. He did not suspect, for instance, that, while the Epanchins were contemplating so important a step as the decision of their daughter's future, they would not have dared to omit exhibiting him, Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch, to the old dignitary who was the acknowledged patron of the family. Though the old dignitary for his part would have borne with perfect equanimity the news of the most awful calamity having befallen the Epanchins, he would certainly have been offended if the Epanchins had betrothed their daughter without his advice and, so to speak, without his

leave. Prince N. that charming, unquestionably witty and open-hearted man, was firmly persuaded that he was something like a sun that had risen that night to shine upon the Epanchins' drawing-room. He regarded them as infinitely beneath him, and it was just this open-hearted and generous notion which prompted his wonderfully charming ease and friendliness with the Epanchins. He knew very well that he would have to tell some story to delight the company, and led up to it with positive inspiration. When Myshkin heard the story afterwards, he felt that he had never heard anything like such brilliant humour and such marvellous gaiety and naivete almost touching, on the lips of such a Don Juan as Prince N. If he had only known how old and hackneyed that story was, how it was known by heart, worn threadbare, stale, and a weariness in every drawing-room, and only at the innocent Epanchins' passed for a novelty, for an impromptu, genuine and brilliant reminiscence of a splendid and brilliant man! Even the little German poet, although he behaved with great modesty and politeness, was ready to believe that he was conferring an honour on the family by his presence. But Myshkin saw nothing of the other side, noticed no undercurrent. This was a mischance that Aglaia had not foreseen. She was looking particularly handsome that evening. The three young ladies were dressed for the evening, but not over smartly, and wore their hair in a particular style. Aglaia was sitting with Yevgeny Pavlovitch, and was talking to him and making jokes with exceptional friendliness, "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch was behaving more sedately than usual, also perhaps from respect to the dignitaries. He was already well known in society, however; he was quite at home there, though he was so young. He arrived at the Epanchins' that evening with crape on his hat, and Princess Byelokonsky remarked with approbation on it. Some fashionable young men would not under such circumstances have put on mourning for such an uncle. Lizaveta Prokofyevna too was pleased at it, though she seemed on the whole preoccupied. Myshkin noticed that Aglaia looked at him intently once or twice, and he fancied she was satisfied with him. By degrees he began to feel very happy. His recent "fantastical" ideas and apprehensions after his conversation with Lebedyev seemed to him now, when he suddenly, at frequent intervals, recalled them, an inconceivable, incredible, even ridiculous dream! (His chief, though unconscious, impulse and desire had been all day to do something to make him disbelieve that dream!) He spoke little and only in answer to questions, and finally was silent altogether; he

sat still and listened, but was evidently enjoying himself extremely. By degrees something like an inspiration was beginning to work within him too, ready to break out at the first opportunity.... He began talking, indeed, by chance in answer to questions, and apparently quite without any special design.

CHAPTER 7

WHILE HE was enjoying himself, watching Aglaia as she talked to Prince N. and “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, suddenly the elderly anglomaniac, who was entertaining the “dignitary” in another corner and with animation telling him some story, uttered the name of Nikolay Andreyevitch Pavlishtchev. Myshkin turned quickly in their direction and began to listen.

They were discussing public affairs and some disturbances on estates in the province. There must have been something amusing about the anglomaniac’s account for the old man began laughing at last at the little sallies of the speaker.

He was telling smoothly, and, as it were, peevishly drawling his words, with soft emphasis on the vowel sounds, how he had been obliged as a direct result of recent legislation to sell a splendid estate of his in the province and for half its value, too, though he was in no need of money, and at the same time to keep an estate that had gone to ruin, was encumbered, and a subject of litigation, and had even to spend money to do so. “To avoid another lawsuit about the Pavlishtchev estate, I ran away from them. Another inheritance or two of that kind and I shall be ruined. I should have come in for nine thousand acres of excellent land, however.”

“Why, of course . . . Ivan Petrovitch is a relation of the late Nikolay Andreyevitch . . . you made a search for relations, I believe,” General Epanchin, who happened to be near and noticed Myshkin’s marked attention to the conversation, said to him in an undertone.

He had till then been entertaining the general who was the head of his department, but he had for some time been noticing Myshkin’s conspicuous isolation, and was becoming uneasy. He wanted to bring him to a certain extent into the conversation and in that way show him off and introduce him a second time to the “great personages.”

“Lyov Nikolayevitch was left on the death of his parents a ward of Nikolay Andreyevitch Pavlishtchev,” he put in, meeting Ivan Petrovitch’s eye.

“De-lighted to hear it,” observed the latter. “And I remember it well, indeed. When Ivan Fyodorovitch introduced us just now, I knew you at once, and from your face, too. You’ve changed very little, indeed, though

you were only ten or eleven when I saw you. There is something one remembers about your features ...”

“Did you see me when I was a child?” Myshkin asked, with great surprise.

“Yes, very long ago,” Ivan Petrovitch went on. “At Zlatoverhovo, where you used to live at my cousin’s. In old days I used to go pretty often to Zlatoverhovo. Don’t you remember me? You might very likely not remember. . . . “Vbu were then . . . you had some sort of illness then, so much so that I was very much struck on one occasion.”

“I don’t remember at all,” Myshkin asserted with warmth.

A few more words of explanation, perfectly calm on the part of Ivan Petrovitch, and betraying great agitation on the part of Myshkin, followed, and it appeared that the two elderly maiden ladies, kinswomen of Pavlishtchev, who had lived on his estate, Zlatoverhovo, and by whom Myshkin had been brought up, were also cousins of Ivan Petrovitch’s. The latter was as unable as every one else to explain what induced Pavlishtchev to take so much trouble over his protege, the little prince. “It hadn’t, in fact, occurred to me to be curious about that,” but yet, it appeared that he had an excellent memory, for he remembered how severe his elder cousin, Marfa Nikitishna had been with her little pupil, “so that on one occasion I stood up for you and attacked her system of education. For the rod, and nothing but the rod with an invalid child . . . you’ll admit . . ,” and how tender the younger sister, Natalya Nikitishna, was to the poor child. . . . “They are both,” he went on, “in X Province now (though I’m not sure whether they’re both living) where Pavlishtchev left them an extremely nice little property. I believe Marfa Nikitishna wanted to go into a convent, but I won’t be sure, I may be thinking of some one else. . . . “Vfes, I heard that the other day, about a doctor’s wife.”

Myshkin listened to this with eyes shining with delight and emotion. With great warmth he declared that he should never forgive himself for not having seized an opportunity to seek out and visit the ladies who had brought him up, though he had been for six months in the central provinces. He had been meaning to set off every day, but had been continually occupied with other matters. . . . But that now he was determined ... he would certainly . . . even though it were to X Province. . . . “So you know Natalya Nikitishna? What a fine, what a saintly nature! But, Marfa Nikitishna, too . . . forgive me . . . but I think you are mistaken about Marfa

Nikitishna! She was severe, but . . . how could she help losing patience . . . with such an idiot as I was then. Ha-ha! “Vbu know I was a complete idiot. Ha-ha! Though . . . you saw me then, and . . . how is it that I don’t remember you, tell me please? So you ... my God! are you really a relation of Nikolay Andreyevitch Pavlishtchev?”

“I as-sure you I am,” said Ivan Petrovitch, with a smile, scrutinising Myshkin.

“Oh, I didn’t say that because I . . . doubted it. . . and, in fact, how could I doubt it. . . Ha-ha! ... in the least? But I only mean that Nikolay Andreyevitch Pavlishtchev was such a splendid man! A most noble-hearted man, I assure you!”

Myshkin was not exactly breathless but “choking with good-heartedness,” as Adelaida expressed it next day to her betrothed, Prince S.

“Mercy on us,” laughed Ivan Petrovitch. “Why shouldn’t I be a relation of a noble-hearted man, even?”

“Oh, my goodness!” cried Myshkin, overcome with confusion and growing more and more hurried and eager. “I... I’ve said something stupid again, but. .. that’s bound to happen because I ... I ... I ... but that’s out of place again! And of what consequence am I, pray, beside such interests, such vast interests? And by comparison with such a noble-hearted man! For you know, he really was a noble man, wasn’t he? Wasn’t he?”

Myshkin was positively trembling all over. Why he was suddenly so agitated, why he was in such a state of ecstasy and emotion quite irrelevant and as it seemed out of all proportion with the subject of conversation, it was difficult to decide. He was in such a state of mind and he almost seemed to feel the warmest and liveliest gratitude to some one for something, perhaps to Ivan Petrovitch himself, if not to the whole company. He was “bubbling over” with happiness. Ivan Petrovitch began at last staring at him more fixedly, the “dignitary” too began looking at him with great intentness. Princess Byelokonsky looked wrathfully at Myshkin and tightened her lips. Prince N. Yevgeny Pavlovitch, Prince S. the young ladies, all broke off their conversation and listened. Aglaia seemed frightened, Lizaveta Prokofyevna’s heart failed her. They, too, the mother and daughters, had behaved strangely: they had foreseen and decided that it would be better for Myshkin to sit still and be silent the whole evening. But as soon as they saw him sitting in complete solitude, perfectly satisfied with his position, they were at once dreadfully upset. Alexandra had been on the

point of going to him across the room and tactfully joining the company, that is Prince N.’s group, near Princess Byelokonsky. And now that Myshkin had begun talking of his own accord they were even more perturbed.

“You are right in saying that he was a most excellent man,” Ivan Petrovitch pronounced impressively, with no smile now. “Yes, yes, he was an excellent man! Excellent, and worthy,” he added, after a pause. “Worthy one may say, of all respect,” he added more impressively, after a third pause. “And ... and it is very agreeable to see on your part.

“Wasn’t it that Pavlishtchev that there was a queer story about . . . with the abbe ... the abbe . . . I’ve forgotten which abbe . . . only everybody was talking about it at one time,” the “dignitary” brought out as though recollecting something.

“With the Abbe Goureau, a Jesuit,” Ivan Petrovitch recalled. “\fes, there you have our most excellent and worthy people. Because he was after all a man of family and fortune, a kammerherr, if he had . . . chosen to remain in the service. . . . And then he suddenly threw up the service to go over to the Roman Church and become a Jesuit, and almost openly, with a sort of enthusiasm. It’s true, he died in the nick of time ... everybody said so....”

Myshkin was beside himself.

“Pavlishtchev . . . Pavlishtchev, went over to the Roman Church? Impossible!” he cried in horror.

“‘Impossible,’ indeed!” Ivan Petrovitch drawled solidly.

“That’s saying a good deal, and you must admit, dear prince . . . However you have such a high opinion of the deceased. ... He certainly was a most good-natured man, and to that I chiefly attribute the success of that rascal Goureau. But ask me what a fuss and bother I had afterwards over that affair. .. especially with that very Goureau. Only fancy,” he turned suddenly to the old man, “they even tried to put in a claim under the will, and I was forced to have recourse to the most, that is, to vigorous measures . . . to bring them to their senses ... for they’re first-rate at that kind of thing. Won-der-ful people! But, thank goodness! it all happened in Moscow. I went straight to the court, and we soon ... brought them to their senses.”

“You wouldn’t believe how you grieve and astonish me,” cried Myshkin.

“I am sorry. But as a matter of fact, all this was after all a trifling business and would have ended in smoke as such things always do: I’m convinced of it. Last summer,” he went on, turning to the old man,

“Countess K. I am told, went into some Catholic convent abroad. Russians never can hold out if once they come under the influence of those . . . rogues . . . especially abroad.”

“It all comes from our . . . weariness,” the old dignitary mumbled authoritatively. “And their manner of proselytising is . . . skilful and peculiar to them. . .. They know how to scare people. They gave me a good scare, too, I assure you, in Vienna in 1832. But I wouldn’t surrender, I ran away from them. Ha-ha! I really did run away from them ...”

“I heard, my dear sir, that you ran away from Vienna to Paris with the beauty, Countess Levitzky, and that was why you flung up your post, not to escape from the Jesuits,” Princess Byelokonsky put in suddenly.

“Well, you see, it was from a Jesuit; it turns out after all that it was from a Jesuit,” the old dignitary retorted, laughing at the agreeable recollection. “You seem to be very religious, which one doesn’t often meet with nowadays in a young man,” he added, turning genially to Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch, who was listening open-mouthed and still amazed.

The old man evidently wanted to study Myshkin more closely. He had for some reason become an object of interest to him.

“Pavlishtchev was a clear-headed man and a Christian, a genuine Christian,” Myshkin brought out suddenly. “How could he have accepted a faith . . . that’s unchristian? Catholicism is as good as an unchristian religion!” he added, suddenly, looking about him with flashing eyes as though scanning the whole company.

“Come, that’s too much!” muttered the old man, and he looked with surprise at General Epanchin.

“How do you mean Catholicism is an unchristian religion,” said Ivan Petrovitch, turning round in his chair. “What is it then?”

“An unchristian religion in the first place!” Myshkin began, in extreme agitation and with excessive abruptness. “And in the second place Roman Catholicism is even worse than atheism itself, in my opinion! “Vfes, that’s my opinion! Atheism only preaches a negation, but Catholicism goes further: it preaches a distorted Christ, a Christ calumniated and defamed by themselves, the opposite of Christ! It preaches the Antichrist, I declare it does, I assure you it does! This is the conviction I have long held, and it has distressed me, mvself. . . . Roman Catholicism cannot hold its position without universal political supremacy, and cries: ‘Non possumus!’ To my thinking Roman Catholicism is not even a religion, but simply the

continuation of the Western Roman Empire, and everything in it is subordinated to that idea, faith to begin with. The Pope seized the earth, an earthly throne, and grasped the sword; everything has gone on in the same way since, only they have added to the sword lying, fraud, deceit, fanaticism, superstition, villainy. They have trifled with the most holy, truthful, sincere, fervent feelings of the people; they have bartered it all, all for money, for base earthly power. And isn't that the teaching of Antichrist? How could atheism fail to come from them? Atheism has sprung from Roman Catholicism itself. It originated with them themselves. Can they have believed themselves? It has been strengthened by revulsion from them; it is begotten by their lying and their spiritual impotence. Atheism! Among us it is only the exceptional classes who don't believe, those who, as Yevgeny Pavlovitch splendidly expressed it the other day, have lost their roots. But over there, in Europe, a terrible mass of the people themselves are beginning to lose their faith — at first from darkness and lying, and now from fanaticism and hatred of the church and Christianity."

Myshkin paused to take breath. He had been talking fearfully fast. He was pale and breathless. They all glanced at one another, and at last the old dignitary simply burst out laughing. Prince N. drew out his lorgnette, and took a prolonged stare at Myshkin. The German poet crept out of his corner, and moved nearer to the table, with a spiteful smile on his face.

"You are exaggerating very much," Ivan Petrovitch drawled with an air of being bored, and even rather ashamed of something. "There are representatives of that Church who are virtuous and worthy of all respect...."

"I have said nothing about individual representatives of the Church. I was speaking of Roman Catholicism in its essence. I am speaking of Rome. Can a Church disappear altogether? I never said that!"

"I agree. But all that's well known and — irrelevant, indeed, and ... it's a theological question ..."

"Oh, no, no! It's not only a theological question, I

assure you it's not! It concerns us much more closely than you think. That's our whole mistake, that we can't see that this is not exclusively a theological question! Why, socialism too springs from Catholicism and the Catholic idea! Like its brother atheism, it comes from despair in opposition to Catholicism on the moral side, to replace the lost moral power of religion, to quench the spiritual thirst of parched humanity, and to save them

not by Christ but also by violence. That, too, is freedom through violence, that, too, is union through sword and blood. ‘Don’t dare to believe in God, don’t dare to have property and individuality, fratemite ou la mort, two millions of heads!’ By their works ye shall know them — as it is said. And don’t imagine that all this is so harmless and without danger for us. Oh, we need to make resistance at once, at once! Our Christ whom we have kept and they have never known must shine forth and vanquish the West. Not letting ourselves be slavishly caught by the wiles of the Jesuits, but carrying our Russian civilisation to them, we ought to stand before them and not let it be said among us, as it was just now, that their preaching is skilful.”

“But allow me, allow me!” said Ivan Petrovitch,

growing dreadfully uneasy, looking about him, and positively beginning to be terrified. “All your ideas, of course, are very praiseworthy and full of patriotism, but all this is exaggerated in the extreme, and ... in fact, we had better drop the subject....”

“No, it’s not exaggerated; it’s even understated, positively understated, because I am not capable of expressing ...”

“Al-low me!”

Myshkin ceased speaking, and sitting upright in his chair gazed with a fixed and fervent look at Ivan Petrovitch.

“I fancy you have been too much affected by what happened to your benefactor,” the old dignitary indulgently observed, with unruffled composure. “You have grown over-ardent. . . perhaps from solitude. If you were to live more among people and to see more of the world, I expect you would be welcomed as a remarkable young man; then, of course, you would grow less excitable and you would see that it is all much simpler . . . and besides, such exceptional cases are due in my opinion partly to our being blase, partly to our being ... bored.”

“Just so, just so!” cried Myshkin. “A splendid idea! It’s just from dullness, from our dullness. Not from being blase. On the contrary, from unsatisfied yearning ... not from being blase. There you’re mistaken. Not simply from unsatisfied yearnings, but from feverishness, from burning thirst. And . . . and don’t think that it’s to such a slight extent that one can afford to laugh at it. Excuse me, one needs to look ahead in these things. As soon as Russians feel the ground under their feet and are confident that they have reached firm ground, they are so delighted at reaching it that they rush at once to the furthest limit. Why is that? You are surprised at Pavlishtchev,

and you put it down to madness on his part, or to simplicity. But it's not that! And Russian intensity in such cases is a surprise not to us only but to all Europe. If one of us turns Catholic, he is bound to become a Jesuit, and one of the most underground. If he becomes an atheist, he's sure to clamour for the extirpation of belief in God by force, that is, by the sword. Why is this, why such frenzy? \bu must surely know! Because he has found the fatherland which he has missed here. He has reached the shore, he has found the land and he rushes to kiss it. Russian atheists and Russian Jesuits are the outcome not only of vanity, not only of a bad, vain feeling, but also of spiritual agony, spiritual thirst, a craving for something higher, for a firm footing, for a fatherland in which they have ceased to believe, because they have never even known it! It's easier for a Russian to become an atheist than for anyone else in the world. And Russians do not merely become atheists, but they invariably believe in atheism, as though it were a new religion without noticing that they are putting faith in a negation. So great is our craving! 'He who has no roots beneath him has no god.' That's not my own saying. It was said by a merchant and Old Believer, whom I met when I was travelling. It's true he did not use those words. He said: 'The man who has renounced his fatherland has renounced his god.' Only think that among us, even highly educated people join the sect of Flagellants. Though why is that worse than nihilism, Jesuitism, or atheism? It may even be rather more profound! But that's what their agony has brought them to. Reveal to the yearning and feverish companions of Columbus the 'New World,' reveal to the Russian the 'world' of Russia, let him find the gold, the treasure hidden from him in the earth! Show him the whole of humanity, rising again, and renewed by Russian thought alone, perhaps by the Russian God and Christ, and you will see into what a mighty and truthful, what a wise and gentle giant he will grow, before the eyes of the astounded world, astounded and dismayed, because it expects of us nothing but the sword, nothing but the sword and violence, because, judging us by themselves, the other peoples cannot picture us free from barbarism. That has always been so hitherto and goes on getting more so! And ..."

But at this point an incident took place, and the speaker's eloquence was cut short in the most unexpected manner.

This wild tirade, this rush of strange and agitated words and confused, enthusiastic ideas, which seemed tripping each other up and tumbling over one another in confusion, all seemed suggestive of something ominous in

the mental condition of the young man who had broken out so suddenly, apropos of nothing. Those present who knew Myshkin wondered apprehensively (and some of them with shame) at this outbreak, which was so out of keeping with his habitual diffidence and restraint, with his rare and peculiar tact in some cases, and his instinctive feeling for real propriety. They could not understand what it was due to. What had been told him about Pavlishtchev could not have been the cause of it. The ladies gazed at him from their corner, as though he had taken leave of his senses, and Princess Byelokonsky confessed afterwards that in another minute she would have taken to her heels. The old gentlemen were almost disconcerted in their first amazement; the chief of the department looked sternly and with displeasure at him from his place. The colonel of engineers sat in absolute immobility. The German positively turned pale, but still smiled his artificial smile, looking at the rest of the company to see how they were taking it. But all this and the whole “scandal” might have ended in the most ordinary and natural way in another minute. General Epanchin, who was extremely astonished, though he grasped the situation sooner than the rest, had made several attempts to stop Myshkin already. But failing in his efforts, he was making his way towards him, with a firm and resolute design. In another minute, he would perhaps, had it been necessary, have taken the extreme step of leading Myshkin out of the room in a friendly way on the pretext of his being ill, which would, perhaps, have been the truth, and which the general fully believed himself. . . . But the scene had a very different conclusion.

At the beginning, when Myshkin at first entered the drawing-room, he had seated himself as far as possible from the china vase about which Aglaia had so scared him. It seems almost beyond belief, but after Aglaia’s words the day before a haunting conviction, a prodigious and incredible presentiment obsessed him that he would be sure to break the vase next day, however carefully he kept away from it and tried to avoid the disaster. But so it was. In the course of the evening other and brighter impressions had flowed into his soul: we have spoken of that already. He forgot his presentiment. When he had heard Pavlishtchev’s name mentioned, and General Epanchin had brought him forward and introduced him again to Ivan Petrovitch, he moved nearer to the table and sat down in the very armchair nearest to the huqe and handsome china vase, which stood on a pedestal almost at his elbow and a little behind him.

At his last words he suddenly rose from his seat, and incautiously waved his arm, somehow twitching his shoulder and . . . there was a general scream of horror! The vase tottered at first, as though hesitating whether to fall upon the head of some old gentleman, but suddenly inclining in the opposite direction, towards the German poet, who skipped aside in alarm, it crashed to the ground. A crash, a scream, and the priceless fragments were scattered about the carpet, dismay and astonishment — what was Myshkin's condition would be hard, and is perhaps unnecessary, to describe! But we must not omit to mention one odd sensation, which struck him at that very minute, and stood out clearly above the mass of other confused and strange sensations. It was not the shame, not the scandal, not the fright, nor the suddenness of it that impressed him most, but his foreknowledge of it! He could not explain what was so arresting about that thought, he only felt that it had gripped him to the heart, and he stood still in a terror that was almost superstitious! Another instant and everything seemed opening out before him; instead of horror there was light, joy, and ecstasy; his breath began to fail him, and . . . but the moment had passed. Thank God, it was not that! He drew a breath and looked about him.

He seemed for a long time unable to understand the fuss that was going on around him, or rather, he understood it perfectly and saw everything, but stood, as it were apart, as though he had no share in it, and, like some one invisible in a fairy-tale, had crept into the room and was watching people, with whom he had no concern though they interested him. He saw them picking up the pieces, heard rapid conversations, saw Aglaia, pale, looking strangely at him, very strangely; there was no trace of hatred, no trace of anger in her eyes, she was looking at him with a frightened expression, but there was so much affection in it and her eyes flashed so at the rest of the company ... his heart ached with a sweet pain. At last he saw to his amazement that they had all sat down again and were positively laughing, as though nothing had happened! In another minute the laughter grew louder: they laughed, looking at him, at his dumb stupefaction; but their laughter was friendly and gay. Many of them addressed him, speaking so cordially, Lizaveta Prokofyevna most of all: she spoke laughingly and said something very, very kind. Suddenly he felt General Epanchin slap him amicably on the shoulder. Ivan Petrovitch, too, was laughing, but the old "dignitary" was the most charming and sympathetic of all: he took Myshkin's hand and with a faint squeeze of it, and a light pat with the other

hand, urged him to pull himself together, as though he were talking to a little frightened boy (Myshkin was highly delighted at this), and made him sit down beside him. Myshkin looked with pleasure into his face, and was somehow still unable to speak, his breath failed him; he liked the old man's face so much.

"What," he muttered at last, "you really forgive me? You, too, Lizaveta Prokofyevna?"

The laughter was louder than ever. Tears came into Myshkin's eyes — he could hardly believe in it; he was enchanted.

"It was a fine vase, to be sure. I can remember it here for the last fifteen years, yes . . . fifteen . . ." Ivan Petrovitch was beginning.

"A terrible disaster, indeed! Even a man must come to an end, and all this to-do about a clay pot!" said Lizaveta Prokofyevna, in a loud voice. "Surely you're not so upset over it, Lyov Nikolayevitch?" she added, with a positive note of apprehension. "Never mind, my dear boy, never mind! You'll frighten me, really."

"And you forgive me for everything? For everything, besides the vase?"

Myshkin would have got up from his seat, but the old man drew him again by the arm.

He would not let him go.

"C'est tres curieux et c'est tres serieux!" he whispered across the table to Ivan Petrovitch, speaking, however, rather loudly.

Myshkin may have heard it.

"So I've not offended anyone? You can't think how happy I am at the notion, but that was bound to be so! Could I possibly offend anyone here? I should be offending you again, if I could think such a thing."

"Calm yourself, my dear boy, this is all exaggerated. And there's nothing for you to be so grateful about. That's an excellent feeling, but exaggerated."

"I'm not thanking you, I am only . . . admiring you, I'm happy looking at you. Perhaps I'm talking nonsense, but I must speak, I must explain ... if only from self-respect...."

All he said and did was spasmodic, confused, feverish. It is quite likely that the words he uttered were often not those he intended to use. His eyes seemed to ask whether he might speak. His glance fell upon Princess Byelokonsky.

“It’s all right, my dear boy, go on, go on, only don’t be in such haste,” she observed. “You began in such a breathless hurry just now, and you see what came of it; but don’t be afraid to talk. These ladies and gentlemen have often seen queerer folk than you. They won’t be surprised at you. And you are not so very remarkable, either. You’ve done nothing but break a vase and given us all a fright.”

Myshkin listened to her, smiling.

“Why, it was you,” he began, addressing the old “dignitary,”

“it was you who saved a student called Podkumov and a clerk called Shvabrin from exile three months ago.”

The old man positively flushed a little, and muttered that he must calm himself.

“And, I think it’s you, I’ve heard,” he turned at once to Ivan Petrovitch, “who gave your peasants timber to rebuild their huts when they were burnt out, though they were free and had given you a lot of trouble?”

“Oh, that’s ex-ag-gera-ted,” muttered Ivan Petrovitch, though with anairof dignified pleasure.

But this time it was true that Myshkin’s words were “exaggerated”; it was only an incorrect rumour that had reached him.

“And did not you,” he went on, addressing Princess Byelokonsky, “receive me six months ago in Moscow, as though I had been your own son, when Lizaveta Prokofyevna wrote to you? And, exactly as though I had been your own son, you gave me one piece of advice which I shall never forget. Do you remember?”

“Why are you in such a state?” said Princess Byelokonsky, with vexation. “You’re a good-natured fellow but absurd. If some one gives you a halfpenny you thank him as though he had saved your life. You think it praiseworthy, but it’s disgusting.”

She was on the verge of being angry, but suddenly burst out laughing, and this time her laughter was good-humoured. Lizaveta Prokofyevna’s face brightened too; General Epanchin beamed.

“I said that Lyov Nikolayevitch was a man ... a man ... if only he wouldn’t be in such a hurry, as the princess observed. . . .” General Epanchin murmured in rapture, repeating Princess Byelokonskys words, which had struck him.

Only Aglaia seemed mournful, but there was a flush perhaps of indignation in herface.

“He really is very charming,” the old man muttered again to Ivan Petrovitch.

“I came here with anguish in my heart,” Myshkin went on, with increasing emotion, speaking more and more quickly, more and more queerly and eagerly. “I... I was afraid of you, afraid of myself too. Of myself most of all. When I came back here to Petersburg, I determined that I would see the best people, the people of old family, of ancient lineage, to which I belong myself, among whom I am in the front rank by birth. Now, I’m sitting with princes like myself, am I not? I wanted to get to know you, and it was necessary, very, very necessary! . . . I’ve always heard too much that was bad about you, more than what was qood; of vour pettiness, the exclusiveness of your interests, your stagnation, your shallow education, and your ridiculous habits. Oh, so much is said and written about you! I came here to-day with curiosity, with excitement. I wanted to see for myself and make up my own mind whether this upper crust of Russian society is really good for nothing and has out-lived its time, is drained of its ancient life and only fit to die, but still persists in a petty, endless strife with the men ... of the future, getting in their way and not conscious that it is dying itself. I did not quite believe in this view before, because there never has been an upper class amongst us, except, perhaps, the courtiers, by uniform or. . . by accident, and now it has quite disappeared. That’s right, isn’t it?”

“No, it’s not right at all,” said Ivan Petrovitch, smiling ironically.

“There, he’s off again!” said Princess Byelokonsky, losing patience.

“Laissez le dire, he’s trembling all over,” the old man warned them in an undertone.

Myshkin had completely lost control of himself.

“And what do I find? I find people elegant, simple-

hearted, and clever. I meet an old man who is ready to listen to a boy like me and be kind to him. I find people ready to understand and to forgive, Russian, and kind-hearted, almost as kind and warm-hearted as I met there, and almost their equals. You can judge what a delightful surprise it is! Oh, do let me put it into words! I had heard so often and fully believed myself that society was nothing but manners, and antiquated forms, and that all reality was extinct. But I see now for myself that that cannot be so among us; that may be anywhere else but not in Russia. Can you all be Jesuits and frauds? I heard Prince N. tell a story just now. Wasn’t that simple-hearted, spontaneous humour; wasn’t it genuine frankness? Can such sayings come

from the lips of a man . . . who is dead; whose heart and talent have run dry? Could the dead have treated me as you have treated me? Isn't it material ... for the future, for hope? Can such people lag behind and fail to understand?"

"I beg you again; calm yourself, my dear boy. We'll talk about all this another time. I shall be delighted. .. ," smiled the old "dignitary."

Ivan Petrovitch cleared his throat and turned round in his chair; General Epanchin made a movement; the chief of the department began talking to the old "dignitary's" wife, paying not the slightest attention to Myshkin; but the "dignitary's" wife frequently listened and glanced at him.

"No, it's better for me to speak, you know," Myshkin began again, with another feverish outburst, addressing the old man with peculiar trustfulness, and as it were, confidentially. "Yesterday, Aglaia Ivanovna told me not to talk, and even told me what subjects not to talk about; she knows I'm absurd on those subjects. I'm twenty-seven, but I know that I'm like a child. I have no right to express an opinion, I've said that long ago. It's only with Rogozhin in Moscow that I've talked openly. We read Pushkin together, the whole of him. He knew nothing of him, not even the name of Pushkin. ... I'm always afraid that my absurd manner may discredit the thought or the leading idea. I have no elocution. My gestures are always inappropriate, and that makes people laugh, and degrades my ideas. I've no sense of proportion either, and that's the great thing; that's the chief thing in fact. ... I know it's better for me to sit still and keep quiet. When I persist in keepinq quiet, I seem very sensible, and what's more I think things over. But now it's better for me to talk. I'm talking because you look at me so nicely; you have such a nice face! I promised Aglaia Ivanovna yesterday that I'd be silent all the evening!"

"Vraiment!"smiled the old dignitary.

"But sometimes I think that I am not right in thinking that. Sincerity is more important than elocution, isn't it? Isn't it?"

"Sometimes."

"I want to explain everything, everything, everything! Oh, yes! "Vbu think I'm Utopian? A theorist? My ideas are really all so simple. . . . Don't you believe it? "Vbu smile? "Vbu know I'm contemptible sometimes, for I lose my faith. As I came here just now, I wondered: 'How shall I talk to him? With what words shall I begin, so that they may understand a little?' How frightened I was, but I was more frightened for you. It was awful,

awful! And yet, how could I be afraid? Wasn't it shameful to be afraid? What does it matter that for one advanced man there is such a mass of retrograde and evil ones? That's what I'm so happy about; that I'm convinced now that there is no such mass, and that it's all living material! There's no reason to be troubled because we're absurd, is there? "Vbu know it really is true that we're absurd, that we're shallow, have bad habits, that we're bored, that we don't know how to look at things, that we can't understand; we're all like that, all of us, you, and I, and they! And you are not offended at my telling you to your faces that you're absurd? Are you? And if that's so, aren't you good material? Do you know, to my thinking it's a good thing sometimes to be absurd; it's better in fact, it makes it easier to forgive one another, it's easier to be humble. One can't understand everything at once, we can't begin with perfection all at once! In order to reach perfection one must begin by being ignorant of a great deal. And if we understand things too quickly, perhaps we shan't understand them thoroughly. I say that to you who have been able to understand so much already and . . . have failed to understand so much. I am afraid for you now. "Vbu are not angry at a boy like me for saying things to you? Of course you're not! Oh, you know how to forget and to forgive those who have offended you and those who have not offended you,

for it's always more difficult to forgive those who have not offended one, and just because they've not injured one, and that therefore one's complaint of them is groundless. That's what I expected of the best people, that's what I was in a hurry to tell you as I came here, and did not know how to tell you. . . . \bu are laughing, Ivan Petrovitch? You think that I was afraid for them, that I'm their champion, a democrat, an advocate of equality?" he laughed hysterically (he had been continually breaking into short laughs of delight). "I'm afraid for you, for all of you, for all of us together. I am a prince myself, of ancient family, and I am sitting with princes. I speak to save us all, that our class may not vanish in vain; in darkness, without realising anything, abusing everything, and losing everything. Why disappear and make way for others when we might remain in advance and be the leaders? If we are advanced we shall be the leaders. Let us be servants in order to be leaders."

He began to try to get up from his chair, but the old man still held him, though he looked at him with growing uneasiness.

“Listen! I know it’s not right to talk. Better set an example, better to begin. ... I have already begun . . . and — and — can one really be unhappy? Oh, what does my grief, what does my sorrow matter if I can be happy? Do you know I don’t know how one can walk by a tree and not be happy at the sight of it? How can one talk to a man and not be happy in loving him! Oh, it’s only that I’m notable to express it. . . . And what beautiful things there are at every step, that even the most hopeless man must feel to be beautiful! Look at a child! Look at God’s sunrise! Look at the grass, how it grows! Look at the eyes that gaze at you and love you! ...”

He had for some time been standing as he talked. The old man looked at him in alarm. Lizaveta Prokofyevna cried out, “Ah, my God!” and threw up her hands in dismay, the first to realise what was wrong.

Aglaia quickly ran up to him. She was in time to catch him in her arms, and with horror, with a face distorted with pain, she heard the wild scream of the “spirit tearing and casting down the unhappy man.”

The sick man lay on the carpet. Some one hastened to put a pillow under his head.

No one had expected this. A quarter of an hour later, Prince N. “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, and the old dignitary were trying to restore the liveliness of the company, but within half an hour the party had broken up. Many words of sympathy and regret were uttered, a few comments were made. Ivan Petrovitch remarked that “the young man was a Slavophil or something of the sort, but that there was nothing very dangerous about that, however.” The old dignitary expressed no opinion. It’s true that later on, next day and the day after, every one who had been present seemed rather cross. Ivan Petrovitch was positively offended, but not seriously so. The chief of the department was for some time rather cold to General Epanchin. The old dignitary, who was their “patron,” mumbled something by way of admonition to the father of the family, though, in flattering terms he expressed the deepest interest in Aglaia’s future. He really was a rather good-hearted man; but one reason for the interest he had taken in Myshkin that evening was the part that the prince had played in the scandal connected with Nastasya Filippovna. He had heard something of the story and had been much interested by it, and would have liked indeed to ask questions about it.

Princess Byelokonsky said to Lizaveta Prokofyevna as she took leave that evening:

“Well, there’s good and bad in him. And if you care to know my opinion, there’s more bad than good. “Vbu can see for yourselves what he is, a sick man!”

Madame Epanchin made up her mind, once for all, that as a bride-groom he was “impossible,” and that night she vowed to herself that “as long as she was living, he should not be the husband of Aglaia.” She got up in the same mind next morning. But in the course of the morning, by lunch-time at one o’clock, she was drawn into contradicting herself in an extraordinary way.

In reply to her sisters’ carefully guarded question, Aglaia replied coldly, but haughtily, as it were, rapping it out:

“I’ve never given him a promise of any sort, I’ve never in my life looked on him or thought of him as my betrothed. He is no more to me than anyone else.”

Lizaveta Prokofyevna suddenly flared up.

“That I should never have expected of vou,” she said with chagrin. “As a suitor he’s out of the question, I know, and thank God that we’re agreed about it. But I didn’t expect such words from you. I looked for something very different from you. I’d be ready to turn away all those people who were here last night and to keep him. That’s what I think of him!

At that point she stopped short, frightened at her words. But if only she had known how unjust she was to her daughter at that moment! Everything was settled in Aglaia’s mind. She too was waiting for the hour that was to decide everything, and every hint, every incautious touch dealt a deep wound to her heart.

CHAPTER 8

For MYSHKIN, too, that morning began under the influence of painful forebodings; they might be explained by his invalid state, but his sadness was quite indefinite, and that was what made it most distressing to him. It is true that painful, mortifying facts stood vividly before him, but his sadness went beyond everything he remembered, and the reflections that followed that memory. He realised that he could not regain his serenity alone. By degrees the conviction took root in him that something special, something decisive, would happen to him that very day. His fit of the previous evening had been a slight one. Besides depression and a certain weariness in his head and pain in his limbs, he had nothing the matter with him. His brain worked fairly accurately, though his soul was ill at ease. He got up rather late, and at once clearly recalled the previous evening. He remembered, too, though not quite distinctly, how he had been taken home half an hour after the fit. He learnt that a messenger had already been from the Epanchins to ask after his health. At half-past eleven another called to inquire and this pleased him. Vera Lebedyev was among the first to visit him and wait upon him. She burst out crying for the first minute when she saw him, but when Myshkin at once reassured her she began laughing. He was suddenly struck by the girl's deep sympathy for him. He took her hand and kissed it. Vera flushed crimson.

"Ach, what are you doing!" she cried, drawing her hand away in dismay. She went away quickly in strange confusion. She had time though to tell him, among other things, that her father had run off very early to see the "departed," as he persisted in calling the general, to find out whether he had died in the night, and it was reported, so she was told, that he was at the point of death. At twelve o'clock Lebedyev himself came home, and went in to Myshkin, not merely "for a minute to inquire after his precious health," and so on, but also to look into the cupboard. He did nothing but sigh and groan and Myshkin soon dismissed him; yet he made an attempt to question the prince about his fit the previous evening, though it was evident he knew full details about it already. After him Kolya ran in also for a minute. He really was in a hurry, and was in great and painful agitation. He began by directly and insistently begging Myshkin for an explanation of all

that they had been concealing from him, asserting that he had learned almost everything the day before. He was deeply and violently distressed.

With all possible sympathy Myshkin told him the whole story, relating the facts with absolute exactness, and it fell like a thunderbolt on the poor boy. He could not utter a word and wept in silence. Myshkin felt that this was one of those impressions which remain for ever and make a turning-point in a young life. He hastened to give him his view of the case, adding that in his opinion the old man's death might principally be due to the horror inspired by his own action, and that not every one was capable of such a feeling. Kolya's eyes flashed as he listened to Myshkin.

"They're a worthless lot — Ganya and Varya and Ptitsyn! I'm not going to quarrel with them, but our paths lie apart from this moment. Ah, prince, I've had so many new feelings since yesterday! It's a lesson for me! I consider that my mother, too, is entirely my responsibility now; though she's provided for at Varya's, that's not the thing ..."

He jumped up, remembering that he was expected at home, hurriedly asked after Myshkin's health, and listening to the answer, added in haste:

"Isn't there something else? I heard yesterday (though I've no right) ... but if you ever want a devoted servant for any purpose, here he is before you. It seems as though we're both of us not quite happy, isn't that so? But ... I don't ask anything, I don't ask ..."

He went away, and Myshkin sank into still deeper brooding. Every one was predicting misfortune, everyone had already drawn conclusions, everyone looked at him, as though they knew something and something he did not know. "Lebedyev asks questions, Kolya directly hints at it, and Vera weeps." At last he dismissed the subject in vexation. "It's all mv accursed sicklv over-sensitiveness," he thought. His face brightened when, after one o'clock he saw the Epanchins, who came to visit him "for a moment." They really did come only for a moment. When Lizaveta Prokofyevna got up from lunch, she announced that they were all going for a walk at once, and all together. The announcement was made in the form of a command, dry, abrupt and unexplained. They all went out, that is the mother, the girls, and Prince S. Lizaveta Prokofyevna turned in a direction exactly opposite to that which they took every day. Every one understood what it meant, but every one refrained from speaking for fear of irritating Madame Epanchin, and, as though to escape from reproaches or objections, she walked in front without

looking back at them. At last Adelaida observed that there was no need to race along like that and that there was no catching mamma up.

“Now then,” said Lizaveta Prokofyevna, turning suddenly, “we’re just passing his door. Whatever Aglaia may think, and whatever may happen afterwards, he is not a stranger, and what’s more, now he’s in trouble and ill. I shall go to see him anyhow. If any care to come too, they can, if not you can go on. The way is open.”

They all went in, of course. Myshkin very properly hastened to beg forgiveness once more for the vase and ... the scene.

“Oh, that’s no matter,” answered Lizaveta Prokofyevna. “I don’t mind about the vase, I mind about you. So now you’re aware yourself that there was a scene last night, that’s how it is ‘the morning after.’ But it’s all of no consequence, for every one sees now that one mustn’t be hard on you. Good-bye for the present though. If you feel strong enough, go for a little walk and then have a nap — that’s my advice. And if you feel disposed, come in as usual. Be sure, once for all, that whatever happens, whatever may come you’ll always be our friend, mine anyway. I can answer for myself...”

All accepted this challenge, and confirmed their mother’s sentiments. They went out, but in this simple-hearted haste to say something kind and encouraging there lay hid a great deal that was cruel, of which Lizaveta Prokofyevna had no suspicion. In the words “as usual” and “mine at least” — there was again an ominous note. Myshkin began to think of Aglaia. It is true that she had given him a wonderful smile on going in and again on taking leave, but she had not uttered a word, even when the others had all made their protestations of friendship, though she had looked intently at him once or twice. Her face was paler than usual, as though she had slept badly that night. Myshkin made up his mind that he would certainly go to them that evening “as usual” and he looked feverishly at his watch. Vera came in just three minutes after the Epanchins had gone.

“Aglaia Ivanovna gave me a message for you just now, in secret, Lyov Nikolayevitch,” she said.

Myshkin positively trembled.

“A note?”

“No, a message. She had hardly time for that, even. She begs you earnestly not to be away from home for one minute all to-day, up till seven o’clock this evening, or till nine o’clock, I couldn’t quite hear.”

“But why so? What does it mean?”

“I know nothing about it. Only she was very earnest that I should give you the message.”

“Did she say’very earnest’?”

“No, she didn’t say that. She just managed to turn round and speak, as I luckily ran up to her myself. But I could see from her face whether she was in earnest over it. She looked at me so that she made my heart stop beating....”

After asking a few more questions Myshkin was more agitated than ever, though he succeeded in learning nothing more. When he was left alone, he lay down on the sofa and fell to musing again.

“Perhaps they have a visitor there till nine o’clock and she’s afraid I may do something silly before visitors again,” he thought at last, and began again impatiently waiting for evening and looking at his watch. But the mystery was solved long before the evening, and the solution also was brought by a visitor, and took the form of a new and agonising mystery.

Just half an hour after the Epanchins’ visit, Ippolit came in to him, so tired and exhausted that, entering without uttering a word, he literally fell, almost unconscious, into an easy chair, and instantly broke into an insufferable cough. He coughed till the blood came. His eyes glittered and there were hectic flushes on his cheeks. Myshkin murmured something to him, but Ippolit made no reply, and for a long time could only motion to Myshkin to let him alone. At last he came to himself.

“I’m going!” he pronounced, with an effort at last, and with a husky voice.

“I’ll go with you if you like,” said Myshkin, getting up from his seat and suddenly stopping short, as he recalled that he had been forbidden to leave the house.

Ippolit laughed.

“I’m not going away from you,” he went on, continually gasping and coughing, “on the contrary, I found it necessary to come to you and about something important ... but for which I would not have disturbed you. I’m going over yonder, and this time I believe I really am going. It’s all up! I haven’t come for sympathy, believe me ... I lay down at ten o’clock to-day meaning not to get up again till the time came. But you see I changed my mind and got up once more to come to you ... so you see I had to.”

“It grieves me to look at you. \bu’d better have sent for me instead of troubling to come here.”

“Well, that’s enough. You’ve expressed your regret and enough to satisfy the requirements of politeness. ... But I forgot: how are you yourself?”

“I’m all right. Yesterday I was ... not quite ...”

“I know, I know, the Chinese vase had the worst of it. I’m sorry I wasn’t there! I’ve come about something. In the first place, I’ve had the pleasure today of seeing Gavril Ardalionovitch at a tryst with Aglaia Ivanovna on the green seat. I was astonished to see how stupid a man can look. I remarked upon it to Aglaia Ivanovna, when Gavril Ardalionovitch had gone. . . . You seem not to be surprised at anything, prince,” he added, looking mistrustfully at Myshkin’s calm face. “To be surprised at nothing, they say, is a sign of great intelligence. To my mind, it might quite as well be a sign of great stupidity . . . But I don’t mean that for you, excuse me ... I am very unfortunate in my expressions to-day.”

“I knew yesterday that Gavril Ardalionovitch ...”

Myshkin broke off, obviously confused, though Ippolit was annoyed at his not being surprised.

“You knew it! That’s something new! But don’t tell me about it. . . . “Vbu weren’t a witness of the interview to-day, I suppose?”

“You saw that I was not there, since you were there yourself.”

“Oh, you may have been sitting behind a bush somewhere. But I’m glad, for your sake, of course, for I was beginning to think that Gavril Ardalionovitch — was the favourite.”

“I beg you not to speak of this to me, Ippolit, and in such terms.”

“Especially since you know all about it already.”

“You are mistaken, I know hardly anything about it, and Aglaia Ivanovna knows for a fact that I know nothing about it. I knew nothing about their meeting, really. \bu say there’s been a meeting between them? Very well then, let us leave the subject....”

“But how’s this? One minute you know, the next you don’t. You say, ‘very well and let us leave it.’ But look here, don’t be so trustful! Especially if you don’t know anything about it. \bu are trustful because you don’t know anything about it. And do you know what those two, the brother and sister, are scheming for? Perhaps you suspect that? Very well, very well, I’ll drop it,” he added, noticing an impatient gesture from Myshkin. “Well, I’ve come about my own affairs and I want to . . . explain about it. Damn it all,

one can’t die without explanations. It’s awful how much I explain. Do you care to hear?”

“Speak, I’m listening.”

“But I’m changing my opinion again, though, I’ll begin with Ganya, all the same. Would you believe it that I had an appointment at the green seat to-day, too? I don’t want to tell a lie, though. I insisted on an interview myself, I begged for it, I promised to reveal a secret. I don’t know whether I came too early (I believe I really was early), but I had no sooner sat down beside Aglaia Ivanovna, when I saw Gavril Ardalionovitch and Varvara Ardalionovna coming along, arm in arm, as though they were out for a walk. They both seemed very much amazed at meeting me. It was so unexpected that they were quite taken aback. Aglaia Ivanovna flushed crimson, and you may not believe it, but she was rather disconcerted, whether because I was there or simply at the sight of Gavril Ardalionovitch — you know what a beauty he is — anyway she turned crimson, and ended it all in a second, very absurdly. She got up, answered Gavril Ardalionovitch’s bow, and Varvara Ardalionovna’s ingratiating smile, and suddenly rapped out: ‘I’ve only come to express in person my pleasure at your sincere and friendly feelings, and if I am in need of them, believe me . . .’ Then she turned awav and the two went off — I don’t know whether like fools or in triumph — Ganya, of course, a fool. He couldn’t make out a word, and turned as red as a lobster (he has an extraordinary expression of face sometimes). But Varvara Ardalionovna seemed to understand that they must make their escape as quickly as possible, and that this was quite enough from Aglaia Ivanovna, and she drew her brother away. She’s cleverer than he is and I’ve no doubt she’s triumphant now. I came to Aglaia Ivanovna to make arrangements about a meeting with Nastasya Filippovna.”

“With Nastasya Filippovna,” cried Myshkin.

“Aha! You seem to be losing your indifference and beginning to be surprised. I’m glad that you’re ready to be like a human being at last. I’ll comfort you for that. This is what comes of serving a young lady of lofty soul. I got a slap in the face from her to-day.”

“Morally speaking?” Myshkin could not help asking.

“Yes, not physically. I don’t think anyone would raise a hand against a creature like me, even a woman would not strike me now. Even Ganya wouldn’t strike me! Though I did think he was going to fly at me at one

time yesterday. ... I'll bet you anything I know what you're thinking about now. "Vbu're thinking, 'he mustn't be beaten of course, but he might be smothered with a pillow or a wet cloth in his sleep — in fact one ought to. . . .' It's written on your face that you're thinking that at this very second."

"I've never thought of such a thing," Myshkin answered with disgust.

"I don't know, I dreamt last night that I was smothered with a wet cloth by ... a man. . . . I'll tell you who it was — Rogozhin! What do you think? Could a man be smothered with a wet cloth?"

"I don't know."

"I've heard that it can be done. Very well, we'll drop it. Come, why am I a slanderer? Why did she accuse me of being a slanderer to-day? And take note, it was after she'd heard every word I had to say, and questioned me, too. .. . But that's just like a woman! For her sake I've got into communication with Rogozhin, an interesting person. In her interests I have arranged a personal interview with Nastasya Filippovna for her. Was it because I wounded her vanity by hinting that she enjoyed Nastasya Filippovna's 'leavings'? Yes, I did try to impress that upon her all the time in her interest, I don't deny it. I wrote her two letters in that strain, and to-day for the third time, at our interview ... I began by telling her that it was humiliating for her. . . . Though the word 'leavings' wasn't mine, but some one else's. At Ganya's, anyway, everybody was saying it, and indeed she repeated it herself. So how can she call me a slanderer? I see, I see, it's very amusing for you to look at me now, and I bet you're applying those stupid verses to me:

'And on the gloom of my declining hour Perchance the farewell smile of love may shine.'

"Ha-ha-ha!" He went off into an hysterical laugh. "Mark," he gasped through a fit of coughing, "what a fellow Ganya is, he talks about 'leavings' and what does he want to take advantage of himself now!"

For a long while Myshkin was silent. He was horrorstruck.

"You spoke of an interview with Nastasya Filippovna," he murmured at last.

"Hey, are you really unaware that Aglaia Ivanovna is going to meet Nastasya Filippovna to-day? And that for that purpose Nastasya Filippovna has been brought, through Rogozhin, from Petersburg, at an invitation of Aglaia Ivanovna and by my efforts, is now staying with Rogozhin, where she stayed before, very near you, in the house of that woman . .. Darya

Alexeyevna ... a very dubious lady, a friend of hers, and to that very doubtful house Aglaia Ivanovna is going to-day to have a friendly conversation with Nastasya Filippovna, and to decide various problems. They want to work at arithmetic. Didn't you know it? Honour bright?"

"That's incredible!"

"Well, that's all right if it's incredible. But how could you know? Though this is such a place, if a fly buzzes every one knows of it. But I've warned you, and you may be grateful to me. Well, till we meet again — in the next world probably. But another thing: though I have been a cad to you, because . . . why should I be a loser? Kindly tell me that? For your advantage, eh? I've dedicated my 'Confession' to her (you didn't know that?). And how she received it too, ha-ha! But anyway I've not behaved like a cad to her, I've not done her any harm; but she's put me to shame and snubbed me . . . though I've done you no harm either. If I did refer to 'leavings' and things of that sort, still I am telling you the day and the hour and the address of their meeting, and I've let you into the whole game . . . from resentment of course, not from generosity. Good-bye, I'm as talkative as a stammerer or a consumptive. Mind you take steps at once, if you deserve to be called a man. The interview is to take place this evening, that's the truth."

Ippolit went towards the door, but Myshkin called after him and he stopped in the doorway.

"So then, according to you, Aglaia Ivanovna is going herself to-day to Nastasya Filippovna?" asked Myshkin.

Patches of red came out on his forehead and cheeks.

"I don't know for a fact, but that's probably so," answered Ippolit, looking round. "Yes, it must be so. Nastasya Filippovna couldn't go to her? And it wouldn't be at Ganya's, where there's a man almost dead. What do you think of the general?"

"It can't be there, if only for that reason," Myshkin put in. "How could she get away even if she wanted to? "Vbu don't know ... the habits of the household. She couldn't get away from home alone to see Nastasya Filippovna. It's nonsense!"

"Look here, prince, nobody jumps out of window, but when the house is on fire the grandest gentleman or lady is ready to jump out of window. When it's a case of necessity, there's no help for it, and our young lady will even go to see Nastasya Filippovna. And don't they let them go anywhere, your young ladies?"

“No, I didn’t mean that...”

“Well, if not, she’s only to go down the steps, and go straight there, and she needn’t ever go home again. There are cases when one may sometimes burn one’s ships and not go home again. Life does not consist only of lunches and dinners and Prince S.’s. I fancy you take Aglaia Ivanovna for a young lady or a boarding-school miss. Wait till seven or eight o’clock. If I were in your place, I’d send some one to be on the watch there to catch the very minute when she comes down the steps. Send Kolya. He’ll be deliqhted to plav the spv, believe me, for vour sake, I mean ... for everything’s relative.... Ha-ha!”

Ippolit went out. Myshkin had no reason for asking anyone to spy for him, even if he had been capable of doing so. Aglaia’s command that he should stay at home was now almost explained. Perhaps she meant to come and fetch him, or perhaps it was that she did not want him to turn up there and so had told him to stay at home. That might be so, too. His head was in a whirl; the whole room was turning round. He lay down on the sofa and closed his eyes.

In either case it was final, conclusive. Myshkin did not think of Aglaia as a young lady, or a boarding-school miss. He felt now that he had been uneasy for a long time, and that it was just something of this kind he had been dreading. But what did she want to see her for? A shiver ran over Myshkin’s whole body. He was in a fever again.

No, he didn’t look on her as a child! He had been horrified by some of her views, some of her sayings of late. He sometimes fancied that she had seemed too reserved, too controlled, and he remembered that this had alarmed him. He had been trying during those days not to think about it, he had dismissed oppressive ideas; but what lay hidden in that soul? The thought had worried him for a long time, though he had faith in that soul. And now all this must be settled and revealed that day. An awful thought! And again— “that woman!” Why did it always seem to him that that woman was bound to appear at the last moment, and tear asunder his fate like a rotten thread? That it had always seemed so he was ready to swear now, though he was almost delirious. If he had tried to forget “her” of late, it was simply because he was afraid of her. Did he love that woman or hate her? He had not put that question to himself once that day. His heart was clear on one point: he knew whom he loved. ... He was not so much afraid of the meeting of the two, not of the strangeness, not of the unknown cause

of that meeting, not of what it might lead to, whatever it might be — he was afraid of Nastasya Filippovna. He remembered a few days later that all through those feverish hours her eyes, her glance, were before him, her words in his ears — strange words, though little remained of them in his memory, when those feverish hours of misery were over. He scarcely remembered that Vera had brought him his dinner,

that he ate it, and did not know whether he slept after dinner or not. All he knew was that he only began to see things clearly that evening, when Aglaia came towards him on the verandah, and he jumped up from the sofa and went to meet her. It was a quarter past seven. Aglaia was entirely alone, dressed simply, as it seemed hastily, in a light burnous. Her face was pale as it had been that morning, and her eyes glittered with a dry, hard light. He had never seen such an expression in her eyes. She looked at him attentively.

“You are quite ready,” she observed quietly, and with apparent composure. “You are dressed and have your hat in your hand. So you’ve been warned, and I know by whom — Ippolit?”

“Yes, he told me . . ,” muttered Myshkin, more dead than alive.

“Come along. “Vbu know that you must escort me there. You are strong enough to go out, I suppose?”

“I’m strong enough, but... is this possible?”

He broke off instantly and could say no more. This was his one attempt to restrain the mad girl, and after it he followed her like a slave. Confused as his ideas were, he realised that she would certainly go there even without him, and that therefore he was bound to go with her in any case. He divined how strong her determination was. It was beyond him to check this wild impulse. They walked in silence the whole way, scarcely uttering a word. He only noticed that she knew the way well, and when he wanted to go a rather longer way because the road was more deserted, and suggested this to her, she seemed to listen with strained attention and answered abruptly:

“It’s all the same!”

When they had almost reached Darya Alexeyevna’s abode (a big, old, wooden house) there came down the steps a gorgeously dressed lady with a young girl. They both got into an elegant carriage which stood waiting at the steps, talking and laughing loudly. They did not once glance at the approaching couple and seemed not to notice them. As soon as the carriage had driven off, the door instantly opened a second time, and Rogozhin, who

had been waiting there, admitted Myshkin and Aglaia and closed the door behind them.

“There’s no one in the whole house now, except us four,” he observed aloud, and looked strangely at Myshkin.

In the first room they went into, Nastasya Filippovna was waiting. She too was dressed very simply and all in black. She stood up to greet them, but did not smile or even give Myshkin her hand.

Her intent and uneasy eyes were fastened on Aglaia. The two ladies sat at a little distance from one another — Aglaia on a sofa in a corner of the room, Nastasya Filippovna at the window. Myshkin and Rogozhin did not sit down, and she did not invite them to do so. Myshkin looked with perplexity and, as it were, with pain at Rogozhin, but the latter still wore the same smile. The silence lasted some moments.

At length an ominous look passed over Nastasya Filippovna’s face. Her gaze grew obstinate, hard, and full of hatred, and it was riveted all the time upon her visitors. Aglaia was evidently confused, but not intimidated. As she walked in, she scarcely looked at her rival, and, for the time, sat with downcast eyes, as though musing. Once or twice she looked, as it were, casually round the room. There was an unmistakable shade of disgust on her face, as though she were afraid of contamination here. She mechanically arranged her dress, and even once restlessly changed her seat, moving to the other end of the sofa. She was hardly perhaps conscious of her actions; but their unconsciousness made them even more insulting. At last she looked resolutely straight into Nastasya Filippovna’s face and read at once all that was revealed in the ominous gleam in her rival’s eyes. Woman understood woman. Aglaia shuddered.

“You know, of course, why I asked you to come,” she brought out at last, but in a very low voice, and pausing once ortwice even in this brief sentence.

“No, I know nothing about it,” Nastasya Filippovna answered, drily and abruptly.

Aglaia flushed. Perhaps it struck her suddenly as strange and incredible that she should be sitting here with that woman in “that woman’s” house, and hanging upon her answer. At the first sound of Nastasya Filippovna’s voice a sort of shiver ran over her. All this, of course, “that woman” saw quite clearly.

“You understand everything ... but you pretend not to understand on purpose,” said Aglaia, almost in a whisper, looking sullenly at the floor.

“Why should I?” Nastasya Filippovna smiled.

“You want to take advantage of my position, of my being in your house,” Aglaia brought out, awkwardly and absurdly.

“You’re responsible for your position, not I,” said Nastasya Filippovna, suddenly flaring up. “\bu’re not here at my invitation, but I at yours, and I don’t know to this hour with what object.”

Aglaia raised her head haughtily.

“Restrain your tongue. That is your weapon and I’ve not come to fight you with it.”

“Ah! “Vbu have come to fight me then! Would you believe it, I thought that you were ... cleverer...”

They looked at one another, no longer concealing their spite. One of them was a woman who had lately written those letters to the other. And now it all fell to pieces at their first meeting. And yet not one of the four persons in the room seemed at that moment to think it strange. Myshkin, who would not the day before have believed in the possibility of it even in a dream, now stood, gazed and listened as though he had foreseen this long ago. The most fantastic dream seemed to have changed suddenly into the most vivid and sharply defined reality. One of these women, at that moment, so despised the other, and so keenly desired to express this feeling to her (possibly she had come simply to do so, as Rogozhin said next day) that, unaccountable as the other was with her disordered intellect and sick soul, it seemed that no idea she had adopted beforehand could have been maintained against the malignant, purely feminine contempt of her rival. Myshkin felt sure that Nastasya Filippovna would not mention the letters of her own accord. He could guess from her flashing eyes what those letters must be costing her now; and he would have given half his life that Aglaia should not speak of them.

But Aglaia seemed suddenly to pull herself together, and instantly mastered herself.

“You misunderstand me,” she said. “I have not come here to fight you, though I don’t like you. I... I came ... to speak to you as one human being to another. When I sent for you, I had already made up my mind what to speak to you about, and I won’t depart from that decision now, though you should not understand me at all. That will be the worse for you and not for me. I

wanted to answer what you have written to me, and to answer you in person, because I thought it more convenient. Hear my answer to all your letters. I felt sorry for Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch from that day when I first made his acquaintance, and heard afterwards what happened at your party. I felt sorry for him, because he is such a simple-hearted man and in his simplicity believed that he might be happy . . . with a woman ... of such a character. What I was afraid offer him came to pass. “Vbu were incapable of loving him, you tortured him, you tortured him and abandoned him. You could not love him, because you were too proud ... no, not proud, that’s a mistake, but too vain . . . that’s not it, either, it’s your self-love which amounts almost to madness, of which your letters to me are a proof. “Vbu couldn’t love a simple-hearted man like him, and very likely you secretly despised him and laughed at him. You can love nothing but your shame and the continual thought that you’ve been brought to shame and humiliated. If your shame were less or you were free from it altogether, you’d be more unhappy . . .” (Aglaia enjoyed pronouncing these too rapidly uttered but long prepared and pondered words — words she had brooded over before she had dreamed of the present interview; with malignant eyes she watched their effect on Nastasya Filippovna’s face, distorted with agitation). “You remember,” she went on, “he wrote me a letter then. He says that you know about that letter and have read it, in fact. From that letter I understood it all and understood it correctly. He confirmed that himself lately, that is, everything I’m telling you, word for word, indeed. After the letter I waited. I guessed that you were sure to come here, because you can’t exist without Petersburg; you are still too young and too good-looking for the provinces. Though, indeed, those are not my words either,” she added, blushing hotly, and from that moment the colour did not leave her face, till she finished speaking. “When I saw the prince again, I felt dreadfully hurt and wounded on his account. Don’t laugh. If you laugh, you’re not worthy to understand that.”

“You see that I’m not laughing,” Nastasya Filippovna pronounced sternly and mournfully.

“It’s nothing to me, though, laugh as much as you like. When I began to question him, he told me that he had ceased to love you long ago, that even the memory of you was a torture to him, but that he was sorry for you . . . and that when he thought of you, it always pierced his heart. I have to tell you, too, that I have never in my life met a man like him for noble

simplicity, and boundless trustfulness. I understood from the way he talked that anyone who chose could deceive him, and that he would forgive anyone afterwards who had deceived him, and that was why I grew to love him ...”

Aglaia paused for a moment as though amazed, as though hardly able to believe her own ears that she could have uttered such words. But at the same time an infinite pride shone in her eyes. She seemed by now to be beyond caring, even if “that woman” did laugh at once at the avowal that had broken from her.

“I’ve told you all, and now, no doubt, you understand what I want of you?”

“Perhaps I do understand, but tell me yourself,” Nastasya Filippovna answered softly.

There was a glow of anger in Aglaia’s face.

“I want to learn from you,” she pronounced firmly and distinctly, “what right you have to meddle in his feelings for me? By what right you have dared to send me letters? What right you have to be continually declarinq to him and to me that vou love him, after abandoning him of your own accord and running away from him in such an insulting and degrading way.”

“I have never declared either to him or to you that I love him,” Nastasya Filippovna articulated with an effort, “and . . . you are right that I did run away from him,” she added, hardlyaudibly.

“Never declared it ‘to him or to me’!” cried Aglaia. “How about your letters? Who asked you to begin matchmaking and persuading me to marry him? Wasn’t that a declaration? Why do you force yourself upon us? I thought at first that you wanted to rouse in me an aversion for him by interfering with us, and so make me give him up. It was only afterwards that I guessed what it meant. “Vbu simply imagined that you were doing something wonderful and heroic with all these pretences. Why, are you capable of loving him if you love your vanity so dearly? Why didn’t you simply go away from here instead of writing me absurd letters? Why don’t you even now marry the generous man who loves you so much that he honours you with the offer of his hand? It’s quite clear why — if you marry Rogozhin, what grievance will you have to complain of? You’ll have had too much honour done you. “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch said that you’d read too much poetry and have had ‘too much education for your . . . position’; that

you’re a blue stocking and live in idleness. Add to that your vanity and one gets the full explanation of you.”

“And don’t you live in idleness?”

Too hurriedly, too crudely, the contest had reached such an unexpected point, unexpected indeed, for when Nastasya Filippovna set off for Pavlovsk, she still had dreams of something different, though no doubt her forebodings were rather of ill than good. Aglaia was absolutely carried away by the impulse of the moment, as though she were falling down a precipice and could not resist the dreadful joy of vengeance. It was positively strange for Nastasya Filippovna to see Aglaia like this. She looked at her and seemed as though she could not believe her eyes, and was completely at a loss for the first moment. Whether she were a woman who had read too much poetry as Yevgeny Pavlovitch had said, or simply mad, as Myshkin was convinced, in any case this woman — though she sometimes behaved with such cynicism and impudence — was really far more modest, soft, and trustful than might have been believed. It’s true that she was full of romantic notions, of self-centered dreaminess and capricious fantasy, but yet there was much that was strong and deep in her . . . Myshkin understood that. There was an expression of suffering in his face. Aglaia noticed this and trembled with hatred.

“How dare you address me like that?” she said, with indescribable haughtiness, in reply to Nastasya Filippovna’s question.

“You must have heard me wrong,” said Nastasya Filippovna in surprise. “How have I addressed you?”

“If you wanted to be a respectable woman, why didn’t you give up your seducer, Totsky, simply . . . without theatrical scenes?” Aglaia said suddenly, apropos of nothing.

“What do you know of my position that you dare to judge me?” said Nastasya Filippovna, trembling, and turning terribly white.

“I know that you didn’t go to work, but off with a rich man, Rogozhin, to go on posing as a fallen angel. I don’t wonder that Totsky tried to shoot himself to escape from such a fallen angel!”

“Don’t!” said Nastasya Filippovna with repulsion, and as though in anguish, “you understand me about as well as . . . Darya Alexeyevna’s housemaid, who was tried in court the other day with her betrothed. She’d have understood better than you ...”

“Very likely, a respectable girl who works for her living. Why do you speak with such contempt of a housemaid?”

“I don’t feel contempt for work, but for you when you speak of work.”

“If you’d wanted to be respectable, you’d have become a washer-woman.”

They both got up and gazed with pale faces at each other.

“Aglaia, leave off! It’s unjust,” cried Myshkin, like one distraught.

Rogozhin was not smiling now, but was listening with compressed lips and folded arms.

“There, look at her,” said Nastasya Filippovna, trembling with anger, “look at this young lady! And I took her for an angel! Have you come to me without a governess, Aglaia Ivanovna? .. .And if you like . .. if you like I’ll tell you at once, directly and plainly, why vou came to see me. You were afraid, that’s whv vou came.”

“Afraid of you?” asked Aglaia, beside herself with naive and insulting amazement that this woman dared to speak to her like this.

“Me, of course! You were afraid of me since you decided to come and see me. \bu don’t despise anyone you’re afraid of. And to think that I’ve respected you up to this very moment! But do you know why you are afraid of me and what is your chief object now? You wanted to find out for yourself whether he loves you more than me, or not, for you’re fearfully jealous ...”

“He has told me that he hates you . . .” Aglaia faltered.

“Perhaps; perhaps lam not worthy of him, only .. . only I think you’re lying! He cannot hate me and he could not have said so. But I am ready to forgive you .. . seeing the position you’re in .. . though I did think better of you. I thought that you were cleverer and better looking even, I did indeed! . . . Well, take your treasure . . . here he is, he’s looking at you, he is quite dazed. Take him, but on condition that you leave this house at once! This very minute! ...”

She dropped into an easy chair and burst into tears. But suddenly there was a light of some new feeling in her face. She looked intently and fixedly at Aglaia, and rose from her seat.

“But if you like I’ll tell him . . . I’ll order him, do you hear? I’ve only to tell him, and he’ll throw you up at once and stay with me for ever, and marry me, and you’ll have to run home alone. Shall I? Shall I?” she cried,

like a mad creature, scarcely able to believe that she could be saying such things.

Aglaia ran in terror to the door, but stopped at the door and listened.

“Shall I send Rogozhin away? “Vbu thought that I was going to marry Rogozhin to please you? Here in your presence I shall cry to Rogozhin ‘Go away!’ and say to the prince, ‘do you remember what you promised?’ Heavens! Why have I humiliated myself so before them? Didn’t you tell me yourself, prince, that you would follow me whatever happened to me, and would never abandon me, that you love me and forgive me everything and — re . . . resp. . . . Yes, you said that too! And it was only to set you free that I ran away from you then, but now I don’t want to! Why has she treated me like a loose woman? Ask Rogozhin whether I’m a loose woman, he’ll tell you! Now when she has covered me with shame and before your eyes too, will you turn away from me also, and walk away arm in arm with her? Well, curse you then, for you were the only one I trusted. Go away, Rogozhin, you’re not wanted!” she went on, hardly knowing what she was doing, bringing the words out with an effort, with a distorted face and parched lips, evidently not believing a syllable of her tirade, and at the same time wishing to prolong the position if only for a second and to deceive herself. The outbreak was so violent that it might almost have killed her, so at least it seemed to Myshkin.

“Here he is! Look at him!” she cried to Aglaia, pointing to Myshkin. “If he doesn’t come to me at once, if he does not take me, and doesn’t give you up, take him for yourself, I give him up, I don’t want him.”

Both she and Aglaia stood, as it were, in suspense, and both gazed like mad creatures at Myshkin. But he, perhaps, did not understand all the force of this challenge; in fact, it’s certain that he didn’t. He only saw before him the frenzied, despairing face, which, as he had once said to Aglaia, had “stabbed his heart for ever.” He could bear no more and he turned, appealing and reproachful to Aglaia, pointing to Nastasya Filippovna.

“How can you! “Vbu see what an . . . unhappy creature she is!”

But he could utter nothing more, petrified by the awful look in Aglaia’s eyes. That look betrayed such suffering and at the same time such boundless hatred that, with a gesture of despair, he cried out and ran to her, but it was already too late. She could not endure even the instant of his hesitation. She hid her face in her hands, cried, “Oh, my God!” and ran out of the room. Rogozhin followed to unbolt the street-door for her.

Myshkin ran too, but he felt himself clutched by two arms in the doorway. The desperate, contorted face of Nastasya Filippovna was gazing fixedly at him, and her blue lips moved, asking:

“You follow her? Her?”

She dropped senseless in his arms. He lifted her up, carried her into the room, laid her in a low chair, and stood over her in blank suspense. There was a qlass of water on a little table. Roqozhin, cominq back, took it up and sprinkled it in her face. She opened her eyes, and for a minute remembered nothing, but suddenly looked round her, started, cried out and threw herself in Myshkin’s arms.

“Mine, mine!” she cried. “Has the proud young lady gone? Ha-ha-ha!” she cried in hysterics. “Ha-ha-ha! I gave him up to that young lady. And why? What for? I was mad! Mad! . . . Getaway, Rogozhin. Ha-ha-ha!”

Rogozhin looked at them intently, and did not utter a word, but took his hat and went away. Ten minutes later Myshkin was sitting by Nastasya Filippovna, with his eyes fastened upon her, stroking her head and cheeks with both hands, as though she were a little child. He sighed in response to her laughter and was ready to cry at her tears. He said nothing, but listened intently to her broken, excited, incoherent babble. He scarcely took it in, but smiled gently to her, and as soon as he fancied she was beginning to grieve again, or to weep, to reproach him or complain, he began at once stroking her head again, and tenderly passing his hands over her cheeks, soothing and comforting her like a child.

CHAPTER 9

A FORTNIGHT had passed since the events narrated in the last chapter, and the positions of the persons concerned were so completely changed that it is extremely difficult for us to continue our story without certain explanations. And yet we must, as far as possible, confine ourselves to the bare statement of facts and for a very simple reason: because we find it difficult in many instances to explain what occurred. Such a preliminary statement on our part must seem very strange and obscure to the reader, who may ask how we can describe that of which we have no clear idea, no personal opinion. To avoid putting ourselves in a still more false position, we had better try to give an instance — and perhaps the kindly disposed reader will understand — of our difficulty. And we do this the more readily as this instance will not make a break in our narrative, but will be the direct continuation of it.

A fortnight later, that is at the beginning of July, and in the course of that fortnight the history of our hero, and particularly the last incident in that history, was transformed into a strange, very diverting, almost incredible, and at the same time conspicuously actual scandal which gradually spread through all the streets adjoining Lebedyev's, Ptitsyn's, Darya Alexeyevna's and the Epanchins' villas, in short almost all over the town and even the districts adjoining it. Almost all the society of the place, the inhabitants, the summer visitors and the people who came to hear the band were all talking of the same story told in a thousand variations — how a prince, after causing a scandal in a well-known and honourable family and jilting a young girl of that family, to whom he was already betrothed, had been captivated by a well-known cocotte; had broken with all his own friends and, regardless of everything, regardless of threats, regardless of the general indignation of the public, was in a few days' time intending, with head erect, looking everyone straight in the face, to be openly and publicly married here in Pavlovsk to a woman with a disgraceful past. The story became so richly adorned with scandalous details, so many well-known and distinguished persons were introduced into it, and so many fantastic and enigmatical shades of significance were given to it, while on the other hand, it was presented with such incontestable and concrete facts that the general curiosity and gossip were, of course, very pardonable. The most subtle, artful, and at the same time probable interpretation must be put to the credit

of a few serious gossips belonging to that class of sensible people who are always, in every rank of society, in haste to explain every event to their neighbours, and who find indeed their vocation and often their consolation in doing so. According to their version, the young man was of good family, a prince, and almost wealthy, a fool but a democrat, who had gone crazy over the contemporary nihilism revealed by Mr. Turgenev. Though scarcely able to speak Russian, he had fallen in love with the daughter of General Epanchin, and had succeeded in being accepted as her betrothed by the family. But like the Frenchman in a story that had just appeared in print, who had allowed himself to be consecrated as a priest, had purposely begged to be consecrated, had performed all the rites, all the bowings and kissings and vows, and so on, in order to inform his bishop publicly next day, that, not believing in God, he considered it dishonourable to deceive the people and be kept by them for nothing, and so had renounced the priesthood he had assumed the day before, and sent his letter to be printed in all the Liberal papers — like this French atheist, the prince had played a false part. It was said that he had purposely waited for the formal evening party given by the parents of his betrothed at which he was presented to very many distinguished personages, in order to declare his way of thinking aloud before every one, that he had been rude to venerable old dignitaries, had renounced his betrothed publicly and insultingly; and in struggling with the servants who led him out had broken a magnificent china vase. It was stated as characteristic of the tendencies of the day that the senseless man really was in love with his betrothed, the general’s daughter, and had renounced her simply on account of nihilism, and for the sake of the scandal it would lead to, so that he might have the gratification of marrying a “lost” woman in sight of all the world and thereby proving his conviction that there were neither “lost” nor “virtuous” women, but that all women were alike, free; that he did not believe in the old conventional division, but had faith only in the “woman question”; that in fact a “lost” woman was in his eyes somewhat superior to one who was not lost. This explanation sounded extremely probable, and was accepted by the majority of the summer visitors, the more readily as it seemed to be supported by daily events. It’s true that a great number of facts still remained unexplained. It was said that the poor girl so adored her betrothed — according to some people her “seducer” — that on the day after he threw her over, she had to run to find him where he was sitting with his mistress. Others maintained on the

contrary that she had been purposely lured by him to his mistress's simply for the sake of nihilism, that is, for the sake of shaming and insulting her. However that may have been, the interest in the story grew greater every day, especially as there remained not the slightest doubt that the scandalous marriage really would take place.

And now, if we should be asked for an explanation — not of the nihilistic significance of the incident, oh, no! — but simply how far the proposed marriage satisfied Myshkin's real desires, what those desires actually were at that moment, how the spiritual condition of our hero was to be defined at that instant, and so on, and so on, we should, we admit, find it very difficult to answer. We can only say one thing, that the marriage really was arranged, and that Myshkin himself had authorised Lebedyev, Keller, and a friend of Lebedyev's, presented to Myshkin by the latter at this juncture, to undertake all necessary arrangements, religious and secular; that they were bidden not to spare money; that Nastasya Filippovna was insisting on the wedding and in haste for it. That Keller, at his own ardent request, had been chosen for the prince's best man, while Burdovsky, who accepted the appointment with enthusiasm, had been chosen to perform the same office for Nastasya Filippovna, and that the wedding day had been fixed for the beginning of July. But besides these well-authenticated circumstances, some other facts are known to us which throw us completely out of our reckoning, because they are in direct contradiction of the preceding. We have a strong suspicion, for instance, that, after authorising Lebedyev and the others to make all the arrangements, Myshkin almost forgot the very same day that he had a master of ceremonies, and a wedding and "best men" at hand; and that his haste in handing over arrangements to others was simply to avoid thinking about it himself, and even, perhaps, to make haste to forget about it. Of what was he thinking himself in that case, what did he want to remember, and for what was he struggling? There is no doubt, moreover, that no sort of coercion, on Nastasya Filippovna's part, for instance, was applied to him; that Nastasya Filippovna certainly did desire a speedy wedding, and that it was she, and not Myshkin, who had thought of the wedding. But Myshkin had agreed of his own free will, somewhat casually indeed, and as though he had been asked for some quite ordinary thing. Such strange facts are before us in abundance, but far from making things clearer to our thinking, they positively obscure every explanation, however we take them. But we will bring forward another instance.

Thus, we know for a fact that during that fortnight Myshkin spent whole days and evenings with Nastasya Filippovna; that she took him with her for walks and to hear the band; that he drove out in her carriage with her every day; that he began to be uneasy about her if an hour passed without his seeing her (so that by every sign he loved her sincerely); that whatever she talked to him about, he listened with a mild and gentle smile for hours together, saying scarcely anything himself. But we know too that in the course of those days he had several, in fact many, times called at the Epanchins' without concealing the fact from Nastasya Filippovna, though it had driven her almost to despair. We know that, as long as the Epanchins remained at Pavlovsk, they did not receive him, and consistently refused to allow him to see Aglaia Ivanovna; that he would go away without saying a word and next day go to them again as though he had completely forgotten their refusal the day before, and, of course, be refused again. We know too, that an hour after Aqlaia Ivanovna had run awav from Nastasya Filippovna, perhaps even less than an hour after, Myshkin was already at the Epanchins', confident, of course, of finding Aglaia there, and that his arrival had thrown the household into extreme amazement and alarm, because Aglaia had not yet returned home. And it was only from him the Epanchins had first learned that she had been with him to Nastasya Filippovna's. It was said that Lizaveta Prokofyevna, her daughters and even Prince S. treated Myshkin on that occasion in a very harsh and hostile way; and that they had there and then in the strongest terms renounced all friendship and acquaintance with him, the more emphatically that Varvara Ardalionovna had suddenly made her appearance and announced to Lizaveta Prokofyevna that Aglaia had been in her house for the last hour in a fearful state of mind, and seemed unwilling to return home. This last piece of news affected Lizaveta Prokofyevna more than anything, and it turned out to be quite true. On coming away from Nastasya Filippovna's, Aglaia would certainly sooner have died than have faced her family, and so she flew to Nina Alexandrovna's. Varvara Ardalionovna for her part felt it essential promptly to inform Lizaveta Prokofyevna of everything. And the mother and daughters rushed off at once to Nina Alexandrovna's, followed by the head of the family, Ivan Fyodorovitch, who had just returned home. Myshkin trudged along after them, in spite of their dismissal of him and their harsh words. But Varvara Ardalionovna took care that there, too, he was not allowed to see Aglaia. The end of it was that, when Aglaia saw her

mother and sisters shedding tears over her and not uttering a word of blame, she threw herself into their arms and at once returned home with them. It was said, though the story was not well authenticated, that Gavril Ardalionovitch was particularly unlucky on this occasion, too; that seizing the opportunity while Varvara Ardalionovna was running to Lizaveta Prokofyevna, and he was left alone with Aglaia, he had thought fit to begin talking of his passion; that, listening to him, Aglaia had, in spite of her tears and dejection, suddenly burst out laughing and had all at once put a strange question to him: would he, to prove his love, burn his finger in the candle? Gavril Ardalionovitch was, so the story went, petrified by the question; he was so completely taken aback, and his face betrayed such extreme amazement, that Aglaia had laughed at him as though she were in hysterics, and to get away from him ran upstairs to Nina Alexandrovna where she was found by her parents. This story was repeated to Myshkin next day by Ippolit who, being too ill to get up, sent for the prince on purpose to tell it to him. How Ippolit got hold of the story we don't know, but when Myshkin heard about the candle and the finger, he laughed so much that Ippolit was surprised. Then he suddenly began to tremble and burst into tears. .. . Altogether, he was during those days in a state of great uneasiness, and extraordinary perturbation, vague but tormenting. Ippolit bluntly declared that he thought he was out of his mind, but it was impossible to affirm this with certainty.

In presenting all these facts and declining to attempt to explain them, we have no desire to justify our hero in the eyes of the reader. What is more, we are quite prepared to share the indignation he excited even in his friends. Even Vera Lebedyev was indignant with him for a time; even Kolya was indignant; even Keller was indignant, till he was chosen as best man, to say nothing of Lebedyev himself, who even began intriguing against Myshkin, also from an indignation which was quite genuine. But of that we will speak later. Altogether, we are in complete sympathy with some forcible and psychologically deep words of Yevgeny Pavlovitch's, spoken plainly and unceremoniously by the latter in friendly conversation with Myshkin six or seven days after the incident at Nastasya Filippovna's. We must observe, by the way, that not only the Epanchins, but every one directly or indirectly connected with them had thought proper to break off all relations with Myshkin. Prince S. for instance turned aside when he met Myshkin and did not respond to his greeting. But "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch was not afraid of

compromising himself by visiting the prince, though he had begun visiting the Epanchins every day again, and was received by them with an unmistakable increase of cordiality. He came to see Myshkin the very day after the Epanchins had left Pavlovsk. He knew already of all the rumours that were circulating, and had, perhaps indeed, assisted to circulate them himself. Myshkin was delighted to see him and at once began speaking of the Epanchins. Such a simple and direct openinq completely loosened “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch’s tongue too, so that he went straight to the point without beating about the bush.

Myshkin did not know that the Epanchins had left. He was struck by the news, he turned pale; but a minute later he shook his head, confused and meditative, and acknowledged that “so it was bound to be”; then he asked quickly, “where had they gone?”

Meanwhile “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch watched him carefully, and he marvelled not a little at all this — the rapidity of his questions, their simplicity, his perturbation, restlessness and excitement, and at the same time a sort of strange openness. He told Myshkin about everything, however, courteously and in detail. There was a great deal the latter had not heard, and this was the first person to visit him from the Epanchins’ circle. He confirmed the rumour that Aglaia really had been ill. She had lain for three days and nights in a fever without sleeping. Now she was better and out of all danger, but in a nervous and hysterical state. “It was a good thing,” he said, “that now there was perfect harmony in the house. They tried to make no allusion to the past, not only before Aglaia, but also among themselves. The parents had already made up their minds to a trip abroad in the autumn, immediately after Adelaida’s wedding. Aglaia had received in silence the preliminary hints at this plan. He, “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, might very possibly be going abroad too. Even Prince S. might possibly go with Adelaida for a couple of months if business permitted. The general himself would remain. They had all moved now to Kolmino, their estate fifteen miles out of Petersburg, where they had a spacious manor-house. Princess Byelokonsky had not yet returned to Moscow, and he believed she was staying on at Pavlovsk on purpose. Lizaveta Prokofyevna had insisted emphatically that they could not stay on in Pavlovsk, after what had happened. He, Yevgeny Pavlovitch, had reported to her every day the rumours that were circulating in the town. It did not seem possible for them to move to the villa at Yelagin.”

“And indeed,” added Yevgeny Pavlovitch, “you’ll admit yourself they could hardly have faced it out. . .. Especially knowing what’s going on here in your house every hour, prince, and your daily calls there in spite of their refusing to see you....”

“Yes, yes, yes, you’re right. I wanted to see Aglaia Ivanovna,” said Myshkin, shaking his head again.

“Ah, dear prince,” cried Yevgeny Pavlovitch, with warm-hearted regret. “How then could you allow . . . all that’s happened? Of course, of course, it was all so unexpected. I understand that you must have been at your wits’ end and you could not have restrained the mad girl; that was not in your power. But you ought to have understood how intense and how much in earnest the girl was ... in herfeeling for you. She did not care to share you with another woman and you . . . you could desert and shatter a treasure like that!”

“Yes, yes, you’re right. I am to blame,” Myshkin began again in terrible distress. “And do you know she alone, Aglaia alone, looked at Nastasya Filippovna like that. ... No one else ever looked at her like that.”

“Yes, that’s just what makes it all so dreadful that there was nothing serious in it,” cried Yevgeny Pavlovitch, completely carried away. “Forgive me, prince, but I . . . I’ve been thinking about it, prince. I have thouqht a lot about it; I know all that happened before, I know all that happened six months ago, all — and there was nothing serious in it! It was only your head, not your heart, that was involved, an illusion, a fantasy, a mirage, and only the scared jealousy of an utterly inexperienced girl would have taken it for anything serious! ...”

At this point, without mincing matters, Yevgeny Pavlovitch gave full vent to his indignation. Clearly and reasonably, and, we repeat, with great psychological insight, he drew a vivid picture of Myshkin’s past relations with Nastasya Filippovna. He had at all times a gift for language, and at this moment he rose to positive eloquence. “From the very first,” he declared, “it began with falsity. What begins in a lie must end in a lie; that’s a law of nature. I don’t agree, and, in fact, I’m indignant when somebody calls you — well — an idiot. \bu’re too clever to be called that. But you’re so strange that you’re not like other people — you must admit that yourself. I’ve made up my mind that what’s at the bottom of all that’s happened is your innate inexperience (mark that word, ‘innate,’ prince), and your extraordinary simple-heartedness, and then the phenomenal lack of all feeling for

proportion in you (which you have several times recognised yourself), and finally the huge mass of intellectual convictions, which you, with your extraordinary honesty, have hitherto taken for real, innate, intuitive convictions! \bu must admit yourself, prince, that from the very beginning, in your relations with Nastasya Filippovna, there was an element of conventional democratic feeling (I use the expression for brevity), the fascination, so to say, of the ‘woman question’ (to express it still more briefly). I know all the details of the strange, scandalous scene that took place at Nastasya Filippovna’s, when Rogozhin brought his money. If you like, I will analyse you to yourself on my fingers, I will show you to yourself as in a looking-glass, I know so exactly how it all was, and why it all turned out as it did. As a youth in Switzerland you yearned for your native country, and longed for Russia as for an unknown land of promise. You had read a great many books about Russia, excellent books perhaps, but pernicious for you. \bu arrived in the first glow of eagerness to be of service, so to say; you rushed, you flew headlong to be of service. And on the very dav of vour arrival, a sad and heartrending story of an injured woman is told you, you a virginal knight — and about a woman! The very same day you saw that woman, you were bewitched by her beauty, her fantastic, demoniacal beauty (I admit she’s a beauty, of course). Add to that your nerves, your epilepsy, add to that our Petersburg thaw which shatters the nerves, add all that day, in an unknown and to you almost fantastic town, a day of scenes and meetings, a day of unexpected acquaintances, a day of the most surprising reality, of meeting the three Epanchin beauties, and Aglaia among them; then your fatigue and the turmoil in your head, and then the drawing-room of Nastasya Filippovna, and the tone of that drawing-room, and .. . what could you expect of yourself at such a moment, what do you think?”

“Yes, yes; yes, yes,” Myshkin shook his head, beginning to flush crimson. “Yes, that’s almost exactly how it was. And do you know I’d scarcely slept at all in the train the night before, and all the night before that, and was fearfully exhausted.”

“Yes, of course, that’s just what I am driving at,”

“Vfevgeny Pavlovitch went on warmly, “the fact’s clear that you, intoxicated with enthusiasm, so to speak, clutched at the opportunity of publicly proclaiming the generous idea, that you, a prince by birth and a man of pure life, did not regard a woman as dishonoured who had been put

to shame, not through her own fault, but through the fault of a disgusting aristocratic profligate. Good heavens, of course one can understand it. But that’s not the point, dear prince, the point is whether there was reality, whether there was genuineness in your emotions, whether there was natural feeling or only intellectual enthusiasm. What do you think; in the temple the woman was forgiven — just such a woman, but she wasn’t told that she’d done well, that she was deserving of all respect and honour, was she? Didn’t common sense tell you within three months the true state of the case? But, even granting that she’s innocent now — I won’t insist on that for I don’t want to — but could all her adventures justify such intolerable, diabolical pride, such insolent, such rapacious egoism? Forgive me, prince, I let myself be carried away, but.

“Yes, all that may be so. Maybe you are right. . . .” Myshkin muttered again, “she certainly is very much irritated, and you’re right, no doubt, but...”

“Deserving of compassion? That’s what you mean to say, my kind-hearted friend? But how could you, out of compassion, for the sake of her pleasure, put to shame another, a pure and lofty girl, humiliate her in those haughty, those hated eyes? What will compassion lead you to next? It’s an exaggeration that passes belief! How can you, loving a girl, humiliate her like this before her rival, jilt her for the sake of another woman, in the very presence of that other, after you had yourself made her an honourable offer. . . and you did make her an offer, didn’t you? “Vbu said so before her parents and her sisters! Do you call yourself an honourable man after that, allow me to ask you, prince? And . . . and didn’t you deceive that adorable girl when you told her that you loved her?”

“Yes, yes, you’re right. Ach, I feel that I am to blame!” Myshkin replied, in unutterable distress.

“But is that enough?” cried “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, indignantly. “Is it sufficient to cry out: ‘Ach, I’m to blame?’ “Vbu are to blame, but yet you persist! And where was your heart then, your ‘Christian’ heart? Why, you saw her face at that moment: well, was she suffering less than the other, that other woman who has come between you? How could you have seen it and allowed it? How could you?”

“But ... I didn’t allow it,” muttered the unhappy prince.

“You didn’t allow it?”

“I really didn’t allow anything. I don’t understand to this hour how it all came to pass. I ... I was running after Aglaia Ivanovna at the time, but Nastasya Filippovna fell down fainting. And since then they haven’t let me see Aglaia Ivanovna.”

“Never mind! \bu ought to have run after Aglaia even if the other woman was fainting!”

“Yes . . . Yes, I ought to have. . . . She would have died, you know. She would have killed herself, you don’t know her, and ... it made no difference, I should have told Aglaia Ivanovna everything afterwards, and . . . you see, “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, I see that you don’t know everything. Tell me, why won’t they let me see Aglaia Ivanovna? I would have explained everything to her. \bu see, they both talked of the wrong thing, utterly wrong; that’s why it all happened. ... I can’t explain it to you at all; but perhaps I could explain it to Aglaia. . . . Oh, dear; oh, dear! You speak of her face at that moment when she ran away.... Oh, dear, I remember it! -... Let us go, let us go!” He jumped hastily up from his seat and pulled Yevgeny Pavlovitch by the hand.

“Where are you going?”

“Let’s go to Aglaia Ivanovna; let’s go at once! ...”

“But she’s not in Pavlovsk now, I told you so. And why go to her?”

“She will understand, she will understand!” Myshkin muttered, clasping his hands imploringly. “She would understand that it’s all not that, but something quite different!”

“How do you mean, something quite different? Only, you’re going to marry her, anyhow. So you persist in it.... Are you going to be married or not?”

“Well, yes ... lam; yes, lam!”

“Then how is it ‘not that’?”

“No, it’s not that, not that. It makes no difference that I’m going to marry her. That’s nothing, nothing.”

“How do you mean it makes no difference, that it’s nothing? Why, it’s not a trifling matter, is it? You’re marrying a woman you love to make her happy, and Aglaia Ivanovna sees that and knows it. How can you say it makes no difference?”

“Happy? Oh, no! I’m only just marrying her; she wants me to. And what is there in my marrying her? I . . . oh, well, all that’s no matter! Only she would certainly have died. I see now that her marrying Rogozhin was

madness. I understand now all that I didn’t understand before, and, you see, when they stood there, facing one another, I couldn’t bear Nastasya Filippovna’s face. . . . \bu don’t know, “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch” — he dropped his voice mysteriously— “I’ve never said this to anyone, not even to Aglaia, but I can’t bear Nastasya Filippovna’s face. ... It was true what you said just now about that evening at Nastasya Filippovna’s; but there is one thing you left out because you don’t know it. I looked at her face! That morning, in her portrait, I couldn’t bear the sight of it. . . . Vera, now, Lebedyev’s daughter, has quite different eyes. I . . . I’m afraid of her face!” he added with extraordinary terror.

“You’re afraid of it?”

“Yes; she’s mad—” he whispered, turning pale.

“You’re sure of that?” asked “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch,

with extreme interest.

“Yes, sure. Now I’m sure. Now, during these last days, I’ve become quite sure!”

“But what are you doing, prince?” Yevgeny Pavlovitch cried with horror. “So you’re marrying her from a sort of fear? There’s no understanding it! Without even loving her, perhaps?”

“Oh, no. I love her with my whole heart! Why, she’s ... a child! Now she’s a child, quite a child! Oh, you know nothing about it!”

“And at the same time you have declared your love to Aglaia Ivanovna?”

“Oh, yes, yes!”

“How so? Then you want to love both of them?”

“Oh, yes, yes!”

“Upon my word, prince, think what you’re saying!”

“Without Aglaia I’m . . . I absolutely must see her! I . . . I shall soon die in my sleep, I thought I should have died last night in my sleep. Oh, if Aglaia only knew, if she only knew everything . . . absolutely everything I mean. For in this case one needs to know everything, that’s what matters most. Why is it we never can know everything about another person, when one ought to, when that other one’s to blame! . . . But I don’t know what I’m saying. I’m muddled. \bu’ve shocked me very much . . . and does her face look now as it did when she ran away? Oh, yes, I am to blame! Most likely it’s all my fault. I don’t know quite how, but I am to blame. . . . There’s something in all this I can’t explain to you, “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch. I

can’t find the words, but . . . Aglaia Ivanovna will understand! Oh, I’ve always believed that she would understand.”

“No, prince, she won’t understand. Aglaia Ivanovna loved you like a woman, like a human being, not like an abstract spirit. Do you know what, my poor prince, the most likely thing is that you’ve never loved either of them!”

“I don’t know, perhaps so . .. perhaps. \bu’re right in a great deal, “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch. You are very clever, Yevgeny Pavlovitch. Oh, my head is beginning to ache again. For God’s sake, let’s go to her! For God’s sake!”

“But I tell you she’s not in Pavlovsk, she’s in Kolmino.”

“Let’s go to Kolmino. Let’s go at once!”

“That’s impossible!” Yevgeny Pavlovitch said emphatically, qettinq up.

“Listen. I’ll write to her. You take a letter!”

“No, prince, no! Spare me such a commission. I can’t!”

They parted. Yevgeny Pavlovitch went away with odd impressions, and in his judgment too the upshot of it was that Myshkin was not in his right mind. And what was the meaning of that face he feared so much, and yet loved! And yet perhaps he really would die without seeing Aglaia, so that Aglaia never would know how much he loved her! “Ha-ha! And how can one love two at once? With two different sorts of love? That’s interesting . . . poor idiot! What will become of him now?”

CHAPTER 10

But MYSHKIN did not die before his wedding, either awake or “in his sleep,” as he had predicted to “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch. Perhaps he did not sleep well and had bad dreams; but by day, with people, he was kind and seemed contented. At times he seemed lost in brooding, but that was only when he was alone. The wedding was being hurried on; it was fixed for about a week after Yevgeny Pavlovitch’s visit. With such haste his best friends, if he had any, could hardly have “saved the poor crazy fellow.” There were rumours that General Epanchin and his wife, Lizaveta Prokofyevna, were partly responsible for Yevgeny Pavlovitch’s visit. But if, in the immense kindness of their hearts, they may both have wished to save the poor lunatic from ruin, they could hardly go beyond this feeble effort; neither their position nor, perhaps, their inclination was compatible (naturally enough) with a more pronounced action. We have mentioned already that many even of those immediately surrounding Myshkin had turned against him. Vera Lebedyev, however, confined herself to shedding a few tears in solitude, staying more in the lodge, and looking in upon Myshkin less than before. Kolya at this time was occupied with his father’s funeral. The old general had died of a second stroke eight days after the first. Myshkin showed the warmest sympathy with the grief of the family, and for the first few days spent several hours daily with Nina Alexandrovna. He went to the funeral and to the service in the church. Many people noticed that Myshkin’s arrival and departure were accompanied by whispers among the crowd in the church. It was the same thing in the streets and in the gardens. Wherever he walked or drove out, he was greeted by a hum of talk, his name was mentioned, he was pointed out; and Nastasya Filippovna’s name, too, was audible. People looked out for her at the funeral, but she was not present. Another person conspicuously absent was the captain’s widow, whom Lebedyev succeeded in preventing from coming. The burial service had a strong and painful effect on Myshkin. He whispered to Lebedyev in answer to some question that it was the first time he had been present at an Orthodox funeral, though he had a faint memory of a similar service at a village church in his childhood.

“Yes, it seems as though it’s not the same man in the coffin as we elected president lately — do you remember, prince?” Lebedyev whispered to

Myshkin. “Whom are you looking for?”

“Oh, nothing. I fancied ...”

“Not Rogozhin?”

“Why, is he here?”

“Yes, in the church.”

“I fancied I saw his eyes,” Myshkin muttered in confusion. “But why? What’s he here for? Was he invited?”

“They never thought of him. Why, they don’t know him at all. There are all kinds of people in the crowd here. But why are you so astonished? I often meet him now. Why, four times in this last week I’ve met him in Pavlovsk.”

“I’ve never seen him once since . . . that time,”

muttered Myshkin.

As Nastasya Filippovna too had not once told him that she had met Rogozhin “since that time,” Myshkin concluded now that Rogozhin was for some reason keeping out of sight on purpose. All that day he was lost in thought, while Nastasya Filippovna was exceptionally lively during the dayand evening.

Kolya, who had made it up with Myshkin before his father’s death, suggested that he should ask Keller and Burdovsky to be his best men (as the matter was urgent and near at hand). He guaranteed that Keller would behave properly and perhaps be of use, while there was no need to speak of Burdovsky, as he was a quiet and retiring person. Nina Alexandrovna and Lebedyev observed to Myshkin that if the marriage were a settled thing, there was no need for it to be at Pavlovsk, in the height of the summer season, so publicly. They urged that it would be better to have the wedding at Petersburg and even in the house. Myshkin saw only too clearly the drift of their apprehensions. He replied briefly and simply that it was Nastasya Filippovna’s particular wish.

Next dav Keller called on Mvshkin, havinq been informed that he was to be a “best man.” Before going in he stood still in the doorway, and as soon as he saw Myshkin, he raised his right hand, with the forefinger apart from the rest, and cried, as though taking a vow:

“I won’t drink.”

Then he went up to Myshkin, warmly pressed and shook both his hands, and announced that certainly, when he first heard of the wedding, he felt hostile and had proclaimed the fact at billiards, and for no other reason than

that he had anticipated for the prince and had daily hoped, with the impatience of a friend, to see by his side at the altar some one like the Princess de Rohan, or at least de Chabot. But now he saw for himself that Myshkin looked at things at least twelve times as nobly as all of them “put together”! For he did not care for pomp or wealth, nor even for public esteem, but cared only for the truth! The sympathies of exalted persons were too well known, and the prince was too lofty by his education not to be an exalted person, speaking generally!

“But the common herd and rabble judge differently; in the town, in the houses, in the assemblies, in the villas, at the band-stand, in the taverns and the billiard-rooms, they were talking and shouting of nothing but the coming event. I have heard that they were even talking of getting up ‘rough music’ under the windows — and that, so to say, on the wedding night! If you should need, prince, the pistol of an honest man, I am ready to exchange half a dozen shots like a gentleman before you rise the morning after your nuptials.” He advised too, in anticipation of a great rush of thirsty souls on coming out of the church, to have the fire-hose ready in the courtyard. But Lebedyev opposed this. He said they would pull the house to pieces if they had the hose.

“That Lebedyev is intriguing against you, prince, he is really. They want to put you under control. Can you believe it? with everything, your freedom and your money — that is, the two objects which distinguish every one of us from a quadruped! I’ve heard it, I’ve heard it on good authority! It’s the holy truth!”

Myshkin seemed to remember having heard something of the sort himself, but of course he had paid no attention to it. Now, too, he merely laughed and forgot it again at once. Lebedyev certainly had been very busy for some time past. This man’s schemes sprang up by inspiration, and in the excess of his ardour became too complex, developing into ramifications far removed from his original starting-point. This was why he generally failed in his undertakings. When, almost on the wedding-day, he came to Myshkin to express his penitence (it was his invariable habit to express his pentience to those against whom he had been intriguing, especially when he had not succeeded), he announced to him that he had become a mere Lebedyev. Then he disclosed his whole game, which greatly interested Myshkin. According to his story, he had begun by looking for the protection of some persons of consequence on whose support he might reckon in case of need,

and he had gone to General Ivan Fyodorovitch. General Epanchin was perplexed, was full of good-will towards the “young man,” but declared that, “however much he might wish to save him, it was not seemly for him to act in the matter.” Lizaveta Prokofyevna would not see him or listen to him. Yevgeny Pavlovitch and Prince S. simply waved him away. But he, Lebedyev, did not lose heart, and took the advice of a shrewd lawyer, a worthy old man and a great friend of his, almost his patron. He had given his opinion that it was only possible if they had competent witnesses as to his mental derangement and unmistakable insanity, and still more persons of consequence to back them. Even then Lebedyev was not discouraged, and had, on one occasion, even brought a doctor — also a worthy old man, with an Anna ribbon — who was staying at Pavlovsk, to see the prince, simply, so to say, to see how the land lay, to make the prince’s acquaintance, and, not officially but in a friendly way, to let him know what he thought of him.

Myshkin remembered the doctor’s visit. He remembered that Lebedyev had pestered him the evening before about his not being well, and when Myshkin positively declined medical aid, Lebedyev suddenly made his appearance with a doctor, pretending that they had both just come from Ippolit Terentyev, who was much worse, and that the doctor had something to tell Myshkin about the invalid. Myshkin praised Lebedyev, and received the doctor very cordially. They began talking at once of Ippolit. The doctor asked him to qive a minute account of the scene of the attempted suicide, and the prince quite delighted him by his description and explanation of the incident. They talked of the climate of Petersburg, of Myshkin’s affliction, of Switzerland, and of Doctor Schneider. The discussion of Schneider’s system and Myshkin’s stories about him so interested the doctor that he stayed two hours with him smoking Myshkin’s excellent cigars, while Lebedyev produced a delicious liqueur, which was brought in by Vera. Then the doctor, who was a married man and pater-familias, overflowed with such compliments to Vera that he excited her intense indignation. They parted friends. On leaving Myshkin the doctor said to Lebedyev, if every one like that were to be put under control, who would be left to control them? In reply to Lebedyev’s tragic description of the imminent event, the doctor shook his head slyly and cunningly, and observed at last that, even apart from the fact that “there’s nobody a man may not marry,” the fascinating lady, besides being of incomparable beauty, which alone might

well attract a wealthy man, was also — so he, at least, had heard— "possessed of a fortune that had come to her from Totsky and Rogozhin, pearls and diamonds, shawls and furniture; and therefore the dear prince's choice, far from being a proof of peculiar, so to say, glaring foolishness, was rather a testimony to the shrewdness of his worldly wisdom and prudence, and therefore tended to the very opposite conclusion, completely in the prince's favour, in fact...."

This idea struck Lebedyev too, and he did not go beyond it. "And now," he added to Myshkin, "you will see nothing from me but devotion and readiness to shed my blood for you, and I've come to tell you so."

Ippolit too had distracted Myshkin's mind during those days; he sent for him only too often. The family was living in a little house not far off. The little ones, Ippolit's brother and sister, were glad to be at Pavlovsk, if only because they could escape from the invalid into the garden. The poor captain's widow was left at his mercy and was completely his victim. Myshkin was obliged to intervene and make peace between them every day, and the invalid still called him his "nurse," though at the same time he seemed to feel bound to despise him for playing the part of peacemaker. He was in high dudgeon against Kolya because the latter had scarcely visited him of late, having stayed at first beside his dying father and afterwards with his widowed mother. At last he made Myshkin's approaching marriage to Nastasya Filippovna the butt of his gibes, and ended by offending the prince and making him really angry at last. Myshkin gave up visiting him. Two days later the captain's widow trotted round in the morning and begged Myshkin, with tears, to come to them or "that fellow would be the death of her." She added that the invalid wanted to tell him a great secret. Myshkin went.

Ippolit wanted to make it up, wept, and after his tears, of course, felt more spiteful than ever, but was afraid to show his spite. He was very ill, and there was every sign that the end was close at hand. He had no secret to tell him, except some earnest requests — breathless, so to say, with emotion (possibly shammed)— "to beware of Rogozhin."

"He is a man who will never give up his object. He's not like you and me, prince; if he wants a thing, nothing will shake him," &c. &c.

Myshkin began questioning him more in detail, tried to get at facts of some sort. But there were no facts except Ippolit's personal sentiments and impressions. To his intense gratification, Ippolit did, however, at last

succeed in scaring Myshkin thoroughly. At first he was unwilling to respond to some of Ippolit's questions, and only smiled at his advice "to go abroad; there were Russian priests everywhere, and he could be married there." But Ippolit ended at last with the suggestion: "It's for Aglaia Ivanovna I am afraid, you know; Rogozhin knows how you love her. It's a case of love for love. "Vbu have robbed him of Nastasya Filippovna, he will kill Aglaia Ivanovna; though she's not yours now, still you'd feel it, wouldn't you?"

He attained his object. Myshkin left him almost beside himself.

These warnings about Rogozhin came the day before the wedding. Myshkin saw Nastasya Filippovna that evening for the last time before the wedding. But she was not in a state to reassure him. On the contrary, she had of late made him more and more uneasy. Till then, that is a few days before, when she saw him she made every effort to cheer him up, and was dreadfully afraid of his looking sad. She even tried sinqinq to him; most frequently she would tell him everything amusing she could think of. Myshkin almost always pretended to laugh heartily. Sometimes he did really laugh at the brilliant wit and genuine feeling with which she sometimes told stories, when she was carried away by her subject, as she often was. Seeing Myshkin's mirth, seeing the impression made on him, she was delighted, and began to feel proud of herself. But now her melancholy and brooding grew more marked every hour. His conviction of Nastasya Filippovna's condition did not waver; but for that conviction all her behaviour now would have seemed to him enigmatic and unaccountable. But he genuinely believed that her recovery was possible. He had been quite truthful in telling Yevgeny Pavlovitch that he loved her truly and sincerely, and in his love for her there was an element of the tenderness for some sick, unhappy child who could not be left to shift for itself. He did not explain to anyone his feeling for her, and, in fact, disliked speaking of it, when he found it impossible to avoid the subject. When they were together, they never discussed their "feelings," as though they had taken a vow not to do so. Anyone might have taken part in their everyday gay and lively conversation. Darya Alexeyevna used to say afterwards that she had done nothing all this time, but wonder and rejoice, as she looked at them.

But his view of Nastasya Filippovna's spiritual and mental condition to some extent saved him from many perplexities. Now she was completely different from the woman he had known three months before. He no longer

wondered, for instance, why she had run away from marrying him then with tears, with curses and reproaches, yet now she was herself insisting on the marriage. So she was no longer afraid that marriage with her would be misery for him, thought Myshkin. Such a rapid growth of self-confidence could not be natural in her, in his opinion. But, again, this self-confidence could not be due simply to her hatred for Aglaia. Nastasya Filippovna was capable of feeling too deeply for that. It could not come from dread of her fate with Rogozhin. All these causes as well as others might indeed enter into it. But what was clearest to his mind was what he had suspected long ago — that is, that the poor sick soul had broken down. Though all this saved him in one way from perplexity, it could not give him any peace or rest all that time. At times he tried, as it were, not to think of anything. He seemed really to look on his marriage as some insignificant formality, he held his own future so cheap. As for protests, conversations like the one with “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch, he was utterly unable to answer them, and felt himself absolutely incompetent, and so avoided all talk of the kind.

He noticed, however, that Nastasya Filippovna knew and understood quite well what Aglaia meant for him. She did not speak, but he saw her “face,” when she found him sometimes preparing to go to the Epanchins’. When the Epanchins left Pavlovsk, she was positively radiant. Unobservant and unsuspicious as he was, he had begun to be worried by the thought that Nastasya Filippovna might make up her mind to some public scandal to get Aglaia out of Pavlovsk. The talk and commotion about the wedding in all the villas was no doubt partly kept up by Nastasya Filippovna in order to irritate her rival. As it was difficult to meet the Epanchins, Nastasya Filippovna arranged to drive right in front of their windows with the prince in her carriage beside her. This was a horrible surprise for Myshkin. He realised it, as he usually did, when it was too late to set things right, when the carriage was actually passing the windows. He said nothing, but he was ill for two days afterwards. She did not repeat the experiment. During the last few days before the wedding she had frequent fits of brooding. She always ended by overcoming her melancholy, and became cheerful again, but more gently, not so noisily, not so happily cheerful as she had been of late. Myshkin redoubled his attention. It struck him as curious that she never spoke of Rogozhin. Only once, five days before the wedding, a message was suddenly brought him from Darya Alexeyevna to come at once, as Nastasya Filippovna was in a terrible state. He found her in a

condition approaching complete madness. She kept screaming, shuddering, and crying out that Rogozhin was hidden in the garden, in their house, that she had seen him just now, that he would kill her in the night, that he would cut her throat! She could not be calmed all day. But that evening when Myshkin looked in on Ippolit for a moment, the captain's widow, who had only just returned from the town where she had been on some little affair of her own, told him that Roqozhin had been to her lodqinq that day at Petersburg and had questioned her about Pavlovsk. In answer to her inquiry she said that Rogozhin had called on her at the very time when he was supposed to have been seen in the garden by Nastasya Filippovna. It was explained as pure imagination. Nastasya Filippovna went to the captain's widow herself to question her more minutely, and was greatly relieved.

On the day before the wedding Myshkin left Nastasya Filippovna in a state of great excitement. Her wedding finery arrived from the dressmaker's in Petersburg — her wedding dress, the bridal veil, and so on. Myshkin had not expected that she would be so much excited over her dress. He praised everything, and his praises made her happier than ever. But she let slip what was in her mind. She had heard that there was indignation in the town; that the madcaps of the place were getting up some sort of charivari with music, and possibly verses composed for the occasion; and that this was more or less with the approval of the rest of Pavlovsk society. And so she wanted to hold up her head higher than ever before them, to outshine them all with the taste and richness of her attire. "Let them shout, let them whistle if they dare!" Her eyes flashed at the very thought of it. She had another secret thought, but she did not utter that aloud. She hoped that Aglaia, or at any rate some one sent by her, would also be in the crowd incognito, in the church, would look and see, and she secretly prepared herself for it. She parted from Myshkin at eleven o'clock in the evening, absorbed in these ideas, but before it had struck midnight a messenger came running to Myshkin from Darya Alexeyevna begging him to "come at once, she's very bad."

Myshkin found his bride shut up in her bedroom, weeping, in despair, in hysterics. For a long time she would hear nothing that was said to her through the closed door. At last she opened it, letting no one in but Myshkin, shut the door, and fell on her knees before him. (So at least Darya Alexeyevna, who managed to get a peep, reported afterwards.)

“What am I doing? What am I doing? What am I doing to you?” she cried, embracing his feet convulsively.

Myshkin spent a whole hour with her; we do not know what they talked about. Darya Alexeyevna said that they parted peaceably and happily an hour later. Myshkin sent once more that night to inquire, but Nastasya Filippovna had dropped asleep.

In the morning before she waked, two more messengers were sent by Myshkin to Darya Alexeyevna, and it was a third messenger who was charged to report that “there was a perfect swarm of dressmakers and hairdressers from Petersburg round Nastasya Filippovna now; that there was no trace of yesterday’s upset; that she was busy, as such a beauty might well be, over dressing before her wedding; and that now, that very minute, there was an important consultation which of her diamonds to put on and how to put them on.”

Myshkin was completely reassured.

The account of what followed at the wedding was given me by people who saw it all, and I think it is correct.

The wedding was fixed for eight o’clock in the evening; Nastasya Filippovna was quite ready by seven. From six o’clock onwards a gaping crowd began gathering round Lebedyev’s villa, and a still larger one round Darya Alexeyevna’s. The church began filling up by seven o’clock. Vera Lebedyev and Kolya were in great alarm on Myshkin’s account. But they had a great deal to do in the house. They were arranging for a reception and refreshments in the prince’s rooms, though they hardly expected much of a gathering after the wedding. Besides the necessary persons who had to be present at the wedding, Lebedyev, the Ptitsyns, Ganya, the doctor with the Anna on his breast, and Darya Alexeyevna had been invited. When Myshkin asked Lebedyev why he had invited the doctor, “a man he hardly knew,” the latter replied complacently:

“An order on his breast, a man who is respected, for the style of the thing.”

And Myshkin laughed. Keller and Burdovsky, in evening suits, with gloves, looked quite correct, only Keller still troubled Myshkin and his supporters by a certain undisguised inclination for combat and cast very hostile looks at the sightseers who were gathering round the house. At last, at half-past seven, Myshkin set off for the church in a coach. We may observe, by the way, that he particularly wished not to omit any of the usual

ceremonies. Everything was done openly, publicly, and “in due order.” Makinq his wav somehow or other throuqh the crowd in the church, escorted by Keller, who cast menacing looks to right and left of him, and followed by a continual fire of whispers and exclamations, Myshkin disappeared for a time into the altar end of the church, — and Keller went off to fetch the bride from Darya Alexeyevna’s, where he found at the entrance a crowd two or three times as large and fully three times as free and easy as at the prince’s. As he mounted the steps, he heard exclamations that were beyond endurance, and had already turned round to address an appropriate harangue to the crowd when he was luckily stopped by Burdovsky and by Darya Alexeyevna, who ran out at the door. They seized him and drew him indoors by force. Keller was irritated and hurried. Nastasya Filippovna got up, looked once more into the looking-glass, observed with a wry smile, as Keller reported afterwards, that she was “as pale as death,” bowed devoutly to the ikon, and went out on to the steps.

A hum of voices greeted her appearance. For the first moment, it is true, there were sounds of laughter, applause, even perhaps hisses, but within a moment another note was heard.

“What a beauty!” they exclaimed in the crowd.

“She’s not the first and she won’t be the last.”

“She’ll cover it all up with the wedding ring.”

“You won’t find a beauty like that again in a hurry. Hurrah!” cried those standing nearest.

“A princess! For a princess like that I’d sell my soul,” cried a clerk. ‘“One night at the price of a life!’” he quoted.

Nastasya Filippovna certainly was as white as a handkerchief when she came out, but her great black eyes glowed upon the crowd like burning coals. The crowd could not stand against them. Indignation was transformed into cries of enthusiasm. The door of the carriage was already open, Keller had already offered the bride his arm, when suddenly she uttered a cry and rushed straight into the crowd. All who were accompanying her were petrified with amazement. The crowd parted to make way for her, and five or six paces from the steps Rogozhin suddenly appeared. Nastasya Filippovna had caught his eyes in the crowd. She rushed at him like a mad creature and seized him by both arms.

“Save me! Take me away! Where you will, at once!”

Rogozhin seized her in his arms and almost carried her to the carriage. Then in a flash he pulled out a hundred-rouble note and gave it to the driver.

“To the railway station, and if you catch the train, there’s another hundred for you.”

And he leapt into the carriage after Nastasya Filippovna and closed the door. The coachman did not hesitate for one moment and whipped up his horses. Keller pleaded afterwards that he was taken by surprise: “Another second and I should have come to, and I wouldn’t have let them go!” he explained, describing the adventure. He and Burdovsky would have taken another carriage that stood by and have rushed off in pursuit, but reflected as he was starting that “it was in any case too late, and one couldn’t bring her back by force!”

“And the prince won’t wish it!” decided Burdovsky, greatly agitated.

Rogozhin and Nastasya Filippovna galloped to the station in time. After they had got out of the carriage, and when Rogozhin was on the point of stepping into the train he had time to stop a girl who was wearing an old but decent dark mantle and a silk kerchief on her head.

“Would you like fifty roubles for your mantle?” he cried, suddenly holding out the money to the girl. While she was still lost in amazement and trying to take it in, he had already thrust the fifty-rouble note into her hand, pulled off the mantle and kerchief, and flung them on the shoulders and head of Nastasya Filippovna. Her gorgeous array was too conspicuous, would have attracted attention on the journey, and it was only afterwards that the girl understood why her old and worthless mantle had been bought at so much profit to herself.

A rumour of what had happened reached the church with astounding rapidity. When Keller hurried to the prince, numbers of people whom he did not know rushed up to question him. There was loud talking, shaking of heads, and even laughter. No one left the church. Every one waited to see how the bridegroom would take the news. He turned pale, but received the news quietly, saying hardly anything.

“I was afraid, but yet I didn’t think this would happen. . . .”And then, after a brief silence, he added: “However... in her condition . . . this is the natural order of things.” This comment even Keller spoke of afterwards as “unexampled philosophy”

Myshkin came out of the church apparently calm and confident, so at least many people noticed and said afterwards. He seemed very anxious to

get home and to be alone, but he was not allowed. He was followed into his room by several of the guests who had been invited — Ptitsyn, Gavril Ardalionovitch, and the doctor, who, like the others, seemed indisposed to go home. Moreover, the whole house was literally besieged by an idle crowd. From the verandah Myshkin could hear Keller and Lebedyev in angry dispute with some persons who were complete strangers, though they seemed to be of good position, and were bent on entering the verandah at any cost. Myshkin went out to the disputants, inquired what was the matter, and politely waving aside Lebedyev and Keller, he courteously addressed a stout, grey-headed gentleman who was standing on the steps at the head of a group of others, and invited him to honour him with a visit. The gentleman was somewhat disconcerted, but came in all the same, and after him came a second and a third. Out of the whole crowd seven or eight came in, trying to be as much at their ease as possible in doing so. But it turned out that no more were eager to join them, and they soon began censuring those intruders, who sat down, while a conversation sprang up and tea was offered. All this was done very modestly and decorously, to the considerable surprise of the new arrivals. There were, of course, some attempts to enliven the conversation and turn it to the theme lying uppermost in their minds. A few indiscreet questions were asked, a few risky remarks made. Myshkin answered every one so simply and cordially, yet with so much dignity, with such confidence in the good breeding of his guests, that indiscreet questions died away of themselves. Little by little the conversation became almost serious. One gentleman, catching at a word, suddenly swore with intense indignation that he would not sell his property, whatever happened; that on the contrary he would hang on and on and that "enterprise was better than money."

"There, my dear sir, you have my system of economy, and I don't mind your knowing it." As he was addressing Myshkin, the latter warmly commended his intention, though Lebedyev whispered in his ear that this gentleman had neither house nor home, and never had had a property of any kind. Almost an hour passed, tea was finished, and after tea the visitors began to be ashamed to stay longer. The doctor and the grey-headed gentleman took a warm farewell of Myshkin, and they all said good-bye with noisy heartiness. Good wishes were expressed, and the opinion that "it was no use grieving, and that maybe it was all for the best," and so on. Attempts were made, indeed, to ask for champagne, but the older guests

checked the younger ones. When all were gone, Keller bent over to Lebedyev and informed him, “You and I would have made a row, had a fight, disgraced ourselves, have dragged in the police; but he’s made a lot of new friends — and what friends! I know them!” Lebedyev, who was a little “elevated,” sighed, and articulated, “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.’ I said so about him before, but now I’ll add that God has saved the babe himself from the bottomless pit, He and His saints!”

At last, about half-past ten, Myshkin was left alone. His head was aching. Kolya had helped him change his wedding clothes for his everyday suit, and was the last to leave. They parted very warmly. Kolya did not speak about what had happened, but promised to come early next day. He bore witness afterwards that Myshkin had given him no hint at their last parting, and so concealed his intentions even from him. Soon there was scarcely anyone left in the house. Burdovsky went off to Ippolit’s. Keller and Lebedyev went away too. Only Vera Lebedyev remained for some time in Myshkin’s rooms, hurriedly restoring them to their usual order. As she went out, she glanced at Myshkin. He was sitting with both elbows on the table and his head hidden in his hands. She went softly up to him and touched him on the shoulder. Myshkin looked at her in surprise, and for a minute seemed trying to remember. But recollecting and recognising everything, he suddenly became extremely agitated, though all he did was to beg Vera very earnestly to knock at his door early next morning, at seven o’clock, in time to catch the first train. Vera promised. Myshkin begged her eagerly not to speak of this to anyone. She promised that too, and at last when she opened the door to go Myshkin stopped her for the third time, and took her hands, kissed them, then kissed her on her forehead, and with rather a “peculiar” air, said, “Til to-morrow!” So at least Vera described it afterwards. She went away in great anxiety about him. She felt rather more cheerful in the morning, when at seven o’clock she knocked at his door as agreed and informed him that the train for Petersburg would leave in a quarter of an hour. It seemed to her that he answered her quite in good spirits, and even with a smile. He had hardly undressed that night, though he had slept. He thought he might be back that day. It appeared therefore that he had thought it possible and necessary to tell no one but her at that moment that he was going to town.

CHAPTER 11

An HOUR later he was already in Petersburg and soon after nine he was ringing at Rogozhin's door. He went in at the visitors' entrance and for a long time there was no answer. At last the door of the flat occupied by Rogozhin's mother was opened and a trim-looking old servant appeared.

"Parfyon Semyonovitch is not at home," she announced from the door. "Whom do you want?"

"Parfyon Semyonovitch!"

"He is not at home."

The old servant looked at Myshkin with wild curiosity.

"Tell me, anyway, did he sleep at home last night? And ... did he come back alone yesterday?"

The old woman went on looking at him but made no reply.

"Wasn't Nastasya Filippovna with him here . . . last night?"

"But allow me to ask who may you be pleased to be?"

"Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch Myshkin, we are very intimate friends."

"He is not at home."

The woman dropped her eyes.

"And Nastasya Filippovna?"

"I know nothing about that."

"Stay, stay! When is he coming back?"

"We know nothing of that either."

The door was closed.

Myshkin determined to come back in an hour's time. Glancing into the yard he saw the porter.

"Is Parfyon Semyonovitch at home?"

"Yes."

"How is it I was told just now that he was not at home?"

"Did his servant tell you that?"

"No, the servant at his mother's. I rang at Parfyon Semyonovitch's, but there was no answer."

"Perhaps he's gone out," the porter commented.

"You see, he doesn't say. And sometimes he takes the key away with him; the rooms are locked up for three days at a time."

"Do you know for a fact that he was at home yesterday?"

“Yes, he was. Sometimes he goes in at the front door and one doesn’t see him.”

“And was Nastasya Filippovna with him yesterday?”

“That I can’t say. She doesn’t often come; I think we should know if she had been.”

Myshkin went out and for some time walked up and down the pavement lost in thought. The windows of the rooms occupied by Rogozhin were all closed; the windows of the part inhabited by his mother were almost all open. It was a hot, bright day. Myshkin crossed to the pavement on the other side of the street and stopped to look once more at the windows. They were not only closed, but almost everywhere hung with white curtains.

He stood still a moment, and strange to say it suddenly seemed to him that the corner of one curtain was lifted and he caught a glimpse of Rogozhin’s face, a momentary glimpse and it vanished. He waited a little longer and resolved to go back and ring again, but on second thought he put it off for one hour. “And who knows perhaps it was only my fancy....”

What decided him was that he was in haste to get to the Izamailovsky Polk, to the lodging Nastasya Filippovna had lately occupied. He knew that when, at his request, she had left Pavlovsk three weeks before, she had settled in the house of a friend of hers, the widow of a teacher, an estimable lady with a family, who let well-furnished rooms, and in fact almost made her living by doing so. It was highly probable that, when Nastasya Filippovna moved for the second time to Pavlovsk, she had kept her lodging; it was very likely in any case that she had spent the night at those lodgings where Rogozhin, of course, would have brought her that evening. Myshkin took a cab. On the way it struck him that he ought to have begun by doing this, because it was unlikely she should have gone at night straight to Rogozhin’s. He remembered the porter’s words that Nastasya Filippovna did not often come. If she did not at any time come often, what would have induced her to stav at Roqozhin’s now? Comfortinq himself with these reflections, Myshkin reached the lodgings at last more dead than alive.

To his great amazement at the widow’s they had heard nothing of Nastasya Filippovna either that day or the day before, but they all ran out to stare at him, as at a wonder. The lady’s numerous family — all girls of every age between seven and fifteen — ran out after their mother and surrounded Myshkin, gaping. They were followed by a lean, yellow-faced aunt, and last of all the grandmother, a very aged lady in spectacles. The

lady of the house earnestly begged him to go in and sit down, which Myshkin did. He saw at once that they knew quite well who he was and that his wedding was to have taken place the day before, and that they were dying to ask about the wedding and about the marvellous fact that he was inquiring of them for the woman, who should have been at that moment with him at Pavlovsk, but had too much delicacy to ask. In brief outlines he satisfied their curiosity about the wedding. Cries and exclamations of wonder and dismay followed, so that he was obliged to tell almost the whole story, in outline only, of course. Finally, the council of the sage and agitated ladies determined that the first thing certainly was to knock at Rogozhin's till he got an answer and to find out positively from him about everything. If he were not at home (and that he must ascertain for certain), or if he were unwilling to say, the prince should go to a German lady living with her mother at Semyonovsky Polk, who was a friend of Nastasya Filippovna's; possibly Nastasya Filippovna, in her excitement and desire to conceal herself, might have passed the night with them.

Myshkin got up completely crushed; they said afterwards that he had turned fearfully pale; indeed, his legs were almost giving way under him. At last, through the terrible shrill patter of their voices, he made out that they were arranging to act with him and were asking for his address in town. He had no address, it appeared; they advised him to put up at some hotel. Myshkin thought a moment and gave the address of the hotel he had stayed at before, the one where he had had a fit five weeks before. Then he set off again to Rogozhin's. This time he failed to get an answer, not only from Rogozhin's, but even from his mother's flat. Myshkin went in search of the porter and with some difficulty found him in the yard; the porter was busy and hardly answered him, hardly looked at him in fact. "Vfet he asserted positively that Parfyon Semyonovitch had gone out very early in the morning, had gone to Pavlovsk, and would not be home that day.

"I will wait; perhaps he will be back in the evening?"

"But he mayn't be back for a week. There's no telling."

"So he had anyway been at home that night?"

"That he had, to be sure."

All this was suspicious, and there was something queer about it. It was quite possible that the porter might have received fresh instructions in the interval: he had been quite talkative the first time, but now he simply turned his back on him. But Myshkin made up his mind to come back once more,

two hours later, and even to keep watch on the house if necessary; but now there was still hope in the German lady and he drove off to Semyonovsky Polk.

But at the German lady's they did not even understand what he wanted. From some words they let slip, he was able to guess that the German beauty had quarrelled with Nastasya Filippovna about a fortnight before, so that she had heard nothing of her of late and exerted herself to the utmost now to make him understand that she did not care to hear anything "if she had married all the princes in the world." Myshkin made haste to get away. It occurred to him among other conjectures that she might have gone to Moscow as she had done before, and Rogozhin of course had gone after her or perhaps with her. "If I could only find any traces!" He remembered, however, that he must stop at a hotel and he hurried to Liteyny; there he was at once given a room. The waiter asked him if he would not have something to eat; he answered absent-mindedly that he would. Then, realising, was furious with himself at wasting half an hour over lunch; and only later on grasped the fact that he was not obliged to remain to eat the lunch that was served to him. A strange sensation gained possession of him in that dingy and stuffy corridor, a sensation that strove painfully to become a thought; but he still could not guess what that new struggling thought was. He went out of the hotel at last, hardly knowing what he was doing; his head was in a whirl. But where was he to go? He rushed off to Roqozhin's aqain.

Rogozhin had not come back; there was no answer to his ring; he rang at old Madame Rogozhin's; the door was opened and he was told that Parfyon Semyonovitch was not at home and might be away for three days. Myshkin was disconcerted at being looked at as before with such wild curiosity. This time he could not find the porter at all. He crossed over to the opposite pavement as before, gazed up at the windows and walked up and down in the stifling heat for half an hour, possibly more. This time nothing was stirring; the windows did not open, the white curtains were motionless. He made up his mind that he certainly had been mistaken before, that it was his fancy; that the windows in fact were so opaque and dirty that it would have been difficult to see, even if anyone had peeped out. Relieved by this reflection he set off to the widow lady's at Izmailovsky Polk.

There they were already expecting him. The lady herself had already been to three or four places and had even been to Rogozhin's; nothing was

to be seen or heard there. Myshkin listened in silence, went into the room, sat down on the sofa and gazed at them all, as though he did not understand what they were talking about. Strange to say, he was at one moment keenly observant, at the rest absent-minded to an incredible degree. All the family declared afterwards that he was an extraordinarily strange person that day, so that “perhaps even then the end was clear.” At last he got up and asked them to show him the rooms which had been Nastasya Filippovna’s. They were two large, light, lofty rooms, very nicely furnished and let at a high rent. All the ladies described afterwards how Myshkin had scrutinised every object in the room, had seen on the table a French book from the library, “Madame Bovary,” lying opened, turned down the corner of the page at which the book was open, asked permission to take it with him, and not heeding the objection that it was a library book, put it in his pocket. He sat down at the open window and seeing a card-table marked with chalk, he asked who played. They told him that Nastasya Filippovna used to play every evening with Rogozhin at Fools, Preference, Millers, Whist, \bur own Trumps — all sorts of games, and that they had only taken to playing cards lately, after she came back from Pavlovsk, because Nastasya Filippovna was always complaining that she was bored, that Rogozhin would sit silent all the evening and did not know how to say a word, and she would often cry; and suddenly the next evening Rogozhin had taken a pack of cards out of his pocket; then Nastasya Filippovna had laughed, and they began playing. Myshkin asked where were the cards they used to play with? But the cards were not forthcoming; Rogozhin used to bring a new pack everyday in his pocket and took it away again with him.

The ladies advised him to go once more to Rogozhin’s and to knock loudly once more, and to go not at once but in the evening, “perhaps something will turn up.” The widow herself offered meanwhile to go to Pavlovsk, to Darya Alexeyevna’s, to find out whether anything was known of her there. They asked Myshkin to come again in any case at ten o’clock that evening, that they might agree on the plans for next day.

In spite of all their attempts to comfort and reassure him, Myshkin’s soul was overwhelmed with absolute despair. In unutterable dejection he walked to his hotel. The dusty, stifling atmosphere of Petersburg weighed on him like a press; he was jostled by morose or drunken people, stared aimlessly at the faces, and perhaps walked much farther than he need have done; it was almost evening when he went into his room. He decided to rest a little and

then to go to Rogozhin's again, as he had been advised. He sat down on the sofa, leaned his elbows on the table and sank into thought.

God knows how long and of what he thought. There were many things he dreaded and he felt painfully, agonisingly, that he was in terrible dread. Vera Lebedyev came into his mind; then the thought struck him that Lebedyev perhaps knew something about it, or, if he did not, might find out more quickly and easily than he could. Then he remembered Ippolit, and that Rogozhin used to visit Ippolit. Then he thought of Rogozhin, as he was lately at the funeral, then in the park, then suddenly as he was here in the corridor, when he hid and waited for him with a knife. He recalled his eyes now, his eyes as they looked at him there in the darkness. He shuddered: that thought which had been striving for expression suddenly came into his head.

He thouqht that if Roqozhin were in Petersburq,

even though he were hiding for a time, he would certainly end by coming to him, Myshkin, with good or with evil intention, as he had done then. Anyway, if Rogozhin did want to see him, there would be nowhere else for him to come but here, to this corridor. He did not know his address, so he might very well suppose that Myshkin would go to the same hotel as before; anyway, he would try looking for him here if he had great need of him. And who knows, perhaps he had great need of him?

So he mused and the idea seemed to him for some reason quite possible.

He could not have explained if he had probed his own thought why he should be suddenly so necessary to Rogozhin, and why it was so impossible that they should not meet. But the thought was an oppressive one. "If he is all right, he will not come," Myshkin went on thinking; "he is more likely to come if he is unhappy; and he is certain to be unhappy."

Of course, with that conviction he ought to have remained at home in his room, waiting for Rogozhin; but he seemed unable to remain with this new idea;

he snatched up his hat and went out hurriedly. It was almost dark in the corridor by now. "What if he suddenly comes out of that corner and stops me at the stairs?" flashed through his mind, as he reached the same spot. But no one came out. He passed out at the gate, went out into the street, wondered at the dense crowd of people who had flocked into the streets at sunset (as they always do in Petersburg in summer-time) and turned in the direction of Gorohovy. Fifty paces from the hotel, at the first crossing some

one in the crowd suddenly touched his elbow, and in an undertone said in his ear:

“Lyov Nikolayevitch, follow me, brother, I want you.”

It was Rogozhin.

Strange to say, Myshkin began telling him joyfully, gabbling at a great rate and hardly articulating the words, how he had just expected to see him at the hotel in the corridor.

“I’ve been there,” Rogozhin unexpectedly answered. “Come along.”

Myshkin was surprised at his answer, but did not wonder till two minutes later at least, when he realised it. When he reflected on the answer, he was alarmed and began to look intently at Rogozhin, who was walking almost half a step in front of him, looking straight before him, not glancing at anyone they passed, making way for other people with mechanical care.

“Why didn’t you ask for me at my room ... if you have been at the hotel?” asked Myshkin suddenly.

Rogozhin stopped, looked at him, thought a little, and as though he did not take in the question, said:

“I say, Lyov Nikolayevitch, you go straight along, here to the house, you know? But I’ll walk on the other side. And mind that we keep together....”

Saying this, he crossed the road to the opposite pavement, stood still to see whether Myshkin were walking on and seeing that he was standing still, gazing at him open-eyed, motioned him towards Gorohovy and walked on turning every moment to look at Myshkin and sign him to follow. He was evidently reassured by Myshkin’s understanding him and followed him on the other side of the pavement. It occurred to Myshkin that Rogozhin wanted to keep a look out, and not let some one pass him on the way, and that therefore he had crossed to the other side, “only why didn’t he say whom he has to look out for?”

So they walked for five hundred paces, and all at once, for some reason, Myshkin began trembling. Rogozhin still kept looking back at him, though not so often. Myshkin could not stand it and beckoned to him. Rogozhin at once crossed the road to him.

“Is Nastasya Filippovna in your house?”

“Yes.”

“And was it you looked at me behind the curtain this morning?”

“Yes.”

“How, was it you? ...”

But Myshkin did not know what more to ask or how to finish his question. Moreover, his heart was throbbing so violently that he could scarcely speak. Rogozhin, too, was silent, and he still gazed at him as before, that is, as it were, dreamily.

“Well, I am going,” he said suddenly, preparing to cross the road again, “and you go by yourself. Let us go separately in the street. . . that’s better for us . . . on different sides.... You will see.”

When at last they turned on opposite sides of the road into Gorohovy and began to approach Roqozhin’s house, Mvshkin’s leqs beqan to qive wav under him again, so that it was almost difficult for him to walk. It was about ten o’clock in the evening. The windows in the old lady’s part of the house were still open as before; in Rogozhin’s they were all closed, and in the twilight the white curtains over them seemed still more conspicuous. Myshkin approached the house from the other side of the pavement. Rogozhin from his side of the pavement went straight up the steps and beckoned to him. Myshkin crossed over and joined him.

“The porter doesn’t know that I’ve come home now. I said this morning that I was going to Pavlovsk, and I left word at my mother’s too,” he whispered, with a sly and almost pleased smile. “We’ll go in and no one will hear.”

The key was already in his hand. As he went up the staircase, he turned round and shook his finger at Myshkin to warn him to go up quietly; quietly he opened the door of his rooms, let Myshkin in, followed him in cautiously, closed the door behind him, and put the key in his pocket.

“Come along,” he articulated in a whisper.

He had not spoken above a whisper since they were in Liteyny. In spite of all his outward composure, he was inwardly in a state of intense agitation. When they went into the drawing-room, on their way to the study, he went to the window and mysteriously beckoned to Myshkin.

“When you began ringing here this morning, I guessed at once that it was you. I went on tip-toe to the door and heard you talking to Pafnutyevna. And I gave her orders as soon as it was daylight that if you or anyone from you or anyone whatever began knocking at my door, she wasn’t to say I was here on any account, especially if you yourself came for me, and I gave her your name. And afterwards when you went out, the thought struck me, ‘What if he stands and keeps a look-out and watches in the street.’ I went up

to this very window, drew aside the curtain, and there you were, standing looking straight at me.. .. That's how it happened."

"Where is . . . Nastasya Filippovna?" Myshkin articulated breathlessly.

"She is . . . here," Rogozhin brought out slowly, after a moment's delay.

"Where?"

Rogozhin raised his eyes and looked intently at Myshkin.

"Come along...."

He still talked in a whisper and not hurriedly, but deliberately, and still with the strange dreaminess. Even when he told him about the curtain, he seemed to mean something quite different by his words, in spite of the spontaneousness with which he spoke.

They went into the study. There was some change in the room since Myshkin had been in it last. A heavy green silk curtain that could be drawn at either end hung right across the room, dividing the alcove where Rogozhin's bed stood from the rest of the apartment. The heavy curtain was closely drawn at both ends. It was very dark in the room. The white nights of the Petersburg summer were beginning to get darker and, had it not been for the full moon, it would have been difficult to make out anything in Rogozhin's dark rooms with the windows curtained. It is true they could still see each other's faces, though very indistinctly. Rogozhin's face was pale as usual; his glittering eyes watched Myshkin intently with a fixed stare.

"You'd better light a candle," said Myshkin.

"No, no need," answered Rogozhin, and taking Myshkin's hand he made him sit down on a chair; he sat opposite, moving his chair up so that he almost touched Myshkin with his knees. Between them, a little to one side, stood a small round table.

"Sit down, let's stay here a bit," he said, as though persuading Myshkin to stay. "I seemed to know that you would be staying at that hotel again," he began, as people sometimes approach an important subject by beginning about quite irrelevant trifles. "As soon as I got into the corridor I thought, what if he is sitting waiting for me, just as I am for him at this very moment? Have you been to the teacher's widow?"

"Yes," Myshkin was hardly able to articulate from the violent throbbing of his heart.

"I thought of that, too. There'll be talk, I thought. . . and then I thought again: I'll bring him here for the night, so that we may spend this night

together.”

“Rogozhin! Where is Nastasya Filippovna?” Myshkin whispered suddenly, and he stood up trembling in every limb. Rogozhin got up, too.

“There,” he whispered, nodding towards the curtain.

“Asleep?” whispered Myshkin.

Aqain Roqozhin looked at him, intentlvas before.

“Well, come along then! . . . Only you . . . well, come along!”

He lifted the curtain, stood still, and turned to Myshkin again.

“Come in,” he nodded, motioning him to go within the curtain. Myshkin went in.

“It’s dark here,” he said.

“One can see,” muttered Rogozhin.

“I can scarcely see ... there’s a bed.”

“Go nearer,” Rogozhin suggested softly.

Myshkin took a step nearer, then a second, and stood still. He stood still and looked for a minute or two. Neither of them uttered a word all the while they stood by the bedside. Myshkin’s heart beat so violently that it seemed as though it were audible in the death-like stillness of the room. But his eyes were by now accustomed to the darkness, so that he could make out the whole bed. Some one lay asleep on it, in a perfectly motionless sleep; not the faintest stir, not the faintest breath could be heard. The sleeper was covered over from head to foot with a white sheet and the limbs were vaguely defined; all that could be seen was that a human figure lay there,

stretched at full length. All around in disorder at the foot of the bed, on chairs beside it, and even on the floor, clothes had been flung in disorder; a rich white silk dress, flowers, and ribbons. On a little table at the head of the bed there was the glitter of diamonds that had been taken off and thrown down. At the end of the bed there was a crumpled heap of lace and on the white lace the toes of a bare foot peeped out from under the sheet; it seemed as though it had been carved out of marble and it was horridly still. Myshkin looked and felt that as he looked, the room became more and more still and death-like. Suddenly there was the buzz of a fly which flew over the bed and settled on the pillow. Myshkin started.

“Let’s go.” Rogozhin touched his arm. They went out, and sat down on the same chairs, facing one another again. Myshkin trembled more and more violently, and never took his questioning eyes off Rogozhin’s face.

“I notice you are trembling, Lyov Nikolayevitch,” Rogozhin said at last, “almost as much as you did when you had your illness. Do you remember, in Moscow? Or as you had once before a fit? I can’t think what I should do with you now....”

Myshkin listened, straining every effort to understand, and still his eyes questioned him.

“Was it . . . you?” he brought out at last, nodding towards the curtain.

“It was I,” Rogozhin whispered, and he looked down.

They were si lent for five minutes.

“For if,” Rogozhin began, continuing suddenly as though his speech had not been interrupted, “you are ill, have your fit and scream, some one may hear from the street or the yard, and guess that there are people in the flat. They’ll begin knocking and come in ... for they all think I am not at home. I haven’t lighted a candle for fear they should guess from the street or the yard. For when I am away, I take the key and no one ever comes in to tidy the place for three or four days in my absence. That’s my habit. So I took care they shouldn’t find out we are here....”

“Stay,” said Myshkin. “I asked the porter and the old woman this morning whether Nastasya Filippovna hadn’t stayed the night here. So they must know already.”

“I know that you asked them. I told Pafnutyevna that Nastasya Filippovna came here yesterday and went away to Pavlovsk and that she was only here ten minutes. And they don’t know she stayed the night here — no one knows it. I came in with her yesterday quite secretly, as we did just now. I’d been thinking on the way that she wouldn’t care to come in secretly, but not a bit of it! She whispered, she walked on tip-toe, she drew her skirts round her, and held them in her hand that they might not rustle. She shook her finger at me on the stairs — it was you she was afraid of. She was mad with terror in the train, and it was her own wish to stay the night here. I thought of taking her to her lodgings at the widow’s — but not a bit of it! ‘He’ll find me there as soon as it’s daylight,’ she said, ‘but you will hide me and early to-morrow morning we’ll set off for Moscow,’ and then she wanted to go somewhere to Orel. And as she went to bed she kept saying we’d go to Orel. . .

“Stay; what are you going to do now, Parfyon. What do you want to do?”

“I wonder about you, you keep trembling. We’ll stay the night here together. There is no bed but that one, and I thought we might take the

pillows off the two sofas and make up a bed here for vou and me beside the curtain, so that we can be together. For if they come in and begin looking round or searching, they'll see her at once and take her away. They'll begin questioning me, I shall say it was me, and they'll take me away at once. So let her lie here now beside us, beside you and me...."

"Yes, yes!" Myshkin agreed warmly.

"So we won't confess and let them take her away."

"Not on any account!" Myshkin decided. "Certainly not."

"That's what I decided, lad, not to give her up on any account to any one! We'll keep quiet all night. I only went out for an hour this morning, except for that I've been with her all the time. And then I went to find you in the evening. Another thing I am afraid of is that it's so hot and there may be a smell. Do you notice a smell?"

"Perhaps I do, I don't know. There certainly will be by the morning."

"I covered her with American leather, good American leather, and put the sheet over it, and I put four jars of Zhdanov's disinfectant there uncorked, they are standing there now."

"Just as they did that time ... at Moscow?"

"On account of the smell, brother. And you see how she is lying. . . . You must look in the morning when it's light. What's the matter, can't you stand up?" Rogozhin asked with apprehensive wonder, seeing that Myshkin was trembling so much that he could not get up.

"My legs won't move," muttered Myshkin, "it's from terror, I know. . . . When the fear is over I shall get up."

"Stay, I'll make up our bed and you'd better lie down . . . and I'll lie down too . .. and we'll listen, for I don't know yet, lad, for I don't understand it all yet, I warn you of that beforehand, so that you may know all about it beforehand...."

Muttering these unintelligible words, Rogozhin began making up the beds. It was evident that he had thought of these beds, possibly even that morning. The previous night he had lain on the sofa. But there was not room for two on the sofa, and he was set on their sleeping side by side, that was why, with much effort, he now dragged, right across the room, the various cushions off the two sofas and laid them by the curtain. He made the bed after a fashion; he went up to Myshkin, tenderly and eagerly took him by the arm, raised him and led him to the bed, but Myshkin found he

could walk by himself, so his terror was passing off, and yet he still was trembling.

“Because,” Rogozhin began making Myshkin lie down on the left on the best cushions, while without undressing he stretched himself out on the right, clasping his hands behind his head, “because it’s hot, brother, and you know there may be a smell... I am afraid to open the windows; my mother has got jars of flowers, heaps of flowers, and they have such a delicious smell; I thought of bringing them in, but Pafnutyevna would have been suspicious, she is inquisitive.”

“She is inquisitive,” Myshkin assented.

“Shall we buy nosegays and put flowers all round her? But I think, friend, it will make us sad to see her with flowers round her!”

“Listen!” said Myshkin uncertainly, as though he were looking for what he meant to ask and at once forgetting it again, “listen, tell me what did you do it with? A knife? The same one?”

“The same one.”

“There’s something else; I want to ask you something else, Parfyon ... I want to ask you a great many questions, all about it... but you had better tell me first, to begin with, so that I may know; did you mean to kill her before my wedding, at the church door... with a knife?”

“I don’t know whether I meant to or not,” Rogozhin answered drily, seeming somewhat surprised at the question and not understanding it.

“Did you ever take the knife with you to Pavlovsk?”

“No, never. All I can tell you about the knife is this, Lyov Nikolayevitch,” he added after a pause, “I took it out of a locked drawer this morning, for it all happened this morning, about four o’clock. It had been lying in a book all the time. . . . And . . . and . . . another thing seems strange: the knife went in three or four inches . . . just under the left breast . . . and there wasn’t more than half a tablespoonful of blood flowed on to her chemise, there was no more....”

“That, that, that,” Myshkin sat up suddenly in great agitation, “that I know, I’ve read about it, that’s called internal bleeding. . . . Sometimes there’s not one drop. That’s when the stab goes straight to the heart.”

“Stay, do you hear?” Rogozhin interrupted quickly, all of a sudden sitting up in terror on the cushions. “Do you hear?”

“No!” answered Myshkin, as quickly and fearfully looking at Rogozhin.

“Steps! Do you hear? In the drawing-room. . . .” They both began listening.

“I hear,” said Myshkin decidedly.

“Footsteps?”

“Footsteps.”

“Shall we shut the door or not?”

“Shut it...”

They shut the door and both lay down again.

They were silent for a long time.

“Ah, yes,” Myshkin began suddenly in the same excited and hurried whisper, as though he had caught his thought and were dreadfully afraid of losing it again; he sat up on the bed. “It’s .. . I wanted . . . those cards! cards. . . . They said you played cards with her?”

“Yes I did,” said Rogozhin, aftera brief silence.

“Where are ... the cards?”

“They are here,” Rogozhin brought out after a long silence, “here ...”

He brought a pack of cards wrapped up in paper out of his pocket and held them out to Myshkin. He took it, but with a sort of wonder. A new feeling of hopeless sadness weighed on his heart; he realised suddenly that at that moment and a long time past he had been saying not what he was wanting to say and had been doing the wrong thing, and that the cards he was holding in his hands and was so pleased to see were no help, no help now. He stood up and clasped his hand. Rogozhin lay without movement and seemed not to hear and see his action; but his eyes glittered in the darkness and were wide open and staring fixedly. Myshkin sat down on a chair and began looking at him with terror. Half an hour passed; suddenly Rogozhin cried out aloud and began laughing, as though he had forgotten they must speak in a whisper:

“That officer, that officer... do you remember how she switched that officer at the band-stand, ha-ha-ha! And there was a cadet... a cadet... a cadet, too, who rushed up ...”

Myshkin jumped up from the chair in new terror. When Rogozhin was quiet (and he suddenly ceased), Myshkin bent softly over him, sat beside him and with his heart beating violently and his breath coming in gasps, he began looking at him. Rogozhin did not turn his head towards him and seemed indeed to have forgotten him. Myshkin looked and waited; time was passing, it began to get light. From time to time Rogozhin began suddenly

and incoherently muttering in a loud harsh voice, he began shouting and laughing. Then Myshkin stretched out his trembling hand to him and softly touched his head, his hair, stroking them and stroking his cheeks ... he could do nothing else! He began trembling again, and again his legs seemed suddenly to fail him. Quite a new sensation gnawed at his heart with infinite anguish. Meanwhile it had become quite light; at last he lay down on the pillow as though utterly helpless and despairing and put his face close to the pale and motionless face of Rogozhin; tears flowed from his eyes on to Rogozhin’s cheeks, but perhaps he did not notice then his own tears and was quite unaware of them.

Anyway, when after many hours the doors were opened and people came in, they found the murderer completely unconscious and raving.

Myshkin was sitting beside him motionless on the floor, and every time the delirious man broke into screaming or babble, he hastened to pass his trembling hand softly over his hair and cheeks, as though caressing and soothing him. But by now he could understand no questions he was asked and did not recognize the people surrounding him; and if Schneider himself had come from Switzerland to look at his former pupil and patient, remembering the condition in which Myshkin had sometimes been during the first year of his stay in Switzerland, he would have flung up his hands in despair and would have said as he did then, “An idiot!”

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSION

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S widow, hurrying off to Pavlovsk, had gone straight to see Darya Alexeyevna, who was agitated by the events of the previous day, and telling her all that she knew threw her into a regular panic. The two ladies decided at once to get into communication with Lebedyev, who as a householder and a friend of his lodger, was also in agitation. Vera Lebedyev told them all that she knew. By Lebedyev's advice they decided to set off to Petersburg all three together, in order as quickly as possible to prevent what might very easily come to pass. So it came about that at about eleven o'clock next morning Rogozhin's flat was broken open in the presence of the police, of Lebedyev, of the ladies, and of Rogozhin's brother, Semyon Semyonovitch, who lived in the lodge. Matters were greatly facilitated by the evidence of the porter, that he had seen Parfyon Semyonovitch the previous evening going in at the front door with a visitor and seemingly in secret.

For two months Rogozhin was prostrate with inflammation of the brain, and he was tried as soon as he recovered. He gave straightforward, exact, and fully satisfactory evidence on every point, in consequence of which from the very first Myshkin's name was not brought into the case. Rogozhin was taciturn during his trial. He did not contradict his adroit and eloquent counsel, who proved clearly and logically that the crime committed was a consequence of the brain fever which had set in long before its perpetration, as a result of the troubles of the accused. But he added nothing of his own to confirm that contention, and as before, clearly and precisely maintained and recollected the minutest circumstances connected with the crime. In view of extenuating circumstances he was sentenced to only fifteen years penal servitude in Siberia, and heard his sentence grimly, silently, and "dreamily." All his vast fortune, except the comparatively small part that he had squandered in the first few months of debauchery, passed to his brother, Semyon Semyonovitch, to the great satisfaction of the latter. Rogozhin's old mother is still living, and seems from time to time to remember her favourite son, Parfyon, though only vaguely. God has saved her mind and

her heart from the knowledge of the blow that has fallen on her melancholy house.

Lebedyev, Keller, Ganya, Ptitsyn, and many of the other persons of our story go on living as before and have changed but little. There is scarcely anything to be said about them. Ippolit died in a state of terrible excitement somewhat sooner than he had expected, a fortnight after the death of Nastasya Filippovna. Kolya was greatly affected by what had happened; he attached himself more closely than ever to his mother. Nina Alexandrovna is uneasy at his being too thoughtful for his years; he may become an active and useful man. Among other things, the arrangement of Myshkin's future was partly due to his efforts; he had long before noticed Yevgeny Pavlovitch Radomsky as different from the other persons he had made friends with of late; he was the first to go and tell him all he knew about the case and Myshkin's present condition. He was not mistaken in his estimate of him. "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch took the warmest interest in the luckless "idiot's" fate and by his care and efforts Myshkin was taken back to Dr. Schneider's in Switzerland. As "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch has gone abroad and intends to spend a long time in Europe, openly declaring that he is a superfluous man in Russia, he visits his sick friend at Schneider's pretty often, at least once every few months. But Schneider frowns and shakes his head more ominously every time; he hints at a permanent derangement of the intellect; he does not yet say positively that recovery is out of the question, but he allows himself phrases suggestive of most melancholy possibilities, "Vfevgeny Pavlovitch takes this very much to heart; he has a heart, which is evident from the fact that Kolya writes to him, and that he even sometimes answers him. Another curious fact is known about him, and as it shows a kindly trait in his character, we hasten to mention it. After every visit to Dr. Schneider, Yevgeny Pavlovitch, besides writing to Kolya, sends a letter to another person in Petersburg giving the most sympathetic and minute account of Mvshkin's state of health. Together with the most respectful expression of devotion those letters sometimes (and more and more frequently) contain a frank statement of views, ideas, and feelings — in fact something approaching a feeling of warm friendship is revealed by them. The person who is in correspondence with him (though the letters are not very frequent) and who has won so much attention and respect from him is Vera Lebedyev. We have never been able to ascertain how such relations arose between them. No doubt they began at the time of Myshkin's

breakdown, when Vera Lebedyev was so distressed that she fell positively ill. But exactly what incident brought about his acquaintance and friendship we do not know.

We have alluded to these letters chiefly because they contained news of the Epanchins, and especially of Aglaia. Of her “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch wrote in a rather disconnected letter from Paris that aftera brief and extraordinary attachment to an exile, a Polish count, she had suddenly married him against the wishes of her parents, who had only given their consent at last because there were possibilities of a terrible scandal. Then after almost six months’ silence “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch gave his correspondent a lengthy and detailed account of how, on his last visit to Dr. Schneider’s, he had met there Prince S. and all the Epanchin family (except, of course, Ivan Fyodorovitch who was kept in Petersburg by business). It was a strange meeting; they had all met “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch with extraordinary delight; Adelaida and Alexandra were unaccountably grateful to him “for his angelic kindness to the unhappy prince.” Lizaveta Prokofyevna wept bitterly at the sight of Myshkin in his afflicted and humiliated condition. Obviously everything had been forgiven him. Prince S. had made a few just and true observations. It seemed to “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch that Adelaida and he were not yet in perfect harmony, but that inevitably in the future Adelaida would spontaneously and ungrudgingly allow her impetuous temper to be guided by Prince S.’s good sense and experience. Moreover, the painful experiences the family had been through, especially Aglaia’s recent adventure with the exile, had made a profound impression upon her. Everything that the family had dreaded in giving Aglaia to the Polish count had within six months come to pass, together with fresh surprises of which they had never dreamed. It turned out that the count was not even a count, and if he were really an exile, it was owing to some dark and dubious incident in the past. He had fascinated Aglaia by the extraordinary nobility of his soul, which was torn with patriotic anguish, and fascinated her to such a degree that even before she married him she became a member of a committee for the restoration of Poland and had, moreover, visited the confessional of a celebrated Catholic priest, who gained a complete ascendancy over her mind. The vast estates of the Polish count, of which he had given Lizaveta Prokofyevna and Prince S. almost incontestable evidence, turned out to be a myth. What was more, within six months of the wedding the count and his friend the celebrated confessor had

succeeded in setting Aglaia completely against her family, so that for some months they had not even seen her. . . . There was, in fact, a great deal to say, but Lizaveta Prokofyevna, her daughter, and even Prince S. had been so much distressed by all this “terrible business,” that they were reluctant even to allude to some points in conversation with Yevgeny Pavlovitch, though they were aware that he already knew the story of Aglaia’s latest infatuation. Poor Lizaveta Prokofyevna was longing to be back in Russia, and according to “Vfevgeny Pavlovitch’s account she was bitter and unfair in her criticism of everything in Europe.

“They can’t make decent bread anywhere; in winter they are frozen like mice in a cellar,” she said; “here, at any rate, I’ve had a good Russian cry over this poor fellow,” she added pointing to Myshkin, who did not even recognise her. “We’ve had enough of following our whims; it’s time to be reasonable. And all this, all this life abroad, and this Europe of yours is all a fantasy, and all of us abroad are only a fantasy . . . remember my words, you’ll see it for yourself!” she concluded almost wrathfully, as she parted from Yevgeny Pavlovitch.

THE PERMANENT HUSBAND



Translated by Frederick Whishaw

First published in 1870, this novella revolves around the complicated relationship between the rich and idle Velchaninov and Trusotsky, the husband of his deceased former lover.

The novella introduces the character Alexei Ivanovich Velchaninov as a land owner, currently residing in Saint Petersburg for a trial about a piece of land. He receives a visit from Pavel Pavlovich Trusotsky, an old acquaintance that recently became a widower. It is revealed that Velchaninov had had an affair with Trusotsky's wife Natalia, and he realises that he is the actual father of Liza, Trusotsky's eight-year-old daughter. Velchaninov, who does not want Liza to be raised by an alcoholic, brings Liza to a foster family.

In many ways it is a fascinating novel, charting the development of the two men’s lives and their unusual relationship. *The Permanent Husband* beautifully portrays the confused and changing feelings the two men have for one another, with shifting contrasts of hatred, guilt and love. For some critics, this lesser known work is Dostoyevsky at his best, engaging with the author’s favoured themes of tortured minds and neurosis, presenting them in a captivating and original manner.

THE PERMANENT HUSBAND

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CHAPTER I.

Summer had come, and Velchaninoff, contrary to his expectations, was still in St. Petersburg. His trip to the south of Russia had fallen through, and there seemed no end to the business which had detained him.

This business — which was a lawsuit as to certain property — had taken a very disagreeable aspect. Three months ago the thing had appeared to be by no means complicated — in fact, there had seemed to be scarcely any question as to the rights and wrongs of the matter, but all seemed to change suddenly.

"Everything else seems to have changed for the worse, too!" said Velchaninoff to himself, over and over again.

He was employing a clever lawyer — an eminent man, and an expensive one, too; but in his impatience and suspicion he began to interfere in the matter himself. He read and wrote papers — all of which the lawyer put into his waste-paper basket — *holus bolus*; called in continually at the courts and offices, made inquiries, and confused and worried everybody concerned in the matter; so at least the lawyer declared, and begged him for mercy's sake to go away to the country somewhere.

But he could not make up his mind to do so. He stayed in town and enjoyed the dust, and the hot nights, and the closeness of the air of St. Petersburg, things which are enough to destroy anyone's nerves. His lodgings were somewhere near the Great Theatre; he had lately taken them, and did not like them. Nothing went well with him; his hypochondria increased with each day, and he had long been a victim to that disorder.

Velchaninoff was a man who had seen a great deal of the world; he was not quite young, thirty-eight years old — perhaps thirty-nine, or so; and all this "old age," as he called it, had "fallen upon him quite unawares." However, as he himself well understood, he had aged more in the *quality* than in the number of the years of his life; and if his infirmities were really creeping upon him, they must have come from within and not from outside causes. He looked young enough still. He was a tall, stout man, with light-brown thick hair, without a suspicion of white about it, and a light beard that reached half way down his chest. At first sight you might have supposed him to be of a lax, careless disposition or character, but on studying him more closely you would have found that, on the contrary, the

man was decidedly a stickler for the proprieties of this world, and withal brought up in the ways and graces of the very best society. His manners were very good — free but graceful — in spite of this lately-acquired habit of grumbling and reviling things in general. He was still full of the most perfect, aristocratic self-confidence: probably he did not himself suspect to how great an extent this was so, though he was a most decidedly intelligent, I may say clever, even talented man. His open, healthy-looking face was distinguished by an almost feminine refinement, which quality gained him much attention from the fair sex. He had large blue eyes — eyes which ten years ago had known well how to persuade and attract; such clear, merry, careless eyes they had been, that they invariably brought over to his side any person he wished to gain. Now, when he was nearly forty years old, their ancient, kind, frank expression had died out of them, and a certain cynicism — a cunning — an irony very often, and yet another variety of expression, of late — an expression of melancholy or pain, undefined but keen, had taken the place of the earlier attractive qualities of his eyes. This expression of melancholy especially showed itself when he was alone; and it was a strange fact that the gay, careless, happy fellow of a couple of years ago, the man who could tell a funny story so inimitably, should now love nothing so well as to be all alone. He intended to throw up most of his friends — a quite unnecessary step, in spite of his present financial difficulties. Probably his vanity was to blame for this intention: he could not bear to see his old friends in his present position; with his vain suspicious character it would be most unpalatable to him.

But his vanity began to change its nature in solitude. It did not grow less, on the contrary; but it seemed to develop into a special type of vanity which was unlike its old self. This new vanity suffered from entirely different causes, “*higher* causes, if I may so express it,” he said, “and if there really be higher and lower motives in this world.”

He defined these “higher things” as matters which he could not laugh at, or turn to ridicule when happening in his own individual experience. Of course it would be quite another thing with the same subjects in society; by *himself* he could not ridicule then; but put him among other people, and he would be the first to tear himself from all of those secret resolutions of his conscience made in solitude, and laugh them to scorn.

Very often, on rising from his bed in the morning, he would feel ashamed of the thoughts and feelings which had animated him during the long

sleepless night — and his nights of late had been sleepless. He seemed suspicious of everything and everybody, great and small, and grew mistrustful of himself.

One fact stood out clearly, and that was that during those sleepless nights his thoughts and opinions took huge leaps and bounds, sometimes changing entirely from the thoughts and opinions of the daytime. This fact struck him very forcibly; and he took occasion to consult an eminent medical friend. He spoke in fun, but the doctor informed him that the fact of feelings and opinions changing during meditations at night, and during sleeplessness, was one long recognised by science; and that that was especially the case with persons of strong thinking power, and of acute feelings. He stated further that very often the beliefs of a whole life are uprooted under the melancholy influence of night and inability to sleep, and that often the most fateful resolutions are made under the same influence; that sometimes this impressionability to the mystic influence of the dark hours amounted to a malady, in which case measures must be taken, the radical manner of living should be changed, diet considered, a journey undertaken if possible, etc., etc.

Velchaninoff listened no further, but he was sure that in his own case there was decided malady.

Very soon his morning meditations began to partake of the nature of those of the night, but they were more bitter. Certain events of his life now began to recur to his memory more and more vividly; they would strike him suddenly, and without apparent reason: things which had been forgotten for ten or fifteen years — some so long ago that he thought it miraculous that he should have been able to recall them at all. But that was not all — for, after all, what man who has seen any life has not hundreds of such recollections of the past? The principal point was that all this past came back to him now with an absolutely new light thrown upon it, and he seemed to look at it from an entirely new and unexpected point of view. Why did some of his acts appear to him now to be nothing better than crimes? It was not merely in the judgment of his intellect that these things appeared so to him now — had it been only his poor sick mind, he would not have trusted it; but his whole being seemed to condemn him; he would curse and even weep over these recollections of the past! If anyone had told him a couple of years since that he would *weep* over anything, he would have laughed the idea to scorn.

At first he recalled the unpleasant experiences of his life: certain failures in society, humiliations; he remembered how some designing person had so successfully blackened his character that he was requested to cease his visits to a certain house; how once, and not so very long ago, he had been publicly insulted, and had not challenged the offender; how once an epigram had been fastened to his name by some witty person, in the midst of a party of pretty women and he had not found a reply; he remembered several unpaid debts, and how he had most stupidly run through two very respectable fortunes.

Then he began to recall facts belonging to a "higher" order. He remembered that he had once insulted a poor old grey-headed clerk, and that the latter had covered his face with his hands and cried, which Velchaninoff had thought a great joke at the time, but now looked upon in quite another light. Then he thought how he had once, merely for fun, set a scandal going about the beautiful little wife of a certain schoolmaster, and how the husband had got to hear the rumour. He (Velchaninoff) had left the town shortly after and did not know how the matter had ended; but now he fell to wondering and picturing to himself the possible consequences of his action; and goodness knows where this theme would not have taken him to if he had not suddenly recalled another picture: that of a poor girl, whom he had been ashamed of and never thought of loving, but whom he had betrayed and forsaken, her and her child, when he left St. Petersburg. He had afterwards searched for this girl and her baby for a whole year, but never found them.

Of this sort of recollections there were, alas! but too many; and each one seemed to bring along with it a train of others. His vanity began to suffer, little by little, under these memories. I have said that his vanity had developed into a new type of vanity. There were moments (few albeit) in which he was not even ashamed of having no carriage of his own, now; or of being seen by one of his former friends in shabby clothes; or when, if seen and looked at by such a person contemptuously, he was high-minded enough to suppress even a frown. Of course such moments of self-oblivion were rare; but, as I said before, his vanity began little by little to change away from its former quarters and to centre upon one question which was perpetually ranging itself before his intellect. "There is some power or other," he would muse, sarcastically, "somewhere, which is extremely interested in my morals, and sends me these damnable recollections and

tears of remorse! Let them come, by all means; but they have not the slightest effect on me! for I haven't a scrap of independence about me, in spite of my wretched forty years, I know that for certain. Why, if it were to happen so that I should gain anything by spreading another scandal about that schoolmaster's wife, (for instance, that she had accepted presents from me, or something of that sort), I should certainly spread it without a thought."

But though no other opportunity ever did occur of maligning the schoolmistress, yet the very thought alone that *if* such an opportunity were to occur he would inevitably seize it was almost fatal to him at times. He was not tortured with memory at every moment of his life; he had intervals of time to breathe and rest in. But the longer he stayed, the more unpleasant did he find his life in St. Petersburg. July came in. At certain moments he felt inclined to throw up his lawsuit and all, and go down to the Crimea; but after an hour or so he would despise his own idea, and laugh at himself for entertaining it.

"These thoughts won't be driven away by a mere journey down south," he said to himself, "when they have once begun to annoy me; besides, if I am easy in my conscience now, I surely need not try to run away from any such worrying recollections of past days!" "Why should I go after all?" he resumed, in a strain of melancholy philosophizing; "this place is a very heaven for a hypochondriac like myself, what with the dust and the heat, and the discomfort of this house, what with the nonsensical swagger and pretence of all these wretched little 'civil servants' in the departments I frequent! Everyone is delightfully candid — and candour is undoubtedly worthy of all respect! I *won't* go away — I'll stay and die here rather than go!"

CHAPTER II.

It was the third of July. The heat and closeness of the air had become quite unbearable. The day had been a busy one for Velchaninoff — he had been walking and driving about without rest, and had still in prospect a visit in the evening to a certain state councillor who lived somewhere on the Chornaya Riéchka (black stream), and whom he was anxious to drop in upon unexpectedly.

At six o'clock our hero issued from his house once more, and trudged off to dine at a restaurant on the Nefsky, near the police-bridge — a second-rate sort of place, but French. Here he took his usual corner, and ordered his usual dinner, and waited.

He always had a rouble[1] dinner, and paid for his wine extra, which moderation he looked upon as a discreet sacrifice to the temporary financial embarrassment under which he was suffering.

He regularly went through the ceremony of wondering how he could bring himself to eat "such nastiness," and yet as regularly he demolished every morsel, and with excellent show of appetite too, just as though he had eaten nothing for three days.

"This appetite can't be healthy!" he murmured to himself sometimes, observing his own voracity. However, on this particular occasion, he sat down to his dinner in a miserably bad humour: he threw his hat angrily away somewhere, tipped his chair back, — and reflected.

He was in the sort of humour that if his next neighbour — dining at the little table near him — were to rattle his plate, or if the boy serving him were to make any little blunder, or, in fact, if any little petty annoyance were to put him out of a sudden, he was quite capable of shouting at the offender, and, in fact, of kicking up a serious row on the smallest pretext.

Soup was served to him. He took up his spoon, and was about to commence operations, when he suddenly threw it down again, and started from his seat. An unexpected thought had struck him, and in an instant he had realized why he had been plunged in gloom and mental perturbation during the last few days. Goodness knows why he thus suddenly became inspired, as it were, with the truth; but so it was. He jumped from his chair, and in an instant it all stood out before him as plain as his five fingers! "It's all that hat!" he muttered to himself; "it's all simply and solely that

damnable round hat, with the crape band round it; that's the reason and cause of all my worries these last days!"

He began to think; and the more he thought, the more dejected he became, and the more astonishing appeared the "remarkable circumstance of the hat."

"But, hang it all, there *is* no circumstance!" he growled to himself. "What circumstance do I mean? There's been nothing in the nature of an event or occurrence!"

The fact of the matter was this: Nearly a fortnight since, he had met for the first time, somewhere about the corner of the Podiacheskaya, a gentleman with crape round his hat. There was nothing particular about the man — he was just like all others; but as he passed Velchaninoff he had stared at him so fixedly that it was impossible to avoid noticing him, and more than noticing — observing him attentively.

The man's face seemed to be familiar to Velchaninoff. He had evidently seen him somewhere and at some time or other.

"But one sees thousands of people during one's life," thought Velchaninoff; "one can't remember every face!" So he had gone on his way, and before he was twenty yards further, to all appearances he had forgotten all about the meeting, in spite of the strength of the first impression made upon him.

And yet he had *not* forgotten; for the impression remained all day, and a very original impression it was, too, — a kind of objectless feeling of anger against he knew not what. He remembered his exact feelings at this moment, a fortnight after the occurrence: how he had been puzzled by the angry nature of his sentiments at the time, and puzzled to such an extent that he had never for a moment connected his ill-humour with the meeting of the morning, though he had felt as cross as possible all day. But the gentleman with the crape band had not lost much time about reminding Velchaninoff of his existence, for the very next day he met the latter again, on the Nefsky Prospect and again he had stared in a peculiarly fixed way at him.

Velchaninoff flared up and spat on the ground in irritation — Russian like, but a moment after he was wondering at his own wrath. "There are faces, undoubtedly," he reflected, "which fill one with disgust at first sight; but I certainly *have* met that fellow somewhere or other.

"Yes, I *have* met him before!" he muttered again, half an hour later.

And again, as on the last occasion, he was in a vile humour all that evening, and even went so far as to have a bad dream in the night; and yet it never entered his head to imagine that the cause of his bad temper on both occasions had been the accidental meeting with the gentleman in mourning, although on the second evening he had remembered and thought of the chance encounter two or three times.

He had even flared up angrily to think that “such a dirty-looking cad” should presume to linger in his memory so long; he would have felt it humiliating to himself to imagine for a moment that such a wretched creature could possibly be in any way connected with the agitated condition of his feelings.

Two days later the pair had met once more at the landing place of one of the small Neva ferry steamers.

On the third occasion Velchaninoff was ready to swear that the man recognised him, and had pressed through the crowd towards him; had even dared to stretch out his hand and call him by name. As to this last fact he was not quite certain, however. “At all events, who the deuce *is* he?” thought Velchaninoff, “and why can’t the idiot come up and speak to me if he really does recognise me; and if he so much wishes to do so?” With these thoughts Velchaninoff had taken a droshky and started off for the Smolney Monastery, where his lawyer lived.

Half an hour later he was engaged in his usual quarrel with that gentleman.

But that same evening he was in a worse humour than ever, and his night was spent in fantastic dreams and imaginings, which were anything but pleasant. “I suppose it’s bile!” he concluded, as he paid his matutinal visit to the looking-glass.

This was the third meeting.

Then, for five days there was not a sign of the man; and yet, much to his distaste, Velchaninoff could not, for the life of him, avoid thinking of the man with the crape band.

He caught himself musing over the fellow. “What have I to do with him?” he thought. “What can his business in St. Petersburg be? — he looks busy: and whom is he in mourning for? He clearly recognises me, but I don’t know in the least who he is! And why do such people as he is put crape on their hats? it doesn’t seem ‘the thing’ for them, somehow! I believe I shall recognise this fellow if I ever get a good close look at him!”

And there came over him that sensation we all know so well — the same feeling that one has when one can't for the life of one think of the required word; every other word comes up; associations with the right word come up; occasions when one has used the word come up; one wanders round and round the immediate vicinity of the word wanted, but the actual word itself will not appear, though you may break your head to get at it!

"Let's see, now: it was — yes — some while since. It was — where on earth was it? There was a — oh! devil take whatever there was or wasn't there! What does it matter to me?" he broke off angrily of a sudden. "I'm not going to lower myself by thinking of a little cad like that!"

He felt very angry; but when, in the evening, he remembered that he had been so upset, and recollected the cause of his anger, he felt the disagreeable sensation of having been caught by someone doing something wrong.

This fact puzzled and annoyed him.

"There must be some reason for my getting so angry at the mere recollection of that man's face," he thought, but he didn't finish thinking it out.

But the next evening he was still more indignant; and this time, he really thought, with good cause. "Such audacity is unparalleled!" he said to himself.

The fact of the matter is, there had been a fourth meeting with the man of the crape hat band. The latter had apparently arisen from the earth and confronted him. But let me explain what had happened.

It so chanced that Velchaninoff had just met, accidentally, that very state-councillor mentioned a few pages back, whom he had been so anxious to see, and on whom he had intended to pounce unexpectedly at his country house. This gentleman evidently avoided Velchaninoff, but at the same time was most necessary to the latter in his lawsuit. Consequently, when Velchaninoff met him, the one was delighted, while the other was very much the reverse. Velchaninoff had immediately button-holed him, and walked down the street with him, talking; doing his very utmost to keep the sly old fox to the subject on which it was so necessary that he should be pumped. And it was just at this most important moment, when Velchaninoff's intellect was all on the *qui vive* to catch up the slightest hints of what he wished to get at, while the foxy old councillor (aware of the fact) was doing his best to reveal nothing, that the former, taking his eyes from

his companion's face for one instant, beheld the gentleman of the crape hatband walking along the other side of the road, and looking at him — nay, *watching* him, evidently — and apparently smiling!

"Devil take him!" said Velchaninoff, bursting out into fury at once, while the "old fox" instantly disappeared, "and I should have succeeded in another minute. Curse that dirty little hound! he's simply spying me. I'll — I'll hire somebody to — I'll take my oath he laughed at me! D — n him, I'll thrash him. I wish I had a stick with me. I'll — I'll buy one! I won't leave this matter so. Who the deuce is he? I *will* know! Who is he?"

At last, three days after this fourth encounter, we find Velchaninoff sitting down to dinner at his restaurant, as recorded a page or two back, in a state of mind bordering upon the furious. He could not conceal the state of his feelings from himself, in spite of all his pride. He was obliged to confess at last, that all his anxiety, his irritation, his state of agitation generally, must undoubtedly be connected with, and absolutely attributed to, the appearance of the wretched-looking creature with the crape hatband, in spite of his insignificance.

"I may be a hypochondriac," he reflected, "and I may be inclined to make an elephant out of a gnat; but how does it help me? What use is it to me if I persuade myself to believe that *perhaps* all this is fancy? Why, if every dirty little wretch like that is to have the power of upsetting a man like myself, why — it's — it's simply unbearable!"

Undoubtedly, at this last (fifth) encounter of to-day, the elephant had proved himself a very small gnat indeed. The "crape man" had appeared suddenly, as usual, and had passed by Velchaninoff, but without looking up at him this time; indeed, he had gone by with downcast eyes, and had even seemed anxious to pass unobserved. Velchaninoff had turned rapidly round and shouted as loud as ever he could at him.

"Hey!" he cried. "You! Crape hatband! You want to escape notice this time, do you? Who are you?"

Both the question and the whole idea of calling after the man were absurdly foolish, and Velchaninoff knew it the moment he had said the words. The man had turned round, stopped for an instant, lost his head, smiled — half made up his mind to say something, — had waited half a minute in painful indecision, then twisted suddenly round again, and "bolted" without a word. Velchaninoff gazed after him in amazement. "What if it be *I* that haunt *him*, and not he me, after all?" he thought.

However, Velchaninoff ate up his dinner, and then drove off to pounce upon the town councillor at the latter's house, if he could.

The councillor was not in; and he was informed that he would scarcely be at home before three or four in the morning, because he had gone to a "name's-day party."

Velchaninoff felt that this was too bad! In his rage he determined to follow and hunt the fellow up at the party: he actually took a droshky, and started off with that wild idea; but luckily he thought better of it on the way, got out of the vehicle and walked away towards the "Great Theatre," near which he lived. He felt that he must have motion; also he *must* absolutely sleep well this coming night: in order to sleep he must be tired; so he walked all the way home — a fairly long walk, and arrived there about half-past ten, as tired as he could wish.

His lodging, which he had taken last March, and had abused ever since, apologising to himself for living "in such a hole," and at the same time excusing himself for the fact by the reflection that it was only for a while, and that he had dropped quite accidentally into St. Petersburg — thanks to that cursed lawsuit! — his lodging, I say, was by no means so bad as he made it out to be!

The entrance certainly was a little dark, and dirty-looking, being just under the arch of the gateway. But he had two fine large light rooms on the second floor, separated by the entrance hall: one of these rooms overlooked the yard and the other the street. Leading out of the former of these was a smaller room, meant to be used as a bedroom; but Velchaninoff had filled it with a disordered array of books and papers, and preferred to sleep in one of the large rooms, the one overlooking the street, to wit.

His bed was made for him, every day, upon the large divan. The rooms were full of good furniture, and some valuable ornaments and pictures were scattered about, but the whole place was in dreadful disorder; the fact being that at this time Velchaninoff was without a regular servant. His one domestic had gone away to stay with her friends in the country; he thought of taking a man, but decided that it was not worth while for a short time; besides he hated flunkeys, and ended by making arrangements with his dvornik's sister Martha, who was to come up every morning and "do out" his rooms, he leaving the key with her as he went out each day. Martha did absolutely nothing towards tidying the place and robbed him besides, but he didn't care, he liked to be alone in the house. But solitude is all very well

within certain limits, and Velchaninoff found that his nerves could not stand all this sort of thing at certain bilious moments; and it so fell out that he began to loathe his room more and more every time he entered it.

However, on this particular evening he hardly gave himself time to undress; he threw himself on his bed, and determined that nothing should make him think of *anything*, and that he would fall asleep at once.

And, strangely enough, his head had hardly touched the pillow before he actually was asleep; and this was the first time for a month past that such a thing had occurred.

He awoke at about two, considerably agitated; he had dreamed certain very strange dreams, reminding him of the incoherent wanderings of fever.

The subject seemed to be some crime which he had committed and concealed, but of which he was accused by a continuous flow of people who swarmed into his rooms for the purpose. The crowd which had already collected within was enormous, and yet they continued to pour in in such numbers that the door was never shut for an instant.

But his whole interest seemed to centre in one strange looking individual, — a man who seemed to have once been very closely and intimately connected with him, but who had died long ago and now reappeared for some reason or other.

The most tormenting part of the matter was that Velchaninoff could not recollect who this man was, — he could not remember his name, — though he recollected the fact that he had once dearly loved him. All the rest of the people swarming into the room seemed to be waiting for the final word of this man, — either the condemnation or the justification of Velchaninoff was to be pronounced by him, — and everyone was impatiently waiting to hear him speak.

But he sat motionless at the table, and would not open his lips to say a word of any sort.

The uproar continued, the general annoyance increased, and, suddenly, Velchaninoff himself strode up to the man in a fury, and smote him because he would not speak. Velchaninoff felt the strangest satisfaction in having thus smitten him; his heart seemed to freeze in horror for what he had done, and in acute suffering for the crime involved in his action, — but in that very sensation of freezing at the heart lay the sense of satisfaction which he felt.

Exasperated more and more, he struck the man a second and a third time; and then — in a sort of intoxication of fury and terror, which amounted to actual insanity, and yet bore within it a germ of delightful satisfaction, he ceased to count his blows, and rained them in without ceasing.

He felt he must destroy, annihilate, demolish all this.

Suddenly something strange happened; everyone present had given a dreadful cry and turned expectantly towards the door, while at the same moment there came three terrific peals of the hall-bell, so violent that it appeared someone was anxious to pull the bell-handle out.

Velchaninoff awoke, started up in a second, and made for the door; he was persuaded that the ring at the bell had been no dream or illusion, but that someone had actually rung, and was at that moment standing at the front door.

"It would be *too* unnatural if such a clear and unmistakable ring should turn out to be nothing but an item of a dream!" he thought. But, to his surprise, it proved that such was nevertheless the actual state of the case! He opened the door and went out on to the landing; he looked downstairs and about him, but there was not a soul to be seen. The bell hung motionless. Surprised, but pleased, he returned into his room. He lit a candle, and suddenly remembered that he had left the door closed, but not locked and chained. He had often returned home before this evening and forgotten to lock the door behind him, without attaching any special significance to the fact; his maid had often respectfully protested against such neglect while with him. He now returned to the entrance hall to make the door fast; before doing so he opened it, however, and had one more look about the stairs. He then shut the door and fastened the chain and hook, but did not take the trouble to turn the key in the lock.

Some clock struck half-past two at this moment, so that he had had three hours' sleep — more or less.

His dream had agitated him to such an extent that he felt unwilling to lie down again at once; he decided to walk up and down the room two or three times first, just long enough to smoke a cigar. Having half-dressed himself, he went to the window, drew the heavy curtains aside and pulled up one of the blinds, it was almost full daylight. These light summer nights of St. Petersburg always had a bad effect upon his nerves, and of late they had added to the causes of his sleeplessness, so that a few weeks since he had

invested in these thick curtains, which completely shut out the light when drawn close.

Having thus let in the sunshine, quite oblivious of the lighted candle on the table, he commenced to walk up and down the room. Still feeling the burden of his dream upon him, its impression was even now at work upon his mind, he still felt a painfully guilty sensation about him, caused by the fact that he had allowed himself to raise his hand against “that man” and strike him. “But, my dear sir!” he argued with himself, “it was not a man at all! the whole thing was a dream! what’s the use of worrying yourself for nothing?”

Velchaninoff now became obstinately convinced that he was a sick man, and that to his sickly state of body was to be attributed all his perturbation of mind. He was an invalid.

It had always been a weak point with Velchaninoff that he hated to think of himself as growing old or infirm; and yet in his moments of anger he loved to exaggerate one or the other in order to worry himself.

“It’s old age,” he now muttered to himself, as he paced up and down the room. “I’m becoming an old fogey — that’s the fact of the matter! I’m losing my memory — see ghosts, and have dreams, and hear bells ring — curse it all! I know these dreams of old, they always herald fever with me. I dare swear that the whole business of this man with the crape hatband has been a dream too! I was perfectly right yesterday, he isn’t haunting me the least bit in the world; it is I that am haunting *him*! I’ve invented a pretty little ghost-story about him and then climb under the table in terror at my own creation! Why do I call him a little cad, too? he may be a most respectable individual for all I know! His face is a disagreeable one, certainly, though there is nothing hideous about it! He dresses just like anyone else. I don’t know — there’s something about his look — There I go again! What the devil have I got to do with his look? what a fool I am — just as though I could not live without the dirty little wretch — curse him!”

Among other thoughts connected with this haunting crape-man was one which puzzled Velchaninoff immensely; he felt convinced that at some time or other he had known the man, and known him very intimately; and that now the latter, when meeting him, always laughed at him because he was aware of some great secret of his former life, or because he was amused to see Velchaninoff’s present humiliating condition of poverty.

Mechanically our hero approached the window in order to get a breath of fresh air — when he was suddenly seized with a violent fit of shuddering; — a feeling came over him that something unusual and unheard-of was happening before his very eyes.

He had not had time to open the window when something he saw caused him to slip behind the corner of the curtain, and hide himself.

The man in the crape hatband was standing on the opposite side of the street.

He was standing with his face turned directly towards Velchaninoff's window, but evidently unaware of the latter's presence there, and was carefully examining the house, and apparently considering some question connected with it.

He seemed to come to a decision after a moment's thought, and raised his finger to his forehead; then he looked quietly about him, and ran swiftly across the road on tiptoe. He reached the gate, and entered it; this gate was often left open on summer nights until two or three in the morning.

"He's coming to me," muttered Velchaninoff, and with equal caution he left the window, and ran to the front door; arrived in the hall, he stood in breathless expectation before the door, and placed his trembling hand carefully upon the hook which he had fastened a few minutes since, and stood listening for the tread of the expected footfall on the stairs. His heart was beating so loud that he was afraid he might miss the sound of the cautious steps approaching.

He could understand nothing of what was happening, but it seemed clear that his dream was about to be realised.

Velchaninoff was naturally brave. He loved risk for its own sake, and very often ran into useless dangers, with no one by to see, to please himself. But this was different, somehow; he was not himself, and yet he was as brave as ever, but with something added. He made out every movement of the stranger from behind his own door.

"Ah! — there he comes! — he's on the steps now! — here he comes! — he's up now! — now he's looking down stairs and all about, and crouching down! Aha! there's his hand on the door-handle — he's trying it! — he thought he would find it unlocked! — then he must know that I *do* leave it unlocked sometimes! — He's trying it again! — I suppose he thinks the hook may slip! — he doesn't care to go away without doing anything!"

So ran Velchaninoff’s thoughts, and so indeed followed the man’s actions. There was no doubt about it, someone was certainly standing outside and trying the door-handle, carefully and cautiously pulling at the door itself, and, in fact, endeavouring to effect an entrance; equally sure was it that the person so doing must have his own object in trying to sneak into another man’s house at dead of night. But Velchaninoff’s plan of action was laid, and he awaited the proper moment; he was anxious to seize a good opportunity — slip the hook and chain — open the door wide, suddenly, and stand face to face with this bugbear, and then ask him what the deuce he wanted there.

No sooner devised than executed.

Awaiting the proper moment, Velchaninoff suddenly slipped the hook, pushed the door wide, and almost tumbled over the man with the crape hatband!

CHAPTER III.

The crape-man stood rooted to the spot dumb with astonishment.
Both men stood opposite one another on the landing, and both stared in each other's eyes, silent and motionless.

So passed a few moments, and suddenly, like a flash of lightning, Velchaninoff became aware of the identity of his guest.

At the same moment the latter seemed to guess that Velchaninoff had recognised him. Velchaninoff could see it in his eyes. In one instant the visitor's whole face was all ablaze with its very sweetest of smiles.

"Surely I have the pleasure of speaking to Aleksey Ivanovitch?" he asked, in the most dulcet of voices, comically inappropriate to the circumstances of the case.

"Surely you are Pavel Pavlovitch Trusotsky?" asked Velchaninoff, in return, after a pause, and with an expression of much perplexity.

"I had the pleasure of your acquaintance ten years ago at T —— , and, if I may remind you of the fact, we were almost intimate friends."

"Quite so — oh yes! but it is now three o'clock in the morning, and you have been trying my lock for the last ten minutes."

"Three o'clock!" cried the visitor, looking at his watch with an air of melancholy surprise.

"Why, so it is! dear me — three o'clock! forgive me, Aleksey Ivanovitch! I ought to have found it out before thinking of paying you a visit. I will do myself the honour of calling to explain another day, and now I — ."

"Oh no; — no, no! If you are to explain at all let's have it at once; this moment!" interrupted Velchaninoff warmly. "Kindly step in here, into the room! You must have meant to come in, you know; you didn't come here at night, like this, simply for the pleasure of trying my lock?"

He felt excited, and at the same time was conscious of a sort of timidity; he could not collect his thoughts. He was ashamed of himself for it. There was no danger, no mystery about the business, nothing but the silly figure of Pavel Pavlovitch.

And yet he could not feel satisfied that there was nothing particular in it; he felt afraid of something to come, he knew not what or when.

However, he made the man enter, seated him in a chair, and himself sat down on the side of his bed, a yard or so off, and rested his elbows on his knees while he quietly waited for the other to begin. He felt irritated; he stared at his visitor and let his thoughts run. Strangely enough, the other never opened his mouth; he seemed to be entirely oblivious of the fact that it was his duty to speak. Nay, he was even looking enquiringly at Velchaninoff as though quite expecting that the latter would speak to *him*!

Perhaps he felt a little uncomfortable at first, somewhat as a mouse must feel when he finds himself unexpectedly in the trap.

Velchaninoff very soon lost his patience.

"Well?" he cried, "you are not a fantasy or a dream or anything of that kind, are you? You aren't a corpse, are you? Come, my friend, this is not a game or play. I want your explanation, please!"

The visitor fidgeted about a little, smiled, and began to speak cautiously.

"So far as I can see," he said, "the time of night of my visit is what surprises you, and that I should have come as I did; in fact, when I remember the past, and our intimacy, and all that, I am astonished myself; but the fact is, I did not mean to come in at all, and if I did so it was purely an accident."

"An accident! Why, I saw you creeping across the road on tip-toes!"

"You saw me? Indeed! Come, then you know as much or more about the matter than I do; but I see I am annoying you. This is how it was: I've been in town three weeks or so on business. I am Pavel Pavlovitch Trusotsky, you recognized me yourself, my business in town is to effect an exchange of departments. I am trying for a situation in another place — one with a large increase of salary; but all this is beside the point; the fact of the matter is, I believe I have been delaying my business on purpose. I believe if everything were settled at this moment I should still be dawdling in this St. Petersburg of yours in my present condition of mind. I go wandering about as though I had lost all interest in things, and were rather glad of the fact, in my present condition of mind."

"What condition of mind?" asked Velchaninoff, frowning.

The visitor raised his eyes to Velchaninoff's, lifted his hat from the ground beside him, and with great dignity pointed out the black crape band.

"There, sir, in *that* condition of mind!" he observed.

Velchaninoff stared stupidly at the crape, and thence at the man's face. Suddenly his face flushed up in a hot blush for a moment, and he was

violently agitated.

“Not Natalia Vasilievna, surely?”

“Yes, Natalia Vasilievna! Last March! Consumption, sir, and almost suddenly — all over in two or three months — and here am I left as you see me!”

So saying, Pavel Pavlovitch, with much show of feeling, bent his bald head down and kept it bent for some ten seconds, while he held out his two hands, in one of which was the hat with the band, in explanatory emotion.

This gesture, and the man’s whole air, seemed to brighten Velchaninoff up; he smiled sarcastically for one instant, not more at present, for the news of this lady’s death (he had known her so long ago, and had forgotten her many a year since) had made a quite unexpected impression upon his mind.

“Is it possible!” he muttered, using the first words that came to his lips, “and pray why did you not come here and tell me at once?”

“Thanks for your kind interest, I see and value it, in spite of — —”

“In spite of what?”

“In spite of so many years of separation you at once sympathised with my sorrow — and in fact with myself, and so fully too — that I feel naturally grateful. That’s all I had to tell you, sir! Don’t suppose I doubt my friends, you know; why, even here, in this place, I could put my finger on several very sincere friends indeed (for instance, Stepan Michailovitch Bagantoff); but remember, my dear Aleksey Ivanovitch — nine years have passed since we were acquaintances — or friends, if you’ll allow me to say so — and meanwhile you have never been to see us, never written.”

The guest sang all this out as though he were reading it from music, but kept his eyes fixed on the ground the while, although, of course, he saw what was going on above his eyelashes exceedingly well all the same.

Velchaninoff had found his head by this time.

With a strange sort of fascinated attention, which strengthened itself every moment, he continued to gaze at and listen to Pavel Pavlovitch, and of a sudden, when the latter stopped speaking, a flood of curious ideas swept unexpectedly through his brain.

“But look here,” he cried, “how is it that I never recognized you all this while? — we’ve met five times, at least, in the streets!”

“Quite so — I am perfectly aware of the circumstance. You chanced to meet me two or three times, and — —”

“No, no! *you* met *me*, you know — not I you!” Velchaninoff suddenly burst into a roar of laughter, and rose from his seat. Pavel Pavlovitch paused a moment, looked keenly at Velchaninoff, and then continued:

“As to your not recognizing me, in the first place you might easily have forgotten me by now; and besides, I have had small-pox since last we met, and I daresay my face is a good deal marked.”

“Smallpox? why, how did you manage that? — he has had it, though, by Jove!” cried Velchaninoff. “What a funny fellow you are — however, go on, don’t stop.”

Velchaninoff’s spirits were rising higher and higher; he was beginning to feel wonderfully light-hearted. That feeling of agitation which had lately so disturbed him had given place to quite a different sentiment. He now began to stride up and down the room, very quickly.

“I was going to say,” resumed Pavel Pavlovitch, “that though I have met you several times, and though I quite intended to come and look you up, when I was arranging my visit to Petersburg, still, I was in that condition of mind, you know, and my wits have so suffered since last March, that — —”

“Wits since last March, — yes, go on: wait a minute — do you smoke?”

“Oh — you know, Natalia Vasilievna, never—”

“Quite so; but since March — eh?”

“Well — I might, a cigarette or so.”

“Here you are, then! Light up and go on, — go on! you interest me wonderfully.”

Velchaninoff lit a cigar and sat down on his bed again. Pavel Pavlovitch paused a moment.

“But what a state of agitation you seem to be in yourself!” said he, “are you quite well?”

“Oh, curse my health!” cried Velchaninoff,— “you go on!”

The visitor observed his host’s agitation with satisfaction; he went on with his share of the talking with more confidence.

“What am I to go on about?” he asked. “Imagine me, Alexey Ivanovitch — a broken man, — not simply broken, but gone at the root, as it were; a man forced to change his whole manner of living, after twenty years of married life, wandering about the dusty roads without an object, — mind lost — almost oblivious of his own self, — and yet, as it were, taking some sort of intoxicated delight in his loneliness! Isn’t it natural that if I should, at such a moment of self-forgetfulness come across a friend — even a *dear*

friend, I might prefer to avoid him for that moment? and isn't it equally natural that at another moment I should long to see and speak with some one who has been an eye-witness of, or a partaker, so to speak, in my never-to-be-recalled past? and to rush — not only in the day, but at night, if it so happens, — to rush to the embrace of such a man? — yes, even if one has to wake him up at three in the morning to do it! I was wrong in my time, not in my estimate of my friend, though, for at this moment I feel the full rapture of success; my rash action has been successful: I have found sympathy! As for the time of night, I confess I thought it was not twelve yet! You see, one sups of grief, and it intoxicates one, — at least, not grief, exactly, it's more the condition of mind — the new state of things that affects me."

"Dear me, how oddly you express yourself!" said Velchaninoff, rising from his seat once more, and becoming quite serious again.

"Oddly, do I? Perhaps."

"Look here: are you joking?"

"Joking!" cried Pavel Pavlovitch, in shocked surprise; "*joking* — at the very moment when I am telling you of — —"

"Oh — be quiet about that! for goodness sake."

Velchaninoff started off on his journey up and down the room again.

So matters stood for five minutes or so: the visitor seemed inclined to rise from his chair, but Velchaninoff bade him sit still, and Pavel Pavlovitch obediently flopped into his seat again.

"How changed you are!" said the host at last, stopping in front of the other chair, as though suddenly struck with the idea; "fearfully changed!"

"Wonderful! you're quite another man!"

"That's hardly surprising! *nine* years, sir!"

"No, no, no! years have nothing to do with it! it's not in appearance you are so changed: it's something else!"

"Well, sir, the nine years might account for anything."

"Perhaps it's only since March, eh?"

"Ha-ha! you are playful, sir," said Pavel Pavlovitch, laughing slyly. "But, if I may ask it, wherein am I so changed?"

"Oh — why, you used to be such a staid, sober, correct Pavel Pavlovitch; such a wise Pavel Pavlovitch; and now you're a good-for-nothing sort of Pavel Pavlovitch."

Velchaninoff was in that state of irritation when the steadiest, gravest people will sometimes say rather more than they mean.

“Good-for-nothing, am I? and *wise* no longer, I suppose, eh?” chuckled Pavel Pavlovitch, with disagreeable satisfaction.

“Wise, indeed! My dear sir, I’m afraid you are not sober,” replied Velchaninoff; and added to himself, “I am pretty fairly insolent myself, but I can’t compare with this little cad! And what on earth is the fellow driving at?”

“Oh, my dear, good, my best of Alexey Ivanovitches,” said the visitor suddenly, most excitedly, and twisting about on his chair, “and why *should* I be sober? We are not moving in the brilliant walks of society — you and I — just now. We are but two dear old friends come together in the full sincerity of perfect love, to recall and talk over that sweet mutual tie of which the dear departed formed so treasured a link in our friendship.”

So saying, the sensitive gentleman became so carried away by his feelings that he bent his head down once more, to hide his emotion, and buried his face in his hat.

Velchaninoff looked on with an uncomfortable feeling of disgust.

“I can’t help thinking the man is simply silly,” he thought; “and yet — no, no — his face is so red he must be drunk. But drunk or not drunk, what does the little wretch want with me? That’s the puzzle.”

“Do you remember — oh, *don’t* you remember — our delightful little evenings — dancing sometimes, or sometimes literary — at Simeon Simeonovitch’s?” continued the visitor, gradually removing his hat from before his face, and apparently growing more and more enthusiastic over the memories of the past, “and our little readings — you and she and myself — and our first meeting, when you came in to ask for information about something connected with your business in the town, and commenced shouting angrily at me; don’t you remember — when suddenly in came Natalia Vasilievna, and within ten minutes you were our dear friend, and so remained for exactly a year? Just like Turgenieff’s story ‘The Provincialka!’ ”

Velchaninoff had continued his walk up and down the room during this *tirade*, with his eyes on the ground, listening impatiently and with disgust — but listening *hard*, all the same.

“It never struck me to think of ‘The Provincialka’ in connection with the matter,” he interrupted. “And look here, why do you talk in that sneaking,

whining sort of voice? You never used to do that. Your whole manner is unlike yourself."

"Quite so, quite so. I used to be more silent, I know. I used to love to listen while others talked. You remember how well the dear departed talked — the wit and grace of her conversation. As to The Provincialka, I remember she and I used often to compare your friendship for us to certain episodes in that piece, and especially to the doings of one Stupendief. It really was remarkably like that character and his doings."

"What Stupendief do you mean, confound it all?" cried Velchaninoff, stamping his foot with rage. The name seemed to have evoked certain most irritating thoughts in his mind.

"Why, Stupendief, don't you know, the 'husband' in 'Provincialka,'" whined Pavel Pavlovitch, in the very sweetest of tones; "but that belongs to another set of fond memories — after you departed, in fact, when Mr. Bagantoff had honoured us with his friendship, just as you had done before him, only that his lasted five whole years."

"Bagantoff? What Bagantoff? Do you mean that same Bagantoff who was serving down in your town? Why, he also — —"

"Yes, yes! quite so. He also, he also!" cried the enthusiastic Pavel Pavlovitch, seizing upon Velchaninoff's accidental slip. "Of course! So that there you are — there's the whole company. Bagantoff played the 'count,' the dear departed was the 'Provincialka,' and I was the 'husband,' only that the part was taken away from me, for incapacity, I suppose!"

"Yes; fancy *you* a Stupendief. You're a — you're first a Pavel Pavlovitch Trusotsky!" said Velchaninoff, contemptuously, and very unceremoniously. "But look here! Bagantoff is in town; I know he is, for I have seen him. Why don't you go to see *him* as well as myself?"

"My dear sir, I've been there every day for the last three weeks. He won't receive me; he's ill, and can't receive! And, do you know, I have found out that he really is very ill! Fancy my feelings — a five-year's friend! Oh, my dear Alexey Ivanovitch! you don't know what my feelings are in my present condition of mind. I assure you, at one moment I long for the earth to open and swallow me up, and the next I feel that I *must* find one of those old friends, eyewitnesses of the past, as it were, if only to weep on his bosom, only to weep, sir — give you my word."

"Well, that's about enough for to-night; don't you think so?" said Velchaninoff, cuttingly.

“Oh, too — too much!” cried the other, rising. “It must be four o’clock; and here am I agitating your feelings in the most selfish way.”

“Now, look here; I shall call upon you myself, and I hope that you will then —— but, tell me honestly, are you drunk to-night?”

“Drunk! not the least in the world!”

“Did you drink nothing before you came here, or earlier?”

“Do you know, my dear Alexey Ivanovitch, you are quite in a high fever!”

“Good-night. I shall call to-morrow.”

“And I have noticed it all the evening, really quite delirious!” continued Pavel Pavlovitch, licking his lips, as it were, with satisfaction as he pursued this theme. “I am really quite ashamed that I should have allowed myself to be so awkward as to agitate you. Well, well; I’m going! Now you must lie down at once and go to sleep.”

“You haven’t told me where you live,” shouted Velchaninoff after him as he left the room.

“Oh, didn’t I? Pokrofsky Hotel.”

Pavel Pavlovitch was out on the stairs now.

“Stop!” cried Velchaninoff, once more. “You are not ‘running away,’ are you?”

“How do you mean, ‘running away?’ ” asked Pavel Pavlovitch, turning round at the third step, and grinning back at him, with his eyes staring very wide open.

Instead of replying, Velchaninoff banged the door fiercely, locked and bolted it, and went fuming back into his room. Arrived there, he spat on the ground, as though to get rid of the taste of something loathsome.

He then stood motionless for at least five minutes, in the centre of the room; after which he threw himself upon his bed, and fell asleep in an instant.

The forgotten candle burned itself out in its socket.

CHAPTER IV.

Velchaninoff slept soundly until half-past nine, at which hour he started up, sat down on the side of his bed, and began to think.
His thoughts quickly fixed themselves upon the death of “that woman.”

The agitating impression wrought upon his mind by yesterday’s news as to her death had left a painful feeling of mental perturbation.

This morning the whole of the events of nine years back stood out before his mind’s eye with extraordinary distinctness.

He had loved this woman, Natalia Vasilievna — Trusotsky’s wife, — he had loved her, and had acted the part of her lover during the time which he had spent in their provincial town (while engaged in business connected with a legacy); he had lived there a whole year, though his business did not require by any means so long a visit; in fact, the tie above mentioned had detained him in the place.

He had been so completely under the influence of this passion, that Natalia Vasilievna had held him in a species of slavery. He would have obeyed the slightest whim or the wildest caprice of the woman, at that time. He had never, before or since, experienced anything approaching to the infatuation she had caused.

When the time came for departing, Velchaninoff had been in a state of such absolute despair, though the parting was to have been but a short one, that he had begged Natalia Vasilievna to leave all and fly across the frontier with him; and it was only by laughing him out of the idea (though she had at first encouraged it herself, probably for a joke), and by unmercifully chaffing him, that the lady eventually persuaded Velchaninoff to depart alone.

However, he had not been a couple of months in St. Petersburg before he found himself asking himself that question which he had never to this day been able to answer satisfactorily, namely, “*Did* he love this woman at all, or was it nothing but the infatuation of the moment?” He did not ask this question because he was conscious of any new passion taking root in his heart; on the contrary, during those first two months in town he had been in that condition of mind that he had not so much as looked at a woman, though he had met hundreds, and had returned to his old society ways at once. And yet he knew perfectly well that if he were to return to T —— he

would instantly fall into the meshes of his passion for Natalia Vasilievna once more, in spite of the question which he could not answer as to the reality of his love for her.

Five years later he was as convinced of this fact as ever, although the very thought of it was detestable to him, and although he did not remember the name of Natalia Vasilievna but with loathing.

He was ashamed of that episode at T —— . He could not understand how he (Velchaninoff) could ever have allowed himself to become the victim of such a stupid passion. He blushed whenever he thought of the shameful business — blushed, and even wept for shame.

He managed to forget his remorse after a few more years — he felt sure that he had "lived it down;" and yet now, after nine years, here was the whole thing resuscitated by the news of Natalia's death.

At all events, however, now, as he sat on his bed with agitating thoughts swarming through his brain, he could not but feel that the fact of her being dead was a consolation, amidst all the painful reflections which the mention of her name had called up.

"Surely I am a little sorry for her?" he asked himself.

Well, he certainly did not feel that sensation of hatred for her now; he could think of her and judge her now without passion of any kind, and therefore more justly.

He had long since been of opinion that in all probability there had been nothing more in Natalia Vasilievna than is to be found in every lady of good provincial society, and that he himself had created the whole "fantasy" of his worship and her worshipfulness; but though he had formed this opinion, he always doubted its correctness, and he still felt that doubt now. Facts existed to contradict the theory. For instance, this Bagantoff had lived for several years at T —— , and had been no less a victim to passion for this woman, and had been as helpless as Velchaninoff himself under her witchery. Bagantoff, though a young idiot (as Velchaninoff expressed it), was nevertheless a scion of the very highest society in St. Petersburg. His career was in St. Petersburg, and it was significant that such a man should have wasted five important years of his life at T —— simply out of love for this woman. It was said that he had only returned to Petersburg even then because the lady had had enough of him; so that, all things considered, there must have been something which rendered Natalia Vasilievna preeminently attractive among women.

Yet the woman was not rich; she was not even pretty (if not absolutely *plain*!) Velchaninoff had known her when she was twenty-eight years old. Her face was capable of taking a pleasing expression, but her eyes were not good — they were too hard. She was a thin, bony woman to look at. Her mind was intelligent, but narrow and one-sided. She had tact and taste, especially as to dress. Her character was firm and overbearing. She was never wrong (in her own opinion) or unjust. The unfaithfulness towards her husband never caused her the slightest remorse; she hated corruption, and yet she was herself corrupt; and she believed in herself absolutely. Nothing could ever have persuaded her that she herself was actually depraved; Velchaninoff believed that she really did not know that her own corruption was corrupt. He considered her to be "one of those women who only exist to be unfaithful wives." Such women never remain unmarried, — it is the law of their nature to marry, — their husband is their first lover, and he is always to blame for anything that may happen afterwards; the unfaithful wife herself being invariably *absolutely* in the right, and of course perfectly innocent.

So thought Velchaninoff; and he was convinced that such a type of woman actually existed; but he was no less convinced that there also existed a corresponding type of men, born to be the husbands of such women. In his opinion the mission of such men was to be, so to speak, "permanent husbands," — that is, to be husbands all their lives, and nothing else.

Velchaninoff had not the smallest doubt as to the existence of these two types, and Pavel Pavlovitch Trusotsky was, in his opinion, an excellent representative of the male type. Of course, the Pavel Pavlovitch of last night was by no means the same Pavel Pavlovitch as he had known at T —— . He had found an extraordinary change in the man; and yet, on reflection, he was bound to admit that the change was but natural, for that he could only have remained what he was so long as his wife lived; and that now he was but a part of a whole, allowed to wander at will — that is, an imperfect being, a surprising, an incomprehensible sort of a *thing*, without proper balance.

As for the Pavel Pavlovitch of T —— , this is what Velchaninoff remembered of him:

Pavel Pavlovitch had been a husband, of course, — a formality, — and that was all. If, for instance, he was a clerk of department besides, he was so merely in his capacity of, and as a part of his responsibility as — a husband.

He worked for his wife, and for her social position. He had been thirty-five years old at that time, and was possessed of some considerable property. He had not shown any special talent, nor, on the other hand, any marked incapacity in his professional employment; his position had been decidedly a good one.

Natalia Vasilievna had been respected and looked up to by all; not that she valued their respect in the least, — she considered it merely as her due. She was a good hostess, and had schooled Pavel Pavlovitch into polite manners, so that he was able to receive and entertain the very best society passably well.

He might be a clever man, for all Velchaninoff knew, but as Natalia Vasilievna did not like her husband to talk much, there was little opportunity of judging. He may have had many good qualities, as well as bad; but the good ones were, so to speak, kept put away in their cases, and the bad ones were stifled and not allowed to appear. Velchaninoff remembered, for instance, that Pavel Pavlovitch had once or twice shown a disposition to laugh at those about him, but this unworthy proclivity had been very promptly subdued. He had been fond of telling stories, but this was not allowed either; or, if permitted at all, the anecdote was to be of the shortest and most uninteresting description.

Pavel Pavlovitch had a circle of private friends outside the house, with whom he was fain, at times, to taste the flowing bowl; but this vicious tendency was radically stamped out as soon as possible.

And yet, with all this, Natalia Vasilievna appeared, to the uninitiated, to be the most obedient of wives, and doubtless considered herself so. Pavel Pavlovitch may have been desperately in love with her, — no one could say as to this.

Velchaninoff had frequently asked himself during his life at T —— , whether Pavel Pavlovitch ever suspected his wife of having formed the tie with himself, of which mention has been made. Velchaninoff had several times questioned Natalia Vasilievna on this point, seriously enough; but had invariably been told, with some show of annoyance, that her husband neither did know, nor ever could know; and that “all there might be to know was not his business!”

Another trait in her character was that she never laughed at Pavel Pavlovitch, and never found him funny in any sense; and that she would have been down on any person who dared to be rude to him, at once!

Pavel Pavlovitch's reference to the pleasant little readings enjoyed by the trio nine years ago was accurate; they used to read Dickens' novels together. Velchaninoff or Trusotsky reading aloud, while Natalia Vasilievna worked. The life at T —— had ended suddenly, and so far as Velchaninoff was concerned, in a way which drove him almost to the verge of madness. The fact is, he was simply turned out — although it was all managed in such a way that he never observed that he was being thrown over like an old worn-out shoe.

A young artillery officer had appeared in the town a month or so before Velchaninoff's departure and had made acquaintance with the Trusotsky's. The trio became a quartet. Before long Velchaninoff was informed that for many reasons a separation was absolutely necessary; Natalia Vasilievna adduced a hundred excellent reasons why this had become unavoidable — and especially one which quite settled the matter. After his stormy attempt to persuade Natalia Vasilievna to fly with him to Paris — or anywhere, — Velchaninoff had ended by going to St. Petersburg alone — for two or three months at the *very most,* as he said, — otherwise he would refuse to go at all, in spite of every reason and argument Natalia might adduce.

Exactly two months later Velchaninoff had received a letter from Natalia Vasilievna, begging him to come no more to T —— , because that she already loved another. As to the principal reason which she had brought forward in favour of his immediate departure, she now informed him that she had made a mistake. Velchaninoff remembered the young artilleryman, and understood, — and so the matter had ended, once and for all. A year or two after this Bagantoff appeared at T —— , and an intimacy between Natalia Vasilievna and the former had sprung up which lasted for five years. This long period of constancy, Velchaninoff attributed to advancing age on the part of Natalia. He sat on the side of his bed for nearly an hour and thought. At last he roused himself, rang for Mavra and his coffee, drank it off quickly — dressed — and punctually at eleven was on his way to the Pokrofsky Hotel: he felt rather ashamed of his behaviour to Pavel Pavlovitch last night. Velchaninoff put down all that phantasmagoria of the trying of the lock and so on to Pavel Pavlovitch's drunken condition and to other reasons, — but he did not know why he was now on his way to make fresh relations with the husband of that woman, since their acquaintanceship and intercourse had come to so natural and simple a

termination; yet something seemed to draw him thither — some strong current of impulse, — and he went.

CHAPTER V.

Pavel Pavlovitch was not thinking of “running away,” and goodness knows why Velchaninoff should have asked him such a question last night — he did not know himself why he had said it!

He was directed to the Petrofsky Hotel, and found the building at once. At the hotel he was told that Pavel Pavlovitch had now engaged a furnished lodging in the back part of the same house.

Mounting the dirty and narrow stairs indicated, as far as the third storey, he suddenly became aware of someone crying. It sounded like the weeping of a child of some seven or eight years of age; it was a bitter, but a more or less suppressed sort of crying, and with it came the sound of a grown man’s voice, apparently trying to quiet the child — anxious that its sobbing and crying should not be heard, — and yet only succeeding in making it cry the louder.

The man’s voice did not seem in any way sympathetic with the child’s grief; and the latter appeared to be begging for forgiveness.

Making his way into a narrow dark passage with two doors on each side of it, Velchaninoff met a stout-looking, elderly woman, in very careless morning attire, and inquired for Pavel Pavlovitch.

She tapped the door with her fingers in response to his inquiry — the same door, apparently, whence issued the noises just mentioned. Her fat face seemed to flush with indignation as she did so.

“He appears to be amusing himself in there!” she said, and proceeded downstairs.

Velchaninoff was about to knock, but thought better of it and opened the door without ceremony.

In the very middle of a room furnished with plain, but abundant furniture, stood Pavel Pavlovitch in his shirt-sleeves, very red in the face, trying to persuade a little girl to do something or other, and using cries and gestures, and what looked to Velchaninoff very like kicks, in order to effect his purpose. The child appeared to be some seven or eight years of age, and was poorly dressed in a short black stuff frock. She seemed to be in a most hysterical condition, crying and stretching out her arms to Pavel Pavlovitch, as though begging and entreating him to allow her to do whatever it might be she desired.

On Velchaninoff's appearance the scene changed in an instant. No sooner did her eyes fall on the visitor than the child made for the door of the next room, with a cry of alarm; while Pavel Pavlovitch — thrown out for one little instant — immediately relaxed into smiles of great sweetness — exactly as he had done last night, when Velchaninoff suddenly opened his front door and caught him standing outside.

"Alexey Ivanovitch!" he cried in real surprise; "who ever would have thought it! Sit down — sit down — take the sofa — or this chair, — sit down, my dear sir! I'll just put on — —" and he rushed for his coat and threw it on, leaving his waistcoat behind.

"Don't stand on ceremony with me," said Velchaninoff sitting down; "stay as you are!"

"No, sir, no! excuse me — I insist upon standing on ceremony. There, now! I'm a little more respectable! Dear me, now, who ever would have thought of seeing *you* here! — not I, for one!"

Pavel Pavlovitch sat down on the edge of a chair, which he turned so as to face Velchaninoff.

"And pray *why* shouldn't you have expected me? I told you last night that I was coming this morning!"

"I thought you wouldn't come, sir — I did indeed; in fact, when I thought over yesterday's visit, I despaired of ever seeing you again: I did indeed, sir!"

Velchaninoff glanced round the room meanwhile. The place was very untidy; the bed was unmade; the clothes thrown about the floor; on the table were two coffee tumblers with the dregs of coffee still in them, and a bottle of champagne half finished, and with a tumbler standing alongside it. He glanced at the next room, but all was quiet there; the little girl had hidden herself, and was as still as a mouse.

"You don't mean to say you drink that stuff at this time of day?" he asked, indicating the champagne bottle.

"It's only a remnant," explained Pavel Pavlovitch, a little confused.

"My word! You *are* a changed man!"

"Bad habits, sir; and all of a sudden. All dating from that time, sir. Give you my word, I couldn't resist it. But I'm all right now — I'm not drunk — I shan't talk twaddle as I did last night; don't be afraid sir, it's all right! From that very day, sir; give you my word it is! And if anyone had told me half a year ago that I should become like this, — if they had shown me my

face in a glass then as I should be *now*, I should have given them the lie, sir; I should indeed!”

“Hem! Then you *were* drunk last night?”

“Yes — I was!” admitted Pavel Pavlovitch, a little guiltily— “not exactly *drunk*, a little *beyond* drunk! — I tell you this by way of explanation, because I’m always worse *after* being drunk! If I’m only a little drunk, still the violence and unreasonableness of intoxication come out afterwards, and stay out too; and then I feel my grief the more keenly. I daresay my grief is responsible for my drinking. I am capable of making an awful fool of myself and offending people when I’m drunk. I daresay I seemed strange enough to you last night?”

“Don’t you remember what you said and did?”

“Assuredly I do — I remember everything!”

“Listen to me, Pavel Pavlovitch: I have thought it over and have come to very much the same conclusion as you did yourself,” began Velchaninoff gently; “besides — I believe I was a little too irritable towards you last night — too impatient, — I admit it gladly; the fact is — I am not very well sometimes, and your sudden arrival, you know, in the middle of the night — —”

“In the middle of the night: you are quite right — it was!” said Pavel Pavlovitch, wagging his head assentingly; “how in the world could I have brought myself to do such a thing? I shouldn’t have come in, though, if you hadn’t opened the door. I should have gone as I came. I called on you about a week ago, and did not find you at home, and I daresay I should never have called again; for I am rather proud — Alexey Ivanovitch — in spite of my present state. Whenever I have met you in the streets I have always said to myself, ‘What if he doesn’t know me and rejects me — nine years is no joke!’ and I did not dare try you for fear of being snubbed. Yesterday, thanks to that sort of thing, you know,” (he pointed to the bottle), “I didn’t know what time it was, and — it’s lucky you are the kind of man you are, Alexey Ivanovitch, or I should despair of preserving your acquaintance, after yesterday! You remember old times, Alexey Ivanovitch!”

Velchaninoff listened keenly to all this. The man seemed to be talking seriously enough, and even with some dignity; and yet he had not believed a single word that Pavel Pavlovitch had uttered from the very first moment that he entered the room.

“Tell me, Pavel Pavlovitch,” said Velchaninoff at last, “ — I see you are not quite alone here, — whose little girl is that I saw when I came in?”

Pavel Pavlovitch looked surprised and raised his eyebrow; but he gazed back at Velchaninoff with candour and apparent amiability:

“Whose little girl? Why that’s our Liza!” he said, smiling affably.

“What Liza?” asked Velchaninoff, — and something seemed to cause him to shudder inwardly.

The sensation was dreadfully sudden. Just now, on entering the room and seeing Liza, he had felt surprised more or less, — but had not been conscious of the slightest feeling of presentiment, — indeed he had had no special thought about the matter, at the moment.

“Why — *our* Liza! — our daughter Liza!” repeated Pavel Pavlovitch, smiling.

“Your daughter? Do you mean to say that you and Natalia Vasilievna had children?” asked Velchaninoff timidly, and in a very low tone of voice indeed!

“Of course — but — what a fool I am — how in the world should *you* know! Providence sent us the gift after you had gone!”

Pavel Pavlovitch jumped off his chair in apparently pleasurable excitement.

“I heard nothing of it!” said Velchaninoff, looking very pale.

“How should you? how should you?” repeated Pavel Pavlovitch with ineffable sweetness. “We had quite lost hope of any children — as you may remember, — when suddenly Heaven sent us this little one. And, oh! my feelings — Heaven alone knows what I felt! Just a year after you went, I think — no, wait a bit — not a year by a long way! — Let’s see, you left us in October, or November, didn’t you?”

“I left T —— on the twelfth of September, I remember well.”

“Hum! September was it? Dear me! Well, then, let’s see — September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April — to the 8th of May — that was Liza’s birthday — eight months all but a bit; and if you could only have seen the dear departed, how rejoiced — —”

“Show her to me — call her in!” the words seemed to tear themselves from Velchaninoff, whether he liked it or no.

“Certainly — this moment!” cried Pavel Pavlovitch, forgetting that he had not finished his previous sentence, or ignoring the fact; and he hastily left the room, and entered the small chamber adjoining.

Three or four minutes passed by, while Velchaninoff heard the rapid interchange of whispers going on, and an occasional rather louder sound of Liza's voice, apparently entreating her father to leave her alone — so Velchaninoff concluded.

At last the two came out.

"There you are — she's dreadfully shy and proud," said Pavel Pavlovitch; "just like her mother."

Liza entered the room without tears, but with eyes downcast, her father leading her by the hand. She was a tall, slight, and very pretty little girl. She raised her large blue eyes to the visitor's face with curiosity; but only glanced surlily at him, and dropped them again. There was that in her expression that one always sees in children when they look on some new guest for the first time — retiring to a corner, and looking out at him thence seriously and mistrustingly; only that there was a something in her manner beyond the usual childish mistrust — so, at least thought Velchaninoff.

Her father brought her straight up to the visitor.

"There — this gentleman knew mother very well. He was our friend; you mustn't be shy, — give him your hand!"

The child bowed slightly, and timidly stretched out her hand.

"Natalia Vasilievna never would teach her to curtsey; she liked her to bow, English fashion, and give her hand," explained Pavel Pavlovitch, gazing intently at Velchaninoff.

Velchaninoff knew perfectly well that the other was keenly examining him at this moment, but he made no attempt to conceal his agitation: he sat motionless on his chair and held the child's hand in his, gazing into her face the while.

But Liza was apparently much preoccupied, and did not take her eyes off her father's face; she listened timidly to every word he said.

Velchaninoff recognised her large blue eyes at once; but what specially struck him was the refined pallor of her face, and the colour of her hair; these traits were altogether too significant, in his eyes! Her features, on the other hand, and the set of her lips, reminded him keenly of Natalia Vasilievna. Meanwhile Pavel Pavlovitch was in the middle of some apparently most interesting tale — one of great sentiment seemingly, — but Velchaninoff did not hear a word of it until the last few words struck upon his ear:

“... So that you can’t imagine what our joy was when Providence sent us this gift, Alexey Ivanovitch! She was everything to me, for I felt that if it should be the will of Heaven to deprive me of my other joy, I should still have Liza left to me; that’s what I felt, sir, I did indeed!”

“And Natalia Vasilievna?” asked Velchaninoff.

“Oh, Natalia Vasilievna—” began Pavel Pavlovitch, smiling with one side of his mouth; “she never used to like to say much — as you know yourself; but she told me on her deathbed — deathbed! you know, sir — to the very day of her death she used to get so angry and say that they were trying to cure her with a lot of nasty medicines when she had nothing the matter but a simple little feverish attack; and that when Koch arrived (you remember our old doctor Koch?) he would make her all right in a fortnight. Why, five hours before she died she was talking of fixing that day three weeks for a visit to her Aunt, Liza’s godmother, at her country place!” Velchaninoff here started from his seat, but still held the child’s hand. He could not help thinking that there was something reproachful in the girl’s persistent stare in her father’s face.

“Is she ill?” he asked hurriedly, and his voice had a strange tone in it.

“No! I don’t think so” said Pavel Pavlovitch; “but, you see our way of living here, and all that: she’s a strange child and very nervous, besides! After her mother’s death she was quite ill and hysterical for a fortnight. Just before you came in she was crying like anything; and do you know what about, sir? Do you hear me, Liza? — You listen! — Simply because I was going out, and wished to leave her behind, and because she said I didn’t love her so well as I used to in her mother’s time. That’s what she pitches into me for! Fancy a child like this getting hold of such an idea! — a child who ought to be playing at dolls, instead of developing ideas of that sort! The thing is, she has no one to play with here.”

“Then — then — are you two quite alone here?”

“Quite! a servant comes in once a day, that’s all!”

“And when you go out, do you leave her quite alone?”

“Of course! What else am I to do? Yesterday I locked her in that room, and that’s what all the tears were about this morning. What could I do? the day before yesterday she went down into the yard all by herself, and a boy took a shot at her head with a stone! Not only that, but she must needs go and cling on to everybody she met, and ask where I had gone to! That’s not so very pleasant, you see! But I oughtn’t to complain when I say I am going

out for an hour and then stay out till four in the morning, as I did last night! The landlady came and let her out: she had the door broken open! Nice for my feelings, eh! It's all the result of the eclipse that came over my life; nothing but that, sir!"

"Papa!" said the child, timidly and anxiously.

"Now, then! none of that again! What did I tell you yesterday?"

"I won't; I won't!" cried the child hurriedly, clasping her hands before her entreatingly.

"Come! things can't be allowed to go on in this way!" said Velchaninoff impatiently, and with authority. "In the first place, you are a man of property; how can you possibly live in a hole like this, and in such disorder?"

"This place! Oh, but we shall probably have left this place within a week; and I've spent a lot of money here, as it is, though I may be 'a man of property;' and — —"

"Very well, that'll do," interrupted Velchaninoff with growing impatience, "now, I'll make you a proposition: you have just said that you intend to stay another week — perhaps two. I have a house here — or rather I know a family where I am as much at home as at my own fireside, and have been so for twenty years. The family I mean is the Pogoryeltseffs — Alexander Pavlovitch Pogoryeltseff is a state councillor (he may be of use to you in your business!) They are now living in the country — they have a beautiful country villa; Claudia Petrovna, the lady of the house, is like a sister — like a mother to me; they have eight children. Let me take Liza down to them without loss of time! they'll receive her with joy, and they'll treat her like their own little daughter — they will, indeed!"

Velchaninoff was in a great hurry, and much excited, and he did not conceal his feelings.

"I'm afraid it's impossible!" said Pavel Pavlovitch with a grimace, looking straight into his visitor's eyes, very cunningly, as it seemed to Velchaninoff.

"Why! why, impossible?"

"Oh, why! to let the child go — so suddenly, you know, of course with such a sincere well-wisher as yourself — it's not that! — but a strange house — and such swells, too! — I don't know whether they would receive her!"

“But I tell you I’m like a son of the house!” cried Velchaninoff, almost angrily. “Claudia Petrovna will be delighted to take her, at one word from me! She’d receive her as though she were my own daughter. Deuce take it, sir, you know you are only humbugging me, — what’s the use of talking about it?”

He stamped his foot.

“No — no! I mean to say — don’t it look a little strange? Oughtn’t I to call once or twice first? — such a smart house as you say theirs is — don’t you see — —”

“I tell you it’s the simplest house in the world; it isn’t ‘smart’ in the least bit,” cried Velchaninoff; “they have a lot of children: it will make another girl of her! — I’ll introduce you there myself, to-morrow, if you like. Of course you’ll have to go and thank them, and all that. You shall go down every day with me, if you please.”

“Oh, but — —”

“Nonsense! You know it’s nonsense! Now look here: you come to me this evening — I’ll put you up for the night — and we’ll start off early to-morrow and be down there by twelve.”

“Benefactor! — and I may spend the night at your house?” cried Pavel Pavlovitch, instantly consenting to the plan with the greatest cordiality,— “you are really *too* good! And where’s their country house?”

“At the Liesnoy.”

“But look here, how about her dress? Such a house, you know, — a father’s heart shrinks — —”

“Nonsense! — she’s in mourning — what else could she wear but a black dress like this? it’s exactly the thing; you couldn’t imagine anything more so! — you might let her have some clean linen with her, and give her a cleaner neck-handkerchief.”

“Directly, directly. We’ll get her linen together in a couple of minutes — it’s just home from the wash!”

“Send for a carriage — can you? Tell them to let us have it at once, so as not to waste time.”

But now an unexpected obstacle arose: Liza absolutely rejected the plan; she had listened to it with terror, and if Velchaninoff had, in his excited argument with Pavel Pavlovitch, had time to glance at the child’s face, he would have observed her expression of absolute despair at this moment.

“I won’t go!” she said, quietly but firmly.

“There — look at that! Just like her mamma!”

“I’m *not* like mamma, I’m *not* like mamma!” cried Liza, wringing her little hands in despair. “Oh, papa — papa!” she added, “if you desert me—” she suddenly threw herself upon the alarmed Velchaninoff— “If you take me away—” she cried— “I’ll — —”

But Liza had no time to finish her sentence, for Pavel Pavlovitch suddenly seized her by the arm and collar and hustled her into the next room with unconcealed rage. For several minutes Velchaninoff listened to the whispering going on there, — whisperings and seemingly subdued crying on the part of Liza. He was about to follow the pair, when suddenly out came Pavel Pavlovitch, and stated — with a disagreeable grin — that Liza would come directly.

Velchaninoff tried not to look at him and kept his eyes fixed on the other side of the room.

The elderly woman whom Velchaninoff had met on the stairs also made her appearance, and packed Liza’s things into a neat little carpet bag.

“Is it you that are going to take the little lady away, sir?” she asked; “if so, you are doing a good deed! She’s a nice quiet child, and you are saving her from goodness knows what, here!”

“Oh! come — Maria Sisevna,” — began Pavel Pavlovitch.

“Well? What? Isn’t it true! Arn’t you ashamed to let a girl of her intelligence see the things that you allow to go on here? The carriage has arrived for you, sir, — *you* ordered one for the Liesnoy, didn’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Well, good luck to you!”

Liza came out, looking very pale and with downcast eyes; she took her bag, but never glanced in Velchaninoff’s direction. She restrained herself and did not throw herself upon her father, as she had done before — not even to say good-bye. She evidently did not wish to look at him.

Her father kissed her and patted her head in correct form; her lip curled during the operation, the chin trembled a little, but she did not raise her eyes to her father’s.

Pavel Pavlovitch looked pale, and his hands shook; Velchaninoff saw that plainly enough, although he did his best not to see the man at all. He (Velchaninoff) had but one thought, and that was how to get away at once!

Downstairs was old Maria Sisevna, waiting to say good-bye; and more kissing was done. Liza had just climbed into the carriage when suddenly

she caught sight of her father’s face; she gave a loud cry and wrung her hands, — in another minute she would have been out of the carriage and away, but luckily the vehicle went on and she was too late!

CHAPTER VI.

“Are you feeling faint?” asked Velchaninoff of his companion, frightened out of his wits: “I’ll tell him to stop and get you some water, shall I?”

She looked at him angrily and reproachfully.

“Where are you taking me to?” she asked coldly and abruptly.

“To a very beautiful house, Liza. There are plenty of children, — they’ll all love you there, they are so kind! Don’t be angry with me, Liza; I wish you well, you know!”

In truth, Velchaninoff would have looked strange at this moment to any acquaintance, if such had happened to see him!

“How — how — how — oh! *how* wicked you are!” said Liza, fighting with suppressed tears, and flashing her fine angry eyes at him.

“But Liza — I — —”

“You are bad — bad — and wicked!” cried Liza. She wrung her hands.

Velchaninoff was beside himself.

“Oh, Liza, Liza! if only you knew what despair you are causing me!” he said.

“Is it true that he is coming down to-morrow?” asked the child haughtily — “is it true or not?”

“Quite true — I shall bring him down myself, — I shall take him and bring him!”

“He will deceive you somehow!” cried the child, drooping her eyes.

“Doesn’t he love you, then, Liza?”

“No.”

“Has he ill-treated you, — has he?”

Liza looked gloomily at her questioner, and said nothing. She then turned away from him and sat still and depressed.

Velchaninoff commenced to talk: he tried to win her, — he spoke warmly — excitedly — feverishly.

Liza listened incredulously and with a hostile air, — but still she listened. Her attention delighted him beyond measure; — he went so far as to explain to her what it meant when a man took to drink. He said that he loved her and would himself look after her father.

At last Liza raised her eyes and gazed fixedly at him.

Then Velchaninoff began to speak of her mother and of how well he had known her; and he saw that his tales attracted her. Little by little she began to reply to his questions, but very cautiously and in an obstinately monosyllabic way.

She would answer nothing to his chief inquiries; as to her former relations with her father, for instance, she maintained an obstinate silence.

While speaking to her, Velchaninoff held the child's hand in his own, as before; and she did not try to take it away.

Liza said enough to make it apparent that she had loved her father more than her mother at first, because that her father had loved the child better than her mother did; but that when her mother had died and was lying dead, Liza wept over her and kissed her, and ever since then she had loved her mother more than all — all there was in the whole world — and that every night she thought of her and loved her.

But Liza was very proud, and suddenly recollecting herself and finding that she was saying a great deal more than she had meant to reveal, she paused, and relapsed into obstinate silence once more, and gazed at Velchaninoff with something like hatred in her eyes, considering that he had beguiled her into the revelations just made.

By the end of the journey, however, her hysterical condition was nearly over, but she was very silent and sat looking morosely about her, obstinately silent and gloomy, like a little wild animal.

The fact that she was being taken to a strange house where she had never been before did not seem so far to weigh upon her; Velchaninoff saw clearly enough that other things distressed her, and principally that she was ashamed — ashamed that her father should have let her go so easily — thrown her away, as it were — into Velchaninoff's arms.

"She's ill," thought the latter, "and perhaps very ill; she has been bullied and ill-treated. Oh! that drunken, blackguardly wretch of a fellow!" He hurried on the coachman. Velchaninoff trusted greatly to the fresh air, to the garden, to the children, to the new life, now; as to the future, he was in no sort of doubt at all, his hopes were clear and defined. One thing he was quite sure of, and that was that he had never before felt what now swelled within his soul, and that the sensation would last for ever and ever.

"I have an object at last! this is Life!" he said to himself enthusiastically.

Many thoughts welled into his brain just now, but he would have none of them; he did not care to think of details at this moment, for without details

the future was all so clear and so beautiful, and so safe and indestructible!

The basis of his plan was simple enough; it was simply this, in the language of his own thoughts:

“I shall so work upon that drunken little blackguard that he will leave Liza with the Pogoryeltseffs, and go away alone — at first, ‘for a time,’ of course! — and so Liza shall remain behind for me! what more do I want? The plan will suit him, too! — else why does he bully her like this?”

The carriage arrived at last.

It was certainly a very beautiful place. They were met first of all by a troop of noisy children, who overflowed on to the front-door steps. Velchaninoff had not been down for some time, and the delight of the little ones to see him was excessive — they were very fond of him.

The elder ones shouted, before he had left the carriage, by way of chaff:

“How’s the lawsuit getting on, eh?” and the smaller gang took up the joke, and all clamoured the same question: it was a pet joke in this establishment to chaff Velchaninoff about his lawsuit. But when Liza climbed down the carriage steps, she was instantly surrounded and stared at with true juvenile curiosity. Then Claudia Petrovna and her husband came out, and both of them good-humouredly bantered Velchaninoff about his lawsuit.

Claudia Petrovna was a lady of some thirty-seven summers, stout and well-favoured, and with a sweet fresh-looking face. Her husband was a man of fifty-five, a clever and long-headed man of the world, but above all, a good and kind-hearted friend to anyone requiring kindness.

The Pogoryeltseffs’ house was in the full sense of the word a “home” to Velchaninoff, as the latter had stated. There was rather more here, however; for, twenty years since Claudia had very nearly married young Velchaninoff almost a boy at that time, and a student at the university.

This had been his first experience of love — and very hot and fiery and funny — and sweet it was! The end of it was, however, that Claudia married Mr Pogoryeltseff. Five years later she and Velchaninoff had met again, and a quiet candid friendship had sprung up between them. Since then there had always been a warmth, a speciality about their friendship, a radiance which overspread it and glorified their relations one to the other. There was nothing here that Velchaninoff could remember with shame — all was pure and sweet; and this was perhaps the reason why the friendship

was specially dear to Velchaninoff; he had not experienced many such platonic intimacies.

In this house Velchaninoff was simple and happy, confessed his sins, played with the children and lectured them, and never bothered his head about outside matters; he had promised the Pogoryeltseffs that he would live a few more years alone in the world, and then move over to their household for good and all; and he looked forward to that good time coming with all seriousness.

Velchaninoff now gave all the information about Liza which he thought fit, though his simple request would have been amply sufficient here.

Claudia Petrovna kissed the little "orphan," and promised to do all she possibly could for her; and the children carried Liza off to play in the garden. Half an hour passed in conversation, and then Velchaninoff rose to depart: he was in such a hurry, that his friends could not help remarking upon the fact. He had not been near them for three weeks, they said, and now he only stayed half an hour! Velchaninoff laughed and promised to come down to-morrow. Someone observed that Velchaninoff's state of agitation was remarkable, even for *him*! Whereupon the latter jumped up, seized Claudia Petrovna's hand, and, under pretence of having forgotten to tell her something most important about Liza, he led her into another room.

"Do you remember," he began, "what I told you, and only you, — even your husband does not know of it — about my year of life down at T —— ?"

"Oh yes! only too well! You have often spoken of it."

"No — I did not 'speak about it,' I *confessed*, and only to yourself; but I never told you the lady's name. It was Trusotsky, the wife of this Trusotsky; it is she who has died, and this little Liza is her child — *my* child!"

"Is this certain? Are you quite sure there is no mistake?" asked Claudia Petrovna, with some agitation.

"Quite, quite certain!" said Velchaninoff enthusiastically. He then gave a short, hasty, and excited narrative of all that had occurred. Claudia had heard it all before, excepting the lady's name.

The fact is, Velchaninoff had always been so afraid that one of his friends might some fine day meet Madame Trusotsky at T —— , and wonder how in the world he could have loved such a woman as that, that he had never revealed her name to a single soul; not even to Claudia Petrovna, his great friend.

“And does the ‘father’ know nothing of it?” asked Claudia, having heard the tale out.

“N — no; he knows — you see, that’s just what is bothering me now. I haven’t sifted the matter as yet,” resumed Velchaninoff hotly. “He must know — he *does* know. I remarked that fact both yesterday and to-day. But I wish to discover *how much* he knows. That’s why I am hurrying back now; he is coming to-night. He knows all about Bagantoff; but how about myself? You know how such wives can deceive their husbands! If an angel from Heaven were to come down and convict a woman, her husband will still trust her, and give the angel the lie.

“Oh! don’t nod your head at me, don’t judge me! I have long since judged and convicted myself. You see, this morning I felt so sure that he knew all, that I compromised myself before him. Fancy, I was really ashamed of having been rude to him last night. He only called in to see me out of the pure unconquerably malicious desire to show me that he knew all the offence, and knew who was the offender! I behaved like a fool; I gave myself into his hands too easily; I was too heated; he came at such a feverish moment for me. I tell you, he has been bullying Liza, simply to ‘let off bile,’ — you understand. He needs a safety-valve for his offended feelings, and vents them upon *anyone*, even a little child!

“It is exasperation, and quite natural. We must treat him in a Christian spirit, my friend; and do you know, I wish to change my way of treating him, entirely; I wish to be particularly kind to him. That will be a good action on my part, for I am to blame before him, I know I am; there’s no disguising the fact! Besides, once at T —— , it so happened that I required four thousand roubles at a moment’s notice. Well, the fellow gave me the money, without a receipt, at once, and with every manifestation of delight to be able to serve me! And I took the money from his hands, — I did, indeed! I took it as though he were a friend. Think of that!”

“Very well; only be careful!” said Claudia Petrovna. “You are so enthusiastic that I am really alarmed for you! Of course Liza shall now be no less than my own daughter to me; but there is so much to know and to settle yet! Above all, be very careful and observant! You are not nearly careful enough when you are happy! You are much too exalted an individual to be cautious, when you are happy!” she added with a smile.

The whole family went out to see Velchaninoff off. The children brought Liza along with them; they had been playing in the garden. They seemed to

look at her now with even more perplexity then at first! The girl became dreadfully shy when Velchaninoff kissed her before all, and promised to come down next day and bring her father with him. To the last moment she did not say a single word, and never looked at him at all; but just before he was about to start she seized his hand and drew him away to one side, looking imploringly in his face: she evidently had something to say to him. Velchaninoff immediately took her into an adjoining room.

"What is it, Liza?" he asked, kindly and encouragingly; but she drew him farther away, — into the very farthest corner of the room, anxious to get well out of sight and hearing of the rest.

"What is it, Liza? What is it?"

But she was still silent, and could not make up her mind to speak; she stared with her motionless, large blue eyes, into his face, and in every lineament of her little face was betrayed the wildest terror and anxiety.

"He'll — hang himself!" she whispered at last, as though she were talking in her sleep.

"Who will hang himself?" asked Velchaninoff, in alarm.

"He will — *he*! He tried to hang himself to a hook last night!" said the child, panting with haste and excitement; "I saw it myself! To-day he tried it again, — he wishes to hang himself; he told me so! — he told me so! He wanted to, long ago; he has always wanted to do it! I saw it myself — in the night!"

"Impossible!" muttered Velchaninoff, incredulously.

Liza suddenly threw herself into his arms, kissed his hands, and cried. She could hardly breathe for sobbing; she was begging and imploring Velchaninoff, but he could not understand what she was trying to say.

Velchaninoff never afterwards forgot the terrible look of this distressed child; he thought of it waking and thought of it sleeping — how she had come to him in her despair as to her last hope, and hysterically begged and prayed him to help her! "And to think of her being so deeply attached to him!" he reflected jealously, as he drove, impatient and feverish, towards town. "She said herself that she loved her mother better; — perhaps she hates him, and doesn't love him at all! And what's all that nonsense about 'hanging himself!' What did she mean by that? As if he would hang himself, the fool! I must sift the matter — the whole matter. I must settle this business once and for ever — and quickly!"

CHAPTER VII.

He was in a great hurry to “know all.” In order to lose no time about finding out what he felt he must know at once, he told the coachman to drive him straight to Trusotsky’s rooms. On the way he changed his mind; “let him come to me, himself,” he thought, “and meanwhile I can attend to my cursed law business.”

But to-day he really felt that he was too absent to attend to anything at all; and at five o’clock he set out with the intention of dining. And at this moment, for the first time, an amusing idea struck him. What if he really only hindered his law business by meddling as he did, and hunting his wretched lawyer about the place, when the latter plainly avoided meeting him? Velchaninoff laughed merrily over this idea. “And yet,” he thought; “if this notion had struck me in the evening instead of now, how angry I should have been!” He laughed again, more merrily than before. But in spite of his merriness he grew more and more thoughtful and impatient, and could settle to nothing, nor could he think out what he most wanted to reflect upon.

“I *must* have that fellow here!” he said at length; “I must read the mystery of *him* first of all, and then I can settle what to do next. There’s a duel in this business!”

Returning home at seven o’clock he did not find Pavel Pavlovitch there, which fact first surprised him, then angered him, then depressed him, and at last, frightened him.

“God knows, God knows how it will all end!” he cried; first trying to settle himself on a sofa, and then marching up and down the room, and all the while looking at his watch every other minute.

At length — at about nine o’clock — Pavel Pavlovitch appeared.

“If this man was cunning enough to mean it he could not have managed better in order to put me into a state of nervousness!” thought Velchaninoff, though his heart bounded for joy to see his guest arrive.

To Velchaninoff’s cordial inquiry as to why he was so late, Pavel Pavlovitch smiled disagreeably — took a seat with easy familiarity, carelessly threw his crapebound hat on a chair, — and made himself perfectly at home. Velchaninoff observed and took stock of the careless manner adopted by his visitor; it was not like yesterday. Velchaninoff then quietly, and in a few words, gave Pavel Pavlovitch an account of what he

had done with Liza, of how kindly she had been received, of how good it would be for the child down there; then he led the conversation to the topic of the Pogoryeltseffs, leaving Liza out of the talking altogether, and spoke of how kind the whole family were, of how long he had known them, and so on.

Pavel Pavlovitch listened absently, occasionally looking ironically at his host from under his eyelashes.

“What an enthusiast you are!” he muttered at last, smiling very unpleasantly.

“Hum, you seem in a bad humour to-day!” remarked Velchaninoff with annoyance.

“And why shouldn’t I be as wicked as my neighbours?” cried Pavel Pavlovitch suddenly! He said this so abruptly that he gave one the idea that he had pounced out of a corner where he had been lurking, on purpose to make a dash at the first opportunity.

“Oh dear me! do as you like, pray!” laughed Velchaninoff; “I only thought something had put you out, perhaps!”

“So it has,” cried Pavel Pavlovitch, as though proud of the fact.

“Well, what was it?”

Pavel Pavlovitch waited a moment or two before he replied.

“Why it’s that Stepan Michailovitch Bagantoff of ours — up to his tricks again; he’s a shining light among the highest circles of society — he is!”

“Wouldn’t he receive you again — or what?”

“N — no! not quite that, this time; on the contrary I was allowed to go in for the first time on record, and I had the honour of musing over his features, too! — but he happened to be a corpse, that’s all!”

“What! Bagantoff dead?” cried Velchaninoff, in the greatest astonishment; though there was no particular reason why he *should* be surprised.

“Yes — my unalterable — six-years-standing friend is dead! — died yesterday at about mid-day, and I knew nothing of it! Perhaps he died just when I called there — who knows? To-morrow is the funeral! he’s in his coffin at this moment! Died of nervous fever; and they let me in to see him — they did indeed! — to contemplate his features! I told them I was a great friend — and therefore they allowed me in! A pretty trick he has played me — this dear friend of six years’ standing! why — perhaps I came to St. Petersburg *specially for him*!”

“Well — it’s hardly worth your while to be angry with him about it, is it — he didn’t die on purpose!” said Velchaninoff laughing.

“Oh, but I’m speaking out of pure sympathy — he was a *dear* friend to me! oh a *very* dear friend!”

Pavel Pavlovitch gave a smile of detestable irony and cunning.

“Do you know what, Alexey Ivanovitch,” he resumed, “I think you ought to treat me to something, — I have often treated you; I used to be your host every blessed day, sir, at T —— , for a whole year! Send for a bottle of wine, do — my throat is so dry!”

“With pleasure — why didn’t you say so before! what would you like?”

“Don’t say ‘you!’ say ‘we’! we’ll drink together of course!” said Pavel Pavlovitch defiantly, but at the same time looking into Velchaninoff’s eyes with some concern.

“Shall it be champagne?”

“Of course! it isn’t time for vodki yet!”

Velchaninoff rose slowly — rang the bell and gave Mavra the necessary orders.

“We’ll drink to this happy meeting of friends after nine years’ parting!” said Pavel Pavlovitch, with a very inappropriate and unnecessary giggle. “Why, you are the only real, true friend left to me now! Bagantoff is no more! it quite reminds one of the great poet:

“Great Patroclus is no more,

Mean Thersites liveth yet!”

— and so on, — don’t you know!”

At the name “Thersites” Pavel Pavlovitch touched his own breast.

“I wish you would speak plainly, you pig of a fellow!” said Velchaninoff to himself, “I hate hints!” His own anger was on the rise, and he had long been struggling with his self-restraint.

“Look here, — tell me this, since you consider Bagantoff to have been guilty before you (as I see you do) surely you must be glad that your betrayer is dead? What are you so angry about?”

“Glad! Why should I be glad?”

“I judge by what I should imagine your feelings to be.”

“Ha-ha! well, this time you are a little bit in error as to my feelings, for once! A certain sage has said ‘my good enemy is dead, but I have a still better one alive! ha-ha!”

“Well but you saw him alive for five years at a stretch, — I should have thought that was enough to contemplate his features in!” said Velchaninoff angrily and contemptuously.

“Yes, but how was I to know then, sir?” snapped Pavel Pavlovitch — jumping out of an ambush once more, as it were, — delighted to be asked a question which he had long awaited; “why, what do you take me for, Alexey Ivanovitch?” at this moment there was in the speaker’s face a new expression altogether, transfiguring entirely the hitherto merely disagreeably malicious look upon it.

“Do you mean to say you knew nothing of it?” said Velchaninoff in astonishment.

“How! Didn’t know? As if I could have known it and —— Oh, you race of Jupiters! you reckon a man to be no better than a dog, and judge of him by your own sentiments. Look here, sir, — there, look at that.” So saying, he brought his fist madly down upon the table with a resounding bang, and immediately afterwards looked frightened at his own act.

Velchaninoff’s face beamed.

“Listen, Pavel Pavlovitch,” he said; “it is entirely the same thing to me whether you knew or did not know all about it. If you did not know, so much the more honourable is it for you; but — I can’t understand why you should have selected me for your confidant.”

“I wasn’t talking of you; don’t be angry, it wasn’t about you,” muttered Pavel Pavlovitch, with his eyes fixed on the ground.

At this moment, Mavra entered with the champagne.

“Here it is!” cried Pavel Pavlovitch, immensely delighted at the appearance of the wine. “Now then, tumblers my good girl, tumblers quick! Capital! Thank you, we don’t require you any more, my good Mavra. What! you’ve drawn the cork? Excellent creature. Well, ta-ta! off with you.”

Mavra’s advent with the bottle so encouraged him that he again looked at Velchaninoff with some defiance.

“Now confess,” he giggled suddenly, “confess that you are very curious indeed to hear about all this, and that it is by no means ‘entirely the same to you,’ as you declared! Confess that you would be miserable if I were to get up and go away this very minute without telling you anything more.”

“Not the least in the world, I assure you!”

Pavel Pavlovitch smiled; and his smile said, as plainly as words could, “That’s a lie!”

“Well, let’s to business,” he said, and poured out two glasses of champagne.

“Here’s a toast,” he continued, raising his goblet, “to the health in Paradise of our dear departed friend Bagantoff.”

He raised his glass and drank.

“I won’t drink such a toast as that!” said Velchaninoff; and put his glass down on the table.

“Why not? It’s a very pretty toast.”

“Look here, were you drunk when you came here?”

“A little; why?”

“Oh — nothing particular. Only it appeared to me that yesterday, and especially this morning, you were sincerely sorry for the loss of Natalia Vasilievna.”

“And who says I am not sorry now?” cried Pavel Pavlovitch, as if somebody had pulled a string and made him snap the words out, like a doll.

“No, I don’t mean that; but you must admit you may be in error about Bagantoff; and that’s a serious matter!”

Pavel Pavlovitch grinned and gave a wink.

“Hey! Wouldn’t you just like to know how I found out about Bagantoff, eh?”

Velchaninoff blushed.

“I repeat, it’s all the same to me,” he said; and added to himself, “Hadn’t I better pitch him and the bottle out of the window together.” He was blushing more and more now.

Pavel Pavlovitch poured himself out another glass.

“I’ll tell you directly how I found out all about Mr. Bagantoff, and your burning wish shall be satisfied. For you are a fiery sort of man, you know, Alexey Ivanovitch, oh, dreadfully so! Ha-ha-ha. Just give me a cigarette first, will you, for ever since March — —”

“Here’s a cigarette for you.”

“Ever since March I have been a depraved man, sir, and this is how it all came about. Listen. Consumption, as you know, my dear friend” (Pavel Pavlovitch was growing more and more familiar!), “is an interesting malady. One sees a man dying of consumption without a suspicion that to-morrow is to be his last day. Well, I told you how Natalia Vasilievna, up to five hours before her death, talked about going to visit her aunt, who lived thirty miles or so away, and starting in a fortnight. You know how some

ladies — and gentlemen, too, I daresay — have the bad habit of keeping a lot of old rubbish by them, in the way of love-letters and so on. It would be much safer to stick them all into the fire, wouldn't it? But no, they must keep every little scrap of paper in drawers and desks, and endorse it and classify it, and tie it up in bundles, for each year and month and class! I don't know whether they find this consoling to their feelings afterwards, or what. Well, since she was arranging a visit to her aunt just five hours before her death, Natalia Vasilievna naturally did not expect to die so soon; in fact, she was expecting old Doctor Koch down till the last; and so, when Natalia Vasilievna *did* die, she left behind her a beautiful little black desk all inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and bound with silver, in her bureau; oh, a lovely little box, an heirloom left her by her grandmother, with a lock and key all complete. Well, sir, in this box everything — I mean *everything*, you know, for every day and hour for the last twenty years — was disclosed; and since Mr. Bagantoff had a decided taste for literature (indeed, he had published a passionate novel once, I am told, in a newspaper!) — consequently there were about a hundred examples of his genius in the desk, ranging over a period of five years. Some of these talented effusions were covered with pencilled remarks by Natalia Vasilievna herself! Pleasant, that, for a fond husband's feelings, sir, eh?"

Velchaninoff quickly cast his thoughts back over the past, and remembered that he had never written a single letter or a single note to Natalia Vasilievna.

He had written a couple of letters from St. Petersburg, but, according to a previous arrangement, he had addressed them to both Mr. and Mrs. Trusotsky together. He had not answered Natalia Vasilievna's last letter — which had contained his dismissal — at all.

Having ended his speech, Pavel Pavlovitch relapsed into silence, and sat smiling repulsively for a whole minute or so.

"Why don't you answer my question, my friend?" he asked, at length, evidently disturbed by Velchaninoff's silence.

"What question?"

"As to the pleasure I must have felt as a fond husband, upon opening the desk."

"Your feelings are no business of mine!" said the other bitterly, rising and commencing to stride up and down the room.

“I wouldn’t mind betting that you are thinking at this very moment: ‘What a pig of a fellow he is to parade his shame like this!’ Ha-ha! dear me, what a squeamish gentleman you are to be sure!”

“Not at all. I was thinking nothing of the sort; on the contrary, I consider that you are — besides being more or less intoxicated — so put out by the death of the man who has injured you that you are not yourself. There’s nothing surprising in it at all! I quite understand why you wish Bagantoff were still alive, and am ready to respect your annoyance, but — —”

“And pray *why* do you suppose that I wish Bagantoff were alive?”

“Oh, that’s your affair!”

“I’ll take my oath you are thinking of a duel!”

“Devil take it, sir!” cried Velchaninoff, obliged to hold himself tighter than ever. “I was thinking that you, like every respectable person in similar circumstances, would act openly and candidly and straightforwardly, and not humiliate yourself with comical antics and silly grimaces, and ridiculous complaints and detestable innuendoes, which only heap greater shame upon you. I say I was thinking you would act like a respectable person.”

“Ha-ha-ha! — but perhaps I am *not* a respectable person!”

“Oh, well, that’s your own affair again and yet, if so, what in the devil’s name could you want with Bagantoff alive?”

“Oh, my dear sir, I should have liked just to have a nice peep at a dear old friend, that’s all. We should have got hold of a bottle of wine, and drunk it together!”

“He wouldn’t have drunk with *you*!”

“Why not? *Noblesse oblige?* Why, *you* are drinking with me. Wherein is he better than you?”

“I have not drunk with you.”

“Wherefore this sudden pride, sir?”

Velchaninoff suddenly burst into a fit of nervous, irritable laughter.

“Why, deuce take it all!” he cried, “you are quite a different type to what I believed. I thought you were nothing but a ‘permanent husband,’ but I find you are a sort of bird of prey.”

“What! ‘permanent husband?’ What is a ‘permanent husband?’ ” asked Pavel Pavlovitch, pricking up his ears.

“Oh — just one type of husbands — that’s all, it’s too long to explain. Come, you’d better get out now; it’s quite time you went. I’m sick of you!”

“And bird of prey, sir; what did that mean?”

“I said you were a bird of prey for a joke.”

“Yes; but — bird of prey — tell me what you mean, Alexey Ivanovitch, for goodness sake!”

“Come, come, that’s quite enough!” shouted Velchaninoff, suddenly flaring up and speaking at the top of his voice. “It’s time you went; get out of this, will you?”

“No, sir, it’s *not* enough!” cried Pavel Pavlovitch, jumping up, too. “Even if you *are* sick of me, sir, it’s not enough; for you must first drink and clink glasses with me. I won’t go before you do! No, no; oh dear no! drink first; it’s *not* enough yet.”

“Pavel Pavlovitch, will you go to the devil or will you not?”

“With pleasure, sir. I’ll go to the devil with pleasure; but first we must drink. You say you don’t wish to drink *with me*; but *I wish you* to drink with me — actually *with me*.”

Pavel Pavlovitch was grimacing and giggling no longer. He seemed to be suddenly transfigured again, and was as different from the Pavel Pavlovitch of but a few moments since as he could possibly be, both in appearance and in the tone of his voice; so much so that Velchaninoff was absolutely confounded.

“Come, Alexey Ivanovitch, let’s drink! — don’t refuse me!” continued Pavel Pavlovitch, seizing the other tightly by the hand and gazing into his face with an extraordinary expression.

It was clear there was more in this matter than the mere question of drinking a glass of wine.

“Well,” muttered Velchaninoff, “but that’s nothing but dregs!”

“No, there’s just a couple of glasses left — it’s quite clear. Now then, clink glasses and drink. There, I’ll take your glass and you take mine.” They touched glasses and drank.

“Oh, Alexey Ivanovitch! now that we’ve drunk together — oh!” Pavel Pavlovitch suddenly raised his hand to his forehead and sat still for a few moments.

Velchaninoff trembled with excitement. He thought Pavel Pavlovitch was about to disclose *all*; but Pavel Pavlovitch said nothing whatever. He only looked at him, and quietly smiled his detestable cunning smile in the other’s face.

“What do you want with me, you drunken wretch?” cried Velchaninoff, furious, and stamping his foot upon the floor; “you are making a fool of me!”

“Don’t shout so — don’t shout! Why make such a noise?” cried Pavel Pavlovitch. “I’m not making a fool of you! Do you know what you are to me now?” and he suddenly seized Velchaninoff’s hand, and kissed it before Velchaninoff could recollect himself.

“There, that’s what you are to me *now*; and now I’ll go to the devil.”

“Wait a bit — stop!” cried Velchaninoff, recollecting himself; “there’s something I wished to say to you.”

Pavel Pavlovitch turned back from the door.

“You see,” began Velchaninoff, blushing and keeping his eye well away from the other, “you ought to go with me to the Pogoryeltseffs to-morrow — just to thank them, you know, and make their acquaintance.”

“Of course, of course; quite so!” said Pavel Pavlovitch readily, and making a gesture of the hand to imply that he knew his duty, and there was no need to remind him of it.

“Besides Liza expects you anxiously — I promised her.”

“Liza?” Pavel Pavlovitch turned quickly once more upon him. “Liza? Do you know, sir, what this Liza has been to me — has been and is?” he cried passionately and almost beside himself; “but — no! — afterwards — that shall be afterwards! Meanwhile it’s not enough for me, Alexey Ivanovitch, that we have drunk together; there’s another satisfaction I must have, sir!” He placed his hat on a chair, and, panting with excitement, gazed at his companion with much the same expression as before.

“Kiss me, Alexey Ivanovitch!”

“Are you drunk?” cried the other, drawing back.

“Yes, I am — but kiss me all the same, Alexey Ivanovitch — oh, do! I kissed your hand just now, you know.”

Alexey Ivanovitch was silent for a few moments, as though stunned by the blow of a cudgel. Then he quickly bent down to Pavel Pavlovitch (who was about the height of his shoulder), and kissed his lips, from which proceeded a disagreeably powerful odour of wine. He performed the action as though not quite certain of what he was doing.

“Well! *now, now!*” cried Pavel Pavlovitch, with drunken enthusiasm, and with his eyes flashing fiercely; “*now* — look here — I’ll tell you what! I

thought at that time: ‘Surely not *he*, too! If *this* man,’ I thought, ‘if *this* man is guilty too — then whom am I ever to trust again!’ ”

Pavel Pavlovitch suddenly burst into tears.

“So now you must understand *how* dear a friend you are to me henceforth.” With these words he took his hat and rushed out of the room.

Velchaninoff stood for several minutes in one spot, just as he had done after Pavel Pavlovitch’s first visit.

“It’s merely a drunken sally — nothing more!” he muttered. “Absolutely nothing further!” he repeated, when he was undressed and settled down in his bed.

CHAPTER VIII.

Next morning, while waiting for Pavel Pavlovitch, who had promised to be in good time in order to drive down to the Pogoryeltseffs with him, Velchaninoff walked up and down the room, sipped his coffee, and every other minute reflected upon one and the same idea; namely, that he felt like a man who had awaked from sleep with the deep impression of having received a box on the ear the last thing at night.

"Hm!" he thought, anxiously, "he understands the state of the case only too well; he'll take it out of me by means of Liza!" The dear image of the poor little girl danced before his eyes. His heart beat quicker when he reflected that to-day — in a couple of hours — he would see *his own* Liza once more. "Yes — there's no question about it," he said to himself; "my whole end and aim in life is *there* now! What do I care about all these 'memories' and boxes on the ear; and what have I lived for up to now? — for sorrow and discomfort — that's all! but *now*, now — it's all different!"

But in spite of his ecstatic feelings he grew more and more thoughtful.

"He is worrying me for Liza, that's plain; and he bullies Liza — he is going to take it out of me that way — for *all*! Hm! at all events I cannot possibly allow such sallies as his of last night," and Velchaninoff blushed hotly "and here's half-past eleven and he hasn't come yet." He waited long — till half-past twelve, and his anguish of impatience grew more and more keen. Pavel Pavlovitch did not appear. At length the idea began to take shape that Pavel Pavlovitch naturally would not come again for the sole purpose of another scene like that of last night. The thought filled Velchaninoff with despair. "The brute knows I am depending upon him — and what on earth am I to do now about Liza? How can I make my appearance without him?"

At last he could bear it no longer and set off to the Pokrofsky at one o'clock to look for Pavel Pavlovitch.

At the lodging, Velchaninoff was informed that Pavel Pavlovitch had not been at home all night, and had only called in at nine o'clock, stayed a quarter of an hour, and had gone out again.

Velchaninoff stood at the door listening to the servants' report, mechanically tried the handle, recollected himself, and asked to see Maria Sisevna.

The latter obeyed his summons at once.

She was a kind-hearted old creature, of generous feelings, as Velchaninoff described her afterwards to Claudia Petrovna. Having first enquired as to his journey yesterday with Liza, Maria launched into anecdotes of Pavel Pavlovitch. She declared that she would long ago have turned her lodger out neck and crop, but for the child. Pavel Pavlovitch had been turned out of the hotel for generally disreputable behaviour. “Oh, he does dreadful things!” she continued. “Fancy his telling the poor child, in anger, that she wasn’t his daughter, but — —”

“Oh no, no! impossible!” cried Velchaninoff in alarm.

“I heard it myself! She’s only a small child, of course, but that sort of thing doesn’t do before an intelligent child like her! She cried dreadfully — she was quite upset. We had a catastrophe in the house a short while since. Some commissionnaire or somebody took a room in the evening, and hung himself before morning. He had bolted with money, they say. Well, crowds of people came in to stare at him. Pavel Pavlovitch wasn’t at home, but the child had escaped and was wandering about; and she must needs go with the rest to see the sight. I saw her looking at the suicide with an extraordinary expression, and carried her off at once, of course; and fancy, I hardly managed to get home with her — trembling all over she was — when off she goes in a dead faint, and it was all I could do to bring her round at all. I don’t know whether she’s epileptic or what — and ever since that she has been ill. When her father heard, he came and pinched her all over — he doesn’t beat her; he always pinches her like that, — then he went out and got drunk somewhere, and came back and frightened her. ‘I’m going to hang myself too,’ he says, ‘because of you. I shall hang myself on that blind string there,’ he says, and he makes a loop in the string before her very eyes. The poor little thing went quite out of her mind with terror, and cried and clasped him round with her little arms. ‘I’ll be good — I’ll be good!’ she shrieks. It was a pitiful sight — it was, indeed!”

Velchaninoff, though prepared for strange revelations concerning Pavel Pavlovitch and his ways, was quite dumbfounded by these tales; he could scarcely believe his ears.

Maria Sisevna told him many more such little anecdotes. Among others, there was one occasion, when, if she (Maria) had not been by, Liza would have thrown herself out of the window.

Pavel Pavlovitch had come staggering out of the room muttering, “I shall smash her head in with a stick! I shall murder her like a dog!” and he had gone away, repeating this over and over again to himself.

Velchaninoff hired a carriage and set off towards the Pogoryeltseffs. Before he had left the town behind him, the carriage was delayed by a block at a cross road, just by a small bridge, over which was passing, at the moment, a long funeral procession. There were carriages waiting to move on on both sides of the bridge, and a considerable crowd of foot passengers besides.

The funeral was evidently of some person of considerable importance, for the train of private and hired vehicles was a very long one; and at the window of one of these carriages in the procession Velchaninoff suddenly beheld the face of Pavel Pavlovitch.

Velchaninoff would not have believed his eyes, but that Pavel Pavlovitch nodded his head and smiled to him. He seemed to be delighted to have recognised Velchaninoff; he even began to kiss his hand out of the window.

Velchaninoff jumped out of his own vehicle, and in spite of policemen, crowd, and everything else, elbowed his way to Pavel Pavlovitch’s carriage window. He found the latter sitting alone.

“What are you doing?” he cried. “Why didn’t you come to my house? Why are you here?”

“I’m paying a debt; don’t shout so! I’m repaying a debt,” said Pavel Pavlovitch, giggling and winking. “I’m escorting the mortal remains of my dear friend Stepan Michailovitch Bagantoff!”

“What absurdity, you drunken, insane creature,” cried Velchaninoff louder than ever, and beside himself with outraged feeling. “Get out and come with me. Quick! get out instantly!”

“I can’t. It’s a debt — —”

“I’ll pull you out, then!” shouted Velchaninoff.

“Then I’ll scream, sir, I’ll scream!” giggled Pavel Pavlovitch, as merrily as ever, just as though the whole thing was a joke. However, he retreated into the further corner of the carriage, all the same.

“Look out, sir, look out! You’ll be knocked down!” cried a policeman.

Sure enough, an outside carriage was making its way on to the bridge from the side, stopping the procession, and causing a commotion. Velchaninoff was obliged to spring aside, and the press of carriages and

people immediately separated him from Pavel Pavlovitch. He shrugged his shoulders and returned to his own vehicle.

“It’s all the same. I couldn’t take such a fellow with me, anyhow,” he reflected, still all of a tremble with excitement and the rage of disgust. When he repeated Maria Sisevna’s story, and his meeting at the funeral, to Claudia Petrovna afterwards, the latter became buried in deep thought.

“I am anxious for you,” she said at last. “You must break off all relations with that man, and as soon as possible.”

“Oh, he’s nothing but a drunken fool!” cried Velchaninoff passionately; “as if I am to be afraid of *him*! And how can I break off relations with him? Remember Liza!”

Meanwhile Liza was lying ill; fever had set in last night, and an eminent doctor was momentarily expected from town! He had been sent for early this morning.

These news quite upset Velchaninoff. Claudia Petrovna took him in to see the patient.

“I observed her very carefully yesterday,” she said, stopping at the door of Liza’s room before entering it. “She is a proud and morose child. She is ashamed of being with us, and of having been thrown over by her father. In my opinion that is the whole secret of her illness.”

“How ‘thrown over’? Why do you suppose that he has thrown her over?”

“The simple fact that he allowed her to come here to a strange house, and with a man who was also a stranger, or nearly so; or, at all events, with whom his relations were such that — —”

“Oh, but I took her myself, almost by force.”

Liza was not surprised to see Velchaninoff alone. She only smiled bitterly, and turned her hot face to the wall. She made no reply to his passionate promises to bring her father down to-morrow without fail, or to his timid attempts at consolation.

As soon as Velchaninoff left the sick child’s presence, he burst into tears.

The doctor did not arrive until evening. On seeing the patient he frightened everybody by his very first remark, observing that it was a pity he had not been sent for before.

When informed that the child had only been taken ill last night, he could not believe it at first.

“Well, it all depends upon how this night is passed,” he decided at last.

Having made all necessary arrangements, he took his departure, promising to come as early as possible next morning.

Velchaninoff was anxious to stay the night, but Claudia Petrovna begged him to try once more “to bring down that brute of a man.”

“Try once more!” cried Velchaninoff, passionately; “why, I’ll tie him hand and foot and bring him along myself!”

The idea that he would tie Pavel Pavlovitch up and carry him down in his arms overpowered Velchaninoff, and filled him with impatience to execute his frantic desire.

“I don’t feel the slightest bit guilty before him any more,” he said to Claudia Petrovna, at parting, “and I withdraw all my servile, abject words of yesterday — all I said to you,” he added, wrathfully.

Liza lay with closed eyes, apparently asleep; she seemed to be better. When Velchaninoff bent cautiously over her in order to kiss — if it were but the edge of her bed linen — she suddenly opened her eyes, just as though she had been waiting for him, and whispered, “Take me away!”

It was but a quiet, sad petition — without a trace of yesterday’s irritation; but at the same time there was that in her voice which betrayed that she made the request in the full knowledge that it could not be assented to.

No sooner did Velchaninoff, in despair, begin to assure her as tenderly as he could that what she desired was impossible, than she silently closed her eyes and said not another word, just as though she neither saw nor heard him.

Arrived in town Velchaninoff told his man to drive him to the Pokrofsky. It was ten o’clock at night.

Pavel Pavlovitch was not at his lodgings. Velchaninoff waited for him half an hour, walking up and down the passage in a state of feverish impatience. Maria Sisevna assured him at last that Pavel Pavlovitch would not come in until the small hours.

“Well, then, I’ll return here before daylight,” he said, beside himself with desperation, and he went home to his own rooms.

What was his amazement, when, on arriving at the gate of his house, he learned from Mavra that “yesterday’s visitor” had been waiting for him ever since before ten o’clock.

“He’s had some tea,” she added, “and sent me for wine again — the same wine as yesterday. He gave me the money to buy it with.”

CHAPTER IX.

Pavel Pavlovitch had made himself very comfortable. He was sitting in the same chair as he had occupied yesterday, smoking a cigar, and had just poured the fourth and last tumbler of champagne out of the bottle.

The teapot and a half-emptied tumbler of tea stood on the table beside him; his red face beamed with benevolence. He had taken off his coat, and sat in his shirt sleeves.

“Forgive me, dearest of friends,” he cried, catching sight of Velchaninoff, and hastening to put on his coat, “I took it off to make myself thoroughly comfortable.”

Velchaninoff approached him menacingly.

“You are not quite tipsy yet, are you? Can you understand what is said to you?”

Paul Pavlovitch became a little confused.

“No, not quite. I’ve been thinking of the dear deceased a bit, but I’m not quite drunk yet.”

“Can you understand what I say?”

“My dear sir, I came here on purpose to understand you.”

“Very well, then I shall begin at once by telling you that you are an ass, sir!” cried Velchaninoff, at the top of his voice.

“Why, if you begin that way where will you end, I wonder!” said Pavel Pavlovitch, clearly alarmed more than a little.

Velchaninoff did not listen, but roared again,

“Your daughter is dying — she is very ill! Have you thrown her over altogether, or not?”

“Oh, surely she isn’t dying yet?”

“I tell you she’s ill; very, very ill — dangerously ill.”

“What, fits? or — —”

“Don’t talk nonsense. I tell you she is very dangerously ill. You ought to go down, if only for that reason.”

“What, to thank your friends, eh? to return thanks for their hospitality? Of course, quite so; I well understand, Alexey Ivanovitch — dearest of friends!” He suddenly seized Velchaninoff by both hands, and added with intoxicated sentiment, almost melted to tears, “Alexey Ivanovitch, don’t shout at me — don’t shout at me, please! If you do, I may throw myself into

the Neva — I don't know! — and we have such important things to talk over. There's lots of time to go to the Pogoryeltseffs another day."

Velchaninoff did his best to restrain his wrath. "You are drunk, and therefore I don't understand what you are driving at," he said sternly. "I'm ready to come to an explanation with you at any moment you like — delighted! — the the sooner the better. But first let me tell you that I am going to take my own measures to secure you. You will sleep here to-night, and to-morrow I shall take you with me to see Liza. I shall not let you go again. I shall bind you, if necessary, and carry you down myself. How do you like this sofa to sleep on?" he added, panting, and indicating a wide, soft divan opposite his own sofa, against the other wall.

"Oh — anything will do for me!"

"Very well, you shall have this sofa. Here, take these things — here are sheets, blankets, pillow" (Velchaninoff pulled all these things out of a cupboard, and tossed them impatiently to Pavel Pavlovitch, who humbly stood and received them); "now then, make your bed, — come, bustle up!"

Pavel Pavlovitch laden with bed clothes had been standing in the middle of the room with a stupid drunken leer on his face, irresolute; but at Velchaninoff's second bidding he hurriedly began the task of making his bed, moving the table away from in front of it, and smoothing a sheet over the seat of the divan. Velchaninoff approached to help him. He was more or less gratified with his guest's alarm and submission.

"Now, drink up that wine and lie down!" was his next command. He felt that he *must* order this man about, he could not help himself. "I suppose you took upon yourself to order this wine, did you?"

"I did — I did, sir! I sent for the wine, Alexey Ivanovitch, because I knew *you* would not send out again!"

"Well, it's a good thing that you knew that; but I desire that you should know still more. I give you notice that I have taken my own measures for the future, I'm not going to put up with any more of your antics."

"Oh, I quite understand, Alexey Ivanovitch, that that sort of thing could only happen once!" said Pavel Pavlovitch, giggling feebly.

At this reply Velchaninoff, who had been marching up and down the room stopped solemnly before Pavel Pavlovitch.

"Pavel Pavlovitch," he said, "speak plainly! You are a clever fellow — I admit the fact freely, — but I assure you you are going on a false track now.

Speak plainly, and act like an honest man, and I give you my word of honour that I will answer all you wish to know."

Pavel Pavlovitch grinned his disagreeable grin (which always drove Velchaninoff wild) once more.

"Wait!" cried the latter. "No humbug now, please; I see through you. I repeat that I give you my word of honour to reply candidly to anything you may like to ask, and to give you every sort of satisfaction — reasonable or even unreasonable — that you please. *Oh!* how I wish I could make you understand me!"

"Since you are so very kind," began Pavel Pavlovitch, cautiously bending towards him, "I may tell you that I am very much interested as to what you said yesterday about 'bird of prey'?"

Velchaninoff spat on the ground in utter despair and disgust, and recommenced his walk up and down the room, quicker than ever.

"No, no, Alexey Ivanovitch, don't spurn my question; you don't know how interested I am in it. I assure you I came here on purpose to ask you about it. I know I'm speaking indistinctly, but you'll forgive me that. I've read the expression before. Tell me now, was Bagantoff a 'bird of prey,' or — the other thing? How is one to distinguish one from the other?"

Velchaninoff went on walking up and down, and answered nothing for some minutes.

"The bird of prey, sir," he began suddenly, stopping in front of Pavel Pavlovitch, and speaking vehemently, "is the man who would poison Bagantoff while drinking champagne with him under the cloak of goodfellowship, as you did with me yesterday, instead of escorting his wretched body to the burial ground as you did — the deuce only knows why, and with what dirty, mean, underhand, petty motives, which only recoil upon yourself and make you viler than you already are. Yes, sir, recoil upon yourself!"

"Quite so, quite so, I oughtn't to have gone," assented Pavel Pavlovitch, "but aren't you a little — —"

"The bird of prey is not a man who goes and learns his grievance off by heart, like a lesson, and whines it about the place, grimacing and posing, and hanging it round other people's necks, and who spends all his time in such pettifogging. Is it true you wanted to hang yourself? Come, is it true, or not?"

“I — I don’t know — I may have when I was drunk — I don’t remember. You see, Alexey Ivanovitch, it wouldn’t be quite nice for me to go poisoning people. I’m too high up in the service, and I have money, too, you know — and I may wish to marry again, who knows.”

“Yes; you’d be sent to Siberia, which would be awkward.”

“Quite so; though they say the penal servitude is not so bad as it was. But you remind me of an anecdote, Alexey Ivanovitch. I thought of it in the carriage, and meant to tell you afterwards. Well! you may remember Liftsoff at T —— . He came while you were there. His younger brother — who is rather a swell, too — was serving at L —— under the governor, and one fine day he happened to quarrel with Colonel Golubenko in the presence of ladies, and of one lady especially. Liftsoff considered himself insulted, but concealed his grievance; and, meanwhile, Golubenko proposed to a certain lady and was accepted. Would you believe it, Liftsoff made great friends with Golubenko, and even volunteered to be best man at his wedding. But when the ceremony was all over, and Liftsoff approached the bridegroom to wish him joy and kiss him, as usual, he took the opportunity of sticking a knife into Golubenko. Fancy! his own best man stuck him! Well, what does the assassin do but run about the room crying. ‘Oh! what have I done? Oh! what have I done?’ says he, and throws himself on everyone’s neck by turns, ladies and all! Ha-ha-ha! He starved to death in Siberia, sir! One is a little sorry for Golubenko; but he recovered, after all.”

“I don’t understand why you told me that story,” said Velchaninoff, frowning heavily.

“Why, because he stuck the other fellow with a knife,” giggled Pavel Pavlovitch, “which proves that he was no type, but an ass of a fellow, who could so forget the ordinary manners of society as to hang around ladies’ necks, and in the presence of the governor, too — and yet he stuck the other fellow. Ha-ha-ha! He did what he intended to do, that’s all, sir!”

“Go to the devil, will you — you and your miserable humbug — you miserable humbug yourself,” yelled Velchaninoff, wild with rage and fury, and panting so that he could hardly get his words out. “You think you are going to alarm *me,* do you, you frightener of children — you mean beast — you low scoundrel you? — scoundrel — scoundrel — scoundrel!” He had quite forgotten himself in his rage.

Pavel Pavlovitch shuddered all over; his drunkenness seemed to vanish in an instant; his lips trembled and shook.

“Are you calling *me* a scoundrel, Alexey Ivanovitch — *you* — *me*?”

But Velchaninoff was himself again now.

“I’ll apologise if you like,” he said, and relapsed into gloomy silence. After a moment he added, “But only on condition that you yourself agree to speak out fully, and at once.”

“In your place I should apologise unconditionally, Alexey Ivanovitch.”

“Very well; so be it then.” Velchaninoff was silent again for a while. “I apologise,” he resumed; “but admit yourself, Pavel Pavlovitch, that I need not feel myself in any way bound to you after this. I mean with regard to *anything* — not only this particular matter.”

“All right! Why, what is there to settle between us?” laughed Pavel Pavlovitch, without looking up.

“In that case, so much the better — so much the better. Come, drink up your wine and get into bed, for I shall not let you go now, anyhow.”

“Oh, my wine — never mind my wine!” muttered Pavel Pavlovitch; but he went to the table all the same, and took up his tumbler of champagne which had long been poured out. Either he had been drinking copiously before, or there was some other unknown cause at work, but his hand shook so as he drank the wine that a quantity of it was spilled over his waistcoat and the floor. However, he drank it all, to the last drop, as though he could not leave the tumbler without emptying it. He then placed the empty glass on the table, approached his bed, sat down on it, and began to undress.

“I think perhaps I had better *not* sleep here,” he said suddenly, with one boot off, and half undressed.

“Well, I *don’t* think so,” said Velchaninoff, who was walking up and down, without looking at him.

Pavel Pavlovitch finished undressing and lay down. A quarter of an hour later Velchaninoff also got into bed, and put the candle out.

He soon began to doze uncomfortably. Some new trouble seemed to have suddenly come over him and worried him, and at the same time he felt a sensation of shame that he could allow himself to be worried by the new trouble. Velchaninoff was just falling definitely asleep, however, when a rustling sound awoke him. He immediately glanced at Pavel Pavlovitch’s bed. The room was quite dark, the blinds being down and curtains drawn; but it seemed to him that Pavel Pavlovitch was not lying in his bed; he seemed to be sitting on the side of it.

“What’s the matter?” cried Velchaninoff.

“A ghost, sir,” said Pavel Pavlovitch, in a low tone, after a few moments of silence.

“What? What sort of a ghost?”

“Th — there — in that room — just at the door, I seemed to see a ghost!”

“Whose ghost?” asked Velchaninoff, pausing a minute before putting the question.

“Natalia Vasilievna’s!”

Velchaninoff jumped out of bed and walked to the door, whence he could see into the room opposite, across the passage. There were no curtains in that room, so that it was much lighter than his own.

“There’s nothing there at all. You are drunk; lie down again!” he said, and himself set the example, rolling his blanket around him.

Pavel Pavlovitch said nothing, but lay down as he was told.

“Did you ever see any ghosts before?” asked Velchaninoff suddenly, ten minutes later.

“I think I saw one once,” said Pavel Pavlovitch in the same low voice; after which there was silence once more. Velchaninoff was not sure whether he had been asleep or not, but an hour or so had passed, when suddenly he was wide awake again. Was it a rustle that awoke him? He could not tell; but one thing was evident — in the midst of the profound darkness of the room something white stood before him; not quite close to him, but about the middle of the room. He sat up in bed, and stared for a full minute.

“Is that you, Pavel Pavlovitch?” he asked. His voice sounded very weak.

There was no reply; but there was not the slightest doubt of the fact that someone was standing there.

“Is that you, Pavel Pavlovitch?” cried Velchaninoff again, louder this time; in fact, so loud that if the former had been asleep in bed he must have started up and answered.

But there was no reply again. It seemed to Velchaninoff that the white figure had approached nearer to him.

Then something strange happened; something seemed to “let go” within Velchaninoff’s system, and he commenced to shout at the top of his voice, just as he had done once before this evening, in the wildest and maddest way possible, panting so that he could hardly articulate his words: “If you — drunken ass that you are — dare to think that you could frighten *me*, I’ll turn my face to the wall, and not look round once the whole night, to show

you how little I am afraid of you — a fool like you — if you stand there from now till morning! I despise you!" So saying, Velchaninoff twisted round with his face to the wall, rolled his blanket round him, and lay motionless, as though turned to stone. A deathlike stillness supervened.

Did the ghost stand where it was, or had it moved? He could not tell; but his heart beat, and beat, and beat — At least five minutes went by, and then, not a couple of paces from his bed, there came the feeble voice of Pavel Pavlovitch:

"I got up, Alexey Ivanovitch, to look for a little water. I couldn't find any, and was just going to look about nearer your bed — —"

"Then why didn't you answer when I called?" cried Velchaninoff angrily, after a minute's pause.

"I was frightened; you shouted so, you alarmed me!"

"You'll find a caraffe and glass over there, on the little table. Light a candle."

"Oh, I'll find it without. You'll forgive me, Alexey Ivanovitch, for frightening you so; I felt thirsty so suddenly."

But Velchaninoff said nothing. He continued to lie with his face to the wall, and so he lay all night, without turning round once. Was he anxious to keep his word and show his contempt for Pavel Pavlovitch? He did not know himself why he did it; his nervous agitation and perturbation were such that he could not sleep for a long while, he felt quite delirious. At last he fell asleep, and awoke at past nine o'clock next morning. He started up just as though someone had struck him, and sat down on the side of his bed. But Pavel Pavlovitch was not to be seen. His empty, rumpled bed was there, but its occupant had flown before daybreak.

"I thought so!" cried Velchaninoff, bringing the palm of his right hand smartly to his forehead.

CHAPTER X.

The doctor’s anxiety was justified; Liza grew worse, so much so that it was clear she was far more seriously ill than Velchaninoff and Claudia Petrovna had thought the day before.

When the former arrived in the morning, Liza was still conscious, though burning with fever. He assured his friend Claudia, afterwards, that the child had smiled at him and held out her little hot hand. Whether she actually did so, or whether he so much longed for her to do so that he imagined it done, is uncertain.

By the evening, however, Liza was quite unconscious, and so she remained during the whole of her illness. Ten days after her removal to the country she died.

This was a sad period for Velchaninoff; the Pogoryeltseffs were quite anxious on his account. He was with them for the greater part of the time, and during the last few days of the little one’s illness, he used to sit all alone for hours together in some corner, apparently thinking of nothing. Claudia Petrovna would attempt to distract him but he hardly answered her, and conversation was clearly painful to him. Claudia was quite surprised that “all this” should affect him so deeply.

The children were the best consolation and distraction for him; with them he could even laugh and play at intervals. Every hour, at least, he would rise from his chair and creep on tip-toes to the sick-room to look at the little invalid. Sometimes he imagined that she knew him; he had no hope for her recovery — none of the family had any hope; but he never left the precincts of the child’s chamber, sitting principally in the next room.

Twice, however, he had evinced great activity of a sudden; he had jumped up and started off for town, where he had called upon all the most eminent doctors of the place, and arranged consultations between them. The last consultation was on the day before Liza’s death.

Claudia Petrovna had spoken seriously to him a day or two since, as to the absolute necessity of hunting up Pavel Pavlovitch Trusotsky, because in case of anything happening to Liza, she could not be buried without certain documents from him.

Velchaninoff promised to write to him, and did write a couple of lines, which he took to the Pokrofsky. Pavel Pavlovitch was not at home, as usual,

but he left the letter to the care of Maria Sisevna.

At last Liza died — on a lovely summer evening, just as the sun was setting; and only then did Velchaninoff rouse himself.

When the little one was laid out, all covered with flowers, and dressed in a fair white frock belonging to one of Claudia Petrovna's children, Velchaninoff came up to the lady of the house, and told her with flashing eyes that he would now go and fetch the murderer. Regardless of all advice to put off his search until to-morrow he started for town immediately.

He knew where to find Pavel Pavlovitch. He had not been in town exclusively to find the doctors those two days. Occasionally, while watching the dying child, he had been struck with the idea that if he could only find and bring down Pavel Pavlovitch she might hear his voice and be called back, as it were, from the darkness of delirium; at such moments he had been seized with desperation, and twice he had started up and driven wildly off to town in order to find Pavel Pavlovitch.

The latter's room was the same as before, but it was useless to look for him there, for, according to Maria Sisevna's report, he was now two or three days absent from home at a stretch, and was generally to be found with some friends in the Voznecensky.

Arrived in town about ten o'clock, Velchaninoff went straight to these latter people, and securing the services of a member of the family to assist in finding Pavel Pavlovitch, set out on his quest. He did not know what he should do with Pavel Pavlovitch when found, whether he should kill him then and there, or simply inform him of the death of the child, and of the necessity for his assistance in arranging for her funeral. After a long and fruitless search Velchaninoff found Pavel Pavlovitch quite accidentally; he was quarrelling with some person in the street — tipsy as usual, and seemed to be getting the worst of the controversy, which appeared to be about a money claim.

On catching sight of Velchaninoff, Pavel Pavlovitch stretched out his arms to him and begged for help; while his opponent — observing Velchaninoff's athletic figure — made off. Pavel Pavlovitch shook his fist after him triumphantly, and hooted at him with cries of victory; but this amusement was brought to a sudden conclusion by Velchaninoff, who, impelled by some mysterious motive — which he could not analyse, took him by the shoulders, and began to shake him violently, so violently that his teeth chattered.

Pavel Pavlovitch ceased to shout after his opponent, and gazed with a stupid tipsy expression of alarm at his new antagonist. Velchaninoff, having shaken him till he was tired, and not knowing what to do next with him, set him down violently on the pavement, backwards.

“Liza is dead!” he said.

Pavel Pavlovitch sat on the pavement and stared, he was too far gone to take in the news. At last he seemed to realize.

“Dead!” he whispered, in a strange inexplicable tone. Velchaninoff was not sure whether his face was simply twitching, or whether he was trying to grin in his usual disagreeable way; but the next moment the drunkard raised his shaking hand to cross himself. He then struggled to his feet and staggered off, appearing totally oblivious of the fact that such a person as Velchaninoff existed.

However, the latter very soon pursued and caught him, seizing him once more by the shoulder.

“Do you understand, you drunken sot, that without you the funeral arrangements cannot be made?” he shouted, panting with rage.

Pavel Pavlovitch turned his head.

“The artillery — lieutenant — don’t you remember him?” he muttered, thickly.

“*What?*” cried Velchaninoff, with a shudder.

“He’s her father — find him! he’ll bury her!”

“You liar! You said that out of pure malice. I thought you’d invent something of the sort!”

Quite beside himself with passion Velchaninoff brought down his powerful fist with all his strength on Pavel Pavlovitch’s head; another moment and he might have followed up the blow and slain the man as he stood. His victim never winced, but he turned upon Velchaninoff a face of such insane terrible passion, that his whole visage looked distorted.

“Do you understand Russian?” he asked more firmly, as though his fury had chased away the effects of drunkenness. “Very well, then, you are a —— !” (here followed a specimen of the very vilest language which the Russian tongue could furnish); “and now you can go back to her!” So saying he tore himself from Velchaninoff’s grasp, nearly knocking himself over with the effort, and staggered away. Velchaninoff did not follow him.

Next day, however, a most respectable-looking middle-aged man arrived at the Pogoryeltseft’s house, in civil uniform, and handed to Claudia

Petrovna a packet addressed to her “from Pavel Pavlovitch Trusotsky.”

In this packet was a sum of three hundred roubles, together with all certificates necessary for Liza’s funeral. Pavel Pavlovitch had written a short note couched in very polite and correct phraseology, and thanking Claudia Petrovna sincerely “for her great kindness to the orphan — kindness for which heaven alone could recompense her.” He added rather confusedly that severe illness prevented his personal presence at the funeral of his “tenderly loved and unfortunate daughter,” but that he “felt he could repose all confidence (as to the ceremony being fittingly performed) in the angelic goodness of Claudia Petrovna.” The three hundred roubles, he explained, were to go towards the funeral and other expenses. If there should be any of the money left after defraying all charges, Claudia Petrovna was requested to spend the same in prayers for the repose of the soul of the deceased.

Nothing further was to be discovered by questioning the messenger; and it was soon evident that the latter knew nothing, excepting that he had only consented to act as bearer of the packet, in response to the urgent appeal of Pavel Pavlovitch.

Pogoryeltseff was a little offended by the offer of money for expenses, and would have sent it back, but Claudia Petrovna suggested that a receipt should be taken from the cemetery authorities for the cost of the funeral (since one could not well refuse to allow a man to bury his own child), together with a document undertaking that the rest of the three hundred roubles should be spent in prayer for the soul of Liza.

Velchaninoff afterwards posted an envelope containing these two papers to Trusotsky’s lodging.

After the funeral Velchaninoff disappeared from the country altogether. He wandered about town for a whole fortnight, knocking up against people as he went blindly through the streets. Now and then he spent a whole day lying in his bed, oblivious of the most ordinary needs and occupations; the Pogoryeltseffs often invited him to their house, and he invariably promised to come, and as invariably forgot all about it. Claudia Petrovna went as far as to call for him herself, but she did not find him at home. The same thing happened with his lawyer, who had some good news to tell him. The difference with his opponent had been settled advantageously for Velchaninoff, the former having accepted a small bonification and

renounced his claim to the property in dispute. All that was wanting was the formal acquiescence of Velchaninoff himself.

Finding him at home at last, after many endeavours, the lawyer was excessively surprised to discover that Velchaninoff was as callous and cool as to the result of his (the lawyer's) labours, as he had before been ardent and excitable.

The hottest days of July had now arrived, but Velchaninoff was oblivious of everything. His grief swelled and ached at his heart like some internal boil; his greatest sorrow was that Liza had not had time to know him, and died without ever guessing how fondly he loved her. The sweet new beacon of his life, which had glimmered for a short while within his heart, was extinguished once more, and lost in eternal gloom.

The whole object of his existence, as he now told himself at every moment, should have been that Liza might feel his love about her and around her, each day, each hour, each moment of her life.

"There can be no higher aim or object than this in life," he thought, in gloomy ecstasy. "If there be other aims in life, none can be holier or better than this of mine. All my old unworthy life should have been purified and atoned for by my love for Liza; in place of myself — my sinful, worn-out, useless life — I should have bequeathed to the world a sweet, pure, beautiful being, in whose innocence all my guilt should have been absorbed, and lost, and forgiven, and in her I should have forgiven myself."

Such thoughts would flit through Velchaninoff's head as he mused sorrowfully over the memory of the dead child. He thought over all he had seen of her; he recalled her little face all burning with fever, then lying at rest in her coffin, covered with lovely flowers. He remembered that once he had noticed that one of her fingers was quite black from some bruise or pinch — goodness knows what had made it so, but it was the sight of that little finger which had filled him with longing to go straight away and *murder* Pavel Pavlovitch.

"Do you know what Liza is to me?" Pavel had said, he recollected, one day; and now he understood the exclamation. It was no pretence of love, no posturing and nonsense — it was real love! How, then, could the wretch have been so cruel to a child whom he so dearly loved? He could not bear to think of it, the question was painful, and quite unanswerable.

One day he wandered down — he knew not exactly how — to the cemetery where Liza was buried, and hunted up her grave. This was the

first time he had been there since the funeral; he had never dared to go there before, fearing that the visit would be too painful. But strangely enough, when he found the little mound and had bent down and kissed it, he felt happier and lighter at heart than before.

It was a lovely evening, the sun was setting, the tall grass waved about the tombs, and a bee hummed somewhere near him. The flowers and crosses placed on the tomb by Claudia Petrovna were still there. A ray of hope blazed up in his heart for the first time for many a long day. “How light-hearted I feel,” he thought, as he felt the spell of the quiet of God’s Acre, and the hush of the beautiful still evening. A flow of some indefinable faith in something poured into his heart.

“This is Liza’s gift,” he thought; “this is Liza herself talking to me!”

It was quite dark when he left the cemetery and turned his steps homewards.

Not far from the gate of the burial ground there stood a small inn or public-house, and through the open windows he could see the people inside sitting at tables. It instantly struck Velchaninoff that one of the guests, sitting nearest to the window, was Pavel Pavlovitch, and that the latter had seen him and was observing him curiously.

He went on further, but before very long he heard footsteps pursuing him. It was, of course, Pavel Pavlovitch. Probably the unusually serene and peaceful expression of Velchaninoff’s face as he went by had attracted and encouraged him.

He soon caught Velchaninoff up, and smiled timidly at him, but not with the old drunken grin. He did not appear to be in the smallest degree drunk.

“Good evening,” said Pavel Pavlovitch.

“How d’ye do?” replied Velchaninoff.

CHAPTER XI.

By replying thus to Pavel Pavlovitch's greeting Velchaninoff surprised himself. It seemed strange indeed to him that he should now meet this man without any feeling of anger, and that there should be something quite novel in his feelings towards Pavel Pavlovitch — a sort of call to new relations with him.

"What a lovely evening!" said Pavel Pavlovitch, looking observantly into the other's eyes.

"So you haven't gone away yet!" murmured Velchaninoff, not in a tone of inquiry, but as though musing upon the fact as he continued to walk on.

"I've been a good deal delayed; but I've obtained my petition, my new post, with rise of salary. I'm off the day after to-morrow for certain."

"What? You've obtained the new situation?"

"And why not?" said Pavel Pavlovitch, with a crooked smile.

"Oh, I meant nothing particular by my remark!" said Velchaninoff frowning, and glancing sidelong at his companion. To his surprise Pavel Pavlovitch, both in dress and appearance, even down to the hat with the crape band, was incomparably neater and tidier-looking than he was wont to be a fortnight since.

"Why was he sitting in the public-house then?" thought Velchaninoff. This fact puzzled him much.

"I wished to let you know of my other great joy, Alexey Ivanovitch!" resumed Pavel.

"Joy?"

"I'm going to marry."

"What?"

"Yes, sir! after sorrow, joy! It is ever thus in life. Oh! Alexey Ivanovitch, I should so much like if — but you look as though you were in a great hurry."

"Yes, I am in a hurry, and I am ill besides." He felt as though he would give anything to get rid of the man; the feeling of readiness to develop new and better relations with him had vanished in a moment.

"I should so much like — —"

Pavel Pavlovitch did not finish his sentence; Velchaninoff kept silence and waited.

“In that case, perhaps another time — if we should happen to meet.”

“Yes, yes, another time,” said Velchaninoff quickly, continuing to move along, and never looking at his companion.

Nothing was said for another minute or two. Pavel Pavlovitch continued to trot alongside.

“In that case, *au revoir*,” he blurted, at last. “*Au revoir!* I hope — —”

Velchaninoff did not think it necessary to hear him complete his sentence; he left Pavel, and returned home much agitated. The meeting with “that fellow” had been too much for his present state of mind. As he lay down upon his bed the thought came over him once more: “Why was that fellow there, close to the cemetery?” He determined to go down to the Pogoryeltseffs’ next morning; not that he felt inclined to go — any sympathy was intolerably painful to him, — but they had been so kind and so anxious about him, that he must really make up his mind to go. But next day, while finishing his breakfast, he felt terribly disinclined for the visit; he felt, as it were, shy of meeting them for the first time after his grief. “Shall I go or not?” he was saying to himself, as he sat at his table. When suddenly, to his extreme amazement, in walked Pavel Pavlovitch.

In spite of yesterday’s *rencontre*, Velchaninoff could not have believed that this man would ever enter his rooms again; and when he now saw him appear, he gazed at him in such absolute astonishment, that he simply did not know what to say. But Pavel Pavlovitch took the management of the matter into his own hands; he said “good morning,” and sat down in the very same chair which he had occupied on his last visit, three weeks since.

This circumstance reminded Velchaninoff too painfully of that visit, and he glared at his visitor with disgust and some agitation.

“You are surprised, I see!” said Pavel Pavlovitch, reading the other’s expression.

He seemed to be both freer, more at his ease, and yet more timid than yesterday. His outward appearance was very curious to behold; for Pavel Pavlovitch was not only *neatly* dressed, he was “got up” in the pink of fashion. He had on a neat summer overcoat, with a pair of light trousers and a white waistcoat; his gloves, his gold eye-glasses (quite a new acquisition), and his linen were quite above all criticism; he wafted an odour of sweet scent when he moved. He looked funny, but his appearance awakened strange thoughts besides.

“Of course I have surprised you, Alexey Ivanovitch,” he said, twisting himself about; “I see it. But in my opinion there should be a something exalted, something higher — untouched and unattainable by petty discords, or the ordinary conditions of life, between man and man. Don’t you agree with me, sir?”

“Pavel Pavlovitch, say what you have to say as quickly as you can, and without further ceremony,” said Velchaninoff, frowning angrily.

“In a couple of words, sir,” said Pavel, hurriedly, “I am going to be married, and I am now off to see my bride — at once. She lives in the country; and what I desire is, the profound honour of introducing *you* to the family, sir; in fact, I have come here to petition you, sir” (Pavel Pavlovitch bent his head deferentially)— “to beg you to go down with me.”

“Go down with you? Where to?” cried the other, his eyes starting out of his head.

“To their house in the country, sir. Forgive me, my dear sir, if I am too agitated, and confuse my words; but I am so dreadfully afraid of hearing you refuse me.”

He looked at Velchaninoff plaintively.

“You wish me to accompany you to see your bride?” said Velchaninoff, staring keenly at Pavel Pavlovitch; he could not believe either his eyes or his ears.

“Yes — yes, sir!” murmured Pavel, who had suddenly become timid to a painful degree. “Don’t be angry, Alexey Ivanovitch, it is not my audacity that prompts me to ask you this; I do it with all humility, and conscious of the unusual nature of my petition. I — I thought perhaps you would not refuse my humble request.”

“In the first place, the thing is absolutely out of the question,” said Velchaninoff, turning away in considerable mental perturbation.

“It is only my immeasurable longing that prompts me to ask you. I confess I have a reason for desiring it, which reason I propose to reveal to you afterwards; just now I — —”

“The thing is quite impossible, however you may look at it. You must admit yourself that it is so!” cried Velchaninoff. Both men had risen from their chairs in the excitement of the conversation.

“Not at all — not at all; it is quite possible, sir. In the first place, I merely propose to introduce you as my friend; and in the second place, you know the family already, the Zachlebnikoff’s — State Councillor Zachlebnikoff!”

“What? how so?” cried Velchaninoff. This was the very man whom he had so often tried to find at home, and whom he never succeeded in hunting down — the very lawyer who had acted for his adversary in the late legal proceedings.

“Why, certainly — certainly!” cried Pavel Pavlovitch, apparently taking heart at Velchaninoff’s extreme display of amazement. “The very same man whom I saw you talking to in the street one day; when I watched you from the other side of the road, I was waiting my turn to speak to him then. We served in the same department twelve years since. I had no thought of all this that day I saw you with him; the whole idea is quite new and sudden — only a week old.”

“But — excuse me; why, surely this is a most respectable family, isn’t it?” asked Velchaninoff, naïvely.

“Well, and what if it is respectable?” said Pavel, with a twist.

“Oh, no — of course, I meant nothing; but, so far as I could judge from what I saw, there — —”

“They remember — they remember your coming down,” cried Pavel delightedly. “I told them all sorts of flattering things about you.”

“But, look here, how are you to marry within three months of your late wife’s death?”

“Oh! the wedding needn’t be at once. The wedding can come off in nine or ten months, so that I shall have been in mourning exactly a year. Believe me, my dear sir, it’s all most charming — first place, Fedosie Petrovitch has known me since I was a child; he knew my late wife; he knows how much income I have; he knows all about my little private capital, and all about my new increase of salary. So that you see the whole thing is a mere matter of weights and scales.”

“Is she a daughter of his, then?”

“I’ll tell you all about it,” said Pavel, licking his lips with pleasure. “May I smoke a cigarette? Now, you see, men like Fedosie Petrovitch Zachlebnikoff are much valued in the State; but, excepting for a few perquisites allowed them, the pay is wretched; they live well enough, but they cannot possibly lay by money. Now, imagine, this man has eight daughters and only one little boy: if he were to die there would be nothing but a wretched little pension to keep the lot of them. Just imagine now — *boots* alone for such a family, eh? Well, out of these eight girls five are marriageable, the eldest is twenty-four already (a splendid girl, she is, you

shall see her for yourself). The sixth is a girl of fifteen, still at school. Well, all those five elder girls have to be trotted about and shown off, and what does all that sort of thing cost the poor father, sir? They must be married. Then suddenly I appear on the scene — the first probable bridegroom in the family, and they all know that I have money. Well, there you are, sir — the thing's done."

Pavel Pavlovitch was intoxicated with enthusiasm.

"Are you engaged to the eldest?"

"N — no; — not the eldest. I am wooing the sixth girl, the one at school."

"What?" cried Velchaninoff, laughing in spite of himself. "Why, you say yourself she's only fifteen years old."

"Fifteen *now*, sir; but she'll be sixteen in nine months — sixteen and three months — so why not? It wouldn't be quite nice to make the engagement public just yet, though; so there's to be nothing formal at present, it's only a private arrangement between the parents and myself so far. Believe me, my dear sir, the whole thing is apple-pie, regular and charming."

"Then it isn't quite settled yet?"

"Oh, *quite* settled — quite settled. Believe me, it's all as right and tight as — —"

"Does *she* know?"

"Well, you see, just for form's sake, it is not actually talked about — to her I mean, — but she *knows* well enough. Oh! now you *will* make me happy this once, Alexey Ivanovitch, won't you?" he concluded, with extreme timidity of voice and manner.

"But why should *I* go with you? However," added Velchaninoff impatiently, "as I am not going in any case, I don't see why I should hear any reasons you may adduce for my accompanying you."

"Alexey Ivanovitch! — —"

"Oh, come! you don't suppose I am going to sit down in a carriage with you alongside, and drive down there! Come, just think for yourself!"

The feeling of disgust and displeasure which Pavel Pavlovitch had awakened in him before, had now started into life again after the momentary distraction of the man's foolery about his bride. He felt that in another minute or two he might kick the fellow out before he realized what he was doing. He felt angry with himself for some reason or other.

“Sit down, Alexey Ivanovitch, sit down! You shall not repent it!” said Pavel Pavlovitch in a wheedling voice. “No, no, no!” he added, deprecating the impatient gesture which Velchaninoff made at this moment. “Alexey Ivanovitch, I entreat you to pause before you decide definitely. I see you have quite misunderstood me. I quite realize that I am not for you, nor you for me! I am not quite so absurd as to be unaware of that fact. The service I ask of you now shall not compromise you in any way for the future. I am going away the day after to-morrow, for certain; let this one day be an exceptional one for me, sir. I came to you founding my hopes upon the generosity and nobility of your heart, Alexey Ivanovitch — upon those special tender feelings which may, perhaps, have been aroused in you by late events. Am I explaining myself clearly, sir; or do you still misunderstand me?”

The agitation of Pavel Pavlovitch was increasing with every moment.

Velchaninoff gazed curiously at him.

“You ask a service of me,” he said thoughtfully, “and insist strongly upon my performance of it. This is very suspicious, in my opinion; I must know more.”

“The whole service I ask is merely that you will come with me; and I promise, when we return that I will lay bare my heart to you as though we were at a confessional. Trust me this once, Alexey Ivanovitch!”

But Velchaninoff still held out, and the more obstinately because he was conscious of a certain worrying feeling which he had had ever since Pavel Pavlovitch began to talk about his bride. Whether this feeling was simple curiosity, or something quite inexplicable, he knew not. Whatever it was it urged him to agree, and go. And the more the instinct urged him, the more he resisted it.

He sat and thought for a long time, his head resting on his hand, while Pavel Pavlovitch buzzed about him and continued to repeat his arguments.

“Very well,” he said at last, “very well, I’ll go.” He was agitated almost to trembling pitch. Pavel was radiant.

“Then, Alexey Ivanovitch, change your clothes — dress up, will you? Dress up in your own style — you know so well how to do it.”

Pavel Pavlovitch danced about Velchaninoff as he dressed. His state of mind was exuberantly blissful.

“What in the world does the fellow mean by it all?” thought Velchaninoff.

“I’m going to ask you one more favour yet, Alexey Ivanovitch,” cried the other. “You’ve consented to come; you must be my guide, sir, too.”

“For instance, how?”

“Well, for instance, here’s an important question — the crape. Which ought I to do — tear it off, or leave it on?”

“Just as you like.”

“No, I want your opinion. What should you do yourself, if you were wearing crape, under the circumstances? My own idea was, that if I left it on, I should be giving a proof of the fidelity of my affections. A very flattering recommendation, eh, sir?”

“Oh, take it off, of course.”

“Do you really think it’s a matter of ‘of course’?” Pavel Pavlovitch reflected. “No,” he continued, “do you know, I think I’d rather leave it on.”

“Well, do as you like! He doesn’t trust me, at all events, which is one good thing,” thought Velchaninoff.

They left the house at last. Pavel looked over his companion’s smart costume with intense satisfaction. Velchaninoff was greatly surprised at Pavel’s conduct, but not less so at his own. At the gate there stood a very superior open carriage.

“H’m! so you had a carriage in waiting, had you? Then you were quite convinced that I would consent to come down with you, I suppose?”

“I took the carriage for my own use, but I was nearly sure you would come,” said Pavel Pavlovitch, who wore the air of a man whose cup of happiness is full to the brim.

“Don’t you think you are a little too sanguine in trusting so much to my benevolence?” asked Velchaninoff, as they took their seats and started. He smiled as he spoke, but his heart was full of annoyance.

“Well, Alexey Ivanovitch, it is not for *you* to call me a fool for that,” replied Pavel, firmly and impressively.

“H’m! and Liza?” thought Velchaninoff, but he chased the idea away, he felt as though it were sacrilege to think of her here; and immediately another thought came in, namely, how small, how petty a creature he must be himself to harbour such a thought — such a mean, paltry sentiment in connection with Liza’s sacred name. So angry was he, that he felt as though he must stop the carriage and get out, even though it cost him a struggle with Pavel Pavlovitch to do so.

But at this moment Pavel spoke, and the old feeling of desire to go with him re-entered his soul. “Alexey Ivanovitch,” Pavel said, “are you a judge of articles of value?”

“What sort of articles?”

“Diamonds.”

“Yes.”

“I wish to take down a present with me. What do you think? Ought I to give her one, or not?”

“Quite unnecessary, I should think.”

“But I wish to do it, badly. The only thing is, what shall I give? — a whole set, brooch, ear-rings, bracelet, and all, or only one article?”

“How much do you wish to spend?”

“Oh, four or five hundred roubles.”

“Bosh!”

“What, too much?”

“Buy one bracelet for about a hundred.”

This advice depressed Pavel Pavlovitch; he grew wondrous melancholy. He was terribly anxious to spend a lot of money, and buy the whole set. He insisted upon the necessity of doing so.

A shop was reached and entered, and Pavel bought a bracelet after all, and that not the one he chose himself, but the one which his companion fixed upon. Pavel wished to buy both. When the shopman, who originally asked one hundred and seventy five, let the bracelet go for a hundred and fifty roubles, Pavel Pavlovitch was anything but pleased. He was most anxious to spend a lot of money on the young lady, and would have gladly paid two hundred roubles for the same goods, on the slightest encouragement.

“It doesn’t matter, my being in a hurry to give her presents, does it?” he began excitedly, when they were back in the carriage, and rolling along once more. “They are not ‘swells’ at all; they live most simply. Innocence loves presents,” he continued, smiling cunningly. “You laughed just now, Alexey Ivanovitch, when I said that the girl was only fifteen; but, you know, what specially struck me about her was, that she still goes to school, with a sweet little bag in her hand, containing copy books and pencils. Ha-ha-ha! It was the little satchel that ‘fetched’ me. I do love innocence, Alexey Ivanovitch. I don’t care half so much for good looks as for innocence. Fancy, she and her friend were sitting in the corner there, the other day, and

roared with laughter because the cat jumped from a cupboard on to the sofa, and fell down all of a heap. Why, it smells of fresh apples, that does, sir. Shall I take off the crape, eh?"

"Do as you like!"

"Well, I'll take it off!" He took his hat, tore the crape off, and threw the latter into the road.

Velchaninoff remarked that as he put his hat on his bald head once more, he wore an expression of the simplest and frankest hope and delight.

"Is he *really* that sort of man?" thought Velchaninoff with annoyance. "He surely *can't* be trundling me down here without some underhand motive — impossible! He *can't* be trusting entirely to my generosity?" This last idea seemed to fill him with indignation. "What *is* this clown of a fellow?" he continued to reflect. "Is he a fool, an idiot, or simply a 'permanent husband'? I can't make head or tail of it all!"

CHAPTER XII.

The Zachlebnikoffs were certainly, as Velchaninoff had expressed it, a most respectable family. Zachlebnikoff himself was a most eminently dignified and “solid” gentleman to look at. What Pavel Pavlovitch had said as to their resources was, however, quite true; they lived well, but if paterfamilias were to die, it would be very awkward for the rest.

Old Zachlebnikoff received Velchaninoff most cordially. He was no longer the legal opponent; he appeared now in a far more agreeable guise.

“I congratulate you,” he said at once, “upon the issue. I did my best to arrange it so, and your lawyer was a capital fellow to deal with. You have your sixty thousand without trouble or worry, you see; and if we hadn’t squared it we might have fought on for two or three years.”

Velchaninoff was introduced to the lady of the house as well — an elderly, simple-looking, worn woman. Then the girls began to troop in, one by one and occasionally two together. But, somehow, there seemed to be even more than Velchaninoff had been led to expect; ten or a dozen were collected already — he could not count them exactly. It turned out that some were friends from the neighbouring houses.

The Zachlebnikoffs’ country house was a large wooden structure of no particular style of architecture, but handsome enough, and was possessed of a fine large garden. There were, however, two or three other houses built round the latter, so that the garden was common property for all, which fact resulted in great intimacy between the Zachlebnikoff girls and the young ladies of the neighbouring houses.

Velchaninoff discovered, almost from the first moment, that his arrival — in the capacity of Pavel Pavlovitch’s friend, desiring an introduction to the family — was expected, and looked forward to as a solemn and important occasion.

Being an expert in such matters he very soon observed that there was even more than this in his reception. Judging from the extra politeness of the parents, and by the exceeding smartness of the young ladies, he could not help suspecting that Pavel Pavlovitch had been improving the occasion, and that he had — not, of course, in so many words — given to understand that Velchaninoff was a single man — dull and disconsolate, and had represented him as likely enough at any moment to change his manner of

living and set up an establishment, especially as he had just come in for a considerable inheritance. He thought that Katerina Fedosievna, the eldest girl — twenty-four years of age, and a splendid girl according to Pavel's description — seemed rather "got up to kill," from the look of her. She was eminent, even among her well-dressed sisters, for special elegance of costume, and for a certain originality about the make-up of her abundant hair.

The rest of the girls all looked as though they were well aware that Velchaninoff was making acquaintance with the family "for Katie," and had come down "to have a look at her." Their looks and words all strengthened the impression that they were acting with this supposition in view, as the day went on.

Katerina Fedosievna was a fine tall girl, rather plump, and with an extremely pleasing face. She seemed to be of a quiet, if not actually sleepy, disposition.

"Strange, that such a fine girl should be unmarried," thought Velchaninoff, as he watched her with much satisfaction.

All the sisters were nice-looking, and there were several pretty faces among the friends assembled. Velchaninoff was much diverted by the presence of all these young ladies.

Nadejda Fedosievna, the school-girl and bride elect of Pavel Pavlovitch, had not as yet condescended to appear. Velchaninoff awaited her coming with a degree of impatience which surprised and amused him. At last she came, and came with effect, too, accompanied by a lively girl, her friend — Maria Nikitishna — who was considerably older than herself and a very old friend of the family, having been governess in a neighbouring house for some years. She was quite one of the family, and boasted of about twenty-three years of age. She was much esteemed by all the girls, and evidently acted at present as guide, philosopher, and friend to Nadia (Nadejda). Velchaninoff saw at the first glance that all the girls were against Pavel Pavlovitch, friends and all; and when Nadia came in, it did not take him long to discover that she absolutely *hated* him. He observed, further, that Pavel Pavlovitch either did not, or *would not*, notice this fact.

Nadia was the prettiest of all the girls — a little *brunette*, with an impudent audacious expression; she might have been a Nihilist from the independence of her look. The sly little creature had a pair of flashing eyes and a most charming smile, though as often as not her smile was more full

of mischief and wickedness than of amiability; her lips and teeth were wonders; she was slender but well put together, and the expression of her face was thoughtful though at the same time childish.

“Fifteen years old” was imprinted in every feature of her face and every motion of her body. It appeared afterwards that Pavel Pavlovitch had actually seen the girl for the first time with a little satchel in her hand, coming back from school. She had ceased to carry the satchel since that day.

The present brought down by Pavel Pavlovitch proved a failure, and was the cause of a very painful impression.

Pavel Pavlovitch no sooner saw his bride elect enter the room than he approached her with a broad grin on his face. He gave his present with the preface that he “offered it in recognition of the agreeable sensation experienced by him at his last visit upon the occasion of Nadejda Fedosievna singing a certain song to the pianoforte,” and there he stopped in confusion and stood before her lost and miserable, shoving the jeweller’s box into her hand. Nadia, however, would not take the present, and drew her hands away.

She approached her mother imperiously (the latter looked much put out), and said aloud: “I won’t take it, mother.” Nadia was blushing with shame and anger.

“Take it and say ‘thank you’ to Pavel Pavlovitch for it,” said her father quietly but firmly. He was very far from pleased.

“Quite unnecessary, quite unnecessary!” he muttered to Pavel Pavlovitch.

Nadia, seeing there was nothing else to be done, took the case and curtsied — just as children do, giving a little bob down and then a bob up again, as if she had been on springs.

One of the sisters came across to look at the present whereupon Nadia handed it over to her unopened, thereby showing that she did not care so much as to look at it herself.

The bracelet was taken out and handed around from one to the other of the company; but all examined it silently, and some even ironically, only the mother of the family muttered that the bracelet was “very pretty.”

Pavel Pavlovitch would have been delighted to see the earth open and swallow him up.

Velchaninoff helped the wretched man out of the mess. He suddenly began to talk loudly and eloquently about the first thing that struck him, and before five minutes had passed he had won the attention of everyone in the room. He was a wonderfully clever society talker. He had the knack of putting on an air of absolute sincerity, and of impressing his hearers with the belief that he considered them equally sincere; he was able to act the simple, careless, and happy young fellow to perfection. He was a master of the art of interlarding his talk with occasional flashes of real wit, apparently spontaneous but actually pre-arranged, and very likely *stale*, in so far that he had himself made the joke before.

But to-day he was particularly successful; he felt that he must talk on and talk well, and he knew that before many moments were past he should succeed in monopolizing all eyes and all ears — that no joke should be laughed at but his own, and no voice heard but his.

And sure enough the spell of his presence seemed to produce a wonderful effect; in a while the talking and laughter became general, with Velchaninoff as the centre and motor of all. Mrs. Zachlebnikoff's kind face lighted up with real pleasure, and Katie's pretty eyes were alight with absolute fascination, while her whole visage glowed with delight.

Only Nadia frowned at him, and watched him keenly from beneath her dark lashes. It was clear that she was prejudiced against him. This last fact only roused Velchaninoff to greater exertions. The mischievous Maria Nikitishna, however, as Nadia's ally, succeeded in playing off a successful piece of chaff against Velchaninoff; she pretended that Pavel Pavlovitch had represented Velchaninoff as the friend of his childhood, thereby making the latter out to be some seven or eight years older than he really was. Velchaninoff liked the look of Maria, notwithstanding.

Pavel Pavlovitch was the picture of perplexity. He quite understood the success which his "friend" was achieving, and at first he felt glad and proud of that success, laughing at the jokes and taking a share of the conversation; but for some reason or other he gradually relapsed into thoughtfulness, and thence into melancholy — which fact was sufficiently plain from the expression of his lugubrious and careworn physiognomy.

"Well, my dear fellow, you are the sort of guest one need not exert oneself to entertain," said old Zachlebnikoff at last, rising and making for his private study, where he had business of importance awaiting his attention; "and I was led to believe that you were the most morose of

hypochondriacs. Dear me! what mistakes one does make about other people, to be sure!”

There was a grand piano in the room, and Velchaninoff suddenly turned to Nadia and remarked:

“You sing, don’t you?”

“Who told you I did?” said Nadia curtly.

“Pavel Pavlovitch.”

“It isn’t true; I only sing for a joke — I have no voice.”

“Oh, but I have no voice either, and yet I sing!”

“Well, you sing to us first, and then I’ll sing,” said Nadia, with sparkling eyes; “not now though — after dinner. I hate music,” she added, “I’m so sick of the piano. We have singing and strumming going on all day here; — and Katie is the only one of us all worth hearing!”

Velchaninoff immediately attacked Katie, and besieged her with petitions to play. This attention from him to her eldest daughter so pleased mamma that she flushed up with satisfaction.

Katie went to the piano, blushing like a school-girl, and evidently much ashamed of herself for blushing; she played some little piece of Haydn’s correctly enough but without much expression.

When she had finished Velchaninoff praised the music warmly — Haydn’s music generally, and this little piece in particular. He looked at Katie too, with admiration, and his expression seemed to say. “By Jove, you’re a fine girl!” So eloquent was his look that everyone in the room was able to read it, and especially Katie herself.

“What a pretty garden you have!” said Velchaninoff after a short pause, looking through the glass doors of the balcony. “Let’s all go out; may we?”

“Oh, yes! do let’s go out!” cried several voices together. He seemed to have hit upon the very thing most desired by all.

So they all adjourned into the garden, and walked about there until dinner-time; and Velchaninoff had the opportunity of making closer acquaintance with some of the girls of the establishment. Two or three young fellows “dropped in” from the neighbouring houses — a student, a school-boy, and another young fellow of about twenty in a pair of huge spectacles. Each of these young fellows immediately attached himself to the particular young lady of his choice.

The young man in spectacles no sooner arrived than he went aside with Nadia and Maria Nikitishna, and entered into an animated whispering

conversation with them, with much frowning and impatience of manner.

This gentleman seemed to consider it his mission to treat Pavel Pavlovitch with the most ineffable contempt.

Some of the girls proposed a game. One of them suggested “Proverbs,” but it was voted dull; another suggested acting, but the objection was made that they never knew how to finish off.

“It may be more successful with you,” said Nadia to Velchaninoff confidentially. “You know we all thought you were Pavel Pavlovitch’s friend, but it appears that he was only boasting. I am *very* glad you have come — for a certain reason!” she added, looking knowingly into Velchaninoff’s face, and then retreating back again to Maria’s wing, blushing.

“We’ll play ‘Proverbs’ in the evening,” said another, “and we’ll all chaff Pavel Pavlovitch; *you* must help us too!”

“We *are* so glad you’re come — it’s so dull here as a rule,” said a third, a funny-looking red-haired girl, whose face was comically hot, with running apparently. Goodness knows where she had dropped from; Velchaninoff had not observed her arrive.

Pavel Pavlovitch’s agitation increased every moment. Meanwhile Velchaninoff took the opportunity of making great friends with Nadia. She had ceased to frown at him as before, and had now developed the wildest of spirits, dancing and jumping about, singing and whistling, and occasionally even catching hold of his hand in her innocent friendliness.

She was very happy indeed, apparently; but she took no more notice of Pavel Pavlovitch than if he had not been there at all.

Pavel Pavlovitch was very jealous of all this, and once or twice when Nadia and Velchaninoff talked apart, he joined them and rudely interrupted their conversation by interposing his anxious face between them.

Katia could not help being fully aware by this time that their charming guest had not come in for her sake, as had been believed by the family; indeed, it was clear that Nadia interested him so much that she excluded everyone else, to a considerable extent, from his attention. However, in spite of this, her good-natured face retained its amiability of expression all the same. She seemed to be happy enough witnessing the happiness of the rest and listening to the merry talk; she could not take a large share in the conversation herself, poor girl!

“What a fine girl your sister, Katerina Fedosievna is,” remarked Velchaninoff to Nadia.

“Katia? I should think so! there is no better girl in the world. She’s our family angel! I’m in love with her myself!” replied Nadia enthusiastically.

At last, dinner was announced, and a very good dinner it was, several courses being added for the benefit of the guests: a bottle of tokay made its appearance, and champagne was handed round in honour of the occasion. The good humour of the company was general, old Zachlebnikoff was in high spirits, having partaken of an extra glass of wine this evening. So infectious was the hilarity that even Pavel Pavlovitch took heart of grace and made a pun. From the end of the table where he sat beside the lady of the house, there suddenly came a loud laugh from the delighted girls who had been fortunate enough to hear the virgin attempt.

“Papa, papa, Pavel Pavlovitch has made a joke!” cried several at once: “he says that there is quite a ‘galaxy of gals’ here!”

“Oho! *he’s* made a pun too, has he?” cried the old fellow. “Well, what is it, let’s have it!” He turned to Pavel Pavlovitch with beaming face, prepared to roar over the latter’s joke.

“Why, I tell you, he says there’s quite a ‘galaxy of gals.’ ”

“Well, go on, where’s the joke?” repeated papa, still dense to the merits of the pun, but beaming more and more with benevolent desire to see it.

“Oh, papa, how stupid you are not to see it. Why ‘gals’ and ‘galaxy,’ don’t you see? — he says there’s quite a gal-axy of gals!”

“Oh! oh!” guffawed the old gentleman, “Ha-ha! Well, we’ll hope he’ll make a better one next time, that’s all.”

“Pavel Pavlovitch can’t acquire all the perfections at once,” said Maria Nikitishna. “Oh, my goodness! he’s swallowed a bone — look!” she added, jumping up from her chair.

The alarm was general, and Maria’s delight was great.

Poor Pavel Pavlovitch had only choked over a glass of wine, which he seized and drank to hide his confusion; but Maria declared that it was a fishbone — that she had seen it herself, and that people had been known to die of swallowing a bone just like that.

“Clap him on the back!” cried somebody.

It appeared that there were numerous kind friends ready to perform this friendly office, and poor Pavel protested in vain that it was nothing but a

common choke. The belabouring went on until the coughing fit was over, and it became evident that mischievous Maria was at the bottom of it all.

After dinner old Mr. Zachlebnikoff retired for his post-prandial nap, bidding the young people enjoy themselves in the garden as best they might.

“You enjoy yourself, too!” he added to Pavel Pavlovitch, tapping the latter’s shoulder affably as he went by.

When the party were all collected in the garden once more, Pavel suddenly approached Velchaninoff: “One moment,” he whispered, pulling the latter by the coat-sleeve.

The two men went aside into a lonely by-path.

“None of that *here*, please; I won’t allow it here!” said Pavel Pavlovitch in a choking whisper.

“None of what? Who?” asked Velchaninoff, staring with all his eyes.

Pavel Pavlovitch said nothing more, but gazed furiously at his companion, his lips trembling in a desperate attempt at a pretended smile. At this moment the voices of several of the girls broke in upon them, calling them to some game. Velchaninoff shrugged his shoulders and re-joined the party. Pavel followed him.

“I’m sure Pavel Pavlovitch was borrowing a handkerchief from you, wasn’t he? He forgot his handkerchief last time too. Pavel Pavlovitch has forgotten his handkerchief again, and he has a cold as usual!” cried Maria.

“Oh, Pavel Pavlovitch, why didn’t you say so?” cried Mrs. Zachlebnikoff, making towards the house; “you shall have one at once.”

In vain poor Pavel protested that he had two of those necessary articles, and was *not* suffering from a cold. Mrs. Zachlebnikoff was glad of the excuse for retiring to the house, and heard nothing. A few moments afterwards a maid pursued Pavel with a handkerchief, to the confusion of the latter gentleman.

A game of “proverbs” was now proposed. All sat down, and the young man with spectacles was made to retire to a considerable distance and wait there with his nose close up against the wall and his back turned until the proverb should have been chosen and the words arranged. Velchaninoff was the next in turn to be the questioner.

Then the cry arose for Pavel Pavlovitch, and the latter, who had more or less recovered his good humour by this time, proceeded to the spot indicated; and, resolved to do his duty like a man, took his stand with his

nose to the wall, ready to stay there motionless until called. The red-haired young lady was detailed to watch him, in case of fraud on his part.

No sooner, however, had the wretched Pavel taken up his position at the wall, than the whole party took to their heels and ran away as fast as their legs could carry them.

“Run quick!” whispered the girls to Velchaninoff, in despair, for he had not started with them.

“Why, what’s happened? What’s the matter?” asked the latter, keeping up as best he could.

“Don’t make a noise! we want to get away and let him go on standing there — that’s all.”

Katia, it appeared, did not like this practical joke. When the last stragglers of the party arrived at the end of the garden, among them Velchaninoff, the latter found Katia angrily scolding the rest of the girls.

“Very well,” she was saying, “I won’t tell mother this time; but I shall go away myself: it’s too bad! What will the poor fellow’s feelings be, standing all alone there, and finding us fled!”

And off she went. The rest, however, were entirely unsympathizing, and enjoyed the joke thoroughly. Velchaninoff was entreated to appear entirely unconscious when Pavel Pavlovitch should appear again, just as though nothing whatever had happened. It was a full quarter of an hour before Pavel put in an appearance, two thirds, at least, of that time he must have stood at the wall. When he reached the party he found everyone busy over a game of *Goriélki*, laughing and shouting and making themselves thoroughly happy.

Wild with rage, Pavel Pavlovitch again made straight for Velchaninoff, and tugged him by the coat-sleeve.

“One moment, sir!”

“Oh, my goodness! he’s always coming in with his ‘one moments’!” said someone.

“A handkerchief wanted again probably!” shouted someone else after the pair as they retired.

“Come now, this time it was you! You were the originator of this insult!” muttered Pavel, his teeth chattering with fury.

Velchaninoff interrupted him, and strongly recommended Pavel to bestir himself to be merrier.

“You are chaffed because you get angry,” he said; “if you try to be jolly instead of sulky you’ll be let alone!”

To his surprise these words impressed Pavel deeply; he was quiet at once, and returned to the party with a guilty air, and immediately began to take part in the games engaged in once more. He was not further bullied at present, and within half an hour his good humour seemed quite re-established.

To Velchaninoff’s astonishment, however, he never seemed to presume to speak to Nadia, although he kept as close to her, on all occasions, as he possibly could. He seemed to take his position as quite natural, and was not put out by her contemptuous air towards him.

Pavel Pavlovitch was teased once more, however, before the evening ended.

A game of “Hide-and-seek” was commenced, and Pavel had hidden in a small room in the house. Being observed entering there by someone, he was locked in, and left there raging for an hour. Meanwhile, Velchaninoff learned the “special reason” for Nadia’s joy at his arrival. Maria conducted him to a lonely alley, where Nadia was awaiting him alone.

“I have quite convinced myself,” began the latter, when they were left alone, “that you are not nearly so great a friend of Pavel Pavlovitch as he gave us to understand. I have also convinced myself that you alone can perform a certain great service for me. Here is his horrid bracelet” (she drew the case out of her pocket)— “I wish to ask you to be so kind as to return it to him; I cannot do so myself, because I am quite determined never to speak to him again all my life. You can tell him so from me, and better add that he is not to worry me with any more of his nasty presents. I’ll let him know something else I have to say through other channels. Will you do this for me?”

“Oh, for goodness sake, spare me!” cried Velchaninoff, almost wringing his hands.

“How spare you?” cried poor Nadia. Her artificial tone put on for the occasion had collapsed at once before this check, and she was nearly crying. Velchaninoff burst out laughing.

“I don’t mean — I should be delighted, you know — but the thing is, I have my own accounts to settle with him!”

“I knew you weren’t his friend, and that he was lying. I shall never marry him — never! You may rely on that! I don’t understand how he could

dare — at all events, you really *must* give him back this horrid bracelet. What am I to do if you don't? I *must* have it given back to him this very day. He'll catch it if he interferes with father about me!"

At this moment the spectacled young gentleman issued from the shrubs at their elbow.

"You are bound to return the bracelet!" he burst out furiously, upon Velchaninoff, "if only out of respect to the rights of woman — —"

He did not finish the sentence, for Nadia pulled him away from beside Velchaninoff with all her strength.

"How stupid you are," she cried; "go away. How dare you listen? I told you to stand a long way off!" She stamped her foot with rage, and for some while after the young fellow had slunk away she continued to walk along with flashing eyes, furious with indignation. "You wouldn't believe how stupid he is!" she cried at last. "You laugh, but think of my feelings!"

"That's not *he*, is it?" laughed Velchaninoff.

"Of course not. How could you imagine such a thing! It's only his friend, and how he can choose such friends I can't understand! They say he is a 'future motive-power,' but I don't see it. Alexey Ivanovitch, for the last time — I have no one else to ask — will you give the bracelet back or not?"

"Very well, I will. Give it to me!"

"Oh, you dear, good Alexey Ivanovitch, thanks!" she cried, enthusiastic with delight. "I'll sing all the evening for that! I sing beautifully, you know! I was telling you a wicked story before dinner. Oh, I *wish* you would come down here again; I'd tell you *all*, then, and lots of other things besides — for you are a dear, kind, good fellow, like — like Katia!"

And sure enough when they reached home she sat down and sang a couple of songs in a voice which, though entirely untrained, was of great natural sweetness and considerable strength.

When the party returned from the garden they had found Pavel Pavlovitch drinking tea with the old folks on the balcony. He had probably been talking on serious topics, as he was to take his departure the day after to-morrow for nine months. He never so much as glanced at Velchaninoff and the rest when they entered; but he evidently had not complained to the authorities, and all was quiet as yet. But, when Nadia began to sing, he came in. Nadia did not answer a single one of his questions, but he did not seem offended by this, and took his stand behind her chair. Once there, his

whole appearance gave it to be understood that that was his own place by right, and that he allowed none to dispute it.

“It’s Alexey Ivanovitch’s turn to sing now!” cried the girls, when Nadia’s song was finished, and all crowded round to hear Velchaninoff, who sat down to accompany himself. He chose a song of Glinke’s, too much neglected nowadays; it ran: —

“When from your merry lips

Tenderness flows,” &c.

Velchaninoff seemed to address the words to Nadia exclusively, but the whole party stood around him. His voice had long since gone the way of all flesh, but it was clear that he must have had a good one once, and it so happened that Velchaninoff had heard this particular song many years ago, from Glinkes’ own lips, when a student at the university, and remembered the great effect that it had made upon him when he first heard it. The song was full of the most intense passion of expression, and Velchaninoff sang it well, with his eyes fixed upon Nadia.

Amid the applause that followed the completion of the performance, Pavel Pavlovitch came forward, seized Nadia’s hand and drew her away from the proximity of Velchaninoff; he then returned to the latter at the piano, and, with every evidence of frantic rage, whispered to him, his lips all of a tremble,

“One moment with you!”

Velchaninoff, seeing that the man was capable of worse things in his then frame of mind, took Pavel’s hand and led him out through the balcony into the garden — quite dark now.

“Do you understand, sir, that you must come away at once — *this very minute*?” said Pavel Pavlovitch.

“No, sir, I do not!”

“Do you remember,” continued Pavel in his frenzied whisper, “do you remember that you begged me to tell you *all*, *everything* — down to the smallest details? Well, the time has come for telling you all — come!”

Velchaninoff considered a moment, glanced once more at Pavel Pavlovitch, and consented to go.

“Oh! stay and have another cup of tea!” said Mrs. Zachlebnikoff, when this decision was announced.

“Pavel Pavlovitch, why are you taking Alexey Ivanovitch away?” cried the girls, with angry looks. As for Nadia, she looked so cross with Pavel,

that the latter felt absolutely uncomfortable; but he did not give in.

“Oh, but I am very much obliged to Pavel Pavlovitch,” said Velchaninoff, “for reminding me of some most important business which I must attend to this very evening, and which I might have forgotten,” laughed Velchaninoff, as he shook hands with his host and made his bow to the ladies, especially to Katia, as the family thought.

“You must come again soon!” said the host; “we have been so glad to see you; it was so good of you to come!”

“Yes, *so* glad!” said the lady of the house.

“Do come again soon!” cried the girls, as Pavel Pavlovitch and Velchaninoff took their seats in the carriage; “Alexey Ivanovitch, *do* come back soon!” And with these voices in their ears they drove away.

CHAPTER XIII.

In spite of Velchaninoff's apparently happy day, the feeling of annoyance and suffering at his heart had hardly actually left him for a single moment. Before he sang the song he had not known what to do with himself, or suppressed anger and melancholy — perhaps that was the reason why he had sung with so much feeling and passion.

"To think that I could so have lowered myself as to forget everything!" he thought — and then despised himself for thinking it; "it is more humiliating still to cry over what is done," he continued. "Far better to fly into a passion with someone instead."

"Fool!" he muttered — looking askance at Pavel Pavlovitch, who sat beside him as still as a mouse. Pavel Pavlovitch preserved a most obstinate silence — probably concentrating and ranging his energies. He occasionally took his hat off, impatiently, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

Once — and once only — Pavel spoke, to the coachman, he asked whether there was going to be a thunder-storm.

"Wheugh!" said the man, "I should think so! It's been a steamy day — just the day for it!"

By the time town was reached — half-past ten — the whole sky was overcast.

"I am coming to your house," said Pavel to Velchaninoff, when almost at the door.

"Quite so; but I warn you, I feel very unwell to-night!"

"All right — I won't stay too long."

When the two men passed under the gateway, Pavel Pavlovitch disappeared into the 'dvornik's' room for a minute, to speak to Mavra.

"What did you go in there for?" asked Velchaninoff severely as they mounted the stairs and reached his own door.

"Oh — nothing — nothing at all, — just to tell them about the coachman. — —"

"Very well. Mind, I shall not allow you to drink!"

Pavel Pavlovitch did not answer.

Velchaninoff lit a candle, while Pavel threw himself into a chair; — then the former came and stood menacingly before him.

“I may have told you I should have *my* last word to say to-night, as well as you!” he said with suppressed anger in his voice and manner: “Here it is. I consider conscientiously that things are square between you and me, now; and therefore there is no more to be said, understand me, about *anything*. Since this is so, had you not better go, and let me close the door after you?”

“Let’s cry ‘quits’ first, Alexey Ivanovitch,” said Pavel Pavlovitch, gazing into Velchaninoff’s eyes with great sweetness.

“Quits?” cried the latter, in amazement; “you strange man, what are we to cry quits about? Are you harping upon your promise of a ‘last word’?”

“Yes.”

“Oh, well, we have nothing more to cry quits for. We have been quits long since,” said Velchaninoff.

“Dear me, do you really think so?” cried Pavel Pavlovitch, in a shrill, sharp voice, pressing his two hands tightly together, finger to finger, as he held them up before his breast.

Velchaninoff said nothing. He rose from his seat and began to walk up and down the room. The word “Liza” resounded through and through his soul like the voice of a bell.

“Well, what is there that you still consider unsettled between us?” he asked at last, looking angrily at Pavel, who had never ceased to follow him with his eyes — always holding his hands before his breast, finger tip to finger tip.

“Don’t go down there any more,” said Pavel, almost in a whisper, and rising from his seat with every indication of humble entreaty.

“*What!* is *that* all?” cried Velchaninoff, bursting into an angry laugh; “good heavens, man, you have done nothing but surprise me all day.” He had begun in a tone of exasperation, but he now abruptly changed both voice and expression, and continued with an air of deep feeling. “Listen,” he said, “listen to me. I don’t think I have ever felt so deeply humiliated as I am feeling now, in consequence of the events of to-day. In the first place, that I should have condescended to go down with you at all, and in the second place, all that happened there. It has been such a day of pettifogging — pitiful pettifogging. I have profaned and lowered myself by taking a share in it all, and forgetting —— Well, it’s done now. But look here — you fell upon me to-day, unawares — upon a sick man. Oh, you needn’t excuse yourself; at all events I shall certainly *not* go there again. I have not the slightest interest in so doing,” he concluded, with an air of decision.

“No, really!” cried Pavel Pavlovitch, making no secret of his delight and exultation.

Velchaninoff glanced contemptuously at him, and recommenced his march up and down the room.

“You have determined to be happy under any circumstances, I suppose?” he observed, after a pause. He could not resist making the remark disdainfully.

“Yes, I have,” said Pavel, quietly.

“It’s no business of mine that he’s a fool and a knave, out of pure idiocy!” thought Velchaninoff. “I can’t help hating him, though I feel that he is not even worth hating.”

“I’m a permanent husband,” said Pavel Pavlovitch, with the most exquisitely servile irony, at his own expense. “I remember you using that expression, Alexey Ivanovitch, long ago, when you were with us at T —— . I remember many of your original phrases of that time, and when you spoke of ‘permanent husbands,’ the other day, I recollected the expression.”

At this point Mavra entered the room with a bottle of champagne and two glasses.

“Forgive me, Alexey Ivanovitch,” said Pavel, “you know I can’t get on without it. Don’t consider it an audacity on my part — think of it as a mere bit of by-play unworthy your notice.”

“Well,” consented Velchaninoff, with a look of disgust, “but I must remind you that I don’t feel well, and that—”

“One little moment — I’ll go at once, I really will — I *must* just drink *one* glass, my throat is so — —”

He seized the bottle eagerly, and poured himself out a glass, drank it greedily at a gulp, and sat down. He looked at Velchaninoff almost tenderly.

“What a nasty looking beast!” muttered the latter to himself.

“It’s all her friends that make her like that,” said Pavel, suddenly, with animation.

“What? Oh, you refer to the lady. I — —”

“And, besides, she is so very young still, you see,” resumed Pavel. “I shall be her slave — she shall see a little society, and a bit of the world. She will change, sir, entirely.”

“I mustn’t forget to give him back the bracelet, by-the-bye,” thought Velchaninoff, frowning, as he felt for the case in his coat pocket.

“You said just now that I am determined to be happy, Alexey Ivanovitch,” continued Pavel, confidentially, and with almost touching earnestness. “I *must* marry, else what will become of me? You see for yourself” (he pointed to the bottle), “and that’s only a hundredth part of what I demean myself to nowadays. I cannot get on without marrying again, sir; I *must* have a new faith. If I can but believe in some one again, sir, I shall rise — I shall be saved.”

“Why are you telling *me* all this?” exclaimed Velchaninoff, very nearly laughing in his face; it seemed so absurdly inconsistent.

“Look here,” he continued, roaring the words out, “let me know now, once for all, why did you drag me down there? what good was I to do you there?”

“I — I wished to try —— ,” began Pavel, with some confusion.

“Try what?”

“The effect, sir. You see, Alexey Ivanovitch, I have only been visiting there a week” (he grew more and more confused), “and yesterday, when I met you, I thought to myself that I had never seen her yet in society; that is, in the society of other *men* besides myself — a stupid idea, I know it is — I was very anxious to try — you know my wretchedly jealous nature.” He suddenly raised his head and blushed violently.

“He *can’t* be telling me the truth!” thought Velchaninoff; he was struck dumb with surprise.

“Well, go on!” he muttered at last.

“Well, I see it was all her pretty childish nature, sir — that and her friends together. You must forgive my stupid conduct towards yourself to-day, Alexey Ivanovitch. I will never do it again — never again, sir, I assure you!”

“I shall never be there to give you the opportunity,” replied Velchaninoff with a laugh.

“That’s partly why I say it,” said Pavel.

“Oh, come! I’m not the only man in the world you know!” said the other irritably.

“I am sorry to hear you say that, Alexey Ivanovitch. My esteem for Nadejda is such that I — —”

“Oh, forgive me, forgive me! I meant nothing, I assure you! Only it surprises me that you should have expected so much of me — that you trusted me so completely.”

“I trusted you entirely, sir, solely on account of — all that has passed.”

“So that you still consider me the most honourable of men?” Velchaninoff paused, the naïve nature of his sudden question surprised even himself.

“I always did think you that, sir!” said Pavel, hanging his head.

“Of course, quite so — I didn’t mean quite that — I wanted to say, in spite of all prejudices you may have formed, you — —”

“Yes, in spite of all prejudices!”

“And when you first came to Petersburg?” asked Velchaninoff, who himself felt the monstrosity of his own inquisitive questions, but could not resist putting them.

“I considered you the most honourable of men when I first came to Petersburg, sir; no less. I always respected you, Alexey Ivanovitch!”

Pavel Pavlovitch raised his eyes and looked at his companion without the smallest trace of confusion.

Velchaninoff suddenly felt cowed and afraid. He was anxious that nothing should result — nothing disagreeable — from this conversation, since he himself was responsible for having initiated it.

“I loved you, Alexey Ivanovitch; all that year at T —— I loved you — you did not observe it,” continued Pavel Pavlovitch, his voice trembling with emotion, to the great discomfiture of his companion. “You did not observe my affection, because I was too lowly a being to deserve any sort of notice; but it was unnecessary that you should observe my love. Well, sir, and all these nine years I have thought of you, for I have never known such a year of life as that year was.” (Pavel’s eyes seemed to have a special glare in them at this point.) “I remembered many of your sayings and expressions, sir, and I thought of you always as a man imbued with the loftiest sentiments, and gifted with knowledge and intellect, sir — of the highest order — a man of grand ideas. ‘Great ideas do not proceed so frequently from greatness of intellect, as from elevation of taste and feeling.’ You yourself said that, sir, once. I dare say you have forgotten the fact, but you did say it. Therefore I always thought of you, sir, as a man of taste and feeling; consequently I concluded — consequently I trusted you, in spite of everything.”

Pavel Pavlovitch’s chin suddenly began to tremble. Velchaninoff was frightened out of his wits. This unexpected tone must be put an end to at all hazards.

“Enough, Pavel Pavlovitch!” he said softly, blushing violently and with some show of irritation. “And why — why (Velchaninoff suddenly began to shout passionately) — why do you come hanging round the neck of a sick man, a worried man — a man who is almost out of his wits with fever and annoyance of all sorts, and drag him into this abyss of lies and mirage and vision and shame — and unnatural, disproportionate, distorted nonsense! Yes, sir, that’s the most shameful part of the whole business — the disproportionate nonsense of what you say! You know it’s all humbug; both of us are mean wretches — both of us; and if you like I’ll prove to you at once that not only you don’t love me, but that you loathe and hate me with all your heart, and that you are a liar, whether you know it or not! You took me down to see your bride, not — not a bit in the world to try how she would behave in the society of other men — absurd idea! — You simply saw me, yesterday, and your vile impulse led you to carry me off there in order that you might show me the girl, and say, as it were. There, look at that! She’s to be mine! Try your hand *there* if you can! It was nothing but your challenge to me! You may not have known it, but this was so, as I say; and you felt the impulse which I have described. Such a challenge could not be made without hatred; consequently you hate me.”

Velchaninoff almost *rushed* up and down the room as he shouted the above words; and with every syllable the humiliating consciousness that he was allowing himself to descend to the level of Pavel Pavlovitch afflicted him and tormented him more and more!

“I was only anxious to be at peace with you, Alexey Ivanovitch!” said Pavel sadly, his chin and lips working again.

Velchaninoff flew into a violent rage, as if he had been insulted in the most unexampled manner.

“I tell you once more, sir,” he cried, “that you have attached yourself to a sick and irritated man, in order that you may surprise him into saying something unseemly in his madness! We are, I tell you, man, we are men of different worlds. Understand me! between us two there is a grave,” he hissed in his fury, and stopped.

“And how do you know, — sir,” cried Pavel Pavlovitch, his face suddenly becoming all twisted, and deadly white to look at, as he strode up to Velchaninoff, “how do you know what that grave means to me, sir, here!” (He beat his breast with terrible earnestness, droll though he looked.) “Yes, sir, we both stand on the brink of the grave, but on my side there is more,

sir, than on yours — yes, more, more, more!” he hissed, beating his breast without pause— “more than on yours — the grave means more to me than to you!”

But at this moment a loud ring at the bell brought both men to their senses. Someone was ringing so loud that the bell-wire was in danger of snapping.

“People don’t ring like that for me, observed Velchaninoff angrily.”

“No more they do for me, sir! I assure you they don’t!” said Pavel Pavlovitch anxiously. He had become the quiet timid Pavel again in a moment. Velchaninoff frowned and went to open the door.

“Mr. Velchaninoff, if I am not mistaken?” said a strange voice, apparently belonging to some young and very self-satisfied person, at the door.

“What is it?”

“I have been informed that Mr. Trusotsky is at this moment in your rooms. I must see him at once.”

Velchaninoff felt inclined to send this self-satisfied looking young gentleman flying downstairs again; but he reflected — refrained, stood aside and let him in.

“Here is Mr. Trusotsky. Come in.”

CHAPTER XIV.

A young fellow of some nineteen summers entered the room; he might have been even younger, to judge by his handsome but self-satisfied and very juvenile face.

He was not badly dressed, at all events his clothes fitted him well; in stature he was a little above the middle height; he had thick black hair, and dark, bold eyes — and these were the striking features of his face. Unfortunately his nose was a little too broad and tip-tilted, otherwise he would have been a really remarkably good-looking young fellow. — He came in with some pretension.

“I believe I have the opportunity of speaking to Mr. Trusotsky?” he observed deliberately, and bringing out the word opportunity with much apparent satisfaction, as though he wished to accentuate the fact that he could not possibly be supposed to feel either honour or pleasure in meeting Mr. Trusotsky. Velchaninoff thought he knew what all this meant; Pavel Pavlovitch seemed to have an inkling of the state of affairs, too. His expression was one of anxiety, but he did not show the white feather.

“Not having the honour of your acquaintance,” he said with dignity, “I do not understand what sort of business you can have with me.”

“Kindly listen to me first, and you can then let me know your ideas on the subject,” observed the young gentleman, pulling out his tortoiseshell glasses, and focusing the champagne bottle with them. Having deliberately inspected that object, he put up his glasses again, and fixing his attention once more upon Pavel Pavlovitch, remarked:

“Alexander Loboff.”

“What about Alexander Loboff?”

“That’s my name. You’ve not heard of me?”

“No.”

“H’m! Well, I don’t know when you should have, now I think of it; but I’ve come on important business concerning yourself. I suppose I can sit down? I’m tired.”

“Oh, pray sit down,” said Velchaninoff, but not before the young man had taken a chair. In spite of the pain at his heart Velchaninoff could not help being interested in this impudent youngling.

There seemed to be something in his good-looking, fresh young face that reminded him of Nadia.

“You can sit down too,” observed Loboff, indicating an empty seat to Pavel Pavlovitch, with a careless nod of his head.

“Thank you; I shall stand.”

“Very well, but you’ll soon get tired. You need not go away, I think, Mr. Velchaninoff.”

“I have nowhere to go to, my good sir, I am at home.”

“As you like; I confess I should prefer your being present while I have an explanation with this gentleman. Nadejda Fedosievna has given you a flattering enough character, sir, to me.”

“Nonsense; how could she have had time to do so?”

“Immediately after you left. Now, Mr. Trusotsky, this is what I wish to observe,” he continued to Pavel, the latter still standing in front of him; “we, that is Nadejda Fedosievna and myself, have long loved one another, and have plighted our troth. You have suddenly come between us as an obstruction; I have come to tell you that you had better clear out of the way at once. Are you prepared to adopt my suggestion?”

Pavel Pavlovitch took a step backward in amazement; his face paled visibly, but in a moment a spiteful smile curled his lip.

“Not in the slightest degree prepared, sir,” he said, laconically.

“Dear me,” said the young fellow, settling himself comfortably in his chair, and throwing one leg over the other.

“Indeed, I do not know whom I am speaking to,” added Pavel Pavlovitch, “so that it can’t hardly be worth your while to continue.”

So saying he sat down at last.

“I *said* you’d get tired,” remarked the youth. “I informed you just now,” he added, “that my name is Alexander Loboff, and that Nadejda and I have plighted our troth; consequently you cannot truthfully say, as you did say just now, that you don’t know who I am, nor can you honestly assert that you do not see what we can have to talk about. Not to speak of myself — there is Nadejda Fedosievna to be considered — the lady to whom you have so impudently attached yourself: that alone is matter sufficient for explanation between us.”

All this the young fellow rattled off carelessly enough, as if the thing were so self-evident that it hardly needed mentioning. While talking, he

raised his eye-glass once more, and inspected some object for an instant, putting the glass back in his pocket immediately afterwards.

“Excuse me, young man,” began Pavel Pavlovitch: but the words “young man” were fatal.

“At any other moment,” observed the youth, “I should of course forbid your calling me ‘young man’ at once; but you must admit that in this case my youth is my principal advantage over yourself, and that even this very day you would have given anything — nay, at the moment when you presented your bracelet — to be just a little bit younger.”

“Cheeky young brat!” muttered Velchaninoff.

“In any case,” began Pavel Pavlovitch, with dignity, “I do not consider your reasons as set forth — most questionable and improper reasons at the best — sufficient to justify the continuance of this conversation. I see your ‘business’ is mere childishness and nonsense: to-morrow I shall have the pleasure of an explanation with Mr. Zachlebnikoff, my respected friend. Meanwhile, sir, perhaps you will make it convenient to — depart.”

“That’s the sort of man he is,” cried the youth, hotly, turning to Velchaninoff: “he is not content with being as good as kicked out of the place, and having faces made at him, but he must go down again to-morrow to carry tales about us to Mr. Zachlebnikoff. Do you not prove by this, you obstinate man, that you wish to carry off the young lady by force? that you desire to *buy* her of people who preserve — thanks to the relics of barbarism still triumphant among us — a species of power over her? Surely she showed you sufficiently clearly that she *despises* you? You have had your wretched tasteless present of to-day — that bracelet thing — returned to you; what more do you want?”

“Excuse me, no bracelet has been, or can be returned to me,” said Pavel Pavlovitch, with a shudder of anxiety, however.

“How so? hasn’t Mr. Velchaninoff given it to you?”

“Oh, the deuce take you, sir,” thought Velchaninoff. “Nadejda Fedosievna certainly did give me this case for you, Pavel Pavlovitch,” he said; “I did not wish to take it, but she was anxious that I should: here it is, I’m very sorry.”

He took out the case and laid it down on the table before the enraged Pavel Pavlovitch.

“How is it you have not handed it to him before?” asked the young man severely.

“I had no time, as you may conclude,” said Velchaninoff with a frown.

“H’m! Strange circumstance!”

“*What*, sir?”

“Well, you must admit it *is* strange! However, I am quite prepared to believe that there has been some mistake.”

Velchaninoff would have given worlds to get up and drub the impertinent young rascal and drag him out of the house by the ear; but he could not contain himself, and burst out laughing. The boy immediately followed suit and laughed too.

But for Pavel Pavlovitch it was no laughing matter.

If Velchaninoff had seen the ferocious look which the former cast at him at the moment when he and Loboff laughed, he would have realized that Pavel Pavlovitch was in the act of passing a fatal limit of forbearance. He did not see the look; but it struck him that it was only fair to stand up for Pavel now.

“Listen, Mr. Loboff,” he said, in friendly tones, “not to enter into the consideration of other matters, I may point out that Mr. Trusotsky brings with him, in his wooing of Miss Zachlebnikoff, a name and circumstances fully well-known to that esteemed family; in the second place, he brings a fairly respectable position in the world; and thirdly, he brings wealth. Therefore he may well be surprised to find himself confronted by such a rival as yourself — a gentleman of great wealth, doubtless, but at the same time so very young, that he could not possibly look upon you as a serious rival; therefore, again, he is quite right in begging you to bring the conversation to an end.”

“What do you mean by ‘so very young’? I was nineteen a month since; by the law I might have been married long ago. That’s a sufficient answer to your argument.”

“But what father would consent to allowing his daughter to marry you *now* — even though you may be a Rothschild to come, or a benefactor to humanity in the future. A man of nineteen years old is not capable of answering for himself and yet you are ready to take on your own responsibility another being — in other words, a being who is as much a child as you are yourself. Why, it is hardly even honourable on your part, is it? I have presumed to address you thus, because you yourself referred the matter to me as a sort of arbiter between yourself and Pavel Pavlovitch.”

“Yes, by-the-bye, ‘Pavel Pavlovitch,’ I forgot he was called that,” remarked the youth. “I wonder why I thought of him all along as ‘Vassili Petrovitch.’ Look here, sir (addressing Velchaninoff), you have not surprised me in the least. I knew you were all tarred with one brush. It is strange that you should have been described to me as a man of some originality. However, to business. All that you have said is, of course, utter nonsense; not only is there nothing ‘dishonourable’ about my intentions, as you permitted yourself to suggest, but the fact of the matter is entirely the reverse, as I hope to prove to you by-and-bye. In the first place, we have promised each other marriage, besides which I have given her my word that if she ever repents of her promise she shall have her full liberty to throw me over. I have given her surety to that effect before witnesses.”

“I bet anything your friend — what’s his name? — Predposiloff invented that idea,” cried Velchaninoff.

“He-he-he!” giggled Pavel Pavlovitch contemptuously.

“What is that person giggling about? You are right, sir, it was Predposiloff’s idea. But I don’t think you and I quite understand one another, do we? and I had such a good report of you. How old are you? Are you fifty yet?”

“Stick to business, if you please.”

“Forgive the liberty. I did not mean anything offensive. Well, to proceed. I am no millionaire, and I am no great benefactor to humanity (to reply to your arguments), but I shall manage to keep myself and my wife. Of course I have nothing now; I was brought up, in fact, in their house from my childhood.”

“How so?”

“Oh, because I am a distant relative of this Mr. Zachlebnikoff’s wife. When my people died, he took me in and sent me to school. The old fellow is really quite a kind-hearted man, if you only knew it.”

“I do know it!”

“Yes, he’s an old fogey rather, but a kind-hearted old fellow; but I left him four months ago and began to keep myself. I first joined a railway office at ten roubles a month, and am now in a notary’s place at twenty-five. I made him a formal proposal for her a fortnight since. He first laughed like mad, and afterwards fell into a violent rage, and Nadia was locked up. She bore it heroically. He had been furious with me before for throwing up a post in his department which he procured for me. You see he is a good and

kind old fellow at home, but get him in his office and — oh, my word! — he's a sort of *Jupiter Tonans*! I told him straight out that I didn't like his ways; but the great row was — thanks to the second chief at the office; he said I insulted him, but I only told him he was an ignorant beggar. So I threw them all up, and went in for the notary business. Listen to that! What a clap! We shall have a thunder-storm directly! What a good thing I arrived before the rain! I came here on foot, you know, all the way, nearly at a run, too!"

"How in the world did you find an opportunity of speaking to Miss Nadia then? especially since you are not allowed to meet."

"Oh, one can always get over the railing; then there's that red-haired girl, she helps, and Maria Nikitishna — oh, but she's a snake, that girl! What's the matter? Are you afraid of the thunder-storm?"

"No, I'm ill — seriously ill!"

Velchaninoff had risen from his seat with a fearful sudden pain in his chest, and was trying to walk up and down the room.

"Oh, really! then I'm disturbing you. I shall go at once," said the youth, jumping up.

"No, you don't disturb me!" said Velchaninoff ceremoniously.

"How not; of course I do, if you've got the stomach ache! Well now, Vassili — what's your name — Pavel Pavlovitch, let's conclude this matter. I will formulate my question for once into words which will adapt themselves to your understanding: Are you prepared to renounce your claim to the hand of Nadejda Fedosievna before her parents, and in my presence, with all due formality?"

"No, sir; not in the slightest degree prepared," said Pavel Pavlovitch witheringly; "and allow me to say once more that all this is childish and absurd, and that you had better clear out!"

"Take care," said the youth, holding up a warning forefinger; "better give it up now, for I warn you that otherwise you will spend a lot of money down there, and take a lot of trouble; and when you come back in nine months you will be turned out of the house by Nadejda Fedosievna herself; and if you don't go *then*, it will be the worse for you. Excuse me for saying so, but at present you are like the dog in the manger. Think over it, and be sensible for once in your life."

"Spare me the moral, if you please," began Pavel Pavlovitch furiously; "and as for your low threats I shall take my measures to-morrow — *serious*

measures.”

“Low threats? pooh! You are low yourself to take them as such. Very well, I’ll wait till to-morrow then; but if you — there’s the thunder again! — *au revoir* — very glad to have met you, sir.” He nodded to Velchaninoff and made off hurriedly, evidently anxious to reach home before the rain.

CHAPTER XV.

“You see, you see!” cried Pavel to Velchaninoff, the instant that the young fellow’s back was turned.

“Yes; you are not going to succeed there,” said Velchaninoff. He would not have been so abrupt and careless of Pavel’s feelings if it had not been for the dreadful pain in his chest.

Pavel Pavlovitch shuddered as though from a sudden scald. “Well, sir, and you — you were loth to give me back the bracelet, eh?”

“I hadn’t time.”

“Oh! you were sorry — you pitied me, as true friend pities friend!”

“Oh, well, I pitied you, then!” Velchaninoff was growing angrier every moment. However, he informed Pavel Pavlovitch shortly as to how he had received the bracelet, and how Nadia had almost forced it upon him.

“You must understand,” he added, “that otherwise I should never have agreed to accept the commission; there are quite enough disagreeables already.”

“You liked the job, and accepted it with pleasure,” giggled Pavel Pavlovitch.

“That is foolish on your part; but I suppose you must be forgiven. You must have seen from that boy’s behaviour that I play no part in this matter. Others are the principal actors, not I!”

“At all events the job had attractions for you.” Pavel Pavlovitch sat down and poured out a glass of wine.

“You think I shall knuckle under to that young gentleman? Pooh! I shall drive him out to-morrow, sir, like dust. I’ll smoke this little gentleman out of his nursery, sir; you see if I don’t.” He drank his wine off at a gulp, and poured out some more. He seemed to grow freer as the moments went by; he talked glibly now.

“Ha-ha! Sachinka and Nadienka![2] darling little children. Ha-ha-ha!” He was beside himself with fury.

At this moment, a terrific crash of thunder startled the silence, and was followed by flashes of lightning and sheets of heavy rain. Pavel Pavlovitch rose and shut the window.

“The fellow asked you if you were afraid of the thunder; do you remember? Ha-ha-ha! Velchaninoff afraid of thunder! And all that about

‘fifty years old’ wasn’t bad, eh? Ha-ha-ha!” Pavel Pavlovitch was in a spiteful mood.

“You seem to have settled yourself here,” said Velchaninoff, who could hardly speak for agony. “Do as you like, I must lie down.”

“Come, you wouldn’t turn a *dog* out to-night!” replied Pavel, glad of a grievance.

“Of course, sit down; drink your wine — do anything you like,” murmured Velchaninoff, as he laid himself flat on his divan, and groaned with pain.

“Am I to spend the night? Aren’t you afraid?”

“What of?” asked Velchaninoff, raising his head slightly.

“Oh, nothing. Only last time you seemed to be a little alarmed, that’s all.”

“You are a fool!” said the other angrily, as he turned his face to the wall.

“Very well, sir; all right,” said Pavel.

Velchaninoff fell asleep within a minute or so of lying down. The unnatural strain of the day, and his sickly state of health together, had suddenly undermined his strength, and he was as weak as a child. But physical pain would have its own, and soon conquered weakness and sleep; in an hour he was wide awake again, and rose from the divan in anguish. Pavel Pavlovitch was asleep on the other sofa. He was dressed, and in his boots; his hat lay on the floor, and his eye-glass hung by its cord almost to the ground. Velchaninoff did not wake his guest. The room was full of tobacco smoke, and the bottle was empty; he looked savagely at the sleeping drunkard.

Having twisted himself painfully off his bed, Velchaninoff began to walk about, groaning and thinking of his agony; he could lie no longer.

He was alarmed for this pain in his chest, and not without reason. He was subject to these attacks, and had been so for many years; but they came seldom, luckily — once a year or two years. On such occasions, his agony was so dreadful for some ten hours or so that he invariably believed that he must be actually dying.

This night, his anguish was terrible; it was too late to send for the doctor, but it was far from morning yet. He staggered up and down the room, and before long his groans became loud and frequent.

The noise awoke Pavel Pavlovitch. He sat up on his divan, and for some time gazed in terror and perplexity upon Velchaninoff, as the latter walked

moaning up and down. At last he gathered his senses, and enquired anxiously what was the matter.

Velchaninoff muttered something unintelligible.

“It’s your kidneys — I’m sure it is,” cried Pavel, very wide awake of a sudden. “I remember Peter Kuzmich used to have the same sort of attacks. The kidneys — why, one can die of it. Let me go and fetch Mavra.”

“No, no; I don’t want anything,” muttered Velchaninoff, waving him off irritably.

But Pavel Pavlovitch — goodness knows why — was beside himself with anxiety; he was as much exercised as though the matter at issue were the saving of his own son’s life. He insisted on immediate compresses, and told Velchaninoff he must drink two or three cups of very hot weak tea — boiling hot. He ran for Mavra, lighted the fire in the kitchen, put the kettle on, put the sick man back to bed, covered him up, and within twenty minutes had the first hot application all ready, as well as the tea.

“Hot plates, sir, hot plates,” he cried, as he clapped the first, wrapped in a napkin, on to Velchaninoff’s chest. “I have nothing else handy; but I give you my word it’s as good as anything else. Drink this tea quick, never mind if you scald your tongue — life is dearer. You can die of this sort of thing, you know.” He sent sleepy Mavra out of her wits with flurry; the plates were changed every couple of minutes. At the third application, and after having taken two cups of scalding tea, Velchaninoff suddenly felt decidedly better.

“Capital! thank God! if we can once get the better of the pain it’s a good sign!” cried Pavel, delightedly, and away he ran for another plate and some more tea.

“If only we can beat the pain down!” he kept muttering to himself every minute.

In half an hour the agony was passed, but the sick man was so completely knocked up that, in spite of Pavel’s repeated entreaties to be allowed to apply “just one more plate,” he could bear no more. His eyes were drooping from weakness.

“Sleep — sleep,” he muttered faintly.

“Very well,” consented Pavel, “go to sleep.”

“Are you spending the night here? What time is it?”

“Nearly two.”

“You must sleep here.”

“Yes, yes — all right. I will.”

A moment after the sick man called to Pavel again.

“You — you—” muttered the former faintly, as Pavel ran up and bent over him, “you are better than I am. I understand all — all — thank you!”

“Go to sleep!” whispered Pavel Pavlovitch, as he crept back to his divan on tip-toes.

Velchaninoff, dozing off, heard Pavel quietly make his bed, undress and lie down, all very softly, and then put the light out.

Undoubtedly Velchaninoff fell asleep very quietly when the light was once out; he remembered that much afterwards. Yet all the while he was asleep, and until he awoke, he dreamed that he could not go to sleep in spite of his weakness. At length he dreamed that he was delirious, and that he could not for the life of him chase away the visions which crowded in upon him, although he was conscious the whole while they *were* but visions and not reality. The apparition was familiar to him. He thought that his front door was open, and that his room gradually filled with people pouring in. At the table in the middle of the room, sat one man exactly as had been the case a month before, during one of his dreams. As on the previous occasion, this man leant on his elbow at the table and would not speak; he was in a round hat with a crape band.

“How?” thought the dreamer. “Was it really Pavel Pavlovitch last time as well?” However, when he looked at the man’s face, he was convinced that it was quite another person.

“Why has he a crape band, then?” thought Velchaninoff in perplexity.

The noise and chattering of all these people was dreadful; they seemed even more exasperated with Velchaninoff than on the former occasion. They were all threatening him with something or other, shaking their fists at him, and shouting something which he could not understand.

“It’s all a vision,” he dreamed, “I know quite well that I am up and about, because I could not lie still for anguish!”

Yet the cries and noise at times seemed so real that he was now and again half-convinced of their reality.

“Surely this *can’t* be delirium!” he thought. “What on earth do all these people want of me — my God!”

Yet if it were not a vision, surely all these cries would have roused Pavel Pavlovitch? There he was, fast asleep in his divan!

Then something suddenly occurred as in the old dream. Another crowd of people surged in, crushing those who were already collected inside. These new arrivals carried something large and heavy; he could judge of the weight by their footsteps labouring upstairs.

Those in the room cried, “They’re bringing it! they’re bringing it!”

Every eye flashed as it turned and glared at Velchaninoff; every hand threatened him and then pointed to the stairs.

Undoubtedly it was reality, not delirium. Velchaninoff thought that he stood up and raised himself on tip-toes, in order to see over the heads of the crowd. He wanted to know what was being carried in.

His heart beat wildly, wildly, wildly; and suddenly, as in his former dream, there came one — two — three loud rings at the bell.

And again, the sound of the bell was so distinct and clear that he felt it *could* not be a dream. He gave a cry, and awoke; but he did not rush to the door as on the former occasion.

What sudden idea was it that guided his movements? Had he any idea at all, or was it impulse that prompted him what to do? He sprang up in bed, with arms outstretched, as though to ward off an attack, straight towards the divan where Pavel Pavlovitch was sleeping.

His hands encountered other hands outstretched in his direction; consequently some one must have been standing over him.

The curtains were drawn, but it was not absolutely dark, because a faint light came from the next room, which had no curtains.

Suddenly something cut the palm of his left hand, some of his fingers causing him sharp pain. He instantly realized that he had seized a knife or a razor, and he closed his hand upon it with the rapidity of thought.

At that moment something fell to the ground with a hard metallic sound.

Velchaninoff was probably three times as strong as Pavel Pavlovitch, but the struggle lasted for a long while — at least three minutes.

The former, however, forced his adversary to the earth, and bent his arms back behind his head; then he paused, for he was most anxious to tie the hands. Holding the assassin’s wrist with his wounded left hand, he felt for the blind cord with his right. For a long while he could not find it; at last he grasped it, and tore it down.

He was amazed afterwards at the unnatural strength which he must have displayed during all this.

During the whole of the struggle neither man spoke a word; only their heavy breathing was audible, and the inarticulate sounds emitted by both as they fought.

At length, having secured his opponent's hands, Velchaninoff left him on the ground, rose, drew the curtains, and pulled up the blind.

The deserted street was light now. He opened the window, and stood breathing in the fresh air for a few moments. It was a little past four o'clock. He shut the window once more, fetched a towel and bound up his cut hand as tightly as he could to stop the flow of blood.

At his feet he caught sight of the opened razor lying on the carpet; he picked it up, wiped it, and put it by in its own case, which he now saw he had left upon the little cupboard beside the divan which Pavel Pavlovitch occupied. He locked the cupboard.

Having completed all these arrangements, he approached Pavel Pavlovitch and looked at him. Meanwhile the latter had managed to raise himself from the floor and reach a chair; he was now sitting in it — undressed to his shirt, which was stained with marks of blood both back and front — Velchaninoff's blood, not his own.

Of course this was Pavel Pavlovitch; but it would have been only natural for any one who had known him before, and saw him at this moment, to doubt his identity. He sat upright in his chair — very stiffly, owing to the uncomfortable position of his tightly bound hands behind his back; his face looked yellow and crooked, and he shuddered every other moment. He gazed intently, but with an expression of dazed perplexity, at Velchaninoff.

Suddenly he smiled gravely, and nodding towards a carafe of water on the table, muttered, "A little drop!" Velchaninoff poured some into a glass, and held it for him to drink.

Pavel gulped a couple of mouthfuls greedily — then suddenly raised his head and gazed intently at Velchaninoff standing over him; he said nothing, however, but finished the water. He then sighed deeply.

Velchaninoff took his pillows and some of his clothing, and went into the next room, locking Pavel Pavlovitch behind him.

His pain had quite disappeared, but he felt very weak after the strain of his late exertion. Goodness knows whence came his strength for the trial; he tried to think, but he could not collect his ideas, the shock had been too great.

His eyes would droop now and again, sometimes for ten minutes at a time; then he would shudder, wake up, remember all that had passed and raise the blood-stained rag bound about his hand to prove the reality of his thoughts; then he would relapse into eager, feverish thought. One thing was quite certain, Pavel Pavlovitch had intended to cut his throat, though, perhaps, a quarter of an hour before the fatal moment he had not known that he would make the attempt. Perhaps he had seen the razor case last evening, and thought nothing of it, only remembering the fact that it was there. The razors were usually locked up, and only yesterday Velchaninoff had taken one out in order to make himself neat for his visit to the country, and had omitted to lock it up again.

“If he had premeditated murdering me, he would certainly have provided himself with a knife or a pistol long ago; he could not have relied on my razors, which he never saw until yesterday,” concluded Velchaninoff.

At last the clock struck six. Velchaninoff arose, dressed himself, and went into Pavel Pavlovitch’s room. As he opened the door he wondered why he had ever locked it, and why he had not allowed Pavel to go away at once.

To his surprise the prisoner was dressed, he had doubtless found means to get his hands loose. He was sitting in an arm-chair, but rose when Velchaninoff entered. His hat was in his hand.

His anxious look seemed to say as plain as words: —

“Don’t talk to me! It’s no use talking — don’t talk to me!”

“Go!” said Velchaninoff. “Take your jewel-case!” he added.

Pavel Pavlovitch turned back and seized his bracelet-case, stuffing it into his pocket, and went out.

Velchaninoff stood in the hall, waiting to shut the front door after him.

Their looks met for the last time. Pavel Pavlovitch stopped, and the two men gazed into each others eyes for five seconds or so, as though in indecision. At length Velchaninoff faintly waved him away with his hand.

“Go!” he said, only half aloud, as he closed the door and turned the key.

CHAPTER XVI.

A feeling of immense happiness took possession of Velchaninoff; something was finished, and done with, and settled. Some huge anxiety was at an end, so it seemed to him. This anxiety had lasted five weeks.

He raised his hand and looked at the blood-stained rag bound about it.

"Oh, yes!" he thought, "it is, indeed, all over now."

And all this morning — the first time for many a day, he did not even once think of Liza; just as if the blood from those cut fingers had wiped out that grief as well, and made him "quits" with it.

He quite realized how terrible was the danger which he had passed through.

"For those people," he thought, "who do not know a minute or two before-hand that they are going to murder you, when they once get the knife into their hands, and feel the first touch of warm blood — Good Heaven! they not only cut your throat, they hack your head off afterwards — right off!"

Velchaninoff could not sit at home, he *must* go out and let something happen to him, and he walked about in hopes of something turning up; he longed to *talk*, and it struck him that he might fairly go to the doctor and talk to him, and have his hand properly bound up.

The doctor inquired how he hurt his hand, which made Velchaninoff laugh like mad; he was on the point of telling all, but refrained. Several times during the day he was on the point of telling others the whole story. Once it was to a perfect stranger in a restaurant, with whom he had begun to converse on his own initiative. Before this day he had hated the very idea of speaking to strangers in the public restaurants.

He went into a shop and ordered some new clothes, not with the idea of visiting the Pogoryeltseffs however — the thought of any such visit was distasteful to him; besides he could not leave town, he felt that he must stay and see what was going to happen.

Velchaninoff dined and enjoyed his dinner, talking affably to his neighbour and to the waiter as well. When evening fell he went home, his head was whirling a little, and he felt slightly delirious; the first sight of his rooms gave him quite a start. He walked round them and reflected. He visited the kitchen, which he had hardly ever done before in his life, and

thought, “This is where they heated the plates last night.” He locked the doors carefully, and lit his candles earlier than usual. As he shut the door he remembered that he had asked Mavra, as he passed the dvornik’s lodging, whether Pavel Pavlovitch had been. Just as if the latter could possibly have been near the place!

Having then carefully locked himself in, he opened the little cupboard where his razors were kept, and took out “the” razor. There was still some of the blood on the bone handle. He put the razor back again, and locked the cupboard.

He was sleepy; he felt that he must go to sleep as speedily as possible, otherwise he would be useless “for to-morrow,” and to-morrow seemed to him for some reason or other to be about to be a fateful day for him.

But all those thoughts which had crowded in upon him all day, and had never left him for a moment, were still in full swing within his brain; he thought, and thought, and thought, and could not fall asleep.

If Pavel Pavlovitch arrived at murdering point accidentally, had he ever seriously thought of murder even for a single evil instant before? Velchaninoff decided the question strangely enough: Pavel Pavlovitch *had* the desire to murder him, but did not himself know of the existence of this desire.

“It seems an absurd conclusion; but so it is!” thought Velchaninoff.

Pavel Pavlovitch did not come to Petersburg to look out for a new appointment, nor did he come for the sake of finding Bagantoff, in spite of his rage when the latter died. No! he despised Bagantoff thoroughly. Pavel Pavlovitch had come to St. Petersburg for *him*, and had brought Liza with him, for him alone, Velchaninoff.

“Did *I* expect to have my throat cut?” Velchaninoff decided that he *had* expected it, from the moment when he saw Pavel Pavlovitch in the carriage following in Bagantoff’s funeral procession. “That is I expected something — of course, not exactly to have my throat cut! And surely — surely, it was not all *bonâ fide* yesterday,” he reflected, raising his head from the pillow in the excitement of the idea. “*Surely* it cannot have been all in good faith that that fellow assured me of his love for me, beating his breast, and with his under lip trembling, as he spoke!

“Yes, it was absolutely *bonâ fide*!” he decided. “This quasimodo of T —— was quite good enough and generous enough to fall in love with his

wife’s lover — his wife in whom he never observed ‘anything’ during the twenty years of their married life.

“He respected and loved me for nine years, and remembered both me and my sayings. My goodness, to think of that! and I knew nothing whatever of all this! Oh, no! he was not lying yesterday! But did he love me *while* he declared his love for me, and said that we must be ‘quits!’ Yes, he did, he loved me spitefully — and spiteful love is sometimes the strongest of all.

“I daresay I made a colossal impression upon him down at T —— , for it is just upon such Schiller-like men that one is liable to make a colossal impression. He exaggerated my value a thousand fold; perhaps it was my ‘philosophical retirement’ that struck him! It would be curious to discover precisely what it was that made so great an impression upon him. Who knows, it may have been that I wore a good pair of gloves, and knew how to put them on. These quasimodo fellows love æstheticism to distraction! Give them a start in the direction of admiration for yourself, and they will do all the rest, and give you a thousand times more than your due of every virtue that exists; will fight to the death for you with pleasure, if you ask it of them. How high he must have held my aptitude for illusionizing others; perhaps that has struck him as much as anything else! for he remarked: ‘If *this* man deceived me, whom am I ever to trust again!’

“After such a cry as that a man may well turn wild beast.

“And he came here to ‘embrace and weep over me,’ as he expressed it. H’m! that means he came to cut my throat, and *thought* that he came to embrace and weep over me. He brought Liza with him, too.

“What if I *had* wept with him and embraced him? Perhaps he really would have fully and entirely forgiven me — for he was yearning to forgive me, I could see that! And all this turned to drunkenness and bestiality at the first check. Yes, Pavel Pavlovitch, the most deformed of all deformities is the abortion with noble feelings. And this man was foolish enough to take me down to see his ‘bride.’ My goodness! his bride! Only such a lunatic of a fellow could ever have developed so wild an idea as a ‘new existence’ to be inaugurated by an alliance between himself and Nadia. But you are not to blame, Pavel Pavlovitch, you are a deformity, and all your ideas and actions and aspirations must of necessity be deformed. But deformity though he be, why in the world was *my* sanction, *my* blessing, as it were, necessary to his union with Miss Zachlebnikoff? Perhaps he sincerely

hoped that there, with so much sweet innocence and charm around us, we should fall into each other's arms in some leafy spot, and weep out our differences on each other's shoulders?

"Was *murder* in his thoughts when I caught him standing between our beds that first time, in the darkness? No. I think not. And yet the first idea of it may have entered his soul as he stood there — And if I had not left the razors out, probably nothing would have happened. Surely that is so; for he avoided me for weeks — he was *sorry* for me, and avoided me. He chose Bagantoff to expend his wrath upon, first, not me! He jumped out of bed and fussed over the hot plates, to divert his mind from murder perhaps — from the knife to charity! Perhaps he tried to save both himself and me by his hot plates!"

So mused Velchaninoff, his poor overwrought brain working on and on, and jumping from conclusion to conclusion with the endless activity of fever, until he fell asleep. Next morning he awoke with no less tired brain and body, but with a new terror, an unexpected and novel feeling of dread hanging over him.

This dread consisted in the fact that he felt that he, Velchaninoff, must go and see Pavel Pavlovitch that very day; he knew not why he must go, but he felt drawn to go, as though by some unseen force. The idea was too loathsome to look into, so he left it to take care of itself as an unalterable fact. The madness of it, however, was modified, and the whole aspect of the thought became more reasonable, after a while, when it took shape and resolved itself into a conviction in Velchaninoff's mind that Pavel Pavlovitch had returned home, locked himself up, and hung himself to the bedpost, as Maria Sisevna had described of the wretched suicide witnessed by poor Liza.

"Why should the fool hang himself?" he repeated over and over again; yet the thought *would* return that he was bound to hang himself, as Liza had said that he threatened to do. Velchaninoff could not help adding that if he were in Pavel Pavlovitch's place he would probably do the same.

So the end of it was that instead of going out to his dinner, he set off for Pavel Pavlovitch's lodging, "just to ask Maria Sisevna after him." But before he had reached the street he paused and his face flushed up with shame. "Surely I am not going there to embrace and weep over him! Surely I am not going to add this one last pitiful folly to the long list of my late shameful actions!"

However, his good providence saved him from this “pitiful folly,” for he had hardly passed through the large gateway into the street, when Alexander Loboff suddenly collided with him. The young fellow was dashing along in a state of great excitement.

“I was just coming to you. Our friend Pavel Pavlovitch — a nice sort of fellow he is — —”

“Has he hung himself?” gasped Velchaninoff.

“Hung himself? Who? Why?” asked Loboff, with his eyes starting out of his head.

“Oh! go on, I meant nothing!”

“Tfu! What a funny line your thoughts seem to take. He hasn’t hung himself a bit — why in the world should he? — on the contrary, he’s gone away. I’ve just seen him off! My goodness, how that fellow can drink! We had three bottles of wine. Predposiloff was there too — but how the fellow drinks! Good heavens! he was singing in the carriage when the train went off! He thought of you, and kissed his hand to you, and sent his love. He’s a scamp, that fellow, eh?”

Young Loboff had apparently had quite his share of the three bottles, his face was flushed and his utterance thick. Velchaninoff roared with laughter.

“So you ended up by weeping over each others shoulders, did you? Ha-ha-ha! Oh, you poetical, Schiller-ish, funny fellows, you!”

“Don’t scold us. You must know he went down *there* yesterday and to-day, and he has withdrawn. He ‘sneaked’ like anything about Nadia and me. They’ve shut her up. There was such a row, but we wouldn’t give way — and, my word, how the fellow drinks! He was always talking about you; but, of course, he is no companion for you. You are, more or less, a respectable sort of man, and must have belonged to society at some time of your life, though you seem to have retired into private life just now. Is it poverty, or what? I couldn’t make head or tail of Pavel Pavlovitch’s story.”

“Oh! Then it was he who gave you those interesting details about me?”

“Yes; don’t be cross about it. It’s better to be a citizen than ‘a swell’ any-day! The thing is one does not know whom to respect in Russia nowadays! Don’t you think it a diseased feature of the times, in Russia, that one doesn’t know whom to respect?”

“Quite so, quite so. Well, go on about Pavel Pavlovitch — —”

“Well, he sat down in the railway carriage and began singing, then he cried a bit. It was really disgusting to see the fellow. I hate fools! Then he

began to throw money to beggars ‘for the repose of Liza’s soul,’ he said. Is that his wife?”

“Daughter.”

“What’s the matter with your hand?”

“I cut it.”

“H’m! Never mind, cheer up! It’ll be all right soon! I am glad that fellow has gone, you know, — confound him! But I bet anything he’ll marry as soon as he arrives at his place.”

“Well, what of that? You are going to marry, too!”

“I! That’s quite a different affair! What a funny man you are! Why, if *you* are fifty, he must be sixty! Well, ta-ta! Glad I met you — can’t come in — don’t ask me — no time!”

He started off at a run, but turned a minute after and came back.

“What a fool I am!” he cried, “I forgot all about it — he sent you a letter. Here it is. How was it you didn’t see him off? Ta-ta!”

Velchaninoff returned home and opened the letter, which was sealed and addressed to himself.

There was not a syllable inside in Pavel Pavlovitch’s own hand writing; but he drew out another letter, and knew the writing at once. It was an old, faded, yellow-looking sheet of paper, and the ink was faint and discoloured; the letter was addressed to Velchaninoff, and written ten years before — a couple of months after his departure from T —— . He had never received a copy of this one, but another letter, which he well remembered, had evidently been written and sent instead of it; he could tell that by the substance of the faded document in his hand. In this present letter Natalia Vasilievna bade farewell to him for ever (as she had done in the other communication), and informed him that she expected her confinement in a few months. She added, for his consolation, that she would find an opportunity of purveying his child to him in good time, and pointed out that their friendship was now cemented for ever. She begged him to love her no longer, because she could no longer return his love, but authorized him to pay a visit to T —— after a year’s absence, in order to see the child. Goodness only knows why she had not sent this letter, but had changed it for another!

Velchaninoff was deadly pale when he read this document; but he imagined Pavel Pavlovitch finding it in the family box of black wood with

mother-of-pearl ornamentation and silver mounting, and reading it for the first time!

"I should think he, too, grew as pale as a corpse," he reflected, catching sight of his own face in the looking-glass. "Perhaps he read it and then closed his eyes and hoped and prayed that when he opened them again the dreadful letter would be nothing but a sheet of white paper once more! Perhaps the poor fellow tried this desperate expedient two or three times before he accepted the truth!"

CHAPTER XVII.

Two years have elapsed since the events recorded in the foregoing chapters, and we find our friend Velchaninoff, one lovely summer day, seated in a railway carriage on his way to Odessa; he was making the journey for the purpose of seeing a great friend, and of being introduced to a lady whose acquaintance he had long wished to make.

Without entering into any details, we may remark that Velchaninoff was entirely changed during these last two years. He was no longer the miserable, fanciful hypochondriac of those dark days. He had returned to society and to his friends, who gladly forgave him his temporary relapse into seclusion. Even those whom he had ceased to bow to, when met, were now among the first to extend the hand of friendship once more, and asked no questions — just as though he had been abroad on private business, which was no affair of theirs.

His success in the legal matters of which we have heard, and the fact of having his sixty thousand roubles safe at his bankers — enough to keep him all his life — was the elixir which brought him back to health and spirits. His premature wrinkles departed, his eyes grew brighter, and his complexion better; he became more active and vigorous — in fact, as he sat thinking in a comfortable first-class carriage, he looked a very different man from the Velchaninoff of two years ago.

The next station to be reached was that at which passengers were expected to dine, forty minutes being allowed for this purpose.

It so happened that Velchaninoff, while seated at the dinner table, was able to do a service to a lady who was also dining there. This lady was young and nice looking, though rather too flashily dressed, and was accompanied by a young officer who unfortunately was scarcely in a befitting condition for ladies' society, having refreshed himself at the bar to an unnecessary extent. This young man succeeded in quarrelling with another person equally unfit for ladies' society, and a brawl ensued, which threatened to land both parties upon the table in close proximity to the lady. Velchaninoff interfered, and removed the brawlers to a safe distance, to the great and almost boundless gratitude of the alarmed lady, who hailed him as her "guardian angel." Velchaninoff was interested in the young woman,

who looked like a respectable provincial lady — of provincial manners and taste, as her dress and gestures showed.

A conversation was opened, and the lady immediately commenced to lament that her husband was “never by when he was wanted,” and that he had now gone and hidden himself somewhere just because he happened to be required.

“Poor fellow, he’ll catch it for this,” thought Velchaninoff. “If you will tell me your husband’s name,” he added aloud, “I will find him, with pleasure.”

“Pavel Pavlovitch,” hiccupped the young officer.

“Your husband’s name is Pavel Pavlovitch, is it?” inquired Velchaninoff with curiosity, and at the same moment a familiar bald head was interposed between the lady and himself.

“Here you are *at last*,” cried the wife, hysterically.

It was indeed Pavel Pavlovitch.

He gazed in amazement and dread at Velchaninoff, falling back before him just as though he saw a ghost. So great was his consternation, that for some time it was clear that he did not understand a single word of what his wife was telling him — which was that Velchaninoff had acted as her guardian angel, and that he (Pavel) ought to be ashamed of himself for never being at hand when he was wanted.

At last Pavel Pavlovitch shuddered, and woke up to consciousness.

Velchaninoff suddenly burst out laughing. “Why, we are old friends” — he cried, “friends from childhood!” He clapped his hand familiarly and encouragingly on Pavel’s shoulder. Pavel smiled wanly. “Hasn’t he ever spoken to you of Velchaninoff?”

“No, never,” said the wife, a little confused.

“Then introduce me to your wife, you faithless friend!”

“This — this is Mr. Velchaninoff!” muttered Pavel Pavlovitch, looking the picture of confusion.

All went swimmingly after this. Pavel Pavlovitch was despatched to cater for the party, while his lady informed Velchaninoff that they were on their way from O —— , where Pavel Pavlovitch served, to their country place — a lovely house, she said, some twenty-five miles away. There they hoped to receive a party of friends, and if Mr. Velchaninoff would be so very kind as to take pity on their rustic home, and honour it with a visit, she should do her best to show her gratitude to the guardian angel who, etc., etc.

Velchaninoff replied that he would be delighted; and that he was an idle man, and always free — adding a compliment or two which caused the fair lady to blush with delight, and to tell Pavel Pavlovitch, who now returned from his quest, that Alexey Ivanovitch had been so kind as to promise to pay them a visit next week, and stay a whole month.

Pavel Pavlovitch, to the amazed wrath of his wife, smiled a sickly smile, and said nothing.

After dinner the party bade farewell to Velchaninoff, and returned to their carriage, while the latter walked up and down the platform smoking his cigar; he knew that Pavel Pavlovitch would return to talk to him.

So it turned out. Pavel came up with an expression of the most anxious and harassed misery. Velchaninoff smiled, took his arm, led him to a seat, and sat down beside him. He did not say anything, for he was anxious that Pavel should make the first move.

"So you are coming to us?" murmured the latter at last, plunging *in medias res*.

"I knew you'd begin like that! you haven't changed an atom!" cried Velchaninoff, roaring with laughter, and slapping him confidentially on the back. "Surely, you don't really suppose that I ever had the smallest intention of visiting you — and staying a month too!"

Pavel Pavlovitch gave a start.

"Then you're *not* coming?" he cried, without an attempt to hide his joy.

"No, no! of course not!" replied Velchaninoff, laughing. He did not know why, but all this was exquisitely droll to him; and the further it went the funnier it seemed.

"Really — are you really serious?" cried Pavel, jumping up.

"Yes; I tell you, I won't come — not for the world!"

"But what will my wife say now? She thinks you intend to come!"

"Oh, tell her I've broken my leg — or anything you like!"

"She won't believe!" said Pavel, looking anxious.

"Ha-ha-ha! You catch it at home, I see! Tell me, who is that young officer?"

"Oh, a distant relative of mine — an unfortunate young fellow — —"

"Pavel Pavlovitch!" cried a voice from the carriage, "the second bell has rung!"

Pavel was about to move off — Velchaninoff stopped him.

"Shall I go and tell your wife how you tried to cut my throat?" he said.

“What are you thinking of — God forbid!” cried Pavel, in a terrible fright.

“Well, go along, then!” said the other, loosing his hold of Pavel’s shoulder.

“Then — then — you won’t come, will you?” said Pavel once more, timidly and despairingly, and clasping his hands in entreaty.

“No — I won’t — I swear! — run away — you’ll be late!” He put out his hand mechanically, then recollected himself, and shuddered. Pavel did not take the proffered hand, he withdrew his own.

The third bell rang.

An instantaneous but total change seemed to have come over both. Something snapped within Velchaninoff’s heart — so it seemed to him, and he who had been roaring with laughter a moment before, seized Pavel Pavlovitch angrily by the shoulder.

“If I — *I* offer you my hand, sir” (he showed the scar on the palm of his left hand)— “if *I* can offer you my hand, sir, I should think *you* might accept it!” he hissed with white and trembling lips.

Pavel Pavlovitch grew deadly white also, his lips quivered and a convulsion seemed to run through his features:

“And — Liza?” he whispered quickly. Suddenly his whole face worked, and tears started to his eyes.

Velchaninoff stood like a log before him.

“Pavel Pavlovitch! Pavel Pavlovitch!” shrieked the voice from the carriage, in despairing accents, as though some one were being murdered.

Pavel roused himself and started to run. At that moment the engine whistled, and the train moved off. Pavel Pavlovitch just managed to cling on, and so climb into his carriage, as it moved out of the station.

Velchaninoff waited for another train, and then continued his journey to Odessa.

THE END

THE POSSESSED

OR, DEVILS; OR, DEMONS

Translated by Constance Garnett

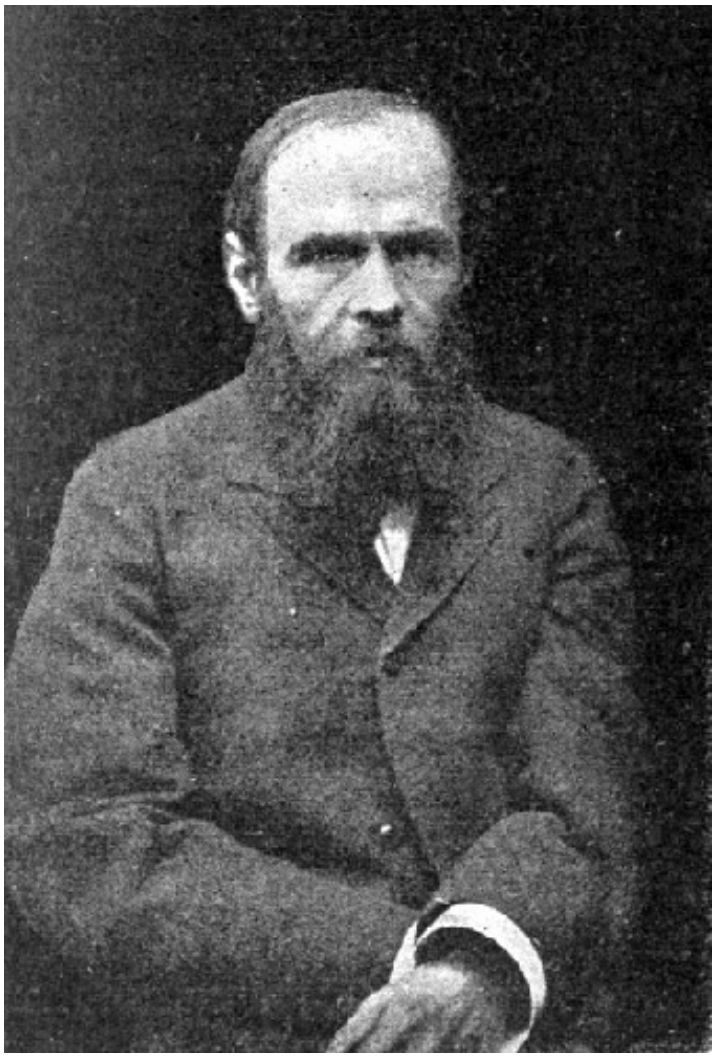
The Possessed was first published in 1872 and is a deeply political novel, providing a vivid testimonial of life in Imperial Russia in the late 19th century. The novel presents five primary characters, each epitomising different ideologies. By exploring their differing philosophies, Dostoyevsky describes the political chaos seen in his contemporary Russia.

The original Russian title uses the Russian word ‘Бесы’, which means "demons", conveying the idea of the gradual collapse of the Russian Orthodox Church, bringing about the imperceptible spread of bésy, "little beasts" or "demons", symbolising the oncoming nihilistic concepts of the first half of the 20th century.

The novel takes place in a provincial Russian setting, primarily on the estates of Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky and Varvara Stavrogina. Stepan Trofimovich's son, Pyotr Verkhovensky, is an aspiring revolutionary conspirator, attempting to organise a band of revolutionaries in the area. He considers Varvara Stavrogina's son, Nikolai, central to his plot because he thinks Nikolai Stavrogin has no sympathy for mankind whatsoever. Verkhovensky gathers conspirators like the philosophising Shigalyov, suicidal Kirillov and the former military figure Virginsky, and he schemes to solidify their loyalty to him and each other by murdering Ivan Shatov, a fellow conspirator. Verkhovensky plans to have Kirillov, who was committed to killing himself, take credit for the murder in his suicide note. Kirillov complies and Verkhovensky murders Shatov, but his scheme begins to falls apart.

Interestingly, *The Possessed* is a combination of two separate works that Dostoyevsky was working upon at the same time. One narrative was a commentary on the real-life murder in 1869 by the socialist revolutionary group (People's Vengeance) of one of its own members (Ivan Ivanovich Ivanov). The character Pyotr Verkhovensky is based upon the leader of this revolutionary group, Sergey Nechayev, who was found guilty of this murder. Sergey Nechayev was a close confidant of Mikhail Bakunin, who

had direct influence over both Nechayev and the "People's Vengeance". The character Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky is based upon Timofey Granovsky. The other novel eventually melded into *The Possessed* was originally a religious work. The most immoral character Stavrogin was to be the hero of this novel and is now commonly viewed as the most important character in the novel.



Dostoyevsky, 1876

THE POSSESSED

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The manuscript of the novel

THE POSSESSED

“Strike me dead, the track has vanished, Well, what now? We’ve lost the way, Demons have bewitched our horses, Led us in the wilds astray.

What a number! Whither drift they? What’s the mournful dirge they sing? Do they hail a witch’s marriage Or a goblin’s burying?”

A. Pushkin.

“And there was one herd of many swine feeding on this mountain; and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

“Then went the devils out of the man and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake and were choked.

“When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

“Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.”

Luke, ch. viii. 32-37.

PART I

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY: SOME DETAILS OF THE BIOGRAPHY OF THAT HIGHLY RESPECTED GENTLEMAN STEFAN TEOFIMOVITCH VERHOVENSKY.

IN UNDERTAKING to describe the recent and strange incidents in our town, till lately wrapped in uneventful obscurity, I find' myself forced in absence of literary skill to begin my story rather far back, that is to say, with certain biographical details concerning that talented and highly-esteemed gentleman, Stepan Trofimovitch Verhovensky. I trust that these details may at least serve as an introduction, while my projected story itself will come later.

I will say at once that Stepan Trofimovitch had always filled a particular role among us, that of the progressive patriot, so to say, and he was passionately fond of playing the part — so much so that I really believe he could not have existed without it. Not that I would put him on a level with an actor at a theatre, God forbid, for I really have a respect for him. This may all have been the effect of habit, or rather, more exactly of a generous propensity he had from his earliest years for indulging in an agreeable day-dream in which he figured as a picturesque public character. He fondly loved, for instance, his position as a "persecuted" man and, so to speak, an "exile." There is a sort of traditional glamour about those two little words that fascinated him once for all and, exalting him gradually in his own opinion, raised him in the course of years to a lofty pedestal very gratifying to vanity. In an English satire of the last century, Gulliver, returning from the land of the Lilliputians where the people were only three or four inches high, had grown so accustomed to consider himself a giant among them, that as he walked along the streets of London he could not help crying out to carriages and passers-by to be careful and get out of his way for fear he should crush them, imagining that they were little and he was still a giant. He was laughed at and abused for it, and rough coachmen even lashed at the giant with their whips. But was that just? What may not be done by habit?

Habit had brought Stepan Trofimovitch almost to the same position, but in a more innocent and inoffensive form, if one may use such expressions, for he was a most excellent man.

I am even inclined to suppose that towards the end he had been entirely forgotten everywhere; but still it cannot be said that his name had never been known. It is beyond question that he had at one time belonged to a certain distinguished constellation of celebrated leaders of the last generation, and at one time — though only for the briefest moment — his name was pronounced by many hasty persons of that day almost as though it were on a level with the names of Tchaadaev, of Byelinsky. of Granovsky, and of Herzen, who had only just begun to write abroad. But Stepan Trofimovitch's activity ceased almost at the moment it began, owing, so to say, to a "vortex of combined circumstances." And would you believe it? It turned out afterwards that there had been no "vortex" and even no "circumstances," at least in that connection. I only learned the other day to my intense amazement, though on the most unimpeachable authority, that Stepan Trofimovitch had lived among us in our province not as an "exile" as we were accustomed to believe, and had never even been under police supervision at all. Such is the force of imagination! All his life he sincerely believed that in certain spheres he was a constant cause of apprehension, that every step he took was watched and noted, and that each one of the three governors who succeeded one another during twenty years in our province came with special and uneasy ideas concerning him, which had, by higher powers, been impressed upon each before everything else, on receiving the appointment. Had anyone assured the honest man on the most irrefutable grounds that he had nothing to be afraid of, he would certainly have been offended. Yet Stepan Trofimovitch was a most intelligent and gifted man, even, so to say, a man of science, though indeed, in science . . . well, in fact he had not done such great things in science. I believe indeed he had done nothing at all. But that's very often the case, of course, with men of science among us in Russia.

He came back from abroad and was brilliant in the capacity of lecturer at the university, towards the end of the forties. He only had time to deliver a few lectures, I believe they were about the Arabs; he maintained, too, a brilliant thesis on the political and Hanseatic importance of the German town Hanau, of which there was promise in the epoch between 1413 and 1428, and on the special and obscure reasons why that promise was never

fulfilled. This dissertation was a cruel and skilful thrust at the Slavophils of the day, and at once made him numerous and irreconcilable enemies among them. Later on — after he had lost his post as lecturer, however — he published (by way of revenge, so to say, and to show them what a man they had lost) in a progressive monthly review, which translated Dickens and advocated the views of George Sand, the beginning of a very profound investigation into the causes, I believe, of the extraordinary moral nobility of certain knights at a certain epoch or something of that nature.

Some lofty and exceptionally noble idea was maintained in it, anyway. It was said afterwards that the continuation was hurriedly forbidden and even that the progressive review had to suffer for having printed the first part. That may very well have been so, for what was not possible in those days? Though, in this case, it is more likely that there was nothing of the kind, and that the author himself was too lazy to conclude his essay. He cut short his lectures on the Arabs because, somehow and by some one (probably one of his reactionary enemies) a letter had been seized giving an account of certain circumstances, in consequence of which some one had demanded an explanation from him. I don’t know whether the story is true, but it was asserted that at the same time there was discovered in Petersburg a vast, unnatural, and illegal conspiracy of thirty people which almost shook society to its foundations. It was said that they were positively on the point of translating Fourier. As though of design a poem of Stepan Trofimovitch’s was seized in Moscow at that very time, though it had been written six years before in Berlin in his earliest youth, and manuscript copies had been passed round a circle consisting of two poetical amateurs and one student. This poem is lying now on my table. No longer ago than last year I received a recent copy in his own handwriting from Stepan Trofimovitch himself, signed by him, and bound in a splendid red leather binding. It is not without poetic merit, however, and even a certain talent. It’s strange, but in those days (or to be more exact, in the thirties) people were constantly composing in that style. I find it difficult to describe the subject, for I really do not understand it. It is some sort of an allegory in lyrical-dramatic form, recalling the second part of Faust. The scene opens with a chorus of women, followed by a chorus of men, then a chorus of incorporeal powers of some sort, and at the end of all a chorus of spirits not yet living but very eager to come to life. All these choruses sing about something very indefinite, for the most part about somebody’s curse, but with a tinge of the

higher humour. But the scene is suddenly changed. There begins a sort of “festival of life” at which even insects sing, a tortoise comes on the scene with certain sacramental Latin words, and even, if I remember aright, a mineral sings about something that is a quite inanimate object. In fact, they all sing continually, or if they converse, it is simply to abuse one another vaguely, but again with a tinge of higher meaning. At last the scene is changed again; a wilderness appears, and among the rocks there wanders a civilized young man who picks and sucks certain herbs. Asked by a fairy why he sucks these herbs, he answers that, conscious of a superfluity of life in himself, he seeks forgetfulness, and finds it in the juice of these herbs, but that his great desire is to lose his reason at once (a desire possibly superfluous). Then a youth of indescribable beauty rides in on a black steed, and an immense multitude of all nations follow him. The youth represents death, for whom all the peoples are yearning. And finally, in the last scene we are suddenly shown the Tower of Babel, and certain athletes at last finish building it with a song of new hope, and when at length they complete the topmost pinnacle, the lord (of Olympia, let us say) takes flight in a comic fashion, and man, grasping the situation and seizing his place, at once begins a new life with new insight into things. Well, this poem was thought at that time to be dangerous. Last year I proposed to Stepan Trofimovitch to publish it, on the ground of its perfect harmlessness nowadays, but he declined the suggestion with evident dissatisfaction. My view of its complete harmlessness evidently displeased him, and I even ascribe to it a certain coldness on his part, which lasted two whole months.

And what do you think? Suddenly, almost at the time I proposed printing it here, our poem was published abroad in a collection of revolutionary verse, without the knowledge of Stepan Trofimovitch. He was at first alarmed, rushed to the governor, and wrote a noble letter in self-defence to Petersburg. He read it to me twice, but did not send it, not knowing to whom to address it. In fact he was in a state of agitation for a whole month, but I am convinced that in the secret recesses of his heart he was enormously flattered. He almost took the copy of the collection to bed with him, and kept it hidden under his mattress in the daytime; he positively would not allow the women to turn his bed, and although he expected every day a telegram, he held his head high. No telegram came. Then he made friends with me again, which is a proof of the extreme kindness of his gentle and unresentful heart.

II

Of course I don't assert that he had never suffered for his convictions at all, but I am fully convinced that he might have gone on lecturing on his Arabs as long as he liked, if he had only given the necessary explanations. But he was too lofty, and he proceeded with peculiar haste to assure himself that his career was ruined for ever "by the vortex of circumstance." And if the whole truth is to be told the real cause of the change in his career was the very delicate proposition which had been made before and was then renewed by Varvara Petrovna Stavrogin, a lady of great wealth, the wife of a lieutenant-general, that he should undertake the education and the whole intellectual development of her only son in the capacity of a superior sort of teacher and friend, to say nothing of a magnificent salary. This proposal had been made to him the first time in Berlin, at the moment when he was first left a widower. His first wife was a frivolous girl from our province, whom he married in his early and unthinking youth, and apparently he had had a great deal of trouble with this young person, charming as she was, owing to the lack of means for her support; and also from other, more delicate, reasons. She died in Paris after three years' separation from him, leaving him a son of five years old; "the fruit of our first, joyous, and unclouded love," were the words the sorrowing father once let fall in my presence.

The child had, from the first, been sent back to Russia, where he was brought up in the charge of distant cousins in some remote region. Stepan Trofimovitch had declined Varvara Petrovna's proposal on that occasion and had quickly married again, before the year was over, a taciturn Berlin girl, and, what makes it more strange, there was no particular necessity for him to do so. But apart from his marriage there were, it appears, other reasons for his declining the situation. He was tempted by the resounding fame of a professor, celebrated at that time, and he, in his turn, hastened to the lecturer's chair for which he had been preparing himself, to try his eagle wings in flight. But now with singed wings he naturally remembered the proposition which even then had made him hesitate. The sudden death of his second wife, who did not live a year with him, settled the matter decisively. To put it plainly it was all brought about by the passionate sympathy and priceless, so to speak, classic friendship of Varvara Petrovna, if one may use such an expression of friendship. He flung himself into the arms of this friendship, and his position was settled for more than twenty

years. I use the expression “flung himself into the arms of,” but God forbid that anyone should fly to idle and superfluous conclusions. These embraces must be understood only in the most loftily moral sense. The most refined and delicate tie united these two beings, both so remarkable, for ever.

The post of tutor was the more readily accepted too, as the property — a very small one — left to Stepan Trofimovitch by his first wife was close to Skvoreshniki, the Stavrogins’ magnificent estate on the outskirts of our provincial town. Besides, in the stillness of his study, far from the immense burden of university work, it was always possible to devote himself to the service of science, and to enrich the literature of his country with erudite studies. These works did not appear. But on the other hand it did appear possible to spend the rest of his life, more than twenty years, “a reproach incarnate,” so to speak, to his native country, in the words of a popular poet:

Reproach incarnate thou didst stand
Erect before thy Fatherland,
O Liberal idealist!

But the person to whom the popular poet referred may perhaps have had the right to adopt that pose for the rest of his life if he had wished to do so, though it must have been tedious. Our Stepan Trofimovitch was, to tell the truth, only an imitator compared with such people; moreover, he had grown weary of standing erect and often lay down for a while. But, to do him justice, the “incarnation of reproach” was preserved even in the recumbent attitude, the more so as that was quite sufficient for the province. You should have seen him at our club when he sat down to cards. His whole figure seemed to exclaim “Cards! Me sit down to whist with you! Is it consistent? Who is responsible for it? Who has shattered my energies and turned them to whist? Ah, perish, Russia!” and he would majestically trump with a heart.

And to tell the truth he dearly loved a game of cards, which led him, especially in later years, into frequent and unpleasant skirmishes with Varvara Petrovna, particularly as he was always losing. But of that later. I will only observe that he was a man of tender conscience (that is, sometimes) and so was often depressed. In the course of his twenty years’ friendship with Varvara Petrovna he used regularly, three or four times a year, to sink into a state of “patriotic grief,” as it was called among us, or

rather really into an attack of spleen, but our estimable Varvara Petrovna preferred the former phrase. Of late years his grief had begun to be not only patriotic, but at times alcoholic too; but Varvara Petrovna's alertness succeeded in keeping him all his life from trivial inclinations. And he needed some one to look after him indeed, for he sometimes behaved very oddly: in the midst of his exalted sorrow he would begin laughing like any simple peasant. There were moments when he began to take a humorous tone even about himself. But there was nothing Varvara Petrovna dreaded so much as a humorous tone. She was a woman of the classic type, a female Maecenas, invariably guided only by the highest considerations. The influence of this exalted lady over her poor friend for twenty years is a fact of the first importance. I shall need to speak of her more particularly, which I now proceed to do.

III

There are strange friendships. The two friends are always ready to fly at one another, and go on like that all their lives, and yet they cannot separate. Parting, in fact, is utterly impossible. The one who has begun the quarrel and separated will be the first to fall ill and even die, perhaps, if the separation comes off. I know for a positive fact that several times Stepan Trofimovitch has jumped up from the sofa and beaten the wall with his fists after the most 'intimate and emotional *tete-a-tete* with Varvara Petrovna.

This proceeding was by no means an empty symbol; indeed, on one occasion, he broke some plaster off the wall. It may be asked how I come to know such delicate details. What if I were myself a witness of it? What if Stepan Trofimovitch himself has, on more than one occasion, sobbed on my shoulder while he described to me in lurid colours all his most secret feelings. (And what was there he did not say at such times!) But what almost always happened after these tearful outbreaks was that next day he was ready to crucify himself for his ingratitude. He would send for me in a hurry or run over to see me simply to assure me that Varvara Petrovna was "an angel of honour and delicacy, while he was very much the opposite." He did not only run to confide in me, but, on more than one occasion, described it all to her in the most eloquent letter, and wrote a full signed confession that no longer ago than the day before he had told an outsider that she kept him out of vanity, that she was envious of his talents and

erudition, that she hated him and was only afraid to express her hatred openly, dreading that he would leave her and so damage her literary reputation, that this drove him to self-contempt, and he was resolved to die a violent death, and that he was waiting for the final word from her which would decide everything, and so on and so on in the same style. You can fancy after this what an hysterical pitch the nervous outbreaks of this most innocent of all fifty-year-old infants sometimes reached! I once read one of these letters after some quarrel between them, arising from a trivial matter, but growing venomous as it went on. I was horrified and besought him not to send it.

“I must . . . more honourable . . . duty ... I shall die if I don’t confess everything, everything!” he answered almost in delirium, and he did send the letter.

That was the difference between them, that Varvara Petrovna never would have sent such a letter. It is true that he was passionately fond of writing, he wrote to her though he lived in the same house, and during hysterical interludes he would write two letters a day. I know for a fact that she always read these letters with the greatest attention, even when she received two a day, and after reading them she put them away in a special drawer, sorted and annotated; moreover, she pondered them in her heart. But she kept her friend all day without an answer, met him as though there were nothing the matter, exactly as though nothing special had happened the day before. By degrees she broke him in so completely that at last he did not himself dare to allude to what had happened the day before, and only glanced into her eyes at times. But she never forgot anything, while he sometimes forgot too quickly, and encouraged by her composure he would not infrequently, if friends came in, laugh and make jokes over the champagne the very same day. With what malignancy she must have looked at him at such moments, while he noticed nothing! Perhaps in a week’s time, a month’s time, or even six months later, chancing to recall some phrase in such a letter, and then the whole letter with all its attendant circumstances, he would suddenly grow hot with shame, and be so upset that he fell ill with one of his attacks of “summer cholera.” These attacks of a sort of “summer cholera” were, in some cases, the regular consequence of his nervous agitations and were an interesting peculiarity of his physical constitution.

No doubt Varvara Petrovna did very often hate him. But there was one thing he had not discerned up to the end: that was that he had become for her a son, her creation, even, one may say, her invention; he had become flesh of her flesh, and she kept and supported him not simply from “envy of his talents.” And how wounded she must have been by such suppositions! An inexhaustible love for him lay concealed in her heart in the midst of continual hatred, jealousy, and contempt. She would not let a speck of dust fall upon him, coddled him up for twenty-two years, would not have slept for nights together if there were the faintest breath against his reputation as a poet, a learned man, and a public character. She had invented him, and had been the first to believe in her own invention. He was, after a fashion, her day-dream. . . . But in return she exacted a great deal from him, sometimes even slavishness. It was incredible how long she harboured resentment. I have two anecdotes to tell about that.

IV

On one occasion, just at the time when the first rumours of the emancipation of the serfs were in the air, when all Russia was exulting and making ready for a complete regeneration, Varvara Petrovna was visited by a baron from Petersburg, a man of the highest connections, and very closely associated with the new reform. Varvara Petrovna prized such visits highly, as her connections in higher circles had grown weaker and weaker since the death of her husband, and had at last ceased altogether. The baron spent an hour drinking tea with her. There was no one else present but Stepan Trofimovitch, whom Varvara Petrovna invited and exhibited. The baron had heard something about him before or affected to have done so, but paid little attention to him at tea. Stepan Trofimovitch of course was incapable of making a social blunder, and his manners were most elegant. Though I believe he was by no means of exalted origin, yet it happened that he had from earliest childhood been brought up in a Moscow household — of high rank, and consequently was well bred. He spoke French like a Parisian. Thus the baron was to have seen from the first glance the sort of people with whom Varvara Petrovna surrounded herself, even in provincial seclusion. But things did not fall out like this. When the baron positively asserted the absolute truth of the rumours of the great reform, which were then only just beginning to be heard, Stepan Trofimovitch could not contain

himself, and suddenly shouted “Hurrah!” and even made some gesticulation indicative of delight. His ejaculation was not over-loud and quite polite, his delight was even perhaps premeditated, and his gesture purposely studied before the looking-glass half an hour before tea. But something must have been amiss with it, for the baron permitted himself a faint smile, though he, at once, with extraordinary courtesy, put in a phrase concerning the universal and befitting emotion of all Russian hearts in view of the great event. Shortly afterwards he took his leave and at parting did not forget to hold out two fingers to Stepan Trofimovitch. On returning to the drawing-room Varvara Petrovna was at first silent for two or three minutes, and seemed to be looking for something on the table. Then she turned to Stepan Trofimovitch, and with pale face and flashing eyes she hissed in a whisper:

“I shall never forgive you for that!”

Next day she met her friend as though nothing had happened, she never referred to the incident, but thirteen years afterwards, at a tragic moment, she recalled it and reproached him with it, and she turned pale, just as she had done thirteen years before. Only twice in the course of her life did she say to him:

“I shall never forgive you for that!”

The incident with the baron was the second time, but the first incident was so characteristic and had so much influence on the fate of Stepan Trofimovitch that I venture to refer to that too.

It was in 1855, in spring-time, in May, just after the news had reached Skvoreshniki of the death of Lieutenant-General Gavrogin, a frivolous old gentleman who died of a stomach ailment on the way to the Crimea, where he was hastening to ‘join the army on active service. Varvara Petrovna was left a widow and put on deep mourning. She could not, it is true, deplore his death very deeply, since, for the last four years, she had been completely separated from him owing to incompatibility of temper, and was giving him an allowance. (The Lieutenant-General himself had nothing but one hundred and fifty serfs and his pay, besides his position and his connections. All the money and Skvoreshniki belonged to Varvara Petrovna, the only daughter of a very rich contractor.) Yet she was shocked by the suddenness of the news, and retired into complete solitude. Stepan Trofimovitch, of course, was always at her side.

May was in its full beauty. The evenings were exquisite. The wild cherry was in flower. The two friends walked every evening in the garden and used

to sit till nightfall in the arbour, and pour out their thoughts and feelings to one another. They had poetic moments. Under the influence of the change in her position Varvara Petrovna talked more than usual. She, as it were, clung to the heart of her friend, and this continued for several evenings. A strange idea suddenly came over Stepan Trofimovitch: “Was not the inconsolable widow reckoning upon him, and expecting from him, when her mourning was over, the offer of his hand?” A cynical idea, but the very loftiness of a man’s nature sometimes increases a disposition to cynical ideas if only from the many-sidedness of his culture. He began to look more deeply into it, and thought it seemed like it. He pondered: “Her fortune is immense, of course, but . . .” Varvara Petrovna certainly could not be called a beauty. She was a tall, yellow, bony woman with an extremely long face, suggestive of a horse. Stepan Trofimovitch hesitated more and more, he was tortured by doubts, he positively shed tears of indecision once or twice (he wept not infrequently). In the evenings, that is to say in the arbour, his countenance involuntarily began to express something capricious and ironical, something coquettish and at the same time condescending. This is apt to happen as it were by accident, and the more gentlemanly the man the more noticeable it is. Goodness only knows what one is to think about it, but it’s most likely that nothing had begun working in her heart that could have fully justified Stepan Trofimovitch’s suspicions. Moreover, she would not have changed her name, Stavrogin, for his name, famous as it was. Perhaps there was nothing in it but the play of femininity on her side; the manifestation of an unconscious feminine yearning so natural in some extremely feminine types. However, I won’t answer for it; the depths of the female heart have not been explored to this day. But I must continue.

It is to be supposed that she soon inwardly guessed the significance of her friend’s strange expression; she was quick and observant, and he was sometimes extremely guileless. But the evenings went on as before, and their conversations were just as poetic and interesting. And behold on one occasion at nightfall, after the most lively and poetical conversation, they parted affectionately, warmly pressing each other’s hands at the steps of the lodge where Stepan Trofimovitch slept. Every summer he used to move into this little lodge which stood adjoining the huge seignorial house of Skvoreshniki, almost in the garden. He had only just gone in, and in restless hesitation taken a cigar, and not having yet lighted it, was standing weary and motionless before the open window, gazing at the light feathery white

clouds gliding around the bright moon, when suddenly a faint rustle made him start and turn round. Varvara Petrovna, whom he had left only four minutes earlier, was standing before him again. Her yellow face was almost blue. Her lips were pressed tightly together and twitching at the corners. For ten full seconds she looked him in the eyes in silence with a firm relentless gaze, and suddenly whispered rapidly:

“I shall never forgive you for this!”

When, ten years later, Stepan Trofimovitch, after closing the doors, told me this melancholy tale in a whisper, he vowed that he had been so petrified on the spot that he had not seen or heard how .Varvara Petrovna had disappeared. As she never once afterwards alluded to the incident and everything went on as though nothing had happened, he was all his life inclined to the idea that it was all an hallucination, a symptom of illness, the more so as he was actually taken ill that very night and was indisposed for a fortnight, which, by the way, cut short the interviews in the arbour.

But in spite of his vague theory of hallucination he seemed every day, all his life, to be expecting the continuation, and, so to say, the *denouement* of this affair. He could not believe that that was the end of it! And if so he must have looked strangely sometimes at his friend.

V

She had herself designed the costume for him which he wore for the rest of his life. It was elegant and characteristic; a long black frock-coat, buttoned almost to the top, but stylishly cut; a soft hat (in summer a straw hat) with a wide brim, a white batiste cravat with a full bow and hanging ends, a cane with a silver knob; his hair flowed on to his shoulders. It was dark brown, and only lately had begun to get a little grey. He was clean-shaven. He was said to have been very handsome in his youth. And, to my mind, he was still an exceptionally impressive figure even in old age. Besides, who can talk of old age at fifty-three? From his special pose as a patriot, however, he did not try to appear younger, but seemed rather ‘“to pride himself on the solidity of his age, and, dressed as described, tall and thin with flowing hair, he looked almost like a patriarch, or even more like the portrait of the poet Kukolnik, engraved in the edition of his works published in 1830 or thereabouts. This resemblance was especially striking when he sat in the garden in summertime, on a seat under a bush of flowering lilac, with both

hands propped on his cane and an open book beside him, musing poetically over the setting sun. In regard to books I may remark that he came in later years rather to avoid reading. But that was only quite towards the end. The papers and magazines ordered in great profusion by Varvara Petrovna he was continually reading. He never lost interest in the successes of Russian literature either, though he always maintained a dignified attitude with regard to them. He was at one time engrossed in the study of our home and foreign politics, but he soon gave up the undertaking with a gesture of despair. It sometimes happened that he would take De Tocqueville with him into the garden while he had a Paul de Kock in his pocket. But these are trivial matters.

I must observe in parenthesis about the portrait of Kukolnik; the engraving had first come into the hands of Varvara Petrovna when she was a girl in a high-class boarding-school in Moscow. She fell in love with the portrait at once, after the habit of all girls at school who fall in love with anything they come across, as well as with their teachers, especially the drawing and writing masters. What is interesting in this, though, is not the characteristics of girls but the fact that even at fifty Varvara Petrovna kept the engraving among her most intimate and treasured possessions, so that perhaps it was only on this account that she had designed for Stepan Trofimovitch a costume somewhat like the poet's in the engraving. But that, of course, is a trifling matter too.

For the first years or, more accurately, for the first half of the time he spent with Varvara Petrovna, Stepan Trofimovitch was still planning a book and every day seriously prepared to write it. But during the later period he must have forgotten even what he had done. More and more frequently he used to say to us:

"I seem to be ready for work, my materials are collected, yet the work doesn't get done! Nothing is done!"

And he would bow his head dejectedly. No doubt this was calculated to increase his prestige in our eyes as a martyr to science, but. he himself was longing for something else. "They have forgotten me! I'm no use to anyone!" broke from him more than once. This intensified depression took special hold of him towards the end of the fifties. Varvara Petrovna realised at last that it was a serious matter. Besides, she could not endure the idea that her friend was forgotten and useless. To distract him and at the same time to renew his fame she carried him off to Moscow, where she had

fashionable acquaintances in the literary and scientific world; but it appeared that Moscow too was unsatisfactory.

It was a peculiar time; something new was beginning, quite unlike the stagnation of the past, something very strange too, though it was felt everywhere, even at Skvoreshniki. Rumours of all sorts reached us. The facts were generally more or less well known, but it was evident that in addition to the facts there were certain ideas accompanying them, and what's more, a great number of them. And this was perplexing. It was impossible to estimate and find out exactly what was the drift of these ideas. Varvara Petrovna was prompted by the feminine composition of her character to a compelling desire to penetrate the secret of them. She took to reading newspapers and magazines, prohibited publications printed abroad and even the revolutionary manifestoes which were just beginning to appear at the time (she was able to procure them all); but this only set her head in a whirl. She fell to writing letters; she got few answers, and they grew more incomprehensible as time went on. Stepan Trofimovitch was solemnly called upon to explain "these ideas" to her once for all, but she remained distinctly dissatisfied with his explanations.

Stepan Trofimovitch's view of the general movement was supercilious in the extreme. In his eyes all it amounted to was that he was forgotten and of no use. At last his name was mentioned, at first in periodicals published abroad as that of an exiled martyr, and immediately afterwards in Petersburg as that of a former star in a celebrated constellation. He was even for some reason compared with Radishtchev. Then some one printed the statement that he was dead and promised an obituary notice of him. Stepan Trofimovitch instantly perked up and assumed an air of immense dignity. All his disdain for his contemporaries evaporated and he began to cherish the dream of joining the movement and showing his powers. Varvara Petrovna's faith in everything instantly revived and she was thrown into a violent ferment. It was decided to go to Petersburg without a moment's delay, to find out everything on the spot, to go into everything personally, and, if possible, to throw themselves heart and soul into the new movement. Among other things she announced that she was prepared to found a magazine of her own, and henceforward to devote her whole life to it. Seeing what it had come to, Stepan Trofimovitch became more condescending than ever, and on the journey began to behave almost patronisingly to Varvara Petrovna — which she at once laid up in her heart

against him. She had, however, another very important reason for the trip, which was to renew her connections in higher spheres. It was necessary, as far as she could, to remind the world of her existence, or at any rate to make an attempt to do so. The ostensible object of the journey was to see her only son, who was just finishing his studies at a Petersburg lyceum.

VI

They spent almost the whole winter season in Petersburg. But by Lent everything burst like a rainbow-coloured soap-bubble.

Their dreams were dissipated, and the muddle, far from being cleared up, had become even more revoltingly incomprehensible. To begin with, connections with the higher spheres were not established, or only on a microscopic scale, and by humiliating exertions. In her mortification Varvara Petrovna threw herself heart and soul into the “new ideas,” and began giving evening receptions. She invited literary people, and they were brought to her at once in multitudes. Afterwards they came of themselves without invitation, one brought another. Never had she seen such literary men. They were incredibly vain, but quite open in their vanity, as though they were performing a duty by the display of it. Some (but by no means all) of them even turned up intoxicated, seeming, however, to detect in this a peculiar, only recently discovered, merit. They were all strangely proud of something. On every face was written that they had only just discovered some extremely important secret. They abused one another, and took credit to themselves for it. It was rather difficult to find out what they had written exactly, but among them there were critics, novelists, dramatists, satirists, and exposers of abuses. Stepan Trofimovitch penetrated into their very highest circle from which the movement was directed. Incredible heights had to be scaled to reach this group; but they gave him a cordial welcome, though, of course, no one of them had ever heard of him or knew anything about him except that he “represented an idea.” His manoeuvres among them were so successful that he got them twice to Varvara Petrovna’s salon in spite of their Olympian grandeur. These people were very serious and very polite; they behaved nicely; the others were evidently afraid of them; but it was obvious that they had no time to spare. Two or three former literary celebrities who happened to be in Petersburg, and with whom Varvara Petrovna had long maintained a most refined correspondence, came

also. But to her surprise these genuine and quite indubitable celebrities were stiller than water, humbler than the grass, and some of them simply hung on to this new rabble, and were shamefully cringing before them. At first Stepan Trofimovitch was a success. People caught at him and began to exhibit him at public literary gatherings. The first time he came on to the platform at some public reading in which he was to take part, he was received with enthusiastic clapping which lasted for five minutes. He recalled this with tears nine years afterwards, though rather from his natural artistic sensibility than from gratitude. “I swear, and I’m ready to bet,” he declared (but only to me, and in secret), “that not one of that audience knew anything whatever about me.” A noteworthy admission. He must have had a keen intelligence since he was capable of grasping his position so clearly even on the platform, even in such a state of exaltation; it also follows that he had not a keen intelligence if, nine years afterwards, he could not recall it without mortification, he was made to sign two or three collective protests (against what he did not know); he signed them. Varvara Petrovna too was made to protest against some “disgraceful action” and she signed too. The majority of these new people, however, though they visited Varvara Petrovna, felt themselves for some reason called upon to regard her with contempt, and with undisguised irony. Stepan Trofimovitch hinted to me at bitter moments afterwards that it was from that time she had been envious of him. She saw, of course, that she could not get on with these people, yet she received them eagerly, with all the hysterical impatience of her sex, and, what is more, she expected something. At her parties she talked little, although she could talk, but she listened the more. They talked of the abolition of the censorship, and of phonetic spelling, of the substitution of the Latin characters for the Russian alphabet, of some one’s having been sent into exile the day before, of some scandal, of the advantage of splitting Russia into nationalities united in a free federation, of the abolition of the army and the navy, of the restoration of Poland as far as the Dnieper, of the peasant reforms, and of the manifestoes, of the abolition of the hereditary principle, of the family, of children, and of priests, of women’s rights, of Kraevsky’s house, for which no one ever seemed able to forgive Mr. Kraevsky, and so on, and so on. It was evident that in this mob of new people there were many impostors, but undoubtedly there were also many honest and very attractive people, in spite of some surprising characteristics in them. The honest ones were far more difficult to understand than the

coarse and dishonest, but it was impossible to tell which was being made a tool of by the other. When Varvara Petrovna announced her idea of founding a magazine, people flocked to her in even larger numbers, but charges of being a capitalist and an exploiter of labour were showered upon her to her face. The rudeness of these accusations was only equalled by their unexpectedness. The aged General Ivan Ivanovitch Drozdov, an old friend and comrade of the late General Stavrogin's, known to us all here as an extremely stubborn and irritable, though very estimable, man (in his own way, of course), who ate a great deal, and was dreadfully afraid of atheism, quarrelled at one of Varvara Petrovna's parties with a distinguished young man. The latter at the first word exclaimed, "You must be a general if you talk like that," meaning that he could find no word of abuse worse than "general."

Ivan Ivanovitch flew into a terrible passion: "Yes, sir, I am a general, and a lieutenant-general, and I have served my Tsar, and you, sir, are a puppy and an infidel!"

An outrageous scene followed. Next day the incident was exposed in print, and they began getting up a collective protest against Varvara Petrovna's disgraceful conduct in not having immediately turned the general out. In an illustrated paper there appeared a malignant caricature in which Varvara Petrovna, Stepan Trofimovitch, and General Drozdov were depicted as three reactionary friends. There were verses attached to this caricature written by a popular poet especially for the occasion. I may observe, for my own part, that many persons of general's rank certainly have an absurd habit of saying, "I have served my Tsar "... just as though they had not the same Tsar as all the rest of us, their simple fellow-subjects, but had a special Tsar of their own.

It was impossible, of course, to remain any longer in Petersburg, all the more so as Stepan Trofimovitch was overtaken by a complete fiasco. He could not resist talking of the claims of art, and they laughed at him more loudly as time went on. At his last lecture he thought to impress them with patriotic eloquence, hoping to touch their hearts, and reckoning on the respect inspired by his "persecution." He did not attempt to dispute the uselessness and absurdity of the word "fatherland," acknowledged the pernicious influence of religion, but firmly and loudly declared that boots were of less consequence than Pushkin; of much less, indeed. He was hissed so mercilessly that he burst into tears, there and then, on the platform.

Varvara Petrovna took him home more dead than alive. *“On m’a traits, comme un vieux bonnet de coton,”* he babbled senselessly. She was looking after him all night, giving him laurel-drops and repeating to him till daybreak, “You will still be of use; you will still make your mark; you will be appreciated ... in another place.”

Early next morning five literary men called on Varvara Petrovna, three of them complete strangers, whom she had ever set eyes on before. With a stern air they informed her that they had looked into the question of her magazine, and had brought her their decision on the subject. Varvara Petrovna had never authorised anyone to look into or decide anything concerning her magazine. Their decision was that, having founded the magazine, she should at once hand it over to them with the capital to run it, on the basis of a co-operative society. She herself was to go back to Skvoreshniki, not forgetting to take with her Stepan Trofimovitch, who was “out of date.” From delicacy they agreed to recognise the right of property in her case, and to send her every year a sixth part of the net profits. What was most touching about it was that of these five men, four certainly were not actuated by any mercenary motive, and were simply acting in the interests of the “cause.”

“We came away utterly at a loss,” Stepan Trofimovitch used to say afterwards. “I couldn’t make head or tail of it, and kept muttering, I remember, to the rumble of the train:

‘Vyek, *and vyek, and Lyov Kambek, Lyov Kambek and vyek, and vyek.’*

and goodness knows what, all the way to Moscow. It was only in Moscow that I came to myself — as though we really might find something different there.”

“Oh, my friends!” he would exclaim to us sometimes with fervour, ‘‘ you cannot imagine what wrath and sadness overcome your whole soul when a great idea, which you have long cherished as holy, is caught up by the ignorant and dragged forth before fools like themselves into the street, and you suddenly meet it in the market unrecognisable, in the mud, absurdly set up, without proportion, without harmony, the plaything of foolish louts! No! In our day it was not so, and it was not this for which we strove. No, no, not this at all. I don’t recognise it. ... Our day will come again and will turn all the tottering fabric of to-day into a true path. If not, what will happen? . . .”

VII

Immediately on their return from Petersburg Varvara Petrovna sent her friend abroad to “recruit”; and, indeed, it was necessary for them to part for a time, she felt that. Stepan Trofimovitch was delighted to go.

“There I shall revive!” he exclaimed. “There, at last, I shall set to work!” But in the first of his letters from Berlin he struck his usual note:

“My heart is broken!” he wrote to Varvara Petrovna. “I can forget nothing! Here, in Berlin, everything brings back to me my old past, my first raptures and my first agonies. Where is she? Where are they both? Where are you two angels of whom I was never worthy? Where is my son, my beloved son? And last of all, where am *I,* where is my old self, strong as steel. firm as a rock, when now some Andreev, our orthodox clown with a beard, *pent briser man existence en deux”* — and so on.

As for Stepan Trofimovitch’s son, he had only seen him twice in his life, the first time when he was born and the second time lately in Petersburg, where the young man was preparing to enter the university. The boy had been all his life, as we have said already, brought up by his aunts (at Varvara Petrovna’s expense) in a remote province, nearly six hundred miles from Skvoreshniki. As for Andreev, he was nothing more or less than our local shopkeeper, a very eccentric fellow, a self-taught archaeologist who had a passion for collecting Russian antiquities and sometimes tried to outshine Stepan Trofimovitch in erudition and in the progressiveness of his opinions. This worthy shopkeeper, with a grey beard and silver-rimmed spectacles, still owed Stepan Trofimovitch four hundred roubles for some acres of timber he had bought on the latter’s little estate (near Skvoreshniki). Though Varvara Petrovna had liberally provided her friend with funds when she sent him to Berlin, yet Stepan Trofimovitch had, before starting, particularly reckoned on getting that four hundred roubles, probably for his secret expenditure, and was ready to cry when Andreev asked leave to defer payment for a month, which he had a right to do, since he had brought the first installments of the money almost six months in advance to meet Stepan Trofimovitch’s special need at the time.

Varvara Petrovna read this first letter greedily, and underlining in pencil the exclamation: “Where are they both?” numbered it and put it away in a drawer. He had, of course, referred to his two deceased wives. The second letter she received from Berlin was in a different strain:

“I am working twelve hours out of the twenty-four.” (“Eleven would be enough,” muttered Varvara Petrovna.) “I’m rummaging in the libraries,

collating, copying, rushing about. I've visited the professors. I have renewed my acquaintance with the delightful Dundasov family. What a charming creature Lizaveta Mkolaevna is even now! She sends you her greetings. Her young husband and three nephews are all in Berlin. I sit up talking till daybreak with the young people and *we* have almost Athenian evenings, Athenian, I mean, only in their intellectual subtlety and refinement. Everything is in noble style; Â» great deal of music, Spanish airs, dreams of the regeneration of all humanity, ideas of eternal beauty, of the Sistine Madonna, light interspersed with darkness, but there are spots even on the sun! Oh, my friend, my noble, faithful friend! In heart I am with you and am yours; with you alone, always, *en tout pays,* even in *le pays de Makar et de ses veaux,* of which we often used to talk in agitation in Petersburg, do you remember, before we came away. I think of it with a smile. Crossing the frontier I felt myself in safety, a sensation, strange and new, for the first time after so many years" — and so on and so on.

"Come, it's all nonsense!" Varvara Petrovna commented, folding up that letter too. "If he's up till daybreak with his Athenian nights, he isn't at his books for twelve hours a day. Was he drunk when he wrote it? That Dundasov woman dares to send me greetings! But there, let him amuse himself!"

The phrase "*dans le pays de Makar et de ses veaux*" meant: "wherever Makar may drive his calves." Stepan Trofimovitch sometimes purposely translated Russian proverbs and traditional sayings into French in the most stupid way, though no doubt he was able to understand and translate them better. But he did it from a feeling that it was chic, and thought it witty.

But he did not amuse himself for long. He could not hold out for four months, and was soon flying back to Skvoreshniki. His last letters consisted of nothing but outpourings of the most sentimental love for his absent friend, and were literally wet with tears. There are natures extremely attached to home like lap-dogs. The meeting of the friends was enthusiastic. Within two days everything was as before and even duller than before. "My friend," Stepan Trofimovitch said to me a fortnight after, in dead secret, "I have discovered something awful for me . . . something new: *je suis un simple* dependent, *et rien de plus! Mais r-r-rien de plus .'"*

VIII

After this we had a period of stagnation which lasted nine years. The hysterical outbreaks and sobbings on my shoulder that recurred at regular intervals did not in the least mar our prosperity. I wonder that Stepan Trofimovitch did not grow stout during this period. His nose was a little redder, and his manner had gained in urbanity, that was all. By degrees a circle of friends had formed around him, although it was never a very large one. Though Varvara Petrovna had little to do with the circle, yet we all recognised her as our patroness. After the lesson she had received in Petersburg, she settled down in our town for good. In winter she lived in her town house and spent the summer on her estate in the neighbourhood. She had never enjoyed so much consequence and prestige in our provincial society as during the last seven years of this period, that is up to the time of the appointment of our present governor. Our former governor, the mild Ivan Ossipovitch, who will never be forgotten among us, was a near relation of Varvara Petrovna's, and had at one time been under obligations to her. His wife trembled at the very thought of displeasing her, while the homage paid her by provincial society was carried almost to a pitch that suggested idolatry. So Stepan Trofimovitch, too, had a good time. He was a member of the club, lost at cards majestically, and was everywhere treated with respect, though many people regarded him only as a "learned man." Later on, when Varvara Petrovna allowed him to live in a separate house, we enjoyed greater freedom than before. Twice a week we used to meet at his house. We were a merry party, especially when he was not sparing of the champagne. The wine came from the shop of the same Andreev. The bill was paid twice a year by Varvara Petrovna, and on the day it was paid Stepan Trofimoivitch almost invariably suffered from an attack of his "summer cholera."

One of the first members of our circle was Liputin, an elderly provincial official, and a great liberal, who was reputed in the town to be an atheist. He had married for the second time a young and pretty wife with a dowry, and had, besides, three grown-up daughters. He brought up his family in the fear of God, and kept a tight hand over them. He was extremely stingy, and out of his salary had bought himself a house and amassed a fortune. He was an uncomfortable sort of man, and had not been in the service. He was not much respected in the town, and was not received in the best circles. Moreover, he was a scandal-monger, and had more than once had to smart for his back-biting, for which he had been badly punished by an officer, and

again by a country gentleman, the respectable head of a family- But we liked his wit, his inquiring mind, his peculiar, malicious liveliness. Varvara Petrovna disliked him, but he always knew how to make up to her.

Nor did she care for Shatov, who became one of our circle during the last years of this period. Shatov had been a student and had been expelled from the university after some disturbance. In his childhood he had been a student of Stepan Trofimovitch's and was by birth a serf of Varvara Petrovna's, the son of a former valet of hers, Pavel Fyodoritch, and was greatly indebted to her bounty. She disliked him for his pride and ingratitude and could never forgive him for not having come straight to her on his expulsion from the university. On the contrary he had not even answered the letter she had expressly sent him at the time, and preferred to be a drudge in the family of a merchant of the new style, with whom he went abroad, looking after his children more in the position of a nurse than of a tutor. He was very eager to travel at the time. The children had a governess too, a lively young Russian lady, who also became one of the household on the eve of their departure, and had been engaged chiefly because she was so cheap. Two months later the merchant turned her out of the house for "free thinking." Shatov took himself off after her and soon afterwards married her in Geneva. They lived together about three weeks, and then parted as free people recognising no bonds, though, no doubt, also through poverty. He wandered about Europe alone for a long time afterwards, living God knows how; he is said to have blacked boots in the street, and to have been a porter in some dockyard. At last, a year before, he had returned to his native place among us and settled with an old aunt, whom he buried a month later. His sister Dasha, who had also been brought up by Varvara Petrovna, was a favourite of hers, and treated with respect and consideration in her house. He saw his sister rarely and was not on intimate terms with her. In our circle he was always sullen, and never talkative; but from time to time, when his convictions were touched upon, he became morbidly irritable and very unrestrained in his language.

"One has to tie Shatov up and then argue with him," Stepan Trofimovitch would sometimes say in joke, but he liked him.

Shatov had radically changed some of his former socialistic convictions abroad and had rushed to the opposite extreme. He was one of those idealistic beings common in Russia, who are suddenly struck by some overmastering idea which seems, as it were, to crush them at once, and

sometimes for ever. They are never equal to coping with it, but put passionate faith in it, and their whole life passes afterwards, as it were, in the last agonies under the weight of the stone that has fallen upon them and half crushed them. In appearance Shatov was in complete harmony with his convictions: he was short, awkward, had a shock of flaxen hair, broad shoulders, thick lips, very thick overhanging white eyebrows, a wrinkled forehead, and a hostile, obstinately downcast, as it were shamefaced, expression in his eyes. His hair was always in a wild tangle and stood up in a shock which nothing could smooth. He was seven- or eight-and-twenty.

"I no longer wonder that his wife ran away from him," Varvara Petrovna enunciated on one occasion after gazing intently at him. He tried to be neat in his dress, in spite of his extreme poverty. He refrained again from appealing to Varvara Petrovna, and struggled along as best he could, doing various jobs for tradespeople. At one time he served in a shop, at another he was on the point of going as an assistant clerk on a freight steamer, but he fell ill just at the time of sailing. It is hard to imagine what poverty he was capable of enduring without thinking about it at all. After his illness Varvara Petrovna sent him a hundred roubles, anonymously and in secret. He found out the secret, however, and after some reflection took the money and went to Varvara Petrovna to thank her. She received him with warmth, but on this occasion, too, he shamefully disappointed her. He only stayed five minutes, staring blankly at the ground and smiling stupidly in profound silence, and suddenly, at the most interesting point, without listening to what she was saying, he got up, made an uncouth sideways bow, helpless with confusion, caught against the lady's expensive inlaid work-table, upsetting it on the floor and smashing it to atoms, and walked out nearly dead with shame. Liputin blamed him severely afterwards for having accepted the hundred roubles and having even gone to thank Varvara Petrovna for them, instead of having returned the money with contempt, because it had come from his former despotic mistress. He lived in solitude on the outskirts of the town, and did not like any of us to go and see him. He used to turn up invariably at Stepan Trofimovitch's evenings, and borrowed newspapers and books from him.

There was another young man who always came, one Virginsky, a clerk in the service here, who had something in common with Shatov, though on the surface he seemed his complete opposite in every respect. He was a "family man" too. He was a pathetic and very quiet young man though he

was thirty; he had considerable education though he was chiefly self-taught. He was poor, married, and in the service, and supported the aunt and sister of his wife. His wife and all the ladies of his family professed the very latest convictions, but in rather a crude form. It was a case of “an idea dragged forth into the street,” as Stepan Trofimovitch had expressed it upon a former occasion. They got it all out of books, and at the first hint coming from any of our little progressive corners in Petersburg they were prepared to throw anything overboard, so soon as they were advised to do so, Madame Virginsky practised as a midwife in the town. She had lived a long while in Petersburg as a girl. Virginsky himself was a man of rare single-heartedness, and I have seldom met more honest fervour.

“I will never, never, abandon these bright hopes,” he used to say to me with shining eyes. Of these “bright hopes” he always spoke quietly, in a blissful half-whisper, as it were secretly. He was rather tall, but extremely thin and narrow-shouldered, and had extraordinarily lank hair of a reddish hue. All Stepan Trofimovitch’s condescending gibes at some of his opinions he accepted mildly, answered him sometimes very seriously, and often nonplussed him. Stepan Trofimovitch treated him very kindly, and indeed he behaved like a father to all of us. “You are all half-hearted chickens,” he observed to Virginsky in joke. “All who are like you, though in you, Virginsky, I have not observed that narrow-mindedness I found in Petersburg, *chez ces siminaristes.* But you’re a half-hatched chicken all the same. Shatov would give anything to hatch out,, but he’s half-hatched too.”

“And I?” Liputin inquired.

“You’re simply the golden mean which will get on anywhere in its own way.” Liputin was offended.

The story was told of Virginsky, and it was unhappily only too true, that before his wife had spent a year in lawful wedlock with him she announced that he was superseded and that she preferred Lebyadkin. This Lebyadkin, a stranger to the town, turned out afterwards to be a very dubious character, and not a retired captain as he represented himself to be. He could do nothing but twist his moustache, drink, and chatter the most inept nonsense that can possibly be imagined. This fellow, who was utterly lacking in delicacy, at once settled in his house, glad to live at another man’s expense, ate and slept there and came, in the end, to treating the master of the house with condescension. It was asserted that when Virginsky’s wife had announced to him that he was superseded he said to her:

“My dear, hitherto I have only loved you, but now I respect you,” but I doubt whether this renunciation, worthy of ancient Home, was ever really uttered. On the contrary they say that he wept violently. A fortnight after he was superseded, all of them, in a “family party,” went one day for a picnic to a wood outside the town to drink tea with their friends. Virginsky was in a feverishly lively mood and took part in the dances. But suddenly, without any preliminary quarrel, he seized the giant Lebyadkin with both hands, by the hair, just as the latter was dancing a *can-can* solo, pushed him down, and began dragging him along with shrieks, shouts, and tears. The giant was so panic-stricken that he did not attempt to defend himself, and hardly uttered a sound all the time he was being dragged along. But afterwards he resented it with all the heat of an honourable man. Virginsky spent a whole night on his knees begging his wife’s forgiveness. But this forgiveness was not granted, as he refused to apologise to Lebyadkin; moreover, he was upbraided for the meanness of his ideas and his foolishness, the latter charge based on the fact that he knelt down in the interview with his wife. The captain soon disappeared and did not reappear in our town till quite lately, when he came with his sister, and with entirely different aims; but of him later. It was no wonder that the poor young husband sought our society and found comfort in it. But he never spoke of his home-life to us. On one occasion only, returning with me from Stepan Trofimovitch’s, he made a remote allusion to his position, but clutching my hand at once he cried ardently:

“It’s of no consequence. It’s only a personal incident. It’s no hindrance to the ‘cause,’ not the slightest!”

Stray guests visited our circle too; a Jew, called Lyamshin, and a Captain Kartusov came. An old gentleman of inquiring mind used to come at one time, but he died. Liputin brought an exiled Polish priest called Slontsevsky, and for a time we received him on principle, but afterwards we didn’t keep it up.

IX

At one time it was reported about the town that our little circle was a hotbed of nihilism, profligacy, and godlessness, and the rumour gained more and more strength. And yet we did nothing but indulge in the most harmless, agreeable, typically Russian, light-hearted liberal chatter. “The higher

liberalism” and the “higher liberal,” that is, a liberal without any definite aim, is only possible in Russia.

Stepan Trofimovitch, like every witty man, needed a listener, and, besides that, he needed the consciousness that he was fulfilling the lofty duty of disseminating ideas. And finally he had to have some one to drink champagne with, and over the wine to exchange light-hearted views of a certain sort, about Russia and the “Russian spirit,” about God in general, and the “Russian God” in particular, to repeat for the hundredth time the same Russian scandalous stories that every one knew and everyone repeated. We had no distaste for the gossip of the town which often, indeed, led us to the most severe and loftily moral verdicts. We fell into generalising about humanity, made stern reflections on the future of Europe and mankind in general, authoritatively predicted that after Caesarism France would at once sink into the position of a second-rate power, and were firmly convinced that this might terribly easily and quickly come to pass. We had long ago predicted that the Pope would play the part of a simple archbishop in a united Italy, and were firmly convinced that this thousand-year-old question had, in our age of humanitarianism, industry, and railways, become a trifling matter. But, of course, “Russian higher liberalism” could not look at the question in any other way. Stepan Trofimovitch sometimes talked of art, and very well, though rather abstractly. He sometimes spoke of the friends of his youth — all names noteworthy in the history of Russian progress. He talked of them with emotion and reverence, though sometimes with envy. If we were very much bored, the Jew, Lyamshin (a little post-office clerk), a wonderful performer on the piano, sat down to play, and in the intervals would imitate a pig, a thunderstorm, a confinement with the first cry of the baby, and so on, and so on; it was only for this that he was invited, indeed. If we had drunk a great deal — and that did happen sometimes, though not often — we flew into raptures, and even on one occasion sang the “Marseillaise” in chorus to the accompaniment of Lyamshin, though I don’t know how it went off. The great day, the nineteenth of February, we welcomed enthusiastically, and for a long time beforehand drank toasts in its honour. But that was long ago, before the advent of Shatov or Virginsky, when Stepan Trofimovitch was still living in the same house with Varvara Petrovna. For some time before the great day Stepan Trofimovitch fell into the habit of muttering to himself

well-known, though rather far-fetched, lines which must have been written by some liberal landowner of the past:

"*The peasant with his axe is coming,*

Something terrible will happen."

Something of that sort, I don't remember the exact words. Varvara Petrovna overheard him on one occasion, and crying, "Nonsense, nonsense!" she went out of the room in a rage. Liputin, who happened to be present, observed malignantly to Stepan Trofimovitch:

"It'll be a pity if their former serfs really do some mischief to *messieurs les* landowners to celebrate the occasion," and he drew his forefinger round his throat.

"*Cher ami,"* Stepan Trofimovitch observed, "believe me that -this (he repeated the gesture) will never be of any use to our landowners nor to any of us in general. We shall never be capable of organising anything even without our heads, though our heads hinder our understanding more than anything."

I may observe that many people among us anticipated that something extraordinary, such as Liputin predicted, would take place on the day of the emancipation, and those who held this view were the so-called "authorities" on the peasantry and the government. I believe Stepan Trofimovitch shared this idea, so much so that almost on the eve of the great day he began asking Varvara Petrovna's leave to go abroad; in fact he began to be uneasy. But the great day passed, and some time passed after it, and the condescending smile reappeared on Stepan Trofimovitch's lips. In our presence he delivered himself of some noteworthy thoughts on the character of the Russian in general, and the Russian peasant in particular.

"Like hasty people we have been in too great a hurry with our peasants," he said in conclusion of a series of remarkable utterances. "We have made them the fashion, and a whole section of writers have for several years treated them as though they were newly discovered curiosities. We have put laurel-wreaths on lousy heads. The Russian village has given us only 'Kamarinsky' in a thousand years. A remarkable Russian poet who was also something of a wit, seeing the great Rachel on the stage for the first time cried in ecstasy, 'I wouldn't exchange Rachel for a peasant! 'I am prepared to go further. I would'; give all the peasants in Russia for one Rachel. It's high time to look things in the face more soberly, and not to mix up our national rustic pitch with *bouquet de I'lmpiratrice."*

Liputin agreed at once, but remarked that one had to perjure oneself and praise the peasant all the same for the sake of being progressive, that even ladies in good society shed tears reading “Poor Anton,” and that some of them even wrote from Paris to their bailiffs that they were, henceforward, to treat the peasants as humanely as possible.

It happened, and as ill-luck would have it just after the rumours of the Anton Petrov affair had reached us, that there was some disturbance in our province too, only about ten miles from Skvoreshniki, so that a detachment of soldiers was sent down in a hurry.

This time Stepan Trofimovitch was so much upset that he even frightened us. He cried out at the club that more troops were needed, that they ought to be telegraphed for from another province; he rushed off to the governor to protest that he had no hand in it, begged him not to allow his name on account of old associations to be brought into it, and offered to write about his protest to the proper quarter in Petersburg. Fortunately it all passed over quickly and ended in nothing, but I was surprised at Stepan Trofimovitch at the time.

Three years later, as every one knows, people were beginning to talk of nationalism, and “public opinion” first came upon the scene. Stepan Trofimovitch laughed a great deal.

“My friends,” he instructed us, “if our nationalism has ‘dawned’ as they keep repeating in the papers — it’s still at school, at some German ‘Peterschule,’ sitting over a German book and repeating its everlasting German lesson, and its German teacher will make it go down on its knees when he thinks fit. I think highly of the German teacher. But nothing has happened and nothing of the kind has dawned and everything is going on in the old way, that is, as ordained by God. To my thinking that should be enough for Russia, *pour notre Sainte Russie*. Besides, all this Slavism and nationalism is too old to be new. Nationalism, if you like, has never existed among us except as a distraction for gentlemen’s clubs, and Moscow ones at that. I’m not talking of the days of Igor, of course. And besides it all comes of idleness. Everything in Russia comes of idleness, everything good and fine even. It all springs from the charming, cultured, whimsical idleness of our gentry! I’m ready to repeat it for thirty thousand years. We don’t know how to live by our own labour. And as for the fuss they’re making now about the ‘dawn’ of some sort of public opinion, has it so suddenly dropped from heaven without any warning? How is it they don’t understand that

before we can have an opinion of our own we must have work, our own work, our own initiative in things, our own experience. Nothing is to be gained for nothing. If we work we shall have an opinion of our own. But as we never shall work, our opinions will be formed for us by those who have hitherto done the work instead of us, that is, as always, Europe, the everlasting Germans — our teachers for the last two centuries. Moreover, Russia is too big a tangle for us to unravel alone without the Germans, and without hard work. For the last twenty years I've been sounding the alarm, and the summons to work. I've given up my life to that appeal, and, in my folly I put faith in it. Now I have lost faith in it, but I sound the alarm still, and shall sound it to the' tomb. I will pull at the bell-ropes until they toll for my own requiem!"

"Alas! We could do nothing but assent. We applauded our teacher and with what warmth, indeed! And, after all, my friends, don't we still hear to-day, every hour, at every step, the game "charming,"

"clever,"

"liberal," old Russian nonsense? Our teacher believed in God.

"I can't understand why they make me out an infidel here," he used to say sometimes. "I believe in God, *mais distinguons*, I believe in Him as a Being who is conscious of Himself in me only. I cannot believe as my Nastasya (the servant) or like some country gentleman who believes 'to be on the safe side,' or like our dear Shatov — but no, Shatov doesn't come into it. Shitov believes 'on principle,' like a Moscow Slavophil. as for Christianity, for all my genuine respect for it, I'm not a Christian. I am more of an antique pagan, like the great Goethe, or like an ancient Greek. The very fact that Christianity has failed to understand woman is enough, as George Sand has so splendidly shown in one of her great 'novels. As for the bowings, fasting and all the rest of it, I don't understand what they have to do with me. However busy the informers may be here, I don't care to become a Jesuit. In the year 1847 Byelinsky, who was abroad, sent his famous letter to Gogol, and warmly reproached him for believing in some sort of God. *Entre nous soit dit, I* can imagine nothing more comic than the moment when Gogol (the Gogol of that period!) read that phrase, and . . . the whole letter! But dismissing the humorous aspect, and, as I am fundamentally in agreement, I point to them and say — these were men! They knew how to love their people, they knew how to suffer for them, they knew how to sacrifice everything for them, yet they knew how to differ

from them when they ought, and did not filch certain ideas from them. Could Byelinsky have sought salvation in Lenten oil, or peas with radish! . . .” But at this point Shatov interposed.

“Those men of yours never loved the people, they didn’t suffer for them, and didn’t sacrifice anything for them, though they may have amused themselves by imagining it!” he growled sullenly, looking down, and moving impatiently in his chair.

“They didn’t love the people!” yelled Stepan Trofimovitch. “Oh, how they loved Russia!”

“Neither Russia nor the people!” Shatov yelled too. with flashing eyes. “You can’t love what you don’t know and they had no conception of the Russian people. All of them peered at the Russian people through their fingers, and you do too; Byelinsky especially: from that very letter to Gogol one can see it. Byelinsky, like the Inquisitive Man in Krylov’s fable, did not notice the elephant in the museum of curiosities, but concentrated his whole attention on the French Socialist beetles; he did not get beyond them. And yet perhaps he was cleverer than any of you. You’ve not only overlooked the people, you’ve taken up an attitude of disgusting contempt for them, if only because you could not imagine any but the French people, the Parisians indeed, and were ashamed that the Russians were not like them. That’s the naked truth. And he who has no people has no God. You may be sure that all who cease to understand their own people and lose their connection with them at once lose to the same extent the faith of their fathers, and become atheistic or indifferent. I’m speaking the truth! This is a fact which will be realised. That’s why all of you and all of us now are either beastly atheists or careless, dissolute imbeciles, and nothing more. And you too, Stepan Trofimovitch, I don’t make an exception of you at all! In fact, it is on your account I am speaking, let me tell you that!”

As a rule, after uttering such monologues (which happened to him pretty frequently) Shatov snatched up his cap and rushed to the door, in the full conviction that everything was now over, and that he had cut short all friendly relations with Stepan Trofimovitch for ever. But the latter always succeeded in stopping him in time.

“Hadn’t we better make it up, Shatov, after all these endearments,” he would say, benignly holding out his hand to him from his arm-chair.

Shatov, clumsy and bashful, disliked sentimentality. Externally he was rough, but inwardly, I believe, he had great delicacy. Although he often

went too far, he was the first to suffer for it. Muttering something between his teeth in response to Stepan Trofimovitch’s appeal, and shuffling with his feet like a bear, he gave a sudden and unexpected smile, put down his cap, and sat down in the same chair as before, with his eyes stubbornly fixed on the ground. Wine was, of course, brought in, and Stepan Trofimovitch proposed some suitable toast, for instance the memory of some leading man of the past.

CHAPTER II.

PRINCE HARRY. MATCHMAKING.

THERE WAS ANOTHER being in the world to whom Varvara Petrovna was as much attached as she was to Stepan Trofimovitch, her only son, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch Stavrogin. It was to undertake his education that Stepan Trofimovitch had been engaged. The boy was at that time eight years old, and his frivolous father, General Stavrogin, was already living apart from Varvara Petrovna, so that the child grew up entirely in his mother's care. To do Stepan Trofimovitch justice, he knew how to win his pupil's heart. The whole secret of this lay in the fact that he was a child himself. I was not there in those days, and he continually felt the want of a real friend. He did not hesitate to make a friend of this little creature as soon as he had grown a little older. It somehow came to pass quite naturally that there seemed to be no discrepancy of age between them. More than once he awaked his ten- or eleven-year-old friend at night, simply to pour out his wounded feelings and weep before him, or to tell him some family secret, without realising that this was an outrageous proceeding. They threw themselves into each other's arms and wept. The boy knew that his mother loved him very much, but I doubt whether he cared much for her. She talked little to him and did not often interfere with him, but he was always morbidly conscious of her intent, searching eyes fixed upon him. Yet the mother confided his whole instruction and moral education to Stepan Trofimovitch. At that time her faith in him was unshaken. One can't help believing that the tutor had rather a bad influence on his pupil's nerves. When at sixteen he was taken to a lyceum he was fragile-looking and pale, strangely quiet and dreamy. (Later on he was distinguished by great physical strength.) One must assume too that the friends went on weeping at night, throwing themselves in each other's arms, though their tears were not always due to domestic difficulties. Stepan Trofimovitch succeeded in reaching the deepest chords in his pupil's heart, and had aroused in him a vague sensation of that eternal, sacred yearning which some elect souls can never give up for cheap gratification when once they have tasted and known it. (There are some connoisseurs who prize this yearning more than the most complete satisfaction of it, if such were possible.) But in any case it

was just as well that the pupil and the preceptor were, though none too soon, parted.

For the first two years the lad used to come home from the lyceum for the holidays. While Varvara Petrovna and Stepan Trofimovitch were staying in Petersburg he was sometimes present at the literary evenings at his mother's, he listened and looked on. He spoke little, and was quiet and shy as before. His manner to Stepan Trofimovitch was as affectionately attentive as ever, but there was a shade of reserve in it. He unmistakably avoided distressing, lofty subjects or reminiscences of the past. By his mother's wish he entered the army on completing the school course, and soon received a commission in one of the most brilliant regiments of the Horse Guards. He did not come to show himself to his mother in his uniform, and his letters from Petersburg began to be infrequent. Varvara Petrovna sent him money without stint, though after the emancipation the revenue from her estate was so diminished that at first her income was less than half what it had been before. She had, however, a considerable sum laid by through years of economy. She took great interest in her son's success in the highest Petersburg society. Where she had failed, the wealthy young officer with expectations succeeded. He renewed acquaintances which she had hardly dared to dream of, and was welcomed everywhere with pleasure. But very soon rather strange rumours reached Varvara Petrovna. The young man had suddenly taken to riotous living with a sort of frenzy. Not that he gambled or drank too much; there was only talk of savage recklessness, of running over people in the street with his horses, of brutal conduct to a lady of good society with whom he had a liaison and whom he afterwards publicly insulted. There was a callous nastiness about this affair. It was added, too, that he had developed into a regular bully, insulting people for the mere pleasure of insulting them. Varvara Petrovna was greatly agitated and distressed. Stepan Trofimovitch assured her that this was only the first riotous effervescence of a too richly endowed nature, that the storm would subside and that this was only like the youth of Prince Harry, who caroused with Falstaff, Poins, and Mrs. Quickly, as described by Shakespeare.

This time Varvara Petrovna did not cry out, "Nonsense, nonense!" as she was very apt to do in later years in response to Stepan Trofimovitch. On the contrary she listened very eagerly, asked him to explain this theory more exactly, took up Shakespeare herself and with great attention read the

immortal chronicle. But it did not comfort her, and indeed she did not find the resemblance very striking. With feverish impatience she awaited answers to some of her letters. She had not long to wait for them. The fatal news soon reached her that “Prince Harry” had been involved in two duels almost at once, was entirely to blame for both of them, had killed one of his adversaries on the spot and had maimed the other and was awaiting his trial in consequence. The case ended in his being degraded to the ranks, deprived of the rights of a nobleman, and transferred to an infantry line regiment, and he only escaped worse punishment by special favour.

In 1863 he somehow succeeded in distinguishing himself; he received a cross, was promoted to be a non-commissioned officer, and rose rapidly to the rank of an officer. During this period Varvara Petrovna despatched perhaps hundreds of letters to the capital, full of prayers and supplications. She even stooped to some humiliation in this extremity. After his promotion the young man suddenly resigned his commission, but he did not come back to Skvoreshniki again, and gave up writing to his mother altogether. They learned by roundabout means that he was back in Petersburg, but that he was not to be met in the same society as before; he seemed to be in hiding. They found out that he was living in strange company, associating with the dregs of the population of Petersburg, with slip-shod government clerks, discharged military men, beggars of the higher class, and drunkards of all sorts — that he visited their filthy families, spent days and nights in dark slums and all sorts of low haunts, that he had sunk very low, that he was in rags, and that apparently he liked it. He did not ask his mother for money, he had his own little estate — once the property of his father, General Stavrogin, which yielded at least some revenue, and which, it was reported, he had let to a German from Saxony. At last his mother besought him to come to her, and “Prince Harry” made his appearance in our town. I had never feet eyes him before, but now I got a very distinct impression of him. He was a very handsome young man of five-and-twenty, and I must own I was impressed by him. I had expected to see a dirty ragamuffin, sodden with drink and debauchery. He was on the contrary, the most elegant gentleman I had ever met’ extremely well dressed, with an air and manner only to be found in a man accustomed to culture and refinement. I was not the only person surprised. It was a surprise to all the townspeople to whom, of course, young Stavrogin’s whole biography was well known in its minutest details, though one could not imagine how they had got hold of

them, and, what was still more surprising, half of their stories about him turned out to be true.

All our ladies were wild over the new visitor. They were sharply divided into two parties, one of which adored him while the other half regarded him with a hatred that was almost blood-thirsty: but both were crazy about him. Some of them were particularly fascinated by the idea that he had perhaps a fateful secret hidden in his soul; others were positively delighted at the fact that he was a murderer. It appeared too that he had had a very good education and was indeed a man of considerable culture. No great acquirements were needed, of course, to astonish us. But he could judge also of very interesting everyday affairs, and, what was of the utmost value, he judged of them with remarkable good sense. I must mention as a peculiar fact that almost from the first day we all of us thought him a very sensible fellow. He was not very talkative, he was elegant without exaggeration, surprisingly modest, and at the same time bold and self-reliant, as none of us were. Our dandies gazed at him with envy, and were completely eclipsed by him. His face, too, impressed me. His hair was of a peculiarly intense black, his light-coloured eyes were peculiarly light and calm, his complexion was peculiarly soft and white, the red in his cheeks was too bright and clear, his teeth were like pearls, and his lips like coral — one would have thought that he must be a paragon of beauty, yet at the same time there seemed something repellent about him. It was said that his face suggested a mask; so much was said though, among other things they talked of his extraordinary physical strength. He was rather tall. Varvara Petrovna looked at him with pride, yet with continual uneasiness. He spent about six months among us — listless, quiet, rather morose. He made his appearance in society, and with unfailing propriety performed all the duties demanded by our provincial etiquette. He was related, on his father’s side, to the governor, and was received by the latter as a near kinsman. But a few months passed and the wild beast showed his claws.

I may observe by the way, in parenthesis, that Ivan Ossipovitch, our dear mild governor, was rather like an old woman, though he was of good family and highly connected — which explains the fact that he remained so long among us, though he steadily avoided all the duties of his office. From his munificence and hospitality he ought rather to have been a marshal of nobility of the good old days than a governor in such busy times as ours. It was always said in the town that it was not he, but Varvara Petrovna who

governed the province. Of course this was said sarcastically; however, it was certainly a falsehood. And, indeed, much wit was wasted on the subject among us. On the contrary, in later years, Varvara Petrovna purposely and consciously withdrew from anything like a position of authority, and, in spite of the extraordinary respect in which she was held by the whole province, voluntarily confined her influence within strict limits set up by herself. Instead of these higher responsibilities she suddenly took up the management of her estate, and, within two or three years, raised the revenue from it almost to what it had yielded in the past. Giving up her former romantic impulses (trips to Petersburg, plans for founding a magazine, and so on) she began to be careful and to save money. She kept even Stepan Trofimovitch at a distance, allowing him to take lodgings in another house (a change for which he had long been worrying her under various pretexts). Little by little Stepan Trofimovitch began to call her a prosaic woman, or more jestingly, “My prosaic friend.” I need hardly say he only ventured on such jests in an extremely respectful form, and on rare, and carefully chosen, occasions.

All of us in her intimate circle felt — Stepan Trofimovitch more acutely than any of us — that her son had come to her almost, as it were, as a new hope, and even as a sort of new aspiration. Her passion for her son dated from the time of his successes in Petersburg society, and grew more intense from the moment that he was degraded in the army. Yet she was evidently afraid of him, and seemed like a slave in his presence. It could be seen that she was afraid of something vague and mysterious which she could not have put into words, and she often stole searching glances at “Nicolas,” scrutinising him reflectively . . . and behold — the wild beast suddenly showed his claws.

II

Suddenly, apropos of nothing, our prince was guilty of incredible outrages upon various persons and, what was most striking these outrages were utterly unheard of, quite inconceivable, unlike anything commonly done, utterly silly and mischievous, quite unprovoked and objectless. One of the most respected of our club members, on our committee of management, Pyotr Pavlovitch Gaganov, an elderly man of high rank in the service, had formed the innocent habit of declaring vehemently on all sorts of occasions:

“No, you can’t lead me by the nose!” Well, there is no harm in that. But one day at the club, when he brought out this phrase in connection with some heated discussion in the midst of a little group of members (all persons of some consequence) Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, who was standing on one side, alone and unnoticed, suddenly went up to Pyotr Pavlovitch, took him unexpectedly and firmly with two fingers by the nose, and succeeded in leading him two or three steps across the room. He could have had no grudge against Mr. Gaganov. It might be thought to be a mere schoolboy prank, though, of course, a most unpardonable one. Yet, describing it afterwards, people said that he looked almost dreamy at the very instant of the operation, “as though he had gone out of his mind,” but that was recalled and reflected upon long afterwards. In the excitement of the moment all they recalled was the minute after, when he certainly saw it all as it really was, and far from being confused smiled gaily and maliciously “without the slightest regret.” There was a terrific outcry; he was surrounded. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch kept turning round, looking about him, answering nobody, and glancing curiously at the persons exclaiming around him. At last he seemed suddenly, as it were, to sink into thought again — so at least it was reported — frowned, went firmly up to the affronted Pyotr Pavlovitch, and with evident vexation said in a rapid mutter:

“You must forgive me, of course ... I really don’t know what suddenly came over me . . . it’s silly.”

The carelessness of his apology was almost equivalent to a fresh insult. The outcry was greater than ever. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch shrugged his shoulders and went away. All this was very stupid, to say nothing of its gross indecency —

A calculated and premeditated indecency as it seemed at first sight — and therefore a premeditated and utterly brutal insult to our whole society. So it was taken to be by every one. We began by promptly and unanimously striking young Stavrogin’s name off the list of club members. Then it was decided to send an. appeal in the name of the whole club to the governor, begging him at once (without waiting for the case to be formally tried in court) to use “the administrative power entrusted to him” to restrain this dangerous ruffian, “this duelling bully from the capital, and so protect the tranquillity of all the gentry of our town from injurious encroachments.” It was added with angry resentment that” a law might be found to control even Mr. Stavrogin.” This phrase was prepared by way of a thrust at the

governor on account of Varvara Petrovna. They elaborated it with relish. As ill luck would have it, the governor was not in the town at the time. He had gone to a little distance to stand godfather to the child of a very charming lady, recently left a widow in an interesting condition. But it was known that he would soon be back. In the meanwhile they got up a regular ovation for the respected and insulted gentleman; people embraced and kissed him; the whole town called upon him. It was even proposed to give a subscription dinner in his honour, and they only gave up the idea at his earnest request — reflecting possibly at last that the man had, after all, been pulled by the nose and that that was really nothing to congratulate him upon. Yet, how had it happened? How could it have happened? It is remarkable that no one in the whole town put down this savage act to madness. They must have been predisposed to expect such actions from Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, even when he was sane. For my part I don't know to this day how to explain it, in spite of the event that quickly followed and apparently explained everything, and conciliated every one. I will add also that, four years later, in reply to a discreet question from me about the incident at the club, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch answered, frowning: "I wasn't quite well at the time." But there is no need to anticipate events.

The general outburst of hatred with which every one fell upon the "ruffian and duelling bully from the capital" also struck me as curious. They insisted on seeing an insolent design and deliberate intention to insult our whole society at once. The truth was no one liked the fellow, but, on the contrary, he had set every one against him — and one wonders how. Up to the last incident he had never quarrelled with anyone, nor insulted anyone, but was as courteous as a gentleman in a fashion-plate, if only the latter were able to speak. I imagine that he was hated for his pride. Even our ladies, who had begun by adoring him, railed against him now, more loudly than the men. Varvara Petrovna was dreadfully overwhelmed. She confessed afterwards to Stepan Trofimovitch that she had had a foreboding of all this long before, that every day for the last six months she had been expecting "just something of that sort," a remarkable admission on the part of his own mother. "It's begun!" she thought to herself with a shudder. The morning after the incident at the club she cautiously but firmly approached the subject with her son, but the poor woman was trembling all over in spite of her firmness. She had not slept all night and even went out early to

Stepan Trofimovitch's lodgings to ask his advice, and shed tears there, a thing which she had never been known to do before anyone. She longed for "Nicolas" to say something to her, to deign to give some explanation. Nikolay, who was always so polite and respectful to his mother, listened to her for some time scowling, but very seriously. He suddenly got up without saying a word, kissed her hand and went away. That very evening, as though by design, he perpetrated another scandal. It was of a more harmless and ordinary character than the first. Yet, owing to the state of the public mind, it increased the outcry in the town.

Our friend Liputin turned up and called on Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch immediately after the latter's interview with his mother, and earnestly begged for the honour of his company at a little party he was giving for his wife's birthday that evening. Varvara Petrovna had long watched with a pang at her heart her son's taste for such low company, but she had not dared to speak of it to him. He had made several acquaintances besides Liputin in the third rank of our society, and even in lower depths — he had a propensity for making such friends. He had never been in Liputin's house before, though he had met the man himself. He guessed that Liputin's invitation now was the consequence of the previous day's scandal, and that as a local liberal he was delighted at the scandal, genuinely believing that that was the proper way to treat stewards at the club, and that it was very well done. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch smiled and promised to come.

A great number of guests had assembled. The company was not very presentable, but very sprightly. Liputin, vain and envious, only entertained visitors twice a year, but on those occasions he did it without stint. The most honoured of the invited guests, Stepan Trofimovitch, was prevented by illness from being present. Tea was handed, and there were refreshments and vodka in plenty. Cards were played at three tables, and while waiting for supper the young people got up a dance. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch led out Madame Liputin — a very pretty little woman who was dreadfully shy of him — took two turns round the room with her, sat down beside her, drew her into conversation and made her laugh. Noticing at last how pretty she was when she laughed, he suddenly, before all the company, seized her round the waist and kissed her on the lips two or three times with great relish. The poor frightened lady fainted. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch took his hat and went up to the husband, who stood petrified in the middle of the general excitement. Looking at him he, too, became confused and muttering

hurriedly “Don’t be angry,” went away. Liputin ran after him in the entry, gave him his fur-coat with his own hands, and saw him down the stairs, bowing. But next day a rather amusing sequel followed this comparatively harmless prank — a sequel from which Liputin gained some credit, and of which he took the fullest possible advantage.

At ten o’clock in the morning Liputin’s servant Agafya, an easy-mannered, lively, rosy-cheeked peasant woman of thirty, made her appearance at Stavrogin’s house, with a message for Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. She insisted on seeing “his honour himself.” He had a very bad headache, but he went out. Varvara Petrovna succeeded in being present when the message was given.

“Sergay Vassilyevitch” (Liputin’s name), Agafya rattled off briskly, “bade me first of all give you his respectful greetings and ask after your health, what sort of night your honour spent after yesterday’s doings, and how your honour feels now after yesterday’s doings?”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch smiled.

“Give him my greetings and thank him, and tell your master from me, Agafya, that he’s the most sensible man in the town.”

“And he told me to answer that,” Agafya caught him up still more briskly, “that he knows that without your telling him, and wishes you the same.”

“Really! But how could he tell what I should say to you?”

“I can’t say in what way he could tell, but when *I* had set off and had gone right down the street, *I* heard something, and there he was, running after me without his cap. “I say, Agafya, if by any chance he says to you, ‘*Tell* your master that he has more sense than all the town,’ you tell him at once, don’t forget,’ The master himself knows that very well, and wishes you the same.’”

III

At last the interview with the governor took place too. Our dear, mild, Ivan Ossipovitch had only just returned and only just had time to hear the angry complaint from the club. There was no doubt that something must be done, but he was troubled. The hospitable old man seemed also rather afraid of his young kinsman. He made up his mind, however, to induce him to apologise to the club and to his victim in satisfactory form, and, if required, by letter,

and then to persuade him to leave us for a time, travelling, for instance, to improve hie mind, in Italy, or in fact anywhere abroad. In the waiting-room in which on this occasion he received Nikolay Vsyevoloctoyitch (who had been at other times privileged as a relation to wander all over the house unchecked), Alyosha Telyatnikov, a clerk of refined manners, who was also a member of the governor's household, was sitting in a corner opening envelopes at a table, and in the next room, at the window nearest to the door, a stout and sturdy colonel, a former friend and colleague of the governor, was sitting alone reading the *Oolos*, paying no attention, of course, to what was taking place in the waiting-room; in fact, he had his back turned. Ivan Ossipovitch approached the subject in a roundabout way, almost in a "whisper, but kept getting a little muddled. Nikolay looked anything but cordial, not at all as a relation should. He was pale and sat looking down and continually moving his eyebrows as though trying to control acute pain.

"*You* have a kind heart and a generous one, Nicolas," the old man put in among other things, "you're a man of great culture, you've grown up in the highest circles, and here too your behaviour has hitherto been a model, which has been a great consolation to your mother, who is so precious to all of us. ... And now again everything has appeared in such an unaccountable light, so detrimental to all! I speak as a friend of your family, as an old man who loves you sincerely and a relation, at whose words you cannot take offence. . . . Tell me, what drives you to such reckless proceedings so contrary to all accepted rules and habits? What can be the meaning of such acts which seem almost like outbreaks of delirium?"

Nikolay listened with vexation and impatience. All at once there was a gleam of something sly and mocking in his eyes.

"I'll tell you what drives me to it," he said sullenly, and looking round him he bent down to Ivan Ossipovitch's ear. The refined Alyosha Telyatnikov moved three steps farther away towards the window, and the colonel coughed over the *Qolos.* Poor Ivan Ossipovitch hurriedly and trustfully inclined his ear-; he was exceedingly curious. And then something utterly incredible, though on the other side only too unmistakable, took place. The old man suddenly felt that, instead of telling him some interesting secret, Nikolay had seized the upper part of his ear between his teeth and was nipping it rather hard. He shuddered, and breath failed him.

“Nicolas, this is beyond a joke!” he moaned mechanically in a voice not his own.

Alyosha and the colonel had not yet grasped the situation, besides they couldn’t see, and fancied up to the end that the two were whispering together; and yet the old man’s desperate face alarmed them. They looked at one another with wide-open eyes, not knowing whether to rush to his assistance as agreed or to wait. Nikolay noticed this perhaps, and bit the harder.

“Nicolas! Nicolas!” his victim moaned again, “come . . . you’ve had your joke, that’s enough!”

In another moment the poor governor would certainly have died of terror; but the monster had mercy on him, and let go his ear. The old man’s deadly terror lasted for a full minute, and it was followed by a sort of fit. Within half an hour Nikolay was arrested and removed for the time to the guard-room, where he was confined in a special cell, with a special sentinel at the door. This decision was a harsh one, but our mild governor was so angry that he was prepared to take the responsibility even if he had to face Varvara Petrovna. To the general amazement, when this lady arrived at the governor’s in haste and in nervous irritation to discuss the matter with him at once, she was refused admittance, whereupon, without getting out of the carriage, she returned home, unable to believe her senses.

And at last everything was explained! At two o’clock in the morning the prisoner, who had till then been calm and had even slept, suddenly became noisy, began furiously beating on the door with his fists, — with unnatural strength wrenched the iron grating off the door, broke the window, and cut his hands all over. When the officer on duty ran with a detachment of men and the keys and ordered the cell to be opened that they might rush in and bind the maniac, it appeared that he was suffering from acute brain fever. He was taken home to his mother.

Everything was explained at once. All our three doctors gave it as their opinion that the patient might well have been in a delirious state for three days before, and that though he might have apparently been in possession of full consciousness and cunning, yet he might have been deprived of common sense and will, which was indeed borne out by the facts. So it turned out that Liputin had guessed the truth sooner than any one. Ivan Ossipovitch, who was a man of delicacy and feeling, was completely abashed. But what was striking was that he, too, had considered Nikolay

Vsyevolodovitch capable of any mad action even when in the full possession of his faculties. At the club, too, people were ashamed and wondered how it was they had failed to “see the elephant” and had missed the only explanation of all these marvels: there were, of course, sceptics among them, but they could not long maintain their position.

Nikolay was in bed for more than two months. A famous doctor was summoned from Moscow for a consultation; the whole town called on Varvara Petrovna. She forgave them. — When in the spring Nikolay had completely recovered and assented without discussion to his mother’s proposal that he should go for a tour to Italy, she begged him further to pay visits of farewell; to all the neighbours, and so far as possible to apologise where necessary. Nikolay agreed with great alacrity. It became known at the club that he had had a most delicate explanation with Pyotr Pavlovitch Gaganov, at the house of the latter, who had been completely satisfied with his apology. As he went round to pay these calls Nikolay was very grave and even gloomy. Every one appeared to receive him sympathetically, but everybody seemed embarrassed and glad that he was going to Italy. Ivan Ossipovitch was positively tearful, but was, for some reason, unable to bring himself to embrace him, even at the final leave-taking. It is true that some of us retained the conviction that the scamp had simply been making fun of us, and that the illness was neither here nor there. He went to see Liputin too.

“Tell me,” he said, “how could you guess beforehand what I should say about your sense and prime Agafya with an answer to it?”

“Why,” laughed Liputin, “it was because I recognised that you were a clever man, and so I foresaw what your answer would be.”

“Anyway, it was a remarkable coincidence. But, excuse me, did you consider me a sensible man and not insane when you sent Agafya?”

“For the cleverest and most rational, and *I* only pretended to believe that you were insane. . . . And you guessed at once what was in my mind, and sent a testimonial to my wit through Agafya.”

“Well, there you’re a little mistaken. I really was . . . unwell . . ,” muttered Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, frowning. “Bah!” he cried, “do you suppose I’m capable of attacking people when I’m in my senses? What object would there be in it?”

Liputin shrank together and didn’t know what to answer. Nikolay turned pale or, at least, so it seemed to Liputin.

“You have a very peculiar way of looking at things, anyhow,” Nikolay went on, “but as for Agafya, I understand, of course, that you simply sent her to be rude to me.”

“I couldn’t challenge you to a duel, could I?”

“Oh, no, of course! I seem to have heard that you’re not fond of duels. ...”

“Why borrow from the French?” said Liputin, doubling

up again.

“You’re for nationalism, then?”

Liputin shrank into himself more than ever.

“Ba, ba! What do I see?” cried Nicolas, noticing a volume of Considerant in the most conspicuous place on the table. “You don’t mean to say you’re a Fourierist! I’m afraid you must be! And isn’t this too borrowing from the French?” he laughed, tapping the book with his finger.

“No, that’s not taken from the French,” Liputin cried with positive fury, jumping up from his chair. “That is taken from the universal language of humanity, not simply from the French. From the language of the universal social republic and harmony of mankind, let me tell you! Not simply from the French!”

“Foo! hang it all! There’s no such language!” laughed Nikolay.

Sometimes a trifle will catch the attention and exclusively absorb it for a time. Most of what I have to tell of young Stavrogin will come later. But I will note now as a curious fact that of all the impressions made on him by his stay in our town, the one most sharply imprinted on his memory was the unsightly and almost abject figure of the little provincial official, the coarse and jealous family despot, the miserly money-lender who picked up the candle-ends and scraps left from dinner, and was at the same time a passionate believer in some visionary future “social harmony,” who at night gloated in ecstasies over fantastic pictures of a future phalanstery, in the approaching realisation of which, in Russia, and in our province, he believed as firmly *as* in his own existence. And that in the very place where he had saved up to buy himself a “little home,” where he had married for the second time, getting a dowry with his bride, where perhaps, for a hundred miles round there was not one man, himself included, who was the very least like a future member “of the universal human republic and social harmony.”

“God knows how these people come to exist!” Nikolay wondered, recalling sometimes the unlooked-for Fourierist.

IV

Our prince travelled for over three years, so that he was almost forgotten in the town. We learned from Stepan Trofimovitch that he had travelled all over Europe, that he had even been in Egypt and had visited Jerusalem, and then had joined some scientific expedition to Iceland, and he actually did go to Iceland. It was reported too that he had spent one winter attending lectures in a German university. He did not write often to his mother, twice a year, or even less, but Varvara Petrovna was not angry or offended at this. She accepted submissively and without repining the relations that had been established once for all between her son and herself. She fretted for her “Nicolas” and dreamed of him continually. She kept her dreams and lamentations to herself. She seemed to have become less intimate even with Stepan Trofimovitch. She was forming secret projects, and seemed to have become more careful about money than ever. She was more than ever given to saving money and being angry at Stepan Trofimovitch’s losses at cards.

At last, in the April of this year, she received a letter from Paris from Praskovya Ivanovna Drozdov, the widow of the general and the friend of Varvara Petrovna’s childhood. Praskovya Ivanovna, whom Varvara Petrovna had not seen or corresponded with for eight years, wrote, informing her that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had become very intimate with them and a great friend of her only daughter, Liza, and that he was intending to accompany them to Switzerland, to Verney-Montreux, though in the household of Count K. (a very influential personage in Petersburg), who was now staying in Paris. He was received like a son of the family, so that he almost lived at the count’s. The letter was brief, and the object of it was perfectly clear, though it contained only a plain statement of the above-mentioned facts without drawing any inferences from them. Varvara Petrovna did not pause long to consider; she made up her mind instantly, made her preparations, and taking with her her protegee, Dasha (Shatov’s sister), she set off in the middle of April for Paris, and from there went on to Switzerland. She returned in July, alone, leaving Dasha with the Drozdovs. She brought us the news that the Drozdovs themselves had promised to arrive among us by the end of August.

The Drozdovs, too, were landowners of our province, but the official duties of General Ivan Ivanovitch Drozdov (who had been a friend of Varvara Petrovna's and a colleague of her husband's) had always prevented them from visiting their magnificent estate. On the death of the general, which had taken place the year before, the inconsolable widow had gone abroad with her daughter, partly in order to try the grape-cure which she proposed to carry out at Verney-Montreux during the latter half of the summer. On their return to Russia they intended to settle in our province for good. She had a large house in the town which had stood empty for many years with the windows nailed up. They were wealthy people. Praskovya Ivanovna had been, in her first marriage, a Madame Tushin, and like her school-friend, Varvara Petrovna, was the daughter of a government contractor of the old school, and she too had been an heiress at her marriage. Tushin, a retired cavalry captain, was also a man of means, and of some ability. At his death he left a snug fortune to his only daughter Liza, a child of seven. Now that Lizaveta Nikolaevna was twenty-two her private fortune might confidently be reckoned at 200,000 roubles, to say nothing of the property — which was bound to come to her at the death of her mother, who had no children by her second marriage. Varvara Petrovna seemed to be very well satisfied with her expedition. In her own opinion she had succeeded in coming to a satisfactory understanding with Praskovya Ivanovna, and immediately on her arrival she confided everything to Stepan Trofimovitch. She was positively effusive with him as she had not been for a very long time.

"Hurrah!" cried Stepan Trofimovitch, and snapped his fingers.

He was in a perfect rapture, especially as he had spent the whole time of his friend's absence in extreme dejection. On setting off she had not even taken leave of him properly, and had said nothing of her plan to "that old woman," dreading, perhaps, that he might chatter about it. She was cross with him at the time on account of a considerable gambling debt which she had suddenly discovered. But before she left Switzerland she had felt that on her return she must make up for it to her forsaken friend, especially as she had treated him very curtly for a long time past. Her abrupt and mysterious departure had made a profound and poignant impression on the timid heart of Stepan Trofimovitch, and to make matters worse he was beset with other difficulties at the same time. He was worried by a very considerable money obligation, which had weighed upon him for a long

time and which he could never hope to meet without Varvara Petrovna's assistance. Moreover, in the May of this year, the term of office of our mild and gentle Ivan Ossipovitch came to an end. He was superseded under rather unpleasant circumstances. Then, while Varvara Petrovna was still away, there followed the arrival of our new governor, Andrey Antonovitch von Lembke, and with that a change began at once to be perceptible in the attitude of almost the whole of our provincial society towards Varvara Petrovna, and consequently towards Stepan Trofimovitch. He had already had time anyway to make some disagreeable though valuable observations, and seemed very apprehensive alone without Varvara Petrovna. He had an agitating suspicion that he had already been mentioned to the governor as a dangerous man. He knew for a fact that some of our ladies meant to give up calling on Varvara Petrovna. Of our governor's wife (who was only expected to arrive in the autumn) it was reported that though she was, so it was heard, proud, she was a real aristocrat, and "not like that poor Varvara Petrovna." Everybody seemed to know for a fact, and in the greatest detail, that our governor's wife and Varvara Petrovna had met already in society and had parted enemies, so that the mere mention of Madame von Lembke's name would,' it was said, make a painful impression on Varvara Petrovna. The confident and triumphant air of Varvara Petrovna, the contemptuous indifference with which she heard of the opinions of our provincial ladies and the agitation in local society, revived the flagging spirits of Stepan Trofimovitch and cheered him up at once. With peculiar, gleefully-obsequious humour, he was beginning to describe the new governor's arrival.

"You are no doubt aware, *excellente amie,*" he said, jauntily and coquettishly drawling his words, "what is meant by a Russian administrator, speaking generally, and what is meant by a new Russian administrator, that is the newly-baked, newly-established ... *ces interminables mots Russes!* But I don't think you can know in practice what is meant by administrative ardour, and what sort of thing that is."

"Administrative ardour? I don't know what that is."

"Well . . . *Vous savez chez nous* . . . *En un mot,* set the most insignificant nonentity to sell miserable tickets at a railway station, and the nonentity will at once feel privileged to look down on you like a Jupiter, *pour montrer son pouvoir* when you go to take a ticket. 'Now then,' he says, 'I shall show you my power' . . . and in them it comes to a genuine, administrative ardour. *En*

un mot, I've read that some verger in one of our Russian churches abroad — *mais c'est ires curieux* — drove, literally drove a distinguished English family, *les dames charmantes,* out of the church before the beginning of the Lenten service . . . *vous savez ces chants et le livre de Job* ... on the simple pretext that 'foreigners are not allowed to loaf about a Russian church, and that they must come at the time fixed. . . .' And he sent them into fainting fits. ... That verger was suffering from an attack of administrative ardour, *et il a montre son pouvoir."*

"Cut it short if you can, Stepan Trofimovitch."

"Mr. von Lembke is making a tour of the province now. *En un mot,* this Andrey Antonovitch, though he is a russified German and of the Orthodox persuasion, and even — I will say that for him — a remarkably handsome man of about forty . . ."

"What makes you think he's a handsome man? He has eyes like a sheep's."

"Precisely so. But in this I yield, of course, to the opinion of our ladies."

"Let's get on, Stepan Trofimovitch, I beg you! By the way, you're wearing a red neck-tie. Is it long since you've taken to it?"

"I've . . . I've only put it on to-day."

"And do you take your constitutional? Do you go for a four-mile walk every day as the doctor told you to?"

"N-not . . . always."

"I knew you didn't! I felt sure of that when I was in Switzerland!" she cried irritably. "Now you must go not four but six miles a day! You've grown terribly slack, terribly, terribly! You're not simply getting old, you're getting decrepit. . . . You shocked me when I first saw you just now, in spite of your red tie, *quelle idee rouge!* Go on about Von Lembke if you've really something to tell me, and do finish some time, I entreat you, I'm tired."

"*En un mot, I* only wanted to say that he is one of those administrators who begin to have power at forty, who, till they're forty, have been stagnating in insignificance and then suddenly come to the front through suddenly acquiring a wife, or some other equally desperate means. . . . That is, he has gone away now . . . that is, I mean to say, it was at once whispered in both his ears that I am a corrupter of youth, and a hot-bed of provincial atheism. . . . He began making inquiries at once."

"Is that true?"

“I took steps about it, in fact. When he was ‘informed’ that you ‘ruled the province,’ *vous savez*, he allowed himself to use the expression that ‘there shall be nothing of that sort in the future.’”

“Did he say that?”

“That ‘there shall be nothing of the sort in future,’ and, *avec cette morgue*. . . . His wife, Yulia Mihailovna, we shall behold at the end of August, she’s coming straight from Petersburg.”

“From abroad. We met there.”

“*Vraiment?”*

“In Paris and in Switzerland. She’s related to the Drozdovs.”

“Related! What an extraordinary coincidence! They say she is ambitious and . . . supposed to have great connections.”

“Nonsense! Connections indeed! She was an old maid without a farthing till she was five-and-forty. But now she’s hooked her Von Lembke, and, of course, her whole object is to push him forward. They’re both intriguers.”

“And they say she’s two years older than he is?”

“Five. Her mother used to wear out her skirts on my doorsteps in Moscow; she used to beg for an invitation to our balls as a favour when my husband was living. And this creature used to sit all night alone in a corner without dancing, with her turquoise fly on her forehead, so that simply from pity I used to have to send her her first partner at two o’clock in the morning. She was five-and-twenty then, and they used to rig her out in short skirts like a little girl. It was improper to have them about at last.”

“I seem to see that fly.”

“I tell you, as soon as I arrived I was in the thick of an intrigue. You read Madame Drozdov’s letter, of course. What could be clearer? What did I find? That fool Praskovya herself — she always was a fool — looked at me as much as to ask why I’d come. You can fancy how surprised I was. I looked round, and there was that Lembke woman at her tricks, and that cousin of hers — old Drozdov’s nephew — it was all clear. You may be sure I changed all that in a twinkling, and Praskovya is on my side again, but what an intrigue

“In which you came off victor, however. Bismarck!”

“Without being a Bismarck I’m equal to falseness and stupidity wherever I meet it. falseness, and Praskovya’s folly. I don’t know when I’ve met such a flabby woman, and what’s more her legs are swollen, and she’s a good-

natured simpleton, too. What can be more foolish than a good-natured simpleton?”

“A spiteful fool, *ma bonne amie*, a spiteful fool is still more foolish,” Stepan Trofimovitch protested magnanimously.

“You’re right, perhaps. Do you remember Liza?”

“*Charmante enfant!*”

“But she’s not an *enfant* now, but a woman, and a woman of character. She’s a generous, passionate creature, and what I like about her, she stands up to that confiding fool, her mother. There was almost a row over that cousin.”

“Bah, and of course he’s no relation of Lizaveta Nikolaevna’s at all. . . . Has he designs on her?”

“You see, he’s a young officer, not by any means talkative, modest in fact. I always want to be just. I fancy he is opposed to the intrigue himself, and isn’t aiming at anything, and it was only the Von Lembke’s tricks. He had a great respect for Nicolas. You understand, it all depends on Liza. But I left her on the best of terms with Nicolas, and he promised he would come to us in November. So it’s only the Von Lembkev who is intriguing, and Praskovya is a blind woman. She suddenly tells me that all my suspicions are fancy. I told her to her face she was a fool. I am ready to repeat it at the day of judgment. And if it hadn’t been for Nicolas begging me to leave it for a time, I wouldn’t have come away without unmasking that false woman. She’s been trying to ingratiate herself with Count K. through Nicolas. She wants to come between mother and son. But Liza’s on our side, and I came to an understanding with Praskovya. Do you know that Karmazinov is a relation of hers?”

“What? A relation of Madame von Lembke?”

“Yes, of hers. Distant.”

“Karmazinov, the novelist?”

“Yes, the writer. Why does it surprise you? Of course he considers himself a great man. Stuck-up creature! She’s coming here with him. Now she’s making a fuss of him out there. She’s got a notion of setting up a sort of literary society here. He’s coming for a month, he wants to sell his last piece of property here. I very nearly met him in Switzerland, and was very anxious not to. Though I hope he will deign to recognise me. He wrote letters to me in the old days, he has been in my house. I should like you to

dress better, Stepan Trofimovitch; you're growing more slovenly every day. . . . Oh, how you torment me! What are you reading now?"

"I ... I ..."

"I understand. The same as ever, friends and drinking, the club and cards, and the reputation of an atheist. I don't like that reputation, Stepan Trofimovitch; I don't care for you to be called an atheist, particularly now. I didn't care for it in old days, for it's all nothing but empty chatter. It must be said at last."

"*Mais, ma chere* ..."

"Listen, Stepan Trofimovitch, of course I'm ignorant compared with you on all learned subjects, but as I was travelling here I thought a great deal about you. I've come to one conclusion."

"What conclusion?"

"That you and I are not the wisest people in the world, but that there are people wiser than we are."

"Witty and apt. If there are people wiser than we are, then there are people more right than we are, and we may be mistaken, you mean? *Mais, ma bonne amie*, granted that I may make a mistake, yet have I not the common, human, eternal, supreme [right of freedom of conscience? I have the right not to be bigoted or superstitious if I don't wish to, and for that I shall naturally be hated by certain persons to the end of time. *El puis, comme on trouve toujours plus de moines que de raison,* and as I thoroughly agree with that . . ."

"What, what did you say?"

"I said, *on trouve, toujours plus de moines que de raison,* and as I thoroughly . . ."

"I'm sure that's not your saying. You must have taken it from somewhere."

"It was Pascal said that."

"Just as I thought . . .it's not your own. Why don't you ever say anything like that yourself, so shortly and to the point, instead of dragging things out to such a length? That's much, better than what you said just now about administrative ardour. . ."

"*Ma foi, chere* . . . why? In the first place probably because I'm not a Pascal after all, *et puis* . . . secondly, we Russians never can say anything in our own language. . . . We never have said anything hitherto, at any rate. . . ."

“H’m! That’s not true, perhaps. Anyway, you’d better make a note of such phrases, and remember them, you know, in case you have to talk. . . . Ach, Stephan Trofimovitch. I have come to talk to you seriously, quite seriously.”

“*Chere, chere amie!”*

“Now that all these Von Lembkes and Karmazinovs . . . Oh, my goodness, how you have deteriorated! . . . Oh, my goodness, how you do torment me! . . . I should have liked these people to feel a respect for you, for they’re not worth your little finger — but the way you behave! . . . What will they see? What shall I have to show them? Instead of nobly standing as an example, keeping up the tradition of the past, you surround yourself with a wretched rabble, you have picked up impossible habits, you’ve grown feeble, you can’t do without wine and cards, you read nothing but Paul de Kock, and write nothing, while all of them write; all your time’s wasted in gossip. How can you bring yourself to be friends with a wretched creature like your inseparable Liputin?

“Why is he *mine* and *inseparable 1”* Stepan Trofimovitch Protested timidly.

“Where is he now?” Varvara Petrovna went on, sharply and sternly.

“He ... he has an infinite respect for you, and he’s gone to S —— k, to receive an inheritance left him by his mother.”

“He seems to do nothing but get money. And how’s Shatov? Is he just the same?”

“*Irascible, mais bon,”*

“I can’t endure your Shatov. He’s spiteful and he thinks too much of himself.”

“How is Darya Pavlovna?”

“You mean Dasha? What made you think of her?” Varvara Petrovna looked at him inquisitively. “She’s quite well. I left her with the Drozdovs. I heard something about your son in Switzerland. Nothing good.”

“*Oh, c’est un histoire bien bete! Je vous attendais, ma bonne amie, pour vous raconter . . .*”

“Enough, Stepan Trofimovitch. Leave me in peace. I’m worn out. We shall have time to talk to our heart’s content, especially of what’s unpleasant. You’ve begun to splutter when you laugh, it’s a sign of senility! And what a strange way of laughing you’ve taken to! ... Good Heavens, what a lot of bad habits you’ve fallen into! Karmazinov won’t come and see

you! And people are only too glad to make the most of anything as it is. . . . You've betrayed yourself completely now. Well, come, that's enough, that's enough, I'm tired. You really might have mercy upon one!"

Stepan Trofimovitch "had mercy," but he withdrew in great perturbation.

V

Our friend certainly had fallen into not a few bad habits, especially of late. He had obviously and rapidly deteriorated; and it was true that he had become slovenly. He drank more and had become more tearful and nervous; and had grown too impressionable on the artistic side. His face had acquired a strange facility for changing with extraordinary quickness, from the most solemn expression, for instance, to the most absurd, and even foolish. He could not endure solitude, and was always craving for amusement. One had always to repeat to him some gossip, some local anecdote, and every day a new one. If no; one came to see him for a long time he wandered disconsolately about the rooms, walked to the window, puckering up his lips, heaved deep sighs, and almost fell to whimpering at last. He was always full of forebodings, was afraid of something unexpected and inevitable; he had become timorous; he began to pay great attention to his dreams.

He spent all that day and evening in great depression, he sent for me, was very much agitated, talked a long while, gave me a long account of things, but all rather disconnected. Varvara Petrovna had known for a long time that he concealed nothing from me. It seemed to me at last that he was worried about something particular, and was perhaps unable to form a definite idea of it himself. As a rule when we met *tete-a-tete* and he began making long complaints to me, a bottle was almost always brought in after a little time, and things became much more comfortable. This time there was no wine, and he was evidently struggling all the while against the desire to send for it.

"And why is she always so cross?" he complained every minute, like a child. "Tows *les hommes de genie et de progres en Mussie etaient, sont, et seront toujours des* gamblers *et des* drunkards *qui boivent* in outbreaks . . . and I'm not such a gambler after all, and I'm not such a drunkard. She reproaches me for not writing anything. Strange idea! . . . She asks why I lie down? She says I ought to stand, 'an example and reproach.' *Mais, entre*

nous soit dit, what is a man to do who is destined to stand as a ‘reproach,’ if not to lie down? Does she understand that?”

And at last it became clear to me what was the chief particular trouble which was worrying him so persistently at this time. Many times that evening he went to the looking-glass, and stood a long while before it. At last he turned from the looking-glass to me, and with a sort of strange despair, said: “*Mon cher, je suis un* broken-down man.” Yes, certainly, up to that time, up to that very day there was one thing only of which he had always felt confident in spite of the “new views,” and of the “change in Varvara Petrovna’s ideas,” that was, the conviction that still he had a fascination for her feminine heart, not simply as an exile or a celebrated man of learning, but as a handsome man. For twenty years this soothing and flattering opinion had been rooted in his mind, and perhaps of all his convictions this was the hardest to part with. Had he any presentiment that evening of the colossal ordeal which was preparing for him in the immediate future?

VI

I will now enter upon the description of that almost forgotten incident with which my story properly speaking begins.

At last at the very end of August the Drozdovs returned. Their arrival made a considerable sensation in local society, and took place shortly before their relation, our new governor’s wife, made her long-expected appearance. But of all these interesting events I will speak later. For the present I will confine myself to saying that Praskovya Ivanovna brought Varvara Petrovna, who was expecting her so impatiently, a most perplexing problem: Nikolay had parted from them in July, and, meeting Count K. on the Rhine, had set off with him and his family for Petersburg. (N.B. — The Count’s three daughters were all of marriageable age.)

“Lizaveta is so proud and obstinate that I could get nothing out of her,” Praskovya Ivanovna said in conclusion. “But I saw for myself that something had happened between her and Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. I don’t know the reasons, but I fancy, my dear Varvara Petrovna, that you will have to ask your Darya Pavlovna for them. To my thinking Liza was offended. I’m glad. I can tell you that I’ve brought you back your favourite at last and handed her over to you; it’s a weight off my mind.”

These venomous words were uttered with remarkable irritability. It was evident that the “flabby” woman had prepared them and gloated beforehand over the effect they would produce. But Varvara Petrovna was not the woman to be disconcerted by sentimental effects and enigmas. She sternly demanded the most precise and satisfactory explanations. Praskovya Ivanovna immediately lowered her tone and even ended by dissolving into tears and expressions of the warmest friendship. This irritable but sentimental lady, like Stepan Trofimovitch, was for ever yearning for true friendship, and her chief complaint against her daughter Lizaveta Mkolaevna was just that “her daughter was not a friend to her.”

But from all her explanations and outpourings nothing certain could be gathered but that there actually had been some sort of quarrel between Liza and Nikolay, but of the nature of the quarrel Praskovya Ivanovna was obviously unable to form a definite idea. As for her imputations against Darya Pavlovna, she not only withdrew them completely in the end, but even particularly begged Varvara Petrovna to pay no attention to her words, because “they had been said in irritation.” In fact, it had all been left very far from clear — suspicious, indeed. According to her account the quarrel had arisen from Liza’s “obstinate and ironical character.” ‘‘ Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch is proud, too, and though he was very much in love, yet he could not endure sarcasm, and began to be sarcastic himself. Soon afterwards we made the acquaintance of a young man, the nephew, I believe, of your ‘Professor’ and, indeed, the surname’s the same.”

“The son, not the nephew,” Varvara Petrovna corrected her.

Even in old days Praskovya Ivanovna had been always unable to recall Stepan Trofimovitch’s name, and had always called him the “Professor.”

“Well, his son, then; so much the better. Of course, it’s all the same to me. An ordinary young man, very lively and free in his manners, but nothing special in him. Well, then, Liza herself did wrong, she made friends with the young man with the idea of making Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch jealous. I don’t see much harm in that; it’s the way of girls, quite usual, even charming in them. Only instead of being jealous Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch made friends with the young man himself, just as though he saw nothing and didn’t care. This made Liza furious. The young man soon went away (he was in a great hurry to get somewhere) and Liza took to picking quarrels with Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch at every opportunity. She noticed that he used sometimes to talk to Dasha; and, well, she got in such a

frantic state that even my life wasn't worth living, my dear. The doctors have forbidden my being irritated, and I was so sick of their lake they make such a fuss about, it simply gave me toothache, I had such rheumatism. It's stated in print that the Lake of Geneva does give people the toothache. It's a feature of the place. Then Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch suddenly got a letter from the countess and he left us at once. He packed up in one day. They parted in a friendly way, and Liza became very cheerful and frivolous, and laughed a great deal seeing him off; only that was all put on. When he had gone she became very thoughtful, and she gave up speaking of him altogether and wouldn't let me mention his name. And I should advise you, dear Varvara Petrovna, not to approach the subject with Liza, you'll only do harm. But if you hold your tongue she'll begin to talk of it herself, and then you'll learn more. I believe they'll come together again, if only Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch doesn't put off coming, as he promised."

"I'll write to him at once. If that's how it was, there was nothing in the quarrel; all nonsense! And I know Darya too well. It's nonsense!"

"I'm sorry for what I said about Dashenka, I did wrong. Their conversations were quite ordinary and they talked out loud, too. But it all upset me so much at the time, my dear. And Liza, I saw, got on with her again as affectionately as before. . . ."

That very day Varvara Petrovna wrote to Nikolay, and begged him to come, if only one month, earlier than the date he had fixed. But yet she still felt that there was something unexplained and obscure in the matter. She pondered over it all the evening and all night. Praskovya's opinion seemed to her too innocent and sentimental. "Praskovya has always been too sentimental from the old schooldays upwards," she reflected. "Nicolas is not the man to run away from a girl's taunts. There's some other reason for it, if there really has been a breach between them. That officer's here though, they've brought him with them. As a relation he lives in their house. And, as for Darya, Praskovya was in too much haste to apologise. She must have kept something to herself, which she wouldn't tell me."

By the morning Varvara Petrovna had matured a project for putting a stop once for all to one misunderstanding at least; a project amazing in its unexpectedness. What was in her heart when she conceived it? It would be hard to decide and I will not undertake to explain beforehand all the incongruities of which it was made up. I simply confine myself as chronicler to recording events precisely as they happened, and it is not my

fault if they seem incredible. Yet I must once more testify that by the morning there was not the least suspicion of Dasha left in Varvara Petrovna's mind, though in reality there never had been any — she had too much confidence in her. Besides, she could not admit the idea that "Nicolas" could be attracted by her Darya. Next morning when Darya Pavlovna was pouring out tea at the table Varvara Petrovna looked for a long while intently at her and, perhaps for the twentieth time since the previous day, repeated to herself: "It's all nonsense!"

All she noticed was that Dasha looked rather tired, and that she was even quieter and more apathetic than she used to be. After their morning tea, according to their invariable custom, they sat down to needlework. Varvara Petrovna demanded from her a full account of her impressions abroad, especially of nature, of the inhabitants, of the towns, the customs, their arts and commerce — of everything she had time to observe. She asked no questions about the Drozdovs or how she had got on with them. Dasha, sitting beside her at the work-table helping her with the embroidery, talked for half an hour in her even, monotonous, but rather weak voice.

"Darya!" Varvara Petrovna interrupted suddenly, "is there nothing special you want to tell me?"

"No, nothing," said Dasha, after a moment's thought, and she glanced at Varvara Petrovna with her light-coloured eyes.

"Nothing on your soul, on your heart, or your conscience?"

"Nothing," Dasha repeated, quietly, but with a sort of sullen firmness.

"I knew there wasn't! Believe me, Darya, I shall never doubt you. Now sit still and listen. In front of me, on that chair. I want to see the whole of you. That's right. Listen, do you want to be married?"

Dasha responded with a long, inquiring, but not greatly astonished look.

"Stay, hold your tongue. In the first place there is a very great difference in age, but of course you know better than anyone what nonsense that is. You're a sensible girl, and there must be no mistakes in your life. Besides, he's still a handsome man. . . In short, Stepan Trofimovitch, for whom you have always had such a respect. Well?"

Dasha looked at her still more inquiringly, and this time not simply with surprise; she blushed perceptibly.

"Stay, hold your tongue, don't be in a hurry! Though you will have money under my will, yet when I die, what will become of you, even if you have money? You'll be deceived and robbed of your money, you'll be lost

in fact. But married to him you're the wife of a distinguished man. Look at him on the other hand. Though I've provided for him, if I die what will become of him I But I could trust him to you. Stay, I've not finished. He's frivolous, shilly-shally, cruel, egoistic, he has low habits. But mind you think highly of him, in the first place because there are many worse. I don't want to get you off my hands by marrying you to a rascal, you don't imagine anything of that sort, do you? And, above all, because I ask you, you'll think highly of him," —

She broke off suddenly and irritably. "Do you hear? Why won't you say something?"

Dasha still listened and did not speak.

"Stay, wait a little. He's an old woman, but you know, that's all the better for you. Besides, he's a pathetic old woman. He doesn't deserve to be loved by a woman at all, but he deserves to be loved for his helplessness, and you must love him for his helplessness. You understand me, don't you? Do you understand me?"

Dasha nodded her head affirmatively.

"I knew you would. I expected as much of you. He will love you because he ought, he ought; he ought to adore you." Varvara Petrovna almost shrieked with peculiar exasperation. "Besides, he will be in love with you without any ought about it. I know him. And another thing, I shall always be here. You may be sure I shall always be here. He will complain of you, he'll begin to say things against you behind your back, he'll whisper things against you to any stray person he meets, he'll be for ever whining and whining; he'll write you letters from one room to another, two a day, but he won't be able to get on without you all the same, and that's the chief thing. Make him obey you. If you can't make him you'll be a fool. He'll want to hang himself and threaten, to — don't you believe it. It's nothing but nonsense. Don't believe it; but still keep a sharp look-out, you never can tell, and one day he may hang himself. It does happen with people like that. It's not through strength of will but through weakness that people hang themselves, and so never drive him to an extreme, that's the first rule in married life. Remember, too, that he's a poet. Listen, Dasha, there's no greater happiness than self-sacrifice. And besides, you'll be giving me great satisfaction and that's the chief thing. Don't think I've been talking nonsense. I understand what I'm saying. I'm an egoist, you be an egoist,

too. Of course I'm not forcing you. It's entirely for you to decide. As you say, so it shall be. Well, what's the good of sitting like this. Speak!"

"I don't mind, Varvara Petrovna, if I really must be married," said Dasha firmly.

"Must? What are you hinting at?" Varvara Petrovna looked sternly and intently at her.

Dasha was silent, picking at her embroidery canvas with her needle.

"Though you're a clever girl, you're talking nonsense; though it is true that I have certainly set my heart on marrying you, yet it's not because it's necessary, but simply because the idea has occurred to me, and only to Stepan Trofimovitch. If it had not been for Stepan Trofimovitch, I should not have thought of marrying you yet, though you are twenty. . . . Well?"

"I'll do as you wish, Varvara Petrovna."

"Then you consent! Stay, be quiet. Why are you in such a hurry? I haven't finished. In my will I've left you fifteen thousand roubles. I'll give you that at once, on your wedding-day. You will give eight thousand of it to him; that is, not to him but to me. He has a debt of eight thousand. I'll pay it, but he must know that it is done with your money. You'll have seven thousand left in your hands. Never let him touch a farthing of it. Don't pay his debts ever. If once you pay them, you'll never be free of them. Besides, I shall always be here. You shall have twelve hundred roubles a year from me, with extras, fifteen hundred, besides board and lodging, which shall be at my expense, just as he has it now. Only you must set up your own servants. Your yearly allowance shall be paid to you all at once straight into your hands. But be kind, and sometimes give him something, and let his friends come to see him once a week, but if they come more often, turn them out. But I shall be here, too. And if I die, your pension will go on till his death, do you hear, till *his* death, for it's his pension, not yours. And besides the seven thousand you'll have now, which you ought to keep untouched if you're not foolish, I'll leave you another eight thousand in my will. And you'll get nothing more than that from me, it's right that you should know it. Come, you consent, eh? Will you say something at last?"

"I have told you already, Varvara Petrovna."

"Remember that you're free to decide. As you like, so it shall be."

"Then, may I ask, Varvara Petrovna, has Stepan Trofimovitch said anything yet?"

“No, he hasn’t said anything, he doesn’t know . . . but he will speak directly.”

She jumped up at once and threw on a black shawl. Dasha flushed a little again, and watched her with questioning eyes. Varvara Petrovna turned suddenly to her with a face flaming with anger.

“You’re a fool!” She swooped down on her like a hawk. “An ungrateful fool! What’s in your mind? Can you imagine that I’d compromise you, in any way, in the smallest degree. Why, he shall crawl on his knees to ask you, he must be dying of happiness, that’s how it shall be arranged. Why, you know that I’d never let you suffer. Or do you suppose he’ll take you for the sake of that eight thousand, and that I’m hurrying off to sell you? You’re a fool, a fool! You’re all ungrateful fools. Give me my umbrella!”

And she flew off to walk by the wet brick pavements and the wooden planks to Stepan Trofimovitch’s.

VII

It was true that she would never have let Dasha suffer; on the contrary, she considered now that she was acting as her benefactress. The most generous and legitimate indignation was glowing in her soul, when, as she put on her shawl, she caught fixed upon her the embarrassed and mistrustful eyes of her protegee. She had genuinely loved the girl from her childhood upwards. Praskovya Ivanovna had with justice called Darya Pavlovna her favourite. Long ago Varvara Petrovna had made up her mind once for all that “Darya’s disposition was not like her brother’s” (not, that is, like Ivan Shatov’s), that she was quiet and gentle, and capable of great self-sacrifice; that she was distinguished by a power of devotion, unusual modesty, rare reasonableness, and, above all, by gratitude. Till that time Dasha had, to all appearances, completely justified her expectations.

“In that life there will be no mistakes,” said Varvara Petrovna when the girl was only twelve years old, and as it was characteristic of her to attach herself doggedly and passionately to any dream that fascinated her, any new design, any idea that struck her as noble, she made up her mind at once to educate Dasha as though she were her own daughter. She at once set aside a sum of money for her, and sent for a governess, Miss Criggs, who lived with them until the girl was sixteen, but she was for some reason suddenly dismissed. Teachers came for her from the High School, among them a real

Frenchman, who taught Dasha French. He, too, was suddenly dismissed, almost turned out of the house. A poor lady, a widow of good family, taught her to play the piano. Yet her chief tutor was Stepan Trofimovitch.

In reality he first discovered Dasha. He began teaching the quiet child even before Varvara Petrovna had begun to think about her. I repeat again, it was wonderful how children took to him. Lizaveta Nikolaevna Tushin had been taught by him from the age of eight till eleven (Stepan Trofimovitch took no fees, of course, for his lessons, and would not on any account have taken payment from the Drozdovs). But he fell in love with the charming child and used to tell her poems of a sort about the creation of the world, about the earth, and the history of humanity. His lectures about the primitive peoples and primitive man were more interesting than the Arabian Nights. Liza, who was ecstatic over these stories, used to mimic Stepan Trofimovitch very funnily at home. He heard of this and once peeped in on her unawares. Liza, overcome with confusion, flung herself into his arms and shed tears; Stepan Trofimovitch wept too with delight. But Liza soon after went away, and only Dasha was left. When Dasha began to have other teachers, Stepan Trofimovitch gave up his lessons with her, and by degrees left off noticing her. Things went on like this for a long time. Once when she was seventeen he was struck by her prettiness. It happened at Varvara Petrovna's table. He began to talk to the young girl, was much pleased with her answers, and ended by offering to give her a serious and comprehensive course of lessons on the history of Russian literature. Varvara Petrovna approved, and thanked him for his excellent idea, and Dasha was delighted. Stepan Trofimovitch proceeded to make special preparations for the lectures, and at last they began. They began with the most ancient period. The first lecture went off enchantingly. Varvara Petrovna was present. When Stepan Trofimovitch had finished, and as he was going informed his pupil that the next time he would deal with "The Story of the Expedition of Igor," Varvara Petrovna suddenly got up and announced that there would be no more lessons. Stepan Trofimovitch winced, but said nothing, and Dasha flushed crimson. It put a stop to the scheme, however. This had happened just three years before Varvara Petrovna's unexpected fancy.

Poor Stepan Trofimovitch was sitting alone free from all misgivings. Plunged in mournful reveries he had for some time been looking out of the window to see whether any of his friends were coining. But nobody would

come. It was drizzling. It was turning cold, he would have to have the stove heated. He sighed. Suddenly a terrible apparition flashed upon his eyes:

Varvara Petrovna in such weather and at such an unexpected hour to see him! And on foot! He was so astounded that he forgot to put on his coat, and received her as he was, in his everlasting pink-wadded dressing-jacket.

"*Ma bonne amie!"* he cried faintly, to greet her. "You're alone; I'm glad; I can't endure your friends. How you do smoke! Heavens, what an atmosphere! You haven't finished your morning tea and it's nearly twelve o'clock. It's your idea of bliss — disorder! You take pleasure in dirt. What's that torn paper on the floor? Nastasya, Nastasya! What is your Nastasya about? Open the window, the casement, the doors, fling everything wide open. And we'll go into the drawing-room. I've come to you on a matter of importance. And you sweep up, my good woman, for once in your life."

"They make such a muck!" Nastasya whined in a voice of plaintive exasperation.

"Well, you must sweep, sweep it up fifteen times a day! You've a wretched drawing-room" (when they had gone into the drawing-room). "Shut the door properly. She'll be listening. You must have it repapered. Didn't I send a paperhanger to you with patterns? Why didn't you choose one? Sit down, and listen. Do sit down, I beg you. Where are you off to? Where are you off to I Where are you off to?

"I'll be back directly," Stepan Trofimovitch cried from the next room. "Here, I am again."

"Ah,- you've changed your coat." She scanned him mockingly. (He had flung his coat on over the dressing-jacket.) "Well, certainly that's more suited to our subject. Do sit down, I entreat you."

She told him everything at once, abruptly and impressively She hinted at the eight thousand of which he stood in such terrible need. She told him in detail of the dowry. Stepan Trofimovitch sat trembling, opening his eyes wider and wider. He heard it all, but he could not realise it clearly. He tried to speak, but his voice kept breaking. All he knew was that everything would be as she said, that to protest and refuse to agree would be useless, and that he was a married man irrevocably.

"*Mais, ma bonne amie!* . . . for the third time, and at my age . . . and to such a child." He brought out at last, *"Mais, c'est une enfant!"*

"A child who is twenty years old, thank God. Please don't roll your eyes, I entreat you, you're not on the stage. You're very clever and learned, but

you know nothing at all about life. You will always want a nurse to look after you. I shall die, and what will become of you? She will be a good nurse to you; she's a modest girl, strong-willed, reasonable; besides, I shall be here too, I shan't die directly. She's fond of home, she's an angel of gentleness. This happy thought came to me in Switzerland. Do you understand if I tell you myself that she is an angel of gentleness!" she screamed with sudden fury. "Your house is dirty, she will bring in order, cleanliness. Everything will shine like a mirror. Good gracious, do you expect me to go on my knees to you with such a treasure, to enumerate all the advantages, to court you! Why, you ought to be on your knees. . . . Oh, you shallow, shallow, faint-hearted man!"

"But . . . I'm an old man!"

"What do your fifty-three years matter! Fifty is the middle of life, not the end of it. You are a handsome man and you know it yourself. You know, too, what a respect she has for you. If I die, what will become of her? But married to you she'll be at peace, and I shall be at peace. You have renown, a name, a loving heart. You receive a pension which I look upon as an obligation. You will save her perhaps, you will save her! In any case you will be doing her an honour. You will form her for life, you will develop her heart, you will direct her ideas. How many people come to grief nowadays because their ideas are wrongly directed. By that time your book will be ready, and you will at once set people talking about you again."

"I am, in fact," he muttered, at once flattered by Varvara Petrovna's adroit insinuations. "I was just preparing to sit down to my 'Tales from Spanish History.'"

"Well, there you are. It's just come right."

"But . . . she? Have you spoken to her?"

"Don't worry about her. And there's no need for you to be inquisitive. Of course, you must ask her yourself, entreat her to do you the honour, you understand? But don't be uneasy. I shall be here. Besides, you love her.''

Stepan Trofimovitch felt giddy. The walls were going round. There was one terrible idea underlying this to which he could

not reconcile himself.

"*Excellente amie"* his voice quivered suddenly. "I could never have conceived that you would make up your mind to give me in marriage to another . . . woman."

“You’re not a girl, Stepan Trofimovitch. Only girls are given in marriage. Yon are taking a wife,” Varvara Petrovna hissed malignantly.

“*Oui, j’ai pris un mot pour un autre. Mais c’est egal.*” He gazed at her with a hopeless air.

“I see that *e’est egal,*” she muttered contemptuously through her teeth. “Good heavens! Why he’s going to faint. Nastasya, Nastasya, water!”

But water was not needed. He came to himself. Varvara Petrovna took up her umbrella.

“I see it’s no use talking to you now. . . .”

“*Oui, oui, je suis incapable.*”

“Bat by to-morrow you’ll have rested and thought it over. Stay at home. If anything happens let me know, even if it’s at night. Don’t write letters, I shan’t read them. To-morrow I’ll come again at this time alone, for a final answer, and I trust it will be satisfactory. Try to have nobody here and no untidiness, for the place isn’t fit to be seen. Nastasya, Nastasya!”

The next day, of course, he consented, and, indeed, he could do nothing else. There was one circumstance . . .

VIII

Stepan Trofimovitch’s estate, as we used to call it (which consisted of fifty souls, reckoning in the old fashion, and bordered on Skvoreshniki), was not really his at all, but his first wife’s, and so belonged now to his son Pyotr Stepanovitch Verhovensky. Stepan Trofimovitch was simply his trustee, and so, when the nestling was full-fledged, he had given his father a formal authorisation to manage the estate. This transaction was a profitable one for the young man. He received as much as a thousand roubles a year by way of revenue from the estate, though under the new regime it could not have yielded more than five hundred, and possibly not that. God knows how such an arrangement had arisen. The whole sum, however, was sent the young man by Varvara Petrovna, and Stepan Trofimovitch had nothing to do with a single rouble of it. On the other hand, the whole revenue from the land remained in his pocket, and he had, besides, completely ruined the estate, letting it to a mercenary rogue, and without the knowledge of Varvara Petrovna selling the timber which gave the estate its chief value. He had some time before he sold the woods bit by bit. It was worth at least eight thousand, yet he had only received five thousand for it. But he sometimes

lost too much at the club, and was afraid to ask Varvara Petrovna for the money. She clenched her teeth when she heard at last of everything. And now, all at once, his son announced that he was coming himself to sell his property for what he could get for it, and commissioned his father to take steps promptly to arrange the sale. It was clear that Stepan Trofimovitch, being a generous and disinterested man, felt ashamed of his treatment of *ce cher enfant* (whom he had seen for the last time nine years before as a student in Petersburg). The estate might originally have been worth thirteen Or fourteen thousand. Now it was doubtful whether anyone would give five for it. No doubt Stepan Trofimovitch was fully entitled by the terms of the trust to sell the wood, and taking into account the incredibly large yearly revenue of a thousand roubles which had been sent punctually for so many years, he could have put up a good defence of his management. But Stepan Trofimovitch was a generous man of exalted impulses. A wonderfully fine inspiration occurred to his mind: when Petrusha returned, to lay on the table before him the maximum price of fifteen thousand roubles without a hint at the sums that had been sent him hitherto, and warmly and with tears to press *ce cher fils* to his heart, and so to make an end of all accounts between them. He began cautiously and indirectly unfolding this picture before Varvara Petrovna. He hinted that this would add a peculiarly noble note to their friendship . . . to their “idea.” This would set the parents of the last generation — and people of the last generation generally — in such a disinterested and magnanimous light in comparison with the new frivolous and socialistic younger generation. He said a great deal more, but Varvara Petrovna was obstinately silent. At last she informed him airily that she was prepared to buy their estate, and to pay for it the maximum price, that is, six or seven thousand (though four would have been a fair price for it). Of the remaining eight thousand which had vanished with the woods she said not a word.

This conversation took place a month before the match was proposed to-him. Stepan Trofimovitch was overwhelmed, and began to ponder. There might in the past have been a hope that his soft would not come, after all — an outsider, that is to say, might have hoped so. Stepan Trofimovitch as a father would; have indignantly rejected the insinuation that he could entertain such a hope. Anyway queer rumours had hitherto been reaching us about Petrusha. To begin with, on completing his studies at the university six years before, he had hung about in Petersburg without getting work.

Suddenly we got the news that he had taken part in issuing some anonymous manifesto and that he was implicated in the affair. Then he suddenly turned up abroad in Switzerland at Geneva — he had escaped, very likely.

"It's surprising to me," Stepan Trofimovitch commented, greatly disconcerted. "Petrusha, *c'est une si pauvre tete!* He's good, noble-hearted, very sensitive, and I was so delighted with him in Petersburg, comparing him with the young people of to-day. But *c'est un pauvre sire, tout de meme*.. . . And you know it all comes from that same half-bakedness, that sentimentality. They are fascinated, not by realism, but by the emotional ideal side of socialism, by the religious note in it, so to say, by the poetry of it ... second-hand, of course. And for me, for me, think what it means! I have so many enemies here and more still *there*, they'll put it down to the father's influence. Good God! Petrusha a revolutionist! What times we live in!"

Very soon, however, Petrusha sent his exact address from Switzerland for money to be sent him as usual; so he. could not be exactly an exile. And now, after four years abroad, he was suddenly making his appearance again in his own country", and announced that he would arrive shortly, so there could be no charge against him. What was more, some one seemed to be interested in him and protecting him. He wrote now from the south of Russia, where he was busily engaged in some private but important business. All this was capital, but where was his father to get that other seven or eight thousand, to make up a suitable price for the estate? And what if there should be an outcry, and instead of that imposing picture it should come to a lawsuit? Something told Stepan Trofimovitch that the sensitive Petrusha would not relinquish anything that was to his interest. "Why is it — as I've noticed," Stepan Trofimovitch whispered to me once, "why is it that all these desperate socialists and communists are at the same time such incredible skinflints, so avaricious, so keen over property, and, in fact, the more socialistic, the more extreme they are, the keener they are over property . . . why is it? Can that, too, come from sentimentalism?" I don't know whether there is any truth in this observation of Stepan Trofimovitch's. I only know that Petrusha had somehow got wind of the sale of the woods and the rest of it, and that Stepan Trofimovitch was aware of the fact. I happened, too, to read some of Petrusha's letters to his father. He wrote extremely rarely, once a year, or even less often. Only recently, to

inform him of his approaching visit, he had sent two letters, one almost immediately after the other. All his letters were short, dry, consisting only of instructions, and as the father and son had, since their meeting in Petersburg, adopted the fashionable “thou” and “thee,” Petrusha’s letters had a striking resemblance to the missives that used to be sent by landowners of the old school from the town to their serfs whom they had left in charge of their estates. And now suddenly this eight thousand which would solve the difficulty would be wafted to him by Varvara Petrovna’s proposition. And at the same time she made him distinctly feel that it never could be wafted to him from anywhere else. Of course Stepan Trofimovitch consented.

He sent for me directly she had gone and shut himself up for the whole day, admitting no one else. He cried, of course, talked well and talked a great deal, contradicted himself continually, made a casual pun, and was much pleased with it. Then he had a slight attack of his “summer cholera” — everything in fact followed the usual course. Then he brought out the portrait of his German bride, now twenty years deceased, and began plaintively appealing to her: “Will you forgive me?” In fact he seemed somehow distracted. Our grief led us to get a little drunk. He soon fell into a sweet sleep, however. Next morning he tied his cravat in masterly fashion, dressed with care, and went frequently to look at himself in the glass. He sprinkled his handkerchief with scent, only a slight dash of it, however, and as soon as he saw Varvara Petrovna out of the window he hurriedly took another handkerchief and hid the scented one under the pillow.

“Excellent!” Varvara Petrovna approved, on receiving his consent. “In the first place you show a fine decision, and secondly you’ve listened to the voice of reason, to which you generally pay so little heed in your private affairs. There’s no need of haste, however,” she added, scanning the knot of his white tie, “for the present say nothing, and I will say nothing. It will soon be your birthday; I will come to see you with her. Give us tea in the evening, and please without wine or other refreshments, but I’ll arrange it all myself. Invite your friends, but we’ll make the list together. You can talk to her the day before, if necessary. And at your party we won’t exactly announce it, or make an engagement of any sort, but only hint at it, and let people know without any sort of ceremony. And then the wedding a fortnight later, as far as possible without any fuss. . . . You two might even

go away for a time after the wedding, to Moscow, for instance. I'll go with you, too, perhaps. . . The chief thing is, keep quiet till then.

Stepan Trofimovitch was surprised. He tried to falter that he could not do like that, that he must talk it over with his bride. But Varvara Petrovna flew at him in exasperation.

"What for? In the first place it may perhaps come to nothing."

"Come to nothing!" muttered the bridegroom, utterly dumbfoundered.

"Yes. I'll see. . . . But everything shall be as I've told you, and don't be uneasy. I'll prepare her myself. There's really no need for you. Everything necessary shall be said and done, and there's no need for you to meddle. Why should you? In what character? Don't come and don't write letters. And not a sight or sound of you, I beg. I will be silent too."

She absolutely refused to explain herself, and went away, obviously upset. Stepan Trofimovitch's excessive readiness evidently impressed her. Alas! he was utterly unable to grasp his position, and the question had not yet presented itself to him from certain other points of view. On the contrary a new note was apparent in him, a sort of conquering and jaunty air. He swaggered.

"I do like that!" he exclaimed, standing before me, and flinging wide his arms. "Did you hear? She wants to drive me to refusing at last. Why, I may lose patience, too, and ... refuse! 'Sit still, there's no need for you to go to her.' But after all, why should I be married? Simply because she's taken an absurd fancy into her heart. But I'm a serious man, and I can refuse to submit to the idle whims of a giddy-woman! I have duties to my son and . . and to myself! I'm making a sacrifice. Does she realise that? I have agreed, perhaps, because I am weary of life and nothing matters to me. But she may exasperate me, and then it will matter. I shall resent it and refuse. *Et enftn, le ridicule* . . . what will they say at the club? What will . . . what will . . . Laputin say? 'Perhaps nothing will come of it' — what a thing to say! That beats everything. That's really . . . what is one to say to that? . . . *Je suis un for fat, un Badinguet, un* man pushed to the wall. . . ."

And at the same time a sort of capricious complacency, something frivolous and playful, could be seen in the midst of all these plaintive exclamations. In the evening we drank too much again.

CHAPTER III.

THE SINS OF OTHERS

ABOUT A WEEK had passed, and the position had begun to grow more complicated.

I may mention in passing that I suffered a great deal during that unhappy week, as I scarcely left the side of my affianced friend, in the capacity of his most intimate confidant. What weighed upon him most was the feeling of shame, though we saw no one all that week, and sat indoors alone. But he was even ashamed before me, and so much so that the more he confided to me the more vexed he was with me for it. He was so morbidly apprehensive that he expected that every one knew about it already, the whole town, and was afraid to show himself, not only at the club, but even in his circle of friends. He positively would not go out to take his constitutional till well after dusk, when it was quite dark.

A week passed and he still did not know whether he were betrothed or not, and could not find out for a fact, however much he tried. He had not yet seen his future bride, and did not know whether she was to be his bride or not; did not, in fact, know whether there was anything serious in it at all. Varvara Petrovna, for some reason, resolutely refused to admit him to her presence. In answer to one of his first letters to her (and he wrote a great number of them) she begged him plainly to spare her all communications with him for a time, because she was very busy, and having a great deal of the utmost importance to communicate to him she was waiting for a more free moment to do so, and that she would let him know *in time* when he could come to see her. She declared she would send back his letters unopened, as they were “simple self-indulgence.” I read that letter myself — he showed it me.

Yet all this harshness and indefiniteness were nothing compared with his chief anxiety. That anxiety tormented him to the utmost and without ceasing. He grew thin and dispirited through it. It was something of which he was more ashamed than of anything else, and of which he would not on any account speak, even to me; on the contrary, he lied on occasion, and shuffled before me like a little boy; and at the same time he sent for me

himself every day, could not stay two hours without me, needing me as much as air or water.

Such conduct rather wounded my vanity. I need hardly say that I had long ago privately guessed this great secret of his, and saw through it completely. It was my firmest conviction at the time that the revelation of this secret, this chief anxiety of Stepan Trofimovitch's would not have redounded to his credit, and, therefore, as I was still young, I was rather indignant at the coarseness of his feelings and the ugliness of some of his suspicions. In my warmth — and, I must confess, in my weariness of being his confidant — I perhaps blamed him too much. I was so cruel as to try and force him to confess it all to me himself, though I did recognise that it might be difficult to confess some things. He, too, saw through me; that is, he clearly perceived that I saw through him, and that I was angry with him indeed, and he was angry with me too for being angry with him and seeing through him. My irritation was perhaps petty and stupid; but the unrelieved solitude of two friends together is sometimes extremely prejudicial to true friendship. From a certain point of view he had a very true understanding of some aspects of his position, and defined it, indeed, very subtly on those points about which he did not think it necessary to be secret.

"Oh, how different she was then!" he would sometimes say to me about Varvara Petrovna. "How different she was in the old days when we used to talk together. . . . Do you know that she could talk in those days! Can you believe that she had ideas in those days, original ideas! Now, everything has changed! She says all that's only old-fashioned twaddle. She despises the past. . . . Now she's like some shopman or cashier, she has grown hard-hearted, and she's always cross. . . ."

"Why is she cross now if you are carrying out her 'orders'?" I answered.

He looked at me subtly.

"*Cher ami;* if I had not agreed she would have been dreadfully angry, dread-ful-ly! But yet less than now that I have

consented."

He was pleased with this saying of his, and we emptied a bottle between us that evening. But that was only for a moment, next day he was worse and more ill-humoured than ever.

But what I was most vexed with him for was that he could not bring himself to call on the Drozdovs, as he should have done on their arrival, to renew the acquaintance of which, so we heard they were themselves

desirous, since they kept asking about him. It was a source of daily distress to him. He talked of Lizaveta Nikolaevna with an ecstasy which I was at a loss to understand. No doubt he remembered in her the child whom he had once loved. But besides that, he imagined for some unknown reason that he would at once find in her company a solace for his present misery, and even the solution of his more serious doubts. He expected to meet in Lizaveta Nikolaevna an extraordinary being. And yet he did not go to see her though he meant to do so every day. The worst of it was that I was desperately anxious to be presented to her and to make her acquaintance, and I could look to no one but Stepan Trofimovitch to effect this. I was frequently meeting her, in the street of course, when she was out riding, wearing a riding-habit and mounted on a fine horse, and accompanied by her cousin, so-called, a handsome officer, the nephew of the late General Drozdov — and these meetings made an extraordinary impression on me at the time. My infatuation lasted only a moment, and I very soon afterwards recognised the impossibility of my dreams myself — but though it was a fleeting impression it was a very real one, and so it may well be imagined how indignant I was at the time with my poor friend for keeping so obstinately secluded.

All the members of our circle had been officially informed from the beginning that Stepan Trofimovitch would see nobody for a time, and begged them to leave him quite alone. He insisted on sending round a circular notice to this effect, though I tried to dissuade him. I went round to every one at his request and told everybody that Varvara Petrovna had given “our old man” (as we all used to call Stepan Trofimovitch among ourselves) a special job, to arrange in order some correspondence lasting over many years; that he had shut himself up to do it and I was helping him. Liputin was the only one I did not have time to visit, and I kept putting it off — to tell the real truth I was afraid to go to him. I knew beforehand that he would not believe one word of my story, that he would certainly imagine that there was some secret at the bottom of it, which they were trying to hide from him alone, and as soon as I left him he would set to work to make inquiries and gossip all over the town. While I was picturing all this to myself I happened to run across him in the street. It turned out that he had heard all about it from our friends, whom I had only just informed. But, strange to say, instead of being inquisitive and asking questions about Stepan Trofimovitch, he interrupted me, when I began apologising for not having

come to him before, and at once passed to other subjects. It is true that he had a great deal stored up to tell me. He was in a state of great excitement, and was delighted to have got hold of me for a listener. He began talking of the news of the town, of the arrival of the governor's wife, "with new! topics of conversation," of an opposition party already formed in the club, of how they were all in a hubbub over the new ideas, and how charmingly this suited him, and so on. He talked for a quarter of an hour and so amusingly that I could not tear myself away. Though I could not endure him, yet I must admit he had the gift of making one listen to him, especially when he was very angry at something. This man was, in my opinion, a regular spy from his very nature. At every moment he knew the very latest gossip and all the trifling incidents of our town, especially the unpleasant ones, and it was surprising to me how he took things to heart that were sometimes absolutely no concern of his. It always seemed to me that the leading feature of his character was envy. When I told Stepan Trofimovitch the same evening of my meeting Liputin that morning and our conversation, the latter to my amazement became greatly agitated, and asked me the wild question: "Does Liputin know or not?"

I began trying to prove that there was no possibility of his finding it out so soon, and that there was nobody from whom he could hear it. But Stepan Trofimovitch was not to be shaken. "Well, you may believe it or not," he concluded unexpectedly at last, "but I'm convinced that he not only knows every detail of 'our' position, but that he knows something else besides, something neither you nor I know yet, and perhaps never shall, or shall only know when it's too late, when there's no turning back! . . ."

I said nothing, but these words suggested a great deal. For five whole days after that we did not say one word about Liputin; it was clear to me that Stepan Trofimovitch greatly regretted having let his tongue run away with him, and having revealed such suspicions before me.

II

One morning, on the seventh or eighth day after Stepan Trofimovitch had consented to become "engaged," about eleven o'clock, when I was hurrying as usual to my afflicted friend, I had an adventure on the way.

I met Karmazinov, "the great writer," as Liputin called him. I had read Karmazinov from a child. His novels and tales were well known to the past

and even to the present generation. I revelled in them; they were the great enjoyment of my childhood and youth. Afterwards I grew rather less enthusiastic over his work. I did not care so much for the novels with a purpose which he had been writing of late as for his first, early works, which were so full of spontaneous poetry, and his latest publications I had not . liked at all. Speaking generally, if I may venture to express my opinion on so delicate a subject, all these talented gentlemen of the middling sort who are sometimes in their lifetime accepted almost as geniuses, pass out of memory quite suddenly and without a trace when they die, and what's more, it often happens that even during their lifetime, as soon as a new generation grows up and takes the place of the one in which they have flourished, they are forgotten and neglected by every one in an incredibly short time. This somehow happens among us quite suddenly, like the shifting of the scenes on the stage. Oh, it's not at all the same as with Pushkin, Gogol, Moliere, Voltaire, all those great men who really had a new original word to say! It's true, too, that these talented gentlemen of the middling sort in the decline of their venerable years usually write themselves out in the most pitiful way, though they don't observe the fact themselves. It happens not infrequently that a writer who has been for a long time credited with extraordinary profundity and expected to exercise a great and serious influence on the progress of society, betrays in the end such poverty, such insipidity in his fundamental ideas that no one regrets that he succeeded in writing himself out so soon. But the old grey-beards don't notice this, and are angry. Their vanity sometimes, especially towards the end of their career, reaches proportions that may well provoke wonder. God knows what they begin to take themselves for — for gods at least! People used to say about Karmazinov that his connections with aristocratic society and powerful personages were dearer to him than his own soul, people used to say that on meeting you he would be cordial, that he would fascinate and enchant you with his open-heartedness, especially if you were of use to him in some way, and if you came to him with some preliminary recommendation. But that before any stray prince, any stray countess, anyone that he was afraid of, he would regard it as his sacred duty to forget your existence with the most insulting carelessness, like a chip of wood, like a fly, before you had even time to get out of his sight; he seriously considered this the best and most aristocratic style. In spite of the best of breeding and perfect knowledge of good manners he is, they say, vain to such an hysterical pitch

that he cannot conceal his irritability as an author even in. those circles of society where little interest is taken in literature. If anyone were to surprise him by being indifferent, he would be morbidly chagrined, and try to revenge himself.

A year before, I had read an article of his in a review, written with an immense affectation of naive poetry, and psychology too. He described the wreck of some steamer on the English coast, of which he had been the witness, and how he had seen the drowning people saved, and the dead bodies brought ashore. All this rather long and verbose article was written solely with the object of self-display. One seemed to read between the lines: “Concentrate yourselves on me. Behold what I was like at those moments. What are the sea, the storm, the rocks, the splinters of wrecked ships to you? I have described all that sufficiently to you with my mighty pen. Why look at that drowned woman with the dead child in her dead arms? Look rather at me, see how I was unable to bear that sight and turned away from it. Here I stood with my back to it; here I was horrified and could not bring myself to look; I blinked my eyes — isn’t that interesting?” When I told Stepan Trofimovitch my opinion of Karmazinov’s article he quite agreed with me.

When rumours had reached us of late that Karmazinov was coming to the neighbourhood I was, of course, very eager to see him, and, if possible, to make his acquaintance. I knew that this might be done through Stepan Trofimovitch, they had once been friends. And now I suddenly met him at the cross-roads. I knew him at once. He had been pointed out to me two or three days before when he drove past with the governor’s wife. He was a short, stiff-looking old man, though not over fifty-five, with a rather red little face, with thick grey locks of hair clustering under his chimney-pot hat, and curling round his clean little pink ears. His clean little face was not altogether handsome with its thin, long, crafty-looking lips, with its rather fleshy nose, and its sharp, shrewd little eyes. He was dressed somewhat shabbily in a sort of cape such as would be worn in Switzerland or North Italy at that time of year. But, at any rate, all the minor details of his costume, the little studs, and collar, the buttons, the tortoise-shell lorgnette on a narrow black ribbon, the signet-ring, were all such as are worn by persons of the most irreproachable good form. I am certain that in summer he must have worn light prunella shoes with mother-of-pearl buttons at the side. When we met he was standing still at the turning and looking about

him, attentively. Noticing that I was looking at him with interest, he asked me in a sugary, though rather shrill voice:

“Allow me to ask, which is my nearest way to Bykovy Street?”

“To Bykovy Street? Oh, that’s here, close by,” I cried in great excitement. “Straight on along this street and the second turning to the left.”

“Very much obliged to you.”

A curse on that minute! I fancy I was shy, and looked cringing. He instantly noticed all that, and of course realised it all at once; that is, realised that I knew who he was, that I had read him and revered him from a child, and that I was shy and looked at him cringingly. He smiled, nodded again, and walked on as I had directed him. I don’t know why I turned back to follow him; I don’t know why I ran for ten paces beside him. He suddenly stood still again.

“And could you tell me where is- the nearest cab-stand?” he shouted out to me again.

It was a horrid shout! A horrid voice!

“A cab-stand? The nearest cab-stand is ... by the Cathedral; there are always cabs standing there,” and I almost turned to run for a cab for him. I almost believe that that was what he expected me to do. Of course I checked myself at once, and stood still, but he had noticed my movement and was still watching me with the same horrid smile. Then something happened which I shall never forget.

He suddenly dropped a tiny bag, which he was holding in his left hand; though indeed it was not a bag, but rather a little box, or more probably some part of a pocket-book, or to be more accurate a little reticule, rather like an old-fashioned lady’s reticule, though I really don’t know what it was. I only know that I flew to pick it up.

I am convinced that I did not really pick it up, but my first motion was unmistakable. I could not conceal it, and, like a fool, I turned crimson. The cunning fellow at once got all that could be got out of the circumstance.

“Don’t trouble, I’ll pick it up,” he pronounced charmingly; that is, when he was quite sure that I was not going to pick up the reticule, he picked it up as though forestalling me, nodded once more, and went his way, leaving me to look like a fool. It was as good as though I had picked it up myself. For five minutes I considered myself utterly disgraced for ever, but as I reached Stepan Trofimovitch’s house I suddenly burst out laughing; the meeting

struck me as so amusing that I immediately resolved to entertain Stepan Trofimovitch with an account of it, and even to act the whole scene to him.

III

But this time to my surprise I found an extraordinary change in him. He pounced on me with a sort of avidity, it is true, as soon as I went in, and began listening to me, but with such a distracted air that at first he evidently did not take in my words. But as soon as I pronounced the name of Karmazinov he suddenly flew into a frenzy.

“Don’t speak of him! Don’t pronounce that name!” he exclaimed, almost in a fury. “Here, look, read it! Read it!”

He opened the drawer and threw on the table three small sheets of paper, covered with a hurried pencil scrawl, all from Varvara Petrovna. The first letter was dated the day before yesterday, the second had come yesterday, and the last that day, an hour before. Their contents were quite trivial, and all referred to Karmazinov and betrayed the vain and fussy uneasiness of Varvara Petrovna and her apprehension that Karmazinov might forget to pay her a visit. Here is the first one dating from two days before. (Probably there had been one also three days before, and possibly another four days before as well.)

“If he deigns to visit you to-day, not a word about me, I beg. Not the faintest hint. Don’t speak of me, don’t mention me. — V. S.”

The letter of the day before:

“If he decides to pay you a visit this morning, I think the most dignified thing would be not to receive him. That’s what I think about it; I don’t know what you think. — V. S.”

To-day’s, the last:

“I feel sure that you’re in a regular litter and clouds of tobacco smoke. I’m sending you Marya and Fomushka. They’ll tidy you up in half an hour. And don’t hinder them, but go and sit in the kitchen while they clear up. I’m sending you a Bokhara rug and two china vases. I’ve long been meaning to make you a present of them, and I’m sending you my Teniers, too, for a time.! You can put the vases in the window and hang the Teniers on the right under the portrait of Goethe; it will be more conspicuous there and it’s always light there in the morning. If he does turn up at last, receive him with the utmost courtesy but try and talk of trifling matters, of some

intellectual subject, and behave as though you had seen each other lately. Not a word about me. Perhaps I may look in on you in the evening. — V. S.

"P.S. — If he does not come to-day he won't come at all."

I read and was amazed that he was in such excitement over such trifles. Looking at him inquiringly, I noticed that he had had time while I was reading to change the everlasting white tie he always wore, for a red one. His hat and stick lay on the table. He was pale, and his hands were positively trembling.

"I don't care a hang about her anxieties," he cried frantically, in response to my inquiring look. "*Je m'en fiche!* She has the face to be excited about Karmazinov, and she does not answer my letters. Here is my unopened letter which she sent me back yesterday, here on the table under the book, under *L'Homme qui rit.* What is it to me that she's wearing herself out over Nikolay! *Je m'en fiche, et je proclame ma liberte! Au diable le Karmazinov! Au diable la Lembke!* I've hidden the vases in the entry, and the Teniers in the chest of drawers, and I have demanded that she is to see me at once. Do you hear. I've insisted! I've sent her just such a scrap of paper, a pencil scrawl, unsealed, by Nastasya, and I'm waiting. I want Darya Pavlovna to speak to me with her own lips, before the face of Heaven, or at least before you. *Vous me seconderez, n'est-ce pas, comme ami et timoin.* I don't want to have to blush, to lie, I don't want secrets, I won't have secrets in this matter. Let them confess everything to me openly, frankly, honourably and then . . . then perhaps I may surprise the whole generation by my magnanimity. . . . Am I a scoundrel or not, my dear sir?" he concluded suddenly, looking menacingly at me, as though I'd considered him a scoundrel.

I offered him a sip of water; I had never seen him like this before. All the while he was talking he kept running from one end of the room to the other, but he suddenly stood still before me in an extraordinary attitude.

"Can you suppose," he began again with hysterical haughtiness, looking me up and down, "can you imagine that I, Stepan Verhovensky, cannot find in myself the moral strength to take my bag — my beggar's bag — and laying it on my feeble shoulders to go out at the gate and vanish for ever, when honour and the great principle of independence demand it I It's not the first time that Stepan Verhovensky has had to repel despotism by moral force, even though it be the despotism of a crazy woman, that is, the most cruel and insulting despotism which can exist on earth, although you have, I fancy, forgotten yourself so much as to laugh at my phrase, my dear sir! Oh,

you don’t believe that I can find the moral strength in myself to end my life as a tutor in a merchant’s family, or to die of hunger in a ditch! Answer me, answer at once; do you believe it, or don’t you believe it?”

But I was purposely silent. I even affected to hesitate to wound him by answering in the negative, but to be unable to answer affirmatively. In all this nervous excitement of his there was something which really did offend me, and not personally, oh, no! But ... I will explain later on. He positively turned pale.

“Perhaps you are bored with me, G —— v (this is my surname),

and you would like . . . not to come and see me at all?” he said in that tone of pale composure which usually precedes some extraordinary outburst. I jumped up in alarm. At that moment Nastasya came in, and, without a word, handed Stepan Trofimovitch a piece of paper, on which something was written in pencil. He glanced at it and flung it to me. On the paper, in Varvara Petrovna’s hand three words were written: “Stay at home.”

Stepan Trofimovitch snatched up his hat and stick in silence and went quickly out of the room. Mechanically I followed him. Suddenly voices and sounds of rapid footsteps were heard in the passage. He stood still, as though thunder-struck.

“It’s Liputin; I am lost!” he whispered, clutching at my arm.

At the same instant Liputin walked into the room.

IV

Why he should be lost owing to Liputin I did not know, and indeed I did not attach much significance to the words; I put it all down to his nerves. His terror, however, was remarkable, and I made up my mind to keep a careful watch on him.

The very appearance of Liputin as he came in assured us that he had on this occasion a special right to come in, in spite of the prohibition. He brought with him an unknown gentleman, who must have been a new arrival in the town. In reply to the senseless stare of my petrified friend, he called out immediately in a-loud voice:

“I’m bringing you a visitor, a special one! I make bold to intrude on your solitude. Mr. Kirillov, a very distinguished civil engineer. And what’s more

he knows your son, the much esteemed Pyotr Stepanovitch, very intimately; and he has a message from him. He's only just arrived."

"The message is your own addition," the visitor observed curtly. "There's no message at all. But I certainly do know Verhovensky. I left him in the X. province, ten days ahead of us."

Stepan Trofimovitch mechanically offered his hand and motioned him to sit down. He looked at me* he looked at Liputin, and then as though suddenly recollecting himself sat down himself, though he still kept his hat and stick in his hands without being aware of it.

"Bah, but you were going out yourself! I was told that you were quite knocked up with work."

"Yes, I'm ill, and you see, I meant to go for a walk, I ..." Stepan Trofimovitch checked himself, quickly flung his hat and stick on the sofa and — turned crimson.

Meantime, I was hurriedly examining the visitor. He was a young man, about twenty-seven, decently dressed, well made, slender and dark, with a pale, rather muddy-coloured face and black lustreless eyes. He seemed rather thoughtful and absent-minded, spoke jerkily and ungrammatically, transposing words in rather a strange way, and getting muddled if he attempted a sentence of any length. Liputin was perfectly aware of Stepan Trofimovitch's alarm, and was obviously pleased at it. He sat down in a wicker chair which he dragged almost into the middle of the room, so as to be at an equal distance between his host and the visitor, who had installed themselves on sofas on opposite sides of the room. His sharp eyes darted inquisitively from one corner of the room to another.

"It's .... a long while since I've seen Petrusha. . . . You met abroad?" Stepan Trofimovitch managed to mutter to the visitor.

"Both here and abroad."

"Alexey Nilitch has only just returned himself after living four years abroad," put in Liputin. "He has been travelling to perfect himself in his speciality and has come to us because he has good reasons to expect a job on the building of our railway bridge, and he's now waiting for an answer about it. He knows the Drozdovs and Lizaveta Nikolaevna, through Pyotr Stepanovitch."

The engineer sat, as it were, with a ruffled air, and listened with awkward impatience. It seemed to me that he was angry about something.

"He knows Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch too."

“Do you know Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch?” inquired Stepan Trofimovitch.

“I know him too.”

“It’s . . . it’s a very long time since I’ve seen Petrusha, and ... I feel I have so little right to call myself a father . . . *c’est le mot*; I . . . how did you leave him?”

“Oh, yes, I left him ... he comes himself,” replied Mr. Kirillov, in haste to be rid of the question again. He certainly was angry.

“He’s coming! At last I ... you see, it’s very long since I’ve see Petrusha!” Stepan Trofimovitch could not get away from this phrase. “Now I expect my poor boy to whom . . . to whom I have been so much to blame! That is, I mean to say, when I left him in Petersburg, I ... in short, I looked on him as a nonentity, *quelque chose dans ce genre.* He was a very nervous boy, you know, emotional, and . . . very timid. When he said his prayers going to bed he used to bow down to the ground, and make the sign of the cross on his pillow that he might not die in the night. . . . *Je m’en souviens. Enfin*, no artistic feeling whatever, not a sign of anything higher, of anything fundamental, no embryo of a future ideal . . . *c’etait comma un petit idiot*, but I’m afraid I am incoherent; excuse me . . . you came upon me . . .”

“You say seriously that he crossed his pillow?” the engineer asked suddenly with marked curiosity.

“Yes, he used to . . .”

“All right. I just asked. Go on.”

Stepan Trofimovitch looked interrogatively at Liputin.

“I’m very grateful to you for your visit. But I must confess I’m ... not in a condition . . . just now . . . But allow me to ask where you are lodging.”

“At Filipov’s, in Bogoyavlensky Street.”

“Ach, that’s where Shatov lives,” I observed involuntarily.

“Just so, in the very same house,” cried Liputin, “only Shatov lodges above, in the attic, while he’s down below, at Captain Lebyadkin’s. He knows Shatov too, and he knows Shatov’s wife. He was very intimate with her, abroad.”

“*Comment!* Do you really know anything about that unhappy marriage *de ce pauvre ami* and that woman,” cried Stepan Trofimovitch, carried away by sudden feeling. “You are the first man I’ve met who has known her personally; and if only ...”

“What nonsense!” the engineer snapped out, flushing all over. “How you add to things, Liputin! I’ve not seen Shatov’s wife; I’ve only once seen her in the distance and not at all close... . I know Shatov. Why do you add things of all sorts?”

He turned round sharply on the sofa, clutched his hat, then laid it down again, and settling himself down once more as before, fixed his angry black eyes on Stepan Trofimovitch with a sort of defiance. I was at a loss to understand such strange irritability.

“Excuse me,” Stepan Trofimovitch observed impressively. “I understand that it may be a very delicate subject. ...” — —’

“No sort of delicate subject in it, and indeed it’s shameful, and I didn’t shout at you that it’s nonsense, but at Liputin, because he adds things. Excuse me if you took it to yourself. I know Shatov, but I don’t know his wife at all ... I don’t know her at all!”

“I understand. I understand. And if I insisted, it’s only because I’m very fond of our poor friend, *noire irascible ami*, and have always taken an interest in him. ... In my opinion that man changed his former, possibly over-youthful but yet sound ideas, too abruptly. And now he says all sorts of things about *notre Sainte Russie* to such a degree that I’ve long explained this upheaval in his whole constitution, I can only call it that, to some violent shock in his family life, and, in fact, to his unsuccessful marriage. I, who know my poor Russia like the fingers on my hand, and have devoted my whole life to the Russian people, I can assure you that he does not know the Russian people, and what’s more . . .”

“I don’t know the Russian people at all, either, and I haven’t time to study them,” the engineer snapped out again, and again he turned sharply on the sofa. Stepan Trofimovitch was pulled up in the middle of his speech.

“He is studying them, he is studying them,” interposed Liputin. “He has already begun the study of them, and is writing a very interesting article dealing with the causes of the increase of suicide in Russia, and, generally speaking, the causes that lead to the increase or decrease of suicide in society. He has reached amazing results.”

The engineer became dreadfully excited. “You have no right at all,” he muttered wrathfully. “I’m not writing an article. I’m not going to do silly things. I asked you confidentially, quite by chance. There’s no article at all. I’m not publishing, and you haven’t the right . . .” Liputin was obviously enjoying himself.

“I beg your pardon, perhaps I made a mistake in calling your literary work an article. He is only collecting observations, and the essence of the question, or, so to say, its moral aspect he is not touching at all. And, indeed, he rejects morality itself altogether, and holds with the last new principle of general destruction for the sake of ultimate good. He demands already more than a hundred million heads for the establishment of common sense in Europe; many more than they demanded at the last Peace Congress. Alexey Nilitch goes further than anyone in that sense.” The engineer listened with a pale and contemptuous smile. For half a minute every one was silent.

“All this is stupid, Liputin,” Mr. Kirillov observed at last, with a certain dignity. “If I by chance had said some things to you, and you caught them up again, as you like. But you have no right, for I never speak to anyone. I scorn to talk. . . . If one has a conviction then it’s clear to me. . . . But you’re doing foolishly. I don’t argue about things when everything’s settled. I can’t bear arguing. I never want to argue. . . .”

“And perhaps you are very wise,” Stepan Trofimovitch could not resist saying.

“I apologise to you, but I am not angry with anyone here,” the visitor went on, speaking hotly and rapidly. ‘‘ I have seen few people for four years. For four years I have talked little and have tried to see no one, for my own objects which do not concern anyone else, for four years. Liputin found this out and is laughing. I understand and don’t mind. I’m not ready to take offence, only annoyed at his liberty. And if I don’t explain my ideas to you,” he concluded unexpectedly, scanning us all with resolute eyes, “it’s not at all that I’m afraid of your giving information to the government; that’s not so; please do not imagine nonsense of that sort.”

No one made any reply to these words. We only looked at each other. Even Liputin forgot to snigger.

“Gentlemen, I’m very sorry” — Stepan Trofimovitch got up resolutely from the sofa—” but I feel ill and upset. Excuse me.”

“Ach, that’s for us to go.” Mr. Kirillov started, snatching up his cap. “It’s a good thing you told us. I’m so forgetful.”

He rose, and with a good-natured air went up to Stepan Trofimovitch, holding out his hand.

“I’m sorry you’re not well, and I came,”

“I wish you every success among us,” answered Stepan Trofimovitch, shaking hands with him heartily and without haste. ‘I understand that, if as you say you have lived so long abroad, cutting yourself off from people for objects of your own and forgetting Russia, you must inevitably look with wonder on us who are Russians to the backbone, and we must feel the same about you. *Mais cela passera.* I’m only puzzled at one thing: you want to build our bridge and at the same time you declare that you hold with the principle of universal destruction. They won’t let you build our bridge.”

“What! What’s that you said? Ach, I say!” Kirillov cried, much struck, and he suddenly broke into the most frank and good-humoured laughter. For a moment his face took a quite childlike expression, which I thought suited him particularly. Liputin rubbed his hand with delight at Stepan Trofimovitch’s witty remark. I kept wondering to myself why Stepan Trofimovitch was so frightened of Liputin, and why he had cried out “I am lost” when he heard him coming. We were all standing in the doorway. It was the moment when hosts and guests hurriedly exchange the last and most cordial words, and then part to their mutual gratification.

“The reason he’s so cross to-day,” Liputin dropped all at once, as it were casually, when he was just going out of the room, “is because he had a disturbance to-day with Captain Lebyadkin over his sister. Captain Lebyadkin thrashes that precious sister of his, the mad girl, every day with a whip, a real Cossack whip, every morning and evening. So Alexey Nilibch has positively taken the lodge so as not to be present. Well, good-bye.”

“A sister? An invalid? With a whip?” Stepan Trofimovitch cried out, as though he had suddenly been lashed with a whip himself. “What sister? What Lebyadkin?” All his former terror came back in an instant. “Lebyadkin! Oh, that’s the retired captain; he used only to call himself a lieutenant before. ...”

“Oh, what is his rank to me? What sister? Good heavens! . . . You say Lebyadkin? But there used to be a Lebyadkin here. . . .”

“That’s the very man. ‘Our’ Lebyadkin, at Virginsky’s, you remember?”

“But he was caught with forged papers?”

“Well, now he’s come back. He’s been here almost three weeks and under the most peculiar circumstances.”

“Why, but he’s a scoundrel?”

“As though no one could be a scoundrel among us,” Liputin grinned suddenly, his knavish little eyes seeming to peer into Stepan Trofimovitch’s

soul.

“Good heavens! I didn’t mean that at all ... though I quite agree with you about that, with you particularly. But what then, what then? What did you mean by that? You certainly meant something by that.”

“Why, it’s all so trivial. . . . This captain to all appearances went away from us at that time; not because of the forged papers, but simply to look for his sister, who was in hiding from him somewhere, it seems; well, and now he’s brought her and that’s the whole story. Why do you seem frightened, Stepan Trofimovitch? I only tell this from his drunken chatter though, he doesn’t speak of it himself when he’s sober. He’s an irritable man, and, so to speak, aesthetic in a military style; only he has bad taste. And this sister is lame as well as mad. She seems to have been seduced by some one, and Mr. Lebyadkin has, it seems, for many years received a yearly grant from the seducer by way of compensation for the wound to his honour, so it would seem at least from his chatter, though I believe it’s only drunken talk. It’s simply his brag. Besides, that sort of thing is done much cheaper. But that he has a sum of money is perfectly certain. Ten days ago he was walking barefoot, and now I’ve seen hundreds in his hands. His sister has fits of some sort every day, she shrieks and he ‘keeps her in order’ with the whip. You must inspire a woman with respect, he says. What I can’t understand is how Shatov goes on living above him. Alexey Nilitch has only been three days with them. They were acquainted in Petersburg, and now he’s taken the lodge to get away from the disturbance.”

“Is this all true?” said Stepan Trofimovitch, addressing the engineer.

“You do gossip a lot, Liputin,” the latter muttered wrathfully.

“Mysteries, secrets! Where have all these mysteries and secrets among us sprung from?” Stepan Trofimovitch could not refrain from exclaiming.

The engineer frowned, flushed red, shrugged his shoulders and went out of the room.

“Alexey Nilitch positively snatched the whip out of his hand, broke it and threw it out of the window, and they had a violent quarrel,” added Liputin.

“Why are you chattering, Liputin; it’s stupid. What for?” Alexey Nilitch turned again instantly.

“Why be so modest and conceal the generous impulses of one’s soul; that is, of your soul? I’m not speaking of my own.”

“How stupid it is ... and quite unnecessary. Lebyadkin’s stupid and quite worthless — and no use to the cause, and . . . utterly mischievous. Why do you keep babbling all sorts of things? I’m going.”

“Oh, what a pity!” cried Liputin with a candid smile, “or I’d have amused you with another little story, Stepan Trofimovitch. I came, indeed, on purpose to tell you, though I dare say you’ve heard it already. Well, till another time, Alexey Nilitch is in such a hurry. Good-bye for the present. The story concerns Varvara Petrovna. She amused me the day before yesterday; she sent for me on purpose. It’s simply killing. Good-bye.”

But at this Stepan Trofimovitch absolutely would not let him go. He seized him by the shoulders, turned him sharply back into the room, and sat him down in a chair. Liputin was positively scared.

“Why, to be sure,” he began, looking warily at Stepan Trofimovitch from his chair, “she suddenly sent for me and asked me ‘confidentially’ my private opinion, whether Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch is mad or in his right mind. Isn’t that astonishing?”

“You’re out of your mind!” muttered Stepan Trofimovitch, and suddenly, as though he were beside himself: “Liputin, you know perfectly well that you only came here to tell me something insulting of that sort and . . . something worse!”

In a flash, I recalled his conjecture that Liputin knew not only more than we did about our affair, but something else which we should never know.

“Upon my word, Stepan Trofimovitch,” muttered Liputin, seeming greatly alarmed, “upon my word . . .”

“Hold your tongue and begin! I beg you, Mr. Kirillov, to come back too, and be present. I earnestly beg you! Sit down, and you, Liputin, begin directly, simply and without any excuses.”

“If I had only known it would upset you so much I wouldn’t have begun at all. And of course I thought you knew all about it from Varvara Petrovna herself.”

“You didn’t think that at all. Begin, begin, I tell you.”

“Only do me the favour to sit down yourself, or how can I sit here when you are running about before me in such excitement. I can’t speak coherently.”

Stepan Trofimovitch restrained himself and sank impressively into an easy chair. The engineer stared gloomily at the floor. Liputin looked at them with intense enjoyment,

“How am I to begin? . . . I’m too overwhelmed. . . .”

VI

The day before yesterday a servant was suddenly sent to me: ‘You are asked to call at twelve o’clock,’ said he. Can you fancy such a thing? I threw aside my work, and precisely at midday yesterday I was ringing at the bell. I was let into the drawing, room; I waited a minute — she came in; she made me sit down and sat down herself, opposite. I sat down, and I couldn’t believe it; you know how she has always treated me. She began at once without beating about the bush, you know her way. ‘You remember,’ she said, ‘that four years ago when Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was ill he did some strange things which made all the town wonder till the position was explained. One of those actions concerned you personally. When Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch recovered he went at my request to call on you. I know that he talked to you several times before, too. Tell me openly and candidly what you . . . (she faltered a little at this point) what you thought of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch then . . . what was your view of him altogether . . . what idea you were able to form of him at that time . . . and, still have?’

“Here she was completely confused, so that she paused for a whole minute, and suddenly flushed. I was alarmed. She began again — touchingly is not quite the word, it’s not applicable to her — but in a very impressive tone:

“‘ I want you,’ she said, ‘to understand me clearly and without mistake. I’ve sent for you now because I look upon you as a keen-sighted and quick-witted man, qualified to make accurate observations.’ (What compliments!) ‘You’ll understand too,’ she said, ‘that I am a mother appealing to you. . . . Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch has suffered some calamities and has passed through many changes of fortune in his life. All that,’ she said, ‘might well have affected the state of his mind. I’m not speaking of madness, of course,’ she said, ‘that’s quite out of the question!’ (This was uttered proudly and resolutely.) ‘But there might be something strange, something peculiar, some turn of thought, a tendency to some particular way of looking at things.’ (Those were her exact words, and I admired, Stepan Trofimovitch, the exactness with which Varvara Petrovna can put things. She’s a lady of superior intellect!) ‘*I* have noticed in him, anyway,’ she said,’ a perpetual restlessness and a tendency to peculiar impulses. But I am a mother and you

are an impartial spectator, and therefore qualified with your intelligence to form a more impartial opinion. I implore you, in fact' (yes, that word, 'implore' was uttered!), 'to tell me the whole truth, without mincing matters. And if you will give me your word never to forget that I have spoken to you in confidence, you may reckon upon my always being ready to seize every opportunity in the future to show my gratitude.' Well, what do you say to that?"

"You have ... so amazed me . . ," faltered Stepan Trofimovitch, "that I don't believe you."

"Yes, observe, observe," cried Liputin, as though he had not heard Stepan Trofimovitch, "observe what must be her agitation and uneasiness if she stoops from her grandeur to appeal to a man like me, and even condescends to beg me to keep it secret. What do you call that? Hasn't she received some news of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, something unexpected?"

"I don't know ... of news of any sort ... I haven't seen her for some days, but . . . but I must say ..," lisped Stepan Trofimovitch, evidently hardly able to think clearly, "but I must say, Liputin, that if it was said to you in confidence, and here you're telling it before every one . . ."

"Absolutely in confidence! But God strike me dead if I . . . But as for telling it here . . . what does it matter *I* Are we strangers, even Alexey Nilitch?"

"I don't share that attitude. No doubt we three here will keep the secret, but I'm afraid of the fourth, you, and wouldn't trust you in anything. ..."

"What do you mean by that? Why it's more to my interest than anyone's, seeing I was promised eternal gratitude! What I wanted was to point out in this connection one extremely strange incident, rather to say, psychological than simply strange. Yesterday evening, under the influence of my conversation with Varvara Petrovna — you can fancy yourself what an impression it made on me — I approached Alexey Nilitch with a discreet question: 'You knew Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch abroad,' said I, 'and used to know him before in Petersburg too. What do you think of his mind and his abilities?' said I. He answered laconically, as his way is, that he was a man of subtle intellect and sound judgment. 'And have you never noticed in the course of years,' said I, 'any turn of ideas or peculiar way of looking at things, or any, so to say, insanity?' In fact, I repeated Varvara Petrovna's own question. And would you believe it, Alexey Nilitch suddenly grew thoughtful, and scowled, just as he's doing now. 'Yes,' said he, 'I have

sometimes thought there was something strange.’ Take note, too, that if anything could have seemed strange even to Alexey Nilitch, it must really have been something, mustn’t it?”

“Is that true?” said Stepan Trofimovitch, turning to Alexey Nilitch.

“I should prefer not to speak of it,” answered Alexey Nilitch, suddenly raising his head, and looking at him with flashing eyes. “I wish to contest your right to do this, Liputin. You’ve no right to drag me into this. I did not give my whole opinion at all. Though I knew Nikolay Stavrogin in Petersburg that was long ago, and though I’ve met him since I know him very little. I beg you to leave me out and . . . All this is something like scandal.”

Liputin threw up his hands with an air of oppressed innocence.

“A scandal-monger! Why not say a spy while you’re about it? It’s all very well for you, Alexey Nilitch, to criticise when you stand aloof from everything. But you wouldn’t believe it, Stepan Trofimovitch — take Captain Lebyadkin, he is stupid enough, one may say ... in fact, one’s ashamed to say how stupid he is; there is a Russian comparison, to signify the degree of it; and do you know he considers himself injured by Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, though he is full of admiration for his wit. ‘I’m amazed,’ said he, ‘at that man. He’s a subtle serpent.’ His own words. And I said to him (still under the influence of my conversation, and after I had spoken to Alexey Nilitch), ‘What do you think, captain, is your subtle serpent mad or not?’ Would you believe it, it was just as if I’d given him a sudden lash from behind. He simply leapt up from his seat. ‘Yes,’ said he, ‘. . . yes, only that,’ he said, ‘cannot affect . . .”Affect what?’ He didn’t finish. Yes, and then he fell to thinking so bitterly, thinking so much, that his drunkenness dropped off him. We were sitting in Filipov’s restaurant. And it wasn’t till half an hour later that he suddenly struck the table with his fist. ‘Yes,’ said he, ‘maybe he’s mad, but that can’t affect it. . . .’ Again he didn’t say what it couldn’t affect. Of course I’m only giving you an extract of the conversation, but one can understand the sense of it. You may ask whom you like, they all have the same idea in their heads, though it never entered anyone’s head before. ‘Yes,’ they say, ‘he’s mad; he’s very clever, but perhaps he’s mad too.’”

Stepan Trofimovitch sat pondering, and thought intently.

“And how does Lebyadkin know?”

“Do you mind inquiring about that of Alexey Nilitch, who has just called me a spy? I’m a spy, yet I don’t know, but Alexey Nilitch knows all the ins and outs of it, and holds his tongue.”

“I know nothing about it, or hardly anything,” answered the engineer with the same irritation. “You make Lebyadkin drank to find out. You brought me here to find out and to make me say. And so you must be a spy.”

“I haven’t made him drunk yet, and he’s not worth the money either, with all his secrets. They are not worth that to me. I don’t know what they are to you. On the contrary, he is scattering the money, though twelve days ago he begged fifteen kopecks of me, and it’s he treats me to champagne, not I him. But you’ve given me an idea, and if there should be occasion I will make him drunk, just to get to the bottom of it and maybe I shall find out . . . all your little secrets,” Liputin snapped back spitefully.

Stepan Trofimovitch looked in bewilderment at the two disputants. Both were giving themselves away, and what’s more, were not standing on ceremony. The thought crossed my mind that Liputin had brought this Alexey Nilitch to us with the simple object of drawing him into a conversation through a third person for purposes of his own — his favourite manoauvre.

“Alexey Nilitch knows Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch quite well,” he went on, irritably, “only he conceals it. And as to your question about Captain Lebyadkin, he made his acquaintance before any of us did, six years ago in Petersburg, in that obscure, if one may so express it, epoch in the life of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, before he had dreamed of rejoicing our hearts by coming here. Our prince, one must conclude, surrounded himself with . rather a queer selection of acquaintances. It was at that time, it seems, that he made acquaintance with this gentleman here.”

“Take care, Liputin. I warn you, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch meant to be here soon himself, and he knows how to defend himself.”

“Why warn me? I am the first to cry out that he is a man of the most subtle and refined intelligence, and I quite reassured Varvara Petrovna yesterday on that score. ‘It’s his character,’ I said to her, ‘that I can’t answer for.’ Lebyadkin said the same thing yesterday: ‘A lot of harm has come to me from his character,’ he said. Stepan Trofimovitch, it’s all very well for you to cry out about slander and spying, and at the very time observe that you wring it all out of me, and with such immense curiosity too. Now, Varvara Petrovna went straight to the point yesterday. ‘You have had a

personal interest in the business,' she said, 'that's why I appeal to you.' I should say so! What need to look for motives when I've swallowed a personal insult from his excellency before the whole society of the place. I should think I have grounds to be interested, not merely for the sake of gossip. He shakes hands with you one day, and next day, for no earthly reason, he returns your hospitality by slapping you on the cheeks in the face of all decent society, if the fancy takes him, out of sheer wantonness. And what's more, the fair sex is everything for them, these butterflies and mettlesome-cocks! Grand gentlemen with little wings like the ancient cupids, lady-killing Petchorins! It's all very well for you, Stepan Trofimovitch, a confirmed bachelor, to talk like that, stick up for his excellency and call me a slanderer. But if you married a pretty young wife — as you're still such a fine fellow — then I dare say you'd bolt your door against our prince, and throw up barricades in your house! Why, if only that Mademoiselle Lebyadkin, who is thrashed with a whip, were not mad and bandy-legged, by Jove, I should fancy she was the victim of the passions of our general, and that it was from him that Captain Lebyadkin had suffered 'in his family dignity,' as he expresses it himself. Only perhaps that is inconsistent with his refined taste, though, indeed, even that's no hindrance to him. Every berry is worth picking if only he's in the mood for it. You talk of slander, but I'm not crying this aloud though the whole town is ringing with it; I only listen and assent. That's not prohibited."

"The town's ringing with it? What's the town ringing with?"

"That is, Captain Lebyadkin is shouting for all the town to hear, and isn't that just the same as the market-place ringing with it? How am I to blame? I interest myself in it only among friends, for, after all, I consider myself among friends here." He looked at us with an innocent air. "Something's happened, only consider: they say his excellency has sent three hundred roubles from Switzerland by a most honourable young lady, and, so to say, modest orphan, whom I have the honour of knowing, to be handed over to Captain Lebyadkin. And Lebyadkin, a little later, was told as an absolute fact also by a very honourable and therefore trustworthy person, I won't say whom, that not three hundred but a thousand roubles had been sent! . . . And so, Lebyadkin keeps crying out' the young lady has grabbed seven hundred roubles belonging to me,' and he's almost ready to call in the police; he threatens to, anyway, and he's making an uproar all over the town."

“This is vile, vile of you!” cried the engineer, leaping up suddenly from his chair.

“But I say, you are yourself the honourable person who brought word to Lebyadkin from Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch that a thousand roubles were sent, not three hundred. Why, the captain told me so himself when he was drunk.”

“It’s . . . it’s an unhappy misunderstanding. Some one’s made a mistake and it’s led to ... It’s nonsense, and it’s base of you.”

“But I’m ready to believe that it’s nonsense, and I’m distressed at the story, for, take it as you will, a girl of an honourable reputation is implicated first over the seven hundred roubles, and secondly in unmistakable intimacy with Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. For how much does it mean to his excellency to disgrace a girl of good character, or put to shame another man’s wife, like that incident with me? If he comes across a generous-hearted man he’ll force him to cover the sins of others under the shelter of his honourable name. That’s just what I had to put up with, I’m speaking of myself. . . .”

“Be careful, Liputin.” Stepan Trofimovitch got up from his easy chair and turned pale.

“Don’t believe it, don’t believe it! Somebody has made a mistake and Lebyadkin’s drunk ..,” exclaimed the engineer in indescribable excitement. “It will all be explained, but I can’t. . . . And I think it’s low. . . . And that’s enough, enough!”

He ran out of the room.

“What are you about? Why, I’m going with you!” cried Liputin, startled. He jumped up and ran after Alexey Nilitch.

VII

Stepan Trofimovitch stood a moment reflecting, looked at me as though he did not see me, took up his hat and stick and walked quietly out of the room. I followed him again, as before. As we went out of the gate, noticing that I was accompanying him, he said:

“Oh yes, you may serve as a witness . . . *de I’accident. Vous m’accompagnerez, riest-ce pas?”*

“Stepan Trofimovitch, surely you’re not going there again? Think what may come of it!”

With a pitiful and distracted smile, a smile of shame and utter despair, and at the same time of a sort of strange ecstasy, he whispered to me, standing still for an instant:

“I can’t marry to cover ‘another man’s sins’!”

These words were just what I was expecting. At last that fatal sentence that he had kept hidden from me was uttered aloud, after a whole week of shuffling and pretence. I was positively enraged.

“And you, Stepan Verhovensky, with your luminous mind, your kind heart, can harbour such a dirty, such a low idea . . . and could before Liputin came!”

He looked at me, made no answer and walked on in the same direction. I did not want to be left behind. I wanted to give Varvara Petrovna my version. I could have forgiven him if he had simply with his womanish faint-heartedness believed Liputin, but now it was clear that he had thought of it all himself long before, and that Liputin had only confirmed his suspicions and poured oil on the flames. He had not hesitated to suspect the girl from the very first day, before he had any kind of grounds, even Liputin’s words, to go upon. Varvara Petrovna’s despotic behaviour he had explained to himself as due to her haste to cover up the aristocratic misdoings of her precious ‘‘Nicolas” by marrying the girl to an honourable man! I longed for him to be punished for it.

“*Oh, Dieu, qui est si grand et si ban!* Oh, who will comfort me!” he exclaimed, halting suddenly again, after walking a hundred paces.

“Come straight home and I’ll make everything clear to you,” I cried, turning him by force towards home.

“It’s he! Stepan Trofimovitch, it’s you? You?” A fresh, joyous young voice rang out like music behind us.

We had seen nothing, but a lady on horseback suddenly made her appearance beside us — Lizaveta Nikolaevna with her invariable companion. She pulled up her horse.

“Come here, come here quickly!” she called to us, loudly and merrily. “It’s twelve years since I’ve seen him, and I know him, while he. . . . Do you really not know me?”

Stepan Trofimovitch clasped the hand held out to him and kissed it reverently. He gazed at her as though he were praying and could not utter a word.

“He knows me, and is glad! Mavriky Nikolaevitch, he’s delighted to see me! Why is it you haven’t been to see us all this fortnight? Auntie tried to persuade me you were ill and must not be disturbed; but I know Auntie tells lies. I kept stamping and swearing at you, but I had made up my mind, quite made up my mind, that you should come to me first, that was why I didn’t send to you. Heavens, why he hasn’t changed a bit!” She scrutinised him, bending down from the saddle. “He’s absurdly unchanged. Oh, yes, he has wrinkles, a lot of wrinkles, round his eyes and on his cheeks some grey hair, but his eyes are just the same. And have I changed? Have I changed? Why don’t you say something?”

I remembered at that moment the story that she had been almost ill when she was taken away to Petersburg at eleven years old, and that she had cried during her illness and asked for Stepan Trofimovitch.

“You ... I ..,” he faltered now in a voice breaking with joy. “I was just crying out ‘who will comfort me?’ and I heard your voice. I look on it as a miracle *etje commence d croire.”*

“En Dieu! En Dieu qui est la-haut et qui est si grand et si bon? You see, I know all your lectures by heart. Mavriky Nikolaevitch, what faith he used to preach to me then, *en Dieu qui est si grand et si bon!* And do you remember your story of how Columbus discovered America, and they all cried out, ‘Land! land!’? My nurse Alyona Frolovna says I was light-headed at night afterwards, and kept crying out ‘land! land!’ in my sleep. And do you remember how you told me the story of Prince Hamlet? And do you remember how you described to me how the poor emigrants were transported from Europe to America? And it was all untrue; I found out afterwards how they were transited. But what beautiful fibs he used to tell me then, Mavriky Nikolaevitch! They were better than the truth. Why do you look at Mavriky Nikolaevitch like that? He is the best and “best man on the face of the globe and you must like him just you do me! *Il fait tout ce que je veux.* But, dear Stepan Trofimovitch, you must be unhappy again, since you cry out in the middle of the street asking who will comfort you. Unhappy, aren’t you? Aren’t you?”

“Now I’m happy. . . .”

“Aunt is horrid to you?” she went on, without listening. “She’s just the same as ever, cross, unjust, and always our precious aunt! And do you remember how you threw yourself into my arms in the garden and I comforted you and cried — don’t be afraid of Mavriky Nikolaevitch; he has

known all about you, everything, for ever so long; you can weep on his shoulder as long as you like, and he'll stand there as long as you like! . . . Lift up your hat, take it off altogether for a minute, lift up your head, stand on tiptoe, I want to kiss you on the forehead as I kissed you for the last time when we parted. Do you see that young lady's admiring us out of the window? Come closer, closer! Heavens! How grey he is!"

And bending over in the saddle she kissed him on the forehead.

"Come, now to your home! I know where you live. I'll be with you directly, in a minute. I'll make you the first visit, you stubborn man, and then I must have you for a whole day at home. You can go and make ready for me."

And she galloped off with her cavalier. We returned. Stepan Trofimovitch sat down on the sofa and began to cry.

"*Dieu, Dieu.'"* he exclaimed, "*enftn une minute de bonheur!"*

Not more than ten minutes afterwards she reappeared according to her promise, escorted by her Mavriky Nikolaevitch.

"*Vous et le bonheur, vous arrivez en meme temps!*" He got up to meet her.

"Here's a nosegay for you; I rode just now to Madame Chevalier's, she has flowers all the winter for name-days. Here's Mavriky Nikolaevitch, please make friends. I wanted to bring you a cake instead of a nosegay, but Mavriky Nikolaevitch declares that is not in the Russian spirit."

Mavriky Nikolaevitch was an artillery captain, a tall and handsome man of thirty-three, irreproachably correct in appearance, with an imposing and at first sight almost stern countenance, in spite of his wonderful and delicate kindness which no one could fail to perceive almost the first moment of making his acquaintance. He was taciturn, however, seemed very self-possessed and made no efforts to gain friends. Many of us said later that he was by no means clever; but this was not altogether just.

I won't attempt to describe the beauty of Lizaveta Nikolaevna. The whole town was talking of it, though some of our ladies and young girls indignantly differed on the subject. There were some among them who already detested her, and principally for her pride. The Drozdovs had scarcely begun to pay calls, which mortified them, though the real reason for the delay was Praskovya Ivanovna's invalid state. They detested her in the second place because she was a relative of the governor's wife, and thirdly because she rode out every day on horseback. We had never had

young ladies who rode on horseback before; it was only natural that the appearance of Lizaveta Nikolaevna oh horseback and her neglect to pay calls was bound to offend local society. Yet every one knew that riding was prescribed her by the doctor’s orders, and they talked sarcastically of her illness. She really was ill. What struck me at first sight in her was her abnormal, nervous, incessant restlessness. Alas, the poor girl was very unhappy, and everything was explained later. To-day, recalling the past, I should not say she was such a beauty as she seemed to me then. Perhaps she was really not pretty at all. Tall, slim, but strong and supple, she struck one by the irregularities of the lines of her face. Her eyes were set somewhat like a Kalmuck’s, slanting; she was pale and thin in the face with high cheek-bones, but there was something in the face that conquered and fascinated! There was something powerful in the ardent glance of her dark eyes. She always made her appearance “like a Conquering heroine, and to spread her conquests.” She seemed proud and at times even arrogant. I don’t know whether she succeeded in being kind, but I know that she wanted to, and made terrible efforts to force herself to be a little kind. There were, no doubt, many fine impulses and the very best elements in her character, but everything in her seemed perpetually seeking its balance and unable to find it; everything was in chaos, in agitation, in uneasiness. Perhaps the demands she made upon herself were too severe, and she was never able to find in herself the strength to satisfy them.

She sat on the sofa and looked round the room.

“Why do I always begin to feel sad at such moments; explain that mystery, you learned person? I’ve been thinking all my life that I should be goodness knows how pleased at seeing you and recalling everything, and here I somehow don’t feel pleased at all, although I do love you. . . . Ach, heavens! He has my portrait on the wall! Give it here. I remember it! I remember it!”

An exquisite miniature in water-colour of Liza at twelve years old had been sent nine years before to Stepan Trofimovitch from Petersburg by the Drozdovs. He had kept it hanging on his wall ever since.

“Was I such a pretty child? Can that really have been my face?”

She stood up, and with the portrait in her hand looked in the looking-glass.

“Make haste, take it!” she cried, giving back the portrait. “Don’t hang it up now, afterwards. I don’t want to look at it.”

She sat down on the sofa again. “One life is over and another is begun, then that one is over — a third begins, and so on, endlessly. All the ends are snipped off as it were with scissors. See what stale things I’m telling you. Yet how much truth there is in them!”

She looked at me, smiling; she had glanced at me several times already, but in his excitement Stepan Trofimovitch forgot: that he had promised to introduce me.

“And why have you hung my portrait under those daggers? And why have you got so many daggers and sabres?”

He had as a fact hanging on the wall, I don’t know why, two crossed daggers and above them a genuine Circassian sabre. As she asked this question she looked so directly at me that I wanted to answer, but hesitated to speak. Stepan Trofimovitch grasped the position at last and introduced me.

“I know, I know,” she said, “I’m delighted to meet you. Mother has heard a great deal about you, too. Let me introduce you to Mavriky Nikolaevitch too, he’s a splendid person. I had formed a funny notion of you already. You’re Stepan Trofimovitch’s confidant, aren’t you?”

I turned rather red.

“Ach, forgive me, please. I used quite the wrong word: not funny at all, but only . . .” She was confused and blushed. ‘‘ Why be ashamed though at your being a splendid person? Well, it’s time we were going, Mavriky Nikolaevitch! Stepan Trofimovitch, you must be with us in half an hour. Mercy, what a lot we shall talk! Now I’m your confidante, and about everything, *everything*, you understand?”

Stepan Trofimovitch was alarmed at once.

“Oh, Mavriky Nikolaevitch knows everything, don’t mind him!”

“What does he know?”

“Why, what do you mean?” she cried in astonishment. “Bah, why it’s true then that they’re hiding it! I wouldn’t believe it! And they’re hiding Dasha, too. Aunt wouldn’t let me go in to see Dasha to-day. She says she’s got a headache.”

“But . . . but how did you find out?”

“My goodness, like every one else. That needs no cunning!”

“But does every one else . . .?”

“Why, of course. Mother, it’s true, heard it first through Alyona Frolovna, my nurse; your Nastasya ran round to tell her. You told Nastasya,

didn’t you? She says you told her yourself.”

“I ... I did once speak,” Stepan Trofimovitch faltered, crimsoning all over, “but ... I only hinted . . . *j’etais si nerveux et malade, et puis ...*”

She laughed.

“And your confidant didn’t happen to be at hand, and Nastasya turned up. Well that was enough! And the whole town’s full of her cronies! Come, it doesn’t matter, let them know; it’s all the better. Make haste and come to us, we dine early. . . . Oh, I forgot,” she added, sitting down again; “listen, what sort of person is Shatov?”

“Shatov? He’s the brother of Darya Pavlovna.”

“I know he’s her brother! What a person you are, really,” she interrupted impatiently. “I want to know what he’s like; what sort of man he is.”

“*C’est un pense-creux d’ici. C’est le meilleur et le plus irascible l’homme, du monde.”*

“I’ve heard that he’s rather queer. But that wasn’t what I meant. I’ve heard that he knows three languages, one of them English, and can do literary work. In that case I’ve a lot of work for him. I want some one to help me and the sooner the better. Would he take the work or not? He’s been recommended to me. ...”

“Oh, most certainly he will. *Et vous ferez un bienfait. . . .”*

“I’m not doing it as a *bienfait.* I need some one to help me.”

“I know Shatov pretty well,” I said, “and if you will trust me with a message to him I’ll go to him this minute.”

“Tell him to come to me at twelve o’clock to-morrow morning. Capital! Thank you. Mavriky Nikolaevitch, are you ready?”

They went away. I ran at once, of course, to Shatov.

“*Man ami!”* said Stepan Trofimovitch, overtaking me on the steps. “Be sure to be at my lodging at ten or eleven o’clock when I come back. Oh, I’ve acted very wrongly in my conduct to you and to every one.”

VIII

I did not find Shatov at home. I ran round again, two hours later. He was still out. At last, at eight o’clock I went to him again, meaning to leave a note if I did not find him; again I failed to find him. His lodging was shut up, and he lived alone without a servant of any sort. I did think of knocking at Captain Lebyadkin’s down below to ask about Shatov; but it was all shut

up below, too, and there was no sound or light as though the place were empty. I passed by Lebyadkin's door with curiosity, remembering the stories I had heard that day. Finally, I made up my mind to come very early next morning: To tell the truth I did not put much confidence in the effect of a note. Shatov might take no notice of it; he was so obstinate and shy. Cursing my want of success, I was going out of the gate when all at once I stumbled on Mr. Kirillov. He was going into the house and he recognised me first. As he began questioning me of himself, I told him how things were, and that I had a note.

"Let us go in," said he, "I will do everything."

I remembered that Liputin had told us hp had taken the wooden lodge in the yard that morning. In the lodge, which was too large for him, a deaf old woman who waited upon him was living too. The owner of the house had moved into a new house in another street, where he kept a restaurant, and this old woman, a relation of his, I believe, was left behind to look after everything in the old house. The rooms in the lodge were fairly clean, though the wall-papers were dirty. In the one we went into the furniture was of different sorts, picked up here and there, and all utterly worthless. There were two card-tables, a chest of drawers made of elder, a big deal table that must have come from some peasant hut or kitchen, chairs and a sofa with trellis-work back and hard leather cushions. In one corner there was an old-fashioned ikon, in front of which the old woman had lighted a lamp before we came in, and on the walls hung two dingy oil-paintings, one, a portrait of the Tsar Nikolas I, painted apparently between 1820 and 1830; the other the portrait of some bishop. Mr. Kirillov lighted a candle and took out of his trunk, which stood not yet unpacked in a corner, an envelope, sealing-wax, and a glass seal.

"Seal your note and address the envelope."

I would have objected that this was unnecessary, but he insisted. When I had addressed the envelope I took my cap.

"I was thinking you'd have tea," he said. "I have bought tea. Will you?"

I could not refuse. The old woman soon brought in the tea, that is, a very large tea-pot of boiling water, a little tea-pot full of strong tea, two large earthenware cups, coarsely decorated, a fancy loaf, and a whole deep saucer of lump sugar.

"I love tea at night," said he. "I walk much and drink it till daybreak. Abroad tea at night is inconvenient."

“You go to bed at daybreak?”

“Always; for a long while. I eat little; always tea. Liputin’s sly, but impatient.”

I was surprised at his wanting to talk; I made up my mind to take advantage of the opportunity. “There were unpleasant misunderstandings this morning,” I observed.

He scowled.

“That’s foolishness; that’s great nonsense. All this is nonsense because Lebyadkin is drunk. I did not tell Liputin, but only explained the nonsense, because he got it all wrong. Liputin has a great deal of fantasy, he built up a mountain out of nonsense. I trusted Liputin yesterday.”

“And me to-day?” I said, laughing.

“But you see, you knew all about it already this morning; Liputin is weak or impatient, or malicious or ... he’s envious.”

The last word struck me.

“You’ve mentioned so many adjectives, however, that it would be strange if one didn’t describe him.”

“Or all at once.”

“Yes, and that’s what Liputin really is — he’s a chaos. He was lying this morning when he said you were writing something, wasn’t he?

“Why should he?” he said, scowling again and staring at the floor.

I apologised, and began assuring him that I was not inquisitive. He flushed.

“He told the truth; I am writing. Only that’s no matter.”

We were silent for a minute. He suddenly smiled with the childlike smile I had noticed that morning.

“He invented that about heads himself out of a book, and told me first himself, and understands badly. But I only seek the causes why men dare not kill themselves; that’s all. And it’s all no matter.”

“How do you mean they don’t dare? Are there so few suicides?”

“Very few.”

“Do you really think so?”

He made no answer, got up, and began walking to and fro lost in thought.

“What is it restrains people from suicide, do you think?” I asked.

He looked at me absent-mindedly, as though trying to remember what we were talking about.

“I . . . I don’t know much yet. . . . Two prejudices restrain them, two things; only two, one very little, the other very big.”

“What is the little thing?”

“Pain.”

“Pain? Can that be of importance at such a moment?”

“Of the greatest. There are two sorts: those who kill themselves either from great sorrow or from spite, or being mad, or no matter what . . . they do it suddenly. They think little about the pain, but kill themselves suddenly. But some do it from reason — they think a great deal.”

“Why, are there people who do it from reason?”

“Very many. If it were not for superstition there would be more, very many, all.”

“What, all?”

He did not answer.

“But aren’t there means of dying without pain?”

“Imagine” — he stopped before me—” imagine a stone as big as a great house; it hangs and you are under it; if it falls on you, on your head, will it hurt you?”

“A stone as big as a house? Of course it would be fearful.”

“I speak not of the fear. Will it hurt?”

“A stone as big as a mountain, weighing millions of tons? Of course it wouldn’t hurt.”

“But really stand there and while it hangs you will fear very much that it will hurt. The most learned man, the greatest doctor, all, all will be very much frightened. Every one will know that it won’t hurt, and every one will be afraid that it will hurt.”

“Well, and the second cause, the big one?”

“The other world!”

“You mean punishment?”

“That’s no matter. The other world; only the other world.”

“Are there no atheists, such as don’t believe in the other world at all?”

Again he did not answer.

“You judge from yourself, perhaps.”

“Every one cannot judge except from himself,” he said, reddening. “There will be full freedom when it will be just the same to live or not to live. That’s the goal for all.”

“The goal? But perhaps no one will care to live then?”

“No one,” he pronounced with decision.

“Man fears death because he loves life. That’s how I understand it,” I observed, “and that’s determined by nature.”

“That’s abject; and that’s where the deception comes in.” His eyes flashed. “Life is pain, life is terror, and man is unhappy. Now all is pain and terror. Now man loves life, because he loves pain and terror, and so they have done according. Life is given now for pain and terror, and that’s the deception. Now man is not yet what he will be. There will be a new man, happy and proud. For whom it will be the same to live or not to live, he will be the new man. He who will conquer pain and terror will himself be a god. And this God will not be.”

“Then this God does exist according to you?”

“He does not exist, but He is. In the stone there is no pain, but in the fear of the stone is the pain. God is the pain of the fear of death. He who will conquer pain and terror will become himself a god. Then there will be a new life, a new man; everything will be new . . . then they will divide history into two parts: from the gorilla to the annihilation of God, and from the annihilation of God to . . .”

“To the gorilla?”

“... To the transformation of the earth, and of man physically. Man will be God, and will be transformed physically, and the world will be transformed and things will be transformed and thoughts and all feelings. What do you think: will man be changed physically then?”

“If it will be just the same living or not living, all will kill themselves, and perhaps that’s what the change will be?”

“That’s no matter. They will kill deception. Every one who wants the supreme freedom must dare to kill himself. He who dares to kill himself has found out the secret of the deception. There is no freedom beyond; that is all, and there is nothing beyond. He who dares kill himself is God. Now every one can do so that there shall be no God and shall be nothing. But no one has once done it yet.”

“There have been millions of suicides.”

“But always not for that; always with terror and not for that object. Not to kill fear. He who kills himself only to kill fear will become a god at once.”

“He won’t have time, perhaps,” I observed.

“That’s no matter,” he answered softly, with calm pride, almost disdain. “I’m sorry that you seem to be laughing,” he added half a minute later.

“It seems strange to me that you were so irritable this morning and are now so calm, though you speak with warmth.”

“This morning? It was funny this morning,” he answered with a smile. “I don’t like scolding, and I never laugh,” he added mournfully.

“Yes, you don’t spend your nights very cheerfully over your tea.”

I got up and took my cap.

“You think not?” he smiled with some surprise. “Why? No, I ... I don’t know.” He was suddenly confused. “I know not how it is with the others, and I feel that I cannot do as others. Everybody thinks and then at once thinks of something else. I can’t think of something else. I think all my life of one thing. God has tormented me all my life,” he ended up suddenly with astonishing expansiveness.

“And tell me, if I may ask, why is it you speak Russian not quite correctly? Surely you haven’t forgotten it after five years abroad?”

“Don’t I speak correctly? I don’t know. No, it’s not because of abroad. I have talked like that all my life . . . it’s no matter to me.”

“Another question, a more delicate one. I quite — believe you that you’re disinclined to meet people and talk very little. Why have you talked to me now?”

“To you? This morning you sat so nicely and you . . . but it’s all no matter . . . you are like my brother, very much, extremely,” he added, flushing. “He has been dead seven years. He was older, very, very much.”

“I suppose he had a great influence on your way of thinking?”

“N-no. He said little; he said nothing. I’ll give your note.”

He saw me to the gate with a lantern, to lock it after me. “Of course he’s mad,” I decided. In the gateway I met with another encounter.

IX

I had only just lifted my leg over the high barrier across the bottom of the gateway, when suddenly a strong hand clutched at my chest.

“Who’s this?” roared a voice, “a friend or an enemy? Own up!”

“He’s one of us; one of us!” Liputin’s voice squealed near by. “It’s Mr. G —— v, a young man of classical education, in touch with the highest society.”

“I love him if he’s in society, clas-si . . . that means he’s high-ly ed-u-cated. The retired Captain Ignat Lebyadkin, at the service of the world and his friends ... if they’re true ones, if they’re true ones, the scoundrels.”

Captain Lebyadkin, a stout, fleshy man over six feet in height, with curly hair and a red face, was so extremely drunk that he could scarcely stand up before me, and articulated with difficulty. I had seen him before, however, in the distance.

“And this one!” he roared again, noticing Kirillov, who was still standing with the lantern; he raised his fist, but let it fall again at once.

“I forgive you for your learning! Ignat Lebyadkin — high-ly ed-u-cated. . . .

‘*A bomb of love with stinging smart*
Exploded in Ignaty’s heart.
In anguish dire I weep again
The arm that at Sevastopol
I lost in bitter pain!’

Not that I ever was at Sevastopol, or ever lost my arm, but you know what rhyme is.” He pushed up to me with his ugly, tipsy face.

“Pie is in a hurry, he is going home!” Liputin tried to persuade him. “He’ll tell Lizaveta Nikolaevna to-morrow.”

“Lizaveta!” he yelled again. “Stay, don’t go! A variation;

‘*Among the Amazons a star,*
Upon her steed she flashes by,
And smiles upon me from afar,
The child of aris-to-cra-cy!
To a Starry Amazon.’

You know that’s a hymn. It’s a hymn, if you’re not an ass! The duffers, they don’t understand! Stay!”

He caught hold of my coat, though I pulled myself away with all my might.

“Tell her I’m a knight and the soul of honour, and as for that Dasha . . . I’d pick her up and chuck her out. . . . She’s only a serf, she daren’t ...”

At this point he fell down, for I pulled myself violently out of his hands and ran into the street. Liputin clung on to me.

“Alexey Nilitch will pick him up. Do you know what I’ve just found out from him?” he babbled in desperate haste. “Did you hear his verses? He’s sealed those verses to the ‘Starry Amazon’ in an envelope and is going to

send them to-morrow to Lizaveta Nikolaevna, signed with his name in full. What a fellow!”

“I bet you suggested it to him yourself.”

“You’ll lose your bet,” laughed Liputin. “He’s in love, in love like a cat, and do you know it began with hatred. He hated Lizaveta Nikolaevna at first so much, for riding on horseback that he almost swore aloud at her in the street. Yes, he did abuse her! Only the day before yesterday he swore at her when she rode by — luckily she didn’t hear. And, suddenly, to-day — poetry! Do you know he means to risk a proposal? Seriously! Seriously!”

“I wonder at you, Liputin; whenever there’s anything nasty going on you’re always on the spot taking a leading part in it,” I said angrily.

“You’re going rather far, Mr. G —— v. Isn’t your poor little

heart quaking, perhaps, in terror of a rival?”

“Wha-at!” I cried, standing still.

“Well, now to punish you I won’t say anything more, and wouldn’t you like to know though? Take this alone, that that lout is not a simple captain now but a landowner of our province, and rather an important one, too, for Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch sold him all his estate the other day, formerly of two hundred serfs; and as God’s above, I’m not lying. I’ve only just heard it, but it was from a most reliable source. And now you can ferret it out for yourself; I’ll say nothing more; good-bye.”

Stepan Trofimovitch was awaiting me with hysterical impatience. It was an hour since he had returned. I found him in a state resembling intoxication; for the first five minutes at least I thought he was drunk. Alas, the visit to the Drozdovs had been the finishing-stroke.

“*Mon ami!* I have completely lost the thread . . . Lise . . . I love and respect that angel as before; just as before; but it seems to me they both asked me simply to find out something from me, that is more simply to get something out of me, and then to get rid of me. . . . That’s how it is.”

“You ought to be ashamed!” I couldn’t help exclaiming. “My friend, now I am utterly alone. *Enfin, c’est ridicule.* Would you believe it, the place is positively packed with mysteries there too. They simply flew at me about those ears and noses, and some mysteries in Petersburg too. You know they hadn’t heard till they came about the tricks Nicolas played here four years ago. ‘You were here, you saw it, is it true that he is mad?’ Where they got the idea I can’t make out. Why is it that Praskovya is so anxious Nicolas should be mad? The woman will have it so, she will. *Ce Maurice,* or what’s

his name, Mavriky Nikolaevitch, *brave homme tout de meme* . . . but can it be for his sake, and after she wrote herself from Paris to *cette pauvre amie?* . . . *Enfin,* this Praskovya, as *cette chere amie* calls her, is a type. She's Gogol's Madame Box, of immortal memory, only she's a spiteful Madame Box, a malignant Box, and in an immensely exaggerated form."

"That's making her out a regular packing-case if it's an exaggerated form."

"Well, perhaps it's the opposite; it's all the same, only don't interrupt me, for I'm all in a whirl. They are all at loggerheads, except Lise, she keeps on with her 'Auntie, auntie!' but Lise's sly, and there's something behind it too. Secrets. She has quarrelled with the old lady. *Cette pauvre* auntie tyrannises over every one it's true, and then there's the governor's wife, and the rudeness of local society, and Karmazinov's 'rudeness'; and then this idea of madness, *ce Lipoutine, ce que je ne comprends pas* . . . and . . . and they say she's been putting vinegar on her head, and here are we with our complaints and letters. . . . Oh, how I have tormented her and at such a time! *Je suis un ingrat!* Only imagine, I come back and find a letter from her; read it, read it! Oh, how ungrateful it was of me!"

He gave me a letter he had just received from Varvara Petrovna. She seemed to have repented of her "stay at home." The letter was amiable but decided in tone, and brief. She invited Stepan Trofimovitch to come to her the day after to-morrow, which was Sunday, at twelve o'clock, and advised him to bring one of his friends with him. (My name was mentioned in parenthesis). She promised on her side to invite Shatov, as the brother of Darya Pavlovna. "You can obtain a final answer from her: will that be enough for you? Is this the formality you were so anxious for?"

"Observe that irritable phrase about formality. Poor thing, poor thing, the friend of my whole life! I confess the sudden determination of my whole future almost crushed me. ... I confess I still had hopes, but now *tout est dit. I* know now that all is over. *C'est terrible!* Oh, that that Sunday would never come and everything would go on in the old way. You would have gone on coming and I'd have gone on here. . . ."

"You've been upset by all those nasty things Liputin said, those slanders."

"My dear, you have touched on another sore spot with your friendly finger. Such friendly fingers are generally merciless and sometimes unreasonable; *pardon,* you may riot believe it, but I'd almost forgotten all

that, all that nastiness, not that I forgot it, indeed, but in my foolishness I tried all the while I was with Lise to be happy and persuaded myself I was happy. But now . . . Oh, now I'm thinking of that generous, humane woman, so long-suffering with my contemptible failings — not that she's been altogether long-suffering, but what have I been with my horrid, worthless character! I'm a capricious child, with all the egoism of a child and none of the innocence. For the last twenty years she's been looking after me like a nurse, *cette pauvre* auntie, as Lise so charmingly calls her. . . . And now, after twenty years, the child clamours to be married, sending letter after letter, while her head's in a vinegar-compress and . . . now he's got it — on Sunday I shall be a married man, that's no joke. . . . And why did I keep insisting myself, what did I write those letters for? Oh, I forgot. Lise idolizes Darya Pavlovna, she says so anyway; she says of her '*c'est un ange,* only rather a reserved one.' They both advised me, even Praskovya. . . . Praskovya didn't advise me though. Oh, what venom lies concealed in that 'Box'! And Lise didn't exactly advise me: 'What do you want to get married for,' she said, 'your intellectual pleasures ought to be enough for you.' She laughed. I forgive her for laughing, for there's an ache in her own heart. You can't get on without a woman though, they said to me. The infirmities of age are coming upon you, and she will tuck you up, or whatever it is. ... *Ma foi,* I've been thinking myself all this time I've been sitting with you that Providence was sending her to me in the decline of my stormy years and that she would tuck me up, or whatever they call it ... *enfin,* she'll be handy for the housekeeping. See what a litter there is, look how everything's lying about. I said it must be cleared up this morning, and look at the book on the floor! *La pauvre amie* was always angry at the untidiness here. . . . Ah, now I shall no longer hear her voice! *Vingt ans!* And it seems they've had anonymous letters. Only fancy, it's said that Nicolas has sold Lebyadkin his property. *C'est un monstre; et enfin* what is Lebyadkin? Lise listens, and listens, ooh, how she listens! I forgave her laughing. I saw her face as she listened, and *ce Maurice* ... I shouldn't care to be in his shoes now, *brave homme tout de meme,* but rather shy; but never mind him. . . ."

He paused. He was tired and upset, and sat with drooping head, staring at the floor with his tired eyes. I took advantage of the interval to tell him of my visit to Filipov's house, and curtly and dryly expressed my opinion that Lebyadkin's sister (whom I had never seen) really might have been

somehow Victimised by Nicolas at some time during that mysterious period of his life, as Liputin had called it, and that it was very possible that Lebyadkin received sums of money from Nicolas for some reason, but that was all. As for the scandal about Darya Pavlovna, that was all nonsense, all that brute Liputin's misrepresentations, that this was anyway what Alexey Nilitch warmly maintained, and we had no grounds for disbelieving him. Stepan Trofimovitch listened to my assurances with an absent air, as though they did not concern him. I mentioned by the way my conversation with Kirillov, and added that he might be mad.

"He's not mad, but one of those shallow-minded people," he mumbled listlessly. "*Ces gens-il supposent la nature et la societe humaine autres que Dieu ne les a faites et qu'elles ne sont reellement.* People try to make up to them, but Stepan Verhovensky does not, anyway. I saw them that time in Petersburg *avec cette chere amie* (oh, how I used to wound her then), and I wasn't afraid of their abuse or even of their praise. I'm not afraid now either. *Mais parlous d'autre chose.* ... I believe I have done dreadful things. Only fancy, I sent a letter yesterday to Darya Pavlovna and . . . how I curse myself for it!"

"What did you write about?"

"Oh, my friend, believe me, it was all done in' a noble spirit. I let her know that I had written to Nicolas five days before, also in a noble spirit."

"I understand now!" I cried with heat. "And what right had you to couple their names like that?"

"But, *mon cher,* don't crush me completely, don't shout at me; as it is I'm utterly squashed like ... a black-beetle. And, after all, I thought it was all so honourable. Suppose that something really happened . . . *en Suisse* ... or was beginning. I was bound to question their hearts beforehand that I . . *enfin,* that I might not constrain their hearts, and be a stumbling-block in their paths. I acted simply from honourable feeling."

"Oh, heavens! What a stupid thing you've done!" I cried involuntarily.

"Yes, yes," he assented with positive eagerness. "You have never said anything more just, *c'etait bete, mais que faire? Tout est dit.* I shall marry her just the same even if it be to cover 'another's sins.' So there was no object in writing, was there?"

"You're at that idea again!"

"Oh, you won't frighten me with your shouts now. You see a different Stepan Verhovensky before you now. The man I was is buried. *Enfin, tout*

est dit. And why do you cry out? Simply because you're not getting married, and you won't have to wear a certain decoration on your head. Does that shock you again? My poor friend, you don't know woman, while I have done nothing but study her. 'If you want to conquer the world, conquer yourself — the one good thing that another romantic like you, my bride's brother, Shatov, has succeeded in saying. I would gladly borrow from him his phrase. Well, here I am ready to conquer myself, and I'm getting married. And what am I conquering by way of the whole world? Oh, my friend, marriage is the moral death of every proud soul, of all independence. Married life will corrupt me, it will sap my energy, my courage in the service of the cause. Children will come, probably not my own either — certainly not my own: a wise man is not afraid to face the truth. Liputin proposed this morning putting up barricades to keep out Nicolas; Liputin's a fool. A woman would deceive the all-seeing eye itself. *Le bon Dieu* knew what He was in for when He was creating woman, but I'm sure that she meddled in it herself and forced Him to create her such as she is ... and with such attributes: for who would have incurred so much trouble for nothing? I know Nastasya may be angry with me for free-thinking, but . . . *enfin, taut est dit."*

He wouldn't have been himself if he could have dispensed with the cheap gibing free-thought which was in vogue in his day. Now, at any rate, he comforted himself with a gibe, but not for long.

"Oh, if that day after to-morrow, that Sunday, might never come!" he exclaimed suddenly, this time in utter despair. "Why could not this one week be without a Sunday — *si le miracle exists?* What would it be to Providence to blot out one Sunday from the calendar? If only to prove His power to the atheists *et que tout soit dit!* Oh, how I loved her! Twenty years, these twenty years, and she has never understood me!"

"But of whom are you talking? Even I don't understand you!" I asked, wondering.

"*Vingt ans!* And she has not once understood me; oh, it's cruel! And can she really believe that I am marrying from fear, from poverty? Oh, the shame of it! Oh, Auntie, Auntie, I do it for you! . . . Oh, let her know, that Auntie, that she is the one woman I have adored for twenty years! She must learn this, it must be so, if not they will need force to drag me under *ce qu'on appelle le* wedding-crown."

It was the first time I had heard this confession, and so vigorously uttered. I won't conceal the fact that I was terribly tempted to laugh. I was wrong.

"He is the only one left me now, the only one, my one hope!" he cried suddenly, clasping his hands as though struck by a new idea. "Only he, my poor boy, can save me now, and, oh, why doesn't he come! Oh, my son, oh, my Petrusha. . . . And though I do not deserve the name of father, but rather that of tiger, yet . . . *Laissez-moi, mon ami*, I'll lie down a little, to collect my ideas. I am so tired, so tired. And I think it's time you were in bed. *Voyez vous*, it's twelve o'clock. . . ."

CHAPTER IV.

THE CRIPPLE

SHATOV WAS NOT PERVERSE but acted on my note, and called at midday on Lizaveta Nikolaevna. We went in almost together; I was also going to make my first call. They were all, that is Liza, her mother, and Mavriky Nikolaevitch, sitting in the big drawing-room, arguing. The mother was asking Liza to play some waltz on the piano, and as soon as Liza began to play the piece asked for, declared it was not the right one. Mavriky Nikolaevitch in the simplicity of his heart took Liza's part, maintaining that it was the right waltz. The elder lady was so angry that she began to cry. She was ill and walked with difficulty. Her legs were swollen, and for the last few days she had been continually fractious, quarrelling with every one, though she always stood rather in awe of Liza. They were pleased to see us. Liza flushed with pleasure, and saying "*merci*" to me, on Shatov's account of course, went to meet him, looking at him with interest.

Shatov stopped awkwardly in the doorway. Thanking him for coming she led him up to her mother.

"This is Mr. Shatov, of whom I have told you, and this is Mr. G —— v, a great friend of mine and of Stepan Trofimovitch's. Mavriky Nikolaevitch made his acquaintance yesterday, too."

"And which is the professor?"

"There's no professor at all, maman."

"But there is. You said yourself that there'd be a professor. It's this one, probably." She disdainfully indicated Shatov.

"I didn't tell you that there'd be a professor. Mr. G —— v is

in the service, and Mr. Shatov is a former student."

"A student or professor, they all come from the university just the same. You only want to argue. But the Swiss one had moustaches and a beard."

"It's the son of Stepan Trofimovitch that maman always calls the professor," said Liza, and she took Shatov away to the sofa at the other end of the drawing-room.

"When her legs swell, she's always like this, you understand she's ill," she whispered to Shatov, still with the same marked curiosity, scrutinising him, especially his shock of hair.

“Are you an officer?” the old lady inquired of me. Liza had mercilessly abandoned me to her.

“N-no. — I’m in the service. . . .”

“Mr. G —— v is a great friend of Stepan Trofimovitch’s,” Liza chimed in immediately.

“Are you in Stepan Trofimovitch’s service? Yes, and he’s a professor, too, isn’t he?”

“Ah, maman, you must dream at night of professors,” cried Liza with annoyance.

“I see too many when I’m awake. But you always will contradict your mother. Were you here four years ago when Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was in the neighbourhood?”

I answered that I was.

“And there was some Englishman with you?”

“No, there was not.”

Liza laughed.

“Well, you see there was no Englishman, so it must have been idle gossip. And Varvara Petrovna and Stepan Trofimovitch both tell lies. And they all tell lies.”

“Auntie and Stepan Trofimovitch yesterday thought there was a resemblance between Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch and Prince Harry in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV,* and in answer to that maman says that there was no Englishman here,” Liza explained to us.

“If Harry wasn’t here, there was no Englishman. It was no one else but Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch at his tricks.”

“I assure you that maman’s doing it on purpose,” Liza thought necessary to explain to Shatov. “She’s really heard of Shakespeare. I read her the first act of *Othello* myself. But she’s in great pain now. Maman, listen, it’s striking twelve, it’s time you took your medicine.”

“The doctor’s come,” a maid-servant announced at the door.

The old lady got up and began calling her dog: “Zemirka, Zemirka, you come with me at least.”

Zemirka, a horrid little old dog, instead of obeying, crept under the sofa where Liza was sitting.

“Don’t you want to? Then I don’t want you. Good-bye, my good sir, I don’t know your name or your father’s,” she said, addressing me.

“Anton Lavrentyevitch . . .”

“Well, it doesn’t matter, with me it goes in at one ear and out of the other. Don’t you come with me, Mavriky Nikolaevitch, it was Zemirka I called. Thank God I can still walk without help and to-morrow I shall go for a drive.”

She walked angrily out of the drawing-room.

“Anton Lavrentyevitch, will you talk meanwhile to Mavriky Nikolaevitch; I assure you you’ll both be gainers by getting to know one another better,” said Liza, and she gave a friendly smile to Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who beamed all over as she looked at him. There was no help for it, I remained to talk to Mavriky Nikolaevitch.

II

Lizaveta Nikolaevna’s business with Shatov turned out, to my surprise, to be really only concerned with literature. I had imagined, I don’t know why, that she had asked him to come with some other object. We, Mavriky Nikolaevitch and I that is, seeing that they were talking aloud and not trying to hide anything from us, began to listen, and at last they asked our advice. It turned out that Lizaveta Nikolaevna was thinking of bringing out a book which she thought would be of use, but being quite inexperienced she needed some one to help her. The earnestness with which she began to explain her plan to Shatov quite surprised me.

“She must be one of the new people,” I thought. “She has not been to Switzerland for nothing.”

Shatov listened with attention, his eyes fixed on the ground, showing not the slightest surprise that a giddy young lady in society should take up work that seemed so out of keeping with her.

Her literary scheme was as follows. Numbers of papers and journals are published in the capitals and the provinces of Russia, and every day a number of events are reported in them. The year passes, the newspapers are everywhere folded up and put away in cupboards, or are torn up and become litter, or are used for making parcels or wrapping things. Numbers of these facts make an impression and are remembered by the public, but in the course of years they are forgotten. Many people would like to look them up, but it is a labour for them to embark upon this sea of paper, often knowing nothing of the day or place or even year in which the incident occurred. Yet if all the facts for a whole year were brought together into one

book, on a definite plan, and with a definite object, under headings with references, arranged according to months and days, such a compilation might reflect the characteristics of Russian life for the whole year, even though the facts published are only a small fraction of the events that take place.

“Instead of a number of newspapers there would be a few fat books, that’s all,” observed Shatov.

But Lizaveta Nikolaevna clung to her idea, in spite of the difficulty of carrying it out and her inability to describe it. “It ought to be one book, and not even a very thick one,” she maintained. But even if it were thick it would be clear, for the great point would be the plan and the character of the presentation of facts. Of course not all would be collected and reprinted. . The decrees and acts of government, local regulations, laws — all such facts, however important, might be altogether omitted from the proposed publication. They could leave out a great deal and confine themselves to a selection of events more or less characteristic of the moral life of the people, of the personal character of the Russian people at the present moment. Of course everything might be put in: strange incidents, fires, public subscriptions, anything good or bad, every speech or word, perhaps even floodings of the rivers, perhaps even some government decrees, but only such things to be selected as are characteristic of the period; everything would be put in with a certain view, a special significance and intention, with an idea which would illuminate the facts looked at in the aggregate, as a whole. And finally the book ought to be interesting even for light reading, apart from its value as a work of reference. It would be, so to say, a presentation of the spiritual, moral, inner life of Russia for a whole year.

“We want every one to buy it, we want it to be a book that will be found on every table,” Liza declared. “I understand that all lies in the plan, and that’s why I apply to you,” she concluded. She grew very warm over it, and although her explanation was obscure and incomplete, Shatov began to understand.

“So it would amount to something with a political tendency, a selection of facts with a special tendency,” he muttered, still not raising his head.

“Not at all, we must not select with a particular bias, and we ought not to have any political tendency in it. Nothing but impartiality — that will be the only tendency.”

“But a tendency would be no harm,” said Shatov, with a slight movement, “and one can hardly avoid it if there is any selection at all. The very selection of facts will suggest how they are to be understood. Your idea is not a bad one.”

“Then such a book is possible?” cried Liza delightedly.

“We must look into it and consider. It’s an immense undertaking. One can’t work it out on the spur of the moment. We need experience. And when we do publish the book I doubt whether we shall find out how to do it. Possibly after many trials; but the thought is alluring. It’s a useful idea.”

He raised his eyes at last, and they were positively sparkling with pleasure, he was so interested.

“Was it your own idea?” he asked Liza, in a friendly and, as it were, bashful way.

“The idea’s no trouble, you know, it’s the plan is the trouble,” Liza smiled. “I understand very little. I am not very clever, and I only pursue what is clear to me, myself. . . .”

“Pursue?”

“Perhaps that’s not the right word?” Liza inquired quickly.

“The word is all right; I meant nothing.”

“I thought while I was abroad that even I might be of some use. I have money of my own lying idle. Why shouldn’t I — even I — work for the common cause? Besides, the idea somehow occurred to me all at once of itself. I didn’t invent it at all, and was delighted with it. But I saw at once that I couldn’t get on without some one to help, because I am not competent to do anything of myself. My helper, of course, would be the co-editor of the book. We would go halves. You would give the plan and the work. Mine would be the original idea and the means for publishing it. Would the book pay its expenses, do you think?”

“If we hit on a good plan the book will go.”

“I warn you that I am not doing it for profit; but I am very anxious that the book should circulate and should be very proud of making a profit.”

“Well, but how do I come in?”

“Why, I invite you to be my fellow-worker, to go halves. You will think out the plan.”

“How do you know that I am capable of thinking out the plan?”

“People have talked about you to me, and here I’ve heard

... I know that you are very clever and . . . are working for the cause . . . and think a great deal. Pyotr Stepanovitch Verhovensky spoke about you in Switzerland," she added hurriedly. "He's a very clever man, isn't he?"

Shatov stole a fleeting, momentary glance at her, but dropped his eyes again.

"Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch told me a great deal about you, too."

Shatov suddenly turned red.

"But here are the newspapers." Liza hurriedly picked up from a chair a bundle of newspapers that lay tied up ready. "I've tried to mark the facts here for selection, to sort them, and I have put the papers together . . . you will see."

Shatov took the bundle.

"Take them home and look at them. Where do you live?"

"In Bogoyavlensky Street, Filipov's house."

"I know. I think it's there, too, I've been told, a captain lives, beside you, Mr. Lebyadkin," said Liza in the same hurried manner.

Shatov sat for a full minute with the bundle in his outstretched hand, making no answer and staring at the floor.

"You'd better find some one else for these jobs. I shouldn't suit you at all," he brought out at last, dropping his voice in an awfully strange way, almost to a whisper.

Liza flushed crimson.

"What jobs are you speaking of? Mavriky Nikolaevitch," she cried, "please bring that letter here."

I too followed Mavriky Nikolaevitch to the table,

"Look at this," she turned suddenly to me, unfolding the letter in great excitement. "Have you ever seen anything like it. Please read it aloud. I want Mr. Shatov to hear it too."

With no little astonishment I read aloud the following missive:

"To the.

Perfection, Miss Tushin.

"Gracious Lady

"Lizaveta Nikolaevna!

"Oh, she's a sweet queen, Lizaveta Tushin!

When on side-saddle she gallops by,

And in the breeze her fair tresses fly!

Or when with her mother in church she bows low

And on devout faces a red flush doth flow!
Then for the joys of lawful wedlock I aspire,
And follow her and her mother with tears of desire.
“Composed by an unlearned man in the midst of a discussion.
“Gracious Lady!

“I pity myself above all men that I did not lose my arm at Sevastopol, not having been there at all, but served all the campaign delivering paltry provisions, which I look on as a degradation. You are a goddess of antiquity, and I am nothing, but have had a glimpse of infinity. Look on it as a poem and no more, for, after all, poetry is nonsense and justifies what would be considered impudence in prose. Can the sun be angry with the infusoria if the latter composes verses to her from the drop of water, where there is a multitude of them if you look through the microscope? Even the club for promoting humanity to the larger animals in tip-top society in Petersburg, winch rightly feels compassion for dogs and horses, despises the brief infusoria making no reference to it whatever, because it is not big enough. I’m not big enough either. The idea of marriage might seem droll, but soon I shall have property worth two hundred souls through a misanthropist whom you ought to despise. I can tell a lot and I can undertake to produce documents that would mean Siberia. Don’t despise my proposal. A letter from an infusoria is of course in verse.

“Captain Lebyadkin your most humble friend
And he has time no end.”

“That was written by a man in a drunken condition, a worthless fellow,” I cried indignantly. “I know him.”

“That letter I received yesterday,” Liza began to explain, flushing and speaking hurriedly. “I saw myself, at once, that it came from some foolish creature, and I haven’t yet shown it to maman, for fear of upsetting her more. But if he is going to keep on like that, I don’t know how to act. Mavriky Nikolaevitch wants to go out and forbid him to do it. As I have looked upon you as a colleague,” she turned to Shatov, “and as you live there, I wanted to question you so as to judge what more is to be expected of him.”

“He’s a drunkard and a worthless fellow,” Shatov muttered with apparent reluctance.

“Is he always so stupid?”

“No, he’s not stupid at all when he’s not drunk.”

“I used to know a general who wrote verses exactly like that,” I observed, laughing.

“One can see from the letter that he is clever enough for his own purposes,” Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who had till then been silent, put in unexpectedly.

“He lives with some sister?” Liza queried.

“Yes, with his sister.”

“They say he tyrannises over her, is that true?”

Shatov looked at Liza again, scowled, and muttering, “What business is it of mine?” moved towards the door.

“Ah, stay!” cried Liza, in a flutter. “Where are you going? We have so much still to talk over. . . .”

“What is there to talk over? I’ll let you know to-morrow.”

“Why, the most important thing of all — the printing-press! Do believe me that I am not in jest, that I really want to work in good earnest!” Liza assured him in growing agitation. “If we decide to publish it, where is it to be printed? You know it’s a most important question, for we shan’t go to Moscow for it, and the printing-press here is out of the question for such a publication. I made up my mind long ago to set up a printing-press of my own, in your name perhaps — and I know maman will allow it so long as it is in your name. . . .”

“How do you know that I could be a printer?” Shatov asked sullenly.

“Why, Pyotr Stepanovitch told me of you in Switzerland, and referred me to you as one who knows the business and able to set up a printing-press. He even meant to give me a note to you from himself, but I forgot it.”

Shatov’s face changed, as I recollect now. He stood for a few seconds longer, then went out of the room.

Liza was angry.

“Does he always go out like that?” she asked, turning to me.

I was just shrugging my shoulders when Shatov suddenly came back, went straight up to the table and put down the roll of papers he had taken.

“I’m not going to be your helper, I haven’t the time. . . .”

“Why? Why? I think you are angry!” Liza asked him in a grieved and imploring voice.

The sound of her voice seemed to strike him; for some moments he looked at her intently, as though trying to penetrate to her very soul.

“No matter,” he muttered, softly, “I don’t want to. . . .”

And he went away altogether.

Liza was completely overwhelmed, quite disproportionately in fact, so it seemed to me.

“Wonderfully queer man,” Mavriky Nikolaevitch observed aloud.

III

He certainly was queer, but in all this there was a very great deal not clear to me. There was something underlying it all? I simply did not believe in this publication; then that stupid letter, in which there was an offer, only too barefaced, to give information and produce “documents,” though they were all silent about that, and talked of something quite different; finally that printing-press and Shatov’s sudden exit, just because they spoke of a printing-press. All this led me to imagine that something had happened before I came in of which I knew nothing; and, consequently, that it was no business of mine and that I was in the way. And, indeed, it was time to take leave, I had stayed long enough for the first call. I went up to say good-bye to Lizaveta Nikolaevna.

She seemed to have forgotten that I was in the room, and was still standing in the same place by the table with her head bowed, plunged in thought, gazing fixedly at one spot on the carpet.

“Ah, you, too, are going, good-bye,” she murmured in an ordinary friendly tone. “Give my greetings to Stepan Trofimovitch, and persuade him to come and see me as soon as he can. Mavriky Nikolaevitch, Anton Lavrentyevitch is going. Excuse maman’s not being able to come out and say good-bye to you. ...”

I went out and had reached the bottom of the stairs when a footman suddenly overtook me at the street door.

“My lady begs you to come back. . . .”

“The mistress, or Lizaveta Nikolaevna?”

“The young lady.”

I found Liza not in the big room where we had been sitting, but in the reception-room next to it. The door between it and the drawing-room, where Mavriky Nikolaevitch was left alone, was closed.

Liza smiled to me but was pale. She was standing in the middle of the room in evident indecision, visibly struggling with herself; but she suddenly took me by the hand, and led me quickly to the window.

“I want to see *her* at once,” she whispered, bending upon me a burning, passionate, impatient glance, which would not admit a hint of opposition. ‘‘ I must see her with my own eyes, and I beg you to help me.”

She was in a perfect frenzy, and — in despair.

“Who is it you want to see, Lizaveta Nikolaevna?” I inquired in dismay.

“That Lebyadkin’s sister, that lame girl. ... Is it true that she’s lame?”

I was astounded.

“I have never seen her, but I’ve heard that she’s lame. I heard it yesterday,” I said with hurried readiness, and also in a whisper.

“I must see her, absolutely. Could you arrange it to-day?”

I felt dreadfully sorry for her.

“That’s utterly impossible, and, besides, I should not know at all how to set about it,” I began persuading her. “I’ll go to Shatov. . . .”

“If you don’t arrange it by to-morrow I’ll go to her by myself, alone, for Mavriky Nikolaevitch has refused. I rest all my hopes on you and I’ve no one else; I spoke stupidly to Shatov. . . . I’m sure that you are perfectly honest and perhaps ready to do anything for me, only arrange it.”

I felt a passionate desire to help her in every way.

“This is what I’ll do,” I said, after a moment’s thought. “I’ll go myself to-day and will see her for sure, *for sure. I* will manage so as to see her. I give you my word of honour. Only let me confide in Shatov.”

“Tell him that I do desire it, and that I can’t wait any longer, but that I wasn’t deceiving him just now. He went away perhaps because he’s very honest and he didn’t like my seeming to deceive him. I wasn’t deceiving him, I really do want to edit books and found a printing-press. . . .”

“He is honest, very honest,” I assented warmly.

“If it’s not arranged by to-morrow, though, I shall go myself whatever happens, and even if every one were to know.”

“I can’t be with you before three o’clock to-morrow,” I observed, after a moment’s deliberation.

“At three o’clock then. Then it was true what I imagined yesterday at Stepan Trofimovitch’s, that you — -are rather devoted to me?” she said with a smile, hurriedly pressing my hand to say good-bye, and hurrying back to the forsaken Mavriky Nikolaevitch.

I went out weighed down by my promise, and unable to understand what had happened. I had seen a woman in real despair, not hesitating to compromise herself by confiding in a man she hardly knew. Her womanly

smile at a moment so terrible for her and her hint that she had noticed my feelings the day before sent a pang to my heart; but I felt sorry for her, very sorry — that was all! Her secrets became at once something sacred for me, and if anyone had begun to reveal them to me now, I think I should have covered my ears, and should have refused to hear anything more. I only had a presentiment of something . . . yet I was utterly at a loss to see how I could do anything. What's more I did not even yet understand exactly what I had to arrange; an interview, but what sort of an interview? And how could I bring them together? My only hope was Shatov, though I could be sure that he wouldn't help me in any way. But all the same, I hurried to him.

IV

I did not find him at home till past seven o'clock that evening. To my surprise he had visitors with him — Alexey Nilitch, and another gentleman I hardly knew, one Shigalov, the brother of Virginsky's wife.

This gentleman must, I think, have been staying about two months in the town; I don't know where he came from. I had only heard that he had written some sort of article in a progressive Petersburg magazine. Virginsky had introduced me casually to him in the street. I had never in my life seen in a man's face so much despondency, gloom, and moroseness. He looked as though he were expecting the destruction of the world, and not at some indefinite time in accordance with prophecies, which might never be fulfilled, but quite definitely, as though it were to be the day after to-morrow at twenty-five minutes past ten. We hardly said a word to one another on that occasion, but had simply shaken hands like two conspirators. I was most struck by his ears, which were of unnatural size, long, broad, and thick, sticking out in a peculiar way. His gestures were slow and awkward.

If Liputin had imagined that a phalanstery might be established in our province, this gentleman certainly knew the day and the hour when it would be founded. He made a sinister impression on me. I was the more surprised at finding him here, as Shatov was not fond of visitors.

I could hear from the stairs that they were talking very loud, all three at once, and I fancy they were disputing; but as soon as I went in, they all ceased speaking. They were arguing, standing up, but now they all suddenly sat down, so that I had to sit down too. There was a stupid silence that was

not broken for fully three minutes. Though Shigalov knew me, he affected not to know me, probably not from hostile feelings, but for no particular reason. Alexey Nilitch and I bowed to one another in silence, and for some reason did not shake hands. Shigalov began at last looking at me sternly and frowningly, with the most naive assurance that I should immediately get up and go away. At last Shatov got up from his chair and the others jumped up at once. They went out without saying good-bye. Shigalov only said in the doorway to Shatov, who was seeing him out:

"Remember that you are bound to give an explanation."

"Hang your explanation, and who the devil am I bound to?" said Shatov. He showed them out and fastened the door with the latch.

"Snipes!" he said, looking at me, with a sort of wry smile.

His face looked angry, and it seemed strange to me that he spoke first. When I had been to see him before (which was not often) it had usually happened that he sat scowling in a corner, answered ill-humouredly and only completely thawed and began to talk with pleasure after a considerable time. Even so, when he was saying good-bye he always scowled, and let one out as though he were getting rid of a personal enemy.

"I had tea yesterday with that Alexey Nilitch," I observed. "I think he's mad on atheism."

"Russian atheism has never gone further than making a joke," growled Shatov, putting up a new candle in place of an end that had burnt out.

"No, this one doesn't seem to me a joker, I think he doesn't know how to talk, let alone trying to make jokes."

"Men made of paper! It all comes from flunkeyism of thought," Shatov observed calmly, sitting down on a chair in the corner, and pressing the palms of both hands on his knees.

"There's hatred in it, too," he went on, after a minute's pause. "They'd be the first to be terribly unhappy if Russia could be suddenly reformed, even to suit their own ideas, and became extraordinarily prosperous and happy. They'd have no one to hate then, no one to curse, nothing to find fault with. There is nothing in it but an immense animal hatred for Russia which has eaten into their organism. . . . And it isn't a case of tears unseen by the world under cover of a smile! There has never been a falser word said in Russia than about those unseen tears," he cried, almost with fury.

"Goodness only knows what you're saying," I laughed.

“Oh, you’re a ‘moderate liberal,’” said Shatov, smiling too. “Do you know,” he went on suddenly, “I may have been talking nonsense about the ‘flunkeyism of thought.’ You will say to me no doubt directly, ‘it’s you who are the son of a flunkey, but I’m not a flunkey.’”

“I wasn’t dreaming of such a thing. . . . What are you saying!”

“You need not apologise. I’m not afraid of you. Once I was only the son of a flunkey, but now I’ve become a flunkey myself, like you. Our Russian liberal is a flunkey before everything, and is only looking for some one whose boots he can clean.”

“What boots? What allegory is this?”

“Allegory, indeed! You are laughing, I see. . . . Stepan Trofimovitch said truly that I lie under a stone, crushed but not killed, and do nothing but wriggle. It was a good comparison of his.”

“Stepan Trofimovitch declares that you are mad over the Germans,” I laughed. “We’ve borrowed something from them anyway.”

“We took twenty kopecks, but we gave up a hundred roubles of our own.”

We were silent a minute.

“He got that sore lying in America.”

“Who? What sore?”

“I mean Kirillov. I spent four months with him lying on the floor of a hut.”

“Why, have you been in America?” I asked, surprised. “You never told me about it.”

“What is there to tell? The year before last we spent our last farthing, three of us, going to America in an emigrant steamer, to test the life of the American workman on ourselves, and to verify by *personal* experiment the state of a man in the hardest social conditions. That was our object in going there.”

“Good Lord!” I laughed. “You’d much better have gone somewhere in our province at harvest-time if you wanted to ‘make a personal experiment’ instead of bolting to America.”

“We hired ourselves out as workmen to an exploiter; there were six of us Russians working for him — students, even landowners coming from their estates, some officers, too, and all with the same grand object. Well, so we worked, sweated, wore ourselves out; Kirillov and I were exhausted at last; fell ill — went away — we couldn’t stand it. Our employer cheated us when

he paid us off; instead of thirty dollars, as he had agreed, he paid me eight and Kirillov fifteen; he beat us, too, more than once. So then we were left without work, Kirillov and I, and we spent four months lying on the floor in that little town. He thought of one thing and I thought of another."

"You don't mean to say your employer beat you? In America? How you must have sworn at him!"

"Not a bit of it. On the contrary, Kirillov and I made up our minds from the first that we Russians were like little children beside the Americans, and that one must be born in America, or at least live for many years with Americans to be on a level with them. And do you know, if we were asked a dollar for a thing worth a farthing, we used to pay it with pleasure, in fact with enthusiasm. We approved of everything: spiritualism, lynch-law, revolvers, tramps. Once when we were travelling a fellow slipped his hand into my pocket, took my brush, and began brushing his hair with it. Kirillov and I only looked at one another, and made up our minds that that was the right thing and that we liked it very much. . . ."

"The strange thing is that with us all this is not only in the brain but is carried out in practice," I observed.

"Men made of paper," Shatov repeated.

"But to cross the ocean in an emigrant steamer, though, to go .to an unknown country, even to make a personal experiment and all that — by Jove . . . there really is a large-hearted staunchness about it. ... But how did you get out of it?"

"I wrote to a man in Europe and he sent me a hundred roubles."

As Shatov talked he looked doggedly at the ground as he always did, even when he was excited. At this point he suddenly raised his head.

"Do you want to know the man's name?"

"Who was it?"

"Nikolay Stavrogin."

He got up suddenly, turned to his limewood writing-table and began searching for something on it. There was a vague, though well-authenticated rumour among us that Shatov's wife had at one time had a liaison with Nikolay Stavrogin, in Paris, and just about two years ago, that is when Shatov was in America. It is true that this was long after his wife had left him in Geneva.

"If so, what possesses him now to bring his name forward and to lay stress on it?" I thought.

“I haven’t paid him back yet,” he said, turning suddenly to me again, and looking at me intently he sat down in the same place as before in the corner, and asked abruptly, in quite a different voice:

“You have come no doubt with some object. What do you want?”

I told him everything immediately, in its exact historical order, and added that though I had time to think it over coolly after the first excitement was over, I was more puzzled than ever. I saw that it meant something very important to Lizaveta Nikolaevna. I was extremely anxious to help her, but the trouble was that I didn’t know how to keep the promise I had made her, and didn’t even quite understand now what I had promised her. Then I assured him impressively once more that she had not meant to deceive him, and had had no thought of doing so; that there had been some misunderstanding, and that she had been very much hurt by the extraordinary way in which he had gone off that morning.

He listened very attentively.

“Perhaps I was stupid this morning, as I usually am. . . . Well, if she didn’t understand why I went away like that . . . so much the better for her.”

He got up, went to the door, opened it, and began listening on the stairs.

“Do you want to see that person yourself?”

“That’s just what I wanted, but how is it to be done?” I cried, delighted.

“Let’s simply go down while she’s alone. When he conies in he’ll beat her horribly if he finds out we’ve been there. I often go in on the sly. I went for him this morning when he began beating her again.”

“What do you mean?”

“I dragged him off her by the hair. He tried to beat me, but I frightened him, and so it ended. I’m afraid he’ll come back drunk, and won’t forget it — he’ll give her a bad beating because of it.”

We went downstairs at once.

The Lebyadkins’ door was shut but not locked, and we were able to go in. Their lodging consisted of two nasty little rooms, with smoke-begrimed walls on which the filthy wall-paper literally hung in tatters. It had been used for some years as an eating-house, until Filipov, the tavern-keeper, moved to another house. The other rooms below what had been the eating-house were now shut up, and these two were all the Lebyadkins had. The furniture consisted of plain benches and deal tables, except for an old arm-chair that had lost its arms. In the second room there was the bedstead that belonged to Mile. Lebyadkin standing in the corner, covered with a chintz

quilt; the captain himself went to bed anywhere on the floor, often without undressing. Everything was in disorder, wet and filthy; a huge soaking rag lay in the middle of the floor in the first room, and a battered old shoe lay beside it in the wet. It was evident that no one looked after anything here. The stove was not heated, food was not cooked; they had not even a samovar as Shatov told me. The captain had come to the town with his sister utterly destitute, and had, as Liputin said, at first actually gone from house to house begging. But having unexpectedly received some money, he had taken to drinking at once, and had become so besotted that he was incapable of looking after things.

Mile. Lebyadkin, whom I was so anxious to see, was sitting quietly at a deal kitchen table on a bench in the corner of the inner room, not making a sound. When we opened the door she did not call out to us or even move from her place. Shatov said that the door into the passage would not lock and it had once stood wide open all night. By the dim light of a thin candle in an iron candlestick, I made out a woman of about thirty, perhaps, sickly and emaciated, wearing an old dress of dark cotton material, with her long neck uncovered, her scanty dark hair twisted into a knot on the nape of her neck, no larger than the fist of a two-year-old child. She looked at us rather cheerfully. Besides the candlestick, she had on the table in front of her a little peasant looking-glass, an old pack of cards, a tattered book of songs, and a white roll of German bread from which one or two bites had been taken. It was noticeable that Mile. Lebyadkin used powder and rouge, and painted her lips. She also blackened her eyebrows, which were fine, long, and black enough without that. Three long wrinkles stood sharply conspicuous across her high, narrow forehead in spite of the powder on it. I already knew that she was lame, but on this occasion she did not attempt to get up or walk. At some time, perhaps in early youth, that wasted face may have been pretty; but her soft, gentle grey eyes were remarkable even now. There was something dreamy and sincere in her gentle, almost joyful, expression. This gentle serene joy, which was reflected also in her smile, astonished me after all I had heard of the Cossack whip and her brother’s violence. Strange to say, instead of the oppressive repulsion and almost dread one usually feels in the presence of these creatures afflicted by God, I felt it almost pleasant to look at her from the first moment, and my heart was filled afterwards with pity in which there was no trace of aversion.

“This is how she sits literally for days together, utterly alone, without moving; she tries her fortune with the cards, or looks in the looking-glass,” said Shatov, pointing her out to me from the doorway. “He doesn’t feed her, you know. The old woman in the lodge brings her something sometimes out of charity; how can they leave her all alone like this with a candle!”

To my surprise Shatov spoke aloud, just as though she were not in the room.

“Good day, Shatushka!” Mile. Lebyadkin said genially.

“I’ve brought you a visitor, Marya Timofyevna,” said Shatov.

“The visitor is very welcome. I don’t know who it is you’ve brought, I don’t seem to remember him.” She scrutinised me intently from behind the candle, and turned again at once to Shatov (and she took no more notice of me for the rest of the conversation, as though I had not been near her).

“Are you tired of walking up and down alone in your garret?” she laughed, displaying two rows of magnificent teeth.

“I was tired of it, and I wanted to come and see you.”

Shatov moved a bench up to the table, sat down on it and made me sit beside him.

“I’m always glad to have a talk, though you’re a funny person, Shatushka, just like a monk. When did you comb your hair last I Let me do it for you.” And she pulled a little comb out of her pocket. “I don’t believe you’ve touched it since I combed it last.”

“Well, I haven’t got a comb,” said Shatov, laughing too.

“Really? Then I’ll give you mine; only remind me, not this one but another.”

With a most serious expression she set to work to comb his hair. She even parted it on one side; drew back a little, looked to see whether it was right and put the comb back in her pocket.

“Do you know what, Shatushka?” She shook her head. “You may be a very sensible man but you’re dull. It’s strange for me to look at all of you. I don’t understand how it is people are dull. Sadness is not dullness. I’m happy.”

“And are you happy when your brother’s here?”

“You mean Lebyadkin? He’s my footman. And I don’t care whether he’s here or not. I call to him: ‘Lebyadkin, bring the water! ‘or’ Lebyadkin, bring my shoes!’ and he runs. Sometimes one does wrong and can’t help laughing at him.

“That’s just how it is,” said Shatov, addressing me aloud without ceremony. “She treats him just like a footman. I’ve heard her myself calling to him, ‘Lebyadkin, give me some water!’ And she laughed as she said it. The only difference is that he doesn’t fetch the water but beats her for it; but she isn’t a bit afraid of him. She has some sort of nervous fits, almost every day, and they are destroying her memory so that afterwards she forgets everything that’s just happened, and is always in a muddle over time. You imagine she remembers how you came in; perhaps she does remember, but no doubt she has changed everything to please herself, and she takes us now for different people from what we are, though she knows I’m ‘Shatushka.’ It doesn’t matter my speaking aloud, she soon leaves off listening to people who talk to her, and plunges into dreams. Yes, plunges. She’s an extraordinary person for dreaming; she’ll sit for eight hours, for whole days together in the same place. You see there’s a roll lying there, perhaps she’s only taken one bite at it since the morning, and she’ll finish it to-morrow. Now she’s begun trying her fortune on cards. .”. .”

“I keep trying my fortune, Shatushka, but it doesn’t come out right,” Marya Timofyevna put in suddenly, catching the last word, and without looking at it she put out her left hand for the roll (she had heard something about the roll too very likely). She got hold of the roll at last and after keeping it for some time in her left hand, while her attention was distracted by the conversation which sprang up again, she put it back again on the table unconsciously without having taken a bite of it.

“It always comes out the same, a journey, a wicked man, somebody’s treachery, a death-bed, a letter, unexpected news. I think it’s all nonsense. Shatushka, what do you think? If people can tell lies why shouldn’t a card?” She suddenly threw the cards together again. “I said the same thing to Mother Praskovya, she’s a very venerable woman, she used to run to my cell to tell her fortune on the cards, without letting the Mother Superior know. Yes, and she wasn’t the only one who came to me. They sigh, and shake their heads at me, they talk it over while I laugh. ‘Where are you going to get a letter from, Mother Praskovya,’ I say, ‘when you haven’t had one for twelve years?’ Her daughter had been taken away to Turkey by her husband, and for twelve years there had been no sight nor sound of her. Only I was sitting the next evening at tea with the Mother Superior (she was a princess by birth), there was some lady there too, a visitor, a great dreamer, and a little monk from Athos was sitting there too, a rather absurd

man to my thinking. What do you think, Shatushka, that monk from Athos had brought Mother Praskovya a letter from her daughter in Turkey, that morning — so much for the knave of diamonds — unexpected news! We were drinking our tea, and the monk from Athos said to the Mother Superior, ‘Blessed Mother Superior, God has blessed your convent above all things in that you preserve so great a treasure in its precincts,’ said he. ‘What treasure is that?’ asked the Mother Superior. ‘The Mother Lizaveta, the Blessed.’ This Lizaveta the Blessed was enshrined in the nunnery wall, in a cage seven feet long and five feet high, and she had been sitting there for seventeen years in nothing but a hempen shift, summer and winter, and she always kept pecking at the hempen cloth with a straw or a twig of some sort, and she never said a word, and never combed her hair, or washed, for seventeen years. In the winter they used to put a sheepskin in for her, and every day a piece of bread and a jug of water. The pilgrims gaze at her, sigh and exclaim, and make offerings of money. ‘A treasure you’ve pitched on,’ answered the Mother Superior — (she was angry, she disliked Lizaveta dreadfully)—’ Lizaveta only sits there out of spite, out of pure obstinacy, it is nothing but hypocrisy.’ I didn’t like this; I was thinking at the time of shutting myself up too. ‘I think,’ said I, ‘that God and nature are just the same thing.’ They all cried out with one voice at me, ‘Well, now!’ The Mother Superior laughed, whispered something to the lady and called me up, petted me, and the lady gave me a pink ribbon. Would you like me to show it to you? And the monk began to admonish me. But he talked so kindly, so humbly, and so wisely, I suppose. I sat and listened. ‘Do you understand?’ he asked. ‘No,’ I said, ‘I don’t understand a word, but leave me quite alone.’ Ever since then they’ve left me in peace, Shatushka. And at that time an old woman who was living in the convent doing penance for prophesying the future, whispered to me as she was coming out of church, ‘What is the mother of God? What do you think?”The great mother,’ I answer, ‘the hope of the human race.”Yes,’ she answered, ‘the mother of God is the great mother — the damp earth, and therein lies great joy for men. And every earthly woe and every earthly tear is a joy for us; and when you water the earth with your tears a foot deep, you will rejoice at everything at once, and your sorrow will be no more, such is the prophecy.’ That word sank into my heart at the time. Since then when I bow down to the ground at my prayers, I’ve taken to kissing the earth. I kiss it and weep. And let me tell you, Shatushka, there’s no harm in those tears; and even if

one has no grief, one's tears flow from joy. The tears flow of themselves, that's the truth. I used to go out to the shores of the lake; on one side was our convent and on the other the pointed mountain, they called it the Peak. I used to go up that mountain, facing the east, fall down to the ground, and weep and weep, and I don't know how long I wept, and I don't remember or know anything about it. I would get up, and turn back when the sun was setting, it was so big, and splendid and glorious — do you like looking at the sun, Shatushka? It's beautiful but sad. I would turn to the east again, and the shadow, the shadow of our mountain was flying like an arrow over our lake, long, long and narrow, stretching a mile beyond, right up to the island on the lake and cutting that rocky island right in two, and as it cut it in two, the sun would set altogether and suddenly all would be darkness. And then I used to be quite miserable, suddenly I used to remember, I'm. afraid of the dark, Shatushka. And what I wept for most was my baby. ..."

"Why, had you one?" And Shatov, who had been listening attentively all the time, nudged me with his elbow.

"Why, of course. A little rosy baby with tiny little nails, and my only grief is I can't remember whether it was a boy or a girl. Sometimes I remember it was a boy, and sometimes it was a girl. And when he was born, I wrapped him in cambric and lace, and put pink ribbons on him, strewed him with flowers, got him ready, said prayers over him. I took him away un-christened and carried him through the forest, and I was afraid of the forest, and I was frightened, and what I weep for most is that I had a baby and I never had a husband."

"Perhaps you had one?" Shatov queried cautiously."

"You're absurd, Shatushka, with your reflections. I had, perhaps I had, but what's the use of my having had one, if it's just the same as though I hadn't. There's an easy riddle for you. Guess it!" she laughed.

"Where did you take your baby?"

"I took it to the pond," she said with a sigh.

Shatov nudged me again.

"And what if you never had a baby and all this is only a wild dream?"

"You ask me a hard question, Shatushka," she answered dreamily, without a trace of surprise at such a question. "I can't tell you anything about that, perhaps I hadn't; I think that's only your curiosity. I shan't leave off crying for him anyway, I couldn't have dreamt it." And big tears

glittered in her eyes. “Shatushka, Shatushka, is it true that your wife ran away from you?”

She suddenly put both hands on his shoulders, and looked at him pityingly. “Don’t be angry, I feel sick myself. Do you know, Shatushka, I’ve had a dream: he came to me again, he beckoned me, called me. ‘My little puss,’ he cried to me, ‘little puss, come to me!’ And I was more delighted at that ‘little puss’ than anything; he loves me, I thought.”

“Perhaps he will come in reality,” Shatov muttered in an undertone.

“No, Shatushka, that’s a dream. . . . He can’t come in reality. You know the song:

‘*A new fine house I do not crave,*

This tiny cell’s enough for me;

There will I dwell my soul to save

And ever pray to God for thee.’

Ach, Shatushka, Shatushka, my dear, why do you never ask

me about anything?”

“Why, you won’t tell. That’s why I don’t ask.”

“I won’t tell, I won’t tell,” she answered quickly. “You may kill me, I won’t tell. You may burn me, I won’t tell.

And whatever I had to bear I’d never tell, people won’t find out!”

“There, you see. Every one has something of their own,” Shatov said, still more softly, his head drooping lower and lower.

“But if you were to ask perhaps I should tell, perhaps I should!” she repeated ecstatically. “Why don’t you ask I Ask, ask me nicely, Shatushka, perhaps I shall tell you. Entreat me, Shatushka, so that I shall consent of myself. Shatushka, Shatushka!”

But Shatushka was silent. There was complete silence lasting a minute. Tears slowly trickled down her painted cheeks. She sat forgetting her two hands on Shatov’s shoulders, but no longer looking at him.

“Ach, what is it to do with me, and it’s a sin.” Shatov suddenly got up from the bench.

“Get up!” He angrily pulled the bench from under me and put it back where it stood before.

“He’ll be coming, so we must mind he doesn’t guess. It’s time we were off.”

“Ach, you’re talking of my footman,” Marya Timofyevna laughed suddenly. “You’re afraid of him. Well, good-bye, dear visitors, but listen for

one minute, I've something to tell you. That Nilitch came here with Filipov, the landlord, a red beard, and my fellow had flown at me just then, so the landlord caught hold of him and pulled him about the room while he shouted 'It's not my fault, I'm suffering for another man's sin!' So would you believe it, we all burst out laughing. . . ."

"Ach, Timofyevna, why it was I, not the red beard, it was I pulled him away from you by his hair, this morning; the landlord came the day before yesterday to make a row; you've mixed it up."

"Stay, I really have mixed it up. Perhaps it was you. Why dispute about trifles? What does it matter to him who it is gives him a beating?" She laughed.

"Come along!" Shatov pulled me. "The gate's creaking, he'll find us and beat her."

And before we had time to run out on to the stairs we heard a drunken shout and a shower of oaths at the gate.

Shatov let me into his room and locked the door.

"You'll have to stay a minute if you don't want a scene. He's squealing like a little pig, he must have stumbled over the gate again. He falls flat every time."

We didn't get off without a scene, however.

VI

Shatov stood at the closed door of his room and listened; suddenly he sprang back.

"He's coming here, I knew he would," he whispered furiously. "Now there'll be no getting rid of him till midnight."

Several violent thumps of a fist on the door followed.

"Shatov, Shatov, friend. . . .! open!" yelled the captain. "Shatov,

I have come, to thee to tell thee
That the sun doth r-r-rise apace,
That the forest glows and tr-r-rembles
In . . . the fire of . . . his . . . embrace.
Tell thee I have waked, God damn thee,
Wakened under the birch-twigs. . . .'
("As it might be under the birch-rods, ha ha!")
'Silvery little bird . . . is . . . thirsty,

Says I’m going

t o ... *have a drink,*

But I don’t . . . know what to drink. . . .’

Damn his stupid curiosity! Shatov, do you understand how good it is to be alive!”

“Don’t answer!” Shatov whispered to me again.

“Open the door! Do you understand that there’s something higher than brawling ... in mankind; there are moments of an hon-hon-honourable man. . . . Shatov, I’m good; I’ll forgive you. . . . Shatov, damn the manifestoes, eh?”

Silence.

“Do you understand, you ass, that I’m in love, that I’ve bought a dress-coat, look, the garb of love, fifteen roubles; a captain’s love calls for the niceties of style. . . . Open the door!” he roared savagely all of a sudden, and he began furiously banging with his fists again.

“Go to hell!” Shatov roared suddenly. .

“S-s-slave! Bond-slave, and your sister’s a slave, a bondswoman . . . a th . . . th . . . ief!”

“And you sold your sister.”

“That’s a lie! I put up with the libel though. I could with one word ... do you understand what she is?”

“What?” Shatov at once drew near the door inquisitively.

“But will you understand?”

“Yes, I shall understand, tell me what?”

“I’m not afraid to say! I’m never afraid to say anything in public! . . .”

“You not afraid? A likely story,” said Shatov, taunting him, and nodding to me to listen.

“Me afraid?”

“Yes, I think you are.”

“Me afraid?”

“Well then, tell away if you’re not afraid of your master’s whip. . . . You’re a coward, though you are a captain!”

“I ... I ... she’s . . . she’s . . ,” faltered Lebyadkin in a voice shaking with excitement.

“Well?” Shatov put his ear to the door.

A silence followed, lasting at least half a minute.

“Sc-ou-oundrel!” came from the other side of the door at last, and the captain hurriedly beat a retreat downstairs, puffing like a samovar, stumbling on every step.

“Yes, he’s a sly one, and won’t give himself away even when he’s drunk.”

Shatov moved away from the door.

“What’s it all about?” I asked.

Shatov waved aside the question, opened the door and began listening on the stairs again. He listened a long while, and even stealthily descended a few steps. At last he came back.

“There’s nothing to be heard; he isn’t beating her; he must have flopped down at once to go to sleep. It’s time for you to go.”

“Listen, Shatov, what am I to gather from all this?”

“Oh, gather what you like!” he answered in a weary and disgusted voice, and he sat down to his writing-table.

I went away. An improbable idea was growing stronger and stronger in my mind. I thought of the next day with distress. . . .

VII

This “next day,” the very Sunday which was to decide Stepan Trofimovitch’s fate irrevocably, was one of the most memorable days in my chronicle. It was a day of surprises, a, day that solved past riddles and suggested new ones, a day of startling revelations, and still more hopeless perplexity. In the morning, as the reader is already aware, I had by Varvara, Petrovna’s particular request to accompany my friend on his visit to her, and at three o’clock in the afternoon I had to be with Lizaveta Nikolaevna in order to tell her — I did not know what — and to assist her — I did not know how. And meanwhile it all ended as no one could have expected. In a word, it was a day of wonderful coincidences.

To begin with, when Stepan Trofimovitch and I arrived at Varvara Petrovna’s at twelve o’clock punctually, the time she had fixed, we did not find her at home; she had not yet come back from church. My poor friend was so disposed, or, more accurately speaking, so indisposed that this circumstance crushed him at once; he sank almost helpless into an arm-chair in the drawing-room. I suggested a glass of water; but in spite of his pallor and the trembling of his hands, he refused it with dignity. His get-up

for the occasion was, by the way, extremely recherche: a shirt of batiste and embroidered, almost fit for a ball, a white tie, a new hat in his hand, new straw-coloured gloves, and even a suspicion of scent. We had hardly sat down when Shatov was shown in by the butler, obviously also by official invitation. Stepan Trofimovitch was rising to shake hands with him, but Shatov, after looking attentively at us both, turned away into a corner, and sat down there without even nodding to us. Stepan Trofimovitch looked at me in dismay again.

We sat like this for some minutes longer in complete silence. Stepan Trofimovitch suddenly began whispering something to me very quickly, but I could not catch it; and indeed, he was so agitated himself that he broke off without finishing. The butler came in once more, ostensibly to set something straight on the table, more probably to take a look at us.

Shatov suddenly addressed him with a loud question:

“Alexey Yegorytch, do you know whether Darya Pavlovna has gone with her?”

“Varvara Petrovna was pleased to drive to the cathedral alone, and Darya Pavlovna was pleased to remain in her room upstairs, being indisposed,” Alexey Yegorytch announced formally and reprovingly.

My poor friend again stole a hurried and agitated glance at me, so that at last I turned away from him. Suddenly a carriage rumbled at the entrance, and some commotion at a distance in the house made us aware of the lady’s return. We all leapt up from our easy chairs, but again a surprise awaited us; we heard the noise of many footsteps, so our hostess must have returned not alone, and this certainly was rather strange, since she had fixed that time herself. Finally, we heard some one come in with strange rapidity as though running, in a way that Varvara Petrovna could not have come in. And, all at once she almost flew into the room, panting and extremely agitated. After her a little later and much more quickly Lizaveta Nikolaevna came in, and with her, hand in hand, Marya Timofyevna Lebyadkin! If I had seen this in my dreams, even then I should not have believed it.

To explain their utterly unexpected appearance, I must go back an hour and describe more in detail an extraordinary adventure which had befallen Varvara Petrovna in church.

In the first place almost the whole town, that is, of course, all of the upper stratum of society, were assembled in the cathedral. It was known that the governor’s wife was to make her appearance there for the first time

since her arrival amongst us. I must mention that there were already rumours that she was a free-thinker, and a follower of “the new principles.” All the ladies were also aware that she would be dressed with magnificence and extraordinary elegance. And so the costumes of our ladies were elaborate and gorgeous for the occasion.

Only Varvara Petrovna was modestly dressed in black as she always was, and had been for the last four years. She had taken her usual place in church in the first row on the left, and a footman in livery had put down a velvet cushion for her to kneel on; everything in fact, had been as usual. But it was noticed, too, that all through the service she prayed with extreme fervour. It was even asserted afterwards when people recalled it, that she had had tears in her eyes. The service was over at last, and our chief priest, Father Pavel, came out to deliver a solemn sermon. We liked his sermons and thought very highly of them. We used even to try to persuade him to print them, but he never could make up his mind to. On this occasion the sermon was a particularly long one.

And behold, during the sermon a lady drove up to the church in an old fashioned hired droshky, that is, one in which the lady could only sit sideways, holding on to the driver’s sash, shaking at every jolt like a blade of grass in the breeze. Such droshkys are still to be seen in our town. Stopping at the corner of the cathedral — for there were a number of carriages, and mounted police too, at the gates — the lady sprang out of the droshky and handed the driver four kopecks in silver.

“Isn’t it enough, Vanya?” she cried, seeing his grimace. “It’s all I’ve got,” she added plaintively.

“Well, there, bless you. I took you without fixing the price,” said the driver with a hopeless gesture, and looking at her he added as though reflecting:

“And it would be a sin to take advantage of you too.”

Then, thrusting his leather purse into his bosom, he touched up his horse and drove off, followed by the jeers of the drivers standing near. Jeers, and wonder too, followed the lady as she made her way to the cathedral gates, between the carriages and the footmen waiting for their masters to come out. And indeed, there certainly was something extraordinary and surprising to every one in such a person’s suddenly appearing in the street among people. She was painfully thin and she limped, she was heavily powdered and rouged; her long neck was quite bare, she had neither kerchief nor

pelisse; she had nothing on but an old dark dress in spite of the cold and windy, though bright, September day. She was bareheaded, and her hair was twisted up into a tiny knot, and on the right side of it was stuck an artificial rose, such as are used to dedicate cherubs sold in Palm week. I had noticed just such a one with a wreath of paper roses in a corner under the ikons when I was at Mary Timofyevna's the day before. To put a finishing-touch to it, though the lady walked with modestly downcast eyes there was a sly and merry smile on her face. If she had lingered a moment longer, she would perhaps not have been allowed to enter the cathedral. But she succeeded in slipping by, and entering the building, gradually pressed forward.

Though it was half-way through the sermon, and the dense crowd that filled the cathedral was listening to it with absorbed and silent attention, yet several pairs of eyes glanced with curiosity and amazement at the new-comer. She sank on to the floor, bowed her painted face down to it, lay there a long time, unmistakably weeping; but raising her head again and getting up from her knees, she soon recovered, and was diverted. Gaily and with evident and intense enjoyment she let her eyes rove over the faces, and over the walls of the cathedral. She looked with particular curiosity at some of the ladies, even standing on tip-toe to look at them, and even laughed once or twice, giggling strangely. But the sermon was over, and they brought out the cross. The governor's wife was the first to go up to the cross, but she stopped short two steps from it, evidently wishing to make way for Varvara . Petrovna, who, on her side, moved towards it quite directly as though she noticed no one in front of her. There was an obvious and, in its way, clever malice implied in this extraordinary act of deference on the part of the governor's wife; every one felt this; Varvara Petrovna must have felt it too; but she went on as before, apparently noticing no one, and with the same unfaltering air of dignity kissed the cross, and at once turned to leave the cathedral. A footman in livery cleared the way for her, though every one stepped back spontaneously to let her pass. But just as she was going out, in the porch the closely packed mass of people blocked the way for a moment. Varvara Petrovna stood still, and suddenly a strange, extraordinary creature, the woman with the paper rose on her head, squeezed through the people, and fell on her knees before her. Varvara Petrovna, who was not easily disconcerted, especially in public, looked at her sternly and with dignity.

I hasten to observe here, as briefly as possible, that though Varvara Petrovna had become, it was said, excessively careful and even stingy, yet sometimes she was not sparing of money, especially for benevolent objects. She was a member of a charitable society in the capital. In the last famine year she had sent five hundred roubles to the chief committee for the relief of the sufferers, and people talked of it in the town. Moreover, just before the appointment of the new governor, she had been on the very point of founding a local committee of ladies to assist the poorest mothers in the town and in the province. She was severely censured among us for ambition; but Varvara Petrovna's well-known strenuousness and, at the .same time, her persistence nearly triumphed over all obstacles. The society was almost formed, and the original idea embraced a wider and wider scope in the enthusiastic mind of the foundress. She was already dreaming of founding a similar society in Moscow, and the gradual expansion of its influence over all the provinces of Russia. And now, with the sudden change of governor, everything was at a standstill; and the new governor's wife had, it was said, already uttered in society some biting, and, what was worse, apt and sensible remarks about the impracticability of the fundamental idea of such a committee, which was, with additions of course, repeated to Varvara Petrovna. God alone knows the secrets of men's hearts; but I imagine that Varvara Petrovna stood still now at the very cathedral gates positively with a certain pleasure, knowing that the governor's wife and, after her, all the congregation, would have to pass by immediately, and "let her see for herself how little I care what she thinks, and what pointed things she says about the vanity of my benevolence. So much for all of you!"

"What is it my dear? What are you asking?" said Varvara Petrovna, looking more attentively at the kneeling woman before her, who gazed at her with a fearfully panic-stricken, shame-faced, but almost reverent expression, and suddenly broke into the same strange giggle.

"What does she want? Who is she Â«"

Varvara Petrovna bent an imperious and inquiring gaze on all around her. Every one was silent.

"You are unhappy? You are in need of help?"

"I am in need. ... I have come ..," faltered the "unhappy" creature, in a voice broken with emotion. "I have come only to kiss your hand. ..."

Again she giggled. With the childish look with which little children caress some one, begging for a favour, she stretched forward to seize Varvara Petrovna's hand, but, as though panic-stricken, drew her hands back.

"Is that all you have come for?" said Varvara Petrovna, with a compassionate smile; but at once she drew her mother-of-pearl purse out of her pocket, took out a ten-rouble note and gave it to the unknown. The latter took it. Varvara Petrovna was much interested and evidently did not look upon her as an ordinary low-class beggar.

"I say, she gave her ten roubles!" some one said in the crowd.

"Let me kiss your hand," faltered the unknown, holding tight in the fingers of her left hand the corner of the ten-rouble note, which fluttered in the draught. Varvara Petrovna frowned slightly, and with a serious, almost severe, face held out her hand. The cripple kissed it with reverence. Her grateful eyes shone with positive ecstasy. At that moment the governor's wife came up, and a whole crowd of ladies and high officials flocked after her. The governor's wife was forced to stand still for a moment in the crush; many people stopped.

"You are trembling. Are you cold?" Varvara Petrovna observed suddenly, and flinging off her pelisse which a footman caught in mid-air, she took from her own shoulders a very expensive black shawl, and with her own hands wrapped it round the bare neck of the still kneeling woman.

"But get up, get up from your knees I beg you!"

The woman got up.

"Where do you live? Is it possible no one knows where she lives?" Varvara Petrovna glanced round impatiently again. But the crowd was different now: she saw only the faces of acquaintances, people in society, surveying the scene, some with severe astonishment, others with sly curiosity and at the same time guileless eagerness for a sensation, while others positively laughed.

"I believe her name's Lebyadkin," a good-natured person volunteered at last in answer to Varvara Petrovna. It was our respectable and respected merchant Andreev, a man in spectacles with a grey beard, wearing Russian dress and holding a high round hat in his hands. "They live in the Filipovs' house in Bogoyavlensky Street."

"Lebyadkin? Filipovs' house? I have heard something. . . . Thank you, Nikon Semyonitch. But who is this Lebyadkin?"

“He calls himself a captain, a man, it must be said, not over careful in his behaviour. And no doubt this is his sister. She must have escaped from under control,” Nikon Semyonitch went on, dropping his voice, and glancing significantly at Varvara Petrovna.

“I understand. Thank you, Nikon Semyonitch. Your name is Mile. Lebyadkin?”

“No, my name’s not Lebyadkin.”

“Then perhaps your brother’s name is Lebyadkin?”

“My brother’s name is Lebyadkin.”

“This is what I’ll do, I’ll take you with me now, my dear, and you shall be driven from me to your family. Would you like to go with me?”

“Ach, I should!” cried Mile. Lebyadkin, clasping her hands.

“Auntie, auntie, take me with you too!” the voice of Lizaveta Nikolaevna cried suddenly.

I must observe that Lizaveta Nikolaevna had come to the cathedral with the governor’s wife, while Praskovya Ivanovna had by the doctor’s orders gone for a drive in her carriage, taking Mavriky Nikolaevitch to entertain her. Liza suddenly left the governor’s wife and ran up to Varvara Petrovna.

“My dear, you know I’m always glad to have you, but what will your mother say?” Varvara Petrovna began majestically, but she became suddenly confused, noticing Liza’s extraordinary agitation.

“Auntie, auntie, I must come with you!” Liza implored, kissing Varvara Petrovna.

“*Mais qu’avez vous done, Lise?”* the governor’s wife asked with expressive wonder.

“Ah, forgive me, darling, *chere cousine*, I’m going to auntie’s.”

Liza turned in passing to her unpleasantly surprised *chere cousine*, and kissed her twice.

“And tell maman to follow me to auntie’s directly; maman meant, fully meant to come and see you, she said so this morning herself, I forgot to tell you,” Liza pattered on. “I beg your pardon, don’t be angry, *Julie, chere . . . cousine*. . . . Auntie, I’m ready!”

“If you don’t take me with you, auntie, I’ll run after your carriage, screaming,” she whispered rapidly and despairingly in Varvara Petrovna’s ear; it was lucky that no one heard. Varvara Petrovna positively staggered back, and bent her penetrating gaze on the mad girl. That gaze settled everything. She made up her mind to take Liza with her.

“We must put an end to this!” broke from her lips. “Very well, I’ll take you with pleasure, Liza,” she added aloud, “if Yulia Mihailovna is willing to let you come, of course.” With a candid air and straightforward dignity she addressed the governor’s wife directly.

“Oh, certainly, I don’t want to deprive her of such a pleasure especially as I am myself . . .” Yulia Mihailovna lisped with amazing affability—” I myself . . . know well what a fantastic, wilful little head it is!” Yulia Mihailovna gave a charming smile.

“I thank you extremely,” said Varvara Petrovna, with a courteous and dignified bow.

“And I am the more gratified,” Yulia Mihailovna went on, lisping almost rapturously, flushing all over with agreeable excitement, “that, apart from the pleasure of being with you Liza should be carried away by such an excellent, I may say lofty, feeling ... of compassion ...” (she glanced at the “unhappy creature”) “and . . . and at the very portal of the temple. . . .”

“Such a feeling does you honour,” Varvara Petrovna approved magnificently. Yulia Mihailovna impulsively held out her hand and Varvara Petrovna with perfect readiness touched it with her fingers. The general effect was excellent, the faces of some of those present beamed with pleasure, some bland and insinuating smiles were to be seen.

In short it was made manifest to every one in the town that it was not Yulia Mihailovna who had up till now neglected Varvara Petrovna in not calling upon her, but on the contrary that Varvara Petrovna had “kept Yulia Mihailovna within bounds at a distance, while the latter would have hastened to pay her a visit, going on foot perhaps if necessary, had she been fully assured that Varvara Petrovna would not turn her away.” And Varvara Petrovna’s prestige was enormously increased.

“Get in, my dear.” Varvara Petrovna motioned Mile. Lebyadkin towards the carriage which had driven up.

The “unhappy creature” hurried gleefully to the carriage door, and there the footman lifted her in.

“What! You’re lame!” cried Varvara Petrovna, seeming quite alarmed, and she turned pale. (Every one noticed it at the time, but did not understand it.)

The carriage rolled away. Varvara Petrovna’s house was very near the cathedral. Liza told me afterwards that Miss Lebyadkin laughed hysterically

for the three minutes that the drive lasted, while Varvara Petrovna sat “as though in a mesmeric sleep.” Liza’s own expression.

CHAPTER V.

THE SUBTLE SERPENT

VARVARA PETROVNA rang the bell and threw herself into an easy chair by the window.

“Sit here, my dear.” She motioned Marya Timofyevna to a seat in the middle of the room, by a large round table. “Stepan Trofimovitch, what is the meaning of this? See, see, look at this woman, what is the meaning of it?”

“I ... I ..,” faltered Stepan Trofimovitch.

But a footman came in.

“A cup of coffee at once, we must have it as quickly as possible! Keep the horses!”

“*Mais, chere et excellente amie, dans quelle inquietude . . .*” Stepan Trofimovitch exclaimed in a dying voice.

“Ach! French! French! I can see at once that it’s the highest society,” cried Marya Timofyevna, clapping her hands, ecstatically preparing herself to listen to a conversation in French. Varvara Petrovna stared at her almost in dismay.

We all sat in silence, waiting to see how it would end. Shatov did not lift up his head, and Stepan Trofimovitch was overwhelmed with confusion as though it were all his fault; the perspiration stood out on his temples. I glanced at Liza (she was sitting in the corner almost beside Shatov). Her eyes darted keenly from Varvara Petrovna to the cripple and back again; her lips were drawn into a smile, but not a pleasant one. Varvara Petrovna saw that smile. Meanwhile Marya Timofyevna was absolutely transported. With evident enjoyment and without a trace of embarrassment she stared at Varvara Petrovna’s beautiful drawing-room — the furniture, the carpets, the pictures on the walls, the old-fashioned painted ceiling, the great bronze crucifix in the corner, the china lamp, the albums, the objects on the table.

“And you’re here, too, Shatushka!” she cried suddenly. “Only fancy, I saw you a long time ago, but I thought it couldn’t be you! How could you come here!” And she laughed gaily.

“You know this woman?” said Varvara Petrovna, turning to him at once.

“I know her,” muttered Shatov. He seemed about to move from his chair, but remained sitting.

“What do you know of her? Make haste, please!”

“Oh, well . . ,” he stammered with an incongruous smile. “You see for yourself. ...”

“What do I see? Come now, say something!”

“She lives in the same house as I do . . . with her brother . . . an officer.”

“Well?”

Shatov stammered again.

“It’s not worth talking about . . ,” he muttered, and relapsed into determined silence. He positively flushed with determination.

“Of course one can expect nothing else from you,” said Varvara Petrovna indignantly. It was clear to her now that they all knew something and, at the same time, that they were all scared, that they were evading her questions, and anxious to keep something from her.

The footman came in and brought her, on a little silver tray, the cup of coffee she had so specially ordered, but at a sign from her moved with it at once towards Marya Timofyevna.

“You were very cold just now, my dear; make haste and drink it and get warm.”

“*Herd.”*

Marya Timofyevna took the cup and at once went off into a giggle at having said *merci* to the footman. But meeting Varvara Petrovna’s reproving eyes, she was overcome with shyness and put the cup on the table.

“Auntie, surely you’re not angry?” she faltered with a sort of flippant playfulness.

“Wh-a-a-t?” Varvara Petrovna started, and drew herself up in her chair. “I’m not your aunt. What are you thinking of?”

Marya Timofyevna, not expecting such an angry outburst, began trembling all over in little convulsive shudders, as though she were in a fit, and sank back in her chair.

“I ... I ... thought that was the proper way,” she faltered, gazing open-eyed at Varvara Petrovna. “Liza called you that.”

“What Liza?”

“Why, this young lady here,” said Marya Timofyevna, pointing with her finger.

“So she’s Liza already?”

“You called her that yourself just now,” said Marya Timofyevna growing a little holder. “And I dreamed of a beauty like that,” she added, laughing, as it were accidentally.

Varvara Petrovna reflected, and grew calmer, she even smiled faintly at Marya Timofyevna’s last words; the latter, catching her smile, got up from her chair, and limping, went timidly towards her.

“Take it. I forgot to give it back. Don’t be angry with my rudeness.”

She took from her shoulders the black shawl that Varvara Petrovna had wrapped round her.

“Put it on again at once, and you can keep it always. Go and sit down, drink your coffee, and please don’t be afraid of me, my dear, don’t worry yourself. I am beginning to understand you.”

“*Chere amie* . . .” Stepan Trofimovitch ventured again.

“Ach, Stepan Trofimovitch, it’s bewildering enough without you. You might at least spare me. . . . Please ring that bell there, near you, to the maid’s room.”

A silence followed. Her eyes strayed irritably and suspiciously over all our faces. Agasha, her favourite maid, came in.

“Bring me my check shawl, the one I bought in Geneva. What’s Darya Pavlovna doing?”

“She’s not very well, madam.”

“Go and ask her to come here. Say that I want her particularly, even if she’s not well.”

At that instant there was again, as before, an unusual noise of steps and voices in the next room, and suddenly Praskovya Ivanovna, panting and “distracted,” appeared in the doorway. She was leaning on the arm of Mavriky Nikolaevitch.

“Ach, heavens, I could scarcely drag myself here. Liza, you mad girl, how you treat your mother!” she squeaked, concentrating in that squeak, as weak and irritable people are wont to do, all her accumulated irritability. “Varvara Petrovna, I’ve come for my daughter!”

Varvara Petrovna looked at her from under her brows, half rose to meet her, and scarcely concealing her vexation brought out: “Good morning, Praskovya Ivanovna, please be seated, knew you would come!”

II

There could be nothing surprising to Praskovya Ivanovna in such a reception. Varvara Petrovna had from childhood upwards treated her old school friend tyrannically, and under a show of friendship almost contemptuously. And this was an exceptional occasion too. During the last few days there had almost been a complete rupture between the two households, as I have mentioned incidentally already. The reason of this rupture was still a mystery to Varvara Petrovna, which made it all the more offensive; but the chief cause of offence was that Praskovya Ivanovna had succeeded in taking up an extraordinarily supercilious attitude towards Varvara Petrovna. Varvara Petrovna was wounded of course, and meanwhile some strange rumours had reached her which also irritated her extremely, especially by their vagueness. Varvara Petrovna was of a direct and proudly frank character, somewhat slap-dash in her methods, indeed, if the expression is permissible. There was nothing she detested so much as secret and mysterious insinuations, she always preferred war in the open. Anyway, the two ladies had not met for five days. The last visit had been paid by Varvara Petrovna, who had come back from “that Drozdov woman” offended and perplexed. I can say with certainty that Praskovya Ivanovna had come on this occasion with the naive conviction that Varvara Petrovna would, for some reason, be sure to stand in awe of her. This was evident from the very expression of her face. Evidently too, Varvara Petrovna was always possessed by a demon of haughty pride whenever she had the least ground for suspecting that she was for some reason supposed to be humiliated. Like many weak people, who for a long time ‘allow themselves to be insulted without resenting it, Praskovya Ivanovna showed an extraordinary violence in her attack at the first favourable opportunity. It is true that she was not well, and always became more irritable in illness. I must add finally, that our presence in the drawing-room could hardly be much check to the two ladies who had been friends from childhood, if a quarrel had broken out between them. We were looked upon as friends of the family, and almost as their subjects. I made that reflection with some alarm at the time. Stepan Trofimovitch, who had not sat down since the entrance of Varvara Petrovna, sank helplessly into an arm-chair on hearing Praskovya Ivanovna’s squeal, and tried to catch my eye with a look of despair. Shatov turned sharply in his chair, and growled something to himself. I believe he meant to get up and go away. Liza rose from her chair but sank back again at once without even paying befitting attention to her

mother’s squeal — not from “waywardness,” but obviously because she was entirely absorbed by some” other overwhelming impression. She was looking absent-mindedly into the air, no longer noticing even Marya Timofyevna.

III

“Ach, here!” Praskovya Ivanovna indicated an easy chair near the table and sank heavily into it with the assistance of Mavriky Nikolaevitch. “I wouldn’t have sat down in your house, my lady, if it weren’t for my legs,” she added in a breaking voice.

Varvara Petrovna raised her head a little, and with an expression of suffering pressed the fingers of her right hand to her right temple, evidently in acute pain *(tic douloureux).*

“Why so, Praskovya Ivanovna; why wouldn’t you sit down in my house? I possessed your late husband’s sincere friendship all his life; and you and I used to play with our dolls at school together as girls.”

Praskovya Ivanovna waved her hands.

“I knew that was coming! You always begin about the school when you want to reproach me — that’s your way. But to my thinking that’s only fine talk. I can’t stand the school you’re always talking about.”

You’ve come in rather a bad temper, I’m afraid; how are your legs? Here they’re bringing you some coffee, please have some, drink it and don’t be cross.”

“Varvara Petrovna, you treat me as though I were a child. I won’t have any coffee, so there!”

And she pettishly waved away the footman who was bringing her coffee. (All the others refused coffee too except Mavriky Nikolaevitch and me. Stepan Trofimovitch took it, but put it aside on the table. Though Marya Timofyevna was very eager to have another cup and even put out her hand to take it, on second thoughts she refused it ceremoniously, and was obviously pleased with herself for doing so.)

Varvara Petrovna gave a wry smile.

“I’ll tell you what it is, Praskovya Ivanovna, my friend, you must have taken some fancy into your head again, and that’s why you’ve come. You’ve simply lived on fancies all your life. You flew into a fury at the mere mention of our school; but do you remember how you came and

persuaded all the class that a hussar called Shablykin had proposed to you, and how Mme. Lefebure proved on the spot you were lying. Yet you weren't lying, you were simply imagining it all to amuse yourself. Come, tell me, what is it now? What are you fancying now; what is it vexes you?"

"And you fell in love with the priest who used to teach us scripture at school — so much for you, since you've such a spiteful memory. Ha ha ha!"

She laughed viciously and went off into a fit of coughing.

"Ah, you've not forgotten the priest then . . ," said Varvara Petrovna, looking at her vindictively.

Her face turned green. Praskovya Ivanovna suddenly assumed a dignified air.

"I'm in no laughing mood now, madam. Why have you drawn my daughter into your scandals in the face of the whole town? That's what I've come about.'

"My scandals?" Varvara Petrovna drew herself up menacingly.

"Maman, I entreat you too, to restrain yourself," Lizaveta Nikolaevna brought out suddenly.

"What's that you say?" The maman was on the point of breaking into a squeal again, but catching her daughter's flashing eye, she subsided suddenly.

"How could you talk about scandal, maman?" cried Liza, flushing red. "I came of my own accord with Yulia Mihailovna's permission, because I wanted to learn this unhappy woman's story and to be of use to her."

"This unhappy woman's story!" Praskovya Ivanovna drawled with a spiteful laugh. "Is it your place to mix yourself up with such 'stories.' Ach, enough of your tyrannising!" She turned furiously to Varvara Petrovna. "I don't know whether it's true or not, they say you keep the whole town in order, but it seems your turn has come at last."

Varvara Petrovna sat straight as an arrow ready to fly from the bow. For ten seconds she looked sternly and immovably at Praskovya Ivanovna.

"Well, Praskovya, you must thank God that all here present are our friends," she said at last with ominous composure. "You've said a great deal better unsaid."

"But I'm not so much afraid of what the world will say, my lady, as some people. It's you who, under a show of pride, are trembling at what people

will say. And as for all here being your friends, it’s better for you than if strangers had been listening.”

“Have you grown wiser during this last week?”

“It’s not that I’ve grown wiser, but simply that the truth has come out this week.”

“What truth has come out this week? Listen, Praskovya Ivanovna, don’t irritate me. Explain to me this minute, I beg you as a favour, what truth has come out and what do you mean by that?”

“Why there it is, sitting before you!” and Praskovya Ivanovna suddenly pointed at Marya Timofyevna with that desperate determination which takes no heed of consequences, if only it can make an impression at the moment. Marya Timofyevna, who had watched her all the time with light-hearted curiosity, laughed exultingly at the sight of the wrathful guest’s finger pointed impetuously at her, and wriggled gleefully in her easy chair.

“God Almighty have mercy on us, they’ve all gone crazy!” exclaimed Varvara Petrovna, and turning pale she sank back in her chair.

She turned so pale that it caused some commotion. Stepan Trofimovitch was the first to rush up to her. I drew near also; even Liza got up from her seat, though she did not come forward. But the most alarmed of all was Praskovya Ivanovna herself; She uttered a scream, got up as far as she could and almost wailed in a lachrymose voice:

“Varvara Petrovna, dear, forgive me for my wicked foolishness! Give her some water, somebody.”

“Don’t whimper, please, Praskovya Ivanovna, and leave me alone, gentlemen, please, I don’t want any water!” Varvara Petrovna pronounced in a firm though low voice, with blanched lips.

“Varvara Petrovna, my dear,” Praskovya Ivanovna went on, a little reassured, “though I am to blame for my reckless words, what’s upset me more than anything are these anonymous letters that some low creatures keep bombarding me with; they might write to you, since it concerns you, but I’ve a daughter!”

Varvara Petrovna looked at her in silence, with wide-open eyes, listening with wonder. At that moment a side-door in the corner opened noiselessly, and Darya Pavlovna made her appearance. She stood still and looked round. She was struck by our perturbation. Probably she did not at first distinguish Marya Timofyevna, of whose presence she had not been informed. Stepan Trofimovitch was the first to notice her; he made a rapid movement, turned

red, and for some reason proclaimed in a loud voice: “Darya Pavlovna!” so that all eyes turned on the new-comer.

“Oh, is this your Darya Pavlovna!” cried Marya Timofyevna. “Well, Shatushka, your sister’s not like you. How can my fellow call such a charmer the serf-wench Dasha?”

Meanwhile Darya Pavlovna had gone up to Varvara Petrovna, but struck by Marya Timofyevna’s exclamation she turned quickly and stopped just before her chair, looking at the imbecile with a long fixed gaze.

“Sit down, Dasha,” Varvara Petrovna brought out with terrifying composure. “Nearer, that’s right. You can see this woman, sitting down. Do you know her?”

“I have never seen her,” Dasha answered quietly, and after a pause she added at once:

“She must be the invalid sister of Captain Lebyadkin.”

“And it’s the first time I’ve set eyes on you, my love, though I’ve been interested and wanted to know you a long time, for I see how well-bred you are in every movement you make,” Marya Timofyevna cried enthusiastically. “And though my footman swears at you, can such a well-educated charming person as you really have stolen money from him? For you are sweet, sweet, sweet, I tell you that from myself!” she concluded, enthusiastically waving her hand.

“Can you make anything of it?” Varvara Petrovna asked with proud dignity.

“I understand it. . . .”

“Have you heard about the money?”

“No doubt it’s the money that I undertook at Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch’s request to hand over to her brother, Captain Lebyadkin.”

A silence followed.

“Did Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch himself ask you to do so?”

“He was very anxious to send that money, three hundred roubles, to Mr. Lebyadkin. And as he didn’t know his address, but only knew that he was to be in our town, he charged me to give it to Mr. Lebyadkin if he came.”

“What is the money . . . lost? What was *this* woman speaking about just now?”

“That I don’t know. I’ve heard before that Mr. Lebyadkin says I didn’t give him all the money, but I don’t understand his words. There were three hundred roubles and I sent him three hundred roubles.”

Darya Pavlovna had almost completely regained her composure. And it was difficult, I may mention, as a rule, to astonish the girl or ruffle her calm for long — whatever she might be feeling. She brought out all her answers now without haste, replied immediately to every question with accuracy, quietly, smoothly, and without a trace of the sudden emotion she had shown at first, or the slightest embarrassment which might have suggested a consciousness of guilt. Varvara Petrovna's eyes were fastened upon her all the time she was speaking. Varvara Petrovna thought for a minute:

"If," she pronounced at last firmly, evidently addressing all present, though she only looked at Dasha, "if Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch did not appeal even to me but asked you to do this for him, he must have had his reasons for doing so. I don't consider I have any right to inquire into them, if they are kept secret from me. But the very fact of your having taken part in the matter reassures me on that score, be sure of that, Darya, in any case. But you see, my dear, you may, through ignorance of the world, have quite innocently done something imprudent; and you did so when you undertook to have dealings with a low character. The rumours spread by this rascal show what a mistake you made. But I will find out about him, and as it is my task to protect you, I shall know how to defend you. But now all this must be put a stop to."

"The best thing to do," said Marya Timofyevna, popping up from her chair, "is to send him to the footmen's room when he comes. Let him sit on the benches there and play cards with them while we sit here and drink coffee. We might send him a cup of coffee too, but I have a great contempt for him."

And she wagged her head expressively.

"We must put a stop to this," Varvara Petrovna repeated, listening attentively to Marya Timofyevna. "Ring, Stepan Trofimovitch, I beg you."

Stepan Trofimovitch rang, and suddenly stepped forward, all excitement.

"If . . . if . . ," he faltered feverishly, flushing, breaking off and stuttering, "if I too have heard the most revolting story, or rather slander, it was with utter indignation . . . *enfin c'est un homme perdu, et quelque chose comme un format evade. . . .*"

He broke down and could not go on. Varvara Petrovna, screwing up her eyes, looked him up and down.

The ceremonious butler Alexey Yegorytch came in.

“The carriage,” Varvara Petrovna ordered. “And you, Alexey Yegorytch, get ready to escort Miss Lebyadkin home; she will give you the address herself.”

“Mr. Lebyadkin has been waiting for her for some time downstairs, and has been begging me to announce him.”

“That’s impossible, Varvara Petrovna!” and Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who had sat all the time in unbroken silence, suddenly came forward in alarm. “If I may speak, he is not a man who can be admitted into society. He ... he ... he’s an impossible person, Varvara Petrovna!”

“Wait a moment,” said Varvara Petrovna to Alexey Yegorytch, and he disappeared at once.

“*C’est un homme malhonnete et je crois meme que c’est un format evade ou quelque chose dans ce genre,”* Stepan Trofimovitch muttered again, and again he flushed red and broke off.

“Liza, it’s time we were going,” announced Praskovya Ivanovna disdainfully, getting up from her seat. She seemed sorry that in her alarm she had called herself a fool. While Darya Pavlovna was speaking, she listened, pressing her lips superciliously. But what struck me most was the expression of Lizaveta Nikolaevna from the moment Darya Pavlovna had come in. There was a gleam of hatred and hardly disguised contempt in her eyes.

“Wait one minute, Praskovya Ivanovna, I beg you.” Varvara Petrovna detained her, still with the same exaggerated composure. “Kindly sit down. I intend to speak out, and your legs are bad. That’s right, thank you. I lost my temper just now and uttered some impatient words. Be so good as to forgive me. I behaved foolishly and I’m the first to regret it, because I like fairness in everything. Losing your temper too, of course, you spoke of certain anonymous letters. Every anonymous communication is deserving of contempt, just because it’s not signed. If you think differently I’m sorry for you. In any case, if I were in your place, I would not pry into such dirty corners, I would not soil my hands with it. But you have soiled yours. However, since you have begun on the subject yourself, I must tell you that six days ago *I* too received a clownish anonymous letter. In it some rascal informs me that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch has gone out of his mind, and that I have reason to fear some lame woman, who ‘is destined to play a great part in my life.’ I remember the expression. Reflecting and being aware that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch has very numerous enemies, I

promptly sent for a man living here, one of his secret enemies, and the most vindictive and contemptible of them, and from my conversation with him I gathered what was the despicable source of the anonymous letter. If you too, my poor Praskovya Ivanovna, have been worried by similar letters on my account, and as you say ‘bombarded’ with them, I am, of course, the first to regret having been the innocent cause of it. That’s all I wanted to tell you by way of explanation. I’m very sorry to see that you are so tired and so upset. Besides, I have quite made up my mind to see that suspicious personage of whom Mavriky Nikolaevitch said just now, a little inappropriately, that it was impossible to receive him. Liza in particular need have nothing to do with it. Come to me, Liza, my dear, let me kiss you again.”

Liza crossed the room and stood in silence before Varvara Petrovna. The latter kissed her, took her hands, and, holding her at arm’s-length, looked at her with feeling, then made the sign of the cross over her and kissed her again.

“Well, good-bye, Liza” (there was almost the sound of tears in Varvara Petrovna’s voice), “believe that I shall never cease to love you whatever fate has in store for you. God be with you. I have always blessed His holy Will. . . .”

She would have added something more, but restrained herself and broke off. Liza was walking back to her place, still in the same silence, as it were plunged in thought, but she suddenly stopped before her mother.

“I am not going yet, mother. I’ll stay a little longer at auntie’s,” she brought out in a low voice, but there was a note .of iron determination in those quiet words.

“My goodness! What now?” wailed Praskovya Ivanovna, clasping her hands helplessly. But Liza did not answer, and seemed indeed not to hear her; she sat down in the same corner and fell to gazing into space again as before.

There was a look of pride and triumph in Varvara Petrovna’s face.

“Mavriky Nikolaevitch, I have a great favour to ask of you. Be so kind as to go and take a look at that person downstairs, and if there is any possibility of admitting him, bring him up here.”

Mavriky Nikolaevitch bowed and went out. A moment later he brought in Mr. Lebyadkin.

IV

I have said something of this gentleman's outward appearance. He was a tall, curly-haired, thick-set fellow about forty with a purplish, rather bloated and flabby face, with cheeks that quivered at every movement of his head, with little bloodshot eyes that were sometimes rather crafty, with moustaches and sidewhiskers, and with an incipient double chin, fleshy and rather unpleasant-looking. But what was most striking about him was the fact that he appeared now wearing a dress-coat and clean linen.

"There are people on whom clean linen is almost unseemly," as Liputin had once said when Stepan Trofimovitch reproached him in jest for being untidy. The captain had perfectly new black gloves too, of which he held the right one in his hand, while the left, tightly stretched and unbuttoned, covered part of the huge fleshy fist in which he held a bran-new, glossy round hat, probably worn for the first time that day. It appeared therefore that "the garb of love," of which he had shouted to Shatov the day before, really did exist. All this, that is, the dress-coat and clean linen, had been procured by Liputin's advice with some mysterious object in view (as I found out later). There was no doubt that his coming now (in a hired carriage) was at the instigation and with the assistance of some one else; it would never have dawned on him, nor could he by himself have succeeded in dressing, getting ready and making up his mind in three-quarters of an hour, even if the scene in the porch of the cathedral had reached his ears at once. He was not drunk, but was in the dull, heavy, dazed condition of a man suddenly awakened after many days of drinking. It seemed as though he would be drunk again if one were to put one's hands on his shoulders and rock him to and fro once or twice. He was hurrying into the drawing-room but stumbled over a rug near the doorway. Marya Timofyevna was helpless with laughter. He looked savagely at her and suddenly took a few rapid steps towards Varvara Petrovna.

"I have come, madam . . ," he blared out like a trumpet-blast.

"Be so good, sir, as to take a seat there, on that chair," said Varvara Petrovna, drawing herself up. "I shall hear you as well from there, and it will be more convenient for me to look at you from here."

The captain stopped short, looking blankly before him. He turned, however, and sat down on the seat indicated close to the door. An extreme lack of self-confidence and at the same time insolence, and a sort of

incessant irritability, were apparent in the expression of his face. He was horribly scared, that was evident, but his self-conceit was wounded, and it might be surmised that his mortified vanity might on occasion lead him to any effrontery, in spite of his cowardice. He was evidently uneasy at every movement of his clumsy person. We all know that when such gentlemen are brought by some marvellous chance into society, they find their worst ordeal in their own hands, and the impossibility of disposing them becomingly, of which they are conscious at every moment. The captain sat rigid in his chair, with his hat and gloves in his hands and his eyes fixed with a senseless stare on the stern face of Varvara Petrovna. He would have liked, perhaps, to have looked about more freely, but he could not bring himself to do so yet. Marya Timofyevna, apparently thinking his appearance very funny, laughed again, but he did not stir. Varvara Petrovna ruthlessly kept him in this position for a long time, a whole minute, staring at him without mercy.

“In the first place allow me to learn your name from yourself,” Varvara Petrovna pronounced in measured and impressive tones.

“Captain Lebyadkin,” thundered the captain. “I have come, madam . . .” He made a movement again.

“Allow me!” Varvara Petrovna checked him again. “Is this unfortunate person who interests me so much really your sister?”

“My sister, madam, who has escaped from control, for she is in a certain condition. . . .”

He suddenly faltered and turned crimson. “Don’t misunderstand me, madam,” he said, terribly confused. “Her own brother’s not going to throw mud at her . . . in a certain condition doesn’t mean in such a condition ... in the sense of an injured reputation ... in the last stage . . ,” he suddenly broke off.

“Sir!” said Varvara Petrovna, raising her head.

“In this condition!” he concluded suddenly, tapping the middle of his forehead with his finger.

A pause followed.

“And has she suffered in this way for long?” asked Varvara Petrovna, with a slight drawl.

“Madam, I have come to thank you for the generosity you showed in the porch, in a Russian, brotherly way.”

“Brotherly?”

“I mean, not brotherly, but simply in the sense that I am my sister’s brother; and believe me, madam,” he went on more hurriedly, turning crimson again, “I am not so uneducated as I may appear at first sight in your drawing-room. My sister and I are nothing, madam, compared with the luxury we observe here. Having enemies who slander us, besides. But on the question of reputation Lebyadkin is proud, madam . . . and . . . and . . . and I’ve come to repay with thanks. . . . Here is money, madam!”

At this point he pulled out a pocket-book, drew out of it a bundle of notes, and began turning them over with trembling fingers in a perfect fury of impatience. It was evident that he was in haste to explain something, and indeed it was quite necessary to do so. But probably feeling himself that his fluster with the money made him look even more foolish, he lost the last traces of self-possession. The money refused to be counted. His fingers fumbled helplessly, and to complete his shame a green note escaped from the pocket-book, and fluttered in zigzags on to the carpet.

“Twenty roubles, madam.” He leapt up suddenly with the roll of notes in his hand, his face perspiring with discomfort. Noticing the note which had dropped on the floor, he was bending down to pick it up, but for some reason overcome by shame, he dismissed it with a wave.

“For your servants, madam; for the footman who picks it up. Let them remember my sister!”

“I cannot allow that,” Varvara Petrovna brought out hurriedly, even with some alarm.

“In that case . . .”

He bent down, picked it up, flushing crimson, and suddenly going up to Varvara Petrovna held out the notes he had counted.

“What’s this?” she cried, really alarmed at last, and positively shrinking back in her chair.

Mavriky Nikolaevitch, Stepan Trofimovitch, and I all stepped forward.

“Don’t be alarmed, don’t be alarmed; I’m not mad, by God, I’m not mad,” the captain kept asseverating excitedly. “Yes, sir, you’re out of your senses.”

“Madam, she’s not at all as you suppose. I am an insignificant link. Oh, madam, wealthy are your mansions, but poor is the dwelling of Marya Anonyma, my sister, whose maiden name was Lebyadkin, but whom we’ll call Anonyma for the time, only for *the time*, madam, for God Himself will not suffer it for ever. Madam, you gave her ten roubles and she took it,

because it was from *you*, madam! Do you hear, madam? From no one else in the world would this Marya Anonyma take it, or her grandfather, the officer killed in the Caucasus before the very eyes of Yermolov, would turn in his grave. But from you, madam, from you she will take anything. But with one hand she takes it, and with the other she holds out to you twenty roubles by way of subscription to one of the benevolent committees in Petersburg and Moscow, of which you are a member . . . for you published yourself, madam, in the *Moscow News*, that you are ready to receive subscriptions in our town, and that any one may subscribe. . . .”

The captain suddenly broke off; he breathed hard as though after some difficult achievement. All he said about the benevolent society had probably been prepared beforehand, perhaps under Liputin’s supervision. He perspired more than ever; drops literally trickled down his temples. Varvara Petrovna looked searchingly at him.

“The subscription list,” she said severely, “is always downstairs in charge of my porter. There you can enter your subscriptions if you wish to. And so I beg you to put your notes away and not to wave them in the air. That’s right. I beg you also to go back to your seat. That’s right. I am very sorry, sir, that I made a mistake about your sister, and gave her something as though she were poor when she is so rich. There’s only one thing I don’t understand, why she can only take from me, and no one else. You so insisted upon that that I should like a full explanation.”

“Madam, that is a secret that may be buried only in the grave!” answered the captain.

“Why?” Varvara Petrovna asked, not quite so firmly.

“Madam, madam . . .”

He relapsed into gloomy silence, looking on the floor, laying his right hand on his heart. Varvara Petrovna waited, not taking her eyes off him.

“Madam!” he roared suddenly. “Will you allow me to ask you one question? Only one, but frankly, directly, like a Russian, from the heart?”

“Kindly do so.”

“Have you ever suffered madam, in your life?”

“You simply mean to say that you have been or are being ill-treated by some one.”

“Madam, madam!” He jumped up again, probably unconscious of doing so, and struck himself on the breast. “Here in this bosom so much has

accumulated, so much that God Himself will be amazed when it is revealed at the Day of Judgment.”

“H’m! A strong expression!”

“Madam, I speak perhaps irritably. . . .”

“Don’t be uneasy. I know myself when to stop you.”

“May I ask you another question, madam?”

“Ask another question.”

“Can one die simply from the generosity of one’s feelings?”

“I don’t know, as I’ve never asked myself such a question.”

“You don’t know! You’ve never asked yourself such a question,” he said with pathetic irony. “Well, if that’s it, if that’s it ...

“*Be still, despairing heart!*”

And he struck himself furiously on the chest. He was by now walking about the room again.

It is typical of such people to be utterly incapable of keeping their desires to themselves; they have, on the contrary, an irresistible impulse to display them in all their unseemliness as soon as they arise. When such a gentleman gets into” a circle in which he is not at home he usually begins timidly,-but you have only to give him an inch and he will at once rush into impertinence. The captain was already excited. He walked about waving his arms and not listening to questions, talked about himself very, very quickly, so that sometimes his tongue would not obey him, and without finishing one phrase he passed to another. It is true he was probably not quite sober. Moreover, Lizaveta Nikolaevna was sitting there too, and though he did not once glance at her, her presence seemed to over-excite him terribly; that, however, is only my supposition. There must have been some reason which led Varvara Petrovna to resolve to listen to such a man in spite of her repugnance, Praskovya Ivanovna was simply shaking with terror, though, I believe she really did not quite understand what it was about.’’ Stepan Trofimovitch was trembling too, but that was, on the contrary, because he was disposed to understand everything, and exaggerate it. Mavriky Nikolaevitch stood in the attitude of one ready to defend all present; Liza was pale, and she gazed fixedly with wide-open eyes at the wild captain. Shatov sat in the same position as before, but, what was strangest of all, Marya Timofyevna had not only ceased laughing, but had become terribly sad. She leaned her right elbow on the table, and with a prolonged,

mournful gaze watched her brother declaiming. Darya Pavlovna alone seemed to me calm.

“All that is nonsensical allegory,” said Varvara Petrovna, getting angry at last. “You haven’t answered my question, why? I insist on an answer.”

“I haven’t answered, why? You insist on an answer, why?” repeated the captain, winking. “That little word ‘why’ has run through all the universe from the first day of creation, and all nature cries every minute to it’s Creator, ‘why?’ And for seven thousand years it has had no answer, and must Captain Lebyadkin alone answer? And is that justice, madam?”

“That’s all nonsense and not to the point!” cried Varvara Petrovna, getting angry and losing patience. “That’s allegory; besides, you express yourself too sensationally, sir, which I consider impertinence.”

“Madam,” the captain went on, not hearing, “I should have liked perhaps to be called Ernest, yet I am forced to bear the vulgar name Ignat — why is that do you suppose? I should have liked to be called Prince de Monbart, yet I am only Lebyadkin, derived from a swan.* Why is that? I am a poet, madam, a poet in soul, and might be getting a thousand roubles at a time from a publisher, yet I am forced to live in a pig pail. Why? Why, madam? To my mind Russia is a freak of nature and nothing else.”

“Can you really say nothing more definite?”

“I can read you the poem, ‘The Cockroach,’ madam.”

“Wha-a-t?”

“Madam, I’m not mad yet! I shall be mad, no doubt I shall be, but I’m not so yet. Madam, a friend of mine — a most honourable man — has written a Krylov’s fable, called ‘The Cockroach.’ May I read it?”

“You want to read some fable of Krylov’s?”

“No, it’s not a fable of Krylov’s I want to read. It’s my fable, my own composition. Believe me, madam, without offence I’m not so uneducated and depraved as not to understand that Russia can boast of a great fable-writer, Krylov, to whom the Minister of Education has raised a monument in the Summer Gardens for the diversion of the young. Here, madam, you ask me why? The answer is at the end of this fable, in letters of fire.”

“Read your fable.”

“*Lived a cockroach in the world*
Such was his condition,
In a glass he chanced to fall
Full of fly-perdition.”

“Heavens! What does it mean?” cried Varvara Petrovna. “That’s when flies get into a glass in the summer-time,” the captain explained hurriedly with the irritable impatience of an author interrupted in reading. “Then it is perdition to the flies, any fool can understand. Don’t interrupt, don’t interrupt. You’ll see, you’ll see. . . .” He kept waving his arms.

“*But he squeezed against the flies,*

They woke up and cursed him,

Raised to Jove their angry cries;

‘The glass is full to bursting!’

In the middle of the din

Came along Nikifor,

Fine old man, and looking in . . .

* From Lebyed, a Swan.

I haven’t quite finished it. But no matter, I’ll tell it in words,” the captain rattled on. “Nikifor takes the glass, and in spite of their outcry empties away the whole stew, flies, and beetles and all, into the pig pail, which ought to have been done long ago. But observe, madam, observe, the cockroach doesn’t complain. That’s the answer to your question, why?” he cried triumphantly. “‘ The cockroach does not complain.’ As for Nikifor he typifies nature,” he added, speaking rapidly and walking complacently about the room.

Varvara Petrovna was terribly angry.

“And allow me to ask you about that money said to have been received from Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, and not to have been given to you, about which you dared to accuse a person belonging to my household.”

“It’s a slander!” roared Lebyadkin, flinging up his right hand tragically.

“No, it’s not a slander.”

“Madam, there are circumstances that force one to endure family disgrace rather than proclaim the truth aloud. Lebyadkin will not blab, madam!”

He seemed dazed; he was carried away; he felt his importance; he certainly had some fancy in his mind. By now he wanted to insult some one, to do something nasty to show his power.

“Ring, please, Stepan Trofimovitch,” Varvara Petrovna asked him.

“Lebyadkin’s cunning, madam,” he said, winking with his evil smile; “he’s cunning, but he too has a weak spot, he too at times is in the portals of passions, and these portals are the old military hussars’ bottle, celebrated by

Denis Davydov. So when he is in those portals, madam, he may happen to send a letter in verse, a most magnificent letter — but which afterwards he would have wished to take back, with the tears of all his life; for the feeling of the beautiful is destroyed. But the bird has flown, you won't catch it by the tail. In those portals now, madam, Lebyadkin may have spoken about an honourable young lady, in the honourable indignation of a soul revolted by wrongs, and his slanderers have taken advantage of it. But Lebyadkin is cunning, madam! And in vain a malignant wolf sits over him every minute, filling his glass and waiting for the end. Lebyadkin won't blab. And at the bottom of the bottle he always finds instead Lebyadkin's cunning. But enough, oh, enough, madam! Your splendid halls might belong to the noblest in the land, but the cockroach will not complain. Observe that, observe that he does not complain, and recognise his noble spirit!"

At that instant a bell rang downstairs from the porter's room, and almost at the same moment Alexey Yegorytch appeared in response to Stepan Trofimovitch's ring, which he had somewhat delayed answering. The correct old servant was unusually excited.

"Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch has graciously arrived this moment and is coming here," he pronounced, in reply to Varvara Petrovna's questioning glance. I particularly remember her at that moment; at first she turned pale, but suddenly her eyes flashed. She drew herself up in her chair with an air of extraordinary determination. Every one was astounded indeed. The utterly unexpected arrival of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, who was not expected for another month, was not only strange from its unexpectedness but from its fateful coincidence with the present moment. Even the captain remained standing like a post in the middle of the room with his mouth wide open, staring at the door with a fearfully stupid expression.

And, behold, from the next room — a very large and long apartment — came the sound of swiftly approaching footsteps, little, exceedingly rapid steps; some one seemed to be running, and that some one suddenly flew into the drawing-room, not Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, but a young man who was a complete stranger to all.

V

I will permit myself to halt here to sketch in a few hurried strokes this person who had so suddenly arrived on the scene.

He was a young man of twenty-seven or thereabouts, a little above the medium height, with rather long, lank, flaxen hair, and with faintly defined, irregular moustache and beard. He was dressed neatly, and in the fashion, though not like a dandy. At the first glance he looked round-shouldered and awkward, but yet he was not round-shouldered, and his manner was easy. He seemed a queer fish, and yet later on we all thought his manners good, and his conversation always to the point.

No one would have said that he was ugly, and yet no one would have liked his face- His head was elongated at the back, and looked flattened at the sides, so that his face seemed pointed, his forehead was high and narrow, but his features were small; his eyes were keen, his nose was small and sharp, his lips were long and thin. The expression of his face suggested ill-health, but this was misleading. He had a wrinkle on each cheek which gave him the look of a man who had just recovered from a serious illness. Yet he was perfectly well and strong, and had never been ill.

He walked and moved very hurriedly, yet never seemed in a hurry to be off. It seemed as though nothing could disconcert him; in every circumstance and in every sort of society he remained the same. He had a great deal of conceit, but was utterly unaware of it himself.

He talked quickly, hurriedly, but at the same time with assurance, and was never at a loss for a word. In spite of his hurried manner his ideas were in perfect order, distinct and definite — and this was particularly striking. His articulation was wonderfully clear. His words pattered out like smooth, long grains, always well chosen, and at your service. At first this attracted one, but afterwards it became repulsive, just because of this over-distinct articulation, this string of ever-ready words, one somehow began to imagine that he must have a tongue of special shape, somehow exceptionally long and thin, extremely red with a very sharp everlastingly active little tip.

Well, this was the young man who darted now into the drawing-room, and really, I believe to this day, that he began to talk in the next room, and came in speaking. He was standing before Varvara Petrovna in a trice.

“. . . Only fancy, Varvara Petrovna,” he pattered on, “I came in expecting to find he’d been here for the last quarter of an hour; he arrived an hour and a half ago; we met at Kirillov’s: he set off half an hour ago meaning to come straight here, and told me to come here too, a quarter of an hour later. ...”

“But who? Who told you to come here?” Varvara Petrovna inquired.

“Why, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch! Surely this isn’t the first you’ve heard of it! But his luggage must have been here a long while, anyway. How is it you weren’t told? Then I’m the first to bring the news. One might send out to look for him; he’s sure to be here himself directly though. And I fancy, at the moment that just fits in with some of his expectations, and is far as I can judge, at least, some of his calculations.”

At this point he turned his eyes about the room and fixed them with special attention on the captain.

“Ach, Lizaveta Nikolaevna, how glad I am to meet you at the very first step, delighted to shake hands with you.” He flew up to Liza, who was smiling gaily, to take her proffered hand, “and I observe that my honoured friend Praskovya Ivanovna has not forgotten her ‘professor,’ and actually isn’t cross with him, as she always used to be in Switzerland. But how are your legs, here, Praskovya Ivanovna, and were the Swiss doctors right when at the consultation they prescribed your native air? What? Fomentations? That ought to do good. But how sorry I was, Varvara Petrovna “(he turned rapidly to her) ‘‘that I didn’t arrive in time to meet you abroad, and offer my respects to you in person; I had so much to tell you too. I did send word to my old man here, but I fancy that he did as-he always does . .”

“Petrusha!” cried Stepan Trofimovitch, instantly roused from his stupefaction. He clasped his hands and flew to his son. “*Pierre, mon enfant!* Why, I didn’t know you!” He pressed him in his arms and the tears rolled down his cheeks.

“Come, be quiet, be quiet, no flourishes, that’s enough, that’s enough, please,” Petrusha muttered hurriedly, trying to extricate himself from his embrace.

“I’ve always sinned against you, always!”

“Well, that’s enough. We can talk of that later. I knew you’d carry on. Come, be a little more sober, please.”

“But it’s ten years since I’ve seen you.”

“The less reason for demonstrations.”

“*Mon enfant! . . .*”

“Come, I believe in your affection, I believe in it, take your arms away. You see, you’re disturbing other people. . . . Ah, here’s Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch; keep quiet, please.”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was already in the room; he came in very quietly and stood still for an instant in the doorway, quietly scrutinising the

company.

I was struck by the first sight of him just as I had been four years before, when I saw him for the first time. I had not forgotten him in the least. But I think there are some countenances which always seem to exhibit something new which one has not noticed before, every time one meets them, though one may have seen them a hundred times already. Apparently he was exactly the same as he had been four years before. He was as elegant, as dignified, he moved with the same air of consequence as before, indeed he looked almost as young. His faint smile had just the same official graciousness and complacency. His eyes had the same stern, thoughtful and, as it were, preoccupied look. In fact, it seemed as though we had only parted the day before. But one thing struck me. In old days, though he had been considered handsome, his face was “like a mask,” as some of our sharp-tongued ladies had expressed it. Now — now, I don’t know why he impressed me at once as absolutely, incontestably beautiful, so that no one could have said that his face was like a mask. Wasn’t it perhaps that he was a little paler and seemed rather thinner than before? Or was there, perhaps, the light of some new idea in his eyes?

“Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch!” cried Varvara Petrovna, drawing herself up but not rising from her chair. “Stop a minute!” She checked his advance with a peremptory gesture.

But to explain the awful question which immediately followed that gesture and” exclamation — a question which I should have imagined to be impossible even in Varvara Petrovna, I must ask the reader to remember what that lady’s temperament had always been, and the extraordinary impulsiveness she showed at some critical moments. I beg him to consider also, that in spite of the exceptional strength of her spirit and the very considerable amount of common sense and practical, so to say business, tact she possessed, there were moments in her life in which she abandoned herself altogether, entirely and, if it’s permissible to say so, absolutely without restraint. I beg him to take into consideration also that the present moment might really be for her one of those in which all the essence of life, of all the past and all the present, perhaps, too, all the future, is concentrated, as it were, focused. I must briefly recall, too, the anonymous letter of which she had spoken to Praskovya Ivanovna with so much irritation, though I think she said nothing of the latter part of it. Yet it

perhaps contained the explanation of the possibility of the terrible question with which she suddenly addressed her son.

“Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch,” she repeated, rapping out her words in a resolute voice in which there was a ring of menacing challenge, “I beg you to tell me at once, without moving from that place; is it true that this unhappy cripple — here she is, here, look at her — is it true that she is ... your lawful wife?”

I remember that moment only too well; he did not wink an eyelash but looked intently at his mother. Not the faintest change in his face followed. At last he smiled, a sort of indulgent smile, and without answering a word went quietly up to his mother, took her hand, raised it respectfully to his lips and kissed it. And so great was his invariable and irresistible ascendancy over his mother that even now she could not bring herself to pull away her hand. She only gazed at him, her whole figure one concentrated question, seeming to betray that she could not bear the suspense another moment.

But he was still silent. When he had kissed her hand, he scanned the whole room once more, and moving, as before, without haste went towards Marya Timofyevna. It is very difficult to describe people’s countenances at certain moments. I remember, for instance, that Marya Timofyevna, breathless with fear, rose to her feet to meet him and clasped her hands before her, as though beseeching him. And at the same time I remember the frantic ecstasy which almost distorted her face — an ecstasy almost too great for any human being to bear. Perhaps both were there, both the terror and the ecstasy. But I remember moving quickly towards her (I was standing not far off), for I fancied she was going to faint.

“You should not be here,” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch said to her in a caressing and melodious voice; and there was the light of an extraordinary tenderness in his eyes. He stood before her in the most respectful attitude, and every gesture showed sincere respect for her. The poor girl faltered impulsively in a half-whisper.

“But may I ... kneel down ... to you now?”

“No, you can’t do that.”

He smiled at her magnificently, so that she too laughed joyfully at once. In the same melodious voice, coaxing her tenderly as though she were a child, he went on gravely.

“Only think that you are a girl, and that though I’m your devoted friend I’m an outsider, not your husband, nor your father, nor your betrothed. Give

me your arm and let us go; I will take you to the carriage, and if you will let me I will see you all the way home."

She listened, and bent her head as though meditating.

"Let's go," she said with a sigh, giving him her hand.

But at that point a slight mischance befell her. She must have turned carelessly, resting on her lame leg, which was shorter than the other. She fell sideways into the chair, and if the chair had not been there would have fallen on to the floor. He instantly seized and supported her, and holding her arm firmly in his, led her carefully and sympathetically to the door. She was evidently mortified at having fallen; she was overwhelmed, blushed, and was terribly abashed. Looking dumbly on the ground, limping painfully, she hobbled after him, almost hanging on his arm. So they went out. Liza, I saw, suddenly jumped up from her chair for some reason as they were going out, and she followed them with intent eyes till they reached the door. Then she sat down again in silence, but there was a nervous twitching in her face, as though she had touched a viper.

While this scene was taking place between Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch and Marya Timofyevna every one was speechless with amazement; one could have heard a fly; but as soon as they had gone out, every one began suddenly talking.

VI

It was very little of it talk, however; it was mostly exclamation. I've forgotten a little the order in which things happened, for a scene of confusion followed. Stepan Trofimovitch uttered some exclamation in French, clasping his hands, but Varvara Petrovna had no thought for him. Even Mavriky Nikolaevitch muttered some rapid, jerky comment. But Pyotr Stepanovitch was the most excited of all. He was trying desperately with bold gesticulations to persuade Varvara Petrovna of something, but it was a long time before I could make out what it was. He appealed to Praskovya Ivanovna, and Lizaveta Nikolaevna too, even, in his excitement, addressed a passing shout to his father — in fact he seemed all over the room at once. Varvara Petrovna, flushing all over, sprang up from her seat and cried to Praskovya Ivanovna:

"Did you hear what he said to her here just now, did you hear it?"

But the latter was incapable of replying. She could only mutter something and wave her hand. The poor woman had troubles of her own to think about. She kept turning her head towards Liza and was watching her with unaccountable terror, but she didn't even dare to think of getting up and going away until her daughter should get up. In the meantime the captain wanted to slip away. That I noticed. There was no doubt that he had been in a great panic from the instant that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had made his appearance; but Pyotr Stepanovitch took him by the arm and would not let him go.

"It is necessary, quite necessary," he pattered on to Varvara Petrovna, still trying to persuade her. He stood facing her, as she was sitting down again in her easy chair, and, I remember, was listening to him eagerly; he had succeeded in securing her attention.

"It is necessary. You can see for yourself, Varvara Petrovna, that there is a misunderstanding here, and much that is strange on the surface, and yet the thing's as clear as daylight, and as simple as my finger. I quite understand that no one has authorised me to tell the story, and I dare say I look ridiculous putting myself forward. But in the first place, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch attaches no sort of significance to the matter himself, and, besides, there are incidents of which it is difficult for a man to make up his mind to give an explanation himself. And so it's absolutely necessary that it should be undertaken by a third person, for whom it's easier to put some delicate points into words. Believe me, Varvara Petrovna, that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch is not at all to blame for not immediately answering your question just now with a full explanation, it's all a trivial affair. I've known him since his Petersburg days. Besides, the whole story only does honour to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, if one must make use of that vague word 'honour.'"

"You mean to say that you were a witness of some incident which gave rise ... to this misunderstanding?" asked Varvara Petrovna.

"I witnessed it, and took part in it," Pyotr Stepanovitch hastened to declare.

"If you'll give me your word that this will not wound Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's delicacy in regard to his feeling for me, from whom he ne-e-ver conceals anything . . . and if you are convinced also that your doing this will be agreeable to him . . ."

“Certainly it will be agreeable, and for that reason I consider it a particularly agreeable duty. I am convinced that he would beg me to do it himself.”

The intrusive desire of this gentleman, who seemed to have dropped on us from heaven to tell stories about other people’s affairs, was rather strange and inconsistent with ordinary usage.

But he had caught Varvara Petrovna by touching on too painful a spot. I did not know the man’s character at that time, and still less his designs.

“I am listening,” Varvara Petrovna announced with a reserved and cautious manner. She was rather painfully aware of her condescension.

“It’s a short story; in fact if you like it’s not a story at all,” he rattled on, “though a novelist might work it up into a novel in an idle hour. It’s rather an interesting little incident, Praskovya Ivanovna, and I am sure that Lizaveta Nikolaevna will be interested to hear it, because there are a great many things in it that are odd if not wonderful. Five years ago, in Petersburg, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch made the acquaintance of this gentleman, this very Mr. Lebyadkin who’s standing here with his mouth open, anxious, I think, to slip away at once. Excuse me, Varvara Petrovna. I don’t advise you to make your escape though, you discharged clerk in the former commissariat department you see; I remember you very well. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch and I know very well what you’ve been up to here, and, don’t forget, you’ll have to answer for it. I ask your pardon once more, Varvara Petrovna. In those days Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch used to call this gentleman his Falstaff; that must be,” he explained suddenly, “some old burlesque character, at whom every one laughs, and who is willing to let every one laugh at him, if only they’ll pay him for it. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was leading at that time in Petersburg a life, so to say, of mockery. I can’t find another word to describe it, because he is not a man who falls into disillusionment, and he disdained to be occupied with work at that time. I’m only speaking of that period, Varvara Petrovna. Lebyadkin had a sister, the woman who was sitting here just now. The brother and sister hadn’t a corner * of their own, but were always quartering themselves on different people. He used to hang about the arcades in the Gostiny Dvor, always wearing his old uniform, and would stop the more respectable-looking passers-by, and everything he got from them he’d spend in drink. His sister lived like the birds of heaven. She’d help people in their ‘corners,’ and do jobs for them on occasion. It was a regular Bedlam. I’ll

pass over the description of this life in ‘corners,’ a life to which Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had taken,”

* In the poorer quarters of Russian towns a single room is often let out to several families, each of which occupies a “corner.”

“at that time, from eccentricity. I’m only talking of that period, Varvara Petrovna; as for ‘eccentricity,’ that’s his own expression. He does not conceal much from me. Mile. Lebyadkin, who was thrown in the way of meeting Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch very often, at one time, was fascinated by his appearance. He was, so to say, a diamond set in the dirty background of her life. I am a poor hand at describing feelings, so I’ll pass them over; but some of that dirty lot took to jeering at her once, and it made her sad. They always had laughed at her, but she did not seem to notice it before. She wasn’t quite right in her head even then, but very different from what she is now. There’s reason to believe that in her childhood she received something like an education through the kindness of a benevolent lady. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had never taken the slightest notice of her. He used to spend his time chiefly in playing preference with a greasy old pack of cards for stakes of a quarter-farthing with clerks. But once, when she was being ill-treated, he went up (without inquiring into the cause) and seized one of the clerks by the collar and flung him out of a second-floor window. It was not a case of chivalrous indignation at the sight of injured innocence; the whole operation took place in the midst of roars of laughter, and the one who laughed loudest was Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch himself. As it all ended without harm, they were reconciled and began drinking punch. But the injured innocent herself did not forget it. Of course it ended in her becoming completely crazy. I repeat I’m a poor hand at describing feelings. But a delusion was the chief feature in this case. And Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch aggravated that delusion as though he did it on purpose. Instead of laughing at her he began all at once treating Mile. Lebyadkin with sudden respect. Kirillov, who was there (a very original man, Varvara Petrovna, and very abrupt, you’ll see him perhaps one day, for he’s here now), well, this Kirillov who, as a rule, is perfectly silent, suddenly got hot, and said to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, I remember, that he treated the girl as though she were a marquise, and that that was doing for her altogether. I must add that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had rather a respect for this Kirillov. What do you suppose was the answer he gave him: ‘You imagine, Mr. Kirillov, that I am laughing at her. Get rid of that idea, I really do

respect her, for she’s better than any of us.’ And, do you know, he said it in such a serious tone. Meanwhile, he hadn’t really said a word to her for two or three months, except ‘good morning’ and ‘good-bye.’ I remember, for I was there, that she came at last to the point of looking on him almost as her betrothed who dared not ‘elope with her,’ simply because he had many enemies and family difficulties, or something of the sort. There was a great deal of laughter about it. It ended in Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch’s making provision for her when he had to come here, and I believe he arranged to pay a considerable sum, three hundred roubles a year, if not more, as a pension for her. In short it was “all a caprice, a fancy of a man prematurely weary on his side, perhaps — it may even have been, as Kirillov says, a new experiment of a blase man, with the object of finding out what you can bring a crazy cripple to.” (You picked out on purpose, he said, the lowest creature, a cripple, for ever covered with disgrace and blows, knowing, too, that this creature was dying of comic love for you, and set to work to mystify her completely on purpose, simply to see what would come of it.) “Though, how is a man so particularly to blame for the fancies of a crazy woman, to whom he had hardly uttered two sentences the whole time. There are things, Varvara Petrovna, of which it is not only impossible to speak sensibly, but it’s even nonsensical to begin speaking of them at all. Well, eccentricity then, let it stand at that. Anyway, there’s nothing worse to be said than that; and yet now they’ve made this scandal out of it. ... I am to some extent aware, Varvara Petrovna, of what is happening here.”

The speaker suddenly broke off and was turning to Lebyadkin. But Varvara Petrovna checked him. She was in a state of extreme exaltation.

“Have you finished?” she asked.

“Not yet; to complete my story I should have to ask this gentleman one or two questions if you’ll allow me . . . you’ll see the point in a minute, Varvara Petrovna.”

“Enough, afterwards, leave it for the moment I beg you. Oh, I was quite right to let you speak!”

“And note this, Varvara Petrovna,” Pyotr Stepanovitch said hastily. “Could Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch have explained all this just now in answer to your question, which was perhaps too peremptory?”

“Oh, yes, it was.”

“And wasn’t I right in saying that in some cases it’s much easier for a third person to explain things than for the person interested?”

“Yes, yes . . . but in one thing you were mistaken, and, I see with regret, are still mistaken.”

“Really, what’s that?”

“You see. . . . But won’t you sit down, Pyotr Stepanovitch?”

“Oh, as you please. I am tired indeed. Thank you.” He instantly moved up an easy chair and turned it so that he had Varvara Petrovna on one side and Praskovya Ivanovna at the table on the other, while he faced Lebyadkin, from whom he did not take his eyes for one minute.

“You are mistaken in calling this eccentricity. . . .”

“Oh, if it’s only that. . . .”

“No, no, no, wait a little,” said Varvara Petrovna, who was obviously about to say a good deal and to speak with enthusiasm. As soon as Pyotr Stepanovitch noticed it, he was all attention.

“No, it was something higher than eccentricity, and I assure you, something sacred even! A proud man who has suffered humiliation early in life and reached the stage of ‘mockery’ as you so subtly called it — Prince Harry, in fact, to use the capital nickname Stepan Trofimovitch gave him then, which would have been perfectly correct if it were not that he is more like Hamlet, to my thinking at least.”

“*Et vous avez raison,*” Stepan Trofimovitch pronounced, impressively and with feeling.

“Thank you, Stepan Trofimovitch. I thank you particularly too for your unvarying faith in Nicolas, in the loftiness of his soul and of his destiny. That faith you have even strengthened in me when I was losing heart.”

“*Chere, chere.*” Stepan Trofimovitch was stepping forward, when he checked himself, reflecting that it was dangerous to interrupt.

“And if Nicolas had always had at his side” (Varvara Petrovna almost shouted) “a gentle Horatio, great in his humility — another excellent expression of yours, Stepan Trofimovitch — -he might long ago have been saved from the sad and ‘sudden demon of irony,’ which has tormented him all his life. (‘ The demon of irony’ was a wonderful expression of yours again, Stepan Trofimovitch.) But Nicolas has never had an Horatio or an Ophelia. He had no one but his mother, and what can a mother do alone, and in such circumstances? Do you know, Pyotr Stepanovitch, it’s perfectly comprehensible to me now that a being like Nicolas could be found even in such filthy haunts as you have described. I can so clearly picture now that ‘mockery’ of life. (A wonderfully subtle expression of yours!) That

insatiable thirst of contrast, that gloomy background against which he stands out like a diamond, to use your comparison again, Pyotr Stepanovitch. And then he meets there a creature ill-treated by every one, crippled, half insane, and at the same time perhaps filled with noble feelings."

"H'm. . . . Yes, perhaps."

"And after that you don't understand that he's not laughing at her like every one. Oh, you people! You can't understand his defending her from insult, treating her with respect 'like a marquise' (this Kirillov must have an exceptionally deep understanding of men, though he didn't understand Nicolas). It was just this contrast, if you like, that led to the trouble. If the unhappy creature had been in different surroundings, perhaps she would never have been brought to entertain such a frantic delusion. Only a woman can understand it, Pyotr Stepanovitch, only a woman. How sorry I am that you . . . not that you're not a woman, but that you can't be one just for the moment so as to understand."

"You mean in the sense that the worse things are the better it is. I understand, I understand, Varvara Petrovna. It's rather as it is in religion; the harder life is for a man or the more crushed and poor the people are, the more obstinately they dream of compensation in heaven; and if a hundred thousand priests are at work at it too, inflaming their delusion, and speculating on it, then ... I understand you, Varvara Petrovna, I assure you."

"That's not quite it; but tell me, ought Nicolas to have laughed at her and have treated her as the other clerks, in order to extinguish the delusion in this unhappy organism." (Why Varvara Petrovna used the word organism I couldn't understand.) "Can you really refuse to recognise the lofty compassion, the noble tremor of the whole organism with which Nicolas answered Kirillov: 'I do not laugh at her.' A noble, sacred answer!"

"*Sublime,*" muttered Stepan Trofimovitch.

"And observe, too, that he is by no means so rich as you suppose. The money is mine and not his, and he would take next to nothing from me then."

"I understand, I understand all that, Varvara Petrovna," said Pyotr Stepanovitch, with a movement of some impatience.

"Oh, it's my character! I recognise myself in Nicolas. I recognise that youthfulness, that liability to violent, tempestuous impulses. And if we ever come to be friends, Pyotr Stepanovitch, and, for my part, I sincerely hope

we may, especially as I am so deeply indebted to you, then, perhaps you'll understand. . . ."

"Oh, I assure you, I hope for it too," Pyotr Stepanovitch muttered jerkily.

"You'll understand then the impulse which leads one in the blindness of generous feeling to take up a man who is unworthy of one in every respect, a man who utterly fails to understand one, who is ready to torture one at every opportunity and, in contradiction to everything, to exalt such a man into a sort of ideal, into a dream. To concentrate in him all one's hopes, to bow down before him; to love him all one's life, absolutely without knowing why — perhaps just because he was unworthy of it. ... Oh, how I've suffered all my life, Pyotr Stepanovitch!"

Stepan Trofimovitch, with a look of suffering on his face, began trying to catch my eye, but I turned away in time.

"... And only lately, only lately — oh, how unjust I've been to Nicolas! . . . You would not believe how they have been worrying me on all sides, all, all, enemies, and rascals, and friends, friends perhaps more than enemies. When the first contemptible anonymous letter was sent to me, Pyotr Stepanovitch, you'll hardly believe it, but I had not strength enough to treat all this wickedness with contempt. ... I shall never, never forgive myself for my weakness."

"I had heard something of anonymous letters here already," said Pyotr Stepanovitch, growing suddenly more lively, "and I'll find out the writers of them, you may be sure."

"But you can't imagine the intrigues that have been got up here. They have even been pestering our poor Praskovya Ivanovna, and what reason can they have for worrying her? I was quite unfair to you to-day perhaps, my dear Praskovya Ivanovna," she added in a generous impulse of kindliness, though not without a certain triumphant irony.

"Don't say any more, my dear," the other lady muttered reluctantly. "To my thinking we'd better make an end of all this; too much has been said."

And again she looked timidly towards Liza, but the latter was looking at Pyotr Sterjanovitch.

"And I intend now to adopt this poor unhappy creature, this insane woman who has lost everything and kept only her heart," Varvara Petrovna exclaimed suddenly. "It's a sacred duty I intend to carry out. I take her under my protection from this day."

“And that will be a very good thing in one way,” Pyotr Stepanovitch cried, growing quite eager again. “Excuse me, I did not finish just now. It’s just the care of her I want to speak of. Would you believe it, that as soon as Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had gone (I’m beginning from where I left off, Varvara Petrovna), this gentleman here, this Mr. Lebyadkin, instantly imagined he had the right to dispose of the whole pension that was provided for his sister. And he did dispose of it. I don’t know exactly how it had been arranged by Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch at that time. But a year later, when he learned from abroad what had happened, he was obliged to make other arrangements. Again, I don’t know the details; he’ll tell you them himself. I only know that the interesting young person was placed somewhere in a remote nunnery, in very comfortable surroundings, but under friendly superintendence — you understand? But what do you think Mr. Lebyadkin made up his mind to do I He exerted himself to the utmost, to begin with, to find where his source of income, that is his sister, was hidden. Only lately he attained his object, took her from the nunnery, asserting some claim to her, and brought her straight here. Here he doesn’t feed her properly, beats her, and bullies her. As soon as by some means he gets a considerable sum from Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, he does nothing but get drunk, and instead of gratitude ends by impudently defying Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, making senseless demands, threatening him with proceedings if the pension is not paid straight into his hands. So he takes what is a voluntary gift from Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch as a tax — can you imagine it? Mr. Lebyadkin, is that *all* true that I have said just now?”

The captain, who had till that moment stood in silence looking down, took two rapid steps forward and turned crimson.

“Pyotr Stepanovitch, you’ve treated me cruelly,” he brought out abruptly.

“Why cruelly? How? But allow us to discuss the question of cruelty or gentleness later on. Now answer my first question; is it true all that I have said or not? If you consider it’s false you are at liberty to give your own version at once.”

“I ... you know yourself, Pyotr Stepanovitch,” the captain muttered, but he could not go on and relapsed into silence. It must be observed that Pyotr Stepanovitch was sitting in an easy chair with one leg crossed over the other, while the captain stood before him in the most respectful attitude.

Lebyadkin’s hesitation seemed to annoy Pyotr Stepanovitch; a spasm of anger distorted his face.

“Then you have a statement you want to make?” he said, looking subtly at the captain. “Kindly speak. We’re waiting for you.”

“You know yourself Pyotr Stepanovitch, that I can’t say anything.”

“No, I don’t know it. It’s the first time I’ve heard it. Why can’t you speak?”

The captain was silent, with his eyes on the ground.

“Allow me to go, Pyotr Stepanovitch,” he brought out resolutely.

“No, not till you answer my question: is it *all* true that I’ve said?”

“It is true,” Lebyadkin brought out in a hollow voice, looking at his tormentor. Drops of perspiration stood out on his forehead.

“Is it *all* true?”

“It’s all true.”

“Have you nothing to add or to observe? If you think that we’ve been unjust, say so; protest, state your grievance aloud.”

“No, I think nothing.”

“Did you threaten Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch lately?”

“It was ... it was more drink than anything, Pyotr Stepanovitch.” He suddenly raised his head. “If family honour and undeserved disgrace cry out among men then — then is a man to blame?” he roared suddenly, forgetting himself as before.

“Are you sober now, Mr. Lebyadkin?”

Pyotr Stepanovitch looked at him penetratingly.

“I am . . . sober.”

“What do you mean by family honour and undeserved disgrace?”

“I didn’t mean anybody, anybody at all. I meant myself,” the captain said, collapsing again.

“You seem to be very much offended by what I’ve said about you and your conduct? You are very irritable, Mr. Lebyadkin. But let me tell you I’ve hardly begun yet what I’ve got to say about your conduct, in its real sense. I’ll begin to discuss your conduct in its real sense. I shall begin, that may very well happen, but so far I’ve not begun, in a *real* sense.”

Lebyadkin started and stared wildly at Pyotr Stepanovitch.

“Pyotr Stepanovitch, I am just beginning to wake up.”

“H’m! And it’s I who have waked you up?”

“Yes, it’s you who have waked me, Pyotr Stepanovitch; and I’ve been asleep for the last four years with a storm-cloud hanging over me. May I withdraw at last, Pyotr Stepanovitch?”

“Now you may, unless Varvara Petrovna thinks it necessary ...”

But the latter dismissed him with a wave of her hand.

The captain bowed, took two steps towards the door, stopped suddenly, laid his hand on his heart, tried to say something, did not say it, and was moving quickly away. But in the doorway he came face to face with Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch; the latter stood aside. The captain shrank into himself, as it were, before him, and stood as though frozen to the spot, his eyes fixed upon him like a rabbit before a boa-constrictor. After a little pause Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch waved him aside with a slight motion of his hand, and walked into the drawing-room.

VII

He was cheerful and serene. Perhaps something very pleasant had happened to him, of which we knew nothing as yet; but he seemed particularly contented.

“Do you forgive me, Nicolas?” Varvara Petrovna hastened to say, and got up suddenly to meet him.

But Nicolas positively laughed.

“Just as I thought,” he said, good-humouredly and jestingly. “I see you know all about it already. When I had gone from here I reflected in the carriage that I ought at least to have told you the story instead of going off like that. But when I remembered that Pyotr Stepanovitch was still here, I thought no more of it.”

As he spoke he took a cursory look round.

“Pyotr Stepanovitch told us an old Petersburg episode in the life of a queer fellow,” Varvara Petrovna rejoined enthusiastically—” a mad and capricious fellow, though always lofty in his feelings, always chivalrous and noble. ...”

“Chivalrous? You don’t mean to say it’s come to that,” laughed Nicolas. “However, I’m very grateful to Pyotr Stepanovitch for being in such a hurry this time.” He exchanged a rapid glance with the latter. “You must know, maman, that Pyotr Stepanovitch is the universal peacemaker; that’s his part in life, his weakness, his hobby, and I particularly recommend him to you from that point of view. I can guess what a yarn he’s been spinning. He’s a great hand at spinning them; he has a perfect record-office in his head. He’s such a realist, you know, that he can’t tell a lie, and prefers truthfulness to

effect . . . except, of course, in special cases when effect is more important than truth.” (As he said this he was still looking about him.) “So, you see clearly, maman, that it’s not for you to ask my forgiveness, and if there’s any craziness about this affair it’s my fault, and it proves that, when all’s said and done, I really am mad. ... I must keep up my character here. . . .”

Then he tenderly embraced his mother.

“In any case the subject has been fully discussed and is done with,” he added, and there was a rather dry and resolute note in his voice. Varvara Petrovna understood that note, but her exaltation was not damped, quite the contrary.

“I didn’t expect you for another month, Nicolas!”

“I will explain everything to you, maman, of course, but now ...”

And he went towards Praskovya Ivanovna.

But she scarcely turned her head towards him, though she had been completely overwhelmed by his first appearance. Now she had fresh anxieties to think of; at the moment the captain had stumbled upon Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch as he was going out, Liza had suddenly begun laughing — at first quietly and intermittently, but her laughter grew more and more violent, louder and more conspicuous. She flushed crimson, in striking contrast with her gloomy expression just before.

While Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was .talking to Varvara Petrovna, she had twice beckoned to Mavriky Nikolaevitch as though she wanted to whisper something to him; but as soon as the young man bent down to her, she instantly burst into laughter; so that it seemed as though it was at poor Mavriky Nikolaevitch that she was laughing. She evidently tried to control herself, however, and put her handkerchief to her lips. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch turned to greet her with a most innocent and open-hearted air.

“Please excuse me,” she responded, speaking quickly. “You . . . you’ve seen Mavriky Nikolaevitch of course. . . . My goodness, how inexcusably tall you are, Mavriky Nikolaevitch!”

And laughter again, Mavriky Nikolaevitch was tall, but by no means inexcusably so.

“Have . . . you been here long?” she muttered, restraining herself again, genuinely embarrassed though her eyes were shining.

“More than two hours,” answered Nicolas, looking at her intently. I may remark that he was exceptionally reserved and courteous, but that apart

from his courtesy his expression was utterly indifferent, even listless.

“And where are you going to stay?”

“Here.”

Varvara Petrovna, too, was watching Liza, but she was suddenly struck by an idea.

“Where have you been all this time, Nicolas, more than two hours?” she said, going up to him. “The train comes in at ten o’clock.”

“I first took Pyotr Stepanovitch to Kirillov’s. I came across Pyotr Stepanovitch at Matveyev (three stations away), and we travelled together.”

“I had been waiting at Matveyev since sunrise,” put in Pyotr Stepanovitch. “The last carriages of our train ran off the rails in the night, and we nearly had our legs broken.”

“Your legs broken!” cried Liza. “Maman, maman, you and I meant to go to Matveyev last week, we should have broken our legs too!”

“Heaven have mercy on us!” cried Praskovya Ivanovna, crossing herself.

“Maman, maman, dear maman, you mustn’t be frightened if I break both my legs’. It may so easily happen to me; you say yourself that I ride so recklessly every day. Mavriky Nikolaevitch, will you go about with me when I’m lame?” She began giggling again. “If it does happen I won’t let anyone take me about but you, you can reckon on that. . . . Well, suppose I break only one leg. Come, be polite, say you’ll think it a pleasure.”

“A pleasure to be crippled?” said Mavriky Nikolaevitch, frowning gravely.

“But then you’ll lead me about, only you and no one else.”

“Even then it’ll be you leading me about, Lizaveta

Nikolaevna,” murmured Mavriky Nikolaevitch, even more gravely.

“Why, he’s trying to make a joke!” cried Liza, almost in dismay. “Mavriky Nikolaevitch, don’t you ever dare take to that! But what an egoist you are! I am certain that, to your credit, you’re slandering yourself. It will be quite the contrary; from morning till night you’ll assure me that I have become more charming for having lost my leg. There’s one insurmountable difficulty — you’re so fearfully tall, and when I’ve lost my leg I shall be so very tiny.. How will you be able to take me on your arm; we shall look a strange couple!”

And she laughed hysterically. Her jests and insinuations were feeble, but she was not capable of considering the effect she was producing.

“Hysterics!” Pyotr Stepanovitch whispered to me. “A glass of water, make haste!”

He was right. A minute later every one was fussing about, water was brought. Liza embraced her mother, kissed her warmly, wept on her shoulder, then drawing back and looking her in the face she fell to laughing again. The mother too began whimpering. Varvara Petrovna made haste to carry them both off to her own rooms, going out by the same door by which Darya Pavlovna had come to us. But they were not away long, not more than four minutes.

I am trying to remember now every detail of these last moments of that memorable morning. I remember that when we were left without the ladies (except Darya Pavlovna, who had not moved from her seat), Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch made the round, greeting us all except Shatov, who still sat in his corner, his head more bowed than ever. Stepan Trofimovitch was beginning something very witty to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, but the latter turned away hurriedly to Darya Pavlovna. But before he reached her, Pyotr Stepanovitch caught him and drew him away, almost violently, towards the window, where he whispered something quickly to him, apparently something very important to judge by the expression of his face and the gestures that accompanied the whisper. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch listened inattentively and listlessly with his official smile, and at last even impatiently, and seemed all the time on the point of breaking away. He moved away from the window just as the ladies came back. Varvara Petrovna made Liza sit down in the same seat as before, declaring that she must wait and rest another ten minutes; and that the fresh air would perhaps be too much for her nerves at once. She was looking after Liza with great devotion, and sat down beside her. Pyotr Stepanovitch, now disengaged, skipped up to them at once, and broke into a rapid and lively flow of conversation. At that point Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch at last went up to Darya Pavlovna with his leisurely step. Dasha began stirring uneasily at his approach, and jumped up quickly in evident embarrassment, flushing all over her face.

“I believe one may congratulate you . . . or is it too soon?” he brought out with a peculiar line in his face.

Dasha made him some answer, but it was difficult to catch it.

“Forgive my indiscretion,” he added, raising his voice, “but you know I was expressly informed. Did you know about it?”

“Yes, I know that you were expressly informed.”

“But I hope I have not done any harm by my congratulations,” he laughed. “And if Stepan Trofimovitch . . .”

“What, what’s the congratulation about?” Pyotr Stepanovitch suddenly skipped up to them. “What are you being congratulated about, Darya Pavlovna? Bah! Surely that’s not it? Your blush proves I’ve guessed right. And indeed, what else does one congratulate our charming and virtuous young ladies on? And what congratulations make them blush most readily? Well, accept mine too, then, if I’ve guessed right! And pay up. Do you remember when we were in Switzerland you bet you’d never be married. . . . Oh, yes, apropos of Switzerland — what am I thinking about? Only fancy, that’s half what I came about, and I was almost forgetting it. Tell me,” he turned quickly to Stepan Trofimovitch, “when are you going to Switzerland?”

“I ... to Switzerland?” Stepan Trofimovitch replied, wondering and confused.

“What? Aren’t you going? Why you’re getting married, too, you wrote?”

“*Pierre!*” cried Stepan Trofimovitch.

“Well, why Pierre? . . . You see, if that’ll please you, I’ve flown here to announce that I’m not at all against it, since you were set on having my opinion as quickly as possible; and if, indeed,” he pattered on, “you want to ‘be saved,’ as you wrote, beseeching my help in the same letter, I am at your service again. Is it true that he is going to be married, Varvara Petrovna?” He turned quickly to her. “I hope I’m not being indiscreet; he writes himself that the whole town knows it and every one’s congratulating him, so that, to avoid it he only goes out at night. I’ve got his letters in my pocket. But would you believe it, Varvara Petrovna, I can’t make head or tail of it? Just tell me one thing, Stepan Trofimovitch, are you to be congratulated or are you to be ‘saved’ I You wouldn’t believe it; in one line he’s despairing and in the next he’s most joyful. To begin with he begs my forgiveness; well, of course, that’s their way . . . though it must be said; fancy, the man’s only seen me twice in his life and then by accident. And suddenly now, when he’s going to be married for the third time, he imagines that this is a breach of some sort of parental duty to me, and entreats me a thousand miles away not to be angry and to allow him to. Please don’t be hurt, Stepan Trofimovitch. It’s characteristic of your generation, I take a broad view of it, and don’t blame you. And let’s admit it does you honour

and all the rest. But the point is again that I don't see the point of it. There's something about some sort of 'sins in Switzerland."I'm getting married,' he says, for my sins or on account of the 'sins' of another,' or whatever it is —'sins' anyway. 'The girl,' says he, 'is a pearl and a diamond,' and, well, of course, he's 'unworthy of her'; it's their way of talking; but on account of some sins or circumstances 'he is obliged to lead her to the altar, and go to Switzerland, and therefore abandon everything and fly to save me.' Do you understand anything of all that? However . . . however, I notice from the expression of your faces" — (he turned about with the letter in his hand looking with an innocent smile into the faces of the company)— "that, as usual, I seem to have put my foot in it through my stupid way of being open, or, as Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch says, 'being in a hurry.' I thought, of course, that we were all friends here, that is, your friends, Stepan Trofimovitch, your friends. I am really a stranger, and I see ... and I see that you all know something, and that just that something I don't know." He still went on looking about him.

"So Stepan Trofimovitch wrote to you that he was getting married for the 'sins of another committed in Switzerland,' and that you were to fly here 'to save him,' in those very words?" said Varvara Petrovna, addressing him suddenly. Her face was yellow and distorted, and her lips were twitching.

"Well, you see, if there's anything I've not understood," said Pyotr Stepanovitch, as though in alarm, talking more quickly than ever, "it's his fault, of course, for writing like that. Here's the letter. You know, Varvara Petrovna, his letters are endless and incessant, and, you know, for the last two or three months there has been letter upon letter, till, I must own, at last I sometimes didn't read them through. Forgive me, Stepan Trofimovitch, for my foolish confession, but you must admit, please, that, though you addressed them to me, you wrote them more for posterity, so that you really can't mind. . . . Come, come, don't be offended; we're friends, anyway. But this letter, Varvara Petrovna, this letter, I did read through. These 'sins' — these 'sins of another' — are probably some little sins of our own, and I don't mind betting very innocent ones, though they have suddenly made us take a fancy to work up a terrible story, with a glamour of the heroic about it; and it's just for the sake of that glamour we've got it up. You see there's something a little lame about our accounts — it must be confessed, in the end. We've a great weakness for cards, you know. . . . But this is unnecessary, quite unnecessary, I'm sorry, I chatter too much. But upon my

word, Varvara Petrovna, he gave me a fright, and I really was half prepared to save him. He really made me feel ashamed. Did he expect me to hold a knife to his throat, or what? Am I such a merciless creditor? He writes something here of a dowry. . . . But are you really going to get married, Stepan Trofimovitch? That would be just like you, to say a lot for the sake of talking. Ach, Varvara Petrovna, I'm sure you must be blaming me now, and just for my way of talking too. ..."

"On the contrary, on the contrary, I see that you are driven out of all patience, and, no doubt you have had good reason," Varvara Petrovna answered spitefully. She had listened with spiteful enjoyment to all the "candid outbursts" of Pyotr Stepanovitch, who was obviously playing a part (what part I did not know then, but it was unmistakable, and over-acted indeed).

"On the contrary," she went on, "I'm only too grateful to you for speaking; but for you I might not have known of it. My eyes are opened for the first time for twenty years. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, you said just now that you had been expressly informed; surely Stepan Trofimovitch hasn't written to you in the same style?"

"I did get a very harmless and ... and . . . very generous letter from him. . . ."

"You hesitate, you pick out your words. That's enough! Stepan Trofimovitch, I request a great favour from you." She suddenly turned to him with flashing eyes. "Kindly leave us at once, and never set foot in my house again."

I must beg the reader to remember her recent "exaltation," which had not yet passed. It's true that Stepan Trofimovitch was terribly to blame! But what was a complete surprise to me then was the wonderful dignity of his bearing under his son's "accusation," which he had never thought of interrupting, and before Varvara Petrovna's "denunciation." How did he come by such spirit? I only found out one thing, that he had certainly been deeply wounded at his first meeting with Petrusha, by the way he had embraced him. It was a deep and genuine grief; at least in his eyes and to his heart. He had another grief at the same time, that is the poignant consciousness of having acted contemptibly. He admitted this to me afterwards with perfect openness. And you know real genuine sorrow will sometimes make even a phenomenally frivolous, unstable man solid and stoical; for a short time at any rate; what's more, even fools are by genuine

sorrow turned into wise men, also only for a short time of course; it is characteristic of sorrow. And if so, what might not happen with a man like Stepan Trofimovitch? It worked a complete transformation — though also only for a time, of course.

He bowed with dignity to Varvara Petrovna without uttering a word (there was nothing else left for him to do, indeed). He was on the point of going out without a word, but could not refrain from approaching Darya Pavlovna. She seemed to foresee that he would do so, for she began speaking of her own accord herself, in utter dismay, as though in haste to anticipate him.

“Please, Stepan Trofimovitch, for God’s sake, don’t say anything,” she began, speaking with haste and excitement, with a look of pain in her face, hurriedly stretching out her hands to him. “Be sure that I still respect you as much . . . and think just as highly of you, and . . . think well of me too, Stepan Trofimovitch, that will mean a great deal to me, a great deal. ...”

Stepan Trofimovitch made her a very, very low bow.

“It’s for you to decide, Darya Pavlovna; you know that yon are perfectly free in the whole matter! You have been, and you are now, and you always will be,” Varvara Petrovna concluded impressively.

“Bah! Now I understand it all!” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, slapping himself on the forehead. “But . . . but what a position I am put in by all this! Darya Pavlovna, please forgive me! . . . What do you call your treatment of me, eh?” he said, addressing his father.

“Pierre, you might speak to me differently, mightn’t you, my boy,” Stepan Trofimovitch observed quite quietly.

“Don’t cry out, please,” said Pierre, with a wave of his hand. “Believe me, it’s all your sick old nerves, and crying out will do no good at all. You’d better tell me instead, why didn’t you warn me since you might have supposed I should speak out at the first chance?”

Stepan Trofimovitch looked searchingly at him.

“Pierre, you who know so much of what goes on here, can you really have known nothing of this business and have heard nothing about it?”

“What? What a set! So it’s not enough to be a child in your old age, you must be a spiteful child too! Varvara Petrovna, did you hear what he said?”

There was a general outcry; but then suddenly an incident took place which no one could have anticipated.

VIII

First of all I must mention that, for the last two or three minutes Lizaveta Nikolaevna had seemed to be possessed by a new impulse; she was whispering something hurriedly to her mother, and to Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who bent down to listen. Her face was agitated, but at the same time it had a look of resolution. At last she got up from her seat in evident haste to go away, and hurried her: mother whom Mavriky Nikolaevitch began helping up from her low chair. But it seemed they were not destined to get away without seeing everything to the end.

Shatov, who had been forgotten by every one in his corner (not far from Lizaveta Nikolaevna), and who did not seem to know himself why he went on sitting there, got up from his chair, and walked, without haste, with resolute steps right across the room to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, looking him straight in the face. The latter noticed him approaching at some distance, and faintly smiled, but when Shatov was close to him he left off smiling.

When Shatov stood still facing him with his eyes fixed on him, and without uttering a word, every one suddenly noticed it and there was a general hush; Pyotr Stepanovitch was the last to cease speaking. Liza and her mother were standing in the middle of the room. So passed five seconds; the look of haughty astonishment was followed by one of anger on Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's face; he scowled. . . .

And suddenly Shatov swung his long, heavy arm, and with all his might struck him a blow in the face. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch staggered violently.

Shatov struck the blow in a peculiar way, not at all after the conventional fashion (if one may use such an expression). It was not a slap with the palm of his hand, but a blow with the whole fist, and it was a big, heavy, bony fist covered with red hairs and freckles. If the blow had struck the nose, it would have broken it. But it hit him on the cheek, and struck the left corner of the lip and the upper teeth, from which blood streamed at once.

I believe there was a sudden scream, perhaps Varvara Petrovna screamed — that I don't remember, because there was a dead hush again; the whole scene did not last more than ten seconds, however.

Yet a very great deal happened in those seconds.

I must remind the reader again that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's was one of those natures that know nothing of fear. At a duel he could face the pistol

of his opponent with indifference, and could take aim and kill with brutal coolness. If anyone had slapped him in the face, I should have expected him not to challenge his assailant to a duel, but to murder him on the spot. He was just one of those characters, and would have killed the man, knowing very well what he was doing, and without losing his self-control. I fancy, indeed, that he never was liable to those fits of blind rage which deprive a man of all power of reflection. Even when overcome with intense anger, as he sometimes was, he was always able to retain complete self-control, and therefore to realise that he would certainly be sent to penal servitude for murdering a man not in a duel; nevertheless, he'd have killed any one who insulted him, and without the faintest hesitation.

I have been studying Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch of late, and through special circumstances I know a great many facts about him now, at the time I write. I should compare him, perhaps, with some gentlemen of the past of whom legendary traditions are still perceived among us. We are told, for instance, about the Decabrist L — n, that he was always seeking for danger, that he revelled in the sensation, and that it had become a craving of his nature; that in his youth he had rushed into duels for nothing; that in Siberia he used to go to kill bears with nothing but a knife; that in the Siberian forests he liked to meet with runaway convicts, who are, I may observe in passing, more formidable than bears. There is no doubt that these legendary gentlemen were capable of a feeling of fear, and even to an extreme degree, perhaps, or they would have been a great deal quieter, and a sense of danger would never' have become a physical craving with them. But the conquest of fear was what fascinated them. The continual ecstasy of vanquishing and the consciousness that no one could vanquish them was what attracted them. The same L — -n struggled with hunger for some time before he was sent into exile, and toiled to earn his daily bread simply because he did not care to comply with the requests of his rich father, which he considered unjust. So his conception of struggle was many-sided, and he did not prize stoicism and strength of character only in duels and bear-fights.

But many years have passed since those times, and the nervous, exhausted, complex character of the men of to-day is incompatible with the craving for those direct and unmixed sensations which were so sought after by some restlessly active gentlemen of the good old days. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch would, perhaps, have looked down on L — n, and have called him a boastful cock-a-hoop coward; it's true he wouldn't have

expressed himself aloud. Stavrogin would have shot his opponent in a duel, and would have faced a bear if necessary, and would have defended himself from a brigand in the forest as successfully and as fearlessly as L — n, but it would be without the slightest thrill of enjoyment, languidly, listlessly, even with *ennui* and entirely from unpleasant necessity. In anger, of course, there has been a progress compared with L — n, even compared with Lermontov. There was perhaps more malignant anger in Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch than in both put together, but it was a calm, cold, if one may so say, *reasonable* anger, and therefore the most revolting and most terrible possible. I repeat again, I considered him then, and I still consider him (now that everything is over), a man who, if he received a slap in the face, or any equivalent insult, would be certain to kill his assailant at once, on the spot, without challenging him.

Yet, in the present case, what happened was something different and amazing.

He had scarcely regained his balance after being almost knocked over in this humiliating way, and the horrible, as it were, sodden, thud of the blow in the face had scarcely died away in the room when he seized Shatov by the shoulders with both hands, but at once, almost at the same instant, pulled both hands away and clasped them behind his back. He did not speak, but looked at Shatov, and turned as white as his shirt. But, strange to say, the light in his eyes seemed to die out. Ten seconds later his eyes looked cold, and I'm sure I'm not lying — calm. Only he was terribly pale. Of course I don't know what was passing within the man, I saw only his exterior. It seems to me that if a man should snatch up a bar of red-hot iron and hold it tight in his hand to test his fortitude, and after struggling for ten seconds with insufferable pain end by overcoming it, such a man would, I fancy, go through something like what Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was enduring during those ten seconds.

Shatov was the first to drop his eyes, and evidently because he was unable to go on facing him; then he turned slowly and walked out of the room, but with a very different step. He withdrew quietly, with peculiar awkwardness, with his shoulders hunched, his head hanging as though he were inwardly pondering something. I believe he was whispering something. He made his way to the door carefully, without stumbling against anything or knocking anything over; he opened the door a very little

way, and squeezed through almost sideways. As he went out his shock of hair standing on end at the back of his head was particularly noticeable.

Then first of all one fearful scream was heard. I saw Lizaveta Nikolaevna seize her mother by the shoulder and Mavriky Nikolaevitch by the arm and make two or three violent efforts to draw them out of the room. But she suddenly uttered a shriek, and fell full length on the floor, fainting. I can hear the thud of her head on the carpet to this day.

PART II

CHAPTER I.

NIGHT

EIGHT DAYS HAD PASSED. Now that it is all over and I am writing a record of it, we know all about it; but at the time we knew nothing, and it was natural that many things should seem strange to us: Stepan Trofimovitch and I, anyway, shut ourselves up for the first part of the time, and looked on with dismay from a distance. I did, indeed, go about here and there, and, as before, brought him various items of news, without which he could not exist.

I need hardly say that there were rumours of the most varied kind going about the town in regard to the blow that Stavrogin had received, Lizaveta Nikolaevna's fainting fit, and all that happened on that Sunday. But what we wondered was, through whom the story had got about so quickly and so accurately. Not one of the persons present had any need to give away the secret of what had happened, or interest to serve by doing so.

The servants had not been present. Lebyadkinwas the only one who might have chattered, not so much from spite, for he had gone out in great alarm (and fear of an enemy destroys spite against him), but simply from incontinence of speech-But Lebyadkin and his sister had disappeared next day, and nothing could be heard of them. There was no trace of them at Filipov's house, they had moved, no one knew where, and seemed to have vanished. Shatov, of whom I wanted to inquire about Marya Timofyevna, would not open his door, and I believe sat locked up in his room for the whole of those eight days, even discontinuing his work in the town. He would not see me. I went to see him on Tuesday and knocked at his door. I got no answer, but being convinced by unmistakable evidence that he was at home, I knocked a second time. Then, jumping up, apparently from his bed, he strode to the door and shouted at the top of his voice:

"Shatov is not at home!"

With that I went away.

Stepan Trofimovitch and *I*, not without dismay at the boldness of the supposition, though we tried to encourage one another, reached at last a conclusion: we made up our mind that the only person who could be responsible for spreading these rumours was Pyotr Stepanovitch, though he

himself not long after assured his father that he had found the story on every one's lips, especially at the club, and that the governor and his wife were familiar with every detail of it. What is even more remarkable is that the next day, Monday evening, I met Liputin, and he knew every word that had been passed, so that he must have heard it first-hand. Many of the ladies (and some of the leading ones) were very inquisitive about the "mysterious cripple," as they called Marya Timdfyevna. There were some, indeed, who were anxious to see her and make her acquaintance, so the intervention of the persons who had been in such haste to conceal the Lebyadkins was timely. But Lizaveta Nikolaevna's fainting certainly took the foremost place in the story, and "all society" was interested, if only because it directly concerned Yulia Mihailovna, as the kinswoman and patroness of the young lady. And what was there they didn't say! What increased the gossip was the mysterious position of affairs; both houses were obstinately closed; Lizaveta Nikolaevna, so they said, was in bed with brain fever. The same thing was asserted of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, with the revolting addition of a tooth knocked out and a swollen face. It was even whispered in corners that there would soon be murder among us, that Stavrogin was not the man to put up with such an insult, and that he would kill Shatov, but with the secrecy of a Corsican vendetta. People liked this idea, but the majority of our young people listened with contempt, and with an air of the most nonchalant indifference, which was, of course, assumed. The old hostility to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch in the town was in general strikingly manifest. Even sober-minded people were eager to throw blame on him though they could not have said for what. It was whispered that he had ruined Lizaveta Nikolaevna's reputation, and that there had been an intrigue between them in Switzerland. Cautious people, of course, restrained themselves, but all listened with relish. There were other things said, though not in public, but in private, on rare occasions and almost in secret, extremely strange things, to which I only refer to warn my readers of them with a view to the later events of my story. Some people, with knitted brows, said, God knows on what foundation, that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had some special business in our province, that he had, through Count K. been brought into touch with exalted circles in Petersburg, that he was even, perhaps, in government service, and might almost be said to have been furnished with some sort of commission from some one. When very sober-minded and sensible people smiled at this rumour, observing very reasonably that a man always, mixed

up with scandals, and who was beginning his career among us, with a swollen face did not look like a government official, they were told in a whisper that he was employed not in the official, but, so to say, the confidential service, and that in such cases it was essential to be as little like an official as possible. This remark produced a sensation; we knew that the Zemstvo of our province was the object of marked attention in the capital. I repeat, these were only flitting rumours that disappeared for a time when Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch first came among us. But I may observe that many of the rumours were partly due to a few brief but malicious words, vaguely and disconnectedly dropped at the club by a gentleman who had lately returned from Petersburg. This was a retired captain in the guards, Artemy Pavlovitch Gaganov. He was a Very large landowner in our province and district, a man used to the society of Petersburg, and a son of the late Pavel Pavlovitch Gaganov, the venerable old man with whom Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had, over four years before, had the extraordinarily coarse and sudden encounter which I have described already in the beginning of my story.

It immediately became known to every one that Yulia Mihailovna had made a special call on Varvara Petrovna> and had been informed at the entrance: “Her honour was too unwell to see visitors.” It was known, too, that Yulia Mihailovna sent I a message two days later to inquire after Varvara Petrovna’s health. At last she began “defending” Varvara Petrovna everywhere, of course only in the loftiest sense, that is, in the vaguest possible way. She listened coldly and sternly to the hurried remarks made at first about the scene on Sunday, so that during the later days they were not renewed in her presence. So that the belief gained ground everywhere that Yulia Mihailovna knew not only the whole of the mysterious story but all its secret significance to the smallest detail, and not as an outsider, but as one taking part in it. I may observe, by the way, that she was already gradually beginning to gain that exalted influence among us for which she was so eager and which she was certainly struggling to win, and was already beginning to see herself “surrounded by a circle.” A section of society recognised her practical sense and tact . . . but of that later. Her patronage partly explained Pyotr Stepanovitch’s rapid success in our society — a success with which Stepan Trofimovitch was particularly impressed at the time.

We possibly exaggerated it. To begin with, Pyotr Stepanovitch seemed to make acquaintance almost instantly with the whole town within the first four days of his arrival. He only arrived on Sunday; and on Tuesday I saw him in a carriage with Artemy Pavlovitch Gaganov, a man who was proud, irritable, and supercilious, in spite of his good breeding, and who was not easy to get on with. At the governor's, too, Pyotr Stepanovitch met with a warm welcome, so much so that he was at once on an intimate footing, like a young friend, treated, so to say, affectionately. He dined with Yulia Mihailovna almost every day. He had made her acquaintance in Switzerland, but there was certainly something curious about the rapidity of his success in the governor's house. In any case he was reputed, whether truly or not, to have been at one time a revolutionist abroad, he had had something to do with some publications and some congresses abroad, "which one can prove from the newspapers," to quote the malicious remark of Alyosha Telyatnikov, who had also been once a young friend affectionately treated in the house of the late governor, but was now, alas, a clerk on the retired list. But the fact was unmistakable: the former revolutionist, far from being hindered from returning to his beloved Fatherland, seemed almost to have been encouraged to do so, so perhaps there was nothing in it. Liputin whispered to me once that there were rumours that Pyotr Stepanovitch had once professed himself penitent, and on his return had been pardoned on mentioning certain names and so, perhaps, had succeeded in expiating his offence, by promising to be of use to the government in the future. I repeated these malignant phrases to Stepan Trofimovitch, and although the latter was in such a state that he was hardly capable of reflection, he pondered profoundly. It turned out later that Pyotr Stepanovitch had come to us with a very influential letter of recommendation, that he had, at any rate, brought one to the governor's wife from a very important old lady in Petersburg, whose husband was one of the most distinguished old dignitaries in the capital. This old lady, who was Yulia Mihailovna's godmother, mentioned in her letter that Count K. knew Pyotr Stepanovitch very well through Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, made much of him, and thought him "a very excellent young man in spite of his former errors." Yulia Mihailovna set the greatest value on her relations with the "higher spheres," which were few and maintained with difficulty, and was, no doubt, pleased to get the old lady's letter, but still there was something peculiar about it. She even forced her husband upon a

familiar footing with Pyotr Stepanovitch, so much so that Mr. von Lembke complained of it ... but of that, too, later. I may mention, too, that the great author was also favourably disposed to Pyotr Stepanovitch, and at once invited him to go and see him. Such alacrity on the part of a man so puffed up with conceit stung Stepan Trofimovitch more painfully than anything; but I put a different interpretation on it. In inviting a nihilist to see him, Mr. Karmazinov, no doubt, had in view his relations with the progressives of the younger generation in both capitals. The great author trembled nervously before the revolutionary youth of Russia, and imagining, in his ignorance, that the future lay in their hands, fawned upon them in a despicable way, chiefly because they paid no attention to him whatever.

II

Pyotr Stepanovitch ran round to see his father twice, but unfortunately I was absent on both occasions. He visited him for the first time only on Wednesday, that is, not till the fourth day after their first meeting, and then only on business. Their difficulties over the property were settled, by the way, without fuss or publicity. Varvara Petrovna took it all on herself, and paid all that was owing, taking over the land, of course, and only informed Stepan Trofimovitch that it was all settled and her butler, Alexey Yegorytch, was, by her authorisation, bringing him something to sign. This Stepan Trofimovitch did, in silence, with extreme dignity. Apropos of his dignity, I may mention that I hardly recognised my old friend during those days. He behaved as he had never done before; became amazingly taciturn and had not even written one letter to Varvara Petrovna since Sunday, which seemed to me almost a miracle. What’s more, he had become quite calm. He had fastened upon a final and decisive idea which gave him tranquillity. That was evident. He had hit upon this idea, and sat still, expecting something. At first, however, he was ill, especially on Monday. He had an attack of his summer cholera. He could not remain all that time without news either; but as soon as I departed from the statement of facts, and began discussing the case in itself, and formulated any theory, he at once gesticulated to me to stop. But both his interviews with his son had a distressing effect on him, though they did not shake his determination. After each interview he spent the whole day lying on the sofa with a handkerchief soaked in vinegar on his head. But he continued to remain calm in the deepest sense.

Sometimes, however, he did not hinder my speaking. Sometimes, too, it seemed to me that the mysterious determination he had taken seemed to be failing him and he appeared to be struggling with a new, seductive stream of ideas. That was only at moments, but I made a note of it. I suspected that he was longing to assert himself- again, to come forth from his seclusion, to show fight, to struggle to the last.

"*Cher, I* could crush them!" broke from him on Thursday evening after his second interview with Pyotr Stepanovitch, when he lay stretched on the sofa with his head wrapped in a towel.

Till that moment he had not uttered one word all day.

"*Fils, fils, cher,"* and so on, "I agree all those expressions are nonsense, kitchen talk, and so be it. I see it for myself. I never gave him food or drink, I sent him a tiny baby from Berlin to X province by post, and all that, I admit it. . . . 'You gave me neither food nor drink, and sent me by post,' he says, 'and what's more you've robbed me here.'"

"' But you unhappy boy,' I cried to him, 'my heart has been aching for you all my life; though I did send you by post.' *Il rit."*

"But I admit it. I admit it, granted it was by post," he concluded, almost in delirium.

"*Passons,"* he began again, five minutes later. "I don't understand Turgenev. That Bazarov of his is a fictitious figure, it does not exist anywhere. The fellows themselves were the first to disown him as unlike anyone. That Bazarov is a sort of indistinct mixture of Nozdryov and Byron, *c'est le mot.* Look at them attentively: they caper about and squeal with joy like puppies in the sun. They are happy, they are victorious! What is there of Byron in them! . . . and with that, such ordinariness! What a low-bred, irritable vanity? What an abject craving to *faire du bruit autour de son nom,* without noticing that *son nom.* . . . Oh, it's a caricature! 'Surely,' I cried to him, 'you don't want to offer yourself just as you are as a substitute for Christ?' *Il rit. Il rit beaucoup. Il rit trap.* He has a strange smile. His mother had not a smile like that. *Il rit toujours."*

Silence followed again.

"They are cunning; they were acting in collusion on Sunday," he blurted out suddenly. . . .

"Oh, not a doubt of it," I cried, pricking up my ears. "It was a got-up thing and it was too transparent, and so badly acted."

“I don’t mean that. Do you know that it was all too transparent on purpose, that those . . . who had to, might understand it. Do you understand that?”

“I don’t understand.”

“*Tant mieux; passons.* I am very irritable to-day.”

“But why have you been arguing with him, Stepan Trofimovitch?” I asked him reproachfully.

“*Je voulais convertir* — you’ll laugh of course — *cette pauvre* auntie, *elle entendra de belles choses!* Oh, my dear boy, would you believe it. I felt like a patriot. I always recognised that I was a Russian, however . . . a genuine Russian must be like you and me. *Il y aid, dedans quelque chose d’aveugle et de louche.”*

“Not a doubt of it,” I assented.

“My dear, the real truth always sounds improbable, do you know that? To make truth sound probable you must always mix in some falsehood with it. Men have always done so. Perhaps there’s something in it that passes our understanding. What do you think: is there something we don’t understand in that triumphant squeal? I should like to think there was. I should like to think so.”

I did not speak. He, too, was silent for a long time. “They say that French cleverness . . . “he babbled suddenly, as though in a fever ..,” that’s false, it always has been. Why libel French cleverness? It’s simply Russian indolence, our degrading impotence to produce ideas, our revolting parasitism in the rank of nations. *Ils sont tout simplement des paresseux,* and not French cleverness. Oh, the Russians ought to be extirpated for the good of humanity, like noxious parasites! We’ve been striving for something utterly, utterly different. I can make nothing of it. I have given up understanding. ‘Do you understand,’ I cried to him, ‘that if you have the guillotine in the foreground of your programme and are so enthusiastic about it too, it’s simply because nothing’s easier than cutting off heads, and nothing’s harder than to have an idea. *Vous etes des paresseux! Votre drapeau est un guenille, une impuissance.* It’s those carts, or, what was it? ... “the rumble of the carts carrying bread to humanity “being more important than the Sistine Madonna, or, what’s the saying? . . . *une betise dans ce genre.* Don’t you understand, don’t you understand,’ I said to him, ‘that unhappiness is just as necessary to man as happiness.’ *Il rit.* ‘All you do is to make a *bon mot,’* he said, ‘with your limbs snug on a velvet sofa.’ .

. . (He used a coarser expression.) And this habit of addressing a father so familiarly is very nice when father and son are on good terms, but what do you think of it when they are abusing one another?”

We were silent again for a minute.

“*Cher,*” he concluded at last, getting up quickly, “do you know this is bound to end in something?”

“Of course,” said I.

“*Vous ne comprenez pas. Passons.* But . . . usually in our world things come to nothing, but this will end in something; it’s bound to, it’s bound to!”

He got up, and walked across the room in violent emotion, and coming back to the sofa sank on to it exhausted.

On Friday morning, Pyotr Stepanovitch went off somewhere in the neighbourhood, and remained away till Monday. I heard of his departure from Liputin, and in the course of conversation I learned that the Lebyadkins, brother and sister, had moved to the riverside quarter. “I moved them,” he added, and, dropping the Lebyadkins, he suddenly announced to me that Lizaveta Nikolaevna was going to marry Mavriky Nikolaevitch, that, although it had not been announced, the engagement was a settled thing. Next day I met Lizaveta Nikolaevna out riding with Mavriky Nikolaevitch; she was out for the first time after her illness. She beamed at me from the distance, laughed, and nodded in a very friendly way. I told all this to Stepan Trofimovitch; he paid no attention, except to the news about the Lebyadkins.

And now, having described our enigmatic position throughout those eight days during which we knew nothing, I will pass on to the description of the succeeding incidents of my chronicle, writing, so to say, with full knowledge, and describing things as they became known afterwards, and are clearly seen to-day. I will begin with the eighth day after that Sunday, that is, the Monday evening — for in reality a “new scandal” began with that evening.

III

It was seven o’clock in the evening. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was sitting alone in his study — the room he had been fond of in old days. It was lofty, carpeted with rugs, and contained somewhat heavy old-fashioned furniture.

He was sitting on the sofa in the corner, dressed as though to go out, though he did not seem to be intending to do so. On the table before him stood a lamp with a shade. The sides and corners of the big room were left in shadow. His eyes looked dreamy and concentrated, not altogether tranquil; his face looked tired and had grown a little thinner. He really was ill with a swollen face; but the story of a tooth having been knocked out was an exaggeration. One had been loosened, but it had grown into its place again: he had had a cut on the inner side of the upper lip, but that, too, had healed. The swelling on his face had lasted all the week simply because the invalid would not have a doctor, and instead of having the swelling lanced had waited for it to go down. He would not hear of a doctor, and would scarcely allow even his mother to come near him, and then only for a moment, once a day, and only at dusk, after it was dark and before lights had been brought in. He did not receive Pyotr Stepanovitch either, though the latter ran round to Varvara Petrovna's two or three times a day so long as he remained in the town. And now, at last, returning on the Monday morning after his three days' absence, Pyotr Stepanovitch made a circuit of the town, and, after dining at Yulia Mihailovna's, came at last in the evening to Varvara Petrovna, who was impatiently expecting him. The interdict had been removed, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was "at home." Varvara Petrovna herself led the visitor to the door of the study; she had long looked forward to their meeting, and Pyotr Stepanovitch had promised to run to her and repeat what passed. She knocked timidly at Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's door, and getting no answer ventured to open the door a couple of inches.

"Nicolas, may I bring Pyotr Stepanovitch in to see you?" she asked, in a soft and restrained voice, trying to make out her son's face behind the lamp.

"You can — you can, of course you can," Pyotr Stepanovitch himself cried out, loudly and gaily. He opened the door with his hand and went in.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had not heard the knock at the door, and only caught his mother's timid question, and had not had time to answer it. Before him, at that moment, there lay a letter he had just read over, which he was pondering deeply. He started, hearing Pyotr Stepanovitch's sudden outburst, and hurriedly put the letter under a paper-weight, but did not quite succeed; a corner of the letter and almost the whole envelope showed.

"I called out on purpose that you might be prepared," Pyotr Stepanovitch said hurriedly, with surprising naivete, running up to the table, and instantly

staring at the corner of the letter, which peeped out from beneath the paper-weight.

“And no doubt you had time to see how I hid the letter I had just received, under the paper-weight,” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch calmly, without moving from his place.

“A letter? Bless you and your letters, what are they to do with me?” cried the visitor. “But . . . what does matter ..,” he whispered again, turning to the door, which was by now closed, and nodding his head in that direction.

“She never listens,” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch observed coldly.

“What if she did overhear?” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, raising his voice cheerfully, and settling down in an arm-chair. “I’ve nothing against that, only I’ve come here now to speak to you alone. Well, at last I’ve succeeded in getting at you. First of all, how are you? I see you’re getting on splendidly. To-morrow you’ll show yourself again — eh?”

“Perhaps.”

“Set their minds at rest. Set mine at rest at last.” He gesticulated violently with a jocose and amiable air. “If only you knew what nonsense I’ve had to talk to them. You know, though.” He laughed.

“I don’t know everything. I only heard from my mother that you’ve been . . . very active.”

“Oh, well, I’ve said nothing definite,” Pyotr Stepanovitch flared up at once, as though defending himself from an awful attack. “I simply trotted out Shatov’s wife; you know, that is, the rumours of your liaison in Paris, which accounted, of course, for what happened on Sunday. You’re not angry?”

“I’m sure you’ve done your best.”

“Oh, that’s just what I was afraid of. Though what does that mean, ‘done your best’? That’s a reproach, isn’t it? You always go straight for things, though. . . . What I was most afraid of, as I came here, was that you wouldn’t go straight for the point.”

“I don’t want to go straight for anything,” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch with some irritation- But he laughed at once.

“I didn’t mean that, I didn’t mean that, don’t make a mistake,” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, waving his hands, rattling his words out like peas, and at once relieved at his companion’s irritability. “I’m not going to worry you with *our* business, especially in your present position. I’ve only come about Sunday’s affair, and only to arrange the most necessary steps, because, you

see, it’s impossible. I’ve come with the frankest explanations which I stand in more need of than you — so much for your vanity, but at the same time it’s true. I’ve come to be open with you from this time forward.”

“Then you have not been open with me before?”

“You know that yourself. I’ve been cunning with you many times . . . you smile; I’m very glad of that smile as a prelude to our explanation. I provoked that smile on purpose by using the word ‘cunning,’ so that you might get cross directly at my daring to think I could be cunning, so that I might have a chance of explaining myself at once. You see, you see how open I have become now! Well, do you care to listen?”

In the expression of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch’s face, which was contemptuously composed, and even ironical, in spite of his visitor’s obvious desire to irritate him by the insolence of his premeditated and intentionally coarse naivetes, there was, at last, a look of rather uneasy curiosity.

“Listen,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, wriggling more than ever, “when I set off to come here, I mean here in the large sense, to this town, ten days ago, I made up my mind, of course, to assume a character. It would have been best to have done without anything, to have kept one’s own character, wouldn’t it? There is no better dodge than one’s own character, because no one believes in it. I meant, I must own, to assume the part of a fool, because it is easier to be a fool than to act one’s own character; but as a fool is after all something extreme, and anything extreme excites curiosity, I ended by sticking to my own character. And what is my own character? The golden mean: neither wise nor foolish, rather stupid, and dropped from the moon, as sensible people say here, isn’t that it?”

“Perhaps it is,” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, with a faint smile.

“Ah, you agree — I’m very glad; I knew beforehand that it was your own opinion. . . . You needn’t trouble, I am not annoyed, and I didn’t describe myself in that way to get a flattering contradiction from you — no, you’re not stupid, you’re clever. ... Ah! you’re smiling again! . . . I’ve blundered once more. You would not have said ‘you’re clever,’ granted; I’ll let it pass anyway. *Passons*, as papa says, and, in parenthesis, don’t be vexed with my verbosity. By the way, I always say a lot, that is, use a great many words and talk very fast, and I never speak well. And why do I use so many words, and why do I never speak well? Because I don’t know how to speak. People who can speak well, speak briefly. So that I am stupid, am I

not? But as this gift of stupidity is natural to me, why shouldn't I make skilful use of it? And I do make use of it. It's true that as I came here, I did think, at first, of being silent. But you know silence is a great talent, and therefore incongruous for me, and secondly silence would be risky, anyway. So I made up my mind finally that it would be best to talk, but to talk stupidly — that is, to talk and talk and talk — to be in a tremendous hurry to explain things, and in the end to get muddled in my own explanations, so that my listener would walk away without hearing the end, with a shrug, or, better still, with a curse. You succeed straight off in persuading them of your simplicity, in boring them and in being incomprehensible — three advantages all at once! Do you suppose anybody will suspect you of mysterious designs after that? Why, every one of them would take it as a personal affront if anyone were to say I had secret designs. And I sometimes amuse them too, and that's priceless. Why, they're ready to forgive me everything now, just because the clever fellow who used to publish manifestoes out there turns out to be stupider than themselves — that's so, isn't it? From your smile I see you approve."

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was not smiling at all, however.

On the contrary, he was listening with a frown and some impatience.

"Eh? What? I believe you said 'no matter.'"

Pyotr Stepanovitch rattled on. (Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had said nothing at all.) "Of course, of course. I assure you I'm not here to compromise you by my company, by claiming you as my comrade. But do you know you're horribly captious to-day; I ran in to you with a light and open heart, and you seem to be laying up every word I say against me. I assure you I'm not going to begin about anything shocking to-day, I give you my word, and I agree beforehand to all your conditions."

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was obstinately silent.

"Eh? What? Did you say something? I see, I see that I've made a blunder again, it seems; you've not suggested conditions and you're not going to; I believe you, I believe you; well, you can set your mind at rest; I know, of course, that it's not worth while for me to suggest them, is it? I'll answer for you beforehand, and — just from stupidity, of course; stupidity again. . . . You're laughing? Eh? What?"

"Nothing," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch laughed at last. "I just remembered that I really did call you stupid, but you weren't there then, so they must have repeated it. ... I would ask you to make haste and come to the point."

“Why, but I am at the point! I am talking about Sunday,” babbled Pyotr Stepanovitch. “Why, what was I on Sunday? What would you call it? Just fussy, mediocre stupidity, and in the stupidest way I took possession of the conversation by force. But they forgave me everything, first because I dropped from the moon, that seems to be settled here, now, by every one; and, secondly, because I told them a pretty little story, and got you all out of a scrape, didn’t they, didn’t they?”

“That is, you told your story so as to leave them in doubt and suggest some compact and collusion between us, when there was no collusion and I’d not asked you to do anything.”

“Just so, just so!” Pyotr Stepanovitch caught him up, apparently delighted. “That’s just what I did do, for I wanted you to see that I implied it; I exerted myself chiefly for your sake, for I caught you and wanted to compromise you, above all I wanted to find out how far you’re afraid.”

“It would be interesting to know why you are so open now?”

“Don’t be angry, don’t be angry, don’t glare at me. . . . You’re not, though. You wonder why I am so open? Why, just because it’s all changed now; of course, it’s over, buried Under the sand. I’ve suddenly changed my ideas about you. The old way is closed; now I shall never compromise you in the old way, it will be in a new way now.”

“You’ve changed your tactics?”

“There are no tactics. Now it’s for you to decide in everything, that is, if you want to, say yes, and if you want to, say no. There you have my new tactics. And I won’t say a word about our cause till you bid me yourself. You laugh? Laugh away. I’m laughing myself. But I’m in earnest now, in earnest, in earnest, though a man who is in such a hurry is stupid, isn’t he? Never mind, I may be stupid, but I’m in earnest, in earnest.”

He really was speaking in earnest in quite a different tone, and with a peculiar excitement, so that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked at him with curiosity.

“You say you’ve changed your ideas about me?” he asked.

“I changed my ideas about you at the moment when you drew your hands back after Shatov’s attack, and, that’s enough, that’s enough, no questions, please, I’ll say nothing more now.”

He jumped up, waving his hands as though waving off questions. But as there were no questions, and he had no reason to go away, he sank into an arm-chair again, somewhat reassured.

“By the way, in parenthesis,” he rattled on at once, “some people here are babbling that you’ll kill him, and taking bets about it, so that Lembke positively thought of setting the police on, but Yulia Mihailovna forbade it. ... But enough about that, quite enough, I only spoke of it to let you know. By the way, I moved the Lebyadkins the same day, you know; did you get my note with their address?”

“I received it at the time.”

“I didn’t do that by way of ‘stupidity.’ I did it genuinely, to serve you. If it was stupid, anyway, it was done in good faith.”

“Oh, all right, perhaps it was necessary. . . .” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch dreamily, “only don’t write any more letters to me, I beg you.”

“Impossible to avoid it. It was only one.”

“So Liputin knows?”

“Impossible to help it: but Liputin, you know yourself, dare not . . . By the way, you ought to meet our fellows, that is, *the* fellows not *our* fellows, or you’ll be finding fault again. Don’t disturb yourself, not just now, but sometime. Just now it’s raining. I’ll let them know, they’ll meet together, and we’ll go in the evening. They’re waiting, with their mouths open like young crows in a nest, to see what present we’ve brought them. They’re a hot-headed lot. They’ve brought out leaflets, they’re on the point of quarrelling. Virginsky is a universal humanity man, Liputin is a Fourierist with a marked inclination for police work; a man, I assure you, who is precious from one point of view, though he requires strict supervision in all others; and, last of all, that fellow with the long ears, he’ll read an account of his own system. And do you know, they’re offended at my treating them casually, and throwing cold water over them, but we certainly must meet.”

“You’ve made me out some sort of chief?” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch dropped as carelessly as possible.

Pyotr Stepanovitch looked quickly at him.

“By the way,” he interposed, in haste to change the subject, as though he had not heard. “I’ve been here two or three times, you know, to see her excellency, Varvara Petrovna, and I have been obliged to say a great deal too.”

“So I imagine.”

“No, don’t imagine, I’ve simply told her that you won’t kill him, well, and other sweet things. And only fancy; the very next day she knew I’d

moved Marya Timofyevna beyond the river. Was it you told her?”

“I never dreamed of it!”

“I knew it wasn’t you. Who else could it be? It’s interesting.”

“Liputin, of course.”

“N-no, not Liputin,” muttered Pyotr Stepanovitch, frowning; “I’ll find out who. It’s more like Shatov. . . . That’s nonsense though. Let’s leave that! Though it’s awfully important. . . . By the way, I kept expecting that your mother would suddenly burst out with the great question. . . . Ach! yes, she was horribly glum at first, but suddenly, when I came to-day, she was beaming all over, what does that mean?”

“It’s because I promised her to-day that within five days I’ll be engaged to Lizaveta Nikolaevna,” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch said with surprising openness.

“Oh! . . . Yes, of course,” faltered Pyotr Stepanovitch, seeming disconcerted. “There are rumours of her engagement, you know. It’s true, too. But you’re right, she’d run from under the wedding crown, you’ve only to call to her. You’re not angry at my saying so?”

“No, I’m not angry.”

“I notice it’s awfully hard to make you angry to-day, and I begin to be afraid of you. I’m awfully curious to know how you’ll appear to-morrow. I expect you’ve got a lot of things ready. You’re not angry at my saying so?”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch made no answer at all, which completed Pyotr Stepanovitch’s irritation.

“By the way, did you say that in earnest to your mother, about Lizaveta Nikolaevna?” he asked.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked coldly at him.

“Oh, I understand, it was only to soothe her, of course.”

“And if it were in earnest?” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch asked firmly.

“Oh, God bless you then, as they say in such cases. It won’t hinder the cause (you see, I don’t say ‘our,’ you don’t like the word ‘our’) and I ... well, I ... am at your service, as you know.”

“You think so?”

“I think nothing — nothing,” Pyotr Stepanovitch hurriedly declared, laughing, “because I know you consider what you’re about beforehand for yourself, and everything with you has been thought out. I only mean that I am seriously at your service, always and everywhere, and in every sort of circumstance, every sort really, do you understand that?”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch yawned.

“I’ve bored you,” Pyotr Stepanovitch cried, jumping up suddenly, and snatching his perfectly new round hat as though he were going away. He remained and went on talking, however, though he stood up, sometimes pacing about the room and tapping himself on the knee with his hat at exciting parts of the conversation.

“I meant to amuse you with stories of the Lembkes, too,” he cried gaily.

“Afterwards, perhaps, not now. But how is Yulia Mihailovna?”

“What conventional manners all of you have! Her health is no more to you than the health of the grey cat, yet you ask after it. I approve of that. She’s quite well, and her respect for you amounts to a superstition, her immense anticipations of you amount to a superstition. She does not say a word about what happened on Sunday, and is convinced that you will overcome everything yourself by merely making your appearance. Upon my word! She fancies you can do anything. You’re an enigmatic and romantic figure now, more than ever you were — extremely advantageous position. It is incredible how eager every one is to see you. They were pretty hot when I went away, but now it is more so than ever. Thanks again for your letter. They are all afraid of Count K. Do you know they look upon you as a spy? I keep that up, you’re not angry?”

“It does not matter.”

“It does not matter; it’s essential in the long run. They have their ways of doing things here. I encourage it, of course; Yulia Mihailovna, in the first place, Gaganov too. . . . You laugh? But you know I have my policy; I babble away and suddenly I say something clever just as they are on the look-out for it. They crowd round me and I humbug away again. They’ve all given me up in despair by now: ‘he’s got brains but he’s dropped from the moon.’ Lembke invites me to enter the service so that I may be reformed. You know I treat him mockingly, that is, I compromise him and he simply stares, Yulia Mihailovna encourages it. Oh, by the way, Gaganov is in an awful rage with you. He said the nastiest things about you yesterday at Duhovo. I told him the whole truth on the spot, that is, of course, not the whole truth. I spent the whole day at Duhovo. It’s a splendid estate, a fine house.”

“Then is he at Duhovo now?” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch broke in suddenly, making a sudden start forward and almost leaping up from his seat.

“No, he drove me here this morning, we returned together,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, appearing not to notice Stavrogin’s momentary excitement. “What’s this? I dropped a book.” He bent down to pick up the “keepsake” he had knocked down. The Women of Balzac,’ with illustrations.” He opened it suddenly. “I haven’t read it. Lembke writes novels too.”

“Yes?” queried Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, as though beginning to be interested.

“In Russian, on the sly, of course, Yulia Mihailovna knows and allows it. He’s henpecked, but with good manners; it’s their system. Such strict form — such self-restraint! Something of the sort would be the thing for us.”

“You approve of government methods?”

“I should rather think so! It’s the one thing that’s natural and practicable in Russia. ... I won’t ... I won’t,” he cried out suddenly, “I’m not referring to that — not a word on delicate subjects. Good-bye, though, you look rather green.”

“I’m feverish.”

“I can well believe it; you should go to bed. By the way, there are Skoptsi here in the neighbourhood — they’re curious people ... of that later, though. Ah, here’s another anecdote. There’s an infantry regiment here in the district. I was drinking last Friday evening with the officers. We’ve three friends among them, *vous comprenez?* They were discussing atheism and I need hardly say they made short work of God. They were squealing with delight. By the way, Shatov declares that if there’s to be a rising in Russia we must begin with atheism. Maybe it’s true. One grizzled old stager of a captain sat mum, not saying a word. All at once he stands up in the middle of the’ room and says aloud, as though speaking to himself: ‘If there’s no God, how can I be a captain then?’ He took up His cap and went out, flinging up his hands.”

“He expressed a rather sensible idea,” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, yawning for the third time.

“Yes? I didn’t understand it; I meant to ask you about it. Well what else have I to tell you? The Shpigulin factory’s interesting; as you know, there are five hundred workmen in it, it’s a hotbed of cholera, it’s not been cleaned for fifteen years and the factory hands are swindled. The owners are millionaires. I assure you that some among the hands have an idea of the *Internationale*,. What, you smile? You’ll see — only give me ever so little time! I’ve asked you to fix the time already and now I ask you again and

then. . . . But I beg your pardon, I won't, I won't speak of that, don't frown. There!" He turned back suddenly. "I quite forgot the chief thing. I was told just now that our box had come from Petersburg."

"You mean ..." Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked at him, not understanding.

"Your box, your things, coats, trousers, and linen have come. Is it true?"

"Yes . . . they said something about it this morning."

"Ach, then can't I open it at once! . . ."

"Ask Alexey."

"Well, to-morrow, then, will to-morrow do? You see my new jacket, dress-coat and three pair's of trousers are with your things, from Sharmer's, by your recommendation, do you remember?"

"I hear you're going in for being a gentleman here," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch with a smile. "Is it true you're going to take lessons at the riding school?"

Pyotr Stepanovitch smiled a wry smile. "I say," he said suddenly, with excessive haste in a voice that quivered and faltered, "I say, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, let's drop personalities once for all. Of course, you can despise me as much as you like if it amuses you — but we'd better dispense with personalities for a time, hadn't we?"

"All right," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch assented.

Pyotr Stepanovitch grinned, tapped his knee with his hat, shifted from one leg to the other, and recovered his former expression.

"Some people here positively look upon me as your rival with Lizaveta Nikolaevna, so I must think of my appearance, mustn't I," he laughed. "Who was it told you that though? H'm. It's just eight o'clock; well I must be off. I promised to look in on Varvara Petrovna, but I shall make my escape. And you go to bed and you'll be stronger to-morrow. It's raining and dark, but I've a cab, it's not over safe in the streets here at night. . . . Ach, by the way, there's a run-away convict from Siberia, Fedka, wandering about the town and the neighbourhood. Only fancy, he used to be a serf of mine, and my papa sent him for a soldier fifteen years ago and took the money for him. He's a very remarkable person."

"You have been talking to him?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch scanned him.

"I have. He lets me know where he is. He's ready for anything, anything, for money of course, but he has convictions, too, of a sort, of course. Oh yes, by the way, again, if you meant anything of that plan, you remember,

about Lizaveta Nikolaevna, I tell you once again, I too am a fellow ready for anything of any kind you like, and absolutely at your service. ... Hullo! are you reaching for your stick. Oh no ... only fancy ... I thought you were looking for your stick."

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was looking for nothing and said nothing.

But he had risen to his feet very suddenly with a strange look in his face.

"If you want any help about Mr. Gaganov either," Pyotr Stepanovitch blurted out suddenly, this time looking straight at the paper-weight, "of course I can arrange it all, and I'm certain you won't be able to manage without me."

He went out suddenly without waiting for an answer, but thrust his head in at the door once more. "I mention that," he gabbled hurriedly, "because Shatov had no right either, you know, to risk his life last Sunday when he attacked you, had he? I should be glad if you would make a note of that." He disappeared again without waiting for an answer.

IV

Perhaps he imagined, as he made his exit, that as soon as he was left alone, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch would begin beating on the wall with his fists, and no doubt he would have been glad to see this, if that had been possible. But, if so, he was greatly mistaken. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was still calm. He remained standing for two minutes in the same position by the table, apparently plunged in thought, but soon a cold and listless smile came on to his lips. He slowly sat down again in the same place in the corner of the sofa, and shut his eyes as though from weariness. The corner of the letter was still peeping from under the paperweight, but he didn't even move to cover it.

He soon sank into complete forgetfulness.

When Pyotr Stepanovitch went out without coming to see her, as he had promised, Varvara Petrovna, who had been worn out by anxiety during these days, could not control herself, and ventured to visit her son herself, though it was not her regular time. She was still haunted by the idea that he would tell her something conclusive. She knocked at the door gently as before, and again receiving no answer, she opened the door. Seeing that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was sitting strangely motionless, she cautiously advanced to the sofa with a throbbing heart. She seemed struck by the fact

that he could fall asleep so quickly and that he could sleep sitting like that, so erect and motionless, so that his breathing even was scarcely perceptible. His face was pale and forbidding, but it looked, as it were, numb and rigid. His brows were somewhat contracted and frowning. He positively had the look of a lifeless wax figure. She stood over him for about three minutes, almost holding her breath, and suddenly she was seized with terror. She withdrew on tiptoe, stopped at the door, hurriedly made the sign of the cross over him, and retreated unobserved, with a new oppression and a new anguish at her heart.

He slept a long while, more than an hour, and still in the same rigid pose: not a muscle of his face twitched, there was not the faintest movement in his whole body, and his brows were still contracted in the same forbidding frown. If Varvara Petrovna had remained another three minutes she could not have endured the stifling sensation that this motionless lethargy roused in her, and would have waked him. But he suddenly opened his eyes, and sat for ten minutes as immovable as before, staring persistently and curiously, as though at some object in the corner which had struck him, although there was nothing new or striking in the room.

Suddenly there rang out the low deep note of the clock on the wall.

With some uneasiness he turned to look at it, but almost at the same moment the other door opened, and the butler, Alexey Yegorytch came in. He had in one hand a greatcoat, a scarf, and a hat, and in the other a silver tray with a note on it.

“Half-past nine,” he announced softly, and laying the other things on a chair, he held out the tray with the note — a scrap of paper unsealed and scribbled in pencil. Glancing through it, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch took a pencil from the table, added a few words, and put the note back on the tray.

“Take it back as soon as I have gone out, and now dress me,” he said, getting up from the sofa.

Noticing that he had on a light velvet jacket, he thought a minute, and told the man to bring him a cloth coat, which he wore on more ceremonious occasions. At last, when he was dressed and had put on his hat, he locked the door by which his mother had come into the room, took the letter from under the paperweight, and without saying a word went out into the corridor, followed by Alexey Yegorytch. From the corridor they went down the narrow stone steps of the back stairs to a passage which opened straight into the garden. In the corner stood a lantern and a big umbrella.

“Owing to the excessive rain the mud in the streets is beyond anything,” Alexey Yegorytch announced, making a final effort to deter his master from the expedition. But opening his umbrella the latter went without a word into the damp and sodden garden, which was dark as a cellar. The wind was roaring and tossing the bare tree-tops. The little sandy paths were wet and slippery. Alexey Yegoryvitch walked along as he was, bareheaded, in his swallow-tail coat, lighting up the path for about three steps before them with the lantern.

“Won’t it be noticed?” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch asked suddenly.

“Not from the windows. Besides I have seen to all that already,” the old servant answered in quiet and measured tones.

“Has my mother retired?”

“Her excellency locked herself in at nine o’clock as she has done the last few days, and there is no possibility of her knowing anything. At what hour am I to expect your honour?”

“At one or half-past, not later than two.”

“Yes, sir.”

Crossing the garden by the winding paths that they both knew by heart, they reached the stone wall, and there in the farthest corner found a little door, which led out into a narrow and deserted lane, and was always kept locked. It appeared that Alexey Yegorytch had the key in his hand.

“Won’t the door creak?” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch inquired again.

But Alexey Yegorytch informed him that it had been oiled yesterday “as well as to-day.” He was by now wet through. Unlocking the door he gave the key to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch.

“If it should be your pleasure to be taking a distant walk, I would warn your honour that I am not confident of the folk here, especially in the back lanes, and especially beyond the river,” he could not resist warning him again. He was an old servant, who had been like a nurse to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, and at one time used to dandle him in his arms; he was a grave and severe man who was fond of listening to religious discourse and reading books of devotion.

“Don’t be uneasy, Alexey Yegorytch.”

“May God’s blessing rest on you, sir, but only in your righteous undertakings.”

“What?” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, stopping short in the lane.

Alexey Yegorytch resolutely repeated his words. He had never before ventured to express himself in such language in his master's presence.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and crossed the lane, sinking five or six inches into the mud at every step. He came out at last into a long deserted street. He knew the town like the five fingers of his hand, but Bogoyavlensky Street was a long way off. It was past ten when he stopped at last before the locked gates of the dark old house that belonged to Filipov. The ground floor had stood empty since the Lebyadkins had left it, and the windows were boarded up, but there was a light burning in Shatov's room on the second floor. As there was no bell he began banging on the gate with his hand. A window was opened and Shatov peeped out into the street. It was terribly dark, and difficult to make out anything. Shatov was peering out for some time, about a minute.

"Is that you?" he asked suddenly.

"Yes," replied the uninvited guest.

Shatov slammed the window, went downstairs and opened the gate. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch stepped over the high sill, and without a word passed by him straight into Kjrillov's lodge.

There everything was unlocked and all the doors stood open.

The passage and the first two rooms were dark, but there was a light shining in the last, in which Kirillov lived and drank tea, and laughter and strange cries came from it. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went towards the light, but stood still in the doorway without going in. There was tea on the table. In the middle of the room stood the old woman who was a relation of the landlord. She was bareheaded and was dressed in a petticoat and a hare-skin jacket, and her stockingless feet were thrust into slippers. In her arms she had an eighteen-months-old baby, with nothing on but its little shirt; with bare legs, flushed cheeks, and ruffled white hair. It had only just been taken out of the cradle. It seemed to have just been crying; there were still tears in its eyes. But at that instant it was stretching out its little arms, clapping its hands, and laughing with a sob as little children do. Kirillov was bouncing a big red india-rubber ball on the floor before it. The ball bounced up to the ceiling, and .jack to the floor, the baby shrieked "Baw! baw!" Kirillov caught the "baw '.' and gave it to it. The baby threw it itself with its awkward little hand's, and Kirillov ran to pick it up again.

At last the "baw" rolled under the cupboard. "Baw! baw!" cried the child. Kirillov lay down on the floor, trying to reach the ball with his hand

under the cupboard. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went into the room. The baby caught sight of him, nestled against the old woman, and went off into a prolonged infantile wail. The woman immediately carried it out of the room.

“Stavrogin?” said Kirillov, beginning to get up from the floor with the ball in his hand, and showing no surprise at the unexpected visit. “Will you have tea?”

He rose to his feet.

“I should be very glad of it, if it’s hot,” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch; “I’m wet through.”

“It’s hot, nearly boiling in fact,” Kirillov declared delighted. “Sit down. You’re muddy, but that’s nothing; I’ll mop up the floor later.”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch sat down and emptied the cup he handed him almost at a gulp.

“Some more?” asked Kirillov.

“No, thank you.”

Kirillov, who had not sat down till then, seated himself facing him, and inquired:

“Why have you come?”

“On business. Here, read this letter from Gaganov; do you remember, I talked to you about him in Petersburg.”

Kirillov took the letter, read it, laid it on the table and looked at him expectantly.

“As you know, I met this Gaganov for the first time in my life a month ago, in Petersburg,” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch began to explain. “We came across each other two or three times in company with other people. Without making my acquaintance and without addressing me, he managed to be very insolent to me. I told you so at the time; but now for something you don’t know. As he was leaving Petersburg before I did, he sent me a letter, not like this one, yet impertinent in the highest degree, and what was queer about it was that it contained no sort of explanation of why it was written. I answered him at once, also by letter, and said, quite frankly, that he was probably angry with me on account of the incident with his father four years ago in the club here, and that I for my part was prepared to make him every possible apology, seeing that my action was unintentional and was the result of illness. I begged him to consider and accept my apologies. He went away without answering, and now here I find him in a regular fury. Several things

he has said about me in public have been repeated to me, absolutely abusive, and making astounding charges against me. Finally, to-day, I get this letter, a letter such as no one has ever had before, I should think, containing such expressions as ‘the punch you got in your ugly face.’ I came in the hope that you would not refuse to be my second.”

“You said no one has ever had such a letter,” observed Kirillov, “they may be sent in a rage. Such letters have been written more than once. Pushkin wrote to Hekern. All right, I’ll come. Tell me how.”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch explained that he wanted it to be to-morrow, and that he must begin by renewing his offers of apology, and even with the promise of another letter of apology, but on condition that Gaganov, on his side, should promise to send no more letters. The letter he had received he would regard as unwritten.

“Too much concession; he won’t agree,” said Kirillov.

“I’ve come first of all to find out whether you would consent to be the bearer of such terms.”

“I’ll take them. It’s your affair. But he won’t agree.”

“I know he won’t agree.”

“He wants to fight. Say how you’ll fight.”

“The point is that I want the thing settled to-morrow. By nine o’clock in the morning you must be at his house. He’ll listen, and won’t agree, but will put you in communication with his second — let us say about eleven. You will arrange things with him, and let us all be on the spot by one or two o’clock. Please try to arrange that. The weapons, of course, will be pistols. And I particularly beg you to arrange to fix the barriers at ten paces apart; then you put each of us ten paces from the barrier, and at a given signal we approach. Each must go right up to his barrier, but you may fire before, on the way. I believe that’s all.”

“Ten paces between the barriers is very near,” observed Kirillov.

“Well, twelve then, but not more. You understand that he wants to fight in earnest. Do you know how to load a pistol?”

“I do. I’ve got pistols. I’ll give my word that you’ve never fired them. His second will give his word about his. There’ll be two pairs of pistols, and we’ll toss up, his or ours?”

“Excellent.”

“Would you like to look at the pistols?”

“Very well.”

Kirillov squatted on his heels before the trunk in the corner, which he had never yet unpacked, though things had been pulled out of it as required. He pulled out from the bottom a palm-wood box lined with red velvet, and from it took out a pair of smart and very expensive pistols.

“I’ve got everything, powder, bullets, cartridges. I’ve a revolver besides, wait.”

He stooped down to the trunk again and took out a six-chambered American revolver.

“You’ve got weapons enough, and very good ones.”

“Very, extremely.”

Kirillov, who was poor, almost destitute, though he never noticed his poverty, was evidently proud of showing precious weapons, which he had certainly obtained with great sacrifice.

“You still have the same intentions?” Stavrogin asked after a moment’s silence, and with a certain wariness.

“Yes,” answered Kirillov shortly, guessing at once from his voice what he was asking about, and he began taking the weapons from the table.

“When?” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch inquired still more cautiously, after a pause.

In the meantime Kjrillov had put both the boxes back in his trunk, and sat down in his place again.

“That doesn’t depend on me, as you know — when they tell me,” he muttered, as. though disliking the question; but at the same time with evident readiness to answer any other question. He kept his black, lustreless eyes fixed continually on Stavrogin with a calm but warm and kindly expression in them.

“I understand shooting oneself, of course,” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch began suddenly, frowning a little, after a dreamy silence that lasted three minutes. “I sometimes have thought of it myself, and then there always came a new idea: if one did something wicked, or, worse still, something shameful, that is, disgraceful, only very shameful and . . . ridiculous, such as people would remember for a thousand years and hold in scorn for a thousand years, and suddenly the thought comes: ‘one blow in the temple and there would be nothing more.’ One wouldn’t care then for men and that they would hold one in scorn for a thousand years, would one?”

“You call that a new idea?” said Kirillov, after a moment’s thought.

“I ... didn’t call it so, but when I thought it I felt it as a new idea.”

“You ‘felt the idea’?” observed Kirillov. “That’s good. There are lots of ideas that are always there and yet suddenly become new. That’s true. I see a great deal now as though it were for the first time.”

“Suppose you had lived in the moon,” Stavrogin interrupted, not listening, but pursuing his own thought, “and suppose there you had done all these nasty and ridiculous things. . . . You know from here for certain that they will laugh at you and hold you in scorn for a thousand years as long as the moon lasts. But now you are here, and looking at the moon from here. You don’t care here for anything you’ve done there, and that the people there will hold you in scorn for a thousand years, do you?”

“I don’t know,” answered Kirillov. “I’ve not been in the moon,” he added, without any irony, simply to state the fact.

“Whose baby was that just now?”

“The old woman’s mother-in-law was here — no, daughter-in-law, it’s all the same. Three days. She’s lying ill with the baby, it cries a lot at night, it’s the stomach. The mother sleeps, but the old woman picks it up; I play ball with it. The ball’s from Hamburg. I bought it in Hamburg to throw it and catch it, it strengthens the spine. It’s a girl.”

“Are you fond of children?”

“I am,” answered Kirillov, though rather indifferently.

“Then you’re fond of life?”

“Yes, I’m fond of life! What of it?”

“Though you’ve made up your mind to shoot yourself.”

“What of it? Why connect it? Life’s one thing and that’s another. Life exists, but death doesn’t at all.”

“You’ve begun to believe in a future eternal life?”

“No, not in a future eternal life, but in eternal life here. There are moments, you reach moments, and time suddenly stands still, and it will become eternal.”

“You hope to reach such a moment?”

“Yes.”

“That’ll scarcely be possible in our time,” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch responded slowly and, as it were, dreamily; the two spoke without the slightest irony. “In the Apocalypse the angel swears that there will be no more time.”

“I know. That’s very true; distinct and exact. When all mankind attains happiness then there will be no more time, for there’ll be no need of it, a

very true thought.”

“Where will they put it?”

“Nowhere. Time’s not an object but an idea. It will be extinguished in the mind.”

“The old commonplaces of philosophy, the same from the beginning of time,” Stavrogin muttered with a kind of disdainful compassion.

“Always the same, always the same, from the beginning of time and never any other,” Kirillov said with sparkling eyes, as though there were almost a triumph in that idea.

“You seem to be very happy, Kirillov.”

“Yes, very happy,” he answered, as though making the most ordinary reply.

“But you were distressed so lately, angry with Liputin.”

“H’m . . . I’m not scolding now. I didn’t know then that I was happy. Have you seen a leaf, a leaf from a tree?”

“Yes.”

“I saw a yellow one lately, a little green. It was decayed at the edges. It was blown by the wind. When I was ten years old I used to shut my eyes in the winter on purpose and fancy a green leaf, bright, with veins on it, and the sun shining. I used to open my eyes and not believe them, because it was very nice, and I used to shut them again.”

“What’s that? An allegory?”

“N-no . . . why? I’m not speaking of an allegory, but of a leaf, only a leaf. The leaf is good. Everything’s good.”

“Everything?”

“Everything. Man is unhappy because he doesn’t know he’s happy. It’s only that. That’s all, that’s all! If anyone finds out he’ll become happy at once, that minute. That mother-in-law will die; but the baby will remain. It’s all good. I discovered it all of a sudden.”

“And if anyone dies of hunger, and if anyone insults and outrages the little girl, is that good?”

“Yes! And if anyone blows his brains out for the baby, that’s good too. And if anyone doesn’t, that’s good too. It’s all good, all. It’s good for all those who know that it’s all good. If they knew that it was good for them, it would be good for them, but as long as they don’t know it’s good for them, it will be bad for them. That’s the whole idea, the whole of it.”

“When did you find out you were so happy?”

“Last week, on Tuesday, no, Wednesday, for it was Wednesday by that time, in the night.”

“By what reasoning?”

“I don’t remember; I was walking about the room; never mind. I stopped my clock. It was thirty-seven minutes past two.”

“As an emblem of the fact that there will be no more time*!*”

Kirillov was silent.

“They’re bad because they don’t know they’re good. When they find out, they won’t outrage a little girl. They’ll find out that they’re good and they’ll all become good, every one of them.”

“Here you’ve found it out, so have you become good then?”

“I am good.”

“That I agree with, though,” Stavrogin muttered, frowning.

“He who teaches that all are good will end the world.”

“He who taught it was crucified.”

“He will come, and his name will be the man-god.”

“The god-man?”

“The man-god. That’s the difference.”

“Surely it wasn’t you lighted the lamp under the ikon?”

“Yes, it was I lighted it.”

“Did you do it believing?”

“The old woman likes to have the lamp and she hadn’t time to do it to-day,” muttered Kirillov.

“You don’t say prayers yourself?”

“I pray to everything. You see the spider crawling on the wall, I look at it and thank it for crawling.”

His eyes glowed again. He kept looking straight at Stavrogin with firm and unflinching expression. Stavrogin frowned and watched him disdainfully, but there was no mockery in his eyes.

“I’ll bet that when I come next time you’ll be believing in

God too,” he said, getting up and taking his hat.

“Why?” said Kirillov, getting up too.

“If you were to find out that you believe in God, then you’d believe in Him; but since you don’t know that you believe in Him, then you don’t believe in Him,” laughed Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch.

“That’s not right,” Kirillov pondered, “you’ve distorted the idea. It’s a flippant joke. Remember what you have meant in my life, Stavrogin.”

“Good-bye, Kirillov.”

“Come at night; when will you?”

“Why, haven’t you forgotten about to-morrow?”

“Ach, I’d forgotten. Don’t be uneasy. I won’t oversleep. At nine o’clock. I know how to wake up when I want to. I go to bed saying ‘seven o’clock,’ and I wake up at seven o’clock, ‘ten o’clock,’ and I wake up at ten o’clock.”

“You have remarkable powers,” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, looking at his pale face.

“I’ll come and open the gate.”

“Don’t trouble, Shatov will open it for me.”

“Ah, Shatov. Very well, good-bye.”

VI

The door of the empty house in which Shatov was lodging was not closed; but, making his way into the passage, Stavrogin found himself in utter darkness, and began feeling with his hand for the stairs to the upper story. Suddenly a door opened upstairs and a light appeared. Shatov did not come out himself, but simply opened his door. When Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was standing in the doorway of the room, he saw Shatov standing at the table in the corner, waiting expectantly.

“Will you receive me on business?” he queried from the doorway.

“Come in and sit down,” answered Shatov. “Shut the door; stay, I’ll shut it.”

He locked the door, returned to the table, and sat down, facing Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. He had grown thinner during that week, and now he seemed in a fever.

“You’ve been worrying me to death,” he said, looking down, in a soft half-whisper. “Why didn’t you come?”

“You were so sure I should come then?”

“Yes, stay, I have been delirious . . . perhaps I’m delirious now. . . . Stay a moment.”

He got up and seized something that was lying on the uppermost of his three bookshelves. It was a revolver.

“One night, in delirium, I fancied that you were corning to kill me, and early next morning I spent my last farthing on buying a revolver from that good-for-nothing fellow Lyamshin; I did not mean to let you do it. Then I

came to myself again . . . I've neither powder nor shot; it has been lying there on the shelf till now; wait a minute. ..."

He got up and was opening the casement.

"Don't throw it away, why should you?" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch checked him. "It's worth something. Besides, tomorrow people will begin saying that there are revolvers lying about under Shatov's window. Put it back, that's right; sit down. Tell me, why do you seem to be penitent for having thought I should come to kill you? I have not come now to be reconciled, but to talk of something necessary. Enlighten me to begin with. You didn't give me that blow because of my connection with your wife?"

"You know I didn't, yourself," said Shatov, looking down again.

"And not because you believed the stupid gossip about Darya Pavlovna?"

"No, no, of course not! It's nonsense! My sister told me from the very first ..." Shatov said, harshly and impatiently, and even with a slight stamp of his foot.

"Then I guessed right and you too guessed right," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went on in a tranquil voice. "You are right. Marya Timofyevna Lebyadkin is my lawful wife, married to me four and a half years ago in Petersburg. I suppose the blow was on her account?"

Shatov, utterly astounded, listened in silence.

"I guessed, but did not believe it," he muttered at last, looking strangely at Stavrogin.

"And you struck me?"

Shatov flushed and muttered almost incoherently:

"Because of your fall . . . your lie. I didn't go up to you to punish you ... I didn't know when I went up to you that I should strike you ... I did it because you meant so much to me in my life ... I ..."

"I understand, I understand, spare your words. I am sorry you are feverish. I've come about a most urgent matter."

"I have been expecting you too long." Shatov seemed to be quivering all over, and he got up from his seat. "Say what you have to say ... I'll speak too . . . later."

He sat down.

"What I have come about is nothing of that kind," began Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, scrutinising him with curiosity. "Owing to certain

circumstances I was forced this very day to choose such an hour to come and tell you that they may murder you.”

Shatov looked wildly at him.

“I know that I may be in some danger,” he said in measured tones, “but how can you have come to know of it?”

“Because I belong to them as you do, and am a member of their society, just as you are.”

“You . . . you are a member of the society?”

“I see from your eyes that you were prepared for anything from me rather than that,” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, with a faint smile. “But, excuse me, you knew then that there would be an attempt on your life?”

“Nothing of the sort. And I don’t think so now, in spite of your words, though . . . though there’s no being sure of anything with these fools!” he cried suddenly in a fury, striking the table with his fist. “I’m not afraid of them! I’ve broken with them. That fellow’s run here four times to tell me it was possible . . . but” — he looked at Stavrogin—” what do you know about it, exactly?”

“Don’t be uneasy; I am not deceiving you,” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went on, rather coldly, with the air of a man who is only fulfilling a duty. “You question me as to what I know. I know that you entered that society abroad, two years ago, at the time of the old organisation, just before you went to America, and I believe, just after our last conversation, about which you wrote so much to me in your letter from America. By the way, I must apologise for not having answered you by letter, but confined myself to ...”

“To sending the money; wait a bit,” Shatov interrupted, hurriedly pulling out a drawer in the table and taking from under some papers a rainbow-coloured note. “Here, take it, the hundred roubles you sent me; but for you I should have perished out there. I should have been a long time paying it back if it had not been for your mother. She made me a present of that note nine months ago, because I was so badly off after my illness. But, go on, please. . . .”

He was breathless.

“In America you changed your views, and when you came back you wanted to resign. They gave you no answer, but charged you to take over a printing press here in Russia from some one, and to keep it till you handed it over to some one who would come from them for it. I don’t know the details exactly, but I fancy that’s the position in outline. You undertook it in

the hope, or on the condition, that it would be the last task they would require of you, and that then they would release you altogether. Whether that is so or not, I learnt it, not from them, but quite by chance. But now for what I fancy you don’t know; these gentry have no intention of parting with you.”

“That’s absurd!” cried Shatov. “I’ve told them honestly that I’ve cut myself off from them in everything. That is my right, the right to freedom of conscience and of thought. ... I won’t put up with it! There’s no power which could . . .”

“I say, don’t shout,” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch said earnestly, checking him. “That Verhovensky is such a fellow that he may be listening to us now in your passage, perhaps, with his own ears or some one else’s. Even that drunkard, Lebyadkin, was probably bound to keep an eye on you, and you on him, too, I dare say? You’d better tell me, has Verhovensky accepted your arguments now, or not?”

“He has. He has said that it can be done and that I have the right. . . .”

“Well then, he’s deceiving you. I know that even Kirillov, who scarcely belongs to them at all, has given them information about you. And they have lots of agents, even people who don’t know that they’re serving the society. They’ve always kept a watch on you. One of the things Pyotr Verhovensky came here for was to settle your business once for all, and he is fully authorised to do so, that is at the first good opportunity, to get rid of you, as a man who knows too much and might give them away. I repeat that this is certain, and allow me to add that they are, for some reason, convinced that you are a spy, and that if you haven’t informed against them yet, you will. Is that true?”

Shatov made a wry face at hearing such a question asked in such a matter-of fact tone.

“If I were a spy, whom could I inform?” he said angrily, not giving a direct answer. “No, leave me alone, let me go to the devil!” he cried suddenly, catching again at his original idea, which agitated him violently. Apparently it affected him more deeply than the news of his own danger. “You, you, Stavrogin, how could you mix yourself up with such shameful, stupid, second-hand absurdity? You a member of the society? What an exploit for Stavrogin!” he cried suddenly, in despair.

He clasped his hands, as though nothing could be a bitterer and more inconsolable grief to him than such a discovery.

“Excuse me,” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, extremely surprised, “but you seem to look upon me as a sort of sun, and on yourself as an insect in comparison. I noticed that even from your letter in America.”

“You . . . you know. . . . Oh, let us drop me altogether,” Shatov broke off suddenly, “and if you can explain anything about yourself explain it. ... Answer my question!” he repeated feverishly.

“With pleasure. You ask how I could get into such a den? After what I have told you, I’m bound to be frank with you to some extent on the subject. You see, strictly speaking, I don’t belong to the society at all, and I never have belonged to it, and I’ve much more right than you to leave them, because I never joined them. In fact, from the very beginning I told them that I was not one of them, and that if I’ve happened to help them it has simply been by accident as a man of leisure. I took some part in reorganising the society, on the new plan, but that was all. But now they’ve changed their views, and have made up their minds that it would be dangerous to let me go, and I believe I’m sentenced to death too.”

“Oh, they do nothing but sentence to death, and all by means of sealed documents, signed by three men and a half. And you think they’ve any power!”

“You’re partly right there and partly not,” Stavrogin answered with the same indifference, almost listlessness. “There’s no doubt that there’s a great deal that’s fanciful about it, as there always is in such cases: a handful magnifies its size and significance. To my thinking, if you will have it, the only one is Pyotr Verhovensky, and it’s simply good-nature on his part to consider himself only an agent of the society. But the fundamental idea is no stupider than others of the sort. They are connected with the *Internationale.* They have succeeded in establishing agents in Russia, they have even hit on a rather original method, though it’s only theoretical, of course. As for their intentions here, the movements of our Russian organisation are something so obscure and almost always unexpected that really they might try anything among us. Note that Verhovensky is an obstinate man.”

“He’s a bug, an ignoramus, a buffoon, who understands nothing in Russia!” cried Shatov spitefully.

“You know him very little. It’s quite true that none of them understand much about Russia, but not much less than you and I do. Besides, Verhovensky is an enthusiast.”

“Verhovensky an enthusiast?”

“Oh, yes. There is a point when he ceases to be a buffoon and becomes a madman. I beg you to remember your own expression: ‘Do you know how powerful a single man may be?’ Please don’t laugh about it, he’s quite capable of pulling a trigger. They are convinced that I am a spy too. As they don’t know how to do things themselves, they’re awfully fond of accusing people of being spies.”

“But you’re not afraid, are you?”

“N — no. I’m not very much afraid. . . . But your case is quite different. I warned you that you might anyway keep it in mind. To my thinking there’s no reason to be offended in being threatened with danger by fools; their brains don’t affect the question. They’ve raised their hand against better men than you or me. It’s a quarter past eleven, though.” He looked at his watch and got up from his chair. “I wanted to ask you one quite irrelevant question.”

“For God’s sake!” cried Shatov, rising impulsively from his seat.

“I beg your pardon?” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked at him inquiringly.

“Ask it, ask your question for God’s sake,” Shatov repeated in indescribable excitement, “but on condition that I ask you a question too. I beseech you to allow me ... I can’t . . . ask your question!”

Stavrogin waited a moment and then began. “I’ve heard that you have some influence on Marya Timofyevna, and that she was fond of seeing you and hearing you talk. Is that so?”

“Yes . . . she used to listen . . ,” said Shatov, confused. “Within a day or two I intend to make a public announcement of our marriage here in the town.”

“Is that possible?” Shatov whispered, almost with horror.

“I don’t quite understand you. There’s no sort of difficulty about it, witnesses to the marriage are here. Everything took place in Petersburg, perfectly legally and smoothly, and if it has not been made known till now, it is simply because the witnesses, Kirillov, Pyotr Verhovensky, and Lebyadkin (whom I now have the pleasure of claiming as a brother-in-law) promised to hold their tongues.”

“I don’t mean that . . . You speak so calmly . . . but good! Listen! You weren’t forced into that marriage, were you?”

“No, no one forced me into it.” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch smiled at Shatov’s importunate haste.

“And what’s that talk she keeps up about her baby?” Shatov interposed disconnectedly, with feverish haste.

“She talks about her baby? Bah! I didn’t know. It’s the first time I’ve heard of it. She never had a baby and couldn’t have had: Marya Timofyevna is a virgin.”

“Ah! That’s just what I thought! Listen!”

“What’s the matter with you, Shatov?”

Shatov hid his face in his hands, turned away, but suddenly clutched Stavrogin by the shoulders.

“Do you know why, do you know why, anyway,” he shouted, “why you did all this, and why you are resolved on such a punishment now!”

“Your question is clever and malignant, but I mean to surprise you too; I fancy I do know why I got married then, and why I am resolved on such a punishment now, as you express it.”

“Let’s leave that ... of that later. Put it off. Let’s talk of the chief thing, the chief thing. I’ve been waiting two years for you.”

“Yes?”

“I’ve waited too long for you. I’ve been thinking of you incessantly. You are the only man who could move ... I wrote to you about it from America.”

“I remember your long letter very well.”

“Too long to be read? No doubt; six sheets of notepaper. Don’t speak! Don’t speak! Tell me, can you spare me another ten minutes? . . . But now, this minute ... I have waited for you too long.”

“Certainly, half an hour if you like, but not more, if that will suit you.”

“And on condition, too,” Shatov put in wrathfully, “that you take a different tone. Do you hear? I demand when I ought to entreat. Do you understand what it means to demand when one ought to entreat?”

“I understand that in that way you lift yourself above all ordinary considerations for the sake of loftier aims,” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch with a faint smile. “I see with regret, too, that you’re feverish.”

“I beg you to treat me with respect, I insist on it!” shouted Shatov, “not my personality — I don’t care a hang for that, but something else, just for this once. While I am talking ... we are two beings, and have come together in infinity . . . for the last time in the world. Drop your tone, and speak like a human being! Speak, if only for once in your life with the voice of a man.

I say it not for my sake but for yours. Do you understand that you ought to forgive me that blow in the face if only because I gave you the opportunity of realising your immense power. . . . Again you smile your disdainful, worldly smile! Oh, when will you understand me! Have done with being a snob! Understand that I insist on that. I insist on it, else I won't speak, I'm not going to for anything!"

His excitement was approaching frenzy. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch frowned and seemed to become more on his guard.

"Since I have remained another half-hour with you when time is so precious," he pronounced earnestly and impressively, "you may rest assured that I mean to listen to you at least with interest . . . and I am convinced that I shall hear from you much that is new."

He sat down on a chair.

"Sit down!" cried Shatov, and he sat down himself.

"Please remember," Stavrogin interposed once more, "that I was about to ask a real favour of you concerning Marya Timofyevna, of great importance for her, anyway. . . ."

"What?" Shatov frowned suddenly with the air of a man who has just been interrupted at the most important moment, and who gazes at you unable to grasp the question.

"And you did not let me finish," Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went on with a smile.

"Oh, nonsense, afterwards!" Shatov waved his hand disdainfully, grasping, at last, what he wanted, and passed at once to his principal theme.

VII

"Do you know," he began, with flashing eyes, almost menacingly, bending right forward in his chair, raising the forefinger of his right hand above him (obviously unaware that he was doing so), "do you know who are the only 'god-bearing' people on earth, destined to regenerate and save the world in the name of a new God, and to whom are given the keys of life and of the new world . . . Do you know which is that people and what is its name?"

"From your manner I am forced to conclude, and I think I may as well do so at once, that it is the Russian people."

"And you can laugh, oh, what a race!" Shatov burst out.

“Calm yourself, I beg of you; on the contrary, I was expecting something of the sort from you.”

“You expected something of the sort? And don’t you know those words yourself?”

“I know them very well. I see only too well what you’re driving at. All your phrases, even the expression ‘god-bearing people’ is only a sequel to our talk two years ago, abroad, not long before you went to America. ... At least, as far as I can recall it now.”

“It’s your phrase altogether, not mine. Your own, not simply the sequel of our conversation. ‘Our’ conversation it was not at all. It was a teacher uttering weighty words, and a pupil who was raised from the dead. I was that pupil and you were the teacher.”

“But, if you remember, it was just after my words you joined their society, and only afterwards went away to America.”

“Yes, and I wrote to you from America about that. I wrote to you about everything. Yes, I could not at once tear my bleeding heart from what I had grown into from childhood, on which had been lavished all the raptures of my hopes and all the tears of my hatred. ... It is difficult to change gods. I did not believe you then, because I did not want to believe, I plunged for the last time into that sewer. . . . But the seed remained and grew up. Seriously, tell me seriously, didn’t you read all my letter from America, perhaps you didn’t read it at all?”

“I read three pages of it. The two first and the last. And I glanced through the middle as well. But I was always meaning . . .”

“Ah, never mind, drop it! Damn it!” cried Shatov, waving his hand. .”If you’ve renounced those words about the people now, how could you have uttered them then? . . . That’s what crushes me now.”

“I wasn’t joking with you then; in persuading you I was perhaps more concerned with myself than with you,” Stavrogin pronounced enigmatically.

“You weren’t joking! In America I was lying for three months on straw beside a hapless creature, and I learnt from him that at the very time when you were sowing the seed of God and the Fatherland in my heart, at that very time, perhaps during those very days, you were infecting the heart of that hapless creature, that maniac Kirillov, with poison . . . you confirmed false malignant ideas in him, and brought him to the verge of insanity. . . . Go, look at him now, he is your creation . . . you’ve seen him though.”

“In the first place, I must observe that Kirillov himself told me that he is happy and that he’s good. Your supposition that all this was going on at the same time is almost correct. But what of it? I repeat, I was not deceiving either of you.”

“Are you an atheist? An atheist now?”

“Yes.”

“And then?”

“Just as I was then.”

“I wasn’t asking you to treat me with respect when I began the conversation. With your intellect you might have understood that,” Shatov muttered indignantly.

“I didn’t get up at your first word, I didn’t close the conversation, I didn’t go away from you, but have been sitting here ever since submissively answering your questions and . . . cries, so it seems I have not been lacking in respect to you yet.” Shatov interrupted, waving his hand.

“Do you remember your expression that ‘an atheist can’t be a Russian,’ that ‘an atheist at once ceases to be a Russian’? Do you remember saying that?”

“Did I?” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch questioned him back. “You ask? You’ve forgotten? And yet that was one of the truest statements of the leading peculiarity of the Russian soul, which you divined. You can’t have forgotten it! I will remind you of something else: you said then that ‘a man who was not orthodox could not be Russian.’”

“I imagine that’s a Slavophil idea.”

“The Slavophils of to-day disown it. Nowadays, people have grown cleverer. But you went further: you believed that Roman Catholicism was not Christianity; you asserted that Rome proclaimed Christ subject to the third temptation of the devil. Announcing to all the world that Christ without an earthly kingdom cannot hold his ground upon earth, Catholicism by so doing proclaimed Antichrist and ruined the whole Western world. You pointed out that if France is in agonies now it’s simply the fault of Catholicism, for she has rejected the iniquitous God of Rome and has not found a new one. That’s what you could say then! I remember our conversations.”

“If I believed, no doubt I should repeat it even now. I wasn’t lying when I spoke as though I had faith,” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch pronounced very

earnestly. “But I must tell you, this repetition of my ideas in the past makes a very disagreeable impression on me. Can’t you leave off?”

“If you believe it?” repeated Shatov, paying not the slightest attention to this request. “But didn’t you tell me that if it were mathematically proved to you that the truth excludes Christ, you’d prefer to stick to Christ rather than to the truth? Did you say that? Did you? ‘‘

“But allow me too at last to ask a question,” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, raising his voice. “What is the object of this irritable and . . . malicious cross-examination?”

“This examination will be over for all eternity, and you will never hear it mentioned again.”

“You keep insisting that we are outside the limits of time and space.”

“Hold your tongue!” Shatov cried suddenly. “I am stupid and awkward, but let my name perish in ignominy! Let me repeat your leading idea. . . . Oh, only a dozen lines, only the conclusion.”

“Repeat it, if it’s only the conclusion. . . .” Stavrogin made a movement to look at his watch, but restrained himself and did not look.

Shatov bent forward in his chair again and again held up his finger for a moment.

“Not a single nation,” he went on, as though reading it line by line, still gazing menacingly at Stavrogin, “not a single nation has ever been founded on principles of science or reason. There has never been an example of it, except for a brief moment, through folly. Socialism is from its very nature bound to be atheism, seeing that it has from the very first proclaimed that it is an atheistic organisation of society, and that it intends to establish itself exclusively on the elements of science and reason. Science and reason have, from the beginning of time, played a secondary and subordinate part in the life of nations; so it will be till the end of time. Nations are built up and moved by another force which sways and dominates them, the origin of which is unknown and inexplicable: that force is the force of an insatiable desire to go on to the end, though at the same time it denies that end. It is the force of the persistent assertion of one’s own existence, and a denial of death. It’s the spirit of life, as the Scriptures call it, ‘the river of living water,’ the drying up of which is threatened in the Apocalypse. It’s the aesthetic principle, as the philosophers call it, the ethical principle with which they identify it, ‘the seeking for God,’ as I call it more simply. The object of every national movement, in every people and at every period of

its existence is only the seeking for its god, who must be its own god, and the faith in Him as the only true one. God is the synthetic personality of the whole people, taken from its beginning to its end. It has never happened that all, or even many, peoples have had one common, god, but each has always had its own. It's a sign of the decay of nations when they begin to have gods in common. When gods begin to be common to several nations the gods are dying and the faith in them, together with the nations themselves. The stronger a people the more individual their God. There never has been a nation without a religion, that is, without an idea of good and evil. Every people has its own conception of good and evil, and its own good and evil. When the same conceptions of good and evil become prevalent in several nations, then these nations are dying, and then the very distinction between good and evil is beginning to disappear. Reason has never had the power to define good and evil, or even to distinguish between good and evil, even approximately; on the contrary, it has always mixed them up in a disgraceful and pitiful way; science has even given the solution by the fist. This is particularly characteristic of the half-truths of science, the most terrible scourge of humanity, unknown till this century, and worse than plague, famine, or war. A half-truth is a despot .. such as has never been in the world before. A despot that has its priests and its slaves, a despot to whom all do homage with love and superstition hitherto inconceivable, before which science itself trembles and cringes in a shameful way. These are your own words, Stavrogin, all except that about the half-truth; that's my own because I am myself a case of half-knowledge, and that's why I hate it particularly. I haven't altered anything of your ideas or even of your words, not a syllable."

"I don't agree that you've not altered anything," Stavrogin observed cautiously. "You accepted them with ardour, and in your ardour have transformed them unconsciously. The very fact that you reduce God to a simple attribute of nationality ..."

He suddenly began watching Shatov with intense and peculiar attention, not so much his words as himself.

"I reduce God to the attribute of nationality?" cried Shatov. "On the contrary, I raise the people to God. And has it ever been otherwise? The people is the body of God. Every people is only a people so long as it has its own god and excludes all other gods on earth irreconcilably; so long as it believes that by its god it will conquer and drive out of the world all other

gods. Such, from the beginning of time, has been the belief of all great nations, all, anyway, who have been specially remarkable, all who have been leaders of humanity. There is no going against facts. The Jews lived only to await the coming of the true God and left the world the true God. The Greeks deified nature and bequeathed the world their religion, that is, philosophy and art. Rome deified the people in the State, and bequeathed the idea of the State to the nations. France throughout her long history was only the incarnation and development of the Roman god, and if they have at last flung their Roman god into the abyss and plunged into atheism, which, for the time being, they call socialism, it is solely because socialism is, anyway, healthier than Roman Catholicism. If a great people does not believe that the truth is only to be found in itself alone (in itself alone and in it exclusively); if it does not believe that it alone is fit and destined to raise up and save all the rest by its truth, it would at once sink into being ethnographical material, and not a great people. A really great people can never accept a secondary part in the history of Humanity, nor even one of the first, but will have the first part. A nation which loses this belief ceases to be a nation. But there is only one truth, and therefore only a single one out of the nations can have the true God, even though other nations may have great gods of their own. Only one nation is ‘god-bearing,’ that’s the Russian people, and . . . and . . . and can you think me such a fool, Stavrogin,” he yelled frantically all at once, “that I can’t distinguish whether my words at this moment are the rotten old commonplaces that have been ground out in all the Slavophil mills in Moscow, or a perfectly new saying, the last word, the sole word of renewal and resurrection, and . . . and what do I care for your laughter at this minute! What do I care that you utterly, utterly fail to understand me, not a word, not a sound! Oh, how I despise your haughty laughter and your look at this minute!”

He jumped up from his seat; there was positively foam on his lips.

“On the contrary Shatov, on the contrary,” Stavrogin began with extraordinary earnestness and self-control, still keeping his seat, “on the contrary, your fervent words have revived many extremely powerful recollections in me. In your words I recognise my own mood two years ago, and now I will not tell you, as I did just now, that you have exaggerated my ideas. I believe, indeed, that they were even more exceptional, even more independent, and I assure you for the third time that I should be very glad to confirm all that you’ve said just now, every syllable of it, but ...”

“But you want a hare!”

“Wh-a-t?”

“Your own nasty expression,” Shatov laughed spitefully, sitting down again. “To cook your hare you must first catch it, to believe in God you must first have a god. You used to say that in Petersburg, I’m told, like Nozdryov, who tried to catch a hare by his hind legs.”

“No, what he did was to boast he’d caught him. By the way, allow me to trouble you with a question though, for indeed I think I have the right to one now. Tell me, have you caught your hare?”

“Don’t dare to ask me in such words! Ask differently, quite differently.” Shatov suddenly began trembling all over.

“Certainly I’ll ask differently.” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked coldly at him. “I only wanted to know, do you believe in God, yourself?”

“I believe in Russia. ... I believe in her orthodoxy. ... I believe in the body of Christ. ... I believe that the new advent will take place in Russia. . . . I believe ...” Shatov muttered frantically.

“And in God? In God?”

“I ... I will believe in God.”

Not one muscle moved in Stavrogin’s face. Shatov looked passionately and defiantly at him, as though he would have scorched him with his eyes.

“I haven’t told you that I don’t believe,”, he cried at last. “I will only have you know that I am a luckless, tedious book, and nothing more so far, so far. . . . But confound me! We’re discussing you not me. . . . I’m a man of no talent, and can only give my blood, nothing more, like every man without talent; never mind my blood either! I’m talking about you. I’ve been waiting here two years for you. . . . Here I’ve been dancing about in my nakedness before you for the last half-hour. You, only you can raise that flag! . . .”

He broke off, and sat as though in despair, with his elbows on the table and his head in his hands.

“I merely mention it as something queer,” Stavrogin interrupted suddenly. “Every one for some inexplicable reason keeps foisting a flag upon me. Pyotr Verhovensky, too, is convinced that I might’ raise his flag,’ that’s how his words were repeated to me, anyway. He has taken it into his head that I’m capable of playing the part of Stenka Razin for them, ‘from my extraordinary aptitude for crime,’ his saying too.”

“What?” cried Shatov, “‘from your extraordinary aptitude for crime’?”

“Just so.”

“H’m! And is it true?” he asked, with an angry smile. “Is it true that when you were in Petersburg you belonged to a secret society for practising beastly sensuality? Is it true that you could give lessons to the Marquis de Sade? Is it true that you decoyed and corrupted children? Speak, don’t dare to lie,” he cried, beside himself. “Nikolay Stavrogin cannot lie to Shatov, who struck him in the face. Tell me everything, and if it’s true I’ll kill you, here, on the spot!”

“I did talk like that, but it was not I who outraged children,” Stavrogin brought out, after a silence that lasted too long. He turned pale and his eyes gleamed.

“But you talked like that,” Shatov went on imperiously, keeping his flashing eyes fastened upon him. “Is it true that you declared that you saw no distinction in beauty between some brutal obscene action and any great exploit, even the sacrifice of life for the good of humanity? Is it true that you have found identical beauty, equal enjoyment, in both extremes?”

“It’s impossible to answer like this. ... I won’t answer,” muttered Stavrogin, who might well have got up and gone away, but who did not get up and go away.

“I don’t know either why evil is hateful and good is beautiful, but I know why the sense of that distinction is effaced and lost in people like the Stavrogins,” Shatov persisted, trembling all over. “Do you know why you made that base and shameful marriage? Simply because the shame and senselessness of it reached the pitch of genius! Oh, you are not one of those who linger on the brink. You fly head foremost. You married from a passion for martyrdom, from a craving for remorse, through moral sensuality. It was a laceration of the nerves. . . Defiance of common sense was too tempting. Stavrogin and a wretched, half-witted, crippled beggar! When you bit the governor’s ear did you feel sensual pleasure? Did you? You idle, loafing, little snob. Did you 1”

“You’re a psychologist,” said Stavrogin, turning paler and paler, “though you’re partly mistaken as to the reasons of my marriage. But who can have given you all this information?” he asked, smiling, with an effort. “Was it Kirillov? But he had nothing to do with it.”

“You turn pale.”

“But what is it you want?” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch asked, raising his voice at last. “I’ve been sitting under your lash for the last half-hour, and

you might at least let me go civilly. Unless you really have some reasonable object in treating me like this."

"Reasonable object?"

"Of course, you're in duty bound, anyway, to let me know your object. I've been expecting you to do so all the time, but you've shown me nothing so far but frenzied spite. I beg you to open the gate for me."

He got up from the chair. Shatov rushed frantically after him. "Kiss the earth, water it with your tears, pray for forgiveness," he cried, clutching him by the shoulder.

"I didn't kill you . . . that morning, though ... I drew back my hands . . ." Stavrogin brought out almost with anguish, keeping his eyes on the ground.

"Speak out! Speak out! You came to warn me of danger. You have let me speak. You mean to-morrow to announce your marriage publicly. . . . Do you suppose I don't see from your face that some new menacing idea is dominating you? . . . Stavrogin, why am I condemned to believe in you through all eternity? Could I speak like this to anyone else? I have modesty, but I am not ashamed of my nakedness because it's Stavrogin I am speaking to. I was not afraid of caricaturing a grand idea by handling it because Stavrogin was listening to me. . . . Shan't I kiss your footprints when you've gone? I can't tear you out of my heart, Nikolay Stavrogin!"

"I'm sorry I can't feel affection for you, Shatov," Stavrogin replied coldly.

"I know you can't, and I know you are not lying. Listen. I can set it all right. I can 'catch your hare' for you."

Stavrogin did not speak.

"You're an atheist because you're a snob, a snob of the snobs. You've lost the distinction between good and evil because you've lost touch with your own people. A new generation is coming, straight from the heart of the people, and you will know nothing of it, neither you nor the Verhovenskys, father or son; nor I, for I'm a snob too — I, the son of your serf and lackey, Pashka. . . . Listen. Attain to God by work; it all lies in that; or disappear like rotten mildew. Attain to Him by work."

"God by work? What sort of work?"

"Peasants' work. Go, give up all your wealth. . . . Ah! you laugh, you're afraid of some trick?"

But Stavrogin was not laughing.

“You suppose that one may attain to God by work, and by peasants’ work,” he repeated, reflecting as though he had really come across something new and serious which was worth considering. “By the way,” he passed suddenly to a new idea, “you reminded me just now. Do you know that I’m not rich at all, that I’ve nothing to give up? I’m scarcely in a position even to provide for Marya Timofyevna’s future. . . . Another thing: I came to ask you if it would be possible for you to remain near Marya Timofyevna in the fixture, as you are the only person who has some influence over her poor brain. I say this so as to be prepared for anything.”

“All right, all right. You’re speaking of Marya Timofyevna,” said Shatov, waving one hand, while he held a candle in the other. “All right. Afterwards, of course. . . . Listen. Go to Tihon.”

“To whom?”

“To Tihon, who used to be a bishop. He lives retired now, on account of illness, here in the town, in the Bogorodsky monastery.’’

“What do you mean?”

“Nothing. People go and see him. You go. What is it to you? What is it to you?”

“It’s the first time I’ve heard of him, and . . . I’ve never seen anything of that sort of people. Thank you, I’ll go.”

“This way.”

Shatov lighted him down the stairs. “Go along.” He flung open the gate into the street.

“I shan’t come to you any more, Shatov,” said Stavrogin quietly as he stepped through the gateway.

The darkness and the rain continued as before.

CHAPTER II.

NIGHT *(continued)*

HE WALKED THE LENGTH of Bogoyavlensky Street. At last the road began to go downhill; his feet slipped in the mud and suddenly there lay open before him a wide, misty, as it were empty expanse — the river. The houses were replaced by hovels; the street was lost in a multitude of irregular little alleys.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was a long while making his way between the fences, keeping close to the river bank, but finding his way confidently, and scarcely giving it a thought indeed. He was absorbed in something quite different, and looked round with surprise when suddenly, waking up from a profound reverie, he found himself almost in the middle of one long, wet, floating bridge.

There was not a soul to be seen, so that it seemed strange to him when suddenly, almost at his elbow, he heard a deferentially familiar, but rather pleasant, voice, with a suave intonation, such as is affected by our over-refined tradespeople or befrizzled young shop assistants.

“Will you kindly allow me, sir, to share your umbrella?”

There actually was a figure that crept under his umbrella, or tried to appear to do so. The tramp was walking beside him, almost “feeling his elbow,” as the soldiers say. Slackening his pace, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch bent down to look more closely, as far as he could, in the darkness. It was a short man, and seemed like an artisan who had been drinking; he was shabbily and scantily dressed; a cloth cap, soaked by the rain and with the brim half torn off, perched on his shaggy, curly head. He looked a thin, vigorous, swarthy man with dark hair; his eyes were large and must have been black, with a hard glitter and a yellow tinge in them, like a gipsy’s; that could be divined even in the darkness. He was about forty, and was not drunk.

“Do you know me?” asked Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. “Mr. Stavrogin, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. You were pointed out to me at the station, when the train stopped last Sunday, though I had heard enough of you beforehand.”

“Prom Pyotr Stepanovitch? Are you . . . Fedka the convict?”

“I was christened Fyodor Fyodorovitch. My mother is living to this day in these parts; she’s an old woman, and grows more and more bent every day. She prays to God for me, day and night, so that she doesn’t waste her old age lying on the stove.”

“You escaped from prison?”

“I’ve had a change of luck. I gave up books and bells and church-going because I’d a life sentence, so that I had a very long time to finish my term.”

“What are you doing here?”

“Well, I do what I can. My uncle, too, died last week in prison here. He was there for false coin, so I threw two dozen stones at the dogs by way of memorial. That’s all I’ve been doing so far. Moreover Pyotr Stepanovitch gives me hopes of a passport, and a merchant’s one, too, to go all over Russia, so I’m waiting on his kindness. ‘Because,’ says he, ‘my papa lost you at cards at the English club, and I,’ says he, ‘find that inhumanity unjust.’ You might have the kindness to give me three roubles, sir, for a glass to warm myself.”

“So you’ve been spying on me. I don’t like that. By whose orders?”

“As to orders, it’s nothing of the sort; it’s simply that I knew of your benevolence, which is known to all the world. All we get, as you know, is an armful of hay, or a prod with a fork. Last Friday I filled myself as full of pie as Martin did of soap; since then I didn’t eat one day, and the day after I fasted, and on the third I’d nothing again. I’ve had my fill of water from the river. I’m breeding fish in my belly. ... So won’t your honour give me something? I’ve a sweetheart expecting me not far from here, but I daren’t show myself to her without money.”

“What did Pyotr Stepanovitch promise you from me?”

“He didn’t exactly promise anything, but only said that *I* might be of use to your honour if my luck turns out good, but how exactly he didn’t explain; for Pyotr Stepanovitch wants to see if I have the patience of a Cossack, and feels no sort of confidence in me.”

“Why?”

“Pyotr Stepanovitch is an astronomer, and has learnt all God’s planets, but even he may be criticised. I stand before you, sir, as before God, because I have heard so much about you. Pyotr Stepanovitch is one thing, but you, *sir,* maybe, are something else. When he’s said of a man he’s a scoundrel, he knows nothing more about him except that he’s a scoundrel.

Or if he's said he's a fool, then that man has no calling with him except that of fool. But *I* may be a fool Tuesday and Wednesday, and on Thursday wiser than he. Here now he knows about me that I'm awfully sick to get a passport, for there's no getting on in Russia without papers — so he thinks that he's snared my soul. I tell you, sir, life's a very easy business for Pyotr Stepanovitch, for he fancies a man to be this and that, and goes on as though he really was. And, what's more, he's beastly stingy. It's his notion that, apart from him, I daren't trouble you, but I stand before you, sir, as before God. This is the fourth night I've been waiting for your honour on this bridge, to show that I can find my own way on the quiet, without him. I'd better bow to a boot, thinks I, than to a peasant's shoe."

"And who told you that I was going to cross the bridge at night?"

"Well, that, I'll own, came out by chance, most through Captain Lebyadkin's foolishness, because he can't keep anything to himself. ... So that three roubles from your honour would pay me for the weary time I've had these three days and nights. And the clothes I've had soaked, I feel that too much to speak of it."

"I'm going to the left; you'll go to the right. Here's the end of the bridge. Listen, Fyodor; I like people to understand what I say, once for all. I won't give you a farthing. Don't meet me in future on the bridge or anywhere. I've no need of you, and never shall have, and if you don't obey, I'll tie you and take you to the police. March!"

"Eh-heh! Fling me something for my company, anyhow. I've cheered you on your way."

"Be off!"

"But do you know the way here? There are all sorts of turnings. ... I could guide you; for this town is for all the world as though the devil carried it in his basket and dropped it in bits here and there."

"I'll tie you up!" said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, turning upon him menacingly.

"Perhaps you'll change your mind, sir; it's easy to ill-treat the helpless."

"Well, I see you can rely on yourself!"

"I rely upon you, sir, and not very much on myself. . . ."

"I've no need of you at all. I've told you so already."

"But I have need, that's how it is! I shall wait for you on the way back. There's nothing for it."

"I give you my word of honour if I meet you I'll tie you up."

“Well, I’ll get a belt ready for you to tie me with. A lucky journey to you, sir. You kept the helpless snug under your Umbrella. For that alone I’ll be grateful to you to my dying day.” He fell behind. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch walked on to his destination, feeling disturbed. This man who had dropped from the sky was absolutely convinced that he Was indispensable to him, Stavrogin, and was in insolent haste to tell him so. He was being treated unceremoniously all round. But it was possible, too, that the tramp had not been altogether lying, and had tried to force his services upon him on his own initiative, without Pyotr Stepanovitch’s knowledge, and that would be more curious still.

II

The house which Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had reached stood alone in a deserted lane between fences, beyond which market gardens stretched, at the very end of the town. It Was a very solitary little wooden house, which was only just built and not yet weather-boarded. In one of the little windows the shutters were not yet closed, and there was a candle standing on the window-ledge, evidently as a signal to the late guest who was expected that night. Thirty paces away Stavrogin made out on the doorstep the figure of a tall man, evidently the master of the house, who had come out to stare impatiently Up the road. He heard his voice, too, impatient and, as it were, timid.

“Is that you? You?”

“Yes,” responded Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, but not till he had mounted the steps and was folding up his umbrella.

“At last, sir.” Captain Lebyadkin, for it was he, ran fussily to and fro. “Let me take your umbrella, please. It’s very wet; I’ll open it on the floor here, in the corner. Please walk in. Please walk in.”

The door was open from the passage into a room that was lighted by two candles.

“If it had not been for your promise that you would certainly come, I should have given up expecting you.”

“A quarter to one,” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, looking at his watch, as he went into the room.

“And in this rain; and such an interesting distance. I’ve no clock . . . and there are nothing but market-gardens round me ... so that you fall behind the

times. Not that I murmur exactly; for I dare not, I dare not, but only because I've been devoured with impatience all the week ... to have things settled at last."

"How so?"

"To hear my fate, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. Please sit down."

He bowed, pointing to a seat by the table, before the sofa.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked round. The room was tiny and low-pitched. The furniture consisted only of the most essential articles, plain wooden chairs and a sofa, also newly made without covering or cushions. There were two tables of limewood; one by the sofa, and the other in the corner was covered with a table-cloth, laid with things over which a clean table-napkin had been thrown. And, indeed, the whole room was obviously kept extremely clean.

Captain Lebyadkin had not been drunk for eight days. His face looked bloated and yellow. His eyes looked uneasy, inquisitive, and obviously bewildered. It was only too evident that he did not know what tone he could adopt, and what line it would be most advantageous for him to take.

"Here," he indicated his surroundings, "I live like Zossima. Sobriety, solitude, and poverty — the vow of the knights of old."

"You imagine that the knights of old took such vows?"

"Perhaps I'm mistaken. Alas! I have no culture. I've ruined all. Believe me, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, here first I have recovered from shameful propensities — not a glass nor a drop! I have a home, and for six days past I have experienced a conscience at ease. Even the walls smell of resin and remind me of nature. And what have I been; what was *I*?

' At night without a bed

I *wander*

And my tongue put out by day

. . .'

to use the words of a poet of genius. But you're wet through. . . . Wouldn't you like some tea?"

"Don't trouble."

"The samovar has been boiling since eight o'clock, but it went out at last like everything in this world. The sun, too, they say, will go out in its turn. But if you like I'll get up the samovar. Agafya is not asleep."

"Tell me, Marya Timofyevna . . ."

“She’s here, here,” Lebyadkin replied at once, in a whisper. “Would you like to have a look at her?” He pointed to the closed door to the next room. “She’s not asleep?”

“Oh, no, no. How could she be? On the contrary, she’s been expecting you all the evening, and as soon as she heard you were coming she began making her toilet.”

He was just twisting his mouth into a jocose smile, but he instantly checked himself.

“How is she, on the whole?” asked Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, frowning.

“On the whole? You know that yourself, sir.” He shrugged his shoulders commiseratingly. “But just now . . . just now she’s telling her fortune with cards. . . .”

“Very good. Later on. First of all I must finish with you.”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch settled himself in a chair. The captain did not venture to sit down on the sofa, but at once moved up another chair for himself, and bent forward to listen, in a tremor of expectation.

“What have you got there under the table-cloth?” asked Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, suddenly noticing it.

“That?” said Lebyadkin, turning towards it also. “That’s from your generosity, by way of house-warming, so to say; considering also the length of the walk, and your natural fatigue,” he sniggered ingratiatingly. Then he got up on tiptoe, and respectfully and carefully lifted the table-cloth from the table in the corner. Under it was seen a slight meal: ham, veal, sardines, cheese, a little green decanter, and a long bottle of Bordeaux. Everything had been laid neatly, expertly, and almost daintily.

“Was that your effort?”

“Yes, sir. Ever since yesterday I’ve done my best, and all to do you honour. . . . Marya Timofyevna doesn’t trouble herself, as you know, on that score. And what’s more its all from your liberality, your own providing, as you’re the master of the house and not I, and I’m only, so to say, your agent. All the same, all the same, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, all the same, in spirit, I’m independent! Don’t take away from me this last possession!” he finished up pathetically.

“H’m! You might sit down again.”

“Gra-a-teful, grateful, and independent.” He sat down. “Ah, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, so much has been fermenting in this heart that I have not known how to wait for your coming. Now you will decide my fate, and . . .

that unhappy creature's, and then . . . shall I pour out all I feel to you as I used to in old days, four years ago? You deigned to listen to me then, you read my verses. . . . They might call me your Falstaff from Shakespeare in those days, but you meant so much in my life! I have great terrors now, and its only to you I look for counsel and light. Pyotr Stepanovitch is treating me abominably!"

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch listened with interest, and looked at him attentively. It was evident that though Captain Lebyadkin had left off drinking he was far from being in a harmonious state of mind. Drunkards of many years' standing, like Lebyadkin, often show traces of incoherence, of mental cloudiness, of something, as it were, damaged, and crazy, though they may deceive, cheat, and swindle, almost as well as anybody if occasion arises.

"I see that you haven't changed a bit in these four years and more, captain," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, somewhat more amiably. "It seems, in fact, as though the second half of a man's life is usually made up of nothing but the habits he has accumulated during the first half."

"Grand words! You solve the riddle of life!" said the captain, half cunningly, half in genuine and unfeigned admiration, for he was a great lover of words. "Of all your sayings, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, I remember one thing above all; you were in Petersburg when you said it: 'One must really be a great man to be able to make a stand even against common sense.' That was it."

"Yes, and a fool as well."

"A fool as well, maybe. But you've been scattering clever sayings all your life, while they . . . Imagine Liputin, imagine Pyotr Stepanovitch saying anything like that! Oh, how cruelly Pyotr Stepanovitch has treated me!"

"But how about yourself, captain? What can you say of your behaviour?"

"Drunkenness, and the multitude of my enemies. But now that's all over, all over, and I have a new skin, like a snake. Do you know, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, I am making my will; in fact, I've made it already?"

"That's interesting. What are you leaving, and to whom?"

"To my fatherland, to humanity, and to the students. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, I read in the paper the biography of an American. He left all his vast fortune to factories and to the exact sciences, and his skeleton to

the students of the academy there, and his skin to be made into a drum, so that the American national hymn might be beaten upon it day and night. Alas! we are pigmies in mind compared with the soaring thought of the States of North America. Russia is the play of nature but not of mind. If I were to try leaving my skin for a drum, for instance, to the Akmolinsky infantry regiment, in which I had the honour of beginning my service, on condition of beating the Russian national hymn upon it every day, in face of the regiment, they'd take it for liberalism and prohibit my skin . . . and so I confine myself to the students. I want to leave my skeleton to the academy, but on the condition though, on the condition that a label should be stuck on the forehead for ever and ever, with the words: 'A repentant free-thinker.' There now!"

The captain spoke excitedly, and genuinely believed, of course, that there was something fine in the American will, but he was cunning too, and very anxious to entertain Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, with whom he had played the part of a buffoon for a long time in the past. But the latter did not even smile, on the contrary, he asked, as it were, suspiciously:

"So you intend to publish your will in your lifetime and get rewarded for it?"

"And what if I do, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch? What if I do?" said Lebyadkin, watching him carefully. "What sort of luck have I had? I've given up writing poetry, and at one time even you were amused by my verses, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. Do you remember our reading them over a bottle? But it's all over with my pen. I've written only one poem, like Gogol's 'The Last Story.' Do you remember he proclaimed to Russia that it broke spontaneously from his bosom? It's the same with me; I've sung my last and it's over."

"What sort of poem?"

"'In case she were to break her leg.'"

"Wha-a-t?"

That was all the captain was waiting for. He had an unbounded admiration for his own poems, but, through a certain cunning duplicity, he was pleased, too, that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch always made merry over his poems, and sometimes laughed at them immoderately. In this way he killed two birds with one stone, satisfying at once his poetical aspirations and his desire to be of service; but now he had a third special and very ticklish object in view. Bringing his verses on the scene, the captain thought

to exculpate himself on one point about which, for some reason, he always felt himself most apprehensive, and most guilty.

"' In case of her breaking her leg.' That is, of her riding on horseback. It's a fantasy, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, a wild fancy, but the fancy of a poet. One day I was struck by meeting a lady on horseback, and asked myself the vital question, 'What would happen then?' That is, in case of accident. All her followers turn away, all her suitors are gone. A pretty kettle of fish. Only the poet remains faithful, with his heart shattered in his breast, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. Even a louse may be in love, and is not forbidden by law. And yet the lady was offended by the letter and the verses. I'm told that even you were angry. Were you? I wouldn't believe in anything so grievous. Whom could I harm simply by imagination? Besides, I swear on my honour, Liputin kept saying, 'Send it, send it,' every man, however humble, has a right to send a letter! And so I sent it."

"You offered yourself as a suitor, I understand."

"Enemies, enemies, enemies?"

"Repeat the verses," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch sternly.

"Ravings, ravings, more than anything."

However, he drew himself up, stretched out his hand, and began:

"*With broken limbs my beauteous queen*
Is twice as charming as before,
And, deep in love as I *have been,*
To-day I *love her even more."*

"Come, that's enough," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, a wave of his hand.

"I dream of Petersburg," cried Lebyadkin, passing quickly to another subject, as though there had been no mention of verses.

"I dream of regeneration. . . . Benefactor! May I reckon that you won't refuse the means for the journey? I've been waiting for you all the week as my sunshine."

"I'll do nothing of the sort. I've scarcely any money left. And why should I give you money?"

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch seemed suddenly angry. Dryly and briefly he recapitulated all the captain's misdeeds; his drunkenness, his lying, his squandering of the money meant for Marya Timofyevna, his having taken her from the nunnery, his insolent letters threatening to publish the secret, the way he had behaved about Darya Pavlovna, and so on, and so on. The

captain heaved, gesticulated, began to reply, but every time Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch stopped him. peremptorily.

“And listen,” he observed at last, “you keep writing about ‘family disgrace.’ What disgrace is it to you that your sister is the lawful wife of a Stavrogin?”

“But marriage in secret, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch — a fatal secret. I receive money from you, and I’m suddenly asked the question, ‘What’s that money for?’ My hands are tied; I cannot answer to the detriment of my sister, to the detriment of the family honour.”

The captain raised his voice. He liked that subject and reckoned boldly upon it. Alas! he did not realise what a blow was in store for him.

Calmly and exactly, as though he were speaking of the most everyday arrangement, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch informed him that in a few days, perhaps even to-morrow or the day after, he intended to make his marriage known everywhere, “to the police as well as to local society.” And so the question of family honour would be settled once for all, and with it the question of subsidy. The captain’s eyes were ready to drop out of his head; he positively could not take it in. It had to be explained to him.

“But she is ... crazy.”

“I shall make suitable arrangements.”

“But . . . how about your mother?”

“Well, she must do as she likes.”

“But will you take your wife to your house?”

“Perhaps so. But that is absolutely nothing to do with you and no concern of yours.”

“No concern of mine!” cried the captain. “What about me then?”

“Well, certainly you won’t come into my house.”

“But, you know, I’m a relation.”

“One does one’s best to escape from such relations. Why should I go on giving you money then? Judge for yourself.”

“Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, this is impossible. You will think better of it, perhaps? You don’t want to lay hands upon. . . . What will people think? What will the world say?”

“Much I care for your world. I married your sister when the fancy took me, after a drunken dinner, for a bet, and now I’ll make it public . . . since that amuses me now.”

He said this with a peculiar irritability, so that Lebyadkin began with horror to believe him.

“But me, me? What about me? I’m what matters most! . . . Perhaps you’re joking, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch?”

“No, I’m not joking.”

“As you will, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, but I don’t believe you. . . . Then I’ll take proceedings.”

“You’re fearfully stupid, captain.”

“Maybe, but this is all that’s left me,” said the captain, losing his head completely. “In old days we used to get free quarters, anyway, for the work she did in the ‘corners.’ But what will happen now if you throw me over altogether?”

“But you want to go to Petersburg to try a new career. By the way, is it true what I hear, that you mean to go and give information, in the hope of obtaining a pardon, by betraying all the others?”

The captain stood gaping with wide-open eyes, and made no answer.

“Listen, captain,” Stavrogin began suddenly, with great earnestness, bending down to the table. Until then he had been talking, as it were, ambiguously, so that Lebyadkin, who had wide experience in playing the part of buffoon, was up to the last moment a trifle uncertain whether his patron were really angry or simply putting it on; whether he really had the wild intention of making his marriage public, or whether he were only playing. Now Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch’s stern expression was so convincing that a shiver ran down the captain’s back.

“Listen, and tell the truth, Lebyadkin. Have you betrayed anything yet, or not? Have you succeeded in doing anything really? Have you sent a letter to somebody in your foolishness?”

“No, I haven’t . . . and I haven’t thought of doing it,” said the captain, looking fixedly at him.

“That’s a lie, that you haven’t thought of doing it. That’s what you’re asking to go to Petersburg for. If you haven’t written, have you blabbed to anybody here? Speak the truth. I’ve heard something.”

“When I was drunk, to Liputin. Liputin’s a traitor. I opened my heart to him,” whispered the poor captain.

“That’s all very well, but there’s no need to be an ass. If you had an idea you should have kept it to yourself. Sensible people hold their tongues nowadays; they don’t go chattering.”

“Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch!” said the captain, quaking. “You’ve had nothing to do with it yourself; it’s not you I’ve . . .”

“Yes. You wouldn’t have ventured to kill the goose that laid your golden eggs.”

“Judge for yourself, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, judge for yourself,” and, in despair, with tears, the captain began hurriedly relating the story of his life for the last four years. It was the most stupid story of a fool, drawn into matters that did not concern him, and in his drunkenness and debauchery unable, till the last minute, to grasp their importance. He said that before he left Petersburg ‘he had been drawn in, at first simply through friendship, like a regular student, although he wasn’t a student,’ and knowing nothing about it, ‘without being guilty of anything,’ he had scattered various papers on staircases, left them by dozens at doors, on bell-handles, had thrust them in as though they were newspapers, taken them to the theatre, put them in people’s hats, and slipped them into pockets. Afterwards he had taken money from them, ‘for what means had I? ‘He had distributed all sorts of rubbish through the districts of two provinces. “Oh, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch!” he exclaimed, “what revolted me most was that this was utterly opposed to civic, and still more to patriotic laws. They suddenly printed that men were to go out with pitchforks, and to remember that those who went out poor in the morning might go home rich at night. Only think of it! It made me shudder, and yet I distributed it. Or suddenly five or six lines addressed to the whole of Russia, apropos of nothing, ‘Make haste and lock up the churches, abolish God, do away with marriage, destroy the right of inheritance, take up your knives,” that’s all, and God knows what it means. tell you, I almost got caught with this five-line leaflet. The officers in the regiment gave me a thrashing, but, bless them for it, let me go. And last year I was almost caught when I passed off French counterfeit notes for fifty roubles on Korovayev, but, thank God, Korovayev fell into the pond when he was drunk, and was drowned in the nick of time, and they didn’t succeed in tracking me. Here, at Virginsky’s, I proclaimed the freedom of the communistic wife. In June I was distributing manifestoes again in X district. They say they will make me do it again. . . . Pyotr Stepanovitch suddenly gave me to understand that I must obey; he’s been threatening me a long time. How he treated me that Sunday! Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, I am a slave, I am a worm, but not a God, which is where I differ from Derzhavin.* But I’ve no income, no income!”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch heard it all with curiosity.

“A great deal of that I had heard nothing of,” he said. “Of course, anything may have happened to you. . . Listen,” he said, after a minute’s thought. “If you like, you can tell them, you know whom, that Liputin was lying, and that you were only pretending to give information to frighten me, supposing that I, too, was compromised, and that you might get more money out of me that way. . . . Do you understand?”

“Dear Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, is it possible that there’s such a danger hanging over me I I’ve been longing for you to come, to ask you.”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch laughed.

“They certainly wouldn’t let you go to Petersburg, even if I were to give you money for the journey.*. . . But it’s time for me to see Marya Timofyevna.” And he got up from his chair.

“Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, but how about Marya Timofyevna?”

“Why, as I told you.”

“Can it be true?”

“You still don’t believe it?”

“Will you really cast me off like an old worn-out shoe?”

“I’ll see,” laughed Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. “Come, let me go.”

“Wouldn’t you like me to stand on the steps . . . for fear I might by chance overhear something . . . for the rooms are small?”

“That’s as well. Stand on the steps. Take my umbrella.”

“Your umbrella. . . . Am I worth it?” said the captain over-sweetly.

***The reference is to a poem of Derzhavin’s.**

“Anyone is worthy of an umbrella.”

“At one stroke you define the minimum of human rights. . . .”

But he was by now muttering mechanically. He was too much crushed by what he had learned, and was completely thrown out of his reckoning. And yet almost as soon as he had gone out on to the steps and had put up the umbrella, there his shallow and cunning brain caught again the ever-present, comforting idea that he was being cheated and deceived, and if so they were afraid of him, and there was no need for him to be afraid.

“If they’re lying and deceiving me, what’s at the bottom of it?” was the thought that gnawed at his mind. The public announcement of the marriage seemed to him absurd. “It’s true that with such a wonder-worker anything may come to pass; he lives to do harm. But what if he’s afraid himself, since the insult of Sunday, and afraid as he’s never been before? And so

he’s in a hurry to declare that he’ll announce it himself, from fear that I should announce it. Eh, don’t blunder, Lebyadkin! And why does he come on the sly, at night, if he means to make it public himself? And if he’s afraid, it means that he’s afraid now, at this moment, for these few days. . . . Eh, don’t make a mistake, Lebyadkin!

“He scares me with Pyotr Stepanovitch. Oy, I’m frightened, I’m frightened! Yes, this is what’s so frightening! And what induced me to blab to Liputin. Goodness knows what these devils are up to. I never can make head or tail of it. Now they are all astir again as they were five years ago. To whom could I give information, indeed? ‘Haven’t I written to anyone in my foolishness?’ H’m! So then I might write as though through foolishness? Isn’t he giving me a hint? ‘You’re going to Petersburg on purpose.’ The sly rogue. I’ve scarcely dreamed of it, and he guesses my dreams. As though he were putting me up to going himself. It’s one or the other of two games he’s up to. Either he’s afraid because he’s been up to some pranks himself ... or he’s not afraid for himself, but is simply egging me on to give them all away! Ach, it’s terrible, Lebyadkin! Ach, you must not make a blunder!”

He was so absorbed in thought that he forgot to listen. It was not easy to hear either. The door was a solid one, and they were talking in a very low voice. Nothing reached the captain but indistinct sounds. He positively spat in disgust, and went out again, lost in thought, to whistle on the steps.

III

Marya Timofyevna’s room was twice as large as the one occupied by the captain, and furnished in the same rough style; but the table in front of the sofa was covered with a gay-coloured table-cloth, and on it a lamp was burning. There was a handsome carpet on the floor. The bed was screened off by a green curtain, which ran the length of the room, and besides the sofa there stood by the table a large, soft easy chair, in which Marya Timofyevna never sat, however. In the corner there was an ikon as there had been in her old room, and a little lamp was burning before it, and on the table were all her indispensable properties. The pack of cards, the little looking-glass, the song-book, even a milk loaf. Besides these there were two books with coloured pictures — one, extracts from a popular book of travels, published for juvenile reading, the other a collection of very light, edifying tales, for the most part about the days of chivalry, intended for

Christmas presents or school reading. She had, too, an album of photographs of various sorts.

Marya Timofyevna was, of course, expecting the visitor, as the captain had announced. But when Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went in, she was asleep, half reclining on the sofa, propped on a woolwork cushion. Her visitor closed the door after him noiselessly, and, standing still, scrutinised the sleeping figure.

The captain had been romancing when he told Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch she had been dressing herself up. She was wearing the same dark dress as on Sunday at Varvara Petrovna's. Her hair was done up in the same little close knot at the back of her head; her long thin neck was exposed in the same way. The black shawl Varvara Petrovna had given her lay carefully folded on the sofa. She was coarsely rouged and powdered as before. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch did not stand there more than a minute. She suddenly waked up, as though she were conscious of his eyes fixed upon her; she opened her eyes, and quickly drew herself up. But something strange must have happened to her visitor: he remained standing at the same place by the door. With a fixed and searching glance he looked mutely and persistently into her face. Perhaps that look was too grim, perhaps there was an expression of aversion in it, even a malignant enjoyment of her fright — if it were not a fancy left by her dreams; but suddenly, after almost a moment of expectation, the poor woman's face wore a look of absolute terror; it twitched convulsively; she lifted her trembling hands and suddenly burst into tears, exactly like a frightened child; in another moment she would have screamed. But Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch pulled himself together; his face changed in one instant, and he went up to the table with the most cordial and amiable smile.

"I'm sorry, Marya Timofyevna, I frightened you coming in suddenly when you were asleep," he said, holding out his hand to her.

The sound of his caressing words produced their effect. Her fear vanished, although she still looked at him with dismay, evidently trying to understand something. She held out her hands timorously also. At last a shy smile rose to her lips.

"How do you do, prince?" she whispered, looking at him strangely.

"You must have had a bad dream," he went on, with a still more friendly and cordial smile.

“But how do you know that I was dreaming *about that?*” And again she began trembling, and started back, putting up her hand as though to protect herself, on the point of crying again. “Calm yourself. That’s enough. What are you afraid of? Surely you know me?” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, trying to soothe her; but it was long before he could succeed. She gazed at him dumbly with the same look of agonising perplexity, with a painful idea in her poor brain, and she still seemed to be trying to reach some conclusion. At one moment she dropped her eyes, then suddenly scrutinised him in a rapid comprehensive glance. At last, though not reassured, she seemed to come to a conclusion.

“Sit down beside me, please, that I may look at you thoroughly later on,” she brought out with more firmness, evidently with a new object. “But don’t be uneasy, I won’t look at you now. I’ll look down. Don’t you look at me either till I ask you to. Sit down,” she added, with positive impatience.

A new sensation was obviously growing stronger and stronger in her.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch sat down and waited. Rather a long silence followed.

“H’m! It all seems so strange to me,” she suddenly muttered almost disdainfully. “Of course I was depressed by bad dreams, but why have I dreamt of you looking like that?”

“Come, let’s have done with dreams,” he said impatiently, turning to her in spite of her prohibition, and perhaps the same expression gleamed for a moment in his eyes again. He saw that she several times wanted, very much in fact, to look at him again, but that she obstinately controlled herself and kept her eyes cast down.

“Listen, prince,” she raised her voice suddenly, “listen prince. ...”

“Why do you turn away? Why don’t you look at me? What’s the object of this farce?” he cried, losing patience.

But she seemed not to hear him.

“Listen, prince,” she repeated for the third time in a resolute voice, with a disagreeable, fussy expression. “When you told me in the carriage that our marriage was going to be made public, I was alarmed at there being an end to the mystery. Now I don’t know. I’ve been thinking it all over, and I see clearly that I’m not fit for it at all. I know how to dress, and I could receive guests, perhaps. There’s nothing much in asking people to have a cup of tea, especially when there are footmen. But what will people say though? I saw a great deal that Sunday morning in that house. That pretty young lady

looked at me all the time, especially after you came in. It was you came in, wasn't it? Her mother's simply an absurd worldly old woman. My Lebyadkin distinguished himself too. I kept looking at the ceiling to keep from laughing; the ceiling there is finely painted. His mother ought to be an abbess. I'm afraid of her, though she did give me a black shawl. Of course, they must all have come to strange conclusions about me. I wasn't vexed, but I sat there, thinking what relation am I to them? Of course, from a countess one doesn't expect any but spiritual qualities; for the domestic ones she's got plenty of footmen; and also a little worldly coquetry, so as to be able to entertain foreign travellers. But yet that Sunday they did look upon me as hopeless. Only Dasha's an angel. I'm awfully afraid they may wound *him* by some careless allusion to me."

"Don't be afraid, and don't be uneasy," said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, making a wry face.

"However, that doesn't matter to me, if he is a little ashamed of me, for there will always be more pity than shame, though it differs with people, of course. He knows, to be sure, that I ought rather to pity them than they me."

"You seem to be very much offended with them, Marya Timofyevna?"

"I? Oh, no," she smiled with simple-hearted mirth. "Not at all. I looked at you all, then. You were all angry, you were all quarrelling. They meet together, and they don't know how to laugh from their hearts. So much wealth and so little gaiety. It all disgusts me. Though I feel for no one now except myself."

"I've heard that you've had a hard life with your brother without me?"

"Who told you that? It's nonsense. It's much worse now. Now my dreams are not good, and my dreams are bad, because you've come. What have you come for, I'd like to know. Tell me please?"

"Wouldn't you like to go back into the nunnery?"

"I knew they'd suggest the nunnery again. Your nunnery is a fine marvel for me! And why should I go to it? What should I go for now? I'm all alone in the world now. It's too late for me to begin a third life."

"You seem very angry about something. Surely you're not afraid that I've left off loving you?"

"I'm not troubling about you at all. I'm afraid that I may leave off loving somebody."

She laughed contemptuously.

“I must have done him some great wrong,” she added suddenly, as it were to herself, “only I don’t know what I’ve done wrong; that’s always what troubles me. Always, always, for the last five years. I’ve been afraid day and night that I’ve done him some wrong. I’ve prayed and prayed and always thought of the great wrong I’d done him. And now it turns out it wag true.”

“What’s turned out?”

“I’m only afraid whether there’s something on *his* side,” she went on, not answering his question, not hearing it in fact. “And then, again, he couldn’t get on with such horrid people. The countess would have liked to eat me, though she did make me sit in the carriage beside her. They’re all in the plot. Surely he’s not betrayed me?” (Her chin and lips were twitching.) “Tell me, have you read about Grishka Otrepyev, how he was cursed in seven cathedrals?”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch did not speak.

“But I’ll turn round now and look at you.” She seemed to decide suddenly. “You turn to me, too, and look at me, but more attentively. I want to make sure for the last time.”

“I’ve been looking at you for a long time.”

“H’m!” said Marya Timofyevna, looking at him intently. “You’ve grown much fatter.”

She wanted to say something more, but suddenly, for the third time, the same terror instantly distorted her face, and again she drew back, putting her hand up before her.

“What’s the matter with you?” cried Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, almost enraged.

But her panic lasted only one instant, her face worked with a sort of strange smile, suspicious and unpleasant.

“I beg you, prince, get up and come in,” she brought out suddenly, in a firm, emphatic voice.

“Come in? Where am I to come in?”

“I’ve been fancying for five years how *he* would come in. Get up and go out of the door into the other room. I’ll sit as though I weren’t expecting anything, and I’ll take up a book, and suddenly you’ll come in after five years’ travelling. I want to see what it will be like.”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch ground his teeth, and muttered something to himself.

“Enough,” he said, striking the table with his open hand. “I beg you to listen to me, Marya Timofyevna. Do me the favour to concentrate all your attention if you can. You’re not altogether mad, you know!” he broke out impatiently. “Tomorrow I shall make our marriage public. You never will live in a palace, get that out of your head. Do you want to live with me for the rest of your life, only very far away from here? In the mountains in Switzerland, there’s a place there. . . . Don’t be afraid. I’ll never abandon you or put you in a madhouse. I shall have money enough to live without asking anyone’s help. You shall have a servant, you shall do no work at all. Everything you want that’s possible shall be got for you. You shall pray, go where you like, and do what you like. I won’t touch you. I won’t go away from the place myself at all. If you like, I won’t speak to you all my life, or if you like, you can tell me your stories every evening as you used to do in Petersburg in the corners. I’ll read aloud to you if you like. But it must be all your life in the same place, and that place is a gloomy one. Will you? Are you ready? You won’t regret it, torment me with tears and curses, will you?”

She listened with extreme curiosity, and for a long time she was silent, thinking.

“It all seems incredible to me,” she said at last, ironically and disdainfully. “I might live for forty years in those mountains,” she laughed.

“What of it? Let’s live forty years then ..,” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, scowling.

“H’m! I won’t come for anything.”

“Not even with me?”

“And what are you that I should go with you? I’m to sit on a mountain beside him for forty years on end — a pretty story! And upon my word, how long-suffering people have become nowadays! No, it cannot be that a falcon has become an owl. My prince is not like that!” she said, raising her head proudly and triumphantly.

Light seemed to dawn upon him.

“What makes you call me a prince, and . . . for whom do you take me?” he asked quickly.

“Why, aren’t you the prince?”

“I never have been one.”

“So yourself, yourself, you tell me straight to my face that you’re not the prince?”

“I tell you I never have been.”

“Good Lord!” she cried, clasping her hands. “I was ready to expect anything from *his* enemies, but such insolence, never! Is he alive?” she shrieked in a frenzy, turning upon Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. “Have you killed him? Confess!”

“Whom do you take me for?” he cried, jumping up from his chair with a distorted face; but it was not easy now to frighten her. She was triumphant.

“Who can tell who you are and where you’ve sprung from? Only my heart, my heart had misgivings all these five years, of all the intrigues. And I’ve been sitting here wondering what blind owl was making up to me? No, my dear, you’re a poor actor, worse than Lebyadkin even. Give my humble greetings to the countess and tell her to send some one better than you. Has she hired you, tell me? Have they given you a place in her kitchen out of charity? I see through your deception. I understand you all, every one of you.”

He seized her firmly above the elbow; she laughed in his face.

“You’re like him, very like, perhaps you’re a relation — you’re a sly lot! Only mine is a bright falcon and a prince, and you’re an owl, and a shopman! Mine will bow down to God if it pleases him, and won’t if it doesn’t. And Shatushka (he’s my dear, my darling!) slapped you on the cheeks, my Lebyadkin told me. And what were you afraid of then, when you came in? Who had frightened you then? When I saw your mean face after I’d fallen down and you picked me up — it was like a worm crawling into my heart. It’s not *he*, I thought, not *he!* My falcon would never have been ashamed of me before a fashionable young lady. Oh heavens! That alone kept me happy for those five years that my falcon was living somewhere beyond the mountains, soaring, gazing at the sun. . . . Tell me, you impostor, have you got much by it I Did you need a big bribe to consent? *I* wouldn’t have given you a farthing. Ha ha ha! Ha ha! . . .”

“Ugh, idiot!” snarled Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, still holding her tight by the arm.

“Go away, impostor!” she shouted peremptorily. “I’m the wife of my prince; I’m not afraid of your knife!”

“Knife!”

“Yes, knife, you’ve a knife in your pocket. You thought I was asleep but I saw it. When you came in just now you took out your knife!”

“What are you saying, unhappy creature? What dreams you have!” he exclaimed, pushing her away from him with all his might, so that her head and shoulders fell painfully against the sofa. He was rushing away; but she at once flew to overtake him, limping and hopping, and though Lebyadkin, panic-stricken, held her back with all his might, she succeeded in shouting after him into the darkness, shrieking and laughing:

“A curse on you, Grishka Otrepyev!”

IV

“A knife, a knife,” he repeated with uncontrollable anger, striding along through the mud and puddles, without picking his way. It is true that at moments he had a terrible desire to laugh aloud frantically; but for some reason he controlled himself and restrained his laughter. He recovered himself only on the bridge, on the spot where Fedka had met him that evening. He found the man lying in wait for him again. Seeing Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch he took off his cap, grinned gaily, and began babbling briskly and merrily about-something. At first Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch walked on without stopping, and for. some time did not even listen to the tramp who was pestering him again. He was suddenly struck by the thought that he had entirely forgotten him, and had forgotten him at the very moment when he himself was repeating, “A knife, a knife.” He seized the tramp by the collar and gave vent to his pent-up rage by flinging him violently against the bridge. For one instant the man thought of fighting, but almost at once realising that compared with his adversary, who had fallen upon him unawares, he was no better than a wisp of straw, he subsided and was silent, without offering any resistance. Crouching on the ground with his elbows crooked behind his back, the wily tramp calmly waited for what would happen next, apparently quite incredulous of danger. He was right in his reckoning. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had already with his left hand taken off his thick scarf to tie his prisoner’s arms, but suddenly, for some reason, he abandoned him, and shoved him away. The man instantly sprang on to his feet, turned round, and a short, broad boot-knife suddenly gleamed in his hand.

“Away with that knife; put it away, at once!” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch commanded with an impatient gesture, and the knife vanished as instantaneously as it had appeared.

Without speaking again or turning round, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went on his way. But the persistent vagabond did not leave him even now, though now, it is true, he did not chatter, and even respectfully kept his distance, a full step behind.

They crossed the bridge like this and came out on to the river bank, turning this time to the left, again into a long deserted back street, which led to the centre of the town by a shorter way than going through Bogoyavlensky Street.

“Is it true, as they say, that you robbed a church in the district the other day?” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch asked suddenly.

“I went in to say my prayers in the first place,” the tramp answered, sedately and respectfully as though nothing had happened; more than sedately, in fact, almost with dignity. There was no trace of his former “friendly” familiarity. All that was to be seen was a serious, business-like man, who had indeed been gratuitously insulted, but who was capable of overlooking an insult.

“But when the Lord led me there,” he went on, “ech, I thought what a heavenly abundance! It was all owing to my helpless state, as in our way of life there’s no doing without assistance. And, now, God be my witness, sir, it was my own loss. The Lord punished me for my sins, and what with the censer and the deacon’s halter, I only got twelve roubles altogether. The chin setting of St. Nikolay of pure silver went for next to nothing. They said it was plated.”

“You killed the watchman?”

“That is, I cleared the place out together with that watchman, but afterwards, next morning, by the river, we fell to quarrelling which should carry the sack. I sinned, I did lighten his load for him.”

“Well, you can rob and murder again.”

“That’s the very advice Pyotr Stepanovitch gives me, in the very same words, for he’s uncommonly mean and hard-hearted about helping a fellow-creature. And what’s more, he hasn’t a ha’porth of belief in the Heavenly Creator, who made us out of earthly clay; but he says it’s all the work of nature even to the last beast. He doesn’t understand either that with our way of life it’s impossible for us to get along without friendly assistance. If you begin to talk to him he looks like a sheep at the water; it makes one wonder. Would you believe, at Captain Lebyadkin’s, out yonder, whom your honour’s just been visiting, when he was living at Filipov’s, before you

came, the door stood open all night long. — He'd be drunk and sleeping like the dead, and his money dropping out of his pockets all over the floor. I've chanced to see it with my own eyes, for in our way of life it's impossible to live without assistance. ..."

"How do you mean with your own eyes? Did you go in at night then?"

"Maybe I did go in, but no one knows of it."

"Why didn't you kill him?"

"Reckoning it out, I steadied myself. For once having learned for sure that I can always get one hundred and fifty roubles, why should I go so far when I can get fifteen hundred roubles, if I only bide my time. For Captain Lebyadkin (I've heard him with my own ears) had great hopes of you when he was drunk; and there isn't a tavern here — not the lowest pot-house — where he hasn't talked about it when he was in that state. So that hearing it from many lips, I began, too, to rest all my hopes on your excellency. I speak to you, sir, as to my father, or my own brother; for Pyotr Stepanovitch will never learn that from me, and not a soul in the world. So won't your excellency spare me three roubles in your kindness? You might set my mind at rest, so that I might know the real truth; for we can't get on without assistance."

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch laughed aloud, and taking out his purse, in which he had as much as fifty roubles, in small notes, threw him one note out of the bundle, then a second, a third, a fourth. Fedka flew to catch them in the air. The notes dropped into the mud, and he snatched them up crying, "Ech! ech!" Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch finished by flinging the whole bundle at him, and, still laughing, went on down the street, this time alone. The tramp remained crawling on his knees in the mud, looking for the notes which were blown about by the wind and soaking in the puddles, and for an < hour after his spasmodic cries of "Ech! ech!" were still to be heard in the darkness.

CHAPTER III.

THE DUEL

THE NEXT DAY, at two o’clock in the afternoon, the duel took place as arranged. Things were hastened forward by Gaganov’s obstinate desire to fight at all costs. He did not understand his adversary’s conduct, and was in a fury. For a whole month he had been insulting him with impunity, and had so far been unable to make him lose patience. What he wanted was a challenge on the part of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, as he had not himself any direct pretext for challenging him. His secret motive for it, that is, his almost morbid hatred of Stavrogin for the insult to his family four years before, he was for some reason ashamed to confess. And indeed he regarded this himself as an impossible pretext for a challenge, especially in view of the humble apology offered by Nikolay Stavrogin twice already. He privately made up his mind that Stavrogin was a shameless coward; and could not understand how he could have accepted Shatov’s blow. So he made up his mind at last to send him the extraordinarily rude letter that had finally roused Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch himself to propose a meeting. Having dispatched this letter the day before, he awaited a challenge with feverish impatience, and while morbidly reckoning the chances at one moment with hope and at the next with despair, he got ready for any emergency by securing a second, to wit, Mavriky Nikolaevitch Drozdov, who was a friend of his, an old schoolfellow, a man for whom he had a great respect. So when Kirillov came next morning at nine o’clock with his message he found things in readiness. All the apologies and unheard-of condescension of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch were at once, at the first word, rejected with extraordinary exasperation. Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who had only been made acquainted with the position of affairs the evening before, opened his mouth with surprise at such incredible concessions, and would have urged a reconciliation, but seeing that Gaganov, guessing his intention, was almost trembling in his chair, refrained, and said nothing. If it had not been for the promise given to his old schoolfellow he would have retired immediately; he only remained in the hope of being some help on the scene of action. Kirillov repeated the challenge. All the conditions of the encounter made by Stavrogin were accepted on the spot, without the faintest

objection. Only one addition was made, and that a ferocious one. If the first shots had no decisive effect, they were to fire again, and if the second encounter were inconclusive, it was to be followed by a third. Kirillov frowned, objected to the third encounter, but gaining nothing by his efforts agreed on the condition, however, that three should be the limit, and that “a fourth encounter was out of the question.” This was conceded. Accordingly at two o’clock in the afternoon the meeting took place at Brykov, that is, in a little copse in the outskirts of the town, lying between Skvoreshniki and the Shpigulin factory. The rain of the previous night was over, but it was damp, grey, and windy. Low, ragged, dingy clouds moved rapidly across the cold sky. The tree-tops roared with a deep droning sound, and creaked on their roots; it was a melancholy morning.

Mavriky Nikolaevitch and Gaganov arrived on the spot in a smart char-a-banc with a pair of horses driven by the latter. They were accompanied by a groom. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch and Kirillov arrived almost at the same instant. They were not driving, they were on horseback, and were also followed by a mounted servant. Kirillov, who had never mounted a horse before, sat up boldly, erect in the saddle, grasping in his right hand the heavy box of pistols which he would not entrust to the servant. In his inexperience he was continually with his left hand tugging at the reins, which made the horse toss his head and show an inclination to rear. This, however, seemed to cause his rider no uneasiness. Gaganov, who was morbidly suspicious and always ready to be deeply offended, considered their coming on horseback as a fresh insult to himself, inasmuch as it showed that his opponents were too confident of success, since they had not even thought it necessary to have a carriage in case of being wounded and disabled. He got out of his char-a-banc, yellow with anger, and felt that his hands were trembling, as he told Mavriky Nikolaevitch. He made no response at all to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch’s bow, and turned away. The seconds cast lots. The lot fell on Kirillov’s pistols. They measured out the barrier and placed the combatants. The servants with the carriage and horses were moved back three hundred paces. The weapons were loaded and handed to the combatants.

I’m sorry that I have to tell my story more quickly and have no time for descriptions. But I can’t refrain from some comments. Mavriky Nikolaevitch was melancholy and preoccupied. Kirillov, on the other hand, was perfectly calm and unconcerned, very exact over the details of the

duties he had undertaken, but without the slightest fussiness or even curiosity as to the issue of the fateful contest that was so near at hand. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was paler than usual. He was rather lightly dressed in an overcoat and a white beaver hat. He seemed very tired, he frowned from time to time, and seemed to feel it superfluous to conceal his ill-humour. But Gaganov was at this moment more worthy of mention than anyone, so that it is quite impossible not to say a few words about him in particular.

II

I have hitherto not had occasion to describe his appearance. He was a tall man of thirty-three, and well fed, as the common folk express it, almost fat, with lank flaxen hair, and with features which might be called handsome. He had retired from the service with the rank of colonel, and if he had served till he reached the rank of general he would have been even more impressive in that position, and would very likely have become an excellent fighting general.

I must add, as characteristic of the man, that the chief cause of his leaving the army was the thought of the family disgrace which had haunted him so painfully since the insult paid to his father by Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch four years before at the club. He conscientiously considered it dishonourable to remain in the service, and was inwardly persuaded that he was contaminating the regiment and his companions, although they knew nothing of the incident. It’s true that he had once before been disposed to leave the army long before the insult to his father, and on quite other grounds, but he had hesitated. Strange as it is to write, the original design, or rather desire, to leave the army was due to the proclamation of the 19th of February of the emancipation of the serfs. Gaganov, who was one of the richest landowners in the province, and who had not lost very much by the emancipation, and was, moreover, quite capable of understanding the humanity of the reform and its economic advantages, suddenly felt himself personally insulted by the proclamation. It was something unconscious, a feeling; but was all the stronger for being unrecognised. He could not bring himself, however, to take any decisive step till his father’s death. But he began to be well known for his “gentlemanly” ideas to many persons of high position in Petersburg, with

whom he strenuously kept up connections. He was secretive and self-contained. Another characteristic: he belonged to that strange section of the nobility, still surviving in Russia, who set an extreme value on their pure and ancient lineage, and take it too seriously. At the same time he could not endure Russian history, and, indeed, looked upon Russian customs in general as more or less piggish. Even in his childhood, in the special military school for the sons of particularly wealthy and distinguished families in which he had the privilege of being educated, from first to last certain poetic notions were deeply rooted in his mind. He loved castles, chivalry; all the theatrical part of it. He was ready to cry with shame that in the days of the Moscow Tsars the sovereign had the right to inflict corporal punishment on the Russian boyars, and blushed at the contrast. This stiff and extremely severe man, who had a remarkable knowledge of military science and performed his duties admirably, was at heart a dreamer. It was said that he could speak at meetings and had the gift of language, but at no time during the thirty-three years of his life had he spoken. Even in the distinguished circles in Petersburg, in which he had moved of late, he behaved with extraordinary haughtiness. His meeting in Petersburg with Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, who had just returned from abroad, almost sent him out of his mind. At the present moment, standing at the barrier, he was terribly uneasy. He kept imagining that the duel would somehow not come off; the least delay threw him into a tremor. There was an expression of anguish in his face when Kirillov, instead of giving the signal for them to fire, began suddenly speaking, only for form, indeed, as he himself explained aloud.

“Simply as a formality, now that you have the pistols in your hands, and I must give the signal, I ask you for the last time, will you not be reconciled? It’s the duty of a second.”

As though to spite him, Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who had till then kept silence, although he had been reproaching himself all day for his compliance and acquiescence, suddenly caught up Kirillov’s thought and began to speak:

“I entirely agree with Mr. Kirillov’s words. . . . This idea that reconciliation is impossible at the barrier is a prejudice, only suitable for Frenchmen. Besides, with your leave, I don’t understand what the offence is. I’ve been wanting to say so for a long time . . . because every apology is offered, isn’t it?”

He flushed all over. He had rarely spoken so much, and with such excitement.

“I repeat again my offer to make every possible apology,” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch interposed hurriedly.

“This is impossible,” shouted Gaganov furiously, addressing Mavriky Nikolaevitch, and stamping with rage. “Explain to this man,” he pointed with his pistol at Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, “if you’re my second and not my enemy, Mavriky Nikolaevitch, that such overtures only aggravate the insult. He feels it impossible to be insulted by me! . . . He feels it no disgrace to walk away from me at the barrier! What does he take me for, after that, do you think? . . . And you, you, my second, too! You’re simply irritating me that I may miss.”

He stamped again. There were flecks of foam on his lips.

“Negotiations are over. I beg you to listen to the signal!” Kirillov shouted at the top of his voice. “One! Two! Three!”

At the word “Three” the combatants took aim at one another. Gaganov at once raised his pistol, and at the fifth or sixth step he fired. For a second he stood still, and, making sure that he had missed, advanced to the barrier. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch advanced too, raising his pistol, but somehow holding it very high, and fired, almost without taking aim. Then he took out his handkerchief and bound it round the little finger of his right hand. Only then they saw that Gaganov had not missed him completely, but the bullet had only grazed the fleshy part of his finger without touching the bone; it was only a slight scratch. Kirillov at once announced that the duel would go on, unless the combatants were satisfied.

“I declare,” said Gaganov hoarsely (his throat felt parched), again addressing Mavriky Nikolaevitch, “that this man,” again he pointed in Stavrogin’s direction, “fired in the air on purpose . . . intentionally. . . . This is an insult again. . . . He wants to make the duel impossible!”

“I have the right to fire as I like so long as I keep the rules,” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch asserted resolutely.

“No, he hasn’t! Explain it to him! Explain it!” cried Gaganov.

“I’m in complete agreement with Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch,” proclaimed Kirillov.

“Why does he spare me?” Gaganov raged, not hearing him. “I despise his mercy. ... I spit on it. ... I .. .”

“I give you my word that I did not intend to insult you,” cried Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch impatiently. “I shot high because I don’t want to kill anyone else, either you or anyone else. It’s nothing to do with you personally. It’s true that I don’t consider myself insulted, and I’m sorry that angers you. But I don’t allow any one to interfere with my rights.”

“If he’s so afraid of bloodshed, ask him why he challenged me,” yelled Gaganov, still addressing Mavriky Nikolaevitch.

“How could he help challenging you?” said Kirillov, intervening. “You wouldn’t listen to anything. How was one to get rid of you?”

“I’ll only mention one thing,” observed Mavriky Nikolaevitch, pondering the matter with painful effort. “If a combatant declares beforehand that he will fire in the air the duel certainly cannot go on ... for obvious and . . . delicate reasons.”

“I haven’t declared that I’ll fire in the air every time,” cried Stavrogin, losing all patience. “You don’t know what’s in my mind or how I intend to fire again. . . . I’m not restricting the duel at all.”

“In that case the encounter can go on,” said Mavriky Nikolaevitch to Gaganov.

“Gentlemen, take your places,” Kirillov commanded. Again they advanced, again Gaganov missed and Stavrogin fired into the air. There might have been a dispute as to his firing into the air. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch might have flatly declared that he’d fired properly, if he had not admitted that he had missed intentionally. He did not aim straight at the sky or at the trees, but seemed to aim at his adversary, though as he pointed the pistol the bullet flew a yard above his hat. The second time the shot was even lower, even less like an intentional miss. Nothing would have convinced Gaganov now.

“Again!” he muttered, grinding his teeth. “No matter! I’ve been challenged and I’ll make use of my rights. I’ll fire a third time . . . whatever happens.”

“You have full right to do so,” Kirillov rapped out. Mavriky Nikolaevitch said nothing. The opponents were placed a third time, the signal was given. This time Gaganov went right up to the barrier, and began from there taking aim, at a distance of twelve paces. His hand was trembling too much to take good aim. Stavrogin stood with his pistol lowered and awaited his shot without moving.

“Too long; you’ve been aiming too long!” Kirillov shouted impetuously. “Fire! Fire!”

But the shot rang out, and this time Stavrogin’s white beaver hat flew off. The aim had been fairly correct. The crown of the hat was pierced very low down; a quarter of an inch lower and all would have been over. Kirillov picked up the hat and handed it to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch.

“Fire; don’t detain your adversary!” cried Mavriky Nikolaevitch in extreme agitation, seeing that Stavrogin seemed to have forgotten to fire, and was examining the hat with Kirillov. Stavrogin started, looked at Gaganov, turned round and this time, without the slightest regard for punctilio, fired to one side, into the copse. The duel was over. Gaganov stood as though overwhelmed. Mavriky Nikolaevitch went up and began saying something to him, but he did not seem to understand. Kirillov took off his hat as he went away, and nodded to Mavriky Nikolaevitch. But Stavrogin forgot his former politeness. When he had shot into the copse he did not even turn towards the barrier. He handed his pistol to Kirillov and hastened towards the horses. His face looked angry; he did not speak. Kirillov, too, was silent. They got on their horses and set off at a gallop.

III

“Why don’t you speak?” he called impatiently to Kirillov, when they were not far from home.

“What do you want?” replied the latter, almost slipping off his horse, which was rearing.

Stavrogin restrained himself.

“I didn’t mean to insult that . . . fool, and I’ve insulted him again,” he said quietly.

“Yes, you’ve insulted him again,” Kirillov jerked out, “and besides, he’s not a fool.”

“I’ve done all I can, anyway.”

“No.”

“What ought I to have done?”

“Not have challenged him.”

“Accept another blow in the face?”

“Yes, accept another.”

“I can’t understand anything now,” said Stavrogin wrath-fully. “Why does every one expect of me something not expected from anyone else? Why am I to put up with what no one else puts up with, and undertake burdens no one else can bear?”

“I thought you were seeking a burden yourself.”

“I seek a bur den?”

“Yes.”

“You’ve . . . seen that?”

“Yes.”

“Is it so noticeable?”

“Yes.”

There was silence for a moment. Stavrogin had a very preoccupied face. He was almost impressed.

“I didn’t aim because I didn’t want to kill anyone. There was nothing more in it, I assure you,” he said hurriedly, and with agitation, as though justifying himself.

“You ought not to have offended him.”

“What ought I to have done then?”

“You ought to have killed him.”

“Are you sorry I didn’t kill him?”

“I’m not sorry for anything. I thought you really meant to kill him. You don’t know what you’re seeking.”

“I seek a burden,” laughed Stavrogin.

“If you didn’t want blood yourself, why did you give him a chance to kill you?”

“If I hadn’t challenged him, he’d have killed me simply, without a duel.”

“That’s not your affair. Perhaps he wouldn’t have killed you.”

“Only have beaten me?”

“That’s not your business. Bear your burden. Or else there’s no merit.”

“Hang your merit. I don’t seek anyone’s approbation.”

“I thought you were seeking it,” Kirillov commented with terrible unconcern.

They rode into the courtyard of the house.

“Do you care to come in?” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch.

“No; I’m going home. Good-bye.”

He got off the horse and took his box of pistols under his arm.

“Anyway, you’re not angry with me?” said Stavrogin, holding out his hand to him.

“Not in the least,” said Kirillov, turning round to shake hands with him. “If my burden’s light it’s because it’s from nature; perhaps your burden’s heavier because that’s your nature. There’s no need to be much ashamed; only a little.”

“I know I’m a worthless character, and I don’t pretend to be a strong one.”

“You’d better not; you’re not a strong person. Come and have tea.”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch went into the house, greatly perturbed.

IV

He learned at once from Alexey Yegorytch that Varvara Petrovna had been very glad to hear that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had gone out for a ride — the first time he had left the house after eight days’ illness. She had ordered the carriage, and had driven out alone for a breath of fresh air “according to the habit of the past, as she had forgotten for the last eight days what it meant to breathe fresh air.”

“Alone, or with Darya Pavlovna?” Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch interrupted the old man with a rapid question, and he scowled when he heard that Darya Pavlovna “had declined to go abroad on account of indisposition and was in her rooms.”

“Listen, old man,” he said, as though suddenly making up his mind. “Keep watch over her all to-day, and if you notice her coming to me, stop her at once, and tell her that I can’t see her for a few days at least . . . that I ask her not to come myself. . . . I’ll let her know myself, when the time comes. Do you hear?”

“I’ll tell her, sir,” said Alexey Yegorytch, with distress in his voice, dropping his eyes.

“Not till you see clearly she’s meaning to come and see me of herself, though.”

“Don’t be afraid, sir, there shall be no mistake. Your interviews have all passed through me, hitherto. You’ve always turned to me for help.”

“I know. Not till she comes of herself, anyway. Bring me some tea, if you can, at once.”

The old man had hardly gone out, when almost at the same instant the door reopened, and Darya Pavlovna appeared in the doorway. Her eyes were tranquil, though her face was pale.

“Where have you come from?” exclaimed Stavrogin.

“I was standing there, and waiting for him to go out, to come in to you. I heard the order you gave him, and when he came out just now I hid round the corner, on the right, and he didn’t notice me.”

“I’ve long meant to break off with you, Dasha . . . for a while . . . for the present. I couldn’t see you last night, in spite of your note. I meant to write to you myself, but I don’t know how to write,” he added with vexation, almost as though with disgust.

“I thought myself that we must break it off. Varvara Petrovna is too suspicious of our relations.”

“Well, let her be.”

“She mustn’t be worried. So now we part till the end comes.”

“You still insist on expecting the end?”

“Yes, I’m sure of it.”

“But nothing in the world ever has an end.”

“This will have an end. Then call me. I’ll come. Now, good-bye.”

“And what sort of end will it be?” smiled Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch.

“You’re not wounded, and . . . have not shed blood?” she asked, not answering his question.

“It was stupid. I didn’t kill anyone. Don’t be uneasy. However, you’ll hear all about it to-day from every one. I’m not quite well.”

“I’m going. The announcement of the marriage won’t be to-day?” she added irresolutely.

“It won’t be to-day, and it won’t be to-morrow. I can’t say about the day after to-morrow. Perhaps we shall all be dead, and so much the better. Leave me alone, leave me alone, do.”

“You won’t ruin that other . . . mad girl?”

“I won’t ruin either of the mad creatures. It seems to be the sane I’m ruining. I’m so vile and loathsome, Dasha, that I might really send for you, ‘at the latter end,’ as you say. And in spite of your sanity you’ll come. Why will you be your own ruin?”

“I know that at the end I shall be the only one left you, and . . . I’m waiting for that.”

“And what if I don’t send for you after all, but run away from you?”

“That can’t be. You will send for me.”

“There’s a great deal of contempt for me in that.”

“You know that there’s not only contempt.”

“Then there is contempt, anyway?”

“I used the wrong word. God is my witness, it’s my greatest wish that you may never have need of me.”

“One phrase is as good as another. I should also have wished not to have ruined you.”

“You can never, anyhow, be my ruin; and you know that yourself, better than anyone,” Darya Pavlovna said, rapidly and resolutely. “If I don’t come to you I shall be a sister of mercy, a nurse, shall wait upon the sick, or go selling the gospel. I’ve made up my mind to that. I cannot be anyone’s wife. I can’t live in a house like this, either. That’s not what I want. . . . You know all that.”

“No, I never could tell what you want. It seems to me that you’re interested in me, as some veteran nurses get specially interested in some particular invalid in comparison with the others, or still more, like some pious old women who frequent funerals and find one corpse more attractive than another. Why do you look at me so strangely?”

“Are you very ill?” she asked sympathetically, looking at him in a peculiar way. “Good heavens! And this man wants to do without me!”

“Listen, Dasha, now I’m always seeing phantoms. One devil offered me yesterday, on the bridge, to murder Lebyadkin and Marya Timofyevna, to settle the marriage difficulty, and to cover up all traces. He asked me to give him three roubles on account, but gave me to understand that the whole operation wouldn’t cost less than fifteen hundred. Wasn’t he a calculating devil! A regular shopkeeper. Ha ha!”

“But you’re fully convinced that it was an hallucination?”

“Oh, no; not a bit an hallucination! It was simply Fedka the convict, the robber who escaped from prison. But that’s not the point. What do you suppose I did! I gave him all I had, everything in my purse, and now he’s sure I’ve given him that on account!”

“You met him at night, and he made such a suggestion? Surely you must see that you’re being caught in their nets on every side!”

“Well, let them be. But you’ve got some question at the tip of your tongue, you know. I see it by your eyes,” he added with a resentful and irritable smile.

Dasha was frightened.

“I’ve no question at all, and no doubt whatever; you’d better be quiet!” she cried in dismay, as though waving off his question.

“Then you’re convinced that I won’t go to Fedka’s little shop?”

“Oh, God!” she cried, clasping her hands. “Why do you torture me like this?”

“Oh, forgive me my stupid joke. I must be picking up bad manners from them. Do you know, ever since last night I feel awfully inclined to laugh, to go on laughing continually for ever so long. It’s as though I must explode with laughter. It’s like an illness. . . . Oh! my mother’s coming in. I always know by the rumble when her carriage has stopped at the entrance.”

Dasha seized his hand.

“God save you from your demon, and . . . call me, call me quickly!”

“Oh! a fine demon! It’s simply a little nasty, scrofulous imp, with a cold in his head, one of the unsuccessful ones. But you have something you don’t dare to say again, Dasha?”

She looked at him with pain and reproach, and turned towards the door.

“Listen,” he called after her, with a malignant and distorted smile. “If ... Yes, if, in one word, if ... you understand, even if I did go to that little shop, and if I called you after that — would you come then?”

She went out, hiding her face in her hands, and neither turning nor answering.

“She will come even after the shop,” he whispered, thinking a moment, and an expression of scornful disdain came into his face. “A nurse! H’m! . . . but perhaps that’s what I want.”

CHAPTER IV.

ALL IN EXPECTATION

The impression made on the whole neighbourhood by the story of the duel, which was rapidly noised abroad, was particularly remarkable from the unanimity with which every one hastened to take up the cudgels for Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. Many of his former enemies declared themselves his friends. The chief reason for this change of front in public opinion was chiefly due to one person, who had hitherto not expressed her opinion, but who now very distinctly uttered a few words, which at once gave the event a significance exceedingly interesting to the vast majority. This was how it happened. On the day after the duel, all the town was assembled at the Marshal of Nobility's in honour of his wife's nameday. Yulia Mihailovna was present, or, rather, presided, accompanied by Lizaveta Nikolaevna, radiant with beauty and peculiar gaiety, which struck many of our ladies at once as particularly suspicious at this time. And I may mention, by the way, her engagement to Mavriky Nikolaevitch was by now an established fact. To a playful question from a retired general of much consequence, of whom we shall have more to say later, Lizaveta Nikolaevna frankly replied that evening that she was engaged. And only imagine, not one of our ladies would believe in her engagement. They all persisted in assuming a romance of some sort, some fatal family secret, something that had happened in Switzerland, and for some reason imagined that Yulia Mihailovna must have had some hand in it. It was difficult to understand why these rumours, or rather fancies, persisted so obstinately, and why Yulia Mihailovna was so positively connected with it. As soon as she came in, all turned to her with strange looks, brimful of expectation. It must be observed that owing to the freshness of the event, and certain circumstances accompanying it, at the party people talked of it with some circumspection, in undertones. Besides, nothing yet was known of the line taken by the authorities. As far as was known, neither of the combatants had been troubled by the police. Every one knew, for instance, that Gaganov had set off home early in the morning to Duhovo, without being hindered. Meanwhile, of course, all were eager for some one to be the first to speak of it aloud, and so to open the door to

the general impatience. They rested their hopes on the general above-mentioned, and they were not disappointed.

This general, a landowner, though not a wealthy one, was one of the most imposing members of our club, and a man of an absolutely unique turn of mind. He flirted in the old-fashioned way with the young ladies, and was particularly fond, in large assemblies, of speaking aloud with all the weightiness of a general, on subjects to which others were alluding in discreet whispers. This was, so to say, his ‘special role in local society. He drawled, too, and spoke with peculiar suavity, probably having picked up the habit from Russians travelling abroad, or from those wealthy landowners of former days who had suffered most from the emancipation. Stepan Trofimovitch had observed that the more completely a landowner was ruined, the more suavely he lisped and drawled his words. He did, as a fact, lisp and drawl himself, but was not aware of it in himself.

The general spoke like a person of authority. He was, besides, a distant relation of Gaganov’s, though he was on bad terms with him, and even engaged in litigation with him. He had, moreover, in the past, fought two duels himself, and had even been degraded to the ranks and sent to the Caucasus on account of one of them. Some mention was made of Varvara Petrovna’s having driven out that day and the day before, after being kept indoors “by illness,” though the allusion was not to her, but to the marvellous matching of her four grey horses of the Stavrogins’ own breeding. The general suddenly observed that he had met “young Stavrogin” that day, on horseback. . . . Every one was instantly silent. The general munched his lips, and suddenly proclaimed, twisting in his fingers his presentation gold snuff-box.

“I’m sorry I wasn’t here some years ago ... I mean when I was at Carlsbad . . . H’m! I’m very much interested in that young man about whom I heard so many rumours at that time. H’m! And, I say, is it true that he’s mad? Some one told me so then. Suddenly I’m told that he has been insulted by some student here, in the presence of his cousins, and he slipped under the table to get away from him. And yesterday I heard from Stepan Vysotsky that Stavrogin had been fighting with Gaganov. And simply with the gallant object of offering himself as a target to an infuriated man, just to get rid of him. H’m! Quite in the style of the guards of the twenties. Is there any house where he visits here?”

The general paused as though expecting an answer. A way had been opened for the public impatience to express itself.

“What could be simpler?” cried Yulia Mihailovna, raising her voice, irritated that all present had turned their eyes upon her, as though at a word of command. “Can one wonder that Stavrogin fought Gaganov and took no notice of the student? He couldn’t challenge a man who used to be his serf!”

A noteworthy saying! A clear and simple notion, yet it had entered nobody’s head till that moment. It was a saying that had extraordinary consequences. All scandal and gossip, all the petty tittle-tattle was thrown into the background, another significance had been detected. A new character was revealed whom all had misjudged; a character, almost ideally severe in his standards. Mortally insulted by a student, that is, an educated man, no longer a serf, he despised the affront because his assailant had once been his serf. Society had gossiped and slandered him; shallow-minded people had looked with contempt on a man who had been struck in the face. He had despised a public opinion, which had not risen to the level of the highest standards, though it discussed them.

“And, meantime, you and I, Ivan Alexandrovitch, sit and discuss the correct standards,” one old club member observed to another, with a warm and generous glow of self-reproach.

“Yes, Pyotr Mihailovitch, yes,” the other chimed in with zest, “talk of the younger generation!”

“It’s not a question of the younger generation,” observed a third, putting in his spoke, “it’s nothing to do with the younger generation; he’s a star, not one of the younger generation; that’s the way to look at it.”

“And it’s just that sort we need; they’re rare people.” The chief point in all this was that the “new man,” besides showing himself an unmistakable nobleman, was the wealthiest landowner in the province, and was, therefore, bound to be a leading man who could be of assistance. I’ve already alluded in passing to the attitude of the landowners of our province. People were enthusiastic:

“He didn’t merely refrain from challenging the student. He put his hands behind him, note that particularly, your excellency,” somebody pointed out.

“And he didn’t haul him up before the new law-courts, either,” added another.

“In spite of the fact that for a personal insult to a nobleman he’d have got fifteen roubles damages! He he he!”

“No, I’ll tell you a secret about the new courts,” cried a third, in a frenzy of excitement, “if anyone’s caught robbing or swindling and convicted, he’d better run home while there’s yet time, and murder his mother. He’ll be acquitted of everything at once, and ladies will wave their batiste handkerchiefs from the platform. It’s the absolute truth!”

“It’s the truth. It’s the truth!”

The inevitable anecdotes followed: Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch’s friendly relations with Count K. were recalled. Count K.’s stern and independent attitude to recent reforms was well known, as well as his remarkable public activity, though that had somewhat fallen off of late. And now, suddenly, every one was positive that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was betrothed to one of the count’s daughters, though nothing had given grounds for such a supposition. And as for some wonderful adventures in Switzerland with Lizaveta Nikolaevna, even the ladies quite dropped all reference to it. I must mention, by the way, that the Drozdovs had by this time succeeded in paying all the visits they had omitted at first. Every one now confidently considered Lizaveta Nikolaevna a most ordinary girl, who paraded her delicate nerves. Her fainting on the day of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch’s arrival was explained now as due to her terror at the student’s outrageous behaviour. They even increased the prosaicness of that to which before they had striven to give such a fantastic colour. As for a lame woman who had been talked of, she was forgotten completely. They were ashamed to remember her.

“And if there had been a hundred lame girls — we’ve all been young once!”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch’s respectfulness to his mother was enlarged upon. Various virtues were discovered in him. People talked with approbation of the learning he had acquired in the four years he had spent in German universities. Gaganov’s conduct was declared utterly tactless: “not knowing friend from foe.” Yulia Mihailovna’s keen insight was unhesitatingly admitted.

So by the time Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch made his appearance among them he was received by every one with naive solemnity. In all eyes fastened upon him could be read eager anticipation. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch at once wrapped himself in the most austere silence, which, of course, gratified every one much more than if he had talked till doomsday. In a word, he was a success, he was the fashion. If once one has

figured in provincial society, there's no retreating into the background. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch began to fulfil all his social duties in the province punctiliously as before. He was not found cheerful company: "a man who has seen suffering; a man not like other people; he has something to be melancholy about." Even the pride and disdainful aloofness for which he had been so detested four years before was now liked and respected.

Varvara Petrovna was triumphant. I don't know whether she grieved much over the shattering of her dreams concerning Lizaveta Nikolaevna. Family pride, of course, helped her to get over it. One thing was strange: Varvara Petrovna was suddenly convinced that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch really had "made his choice "at Count K.'s. And what was strangest of all, she was led to believe it by rumours which reached her on no better authority than other people. She was afraid to ask Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch a direct question. Two or three times, however, she could not refrain from slyly and good-humouredly reproaching him for not being open with her. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch smiled and remained silent. The silence was taken as a sign of assent. And yet, all the time she never forgot the cripple. The thought of her lay like a stone on her heart, a nightmare, she was tortured by strange misgivings and surmises, and all this at the same time as she dreamed of Count K.'s daughters. But of this we shall speak later. Varvara Petrovna began again, of course, to be treated with extreme deference and respect in society, but she took little advantage of it and went out rarely.

She did, however, pay a visit of ceremony to the governor's wife. Of course, no one had been more charmed and delighted by Yulia Mihailovna's words spoken at the marshal's soiree than she. They lifted a load of care off her heart, and had at once relieved much of the distress she had been suffering since that

luckless Sunday.

"I misunderstood that woman," she declared, and with her characteristic impulsiveness she frankly told Yulia Mihailovna that she had come to *thank her.* Yulia Mihailovna was flattered, but she behaved with dignity. She was beginning about this time to be very conscious of her own importance, too much so, in fact. She announced, for example, in the course of conversation, that she had never heard of Stepan Trofimovitch as a leading man or a savant.

“I know young Verhovensky, of course, and make much of him. He’s imprudent, but then he’s young; he’s thoroughly well-informed, though. He’s not an out-of-date, old-fashioned critic, anyway.” Varvara Petrovna hastened to observe that Stepan Trofimovitch had never been a critic, but had, on the contrary, spent all his life in her house. He was renowned through circumstances of his early career, “only too well known to the whole world,” and of late for his researches in Spanish history. Now he intended to write also on the position of modern German universities, and, she believed, something about the Dresden Madonna too. In short, Varvara Petrovna refused to surrender Stepan Trofimovitch to the tender mercies of Yulia Mihailovna.

“The Dresden Madonna? You mean the Sistine Madonna? *Come* Varvara Petrovna, I spent two hours sitting before that picture and came away utterly disillusioned. I could make nothing of it and was in complete amazement. Karmazinov, too, says it’s hard to understand it. They all see nothing in it now, Russians and English alike. All its fame is just the talk of the last generation.”

“Fashions are changed then?”

“What I think is that one mustn’t despise our younger generation either. They cry out that they’re communists, but what *I* say is that we must appreciate them and mustn’t be hard on them. I read everything now — the papers, communism the natural sciences — I get everything because, after all, one must know where one’s living and with whom one has to do. One mustn’t spend one’s whole life on the heights of one’s own fancy. I’ve come to the conclusion, and adopted it as a principle, that one must be kind to the young people and so keep them from the brink. Believe me, Varvara Petrovna, that none but we who make up good society can by our kindness and good influence keep them from the abyss towards which they are brought by the intolerance of all these old men. I am glad though to learn from you about Stepan Trofimovitch. You suggest an idea to me: he may be useful at our literary matinee, you know I’m arranging for a whole day of festivities, a subscription entertainment for the benefit of the poor governesses of our province. They are scattered about Russia; in our district alone we can reckon up six of them. Besides that, there are two girls in the telegraph office, two are being trained in the academy, the rest would like to be but have not the means. The Russian woman’s fate is a terrible one, Varvara Petrovna! It’s out of that they’re making the university question

now, and there's even been a meeting of the Imperial Council about it. In this strange Russia of ours one can do anything one likes; and that, again, is why it's only by the kindness and the direct warm sympathy of all the better classes that we can direct this great common cause in the true path. Oh, heavens, have we many noble personalities among us! There are some, of course, but they are scattered far and wide. Let us unite and we shall be stronger. In one word, I shall first have a literary matinee, then a light luncheon, then an interval, and in the evening a ball. We meant to begin the evening by living pictures, but it would involve a great deal of expense, and so, to please the public, there will be one or two quadrilles in masks and fancy dresses, representing well-known literary schools. This humorous idea was suggested by Karmazinov. He has been a great help to me. Do you know he's going to read us the last thing he's written, which no one has seen yet. He is laying down the pen, and will write no more. This last essay is his farewell to the public. It's a charming little thing called 'Merci.' The title is French; he thinks that more amusing and even subtler. I do, too. In fact I advised it. I think Stepan Trofimovitch might read us something too, if it were quite short and . . . not so very learned. I believe Pyotr Stepanovitch and some one else too will read something. Pyotr Stepanovitch shall run round to you and tell you the programme. Better still, let me bring it to you myself."

"Allow me to put my name down in your subscription list too. I'll tell Stepan Trofimovitch and will beg him to consent."

Varvara Petrovna returned home completely fascinated. She was ready to stand up for Yulia Mihailovna through thick and thin, and for some reason was already quite put out with Stepan Trofimovitch, while he, poor man, sat at home, all unconscious.

"I'm in love with her. I can't understand how I could be so mistaken in that woman," she said to Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch and Pyotr Stepanovitch, who dropped in that evening.

"But you must make peace with the old man all the same," Pyotr Stepanovitch submitted. "He's in despair. You've quite sent him to Coventry. Yesterday he met your carriage and bowed, and you turned away. We'll trot him out, you know; I'm reckoning on him for something, and he may still be useful."

"Oh, he'll read something."

“I don’t mean only that. And I was meaning to drop in on him to-day. So shall I tell him?”

“If you like. I don’t know, though, how you’ll arrange it,” she said irresolutely. “I was meaning to have a talk with him myself, and wanted to fix the time and place.”

She frowned.

“Oh, it’s not worth while fixing a time. I’ll simply give hint; the message.”

“Very well, do. Add that I certainly will fix a time to see him though. Be sure to say that too.”

Pyotr Stepanovitch ran off, grinning. He was, in fact, to the best of my recollection, particularly spiteful all this time, and ventured upon extremely impatient sallies with almost every one. Strange to say, every one, somehow, forgave him. It was generally accepted that he was not to be looked at from the ordinary standpoint. I may remark that he took up an extremely resentful attitude about Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch’s duel. It took him unawares. He turned positively green when he was told of it. Perhaps his vanity was wounded: he only heard of it next day when every one knew of it.

“You had no right to fight, you know,” he whispered to Stavrogin, five days later, when he chanced to meet him at the club. It was remarkable that they had not once met during those five days, though Pyotr Stepanovitch had dropped in at Varvara Petrovna’s almost every day.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch looked at him in silence with an absent-minded air, as though not understanding what was the matter, and he went on without stopping. He was crossing the big hall of the club on his way to the refreshment room.

“You’ve been to see Shatov too. . . . You mean to make it known about Marya Timofyevna,” Pyotr Stepanovitch muttered, running after him, and, as though not thinking of what he was doing he clutched at his shoulder.

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch shook his hand off and turned round quickly to him with a menacing scowl. Pyotr Stepanovitch looked at him with a strange, prolonged smile. It all lasted only one moment. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch walked on.

II

He went to the “old man” straight from Varvara Petrovna’s, and he was in such haste simply from spite, that he might revenge himself for an insult of which I had no idea at that time. The fact is that at their last interview on the Thursday of the previous week, Stepan Trofimovitch, though the dispute was one of his own beginning, had ended by turning Pyotr Stepanovitch out with his stick. He concealed the incident from me at the time. But now, as soon as Pyotr Stepanovitch ran in with his everlasting grin, which was so naively condescending, and his unpleasantly inquisitive eyes peering into every corner, Stepan Trofimovitch at once made a signal aside to me, not to leave the room. This was how their real relations came to be exposed before me, for on this occasion I heard their whole conversation.

Stepan Trofimovitch was sitting stretched out on a lounge. He had grown thin and sallow since that Thursday. Pyotr Stepanovitch seated himself beside him with a most familiar air, unceremoniously tucking his legs up under him, and taking up more room on the lounge than deference to his father should have allowed. Stepan Trofimovitch moved aside, in silence, and with dignity.

On the table lay an open book. It was the novel, “What’s to be done?” Alas, I must confess one strange weakness in my friend; the fantasy that he ought to come forth from his solitude and fight a last battle was getting more and more hold upon his deluded imagination. I guessed that he had got the novel and was *studying* it solely in order that when the inevitable conflict with the “shriekers” came about he might know their methods and arguments beforehand, from their very “catechism,” and in that way be prepared to confute them all triumphantly, *before her eyes.* Oh, how that book tortured him! He sometimes flung it aside in despair, and leaping up, paced about the room almost in a frenzy.

“I agree that the author’s fundamental idea is a true one,” he said to me feverishly, “but that only makes it more awful. It’s just our idea, exactly ours; we first sowed the seed, nurtured it, prepared the way, and, indeed, what could they say new, after us? But, heavens! How it’s all expressed, distorted, mutilated!” he exclaimed, tapping the book with his fingers. “Were these the conclusions we were striving for. Who can understand the original idea in this?”

“Improving your mind?” sniggered Pyotr Stepanovitch, taking the book from the table and reading the title. “It’s high time. I’ll bring you better, if you like.”

Stepan Trofimovitch again preserved a dignified silence. I was sitting on a sofa in the corner.

Pyotr Stepanovitch quickly explained the reason of his coming. Of course, Stepan Trofimovitch was absolutely staggered, and he listened in alarm, which was mixed with extreme indignation.

“And that Yulia Mihailovna counts on my coming to read for her!”

“Well, they’re by no means in such need of you. On the contrary, it’s by way of an attention to you, so as to make up to Varvara Petrovna. But, of course, you won’t dare to refuse, and I expect you want to yourself,” he added with a grin. “You old fogies are all so devilishly ambitious. But, I say though, you must look out that it’s not too boring. What have you got? Spanish history, or what is it? You’d better let me look at it three days beforehand, or else you’ll put us to sleep perhaps.”

The hurried and too barefaced coarseness of these thrusts was obviously premeditated. He affected to behave as though it were impossible to talk to Stepan Trofimovitch in different and more delicate language. Stepan Trofimovitch resolutely persisted in ignoring his insults, but what his son told him made a more and more overwhelming impression upon him.

“And she, she *herself* sent me this message through *you?* “ he asked, turning pale.

“Well, you see, she means to fix a time and place for a mutual explanation, the relics of your sentimentalising. You’ve been coquetting with her for twenty years and have trained her to the most ridiculous habits. But don’t trouble yourself, it’s quite different now. She keeps saying herself that she’s only beginning now to ‘have her eyes opened.’ I told her in so many words that all this friendship of yours is nothing but a mutual pouring forth of sloppiness. She told me lots, my boy. Foo! what a flunkey’s place you’ve been filling all this time. I positively blushed for you.”

“I filling a flunkey’s place?” cried Stepan Trofimovitch, unable to restrain himself.

“Worse, you’ve been a parasite, that is, a voluntary flunkey too lazy to work, while you’ve an appetite for money. She, too, understands all that now. It’s awful the things she’s been telling me about you, anyway. I did laugh, my boy, over your letters to her; shameful and disgusting. But you’re all so depraved, so depraved! There’s always something depraving in charity — you’re a good example of it!”

“She showed you my letters!”

“All; though, of course, one couldn’t read them all. Foo, what a lot of paper you’ve covered! I believe there are more than two thousand letters there. And do you know, old chap, I believe there was one moment when she’d have been ready to marry you. You let slip your chance in the silliest way. Of course, I’m speaking from your point of view, though, anyway, it would have been better than now when you’ve almost been married to ‘cover another man’s sins,’ like a buffoon, for a jest, for money.”

“For money! She, she says it was for money!” Stepan Trofimovitch wailed in anguish.

“What else, then? But, of course, I stood up for you. That’s your only line of defence, you know. She sees for herself that you needed money like every one else, and that from that point of view maybe you were right. I proved to her as clear as twice two makes four that it was a mutual bargain. She was a capitalist and you were a sentimental buffoon in her service. She’s not angry about the money, though you have milked her like a goat. She’s only in a rage at having believed in you for twenty years, at your having so taken her in over these noble sentiments, and made her tell lies for so long. She never will admit that she told lies of herself, but you’ll catch it the more for that. I can’t make out how it was you didn’t see that you’d have to have a day of reckoning. For after all you had some sense. I advised her yesterday to put you in an almshouse, a genteel one, don’t disturb yourself; there’ll be nothing humiliating; I believe that’s what she’ll do. Do you remember your last letter to me, three weeks ago?”

“Can you have shown her that?” cried Stepan Trofimovitch, leaping up in horror.

“Rather! First thing. The one in which you told me she was exploiting you, envious of your talent; oh, yes, and that about ‘other men’s sins.’ You have got a conceit though, my boy! How I did laugh. As a rule your letters are very tedious.

You write a horrible style. I often don’t read them at all, and I’ve one lying about to this day, unopened. I’ll send it to you to-morrow. But that one, that last letter of yours was the tiptop of perfection! How I did laugh! Oh, how I laughed!”

“Monster, monster!” wailed Stepan Trofimovitch.

“Foo, damn it all, there’s no talking to you. I say, you’re getting huffy again as you were last Thursday.”

Stepan Trofimovitch drew himself up, menacingly.

“How dare you speak to me in such language?”

“What language? It’s simple and clear.”

“Tell me, you monster, are you my son or not?”

“You know that best. To be sure all fathers are disposed to be blind in such cases.”

“Silence! Silence!” cried Stepan Trofimovitch, shaking all over.

“You see you’re screaming and swearing at me as you did last Thursday. You tried to lift your stick against me, but you know, I found that document. I was rummaging all the evening in my trunk from curiosity. It’s true there’s nothing definite, you can take that comfort. It’s only a letter of my mother’s to that Pole. But to judge from her character . . .”

“Another word and I’ll box your ears.”

“What a set of people!” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, suddenly addressing himself to me. “You see, this is how we’ve been ever since last Thursday. I’m glad you’re here this time, anyway, and can judge between us. To begin with, a fact: he reproaches me for speaking like this of my mother, but didn’t he egg me on to it? In Petersburg before I left the High School, didn’t he wake me twice in the night, to embrace me, and cry like a woman, and what do you suppose he talked to me about at night I Why, the same modest anecdotes about my mother! It was from him I first heard them.”

“Oh, I meant that in a higher sense! Oh, you didn’t understand me! You understood nothing, nothing.”

“But, anyway, it was meaner in you than in me, meaner, acknowledge that. You see, it’s nothing to me if you like. I’m speaking from your point of view. Don’t worry about my point of view. I don’t blame my mother; if it’s you, then it’s you, if it’s a Pole, then it’s a Pole, it’s all the same to me. I’m not to blame because you and she managed so stupidly in Berlin. As though you could have managed things better. Aren’t you an .absurd set, after that? And does it matter to you whether I’m your son or not? Listen,” he went on, turning to me again, “he’s never spent a penny on me all his life; till I was sixteen he didn’t know me at all; afterwards he robbed me here, and now he cries out that his heart has been aching over me all his life, and carries on before me like an actor. I’m not Varvara Petrovna, mind you.”

He got up and took his hat.

“I curse you henceforth!”

Stepan Trofimovitch, as pale as death, stretched out his hand above him.

“Ach, what folly a man will descend to!” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, actually surprised. “Well, good-bye, old fellow, I shall never come and see you again. Send me the article beforehand, don’t forget, and try and let it be free from nonsense. Facts, facts, facts. And above all, let it be short. Good-bye.”

III

Outside influences, too, had come into play in the matter, however. Pyotr Stepanovitch certainly had some designs on his parent. In my opinion he calculated upon reducing the old man to despair, and so to driving him to some open scandal of a certain sort. This was to serve some remote and quite other object of his own, of which I shall speak hereafter. All sorts of plans and calculations of this kind were swarming in masses in his mind at that time, and almost all, of course, of a fantastic character. He had designs on another victim beside Stepan Trofimovitch. In fact, as appeared afterwards, his victims were not few in number, but this one he reckoned upon particularly, and it was Mr. von Lembke himself.

Andrey Antonovitch von Lembke belonged to that race, so favoured by nature, which is reckoned by hundreds of thousands at the Russian census, and is perhaps unconscious that it forms throughout its whole mass a strictly organised union. And this union, of course, is not planned and premeditated, but exists spontaneously in the whole race, without words or agreements as a moral obligation consisting in mutual support given by all members of the race to one another, at all times and places, and ‘Under all circumstances. Andrey Antonovitch had the honour of being educated in one of those more exalted Russian educational institutions which are filled with the youth from families well provided with wealth or connections. Almost immediately on finishing their studies the pupils were appointed to rather important posts in one of the government departments. Andrey Antonovitch had one uncle a colonel of engineers, and another a baker. But he managed to get into this aristocratic school, and met many of his fellow-countrymen in a similar position. He was a good-humoured companion, was rather stupid at his studies, but always popular. And when many of his companions in the upper forms — chiefly Russians — had already learnt to discuss the loftiest modern questions, and looked as though they were only waiting to leave school to settle the affairs of the universe, Andrey

Antonovitch was still absorbed in the most innocent schoolboy interests. He amused them all, it is true, by his pranks, which were of a very simple character, at the most a little coarse, but he made it his object to be funny. At one time he would blow his nose in a wonderful way when the professor addressed a question to him, thereby making his schoolfellows and the professor laugh. Another time, in the dormitory, he would act some indecent living picture, to the general applause, or he would play the overture to “Fra Diavolo” with his nose rather skilfully. He was distinguished, too, by intentional untidiness, thinking this, for some reason, witty. In his very last year at school he began writing Russian poetry.

Of his native language he had only an ungrammatical knowledge, like many of his race in Russia. This turn for versifying drew him to a gloomy and depressed schoolfellow, the son of a poor Russian general, who was considered in the school to be a great future light in literature. The latter patronised him. But it happened that three years after leaving school this melancholy schoolfellow, who had flung up his official career for the sake of Russian literature, and was consequently going about in torn boots, with his teeth chattering with cold, wearing a light summer overcoat in the late autumn, met, one day on the Anitchin bridge, his former protege, “Lembka,” as he always used to be called at school. And, what do you suppose? He did not at first recognise him, and stood still in surprise. Before him stood an irreproachably dressed young man with wonderfully well-kept whiskers of a reddish hue, with pince-nez, with patent-leather boots, and the freshest of gloves, in a full overcoat from Sharmer’s, and with a portfolio under his arm. Lembke was cordial to his old schoolfellow, gave him his address, and begged him to come and see him some evening. It appeared, too, that he was by now not “Lembka” but “Von Lembke.” The schoolfellow came to see him, however, simply from malice perhaps. On the staircase, which was covered with red felt and was rather ugly and by no means smart, he was met and questioned by the house-porter. A bell rang loudly upstairs. But instead of the wealth which the visitor expected, he found Lembke in a very little side-room, which had a dark and dilapidated appearance, partitioned into two by a large dark green curtain, and furnished with very old though comfortable furniture, with dark green blinds on high narrow windows. Von Lembke lodged in the house of a very distant relation, a general who was his patron. He met his visitor cordially, was serious and exquisitely polite. They talked of literature, too, but kept within

the bounds of decorum. A manservant in a white tie brought them some weak tea and little dry, round biscuits. The schoolfellow, from spite, asked for some seltzer water. It was given him, but after some delays, and Lembke was somewhat embarrassed at having to summon the footman a second time and give him orders. But of himself he asked his visitor whether he would like some supper, and was obviously relieved when he refused and went away. In short, Lembke was making his career, and was living in dependence on his fellow-countryman, the influential general.

He was at that time sighing for the general's fifth daughter, and it seemed to him that his feeling was reciprocated. But Amalia was none the less married in due time to an elderly factory-owner, a German, and an old comrade of the general's. Andrey Antonovitch did not shed many tears, but made a paper theatre. The curtain drew up, the actors came in, and gesticulated with their arms. There were spectators in the boxes, the orchestra moved their bows across their fiddles by machinery, the conductor waved his baton, and in the stalls officers and dandies clapped their hands. It was all made of cardboard, it was all thought out and executed by Lembke himself. He spent six months over this theatre. The general arranged a friendly party on purpose. The theatre was exhibited, all the general's five daughters, including the newly married Amalia with her factory-owner, numerous fraus and frauleins with their men folk, attentively examined and admired the theatre, after which they danced. Lembke was much gratified and was quickly consoled.

The years passed by and his career was secured. He always obtained good posts and always under chiefs of his own race; and he worked his way up at last to a very fine position for a man of his age. He had, for a long time, been wishing to marry and looking about him carefully. Without the knowledge of his superiors he had sent a novel to the editor of a magazine, but it had not been accepted. On the other hand, he cut out a complete toy railway, and again his creation was most successful. Passengers came on to the platform with bags and portmanteaux, with dogs and children, and got into the carriages. The guards and porters moved away, the bell was rung, the signal was given, and the train started off. He was a whole year busy over this clever contrivance. But he had to get married all the same. The circle of his acquaintance was fairly wide, chiefly in the world of his compatriots, but his duties brought him into Russian spheres also, of course. Finally, when he was in his thirty-ninth year, he came in for a legacy. His

uncle the baker died, and left him thirteen thousand roubles in his will. The one thing needful was a suitable post. In spite of the rather elevated style of his surroundings in the service, Mr. von Lembke was a very modest man. He would have been perfectly satisfied with some independent little government post, with the right to as much government timber as he liked, or something snug of that sort, and he would have been content all his life long. But now, instead of the Minna or Ernestine he had expected, Yulia Mihailovna suddenly appeared on the scene. His career was instantly raised to a more elevated plane. The modest and precise man felt that he too was capable of ambition.

Yulia Mihailovna had a fortune of two hundred serfs, to reckon in the old style, and she had besides powerful friends. On the other hand Lembke was handsome, and she was already over forty. It is remarkable that he fell genuinely in love with her by degrees as he became more used to being betrothed to her. On the morning of his wedding day he sent her a poem. She liked all this very much, even the poem; it’s no joke to be forty. He was very quickly raised to a certain grade and received a certain order of distinction, and then was appointed governor of our province.

Before coming to us Yulia Mihailovna worked hard at moulding her husband. In her opinion he was not without abilities, he knew how to make an entrance and to appear to advantage, he understood how to listen and be silent with profundity, had acquired a quite distinguished deportment, could make a speech, indeed had even some odds and ends of thought, and had caught the necessary gloss of modern liberalism. What worried her, however, was that he was not very open to new ideas, and after the long, everlasting plodding for a career, was unmistakably beginning to feel the need of repose. She tried to infect him with her own ambition, and he suddenly began making a toy church: the pastor came out to preach the sermon, the congregation listened with their hands before them, one lady was drying her tears with her handkerchief, one old gentleman was blowing his nose; finally the organ pealed forth. It had been ordered from Switzerland, and made expressly in spite of all expense. Yulia Mihailovna, in positive alarm, carried off the whole structure as soon as she knew about it, and locked it up in a box in her own room. To make up for it she allowed him to write a novel on condition of its being kept secret. From that time she began to reckon only upon herself. Unhappily there was a good deal of shallowness and lack of judgment in her attitude. Destiny had kept her too

long an old maid. Now one idea after another fluttered through her ambitious and rather over-excited brain. She cherished designs, she positively desired to rule the province, dreamed of becoming at once the centre of a circle, adopted political sympathies. Von Lembke was actually a little alarmed, though, with his official tact, he quickly divined that he had no need at all to be uneasy about the government of the province itself. The first two or three months passed indeed very satisfactorily. But now Pyotr Stepanovitch had turned up, and something queer began to happen.

The fact was that young Verhovensky, from the first step, had displayed a flagrant lack of respect for Andrey Antonovitch, and had assumed a strange right to dictate to him; while Yulia Mihailovna, who had always till then been so jealous of her husband's dignity, absolutely refused to notice it; or, at any rate, attached no consequence to it. The young man became a favourite, ate, drank, and almost slept in the house. Von Lembke tried to defend himself, called him "young man" before other people, and slapped him patronisingly on the shoulder, but made no impression. Pyotr Stepanovitch always seemed to be laughing in his face even when he appeared on the surface to be talking seriously to him, and he would say the most startling things to him before company. Returning home one day he found the young man had installed himself in his study and was asleep on the sofa there, uninvited. He explained that he had come in, and finding no one at home had "had a good sleep."

Von Lembke was offended and again complained to his wife. Laughing at his irritability she observed tartly that he evidently did not know how to keep up his own dignity; and that with her, anyway, "the boy" had never permitted himself any undue familiarity, "he was naive and fresh indeed, though not regardful of the conventions of society." Von Lembke sulked. This time she made peace between them. Pyotr Stepanovitch did not go so far as to apologise, but got out of it with a coarse jest, which might at another time have been taken for a fresh offence, but was accepted on this occasion as a token of repentance. The weak spot in Andrey Antonovitch's position was that he had blundered in the first instance by divulging the secret of his novel to him. Imagining him to be an ardent young man of poetic feeling and having long dreamed of securing a listener, he had, during the early days of their acquaintance, on one occasion read aloud two chapters to him. The young man had listened without disguising his boredom, had rudely yawned, had vouchsafed no word of praise; but on

leaving had asked for the manuscript that he might form an opinion of it at his leisure, and Andrey Antonovitch had given it him. He had not returned the manuscript since, though he dropped in every day, and had turned off all inquiries with a laugh. Afterwards he declared that he had lost it in the street. At the time Yulia Mihailovna was terribly angry with her husband when she heard of it.

“Perhaps you told him about the church too?” she burst out almost in dismay.

Von Lembke unmistakably began to brood, and brooding was bad for him, and had been forbidden by the doctors. Apart from the fact that there were signs of trouble in the province, of which we will speak later, he had private reasons for brooding, his heart was wounded, not merely his official dignity. When Andrey Antonovitch had entered upon married life, he had never conceived the possibility of conjugal strife, or dissension in the future. It was inconsistent with the dreams he had cherished all his life of his Minna or Ernestine. He felt that he was unequal to enduring domestic storms. Yulia Mihailovna had an open explanation with him at last.

“You can’t be angry at this,” she said, “if only because you’ve still as much sense as he has, and are immeasurably higher in the social scale. The boy still preserves many traces of his old free-thinking habits; I believe it’s simply mischief; but one can do nothing suddenly, in a hurry; you must do things by degrees. We must make much of our young people; I treat them with affection and hold them back from the brink.”

“But he says such dreadful things,” Von Lembke objected. “I can’t behave tolerantly when he maintains in my presence and before other people that the government purposely drenches the people with vodka in order to brutalise them, and so keep them from revolution. Fancy my position when I’m forced to listen to that before every one.”

As he said this, Von Lembke recalled a conversation he had recently had with Pyotr Stepanovitch. With the innocent object of displaying his Liberal tendencies he had shown him his own private collection of every possible kind of manifesto, Russian and foreign, which he had carefully collected since the year 1859, not simply from a love of collecting but from a laudable interest in them. Pyotr Stepanovitch, seeing his object, expressed the opinion that there was more sense in one line of some manifestoes than in a whole government department, “not even excluding yours, maybe.”

Lembke winced.

“But this is premature among us, premature,” he pronounced almost imploringly, pointing to the manifestoes.

“No, it’s not premature; you see you’re afraid, so it’s not premature.”

“But here, for instance, is an incitement to destroy churches.”

“And why not? You’re a sensible man, and of course you don’t believe in it yourself, but you know perfectly well that you need religion to brutalise the people. Truth is honester than falsehood. . . .”

“I agree, I agree, I quite agree with you, but it is premature, premature in this country . . ,” said Von Lembke, frowning.

“And how can you be an official of the government after that, when you agree to demolishing churches, and marching on Petersburg armed with staves, and make it all simply a question of date?”

Lembke was greatly put out at being so crudely caught.

“It’s not so, not so at all,” he cried, carried away and more and more mortified in his amour-propre. “You’re young, and know nothing of our aims, and that’s why you’re mistaken. You see, my dear Pyotr Stepanovitch, you call us officials of the government, don’t you? Independent officials, don’t you? But let me ask you, how are we acting? Ours is the responsibility, but in the long run we serve the cause of progress just as you do. We only hold together what you are unsettling, and what, but for us, would go to pieces in all directions. We are not your enemies, not a bit of it. We say to you, go forward, progress, you may even unsettle things, that is, things that are antiquated and in need of reform. But we will keep you, when need be, within necessary limits, and so save you from yourselves, for without us you would set Russia tottering, robbing her of all external decency, while our task is to preserve external decency. Understand that we are mutually essential to one another. In England the Whigs and Tories are in the same way mutually essential to one another. Well, you’re Whigs and we’re Tories. That’s how I look at it.”

Andrey Antonovitch rose to positive eloquence. He had been fond of talking in a Liberal and intellectual style even in Petersburg, and the great thing here was that there was no one to play the spy on him.

Pyotr Stepanovitch was silent, and maintained an unusually grave air. This excited the orator more than ever.

“Do you know that I, the ‘person responsible for the province,’” he went on, walking about the study, “do you know I have so many duties I can’t perform one of them, and, on the other hand, I can say just as truly that

there’s nothing for me to do here. The whole secret of it is, that everything depends upon the views of the government. Suppose the government were ever to found a republic, from policy, or to pacify public excitement, and at the same time to increase the power of the governors, then we governors would swallow up the republic; and not the republic only. Anything you like we’ll swallow up. I, at least, feel that I am ready. In one word, if the government dictates to me by telegram, *activite devorante*, I’ll supply *activite devorante.* I’ve told them here straight in their faces: ‘Dear sirs, to maintain the equilibrium and to develop all the provincial institutions one thing is essential; the increase of the power of the governor.’ You see it’s necessary that all these institutions, the zemstvos, the law-courts, should have a two-fold existence, that is, on the one hand, it’s necessary they should exist (I agree that it is necessary), on the other hand, it’s necessary that they shouldn’t. It’s all according to the views of the government. If the mood takes them so that institutions seem suddenly necessary, I shall have them at once in readiness. The necessity passes and no one will find them under my rule. That’s what I understand by *activite devorante,* and you can’t have it without an increase of the governor’s power. We’re talking *tete-a-tete.* You know I’ve already laid before the government in Petersburg the necessity of a special sentinel before the governor’s house. I’m awaiting an answer.”

“You ought to have two,” Pyotr Stepanovitch commented.

“Why two?” said Von Lembke, stopping short before him.

“One’s not enough to create respect for you. You certainly ought to have two.”

Andrey Antonovitch made a wry face.

“You . . . there’s no limit to the liberties you take, Pyotr Stepanovitch. You take advantage of my good-nature, you say cutting things, and play the part of a *bourru bienfaisant. . . .*”

“Well, that’s as you please,” muttered Pyotr Stepanovitch; “anyway you pave the way for us and prepare for our success.”

“Now, who are ‘we,’ and what success?” said Von Lembke, staring at him in surprise. But he got no answer.

Yulia Mihailovna, receiving a report of the conversation, was greatly displeased.

“But I can’t exercise my official authority upon your favourite,” Andrey Antonovitch protested in self-defence, “especially when we’re *tete-a-tete. . .*

. I may say too much . . . in the goodness of my heart.”

“From too much goodness of heart. I didn’t know you’d got a collection of manifestoes. Be so good as to show them to me.”

“But . . . he asked to have them for one day.”

“And you’ve let him have them, again!” cried Yulia Mihailovna getting angry. “How tactless!”

“I’ll send some one to him at once to get them.”

“He won’t give them up.”

“I’ll insist on it,” cried Von Lembke, boiling over, and he jumped up from his seat. “Who’s he that we should be so afraid of him, and who am I that I shouldn’t dare to do any thing?”

“Sit down and calm yourself,” said Yulia Mihailovna, checking him. “I will answer your first question. He came to me with the highest recommendations. He’s talented, and sometimes says extremely clever things. Karmazinov tells me that he has connections almost everywhere, and extraordinary influence over the younger generation in Petersburg and Moscow. And if through him I can attract them all and group them round myself, I shall be saving them from perdition by guiding them into a new outlet for their ambitions. He’s devoted to me with his whole heart and is guided by me in everything.”

“But while they’re being petted . . . the devil knows what they may not do. Of course, it’s an idea . . ,” said Von Lembke, vaguely defending himself, “but . . . but here I’ve heard that manifestoes of some sort have been found in X district.”

“But there was a rumour of that in the summer — manifestoes, false bank-notes, and all the rest of it, but they haven’t found one of them so far. Who told you?”

“*I* heard it from Von Blum.”

“Ah, don’t talk to me of your Blum. Don’t ever dare mention him again!”

Yulia Mihailovna flew into a rage, and for a moment could not speak. Von Blum was a clerk in the governor’s office whom she particularly hated. Of that later.

“Please don’t worry yourself about Verhovensky,” she said in conclusion. “If he had taken part in any mischief he wouldn’t talk as he does to you, and every one else here. Talkers are not dangerous, and I will

even go so far as to say that if anything were to happen I should be the first to hear of it through him. He's quite fanatically devoted to me."

I will observe, anticipating events that, had it not been for Tulia Mihailovna's obstinacy and self-conceit, probably nothing of all the mischief these wretched people succeeded in bringing about amongst us would have happened. She was responsible for a great deal

CHAPTER V.

ON THE EVE OP THE FETE

the date of the fete which Yulia Mihailovna was getting up for the benefit of the governesses of our province had been several times fixed and put off. She had invariably bustling round her Pyotr Stepanovitch and a little clerk, Lyamshin, who used at one time to visit Stepan Trofimovitch, and had suddenly found favour in the governor's house for the way he played the piano and now was of use running errands. Liputin was there a good deal too, and Yulia Mihailovna destined him to be the editor of a new independent provincial paper. There were also several ladies, married and single, and lastly, even Karmazinov who, though he could not be said to bustle, announced aloud with a complacent air that he would agreeably astonish every one when the literary quadrille began. An extraordinary multitude of donors and subscribers had turned up, all the select society of the town; but even the unselect were admitted, if only they produced the cash. Yulia Mihailovna observed that sometimes it was a positive duty to allow the mixing of classes, "for otherwise who is to enlighten them?"

A private drawing-room committee was formed, at which it was decided that the fete was to be of a democratic character. The enormous list of subscriptions tempted them to lavish expenditure. They wanted to do something on a marvellous scale — that's why it was put off. They were still undecided where the ball was to take place, whether in the immense house belonging to the marshal's wife, which she was willing to give up to them for the day, or at Varvara Petrovna's mansion at Skvoreshniki. It was rather a distance to Skvoreshniki, but many of the committee were of opinion that it would be "freer" there. Varvara Petrovna would dearly have liked it to have been in her house. It's difficult to understand why this proud woman seemed almost making up to Yulia Mihailovna. Probably what pleased her was that the latter in her turn seemed almost fawning upon Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch and was more gracious to him than to anyone. I repeat again that Pyotr Stepanovitch was always, in continual whispers, strengthening in the governor's household an idea he had insinuated there already, that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was a man who had very mysterious

connections with very mysterious circles, and that he had certainly come here with some commission from them.

People here seemed in a strange state of mind at the time. Among the ladies especially a sort of frivolity was conspicuous, and it could not be said to be a gradual growth. Certain very free-and-easy notions seemed to be in the air. There was a sort of dissipated gaiety and levity, and I can't say it was always quite pleasant. A lax way of thinking was the fashion. Afterwards when it was all over, people blamed Yulia Mihailovna, her circle, her attitude. But it can hardly have been altogether due to Yulia Mihailovna. On the contrary; at first many people vied with one another in praising the new governor's wife for her success in bringing local society together, and for making things more lively. Several scandalous incidents took place, for which Yulia Mihailovna was in no way responsible, but at the time people were amused and did nothing but laugh, and there was no one to check them. A rather large group of people, it is true, held themselves aloof, and had views of their own on the course of events. But even these made no complaint at the time; they smiled, in fact.

I remember that a fairly large circle came into existence, as it were, spontaneously, the centre of which perhaps was really to be found in Yulia Mihailovna's drawing-room. In this intimate circle which surrounded her, among the younger members of it, of course, it was considered admissible to play all sorts of pranks, sometimes rather free-and-easy ones, and, in fact, such conduct became a principle among them. In this circle there were even some very charming ladies. The young people arranged picnics, and even parties, and sometimes went about the town in a regular cavalcade, in carriages and on horseback. They sought out adventures, even got them up themselves, simply for the sake of having an amusing story to tell. They treated our town as though it were a sort of Glupov. People called them the jeerers or sneerers, because they did not stick at anything. It happened, for instance, that the wife of a local lieutenant, a little brunette, very young though she looked worn out from her husband's ill-treatment, at an evening party thoughtlessly sat down to play whist for high stakes in the fervent hope of winning enough to buy herself a mantle, and instead of winning, lost fifteen roubles. Being afraid of her husband, and having no means of paying, she plucked up the courage of former days and ventured on the sly to ask for a loan, on the spot, at the party, from the son of our mayor, a very nasty youth, precociously vicious. The latter not only refused it, but went

laughing aloud to tell her husband. The lieutenant, who certainly was poor, with nothing but his salary, took his wife home and avenged himself upon her to his heart's content in spite of her shrieks, wails, and entreaties on her knees for forgiveness. This revolting story excited nothing but mirth all over the town, and though the poor wife did not belong to Yulia Mihailovna's circle, one of the ladies of the "cavalcade," an eccentric and adventurous character who happened to know her, drove round, and simply carried her off to her own house. Here she was at once taken up by our madcaps, made much of, loaded with presents, and kept for four days without being sent back to her husband. She stayed at the adventurous lady's all day long, drove about with her and all the sportive company in expeditions about the town, and took part in dances and merry-making. They kept egging her on to haul her husband before the court and to make a scandal. They declared that they would all support her and would come and bear witness. The husband kept quiet, not daring to oppose them. The poor thing realised at last that she had got into a hopeless position and, more dead than alive with fright, on the fourth day she ran off in the dusk from her protectors to her lieutenant. It's not definitely known what took place between husband and wife, but two shutters of the low-pitched little house in which the lieutenant lodged were not opened for a fortnight. Yulia Mihailovna was angry with the mischief-makers when she heard about it all, and was greatly displeased with the conduct of the adventurous lady, though the latter had presented the lieutenant's wife to her on the day she carried her off. However, this was soon forgotten.

Another time a petty clerk, a respectable head of a family, married his daughter, a beautiful girl of seventeen, known to every one in the town, to another petty clerk, a young man who came from a different district. But suddenly it was learned that the young husband had treated the beauty very roughly on the wedding night, chastising her for what he regarded as a stain on his honour. Lyamshin, who was almost a witness of the affair, because he got drunk at the wedding and so stayed the night, as soon as day dawned, ran round with the diverting intelligence.

Instantly a party of a dozen was made up, all of them on horseback, some on hired Cossack horses, Pyotr Stepanovitch, for instance, and Liputin, who, in spite of his grey hairs, took part in almost every scandalous adventure of our reckless youngsters. When the young couple appeared in the street in a droshky with a pair of horses to make the calls which are

obligatory in our town on the day after a wedding, in spite of anything that may happen, the whole cavalcade, with merry laughter, surrounded the droshky and followed them about the town all the morning. They did not, it's true, go into the house, but waited for them outside, on horseback. They refrained from marked insult to the bride or bridegroom, but still they caused a scandal. The whole town began talking of it. Every one laughed, of course. But at this Von Lembke was angry, and again had a lively scene with Yulia Mihailovna. She, too, was extremely angry, and formed the intention of turning the scapegraces out of her house. But next day she forgave them all after persuasions from Pyotr Stepanovitch and some words from Karmazinov, who considered the affair rather amusing.

"It's in harmony with the traditions of the place," he said. "Anyway it's characteristic and . . . bold; and look, every one's laughing, you're the only person indignant."

But there were pranks of a certain character that were absolutely past endurance.

A respectable woman of the artisan class, who went about selling gospels, came into the town. People talked about her, because some interesting references to these gospel women had just appeared in the Petersburg Capers. Again the same buffoon, Lyamshin, with the help of a divinity student, who was taking a holiday while waiting for a post in the school, succeeded, on the pretence of buying books from the gospel woman, in thrusting into her bag a whole bundle of indecent and obscene photographs from abroad, sacrificed expressly for the purpose, as we learned afterwards, by a highly respectable old gentleman (I will omit his name) with an order on his breast, who, to use his own words, loved "a healthy laugh and a merry jest." When the poor woman went to take out the holy books in the bazaar, the photographs were scattered about the place. There were roars of laughter and murmurs of indignation. A crowd collected, began abusing her, and would have come to blows if the police had not arrived in the nick of time. The gospel woman was taken to the lock-up, and only in the evening, thanks to the efforts of Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who had learned with indignation the secret details of this loathsome affair, she was released and escorted out of the town. At this point Yulia Mihailovna would certainly have forbidden Lyamshin her house, but that very evening the whole circle brought him to her with the intelligence that he had just composed a new piece for the piano, and

persuaded her at least to hear it. The piece turned out to be really amusing, and bore the comic title of “The Franco-Prussian War.” It began with the menacing strains of the “Marseillaise “:

“*Qu’un sang impur abreuve nos sillons.”*

There is heard the pompous challenge, the intoxication of future victories. But suddenly mingling with the masterly variations on the national hymn, somewhere from some corner quite close, on one side come the vulgar strains of “Mein lieber Augustin.” The “Marseillaise” goes on unconscious of them. The “Marseillaise” is at the climax of its intoxication with its own grandeur; but Augustin gains strength; Augustin grows more and more insolent, and suddenly the melody of Augustin begins to blend with the melody of the “Marseillaise.” The latter begins, as it were, to get angry; becoming aware of Augustin at last she tries to fling him off, to brush him aside like a tiresome insignificant fly. But “Mein lieber Augustin” holds his ground firmly, he is cheerful and self-confident, he is gleeful and impudent, and the “Marseillaise” seems suddenly to become terribly” stupid. She can no longer conceal her anger and mortification; it is a wail of indignation, tears, and curses, with hands outstretched to Providence.

“*Pas un police de noire, terrain; pas une de nos forteresses.”*

But she is forced to sing in time with “Mein lieber Augustin.” Her melody passes in a sort of foolish way into Augustin; she yields and dies away. And only by snatches there is heard again:

“*Qu’un sang impur ...*”

But at once it passes very offensively into the vulgar waltz. She submits altogether. It is Jules Favre sobbing on Bismarck’s bosom and surrendering every thing. . . . But at this point Augustin too grows fierce; hoarse sounds are heard; there is a suggestion of countless gallons of beer, of a frenzy of self-glorification, demands for millions, for fine cigars, champagne, and hostages. Augustin passes into a wild yell. . . . “The Franco-Prussian War” is over. Our circle applauded, Yulia Mihailovna smiled, and said, “Now, how is one to turn him out?” Peace was made. The rascal really had talent. Stepan Trofimovitch assured me on one occasion that the very highest artistic talents may exist in the most abominable blackguards, and that the one thing does not interfere with the other. There was a rumour afterwards that Lyamshin had stolen this burlesque from a talented and modest young man of his acquaintance, whose name remained unknown. But this is beside

the mark. This worthless fellow who had hung about Stepan Trofimovitch for years, who used at his evening parties, when invited, to mimic Jews of various types, a deaf peasant woman making her confession, or the birth of a child, now at Yulia Mihailovna's caricatured Stepan Trofimovitch himself in a killing way, under the title of "A Liberal of the Forties." Everybody shook with laughter, so that in the end it was quite impossible to turn him out: he had become too necessary a person. Besides he fawned upon Pyotr Stepanovitch in a slavish way, and he, in his turn, had obtained by this time a strange and unaccountable influence over Yulia Mihailovna.

I wouldn't have talked about this scoundrel, and, indeed, he would not be worth dwelling upon, but there was another revolting story, so people declare, in which he had a hand, and this story I cannot omit from my record.

One morning the news of a hideous and revolting sacrilege was all over the town. At the entrance to our immense marketplace there stands the ancient church of Our Lady's Nativity, which was a remarkable antiquity in our ancient town. At the gates of the precincts there is a large ikon of the Mother of God fixed behind a grating in the wall. And behold, one night the ikon had been robbed, the glass of the case was broken, the grating was smashed and several stones and pearls (I don't know whether they were very precious ones) had been removed from the crown and the setting. But what was worse, besides the theft a senseless, scoffing sacrilege had been perpetrated. Behind the broken glass of the ikon they found in the morning, so it was said, a live mouse. Now, four months since, it has been established beyond doubt that the crime was committed by the convict Fedka, but for some reason it is added that Lyamshin took part in it. At the time no one spoke of Lyamshin or had any suspicion of him. But now every one says it was he who put the mouse there. I remember all our responsible officials were rather staggered. A crowd thronged round the scene of the crime from early morning. There was a crowd continually before it, not a very huge one, but always about a hundred people, some coming and some going. As they approached they crossed themselves and bowed down to the ikon. They began to give offerings, and a church dish made its appearance, and with the dish a monk. But it was only about three o'clock in the afternoon it occurred to the authorities that it was possible to prohibit the crowds standing about, and to command them when they had prayed, bowed down and left their offerings, to pass on. Upon Von Lembke this unfortunate

incident made the gloomiest impression. As I was told, Yulia Mihailovna said afterwards it was from this ill-omened morning that she first noticed in her husband that strange depression which persisted in him until he left our province on account of illness two months ago, and, I believe, haunts him still in Switzerland, where he has gone for a rest after his brief career amongst us.

I remember at one o'clock in the afternoon I crossed the marketplace; the crowd was silent and their faces solemn and gloomy. A merchant, fat and sallow, drove up, got out of his carriage, made a bow to the ground, kissed the ikon, offered a rouble, sighing, got back into his carriage and drove off. Another carriage drove up with two ladies accompanied by two of our scapegraces. The young people (one of whom was not quite young) got out of their carriage too, and squeezed their way up to the ikon, pushing people aside rather carelessly. Neither of the young men took off his hat, and one of them put a pince-nez on his nose. In the crowd there was a murmur, vague but unfriendly. The dandy with the pince-nez took out of his purse, which was stuffed full of bank-notes, a copper farthing and flung it into the dish. Both laughed, and, talking loudly, went back to their carriage. At that moment Lizaveta Nikolaevna galloped up, escorted by Mavriky Nikolaevitch. She jumped off her horse, flung the reins to her companion, who, at her bidding, remained on his horse, and approached the ikon at the very moment when the farthing had been flung down. A flush of indignation suffused her cheeks; she took off her round hat and her gloves, fell straight on her knees before the ikon on the muddy pavement, and reverently bowed down three times to the earth. Then she took out her purse, but as it appeared she had only a few small coins in it she instantly took off her diamond ear-rings and put them in the dish.

"May I? May I? For the adornment of the setting?" she asked the monk.

"It is permitted," replied the latter, "every gift is good." The crowd was silent, expressing neither dissent nor approval.

Liza got on her horse again, in her muddy riding-habit, and galloped away.

II

Two days after the incident I have described I met her in a numerous company, who were driving out on some expedition in three coaches,

surrounded by others on horseback. She beckoned to me, stopped her carriage, and pressingly urged me to join their party. A place was found for me in the carriage, and she laughingly introduced me to her companions, gorgeously attired ladies, and explained to me that they were all going on a very interesting expedition. She was laughing, and seemed somewhat excessively happy. Just lately she had been very lively, even playful, in fact.

The expedition was certainly an eccentric one. They were all going to a house the other side of the river, to the merchant Sevastyanov's. In the lodge of this merchant's house our saint and prophet, Semyon Yakovlevitch, who was famous not only amongst us but in the surrounding provinces and even in Petersburg and Moscow, had been living for the last ten years, in retirement, ease, and Comfort. Every one went to see him, especially visitors to the neighbourhood, extracting from him some crazy utterance, bowing down to him, and leaving an offering. These offerings were sometimes considerable, and if Semyon Yakovlevitch did not himself assign them to some other purpose were piously sent to some church or more often to the monastery of Our Lady. A monk from the monastery was always in waiting upon Semyon Yakovlevitch with this object.

All were in expectation of great amusement. No one of the party had seen Semyon Yakovlevitch before, except Lyamshin, who declared that the saint had given orders that he should be driven out with a broom, and had with his own hand flung two big baked potatoes after him. Among the party I noticed Pyotr Stepanovitch, again riding a hired Cossack horse, on which he sat extremely badly, and Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, also on horseback. The latter did not always hold aloof from social diversions, and on such occasions always wore an air of gaiety, although, as always, he spoke little and seldom. When our party had crossed the bridge and reached the hotel of the town, some one suddenly announced that in one of the rooms of the hotel they had just found a traveller who had shot himself, and were expecting the police. At once the suggestion was made that they should go and look at the suicide. The idea met with approval: our ladies had never seen a suicide. I remember one of them said aloud on the occasion, "Everything's so boring, one can't be squeamish over one's amusements, as long as they're interesting." Only a few of them remained outside. The others went in a body into the dirty corridor, and amongst the others I saw, to my amazement, Lizaveta Nikolaevna. The door of the room was open, and they did not, of course, dare to prevent our going in to look at the

suicide. He was quite a young lad, not more than nineteen. He must have been very good-looking, with thick fair hair, with a regular oval face, and a fine, pure forehead. The body was already stiff, and his white young face looked like marble. On the table lay a note, in his handwriting, to the effect that no one was to blame for his death, that he had killed himself because he had “squandered” four hundred roubles. The word “squandered” was used in the letter; in the four lines of his letter there were three mistakes in spelling, A stout country gentleman, evidently a neighbour, who had been staying in the hotel on some business of his own, was particularly distressed about it. From his words it appeared that the boy had been sent by his family, that is, a widowed mother, sisters, and aunts, from the country to the town in order that, under the supervision of a female relation in the town, he might purchase and take home with him various articles for the trousseau of his eldest sister, who was going to be married. The family had, with sighs of apprehension, entrusted him with the four hundred roubles, the savings of ten years, and had sent him on his way with exhortations, prayers, and signs of the cross. The boy had till then been well-behaved and trustworthy. Arriving three days before at the town, he had not gone to his relations, had put up at the hotel, and gone straight to the club in the hope of finding in some back room a “travelling banker,” or at least some game of cards for money. But that evening there was no “banker” there or gambling going on. Going back to the hotel about midnight he asked for champagne, Havana cigars, and ordered a supper of six or seven dishes. But the champagne made him drunk, and the cigar made him sick, so that he did not touch the food when it was brought to him, and went to bed almost unconscious. Waking next morning as fresh as an apple, he went at once to the gipsies’ camp, which was in a suburb beyond the river, and of which he had heard the day before at the club. He did not reappear at the hotel for two days. At last, at five o’clock in the afternoon of the previous day, he had returned drunk, had at once gone to bed, and had slept till ten o’clock in the evening. On waking up he had asked for a cutlet, a bottle of Chateau d’Yquem, and some grapes, paper, and ink, and his bill. No one noticed anything special about him; he was quiet, gentle, and friendly. He must have shot himself at about midnight, though it was strange that no one had heard the shot, and they only raised the alarm at midday, when, after knocking in vain, they had broken in the door. The bottle of Chateau d’Yquem was half empty, there was half a plateful of grapes left too. The shot had been fired from a little

three-chambered revolver, straight into the heart. Very little blood had flowed. The revolver had dropped from his hand on to the carpet. The boy himself was half lying in a corner of the sofa. Death must have been instantaneous. There was no trace of the anguish of death in the face; the expression was serene, almost happy, as though there were no cares in his life. All our party stared at him with greedy curiosity. In every misfortune of one's neighbour there is always something cheering for an onlooker — whoever he may be. Our ladies gazed in silence, their companions distinguished themselves by their wit and their superb equanimity. One observed that his was the best way out of it, and that the boy could not have hit upon anything more sensible; another observed that he had had a good time if only for a moment. A third suddenly blurted out the inquiry why people had begun hanging and shooting themselves among us of late, as though they had suddenly lost their roots, as though the ground were giving way under every one's feet. People looked coldly at this *raisonneur.* Then Lyamshin, who prided himself on playing the fool, took a bunch of grapes from the plate; another, laughing, followed his example, and a third stretched out his hand for the Chateau d'Yquem. But the head of police arriving checked him, and even ordered that the room should be cleared. As every one had seen all they wanted they went out without disputing, though Lyamshin began pestering the police captain about something. The general merrymaking, laughter, and playful talk were twice as lively on the latter half of the way.

We arrived at Semyon Yakovlevitch's just at one o'clock. The gate of the rather large house stood unfastened, and the approach to the lodge was open. We learnt at once that Semyon Yakovlevitch was dining, but was receiving guests. The whole crowd of us went in. The room in which the saint dined and received visitors had three windows, and was fairly large. It was divided into two equal parts by a wooden lattice-work partition, which ran from wall to wall, and was three or four feet high. Ordinary visitors remained on the outside of this partition, but lucky ones were by the saint's invitation admitted through the partition doors into his half of the room. And if so disposed he made them sit down on the sofa or on his old leather chairs. He himself invariably sat in an old-fashioned shabby Voltaire arm-chair. He was a rather big, bloated-looking, yellow-faced man of five and fifty, with a bald head and scanty flaxen hair. He wore no beard; his right cheek was swollen, and his mouth seemed somehow twisted awry. He had a

large wart on the left side of his nose; narrow eyes, and a calm, stolid, sleepy expression. He was dressed in European style, in a black coat, but had no waistcoat or tie. A rather coarse, but white shirt, peeped out below his coat. There was something the matter with his feet, I believe, and he kept them in slippers. I've heard that he had at one time been a clerk, and received a rank in the service. He had just finished some fish soup, and was beginning his second dish of potatoes in their skins, eaten with salt. He never ate anything else, but he drank a great deal of tea, of which he was very fond. Three servants provided by the merchant were running to and fro about him. One of them was in a swallow-tail, the second looked like a workman, and the third like a verger. There was also a very lively boy of sixteen. Besides the servants there was present, holding a jug, a reverend, grey-headed monk, who was a little too fat. On one of the tables a huge samovar was boiling, and a tray with almost two dozen glasses was standing near it. On another table opposite offerings had been placed: some loaves and also some pounds of sugar, two pounds of tea, a pair of embroidered slippers, a foulard handkerchief, a length of cloth, a piece of linen, and so on. Money offerings almost all went into the monk's jug. The room was full of people, at least a dozen visitors, of whom two were sitting with Semyon Yakovlevitch on the other side of the partition. One was a grey-headed old pilgrim of the peasant class, and the other a little, dried-up monk, who sat demurely, with his eyes cast down. The other visitors were all standing on the near aide of the partition, and were mostly, too, of the peasant class, except one elderly and poverty-stricken lady, one landowner, and a stout merchant, who had come from the district town, a man with a big beard, dressed in the Russian style, though he was known to be worth a hundred thousand.

All were waiting for their chance, not daring to speak of themselves. Four were on their knees, but the one who attracted most attention was the landowner, a stout man of forty-five, kneeling right at the partition, more conspicuous than any one, waiting reverently for a propitious word or look from Semyon Yakovlevitch. He had been there for about an hour already, but the saint still did not notice him.

Our ladies crowded right up to the partition, whispering gaily and laughingly together. They pushed aside or got in front of all the other visitors, even those on their knees, except the landowner, who remained obstinately in his prominent position even holding on to the partition. Merry

and greedily inquisitive eyes were turned upon Semyon Yakovlevitch, as well as lorgnettes, pince-nez, and even opera-glasses. Lyamshin, at any rate, looked through an opera-glass. Semyon Yakovlevitch calmly and lazily scanned all with his little eyes.

“Milovzors! Milovzors!” he deigned to pronounce, in a hoarse bass, and slightly staccato.

All our party laughed: “ What’s the meaning of ‘Milovzors’?” But Semyon Yakovlevitch relapsed into silence, and finished his potatoes. Presently he wiped his lips with his napkin, and they handed him tea.

As a rule, he did not take tea alone, but poured out some for his visitors, but by no means for all, usually pointing himself to those he wished to honour. And his choice always surprised people by its unexpectedness. Passing by the wealthy and the high-placed, he sometimes pitched upon a peasant or some decrepit old woman. Another time he would pass over the beggars to honour some fat wealthy merchant. Tea was served differently, too, to different people, sugar was put into some of the glasses and handed separately with others, while some got it without any sugar at all. This time the favoured one was the monk sitting by him, who had sugar put in; and the old pilgrim, to whom it was given without any sugar. The fat monk with the jug, from the monastery, for some reason had none handed to him at all, though up till then he had had his glass every day.

“Semyon Yakovlevitch, do say something to me. I’ve been longing to make your acquaintance for ever so long,” carolled the gorgeously dressed lady from our carriage, screwing up her eyes and smiling. She was the lady who had observed that one must not be squeamish about one’s amusements, so long as they were interesting. Semyon Yakovlevitch did not even look at her. The kneeling landowner uttered a deep, sonorous sigh, like the sound of a big pair of bellows.

“With sugar in it!” said Semyon Yakovlevitch suddenly, pointing to the wealthy merchant. The latter moved forward and stood beside the kneeling gentleman.

“Some more sugar for him!” ordered Semyon Yakovlevitch, after the glass had already been poured out. They put some more in. “More, more, for him!” More was put in a third time, and again a fourth. The merchant began submissively drinking his syrup.

“Heavens!” whispered the people, crossing themselves. The kneeling gentleman again heaved a deep, sonorous sigh.

“Father! Semyon Yakovlevitch!” The voice of the poor lady rang out all at once plaintively, though so sharply that it was startling. Our party had shoved her back to the wall. “A whole hour, dear father, I’ve been waiting for grace. Speak to me. Consider my case in my helplessness.”

“Ask her,” said Semyon Yakovlevitch to the verger, who went to the partition.

“Have you done what Semyon Yakovlevitch bade you last time?” he asked the widow in a soft and measured voice.

“Done it! Father Semyon Yakovlevitch. How can one do it with them?” wailed the widow. “They’re cannibals; they’re lodging a complaint against me, in the court; they threaten to take it to the senate. That’s how they treat their own mother!”

“Give her!” Semyon Yakovlevitch pointed to a sugar-loaf. The boy skipped up, seized the sugar-loaf and dragged it to the widow.

“Ach, father; great is your merciful kindness. What am I to do with so much?” wailed the widow.

“More, more,” said Semyon Yakovlevitch lavishly.

They dragged her another sugar-loaf. “More, more!” the saint commanded. They took her a third, and finally a fourth. The widow was surrounded with sugar on all sides. The monk from the monastery sighed; all this might have gone to the monastery that day as it had done on former occasions.

“What am I to do with so much,” the widow sighed obsequiously. “It’s enough to make one person sick! ... Is it some sort of a prophecy, father?”

“Be sure it’s by way of a prophecy,” said some one in the crowd.

“Another pound for her, another!” Semyon Yakovlevitch persisted.

There was a whole sugar-loaf still on the table, but the saint ordered a pound to be given, and they gave her a pound.

“Lord have mercy on us!” gasped the people, crossing themselves. “It’s surely a prophecy.”

“Sweeten your heart for the future with mercy and loving kindness, and then come to make complaints against your own children; bone of your bone. That’s what we must take this emblem to mean,” the stout monk from the monastery, who had had no tea given to him, said softly but self-complacently, taking upon himself the role of interpreter in an access of wounded vanity.

“What are you saying, father?” cried the widow, suddenly infuriated. “Why, they dragged me into the fire with a rope round me when the Verhishins’ house was burnt, and they locked up a dead cat in my chest. They are ready to do any villainy. . . .”

“Away with her! Away with her!” Semyon Yakovlevitch said suddenly, waving his hands.

The verger and the boy dashed through the partition. The verger took the widow by the arm, and without resisting she trailed to the door, keeping her eyes fixed on the loaves of sugar that had been bestowed on her, which the boy dragged after her.

“One to be taken away. Take it away,” Semyon Yakovlevitch commanded to the servant like a workman, who remained with him. The latter rushed after the retreating woman, and the three servants returned somewhat later bringing back one loaf of sugar which had been presented to the widow and now taken away from her. She carried off three, however.

“Semyon Yakovlevitch,” said a voice at the door. “I dreamt of a bird, a jackdaw; it flew out of the water and flew into the fire. What does the dream mean?”

“Frost,” Semyon Yakovlevitch pronounced.

“Semyon Yakovlevitch, why don’t you answer me all this time? I’ve been interested in you ever so long,” the lady of our party began again.

“Ask him!” said Semyon Yakovlevitch, not heeding her, but pointing to the kneeling gentleman.

The monk from the monastery to whom the order was given moved sedately to the kneeling figure.

“How have you sinned? And was not some command laid upon you?”

“Not to fight; not to give the rein to my hands,” answered the kneeling gentleman hoarsely.

“Have you obeyed?” asked the monk.

“I cannot obey. My own strength gets the better of me.”

“Away with him, away with him! With a broom, with a broom!” cried Semyon Yakovlevitch, waving his hands. The gentleman rushed out of the room without waiting for this penalty.

“He’s left a gold piece where he knelt,” observed the monk, picking up a half-imperial.

“For him!” said the saint, pointing to the rich merchant. The latter dared not refuse it, and took it.

“Gold to gold,” the monk from the monastery could not refrain from saying.

“And give him some with sugar in it,” said the saint, pointing to Mavriky Nikolaevitch. The servant poured out the tea and took it by mistake to the dandy with the pince-nez.

“The long one, the long one!” Semyon Yakovlevitch corrected him.

Mavriky Nikolaevitch took the glass, made a military half-bow, and began drinking it. I don’t know why, but all our party burst into peals of laughter.

“Mavriky Nikolaevitch,” cried Liza, addressing him suddenly.” That kneeling gentleman has gone away. You kneel down in his place.”

Mavriky Nikolaevitch looked at her in amazement.

“I beg you to. You’ll do me the greatest favour. Listen, Mavriky Nikolaevitch,” she went on, speaking in an emphatic, obstinate, excited, and rapid voice. “You must kneel down; I must see you kneel down. If you won’t, don’t come near me. I insist, I insist!”

I don’t know what she meant by it; but she insisted upon it relentlessly, as though she were in a fit. Mavriky Nikolaevitch, as we shall see later, set down these capricious impulses, which had been particularly frequent of late, to outbreaks of blind hatred for him, not due to spite, for, on the contrary, she esteemed him, loved him, and respected him, and he knew that himself — - but from a peculiar unconscious hatred which at times she could not control.

In silence he gave his cup to an old woman standing behind him, opened the door of the partition, and, without being invited, stepped into Semyon Yakovlevitch’s private apartment, and knelt down in the middle of the room in sight of all. I imagine that he was deeply shocked in his candid and delicate heart by Liza’s coarse and mocking freak before the whole company. Perhaps he imagined that she would feel ashamed of herself, seeing his humiliation, on which she had so insisted. Of course no one but he would have dreamt of bringing a woman to reason by so naive and risky a proceeding. He remained kneeling with his imperturbable gravity — long, tall, awkward, and ridiculous. But our party did not laugh. The unexpectedness of the action produced a painful shock. Every one looked at Liza.

“Anoint, anoint!” muttered Semyon Yakovlevitch.

Liza suddenly turned white, cried out, and rushed through the partition. Then a rapid and hysterical scene followed. She began pulling Mavriky Nikolaevitch up with all her might, tugging at his elbows with both hands.

“Get up! Get up!” she screamed, as though she were crazy. “Get up at once, at once. How dare you?”

Mavriky Nikolaevitch got up from his knees. She clutched his arms above the elbow and looked intently into his face. There was terror in her expression.

“Milovzors! Milovzors!” Semyon Yakovlevitch repeated again.

She dragged Mavriky Nikolaevitch back to the other part of the room at last. There was some commotion in all our company. The lady from our carriage, probably intending to relieve the situation, loudly and shrilly asked the saint for the third time, with an affected smile:

“Well, Semyon Yakovlevitch, won’t you utter some saying for me I I’ve been reckoning so much on you.”

“Out with the —— , out with the —— ,” said Semyon Yakovlevitch, suddenly addressing her, with an extremely indecent word. The words were uttered savagely, and with horrifying distinctness. Our ladies shrieked, and rushed headlong away, while the gentlemen escorting them burst into Homeric laughter. So ended our visit to Semyon Yakovlevitch.

At this point, however, there took place, I am told, an extremely enigmatic incident, and, I must own, it was chiefly on account of it that I have described this expedition so minutely.

I am told that when all nocked out, Liza, supported by Mavriky Nikolaevitch, was jostled against Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch in the crush in the doorway. I must mention that since that Sunday morning when she fainted they had not approached each other, nor exchanged a word, though they had met more than once. I saw them brought together in the doorway. I fancied they both stood still for an instant, and looked, as it were, strangely at one another, but I may not have seen rightly in the crowd. It is asserted, on the contrary, and quite seriously, that Liza, glancing at Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, quickly raised her hand to the level of his face, and would certainly have struck him if he had not drawn back in time. Perhaps she was displeased with the expression of his face, or the way he smiled, particularly just after such an episode with Mavriky Nikolaevitch. I must admit I saw nothing myself, but all the others declared they had, though they certainly could not all have seen it in such a crush, though perhaps some may have.

But I did not believe it at the time. I remember, however, that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was rather pale all the way home.

III

Almost at the same time, and certainly on the same day, the interview at last took place between Stepan Trofimovitch and Varvara Petrovna. She had long had this meeting in her mind, and had sent word about it to her former friend, but for some reason she had kept putting it off till then. It took place at Skvoreshniki: Varvara Petrovna arrived at her country house all in a bustle: it had been definitely decided the evening before that the fete was to take place at the marshal's, but Varvara Petrovna's rapid brain at once grasped that no one could prevent her from afterwards giving her own special entertainment at Skvoreshniki, and again assembling the whole town. Then every one could see for themselves whose house was best, and in which more taste was displayed in receiving guests and giving a ball. Altogether she was hardly to be recognised. She seemed completely transformed, and instead of the unapproachable "noble lady" (Stepan Trofimovitch's expression) seemed changed into the most commonplace, whimsical society woman. But perhaps this may only have been on the surface.

When she reached the empty house she had gone through all the rooms, accompanied by her faithful old butler, Alexey Yegorytch, and by Fomushka, a man who had seen much of life and was a specialist in decoration. They began to consult and deliberate: what furniture was to be brought from the town house, what things, what pictures, where they were to be put, how the conservatories and flowers could be put to the best use, where to put new curtains, where to have the refreshment rooms, whether one or two, and so on and so on. And, behold, in the midst of this exciting bustle she suddenly took it into her head to send for Stepan Trofimovitch.

The latter had long before received notice of this interview and was prepared for it, and he had every day been expecting just such a sudden summons. As he got into the carriage he crossed himself: his fate was being decided. He found his friend in the big drawing-room on the little sofa in the recess, before a little marble table with a pencil and paper in her hands. Fomushka, with a yard measure, was measuring the height of the galleries and the windows, while Varvara Petrovna herself was writing down the

numbers and making notes on the margin. She nodded in Stepan Trofimovitch's direction without breaking off from what she was doing, and when the latter muttered some sort of greeting, she hurriedly gave him her hand, and without looking at him motioned him to a seat beside her.

"I sat waiting for five minutes, 'mastering my heart,'" he told me afterwards. "I saw before me not the woman whom I had known for twenty years. An absolute conviction that all was over gave me a strength which astounded even her. I swear that she was surprised at my stoicism in that last hour."

Varvara Petrovna suddenly put down her pencil on the table and turned quickly to Stepan Trofimovitch.

"Stepan Trofimovitch, we have to talk of business. I'm sure you have prepared all your fervent words and various phrases, but we'd better go straight to the point, hadn't we?"

She had been in too great a hurry to show the tone she meant to take. And what might not come next?

"Wait, be quiet; let me speak. Afterwards you shall, though really I don't know what you can answer me," she said in a rapid patter. "The twelve hundred roubles of your pension I consider a sacred obligation to pay you as long as you live. Though why a sacred obligation, simply a contract; that would be a great deal more real, wouldn't it? If you like, we'll write it out. Special arrangements have been made in case of my death. But you are receiving from me at present lodging, servants, and your maintenance in addition. Reckoning that in money it would amount to fifteen hundred roubles, wouldn't it? I will add another three hundred roubles, making three thousand roubles in all. Will that be enough a year for you? I think that's not too little? In any extreme emergency I would add something more. And so, take your money, send me back my servants, and live by yourself where you like in Petersburg, in Moscow, abroad, or here, only not with me. Do you hear?"

"Only lately those lips dictated to me as imperatively and as suddenly very different demands," said Stepan Trofimovitch slowly and with sorrowful distinctness. "I submitted . . . and danced the Cossack dance to please you. *Oui, la comparaison peut etre permise. C'etait comme un petit Cosaque du Don qui sautait sur sa propre tombe.* Now . . ."

"Stop, Stepan Trofimovitch, you are horribly long-winded. You didn't dance, but came to see me in a new tie, new linen, gloves, scented and

pomatumed. I assure you that you were very anxious to get married yourself; it was written on your face, and I assure you a most unseemly expression it was. If I did not mention it to you at the time, it was simply out of delicacy. But you wished it, you wanted to be married, in spite of the abominable things you wrote about me and your betrothed. Now it's very different. And what has the *Cosaque du Don* to do with it, and what tomb do you mean? I don't understand the comparison. On the contrary, you have only to live. Live as long as you can. I shall be delighted."

"In an almshouse?"

"In an almshouse? People don't go into almshouses with three thousand roubles a year. Ah, I remember," she laughed. "Pyotr Stepanovitch did joke about an almshouse once. Bah, there certainly is a special almshouse, which is worth considering. It's for persons who are highly respectable; there are colonels there, and there's positively one general who wants to get into it. If you went into it with all your money, you would find peace, comfort, servants to wait on you. There you could occupy yourself with study, and could always make up a party for cards."

"*Passons"*

"*Passons?"* Varvara Petrovna winced. "But, if so, that's all. You've been informed that we shall live henceforward entirely apart."

"And that's all?" he said. "All that's left of twenty years? Our last farewell?"

"You're awfully fond of these exclamations, Stepan Trofimovitch. It's not at all the fashion. Nowadays people talk roughly but simply. You keep harping on our twenty years! Twenty years of mutual vanity, and nothing more. Every letter you've written me was written not for me but for posterity. You're a stylist, and not a friend, and friendship is only a splendid word. In reality — a mutual exchange of sloppiness. . . ."

"Good heavens! How many sayings not your own! Lessons learned by heart! They've already put their uniform on you too. You, too, are rejoicing; you, too, are basking in the sunshine. *Chere. chere,* for what a mess of pottage you have sold them your freedom!"

"I'm not a parrot, to repeat other people's phrases!" cried Varvara Petrovna, boiling over. "You may be sure I have stored up many sayings of my own. What have you been doing for me all these twenty years? You refused me even the books I ordered for you, though, except for the binder, they would have remained uncut. What did you give me to read when I

asked you during those first years to be my guide? Always Kapfig, and nothing but Kapfig. You were jealous of my culture even, and took measures. And all the while every one's laughing at you. I must confess I always considered you only as a critic. You are a literary critic and nothing more. When on the way to Petersburg I told you that I meant to found a journal and to devote my whole life to it, you looked at me ironically at once, and suddenly became horribly supercilious."

"That was not that, not that. ... we were afraid then of persecution. ..."

"It was just that. And you couldn't have been afraid of persecution in Petersburg at that time. Do you remember that in February, too, when the news of the emancipation came, you ran to me in a panic, and demanded that I should at once give you a written statement that the proposed magazine had nothing to do with you; that the young people had been coming to see me and not you; that you were only a tutor who lived in the house, only because he had not yet received his salary. Isn't that so? Do remember that? You have distinguished yourself all your life, Stepan Trofimovitch."

"That was only a moment of weakness, a moment when we were alone," he exclaimed mournfully. "But is it possible, is it possible, to break off everything for the sake of such petty impressions? Can it be that nothing more has been left between us after those long years?"

"You are horribly calculating; you keep trying to leave me in your debt. When you came back from abroad you looked down upon me and wouldn't let me utter a word, but when I came back myself and talked to you afterwards of my impressions of the Madonna, you wouldn't hear me, you began smiling condescendingly into your cravat, as though I were incapable of the same feelings as you."

"It was not so. It was probably not so. *J'ai oublie!"*

"No; it was so," she answered, "and, what's more, you've nothing to pride yourself on. That's all nonsense, and one of your fancies. Now, there's no one, absolutely no one, in ecstasies over the Madonna; no one wastes time over it except old men who are hopelessly out of date. That's established."

"Established, is it?"

"It's of no use whatever. This jug's of use because one can pour water into it. This pencil's of use because you can write anything with it. But that woman's face is inferior to any face in nature. Try drawing an apple, and

put a real apple beside it. Which would you take? You wouldn't make a mistake, I'm sure. This is what all our theories amount to, now that the first light of free investigation has dawned upon them."

"Indeed, indeed."

‘‘ You laugh ironically. And what used you to say to me about charity? Yet the enjoyment derived from charity is a haughty and immoral enjoyment. The rich man's enjoyment in his wealth, his power, and in the comparison of his importance with the poor. Charity corrupts giver and taker alike; and, what's more, does not attain it's object, as it only increases poverty. Fathers who don't want to work crowd round the charitable like gamblers round the gambling-table, hoping for gain, while the pitiful farthings that are flung them are a hundred times too little. Have you given away much in your life? Less than a rouble, if you try and think. Try to remember when last you gave away anything; it'll be two years ago, maybe four. You make an outcry and only hinder things. Charity ought to be forbidden by law, even in the present state of society. In the new regime there will be no poor at all."

"Oh, what an eruption of borrowed phrases! So it's come to the new regime already? Unhappy woman, God help you!"

"Yes; it has, Stepan Trofimovitch. You carefully concealed all these new ideas from me, though every one's familiar with them nowadays. And you did it simply out of jealousy, so as to have power over me. So that now even that Yulia is a hundred miles ahead of me. But now my eyes have been opened. I have defended you, Stepan Trofimovitch, all I could, but there is no one who does not blame you."

"Enough!" said he, getting up from his seat. "Enough! And what can I wish you now, unless it's repentance?"

"Sit still a minute, Stepan Trofimovitch. I have another question to ask you. You've been told of the invitation to read at the literary matinee. It was arranged through me. Tell me what you're going to read?"

"Why, about that very Queen of Queens, that ideal of humanity, the Sistine Madonna, who to your thinking is inferior to a glass or a pencil."

"So you're not taking something historical?'" said Varvara Petrovna in mournful surprise. "But they won't listen to you. You've got that Madonna on your brain. You seem bent on putting every one to sleep! Let me assure you, Stepan Trofimovitch, I am speaking entirely in your own interest. It would be a different matter if you would take some short but interesting

story of mediaeval court life from Spanish history, or, better still, some anecdote, and pad it out with other anecdotes and witty phrases of your own. There were magnificent courts then; ladies, you know, poisonings. Karmazinov says it would be strange if you couldn't read something interesting from Spanish history."

"Karmazinov — that fool who has written himself out — looking for a subject for me!" .

"Karmazinov, that almost imperial intellect. You are too free in your language, Stepan Trofimovitch."

"Your Karmazinov is a spiteful old woman whose day is over. *Chere, chere,* how long have you been so enslaved by them? Oh God!"

"I can't endure him even now for the airs he gives himself. But I do justice to his intellect. I repeat, I have done my best to defend you as far as I could. And why do you insist on being absurd and tedious? On the contrary, come on to the platform with a dignified smile as the representative of the last generation, and tell them two or three anecdotes in your witty way, as only you can tell things sometimes. Though you may be an old man now, though you may belong to a past age, though you may have dropped behind them, in fact, yet you'll recognise it yourself, with a smile, in your preface, and all will see that you're an amiable, good-natured, witty relic ... in brief, a man of the old savour, and so far advanced as to be capable of appreciating at their value all the absurdities of certain ideas which you have hitherto followed. Come, as a favour to me, I beg you."

"*Chere,* enough. Don't ask me. I can't. I shall speak of the Madonna, but I shall raise a storm that will either crush them all or shatter me alone.",

"It will certainly be you alone, Stepan Trofimovitch."

"Such is my fate. I will speak of the contemptible slave, of the stinking, depraved flunkey who will first climb a ladder with scissors in his hands, and slash to pieces the divine image of the great ideal, in the name of equality, envy, and . . . digestion. Let my curse thunder out upon them, and then — then ..."

"The madhouse?"

"Perhaps. But in any case, whether I shall be left vanquished or victorious, that very evening I shall take my bag, my beggar's bag. I shall leave all my goods and chattels, all your presents, all your pensions and promises of future benefits, and go forth on foot to end my life a tutor in a

merchant’s family or to die somewhere of hunger in a ditch. I have said it. *Alea jacta eat.”* He got up again.

“I’ve been convinced for years,” said Varvara Petrovna, getting up with flashing eyes, “that your only object in life is to put me and my house to shame by your calumnies! What do you mean by being a tutor in a merchant’s family or dying in a ditch? It’s spite, calumny, and nothing more.”

“You have always despised me. But I will end like a knight, faithful to my lady. Your good opinion has always been dearer I to me than anything. From this moment I will take nothing, but will worship you disinterestedly.”

“How stupid that is!”

“You have never respected me. I may have had a mass of weaknesses. Yes, I have sponged on you. I speak the language of nihilism, but sponging has never been the guiding motive of my action. It has happened so of itself. I don’t know how. ... I always imagined there was something higher than meat and drink between us, and — I’ve never, never been a scoundrel! And so, to take the open road, to set things right. I set off late, late autumn out of doors, the mist lies over the fields, the hoarfrost of old age covers the road before me, and the wind howls about the approaching grave. . . . But so forward, forward, on my new way

‘ *Filled with purest love and fervour,*

Faith which my sweet dream did yield.’

Oh, my dreams. Farewell. Twenty years. *Alea jacta est!”*

His face was wet with a sudden gush of tears. He took his hat.

“I don’t understand Latin,” said Varvara Petrovna, doing her best to control herself.

Who knows, perhaps, she too felt like crying. But caprice and indignation once more got the upper hand.

“I know only one thing, that all this is childish nonsense. You will never be capable of carrying out your threats, which are a mass of egoism. You will set off nowhere, to no merchant; you’ll end very peaceably on my hands, taking your pension, and receiving your utterly impossible friends on Tuesdays. Good-bye, Stepan Trofimovitch.”

“*Alea — jacta est!*” He made her a deep bow, and returned home, almost dead with emotion.

CHAPTER VI.

PYOTR STEPANOVITCH IS BUSY

the date of the fete was definitely fixed, and Von Lembke became more and more depressed. He was full of strange and sinister forebodings, and this made Yulia Mihailovna seriously uneasy. Indeed, things were not altogether satisfactory. Our mild governor had left the affairs of the province a little out of gear; at the moment we were threatened with cholera; serious outbreaks of cattle plague had appeared in several places; fires were prevalent that summer in towns and villages; whilst among the peasantry foolish rumours of incendiarism grew stronger and stronger. Cases of robbery were twice as numerous as usual. But all this, of course, would have been perfectly ordinary had there been no other and more weighty reasons to disturb the equanimity of Audrey Antonovitch, who had till then been in good spirits.

What struck Yulia Mihailovna most of all was that he became more silent and, strange to say, more secretive every day. Yet it was hard to imagine what he had to hide. It is true that he rarely opposed her and as a rule followed her lead without question. At her instigation, for instance, two or three regulations of a risky and hardly legal character were introduced with the object of strengthening the authority of the governor. There were several ominous instances of transgressions being condoned with the same end in view; persons who deserved to be sent to prison and Siberia were, solely because she insisted, recommended for promotion. Certain complaints and inquiries were deliberately and systematically ignored. All this came out later on. Not only did Lembke sign everything, but he did not even go into the question of the share taken by his wife in the execution of his duties. On the other hand, he began at times to be restive about “the most trifling matters,” to the surprise of Yulia Mihailovna. No doubt he felt the need to make up for the days of suppression by brief moments of mutiny. Unluckily, Yulia Mihailovna was unable, for all her insight, to understand this honourable punctiliousness in an honourable character. Alas, she had no thought to spare for that, and that was the source of many misunderstandings.

There are some things of which it is not suitable for me to write, and indeed I am not in a position to do so. It is not my business to discuss the blunders of administration either, and I prefer to leave out this administrative aspect of the subject altogether. In the chronicle I have begun I've set before myself a different task. Moreover a great deal will be brought to light by the Commission of Inquiry which has just been appointed for our province; it's only a matter of waiting a little. Certain explanations, however, cannot be omitted.

But to return to Yulia Mihailovna. The poor lady (I feel very sorry for her) might have attained all that attracted and allured her (renown and so on) without any such violent and eccentric actions as she resolved upon at the very first step. But either from an exaggerated passion for the romantic or from the frequently blighted hopes of her youth, she felt suddenly, at the change of her fortunes, that she had become one of the specially elect, almost God's anointed, "over whom there gleamed a burning tongue of fire," and this tongue of flame was the root of the mischief, for, after all, it is not like a chignon, which will fit any woman's head. But there is nothing of which it is more difficult to convince a woman than of this; on the contrary, anyone who cares to encourage the delusion in her will always be sure to meet with success. And people vied with one another in encouraging the delusion in Yulia Mihailovna. The poor woman became at once the sport of conflicting influences, while fully persuaded of her own originality. Many clever people feathered their nests and took advantage of her simplicity during the brief period of her rule in the province. And what a jumble there was under this assumption of independence! She was fascinated at the same time by the aristocratic element and the system of big landed properties and the increase of the governor's power, and the democratic element, and the new reforms and discipline, and free-thinking and stray Socialistic notions, and the correct tone of the aristocratic *salon* and the free-and-easy, almost pot-house, manners of the young people that surrounded her. She dreamed of "giving happiness" and reconciling the irreconcilable, or, rather, of uniting all and everything in the adoration of her own person. She had favourites too; she was particularly fond of Pyotr Stepanovitch, who had recourse at times to the grossest flattery in dealing with her. But she was attracted by him for another reason, an amazing one, and most characteristic of the poor lady: she was always hoping that he would reveal to her a regular conspiracy against the government. Difficult

as it is to imagine such a thing, it really was the case. She fancied for some reason that there must be a nihilist plot Concealed in the province. By his silence at one time and his hints at another Pyotr Stepanovitch did much to strengthen this strange idea in her. She imagined that he was in communication with every revolutionary element in Russia but at the same time passionately devoted to her. To discover the plot, to receive the gratitude of the government, to enter on a brilliant career, to influence the young “by kindness,” and to restrain them from extremes — all these dreams existed side by side in her fantastic brain. She had saved Pyotr Stepanovitch, she had conquered him (of this she was for some reason firmly convinced); she would save others. None, none of them should perish, she should save them all; she would pick them out; she would send in the right report of them; she would act in the interests of the loftiest justice, and perhaps posterity and Russian liberalism would bless her name; yet the conspiracy would be discovered. Every advantage at once.

Still it was essential that .Andrey Antonovitch should be in rather better spirits before the festival. He must be cheered up and reassured. For this purpose she sent Pyotr Stepanovitch to him in the hope that he would relieve his depression by some means of consolation best known to himself, perhaps by giving him some information, so to speak, first hand. She put implicit faith in his dexterity.

It was some time since Pyotr Stepanovitch had been in Mr. von Lembke’s study. He popped in on him just when the sufferer was in a most stubborn mood.

II

A combination of circumstances had arisen which Mr. von Lembke was quite unable to deal with. In the very district where Pyotr Stepanovitch had been having a festive time a sublieutenant had been called up to be censured by his immediate superior, and the reproof was given in the presence of the whole company. The sub-lieutenant was a young man fresh from Petersburg, always silent and morose, of dignified appearance though small, stout, and rosy-cheeked. He resented the reprimand and suddenly, with a startling shriek that astonished the whole company, he charged at his superior officer with his head bent down like a wild beast’s, struck him, and bit him on the shoulder with all his might; they had difficulty in getting him

off. There was no doubt that he had gone out of his mind; anyway, it became known that of late he had been observed performing incredibly strange actions. He had, for instance, flung two ikons belonging to his landlady out of his lodgings and smashed up one of them with an axe; in his own room he had, on three stands resembling lecterns, laid out the works of Vogt, Moleschott, and Buchner, and before each lectern he used to burn a church wax-candle. From the number of books found in his rooms it could be gathered that he was a well-read man. If he had had fifty thousand francs he would perhaps have sailed to the island of Marquisas like the “cadet” to whom Herzen alludes with such sprightly humour in one of his writings. When he was seized, whole bundles of the most desperate manifestoes were found in his pockets and his lodgings.

Manifestoes are a trivial matter too, and to my thinking not worth troubling about. We have seen plenty of them. Besides, they were not new manifestoes; they were, it was said later, just the same as had been circulated in the X province, and Liputin, who had travelled in that district and the neighbouring province six weeks previously, declared that he had seen exactly the same leaflets there then. But what struck Andrey Antonovitch most was that the overseer of Shpigulin’s factory had brought the police just at the same time two or three packets of exactly the same leaflets as had been found on the lieutenant. The bundles, which had been dropped in the factory in the night, had not been opened, and none of the factory-hands had had time to read one of them. The incident was a trivial one, but it set Andrey Antonovitch pondering deeply. The position presented itself to him in an unpleasantly complicated light.

In this factory the famous “Shpigulin scandal” was just then brewing, which made so much talk among us and got into the Petersburg and Moscow papers with all sorts of variations. Three weeks previously one of the hands had fallen ill and died of Asiatic cholera; then several others were stricken down. The whole town was in a panic, for the cholera was coming nearer and nearer and had reached the neighbouring province. I may observe that satisfactory sanitary measures had been, so far as possible, taken to meet the unexpected guest. But the factory belonging to the Shpigulins, who were millionaires and well-connected people, had somehow been overlooked. And there was a sudden outcry from every one that this factory was the hot-bed of infection, that the factory itself, and especially the quarters inhabited by the workpeople, were so inveterately

filthy that even if cholera had not been in the neighbourhood there might well have been an outbreak there. Steps were immediately taken, of course, and Andrey Antonovitch vigorously insisted on their being carried out without delay within three weeks. The factory was cleansed, but the Shpigulins, for some unknown reason, closed it. One of the Shpigulin brothers always lived in Petersburg and the other went away to Moscow when the order was given for cleansing the factory. The overseer proceeded to pay off the workpeople and, as it appeared, cheated them shamelessly. The hands began to complain among themselves, asking to be paid fairly, and foolishly went to the police, though without much disturbance, for they were not so very much excited. It was just at this moment that the manifestoes were brought to Andrey Antonovitch by the overseer.

Pyotr Stepanovitch popped into the study unannounced, like an intimate friend and one of the family; besides, he had a message from Yulia Mihailovna. Seeing him, Lembke frowned grimly and stood still at the table without welcoming him. Till that moment he had been pacing up and down the study and had been discussing something *tete-a-tete* with his clerk Blum, a very clumsy and surly German whom he had brought with him from Petersburg, in spite of the violent opposition of Yulia Mihailovna. On Pyotr Stepanovitch's entrance the clerk had moved to the door, but had not gone out. Pyotr Stepanovitch even fancied that he exchanged significant glances with his chief.

"Aha, I've caught you at last, you secretive monarch of the town!" Pyotr Stepanovitch cried out laughing, and laid his hand over the manifesto on the table. "This increases your collection, eh?"

Andrey Antonovitch flushed crimson; his face seemed to twitch.

"Leave off, leave off at once!" he cried, trembling with rage. "And don't you dare ... sir ..."

"What's the matter with you? You seem to be angry!"

"Allow me to inform you, sir, that I've no intention of putting up with your *sans faisson* henceforward, and I beg you to remember ..."

"Why, damn it all, he is in earnest!"

"Hold your tongue, hold your tongue" — Von Lembke stamped on the carpet—" and don't dare ..."

God knows what it might have come to. Alas, there was one circumstance involved in the matter of which neither Pyotr Stepanovitch nor even Yulia Mihailovna herself had any idea. The luckless Andrey

Antonovitch had been so greatly upset during the last few days that he had begun to be secretly jealous of his wife and Pyotr Stepanovitch. In solitude, especially at night, he spent some very disagreeable moments.

“Well, I imagined that if a man reads you his novel two days running till after midnight and wants to hear your opinion of it, he has of his own act discarded official relations, anyway. . . . Yulia Mihailovna treats me as a friend; there’s no making you out,” Pyotr Stepanovitch brought out, with a certain dignity indeed. “Here is your novel, by the way.” He laid on the table a large heavy manuscript rolled up in blue paper.

Lembke turned red and looked embarrassed.

“Where did you find it?” he asked discreetly, with a rush of joy which he was unable to suppress, though he did his utmost to conceal it.

“Only fancy, done up like this, it rolled under the chest of drawers. I must have thrown it down carelessly on the chest when I went out. It was only found the day before yesterday, when the floor was scrubbed. You did set me a task, though!”

Lembke dropped his eyes sternly.

“I haven’t slept for the last two nights, thanks to you. It was found the day before yesterday, but I kept it, and have been reading it ever since. I’ve no time in the day, so I’ve read it at night. Well, I don’t like it; it’s not my way of looking at things. But that’s no matter; I’ve never set up for being a critic, but I couldn’t tear myself away from it, my dear man, though I didn’t like it! The fourth and fifth chapters are . . . they really are . . . damn it all, they are beyond words! And what a lot of humour you’ve packed into it; it made me laugh! How you can make fun of things *sans que cela paraisse!* As for the ninth and tenth chapters, it’s all about love; that’s not my line, but it’s effective though. I was nearly blubbering over Egrenev’s letter, though you’ve shown him up so cleverly. . . . You know, it’s touching, though at the same time you want to show the false side of him, as it were, don’t you? Have I guessed right? But I could simply beat you for the ending. For what are you setting up I Why, the same old idol of domestic happiness, begetting children and making money; ‘they were married and lived happy ever afterwards’ — come, it’s too much! You will enchant your readers, for even I couldn’t put the book down; but that makes it all the worse! The reading public is as stupid as ever, but it’s the duty of sensible people to wake them up, while you . . . But that’s enough. Good-bye. Don’t be cross

another time; I came in to you because I had a couple of words to say to you, but you are so unaccountable . . .”

Andrey Antonovitch meantime took his novel and locked it up in an oak bookcase, seizing the opportunity to wink to Blum to disappear. The latter withdrew with a long, mournful face.

“I am not unaccountable, I am simply . . . nothing but annoyances,” he muttered, frowning but without anger, and sitting down to the table. “Sit down and say what you have to say. It’s a long time since I’ve seen you, Pyotr Stepanovitch, only don’t burst upon me in the future with such manners . . . sometimes, when one has business, it’s . . .”

“My manners are always the same. . . .”

“I know, and I believe that you mean nothing by it, but sometimes one is worried. . . . Sit down.”

Pyotr Stepanovitch immediately lolled back on the sofa and drew his legs under him.

III

“What sort of worries? Surely not these trifles?” He nodded towards the manifesto. “I can bring you as many of them as you like; I made their acquaintance in X province.”

“You mean at the time you were staying there?”

“Of course, it was not in my absence. I remember there was a hatchet printed at the top of it. Allow me.” (He took up the manifesto.) “Yes, there’s the hatchet here too; that’s it, the very same.”

“Yes, here’s a hatchet. You see, a hatchet.”

“Well, is it the hatchet that scares you?”

“No, it’s not . . . and I am not scared; but this business ... it is a business; there are circumstances.”

“What sort? That it’s come from the factory? He he! But do you know, at that factory the workpeople will soon be writing manifestoes for themselves.”

“What do you mean?” Von Lembke stared at him severely.

“What I say. You’ve only to look at them. You are too soft, Andrey Antonovitch; you write novels. But this has to be handled in the good old way.”

“What do you mean by the good old way? What do you mean by advising me? The factory has been cleaned; I gave the order and they’ve cleaned it.”

“And the workmen are in rebellion. They ought to be flogged, every one of them; that would be the end of it.”

“In rebellion? That’s nonsense; I gave the order and they’ve cleaned it.”

“Ech, you are soft, Andrey Antonovitch!”

“In the first place, I am not so soft as you think, and in the second place . . .” Von Lembke was piqued again. He had exerted himself to keep up the conversation with the young man from curiosity, wondering if he would tell him anything new.

“Ha ha, an old acquaintance again,” Pyotr Stepanovitch interrupted, pouncing on another document that lay under a paper-weight, something like a manifesto, obviously printed abroad and in verse. “Oh, come, I know this one by heart, ‘A Noble Personality.’ Let me have a look at it — yes, ‘A Noble Personality’ it is. I made acquaintance with that personality abroad. Where did you unearth it?”

“You say you’ve seen it abroad?” Von Lembke said eagerly.

“I should think so, four months ago, or may be five.”

“You seem to have seen a great deal abroad.” Von Lembke looked at him subtly.

Pyotr Stepanovitch, not heeding him, unfolded the document and read the poem aloud:

“A NOBLE PERSONALITY

“*He was not of rank exalted,*
He was not of noble birth,
He was bred among the people
In the breast of Mother Earth.
But the malice of the nobles
And the Tsar’s revengeful wrath
Drove him forth to grief and torture
On the martyr’s chosen path.
He set out to teach the people
Freedom, love, equality,
To exhort them to resistance;
But to flee the penalty
Of the prison, whip and gallows,

To a foreign land he went.
While the people waited hoping
From Smolensk to far Tashkent,
Waited eager for his coming
To rebel against their fate,
To arise and crush the Tsardom
And the nobles' vicious hate,
To share all the wealth in common,
And the antiquated thrall
Of the church, the home and marriage
To abolish once for all."

"You got it from that officer, I suppose, eh?" asked Pyotr Stepanovitch.

"Why, do you know that officer, then, too?"

"I should think so. *I* had a gay time with him there for two days; he was bound to go out of his mind."

"Perhaps he did not go out of his mind."

"You think he didn't because he began to bite?"

"But, excuse me, if you saw those verses abroad and then, it appears, at that officer's . . ."

"What, puzzling, is it? You are putting me through an examination, Andrey Antonovitch, I see. You see," he began suddenly with extraordinary dignity, "as to what I saw abroad I have already given explanations, and my explanations were found satisfactory, otherwise I should not have been gratifying this town with my presence. I consider that the question as regards me has been settled, and I am not obliged to give any further account of myself, not because I am an informer, but because I could not help acting as I did. The people who wrote to Yulia Mihailovna about me knew what they were talking about, and they said I was an honest man. . . . But that's neither here nor there; I've come to see you about a serious matter, and it's as well you've sent your chimney-sweep away. It's a matter of importance to me, Andrey Antonovitch. I shall have a very great favour to ask of you."

"A favour? H'm ... by all means; I am waiting and, I confess, with curiosity. And I must add, Pyotr Stepanovitch, that you surprise me not a little."

Von Lembke was in some agitation. Pyotr Stepanovitch crossed his legs.

“In Petersburg,” he began, “I talked freely of most things, but there were things — this, for instance” (he tapped the “Noble Personality” with his finger) “about which I held my tongue — in the first place, because it wasn’t worth talking about, and secondly, because I only answered questions. I don’t care to put myself forward in such matters; in that I see the distinction between a rogue and an honest man forced by circumstances. Well, in short, we’ll dismiss that. But now . . . now that these fools . . . now that this has come to the surface and is in your hands, and I see that you’ll find out all about it — for you are a man with eyes and one can’t tell beforehand what you’ll do — and these fools are still going on, I ... I ... well, the fact is, I’ve come to ask you to save one man, a fool too, most likely mad, for the sake of his youth, his misfortunes, in the name of your humanity. . . . You can’t be so humane only in the novels you manufacture!” he said, breaking off with coarse sarcasm and impatience.

In fact, he was seen to be a straightforward man, awkward and impolitic from excess of humane feeling and perhaps from excessive sensitiveness — above all, a man of limited intelligence, as Von Lembke saw at once with extraordinary subtlety. He had indeed long suspected it, especially when during the previous week he had, sitting alone in his study at night, secretly cursed him with all his heart for the inexplicable way in which he had gained Yulia Mihailovna’s good graces.

“For whom are you interceding, and what does all this mean?” he inquired majestically, trying to conceal his curiosity.

“It ... it’s . . . damn it! It’s not my fault that I trust you! Is it my fault that I look upon you as a most honourable and, above all, a sensible man . . . capable, that is, of understanding . . . damn ...”

The poor fellow evidently could not master his emotion.

“You must understand at last,” he went on, “you must understand that in pronouncing his name I am betraying him to you — I am betraying him, am I not? I am, am I not?”

“But how am I to guess if you don’t make up your mind to speak out?”

“That’s just it; you always cut the ground from under one’s feet with your logic, damn it. ... Well, here goes . . . this ‘noble personality,’ this ‘student’... is Shatov . . . that’s all.”

“Shatov? How do you mean it’s Shatov?”

“Shatov is the ‘student’ who is mentioned in this. He lives here, he was once a serf, the man who gave that slap. ...”

“I know, I know.” Lembke screwed up his eyes. “But excuse me, what is he accused of? Precisely and, above all, what is your petition?”

“I beg you to save him, do you understand? I used to know him eight years ago, I might almost say I was his friend,” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, completely carried away. “But I am not bound to give you an account of my past life,” he added, with a gesture of dismissal. “All this is of no consequence; it’s the case of three men and a half, and with those that are abroad you can’t make up a dozen. But what I am building upon is your humanity and your intelligence. You will understand and you will put the matter in its true light, as the foolish dream of a man driven crazy ... by misfortunes, by continued misfortunes, and not as some impossible political plot or God knows what!”

He was almost gasping for breath.

“H’m. I see that he is responsible for the manifestoes with the axe,” Lembke concluded almost majestically. “Excuse me, though, if he were the only person concerned, how could he have distributed it both here and in other districts and in the X province . . . and, above all, where did he get them?”

“But I tell you that at the utmost there are not more than five people in it — a dozen perhaps. How can I tell?”

“You don’t know?”

“How should I know? — damn it all.”

“Why, you knew that Shatov was one of the conspirators.”

“Ech!” Pyotr Stepanovitch waved his hand as though to keep off the overwhelming penetration of the inquirer. “Well, listen. I’ll tell you the whole truth: of the manifestoes I know nothing — that is, absolutely nothing. Damn it all, don’t you know what nothing means? . . . That sub-lieutenant, to be sure, and somebody else and some one else here . . . and Shatov perhaps and some one else too — well, that’s the lot of them . . . a wretched lot. . . . But I’ve come to intercede for Shatov. He must be saved, for this poem is his, his own composition, and it was through him it was published abroad; that I know or a fact, but of the manifestoes I really know nothing.”

“If the poem is his work, no doubt the manifestoes are too. But what data have you for suspecting Mr. Shatov?”

Pyotr Stepanovitch, with the air of a man driven out of all patience, pulled a pocket-book out of his pocket and took a note out of it.

“Here are the facts,” he cried, flinging it on the table.

Lembke unfolded it; it turned out to be a note written six months before from here to some address abroad. It was a brief note, only two lines:

“I can’t print ‘A Noble Personality’ here, and in fact I can do nothing; print it abroad.

Lembke looked intently at Pyotr Stepanovitch. Varvara Petrovna had been right in saying that he had at times the expression of a sheep.

“You see, it’s like this,” Pyotr Stepanovitch burst out. “He wrote this poem here six months ago, but he couldn’t get it printed here, in a secret printing press, and so he asks to have it printed abroad. . . . That seems clear.”

“Yes, that’s clear, but to whom did he write? That’s not clear yet,” Lembke observed with the most subtle irony.

“Why, Kirillov, of course; the letter was written to Kirillov abroad. . . . Surely you knew that? What’s so annoying is that perhaps you are only putting it on before me, and most likely you knew all about this poem and everything long ago! How did it come to be on your table? It found its way there somehow! Why are you torturing me, if so?”

He feverishly mopped his forehead with his handkerchief.

“I know something, perhaps.” Lembke parried dexterously. “But who is this Kirillov?”

“An engineer who has lately come to the town. He was Stavrogin’s second, a maniac, a madman; your sub-lieutenant may really only be suffering from temporary delirium, but Kirillov is a thoroughgoing madman — thoroughgoing, that I guarantee. Ah, Audrey Antonovitch, if the government only knew what sort of people these conspirators all are, they wouldn’t have the heart to lay a finger on them. Every single one of them ought to be in an asylum; I had a good look at them in Switzerland and at the congresses.”

“From which they direct the movement here?”

“Why, who directs it? Three men and a half. It makes one sick to think of them. And what sort of movement is there here? Manifestoes! And what recruits have they made? Sub-lieutenants in brain fever and two or three students! You are a sensible man: answer this question. Why don’t people of consequence join their ranks? Why are they all students and half-baked boys of twenty-two? And not many of those. I dare say there are thousands

of bloodhounds on their track, but have they tracked out many of them I Seven! I tell you it makes one sick."

Lembke listened with attention but with an expression that seemed to say, "You don't feed nightingales on fairy-tales."

"Excuse me, though. You asserted that the letter was sent abroad, but there's no address on it; how do you come to know that it was addressed to Mr. Kirillov and abroad too and . . . and . . . that it really was written by Mr. Shatov?"

"Why, fetch some specimen of Shatov's writing and compare it. You must have some signature of his in your office. As for its being addressed to Kirillov, it was Kirillov himself showed it me at the time."

"Then you were yourself . . ."

"Of course I was, myself. They showed me lots of things out there. And as for this poem, they say it was written by Herzen to Shatov when he was still wandering abroad, in memory of their meeting, so they say, by way of praise and recommendation — damn it all ... and Shatov circulates it among the young people as much as to say, 'This was Herzen's opinion of me.'

"Ha ha!" cried Lembke, feeling he had got to the bottom of it at last. "That's just what I was wondering: one can understand the manifesto, but what's the object of the poem?"

"Of course you'd see it. Goodness knows why I've been babbling to you. Listen. Spare Shatov for me and the rest may go to the devil — even Kirillov, who is in hiding now, shut up in Filipov's house, where Shatov lodges too. They don't like me because I've turned round . . . but promise me Shator and I'll dish them all up for you. I shall be of use, Andrey Antonovitch! I reckon nine or ten men make up the whole wretched lot. I am keeping an eye on them myself, on my. own account. We know of three already: Shatov, Kirillov, and that sub-lieutenant. The others I am only watching carefully . . . though I am pretty sharp-sighted too. It's the same over again as it was in the X province: two students, a schoolboy, two noblemen of twenty, a teacher, and a half-pay major of sixty, crazy with drink, have been caught with manifestoes; that was all — you can take my word for it, that was all; it was quite a surprise that that was all. But I must have six days. I have reckoned it out — six days, not less. If you want to arrive at any result, don't disturb them for six days and I can kill all the birds with one stone for you; but if you flutter them before, the birds will fly away. But spare me Shatov. I speak for Shatov. . . . The best plan would be

to fetch him here secretly, in a friendly way, to your study and question him without disguising the facts. ... I have no doubt he'll throw himself at your feet and burst into tears! He is a highly strung and unfortunate fellow; his wife is carrying on with Stavrogin. Be kind to him and he will tell you everything, but I must have six days. . . . And, above all, above all, not a word to Yulia Mihailovna. It's a secret. May it be a secret?"

"What?" cried Lembke, opening wide his eyes. "Do you mean to say you said nothing of this to Yulia Mihailovna?"

"To her? Heaven forbid! Ech, Andrey Antonovitch! You see, I value her friendship and I have the highest respect for her . . . and all the rest of it ... but I couldn't make such a blunder. I don't contradict her, for, as you know yourself, it's dangerous to contradict her. I may have dropped a word to her, for I know she likes that, but to suppose that I mentioned names to her as I have to you or anything of that sort! My good sir! Why am I appealing to you? Because you are a man, anyway, a serious person with old-fashioned firmness and experience in the service. You've seen life. You must know by heart every detail of such affairs, I expect, from what you've seen in Petersburg. But if I were to mention those two names, for instance, to her, she'd stir up such a hubbub. . . . You know, she would like to astonish Petersburg. No, she's too hot-headed, she really is."

"Yes, she has something of that owgrwe," Andrey Antonovitch muttered with some satisfaction, though at the same time he resented this unmannerly fellow's daring to express himself rather freely about Yulia Mihailovna. But Pyotr Stepanovitch probably imagined that he had not gone far enough and that he must exert himself further to flatter Lembke and make a complete conquest of him.

"*Fougue* is just it," he assented. "She may be a woman of genius, a literary woman, but she would scare our sparrows. She wouldn't be able to keep quiet for six hours, let alone six days. Ech, Andrey Antonovitch, don't attempt to tie a woman down for six days! You do admit that I have some experience — in this sort of thing, I mean; I know something about it, and you know that I may very well know something about it. I am not asking for six days for fun but with an object."

"I have heard . . ." (Lembke hesitated to utter his thought) "I have heard that on your return from abroad you made some expression . . . as it were of repentance, in the proper quarter?"

"Well, that's as it may be."

“And, of course, I don’t want to go into it. ... But it has seemed to me all along that you’ve talked in quite a different style — about the Christian faith, for instance, about social institutions, about the government even. . .”

“I’ve said lots of things, no doubt, I am saying them still; but such ideas mustn’t be applied as those fools do it, that’s the point. What’s the good of biting his superior’s shoulder! You agreed with me yourself, only you said it was premature.”

“I didn’t mean that when I agreed and said it was premature.”

“You weigh every word you utter, though. He he! You are a careful man!” Pyotr Stepanovitch observed gaily all of a sudden. “Listen, old friend. I had to get to know you; that’s why I talked in my own style. You are not the only one I get to know like that. Maybe I needed to find out your character.”

“What’s my character to you?”

“How can I tell what it may be to me?” He laughed again. “You see, my dear and highly respected Andrey Antonovitch, you are cunning, but it’s not come to *that* yet and it certainly never will come to it, you understand? Perhaps you do understand. Though I did make an explanation in the proper quarter when I came back from abroad, and I really don’t know why a man of certain convictions should not be able to work for the advancement of his sincere convictions . . . but nobody *there.* has yet instructed me to investigate your character and I’ve not undertaken any such job from *them.* Consider: I need not have given those two names to you. I might have gone straight *there;* that is where I made my first explanations. And if I’d been acting with a view to financial profit or my own interest in any way, it would have been a bad speculation on my part, for now they’ll be grateful to you and not to me at headquarters. I’ve done it solely for Shatov’s sake,” Pyotr Stepanovitch added generously, “for Shatov’s sake, because of our old friendship. . .. But when you take up your pen to write to headquarters, you may put in a word for me, if you like. . . . I’ll make no objection, he he! *Adieu,* though; I’ve stayed too long and there was no need to gossip so much!” he added with some amiability, and he got up from the sofa.

“On the contrary, I am very glad that the position has been defined, so to speak.” Von Lembke too got up and he too looked pleasant, obviously affected by the last words. “I accept your services and acknowledge my obligation, and you may be sure that anything I can do by way of reporting your zeal ...”

“Six days — the great thing is to put it off for six days, and that you shouldn’t stir for those six days, that’s what I want.”

“So be it.”

“Of course, I don’t tie your hands and shouldn’t venture to. You are bound to keep watch, only don’t nutter the nest too soon; I rely on your sense and experience for that. But I should think you’ve plenty of bloodhounds and trackers of your own in reserve, ha ha!” Pyotr Stepanovitch blurted out with the gaiety and irresponsibility of youth.

“Not quite so.” Lembke parried amiably. “Young people are apt to suppose that there is a great deal in the background. . . . But, by the way, allow me one little word: if this Kirillor was Stavrogin’s second, then Mr. Stavrogin too . . .”

“What about Stavrogin?”

“I mean, if they are such friends?”

“Oh, no, no, no! There you are quite out of it, though you are cunning. You really surprise me. I thought that you had some information about it. ... H’m . . . Stavrogin — it’s quite the opposite, quite. . . . *Avis au lecteur.”*

“Do you mean it? And can it be so?” Lembke articulated mistrustfully. “Yulia Mihailovna told me that from what she heard from Petersburg he is a man acting on some sort of instructions, so to speak. ...”

“I know nothing about it; I know nothing, absolutely nothing. *Adieu. Avis au lecteur!”* Abruptly and obviously Pyotr Stepanovitch declined to discuss it.

He hurried to the door.

“Stay, Pyotr Stepanovitch, stay,” cried Lembke. “One other tiny matter and I won’t detain you.”

He drew an envelope out of a table drawer.

“Here is a little specimen of the same kind of thing, and I let you see it to show how completely I trust you. Here, and tell me your opinion.”

In the envelope was a letter, a strange anonymous letter addressed to Lembke and only received by him the day before. With intense vexation Pyotr Stepanovitch read as follows:

“your excellency, — For such you are by rank. Herewith I make known that there is an attempt to be made on the life of personages of general’s rank and on the Fatherland. For it’s working up straight for that. I myself have been disseminating unceasingly for a number of years. There’s infidelity too. There’s a rebellion being got up and there are some thousands

of manifestoes, and for every one of them there will be a hundred running with their tongues out, unless they've been taken away beforehand by the police. For they've been promised a mighty lot of benefits, and the simple people are foolish, and there's vodka too. The people will attack one after another, taking them to be guilty, and, fearing both sides, I repent of what I had no share in, my circumstances being what they are. If you want information to save the Fatherland, and also the Church and the ikons, I am the only one that can do it. But only on condition that I get a pardon from the Secret Police by telegram at once, me alone, but the rest may answer for it. Put a candle every evening at seven o'clock in the porter's window for a signal. Seeing it, I shall believe and come to kiss the merciful hand from Petersburg. But on condition there's a pension for me, for else how am I to live? You won't regret it for it will mean a star for you. You must go secretly or they'll wring your neck. Your excellency's desperate servant falls at your feet.

"repentant free-thinker incognito."

Von Lembke explained that the letter had made its appearance in the porter's room when it was left empty the day before.

"So what do you think?" Pyotr Stepanovitch asked almost rudely.

"I think it's an anonymous skit by way of a hoax."

"Most likely it is. There's no taking you in."

"What makes me think that is that it's so stupid."

"Have you received such documents here before?"

"Once or twice, anonymous letters."

"Oh, of course they wouldn't be signed. In a different style? In different handwritings?"

"Yes."

"And were they buffoonery like this one?"

"Yes, and you know . . . very disgusting."

"Well, if you had them before, it must be the same thing now."

"Especially because it's so stupid. Because these people are educated and wouldn't write so stupidly."

"Of course, of course."

"But what if this is some one who really wants to turn informer?"

"It's not very likely," Pyotr Stepanovitch rapped out dryly. "What does he mean by a telegram from the Secret Police and; a pension? It's obviously a hoax."

“Yes, yes,” Lembke admitted, abashed.

“I tell you what: you leave this with me. I can certainly; find out for you before I track out the others.”

“Take it,” Lembke assented, though with some hesitation.

“Have you shown it to anyone?”

“Is it likely! No.”

“Not to Yulia Mihailovna?”

“Oh, Heaven forbid! And for God’s sake don’t you show it her!” Lembke cried in alarm. “She’ll be so upset . . . and will be dreadfully angry with me.”

“Yes, you’ll be the first to catch it; she’d say you brought it on yourself if people write like that to you. I know what women’s logic is. Well, good-bye. I dare say I shall bring you the writer in a couple of days or so. Above all, our compact!”

IV

Though Pyotr Stepanovitch was perhaps far from being a stupid man, Fedka the convict had said of him truly “that he would make up a man himself and go on living with him too.” He came away from Lembke fully persuaded that for the next six days, anyway, he had put his mind at rest, and this interval was absolutely necessary for his own purposes. But it was a false idea and founded entirely on the. fact that he had made up for himself once for all an Andrey Antonovitch who was a perfect simpleton.

Like every morbidly suspicious man, Andrey Antonovitch was always exceedingly and joyfully trustful the moment he got on to sure ground. The new turn of affairs struck him at first in a rather favourable light in spite of some fresh and troublesome complications. Anyway, his former doubts fell to the ground. Besides, he had been so tired for the last few days, so exhausted and helpless, that his soul involuntarily yearned for rest. But alas! he was again uneasy. The long time he had spent in Petersburg had left ineradicable traces in his heart. The official and even the secret history of the “younger generation “was fairly familiar to him — he was a curious man and used to collect manifestoes — but he could never understand a word of it. Now he felt like a man lost in a forest. Every instinct told him that there was something in Pyotr Stepanovitch’s words utterly incongruous, anomalous, and grotesque, “though there’s no telling what may not happen

with this ‘younger generation,’ and the devil only knows what’s going on among them,” he mused, lost in perplexity.

And at this moment, to make matters worse, Blum poked his head in. He had been waiting not far off through the whole of Pyotr Stepanovitch’s visit. This Blum was actually a distant relation of Andrey Antonovitch, though the relationship had always been carefully and timorously concealed. I must apologise to the reader for devoting a few words here to this insignificant person. Blum was one of that strange class of “unfortunate” Germans who are unfortunate not through lack of ability but through some inexplicable ill luck. “Unfortunate” Germans are not a myth, but really do exist even in Russia, and are of a special type. Andrey Antonoyitch had always had a quite touching sympathy for him, and wherever he could, as he rose himself in the service, had promoted him to subordinate positions under him; but Blum had never been successful. Either the post was abolished after he had been appointed to it, or a new chief took charge of the department; once he was almost arrested by mistake with other people. He was precise, but he was gloomy to excess and to his own detriment. He was tall and had red hair; he stooped and was depressed and even sentimental; and in spite of his being humbled by his life, he was obstinate and persistent as an ox, though always at the wrong moment. For Andrey Antonovitch he, as well as his wife and numerous family, had cherished for many years a reverent devotion. Except Andrey Antonovitch no one had ever liked him. Yulia Mihailovna would have discarded him from the first, but could not overcome her husband’s obstinacy. It was the cause of their first conjugal quarrel. It had happened soon after their marriage, in the early days of their honeymoon, when she was confronted with Blum, who, together with the humiliating secret of his relationship, had been until then carefully concealed from her. Andrey Antonovitch besought her with clasped hands, told her pathetically all the story of Blum and their friendship from childhood, but Yulia Mihailovna considered herself disgraced for ever, and even had recourse to fainting. Von Lembke would not budge an inch, and declared that he would not give up Blum or part from him for anything in the world, so that she was surprised at last and was obliged to put up with Blum. It was settled, however, that the relationship should be concealed even more carefully than before if possible, and that even Blum’s Christian name and patronymic should be changed, because he too was for some reason called Andrey Antonovitch. Blum knew no one in the town except

the German chemist, had not called on anyone, and led, as he always did, a lonely and niggardly existence. He had long been aware of Andrey Antonovitch's literary peccadilloes. He was generally summoned to listen to secret *tete-a-tete* readings of his novel; he would sit like a post for six hours at a stretch, perspiring and straining his utmost to keep awake and smile. On reaching home he would groan with his long-legged and lanky wife over their benefactor's unhappy weakness for Russian literature.

Andrey Antonovitch looked with anguish at Blum.

"I beg you to leave me alone, Blum," he began with agitated haste, obviously anxious to avoid any renewal of the previous conversation which had been interrupted by Pyotr Stepanovitch.

"And yet this may be arranged in the most delicate way and with no publicity; you have full power." Blum respectfully but obstinately insisted on some point, stooping forward and coming nearer and nearer by small steps to Andrey Antonovitch.

"Blum, you are so devoted to me and so anxious to serve me that I am always in a panic when I look at you."

"You always say witty things, and sleep in peace satisfied with what you've said, but that's how you damage yourself."

"Blum, I have just convinced myself that it's quite a mistake, quite a mistake."

"Not from the words of that false, vicious young man whom you suspect yourself? He has won you by his flattering praise of your talent for literature."

"Blum, you understand nothing about it; your project is absurd, I tell you. We shall find nothing and there will be a fearful upset and laughter too, and then Yulia Mihailovna . . ."

"We shall .certainly find everything we are looking for." Blum advanced firmly towards him, laying his right hand on his heart. "We will make a search suddenly early in the morning, carefully showing every consideration for the person himself and strictly observing all the prescribed forms of the law. The young men, Lyamshin and Telyatnikov, assert positively that we shall find all we want. They were constant visitors there. Nobody is favourably disposed to Mr. Verhovensky. Madame Stavrogin has openly refused him her graces, and every honest man, if only there is such a one in this coarse town, is persuaded that a hotbed of infidelity and social doctrines has always been concealed there. He keeps all the forbidden

books, Ryliev's. 'Reflections,' all. Herzen's works. ... I have an approximate catalogue, in case of need."

"Oh heavens! Every one has these books; how simple you are, my poor Blum."

"And many manifestoes," Blum went on without heeding the observation. "We shall end by certainly coming upon traces of the real manifestoes here. That young Verhovensky I feel very suspicious of."

"But you are mixing up the father and the son. They are not on good terms. The son openly laughs at his father."

"That's only a mask."

"Blum, you've sworn to torment me! Think! he is a conspicuous figure here, after all. He's been a professor, he is a well-known man. He'll make such an uproar and there will be such gibes all over the town, and we shall make a mess of it all. . . . And only think how Yulia Mihailovna will take it." Blum pressed forward and did not listen. "He was only a lecturer, only a lecturer, and of a low rank when he retired." He smote himself on the chest. "He has no marks of distinction. He was discharged from the service on suspicion of plots against the government. He has been under secret supervision, and undoubtedly still is so. And in view of the disorders that have come to light now, you are undoubtedly bound in duty. You are losing your chance of distinction by letting slip the real criminal."

"Yulia Mihailovna! Get away, Blum," Von Lembke cried suddenly, hearing the voice of his spouse in the next room. Blum started but did not give in.

"Allow me, allow me," he persisted, pressing both hands still more tightly on his chest.

"Get away!" hissed Andrey Antonovitch. "Do what you like . . . afterwards. Oh, my God!"

The curtain was raised and Yulia Mihailovna made her appearance. She stood still majestically at the sight of Blum, casting a haughty and offended glance at him, as though the very presence of this man was an affront to her. Blum respectfully made her a deep bow without speaking and, doubled up with veneration, moved towards the door on tiptoe with his arms held a little away from him.

Either because he really took Andrey Antonovitch's last hysterical outbreak as a direct permission to act as he was asking, or whether he strained a point in this case for the direct advantage of his benefactor,

because he was too confident that success would crown his efforts; anyway, as we shall see later on, this conversation of the governor with his subordinate led to a very surprising event which amused many people, became public property, moved Yulia Mihailovna to fierce anger, utterly disconcerting Andrey Antonovitch and reducing him at the crucial moment to a state of deplorable indecision.

It was a busy day for Pyotr Stepanovitch. From Von Lembke he hastened to Bogoyavlensky Street, but as he went along Bykovy Street, past the house where Karmazinov was staying," he suddenly stopped, grinned, and went into the house. The servant told him that he was expected, which interested him, as he had said nothing beforehand of his coming.

But the great writer really had been expecting him, not only that day but the day before and the day before that. Three days before he had handed him his manuscript *Merci* (which . he had meant to read at the literary matinee at Yulia Mihailovna's fete). He had done this out of amiability, fully convinced that he was agreeably nattering the young man's vanity by letting him read the great work beforehand. Pyotr Stepanovitch had noticed long before that this vainglorious, spoiled gentleman, who was so offensively unapproachable for all but the elect, this writer "with the intellect of a statesman," was simply trying to curry favour with him, even with avidity. I believe the young man guessed at last that Karmazinov considered him, if not the leader of the whole secret revolutionary movement in Russia, at least one of those most deeply initiated into the secrets of the Russian revolution who had an incontestable influence on the younger generation. The state of mind of "the cleverest man in Russia" interested Pyotr Stepanovitch, but hitherto he had, for certain reasons, avoided explaining himself.

The great writer was staying in the house belonging to his sister, who was the wife of a *kammerherr* and had an estate in the neighbourhood. Both she and her husband had the deepest reverence for their illustrious relation, but to their profound regret both of them happened to be in Moscow at the time of his visit, so that the honour of receiving him fell to the lot of an old lady, a poor relation of the kammerherr's, who had for years lived in the family and looked after the housekeeping. All the household had moved about on tiptoe since Karmazinov's arrival. The old lady sent news to Moscow almost every day, how he had slept, what he had deigned to eat, and had once sent a telegram to announce that after a dinner-party at the

mayor’s he was obliged to take a spoonful of a well-known medicine. She rarely plucked up courage to enter his room, though he behaved courteously to her, but dryly, and only talked to her of what was necessary.

When Pyotr Stepanovitch came in, he was eating his morning cutlet with half a glass of red wine. Pyotr Stepanovitch had been to see him before and always found him eating this cutlet, which he finished in his presence without ever offering him anything. After the cutlet a little cup of coffee was served. The footman who brought in the dishes wore a swallow-tail coat, noiseless boots, and gloves.

“Ha ha!” Karmazinov got up from the sofa, wiping his mouth with a table-napkin, and came forward to kiss him with an air of unmixed delight — after the characteristic fashion of Russians if they are very illustrious. But Pyotr Stepanovitch knew by experience that, though Karmazinov made a show of kissing him, he really only proffered his cheek, and so this time he did the same: the cheeks met. Karmazinov did not show that he noticed it, sat down on the sofa, and affably offered Pyotr Stepanovitch an easy chair facing him, in which the latter stretched himself at once.

“You don’t . . . wouldn’t like some lunch?” inquired Karmazinov, abandoning his usual habit but with an air, of course, which would prompt a polite refusal. Pyotr Stepanovitch at once expressed a desire for lunch. A shade of offended surprise darkened the face of his host, but only for an instant; he nervously rang for the servant and, in spite of all his breeding, raised his voice scornfully as he gave orders for a second lunch to be served.

“What will you have, cutlet or coffee?” he asked once more,

“A cutlet and coffee, and tell him to bring some more wine, I am hungry,” answered Pyotr Stepanovitch, calmly scrutinising his host’s attire. Mr. Karmazinov was wearing a sort of indoor wadded jacket with pearl buttons, but it was too short, which was far from becoming to his rather comfortable stomach and the solid curves of his hips. But tastes differ. Over his knees he had a checkered woollen plaid reaching to the floor, though it was warm in the room.

“Are you unwell?” commented Pyotr Stepanovitch.

“No, not unwell, but I am afraid of being so in this climate,” answered the writer in his squeaky voice, though he uttered each word with a soft cadence and agreeable gentlemanly lisp. “I’ve been expecting you since yesterday.”

“Why? I didn’t say I’d come.”

“No, but you have my manuscript. Have you . . . read it?”

“Manuscript? Which one?”

Karmazinov was terribly surprised.

“But you’ve brought it with you, haven’t you?” He was so disturbed that he even left off eating and looked at Pyotr Stepanovitch with a face of dismay.

“Ah, that *Bon jour* you mean. ...”

“*Merci.”*

“Oh, all right. I’d quite forgotten it and hadn’t read it; I haven’t had time. I really don’t know, it’s not in my pockets . . . it must be on my table. Don’t be uneasy, it will be found.”

“No, I’d better send to your rooms at once. It might be lost; besides, it might be stolen.”

“Oh, who’d want it! But why are you so alarmed? Why, Yulia Mihailovna told me you always have several copies made — one kept at a notary’s abroad, another in Petersburg, a third in Moscow, and then you send some to a bank, I believe.”

“But Moscow might be burnt again and my manuscript with it. No, I’d better send at once.”

“Stay, here it is!” Pyotr Stepanovitch pulled a roll of note-paper out of a pocket at the back of his coat. “It’s a little crumpled. Only fancy, it’s been lying there with my pocket-handkerchief ever since I took it from you; I forgot it.”

Karmazinov greedily snatched the manuscript, carefully examined it, counted the pages, and laid it respectfully beside him on a special table, for the time, in such a way that he would not lose sight of it for an instant.

“You don’t read very much, it seems?” he hissed, unable to restrain himself.

“No, not very much.”

“And nothing in the way of Russian literature?”

“In the way of Russian literature? Let me see, I have read something. ... ‘On the Way’ or ‘Away!’ or ‘At the Parting of the Ways’ — something of the sort; I don’t remember. It’s a long time since I read it, five years ago. I’ve no time.”

A silence followed.

“When I came I assured every one that you were a very intelligent man, and now I believe every one here is wild over you.”

“Thank you,” Pyotr Stepanovitch answered calmly.

Lunch was brought in. Pyotr Stepanovitch pounced on the cutlet with extraordinary appetite, had eaten it in a trice, tossed off the wine and swallowed his coffee.

“This boor,” thought Karmazinov, looking at him askance as he munched the last morsel and drained the last drops— “this boor probably understood the biting taunt in my words . . . and no doubt he has read the manuscript with eagerness; he is simply lying with some object. But possibly he is not lying and is only genuinely stupid. I like a genius to be rather stupid. Mayn’t he be a sort of genius among them? Devil take the fellow!”

He got up from the sofa and began pacing from one end of the room to the other for the sake of exercise, as he always did after lunch.

“Leaving here soon?” asked Pyotr Stepanovitch from his easy chair, lighting a cigarette.

“I really came to sell an estate and I am in the hands of my bailiff.”

“You left, I believe, because they expected an epidemic out there after the war?”

“N-no, not entirely for that reason,” Mr. Karmazinov went on, uttering his phrases with an affable intonation, and each time he turned round in pacing the corner there was a faint but jaunty quiver of his right leg. “I certainly intend to live as long as I can.” He laughed, not without venom. “There is something in our Russian nobility that makes them wear out very quickly, from every point of view. But I wish to wear out as late as possible, and now I am going abroad for good; there the climate is better, the houses are of stone, and everything stronger. Europe will last my time, I think. What do you think?”

“How can I tell?”

“H’m. If the Babylon out there really does fall, and great will be the fall thereof (about which I quite agree with you, yet I think it will last my time), there’s nothing to fall here in Russia, comparatively speaking. There won’t be stones to fall, everything will crumble into dirt. Holy Russia has less power of resistance than anything in the world. The Russian peasantry is still held together somehow by the Russian God; but according to the latest accounts the Russian God is not to be relied upon, and scarcely survived the

emancipation; it certainly gave Him a severe shock. And now, what with railways, what with you . . . I've no faith in the Russian God."

"And how about the European one?"

"I don't believe in any. I've been slandered to the youth of Russia. I've always sympathised with every movement among them. I was shown the manifestoes here. Every one looks at them with perplexity because they are frightened at the way things are put in them, but every one is convinced of their power even if they don't admit it to themselves. Everybody has been rolling downhill, and every one has known for ages that they have nothing to clutch at. I am persuaded of the success of this mysterious propaganda, if only because Russia is now pre-eminently the place in all the world where anything you like may happen without any opposition. I understand only too well why wealthy Russians all flock abroad, and more and more so every year. It's simply instinct. If the ship is sinking, the rats are the first to leave it. Holy Russia is a country of wood, of poverty . . . and of danger, the country of ambitious beggars in its upper classes, while the immense majority live in poky little huts. She will be glad of any way of escape; you have only to present it to her. It's only the government that still means to resist, but it brandishes its cudgel in the dark and hits its own men. Everything here is doomed and awaiting the end. Russia as she is has no future. I have become a German and I am proud of it."

"But you began about the manifestoes. Tell me everything: how do you look at them?"

"Every one is afraid of them, so they must be influential. They openly unmask what is false and prove that there is nothing to lay hold of among us, and nothing to lean upon. They speak aloud while all is silent. What is most effective about them (in spite of their style) is the incredible boldness with which they look the truth straight in the face. To look facts straight in the face is only possible to Russians of this generation. No, in Europe they are not yet so bold; it is a realm of stone, there there is still something to lean upon. So far as I see and am able to judge, the whole essence of the Russian revolutionary idea lies in the negation of honour. I like its being so boldly and fearlessly expressed. No, in Europe they wouldn't understand it yet, but that's just what we shall clutch at. For a Russian a sense of honour is only a superfluous burden, and it always has been a burden through all his history. The open 'right to dishonour "will attract him more than anything. I belong to the older generation and, I must confess, still cling to

honour, but only from habit. It is only that I prefer the old forms, granted it's from timidity; you see one must live somehow what's left of one's life."

He suddenly stopped.

"I am talking," he thought, "while he holds his tongue and watches me. He has come to make me ask him a direct question. And I shall ask him."

"Yulia Mihailovna asked me by some stratagem to find out from you what the surprise is that you are preparing for the ball to-morrow," Pyotr Stepanovitch asked suddenly.

"Yes, there really will be a surprise and I certainly shall astonish . . ," said Karmazinov with increased dignity. "But I won't tell you what the secret is."

Pyotr Stepanovitch did not insist.

"There is a young man here called Shatov," observed the great writer. "Would you believe it, I haven't seen him."

"A very nice person. What about him?"

"Oh, nothing. He talks about something. Isn't he the person who gave Stavrogin that slap in the face?"

"Yes."

"And what's your opinion of Stavrogin?"

"I don't know; he is such a flirt."

Karmazinov detested Stavrogin because it was the latter s habit not to take any notice of him.

"That flirt," he said, chuckling, "if what is advocated in your manifestoes ever comes to pass, will be the first to be hanged."

"Perhaps before," Pyotr Stepanovitch said suddenly.

"Quite right too," Karmazinov assented, not laughing, and with pronounced gravity.

"You have said so once before, and, do you know, I repeated it to him."

"What, you surely didn't repeat it?" Karmazinov laughed again.

"He said that if he were to be hanged it would be enough for you to be flogged, not simply as a compliment but to hurt, as they flog the peasants."

Pyotr Stepanovitch took his hat and got up from his seat. Karmazinov held out both hands to him at parting.

"And what if all that you are . . . plotting for is destined to come to pass . . ," he piped suddenly, in a honeyed voice with a peculiar intonation, still holding his hands in his. "How soon could it come about?"

“How could I tell?” Pyotr Stepanovitch answered rather roughly. They looked intently into each other’s eyes.

“At a guess? Approximately?” Karmazinov piped still more sweetly.

“You’ll have time to sell your estate and time to clear out too,” Pyotr Stepanovitch muttered still more roughly. They looked at one another even more intently.

There was a minute of silence.

“It will begin early next May and will be over by October,” Pyotr Stepanovitch said suddenly.

“I thank you sincerely,” Karmazinov pronounced in a voice saturated with feeling, pressing his hands.

“You will have time to get out of the ship, you rat,” Pyotr Stepanovitch was thinking as he went out into the street. “Well, if that ‘imperial intellect’ inquires so confidently of the day and the hour and thanks me so respectfully for the information I have given, we mustn’t doubt of ourselves. [He grinned.] H’m! But he really isn’t stupid . . . and he is simply a rat escaping; men like that don’t tell tales!”

He ran to Filipov’s house in Bogoyavlensky Street.

VI

Pyotr Stepanovitch went first to Kirillov’s. He found him, as usual, alone, and at the moment practising gymnastics, that is, standing with his legs apart, brandishing his arms above his head in a peculiar way. On the floor lay a ball. The tea stood cold on the table, not cleared since breakfast. Pyotr Stepanovitch stood for a minute on the threshold.

“You are very anxious about your health, it seems,” he said in a loud and cheerful tone, going into the room. “What a jolly ball, though; foo, how it bounces! Is that for gymnastics too?”

Kirillov put on his coat.

“Yes, that’s for the good of my health too,” he muttered dryly. “Sit down.”

“I’m only here for a minute. Still, I’ll sit down. Health is all very well, but I’ve come to remind you of our agreement. The appointed time is approaching ... in a certain sense,” he concluded awkwardly.

“What agreement?”

“How can you ask?” Pyotr Stepanovitch was startled and even dismayed.

“It’s not an agreement and not an obligation. I have not bound myself in any way; it’s a mistake on your part.”

“I say, what’s this you’re doing?” Pyotr Stepanovitch jumped up.

“What I choose.”

“What do you choose?”

“The same as before.”

“How am I to understand that? Does that mean that you are in the same mind?”

“Yes. Only there’s no agreement and never has been, and I have not bound myself in any way. I could do as I like and I can still do as I like.”

Kirillov explained himself curtly and contemptuously.

“I agree, I agree; be as free as you like if you don’t change your mind.” Pyotr Stepanovitch sat down again with a satisfied air. “You are angry over a word. You’ve become very irritable of late; that’s why I’ve avoided coming to see you, I was quite sure, though, you would be loyal.”

“I dislike you very much, but you can be perfectly sure — though I don’t regard it as loyalty and disloyalty.”

“But do you know” (Pyotr Stepanovitch was startled again) “we must talk things over thoroughly again so as not to get in a muddle. The business needs accuracy, and you keep giving me such shocks. Will you let me speak?”

“Speak,” snapped Kirillov, looking away.

“You made up your mind long ago to take your life ... I mean, you had the idea in your mind. Is that the right expression? Is there any mistake about that?”

“I have the same idea still.”

“Excellent. Take note that no one has forced it on you.”

“Rather not; what nonsense you talk.”

“I dare say I express it very stupidly. Of course, it would be very stupid to force anybody to it. I’ll go on. You were a member of the society before its organisation was changed, and confessed it to one of the members.”

“I didn’t confess it, I simply said so.”

“Quite so. And it would be absurd to confess such a thing. What a confession! You simply said so. Excellent.”

“No, it’s not excellent, for you are being tedious. I am not obliged to give you any account of myself and you can’t understand my ideas. I want to put an end to my life, because that’s my idea, because I don’t want to be afraid

of death, because . . . because there's no need for you to know. What do you want? Would you like tea? It's cold. Let me get you another glass."

Pyotr Stepanovitch actually had taken up the teapot and was looking for an empty glass. Kirillov went to the cupboard and brought a clean glass.

"I've just had lunch at Karmazinov's," observed his visitor, "then I listened to him talking, and perspired and .got into a sweat again running here. I am fearfully thirsty."

"Drink. Cold tea is good."

Kirillov sat down on his chair again and again fixed his eyes on the farthest corner.

"The idea had arisen in the society," he went on in the same voice, "that I might be of use if I killed myself, and that when you get up some bit of mischief here, and they are looking for the guilty, I might suddenly shoot myself and leave a letter saying I did it all, so that you might escape suspicion for another year."

"For a few days, anyway; one day is precious."

"Good. So for that reason they asked me, if I would, to wait. I said I'd wait till the society fixed the day, because it makes no difference to me."

"Yes, but remember that you bound yourself not to make up your last letter without me and that in Russia you would be at my . . . well, at my disposition, that is for that purpose only. I need hardly say, in everything else, of course, you are free," Pyotr Stepanovitch added almost amiably.

"I didn't bind myself, I agreed, because it makes no difference to me."

"Good, good. I have no intention of wounding your vanity, but . . ."

"It's not a question of vanity."

"But remember that a hundred and twenty thalers were collected for your journey, so you've taken money."

"Not at all." Kirillov fired up. "The money was not on that condition. One doesn't take money for that."

"People sometimes do."

"That's a lie. I sent a letter from Petersburg, and in Petersburg I paid you a hundred and twenty thalers; I put it in your hand . . . and it has been sent off there, unless you've kept it for yourself."

"All right, all right, I don't dispute anything; it has been sent off. *All* that matters is that you are still in the same mind."

"Exactly the same. When you come and tell me it's time, I'll carry it all out. Will it be very soon?"

“Not very many days. . . . But remember, we’ll make up the letter together, the same night.”

“The same day if you like. You say I must take the responsibility for the manifestoes on myself?”

“And something else too.”

“I am not going to make myself out responsible for everything.”

“What won’t you be responsible for?” said Pyotr Stepanovitch again.

“What I don’t choose; that’s enough. I don’t want to talk about it any more.”

Pyotr Stepanovitch controlled himself and changed the subject.

“To speak of something else,” he began, “will you be with us this evening? It’s Virginsky’s name-day; that’s the pretext for our meeting.”

“I don’t want to.”

“Do me a favour. Do come. You must. We must impress them by our number and our looks. You have a face . . . well, in one word, you have a fateful face.”

“You think so?” laughed Kirillov. “Very well, I’ll come, but not for the sake of my face. What time is it?”

“Oh, quite early, half-past six. And, you know, you can go in, sit down, and not speak to any one, however many there may be there. Only, I say, don’t forget to bring pencil and paper with you.”

“What’s that for?”

“Why, it makes no difference to you, and it’s my special request. You’ll only have to sit still, speaking to no one, listen, and sometimes seem to make a note. You can draw something, if you like.”

“What nonsense! What for?”

“Why, since it makes no difference to you! You keep saying that it’s just the same to you.”

“No, what for?”

“Why, because that member of the society, the inspector, has stopped at Moscow and I told some of them here that possibly the inspector may turn up to-night; and they’ll think that you are the inspector. And as you’ve been here three weeks already, they’ll be still more surprised.”

“Stage tricks. You haven’t got an inspector in Moscow.”

“Well, suppose I haven’t — damn him! — what business is that of yours and what bother will it be to you? You are a member of the society yourself.”

“Tell them I am the inspector; I’ll sit still and hold my tongue, but I won’t have the pencil and paper.”

“But why?”

“I don’t want to.”

Pyotr Stepanovitch was really angry; he turned positively green, but again he controlled himself. He got up and took his hat.

“Is that fellow with you?” he brought out suddenly, in a low voice.

“Yes.”

“That’s good. I’ll soon get him away. Don’t be uneasy.”

“I am not uneasy. He is only here at night. The old woman is in the hospital, her daughter-in-law is dead. I’ve been alone for the last two days. I’ve shown him the place in the paling where you can take a board out; he gets through, no one sees.”

“I’ll take him away soon.”

“He says he has got plenty of places to stay the night in.”

“That’s rot; they are looking for him, but here he wouldn’t be noticed. Do you ever get into talk with him?”

“Yes, at night. He abuses you tremendously. I’ve been reading the ‘Apocalypse’ to him at night, and we have tea. He listened eagerly, very eagerly, the whole night.”

“Hang it all, you’ll convert him to Christianity!”

“He is a Christian as it is. Don’t be uneasy, he’ll do the murder. Whom do you want to murder?”

“No, I don’t want him for that, I want him for something different. . . . And does Shatov know about Pedka?”

“I don’t talk to Shatov, and I don’t see him.”

“Is he angry?”

“No, we are not angry, only we shun one another. We lay too long side by side in America.”

“I am going to him directly.”

“As you like.”

“Stavrogin and I may come and see you from there, about ten o’clock.”

“Do.”

“I want to talk to him about something important. . . . I say, make me a present of your ball; what do you want with it now? I want it for gymnastics too. I’ll pay you for it if you like.”

“You can take it without.”

Pyotr Stepanovitch put the ball in the back pocket of his coat.

“But I’ll give you nothing against Stavrogin,” Kirillov muttered after his guest, as he saw him out. The latter looked at him in amazement but did not answer.

Kirillov’s last words perplexed Pyotr Stepanovitch extremely; he had not time yet to discover their meaning, but even while he was on the stairs of Shatov’s lodging he tried to remove all trace of annoyance and to assume an amiable expression. Shatov was at home and rather unwell. He was lying on his bed, though dressed.

“What bad luck!” Pyotr Stepanovitch cried out in the doorway. “Are you really ill?”

The amiable expression of his face suddenly vanished; there was a gleam of spite in his eyes.

“Not at all.” Shatov jumped up nervously. “I am not ill at all ... a little headache . . .”

He was disconcerted; the sudden appearance of such a visitor positively alarmed him.

“You mustn’t be ill for the job I’ve come about,” Pyotr Stepanovitch began quickly and, as it were, peremptorily. “Allow me to sit down.” (He sat down.) “And you sit down again on your bedstead; that’s right. There will be a party of our fellows at Virginsky’s to-night on the pretext of his birthday; it will have no political character, however — we’ve seen to that. I am coming with Nikolay Stavrogin. I would not, of course, have dragged you there, knowing your way of thinking at present . . . simply to save your being worried, not because we think you would betray us. But as things have turned out, you will have to go. You’ll meet there the very people with whom we shall finally settle how you are to leave the society and to whom you are to hand over what is in your keeping. We’ll do it without being noticed; I’ll take you aside into a corner; there’ll be a lot of people and there’s no need for every one to know. I must confess I’ve had to keep my tongue wagging on your behalf; but now I believe they’ve agreed, on condition you hand over the printing press and all the papers, of course. Then you can go where you please.”

Shatov listened, frowning and resentful. The nervous alarm of a moment before had entirely left him.

“I don’t acknowledge any sort of obligation to give an account to the devil knows whom,” he declared definitely. “No one has the authority to set

me free.”

“Not quite so. A great deal has been entrusted to you. You hadn’t the right to break off simply. Besides, you made no clear statement about it, so that you put them in an ambiguous position.”

“I stated my position clearly by letter as soon as I arrived here.”

“No, it wasn’t clear,” Pyotr Stepanovitch retorted calmly. “I sent you ‘A Noble Personality’ to be printed here, and meaning the copies to be kept here till they were wanted; and the two manifestoes as well. You returned them with an ambiguous letter which explained nothing.”

“I refused definitely to print them.”

“Well, not definitely. You wrote that you couldn’t, but you didn’t explain for what reason. ‘I can’t’ doesn’t mean’ I don’t want to.’ It might be supposed that you were simply unable through circumstances. That was how they took it, and considered that you still meant to keep up your connection with the society, so that they might have entrusted something to you again and so have compromised themselves. They say here that you simply meant to deceive them, so that you might betray them when you got hold of something important. I have defended you to the best of my powers, and have shown your brief note as evidence in your favour. But I had to admit on rereading those two lines that they were misleading and not conclusive.”

“You kept that note so carefully then?”

“My keeping it means nothing; I’ve got it still.”

“Well, I don’t care, damn it!” Shatov cried furiously. “Your fools may consider that I’ve betrayed them if they like — -what is it to me? I should like to see what you can do to me?”

“Your name would be noted, and at the first success of the revolution you would be hanged.”

“That’s when you get the upper hand and dominate Russia?”

“You needn’t laugh. I tell you again, I-stood up for you. Anyway, I advise you to turn up to-day. Why waste words through false pride? Isn’t it better to part friends? In any case you’ll have to give up the printing press and the old type and papers — that’s what we must talk about.”

“I’ll come,” Shatov muttered, looking down thoughtfully.

Pyotr Stepanovitch glanced askance at him from his place.

“Will Stavrogin be there?” Shatov asked suddenly, raising his head.

“He is certain to be.”

“Ha ha!”

Again they were silent for a minute. Shatov grinned disdainfully and irritably.

“And that contemptible ‘Noble Personality’ of yours, that I wouldn’t print here. Has it been printed?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“To make the schoolboys believe that Herzen himself had written it in your album?”

“Yes, Herzen himself.”

Again they were silent for three minutes. At last Shatov got up from the bed.

“Go out of my room; I don’t care to sit with you.”

“I’m going,” Pyotr Stepanovitch brought out with positive alacrity, getting up at once. “Only one word: Kirillov is quite alone in the lodge now, isn’t he, without a servant?”

“Quite alone. Get along; I can’t stand being in the same room with you.”

“Well, you are a pleasant customer now!” Pyotr Stepanovitch reflected gaily as he went out into the street, “and you will be pleasant this evening too, and that just suits me; nothing better could be wished, nothing better could be wished! The Russian God Himself seems helping me.”

VII

He had probably been very busy that day on all sorts of errands and probably with success, which was reflected in the self-satisfied expression of his face when at six o’clock that evening he turned ‘up at Stavrogin’s. But he was not at once admitted: Stavrogin had just locked himself in the study with Mavriky Nikolaevitch. This news instantly made Pyotr Stepanovitch anxious. He seated himself close to the study door to wait for the visitor to go away. He could hear conversation but could not catch the words. The visit did not last long; soon he heard a noise, the sound of an extremely loud and abrupt voice, then the door opened and Mavriky Nikolaevitch came out with a very pale face. He did not notice Pyotr Stepanovitch, and quickly passed by. Pyotr Stepanovitch instantly ran into the study.

I cannot omit a detailed account of the very brief interview that had taken place between the two “rivals” — an interview which might well have

seemed impossible under the circumstances, but which had yet taken place..

This is how it had come about. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had been enjoying an after-dinner nap on the couch in his study when Alexey Yegorytch had announced the unexpected visitor. Hearing the name, he had positively leapt up, unwilling to believe it. But soon a smile gleamed on his lips — a smile of haughty triumph and at the same time of a blank, incredulous wonder. The visitor, Mavriky Nikolaevitch, seemed struck by the expression of that smile as he came in; anyway, he stood still in the middle of the room as though uncertain whether to come further in or to turn back. Stavrogin succeeded at once in transforming the expression of his face, and with an air of grave surprise took a step towards him. The visitor did not take his outstretched hand, but awkwardly moved a chair and, not uttering a word, sat down without waiting for his host to do so. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch sat down on the sofa facing him obliquely and, looking at Mavriky Nikolaevitch, waited in silence.

“If you can, marry Lizaveta Nikolaevna,” Mavriky Nikolaevitch brought out suddenly at last, and what was most curious, it was impossible to tell from his tone whether it was an entreaty, a recommendation, a surrender, or a command.

Stavrogin still remained silent, but the visitor had evidently said all he had come to say and gazed at him persistently, waiting for an answer.

“If I am not mistaken (but it’s quite certain), Lizaveta Nikolaevna is already betrothed to you,” Stavrogin said at last.

“Promised and betrothed,” Mavriky Nikolaevitch assented firmly and clearly.

“You have . . . quarrelled? Excuse me, Mavriky Nikolaevitch.”

“No, she ‘loves and respects me’; those are her words. Her words are more precious than anything.”

“Of that there can be no doubt.”

“But let me tell you, if she were standing in the church at her wedding and you were to call her, she’d give up me and every one and go to you.”

“From the wedding?”

“Yes, and after the wedding.”

“Aren’t you making a mistake?”

“No. Under her persistent, sincere, and intense hatred for you love is flashing out at every moment . . . and madness . . . the sincerest infinite love and . . . madness! On the contrary, behind the love she feels for me, which

is sincere too, every moment there are flashes of hatred . . . the most intense hatred! I could never have fancied all these transitions . . . before.”

“But I wonder, though, how could you come here and dispose of the hand of Lizaveta Nikolaevna? Have you the right to do so? Has she authorised you?”

Mavriky Nikolaevitch frowned and for a minute he looked down.

“That’s all words on your part,” he brought out suddenly, “words of revenge and triumph; I am sure you can read between the lines, and is this the time for petty vanity? Haven’t you satisfaction enough? Must I really dot my *i’s* and go into it all? Very well, I will dot my *i’s*, if you are so anxious for my humiliation. I have no right, it’s impossible for me to be authorised; Lizaveta Nikolaevna knows nothing about it and her betrothed has finally lost his senses and is only fit for a madhouse, and, to crown everything, has come to tell you so himself. You are the only man in the world who can make her happy, and I am the one to make her unhappy. You are trying to get her, you are pursuing her, but — I don’t know why — you won’t marry her. If it’s because of a lovers’ quarrel abroad and I must be sacrificed to end it, sacrifice me. She is too unhappy and I can’t endure it. My words are not a sanction, not a prescription, and so it’s no slur on your pride. If you care to take my place at the altar, you can do it without any sanction from me, and there is no ground for me to come to you with a mad proposal, especially as our marriage is utterly impossible after the step I am taking now. I cannot lead her to the altar feeling myself an abject wretch. What I am doing here and my handing her over to you, perhaps her bitterest foe, is to my mind something so abject that I shall never get over it.”

“Will you shoot yourself on our wedding day?”

“No, much later. Why stain her bridal dress with my blood? Perhaps I shall not shoot myself at all, either now or later.”

“I suppose you want to comfort me by saying that?”

“You? What would the blood of one more mean to you?” He turned pale and his eyes gleamed. A minute of silence followed.

“Excuse me for the questions I’ve asked you,” Stavrogin began again; “some of them I had no business to ask you, but one of them I think I have every right to put to you. Tell me, what facts have led you to form a conclusion as to my feelings for Lizaveta Nikolaevna? I mean to a conviction of a degree of feeling on my part as would justify your coming here . . . and risking such a proposal.”

“What?” Mavriky Nikolaevitch positively started. “Haven’t you been trying to win her? Aren’t you trying to win her, and don’t you want to win her?”

“Generally speaking, I can’t speak of my feeling for this woman or that to a third person or to anyone except the woman herself. You must excuse it, it’s a constitutional peculiarity. But to make up for it, I’ll tell you the truth about everything else; I am married, and it’s impossible for me either to marry or to try ‘to win’ anyone.”

Mavriky Nikolaevitch was so astounded that he started back in his chair and for some time stared fixedly into Stavrogin’s face.

“Only fancy, I never thought of that,” he muttered. “You said then, that morning, that you were not married . . . and so I believed you were not married.”

He turned terribly pale; suddenly he brought his fist down on the table with all his might.

“If after that confession you don’t leave Lizaveta Nikolaevna alone, if you make her unhappy, I’ll kill you with my stick like a dog in a ditch!”

He jumped up and walked quickly out of the room. Pyotr Stepanovitch, running in, found his host in a most unexpected frame of mind.

“Ah, that’s you!” Stavrogin laughed loudly; his laughter seemed to be provoked simply by the appearance of Pyotr Stepanovitch as he ran in with such impulsive curiosity.

“Were you listening at the door? Wait a bit. What have you come about? I promised you something, didn’t I? Ah, bah! I remember, to meet ‘our fellows.’ Let us go. I am delighted. You couldn’t have thought of anything more appropriate.” He snatched up his hat and they both went at once out of the house.

“Are you laughing beforehand at the prospect of seeing ‘our fellows’?” chirped gaily Pyotr Stepanovitch, dodging round him with obsequious alacrity, at one moment trying to walk beside his companion on the narrow brick pavement and at the next running right into the mud of the road; for Stavrogin walked in the middle of the pavement without observing that he left no room for anyone else.

“I am not laughing at all,” he answered loudly and gaily; “on the contrary, I am sure that you have the most serious set of people there.”

“‘Surly dullards,’ as you once deigned to express it.”

“Nothing is more amusing sometimes than a surly dullard.”

“Ah, you mean Mavriky Nikolaevitch ‘? I am convinced he came to give up his betrothed to you, eh? I egged him on to do it, indirectly, would you believe it? And if he doesn’t give her up, we’ll take her, anyway, won’t we — eh?”

Pyotr Stepanovitch knew no doubt that he was running some risk in venturing on such sallies, but when he was excited he preferred to risk anything rather than to remain in uncertainty. Stavrogin only laughed.

“You still reckon you’ll help me?” he asked. “If you call me. But you know there’s one way, and the best one.”

“Do I know your way?”

“Oh no, that’s a secret for the time. Only remember, a secret has its price.”

“I know what it costs,” Stavrogin muttered to himself, but he restrained himself and was silent.

“What it costs? What did you say?” Pyotr Stepanovitch was startled.

“I said, ‘Damn you and your secret!’ You’d better be telling me who will be there. I know that we are going to a name-day party, but who will be there?”

“Oh, all sorts! Even Kirillov.”

“All members of circles?”

“Hang it all, you are in a hurry! There’s not one circle formed yet.”

“How did you manage to distribute so many manifestoes then?”

“Where we are going only four are members of the circle. The others on probation are spying on one another with jealous eagerness, and bring reports to me. They are a trustworthy set. It’s all material which we must organise, and then we must clear out. But you wrote the rules yourself, there’s no need to explain.”

“Are things going badly then? Is there a hitch?”

“Going? Couldn’t be better. It will amuse you: the first thing which has a tremendous effect is giving them titles. Nothing has more influence than a title. I invent ranks and duties on purpose; I have secretaries, secret spies, treasurers, presidents, registrars, their assistants — they like it awfully, it’s taken capitally. Then, the next force is sentimentalism, of course. You know, amongst us socialism spreads principally through sentimentalism. But the trouble is these lieutenants who bite; sometimes you put your foot in it. Then come the out-and-out rogues; well, they are a good sort, if you like, and sometimes very useful; but they waste a lot of one’s time, they want

incessant looking after. And the most important force of all — the cement that holds everything together — is their being ashamed of having an opinion of their own. That is a force! And whose work is it, whose precious achievement is it, that not one idea of their own is left in their heads! They think originality a disgrace."

"If so, why do you take so much trouble?"

"Why, if people lie simply gaping at every one, how can you resist annexing them? Can you seriously refuse to believe in the possibility of success? Yes, you have the faith, but one wants will. It's just with people like this that success is possible. I tell you I could make them go through fire; one has only to din it into them that they are not advanced enough. The fools reproach me that I have taken in every one here over the central committee and 'the innumerable branches.' You once blamed me for it yourself, but where's the deception? You and I are the central committee and there will be as many branches as we like."

"And always the same sort of rabble!"

"Raw material. Even they will be of use."

"And you are still reckoning on me?"

"You are the chief, you are the head; I shall only be a subordinate, your secretary. We shall take to our barque, you know; the oars are of maple, the sails are of silk, at the helm sits a fair maiden, Lizaveta Nikolaevna . . . hang it, how does it go in the ballad?"

"He is stuck," laughed Stavrogin. "No, I'd better give you my version. There you reckon on your fingers the forces that make up the circles. All that business of titles and sentimentalism is a very good cement, but there is something better; persuade four members of the circle to do for a fifth on the pretence that he is a traitor, and you'll tie them all together with the blood they've shed as though it were a knot. They'll be your slaves, they won't dare to rebel or call you to account. Ha ha ha!"

"But you . . . you shall pay for those words," Pyotr Stepanovitch thought to himself, "and this very evening, in fact. You go too far."

This or something like this must have been Pyotr Stepanovitch's reflection. They were approaching Virginsky's house.

"You've represented me, no doubt, as a member from abroad, an inspector in connection with the *Internationale?*" Stavrogin asked suddenly.

"No, not an inspector; you won't be an inspector; but you are one of the original members from abroad, who knows the most important secrets —

that’s your role. You are going to speak, of course?”

“What’s put that idea into your head?”

“Now you are bound to speak.”

Stavrogin positively stood still in the middle of the street in surprise, not far from a street lamp. Pyotr Stepanovitch faced his scrutiny calmly and defiantly. Stavrogin cursed and went on.

“And are you going to speak?” he suddenly asked Pyotr Stepanovitch.

“No, I am going to listen to yon.”

“Damn you, you really are giving me an idea?”

“What idea?” Pyotr Stepanovitch asked quickly.

“Perhaps I will speak there, but afterwards I will give you a hiding — and a sound one too, you know.”

“By the way, I told Karmazinov this morning that you said he ought to be thrashed, and not simply as a form but to hurt, as they flog peasants.”

“But I never said such a thing; ha ha!”

“No matter. *Se non e vero* ...”

“Well, thanks. I am truly obliged.”

“And another thing. Do you know, Karmazinov says that the essence of our creed is the negation of honour, and that by the open advocacy of a right to be dishonourable a Russian can be won over more easily than by anything.”

“An excellent saying! Golden words!” cried Stavrogin. “He’s hit the mark there! The right to dishonour — why, they’d all flock to us for that, not one would stay behind! And listen, Verhovensky, you are not one of the higher police, are you?”

“Anyone who has a question like that in his mind doesn’t utter it,”

“I understand, but we are by ourselves.”

“No, so far I am not one of the higher police. Enough, here we are. Compose your features, Stavrogin; I always do mine when I go in. A gloomy expression, that’s all, nothing more is wanted; it’s a very simple business.”

CHAPTER VII.

A MEETING

VIRGINSKY LIVED IN HIS OWN house, or rather his wife's, in Muravyin Street. It was a wooden house of one story, and there were no lodgers in it: On the pretext of Virginsky's-name-day party, about fifteen guests were assembled; but the entertainment was not in the least like an ordinary provincial name-day party. From the very beginning of their married life the husband and wife had agreed once for all that it was utterly stupid to invite friends to celebrate name-days, and that "there is nothing to rejoice about in fact." In a few years they had succeeded in completely cutting themselves off from all society. Though he was a man of some ability, and by no means very poor, he somehow seemed to every one an eccentric fellow who was fond of solitude, and, what's more, "stuck up in conversation." Madame Virginsky was a midwife by profession — and by that very fact was on the lowest rung of the social ladder, lower even than the priest's wife in spite of her husband's rank as an officer. But she was conspicuously lacking in the humility befitting her position. And after her very stupid and unpardonably open liaison on principle with Captain Lebyadkin, a notorious rogue, even the most indulgent of our ladies turned away from her with marked contempt. But Madame Virginsky accepted all this as though it were what she wanted. It is remarkable that those very ladies applied to Arina Prohorovna (that is, Madame Virginsky) when they were in an interesting condition, rather than to any one of the other three accoucheuses of the town. She was sent for even by country families living in the neighbourhood, so great was the belief in her knowledge, luck, and skill in critical cases. It ended in her practising only among the wealthiest ladies; she was greedy of money. Feeling her power to the full, she ended by not putting herself out for anyone. Possibly on purpose, indeed, in her practice in the best houses she used to scare nervous patients by the most incredible and nihilistic disregard of good manners, or by jeering at "everything holy," at the very time when "everything holy" might have come in most useful. Our town doctor, Rozanov — he too was an accoucheur — asserted most positively that on one occasion when a patient in labour was crying out and calling on the name of the Almighty, a free-

thinking sally from Arina Prohorovna, fired off like a pistol-shot, had so terrifying an effect on the patient that it greatly accelerated her delivery.

But though she was a nihilist, Madame Virginsky did not, when occasion arose, disdain social or even old-fashioned superstitions and customs if they could be of any advantage to herself. She would never, for instance, have stayed away from a baby's christening, and always put on a green silk dress with a train and adorned her chignon with curls and ringlets for such events, though at other times she positively revelled in slovenliness. And though during the ceremony she always maintained "the most insolent air," so that she put the clergy to confusion, yet when it was over she invariably handed champagne to the guests (it was for that that she came and dressed up), and it was no use trying to take the glass without a contribution to her "porridge bowl."

The guests who assembled that evening at Virginsky's (mostly men) had a casual and exceptional air. There was no supper nor cards. In the middle of the large drawing-room, which was papered with extremely old blue paper, two tables had been put together and covered with a large though not quite clean table-cloth, and on them two samovars were boiling. The end of the table was taken up by a huge tray with twenty-five glasses on it and a basket with ordinary French bread cut into a number of slices, as one sees it in genteel boarding-schools for boys or girls. The tea was poured out by a maiden lady of thirty, Arina Prohorovna's sister, a silent and malevolent creature, with flaxen hair and no eyebrows, who shared her sister's progressive ideas and was an object of terror to Virginsky himself in domestic life. There were only three ladies in the room: the lady of the house, her eyebrowless sister, and Virginsky's sister, a girl who had just arrived from Petersburg. Arina Prohorovna, a good-looking and buxom woman of seven-and-twenty, rather dishevelled, in an everyday greenish woollen dress, was sitting scanning the guests with her bold eyes, and her look seemed in haste to say, "You see I am not in the least afraid of anything." Miss Virginsky, a rosy-cheeked student and a nihilist, who was also good-looking, short, plump and round as a little ball, had settled herself beside Arina Prohorovna, almost in her travelling clothes. She held a roll of paper in her hand, and scrutinised the guests with impatient and roving eyes. Virginsky himself was rather unwell that evening, but he came in and sat in an easy chair by the tea-table. All the guests were sitting down too, and the orderly way in which they were ranged on chairs suggested a

meeting. Evidently all were expecting something and were filling up the interval with loud but irrelevant conversation. When Stavrogin and Verhovensky appeared there was a sudden hush.

But I must be allowed to give a few explanations to make things clear.

I believe that all these people had come together in the agreeable expectation of hearing something particularly interesting, and had notice of it beforehand. They were the flower of the reddest Radicalism of our ancient town, and had been carefully picked out by Virginsky for this "meeting." I may remark, too, that some of them (though not very many) had never visited him before. Of course most of the guests had no clear idea why they had been summoned. It was true that at that time all took Pyotr Stepanovitch for a fully authorised emissary from abroad; this idea had somehow taken root among them at once and naturally flattered them. And yet among the citizens assembled ostensibly to keep a name-day, there were some who had been approached with definite proposals. Pyotr Verhovensky had succeeded in getting together a "quintet" amongst us like the one he had already formed in Moscow and, as appeared later, in our province among the officers. It was said that he had another in X province. This quintet of the elect were sitting now at the general table, and very skilfully succeeded in giving themselves the air of being quite ordinary people, so that no one could have known them. They were — since it is no longer a secret — first Liputin, then Virginsky himself, then Shigalov (a gentleman with long ears, the brother of Madame Virginsky), Lyamshin, and lastly a strange person called Tolkatchenko, a man of forty, who was famed for his vast knowledge of the people, especially of thieves and robbers. He used to frequent the taverns on purpose (though not only with the object of studying the people), and plumed himself on his shabby clothes, tarred boots, and crafty wink and a flourish of peasant phrases. Lyamshin had once or twice brought him to Stepan Trofimovitch's gatherings, where, however, he did not make a great sensation. He used to make his appearance in the town from time to time, chiefly when he was out of a job; he was employed on the railway.

Every one of these fine champions had formed this first group in the fervent conviction that their quintet was only one of hundreds and thousands of similar groups scattered all over Russia, and that they all depended on some immense central but secret power, which in its turn was intimately connected with the revolutionary movement all over Europe. But

I regret to say that even at that time there was beginning to be dissension among them. Though they had ever since the spring been expecting Pyotr Verhovensky, whose coming had been heralded first by Tolkatchenko and then by the arrival of Shigalov, though they had expected extraordinary miracles from him, and though they had responded to his first summons without the slightest criticism, yet they had no sooner formed the quintet than they all somehow seemed to feel insulted; and I really believe it was owing to the promptitude with which they consented to join. They had joined, of course, from a not ignoble feeling of shame, for fear people might say afterwards that they had not dared to join; still they felt Pyotr Verhovensky ought to have appreciated their heroism and have rewarded it by telling them some really important bits of news at least. But Verhovensky was not at all inclined to satisfy their legitimate curiosity, and told them nothing but what was necessary; he treated them in general with great sternness and even rather casually. This was positively irritating, and Comrade Shigalov was already egging the others on to insist on his "explaining himself," though, of course, not at Virginsky's, where so many outsiders were present.

I have an idea that the above-mentioned members of the first quintet were disposed to suspect that among the guests of Virginsky's that evening some were members of other groups, unknown to them, belonging to the same secret organisation and founded in the town by the same Verhovensky; so that in fact all present were suspecting one another, and posed in various ways to one another, which gave the whole party a very perplexing and even romantic air. Yet there were persons present who were beyond all suspicion. For instance, a major in the service, a near relation of Virginsky, a perfectly innocent person who had not been invited but had come of himself for the name-day celebration, so that it was impossible not to receive him. But Virginsky was quite unperturbed, as the major was "incapable of betraying them"; for in spite of his stupidity he had all his life been fond of dropping in wherever extreme Radicals met; he did not sympathise with their ideas himself, but was very fond of listening to them. What's more, he had even been compromised indeed. It had happened in his youth that whole bundles of manifestoes and of numbers of *The flell* had passed through his hands, and although he had been afraid even to open them, yet he would have considered it absolutely contemptible to refuse to distribute them — and there are such people in Russia even to this day.

The rest of the guests were either types of honourable amour-propre crushed and embittered, or types of the generous impulsiveness of ardent youth. There were two or three teachers, of whom one, a lame man of forty-five, a master in the high school, was a very malicious and strikingly vain person; and two or three officers. Of the latter, one very young artillery officer who had only just come from a military training school, a silent lad who had not yet made friends with anyone, turned up now at Virginsky's with a pencil in his hand, and, scarcely taking any part in the conversation, continually made notes in his notebook. Everybody saw this, but every one pretended not to. There was, too, an idle divinity student who had helped Lyamshin to put indecent photographs into the gospel-woman's pack. He was a solid youth with a free-and-easy though mistrustful manner, with an unchangeably satirical smile, together with a calm air of triumphant faith in his own perfection. There was also present, I don't know why, the mayor's son, that unpleasant and prematurely exhausted youth to whom I have referred already in telling the story of the lieutenant's little wife. He was silent the whole evening. Finally there was a very enthusiastic and tousle-headed schoolboy of eighteen, who sat with the gloomy air of a young man whose dignity has been wounded, evidently distressed by his eighteen years. This infant was already the head of an independent group of conspirators which had been formed in the highest class of the gymnasium, as it came out afterwards to the surprise of every one.

I haven't mentioned Shatov. He was there at the farthest corner of the table, his chair pushed back a little out of the row. He gazed at the ground, was gloomily silent, refused tea and bread, and did not for one instant let his cap go out of his hand, as though to show that he was not a visitor, but had come on business, and when he liked would get up and go away. Kirillov was not far from him. He, too, was very silent, but he did not look at the ground; on the contrary, he scrutinised intently every speaker with his fixed, lustreless eyes, and listened to everything without the slightest emotion or surprise. Some of the visitors who had never seen him before stole thoughtful glances at him. I can't say whether Madame Virginsky knew anything about the existence of the quintet. I imagine she knew everything and from her husband. The girl-student, of course, took no part in anything; but she had an anxiety of her own: she intended to stay only a day or two and then to go on farther and farther from one university town to another "to show active sympathy with the sufferings of poor students and to rouse

them to protest.” She was taking with her some hundreds of copies of a lithographed appeal, I believe of her own composition. It is remarkable that the schoolboy conceived an almost murderous hatred for her from the first moment, though he saw her for the first time in his life; and she felt the same for him. The major was her uncle, and met her to-day for the first time after ten years. When Stavrogin and Verhovensky came in, her cheeks were as red as cranberries: she had just quarrelled with her uncle over his views on the woman question.

II

With conspicuous nonchalance Verhovensky lounged in the chair at the upper end of the table, almost without greeting anyone. His expression was disdainful and even haughty. Stavrogin bowed politely, but in spite of the fact that they were all only waiting for them, everybody, as though acting on instruction, appeared scarcely to notice them. The lady of the house turned severely to Stavrogin as soon as he was seated.

“Stavrogin, will you have tea?”

“Please,” he answered.

“Tea for Stavrogin,” she commanded her sister at the samovar. “And you, will you?” (This was to Verhovensky.)

“Of course. What a question to ask a visitor! And give me cream too; you always give one such filthy stuff by way of tea, and with a name-day party in the house!”

“What, you believe in keeping name-days too!” the girl-student laughed suddenly. “We were just talking of that.”

“That’s stale,” muttered the schoolboy at the other end of the table.

“What’s stale? To disregard conventions, even the most innocent is not stale; on the contrary, to the disgrace of every one, so far it’s a novelty,” the girl-student answered instantly, darting forward on her chair. “Besides, there are no innocent conventions,” she added with intensity.

“I only meant,” cried the schoolboy with tremendous excitement, “to say that though conventions of course are stale and must be eradicated, yet about name-days everybody knows that they are stupid and very stale to waste precious time upon, which has been wasted already all over the world, so that it would be as well to sharpen one’s wits on something more useful. . . .”

“You drag it out so, one can’t understand what you mean,” shouted the girl.

“I think that every one has a right to express an opinion as well as every one else, and if I want to express my opinion like anybody else ...”

“No one is attacking your right to give an opinion,” the lady of the house herself cut in sharply. “You were only asked not to ramble because no one can make out what you mean.”

“But allow me to remark that you are not treating me with respect. If I couldn’t fully express my thought, it’s not from want of thought but from too much thought,” the schoolboy muttered, almost in despair, losing his thread completely.

“If you don’t know how to talk, you’d better keep quiet,” blurted out the girl.

The schoolboy positively jumped from his chair.

“I only wanted to state,” he shouted, crimson with shame and afraid to look about him, “that you only wanted to show off your cleverness because Mr. Stavrogin came in — so there!”

“That’s a nasty and immoral idea and shows the worthless-ness of your development. I beg you not to address me again,” the girl rattled off.

“Stavrogin,” began the lady of the house, “they’ve been discussing the rights of the family before you came — this officer here” — she nodded towards her relation, the major— “and, of course, I am not going to worry you with such stale nonsense, which has been dealt with long ago. But how have the rights and duties of the family come about in the superstitious form in which they exist at present? That’s the question. What’s your opinion?”

“What do you mean by ‘come about’?” Stavrogin asked in his turn.

“We know, for instance, that the superstition about God came from thunder and lightning.” The girl-student rushed into the fray again, staring at Stavrogin with her eyes almost jumping out of her head. “It’s well known that primitive man, scared by thunder and lightning, made a god of the unseen enemy, feeling their weakness before it. But how did the superstition of the family arise? How did the family itself arise?”

“That’s not quite the same thing. . . .” Madame Virginsky tried to check her.

“I think the answer to this question wouldn’t be quite discreet,” answered Stavrogin.

“How so?” said the girl-student, craning forward suddenly. But there was an audible titter in the group of teachers, which was at once caught up at the other end by Lyamshin and the schoolboy and followed by a hoarse chuckle from the major.

“You ought to write vaudevilles,” Madame Virginsky observed to Stavrogin.

“It does you no credit, I don’t know what your name is,” the girl rapped out with positive indignation.

“And don’t you be too forward,” boomed the major. “You are a young lady and you ought to behave modestly, and you keep jumping about as though you were sitting on a needle.”

“Kindly hold your tongue and don’t address me familiarly with your nasty comparisons. I’ve never seen you before and I don’t recognise the relationship.”

“But I am your uncle; I used to carry you about when you ere a baby!”

“I don’t care what babies you used to carry about. I didn’t ask you to carry me. It must have been a pleasure to you to do so, you rude officer. And allow me to observe, don’t dare to address me so familiarly, unless it’s as a fellow-citizen. I forbid you to do it, once for all.”

“There, they are all like that!” cried the major, banging the table with his fist and addressing Stavrogin, who was sitting opposite. “But, allow me, I am fond of Liberalism and modern ideas, and I am fond of listening to clever conversation; masculine conversation, though, I warn you. But to listen to these women, these nightly windmills — no, that makes me ache all over! Don’t wriggle about!” he shouted to the girl, who was leaping up from her chair. “No, it’s my turn to speak, I’ve been insulted.”

“You can’t say anything yourself, and only hinder other people talking,” the lady of the house grumbled indignantly.

“No, I will have my say,” said the major hotly, addressing Stavrogin. “I reckon on you, Mr. Stavrogin, as a fresh person who has only just come on the scene, though I haven’t the honour of knowing you. Without men they’ll perish like flies — that’s what I think. All their woman question is only lack of originality. I assure you that all this woman question has been invented for them by men in foolishness and to their own hurt. I only thank God I am not married. There’s not the slightest variety in them, they can’t even invent a simple pattern; they have to get men to invent them for them! Here I used to carry her in my arms, used to dance the mazurka with her when she was

ten years old; to-day she's come, naturally I fly to embrace her, and at the second word she tells me there's no God. She might have waited a little, she was in too great a hurry! Clever people don't believe, I dare say; but that's from their cleverness. But you, chicken, what do you know about God, I said to her. 'Some student taught you, and if he'd taught you to light the lamp before the ikons you would have lighted it.'"

"You keep telling lies, you are a very spiteful person. I proved to you just now the untenability of your position," the girl answered contemptuously, as though disdaining further explanations with such a man. "I told you just now that we've all been taught in the Catechism if you honour your father and your parents you will live long and have wealth. That's in the Ten Commandments. If God thought it necessary to offer rewards for love, your God must be immoral. That's how I proved it to you. It wasn't the second word, and it was because you asserted your rights. It's not my fault if you are stupid and don't understand even now. You are offended and you are spiteful — and that's what explains all your generation."

"You're a goose!" said the major.

"And you are a fool!"

"You can call me names!"

"Excuse me, Kapiton Maximitch, you told me yourself you don't believe in God," Liputin piped from the other end of the table.

"What if I did say so — that's a different matter. I believe, perhaps, only not altogether. Even if I don't believe altogether, still I don't say God ought to be shot. I used to think about God before I left the hussars. From all the poems you would think that hussars do nothing but carouse and drink. Yes, I did drink, maybe, but would you believe it, I used to jump out of bed at night and stood crossing myself before the images with nothing but my socks on, praying to God to give me faith; for even then I couldn't be at peace as to whether there was a God or not. It used to fret me so! In the morning, of course, one would amuse oneself and one's faith would seem to be lost again; and in fact I've noticed that faith always seems to be less in the daytime."

"Haven't you any cards?" asked Verhovensky, with a mighty yawn, addressing Madame Virginsky.

"I sympathise with your question, I sympathise entirely," the girl-student broke in hotly, flushed with indignation at the major's words.

“We are wasting precious time listening to silly talk,” snapped out the lady of the house, and she looked reprovingly at her husband.

The girl pulled herself together.

“I wanted to make a statement to the meeting concerning the sufferings of the students and their protest, but as time is being wasted in immoral conversation ...”

“There’s no such thing as moral or immoral,” the schoolboy brought out, unable to restrain himself as soon as the girl began.

“I knew that, Mr. Schoolboy, long before you were taught it.”

“And I maintain,” he answered savagely, “that you are a child come from Petersburg to enlighten us all, though we know for ourselves the commandment ‘honour thy father and thy mother,’ which you could not repeat correctly; and the fact that it’s immoral every one in Russia knows from Byelinsky.”

“Are we ever to have an end of this?” Madame Virginsky said resolutely to her husband. As the hostess, she blushed for the ineptitude of the conversation, especially as she noticed .smiles and even astonishment among the guests who had been invited for the first time.

“Gentlemen,” said Virginsky, suddenly lifting up his voice, “if anyone wishes to say anything more nearly connected with our business, or has any statement to make, I call upon him to do so without wasting time.”

“I’ll venture to ask one question,” said the lame teacher suavely. He had been sitting particularly decorously and had not spoken till then. “I should like to know, are we some sort of meeting, or are we simply a gathering of ordinary mortals paying a visit? I ask simply for the sake of order and so as not to remain in ignorance.”

This “sly” question made an impression. People looked at each other, every one expecting some one else to answer, and suddenly all, as though at a word of command, turned their eyes to Verhovensky and Stavrogin.

“I suggest our voting on the answer to the question whether we are a meeting or not,” said Madame Virginsky.

“I entirely agree with the suggestion,” Liputin chimed in, “though the question is rather vague.”

“*I* agree too.”

“And so do I,” cried voices. “I too think it would make our proceedings more in order,” confirmed Virginsky.

“To the vote then,” said his wife. “Lyamshin, please sit down to the piano; you can give your vote from there when the voting begins.”

“Again!” cried Lyamshin. “I’ve strummed enough for you.”

“I beg you most particularly, sit down and play. Don’t you care to do anything for the cause?”

“But I assure you, Arina Prohorovna, nobody is eavesdropping. It’s only your fancy. Besides, the windows are high, and people would not understand if they did hear.”

“We don’t understand ourselves,” some one muttered. “But I tell you one must always be on one’s guard. I mean in case there should be spies,” she explained to Verhovensky. “Let them hear from the street that we have music and a name-day party.”

“Hang it all!” Lyamshin swore, and sitting down to the piano, began strumming a valse, banging on the keys almost with his fists, at random.

“I propose that those who want it to be a meeting should put up their right hands,” Madame Virginsky proposed.

Some put them up, others did not. Some held them up and then put them down again and then held them up again. “Poo! I don’t understand it at all,” one officer shouted. “I don’t either,” cried the other.

“Oh, I understand,” cried a third. “If it’s *yes*, you hold your hand up.”

“But what does ‘yes’ mean?”

“Means a meeting.”

“No, it means not a meeting.”

“I voted for a meeting,” cried the schoolboy to Madame Virginsky.

“Then why didn’t you hold up your hand?”

“I was looking at you. You didn’t hold up yours, so I didn’t hold up mine.”

“How stupid! I didn’t hold up my hand because I proposed it. Gentlemen, now I propose the contrary. Those who want a meeting, sit still and do nothing; those who don’t, hold up their right hands.”

“Those who don’t want it?” inquired the schoolboy. “Are you doing it on purpose?” cried Madame Virginsky wrathfully.

“No. Excuse me, those who want it, or those who don’t want it? For one must know that definitely,” cried two or three voices.

“Those who don’t want it — those who *don’t* want it.”

“Yes, tat what is one to do, hold up one’s hand or not hold it up if one doesn’t want it?” cried an officer.

“Ech, we are not accustomed to constitutional methods yet!” remarked the major.

“Mr. Lyamshin, excuse me, but you are thumping so that no one can hear anything,” observed the lame teacher.

“But, upon my word, Arina Prohorovna, nobody is listening, really!” cried Lyamshin, jumping up. “I won’t play! I’ve come to you as a visitor, not as a drummer!”

“Gentlemen,” Virginsky went on, “answer verbally, are we a meeting or not?”

“We are! We are!” was heard on all sides. “If so, there’s no need to vote, that’s enough. Are you satisfied, gentlemen? Is there any need to put it to the vote?”

“No need — no need, we understand.”

“Perhaps some one doesn’t want it to be a meeting?”

“No, no; we all want it.”

“But what does ‘meeting’ mean?” cried a voice. No one answered.

“We must choose a chairman,” people cried from different parts of the room.

“Our host, of course, our host!”

“Gentlemen, if so,” Virginsky, the chosen chairman, began, “I propose my original motion. If anyone wants to say anything more relevant to the subject, or has some statement to make, let him bring it forward without loss of time.”

There was a general silence. The eyes of all were turned again on Verhovensky and Stavrogin.

“Verhovensky, have you no statement to make?” Madame Virginsky asked him directly.

“Nothing whatever,” he answered, yawning and stretching on his chair. “But I should like a glass of brandy.”

“Stavrogin, don’t you want to?”

“Thank you, I don’t drink.”

“I mean don’t you want to speak, not don’t you want brandy.”

“To speak, what about? No, I don’t want to.”

“They’ll bring you some brandy,” she answered Verhovensky, The girl-student got up. She had darted up several times

already.

“I have come to make a statement about the sufferings of poor students and the means of rousing them to protest.”

But she broke off. At the other end of the table a rival had risen, and all eyes turned to him. Shigalov, the man with the long ears, slowly rose from his seat with a gloomy and sullen air and mournfully laid on the table a thick notebook filled with extremely small handwriting. He remained standing in silence. Many people looked at the notebook in consternation, but Liputin, Virginsky, and the lame teacher seemed pleased.

“I ask leave to address the meeting,” Shigalov pronounced sullenly but resolutely.

“You have leave.” Virginsky gave his sanction.

The orator sat down, was silent for half a minute, and pronounced in a solemn voice,

“Gentlemen!”

“Here’s the brandy,” the sister who had been pouring out tea and had gone to fetch brandy rapped out, contemptuously and disdainfully putting the bottle before Verhovensky, together with the wineglass which she brought in her fingers without a tray or a plate.

The interrupted orator made a dignified pause.

“Never mind, go on, I am not listening,” cried Verhovensky, pouring himself out a glass.

“Gentlemen, asking your attention and, as you will see later, soliciting your aid in a matter of the first importance,” Shigalov began again, “I must make some prefatory remarks.”

“Arina Prohorovna, haven’t you some scissors?” Pyotr Stepanovitch asked suddenly.

“What do you want scissors for?” she asked, with wide-open eyes.

“I’ve forgotten to cut my nails; I’ve been meaning to for the last three days,” he observed, scrutinising his long and dirty nails with unruffled composure.

Arina Prohorovna crimsoned, but Miss Virginsky seemed pleased.

“I believe I saw them just now on the window.” She got up from the table, went and found the scissors, and at once brought them. Pyotr Stepanovitch did not even look at her, took the scissors, and set to work with them. Arina Prohorovna grasped that these were realistic manners, and was ashamed of her sensitiveness. People looked at one another in silence.

The lame teacher looked vindictively and enviously at Verhovensky. Shigalov went on.

“Dedicating my energies to the study of the social organisation which is in the future to replace the present condition of things, I’ve come to the conviction that all makers of social systems from ancient times up to the present year, 187-, have been dreamers, tellers of fairy-tales, fools who contradicted themselves, who understood nothing of natural science and the strange animal called man. Plato, Rousseau, Fourier, columns of aluminium, are only fit for sparrows and not for human society. But, now that we are all at last preparing to act, a new form of social organisation is essential. In order to avoid further uncertainty, I propose my own system of world-organisation. Here it is.” He tapped the notebook. “I wanted to expound my views to the meeting in the most concise form possible, but I see that I should need to add a great many verbal explanations, and so the whole exposition would occupy at least ten evenings, one for each of my chapters.” (There was the sound of laughter.) “I must add, besides, that my system is not yet complete.” (Laughter again.) “I am perplexed by my own data and my conclusion is a direct contradiction of the original idea with which I start. Starting from unlimited freedom, I arrive at unlimited despotism. I will add, however, that there can be no solution of the social problem but mine.”

The laughter grew louder and louder, but it came chiefly from the younger and less initiated visitors. There was an expression of some annoyance on the faces of Madame Virginsky, Liputin, and the lame teacher.

“If you’ve been unsuccessful in making your system consistent, and have been reduced to despair yourself, what could we do with it?” one officer observed warily.

“You are right, Mr. Officer” — Shigalov turned sharply to him—” especially in using the word despair. Yes, I am reduced to despair. Nevertheless, nothing can take the place of the system set forth in my book, and there is no other way out of it; no one can invent anything else. And so I hasten without loss of time to invite the whole society to listen for ten evenings to my book and then give their opinions of it. If the members are unwilling to listen to me, let us break up from the start — the men to take up service under government, the women to their cooking; for if you reject my solution you’ll find no other, none whatever! If they let the opportunity

slip, it will simply be their loss, for they will be bound to come back to it again.”

There was a stir in the company. “Is he mad, or what?” voices asked.

“So the whole point lies in Shigalov’s despair,” Lyamshin commented, “and the essential question is whether he must despair or not?”

“Shigalov’s being on the brink of despair is a personal question,” declared the schoolboy.

“I propose we put it to the vote how far Shigalov’s despair affects the common cause, and at the same time whether it’s worth while listening to him or not,” an officer suggested gaily.

“That’s not right.” The lame teacher put in his spoke at last. As a rule he spoke with a rather mocking smile, so that it was difficult to make out whether he was in earnest or joking. “That’s not right, gentlemen. Mr. Shigalov is too much devoted to his task and is also too modest. I know his book. He suggests as a final solution of the question the division of mankind into two unequal parts. One-tenth enjoys absolute liberty and unbounded power over the other nine-tenths. The others have to give up all individuality and become, so to speak, a herd, and, through boundless submission, will by a series of regenerations attain primaeval innocence, something like the Garden of Eden. They’ll have to work, however. The measures proposed by the author for depriving nine-tenths of mankind of their freedom and transforming them into a herd through the education of whole generations are very remarkable, founded on the facts of nature and highly logical. One may not agree with some of the deductions, but it would be difficult to doubt the intelligence and knowledge of the author. It’s a pity that the time required — ten evenings — is impossible to arrange for, or we might hear a great deal that’s interesting.”

“Can you be in earnest?” Madame Virginsky addressed the lame gentleman with a shade of positive uneasiness in her voice, “when that man doesn’t know what to do with people and so turns nine-tenths of them into slaves? I’ve suspected him for a long time.”

“You say that of your own brother?” asked the lame man.

“Relationship? Are you laughing at me?”

“And besides, to work for aristocrats and to obey them as though they were gods is contemptible!” observed the girl-student fiercely.

“What I propose is not contemptible; it’s paradise, an earthly paradise, and there can be no other on earth,” Shigalov pronounced authoritatively.

“For my part,” said Lyamshin, “if I didn’t know what to do with nine-tenths of mankind, I’d take them and blow them up into the air instead of putting them in paradise. I’d only leave a handful of educated people, who would live happily ever afterwards on scientific principles.”

“No one but a buffoon can talk like that!” cried the girl, flaring up.

“He is a buffoon, but he is of use,” Madame Virginsky whispered to her.

“And possibly that would be the best solution of the problem,” said Shigalov, turning hotly to Lyamshin. “You certainly don’t know what a profound thing you’ve succeeded in saying, my merry friend. But as it’s hardly possible to carry out your idea, we must confine ourselves to an earthly paradise, since that’s what they call it.”

“This is pretty thorough rot,” broke, as though involuntarily, from Verhovensky. Without even raising his eyes, however, he went on cutting his nails with perfect nonchalance.

“Why is it rot?” The lame man took it up instantly, as though he had been lying in wait for his first words to catch at them. “Why is it rot? Mr. Shigalov is somewhat fanatical in his love for humanity, but remember that Fourier, still more Cabet and even Proudhon himself, advocated a number of the most despotic and even fantastic measures. Mr. Shigalov is perhaps far more sober in his suggestions than they are. I assure you that when one reads his book it’s almost impossible not to agree with some things. He is perhaps less far from realism than anyone and his earthly paradise is almost the real one — if it ever existed — for the loss of which man is always sighing.”

“I knew I was in for something,” Verhovensky muttered again.

“Allow me,” said the lame man, getting more and more excited. “Conversations and arguments about the future organisation of society are almost an actual necessity for all thinking people nowadays. Herzen was occupied with nothing else all his life. Byelinsky, as I know on very good authority, used to spend whole evenings with his friends debating and settling beforehand even the minutest, so to speak, domestic, details of the social organisation of the future.”

“Some people go crazy over it,” the major observed suddenly.

“We are more likely to arrive at something by talking, anyway, than by sitting silent and posing as dictators,” Liputin hissed, as though at last venturing to begin the attack.

“I didn’t mean Shigalov when I said it was rot,” Verhovensky mumbled. “You see, gentlemen,” — he raised his eyes a trifle— “to my mind all these books, Fourier, Cabet, all this talk about the right to work, and Shigalov’s theories — are all like novels of which one can write a hundred thousand — an aesthetic entertainment. I can understand that in this little town you are bored, so you rush to ink and paper.”

“Excuse me,” said the lame man, wriggling on his chair, “though we are provincials and of course objects of commiseration on that ground, yet we know that so far nothing has happened in the world new enough to be worth our weeping at having missed it. It is suggested to us in various pamphlets made abroad and secretly distributed that we should unite and form groups with the sole object of bringing about universal destruction. It’s urged that, however much you tinker with the world, you can’t make a good job of it, but that by cutting off a hundred million heads and so lightening one’s burden, one can jump over the ditch more safely. A fine idea, no doubt, but quite as impracticable as Shigalov’s theories, which you referred to just now so contemptuously.”

“Well, but I haven’t come here for discussion.” Verhovensky let drop this significant phrase, and, as though quite unaware of his blunder, drew the candle nearer to him that he might see better.

“It’s a pity, a great pity, that you haven’t come for discussion, and it’s a great pity that you are so taken up just now with your toilet.”

“What’s my toilet to you?”

“To remove a hundred million heads is as difficult as to transform the world by propaganda. Possibly more difficult, especially in Russia,” Liputin ventured again.

“It’s Russia they rest their hopes on now,” said an officer.

“We’ve heard they are resting their hopes on it,” interposed the lame man. “We know that a mysterious finger is pointing to our delightful country as the land most fitted to accomplish the great task. But there’s this: by the gradual solution of the problem by propaganda I shall gain something, anyway — I shall have some pleasant talk, at least, and shall even get some recognition from government for my services to the cause of society. But in the second way, by the rapid method of cutting off a hundred million heads, what benefit shall I get personally? If you began advocating that, your tongue might be cut out.”

“Yours certainly would be,” observed Verhovensky.

“You see. And as under the most favourable circumstances you would not get through such a massacre in less than fifty or at the best thirty years — for they are not sheep, you know, and perhaps they would not let themselves be slaughtered — wouldn’t it be better to pack one’s bundle and migrate to some quiet island beyond calm seas and there close one’s eyes tranquilly? Believe me” — he tapped the table significantly with his finger — “you will only promote emigration by such propaganda and nothing else!”

He finished evidently triumphant. He was one of the intellects of the province. Liputin smiled slyly, Virginsky listened rather dejectedly, the others followed the discussion with great attention, especially the ladies and officers. They all realised that the advocate of the hundred million heads theory had been driven into a corner, and waited to see what would come of it.

“That was a good saying of yours, though,” Verhovensky mumbled more carelessly than ever, in fact with an air of positive boredom. “Emigration is a good idea. But all the same, if in spite of all the obvious disadvantages you foresee, more and more come forward every day ready to fight for the common cause, it will be able to do without you. It’s a new Religion, my good friend, coming to take the place of the old one. That’s why so many fighters come forward, and it’s a big movement. You’d better emigrate! And, you know, I should advise Dresden, not ‘the calm islands.’ To begin with, it’s a town that has never been visited by an epidemic, and as you are a man of culture, no doubt you are afraid of death. Another thing, it’s near the Russian frontier, so you can more easily receive your income from your beloved Fatherland. Thirdly, it contains what are called treasures of art, and you are a man of aesthetic tastes, formerly a teacher of literature, I believe. And, finally, it has a miniature Switzerland of its own — to provide you with poetic inspiration, for no doubt you write verse. In fact it’s a treasure in a nutshell!” There was a general movement, especially among the officers. In another instant they would have all begun talking at once. But the lame man rose irritably to the bait.

“No, perhaps I am not going to give up the common cause. You must understand that . . .”

“What, would you join the quintet if I proposed it to you?” Verhovensky boomed suddenly, and he laid down the scissors.

Every one seemed startled. The mysterious man had revealed himself too freely. He had even spoken openly of the “quintet.”

“Every one feels himself to be an honest man and will not shirk his part in the common cause” — the lame man tried to wriggle out of it—” but . . .”

“No, this is not a question which allows of a *but,”* Verhovensky interrupted harshly and peremptorily. “I tell you, gentlemen, I must have a direct answer. I quite understand that, having come here and having called you together myself, I am bound to give you explanations” (again an unexpected revelation), “but I can give you none till I know what is your attitude to the subject. To cut the matter short — for we can’t go on talking for another thirty years as people have done for the last thirty — I ask you which you prefer: the slow way, which consists in the composition of socialistic romances and the academic ordering of the destinies of humanity a thousand years hence, while despotism will swallow the savoury morsels which would almost fly into your mouths of themselves if you’d take a little trouble; or do you, whatever it may imply, prefer a quicker way which will at last untie your hands, and will let humanity make its own social organisation in freedom and in action, not on paper? They shout ‘a hundred million heads’; that may be only a metaphor; but why be afraid of it if, with the slow day-dream on paper, despotism in the course of some hundred years will devour not a hundred but five hundred million heads? Take note too that an incurable invalid will not be cured whatever prescriptions are written for him on paper. On the contrary, if there is delay, he will grow so corrupt that he will infect us too and contaminate all the fresh forces which one might still reckon upon now, so that we shall all at last come to grief together. I thoroughly agree that it’s extremely agreeable to chatter liberally and eloquently, but action is a little trying. . . . However, I am no hand at talking; I came here with communications, and so I beg all the honourable company not to vote, but simply and directly to state which you prefer: walking at a snail’s pace in the marsh, or putting on full steam to get across it?”

“I am certainly for crossing at full steam!” cried the schoolboy in an ecstasy.

“So am I,” Lyamshin chimed in.

“There can be no doubt about the choice,” muttered an officer, followed by another, then by some one else. What struck them all most was that

Verhovensky had come “with communications” and had himself just promised to speak.

“Gentlemen, I see that almost all decide for the policy of the manifestoes,” he said, looking round at the company.

“All, all!” cried the majority of voices.

“I confess I am rather in favour of a more humane policy,” said the major, “but as all are on the other side, I go with all the rest.”

“It appears, then, that even you are not opposed to it,” said Verhovensky, addressing the lame man.

“I am not exactly . . ,” said the latter, turning rather red, “but if I do agree with the rest now, it’s simply not to break up—”

“You are all like that! Ready to argue for six months to practise your Liberal eloquence and in the end you vote the same as the rest! Gentlemen, consider though, is it true that you are all ready?”

(Ready for what? The question was vague, but very alluring.)

“All are, of course!” voices were heard. But all were looking at one another.

“But afterwards perhaps you will resent having agreed so quickly? That’s almost always the way with you.”

The company was excited in various ways, greatly excited. The lame man flew at him.

“Allow me to observe, however, that answers to such questions are conditional. Even if we have given our decision, you must note that questions put in such a strange way ...”

“In what strange way?”

“In a way such questions are not asked.”

“Teach me how, please. But do you know, I felt sure you’d be the first to take offence.”

“You’ve extracted from us an answer as to our readiness for immediate action; but what right had you to do so? By what authority do you ask such questions?”

“You should have thought of asking that question sooner! Why did you answer? You agree and then you go back on it!”

“But to my mind the irresponsibility of your principal question suggests to me that you have no authority, no right, and only asked from personal curiosity.”

“What do you mean? What do you mean?” cried Verhovensky, apparently beginning to be much alarmed.

“Why, that the initiation of new members into anything you like is done, anyway, *tete-a-tete* and not in the company of twenty people one doesn’t know!” blurted out the lame man. He had said all that was in his mind because he was too irritated to restrain himself. Verhovensky turned to the general company with a capitally simulated look of alarm.

“Gentlemen, I deem it my duty to declare that all this is folly, and that our conversation has gone too far. I have so far initiated no one, and no one has the right to say of me that I initiate members. We were simply discussing our opinions. That’s so, isn’t it? But whether that’s so or not, you alarm me very much.” He turned to the lame man again. “I had no idea that it was unsafe here to speak of such practically innocent matters except *tete-a-tete*. Are you afraid of informers? Can there possibly be an informer among us here?”

The excitement became tremendous; all began talking.

“Gentlemen, if that is so,” Verhovensky went on, “*I* have compromised myself more than anyone, and so I will ask you to answer one question, if you care to, of course. You are all perfectly free.”

“What question? What question?” every one clamoured.

“A question that will make it clear whether we are to remain together, or take up our hats and go our several ways without speaking.”

“The question! The question!”

“If any one of us knew of a proposed political murder, would he, in view of all the consequences, go to give information, or would he stay at home and await events? Opinions may differ on this point. The answer to the question will tell us clearly whether we are to separate, or to remain together and for far longer than this one evening. Let me appeal to you first.” He turned to the lame man.

“Why to me first?”

“Because you began it all. Be so good as not to prevaricate; it won’t help you to be cunning. But please yourself, it’s for you to decide.”

“Excuse me, but such a question is positively insulting.”

“No, can’t you be more exact than that?”

“I’ve never been an agent of the Secret Police,” replied the latter, wriggling more than ever.

“Be so good as to be more definite, don’t keep us waiting.”

The lame man was so furious that he left off answering. Without a word he glared wrathfully from under his spectacles at his tormentor.

“Yes or no? Would you inform or not?” cried Verhovensky.

“Of course I wouldn’t,” the lame man shouted twice as loudly.

“And no one would, of course not!” cried many voices.

“Allow me to appeal to you, Mr. Major. Would you inform or not?” Verhovensky went on. “And note that I appeal to you on purpose.”

“I won’t inform.”

“But if you knew that some one meant to rob and murder some one else, an ordinary mortal, then you would inform and give warning?”

“Yes, of course; but that’s a private affair, while the other would be a political treachery. I’ve never been an agent of the Secret Police.”

“And no one here has,” voices cried again. “It’s an unnecessary question. Every one will make the same answer. There are no informers here.”

“What is that gentleman getting up for?” cried the girl-student.

“That’s Shatov. What are you getting up for?” cried the lady of the house.

Shatov did, in fact, stand up. He was holding his cap in his hand and looking at Verhovensky. Apparently he wanted to say something to him, but was hesitating. His face was pale and wrathful, but he controlled himself. He did not say one word, but in silence walked towards the door.

“Shatov, this won’t make things better for you!” Verhovensky called after him enigmatically.

“But it will for you, since you are a spy and a scoundrel!” Shatov shouted to him from the door, and he went out.

Shouts and exclamations again.

“That’s what comes of a test,” cried a voice.

“It’s been of use,” cried another.

“Hasn’t it been of use too late?” observed a third.

“Who invited him? Who let him in? Who is he? Who is Shatov? Will he inform, or won’t he?” There was a shower of questions.

“If he were an informer he would have kept up appearances instead of cursing it all and going away,” observed some one.

“See, Stavrogin is getting up too. Stavrogin has not answered the question either,” cried the girl-student.

Stavrogin did actually stand up, and at the other end of the table Kirillov rose at the same time.

“Excuse me, Mr. Stavrogin,” Madame Virginsky addressed him sharply, “we all answered the question, while you are going away without a word.”

“I see no necessity to answer the question which interests you,” muttered Stavrogin.

“But we’ve compromised ourselves and you won’t,” shouted several voices.

“What business is it of mine if you have compromised yourselves?” laughed Stavrogin, but his eyes flashed.

“What business? What business?” voices exclaimed.

Many people got up from their chairs.

“Allow me, gentlemen, allow me,” cried the lame man. “Mr. Verhovensky hasn’t answered the question either; he has only asked it.”

The remark produced a striking effect. All looked at one another. Stavrogin laughed aloud in the lame man’s face and went out; Kirillov followed him; Verhovensky ran after them into the passage.

“What are you doing?” he faltered, seizing Stavrogin’s hand and gripping it with all his might in his. Stavrogin pulled away his hand without a word.

Â«Â«Be at Kirillov’s directly, I’ll come. . . . It’s absolutely necessary for me to see you! . . .”

“It isn’t necessary for me,” Stavrogin cut him short.

“Stavrogin will be there,” Kirillov said finally. “Stavrogin, it is necessary for you. I will show you that there.”

They went out.

CHAPTER VIII.

IVAN THE TSAREVITCH

they had gone. Pyotr Stepanovitch was about to rush back to the meeting to bring order into chaos, but probably reflecting that it wasn't worth bothering about, left everything, and two minutes later was flying after the other two. On the way he remembered a short cut to Filipov's house. He rushed along it, up to his knees in mud, and did in fact arrive at the very moment when Stavrogin and Kirillov were coming in at the gate.

"You here already?" observed Kirillov. "That's good. Come in."

"How is it you told us you lived alone," asked Stavrogin, passing a boiling samovar in the passage.

"You will see directly who it is I live with," muttered Kirillov. "Go in."

They had hardly entered when Verhovensky at once took out of his pocket the anonymous letter he had taken from Lembke, and laid it before Stavrogin. They all then sat down. Stavrogin read the letter in silence.

"Well?" he asked.

"That scoundrel will do as he writes," Verhovensky explained. "So, as he is under your control, tell me how to act. I assure you he may go to Lembke to-morrow."

"Well, let him go."

"Let him go! And when we can prevent him, too!"

"You are mistaken. He is not dependent on me. Besides, I don't care; he doesn't threaten me in any way; he only threatens you."

"You too."

"I don't think so."

"But there are other people who may not spare you. Surely you understand that? Listen, Stavrogin. This is only playing with words. Surely you don't grudge the money?"

"Why, would it cost money?"

"It certainly would; two thousand or at least fifteen hundred. Give it to me to-morrow or even to-day, and to-morrow evening I'll send him to Petersburg for you. That's just what he wants. If you like, he can take Marya Timofyevna. Note that."

There was something distracted about him. He spoke, as it were, without caution, and he did not reflect on his words. Stavrogin watched him, wondering.

“I’ve no reason to send Marya Timofyevna away.”

“Perhaps you don’t even want to,” Pyotr Stepanovitch smiled ironically.

“Perhaps I don’t.”

“In short, will there be the money or not?” he cried with angry impatience, and as it were peremptorily, to Stavrogin. The latter scrutinised him gravely. “There won’t be the money.”

“Look here, Stavrogin! You know something, or have done something already! You are going it!”

His face worked, the corners of his mouth twitched, and he suddenly laughed an unprovoked and irrelevant laugh.

“But you’ve had money from your father for the estate,” Stavrogin observed calmly. “Maman sent you six or eight thousand for Stepan Trofimovitch. So you can pay the fifteen hundred out of your own money. I don’t care to pay for other people. I’ve given a lot as it is. It annoys me. . . .” He smiled himself at his own words. “Ah, you are beginning to joke!”

Stavrogin got up from his chair. Verhovensky instantly jumped up too, and mechanically stood with his back to the door as though barring the way to him. Stavrogin had already made a motion to push him aside and go out, when he stopped short.

“I won’t give up Shatov to you,” he said. Pyotr Stepanovitch started. They looked at one another.

“I told you this evening why you needed Shatov’s blood,” said Stavrogin, with flashing eyes. “It’s the cement you want to bind your groups together with. You drove Shatov away cleverly just now. You knew very well that he wouldn’t promise not to inform and he would have thought it mean to lie to you. But what do you want with me? What do you want with me? Ever since we met abroad you won’t let me alone. The explanation you’ve given me so far was simply raving. Meanwhile you are driving at my giving Lebyadkin fifteen hundred roubles, so as to give Fedka an opportunity to murder him. I know that you think I want my wife murdered too. You think to tie my hands by this crime, and have me in your power. That’s it, isn’t it? What good will that be to you? What the devil do you want with me? Look at me. Once for all, am I the man for you? And let me alone.”

“Has Fedka been to you himself?” Verhovensky asked breathlessly.

“Yes, he came. His price is fifteen hundred too. . . . But here; he’ll repeat it himself. There he stands.” Stavrogin stretched out his hand.

Pyotr Stepanovitch turned round quickly. A new figure, Fedka, wearing a sheep-skin coat, but without a cap, as though he were at home, stepped out of the darkness in the doorway. He stood there laughing and showing his even white teeth. His black eyes, with yellow whites, darted cautiously about the room watching the gentlemen. There was something he did not understand. He had evidently been just brought in by Kirillov, and his inquiring eyes turned to the latter. He stood in the doorway, but was unwilling to come into the room.

“I suppose you got him ready here to listen to our bargaining, or that he may actually see the money in our hands. Is that it?” asked Stavrogin; and without waiting for an answer he walked out of the house. Verhovensky, almost frantic, overtook him at the gate.

“Stop! Not another step!” he cried, seizing him by the arm. Stavrogin tried to pull away his arm, but did not succeed. He was overcome with fury. Seizing Verhovensky by the hair with his left hand he flung him with all his might on the ground and went out at the gate. But he had not gone thirty paces before Verhovensky overtook him again.

“Let us make it up; let us make it up!” he murmured in a spasmodic whisper.

Stavrogin shrugged his shoulders, but neither answered nor turned round.

“Listen. I will bring you Lizaveta Nikolaevna to-morrow; shall I? No? Why don’t you answer? Tell me what you want. I’ll do it. Listen. I’ll let you have Shatov. Shall I?”

“Then it’s true that you meant to kill him?” cried Stavrogin.

“What do you want with Shatov? What is he to you?” Pyotr Stepanovitch went on, gasping, speaking rapidly. He was in a frenzy, and kept running forward and seizing Stavrogin by the elbow, probably unaware of what he was doing. “Listen. I’ll let you have him. Let’s make it up. Your price is a very great one, but . . . Let’s make it up!”

Stavrogin glanced at him at last, and was amazed. The eyes, the voice, were not the same as always, or as they had been in the room just now. What he saw was almost another face. The intonation of the voice was different. Verhovensky besought, implored. He was a man from whom what

was most precious was being taken or had been taken, and who was still stunned by the shock.

“But what’s the matter with you?” cried Stavrogin. The other did not answer, but ran after him and gazed at him with the same imploring but yet inflexible expression.

“Let’s make it up!” he whispered once more. “Listen. Like Fedka, I have a knife in my boot, but I’ll make it up with you!”

“But what do you want with me, damn you?” Stavrogin cried, with intense anger and amazement. “Is there some mystery about it? Am I a sort of talisman for you?”

“Listen. We are going to make a revolution,” the other muttered rapidly, and almost in delirium. “You don’t believe we shall make a revolution? We are going to make such an upheaval that everything will be uprooted from its foundation. Karmazinov is right that there is nothing to lay hold of. Karmazinov is very intelligent. Another ten such groups in different parts of Russia — and I am safe.”

“Groups of fools like that?” broke reluctantly from Stavrogin.

“Oh, don’t be so clever, Stavrogin; don’t be so clever yourself. And you know you are by no means so intelligent that you need wish others to be. You are afraid, you have no faith. You are frightened at our doing things on such a scale. And why are they fools? They are not such fools. No one has a mind of his own nowadays. There are terribly few original minds nowadays. Virginsky is a pure-hearted man, ten times as pure as you or I; but never mind about him. Liputin is a rogue, but I know one point about him. Every rogue has some point in him. . . . Lyamshin is the only one who hasn’t, but he is in my hands. A few more groups, and I should have money and passports everywhere; so much at least. Suppose it were only that? And safe places, so that they can search as they like. They might uproot one group but they’d stick at the next. We’ll set things in a ferment. . . . Surely you don’t think that we two are not enough?”

“Take Shigalov, and let me alone. ...”

“Shigalov is a man of genius! Do you know he is a genius like Fourier, but bolder than Fourier; stronger. I’ll look after him. He’s discovered ‘equality ‘!”

“He is in a fever; he is raving; something very queer has happened to him,” thought Stavrogin, looking at him once more. Both walked on without stopping.

“He’s written a good thing in that manuscript,” Verhovensky went on. “He suggests a system of spying. Every member of the society spies on the others, and it’s his duty to inform against them. Every one belongs to all and all to every one. All are slaves and equal in their slavery. In extreme cases he advocates slander and murder, but the great thing about it is equality. To begin with, the level of education, science, and talents is lowered. A high level of education and science is only possible for great intellects, and they are not wanted. The great intellects have always seized the power and been despots. Great intellects cannot help being despots and they’ve always done more harm than good. They will be banished or put to death. Cicero will have his tongue cut out, Copernicus will have his eyes put out, Shakespeare will be stoned — that’s Shigalovism. Slaves are bound to be equal. There has never been either freedom or equality without despotism, but in the herd there is bound to be equality, and that’s Shigalovism! Ha ha ha! Do you think it strange? I am for Shigalovism.”

Stavrogin tried to quicken his pace, and to reach home as soon as possible. “If this fellow is drunk, where did he manage to get drunk?” crossed his mind. “Can it be the brandy?”

“Listen, Stavrogin. To level the mountains is a fine idea, not an absurd one. I am for Shigalov. Down with culture. We’ve had enough science! Without science we have material enough to go on for a thousand years, but one must have discipline. The one thing wanting in the world is discipline. The thirst for culture is an aristocratic thirst. The moment you have family ties or love you get the desire for property. We will destroy that desire; we’ll make use of drunkenness, slander, spying; we’ll make use of incredible corruption; we’ll stifle every genius in its infancy. We’ll reduce all to a common denominator! Complete equality! ‘We’ve learned a trade, and we are honest men; we need nothing more,’ that was an answer given by English working-men recently. Only the necessary is necessary, that’s the motto of the whole world henceforward. But it needs a shock. That’s for us, the directors, to look after. Slaves must have directors. Absolute submission, absolute loss of individuality, but once in thirty years Shigalov would let them have a shock and they would all suddenly begin eating one another up, to a certain point, simply as a precaution against boredom. Boredom is an aristocratic sensation. The Shigalovians will have no desires. Desire and suffering are our lot, but Shigalovism is for the slaves.”

“You exclude yourself?” Stavrogin broke in again.

“You, too. Do you know, I have thought of giving up the world to the Pope. Let him come forth, on foot, and barefoot, and show himself to the rabble, saying, ‘See what they have brought me to!’ and they will all rush after him, even the troops. The Pope at the head, with us round him, and below us — Shigalovism. All that’s needed is that the *Internationale* should come to an agreement with the Pope; so it will. And the old chap will agree at once. There’s nothing else he can do. Remember my words! Ha ha! Is it stupid? Tell me, is it stupid or not?”

“That’s enough!” Stavrogin muttered with vexation.

“Enough! Listen. I’ve given up the Pope! Damn Shigalovism! Damn the Pope! We must have something more everyday. Not Shigalovism, for Shigalovism is a rare specimen of the jeweller’s art. It’s an ideal; it’s in the future. Shigalov is an artist and a fool like every philanthropist. We need coarse work, and Shigalov despises coarse work. Listen. The Pope shall be for the west, and you shall be for us, you shall be for us!”

“Let me alone, you drunken fellow!” muttered Stavrogin, and he quickened his pace.

“Stavrogin, you are beautiful,” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, almost ecstatically. “Do you know that you are beautiful! What’s the most precious thing about you is that you sometimes don’t know it. Oh, I’ve studied you! I often watch you on the sly! There’s a lot of simpleheartedness and naivete about you still. Do you know that? There still is, there is! You must be suffering and suffering genuinely from that simple-heartedness. I love beauty. I am a nihilist, but I love beauty. Are nihilists incapable of loving beauty? It’s only idols they dislike, but I love an idol. You are my idol! You injure no one, and every one hates you. You treat every one as an equal, and yet every one is afraid of you — that’s good. Nobody would slap you on the shoulder. You are an awful aristocrat. An aristocrat is irresistible when he goes in for democracy! To sacrifice life, your own or another’s is nothing to you. You are just the man that’s needed. It’s just such a man as you that I need. I know no one but you. You are the leader, you are the sun and I am your worm.”

He suddenly kissed his hand. A shiver ran down Stavrogin’s spine, and he pulled away his hand in dismay. They stood still.

“Madman!” whispered Stavrogin.

“Perhaps I am raving; perhaps I am raving,” Pyotr Stepanovitch assented, speaking rapidly. “But I’ve thought of the first step! Shigalov

would never have thought of it. There are lots of Shigalovs, but only one man, one man in Russia has hit on the first step and knows how to take it. And I am that man! Why do you look at me? I need you, you; without you I am nothing. Without you I am a fly, a bottled idea; Columbus without America."

Stavrogin stood still and looked intently into his wild eyes.

"Listen. First of all we'll make an upheaval," Verhovensky went on in desperate haste, continually clutching at Stavrogin's left sleeve. "I've already told you. We shall penetrate to the peasantry. Do you know that we are tremendously powerful already? Our party does not consist only of those who commit murder and arson, fire off pistols in the traditional fashion, or bite colonels. They are only a hindrance. I don't accept anything without discipline. I am a scoundrel, of course, and not a socialist. Ha ha! Listen. I've reckoned them all up: a teacher who laughs with children at their God and at their cradle; is on our side. The lawyer who defends an educated murderer because he is more cultured than his victims and could not, help murdering them to get money is one of us. The schoolboys who murder a peasant for the sake of sensation are ours. The juries who acquit every criminal are ours. The prosecutor who trembles at a trial for fear he should not seem advanced enough is ours, ours. Among officials and literary men we have lots, lots, and they don't know it themselves. On the other hand, the docility of schoolboys and fools has reached an extreme pitch; the schoolmasters are bitter and bilious. On all sides we see vanity puffed up out of all proportion; brutal, monstrous appetites. . . . Do you know how many we shall catch by little, ready-made ideas? When I left Russia, Littre's dictum that crime is insanity was all the rage; I come back and I find that crime is no longer insanity, but simply common sense, almost a duty; anyway, a gallant protest. 'How can we expect a cultured man not to commit a murder, if he is in need of money.' But these are only the first fruits. The Russian God has already been vanquished by cheap vodka. The peasants are drunk, the mothers are drunk, the children are drunk, the churches are empty, and in the peasant courts one hears, 'Two hundred lashes or stand us a bucket of vodka.' Oh, this generation has only to grow up. It's only a pity we can't afford to wait, or we might have let them get a .bit more tipsy! Ah, what a pity there's no proletariat! But there will be, there will be; we are going that way. . . ."

“It’s a pity, too, that we’ve grown greater fools,” muttered Stavrogin, moving forward as before.

“Listen. I’ve seen a child of six years old leading home his drunken mother, whilst she swore at him with foul words. Do you suppose I am glad of that? When it’s in our hands, maybe we’ll mend things ... if need be, we’ll drive them for forty years into the wilderness. . . . But one or two generations of vice are essential now; monstrous, abject vice by which a man is transformed into a loathsome, cruel, egoistic reptile. That’s what we need! And what’s more, a little ‘fresh blood’ that we may get accustomed to it. Why are you laughing? I am not contradicting myself. I am only contradicting the philanthropists and Shigalovism, not myself! I am a scoundrel, not a socialist. Ha ha ha! I’m only sorry there’s no time. I promised Karmazinov to begin in May, and to make an end by October. Is that too soon? Ha ha! Do you know what, Stavrogin? Though the Russian people use foul language, there’s nothing cynical about them so far. Do you know the serfs had more self-respect than Karmazinov? Though they were beaten they always preserved their gods, which is more than Karmazinov’s done.”

“Well, Verhovensky, this is the first time I’ve heard you talk, and I listen with amazement,” observed Stavrogin. “So you are really not a socialist, then, but some sort of ... ambitious politician?”

“A scoundrel, a scoundrel! You are wondering what I am. I’ll tell you what I am directly, that’s what I am leading up to. It was not for nothing that I kissed your hand. But the people-must believe that we know what we are after, while the other side do nothing but ‘brandish their cudgels and beat their own followers.’ Ah, if we only had more time! That’s the only trouble, we have no time. We will proclaim destruction. . . .. Why is it, why is it that idea has such a fascination. But we must have a little exercise; we must. We’ll set fires going. . . . We’ll set legends going. Every scurvy ‘group’ will be of use. Out of those very groups I’ll pick you out fellows so keen they’ll not shrink from shooting, and be grateful for the honour of a job, too. Well, and there will be an upheaval! There’s going to be such an upset as the world has never seen before. . . . Russia will be overwhelmed with darkness, the earth will weep for its old gods.. . . . Well, then we shall bring forward . . . whom?”

“Whom.”

“Ivan the Tsarevitch.”

“Who-m?”

“Ivan the Tsarevitch. You! You!”

Stavrogin thought a minute.

“A pretender?” he asked suddenly, looking with intense-surprise at his frantic companion. “Ah! so that’s your plan at last!”

“We shall say that he is ‘in hiding,’” Verhovensky said softly, in a sort of tender whisper, as though he really were drunk indeed. “Do you know the magic of that phrase, ‘he is in hiding’? But he will appear, he will appear. We’ll set a legend going better than the Skoptsis’. He exists, but no one has seen him. Oh, what a legend one can set going! And the great thing is it will be a new force at work! And we need that; that’s what they are crying for. What can Socialism do: it’s destroyed the old forces but hasn’t brought in any new.. But in this we have a force, and what a force! Incredible. We only need one lever to lift up the earth. Everything will rise up!”

“Then have you been seriously reckoning on me?” Stavrogin said with a malicious smile.

“Why do you laugh, and so spitefully? Don’t frighten me. *I* am like a little child now. I can be frightened to death by one-smile like that. Listen. I’ll let no one see you, no one. So it-must be. He exists, but no one has seen him; he is in hiding. And do you know, one might show you, to one out of a hundred-thousand, for instance. And the rumour will spread over all the land, ‘We’ve seen him, we’ve seen him.’

“Ivan Filipovitch the God of Sabaoth, has been seen, too, when he ascended into heaven in his chariot in the sight of men. They saw him with their own eyes. And you are not an Ivan Filipovitch. You are beautiful and proud as a God; you are seeking nothing for yourself, with the halo of a victim round you, ‘in hiding.’ The great thing is the legend. You’ll conquer them, you’ll have only to look, and you will conquer them. He is ‘in hiding,’ and will come forth bringing a new truth. And, meanwhile, we’ll pass two or three judgments as wise as Solomon’s. The groups, you know, the quintets — we’ve no need of newspapers. If out of ten thousand petitions only one is granted, all would come with petitions. In every parish, every peasant will know that there is somewhere a hollow tree where petitions are to be put. And the whole land will resound with the cry, ‘A new just law is to come,’ and the sea will be troubled and the whole gimcrack show will f all to the ground, and then we shall consider how to

build up an edifice of stone. For the first time! *We* are going to build it, we, and only we!”

“Madness,” said Stavrogin.

“Why, why don’t you want it? Are you afraid? That’s why I caught at you, because you are afraid of nothing. Is it unreasonabe? But you see, so far I am Columbus without America. Would Columbus without America seem reasonable?”

Stavrogin did not speak. Meanwhile they had reached the house and stopped at the entrance.

“Listen,” Verhovensky bent down to his ear. “I’ll do it for you without the money. I’ll settle Marya Timofyevna to-morrow! . . . Without the money, and to-morrow I’ll bring you Liza. Will you have Liza to-morrow?”

“Is he really mad?” Stavrogin wondered smiling. The front door was opened.

“Stavrogin — is America ours?” said Verhovensky, seizing his hand for the last time.

“What for?” said Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, gravely and sternly.

“You don’t care, I knew that!” cried Verhovensky in an access of furious anger. “You are lying, you miserable, profligate, perverted, little aristocrat! I don’t believe you, you’ve the

*The reference is to the legend current in the sect of Flagellants. — Translator’s note.

appetite of a wolf! . . . Understand that you’ve cost me such a price, I can’t give you up now! There’s no one on earth but you! I invented you abroad; I invented it all, looking at you. If I hadn’t watched you from my corner, nothing of all this would have entered my head!”

Stavrogin went up the steps without answering.

“Stavrogin!” Verhovensky called after him, “I give you a day . . . two, then . . . three, then; more than three I can’t — and then you’re to answer!”

CHAPTER IX.

A RAID AT STEFAN TROFIMOVITCH'S

meanwhile an incident had occurred which astounded me and shattered Stepan Trofimovitch. At eight o'clock in the morning Nastasya ran round to me from him with the news that her master was "raided." At first I could not make out what she meant; I could only gather that the "raid" was carried out by officials, that they had come and taken his papers, and that a soldier had tied them up in a bundle and "wheeled them away in a barrow." It was a fantastic story. I hurried at once to Stepan Trofimovitch.

I found him in a surprising condition: upset and in great agitation, but at the same time unmistakably triumphant. On the table in the middle of the room the samovar was boiling, and there was a glass of tea poured out but untouched and forgotten. Stepan Trofimovitch was wandering round the table and peeping into every corner of the room, unconscious of what he was doing. He was wearing his usual red knitted jacket, but seeing me, he hurriedly put on his coat and waistcoat — a thing he had never done before when any of his intimate friends found him in his jacket. He took me warmly by the hand at once.

"*Enfin un ami!"* (He heaved a deep sigh.) "*Cher,* I've sent to you only, and no one knows anything. We must give Nastasya orders to lock the doors and not admit anyone, except, of course *them. . . . Vous comprenez?"*

He looked at me uneasily, as though expecting a reply. I made haste, of course, to question him, and from his disconnected and broken sentences, full of unnecessary parentheses, I succeeded in learning that at seven o'clock that morning an official of the province had 'all of a sudden' called on him.

"*Pardon, j'ai oublie son nom, Il n'est pas du pays,* but I think he came to the town with Lembke, *quelque chose de bete et d'Allemand dans la physionomie. Il s'appelle Bosenthal."*

"Wasn't it Blum?"

"Yes, that was his name. *Vous le connaissez? Quelque chose d'Maite et de tres content dans la figure, pomtant tres severe, roide et serieux.* A type of the police, of the submissive subordinates, *je m'y connais.* I was still asleep, and, would you believe it, he asked to have a look at my books and

manuscripts! *Oui, je m'en souviens, il a employe ce mot.* He did not arrest me, but only the books. *Il se tenait a distance,* and when he began to explain his visit he looked as though I ... *enfin il avait Vair de croire que je tomberai sur lui immediatement et que je commen-cerai a le battre comme platre. Tous ces gens du bas etage sont comme ca* when they have to do with a gentleman. I need hardly say I understood it all at once. *Voild vingt ans que je m'y prepare.* I opened all the drawers and handed him all the keys; I gave them myself, I gave him all. *J'etais digne et calme.* From the books he took the foreign edition of Herzen, the bound volume of *The Sell,* four copies of my poem, *et enfin tout fa.* Then he took my letters and my papers *et quelques-unes de mes ebauches historiques, critiques et politiques.* All that they carried off. Nastasya says that a soldier wheeled them away in a barrow and covered them with an apron; *oui, c'est cela,* with an apron." It sounded like delirium. Who could make head or tail of it? I pelted him with questions again. Had Blum come alone, or with others? On whose authority? By what right? How had he dared? How did he explain it?

"*Il etait seul, bien seul,* but there was some one else *dans I'antichambre, oui, je m'en souviens, et puis* . . . Though I believe there was some one else besides, and there was a guard standing in the entry. You must ask Nastasya; she knows all about it better than I do. *J'etais surexcite, voyez-vous. Il parlait, il parlait . . . un tas de chases;* he said very little though, it was I said all that. ... I told him the story of my life, simply from that point of view, of course. *J'etais surexcite, mais digne, je vous assure.* ... I am afraid, though, I may have shed tears. They got the barrow from the shop next door."

"Oh, heavens! how could all this have happened? But for mercy's sake, speak more exactly, Stepan Trofimovitch. What you tell me sounds like a dream."

"*Cher,* I feel as though I were in a dream myself.... *Savez-vous! Il a prononce le nom de Telyatnikof,* and I believe that that man was concealed in the entry. Yes, I remember, he suggested: calling the prosecutor and Dmitri Dmitritch, I believe . . .; *qui me doit encore quinze roubles* I won at cards, *soit Ait en passant. Enfin, je n'ai pas trop compris.* But I got the better of them, and what do I care for Dmitri Dmitritch? I believe I begged him very earnestly to keep it quiet; I begged him particularly, most particularly. I am afraid I demeaned myself, in fact, *comment croyez-vous?*

Enfin il a consenti. Yes, I remember, he suggested that himself — that it would be better to keep it quiet, for he had only come ‘to have a look round’ *et rien de plus*, and nothing more, nothing more . . . and that if they find nothing, nothing will happen. So that we ended it all *en amis*, *je suis tout a fait content.”*

“Why, then he suggested the usual course of proceedings in such cases and regular guarantees, and you rejected them yourself,” I cried with friendly indignation.

“Yes, it’s better without the guarantees. And why make a scandal? Let’s keep it *en amis* so long as we can. You know, in our town, if they get to know it ... *mes ennemis, et puis, a quoi bon, le procureur, ce cochon de notre procureur, qui deux fois m’a manque de politesse et qu’on a rosse a plaisir Vautre annee chez cette charmante et belle Natalya Pavlovna quand il se cacha dans son boudoir. Et puis, mon ami,* don’t make objections and don’t depress me, I beg you, for nothing is more unbearable when a man is in trouble than for a hundred friends to point out to him what a fool he has made of himself. Sit down though and have some tea. I must admit I am awfully tired. . . . Hadn’t I better lie down and put vinegar on my head? What do you think?”

“Certainly,” I cried, “ice even. You are very much upset. You are pale and your hands are trembling. Lie down, rest, and put off telling me. I’ll sit by you and wait.”

He hesitated, but I insisted on his lying down. Nastasya brought a cup of vinegar. I wetted a towel and laid it on his head. Then Nastasya stood on a chair and began lighting a lamp before the ikon in the corner. I noticed this with surprise; there had never been a lamp there before and now suddenly it had made its appearance.

“I arranged for that as soon as they had gone away,” muttered Stepan Trofimovitch, looking at me slyly. “*Quand on a de ces choses-la dans sa chambre et qu’on vient vous arreter* it makes an impression and they are sure to report that they have seen it. . . .”

When she had done the lamp, Nastasya stood in the doorway, leaned her cheek in her right hand, and began gazing at him with a lachrymose air.

“*Eloignez-la* on some excuse,” he nodded to me from the sofa. “I can’t endure this Russian sympathy, *et puis ca m’embete.”*

But she went away of herself. I noticed that he kept looking towards the door and listening for sounds in the passage.

“*Il faut etre prit, voyez-vous,*” he said, looking at me significantly, “*chaque moment* . . . they may come and take one and, phew! — a man disappears.”

“Heavens! who’ll come? Who will take you?”

“*Voyez-vous, mon cher,* I asked straight out when he was going away, what would they do to me now.”

“You’d better have asked them where you’d be exiled!” I cried out in the same indignation.

“That’s just what I meant when I asked, but he went away without answering. *Voyez-vous:* as for linen, clothes, warm things especially, that must be as they decide; if they tell me to take them — all right, or they might send me in a soldier’s overcoat. But I thrust thirty-five roubles” (he suddenly dropped his voice, looking towards the door by which Nastasya had gone out) “in a slit in my waistcoat pocket, here, feel. . . . I believe they won’t take the waistcoat off, and left seven roubles in my purse to keep up appearances, as though that were all I have. You see, it’s in small change and the coppers are on the table, so they won’t guess that I’ve hidden the money, but will suppose that that’s all. For God knows where I may have to sleep to-night!”

I bowed my head before such madness. It was obvious that a man could not be arrested and searched in the way he was describing, and he must have mixed things up. It’s true it all happened in the days before our present, more recent regulations. It is true, too, that according to his own account they had offered to follow the more regular procedure, but he “got the better of them” and refused. ... Of course not long ago a governor might, in extreme cases. . . . But how could this be an extreme case? That’s what baffled me.

“No doubt they had a telegram from Petersburg,” Stepan Trofimovitch said suddenly.

“A telegram? About you? Because of the works of Herzen and your poem? Have you taken leave of your senses? What is there in that to arrest you for?”

I was positively angry. He made a grimace and was evidently mortified — not at my exclamation, but at the idea that there was no ground for arrest.

“Who can tell in our day what he may not be arrested for?” he muttered enigmatically.

A wild and nonsensical idea crossed my mind.

“Stepan Trofimovitch, tell me as a friend,” I cried, “as a real friend, I will not betray you: do you belong to some secret society or not?”

And on this, to my amazement, he was not quite certain whether he was or was not a member of some secret society.

“That depends, *voyez-vous.”’*

“How do you mean ‘it depends’?”

“When with one’s whole heart one is an adherent of progress and . . . who can answer it? You may suppose you don’t belong, and suddenly it turns out that you do belong to some thing.”

“Now is that possible? It’s a case of yes or no.”

“*Cela date de Petersburg* when she and I were meaning to found a magazine there. That’s what’s at the root of it. She gave them the slip then, and they forgot us, but now they’ve remembered. *Cher, cher,* don’t you know me?” he cried hysterically. “And they’ll take us, put us in a cart, and march us off to Siberia for ever, or forget us in prison.”

And he suddenly broke into bitter weeping. His tears positively streamed. He covered his face with his red silk handkerchief and sobbed, sobbed convulsively for five minutes. It wrung my heart. This was the man who had been a prophet among us for twenty years, a leader, a patriarch, the Kukolnik who had borne himself so loftily and majestically before all of us, before whom we bowed down with genuine reverence, feeling proud of doing so — and all of a sudden here he was sobbing, sobbing like a naughty child waiting for the rod which the teacher is fetching for him. I felt fearfully sorry for him. He believed in the reality of that “cart” as he believed that I was sitting by his side, and he expected it that morning, at once, that very minute, and all this on account of his Herzen and some poem! Such complete, absolute ignorance of everyday reality was touching and somehow repulsive.

At last he left off crying, got up from the sofa and began walking about the room again, continuing to talk to me, though he looked out of the window every minute and listened to every sound in the passage. Our conversation was still disconnected. All my assurances and attempts to console him rebounded from him like peas from a wall. He scarcely listened, but yet what he needed was that I should console him and keep on talking with that object. I saw that he could not do without me now, and would not let me go for anything. I remained, and we spent more than two

hours together. In conversation he recalled that Blum had taken with him two manifestoes he had found.

“Manifestoes!” I said, foolishly frightened. “Do you mean to say you ...”

“Oh, ten were left here,” he answered with vexation (he talked to me at one moment in a vexed and haughty tone and at the next with dreadful plaintiveness and humiliation), “but I had disposed of eight already, and Blum only found two.” And he suddenly flushed with indignation. “*Vous me mettez avec ces gens-la!* Do you suppose I could be working with those scoundrels, those anonymous libellers, with my son Pyotr Stepanovitch, *avec ces esprits forts de la achete?* Oh, heavens!”

“Bah! haven’t they mixed you up perhaps? . . . But it’s nonsense, it can’t be so,” I observed.

“*Savez-vous,”* broke from him suddenly, “I feel at moments *que je ferai id-bas quelque esclandre.* Oh, don’t go away, don’t leave me alone! *Ma carriere est finie aujourd’hui, je le sens.* Do you know, I might fall on somebody there and bite him, like that lieutenant.”

He looked at me with a strange expression — alarmed, and at the same time anxious to alarm me. He certainly was getting more and more exasperated with somebody and about something as time went on and the police-cart did not appear; he was positively wrathful. Suddenly Nastasya, who had come from the kitchen into the passage for some reason, upset a clothes-horse there. Stepan Trofimovitch trembled and turned numb with terror as he sat; but when the noise was explained, he almost shrieked at Nastasya and, stamping, drove her back to the kitchen. A minute later he said, looking at me in despair: “I am ruined! *Cher”* — he sat down suddenly beside me and looked piteously into my face—” *cher,* it’s not Siberia I am afraid of, I swear. *Oh, je vous jure!”* (Tears positively stood in his eyes.) “It’s something else I fear.”

I saw from his expression that he wanted at last to tell me something of great importance which he had till now refrained from telling.

“I am afraid of disgrace,” he whispered mysteriously. “What disgrace? On the contrary! Believe me, Stepan Trofimovitch, that all this will be explained to-day and will end to your advantage. . . .”

“Are you so sure that they will pardon me?”

“Pardon you? What! What a word! What have you done? I assure you you’ve done nothing.”

“*Qu’en savez-vous;* all my life has been . . . *cher* . . . They’ll remember everything . . . and if they find nothing, it will be *worse still,*” he added all of a sudden, unexpectedly. “How do you mean it will be worse?”

“It will be worse.”

“I don’t understand.”

“My friend, let it be Siberia, Archangel, loss of rights — if *I* must perish, let me perish! But ... I am afraid of something else.” (Again whispering, a scared face, mystery.) “But of what? Of what?”

“They’ll flog me,” he pronounced, looking at me with a face of despair.

“Who’ll flog you? What for? Where?” I cried, feeling alarmed that he was going out of his mind.

“Where? Why there . . . where ‘that’s’ done.”

“But where is it done?”

“Eh, *cher,’*” he whispered almost in my ear. “The floor suddenly gives way under you, you drop half through. . . . Every one knows that.”

“Legends!” I cried, guessing what he meant. “Old tales. Can you have believed them till now?” I laughed.

“Tales! But there must be foundation for them; flogged men tell no tales. I’ve imagined it ten thousand times.”

“But you, why you? You’ve done nothing, you know.”

“That makes it worse. They’ll find out I’ve done nothing and flog me for it.”

“And you are sure that you’ll be taken to Petersburg for that.”

“My friend, I’ve told you already that I regret nothing, *ma carriere est finie*. From that hour when she said good-bye to me at Skvoreshniki my life has had no value for me . . . but disgrace, disgrace, *que dira-t-elle* if she finds out?”

He looked at me in despair. And the poor fellow flushed all over. I dropped my eyes too.

“She’ll find out nothing, for nothing will happen to you. I feel as if I were speaking to you for the first time in my life, Stepan Trofimovitch, you’ve astonished me so this morning.”

“But, my friend, this isn’t fear. For even if I am pardoned, even if I am brought here and nothing is done to me — then I am undone. *Elle me soupfonnera toute sa vie* — me, me, the poet, the thinker, the man whom she has worshipped for twenty-two years!”

“It will never enter her head.”

“It will,” he whispered with profound conviction. “We’ve talked of it several times in Petersburg, in Lent, before we came away, when we were both afraid. . . . *Elle me soupfonnera toute sa vie* . . . and how can I disabuse her? It won’t sound likely. And in this wretched town who’d believe it, *c’est invraisemblable. . . . Et puis les femmes,* she will be pleased. She will be genuinely grieved like a true friend, but secretly she will be pleased. ... I shall give her a weapon against me for the rest of my life. Oh, it’s all over with me! Twenty years of such perfect happiness with her . . . and now!” He hid his face in his hands.

“Stepan Trofimovitch, oughtn’t you to let Varvara Petrovna know at once of what has happened?” I suggested.

“God preserve me!” he cried, shuddering and leaping up from his place. “On no account, never, after what was said at parting at Skvoreshniki — never!” His eyes flashed.

We went on sitting together another hour or more, I believe, expecting something all the time — the idea had taken such hold of us. He lay down again, even closed his eyes, and lay for twenty minutes without uttering a word, so that I thought he was asleep or unconscious. Suddenly he got up impulsively, pulled the towel off his head, jumped up from the sofa, rushed to the looking-glass, with trembling hands tied his cravat, and in a voice of thunder called to Nastasya, telling her to give him his overcoat, his new hat and his stick.

“I can bear no more,” he said in a breaking voice. “I can’t, I can’t! I am going myself.”

“Where?” I cried, jumping up too.

“To Lembke. *Cher,* I ought, I am obliged. It’s my duty. I am a citizen and a man, not a worthless chip. I have rights; I want my rights. . . . For twenty years I’ve not insisted on my rights. All my life I’ve neglected them criminally . . . but now I’ll demand them. He must tell me everything — everything. He received a telegram. He dare not torture me; if so, let him arrest me, let him arrest me!”

He stamped and vociferated almost with shrieks. “I approve of what you say,” I said, speaking as calmly as possible, on purpose, though I was very much afraid for him.

“Certainly it is better than sitting here in such misery, but I can’t approve of your state of mind. Just see what you look like and in what a state you

are going there! *Il faut etre digne et calme avec Lembke.* You really might rush at some one there and bite him.”

“I am giving myself up. I am walking straight into the jaws of the Hon. . . .”

“I’ll go with you.”

“I expected no less of you, I accept your sacrifice, the sacrifice of a true friend; but only as far as the house, only as far as the house. You ought not, you have no right to compromise yourself further by being my confederate. *Oh, croyez-moi, je serai calme.* I feel that I am at this moment *d la hauteur de tout ce que il y a de plus sacre.” . . .*

“I may perhaps go into the house with you,” I interrupted him. “I had a message from their stupid committee yesterday through Vysotsky that they reckon on me and invite me to the *file* to-morrow as one of the stewards or whatever it is ... one of the six young men whose duty it is to look after the trays, wait on the ladies, take the guests to their places, and wear a rosette of crimson and white ribbon on the left shoulder. I meant to refuse, but now why shouldn’t I go into the house on the excuse of seeing Yulia Mihailovna herself about it? ... So we will go in together.”

He listened, nodding, but I think he understood nothing. We stood on the threshold.

“*Cher”* — he stretched out his arm to the lamp before the ikon—” *cher,* I have never believed in this, but ... so be it, so be it!” He crossed himself.” *Allans!”*

“Well, that’s better so,” I thought as I went out on to the steps wi*th* him. “The fresh air will do him good on the way, and we shall calm down, turn back, and go home to bed. ...”

But I reckoned without my host. On the way an adventure occurred which agitated Stepan Trofimovitch even more, and finally determined him to go on ... so that I should never have expected of our friend so much spirit as he suddenly displayed that morning. Poor friend, kind-hearted friend!

CHAPTER X.

FILIBUSTERS. A FATAL MORNING

the adventure that befell us on the way was also a surprising one. But I must tell the story in due order. An hour before Stepan Trofimovitch and I came out into the street, a crowd of people, the hands from Shpigulins' factory, seventy or more in number, had been marching through the town, and had been an object of curiosity to many spectators. They walked intentionally in good order and almost in silence. Afterwards it was asserted that these seventy had been elected out of the whole number of factory hands, amounting to about nine hundred, to go to the governor and to try and get from him, in the absence of their employer, a just settlement of their grievances against the manager, who, in closing the factory and dismissing the workmen, had cheated them all in an impudent way — a fact which has since been proved conclusively. Some people still deny that there was any election of delegates, maintaining that seventy was too large a number to elect, and that the crowd simply consisted of those who had been most unfairly treated, and that they only came to ask for help in their own case, so that the general "mutiny" of the factory workers, about which there was such an uproar later on, had never existed at all. Others fiercely maintained that these seventy men were not simple strikers but revolutionists, that is, not merely that they were the most turbulent, but that they must have been worked upon by seditious manifestoes. The fact is, it is still uncertain whether there had been any outside influence or incitement at work or not. My private opinion is that the workmen had not read the seditious manifestoes at all, and if they had read them, would not have understood one word, for one reason because the authors of such literature write very obscurely in spite of the boldness of their style. But as the workmen really were in a difficult plight and the police to whom they appealed would not enter into their grievances, what could be more natural than their idea of going in a body to "the general himself" if possible, with the petition at their head, forming up in an orderly way before his door, and as soon as he showed himself, all falling on their knees and crying out to him as to providence itself? To my mind there is no need to see in this a mutiny or even a deputation, for it's a traditional, historical mode of action; the

Russian people have always loved to parley with “the general himself” for the mere satisfaction of doing so, regardless of how the conversation may end.

And so I am quite convinced that, even though Pyotr Stepanovitch, Liputin, and perhaps some others — perhaps even Fedka too — had been flitting about among the workpeople talking to them (and there is fairly good evidence of this), they had only approached two, three, five at the most, trying to sound them, and nothing had come of their conversation. As for the mutiny they advocated, if the factory-workers did understand anything of their propaganda, they would have left off listening to it at once as to something stupid that had nothing to do with them. Fedka was a different matter: he had more success, I believe, than Pyotr Stepanovitch. Two workmen are now known for a fact to have assisted Fedka in causing the fire in the town which occurred three days afterwards, and a month later three men who had worked in the factory were arrested for robbery and arson in the province. But if in these cases Fedka did lure them to direct and immediate action, he could only have succeeded with these five, for we heard of nothing of the sort being done by others.

Be that as it may, the whole crowd of workpeople had at last reached the open space in front of the governor’s house and were drawn up there in silence and good order. Then, gaping open-mouthed at the front door, they waited. I am told that as soon as they halted they took off their caps, that is, a good half-hour before the appearance of the governor, who, as ill-luck would have it, was not at home at the moment. The police made their appearance at once, at first individual policemen and then as large a contingent of them as could be gathered together; they began, of course, by being menacing, ordering them to break up. But the workmen remained obstinately, like a flock of sheep at a fence, and replied laconically that they had come to see “the general himself”; it was evident that they were firmly determined. The unnatural shouting of the police ceased, and was quickly succeeded by deliberations, mysterious whispered instructions, and stern, fussy perplexity, which wrinkled the brows of the police officers. The head of the police preferred to await the arrival of the “governor himself.” It was not true that he galloped to the spot with three horses at full speed, and began hitting out right and left before he alighted from his carriage. It’s true that he used to dash about and was fond of dashing about at full speed in a carriage with a yellow back, and while his trace-horses, who were so trained

to carry their heads that they looked “positively perverted,” galloped more and more frantically, rousing the enthusiasm of all the shopkeepers in the bazaar, he would rise up in the carriage, stand erect, holding on by a strap which had been fixed on purpose at the side, and with his right arm extended into space like a figure on a monument, survey the town majestically. But in the present case he did not use his fists, and though as he got out of the carriage he could not refrain from a forcible expression, this was simply done to keep up his popularity. There is a still more absurd story that soldiers were brought up with bayonets, and that a telegram was sent for artillery and Cossacks; those are legends which are not believed now even by those who invented them. It’s an absurd story, too, that barrels of water were brought from the fire brigade, and that people were drenched with water from them. The simple fact is that Ilya Ilyitch shouted in his heat that he wouldn’t let one of them come dry out of the water; probably this was the foundation of the barrel legend which got into the columns of the Petersburg and Moscow newspapers. Probably the most accurate version was that at first all the available police formed a cordon round the crowd, and a messenger was sent for Lembke, a police superintendent, who dashed off in the carriage belonging to the head of the police on the way to Skvoreshniki, knowing that Lembke had gone there in his carriage half an hour before.

But I must confess that I am still unable to answer the question how they could at first sight, from the first moment, have transformed an insignificant, that is to say an ordinary, crowd of petitioners, even though there were several of them, into a rebellion which threatened to shake the foundations of the state. Why did Lembke himself rush at that idea when he arrived twenty minutes after the messenger? *I* imagine (but again it’s only my private opinion) that it was to the interest of Ilya Ilyitch, who was a crony of the factory manager’s, to represent the crowd in this light to Lembke, in order to prevent him from going into the case; and Lembke himself had put the idea into his head. In the course of the last two days, he had had two unusual and mysterious conversations with Mm. It is true they were exceedingly obscure, but Ilya Ilyitch was able to gather from them that the governor had thoroughly made up his mind that there were political manifestoes, and that Shpigulins’ factory hands were being incited to a Socialist rising, and that he was so persuaded of it that he would perhaps have regretted it if the story had turned out to be nonsense. “He wants to get

distinction in Petersburg," our wily Ilya Ilyitch thought to himself as he left Von Lembke; "well, that just suits me."

But I am convinced that poor Andrey Antonovitch would not have desired a rebellion even for the sake of distinguishing himself. He was a most conscientious official, who had lived in a state of innocence up to the time of his marriage. And was it his fault that, instead of an innocent allowance of wood from the government and an equally innocent Minnchen, a princess of forty summers had raised him to her level? I know almost for certain that the unmistakable symptoms of the mental condition which brought poor Andrey Antonovitch to a well-known establishment in Switzerland, where, I am told, he is now regaining his energies, were first apparent on that fatal morning. But once we admit that unmistakable signs of something were visible that morning, it may well be allowed that similar symptoms .may have been evident the day before, though not so clearly. I happen to know from the most private sources (well, you may assume that Yulia Mihailovna later on, not in triumph but *almost* in remorse — for a woman is incapable of *complete* remorse — revealed part of it to me herself) that Andrey Antonovitch had gone into his wife's room in the middle of the previous night, past two o'clock in the morning, had waked her up, and had insisted on her listening to his "ultimatum.'' He demanded it so insistently that she was obliged to get up from her bed in indignation and curl-papers, and, sitting down on a couch, she had to listen, though with sarcastic disdain. Only then she grasped for the first time how far gone her Andrey Antonovitch was, and was secretly horrified. She ought to have thought what she was about and have been softened, but she concealed her horror and was more obstinate than ever. Like every wife she had her own method of treating Andrey Antonovitch, which she had tried more than once already and with it driven him to frenzy. Yulia Mihailovna's method was that of contemptuous silence, for one hour, two, a whole day. and almost for three days and nights — silence whatever happened, whatever he said, whatever he did, even if he had clambered up to throw himself out of a three-story window — a method unendurable for a sensitive man! Whether Yulia Mihailovna meant to punish her husband for his blunders of the last few days and the jealous envy he, as the chief authority in the town, felt for her administrative abilities; whether she was indignant at his criticism of her behaviour with the young people and local society generally, and lack of comprehension of her subtle and far-sighted political aims; or was angry

with his stupid and senseless jealousy of Pyotr Stepanovitch — however that may have been, she made up her mind not to be softened even now, in spite of its being three o'clock at night, and though Andrey Antonovitch was in a state of emotion such as she had never seen him in before.

Pacing up and down in all directions over the rugs of her boudoir, beside himself, he poured out everything, everything, quite disconnectedly, it's true, but everything that had been rankling in his heart, for—" it was outrageous." He began by saying that he was a laughing-stock to every one and "was being led by the nose."

"Curse the expression," he squealed, at once catching her smile, "let it stand, it's true. . . . No, madam, the time has come; let me tell you it's not a time for laughter and feminine arts now. We are not in the boudoir of a mincing lady, but like two abstract creatures in a balloon who have met to speak the truth." (He was no doubt confused and could not find the right words for his ideas, however just they were.) "It is you, madam, you who have destroyed my happy past. I took up this post simply for your sake, for the sake of your ambition. . . . You smile sarcastically? Don't triumph, don't be in a hurry. Let me tell you, madam, let me tell you that I should have been equal to this position, and not only this position but a dozen positions like it, for I have abilities; but with you, madam, with you — it's impossible, for with you here I have no abilities. There cannot be two centres, and you have created two — one of mine and one in your boudoir — two centres of power, madam, but I won't allow it, I won't allow it! In the service, as in marriage, there must be one centre, two are impossible.. . . How have you repaid me?" he went on. "Our marriage has been nothing but your proving to me all the time, every hour, that I am a nonentity, a fool, and even a rascal, and I have been all the time, every hour, forced in a degrading way to prove to you that I am not a nonentity, not a fool at all, and that I impress every one with my honourable character. Isn't that degrading for both sides?"

At this point he began rapidly stamping with both feet on the carpet, so that Yulia Mihailovna was obliged to get up with stern dignity. He subsided quickly, but passed to being pathetic and began sobbing (yes, sobbing!), beating himself on the breast almost for five minutes, getting more and more frantic at Yulia Mihailovna's profound silence. At last he made a fatal blunder, and let slip that he was jealous of Pyotr Stepanovitch. Realising that he had made an utter fool of himself, he became savagely furious, and

shouted that he “would not allow them to deny God “and that he would” send her *salon* of irresponsible infidels packing,” that the governor of a province was bound to believe in God “and so his wife was too,” that he wouldn’t put up with these young men; that “you, madam, for the sake of your own dignity, ought to have thought of your husband and to have stood up for his intelligence even if he were a man of poor abilities (and I’m by no means a man of poor abilities!), and yet it’s your doing that every one here despises me, it was you put them all up to it!” He shouted that he would annihilate the woman question, that he would eradicate every trace of it, that to-morrow he would forbid and break up their silly fete for the benefit of the governesses (damn them!), that the first governess he came across to-morrow morning he would drive out of the province “with a Cossack! I’ll make a point of it!” he shrieked. “Do you know,” he screamed, “do you know that your rascals are inciting men at the factory, and that I know it? Let me tell you, I know the names of four of these rascals and that I am going out of my mind, hopelessly, hopelessly! . . .”

But at this point Yulia Mihailovna suddenly broke her silence and sternly announced that she had long been aware of these criminal designs, and that it was all foolishness, and that he had taken it too seriously, and that as for these mischievous fellows, she knew not only those four but all of them (it was a lie); but that she had not the faintest intention of going out of her mind on account of it, but, on the contrary, had all the more confidence in her intelligence and hoped to bring it all to a harmonious conclusion: to encourage the young people, to bring them to reason, to show them suddenly and unexpectedly that their designs were known, and then to point out to them new aims for rational and more noble activity.

Oh, how can I describe the effect of this on Andrey Antonovitch! Hearing that Pyotr Stepanovitch had duped him again and had made a fool of him so coarsely, that he had told her much more than he had told him, and sooner than him, and that perhaps Pyotr Stepanovitch was the chief instigator of all these criminal designs — he flew into a frenzy. “Senseless but malignant woman,” he cried, snapping his bonds at one blow, “let me tell you, I shall arrest your worthless lover at once, I shall put him in fetters and send him to the fortress, or — I shall jump out of window before your eyes this minute!”

Yulia Mihailovna, turning green with anger, greeted this tirade at once with a burst of prolonged, ringing laughter, going off into peals such as one

hears at the French theatre when a Parisian actress, imported for a fee of a hundred thousand to play a coquette, laughs in her husband's face for daring to be jealous of her.

Von Lembke rushed to the window, but suddenly stopped as though rooted to the spot, folded his arms across his chest, and, white as a corpse, looked with a sinister gaze at the laughing lady. "Do you know, Yulia, do you know," he said in a gasping and suppliant voice, "do you know that even I can do something?" But at the renewed and even louder laughter that followed his last words he clenched his,teeth, groaned, and suddenly rushed, not towards the window, but at his spouse, with his fist raised! He did not bring it down — no, I repeat again and again, no; but it was the last straw. He ran to his own room, not knowing what he was doing, flung himself, dressed as he was, face downwards on his bed, wrapped himself convulsively, head and all, in the sheet, and lay so for two hours — incapable of sleep, incapable of thought, with a load on his heart and blank, immovable despair in his soul. Now and then he shivered all over with an agonising, feverish tremor. Disconnected and irrelevant things kept coming into his mind: at one minute he thought of the old clock which used to hang on his wall fifteen years ago in Petersburg and had lost the minute-hand; at another of the cheerful clerk, Millebois, and how they had once caught a sparrow together in Alexandrovsky Park and had laughed so that they could be heard all over the park, remembering that one of them was already a college assessor. I imagine that about seven in the morning he must have fallen asleep without being aware of it himself, and must have slept with enjoyment, with agreeable dreams.

Waking about ten o'clock, he jumped wildly out of bed remembered everything at once, and slapped himself on the head; he refused his breakfast, and would see neither Blum nor the chief of the police nor the clerk who came to remind him that he was expected to preside over a meeting that morning; he would listen to nothing, and did not want to understand. He ran like one possessed to Yulia Mihailovna's part of the house. There Sofya Antropovna, an old lady of good family who had lived for years with Yulia Mihailovna, explained to him that his wife had set off at ten o'clock that morning with a large company in three carriages to Varvara Petrovna Stavrogin's, to Skvoreshniki, to look over the place with a view to the second fete which was planned for a fortnight later, and that the visit to-day had been arranged with Varvara Petrovna three days before.

Overwhelmed with this news, Andrey Antonovitch returned to his study and impulsively ordered the horses. He could hardly wait for them to be got ready. His soul was hungering for Yulia Mihailovna — to look at her, to be near her for five minutes; perhaps she would glance at him, notice him, would smile as before, forgive him . . . 0-oh!" Aren't the horses ready?" Mechanically he opened a thick book lying on the table. (He sometimes used to try his fortune in this way with a book, opening it at random and reading the three lines at the top of the right-hand page.) What turned up was: "*Tout est pour le mieux dans le meilleur des mondes possibles.*" — Voltaire, *Candide.* He uttered an ejaculation of contempt and ran to get into the carriage. "Skvoreshniki!"

The coachman said afterwards that his master urged him on all the way, but as soon as they were getting near the mansion he suddenly told him to turn and drive back to the town, bidding him "Drive fast; please drive fast!" Before they reached the town wall "master told me to stop again, got out of the carriage, and went across the road into the field; I thought he felt ill but he stopped and began looking at the flowers, and so he stood for a time. It was strange, really; I began to feel quite uneasy." This was the coachman's testimony. I remember the weather that morning: it was a cold, clear, but windy September day; before Andrey Antonovitch stretched a forbidding landscape of bare fields from which the crop had long been harvested; there were a few dying yellow flowers, pitiful relics blown about by the howling wind. Did he want to compare himself and his fate with those wretched flowers battered by the autumn and the frost? I don't think so; in fact I feel sure it was not so, and that he realised nothing about the flowers in spite of the evidence of the coachman and of the police superintendent, who drove up at that moment and asserted afterwards that he found the governor with a bunch of yellow flowers in his hand. This police superintendent, Flibusterov by name, was an ardent champion of authority who had only recently come to our town but had already distinguished himself and become famous by his inordinate zeal, by a certain vehemence in the execution of his duties, and his inveterate inebriety. Jumping out of the carriage, and not the least disconcerted at the sight of what the governor was doing, he blurted out all in one breath, with a frantic expression, yet with an air of conviction, that "There's an upset in the town."

"Eh? What?" said Andrey Antonovitch, turning to him with a stern face, but without a trace of surprise or any recollection of his carriage and his

coachman, as though he had been in his own study.

“Police-superintendent Flibusterov, your Excellency. There’s a riot in the town.”

“Filibusters?” Andrey Antonovitch said thoughtfully.

“Just so, your Excellency. The Shpigulin men are making a riot.”

“The Shpigulin men! . . .”

The name “Shpigulin” seemed to remind him of something. He started and put his finger to his forehead: “The Shpigulin men!” In silence, and still plunged in thought, he walked without haste to the carriage, took his seat, and told the coachman to drive to the town. The police-superintendent followed in the droshky.

I imagine that he had vague impressions of many interesting things of all sorts on the way, but I doubt whether he had any definite idea or any settled intention as he drove into the open space in front of his house. But no sooner did he see the resolute and orderly ranks of “the rioters,” the cordon of police, the helpless (and perhaps purposely helpless) chief of police, and the general expectation of which he was the object, than all the blood rushed to his heart. With a pale face he stepped out of his carriage.

“Caps off!” he said breathlessly and hardly audibly. “On your knees!” he squealed, to the surprise of every one, to his own surprise too, and perhaps the very unexpectedness of the position was the explanation of what followed. Can a sledge on a switchback at carnival stop short as it flies down the hill? What made it worse, Andrey Antonovitch had been all his life serene in character, and never shouted or stamped at anyone; and such people are always the most dangerous if it once happens that something sets their sledge sliding downhill. Everything was whirling before his eyes.

“Filibusters!” he yelled still more shrilly and absurdly, and his voice broke. He stood, not knowing what he was going to do, but knowing and feeling in his whole being that he certainly would do something directly.

“Lord!” was heard from the crowd. A lad began crossing himself; three or four men actually did try to kneel down, but the whole mass moved three steps forward, and suddenly all began talking at once: “Your Excellency ... we were hired for a term . . . the manager . . . you mustn’t say,” and so on and so on. It was impossible to distinguish anything.

Alas! Andrey Antonovitch could distinguish nothing: the flowers were still in his hands. The riot was as real to him as the prison carts were to Stepan Trofimovitch. And flitting to and fro in the crowd of “rioters” who

gazed open-eyed at him, he seemed to see Pyotr Stepanovitch, who had egged them on — Pyotr Stepanovitch, whom he hated and whose image had never left him since yesterday.

“Rods!” he cried even more unexpectedly. A dead silence followed.

From the facts I have learnt and those I have conjectured, this must have been what happened at the beginning; but I have no such exact information for what followed, nor can I conjecture it so easily. There are some facts, however.

In the first place, rods were brought on the scene with strange rapidity; they had evidently been got ready beforehand in expectation by the intelligent chief of the police. Not more than two, or at most three, were actually flogged, however; that fact I wish to lay stress on. It’s an absolute fabrication to say that the whole crowd of rioters, or at least half of them, were punished. It is a nonsensical story, too, that a poor but respectable lady was caught as she passed by and promptly thrashed; yet I read myself an account of this incident afterwards among the provincial items of a Petersburg newspaper. Many people in the town talked of an old woman called Avdotya Petrovna Tarapygin who lived in the almshouse by the cemetery. She, was said, on her way home from visiting a friend, to have forced her way into the crowd of spectators through natural curiosity. Seeing what was going on, she cried out, “What a shame!” and spat on the ground. For this it was said she had been seized and flogged too. This story not only appeared in print, but in our excitement we positively got up a subscription for her benefit. I subscribed twenty kopecks myself. And would you believe it? It appears now that there was no old woman called Tarapygin living in the almshouse at all! I went to inquire at the almshouse by the cemetery myself; they had never heard of anyone called Tarapygin there, and, what’s more, they were quite offended when I told them the story that was going round. I mention this fabulous Avdotya Petrovna because what happened to her (if she really had existed) very nearly happened to Stepan Trofimovitch. Possibly, indeed, his adventure may have been at the bottom of the ridiculous tale about the old woman, that is, as the gossip went on growing he was transformed into this old dame.

What I find most difficult to understand is how he came to slip away from me as soon as he got into the square. As I had a misgiving of something very unpleasant, I wanted to take him round the square straight to the entrance to the governor’s, but my own curiosity was roused, and I

stopped only for one minute to question the first person I came across, and suddenly I looked round and found Stepan Trofimovitch no longer at my side. Instinctively I darted off to look for him in the most dangerous place; something made me feel that his sledge, too, was flying downhill. And I did, as a fact, find him in the very centre of things. I remember I seized him by the arm; but he looked quietly and proudly at me with an air of immense authority.

"*Cher,*" he pronounced in a voice which quivered on a breaking note, "if they are dealing with people so unceremoniously before us, in an open square, what is to be expected from *that* man, for instance ... if he happens to act on his own authority?"

And shaking with indignation and with an intense desire to defy them, he pointed a menacing, accusing finger at Flibusterov, who was gazing at us open-eyed two paces away.

"*That* man!" cried the latter, blind with rage. "What man? And who are you?" He stepped up to him, clenching his fist. "Who are you?" he roared ferociously, hysterically, and desperately. (I must mention that he knew Stepan Trofimovitch perfectly well by sight.) Another moment and he would have certainly seized him by the collar; but luckily, hearing him shout, Lembke turned his head. He gazed intensely but with perplexity at Stepan Trofimovitch, seeming to consider something, and suddenly he shook his hand impatiently. Flibusterov was checked. I drew Stepan Trofimovitch out of the crowd, though perhaps he may have wished to retreat himself.

"Home, home," I insisted; "it was certainly thanks to Lembke that we were not beaten."

"Go, my friend; I am to blame for exposing you to this. You have a future and a career of a sort before you, while I — *man heure est sonnee.*"

He resolutely mounted the governor's steps. The hall-porter knew me; I said that we both wanted to see Yulia Mihailovna.

We sat down in the waiting-room and waited. I was unwilling to leave my friend, but I thought it unnecessary to say anything more to him. He had the air of a man who had consecrated himself to certain death for the sake of his country. We sat down, not side by side, but in different corners — I nearer to the entrance, he at some distance facing me, with his head bent in thought, leaning lightly on his stick. He held his wide-brimmed hat in his left hand. We sat like that for ten minutes.

II

Lembke suddenly came in with rapid steps, accompanied by the chief of police, looked absent-mindedly at us and, taking no notice of us, was about to pass into his study on the right, but Stepan Trofimovitch stood before him blocking his way. The tall figure of Stepan Trofimovitch, so unlike other people, made an impression. Lembke stopped.

“Who is this?” he muttered, puzzled, as if he were questioning the chief of police, though he did not turn his head towards him, and was all the time gazing at Stepan Trofimovitch.

“Retired college assessor, Stepan Trofimovitch Verhovensky, your Excellency,” answered Stepan Trofimovitch, bowing majestically. His Excellency went on staring at him with a very blank expression, however.

“What is it?” And with the curtness of a great official he turned his ear to Stepan Trofimovitch with disdainful impatience, taking him for an ordinary person with a written petition of some sort.

“I was visited and my house was searched to-day by an official acting in your Excellency’s name; therefore I am desirous ...”

“Name? Name?” Lembke asked impatiently, seeming suddenly to have an inkling of something. Stepan Trofimovitch repeated his name still more majestically.

“A-a-ah! It’s . . . that hotbed . . . You have shown yourself, sir, in such a light. . . . Are you a professor? a professor?”

“I once had the honour of giving some lectures to the young men of the X university.”

“The young men!” Lembke seemed to start, though I am ready to bet that he grasped very little of what was going on or even, perhaps, did not know with whom he was talking.

“That, sir, I won’t allow,” he cried, suddenly getting terribly angry. “I won’t allow young men! It’s all these manifestoes? It’s an assault on society, sir, a piratical attack, filibustering. . . . What is your request?”

“On the contrary, your wife requested me to read something to-morrow at her fete. I’ve not come to make a request but to ask for my rights. . . .”

“At the fete? There’ll be no fete. I won’t allow your fete. A lecture? A lecture?” he screamed furiously.

“I should be very glad if you would speak to me rather more politely, your Excellency, without stamping or shouting at me’ as though I were a

boy.”

“Perhaps you understand whom you are speaking to?” said Lembke, turning crimson.

“Perfectly, your Excellency.”

“I am protecting society while you are destroying it! ... You ... I remember about you, though: you used to be a tutor in the house of Madame Stavrogin?”

“Yes, I was in the position ... of tutor ... in the house of Madame Stavrogin.”

“And have been for twenty years the hotbed of all that has now accumulated ... all the fruits. ... I believe I saw you just now in the square. You’d better look out, sir, you’d better look out; your way of thinking is well known. You may be sure that I keep my eye on you. I cannot allow your lectures, sir, I cannot. Don’t come with such requests to me.”

He would have passed on again.

“I repeat that your Excellency is mistaken; it was your wife who asked me to give, not a lecture, but a literary reading at the fete to-morrow. But I decline to do so in any case now. I humbly request that you will explain to me if possible how, why, and for what reason I was subjected to an official search to-day? Some of my books and papers, private letters to me, were taken from me and wheeled through the town in a barrow.”

“Who searched you?” said Lembke, starting and returning to full consciousness of the position. He suddenly flushed all over. He turned quickly to the chief of police. At that moment the long, stooping, and awkward figure of Blum appeared in the doorway.

“Why, this official here,” said Stepan Trofimovitch, indicating Mm. Blum came forward with a face that admitted his responsibility but showed no contrition.

“*Vous ne faites que des beatises,*” Lembke threw at him in a tone of vexation and anger, and suddenly he was transformed and completely himself again.

“Excuse me,” he muttered, utterly disconcerted and turning absolutely crimson, “all this ... all this was probably a mere blunder, a misunderstanding . . . nothing but a misunderstanding.”

“Your Excellency,” observed Stepan Trofimovitch, “once when I was young I saw a characteristic incident. In the corridor of a theatre a man ran up to another and gave him a sounding smack in the face before the whole

public. Perceiving at once that his victim was not the person whom he had intended to chastise but some one quite different who only slightly resembled him, he pronounced angrily, with the haste of one whose moments are precious — as your Excellency did just now— “I’ve made a mistake . . . excuse me, it was a misunderstanding, nothing but a misunderstanding.’ And when the offended man remained resentful and cried out, he observed to him, with extreme annoyance: ‘Why, I tell you it was a misunderstanding. What are you crying out about?’”

“That’s . . . that’s very amusing, of course” — Lembke gave a wry smile —” but . . . but can’t you see how unhappy I am myself?”

He almost screamed, and seemed about to hide his face in .his hands.

This unexpected and piteous exclamation, almost a sob, was almost more than one could bear. It was probably the first moment since the previous day that he had full, vivid consciousness of all that had happened — and it was followed by complete, humiliating despair that could not be disguised — who knows, in another minute he might have sobbed aloud. For the first moment Stepan Trofimovitch looked wildly at him; then he suddenly bowed his head and in a voice pregnant with feeling pronounced:

“Your Excellency, don’t trouble yourself with my petulant complaint, and only give orders for my books and letters to be restored to me. ...”

He was interrupted. At that very instant Yulia Mihailovna returned and entered noisily with all the party which had accompanied her. But at this point I should like to tell my story in as much detail as possible.

III

In the first place, the whole company who had filled three carriages crowded into the waiting-room. There was a special entrance to Yulia Mihailovna’s apartments on the left as one entered the house; but on this occasion they all went through the waiting-room — and I imagine just because Stepan Trofimovitch was there, and because all that had happened to him as well as the Shpigulin affair had reached Yulia Mihailovna’s ears as she drove into the town. Lyamshin, who for some misdemeanour had not been invited to join the party and so knew all that had been happening in the town before anyone else, brought her the news. With spiteful glee he hired a wretched Cossack nag and hastened on the way to Skvoreshniki to meet the returning cavalcade with the diverting intelligence. I fancy that, in spite of

her lofty determination, Yulia Mihailovna was a little disconcerted on hearing such surprising news, but probably only for an instant. The political aspect of the affair, for instance, could not cause her uneasiness; Pyotr Stepanovitch had impressed upon her three or four times that the Shpigulin ruffians ought to be flogged, and Pyotr Stepanovitch certainly had for some time past been a great authority in her eyes. “But . . . anyway, I shall make him pay for it,” she doubtless reflected, the “he,” of course, referring to her spouse. I must observe in passing that on this occasion, as though purposely, Pyotr Stepanovitch had taken no part in the expedition, and no one had seen him all day. I must mention too, by the way, that Varvara Petrovna had come back to the town with her guests (hi the same carriage with Yulia Mihailovna) in order to be present at the last meeting of the committee which was arranging the fete for the next day. She too must have been interested, and perhaps even agitated, by the news about Stepan Trofimovitch communicated by Lyamshin.

The hour of reckoning for Andrey Antonovitch followed at once. Alas! he felt that from the first glance at his admirable wife. With an open air and an enchanting smile she went quickly up to Stepan Trofimovitch, held out her exquisitely gloved hand, and greeted him with a perfect shower of nattering phrases — as though the only thing she cared about that morning was to make haste to be charming to Stepan Trofimovitch because at last she saw him in her house. There was not one hint of the search that morning; it was as though she knew nothing of it. There was not one word to her husband, not one glance in his direction — as though he had not been in the room. What’s more, she promptly confiscated Stepan Trofimovitch and carried him off to the drawing-room — as though he had had no interview with Lembke, or as though it was not worth prolonging if he had. I repeat again, I think that in this, Yulia Mihailovna, in spite of her aristocratic tone, made another great mistake. And Karmazinov particularly did much to aggravate this. (He had taken part in the expedition at Yulia Mihailovna’s special request, and in that way had, incidentally, paid his visit to Varvara Petrovna, and she was so poor-spirited as to be perfectly delighted at it.) On seeing Stepan Trofimovitch, he called out from the doorway (he came in behind the rest) and pressed forward to embrace him, even interrupting Yulia Mihailovna.

“What years, what ages! At last . . . *excellent ami.*”

He made as though to kiss him, offering his cheek, of course, and Stepan Trofimovitch was so fluttered that he could not avoid saluting it.

"*Cher,*" he said to me that evening, recalling all the events of that day, "I wondered at that moment which of us was the most contemptible: he, embracing me only to humiliate me, or I, despising him and his face and kissing it on the spot, though I might have turned away. . . . Poo!"

"Come, tell me about yourself, tell me everything," Karmazinov drawled and lisped, as though it were possible for him on the spur of the moment to give an account of twenty-five years of his life. But this foolish trifling was the height of "chic."

"Remember that the last time we met was at the Granovsky dinner in Moscow, and that twenty-four years have passed since then . . ." Stepan Trofimovitch began very reasonably (and consequently not at all in the same "chic" style).

"*Ce cher homme,*" Karmazinov interrupted with shrill familiarity, squeezing his shoulder with exaggerated friendliness. "Make haste and take us to your room, Yulia Mihailovna; there he'll sit down and tell us everything."

"And yet I was never at all intimate with that peevish old woman," Stepan Trofimovitch went on complaining to me that same evening, shaking with anger; "we were almost boys, and I'd begun to detest him even then . . . just as he had me, of course."

Yulia Mihailovna's drawing-room filled up quickly. Varvara Petrovna was particularly excited, though she tried to appear indifferent, but I caught her once or twice glancing with hatred at Karmazinov and with wrath at Stepan Trofimovitch — the wrath of anticipation, the wrath of jealousy and love: if Stepan Trofimovitch had blundered this time and had let Karmazinov make him look small before every one, I believe she would have leapt up and beaten him. I have forgotten to say that Liza too was there, and I had never seen her more radiant, carelessly light-hearted, and happy. Mavriky Nikolaevitch was there too, of course. In the crowd of young ladies and rather vulgar young men who made up Yulia Mihailovna's usual retinue, and among whom this vulgarity was taken for sprightliness, and cheap cynicism for wit, I noticed two or three new faces: a very obsequious Pole who was on a visit in the town; a German doctor, a sturdy old fellow who kept loudly laughing with great zest at his own wit; and lastly, a very young princeling from Petersburg like an automaton figure,

with the deportment of a state dignitary and a fearfully high collar. But it was evident that Yulia Mihailovna had a very high opinion of this visitor, and was even a little anxious of the impression her *salon* was making on him.

"*Cher M. Karmazinov,*" said Stepan Trofimovitch, sitting in a picturesque pose on the sofa and suddenly beginning to lisp as daintily as Karmazinov himself, "*cher M. Karmazinov*, the life of a man of our time and of certain convictions, even after an interval of twenty-five years, is bound to seem monotonous ..."

The German went off into a loud abrupt guffaw like a neigh, evidently imagining that Stepan Trofimovitch had said something exceedingly funny. The latter gazed at him with studied amazement but produced no effect on him whatever. The prince, too, looked at the German, turning head, collar and all, towards him and putting up his pince-nez, though without the slightest curiosity.

"... Is bound to seem monotonous," Stepan Trofimovitch intentionally repeated, drawling each word as deliberately and nonchalantly as possible. "And so my life has been throughout this quarter of a century, *et comme on trouve partout plus de moines que de raison*, and as I am entirely of this opinion, it has come to pass that throughout this quarter of a century I ..."

"*C'est charmant, les moines,*" whispered Yulia Mihailovna, turning to Varvara Petrovna, who was sitting beside her.

Varvara Petrovna responded with a look of pride. But Karmazinov could not stomach the success of the French phrase, and quickly and shrilly interrupted Stepan Trofimovitch.

"As for me, I am quite at rest on that score, and for the past seven years I've been settled at Karlsruhe. And last year, when it was proposed by the town council to lay down a new water-pipe, I felt in my heart that this question of water-pipes in Karlsruhe was dearer and closer to my heart than all the questions of my precious Fatherland ... in this period of so-called reform."

"I can't help sympathising, though it goes against the grain," sighed Stepan Trofimovitch, bowing his head significantly.

Yulia Mihailovna was triumphant: the conversation was becoming profound and taking a political turn.

"A drain-pipe?" the doctor inquired in a loud voice.

“A water-pipe, doctor, a water-pipe, and I positively assisted them in drawing up the plan.”

The doctor went off into a deafening guffaw. Many people followed his example, laughing in the face of the doctor, who remained unconscious of it and was highly delighted that every one was laughing.

“You must allow me to differ from you, Karmazinov,” Yulia Mihailovna hastened to interpose. “Karlsruhe is all very well, but you are fond of mystifying people, and this time we don’t believe you. What Russian writer has presented so many modern types, has brought forward so many contemporary problems, has put his finger on the most vital modern points which make up the type of the modern man of action? You, only you, and no one else. It’s no use your assuring us of your coldness towards your own country and your ardent interest in the water-pipes of Karlsruhe. Ha ha!”

“Yes, no doubt,” lisped Karmazinov. “I have portrayed in the character of Pogozhev all the failings of the Slavophils and in the character of Nikodimov all the failings of the Westerners. ...”

“I say, hardly *all!*” Lyamshin whispered slyly. “But I do this by the way, simply to while away the tedious hours and to satisfy the persistent demands of my fellow-countrymen.”

“You are probably aware, Stepan Trofimovitch,” Yulia Mihailovna went on enthusiastically, “that to-morrow we shall have the delight of hearing the charming lines . . . one of the last of Semyon Yakovlevitch’s exquisite literary inspirations — it’s called *Merci.* He announces in this piece that he will write no more, that nothing in the world will induce him to, if angels from Heaven or, what’s more, all the best society were to implore him to change his mind. In fact he is laying down the pen for good, and this graceful *Merci* is addressed to the public in grateful acknowledgment of the constant enthusiasm with which it has for so many years greeted his unswerving loyalty to true Russian thought.”

Yulia Mihailovna was at the acme of bliss. “Yes, I shall make my farewell; I shall say my *Merci* and depart and there ... in Karlsruhe ... I shall close my eyes.” Karmazinov was gradually becoming maudlin.

like many of our great writers (and there are numbers of them amongst us), he could not resist praise, and began to be limp at once, in spite of his penetrating wit. But I consider this is pardonable. They say that one of our Shakespeares positively blurted out in private conversation that “we *great men* can’t do otherwise,” and so on, and, what’s more, was unaware of it.

“There in Karlsruhe I shall close my eyes. When we have done our duty, all that’s left for us great men is to make haste to close our eyes without seeking a reward. I shall do so too.”

“Give me the address and I shall come to Karlsruhe to visit your tomb,” said the German, laughing immoderately.

“They send corpses by rail nowadays,’’ one of the less important young men said unexpectedly.

Lyamshin positively shrieked with delight. Yulia Mihailovna frowned. Nikolay Stavrogin walked in.

“Why, I was told that you were locked up?” he said aloud, addressing Stepan Trofimovitch before every one else.

“No, it was a case of unlocking,” jested Stepan Trofimovitch.

“But I hope that what’s happened will have no influence on what I asked you to do,” Yulia Mihailovna put in again. “I trust that you will not let this unfortunate annoyance, of which I had no idea, lead you to disappoint our eager expectations and deprive us of the enjoyment of hearing your reading at our literary matinee.”

“I don’t know, I ... now . . .”

“Really, I am so unlucky, Varvara Petrovna . . . and only fancy, just when I was so longing to make the personal acquaintance of one of the most remarkable and independent intellects of Russia — and here Stepan Trofimovitch suddenly talks of deserting us.”

“Your compliment is uttered so audibly that I ought to pretend not to hear it,” Stepan Trofimovitch said neatly, “but I cannot believe that my insignificant presence is so indispensable at your fete to-morrow. However, I ...”

“Why, you’ll spoil him!” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, bursting into the room. “I’ve only just got him in hand — and in one morning he has been searched, arrested, taken by the collar by a policeman, and here ladies are cooing to him in the governor’s drawing-room. Every bone in his body is aching with rapture; in his wildest dreams he had never hoped for such good fortune. Now he’ll begin informing against the Socialists after this!”

“Impossible, Pyotr Stepanovitch! Socialism is too grand an idea to be unrecognised by Stepan Trofimovitch.” Yulia Mihailovna took up the gauntlet with energy.

“It’s a great idea but its exponents are not always great men, *et brisons-id, mon cher,”* Stepan Trofimovitch ended, addressing his son and rising

gracefully from his seat.

But at this point an utterly unexpected circumstance occurred. Von Lembke had been in the room for some time but seemed unnoticed by anyone, though every one had seen him come in. In accordance with her former plan, Yulia Mihailovna went on ignoring him. He took up his position near the door and with a stern face listened gloomily to the conversation. Hearing an allusion to the events of the morning, he began fidgeting uneasily, stared at the prince, obviously struck by his stiffly starched, prominent collar; then suddenly he seemed to start on hearing the voice of Pyotr Stepanovitch and seeing him burst in; and no sooner had Stepan Trofimovitch uttered his phrase about Socialists than Lembke went up to him, pushing against Lyamshin, who at once skipped out of the way with an affected gesture of surprise, rubbing his shoulder and pretending that he had been terribly bruised.

“Enough!” said Von Lembke to Stepan Trofimovitch, vigorously gripping the hand of the dismayed gentleman and squeezing it with all his might in both of his. “Enough! The filibusters of our day are unmasked. Not another word. Measures have been taken. . . .”

He spoke loudly enough to be heard by all the room, and concluded with energy. The impression he produced was poignant. Everybody felt that something was wrong. I saw Yulia Mihailovna turn pale. The effect was heightened by a trivial accident. After announcing that measures had been taken, Lembke turned sharply and walked quickly towards the door, but he had hardly taken two steps when he stumbled over a rug, swerved forward, and almost fell. For a moment he stood still, looked at the rug at which he had stumbled, and, uttering aloud “Change it!” went out of the room. Yulia Mihailovna ran after him. Her exit was followed by an uproar, in which it was difficult to distinguish anything. Some said he was “deranged,” others that he was “liable to attacks”; others put their fingers to their forehead; Lyamshin, in the corner, put his. two fingers above his forehead. People hinted at some domestic difficulties — in a whisper, of course. No one took up his hat; all were waiting. I don’t know what Yulia Mihailovna managed to do, but five minutes later she came back, doing her utmost to appear composed. She replied evasively that Andrey Antonovitch was rather excited, but that it meant nothing, that he had been like that from a child, that she knew “much better,” and that the fete next day would certainly cheer him up. Then followed a few flattering words to Stepan Trofimovitch

simply from civility, and a loud invitation to the members of the committee to open the meeting now, at once. Only then, all who were not members of the committee prepared to go home; but the painful incidents of this fatal day were not yet over.

I noticed at the moment when Nikolay Stavrogin came in that Liza looked quickly and intently at him and was for a long time unable to take her eyes off him — so much so that at last it attracted attention. I saw Mavriky Nikolaevitch bend over her from behind; he seemed to mean to whisper something to her, but evidently changed his intention and drew himself up quickly, looking round at every one with a guilty air. Mkolay Vsyevolodovitch too excited curiosity; his face was paler than usual and there was a strangely absent-minded look in his eyes. After flinging his question at Stepan Trofimovitch he seemed to forget about him altogether, and I really believe he even forgot to speak to his hostess. He did not once look at Liza — not because he did not want to, but I am certain because he did not notice her either. And suddenly, after the brief silence that followed Yulia Mihailovna's invitation to open the meeting without loss of time, Liza's musical voice, intentionally loud, was heard. She called to Stavrogin.

"Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, a captain who calls himself a relation of yours, the brother of your wife, and whose name is Lebyadkin, keeps writing impertinent letters to me, complaining of you and offering to tell me some secrets about you. If he really is a connection of yours, please tell him not to annoy me, and save me from this unpleasantness."

There was a note of desperate challenge in these words — every one realised it. The accusation was unmistakable, though perhaps it was a surprise to herself. She was like a man who shuts his eyes and throws himself from the roof.

But Nikolay Stavrogin's answer was even more astounding.

To begin with, it was strange that he was not in the least surprised and listened to Liza with unruffled attention. There was no trace of either confusion or anger in his face. Simply, firmly, even with an air of perfect readiness, he answered the fatal question:

"Yes, I have the misfortune to be connected with that man. I have been the husband of his sister for nearly five years. You may be sure I will give him your message as soon as possible, and I'll answer for it that he shan't annoy you again."

I shall never forget the horror that was reflected on the face of Varvara Petrovna. With a distracted air she got up from her seat, lifting up her right hand as though to ward off a blow. Mkolay Vsyevolodovitch looked at her, looked at Liza, at the spectators, and suddenly smiled with infinite disdain; he walked deliberately out of the room. Every one saw how Liza leapt up from the sofa as soon as he turned to go and unmistakably made a movement to run after him. But she controlled herself and did not run after him; she went quietly out of the room without saying a word or even looking at anyone, accompanied, of course, by Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who rushed after her.

The uproar and the gossip that night in the town I will not attempt to describe. Varvara Petrovna shut herself up in her town house and Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, it was said, went straight to Skvoreshniki without seeing his mother. Stepan Trofimovitch sent me that evening to *cette chere amie* to implore her to allow him to come to her, but she would not see me. He was terribly overwhelmed; he shed tears. “Such a marriage! Such a marriage! Such an awful thing in the family!” he kept repeating. He remembered Karmazinov, however, and abused him terribly. He set to work vigorously to prepare for the reading too and — the artistic temperament! — rehearsed before the looking-glass and went over all the jokes and witticisms uttered in the course of his life which he had written down in a separate notebook, to insert into his reading next day.

“My dear, I do this for the sake of a great idea,” he said to me, obviously justifying himself. “*Cher ami,* I have been stationary for twenty-five years and suddenly I’ve begun to move — whither, I know not — but I’ve begun to move. . . .”

PART III

CHAPTER I.

THE FETE — FIRST PART

the fete took place in spite of all the perplexities of the preceding “Shpigulin” day. I believe that even if Lembke had died the previous night, the fete would still have taken place next morning — so peculiar was the significance Yulia Mihailovna attached to it. Alas! up to the last moment she was blind and had no inkling of the state of public feeling. No one believed at last that the festive day would pass without some tremendous scandal, some “catastrophe” as some people expressed it, rubbing their hands in anticipation. Many people, it is true, tried to assume a frowning and diplomatic countenance; but, speaking generally, every Russian is inordinately delighted at any public scandal and disorder. It is true that we did feel something much more serious than the mere craving for a scandal: there was a general feeling of irritation, a feeling of implacable resentment; every one seemed thoroughly disgusted with everything. A kind of bewildered cynicism, a forced, as it were, strained cynicism was predominant in every one. The only people who were free from bewilderment were the ladies, and they were clear on only one point:’ their remorseless detestation of Yulia Mihailovna. Ladies of all shades of opinion were agreed in this. And she, poor dear, had no suspicion; up to the last hour she was persuaded that she was “surrounded by followers,” and that they were still “fanatically devoted to her.”

I have already hinted that some low fellows of different sorts had made their appearance amongst us. In turbulent times of upheaval or transition low characters always come to the front everywhere. I am not speaking now of the so-called “advanced” people who are always in a hurry to be in advance of every one else (their absorbing anxiety) and who always have some more or less definite, though often very stupid, aim. No, I am speaking only of the riff-raff. In every period of transition this riff-raff, which exists in every society, rises to the surface, and is not only without any aim but has not even a symptom of an idea, and merely does its utmost to give expression to uneasiness and impatience. Moreover, this riff-raff almost always falls unconsciously under the control of the little group of “advanced people” who do act with a definite aim, and this little group can

direct all this rabble as it pleases, if only it does not itself consist of absolute idiots, which, however, is sometimes the case. It is said among us now that it is all over, that Pyotr Stepanovitch was directed by the *Internationale,* and Yulia Mihailovna by Pyotr Stepanovitch, while she controlled, under his rule, a rabble of all sorts. The more sober minds amongst us wonder at themselves now, and can't understand how they came to be so foolish at the time.

What constituted the turbulence of our time and what transition it was we were passing through I don't know, nor I think does anyone, unless it were some of those visitors of ours. Yet the most worthless fellows suddenly gained predominant influence, began loudly criticising everything sacred, though till then they had not dared to open their mouths, while the leading people, who had till then so satisfactorily kept the upper hand, began listening to them and holding their peace, some even simpered approval in a most shameless way. People like Lyamshin and Telyatnikov, like Gogol's Tentyotnikov, drivelling home-bred editions of Radishtchev, wretched little Jews with a mournful but haughty smile, guffawing foreigners, poets of advanced tendencies from the capital, poets who made up with peasant coats and tarred boots for the lack of tendencies or talents, majors and colonels who ridiculed the senselessness of the service, and who would have been ready for an extra rouble to unbuckle their swords, and take jobs as railway clerks; generals who had abandoned their duties to become lawyers; advanced mediators, advancing merchants, innumerable divinity students, women who were the embodiment of the woman question — all these suddenly gained complete sway among us and over whom? Over the club, the venerable officials, over generals with wooden legs, over the very strict and inaccessible ladies of our local society. Since even Varvara Petrovna was almost at the beck and call of this rabble, right up to the time of the catastrophe with her son, our other local Minervas may well be pardoned for their temporary aberration. Now all this is attributed, as I have mentioned already, to the *Internationale.* This idea has taken such root that it is given as the explanation to visitors from other parts. Only lately councillor Kubrikov, a man of sixty-two, with the Stanislav Order on his breast, came forward uninvited and confessed in a voice full of feeling that he had beyond a shadow of doubt been for fully three months under the influence of the *Internationale.* When with every deference for his years 'and services he was invited to be more definite, he stuck firmly to his

original statement, though he could produce no evidence except that “he had felt it in all his feelings,” so that they cross-examined him no further.

I repeat again, there was still even among us a small group who held themselves aloof from the beginning, and even locked themselves up. But what lock can stand against a law of nature? Daughters will grow up even in the most careful families, and it is essential for grown-up daughters to dance.

And so all these people, too, ended by subscribing to the governesses’ fund.

The ball was assumed to be an entertainment so brilliant, so unprecedented; marvels were told about it; there were rumours of princes from a distance with lorgnettes; of ten stewards, all young dandies, with rosettes on their left shoulder; of some Petersburg people who were setting the thing going; there was a rumour that Karmazinov had consented to increase the subscriptions to the fund by reading his *Merci* in the costume of the governesses of the district; that there would be a literary quadrille all in costume, and every costume would symbolise some special line of thought; and finally that “honest Russian thought” would dance in costume — which would certainly be a complete novelty in itself. Who could resist subscribing? Every one subscribed.

II

The programme of the fete was divided into two parts: the literary matinee from midday till four o’clock, and afterwards a ball from ten o’clock onwards through the night. But in this very programme there lay concealed germs of disorder. In the first place, from the very beginning a rumour had gained ground among the public concerning a luncheon immediately after the literary matinee, or even while it was going on, during an interval arranged expressly for it — a free luncheon, of course, which would form part of the programme and be accompanied by champagne. The immense price of the tickets (three roubles) tended to confirm this rumour. “As though one would subscribe for nothing? The fete is arranged for twenty-four hours, so food must be provided. People will get hungry.” This was how people reasoned in the town. I must admit that Yulia Mihailovna did much to confirm this disastrous rumour by her own heedlessness. A month earlier, under the first spell of the great project, she would babble about it to

anyone she met; and even sent a paragraph to one of the Petersburg papers about the toasts and speeches arranged for her fete. What fascinated her most at that time was the idea of these toasts; she wanted to propose them herself and was continually composing them in anticipation. They were to make clear what was their banner (what was it? I don't mind betting that the poor dear composed nothing after all), they were to get into the Petersburg and Moscow papers, to touch and fascinate the higher powers and then to spread the idea over all the provinces of Russia, rousing people to wonder and imitation.

But for toasts, champagne was essential, and as champagne can't be drunk on an empty stomach, it followed that a lunch was essential too. Afterwards, when by her efforts a committee had been formed and had attacked the subject more seriously, it was proved clearly to her at once that if they were going to dream of banquets there would be very little left for the governesses, however well people subscribed. There were two ways out of the difficulty: either Belshazzar's feast with toasts and speeches, and ninety roubles for the governesses, or a considerable sum of money with the fete only as a matter of form to raise it. The committee, however, only wanted to scare her, and had of course worked out a third course of action, which was reasonable and combined the advantages of both, that is, a very decent fete in every respect only without champagne, and so yielding a very respectable sum, much more than ninety roubles. But Yulia Mihailovna would not agree to it: her proud spirit revolted from paltry compromise. She decided at once that if the original idea could not be carried out they should rush to the opposite extreme, that is, raise an enormous subscription that would be the envy of other provinces. "The public must understand," she said at the end of her flaming speech to the committee, "that the attainment of an object of universal human interest is infinitely loftier than the corporeal enjoyments of the passing moment, that the fete in its essence is only the proclamation of a great idea, and so we ought to be content with the most frugal German ball simply as a symbol, that is, if we can't dispense with this detestable ball altogether," so great was the aversion she suddenly conceived for it. But she was pacified at last. It was then that "the literary quadrille" and the other aesthetic items were invented and proposed as substitutes for the corporeal enjoyments. It was then that Karmazinov finally consented to read *Herd* (until then he had only tantalised them by his hesitation) and so eradicate the very idea of victuals from the minds of our

incontinent public. So the ball was once more to be a magnificent function, though in a different style. And not to be too ethereal it was decided that tea with lemon and round biscuits should be served at the beginning of the ball, and later on “orchade” and lemonade and at the end even ices — but nothing else. For those who always and everywhere are hungry and, still more, thirsty, they might open a buffet in the farthest of the suite of rooms and put it in charge of Prohorovitch, the head cook of the club, who would, subject to the strict supervision of the committee, serve whatever was wanted, at a fixed charge, and a notice should be put up on the door of the hall that refreshments were extra. But on the morning they decided not to open the buffet at all for fear of disturbing the reading, though the buffet would have been five rooms off the White Hall in which Karmazinov had consented to read *Merci.*

It is remarkable that the committee, and even the most practical people in it, attached enormous consequence to this reading. As for people of poetical tendencies, the marshal’s wife, for instance, informed Karmazinov that after the reading she would immediately order a marble slab to be put up in the wall of the White Hall with an inscription in gold letters, that on such a day and year, here, in this place, the great writer of Russia and of Europe had read *Merci* on laying aside his pen, and so had for the first time taken leave of the Russian public represented by the leading citizens of our town, and that this inscription would be read by all at the ball, that is, only five hours after *Merci* had been read. I know for a fact that Karmazinov it was who insisted that there should be no buffet in the morning on any account, while he was reading, in spite of some protests from members of the committee that this was rather opposed to our way of doing things.

This was the position of affairs, while in the town people were still reckoning on a Belshazzar feast, that is, on refreshments provided by the committee; they believed in this to the last hour. Even the young ladies were dreaming of masses of sweets and preserves, and something more beyond their imagination. Every one knew that the subscriptions had reached a huge sum, that all the town was struggling to go, that people were driving in from the surrounding districts, and that there were not tickets enough. It was known, too, that there had been some large subscriptions apart from the price paid for tickets: Varvara Petrovna, for instance, had paid three hundred roubles for her ticket and had given almost all the flowers from her conservatory to decorate the room. The marshal’s wife, who was a member

of the committee, provided the house and the lighting; the club furnished the music, the attendants, and gave up Prohorovitch for the whole day. There were other contributions as well, though lesser ones, so much so indeed that the idea was mooted of cutting down the price of tickets from three roubles to two. Indeed, the committee were afraid at first that three roubles would be too much for young ladies to pay, and suggested that they might have family tickets, so that every family should pay for one daughter only, while the other young ladies of the family, even if there were a dozen specimens, should be admitted free. But all their apprehensions turned out to be groundless: it was just the young ladies who did come. Even the poorest clerks brought their girls, and it was quite evident that if they had had no girls it would never have occurred to them to subscribe for tickets. One insignificant little secretary brought all his seven daughters, to say nothing of his wife and a niece into the bargain, and every one of these persons held in her hand an entrance ticket that cost three roubles.

It may be imagined what an upheaval it made in the town! One has only to remember that as the fete was divided into two parts every lady needed two costumes for the occasion — a morning one for the matinee and a ball dress for the evening. Many middle-class people, as it appeared afterwards, had pawned everything they had for that day, even the family linen, even the sheets, and possibly the mattresses, to the Jews, who had been settling in our town in great numbers during the previous two years and who became more and more numerous as time went on. Almost all the officials had asked for their salary in advance, and some of the landowners sold beasts they could ill spare, and all simply to bring their ladies got up as marchionesses, and to be as good as anybody The magnificence of dresses on this occasion was something unheard of in our neighbourhood. For a fortnight beforehand the town was overflowing with funny stories which were all brought by our wits to Yulia Mihailovna’s court. Caricatures were passed from hand to hand. I have seen some drawings of the sort myself, in Yulia Mihailovna’s album. All this reached the ears of the families who were the source of the jokes; I believe this was the cause of the general hatred of Yulia Mihailovna which had grown so strong in the town. People swear and gnash their teeth when they think of it now. But it was evident, even at the time, that if the committee were to displease them in anything, or if anything went wrong at the ball, the outburst of indignation would be something surprising. That’s why every one was secretly expecting a

scandal; and if it was so confidently expected, how could it fail to come to pass? The orchestra struck up punctually at midday. Being one of the stewards, that is, one of the twelve “young men with a rosette,” I saw with my own eyes how this day of ignominious memory began. It began with an enormous crush at the doors. How was it that everything, including the police, went wrong that day? I don’t blame the genuine public: the fathers of families did not crowd, nor did they push against anyone, in spite of their position. On the contrary, I am told that they were disconcerted even in the street, at the sight of the crowd shoving in a way unheard of in our town, besieging the entry and taking it by assault, instead of simply going in. Meanwhile the carriages kept driving up, and at last blocked the street. Now, at the time I write, I have good grounds for affirming that some of the lowest rabble of our town were brought in without tickets by Lyamshin and Liputin, possibly, too, by other people who were stewards like me. Anyway, some complete strangers, who had come from the surrounding districts and elsewhere, were present. As soon as these savages entered the hall they began asking where the buffet was, as though they had been put up to it beforehand, and learning that there was no buffet they began swearing with brutal directness, and an unprecedented insolence; some of them, it is true, were drunk when they came. Some of them were dazed like savages at the splendour of the hall, as they had never seen anything like it, and subsided for a minute gazing at it open-mouthed. This great White Hall really was magnificent, though the building was falling into decay: it was of immense size, with two rows of windows, with an old-fashioned ceiling covered with gilt carving, with a gallery with mirrors on the walls, red and white draperies, marble statues (nondescript but still statues) with heavy old furniture of the Napoleonic period, white and gold, upholstered in red velvet. At the moment I am describing, a high platform had been put up for the literary gentlemen who were to read, and the whole hall was filled with chairs like the parterre of a theatre with wide aisles for the audience.

But after the first moments of surprise the most senseless questions and protests followed. “Perhaps we don’t care for a reading. . . . We’ve paid our money. . . . The audience has been impudently swindled. . . . This is our entertainment, not the Lembkes’! They seemed, in fact, to have been let in for this purpose. I remember specially an encounter in which the princeling with the stand-up collar and the face of a Dutch doll, whom I had met the morning before at Yulia Mihailovna’s, distinguished himself. He had, at her

urgent request, consented to pin a rosette on his left shoulder and to become one of our stewards. It turned out that this dumb wax figure could act after a fashion of his own, if he could not talk. When a colossal pockmarked captain, supported by a herd of rabble following at his heels, pestered him by asking “which way to the buffet?” he made a sign to a police sergeant. His hint was promptly acted upon, and in spite of the drunken captain’s abuse he was dragged out of the hall. Meantime the genuine public began to make its appearance, and stretched in three long files between the chairs. The disorderly elements began to subside, but the public, even the most “respectable” among them, had a dissatisfied and perplexed air; some of the ladies looked positively scared.

At last all were seated; the music ceased. People began blowing their noses and looking about them. They waited with too solemn an air — which is always a bad sign. But nothing was to be seen yet of the Lembkes. Silks, velvets, diamonds glowed and sparkled on every side; whiffs of fragrance filled the air. The men were wearing all their decorations, and the old men were even in uniform. At last the marshal’s wife came in with Liza. Liza had never been so dazzlingly charming or so splendidly dressed as that morning. Her hair was done up in curls, her eyes sparkled, a smile beamed on her face. She made an unmistakable sensation: people scrutinised her and whispered about her. They said that she was looking for Stavrogin, but neither Stavrogin nor Varvara Petrovna were there. At the time I did not understand the expression of her face: why was there so much happiness, such joy, such energy and strength in that face? I remembered what had happened the day before and could not make it out.

But still the Lembkes did not come. This was distinctly a blunder. I learned that Yulia Mihailovna waited till the last minute for Pyotr Stepanovitch, without whom she could not stir a step, though she never admitted it to herself. I must mention, in parenthesis, that on the previous day Pyotr Stepanovitch had at the last meeting of the committee declined to wear the rosette of a steward, which had disappointed her dreadfully, even to the point of tears. To her surprise and, later on, her extreme discomfiture (to anticipate things) he vanished for the whole morning and did not make his appearance at the literary matinee at all, so that no one met him till evening. At last the audience began to manifest unmistakable signs of impatience. No one appeared on the platform either. The back rows began applauding, as in a theatre. The elderly gentlemen and the ladies frowned.

“The Lembkes are really giving themselves unbearable airs.” Even among the better part of the audience an absurd whisper began to gain ground that perhaps there would not be a fete at all, that Lembke perhaps was really unwell, and so on and so on. But, thank God, the Lembkes at last appeared, she was leaning on his arm; I must confess I was in great apprehension myself about their appearance. But the legends were disproved, and the truth was triumphant. The audience seemed relieved. Lembke himself seemed perfectly well. Every one, I remember, was of that opinion, for it can be imagined how many eyes were turned on him. I may mention, as characteristic of our society, that there were very few of the better-class people who saw reason to suppose that there was anything wrong with him; his conduct seemed to them perfectly normal, and so much so that the action he had taken in the square the morning before was accepted and approved.

“That’s how it should have been from the first,” the higher officials declared. “If a man begins as a philanthropist he has to come to the same thing in the end, though he does not see that it was necessary from the point of view of philanthropy itself” — that, at least, was the opinion at the club. They only blamed him for having lost his temper. “It ought to have been done more coolly, but there, he is a new man,” said the authorities.

All eyes turned with equal eagerness to Yulia Mihailovna. Of course no one has the right to expect from me an exact account in regard to one point: that is a mysterious, a feminine question. But I only know one thing: on the evening of the previous day she had gone into Andrey Antonovitch’s study and was there with him till long after midnight. Andrey Antonovitch was comforted and forgiven. The husband and wife came to a complete understanding, everything was forgotten, and when at the end of the interview Lembke went down on his knees, recalling with horror the final incident of the previous night, the exquisite hand, and after it the lips of his wife, checked the fervent flow of penitent phrases of the chivalrously delicate gentleman who was limp with emotion. Every one could see the happiness in her face. She walked in with an open-hearted *air,* wearing a magnificent dress. She seemed to be at the very pinnacle of her heart’s desires, the fete — the goal and crown of her diplomacy — was an accomplished fact. As they walked to their seats in front of the platform, the Lembkes bowed in all directions and responded to greetings. They were at once surrounded. The marshal’s wife got up to meet them.

But at that point a horrid misunderstanding occurred; the orchestra, apropos of nothing, struck up a flourish, not a triumphal march of any kind, but a simple flourish such as was played at the club when some one's health was drunk at an official dinner. I know now that Lyamshin, in his capacity of steward, had arranged this, as though in honour of the Lembkes' entrance. Of course he could always excuse it as a blunder or excessive zeal. . . . Alas! I did not know at the time that they no longer cared even to find excuses, and that all such considerations were from that day a thing of the past. But the flourish was not the end of it: in the midst of the vexatious astonishment and the smiles of the audience there was a sudden "hurrah" from the end of the hall and from the gallery also, apparently in Lembke's honour. The hurrahs were few, but I must confess they lasted for some time. Yulia Mihailovna flushed, her eyes flashed. Lembke stood still at his chair, and turning towards the voices sternly and majestically scanned the audience. . . . They hastened to make him sit down. I noticed with dismay the same dangerous smile on his face as he had worn the morning before, in his wife's drawing-room, when he stared at Stepan Trofimovitch before going up to him. It seemed to me that now, too, there was an ominous, and, worst of all, a rather comic expression on his countenance, the expression of a man resigned to sacrifice himself to satisfy his wife's lofty aims. . . . Yulia Mihailovna beckoned to me hurriedly, and whispered to me to run to Karmazinov and entreat him to begin. And no sooner had I turned away than another disgraceful incident, much more unpleasant than the first, took place.

On the platform, the empty platform, on which till that moment all eyes and all expectations were fastened, and where nothing was to be seen but a small table, a chair in front of it, and on the table a glass of water on a silver salver — on the empty platform there suddenly appeared the colossal figure of Captain Lebyadkin wearing a dress-coat and a white tie. I was so astounded I could not believe my eyes. The captain seemed confused and remained standing at the back of the platform. Suddenly there was a shout in the audience, "Lebyadkin! You?" The captain's stupid red face (he was hopelessly drunk) expanded in a broad vacant grin at this greeting. He raised his hand, rubbed his forehead with it, shook his shaggy head and, as though making up his mind to go through with it, took two steps forward and suddenly went off into a series of prolonged, blissful, gurgling, but not loud guffaws, which made him screw up his eyes and set all his bulky

person heaving. This spectacle set almost half the audience laughing, twenty people applauded. The serious part of the audience looked at one another gloomily; it all lasted only half a minute, however. Liputin, wearing his steward's rosette, ran on to the platform with two servants; they carefully took the captain by both arms, while Liputin whispered something to him. The captain scowled, muttered "Ah, well, if that's it!" waved his hand, turned his huge back to the public and vanished with his escort. But a minute later Liputin skipped on to the platform again. He was wearing the sweetest of his invariable smiles, which usually suggested vinegar and sugar, and carried in his hands a sheet of note-paper. With tiny but rapid steps he came forward to the edge of the platform.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, addressing the public, "through our inadvertency there has arisen a comical misunderstanding which has been removed; but I've hopefully undertaken to do something at the earnest and most respectful request of one of our local poets. Deeply touched by the humane and lofty object ... in 'spite of his appearance . . . the object which has brought us all together ... to wipe away the tears of the poor but well-educated girls of our province . . . this gentleman, I mean this local poet . . . although desirous of preserving his incognito, would gladly have heard his poem read at the beginning of the ball . . . that is, I mean, of the matinee. Though this poem is not in the programme . . . for it has only been received half an hour ago . . . yet it has seemed to *us*" — (Us? Whom did he mean by us? I report his confused and incoherent speech word for word)—" that through its remarkable naivete of feeling, together with its equally remarkable gaiety, the poem might well be read, that is, not as something serious, but as something appropriate to the occasion, that is to the idea . . . especially as some lines . . . And I wanted to ask the kind permission of the audience."

"Read it!" boomed a voice at the back of the hall.

"Then I am to read it?"

"Read it, read it!" cried many voices.

"With the permission of the audience I will read it," Liputin minced again, still with the same sugary smile. He still seemed to hesitate, and I even thought that he was rather excited. These people are sometimes nervous in spite of their impudence. A divinity student would have carried it through without winking, but Liputin did, after all, belong to the last generation.

“I must say, that is, I have the honour to say by way of preface, that it is not precisely an ode such as used to be written for fetes, but is rather, so to say, a jest, but full of undoubted feeling, together with playful humour, and, so to say, the most realistic truthfulness.”

“Read it, read it!”

He unfolded the paper. No one of course was in time to stop him. Besides, he was wearing his steward’s badge. In a ringing voice he declaimed:

“To the local governesses of the Fatherland from the poet at the fete:

“*Governesses all, good morrow,*

Triumph on this festive day.

Retrograde or vowed George-Sander — *Never mind, just frisk away!”*

“But that’s Lebyadkin’s! Lebyadkin’s!” cried several voices. There was laughter and even applause, though not from very many.

“*Teaching French to wet-nosed children, You are glad enough to think*

You can catch a worn-out sexton —

Even he is worth a wink!”

“Hurrah! hurrah!”

“*But in these great days of progress, Ladies, to your sorrow know,*

You can’t even catch a sexton,

If you have not got a ‘dot’.”

“To be sure, to be sure, that’s realism. You can’t hook a husband without a ‘dot’!”

“*But, henceforth, since through our feasting Capital has flowed from all,*

And we send you forth to conquest

Dancing, downed from this hall — *Retrograde or vowed George-Sander, Never mind, rejoice you may,*

You’re a governess with a dowry,

Spit on all and frisk away!”

I must confess I could not believe my ears. The insolence of it was so unmistakable that there was no possibility of excusing Liputin on the ground of stupidity. Besides, Liputin was by no means stupid. The intention was obvious, to me, anyway; they seemed in a hurry to create disorder. Some lines in these idiotic verses, for instance the last, were such that no stupidity could have let them pass. Liputin himself seemed to feel that he had undertaken too much; when he had achieved his exploit he was so overcome by his own impudence that he did not even leave the platform but

remained standing, as though there were something more he wanted to say. He had probably imagined that it would somehow produce a different effect; but even the group of ruffians who had applauded during the reading suddenly sank into silence, as though they, too, were overcome. What was silliest of all, many of them took the whole episode seriously, that is, did not regard the verses as a lampoon but actually thought it realistic and true as regards the governesses — a poem with a tendency, in fact. But the excessive freedom of the verses struck even them at last; as for the general public they were not only scandalised but obviously offended. I am sure I am not mistaken as to the impression. Yulia Mihailovna said afterwards that in another moment she would have fallen into a-swoon. One of the most respectable old gentlemen helped his old wife on to her feet, and they walked out of the hall accompanied by the agitated glances of the audience. Who knows, the example might have infected others if Karmazinov himself, wearing a dress-coat and a white tie and carrying a manuscript, in his hand, had not appeared on the platform at that moment. Yulia Mihailovna turned an ecstatic gaze at him as on her deliverer. . . . But I was by that time behind the scenes. I was in quest of Liputin.

“You did that on purpose!” I said, seizing him indignantly by the arm.

“I assure you I never thought . . ,” he began, cringing and lying at once, pretending to be unhappy. “The verses had only just been brought and I thought that as an amusing pleasantry. ...”

“You did not think anything of the sort. You can’t really think that stupid rubbish an amusing pleasantry?”

“Yes, I do.”

“You are simply lying, and it wasn’t brought to you just now. You helped Lebyadkin to compose it yourself, yesterday very likely, to create a scandal. The last verse must have been yours, the part about the sexton too. Why did he come on in a dress-coat? You must have meant him to read it, too, if he had not been drunk?”

Liputin looked at me coldly and ironically. “What business is it of yours?” he asked suddenly with strange calm.

“What business is it of mine I You are wearing the steward’s badge, too. . . . Where is Pyotr Stepanovitch?”

“I don’t know, somewhere here; why do you ask?”

“Because now I see through it. It’s simply a plot against Yulia Mihailovna so as to ruin the day by a scandal. . . .” Liputin looked at me

askance again.

“But what is it to you?” he said, grinning. He shrugged his shoulders and walked away.

It came over me with a rush. All my suspicions were confirmed. Till then, I had been hoping I was mistaken! What was I to do? I was on the point of asking the advice of Stepan Trofimovitch, but he was standing before the looking-glass, trying on different smiles, and continually consulting a piece of paper on which he had notes. He had to go on immediately after Karmazinov, and was not in a fit state for conversation. Should I run to Yulia Mihailovna? But it was too soon to go to her: she needed a much sterner lesson to cure her of her conviction that she had “a following,” and that every one was “fanatically devoted” to her. She would not have believed me, and would have thought I was dreaming. Besides, what help could she be?” Eh,” I thought, “after all, what business is it of mine? I’ll take off my badge and go home *when it begins.”* That was my mental phrase, “when it begins”; I remember it.

But I had to go and listen to Karmazinov. Taking a last look round behind the scenes, I noticed that a good number of outsiders, even women among them, were flitting about, going in and out. “Behind the scenes” was rather a narrow space completely screened from the audience by a curtain and communicating with other rooms by means of a passage. Here our readers were awaiting their turns. But I was struck at that moment by the reader who was to follow Stepan Trofimovitch. He, too, was some sort of professor (I don’t know to this day exactly what he was) who had voluntarily left some educational institution after a disturbance among the students, and had arrived in the town only a few days before. He, too, had been recommended to Yulia Mihailovna, and she had received him with reverence. I know now that he had only spent one evening in her company before the reading; he had not spoken all that evening, had listened with an equivocal smile to the jests and the general tone of the company surrounding Yulia Mihailovna, and had made an unpleasant impression on every one by his air of haughtiness, and at the same time almost timorous readiness to take offence. It was Yulia Mihailovna herself who had enlisted his services. Now he was walking from corner to corner, and, like Stepan Trofimovitch, was muttering to himself, though he looked on the ground instead of in the looking-glass. He was not trying on smiles, though he often smiled rapaciously. It was obvious that it was useless to speak to him either.

He looked about forty, was short and bald, had a greyish beard, and was decently dressed. But what was most interesting about him was that at every turn he took he threw up his right fist, brandished it above his head and suddenly brought it down .again as though crushing an antagonist to atoms. He went — through this by-play every moment. It made me uncomfortable. I hastened away to listen to Karmazinov.

III

There was a feeling in the hall that something was wrong again. Let me state to begin with that I have the deepest reverence for genius, but why do our geniuses in the decline of their illustrious years behave sometimes exactly like little boys? What though he was Karmazinov, and came forward with as much dignity as five *Kammerherrs* rolled into one? How could he expect to keep an audience like ours listening for a whole hour to a single paper? I have observed, in fact, that however big a genius a man may be, he can't monopolise the attention of an audience at a frivolous literary matinee for more than twenty minutes with impunity. The entrance of the great writer was received, indeed, with the utmost respect: even the severest elderly men showed signs of approval and interest, and the ladies even displayed some enthusiasm. The applause was brief, however, and somehow uncertain and not unanimous. Yet there was no unseemly behaviour in the back rows, till Karmazinov began to speak, not that anything very bad followed then, but only a sort of misunderstanding. I have mentioned already that he had rather a shrill voice, almost feminine in fact, and at the same time a genuinely aristocratic lisp. He had hardly articulated a few words when some one had the effrontery to laugh aloud — probably some ignorant simpleton who knew nothing of the world, and was congenitally disposed to laughter. But there was nothing like a hostile demonstration; on the contrary people said "sh-h!" and the offender was crushed. But Mr. Karmazinov, with an affected air and intonation, announced that "at first he had declined absolutely to read." (Much need there was to mention it!) "There are some lines which come so deeply from the heart that it is impossible to utter them aloud, so that these holy things cannot be laid before, the public" — (Why lay them then?)—" but as he had been begged to do so, he was doing so, and as he was, moreover, laying down his pen for ever, and had sworn to write no more, he had written this

last farewell; and as he had sworn never, on any inducement, to read anything in public," and so on, and so on, all in that style.

But all that would not have mattered; every one knows what authors' prefaces are like, though, I may observe, that considering the lack of culture of our audience and the irritability of the back rows, all this may have had an influence. Surely it would have been better to have read a little story, a short tale such as he had 'written in the past — over-elaborate, that is, and affected, but sometimes witty. It would have saved the situation. No, this was quite another story! It was a regular oration! Good heavens, what wasn't there in it! I am positive that it would have reduced to rigidity even a Petersburg audience, let alone ours. Imagine an article that would have filled some thirty pages of print of the most affected, aimless prattle; and to make matters worse, the gentleman read it with a sort of melancholy condescension as though it were a favour, so that it was almost insulting to the audience. The subject. . . . Who could make it out? It was a sort of description of certain impressions and reminiscences. But of what? And about what? Though the leading intellects of the province did their utmost during the first half of the reading, they could make nothing of it, and they listened to the second part simply out of politeness. A great deal was said about love, indeed, of the love of the genius for some person, but I must admit it made rather an awkward impression. For the great writer to tell us about his first kiss seemed to my mind a little incongruous with his short and fat-little figure . . . Another thing that was offensive; these kisses did not occur as they do with the rest of mankind. There had to be a framework of gorse (it had to be gorse or some such plant that one must look up in a flora) and there had to be a tint of purple in the sky, such as no mortal had ever observed before, or if some people had seen it, they had never noticed it, but he seemed to say, "I have seen it and am describing it to you, fools, as if it were a most ordinary thing." The tree under which the interesting couple sat had of course to be of an orange colour. They were sitting somewhere in Germany. Suddenly they see Pompey or Cassius on the eve of a battle, and both are penetrated by a Â«hill of ecstasy. Some wood-nymph squeaked in the bushes. Gluck played the violin among the reeds. The title of the piece lie was playing was given in full, but no one knew it, so that one would have had to look it up in a musical dictionary. Meanwhile a fog came on, such a fog, such a fog, that it was more like a million pillows than a fog. And suddenly everything disappears and the great genius is

crossing the frozen Volga in a thaw. Two and a half pages are filled with the crossing, and,yet he falls through the ice. The genius is drowning — you imagine he was drowned? Not a bit of it; this was simply in order that when he was drowning and at his last gasp, he might catch sight of a bit of ice, the size of a pea, but pure and crystal “as a frozen tear,” and in that tear was reflected Germany, or more accurately the sky of Germany, and its iridescent sparkle recalled to his mind the very tear which “dost thou remember, fell from thine eyes when we were sitting under that emerald tree, and thou didst cry out joyfully: ‘There is no crime!”No,’ I said through my tears, ‘but if that is so, there are no righteous either.’ We sobbed and parted for ever.” She went off somewhere to the sea coast, while he went to visit some caves, and then he descends and descends and descends for three years under Suharev Tower in Moscow, and suddenly in the very bowels of the earth, he finds in a cave a lamp, and before the lamp a hermit. The hermit is praying. The genius leans against a little barred window, and suddenly hears a sigh. Do you suppose it was the hermit sighing? Much he cares about the hermit! Not a bit of it, this sigh simply reminds him of her first sigh, thirty-seven years before, “in Germany, when, dost thou remember, we sat under an agate tree and thou didst say to me, ‘Why love? See ochra is growing all around and I love thee; but the ochra will cease to grow, and I shall cease to love.’” Then the fog comes on again, Hoffman appears on the scene, the wood-nymph whistles a tune from Chopin, and suddenly out of the fog appears Ancus Marcius over the roofs of Rome, wearing a laurel wreath. “A chill of ecstasy ran down our backs and we parted for ever” — and so on and so on.

Perhaps I am not reporting it quite right and don’t know how to report it, but the drift of the babble was something of that sort. And after all, how disgraceful this passion of our great intellects for jesting in a superior way really is! The great European philosopher, the great man of science, the inventor, the martyr — all these who labour and are heavy laden, are to the great Russian genius no more than so many cooks in his kitchen. He is the master and they come to him, cap in hand, awaiting orders. It is true he jeers superciliously at Russia too, and there is nothing he likes better than exhibiting the bankruptcy of Russia in every relation before the great minds of Europe, but as regards himself, no, he is at a higher level than all the great minds of Europe; they are only material for his jests. He takes another man’s idea, tacks on to it its antithesis, and the epigram is made. There is

such a thing as crime, there is no such thing as crime; there is no such thing as justice, there are no just men; atheism, Darwinism, the Moscow bells. . . . But alas, he no longer believes in the Moscow bells; Rome, laurels. . . . But he has no belief in laurels even. . . . We have a conventional attack of Byronic spleen, a grimace from Heine, something of Petchorin — and the machine goes on rolling, whistling, at full speed. “But you may praise me, you may praise me, that I like extremely; it’s only in a manner of speaking that I lay down the pen; I shall bore you three hundred times more, you’ll grow weary of reading me. . . .”

Of course it did not end without trouble; but the worst of it was that it was his own doing. People had for some time begun shuffling their feet, blowing their noses, coughing, and doing everything that people do when a lecturer, whoever he may be, keeps an audience for longer than twenty minutes at a literary matinee. But the genius noticed nothing of all this. He went on lisping and mumbling, without giving a thought to the audience, so that every one began to wonder. Suddenly in a back row a solitary but loud voice was heard:

“Good Lord, what nonsense!”

The exclamation escaped involuntarily, and I am sure was not intended as a demonstration. The man was simply worn out. But Mr. Karmazinov stopped, looked sarcastically at the audience, and suddenly lisped with the deportment of an aggrieved *kammerherr.*

“I’m afraid I’ve been boring you dreadfully, gentlemen?”

That was his blunder, that he was the first to speak; for provoking an answer in this way he gave an opening for the rabble to speak, too, and even legitimately, so to say, while if he had restrained himself, people would have gone on blowing their noses and it would have passed off somehow. Perhaps he expected applause in response to his question, but there was no sound of applause; on the contrary, every one seemed to subside and shrink back in dismay.

“You never did see Ancus Marcius, that’s all brag,” cried a voice that sounded full of irritation and even nervous exhaustion.

“Just so,” another voice agreed at once. “There are no such things as ghosts nowadays, nothing but natural science. Look it .up in a scientific book.”

“Gentlemen, there was nothing I expected less than such objections,” said Karmazinov, extremely surprised. The great genius had completely lost

touch with his Fatherland in Karlsruhe.

“Nowadays it’s outrageous to say that the world stands on three fishes,” a young lady snapped out suddenly. “You can’t have gone down to the hermit’s cave, Karmazinov. And who talks about hermits nowadays?”

“Gentlemen, what surprises me most of all is that you take it all so seriously. However . . . however, you are perfectly right. No one has greater respect for truth and realism than I have. . . .”

Though he smiled ironically he was tremendously overcome. His face seemed to express: “I am not the sort of man you think, I am on your side, only praise me, praise me more, as much as possible, I like it extremely. ...”

“Gentlemen,” he cried, completely mortified at last, “I see that my poor poem is quite out of place here. And, indeed, I am out of place here myself, I think.”

“You threw at the crow and you hit the cow,” some fool, probably drunk, shouted at the top of his voice, and of course no notice ought to have been taken of him. It is true there was a sound of disrespectful laughter.

“A cow, you say?” Karmazinov caught it up at once, his voice grew shriller and shriller. “As for crows and cows, gentlemen, I will refrain. I’ve too much respect for any audience to permit myself comparisons, however harmless; but I did think . . .”

“You’d better be careful, sir,” some one shouted from a back row.

“But I had supposed that laying aside my pen and saying farewell to my readers, I should be heard ...”

“No, no, we want to hear you, we want to,” a few voices from the front row plucked up spirit to exclaim at last.

“Read, read!” several enthusiastic ladies’ voices chimed in, and at last there was an outburst of applause, sparse and feeble, it is true.

“Believe me, Karmazinov, every one looks on it as an honour . . ,” the marshal’s wife herself could not resist saying.

“Mr. Karmazinov!” cried a fresh young voice in the back of the hall suddenly. It was the voice of a very young teacher from the district school who had only lately come among us, an excellent young man, quiet and gentlemanly. He stood up in his place. “Mr. Karmazinov, if I had the happiness to fall in love as you have described to us, I really shouldn’t refer to my love in an article intended for public reading. . . .” He flushed red all over.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” cried Karmazinov, “I have finished. I will omit the end and withdraw. Only allow me to read the six last lines:

“Yes, dear reader, farewell!” he began at once from the manuscript without sitting down again in his chair. “Farewell, reader; I do not greatly insist on our parting friends; what need to trouble you, indeed. You may abuse me, abuse me as you will if it affords you any satisfaction. But best of all if we forget one another for ever. And if you all, readers, were suddenly so kind as to fall on your knees and begin begging me with tears, ‘Write, oh, write for us, Karmazinov — for the sake of Russia, for the sake of posterity, to win laurels,’ even then I would answer you, thanking you, of course, with every courtesy, ‘No, we’ve had enough of one another, dear fellow-countrymen, *merci!* It’s time we took our separate ways!”*Herd*, mem, *merci!”*

Karmazinov bowed ceremoniously, and, as red as though he had been cooked, retired behind the scenes.

“Nobody would go down on their knees; a wild idea!”

“What conceit!”

“That’s only humour,” some one more reasonable suggested. “Spare me your humour.”

“I call it impudence, gentlemen!”

“Well, he’s finished now, anyway!”

“Ech, what a dull show!”

But all these ignorant exclamations in the back rows (though they were confined to the back rows) were drowned in applause from the other half of the audience. They called for Karmazinov. Several ladies with Yulia Mihailovna and the marshal’s wife crowded round the platform. In Yulia Mihailovna’s hands was a gorgeous laurel wreath resting on another wreath of living roses on a white velvet cushion.

“Laurels!” Karmazinov pronounced with a subtle and rather sarcastic smile. “I am touched, of course, and accept with real emotion this wreath prepared beforehand, but still fresh and unwithered, but I assure you, mesdames, that I have suddenly become so realistic that I feel laurels would in this age be far more appropriate in the hands of a skilful cook than in mine. . . .”

“Well, a cook is more useful,” cried the divinity student, who had been at the “meeting” at Virgirisky’s.

There was some disorder. In many rows people jumped up to get a better view of the presentation of the laurel wreath.

“I’d give another three roubles for a, cook this minute,” another voice assented loudly, too loudly; insistently, in fact.

“So would I.”

“And I.”

“Is it possible there’s no buffet? . . .”

“Gentlemen, it’s simply a swindle. . . .”

It must be admitted, however, that all these unbridled gentlemen still stood in awe of our higher officials and of the police superintendent, who was present in the hall. Ten minutes later all had somehow got back into their places, but there was not the same good order as before. And it was into this incipient chaos that poor Stepan Trofimovitch was thrust.

IV

I ran out to him behind the scenes once more, and had time to warn him excitedly that in my opinion the game was up, that he had better not appear at all, but had better go home at once on the excuse of his usual ailment, for instance, and I would take off my badge and come with him. At that instant he was on his way to the platform; he stopped suddenly, and haughtily looking me up and down he pronounced solemnly:

“What grounds have you, sir, for thinking me capable of such baseness?”

I

d rew back. I was as sure as twice two make four that he would not get off without a catastrophe. Meanwhile, as I stood utterly dejected, I saw moving before me again the figure of the professor, whose turn it was to appear after Stepan Trofimovitch, and who kept lifting up his fist and bringing it down again with a swing. He kept walking up and down, absorbed in himself and muttering something to himself with a diabolical but triumphant smile. I somehow almost unintentionally went up to him. I don’t know what induced me to meddle again.

“Do you know,” I said, “judging from many examples, if a lecturer keeps an audience for more than twenty minutes it won’t go on listening. No celebrity is able to hold his own for half an hour.”

He stopped short and seemed almost quivering with resentment. Infinite disdain was expressed in his countenance.

“Don’t trouble yourself,” he muttered contemptuously and walked on. At that moment Stepan Trofimovitch’s voice rang out in the hall.

“Oh, hang you all,” I thought, and ran to the hall.

Stepan Trofimovitch took his seat in the lecturer’s chair in the midst of the still persisting disorder. He was greeted by the first rows with looks which were evidently not over-friendly. (Of late, at the club, people almost seemed not to like him, and treated him with much less respect than formerly.) But it was something to the good that he was not hissed. I had had a strange idea in my head ever since the previous day: I kept fancying that he would be received with hisses as soon as he appeared. They scarcely noticed him, however, in the disorder. What could that man hope for if Karmazinov was treated like this? He was pale; it was ten years since he had appeared before an audience. From his excitement and from all that I knew so well in him, it was clear to me that he, too, regarded his present appearance on the platform as a turning-point of his fate, or something of the kind. That was just what I was afraid of. The man was dear to me. And what were my feelings when he opened his lips and I heard his first phrase?

“Ladies and gentlemen,” he pronounced suddenly, as though resolved to venture everything, though in an almost breaking voice. “Ladies and gentlemen! Only this morning there lay before me one of the illegal leaflets that have been distributed here lately, and I asked myself for the hundredth time, ‘Wherein lies its secret?’”

The whole hall became instantly still, all looks were turned to him, some with positive alarm. There was no denying, he knew how to secure their interest from the first word. Heads were thrust out from behind the scenes; Liputin and Lyamshin listened greedily. Yulia Mihailovna waved to me again.

“Stop him, whatever happens, stop him,” she whispered in agitation. I could only shrug my shoulders: how could one stop a man resolved to venture everything? Alas, I understood what was in Stepan Trofimovitch’s mind.

“Ha ha, the manifestoes!” was whispered in the audience; the whole hall was stirred.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I’ve solved the whole mystery. The whole secret of their effect lies in their stupidity.” (His eyes flashed.) “Yes. gentlemen, if

this stupidity were intentional, pretended and calculated, oh, that would be a stroke of genius! But we must do them justice: they don't pretend anything. It's the barest, most simple-hearted, most shallow stupidity. *C'est la betise dans son essence la plus pure, quelque chose comme un simple chimique.* If it were expressed ever so little more cleverly, every one would see at once the poverty of this shallow stupidity. But as it is, every one is left wondering: no one can believe that it is such elementary stupidity. 'It's impossible that there's nothing more in it,' every one says to himself and tries to find the secret of it, sees a mystery in it, tries to read between the lines — the effect is attained! Oh, never has stupidity been so solemnly rewarded, though it has so often deserved it. ... For, *en parenthese,* stupidity is of as much service to humanity as the loftiest genius. . . ."

"Epigram of 1840" was commented, in a very modest voice, however, but it was followed by a general outbreak of noise and uproar.

"Ladies and gentlemen, hurrah! I propose a toast to stupidity!" cried Stepan Trofimovitch, defying the audience in a perfect frenzy.

I ran up on the pretext of pouring out some water for him.

"Stepan Trofimovitch, leave off, Yulia Mihailovna entreats you to."

"No, you leave me alone, idle young man," he cried out at me at the top of his voice. I ran away. "Messieurs," he went on, "why this excitement, why the outcries of indignation I hear? I have come forward with an olive branch. I bring you the last word, for in this business I have the last word — and we shall be reconciled."

"Down with him!" shouted some.

"Hush, let him speak, let him have his say!" yelled another section. The young teacher was particularly excited; having once brought himself to speak he seemed now unable to be silent.

"Messieurs, the last word in this business — is forgiveness. I, an old man at the end of my life, I solemnly declare that the spirit of life breathes in us still, and there is still a living strength in the young generation. The enthusiasm of the youth of today is as pure and bright as in our age. All that has happened is a change of aim, the replacing of one beauty by another! The whole difficulty lies in the question which is more beautiful, Shakespeare or boots, Raphael or petroleum?"

"It's treachery!" growled some.

"Compromising questions!"

"*Agent provocateur!*"

“But I maintain,” Stepan Trofimovitch shrilled at the utmost pitch of excitement, “I maintain that Shakespeare and Raphael are more precious than the emancipation of the serfs, more precious than Nationalism, more precious than Socialism, more precious than the young generation, more precious than chemistry, more precious than almost all humanity because they are the fruit, the real fruit of all humanity and perhaps the highest fruit that can be. A form of beauty already attained, but for the attaining of which I would not perhaps consent to live. . . . Oh, heavens!” he cried, clasping his hands, “ten years ago I said the same thing from the platform in Petersburg, exactly the same thing, in the same words, and in just the same way they did not understand it, they laughed and hissed as now; shallow people, what is lacking in you that you cannot understand? But let me tell you, let me tell you, without the English, life is still possible for humanity, without Germany, life is possible, without the Russians it is only too possible, without science, without bread, life is possible — only without beauty it is impossible, for there will be nothing left in the world. That’s the secret at the bottom of everything, that’s what history teaches! Even science would not exist a moment without beauty — do you know that, you who laugh — it will sink into bondage, you won’t invent a nail even! . . I won’t yield an inch!” he shouted absurdly in confusion, and with all his might banged his fist on the table.

But all the while that he was shrieking senselessly and incoherently, the disorder in the hall increased. Many people jumped up from their seats, some dashed forward, nearer to the platform. It all happened much more quickly than I describe it, and there was no time to take steps, perhaps no wish to, either.

“It’s all right for you, with everything found for you, you pampered creatures!” the same divinity student bellowed at the foot of the platform, grinning with relish at Stepan Trofimovitch, who noticed it and darted to the very edge of the platform.

“Haven’t I, haven’t I just declared that the enthusiasm of the young generation is as pure and bright as it was, and that it is coming to grief through being deceived only in the forms of beauty! Isn’t that enough for you? And if you consider that he who proclaims this is a father crushed and insulted, can one — oh, shallow hearts — can one rise to greater heights of impartiality and fairness? . . . Ungrateful . . . unjust. . . . Why, why can’t you be reconciled!”

And he burst into hysterical sobs. He wiped away his dropping tears with his fingers. His shoulders and breast were heaving with sobs. He was lost to everything in the world.

A perfect panic came over the audience, almost all got up from their seats. Yulia Mihailovna, too, jumped up quickly, seizing her husband by the arm and pulling him up too. . . . The scene was beyond all belief.

“Stepan Trofimovitch!” the divinity student roared gleefully. “There’s Fedka the convict wandering about the town and the neighbourhood, escaped from prison. He is a robber and has recently committed another murder. Allow me to ask you: if you had not sold him as a recruit fifteen years ago to pay a gambling debt, that is, more simply, lost him at cards, tell me, would he have got into prison? Would he have cut men’s throats now, in his struggle for existence? What do you say, Mr. Esthete?”

I decline to describe the scene that followed. To begin with there was a furious volley of applause. The applause did not come from all — probably from some fifth part of the audience — but they applauded furiously. The rest of the public made for the exit, but as the applauding part of the audience kept pressing forward towards the platform, there was a regular block. The ladies screamed, some of the girls began to cry and asked to go home. Lembke, standing up by his chair, kept gazing wildly about him. Yulia Mihailovna completely lost her head — for the first time during her career amongst us. As for Stepan Trofimovitch, for the first moment he seemed literally crushed by the divinity student’s words, but he suddenly raised his arms as though holding them out above the public and yelled:

“I shake the dust from off my feet and I curse you. . . . It’s the end, the end. . . .”

And turning, he ran behind the scenes, waving his hands menacingly.

“He has insulted the audience! . . . Verhovensky!” the angry section roared. They even wanted to rush in pursuit of It was impossible to appease them, at the moment, any way, and — a final catastrophe broke like a bomb on the assembly and exploded in its midst: the third reader, the maniac who kept waving his fist behind the scenes, suddenly ran on to the platform. He looked like a perfect madman. With a broad, triumphant smile, full of boundless self-confidence, he looked round at the agitated hall and he seemed to be delighted at the disorder. He was not in the least disconcerted at having to speak in such an uproar, on the contrary, he was obviously delighted. This was so obvious that it attracted attention at once.

“What’s this now?” people were heard asking. “Who is this? Sh-h! What does he want to say?”

“Ladies and gentlemen,” the maniac shouted with all his might, standing at the very edge of the platform and speaking with almost as shrill, feminine a voice as Karmazinov’s, but without the aristocratic lisp. “Ladies and gentlemen! Twenty years ago, on the eve of war with half Europe, Russia was regarded as an ideal country by officials of all ranks! Literature was in the service of the censorship; military drill was all that was taught at the universities; the troops were trained like a ballet, and the peasants paid the taxes and were mute under the lash of serfdom. Patriotism meant the wringing of bribes from the quick and the dead. Those who did not take bribes were looked upon as rebels because they disturbed the general harmony. The birch copses were extirpated in support of discipline. Europe trembled. . . . But never in the thousand years of its senseless existence had Russia sunk to such ignominy. . . .”

He raised his fist, waved it ecstatically and menacingly over his head and suddenly brought it down furiously, as though pounding an adversary to powder. A frantic yell rose from the whole hall, there was a deafening roar of applause; almost half the audience was applauding: their enthusiasm was excusable. Russia was being put to shame publicly, before every one. Who could fail to roar with delight?

“This is the real thing! Come, this is something like! Hurrah! Yes, this is none of your aesthetics!”

The maniac went on ecstatically:

“Twenty years have passed since then. Universities have been opened and multiplied. Military drill has passed into a legend; officers are too few by thousands, the railways have eaten up all the capital and have covered Russia as with a spider’s web, so that in another fifteen years one will perhaps get somewhere. Bridges are rarely on fire, and fires in towns occur only at regular intervals, in turn, at the proper season. In the law courts judgments are as wise as Solomon’s, and the jury only take bribes through the struggle for existence, to escape starvation. The serfs are free, and flog one another instead of being flogged by the land-owners. Seas and oceans of vodka are consumed to support the budget, and in Novgorod, opposite the ancient and useless St. Sophia, there has been solemnly put up a colossal bronze globe to celebrate a thousand years of disorder and confusion; Europe scowls and begins to be uneasy again. . . . Fifteen years

of reforms! And yet never even in the most grotesque periods of its madness has Russia sunk . . .”

The last words could not be heard in the roar of the crowd. One could see him again raise his arm and bring it down triumphantly again. Enthusiasm was beyond all bounds: people yelled, clapped their hands, even some of the ladies shouted: “Enough, you can’t beat that!” Some might have been drunk. The orator scanned them all and seemed revelling in his own triumph. I caught a glimpse of Lembke in indescribable excitement, pointing something out to somebody. Yulia Mihailovna, with a pale face, said something in haste to the prince, who had run up to her. But at that moment a group of six men, officials more or less, burst on to the platform, seized the orator and dragged him behind the scenes. I can’t understand how he managed to tear himself away from them, but he did escape, darted up to the edge of the platform again and succeeded in shouting again, at the top of his voice, waving his fist: “But never has Russia sunk . . .”

But he was dragged away again. I saw some fifteen men dash behind the scenes to rescue him, not crossing the platform but breaking down the light screen at the side of it. . . . I saw afterwards, though I could hardly believe my eyes, the girl student (Virginsky’s sister) leap on to the platform with the same roll under her arm, dressed as before, as plump and rosy as ever, surrounded by two or three women and two or three men, and accompanied by her mortal enemy, the schoolboy. I even caught the phrase:

“Ladies and gentlemen, I’ve come to call attention to the I sufferings of poor students and to rouse them to a general protest ...”

But I ran away. Hiding my badge in my pocket I made my way from the house into the street by back passages which I knew of. First of all, of course, I went to Stepan Trofimovitch’s.

CHAPTER II.

THE END OF THE FETE

HE WOULD NOT SEE ME. He had shut himself up and was writing. At my repeated knocks and appeals he answered through the door:

“My friend, I have finished everything. Who can ask anything more of me?”

“You haven’t finished anything, you’ve only helped to make a mess of the whole thing. For God’s sake, no epigrams, Stepan Trofimovitch! Open the door. We must take steps; they may still come and insult you. . . .”

I thought myself entitled to be particularly severe and even rigorous. I was afraid he might be going to do something still more mad. But to my surprise I met an extraordinary firmness.

“Don’t be the first to insult me then. I thank you for the past, but I repeat I’ve done with all men, good and bad. I am writing to Darya Pavlovna, whom I’ve forgotten so unpardonably till now. You may take it to her to-morrow, if you like, now *merci.”*

“Stepan Trofimovitch, I assure you that the matter is more serious than you think. Do you think that you’ve crushed some one there? You’ve pulverised no one, but have broken yourself to pieces like an empty bottle.” (Oh, I was coarse and discourteous;. I remember it with regret.) “You’ve absolutely no reason to write to Darya Pavlovna . . . and what will you do with yourself without me? What do you understand about practical life? I expect you are plotting something else? You’ll simply come to grief again if you go plotting something more. . . .”

He rose and came close up to the door.

“You’ve not been long with them, but you’ve caught the infection of their tone and language. *Dieu vous pardonne, mon ami, et Dieu vous garde.* But I’ve always seen in you the germs of delicate feeling, and you will get over it perhaps — *apres le temps,* of course, like all of us Russians. As for what you say about my impracticability, I’ll remind you of a recent idea of mine: a whole mass of people in Russia do nothing whatever but attack other people’s impracticability with the utmost fury and with the tiresome persistence of flies- in the summer, accusing every one of it except themselves *Cher,* remember that I am excited, and don’t distress me. Once

more *merci* for everything, and let us part like Karmazinov and the public; that is, let us forget each other with as much generosity as we can. He was posing in begging his former readers so earnestly to forget him; *quant a moi*, I am not so conceited, and I rest my hopes on the youth of your inexperienced heart. How should you remember a useless old man for long? ‘Live more,’ my friend, as Nastasya wished me on my last name-day *(ces pauvres gens ont quelquefois des mots charmants et pleins de philosophie).* I do not wish you much happiness — it will bore you. I do not wish you trouble either, but, following the philosophy of the peasant, I will repeat simply ‘live more’ and try not to be much bored; this useless wish I add from myself. Well, good-bye, and good-bye for good. Don’t stand at my door, I will not open it.”

He went away and I could get nothing more out of him. In spite of his “excitement,” he spoke smoothly, deliberately, with weight, obviously trying to be impressive. Of course he was rather vexed with me and was avenging himself indirectly, possibly even for the yesterday’s “prison carts” and “floors that give way.” His tears in public that morning, in spite of a triumph of a sort, had put him, he knew, in rather a comic position, and there never was a man more solicitous of dignity and punctilio in his relations with his friends than Stepan Trofimovitch. Oh, I don’t blame him. But this fastidiousness and irony which he preserved in spite of all shocks reassured me at the time. A man who Was so little different from his ordinary self was, of course, not in the mood at that moment for anything tragic or extraordinary. So I reasoned at the time, and, heavens, what a mistake I made! I left too much out of my reckoning.

In anticipation of events I will quote the few first lines of the letter to Darya Pavlovna, which she actually received the following day:

“Mon enfant, my hand trembles, but I’ve done with everything. You were not present at my last struggle: you did not come to that matinee, and you did well to stay away. But you will be told that in our Russia, which has grown so poor in men of character, one man had the courage to stand up and, in spite of deadly menaces showered on him from all sides, to tell the fools the truth, that is, that they are fools. *Oh, ce sont — des pauvres petits vauriens et rien de plus, des petits* — fools — *voild le mot!* The die is cast; I am going from this town for ever and I know not whither. Every one I loved has turned from me. But you, you are a pure and naive creature; you, a gentle being whose life has been all but linked with mine at the will of a

capricious and imperious heart; you who looked at me perhaps with contempt when I shed weak tears on the eve of our frustrated marriage; you, who cannot in any case look on me except as a comic figure — for you, for you is the last cry of my heart, for you my last duty, for you alone! I cannot leave you for ever thinking of me as an ungrateful fool, a churlish egoist, as probably a cruel and ungrateful heart — whom, alas, I cannot forget — is every day describing me to you. . . .”

And so on and so on, four large pages.

Answering his “I won’t open” with three bangs with my fist on the door, and shouting after him that I was sure he would send Nastasya for me three times that day, but I would not come, I gave him up and ran off to Yulia Mihailovna.

II

There I was the witness of a revolting scene: the poor woman was deceived to her face, and I could do nothing. Indeed, what could I say to her? I had had time to reconsider things a little and reflect that I had nothing to go upon but certain feelings and suspicious presentiments. I found her in tears, almost in hysterics, with compresses of eau-de-Cologne and a glass of water. Before her stood Pyotr Stepanovitch, who talked without stopping, and the prince, who held his tongue as though it had been under a lock. With tears and lamentations she reproached Pyotr Stepanovitch for his “desertion.” I was struck at once by the fact that she ascribed the whole failure, the whole ignominy of the matinee, everything in fact, to Pyotr Stepanovitch’s absence.

In him I observed an important change: he seemed a shade too anxious, almost serious. As a rule he never seemed serious; he was always laughing, even when he was angry, and he was often angry. Oh, he was angry now! He was speaking coarsely, carelessly, with vexation and impatience. He said that he had been taken ill at Gaganov’s lodging, where he had happened to go early in the morning. Alas, the poor woman was so anxious to be deceived again! The chief question which I found being discussed was whether the ball, that is, the whole second half of the fete, should or should not take place. Yulia Mihailovna could not be induced to appear at the ball “after the insults she had received that morning;” in other words, her heart was set on being compelled to do so, and by him, by Pyotr Stepanovitch.

She looked upon him as an oracle, and I believe if he had gone away she would have taken to her bed at once. But he did not want to go away; he was desperately anxious that the ball should take place and that Yulia Mihailovna should be present at it.

“Come, what is there to cry about? Are you set on having a scene? On venting your anger on somebody? Well, vent it on me; only make haste about it, for the time is passing and you must make up your mind. We made a mess of it with the matinee; we’ll pick up on the ball. Here, the prince thinks as I do. Yes, if it hadn’t been for the prince, how would things have ended there?”

The prince had been at first opposed to the ball (that is, opposed to Yulia Mihailovna’s appearing at it; the ball was bound to go on in any case), but after two or three such references to his opinion he began little by little to grunt his acquiescence.

I was surprised too at the extraordinary rudeness of Pyotr Stepanovitch’s tone. Oh, I scout with indignation the contemptible slander which was spread later of some supposed liaison between Yulia Mihailovna and Pyotr Stepanovitch. There was no such thing, nor could there be. He gained his ascendency over her from the first only by encouraging her in her dreams of influence in society and in the ministry, by entering into her plans, by inventing them for her, and working upon her with the grossest flattery. He had got her completely into his toils and had become as necessary to her as the air she breathed. Seeing me, she cried, with flashing eyes:

“Here, ask him. He kept by my side all the while, just like the prince did. Tell me, isn’t it plain that it was all a preconcerted plot, a base, designing plot to damage Andrey Antonovitch and me as much as possible? Oh, they had arranged it beforehand. They had a plan! It’s a party, a regular party.”

“You are exaggerating as usual. You’ve always some romantic notion in your head. But I am glad to see Mr. ...” (He pretended to have forgotten my name.) “He’ll give us his opinion.”

“My opinion,” I hastened to put in, “is the same as Yulia Mihailovna’s. The plot is only too evident. I have brought you these ribbons, Yulia Mihailovna. Whether the ball is to take place or not is not my business, for it’s not in my power to decide; but my part as steward is over. Forgive my warmth, but I can’t act against the dictates of common sense and my own convictions.”

“You hear! You hear!” She clasped her hands.

“I hear, and I tell you this.” He turned to me. “I think you must have eaten something which has made you all delirious. To my thinking, nothing has happened, absolutely nothing but what has happened before and is always liable to happen in this town. A plot, indeed! It was an ugly failure, disgracefully stupid. But where’s the plot? A plot against Yulia Mihailovna, who has spoiled them and protected them and fondly forgiven them all their schoolboy pranks! Yulia Mihailovna! What have I been hammering into you for the last month continually? What did I warn you? What did you want with all these people — what did you want with them? What induced you to mix yourself up with these fellows? What was the motive, what was the object of it? To unite society? But, mercy on us! will they ever be united?”

“When did you warn me? On the contrary, you approved of it, you even insisted on it. ... I confess I am so surprised. . . . You brought all sorts of strange people to see me yourself.”

“On the contrary, I opposed you; I did not approve of it. As for bringing them to see you, I certainly did, but only after they’d got in by dozens and only of late to make up ‘the literary quadrille’ — we couldn’t get on without these rogues. Only I don’t mind betting that a dozen or two more of the same sort were let in without tickets to-day.”

“Not a doubt of it,” I agreed.

“There, you see, you are agreeing already. Think what the tone has been lately here — I mean in this wretched town. It’s nothing but insolence, impudence; it’s been a crying scandal all the time. And who’s been encouraging it? Who’s screened it by her authority? Who’s upset them all? Who has made all the small fry huffy? All their family secrets are caricatured in your album. Didn’t you pat them on the back, your poets and caricaturists? Didn’t you let Lyamshin kiss your hand? Didn’t a divinity student abuse an actual state councillor in your presence and spoil his daughter’s dress with his tarred boots? Now, can you wonder that the public is set against you?”

“But that’s all your doing, yours! Oh, my goodness!”

“No, I warned you. We quarrelled. Do you hear, we quarrelled?”

“Why, you are lying to my face!”

“Of course it’s easy for you to say that. You need a victim to vent your wrath on. Well, vent it on me as I’ve said already. I’d better appeal to you, Mr. . . .” (He was still unable to recall my name.) “We’ll reckon on our fingers. I maintain that, apart from Liputin, there was nothing preconcerted,

nothing! I will prove it, but first let us analyse Liputin. He came forward with that fool Lebyadkin's verses. Do you maintain that that was a plot? But do you know it might simply have struck Liputin as a clever thing to do. Seriously, seriously. He simply came forward with the idea of making every one laugh and entertaining them — his protectress Yulia Mihailovna first of all. That was all. Don't you believe it? Isn't that in keeping with all that has been going on here for the last month? Do you want me to tell the whole truth? I declare that under other circumstances it might have gone off all right. It was a coarse joke — well, a bit strong, perhaps; but it was amusing, you know, wasn't it?"

"What! You think what Liputin did was clever?" Yulia Mihailovna cried in intense indignation. "Such stupidity, such tactlessness, so contemptible, so mean! It was intentional! Oh, you are saying it on purpose! I believe after that you are in the plot with them yourself."

"Of course I was behind the scenes, I was in hiding, I set it all going. But if I were in the plot — understand that, anyway — it wouldn't have ended with Liputin. So according to you I had arranged with my papa too that he should cause such a scene on purpose? Well, whose fault is it that my papa was allowed to read? Who tried only yesterday to prevent you from allowing it, only yesterday?"

"*Oh, hier il avait tant d'esprit,* I was so reckoning on him; and then he has such manners. I thought with him and Karmazinov . . . Only think!

"Yes, only think. But in spite of *tant d'esprit* papa has made things worse, and if I'd known beforehand that he'd make such a mess of it, I should certainly not have persuaded you yesterday to keep the goat out of the kitchen garden, should I — since I am taking part in this conspiracy against your fete that you are so positive about? And yet I did try to dissuade you yesterday; I tried to because *I* foresaw it. To foresee everything was, of course, impossible; he probably did not know himself a minute before what he would fire off — these nervous old men can't be reckoned on like other people. But you can still save the situation: to satisfy the public, send to him to-morrow by administrative order, and with all the ceremonies, two doctors to inquire into his health. Even to-day, in fact, and take him straight to the hospital and apply cold compresses. Every one would laugh, anyway, and see that there was nothing to take offence at. I'll tell people about it in the evening at the ball, as I am his son. Karmazinov is another story. He was a perfect ass and dragged out his article for a whole

hour. He certainly must have been in the plot with me! ‘I’ll make a mess of it too,’ he thought, ‘to damage Yulia Mihailovna.’”

“Oh, Karmazinov! *Quelle honte!* I was burning, burning with shame for his audience!”

“Well, I shouldn’t have burnt, but have cooked him instead. The audience was right, you know. Who was to blame for Karmazinov, again? Did I foist him upon you? Was I one of his worshippers? Well, hang him! But the third maniac, the political — that’s a different matter. That was every one’s blunder, not only my plot.”

“Ah, don’t speak of it! That was awful, awful! That was my fault, entirely my fault!”

“Of course it was, but I don’t blame you for that. No one can control them, these candid souls! You can’t always be safe from them, even in Petersburg. He was recommended to you, and in what terms too! So you will admit that you are bound to appear at the ball to-night. It’s an important business. It was you put him on to the platform. You must make it plain now to the public that you are not in league with him, that the fellow is in the hands of the police, and that you were in some inexplicable way deceived. You ought to declare with indignation that you were the victim of a madman. Because he is a madman and nothing more. That’s how you must put it about him. I can’t endure these people who bite. I say worse things perhaps, but not from the platform, you know. And they are talking about a senator too.”

“What senator? Who’s talking?”

“I don’t understand it myself, you know. Do you know anything about a senator, Yulia Mihailovna?”

“A senator?”

“You see, they are convinced that a senator has been appointed to be governor here, and that you are being superseded from Petersburg. I’ve heard it from lots of people.”

“I’ve heard it too,” I put in.

“Who said so?” asked Yulia Mihailovna, flushing all over.

“You mean, who said so first? How can I tell? But there it is, people say so. Masses of people are saying so. They were saying so yesterday particularly. They are all very serious about it, though I can’t make it out. Of course the more intelligent and competent don’t talk, but even some of those listen.”

“How mean! And . . . how stupid!”

“Well, that’s just why you must make your appearance, to show these fools.”

“I confess I feel myself that it’s my duty, but . . . what if there’s another disgrace in store for us? What if people don’t come? No one will come, you know, no one!”

“How hot you are! They not come! What about the new clothes? What about the girls’ dresses? I give you up as a woman after that! Is that your knowledge of human nature?”

“The marshal’s wife won’t come, she won’t.”

“But, after all, what has happened? Why won’t they come?” he cried at last with angry impatience.

“Ignominy, disgrace — that’s what’s happened. I don’t know what to call it, but after it I can’t face people.”

“Why? How are you to blame for it, after all? Why do you take the blame of it on yourself? Isn’t it rather the fault of the audience, of your respectable residents, your patresfamilias? They ought to have controlled the roughs and the rowdies — for it was all the work of roughs and rowdies, nothing serious. You can never manage things with the police alone in any society, anywhere. Among us every one asks for a special policeman to protect him wherever he goes. People don’t understand that society must protect itself. And what do our patresfamilias, the officials, the wives and daughters, do in such cases? They sit quiet and sulk. In fact there’s not enough social initiative to keep the disorderly in check.”

“Ah, that’s the simple truth! They sit quiet, sulk and . . . gaze about them.”

“And if it’s the truth, you ought to say so aloud, proudly, sternly, just to show that you are not defeated, to those respectable residents and mothers of families. Oh, you can do it; you have the gift when your head is clear. You will gather them round you and say it aloud. And then a paragraph in the *Voice* and the *Financial News*. Wait a bit, I’ll undertake it myself, I’ll arrange it all for you. Of course there must be more superintendence: you must look after the buffet; you must ask the prince, you must ask Mr. . . . You must not desert us, monsieur, just when we have to begin all over again. And finally, you must appear arm-in-arm with Andrey Antonovitch. . . . How is Andrey Antonovitch?”

“Oh, how unjustly, how untruly, how cruelly you have always judged that angelic man!” Yulia Mihailovna cried in a sudden, outburst, almost with tears, putting her handkerchief to her eyes.

Pyotr Stepanovitch was positively taken aback for the moment. “Good heavens! I. ... What have I said? I’ve always . . .”

“You never have, never! You have never done him justice.”

“There’s no understanding a woman,” grumbled Pyotr Stepanovitch, with a wry smile.

“He is the most sincere, the most delicate, the most angelic of men! The most kind-hearted of men!”

“Well, really, as for kind-heartedness . . . I’ve always done him justice. ...”

“Never! But let us drop it. I am too awkward in my defence of him. This morning that little Jesuit, the marshal’s wife, also dropped some sarcastic hints about what happened yesterday.”

“Oh, she has no thoughts to spare for yesterday now, she is full of to-day. And why are you so upset at her not coming to the ball to-night? Of course, she won’t come after getting mixed up in such a scandal. Perhaps it’s not her fault, but still her reputation . . . her hands are soiled.”

“What do you mean; I don’t understand? Why are her hands soiled?” Yulia Mihailovna looked at him in perplexity.

“I don’t vouch for the truth of it, but the town is ringing with the story that it was she brought them together.”

“What do you mean? Brought whom together?”

“What, do you mean to say you don’t know?” he exclaimed with well-simulated wonder.

“Why Stavrogin and Lizaveta Nikolaevna.”

“What? How?” we all cried out at once.

“Is it possible you don’t know? Phew! Why, it is quite a tragic romance: Lizaveta Nikolaevna was pleased to get out of that lady’s carriage and get straight into Stavrogin’s carriage, and slipped off with ‘the latter’ to Skvoreshniki in full daylight. Only an hour ago, hardly an hour.”

We were flabbergasted. Of course we fell to questioning him, but to our wonder, although he “happened” to be a witness of the scene himself, he could give us no detailed account of it. The thing seemed to have happened like this: when the marshal’s wife was driving Liza and Mavriky Nikolaevitch from the matinee to the house of Praskovya Ivanovna (whose

legs were still bad) they saw a carriage waiting a short distance, about twenty-five paces, to one side of the front door. When Liza jumped out, she ran straight to this carriage; the door was flung open and shut again; Liza called to Mavriky Nikolaevitch, “Spare me,” and the carriage drove off at full speed to Skvoreshniki. To our hurried questions whether it was by arrangement? Who was in the carriage? Pyotr Stepanovitch answered that he knew nothing about it; no doubt it had been arranged, but that he did not see Stavrogin himself; possibly the old butler, Alexey Yegorytch, might have been in the carriage. To the question “How did he come to be there, and how did he know for a fact that she had driven to Skvoreshniki?” he answered that he happened to be passing and, at seeing Liza, he had run up to the carriage (and yet he could not make out who was in it, an inquisitive man like him!) and that Mavriky Nikolaevitch, far from setting off in pursuit, had not even tried to stop Liza, and had even laid a restraining hand on the marshal’s wife, who was shouting at the top of her voice: “She is going to Stavrogin, to Stavrogin.” At this point I lost patience, and cried furiously to Pyotr Stepanovitch:

“It’s all your doing, you rascal! This was what you were doing this morning. You helped Stavrogin, you came in the carriage, you helped her into it ... it was you, you, you! Yulia Mihailovna, he is your enemy; he will be your ruin too! Beware of him!”

And I ran headlong out of the house. I wonder myself and cannot make out to this day how I came to say that to him. But I guessed quite right: it had all happened almost exactly as I said, as appeared later. What struck me most was the obviously artificial way in which he broke the news. He had not told it at once on entering the house as an extraordinary piece of news, but pretended that we knew without his telling us which was impossible in so short a time. And if we had known it, we could not possibly have refrained from mentioning it till he introduced the subject. Besides, he could not have heard yet that the town was “ringing with gossip” about the marshal’s wife in so short a time. Besides, he had once or twice given a vulgar, frivolous smile as he told the story, probably considering that we were fools and completely taken in.

But I had no thought to spare for him; the central fact I believed, and ran from Yulia Mihailovna’s, beside myself. The catastrophe cut me to the heart. I was wounded almost to tears; perhaps I did shed some indeed. I was at a complete loss what to do. I rushed to Stepan Trofimovitch’s, but the

vexatious man still refused to open the door. Nastasya informed me, in a reverent whisper, that he had gone to bed, but I did not believe it. At Liza's house I succeeded in questioning the servants. They confirmed the story of the elopement, but knew nothing themselves. There was great commotion in the house; their mistress had been attacked by fainting fits, and Mavriky Nikolaevitch was with her. I did not feel it possible to ask for Mavriky Nikolaevitch. To my inquiries about Pyotr Stepanovitch they told me that he had been in and out continually of late, sometimes twice in the day. The servants were sad, and showed particular respectfulness in speaking of Liza; they were fond of her. That she was ruined, utterly ruined, I did not doubt; but the psychological aspect of the matter I was utterly unable to understand, especially after her scene with Stavrogin the previous day. To run about the town and inquire at the houses of acquaintances, who would, of course, by now have heard the news and be rejoicing at it, seemed to me revolting, besides being humiliating for Liza. But, strange to say, I ran to see Darya Pavlovna, though I was not admitted (no one had been admitted into the house since the previous morning). I don't know what I could have said to her and what made me run to her. From her I went to her brother's. Shatov listened sullenly and in silence. I may observe that I found him more gloomy than I had ever seen him before; he was awfully preoccupied and seemed only to listen to me with an effort. He said scarcely anything and began walking up and down his cell from corner to corner, treading more noisily than usual. As I was going down the stairs he shouted after me to go to Liputin's: "There you'll hear everything." Yet I did not go to Liputin's, but after I'd gone a good way towards home I turned back to Shatov's again, and, half opening the door without going in, suggested to him laconically and with no kind of explanation, "Won't you go to Marya Timofyevna to-day?" At this Shatov swore at me, and I went away. I note here that I may not forget it that he did purposely go that evening to the other end of the town to see Marya Timofyevna, whom he had not seen for some time. He found her in excellent health and spirits and Lebyadkin dead drunk, asleep on the sofa in the first room. This was at nine o'clock. He told me so himself next day when we met for a moment in the street. Before ten o'clock I made up my mind to go to the ball, but not in the capacity of a steward (besides my rosette had been left at Yulia Mihailovna's). I was tempted by irresistible curiosity to listen, without asking any questions, to what people were saying in the town about all that had happened. I wanted,

too, to have a look at Yulia Mihailovna, if only at a distance. I reproached myself greatly that I had left her so abruptly that afternoon.

III

All that night, with its almost grotesque incidents, and the terrible *denouement* that followed in the early morning, still seems to me like a hideous nightmare, and is, for me at least, the most painful chapter in my chronicle. I was late for the ball, and it was destined to end so quickly that I arrived not long before it was over. It was eleven o'clock when I reached the entrance of the marshal's house, where the same White Hall in which the matinee had taken place had, in spite of the short interval between, been cleared and made ready to serve as the chief ballroom for the whole town, as we expected, to dance in. But far as I had been that morning from expecting the ball to be a success, I had had no presentiment of the full truth. Not one family of the higher circles appeared; even the subordinate officials of rather more consequence were absent — and this was a very striking fact. As for ladies and girls, Pyotr Stepanovitch's arguments (the duplicity of which was obvious now) turned out to be utterly incorrect: exceedingly few had come; to four men there was scarcely one lady — and what ladies they were! Regimental ladies of a sort, three doctors' wives with their daughters, two or three poor ladies from the country, the seven daughters and the niece of the secretary whom I have mentioned already, some wives of tradesmen, of post-office clerks and other small fry — was this what Yulia Mihailovna expected? Half the tradespeople even were absent. As for the men, in spite of the complete absence of all persons of consequence, there was still a crowd of them, but they made a doubtful and suspicious impression. There were, of course, some quiet and respectful officers with their wives, some of the most docile fathers of families, like that secretary, for instance, the father of his seven daughters. All these humble, insignificant people had come, as one of these gentlemen expressed it, because it was "inevitable." But, on the other hand, the mass of free-and-easy people and the mass too of those whom Pyotr Stepanovitch and I had suspected of coming in without tickets, seemed even bigger than in the afternoon. So far they were all sitting in the refreshment bar, and had gone straight there on arriving, as though it were the meeting-place they had agreed upon. So at least it seemed to me. The refreshment bar had been

placed in a large room, the last of several opening out of one another. Here Prohoritch was installed with all the attractions of the club cuisine and with a tempting display of drinks and dainties. I noticed several persons whose coats were almost in rags and whose get-up was altogether suspicious and utterly unsuitable for a ball. They had evidently been with great pains brought to a state of partial sobriety which would not last long; and goodness knows where they had been brought from, they were not local people. I knew, of course, that it was part of Yulia Mihailovna's idea that the ball should be of the most democratic character, and that "even working people and shopmen should not be excluded if any one of that class chanced to pay for a ticket." She could bravely utter such words in her committee with absolute security that none of the working people of our town, who all lived in extreme poverty, would dream of taking a ticket. But in spite of the democratic sentiments of the committee, I could hardly believe that such sinister-looking and shabby people could have been admitted in the regular way. But who could have admitted them, and with what object? Lyamshin and Liputin had already been deprived of their steward's rosettes, though they were present at the ball, as they were taking part in the "literary quadrille." But, to my amazement, Liputin's place was taken by the divinity student, who had caused the greatest scandal at the matinee by his skirmish with Stepan Trofimovitch; and Lyamshin's was taken by Pyotr Stepanovitch himself. What was to be looked for under the circumstances?

I tried to listen to the conversation. I was struck by the wildness of some ideas I heard expressed. It was maintained in one group, for instance, that Yulia Mihailovna had arranged Liza's elopement with Stavrogin and had been paid by the latter for doing so. Even the sum paid was mentioned. It was asserted that she had arranged the whole fete with a view to it, and that that was the reason why half the town had not turned up at the ball, and that Lembke himself was so upset about it that "his mind had given way," and that, crazy as he was, "she had got him in tow." There was a great deal of laughter too, hoarse, wild and significant. Every one was criticising the ball, too, with great severity, and abusing Yulia Mihailovna without ceremony. In fact it was disorderly, incoherent, drunken and excited babble, so it was difficult to put it together and make anything of it. At the same time there were simple-hearted people enjoying themselves at the refreshment-bar; there were even some ladies of the sort who are surprised and frightened at nothing, very genial and festive, chiefly military ladies with their husbands.

They made parties at the little tables, were drinking tea, and were very merry. The refreshment-bar made a snug refuge for almost half of the guests. Yet in a little time all this mass of people must stream into the ballroom. It was horrible to think of it!

Meanwhile the prince had succeeded in arranging three skimpy quadrilles in the White Hall. The young ladies were dancing, while their parents were enjoying watching them. But many of these respectable persons had already begun to think how they could, after giving their girls a treat, get off in good time before “the trouble began.” Absolutely every one was convinced that it certainly would begin. It would be difficult for me to describe Yulia Mihailovna’s state of mind. I did not talk to her though I went close up to her. She did not respond to the bow I made her on entering; she did not notice me (really did not notice). There was a painful look in her face and a contemptuous and haughty though restless and agitated expression in her eyes. She controlled herself *with* evident suffering — for whose sake, with what object? She certainly ought to have gone away, still more to have got her husband away, and she remained! From her face one could see that her eyes were “fully opened,” and that it was useless for her to expect any. thing more. She did not even summon Pyotr Stepanovitch (he seemed to avoid her; I saw him in the refreshment-room, he was extremely lively). But she remained at the ball and did not let Andrey Antonovitch leave her side for a moment. Oh, up to the very last moment, even that morning she would have repudiated any hint about his health with genuine indignation. But now her eyes were to be opened on this subject too. As for me, I thought from the first glance that Andrey Antonovitch looked worse than he had done in the morning. He seemed to be plunged into a sort of oblivion and hardly to know where he was. Sometimes he looked about him with unexpected severity — at me, for instance, twice. Once he tried to say something; he began loudly and audibly but did not finish the sentence, throwing a modest old clerk who happened to be near him almost into a panic. But even this humble section of the assembly held sullenly and timidly aloof from Yulia Mihailovna and at the same time turned upon her husband exceedingly strange glances, open and staring, quite out of keeping with their habitually submissive demeanour.

“Yes, that struck me, and I suddenly began to guess about Andrey Antonovitch,” Yulia Mihailovna confessed to me afterwards.

Yes, she was to blame again! Probably when after my departure she had settled with Pyotr Stepanovitch that there should be a ball and that she should be present she must have gone again to the study where Andrey Antonovitch was sitting, utterly “shattered” by the matinee; must again have used all her fascinations to persuade him to come with her. But what misery she must have been in now! And yet she did not go away. Whether it was pride or simply she lost her head, I do not know. In spite of her haughtiness, she attempted with smiles and humiliation to enter into conversation with some ladies, but they were confused, confined themselves to distrustful monosyllables, “Yes” and “No,” and evidently avoided her.

The only person of undoubted consequence who was present at the ball was that distinguished general whom I have described already, the one who after Stavrogin’s duel with Gaganov opened the door to public impatience at the marshal’s wife’s. He walked with an air of dignity through the rooms, looked about, and listened, and tried to appear as though he had come rather for the sake of observation than for the sake of enjoying himself. . . . He ended by establishing himself beside Yulia Mihailovna and not moving a step away from her, evidently trying to keep up her spirits, and reassure her. He certainly was a most kind-hearted man, of very high rank, and so old that even compassion from him was not wounding. But to admit to herself that this old gossip was venturing to pity her and almost to protect her, knowing that he was doing her honour by his presence, was very vexatious. The general stayed by her and never ceased chattering.

“They say a town can’t go on without seven righteous men . . . seven, I think it is, I am not sure of the number fixed. ... I don’t know how many of these seven, the certified righteous of the town . . . have the honour of being present at your ball. Yet in spite of their presence I begin to feel unsafe. *Vous me pardonnez, charmante dame, n’est-ce pas?* I speak allegorically, but I went into the refreshment-room and I am glad I escaped alive. . . . Our priceless Prohoritch is not in his place there, and I believe his bar will be destroyed before morning. But I am laughing. I am only waiting to see what the ‘literary quadrille’ is going to be like, and then home to bed. You must excuse a gouty old fellow. I go early to bed, and I would advise you too to go ‘by-by,’ as they say *aux enfants.* I’ve come, you know, to have a look at the pretty girls . . . whom, of course, I could meet nowhere in such profusion as here. They all live beyond the river and I don’t drive out so far.

There’s a wife of an officer ... in the chasseurs I believe he is . . . who is distinctly pretty, distinctly, and . . . she knows it herself. I’ve talked to the sly puss; she is a sprightly one . . . and the girls too are fresh-looking; but that’s all, there’s nothing but freshness. Still, it’s a pleasure to look at them. There are some rosebuds, but their lips are thick. As a rule there’s an irregularity about female beauty in Russia, and . . . they are a little like buns. . . . *vous me pardonnez, n’est-ce pas?*. . . with good eyes, however, laughing eyes. . . . These rose buds are charming for two years when they are young . . . even for three . . . then they broaden out and are spoilt for ever . . producing in their husbands that deplorable indifference which does so much to promote the woman movement . . . that is, if I understand it correctly. . . . H’m! It’s a fine hall; the rooms are not badly decorated. It might be worse. The music might be much worse. ... I don’t say it ought to have been. What makes a bad impression is that there are so few ladies. I say nothing about the dresses. It’s bad that that chap in the grey trousers should dare to dance the cancan so openly. I can forgive him if he does it in the gaiety of his heart, and since he is the local chemist. . . . Still, eleven o’clock is a bit early even for chemists. There were two fellows fighting in the refreshment-bar and they weren’t turned out. At eleven o’clock people ought to be turned out for fighting, whatever the standard of manners. . . . Three o’clock is a different matter; then one has to make concessions to public opinion — if only this ball survives till three o’clock. Varvara Petrovna has not kept her word, though, and hasn’t sent flowers. H’m! She has no thoughts for flowers, *pauvre mere!* And poor Liza! Have you heard? They say it’s a mysterious story . . . and Stavrogin is to the front again. . . . H’m! I would have gone home to bed ... I can hardly keep my eyes open. But when is this ‘literary quadrille’ coming on?”

At last the “literary quadrille” began. Whenever of late there had been conversation in the town on the ball it had invariably turned on this literary quadrille, and as no one could imagine what it would be like, it aroused extraordinary curiosity. Nothing could be more unfavourable to its chance of success, and great was the disappointment.

The side doors of the White Hall were thrown open and several masked figures appeared. The public surrounded them eagerly. All the occupants of the refreshment-bar trooped to the last man into the hall. The masked figures took their places for the dance. I succeeded in making my way to the front and installed myself just behind Yulia Mihailovna, Von Lembke, and

the general. At this point Pyotr Stepanovitch, who had kept away till that time, skipped up to Yulia Mihailovna.

“I’ve been in the refreshment-room all this time, watching,” he whispered, with the air of a guilty schoolboy, which he, however, assumed on purpose to irritate her even more. She turned crimson with anger.

“You might give up trying to deceive me now at least, insolent man!” broke from her almost aloud, so that it was heard by other people. Pyotr Stepanovitch skipped away extremely well satisfied with himself.

It would be difficult to imagine a more pitiful, vulgar, dull and insipid allegory than this “literary quadrille.” Nothing could he imagined less appropriate to our local society. Yet they say it was Karmazinov’s idea. It was Liputin indeed who arranged it with the help of the lame teacher who had been at the meeting at Virginsky’s. But Karmazinov had given the idea and had, it was said, meant to dress up and to take a special and prominent part in it. The quadrille was made up of six couples of masked figures, who were not in fancy dress exactly, for their clothes were like every one else’s. Thus, for instance, one short and elderly gentleman wearing a dress-coat — in fact, dressed like every one wore a venerable grey beard, tied on (and this constituted his disguise). As he danced he pounded up and down, taking tiny and rapid steps on the same spot with a stolid expression of countenance. He gave vent to sounds in a subdued but husky bass, and this huskiness was meant to suggest one of the well-known papers. Opposite this figure danced two giants, X and Z, and these letters were pinned on their coats, but what the letters meant remained unexplained. “Honest Russian thought” was represented by a middle-aged gentleman in spectacles, dress-coat and gloves, and wearing fetters (real fetters). Under his arm he had a portfolio containing papers relating to some “case.” To convince the sceptical, a letter from abroad testifying to the honesty of “honest Russian thought” peeped out of his pocket. All this was explained by the stewards, as the letter which peeped out of his pocket could not be read. “Honest Russian thought” had his right hand raised and in it held a glass as though he wanted to propose a toast. In a line With him on each side tripped a crop-headed nihilist girl; while *vis-a-vis* danced another elderly gentleman in a dress-coat with a heavy cudgel in his hand. He was meant to represent a formidable periodical (not a Petersburg one), and seemed to be saying, “I’ll pound you to a jelly.” But in spite of his cudgel he could not bear the spectacles of “honest Russian thought” fixed upon

him and tried to look away, and when he did the *pas de deux,* he twisted, turned, and did not know what to do with himself — so terrible, probably, were the stings of his conscience! I don't remember all the absurd tricks they played, however; it was all in the same style, so that I felt at last painfully ashamed. And this same expression, as it were, of shame was reflected in the whole public, even on the most sullen figures that had come out of the refreshment-room. For some time all were silent and gazed with angry perplexity. When a man is ashamed he generally begins to get angry and is disposed to be cynical. By degrees a murmur arose in the audience.

"What's the meaning of it?" a man who had come in from the refreshment-room muttered in one of the groups.

"It's silly."

"It's something literary. It's a criticism of the *Voice."*

"What's that to me?"

From another group:

"Asses!"

"No, they are not asses; it's we who are the asses."

"Why are you an ass?"

"I am not an ass."

"Well, if you are not, I am certainly not."

From a third group:

"We ought to give them a good smacking and send them flying."

"Pull down the hall!"

From a fourth group:

"I wonder the Lembkes are not ashamed to look on!"

"Why should they be ashamed? You are not."

"Yes, I am ashamed, and he is the governor."

"And you are a pig."

"I've never seen such a commonplace ball in my life," a lady observed viciously, quite close to Yulia Mihailovna, obviously with the intention of being overheard. She was a stout lady of forty with rouge on her cheeks, wearing a bright-coloured silk dress. Almost every one in the town knew her, but no one received her. She was the widow of a civil councillor, who had left her a wooden house and a small pension; but she lived well and kept horses. Two months previously she had called on Yulia Mihailovna, but the latter had not received her.

“That might have been foreseen,” she added, looking insolently into Yulia Mihailovna’s face.

“If you could foresee it, why did you come?” Yulia Mihailovna could not resist saying.

“Because I was too simple,” the sprightly lady answered instantly, up in arms and eager for the fray; but the general intervened.

“*Chere dame”* — he bent over to Yulia Mihailovna—” you’d really better be going. We are only in their way and they’ll enjoy themselves thoroughly without us. You’ve done your part, you’ve opened the ball, now leave them in peace. And Audrey Antonovitch doesn’t seem to be feeling quite satisfactorily. ... To avoid trouble.”

But it was too late.

All through the quadrille Andrey Antonovitch gazed at the dancers with a sort of angry perplexity, and when he heard the comments of the audience he began looking about him uneasily. Then for the first time he caught sight of some of the persons who had come from the refreshment-room; there was an expression of extreme wonder in his face. Suddenly there was a loud roar of laughter at a caper that was cut in the quadrille. The editor of the “menacing periodical, not a Petersburg one,” who was dancing with the cudgel in his hands, felt utterly unable to endure the spectacled gaze of “honest Russian thought,” and not knowing how to escape it, suddenly in the last figure advanced to meet him standing on his head, which was meant, by the way, to typify the continual turning upside down of common sense by the menacing non-Petersburg gazette. As Lyamshin was the only one who could walk standing on his head, he had undertaken to represent the editor with the cudgel. Yulia Mihailovna had had no idea that anyone was going to walk on his head. “They concealed that from me, they concealed it,” she repeated to me afterwards in despair and indignation. The laughter from the crowd was, of course, provoked not by the allegory, which interested no one, but simply by a man’s walking on his head in a swallow-tail coat. Lembke flew into a rage and shook with fury.

“Rascal!” he cried, pointing to Lyamshin, “take hold of the scoundrel, turn him over . . . turn his legs . . . his head ... so that his head’s up ... up!”

Lyamshin jumped on to his feet. The laughter grew louder.

“Turn out all the scoundrels who are laughing!” Lembke prescribed suddenly.

There was an angry roar and laughter in the crowd.

“You can’t do like that, your Excellency.”

“You mustn’t abuse the public.”

“You are a fool yourself!” a voice cried suddenly from a corner.

“Filibusters!” shouted some one from the other end of the room.

Lembke looked round quickly at the shout and turned pale. A vacant smile came on to his lips, as though he suddenly understood and remembered something.

“Gentlemen,” said Yulia Mihailovna, addressing the crowd which was pressing round them, as she drew her husband away— “gentlemen, excuse Andrey Antonovitch. Andrey Antonovitch is unwell . . . excuse . . . forgive him, gentlemen.”

I positively heard her say “forgive him.” It all happened very quickly. But I remember for a fact that a section of the public rushed out of the hall immediately after those words of Yulia Mihailovna’s as though panic-stricken. I remember one hysterical, tearful feminine shriek:

“Ach, the same thing again!”

And in the retreat of the guests, which was almost becoming a crush, another bomb exploded exactly as in the afternoon.

“Fire! All the riverside quarter is on fire!”

I don’t remember where this terrible cry rose first, whether it was first raised in the hall, or whether some one ran upstairs from the entry, but it was followed by such alarm that I can’t attempt to describe it. More than half the guests at the ball came from the quarter beyond the river, and were owners or occupiers of wooden houses in that district. They rushed to the windows, pulled back the curtains in a flash, and tore down the blinds. The riverside was in flames. The fire, it is true, was only beginning, but it was in flames in three separate places — and that was what was alarming.

“Arson! The Shpigulin men!” roared the crowd.

I remember some very characteristic exclamations:

“I’ve had a presentiment in my heart that there’d be arson, I’ve had a presentiment of it these last few days!”

“The Shpigulin men, the Shpigulin men, no one else!”

“We were all lured here on purpose to set fire to it!”

This last most amazing exclamation came from a woman; it was an unintentional involuntary shriek of a housewife whose goods were burning. Every one rushed for the door. I won’t describe the crush in the vestibule

over sorting out cloaks, shawls, and pelisses, the shrieks of the frightened women, the weeping of the young ladies. I doubt whether there was any theft, but it was no wonder that in such disorder some went away without their wraps because they were unable to find them, and this grew into a legend with many additions, long preserved in the town. Lembke and Yulia Mihailovna were almost crushed by the crowd at the doors.

“Stop, every one! Don’t let anyone out!” yelled Lembke, stretching out his arms menacingly towards the crowding people.

“Every one without exception to be strictly searched at once!

A storm of violent oaths rose from the crowd.

“Andrey Antonovitch! Andrey Antonovitch!” cried Yulia Mihailovna in complete despair.

“Arrest her first!” shouted her husband, pointing his finger at her threateningly. “Search her first! The ball was arranged with a view to the fire. ...”

She screamed and fell into a swoon. (Oh, there was no doubt of its being a real one.) The general, the prince, and I rushed to her assistance; there were others, even among the ladies, who helped us at that difficult moment. We carried the unhappy woman out of this hell to her carriage, but she only regained consciousness as she reached the house, and her first utterance was about Andrey Antonovitch again. With the destruction of all her fancies, the only thing left in her mind was Andrey Antonovitch. They sent for a doctor. I remained with her for a whole hour; the prince did so too. The general, in an access of generous feeling (though he had been terribly scared), meant to remain all night “by the bedside of the unhappy lady,” but within ten minutes he fell asleep in an arm-chair in the drawing-room while waiting for the doctor, and there we left him.

The chief of the police, who had hurried from the ball to the fire, had succeeded in getting Andrey Antonovitch out of the hall after us, and attempted to put him into Yulia Mihailovna’s carriage, trying all he could to persuade his Excellency “to seek repose.” But I don’t know why he did not insist. Andrey Antonovitch, of course, would not hear of repose, and was set on going to the fire; but that was not a sufficient reason. It ended in his taking him to the fire in his droshky. He told us afterwards that Lembke was gesticulating all the way and “shouting orders that it was impossible to obey owing to their unusualness.” It was officially reported later on that his

Excellency had at that time been in a delirious condition “owing to a sudden fright.”

There is no need to describe how the ball ended. A few dozen rowdy fellows, and with them some ladies, remained in the hall. There were no police present. They would not let the orchestra go, and beat the musicians who attempted to leave. By morning they tad pulled all Prohoritch’s stall to pieces, had drunk themselves senseless, danced the Kamarinsky in its unexpurgated form, made the rooms in a shocking mess, and only towards daybreak part of this hopelessly drunken rabble reached the scene of the fire to make fresh disturbances there. The other part spent the night in the rooms dead drunk, with disastrous consequences to the velvet sofas and the floor. Next morning, at the earliest possibility, they were dragged out by their legs into the street So ended the fete for the benefit of the governesses of our province.

IV

The fire frightened the inhabitants of the riverside just because it was evidently a case of arson. It was curious that at the first cry of “fire” another cry was raised that the Shpigulin men had done it. It is now well known that three Shpigulin men really did have a share in setting fire to the town, but that was all; all the other factory hands were completely acquitted, not only officially but also by public opinion. Besides those three rascals (of whom one has been caught and confessed and the other two have so far escaped), Fedka the convict undoubtedly had a hand in the arson. That is all that is known for certain about the fire till now; but when it comes to conjectures it’s a very different matter. What had led these three rascals to do it? Had they been instigated by anyone? It is very difficult to answer all these questions even now.

Owing to the strong wind, the fact that the houses at the riverside were almost all wooden, and that they had been set fire to in three places, the fire spread quickly and enveloped the whole quarter with extraordinary rapidity. (The fire burnt, however, only at two ends; at the third spot it was extinguished almost as soon as it began to burn — of which later.) But the Petersburg and Moscow papers exaggerated our calamity. Not more than a quarter, roughly speaking, of the riverside district was burnt down; possibly less indeed. Our fire brigade, though it was hardly adequate to the size and

population of the town, worked with great promptitude and devotion. But it would not have been of much avail, even with the zealous co-operation of the inhabitants, if the wind had not suddenly dropped towards morning. When an hour after our flight from the ball I made my way to the riverside, the fire was at its height. A whole street parallel with the river was in flames. It was as light as day. I won't describe the fire; every one in Russia knows what it looks like. The bustle and crush was immense in the lanes adjoining the burning street. The inhabitants, fully expecting the fire to reach their houses, were hauling out their belongings, but had not yet left their dwellings, and were waiting meanwhile sitting on their boxes and feather beds under their windows. Part of the male population were hard at work ruthlessly chopping down fences and even whole huts which were near the fire and on the windward side. None were crying except the children, who had been waked out of their sleep, though the women who had dragged out their chattels were lamenting in sing-song voices. Those who had not finished their task were still silent, busily carrying out their goods. Sparks and embers were carried a long way in all directions. People put them out as best they could. Some helped to put the fire out while others stood about, admiring it. A great fire at night always has a thrilling and exhilarating effect. This is what explains the attraction of fireworks. But in that case the artistic regularity with which the fire is presented and the complete lack of danger give an impression of lightness and playfulness like the effect of a glass of champagne. A real conflagration is a very different matter. Then the horror and a certain sense of personal danger, together with the exhilarating effect of a fire at night, produce on the spectator (though of course not in the householder whose goods are being burnt) a certain concussion of the brain and, as it were, a challenge to those destructive instincts which, alas, lie hidden in every heart, even that of the mildest and most domestic little clerk. . . . This sinister sensation is almost always fascinating. "I really don't know whether one can look at a fire without a certain pleasure." This is word for word what Stepan Trofimovitch said to me one night on returning home after he had happened to witness a fire and was still under the influence of the spectacle. Of course, the very man who enjoys the spectacle will rush into the fire himself to save a child or an old woman; but that is altogether a different matter.

Following in the wake of the crowd of sightseers, I succeeded, without asking questions, in reaching the chief centre of danger, where at last I saw

Lembke, whom I was seeking at Yulia Mihailovna's request. His position was strange and extraordinary. He was standing on the ruins of a fence. Thirty paces to the left of him rose the black skeleton of a two-storied house which had almost burnt out. It had holes instead of windows at each story, its roof had fallen in, and the flames were still here and there creeping among the charred beams At the farther end of the courtyard, twenty paces away, the lodge, also a two-storied building, was beginning to burn, and the firemen were doing their utmost to save it. On the right the firemen and the people were trying to save a rather large wooden building which was not actually burning, though it had caught fire several times and was inevitably bound to be burnt in the end. Lembke stood facing the lodge, shouting and gesticulating. He was giving orders which no one attempted to carry out. It seemed to me that every one had given him up as hopeless and left him. Anyway, though every one in the vast crowd of all classes, among whom there were gentlemen, and even the cathedral priest, was listening to him with curiosity and wonder, no one spoke to him or tried to get him away. Lembke, with a pale face and glittering eyes, was uttering the most amazing things. To complete the picture, he had lost his hat and was bareheaded.

"It's all incendiarism! It's nihilism! If anything is burning, it's nihilism!" I heard almost with horror; and though there was nothing to be surprised at, yet actual madness, when one sees it, always gives one a shock.

"Your Excellency," said a policeman, coming up to him, "what if you were to try the repose of home? . . . It's dangerous for your Excellency even to stand here."

This policeman, as I heard afterwards, had been told off by the chief of police to watch over Andrey Antonovitch, to do his utmost to get him home, and in case of danger even to use force — a task evidently beyond the man's power.

"They will wipe away the tears of the people whose houses have been burnt, but they will burn down the town. It's all the work of four scoundrels, four and a half! Arrest the scoundrel! He worms himself into the honour of families. They made use of the governesses to burn down the houses. It's vile, vile! Aie, what's he about?" he shouted, suddenly noticing a fireman at the top of the burning lodge, under whom the roof had almost burnt away and round whom the flames were beginning to flare up. "Pull him down! Pull him down! He will fall, he will catch fire, put him out! . . . What is he doing there?"

“He is putting the fire out, your Excellency.”

“Not likely. The fire is in the minds of men and not in the roofs of houses. Pull him down and give it up! Better give it up, much better! Let it put itself out. Aie, who is crying now? An old woman! It’s an old woman shouting. Why have they forgotten the old woman?”

There actually was an old woman crying on the ground floor of the burning lodge. She was an old creature of eighty, a relation of the shopkeeper who owned the house. But she had not been forgotten; she had gone back to the burning house while it was still possible, with the insane idea of rescuing her feather bed from a corner room which was still untouched. Choking with the smoke and screaming with the heat, for the room was on fire by the time she reached it, she was still trying with her decrepit hands to squeeze her feather bed through a broken window pane. Lembke rushed to her assistance. Every one saw him run up to the window, catch hold of one corner of the feather bed and try with all his might to pull it out. As ill luck would have it, a board fell at that moment from the roof and hit the unhappy governor. It did not kill him, it merely grazed him on the neck as it fell, but Audrey Antonovitch’s career was over, among us at least; the blow knocked him off his feet and he sank on the ground unconscious.

The day dawned at last, gloomy and sullen. The fire was abating; the wind was followed by a sudden calm, and then a fine drizzling rain fell. I was by that time in another part, some distance from where Lembke had fallen, and here I overheard very strange conversations in the crowd. A strange fact had come to light. On the very outskirts of the quarter, on a piece of waste land beyond the kitchen gardens, not less than fifty paces from any other buildings, there stood a little wooden house which had only lately been built, and this solitary house had been on fire at the very beginning, almost before any other. Even had it burnt down, it was so far from other houses that no other building in the town could have caught fire from it, and, *vice versa*, if the whole riverside had been burnt to the ground, that house might have remained intact, whatever the wind had been. It followed that it had caught fire separately and independently and therefore not accidentally. But the chief point was that it was not burnt to the ground, and at daybreak strange things were discovered within it. The owner of this new house, who lived in the neighbourhood, rushed up as soon as he saw it in flames and with the help of his neighbours Pulled apart a pile of faggots

which had been heaped up by the side wall and set fire to. In this way he saved the house. But there were lodgers in the house — the captain, who was well known in the town, his sister, and their elderly servant, and these three persons — the captain, his sister, and their servant — had been murdered and apparently robbed in the night. (It was here that the chief of police had gone while Lembke was rescuing the feather bed.)

By morning the news had spread and an immense crowd of all classes, even the riverside people who had been burnt out had flocked to the waste land where the new house stood. It was difficult to get there, so dense was the crowd. I was told at once that the captain had been found lying dressed on the bench with his throat cut, and that he must have been dead drunk when he was killed, so that he had felt nothing, and he had "bled like a bull"; that his sister Marya Timofeyevna had been "stabbed all over" with a knife and she was lying on the floor in the doorway, so that probably she had been awake and had fought and struggled with the murderer. The servant, who had also probably been awake, had her skull broken. The owner of the house said that the captain had come to see him the morning before, and that in his drunken bragging he had shown him a lot of money, as much as two hundred roubles. The captain's shabby old green pocket-book was found empty on the floor, but Marya Timofeyevna's box had not been touched, and the silver setting of the ikon had not been removed either; the captain's clothes, too, had not been disturbed. It was evident that the thief had been in a hurry and was a man familiar with the captain's circumstances, who had come only for money and knew where it was kept. If the owner of the house had not run up at that moment the burning faggot stack would certainly have set fire to the house and "it would have been difficult to find out from the charred corpses how they had died."

So the story was told. One other fact was added: that the person who had taken this house for the Lebyadkins was no other than Mr. Stavrogin, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, the son of Varvara Petrovna. He had come himself to take it and had had much ado to persuade the owner to let it, as the latter had intended to use it as a tavern; but Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch was ready to give any rent he asked and had paid for six months in advance.

"The fire wasn't an accident," I heard said in the crowd.

But the majority said nothing. People's faces were sullen, but I did not see signs of much much indignation. People persisted, however, in gossiping about Stavrogin, saying that the murdered woman was his wife;

that on the previous day he had “dishonourably” abducted a young lady belonging to the best family in the place, the daughter of Madame Drozdov, and that a complaint was to be lodged against him in Petersburg; and that his wife had been murdered evidently that he might marry the young lady. Skvoreshniki was not more than a mile and a half away, and I remember I wondered whether I should not let them know the position of affairs. I did not notice, however, that there was anyone egging the crowd on and I don’t want to accuse people falsely, though I did see and recognised at once in the crowd at the fire two or three of the rowdy lot I had seen in the refreshment-room. I particularly remember one thin, tall fellow, a cabinet-maker, as I found out later, with an emaciated face and a curly head, black as though grimed with soot. He was not drunk, but in contrast to the gloomy passivity of the crowd seemed beside himself with excitement. He kept addressing the people, though I don’t remember his words; nothing coherent that he said was longer than “I say, lads, what do you say to this? Are things to go on like this?” and so saying he waved his arms.

CHAPTER III.

A ROMANCE ENDED

FROM THE LARGE BALLROOM of Skvoreshniki (the room in which the last interview with Varvara Petrovna and Stepan Trofimovitch had taken place) the fire could be plainly seen At daybreak, soon after five in the morning, Liza was standing at the farthest window on the right looking intently at the fading glow. She was alone in the room. She was wearing the dress she had worn the day before at the matinee — a very smart light green dress covered with lace, but crushed and put on carelessly and with haste. Suddenly noticing that some of the hooks were undone in front she flushed, hurriedly set it right, snatched up from a chair the red shawl she had flung down when she came in the day before, and put it round her neck. Some locks of her luxuriant hair had come loose and showed below the shawl on her right shoulder. Her face looked weary and careworn. but her eyes glowed under her frowning brows. She went up to the window again and pressed her burning forehead against the cold pane. The door opened and Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch came in.

“I’ve sent a messenger on horseback,” he said. “In ten minutes we shall hear all about it, meantime the servants say that part of the riverside quarter has been burnt down, on the right side of the bridge near the quay. It’s been burning since eleven o’clock; now the fire is going down.”

He did not go near the window, but stood three steps behind her; she did not turn towards him.

“It ought to have been light an hour ago by the calendar, and it’s still almost night,” she said irritably.

“‘Calendars always tell lies,’” he observed with a polite smile, but, a little ashamed; he made haste to add: “It’s dull to live by the calendar, Liza.”

And he relapsed into silence, vexed at the ineptitude of the second sentence. Liza gave a wry smile.

“You are in such a melancholy mood that you cannot even find words to speak to me. But you need not trouble, there’s a point in what you said. I always live by the calendar. Every step I take is regulated by the calendar. Does that surprise you?”

She turned quickly from the window and sat down in a low chair.

“You sit down, too, please. We haven’t long to be together and I want to say anything I like. . . . Why shouldn’t you, too, say anything you like?”

Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch sat beside her and softly, almost timidly took her hand.

“What’s the meaning of this tone, Liza? Where has it suddenly sprung from? What do you mean by ‘we haven’t long to be together’? That’s the second mysterious phrase since you waked, half an hour ago.”

“You are beginning to reckon up my mysterious phrases!” she laughed. “Do you remember I told you I was a dead woman when I came in yesterday? That you thought fit to forget. To forget or not to notice.”

“I don’t remember, Liza. Why dead? You must live.”

“And is that all? You’ve quite lost your flow of words. I’ve lived my hour and that’s enough. Do you remember Christopher Ivanovitch?”

“No I don’t,” he answered, frowning.

“Christopher Ivanovitch at Lausanne? He bored you dreadfully. He always used to open the door and say,’ I’ve come for one minute,’ and then stay the whole day. I don’t want to be like Christopher Ivanovitch and stay the whole day.” A look of pain came into his face.

“Liza, it grieves me, this unnatural language. This affectation must hurt you, too. What’s it for? What’s the object of it?”

His eyes glowed.

“Liza,” he cried, “I swear I love you now more than yesterday when you came to me!”

“What a strange declaration! Why bring in yesterday and to-day and these comparisons?”

“You won’t leave me,” he went on, almost with despair; “we will go away together, to-day, won’t we? Won’t we?”

“Aie, don’t squeeze my hand so painfully! Where could we go together to-day? To ‘rise again’ somewhere? No, we’ve made experiments enough . . . and it’s too slow for me; and I am not fit for it; it’s too exalted for me. If we are to go, let it be to Moscow, to pay visits and entertain — that’s my ideal you know; even in Switzerland I didn’t disguise from you what I was like. As we can’t go to Moscow and pay visits since you are married, it’s no use talking of that.”

“Liza! What happened yesterday!”

“What happened is over!”

“That’s impossible! That’s cruel?”

“What if it is cruel? You must bear it if it is cruel.”

“You are avenging yourself on me for yesterday’s caprice,” he muttered with an angry smile. Liza flushed.

“What a mean thought!”

“Why then did you bestow on me ... so great a happiness? Have I the right to know?”

“No, you must manage without rights; don’t aggravate the meanness of your supposition by stupidity. You are not lucky to-day. By the way, you surely can’t be afraid of public opinion and that you will be blamed for this ‘great happiness’? If that’s it, for God’s sake don’t alarm yourself. It’s not your doing at all and you are not responsible to anyone. When I opened your door yesterday, you didn’t even know who was coming in. It was simply my caprice, as you expressed it just now, and nothing more! You can look every one in the face boldly and triumphantly!”

“Your words, that laugh, have been making me feel cold with horror for the last hour. That ‘happiness’ of which you speak frantically is worth . . . everything to me. How can I lose you now? I swear I loved you less yesterday. Why are you taking everything from me to-day? Do you know what it has cost me, this new hope? I’ve paid for it with life.”

“Your own life or another’s?” He got up quickly.

“What does that mean?” he brought out, looking at her steadily.

“Have you paid for it with your life or with mine? is what I mean. Or have you lost all power of understanding?” cried Liza, flushing. “Why did you start up so suddenly? Why do you stare at me with such a look? You frighten me? What is it you are afraid of all the time? I noticed some time ago that you were afraid and you are now, this very minute . . . Good heavens, how pale you are!”

“If you know anything, Liza, I swear I don’t . . . and I wasn’t talking of *that* just now when I said that I had paid for it with life. . . .”

“I don’t understand you,” she brought out, faltering apprehensively.

At last a slow brooding smile came on to his lips. He slowly sat down, put his elbows on his knees, and covered his face with his hands.

“A bad dream and delirium. . . . We were talking of two different things.”

“I don’t know what you were talking about. . . . Do you mean to say you did not know yesterday that I should leave you to-day, did you know or not?

Don’t tell a lie, did you or not?”

“I did,” he said softly.

“Well then, “what would you have? You knew and yet you accepted ‘that moment’ for yourself. Aren’t we quits?”

“Tell me the whole truth,” he cried in intense distress. “When you opened my door yesterday, did you know yourself that it was only for one hour?”

She looked at him with hatred.

“Really, the most sensible person can ask most amazing questions. And why are you so uneasy? Can it be vanity that a woman should leave you first instead of your leaving her? Do you know, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, since I’ve been with you I’ve discovered that you are very generous to me, and it’s just that I can’t endure from you.”

He got up from his seat and took a few steps about the room.

“Very well, perhaps it was bound to end so. ... But how can it all have happened?”

“That’s a question to worry about! Especially as you know the answer yourself perfectly well, and understand it better than anyone on earth, and were counting on it yourself. I am a young lady, my heart has been trained on the opera, that’s how it all began, that’s the solution.”

“No.”

“There is nothing in it to fret your vanity. It is all the absolute truth. It began with a fine moment which was too much for me to bear. The day before yesterday, when I “insulted” you before every one and you answered me so chivalrously, I went home and guessed at once that you were running away from me because you were married, and not from contempt for me which, as a fashionable young lady, I dreaded more than anything. I understood that it was for my sake, for me, mad as I was, that you ran away. You see how I appreciate your generosity. Then Pyotr Stepanovitch skipped up to me and explained it all to me at once. He revealed to me that you were dominated by a ‘great idea,’ before which he and I were as nothing, but yet that I was a stumbling-block in your path. He brought himself in, he insisted that we three should work together, and said the most fantastic things about a boat and about maple-wood oars out of some Russian song. I complimented him and told him he was a poet, which he swallowed as the real thing. And as apart from him I had known long before that I had not the strength to do anything for long, I made up my mind on the spot. Well,

that’s all and quite enough, and please let us have no more explanations. We might quarrel. Don’t be afraid of anyone, I take it all on myself. I am horrid and capricious, I was fascinated by that operatic boat, I am a young lady . . . but you know I did think that you were dreadfully in love with me. Don’t despise the poor fool, and don’t laugh at the tear that dropped just now. I am awfully given to crying with self-pity. Come, that’s enough, that’s enough. I am no good for anything and you are no good for anything; it’s as bad for both of us, so let’s comfort ourselves with that. Anyway, it eases our vanity.”

“Dream and delirium,” cried Stavrogin, wringing his hands, and pacing about the room. “Liza, poor child, what have you done to yourself?”

“I’ve burnt myself in a candle, nothing more. Surely you are not crying, too? You should show less feeling and better breeding. ...”

“Why, why did you come to me?”

“Don’t you understand what a ludicrous position you put yourself in in the eyes of the world by asking such questions?”

“Why have you ruined yourself, so grotesquely and so stupidly, and what’s to be done now?”

“And this is Stavrogin, ‘the vampire Stavrogin,’ as you are called by a lady here who is in love with you! Listen! I have told you already, I’ve put all my life into one hour and I am at peace. Do the same with yours . . . though you’ve no need to: you have plenty of ‘hours’ and ‘moments’ of all sorts before you.”

“As many as you; I give you my solemn word, not one hour more than you!”

He was still walking up and down and did not see the rapid penetrating glance she turned upon him, in which there seemed a dawning hope. But the light died away at the same moment.

“If you knew what it costs me that I can’t be sincere at this moment, Liza, if I could only tell you ...”

“Tell me? You want to tell me something, to me? God save me from your secrets!” she broke in almost in terror. He stopped and waited uneasily.

“I ought to confess that ever since those days in Switzerland I have had a strong feeling that you have something awful, loathsome, some bloodshed on your conscience . . . and yet something that would make you look very ridiculous. Beware of telling me, if it’s true: I shall laugh you to scorn. I shall laugh at you for the rest of your life. . . . Aie, you are turning pale

again? I won't, I won't, I'll go at once." She jumped up from her chair with a movement of disgust and contempt.

"Torture me, punish me, vent your spite on me," he cried in despair. "You have the full right. I knew I did not love you and yet I ruined you! Yes, I accepted the moment for my own; I had a hope . . . I've had it a long time . . . my last hope. ... I could not resist the radiance that flooded my heart when you came in to me yesterday, of yourself, alone, of your own accord. I suddenly believed. . . . Perhaps I have faith in it still."

"I will repay such noble frankness by being as frank. I don't want to be a Sister of Mercy for you. Perhaps I really may become a nurse unless I happen appropriately to die to-day; but if I do I won't be your nurse, though, of course, you need one as much as any crippled creature. I always fancied that you would take me to some place where there was a huge wicked spider, big as a man, and we should spend our lives looking at it and being afraid of it. That's how our love would spend itself. Appeal to Dashenka; she will go with you anywhere you like."

"Can't you help thinking of her even now?"

"Poor little spaniel! Give her my greetings. Does she know that even in Switzerland you had fixed on her for your old age? What prudence! What foresight! Aie, who's that?"

At the farther end of the room a door opened a crack; a head was thrust in and vanished again hurriedly.

"Is that you, Alexey Yegorytch?" asked Stavrogin. "No, it's only I." Pyotr Stepanovitch thrust himself half in again. "How do you do, Lizaveta Nikolaevna? Good morning, anyway. I guessed I should find you both in this room. I have come for one moment literally, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. I wag anxious to have a couple of words with you at all costs absolutely necessary . . . only a few words!"

Stavrogin moved towards him but turned back to Liza at the third step.

"If you hear anything directly, Liza, let me tell you I am to blame for it!"

She started and looked at him in dismay; but he hurriedly went out.

II

The room from which Pyotr Stepanovitch had peeped in was a large oval vestibule. Alexey Yegorytch had been sitting there before Pyotr Stepanovitch came in, but the latter sent him away. Stavrogin closed the

door after him and stood expectant. Pyotr Stepanovitch looked rapidly and searchingly at him.”

“Well?”

“If you know already,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch hurriedly, his eyes looking as though they would dive into Stavrogin’s soul, “then, of course, we are none of us to blame, above all not you, for it’s such a concatenation . . . such a coincidence of events ... in brief, you can’t be legally implicated and I’ve rushed here to tell you so beforehand.”

“Have they been burnt? murdered?”

“Murdered but not burnt, that’s the trouble, but I give you my word of honour that it’s not been my fault, however much you may suspect me, eh? Do you want the whole truth: you see the idea really did cross my mind — you hinted it yourself, not seriously, but teasing me (for, of course, you would not hint it seriously), but I couldn’t bring myself to it, and wouldn’t bring myself to it for anything, not for a hundred roubles — and what was there to be gained by it, I mean for me, for me. . . .” (He was in desperate haste and his talk was like the clacking of a rattle.) “But what a coincidence of circumstances: I gave that drunken fool Lebyadkin two hundred and thirty roubles of my own money (do you hear, my own money, there wasn’t a rouble of yours and, what’s more, you know it yourself) the day before yesterday, in the evening — do you hear, not yesterday after the matinee, but the day before yesterday, make a note of it: it’s a very important coincidence for I did not know for certain at that time whether Lizaveta Nikolaevna would come to you or not; I gave my own money simply because you distinguished yourself by taking it into your head to betray your secret to every one. Well, I won’t go into that . . . that’s your affair . . . your chivalry . but I must own I was amazed, it was a knock-down blow. And forasmuch as I was exceeding weary of these tragic stories — and let me tell you, I talk seriously though I do use Biblical language — as it was all upsetting my plans in fact, I made up my mind at any cost, and without your knowledge, to pack the Lebyadkins off to Petersburg, especially as he was set on going himself. I made one mistake: I gave the money in your name; — was it a mistake or not? Perhaps it wasn’t a mistake, eh? Listen now, listen how it has all turned out. . . .”

In the heat of his talk he went close up to Stavrogin and took hold of the revers of his coat (really, it may have been on purpose). With a violent movement Stavrogin struck him on the arm.

“Come, what is it ... give over . . . you’ll break my arm, . . what matters is the way things have turned out,” he rattled on, not in the least surprised at the blow. “I forked out the money in the evening on condition that his sister and he should set off early next morning; I trusted that rascal Liputin with the job of getting them into the train and seeing them off. But that beast Liputin wanted to play his schoolboy pranks on the public — perhaps you heard? At the matinee? Listen, listen: they both got drunk, made up verses of which half are Liputin’s; he rigged Lebyadkin out in a dress-coat, assuring me meanwhile that he had packed him off that morning, but he kept him shut somewhere in a back room, till he thrust him on the platform at the matinee. But Lebyadkin got drunk quickly and unexpectedly. Then came the scandalous scene you know of, and then they got him home more dead than alive, and Liputin niched away the two hundred roubles, leaving him only small change. But it appears unluckily that already that morning Lebyadkin had taken that two hundred roubles out of his pocket, boasted of it and shown it in undesirable quarters. And as that was just what Fedka was expecting, and as he had heard something at Kirillov’s (do you remember, your hint?) he made up his mind to take advantage of it. That’s the whole truth. I am glad, anyway, that Fedka did not find the money, the rascal was reckoning on a thousand, you know! He was in a hurry and seems to have been frightened by the fire himself. . . . Would you believe it, that fire came as a thunderbolt for me. Devil only knows what to make of it! It is taking things into their own hands. . . . You see, as I expect so much of you I will hide nothing from you: I’ve long been hatching this idea of a fire because it suits the national and popular taste; but I was keeping it for a critical moment, for that precious time when we should all rise up and . . . And they suddenly took it into their heads to do it, on their own initiative, without orders, now at the very moment when we ought to be lying low and keeping quiet! Such presumption! . . . The fact is, I’ve not got to the bottom of it yet, they talk about two Shpigulin men . but if there are any of *our* fellows in it, if any one of them has had a hand in it — so much the worse for him! You see what comes of letting people get ever so little out of hand! No, this democratic rabble, with its quintets, is a poor foundation; what we want is one magnificent, despotic will, like an idol, resting on something fundamental and external. . . . Then the quintets will cringe into obedience and be obsequiously ready on occasion. But, anyway, though, they are all

crying out now that Stavrogin wanted his wife to be burnt and that that's what caused the fire in the town, but ..."

"Why, are they all saying that?"

"Well, not yet, and I must confess I have heard nothing of the sort, but what one can do with people, especially when they've been burnt out! *Vox populi vox Dei.* A stupid rumour is soon set going. But you really have nothing to be afraid of. From the legal point of view you are all right, and with your conscience also. For you didn't want it done, did you? There's no clue, nothing but the coincidence. . . . The only thing is Fedka may remember what you said that night at Kirillov's (and what made you say it?) but that proves nothing and we shall stop Fedka's mouth. I shall stop it to-day. ..."

"And weren't the bodies burnt at all?"

"Not a bit; that ruffian could not manage anything properly. But I am glad, anyway, that you are so calm . . . for though you are not in any way to blame, even in thought, but all the same. . . . And you must admit that all this settles your difficulties capitally: you are suddenly free and a widower and can marry a charming girl this minute with a lot of money, who is already yours, into the bargain. See what can be done by crude, simple coincidence — eh?"

"Are you threatening me, you fool?"

"Come, leave off, leave off! Here you .are, calling me a fool, and what a tone to use! You ought to be glad, yet you ... I rushed here on purpose to let you know in good time. . . . Besides, how could I threaten you? As if I cared for what I could get by threats! I want you to help from goodwill and not from fear. You are the light and the sun. . . . It's I who am terribly afraid of you, not you of me! I am not Mavriky Nikolaevitch. . . . And only fancy, as I flew here in a racing droshky I saw Mavriky Nikolaevitch by the fence at the farthest corner of your garden ... in his greatcoat, drenched through, he must have been sitting there all night! Queer goings on! How mad people can be!"

"Mavriky Nikolaevitch? Is that true?"

"Yes, yes. He is sitting by the garden fence. About three hundred paces from here, I think. I made haste to pass him, but he saw me. Didn't you know? In that case I am glad I didn't forget to tell you. A man like that is more dangerous than anyone if he happens to have a revolver about him,

and then the night, the sleet, or natural irritability — for after all he is in a nice position, ha ha! What do you think V Why is he sitting there?”

“He is waiting for Lizaveta Nikolaevna, of course.”

“Well! Why should she go out to him? And ... in such rain too . . . what a fool!”

“She is just going out to him!”

“Eh! That’s a piece of news! So then . . . But listen, her position is completely changed now. What does she want with Mavriky now? You are free, a widower, and can marry her to-morrow? She doesn’t know yet — leave it to me and I’ll arrange it all for you. Where is she? We must relieve her mind too.”

“Relieve her mind?”

“Rather! Let’s go.”

“And do you suppose she won’t guess what those dead bodies mean?” said Stavrogin, screwing up his eyes in a peculiar way.

“Of course she won’t,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch with all the confidence of a perfect simpleton, “for legally . . . Ech, what a man you are! What if she did guess? Women are so clever at shutting their eyes to such things, you don’t understand women! Apart from it’s being altogether to her interest to marry you now, because there’s no denying she’s disgraced herself; apart from that, I talked to her of ‘the boat’ and I saw that one could affect her by it, so that shows you what the girl is made of. Don’t be uneasy, she will step over those dead bodies without turning a hair — especially as you are not to blame for them; not in the least, are you? She will only keep them in reserve to use them against you when you’ve been married two or three years. Every woman saves up something of the sort out of her husband’s past when she gets married, but by that time . . . what may not happen in a year? Ha ha!”

“If you’ve come in a racing droshky, take her to Mavriky Nikolaevitch now. She said just now that she could not endure me and would leave me, and she certainly will not accept my carriage.”

“What! Can she really be leaving? How can this have come about?” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, staring stupidly at him.

“She’s guessed somehow during this night that I don’t love her . . . which she knew all along, indeed.”

“But don’t you love her?” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, with an expression of extreme surprise. “If so, why did you keep her when she came to you

yesterday, instead of telling her plainly like an honourable man that you didn't care for her? That was horribly shabby on your part; and how mean you make me look in her eyes!"

Stavrogin suddenly laughed."

"I am laughing at my monkey," he explained at once.

"Ah! You saw that I was putting it on!" cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, laughing too, with great enjoyment. "I did it to amuse you! Only fancy, as soon as you came out to me I guessed from your face that you'd been 'unlucky.' A complete fiasco, perhaps. Eh? There! I'll bet anything," he cried, almost gasping with delight, "that you've been sitting side by side in the drawing-room all night wasting your precious time discussing something lofty and elevated . . . There, forgive me, forgive me; it's not my business. I felt sure yesterday that it would all end in foolishness. I brought her to you simply to amuse you, and to show you that you wouldn't have a dull time with me. I shall be of use to you a hundred times in that way. I always like pleasing people. If you don't want her now, which was what I was reckoning on when I came, then . . ."

"So you brought her simply for my amusement?"

"Why, what else?"

"Not to make me kill my wife?"

"Come. You've not killed her? What a tragic fellow you are!

"It's just the same; you killed her."

"I didn't kill her! I tell you I had no hand in it. ... You are beginning to make me uneasy, though. . . ."

"Go on. You said, 'if you don't want her now, then . . . '"

"Then, leave it to me, of course. *I* can quite easily marry her off to Mavriky Nikolaevitch, though I didn't make him sit down by the fence. Don't take that notion into your head. I am afraid of him, now. You talk about my droshky, but I simply dashed by. . . . What if he has a revolver? It's a good thing I brought mine. Here it is." He brought a revolver out of his pocket, showed it, and hid it again at once. "I took it as I was coming such a long way. . . . But I'll arrange all that for you in a twinkling: her little heart is aching at this moment for Mavriky; it should be, anyway. . . . And, do you know, I am really rather sorry for her? If I take her to Mavriky she will begin about you directly; she will praise you to <u>him</u> and abuse him to his face. You know the heart of woman! There you are, laughing again! I am awfully glad that you are so cheerful now. Come, let's go. I'll begin

with Mavriky right away, and about them . . . those who've been murdered . . . hadn't we better keep quiet now? She'll hear later on, anyway."

"What will she hear? Who's been murdered? What were you saying about Mavriky Nikolaevitch?" said Liza, suddenly opening the door.

"Ah! You've been listening?"

"What were you saying just now about Mavriky Nikolaevitch? Has he been murdered?"

"Ah! Then you didn't hear? Don't distress yourself, Mavriky Nikolaevitch is alive and well, and you can satisfy yourself of it in an instant, for he is here by the wayside, by the garden fence . . . and I believe he's been sitting there all night. He is drenched through in his greatcoat! He saw me as I drove past."

"That's not true. You said 'murdered.' . . . Who's been murdered?" she insisted with agonising mistrust.

"The only people who have been murdered are my wife, her brother Lebyadkin, and their servant," Stavrogin brought out firmly.

Liza trembled and turned terribly pale.

"A strange brutal outrage, Lizaveta Nikolaevna. A simple case of robbery," Pyotr Stepanovitch rattled off at once "Simply robbery, under cover of the fire. The crime was committed by Fedka the convict, and it was all that fool Lebyadkin's fault for showing every one his money. ... I rushed here with the news ... it fell on me like a thunderbolt. Stavrogin could hardly stand when *I* told him. We were deliberating here whether to tell you at once or not?"

"Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, is he telling the truth?" Liza articulated faintly.

"No; it's false."

"False?" said Pyotr Stepanovitch, starting. "What do you mean by that?"

"Heavens! I-shall go mad!" cried Liza.

"Do you understand, anyway, that he is mad now!" Pyotr Stepanovitch cried at the top of his voice. "After all, his wife has just been murdered. You see how white he is. ... Why, he has been with you the whole night. He hasn't left your side a minute. How can you suspect him?"

"Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, tell me, as before God, are you guilty or not, and I swear I'll believe your word as though it were God's, and I'll follow you to the end of the earth. Yes, I will. I'll follow you like a dog."

“Why are you tormenting her, you fantastic creature?” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch in exasperation. “Lizaveta Nikolaevna, upon my oath, you can crush me into powder, but he is not guilty. On the contrary, it has crushed him, and he is raving, you see that. He is not to blame in any way, not in any way, not even in thought! . . . It’s all the work of robbers who will probably be found within a week and flogged. . . . It’s all the work of Fedka the convict, and some Shpigulin men, all the town is agog with it. That’s why I say so too.”

“Is that right? Is that right?” Liza waited trembling for her final sentence.

“I did not kill them, and I was against it, but I knew they were going to be killed and I did not stop the murderers. Leave me, Liza,” Stavrogin brought out, and he walked into the drawing-room.

Liza hid her face in her hands and walked out of the house. Pyotr Stepanovitch was rushing after her, but at once ‘hurried back and went into the drawing-room.

“So that’s your line? That’s your line? So there’s nothing you are afraid of?” He flew at Stavrogin in an absolute fury, muttering incoherently, scarcely able to find words and foaming at the mouth.

Stavrogin stood in the middle of the room and did not answer a word. He clutched a lock of his hair in his left hand and smiled helplessly. Pyotr Stepanovitch pulled him violently by the sleeve.

“Is it all over with you? So that’s the line you are taking? You’ll inform against all of us, and go to a monastery yourself, or to the devil. . . . But I’ll do for you, though you are not afraid of me!”

“Ah! That’s you chattering!” said Stavrogin, noticing him at last. “Run,” he said, coming to himself suddenly, “run after her, order the carriage, don’t leave her. . . . Run, run! Take her home so that no one may know . . . and that she mayn’t go there ... to the bodies ... to the bodies. . . . Force her to get into the carriage . . . Alexey Yegorytch! Alexey Yegorytch!”

“Stay, don’t shout! By now she is in Mavriky’s arms. . . . Mavriky won’t put her into your carriage. . . . Stay! There’s something more important than the carriage!”

He seized his revolver again. Stavrogin looked at him gravely.

“Very well, kill me,” he said softly, almost conciliatorily.

“Foo. Damn it! What a maze of false sentiment a man can get into!” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, shaking with rage. “Yes, really, you ought to be killed! She ought simply to spit at you! Fine sort of ‘magic boat,’ you are; you are

a broken-down, leaky old hulk! . . . You ought to pull yourself together if only from spite! Ech! Why, what difference would it make to you since you ask for a bullet through your brains yourself?”

Stavrogin smiled strangely.

“If you were not such a buffoon I might perhaps have said yes now. ... If you had only a grain of sense . . .”

“I am a buffoon, but I don’t want you, my better half, to be one! Do you understand me?”, .

Stavrogin did understand, though perhaps no one else did. Shatov, for instance, was astonished when Stavrogin told him that Pyotr Stepanovitch had enthusiasm.

“Go to the devil now, and to-morrow perhaps I may wring something out of myself. Come to-morrow.”

“Yes? Yes?”

“How can I tell! ... Go to hell. Go to hell.” And he walked out of the room.

“Perhaps, after all, it may be for the best,” Pyotr Stepanovitch muttered to himself as he hid the revolver.

III

He rushed off to overtake Lizaveta Nikolaevna. She had not got far away, only a few steps, from the house. She had been detained by Alexey Yegorytch, who was following a step behind her, in a tail coat, and without a hat; his head was bowed respectfully. He was persistently entreating her to wait for a carriage; the old man was alarmed and almost in tears.

“Go along. Your master is asking for tea, and there’s no one to give it to him,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, pushing him away. He took Liza’s arm.

She did not pull her arm away, but she seemed hardly to know what she was doing; she was still dazed.

“To begin with, you are going the wrong way,” babbled Pyotr Stepanovitch. “We ought to go this way, and not by the garden, and, secondly, walking is impossible in any case. It’s over two miles, and you are not properly dressed. If you would wait a second, I came in a droshky; the horse is in the yard. I’ll get it instantly, put you in, and get you home so that no one sees you.”

“How kind you are,” said Liza graciously. “Oh, not at all. Any humane man in my position would do the same. . . .”

Liza looked at him, and was surprised.

“Good heavens! Why I thought it was that old man here still.”

“Listen. I am awfully glad that you take it like this, because it’s all such a frightfully stupid convention, and since it’s come to that, hadn’t I better tell the old man to get the carriage at once. It’s only a matter of ten minutes and we’ll turn back and wait in the porch, eh?”

“I want first . . . where are those murdered people?”

“Ah! What next? That was what I was afraid of. . . . No, we’d better leave those wretched creatures alone; it’s no use your looking at them.”

“I know where they are. I know that house.”

“Well? What if you do know it? Come; it’s raining, and there’s a fog. (A nice job this sacred duty I’ve taken upon myself.) Listen, Lizaveta Nikolaevna! It’s one of two alternatives. Either you come with me in the droshky — in that case wait here, and don’t take another step, for if we go another twenty steps we must be seen by Mavriky Nikolaevitch.”

“Mavriky Nikolaevitch! Where? Where?”

“Well, if you want to go with him, I’ll take you a little farther, if you like, and show you where he sits, but I don’t care to go up to him just now. No, thank you.”

“He is waiting for me. Good God!” she suddenly stopped, and a flush of colour flooded her face.

“Oh! Come now. If he is an unconventional man! You know, Lizaveta Nikolaevna, it’s none of my business. I am a complete outsider, and you know that yourself. But, still, I wish you well. ... If your ‘fairy boat’ has failed you, if it has turned out to be nothing more than a rotten old hulk, only fit to be chopped up . . .”

“Ah! That’s fine, that’s lovely,” cried Liza.

“Lovely, and yet your tears are falling. You must have spirit. You must be as good as a man in every way. In our age, when woman . . . Foo, hang it,” Pyotr Stepanovitch was on the point of spitting. “And the chief point is that there is nothing to regret. It may all turn out for the best. Mavriky Nikolaevitch is a man. ... In fact, he is a man of feeling though not talkative, but that’s a good thing, too, as long as he has no conventional notions, of course. ...”

“Lovely, lovely!” Liza laughed hysterically.

“Well, hang it all ... Lizaveta Nikolaevna,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch suddenly piqued. “I am simply here on your account. . . . It’s nothing to me. ... I helped you yesterday when you wanted it yourself. To-day . . . well, you can see Mavriky Nikolaevitch from here; there he’s sitting; he doesn’t see us. I say, Lizaveta Nikolaevna, have you ever read ‘Polenka Saxe’?”

“What’s that?”

“It’s the name of a novel, ‘Polenka Saxe.’ I read it when I was a student. ... In it a very wealthy official of some sort, Saxe, arrested his wife at a summer villa for infidelity. . . . But, hang it; it’s no consequence! You’ll see, Mavriky Nikolaevitch will make you an offer before you get home. He doesn’t see us yet.”

“Ach! Don’t let him see us!” Liza cried suddenly, like a mad creature. “Come away, come away! To the woods, to the fields!”

And she ran back.

“Lizaveta Nikolaevna, this is such cowardice,” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, running after her. “And why don’t you want him to see you? On the contrary, you must look him straight in the face, with pride. ... If it’s some feeling about *that* . . some maidenly . . . that’s such a prejudice, so out of date. . . But where are you going? Where are you going? Ech! she is running! Better go back to Stavrogin’s and take my droshky. . . . Where are you going? That’s the way to the fields! There! She’s fallen down! . . .”

He stopped. Liza was flying along like a bird, not conscious where she was going, and Pyotr Stepanovitch was already fifty paces behind her. She stumbled over a mound of earth and fell down. At the same moment there was the sound of a terrible shout from behind. It came from Mavriky Nikolaevitch, who had seen her flight and her fall, and was running to her across the field. In a flash Pyotr Stepanovitch had retired into Stavrogin’s gateway to make haste and get into his droshky.

Mavriky Nikolaevitch was already standing in terrible alarm by Liza, who had risen to her feet; he was bending over her and holding her hands in both of his. All the incredible surroundings of this meeting overwhelmed him, and tears were rolling down his cheeks. He saw the woman for whom he had such reverent devotion running madly across the fields, at such an hour, in such weather, with nothing over her dress, the gay dress she wore the day before now crumpled and muddy from her fall. . . . He could not utter a word; he took off his greatcoat, and with trembling hands put it

round her shoulders. Suddenly he uttered a cry, feeling that she had pressed her lips to his hand.

“Liza,” he cried, “*I* am no good for anything, but don’t drive me away from you!”

“Oh, no! Let us make haste away from here. Don’t leave me!” and, seizing his hand, she drew him after her. “Mavriky Nikolaevitch,” she suddenly dropped her voice timidly, “I kept a bold face there all the time, but now I am afraid of death. I shall die soon, very soon, but I am afraid, I am afraid to die . . . ,” she whispered, pressing his hand tight.

“Oh, if there were some one,” he looked round in despair. “Some passer-by! You will get your feet wet, you . . . will lose your reason!”

“It’s all right; it’s all right,” she tried to reassure him. “That’s right. I am not so frightened with you. Hold my hand, lead me. . . . Where are we going now? Home? No! I want first to see the people who have been murdered. His wife has been murdered they say, and he says he killed her himself. But that’s not true, is it? I want to see for myself those three who’ve been killed ... on my account . . . it’s because of them his love for me has grown cold since last night. ... I shall see and find out everything. Make haste, make haste, I know the house . . . there’s a fire there. . . . Mavriky Nikolaevitch, my dear one, don’t forgive me in my shame! Why forgive me? Why are you crying? Give me a blow and kill me here in the field, like a dog!”

“No one is your judge now,” Mavriky Nikolaevitch pronounced firmly. “God forgive you. I least of all can be your judge.”

But it would be strange to describe their conversation. And meanwhile they walked hand in hand quickly, hurrying as though they were crazy. They were going straight towards the fire. Mavriky Nikolaevitch still had hopes of meeting a cart at least, but no one came that way. A mist of fine, drizzling rain enveloped the whole country, swallowing up every ray of light, every gleam of colour, and transforming everything into one smoky, leaden, indistinguishable mass. It had long been daylight, yet it seemed as though it were still night. And suddenly in this cold foggy mist there appeared coming towards them a strange and absurd figure. Picturing it now I think I should not have believed my eyes if I had been in Lizaveta Nikolaevna’s place, yet she uttered a cry of joy, and recognised the approaching figure at once. It was Stepan Trofimovitch. How he had gone off, how the insane, impracticable idea of his flight came to be carried out, of that later. I will only mention that he was in a fever that morning, yet

even illness did not prevent his starting. He was walking resolutely on the damp ground. It was evident that he had planned the enterprise to the best of his ability, alone with his inexperience and lack of practical sense. He wore “travelling dress,” that is, a greatcoat with a wide patent-leather belt, fastened with a buckle and a pair of new high boots pulled over his trousers. Probably he had for some time past pictured a traveller as looking like this, and the belt and the high boots with the shining tops like a hussar’s, in which he could hardly walk, had been ready some time before. A broad-brimmed hat, a knitted scarf, twisted close round his neck, a stick in his right hand, and an exceedingly small but extremely tightly packed bag in his left, completed his get-up. He had, besides, in the same right hand, an open umbrella. These three objects — the umbrella, the stick, and the bag — had been very awkward to carry for the first mile, and had begun to be heavy by the second.

“Can it really be you?” cried Liza, looking at him with distressed wonder, after her first rush of instinctive gladness.

“*Use,”* cried Stepan Trofimovitch, rushing to her almost in delirium too. “*Chere, chere.* . . . Can you be out, too . . in such a fog? You see the glow of fire. *Vous ties malheureuse, n’est-ce pas? I* see, I see. Don’t tell me, but don’t question me either. *Nous sommes tous malheureux mais il faut les pardonner tons. Pardonnons, Lise*, and let us be free for ever. To be quit of the world and be completely free. *Il faut pardonner, pardonner, et pardonner!”*

“But why are you kneeling down?”

“Because, taking leave of the world, I want to take leave of all my past in your person!” He wept and raised both her hands to his tear-stained eyes. “I kneel to all that was beautiful in my life. I kiss and give thanks! Now I’ve torn myself in half; left behind a mad visionary who dreamed of soaring to the sky. *Vingt-deux ans,* here. A shattered, frozen old man. A tutor *chez ce marchand, s’il existe pourtant ce marchand.* . . . But how drenched you are, *Lise* “ he cried, jumping on to his feet, feeling that his knees too were soaked by the wet earth. “And how is it possible . . . you are in such a dress . . . and on foot, and in these fields? . . . You are crying! *Vous etes malheureuse.* Bah, I did hear something. . . . But where have you come from now?” He asked hurried questions with an uneasy air, looking in extreme bewilderment at Mavriky Nikolaevitch. “*Mais savez-vous l’heure qu’il est?”*

“Stepan Trofimovitch, have you heard anything about the people who’ve been murdered? ... Is it true? Is it true?”

“These people! I saw the glow of their work all night. They were bound to end in this. . . .” His eyes flashed again.

“I am fleeing away from madness, from a delirious dream. I am fleeing away to seek for Russia. *Existe-t-elle, la Russie? Bah! C’est vous, cher capitaine!* I’ve never doubted that I should meet you somewhere on some high adventure. . . . But take my umbrella, and — why must you be on foot? For God’s sake, do at least take my umbrella, for I shall hire a carriage somewhere in any case. I am on foot because Stasie (I mean, Nastasya) would have shouted for the benefit of the whole street if she’d found out I was going away. So I slipped away as far as possible incognito. I don’t know; in the *Voice* they write of there being brigands everywhere, but I thought surely I shouldn’t meet a brigand the moment I came out on the road. *Chere Lise,* I thought you said something of some one’s being murdered. Oh, *mon Dieu!* You are ill!”

“Come along, come along!” cried Liza, almost in hysterics, drawing Mavriky Nikolaevitch after her again. “Wait a minute, Stepan Trofimovitch!” she came back suddenly to him. “Stay, poor darling, let me sign you with the cross. Perhaps, it would be better to put you under control, but I’d rather make the sign of the cross over you. You, too, pray for ‘poor’ Liza — just a little, don’t bother too much about it. Mavriky Nikolaevitch, give that baby back his umbrella. You must give it him. That’s right. . . . Come, let us go, let us go!”

They reached the fatal house at the very moment when the huge crowd, which had gathered round it, had already heard a good deal of Stavrogin, and of how much it was to his interest to murder his wife. Yet, I repeat, the immense majority went on listening without moving or uttering a word. The only people who were excited were bawling drunkards and excitable individuals of the same sort as the gesticulatory cabinet-maker. Every one knew the latter as a man really of mild disposition, but he was liable on occasion to get excited and to fly off at a tangent if anything struck him in a certain way. I did not see Liza and Mavriky Nikolaevitch arrive. Petrified with amazement, I first noticed Liza some distance away in the crowd, and I did not at once catch sight of Mavriky Nikolaevitch. I fancy there was a moment when he fell two or three steps behind her or was pressed back by the crush. Liza, forcing her way through the crowd, seeing and noticing

nothing round her, like one in a delirium, like a patient escaped from a hospital, attracted attention only too quickly, of course. There arose a hubbub of loud talking and at last sudden shouts. Some one bawled out, “It’s Stavrogin’s woman!” And on the other side, “It’s not enough to murder them, she wants to look at them!” All at once I saw an arm raised above her head from behind and suddenly brought down upon it. Liza fell to the ground. We heard a fearful scream from Mavriky Nikolaevitch as he dashed to her assistance and struck with all his strength the man who stood between him and Liza. But at that instant the same cabinetmaker seized him with both arms from behind. For some minutes nothing could be distinguished in the scrimmage that followed. I believe Liza got up but was knocked down by another blow. Suddenly the crowd parted and a small space was left empty round Liza’s prostrate figure, and Mavriky Nikolaevitch, frantic with grief and covered with blood, was standing over her, screaming, weeping, and wringing his hands. I don’t remember exactly what followed after; I only remember that they began to carry Liza away. I ran after her. She was still alive and perhaps still conscious. The cabinet-maker and three other men in the crowd were seized. These three still deny having taken any part in the dastardly deed, stubbornly maintaining that they have been arrested by mistake. Perhaps it’s the truth. Though the evidence against the cabinet-maker is clear, he is so irrational that he is still unable to explain what happened coherently. I too, as a spectator, though at some distance, had to give evidence at the inquest. I declared that it had all happened entirely accidentally through the action of men perhaps moved by ill-feeling, yet scarcely conscious of what they were doing — drunk and irresponsible. I am of that opinion to this day.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAST RESOLUTION

THAT MORNING MANY people saw Pyotr Stepanovitch. All who saw him remembered that he was in a particularly excited state. At two o'clock he went to see Gaganov, who had arrived from the country only the day before, and whose house was full of visitors hotly discussing the events of the previous day. Pyotr Stepanovitch talked more than anyone and made them listen to him. He was always considered among us as a "chatterbox of a student with a screw loose," but now he talked of Yulia Mihailovna, and in the general excitement the theme was an enthralling one. As one who had recently been her intimate and confidential friend, he disclosed many new and unexpected details concerning her; incidentally (and of course unguardedly) he repeated some of her own remarks about persons known to all in the town, and thereby piqued their vanity. He dropped it all in a vague and rambling way, like a man free from guile driven by his sense of honour to the painful necessity of clearing up a perfect mountain of misunderstandings, and so simple-hearted that he hardly knew where to begin and where to leave off. He let slip in a rather unguarded way, too, that Yulia Mihailovna knew the whole secret of Stavrogin and that she had been at the bottom of the whole intrigue. She had taken him in too, for he, Pyotr Stepanovitch, had also been in love with this unhappy Liza, yet he had been so hoodwinked that he had *almost* taken her to Stavrogin himself in the carriage. "Yes, yes, it's all very well for you to laugh, gentlemen, but if only I'd known, if I'd known how it would end!" he concluded. To various excited inquiries about Stavrogin he bluntly replied that in his opinion the catastrophe to the Lebyadkins was a pure coincidence, and that it was all Lebyadkin's own fault for displaying his money. He explained this particularly well. One of his listeners observed that it was no good his "pretending"; that he had eaten and drunk and almost slept at Yulia Mihailovna's, yet now he was the first to blacken her character, and that this was by no means such a fine thing to do as he supposed. But Pyotr Stepanovitch immediately defended himself.

"I ate and drank there not because I had no money, and it's not my fault that I was invited there. Allow me to judge for myself how far I need to be

grateful for that.”

The general impression was in his favour. “He may be rather absurd, and of course he is a nonsensical fellow, yet still he is not responsible for Yulia Mihailovna’s foolishness. On the contrary, it appears that he tried to stop her.”

About two o’clock the news suddenly came that Stavrogin, about whom there was so much talk, had suddenly left for Petersburg by the midday train. This interested people immensely; many of them frowned. Pyotr Stepanovitch was so much struck that I was told he turned quite pale and cried out strangely, “Why, how could they have let him go?” He hurried away from Gaganov’s forthwith, yet he was seen in two or three other houses.

Towards dusk he succeeded in getting in to see Yulia Mihailovna though he had the greatest pains to do so, as she had absolutely refused to see him. I heard of this from the lady herself only three weeks afterwards, just before her departure for Petersburg. She gave me no details, but observed with a shudder that “he had on that occasion astounded her beyond all belief.” I imagine that all he did was to terrify her by threatening to charge her with being an accomplice if she “said anything.” The necessity for this intimidation arose from his plans at the moment, of which she, of course, knew nothing; and only later, five days afterwards, she guessed why he had been so doubtful of her reticence and so afraid of a new outburst of indignation on her part.

Between seven and eight o’clock, when it was dark, all the five members of the quintet met together at Ensign Erkel’s lodgings in a little crooked house at the end of the town. The meeting had been fixed by Pyotr Stepanovitch himself, but he was unpardonably late, and the members waited over an hour for him. This Ensign Erkel was that young officer who had sat the whole evening at Virginsky’s with a pencil in his hand and a notebook before him. He had not long been in the town; he lodged alone with two old women, sisters, in a secluded by-street and was shortly to leave the town; a meeting at his house was less likely to attract notice than anywhere. This strange boy was distinguished by extreme taciturnity: he was capable of sitting for a dozen evenings in succession in noisy company, with the most extraordinary conversation going on around him, without uttering a word, though he listened with extreme attention, watching the speakers with his childlike eyes. His face was very pretty and even had a

certain look of cleverness. He did not belong to the quintet; it was supposed that he had some special job of a purely practical character. It is known now that he had nothing of the sort and probably did not understand his position himself. It was simply that he was filled with hero-worship for Pyotr Stepanovitch, whom he had only lately met. If he had met a monster of iniquity who had incited him to found a band of brigands on the pretext of some romantic and socialistic object, and as a test had bidden him rob and murder the first peasant he met, he would certainly have obeyed and done it. He had an invalid mother to whom he sent half of his scanty pay — and how she must have kissed that poor little flaxen head, how she must have trembled and prayed over it! I go into these details about him because I feel very sorry for him.

"Our fellows" were excited. The events of the previous night had made a great impression on them, and I fancy they were in a panic. The simple disorderliness in which they had so zealously and systematically taken part had ended in a way they had not expected. The fire in the night, the murder of the Lebyadkins, the savage brutality of the crowd with Liza, had been a series of surprises which they had not anticipated in their programme. They hotly accused the hand that had guided them of despotism and duplicity. In fact, while they were waiting for Pyotr Stepanovitch they worked each other up to such a point that they resolved again to ask him for a definite explanation, and if he evaded again, as he had done before, to dissolve the quintet and to found instead a new secret society "for the propaganda of ideas" and on their own initiative on the basis of democracy and equality. Liputin, Shigalov, and the authority on the peasantry supported this plan; Lyamshin said nothing, though he looked approving. Virginsky hesitated and wanted to hear Pyotr Stepanovitch first. It was decided to hear Pyotr Stepanovitch, but still he did not come; such casualness added fuel to the flames. Erkel was absolutely silent and did nothing but order the tea, which he brought from his landladies in glasses on a tray, not bringing in the samovar nor allowing the servant to enter.

Pyotr Stepanoviteh did not turn up till half-past eight. With rapid steps he went up to the circular table before the sofa round which the company were seated; he kept his cap in his hand and refused tea. He looked angry, severe, and supercilious. He must have observed at once from their faces that they were "mutinous."

"Before I open my mouth, you've got something hidden; out with it."

Liputin began “in the name of all,” and declared in a voice quivering with resentment “that if things were going on like that they might as well blow their brains out.” Oh, they were not at all afraid to blow their brains out, they were quite ready to, in fact, but only to serve the common cause (a general movement of approbation). So he must be more open with them so that they might always know beforehand, “or else what would things be coming to?” (Again a stir and some guttural sounds.) To behave like this was humiliating and dangerous. “We don’t say so because we are afraid, but if one acts and the rest are only pawns, then one would blunder and all would be lost.” (Exclamations. “Yes, yes.” General approval.)

“Damn it all, what do you want?”

“What connection is there between the common cause and the petty intrigues of Mr. Stavrogin?” cried Liputin, boiling over. “Suppose he is in some mysterious relation to the centre, if that legendary centre really exists at all, it’s no concern of ours. And meantime a murder has been committed, the police have been roused; if they follow the thread they may find what it starts from.”

“If Stavrogin and you are caught, we shall be caught too,” added the authority on the peasantry.

“And to no good purpose for the common cause,” Virginsky concluded despondently.

“What nonsense! The murder is a chance crime; it was committed by Fedka for the sake of robbery.”

“H’m! Strange coincidence, though,” said Liputin, wriggling.

“And if you will have it, it’s all through you.”

“Through us?”

“In the first place, you, Liputin, had a share in the intrigue yourself; and the second chief point is, you were ordered to get Lebyadkin away and given money to do it; and what did you do? If you’d got him away nothing would have happened.”

“But wasn’t it you yourself who suggested the idea that it would be a good thing to set him on to read his verses?”

“An idea is not a command. The command was to get him away.”

“Command! Rather a queer word. . . . On the contrary,

your orders were to delay sending him off.”

“You made a mistake and showed your foolishness and self-will. The murder was the work of Fedka, and he carried it out alone for the sake of

robbery. You heard the gossip and believed it. You were scared. Stavrogin is not such a fool, and the proof of that is he left the town at twelve o’clock after an interview with the vice-governor; if there were anything in it they would not let him go to Petersburg in broad daylight.”

“But we are not making out that Mr. Stavrogin committed the murder himself,” Liputin rejoined spitefully and unceremoniously. “He may have known nothing about it, like me; and you know very well that I knew nothing about it, though I am mixed up in it like mutton in a hash.”

“Whom are you accusing?” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, looking at him darkly.

“Those whose interest it is to burn down towns.”

“You make matters worse by wriggling out of it. However, won’t you read this and pass it to the others, simply as a fact of interest?”

He pulled out of his pocket Lebyadkin’s anonymous letter to Lembke and handed it to Liputin. The latter read it, was evidently surprised, and passed it thoughtfully to his neighbour; the letter quickly went the round.

“Is that really Lebyadkin’s handwriting?” observed Shigalov.

“It is,” answered Liputin and Tolkatchenko (the authority on the peasantry).

“I simply brought it as a fact of interest and because I knew you were so sentimental over Lebyadkin,” repeated Pyotr Stepanovitch, taking the letter back. “So it turns out, gentlemen, that a stray Fedka relieves us quite by chance of a dangerous man. That’s what chance does sometimes! It’s instructive, isn’t it?”

The members exchanged rapid glances.

“And now, gentlemen, it’s my turn to ask questions,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, assuming an air of dignity. “Let me know what business you had to set fire to the town without permission.”

“What’s this! We, we set fire to the town? That is laying the blame on others!” they exclaimed.

“I quite understand that you carried the game too far,” Pyotr Stepanovitch persisted stubbornly, “but it’s not a matter of petty scandals with Yulia Mihailovna. I’ve brought you here gentlemen, to explain to you the greatness of the danger you have so stupidly incurred, which is a menace to much besides yourselves.”

“Excuse me, we, on the contrary, were intending just now to point out to you the greatness of the despotism and unfairness you have shown in taking

such a serious and also strange step without consulting the members," Virginsky, who had been hitherto silent, protested, almost with indignation.

"And so you deny it? But I maintain that you set fire to the town, you and none but you. Gentlemen, don't tell lies! I have good evidence. By your rashness you exposed the common cause to danger. You are only one knot in an endless network of knots — and your duty is blind obedience to the centre. Yet three men of you incited the Shpigulin men to set fire to the town without the least instruction to do so, and the fire has taken place."

"What three? What three of us?"

"The day before yesterday, at three o'clock in the night, you, Tolkatchenko, were inciting Fomka Zavyalov at the 'Forget-me-not.'"

"Upon my word!" cried the latter, jumping up, "I scarcely said a word to him, and what I did say was without intention, simply because he had been flogged that morning. And I dropped it at once; I saw he was too drunk. If you had not referred to it I should not have thought of it again. A word could not set the place on fire."

"You are like a man who should be surprised that a tiny spark could blow a whole powder magazine into the air."

"I spoke in a whisper in his ear, in a corner; how could you have heard of it?"

Tolkatchenko reflected suddenly.

"I was sitting there under the table. Don't disturb yourselves, gentlemen; I know every step you take. You smile sarcastically, Mr. Liputin? But I know, for instance, that you pinched your wife black and blue at midnight, three days ago, in your bedroom as you were going to bed."

Liputin's mouth fell open and he turned pale. (It was afterwards found out that he knew of this exploit of Liputin's from Agafya, Liputin's servant, whom he had paid from the beginning to spy on him; this only came out later.)

"May I state a fact?" said Shigalov, getting up.

"State it."

Shigalov sat down and pulled himself together.

"So far as *I* understand — and it's impossible not to understand it — you yourself at first and a second time later, drew with great eloquence, but too theoretically, a picture of Russia covered with an endless network of knots. Each of these centres of activity, proselytising and ramifying endlessly, aims by systematic denunciation to injure the prestige of local authority, to

reduce the villages to confusion, to spread cynicism and scandals, together with complete disbelief in everything and an eagerness for something better, and finally, by means of fires, as a pre-eminently national method, to reduce the country at a given moment, if need be, to desperation. Are those your words which I tried to remember accurately? Is that the programme you gave us as the authorised representative of the central committee, which is to this day utterly unknown to us and almost like a myth?"

"It's correct, only you are very tedious."

"Every one has a right to express himself in his own way. Giving us to understand that the separate knots of the general network already covering Russia number by now several hundred, and propounding the theory that if every one does his work successfully, all Russia at a given moment, at a signal . . ."

"Ah, damn it all, I have enough to do without you!" cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, twisting in his chair.

"Very well, I'll cut it short and I'll end simply by asking if we've seen the disorderly scenes, we've seen the discontent of the people, we've seen and taken part in the downfall of local administration, and finally, we've seen with our own eyes the town on fire? What do you find amiss? Isn't that your programme? What can you blame us for?"

"Acting on your own initiative!" Pyotr Stepanovitch cried furiously. "While I am here you ought not to have dared to act without my permission. Enough. We are on the eve of betrayal, and perhaps to-morrow or to-night you'll be seized. So there. I have authentic information."

At this all were agape with astonishment.

"You will be arrested not only as the instigators of the fire, but as a quintet. The traitor knows the whole secret of the network. So you see what a mess you've made of it!"

"Stavrogin, no doubt," cried Liputin.

"What . . . why Stavrogin?" Pyotr Stepanovitch seemed suddenly taken aback. "Hang it all," he cried, pulling himself together at once, "it's Shatov! I believe you all know now that Shatov in his time was one of the society. *I* must tell you that, watching him through persons he does not suspect, *I* found, out to my amazement that he knows all about the organisation of the network and . . . everything, in fact. To save himself from being charged with having formerly belonged, he will give information against all. He has been hesitating up till now and I have spared him. Your fire has decided

him: he is shaken and will hesitate no longer. To-morrow we shall be arrested as incendiaries and political offenders."

"Is it true? How does Shatov know?" The excitement was indescribable.

"It's all perfectly true. I have no right to reveal the source from which I learnt it or how I discovered it, but I tell you what I can do for you meanwhile: through one person I can act on Shatov so that without his suspecting it he will put oft giving information, but not more than for twenty-four hours." All were silent.

"We really must send him to the devil!" Tolkatchenko was the first to exclaim.

"It ought to have- been done long ago," Lyamshin put in malignantly, striking the table with his fist.

"But how is it to be done?" muttered Liputin. Pyotr Stepanovitch at once took up the question and unfolded his plan. The plan was the following day at nightfall to draw Shatov away to a secluded spot to hand over the secret printing press .which had been in his keeping and was buried there, and there "to settle things." He went into various essential details which we will omit here, and explained minutely Shatov's present ambiguous attitude to the central society, of which the reader knows already.

"That's all very well," Liputin observed irresolutely, "but since it will be another adventure ... of the same sort ... it will make too great a sensation."

"No doubt," assented Pyotr Stepanovitch, "but I've provided against that. We have the means of averting suspicion completely."

And with the same minuteness he told them about Kirillov, of his intention to shoot himself, and of his promise to wait for a signal from them and to leave a letter behind him taking on himself anything they dictated to him (all of which the reader knows already).

"His determination to take his own life — a philosophic, or as I should call it, insane decision — has become known *there"* Pyotr Stepanovitch went on to explain. "*There* not a thread, not a grain of dust is overlooked; everything is turned to the service of the cause. Foreseeing how useful it might be and satisfying themselves that his intention was quite serious, they had offered him the means to come to Russia (he was set for some reason on dying in Russia), gave him a commission which he promised to carry out (and he had done so), and had, moreover, bound him by a promise, as you already know, to commit suicide only when he was told to. He promised everything. You must note that he belongs to the organisation on a

particular footing and is anxious to be of service; more than that I can't tell you. To-morrow, *after Shatov's affair*, I'll dictate a note to him saying that he is responsible for his death. That will seem very plausible: they were friends and travelled together to America, there they quarrelled; and it will all be explained in the letter . . . and . . . and perhaps, if it seems feasible, we might dictate something more to Kirillov — something about the manifestoes, for instance, and even perhaps about the fire. But I'll think about that. You needn't worry yourselves, he has no prejudices; he'll sign anything."

There were expressions of doubt. It sounded a fantastic story. But they had all heard more or less about Kirillov; Liputin more than all.

"He may change his mind and not want to," said Shigalov; "he is a madman anyway, so he is not much to build upon."

"Don't be uneasy, gentlemen, he will want to," Pyotr Stepanovitch snapped out. "I am obliged by our agreement to give him warning the day before, so it must be to-day. I invite Liputin to go with me at once to see him and make certain, and he will tell you, gentlemen, when he comes back — to-day if need be — whether what I say is true. However," he broke off suddenly with intense exasperation, as though he suddenly felt he was doing people like them too much honour by wasting time in persuading them, "however, do as you please. If you don't decide to do it, the union is broken up — but solely through your insubordination and treachery. In that case we are all independent from this moment. But under those circumstances, besides the unpleasantness of Shatov's betrayal and its consequences, you will have brought upon yourselves another little unpleasantness of which you were definitely warned when the union was formed. As far as I am concerned, I am not much afraid of you, gentlemen. . . . Don't imagine that I am so involved with you. . . . But that's no matter."

"Yes, we decide to do it," Liputin pronounced.

"There's no other way out of it," muttered Tolkatchenko, "and if only Liputin confirms about Kirillov, then . . .

"I am against it; with all my soul and strength I protest against such a murderous decision," said Virginsky, standing up.

"But?" asked Pyotr Stepanovitch. . . .

"*But* what?"

"You said *but* . . . and I am waiting."

“I don’t think I did say *but* ... *I* only meant to say that if you decide to do it, then . . .”

“Then?”

Virginsky did not answer.

“I think that one is at liberty to neglect danger to one’s own life,” said Erkel, suddenly opening his mouth, “but if it may injure the cause, then I consider one ought not to dare to neglect danger to one’s life. . . .”

He broke off in confusion, blushing. Absorbed as they all were in their own ideas, they all looked at him in amazement — it was such a surprise that he too could speak.

“I am for the cause,” Virginsky pronounced suddenly.

Every one got up. It was decided to communicate once more and make final arrangements at midday on the morrow, though without meeting. The place where the printing press was hidden was announced and each was assigned his part and his duty. Liputin and Pyotr Stepanovitch promptly set off together to Kirillov.

II

All our fellows believed that Shatov was going to betray them; but they also believed that Pyotr Stepanovitch was playing with them like pawns. And yet they knew, too, that in any case they would all meet on the spot next day and that Shatov’s fate — was sealed. They suddenly felt like flies caught in a web by a huge spider; they were furious, but they were trembling with terror.

Pyotr Stepanovitch, of course, had treated them badly; it might all have gone off far more harmoniously and *easily* if he had taken the trouble to embellish the facts ever so little. Instead of putting the facts in a decorous light, as an exploit worthy of ancient Rome or something of the sort, he simply appealed to their animal fears and laid stress on the danger to their own skins, which was simply insulting; of course there was a struggle for existence in everything and there was no other principle in nature, they all knew that, but still . . .

But Pyotr Stepanovitch had no time to trot out the Romans; he was completely thrown out of his reckoning. Stavrogin’s flight had astounded and crushed him. It was a lie when he said that Stavrogin had seen the vice-governor; what worried Pyotr Stepanovitch was that Stavrogin had gone off

without seeing anyone, even his mother — and it was certainly strange that he had been allowed to leave without hindrance. (The authorities were called to account for it afterwards.) Pyotr Stepanovitch had been making inquiries all day, but so far had found out nothing, and he had never been so upset. And how could he, how could he give up Stavrogin all at once like this! That was why he could not be very tender with the quintet. Besides, they tied his hands: he had already decided to gallop after Stavrogin at once; and meanwhile he was detained by Shatov; he had to cement the quintet together once for all, in case of emergency. “Pity to waste them, they might be of use.” That, I imagine, was his way of reasoning.

As for Shatov, Pyotr Stepanovitch was firmly convinced that he would betray them. All that he had told the others about it was a lie: he had never seen the document nor heard of it, but he thought it as certain as that twice two makes four. It seemed to him that what had happened — the death of Liza, the death of Marya Timofyevna — would be too much for Shatov, and that he would make up his mind at once. Who knows? perhaps he had grounds for supposing it. It is known, too, that he hated Shatov personally; there had at some time been a quarrel between them, and Pyotr Stepanovitch never forgave an offence. I am convinced, indeed, that this was his leading motive.

We have narrow brick pavements in our town, and in some streets only raised wooden planks instead of a pavement. Pyotr Stepanovitch walked in the middle of the pavement, taking up the whole of it, utterly regardless of Liputin, who had no room to walk beside him and so had to hurry a step behind or run in the muddy road if he wanted to speak to him. Pyotr Stepanovitch suddenly remembered how he had lately splashed through the mud to keep pace with Stavrogin, who had walked, as he was doing now, taking up the whole pavement. He recalled the whole scene, and rage choked him.

But Liputin, too, was choking with resentment. Pyotr Stepanovitch might treat the others as he liked, but him! Why, he *knew* more than all the rest, was in closer touch with the work and taking more intimate part in it than anyone, and hitherto his services had been continual, though indirect. Oh, he knew that even now Pyotr Stepanovitch might ruin him *if it came to the worst.* But he had long hated Pyotr Stepanovitch, and not because he was a danger but because of his overbearing manner. Now, when he had to make up his mind to such a deed, he raged inwardly more than all the rest put

together. Alas! he knew that next day “like a slave” he would be the first on the spot and would bring the others, and if he could somehow have murdered Pyotr Stepanovitch before the morrow, without ruining himself, of course, he would certainly have murdered him.

Absorbed in his sensations, he trudged dejectedly after his tormentor, who seemed to have forgotten his existence, though he gave him a rude and careless shove with his elbow now and then. Suddenly Pyotr Stepanovitch halted in one of the principal thoroughfares and went into a restaurant.

“What are you doing?” cried Liputin, boiling over. “This is a restaurant.”

“I want a beefsteak.”

“Upon my word! It is always full of people.”

“What if it is?”

“But ... we shall be late. It’s ten o’clock already.”

“You can’t be too late to go there.”

“But I shall be late! They are expecting me back.”

“Well, let them; but it would be stupid of you to go to them. With all your bobbery I’ve had no dinner. And the later you go to Kirillov’s the more sure you are to find him.”

Pyotr Stepanovitch went to a room apart. Liputin sat in an easy chair on one side, angry and resentful, and watched him eating. Half an hour and more passed. Pyotr Stepanovitch did not hurry himself; he ate with relish, rang the bell, asked for a different kind of mustard, then for beer, without saying a word to Liputin. He was pondering deeply. He was capable of doing two things at once — eating with relish and pondering deeply. Liputin loathed him so intensely at last that he could not tear himself away. It was like a nervous obsession. He counted every morsel of beefsteak that Pyotr Stepanovitch put into his mouth; he loathed him for the way he opened it, for the way he chewed, for the way he smacked his lips over the fat morsels, he loathed the steak itself. At last things began to swim before his eyes; he began to feel slightly giddy; he felt hot and cold run down his spine by turns.

“You are doing nothing; read that,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch suddenly, throwing him a sheet of paper. Liputin went nearer to the candle. The paper was closely covered with bad handwriting, with corrections in every line. By the time he had mastered it Pyotr Stepanovitch had paid his bill and was ready to go. When they were on the pavement Liputin handed him back the paper.

“Keep it; I’ll tell you afterwards. . . . What do you say to it, though?”

Liputin shuddered all over.

“In my opinion . . . such a manifesto ... is nothing but a ridiculous absurdity.”

His anger broke out; he felt as though he were being caught up and carried along.

“If we decide to distribute such manifestoes,” he said, quivering all over, “we’ll make ourselves, contemptible by our stupidity and incompetence.”

“H’m! I think differently,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, walking on resolutely.

“So do I; surely it isn’t your work?”

“That’s not your business.”

“I think too that doggerel, ‘A Noble Personality,’ is the most utter trash possible, and it couldn’t have been written by Herzen.”

“You are talking nonsense; it’s a good poem.”

“I am surprised, too, for instance,” said Liputin, still dashing along with desperate leaps, “that it is suggested that we should act so as to bring everything to the ground. It’s natural in Europe to wish to destroy everything because there’s a proletariat there, but we are only amateurs here and in my opinion are only showing off.”

“I thought you were a Fourierist.”

“Fourier says something quite different, quite different.”

“I know it’s nonsense.”

“No, Fourier isn’t nonsense. . . . Excuse me, I can’t believe that there will be a rising in May.”

Liputin positively unbuttoned his coat, he was so hot.

“Well, that’s enough; but now, that I mayn’t forget it,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, passing with extraordinary coolness to another subject, “you will have to print this manifesto with your own hands. We’re going to dig up Shatov’s printing press, and you will take it to-morrow. As quickly as possible you must print as many copies as you can, and then distribute them all the winter. The means will be provided. You must do as many copies as possible, for you’ll be asked for them from other places.”

“No, excuse me; I can’t undertake such a ... I decline.”

“You’ll take it all the same. I am acting on the instructions of the central committee, and you are bound to obey.”

“And I consider that our centres abroad have forgotten what Russia is like and have lost all touch, and that’s why they talk such nonsense. ... I even think that instead of many hundreds of quintets in Russia, we are the only one that exists, and there is no network at all,” Liputin gasped finally.

“The more contemptible of you, then, to run after the cause without believing in it ... and you are running after me now like a mean little cur.”

“No, I’m not. We have a full right to break off and found a new society.”

“Fool!” Pyotr Stepanovitch boomed at him threateningly all of a sudden, with flashing eyes.

They stood facing one another for some time. Pyotr Stepanovitch turned and pursued his way confidently.

The idea flashed through Liputin’s mind, “Turn and go back; if I don’t turn now I shall never go back.” He pondered this for ten steps, but at the eleventh a new and desperate idea flashed into his mind: he did not turn and did not go back.

They were approaching Filipov’s house, but before reaching it they turned down a side street, or, to be more accurate, an inconspicuous path under a fence, so that for some time they had to walk along a steep slope above a ditch where they could not keep their footing without holding the fence. At a dark corner in the slanting fence Pyotr Stepanovitch took out a plank, leaving a gap, through which he promptly scrambled. Liputin was surprised, but he crawled through after him; then they replaced the plank after them. This was the secret way by which Fedka used to visit Kirillov.

“Shatov mustn’t know that we are here,” Pyotr Stepanovitch whispered sternly to Liputin.

III

Kirillov was sitting on his leather sofa drinking tea, as he always was at that hour. He did not get up to meet them, but gave a sort of start and looked at the new-comers anxiously.

“You are not mistaken,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, “it’s just that I’ve come about.”

“To-day?”

“No, no, to-morrow ... about this time.” And he hurriedly sat down at the table, watching Kirillov’s agitation with some uneasiness. But the latter had already regained his composure and looked as usual.

“These people still refuse to believe in you. You are not vexed at my bringing Liputin?”

“To-day I am not vexed; to-morrow I want to be alone.”

“But not before I come, and therefore in my presence.” .

“I should prefer not in your presence.”

“You remember you promised to write and to sign all I dictated.”

“I don’t care. And now will you be here long?”

“I have to see one man and to remain half an hour, so whatever you say I shall stay that half-hour.”

Kirillov did not speak. Liputin meanwhile sat down on one side under the portrait of the bishop. That last desperate idea gained more and more possession of him. Kirillov scarcely noticed him. Liputin had heard of Kirillov’s theory before and always laughed at him; but now he was silent and looked gloomily round him.

“I’ve no objection to some tea,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, moving up. “I’ve just had some steak and was reckoning on getting tea with you.”

“Drink it. You can have some if you like.”

“You used to offer it to me,” observed Pyotr Stepanovitch sourly.

“That’s no matter. Let Liputin have some too.”

“No, I ... can’t.”

“Don’t want to or can’t?” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, turning quickly to him.

“I am not going to here,” Liputin said expressively.

Pyotr Stepanovitch frowned.

“There’s a flavour of mysticism about that; goodness knows what to make of you people!”

No one answered; there was a full minute of silence.

“But I know one thing,” he added abruptly, “that no superstition will prevent any one of us from doing his duty.”

“Has Stavrogin gone?” asked Kirillov.

“Yes.”

“He’s done well.”

Pyotr Stepanovitch’s eyes gleamed, but he restrained himself.

“I don’t care what you think as long as every one keeps his word.”

“I’ll keep my word.”

“I always knew that you would do your duty like an independent and progressive man.”

“You are an absurd fellow.”

“That may be; I am very glad to amuse you. I am always glad if I can give people pleasure.”

“You are very anxious I should shoot myself and are afraid I might suddenly not?”

“Well, you see, it was your own doing — connecting your plan with our work. Reckoning on your plan we have already done something, so that you couldn’t refuse now because you’ve let us in for it.”

“You’ve no claim at all.”

“I understand, I understand; you are perfectly free, and we don’t come in so long as your free intention is carried out.”

“And am I to take on myself all the nasty things you’ve done?”

“Listen, Kirillov, are you afraid? If you want to cry off, say so at once.”

“I am not afraid.”

“I ask because you are making so many inquiries.”

“Are you going soon?”

“Asking questions again?” Kirillov scanned him contemptuously.

“You see,” Pyotr Stepanovitch went on, getting angrier and angrier, and unable to take the right tone, “you want me to go away, to be alone, to concentrate yourself, but all that’s a bad sign for you — for you above all. You want to think a great deal. To my mind you’d better not think. And really you make me uneasy.”

“There’s only one thing I hate, that at such a moment I should have a reptile like you beside me.”

“Oh, that doesn’t matter. I’ll go away at the time and stand on the steps if you like. If you are so concerned about trifles when it comes to dying, then . . . it’s all a very bad sign. I’ll go out on to the steps and you can imagine I know nothing about it, and that I am a man infinitely below you.”

“No, not infinitely; you’ve got abilities, but there’s a lot you don’t understand because you are a low man.”

“Delighted, delighted. I told you already I am delighted to provide entertainment ... at such a moment.”

“You don’t understand anything.”

“That is, I ... well, I listen with respect, anyway.”

“You can do nothing; even now you can’t hide your petty spite, though it’s not to your interest to show it. You’ll make me cross, and then I may want another six months.” Pyotr Stepanovitch looked at his watch. “I never

understood your theory, but I know you didn’t invent it for our sakes, so I suppose you would carry it out apart from us. And I know too that you haven’t mastered the idea but the idea has mastered you, so you won’t put it off.”

“What? The idea has mastered me?”

“Yes.”

“And not I mastered the idea? That’s good. You have a little sense. Only you tease me and I am proud.”

“That’s a good thing, that’s a good thing. Just what you need, to be proud.”

“Enough. You’ve drunk your tea; go away.”

“Damn it all, I suppose I must” — Pyotr Stepanovitch got up—” though it’s early. Listen, Kirillov. Shall I find that man — you know whom I mean — at Myasnitchiha’s? Or has she too been lying?”

“You won’t find him, because he is here and not there.”

“Here! Damn it all, where?”

“Sitting in the kitchen, eating and drinking.”

“How dared he?” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, flushing angrily. “It was his duty to wait . . . what nonsense! He has no passport, no money!”

“I don’t know. He came to say good-bye; he is dressed and ready. He is going away and won’t come back. He says you are a scoundrel and he doesn’t want to wait for your money.”

“Ha ha! He is afraid that I’ll . . . But even now I can . . . if ... Where is he, in the kitchen?”

Kirillov opened a side door into a tiny dark room; from this room three steps led straight to the part of the kitchen where the cook’s bed was usually put, behind the partition. Here, in the corner under the ikons, Fedka was sitting now, at a bare deal table. Before him stood a pint bottle, a plate of bread, and some cold beef and potatoes on an earthenware dish. He was eating in a leisurely way and was already half drunk, but he was wearing his sheep-skin coat and was evidently ready for a journey. A samovar was boiling the other side of the screen, but it was not for Fedka, who had every night for a week or more zealously blown it up and got it ready for “Alexey Nilitch, for he’s such a habit of drinking tea at nights.” I am strongly disposed to believe that, as Kirillov had not a cook, he had cooked the beef and potatoes that morning with his own hands for Fedka.

“What notion is this?” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, whisking into the room. “Why didn’t you wait where you were ordered?”

And swinging his fist, he brought it down heavily on the table.

Fedka assumed an air of dignity.

“You wait a bit, Pyotr Stepanovitch, you wait a bit,” he began, with a swaggering emphasis on each word, “it’s your first duty to understand here that you are on a polite visit to Mr. Kirillov, Alexey Nilitch, whose boots you might clean any day, because beside you he is a man of culture and you are only — foo!”

And he made a jaunty show of spitting to one side. Haughtiness and determination were evident in his manner, and a certain very threatening assumption of argumentative calm that suggested an outburst to follow. But Pyotr Stepanovitch had no time to realise the danger, and it did not fit in with his preconceived ideas. The incidents and disasters of the day had quite turned his head. Liputin, at the top of the three steps, stared inquisitively down from the little dark room.

“Do you or don’t you want a trustworthy passport and good money to go where you’ve been told? Yes or no?”

“D’you see, Pyotr Stepanovitch, you’ve been deceiving me from the first, and so you’ve been a regular scoundrel to me. For all the world like a filthy human louse — that’s how I look on you. You’ve promised me a lot of money for shedding innocent blood and swore it was for Mr. Stavrogin, though it turns out to be nothing but your want of breeding. I didn’t get a farthing out of it, let alone fifteen hundred, and Mr. Stavrogin hit you in the face, which has come to our ears. Now you axe threatening me again and promising me money — what for, you don’t say. And I shouldn’t wonder if you are sending me to Petersburg to plot some revenge in your spite against Mr. Stavrogin, Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch, reckoning on my simplicity. And that proves you are the chief murderer. And do you know what you deserve for the very fact that in the depravity of your heart you’ve given up believing in God Himself, the true Creator? You are no better than an idolater and are on a level with the Tatar and the Mordva. Alexey Nilitch, who is a philosopher, has expounded the true God, the Creator, many a time to you, as well as the creation of the world and the fate that’s to come and the transformation of every sort of creature and every sort of beast out of the Apocalypse, but you’ve persisted like a senseless idol in your deafness

and your dumbness and have brought Ensign Erkel to the same, like the veriest evil seducer and so-called atheist. ...”

“Ah, you drunken dog! He strips the ikons of their setting and then preaches about God!”

“D’you see, Pyotr Stepanovitch, I tell you truly that I have stripped the ikons, but I only took out the pearls; and how do you know? Perhaps my own tear was transformed into a pearl in the furnace of the Most High to make up for my sufferings, seeing I am just that very orphan, having no daily refuge. Do you know from the books that once, in ancient times, a merchant with just such tearful sighs and prayers stole a pearl from the halo of the Mother of God, and afterwards, in the face of all the people, laid the whole price of it at her feet, and the Holy Mother sheltered him with her mantle before all the people, so that it was a miracle, and the command was given through the authorities to write it all down word for word in the Imperial books. And you let a mouse in, so you insulted the very throne of God. And if you were not my natural master, whom I dandled in my arms when I was a stripling, I would have done for you now, without budging from this place!”

Pyotr Stepanovitch flew into a violent rage.

“Tell me, have you seen Stavrogin to-day?”

“Don’t you dare to question me. Mr. Stavrogin is fairly amazed at you, and he had no share in it even in wish, let alone instructions or giving money. You’ve presumed with me.”

“You’ll get the money and you’ll get another two thousand in Petersburg, when you get there, in a lump sum, and you’ll get more.”

“You are lying, my fine gentleman, and it makes me laugh to see how easily you are taken in. Mr. Stavrogin stands at the top of the ladder above you, and you yelp at him from below like a silly puppy dog, while he thinks it would be doing you an honour to spit at you.”

“But do you know,” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch in a rage, “that I won’t let you stir a step from here, you scoundrel, and I’ll hand you straight over to the police.”

Fedka leapt on to his feet and his eyes gleamed with fury. Pyotr Stepanovitch pulled out his revolver. Then followed a rapid and revolting scene: before Pyotr Stepanovitch could take aim, Fedka swung round and in a flash struck him on the cheek with all his might. Then there was the thud of a second blow, a third, then a fourth, all on the cheek. Pyotr Stepanovitch

was dazed; with his eyes starting out of his head, he muttered something, and suddenly crashed full length to the ground.

“There you are; take him,” shouted Fedka with a triumphant swagger; he instantly took up his cap, his bag from under the bench, and was gone. Pyotr Stepanovitch lay gasping and . unconscious. Liputin even imagined that he had been murdered. Kirillov ran headlong into the kitchen.

“Water!” he cried, and ladling some water in an iron dipper from a bucket, he poured it over the injured man’s head. Pyotr Stepanovitch stirred, raised his head, sat up, and looked blankly about him.

“Well, how are you?” asked Kirillov. Pyotr Stepanovitch looked at him intently, still not recognising him; but seeing Liputin peeping in from the kitchen, he smiled his hateful smile and suddenly got up, picking up his revolver from the floor.

“If you take it into your head to run away to-morrow like that scoundrel Stavrogin,” he cried, pouncing furiously on Kirillov, pale, stammering, and hardly able to articulate his words, “I’ll hang you . . . like a fly ... or crush you . . . if it’s at the other end of the world ... do you understand!”

And he held the revolver straight at Kirillov’s head; but almost at the same minute, coming completely to himself, he drew back his hand, thrust the revolver into his pocket, and without saying another word ran out of the house. Liputin followed him. They clambered through the same gap and again walked along the slope holding to the fence. Pyotr Stepanovitch strode rapidly down the street so that Liputin could scarcely keep up with him. At the first crossing he suddenly stopped.

“Well?” He turned to Liputin with a challenge.

Liputin remembered the revolver and was still trembling all over after the scene he had witnessed; but the answer seemed to come of itself irresistibly from his tongue:

“I think ... I think that . . .”

“Did you see what Fedka was drinking in the kitchen?”

“What he was drinking? He was drinking vodka.”

“Well then, let me tell you it’s the last time in his life he will drink vodka. I recommend you to remember that and reflect on it. And now go to hell; you are not wanted till to-morrow. But mind now, don’t be a fool!”

Liputin rushed home full speed.

IV

He had long had a passport in readiness made out in a false name. It seems a wild idea that this prudent little man, the petty despot of his family, who was, above all things, a sharp man of business and a capitalist, and who was an official too (though he was a Fourierist), should long before have conceived the fantastic project of procuring this passport in case of emergency, that he might escape abroad by means of it *if* . . . he did admit the possibility of this *if*, though no doubt he was never able himself to formulate what this *if* might mean.

But now it suddenly formulated itself, and in a most unexpected way. That desperate idea with which he had gone to Kirillov's after that "fool" he had heard from Pyotr Stepanovitch on the pavement, had been to abandon everything at dawn next day and to emigrate abroad. If anyone doubts that such fantastic incidents occur in everyday Russian life, even now, let him look into the biographies of all the Russian exiles abroad. Not one of them escaped with more wisdom or real justification. It has always been the unrestrained domination of phantoms and nothing more.

Running home, he began by locking himself in, getting out his travelling bag, and feverishly beginning to pack. His chief anxiety was the question of money, and how much he could rescue from the impending ruin — and by what means. He thought of it as "rescuing," for it seemed to him that he could not linger an hour, and that by daylight he must be on the high road. He did not know where to take the train either; he vaguely determined to take it at the second or third big station from the town, and to make his way there on foot, if necessary. In that way, instinctively and mechanically he busied himself in his packing with a perfect whirl of ideas in his head — and suddenly stopped short, gave it all up, and with a deep groan stretched himself on the sofa.

He felt clearly, and suddenly realised that he might escape, but that he was by now utterly incapable of deciding whether he ought to make off *before* or *after* Shatov's death; that he was simply a lifeless body, a crude inert mass; that he was being moved by an awful outside power; and that, though he had a passport to go abroad, that though he could run away from Shatov (otherwise what need was there of such haste?), yet he would run away, not from Shatov, not before his murder, but *after* it, and that that was determined, signed, and sealed.

In insufferable distress, trembling every instant and wondering at himself, alternately groaning aloud and numb with terror, he managed to

exist till eleven o’clock next morning locked in and lying on the sofa; then came the shock he was awaiting, and it at once determined him. When he unlocked his door and went out to his household at eleven o’clock they told him that the runaway convict and brigand, Fedka, who was a terror to every one, who had pillaged churches and only lately been guilty of murder and arson, who was being pursued and could not be captured by our police, had been found at daybreak murdered, five miles from the town, at a turning off the high road, and that the whole town was talking of it already. He rushed headlong out of the house at once to find out further details, and learned, to begin with, that Fedka, who had been found with his skull broken, had apparently been robbed and, secondly, that the police already had strong suspicion and even good grounds for believing that the murderer was one of the Shpigulin men called Tomka, the very one who had been his accomplice in murdering the Lebyadkins and setting fire to their house, and that there had been a quarrel between them on the road about a large sum of money stolen from Lebyadkin, which Fedka was supposed to have hidden. Liputin ran to Pyotr Stepanovitch’s lodgings and succeeded in learning at the back door, on the sly, that though Pyotr Stepanovitch had not returned home till about one o’clock at night, he had slept there quietly all night till eight o’clock next morning. Of course, there could be no doubt that there was nothing extraordinary about Fedka’s death, and that such careers usually have such an ending; but the coincidence of the fatal words that “it was the last time Fedka would drink vodka,” with the prompt fulfilment of the prediction, was so remarkable that Liputin no longer hesitated. The shock had been given; it was as though a stone had fallen upon him and crushed him for ever. Returning home, he thrust his travelling-bag under the bed without a word, and in the evening at the hour fixed he was the first to appear at the appointed spot to meet Shatov, though it’s true he still had his passport in his pocket.

CHAPTER V.

A WANDERER

THE CATASTROPHE WITH Liza and the death of Marya Timofyevna made an overwhelming impression on Shatov. I have already mentioned that that morning I met him in passing; he seemed to me not himself. He told me among other things that on the evening before at nine o'clock (that is, three hours before the fire had broken out) he had been at Marya Timofyevna's. He went in the morning to look at the corpses, but as far as I know gave no evidence of any sort that morning. Meanwhile, towards the end of the day there was a perfect tempest in his soul, and . . . I think I can say with certainty that there was a moment at dusk when he wanted to get up, go out and tell everything. What that *everything* was, no one but he could say. Of course he would have achieved nothing, and would have simply betrayed himself. He had no proofs whatever with which to convict the perpetrators of the crime, and, indeed, he had nothing but vague conjectures to go upon, though to him they amounted to complete certainty. But he was ready to ruin himself if he could only "crush the scoundrels" — his own words. Pyotr Stepanovitch had guessed fairly correctly at this impulse in him, and he knew himself that he was risking a great deal in putting off the execution of his new awful project till next day. On his side there was, as usual, great self-confidence and contempt for all these "wretched creatures" and for Shatov in particular. He had for years despised Shatov for his "whining idiocy," as he had expressed it in former days abroad, and he was absolutely confident that he could deal with such a guileless creature, that is, keep an eye on him all that day, and put a check on him at the first sign of danger. Yet what saved "the scoundrels" for a short time was something quite unexpected which they had not foreseen. . . .

Towards eight o'clock in the evening (at the very time when the quintet was meeting at Erkel's, and waiting in indignation and excitement for Pyotr Stepanovitch) Shatov was lying in the dark on his bed with a headache and a slight chill; he was tortured by uncertainty, he was angry, he kept making up his mind, and could not make it up finally, and felt, with a curse, that it would all lead to nothing. Gradually he sank into a brief doze and had

something like a nightmare. He dreamt that he was lying on his bed, tied up with cords and unable to stir, and meantime he heard a terrible banging that echoed all over the house, a banging on the fence, at the gate, at his door, in Kirillov's lodge, so that the whole house was shaking, and a far-away familiar voice that wrung his heart was calling to him piteously. He suddenly woke and sat up in bed. To his surprise the banging at the gate went on, though not nearly so violent as it had seemed in his dream. The knocks were repeated and persistent, and the strange voice "that wrung his heart" could still be heard below at the gate, though not piteously but angrily and impatiently, alternating with another voice, more restrained and ordinary. He jumped up, opened the casement pane and put his head out.

"Who's there?" he called, literally numb with terror.

"If you are Shatov," the answer came harshly and resolutely from below, "be so good as to tell me straight out and honestly whether you agree to let me in or not?"

It was true: he recognised the voice!

"Marie! . . . Is it you?"

"Yes, yes, Marya Shatov, and I assure you I can't keep the driver a minute longer."

"This minute . . . I'll get a candle," Shatov cried faintly. Then he rushed to look for the matches. The matches, as always happens at such moments, could not be found. He dropped the candlestick and the candle on the floor and as soon as he heard the impatient voice from below again, he abandoned the search and dashed down the steep stairs to open the gate.

"Be so good as to hold the bag while I settle with this blockhead," was how Madame Marya Shatov greeted him below, and she thrust into his hands a rather light cheap canvas handbag studded with brass nails, of Dresden manufacture. She attacked the driver with exasperation.

"Allow me to tell you, you are asking too much. If you've been driving me for an extra hour through these filthy streets, that's your fault, because it seems you didn't know where to find this stupid street and imbecile house. Take your thirty kopecks and make up your mind that you'll get nothing more."

"Ech, lady, you told me yourself Voznesensky Street and this is Bogoyavlensky; Voznesensky is ever so far away. You've simply put the horse into a steam."

“Voznesensky, Bogoyavlensky — you ought to know all those stupid names better than I do, as you are an inhabitant; besides, you are unfair, I told you first of all Filipov’s house and you declared you knew it. In any case you can have me up to-morrow in the local court, but now I beg you to let me alone.”

“Here, here’s another five kopecks.” With eager haste Shatov pulled a five-kopeck piece out of his pocket and gave it to the driver.

“Do me a favour, I beg you, don’t dare to do that!” Madame Shatov flared up, but the driver drove off and Shatov, taking her hand, drew her through the gate.

“Make haste, Marie, make haste . . . that’s no matter, and . . . you are wet through. Take care, we go up here — how sorry I am there’s no light — the stairs are steep, hold tight, hold tight! Well, this is my room. Excuse my having no light.

. . One minute!”

He picked up the candlestick but it was a long time before the matches were found. Madame Shatov stood waiting in the middle of the room, silent and motionless.

“Thank God, here they are at last!” he cried joyfully, lighting up the room. Marya Shatov took a cursory survey of his abode.

“They told me you lived in a poor way, but I didn’t expect it to be as bad as this,” she pronounced with an air of disgust, and she moved towards the bed.

“Oh, I am tired!” she sat down on the hard bed, with an exhausted air. “Please put down the bag and sit down on the chair yourself. Just as you like though; you are in the way standing there. I have come to you for a time, till I can get work, because I know nothing of this place and I have no money. But if I shall be in your way I beg you again, be so good as to tell me so at once, as you are bound to do if you are an honest man. I could sell something to-morrow and pay for a room at an hotel, but you must take me to the hotel yourself. . . . Oh, but I am tired!”

Shatov was all of a tremor.

“You mustn’t, Marie, you mustn’t go to an hotel? An hotel! What for? What for?”

He clasped his hands imploringly.. . .

“Well, if I can get on without the hotel ... I must, any way, explain the position. Remember, Shatov, that we lived in Geneva as man and wife for a

fortnight and a few days; it's three years since we parted, without any particular quarrel though. But don't imagine that I've come back to renew any of the foolishness of the past. I've come back to look for work, and that I've come straight to this town is just because it's all the same to me. I've not come to say I am sorry for anything; please don't imagine anything so stupid as that."

"Oh, Marie! This is unnecessary, quite unnecessary," Shatov muttered vaguely.

"If so, if you are so far developed as to be able to understand that, I may allow myself to add, that if I've come straight to you now and am in your lodging, it's partly because I always thought you were far from being a scoundrel and were perhaps much better than other . . . blackguards!"

Her eyes flashed. She must have had to bear a great deal at the hands of some "blackguards."

"And please believe me, I wasn't laughing at you just now when I told you you were good. I spoke plainly, without fine phrases and I can't endure them. But that's all nonsense. I always hoped you would have sense enough not to pester me. . . . Enough, I am tired."

And she bent on him a long, harassed and weary gaze. Shatov stood facing her at the other end of the room, which was five paces away, and listened to her timidly with a look of new life and unwonted radiance on his face. This strong, rugged man, all bristles on the surface, was suddenly all softness and shining gladness. There was a thrill of extraordinary and unexpected feeling in his soul. Three years of separation, three years of the broken marriage had effaced nothing from his heart. And perhaps every day during those three years he had dreamed of her, of that beloved being who had once said to him, "I love you." Knowing Shatov I can say with certainty that he could never have allowed himself even to dream that a woman might say to him, "I love you." He was savagely modest and chaste, he looked on himself as a perfect monster, detested his own face as well as his character, compared himself to some freak only fit to be exhibited at fairs. Consequently he valued honesty above everything and was fanatically devoted to his convictions; he was gloomy, proud, easily moved to wrath, and sparing of words. But here was the one being who had loved him for a fortnight (that he had never doubted, never!), a being he had always considered immeasurably above him in spite of his perfectly sober understanding of her errors;,a being to whom he could forgive everything,

everything (of that there could be no question; indeed it was quite the other way, his idea was that he was entirely to blame); this woman, this Marya Shatov, was in his house, in his presence again ... it was almost inconceivable! He was so overcome, there was so much that was terrible and at the same time so much happiness in this event that he could not, perhaps would not — perhaps was afraid to — realise the position. It was a dream. But when she looked at him with that harassed gaze he suddenly understood that this woman he loved so dearly was suffering, perhaps had been wronged. His heart went cold. He looked at her features with anguish: the first bloom of youth had long faded from this exhausted face. It's true that she was still good-looking — in his eyes a beauty, as she had always been. In reality she was a woman of twenty-five, rather strongly built, above the medium height (taller than Shatov), with abundant dark brown hair, a pale oval face, and large dark eyes now glittering with feverish brilliance. But the light-hearted, naive and good-natured energy he had known so well in the past was replaced now by a sullen irritability and disillusionment, a sort of cynicism which was not yet habitual to her herself, and which weighed upon her. But the chief thing was that she was ill, that he could see clearly. In spite of the awe in which he stood of her he suddenly went up to her and took her by both hands.

"Marie . . . you know . . . you are very tired, perhaps, for God's sake, don't be angry. ... If you'd consent to have some tea, for instance, eh? Tea picks one up so, doesn't it? If you'd consent!"

"Why talk about consenting! Of course I consent, what a baby you are still. Get me some if you can. How cramped you are here. How cold it is!"

"Oh, I'll get some logs for the fire directly, some logs . . . I've got logs." Shatov was all astir. "Logs . . . that is . . . but I'll get tea directly," he waved his hand as though with desperate determination and snatched up his cap.

"Where are you going? So you've no tea in the house?"

"There shall be, there shall be, there shall be, there shall be everything directly. ... I ..," he took his revolver from the shelf, "I'll sell this revolver directly . . . or pawn it. . . ."

"What foolishness and what a time that will take! Take my money if you've nothing, there's eighty kopecks here, I think; that's all I have. This is like a madhouse."

"I don't want your money, I don't want it I'll be here directly, in one instant. I can manage without the revolver. . . ."

And he rushed straight to Kirillov’s. This was probably two hours before the visit of Pyotr Stepanovitch and Liputin to Kirillov. Though Shatov and Kirillov lived in the same yard they hardly ever saw each other, and when they met they did not nod or speak: they had been too long “lying side by side” in America....

“Kirillov, you always have tea; have you got tea and a

samovar?”

Kirillov, who was walking up and down the room, as he was in the habit of doing all night, stopped and looked intently at his hurried visitor, though without much surprise.

“I’ve got tea and sugar and a samovar. But there’s no need of the samovar, the tea is hot. Sit down and simply drink it.”

“Kirillov, we lay side by side in America. . . . My wife has come to me ... I ... give me the tea. ... I shall want the samovar.”

“If your wife is here you want the samovar. But take it later. I’ve two. And now take the teapot from the table. It’s hot, boiling hot. Take everything, take the sugar, all of it. Bread . . . there’s plenty of bread; all of it. There’s some veal. I’ve a rouble.”

“Give it me, friend, I’ll pay it back to-morrow! Ach, Kirillov!”

“Is it the same wife who was in Switzerland? That’s a good thing. And your running in like this, that’s a good thing too.”

“Kirillov!” cried Shatov, taking the teapot under his arm and carrying the bread and sugar in both hands. “Kirillov, if ... if you could get rid of your dreadful fancies and give up your atheistic ravings ... oh, what a man you’d be, Kirillov!”

“One can see you love your wife after Switzerland. It’s a good thing you do — after Switzerland. When you want tea, come again. You can come all night, I don’t sleep at all. There’ll be a samovar. Take the rouble, here it is. Go to your wife, I’ll stay here and think about you and your wife.”

Marya Shatov was unmistakably pleased at her husband’s haste and fell upon the tea almost greedily, but there was no need to run for the samovar; she drank only half a cup and swallowed a tiny piece of bread. The veal she refused with disgust and irritation.

“You are ill, Marie, all this is a sign of illness,” Shatov remarked timidly as he waited upon her.

“Of course I’m ill, please sit down. Where did you get the tea if you haven’t any?”

Shatov told her about Kirillov briefly. She had heard something of him.

“I know he is mad; say no more, please; ‘there are plenty of fools. So you’ve been in America? I heard, you wrote.”

“Yes, I ... I wrote to you in Paris.”

“Enough, please talk of something else. Are you a Slavophil in your convictions?”

“I . . .1 am not exactly. . . . Since I cannot be a Russian, I became a Slavophil.” He smiled a wry smile with the effort of one who feels he has made a strained and inappropriate jest.

“Why, aren’t you a Russian?”

“No, I’m not.”

“Well, that’s all foolishness. Do sit down, I entreat you. Why are you all over the place? Do you think I am lightheaded? Perhaps I shall be. You say there are only you two in the house.”

“Yes. . . . Downstairs . . .”

“And both such clever people. What is there downstairs? You said downstairs?”

“No, nothing.”

“Why nothing? I want to know.”

“I only meant to say that now we are only two in the yard, but that the Lebyadkins used to live downstairs. ...”

“That woman who was murdered last night?” she started suddenly. “I heard of it. I heard of it as soon as I arrived. There was a fire here, wasn’t there?”

“Yes, Marie, yes, and perhaps I am doing a scoundrelly thing this moment in forgiving the scoundrels. ...” He stood up suddenly and paced about the room, raising his arms as though in a frenzy.

But Marie had not quite understood him. She heard his answers inattentively; she asked questions but did not listen.

“Fine things are being done among you! Oh, how contemptible it all is! What scoundrels men all are! But do sit down, I beg you, oh, how you exasperate me!” and she let her head sink on the pillow, exhausted.

“Marie, I won’t. . . . Perhaps you’ll lie down, Marie?” She made no answer and closed her eyes helplessly. Her pale face looked death-like. She fell asleep almost instantly. Shatov looked round, snuffed the candle, looked uneasily at her face once, more, pressed his hands tight in front of him and walked on tiptoe out of the room into the passage. At the top of the stairs he

stood in the corner with his face to the wall and remained so for ten minutes without sound or movement. He would have stood there longer, but he suddenly caught the sound of soft cautious steps below. Some one was coming up the stairs. Shatov remembered he had forgotten to fasten the gate.

“Who’s there?” he asked in a whisper. The unknown visitor went on slowly mounting the stairs without answering. When he reached the top he stood still; it was impossible to see his face in the dark; suddenly Shatov heard the cautious question:

“Ivan Shatov?”

Shatov said who he was, but at once held out his hand to check his advance. The latter took his hand, and Shatov shuddered as though he had touched some terrible reptile.

“Stand here,” he whispered quickly. “Don’t go in, I can’t receive you just now. My wife has come back. I’ll fetch the candle.”

When he returned with the candle he found a young officer standing there; he did not know his name but he had seen him before.

“Erkel,” said the lad, introducing himself. “You’ve seen me at Virginsky’s.”

“I remember; you sat writing. Listen,” said Shatov in sudden excitement, going up to him frantically, but still talking in a whisper. “You gave me a sign just now when you took my hand. But you know I can treat all these signals with contempt! I don’t acknowledge them. . . . I don’t want them. .. . I can throw you downstairs this minute, do you know that?”

“No, I know nothing about that and I don’t know what you are in such a rage about,” the visitor answered without malice and almost ingenuously. “I have only to give you a message, and that’s what I’ve come for, being particularly anxious not to lose time. You have a printing press which does not belong to you, and of which you are bound to give an account, as you know yourself. I have received instructions to request you to give it up to-morrow at seven o’clock in the evening to Liputin. I have been instructed to tell you also that nothing more will be asked of you.”

“Nothing?”

“Absolutely nothing. Your request is granted, and you are struck off our list. I was instructed to tell you that positively.”

“Who instructed you to tell me?”

“Those who told me the sign.”

“Have you come from abroad?”

“I ... I think that’s no matter to you.”

“Oh, hang it! Why didn’t you come before if you were told to?”

“I followed certain instructions and was not alone.”

“I understand, I understand that you were not alone. Eh . . . hang it! But why didn’t Liputin come himself?”

“So I shall come for you to-morrow at exactly six o’clock in the evening, and we’ll go there on foot. There will be no one there but us three.”

“Will Verhovensky be there?”

“No, he won’t. Verhovensky is leaving the town at eleven o’clock to-morrow morning.”

“Just what I thought!” Shatov whispered furiously, and he struck his fist on his hip. “He’s run off, the sneak!”

He sank into agitated reflection. Erkel looked intently at him and waited in silence.

“But how will you take it? You can’t simply pick it up in your hands and carry it.”

“There will be no need to. You’ll simply point out the place and we’ll just make sure that it really is buried there. We only know whereabouts the place is, we don’t know the place itself. And have you pointed the place out to anyone else yet?” Shatov looked at him.

“You, you, a chit of a boy like you, a silly boy like you, you too have got caught in that net like a sheep? Yes, that’s just the young blood they want! Well, go along. E-ech! that scoundrel’s taken you all in and run away.”

Erkel looked at him serenely and calmly but did not seem to understand.

“Verhovensky, Verhovensky has run away!” Shatov growled fiercely.

“But he is still here, he is not gone away. He is not going till to-morrow,” Erkel observed softly and persuasively. “I particularly begged him to be present as a witness; my instructions all referred to him (he explained frankly like a young and inexperienced boy). But I regret to say he did not agree on the ground of his departure, and he really is in a hurry.”

Shatov glanced compassionately at the simple youth again, but suddenly gave a gesture of despair as though he thought “they are not worth pitying.”

“All right, I’ll come,” he cut him short. “And now get away, be off.”

“So I’ll come for you at six o’clock punctually.” Erkel made a courteous bow and walked deliberately downstairs.

“Little fool!” Shatov could not help shouting after him from the top.

“What is it?” responded the lad from the bottom.
“Nothing, you can go.”
“I thought you said something.”

II

Erkel was a “little fool” who was only lacking in the higher form of reason, the ruling power of the intellect; but of the lesser, the subordinate reasoning faculties, he had plenty — even to the point of cunning. Fanatically, childishly devoted to “the cause” or rather in reality to Pyotr Verhovensky, he acted on the instructions given to him when at the meeting of the quintet they had agreed and had distributed the various duties for the next day. When Pyotr Stepanovitch gave him the job of messenger, he succeeded in talking to him aside for ten minutes.

A craving for active service was characteristic of this shallow, unreflecting nature, which was for ever yearning to follow the lead of another man’s will, of course for the good of “the common” or “the great” cause. Not that that made any difference, for little fanatics like Erkel can never imagine serving a cause except by identifying it with the person who, to their minds, is the expression of it. The sensitive, affectionate and kind-hearted Erkel was perhaps the most callous of Shatov’s would-be murderers, and, though he had no personal spite against him, he would have been present at his murder without-the quiver of an eyelid. He had been instructed; for instance, to have a good look at Shatov’s surroundings while carrying out his commission, and when Shatov, receiving him at the top of the stairs, blurted out to him, probably unaware in the heat of the moment, that his wife had come back to him — Erkel had the instinctive cunning to avoid displaying the slightest curiosity, though the idea flashed through his mind that the fact of his wife’s return was of great importance for the success of their undertaking.

And so it was in reality; it was only that fact that saved the “scoundrels” from Shatov’s carrying out his intention, and at the same time helped them “to get rid of him.” To begin with, it agitated Shatov, threw him out of his regular routine, and deprived him of his usual clear-sightedness and caution. Any idea of his own danger would be the last thing to enter his head at this moment when he was absorbed with such different considerations. On the contrary, he eagerly believed that Pyotr Verhovensky was running away the

next day: it fell in exactly with his suspicions! Returning to the room he sat down again in a corner, leaned his elbows on his knees and hid his face in his hands. Bitter thoughts tormented him. . . .

Then he would raise his head again and go on tiptoe to look at her. “Good God! she will be in a fever by to-morrow morning; perhaps it’s begun already! She must have caught cold. She is not accustomed to this awful climate, and then a third-class carriage, the storm, the rain, and she has such a thin little pelisse, no wrap at all. . . . And to leave her like this, to abandon her in her helplessness! Her bag, too, her bag — what a tiny, light thing, all crumpled up, scarcely weighs ten pounds! Poor thing, how worn out she is, how much she’s been through! She is proud, that’s why she won’t complain. But she is irritable, very irritable. It’s illness; an angel will grow irritable in illness. What a dry forehead, it must be hot — how dark she is under the eyes, and . . . and yet how beautiful the oval of her face is and her rich hair, how ...”

And he made haste to turn away his eyes, to walk away as though he were frightened at the very idea of seeing in her anything but an unhappy, exhausted fellow-creature who needed *help*—” how could he think of *hopes*, oh, how mean, how base is man!” And he would go back to his corner, sit down, hide his face in his hands and again sink into dreams and reminiscences . . . and again he was haunted by hopes.

“Oh, I am tired, I am tired,” he remembered her exclamations, her weak broken voice. “Good God! Abandon her now, and she has only eighty kopecks; she held out her purse, a tiny old thing! She’s come to look for a job. What does she know about jobs? What do they know about Russia? Why, they are like naughty children, they’ve nothing but their own fancies made up by themselves, and she is angry, poor thing, that Russia is not like their foreign dreams! The luckless, innocent creatures! . . . It’s really cold here, though.”

He remembered that she had complained, that he had promised to heat the stove. “There are logs here, I can fetch them if only I don’t wake her. But I can do it without waking her. But what shall I do about the veal? When she gets up perhaps she will be hungry. . . . Well, that will do later: Kirillov doesn’t go to bed all night. What could I cover her with, she is sleeping so soundly, but she must be cold, ah, she must be cold!” And once more he went to look at her; her dress had worked up a little and her right leg was half uncovered to the knee. He suddenly turned away almost in

dismay, took off his warm overcoat, and, remaining in his wretched old jacket, covered it up, trying not to look at it.

A great deal of time was spent in righting the fire, stepping about on tiptoe, looking at the sleeping woman, dreaming in the corner, then looking at her again. Two or three hours had passed. During that time Verhovensky and Liputin had been at Kirillov's. At last he, too, began to doze in the corner. He heard her groan; she waked up and called him; he jumped up like a criminal.

"Marie, I was dropping asleep.' . . . Ah, what a wretch I am, Marie!"

She sat up, looking about her with wonder, seeming not to recognise where she was, and suddenly leapt up in indignation and anger.

"I've taken your bed, I fell asleep so tired I didn't know what I was doing; how dared you not wake me? How could you dare imagine I meant to be a burden to you?"

"How could I wake you, Marie?"

"You could, you ought to have! You've no other bed here, and I've taken yours. You had no business to put me into a false position. Or do you suppose that I've come to take advantage of your charity? Kindly get into your bed at once and I'll lie down in the corner on some chairs."

"Marie, there aren't chairs enough, and there's nothing to put on them."

"Then simply oil the floor. Or you'll have to lie on the floor yourself. I want to lie on the floor at once, at once!"

She stood up, tried to take a step, but suddenly a violent spasm of pain deprived her of all power and all determination, and with a loud groan she fell back on the bed. Shatov ran up, but Marie, hiding her face in the pillow, seized his hand and gripped and squeezed it with all her might. This lasted a minute.

"Marie darling, there's a doctor Frenzel living here, a friend of mine. ... I could run for him."

"Nonsense!"

"What do you mean by nonsense? Tell me, Marie, what is it hurting you? For we might try fomentations ... on the stomach for instance. ... I can do that without a doctor. . . . Or else mustard poultices."

"What's this," she asked strangely, raising her head and looking at him in dismay.

"What's what, Marie?" said Shatov, not understanding. "What are you asking about? Good heavens! I am quite bewildered, excuse my not

understanding.”

“Ach, let me alone; it’s not your business to understand. And it would be too absurd . . ,” she said with a bitter smile. “Talk to me about something. Walk about the room and talk. Don’t stand over me and don’t look at me, I particularly ask you that for the five-hundredth time!”

Shatov began walking up and down the room, looking at the floor, and doing his utmost not to glance at her.

“There’s — don’t be angry, Marie, I entreat you — there’s some veal here, and there’s tea not far off. . . . You had so little before.”

She made an angry gesture of disgust. Shatov bit his tongue in despair.

“Listen, I intend to open a bookbinding business here, on rational co-operative principles. Since you live here what do you think of it, would it be successful?”

“Ech, Marie, people don’t read books here, and there are none here at all. And are they likely to begin binding them!”

“Who are they?”

“The local readers and inhabitants generally, Marie.”

“Well, then, speak more clearly. *They* indeed, and one doesn’t know who they are. You don’t know grammar!”

“It’s in the spirit of the language,” Shatov muttered.

“Oh, get along with your spirit, you bore me. Why shouldn’t the local inhabitant or reader have his books bound?”

“Because reading books and having them bound are two different stages of development, and there’s a vast gulf between them. To begin with, a man gradually gets used to reading, in the course of ages of course, but takes no care of his books and throws them about, not thinking them worth attention. But binding implies respect for books, and implies that not only he has grown fond of reading, but that he looks upon it as something of value. That period has not been reached anywhere in Russia yet. In Europe books have been bound for a long while.”

“Though that’s pedantic, anyway, it’s not stupid, and reminds me of the time three years ago; you used to be rather clever sometimes three years ago.”

She said this as disdainfully as her other capricious remarks.

“Marie, Marie,” said Shatov, turning to her, much moved, “oh, Marie! If you only knew how much has happened in those three years! I heard afterwards that you despised me for changing my convictions. But what are

the men I've broken with? The enemies of all true life, out-of-date Liberals who are afraid of their own independence, the flunkeys of thought, the enemies of individuality and freedom, the decrepit advocates of deadness and rottenness! All they have to offer is senility, a glorious mediocrity of the most bourgeois kind, contemptible shallowness, a jealous equality, equality without individual dignity, equality as it's understood by flunkeys or by the French in '93. And the worst of it is there are swarms of scoundrels among them, swarms of scoundrels!"

"Yes, there are a lot of scoundrels," she brought out abruptly with painful effort. She lay stretched out, motionless, as though afraid to move, with her head thrown back on the pillow, rather on one side, staring at the ceiling with exhausted but glowing eyes. Her face was pale, her lips were dry and hot.

"You recognise it, Marie, you recognise it," cried Shatov. She tried to shake her head, and suddenly the same spasm came over her again. Again she hid her face in the pillow, and again for a full minute she squeezed .Shatov's hand till it hurt. He had run up, beside himself with alarm.

"Marie, Marie! But it may be very serious, Marie!"

"Be quiet ... I won't have it, I won't have it," she screamed almost furiously, turning her face upwards again. "Don't dare to look at me with your sympathy! Walk about the room, say something, talk. ..."

Shatov began muttering something again, like one distraught.

"What do you do here?" she asked, interrupting him with contemptuous impatience.

"I work in a merchant's office. I could get a fair amount of money even here if I cared to, Marie."

"So much the better for you. ..."

"Oh, don't suppose I meant anything, Marie. I said it without thinking."

"And what do you do besides? What are you preaching? You can't exist without preaching, that's your character!"

"I am preaching God, Marie."

"In whom you don't believe yourself. I never could see the

idea of that."

"Let's leave that, Marie; we'll talk of that later."

"What sort of person was this Mary a Timofyevna here?"

"We'll talk of that later too, Marie."

“Don’t dare to say such things to me! Is it true that her death may have been caused by ... the wickedness ... of these people?”

“Not a doubt of it,” growled Shatov.

Marie suddenly raised her head and cried out painfully:

“Don’t dare speak of that to me again, don’t dare to, never,

never!”

And she fell back in bed again, overcome by the same convulsive agony; it was the third time, but this time her groans were louder, in fact she screamed.

“Oh, you insufferable man! Oh, you unbearable man,” she cried, tossing about recklessly, and pushing away Shatov as he bent over her.

“Marie, I’ll do anything you like .... I’ll walk about and talk. . . .”

“Surely you must see that it has begun!”

“What’s begun, Marie?”

“How can I tell! Do I know anything about it? . . . I curse myself! Oh, curse it all from the beginning!”

“Marie, if you’d tell me what’s beginning ... or else I ... if you don’t, what am I to make of it?”

“You are a useless, theoretical babbler. Oh, curse everything on earth!”

“Marie, Marie!” He seriously thought that she was beginning to go mad.

“Surely you must see that I am in the agonies of childbirth,” she said, sitting up and gazing at him with a terrible, hysterical vindictiveness that distorted her whole face. “I curse him before he is born, this child!”

“Marie,” cried Shatov, realising at last what it meant. “Marie . . . but why didn’t you tell me before.” He pulled himself together at once and seized his cap with an air of vigorous determination.

“How could I tell when I came in here? Should I have come to you if I’d known? I was told it would be another ten days! Where are you going? . . . Where are you going? You mustn’t dare!”

“To fetch a midwife! I’ll sell the revolver. We must get money before anything else now.”

“Don’t dare to do anything, don’t dare to fetch a midwife! Bring a peasant woman, any old woman, I’ve eighty kopecks in my purse. . . . Peasant women have babies without midwives. . . . And if I die, so much the better. ...”

“You shall have a midwife and an old woman too. But how am I to leave you alone, Marie!”

But reflecting that it was better to leave her alone now in spite of her desperate state than to leave her without help later, he paid no attention to her groans, nor her angry exclamations, but rushed downstairs, hurrying all he could.

III

First of all he went to Kirillov. It was by now about one o’clock in the night. Kirillov was standing in the middle of the room.

“Kirillov, my wife is in childbirth.”

“How do you mean?”

“Childbirth, bearing a child!”

“You . . . are not mistaken?”

“Oh, no, no, she is in agonies! I want a woman, any old woman, I must have one at once. . . . Can you get one now? You used to have a lot of old women. . . .”

“Very sorry that I am no good at childbearing,” Kirillov answered thoughtfully; “that is, not at childbearing, but at doing anything for childbearing ... or ... no, I don’t know how to say it.”

“You mean you can’t assist at a confinement yourself? But that’s not what I’ve come for. An old woman, I want a woman, a nurse, a servant!”

“You shall have an old woman, but not directly, perhaps ... If you like I’ll come instead. ...”

“Oh, impossible; I am running to Madame Virginsky, the midwife, now.”

“A horrid woman!”

“Oh, yes, Kirillov, yes, but she is the best of them all. Yes, it’ll all be without reverence, without gladness, with contempt, with abuse, with blasphemy in the presence of so great a mystery, the coming of a new creature! Oh, she is cursing it already!”

“If you like I’ll . . .”

“No, no, but while I’m running (oh, I’ll make Madame Virginsky come), will you go to the foot of my staircase and quietly listen? But don’t venture to go in, you’ll frighten her; don’t go in on any account, you must only listen ... in case anything dreadful happens. If anything very bad happens, then run in.”

“I understand. I’ve another rouble. Here it is. I meant to have a fowl to-morrow, but now I don’t want to, make haste, run with all your might.

There’s a samovar all the night.”

Kirillov knew nothing of ‘the present design against Shatov, nor had he had any idea in the past of the degree of danger that threatened him. He only knew that Shatov had some old soores with “those people,” and although he was to some extent involved with them himself through instructions he had received from abroad (not that these were of much consequence, however, for he had never taken any direct share in anything), yet of late he had given it all up, having left off doing anything especially for the “cause,” and devoted himself entirely to a life of contemplation. Although Pyotr Stepanovitch had at the meeting invited Liputin to go with him to Kirillov’s to make sure that the latter would take upon himself, at a given moment, the responsibility for the “Shatov business,” yet in his interview with Kirillov he had said no word about Shatov nor alluded to him in any way — probably considering it impolitic to do so, and thinking that Kirillov could not be relied upon. He put off speaking about it till next day, when it would be all over and would therefore not matter to Kirillov; such at least was Pyotr Stepanovitch’s judgment of him. Liputin, too, was struck by the fact that Shatov was not mentioned in spite of what Pyotr Stepanovitch had promised, but he was too much agitated to protest.

Shatov ran like a hurricane to Virginsky’s house, cursing the distance and feeling it endless.

He had to knock a long time at Virginsky’s; every one had been asleep a long while. But Shatov did not scruple to bang at the shutters with all his might. The dog chained up in the yard dashed about barking furiously. The dogs caught it up all along the street, and there was a regular babel of barking.

“Why are you knocking and what do you want?” Shatov heard at the window at last Virginsky’s gentle voice, betraying none of the resentment appropriate to the “outrage.” The shutter was pushed back a little and the casement was opened.

“Who’s there, what scoundrel is it?” shrilled a female voice which betrayed all the resentment appropriate to the “outrage.” It was the old maid, Virginsky’s relation.

“I am Shatov, my wife has come back to me and she is just confined. ...”

“Well, let her be, get along.”

“I’ve come for Arina Prohorovna; I won’t go without Arina Prohorovna!”

“She can’t attend to every one. Practice at night is a special line. Take yourself off to Maksheyev’s and don’t dare to make that din,” rattled the exasperated female voice. He could hear Virginsky checking her; but the old maid pushed him away and would not desist.

“I am not going away!” Shatov cried again.

“Wait a little, wait a little,” Virginsky cried at last, overpowering the lady. “I beg you to wait five minutes, Shatov. I’ll wake Arina Prohorovna. Please don’t knock and don’t shout. . . . Oh, how awful it all is!”

After five endless minutes, Arina Prohorovna made her appearance.

“Has your wife come?” Shatov heard her voice at the window, . and to his surprise it was not at all ill-tempered, only as usual peremptory, but Arina Prohorovna could not speak except in a peremptory tone.

“Yes, my wife, and she is in labour.”

“Marya Ignatyevna?”

“Yes, Marya Ignatyevna. Of course it’s Marya Ignatyevna.”

A silence followed. Shatov waited. He heard a whispering in the house.

“Has she been here long?” Madame Virginsky asked again.

“She came this evening at eight o’clock. Please make haste.”

Again he heard whispering, as though they were consulting. “Listen, you are not making a mistake? Did she send you for me herself?”

“No, she didn’t send for you, she wants a peasant woman, so as not to burden me with expense, but don’t be afraid, I’ll pay you.”

“Very good, I’ll come, whether you pay or not. I always thought highly of Marya Ignatyevna for the independence of her sentiments, though perhaps she won’t remember me. Have you got the most necessary things?”

“I’ve nothing, but I’ll get everything, everything.”

“There is something generous even in these people,” Shatov reflected, as he set off to Lyamshin’s. “The convictions and the man are two very different things, very likely I’ve been very unfair to them! . . . We are all to blame, we are all to blame . . . and if only all were convinced of it!”

He had not to knock long at Lyamshin’s; the latter, to Shatov’s surprise, opened his casement at once, jumping out of bed, barefoot and in his night-clothes at the risk of catching cold; and he was hypochondriacal and always anxious about his health. But there was a special cause for such alertness and haste: Lyamshin had been in a tremor all the evening, and had not been able to sleep for excitement after the meeting of the quintet; he was haunted by the dread of uninvited and undesired visitors. The news of Shatov’s

giving information tormented him more than anything. . . . And suddenly there was this terrible loud knocking at the window as though to justify his fears.

He was so frightened at seeing Shatov that he at once slammed the casement and jumped back into bed. Shatov began furiously knocking and shouting.

“How dare you knock like that in the middle of the night?” shouted Lyamshin, in a threatening voice, though he was numb with fear, when at least two minutes later he ventured to open the casement again, and was at last convinced that Shatov had come alone.

“Here’s your revolver for you; take it back, give me fifteen roubles.”

“What’s the matter, are you drunk? This is outrageous, I shall simply catch cold. Wait a minute, I’ll just throw my rug over me.”

“Give me fifteen roubles at once. If you don’t give it me, I’ll knock and shout till daybreak; I’ll break your window-frame.”

“And I’ll shout police and you’ll be taken to the lock-up.”

“And am I dumb? Can’t I shout ‘police’ too? Which of us has most reason to be afraid of the police, you or I?”

“And you can hold such contemptible opinions! I know what you are hinting at. ... Stop, stop, for God’s sake don’t go on knocking! Upon my word, who has money at night? What do you want money for, unless you are drunk?”

“My wife has come back. I’ve taken ten roubles off the price, I haven’t fired it once; take the revolver, take it this minute!”

Lyamshin mechanically put his hand out of the casement and took the revolver; he waited a little, and suddenly thrusting his head out of the casement, and with a shiver running down his spine, faltered as though he were beside himself.

“You are lying, your wife hasn’t come back to you. . . . It’s . . . it’s simply that you want to run away.”

“You are a fool. Where should I run to? It’s for your Pyotr Verhovensky to run away, not for me. I’ve just been to the midwife, Madame Virginsky, and she consented at once to come to me. You can ask them. My wife is in agony; I need the money; give it me!”

A swarm of ideas flared up in Lyamshin’s crafty mind like a shower of fireworks. It all suddenly took a different colour, though still panic prevented him from reflecting.

“But how . . . you are not living with your wife?”

“I’ll break your skull for questions like that.”

“Oh dear, I understand, forgive me, I was struck all of a heap. . . . But I understand, I understand ... is Arina Prohorovna really coming? You said just now that she had gone? You know, that’s not true. You see, you see, you see what lies you tell at every step.”

“By now, she must be with my wife . . . don’t keep me . . . it’s not my fault you are a fool.”

“That’s a lie, I am not a fool. Excuse me, I really can’t ...”

And utterly distraught he began shutting the casement again for the third time, but Shatov gave such a yell that he put his head out again.

“But this is simply an unprovoked assault! What do you want of me, what is it, what is it, formulate it? And think, only think, it’s the middle of the night!”

“I want fifteen roubles, you sheep’s-head!”

“But perhaps I don’t care to take back the revolver. You have no right to force me. You bought the thing and the matter is settled, and you’ve no right. ... I can’t give you a sum like that in the night, anyhow. Where am I to get a sum like that?”

“You always have money. I’ve taken ten roubles off the price, but every one knows you are a skinflint.”

“Come the day after to-morrow, do you hear, the day after to-morrow at twelve o’clock, and I’ll give you the whole of it, that will do, won’t it?”

Shatov knocked furiously at the window-frame for the third time.

“Give me ten roubles, and to-morrow early the other five.”

“No, the day after to-morrow the other five, to-morrow I swear I shan’t have it. You’d better not come, you’d better not come.”

“Give me ten, you scoundrel!”

“Why are you so abusive. Wait a minute, I must light a candle; you’ve broken the window. . . . Nobody swears like that at night. Here you are!” He held a note to him out of the window.

Shatov seized it — it was a note for five roubles.

“On my honour I can’t do more, if you were to murder me, I couldn’t; the day after to-morrow I can give you it all, but now I can do nothing.”

“I am not going away!” roared Shatov.

“Very well, take it, here’s some more, see, here’s some more, and I won’t give more. You can shout at the top of your voice, but I won’t give more, I

won’t, whatever happens, I won’t, I won’t.”

He was in a perfect frenzy, desperate and perspiring. The two notes he had just given him were each for a rouble. Shatov had seven roubles altogether now.

“Well, damn you, then, I’ll come to-morrow. I’ll thrash you, Lyamshin, if you don’t give me the other eight.”

“You won’t find me at home, you fool!” Lyamshin reflected quickly.

“Stay, stay!” he shouted frantically after Shatov, who was already running off. “Stay, come back. Tell me please, is it true what you said that your wife has come back?”

“Fool!” cried Shatov, with a gesture of disgust, and ran home as hard as he could.

IV

I may mention that Anna Prohorovna knew nothing of the resolutions that had been taken at the meeting the day before. On returning home overwhelmed and exhausted, Virginsky had not ventured to tell her of the decision that had been taken, yet he could not refrain from telling her half — that is, all that Verhovensky had told them of the certainty of Shatov’s intention to betray them; but he added at the same time that he did not quite believe it. Arina Prohorovna was terribly alarmed. This was why she decided at once to go when Shatov came to fetch her, though she was tired out, as she had been hard at work at a confinement ah! the night before. She had always been convinced that “a wretched creature like Shatov was capable of any political baseness,” but the arrival of Marya Ignatyevna put things in a different light. Shatov’s alarm, the despairing tone of his entreaties, the way he begged for help, clearly showed a complete change of feeling in the traitor: a man who was ready to betray himself merely for the sake of ruining others would, she thought, have had a different air and tone. In short, Arina Prohorovna resolved to look into the matter for herself, with her own eyes.* Virginsky was very glad of her decision, he felt as though a hundredweight had been lifted off him! He even began to feel hopeful: Shatov’s appearance seemed to him utterly incompatible with Verhovensky’s supposition.

Shatov was not mistaken: on getting home he found Arina Prohorovna already with Marie. She had just arrived, had contemptuously dismissed

Kirillov, whom she found hanging about the foot of the stairs, had hastily introduced herself to Marie, who had not recognised her as her former acquaintance, found her in “a very bad way,” that is ill-tempered, irritable and in “a state of cowardly despair,” and within five minutes had completely silenced all her protests.

“Why do you keep on that you don’t want an expensive midwife?” she was saying at the moment when Shatov came in. “That’s perfect nonsense, it’s a false idea arising from the abnormality of your condition. In the hands of some ordinary old woman, some peasant midwife, you’d have fifty chances of going wrong and then you’d have more bother and expense than with a regular midwife. How do you know I am an expensive midwife? You can pay afterwards; I won’t charge you much and I answer for my success; you won’t die in my hands, I’ve seen worse cases than yours. And I can send the baby to a foundling asylum to-morrow, if you like, and then to be brought up in the country, and that’s all it will mean. And meantime you’ll grow strong again, take up some rational work, and in a very short time you’ll repay Shatov for sheltering you and for the expense, which will not be so great.”

“It’s not that . . . I’ve no right to be a burden. . . .”

“Rational feelings and worthy of a citizen, but you can take my word for it, Shatov will spend scarcely anything, if he is willing to become ever so little a man of sound ideas instead of the fantastic person he is. He has only not to do anything stupid, not to raise an alarm, not to run about the town with his tongue out. If we don’t restrain him he will be knocking up all the doctors of the town before the morning; he waked all the dogs in my street. There’s no need of doctors I’ve said already. I’ll answer for everything. You can hire an old woman if you like to wait on you, that won’t cost much. Though he too can do something besides the silly things he’s been doing. He’s got hands and feet, he can run to the chemist’s without offending your feelings by being too benevolent. As though it were a case of benevolence! Hasn’t he brought you into this position? Didn’t he make you break with the family in which you were a governess, with the egoistic object of marrying you? We heard of it, you know . . . though he did run for me like one possessed and yell so all the street could hear. I won’t force myself upon anyone and have come only for your sake, on the principle that all of us are bound to hold together! And I told him so before I left the house. If you

think I am in the way, good-bye, I only hope you won't have trouble which might so easily be averted."

And she positively got up from the chair. Marie was so helpless, in such pain, and — the truth must be confessed — so frightened of what was before her that she dared not let her go. But this woman was suddenly hateful to her, what she said was not what she wanted, there was something quite different in Marie's soul. Yet the prediction that she might possibly die in the hands of an inexperienced peasant woman overcame her aversion. But she made up for it by being more exacting and more ruthless than ever with Shatov. She ended by forbidding him not only to look at her but even to stand facing her. Her pains became more violent. Her curses, her abuse became more and more frantic.

"Ech, we'll send him away," Arina Prohorovna rapped out. "I don't know what he looks like, he is simply frightening you; he is as white as a corpse! What is it to you, tell me please, you absurd fellow? What a farce!"

Shatov made no reply, he made up his mind to say nothing. "I've seen many a foolish father, half crazy in such cases. But they, at any rate ..."

"Be quiet or leave me to die! Don't say another word! I won't have it, I won't have it!" screamed Marie.

"It's impossible not to say another word, if you are not out of your mind, as *I* think you are in your condition. We must talk of what we want, anyway: tell me, have you anything ready? You answer, Shatov, she is incapable."

"Tell me what's needed?"

"That means you've nothing ready." She reckoned up all that was quite necessary, and one must do her the justice to say she only asked for what was absolutely indispensable, the barest necessaries. Some things Shatov had. Marie took out her key and held it out to him, for him to look in her bag. As his hands shook he was longer than he should have been opening the unfamiliar lock. Marie flew into a rage, but when Arina Prohorovna rushed up to take the key from him, she would not allow her on any account to look into her bag and with peevish cries and tears insisted that no one should open the bag but Shatov.

Some things he had to fetch from Kirillov's. No sooner had Shatov turned to go for them than she began frantically calling him back and was only quieted when Shatov had rushed impetuously back from the stairs, and

explained that he should only be gone a minute to fetch something indispensable and would be back at once.

“Well, my lady, it’s hard to please you,” laughed Arina Prohorovna, “one minute he must stand with his face to the wall and not dare to look at you, and the next he mustn’t be gone for a minute, or you begin crying. He may begin to imagine something. Come, come, don’t be silly, don’t blubber, I was laughing, you know.”

“He won’t dare to imagine anything.”

“Tut, tut, tut, if he didn’t love you like a sheep he wouldn’t run about the streets with his tongue out and wouldn’t have roused all the dogs in the town. He broke my window-frame.”

He found Kirillov still pacing up and down his room so preoccupied that he had forgotten the arrival of Shatov’s wife, and heard what he said without understanding him.

“Oh, yes!” he recollected suddenly, as though tearing himself with an effort and only for an instant from some absorbing idea, “yes ... an old woman. ... A wife or an old woman? Stay a minute: a wife and an old woman, is that it? I remember. I’ve been, the old woman will come, only not just now. Take the pillow. Is there anything else? Yes. . . . Stay, do you have moments of the eternal harmony, Shatov?”

“You know, Kirillov, you mustn’t go on staying up every night.”

Kirillov came out of his reverie and, strange to say, spoke far more coherently than he usually did; it was clear that he had formulated it long ago and perhaps written it down.

“There are seconds — they come five or six at a time — when you suddenly feel the presence of the eternal harmony perfectly attained. It’s something not earthly — I don’t mean in the sense that it’s heavenly — but in that sense that man cannot endure it in his earthly aspect. He must be physically changed or die. This feeling is clear and unmistakable; it’s as though you apprehend all nature and suddenly say, ‘Yes, that’s right.’ God, when He created the world, said at the end of each day of creation, ‘Yes, it’s right, it’s good.’ It ... it’s not being deeply moved, but simply joy. You don’t forgive anything because there is no more need of forgiveness. It’s not that you love — oh, there’s something in it higher than love — what’s most awful is that it’s terribly clear and such joy. If it lasted more than five seconds, the soul could not endure it and must perish. In those five seconds I live through a lifetime, and I’d give my whole life for them, because they

are worth it. To endure ten seconds one must be physically changed. I think man ought to give up having children — what's the use of children, what's the use of evolution when the goal has been attained? In the gospel it is written that there will be no child-bearing in the resurrection, but that men will be like the angels of the Lord. That's a hint. Is your wife bearing a child?"

"Kirillov, does this often happen?"

"Once in three days, or once a week."

"Don't you have fits, perhaps?"

"No."

"Well, you will. Be careful, Kirillov. I've heard that's just how fits begin. An epileptic described exactly that sensation before a fit, word for word as you've done. He mentioned five seconds, too, and said that more could not be endured. Remember Mahomet's pitcher from which no drop of water was spilt while he circled Paradise on his horse. That was a case of five seconds too; that's too much like your eternal harmony, and Mahomet was an epileptic. Be careful, Kirillov, it's. epilepsy!"

"It won't have time," Kirillov smiled gently.

VI

The night was passing. Shatov was sent hither and thither, abused, called back. Marie was reduced to the most abject terror for life. She screamed that she wanted to live, that "she must, she must," and was afraid to die. "I don't want to, I don't want to!" she repeated. If Arina Prohorovna had not been there, things would have gone very badly. By degrees she gained complete control of the patient — who began to obey every word, every order from her like a child. Arina Prohorovna ruled by sternness not by kindness, but she was first-rate at her work. It began to get light . . . Arina Prohorovna suddenly imagined that Shatov had just run out on to the stairs to say his prayers and began laughing. Marie laughed too, spitefully, malignantly, as though such laughter relieved her. At last they drove Shatov away altogether. A damp, cold morning dawned. He pressed his face to the wall in the corner just as he had done the evening before when Erkel came. He was trembling like a leaf, afraid to think, but his mind caught at every thought as it does in dreams.

He was continually being carried away by day-dreams, which snapped off short like a rotten thread. From the room came no longer groans but awful animal cries, unendurable, incredible. He tried to stop up his ears, but could not, and he fell on his knees, repeating unconsciously, “Marie, Marie!” Then suddenly he heard a cry, a new cry, which made Shatov start and jump up from his knees, the cry of a baby, a weak discordant cry. He crossed himself and rushed into the room. Arina Prohorovna held in her hands a little red wrinkled creature, screaming, and moving its little arms and legs, fearfully helpless, and looking as though it could be blown away by a puff of wind, but screaming and seeming to assert its full right to live. Marie was lying as though insensible, but a minute later she opened her eyes, and bent a strange, strange look on Shatov: it was something quite new, that look. What it meant exactly he was not able to understand yet, but he had never known such a look on her face before.

“Is it a boy? Is it a boy?” she asked Arina Prohorovna in an exhausted voice.

“It is a boy,” the latter shouted in reply, as she bound up the child.

When she had bound him up and was about to lay him across the bed between the two pillows, she gave him to Shatov for a minute to hold. Marie signed to him on the sly as though afraid of Arina Prohorovna. He understood at once and brought the baby to show her.

“How . . . pretty he is,” she whispered weakly with a smile.

“Poo, what does he look like,” Arina Prohorovna laughed gaily in triumph, glancing at Shatov’s face. “What a funny face!”

“You may be merry, Arina Prohorovna. . . . It’s a great joy,” Shatov faltered with an expression of idiotic bliss, radiant at the phrase Marie had uttered about the child.

“Where does the great joy come in?” said Arina Prohorovna good-humouredly, bustling about, clearing up, and working like a convict.

“The mysterious coming of a new creature, a great and inexplicable mystery; and what a pity it is, Arina Prohorovna, that you don’t understand it.”

Shatov spoke in an incoherent, stupefied and ecstatic way. Something seemed to be tottering in his head and welling up from his soul apart from his own will.

“There were two and now there’s a third human being, a new spirit, finished and complete, unlike the handiwork of man; a new thought and a

new love . . . it’s positively frightening. . . . And there’s nothing grander in the world.”

“Ech, what nonsense he talks! It’s simply a further development of the organism, and there’s nothing else in it, no mystery,” said Arina Prohorovna with genuine and good-humoured laughter. “If you talk like that, every fly is a mystery. But I tell you what: superfluous people ought not to be born. We must first remould everything so that they won’t be superfluous and then bring them into the world. As it is, we shall have to take him to the Foundling, the day after to-morrow. . . . Though that’s as it should be.”

“I will never let him go to the Foundling,” Shatov pronounced resolutely, staring at the floor.

“You adopt him as your son?”

“He is my son.”

“Of course he is a Shatov, legally he is a Shatov, and there’s no need for you to pose as a humanitarian. Men can’t get on without fine words. There, there, it’s all right, but look here, my friends,” she added, having finished clearing up at last, “it’s time for me to go. I’ll come again this morning, and again in the evening if necessary, but now, since everything has gone off so well, I must run off to my other patients, they’ve been expecting me long ago. I believe you got an old woman somewhere, Shatov; an old woman is all very well, but don’t you, her tender husband, desert her; sit beside her, you may be of use; Marya Ignatyevna won’t drive you away, I fancy. . . . There, there, I was only laughing.”

At the gate, to which Shatov accompanied her, she added to him alone.

“You’ve given me something to laugh at for the rest of my life; I shan’t charge you anything; I shall laugh at you in my sleep! I have never seen anything funnier than you last night.”

She went off very well satisfied. Shatov’s appearance and conversation made it as clear as daylight that this man “was going in for being a father and was a ninny.” She ran home on purpose to tell Virginsky about it, though it was shorter and more direct to go to another patient.

“Marie, she told you not to go to sleep for a little time, though, I see, it’s very hard for you,” Shatov began timidly. “I’ll sit here by the window and take care of you, shall I?”

And he sat down, by the window behind the sofa so that she could not see him. But before a minute had passed she called him and fretfully asked

him to arrange the pillow. He began arranging it. She looked angrily at the wall.

“That’s not right, that’s not right. . . . What hands!”

Shatov did it again.

“Stoop down to me,” she said wildly, trying hard not to look at him.

He started but stooped down.

“More . . . not so ... nearer,” and suddenly her left arm was impulsively thrown round his neck and he felt her warm moist kiss on his forehead.

“Marie!”

Her lips were quivering, she was struggling with herself, but suddenly she raised herself and said with flashing eyes:

“Nikolay Stavrogin is a scoundrel!” And she fell back helplessly with her face in the pillow, sobbing hysterically, and tightly squeezing Shatov’s hand in hers.

From that moment she would not let him leave her; she insisted on his sitting by her pillow. She could not talk much but she kept gazing at him and smiling blissfully. She seemed suddenly to have become a silly girl. Everything seemed transformed. Shatov cried like a boy, then talked of God knows what, wildly, crazily, with inspiration, kissed her hands; she listened entranced, perhaps not understanding him, but caressingly ruffling his hair with her weak hand, smoothing it and admiring it. He talked about Kirillov, of how they would now begin “a new life” for good, of the existence of God, of the goodness of all men. . . . She took out the child again to gaze at it rapturously.

“Marie,” he cried, as he held the child in his arms, “all the old madness, shame, and deadness is over, isn’t it? Let us work hard and begin a new life, the three of us, yes, yes! . . . Oh, by the way, what shall we call him, Marie?”

“What shall we call him?” she repeated with surprise, and there was a sudden look of terrible grief in her face.

She clasped her hands, looked reproachfully at Shatov and hid her face in the pillow.

“Marie, what is it?” he cried with painful alarm.

“How could you, how could you . . . Oh, you ungrateful man!”

“Marie, forgive me, Marie ... I only asked you what his name should be. I don’t know. . . .”

“Ivan, Ivan.” She raised her flushed and tear-stained face. How could you suppose we should call him by another *horrible* name?”

“Marie, calm yourself; oh, what a nervous state you are in!”

“That’s rude again, putting it down to my nerves. I bet that if I’d said his name was to be that other . . . horrible name, you’d have agreed at once and not have noticed it even! Oh, men, the mean ungrateful creatures, they are all alike!”

A minute later, of course, they were reconciled. Shatov persuaded her to have a nap. She fell asleep but still kept his hand in hers; she waked up frequently, looked at him, as though afraid he would go away, and dropped asleep again.

Kirillov sent an old woman “to congratulate them,” as well as some hot tea, some freshly cooked cutlets, and some broth and white bread for Marya Ignatyevna. The patient sipped the broth greedily, the old woman undid the baby’s wrappings and swaddled it afresh, Marie made Shatov have a cutlet too.

Time was passing. Shatov, exhausted, fell asleep himself in his chair, with his head on Marie’s pillow. So they were found by Arina Prohorovna, who kept her word. She waked them up gaily, asked Marie some necessary questions, examined the baby, and again forbade Shatov to leave her. Then, jesting at the “happy couple,” with a shade of contempt and superciliousness she went away as well satisfied as before.

It was quite dark when Shatov waked up. He made haste to light the candle and ran for the old woman; but he had hardly begun to go down the stairs when he was struck by the sound of the soft, deliberate steps of some one coming up towards him. Erkel came in.

“Don’t come in,” whispered Shatov, and impulsively seizing him by the hand he drew him back towards the gate. “Wait here, I’ll come directly, I’d completely forgotten you, completely! Oh, how you brought it back!”

He was in such haste that he did not even run in to Kirillov’s, but only called the old woman. Marie was in despair and indignation that “he could dream of leaving her alone.”

“But,” he cried ecstatically, “this is the very last step! And then for a new life and we’ll never, never think of the old horrors again!”

He somehow appeased her and promised to be back at nine o’clock; he kissed her warmly, kissed the baby and ran down quickly to Erkel.

They set off together to Stavrogin’s park at Skvoreshniki, where, in a secluded place at the very edge of the park where it adjoined the pine wood, he had, eighteen months before, buried the printing press which had been entrusted to him. It was a wild and deserted place, quite hidden and at some distance from the Stavrogins’ house. It was two or perhaps three miles from Filipov’s house.

“Are we going to walk all the way? I’ll take a cab.”

“I particularly beg you not to,” replied Erkel. ‘‘ They insisted on that. A cabman would be a witness.”

“Well . . . bother! I don’t care, only to make an end of
it.”

They walked very fast.

“Erkel, you little boy,” cried Shatov, “have you ever been happy?”

“You seem to be very happy just now,” observed Erkel with curiosity.

CHAPTER VI.

A BUSY NIGHT

during that day Virginsky had spent two hours in running round to see the members of the quintet and to inform them that Shatov would certainly not give information, because his wife had come back and given birth to a child, and no one “who knew anything of human nature “could suppose that Shatov could be a danger at this moment. But to his discomfiture he found none of them at home except Erkel and Lyamshin. Erkel listened in silence, looking candidly into his eyes, and in answer to the direct question “Would he go at six o’clock or not?” he replied with the brightest of smiles that “of course he would go.”

Lyamshin was in bed, seriously ill, as it seemed, with his head covered with a quilt. He was alarmed at Virginsky’s coming in, and as soon as the latter began speaking he waved him off from under the bedclothes, entreating him to let him alone. He listened to all he said about Shatov, however, and seemed for some reason extremely struck by the news that Virginsky had found no one at home. It seemed that Lyamshin knew already (through Liputin) of Fedka’s death, and hurriedly and incoherently told Virginsky about it, at which the latter seemed struck in his turn. To Virginsky’s direct question, “Should they go or not?” he began suddenly waving his hands again, entreating him to let him alone, and saying that it was not his business, and that he knew nothing about it.

Virginsky returned home dejected and greatly alarmed. It weighed upon him that he had to hide it from his family; he was accustomed to tell his wife everything; and if his feverish brain had not hatched a new idea at that moment, a new plan of conciliation for further action, he might have taken to his bed like Lyamshin. But this new idea sustained him; what’s more, he began impatiently awaiting the hour fixed, and set off for the appointed spot earlier than was necessary. It was a very gloomy place at the end of the huge park. I went there afterwards on purpose to look at it. How sinister it must have looked on that chill autumn evening! It was at the edge of an old wood belonging to the Crown. Huge ancient pines stood out as vague sombre blurs in the darkness. It was so dark that they could hardly see each other two paces off, but Pyotr Stepanovitch, Liputin, and afterwards Erkel,

brought lanterns with them. At some unrecorded date in the past a rather absurd-looking grotto had for some reason been built here of rough unhewn stones. The table and benches in the grotto had long ago decayed and fallen. Two hundred paces to the right was the bank of the third pond of the park. These three ponds stretched one after another for a mile from the house to the very end of the park. One could scarcely imagine that any noise, a scream, or even a shot, could reach the inhabitants of the Stavrogins' deserted house. Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's departure the previous day and Alexey Yegorytch's absence left only five or six people in the house, all more or less invalided, so to speak. In any case it might be assumed with perfect confidence that if cries or shouts for help were heard by any of the inhabitants of the isolated house they would only have excited terror; no one would have moved from his warm stove or snug shelf to give assistance.

By twenty past six almost all of them except Erkel, who had been told off to fetch Shatov, had turned up at the trysting-place. This time Pyotr Stepanovitch was not late; he came with Tolkatchenko. Tolkatchenko looked frowning and anxious; all his assumed determination and insolent bravado had vanished. He scarcely left Pyotr Stepanovitch's side, and seemed to have become all at once immensely devoted to him. He was continually thrusting himself forward to whisper fussily to him, but the latter scarcely answered him, or muttered something irritably to get rid of him.

Shigalov and Virginsky had arrived rather before Pyotr Stepanovitch, and as soon as he came they drew a little apart in profound and obviously intentional silence. Pyotr Stepanovitch raised his lantern and examined them with unceremonious and insulting minuteness. "They mean to speak," flashed through his mind.

"Isn't Lyamshin here?" he asked Virginsky. "Who said he was ill?"

"I am here," responded Lyamshin, suddenly coming from behind a tree. He was in a warm greatcoat and thickly muffled in a rug, so that it was difficult to make out his face even with a lantern.

"So Liputin is the only one not here?"

Liputin too came out of the grotto without speaking. Pyotr Stepanovitch raised the lantern again.

"Why were you hiding in there? Why didn't you come out?"

“I imagine we still keep the right of freedom ... of our actions,” Liputin muttered, though probably he hardly knew what he wanted to express.

“Gentlemen,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, raising his voice for the first time above a whisper, which produced an effect, “I think you fully understand that it’s useless to go over things again. Everything was said and fully thrashed out yesterday, openly and directly. But perhaps — as I see from your faces — some one wants to make some statement; in that case I beg you to make haste. Damn it all! there’s not much time, and Erkel may bring him in a minute. ...”

“He is sure to bring him,” Tolkatchenko put in for some reason.

“If I am not mistaken, the printing press will be handed over, to begin with?” inquired Liputin, though again he seemed hardly to understand why he asked the question.

“Of course. Why should we lose it?” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, lifting the lantern to his face. “But, you see, we all agreed yesterday that it was not really necessary to take it. He need only show you the exact spot where it’s buried; we can dig it up afterwards for ourselves. I know that it’s somewhere ten paces from a corner of this grotto. But, damn it all! how could you have forgotten, Liputin? It was agreed that you should meet him alone and that we should come out afterwards. . . . It’s strange that you should ask — or didn’t you mean what you said?”

Liputin kept gloomily silent. All were silent. The wind shook the tops of the pine-trees.

“I trust, however, gentlemen, that every one will do his duty,” Pyotr Stepanovitch rapped out impatiently.

“I know that Shatov’s wife has come back and has given birth to a child,” Virginsky said suddenly, excited and gesticulating and scarcely able to speak distinctly. “Knowing what human nature is, we can be sure that now he won’t give information . . . because he is happy. ... So I went to every one this morning and found no one at home, so perhaps now nothing need be done. . . .”

He stopped short with a catch in his breath.

“If you suddenly became happy, Mr. Virginsky,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, stepping up to him, “would you abandon — not giving information; there’s no question of that — but any perilous public action which you had planned before you were happy and which you regarded as a duty and obligation in spite of the risk and loss of happiness?”

“No, I wouldn’t abandon it! I wouldn’t on any account!” said Virginsky with absurd warmth, twitching all over.

“You would rather be unhappy again than be a scoundrel?”

“Yes, yes. . . . Quite the contrary. . . . I’d rather be a complete scoundrel . . . that is no ... not a scoundrel at all, but on the contrary completely unhappy rather than a scoundrel.”

“Well then, let me tell you that Shatov looks on this betrayal as a public duty. It’s his most cherished conviction, and the proof of it is that he runs some risk himself; though, of course, they will pardon him a great deal for giving information. A man like that will never give up the idea. No sort of happiness would overcome him. In another day he’ll go back on it, reproach himself, and will go straight to the police. What’s more, I don’t see any happiness in the fact that his wife has come back after three years’ absence to bear him a child of Stavrogin’s.”

“But no one has seen Shatov’s letter,” Shigalov brought out all at once, emphatically.

“I’ve seen it,” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch. “It exists, and all this is awfully stupid, gentlemen.”

“And I protest . . .” Virginsky cried, boiling over suddenly: “I protest with all my might. ... I want . . . this is what I want. I suggest that when he arrives we all come out and question him, and if it’s true, we induce him to repent of it; and if he gives us his word of honour, let him go. In any case we must have a trial; it must be done after trial. We mustn’t lie in wait for him and then fall upon him.”

“Risk the cause on his word of honour — that’s the acme of stupidity! Damnation, how stupid it all is now, gentlemen! And a pretty part you are choosing to play at the moment of danger!”

“I protest, I protest!” Virginsky persisted.

“Don’t bawl, anyway; we shan’t hear the signal. Shatov, gentlemen. . . . (Damnation, how stupid this is now!) I’ve told you already that Shatov is a Slavophil, that is, one of the stupidest set of people. . . . But, damn it all, never mind, that’s no matter! You put me out! . . . Shatov is an embittered man, gentlemen, and since he has belonged to the party, anyway, whether he wanted to or no, I had hoped till the last minute that he might have been of service to the cause and might have been made use of as an embittered man. I spared him and was keeping him in reserve, in spite of most exact instructions. . . . I’ve spared him a hundred times more than he deserved!

But he’s ended by betraying us. . . . But, hang it all, I don’t care! You’d better try running away now, any of you! No one of you has the right to give up the job! You can kiss him if you like, but you haven’t the right to stake the cause on his word of honour! That’s acting like swine and spies in government pay!”

“Who’s a spy in government pay here?” Liputin filtered out.

“You, perhaps. You’d better hold your tongue, Liputin; you talk for the sake of talking, as you always do. All men are spies, gentlemen, who funk their duty at the moment of danger. There will always be some fools who’ll run in a panic at the last moment and cry out, ‘Aie, forgive me, and I’ll give them all away!’ But let me tell you, gentlemen, no betrayal would win you a pardon now. Even if your sentence were mitigated it would mean Siberia; and, what’s more, there’s no escaping the weapons of the other side — and their weapons are sharper than the government’s.”

Pyotr Stepanovitch was furious and said more than he meant to. With a resolute air Shigalov took three steps towards him. “Since yesterday evening I’ve thought over the question,” he began, speaking with his usual pedantry and assurance. (I believe that if the earth had given way under his feet he would not have raised his voice nor have varied one tone in his methodical exposition.) “Thinking the matter over, I’ve come to the conclusion that the projected murder is not merely a waste of precious time which might be employed in a more suitable and befitting manner, but presents, moreover, that deplorable deviation from the normal method which has always been’ most prejudicial to the cause and has delayed its triumph for scores of years, under the guidance of shallow thinkers and pre-eminently of men of political instead of purely socialistic leanings. I have come here solely to protest against the projected enterprise, for the general edification, intending then to withdraw at the actual moment, which you, for some reason I don’t understand, speak of as a moment of danger to you. I am going — not from fear of that danger nor from a sentimental feeling for Shatov, whom I have no inclination to kiss, but solely because all this business from beginning to end is in direct contradiction to my programme. As for my betraying you and my being in the pay of the government, you can set your mind completely at rest. I shall not betray you.”

He turned and walked away.

“Damn it all, he’ll meet them and warn Shatov!” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, pulling out his revolver. They heard the click of the trigger.

“You may be confident,” said Shigalov, turning once more, “that if I meet Shatov on the way I may bow to him, but I shall not warn him.”

“But do you know, you may have to pay for this, Mr. Fourier?”

“I beg you to observe that I am not Fourier. If you mix me up with that mawkish theoretical twaddler you simply prove that you know nothing of my manuscript, though it has been in your hands. As for your vengeance, let me tell you that it’s a mistake to cock your pistol: that’s absolutely against your interests at the present moment. But if you threaten to shoot me to-morrow, or the day after, you’ll gain nothing by it but unnecessary trouble. You may kill me, but sooner or later you’ll come to my system all the same. Good-bye.”

At that instant a whistle was heard in the park, two hundred paces away from the direction of the pond. Liputin at once answered, whistling also as had been agreed the evening before. (As he had lost several teeth and distrusted his own powers, he had this morning bought for a farthing in the market a child’s clay whistle for the purpose.) Erkel had warned Shatov on the way that they would whistle as a signal, so that the latter felt-no uneasiness.

“Don’t be uneasy, I’ll avoid them and they won’t notice me at all,” Shigalov declared in an impressive whisper; and thereupon deliberately and without haste he walked home through the dark park.

Everything, to the smallest detail of this terrible affair, is now fully known. To begin with, Liputin met Erkel and Shatov at the entrance to the grotto. Shatov did not bow or offer him his hand, but at once pronounced hurriedly in a loud voice:

“Well, where have you put the spade, and haven’t you another lantern? You needn’t be afraid, there’s absolutely no one here, and they wouldn’t hear at Skvoreshniki now if we fired a cannon here. This is the place, here this very spot.”

And he stamped with his foot ten paces from the end of the grotto towards the wood. At that moment Tolkatchenko rushed out from behind a tree and sprang at him from behind, while Erkel seized him by the elbows. Liputin attacked him from the front. The three of them at once knocked him down and pinned him to the ground. At this point Pyotr Stepanovitch darted up with his revolver. It is said that Shatov had time to turn his head and was able to see and recognise him. Three lanterns lighted up the scene. Shatov suddenly uttered a short and desperate scream. But they did not let him go

on screaming. Pyotr Stepanovitch firmly and accurately put his revolver to Shatov's forehead, pressed it to it, and pulled the trigger. The shot seems not to have been loud; nothing was heard at Skvoreshniki, anyway. Shigalov, who was scarcely three paces away, of course heard it — he heard the shout and the shot, but, as he testified afterwards, he did not turn nor even stop. Death was almost instantaneous. Pyotr Stepanovitch was the only one who preserved all his faculties, but I don't think he was quite cool. Squatting on his heels, he searched the murdered man's pockets hastily, though with steady hand. No money was found (his purse had been left under Marya Ignatyevna's pillow). Two or three scraps of paper of no importance were found: a note from his office, the title of some book, and an old bill from a restaurant abroad which had been preserved, goodness knows why, for two years in his pocket. Pyotr Stepanovitch transferred these scraps of paper to his own pocket, and suddenly noticing that they had all gathered round, were gazing at the corpse and doing nothing, he began rudely and angrily abusing them and urging them on. Tolkatchenko and Erkel recovered themselves, and running to the grotto brought instantly from it two stones which they had got ready there that morning. These stones, which weighed about twenty pounds each, were securely tied with cord. As they intended to throw the body in the nearest of the three ponds, they proceeded to tie the stones to the head and feet respectively. Pyotr Stepanovitch fastened the stones while Tolkatchenko and Erkel only held and passed them. Erkel was foremost, and while Pyotr Stepanovitch, grumbling and swearing, tied the dead man's feet together with the cord and fastened the stone to them — a rather lengthy operation — Tolkatchenko stood holding the other stone at arm's-length, his whole person bending forward, as it were, deferentially, to be in readiness to hand it without delay. It never once occurred to him to lay his burden on the ground in the interval. When at last both stones were tied on and Pyotr Stepanovitch got up from the ground to scrutinise the faces of his companions, something strange happened, utterly unexpected and surprising to almost every one.

As I have said already, all except perhaps Tolkatchenko and Erkel were standing still doing nothing. Though Virginsky had rushed up to Shatov with the others he had not seized him or helped to hold him. Lyamshin had joined the group after the shot had been fired. Afterwards, while Pyotr Stepanovitch was busy with the corpse — for perhaps ten minutes — none of them seemed to have been fully conscious. They grouped themselves

around and seemed to have felt amazement rather than anxiety or alarm. Liputin stood foremost, close to the corpse. Virginsky stood behind him, peeping over his shoulder with a peculiar, as it were unconcerned, curiosity; he even stood on tiptoe to get a better view. Lyamshin hid behind Virginsky. He took an apprehensive peep from time to time and slipped behind him again at once. When the stones had been tied on and Pyotr Stepanovitch had risen to his feet, Virginsky began faintly shuddering all over, clasped his hands, and cried out bitterly at the top of his voice:

"It's not the right thing, it's not, it's not at all!" He would perhaps have added something more to his belated exclamation, but Lyamshin did not let him finish: he suddenly seized him from behind and squeezed him with all his might, uttering an unnatural shriek. There are moments of violent emotion, of terror, for instance, when a man will cry out in a voice not his own, unlike anything one could have anticipated from him, and this has sometimes a very terrible effect. Lyamshin gave vent to a scream more animal than human. Squeezing Virginsky from behind more and more tightly and convulsively, he went on shrieking without a pause, his mouth wide open and his eyes starting out of his head, keeping up a continual patter with his feet, as though he were beating a drum. Virginsky was so scared that he too screamed out like a madman, and with a ferocity, a vindictiveness that one could never have expected of Virginsky. He tried to pull himself away from Lyamshin, scratching and punching him as far as he could with his arms behind him. Erkel at last helped to pull Lyamshin away. But when, in his terror, Virginsky had skipped ten paces away from him, Lyamshin, catching sight of Pyotr Stepanovitch, began yelling again and flew at him. Stumbling over the corpse, he fell upon Pyotr Stepanovitch, pressing his head to the latter's chest and gripping him so tightly in his arms that Pyotr Stepanovitch, Tolkatchenko, and Liputin could all of them do nothing at the first moment. Pyotr Stepanovitch shouted, swore, beat him on the head with his fists. At last, wrenching himself away, he drew his revolver and put it in the open mouth of Lyamshin, who was still yelling and was by now tightly held by Tolkatchenko, Erkel, and Liputin. But Lyamshin went on shrieking in spite of the revolver. At last Erkel, crushing his silk handkerchief into a ball, deftly thrust it into his mouth and the shriek ceased. Meantime Tolkatchenko tied his hands with what was left of the rope.

“It’s very strange,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, scrutinising the madman with uneasy wonder. He was evidently struck. “I expected something very different from him,” he added thoughtfully.

They left Erkel in charge of him for a time. They had to make haste to get rid of the corpse: there had been so much noise that some one might have heard. Tolkatchenko and Pyotr Stepanovitch took up the lanterns and lifted the corpse by the head, while Liputin and Virginsky took the feet, and so they carried it away. With the two stones it was a heavy burden, and the distance was more than two hundred paces. Tolkatchenko was the strongest of them. He advised them to keep in step, but no one answered him and they all walked anyhow. Pyotr Stepanovitch walked on the right and, bending forward, carried the dead man’s head on his shoulder while with the left hand he supported the stone. As Tolkatchenko walked more than half the way without thinking of helping him with the stone, Pyotr Stepanovitch at last shouted at him with an oath. It was a single, sudden shout. They all went on carrying the body in silence, and it was only when they reached the pond that Virginsky, stooping under his burden and seeming to be exhausted by the weight of it, cried out again in the same loud and wailing voice:

“It’s not the right thing, no, no, it’s not the right thing!”

The place to which they carried the dead man at the extreme end of the rather large pond, which was the farthest of the three from the house, was one of the most solitary and unfrequented spots in the park, especially at this late season of the year. At that end the pond was overgrown with weeds by the banks. They put down the lantern, swung the corpse and threw it into the pond. They heard a muffled and prolonged splash. Pyotr Stepanovitch raised the lantern and every one followed his example, peering curiously to see the body sink, but nothing could be seen: weighted with the two stones, the body sank at once. The big ripples spread over the surface of the water and quickly passed away. It was over.

Virginsky went off with Erkel, who before giving up Lyamshin to Tolkatchenko brought him to Pyotr Stepanovitch, reporting to the latter that Lyamshin had come to his senses, was penitent and begged forgiveness, and indeed had no recollection of what had happened to him. Pyotr Stepanovitch walked off alone, going round by the farther side of the pond, skirting the park. This was the longest way. To his surprise Liputin overtook him before he got half-way home.

“Pyotr Stepanovitch! Pyotr Stepanovitch! Lyamshin will give information!”

“No, he will come to his senses and realise that he will be the first to go to Siberia if he did. No one will betray us now. Even you won’t.”

“What about you?”

“No fear! I’ll get you all out of the way the minute you attempt to turn traitors, and you know that. But you won’t turn traitors. Have you run a mile and a half to tell me that?”

“Pyotr Stepanovitch, Pyotr Stepanovitch, perhaps we shall never meet again!”

“What’s put that into your head?”

“Only tell me one thing.”

“Well, what? Though I want you to take yourself off.”

“One question, but answer it truly: are we the only quintet in the world, or is it true that there are hundreds of others? It’s a question of the utmost importance to me, Pyotr Stepanovitch.”

“I see that from the frantic state you are in. But do you know, Liputin, you are more dangerous than Lyamshin?”

“I know, I know; but the answer, your answer!”

“You are a stupid fellow! I should have thought it could make no difference to you now whether it’s the only quintet or one of a thousand.”

“That means it’s the only one! I was sure of it . . ,” cried Liputin. “I always knew it was the only one, I knew it all along.” And without waiting for any reply he turned and quickly vanished into the darkness.

Pyotr Stepanovitch pondered a little.

“No, no one will turn traitor,” he concluded with decision, “but the group must remain a group and obey, or I’U ... What a wretched set they are though!”

II

He first went home, and carefully, without haste, packed his trunk. At six o’clock in the morning there was a special train from the town. This early morning express only ran once a week, and was only a recent experiment. Though Pyotr Stepanovitch had told the members of the quintet that he was only going to be away for a short time in the neighbourhood, his intentions, as appeared later, were in reality very different. Having finished packing, he

settled accounts with his landlady to whom he had previously given notice of his departure, and drove in a cab to Erkel's lodgings, near the station. And then just upon one o'clock at night he walked to Kirillov's, approaching as before by Fedka's secret way.

Pyotr Stepanovitch was in a painful state of mind. Apart from other extremely grave reasons for dissatisfaction (he was still unable to learn anything of Stavrogin), he had, it seems — for I cannot assert it for a fact — received in the course of that day, probably from Petersburg, secret information of a danger awaiting him in the immediate future. There are, of course, many legends in the town relating to this period; but if any facts were known, it was only to those immediately concerned. I can only surmise as my own conjecture that Pyotr Stepanovitch may well have had affairs going on in other neighbourhoods as well as in our town, so that he really may have received such a warning. I am convinced, indeed, in spite of Liputin's cynical and despairing doubts, that he really had two or three other quintets; for instance, in Petersburg and Moscow, and if not quintets at least colleagues and correspondents, and possibly was in very curious relations with them. Not more than three days after his departure an order for his immediate arrest arrived from Petersburg — whether in connection with what had happened among us, or elsewhere, I don't know. This order only served to increase the overwhelming, almost panic terror which suddenly came upon our local authorities and the society of the town, till then so persistently frivolous in its attitude, on the discovery of the mysterious and portentous murder of the student Shatov — the climax of the long series of senseless actions in our midst — as well as the extremely mysterious circumstances that accompanied that murder. But the order came too late: Pyotr Stepanovitch was already in Petersburg, living under another name, and, learning what was going on, he made haste to make his escape abroad. . . . But I am anticipating in a shocking way.

He went in to Kirillov, looking ill-humoured and quarrelsome. Apart from the real task before him, he felt, as it were, tempted to satisfy some personal grudge, to avenge himself on Kirillov for something. Kirillov seemed pleased to see him; he had evidently been expecting him a long time with painful impatience. His face was paler than usual; there was a fixed and heavy look in his black eyes.

"I thought you weren't coming," he brought out drearily from his corner of the sofa, from which he had not, however, moved to greet him.

Pyotr Stepanovitch stood before him and, before uttering a word, looked intently at his face.

“Everything is in order, then, and we are not drawing back from our resolution. Bravo!” He smiled an offensively patronising smile. “But, after all,” he added with unpleasant jocosity, “if I am behind my time, it’s not for you to complain: I made you a present of three hours.”

“I don’t want extra hours as a present from you, and you can’t make me a present . . . you fool!”

“What?” Pyotr Stepanovitch was startled, but instantly controlled himself. “What huffiness! So we are in a savage temper?” he rapped out, still with the same offensive superciliousness. “At such a moment composure is what you need. The best thing you can do is to consider yourself a Columbus and me a mouse, and not to take offence at anything I say. I gave you that advice yesterday.”

“*I* don’t want to look upon you as a mouse.”

“What’s that, a compliment? But the tea is cold — and that shows that everything is topsy-turvy. Bah! But I see something in the window, on a plate.” He went to the window. “Oh oh, boiled chicken and rice! . . . But why haven’t you begun upon it yet? So we are in such a state of mind that even chicken ...”

“I’ve dined, and it’s not your business. Hold your tongue!”

“Oh, of course; besides, it’s no consequence — though for me at the moment it is of consequence. Only fancy, I scarcely had any dinner, and so if, as I suppose, that chicken is not wanted now . . . eh?”

“Eat it if you can.”

“Thank you, and then I’ll have tea.”

He instantly settled himself at the other end of the sofa and fell upon the chicken with extraordinary greediness; at the same time he kept a constant watch on his victim. Kirillov looked at him fixedly with angry aversion, as though unable to tear himself away.

“I say, though,” Pyotr Stepanovitch fired off suddenly, while he still went on eating, “what about our business? We are not crying off, are we? How about that document?”

“I’ve decided in the night that it’s nothing to me. I’ll write it. About the manifestoes?”

“Yes, about the manifestoes too. But I’ll dictate it. Of course, that’s nothing to you. Can you possibly mind what’s in the letter at such a

moment?”

“That’s not your business.”

“It’s not mine, of course. It need only be a few lines, though: that you and Shatov distributed the manifestoes and with the help of Fedka, who hid in your lodgings. This last point about Fedka and your lodgings is very important — the most important of all, indeed. You see, I am talking to you quite openly.”

“Shatov? Why Shatov? I won’t mention Shatov for anything.”

“What next! What is it to you? You can’t hurt him now.”

“His wife has come back to him. She has waked up and has sent to ask me where he is.”

“She has sent to ask you where he is? H’m . . . that’s unfortunate. She may send again; no one ought to know I am here.”

Pyotr Stepanovitch was uneasy.

“She won’t know, she’s gone to sleep again. There’s a midwife with her, Arina Virginsky.”

“So that’s how it was. . . . She won’t overhear, I suppose? I say, you’d better shut the front door.”

“She won’t overhear anything. And if Shatov comes I’ll hide you in another room.”

“Shatov won’t come; and you must write that you quarrelled with him because he turned traitor and informed the police . . . this evening . . . and caused his death.”

“He is dead!” cried Kirillov, jumping up from the sofa.

“He died at seven o’clock this evening, or rather, at seven o’clock yesterday evening, and now it’s one o’clock.”

“You have killed him! . . . And I foresaw it yesterday!”

“No doubt you did! With this revolver here.” (He drew out his revolver as though to show it, but did not put it back again and still held it in his right hand as though in readiness.) “You are a strange man, though, Kirillov; you knew yourself that the stupid fellow was bound to end like this. What was there to foresee in that? I made that as plain as possible over and over again. Shatov was meaning to betray us; I was watching him, and it could not be left like that. And you too had instructions to watch him; you told me so yourself three weeks ago. ...”

“Hold your tongue! You’ve done this because he spat in your face in Geneva!”

“For that and for other things too — for many other things; not from spite, however. Why do you jump up? Why look like that? Oh oh, so that’s it, is it?”

He jumped up and held out his revolver before him. Kirillov had suddenly snatched up from the window his revolver, which had been loaded and put ready since the morning. Pyotr Stepanovitch took,up his position and aimed his weapon at Kirillov. The latter laughed angrily.

“Confess, you scoundrel, that you brought your revolver because I might shoot you. . . . But I shan’t shoot you . . . though . . . though ...”

And again he turned his revolver upon Pyotr Stepanovitch, as it were rehearsing, as though unable to deny himself the pleasure of imagining how he would shoot him. Pyotr Stepanovitch, holding his ground, waited for him, waited for him till the last minute without pulling the trigger, at the risk of being the first to get a bullet in his head: it might well be expected of “the maniac.” But at last “the maniac” dropped his hand, gasping and trembling and unable to speak.

“You’ve played your little game and that’s enough.” Pyotr Stepanovitch, too, dropped his weapon. “I knew it was only a game; only you ran a risk, let me tell you: I might have fired.”

And he sat down on the sofa with a fair show of composure and poured himself out some tea, though his hand trembled a little. Kirillov laid his revolver on the table and began walking up and down.

“I won’t write that I killed Shatov . . . and I won’t write anything now. You won’t have a document!”

“I shan’t?”

“No, you won’t.”

“What meanness and what stupidity!” Pyotr Stepanovitch turned green with resentment. “I foresaw it, though. You’ve not taken me by surprise, let me tell you. As you please, however. If I could make you do it by force, I would. You are a scoundrel, though.” Pyotr Stepanovitch was more and more carried away and unable to restrain himself. “You asked us for money out there and promised us no end of things. . . . I won’t go away with nothing, however: I’ll see you put the bullet through your brains first, anyway.”

“I want you to go away at once.” Kirillov stood firmly before him.

“No, that’s impossible.” Pyotr Stepanovitch took up his revolver again. “Now in your spite and cowardice you may think fit to put it off and to turn

traitor to-morrow, so as to get money again; they'll pay you for that, of course. Damn it all, fellows like you are capable of anything! Only don't trouble yourself; I've provided for all contingencies: I am not going till I've dashed your brains out with this revolver, as I did to that scoundrel Shatov, if you are afraid to do it yourself and put off your intention, damn you!"

"You are set on seeing my blood, too?"

"I am not acting from spite; let me tell you, it's nothing to me. I am doing it to be at ease about the cause. One can't rely on men; you see that for yourself. I don't understand what fancy possesses you to put yourself to death. It wasn't my idea; you thought of it yourself before I appeared, and talked of your intention to the committee abroad before you said anything to me. And you know, no one has forced it out of you; no one of them knew you, but you came to confide in them yourself, from sentimentalism. And what's to be done if a plan of action here, which can't be altered now, was founded upon that with your consent and upon your suggestion? . . . your suggestion, mind that! You have put yourself in a position in which you know too much. If you are an ass and go off to-morrow to inform the police, that would be rather a disadvantage to us; what do you think about it? Yes, you've bound yourself; you've given your word, you've taken money. That you can't deny. . . ."

Pyotr Stepanovitch was much excited, but for some time past Kirillov had not been listening. He paced up and down the room, lost in thought again.

"I am sorry for Shatov," he said, stopping before Pyotr Stepanovitch again.

"Why so? I am sorry, if that's all, and do you suppose . . ."

"Hold your tongue, you scoundrel," roared Kirillov, making an alarming and unmistakable movement; "I'll kill you."

"There, there, there! I told a lie, I admit it; I am not sorry at all. Come, that's enough, that's enough." Pyotr Stepanovitch started up apprehensively, putting out his hand.

Kirillov subsided and began walking up and down again.

"I won't put it off; I want to kill myself now: all are scoundrels."

"Well, that's an idea; of course all are scoundrels; and since life is a beastly *thing* for a decent man ..."

"Fool, I am just such a scoundrel as you, as all, not a decent man. There's never been a decent man anywhere."

“He’s guessed the truth at last! Can you, Kirillov, with your sense, have failed to see till now that all men are alike, that there are none better or worse, only some are stupider, than others, and that if all are scoundrels (which is nonsense, though) there oughtn’t to be any people that are not?”

“Ah! Why, you are. really in earnest?” Kirillov looked at him with some wonder. “You speak with heat and simply. . . . Can it be that even fellows like you have convictions?”

“Kirillov, I’ve never been able to understand why you mean to kill yourself. I only know it’s from conviction . . . strong conviction. But if you feel a yearning to express yourself, so to say, I am at your service. . . . Only you must think of the time.”

“What time is it?”

“Oh oh, just two.” Pyotr Stepanovitch looked at his watch and lighted a cigarette.

“It seems we can come to terms after all,” he reflected.

“I’ve nothing to say to you,” muttered Kirillov.

“I remember that something about God comes into it ... you explained it to me once — twice, in fact. If you stopped yourself, you become God; that’s it, isn’t it?”

“Yes, I become God.”

Pyotr Stepanovitch did not even smile; he waited. Kirillov looked at him subtly.

“You are a political impostor and intriguer. You want to lead me on into philosophy and enthusiasm and to bring about a reconciliation so as to disperse my anger, and then, when I am reconciled with you, beg from me a note to say I killed Shatov.” “

Pyotr Stepanovitch answered with almost natural frankness.

“Well, supposing I am such a scoundrel. But at the last moments does that matter to you, Kirillov? What are we quarrelling about? Tell me, please. You are one sort of man and I am another — what of it? And what’s more, we are both of us . . .”

“Scoundrels.”

“Yes, scoundrels if you like. But you know that that’s only words.”

“All my life I wanted it not to be only words. I lived because I did not want it to be. Even now every day I want it to be not words.”

“Well, every one seeks to be where he is best off. The fish . . . that is, every one seeks his own comfort, that’s all. That’s been a commonplace for

ages and ages.”

“Comfort, do you say?”

“Oh, it’s not worth while quarrelling over words.”

“No, you were right in what you said; let it be comfort. God is necessary and so must exist.”

“Well, that’s all right, then.”

“But I know He doesn’t and can’t.”

“That’s more likely.”

“Surely you must understand that a man with two such ideas can’t go on living?”

“Must shoot himself, you mean?”

“Surely you must understand that one might shoot oneself for that alone? You don’t understand that there may be a man, one man out of your thousands of millions, one man who won’t bear it and does not want to.”

“All I understand is that you seem to be hesitating. . . . That’s very bad.”

“Stavrogin, too, is consumed by an idea,” Kirillov said gloomily, pacing up and down the room. He had not noticed the previous remark.

“What?” Pyotr Stepanovitch pricked up his ears. “What idea? Did he tell you something himself?”

“No, I guessed it myself: if Stavrogin has faith, he does not believe that he has faith. If he hasn’t faith, he does not believe that he hasn’t.”

“Well, Stavrogin has got something else worse than that in his head,” Pyotr Stepanovitch muttered peevishly, uneasily watching the turn the conversation had taken and the pallor of Kirillov.

“Damn it all, he won’t shoot himself!” he was thinking. “I always suspected it; it’s a maggot in the brain and nothing more; what a rotten lot of people!”

“You are the last to be with me; I shouldn’t like to part on bad terms with you,” Kirillov vouchsafed suddenly.

Pyotr Stepanovitch did not answer at once. “Damn it all, what is it now?” he thought again.

“I assure you, Kirillov, I have nothing against you personally as a man, and always ...”

“You are a scoundrel and a false intellect. But I am just the same as you are, and I will shoot myself while you will remain living.”

“You mean to say, I am so abject that I want to go on living.”

He could not make up his mind whether it was judicious to keep up such a conversation at such a moment or not, and resolved “to be guided by circumstances.” But the tone of superiority and of contempt for him, which Kirillov had never disguised, had always irritated him, and now for some reason it irritated him more than ever — possibly because Kirillov, who was to die within an hour or so (Pyotr Stepanovitch still reckoned upon this), seemed to him, as it were, already only half a man, some creature whom he could not allow to be haughty.

“You seem to be boasting to me of your shooting yourself.”

“I’ve always been surprised at every one’s going on living,” said Kirillov, not hearing his remark.

“H’m! Admitting that’s an idea, but . . .”

“You ape, you assent to get the better of me. Hold your tongue; you won’t understand anything. If there is no God, then I am God.”

“There, I could never understand that point of yours: why are you God?”

“If God exists, all is His will and from His will I cannot escape. If not, it’s all my will and I am bound to show self-will.”

“Self-will? But why are you bound?”

“Because all will has become mine. Can it be that no one in the whole planet, after making an end of God and believing in his own will, will dare to express his self-will on the most vital point? It’s like a beggar inheriting a fortune and being afraid of it and not daring to approach the bag of gold, thinking himself too weak to own it. I want to manifest my self-will. I may be the only one, but I’ll do it.”

“Do it by all means.”

“I am bound to shoot myself because the highest point of my self-will is to kill myself with my own hands.”

“But you won’t be the only one to kill yourself; there are lots of suicides.”

“With good cause. But to do it without any cause at all, simply for self-will, I am the only one.”

“He won’t shoot himself,” flashed across Pyotr Stepanovitch’s ruined again.

“Do you know,” he observed irritably, “if I were in your place I should kill some one else to show my self-will, not myself. You might be of use. I’ll tell you whom, if you are not afraid. Then you needn’t shoot yourself to-day, perhaps. We may come to terms.”

“To kill some one would be the lowest point of self-will, and you show your whole soul in that. I am not you: I want the highest point and I’ll kill myself.”

“He’s come to it of himself,” Pyotr Stepanovitch muttered malignantly.

“I am bound to show my unbelief,” said Kirillov, walking about the room. “I have no higher idea than disbelief in God. I have all the history of mankind on my side. Man has done nothing but invent God so as to go on living, and not kill himself; that’s the whole of universal history up till now. I am the first one in the whole history of mankind who would not invent God. Let them know it once for all.”

“He won’t shoot himself,” Pyotr Stepanovitch thought anxiously.

“Let whom know it?” he said, egging him on. “It’s only you and me here; you mean Liputin?”

“Let every one know; all will know. There is nothing secret that will not be made known. *He* said so.”

And he pointed with feverish enthusiasm to the image of the Saviour, before which a lamp was burning. Pyotr Stepanovitch lost his temper completely.

“So you still believe in Him, and you’ve lighted the lamp; ‘to be on the safe side,’ I suppose?”

The other did not speak.

“Do you know, to my thinking, you believe perhaps more thoroughly than any priest.”

“Believe in whom? In *Him?* Listen.” Kirillov stood still, gazing before him with fixed and ecstatic look. “Listen to a great idea: there was a day on earth, and in the midst of the earth there stood three crosses. One on the Cross had such faith that he said to another, ‘To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.’ The day ended; both died and passed away and found neither Paradise nor resurrection. His words did not come true. Listen: that Man was the loftiest of all on earth, He was that which gave meaning to life. The whole planet, with everything on it, is mere madness without that Man. There has never been any like Him before or since, never, up to a miracle. For that is the miracle, that there never was or never will be another like Him. And if that is so, if the laws of nature did not spare even Him, have not spared even their miracle and made even Him live in a lie and die for a lie, then all the planet is a lie and rests on a lie and on mockery. So then, the

very laws of the planet are a lie and the vaudeville of devils. What is there to live for? Answer, if you are a man."

"That's a different matter. It seems to me you've mixed up two different causes, and that's a very unsafe thing to do. But excuse me, if you are God I If the lie were ended and if you realised that all the falsity comes from the belief in that former God?"

"So at last you understand!" cried Kirillov rapturously. "So it can be understood if even a fellow like you understands. Do you understand now that the salvation for all consists in proving this idea to every one I Who will prove it? I! I can't understand how an atheist could know that there is no God and not kill himself on the spot. To recognise that there is no God and not to recognise at the same instant that one is God oneself is an absurdity, else one would certainly kill oneself. If you recognise it you are sovereign, and then you won't kill yourself but will live in the greatest glory. But one, the first, must kill himself, for else who will begin and prove it? So I must certainly kill myself, to begin and prove it. Now I am only a god against my will and I am unhappy, because I am *bound* to assert my will. All are unhappy because all are afraid to express their will. Man has hitherto been so unhappy and so poor because he has been afraid to assert his will in the highest point and has shown his self-will only in little things, like a schoolboy. I am awfully unhappy, for I'm awfully afraid. Terror is the curse of man. . . . But I will assert my will, I am bound to believe that I don't believe. I will begin and will make an end of it and open the door, and will save. That's the only thing that will save mankind and will re-create the next generation physically; for with his present physical nature man can't get on without his former God, I believe. For three years I've been seeking for the attribute of my godhead and I've found it; the attribute of my godhead is self-will! That's all I can do to prove in the highest point my independence and my new terrible freedom. For it is very terrible. I am killing myself to prove my independence and my new terrible freedom."

His face was unnaturally pale, and there was a terribly heavy look in his eyes. He was like a man in delirium. Pyotr Stepanoviteh thought he would drop on to the floor.

"Give me the pen!" Kirillov cried suddenly, quite unexpectedly, in a positive frenzy. "Dictate; I'll sign anything. I'll sign that I killed Shatov even. Dictate while it amuses me. I am not afraid of what the haughty slaves

will think! You will see for yourself that all that is secret shall be made manifest! And you will be crushed. ... I believe, I believe!”

Pyotr Stepanoviteh jumped up from his seat and instantly handed him an inkstand and paper, and began dictating, seizing the moment, quivering with anxiety.

“I, Alexey Kirillov, declare ...”

“Stay; I won’t! To whom am I declaring it?”

Kirillov was shaking as though he were in a fever. This declaration and the sudden strange idea of it seemed to absorb him entirely, as though it were a means of escape by which his tortured spirit strove for a moment’s relief.

“To whom am I declaring it? I want to know to whom?”

“To no one, every one, the first person who reads it. Why define it? The whole world!”

“The whole world! Bravo! And I won’t have any repentance. I don’t want penitence and I don’t want it for the police!”

“No, of course, there’s rid need of it, damn the police! Write, if you are in earnest!” Pyotr Stepanoviteh cried hysterically.

“Stay! I want to put at the top a face with the tongue out.”

“Ech, what nonsense,” cried Pyotr Stepanoviteh crossly, “you can express all that without the drawing, by — the tone.”

“By the tone? That’s true. Yes, by the tone, by the tone of it. Dictate, the tone.”

“I, Alexey Kirillov,” Pyotr Stepanoviteh dictated firmly and peremptorily, bending over Kirillov’s shoulder and following every letter which the latter formed with a hand trembling with excitement, “I, Kirillov, declare that to-day, the — th October, at about eight o’clock in the evening, I killed the student Shatov in the park for turning traitor and giving information of the manifestoes and of Fedka, who has been lodging with us for ten days in Filipov’s house. I am shooting myself to-day with my revolver, not because I repent and am afraid of you, but because when I was abroad I made up my mind to put an end to my life.”

“Is that all?” cried Kirillov with surprise and indignation. “Not another word,” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch, waving his hand, attempting to snatch the document from him.

“Stay.” Kirillov put his hand firmly on the paper. “Stay, it’s nonsense! I want to say with whom I killed him. Why Fedka? And what about the fire?

I want it all and I want to be abusive in tone, too, in tone!”

“Enough, Kirillov, I assure you it’s enough,” cried Pyotr Stepanovitch almost imploringly, trembling lest he should tear up the paper; “that they may believe you, you must say it as obscurely as possible, just like that, simply in hints. You must only give them a peep of the truth, just enough to tantalise them. They’ll tell a story better than ours, and of course they’ll believe themselves more than they would us; and you know, it’s better than anything — better than anything! Let me have it, it’s splendid as it is; give it to me, give it to me!”

And he kept trying to snatch the paper. Kirillov listened open-eyed and appeared to be trying to reflect, but he seemed beyond understanding now.

“Damn it all,” Pyotr Stepanovitch cried all at once, ill-humouredly, “he hasn’t signed it! Why are you staring like that? Sign!”

“I want to abuse them,” muttered Kirillov. He took the pen, however, and signed. “I want to abuse them.”

“Write ‘*Vive la republique,’* and that will be enough.”

“Bravo!” Kirillov almost bellowed with delight. ‘*Vive la republique democratique sociale et universelle ou la mart!’* No, no, that’s not it. ‘*Liberte, egalite, fraternite ou la mort.’* There, that’s better, that’s better.” He wrote it gleefully under his signature.

“Enough, enough,” repeated Pyotr Stepanovitch.

“Stay, a little more. I’ll sign it again in French, you know. ‘*De Kirilloff, gentilhomme russe et citoyen du monde.’* Ha ha!” He went off in a peal of laughter. “No, no, no; stay. I’ve found something better than all. Eureka! ‘*Gentilhomme, seminariste russe et citoyen du monde civilise!’* That’s better than any. . . .” He jumped up from the sofa and suddenly, with a rapid gesture, snatched up the revolver from the window, ran with it into the next room, and closed the door behind him.

Pyotr Stepanovitch stood for a moment, pondering and gazing at the door.

“If he does it at once, perhaps he’ll do it, but if he begins thinking, nothing will come of it.”

Meanwhile he took up the paper, sat down, and looked at it again. The wording of the document pleased him again.

“What’s needed for the moment? What’s wanted is to throw them all off the scent and keep them busy for a time. The park? There’s no park in the town and they’ll guess its Skvoreshniki of themselves. But while they are

arriving at that, time will be passing; then the search will take time too; then when they find the body it will prove that the story is true, and it will follow that's it all true, that it's true about Fedka too. And Fedka explains the fire, the Lebyadkins; so that it was all being hatched here, at Filipov's, while they overlooked it and saw nothing — that will quite turn their heads! They will never think of the quintet; Shatov and Kirillov and Fedka and Lebyadkin, and why they killed each other — that will be another question for them. Oh, damn it all, I don't hear the shot!"

Though he had been reading and admiring the wording of it, he had been listening anxiously all the time, and he suddenly flew into a rage. He looked anxiously at his watch; it was getting late and it was fully ten minutes since Kirillov had gone out. . . . Snatching up the candle, he went to the door of the room where Kirillov had shut himself up. He was just at the door when the thought struck him that the candle had burnt out, that it would not last another twenty minutes, and that there was no other in the room. He took hold of the handle and listened warily; he did not hear the slightest sound. He suddenly opened the door and lifted up the candle: something uttered a roar and rushed at him. He slammed the door with all his might and pressed his weight against it; but all sounds died away and again there was deathlike stillness.

He stood for a long while irresolute, with the candle in his hand. He had been able to see very little in the second he held the door open, but he had caught a glimpse of the face of Kirillov standing at the other end of the room by the window, and the savage fury with which the latter had rushed upon him. Pyotr Stepanovitch started, rapidly set the candle on the table, made ready his revolver, and retreated on tiptoe to the farthest corner of the room, so that if Kirillov opened the door and rushed up to the table with the revolver he would still have time to be the first to aim and fire.

Pyotr Stepanovitch had by now lost all faith in the suicide. "He was standing in the middle of the room, thinking," flashed like a whirlwind through Pyotr Stepanovitch's mind, "and the room was dark and horrible too. . . . He roared and rushed at me. There are two possibilities: either I interrupted him at the very second when he was pulling the trigger or ... or he was standing planning how to kill me. Yes, that's it, he was planning it. ... He knows I won't go away without killing him if he funks it himself — so that he would have to kill me first to prevent my killing him. . . . And again, again there is silence. I am really frightened: he may open the door

all of a sudden. . . . The nuisance of it is that he believes in God like any priest. . . . He won't shoot himself for anything! There are lots of these people nowadays 'who've come to it of themselves.' A rotten lot! Oh, damn it, the candle, the candle! It'll go out within a quarter of an hour for certain. ... I must put a stop to it; come what may, I must put a stop to it. ... Now I can kill him. . . . With that document here no one would think of my killing him. I can put him in such an attitude oh the floor with an unloaded revolver in his hand that they'd be certain he'd done it himself. . . . Ach, damn it! how is one to kill him? If I open the door he'll rush out again and shoot me first. Damn it all, he'll be sure to miss!"

He was in agonies, trembling at the necessity of action and his own indecision. At last he took up the candle and again approached the door with the revolver held up in readiness; he put his left hand, in which he held the candle, on the doorhandle. But he managed awkwardly: the handle clanked, there was a rattle and a creak. "He will fire straightway," flashed through Pyotr Stepanovitch's mind. With his foot he flung the door open violently, raised the candle, and held out the revolver; but no shot nor cry came from within. . . . There was no one in the room.

He started. The room led nowhere. There was no exit, no means of escape from it. He lifted the candle higher and looked about him more attentively: there was certainly no one. He called Kirillov's name in a low voice, then again louder; no one answered.

"Can he have got out by the window?" The casement in one window was, in fact, open. "Absurd! He couldn't have got away through, the casement." Pyotr Stepanovitch crossed the room and went up to the window. "He couldn't possibly." All at once he turned round quickly and was aghast at something extraordinary.

Against the wall facing the windows on the right of the door stood a cupboard. On the right side of this cupboard, in the corner formed by the cupboard and the wall, stood Kirillov, and he was standing in a very strange way; motionless, perfectly erect, with his arms held stiffly at his sides, his head raised and pressed tightly back against the wall in the very corner, he seemed to be trying to conceal and efface himself. Everything seemed to show that he was hiding, yet somehow it was not easy to believe it. Pyotr Stepanovitch was standing a little sideways to the corner, and could only see the projecting parts of the figure. He could not bring himself to move to the left to get a full view of Kirillov and solve the mystery. His heart began

beating violently, and he felt a sudden rush of blind fury: he started from where he stood, and, shouting and stamping with his feet, he rushed to the horrible place.

But when he reached Kirillov he stopped short again, still more overcome, horror-stricken. What struck him most was that, in spite of his shout and his furious rush, the figure did riot stir, did not move in a single limb — as though it were of stone or of wax. The pallor of the face was unnatural, the black eyes were quite unmoving and were staring away at a point in the distance. Pyotr Stepanovitch lowered the candle and raised it again, lighting up the figure from all points of view and scrutinising it. He suddenly noticed that, although Kirillov was looking straight before him, he could see him and was perhaps watching him out of the corner of his eye. Then the idea occurred to him to hold the candle right up to the wretch's face, to scorch him and see what he would do. He suddenly fancied that Kirillov's chin twitched and that something like a mocking smile passed over his lips — as though he had guessed Pyotr Stepanovitch's thought. He shuddered arid, beside himself, clutched violently at Kirillov's shoulder.

Then something happened so hideous and so soon over that Pyotr Stepanovitch could never afterwards recover a coherent impression of it. He had hardly touched Kirillov when the latter bent down quickly and with his head knocked the candle out of Pyotr Stepanovitch's hand; the candlestick fell with a clang on the ground and the candle went out. At the same moment he was conscious of a fearful pain in the little finger of his left hand. He cried out, and all that he could remember was that, beside himself, he hit out with all his might and struck three blows with the revolver on the head of Kirillov, who had bent down to him and had bitten his finger. At last he tore away his finger and rushed headlong to get out of the house, feeling his way in the dark. He was pursued by terrible shouts from the room.

"Directly, directly, directly, directly." Ten times. But he still ran on, and was running into the porch when he suddenly heard a loud shot. Then he stopped short in the dark porch and stood deliberating for five minutes; at last he made his way back into the house. But he had to get the candle. He had only to feel on the floor on the right of the cupboard for the candlestick; but how was he to light the candle? There suddenly came into his mind a vague recollection: he recalled that when he had run into the kitchen the day before to attack Fedka he had noticed in passing a large red box of matches

in a corner on a shelf. Feeling with his hands, he made his way to the door on the left leading to the kitchen, found it, crossed the passage, and went down the steps. On the shelf, on the very spot where he had just recalled seeing it, he felt in the dark a full unopened box of matches. He hurriedly went up the steps again without striking a light, and it was only when he was near the cupboard, at the spot where he had struck Kirillov with the revolver and been bitten by him, that he remembered his bitten finger, and at the same instant was conscious that it was unbearably painful. Clenching his teeth, he managed somehow to light the candle-end, set it in the candlestick again, and looked about him: near the open casement, with his feet towards the right-hand corner, lay the dead body of Kirillov. The shot had been fired at the right temple and the bullet had come out at the top on the left, shattering the skull. There were splashes of blood and brains. The revolver was still in the suicide's hand on the floor. Death must have been instantaneous. After a careful look round, Pyotr Stepanovitch got up and went out on tiptoe, closed the door, left the candle on the table in the outer room, thought a moment, and resolved not to put it out, reflecting that it could not possibly set fire to anything. Looking once more at the document left on the table, he smiled mechanically and then went out of the house, still for some reason walking on tiptoe. He crept through Fedka's hole again and carefully replaced the posts after him.

III

Precisely at ten minutes to six Pyotr Stepanovitch and Erkel were walking up and down the platform at the railway-station beside a rather long train. Pyotr Stepanovitch was setting oft and Erkel was saying good-bye to him. The luggage was in, and his bag was in the seat he had taken in a second-class carriage. The first bell had rung already; they were waiting for the second. Pyotr Stepanovitch looked about him, openly watching the passengers as they got into the train. But he did not meet anyone he knew well; only twice he nodded to acquaintances — a merchant whom he knew slightly, and then a young village priest who was going to his parish two stations away. Erkel evidently wanted to speak of something of importance in the last moments, though possibly he did not himself know exactly of what, but he could not bring himself to begin! He kept fancying that Pyotr

Stepanovitch seemed anxious to get rid of him and was impatient for the last bell.

“You look at every one so openly,” he observed with some timidity, as though he would have warned him.

“Why not? It would not do for me to conceal myself at present. It’s too soon. Don’t be uneasy. All I am afraid of is that the devil might send Liputin this way; he might scent me out and race off here.”

“Pyotr Stepanovitch, they are not to be trusted,” Erkel brought out resolutely. “Liputin?”

“None of them, Pyotr Stepanovitch.”

“Nonsense! they are all bound by what happened yesterday. There isn’t one who would turn traitor. People won’t go to certain destruction unless they’ve lost their reason.”

“Pyotr Stepanovitch, but they will lose their reason.” Evidently that idea had already occurred to Pyotr Stepanovitch too, and so Erkel’s observation irritated him the more.

“You are not in a funk too, are you, Erkel? I rely on you more than on any of them. I’ve seen now what each of them is worth. Tell them to-day all I’ve told you. I leave them in your charge. Go round to each of them this morning. Read them my written instructions to-morrow, or the day after, when you are all together and they are capable of listening again . . . and believe me, they will be by to-morrow, for they’ll be in an awful funk, and that will make them as soft as wax. . . . The great thing is that you shouldn’t be downhearted.”

“Ach, Pyotr Stepanovitch, it would be better if you weren’t going away.”

“But I am only going for a few days; I shall be back in no time.”

“Pyotr Stepanovitch,” Erkel brought out warily but resolutely, “what if you were going to Petersburg? Of course, I understand that you are only doing what’s necessary for the cause.”

“I expected as much from you, Erkel. If you have guessed that I am going to Petersburg you can realise that I couldn’t tell them yesterday, at that moment, that I was going so far for fear of frightening them. You saw for yourself what a state they were in. But you understand that I am going for the cause, for work of the first importance, for the common cause, and not to save my skin, as Liputin imagines.”

“Pyotr Stepanovitch, what if you were going abroad? I should understand ... I should understand that you must be careful of yourself

because you are everything and we are nothing. I shall understand, Pyotr Stepanovitch.” The poor boy’s voice actually quivered.

“Thank you, Erkel. . . . Aie, you’ve touched my bad finger.” (Erkel had pressed his hand awkwardly; the bad finger was discreetly bound up in black silk.) “But I tell you positively again that I am going to Petersburg only to sniff round, and perhaps shall only be there for twenty-four hours and then back here again at once. When I come back I shall stay at Gaganov’s country place for the sake of appearances. If there is any notion of danger, I should be the first to take the lead and share it. If I stay longer, in Petersburg I’ll let you know at once ... in the way we’ve arranged, and you’ll tell them.” The second bell rang.

“Ah, then there’s only five, minutes before the train starts. I don’t want the group here to break up, you know. I am not afraid; don’t be anxious about me. I have plenty of such centres, and it’s not much consequence; but there’s no harm in haying as many centres as possible. But I am quite at ease about you, though I am leaving you almost alone with those idiots. Don’t be uneasy; they won’t turn traitor, they won’t have the pluck. . . . Ha ha, you going to-day too?” he cried suddenly in a quite different, cheerful voice to a very young man, who came up gaily to greet him. “I didn’t know you were going by the express too. Where are you off to ... your mother’s?”

The mother of the young man was a very wealthy landowner in a neighbouring province, and the young man was a distant relation of Yulia Mihailovna’s and had been staying about a fortnight in our town.

“No, I am going farther, to R —— . I’ve eight hours to live through in the train. Off to Petersburg?” laughed the young man.

“What makes you suppose I must be going to Petersburg?” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, laughing even more openly.

The young man shook his gloved finger at him.

“Well, you’ve guessed right,” Pyotr Stepanovitch whispered to him mysteriously. “I am going with letters from Yulia Mihailovna and have to call on three or four personages, as you can imagine — bother them all, to speak candidly. It’s a beastly job!”

“But why is she in such a panic? Tell me,” the young man whispered too. “She wouldn’t see even me yesterday. I don’t think she has anything to fear for her husband, quite the contrary; he fell down so creditably at the fire — ready to sacrifice his life, so to speak.”

“Well, there it is,” laughed Pyotr Stepanovitch. “You see, she is afraid that people may have written from here already . . . that is, some gentlemen. . . . The fact is, Stavrogin is at the bottom of it, or rather Prince K. . . . Ech, it’s a long story; I’ll tell you something about it on the journey if you like — as far as my chivalrous feelings will allow me, at least. . . . This is my relation, Lieutenant Erkel, who lives down here.”

The young man, who had been stealthily glancing at Erkel, touched his hat; Erkel made a bow.

“But I say, Verhovensky, eight hours in the train is an awful ordeal. Berestov, the colonel, an awfully funny fellow, is travelling with me in the first class. He is a neighbour of ours in the country, and his wife is a Garin *(nee* de Garine), and you know he is a very decent fellow. He’s got ideas too. He’s only been here a couple of days. He’s passionately fond of whist; couldn’t we get up a game, eh? I’ve already fixed on a fourth —

Pripuhlov, our merchant from T —— with a beard, a millionaire — .I mean it, a real millionaire; you can take my word for it. ... I’ll introduce you; he is a very interesting money-bag. We shall have a laugh.”

“I shall be delighted, and I am awfully fond of cards in the train, but I am going second class.”

“Nonsense, that’s no matter. Get in with us. I’ll tell them directly to move you to the first class. The chief guard would do anything I tell him. What have you got? . . . a bag? a rug?”

“First-rate. Come along!”

Pyotr Stepanovitch took his bag, his rug, and his book, and at once and with alacrity transferred himself to the first class. Erkel helped him. The third bell rang.

“Well, Erkel.” Hurriedly, and with a preoccupied air, Pyotr Stepanovitch held out his hand from the window for the last time. “You see, I am sitting down to cards with them.”

“Why explain, Pyotr Stepanovitch? I understand, I understand it all!”

“Well, au revoir,” Pyotr Stepanovitch turned away suddenly on his name being called by the young man, who wanted to introduce him to his partners. And Erkel saw nothing more of Pyotr Stepanovitch.

He returned home very sad. Not that he was alarmed at Pyotr Stepanovitch’s leaving them so suddenly, but ... he had turned away from him so quickly when that young swell had called to him and ... he might have said something different to him, not “Au revoir,” or ... or at least have

pressed his hand more warmly. That last was bitterest of all. Something else was beginning to gnaw in his poor little heart, something which he could not understand himself yet, something connected with the evening before.

CHAPTER VII.

STEPAN TROFIMOVITCH'S LAST WANDERING

I am persuaded that Stepan Trofimovitch was terribly frightened as he felt the time fixed for his insane enterprise drawing near. I am convinced that he suffered dreadfully from terror, especially on the night before he started — that awful night. Nastasya mentioned afterwards that he had gone to bed late and fallen asleep. But that proves nothing; men sentenced to death sleep very soundly, they say, even the night before their execution. Though he set off by daylight, when a nervous man is always a little more confident (and the major, Virginsky's relative, used to give up believing in God every morning when the night was over), yet I am convinced he could never, without horror, have imagined himself alone on the high road in such a position. No doubt a certain desperation in his feelings softened at first the terrible sensation of sudden solitude in which he at once found himself as soon as he had left Nastasya, and the corner in which he had been warm and snug for twenty years. But it made no difference; even with the clearest recognition of all the horrors awaiting him he would have gone out to the high road and walked along it! There was something proud in the undertaking which allured him in spite of everything. Oh, he might have accepted Varvara Petrovna's luxurious provision and have remained living on her charity, "*comme un* humble dependent." But he had not accepted her charity and was not remaining! And here he was leaving her of himself, and holding aloft the "standard of a great idea, and going to die for it on the open road." That is how he must have been feeling; that's how his action must have appeared to him.

Another question presented itself to me more than once. Why did he run away, that is, literally run away on foot, rather than simply drive away? I put it down at first to the impracticability of fifty years and the fantastic bent of his mind under the influence of strong emotion. I imagined that the thought of posting tickets and horses (even if they had bells) would have seemed too simple and prosaic to him; a pilgrimage, on the other hand, even under an umbrella, was ever so much more picturesque and in character with love and resentment. But now that everything is over, I am inclined to think that it all came about in a much simpler way. To begin with, he was

afraid to hire horses because Varvara Petrovna might have heard of it and prevented him from going by force; which she certainly would have done, and he certainly would have given in, and then farewell to the great idea for ever. Besides, to take tickets for anywhere he must have known at least where he was going. But to think about that was the greatest agony to him at that moment; he was utterly unable to fix upon a place. For if he had to fix on any particular town his enterprise would at once have seemed in his own eyes absurd and impossible; he felt that very strongly. What should he do in that particular town rather than in any other? Look out for *ce marchand?* But what *marchand?* At that point his second and most terrible question cropped up. In reality there was nothing he dreaded more than *ce marchand,* whom he had rushed off to seek so recklessly, though, of course, he was terribly afraid of finding him. No, better simply the high road, better simply to set off for it, and walk along it and to think of nothing so long as he could put off thinking. The high road is something very very long, of which one cannot see the end — like human life, like human dreams. There is an idea in the open road, but what sort of idea is there in travelling with posting tickets? Posting tickets mean an end to ideas. *Vive la grande route* and then as God wills.

After the sudden and unexpected interview with Liza which I have described, he rushed on, more lost in forgetfulness than ever. The high road passed half a mile from Skvoreshniki and, strange to say, he was not at first aware that he was on it. Logical reasoning or even distinct consciousness was unbearable to him at this moment. A fine rain kept drizzling, ceasing, and drizzling again; but he did not even notice the rain. He did not even notice either how he threw his bag over his shoulder, nor how much more comfortably he walked with it so. He must have walked like that for nearly a mile or so when he suddenly stood still and looked round. The old road, black, marked with wheel-ruts and planted with willows on each side, ran before him like an endless thread; on the right hand were bare plains from which the harvest had long ago been carried; on the left there were bushes and in the distance beyond them a copse.

And far, far away a scarcely perceptible line of the railway, running aslant, and on it the smoke of a train, but no sound was heard. Stepan Trofimovitch felt a little timid, but only for a moment. He heaved a vague sigh, put down his bag beside a willow, and sat down to rest. As he moved to sit down he was conscious of being chilly and wrapped himself in his

rug; noticing at the same time that it was raining, he put up his umbrella. He sat like that for some time, moving his lips from time to time and firmly grasping the umbrella handle. Images of all sorts passed in feverish procession before him, rapidly succeeding one another in his mind.

“Lise, Lise,” he thought, “and with her *ce Maurice.* . . . Strange people. . . . But what was the strange fire, and what were they talking about, and who were murdered? I fancy Nastasya has not found out yet and is still waiting for me with my coffee . . . cards? Did I really lose men at cards? H’m! Among us in Russia in the times of serfdom, so called. . . . My God, yes — Fedka!”

He started all over with terror and looked about him. “What if that Fedka is in hiding somewhere behind the bushes? They say he has a regular band of robbers here on the high road. Oh, mercy, I ... I’ll tell him the whole truth then, that I was to blame . . . and that I’ve been miserable about him *for ten years.* More miserable than he was as a soldier, and . . . I’ll give him my purse. H’m! *J’ai en tout quarante roubles; il prendra les roubles et il me tuera tout de meme.”*

In his panic he for some reason shut up the umbrella and laid it down beside him. A cart came into sight on the high road in the distance coming from the town.

“*Grace a Dieu,* that’s a cart and it’s coming at a walking pace; that can’t be dangerous. The wretched little horses here ... I always said that breed ... It was Pyotr Ilyitch though, he talked at the club about horse-breeding and I trumped him, *et puis* . . . but what’s that behind? . . . I believe there’s a woman in the cart. A peasant and a woman, *cela commence* d *etre rassurant.* The woman behind and the man in front — *c’est tres rassurant.* There’s a cow behind the cart tied by the horns, *c’est rassurant au plus haut degre.”*

The cart reached him; it was a fairly solid peasant cart. The woman was sitting on a tightly stuffed sack and the man on the front of the cart with his legs hanging over towards Stepan Trofimovitch. A red cow was, in fact, shambling behind, tied by the horns to the cart. The man and the woman gazed open-eyed at Stepan Trofimovitch, and Stepan Trofimovitch gazed back at them with equal wonder, but after he had let them pass twenty paces, he got up hurriedly all of a sudden and walked after them. In the proximity of the cart it was natural that he should feel safer, but when he had overtaken it he became oblivious of everything again and sank back

into his disconnected thoughts and fancies. He stepped along with no suspicion, of course, that for the two peasants he was at that instant the most mysterious and interesting object that one could meet on the high road.

“What sort may you be, pray, if it’s not uncivil to ask?” the woman could not resist asking at last when Stepan Trofimovitch glanced absent-mindedly at her. She was a woman of about seven and twenty, sturdily built, with black eyebrows, rosy cheeks, and a friendly smile on her red lips, between which gleamed white even teeth.

“You . . . you are addressing me?” muttered Stepan Trofimovitch with mournful wonder.

“A merchant, for sure,” the peasant observed confidently. He was a well-grown man of forty with a broad and intelligent face, framed in a reddish beard.

“No, I am not exactly a merchant, I ... I ... *moi c’est autre chose.”* Stepan Trofimovitch parried the question somehow, and to be on the safe side he dropped back a little from the cart, so that he was walking on a level with the cow.

“Must be a gentleman,” the man decided, hearing words not Russian, and he gave a tug at the horse.

“That’s what set us wondering. You are out for a walk seemingly?” the woman asked inquisitively again.

“You . . . you ask me?”

“Foreigners come from other parts sometimes by the train; your boots don’t seem to be from hereabouts. . . .”

“They are army boots,” the man put in complacently and significantly.

“No, I am not precisely in the army, I ...”

“What an inquisitive woman!” Stepan Trofimovitch mused with vexation. “And how they stare at me . . . *mais enfin.* In fact, it’s strange that I feel, as it were, conscience-stricken before them, and yet I’ve done them no harm.”

The woman was whispering to the man.

“If it’s no offence, we’d give you a lift if so be it’s agreeable.”

Stepan Trofimovitch suddenly roused himself.

“Yes, yes, my friends, I accept it with pleasure, for I’m very tired; but how am I to get in?”

“How wonderful it is,” he thought to himself, “that I’ve been walking so long beside that cow and it never entered my head to ask them for a lift.

This ‘real life’ has something very original about it.”

But the peasant had not, however, pulled up the horse.

“But where are you bound for?” he asked with some mistrustfulness.

Stepan Trofimovitch did not understand him at once.

“To Hatovo, I suppose?”

“Hatov? No, not to Hatov’s exactly? . . . And I don’t know him though I’ve heard of him.”

“The village of Hatovo, the village, seven miles from here.”

“A village? *C’est charmant,* to be sure I’ve heard of it. . . .”

Stepan Trofimovitch was still walking, they had not yet taken him into the cart. A guess that was a stroke of genius flashed through his mind.

“You think perhaps that I am . . . I’ve got a passport and I am a professor, that is, if you like, a teacher . . . but a head teacher. I am a head teacher. *Oui, c’est comme ca qu’on pent traduire.* I should be very glad of a lift and I’ll buy you . . . I’ll buy you a quart of vodka for it.”

“It’ll be half a rouble, sir; it’s a bad road.”

“Or it wouldn’t be fair to ourselves,” put in the woman.

“Half a rouble? Very good then, half a rouble. *C’est encore mieux; fai en tout quarante roubles mais . . .”*

The peasant stopped the horse and by their united efforts Stepan Trofimovitch was dragged into the cart, and seated on the sack by the woman. He was still pursued by the same whirl of ideas. Sometimes he was aware himself that he was terribly absent-minded, and that he was not thinking of what he ought to be thinking of and wondered at it. This consciousness of abnormal weakness of mind became at moments very painful and even humiliating to him.

“How . . . how is this you’ve got a cow behind?” he suddenly asked the woman.

“What do you mean, sir, as though you’d never seen one,” laughed the woman.

“We bought it in the town,” the peasant put in. “Our cattle died last spring . . . the plague. All the beasts have died round us, all of them. There aren’t half of them left, it’s heartbreaking.”

And again he lashed the horse, which had got stuck in a rut.

“Yes, that does happen among you in Russia ... in general we Russians . . . Well, yes, it happens,” Stepan Trofimovitch broke off.

“If you are a teacher, what are you going to Hatovo for? Maybe you are going on farther.”

“I ... I’m not going farther precisely. . . . *C’est-d-dire,* I’m going to a merchant’s.”

“To Spasov, I suppose?”

“Yes, yes, to Spasov. But that’s no matter.”

“If you are going to Spasov and on foot, it will take you a week in your boots,” laughed the woman.

“I dare say, I dare say, no matter, *mes amis,* no matter.” Stepan Trofimovitch cut her short impatiently.

“Awfully inquisitive people; but the woman speaks better than he does, and I notice that since February 19,* their language has altered a little, and . . . and what business is it of mine whether I’m going to Spasov or not? Besides, I’ll pay them, so why do they pester me.”

“If you are going to Spasov, you must take the steamer,” the peasant persisted.

.” That’s true indeed,” the woman put in with animation, “for if you drive along the bank it’s twenty-five miles out of the way.”

“Thirty-five.”

“You’ll just catch the steamer at Ustyevo at two o’clock tomorrow,” the woman decided finally. But Stepan Trofimovitch was obstinately silent. His questioners, too, sank into silence. The peasant tugged at his horse at rare intervals; the peasant woman exchanged brief remarks with him. Stepan Trofimovitch fell into a doze. He was tremendously surprised when the woman, laughing, gave him a poke and he found himself in a rather large village at the door of a cottage with three windows.

“You’ve had a nap, sir?”

“What is it? Where am I? Ah, yes! Well . . . never mind,” sighed Stepan Trofimovitch, and he got out of the cart.

He looked about him mournfully; the village scene seemed strange to him and somehow terribly remote.

*February 19, 1861, the day of the Emancipation of the Serfs, is meant. — Translator’s note.

“And the half-rouble, I was forgetting it!” he said to the peasant, turning to him with an excessively hurried gesture; he was evidently by now afraid to part from them.

“We’ll settle indoors, walk in,” the peasant invited him.

“It’s comfortable inside,” the woman said reassuringly.

Stepan Trofimovitch mounted the shaky steps. “How can it be?” he murmured in profound and apprehensive perplexity. He went into the cottage, however. “*Elle Pa voulu*” he felt a stab at his heart and again he became oblivious of everything, even of the fact that he had gone into the cottage.

It was a light and fairly clean peasant’s cottage, with three windows and two rooms; not exactly an inn, but a cottage at which people who knew the place were accustomed to stop “on their way through the village. Stepan Trofimovitch, quite unembarrassed, went to the foremost corner; forgot to greet anyone, sat down and sank into thought. Meanwhile a sensation of warmth, extremely agreeable after three hours of travelling in the damp, was suddenly diffused throughout his person. Even the slight shivers that spasmodically ran down his spine — such as always occur in particularly nervous people when they are feverish and have suddenly come into a Warm room from the cold — became all at once strangely agreeable. He raised his head and the delicious fragrance of the hot pancakes with which the woman of the house was busy at the stove tickled his nostrils. With a childlike smile he leaned towards the woman and suddenly said:

“What’s that? Are they pancakes? *Mais . . . c’est char-mant.”*

“Would you like some, sir?” the woman politely offered him at once.

“I should like some, I certainly should, and . . . may I ask you for some tea too,” said Stepan Trofimovitch, reviving.

“Get the samovar? With the greatest pleasure.”

On a large plate with a big blue pattern on it were served the pancakes — regular peasant pancakes, thin, made half of wheat, covered with fresh hot butter, most delicious pancakes. Stepan Trofimovitch tasted them with relish.

“How rich they are and how good! And if one could only have *un doigt d’eau de vie.”*

“It’s a drop of vodka you would like, sir, isn’t it?”

“Just so, just so, a little, *un tout petit* new,”

“Five farthings’ worth, I suppose?”

“Five, yes, five, five, five, *un tout petit rien,”* Stepan Trofimovitch assented with a blissful smile.

Ask a peasant to do anything for you, and if he can, and will, he will serve you with care and friendliness; but ask him to fetch you vodka — and

his habitual serenity and friendliness will pass at once into a sort of joyful haste and alacrity; he will be as keen in your interest as though you were one of his family. The peasant who fetches vodka — even though you are going to drink it and not he and he knows that beforehand — seems, as it were, to be enjoying part of your future gratification. Within three minutes (the tavern was only two paces away), a bottle and a large greenish wineglass were set on the table before Stepan Trofimovitch.

“Is that all for me!” He was extremely surprised. “I’ve always had vodka but I never knew you could get so much for five farthings.”

He filled the wineglass, got up and with a certain solemnity crossed the room to the other corner where his fellow-traveller, the black-browed peasant woman, who had shared the sack with him and bothered him with her questions, had ensconced herself. The woman was taken aback, and began to decline, but after having said all that was prescribed by politeness, she stood up and drank it decorously in three sips, as women do, and, with an expression of intense suffering on her face, gave back the wineglass and bowed to Stepan Trofimovitch. He returned the bow with dignity and returned to the table with an expression of positive pride on his countenance.

All this was done on the inspiration of the moment: a second before he had no idea that he would go and treat the peasant woman.

“I know how to get on with peasants to perfection, to perfection, and I’ve always told them so,” he thought complacently, pouring out the rest of the vodka; though there was less than a glass left, it warmed and revived him, and even went a little to his head.

“*Je suis malade tout a- fait, mais ce n’est pas trap mauvais d’etre malade.”*

“Would you care to purchase?” a gentle feminine voice asked close by him.

He raised his eyes and to his surprise saw a lady — *une dame, et die en avait Pair,* somewhat over thirty, very modest in appearance, dressed not like a peasant, in a dark gown with a grey shawl on her shoulders. There was something very kindly in her face which attracted Stepan Trofimovitch immediately. She had only just come back to the cottage, where her things had been left on a bench close by the place where Stepan Trofimovitch had seated himself. Among them was a portfolio, at which he remembered he had looked with curiosity on going in, and a pack, not very large, of

American leather. From this pack she took out two nicely bound books with a cross engraved on the cover, and offered them to Stepan Trofimovitch.

"*Et . . . mais je croisque c'est I'Evangile* . . . with the greatest pleasure. . . . Ah, now I understand. . . . *Vous etes ce qu'on appelle* a gospel-woman; I've read more than once. . . . Half a rouble?"

"Thirty-five kopecks," answered the gospel-woman. "With the greatest pleasure. *Je n'ai rien centre l'Evangile*, and I've been wanting to re-read it for a long time. . . ."

The idea occurred to him at the moment that he had not read the gospel for thirty years at least, and at most had recalled some passages of it, seven years before, when reading Kenan's "Vie de Jesus." As he had no small change he pulled out his four ten-rouble notes — all that he had. The woman of the house undertook to get change, and only then he noticed, looking round, that a good many people had come into the cottage, and that they had all been watching him for some time past, and seemed to be talking about him. They were talking too of the fire in the town, especially the owner of the cart who had only just returned from the town with the cow. They talked of arson, of the Shpigulin men.

"He said nothing to me about the fire when he brought me along, although he talked of everything," struck Stepan Trofimovitch for some reason.

"Master, Stepan Trofimovitch, sir, is it you I see? Well, I never should have thought it! ... Don't you know me?" exclaimed a middle-aged man who looked like an old-fashioned house-serf, wearing no beard and dressed in an overcoat with a wide turn-down collar. Stepan Trofimovitch was alarmed at hearing his own name.

"Excuse me," he muttered, "I don't quite remember you."

"You don't remember me. I am Anisim, Anisim Ivanov. I used to be in the service of the late Mr. Gaganov, and many's the time I've seen you, sir, with Varvara Petrovna at the late Avdotya Sergyevna's. I used to go to you with books from her, and twice I brought you Petersburg sweets from her. . . ."

"Why, yes, I remember you, Anisim," said Stepan Trofimovitch, smiling. "Do you live here?"

"I live near Spasov, close to the V —— Monastery, in the service of Marta Sergyevna, Avdotya Sergyevna's sister. Perhaps your honour remembers her; she broke her leg falling out of her carriage on her way to a

ball. Now her honour lives near the monastery, and I am in her service. And now as your honour sees, I am on my way to the town to see my kinsfolk."

"Quite so, quite so."

"I felt so pleased when I saw you, you used to be so kind to me," Anisim smiled delightedly. "But where are you travelling to, sir, all by yourself as it seems. . . . You've never been a journey alone, I fancy?"

Stepan Trofimovitch looked at him in alarm.

"You are going, maybe, to our parts, to Spasov?"

"Yes, I am going to Spasov. *Il me semble que tout le monde va a Spassof."*

"You don't say it's to Fyodor Matveyevitch's? They will be pleased to see you. He had such a respect for you in old days; he often speaks of you now."

"Yes, yes, to Fyodor Matveyevitch's."

"To be sure, to be sure. The peasants here are wondering; they make out they met you, sir, walking on the high road. They are a foolish lot."

"I ... I ... Yes, you know, Anisim, I made a wager, you know, like an Englishman, that I would go on foot and I ..."

The perspiration came out on his forehead.

"To be sure, to be sure." Anisim listened with merciless curiosity. But Stepan Trofimovitch could bear it no longer. He was so disconcerted that he was on the point of getting up and going out of the cottage. But the samovar was brought in, and at the same moment the gospel-woman, who had been out of the room, returned. With the air of a man clutching at a straw he turned to her and offered her tea. Anisim submitted and walked away.

The peasants certainly had begun to feel perplexed: "What sort of person is he? He was found walking on the high road, he says he is a teacher, he is dressed like a foreigner, and has no more sense than a little child; he answers queerly as though he had run away from some one, and he's got money!" An idea was beginning to gain ground that information must be given to the authorities, "especially as things weren't quite right in the town." But Anisim set all that right in a minute. Going into the passage he explained to every one who cared to listen that Stepan Trofimovitch was not exactly a teacher but "a very learned man and busy with very learned studies, and was a landowner of the district himself, and had been living for twenty-two years with her excellency, the general's widow, the stout Madame Stavrogin, and was by way of being the most important person in

her house, and was held in the greatest respect by every one in the town. He used to lose by fifties and hundreds in an evening at the club of the nobility, and in rank he was a councillor, which was equal to a lieutenant-colonel in the army, which was next door to being a colonel. As for his having money, he had so much from the stout Madame Stavrogin that there was no reckoning it" — and so on and so on.

"*Mais c'est une. dame et tres comme il faut,*" thought Stepan Trofimovitch, as he recovered from Anisim's attack, gazing with agreeable curiosity at his neighbour, the gospel pedlar, who was, however, drinking the tea from a saucer and nibbling at a piece of sugar. "*Ce petit morceau de sucre, ce n'est rien. . . .* There is something noble and independent about her, and at the same time — gentle. *Le comme il faut tout pur,* but rather in a different style."

He soon learned from her that her name was Sofya Matveyevna Ulitin and she lived at K —— , that she had a sister there, a widow; that she was a widow too, and that her husband, who was a sub-lieutenant risen from the ranks, had been killed at Sevastopol.

"But you are still so young, *vous n'avez pas trente ans.*"

"Thirty-four," said Sofya Matveyevna, smiling.

"What, you understand French?"

"A little. I lived for four years after that in a gentleman's family, and there I picked it up from the children."

She told him that being left a widow at eighteen she was for some time in Sevastopol as a nurse, and had afterwards lived in various places, and now she travelled about selling the gospel.

"*Mais, mon Dieu*, wasn't it you who had a strange adventure in our town, a very strange adventure?"

She flushed; it turned out that it had been she.

"*Ces vauriens, ces malheureux,*" he began in a voice quivering with indignation; miserable and hateful recollections stirred painfully in his heart. For a minute he seemed to sink into oblivion.

"Bah, but she's gone away again," he thought, with a start, noticing that she was not by his side. "She keeps going out and is busy about something; I notice that she seems upset too. . . . *Bah, je deviens egoiste!*"

He raised his eyes and saw Anisim again, but this time in the most menacing surroundings. The whole cottage was full of peasants, and it was evidently Anisim who had brought them all in. Among them were the

master of the house, and the peasant with the cow, two other peasants (they turned out to be cab-drivers), another little man, half drunk, dressed like a peasant but clean-shaven, who seemed like a townsman ruined by drink and talked more than any of them. And they were all discussing him, Stepan Trofimovitch. The peasant with the cow insisted on his point that to go round by the lake would be thirty-five miles out of the way, and that he certainly must go by steamer. The half-drunken man and the man of the house warmly retorted:

"Seeing that, though of course it will be nearer for his honour on the steamer over the lake; that's true enough, but maybe according to present arrangements the steamer doesn't go there, brother."

"It does go, it does, it will go for another week," cried Anisim, more excited than any of them.

"That's true enough, but it doesn't arrive punctually, seeing it's late in the season, and sometimes it'll stay three days together at Ustyevo."

"It'll be there to-morrow at two o'clock punctually. You'll be at Spasov punctually by the evening," cried Anisim, eager to do his best for Stepan Trofimovitch.

"*Mais qu'est-ce qu'il a, cet homme,*" thought Stepan Trofimovitch, trembling and waiting in terror for what was in store for him.

The cab-drivers, too, came forward and began bargaining with him; they asked three roubles to Ustyevo. The others shouted that that was not too much, that that was the fare, and that they had been driving from here to Ustyevo all the summer for that fare.

"But . . . it's nice here too. . . . And I don't want . . ." Stepan Trofimovitch mumbled in protest.

"Nice it is, sir, you are right there, it's wonderfully nice at Spasov now and Fyodor Matveyevitch will be so pleased to see you."

"*Man Dieu, mes amis,* all this is such a surprise to me."

At last Sofya Matveyevna came back. But she sat down on the bench looking dejected and mournful.

"I can't get to Spasov!" she said to the woman of the cottage.

"Why, you are bound to Spasov, too, then?" cried Stepan Trofimovitch, starting.

It appeared that a lady had the day before told her to wait at Hatovo and had promised to take her to Spasov, and now this lady had not turned up after all.

“What am I to do now?” repeated Sofya Matveyevna.

“*Mais, ma chere et nouvelle amie, I* can take you just as well as the lady to that village, whatever it is, to which I’ve hired horses, and to-morrow — well, to-morrow, we’ll go on together to Spasov.”

“Why, are you going to Spasov too?”

“*Mais que faire, et je suis enchante!* I shall take you with the greatest pleasure; you see they want to take me, I’ve engaged them already. Which of you did I engage?” Stepan Trofimovitch suddenly felt an intense desire to go to Spasov.

Within a quarter of an hour they were getting into a covered trap, he very lively and quite satisfied, she with her pack beside him, with a grateful smile on her face. Anisim helped them in.

“A good journey to you, sir,” said he, bustling officiously round the trap, “it has been a treat to see you.”

“Good-bye, good-bye, my friend, good-bye.”

“You’ll see Fyodor Matveyevitch, sir . . .”

“Yes, my friend, yes . . . Fyodor Petrovitch . . . only good-bye.”

II

“You see, my friend . . . you’ll allow me to call myself your friend, *n’est-ce pas?*” Stepan Trofimovitch began hurriedly as soon as the trap started. “You see I ... *J’aime le peuple, c’est indispensable, mais il me semble que je ne m’avais jamais vu de pres. Stasie . . . cela va sans dire qu’elle est aussi du peuple, mais le vrai peuple*, that is, the real ones, who are on the high road, it seems to me they care for nothing, but where exactly I am going . . . But let bygones be bygones. I fancy I am talking at, random, but I believe it’s from being flustered.”

“You don’t seem quite well.” Sofya Matveyevna watched him’ keenly though respectfully.

“No, no, I must only wrap myself up, besides there’s a fresh wind, very fresh in fact, but ... let us forget that. That’s not what I really meant to say. *Chere et incomparable amie,* I feel that I am almost happy, and it’s your doing. Happiness is not good for me for it makes me rush to forgive all my enemies at once. . . .”

“Why, that’s a very good thing, sir.”

“Not always, *chere innocente. L’Evangile . . . voyez-vous, desormais nous precherons ensemble* and I will gladly sell your beautiful little books. Yes, I feel that that perhaps is an idea, *quelque chose de tres nouveau dans ce genre.* The peasants are religious, *c’est admis,* but they don’t yet know the gospel. I will expound it to them. . . . By verbal explanation one might correct the mistakes in that remarkable book, which I am of course prepared to treat with the utmost respect. I will be of service even on the high road. I’ve always been of use, I always told *them* so *et d, cette chere ingrate. . . .* Oh, we will forgive, we will forgive, first of all we will forgive all and always. . . . We will hope that we too shall be forgiven. Yes, for all, every one of us, have wronged one another, all are guilty!”

“That’s a very good saying, I think, sir.”

“Yes, yes. ... I feel that I am speaking well. I shall speak to them very well, but what was the chief thing I meant to say? I keep losing the thread and forgetting. . . . Will you allow me to remain with you? I feel that the look in your eyes and . . . I am surprised in fact at your manners. You are simple-hearted, you call me ‘sir,’ and turn your cup upside down on your saucer . . . and that horrid lump of sugar; but there’s something charming about you, and I see from your features.. . . Oh, don’t blush and don’t be afraid of me as a man. *Chere et incomparable, pour moi une femme c’est tout.* I can’t live without a woman, but only at her side, only at her side; ... I am awfully muddled, awfully. I can’t remember what I meant to say. Oh, blessed is he to whom God always sends a woman and . . . and I fancy, indeed, that I am in a sort of ecstasy. There’s a lofty idea in the open road too! That’s what I meant to say, that’s it — about the idea. Now I’ve remembered it, but I kept losing it before. And why have they taken us farther. It was nice there too, but here — *cela dement trop froid. A propos, j’ai en tout quarante roubles et voila cet argent,* take it, take it, I can’t take care of it, I shall lose it or it will be taken away from me. ... I seem to be sleepy, I’ve a giddiness in my head. Yes, I am giddy, I am giddy, I am giddy. Oh, how kind you are, what’s that you are wrapping me up in?”

“You are certainly in a regular fever and I’ve covered you with my rug; only about the money, I’d rather.”

“Oh, for God’s sake, *n’en parlous plus parce que cela me fait mal.* Oh, how kind you are!”

He ceased speaking, and with strange suddenness dropped into a feverish shivery sleep. The road by which they drove the twelve miles was not a

smooth one, and their carriage jolted cruelly. Stepan Trofimovitch woke up frequently, quickly raised his head from the little pillow which Sofya Matveyevna had slipped under it, clutched her by the hand and asked “Are you here?” as though he were afraid she had left him. He told her, too, that he had dreamed of gaping jaws full of teeth, and that he had very much disliked it. Sofya Matveyevna was in great anxiety about him.

They were driven straight up to a large cottage with a frontage of four windows and other rooms in the yard. Stepan Trofimovitch waked up, hurriedly went in and walked straight into the second room, which was the largest and best in the house. An expression of fussiness came into his sleepy face. He spoke at once to the landlady, a tall, thick-set woman of forty with very dark hair and a slight moustache, and explained that he required the whole room for himself, and that the door was to be shut and no one else was to be admitted, “*parce que nous avons a parler. Oui, fai beaucoup a vous dire, chere amie.* I’ll pay you, I’ll pay you,” he said with a wave of dismissal to the landlady.

Though he was in a hurry, he seemed to articulate with difficulty. The landlady listened grimly, and was silent in token of consent, but there was a feeling of something menacing about her silence. He did not notice this, and hurriedly (he was in a terrible hurry) insisted on her going away and bringing them their dinner as quickly as possible, without a moment’s delay.

At that point the moustached woman could contain herself no longer.

“This is not an inn, sir; we don’t provide dinners for travellers. We can boil you some crayfish or set the samovar, but we’ve nothing more. There won’t be fresh fish till to-morrow.”

But Stepan Trofimovitch waved his hands, repeating with wrathful impatience: “I’ll pay, only make haste, make haste.”

They settled on fish, soup, and roast fowl; the landlady declared that fowl was not to be procured in the whole village; she agreed, however, to go in search of one, but with the air of doing him an immense favour.

As soon as she had gone Stepan Trofimovitch instantly sat down on the sofa and made Sofya Matveyevna sit down beside him. There were several arm-chairs as well as a sofa in the room, but they were of a most uninviting appearance. The room was rather a large one, with a corner, in which there was a bed, partitioned off. It was covered with old and tattered yellow paper, and had horrible lithographs of mythological subjects on the walls; in the corner facing the door there was a long row of painted ikons and several

sets of brass ones. The whole room with its strangely ill-assorted furniture was an unattractive mixture of the town element and of peasant traditions. But he did not even glance at it all, nor look out of the window at the vast lake, the edge of which was only seventy feet from the cottage.

“At last we are by ourselves and we will admit no one! I want to tell you everything, everything from the very beginning.”

Sofya Matveyevna checked him with great uneasiness.

“Are you aware, Stepan Trofimovitch? . . .”

“*Comment, vous saves deja mon nom?”* He smiled with delight.

“I heard it this morning from Anisim Ivanovitch when you were talking to him. But I venture to tell you for my part . . .”

And she whispered hurriedly to him, looking nervously at the closed door for fear anyone should overhear — that here in this village, it was dreadful. That though all the peasants were fishermen, they made their living chiefly by charging. travellers every summer whatever they thought fit. The village was not on the high road but an out-of-the-way one, and people only called there because the steamers stopped there, and that when the steamer did not call — and if the weather was in the least unfavourable, it would not — then numbers of travellers would be waiting there for several days, and all the cottages in the village would be occupied, and that was just the villagers’ opportunity, for they charged three times its value for everything — and their landlord here was proud and stuck up because he was, for these parts, very rich; he had a net which had cost a thousand roubles.

Stepan Trofimovitch looked almost reproachfully at Sofya Matveyevna’s extremely excited face, and several times he made a motion to stop her. But she persisted and said all she had to say: she said she had been there before already in the summer “with a very genteel lady from the town,” and stayed there too for two whole days till the steamer came, and what they had to put up with did not bear thinking of. “Here, Stepan Trofimovitch, you’ve been pleased to ask for this room for yourself alone. ... I only speak to warn you. ... In the other room there are travellers already. An elderly man and a young man and a lady with children, and by to-morrow before two o’clock the whole house will be filled up, for since the steamer hasn’t been here for two days it will be sure to come to-morrow. So for a room apart and for ordering dinner, and for putting out the other travellers, they’ll charge you a price unheard of even in the capital. . . .”

But he was in distress, in real distress. “*Assez, mon enfant*, I beseech you, *nous avons notre argent — et apres, le bon Dieu.* And I am surprised that, with the loftiness of your ideas, you . . . *Assez, assez, vous me tourmentez,”* he articulated hysterically, “we have all our future before us, and you . . . you fill me with alarm for the future.”

He proceeded at once to unfold his whole story with such haste that at first it was difficult to understand him. It went on for a long time. The soup was served, the fowl was brought in, followed at last by the samovar, and still he talked on. He told it somewhat strangely and hysterically, and indeed he was ill. It was a sudden, extreme effort of his intellectual faculties, which was bound in his overstrained condition, of course — Sofya Matveyevna foresaw it with distress all the time he was talking — to result immediately afterwards in extreme exhaustion. He began his story almost with his childhood, when, “with fresh heart, he ran about the meadows; it was an hour before he reached his two marriages and his life in Berlin. I dare not laugh, however. It really was for him a matter of the utmost importance, and to adopt the modern jargon, almost a question of struggling for existence.” He saw before him the woman whom he had already elected to share his new life, and was in haste to consecrate her, so to speak. His genius must not be hidden from her. . . . Perhaps he had formed a very exaggerated estimate of Sofya Matveyevna, but he had already chosen her. He could not exist without a woman. He saw clearly from her face that she hardly understood him, and could not grasp even the most essential part. “*Ce n’est rien, nous attendrons*, and meanwhile she can feel it intuitively. . . . My friend, I need nothing but your heart!” he exclaimed, interrupting his narrative, “and that sweet enchanting look with which you are gazing at me now. Oh, don’t blush! I’ve told you already . . .” The poor woman who had fallen into his hands found much that was obscure, especially when his autobiography almost passed into a complete dissertation on the fact that no one had been ever able to understand Stepan Trofimovitch, and that “men of genius are wasted in Russia.” It was all “so very intellectual,” she reported afterwards dejectedly. She listened in evident misery, rather round-eyed. When Stepan Trofimovitch fell into a humorous vein and threw off witty sarcasms at the expense of our advanced and governing classes, she twice made grievous efforts to laugh in response to his laughter, but the result was worse than tears, so that Stepan Trofimovitch was at last embarrassed by it himself and attacked “the nihilists and modern people” with all the greater

wrath and zest. At this point he simply alarmed her, and it was not until he began upon the romance of his life that she felt some slight relief, though that too was deceptive. A woman is always a woman even if she is a nun. She smiled, shook her head and then blushed crimson and dropped her eyes, which roused Stepan Trofimovitch to absolute ecstasy and inspiration so much that he began fibbing freely. Varvara Petrovna appeared in his story as an enchanting brunette (who had been the rage of Petersburg and many European capitals) and her husband "had been struck down on the field of Sevastopol" simply because he had felt unworthy of her love, and had yielded her to his rival, that is, Stepan Trofimovitch. ..." Don't be shocked, my gentle one, my Christian," he exclaimed to Sofya Matveyevna, almost believing himself in all that he was telling, "it was something so lofty, so subtle, that we never spoke of it to one another all our lives." As the story went on, the cause of this position of affairs appeared to be a blonde lady (if not Darya Pavlovna I don't know of whom Stepan Trofimovitch could have been thinking), this blonde owed everything to the brunette, and had grown up in her house, being a distant relation. The brunette observing at last the love of the blonde girl to Stepan Trofimovitch, kept her feelings locked up in her heart. The blonde girl, noticing on her part the love of the brunette to Stepan Trofimovitch, also locked her feelings in her own heart. And all three, pining with mutual magnanimity, kept silent in this way for twenty years, locking their feelings in their hearts. "Oh, what a passion that was, what a passion that was!" he exclaimed with a stifled sob of genuine ecstasy. "I saw the full blooming of her beauty" (of the brunette's, that is), "I saw daily with an ache in my heart how she passed by me as though ashamed she was so fair" (once he said "ashamed she was so fat"). At last he had run away, casting off all this feverish dream of twenty years — *vingt ans* — and now here he was on the high road. . . .

Then in a sort of delirium be began explaining to Sofya Matveyevna the significance of their meeting that day, "so chance an encounter and so fateful for all eternity." Sofya Matveyevna got up from the sofa in terrible confusion at last. He had positively made an attempt to drop on his knees before her, which made her cry. It was beginning to get dark. They had been for some hours shut up in the room. . . .

"No, you'd better let me go into the other room," she faltered, "or else there's no knowing what people may think. . . ."

She tore herself away at last; he let her go, promising her to go to bed at once. As they parted he complained that he had a bad headache. Sofya Matveyevna had on entering the cottage left her bag and things in the first room, meaning to spend the night with the people of the house; but she got no rest.

In the night Stepan Trofimovitch was attacked by the malady with which I and all his friends were so familiar — the summer cholera, which was always the outcome of any nervous strain or moral shock with him. Poor Sofya Matveyevna did not sleep all night. As in waiting on the invalid she was obliged pretty often to go in and out of the cottage through the landlady's room, the latter, as well as the travellers who were sleeping there, grumbled and even began swearing when towards morning she set about preparing the samovar. Stepan Trofimovitch was half unconscious all through the attack; at times he had a vision of the samovar being set, of some one giving him something to drink (raspberry tea), and putting something warm to his stomach and his chest. But he felt almost every instant that *she* was here, beside him; that it was she going out and coming in, lifting him off the bed and settling him in it again. Towards three o'clock in the morning he began to be easier; he sat up, put his legs out of bed and thinking of nothing he fell on the floor at her feet. This was a very different matter from the kneeling of the evening; he simply bowed down at her feet and kissed the hem of her dress.

"Don't, sir, I am not worth it," she faltered, trying to get him back on to the bed.

"My saviour," he cried, clasping his hands reverently before her. "*Vous etes noble comme une marquise!* I — I am a wretch. Oh, I've been dishonest all my life. . . ."

"Calm yourself!" Sofya Matveyevna implored him.

"It was all lies that I told you this evening — to glorify myself, to make it splendid, from pure wantonness — all, all, every word, oh, I am a wretch, I am a wretch!"

The first attack was succeeded in this way by a second — an attack of hysterical remorse. I have mentioned these attacks already when I described his letters to Varvara Petrovna. He suddenly recalled Lise and their meeting the previous morning. "It was so awful, and there must have been some disaster and I didn't ask, didn't find out! I thought only of myself. Oh,

what’s the matter with her? Do you know what’s the matter with her?” he besought Sofya Matveyevna.

Then he swore that “he would never change,” that he would go back to her (that is, Varvara Petrovna). “We” (that is, he and Sofya Matveyevna) “will go to her steps every day when she is getting into her carriage for her morning drive, and we will watch her in secret. . . . Oh, I wish her to smite me on the other cheek; it’s a joy to wish it! I shall turn her my other cheek *comme dans votre livre!* Only now for the first time I understand what is meant by ... turning the other cheek. I never understood before!”

The two days that followed were among the most terrible in Sofya Matveyevna’s life; she remembers them with a shudder to this day. Stepan Trofimovitch became so seriously ill that he could not go on board the steamer, which on this occasion arrived punctually at two o’clock in the afternoon. She could not bring herself to leave him alone, so she did not leave for Spasov either. From her account he was positively delighted at the steamer’s going without him.

“Well, that’s a good thing, that’s capital!” he muttered in his bed. “I’ve been afraid all the time that we should go. Here it’s so nice, better than anywhere. . . . You won’t leave me? Oh, you have not left me!”

It was by no means so nice “here” however. He did not care to hear of her difficulties; his head was full of fancies and nothing else. He looked upon his illness as something transitory, a trifling ailment, and did not think about it at all; he though of nothing but how they would go and sell “these books.” He asked her to read him the gospel.

“I haven’t read it for a long time ... in the original. Some one may ask me about it and I shall make a mistake; I ought to prepare myself after all.”

She sat down beside him and opened the book.

“You read beautifully,” he interrupted her after the first line. “I see, I see I was not mistaken,” he added obscurely but ecstatically. He was, in fact, in a continual state of enthusiasm She read the Sermon on the Mount.

“*Assez, assez, man enfant,* enough. . . . Don’t you think that *that* is enough?”

And he closed his eyes helplessly. He was very weak, but had not yet lost consciousness. Sofya Matveyevna was getting up, thinking that he wanted to sleep. But he stopped her.

“My friend, I’ve been telling lies all my life. Even when I told the truth I never spoke for the sake of the truth, but always for my own sake. I knew it

before, but I only see it now. . . . Oh, where are those friends whom I have insulted with my friendship all my life? And all, all! *Savez-vous* . . . perhaps I am telling lies now; no doubt I am telling lies now. The worst of it is that I believe myself when I am lying. The hardest thing in life is to live without telling lies . . . and without believing in one's lies. Yes, yes, that's just it. ... But wait a bit, that can all come afterwards. . . . We'll be together, together," he added enthusiastically.

"Stepan Trofimovitch," Sofya Matveyevna asked timidly, "hadn't I better send to the town for the doctor?"

He was tremendously taken aback.

"What for? *Est-ce que je suis si malade? Mais rien de serieux.* What need have we of outsiders? They may find, besides — and what will happen then? No, no, no outsiders and we'll be together."

"Do you know," he said after a pause, "read me something more, just the first thing you come across."

Sofya Matveyevna opened the Testament and began reading.

"Wherever it opens, wherever it happens to open," he repeated.

"'And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans . . .'"

"What's that? What is it? Where is that from?"

"It's from the R-Revelation."

"*Oh, je m'en souviens, oui, l'Apocalypse. Lisez, lisez, I* am trying our future fortunes by the book. I want to know what has turned up. Read on from there. . . ."

"'And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

"'I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot.

"'So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

"'Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.'"

"That too . . . and that's in your book too!" he exclaimed, with flashing eyes and raising his head from the pillow. "I never knew that grand passage! You hear, better be cold, better be cold than lukewarm, than *only* lukewarm.

Oh, I'll prove it! Only don't leave me, don't leave me alone! We'll prove it, we'll prove it!"

"I won't leave you, Stepan Trofimovitch. I'll never leave you!" She took his hand, pressed it in both of hers, and laid it against her heart, looking at him with tears in her eyes. ("I felt very sorry for him at that moment," she said, describing it afterwards.)

His lips twitched convulsively.

"But, Stepan Trofimovitch, what are we to do though? Oughtn't we to let some of your friends know, or perhaps your relations?"

But at that he was so dismayed that she was very sorry that she had spoken of it again. Trembling and shaking, he besought her to fetch no one, not to do anything. He kept insisting, "No one, no one! We'll be alone, by ourselves, alone, *nous partirons ensemble."*

Another difficulty was that the people of the house too began to be uneasy; they grumbled, and kept pestering Sofya Matveyevna. She paid them and managed to let them see her money. This softened them for the time, but the man insisted on seeing Stepan Trofimovitch's "papers." The invalid pointed with a supercilious smile to his little bag. Sofya Matveyevna found in it the certificate of his having resigned his post at the university, or something of the kind, which had served him as a passport all his life. The man persisted, and said that "he must be taken somewhere, because their house wasn't a hospital, and if he were to die there might be a bother. We should have no end of trouble." Sofya Matveyevna tried to speak to him of the doctor, but it appeared that sending to the town would cost so much that she had to give up all idea of the doctor. She returned in distress to her invalid. Stepan Trofimovitch was getting weaker and weaker.

"Now read me another passage. . . . About the pigs," he said suddenly.

"What?" asked Sofya Matveyevna, very much alarmed. "About the pigs . . . that's there too . . . *ces cochons. I* remember the devils entered into swine and they all were drowned. You must read me that; I'll tell you why afterwards. I want to remember it word for word. I want it word for word."

Sofya Matveyevna knew the gospel well and at once found the passage in St. Luke which I have chosen as the motto of my record. I quote it here again:

"'And there was there one herd of many swine feeding on the mountain; and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

“‘Then went the devils out of the man and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

“‘When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

“‘Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid.’”

“My friend,” said Stepan Trofimovitch in great excitement “*savez-vous*, that wonderful and . . . extraordinary passage has been a stumbling-block to me all my life . . . *dans ce livre* .... so much so that I remembered those verses from childhood. Now an idea has occurred to me; *une comparaison.* A great number of ideas keep coming into my mind now. You see, that’s exactly like our Russia, those devils that come out of the sick man and enter into the swine. They are all the sores, all the foul contagions, all the impurities, all the devils great and small that have multiplied in that great invalid, our beloved Russia, in the course of ages and ages. *Oui, cette Russie que j’aimais tou jours.* But a great idea and a great Will will encompass it from on high, as with that lunatic possessed of devils . . . and all those devils will come forth, all the impurity, all the rottenness that was putrefying on the surface . . . and they will beg of themselves to enter into swine; and indeed maybe they have entered into them already! They are we, we and those . . . and Petrusha and *les autres avec lui* . . . and I perhaps at the head of them, and we shall cast ourselves down, possessed and raving, from the rocks into the sea, and we shall all be drowned — and a good thing too, for that is all we are fit for. But the sick man will be healed and ‘will sit at the feet of Jesus,’ and all will look upon him with astonishment. . . . My dear, *vous comprendrez apres*, but now it excites me very much. . . . *Vous comprendrez apres. Nous comprendrons ensemble.”*

He sank into delirium and at last lost consciousness. So it went on all the following day. Sofya Matveyevna sat beside him, crying. She scarcely slept at all for three nights, and avoided seeing the people of the house, who were, she felt, beginning to take some steps. Deliverance only came on the third day. In the morning Stepan Trofimovitch returned to consciousness, recognised her, and held out his hand to her. She crossed herself hopefully. He wanted to look out of the window. “*Tiens, un lac!”* he said. “Good heavens, I had not seen it before! . . .” At that moment there was the rumble of a carriage at the cottage door and a great hubbub in the house followed.

III

It was Varvara Petrovna herself. She had arrived, with Darya Pavlovna, in a closed carriage drawn by four horses, with two footmen. The marvel had happened in the simplest way: Anisim, dying of curiosity, went to Varvara Petrovna's the day after he reached the town and gossiped to the servants, telling them he had met Stepan Trofimovitch alone in a village, that the latter had been seen by peasants walking by himself on the high road, and that he had set off for Spasov by way of Ustyevo accompanied by Sofya Matveyevna. As Varvara Petrovna was, for her part, in terrible anxiety and had done everything she could to find her fugitive friend, she was at once told about Anisim. When she had heard his story, especially the details of the departure for Ustyevo in a cart in the company of some Sofya Matvoyevna, she instantly got ready and set off post-haste for Ustyevo herself.

Her stern and peremptory voice resounded through the cottage; even the landlord and his wife were intimidated. She had only stopped to question them and make inquiries, being persuaded that Stepan Trofimovitch must have reached Spasov long before. Learning that he was still here and ill, she entered the cottage in great agitation.

"Well, where is he? Ah, that's you!" she cried, seeing Sofya Matveyevna, who appeared at that very instant in the doorway of the next room. "I can guess from your shameless face that it's you. Go away, you vile hussy! Don't let me find a trace of her in the house! Turn her out, or else, my girl, I'll get you locked up for good. Keep her safe for a time in another house. She's been in prison once already in the town; she can go back there again. And you, my good man, don't dare to let anyone in while I am here, I beg of you. I am Madame Stavrogin, and I'll take the whole house. As for you, my dear, you'll have to give me a full account of it all."

The familiar sounds overwhelmed Stepan Trofimovitch. He began to tremble. But she had already stepped behind the screen. With flashing eyes she drew up a chair with her foot, and, sinking back in it, she shouted to Dasha:

"Go away for a time! Stay in the other room. Why are you so inquisitive? And shut the door properly after you."

For some time she gazed in silence with a sort of predatory look into his frightened face.

“Well, how are you getting on, Stepan Trofimovitch? So you’ve been enjoying yourself?” broke from her with ferocious irony.

“*Chere,”* Stepan Trofimovitch faltered, not knowing what he was saying, “I’ve learnt to know real life in Russia . . . *et je precherai l’Evangile.”*

“Oh, shameless, ungrateful man!” she wailed suddenly, clasping her hands. ‘‘ As though you had not disgraced me enough, you’ve taken up with . . . oh, you shameless old reprobate!”

“Chere . .

.”

His voice failed him and he could not articulate a syllable but simply gazed with eyes wide with horror.

“Who is *she?”*

“*C’est un ange; c’etait plus qu’un ange pour moi.* She’s been all night . . . Oh, don’t shout, don’t frighten her, *chere, chere* ...”

With a loud noise, Varvara Petrovna pushed back her chair, uttering a loud cry of alarm.

“Water, water!”

Though he returned to consciousness, she was still shaking with terror, and, with pale cheeks, looked at his distorted face. It was only then, for the first time, that she guessed the seriousness of his illness.

“Darya,” she whispered suddenly to Darya Pavlovna, “send at once for the doctor, for Salzfish; let Yegorytch go at once. Let him hire horses here and get another carriage from the town. He must be here by night.”

Dasha flew to do her bidding. Stepan Trofimovitch still gazed at her with the same wide-open, frightened eyes; his blanched lips quivered.

“Wait a bit, Stepan Trofimovitch, wait a bit, my dear!” she said, coaxing him like a child. “There, there, wait a bit! Darya will come back and ... My goodness, the landlady, the landlady, you come, anyway, my good woman!”

In her impatience she ran herself to the landlady.

“Fetch *that woman* back at once, this minute. Bring her back, bring her back!”

Fortunately Sofya Matveyevna had not yet had time to get away and was only just going out of the gate with her pack and her bag. She was brought back. She was so panic-stricken that she was trembling in every limb. Varvara Petrovna pounced on her like a hawk on a chicken, seized her by the hand and dragged her impulsively to Stepan Trofimovitch.

“Here, here she is, then. I’ve not eaten her. You thought I’d eaten her.”

Stepan Trofimovitch clutched Varvara Petrovna's hand, raised it to his eyes, and burst into tears, sobbing violently and convulsively.

"There, calm yourself, there, there, my dear, there, poor dear man'! Ach, mercy on us! Calm yourself, will you?" she shouted frantically. "Oh, you bane of my life!"

"My dear," Stepan Trofimovitch murmured at last, addressing Sofya Matveyevna, "stay out there, my dear, I want to say something here. ..."

Sofya Matveyevna hurried out at once.

"*Cherie . . . cherie . . .*"he gasped.

"Don't talk for a bit, Stepan Trofimovitch, wait a little till you've rested. Here's some water. Do wait, will you!"

She sat down on the chair again. Stepan Trofimovitch held her hand tight. For a long while she would not allow him to speak. He raised her hand to his lips and fell to kissing it. She set her teeth and looked away into the corner of the room.

"*Je vous aimais,"* broke from him at last. She had never heard such words from him, uttered in such a voice.

"H'm!" she growled in response.

"*Je vous aimais toute ma vie . . . vingt ans!"*

She remained silent for two or three minutes.

"And when you were getting yourself up for Dasha you sprinkled yourself with scent," she said suddenly, in a terrible whisper.

Stepan Trofimovitch was dumbfoundered.

"You put on a new tie . . ."

Again silence for two minutes.

"Do you remember the cigar?"

"My friend," he faltered, overcome with horror.

"That cigar at the window in the evening . . . the moon was shining . . . after the arbour ... at Skvoreshniki? Do you remember, do you remember?" She jumped up from her place, seized his pillow by the corners and shook it with his head on it. "Do you remember, you worthless, worthless, ignoble, cowardly, worthless man, always worthless!" she hissed in her furious whisper, restraining herself from speaking loudly. At last she left him and sank on the chair, covering her face with her hands. "Enough!" she snapped out, drawing herself up. "Twenty years have passed, there's no calling them back. I am a fool too."

"*Je vous aimais."* He clasped his hands again.

“Why do you keep on with your *aimais* and *aimais?* Enough!” she cried, leaping up again. “And if you don’t go to sleep at once I’ll ... You need rest; go to sleep, go to sleep at once, shut your eyes. Ach, mercy on us, perhaps he wants some lunch! What do you eat? What does he eat? Ach, mercy on us! Where is that woman? Where is she?”

There was a general bustle again. But Stepan Trofimovitch faltered in a weak voice that he really would like to go to sleep *une heure,* and then *un bouillon, un the. . . . enfin il est si heureux.* He lay back and really did seem to go to sleep (he probably pretended to). Varvara Petrovna waited a little, and stole out on tiptoe from behind the partition.

She settled herself in the landlady’s room, turned out the landlady and her husband, and told Dasha to bring her *that woman.* There followed an examination in earnest.

“Tell me all about it, my good girl. Sit down beside me; that’s right. Well?”

“I met Stepan Trofimovitch . . .”

“Stay, hold your tongue! I warn you that if you tell lies or conceal anything, I’ll ferret it out. Well?”

“Stepan Trofimovitch and I ... as soon as I came to Hatovo . . .” Sofya Matveyevna began almost breathlessly.

“Stay, hold your tongue, wait a bit! Why do you gabble like that? To begin with, what sort of creature are you?”

Sofya Matveyevna told her after a fashion, giving a very brief account of herself, however, beginning with Sevastopol. Varvara Petrovna listened in silence, sitting up erect in her chair, looking sternly straight into the speaker’s eyes.

“Why are you so frightened? Why do you look at the ground? I like people who look me straight in the face and hold their own with me. Go on.”

She told of their meeting, of her books, of how Stepan Trofimovitch had regaled the peasant woman with vodka . . . “That’s right, that’s right, don’t leave out the slightest detail,” Varvara Petrovna encouraged her.

At last she described how they had set off, and how Stepan Trofimovitch had gone on talking, “really ill by that time,” and here had given an account of his life from the very beginning, talking for some hours. “Tell me about his life.”

Sofya Matveyevna suddenly stopped and was completely nonplussed.

“I can’t tell you anything about that, madam,” she brought out, almost crying; “besides, I could hardly understand a word of it.”

“Nonsense! You must have understood something.”

“He told a long time about a distinguished lady with black hair.” Sofya Matveyevna flushed terribly though she noticed Varvara Petrovna’s fair hair and her complete dissimilarity with the “brunette” of the story.

“Black-haired? What exactly? Come, speak!”

“How this grand lady was deeply in love with his honour all her life long and for twenty years, but never dared to speak, and was shamefaced before him because she was a very stout lady. . . .”

“The fool!” Varvara Petrovna rapped out thoughtfully but resolutely.

Sofya Matveyevna was in tears by now.

“I don’t know how to tell any of it properly, madam, because I was in a great fright over his honour; and I couldn’t understand, as he is such an intellectual gentleman.”

“It’s not for a goose like you to judge of his intellect. Did he offer you his hand?”

The speaker trembled.

“Did he fall in love with you? Speak! Did he offer you his hand?” Varvara Petrovna shouted peremptorily.

“That was pretty much how it was,” she murmured tearfully. “But I took it all to mean nothing, because of his illness,” she added firmly, raising her eyes.

“What is your name?”

“Sofya Matveyevna, madam,”

“Well, then, let me tell you, Sofya Matveyevna, that he is a wretched and worthless little man. . . . Good Lord! Do you look upon me as a wicked woman *‘!”*

Sofya Matveyevna gazed open-eyed.

“A wicked woman, a tyrant? Who has ruined his life?”

“How can that be when you are crying yourself, madam?”

Varvara Petrovna actually had tears in her eyes.

“Well, sit down, sit down, don’t be frightened. Look me straight in the face again. Why are you blushing? Dasha, come here. Look at her. What do you think of her? Her heart is pure. . . .”

And to the amazement and perhaps still greater alarm of Sofya Matveyevna, she suddenly patted her on the cheek.

“It’s only a pity she is a fool. Too great a fool for her age. That’s all right, my dear, I’ll look after you. I see that it’s all nonsense. Stay near here for the time. A room shall be taken for you and you shall have food and everything else from me . . . till I ask for you.”

Sofya Matveyevna stammered in alarm that she must hurry on.

“You’ve no need to hurry. I’ll buy all your books, and meantime you stay here. Hold your tongue; don’t make excuses. If I hadn’t come you would have stayed with him all the same, wouldn’t you?”

“I wouldn’t have left him on any account,” Sofya Matveyevna brought out softly and firmly, wiping her tears.

It was late at night when Doctor Salzfish was brought. He was a very respectable old man and a practitioner of fairly wide experience who had recently lost his post in the service in consequence of some quarrel on a point of honour with his superiors. Varvara Petrovna instantly and actively took him under her protection. He examined the patient attentively, questioned him, and cautiously pronounced to Varvara Petrovna that “the sufferer’s” condition was highly dubious in consequence of complications, and that they must be prepared “even for the worst.” Varvara Petrovna, who had during twenty years get accustomed to expecting nothing serious or decisive to come from Stepan Trofimovitch, was deeply moved and even turned pale. “Is there really no hope?”

“Can there ever be said to be absolutely no hope? But ...” She did not go to bed all night, and felt that the morning would never come. As soon as the patient opened his eyes and returned to consciousness (he was conscious all the time, however, though he was growing weaker every hour), she went up to him with a very resolute air.

“Stepan Trofimovitch, one must be prepared for anything. I’ve sent for a priest. You must do what is right. . . .”

Knowing his convictions, she was terribly afraid of his refusing. He looked at her with surprise.

“Nonsense, nonsense!” she vociferated, thinking he was already refusing. “This is no time for whims. You have played the fool enough.”

“But ... am I really so ill, then?”

He agreed thoughtfully. And indeed I was much surprised to learn from Varvara Petrovna afterwards that he showed no fear of death at all. Possibly it was that he simply did not believe it, and still looked upon his illness as a trifling one.

He confessed and took the sacrament very readily. Every one, Sofya Matveyevna, and even the servants, came to congratulate him on taking the sacrament. They were all moved to tears looking at his sunken and exhausted face and his blanched and quivering lips.

"*Oui, mes amis*, and I only wonder that you . . . take so much trouble. I shall most likely get up to-morrow, and we will . . . set off. . . . *Toute cette ceremonie* . . . for which, of course, I feel every proper respect . . . was ..."

"I beg you, father, to remain with the in valid," said Varvara Petrovna hurriedly, stopping the priest, who had already taken off his vestments. "As soon as tea has been handed, I beg you to begin to speak of religion, to support his faith."

The priest spoke; every one was standing or sitting round the sick-bed.

"In our sinful days," the priest began smoothly, with a cup of tea in his hand, "faith in the Most High is the sole refuge of the race of man in all the trials and tribulations of life, as well as its hope for that eternal bliss promised to the righteous."

Stepan Trofimovitch seemed to revive, a subtle smile strayed on his lips.

"*Man pere, je vous remercie et vous etes bien bon, mais* . . ."

"No *mais* about it, no *mais* at all!" exclaimed Varvara Petrovna, bounding up from her chair. "Father," she said, addressing the priest, "he is a man who . . . he is a man who . . . You will have to confess him again in another hour! That's the sort of man he is."

Stepan Trofimovitch smiled faintly.

"My friends," he said, "God is necessary to me, if only because He is the only being whom one can love eternally."

Whether he was really converted, or whether the stately ceremony of the administration of the sacrament had impressed him and stirred the artistic responsiveness of his temperament or not, he firmly and, I am told, with great feeling uttered some words which were in flat contradiction with many of his former convictions.

"My immortality is necessary if only because God will not be guilty of injustice and extinguish altogether the flame of love for Him once kindled in my heart. And what is more precious than love? Love is higher than existence, love is the crown of existence; and how is it possible that existence should not be under its dominance? If I have once loved Him and rejoiced in my love, is it possible that He should extinguish me and my joy

and bring me to nothingness again? If there is a God, then I am immortal. *Voila ma profession de foi.”*

“There is a God, Stepan Trofimovitch, I assure you there is,” Varvara Petrovna implored him. “Give it up, drop all your foolishness for once in your life!” (I think she had not quite understood his *profession de foi.)*

“My friend,” he said, growing more and more animated, though his voice broke frequently, “as soon as I understood . . . that turning of the cheek, I ... understood something else as well. *J’ai menti toute ma vie*, all my life, all! I should like . . . but that will do to-morrow. . . . To-morrow we will all set out.”

Varvara Petrovna burst into tears. He was looking about for some one.

“Here she is, she is here!” She seized Sofya Matveyevna by the hand and led her to him. He smiled tenderly.

“Oh, I should dearly like to live again!” he exclaimed with an extraordinary rush of energy. “Every minute, every instant of life ought to be a blessing to man . . . they ought to be, they certainly ought to be! It’s the duty of man to make it so; that’s the law of his nature, which always exists even if hidden. . . . Oh, I wish I could see Petrusha . . . and all of them . . . Shatov ...”

I may remark that as yet no one had heard of Shatov’s fate — not Varvara Petrovna nor Darya Pavlovna, nor even Salzfish, who was the last to come from the town.

Stepan Trofimovitch became more and more excited, feverishly so, beyond his strength.

“The mere fact of the ever present idea that there exists something infinitely more just and more happy than I am fills me through and through with tender ecstasy — and glorifies me — oh, whoever I may be, whatever I have done! What is far more essential for man than personal happiness is to know and to believe at every instant that there is somewhere a perfect and serene happiness for all men and for everything. . . . The one essential condition of human existence is that man should always be able to bow down before something infinitely great. If men are deprived of the infinitely great they will not go on living and will die of despair. The Infinite and the Eternal are as essential for man as the little planet on which he dwells. My friends, all, all: hail to the Great Idea! The Eternal, Infinite Idea! It is essential to every man, whoever he may be, to bow down before what is the Great Idea. Even the stupidest man needs something great. Petrusha . . . oh,

how I want to see them all again! They don’t know, they don’t know that that same Eternal, Grand Idea lies in them all!”

Doctor Salzfish was not present at the ceremony. Coming in suddenly, he was horrified, and cleared the room, insisting that the patient must not be excited.

Stepan Trofimovitch died three days later, but by that time he was completely unconscious. He quietly went out like a candle that is burnt down. After having the funeral service performed, Varvara Petrovna took the body of her poor friend to Skvoreshniki. His grave is in the precincts of the church and is already covered with a marble slab. The inscription and the railing will be added in the spring.

Varvara Petrovna’s absence from town had lasted eight days. Sofya Matveyevna arrived in the carriage with her and seems to have settled with her for good. I may mention that as soon as Stepan Trofimovitch lost consciousness (the morning that he received the sacrament) Varvara Petrovna promptly asked Sofya Matveyevna to leave the cottage again, and waited on the invalid herself unassisted to the end, but she sent for her at once when he had breathed his last. Sofya Matveyevna was terribly alarmed by Varvara Petrovna’s proposition, or rather command, that she should settle for good at Skvoreshniki, but the latter refused to listen to her protests.

“That’s all nonsense! I will go with you to sell the gospel. I have no one in the world now.”

“You have a son, however,” Salzfish observed.

“I have no son!” Varvara Petrovna snapped out — and it was like a prophecy.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION

ALL THE CRIMES AND VILLAINIES THAT had been perpetrated were discovered with extraordinary rapidity, much more quickly than Pyotr Stepanovitch had expected. To begin with, the luckless Marya Ignatyevna waked up before daybreak on the night of her husband's murder, missed him and flew into indescribable agitation, not seeing him beside her. The woman who had been hired by Anna Prohorovna, and was there for the night, could not succeed in calming her, and as soon as it was daylight ran to fetch Arina Prohorovna herself, assuring the invalid that the latter knew where her husband was, and when he would be back. Meantime Arina Prohorovna was in some anxiety too; she had already heard from her husband of the deed perpetrated that night at Skvoreshniki. He had returned home about eleven o'clock in a terrible state of mind and body; wringing his hands, he flung himself face downwards on his bed and shaking with convulsive sobs kept repeating, "It's not right, it's not right, it's not right at all!" He ended, of course, by confessing it all to Arina Prohorovna — but to no one else in the house. She left him on his bed, sternly impressing upon him that "if he must blubber he must do it in his pillow so as not to be overheard, and that he would be a fool if he showed any traces of it next day." She felt somewhat anxious, however, and began at once to clear things up in case of emergency: she succeeded in hiding or completely destroying all suspicious papers, books, manifestoes perhaps. At the same time she reflected that she, her sister, her aunt, her sister-in-law the student, and perhaps even her long-eared brother had really nothing much to be afraid of. When the nurse ran to her in the morning she went without a second thought to Marya Ignatyevna's. She was desperately anxious, moreover, to find out whether what her husband had told her that night in a terrified and frantic whisper, that was almost like delirium, was true — that is, whether Pyotr Stepanovitch had been right in his reckoning that Kirillov would sacrifice himself for the general benefit.

But she arrived at Marya Ignatyevna's too late: when the latter had sent off the woman and was left alone, she was unable to bear the suspense; she got out of bed, and throwing round her the first garment she could find,

something very light and unsuitable for the weather, I believe, she ran down to Kirillov's lodge herself, thinking that he perhaps would be better able than anyone to tell her something about her husband. The terrible effect on her of what she saw there may well be imagined. It is remarkable that she did not read Kirillov's last letter, which lay conspicuously on the table, overlooking it, of course, in her fright. She ran back to her room, snatched up her baby, and went with it out of the house into the street. It was a damp morning, there was a fog. She met no passers-by in such an out-of-the-way street. She ran on breathless through the wet, cold mud, and at last began knocking at the doors of the houses. In the first house no one came to the door, in the second they were so long in coming that she gave it up impatiently and began knocking at a third door. This was the house of a merchant called Titov. Here she wailed and kept declaring incoherently that her husband was murdered, causing a great flutter in the house. Something was known about Shatov and his story in the Titov household; they were horror-stricken that she should be running about the streets in such attire and in such cold with the baby scarcely covered in her arms, when, according to her story, she had only been confined the day before. They thought at first that she was delirious, especially as they could not make out whether it was Kirillov who was murdered or her husband. Seeing that they did not believe her she would have run on farther, but they kept her by force, and I am told she screamed and struggled terribly. They went to Filipov's, and within two hours Kirillov's suicide and the letter he had left were known to the whole town. The police came to question Marya Ignatyevna, who was still conscious, and it appeared at once that she had not read Kirillov's letter, and they could not find out from her what had led her to conclude that her husband had been murdered. She only screamed that if Kirillov was murdered, then her husband was murdered, they were together. Towards midday she sank into a state of unconsciousness from which she never recovered, and she died three days later. The baby had caught cold and died before her.

Arina Prohorovna not finding Marya Ignatyevna and the baby, and guessing something was wrong, was about to run home, but she checked herself at the gate and sent the nurse to inquire of the gentleman at the lodge whether Marya Ignatyevna was not there and whether he knew anything about her. The woman came back screaming frantically. Persuading her not

to scream and not to tell anyone by the time-honoured argument that “she would get into trouble,” she stole out of the yard.

It goes without saying that she was questioned the same morning as having acted as midwife to Marya Ignatyevna; but they did not get much out of her. She gave a very cool and sensible account of all she had herself heard and seen at Shatov’s, but as to what had happened she declared that she knew nothing, and could not understand it.

It may well be imagined what an uproar there was in the town. A new “sensation,” another murder! But there was another element in this case: it was clear that a secret society of murderers, incendiaries, and revolutionists did exist, did actually exist. Liza’s terrible death, the murder of Stavrogin’s wife, Stavrogin himself, the fire, the ball for the benefit of the governesses, the laxity of manners and morals in Yulia Mihailovna’s circle. . . . Even in the disappearance of Stepan Trofimovitch people insisted on scenting a mystery. All sorts of things were whispered about Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch. By the end of the day people knew of Pyotr Stepanovitch’s absence too, and, strange to say, less was said of him than of anyone. What was talked of most all that day was “the senator.” There was a crowd almost all day at Filipov’s house. The police certainly were led astray by Kirillov’s letter. They believed that Kirillov had murdered Shatov and had himself committed suicide. Yet, though the authorities were thrown into perplexity, they were not altogether hoodwinked. The word “park,” for instance, so vaguely inserted in Kirillov’s letter, did not puzzle anyone as Pyotr Stepanovitch had expected it would. The police at once made a rush for Skvoreshniki, not simply because it was the only park in the neighbourhood but also led thither by a sort of instinct because all the horrors of the last few days were connected directly or indirectly with Skvoreshniki. That at least is my theory. (I may remark that; Varvara Petrovna had driven off early that morning in chase of Stepan Trofimovitch, and knew nothing of what had happened in the town.)

The body was found in the pond that evening. What led to the discovery of it was the finding of Shatov’s cap at the scene of the murder, where it had been with extraordinary carelessness overlooked by the murderers. The appearance of the body, the medical examination and certain deductions from it roused immediate suspicions that Kirillov must have had accomplices. It became evident that a secret society really did exist of which Shatov and Kirillov were members and which was connected with

the manifestoes. Who were these accomplices? No one even thought of any member of the quintet that day. It was ascertained that Kirillov had lived like a hermit, and in so complete a seclusion that it had been possible, as stated in the letter, for Fedka to lodge with him for so many days, even while an active search was being made for him. The chief thing that worried every one was the impossibility of discovering a connecting-link in this chaos.

There is no saying what conclusions and what disconnected theories our panic-stricken townspeople would have reached, if the whole mystery had not been suddenly solved next day, thanks to Lyamshin.

He broke down. He behaved as even Pyotr Stepanovitch had towards the end begun to fear he would. Left in charge of Tolkatchenko, and afterwards of Erkel, he spent all the following day lying in his bed with his face turned to the wall, apparently calm, not uttering a word, and scarcely answering when he was spoken to. This is how it was that he heard nothing all day of what was happening in the town. But Tolkatchenko, who was very well informed about everything, took into his head by the evening to throw up the task of watching Lyamshin which Pyotr Stepanovitch had laid upon him, and left the town, that is, to put it plainly, made his escape; the fact is, they lost their heads as Erkel had predicted they would. I may mention, by the way, that Liputin had disappeared the same day before twelve o'clock. But things fell out so that his disappearance did not become known to the authorities till the evening of the following day, when, the police went to question his family, who were panic-stricken at his absence but kept quiet from fear of consequences. But to return to Lyamshin: as soon as he was left alone (Erkel had gone home earlier, relying on Tolkatchenko) he ran out of his house, and, of course, very soon learned the position of affairs. Without even returning home he too tried to run away without knowing where he was going. But the night was so dark and to escape was so terrible and difficult, that after going through two or three streets, he returned home and locked himself up for the whole night. I believe that towards morning he attempted to commit suicide but did not succeed. He remained locked up till midday — and then suddenly he ran to the authorities. He is said to have crawled on his knees, to have sobbed and shrieked, to have kissed the floor crying out that he was not worthy to kiss the boots of the officials standing before him. They soothed him, were positively affable to him. His examination lasted, I am told, for three hours. He confessed everything,

everything, told every detail, everything he knew, every point, anticipating their questions, hurried to make a clean breast of it all, volunteering unnecessary information without being asked. It turned out that he knew enough, and presented things in a fairly true light: the tragedy of Shatov and Kirillov, the fire, the death of the Lebyadkins, and the rest of it were relegated to the background. Pyotr Stepanovitch, the secret society, the organisation, and the network were put in the first place. When asked what was the object of so many murders and scandals and dastardly outrages, he answered with feverish haste that "it was with the idea of systematically undermining the foundations, systematically destroying society and all principles; with the idea of nonplussing every one and making hay of everything, and then, when society was tottering, sick and out of joint, cynical and sceptical though filled with an intense eagerness for self-preservation and for some guiding idea, suddenly to seize it in their hands, raising the standard of revolt and relying on a complete network of quintets, which were actively, meanwhile, gathering recruits and seeking out the weak spots which could be attacked." In conclusion, he said that here in our town Pyotr Stepanovitch had organised only the first experiment in such systematic disorder, so to speak as a programme for further activity, and for all the quintets — and that this was his own (Lyamshin's) idea, his own theory, "and that he hoped they would remember it and bear in mind how openly and properly he had given his information, and therefore might be of use hereafter." Being asked definitely how many quintets there were, he answered that there were immense numbers of them, that all Russia was overspread with a network, and although he brought forward no proofs, I believe his answer was perfectly sincere. He produced only the programme of the society, printed abroad, and the plan for developing a system of future activity roughly sketched in Pyotr Stepanovitch's own handwriting. It appeared that Lyamshin had quoted the phrase about "undermining the foundation," word for word from this document, not omitting a single stop or comma, though he had declared that it was all his own, theory. Of Yulia Mihailovna he very funnily and quite without provocation volunteered the remark, that "she was innocent arid had been made a fool of.'' But, strange to say, he exonerated Nikolay Stavrogin from all share in the secret society, from any collaboration with Pyotr Stepanovic. (Lyamshiu had no conception of the secret and very absurd hopes that Pyotr Stepanovitch was resting on Stavrogin.) According to his story Nikolay Stavrogin had nothing

whatever to do with the death of the Lebyadkins, which had been planned by Pyotr Stepanovitch alone and with the subtle aim of implicating the former in the .crime, and therefore making him dependent on Pyotr Stepanovitch; but instead of the gratitude on which Pyotr Stepanovitch had reckoned with shallow confidence, he had roused nothing but indignation and even despair in “the generous heart of Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch.” He wound up, by a hint, evidently intentional, volunteered hastily, that Stavrogin was perhaps a very important personage, but that there was some secret about that, that he had been living among us, so to say, incognito, that he had some commission, and that very possibly he would come back to us again from Petersburg. (Lyamshin was convinced that Stavrogin had gone to Petersburg), but in quite a different capacity and in different surroundings, in the suite of persons of whom perhaps we should soon hear, and that all this he had heard from Pyotr Stepanovitch, “Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch’s secret enemy.”

Here I will note that two months later, Lyamshin admitted that he had exonerated Stavrogin on purpose, hoping that he would protect him and would obtain for him a mitigation in the second degree of his sentence, and that he would provide him with money and letters of introduction in Siberia. From this confession it is evident that he had an extraordinarily exaggerated conception of Stavrogin’s powers.

On the same day, of course, the police arrested Virginsky and in their zeal took his whole family too. (Arina Prohorovna, her sister, aunt, and even the girl student were released long ago; they say that Shigalov too will be set free very shortly because he cannot be classed with any of the other prisoners. But all that is so far only gossip.) Virginsky at once pleaded guilty. He was lying ill with fever when he was arrested. I am told that he seemed almost relieved; “it was a load off his heart,” he is reported to have said. It is rumoured that he is giving his evidence without reservation, but with a certain dignity, and has not given up any of his “bright hopes,” though at the same time he curses the political method (as opposed to the Socialist one), in which he had been unwittingly and heedlessly carried “by the vortex of combined circumstances.” His conduct at the time of the murder has been put in a favourable light, and I imagine that he too may reckon on some mitigation of his sentence. That at least is what is asserted in the town.

But I doubt whether there is any hope for mercy in Erkel's case. Ever since his arrest he has been obstinately silent, or has misrepresented the facts as far as he could. Not one word of regret has been wrung from him so far. Yet even the sternest of the judges trying him has been moved to some compassion by his youth, by his helplessness, by the unmistakable evidence that he is nothing but a fanatical victim of a political impostor, and, most of all, by his conduct to his mother, to whom, as it appears, he used to send almost the half of his small salary. His mother is now in the town; she is a delicate and ailing woman, aged beyond her years; she weeps and positively grovels on the ground imploring mercy for her son. Whatever may happen, many among us feel sorry for Erkel.

Liputin was arrested in Petersburg, where he had been living for a fortnight. His conduct there sounds almost incredible and is: difficult to explain. He is said to have had a passport in a forged name and quite a large sum of money upon him, and had every possibility of escaping abroad, yet instead of going he remained in Petersburg. He spent some time hunting for Stavrogin and Pyotr Stepanovitch. Suddenly he took to drinking and gave himself up to a debauchery that exceeded all bounds, like a man who had lost all reason and understanding of his position. He was arrested in Petersburg drunk in a brothel. There is a rumour that he has not by any means lost heart, that he tells lies in his evidence and is preparing for the approaching trial hopefully (?) and, as it were, triumphantly. He even intends to make a speech at the trial. Tolkatchenko, who was arrested in the neighbourhood ten days after his flight, behaves with incomparably more decorum; he does not shuffle or tell lies, he tells all he knows, does not justify himself, blames himself with all modesty, though he, too, has a weakness for rhetoric; he tells readily what he knows, and when knowledge of the peasantry and the revolutionary elements among them is touched upon, he positively attitudinises and is eager to produce an effect. He, too, is meaning, I am told, to make a speech at the trial. Neither he nor Liputin seem very much afraid, curious as it seems.

I repeat that the case is not yet over. Now, three months afterwards, local society has had time to rest, has recovered, has got over it, has an opinion of its own, so much so that some people positively look upon Pyotr Stepanovitch as a genius or at least as possessed of "some characteristics of a genius."

“Organisation!” they say at the club, holding up a finger. But all this is very innocent and there are not many people who talk like that. Others, on the other hand, do not deny his acuteness, but point out that he was utterly ignorant of real life, that he was terribly theoretical, grotesquely and stupidly one-sided, and consequently shallow in the extreme. As for his moral qualities all are agreed; about that there are no two opinions.

I do not know whom to mention next so as not to forget anyone. Mavriky Nikolaevitch has gone away for good, I don’t know where. Old Madame Drozdov has sunk into dotage. . . . I have still one very gloomy story to tell, however. I will confine myself to the bare facts.

On her return from Ustyevo, Varvara Petrovna stayed at her town house. All the accumulated news broke upon her at once and gave her a terrible shock. She shut herself up alone. It was evening; every one was tired and went to bed early.

In the morning a maid with a mysterious air handed a note to Darya Pavlovna. The note had, so she said, arrived the evening before, but late, when all had gone to bed, so that she had not ventured to wake her. It had not come by post, but had been put in Alexey Yegorytch’s hand in Skvoreshniki by some unknown person. And Alexey Yegorytch had immediately set off and put it into her hands himself and had then returned to Skvoreshniki.

For a long while Darya Pavlovna gazed at the letter with a beating heart, and dared not open it. She knew from whom it came: the writer was Nikolay Stavrogin. She read what was written on the envelope: “To Alexey Yegorytch, to be given secretly to Darya Pavlovna.”

Here is the letter word for word, without the slightest correction of the defects in style of a Russian aristocrat who had never mastered the Russian grammar in spite of his European education.

“Dear Dabya Pavlovna, — At one time you expressed a wish to be my nurse and made me promise to send for you when I wanted you. I am going away in two days and shall not come back. Will you go with me?

“Last year, like Herzen, *I* was naturalised as a citizen of the canton of Uri, and that nobody knows. There I’ve already bought a little house, I’ve still twelve thousand roubles left; we’ll go and live there for ever. I don’t want to go anywhere else ever.

“It’s a very dull place, a narrow valley, the mountains restrict both vision and thought. It’s very gloomy. I chose the place because there was a little

house to be sold. If you don’t like it I’ll sell it and buy another in some other place.

“I am not well, but I hope to get rid of hallucinations in that air. It’s physical, and as for the moral you know everything; but do you know all?

“I’ve told you a great deal of my life, but not all. Even to you! Not all. By the way, I repeat that in my conscience I feel myself responsible for my wife’s death. I haven’t seen you since then, that’s why I repeat it. I feel guilty about Lizaveta Nikolaevna too; but you know about that; you foretold almost all that.

“Better not come to me. My asking you to is a horrible meanness. And why should you bury your life with me? You are dear to me, and when I was miserable it was good to be beside you; only with you I could speak of myself aloud. But that proves nothing. You defined it yourself, ‘a nurse’ — it’s your own expression; why sacrifice so much? Grasp this, too, that I have no pity for you since I ask you, and no respect for you since I reckon on you. And yet I ask you and I reckon on you. In any case I need your answer for I must set off very soon. In that case I shall go alone.

“I expect nothing of Uri; I am simply going. I have not chosen a gloomy place on purpose. I have no ties in Russia — everything is as alien to me there as everywhere. It’s true that I dislike living there more than anywhere; but I can’t hate anything even there!

“I’ve tried my strength everywhere. You advised me to do this ‘that I might learn to know myself.’ As long as I was experimenting for myself and for others it seemed infinite, as it has all my life. Before your eyes I endured a blow from your brother; I acknowledged my marriage in public. But to what to apply my strength, that is what I’ve never seen, and do not see now in spite of all your praises in Switzerland, which I believed in. I am still capable, as I always was, of desiring to do something good, and of feeling pleasure from it; at the same time I desire evil and feel pleasure from that too. But both feelings are always too petty, and are never very strong. My desires are too weak; they are not enough to guide me. On a log one may cross a river but not on a chip. I say this that you may not believe that I am going to Uri with hopes of any sort.

“As always I blame no one. I’ve tried the depths of debauchery and wasted my strength over it. But I don’t like vice and I didn’t want it. You have been watching me of late. Do you know that I looked upon our iconoclasts with spite, from envy of their hopes? But you had no need to be

afraid. I could not have been one of them for I never shared anything with them. And to do it for fun, from spite I could not either, not because I am afraid of the ridiculous — I cannot be afraid of the ridiculous — but because I have, after all, the habits of a gentleman and it disgusted me. But if I had felt more spite and envy of them I might perhaps have joined them. You can judge how hard it has been for me, and how I've struggled from one thing to another.

"Dear friend! Great and tender heart which I divined! Perhaps you dream of giving me so much love and lavishing on me so much that is beautiful from your beautiful soul, that you hope to set up some aim for me at last by it? No, it's better for you to be more cautious, my love will be as petty as I am myself and you will be unhappy. Your brother told me that the man who loses connection with his country loses his gods, that is, all his aims. One may argue about everything endlessly, but from me nothing has come but negation, with no greatness of soul, no force. Even negation has not come from me. Everything has always been petty and spiritless. Kirillov, in the greatness of his soul, could not compromise with an idea, and shot himself; but I see, of course, that he was great-souled because he had lost his reason. I can never lose my reason, and I can never believe in an idea to such a degree as he did. I cannot even be interested in an idea to such a degree. I can never, never shoot myself.

"I know I ought to kill myself, to brush myself off the earth like a nasty insect; but I am afraid of suicide, for I am afraid of showing greatness of soul. I know that it will be another sham again — the last deception in an endless series of deceptions. What good is there in deceiving oneself? Simply to play at greatness of soul? Indignation and shame I can never feel, therefore not despair.

"Forgive me for writing so much. I wrote without noticing. A hundred pages would be too little and ten lines would be enough. Ten lines would be enough to ask you to be a nurse. Since I left Skvoreshniki I've been living at the sixth station on the line, at the stationmaster's. I got to know him in the time of debauchery five years ago in Petersburg. No one knows I am living there. Write to him. I enclose the address.

"Nikolay Stavrogin."

Darya Pavlovna went at once and showed the letter to Varvara Petrovna. She read it and asked Dasha to go out of the room so that she might read it again alone; but she called her back very quickly.

“Are you going?” she asked almost timidly.

“I am going,” answered Dasha.

“Get ready! We’ll go together.”

Dasha looked at her inquiringly.

“What is there left for me to do here? What difficulty will it make? I’ll be naturalised in Uri, too, and live in the valley. . . . Don’t be uneasy, I won’t be in the way.”

They began packing quickly to be in time to catch the midday train. But in less than half an hour’s time Alexey Yegorytch arrived from Skvoreshniki. He announced that Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had suddenly arrived that morning by the early train, and was now at Skvoreshniki but “in such a state that his honour did not answer any questions, walked through all the rooms and shut himself up in his own wing. ...”

“Though I received no orders I thought it best to come and inform you,” Alexey Yegorytch concluded with a very significant expression.

Varvara Petrovna looked at him searchingly and did not question him. The carriage was got ready instantly. Varvara Petrovna set off with Dasha. They say that she kept crossing herself on the journey.

In Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch’s wing of the house all the doors were open and he was nowhere to be seen.

“Wouldn’t he be upstairs?” Fomushka ventured.

It was remarkable that several servants followed Varvara Petrovna while the others all stood waiting in the drawing-room. They would never have dared to commit such a breach of etiquette before. Varvara Petrovna saw it and said nothing.

They went upstairs. There there were three rooms; but they found no one there.

“Wouldn’t his honour have gone up there?” some one suggested, pointing to the door of the loft. And in-fact, the door of the loft which was always closed had been opened and was standing ajar. The loft was right under the roof and was reached by a long, very steep and narrow wooden ladder. There was a sort of little room up there too.

“I am not going up there. Why should he go up there?” said Varvara Petrovna, turning terribly pale as she looked at the servants. They gazed back at her and said nothing. Dasha was trembling.

Varvara Petrovna rushed up the ladder; Dasha followed, but she had hardly entered the loft when she uttered a scream and fell senseless.

The citizen of the canton of Uri was hanging there behind the door. On the table lay a piece of paper with the words in pencil: “No one is to blame, I did it myself.” Beside it on the table lay a hammer, a piece of soap, and a large nail — obviously an extra one in case of need. The strong silk cord upon which Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch had hanged himself had evidently been chosen and prepared beforehand and was thickly smeared with soap. Everything proved that there had been premeditation and consciousness up to the last moment.

At the inquest our doctors absolutely and emphatically rejected all idea of insanity.

THE END

THE RAW YOUTH



OR, THE ADOLESCENT; OR, AN ACCIDENTAL FAMILY

Translated by Constance Garnett

First published in 1875, this novel chronicles the life of Arkady Dolgoruky, a 19-year-old intellectual, who is the illegitimate child of the controversial and womanising landowner Versilov. The novel focuses on the recurring conflict between father and son, particularly in ideology, exploring the battles between the conventional "old" way of thinking in the 1840s and the new nihilistic point of view of the youth of 1860s Russia.

Another main theme of the novel is Arkady's development and his rebellion against society, as well as his father, through the rejection of attending a university. Instead, Arkady seeks to live independently, aiming to become excessively wealthy and powerful. In his quest for wealth, Arkady is entangled with socialist conspirators and a young widow, whose future is somehow dependent on a document that ‘the raw youth’ has sewn into his jacket.



Dostoyevsky, close to the time of publication

THE RAW YOUTH

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PART I

CHAPTER I

1

I cannot resist sitting down to write the history of the first steps in my career, though I might very well abstain from doing so. . . . I know one thing for certain: I shall never again sit down to write my autobiography even if I live to be a hundred. One must be too disgustingly in love with self to be able without shame to write about oneself. I can only excuse myself on the ground that I am not writing with the same object with which other people write, that is, to win the praise of my readers. It has suddenly occurred to me to write out word for word all that has happened to me during this last year, simply from an inward impulse, because I am so impressed by all that has happened. I shall simply record the incidents, doing my utmost to exclude everything extraneous, especially all literary graces. The professional writer writes for thirty years, and is quite unable to say at the end why he has been writing for all that time. I am not a professional writer and don't want to be, and to drag forth into the literary market-place the inmost secrets of my soul and an artistic description of my feelings I should regard as indecent and contemptible. I foresee, however, with vexation, that it will be impossible to avoid describing feelings altogether and making reflections (even, perhaps, cheap ones), so corrupting is every sort of literary pursuit in its effect, even if it be undertaken only for one's own satisfaction. The reflections may indeed be very cheap, because what is of value for oneself may very well have no value for others. But all this is beside the mark. It will do for a preface, however. There will be nothing more of the sort. Let us get to work, though there is nothing more difficult than to begin upon some sorts of work — perhaps any sort of work.

2

I am beginning — or rather, I should like to begin — these notes from the 19th of September of last year, that is, from the very day I first met . . .

But to explain so prematurely who it was I met before anything else is known would be cheap; in fact, I believe my tone is cheap. I vowed I would eschew all literary graces, and here at the first sentence I am being

seduced by them. It seems as if writing sensibly can't be done simply by wanting to. I may remark, also, that I fancy writing is more difficult in Russian than in any other European language. I am now reading over what I have just written, and I see that I am much cleverer than what I have written. How is it that what is expressed by a clever man is much more stupid than what is left in him? I have more than once during this momentous year noticed this with myself in my relations with people, and have been very much worried by it.

Although I am beginning from the 19th of September, I must put in a word or two about who I am and where I had been till then, and what was consequently my state of mind on the morning of that day, to make things clearer to the reader, and perhaps to myself also.

3

I have passed the leaving examination at the grammar school, and now I am in my twenty-first year. My surname is Dolgoruky, and my legal father is Makar Ivanov Dolgoruky, formerly a serf in the household of the Versilovs. In this way I am a legitimate son, although I am, as a matter of fact, conspicuously illegitimate, and there is not the faintest doubt about my origin.

The facts are as follows. Twenty-two years ago Versilov (that is my father), being twenty-five years old, visited his estate in the province of Tula. I imagine that at that time his character was still quite unformed. It is curious that this man who, even in my childhood, made such an impression upon me, who had such a crucial influence on the whole bent of my mind, and who perhaps has even cast his shadow over the whole of my future, still remains, even now, a complete enigma to me in many respects. Of this, more particulars later. There is no describing him straight off. My whole manuscript will be full of this man, anyway.

He had just been left a widower at that time, that is, when he was twenty-five. He had married one of the Fanariotovs — a girl of high rank but without much money — and by her he had a son and a daughter. The facts that I have gathered about this wife whom he lost so early are somewhat scanty, and are lost among my materials, and, indeed, many of the circumstances of Versilov's private life have eluded me, for he has always been so proud, disdainful, reserved and casual with me, in spite of a sort of

meekness towards me which was striking at times. I will mention, however, to make things clear beforehand, that he ran through three fortunes in his lifetime, and very big ones too, of over fourteen hundred souls, and maybe more. Now, of course, he has not a farthing.

He went to the village on that occasion, “God knows why,” so at least he said to me afterwards. His young children were, as usual, not with him but with relations. This was always his method with his children, legitimate and illegitimate alike. The house-serfs on this estate were rather numerous, and among them was a gardener called Makar Ivanov Dolgoruky. Here I will note in parenthesis, to relieve my mind once and for all, I doubt whether anyone can ever have raged against his surname as I have all my life; this is stupid, of course, but so it has been. Every time I entered a school or met persons whom I had to treat with respect as my elders, every wretched little teacher, tutor, priest — anyone you like — on asking my name and hearing it was Dolgoruky, for some reason invariably thought fitting to add, “Prince Dolgoruky?” And every single time I was forced to explain to these futile people, “No, SIMPLY Dolgoruky.”

That SIMPLY began to drive me mad at last. Here I note as a curious phenomenon that I don’t remember a single exception; every one asked the question. For some it was apparently quite superfluous, and indeed I don’t know how the devil it could have been necessary for anyone. But all, every one of them asked it. On hearing that I was SIMPLY Dolgoruky, the questioner usually looked me up and down with a blank and stupidly apathetic stare that betrayed that he did not know why he had asked the question. Then he would walk away. My comrades and schoolfellows were the most insulting of all. How do schoolboys question a new-comer? The new boy, abashed and confused on the first day of entering a school (whatever school it may be), is the victim of all; they order him about, they tease him, and treat him like a lackey. A stout, chubby urchin suddenly stands still before his victim and watches him persistently for some moments with a stern and haughty stare. The new boy stands facing him in silence, looks at him out of the corner of his eyes, and, if he is not a coward, waits to see what is going to happen.

“What’s your name?”

“Dolgoruky.”

“Prince Dolgoruky?”

“No, simply Dolgoruky.”

“Ah, simply! Fool.”

And he was right; nothing could be more foolish than to be called Dolgoruky without being a prince. I have to bear the burden of that foolishness through no fault of my own. Later on, when I began to get very cross about it, I always answered the question “Are you a prince?” by saying, “No, I’m the son of a servant, formerly a serf.”

At last, when I was roused to the utmost pitch of fury, I resolutely answered:

“No, simply Dolgoruky, the illegitimate son of my former owner.”

I thought of this when I was in the sixth form of the grammar school, and though I was very soon after thoroughly convinced that I was stupid, I did not at once give up being so. I remember that one of the teachers opined — he was alone in his opinion, however — that I was “filled with ideas of vengeance and civic rights.” As a rule this reply was received with a sort of meditative pensiveness, anything but flattering to me.

At last one of my schoolfellows, a very sarcastic boy, to whom I hardly talked once in a year, said to me with a serious countenance, looking a little away:

“Such sentiments do you credit, of course, and no doubt you have something to be proud of; but if I were in your place I should not be too festive over being illegitimate . . . you seem to expect congratulations!”

From that time forth I dropped BOASTING of being illegitimate.

I repeat, it is very difficult to write in Russian: here I have covered three pages with describing how furious I have been all my life with my surname, and after all the reader will, no doubt, probably have deduced that I was really furious at not being a prince but simply Dolgoruky. To explain again and defend myself would be humiliating.

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And so among the servants, of whom there were a great number besides Makar Ivanitch, there was a maid, and she was eighteen when Makar Dolgoruky, who was fifty, suddenly announced his intention of marrying her. In the days of serfdom marriages of house-serfs, as every one knows, only took place with the sanction of their masters, and were sometimes simply arranged by the latter. At that time “auntie” was living on the estate; not that she was my aunt, though: she had, in fact, an estate of her own; but,

I don’t know why, every one knew her all her life as “auntie” — not mine in particular but an aunt in general, even in the family of Versilov, to whom she can hardly have been related. Her name was Tatyana Pavlovna Prutkov, In those days she still had, in the same province and district, a property of thirty-five serfs of her own. She didn’t exactly administer Versilov’s estate (of five hundred serfs), but, being so near a neighbour, she kept a vigilant eye on it, and her superintendence, so I have heard, was as efficient as that of any trained steward. However, her efficiency is nothing to do with me. But, to dispose of all suspicion of cringing or flattery on my part, I should like to add that this Tatyana Pavlovna was a generous and even original person.

Well, far from checking the gloomy Makar Dolgoruky’s matrimonial inclinations (I am told he was gloomy in those days), she gave them the warmest encouragement.

Sofia Andreyevna, the serf-girl of eighteen (that is, my mother), had been for some years fatherless and motherless. Her father, also a serf, who had a great respect for Makar Dolgoruky and was under some obligation to him, had six years before, on his death- bed, beckoned to the old gardener and, pointing significantly to his daughter, had, in the presence of the priest and all the servants, bequeathed her to him, saying, “When she’s grown up, marry her.” This was, so they say, a quarter of an hour before he expired, so that it might, if need be, have been put down to delirium; besides which, he had no right to dispose of property, being a serf. Every one heard his words. As for Makar Ivanovitch, I don’t know in what spirit he afterwards entered upon the marriage, whether with great eagerness or simply as the fulfilment of a duty. Probably he preserved an appearance of complete indifference. He was a man who even at that time knew how to “keep up his dignity.” It was not that he was a particularly well- educated or reading man (though he knew the whole of the church service and some lives of the saints, but this was only from hearing them). It was not that he was a sort of backstairs philosopher; it was simply that he was a man of obstinate, and even at times rash character, was conceited in his talk, autocratic in his judgment, and “respectful in his life,” to use his own surprising expression; that is what he was like at that time. Of course, he was universally respected, but, I am told, disliked by every one. It was a different matter when he ceased to be a house- serf; then he was spoken about as a saint and a man who had suffered much. That I know for a fact.

As for my mother, Tatyana Pavlovna had kept her till the age of eighteen in her house, although the steward had urged that the girl should be sent to Moscow to be trained. She had given the orphan some education, that is, taught her sewing and cutting out clothes, ladylike deportment, and even a little reading. My mother was never able to write decently. She looked upon this marriage with Makar Ivanovitch as something settled long ago, and everything that happened to her in those days she considered very good and all for the best. She went to her wedding looking as unmoved as anyone could on such an occasion, so much so that even Tatyana Pavlovna called her a fish. All this about my mother's character at that time I heard from Tatyana Pavlovna herself. Versilov arrived just six months after this wedding.

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I only want to say that I have never been able to find out or to guess to my own satisfaction what led up to everything between him and my mother. I am quite ready to believe, as he himself assured me last year with a flushed face, though he talked of all this with the most unconstrained and flippant air, that there was no romance about it at all, that it had just happened. I believe that it did just happen, and that little phrase JUST HAPPENED is delightful, yet I always wanted to know how it could have come about. I have always hated that sort of nastiness all my life and always shall. It's not simply a disgraceful curiosity on my part, of course. I may remark that I knew absolutely nothing of my mother till a year ago. For the sake of Versilov's comfort I was sent away to strangers, but of that later, and so I can never picture what she looked like at that time. If she had not been at all pretty, what could a man such as Versilov was then have found attractive in her? This question is of importance to me because it throws a light on an extremely interesting side of that man's character. It is for that reason I ask it and not from depravity. Gloomy and reserved as he always was, he told me himself on one occasion, with that charming candour which he used to produce (from the devil knows where — it seemed to come out of his pocket when he saw it was indispensable) that at that time he was a "very silly young puppy"; not that he was exactly sentimental, but just that he had lately read "Poor Anton" and "Polinka Sachs," two literary works which exerted an immense, humanizing influence on the younger generation of

that day. He added that it was perhaps through “Poor Anton” that he went to the country, and he added it with the utmost gravity. How did that “silly puppy” begin at first with my mother? I have suddenly realized that if I had a single reader he would certainly be laughing at me as a most ridiculous raw youth, still stupidly innocent, putting himself forward to discuss and criticize what he knows nothing about. It is true that I know nothing about it, though I recognize that not at all with pride, for I know how stupid such inexperience is in a great dolt of twenty; only I would tell such a gentleman that he knows nothing about it himself, and I will prove it to him. It is true that I know nothing about women, and I don’t want to either, for I shall always despise that sort of thing, and I have sworn I will all my life.

But I know for certain, though, that some women fascinate by their beauty, or by anything you like, all in a minute, while you may ruminate over another for six months before you understand what is in her; and that to see through and love such a woman it is not enough to look at her, it is not enough to be simply ready for anything, one must have a special gift besides. Of that I am convinced, although I do know nothing about it: and if it were not true it would mean degrading all women to the level of domestic animals, and only keeping them about one as such; possibly this is what very many people would like.

I know from several sources that my mother was by no means a beauty, though I have never seen the portrait of her at that age which is in existence. So it was impossible to have fallen in love with her at first sight. Simply to “amuse himself” Versilov might have pitched on some one else, and there was some one else in the house, an unmarried girl too, Anfisa Konstantinovna Sapozhkov, a housemaid. To a man who had brought “Poor Anton” with him to the country it must have seemed shameful to take advantage of his seignorial rights to violate the sanctity of a marriage, even that of his serf, for I repeat, he spoke with extreme seriousness of this “Poor Anton” only a few months ago, that is, twenty years after the event. Why, “Poor Anton” only had his horse taken from him, but this was a wife! So there must have been something peculiar in this case, and Mlle. Sapozhkov was the loser by it (or rather, I should say, the gainer). I attacked him with all these questions once or twice last year when it was possible to talk to him (for it wasn’t always possible to talk to him). And, in spite of all his society polish and the lapse of twenty years, I noticed that he winced. But I persisted. On one occasion, anyway, although he maintained the air of

worldly superciliousness which he invariably thought fit to assume with me, he muttered strangely that my mother was one of those “defenceless” people whom one does not fall in love with — quite the contrary, in fact — but whom one suddenly pities for their gentleness, perhaps, though one cannot tell what for. That no one ever knows, but one goes on pitying them, one pities them and grows fond of them. “In fact, my dear boy, there are cases when one can’t shake it off.” That was what he told me. And if that was how it really happened I could not look upon him as the “silly puppy” he had proclaimed himself. That is just what I wanted.

He went on to assure me, however, that my mother loved him “through servility.” He positively pretended it was because he was her master! He lied, thinking this was chic! He lied against his conscience, against all honour and generosity.

I have said all this, of course, as it were to the credit of my mother. But I have explained already that I knew nothing whatever of her as she was then. What is more, I know the rigidity of her environment, and the pitiful ideas in which she had become set from her childhood and to which she remained enslaved for the rest of her life. The misfortune happened, nevertheless. I must correct myself, by the way. Letting my fancy run away with me, I have forgotten the fact which I ought to have stated first of all, that is, that the misfortune happened at the very outset (I hope that the reader will not be too squeamish to understand at once what I mean). In fact, it began with his exercising his seignorial rights, although Mlle. Sapozhkov was passed over. But here, in self-defence, I must declare at once that I am not contradicting myself. For — good Lord! — what could a man like Versilov have talked about at that date with a person like my mother even if he had felt the most overwhelming love for her? I have heard from depraved people that men and women very often come together without a word being uttered, which is, of course, the last extreme of monstrous loathsomeness. Nevertheless, I do not see how Versilov could have begun differently with my mother if he had wanted to. Could he have begun by expounding “Polinka Sachs” to her? And besides, they had no thoughts to spare for Russian literature; on the contrary, from what he said (he let himself go once), they used to hide in corners, wait for each other on the stairs, fly apart like bouncing balls, with flushed cheeks if anyone passed by, and the “tyrant slave-owner” trembled before the lowest scrubbing-maid, in spite of his seignorial rights. And although it was at

first an affair of master and servant, it was that and yet not that, and after all, there is no really explaining it. In fact, the more you go into it the more obscure it seems. The very depth and duration of their love makes it more mysterious, for it is a leading characteristic of such men as Versilov to abandon as soon as their object is attained. That did not happen, though. To transgress with an attractive, giddy flirt who was his serf (and my mother was not a flirt) was not only possible but inevitable for a depraved young puppy (and they were all depraved, every one of them, the progressives as well as the reactionaries), especially considering his romantic position as a young widower and his having nothing to do. But to love her all his life is too much. I cannot guarantee that he did love her, but he has dragged her about with him all his life — that's certain.

I put a great many questions to my mother, but there is one, most important, which, I may remark, I did not venture to ask her directly, though I got on such familiar terms with her last year; and, what is more, like a coarse, ungrateful puppy, considering she had wronged me, I did not spare her feelings at all. This was the question: how she after six months of marriage, crushed by her ideas of the sanctity of wedlock, crushed like some helpless fly, respecting her Makar Ivanovitch as though he had been a god — how she could have brought herself in about a fortnight to such a sin? Was my mother a depraved woman, perhaps? On the contrary, I may say now at once that it is difficult to imagine anyone more pure- hearted than she was then and has been all her life. The explanation may be, perhaps, that she scarcely knew what she was doing (I don't mean in the sense in which lawyers nowadays urge this in defence of their thieves and murderers), but was carried away by a violent emotion, which sometimes gains a fatal and tragic ascendancy when the victim is of a certain degree of simplicity. There is no telling: perhaps she fell madly in love with . . . the cut of his clothes, the Parisian style in which he parted his hair, his French accent — yes, French, though she didn't understand a word of it — the song he sang at the piano; she fell in love with something she had never seen or heard of (and he was very handsome), and fell in love with him straight away, once for all, hopelessly, fell in love with him altogether — manners, song, and all. I have heard that this did sometimes happen to peasant girls in the days of serfdom, and to the most virtuous, too. I understand this, and the man is a scoundrel who puts it down to nothing but servility. And so perhaps this young man may have had enough direct power of fascination to

attract a creature who had till then been so pure and who was of a different species, of an utterly different world, and to lead her on to such evident ruin. That it was to her ruin my mother, I hope, realized all her life; only probably when she went to it she did not think of ruin at all; but that is how it always is with these “defenceless” creatures, they know it is ruin and they rush upon it.

Having sinned, they promptly repented. He told me flippantly that he sobbed on the shoulder of Makar Ivanovitch, whom he sent for to his study expressly for the purpose, and she — she meanwhile was lying unconscious in some little back room in the servants’ quarters. . . .

6

But enough of questions and scandalous details. After paying Makar Ivanovitch a sum of money for my mother, Versilov went away shortly afterwards, and ever since, as I have mentioned already, he dragged her about with him, almost everywhere he went, except at certain times when he absented himself for a considerable period. Then, as a rule, he left her in the care of “auntie,” that is, of Tatyana Pavlovna Prutkov, who always turned up on such occasions. They lived in Moscow, and also in other towns and villages, even abroad, and finally in Petersburg. Of all that later, though perhaps it is not worth recording. I will only mention that a year after my mother left Makar Ivanovitch, I made my appearance, and a year later my sister, and ten or eleven years afterwards a sickly child, my younger brother, who died a few months later. My mother’s terrible confinement with this baby was the end of her good looks, so at least I was told: she began rapidly to grow older and feebler.

But a correspondence with Makar Ivanovitch was always kept up. Wherever the Versilovs were, whether they lived for some years in the same place, or were moving about, Makar Ivanovitch never failed to send news of himself to the “family.” Strange relations grew up, somewhat ceremonious and almost solemn. Among the gentry there is always an element of something comic in such relations, I know. But there was nothing of the sort in this case. Letters were exchanged twice a year, never more nor less frequently, and they were extraordinarily alike. I have seen them. There was scarcely anything personal in them. On the contrary, they were practically nothing but ceremonious statements of the most public incidents,

and the most public sentiments, if one may use such an expression of sentiments; first came news of his own health, and inquiries about their health, then ceremonious hopes, greetings and blessings — that was all.

I believe that this publicity and impersonality is looked upon as the essence of propriety and good breeding among the peasants. “To our much esteemed and respected spouse, Sofia Andreyevna, we send our humblest greetings. . . .” “We send to our beloved children, our fatherly blessing, ever unalterable.” The children were mentioned by name, including me. I may remark here that Makar Ivanovitch had so much wit as never to describe “His high-born most respected master, Andrey Petrovitch” as his “benefactor”; though he did invariably, in each letter, send him his most humble greetings, beg for the continuance of his favour, and call down upon him the blessing of God. The answers to Makar Ivanovitch were sent shortly after by my mother, and were always written in exactly the same style. Versilov, of course, took no part in the correspondence. Makar Ivanovitch wrote from all parts of Russia, from the towns and monasteries in which he sometimes stayed for a considerable time. He had become a pilgrim, as it is called. He never asked for anything; but he invariably turned up at home once in three years on a holiday, and stayed with my mother, who always, as it happened, had her own lodgings apart from Versilov’s. Of this I shall have to say more later, here I will only mention that Makar Ivanovitch did not loll on the sofa in the drawing-room, but always sat discreetly somewhere in the background. He never stayed for long: five days or a week.

I have omitted to say that he had the greatest affection and respect for his surname, “Dolgoruky.” Of course this was ludicrous stupidity. And what was most stupid was that he prized his name just because there were princes of the name. A strange, topsy- turvy idea.

I have said that the family were always together, but I mean except for me, of course. I was like an outcast, and, almost from my birth, had been with strangers. But this was done with no special design, but simply because it had happened so. When I was born my mother was still young and good-looking, and therefore necessary to Versilov; and a screaming child, of course, was always a nuisance, especially when they were travelling. That was how it happened that until I was nineteen I had scarcely seen my mother except on two or three brief occasions. It was not due to my mother’s wishes, but to Versilov’s lofty disregard for people.

Now for something quite different. A month earlier, that is a month before the 19th of September, I had made up my mind in Moscow to renounce them all, and to retire into my own idea, finally. I record that expression "retire into my own idea" because that expression may explain my leading motive, my object in life. What that "idea" of mine is, of that there will be only too much said later. In the solitary years of my dreamy life in Moscow it sprang up in my mind before I had left the sixth form of the grammar school, and from that time perhaps never left me for an instant. It absorbed my whole existence. Till then I had lived in dreams; from my childhood upwards I have lived in the world of dreams, always of a certain colour. But after this great and all-absorbing idea turned up, my dreams gained in force, took a definite shape; and became rational instead of foolish. School did not hinder my dreams, and it did not hinder the idea either. I must add, however, that I came out badly in the leaving exam, though I had always been one of the first in all the forms up to the seventh, and this was a result of that same idea, a result of a false deduction from it perhaps. So it was not school work that hindered the idea, but the idea that hindered school work, and it hindered university work too. When I left school I intended at once not only to cut myself off from my family completely, but from all the world if necessary, though I was only nineteen at the time. I wrote through a suitable person to tell them to leave me entirely alone, not to send me any more money for my maintenance, and, if possible, to forget me altogether (that is if they ever did remember me), and finally "nothing would induce" me to enter the university. An alternative presented itself from which there was no escaping: to refuse to enter the university and go on with my education, or to defer putting my idea into practice for another four years. I went for the idea without faltering, for I was absolutely resolved about it. In answer to my letter, which had not been addressed to him, Versilov, my father, whom I had only seen once for a moment when I was a boy of ten (though even in that moment he made a great impression upon me), summoned me to Petersburg in a letter written in his own hand, promising me a private situation. This cold, proud man, careless and disdainful of me, after bringing me into the world and packing me off to strangers, knew nothing of me at all and had never even regretted his conduct; who knows, perhaps he had only a vague and confused idea of my existence, for it

appeared afterwards that the money for my maintenance in Moscow had not been furnished by him but by other people. Yet the summons of this man who so suddenly remembered me and deigned to write to me with his own hand, by flattering me, decided my fate. Strange to say, what pleased me in his note (one tiny sheet of paper) was that he said not a word about the university, did not ask me to change my mind, did not blame me for not wanting to continue my studies, did not, in fact, trot out any parental flourishes of the kind usual in such cases, and yet this was wrong of him since it betrayed more than anything his lack of interest in me. I resolved to go, the more readily because it would not hinder my great idea. "I'll see what will come of it," I argued, "in any case I shall associate with them only for a time; possibly a very short time. But as soon as I see that this step, tentative and trifling as it is, is keeping me from the GREAT OBJECT, I shall break off with them, throw up everything and retreat into my shell." Yes, into my shell! "I shall hide in it like a tortoise." This comparison pleased me very much. "I shall not be alone," I went on musing, as I walked about Moscow those last days like one possessed. "I shall never be alone as I have been for so many awful years till now; I shall have my idea to which I will never be false, even if I like them all there, and they make me happy, and I live with them for ten years!" It was, I may remark beforehand, just that impression, that is, just the twofold nature of the plans and objects definitely formed before leaving Moscow, and never out of my mind for one instant in Petersburg (for I hardly think there was a day in Petersburg which I had not fixed on beforehand as the final date for breaking off with them and going away), it was this, I say, that was, I believe, one of the chief causes of many of the indiscretions I have been guilty of during this year, many nasty things, many even low things, and stupid ones of course. To be sure, a father, something I had never had before, had appeared upon the scene. This thought intoxicated me as I made my preparations in Moscow and sat in the railway carriage. That he was my father would be nothing. I was not fond of sentimentality, but this man had humiliated me and had not cared to know me, while all those years I had been chewing away at my dreams of him, if one may use such an expression. From my childhood upward, my dreams were all coloured by him; all hovered about him as the final goal. I don't know whether I hated him or loved him; but his figure dominated the future and all my schemes of life. And this happened of itself. It grew up with me.

Another thing which influenced me in leaving Moscow was a tremendous circumstance, a temptation which even then, three months before my departure (before Petersburg had been mentioned), set my heart leaping and throbbing. I was drawn to this unknown ocean by the thought that I could enter it as the lord and master of other people's destinies, and what people, too! But the feelings that were surging in my heart were generous and not despotic — I hasten to declare it that my words may not be mistaken. Moreover, Versilov might think (if he ever deigned to think of me) that a small boy who had just left school, a raw youth, was coming who would be agape with wonder at everything. And meanwhile I knew all his private life, and had about me a document of the utmost importance, for which (I know that now for a fact) he would have given some years of his life, if I had told him the secret at the time. But I notice that I am talking in riddles. One cannot describe feelings without facts. Besides which, there will be enough about all this in its proper place; it is with that object I have taken up my pen. Writing like this is like a cloud of words or the ravings of delirium.

8

Finally, to pass once for all to the 19th of September, I will observe briefly and, so to say, cursorily, that I found them all, that is Versilov, my mother and my sister (the latter I saw for the first time in my life) in difficult circumstances, almost destitute, or at least, on the verge of destitution. I knew of this before leaving Moscow, but yet I was not prepared for what I saw. I had been accustomed from childhood to imagine this man, this "future father of mine" in brilliant surroundings, and could not picture him except as the leading figure everywhere. Versilov had never shared the same lodgings with my mother, but had always taken rooms for her apart. He did this, of course, out of regard for their very contemptible "proprieties." But here they were all living together in a little wooden lodge in a back street in the Semyonovsky Polk. All their things were in pawn, so that, without Versilov's knowledge, I gave my mother my secret sixty roubles. SECRET, because I had saved them up in the course of two years out of my pocket money, which was five roubles a month. I had begun saving from the very day I had conceived my "idea," and so Versilov must know nothing about the money. I trembled at the thought of that.

My help was like a drop in the ocean. My mother worked hard and my sister too took in sewing. Versilov lived in idleness, indulged his whims and kept up a number of his former rather expensive habits. He grumbled terribly, especially at dinner, and he was absolutely despotic in all his ways. But my mother, my sister, Tatyana Pavlovna and the whole family of the late Andronikov (the head of some department who used also to manage Versilov's affairs and had died three months before), consisting of innumerable women, grovelled before him as though he were a fetish. I had not imagined this. I may remark that nine years before he had been infinitely more elegant. I have said already that I had kept the image of him in my dreams surrounded by a sort of brilliance, and so I could not conceive how it was possible after only nine years for him to look so much older and to be so worn out; I felt at once sad, sorry, ashamed. The sight of him was one of the most painful of my first impressions on my arrival. Yet he was by no means an old man, he was only forty-five. Looking at him more closely I found in his handsome face something even more striking than what I had kept in my memory. There was less of the brilliance of those days, less external beauty, less elegance even; but life had, as it were, stamped on that face something far more interesting than before.

Meanwhile poverty was not the tenth or twentieth fraction of his misfortunes, and I knew that. There was something infinitely more serious than poverty, apart from the fact that there was still a hope that Versilov might win the lawsuit he had been contesting for the last year with the Princes Sokolsky and might in the immediate future come into an estate to the value of seventy thousand or more. I have said above that Versilov had run through three fortunes in his life, and here another fortune was coming to his rescue again! The case was to be settled very shortly. It was just then that I arrived. It is true that no one would lend him money on his expectations, there was nowhere he could borrow, and meanwhile they had to suffer.

Versilov visited no one, though he sometimes was out for the whole day. It was more than a year since he had been BANISHED from society. In spite of all my efforts, this scandal remained for the most part a mystery though I had been a whole month in Petersburg. Was Versilov guilty or not guilty — that was what mattered to me, that is what I had come to Petersburg for! Every one had turned against him — among others all the influential and distinguished people with whom he had been particularly

clever in maintaining relations all his life — in consequence of rumours of an extremely low and — what was much worse in the eyes of the "world" — scandalous action which he was said to have committed more than a year ago in Germany. It was even reported that he had received a slap in the face from Prince Sokolsky (one of those with whom he was now in litigation) and had not followed it by a challenge. Even his children (the legitimate ones), his son and daughter, had turned against him and were holding aloof. It is true that through the influence of the Fanariotovs and old Prince Sokolsky (who had been a friend of Versilov) the son and daughter moved in the very highest circles. Yet, watching him all that month, I saw a haughty man who had rather cast off "society" than been cast off by it, so independent was his air. But had he the right to look like that — that was the question that agitated me. I absolutely had to find out the whole truth at the earliest possible date, for I had come — to judge this man. I still kept my power hidden from him, but I had either to accept him or to reject him altogether. But that would have been too painful to me and I was in torment. I will confess it frankly at last: the man was dear to me!

And meanwhile I was living in the same flat with him, working, and scarcely refraining from being rude. In fact I did not refrain. After spending a month with him I became more convinced every day that I could not possibly appeal to him for a full explanation. This man in his pride remained an enigma to me, while he wounded me deeply. He was positively charming to me, and jested with me, but I should have liked quarrels better than such jests. There was a certain note of ambiguity about all my conversations with him, or more simply, a strange irony on his part. From our first meeting, on my arrival from Moscow, he did not treat me seriously. I never could make out why he took up this line. It is true that by this means he succeeded in remaining impenetrable, but I would not have humbled myself so far as to ask him to treat me seriously. Besides, he had certain wonderful and irresistible ways which I did not know how to deal with. In short he behaved to me as though I were the greenest of raw youths, which I was hardly able to endure, though I knew it would be so. I, too, gave up talking seriously in consequence, and waited; in fact, I almost gave up talking altogether. I waited for a person on whose arrival in Petersburg I might finally learn the truth; that was my last hope. In any case I prepared myself for a final rupture, and had already taken all necessary measures. I was sorry for my mother but— "either him or me,"

that was the choice I meant to offer her and my sister. I had even fixed on the day; and meanwhile I went to my work.

CHAPTER II

1

On that 19th of September I was also to receive my first salary for the first month of my work in Petersburg in my “private” situation. They did not ask me about this job but simply handed me over to it, I believe, on the very first day of my arrival. This was very unmannerly, and it was almost my duty to protest. The job turned out to be a situation in the household of old Prince Sokolsky. But to protest then would have meant breaking off relations on the spot, and though I was not in the least afraid of that, it would have hindered the attainment of my primary objects; and so in silence I accepted the job for the time, maintaining my dignity by silence. I must explain from the very first that this Prince Sokolsky, a wealthy man and a privy councillor, was no relation at all of the Moscow princes of that name (who had been poor and insignificant for several generations past) with whom Versilov was contesting his lawsuit. It was only that they had the same name. Yet the old prince took a great interest in them, and was particularly fond of one of them who was, so to speak, the head of the family — a young officer. Versilov had till recently had an immense influence in this old man’s affairs and had been his friend, a strange sort of friend, for the poor old prince, as I detected, was awfully afraid of him, not only at the time when I arrived on the scene, but had apparently been always afraid of him all through their friendship. They had not seen each other for a long time, however. The dishonourable conduct of which Versilov was accused concerned the old prince’s family. But Tatyana Pavlovna had intervened and it was through her that I was placed in attendance on the old prince, who wanted a “young man” in his study. At the same time it appeared that he was very anxious to do something to please Versilov, to make, so to speak, the first advance to him, and Versilov ALLOWED it. The old man had made the arrangement in the absence of his daughter, the widow of a general, who would certainly not have permitted him to take this step. Of this later, but I may remark that the strangeness of his relations with Versilov impressed me in the latter’s favour. It occurred to the imagination that if the head of the injured family still cherished a respect for Versilov, the rumours of Versilov’s scoundrelly

behaviour must be absurd, or at least exaggerated, and might have more than one explanation. It was partly this circumstance which kept me from protesting against the situation; in accepting it I hoped to verify all this.

Tatyana Pavlovna was playing a strange part at the time when I found her in Petersburg. I had almost forgotten her, and had not at all expected to find her possessed of such influence. She had met me three or four times during my life in Moscow, and had always turned up, goodness knows where from, sent by some one or other whenever I needed fitting out — to go into Touchard's boarding school, or two and a half years later, when I was being transferred to the grammar school and sent to board with Nikolay Semyonovitch, a friend I shall never forget. She used to spend the whole day with me and inspect my linen and my clothes. She drove about the town with me, took me to Kuznetsky Street, bought me what was necessary, provided me with a complete outfit, in fact, down to the smallest box and penknife. All the while she nagged at me, scolded me, reproached me, cross-examined me, quoting as examples to me various phantom boys among her relations and acquaintances who were all said to be better than I was. She even pinched me and actually gave me several vicious pokes. After fitting me out and installing me, she would disappear completely for several years. On this occasion, too, she turned up at once on my arrival to instal me again. She was a spare little figure with a sharp nose like a beak, and sharp little eyes like a bird's. She waited on Versilov like a slave, and grovelled before him as though he were the Pope, but she did it through conviction. But I soon noticed with surprise that she was respected by all and, what was more, known to every one everywhere. Old Prince Sokolsky treated her with extraordinary deference; it was the same thing with his family; the same with Versilov's haughty children; the same with the Fanariotovs; and yet she lived by taking in sewing, and washing lace, and fetched work from the shops. She and I fell out at the first word, for she thought fit to begin nagging at me just as she had done six years before. And from that time forward we quarrelled every day, but that did not prevent us from sometimes talking, and I must confess that by the end of the month I began to like her: for her independent character, I believe. But I did not tell her so.

I realized at once that I had only been given this post at the old invalid prince's in order to "amuse" him, and that that was my whole duty. Naturally this was humiliating, and I should at once have taken steps, but

the queer old fellow soon made an unexpected impression upon me. I felt something like compassion for him, and by the end of the month I had become strangely attached to him; anyway I gave up my intention of being rude. He was not more than sixty, however, but there had been a great to-do with him a year and a half before, when he suddenly had a fit. He was travelling somewhere and went mad on the way, so there was something of a scandal of which people talked in Petersburg. As is usual in such cases, he was instantly taken abroad, but five months later he suddenly reappeared perfectly well, though he gave up the service. Versilov asserted seriously (and with noticeable heat) that he had not been insane at all, but had only had some sort of nervous fit. I promptly made a note of Versilov's warmth about it. I may observe, however, that I was disposed to share his opinion. The old man only showed perhaps an excessive frivolity at times, not quite appropriate to his years, of which, so they say, there was no sign in him before. It was said that in the past he had been a councillor of some sort, and on one occasion had quite distinguished himself in some commission with which he had been charged. After knowing him for a whole month, I should never have supposed he could have any special capacity as a councillor. People observed (though I saw nothing of it) that after his fit he developed a marked disposition to rush into matrimony, and it was said that he had more than once reverted to this idea during the last eighteen months, that it was known in society and a subject of interest. But as this weakness by no means fell in with the interests of certain persons of the prince's circle, the old man was guarded on all sides. He had not a large family of his own; he had been a widower for twenty years, and had only one daughter, the general's widow, who was now daily expected from Moscow. She was a young person whose strength of will was evidently a source of apprehension to the old man. But he had masses of distant relatives, principally through his wife, who were all almost beggars, besides a multitude of protégés of all sorts, male and female, all of whom expected to be mentioned in his will, and so they all supported the general's widow in keeping watch over the old man. He had, moreover, had one strange propensity from his youth up (I don't know whether it was ridiculous or not) for making matches for poor girls. He had been finding husbands for the last twenty-five years — for distant relations, for the step-daughters of his wife's cousins, for his god-daughters; he even found a husband for the daughter of his house porter. He used to take his protégées into his house

when they were little girls, provide them with governesses and French mademoiselles, then have them educated in the best boarding schools, and finally marry them off with a dowry. The calls upon him were continually increasing. When his protégées were married they naturally produced more little girls and all these little girls became his protégées. He was always having to stand as god-father. The whole lot turned up to congratulate him on his birthdays, and it was all very agreeable to him.

I noticed at once that the old man had lurking in his mind a painful conviction (it was impossible to avoid noticing it, indeed) that every one had begun to look at him strangely, that every one had begun to behave to him not as before, not as to a healthy man. This impression never left him even at the liveliest social functions. The old man had become suspicious, had begun to detect something in every one's eyes. He was evidently tormented by the idea that every one suspected him of being mad. He sometimes looked mistrustfully even at me. And if he had found out that some one was spreading or upholding such rumours, the benevolent old man would have become his implacable foe. I beg that this circumstance may be noted. I may add that it was what decided me from the first day not to be rude to him; in fact, I was glad if I were able sometimes to amuse or entertain him; I don't think that this confession can cast any slur on my dignity.

The greater part of his money was invested. He had since his illness become a partner in a large joint stock enterprise, a very safe one, however. And though the management was in other hands he took a great interest in it, too, attended the shareholders' meetings, was appointed a director, presided at the board-meetings, opposed motions, was noisy and obviously enjoyed himself. He was very fond of making speeches: every one could judge of his brain anyway. And in general he developed a great fancy for introducing profound reflections and bon mots in his conversation, even in the intimacy of private life. I quite understand it.

On the ground floor of his house there was something like a private office where a single clerk kept the books and accounts and also managed the house. This clerk was quite equal to the work alone, though he had some government job as well, but by the prince's own wish I was engaged to assist him; but I was immediately transferred to the prince's study, and often had no work before me, not even books or papers to keep up appearances. I am writing now sobered by time; and about many things feel

now almost like an outsider; but how can I describe the depression (I recall it vividly at this moment) that weighed down my heart in those days, and still more, the excitement which reached such a pitch of confused feverishness that I did not sleep at night — all due to my impatience, to the riddles I had set myself to solve.

2

To ask for money, even a salary, is a most disgusting business, especially if one feels in the recesses of one's conscience that one has not quite earned it. Yet the evening before, my mother had been whispering to my sister apart from Versilov ("so as not to worry Andrey Petrovitch") that she intended to take the ikon which for some reason was particularly precious to her to the pawnbroker's. I was to be paid fifty roubles a month, but I had no idea how I should receive the money; nothing had been said to me about it.

Meeting the clerk downstairs three days before, I inquired of him whom one was to ask for one's salary. He looked at me with a smile as though of astonishment (he did not like me).

"Oh, you get a salary?"

I thought that on my answering he would add:

"What for?"

But he merely answered drily, that he "knew nothing about it," and buried himself in the ruled exercise book into which he was copying accounts from some bills.

He was not unaware, however, that I did something. A fortnight before I had spent four days over work he had given me, making a fair copy, and as it turned out, almost a fresh draft of something. It was a perfect avalanche of "ideas" of the prince's which he was preparing to present to the board of directors. These had to be put together into a whole and clothed in suitable language. I spent a whole day with the prince over it afterwards, and he argued very warmly with me, but was well satisfied in the end. But I don't know whether he read the paper or not. I say nothing of the two or three letters, also about business, which I wrote at his request.

It was annoying to me to have to ask for my salary because I had already decided to give up my situation, foreseeing that I should be obliged through unavoidable circumstances to go away. When I waked up and dressed that morning in my garret upstairs, I felt that my heart was beating, and though I

pooh-poohed it, yet I was conscious of the same excitement as I walked towards the prince's house. That morning there was expected a woman, whose presence I was reckoning upon for the explanation of all that was tormenting me! This was the prince's daughter, the young widow of General Ahmakov, of whom I have spoken already and who was bitterly hostile to Versilov. At last I have written that name! I had never seen her, of course, and could not imagine how I should speak to her or whether I should speak, but I imagined (perhaps on sufficient grounds) that with her arrival there would be some light thrown on the darkness surrounding Versilov in my eyes. I could not remain unmoved. It was frightfully annoying that at the very outset I should be so cowardly and awkward; it was awfully interesting, and, still more, sickening — three impressions at once. I remember every detail of that day!

My old prince knew nothing of his daughter's probable arrival, and was not expecting her to return from Moscow for a week. I had learnt this the evening before quite by chance: Tatyana Pavlovna, who had received a letter from Mme. Ahmakov, let it out to my mother. Though they were whispering and spoke in veiled allusions, I guessed what was meant. Of course I was not eavesdropping, I simply could not avoid listening when I saw how agitated my mother was at the news of this woman's arrival. Versilov was not in the house.

I did not want to tell the old prince because I could not help noticing all that time how he was dreading her arrival. He had even let drop three days before, though only by a timid and remote hint, that he was afraid of her coming on my account; that is that he would have trouble about me. I must add, however, that in his own family he preserved his independence and was still master in his own house, especially in money matters. My first judgment of him was that he was a regular old woman, but I was afterwards obliged to revise my opinion, and to recognize that, if he were an old woman, there was still a fund of obstinacy, if not of real manliness, in him. There were moments when one could hardly do anything with him in spite of his apprehensive and yielding character. Versilov explained this to me more fully later. I recall now with interest that the old prince and I scarcely ever spoke of his daughter, we seemed to avoid it: I in particular avoided it, while he, on his side, avoided mentioning Versilov, and I guessed that he would not answer if I were to ask him one of the delicate questions which interested me so much.

If anyone cares to know what we did talk about all that month I must answer that we really talked of everything in the world, but always of the queerest things. I was delighted with the extraordinary simplicity with which he treated me. Sometimes I looked with extreme astonishment at the old man and wondered how he could ever have presided at meetings. If he had been put into our school and in the fourth class too, what a nice schoolfellow he would have made. More than once, too, I was surprised by his face; it was very serious-looking, almost handsome and thin; he had thick curly grey hair, wide-open eyes; and he was besides slim and well built; but there was an unpleasant, almost unseemly, peculiarity about his face, it would suddenly change from excessive gravity to an expression of exaggerated playfulness, which was a complete surprise to a person who saw him for the first time. I spoke of this to Versilov, who listened with curiosity; I fancy that he had not expected me to be capable of making such observations; he observed casually that this had come upon the prince since his illness and probably only of late.

We used to talk principally of two abstract subjects — of God and of His existence, that is, whether there was a God or not — and of women. The prince was very religious and sentimental. He had in his study a huge stand of ikons with a lamp burning before them. But something seemed to come over him — and he would begin expressing doubts of the existence of God and would say astounding things, obviously challenging me to answer. I was not much interested in the question, speaking generally, but we both got very hot about it and quite genuinely. I recall all those conversations even now with pleasure. But what he liked best was gossiping about women, and he was sometimes positively disappointed at my disliking this subject of conversation, and making such a poor response to it.

He began talking in that style as soon as I went in that morning. I found him in a jocose mood, though I had left him the night before extremely melancholy. Meanwhile it was absolutely necessary for me to settle the matter of the salary — before the arrival of certain persons. I reckoned that that morning we should certainly be interrupted (it was not for nothing my heart was beating) and then perhaps I should not be able to bring myself to speak of money. But I did not know how to begin about money and I was naturally angry at my stupidity. And, as I remember now in my vexation at some too jocular question of his, I blurted out my views on women point-blank and with great vigour.

And this led him to be more expansive with me than ever.

3

“I don’t like women because they’ve no manners, because they are awkward, because they are not self-reliant, and because they wear unseemly clothes!” I wound up my long tirade incoherently.

“My dear boy, spare us!” he cried, immensely delighted, which enraged me more than ever.

I am ready to give way and be trivial only about trifles. I never give way in things that are really important. In trifles, in little matters of etiquette, you can do anything you like with me, and I curse this peculiarity in myself. From a sort of putrid good nature I’ve sometimes been ready to knuckle under to some fashionable snob, simply flattered by his affability, or I’ve let myself be drawn into argument with a fool, which is more unpardonable than anything. All this is due to lack of self- control, and to my having grown up in seclusion, but next day it would be the same thing again: that’s why I was sometimes taken for a boy of sixteen. But instead of gaining self-control I prefer even now to bottle myself up more tightly than ever in my shell— “I may be clumsy — but good-bye!” — however misanthropic that may seem. I say that seriously and for good. But I don’t write this with reference to the prince or even with reference to that conversation.

“I’m not speaking for your entertainment,” I almost shouted at him. “I am speaking from conviction.”

“But how do you mean that women have no manners and are unseemly in their dress? That’s something new.”

“They have no manners. Go to the theatre, go for a walk. Every man knows the right side of the road, when they meet they step aside, he keeps to the right, I keep to the right. A woman, that is a lady — it’s ladies I’m talking about — dashes straight at you as though she doesn’t see you, as though you were absolutely bound to skip aside and make way for her. I’m prepared to make way for her as a weaker creature, but why has she the right, why is she so sure it’s my duty — that’s what’s offensive. I always curse when I meet them. And after that they cry out that they’re oppressed and demand equality; a fine sort of equality when she tramples me under foot and fills my mouth with sand.”

“With sand?”

“Yes, because they’re not decently dressed — it’s only depraved people don’t notice it. In the law-courts they close the doors when they’re trying cases of indecency. Why do they allow it in the streets, where there are more people? They openly hang bustles on behind to look as though they had fine figures; openly! I can’t help noticing; the young lad notices it too; and the child that’s growing into a boy notices it too; it’s abominable. Let old rakes admire them and run after them with their tongues hanging out, but there is such a thing as the purity of youth which must be protected. One can only despise them. They walk along the parade with trains half a yard long behind them, sweeping up the dust. It’s a pleasant thing to walk behind them: you must run to get in front of them, or jump on one side, or they’ll sweep pounds of dust into your mouth and nose. And what’s more it’s silk, and they’ll drag it over the stones for a couple of miles simply because it’s the fashion, when their husbands get five hundred roubles a year in the Senate: that’s where bribes come in! I’ve always despised them. I’ve cursed them aloud and abused them.”

Though I describe this conversation somewhat humorously in the style that was characteristic of me at that time, my ideas are still the same.

“And how do you come off?” the prince queried.

“I curse them and turn away. They feel it, of course, but they don’t show it, they prance along majestically without turning their heads. But I only came to actual abuse on one occasion with two females, both wearing tails on the parade; of course I didn’t use bad language, but I said aloud that long tails were offensive.”

“Did you use that expression?”

“Of course I did. To begin with, they trample upon the rules of social life, and secondly, they raise the dust, and the parade is meant for all. I walk there, other men walk, Fyodor, Ivan, it’s the same for all. So that’s what I said. And I dislike the way women walk altogether, when you look at their back view; I told them that too, but only hinted at it.”

“But, my dear boy, you might get into serious trouble; they might have hauled you off to the police station.”

“They couldn’t do anything. They had nothing to complain of: a man walks beside them talking to himself. Every one has the right to express his convictions to the air. I spoke in the abstract without addressing them. They began wrangling with me of themselves; they began to abuse me, they

used much worse language than I did; they called me milksop, said I ought to go without my dinner, called me a nihilist, and threatened to hand me over to the police; said that I'd attacked them because they were alone and weak women, but if there'd been a man with them I should soon sing another tune. I very coolly told them to leave off annoying me, and I would cross to the other side of the street. And to show them that I was not in the least afraid of their men, and was ready to accept their challenge, I would follow them to their house, walking twenty paces behind them, then I would stand before the house and wait for their men. And so I did."

"You don't say so?"

"Of course it was stupid, but I was roused. They dragged me over two miles in the heat, as far as the 'institutions,' they went into a wooden house of one storey — a very respectable-looking one I must admit — one could see in at the windows a great many flowers, two canaries, three pug-dogs and engravings in frames. I stood for half an hour in the street facing the house. They peeped out two or three times, then pulled down all the blinds. Finally an elderly government clerk came out of the little gate; judging from his appearance he had been asleep and had been waked up on purpose; he was not actually in a dressing-gown, but he was in a very domestic-looking attire. He stood at the gate, folded his hands behind him, and proceeded to stare at me — I at him. Then he looked away, then gazed at me again, and suddenly began smiling at me. I turned and walked away."

"My dear boy, how Schilleresque! I've always wondered at you; with your rosy cheeks, your face blooming with health, and such an aversion, one may say, for women! How is it possible that woman does not make a certain impression on you at your age? Why, when I was a boy of eleven, mon cher, my tutor used to notice that I looked too attentively at the statues in the Summer Gardens."

"You would like me to take up with some Josephine here, and come and tell you all about it! Rather not; I saw a woman completely naked when I was thirteen; I've had a feeling of disgust ever since."

"Do you mean it? But, cher enfant, about a fresh, beautiful woman there's a scent of apples; there's nothing disgusting."

"In the little boarding school I was at before I went to the grammar school, there was a boy called Lambert. He was always thrashing me, for he was three years older than I was, and I used to wait on him, and take off his boots. When he was going to be confirmed an abbé, called Rigaud,

came to congratulate him on his first communion, and they dissolved in tears on each other's necks, and the abbé hugged him tightly to his bosom. I shed tears, too, and felt very envious. He left school when his father died, and for two years I saw nothing of him. Then I met him in the street. He said he would come and see me. By that time I was at the grammar school and living at Nikolay Semyonovitch's. He came in the morning, showed me five hundred roubles, and told me to go with him. Though he had thrashed me two years before, he had always wanted my company, not simply to take off his boots, but because he liked to tell me things. He told me that he had taken the money that day out of his mother's desk, to which he had made a false key, for legally all his father's money was his, and so much the worse for her if she wouldn't give it to him. He said that the Abbé Rigaud had been to lecture him the day before, that he'd come in, stood over him, begun whimpering, and described all sorts of horrors, lifting up his hands to heaven. "And I pulled out a knife and told him I'd cut his throat" (he pronounced it 'thr-r-roat'). We went to Kuznetsky Street. On the way he informed me that his mother was the abbé's mistress, and that he'd found it out, and he didn't care a hang for anything, and that all they said about the sacrament was rubbish. He said a great deal more, and I felt frightened. In Kuznetsky Street he bought a double-barrelled gun, a game bag, cartridges, a riding-whip, and afterwards a pound of sweets. We were going out into the country to shoot, and on the way we met a bird-catcher with cages of birds. Lambert bought a canary from him. In a wood he let the canary go, as it couldn't fly far after being in the cage, and began shooting at it, but did not hit it. It was the first time in his life he had fired off a gun, but he had wanted to buy a gun years before; at Touchard's even we were dreaming of one. He was almost choking with excitement. His hair was black, awfully black, his face was white and red, like a mask, he had a long aquiline nose, such as are common with Frenchmen, white teeth and black eyes. He tied the canary by a thread to a branch, and an inch away fired off both barrels, and the bird was blown into a hundred feathers. Then we returned, drove to an hotel, took a room, and began eating, and drinking champagne; a lady came in. . . . I remember being awfully impressed by her being so splendidly dressed; she wore a green silk dress. It was then I saw . . . all that I told you about. . . . Afterwards, when we had begun drinking, he began taunting and abusing her; she was sitting with nothing on, he took away her clothes and when she began scolding and

asking for her clothes to dress again, he began with all his might beating her with the riding-whip on her bare shoulders. I got up, seized him by the hair, and so neatly that I threw him on the ground at once. He snatched up a fork and stuck it in my leg. Hearing the outcry, people ran in, and I had time to run away. Ever since then it's disgusted me to think of nakedness; and, believe me, she was a beauty."

As I talked, the prince's face changed from a playful expression to one of great sadness.

"Mon pauvre enfant! I have felt convinced all along that there have been very many unhappy days in your childhood."

"Please don't distress yourself!"

"But you were alone, you told me so yourself, but for that Lambert; you have described it so well, that canary, the confirmation and shedding tears on the abbé's breast, and only a year or so later saying that of his mother and the abbé! . . . Oh, mon cher, the question of childhood in our day is truly awful; for a time those golden heads, curly and innocent, flutter before one and look at one with their clear eyes like angels of God, or little birds, and afterwards . . . and afterwards it turns out that it would have been better if they had not grown up at all!"

"How soft you are, prince! It's as though you had little children of your own. Why, you haven't any and never will have."

"Tiens!" His whole face was instantly transformed, "that's just what Alexandra Petrovna said — the day before yesterday, he-he! — Alexandra Petrovna Sinitsky — you must have met her here three weeks ago — only fancy, the day before yesterday, in reply to my jocular remark that if I do get married now I could set my mind at rest, there'd be no children, she suddenly said, and with such spite, 'On the contrary, there certainly would be; people like you always have them, they'll arrive the very first year, you'll see.' He-he! And they've all taken it into their heads, for some reason, that I'm going to get married; but though it was spiteful I admit it was — witty!"

"Witty — but insulting!"

"Oh, cher enfant, one can't take offence at some people. There's nothing I prize so much in people as wit, which is evidently disappearing among us; though what Alexandra Petrovna said — can hardly be considered wit."

"What? What did you say?" I said, catching at his words— "one can't take offence at some people. That's just it! Some people are not worth

noticing — an excellent principle! Just the one I need. I shall make a note of it. You sometimes say the most delightful things, prince."

He beamed all over.

"N'est ce pas? Cher enfant, true wit is vanishing; the longer one lives the more one sees it. Eh, mais . . . c'est moi qui connait les femmes! Believe me, the life of every woman, whatever she may profess, is nothing but a perpetual search for some one to submit to . . . so to speak a thirst for submission. And mark my words, there's not a single exception."

"Perfectly true! Magnificent!" I cried rapturously. Another time we should have launched into philosophical disquisitions on this theme, lasting for an hour, but suddenly I felt as though something had bitten me, and I flushed all over. I suddenly imagined that in admiring his bon mots I was flattering him as a prelude to asking for money, and that he would certainly think so as soon as I began to ask for it. I purposely mention this now.

"Prince, I humbly beg you to pay me at once the fifty roubles you owe me for the month," I fired off like a shot, in a tone of irritability that was positively rude.

I remember (for I remember every detail of that morning) that there followed between us then a scene most disgusting in its realistic truth. For the first minute he did not understand me, stared at me for some time without understanding what money I was talking about. It was natural that he should not realize I was receiving a salary — and indeed, why should I? It is true that he proceeded to assure me afterwards that he had forgotten, and when he grasped the meaning of my words, he instantly began taking out fifty roubles, but he was flustered and turned crimson. Seeing how things stood, I got up and abruptly announced that I could not take the money now, that in what I had been told about a salary they had made a mistake, or deceived me to induce me to accept the situation, and that I saw only too well now, that I did nothing to earn one, for I had no duties to perform. The prince was alarmed and began assuring me that I was of the greatest use to him, that I should be still more useful to him in the future, and that fifty roubles was so little that he should certainly add to it, for he was bound to do so, and that he had made the arrangement himself with Tatyana Pavlovna, but had "unpardonably forgotten it." I flushed crimson and declared resolutely that it was degrading for me to receive a salary for telling scandalous stories of how I had followed two draggle-tails to the 'institutions,' that I had not been engaged to amuse him but to do work, and

that if there was no work I must stop it, and so on, and so on. I could never have imagined that anyone could have been so scared as he was by my words. Of course it ended in my ceasing to protest, and his somehow pressing the fifty roubles into my hand: to this day I recall with a blush that I took it. Everything in the world always ends in meanness, and what was worst of all, he somehow succeeded in almost proving to me that I had unmistakably earned the money, and I was so stupid as to believe it, and so it was absolutely impossible to avoid taking it.

"Cher, cher enfant!" he cried, kissing and embracing me (I must admit I was on the point of tears myself, goodness knows why, though I instantly restrained myself, and even now I blush as I write it). "My dear boy, you're like one of the family to me now; in the course of this month you've won a warm place in my heart! In 'society' you get 'society' and nothing else. Katerina Nikolaevna (that was his daughter's name) is a magnificent woman and I'm proud of her, but she often, my dear boy, very often, wounds me. And as for these girls (elles sont charmantes) and their mothers who come on my birthday, they merely bring their embroidery and never know how to tell one anything. I've accumulated over sixty cushions embroidered by them, all dogs and stags. I like them very much, but with you I feel as if you were my own — not son, but brother, and I particularly like it when you argue against me; you're literary, you have read, you can be enthusiastic. . . ."

"I have read nothing, and I'm not literary at all. I used to read what I came across, but I've read nothing for two years and I'm not going to read."

"Why aren't you going to?"

"I have other objects."

"Cher . . . it's a pity if at the end of your life you say, like me, 'Je sais tout, mais je ne sais rien de bon.' I don't know in the least what I have lived in this world for! But . . . I'm so much indebted to you . . . and I should like, in fact . . ."

He suddenly broke off, and with an air of fatigue sank into brooding. After any agitation (and he might be overcome by agitation at any minute, goodness knows why) he generally seemed for some time to lose his faculties and his power of self-control, but he soon recovered, so that it really did not matter. We sat still for a few minutes. His very full lower lip hung down . . . what surprised me most of all was that he had suddenly

spoken of his daughter, and with such openness too. I put it down, of course, to his being upset.

"Cher enfant, you don't mind my addressing you so familiarly, do you?" broke from him suddenly.

"Not in the least. I must confess that at the very first I was rather offended by it and felt inclined to address you in the same way, but I saw it was stupid because you didn't speak like that to humiliate me."

But he had forgotten his question and was no longer listening.

"Well, how's your FATHER?" he said, suddenly raising his eyes and looking dreamily at me.

I winced. In the first place he called Versilov my FATHER, which he had never permitted himself to do before, and secondly, he began of himself to speak of Versilov, which he had never done before.

"He sits at home without a penny and is very gloomy," I answered briefly, though I was burning with curiosity.

"Yes, about money. His lawsuit is being decided to-day, and I'm expecting Prince Sergay as soon as he arrives. He promised to come straight from the court to me. Their whole future turns on it. It's a question of sixty or seventy thousand. Of course, I've always wished well to Andrey Petrovitch" (Versilov's name), "and I believe he'll win the suit, and Prince Sergay has no case. It's a point of law."

"The case will be decided to-day?" I cried, amazed. The thought that Versilov had not deigned to tell me even that was a great shook to me. "Then he hasn't told my mother, perhaps not anyone," it suddenly struck me. "What strength of will!"

"Then is Prince Sokolsky in Petersburg?" was another idea that occurred to me immediately.

"He arrived yesterday. He has come straight from Berlin expressly for this day."

That too was an extremely important piece of news for me. And he would be here to-day, that man who had given HIM a slap in the face!

"Well, what then?" The old prince's face suddenly changed again. "He'll preach religion as before and . . . and . . . maybe run after little girls, unfledged girls, again. He-he! There's a very funny little story about that going about even now. . . . He-he!"

"Who will preach? Who will run after little girls?"

“Andrey Petrovitch! Would you believe it, he used to pester us all in those days. ‘Where are we going?’ he would say. ‘What are we thinking about?’ That was about it, anyway. He frightened and chastened us. ‘If you’re religious,’ he’d say, ‘why don’t you become a monk?’ That was about what he expected. Mais quelle idée! If it’s right, isn’t it too severe? He was particularly fond of frightening me with the Day of Judgment — me of all people!”

“I’ve noticed nothing of all this, and I’ve been living with him a month,” I answered, listening with impatience. I felt fearfully vexed that he hadn’t pulled himself together and was rambling on so incoherently.

“It’s only that he doesn’t talk about that now, but, believe me, it was so. He’s a clever man, and undoubtedly very learned; but is his intellect quite sound? All this happened to him after his three years abroad. And I must own he shocked me very much and shocked every one. Cher enfant, j’aime le bon Dieu. . . . I believe, I believe as much as I can, but I really was angry at the time. Supposing I did put on a frivolous manner, I did it on purpose because I was annoyed — and besides, the basis of my objection was as serious as it has been from the beginning of the world. ‘If there is a higher Being,’ I said, ‘and He has a PERSONAL existence, and isn’t some sort of diffused spirit for creation, some sort of fluid (for that’s even more difficult to understand), where does He live?’ C’etait bête, no doubt, my dear boy, but, you know, all the arguments come to that. Un domicile is an important thing. He was awfully angry. He had become a Catholic out there.”

“I’ve heard that too. But it was probably nonsense.”

“I assure you by everything that’s sacred. You’ve only to look at him. . . . But you say he’s changed. But in those days how he used to worry us all! Would you believe it, he used to behave as though he were a saint and his relics were being displayed. He called us to account for our behaviour, I declare he did! Relics! En voilà un autre! It’s all very well for a monk or a hermit, but here was a man going about in a dress-coat and all the rest of it, and then he sets up as a saint! A strange inclination in a man in good society, and a curious taste, I admit. I say nothing about that; no doubt all that’s sacred, and anything may happen. . . . Besides, this is all l’inconnu, but it’s positively unseemly for a man in good society. If anything happened to me and the offer were made me I swear I should refuse it. I go and dine to-day at the club and then suddenly make a miraculous

appearance as a saint! Why, I should be ridiculous. I put all that to him at the time. . . . He used to wear chains."

I turned red with anger.

"Did you see the chains yourself?"

"I didn't see them myself but . . ."

"Then let me tell you that all that is false, a tissue of loathsome fabrications, the calumny of enemies, that is, of one chief and inhuman enemy — for he has only one enemy — your daughter!"

The old prince flared up in his turn.

"Mon cher, I beg and insist that from this time forth you never couple with that revolting story the name of my daughter."

I stood up. He was beside himself. His chin was quivering.

"Cette histoire infame! . . . . I did not believe it, I never would believe it, but . . . they tell me, believe it, believe it, I . . ."

At that instant a footman came in and announced visitors. I dropped into my chair again.

4

Two ladies came in. They were both young and unmarried. One was a stepdaughter of a cousin of the old prince's deceased wife or something of the sort, a protégée of his for whom he had already set aside a dowry, and who (I mention it with a view to later events) had money herself: the other was Anna Andreyevna Versilov, the daughter of Versilov, three years older than I. She lived with her brother in the family of Mme. Fanariotov. I had only seen her once before in my life, for a minute in the street, though I had had an encounter, also very brief, with her brother in Moscow. (I may very possibly refer to this encounter later — if I have space, that is, for it is hardly worth recording.) Anna Andreyevna had been from childhood a special favourite of the old prince (Versilov's acquaintance with the prince dated from very long ago). I was so overcome by what had just happened that I did not even stand up on their entrance, though the old prince rose to greet them. Afterwards I thought it would be humiliating to get up, and I remained where I was. What overwhelmed me most was the prince's having shouted at me like that three minutes before, and I did not know whether to go away or not. But the old man, as usual, had already forgotten everything, and was all pleasure and animation at sight of the young ladies.

At the very moment of their entrance he hurriedly whispered to me, with a rapid change of expression and a mysterious wink:

"Look at Olympiada, watch her, watch her; I'll tell you why after. . . ."

I did look at her rather carefully, but I saw nothing special about her. She was a plump, not very tall young lady, with exceedingly red cheeks. Her face was rather pleasing, of the sort that materialists like. She had an expression of kindness, perhaps, but with a touch of something different. She could not have been very brilliant intellectually — that is, not in the higher sense — for one could see cunning in her eyes. She was not more than nineteen. In fact, there was nothing remarkable about her. In our school we should have called her a cushion. (I only give this minute description of her because it will be useful later on.)

Indeed, all I have written hitherto with, apparently, such unnecessary detail is all leading up to what is coming and is necessary for it. It will all come in in its proper place; I cannot avoid it; and if it is dull, pray don't read it.

Versilov's daughter was a very different person. She was tall and somewhat slim, with a long and strikingly pale face and splendid black hair. She had large dark eyes with an earnest expression, a small mouth, and most crimson lips. She was the first woman who did not disgust me by her horrid way of walking. She was thin and slender, however. Her expression was not altogether good-natured, but was dignified. She was twenty-two. There was hardly a trace of resemblance to Versilov in her features, and yet, by some miracle, there was an extraordinary similarity of expression. I do not know whether she was pretty; that is a matter of taste. They were both very simple in their dress, so that it is not worth while to describe it. I expected to be at once insulted by some glance or gesture of Mlle. Versilov, and I was prepared for it. Her brother had insulted me in Moscow the first time we ever met. She could hardly know me by sight, but no doubt she had heard I was in attendance on the prince. Whatever the prince did or proposed to do at once aroused interest and was looked upon as an event in the whole gang of his relations and expectant beneficiaries, and this was especially so with his sudden partiality for me. I knew for a fact that the old prince was particularly solicitous for Anna Andreyevna's welfare and was on the look-out for a husband for her. But it was more difficult to find a suitor for Mlle. Versilov than for the ladies who embroidered on canvas.

And, lo and behold! contrary to all my expectations, after shaking hands with the prince and exchanging a few light, conventional phrases with him, she looked at me with marked curiosity, and, seeing that I too was looking at her, bowed to me with a smile. It is true that she had only just come into the room, and so might naturally bow to anyone in it, but her smile was so friendly that it was evidently premeditated; and, I remember, it gave me a particularly pleasant feeling.

"And this . . . this is my dear young friend Arkady Andreyevitch Dol . . ." The prince faltered, noticing that she bowed to me while I remained sitting — and he suddenly broke off; perhaps he was confused at introducing me to her (that is, in reality, introducing a brother to a sister). The "cushion" bowed to me too; but I suddenly leapt up with a clumsy scrape of my chair: it was a rush of simulated pride, utterly senseless, all due to vanity.

"Excuse me, prince, I am not Arkady Andreyevitch but Arkady Makarovitch!" I rapped out abruptly, utterly forgetting that I ought to have bowed to the ladies. Damnation take that unseemly moment!

"Mais tiens!" cried the prince, tapping his forehead with his finger.

"Where have you studied?" I heard the stupid question drawled by the "cushion," who came straight up to me.

"In Moscow, at the grammar school."

"Ah! so I have heard. Is the teaching good there?"

"Very good."

I remained standing and answered like a soldier reporting himself.

The young lady's questions were certainly not appropriate, but she did succeed in smoothing over my stupid outbreak and relieving the embarrassment of the prince, who was meanwhile listening with an amused smile to something funny Mlle. Versilov was whispering in his ear, evidently not about me. But I wondered why this girl, who was a complete stranger to me, should put herself out to smooth over my stupid behaviour and all the rest of it. At the same time, it was impossible to imagine that she had addressed me quite casually; it was obviously premeditated. She looked at me with too marked an interest; it was as though she wanted me, too, to notice her as much as possible. I pondered over all this later, and I was not mistaken.

"What, surely not to-day?" the prince cried suddenly, jumping up from his seat.

“Why, didn’t you know?” Mlle. Versilov asked in surprise. “Olympie! the prince didn’t know that Katerina Nikolaevna would be here to-day. Why, it’s to see her we’ve come. We thought she’d have arrived by the morning train and have been here long ago. She has just driven up to the steps; she’s come straight from the station, and she told us to come up and she would be here in a minute. . . . And here she is!”

The side-door opened and — THAT WOMAN WALKED IN!

I knew her face already from the wonderful portrait of her that hung in the prince’s study. I had been scrutinizing the portrait all that month. I spent three minutes in the study in her presence, and I did not take my eyes off her face for a second. But if I had not known her portrait and had been asked, after those three minutes, what she was like, I could not have answered, for all was confusion within me.

I only remember from those three minutes the image of a really beautiful woman, whom the prince was kissing and signing with the cross, and who looked quickly at once — the very minute she came in — at me. I distinctly heard the prince muttering something, with a little simper, about his new secretary and mentioning my name, evidently pointing at me. Her face seemed to contract; she threw a vicious glance at me, and smiled so insolently that I took a sudden step forward, went up to the prince, and muttered, trembling all over and unable to finish my words (I believe my teeth were chattering):

“From this time I . . . I’ve business of my own. . . . I’m going.”

And I turned and went out. No one said a word to me, not even the prince; they all simply stared. The old prince told me afterwards that I turned so white that he “was simply frightened.”

But there was no need.

CHAPTER III

1

Indeed there was no need: a higher consideration swallowed up all petty feelings, and one powerful emotion made up to me for everything. I went out in a sort of ecstasy. As I stepped into the street I was ready to sing aloud. To match my mood it was an exquisite morning, sunshine, people out walking, noise, movement, joyousness, and crowds. Why, had not that woman insulted me? From whom would I have endured that look and that insolent smile without instant protest however stupid it might be. I did not mind about that. Note that she had come expressly to insult me as soon as she could, although she had never seen me. In her eyes I was an "envoy from Versilov," and she was convinced at that time, and for long afterwards, that Versilov held her fate in his hands and could ruin her at once if he wanted to, by means of a certain document; she suspected that, anyway. It was a duel to the death. And yet — I was not offended! It was an insult, but I did not feel it. How should I? I was positively glad of it; though I had come here to hate her I felt I was beginning to love her.

I don't know whether the spider perhaps does not hate the fly he has marked and is snaring. Dear little fly! It seems to me that the victim is loved, or at least may be loved. Here I love my enemy; I am delighted, for instance, that she is so beautiful. I am delighted, madam, that you are so haughty and majestic. If you were meeker it would not be so delightful. You have spat on me — and I am triumphant. If you were literally to spit in my face I should really not be angry because you — are my victim; MINE and not HIS. How fascinating was that idea! Yes, the secret consciousness of power is more insupportably delightful than open domination. If I were a millionaire I believe I should take pleasure in going about in the oldest clothes and being taken for a destitute man, almost a beggar, being jostled and despised. The consciousness of the truth would be enough for me.

That is how I should interpret my thoughts and happiness, and much of what I was feeling that day. I will only add that in what I have just written there is too much levity; in reality my feeling was deeper and more modest. Perhaps even now I am more modest in myself than in my words and deeds — God grant it may be so!

Perhaps I have done amiss in sitting down to write at all. Infinitely more remains hidden within than comes out in words. Your thought, even if it is an evil one, is always deeper while it is in your mind; it becomes more absurd and dishonourable when it is put into words. Versilov once said to me that the opposite was true only with horrid people, they simply tell lies, it is easy for them; but I am trying to write the whole truth, and that's fearfully difficult!

2

On that 19th of September I took one other "step."

For the first time since I arrived I had money in my pocket, for the sixty roubles I had saved up in two years I had given to my mother, as I mentioned before. But, a few days before, I had determined that on the day I received my salary I would make an "experiment" of which I had long been dreaming. The day before I had cut out of the paper an address; it was an advertisement that on the 19th of September at twelve o'clock in the morning, in such- and-such a street, at number so-and-so, there would be a sale by the local police authority of the effects of Mme. Lebrecht, and that the catalogue, valuation, and property for sale could be inspected on the day of the auction, and so on.

It was just past one. I hurried to the address on foot. I had not taken a cab for more than two years — I had taken a vow not to (or I should never have saved up my sixty roubles). I had never been to an auction, I had never ALLOWED myself this indulgence. And though my present step was only an EXPERIMENT yet I had made up my mind not to take even that step till I had left the grammar school, when I should break off with everything, hide myself in my shell, and become perfectly free. It is true that I was far from being in my shell and far from being free yet, but then I was only taking this step by way of an experiment — simply to look into it, as it were to indulge a fancy, and after that not to recur to it perhaps for a long while, till the time of beginning seriously. For every one else this was only a stupid little auction, but for me it was the first plank in the ship in which a Columbus would set out to discover his America. That was my feeling then.

When I arrived I went into the furthest corner of the yard of the house mentioned in the advertisement, and entered Mme. Lebrecht's flat, which

consisted of an entry and four small low-pitched rooms. In the first room there was a crowd of about thirty persons, half of them people who had come to bargain, while the rest, judging from their appearance, were either inquisitive outsiders, or connoisseurs, or representatives of Mme. Lebrecht. There were merchants and Jews gloating over the objects made of gold, and a few people of the well-dressed class. The very faces of some of these gentlemen remain stamped in my memory. In the doorway leading to the room on the right there was placed a table so that it was impossible to pass; on it lay the things catalogued for sale. There was another room on the left, but the door into it was closed, though it was continually being opened a little way, and some one could be seen peeping through the crack, no doubt some one of the numerous family of Mme. Lebrecht, who must have been feeling very much ashamed at the time. At the table between the doors, facing the public, sat the warrant officer, to judge by his badge, presiding over the sale. I found the auction half over; I squeezed my way up to the table as soon as I went in. Some bronze candlesticks were being sold. I began looking at the things.

I looked at the things and wondered what I could buy, and what I could do with bronze candlesticks, and whether my object would be attained, and how the thing would be done, and whether my project would be successful, and whether my project were not childish. All this I wondered as I waited. It was like the sensation one has at the gambling table at the moment before one has put down a card, though one has come to do so, feeling, “if I like I’ll put it down, if I don’t I’ll go away — I’m free to choose!” One’s heart does not begin to throb at that point, but there is a faint thrill and flutter in it — a sensation not without charm. But indecision soon begins to weigh painfully upon one: one’s eyes grow dizzy, one stretches out one’s hand, picks up a card, but mechanically, almost against one’s will, as though some one else were directing one’s hand. At last one has decided and thrown down the card — then the feeling is quite different — immense. I am not writing about the auction; I am writing about myself; who else would feel his heart throbbing at an auction?

Some were excited, some were waiting in silence, some had bought things and were regretting it. I felt no sympathy with a gentleman who, misunderstanding what was said, bought an electro-plated milk- jug in mistake for a silver one for five roubles instead of two; in fact it amused me very much. The warrant officer passed rapidly from one class of objects to

another: after the candlesticks, displayed earrings, after earrings an embroidered leather cushion, then a money-box — probably for the sake of variety, or to meet the wishes of the purchasers. I could not remain passive even for ten minutes. I went up to the cushion, and afterwards to the cash-box, but at the critical moment my tongue failed me: these objects seemed to me quite out of the question. At last I saw an album in the warrant officer's hand.

"A family album in real morocco, second-hand, with sketches in water-colour and crayon, in a carved ivory case with silver clasps — priced two roubles!"

I went up: it looked an elegant article, but the carving was damaged in one place. I was the only person who went up to look at it, all were silent; there was no bidding for it. I might have undone the clasps and taken the album out of the case to look at it, but I did not make use of my privilege, and only waved a trembling hand as though to say "never mind."

"Two roubles, five kopecks," I said. I believe my teeth were chattering again.

The album was knocked down to me. I at once took out the money, paid for it, snatched up the album, and went into a corner of the room. There I took it out of its case, and began looking through it with feverish haste — it was the most trumpery thing possible — a little album of the size of a piece of notepaper, with rubbed gilt edges, exactly like the albums girls used to keep in former days when they left school. There were crayon and colour sketches of temples on mountain-sides, Cupids, a lake with floating swans; there were verses:

On a far journey I am starting, From Moscow I am departing, From my dear ones I am parting. And with post-horses flying South.

They are enshrined in my memory!

I made up my mind that I had made a mess of it; if there ever was anything no one could possibly want it was this.

"Never mind," I decided, "one's bound to lose the first card; it's a good omen, in fact."

I felt thoroughly light-hearted.

"Ach, I'm too late; is it yours? You have bought it?" I suddenly heard beside me the voice of a well-dressed, presentable-looking gentleman in a blue coat. He had come in late.

“I am too late. Ach, what a pity! How much was it?”

“Two roubles, five kopecks.”

“Ach, what a pity! Would you give it up?”

“Come outside,” I whispered to him, in a tremor.

We went out on the staircase.

“I’ll let you have it for ten roubles,” I said, feeling a shiver run down my back.

“Ten roubles! Upon my word!”

“As you like.”

He stared at me open-eyed. I was well dressed, not in the least like a Jew or a second-hand dealer.

“Mercy on us — why it’s a wretched old album, what use is it to anyone? The case isn’t worth anything certainly. You certainly won’t sell it to anyone.”

“I see you will buy it.”

“But that’s for a special reason. I only found out yesterday. I’m the only one who would. Upon my word, what are you thinking about!”

“I ought to have asked twenty-five roubles, but as there was, after all, a risk you might draw back, I only asked for ten to make sure of it. I won’t take a farthing less.”

I turned and walked away.

“Well, take four roubles,” he said, overtaking me in the yard, “come, five!”

I strode on without speaking.

“Well, take it then!”

He took out ten roubles. I gave him the album.

“But you must own it’s not honest! Two roubles — and then ten, eh?”

“Why not honest? It’s a question of market.”

“What do you mean by market!” He grew angry.

“When there’s a demand one has a market — if you hadn’t asked for it I shouldn’t have sold it for forty kopecks.”

Though I was serious and didn’t burst out laughing I was laughing inwardly — not from delight — I don’t know why myself, I was almost breathless.

“Listen,” I muttered, utterly unable to restrain myself, but speaking in a friendly way and feeling quite fond of him. “Listen, when as a young man the late James Rothschild, the Parisian one, who left seventeen hundred

million francs (he nodded), heard of the murder of the Duc de Berri some hours before anybody else he sent the news to the proper quarter, and by that one stroke in an instant made several millions — that's how people get on!"

"So you're a Rothschild, are you?" he cried as though indignant with me for being such a fool.

I walked quickly out of the house. One step, and I had made seven roubles ninety-five kopecks. It was a senseless step, a piece of child's play I admit, but it chimed in with my theories, and I could not help being deeply stirred by it. But it is no good describing one's feelings. My ten roubles were in my waistcoat pocket, I thrust in two fingers to feel it — and walked along without taking my hand out. After walking a hundred yards along the street I took the note out to look at it, I looked at it and felt like kissing it. A carriage rumbled up to the steps of a house. The house porter opened the door and a lady came out to get into the carriage. She was young, handsome and wealthy-looking, gorgeously dressed in silk and velvet, with a train more than two yards long. Suddenly a pretty little portfolio dropped out of her hand and fell on the ground; she got into the carriage. The footman stooped down to pick the thing up, but I flew up quickly, picked it up and handed it to the lady, taking off my hat. (The hat was a silk one, I was suitably dressed for a young man.) With a very pleasant smile, though with an air of reserve, the lady said to me: "Merci, m'sieu!" The carriage rolled away. I kissed the ten-rouble note.

3

That same day I was to go and see Efim Zvyerev, one of my old schoolfellows at the grammar school, who had gone to a special college in Petersburg. He is not worth describing, and I was not on particularly friendly terms with him; but I looked him up in Petersburg. He might (through various circumstances which again are not worth relating) be able to give me the address of a man called Kraft, whom it was very important for me to see as soon as he returned from Vilna. Efim was expecting him that day or the next, as he had let me know two days before. I had to go to the Petersburg Side, but I did not feel tired.

I found Efim (who was also nineteen) in the yard of his aunt's house, where he was staying for the time. He had just had dinner and was walking

about the yard on stilts. He told me at once that Kraft had arrived the day before, and was staying at his old lodgings close by, and that he was anxious to see me as soon as possible, as he had something important to tell me.

"He's going off somewhere again," added Efim.

As in the present circumstances it was of great importance to see Kraft I asked Efim to take me round at once to his lodging, which it appeared was in a back street only a few steps away. But Efim told me that he had met him an hour ago and that he was on his way to Dergatchev's.

"But come along to Dergatchev's. Why do you always cry off? Are you afraid?"

Kraft might as a fact stay on at Dergatchev's, and in that case where could I wait for him? I was not afraid of going to Dergatchev's, but I did not want to go to his house, though Efim had tried to get me there three times already. And on each occasion had asked "Are you afraid?" with a very nasty smile at my expense. It was not a case of fear I must state at once; if I was afraid it was of something quite different. This time I made up my mind to go. Dergatchev's, too, was only a few steps away. On the way I asked Efim if he still meant to run away to America.

"Maybe I shall wait a bit," he answered with a faint smile.

I was not particularly fond of him; in fact I did not like him at all. He had fair hair, and a full face of an excessive fairness, an almost unseemly childish fairness, yet he was taller than I was, but he would never have been taken for more than seventeen. I had nothing to talk to him about.

"What's going on there? Is there always a crowd?" I asked.

"But why are you always so frightened?" he laughed again.

"Go to hell!" I said, getting angry.

"There won't be a crowd at all. Only friends come, and they're all his own set. Don't worry yourself."

"But what the devil is it to me whether they're his set or not! I'm not one of his set. How can they be sure of me?"

"I am bringing you and that's enough. They've heard of you already. Kraft can answer for you, too."

"I say, will Vassin be there?"

"I don't know."

"If he is, give me a poke and point him out as soon as we go in. As soon as we go in. Do you hear?"

I had heard a good deal about Vassin already, and had long been interested in him.

Dergatchev lived in a little lodge in the courtyard of a wooden house belonging to a merchant's wife, but he occupied the whole of it. There were only three living rooms. All the four windows had the blinds drawn down. He was a mechanical engineer, and did work in Petersburg. I had heard casually that he had got a good private berth in the provinces, and that he was just going away to it.

As soon as we stepped into the tiny entry we heard voices. There seemed to be a heated argument and some one shouted:

"Quae medicamenta non sanant, ferrum sanat, quae ferrum non sanat — ignis sanat!"

I certainly was in some uneasiness. I was, of course, not accustomed to society of any kind. At school I had been on familiar terms with my schoolfellows, but I was scarcely friends with anyone; I made a little corner for myself and lived in it. But this was not what disturbed me. In any case I vowed not to let myself be drawn into argument and to say nothing beyond what was necessary, so that no one could draw any conclusions about me; above all — to avoid argument.

In the room, which was really too small, there were seven men; counting the ladies, ten persons. Dergatchev was five-and-twenty, and was married. His wife had a sister and another female relation, who lived with them. The room was furnished after a fashion, sufficiently though, and was even tidy. There was a lithographed portrait on the wall, but a very cheap one; in the corner there was an ikon without a setting, but with a lamp burning before it.

Dergatchev came up to me, shook hands and asked me to sit down.

"Sit down; they're all our own set here."

"You're very welcome," a rather nice-looking, modestly dressed young woman added immediately, and making me a slight bow she at once went out of the room. This was his wife, and she, too, seemed to have been taking part in the discussion, and went away to nurse the baby. But there were two other ladies left in the room; one very short girl of about twenty, wearing a black dress, also rather nice-looking, and the other a thin, keen-eyed lady of thirty. They sat listening eagerly, but not taking part in the conversation. All the men were standing except Kraft, Vassin and me. Efim pointed them out to me at once, for I had never seen Kraft before,

either. I got up and went up to make their acquaintance. Kraft's face I shall never forget. There was no particular beauty about it, but a positive excess of mildness and delicacy, though personal dignity was conspicuous in everything about him. He was twenty- six, rather thin, above medium height, fair-haired, with an earnest but soft face; there was a peculiar gentleness about his whole personality. And yet if I were asked I would not have changed my own, possibly very commonplace, countenance for his, which struck me as so attractive. There was something in his face I should not have cared to have in mine, too marked a calm (in a moral sense) and something like a secret, unconscious pride. But I probably could not have actually formed this judgment at the time. It seems so to me now, in the light of later events.

"I'm very glad you've come," said Kraft. "I have a letter which concerns you. We'll stay here a little and then go home."

Dergatchev was a strong, broad-shouldered, dark-complexioned man of medium height, with a big beard. His eyes showed acuteness, habitual reserve, and a certain incessant watchfulness; though he was for the most part silent, he evidently controlled the conversation. Vassin's face did not impress me much, though I had heard of him as extraordinarily intelligent: he had fair hair, large light grey eyes, and a very open face. But at the same time there was something, as it were, too hard in it; one had a presentiment that he would not be communicative, but he looked undeniably clever, cleverer than Dergatchev, of a more profound intellect — cleverer than anyone in the room. But perhaps I am exaggerating. Of the other young men I only recall two; one a tall, dark man of twenty-seven, with black whiskers, who talked a great deal, a teacher or something of the sort; the other was a fellow of my own age, with good lines in his face, wearing a Russian tunic without sleeves. He was silent, and listened attentively. He turned out afterwards to be a peasant.

"No, that's not the way to put it," the black-whiskered teacher began, obviously continuing the previous discussion. He talked more than anyone in the room.

"I'm not talking of mathematical proofs, but that idea which I am prepared to believe without mathematical proof . . ."

"Wait a bit, Tihomirov," Dergatchev interrupted loudly, "the newcomers don't understand. You see," he suddenly addressed himself to me alone (and I confess if he intended to put me as a novice through an examination

or to make me speak, it was adroitly done on his part; I felt it and prepared myself) “it’s all our friend Kraft, who is well known to us all for his character and the solidity of his convictions. From a very ordinary fact he has deduced a very extraordinary conviction that has surprised us all. He has deduced that the Russians are a second-rate people . . .”

“Third-rate,” shouted some one.

“A second-rate people destined to serve as the raw material for a nobler race, and not to play an independent part in the history of humanity. In view of this theory of his, which is perhaps correct, Kraft has come to the conclusion that the activity of every Russian must in the future be paralysed by this idea, that all, so to speak, will fold their hands and . . .”

“Excuse me, Dergatchev, that’s not the way to put it,” Tihomirov interrupted impatiently again (Dergatchev at once gave way), “considering that Kraft has made a serious study of the subject, has made on a physiological basis deductions which he regards as mathematically proved, and has spent perhaps two years on his idea (which I should be prepared a priori to accept with equanimity), considering all this, that is considering Kraft’s excitement and earnestness, the case must be considered as a phenomenon. All this leads up to a question which Kraft cannot understand, and that’s what we must attend to — I mean, Kraft’s not understanding it, for that’s the phenomenon. We must decide whether this phenomenon belongs to the domain of pathology as a solitary instance, or whether it is an occurrence which may be normally repeated in others; that’s what is of interest for the common cause. I believe Kraft about Russia, and I will even say that I am glad of it, perhaps; if this idea were assimilated by all it would free many from patriotic prejudice and untie their hands . . .”

“I am not influenced by patriotism,” said Kraft, speaking with a certain stiffness. All this debate seemed distasteful to him.

“Whether patriotism or not we need not consider,” observed Vassin, who had been very silent.

“But how, tell me, please, could Kraft’s deduction weaken the impulse to the cause of humanity,” shouted the teacher. (He was the only one shouting. All the others spoke in a low voice.) “Let Russia be condemned to second-rateness, but we can still work and not for Russia alone. And, what’s more, how can Kraft be a patriot if he has ceased to believe in Russia?”

“Besides being a German,” a voice interrupted again.

“I am a Russian,” said Kraft.

“That’s a question that has no direct bearing on the subject,” observed Dergatchev to the speaker who had interrupted.

“Take a wider view of your idea,” cried Tihomirov, heeding nothing. “If Russia is only the material for nobler races why shouldn’t she serve as such material? It’s a sufficiently attractive part for her to play. Why not accept the idea calmly, considering how it enlarges the task? Humanity is on the eve of its regeneration, which is already beginning. None but the blind deny the task before us. Let Russia alone, if you’ve lost faith in her, and work for the future, for the future unknown people that will be formed of all humanity without distinction of race. Russia would perish some time, anyway; even the most gifted peoples exist for fifteen hundred or at the most two thousand years. Isn’t it all the same whether it’s two thousand or two hundred? The Romans did not last fifteen hundred years as a vital force, they too have turned into material. They ceased to exist long ago, but they’ve left an idea, and it has become an element in the future of mankind. How can one tell a man there’s nothing to be done? I can’t conceive of a position in which there ever could be nothing to do! Work for humanity and don’t trouble about the rest. There’s so much to do that life isn’t long enough if you look into it more closely.”

“One must live in harmony with the laws of nature and truth,” Mme. Dergatchev observed from the doorway. The door was slightly ajar and one could see that she was standing there, listening eagerly, with the baby at her breast which was covered.

Kraft listened with a faint smile and brought out at last with a somewhat harassed face, but with earnest sincerity:

“I don’t understand how, if one is under the influence of some over-mastering idea which completely dominates one’s mind and one’s heart, one can live for something else which is outside that idea.”

“But if it is logically, mathematically proved to you that your deduction is erroneous — that your whole idea is erroneous, that you have not the slightest right to exclude yourself from working for the welfare of humanity simply because Russia is predestined to a second-rate part, if it is pointed out to you, that in place of your narrow horizon infinity lies open before you, that instead of your narrow idea of patriotism . . .”

“Ah!” Kraft waved his hand gently, “I’ve told you there is no question of patriotism.”

“There is evidently a misunderstanding,” Vassin interposed suddenly, “the mistake arises from the fact that Kraft’s conclusion is not a mere logical theory but, so to say, a theory that has been transmuted into a feeling. All natures are not alike; in some men a logical deduction is sometimes transmuted into a very powerful emotion which takes possession of the whole being, and is sometimes very difficult to dislodge or alter. To cure such a man the feeling itself must be changed, which is only possible by replacing it by another, equally powerful one. That’s always difficult, and in many cases impossible.”

“That’s a mistake,” roared the argumentative teacher, “a logical proof of itself will dissipate prejudices. A rational conviction will give rise to feeling, too. Thought arises from feeling, and dominating a man in its turn formulates new feeling.”

“People are very different. Some change their feelings readily, while for others it’s hard to do so,” responded Vassin, as though disinclined to continue the argument; but I was delighted by his idea.

“That’s perfectly true what you say,” I said, turning to him, all at once breaking the ice and suddenly beginning to speak; “that to change a feeling one must replace it by another. Four years ago a general in Moscow . . . I didn’t know him, you see, but . . . Perhaps he couldn’t have inspired respect of himself . . . And the fact itself may seem irrational but . . . But he had lost a child, that’s to say two little girls who had died one after another of scarlatina. And he was utterly crushed, and did nothing but grieve, so that one couldn’t bear to go and look at him, and he ended by dying scarcely six months later. It’s a fact that he died of it! What could have saved him? The answer is — a feeling of equal strength. One would have had to dig those two little girls out of the grave and give them back to him — that would have been the only thing, I mean in that way. And he died. Yet one might have presented him with excellent reflections: that life is transitory, that all are mortal; one might have produced statistics to show how many children do die of scarlatina . . . he was on the retired list. . . .”

I stopped, out of breath, and looked round.

“That’s nothing to do with it,” said some one.

“The instance you have quoted, though it’s not quite in the same category, is very similar and illustrates the subject,” said Vassin, turning to me.

Here I must confess why I was so delighted with what Vassin had said about the “idea transmuted into feeling,” and at the same time I must confess to a fiendish disgrace. Yes, I was afraid to go to Dergatchev’s, though not for the reason Efim imagined. I dreaded going because I had been afraid of them even before I left Moscow. I knew that they (or some of their sort, it’s all the same) were great in argument and would perhaps shatter “my idea.” I was firmly resolved in myself that I wouldn’t give away my idea or say a word to them about it; but they (or again some of their sort) might easily say something to me which would destroy my faith in my “idea,” even though I might not utter a syllable about it. There were questions connected with my “idea” which I had not settled, but I did not want anyone to settle them but myself. For the last two years I had even given up reading for fear of meeting with some passage opposed to my “idea” which might shake me. And all at once Vassin had solved the difficulty and reassured me on the most essential point. Alter all, what was I afraid of and what could they do to me, whatever skill in argument they might have? I perhaps was the only one who understood what Vassin meant by “an idea transformed into an emotion.” It’s not enough to refute a fine idea, one must replace it by something fine of equal strength; or else, refusing absolutely to part with my feeling, in my heart I should refute the refutation, however strong the argument might be, whatever they might say. And what could they give me in place of it? And therefore I might be braver, I was bound to be more manly. While I was delighted with Vassin, I felt ashamed, and felt myself an insignificant child.

Then there followed fresh ignominy. It was not a contemptible desire to show off my intelligence that made me break the ice and speak, it was an impulse to “throw myself on his neck.” The impulse to throw myself on people’s necks that they might think well of me and take me to their hearts or something of the sort (pure beastliness, in fact) I look upon as the most abject of my weaknesses, and I suspected it in myself long ago; in fact, when I was in the corner in which I entrenched myself for so many years, though I don’t regret doing so, I knew I ought to behave in company with more austerity. What comforted me after every such ignominious scene was that my “idea” was as great a secret as ever, and that I hadn’t given it away. With a sinking at my heart I sometimes imagined that when I did let

out my idea to some one I should suddenly have nothing left, that I should become like every one else, and perhaps I should give up the idea; and so I was on my guard and preserved it, and trembled at the thought of chattering. And now at Dergatchev's, almost at the first contact with anyone, I broke down. I hadn't betrayed anything, of course, but I had chattered unpardonably; it was ignominious. It is a horrid thing to remember! No, I must not associate with people. I think so even now. Forty years hence I will speak. My idea demands a corner.

5

As soon as Vassin expressed approval I felt irresistibly impelled to talk.

"I consider that every one has a right to have his own feelings . . . if they are from conviction . . . and that no one should reproach him with them," I went on, addressing Vassin. Though I spoke boldly, it was as though I was not speaking, not my own tongue moving in my mouth.

"Re-all-ly?" the same voice which had interrupted Dergatchev and shouted at Kraft that he was a German interposed with an ironical drawl. Regarding the speaker as a complete nonentity, I addressed the teacher as though he had called out to me.

"It's my conviction that I should not dare to judge anyone," I said, quivering, and conscious that I was going to make a fool of myself.

"Why so mysterious?" cried the voice of the nonentity again.

"Every man has his own idea," I went on, gazing persistently at the teacher, who for his part held his tongue and looked at me with a smile.

"Yours is?" cried the nonentity.

"Too long to describe. . . . But part of my idea is that I should be left alone. As long as I've two roubles I want to be independent of every one (don't excite yourself, I know the objection that will be made) and to do nothing — not even to work for that grand future of humanity which Mr. Kraft is invited to work for. Personal freedom, that is, my own, is the first thing, and I don't care about anything else."

My mistake was that I lost my temper.

"In other words you advocate the tranquillity of the well-fed cow?"

"So be it. Cows don't hurt anyone. I owe no one anything. I pay society in the form of taxes that I may not be robbed, killed or assaulted, and no one dare demand anything more. I personally, perhaps, may have

other ideas, and if I want to serve humanity I shall, and perhaps ten times as much as those who preach about it; only I want no one to dare to demand it of me, to force me to it like Mr. Kraft. I must be perfectly free not to lift a finger if I like. But to rush and 'fall on everybody's neck' from love to humanity, and dissolve in tears of emotion — is only a fashion. And why should I be bound to love my neighbour, or your future humanity which I shall never see, which will never know anything about me, and which will in its turn disappear and leave no trace (time counts for nothing in this) when the earth in its turn will be changed into an iceberg, and will fly off into the void with an infinite multitude of other similar icebergs; it's the most senseless thing one could possibly imagine. That's your teaching. Tell me why I am bound to be so noble, especially if it all lasts only for a moment?"

"P-pooh!" cried a voice.

I had fired off all this with nervous exasperation, throwing off all restraint. I knew that I was making a fool of myself, but I hurried on, afraid of being interrupted. I felt that my words were pouring out like water through a sieve, incoherently, nineteen to the dozen, but I hurried on to convince them and get the better of them. It was a matter of such importance to me. I had been preparing for it for three years. But it was remarkable that they were all suddenly silent, they said absolutely nothing, every one was listening. I went on addressing my remarks to the teacher.

"That's just it. A very clever man has said that nothing is more difficult than to answer the question 'Why we must be honourable.' You know there are three sorts of scoundrels in the world; naïve scoundrels, that is, convinced that their villany is the highest virtue; scoundrels who are ashamed, that is, ashamed of their own villany, though they fully intend to persevere with it; and lastly simple scoundrels, pure-bred scoundrels. For example I had a schoolfellow called Lambert who told me at sixteen that when he came into his fortune it would be his greatest satisfaction to feed on meat and bread while the children of the poor were dying of hunger; and when they had no fuel for their fires he would buy up a whole woodstack, build it up in a field and set fire to it there, and not give any of it to the poor. Those were his feelings! Tell me, what am I to say to a pure-blooded scoundrel like that if he asks me why he should be honourable? Especially now in these times which you have so transformed, for things have never been worse than they are now. Nothing is clear in our society. You deny

God, you see, deny heroism. What blind, deaf, dull-witted stagnation of mind can force me to act in one way, if it's more to my advantage to do the opposite? You say 'a rational attitude to humanity is to your own advantage, too'; but what if I think all these rational considerations irrational, and dislike all these socialist barracks and phalanxes? What the devil do I care for them or for the future when I shall only live once on earth! Allow me to judge of my advantage for myself; it's more amusing. What does it matter to me what will happen in a thousand years to your humanity if, on your principles, I'm to get for it neither love, nor future life, nor recognition of my heroism? No, if that's how it is I'd rather live in the most ignorant way for myself and let them all go to perdition!"

"An excellent sentiment!"

"Though I'm always ready to go with them."

"That's one better!" — the same voice again.

The others still remained silent, they all scrutinized me, staring; but little by little in different parts of the room there rose a titter, subdued indeed, but they were all laughing at me to my face. Vassin and Kraft were the only ones not laughing, the gentleman with the black whiskers was sniggering too; he sneered at me persistently and listened.

"I'm not going to tell you my idea," I cried, quivering all over, "nothing would induce me, but I ask you on the other hand, from your point of view — don't imagine I'm speaking for myself, for I dare say I love humanity a thousand times more than all of you put together! Tell me, and you must, you are bound now to answer because you are laughing, tell me, what inducement do you hold out to me to follow you? Tell me, how do you prove to me that you'll make things better? How will you deal with my individual protest in your barracks? I have wanted to meet you, gentlemen, for ever so long. You will have barracks, communistic homes, stricte necessaire, atheism, and communistic wives without children — that's your ideal, I know all about it. And for all this, for this little part of mediocre advantage which your rational system guarantees me, for a bit of bread and a warm corner you take away all my personal liberty! For instance; if my wife's carried off, are you going to take away my personal liberty so that I mayn't bash my rival's brains in? You'll tell me I shall be more sensible then myself, but what will the wife say to a husband so sensible, if she has the slightest self-respect? Why it's unnatural; you ought to be ashamed!"

“You’re a specialist on the woman question then?” the voice of the nonentity pronounced malignantly.

For one instant I had an impulse to fly at him and pommel him with my fists. He was a short fellow with red hair and freckles though what the devil does his appearance matter?

“Don’t excite yourself. I’ve never once had relations with a woman,” I rapped out, for the first time addressing him directly.

“A priceless avowal which might have been made more politely in the presence of ladies.”

But there was a general movement among them; they were all looking for their hats and taking leave — not on my account, of course, but simply because it was time to break up. But I was crushed with shame at the way they all ignored me. I jumped up, too.

“Allow me to ask your name. You kept looking at me,” said the teacher, coming up to me with a very nasty smile.

“Dolgoruky.”

“Prince Dolgoruky?”

“No, simply Dolgoruky, legally the son of a former serf, Makar Dolgoruky, but the illegitimate son of my former master, Monsieur Versilov. Don’t make a mistake, gentlemen, I don’t tell you this to make you all fall upon my neck and begin howling like calves from sentimentality.”

There was a loud and unceremonious roar of laughter, so much so that the baby, who was asleep in the next room, waked up and began squealing. I trembled with fury. Every one shook hands with Dergatchev and went out without taking the slightest notice of me.

“Come along,” said Kraft, touching me.

I went up to Dergatchev, pressed his hand and shook it vigorously several times.

“You must excuse Kudryumov’s being so rude to you” (Kudryumov was the red-haired man), said Dergatchev.

I followed Kraft out. I was not in the least ashamed.

6

There is of course an immense difference between what I am now and what I was then.

Still “not in the least ashamed” I overtook Vassin on the stairs, leaving Kraft behind as of secondary importance, and with the most natural air as though nothing had happened I asked:

“I believe you know my father, I mean Versilov.”

“He’s not exactly an acquaintance of mine,” Vassin answered at once (and without a trace of that insulting refinement of politeness which delicate people adopt when they speak to people who have just disgraced themselves), “but I do know him a little; I have met him and I’ve heard him talk.”

“If you’ve heard him no doubt you do know him, for you are you! What do you think of him? Forgive the abrupt question but I need to know. It’s what YOU would think, just your opinion that I need.”

“You are asking a great deal of me. I believe that man is capable of setting himself tremendous tasks and possibly carrying them through — but without rendering an account of his doings to anyone.”

“That’s true, that’s very true — he’s a very proud man! Is he a sincere man? Tell me, what do you think about his being a Catholic? But I forgot, perhaps you don’t know?”

If I had not been so excited I should not, of course, have fired off such questions so irrelevantly at a man of whom I had heard but whom I had never seen before. I was surprised that Vassin did not seem to notice how rude I was.

“I heard something about it, but I don’t know how far it may be true,” he answered in the same calm and even tone as before.

“Not a bit! It’s false! Do you suppose he can believe in God?”

“He — is a very proud man, as you said just now, and many very proud people like to believe in God, especially those who despise other people. Many strong natures seem to have a sort of natural craving to find some one or something to which they can do homage. Strong natures often find it very difficult to bear the burden of their strength.”

“Do you know that must be awfully true,” I cried again. “Only I should like to understand . . .”

“The reason is obvious. They turn to God to avoid doing homage to men, of course without recognizing how it comes about in them; to do homage to God is not so humiliating. They become the most fervent of believers — or to be more accurate the most fervently desirous of believing; but they take this desire for belief itself. These are the people who most

frequently become disillusioned in the end. As for Monsieur Versilov, I imagine that he has some extremely sincere characteristics. And altogether he interested me."

"Vassin!" I cried, "you rejoice my heart! It's not your intelligence I wonder at; I am astonished that you, a man of such a lofty nature and so far above me, can walk with me and talk to me as simply and courteously as though nothing had happened!"

Vassin smiled.

"You are too flattering, and all that has happened is that you have shown a weakness for abstract conversation. You have probably been through a long period of silence."

"For three years I have been silent; for three years I have been preparing to speak . . . You couldn't of course have thought me a fool, you're so extraordinarily clever, though no one could have behaved more stupidly; but you must have thought me a scoundrel."

"A scoundrel!"

"Yes, certainly! Tell me, don't you secretly despise me for saying I was Versilov's illegitimate son. . . . Boasting I was the son of a serf?"

"You worry yourself too much. If you think you did wrong in saying so you've only to avoid saying it again. You have fifty years before you."

"Oh, I know that I ought to be very silent with other people. This throwing oneself on people's necks is the lowest of all vices; I told them so just now, and here I am doing it to you! But there is a difference, isn't there? If you realize that difference, if you are capable of realizing it, then I bless this moment!"

Vassin smiled again.

"Come and see me if you care to," he said. "I have work now and am busy, but I shall be pleased to see you."

"I thought from your face just now that you were too hard and uncommunicative."

"That may very well be true. I saw something of your sister Lizaveta Makarovna at Luga, last year. . . . Kraft has stopped and I believe is waiting for you. He has to turn here."

I pressed Vassin's hand warmly, and ran up to Kraft, who had walked on ahead all the while I talked to Vassin. We walked in silence to his lodgings. I could not speak to him and did not want to. One of the strongest traits in Kraft's character was delicacy.

CHAPTER IV

1

Kraft had been somewhere in the service, and at the same time had been a paid assistant of Andronikov's in the management of the private business which the deceased gentleman had always carried on in addition to his official duties. What mattered to me was, that from his close association with Andronikov, Kraft might well know a great deal of what interested me. But Marie Ivanovna, the wife of Nikolay Semyonovitch, with whom I had boarded so many years while I was at the grammar school in Moscow, was a favourite niece of Andronikov and was brought up by him, and from her I learnt that Kraft had actually been "commissioned" to give me something. I had been expecting him for a whole month.

He lived in a little flat of two rooms quite apart from the rest of the house, and at the moment, having only just returned, he had no servant. His trunk stood open, not yet unpacked. His belongings lay about on the chairs, and were spread out on the table in front of the sofa: his travelling bag, his cashbox, his revolver and so on. As we went in, Kraft seemed lost in thought, as though he had altogether forgotten me. He had perhaps not noticed that I had not spoken to him on the way. He began looking for something at once, but happening to catch a glimpse of himself in the looking-glass he stood still for a full minute gazing at his own face. Though I noticed this peculiar action, and recalled it all afterwards, I was depressed and disturbed. I was not feeling equal to concentrating my mind. For a moment I had a sudden impulse to go straight away and to give it all up for ever. And after all what did all these things amount to in reality? Was it not simply an unnecessary worry I had taken upon myself? I sank into despair at the thought that I was wasting so much energy perhaps on worthless trifles from mere sentimentality, while I had facing me a task that called for all my powers. And meanwhile my incapacity for any real work was clearly obvious from what had happened at Dergatchev's.

"Kraft, shall you go to them again?" I asked him suddenly.

He turned slowly to me as though hardly understanding me. I sat down on a chair.

"Forgive them," said Kraft suddenly.

I fancied, of course, that this was a sneer, but looking attentively at him, I saw such a strange and even wonderful ingenuousness in his face that I positively wondered at his asking me so earnestly to “forgive” them. He brought up a chair and sat down beside me.

“I know that I am perhaps a medley of all sorts of vanities and nothing more,” I began, “but I’m not apologizing.”

“And you’ve no need to apologize to anyone,” he said, quietly and earnestly. He talked all the time quietly and very slowly.

“I may be guilty in my own eyes. . . . I like being guilty in my own eyes. . . . Kraft, forgive me for talking nonsense. Tell me, surely you don’t belong to that circle? That’s what I wanted to ask.”

“They are no sillier than other people and no wiser; they are mad like every one else. . . .”

“Why, is every one mad?” I asked, turning towards him with involuntary curiosity.

“All the best people are mad nowadays; it’s the carnival of mediocrity and ineptitude and nothing else. . . . But it’s not worth talking about.”

As he talked he looked away into the air and began sentences and broke off without finishing them. I was particularly struck by a note of despondency in his voice.

“Surely Vassin is not one of them, Vassin has a mind, Vassin has a moral idea!” I cried.

“There are no moral ideas now. It suddenly appears that there is not one left and, what’s worse, that there never have been any.”

“Never have been any in the past?”

“Let us leave that!” he brought out with unmistakable weariness.

I was touched by his sorrowful earnestness. Ashamed of my own egoism I began to drop into his tone.

“The present day,” he began after a pause lasting two minutes, looking away into space, “the present day is the golden age of mediocrity and callousness, of a passion for ignorance, idleness, inefficiency, a craving for everything ready-made. No one thinks; it’s rare for anyone to work out an idea for himself.”

He broke off again and paused for a while; I listened. “Nowadays they are stripping Russia of her forests, and exhausting her natural wealth, turning the country into a waste and making it only fit for the Kalmucks. If a man looks forward and plants a tree every one laughs at him, and tells him

he won’t live to enjoy it. On the other hand those with aspirations discuss nothing but what will be in a thousand years. The idea that sustained men has utterly gone. It’s as though they were all at an hotel and were leaving Russia to-morrow. They are alive if they could only. . . .”

“Excuse me, Kraft, you said they worried their heads about what would happen in a thousand years. But you despair about the future of Russia . . . isn’t that an anxiety of the same sort?”

“It — it’s the most essential question in the world!” he said irritably, and jumped up quickly from his seat.

“Ah, yes! I forgot,” he said suddenly in quite a different voice, looking at me in perplexity. “I asked you to come for something special and meanwhile . . . for heaven’s sake excuse me.”

He seemed suddenly to wake up from a sort of dream, and was almost disconcerted; he took a letter out of a portfolio on the table and gave it to me.

“This is what I have to give you. It’s a document of some importance,” he began, speaking collectedly and with a businesslike air. Long afterwards, when I recalled it, I was struck by this faculty in him (at an hour such as this was — for him!) of turning such wholehearted attention on another person’s affairs and going into them with such firmness and composure.

“It is a letter of Stolbyeev’s, that is of the man whose will gave rise to Versilov’s lawsuit with the Princes Sokolsky. The case is just being decided in the court, and will certainly be decided in Versilov’s favour; the law is on his side. Meanwhile, in this letter, a private letter written two years ago, the deceased sets forth his real dispositions, or more accurately his desires, and expresses them rather in favour of the Sokolskys than of Versilov. At any rate the points on which the Sokolskys rest their case in contesting the will are materially strengthened by this letter. Versilov’s opponents would give a great deal for this letter, though it really has no positive legal value. Alexey Nikanoritch (Andronikov), who managed Versilov’s affairs, kept this letter and not long before his death gave it to me, telling me to ‘take care of it’; perhaps he had a presentiment that he was dying and was anxious about his papers. I was unwilling to judge of Alexey Nikanoritch’s intentions in the case, and I must confess that at his death I found myself in disagreeable uncertainty what to do with this document, especially as the case was so soon to be concluded. But Marie Ivanovna, in whom Alexey

Nikanoritch seems to have put great confidence in his lifetime, helped me out of the difficulty. She wrote to me three weeks ago telling me that I was to give the letter to you, as this would, she BELIEVED (her own expression) be in accordance with the wishes of the deceased, and I am very glad that I can at last give it to you."

"Tell me," I said, dumbfoundered at this new and unexpected information, "what am I to do with this letter now? How am I to act?"

"That's for you to decide."

"Impossible; my hands are tied, you must admit that! Versilov is so reckoning on this fortune . . . and, you know, he'll be utterly lost without it; and it suddenly appears that a document like this exists!"

"It only exists here in this room."

"Is that really so?" I looked at him attentively.

"If you can't decide how to act in this case, what can I advise you?"

"But I can't give it to the Sokolskys either. I should ruin all Versilov's hopes, and be a traitor to him besides. . . . On the other hand if I give it to Versilov I plunge the innocent into poverty, and I should put Versilov in a hopeless dilemma too; he would either have to give up the fortune or become a thief."

"You exaggerate the importance of the matter."

"Tell me one thing: is this letter decisive, conclusive?"

"No, it isn't. I'm not much of a lawyer. A lawyer on the other side would, no doubt, know how to make use of such a document and to turn it to account; but Alexey Nikanoritch considered positively that if this letter were put forward it would have no great legal value, so that Versilov's case might be won all the same. This letter is more a matter of conscience, so to say. . . ."

"But that's what matters most of all," I interrupted, "just because it would put Versilov in a hopeless dilemma."

"He may on the contrary destroy the document, and so escape all danger."

"Have you any grounds for supposing such a thing of him, Kraft? That's what I want to know; that's why I'm here."

"I believe every one would do the same in his place."

"Would you behave so, yourself?"

"I'm not going to receive a fortune, so I can't tell about myself."

“Very well,” I said, putting the letter in my pocket. “The matter’s settled for the present. Listen, Kraft. Marie Ivanovna, who has, I assure you, told me a great deal, said to me that you and only you could tell me the truth of what happened at Ems a year and a half ago between Versilov and Mme. Ahmakov. I’ve been looking forward to seeing you as a sun that would throw light on everything. You don’t know my position, Kraft. I beseech you to tell me the whole truth. What I want to know is what kind of man He is, and now — now I need to know it more than ever.”

“I wonder Marie Ivanovna did not tell you all about it herself; she might have heard it all from Andronikov, and of course she has heard it and very likely knows more than I do.”

“Andronikov was not clear about it himself, so Marie Ivanovna told me. It seems a maze to which no one has the clue. The devil himself would be lost in it. I know that you were at Ems yourself at the time.”

“I never knew the whole of it, but what I do know I will willingly tell you if you like, though I doubt whether I shall satisfy you.”

2

I won’t reproduce his story word for word, but will only give a brief summary of it.

A year and a half before, Versilov (through the old prince) became a constant visitor at the Ahmakovs’ (they were all abroad then, at Ems) and made a great impression on the general himself, a man who had during three years of marriage squandered all his wife’s large dowry over cards, and as a result of his irregular life had already had a paralytic stroke, though he was not an old man. He had recovered from it before going abroad, and was staying at Ems for the sake of his daughter by his first wife. She was a girl of seventeen, in delicate health — consumptive — and said to be extremely beautiful, but at the same time very fantastical. She had no dowry; but they rested their hopes, as usual, on the old prince. Mme. Ahmakov was said to be a good stepmother, but the girl, for some reason, became particularly attached to Versilov. He was preaching at that time “something impassioned,” as Kraft expressed it, some sort of new life; “was in a state of religious fervour of the most exalted kind,” in the strange and perhaps ironical phrase of Andronikov, which was repeated to me. But it was noticeable that they all soon began to dislike him. The general was

positively afraid of him. Kraft did not altogether deny the rumour that Versilov succeeded in instilling into the invalid husband's mind the suspicion that his wife, Katerina Nikolaevna, was not indifferent to the young Prince Sokolsky (who had left Ems and was at that time in Paris). He did this not directly, but "after his usual fashion" — by hints, inferences, and all sorts of roundabout ways, "at which he is a great master," said Kraft. I may say that Kraft considered him, and preferred to consider him, altogether rather as an impostor and an inveterate intriguer than as a man genuinely possessed by some exalted, or at least original, idea. I knew, apart from Kraft, that Versilov, who had at first had an extraordinary influence on Katerina Nikolaevna, had by degrees come to an open rupture with her. What lay behind all this I could not find out from Kraft, but every one confirmed the story of the mutual hatred that had sprung up between them after their friendship. Then came a strange circumstance: Katerina Nikolaevna's invalid stepdaughter apparently fell in love with Versilov, or was struck by something in him, or was inflamed by his eloquence or I don't know what; but it is known that at one time Versilov spent almost every day at her side. It ended by the young lady's suddenly announcing to her father that she wanted to marry Versilov. That this actually had happened was confirmed by every one — by Kraft, by Andronikov, and by Marie Ivanovna, and even Tatyana Pavlovna once spoke about it before me. They asserted also that Versilov not only desired it himself but positively insisted on a marriage with this girl, and that these two creatures of such different species, one old and the other young, were in complete agreement about it. But the father was alarmed at the idea. As he became more estranged from Katerina Nikolaevna, whom he had been very fond of, he now began almost to idolize his daughter, especially after his stroke. But the bitterest opposition to the idea of such a marriage came from Katerina Nikolaevna. There followed a great number of secret and extremely unpleasant family wrangles, disputes, mortifying and in fact revolting scenes. At last the father began to give way before the persistence of the love-sick girl who was, as Kraft expressed it, "fanaticized" by Versilov. But Katerina Nikolaevna still resisted it with implacable hatred. And it is at this stage that the muddle begins which no one can understand. But this was Kraft's conjecture based on the facts — only a conjecture, however.

He thought Versilov had succeeded, IN HIS CHARACTERISTIC WAY, in subtly suggesting to the young person that the reason Katerina

Nikolaevna would not agree was that she was in love with him herself, and had been for a long time past worrying him with her jealousy, pursuing him and intriguing; that she had declared her feeling to him and was now ready to horsewhip him for loving some one else: something of that sort, anyway. Worst of all, that he had “hinted” this to the girl’s father, the husband of the “unfaithful” wife, explaining that the prince had only been a passing amusement. The house, of course, began to be a perfect hell. In some versions of the story Katerina Nikolaevna was devoted to her stepdaughter and now was in despair at being calumniated to her, to say nothing of her relations with her invalid husband. And, what is more, there existed another version, which, to my grief, I found Kraft fully believed, and therefore I believed myself (of all this I had heard already). It was maintained (Andronikov, it was said, had heard it from Katerina Nikolaevna herself) that, on the contrary, Versilov had in the past, before his feeling for the girl, made love to Katerina Nikolaevna; that though she had been his friend and had been for a time carried away by his religious exaltation, yet she had constantly opposed and mistrusted him, and that she had met Versilov’s declaration with deep resentment and had ridiculed him vindictively; that she had formally dismissed him for having openly suggested that she should become his wife as her husband was expected to have a second attack very shortly. On this theory Katerina Nikolaevna must have felt a peculiar hatred for Versilov when she saw him afterwards so openly trying to win her stepdaughter’s hand. Marie Ivanovna, who told me all this in Moscow, believed in both versions — both together, that is; she maintained that there was nothing inconsistent in all this, that it was something in the style of la haine dans l’amour, of the wounded pride of love on both sides, etc. etc. — something, in fact, like a very subtle, intricate romance, quite out of keeping with any serious and common-sense man and, moreover, with an element of nastiness in it. But Marie Ivanovna, in spite of her estimable character, had been from childhood upwards saturated with sentiment, from the novels which she read day and night. The sequel exhibited Versilov’s evident baseness, his lying and intriguing, something dark and loathsome in him, the more so as the affair had a tragic ending. The poor infatuated girl poisoned herself, they say, by means of phosphorus matches, though even now I don’t know whether to believe that last detail. They did their utmost to hush it up, anyway. The young lady was ill for a fortnight and then died. So the matches remained an open

question, but Kraft firmly believed in them. Shortly afterwards the young lady's father died too — it was said from his grief, which brought on a second stroke, though this did not occur till three months later. But after the young lady's funeral the young Prince Sokolsky, who had returned to Ems from Paris, gave Versilov a slap in the face in a public garden, and the latter had not replied with a challenge but had, on the contrary, showed himself next day on the promenade as though nothing had happened. Then every one turned against him, in Petersburg as well. Though Versilov kept up with some acquaintances, they were quite in a different circle. All his aristocratic friends blamed him, though, as a fact, scarcely anyone knew the details; they only knew something of the young lady's romantic death and the slap in the face. Only two or three persons knew the story fully, so far as that was possible. The one who had known most of all was the deceased, Andronikov, who had for many years had business relations with the Ahmakovs, and had had to do with Katerina Nikolaevna particularly in one case. But he kept all these secrets even from his own family and had only told part of the story to Kraft and Marie Ivanovna, and that from necessity.

"The chief point is that there is a document in existence," concluded Kraft, "which Mme. Ahmakov is very much afraid of."

And this was what he told me about that. When the old prince, Katerina Nikolaevna's father, was abroad, beginning to recover from his attack, she was so indiscreet as to write to Andronikov in dead secret (Katerina Nikolaevna put implicit faith in him) an extremely compromising letter. During his convalescence the old prince actually did, it was said, display a propensity to waste his money — almost to fling it away, in fact; he began buying, when he was abroad, quite useless but expensive objects, pictures, vases, making donations and subscriptions of large sums to various institutions out there, and goodness knows what. He almost bought, on the sly, for an immense sum, a ruined and encumbered estate from a fashionable Russian spendthrift; and, finally, began even dreaming of matrimony. And in view of all this, Katerina Nikolaevna, who had never left her father's side during his illness, wrote to Andronikov, as a "lawyer" and "an old friend," inquiring whether "it would be legally possible to put the old prince under guardianship or to declare him incompetent to manage his own affairs, and, if so, how it could best be done without scandal, that no one might blame her and that her father's feelings might be spared, etc. etc." It was said that Andronikov advised her against this and dissuaded her;

and later on, when the old prince had completely recovered, it was impossible to return to the idea: but the letter remained in Andronikov's hands. And now he had died, and Katerina Nikolaevna had at once remembered the letter: if it turned up among the deceased's papers and fell into the old prince's hands, he would, no doubt, have cast her off for ever, cut her out of his will and not have given her another farthing during his lifetime. The thought that his own daughter did not believe in his sanity, and even wanted to have him certified as a lunatic would change the lamb into a wild beast. Her husband's gambling habits had left her at his death without a farthing, and she had only her father to look to. She fully hoped to receive from him a second dowry as ample as the first.

Kraft did not quite know what had become of the letter, but observed that Andronikov never tore up papers of consequence, and he was, besides, a man of "broad principles" as well as "broad intelligence." (I was positively surprised at the independence of Kraft's criticism of Andronikov, whom he had loved and respected so much.) But Kraft felt convinced that Versilov had obtained possession of the compromising document through his close relations with Andronikov's widow and daughters; it was known, indeed, that they had at once, of necessity, handed over all the deceased's papers to Versilov. He knew, too, that Katerina Nikolaevna was already aware that the letter was in Versilov's possession and that she was frightened on account of it, imagining that Versilov would take the letter straight to her old father; that on her return from abroad she had searched for the document in Petersburg, had been at the Andronikovs', and was still hunting for it now, so that she must still have some hope that the letter was not in Versilov's hands; and, finally, that she had gone to Moscow simply with the same object, and had entreated Marie Ivanovna to look for it among the papers that had remained with her. She had only recently, since her return to Petersburg, heard of the existence of Marie Ivanovna, and of the footing on which the latter had stood with Andronikov.

"You don't think she found it at Marie Ivanovna's?" I asked. "I have my own ideas."

"If Marie Ivanovna has not told even you about it, probably she hasn't got it."

"Then you suppose the document is in Versilov's hands?"

"Most likely it is. I don't know, though. Anything is possible," he answered with evident weariness.

I gave up questioning him, and indeed there was no object in doing so. All that mattered most had been made clear to me, in spite of all this sordid tangle; all that I feared most was confirmed.

“It’s all like a delirious nightmare,” I said, deeply dejected, as I took up my hat.

“Is the man so dear to you?” asked Kraft. I read his deep sympathy on his face at that minute.

“I felt I shouldn’t learn the whole story from you,” said I. “Mme. Ahmakov is the only hope left me. I was resting my hopes on her. Perhaps I shall go to her and perhaps not.”

Kraft looked at me with some surprise.

“Good-bye, Kraft,” I said. “Why force oneself on people who don’t want to see one? Isn’t it better to break with everything, eh?”

“And what then?” he asked almost sullenly, keeping his eyes on the ground.

“Retreat within oneself! Break with everything and withdraw within oneself!”

“To America?”

“To America! Within oneself, simply within oneself! That’s my whole idea, Kraft!” I said enthusiastically.

He looked at me with some curiosity.

“Have you such a place ‘within yourself’?”

“Yes. Good-bye, Kraft; thank you. I am sorry to have troubled you. If I were in your place and had that sort of Russia in my head I’d send them all to hell; I’d say: ‘Get out with you; keep your fretting and intriguing to yourselves — it’s nothing to do with me.’”

“Stay a little longer,” he said suddenly when he was already with me at the front door.

I was a little surprised. I went back and sat down again. Kraft sat opposite. We looked at each other with a sort of smile. I can see it all now. I remember that I felt a sort of wonder at him.

“What I like in you is that you’re so — courteous,” I said suddenly.

“Yes?”

“I feel that, because I don’t often succeed in being courteous myself, though I should like to. And yet perhaps it’s better for people to be rude to one; at least they save one from the misfortune of liking them.”

“What hour of the day do you like best?” he asked, evidently not listening to me.

“What hour? I don’t know. I don’t like sunset.”

“No?” he brought out with a peculiar curiosity.

“Are you going away again?”

“Yes. I’m going away.”

“Soon?”

“Yes.”

“Surely you don’t want a revolver to get to Vilna?” I asked, without the faintest hidden meaning in my words — and indeed there was no meaning at all! I asked the question simply because I happened to glance at the revolver and I was at a loss for something to say.

He turned and looked intently at the revolver.

“No, I take it simply from habit.”

“If I had a revolver I should keep it hidden somewhere, locked up. It really is a temptation, you know. I may not believe in an epidemic of suicide, but if it’s always catching my eye, there really are moments, you know, when it might tempt one.”

“Don’t talk about it,” he said, and suddenly got up from his chair.

“I wasn’t thinking of myself,” I said, standing up too. “I’m not going to use it. If you were to give me three lives it wouldn’t be enough for me.”

“Long life to you,” broke from him.

He gave me an absent-minded smile and, strange to say, walked straight into the passage as though to show me out, probably not noticing what he was doing.

“I wish you every sort of success, Kraft,” I said, as I went out on to the stairs.

“That’s as it may be,” he answered firmly.

“Till we meet again.”

“That’s as it may be, too.”

I remember his last glance at me.

3

And this was the man for whom my heart had been beating all those years! And what had I expected from Kraft, what new information?

As I came away from Kraft's I felt very hungry. It was evening and I had had no dinner. I went to a little restaurant in Great Prospect that I might not have to spend more than twenty, or at most twenty-five, kopecks — I would not have allowed myself to spend more at that time. I took some soup for myself, and as I ate it I sat looking out of window. There were a great many people in the room, and there was a smell of burnt meat, restaurant napkins, and tobacco. It was nasty. Over my head a dumb nightingale, gloomy and pensive, was pecking at the bottom of its cage. There was a noise in the adjoining billiard-room, but I sat there and sank into deep thought. The setting sun (why was Kraft surprised at my not liking the sunset?) aroused in me a new and unexpected sensation quite out of keeping with my surroundings. I was haunted by the soft look in my mother's eyes, her dear eyes which had been watching me so timidly the whole month. Of late I had been very rude at home, to her especially. I had a desire to be rude to Versilov, but not daring, in my contemptible way tormented her instead. I had thoroughly frightened her, in fact; often she looked at me with such imploring eyes when Andrey Petrovitch came in, afraid of some outburst on my part. It was a very strange thing that, sitting here in the restaurant, I realized for the first time that, while Versilov spoke to me familiarly, she always addressed me deferentially. I had wondered at it before and had not been impressed in her favour by it, but now I realized it particularly, and strange ideas passed one after another through my brain. I sat there a long time, till it got quite dark. I thought about my sister too.

It was a fateful moment for me. At all costs I must decide. Could I be incapable of decision? What is the difficulty of breaking with them if they don't want me either? My mother and sister? But I should not leave them, anyway, however things turned out.

It is true that the entrance of that man into my life, though only for an instant in my early childhood, was the turning-point from which my conscious development began. Had he not met me then, my mind, my way of thinking, my fate, would certainly have been different, even in spite of the character ordained me by destiny, which I could not anyway have escaped.

But it turned out that this man was only a dream, the dream of my childhood. I had invented him myself, and in reality he was a different man who fell far below my imagination. I had come to find a genuine man, not a man like this. And why had I fallen in love with him once and for ever in

that brief moment when I saw him as a child? That “for ever” must vanish. Some time, if I have space for it, I will describe that meeting, the most futile incident leading up to nothing. But I had built it up into a pyramid. I had begun building that pyramid as I lay in my little bed, when, falling asleep, I could dream and weep — what for I cannot tell. Because I had been abandoned? Because I was tormented? But I was only tormented a little, and only for two years at Touchard’s, the school into which he thrust me before leaving me for ever. Afterwards no one tormented me; quite the contrary; I looked scornfully at my schoolfellows. And I can’t endure the self-pity of the forlorn. There is no rôle more revolting than that of the orphan, the illegitimate, the outcast and all such wretched creatures, for whom I never feel any pity when they solemnly parade before the public and begin piteously but insistently whining of how they have been treated. I could beat them all! Will none of the filthy, conventional herd understand that it would be ten times as creditable to hold their tongues, not to whine and not to DEIGN to complain! And if he does deign he deserves his fate, the bastard. That’s my view!

But what is absurd is not that I used to dream of him in my little bed but that, almost forgetting my chief object, I have come here for the sake of him, of that “imagined” man. I have come to help him to stamp out a calumny, to crush his enemies. The document of which Kraft had spoken, that woman’s letter to Andronikov about which she was so afraid, which might ruin her and reduce her to poverty, which she supposed to be in Versilov’s hands, was not in his possession but in mine, sewn up in my coat pocket! I had sewn it there myself, and no one in the whole world knew of it. The fact that the romantic Marie Ivanovna, in whose keeping the letter was left “to be preserved,” thought fit to give it to me and to no one else was only her own idea and a matter for her to decide, which I am not called upon to explain, though I may discuss it later if it seems appropriate. But, armed with this unexpected weapon, I could not help yielding to the temptation to come to Petersburg. Of course, I proposed to assist this man secretly without display or excitement, without expecting his praise or his embraces. And never, never would I condescend to reproach him for anything. And indeed, was it his fault that I had fallen in love with him and had created a fantastic ideal of him? Though, indeed, I did not perhaps love him at all! His original mind, his interesting character, his intrigues and adventures, and what my mother had been to him — all that, it seemed

could not keep me. It was enough that my fantastic doll was shattered, and that I could not, perhaps, love him any more. And so what was keeping me? why was I sticking there? — that was the question. The upshot of it all was that only I was a fool, no one else.

But, expecting honesty from others, I will be honest myself. I must confess that the letter sewn up in my pocket did not only arouse in me the passionate desire to rush to Versilov's aid. Now it is quite clear to me, and even then I thought of it with a blush. I had visions of a woman — a proud, aristocratic creature — whom I should meet face to face. She would laugh at me, despise me, as though I were a mouse; she would not even suspect that her future was in my power. This idea intoxicated me even in Moscow, and still more in the train on the way; I have confessed this already. Yes, I hated that woman, but already I loved her as my victim; and all this was true, all this was real. But this was childishness which I should not have expected even from anyone like me. I am describing my feelings then, that is, what passed through my mind as I sat in the restaurant under the nightingale and made up my mind to break with them for ever. The memory of my recent meeting with that woman sent a rush of colour to my face. An ignominious meeting! An ignominious and stupid impression, and — what mattered most — it showed my incapacity for action. It proved — I thought then — that I was not strong enough to withstand the stupidest lure, though I told Kraft myself just now that I had my place "within myself," and work of my own, and that if I had three lives they wouldn't be enough for me. I said that proudly. My having abandoned my idea and mixed myself up with Versilov's affairs was to some extent excusable, but that I should run from side to side like a frightened hare and be drawn into every trifle — that, of course, was simply my own folly. What induced me to go to Dergatchev's and to burst out with my imbecilities, though I knew long ago that I am incapable of saying anything cleverly or sensibly, that it is always better for me to be silent? And some Vassin or other reassures me with the reflection that I've fifty years of life ahead of me and so I've no need to worry. It was a good reply, I admit, and did credit to his unmistakable intelligence; it was good because it was the simplest, and what is simplest is never understood till the last, when everything that is cleverer or stupider has been tried already. But I knew that answer before Vassin; I'd had an inkling of that thought more than

three years ago; what's more, my "idea" was to some extent included in it. Such were my reflections in the restaurant.

I felt disgusted as I made my way towards Semyonovsky Polk at eight o'clock in the evening, worn out with walking and with thinking. It was quite dark by then and the weather had changed; it was dry, but a horrid Petersburg wind had sprung up, blowing keenly and malignantly on my back and whirling up the dust and sand. How many sullen faces of poor people hurrying home to their corners from work and trade! Every one had his own sullen anxiety in his face, and there was perhaps not one common uniting thought in the crowd! Kraft was right; every one was different. I met a little boy, so little that it was strange he could be out alone in the street at that hour; he seemed to have lost his way. A peasant-woman stopped for a minute to listen to him, but, not understanding what he said, waved her hand and went on, leaving him alone in the darkness. I was going towards him, but he suddenly took fright and ran away.

As I approached the house I made up my mind that I should never go and see Vassin. I had an intense longing as I went up the stairs to find them at home alone, without Versilov, that I might have time before he came in to say something nice to my mother or to my dear sister, to whom I had scarcely said anything particular all that month. It so happened that he was not at home.

4

By the way, as I am bringing on to the scene this "new character" (I am speaking of Versilov), I will introduce briefly a formal account of him, though it is of no significance. I do this to make things more comprehensible for the reader, and because I can't foresee where this account could fit in in the later part of my story.

He studied at the university but went into a cavalry regiment of the guards. He married Mlle. Fanariotov and retired from the army. He went abroad, and on his return lived a life of worldly gaiety in Moscow. On his wife's death he spent some time in the country; then came the episode with my mother. Then he lived for a long time somewhere in the south. During the war with Europe he served in the army but did not reach the Crimea and was never in action. At the conclusion of the war he left the service and went abroad. He took my mother with him, though he left her at

Königsberg. The poor woman used sometimes, shaking her head, to tell with a sort of horror how she had spent six months there with her little girl, not knowing the language, absolutely friendless, and in the end penniless, as though she were lost in a forest. Then Tatyana Pavlovna came to fetch her and took her back to some place in the Novgorod Province. Then, on the emancipation of the serfs, Versilov became one of the first “mediators,” and is said to have performed his duties admirably; but he soon gave this up, and in Petersburg was occupied with the conduct of various private lawsuits. Andronikov always had a high opinion of his capacity; he had a great respect for him, and only said he did not understand his character. Then Versilov gave that up too, and went abroad again — this time for a long period, several years. Then came his close intimacy with old Prince Sokolsky. During this period his financial position underwent two or three radical changes. At one time he fell into complete poverty, then grew wealthy and rose again.

Having brought my story to this point, I am determined to describe my “idea” too. For the first time since its conception I will translate it into words. I am determined to reveal it, so to speak, to the reader, partly for the sake of greater clearness in what I have to explain further. And it is not only confusing for the reader; even I, the author, am beginning to get muddled by the difficulty of explaining each step without explaining what led up to it and induced me to take it. By keeping up this “attitude of silence” I have clumsily descended to one of those “literary graces” which I have ridiculed above. Before entering upon my Petersburg romance with all my ignominious adventures in it, I find this preface is necessary. But I was not tempted to silence for the sake of literary “grace” but was forced to it by the nature of the case, that is, the difficulty of the case; even now, when it is all over, I find it very difficult to put this idea into words. Besides, I must describe it in its aspect at that time, that is, the form it took and the way I looked at it, not now, but then, and that is a fresh difficulty. To describe some things is almost impossible. The ideas that are the simplest and the clearest are the most difficult to understand. If before the discovery of America Columbus had begun telling his idea to other people, I am convinced that for a very long time people would not have understood him. And indeed they did not understand him. I don’t mean to compare myself with Columbus, and if anyone imagines that I do he ought to be ashamed of himself, that’s all.

CHAPTER V

1

My “idea” is — to become a Rothschild. I invite the reader to keep calm and not to excite himself.

I repeat it. My “idea” is to become a Rothschild, to become as rich as Rothschild, not simply rich, but as rich as Rothschild. What objects I have in view, what for, and why — all that shall come later. First I will simply show that the attainment of my object is a mathematical certainty.

It is a very simple matter; the whole secret lies in two words: OBSTINACY and PERSEVERANCE.

“We have heard that; it’s nothing new,” people will tell me. Every “vater,” in Germany repeats this to his children, and meanwhile your Rothschild (James Rothschild the Parisian, is the one I mean) is unique while there are millions of such “vaters.”

I should answer:

“You assert that you’ve heard it, but you’ve heard nothing. It’s true that you’re right about one thing. When I said that this was ‘very simple,’ I forgot to add that it is most difficult. All the religions and the moralities of the world amount to one thing: ‘Love virtue and avoid vice.’ One would think nothing could be simpler. But just try doing something virtuous and giving up any one of your vices; just try it. It’s the same with this.

“That’s why your innumerable German ‘vaters’ may, for ages past reckoning, have repeated those two wonderful words which contain the whole secret, and, meanwhile, Rothschild remains unique. It shows it’s the same but not the same, and these ‘vaters’ don’t repeat the same idea.

“No doubt they too have heard of obstinacy and perseverance, but to attain my object what I need is not these German ‘vaters” obstinacy or these ‘vaters” perseverance.”

“The mere fact that he is a ‘vater’ — I don’t mean only the Germans — that he has a family, that he is living like other people, has expenses like other people, has obligations like other people, means that he can’t become a Rothschild, but must remain an average man. I understand quite clearly that in becoming a Rothschild, or merely desiring to become one, not in the

German ‘vaters’’ way but seriously, I must at the same time cut myself off from society.”

Some years ago I read in the newspaper that on one of the steamers on the Volga there died a beggar who went about begging in rags and was known to every one. On his death they found sewn up in his shirt three thousand roubles in notes. The other day I read of another beggar of the “respectable” sort, who used to go about the restaurants holding out his hand. He was arrested and there was found on him five thousand roubles. Two conclusions follow directly from this. The first, that OBSTINACY in saving even the smallest coin will produce enormous results in the long run (time is of no account in this), and secondly that the most unskilful form of accumulation if only PERSEVERING is mathematically certain of success.

Meanwhile there are perhaps a good number of respectable, clever, obstinate people who cannot save either three or five thousand, however much they struggle, though they would be awfully glad to have such a sum. Why is that? The answer is clear: it is because not one of them, in spite of all their wishing it, DESIRES it to such a degree that, for instance, if he is not able to save by other means, he is ready to become a beggar, and so persistent that after becoming a beggar, he will not waste the first farthing he is given on an extra crust of bread for himself or his family. With this system of saving, that is in beggary, one must live on bread and salt and nothing more, to save up such sums; at least, so I imagine. That is no doubt what the two beggars I have mentioned above did do; they must have eaten nothing but bread and have lived almost in the open air. There is no doubt that they had no intention of becoming Rothschilds; they were simply Harpagons or Ilyushkins in their purest form, nothing more; but, when there is intelligent accumulation in quite a different form with the object of becoming a Rothschild, no less strength of will is needed than in the case of those two beggars. The German “vater” does not show such strength of will. There are many kinds of strength in the world, especially of strength of will and of desire. There is the temperature of boiling water and there is the temperature of molten iron.

One wants here the same thing as in a monastery, the same heroic asceticism. Feeling is wanted, not only idea. What for? Why? Is it moral and not monstrous to wear sackcloth and eat black bread all one’s life to heap up filthy lucre? These questions I will consider later. Now I am discussing only the possibility of attaining the object. When I thought of

my “idea” and it was forged in white heat, I began asking myself — am I capable of asceticism? With this object, for the whole of the first month I took bread and water, not more than two and a half pounds of black bread a day. To do this I was obliged to deceive Nikolay Semyonovitch who was clever, and Marie Ivanovna who was anxious for my welfare. Though I wounded her and somewhat surprised Nikolay Semyonovitch who was a man of great delicacy, I insisted on having my dinner brought to my room. There I simply got rid of it. I poured the soup out of window on to the nettles or elsewhere, the meat I either flung out of window to a dog, or wrapping it up in paper put it in my pocket and threw it away after, and so on. As the bread given me for dinner was much less than two and a half pounds I bought bread on the sly. I stood this for a month perhaps, only upsetting my stomach a little, but the next month I added soup to the bread and drank a glass of tea morning and evening, and I assure you I passed a year like that in perfect health and content, as well as in a moral ecstasy and perpetual secret delight. Far from regretting the dainties I missed, I was overjoyed. At the end of the year, having convinced myself I was capable of standing any fast, however severe, I began eating as they did, and went back to dine with them. Not satisfied with this experiment I made a second; apart from the sum paid to Nikolay Semyonovitch for my board I was allowed five roubles a month for pocket money. I resolved to spend only half. This was a very great trial, but after at most two years I had in my pocket by the time I went to Petersburg seventy roubles saved entirely in this way, besides other money. The result of these two experiments was of vast importance to me: I had learnt positively that I could so will a thing as to attain my objects, and that I repeat is the essence of “my idea” — the rest is all nonsense.

2

Let us, however, look into the nonsense too.

I have described my two experiments. In Petersburg, as the reader knows, I made a third. I went to the auction and at one stroke made a profit of seven roubles ninety-five kopecks. This of course was not a real experiment, it was only by way of sport and diversion. I simply wanted to filch a moment from the future, and to test how I should go and behave. I had decided even at the very first, in Moscow, to put off really beginning till

I was perfectly free. I fully realized that I must, for instance, finish my work at school. (The university, as the reader knows already, I sacrificed.) There is no disputing that I went to Petersburg with concealed anger in my heart. No sooner had I left the grammar school and become free for the first time, than I suddenly saw that Versilov's affairs would distract me from beginning my enterprise for an indefinite period. But though I was angry I went to Petersburg feeling perfectly serene about my object.

It is true I knew nothing of practical life; but I had been thinking about it for three years and could have no doubt about it. I had pictured a thousand times over how I should begin. I should suddenly find myself, as though dropped from the clouds, in one of our two capitals (I pitched on Petersburg or Moscow for my beginning, and by choice Petersburg, to which I gave the preference through certain considerations), perfectly free, not dependent on anyone, in good health, and with a hundred roubles hidden in my pocket, as the capital for my first investment. Without a hundred roubles it would be impossible to begin, as, without it, even the earliest period of success would be too remote. Apart from my hundred roubles I should have, as the reader knows already, courage, obstinacy, perseverance, absolute isolation and secrecy. Isolation was the principal thing. I greatly disliked the idea of any connection or association with others until the last moment. Speaking generally I proposed beginning my enterprise alone, that was a sine qua non. People weigh upon me, and with them I should have been uneasy, and uneasiness would have hindered my success. Generally speaking, all my life up to now, in all my dreams of how I would behave with people, I always imagined myself being very clever; it was very different in reality — I was always very stupid; and I confess sincerely, with indignation, I always gave myself away and was flustered, and so I resolved to cut people off altogether. I should gain by it independence, tranquillity of mind and clearness of motive.

In spite of the terrible prices in Petersburg I determined once for all that I should never spend more than fifteen kopecks on food, and I knew I should keep my word. This question of food I had thought over minutely for a long time past. I resolved, for instance, sometimes to eat nothing but bread and salt for two days together, and to spend on the third day what I had saved on those two days. I fancied that this would be better for my health than a perpetual uniform fast on a minimum of fifteen kopecks. Then I needed a corner, literally a "corner," solely to sleep the night in and to have

a refuge in very bad weather. I proposed living in the street, and, if necessary, I was ready to sleep in one of the night refuges where they give you a piece of bread and a glass of tea as well as a night's lodging. Oh, I should be quite capable of hiding my money so that it should not be stolen in the "corner," or in the refuge, and should not even be suspected, I'll answer for that!

"Steal from me? Why, I'm afraid of stealing myself!" I once heard a passer-by in the street say gaily. Of course I only apply to myself the caution and smartness of it, I don't intend to steal. What is more, while I was in Moscow, perhaps from the very first day of my "idea," I resolved that I would not be a pawnbroker or usurer either; there are Jews for that job, and such Russians as have neither intelligence nor character. Pawnbroking and usury are for the commonplace.

As for clothes, I resolved to have two suits, one for every day and one for best. When once I had got them I felt sure I should wear them a long time. I purposely trained myself to wear a suit for two and a half years, and in fact I discovered a secret: for clothes always to look new and not to get shabby they should be brushed as often as possible, five or six times a day. Brushing does not hurt the cloth. I speak from knowledge. What does hurt it is dust and dirt. Dust is the same thing as stones if you look at it through the microscope, and, however hard a brush is, it is almost the same as fur. I trained myself to wear my boots evenly. The secret lies in putting down the whole sole at once, and avoiding treading on the side. One can train oneself to this in a fortnight, after that the habit is unconscious. In this way boots last on an average a third as long again. That is the experience of two years.

Then followed my activity itself.

I started with the hypothesis that I had a hundred roubles. In Petersburg there are so many auction sales, petty hucksters' booths and people who want things, that it would be impossible not to sell anything one bought for a little more. Over the album I had made seven roubles ninety-five kopecks profit on two roubles five kopecks of capital invested. This immense profit was made without any risk: I could see from his eyes that the purchaser would not back out. Of course I know quite well that this was only a chance; but it is just such chances I am on the look-out for, that is why I have made up my mind to live in the street. Well, granted that such a chance is unusual, no matter; my first principle will be to risk nothing, and the second to make every day more than the minimum spent on my

subsistence, that the process of accumulation may not be interrupted for a single day.

I shall be told that “all this is a dream, you don’t know the streets, and you’ll be taken in at the first step.” But I have will and character, and the science of the streets is a science like any other: persistence, attention and capacity can conquer it. In the grammar school right up to the seventh form I was one of the first; I was very good at mathematics. Why, can one possibly exaggerate the value of experience and knowledge of the streets to such a fantastic pitch as to predict my failure for certain? That is only what people say who have never made an experiment in anything, have never begun any sort of life, but have grown stiff in second-hand stagnation. “One man breaks his nose, so another must break his.” No, I won’t break mine. I have character and if I pay attention I can learn anything. But is it possible to imagine that with constant persistence, with incessant vigilance, and continual calculation and reflection, with perpetual activity and alertness one could fail to find out how to make twenty kopecks to spare every day? Above all I resolved not to struggle for the maximum profit, but always to keep calm. As time went on after heaping up one or two thousand I should, of course, naturally rise above second-hand dealing and street trading. I know, of course, far too little as yet about the stock exchange, about shares, banking and all that sort of thing. But to make up for that I know, as I know I have five fingers on my hand, that I should learn all the stock exchange and banking business as well as anyone else, and that the subject would turn out to be perfectly simple, because one is brought to it by practice. What need is there of the wisdom of Solomon so long as one has character; efficiency, skill and knowledge come of themselves. If only one does not leave off “willing.”

The great thing is to avoid risks, and that can only be done if one has character. Not long ago in Petersburg I had before me a subscription list of shares in some railway investments; those who succeeded in getting shares made a lot of money. For some time the shares went up and up. Well, if one day some one who had not succeeded in getting a share, or was greedy for more, had offered to buy mine at a premium of so much per cent. I should certainly have sold it. People would have laughed at me, of course, and have said that if I had waited I should have made ten times as much. Quite so, but my premium is safer, for it’s a bird in the hand while yours is on the bush. I shall be told that one can’t make much like that; excuse me,

that’s your mistake, the mistake of all our Kokorevs, Polyakovs, and Gubonins. Let me tell you the truth; perseverance and persistence in money making and still more in saving is much more effective than these cent. per cent. profits.

Not long before the French Revolution there was a man called Law in Paris who invented of himself a scheme what was theoretically magnificent but which came utterly to grief in practice afterwards. All Paris was in excitement. Law’s shares were bought up at once before allotment. Money from all parts of Paris poured as from a sack into the house where the shares were subscribed. But the house was not enough at last, the public thronged the street, people of all callings, all classes, all ages: bourgeois, noblemen, their children, countesses, marquises, prostitutes, were all struggling in one infuriated, half-crazy, rabid mob. Rank, the prejudices of birth and pride, even honour and good name were all trampled in the same mire; all, even women, were ready to sacrifice anyone to gain a few shares. The list at last was passed down into the streets, but there was nothing to write on. Then it was suggested to a hunchback that he should lend his back for the time as a table on which people could sign their names for shares. The hunchback agreed — one can fancy at what a price. Some time (a very short time) after, they were all bankrupt, the whole thing went smash, the whole idea was exploded and the shares were worth nothing. Who got the best of it? Why, the hunchback, because he did not take shares but louis-d’or in cash. Well, I am that hunchback! I had strength of will enough not to eat, and to save seventy-two roubles out of my kopecks; I shall have strength enough to restrain myself and prefer a safe profit to a large one, even when every one around me is carried away by a fever of excitement. I am trivial only about trifles, not in what is important. I have often lacked fortitude for enduring little things ever since the inception of my idea, but for enduring big things I shall always have enough. When in the morning my mother gave me cold coffee before I set out to work, I was angry and rude to her, and yet I was the same person who had lived a whole month on bread and water.

In short not to make money, not to learn how to make money, would be unnatural. It would be unnatural, too, in spite of incessant and regular saving, unflagging care and mental sobriety, self- control, economy, and growing energy — it would be unnatural, I repeat, to fail to become a millionaire. How did the beggar make his money if not by fanatical

determination and perseverance? Am I inferior to a beggar? "And after all, supposing I don't arrive at anything, suppose my calculation is incorrect, suppose I fall and come to grief; no matter, I shall go on, I shall go on, because I want to." That is what I said in Moscow.

I shall be told that there is no "idea" in this, absolutely nothing new. But I say, and for the last time, that there are an immense number of ideas in it, and a vast amount that is new.

Oh, I foresaw how trivial all objections would be, and that I should be as trivial myself in expounding my "idea": why, what have I said after all? I haven't told a hundredth part of it. I feel that it is trivial, superficial, crude, and, somehow, too young for my age.

3

I've still to answer the questions, "What for?" and "Why?" Whether it's moral," and all the rest of it. I've undertaken to answer them.

I am sad at disappointing the reader straight off, sad and glad too. Let him know that in my idea there is absolutely no feeling of "revenge," nothing "Byronic" — no curses, no lamentations over my orphaned state, no tears over my illegitimacy, nothing, nothing of the sort. In fact, if a romantic lady should chance to come across my autobiography she would certainly turn up her nose. The whole object of my "idea" is — isolation. But one can arrive at isolation without straining to become a Rothschild. What has Rothschild got to do with it?

Why, this. That besides isolation I want power.

Let me tell the reader, he will perhaps be horrified at the candour of my confession, and in the simplicity of his heart will wonder how the author could help blushing: but my answer is that I'm not writing for publication, and I may not have a reader for ten years, and by that time everything will be so thoroughly past, settled and defined that there will be no need to blush. And so, if I sometimes in my autobiography appeal to my reader it is simply a form of expression. My reader is an imaginary figure.

No, it was not being illegitimate, with which I was so taunted at Touchard's, not my sorrowful childhood, it was not revenge, nor the desire to protest, that was at the bottom of my idea; my character alone was responsible for everything. At twelve years old, I believe, that is almost at the dawn of real consciousness, I began to dislike my fellow-creatures. It

was not that I disliked them exactly, but that their presence weighed upon me. I was sometimes in my moments of purest sincerity quite sad that I never could express everything even to my nearest and dearest, that is, I could but will not; for some reason I restrain myself, so that I'm mistrustful, sullen and reserved. Again, I have noticed one characteristic in myself almost from childhood, that I am too ready to find fault, and given to blaming others. But this impulse was often followed at once by another which was very irksome to me: I would ask myself whether it were not my fault rather than theirs. And how often I blamed myself for nothing! To avoid such doubts I naturally sought solitude. Besides, I found nothing in the company of others, however much I tried, and I did try. All the boys of my own age anyway, all my schoolfellows, all, every one of them, turned out to be inferior to me in their ideas. I don't recall one single exception.

Yes, I am a gloomy person; I'm always shutting myself up. I often love to walk out of a room full of people. I may perhaps do people a kindness, but often I cannot see the slightest reason for doing them a kindness. People are not such splendid creatures that they are worth taking much trouble about. Why can't they approach me openly and directly, why must I always be forced to make the first overtures?

That is the question I asked myself. I am a grateful creature, and have shown it by a hundred imbecilities. If some one were frank with me, I should instantly respond with frankness and begin to love them at once. And so I have done, but they have all deceived me promptly, and have withdrawn from me with a sneer. The most candid of them all was Lambert, who beat me so much as a child, but he was only an open brute and scoundrel. And even his openness was only stupidity. Such was my state of mind when I came to Petersburg.

When I came out from Dergatchev's (and goodness only knows what made me go to him) I had gone up to Vassin, and in a rush of enthusiasm I had begun singing his praises. And that very evening I felt that I liked him much less. Why? Just because by my praise of him I had demeaned myself before him. Yet one might have thought it would have been the other way: a man just and generous enough to give another his due, even to his own detriment, ought to stand higher in personal dignity than anyone. And though I quite understood this, I did like Vassin less, much less in fact. I purposely choose an example with which the reader is familiar. I even thought of Kraft with a bitter, sickly feeling, because he had led me into the

passage, and this feeling lasted till the day when Kraft's state of mind at the time was revealed, and it was impossible to be angry with him. From the time when I was in the lowest class in the grammar-school, as soon as any of my comrades excelled me in school work, or witty answers or physical strength, I immediately gave up talking or having anything to do with them. Not that I disliked them or wished them not to succeed; I simply turned away from them because such was my character.

Yes, I thirsted for power, I've thirsted for it all my life, power and solitude. I dreamed of it at an age when every one would have laughed at me to my face if they could have guessed what was in my head. That was why I so liked secrecy. And indeed all my energy went into dreams, so much so that I had no time to talk. This led to my being unsociable, and my absentmindedness led people to more unpleasant conclusions about me, but my rosy cheeks belied their suspicions.

I was particularly happy when, covering myself up in bed at night, I began in complete solitude, with no stir or sound of other people round me, to re-create life on a different plan. I was most desperately dreamy up to the time of the "idea," when all my dreams became rational instead of foolish, and passed from the fantastic realms of romance to the reasonable world of reality.

Everything was concentrated into one object. Not that they were so very stupid before, although there were masses and masses of them. But I had favourites . . . there is no need to bring them in here, however.

Power! I am convinced that very many people would think it very funny if they knew that such a "pitiful" creature was struggling for power. But I shall surprise them even more: perhaps from my very first dreams that is, almost from my earliest childhood, I could never imagine myself except in the foremost place, always and in every situation in life. I will add a strange confession: it is the same perhaps to this day. At the same time, let me observe that I am not apologizing for it.

That is the point of my idea, that is the force of it, that money is the one means by which the humblest nonentity may rise to the FOREMOST PLACE. I may not be a nonentity, but I know from the looking-glass that my exterior does not do me justice, for my face is commonplace. But if I were as rich as Rothschild, who would find fault with my face? And wouldn't thousands of women be ready to fly to me with all their charms if I whistled to them? I am sure that they would honestly consider me good-

looking. Suppose I am clever. But were I as wise as Solomon some one would be found wiser still, and I should be done for. But if I were a Rothschild what would that wise man be beside me? Why, they would not let him say a word beside me! I may be witty, but with Talleyrand or Piron I'm thrown into the shade; but if I were Rothschild, where would Piron be, and where Talleyrand even, perhaps? Money is, of course, despotic power, and at the same time it is the greatest leveller, and that is its chief power. Money levels all inequality. I settled all that in Moscow.

You will see, of course, in this idea nothing but insolence, violence, the triumph of the nonentity over the talented. I admit that it is an impudent idea (and for that reason a sweet one). But let it pass: you imagine that I desire power to be able to crush, to avenge myself. That is just the point, that that is how the commonplace would behave. What is more, I'm convinced that thousands of the wise and talented who are so exalted, if the Rothschilds' millions suddenly fell to their lot could not resist behaving like the most vulgar and commonplace, and would be more oppressive than any. My idea is quite different. I'm not afraid of money. It won't crush me and it won't make me crush others.

What I want isn't money, or rather money is not necessary to me, nor power either. I only want what is obtained by power, and cannot be obtained without it; that is, the calm and solitary consciousness of strength! That is the fullest definition of liberty for which the whole world is struggling! Liberty! At last I have written that grand word. . . . Yes, the solitary consciousness of strength is splendid and alluring. I have strength and I am serene. With the thunderbolts in his hands Jove is serene; are his thunders often heard? The fool fancies that he is asleep. But put a literary man or a peasant-woman in Jove's place, and the thunder would never cease!

If I only have power, I argued, I should have no need to use it. I assure you that of my own free will I should take the lowest seat everywhere. If I were a Rothschild, I would go about in an old overcoat with an umbrella. What should I care if I were jostled in the crowd, if I had to skip through the mud to avoid being run over? The consciousness that I was myself, a Rothschild, would even amuse me at the moment. I should know I could have a dinner better than anyone, that I could have the best cook in the world, it would be enough for me to know it. I would eat a piece of bread and ham and be satisfied with the consciousness of it. I think so even now.

I shouldn't run after the aristocracy, but they would run after me. I shouldn't pursue women, but they would fly to me like the wind, offering me all that women can offer. "The vulgar" run after money, but the intelligent are attracted by curiosity to the strange, proud and reserved being, indifferent to everything. I would be kind, and would give them money perhaps, but I would take nothing from them. Curiosity arouses passion, perhaps I may inspire passion. They will take nothing away with them I assure you, except perhaps presents that will make me twice as interesting to them.

. . . to me enough The consciousness of this.

It is strange, but true, that I have been fascinated by this picture since I was seventeen.

I don't want to oppress or torment anyone and I won't, but I know that if I did want to ruin some man, some enemy of mine, no one could prevent me, and every one would serve me, and that would be enough again. I would not revenge myself on anyone. I could never understand how James Rothschild could consent to become a Baron! Why, for what reason, when he was already more exalted than anyone in the world. "Oh, let that insolent general insult me at the station where we are both waiting for our horses! If he knew who I was he would run himself to harness the horses and would hasten to assist me into my modest vehicle! They say that some foreign count or baron at a Vienna railway station put an Austrian banker's slippers on for him in public; and the latter was so vulgar as to allow him to do it. Oh, may that terrible beauty (yes, terrible, there are such!), that daughter of that luxurious and aristocratic lady meeting me by chance on a steamer or somewhere, glance askance at me and turn up her nose, wondering contemptuously how that humble, unpresentable man with a book or paper in his hand could dare to be in a front seat beside her! If only she knew who was sitting beside her! And she will find out, she will, and will come to sit beside me of her own accord, humble, timid, ingratiating, seeking my glance, radiant at my smile." . . . I purposely introduce these early day-dreams to express what was in my mind. But the picture is pale, and perhaps trivial. Only reality will justify everything.

I shall be told that such a life would be stupid: why not have a mansion, keep open house, gather society round you, why not have influence, why not marry? But what would Rothschild be then? He would become like every one else. All the charm of the "idea" would disappear, all its moral

force. When I was quite a child I learnt Pushkin's monologue of the "Miserly Knight." Pushkin has written nothing finer in conception than that! I have the same ideas now.

"But yours is too low an ideal," I shall be told with contempt. "Money, wealth. Very different from the common weal, from self- sacrifice for humanity."

But how can anyone tell how I should use my wealth? In what way is it immoral, in what way is it degrading, that these millions should pass out of dirty, evil, Jewish hands into the hands of a sober and resolute ascetic with a keen outlook upon life? All these dreams of the future, all these conjectures, seem like a romance now, and perhaps I am wasting time in recording them. I might have kept them to myself. I know, too, that these lines will very likely be read by no one, but if anyone were to read them, would he believe that I should be unable to stand the test of the Rothschild millions? Not because they would crush me, quite the contrary. More than once in my dreams I have anticipated that moment in the future, when my consciousness will be satiated, and power will not seem enough for me. Then, not from ennui, not from aimless weariness, but because I have a boundless desire for what is great, I shall give all my millions away, let society distribute all my wealth, and I — I will mix with nothingness again! Maybe I will turn into a beggar like the one who died on the steamer, with the only difference that they wouldn't find money sewn up in my shirt. The mere consciousness that I had had millions in my hands and had flung them away into the dirt like trash would sustain me in my solitude. I am ready to think the same even now. Yes, my "idea" is a fortress in which I can always, at every turn, take refuge from every one, even if I were a beggar dying on a steamer. It is my poem! And let me tell you I must have the WHOLE of my vicious will, simply to prove TO MYSELF that I can renounce it.

No doubt I shall be told that this is all romance, and that if I got my millions I should not give them up and become a beggar. Perhaps I should not. I have simply sketched the ideal in my mind.

But I will add seriously that if I did succeed in piling up as much money as Rothschild, that it really might end in my giving it all up to the public (though it would be difficult to do so before I reached that amount). And I shouldn't give away half because that would be simply vulgar: I should be only half as rich, that would be all. I should give away all, all to the last

farthing, for on becoming a beggar I should become twice as rich as Rothschild! If other people don't understand this it's not my fault; I'm not going to explain it.

"The fanaticism, the romanticism of insignificance and impotence!" people will pronounce, "the triumph of commonplaceness and mediocrity!" Yes, I admit that it is in a way the triumph of commonplaceness and mediocrity, but surely not of impotence. I used to be awfully fond of imagining just such a creature, commonplace and mediocre, facing the world and saying to it with a smile, "You are Galileos, and Copernicuses, Charlemagnes and Napoleons, you are Pushkins and Shakespeares, you are field- marshals and generals, and I am incompetence and illegitimacy, and yet I am higher than all of you, because you bow down to it yourself." I admit that I have pushed this fancy to such extremes that I have struck out even my education. It seemed to me more picturesque if the man were sordidly ignorant. This exaggerated dream had a positive influence at the time on my success in the seventh form of the grammar-school. I gave up working simply from fanaticism, feeling that lack of education would add a charm to my ideal. Now I've changed my views on that point; education does not detract from it.

Gentlemen, can it be that even the smallest independence of mind is so distasteful to you? Blessed he who has an ideal of beauty, even though it be a mistaken one! But I believe in mine. It is only that I've explained it clumsily, crudely. In ten years, of course, I should explain it better, and I treasure that in my memory.

4

I've finished with my idea. If my account of it has been commonplace and superficial it is I that am to blame and not the idea. I have already pointed out that the simplest ideas are always the most difficult to understand.

Now I will add that they are also the most difficult to explain; moreover, I have described my "idea" in its earliest phase. The converse is the rule with ideas: commonplace and shallow ideas are extraordinarily quickly understood, and are invariably understood by the crowd, by the whole street. What is more, they are regarded as very great, and as the ideas of genius, but only for the day of their appearance. The cheap never wears. For a thing to be quickly understood is only a sign of its commonplaceness.

Bismarck's idea was received as a stroke of genius instantly, and Bismarck himself was looked on as a genius, but the very rapidity of its reception was suspicious. Wait for ten years, and then we shall see what remains of the idea and of Bismarck himself. I introduce this extremely irrelevant observation, of course, not for the sake of comparison, but also for the sake of remembering it. (An explanation for the too unmannerly reader.)

And now I will tell two anecdotes to wind up my account of the "idea," that it may not hinder my story again.

In July, two months before I came to Petersburg, when my time was all my own, Marie Ivanovna asked me to go to see an old maiden lady who was staying in the Troitsky suburb to take her a message of no interest for my story. Returning the same day, I noticed in the railway carriage an unattractive-looking young man, not very poorly though grubbily dressed, with a pimply face and a muddy dark complexion. He distinguished himself by getting out at every station, big and little, to have a drink. Towards the end of the journey he was surrounded by a merry throng of very low companions. One merchant, also a little drunk, was particularly delighted at the young man's power of drinking incessantly without becoming drunk. Another person, who was awfully pleased with him, was a very stupid young fellow who talked a great deal. He was wearing European dress and smelt most unsavoury — he was a footman as I found out afterwards; this fellow got quite friendly with the young man who was drinking, and, every time the train stopped, roused him with the invitation: "It's time for a drop of vodka," and they got out with their arms round each other. The young man who drank scarcely said a word, but yet more and more companions joined him, he only listened to their chatter, grinning incessantly with a drivelling snigger, and only from time to time, always unexpectedly, brought out a sound something like "Ture-lure-loo!" while he put his finger up to his nose in a very comical way. This diverted the merchant, and the footman and all of them, and they burst into very loud and free and easy laughter. It is sometimes impossible to understand why people laugh. I joined them too, and, I don't know why, the young man attracted me too, perhaps by his very open disregard for the generally accepted conventions and proprieties. I didn't see, in fact, that he was simply a fool. Anyway, I got on to friendly terms with him at once, and, as I got out of the train, I learnt from him that he would be in the Tverskoy Boulevard between eight and nine. It appeared that he had been a student.

I went to the Boulevard, and this was the diversion he taught me: we walked together up and down the boulevards, and a little later, as soon as we noticed a respectable woman walking along the street, if there were no one else near, we fastened upon her. Without uttering a word we walked one on each side of her, and with an air of perfect composure as though we didn't see her, began to carry on a most unseemly conversation. We called things by their names, preserving unruffled countenances as though it were the natural thing to do; we entered into such subtleties in our description of all sorts of filth and obscenity as the nastiest mind of the lewdest debauchee could hardly have conceived. (I had, of course, acquired all this knowledge at the boarding school before I went to the grammar school, though I knew only words, nothing of the reality.) The woman was dreadfully frightened, and made haste to try and get away, but we quickened our pace too — and went on in the same way. Our victim, of course, could do nothing; it was no use to cry out, there were no spectators; besides, it would be a strange thing to complain of. I repeated this diversion for eight days. I can't think how I can have liked doing it; though, indeed, I didn't like doing it — I simply did it. At first I thought it original, as something outside everyday conventions and conditions, besides I couldn't endure women. I once told the student that in his "Confessions" Jean Jacques Rousseau describes how, as a youth, he used to behave indecently in the presence of women. The student responded with his "ture-lure-loo!" I noticed that he was extraordinarily ignorant, and that his interests were astonishingly limited. There was no trace in him of any latent idea such as I had hoped to find in him. Instead of originality I found nothing in him but a wearisome monotony. I disliked him more and more. The end came quite unexpectedly. One night when it was quite dark, we persecuted a girl who was quickly and timidly walking along the boulevard. She was very young, perhaps sixteen or even less, very tidily and modestly dressed; possibly a working girl hurrying home from work to an old widowed mother with other children; there is no need to be sentimental though. The girl listened for some time, and hurried as fast as she could with her head bowed and her veil drawn over her face, frightened and trembling. But suddenly she stood still, threw back her veil, showing, as far as I remember, a thin but pretty face, and cried with flashing eyes:

"Oh, what scoundrels you are!"

She may have been on the verge of tears, but something different happened. Lifting her thin little arm, she gave the student a slap in the face which could not have been more dexterously delivered. It did come with a smack! He would have rushed at her, swearing, but I held him back, and the girl had time to run away. We began quarrelling at once. I told him all I had been saving up against him in those days. I told him he was the paltriest commonplace fool without the trace of an idea. He swore at me. . . . (I had once explained to him that I was illegitimate), then we spat at each other, and I've never seen him since. I felt frightfully vexed with myself that evening, but not so much the next day, and by the day after I had quite forgotten it. And though I sometimes thought of that girl again, it was only casually, for a moment. It was only after I had been a fortnight in Petersburg, I suddenly recalled the whole scene. I remembered it, and I was suddenly so ashamed that tears of shame literally ran down my cheeks. I was wretched the whole evening, and all that night, and I am rather miserable about it now. I could not understand at first how I could have sunk to such a depth of degradation, and still less how I could have forgotten it without feeling shame or remorse. It is only now that I understand what was at the root of it; it was all due to my "idea." Briefly, I conclude that, having something fixed, permanent and overpowering in one's mind in which one is terribly absorbed, one is, as it were, removed by it from the whole world, and everything that happens, except the one great thing, slips by one. Even one's impressions are hardly formed correctly. And what matters most — one always has an excuse. However much I worried my mother at that time, however disgracefully I neglected my sister, "Oh, I've my 'idea,' nothing else matters," was what I said to myself, as it were. If I were slighted and hurt, I withdrew in my mortification and at once said to myself, "Ah, I'm humiliated, but still I have my idea, and they know nothing about that." The "idea" comforted me in disgrace and insignificance. But all the nasty things I did took refuge, as it were, under the "idea." It, so to speak, smoothed over everything, but it also put a mist before my eyes; and such a misty understanding of things and events may, of course, be a great hindrance to the "idea" itself, to say nothing of other things.

Now for another anecdote.

On the 1st of April last year, Marie Ivanovna was keeping her name-day; some visitors, though only a few, came for the evening. Suddenly

Agrafena rushed in, out of breath, announcing that a baby was crying in the passage before the kitchen, and that she didn't know what to do. We were all excited at the news. We went out and saw a bark basket, and in the basket a three or four weeks old child, crying. I picked up the basket and took it into the kitchen. Then I immediately found a folded note: "Gracious benefactors, show kind charity to the girl christened Arina, and we will join with her to send our tears to the Heavenly throne for you for ever, and congratulate you on your name-day,
Persons unknown to you."

Then Nikolay Semyonovitch, for whom I have such a respect, greatly disappointed me. He drew a very long face and decided to send the child at once to the Foundling Home. I felt very sad. They lived very frugally but had no children, and Nikolay Semyonovitch was always glad of it. I carefully took little Arina out of the basket and held her up under the arms. The basket had that sour, pungent odour characteristic of a small child which has not been washed for a long time. I opposed Nikolay Semyonovitch, and suddenly announced that I would keep the child at my expense. In spite of his gentleness he protested with some severity, and, though he ended by joking, he adhered to his intention in regard to the foundling. I got my way, however. In the same block of buildings, but in a different wing, there lived a very poor carpenter, an elderly man, given to drink, but his wife, a very healthy and still youngish peasant woman, had only just lost a baby, and, what is more, the only child she had had in eight years of marriage, also a girl, and by a strange piece of luck also called Arina. I call it good luck, because while we were arguing in the kitchen, the woman, hearing of what had happened, ran in to look at the child, and when she learned that it was called Arina, she was greatly touched. She still had milk, and unfastening her dress she put the baby to her breast. I began persuading her to take the child home with her, saying I would pay for it every month. She was afraid her husband would not allow it, but she took it for the night. Next morning, her husband consented to her keeping it for eight roubles a month, and I immediately paid him for the first month in advance. He at once spent the money on drink. Nikolay Semyonovitch, still with a strange smile, agreed to guarantee that the money should be paid regularly every month. I would have given my sixty roubles into Nikolay Semyonovitch's keeping as security, but he would not take it. He knew, however, that I had the money, and trusted me. Our momentary quarrel was

smoothed over by this delicacy on his part. Marie Ivanovna said nothing, but wondered at my undertaking such a responsibility. I particularly appreciated their delicacy in refraining from the slightest jest at my expense, but, on the contrary, taking the matter with proper seriousness. I used to run over to the carpenter's wife three times a day, and at the end of a week I slipped an extra three roubles into her hand without her husband's knowledge. For another three I bought a little quilt and swaddling clothes. But ten days later little Arina fell ill. I called in a doctor at once, he wrote a prescription, and we were up all night, tormenting the mite with horrid medicine. Next day he declared that he had been sent for too late, and answered my entreaties — which I fancy were more like reproaches — by saying with majestic evasiveness: "I am not God." The baby's little tongue and lips and whole mouth were covered with a minute white rash, and towards evening she died, gazing at me with her big black eyes, as though she understood already. I don't know why I never thought to take a photograph of the dead baby. But will it be believed, that I cried that evening, and, in fact, I howled as I had never let myself do before, and Marie Ivanovna had to try to comfort me, again without the least mockery either on her part or on Nikolay Semyonovitch's. The carpenter made a little coffin, and Marie Ivanovna finished it with a frill and a pretty little pillow, while I bought flowers and strewed them on the baby. So they carried away my poor little blossom, whom it will hardly be believed I can't forget even now. A little afterwards, however, this sudden adventure made me reflect seriously. Little Arina had not cost me much, of course; the coffin, the burial, the doctor, the flowers, and the payment to the carpenter's wife came altogether to thirty roubles. As I was going to Petersburg I made up this sum from the forty roubles sent me by Versilov for the journey, and from the sale of various articles before my departure, so that my capital remained intact. But I thought: "If I am going to be turned aside like this I shan't get far." The affair with the student showed that the "idea" might absorb me till it blurred my impressions and drew me away from the realities of life. The incident with little Arina proved, on the contrary, that no "idea" was strong enough to absorb me, at least so completely that I should not stop short in the face of an overwhelming fact and sacrifice to it at once all that I had done for the "idea" by years of labour. Both conclusions were nevertheless true.

CHAPTER VI

1

My hopes were not fully realized. I did not find them alone though Versilov was not at home, Tatyana Pavlovna was sitting with my mother, and she was, after all, not one of the family. Fully half of my magnanimous feelings disappeared instantly. It is wonderful how hasty and changeable I am; in such cases a straw, a grain of sand is enough to dissipate my good mood and replace it by a bad one. My bad impressions, I regret to say, are not so quickly dispelled, though I am not resentful. . . . When I went in, I had a feeling that my mother immediately and hastily broke off what she was saying to Tatyana Pavlovna; I fancied they were talking very eagerly. My sister turned from her work only for a moment to look at me and did not come out of her little alcove again. The flat consisted of three rooms. The room in which we usually sat, the middle room or drawing-room, was fairly large and almost presentable. In it were soft, red armchairs and a sofa, very much the worse for wear, however (Versilov could not endure covers on furniture); there were rugs of a sort and several tables, including some useless little ones. On the right was Versilov's room, cramped and narrow with one window; it was furnished with a wretched-looking writing-table covered with unused books and crumpled papers, and an equally wretched-looking easy chair with a broken spring that stuck up in one corner and often made Versilov groan and swear. On an equally threadbare sofa in this room he used to sleep. He hated this study of his, and I believe he never did anything in it; he preferred sitting idle for hours together in the drawing-room. On the left of the drawing-room there was another room of the same sort in which my mother and sister slept. The drawing-room was entered from the passage at the end of which was the kitchen, where the cook, Lukerya, lived, and when she cooked, she ruthlessly filled the whole flat with the smell of burnt fat. There were moments when Versilov cursed his life and fate aloud on account of the smell from the kitchen, and in that one matter I sympathized with him fully; I hated that smell, too, though it did not penetrate to my room: I lived upstairs in an attic under the roof, to which I climbed by a very steep and shaky ladder. The only things worth mentioning in it were a semicircular window, a low-pitched ceiling, a sofa

covered with American leather on which at night Lukerya spread sheets and put a pillow for me. The rest of the furniture consisted of two articles, a perfectly plain deal table and a wooden rush-bottomed chair. We still preserved, however, some relics of former comfort. In the drawing- room, for instance, we had a fairly decent china lamp, and on the wall hung a large and splendid engraving of the Sistine Madonna; facing it on the other wall was an immense and expensive photograph of the cast-bronze gates of the cathedral of Florence. In the corner of the same room was a shrine of old-fashioned family ikons, one of which had a gilt-silver setting — the one they had meant to pawn, while another (the image of Our Lady) had a velvet setting embroidered in pearls. Under the ikons hung a little lamp which was lighted on every holiday. Versilov evidently had no feeling for the ikons in their inner meaning and religious significance, but he restrained himself. He merely screwed up his eyes, sometimes complaining that the lamplight reflected in the gilt setting hurt them, but he did not hinder my mother from lighting the lamp.

I usually entered in gloomy silence, looking away into some corner, and sometimes without even greeting anyone. As a rule I returned earlier than to-day, and they used to send my dinner to me upstairs. Going into the room I said, “Good evening, mother,” a thing I had never done before. Though even this time I was unable from a sort of bashfulness to make myself look at her, and I sat down in the opposite corner of the room. I was awfully tired, but I did not think of that.

“That lout of yours still walks in as rudely as ever,” Tatyana Pavlovna hissed at me. She had been in the habit in old days of using abusive epithets to me and it had become an established tradition between us.

My mother faltered “Good evening” to me, using the formal mode of address, and evidently embarrassed at my greeting her. “Your dinner has been ready a long while,” she added, almost overcome by confusion: “I hope the soup is not cold, I will order the cutlets at once. . . .” She was hastily jumping up to go to the kitchen and, for the first time perhaps during that whole month, I felt ashamed that she should run about to wait on me so humbly, though till that moment I had expected it of her.

“Thank you very much, mother, I have had dinner already. May I stay and rest here if I am not in the way?”

“Oh . . . of course. . . . how can you ask, pray sit down. . . .”

“Don’t worry yourself, mother, I won’t be rude to Andrey Petrovitch again,” I rapped out all at once.

“Good heavens! how noble of him,” cried Tatyana Pavlovna. “Sonia darling, you don’t mean to say you still stand on ceremony with him? Who is he to be treated with such deference, and by his own mother, too! Look at you, why you behave as though you were afraid of him, it is disgraceful.”

“I should like it very much, mother, if you would call me Arkasha.”

“Oh . . . yes . . . certainly, yes I will,” my mother said hurriedly. I . . . don’t always . . . henceforward I will.”

She blushed all over. Certainly her face had at times a great charm. . . . It had a look of simplicity, but by no means of stupidity. It was rather pale and anaemic, her cheeks were very thin, even hollow; her forehead was already lined by many wrinkles, but there were none round her eyes, and her eyes were rather large and wide open, and shone with a gentle and serene light which had drawn me to her from the very first day. I liked her face, too, because it did not look particularly depressed or drawn; on the contrary, her expression would have been positively cheerful, if she had not been so often agitated, sometimes almost panic-stricken over trifles, starting up from her seat for nothing at all, or listening in alarm to anything new that was said, till she was sure that all was well and as before. What mattered to her was just that all should be as before; that there should be no change, that nothing new should happen, not even new happiness. . . . It might have been thought that she had been frightened as a child. Besides her eyes, I liked the oval of her rather long face, and I believe if it had been a shade less broad across the cheekbones she might have been called beautiful, not only in her youth but even now. She was not more than thirty-nine, but grey hairs were already visible in her chestnut hair.

Tatyana Pavlovna glanced at her in genuine indignation.

“A booby like him! And you tremble before him, you are ridiculous, Sofia, you make me angry, I tell you!”

“Ah, Tatyana Pavlovna, why should you attack him now? But you are joking perhaps, eh?” my mother added, detecting something like a smile on Tatyana Pavlovna’s face. Her scoldings could not indeed be always taken seriously. But she smiled (if she did smile) only at my mother, of course, because she loved her devotedly, and no doubt noticed how happy she was at that moment at my meekness.

“Of course, I can’t help feeling hurt, if you will attack people unprovoked, Tatyana Pavlovna, and just when I’ve come in saying ‘Good evening, mother,’ a thing I’ve never done before,” I thought it necessary to observe at last.

“Only fancy,” she boiled over at once: “He considers it as something to be proud of. Am I to go down on my knees to you, pray, because for once in your life you’ve been polite? and as though it were politeness! Why do you stare into the corner when you come in? I know how you tear and fling about before her! You might have said ‘Good evening’ to me, too, I wrapped you in your swaddling clothes, I am your godmother.”

I need not say I did not deign to answer. At that moment my sister came in and I made haste to turn to her.

“Liza, I saw Vassin to-day and he inquired after you. You have met him?”

“Yes, last year in Luga,” she answered quite simply, sitting down beside me and looking at me affectionately. I don’t know why, but I had fancied she would flush when I spoke of Vassin. My sister was a blonde; very fair with flaxen hair, quite unlike both her parents. But her eyes and the oval of her face were like our mother’s. Her nose was very straight, small, and regular; there were tiny freckles in her face, however, of which there was no sign in my mother’s. There was very little resemblance to Versilov, nothing but the slenderness of figure, perhaps, her tallness and something charming in her carriage. There was not the slightest likeness between us — we were the opposite poles.

“I knew his honour for three months,” Liza added.

“Is it Vassin you call ‘his honour,’ Liza? You should call him by his name. Excuse my correcting you, sister, but it grieves me that they seem to have neglected your education.”

“But it’s shameful of you to remark upon it before your mother,” cried Tatyana Pavlovna, firing up; “and you are talking nonsense, it has not been neglected at all.”

“I am not saying anything about my mother,” I said sharply, defending myself. “Do you know, mother, that when I look at Liza it’s as though it were you over again; you have given her the same charm of goodness, which you must have had yourself, and you have it to this day and always will have it. . . . I was only talking of the surface polish, of the silly rules of etiquette, which are necessary, however. I am only indignant at the thought

that when Versilov has heard you call Vassin ‘his honour’ he has not troubled to correct you at all — his disdain and his indifference to us are so complete. That’s what makes me furious.”

“He is a perfect bear himself, and he is giving us lessons in good manners! Don’t you dare talk of Versilov before your mother, sir, or before me either, I won’t stand it!” Tatyana Pavlovna flashed out.

“I got my salary to-day, mother, fifty roubles; take it, please; here!”

I went up to her and gave her the money; she was in a tremor of anxiety at once.

“Oh, I don’t know about taking it,” she brought out, as though afraid to touch the money. I did not understand.

“For goodness’ sake, mother, if you both think of me as one of the family, as a son and a brother. . . .”

“Oh, I’ve been to blame, Arkady: I ought to have confessed something to you, but I am afraid of you. . . .”

She said this with a timid and deprecating smile; again I did not understand and interrupted.

“By the way, did you know, mother, that Andrey Petrovitch’s case against the Sokolskys is being decided to-day?”

“Ah! I knew,” she cried, clasping her hands before her (her favourite gesture) in alarm.

“To-day?” cried Tatyana Pavlovna startled, “but it’s impossible, he would have told us. Did he tell you?” she turned to my mother.

“Oh! no . . . that it was to-day . . . he didn’t. But I have been fearing it all the week. I would have prayed for him to lose it even, only to have it over and off one’s mind, and to have things as they used to be again.”

“What! hasn’t he even told you, mother?” I exclaimed. “What a man! There’s an example of the indifference and contempt I spoke of just now.”

“It’s being decided, how is it being decided? And who told you?” cried Tatyana Pavlovna, pouncing upon me. “Speak, do.”

“Why, here he is himself! Perhaps he will tell you,” I announced, catching the sound of his step in the passage and hastily sitting down again beside Liza.

“Brother, for God’s sake, spare mother, and be patient with Andrey Petrovitch . . ,” she whispered to me.

“I will, I will,” with that I turned to her and pressed her hand.

Liza looked at me very mistrustfully, and she was right.

2

He came in very much pleased with himself, so pleased that he did not feel it necessary to conceal his state of mind. And, indeed, he had become accustomed of late to displaying himself before us without the slightest ceremony, not only in his bad points but even where he was ridiculous, a thing which most people are afraid to do; at the same time, he fully recognized that we should understand to the smallest detail. In the course of the last year, so Tatyana Pavlovna observed, he had become slovenly in his dress: his clothes though old were always well cut and free from foppishness. It is true that he was prepared to put on clean linen only on every alternate day, instead of every day, which was a real distress to my mother; it was regarded by them as a sacrifice, and the whole group of devoted women looked upon it as an act of heroism. He always wore soft wide-brimmed black hats. When he took off his hat his very thick but silvery locks stood up in a shock on his head; I liked looking at his hair when he took off his hat.

"Good evening; still disputing; and is he actually one of the party? I heard his voice from outside in the passage; he has been attacking me I suppose?"

It was one of the signs of his being in a good humour for him to be witty at my expense; I did not answer, of course. Lukerya came in with a regular sackful of parcels and put them on the table.

"Victory! Tatyana Pavlovna! the case is won, and the Sokolskys certainly won't venture to appeal. I've won the day! I was able to borrow a thousand roubles at once. Sonia, put down your work, don't try your eyes. Back from work, Liza?"

"Yes, father," answered Liza, looking at him affectionately; she used to call him father; nothing would have induced me to submit to doing the same.

"Tired?"

"Yes."

"Give up your work, don't go to-morrow, and drop it altogether."

"Father, that will be worse for me."

"I beg you will . . . I greatly dislike to see women working, Tatyana Pavlovna."

"How can they get on without work? a woman's not to work?"

“I know, I know; that’s excellent and very true, and I agree with it beforehand, but — I mean needlework particularly. Only imagine, I believe that’s one of the morbid anomalous impressions of my childhood. In my dim memories of the time when I was five or six years old I remember more often than anything — with loathing, of course — a solemn council of wise women, stern and forbidding, sitting at a round table with scissors, material, patterns, and a fashion-plate. They thought they knew all about it, and shook their heads slowly and majestically, measuring, calculating, and preparing to cut out. All those kind people who were so fond of me had suddenly become unapproachable, and if I began to play I was carried out of the room at once. Even my poor nurse, who held me by the hand and took no notice of my shouting and pulling at her, was listening and gazing enraptured, as though at a kind of paradise. The sternness of those sensible faces and the solemnity with which they faced the task of cutting out is for some reason distressing for me to picture even now. Tatyana Pavlovna, you are awfully fond of cutting out. Although it may be aristocratic, yet I do prefer a woman who does not work at all. Don’t take that as meant for you, Sonia. . . . How could you, indeed! Woman is an immense power without working. You know that, though, Sonia. What’s your opinion, Arkady Makarovitch? No doubt you disagree?”

“No, not at all,” I answered— “that’s a particularly good saying that woman is an immense power, though I don’t understand why you say that about work. And she can’t help working if she has no money — as you know yourself.”

“Well, that’s enough,” and he turned to my mother, who positively beamed all over (when he addressed me she was all of a tremor); “at least, to begin with, I beg you not to let me see you doing needlework for me. No doubt, Arkady, as a young man of the period you are something of a socialist; well, would you believe it, my dear fellow, none are so fond of idleness as the toiling masses.”

“Rest perhaps, not idleness.”

“No, idleness, doing nothing; that’s their ideal! I knew a man who was for ever at work, though he was not one of the common people, he was rather intellectual and capable of generalizing. Every day of his life, perhaps, he brooded with blissful emotion on visions of utter idleness, raising the ideal to infinity, so to speak, to unlimited independence, to everlasting freedom, dreaming, and idle contemplation. So it went on till he

broke down altogether from overwork. There was no mending him, he died in a hospital. I am sometimes seriously disposed to believe that the delights of labour have been invented by the idle, from virtuous motives, of course. It is one of the ‘Geneva ideas’ of the end of last century. Tatyana Pavlovna, I cut an advertisement out of the newspaper the day before yesterday, here it is”; he took a scrap of paper out of his waist-coat pocket. “It is one of those everlasting students, proficient in classics and mathematics and prepared to travel, to sleep in a garret or anywhere. Here, listen: ‘A teacher (lady) prepares for all the scholastic establishments (do you hear, for all) and gives lessons in arithmetic!’ Prepares for all the scholastic establishments — in arithmetic, therefore, may we assume? No, arithmetic is something apart for her. It is a case of simple hunger, the last extremity of want. It is just the ineptitude of it that’s so touching: it’s evident that the lady has never prepared anyone for any school, and it is doubtful whether she is fit to teach anything. Yet at her last gasp she wastes her one remaining rouble and prints in the paper that she prepares for all the scholastic establishments, and what’s more, gives lessons in arithmetic. Per tutto mundo e in altri siti.”

“Oh, Andrey Petrovitch, she ought to be helped! Where does she live?” cried Tatyana Pavlovna.

“Oh, there are lots of them!” He put the advertisement in his pocket. “That bag’s full of treats for you, Liza, and you, Tatyana Pavlovna; Sonia and I don’t care for sweet things. And perhaps for you, young man. I bought the things myself at Eliseyev’s and at Ballé’s. Too long we’ve gone hungry, as Lukerya said. (NB — None of us had ever gone hungry.) Here are grapes, sweets, duchesses and strawberry tarts; I’ve even brought some excellent liqueur; nuts, too. It’s curious that to this day I’m fond of nuts as I have been from a child, Tatyana Pavlovna, and of the commonest nuts, do you know. Liza takes after me; she is fond of cracking nuts like a squirrel. But there’s nothing more charming, Tatyana Pavlovna, than sometimes when recalling one’s childhood to imagine oneself in a wood, in a copse, gathering nuts. . . . The days are almost autumnal, but bright; at times it’s so fresh, one hides in the bushes, one wanders in the wood, there’s a scent of leaves. . . . I seem to see something sympathetic in your face, Arkady Makarovitch?”

“The early years of my childhood, too, were spent in the country.”

“But I thought you were brought up in Moscow, if I am not mistaken.”

“He was living in Moscow at the Andronikovs’ when you went there; but till then he used to live in the country with your aunt, Varvara Stepanovna,” Tatyana Pavlovna put in.

“Sonia, here’s some money, put it away. I promise you, in a few days, five thousand.”

“So there’s no hope then for the Sokolskys?” asked Tatyana Pavlovna.

“Absolutely none, Tatyana Pavlovna.”

“I have always sympathized with you and all of yours, Andrey Petrovitch, and I have always been a friend of the family, but though the Sokolskys are strangers, yet, upon my word, I am sorry for them. Don’t be angry, Andrey Petrovitch.”

“I have no intention of going shares with them, Tatyana Pavlovna!”

“You know my idea, of course, Andrey Petrovitch; they would have settled the case out of court, if at the very beginning you had offered to go halves with them; now, of course, it is too late. Not that I venture to criticize. . . . I say so because I don’t think the deceased would have left them out of his will altogether.”

“Not only he wouldn’t have left them out, he’d have certainly left them everything, and would have left none out but me, if he’d known how to do things and to write a will properly; but as it is, the law’s on my side, and it’s settled. I can’t go shares, and I don’t want to, Tatyana Pavlovna, and that is the end of the matter.”

He spoke with real exasperation, a thing he rarely allowed himself to do. Tatyana Pavlovna subsided. My mother looked down mournfully. Versilov knew that she shared Tatyana Pavlovna’s views.

“He has not forgotten that slap in the face at Ems,” I thought to myself. The document given me by Kraft and at that moment in my pocket would have a poor chance if it had fallen into his hands. I suddenly felt that the whole responsibility was still weighing upon me, and this idea, together with all the rest, had, of course, an irritating effect upon me.

“Arkady, I should like you to be better dressed, my dear fellow; your suit is all right, but for future contingencies I might recommend you to an excellent Frenchman, most conscientious and possessed of taste.”

“I beg you never to make such suggestions again,” I burst out suddenly.

“What’s that?”

“It is not that I consider it humiliating, of course, but we are not agreed about anything; on the contrary, our views are entirely opposed, for in a day

or two — to-morrow — I shall give up going to the prince's, as I find there is absolutely no work for me to do there."

"But you are going and sitting there with him — that is the work."

"Such ideas are degrading."

"I don't understand; but if you are so squeamish, don't take money from him, but simply go. You will distress him horribly, he has already become attached to you, I assure you. . . . However, as you please. . . ." He was evidently put out.

"You say, don't ask for money, but thanks to you I did a mean thing to-day: you did not warn me, and I demanded my month's salary from him to-day."

"So you have seen to that already; I confess I did not expect you to ask for it; but how sharp you all are nowadays! There are no young people in these days, Tatyana Pavlovna." He was very spiteful: I was awfully angry too.

"I ought to have had things out with you . . . you made me do it, I don't know now how it's to be."

"By the way, Sonia, give Arkady back his sixty roubles at once; and you, my dear fellow, don't be angry at our repaying it so quickly. I can guess from your face that you have some enterprise in your mind and that you need it. . . . So invest it . . . or something of the sort."

"I don't know what my face expresses, but I did not expect mother would have told you of that money when I so particularly asked her. . . ." I looked at my mother with flashing eyes, I cannot express how wounded I felt.

"Arkasha, darling, for God's sake forgive me, I couldn't possibly help speaking of it. . . ."

"My dear fellow, don't make a grievance of her telling me your secrets: besides, she did it with the best intentions — it was simply a mother's longing to boast of her son's feeling for her. But I assure you I should have guessed without that you were a capitalist. All your secrets are written on your honest countenance. He has 'his idea,' Tatyana Pavlovna, as I told you."

"Let's drop my honest countenance," I burst out again. "I know that you often see right through things, but in some cases you see no further than your own nose, and I have marvelled at your powers of penetration. Well then, I have 'my idea.' That you should use that expression, of course, was

an accident, but I am not afraid to admit it; I have ‘an idea’ of my own, I am not afraid and I am not ashamed of it.”

“Don’t be ashamed, that’s the chief thing.”

“And all the same I shall never tell it you.”

“That’s to say you won’t condescend to; no need to, my dear fellow, I know the nature of your idea as it is; in any case it implies:

Into the wilderness I flee.

Tatyana Pavlovna, my notion is that he wants . . . to become a Rothschild, or something of the kind, and shut himself up in his grandeur. . . . No doubt he’ll magnanimously allow us a pension, though perhaps he won’t allow me one — but in any case he will vanish from our sight. Like the new moon he has risen, only to set again.”

I shuddered in my inmost being; of course, it was all chance; he knew nothing of my idea and was not speaking about it, though he did mention Rothschild; but how could he define my feelings so precisely, my impulse to break with them and go away? He divined everything and wanted to defile beforehand with his cynicism the tragedy of fact. That he was horribly angry, of that there could be no doubt.

“Mother, forgive my hastiness, for I see that there’s no hiding things from Andrey Petrovitch in any case,” I said, affecting to laugh and trying if only for a moment to turn it into a joke.

“That’s the very best thing you can do, my dear fellow, to laugh. It is difficult to realize how much every one gains by laughing even in appearance; I am speaking most seriously. He always has an air, Tatyana Pavlovna, of having something so important on his mind, that he is quite abashed at the circumstance himself.”

“I must ask you in earnest, Andrey Petrovitch, to be more careful what you say.”

“You are right, my dear boy; but one must speak out once for all, so as never to touch upon the matter again. You have come to us from Moscow, to begin making trouble at once. That’s all we know as yet of your object in coming. I say nothing, of course, of your having come to surprise us in some way. And all this month you have been snorting and sneering at us. Yet you are obviously an intelligent person, and as such you might leave such snorting and sneering to those who have no other means of avenging themselves on others for their own insignificance. You are always shutting yourself up, though your honest countenance and your rosy cheeks bear

witness that you might look every one straight in the face with perfect innocence. He's a neurotic; I can't make out, Tatyana Pavlovna, why they are all neurotic nowadays. . .?"

"If you did not even know where I was brought up, you are not likely to know why a man's neurotic."

"Oh, so that's the key to it! You are offended at my being capable of forgetting where you were brought up!"

"Not in the least. Don't attribute such silly ideas to me. Mother! Andrey Petrovitch praised me just now for laughing; let us laugh — why sit like this! Shall I tell you a little anecdote about myself? Especially as Andrey Petrovitch knows nothing of my adventures."

I was boiling. I knew this was the last time we should be sitting together like this, that when I left that house I should never enter it again, and so on the eve of it all I could not restrain myself. He had challenged me to such a parting scene himself.

"That will be delightful, of course, if it is really amusing," he observed, looking at me searchingly. "Your manners were rather neglected where you were brought up, my dear fellow, though they are pretty passable. He is charming to-day, Tatyana Pavlovna, and it's a good thing you have undone that bag at last."

But Tatyana Pavlovna frowned; she did not even turn round at his words, but went on untying the parcels and laying out the good things on some plates which had been brought in. My mother, too, was sitting in complete bewilderment, though she had misgivings, of course, and realized that there would be trouble between us. My sister touched my elbow again.

3

"I simply want to tell you all," I began, with a very free-and-easy air, "how a father met for the first time a dearly loved son: it happened 'wherever you were brought up' . . ."

"My dear fellow, won't it be . . . a dull story? You know, tous les genres. . . ."

"Don't frown, Andrey Petrovitch, I am not speaking at all with the object you imagine. All I want is to make every one laugh."

"Well, God hears you, my dear boy. I know that you love us all . . . and don't want to spoil our evening," he mumbled with a sort of affected

carelessness.

“Of course, you have guessed by my face that I love you?”

“Yes, partly by your face, too.”

“Just as I guessed from her face that Tatyana Pavlovna’s in love with me. Don’t look at me so ferociously, Tatyana Pavlovna, it is better to laugh! it is better to laugh!”

She turned quickly to me, and gave me a searching look which lasted half a minute.

“Mind now,” she said, holding up her finger at me, but so earnestly that her words could not have referred to my stupid joke, but must have been meant as a warning in case I might be up to some mischief.

“Andrey Petrovitch, is it possible you don’t remember how we met for the first time in our lives?”

“Upon my word I’ve forgotten, my dear fellow, and I am really very sorry. All that I remember is that it was a long time ago . . . and took place somewhere. . . .”

“Mother, and don’t you remember how you were in the country, where I was brought up, till I was six or seven I believe, or rather were you really there once, or is it simply a dream that I saw you there for the first time? I have been wanting to ask you about it for a long time, but I’ve kept putting it off; now the time has come.”

“To be sure, Arkasha, to be sure I stayed with Varvara Stepanovna three times; my first visit was when you were only a year old, I came a second time when you were nearly four, and afterwards again when you were six.”

“Ah, you did then; I have been wanting to ask you about it all this month.”

My mother seemed overwhelmed by a rush of memories, and she asked me with feeling:

“Do you really mean, Arkasha, that you remembered me there?”

“I don’t know or remember anything, only something of your face remained in my heart for the rest of my life, and the fact, too, that you were my mother. I recall everything there as though it were a dream, I’ve even forgotten my nurse. I have a faint recollection of Varvara Stepanovna, simply that her face was tied up for toothache. I remember huge trees near the house — lime-trees I think they were — then sometimes the brilliant sunshine at the open windows, the little flower garden, the little paths and you, mother, I remember clearly only at one moment when I was taken to

the church there, and you held me up to receive the sacrament and to kiss the chalice; it was in the summer, and a dove flew through the cupola, in at one window and out at another. . . .”

“Mercy on us, that’s just how it was,” cried my mother, throwing up her hands, “and the dear dove I remember, too, now. With the chalice just before you, you started, and cried out, ‘a dove, a dove.’”

“Your face or something of the expression remained in my memory so distinctly that I recognized you five years after in Moscow, though nobody there told me you were my mother. But when I met Andrey Petrovitch for the first time, I was brought from the Andronikovs’; I had been vegetating quietly and happily with them for five years on end. I remember their flat down to the smallest detail, and all those ladies who have all grown so much older here; and the whole household, and how Andronikov himself used to bring the provisions, poultry, fish, and sucking-pigs from the town in a fish-basket. And how at dinner instead of his wife, who always gave herself such airs, he used to help the soup, and how we all laughed at his doing it, he most of all. The young ladies there used to teach me French. But what I liked best of all was Krylov’s Fables. I learned a number of them by heart and every day I used to recite one to Andronikov . . . going straight into his tiny study to do so without considering whether he were busy or not. Well, it was through a fable of Krylov’s that I got to know you, Andrey Petrovitch. I see you are beginning to remember.”

“I do recall something, my dear fellow, that you repeated something to me . . . a fable or a passage from ‘Woe from Wit,’ I fancy. What a memory you have, though!”

“A memory! I should think so! it’s the one thing I’ve remembered all my life.”

“That’s all right, that’s all right, my dear fellow, you are quite waking me up.”

He actually smiled; as soon as he smiled, my mother and sister smiled after him, confidence was restored; but Tatyana Pavlovna, who had finished laying out the good things on the table and settled herself in a corner, still bent upon me a keen and disapproving eye. “This is how it happened,” I went on: “one fine morning there suddenly appeared the friend of my childhood, Tatyana Pavlovna, who always made her entrance on the stage of my existence with dramatic suddenness. She took me away in a carriage to a grand house, to sumptuous apartments. You were staying at Madame

Fanariotov's, Andrey Petrovitch, in her empty house, which she had bought from you; she was abroad at that time. I always used to wear short jackets; now all of a sudden I was put into a pretty little blue greatcoat, and a very fine shirt. Tatyana Pavlovna was busy with me all day and bought me lots of things; I kept walking through all the empty rooms, looking at myself in all the looking- glasses. And wandering about in the same way the next morning, at ten o clock, I walked quite by chance into your study. I had seen you already the evening before, as soon as I was brought into the house, but only for an instant on the stairs. You were coming downstairs to get into your carriage and drive off somewhere; you were staying alone in Moscow then, for a short time after a very long absence, so that you had engagements in all directions and were scarcely ever at home. When you met Tatyana Pavlovna and me you only drawled 'Ah!' and did not even stop."

"He describes it with a special love," observed Versilov, addressing Tatyana Pavlovna; she turned away and did not answer.

"I can see you now as you were then, handsome and flourishing. It is wonderful how much older and less good-looking you have grown in these years; please forgive this candour, you were thirty-seven even then, though. I gazed at you with admiration; what wonderful hair you had, almost jet black, with a brilliant lustre without a trace of grey; moustaches and whiskers, like the setting of a jewel: I can find no other expression for it; your face of an even pallor; not like its sickly pallor to-day, but like your daughter, Anna Andreyevna, whom I had the honour of seeing this morning; dark, glowing eyes, and gleaming teeth, especially when you laughed. And you did laugh, when you looked round as I came in; I was not very discriminating at that time, and your smile rejoiced my heart. That morning you were wearing a dark blue velvet jacket, a sulphur coloured necktie, and a magnificent shirt with Alençon lace on it; you were standing before the looking-glass with a manuscript in your hand, and were busy declaiming Tchatsky's monologue, and especially his last exclamation: 'A coach, I want a coach.'"

"Good heavens!" cried Versilov. "Why, he's right! Though I was only in Moscow for so short a time, I undertook to play Tchatsky in an amateur performance at Alexandra Petrovna Vitovtov's in place of Zhileyko, who was ill!"

"Do you mean to say you had forgotten it?" laughed Tatyana Pavlovna.

“He has brought it back to my mind! And I own that those few days in Moscow were perhaps the happiest in my life! We were still so young then . . . and all so fervently expecting something. . . . It was then in Moscow I unexpectedly met so much. . . . But go on, my dear fellow: this time you’ve done well to remember it all so exactly. . . .”

“I stood still to look at you and suddenly cried out, ‘Ah, how good, the real Tchatsky’ You turned round at once and asked: ‘Why, do you know Tchatsky already?’ and you sat down on a sofa, and began drinking your coffee in the most charming humour — I could have kissed you. Then I informed you that at the Andronikovs’ every one read a great deal, and that the young ladies knew a great deal of poetry by heart, and used to act scenes out of ‘Woe from Wit’ among themselves, and that all last week we had been reading aloud in the evening ‘A Sportsman’s Sketches,’ but what I liked best of all was Krylov’s Fables, and that I knew them by heart. You told me to repeat one, and I repeated ‘The Girl who was Hard to Please.’”

A maid her suitor shrewdly scanned.

“Yes! Yes! I remember it all now,” cried Versilov again; “but, my dear fellow, I remember you, too, clearly now; you were such a charming boy then, a thoughtful boy even, and, I assure you, you, too, have changed for the worse in the course of these nine years.”

At this point all of them, even Tatyana Pavlovna, laughed. It was evident that Andrey Petrovitch had deigned to jest, and had paid me out in the same coin for my biting remark about his having grown old. Every one was amused, and indeed, it was well said.

“As I recited, you smiled, but before I was half-way through the fable you rang the bell and told the footman who answered it to ask Tatyana Pavlovna to come, and she ran in with such a delighted face, that though I had seen her the evening before I scarcely knew her. For Tatyana Pavlovna, I began the fable again, I finished it brilliantly, even Tatyana Pavlovna smiled, and you, Andrey Petrovitch cried ‘Bravo!’ and observed with warmth that if it had been ‘The Ant and the Grasshopper’ it would not be wonderful that a sensible boy of my age should recite it sensibly, but this fable

A maid her suitor shrewdly scanned. Indeed, that’s not a crime.

was different. “Listen how he brings out ‘Indeed, that’s not a crime,’” you said; in fact, you were enthusiastic. Then you said something in French

to Tatyana Pavlovna, and she instantly frowned and began to protest, and grew very hot, in fact; but as it was impossible to oppose Andrey Petrovitch if he once took an idea into his head, she hurriedly carried me off to her room, there my hands and face were washed again, my shirt was changed, my hair was pomaded and even curled.

"Then towards evening Tatyana Pavlovna dressed herself up rather grandly as I had never expected to see her, and she took me with her in the carriage. It was the first time in my life I had been to a play; it was at a private performance at Mme. Vitovtov's. The lights, the chandeliers, the ladies, the officers, the generals, the young ladies, the curtain, the rows of chairs, were utterly unlike anything I had seen before. Tatyana Pavlovna took a very modest seat in one of the back rows, and made me sit down beside her. There were, of course, other children like me in the room, but I had no eyes for anything, I simply waited with a sinking of my heart for the performance. When you came on, Andrey Petrovitch, I was ecstatic to the point of tears. What for and why, I don't understand. Why those tears of rapture? It has been a strange recollection for me ever since, for these last nine years! I followed the drama with a throbbing heart; all I understood of it, of course, was that SHE was deceiving HIM, and that he was ridiculed by stupid people who were not worth his little finger. When he was reciting at the ball I understood that he was humiliated and insulted, that he was reproaching all these miserable people, but that he was — great, great! No doubt my training at the Andronikovs' helped me to understand, and your acting, Andrey Petrovitch! It was the first time I had seen a play! When you went off shouting 'A coach, a coach!' (and you did that shout wonderfully) I jumped up from my seat, and while the whole audience burst into applause, I, too, clapped my hands and cried 'bravo' at the top of my voice. I vividly recall how at that instant I felt as though I had been pierced by a pin in my back 'a little below the waist'; Tatyana Pavlovna had given me a ferocious pinch; but I took no notice of it. As soon as 'Woe from Wit' was over, Tatyana Pavlovna took me home, of course. 'You can't stay for the dancing, and it's only on your account I am not staying!' you hissed at me all the way home in the carriage, Tatyana Pavlovna. All night I was delirious, and by ten o'clock the next morning I was standing at the study door, but it was shut; there were people with you and you were engaged in some business with them; then you drove off and were away the whole day till late at night — so I did not see you again! What I meant to say to you, I

have forgotten, of course, and indeed I did not know then, but I longed passionately to see you as soon as possible. And at eight o'clock next morning you were graciously pleased to set off for Serpuhov; at that time you had just sold your Tula estate to settle with your creditors, but there was still left in your hands a tempting stake; that was why you had come at that time to Moscow, where you had not been able to show yourself till then for fear of your creditors, and this Serpuhov ruffian was the only one of them who had not agreed to take half of what you owed him instead of the whole. When I questioned Tatyana Pavlovna, she did not even answer me. 'It's no business of yours, but the day after to-morrow I shall take you to your boarding school: get your exercise-books ready, take your lesson books, put them all in order, and you must learn to pack your little box yourself, you can't expect to be waited on, sir.' You were drumming this and that into my ears all those three days, Tatyana Pavlovna. It ended in my being taken in my innocence to school at Touchard's, adoring you, Andrey Petrovitch; our whole meeting was a trivial incident, perhaps, but would you believe it, six months afterwards I longed to run away from Touchard's to you!"

"You describe it capitally, you have brought it all back so vividly," Versilov pronounced incisively; "but what strikes me most in your story is the wealth of certain strange details, concerning my debts, for instance. Apart from the fact that these details are hardly a suitable subject for you to discuss, I can't imagine how you managed to get hold of them."

"Details? how I got hold of them? Why I repeat, for the last nine years I have been doing nothing but getting hold of facts about you."

"A strange confession, and a strange way of spending your time."

He turned half-reclining in his easy chair, and even yawned slightly, whether intentionally or not I could not say.

"Well, shall I go on telling you how I wanted to run to you from Touchard's?"

"Forbid him, Andrey Petrovitch; suppress him and send him away," Tatyana Pavlovna burst out.

"That won't do, Tatyana Pavlovna," Versilov answered her impressively. "Arkasha has evidently something on his mind, and so he must be allowed to finish. Well, let him speak! When he's said what he's got to say, it will be off his mind, and what matters most to him is that he should get it off his

mind. Begin your new story, my dear fellow; I call it new, but you may rest assured that I know how it ends."

4

"I ran away, that is, I tried to run away to you, very simply. Tatyana Pavlovna, do you remember after I had been there a fortnight Touchard wrote you a letter — didn't he? Marie Ivanovna showed me the letter afterwards; that turned up among Andronikov's papers, too. Touchard suddenly discovered that the fees he had asked were too small, and with 'dignity' announced in his letter to you that little princes and senator's children were educated in his establishment, and that it was lowering its tone to keep a pupil of such humble origin as me unless the remuneration were increased."

"Mon cher, you really might. . . ."

"Oh that's nothing, that's nothing," I interrupted, "I am only going to say a little about Touchard. You wrote from the provinces a fortnight later, Tatyana Pavlovna, and answered with a flat refusal. I remember how he walked into our classroom, flushing crimson. He was a very short thick-set little Frenchman of five- and-forty, a Parisian cobbler by origin, though he had from time immemorial held a position in Moscow as an instructor in the French language, and even had an official rank, of which he was extremely proud; he was a man of crass ignorance. There were only six of us pupils; among them there actually was a nephew of a Moscow senator; and we all lived like one family under the supervision of his wife, a very affected lady, who was the daughter of a Russian government clerk. During that fortnight I had given myself great airs before my schoolfellows. I boasted of my blue overcoat, and my papa, Andrey Petrovitch, and their questions: why I was called Dolgoruky and not Versilov did not embarrass me in the least, since I did not know why."

"Andrey Petrovitch!" cried Tatyana Pavlovna, in a voice almost menacing. My mother, on the contrary, was watching me intently, and evidently wished me to go on.

"Ce Touchard . . . I actually recall him now . . . he was a fussy little man," Versilov admitted; "but he was recommended to me by the very best people. . . ."

“Ce Touchard walked in with the letter in his hand, went up to the big oak table, at which all six of us were seated learning something by heart; he seized me firmly by the shoulder, picked me up from the chair, and ordered me to collect my exercise-books. ‘Your place is not here but there,’ he said, pointing to a tiny room on the left of the passage, where there was nothing but a plain deal table, a rush-bottom chair, and an American leather sofa — exactly like what I have upstairs in the attic. I went into it in amazement, very much downcast; I had never been roughly treated before. Half an hour later when Touchard had gone out of the schoolroom, I began to exchange glances and smiles with my schoolfellows; they, of course, were laughing at me; but I had no suspicion of it and thought we were laughing because we were merry. At that moment Touchard darted in, seized me by the forelock, and dragged me about.

“‘Don’t you dare sit with gentlemanly boys, you are a child of low origin and no better than a lackey.’

“And he gave me a stinging blow on my chubby, rosy cheek. He must have enjoyed doing so and he struck me a second time, and a third. I cried violently and was terribly astonished. For a whole hour I sat with my face hidden in my hands crying and crying. Something had happened which was utterly beyond my comprehension. I don’t understand how a man, not of spiteful character, a foreigner like Touchard, who rejoiced at the emancipation of the Russian peasants, could have beaten a foolish child like me. I was only amazed, not resentful, however. I had not yet learnt to resent an insult. It seemed to me that I had somehow been naughty, that when I was good again I should be forgiven, and that we should all be merry again at once, that we should go out to play in the yard and live happy ever after.”

“My dear fellow, if I had only known. . . .” Versilov drawled with the careless smile of a rather weary man. “What a scoundrel that Touchard was, though! I have not given up all hope, however, that you may make an effort and forgive us for all that at last, and that we may all live happy ever after.”

He yawned decisively.

“But I am not blaming you at all, and believe me, I am not complaining of Touchard,” I cried, a little disconcerted. “Though, indeed, he beat me for ten months or so. I remember I was always trying to appease him in some way; I used to rush to kiss his hands, I was always kissing them, and I was

always crying and crying. My schoolfellows laughed at me and despised me, because Touchard began to treat me sometimes like a servant, he used to order me to bring him his clothes when he was dressing. My menial instincts were of use to me there; I did my very utmost to please him, and was not in the least offended, because I did not at that time understand it at all, and I am surprised to this day that I could have been so stupid as not to realize that I was not on an equal footing with the rest. It's true my schoolfellows made many things clear to me even then; it was a good school. Touchard came in the end to prefer giving me a kick to slapping me in the face, and six months later he even began to be affectionate; only he never failed to beat me once a month or so to remind me not to forget myself. He soon let me sit with the other boys, too, and allowed me to play with them, but not once during those two and a half years did Touchard forget the difference in our social positions, and from time to time, though not very frequently, he employed me in menial tasks, I verily believe, to remind me of it.

"I was running away; that's to say, I was on the point of running away for five months after those first two months. I have always been slow in taking action. When I got into bed and pulled the quilt over me, I began thinking of you at once, Andrey Petrovitch, only of you, of no one else; I don't in the least know why it was so. I dreamed about you too. I used always to be passionately imagining that you would walk in, and I would rush up to you and you would take me out of that place, and bring me home with you to the same study, and that we would go to the theatre again, and so on. Above all, that we should not part again — that was the chief thing! As soon as I had to wake up in the morning the jeers and contempt of the boys began again; one of them actually began beating me and making me put on his boots for him; he called me the vilest names, particularly aiming at making my origin clear to me, to the diversion of all who heard him. When at last Touchard himself became comprehensible, something unbearable began in my soul. I felt that I should never be forgiven here. Oh, I was beginning by degrees to understand what it was they would not forgive me and of what I was guilty! And so at last I resolved to run away. For two whole months I dreamed of it incessantly at last — it was September — I made up my mind. I waited for Saturday, when my schoolfellows used to go home for the week-end, and meanwhile I secretly and carefully got together a bundle of the most necessary things; all the

money I had was two roubles. I meant to wait till dusk; ‘then I will go downstairs,’ I thought, ‘and I’ll go out and walk away!’ Where? I knew that Andronikov had moved to Petersburg, and I resolved that I would look for Mme. Fanariotov’s house in Arbaty; ‘I’ll spend the night walking or sitting somewhere, and in the morning I’ll ask some one in the courtyard of the house, where Andrey Petrovitch is now, and if not in Moscow, in what town or country. They will be sure to tell me. I’ll walk away, and then ask some one, somewhere else, by which gate to go out to reach such a town; and then I’ll go and walk and walk, I shall keep on walking; I shall sleep somewhere under the bushes; I shall eat nothing but bread, and for two roubles I can get bread enough for a long time.’

“I could not manage to run away on Saturday, however; I had to wait till next day, Sunday, and as luck would have it, Touchard and his wife were going away somewhere for the Sunday; there was no one left in the house but Agafya and me. I awaited the night in terrible agitation, I remember. I sat at the window in the schoolroom, looking out at the dusty street, the little wooden houses, and the few passers-by. Touchard lived in an out-of-the- way street; from the windows I could see one of the city gates; ‘Isn’t it the one?’ I kept wondering. The sun set in a red glow, the sky was so cold-looking, and a piercing wind was stirring up the dust, just as it is to-day. It was quite dark at last; I stood before the ikon and began to pray, only very, very quickly, I was in haste; I caught up my bundle, and went on tip-toe down the creaking stairs, horribly afraid that Agafya would hear me from the kitchen. The door was locked, I turned the key, and at once a dark, dark night loomed black before me like a boundless perilous unknown land, and the wind snatched off my cap. I was just going out on the same side of the pavement; I heard a hoarse volley of oaths from a drunken man in the street. I stood, looked, and slowly turned, slowly went upstairs, slowly took off my things, put down my little bundle and lay down flat, without tears, and without thoughts, and it was from that moment, Andrey Petrovitch, that I began to think. It was from that moment that I realized that besides being a lackey, I was a coward, too, and my real development began!”

“Well, I see through you once and for all from this minute,” cried Tatyana Pavlovna, jumping up from her seat, and so suddenly, that I was utterly unprepared for it; “yes, you were not only a lackey then, you are a lackey now; you’ve the soul of a lackey! Why should not Andrey Petrovitch have apprenticed you to a shoemaker? it would have been an act

of charity to have taught you a trade! Who would have expected more than that of him? Your father, Makar Ivanovitch, asked — in fact, he insisted — that you, his children, should not be brought up to be above your station. Why, you think nothing of his having educated you for the university, and that through him you have received class rights. The little rascals teased him, to be sure, so he has sworn to avenge himself on humanity. . . . You scoundrel!"

I must confess I was struck dumb by this outburst, I got up and stood for some time staring and not knowing what to say.

"Well, certainly Tatyana Pavlovna has told me something new," I said at last, turning resolutely to Versilov; "yes, certainly I am such a lackey that I can't be satisfied with Versilov's not having apprenticed me to a shoemaker; even 'rights' did not touch me. I wanted the whole of Versilov, I wanted a father . . . that's what I asked for — like a regular lackey. Mother, I've had it on my conscience for eight years — when you came to Moscow alone to see me at Touchard's, the way I received you then, but I have no time to speak of it now. Tatyana Pavlovna won't let me tell my story, Good-bye till to-morrow, mother; we may see each other again. Tatyana Pavlovna! what if I am so utterly a lackey that I am quite unable to admit the possibility of a man's marrying again when his wife is alive? Yet you know that all but happened to Andrey Petrovitch at Ems! Mother, if you don't want to stay with a husband who may take another wife to-morrow, remember you have a son who promises to be a dutiful son to you for ever; remember, and let us go away, only on condition that it is 'either he, or I' will you? I don't ask you for an answer at once, of course: I know that such questions can't be answered straight off."

But I could not go on, partly because I was excited and confused. My mother turned pale and her voice seemed to fail her: she could not utter a word. Tatyana Pavlovna said something in a very loud voice and at great length which I could not make out, and twice she pushed me on the shoulder with her fist. I only remember that she shouted that "my words were a sham, the broodings of a petty soul, counted over and turned inside out." Versilov sat motionless and very serious, he was not smiling. I went upstairs to my room. The last thing I saw as I went out was the reproach in my sister's eyes; she shook her head at me sternly.

CHAPTER VII

1

I describe all these scenes without sparing myself, in order to recall it clearly and revive the impression. As I went up to my attic, I did not know in the least whether I ought to be ashamed or triumphant as though I had done my duty. Had I been ever so little more experienced, I should have had a misgiving that the least doubt in such cases must be taken as a bad sign, but another fact threw me out in my reckoning: I don't know what I was pleased about, but I felt awfully pleased, in spite of my being uncertain, and of my realizing distinctly that I had not come off with flying colours downstairs. Even Tatyana Pavlovna's spiteful abuse of me struck me as funny and amusing and did not anger me at all. Probably all this was because I had anyway broken my chains and for the first time felt myself free.

I felt, too, that I had weakened my position: how I was to act in regard to the letter about the inheritance was more obscure than ever. Now it would be certainly taken for granted that I was revenging myself on Versilov. But while all this discussion was going on downstairs I had made up my mind to submit the question of the letter to an impartial outsider and to appeal to Vassin for his decision, or, failing Vassin, to take it to some one else. I had already made up my mind to whom. I would go to see Vassin once, for that occasion only, I thought to myself, and then — then I would vanish for a long while, for some months, from the sight of all, especially of Vassin. Only my mother and sister I might see occasionally. It was all inconsistent and confused; I felt that I had done something, though not in the right way, and I was satisfied: I repeat, I was awfully pleased anyway.

I meant to go to bed rather early, foreseeing I should have a lot to do next day. Besides finding a lodging and moving, I had another project which in one way or another I meant to carry out. But the evening was not destined to end without surprises, and Versilov succeeded in astonishing me extremely. He had certainly never been into my attic, and lo and behold, before I had been an hour in my room I heard his footsteps on the ladder: he called to me to show a light. I took a candle, and stretching out my hand, which he caught hold of, I helped him up.

“Merci, my dear fellow; I’ve never climbed up here before, not even when I took the lodgings. I imagined what sort of place it was, but I never supposed it was quite such a hole as this.” He stood in the middle of my attic, looking around with curiosity. “Why, this is a coffin, a regular coffin.”

It really had a resemblance to the inside of a coffin, and I positively admired the way he had described it in one word. It was a long narrow box of a room, the ceiling sloped away from the wall at the height of my shoulder, and the top of it was within easy reach of my hand. Versilov unconsciously stood stooping, afraid of hitting his head against the ceiling; he did not knock it, however, and, finally more or less reassured, he seated himself on the sofa, where my bed had already been made up. But I did not sit down, I looked at him in the greatest amazement.

“Your mother says she does not know whether to take the money you gave her this evening for your board for the month. But for a coffin like this, instead of taking your money, we ought rather to offer you compensation! I have never been up and . . . I can’t conceive how you can exist here!”

“I am used to it. But what I can’t get used to is seeing you in my room after what has just happened downstairs.”

“O, yes, you were distinctly rude downstairs, but . . . I, too, have a special object which I will explain to you, though indeed there is nothing extraordinary in my coming; even the scene downstairs is in the regular order of things; but for mercy’s sake do explain this: what you told us downstairs after preparing us and approaching the subject so solemnly was surely not all you meant to disclose or communicate? Was there really nothing else?”

“That was all, or we’ll assume it was all.”

“It’s not much, my dear fellow: I must own that from your beginning and the way you urged us to laugh, in fact from your eagerness to talk, I expected more.”

“But that does not matter to you, surely?”

“But I speak simply from a sense of proportion; it was not worth making such a fuss about, it was quite disproportionate; you’ve been sitting mute a whole month, preparing to speak, and when it comes — it’s nothing.”

“I meant to say more, but I am ashamed of having said even that. Not everything can be put into words, there are things it’s better never to say at

all; I said a good deal, but you did not understand."

"Why, so you, too, are sometimes distressed at the impossibility of putting thought into words! That's a noble sorrow, my dear fellow, and it's only vouchsafed to the elect: the fool is always satisfied with what he has said, and always, too, says more than he need; they love to have something to spare."

"As I see I did, for instance; I said more than I need: I asked for the 'whole of Versilov,' that was a great deal too much; I don't need Versilov at all."

"My dear fellow, I see you want to retrieve your failure downstairs. It is very evident you repent it, and as repentance among us always involves immediately attacking some one, you are very anxious to hit hard this time. I have come too soon, and you have not yet cooled down, and besides you are not very good at standing criticism. But sit down, for mercy's sake; I have come to tell you something; thank you, that's right. From what you said to your mother, as you went out, it's quite clear that it is better for us to separate. I have come to persuade you to do so as gently and with as little fuss as possible, to avoid grieving and alarming your mother any further. My coming up here even has cheered her. She believes in a way that we may still be reconciled and that everything will go on as before. I imagine that if we were to laugh heartily once or twice we should fill their timid hearts with delight. They may be simple souls, but they are sincere and true- hearted in their love. Why not humour them on occasion? Well, that's one thing. Another thing: why should we necessarily part thirsting for revenge, gnashing our teeth, vowing vengeance, etc. Of course there is no manner of need to fall on each other's necks, but we might part, so to say, with mutual respect, mightn't we?"

"That's all nonsense! I promise to go away without a fuss — and that's enough. And is it for my mother's sake you are anxious? But it strikes me that my mother's peace of mind has absolutely nothing to do with it, and you are simply saying that."

"You don't believe it?"

"You talk to me just as though I were a baby."

"I am ready to beg your pardon a thousand times over for that, in fact for everything you bring up against me, for those years of your childhood and the rest of it, but, cher enfant, what will be the use of it? You are too clever to want to be put into such a stupid position. To say nothing of my not

understanding, so far, the exact nature of your accusations. What is it you blame me for in reality? For your not having been born a Versilov? Bah! You laugh contemptuously and wave your hands, so that's not it?"

"No, I assure you. I assure you I don't think it an honour to be called Versilov."

"Let's leave honour out of the question; and, besides, your answer was bound to be democratic; but if so, what are you blaming me for?"

"Tatyana Pavlovna told me just now all I needed to know, and had always failed to grasp, till she spoke. That is, that you did not apprentice me to a shoemaker, and that consequently I had to be grateful, too. I can't understand why it is I am not grateful, even now, even after I have been taught my lesson. Isn't it the pride of your race showing itself in me, Andrey Petrovitch?"

"Probably not, and apart from that, you must admit that by your sallies downstairs you've only bullied and tormented your mother instead of crushing me, as you intended. Yet I should have thought it was not for you to judge her. Besides, what wrong has she done you? Explain to me, too, by the way, my dear fellow: for what reason and with what object did you spread abroad that you were illegitimate, at your boarding school and at the grammar school, and everywhere you have been, to every casual stranger, as I hear you have? I hear that you did this with a peculiar relish. And yet that's all nonsense, and a revolting calumny: you are legitimate, a Dolgoruky, the son of Makar Ivanovitch Dolgoruky, a respectable man, remarkable for his intelligence and character. That you have received a superior education is entirely owing to your former master, Versilov, and what's the upshot of it? By proclaiming your illegitimacy, which is a calumny in itself, you first and foremost gave away your mother's secret, and from a false pride exposed your mother to the criticism of every dirty stranger. My dear fellow, that was very discreditable, especially as your mother is in no way to blame: she has a nature of the greatest purity, and that her name is not Versilov is simply because her husband is still living."

"Enough, I entirely agree with you, and I have enough faith in your intelligence to hope that you won't go on rating at me too long for it. You are so fond of moderation; and yet there's a moderation in all things, even in your sudden love for my mother. I'll tell you what would be better: since you have gone so far as to come up and see me and mean to spend a quarter of an hour or half an hour with me (I still don't know what for, we'll

assume for my mother's peace of mind), and what's more, in spite of the scene downstairs, seem so eager to talk to me, you had better tell me about my father — tell me about Makar Ivanovitch the pilgrim. I want to hear from you about him: I have been intending to ask you for some time past. Now that we are parting perhaps for a long time, I should very much like to get from you an answer to another question: has it really been impossible for you during these twenty years to affect my mother's traditional ideas — and now my sister's, too — so as to dissipate by your civilizing influence the primitive darkness of her environment? Oh, I am not speaking of the purity of her nature. She's infinitely nobler than you, morally anyway, excuse my saying so . . . but she's only an infinitely noble corpse. Versilov is the only one living, everything else about him and everything connected with him exists only on the express condition of having the honour to nourish him with its force, its living sap. But I suppose she, too, was once alive, wasn't she? I suppose you loved something in her, didn't you? I suppose she was once a woman?"

"My dear fellow, she never was, if you will have it," he assured me, at once dropping into his habitual manner with me, with which I was so familiar, and by which I was so enraged, that is he was apparently all sincerity and open-heartedness, but if one looked more closely there was nothing in him but the deepest irony: "she never was. The Russian woman never is a woman."

"Is the Polish woman, the French woman? Or the Italian, the passionate Italian, that's the sort to fascinate the civilized upper-class Russian of the type of Versilov?"

"Well, I certainly did not expect to meet a Slavophil," laughed Versilov.

I remember his story, word for word: he began talking with great readiness indeed, and with evident pleasure. It was quite clear to me, that he had come up not to have a gossip with me, and not to pacify my mother either, but with some other object.

2

"Your mother and I have spent these twenty years together in silence," he began, prattling on (it was utterly affected and unnatural), "and all that passed between us took place in silence. The chief characteristic of our twenty years' connection has been its — dumbness. I believe we have

never once quarrelled. It is true I have often gone away and left her alone, but it has always ended in my coming back. Nous revenons toujours; indeed, it's a fundamental characteristic of men; it's due to their magnanimity. If marriage depended on women alone, not a single marriage would last. Meekness, submissiveness, self-abasement, and at the same time firmness, strength, real strength, that's your mother's character. Take note, that she's the best of all the women I've met in my life. And that she has strength I can bear witness: I have seen how that strength has supported her. When it's a matter, I won't say of convictions — convictions are out of the question — but what they look upon as convictions, and so, to their thinking, sacred, she is ready to face torture. Well, I leave you to judge, whether I am much like a torturer. That's why I have preferred to remain silent about almost everything, and not simply because it was more convenient, and I confess I don't regret it. In this way our life has gone on of itself on broad and humane lines, so that indeed I take no credit to myself for it. I must say by the way in parenthesis, that for some reason she never believed in my humanity, and so was always in a tremor; but, though she has trembled, she has never given in to any advanced ideas. They are so good at that, while we never understand that sort of thing, and in fact they are much better at managing things for themselves than we are. They are able to go on living their own lives in positions most unnatural to them, and in positions most strange to them they remain always the same. But we can't do that."

"Who are 'they'? I don't quite understand you."

"The people, my dear fellow, I'm speaking of the common people. They have shown their great living force, and their historical breadth both morally and politically. But, to come back to ourselves, I may remark about your mother, that she is not always dumb; your mother sometimes speaks, but she speaks in such a way that you see at once that you simply waste time in talking to her, even though you might have been preparing her for five years beforehand. Moreover, she makes the most unexpected objections. Note again, that I am far from calling her a fool; on the contrary, she has intelligence of a sort, and even remarkable intelligence; though perhaps you will not believe in her intelligence. . . ."

"Why not? What I don't believe is that you really believe in her intelligence yourself, and are not pretending."

“Yes? You look upon me as such a chameleon? My dear fellow, I am allowing you a little too much licence . . . like a spoilt son. . . . So be it for the time.”

“Tell me if you can the truth about my father.”

“About Makar Ivanovitch? Makar Ivanovitch was, as you are aware, a house-serf, who, so to speak, had a yearning for glory of a sort. . . .”

“I bet that at this minute you feel envious of him!”

“On the contrary, my dear fellow, on the contrary, and if you like I am very glad to see you in such a flippant mood; I swear that I am in a penitent frame of mind, and just now, at this moment, I regret a thousand times over all that happened twenty years ago. And besides, God knows, it all happened quite accidentally . . . well, and, so far as in me lay, humanely too; — as I conceived of an act of humanity in those days anyway. Oh, in those days we were all boiling over with zeal for doing good, for serving the public weal, for a higher ideal; we disapproved of class distinctions, of the privileges of our rank, of our property and even of usury, at least some of us did. . . . I declare we did. There were not many of us, but we said good things, and sometimes, I assure you, did good things, too.”

“That was when you sobbed on his shoulder.”

“I am ready to agree with you on every point beforehand. By the way, you heard of that shoulder from me, and so, at this moment, you are making spiteful use of my frankness and confidence in you; but you must admit that there was not so much harm in that episode as might seem at the first glance, especially for that period. To be sure we were only making a beginning then. Of course it was a pose, but I did not know at the time that it was a pose. Have you, for instance, never posed in practical affairs?”

“I was rather sentimental downstairs, just now, and as I came up here I felt horribly ashamed at the thought that you might imagine I had been posing. It is true in some cases, though one’s feelings are sincere, one makes a display of one’s feelings. I swear that everything I said downstairs was absolutely genuine.”

“That’s exactly it; you have very successfully defined it in a phrase, ‘though one’s feelings are sincere one makes a display of one’s self’; but do you know it was just the same with me. Though I was making a display of them, my sobs were perfectly genuine. I don’t deny that Makar Ivanovitch might, if he had been wittily disposed, have looked upon my sobs as the climax of mockery, but in those days he was too honest to be so clear-

sighted. I don't know whether he felt sorry for me or not. I remember that I had a great desire that he should."

"Do you know," I interrupted him, "you're jeering now when you say that? And in fact, all this last month whenever you have talked to me, you have been jeering. Why have you done so, whenever you have talked with me?"

"You think so?" he answered mildly; "you are very suspicious; however, if I do laugh it's not at you, or, at least not only at you, don't be uneasy. But I am not laughing now, and then — in short I did everything I could then, and, believe me, not for my personal advantage. We, that is, superior people, unlike the common people, do not know how to act for our personal advantage: on the contrary, we made a mess of it as far as we possibly could, and I suspect that that was considered among us in those days 'our higher advantage,' in an exalted sense of course. The present generation of advanced people are much keener on the main chance than we were. Even before our 'sin' I explained the whole position to Makar Ivanovitch with extraordinary directness. I am ready to admit now, that a great deal need not have been explained at all, especially with such directness; to say nothing of humanity it would have been far more polite, but . . . but there's no pulling up when you once begin dancing, and want to cut a fine caper. And perhaps our cravings for the fine and exalted only amount to that in reality. All my life I have never been able to make up my mind about it. However, that is too deep a subject for our superficial conversation, but I assure you I am sometimes ready to die with shame, when I recall it. I offered him at the time three thousand roubles, and I remember he did not say a word and I did all the talking. Only fancy, I imagined that he was afraid of me, that is of my rights of ownership over him, and I remember I did my utmost to reassure him; I kept trying to persuade him to have no apprehension, but to tell me his wishes frankly and without sparing me. By way of guarantee I promised him, that if he did not accept my terms, that is three thousand with freedom (for himself and his wife, of course) — and a journey wherever he pleased (without his wife, of course) — then let him say so straight out, and I would at once give him his freedom, let his wife go, and compensate them both with the same three thousand, I believe, and they should not go away from me, but I would go away myself in solitude for three years to Italy. Mon ami, I should not have taken Mlle. Sapozhkov with me to Italy, you may be sure of that. I was extremely pure at that

epoch. And, do you know, Makar Ivanovitch knew perfectly well that I should do as I promised; but he still remained silent, and only when I was about to throw myself on his neck, for the third time, he drew back, waved his hand, and went out of the room with a certain lack of ceremony, indeed, which I assure you surprised me at the time. I caught a glimpse of myself in the looking-glass and I can't forget it.

"As a rule when they don't speak it's worst of all, and he was a gloomy character, and I must confess that far from feeling sure of him I was awfully afraid of him, when I summoned him to my study. In that class there are types, and many of them, who are, so to speak, the very incarnation of all that's ill-bred, and one's more afraid of that than a beating. Sic. And what a risk I was running, what a risk! Why, what if he had begun shouting for all the servants to hear, had howled, this village Uriah, what would have become of me, such a juvenile David, and what should I have done then? That's why I trotted out the three thousand first of all, that was instinctive; but luckily I was mistaken: this Makar Ivanovitch was something quite different."

"Tell me, had you 'sinned' then? You said just now that you summoned the husband beforehand."

"Well, do you see . . . that is . . . as one understands it. . . ."

"Oh, you had then. You said just now you were mistaken in him, that he was something different; how different?"

"Well, how exactly I don't know to this day, but somehow different, and, do you know, positively very decent. I think so because in the end I felt more than ever ashamed to face him. Next day he agreed to the journey, without any words, but without, of course, forgetting one of the inducements I had offered him."

"He took the money?"

"I should think so! And you know, my dear fellow, in that point he surprised me too. I had not, of course, three thousand at the time in my pocket, but I procured seven hundred and handed it over to him as the first instalment; and what do you think? He demanded the remaining two thousand three hundred from me in the form of a credit note made payable to a certain merchant for security. And two years later, by means of that credit note, he got the money out of me before a court, and with interest too, so that he surprised me again, especially as he had literally gone collecting funds for building a church, and has been a pilgrim ever since, that is, for

the last twenty years. I don't understand what a pilgrim should want money of his own for . . . money which is such a worldly thing. . . . I offered the money at the minute of course with perfect sincerity, and, so to speak, in the first flush of feeling, but afterwards, after the lapse of so many minutes, I might naturally have thought better of it . . . and might have reckoned that he would spare me . . . or, so to say, spare US, me and her, and would have waited for a time at least. But he lost no time however. . . ."

Here I must make a necessary note. If my mother were to outlive M. Versilov, she would have been left literally without a farthing in her old age, had it not been for Makar Ivanovitch's three thousand, which had been doubled long ago by the accumulation of interest, and which he had the previous year left her intact in his will. He had seen through Versilov even in those days.

"You told me once that Makar Ivanovitch had come several times on a visit to you, and always stayed at mother's lodgings?"

"Yes, my dear boy: and I must confess at first I was awfully frightened of these visits. He has come six or seven times altogether during this period, that is, the last twenty years, and on the first occasions I used to hide myself if I were in the house when he arrived. At first I could not make out what it meant, and why he had turned up. But afterwards I thought that from certain points of view it was by no means so stupid on his part. Afterwards it somehow occurred to me to feel curious about him; I came out to have a look at him, and formed, I assure you, a very original impression of him. This was on his third or fourth visit, at the time when I had just been appointed a mediator, and when, of course, I was getting all my energies to work to study Russia. I heard from him a very great deal that was new to me. I found in him, besides, what I had never expected to find: a sort of benign serenity, an evenness of temper, and what was more surprising than anything, something almost like gaiety. Not the faintest allusion to THAT (tu comprends) and a very great capacity for talking sense, and talking extremely well, that is, with none of that silly servantish profundity, which I confess to you I can't endure, democratic as I am, and with none of those far-fetched Russian expressions which 'the genuine Russian peasant' makes use of in novels and on the stage. At the same time very little about religion, unless one begins upon the subject, and most charming descriptions of the monastery and monastic life, if one asks questions about it. And above all — respectfulness, that modest courtesy,

just that courtesy which is essential for the truest equality, and without which, indeed, in my opinion, one cannot be really superior. The truest good-breeding is in such cases attained through the complete absence of conceit, and the man shows himself secure in his self-respect in his own station of life whatever that may be, and whatever fate may befall him. This power of respecting one's self in one's own position is extremely rare, as rare, anyway, as real personal dignity. . . . You will see that for yourself if you live long enough. But what struck me most of all, especially later on, and not at the beginning," added Versilov, "was the fact that this Makar had an extraordinary stateliness, and was, I assure you, very handsome. It is true he was old, but —

Dark visaged, tall, erect,

simple and dignified; I actually wondered how my poor Sonia could have preferred me THEN; at that time he was fifty, but he was still a fine fellow, and compared with him I was such a. featherhead. I remember, however, that he was unpardonably grey even then; so he must have been just as grey-headed when he married her. . . . Perhaps that had an influence."

Versilov had a very nasty aristocratic trick: after saying (when he could not help it) some particularly clever and fine things, he would all at once intentionally cap them with some stupid saying such as this remark about Makar Ivanovitch's grey hair, and the influence it had on my mother. He did this on purpose, probably without knowing why he did it, from a silly snobbish habit. To hear him, one would suppose he was speaking quite seriously, and all the while he was posing to himself, or laughing.

3

I don't know why but I was suddenly overcome by an intense exasperation. In fact, I recall with extreme dissatisfaction some of my behaviour during those minutes; I suddenly got up from my seat.

"I tell you what," I said: "you say you came up chiefly that my mother might imagine we were reconciled. Time enough has passed for her to imagine it; will you be so good as to leave me alone?"

He flushed slightly and got up from his place.

"My dear boy, you are extremely unceremonious with me. However, good-bye; there is no winning love by force. I will only venture upon one

question: do you really want to leave the prince?”

“Aha! I knew you had some object in your mind. . . .”

“That is, you suspect I came up to induce you to stay with the prince, for some purpose of my own. But do you suppose, my dear fellow, that I sent for you from Moscow for some purpose of my own? Oh! how suspicious you are. On the contrary, I was anxious for your good in every way. And even now, since my position has so improved, I should have liked you to let me and your mother help you sometimes.”

“I don’t like you, Versilov.”

“And ‘Versilov’ too! By the way, I greatly regret that I can’t transmit you the name, seeing that in reality constitutes my whole offence, if offence there is, doesn’t it? but again I couldn’t marry a married woman, could I?”

“That was why, I suppose, you wanted to marry an unmarried one?”

A slight spasm passed over his face.

“You are thinking of Ems. Listen, Arkady, you went so far as to allude to that downstairs, pouring contempt upon me before your mother. You must know that that’s where you make your greatest mistake. You know nothing whatever of what happened with Lidya Ahmakov. You don’t know how much your mother had to do with it all, although she was not with me at the time, and if I have ever seen a good woman it was when I looked at your mother then. But that’s enough; all that is a secret still, and you — you talk of what you don’t know, and have heard about from outsiders.”

“Only to-day the prince told me that you have a special fancy for unfledged girls.”

“The prince said that?”

“Yes, listen, would you like me to tell you exactly what you have come up to me for? I have been sitting here all this time wondering what was the secret object of this visit, and now I believe I’ve guessed it.”

He was just going out, but he stopped and turned to me in expectation.

“I blurted out just now that Touchard’s letter to Tatyana Pavlovna was among Andronikov’s papers, and at his death came into the hands of Marie Ivanovna. I saw how your face suddenly twitched, and I only guessed why just now, when your face twitched again in the same way. The idea suddenly occurred to you that if one letter in Andronikov’s keeping had come into Marie Ivanovna’s hands, why shouldn’t another? And Andronikov might have left very important letters, mightn’t he?”

“So I came up here hoping to make you talk about it?”

“You know that yourself.”

He turned very pale.

“You did not imagine that of yourself; there’s a woman’s influence in it; and what hatred there is in your words — in your coarse supposition!”

“A woman? I have seen that woman for the first time today! Perhaps it’s just to spy on her you want me to stay on with the old prince.”

“I see, though, that you will do well in your new line. Isn’t that perhaps ‘your idea’? Go on, my dear fellow, you have an unmistakable gift for detective work. Given talent, one must perfect it.”

He paused to take breath.

“Take care, Versilov, don’t make me your enemy!”

“My dear fellow, in such cases no one gives utterance to his last thoughts, but keeps them to himself. And with that, show me a light, if you please; though you are my enemy you are not so much so as to want me to break my neck, I suppose. Tiens, mon ami, only fancy,” he went on, as he descended the ladder, “all this month I have been taking you for a good-natured fellow. You so want to live and are so thirsting for life that I do believe three lives would not be enough for you: one can see that in your face, and people like that are generally good-natured. And how mistaken I’ve been!”

4

I can’t express how my heart ached when I was left alone; it was as though I had cut off a piece of my own living flesh! Why I had so suddenly lost my temper, and why I had so insulted him — so persistently and intentionally — I couldn’t say now; nor could I at the time, of course. And how pale he had turned! And who knows, perhaps that paleness was the expression of the truest and purest feeling and the deepest sorrow, and not of anger or of offence. I always fancied that there had been a moment when he really loved me. Why, why could I not believe that now, especially when so much had been made clear?

I had flown into a sudden fury and actually driven him away, partly perhaps by my sudden guess that he had come to find out whether there were not another letter left by Andronikov in Marie Ivanovna’s possession. That he must have been on the lookout for those letters, and that he was on the look-out for them I knew. But who knows, perhaps at that minute I had

made a horrible blunder! And who knows, perhaps, by that blunder I had led him to think of Marie Ivanovna and the possibility of her having letters.

And finally, there was something else that was strange: again he had repeated word for word my own thought (about three lives), which I had expressed to Kraft that evening, and, what is more, in my very words. The coincidence was of course a chance again, but how he knew the inmost core of my nature; what insight, what penetration! But if he so well understood one thing, why was it he utterly failed to understand something else? Was it possible he was not pretending, could he really be incapable of divining that it was not the noble rank of a Versilov I wanted, that it was not my birth I could not forgive him, but that all my life I had wanted Versilov himself, the whole man, the father, and that this idea had become part of myself. Was it possible that so subtle a man could be so crude and so stupid? And if not, why did he drive me to fury, why did he pretend?

CHAPTER VIII

1

I tried to get up as early as possible in the morning. As a rule we, that is my mother, my sister and I, used to get up about eight o'clock. Versilov used to lie comfortably in bed till half-past nine. Punctually at half-past eight my mother used to bring me up my coffee. But this time I slipped out of the house at eight o'clock without waiting for it. I had the day before mapped out roughly my plan of action for the whole of this day. In spite of my passionate resolve to carry out this plan I felt that there was a very great deal of it that was uncertain and indefinite in its most essential points. That was why I lay all night in a sort of half-waking state; I had an immense number of dreams, as though I were light-headed, and I hardly fell asleep properly all night. In spite of that I got up feeling fresher and more confident than usual. I was particularly anxious not to meet my mother. I could not have avoided speaking to her on a certain subject, and I was afraid of being distracted from the objects I was pursuing by some new and unexpected impression.

It was a cold morning and a damp, milky mist hovered over everything. I don't know why, but I always like the early workaday morning in Petersburg in spite of its squalid air; and the self- centred people, always absorbed in thought, and hurrying on their affairs, have a special attraction for me at eight o'clock in the morning. As I hasten on my road I particularly like either asking some one a practical question, or being asked one by some passer- by: both question and answer are always brief, clear, and to the point; they are spoken without stopping and almost always in a friendly manner, and there is a greater readiness to answer than at any other hour. In the middle of the day, or in the evening, the Petersburger is far more apt to be abusive or jeering. It is quite different early in the morning, before work has begun, at the soberest and most serious hour of the day. I have noticed that.

I set off again for the Petersburg Side. As I had to be back in Fontanka by twelve o'clock to see Vassin (who was always more likely to be at home at midday), I hurried on without stopping, though I had a great longing to have a cup of coffee. It was absolutely necessary to find Efim Zvyerev at

home too; I went to him and almost missed him; he had finished his coffee and was just ready to go out.

“What brings you here so often?” was how he greeted me without getting up from his seat.

“I will explain that directly.”

The early morning everywhere, including Petersburg, has a sobering effect on a man’s nature. Some of the passionate dreams of night evaporate completely with the light and chill of morning, and it has happened to me myself sometimes to recall in the morning my dreams and even my actions of the previous night, with shame and self-reproach. But I will remark, however, in passing, I consider a Petersburg morning — which might be thought the most prosaic on the terrestrial globe — almost the most fantastic in the world. That is my personal view, or rather impression, but I am prepared to defend it. On such a Petersburg morning, foul, damp and foggy, the wild dream of some Herman out of Pushkin’s “Queen of Spades” (a colossal figure, an extraordinary and regular Petersburg type — the type of the Petersburg period!) would, I believe, be more like solid reality. A hundred times over, in such a fog, I have been haunted by a strange but persistent fancy: “What if this fog should part and float away, would not all this rotten and slimy town go with it, rise up with the fog, and vanish like smoke, and the old Finnish marsh be left as before, and in the midst of it, perhaps, to complete the picture, a bronze horseman on a panting, overdriven steed.” In fact I cannot find words for my sensations, for all this is fantastic after all — poetic, and therefore nonsensical; nevertheless I have often been and often am haunted by an utterly senseless question: “Here they are all flitting to and fro, but how can one tell, perhaps all this is some one’s dream, and there is not one real person here, nor one real action. Some one who is dreaming all this will suddenly wake up — and everything will suddenly disappear.” But I am digressing.

I must say by way of preface that there are projects and dreams in every one’s experience so eccentric that they might well be taken at first sight for madness. It was with such a phantasy in my mind that I arrived that morning at Efim’s, — I went to Efim because I had no one else in Petersburg to whom I could apply on this occasion. Yet Efim was the last person to whom I should have gone with such a proposition if I had had any choice. When I was sitting opposite him, I was actually struck myself with the thought that I was the incarnation of fever and delirium, sitting opposite

the incarnation of prose and the golden mean. Yet on my side there was an idea and true feeling, while on his there was nothing but the practical conviction, that things were not done like that. In short I explained to him briefly and clearly that I had absolutely no one else in Petersburg whom I could send by way of a second in matter vitally affecting my honour; that he, Efim, was an old comrade, and therefore had no right to refuse, and that I wanted to challenge a lieutenant in the Guards, Prince Sokolsky, because more than a year ago he had given my father a slap in the face at Ems. I may mention by the way that Efim knew all the details of my family circumstances, my relations with Versilov, and almost all that I knew myself of Versilov's career; I had on various occasions talked to him of my private affairs, except, of course, of certain secrets. He sat and listened as his habit was, all ruffling up his feathers like a sparrow in a cage, silent and serious, with his puffy face and his untidy, flaxen-white hair. A set smile of mockery never left his lips. This smile was all the nastier for being quite unintentional and unconscious; it was evident that he genuinely and sincerely considered himself at that moment vastly superior to me in intellect and character. I suspected, too, that he despised me for the scene the evening before at Dergatchev's; that was bound to be so. Efim was the crowd, Efim was the man in the street, and the man in the street has no reverence for anything but success.

"And Versilov knows nothing of this?" he asked.

"Of course not."

"Then what right have you to meddle in his affairs? That's the first question. And the second one is, what do you want to show by it?"

I was prepared for the objection, and at once explained to him that it was not so stupid as he supposed. To begin with, the insolent prince would be shown that there are people, even in our class, who know what is meant by honour; and secondly, Versilov would be put to shame and learn a lesson. And in the third place, what mattered most of all, even if Versilov had been right in refusing to challenge him in accordance with his convictions at the time, he would see that there was some one who was capable of feeling the insult to him so keenly that he accepted it as an insult to himself, and was prepared to lay down his life for his, Versilov's, interests . . . although he was leaving him for ever. . . .

"Wait a minute, don't shout, my aunt does not like it. Tell me, is it this same Prince Sokolsky that Versilov is at law with about a will? If so, this

will be quite a new and original way of winning a lawsuit — to kill your opponent in a duel."

I explained to him en toutes lettres, that he was simply silly and impertinent, and that if his sarcastic grin was growing broader and broader, it only showed his conceit and commonplaceness, and that he was incapable of imagining that I had had the lawsuit in my mind from the very beginning, and that reflection on that subject was not confined to his sagacity. Then I informed him that the case was already decided, and, moreover, it had not been brought by Prince Sokolsky but by the Princes Sokolsky, so that if a Prince Sokolsky were killed the others would be left, but that no doubt it would be necessary to put off the challenge till the end of the time within which an appeal was possible, not that the Solkoskys would as a fact appeal, but simply as a matter of good form. When the latest possible date for an appeal had passed, the challenge would follow; that I had come about it now, not that the duel would take place immediately, but that I must be prepared at any rate in time to find a second, if he, Efim, refused, as I knew no one. That was why, I said, I had come.

"Well, come and talk about it then, or else you'll be leading us a wild-goose chase."

He stood up and took his cap.

"So you'll go then?"

"No, of course I won't."

"Why not?"

"Well, for one reason if I agreed now that I would go then, you would begin hanging about here every evening till the time for the appeal was over. And besides, it's simply nonsense, and that's all about it. And am I going to mess up my career for you? Why, Prince Sokolsky will ask me at once: 'Who sent you?'—'Dolgoruky'—'And what's Dolgoruky got to do with Versilov?' And am I to explain your pedigree to him, pray? Why, he'd burst out laughing!"

"Then you give him a punch in the face!"

"But it's all gibberish."

"You're afraid! You so tall and the strongest at the grammar school!"

"I'm afraid, of course, I am afraid. Besides, the prince won't fight, for they only fight their equals."

"I am a gentleman, too, by education. I have rights, I am his equal . . . on the contrary, he is not my equal."

“You are a small boy.”

“How a small boy?”

“Just a small boy; we are both boys but he is grown up.”

“You fool! But I might have been married a year ago by the law.”

“Well, get married then, but anyway you are a —— ! you will grow up one day!”

I saw, of course, that he thought fit to jeer at me. I might not indeed have told all this foolish episode, and it would have been better in fact for it to have perished in obscurity; besides, it’s revolting in its pettiness and gratuitousness, though it had rather serious consequences.

But to punish myself still further I will describe it fully. Realizing that Efim was jeering at me, I permitted myself to push him on the shoulder with my right hand, or rather my right fist. Then he took me by the shoulder, turned me upside down and — proved to me conclusively that he was the strongest of us at the grammar school.

2

The reader will doubtless imagine that I was in a terrible state of mind when I came out from Efim’s; he will be mistaken, however. I quite realized that what had happened was only schoolboyishness, but the gravity of my purpose remained unchanged. I got some coffee at Vassilyevsky Island, purposely avoiding the restaurant I had been at the evening before on the Petersburg Side; the restaurant and its nightingale were doubly hateful to me. It is a strange characteristic of mine that I am capable of hating places and things as though they were people. On the other hand I have happy places in Petersburg, that is places where I have at some time or other been happy. And I am careful of those places, and purposely avoid visiting them as far as possible, that later on when I am alone and unhappy I may go back to them to brood over my griefs and my memories. Over my coffee I did full justice to Efim and his common sense. Yes, he was more practical than I was, but I doubt whether he was in closer touch with reality. A realism that refuses to look beyond the end of its nose is more dangerous than the maddest romanticism, because it is blind. But while I did justice to Efim (who probably at that moment imagined that I was wandering about the streets swearing) — I did not give up one point in my convictions, and I have not to this day. I have seen people who at the first bucket of cold

water have abandoned their course of action, and even their idea, and begun laughing themselves at what an hour before they looked upon as sacred. Oh, how easily that is done! Even if Efim were more right than I in the main, and I were foolish beyond all foolishness and giving myself airs, yet at the very bottom of it all there was a point of view upon which I was right: there was something to be said on my side also, and what is more, too, it was something they could never understand.

I reached Vassin's in Fontanka, near the Semyonovsky bridge, at twelve o'clock punctually, but I did not find him at home. His work was in Vassilyevsky Island, and he was only at home at certain fixed hours, almost always at midday. And as it was a holiday I made sure of finding him; not finding him I decided to wait, although it was my first visit.

I reasoned that the matter of the letter was a question of conscience, and in choosing Vassin to decide it I was showing him the deepest respect, which no doubt must be flattering to him. Of course, I was really worried by this letter and was genuinely persuaded of the necessity of an outside opinion; but I suspect that I could have got out of my difficulty without any outside help. And what is more I was aware of that myself; I had only to give the letter to Versilov, to put it into his hands and then let him do what he liked with it — that would have settled it. To set myself up as judge, as arbitrator in a matter of this sort was indeed utterly irregular. By confining myself to handing over the letter, especially in silence, I should have scored at once, putting myself into a position of superiority over Versilov. For renouncing all the advantages of the inheritance as far as I was concerned (for some part of it would have been sure, sooner or later, to have fallen to me as Versilov's son), I should have secured for ever a superior moral attitude in regard to Versilov's future action. Nobody, on the other hand, could reproach me for ruining the Sokolskys, since the document had no decisive legal value. All this I thought over and made perfectly clear to myself, sitting in Vassin's empty room, and it even occurred to me suddenly that I had come to Vassin's, so thirsting for his advice how to act, simply to show him what a generous and irreproachable person I was, and so to avenge myself for my humiliation before him the previous evening.

As I recognized all this, I felt great vexation; nevertheless I did not go away, but sat on, though I knew for certain that my vexation would only grow greater every five minutes.

First of all, I began to feel an intense dislike for Vassin's room. "Show me your room and I will tell you your character," one really may say that. Vassin had a furnished room in a flat belonging to people evidently poor, who let lodgings for their living and had other lodgers besides Vassin. I was familiar with poky apartments of this sort, scarcely furnished, yet with pretensions to comfort: there is invariably a soft sofa from the second-hand market, which is dangerous to move; a washing-stand and an iron bed shut off by a screen. Vassin was evidently the best and the most to be depended on of the lodgers. Lodging-house keepers always have one such best lodger, and particularly try to please him. They sweep and tidy his room more carefully, and hang lithographs over his sofa; under the table they lay an emaciated-looking rug. People who are fond of stuffy tidiness and, still more, of obsequious deference in their landladies are to be suspected. I felt convinced that Vassin himself was flattered by his position as best lodger. I don't know why, but the sight of those two tables piled up with books gradually enraged me. The books, the papers, the inkstand, all were arrayed with a revolting tidiness, the ideal of which would have coincided with the loftiest conceptions of a German landlady and her maidservant. There were a good many books, not merely magazines and reviews, but real books, and he evidently read them, and he probably sat down to read or to write with an extremely important and precise expression. I don't know why, but I prefer to see books lying about in disorder. Then, at any rate, work is not made into a sacred rite. No doubt Vassin was extremely polite to his visitors, but probably every gesture he made told them plainly, "I will spend an hour and a half with you, and afterwards, when you go away, I'll set to work." No doubt one might have a very interesting conversation with him and hear something new from him, but he would be thinking, "Here we are talking now, and I am interesting you very much, but when you go away, I shall proceed to something more interesting. . . ." Yet I did not go away, but went on sitting there. That I had absolutely no need of his advice I was by now thoroughly convinced.

I stayed for over an hour sitting on one of the two rush-bottom chairs which had been placed by the window. It enraged me, too, that time was passing and that before evening I had to find a lodging. I was so bored that I felt inclined to take up a book, but I did not. At the very thought of distracting my mind I felt more disgusted than ever. For more than an hour there had been an extraordinary silence, when I began gradually and

unconsciously to distinguish the sound of whispering, which kept growing louder, and came from somewhere close by, the other side of a door that was blocked up by the sofa. There were two voices, evidently women's, so much I could hear, but I could not distinguish the words. And yet I was so bored that I began to listen. It was obvious that they were talking earnestly and passionately, and that they were not talking about patterns. They were discussing or disputing about something, or one voice was persuading, or entreating, while the other was refusing or protesting. They must have been other lodgers. I soon got tired, and my ear became accustomed to the sound, so that though I went on listening, it was only mechanically, and sometimes quite without remembering that I was listening, when suddenly something extraordinary happened, as though some one had jumped down off a chair on to both feet, or had suddenly leapt up and stamped; then I heard a moan, then suddenly a shriek, or rather not a shriek but an infuriated animal squeal, reckless whether it could be overheard or not.

I rushed to the door and opened it; another door at the end of the corridor was opened simultaneously, the door of the landlady's room as I learned later, and from it two inquisitive faces peeped out. The shriek, however, ceased at once, and suddenly the door next to mine opened, and a young woman — so at least she seemed to me — dashed out, and rushed downstairs. The other woman, who was elderly, tried to stop her, but did not succeed, and could only moan after her:

"Olya, Olya, where are you going? Och!" But noticing our two open doors, she promptly closed hers, leaving a crack through which she listened till Olya's footsteps had died away completely on the stairs. I turned to my window. All was silence. It was a trivial and perhaps ridiculous incident, and I left off thinking of it.

About a quarter of an hour later I heard in the corridor at Vassin's door a loud and free-and-easy masculine voice. Some one took hold of the door-handle, and opened the door far enough for me to see in the passage a tall man who had already obviously seen and indeed had carefully scrutinized me, although he had not yet entered the room, but still holding the door-handle went on talking to the landlady at the other end of the passage. The landlady called back to him in a thin, piping little voice which betrayed that he was an old acquaintance, respected and valued by her as a visitor of consequence, and a gentleman of a merry disposition. The merry gentleman shouted witticisms, but his theme was only the impossibility of

finding Vassin at home. He declared that this was his destiny from his birth up, that he would wait again as before. And all this, no doubt, seemed the height of wit to the landlady. Finally the visitor flung the door wide open and came in.

He was a well-dressed gentleman, evidently turned out by a good tailor, as they say, “like a real gentleman,” though there was nothing of “the real gentleman” about him, in spite, I fancy, of his desire to appear one. He was not exactly free and easy, but somehow naturally insolent, which is anyway less offensive than an insolence practised before the looking-glass. His brown, slightly grizzled hair, his black eyebrows, big beard and large eyes instead of helping to define his character, actually gave him something universal, like every one else. This sort of man laughs and is ready to laugh, but for some reason one is never cheerful in his company. He quickly passes from a jocular to a dignified air, from dignity to playfulness or winking, but all this seems somehow put on and causeless. . . . However, there is no need to describe him further. I came later on to know this gentleman more intimately, and therefore I have a more definite impression of him now than when he opened the door and came into the room. However, even now I should find it difficult to say anything exact or definite about him, because the chief characteristic of such people is just their incompleteness, their artificiality and their indefiniteness.

He had scarcely sat down when it dawned upon me that he must be Vassin’s stepfather, one M. Stebelkov, of whom I had already heard something, but so casually that I couldn’t tell what it was: I could only remember that it was not to his advantage. I knew that Yassin had long ago been left an orphan under this gentleman’s control, but that for some years past he had not been under his influence, that their aims and interests were different, and that they lived entirely separated in all respects. It came back to my mind, too, that this Stebelkov had some money, that he was, indeed, something of a speculator and spendthrift; in fact I had probably heard something more definite about him, but I have forgotten. He looked me up and down, without bowing to me, however, put his top hat down on a table in front of the sofa, kicked away the table with an air of authority, and instead of quietly sitting down, flung himself full length on the sofa (on which I had not ventured to sit) so that it positively creaked, and dangling his legs held his right foot up in the air and began admiring the tip of his

patent-leather boot. Of course he turned at once to me and stared at me with his big and rather fixed-looking eyes.

"I don't find him in," he gave me a slight nod.

I did not speak.

"Not punctual! He has his own ideas. From the Petersburg Side?"

"You mean you've come from the Petersburg Side?" I asked him in my turn.

"No, I asked whether you had."

"I . . . yes, I have . . . but how did you know?"

"How did I know? H'm!" He winked, but did not deign to explain.

"I don't live on the Petersburg Side, but I've just been there and have come from there."

He remained silent, still with the same significant smile, which I disliked extremely. There was something stupid in his winking.

"From M. Dergatchev's?" he said at last.

"From Dergatchev's?" I opened my eyes. He gazed at me triumphantly. "I don't know him."

"H'm!"

"Well, as you please," I answered. I began to loathe him.

"H'm. . . . To be sure. No, excuse me: you buy a thing at a shop, at another shop next door another man buys something else, and what, do you suppose? Money from a tradesman who is called a money-lender . . . for money too is an article of sale, and a money-lender is a tradesman too. . . . You follow me?"

"Certainly I follow."

"A third purchaser comes along, and pointing to one shop, he says, 'This is sound.' Then he points to the other shop and says, 'This is unsound.' What am I to conclude about this purchaser?"

"How can I tell."

"No, excuse me. I'll take an example, man lives by good example. I walk along the Nevsky Prospect, and observe on the other side of the street a gentleman whose character I should like to investigate more closely. We walk, one each side of the street as far as the gate leading to Morskaya, and there, just where the English shop is, we observe a third gentleman, who has just been run over. Now mark: a fourth gentleman walks up, and wishes to investigate the character of all three of us, including the man who has been

run over, from the point of view of practicability and soundness. . . . Do you follow?”

“Excuse me, with great difficulty.”

“Quite so; just what I thought. I’ll change the subject. I was at the springs in Germany, the mineral springs, as I had frequently been before, no matter which springs. I go to drink the waters and see an Englishman. It is difficult as you know to make acquaintance with an Englishman; two months later, having finished my cure, we were walking, a whole party of us, with alpenstocks on the mountain, no matter what mountain. At a pass there is an étape, the one where the monks make Chartreuse, note that. I meet a native standing in solitude looking about him in silence. I wish to form my conclusions in regard to his soundness: what do you think, can I apply for conclusions to the crowd of Englishmen with whom I am travelling solely because I was unable to talk to them at the springs?”

“How can I tell? Excuse me, it’s very difficult to follow you.”

“Difficult, is it?”

“Yes, you weary me.”

“H’m.” He winked and made a gesture, probably intended to suggest victory and triumph; then with stolid composure he took out of his pocket a newspaper which he had evidently only just bought, unfolded it and began reading the last page, apparently intending to leave me undisturbed. For five minutes he did not look at me.

“Brestograevskies haven’t gone smash, eh! Once they’ve started, they go on! I know a lot that have gone smash.”

He looked at me with intense earnestness.

“I don’t know much about the Stock Exchange so far,” I answered.

“You disapprove of it.”

“What?”

“Money.”

“I don’t disapprove of money but . . . but I think ideas come first and money second.”

“That is, allow me to say. . . . Here you have a man, so to say, with his own capital. . . .”

“A lofty idea comes before money, and a society with money but without a lofty idea comes to grief.”

I don’t know why, but I began to grow hot. He looked at me rather blankly, as though he were perplexed, but suddenly his whole face relaxed

in a gleeful and cunning smile.

“Versilov, hey? He’s fairly scored, he has! Judgment given yesterday, eh?”

I suddenly perceived to my surprise that he knew who I was, and perhaps knew a great deal more. But I don’t understand why I flushed and stared in a most idiotic way without taking my eyes off him. He was evidently triumphant. He looked at me in high glee, as though he had found me out and caught me in the cleverest way.

“No,” he said, raising both his eyebrows; “you ask me about M. Versilov. What did I say to you just now about soundness? A year and a half ago over that baby he might have made a very perfect little job, but he came to grief.”

“Over what baby?”

“The baby who is being brought up now out of the way, but he won’t gain anything by it . . . because. . . .”

“What baby? What do you mean?”

“His baby, of course, his own by Mlle. Lidya Ahmakov. . . . ‘A charming girl very fond of me. . . .’ phosphorus matches — eh?”

“What nonsense, what a wild story! He never had a baby by Mlle. Ahmakov!”

“Go on! I’ve been here and there, I’ve been a doctor and I’ve been an accoucheur. My name’s Stebelkov, haven’t you heard of me? It’s true I haven’t practised for a long time, but practical advice on a practical matter I could give.”

“You’re an accoucheur . . . did you attend Mlle. Ahmakov?”

“No, I did not attend her. In a suburb there was a doctor Granz, burdened with a family; he was paid half a thaler, such is the position of doctors out there, and no one knew him either, so he was there instead of me. . . . I recommended him, indeed, because he was so obscure and unknown. You follow? I only gave practical advice when Versilov, Andrey Petrovitch, asked for it; but he asked me in dead secret, tête-à-tête. But Andrey Petrovitch wanted to catch two hares at once.”

I listened in profound astonishment.

“‘Chase two hares, catch neither,’ according to the popular, or rather peasant, proverb. What I say is: exceptions continually repeated become a general rule. He went after another hare, or, to speak plain Russian, after another lady, and with no results. Hold tight what you’ve got. When he

ought to be hastening a thing on, he potters about: Versilov, that ‘petticoat prophet,’ as young Prince Sokolsky well described him before me at the time. Yes, you had better come to me! If there is anything you want to know about Versilov, you had better come to me!”

He was evidently delighted at my open-mouthed astonishment. I had never heard anything before about a baby. And at that moment the door of the next room slammed as some one walked rapidly in.

“Versilov lives in Mozhaisky Street, at Litvinov’s house, No. 17; I have been to the address bureau myself!” a woman’s voice cried aloud in an irritable tone; we could hear every word. Stebelkov raised his eyebrows and held up his finger. “We talk of him here, and there already he’s. . . . Here you have exceptions continually occurring! Quand on parle d’une corde. . . .”

He jumped up quickly and sitting down on the sofa, began listening at the door in front of which the sofa stood. I too was tremendously struck. I reflected that the speaker was probably the same young girl who had run down the stairs in such excitement. But how did Versilov come to be mixed up in this too? Suddenly there came again the same shriek, the furious shriek of some one savage with anger, who has been prevented from getting or doing something. The only difference was that the cries and shrieks were more prolonged than before. There were sounds of a struggle, a torrent of words, “I won’t, I won’t,”

“Give it up, give it up at once!” or something of the sort, I don’t remember exactly. Then, just as before, some one rushed to the door and opened it. Both the people in the room rushed out into the passage, one just as before, trying to restrain the other. Stebelkov, who had leapt up from the sofa, and been listening with relish, fairly flew to the door, and with extreme lack of ceremony dashed into the passage straight upon the two. I too, of course, ran to the door. But his appearance in the passage acted like a pail of cold water. The two women vanished instantly, and shut the door with a slam.

Stebelkov was on the point of dashing after them, but he stopped short, held up his finger with a smile, and stood considering. This time I detected in his smile something nasty, evil and malignant. Seeing the landlady, who was again standing in her doorway, he ran quickly across the passage to her on tiptoe; after whispering to her for a minute or two, and no doubt receiving information, he came back to the room, resuming his air of

ponderous dignity, picked up his top-hat from the table, looked at himself in the looking-glass as he passed, ruffled up his hair, and with self-complacent dignity went to the next door without even a glance in my direction. For an instant he held his ear to the door, listening, then winked triumphantly across the passage to the landlady, who shook her finger and wagged her head at him, as though to say, “Och, naughty man, naughty man!” Finally with an air of resolute, even of shrinking delicacy, he knocked with his knuckles at the door. A voice asked:

“Who’s there?”

“Will you allow me to enter on urgent business?” Stebelkov pronounced in a loud and dignified voice.

There was a brief delay, yet they did open the door, first only a little way; but Stebelkov at once clutched the door-handle and would not let them close it again. A conversation followed, Stebelkov began talking loudly, still pushing his way into the room. I don’t remember the words, but he was speaking about Versilov, saying that he could tell them, could explain everything— “Yes, I can tell you,”

“Yes, you come to me” — or something to that effect. They quickly let him in, I went back to the sofa and began to listen, but I could not catch it all, I could only hear that Versilov’s name was frequently mentioned. From the intonations of his voice I guessed that Stebelkov by now had control of the conversation, that he no longer spoke insinuatingly but authoritatively, in the same style as he had talked to me— “you follow?”

“kindly note that,” and so on. With women, though, he must have been extraordinarily affable. Already I had twice heard his loud laugh, probably most inappropriate, because accompanying his voice, and sometimes rising above it, could be heard the voices of the women, and they sounded anything but cheerful, and especially that of the young woman, the one who had shrieked: she talked a great deal, rapidly and nervously, making apparently some accusation or complaint, and seeking judgment or redress. But Stebelkov did not give way, he raised his voice higher and higher, and laughed more and more often; such men are unable to listen to other people. I soon jumped up from the sofa, for it seemed to me shameful to be eavesdropping, and went back again to the rush- bottom chair by the window. I felt convinced that Vassin did not think much of this gentleman, but that, if anyone else had expressed the same opinion, he would have at once defended him with grave dignity, and have observed that, “he was a

practical man, and one of those modern business people who were not to be judged from our theoretical and abstract standpoints." At that instant, however, I felt somehow morally shattered, my heart was throbbing and I was unmistakably expecting something.

About ten minutes passed; suddenly in the midst of a resounding peal of laughter some one leapt up from a chair with just the same noise as before, then I heard shrieks from both the women. I heard Stebelkov jump up too and say something in quite a different tone of voice, as though he were justifying himself and begging them to listen. . . . But they did not listen to him; I heard cries of anger: "Go away! You're a scoundrel, you're a shameless villain!" In fact it was clear that he was being turned out of the room. I opened the door at the very minute when he skipped into the passage, as it seemed literally thrust out by their hands. Seeing me he cried out at once, pointing at me: "This is Versilov's son! If you don't believe me, here is his son, his own son! I assure you!" And he seized me by the arm as though I belonged to him. "This is his son, his own son!" he repeated, though he added nothing by way of explanation, as he led me to the ladies.

The young woman was standing in the passage, the elderly one a step behind her, in the doorway. I only remember that this poor girl was about twenty, and pretty, though thin and sickly looking; she had red hair, and was somehow a little like my sister; this likeness flashed upon me at the time, and remained in my memory; but Liza never had been, and never could have been in the wrathful frenzy by which the girl standing before me was possessed: her lips were white, her light grey eyes were flashing, she was trembling all over with indignation. I remember, too, that I was in an exceedingly foolish and undignified position, for, thanks to this insolent scoundrel, I was at a complete loss what to say.

"What do you mean, his son! If he's with you he's a scoundrel too. If you are Versilov's son," she turned suddenly to me, "tell your father from me that he is a scoundrel, that he's a mean, shameless wretch, that I don't want his money. . . . There, there, there, give him this money at once!"

She hurriedly took out of her pocket several notes, but the older lady (her mother, as it appeared later) clutched her hand:

"Olya, but you know . . . perhaps it's not true . . . perhaps it's not his son!"

Olya looked at her quickly, reflected, looked at me contemptuously and went back into the room; but before she slammed the door she stood still in the doorway and shouted to Stebelkov once more:

"Go away!"

And she even stamped her foot at him. Then the door was slammed and locked. Stebelkov, still holding me by the shoulder, with his finger raised and his mouth relaxed in a slow doubtful grin, bent a look of inquiry on me.

"I consider the way you've behaved with me ridiculous and disgraceful," I muttered indignantly. But he did not hear what I said, though he was still staring at me.

"This ought to be looked into," he pronounced, pondering.

"But how dare you drag me in? Who is this? What is this woman? You took me by the shoulder, and brought me in — what does it mean?"

"Yes, by Jove! A young person who has lost her fair fame . . . a frequently recurring exception — you follow?" And he poked me in the chest with his finger.

"Ech, damnation!" I pushed away his finger. But he suddenly and quite unexpectedly went off into a low, noiseless, prolonged chuckle of merriment. Finally he put on his hat and, with a rapid change to an expression of gloom, he observed, frowning:

"The landlady must be informed . . . they must be turned out of the lodgings, to be sure, and without loss of time too, or they'll be . . . you will see! Mark my words, you will see! Yes, by Jove!" he was gleeful again all at once. "You'll wait for Grisha, I suppose?"

"No, I shan't wait," I answered resolutely.

"Well, it's all one to me. . . ."

And without adding another syllable he turned, went out, and walked downstairs, without vouchsafing a glance in the landlady's direction, though she was evidently expecting news and explanations. I, too, took up my hat, and asking the landlady to tell Vassin that I, Dolgoruky, had called, I ran downstairs.

3

I had merely wasted my time. On coming out I set to work at once to look for lodgings; but I was preoccupied. I wandered about the streets for several hours, and, though I went into five or six flats with rooms to let, I

am sure I passed by twenty without noticing them. To increase my vexation I found it far more difficult to get a lodging than I had imagined. Everywhere there were rooms like Vassin's, or a great deal worse, while the rent was enormous, that is, not what I had reckoned upon. I asked for nothing more than a "corner" where I could turn round, and I was informed contemptuously that if that was what I wanted, I must go where rooms were let "in corners." Moreover, I found everywhere numbers of strange lodgers, in whose proximity I could not have lived; in fact, I would have paid anything not to have to live in their proximity. There were queer gentlemen in their waistcoats without their coats, who had dishevelled beards, and were inquisitive and free-and-easy in their manners. In one tiny room there were about a dozen such sitting over cards and beer, and I was offered the next room. In another place I answered the landlady's inquiries so absurdly that they looked at me in surprise, and in one flat I actually began quarrelling with the people. However, I won't describe these dismal details; I only felt that I was awfully tired. I had something to eat in a cookshop when it was almost dark. I finally decided that I would go and give Versilov the letter concerning the will, with no one else present (making no explanation), that I would go upstairs, pack my things in my trunk and bag, and go for the night, if need be, to an hotel. At the end of the Obuhovsky Prospect, at the Gate of Triumph, I knew there was an inn where one could get a room to oneself for thirty kopecks; I resolved for one night to sacrifice that sum, rather than sleep at Versilov's. And as I was passing the Institute of Technology, the notion suddenly struck me to call on Tatyana Pavlovna, who lived just opposite the institute. My pretext for going in was this same letter about the will, but my overwhelming impulse to go in was due to some other cause, which I cannot to this day explain. My mind was in a turmoil, brooding over "the baby," the "exceptions that pass into rules." I had a longing to tell some one, or to make a scene, or to fight, or even to have a cry — I can't tell which, but I went up to Tatyana Pavlovna's. I had only been there once before, with some message from my mother, soon after I came from Moscow, and I remember I went in, gave my message, and went out a minute later, without sitting down, and indeed she did not ask me to.

I rang the bell, and the cook at once opened the door to me, and showed me into the room without speaking. All these details are necessary that the reader may understand how the mad adventure, which had so vast an

influence on all that followed, was rendered possible. And to begin with, as regards the cook. She was an ill- tempered, snub-nosed Finnish woman, and I believe hated her mistress Tatyana Pavlovna, while the latter, on the contrary, could not bring herself to part with her from a peculiar sort of infatuation, such as old maids sometimes show for damp-nosed pug dogs, or somnolent cats. The Finnish woman was either spiteful and rude or, after a quarrel, would be silent for weeks together to punish her mistress. I must have chanced upon one of these dumb days, for even when I asked her, as I remember doing, whether her mistress were at home, she made no answer, but walked off to the kitchen in silence. Feeling sure after this that Tatyana Pavlovna was at home, I walked into the room, and finding no one there, waited expecting that she would come out of her bedroom before long; otherwise, why should the cook have shown me in? Without sitting down, I waited two minutes, three; it was dusk and Tatyana Pavlovna's dark flat seemed even less hospitable from the endless yards of cretonne hanging about. A couple of words about that horrid little flat, to explain the surroundings of what followed. With her obstinate and peremptory character, and the tastes she had formed from living in the country in the past, Tatyana Pavlovna could not put up with furnished lodgings, and had taken this parody of a flat simply in order to live apart and be her own mistress. The two rooms were exactly like two bird-cages, set side by side, one smaller than the other; the flat was on the third storey, and the windows looked into the courtyard. Coming into the flat, one stepped straight into a tiny passage, a yard and a half wide; on the left, the two afore-mentioned bird-cages, and at the end of the passage the tiny kitchen. The five hundred cubic feet of air required to last a human being twelve hours were perhaps provided in this room, but hardly more. The rooms were hideously low-pitched, and, what was stupider than anything, the windows, the doors, the furniture, all were hung or draped with cretonne, good French cretonne, and decorated with festoons; but this made the room twice as dark and more than ever like the inside of a travelling-coach. In the room where I was waiting it was possible to turn round, though it was cumbered up with furniture, and the furniture, by the way, was not at all bad: there were all sorts of little inlaid tables, with bronze fittings, boxes, an elegant and even sumptuous toilet table. But the next room, from which I expected her to come in, the bedroom, screened off by a thick curtain, consisted literally of

a bedstead, as appeared afterwards. All these details are necessary to explain the foolishness of which I was guilty.

So I had no doubts and was waiting, when there came a ring at the bell. I heard the cook cross the little passage with lagging footsteps, and admit the visitors, still in silence, just as she had me. They were two ladies and both were talking loudly, but what was my amazement when from their voices I recognized one as Tatyana Pavlovna, and the other as the woman I was least prepared to meet now, above all in such circumstances! I could not be mistaken: I had heard that powerful, mellow, ringing voice the day before, only for three minutes it is true, but it still resounded in my heart. Yes, it was "yesterday's woman." What was I to do? I am not asking the reader this question, I am only picturing that moment to myself, and I am utterly unable to imagine even now how it came to pass that I suddenly rushed behind the curtain, and found myself in Tatyana Pavlovna's bedroom. In short, I hid myself, and had scarcely time to do so when they walked in. Why I hid and did not come forward to meet them, I don't know. It all happened accidentally and absolutely without premeditation.

After rushing into the bedroom and knocking against the bed, I noticed at once that there was a door leading from the bedroom into the kitchen, and so there was a way out of my horrible position, and I could make my escape but — oh, horror! the door was locked, and there was no key in it. I sank on the bed in despair; I realized that I should overhear their talk, and from the first sentence, from the first sound of their conversation, I guessed that they were discussing delicate and private matters. Oh, of course, a straightforward and honourable man should even then have got up, come out, said aloud, "I'm here, stop!" and, in spite of his ridiculous position, walked past them; but I did not get up, and did not come out; I didn't dare, I was in a most despicable funk.

"My darling Katerina Nikolaevna, you distress me very much," Tatyana Pavlovna was saying in an imploring voice. "Set your mind at rest once for all, it's not like you. You bring joy with you wherever you go, and now suddenly . . . I suppose you do still believe in me? Why, you know how devoted I am to you. As much so as to Andrey Petrovitch, and I make no secret of my undying devotion to him. . . . But do believe me, I swear on my honour he has no such document in his possession, and perhaps no one else has either; and he is not capable of anything so underhand, it's wicked

of you to suspect him. This hostility between you two is simply the work of your own imaginations. . . .”

“There is such a document, and he is capable of anything. And there, as soon as I go in yesterday, the first person I meet is ce petit espion, whom he has foisted on my father.”

“Ach, ce petit espion! To begin with he is not an espion at all, for it was I, I insisted on his going to the prince, or else he would have gone mad, or died of hunger in Moscow — that was the account they sent us of him; and what’s more, that unmannerly urchin is a perfect little fool, how could he be a spy?”

“Yes, he is a fool, but that does not prevent his being a scoundrel. If I hadn’t been so angry, I should have died of laughing yesterday: he turned pale, he ran about, made bows and talked French. And Marie Ivanovna talked of him in Moscow as a genius. That that unlucky letter is still in existence and is in dangerous hands somewhere, I gathered chiefly from Marie Ivanovna’s face.”

“My beauty! why you say yourself she has nothing!”

“That’s just it, that she has; she does nothing but tell lies, and she is a good hand at it, I can tell you! Before I went to Moscow, I still had hopes that no papers of any sort were left, but then, then. . . .”

“Oh, it’s quite the contrary, my dear, I am told she is a good- natured and sensible creature; Andronikov thought more of her than of any of his other nieces. It’s true I don’t know her well — but you should have won her over, my beauty! It’s no trouble to you to win hearts — why, I’m an old woman, but here I’m quite in love with you already, and can’t resist kissing you. . . . But it would have been nothing to you to win her heart.”

“I did, Tatyana Pavlovna, I tried; she was enchanted with me, but she’s very sly too. . . . Yes, she’s a regular type, and a peculiar Moscow type. . . . And would you believe it, she advised me to apply to a man here called Kraft, who had been Andronikov’s assistant. ‘Maybe he knows something,’ she said. I had some idea of what Kraft was like, and in fact, I had a faint recollection of him; but as she talked about Kraft, I suddenly felt certain that it was not that she simply knew nothing but that she knew all about it and was lying.”

“But why, why? Well, perhaps you might find out from him! That German, Kraft, isn’t a chatterbox, and I remember him as very honest —

you really ought to question him! Only I fancy he is not in Petersburg now. . . .”

“Oh, he came back yesterday evening, I have just been to see him. . . . I have come to you in such a state, I’m shaking all over. I wanted to ask you, Tatyana Pavlovna, my angel, for you know every one, wouldn’t it be possible to find out from his papers, for he must have left papers, to whom they will come now? They may come into dangerous hands again! I wanted to ask your advice.”

“But what papers are you talking about?” said Tatyana Pavlovna, not understanding. “Why, you say you have just been at Kraft’s?”

“Yes, I have been, I have, I have just been there, but he’s shot himself! Yesterday evening.”

I jumped up from the bed. I was able to sit through being called a spy and an idiot, and the longer the conversation went on the more impossible it seemed to show myself. It was impossible to contemplate! I inwardly determined with a sinking heart to stay where I was till Tatyana Pavlovna went to the door with her visitor (if, that is, I were lucky, and she did not before then come to fetch something from the bedroom), and afterwards, when Mme. Ahmakov had gone out, then, if need be, I’d fight it out with Tatyana Pavlovna. . . . But when, now, suddenly hearing about Kraft, I jumped up from the bed, I shuddered all over. Without thinking, without reflecting, or realizing what I was doing, I took a step, lifted the curtain, and appeared before the two of them. It was still light enough for them to see me, pale and trembling. . . . They both cried out, and indeed they well might.

“Kraft?” I muttered, turning to Mme. Ahmakov— “he has shot himself? Yesterday? At sunset?”

“Where were you? Where have you come from?” screamed Tatyana Pavlovna, and she literally clawed my shoulder. “You’ve been spying? You have been eavesdropping?”

“What did I tell you just now?” said Katerina Nikolaevna, getting up from the sofa and pointing at me.

I was beside myself.

“It’s a lie, it’s nonsense!” I broke in furiously. “You called me a spy just now, my God! You are not worth spying on, life’s not worth living in the same world with such people as you, in fact! A great-hearted man has killed himself, Kraft has shot himself — for the sake of an idea, for the sake

of Hecuba. . . . But how should you know about Hecuba? . . . And here — one's to live among your intrigues, to linger in the midst of your lying, your deceptions and underhand plots. . . . Enough!"

"Slap him in the face! Slap him in the face!" cried Tatyana Pavlovna, and as Katerina Nikolaevna did not move, though she stared fixedly at me (I remember it all minutely), Tatyana Pavlovna would certainly have done so herself without loss of time, so that I instinctively raised my hand to protect my face; and this gesture led her to imagine that I meant to strike her.

"Well, strike me, strike me, show me that you are a low cur from your birth up: you are stronger than women, why stand on ceremony with them!"

"That's enough of your slander!" I cried. "I have never raised my hand against a woman! You are shameless, Tatyana Pavlovna, you've always treated me with contempt. Oh, servants must be treated without respect! You laugh, Katerina Nikolaevna, at my appearance I suppose; yes, God has not blessed me with the elegance of your young officers. And, yet I don't feel humbled before you, on the contrary I feel exalted. . . . I don't care how I express myself, only I'm not to blame! I got here by accident, Tatyana Pavlovna, it's all the fault of your cook, or rather of your devotion to her: why did she bring me in here without answering my question? And afterwards to dash out of a woman's bedroom seemed so monstrous, that I made up my mind not to show myself, but to sit and put up with your insults. . . . You are laughing again, Katerina Nikolaevna!"

"Leave the room, leave the room, go away!" screamed Tatyana Pavlovna, almost pushing me out. "Don't think anything of his abuse, Katerina Nikolaevna: I've told you that they sent us word that he was mad!"

"Mad? They sent word? Who sent you word? No matter, enough of this, Katerina Nikolaevna! I swear to you by all that's sacred, this conversation and all that I've heard shall remain hidden. . . . Am I to blame for having learned your secrets? Especially as I am leaving your father's service to-morrow, so as regards the letter you are looking for, you need not worry yourself!"

"What's that. . . . What letter are you talking about?" asked Katerina Nikolaevna in such confusion that she turned pale, or perhaps I fancied it. I realized that I had said too much.

I walked quickly out; they watched me go without a word, with looks of intense amazement. I had in fact set them a riddle.

CHAPTER IX

1

I hurried home and — marvellous to relate — I was very well satisfied with myself. That's not the way one talks to women, of course, and to such women too — it would be truer to say such a woman, for I was not considering Tatyana Pavlovna. Perhaps it's out of the question to say to a woman of that class that one spits on her intrigues, but I had said that, and it was just that that I was pleased with. Apart from anything else, I was convinced that by taking this tone I had effaced all that was ridiculous in my position. But I had not time to think much about that: my mind was full of Kraft. Not that the thought of him distressed me very greatly, but yet I was shaken to my inmost depths, and so much so that the ordinary human feeling of pleasure at another man's misfortune — at his breaking his leg or covering himself with disgrace, at his losing some one dear to him, and so on — even this ordinary feeling of mean satisfaction was completely eclipsed by another absolutely single- hearted feeling, a feeling of sorrow, of compassion for Kraft — at least I don't know whether it was compassion, but it was a strong and warm-hearted feeling. And I was glad of this too. It's marvellous how many irrelevant ideas can flash through the mind at the very time when one is shattered by some tremendous piece of news, which one would have thought must overpower all other feelings and banish all extraneous thoughts, especially petty ones; yet petty ones, on the contrary, obtrude themselves. I remember, too, that I was gradually overcome by a quite perceptible nervous shudder, which lasted several minutes, in fact all the time I was at home and talking to Versilov.

This interview followed under strange and exceptional circumstances. I had mentioned already that we lived in a separate lodge in the courtyard; this lodging was marked "No. 13." Before I had entered the gate I heard a woman's voice asking loudly, with impatience and irritation, "Where is No. 13?" The question was asked by a lady who was standing close to the gate and had opened the door of the little shop; but apparently she got no answer there, or was even repulsed, for she came down the steps, resentful and angry.

“But where is the porter?” she cried, stamping her foot. I had already recognized the voice.

“I am going to No. 13,” I said, approaching her. “Whom do you want?”

“I have been looking for the porter for the last hour. I keep asking every one; I have been up all the staircases.”

“It’s in the yard. Don’t you recognize me?”

But by now she had recognized me.

“You want Versilov; you want to see him about something, and so do I,” I went on. “I have come to take leave of him for ever. Come along.”

“You are his son?”

“That means nothing. Granted, though, that I am his son, yet my name’s Dolgoruky; I am illegitimate. This gentleman has an endless supply of illegitimate children. When conscience and honour require it a son will leave his father’s house. That’s in the Bible. He has come into a fortune too, and I don’t wish to share it, and I go to live by the work of my hands. A noble-hearted man will sacrifice life itself, if need be; Kraft has shot himself, Kraft for the sake of an idea, imagine, a young man, yet he overcame hope. . . . This way, this way! We live in a lodge apart. But that’s in the Bible; children leave their parents and make homes for themselves. . . . If the idea draws one on . . . if there is an idea! The idea is what matters, the idea is everything. . . .”

I babbled on like this while we were making our way to the lodge. The reader will, no doubt, observe that I don’t spare myself much, though I give myself a good character on occasion; I want to train myself to tell the truth. Versilov was at home. I went in without taking off my overcoat; she did the same. Her clothes were dreadfully thin: over a wretched gown of some dark colour was hung a rag that did duty for a cloak or mantle; on her head she wore an old and frayed sailor-hat, which was very unbecoming. When we went into the room my mother was sitting at her usual place at work, and my sister came out of her room to see who it was, and was standing in the doorway. Versilov, as usual, was doing nothing, and he got up to meet us. He looked at me intently with a stern and inquiring gaze.

“It’s nothing to do with me,” I hastened to explain, and I stood on one side. “I only met this person at the gate; she was trying to find you and no one could direct her. I have come about my own business, which I shall be delighted to explain afterwards. . . .”

Versilov nevertheless still scrutinized me curiously.

“Excuse me,” the girl began impatiently. Versilov turned towards her.

“I have been wondering a long while what induced you to leave money for me yesterday. . . . I . . . in short . . . here’s your money!” she almost shrieked, as she had before, and flung a bundle of notes on the table. “I’ve had to hunt for you through the address bureau, or I should have brought it before. Listen, you!” She suddenly addressed my mother, who had turned quite pale. “I don’t want to insult you; you look honest, and perhaps this is actually your daughter. I don’t know whether you are his wife, but let me tell you that this gentleman gets hold of the advertisements on which teachers and governesses have spent their last farthing and visits these luckless wretches with dishonourable motives, trying to lure them to ruin by money. I don’t understand how I could have taken his money yesterday: he looked so honest. . . . Get away, don’t say a word! You are a villain, sir! Even if you had honourable intentions I don’t want your charity. Not a word, not a word! Oh, how glad I am that I have unmasked you now before your women! Curse you!”

She ran to the door, but turned for one instant in the doorway to shout.

“You’ve come into a fortune, I’m told.”

With that she vanished like a shadow. I repeat again, it was frenzy. Versilov was greatly astonished; he stood as though pondering and reflecting on something. At last he turned suddenly to me:

“You don’t know her at all?”

“I happened to see her this morning when she was raging in the passage at Vassin’s; she was screaming and cursing you. But I did not speak to her and I know nothing about it, and just now I met her at the gate. No doubt she is that teacher you spoke of yesterday, who also gives lessons in arithmetic.”

“Yes, she is. For once in my life I did a good deed and. . . . But what’s the matter with you?”

“Here is this letter,” I answered. “I don’t think explanation necessary: it comes from Kraft, and he got it from Andronikov. You will understand what’s in it. I will add that no one but me in the whole world knows about that letter, for Kraft, who gave me that letter yesterday just as I was leaving him, has shot himself.”

While I was speaking with breathless haste he took the letter and, holding it lightly poised in his left hand, watched me attentively. When I told him of Kraft’s suicide I looked at him with particular attention to see

the effect. And what did I see? The news did not make the slightest impression on him. If he had even raised an eyebrow! On the contrary, seeing that I had paused, he drew out his eyeglasses, which he always had about him hanging on a black ribbon, carried the letter to the candle and, glancing at the signature, began carefully examining it. I can't express how mortified I was at this supercilious callousness. He must have known Kraft very well: it was, in any case, such an extraordinary piece of news! Besides, I naturally desired it to produce an effect. Knowing that the letter was long, I turned, after waiting, and went out. My trunk had been packed long ago, I had only to stuff a few things into my bag. I thought of my mother and that I had not gone up to speak to her. Ten minutes later, when I had finished my preparations and was meaning to go for a cab, my sister walked into my attic.

"Here are your sixty roubles; mother sends it and begs you again to forgive her for having mentioned it to Andrey Petrovitch. And here's twenty roubles besides. You gave her fifty yesterday for your board; mother says she can't take more than thirty from you because you haven't cost fifty, and she sends you twenty roubles back."

"Well, thanks, if she is telling the truth. Good-bye, sister, I'm going."

"Where are you going now?"

"For the time being to an hotel, to escape spending the night in this house. Tell mother that I love her."

"She knows that. She knows that you love Andrey Petrovitch too. I wonder you are not ashamed of having brought that wretched girl here!"

"I swear I did not; I met her at the gate."

"No, it was your doing."

"I assure you. . . ."

"Think a little, ask yourself, and you will see that you were the cause."

"I was only very pleased that Versilov should be put to shame. Imagine, he had a baby by Lidya Ahmakov . . . but what am I telling you!"

"He? A baby? But it is not his child! From whom have you heard such a falsehood?"

"Why, you can know nothing about it."

"Me know nothing about it? But I used to nurse the baby in Luga. Listen, brother: I've seen for a long time past that you know nothing about anything, and meanwhile you wound Andrey Petrovitch — and . . . mother too."

“If he is right, then I shall be to blame. That’s all, and I love you no less for it. What makes you flush like that, sister? And more still now! Well, never mind, anyway, I shall challenge that little prince for the slap he gave Versilov at Ems. If Versilov was in the right as regards Mlle. Ahmakov, so much the better.”

“Brother, what are you thinking of?”

“Luckily, the lawsuit’s over now. . . . Well, now she has turned white!”

“But the prince won’t fight you,” said Liza, looking at me with a wan smile in spite of her alarm.

“Then I will put him to shame in public. What’s the matter with you, Liza?”

She had turned so pale that she could not stand, and sank on to my sofa.

“Liza,” my mother’s voice called from below.

She recovered herself and stood up; she smiled at me affectionately.

“Brother, drop this foolishness, or put it off for a time till you know about ever so many things: it’s awful how little you understand.”

“I shall remember, Liza, that you turned pale when you heard I was going to fight a duel.”

“Yes, yes, remember that too!” she said, smiling once more at parting, and she went downstairs.

I called a cab, and with the help of the man I hauled my things out of the lodge. No one in the house stopped me or opposed my going. I did not go in to say good-bye to my mother as I did not want to meet Versilov again. When I was sitting in the cab a thought flashed upon me:

“To Fontanka by Semyonovsky Bridge,” I told the man, and went back to Vassin’s.

2

It suddenly struck me that Vassin would know already about Kraft, and perhaps know a hundred times more than I did; and so it proved to be. Vassin immediately informed me of all the facts with great precision but with no great warmth; I concluded that he was very tired, and so indeed he was. He had been at Kraft’s himself in the morning. Kraft had shot himself with a revolver (that same revolver) after dark, as was shown by his diary. The last entry in the diary was made just before the fatal shot, and in it he mentioned that he was writing almost in the dark and hardly able to

distinguish the letters, that he did not want to light a candle for fear that it should set fire to something when he was dead. “And I don’t want to light it and then, before shooting, put it out like my life,” he added strangely, almost the last words. This diary he had begun three days before his death, immediately on his return to Petersburg, before his visit to Dergatchev’s. After I had gone away he had written something in it every quarter of an hour; the last three or four entries were made at intervals of five minutes. I expressed aloud my surprise that though Vassin had had this diary so long in his hands (it had been given him to read), he had not made a copy of it, especially as it was not more than a sheet or so and all the entries were short. “You might at least have copied the last page!” Vassin observed with a smile that he remembered it as it was; moreover, that the entries were quite disconnected, about anything that came into his mind. I was about to protest that this was just what was precious in this case, but without going into that I began instead to insist on his recalling some of it, and he did recall a few sentences — for instance, an hour before he shot himself, “That he was chilly,”

“That he thought of drinking a glass of wine to warm himself, but had been deterred by the idea that it might cause an increase in the flow of blood.” “It was almost all that sort of thing,” Vassin remarked in conclusion.

“And you call that nonsense!” I cried.

“And when did I call it nonsense? I simply did not copy it. But though it’s not nonsense, the diary certainly is somewhat ordinary, or rather, natural — that is, it’s just what it’s bound to be in such circumstances. . . .”

“But the last thoughts, the last thoughts!”

“The last thoughts sometimes are extremely insignificant. One such suicide complained, in fact, in a similar diary that not one lofty idea visited him at that important hour, nothing but futile and petty thoughts.”

“And that he was chilly, was that too a futile thought?”

“Do you mean his being chilly, or the thought about the blood? Besides, it’s a well-known fact that very many people who are capable of contemplating their approaching death, whether it’s by their own hand or not, frequently show a tendency to worry themselves about leaving their body in a presentable condition. It was from that point of view that Kraft was anxious about the blood.”

“I don’t know whether that is a well-known fact . . . or whether that is so,” I muttered; “but I am surprised that you consider all that natural, and yet it’s not long since Kraft was speaking, feeling, sitting among us. Surely you must feel sorry for him?”

“Oh, of course, I’m sorry, and that’s quite a different thing; but, in any case, Kraft himself conceived of his death as a logical deduction. It turns out that all that was said about him yesterday at Dergatchev’s was true. He left behind him a manuscript book full of abtruse theories, proving by phrenology, by craniology, and even by mathematics, that the Russians are a second-rate race, and that therefore, since he was a Russian, life was not worth living for him. What is more striking about it, if you like, is that it shows one can make any logical deduction one pleases; but to shoot oneself in consequence of a deduction does not always follow.”

“At least one must do credit to his strength of will.”

“Possibly not that only,” Vassin observed evasively; it was clear that he assumed stupidity or weakness of intellect. All this irritated me.

“You talked of feeling yourself yesterday, Vassin.”

“I don’t gainsay it now; but what has happened betrays something in him so crudely mistaken that, if one looks at it critically, it checks one’s compassion in spite of oneself.”

“Do you know that I guessed yesterday from your eyes that you would disapprove of Kraft, and I resolved not to ask your opinion, that I might not hear evil of him; but you have given it of yourself, and I am forced to agree with you in spite of myself; and yet I am annoyed with you! I am sorry for Kraft.”

“Do you know we are going rather far. . . .”

“Yes, yes,” I interrupted, “but it’s a comfort, anyway, that in such cases those who are left alive, the critics of the dead, can say of themselves: ‘Though a man has shot himself who was worthy of all compassion and indulgence, we are left, at any rate, and so there’s no great need to grieve.’”

“Yes, of course, from that point of view. . . . Oh, but I believe you are joking, and very cleverly! I always drink tea at this time, and am just going to ask for it: you will join me, perhaps.”

And he went out, with a glance at my trunk and bag.

I had wanted to say something rather spiteful, to retaliate for his judgment of Kraft, and I had succeeded in saying it, but it was curious that he had taken my consoling reflection that “such as we are left” as meant

seriously. But, be that as it may, he was, anyway, more right than I was in everything, even in his feelings. I recognized this without the slightest dissatisfaction, but I felt distinctly that I did not like him.

When they had brought in the tea I announced that I was going to ask for his hospitality for one night only, and if this were impossible I hoped he would say so, and I would go to an hotel. Then I briefly explained my reasons, simply and frankly stating that I had finally quarrelled with Versilov, without, however, going into details. Vassin listened attentively but without the slightest excitement. As a rule he only spoke in reply to questions, though he always answered with ready courtesy and sufficient detail. I said nothing at all about the letter concerning which I had come to ask his advice in the morning, and I explained that I had looked in then simply to call on him. Having given Versilov my word that no one else should know of the letter, I considered I had no right to speak of it to anyone. I felt it for some reason peculiarly repugnant to speak of certain things to Vassin — of some things and not of others; I succeeded, for instance, in interesting him in my description of the scenes that had taken place that morning in the passage, in the next room, and finally at Versilov's. He listened with extreme attention, especially to what I told him of Stebelkov. When I told him how Stebelkov asked about Dergatchev he made me repeat the question again, and seemed to ponder gravely over it, though he did laugh in the end. It suddenly occurred to me at that moment that nothing could ever have disconcerted Vassin; I remember, however, that this idea presented itself at first in a form most complimentary to him.

"In fact, I could not gather much from what M. Stebelkov said," I added finally; "he talks in a sort of muddle . . . and there is something, as it were, feather-headed about him. . . ."

Vassin at once assumed a serious air.

"He certainly has no gift for language, but he sometimes manages to make very acute observations at first sight, and in fact he belongs to the class of business men, men of practical affairs, rather than of theoretical ideas; one must judge them from that point of view. . . ."

It was exactly what I had imagined him saying that morning. "He made an awful row next door, though, and goodness knows how it might have ended."

Of the inmates of the next room, Vassin told me that they had been living there about three weeks and had come from somewhere in the provinces;

that their room was very small, and that to all appearance they were very poor; that they stayed in and seemed to be expecting something. He did not know the young woman had advertised for lessons, but he had heard that Versilov had been to see them; it had happened in his absence, but the landlady had told him of it. The two ladies had held themselves aloof from every one, even from the landlady. During the last few days he had indeed become aware that something was wrong with them, but there had been no other scenes like the one that morning. I recall all that was said about the people next door because of what followed. All this time there was a dead silence in the next room. Vassin listened with marked interest when I told him that Stebelkov had said he must talk to the landlady about our neighbours and that he had twice repeated, "Ah! you will see! you will see!"

"And you will see," added Vassin, "that that notion of his stands for something; he has an extraordinarily keen eye for such things."

"Why, do you think the landlady ought to be advised to turn them out?"

"No, I did not mean that they should be turned out . . . simply that there might be a scandal . . . but all such cases end one way or another. . . . Let's drop the subject."

As for Versilov's visit next door, he absolutely refused to give any opinion.

"Anything is possible: a man feels that he has money in his pocket . . . but he may very likely have given the money from charity; that would perhaps be in accordance with his traditions and his inclinations."

I told him that Stebelkov had chattered that morning about "a baby."

"Stebelkov is absolutely mistaken about that," Vassin brought out with peculiar emphasis and gravity (I remembered this particularly). "Stebelkov sometimes puts too much faith in his practical common sense, and so is in too great a hurry to draw conclusions to fit in with his logic, which is often very penetrating; and all the while the actual fact may be far more fantastic and surprising when one considers the character of the persons concerned in it. So it has been in this case; having a partial knowledge of the affair, he concluded the child belonged to Versilov; and yet the child is not Versilov's."

I pressed him, and, to my great amazement, learned from him that the infant in question was the child of Prince Sergay Sokolsky. Lidya Ahmakov, either owing to her illness or to some fantastic streak in her

character, used at times to behave like a lunatic. She had been fascinated by the prince before she met Versilov, “and he had not scrupled to accept her love,” to use Vassin’s expression. The liaison had lasted but for a moment; they had quarrelled, as we know already, and Lidya had dismissed the prince, “at which the latter seems to have been relieved.” “She was a very strange girl,” added Vassin; “it is quite possible that she was not always in her right mind. But when he went away to Paris, Prince Sokolsky had no idea of the condition in which he had left his victim, he did not know until the end, until his return. Versilov, who had become a friend of the young lady’s, offered her his hand, in view of her situation (of which it appears her parents had no suspicion up to the end). The lovesick damsel was overjoyed, and saw in Versilov’s offer “something more than self-sacrifice,” though that too she appreciated. “Of course, though, he knew how to carry it through,” Vassin added. “The baby (a girl) was born a month or six weeks before the proper time; it was placed out somewhere in Germany but afterwards taken back by Versilov and is now somewhere in Russia — perhaps in Petersburg.”

“And the phosphorus matches?”

“I know nothing about that,” Vassin said in conclusion. “Lidya Ahmakov died a fortnight after her confinement: what had happened I don’t know. Prince Sokolsky, who had only just returned from Paris, learned there was a child, and seems not to have believed at first that it was his child. . . . The whole affair has, in fact, been kept secret by all parties up till now.”

“But what a wretch this prince must be,” I cried indignantly. “What a way to treat an invalid girl!”

“She was not so much of an invalid then. . . . Besides, she sent him away herself. . . . It is true, perhaps, that he was in too great a hurry to take advantage of his dismissal.”

“You justify a villain like that!”

“No, only I don’t call him a villain. There is a great deal in it besides simple villainy. In fact, it’s quite an ordinary thing.”

“Tell me, Vassin, did you know him intimately? I should particularly value your opinion, owing to a circumstance that touches me very nearly.”

But to this Vassin replied with excessive reserve. He knew the prince, but he was, with obvious intention, reticent in regard to the circumstances under which he had made his acquaintance. He added further that one had

to make allowances for Prince Sokolsky's character. "He is impressionable and full of honourable impulses, but has neither good sense nor strength of will enough to control his desires. He is not a well-educated man; many ideas and situations are beyond his power to deal with, and yet he rushes upon them. He will, for example, persist in declaring, 'I am a prince and descended from Rurik; but there's no reason why I shouldn't be a shoemaker if I have to earn my living; I am not fit for any other calling. Above the shop there shall be, "Prince So- and-so, Bootmaker" — it would really be a credit.' He would say that and act upon it, too, that's what matters," added Vassin; "and yet it's not the result of strong conviction, but only the most shallow impressionability. Afterwards repentance invariably follows, and then he is always ready to rush to an opposite extreme; his whole life is passed like that. Many people come to grief in that way nowadays," Vassin ended, "just because they are born in this age."

I could not help pondering on his words.

"Is it true that he was turned out of his regiment?" I asked.

"I don't know whether he was turned out, but he certainly did leave the regiment through some unpleasant scandal. I suppose you know that he spent two or three months last autumn at Luga."

"I . . . I know that you were staying at Luga at that time."

"Yes, I was there too for a time. Prince Sokolsky knew Lizaveta Makarovna too."

"Oh! I didn't know. I must confess I've had so little talk with my sister. . . . But surely he was not received in my mother's house?" I cried.

"Oh, no; he was only slightly acquainted with them through other friends."

"Ah, to be sure, what did my sister tell me about that child? Was the baby at Luga?"

"For a while."

"And where is it now."

"No doubt in Petersburg."

"I never will believe," I cried in great emotion, "that my mother took any part whatever in this scandal with this Lidya!"

"Apart from these intrigues, of which I can't undertake to give the details, there was nothing particularly reprehensible in Versilov's part of the affair," observed Vassin, with a condescending smile. I fancy he began to feel it difficult to talk to me, but he tried not to betray it.

“I will never, never believe,” I cried again, “that a woman could give up her husband to another woman; that I won’t believe! . . . I swear my mother had no hand in it!”

“It seems, though, she did not oppose it.”

“In her place, from pride I should not have opposed it.”

“For my part, I absolutely refuse to judge in such a matter,” was Vassin’s final comment.

Perhaps, for all his intelligence, Vassin really knew nothing about women, so that a whole cycle of ideas and phenomena remained unknown to him. I sank into silence. Vassin had a temporary berth in some company’s office, and I knew that he used to bring work home with him. When I pressed him, he admitted that he had work to do now, accounts to make up, and I begged him warmly not to stand on ceremony with me. I believe this pleased him; but before bringing out his papers he made up a bed for me on the sofa. At first he offered me his bed, but when I refused it I think that too gratified him. He got pillows and a quilt from the landlady. Vassin was extremely polite and amiable, but it made me feel uncomfortable, seeing him take so much trouble on my account. I had liked it better when, three weeks before, I had spent a night at Efim’s. I remember how he concocted a bed for me, also on a sofa, and without the knowledge of his aunt, who would, he thought, for some reason, have been vexed if she had known he had a schoolfellow staying the night with him. We laughed a great deal. A shirt did duty for a sheet and an overcoat for a pillow. I remember how Efim, when he had completed the work, patted the sofa tenderly and said to me:

“Vous dormirez comme un petit roi.”

And his foolish mirth and the French phrase, as incongruous in his mouth as a saddle on a cow, made me enjoy sleeping at that jocose youth’s. As for Vassin, I felt greatly relieved when he sat down to work with his back to me. I stretched myself on the sofa and, looking at his back, pondered deeply on many things.

3

And indeed I had plenty to think about. Everything seemed split up and in confusion in my soul, but certain sensations stood out very definitely, though from their very abundance I was not dominated by any one of them.

They all came, as it were, in disconnected flashes, one after another, and I had no inclination, I remember, to dwell on any one of my impressions or to establish any sequence among them. Even the idea of Kraft had imperceptibly passed into the background. What troubled me most of all was my own position, that here I had "broken off," and that my trunk was with me, and I was not at home, and was beginning everything new. It was as though all my previous intentions and preparations had been in play, "and only now — and above all so SUDDENLY — everything was beginning in reality." This idea gave me courage and cheered me up, in spite of the confusion within me over many things.

But . . . but I had other sensations; one of them was trying to dominate the others and to take possession of my soul, and, strange to say, this sensation too gave me courage and seemed to hold out prospects of something very gay. Yet this feeling had begun with fear: I had been afraid for a long time, from the very hour that in my heat I had, unawares, said too much to Mme. Ahmakov about the "document." "Yes, I said too much," I thought, "and maybe they will guess something . . . it's a pity! No doubt they will give me no peace if they begin to suspect, but . . . let them! Very likely they won't find me, I'll hide! And what if they really do run after me . . .?" And then I began recalling minutely in every point, and with growing satisfaction, how I had stood up before Katerina Nikolaevna and how her insolent but extremely astonished eyes had gazed at me obstinately. Going away, I had left her in the same amazement, I remembered; "her eyes are not quite black, though . . . it's only her eyelashes that are so black, and that's what makes her eyes look so dark. . . ."

And suddenly, I remember, I felt horribly disgusted at the recollection . . . and sick and angry both at them and at myself. I reproached myself and tried to think of something else. "Why did I not feel the slightest indignation with Versilov for the incident with the girl in the next room?" it suddenly occurred to me to wonder. For my part, I was firmly convinced that he had had amorous designs and had come to amuse himself, but I was not particularly indignant at this. It seemed to me, indeed, that one could not have conceived of his behaving differently, and although I really was glad he had been put to shame, yet I did not blame him. It was not that which seemed important to me; what was important was the exasperation with which he had looked at me when I came in with the girl, the way he had looked at me as he had never done before.

“At last he has looked at me SERIOUSLY,” I thought, with a flutter at my heart. Ah, if I had not loved him I should not have been so overjoyed at his hatred!

At last I began to doze and fell asleep. I can just remember being aware of Vassin’s finishing his work, tidying away his things, looking carefully towards my sofa, undressing and putting out the light.

It was one o’clock at night.

4

Almost exactly two hours later I woke up with a start and, jumping up as though I were frantic, sat on my sofa. From the next room there arose fearful lamentations, screams, and sounds of weeping. Our door was wide open, and people were shouting and running to and fro in the lighted passage. I was on the point of calling to Vassin, but I realized that he was no longer in his bed. I did not know where to find the matches; I fumbled for my clothes and began hurriedly dressing in the dark. Evidently the landlady, and perhaps the lodgers, had run into the next room. Only one voice was wailing, however, that of the older woman: the youthful voice I had heard the day before, and so well remembered, was quite silent; I remember that this was the first thought that came into my mind. Before I had finished dressing Vassin came in hurriedly. He laid his hand on the matches instantly and lighted up the room. He was in his dressing-gown and slippers, and he immediately proceeded to dress.

“What’s happened?” I cried.

“A most unpleasant and bothersome business,” he answered almost angrily; “that young girl you were telling me about has hanged herself in the next room.”

I could not help crying out. I cannot describe the pang at my heart! We ran out into the passage. I must own I did not dare go into the room, and only saw the unhappy girl afterwards, when she had been taken down, and even then, indeed, at some distance and covered with a sheet, beyond which the two narrow soles of her shoes stood out. So I did not for some reason look into her face. The mother was in a fearful condition; our landlady was with her — not, however, greatly alarmed. All the lodgers in the flat had gathered round. There were only three of them: an elderly naval man, always very peevish and exacting, though on this occasion he was quite

quiet, and an elderly couple, respectable people of the small functionary class who came from the province of Tver. I won't attempt to describe the rest of that night, the general commotion and afterwards the visit of the police. Literally till daylight I kept shuddering and felt it my duty to sit up, though I did absolutely nothing. And indeed every one had an extraordinarily cheery air, as though they had been particularly cheered by something. Vassin went off somewhere. The landlady turned out to be rather a decent woman, much better than I had imagined her. I persuaded her (and I put it down to my credit) that the mother must not be left alone with the daughter's corpse, and that she must, at least until to-morrow, take her into her room. The landlady at once agreed, and though the mother struggled and shed tears, refusing to leave her daughter, she did at last move into the landlady's room, and the latter immediately ordered the samovar to be brought. After that the lodgers went back to their rooms and shut the doors, but nothing would have induced me to go to bed, and I remained a long time with the landlady, who was positively relieved at the presence of a third person, and especially one who was able to give some information bearing on the case.

The samovar was most welcome, and in fact the samovar is the most essential thing in Russia, especially at times of particularly awful, sudden, and eccentric catastrophes and misfortunes; even the mother was induced to drink two cups — though, of course, only with much urging and almost compulsion. And yet I can honestly say that I have never seen a bitterer and more genuine sorrow that that poor mother's.

After the first paroxysms of sobbing and hysterics she was actually eager to talk, and I listened greedily to her story. There are unhappy people, especially women, who must be allowed to talk as freely as possible when they are in trouble. Moreover, there are characters too, blurred so to speak by sorrow, who all their life long have suffered, have suffered terribly much both of great sorrow and of continual worry about trifles, and who can never be surprised by anything, by any sort of sudden calamity, and who, above all, never, even beside the coffin of their dearest, can forget the rules of behaviour for propitiating people, which they have learnt by bitter experience. And I don't criticize it: there is neither the vulgarity of egoism nor the insolence of culture in this; there is perhaps more genuine goodness to be found in these simple hearts than in heroines of the loftiest demeanour, but the long habit of humiliation, the instinct of self-

preservation, the years of timid anxiety and oppression, leave their mark at last. The poor girl who had died by her own hand was not like her mother in this. They were alike in face, however, though the dead girl was decidedly good-looking. The mother was not a very old woman, fifty at the most; she, too, was fair, but her eyes were sunken, her cheeks were hollow, and she had large yellow, uneven teeth. And indeed everything had a tinge of yellowness: the skin on her hands and face was like parchment; her dark dress had grown yellow with age, and the nail on the forefinger of her right hand* had been, I don't know why, carefully and tidily plastered up with yellow wax.

The poor woman's story was in parts quite disconnected. I will tell it as I understood it and as I remember it.

* This must be an error on Dostoyevsky's part. Russian women sometimes plaster with wax the forefinger of the left hand to protect it from being pricked in sewing. — Translator's Note.

5

They had come from Moscow. She had long been a widow— "the widow of an official, however." Her husband had been in the government service, but had left them practically nothing "except a pension of two hundred roubles." But what are two hundred roubles? Olya grew up, however, and went to the high school— "and how well she did, how good she was at her lessons; she won the silver medal when she left" (at this point, of course, prolonged weeping). The deceased husband had lost a fortune of nearly four thousand roubles, invested with a merchant here in Petersburg. This merchant had suddenly grown rich again. "I had papers, I asked advice; I was told, 'Try, and you will certainly get it. . . .' I wrote, the merchant agreed: 'Go yourself,' I was told. Olya and I set off, and arrived a month ago. Our means were small: we took this room because it was the smallest of all and, as we could see ourselves, in a respectable house, and that's what mattered most to us. We were inexperienced women; every one takes advantage of us. Well, we paid you for one month. With one thing and another, Petersburg is ruinous. Our merchant gives us a flat refusal—'I don't know you or anything about you'; and the paper I had was not regular, I knew that. Then I was advised to go to a celebrated lawyer; he was a professor, not simply a lawyer but an expert, so he'd be sure to tell me what

to do. I took him my last fifteen roubles. The lawyer came out to me, and he did not listen to me for three minutes: 'I see,' says he, 'I know,' says he. 'If the merchant wants to,' says he, 'he'll pay the money; if he doesn't want to, he won't, and if you take proceedings you may have to pay yourself, perhaps; you had far better come to terms.' He made a joke, then, out of the Gospel: 'Make peace,' said he, 'while your enemy is in the way with you, lest you pay to the uttermost farthing.' He laughed as he saw me out. My fifteen roubles were wasted! I came back to Olya; we sat facing one another. I began crying. Olya did not cry; she sat there, proud and indignant. She has always been like that with me; all her life, even when she was tiny, she was never one to moan, she was never one to cry, but she would sit and look fierce; it used to make me creep to look at her. And — would you believe it? — I was afraid of her, I was really quite afraid of her; I've been so for a long time past. I often wanted to grieve, but I did not dare before her. I went to the merchant for the last time. I cried before him freely: he said it was all right, and would not even listen. Meanwhile I must confess that, not having reckoned on being here for so long, we had been for some time without a penny. I began taking our clothes one by one to the pawnbroker's; we have been living on what we have pawned. I stripped myself of everything; she gave me the last of her linen, and I cried bitterly at taking it. She stamped, then she jumped up and ran off to the merchant herself. He was a widower; he talked to her. 'Come at five o'clock the day after to-morrow,' says he, 'perhaps I shall have something to say to you.' She came home quite gay: 'He says he may have something to say to me.' Well, I was pleased too, but yet I somehow felt a sort of chill at my heart. 'Something will come of it,' I thought, but I did not dare to question her. Two days later she came back from the merchant's, pale and trembling all over, and threw herself on her bed. I saw what it meant, and did not dare to question her. And — would you believe it? — the villain had offered her fifteen roubles. 'If I find you pure and virtuous I'll hand you over another forty.' He said that to her face — he wasn't ashamed to. At that she flew at him, so she told me; he thrust her out, and even locked himself in the next room. And meanwhile I must confess, to tell the truth, we had nothing to eat. We brought out a jacket lined with hare-fur; we sold it. She went to a newspaper and put in an advertisement at once: she offered lessons in all subjects and in arithmetic. 'If they'll only pay thirty kopecks,' she said. And in the end I began to be really alarmed at her: she would sit for hours at

the window without saying a word, staring at the roof of the house opposite, and then she would suddenly cry out, ‘If I could only wash or dig!’ She would say one sentence like that and stamp her foot. And there was no one we knew here, no one we could go to: I wondered what would become of us. And all the while I was afraid to talk to her. One day she fell asleep in the daytime. She waked up, opened her eyes, and looked at me; I was sitting on the box, and I was looking at her too. She got up, came to me without saying a word, and threw her arms round me. And we could not help crying, both of us; we sat crying and clinging to each other. It was the first time in her life I had seen her like that. And just as we were sitting like that, your Nastasya came in and said, ‘There’s a lady inquiring for you.’ This was only four days ago. The lady came in; we saw she was very well dressed, though she spoke Russian, it seemed to me, with a German accent. ‘You advertised that you give lessons,’ she said. We were so delighted then, we made her sit down. She laughed in such a friendly way: ‘It’s not for me,’ she said, but my niece has small children; and if it suits you, come to us, and we will make arrangements.’ She gave an address, a flat in Voznessensky Street. She went away. Dear Olya set off the same day; she flew there. She came back two hours later; she was in hysterics, in convulsions. She told me afterwards: ‘I asked the porter where flat No. so-and-so was.’ The porter looked at her and said, ‘And what do you want to go to that flat for?’ He said that so strangely that it might have made one suspicious, but she was so self-willed, poor darling, so impatient, she could not bear impertinent questions. ‘Go along, then,’ he said, and he pointed up the stairs to her and went back himself to his little room. And what do you think! She went in, asked for the lady, and on all sides women ran up to her at once — horrid creatures, rouged; they rushed at her, laughing. ‘Please come in, please come in,’ they cried; they dragged her in. Some one was playing the piano. ‘I tried to get away from them,’ she said, ‘but they would not let me go.’ She was frightened, her legs gave way under her. They simply would not let her go; they talked to her coaxingly, they persuaded her, they uncorked a bottle of porter, they pressed it on her. She jumped up trembling, screamed at the top of her voice ‘Let me go, let me go!’ She rushed to the door; they held the door, she shrieked. Then the one who had been to see us the day before ran up and slapped my Olya twice in the face and pushed her out of the door: ‘You don’t deserve to be in a respectable house, you skinny slut!’ And another shouted after her on the

stairs: ‘You came of yourself to beg of us because you have nothing to eat, but we won’t look at such an ugly fright!’ All that night she lay in a fever and delirious and in the morning her eyes glittered; she got up and walked about. ‘Justice,’ she cried, ‘she must be brought to justice!’ I said nothing, but I thought, ‘If you brought her up how could we prove it?’ She walked about with set lips, wringing her hands and tears streaming down her face. And her whole face seemed darkened from that time up to the very end. On the third day she seemed better; she was quiet and seemed calmer. And then at four o’clock in the afternoon M. Versilov came to us. And I must say I can’t understand, even now, how Olya, who was always so mistrustful, was ready to listen to him almost at the first word. What attracted us both more than anything was that he had such a grave, almost stern air; he spoke gently, impressively, and so politely — more than politely, respectfully even — and yet at the same time he showed no sign of trying to make up to us: it was plain to see he had come with a pure heart. ‘I read your advertisement in the paper,’ said he. ‘You did not word it suitably, madam, and you may damage your prospects by that.’ And he began explaining — I must own I did not understand — something about arithmetic, but I saw that Olya flushed and seemed to brighten up altogether. She listened and talked readily (and, to be sure, he must be a clever man!); I heard her even thank him. He questioned her so minutely about everything, and it seemed that he had lived a long time in Moscow, and it turned out that he knew the head mistress of the high school. ‘I will be sure to find you lessons,’ said he, ‘for I know a great many people here, and I can, in fact, apply to many influential people, so that if you would prefer a permanent situation we might look out for that. . . . Meanwhile,’ said he, ‘forgive me one direct question: can I be of some use to you at once? It will be your doing me a favour, not my doing you one,’ said he, ‘if you will allow me to be of use to you in any way. Let it be a loan,’ said he, ‘and as soon as you have a situation, in a very short time, you will be able to repay me. Believe me, on my honour,’ said he, ‘if ever I were to come to poverty and you had plenty of everything I would come straight to you for some little help. I would send my wife and daughter’ . . . at least, I don’t remember all his words, only I was moved to tears, for I saw that Olya’s lips were trembling with gratitude too. ‘If I take it,’ she answered him, ‘it is because I trust an honourable and humane man, who might have been my father. . . .’ That was very well said by her, briefly and with dignity. ‘A humane man,’ said

she. He stood up at once: ‘I will get you lessons and a situation without fail. I will set to work this very day, for you have quite a satisfactory diploma too. . . .’ I forgot to say that he looked through all her school certificates when he first came in; she showed them to him, and he examined her in several subjects. . . . ‘You see, he examined me, mamma,’ Olya said to me afterwards, ‘and what a clever man he is,’ she said; ‘it is not often one speaks to such a well-educated, cultured man. . . .’ And she was quite radiant. The money — sixty roubles, lay on the table: ‘Take it, mamma,’ said she; ‘when I get a situation we will pay it back as soon as possible. We will show that we are honest and that we have delicacy: he has seen that already, though.’ Then she paused. I saw her draw a deep breath. ‘Do you know, mamma,’ she said to me suddenly, ‘if we had been coarse we should perhaps have refused to take it through pride, but by taking it now we only show our delicacy of feeling and that we trust him completely, out of respect for his grey hair, don’t we?’ At first I did not quite understand: ‘But why, Olya, not accept the benevolence a wealthy and honourable man if he has a good heart too?’ She scowled at me. ‘No, mamma,’ she said, ‘that’s not it; I don’t want benevolence, but his humanity is precious. And it would have been better really not to have taken the money at all, since he has promised to get me a situation; that’s enough . . . though we are in need.’ ‘Well, Olya,’ said I, ‘our need is so great that we could not have refused it.’ I actually laughed. Well, I was pleased, but an hour later she turned to me: ‘Don’t spend that money yet, mamma,’ said she resolutely. ‘What?’ said I. ‘I mean it,’ she said, and she broke off and said no more. She was silent all the evening, only at two o’clock in the night I waked up and heard Olya tossing in her bed: ‘Are you awake, mamma?’ ‘Yes, I am awake.’ ‘Do you know, he meant to insult me.’ ‘What nonsense, what nonsense,’ I said. ‘There is no doubt of it,’ she said; ‘he is a vile man; don’t dare to spend a farthing of his money.’ I tried to talk to her. I burst out crying, in bed as I was. She turned away to the wall. ‘Be quiet,’ she said, ‘let me go to sleep!’ In the morning I looked at her; she was not like herself. And you may believe it or not, before God I swear she was not in her right mind then! From the time that she was insulted in that infamous place there was darkness and perplexity in her heart . . . and in her brain. Looking at her that morning, I had misgivings about her; I was alarmed. I made up my mind I would not say a word to contradict her. ‘He did not even leave his address, mamma,’ she said. ‘For shame, Olya,’ I

said; ‘you listened to him last night; you praised him and were ready to shed tears of gratitude.’ That was all I said, but she screamed and stamped. ‘You are a woman of low feelings,’ she said, ‘brought up in the old slavish ideas. . . .’ And then, without a word, she snatched up her hat, ran out. I called after her. I wondered what was the matter with her, where she had run. She had run to the address bureau to find out where Versilov lived. ‘I’ll take him back the money today and fling it in his face; he meant to insult me,’ she said, ‘like Safronov (that is the merchant), but Safronov insulted me like a coarse peasant, but he like a cunning Jesuit.’ And just then, unhappily, that gentleman knocked at the door: ‘I hear the name of Versilov,’ he said; ‘I can tell you about him.’ When she heard Versilov’s name she pounced on him. She was in a perfect frenzy; she kept talking away. I gazed at her in amazement. She was always a silent girl and had never talked to anyone like that, and with a perfect stranger too. Her cheeks were burning, her eyes glittered. . . . And he said at once: ‘You are perfectly right, madam. Versilov,’ said he, ‘is just like the generals here, described in the newspapers; they dress themselves up with all their decorations and go after all the governesses who advertise in the papers. Sometimes they find what they want, or, if they don’t, they sit and talk a little, make bushels of promises and go away, having got diversion out of it, anyway.’ Olya actually laughed, but so bitterly, and I saw the gentleman take her hand and press it to his heart. ‘I am a man of independent means, madam,’ said he, ‘and might well make a proposal to a fair maiden, but I’d better,’ said he, ‘kiss your little hand to begin with. . . .’ And he was trying to kiss her hand. How she started! But I came to the rescue, and together we turned him out of the room. Then, towards evening, Olya snatched the money from me and ran out. When she came back she said, ‘I have revenged myself on that dishonourable man, mamma.’ ‘Oh, Olya, Olya,’ I said, ‘perhaps we have thrown away our happiness. You have insulted a generous, benevolent man!’ I cried — I was so vexed with her I could not help it. She shouted at me. ‘I won’t have it, I won’t have it!’ she cried; ‘if he were ever so honest, I don’t want his charity! I don’t want anyone to pity me!’ I went to bed with no thought of anything. How many times I had looked on that nail in your wall where once there had been a looking-glass — it never entered my head, never; I never thought of it yesterday and I’d never thought of it before; I had no inkling of it, and I did not expect it of Olya at all. I usually sleep heavily and snore; it’s the blood going to my

head, and sometimes it goes to my heart. I call out in my sleep so that Olya wakes me up at night. ‘What is the matter with you, mamma?’ she would say; ‘you sleep so heavily there’s no waking you.’ ‘Oh, Olya,’ I said, ‘I do, I do.’ That’s how I must have slept this night, so that, after waiting a bit, she got up without fear of waking me. The strap, a long one from our trunk, had been lying about all that month where we could see it; only yesterday morning I had been thinking of tidying it away. And the chair she must have kicked away afterwards, and she had put her petticoat down beside it to prevent its banging on the floor. And it must have been a long time afterwards, a whole hour or more afterwards, that I waked up and called ‘Olya, Olya’; all at once I felt something amiss, and called her name. Either because I did not hear her breathing in her bed, or perhaps I made out in the dark that the bed was empty — anyway, I got up suddenly and felt with my hand; there was no one in the bed and the pillow was cold. My heart sank; I stood still as though I were stunned; my mind was a blank. ‘She’s gone out,’ I thought. I took a step, and by the bed I seemed to see her standing in the corner by the door. I stood still and gazed at her without speaking, and through the darkness she seemed to look at me without stirring. . . . ‘But why has she got on a chair,’ I wondered. ‘Olya,’ I whispered. I was frightened. ‘Olya, do you hear?’ But suddenly, as it were, it all dawned upon me. I went forward, held out both arms and put them round her, and she swayed in my arms; I swayed and she swayed with me. I understood and would not understand. . . . I wanted to cry out, but no cry came. . . . Ach! I fell on the floor and shrieked. . . .”

* * * * * *

“Vassin,” I said at six o’clock in the morning, “if it had not been for your Stebelkov this might not have happened.”

“Who knows? — most likely it would have happened. One can’t draw such a conclusion; everything was leading up to it, apart from that. . . . It is true that Stebelkov sometimes. . . .”

He broke off and frowned disagreeably. At seven o’clock he went out again; he still had a great deal to do. I was left at last entirely alone. It was by now daylight. I felt rather giddy. I was haunted by the figure of Versilov: this lady’s story had brought him out in quite a different light. To think this over better, I lay down on Vassin’s bed just as I was, in my

clothes and my boots, just for a minute, with no intention of going to sleep — and suddenly I fell asleep; I don’t remember how it happened, indeed. I slept almost four hours; nobody waked me.

CHAPTER X

1

I woke about half-past ten, and for a long time I could not believe my eyes: on the sofa on which I had slept the previous night was sitting my mother, and beside her — the unhappy mother of the dead girl. They were holding each other's hands, they were talking in whispers, I suppose, that they might not wake me, and both were crying. I got up from the bed, and flew straight to kiss my mother. She positively beamed all over, kissed me and make the sign of the cross over me three times with the right hand. Before we had time to say a word the door opened, and Versilov and Vassin came in. My mother at once got up and led the bereaved woman away. Vassin gave me his hand, while Versilov sank into an armchair without saying a word to me. Mother and he had evidently been here for some time. His face looked overcast and careworn.

"What I regret most of all," he began saying slowly to Vassin, evidently in continuation of what they had been discussing outside, "is that I had no time to set it all right yesterday evening; then probably this terrible thing would not have happened! And indeed there was time, it was hardly eight o'clock. As soon as she ran away from us last night, I inwardly resolved to follow her and to reassure her, but this unforeseen and urgent business, though of course I might quite well have put it off till to-day . . . or even for a week — this vexatious turn of affairs has hindered and ruined everything. That's just how things do happen!"

"Perhaps you would not have succeeded in reassuring her; things had gone too far already, apart from you," Vassin put in.

"No, I should have succeeded, I certainly should have succeeded. And the idea did occur to me to send Sofia Andreyevna in my place. It flashed across my mind, but nothing more. Sofia Andreyevna alone would have convinced her, and the unhappy girl would have been alive. No, never again will I meddle . . . in 'good works' . . . and it is the only time in my life I have done it! And I imagined that I had kept up with the times and understood the younger generation. But we elders grow old almost before we grow ripe. And, by the way, there are a terrible number of modern people who go on considering themselves the younger generation from

habit, because only yesterday they were such, and meantime they don't notice that they are no longer under the ban of the orthodox."

"There has been a misunderstanding, and the misunderstanding is quite evident," Vassin observed reasonably. "Her mother maintains that after the cruel way she was insulted in that infamous house, she seemed to lose her reason. Add to that her circumstances, the insult in the first place from the merchant . . . all this might have happened in the past, and, to my mind, is in no way particularly characteristic of the younger generation of to-day."

"It's impatient, the present generation, and has little understanding of reality; and, although that's true of all young people in all ages, it's particularly so in this . . . tell me, what part had Mr. Stebelkov in the trouble?"

"Mr. Stebelkov," I put in suddenly, "was the cause of it all. If it hadn't been for him nothing would have happened. He poured oil on the flames."

Versilov listened, but he did not glance at me. Vassin frowned.

"I blame myself for one ridiculous circumstance," Versilov went on deliberately, dwelling on each syllable as before, "I believe that in my usual stupid way I allowed myself to be lively after a fashion — this frivolous little laugh — in fact, I was not sufficiently abrupt, dry and gloomy, three characteristics which seem to be greatly prized by the young generation. In fact, I gave her grounds for suspecting me of being a gay deceiver."

"Quite the opposite," I put in abruptly again, "the mother lays particular stress on your having made the best possible impression through your gravity, severity even, and sincerity — those were her very words. The dead girl herself praised you on the same grounds directly after you'd gone."

"Y-yes?" Versilov mumbled with a cursory glance in my direction at last. "Take this scrap of paper, it's essential to the business" — he held out a tiny sheet to Vassin. Vassin took it, and seeing I was looking at him with curiosity, gave it to me to read. It was a note of two straggling lines scrawled in pencil, and perhaps in the dark:

"Mother darling, forgive me for cutting short my début into life. Your Olya who is causing you such grief."

"That was only found this morning," Vassin explained

"What a strange letter!" I cried in astonishment.

"Why strange?" asked Vassin.

"How can anyone use humorous expressions at such a minute?"

Vassin looked at me inquiringly.

“And the humour is strange too,” I went on. “It’s the conventional school jargon that schoolfellows use with one another. Who could write ‘cut short my début into life’ at such a moment, in such a letter to her unhappy mother — and she seems to have loved her mother too.”

“Why not write it?” said Vassin, still not understanding.

“There’s absolutely no humour about it,” observed Versilov at last, “the expression, of course, is inappropriate, and quite incongruous, and may, as you say, have been picked up from some high-school slang or from some journalistic stuff; but the dead girl used it in that awful letter quite simply and earnestly”

“That’s impossible; she had completed her studies and won the silver medal.”

“A silver medal has nothing to do with it. Lots of them complete their studies as brilliantly nowadays.”

“The younger generation again,” said Vassin, smiling.

“Not at all,” said Versilov, getting up and taking his hat. If the present generation is deficient on the literary side there’s no doubt that it possesses other qualifications,” he added with unusual gravity. “At the same time ‘many’ does not mean ‘all’: you, for instance, I don’t accuse of being badly educated on the literary side, and you’re a young man too.”

“Vassin saw nothing wrong in the use of ‘début’ either,” I could not resist saying.

Versilov held out his hand to Vassin without speaking. The latter took up his cap to go with him, calling out to me: “Goodbye for now.” Versilov went out without noticing me. I too had no time to lose. Come what might, I had to run and find a lodging — now more necessary than ever. My mother was not with the landlady. She had gone out, taking the bereaved woman with her. I went out into the street, feeling particularly cheerful and confident. A new and mighty feeling had sprung up in my soul. As luck would have it, everything helped to maintain this mood. I was exceptionally fortunate and quickly found a lodging in every way suitable. Of this lodging later, but for the moment I will continue with what is more important.

It was past one when I went back to Vassin’s to fetch my trunk, and again found him at home. When he saw me he cried with a sincere and good-humoured air:

“How glad I am you’ve caught me! I was just going out. I can tell you a piece of news that I think will interest you particularly.”

“I’m sure of that,” I cried.

“I say, you do look cheerful! Tell me, did you know anything about a letter that was preserved by Kraft, and came into Versilov’s hands yesterday, something concerning the lawsuit he has just won? In this letter, the testator declares intentions contrary to the decision in the lawcourts yesterday. The letter was written long ago. I know nothing definite about it in fact, but don’t you know something?”

“To be sure I do. The day before yesterday Kraft took me home with him from those people on purpose to give me the letter, and I gave it to Versilov yesterday.”

“Yes? That’s just what I thought. Only fancy, that’s just the business Versilov was speaking of just now, that prevented him from coming yesterday evening to see that girl — -it was owing to that letter. Versilov went straight yesterday evening to Prince Sokolsky’s lawyer, handed in the letter, and refused to take the fortune he had won. By now this refusal has been put into legal form. Versilov is not making Prince Sokolsky a present of the money, but declares that he acknowledges his claim to it.”

I was dumbfoundered, but ecstatic. I had in reality been convinced that Versilov would destroy the letter, and, what is more, though I had told Kraft that this would be dishonourable, and although I had repeated this to myself in the restaurant, and had told myself that “it was to find a true man, not a man like this that I had come” — yet deeper down, that is, in my inmost soul, I felt that there was nothing to be done but to destroy the letter, that is to say, I looked upon this as quite a natural thing to do. If I blamed Versilov for it afterwards I simply blamed him on purpose, to keep up appearances, and to maintain my moral superiority. But hearing now of Versilov’s noble action I was moved to genuine and whole- hearted enthusiasm, blaming myself with shame and remorse for my cynicism and indifference to principle, and instantly exalting Versilov to heights far above me. I almost embraced Vassin.

“What a man! What a man!” I exclaimed, rapturously. “Who else would have done it?”

“I quite agree with you that very many people would not have done it . . . and that it was undoubtedly an extremely disinterested action. . . .”

“But . . .? Finish, Vassin. You have a ‘but’?”

“Yes, of course there is a ‘but’; Versilov’s action, to my mind, is a little too hasty, and not quite ingenuous,” said Vassin with a smile.

“Not ingenuous?”

“Yes. There’s too much of the ‘hero on the pedestal’ about it. For in any case he might have done the same thing without injuring himself. Some part of the inheritance, if not half of it, might well have remained with him, even from the most scrupulous standpoint, especially as the letter has no legal significance, and he has already won the case. The lawyer on the other side shares my opinion. I’ve just been talking to him. His conduct would have been no less handsome; but simply through a whim due to pride, things have turned out differently. What’s more, Mr. Versilov let himself be carried away by his feelings, and acted too precipitately. He said himself yesterday that he might have put it off for a whole week. . . .”

“Do you know, Vassin, I can’t help agreeing with you, but . . . I like it better so, it pleases me more!”

“However, it’s a matter of taste! You asked for my opinion or I should have held my tongue.”

“Even if there is something of the ‘pedestal’ about it, so much the better,” I said. “A pedestal may be a pedestal but in itself it’s a very precious thing. This ‘pedestal’ is, anyway, an ‘ideal’ of a sort, and it’s by no means an improvement that some modern souls are without it: it’s better to have it even in a slightly distorted form! And I’m sure you think so yourself, Vassin darling, Vassin, my dear Vassin! I am raving but of course you understand me. That’s what you’re for, Vassin. In any case I embrace and kiss you, Vassin!”

“So pleased?”

“Yes, awfully pleased. For the man ‘was dead and liveth, he was lost and is found’! Vassin, I’m a miserable wretch of a boy, I’m not as good as you. I recognize it just because at some moments I’m different, deeper and loftier. I say this because the day before yesterday I flattered you to your face (and I did that because I had been humiliated and crushed) — I hated you for it for two whole days. I swore the same night that I would never come and see you, and I came to you yesterday morning simply from spite, do you understand, FROM SPITE. I sat here alone criticizing your room and you, and every one of your books and your landlady. I tried to humble you and laugh at you.”

“You shouldn’t say that. . . .”

“Yesterday evening, when I concluded from some phrase of yours that you did not understand women, I felt glad that I was able to detect you in it. This morning, when I scored off you over the ‘début,’ I was awfully pleased again, and all because I had praised you up so before.”

“I should think so indeed!” Vassin cried at last (he still went on smiling, not in the least surprised at me). “Why, that happens with almost every one, only no one admits it, and one ought not to confess it at all, because in any case it passes, and leads to nothing.”

“Is it really the same with every one? Is every one the same? And you say that quite calmly? Why, one can’t go on living with such views!”

“You think then that:

To me more dear the lie ennobling Than Truth’s dark infamy revealed!”

“But that’s true, you know,” I cried. “There’s a sacred axiom in those two lines!”

“I don’t know. I can’t undertake to decide whether those lines are true or not. Perhaps, as always, the truth lies in the mean: that is, that in one case truth is sacred and in another falsehood. The only thing I know for certain is that that idea will long remain one of the questions most disputed among men. In any case I observe that at the moment you’re longing to dance. Well, dance away then, exercise is wholesome; but I have a mass of work to get through this morning . . . and I’ve lingered on with you till I’m late!”

“I’m going! I’m going! I’m just off! One word only,” I cried, after seizing my trunk, “my ‘throwing myself on your neck’ again; it’s simply because when I came in you told me this news with such genuine pleasure and were ‘so glad’ I had found you, and after the ‘début’ incident this morning; that real gladness of yours turned my ‘youthful ardent soul’ to you again. Well, good-bye, good-bye, I’ll do my best not to come in the future, and I know that that will please you very much, as I see from your eyes, and it will be an advantage to both of us.”

Chattering like this, and almost spluttering in my joyful babble, I hauled up my trunk and set off with it to my lodging. What delighted me most of all was that Versilov had been so unmistakably angry with me, and had been unwilling to speak to me or look at me. As soon as I had deposited my trunk, I at once flew off to my old prince. I must confess that I had rather felt not seeing him those two days. Besides, he would no doubt have heard already about Versilov.

I knew he would be delighted to see me, and I protest that I should have gone, apart from Versilov altogether. What had alarmed me yesterday and that morning was the thought that I might meet Katerina Nikolaevna; but now I was afraid of nothing.

He embraced me joyfully.

"About Versilov! Have you heard?" I began forthwith on the great news.

"Cher enfant, my dear boy, it's so magnanimous, so noble — in fact it made an overwhelming impression even on Kilyan" (this was the clerk downstairs). "It's injudicious on his part, but it's magnificent, it's heroic! One must cherish the ideal!"

"Yes, one must, mustn't one? We were always agreed about that."

"My dear boy, we always have agreed. Where have you been? I wanted very much to come and see you but I didn't know where to find you . . . for I couldn't go to Versilov's anyway. . . . Though now, after all this . . . you know, my boy, I believe it's by this he has always conquered the women's hearts, by these qualities, no doubt of it. . . ."

"By the way, for fear I forget it, I've been saving this up for you. A very low fellow, a ridiculous fool, abusing Versilov to my face yesterday, used the expression that he was a 'petticoat prophet'; what an expression — was it his own expression? I have been treasuring it up for you. . . ."

"A 'petticoat prophet'? Mais . . . c'est charmant! Ha-ha! But that fits him so well, or rather it doesn't — foo! . . . But it's so apt . . . at least it's not apt at all but. . . ."

"Never mind, never mind, don't worry yourself, look upon it simply as a bon mot!"

"It's a capital bon mot, and do you know, it has a deep significance. . . There's a perfectly true idea in it. That is, would you believe it. . . . In fact, I'll tell you a tiny little secret. Have you noticed that girl Olympiada? Would you believe it, she's got a little heartache for Andrey Petrovitch; in fact it goes so far as cherishing a . . ."

"Cherishing! What doesn't she deserve?" I cried with a gesture of contempt.

"Mon cher, don't shout, it's all nonsense, it may be you're right from your point of view. By the way, what was the matter with you last time you were here and Katerina Nikolaevna arrived? . . . You staggered; I thought

you were going to fall down, and was on the point of rushing to support you."

"Never mind that now. The fact is I was simply confused for a special reason. . . ."

"You're blushing now."

"And you must rub it in of course. You know that she's on bad terms with Versilov . . . and then all this; so it upset me. Ech, leave that; later!"

"Yes, let's leave it! I'm delighted to. . . . In fact, I've been very much to blame in regard to her and I remember I grumbled about her to you. . . . Forget it, my dear; she will change her opinion of you, too. I quite foresee that. . . . Ah, here's Prince Sergay!"

A handsome young officer walked in. I looked at him eagerly, I had never seen him before. I call him handsome for every one called him so, but there was something not altogether attractive in that handsome young face. I note this as the impression made the first instant, my first view of him, which remained with me always.

He was thin and finely built, with brown hair, a fresh but somewhat sallow skin and an expression of determination. There was a rather hard look in his beautiful dark eyes even when he was perfectly calm. But his resolute expression repelled one just because one felt that its resoluteness cost him little. But I cannot put it into words. . . . It is true that his face was able to change suddenly from hardness to a wonderfully friendly, gentle and tender expression, and, what is more, with unmistakable frankness. It was just that frankness which was attractive. I will note another characteristic: in spite of its friendliness and frankness his face never looked gay; oven when he laughed with whole-hearted mirth there was always a feeling that there was no trace in his heart of genuine, serene, lighthearted gaiety. . . . But it is extremely difficult to describe a face like this. I'm utterly incapable of it. In his usual stupid way the old prince hastened to introduce us.

"This is my young friend Arkady Andreyevitch Dolgoruky" (again "Andreyovitch!").

The young man turned to me with redoubled courtesy, but it was evident that my name was quite unknown to him.

"He's . . . a relation of Andrey Petrovitch's," murmured my vexatious old prince. (How tiresome these old men sometimes are with their little ways!) The young man at once realized who I was.

“Ach! I heard of you long ago. . . ,” he said quickly. “I had the very great pleasure of making the acquaintance of your sister Lizaveta Makarovna last year at Luga. . . . She talked to me about you too.”

I was surprised; there was a glow of real pleasure in his face.

“Excuse me, prince,” I answered, drawing back both my hands, “I ought to tell you frankly, and I’m glad to be speaking in the presence of our dear prince, that I was actually desirous of meeting you, and quite recently, only yesterday, desired it with very different motives. I tell you this directly although it may surprise you. In short, I wanted to challenge you for the insult you offered to Versilov a year and a half ago in Ems. And though perhaps you would not have accepted my challenge, as I’m only a schoolboy, and not of age, yet I should have sent you the challenge, however you might have taken it or whatever you might have done, and I confess I have the same intention still.”

The old prince told me afterwards that I succeeded in pronouncing these words with great dignity.

There was a look of genuine distress on the young man’s face.

“You didn’t let me finish,” he answered earnestly. “The real cordiality with which I greeted you is due to my present feeling for Andrey Petrovitch. I’m sorry I cannot at once tell you all the circumstances. But I assure you on my honour that I have long regarded my unfortunate conduct at Ems with the greatest regret. I resolved on my return to Petersburg to make every reparation within my power, that is, literally to make him an apology in any form he might select. The highest and weightiest considerations have caused this change in my views. The fact that we were at law with one another would not have affected my determination in the least. His action in regard to me yesterday has, so to speak, moved me to the depths of my soul, and even now, would you believe it, I can’t get over it. And now, I must tell you, I’ve come to the prince to inform him of an astounding circumstance. Three hours ago, that is, just at the time when he was drawing up the deed with the lawyer, a friend of Andrey Petrovitch’s came to me bringing a challenge from him to a duel . . . a formal challenge for the affair at Ems. . . .”

“He challenged you?” I cried, and I felt that my eyes glowed and the blood rushed into my face.

“Yes, challenged me. I at once accepted the challenge, but resolved before our meeting to send him a letter in which I explain my view of my

conduct, and my deep regret for my horrible blunder . . . for it was only a blunder, an unlucky, fatal blunder! I may observe that my position in the regiment forced me to run the risk of this duel, and that by sending such a letter before our meeting I have exposed myself to public censure . . . do you understand? But in spite of that, I made up my mind to send it, and I've only not done so because an hour after the challenge I received another letter from him in which he apologizes for having troubled me, asks me to forget the challenge, and adds that he regrets his 'momentary outburst of cowardice and egoism' — his own words. So that he relieves me from all obligation to send the letter. I had not yet dispatched it, but I have come to say something about this to the prince. . . . And I assure you I have suffered far more from the reproaches of my conscience than anyone. . . . Is this sufficient explanation for you, Arkady Makarovitch, for the time at any rate? Will you do me the honour to believe in my complete sincerity?"

I was completely conquered. I found a perfect frankness, which was the last thing I had expected. Indeed, I had expected nothing of this kind. I muttered something in reply and forthwith held out both hands. He shook both of them in his delightedly. Then he drew the old prince away and talked to him for five minutes in the latter's bedroom.

"If you want to do me particular pleasure," he said frankly in a loud voice, addressing me as he came out of the prince's room, "come back straight with me and I will show you the letter I am just sending to Andrey Petrovitch and with it his letter to me."

I consented with the utmost readiness. My old prince made a great bustle at seeing us off and called me, too, apart into his room for a minute.

"Mon ami, how glad I am, how glad I am. . . . We'll talk of it all later. By the way, I've two letters here in my portfolio. One has to be delivered with a personal explanation and the other must go to the bank — and there too. . . ."

And he at once gave me two commissions which he pretended were urgent and required exceptional effort and attention. I should have to go, deliver them myself, give a receipt and so on.

"Ha, you are cunning!" I cried as I took the letters, "I swear all this is nonsense and you've no work for me to do at all. You've invented these two jobs on purpose to make me believe that I am of use and not taking money for nothing."

“Mon enfant, I protest that you are mistaken. They are both urgent matters. Cher enfant!” he cried, suddenly overcome by a rush of emotion, “my dear young friend” (he put both hands on my head), “I bless you and your destiny. Let us always be as true-hearted as to-day . . . as kind-hearted and good as possible, let us love all that is fair and good . . . in all its varied forms. . . . Well, enfin . . . enfin rendons grâce . . . et je te benis!”

He could not go on, but whimpered over my head. I must confess I was almost in tears too; anyway I embraced my queer old friend with sincere and delighted feeling. We kissed each other warmly.

3

Prince Sergay as I shall call him (that is Prince Sergay Petrovitch Sokolsky) drove me in a smart victoria to his flat, and my first impression was one of surprise at its magnificence. Not that it was really magnificent, but it was a flat such as “well-to-do people” live in, light, large, lofty rooms (I saw two of them) and the furniture well padded, comfortable, abundant and of the best — though I’ve no idea whether it was in the Versailles or Renaissance style. There were rugs, carvings, and statuettes, though everybody said that the Sokolskys were beggars, and had absolutely nothing. I had heard, however, that Prince Sergay had cut a dash wherever he could, here, in Moscow, in his old regiment and in Paris, that he was a gambler and that he had debts. My coat was crumpled and covered with fluff, too, because I had slept in it without undressing, and this was the fourth day I had worn my shirt. My coat was not really shabby but when I went into Prince Sergay’s, I recalled Versilov’s suggestion that I should have a new suit.

“Only fancy, owing to a case of suicide, I slept all night without undressing,” I observed with a casual air, and as he immediately looked attentive I briefly told the story. But what interested him most was evidently his letter. What seemed strangest to me was that he had not smiled nor betrayed the slightest symptom of amusement when I had told him I meant to challenge him to a duel. Though I should have been able to prevent his laughing, his gravity was strange in a man of his class. We sat opposite one another in the middle of the room, at his immense writing table, and he handed me for my inspection the fair copy of his letter to Versilov. The letter was very much like all that he had just told me at the old prince’s; it was written with warmth, indeed. I really did not know at

first what to make of his evident frankness and his apparent leaning towards what was good and right, but I was already beginning to be conquered by it, for after all what reason had I for disbelieving it? Whatever he was like, and whatever stories were told of him, he yet might have good impulses. I looked, too, at Versilov's second note, which consisted of seven lines — his withdrawal of his challenge. Though he did, it is true, speak of his own cowardice and egoism, yet on the whole the note was suggestive of a sort of disdain . . . or rather there was apparent in the whole episode a superlative nonchalance. I did not, however, utter this thought aloud.

"What do you think of this withdrawal, though?" I asked, "you don't suppose he acted from cowardice, do you?"

"Of course not," said Prince Sergay with a smile, though a very grave one, and in fact he was becoming more and more preoccupied. "I know quite well how manly he is. It's a special point of view . . . his peculiar turn of ideas."

"No doubt," I broke in warmly. "A fellow called Vassin says that there's too much of the 'pedestal' about the line he has taken with this letter and his refusing to take the fortune. . . . But to my mind things like that aren't done for effect but correspond with something fundamental within."

"I know Mr. Vassin very well," observed Prince Sergay.

"Oh, yes, you must have seen him in Luga."

We suddenly glanced at one another, and, I remember, I flushed a little. Anyway he changed the subject. I had a great longing to talk, however. The thought of one person I had met the day before tempted me to ask him certain questions, but I did not know how to approach the subject. And altogether I felt ill at ease. I was impressed, too, by his perfect breeding, his courtesy, his manner, his absence of constraint, in fact by the polish which these aristocrats acquire almost from the cradle. I saw two glaring mistakes in grammar in his letter. And as a rule, when I meet such people I'm not at all overawed and only become more abrupt, which is sometimes, perhaps, a mistake. But on this occasion the thought that I was covered with fluff contributed to my discomfiture so that, in fact, I floundered a little and dropped into being over- familar. I caught Prince Sergay eyeing me very intently at times.

"Tell me, prince," I blurted out suddenly, "don't you secretly think it absurd that a youngster like me should think of challenging you, especially for an affront to some one else?"

“An affront to a father may well be resented. No, I don’t think it’s absurd.”

“It seems to me that it’s dreadfully absurd . . . from one point of view, not of course from my own. Especially as my name is Dolgoruky and not Versilov. And if you’re telling me a falsehood, or are trying to smooth things over simply from worldly politeness, it stands to reason that you are deceiving me in everything else.”

“No, I don’t think it’s absurd,” he repeated with great seriousness. “How could you help feeling like a son to your father? It’s true, you’re young . . . because . . . I don’t know . . . I believe that a youth not of age can’t fight a duel . . . and a challenge can’t be accepted from him . . . by the rules. . . . But there is, if you like, one serious objection to be made: if you send a challenge without the knowledge of the offended party on whose behalf you are acting, you seem to be guilty of a certain lack of respect to him, don’t you? . . .”

Our conversation was interrupted by a footman who came in to make some announcement. Prince Sergay, who seemed to have been expecting him, went at once to meet him without finishing what he was saying. So the announcement was made in an undertone and I did not hear it.

“Excuse me,” said Prince Sergay, turning to me, “I’ll be back in a moment.”

And he went out. I was left alone; I walked up and down the room, thinking. Strange to say, he attracted me and at the same time repelled me intensely. There was something in him for which I could not find a name, though it was very repellent. “If he isn’t laughing at me he certainly must be very guileless, but if he has been laughing at me then . . . perhaps I should think him cleverer. . . .” I thought rather oddly. I went up to the table, and read the letter to Versilov once more. In my abstraction I didn’t notice the time, but when I roused myself I found that the prince’s minute had lasted at least a quarter of an hour. This disturbed me a little; I walked up and down once more, at last I took my hat and decided, I remember, to go out to try and find some one to send to Prince Sergay, and when he came, to say good-bye to him at once, declaring that I had work to do and could stay no longer. I fancied that that would be the most suitable thing to do, for I was rather tormented by the idea that he was treating me very casually in leaving me so long.

There were two doors in the room, both shut, and on the same side, one at each end of it. Forgetting which door I had come in by, or rather lost in thought, I opened one of them, and suddenly, in a long narrow room, I saw, sitting on the sofa, my sister Liza. There was no one else in the room and she was certainly waiting for some one. But before I had time even to feel surprised, I heard the voice of Prince Sergay speaking loudly to some one, and returning to the study. I hurriedly closed the door and Prince Sergay, coming in at the other, noticed nothing. I remember he began to apologize and said something about "Anna Fyodorovna." But I was so amazed and confused that I hardly took in what he said, and could only mutter that I simply must go home, and stubbornly persisting in this, I beat a hasty retreat. The well-bred prince must have looked with curiosity at my manners. He came with me right into the hall, still talking, and I neither answered nor looked at him.

4

I turned to the left when I got into the street and walked away at random. There was nothing coherent in my mind. I walked along slowly and I believe I had walked a good way, some five hundred paces, when I felt a light tap on my shoulder. I turned and saw Liza; she had overtaken me and tapped me on the shoulder with her umbrella. There was a wonderful gaiety and a touch of roguishness in her beaming eyes.

"How glad I am you came this way, or I shouldn't have met you to-day!" She was a little out of breath from walking fast.

"How breathless you are."

"I've been running so as to catch you up."

"Liza, was it you I saw just now?"

"Where?"

"At the prince's. . . . At Prince Sokolsky's."

"No, it wasn't me. You didn't see me. . . ."

I made no answer and we walked on for ten paces. Liza burst into a fit of laughter.

"It was me, of course it was! Why, you saw me yourself, you looked into my eyes, and I looked into yours, so how can you ask whether you saw me? What a character! And do you know I dreadfully wanted to laugh when you looked at me then. You looked so awfully funny."

She laughed violently. I felt all the anguish in my heart fade away at once.

"But tell me how did you come to be there?"

"To see Anna Fyodorovna."

"What Anna Fyodorovna?"

"Mme. Stolbyeev. When we were staying in Luga I used to spend whole days with her. She used to receive mother, too, and used even to come and see us, though she visited scarcely anyone else there. She is a distant relation of Andrey Petrovitch's, and a relation of Prince Sokolsky's too: she's a sort of old aunt of his."

"Then she lives at Prince Sokolsky's?"

"No, he lives with her."

"Then whose flat is it?"

"It's her flat. The whole flat has been hers for the last year. Prince Sokolsky has only just arrived and is staying with her. Yes, and she's only been in Petersburg four days herself."

"I say, Liza, bother her flat and her too!"

"No, she's splendid."

"Well, let her be, that's her affair. We're splendid too! See what a day it is, see how jolly! How pretty you are to-day, Liza. But you're an awful baby though."

"Arkady, tell me, that girl, the one who came yesterday. . . ."

"Oh, the pity of it, Liza! The pity of it!"

"Ach, what a pity! What a fate! Do you know it's a sin for us to be walking here so happily while her soul is hovering somewhere in darkness, in some unfathomable darkness, after her sin and the wrong done her. . . . Arkady, who was responsible for her suicide? Oh, how terrible it is! Do you ever think of that outer darkness? Ach, how I fear death, and how sinful it is. I don't like the dark, what a glorious thing the sun is! Mother says it's a sin to be afraid. . . . Arkady, do you know mother well?

"Very little, Liza. Very little so far."

"Ah, what a wonderful person she is; and you ought to get to know her! She needs understanding. . . ."

"Yes, but you see, I didn't know you either; but I know you now, thoroughly. I've found you out altogether in one minute. Though you are afraid of death, Liza, you must be proud, bold, plucky. Better than I am, ever so much better! I like you awfully, Liza. Ach, Liza! let death come

when it must, but meantime let us live — let us live! Oh, let us pity that poor girl, but let us bless life all the same! Don't you think so? I have an 'idea,' Liza. Liza, you know, of course, that Versilov has refused to take the fortune? You don't know my soul, Liza, you don't know what that man has meant to me. . . ."

"Not know indeed! I know all that."

"You know all about it? But, of course, you would! You're clever, cleverer than Vassin. Mother and you have eyes that are penetrating and humane, I mean a point of view that is. I'm talking nonsense. . . . Liza, I'm not good for much, in lots of ways."

"You want taking in hand, that's all."

"Take me in hand, Liza. How nice it is to look at you to-day. Do you know that you are very pretty? I have never seen your eyes before. . . . I've only seen them for the first time to-day . . . where did you get them to-day, Liza? Where have you bought them? What price have you paid for them? Liza, I've never had a friend, and I've thought the idea of friendship nonsense; but it's not nonsense with you. . . . Shall we be friends! You understand what I mean?"

"I quite understand."

"And you know — we'll simply be friends, no conditions, no contract."

"Yes, simply, simply, with only one condition: that if we ever blame one another, if we're displeased about anything, if we become nasty and horrid, even if we forget all this, — we will never forget this day, and this hour! Let's vow that to ourselves. Let us vow that we will always remember this day and how we walked arm in arm together, and how we laughed and were gay. . . . Yes? Shall we?"

"Yes, Liza, yes, I swear. But, Liza, I feel as though I'm hearing you talk for the first time. . . . Liza, have you read much?"

"He has never asked till now! Only yesterday for the first time, when I said something, you deigned to notice me, honoured sir, Mr. Wiseacre."

"But why didn't you begin to talk to me if I've been such a fool?"

"I kept expecting you'd grow wiser. I've been watching you from the very first, Arkady Makarovitch, and as I watched you I said to myself 'he'll come to me, it's bound to end in his coming' — and I made up my mind I'd better leave you the honour of taking the first step. 'No,' I said to myself, 'you can run after me.'"

“Ah, you coquette! Come, Liza, tell me honestly, have you been laughing at me for the last month?”

“Oh, you are funny, you’re awfully funny, Arkady! And do you know, what I’ve been loving you for most all this month is your being so queer. But in some ways you’re a horrid boy too — I say that for fear you should grow conceited. And do you know who else has been laughing at you? Mother’s been laughing at you, mother and I together. ‘Oh my,’ we whispered, ‘what a queer boy! My goodness, what a queer boy!’ And you sat all the while imagining that we were trembling before you.”

“Liza, what do you think about Versilov?”

“I think a great deal about him; but we won’t talk about him just now, you know. There’s no need to talk of him to-day, is there?”

“Quite so! Yes, you’re awfully clever, Liza! You are certainly cleverer than I am. You wait a bit, Liza, I’ll make an end of all this, and then I shall have something to tell you. . . .”

“What are you frowning at?”

“I’m not frowning, Liza, it’s nothing. . . . You see, Liza, it’s best to be open: it’s a peculiarity of mine that I don’t like some tender spots on my soul being touched upon . . . or rather, it’s shameful to be often displaying certain feelings for the admiration of all, isn’t it? So that I sometimes prefer to frown and hold my tongue. You’re clever, you must understand.”

“Yes, and what’s more, I’m the same myself; I understand you in everything. Do you know that mother’s the same too?”

“Ah, Liza! Oh, to live a long while on this earth! Ah? What did you say?”

“I said nothing.”

“You’re looking?”

“Yes, and so are you. I look at you and love you.”

I went with her almost all the way home and gave her my address. As we parted, for the first time in my life I kissed her. . . .

5

And all this would have been very nice but there was one thing that was not nice: one painful thought had been throbbing in my mind all night and I could not shake it off. This was, that when I had met that unhappy girl at the gate I told her I was leaving the house myself, leaving home, that one

left bad people and made a home for oneself, and that Versilov had a lot of illegitimate children. Such words from a son about his father must, of course, have confirmed all her suspicions of Versilov's character and of his having insulted her. I had blamed Stebelkov, but perhaps I had been the chief one to pour oil on the flames. That thought was awful, it is awful even now. . . . But then, that morning, though I'd begun to be uneasy, I told myself it was all nonsense. "Oh, 'things had gone too far already' apart from me," I repeated from time to time, "it's nothing; it will pass! I shall get over it. I shall make up for this somehow, I've fifty years before me!"

But yet the idea haunted me.

PART II

CHAPTER I

1

I pass over an interval of almost two months. The reader need not be uneasy, everything will be clear from the latter part of my story. I start again from the 15th of November, a day I remember only too well for many reasons. To begin with, no one who had known me two months before would have recognized me, externally anyway, that is to say, anyone would have known me but would not have been able to make me out. To begin with I was dressed like a dandy. The conscientious and tasteful Frenchman, whom Versilov had once tried to recommend me, had not only made me a whole suit, but had already been rejected as not good enough. I already had suits made by other, superior, tailors, of a better class, and I even ran up bills with them. I had an account, too, at a celebrated restaurant, but I was still a little nervous there and paid on the spot whenever I had money, though I knew it was mauvais ton, and that I was compromising myself by doing so. A French barber on the Nevsky Prospect was on familiar terms with me, and told me anecdotes as he dressed my hair. And I must confess I practised my French on him. Though I know French, and fairly well indeed, yet I'm afraid of beginning to speak it in grand society; and I dare say my accent is far from Parisian. I have a smart coachman, Matvey, with a smart turn-out, and he is always at my service when I send for him; he has a pale sorrel horse, a fast trotter (I don't like greys). Everything is not perfect, however: it's the 15th of November and has been wintry weather for the last three days, and my fur coat is an old one, lined with raccoon, that once was Versilov's. It wouldn't fetch more than twenty-five roubles. I must get a new one, and my pocket is empty, and I must, besides, have money in reserve for this evening whatever happens — without that I shall be ruined and miserable: that was how I put it to myself at the time. Oh, degradation! Where had these thousands come from, these fast trotters, these expensive restaurants? How could I all at once change like this and forget everything? Shame! Reader, I am beginning now the story of my shame and disgrace, and nothing in life can be more shameful to me than these recollections.

I speak as a judge and I know that I was guilty. Even in the whirl in which I was caught up, and though I was alone without a guide or counsellor, I was, I swear, conscious of my downfall, and so there's no excuse for me. And yet, for those two months I was almost happy — why almost? I was quite happy! And so happy — would it be believed — that the consciousness of my degradation, of which I had glimpses at moments (frequent moments!) and which made me shudder in my inmost soul, only intoxicated me the more. "What do I care if I'm fallen! And I won't fall, I'll get out of it! I have a lucky star!" I was crossing a precipice on a thin plank without a rail, and I was pleased at my position, and even peeped into the abyss. It was risky and it was delightful. And "my idea?" My "idea" later, the idea would wait. Everything that happened was simply "a temporary deviation." "Why not enjoy oneself?" That's what was amiss with my idea, I repeat, it admitted of all sorts of deviations; if it had not been so firm and fundamental I might have been afraid of deviating.

And meanwhile I kept on the same humble lodging; I kept it on but I didn't live in it; there I kept my trunk, my bag, and my various properties. But I really lived with Prince Sergay. I spent my days there and I slept there at night. And this went on for weeks. . . . How this came to pass I'll tell in a minute, but meanwhile I will describe my little lodging. It was already dear to me. Versilov had come to see me there of himself, first of all after our quarrel, and often subsequently. I repeat, this was a period of shame but of great happiness. . . . Yes, and everything at that time was so successful and so smiling. "And what was all that depression in the past about?" I wondered in some ecstatic moments, "why those old painful self-lacerations, my solitary and gloomy childhood, my foolish dreams under my quilt, my vows, my calculations, even my 'idea'? I imagined and invented all that, and it turns out that the world's not like that at all; see how happy and gay I am: I have a father — Versilov; I have a friend — Prince Sergay; I have besides . . . but that 'besides' we'll leave."

Alas, it was all done in the name of love, magnanimity, honour, and afterwards it turned out hideous, shameless and ignominious.

Enough.

He came to see me for the first time three days after our rupture. I was not at home, and he waited for me. Though I had been expecting him every day, when I went into my tiny cupboard of a room there was a mist before my eyes, and my heart beat so violently that I stopped short in the doorway. Fortunately my landlord was with him, having thought it necessary to introduce himself at once, that the visitor might not be bored with waiting. He was eagerly describing something to Versilov. He was a titular counsellor, a man about forty, much disfigured by small-pox, very poor, and burdened with a consumptive wife and an invalid child. He was of a very communicative and unassuming character, but not without tact. I was relieved at his presence, which was a positive deliverance for me, for what could I have said to Versilov? I had known, known in earnest that Versilov would come of his own prompting — exactly as I wanted him to, for nothing in the world would have induced me to go to him first, and not from obstinacy, but just from love of him; a sort of jealous love — I can't express it. Indeed, the reader won't find me eloquent at any time. But though I had been expecting him for those three days, and had been continually picturing how he would come in, yet though I tried my utmost, I could not imagine what we should say to one another at first, after all that had happened.

"Ah, here you are!" he said to me affectionately, holding out his hand and not getting up. "Sit down with us; Pyotr Ippolitovitch is telling me something very interesting about that stone near the Pavlovsky barracks . . . or somewhere in that direction."

"Yes, I know the stone," I made haste to answer, dropping into a chair beside him. They were sitting at the table. The whole room was just fourteen feet square. I drew a deep breath.

There was a gleam of pleasure in Versilov's eyes. I believe he was uncertain, and afraid I should be demonstrative. He was reassured.

"You must begin again, Pyotr Ippolitovitch." They were already calling each other by their names.

"It happened in the reign of the late Tsar," Pyotr Ippolitovitch said, addressing me nervously and with some uneasiness, anxious as to the effect of his story. "You know that stone — a stupid stone in the street, and what use is it, it's only in the way, you'd say, wouldn't you? The Tsar rode by several times, and every time there was the stone. At last the Tsar was displeased, and with good reason; a rock, a regular rock standing in the street, spoiling it. 'Remove the stone!' Well, he said remove it — you

understand what that means—'remove the stone!' The late Tsar — do you remember him? What was to be done with the stone? They all lost their heads, there was the town council, and a most important person, I can't remember his name, one of the greatest personages of the time, who was put in charge of the matter. Well, this great personage listened; they told him it would cost fifteen thousand roubles, no less, and in silver too (for it was not till the time of the late Tsar that paper money could be changed into silver). 'Fifteen thousand, what a sum!' At first the English wanted to bring rails, and remove it by steam; but think what that would have cost! There were no railways then, there was only one running to Tsarskoe-Selo."

"Why, they might have smashed it up!" I cried, frowning. I felt horribly vexed and ashamed in Versilov's presence. But he was listening with evident pleasure. I understood that he was glad to have the landlord there, as he too was abashed with me. I saw that. I remember I felt it somehow touching in him.

"Smash it up! Yes, that was the very idea they arrived at. And Montferant, too, — he was building St. Isaak's Cathedral at the time. — Smash it up, he said, and then take it away. But what would that cost?"

"It would cost nothing. Simply break it up and carry it away."

"No, excuse me, a machine would be wanted to do it, a steam-engine, and besides, where could it be taken? And such a mountain, too! 'Ten thousand,' they said, 'not less than ten or twelve thousand.'"

"I say, Pyotr Ippolitovitch, that's nonsense, you know. It couldn't have been so. . . ."

But at that instant Versilov winked at me unseen, and in that wink I saw such delicate compassion for the landlord, even distress on his account, that I was delighted with it, and I laughed.

"Well, well then," cried the landlord, delighted; he had noticed nothing, and was awfully afraid, as such story-tellers always are, that he would be pestered with questions; "but then a Russian workman walks up, a young fellow, you know the typical Russian, with a beard like a wedge, in a long-skirted coat, and perhaps a little drunk too . . . but no, he wasn't drunk. He just stands by while those Englishmen and Montferant are talking away, and that great personage drives up just then in his carriage, and listens, and gets angry at the way they keep discussing it and can't decide on anything. And suddenly he notices the workman at a distance standing there and smiling deceitfully, that is, not deceitfully though, I'm wrong there, what is it. . .?"

“Derisively,” Versilov prompted him discreetly.

“Derisively, yes, a little derisively, that kind, good Russian smile, you know; the great personage was in a bad humour, you understand: ‘What are you waiting here for, big beard?’ said he. ‘Who are you?’

“‘Why, I’m looking at this stone here, your Highness,’ says he. Yes, I believe he said Highness, and I fancy it was Prince Suvorov, the Italian one, the ancestor of the general. . . . But no, it was not Suvorov, and I’m so sorry I’ve forgotten who it was exactly, but though he was a Highness he was a genuine thorough-bred Russian, a Russian type, a patriot, a cultured Russian heart; well, he saw what was up.

“‘What is it,’ says he. ‘Do you want to take away the stone? What are you sniggering about?’

“‘At the Englishmen, chiefly, your Highness. They ask a prodigious price because the Russian purse is fat, and they’ve nothing to eat at home. Let me have a hundred roubles, your Highness,’ says he; ‘by to-morrow evening we’ll move the stone.’

“Can you imagine such a proposition? The English, of course, are ready to devour him; Montferant laughs. But that Highness with the pure Russian heart says: ‘Give him a hundred roubles! But surely you won’t remove it?’ says he.

“‘To-morrow evening, your Highness, we’ll have it on the move,’ says he.

“‘But how will you do it?’

“‘If you’ll excuse me, your Highness, that’s our secret,’ he says, and in that Russian way, you know. It pleased him: ‘Hey, give him anything he wants.’ And so they left it. What would you suppose he did?”

The landlord paused, and looked from one to the other with a face full of sentiment.

“I don’t know,” said Versilov, smiling; I scowled.

“Well, I’ll tell you what he did,” said the landlord, with as much triumph as though it were his own achievement, “he hired some peasants with spades, simple Russians, and began digging a deep hole just at the edge of it. They were digging all night; they dug an immense hole as big as the stone and just about an inch and a half deeper, and when they dug it out he told them to dig out the earth from under the stone, cautiously, little by little. Well, naturally, as they’d dug the earth away the stone had nothing to stand upon, it began to overbalance; and as soon as it began to shake they

pushed with their hands upon the stone, shouting hurrah, in true Russian style, and the stone fell with a crash into the hole! Then they shovelled earth on it, rammed it down with a mallet, paved it over with little stones — the road was smooth, the stone had disappeared!"

"Only fancy!" cried Versilov.

"The people rushed up to be sure, in multitudes innumerable; the Englishmen had seen how it would be long before; they were furious. Montferant came up: 'That's the peasant style,' says he, 'it's too simple,' says he. 'That's just it, that it's so simple, but you never thought of it, you fools!' And so I tell you that commander, that great personage, simply embraced him and kissed him. 'And where do you come from?' says he. 'From the province of Yaroslav, your Excellency, we're tailors by trade, and we come to Petersburg in the summer to sell fruit.' Well, it came to the ears of the authorities; the authorities ordered a medal to be given him, so he went about with a medal on his neck; but he drank himself to death afterwards, they say; you know the typical Russian, he has no self-restraint! That's why the foreigners have got the better of us so far, yes, there it is!'

"Yes, of course, the Russian mind. . . ." Versilov was beginning.

But at this point, luckily, the landlord was called away by his invalid wife, and hastened off, or I should have been unable to restrain myself. Versilov laughed.

"He's been entertaining me for a whole hour, my dear. That stone . . . is the very model of patriotic unseemliness among such stories, but how could I interrupt him? As you saw, he was melting with delight. And what's more, I believe the stone's there still, if I'm not mistaken, and hasn't been buried in the hole at all."

"Good heavens, yes!" I cried, "that's true! How could he dare! . . ."

"What's the matter? Why, I believe you're really indignant; he certainly has muddled things up. I heard a story of the sort about a stone when I was a child, only of course it was a little different, and not about the same stone. That 'it came to the ears of the authorities!' Why, there was a paean of glory in his heart when he uttered that phrase 'it came to the ears of the authorities.' In the pitiful narrowness of their lives they can't get on without such stories. They have numbers of them, chiefly owing to their incontinence. They've learnt nothing, they know nothing exactly, and they have a longing to talk about something besides cards and their wares,

something of universal interest, something poetic. . . . What sort of man is this Pyotr Ippolitovitch?”

“A very poor creature, and unfortunate too.”

“Well, there, you see, perhaps he doesn’t even play cards. I repeat, in telling that foolish story he was satisfying his love for his neighbour: you see, he wanted to make us happy. His sentiment of patriotism was gratified too; they’ve got another story, for instance, that the English gave Zavyalov a million on condition that he shouldn’t put his stamp on his handiwork.”

“Oh, goodness, I’ve heard that story too.”

“Who hasn’t heard it, and the teller of it knows, too, that you have heard it, but still he tells it, INTENTIONALLY supposing that you haven’t. The vision of the Swedish king, I believe, is a little out of date with them now, but in my youth it used to be repeated unctuously, in a mysterious whisper. And so was the story of some one’s having knelt in the Senate before the Senators at the beginning of last century. There were lots of anecdotes about Commander Bashutsky, too, how he carried away a monument. They simply love anecdotes of the court; for instance, tales of Tchernyshev, a minister in the last reign, how when he was an old man of seventy he got himself up to look like a man of thirty, so much so that the late Tsar was amazed at the levées. . . .”

“I’ve heard that too.”

“Who hasn’t heard it? All these anecdotes are the height of indecency; but, let me tell you, this kind of indecency is far more deeply rooted and widely spread than we imagine. The desire to lie with the object of giving pleasure to your neighbour one meets even in Russian society of the highest breeding, for we all suffer from this incontinence of our hearts. Only anecdotes of a different type are current among us; the number of stories they tell about America is simply amazing, and they’re told by men even of ministerial rank! I must confess I belong to that indecent class myself, and I’ve suffered from it all my life.”

“I’ve told anecdotes about Tchernyshev several times myself.”

“You’ve told them yourself?”

“There’s another lodger here besides me, marked with smallpox too, an old clerk, but he’s awfully prosaic, and as soon as Pyotr Ippolitovitch begins to speak he tries to refute him and contradict. He’s reduced Pyotr Ippolitovitch to such a point that he waits on the old fellow like a slave, and does everything to please him, simply to make him listen.”

“That’s another type of the indecent, one even perhaps more revolting than the first. The first sort is all ecstasy! ‘You only let me lie,’ he seems to say, ‘you’ll see how nice it will be.’ The second sort is all spleen and prose. ‘I won’t let you lie,’ he says, ‘where, when, in what year?’ — in fact a man with no heart. My dear boy, we must always let a man lie a little. It’s quite innocent. Indeed we may let him lie a great deal. In the first place it will show our delicacy, and secondly, people will let us lie in return — two immense advantages at once. Que diable! one must love one’s neighbour. But it’s time for me to be off. You’ve arranged the place charmingly,” he added, getting up from his chair. “I’ll tell Sofia Andreyevna and your sister that I’ve been here and found you quite well. Good-bye, my dear.”

Could this be all? This was not at all what I wanted. I was expecting something different, something important, though I quite understood that this was how it must be. I got up with a candle to light him down the stairs. The landlord would have come forward, but without Versilov’s seeing it I seized him by the arm and thrust him back savagely. He stared with astonishment, but immediately vanished.

“These staircases . . .” Versilov mumbled, dwelling on the syllables evidently in order to say something, and evidently afraid I might say something, “I’m no longer used to such stairs, and you’re on the third storey, but now I can find the way. . . . Don’t trouble, my dear, you’ll catch cold, too.”

But I did not leave him. We were going down the second flight.

“I’ve been expecting you for the last three days,” broke from me suddenly, as it were of itself; I was breathless.

“Thank you, my dear.”

“I knew you’d be sure to come.”

“And I knew that you knew I should be sure to come. Thank you, my dear.”

He was silent. We had reached the outer door, and I still followed him. He opened the door; the wind rushing in blew out my candle. Then I clutched his hand. It was pitch dark. He started but said nothing. I stooped over his hand and kissed it greedily several times, many times.

“My darling boy, why do you love me so much?” he said, but in quite a different voice. His voice quivered, there was a ring of something quite new in it as though it were not he who spoke.

I tried to answer something, but couldn't, and ran upstairs. He stood waiting where he was, and it was only when I was back in the flat that I heard the front door open and shut with a slam. I slipped by the landlord, who turned up again, and went into my room, fastened the latch, and without lighting the candle threw myself on my bed, buried my face in the pillow and cried and cried. It was the first time I had cried since I was at Touchard's. My sobs were so violent, and I was so happy . . . but why describe it?

I write this now without being ashamed of it, for perhaps it was all good, in spite of its absurdity.

3

But didn't I make him suffer for it! I became frightfully overbearing. There was no reference to this scene between us afterwards. On the contrary, we met three days later as though nothing had happened — what's more, I was almost rude that evening, and he too seemed rather dry. This happened in my room again; for some reason I had not been to see him in spite of my longing to see my mother.

We talked all this time, that is throughout these two months, only of the most abstract subjects. And I can't help wondering at it; we did nothing but talk of abstract subjects — of the greatest interest and of vast significance for humanity, of course, but with no bearing whatever on the practical position. Yet many, many aspects of the practical position needed, and urgently needed, defining and clearing up, but of that we did not speak. I did not even say anything about my mother or Liza or . . . or indeed about myself and my whole history. Whether this was due to shame or to youthful stupidity I don't know. I expect it was stupidity, for shame I could have overcome. But I domineered over him frightfully, and absolutely went so far as insolence more than once, even against my own feelings. This all seemed to happen of itself, inevitably; I couldn't restrain myself. His tone was as before, one of light mockery, though always extremely affectionate in spite of everything. I was struck, too, by the fact that he preferred coming to me, so that at last I very rarely went to see my mother, not more than once a week, especially towards the latter part of the time, as I became more and more absorbed in frivolity. He used always to come in the evenings, to

sit and chat with me, he was very fond of talking to the landlord too, which enraged me in a man like him.

The idea struck me that he might have nowhere to go except to see me. But I knew for a fact that he had acquaintances, and that he had, indeed, of late renewed many of his old ties in society, which he had dropped the year before. But he did not seem to be particularly fascinated by them, and seemed to have renewed many of them simply in a formal way; he preferred coming to see me.

I was sometimes awfully touched by the timid way in which he almost always opened my door, and for the first minute looked with strange anxiety into my eyes. "Am I in the way?" he seemed to ask, "tell me, and I'll go." He even said as much sometimes. Once, for instance, towards the end he came in when I had just put on a suit, brand new from the tailor's, and was just setting off to Prince Sergay's, to go off somewhere with him (where, I will explain later). He sat down without noticing that I was on the point of going out; he showed at moments a remarkable absence of mind. As luck would have it, he began to talk of the landlord. I fired up.

"Oh, damn the landlord!"

"Ah, my dear," he said, getting up, "I believe you're going out and I'm hindering you. . . . Forgive me, please."

And he meekly hastened to depart. Such meekness towards me from a man like him, a man so aristocratic and independent, who had so much individuality, at once stirred in my heart all my tenderness for him, and trust in him. But if he loved me so much, why did he not check me at the time of my degradation? If he had said one word I should perhaps have pulled up. Though perhaps I should not. But he did see my foppery, my flaunting swagger, my smart Matvey (I wanted once to drive him back in my sledge but he would not consent, and indeed it happened several times that he refused to be driven in it), he could see I was squandering money — and he said not a word, not a word, he showed no curiosity even! I'm surprised at that to this day; even now. And yet I didn't stand on ceremony with him, and spoke openly about everything, though I never gave him a word of explanation. He didn't ask and I didn't speak.

Yet on two or three occasions we did speak on the money question. I asked him on one occasion, soon after he renounced the fortune he had won, how he was going to live now.

"Somehow, my dear," he answered with extraordinary composure.

I know now that more than half of Tatyana Pavlovna's little capital of five thousand roubles has been spent on Versilov during the last two years.

Another time it somehow happened that we talked of my mother.

"My dear boy," he said mournfully, "I used often to say to Sofia Andreyevna at the beginning of our life together, though indeed I've said it in the middle and at the end too: 'My dear, I worry you and torment you, and I don't regret it as long as you're before me, but if you were to die I know I should kill myself to atone for it.'"

I remember, however, that he was particularly open that evening.

"If only I were a weak-willed nonentity and suffered from the consciousness of it! But you see that's not so, I know I'm exceedingly strong, and in what way do you suppose? Why just in that spontaneous power of accommodating myself to anything whatever, so characteristic of all intelligent Russians of our generation. There's no crushing me, no destroying me, no surprising me. I've as many lives as a cat. I can with perfect convenience experience two opposite feelings at one and the same time, and not, of course, through my own will. I know, nevertheless, that it's dishonourable just because it's so sensible. I've lived almost to fifty, and to this day I don't know whether it's a good thing I've gone on living or not. I like life, but that follows as a matter of course. But for a man like me to love life is contemptible. Of late there has been a new movement, and the Krafts won't accommodate themselves to things, and shoot themselves. But it's evident that the Krafts are stupid, we, to be sure, are clever — so that one can draw no parallel, and the question remains open anyway. And can it be that the earth is only for such as we? In all probability it is; but the idea is a comfortless one. However . . . however, the question remains open, anyway."

He spoke mournfully and yet I didn't know whether he was sincere or not. He always had a manner which nothing would have made him drop.

4

Then I besieged him with questions, I fell upon him like a starving man on bread. He always answered me readily and straightforwardly, but in the end always went off into the widest generalizations, so that in reality one could draw no conclusions from it. And yet these questions had worried me all my life, and I frankly confess that even in Moscow I had put off settling

them till I should meet him in Petersburg. I told him this plainly, and he did not laugh at me — on the contrary, I remember he pressed my hand.

On general politics and social questions I could get nothing out of him, and yet in connection with my "idea" those subjects troubled me more than anything. Of men like Dergatchev I once drew from him the remark that "they were below all criticism," but at the same time he added strangely that "he reserved the right of attaching no significance to his opinions." For a very long time he would say nothing on the question how the modern state would end, and how the social community would be built up anew, but in the end I literally wrenched a few words out of him.

"I imagine that all that will come about in a very commonplace way," he said once. "Simply un beau matin, in spite of all the balance-sheets on budget days, and the absence of deficits, all the states without exception will be unable to pay, so that they'll all be landed in general bankruptcy. At the same time all the conservative elements of the whole world will rise up in opposition to everything, because they will be the bondholders and creditors, and they won't want to allow the bankruptcy. Then, of course, there will follow a general liquidation, so to speak; the Jews will come to the fore and the reign of the Jews will begin: and then all those who have never had shares in anything, and in fact have never had anything at all, that is all the beggars, will naturally be unwilling to take part in the liquidation. . . . A struggle will begin, and after seventy-seven battles the beggars will destroy the shareholders and carry off their shares and take their places as shareholders, of course. Perhaps they'll say something new too, and perhaps they won't. Most likely they'll go bankrupt too. Further than that, my dear boy, I can't undertake to predict the destinies by which the face of this world will be changed. Look in the Apocalypse though . . ."

"But can it all be so materialistic? Can the modern world come to an end simply through finance?"

"Oh, of course, I've only chosen one aspect of the picture, but that aspect is bound up with the whole by indissoluble bonds, so to speak."

"What's to be done?"

"Oh dear, don't be in a hurry; it's not all coming so soon. In any case, to do nothing is always best, one's conscience is at rest anyway, knowing that one's had no share in anything."

"Aië, do stop that, talk sense. I want to know what I'm to do and how I'm to live."

“What you are to do, my dear? Be honest, never lie, don’t covet your neighbour’s house; in fact, read the Ten Commandments — it’s written there once for all.”

“Don’t talk like that, all that’s so old, and besides . . . it’s all words; I want something real.”

“Well, if you’re fearfully devoured by eunui, try to love some one or something, or at any rate to attach yourself to something.”

“You’re only laughing! Besides, what can I do alone with your Ten Commandments?”

“Well, keep them in spite of all your doubts and questions, and you’ll be a great man.”

“Whom no one will know of.”

“‘There is nothing hidden that shall not be made manifest.’”

“You’re certainly laughing.”

“Well, if you take it so to heart you’d better try as soon as possible to specialize, take up architecture or the law, and then when you’re busy with serious work you’ll be more settled in your mind and forget trifles.”

I was silent. What could I gather from this? And yet, after every such conversation I was more troubled than before. Moreover I saw clearly that there always remained in him, as it were, something secret, and that drew me to him more and more.

“Listen,” I said, interrupting him one day, “I always suspect that you say all this only out of bitterness and suffering, but that secretly you are a fanatic over some idea, and are only concealing it, or ashamed to admit it.”

“Thank you, my dear.”

“Listen, nothing’s better than being useful. Tell me how, at the present moment, I can be most of use. I know it’s not for you to decide that, but I’m only asking for your opinion. You tell me, and what you say I swear I’ll do! Well, what is the great thought?”

“Well, to turn stones into bread. That’s a great thought.”

“The greatest? Yes, really, you have suggested quite a new path. Tell me, is it the greatest?”

“It’s very great, my dear boy, very great, but it’s not the greatest. It’s great but secondary, and only great at the present time. Man will be satisfied and forget; he will say: ‘I’ve eaten it and what am I to do now?’ The question will remain open for all time.”

“You spoke once of the ‘Geneva ideas.’ I didn’t understand what was meant by the ‘Geneva ideas.’”

“The ‘Geneva idea’ is the idea of virtue without Christ, my boy, the modern idea, or, more correctly, the ideas of all modern civilization. In fact, it’s one of those long stories which it’s very dull to begin, and it will be a great deal better if we talk of other things, and better still if we’re silent about other things.”

“You always want to be silent!”

“My dear, remember that to be silent is good, safe, and picturesque.”

“Picturesque?”

“Of course. Silence is always picturesque, and the man who is silent always looks nicer than the man who is speaking.”

“Why, talking as we do is no better than being silent. Damn such picturesqueness, and still more damn such profitableness.”

“My dear,” he said suddenly, rather changing his tone, speaking with real feeling and even with a certain insistence, “I don’t want to seduce you from your ideals to any sort of bourgeois virtue, I’m not assuring you that ‘happiness is better than heroism’; on the contrary ‘heroism is finer than any happiness,’ and the very capacity for it alone constitutes happiness. That’s a settled thing between us. I respect you just for being able in these mawkish days to set up some sort of an ‘idea’ in your soul (don’t be uneasy, I remember perfectly well). But yet one must think of proportion, for now you want to live a resounding life, to set fire to something, to smash something, to rise above everything in Russia, to call up storm-clouds, to throw every one into terror and ecstasy, while you vanish yourself in North America. I’ve no doubt you’ve something of that sort in your heart, and so I feel it necessary to warn you, for I really love you, my dear.”

What could I gather from that either? There was nothing in it but anxiety for me, for my material prosperity; it betrayed the father with the father’s kindly but prosaic feelings. Was this what I wanted by way of an idea for the sake of which any honest father would send his son to face death, as the ancient Roman Horatius sent his sons for the idea of Rome?

I often pressed him on the subject of religion, but there the fog was thicker than ever. When I asked him what to do about that, he answered in the stupidest way, as though to a child:

“You must have faith in God, my dear.”

“But what if I don’t believe in all that?” I cried irritably once.

“A very good thing, my dear.”

“How a good thing?”

“It’s a most excellent symptom, dear boy; a most hopeful one, for our atheists in Russia, if only they are really atheists and have some little trace of intelligence, are the best fellows in the whole world, and always disposed to be kind to God, for they’re invariably good-humoured, and they’re good-humoured because they’re immensely pleased at being atheists. Our atheists are respectable people and extremely conscientious, pillars of the fatherland, in fact. . . .”

This was something, of course, but it was not what I wanted. On one occasion, however, he spoke out, but so strangely that he surprised me more than ever, especially after the stories of Catholicism and penitential chains that I had heard about him.

“Dear boy,” he said one day, not in my room, but in the street, when I was seeing him home after a long conversation, “to love people as they are is impossible. And yet we must. And therefore do them good, overcoming your feelings, holding your nose and shutting your eyes (the latter’s essential). Endure evil from them as far as may be without anger, ‘mindful that you too are a man.’ Of course you’ll be disposed to be severe with them if it has been vouchsafed to you to be ever so little more intelligent than the average. Men are naturally base and like to love from fear. Don’t give in to such love, and never cease to despise it. Somewhere in the Koran Allah bids the prophet look upon the ‘froward’ as upon mice, do them good, and pass them by — a little haughty, but right. Know how to despise them even when they are good, for most often it is in that they are base. Oh, my dear, it’s judging by myself I say that. Anyone who’s not quite stupid can’t live without despising himself, whether he’s honest or dishonest — it makes no difference. To love one’s neighbour and not despise him — is impossible. I believe that man has been created physically incapable of loving his neighbour. There has been some mistake in language here from the very first, and ‘love for humanity’ must be understood as love for that humanity which you have yourself created in your soul (in other words, you have created yourself and your love is for yourself) — and which, therefore, never will be in reality.”

“Never will be?”

“My dear boy, I agree that if this were true, it would be stupid, but that’s not my fault, and I was not consulted at the creation. I reserve the right to

have my own opinion about it."

"How is it they call you a Christian, then?" I cried. "A monk in chains, a preacher? I don't understand it!"

"Why, who calls me that?"

I told him; he listened very attentively, but cut short the conversation.

I can't remember what led to this memorable conversation; but he was positively irritated, which scarcely ever happened to him. He spoke passionately and without irony, as though he were not speaking to me. But again I didn't believe him. He could not speak on such subjects seriously to anyone like me.

CHAPTER II

1

On that morning, the 15th of November, I found him at Prince Sergay's. I had brought the prince and him together, but they had ties apart from me (I mean the affair abroad, and all that). Moreover, the prince had promised to divide the disputed fortune with him, giving him a third, which would mean twenty thousand at least. I remember at the time I thought it awfully strange that he was giving him only a third and not the full half; but I said nothing. Prince Sergay gave this promise of his own accord; Versilov had not said a syllable to suggest it, had not dropped a hint. Prince Sergay came forward himself and Versilov only let it pass in silence, never once alluded to it, and showed no sign that he had the least recollection of a promise. I may mention, by the way, that Prince Sergay was absolutely enchanted with him at first and still more with the things he said. He fell into positive raptures about him, and several times expressed his feelings to me. Sometimes when he was alone with me he exclaimed about himself, almost with despair, that he was "so ill-educated, that he was on the wrong track! . . ." Oh, we were still so friendly then! . . . I kept trying to impress Versilov with Prince Sergay's good points only, and excused his defects though I saw them myself; but Versilov listened in silence, or smiled.

"If he has faults he has at least as many virtues as defects!" I once exclaimed to Versilov when I was alone with him.

"Goodness, how you flatter him!" he said laughing.

"How do I flatter him?" I said, not understanding.

"As many virtues! Why he must be a saint if he has as many virtues as defects!"

But, of course, that was not his opinion. In general he avoided speaking of Prince Sergay at that time, as he did indeed of everything real, but of the prince particularly. I suspected, even then, that he went to see Prince Sergay without me, and that they were on rather peculiar terms, but I did not go into that. I was not jealous either at his talking to him more seriously than to me, more positively, so to speak, with less mockery; I was so happy at the time that I was actually pleased at it. I explained it too by Prince

Sergay's being of rather limited intelligence, and so being fond of verbal exactitude; some jests he absolutely failed to see.

But of late he had, as it were, begun to emancipate himself. His feelings for Versilov seemed beginning to change. Versilov with his delicate perception noticed it. I may mention at this point that Prince Sergay's attitude to me, too, became different at the same time, rather too obviously, in fact. Only the lifeless forms of our warm earlier relations were maintained. Yet I went on going to see him; I could not indeed help it, having once been drawn into it. Oh, how clumsy and inexperienced I was then; it is almost beyond belief that mere foolishness of heart can have brought anyone to such humiliation and lack of perception. I took money from him and thought that it didn't matter, that it was quite right. Yet that is not true: even then I knew that it was not right, but it was simply that I thought very little about it. I did not go to the prince to get money, though I needed the money so much. I knew I did not go for the sake of the money, but I realized that I went every day to borrow money. But I was in a whirl then, and besides all that I had something very different in my soul — it was singing with joy!

When I went in at eleven o'clock in the morning I found Versilov just finishing a long tirade. Prince Sergay was walking about the room listening, and Versilov was sitting down. Prince Sergay seemed in some excitement. Versilov was almost always able to work him into a state of excitement. He was exceedingly impressionable, to a degree of simplicity, indeed, which had often made me look down on him. But, I repeat, of late I had detected in him something like a resentful sneer. He stopped short, seeing me, and a quiver seemed to pass over his face. I knew in my heart to what to attribute the shadow over him that morning, but I had not expected that his face would be so distorted by it. I knew that he had an accumulation of anxieties, but it was revolting that I didn't know more than a tenth part of them — the rest had been kept so far a dead secret from me. What made it stupid and revolting was that I often obtruded my sympathy on him, gave advice and often laughed condescendingly at his weakness at being so upset "about such trifles." He used to be silent; but he must have detested me at those moments; I was in an utterly false position and had no suspicion of it. Oh, I call God to witness that of the chief trouble I had no suspicion!

He courteously held out his hand to me, however; Versilov nodded, without interrupting himself. I stretched myself on the sofa — my tone and manners were horrible at that time! My swagger went even further: I used to treat his acquaintances as though they were my own. Oh, if it could only be done all over again, I should know how to behave very differently!

Two words, that I may not forget. Prince Sergay was still living in the same flat, but now occupied almost the whole of it. Mme. Stolbyeev, whose flat it was, after staying only a month, had gone away again.

2

They were talking of the aristocracy. I may mention that Prince Sergay grew sometimes much excited over this subject in spite of his progressive notions. I suspect indeed that many of his misdoings had their source and origin in this idea. Attaching great significance to his princely rank, he threw money away in all directions although he was a beggar, and became involved in debt. Versilov had more than once hinted that this extravagance was not the essence of princeliness, and tried to instil into him a higher conception of it; but Prince Sergay had begun to show signs of resentment at being instructed. Evidently there had been something of the same sort that morning, but I hadn't arrived in time for the beginning of it. Versilov's words struck me at first as reactionary, but he made up for that later on.

"The word honour means duty," he said (I only give the sense as far as I remember it); "when the upper class rules in a state the country is strong. The upper class always has its sense of honour, and its code of honour, which may be imperfect but almost always serves as a bond and strengthens the country; an advantage morally and still more politically. But the slaves, that is all those not belonging to the ruling class, suffer. They are given equal rights to prevent their suffering. That's what has been done with us, and it's an excellent thing. But in all experience so far (in Europe that is to say) a weakening of the sense of honour and duty has followed the establishment of equal rights. Egoism has replaced the old consolidating principle and the whole system has been shattered on the rock of personal freedom. The emancipated masses, left with no sustaining principle, have ended by losing all sense of cohesion, till they have given up defending the liberties they have gained. But the Russian type of aristocrat has never been like the European nobility. Our nobility, even now that it has lost its

privileges, might remain the leading class as the upholders of honour, enlightenment, science, and higher culture, and, what is of the greatest importance, without cutting themselves off into a separate caste, which would be the death of the idea. On the contrary, the entrance to this class has been thrown open long ago among us, and now the time has come to open it completely. Let every honourable and valiant action, every great achievement in science enable a man to gain the ranks of the highest class. In that way the class is automatically transformed into an assembly of the best people in a true and literal sense, not in the sense in which it was said of the privileged caste in the past. In this new, or rather renewed form, the class might be retained."

The prince smiled sarcastically.

"What sort of an aristocracy would that be? It's some sort of masonic lodge you're sketching; not an aristocracy."

Prince Sergay had been, I repeat, extremely ill-educated. I turned over with vexation on the sofa, though I was far from agreeing with Versilov. Versilov quite understood that the prince was sneering.

"I don't know in what sense you talk of a masonic lodge," he answered. "Well, if even a Russian prince recoils from such an idea, no doubt the time for it has not arrived. The idea of honour and enlightenment as the sacred keys that unlock for any man the portals of a class thus continually renewed is, of course, a Utopia. But why is it an impossible one? If the thought is living though only in a few brains it is not yet lost, but shines like a tiny flame in the depths of darkness."

"You are fond of using such words as 'higher culture,"great idea,"sustaining principle' and such; I should like to know what you mean exactly by a 'great idea'?"

"I really don't know how to answer that question, dear prince," Versilov responded with a subtle smile. "If I confess to you that I myself am not able to answer, it would be more accurate. A great idea is most often a feeling which sometimes remains too long undefined. I only know that it's that which has been the source of living life, gay joyous life, I mean, not theoretical and artificial; so that the great idea, from which it flows, is absolutely indispensable, to the general vexation, of course."

"Why vexation?"

"Because, to live with ideas is dreary, and it's always gay without them."

The prince swallowed the rebuke.

“And what do you mean by this living life as you call it?” (He was evidently cross.)

“I don’t know that either, prince; I only know that it must be something very simple, the most everyday thing, staring us in the face, a thing of every day, every minute, and so simple that we can never believe it to be so simple, and we’ve naturally been passing it by for thousands of years without noticing it or recognizing it.”

“I only meant to say that your idea of the aristocracy is equivalent to denying the aristocracy,” observed Prince Sergay.

“Well, if you will have it so, perhaps there never has been an aristocracy in Russia.”

“All this is very obscure and vague. If one says something, one ought, to my mind, to explain it. . . .”

Prince Sergay contracted his brows and stole a glance at the clock on the wall. Versilov got up and took his hat.

“Explain?” he said, “no, it’s better not to, besides, I’ve a passion for talking without explanations. That’s really it. And there’s another strange thing: if it happens that I try to explain an idea I believe in, it almost always happens that I cease to believe what I have explained. I’m afraid of that fate now. Good- bye, dear prince; I always chatter unpardonably with you.”

He went out; the prince escorted him politely, but I felt offended.

“What are you ruffling up your feathers about?” he fired off suddenly, walking past me to his bureau without looking at me.

“I’m ruffling up my feathers,” I began with a tremor in my voice, “because, finding in you such a queer change of tone to me and even to Versilov I . . . Versilov may, of course, have begun in rather a reactionary way, but afterwards he made up for it and . . . there was perhaps a profound meaning in what he said, but you simply didn’t understand, and . . .”

“I simply don’t care to have people putting themselves forward to teach me and treating me as though I were a schoolboy,” he snapped out, almost wrathfully.

“Prince, such expressions . . .”

“Please spare me theatrical flourishes — if you will be so kind. I know that what I am doing is — contemptible, that I’m — a spendthrift, a gambler, perhaps a thief. . . . Yes, a thief, for I gamble away the money belonging to my family, but I don’t want anybody’s judgment. I don’t want it and I won’t have it. I’m — the judge of my own actions. And why this

ambiguity? If he wants to say anything to me let him say it straight out, and not go in for this mysterious prophetic twaddle. To tell me all this he ought to have the right to, he ought to be an honourable man himself. . . .”

“In the first place I didn’t come in at the beginning and I don’t know what you were talking about, and, secondly, what has Versilov done dishonourable, allow me to ask?”

“Please, that’s enough, that’s enough. You asked me for three hundred roubles yesterday. Here it is. . . .”

He laid the money on the table before me, sat down in the armchair, leaned nervously against the back of it, and crossed one leg over the other. I was thrown into confusion.

“I don’t know . . .” I muttered, “though I did ask you for it . . . and though I do need the money now, since you take such a tone . . .”

“Don’t talk about tone. If I spoke sharply you must excuse me. I assure you that I’ve no thoughts to spare for it. Listen to this: I’ve had a letter from Moscow. My brother Sasha, who was only a child, as you know, died four days ago. My father, as you know too, has been paralysed for the last two years, and now, they write to me, he’s worse, he can’t utter a word and knows nobody. They were relieved to get the inheritance, and want to take him abroad, but the doctor writes that he’s not likely to live a fortnight. So I’m left with my mother and sister . . . that is, almost alone. . . . In fact, I’m — alone. This fortune . . . this fortune — oh, it would have been better perhaps if it had not come to me at all! But this is what I wanted to tell you: I promised Andrey Petrovitch a minimum of twenty thousand. . . . And, meanwhile, only imagine, owing to legal formalities I’ve been able to do nothing. I haven’t even . . . we, that is . . . my father that is, has not yet been informed of the inheritance. And meanwhile I’ve lost so much money during the last three weeks, and that scoundrel Stebelkov charges such a rate of interest. . . . I’ve given you almost the last. . . .”

“Oh, prince, if that’s how it is . . .”

“I didn’t mean that. I didn’t mean that. Stebelkov will bring some to-day, no doubt, and there’ll be enough to go on with, but what the devil’s one to think of Stebelkov? I entreated him to get me ten thousand, so that I might at least give Andrey Petrovitch that much. It worries me, it plagues me to think of my promise to give him a third. I gave my word and I must keep it. And I swear I’ll do my utmost to free myself from obligations in that direction anyhow. They weigh upon me, they weigh upon me, they’re

insufferable! This burdensome tie. . . . I can't bear to see Andrey Petrovitch, for I can't look him in the face. . . . Why does he take advantage of it?"

"What does he take advantage of, prince?" I stood before him in amazement. "Has he ever so much as hinted at it?"

"Oh, no, and I appreciate it, it's I who reproach myself. And in fact I'm getting more and more involved. . . . This Stebelkov. . . ."

"Listen, prince, do calm yourself, please. I see you get more excited the more you talk, and yet it may be all imagination. Oh, I've got myself into difficulties too, unpardonably, contemptibly. But I know it's only temporary . . . and as soon as I win back a certain sum, then . . . I say, with this three hundred, I owe you two thousand five hundred, don't I?"

"I'm not asking it from you, I believe," the prince said suddenly with a sneer.

"You say ten thousand for Versilov. If I borrow from you now the money will be taken off Versilov's twenty thousand; otherwise I won't consent. But . . . but I shall certainly pay it back myself. . . . But can you possibly imagine that Versilov comes to you to get the money?"

"It would be easier for me if he did come for the money," Prince Sergay observed enigmatically.

"You talk of some 'burdensome tie.' . . . If you mean with Versilov and me, upon my soul it's an insult. And you say why isn't he what he preaches — that's your logic! And, in the first place it's not logic, allow me to tell you, for even if he's not, he can't help saying what's true. . . . And besides, why do you talk about 'preaching'? You call him a 'prophet.' Tell me, was it you who called him a 'petticoat prophet' in Germany?"

"No, it was not I."

"Stebelkov told me it was you."

"He told a lie. I'm — no hand at giving derisive nicknames. But if a man preaches honour he ought to be honourable himself — that's my logic, and if it's incorrect I don't care. I prefer it to be so. And I won't have anyone dare to come and judge me in my own house and treat me like a baby! That's enough!" he shouted, waving his hand to stop me. . . . "Ah, at last!"

The door opened and Stebelkov walked in.

He was exactly the same, just as jauntily dressed; and squared his chest and stared into one's face as stupidly as ever, imagining that he was being very sly, and exceedingly well satisfied with himself. On this occasion he looked about him in a strange way on entering; there was a look of peculiar caution and penetration in his face, as though he wanted to guess something from our countenances. He instantly subsided, however, and his face beamed with a self-satisfied smile, that "pardonably-insolent" smile, which was yet unspeakably repulsive to me.

I had known for a long time that he was a great torment to Prince Sergay. He had come once or twice when I was present. I . . . I too had had a transaction with him during that month, but on this occasion I was rather surprised at the way he came in.

"In a minute," Prince Sergay said, without greeting him, and, turning his back on us both, he began looking in his desk for the necessary papers and accounts. As for me, I was mortally offended by his last words. The suggestion that Versilov was dishonourable was so clear (and so astonishing!) that it could not be allowed to pass without a full explanation. But that was impossible before Stebelkov. I reclined on the sofa again and turned over a book that was lying before me.

"Byelinsky, part two! That's something new! Are you trying to cultivate your mind?" I exclaimed, I fancy, very unnaturally.

He was busily engaged and in great haste, but at my words he turned.

"I beg you to leave that book alone," he brought out sharply.

This was beyond all endurance, especially before Stebelkov! To make it worse Stebelkov gave a sly and loathsome smirk, and made a stealthy sign to me in Prince Sergay's direction. I turned away from the fool.

"Don't be angry, prince; I'll leave you to your most important visitor, and meanwhile I'll disappear. . . ."

I made up my mind to be casual in my manner.

"Is that me — the most important visitor?" Stebelkov put in, jocosely pointing at himself with his finger.

"Yes, you; you're the most important person and you know it too!"

"No, excuse me. Everywhere in the world there's a second person. I am a second person. There is a first person and a second person. The first acts and the second takes. So the first person turns into the second person, and the second person turns into the first person. Is that so or not?"

"It may be so. But as usual I don't understand you."

“Excuse me. In France there was a revolution and every one was executed. Napoleon came along and took everything. The revolution is the first person, and Napoleon the second person. But it turned out that the revolution became the second person and Napoleon became the first person. Is that right?”

I may observe, by the way, that in his speaking to me of the French Revolution I saw an instance of his own cunning which amused me very much. He still persisted in regarding me as some sort of revolutionist, and whenever he met me thought it necessary to begin on some topic of the sort.

“Come along,” said Prince Sergay, and they went together into the other room. As soon as I was alone I made up my mind to give him back the three hundred as soon as Stebelkov had gone. I needed the money terribly, still I resolved to do so.

They remained in the other room, and for ten minutes I heard nothing, then suddenly they began talking loudly. They were both talking, but Prince Sergay suddenly shouted as though in violent irritation, approaching frenzy. He was sometimes very hasty, so that I was not surprised. But at that moment a footman came in to announce a visitor; I motioned him to the other room and instantly there was silence there. Prince Sergay came out with an anxious face, though he smiled; the footman hastened away, and half a minute later a visitor came in.

It was a visitor of great consequence, with shoulder-knots and a family crest. He was a gentleman not over thirty, of high rank, and of a severe appearance. I may remark that Prince Sergay did not yet really belong to the highest circles in Petersburg, in spite of his passionate desire to do so (I was aware of this desire), and so he must have been glad to see a visitor like this. The acquaintance had, as I knew, only been formed through great efforts on the part of Prince Sergay. The guest was returning Prince Sergay’s visit, and unhappily came upon him at the wrong moment. I saw Prince Sergay look at Stebelkov with an agonized and hopeless expression; but Stebelkov encountered his eyes as though nothing whatever were the matter, and without the faintest idea of effacing himself, sat down on the sofa with a free-and-easy air and began passing his hand through his hair, probably to display his independence. He even assumed an important countenance, in fact he was utterly impossible. As for me, I knew, of course, how to behave, decently even then, and should never have disgraced anyone; but what was my amazement when I caught on Prince Sergay’s

face the same hopeless, miserable and vindictive look directed at me: he was ashamed of us both then, and put me on a level with Stebelkov. That idea drove me to fury. I lolled even more at my ease, and began turning over the leaves of the book, as though the position were no concern of mine. Stebelkov, on the contrary, bent forward open-eyed to listen to their conversation, probably supposing that this was a polite and affable thing to do. The visitor glanced once or twice at Stebelkov, and at me too, indeed.

They talked of family news; this gentleman had at some time known Prince Sergay's mother, who was one of a distinguished family. From what I could gather, in spite of his politeness and the apparent good-nature of his tone, the visitor was very formal and evidently valued his own dignity so highly as to consider a visit from him an honour to anyone whatever. Had Prince Sergay been alone, that is had we not been present, he would certainly have been more dignified and more resourceful. As it was, something tremulous in his smile, possibly an excess of politeness, and a strange absent-mindedness, betrayed him.

They had hardly been sitting there five minutes when another visitor was announced, also of the compromising kind. I knew this one very well and had heard a great deal about him, though he did not know me at all. He was still quite a young man, though twenty- three, who was handsome and elegantly dressed and had a fine house, but moved in distinctly doubtful circles. A year before he had been serving in one of the smartest cavalry regiments, but had been forced to give up his commission, and every one knew for what reason. His relations had even advertised in the papers that they would not be responsible for his debts, but he still continued his profligate manner of life, borrowing money at ten per cent. a month, playing desperately in gambling circles, and squandering his money on a notorious Frenchwoman. A week before, he had succeeded one evening in winning twelve thousand roubles and was triumphant. He was on friendly terms with Prince Sergay: they often played together tête-à-tête; but Prince Sergay positively shuddered seeing him now. I noticed this from where I lay. This youth made himself at home everywhere, talked with noisy gaiety, saying anything that came into his head without restraint. And of course it could never have occurred to him that our host was in such a panic over the impression his associates would make upon his important visitor.

He interrupted their conversation by his entrance, and began at once describing his play on the previous day, before he had even sat down.

“I believe you were there too,” he said, breaking off at the third sentence to address the important gentleman, mistaking him for one of his own set; but looking at him more closely he cried at once:

“Oh, I beg your pardon, I mistook you for one of the party yesterday!”

“Alexey Vladimirovitch Darzan — Ippolit Alexandrovitch Nastchokin,” Prince Sergay made haste to introduce them. This youth could still be introduced. He belonged to a good family and it was a distinguished name; but us he did not introduce, and we went on sitting in our corners. I absolutely refused to turn my head in their direction, but Stebelkov began smirking gleefully at the sight of the young man, and was unmistakably threatening to begin talking. This began to amuse me.

“I met you several times last year at Countess Verigin’s,” said Darzan.

“I remember you, but I believe you were in military uniform then,” Nastchokin observed genially.

“Yes, I was, but thanks to. . . . But Stebelkov here? How does he come here? It’s just thanks to these pretty gentlemen here that I’m not in the army now!” he pointed to Stebelkov, and burst out laughing. Stebelkov laughed gleefully too, probably taking it as a compliment. Prince Sergay blushed and made haste to address a question to Nastchokin, and Darzan, going up to Stebelkov, began talking of something very warmly, though in a whisper.

“I believe you saw a great deal of Katerina Nikolaevna Ahmakov abroad?” the visitor asked Prince Sergay.

“Oh yes, I knew her. . . .”

“I believe we shall soon be hearing a piece of news about her. They say she’s engaged to Baron Büring.”

“That’s true!” cried Darzan.

“Do you know it for a fact?” Prince Sergay asked Nastchokin with evident agitation, bringing out his question with peculiar emphasis.

“I’ve been told so, and people are talking about it; but I don’t know it for a fact.”

“Oh, it is a fact!” said Darzan, going up to him. “Dubasov told me so yesterday, he’s always the first to know news like that. Yes, and the prince ought to know. . . .”

Nastchokin waited till Darzan had finished, and turned to Prince Sergay again.

“She’s not very often seen now.”

“Her father has been ill for the last month,” Prince Sergay observed drily.

“She’s a lady of many adventures!” Darzan blurted out suddenly.

I raised my head and sat up.

“I have the pleasure of knowing Katerina Nikolaevna personally, and I take upon myself the duty of declaring that all scandalous stories about her are mere lies and infamy . . . and invented by those who have sought her favour without success.”

After this stupid outburst I relapsed into silence, still sitting upright and gazing at them all with a flushed face. Every one turned to me, but Stebelkov suddenly guffawed; Darzan, too, simpered and seemed surprised.

“Arkady Makarovitch Dolgoruky,” said Prince Sergay, indicating me to Darzan.

“Oh, believe me, PRINCE,” said Darzan, frankly and good-naturedly addressing me, “I am only repeating what I’ve heard; if there are rumours they have not been of my spreading.”

“I did not mean it for you!” I answered quickly, but Stebelkov had burst into an outrageous roar of laughter, caused as he explained afterwards by Darzan’s having addressed me as prince. My diabolical surname had got me into a mess again. Even now I blush at the thought that I had not the courage — through shame, of course — to set right this blunder and to protest aloud that I was “simply Dolgoruky.” It was the first time in my life I had let it pass. Darzan looked in perplexity at me and at Stebelkov’s laughter.

“Ah yes! Who was the pretty girl I met on the stairs just now, a slim, fair little thing?” he suddenly asked Prince Sergay.

“I really don’t know,” the latter answered quickly, reddening.

“How should you?” laughed Darzan.

“Though . . . it . . . it might have been. . . .” Prince Sergay faltered oddly.

“It was . . . this gentleman’s sister, Lizaveta Makarovna!” said Stebelkov suddenly pointing to me, “for I met her just now too. . . .”

“Ah indeed!” Prince Sergay put in quickly, speaking this time, however, with an extremely grave and dignified expression, “it must have been Lizaveta Makarovna, who is a great friend of Anna Fyodorovna Stolbyeev, in whose flat I am staying; she must have come to-day to see Darya Onisimovna, another of Anna Fyodorovna’s great friends, whom she left in charge of the house when she went away. . . .”

This was all true. Darya Onisimovna was the mother of poor Olya, whose story I have told already. Tatyana Pavlovna had found a refuge for the poor woman at last with Mme. Stolbyeev. I know very well that Liza had been sometimes at Mme. Stolbyeev's, and had lately visited there Darya Onisimovna, of whom every one at home was very fond; but after this statement by Prince Sergay — sensible as it was, however — and still more Stebelkov's stupid outburst, and perhaps because I had been called prince, I suddenly flushed all over. Luckily at that very instant Nastchokin stood up to take leave; he offered his hand to Darzan also. At the moment Stebelkov and I were left alone; he nodded his head to me in the direction of Darzan, who was standing in the doorway with his back to us; I shook my fist at Stebelkov.

A minute later Darzan, too, got up to go, after arranging with Prince Sergay to meet him next day at some place, a gambling house, I believe. As he went out he shouted something to Stebelkov, and made me a slight bow. Hardly had he gone out when Stebelkov jumped up and stood in the middle of the room, pointing to the ceiling with his finger:

"I'll tell you the trick that fine young gentleman played last week. He gave an IOU to Averyanov and signed a false name to it. That IOU is still in existence, but it's not been honoured! It's criminal! Eight thousand!"

"And no doubt that IOU is in your hands?" I cried, glaring at him savagely.

"I have a bank, I have a mont-de-piété, I am not a broker. Have you heard that there is a mont-de-piété in Paris? Bread and benevolence for the poor; I have a mont-de-piété. . . ."

Prince Sergay rudely and angrily cut him short.

"What are you doing here? What are you staying for?"

"But," Stebelkov blinked rapidly, "what about that? Won't it do?"

"No, no, no," Prince Sergay shouted, stamping; "I've said so."

"Well, if so . . . that's so. . . . But that's a mistake. . . ."

He turned abruptly and with bowed head and bent spine went quickly out of the room. Prince Sergay called after him when he was in the doorway:

"You may as well know, sir, that I am not in the least afraid of you."

He was very much irritated, he was about to sit down, but glancing at me, remained standing. His eyes seemed to say to me also, "Why are you hanging about here too?"

"Prince, I . . ." I was beginning.

“I’ve really no time to listen, Arkady Makarovitch, I’m just going out.”

“One minute, prince, it’s very important; and, to begin with, take back your three hundred.”

“What’s this now?”

He was walking up and down, but he stopped short.

“This now is that after all that has passed . . . and what you’ve said about Versilov . . . that he was dishonourable, and in fact your tone all the time. . . . In short, I can’t possibly take it.”

“You’ve been TAKING it for the last month, though.”

He suddenly sat down on the chair. I was standing at the table, and with one hand I patted the volume of Byelinsky, while I held my hat in the other.

“I had different feelings, prince . . . and, in fact, I would never have brought it to such a sum . . . it was the gambling . . . in short, I can’t!”

“You have not distinguished yourself to-day, and so you are in a rage; I’ll ask you to leave that book alone.”

“What does that mean: ‘not distinguished myself’? And, in fact, before your visitors you almost put me on a level with Stebelkov.”

“So that’s the key to the riddle!” he said with a biting smile. “You were abashed by Darzan’s calling you prince, too.”

He laughed spitefully. I flared up.

“I simply don’t understand; I wouldn’t take your title as a gift.”

“I know your character. How absurdly you cried out in defence of Mme. Ahmakov . . . let that book alone!”

“What’s the meaning of it?” I cried.

“L-l-let the book alone!” he yelled suddenly, drawing himself up in the low chair, with a ferocious movement, as though about to spring at me.

“This is beyond all limits,” I said, and I walked quickly out of the room, but before I had reached the end of the drawing-room, he shouted to me from the study:

“Arkady Makarovitch, come back! Co-ome ba-ack! Co-ome ba-ack!”

I went on without heeding. He hastily overtook me, seized me by the arm, and dragged me back into the study. I did not resist.

“Take it,” he said, pale with excitement, handing me the three hundred roubles I had thrown on the table. “You must take it . . . or else we . . . you must!”

“Prince, how can I take it?”

“Oh, I’ll beg your pardon . . . if you like . . . all right, forgive me! . . .”

“I have always liked you, prince, and if you feel the same . . .”

“I do; take it. . . .”

I took the money. His lips were trembling.

“I can understand, prince, that you are exasperated by that scoundrel . . . but I won’t take it, prince, unless we kiss each other, as we have done when we’ve quarrelled before.”

I was trembling, too, as I said this.

“Now for sentimentality,” muttered Prince Sergay, with an embarrassed smile, but he bent down and kissed me. I shuddered; at the instant he kissed me I caught on his face an unmistakable look of aversion.

“Did he bring you the money, anyway? . . .”

“Aië, never mind.”

“I was asking on your account. . . .”

“Yes he did, he did.”

“Prince, we have been friends . . . and in fact, Versilov. . . .”

“Yes, yes. That’s all right!”

“And in fact . . . I really don’t know . . . about this three hundred. . . .”

I was holding the money in my hand.

“Take it, ta-ake it!” he smiled again, but there was something very vicious in his smile.

I took the money.

CHAPTER III

1

I took the money because I loved him. If anyone disbelieves this I must inform him that at the moment when I took the money I was firmly convinced that I could have obtained it from another source. And so I really took it, not because I was in desperate straits, but from delicacy, not to hurt his feelings. Alas, that was how I reasoned at the time! But yet my heart was very heavy as I went out from him. I had seen that morning an extraordinary change in his attitude to me; he had never taken such a tone before, and, as regards Versilov, it was a case of positive mutiny. Stebelkov had no doubt annoyed him very much that morning, but he had begun to be the same before seeing Stebelkov. I repeat once more; the change from his original manner might indeed have been noticed for some days past, but not in the same way, not in the same degree, that was the point.

The stupid gossip about that major, Baron Büring, might have some effect on him. . . . I too had been disturbed by it, but . . . the fact is, I had something else in my heart at that time that shone so resplendent that I heedlessly let many things pass unnoticed, made haste to let them pass, to get rid of them, and to go back to that resplendence. . . .

It was not yet one o'clock. From Prince Sergay's I drove with my Matvey straight off to — it will hardly be believed to whom — to Stebelkov! The fact is that he had surprised me that morning, not so much by turning up at Prince Sergay's (for he had promised to be there) as by the way he had winked at me; he had a stupid habit of doing so, but that morning it had been apropos of a different subject from what I had expected. The evening before, a note had come from him by post, which had rather puzzled me. In it he begged me to go to him between two and three to-day, and that "he might inform me of facts that would be a surprise to me."

And in reference to that letter he had that morning, at Prince Sergay's, made no sign whatever. What sort of secrets could there be between Stebelkov and me? Such an idea was positively ridiculous; but, after all that had happened, I felt a slight excitement as I drove off to him. I had, of course, a fortnight before applied to him for money, and he was ready to

lend it, but for some reason we did not come to terms, and I did not take the money: on that occasion, too, he had muttered something vague, as his habit was, and I had fancied he wanted to make me some offer, to suggest some special conditions; and as I had treated him disdainfully every time I had met him at Prince Sergay's, I proudly cut short any idea of special terms, though he pursued me to the door. I borrowed the money afterwards from Prince Sergay.

Stebelkov lived in a very comfortable style. He had his own establishment, a flat of four rooms, with handsome furniture, men and women servants, and a housekeeper, who was, however, by no means young. I went in angrily.

"Listen, my good man," I began from the door; "to begin with, what's the meaning of that letter? I don't care for letters to be passing between us. And why did you not make any statement you wanted to make at Prince Sergay's this morning? I was at your service."

"And why did you hold your tongue, too, this morning, instead of questioning me?" he said with a broad grin of intense self- satisfaction.

"Because it's not I want something of you, but you want something of me," I cried, suddenly growing hot.

"Why have you come to see me, if that's so?" he cried, almost jumping out of his chair with glee. I turned instantly, and would have gone out, but he seized me by the shoulder.

"No, no, I was joking, it's a matter of importance, as you'll see for yourself."

I sat down, I must admit I was inquisitive. We were seated facing one another at the end of a big writing table. He smiled slyly, and was just holding up his finger.

"None of your slyness, please, and no fingers either, and above all, none of your allegories! Come straight to the point, or I'll go away at once," I cried angrily again.

"You . . . are proud!" he pronounced in a tone of stupid reproach, rocking in his easy-chair and turning his wrinkled forehead towards the ceiling.

"One has to be with you!"

"You . . . took money from Prince Sergay to-day, three hundred roubles; I have money too, my money is better than his."

"How do you know I took it?" I asked, greatly astonished. "Can he have told you that himself?"

“He told me; don’t worry yourself, in the course of conversation it happened to come up, it just happened to come up, it was not on purpose. He told me. And you need not have taken it. Is that so, or not?”

“But I hear that you squeeze out an exorbitant interest.”

“I have a mont-de-piété, but I don’t squeeze. I only lend to friends, and not to other people, the mont-de-piété is for them. . . .”

This mont-de-piété was an ordinary pawnbroker’s shop, which flourished under another name, in a different quarter of the town.

“But I lend large sums to friends.”

“Why, is Prince Sergay such a friend of yours?”

“A fri-iend; but . . . he plays the fool, and he’d better not dare to play the fool.”

“Why is he so much in your power? Does he owe you a great deal?”

“He . . . does owe a great deal.”

“He’ll pay you; he has come into a fortune . . .”

“That is not his fortune; he owes money, and owes something else, too. The fortune’s not enough. I’ll lend to you without interest.”

“As though I were a ‘friend’ too? How have I earned that?” I laughed.

“You will earn it.” Again he rocked his whole person forward on a level with me, and was again holding up his fingers.

“Stebelkov! Speak without flourishing your fingers or I go.”

“I say, he may marry Anna Andreyevna!” and he screwed up his left eye fiendishly.

“Listen, Stebelkov, your conversation is taking such a scandalous turn. . . . How dare you utter the name of Anna Andreyevna!”

“Don’t lose your temper.”

“I am listening, though it’s against the grain, for I see clearly you have something up your sleeve, and I want to find out what it is . . . but you may try my patience too far, Stebelkov!”

“Don’t be angry, don’t be proud. Humble your pride a little and listen; and then you’ll be proud again. You know, of course, about Anna Andreyevna. The prince may make a match . . . you know, of course . . .”

“I have heard of the idea, of course, I know all about it, but I have never spoken to Prince Sergay about it, I only know that the idea originated with old Prince Sokolsky, who is ill now; but I have never talked to him about it and I have had nothing to do with it. I tell you this, simply to make things clear. I will ask you in the first place: what is your object in mentioning it

to me? And secondly, can Prince Sergay possibly discuss such subjects with YOU?"

"He does not discuss them with me; he does not want to discuss them with me, but I mention them to him, and he does not want to listen. He shouted at me this morning."

"I should think so! I commend him."

"Old Prince Sokolsky will give Anna Andreyevna a good dowry; she's a favourite. Then when the prince marries her, he'll repay me all the money he owes. And he will pay other debts as well. He'll certainly pay them! But now he has nothing to pay with."

"What do you want of me?"

"To answer the great question: you are known everywhere, you go everywhere, you can find out anything."

"Oh, damnation . . . find out what?"

"Whether Prince Sergay wishes it, whether Anna Andreyevna wishes it, whether the old prince wishes it."

"And you dare to propose that I should be your spy, and — for money!" I burst out indignantly.

"Don't be too proud, don't be too proud, humble your pride only a little, only for five minutes." He made me sit down again. He was evidently not intimidated by my words or gestures; but I made up my mind to hear him out.

"I must find out quickly, find out quickly, because . . . because it will soon be too late. You saw how he swallowed the pill this morning, when the officer mentioned the baron for Mme. Ahmakov."

I certainly demeaned myself by listening further, but my curiosity was irresistibly aroused.

"Listen, you worthless fellow!" I said resolutely. "Though I'm sitting here listening, and allow you to speak of such persons . . . and even answer you, it's not in the least that I admit your right to do so. I simply see in it some piece of rascality. . . . And in the first place, what hopes can Prince Sergay have in reference to Katerina Nikolaevna?"

"None whatever, yet he is furious."

"That's untrue!"

"Yes, he is. Mme. Ahmakov is no go, then, now. He has lost that stake. Now he has only Anna Andreyevna to fall back on. I will give you two thousand . . . without interest and without an IOU."

Having delivered himself of this, he sat back in his chair, with a determined and important expression, and stared goggle-eyed at me. I too stared.

“You’ve a suit from Bolshaya Milliona; you need money, you want money; my money’s better than his. I will give you more than two thousand . . .”

“But what for? what for? damn it all!” I stamped my foot. He bent towards me and brought out impressively:

“For you not to hinder.”

“But I’m not interfering as it is,” I shouted.

“I know that you are holding your tongue, that’s excellent.”

“I don’t want your approbation. For my part I am very anxious for it myself, but I consider it’s not my business, and in fact that it would be unseemly for me to meddle.”

“There, you see, you see, unseemly!” he held up his finger.

“What do you see?”

“Unseemly . . . Ha!” and he suddenly laughed. “I understand, I understand, that it would be unseemly of you, but you won’t interfere?” he winked; but in that wink there was something so insolent, so low and even jeering: evidently he was assuming some meanness on my part and was reckoning upon it; that was clear, but I hadn’t a notion what was meant.

“Anna Andreyevna is your sister, too,” he pronounced insinuatingly.

“Don’t you dare to speak of that. And in fact don’t dare to speak of Anna Andreyevna at all.”

“Don’t be too proud, only one more minute! Listen! he will get the money and provide for every one,” Stebelkov said impressively, “every one, EVERY ONE, you follow?”

“So you think I’ll take money from him?”

“You are taking it now.”

“I am taking my own.”

“How is it your own?”

“It’s Versilov’s money, he owes Versilov twenty thousand.”

“Versilov then, not you.”

“Versilov is my father.”

“No, you are a Dolgoruky, not a Versilov.”

“It’s all the same.” Yes, indeed, I was able to argue like that then! I knew it was not the same, I was not so stupid as all that, but again it was

from “delicacy” that I reasoned so.

“Enough!” I cried. “I can’t make out what you are talking about, and how dare you ask me to come for such nonsense.”

“Can you really not understand? Is it on purpose or not?” Stebelkov brought out slowly, looking at me with a penetrating and incredulous smile.

“I swear I don’t understand.”

“I tell you he’ll be able to provide for every one, EVERY ONE; you’ve only not to interfere, and don’t try to persuade him.”

“You must have gone out of your mind. Why do you keep trotting out that ‘every one.’ Do you mean he’ll provide for Versilov?”

“You’re not the only one, nor Versilov either . . . there is some one else, too, and Anna Andreyevna is just as much your sister AS LIZAVETA MAKAROVNA!”

I gazed at him open-eyed. There was a sudden glimpse of something like compassion for me in his loathsome eyes:

“You don’t understand, so much the better! That’s good, very good, that you don’t understand. It’s very laudable . . . if you really don’t understand.”

I was absolutely furious.

“Go to hell with your silly nonsense, you madman!” I shouted, taking up my hat.

“It’s not silly nonsense! So you are going, but you’ll come again, you know.”

“No,” I rapped out in the doorway.

“You’ll come, and then we shall have another talk. That will be the real talk. Two thousand, remember!”

2

He made such a filthy and confused impression on me, that when I got out I tried not to think of it at all, but dismissed it with a curse. The idea that Prince Sergay was capable of talking to him of me and of that money stabbed me like a pin. “I’ll win and pay him back to-day,” I thought resolutely. Stupid and inarticulate as Stebelkov was, I had seen the full-blown scoundrel in all his glory. And what mattered most to me, it was impossible to avoid intrigue in this business. Only I had not the time just then to go into any sort of intrigues, and that may have been the chief reason why I was as blind as a hen! I looked anxiously at my watch, but it

was not yet two o'clock; so it was still possible to pay a call; otherwise I should have been worn out with excitement before three o'clock. I went to Anna Andreyevna Versilov, my sister. I had got to know her some time before at my old prince's, during his illness. He thought that I had not seen him for three or four days fretted my conscience, but I was reckoning on Anna Andreyevna: the old prince had become extremely attached to her of late, and even spoke of her to me as his guardian angel. And by the way, the idea of marrying her to Prince Sergay really had occurred to the old prince, and he had even expressed it more than once to me, in secret of course. I had mentioned this suggestion to Versilov, for I had noticed that though he was so indifferent to all the practical affairs of life, he seemed particularly interested whenever I told him of my meeting Anna Andreyevna. When I mentioned the old prince's idea, Versilov muttered that Anna Andreyevna had plenty of sense, and was quite capable of getting out of a delicate position without the advice of outsiders. Stebelkov was right, of course, in saying that the old man meant to give her a dowry, but how could he dare to reckon on getting anything out of it! Prince Sergay had shouted after him that morning that he was not in the least afraid of him: surely Stebelkov had not actually spoken to him of Anna Andreyevna in the study? I could fancy how furious I should have been in Prince Sergay's place.

I had been to see Anna Andreyevna pretty often of late. But there was one queer thing about my visits: it always happened that she arranged for me to come, and certainly expected me, but when I went in she always made a pretence of my having come unexpectedly and by chance; I noticed this peculiarity in her, but I became much attached to her nevertheless. She lived with Mme. Fanariotov, her grandmother, as an adopted child, of course (Versilov had never contributed anything for her keep), but she was very far from being in the position in which the protégées of illustrious ladies are usually described as being; for instance, the one in the house of the old countess, in Pushkin's "Queen of Spades."

Anna Andreyevna was more in the position of the countess herself. She lived quite independently in the house, that is to say, though on the same storey and in the same flat as the Fanariotovs she had two rooms completely apart, so that I, for instance, never once met any of the family as I went in or came out. She was free to receive any visitors she liked, and to employ her time as she chose. It is true that she was in her twenty-third year. She

had almost given up going out into society of late, though Mme. Fanariotov spared no expense for her granddaughter, of whom I was told she was very fond. Yet what I particularly liked about Anna Andreyevna was that I always found her so quietly dressed and always occupied with something, a book or needlework. There was something of the convent, even of the nun about her, and I liked it very much. She was not very talkative, but she always spoke with judgment and knew how to listen, which I never did. When I told her that she reminded me of Versilov, though they had not a feature in common, she always flushed a little. She often blushed and always quickly, invariably with a faint flush, and I particularly liked this peculiarity in her face. In her presence I never spoke of Versilov by his surname, but always called him Andrey Petrovitch, and this had somehow come to pass of itself. I gathered indeed that the Fanariotovs must have been ashamed of Versilov, though indeed I only drew this conclusion from Anna Andreyevna, and again I'm not sure that the word "ashamed" is appropriate in this connection; but there was some feeling of that sort. I talked to her too about Prince Sergay, and she listened eagerly, and was, I fancy, interested in what I told her of him; but it somehow happened that I always spoke of him of my own accord, and she never questioned me about him. Of the possibility of a marriage between them I had never dared to speak, though I often felt inclined to, for the idea was not without attraction for me. But there were very many things of which, in her room, I could not have ventured to speak, yet on the other hand I felt very much at home there. Another thing I liked was that she was so well educated, and had read so much — real books too; she had read far more than I had.

She had invited me the first time of her own accord. I realized even at the time that she might be reckoning on getting some information out of me at one time or another. Oh, lots of people were able to get information of all sorts out of me in those days! "But what of it," I thought, "it's not only for that that she's asking me." In fact I was positively glad to think I might be of use to her . . . and when I sat with her I always felt that I had a sister sitting beside me, though we never once spoke of our relationship by so much as a word or a hint, but behaved as though it did not exist at all. When I was with her it was absolutely unthinkable to speak of it, and indeed looking at her I was struck with the absurd notion that she might perhaps know nothing of our relationship — so completely did she ignore it in her manner to me.

When I went in I found Liza with her. This almost astonished me. I knew very well that they had seen each other before; they had met over the "baby." I will perhaps later on, if I have space, tell how Anna Andreyevna, always so proud and so delicate, was possessed by the fantastic desire to see that baby, and how she had there met Liza. But yet I had not expected that Anna Andreyevna would ever have invited Liza to come to see her. It was a pleasant surprise to me. Giving no sign of this, of course, I greeted Anna Andreyevna, and warmly pressing Liza's hand sat down beside her. Both were busily occupied: spread out on the table and on their knees was an evening dress of Anna Andreyevna's, expensive but "old," that is, worn three times; and Anna Andreyevna wanted to alter it. Liza was "a master-hand" at such work, and had real taste, and so a "solemn council of wise women" was being held. I recalled Versilov's words and laughed; and indeed I was in a radiantly happy state of mind.

"You are in very good spirits to-day and that's very pleasant," observed Anna Andreyevna, uttering her words gravely and distinctly. Her voice was a rich mellow contralto, and she always spoke quietly and gently, with a droop of her long eyelashes, and a faint smile on her pale face.

"Liza knows how disagreeable I am when I am not in good spirits," I answered gaily.

"Perhaps Anna Andreyevna knows that too," mischievous Liza gibed at me. My darling! If I had known what was on her mind at that time!

"What are you doing now?" asked Anna Andreyevna. (I may remark that she had asked me to come and see her that day.)

"I am sitting here wondering why I always prefer to find you reading rather than with needlework. Yes, really needlework doesn't suit you, somehow. I agree with Andrey Petrovitch about that."

"You have still not made up your mind to enter the university, then?"

"I am very grateful to you for not having forgotten our conversation: it shows you think of me sometimes, but . . . about the university my ideas are not quite definite . . . besides, I have plans of my own."

"That means he has a secret," observed Liza.

"Leave off joking, Liza. Some clever person said the other day that by our progressive movement of the last twenty years, we had proved above

everything that we are filthily uneducated. That was meant for our university men, too."

"No doubt father said that," remarked Liza, "you very often repeat his ideas."

"Liza, you seem to think I've no mind of my own."

"In these days it's a good thing to listen to intelligent men, and repeat their words," said Anna Andreyevna, taking my part a little.

"Just so, Anna Andreyevna," I assented warmly. "The man who doesn't think of the position of Russia to-day is no patriot! I look at Russia perhaps from a strange point of view: we lived through the Tatar invasion, and afterwards two centuries of slavery, no doubt because they both suited our tastes. Now freedom has been given us, and we have to put up with freedom: shall we know how to? Will freedom, too, turn out to suit our taste? That's the question."

Liza glanced quickly at Anna Andreyevna, and the latter immediately cast down her eyes and began looking about for something; I saw that Liza was doing her utmost to control herself but all at once our eyes chanced to meet, and she burst into a fit of laughter; I flared up.

"Liza, you are insupportable!"

"Forgive me!" she said suddenly, leaving off laughing and speaking almost sadly. "Goodness knows what I can be thinking about . . ."

And there was a tremor almost as of tears in her voice. I felt horribly ashamed; I took her hand and kissed it warmly.

"You are very good," Anna Andreyevna said softly, seeing me kiss Liza's hand.

"I am awfully glad that I have found you laughing this time, Liza," I said. "Would you believe it, Anna Andreyevna, every time I have met her lately she has greeted me with a strange look, and that look seemed to ask, 'has he found out something? is everything all right?' Really, there has been something like that about her."

Anna Andreyevna looked keenly and deliberately at her. Liza dropped her eyes. I could see very clearly, however, that they were on much closer and more intimate terms than I could have possibly imagined; the thought was pleasant.

"You told me just now that I am good; you would not believe, Anna Andreyevna, how much I change for the better when I'm with you, and how much I like being with you," I said with warmth.

“I am awfully glad that you say that just now,” she answered with peculiar significance. I must mention that she never spoke to me of the reckless way I was living, and the depths to which I was sinking, although (I knew it) she was not only aware of all this, but even made inquiries about it indirectly.

So that this now was something like the first hint on the subject, and my heart turned to her more warmly than ever.

“How is our patient?” I asked.

“Oh, he is much better; he is up, and he went for a drive yesterday and again to-day. You don’t mean to say you have not been to see him to-day? He is eagerly expecting you.”

“I have behaved very badly to him, but now you’re looking after him, and have quite taken my place; he is a gay deceiver, and has thrown me over for you.”

A serious look came into her face, very possibly because my tone was rather too flippant.

“I have just been at Prince Sergay’s,” I muttered, “and I . . . by the way, Liza, you went to see Darya Onisimovna this morning, didn’t you?”

“Yes,” she answered briefly, without raising her head. “But you do go to see the invalid every day, I believe, don’t you?” she asked suddenly, probably in order to say something.

“Yes, I go to see him, but I don’t get there,” I said laughing. “I go in and turn to the left.”

“Even the prince has noticed that you go to see Katerina Nikolaevna very often. He was speaking of it yesterday and laughing,” said Anna Andreyevna.

“What, what did he laugh at?”

“He was joking, you know his way. He said that, on the contrary, the only impression that a young and beautiful woman makes on a young man of your age is one of anger and indignation,” Anne Andreyevna broke into sudden laughter.

“Listen . . . that was a very shrewd saying of his,” I cried. “Most likely it was not he said it, but you said it to him.”

“Why so? No, it was he said it.”

“Well, but suppose the beautiful lady takes notice of him, in spite of his being so insignificant, of his standing in the corner and fuming at the thought that he is ‘only a boy’; suppose she suddenly prefers him to the

whole crowd of admirers surrounding her, what then?" I asked with a bold and defiant air. My head was throbbing.

"Then you are completely done for," laughed Liza.

"Done for," I cried. "No, I'm not done for. I believe that's false. If a woman stands across my path she must follow me. I am not going to be turned aside from my path with impunity. . . ."

I remember Liza once happened to mention long afterwards that I pronounced this phrase very strangely, earnestly, and as though reflecting deeply; and at the same time it was "so absurd, it was impossible to keep from laughing"; Anna Andreyevna did, in fact, laugh again.

"Laugh at me, laugh away," I cried in exultation, for I was delighted with the whole conversation and the tone of it; "from you it's a pleasure to me. I love your laugh, Anne Andreyevna! It's a peculiarity of yours to keep perfectly quiet, and then suddenly laugh, all in one minute, so that an instant before one could not guess what was coming from your face. I used to know a lady in Moscow, I used to sit in a corner and watch her from a distance. She was almost as handsome as you are, but she did not know how to laugh like you; her face was as attractive as yours, but it lost all its attractiveness when she laughed; what's so particularly attractive in you . . . is just that faculty. . . . I have been meaning to tell you so for a long time."

When I said of this Moscow lady that "she was as handsome as you" I was not quite ingenuous. I pretended that the phrase had dropped from me unawares, without my noticing it: I knew very well that such "unconscious" praise is more highly valued by a woman than the most polished compliment. And though Anna Andreyevna might flush, I knew that it pleased her. And indeed I invented the lady: I had known no such lady in Moscow; I had said so simply to compliment Anna Andreyevna, and give her pleasure.

"One really might imagine," she said with a charming laugh, "that you had come under the influence of some fair lady during the last few days."

I felt I was being carried away . . . I longed indeed to tell them something . . . but I refrained.

"By the way, only lately you spoke of Katerina Nikolaevna with very hostile feelings."

"If I did speak ill of her in any way," I cried with flashing eyes, "what's to blame for it is the monstrous slander — that she is an enemy of Andrey Petrovitch's; there's a libelous story about him, too, that he was in love with

her, made her an offer and other absurdities of the sort. The notion is as grotesque as the other scandalous story, that during her husband's lifetime she promised Prince Sergay to marry him as soon as she should be a widow, and afterwards would not keep her word. But I have it first hand that it was not so at all, and that it was all only a joke. I know it first hand. She did, in fact, when she was abroad, say to him in a playful moment: 'Perhaps in the future'; but what did that amount to beyond an idle word? I know very well that the prince on his side can attach no sort of consequence to such a promise; and indeed he has no intention of doing so," I added on second thoughts. "I fancy he has very different ideas in his head," I put in slily. "Nastchokin said this morning at Prince Sergay's that Katerina Nikolaevna was to be married to Baron Büring. I assure you he received the news with the greatest equanimity, you can take my word for it."

"Has Nastchokin been at Prince Sergay's?" Anna Andreyevna asked with grave emphasis, apparently surprised.

"Oh yes; he seems to be one of those highly respectable people . . ."

"And did Nastchokin speak to him of this match with Büring?" asked Anna Andreyevna, showing sudden interest.

"Not of the match, but of the possibility of one — he spoke of it as a rumour; he said there was such a rumour going the round of the drawing-rooms; for my part I am certain it's nonsense."

Anna Andreyevna pondered a moment and bent over her sewing.

"I love Prince Sergay," I added suddenly with warmth. "He has his failings, no doubt; I have told you so already, especially a certain tendency to be obsessed by one idea . . . and, indeed, his faults are a proof of the generosity of his heart, aren't they? But we almost had a quarrel with him to-day about an idea; it's his conviction that one must be honourable if one talks of what's honourable, if not, all that you say is a lie. Now, is that logical? Yet it shows the high standard of honesty, duty, and truth in his soul, doesn't it? . . . Oh, good heavens, what time is it," I cried, suddenly happening to glance at the clock on the wall.

"Ten minutes to three," she responded tranquilly, looking at the clock. All the time I had talked of Prince Sergay she listened to me with her eyes cast down, with a rather sly but charming smile: she knew why I was praising him. Liza listened with her head bent over her work. For some time past she had taken no part in the conversation.

I jumped up as though I were scalded.

“Are you late for some appointment?”

“Yes . . . No . . . I am late though, but I am just off. One word only, Anna Andreyevna,” I began with feeling; “I can’t help telling you to-day! I want to confess that I have often blessed your kindness, and the delicacy with which you have invited me to see you. . . . My acquaintance with you has made the strongest impression on me. . . . In your room I am, as it were, spiritually purified, and I leave you better than when I came. That’s true. When I sit beside you I am not only unable to speak of anything evil, I am incapable even of evil thoughts; they vanish away in your presence and, if I recall anything evil after seeing you, I feel ashamed of it at once, I am cast down and blush inwardly. And do you know, it pleased me particularly to find my sister with you to-day. . . . It’s a proof of your generosity . . . of such a fine attitude. . . . In one word, you have shown something so SISTERLY, if I may be allowed to break the ice, to . . .”

As I spoke she got up from her seat, and turned more and more crimson; but suddenly she seemed in alarm at something, at the overstepping of some line which should not have been crossed and she quickly interrupted me.

“I assure you I appreciate your feelings with all my heart. . . . I have understood them without words for a long time past. . . .”

She paused in confusion, pressing my hand. Liza, unseen by her, suddenly pulled at my sleeve. I said good-bye and went out, but Liza overtook me in the next room.

4

“Liza, why did you tug at my sleeve?” I asked her.

“She is horrid, she is cunning, she is not worth it. . . . She keeps hold of you to get something out of you,” she murmured in a rapid, angry whisper. I had never before seen such a look on her face.

“For goodness’ sake, Liza! she is such a delightful girl!”

“Well, then, I’m horrid.”

“What’s the matter with you?”

“I am very nasty. She may be the most delightful girl, and I am nasty. That’s enough, let me alone. Listen: mother implores you about something ‘of which she does not dare to speak,’ so she said, Arkady darling! Give up gambling, dear one, I entreat you . . . and so does mother. . . .”

“Liza, I know, but . . . I know that it’s pitiful cowardice, but . . . but it’s all of no consequence, really! You see I’ve got into debt like a fool, and I want to win simply to pay it off. I can win, for till now I’ve been playing at random, for the fun of the thing, like a fool, but now I shall tremble over every rouble. . . . It won’t be me if I don’t win! I have not got a passion for it; it’s not important, it’s simply a passing thing; I assure you I am too strong to be unable to stop when I like. I’ll pay back the money and then I shall be altogether yours, and tell mother that I shall stay with you always. . . .”

“That three hundred roubles cost you something this morning!”

“How do you know?” I asked, startled.

“Darya Onisimovna heard it all this morning . . .”

But at that moment Liza pushed me behind the curtain, and we found ourselves in the so-called “lantern,” that is a little circular room with windows all round it. Before I knew where we were I caught the sound of a voice I knew, and the clang of spurs, and recognized a familiar footstep.

“Prince Sergay,” I whispered.

“Yes,” she whispered.

“Why are you so frightened?”

“It’s nothing; I don’t want him to meet me.”

“Tiens, you don’t mean to say he’s trying to flirt with you?” I said smiling. “I’d give it to him if he did. Where are you going?”

“Let us go, I will come with you.”

“Have you said good-bye?”

“Yes, my coat’s in the hall.”

We went out; on the stairs I was struck by an idea.

“Do you know, Liza, he may have come to make her an offer!”

“N-n-no . . . he won’t make her an offer . . ,” she said firmly and deliberately, in a low voice.

“You don’t know, Liza, though I quarrelled with him this morning — since you’ve been told of it already — yet on my honour I really love him and wish him success. We made it up this morning. When we are happy we are so good-natured. . . . One sees in him many fine tendencies . . . and he has humane feelings too. . . . The rudiments anyway . . . and in the hands of such a strong and clever girl as Anna Andreyevna, he would rise to her level and be happy. I am sorry I’ve no time to spare . . . but let us go a little way together, I should like to tell you something. . . .”

“No, you go on, I’m not going that way. Are you coming to dinner?”

“I am coming, I am coming as I promised. Listen, Liza, a low brute, a loathsome creature in fact, called Stebelkov, has a strange influence over his doings . . . an IOU. . . . In short he has him in his power, and he has pressed him so hard, and Prince Sergay has humiliated himself so far that neither of them see any way out of it except an offer to Anna Andreyevna. And really she ought to be warned, though that’s nonsense; she will set it all to rights later. But what do you think, will she refuse him?”

“Good-bye, I am late,” Liza muttered, and in the momentary look on her face I saw such hatred that I cried out in horror:

“Liza, darling, what is it?”

“I am not angry with you; only don’t gamble. . . .”

“Oh, you are talking of that; I’m not going to.”

“You said just now: ‘when we are happy.’ Are you very happy then?”

“Awfully, Liza, awfully! Good heavens, why it’s past three o’clock! . . . Good-bye, Liza. Lizotchka darling, tell me: can one keep a woman waiting? Isn’t it inexcusable?”

“Waiting to meet you, do you mean?” said Liza faintly smiling, with a sort of lifeless, trembling smile.

“Give me your hand for luck.”

“For luck? my hand? I won’t, not for anything.”

She walked away quickly. And she had exclaimed it so earnestly! I jumped into my sledge.

Yes, yes, this was “happiness,” and it was the chief reason why I was as blind as a mole, and had no eyes or understanding, except for myself.

CHAPTER IV

1

Now I am really afraid to tell my story. It all happened long ago; and it is all like a mirage to me now. How could such a woman possibly have arranged a rendezvous with such a contemptible urchin as I was then? Yet so it seemed at first sight! When, leaving Liza, I raced along with my heart throbbing, I really thought that I had gone out of my mind: the idea that she had granted me this interview suddenly appeared to me such an obvious absurdity, that it was impossible for me to believe in it. And yet I had not the faintest doubt of it; the more obviously absurd it seemed, the more implicitly I believed in it.

The fact that it had already struck three troubled me: "If an interview has been granted me, how can I possibly be late for it," I thought. Foolish questions crossed my mind, too, such as: "Which was my better course now, boldness or timidity?" But all this only flashed through my mind because I had something of real value in my heart, which I could not have defined. What had been said the evening before was this: "To-morrow at three o'clock I shall be at Tatyana Pavlovna's," that was all. But in the first place, she always received me alone in her own room, and she could have said anything she liked to me there, without going to Tatyana Pavlovna's for the purpose; so why have appointed another place of meeting? And another question was: would Tatyana Pavlovna be at home or not? If it were a tryst then Tatyana Pavlovna would not be at home. And how could this have been arranged without telling Tatyana Pavlovna beforehand? Then was Tatyana Pavlovna in the secret? This idea seemed to me wild, and in a way indelicate, almost coarse.

And, in fact, she might simply have been going to see Tatyana Pavlovna, and have mentioned the fact to me the previous evening with no object in view, but I had misunderstood her. And, indeed, it had been said so casually, so quickly, and after a very tedious visit. I was for some reason overcome with stupidity the whole evening: I sat and mumbled, and did not know what to say, raged inwardly, and was horribly shy, and she was going out somewhere, as I learnt later, and was evidently relieved when I got up to go. All these reflections surged into my mind. I made up my mind at last

that when I arrived I would ring the bell. “The cook will open the door,” I thought, “and I shall ask whether Tatyana Pavlovna is at home. If she is not then it’s a tryst.” But I had no doubt of it, no doubt of it!

I ran up the stairs and when I was at the door all my fears vanished. “Come what may,” I thought, “if only it’s quickly!” The cook opened the door and with revolting apathy snuffled out that Tatyana Pavlovna was not at home. “But isn’t there some one else? Isn’t there some one waiting for her?” I wanted to ask, but I did not ask, “I’d better see for myself,” and muttering to the cook that I would wait, I took off my fur coat and opened the door. . . .

Katerina Nikolaevna was sitting at the window “waiting for Tatyana Pavlovna.”

“Isn’t she at home?” she suddenly asked me, in a tone of anxiety and annoyance as soon as she saw me. And her face and her voice were so utterly incongruous with what I had expected that I came to a full stop in the doorway.

“Who’s not at home?” I muttered.

“Tatyana Pavlovna! Why, I asked you yesterday to tell her that I would be with her at three o’clock.”

“I . . . I have not seen her at all.”

“Did you forget?”

I sat completely overwhelmed. So this was all it meant! And the worst of it was it was all as clear as twice two makes four, and I — I had all this while persisted in believing it.

“I don’t remember your asking me to tell her. And in fact you didn’t ask me: you simply said you would be here at three o’clock,” I burst out impatiently, I did not look at her.

“Oh!” she cried suddenly; “but if you forgot to tell her, though you knew I should be here, what has brought you here?”

I raised my head; there was no trace of mockery or anger in her face, there was only her bright, gay smile, and a look more mischievous than usual. Though, indeed, her face always had an expression of almost childish mischief.

“There, you see I’ve caught you; well, what are you going to say now?” her whole face seemed to be saying.

I did not want to answer and looked down again. The silence lasted half a minute.

“Have you just come from papa?” she asked.

“I have come from Anna Andreyevna’s, I haven’t been to see Prince Nikolay Ivanitch at all . . . and you know that,” I added suddenly.

“Did anything happen to you at Anna Andreyevna’s?”

“You mean that I look as though I were crazy? But I looked crazy before I went to Anna Andreyevna.”

“And you didn’t recover your wits there?”

“No, I didn’t. And what’s more I heard that you were going to marry Baron Büring.”

“Did she tell you that?” she asked with sudden interest.

“No, it was I told her; I heard Nastchokin tell Prince Sergay so this morning.”

I still kept my eyes cast down and did not look at her; to look at her meant to be flooded with radiance, joy, and happiness, and I did not want to be happy. Indignation had stung me to the heart, and in one instant I had taken a tremendous resolution. Then I began to speak, I hardly knew what about. I was breathless, and spoke indistinctly, but I looked at her boldly. My heart was throbbing. I began talking of something quite irrelevant, though perhaps not incoherently. At first she listened with a serene, patient smile, which never left her face, but little by little signs of surprise and then of alarm passed over her countenance. The smile still persisted, but from time to time it seemed tremulous. “What’s the matter?” I asked her, noticing that she shuddered all over.

“I am afraid of you,” she answered, almost in trepidation.

“Why don’t you go away?” I said. “As Tatyana Pavlovna is not at home, and you know she won’t be, you ought to get up and go.”

“I meant to wait for her, but now . . . really. . . .”

She made a movement to get up.

“No, no, sit down,” I said, stopping her; “there, you shuddered again, but you smile even when you’re frightened. . . . You always have a smile. There, now you are smiling all over. . . .”

“You are raving.”

“Yes, I am.”

“I am frightened . . ,” she whispered again.

“Frightened of what?”

“That you’ll begin knocking down the walls . . ,” she smiled again, though she really was scared.

“I can’t endure your smile . . .!”

And I talked away again. I plunged headlong. It was as though something had given me a shove. I had never, never talked to her like that, I had always been shy. I was fearfully shy now, but I talked; I remember I talked about her face.

“I can’t endure your smile any longer!” I cried suddenly. “Why did I even in Moscow picture you as menacing, magnificent, using venomous drawing-room phrases? Yes, even before I left Moscow, I used to talk with Marie Ivanovna about you, and imagined what you must be like. . . . Do you remember Marie Ivanovna? You’ve been in her house. When I was coming here I dreamed of you all night in the train. For a whole month before you came I gazed at your portrait, in your father’s study, and could make nothing of it. The expression of your face is childish mischief and boundless good-nature — there! I have been marvelling at it all the time I’ve been coming to see you. Oh, and you know how to look haughty and to crush one with a glance. I remember how you looked at me at your father’s that day when you had arrived from Moscow . . . I saw you then, but if you were to ask me how I went out of the room or what you were like, I could not tell you — I could not even have told whether you were tall or short. As soon as I saw you I was blinded. Your portrait is not in the least like you: your eyes are not dark, but light, it’s only the long eyelashes that make them look dark. You are plump, you are neither tall nor short, you have a buxom fullness, the light full figure of a healthy peasant girl. And your face is quite countrified, too, it’s the face of a village beauty — don’t be offended. Why, it’s fine, it’s better so — a round, rosy, clear, bold, laughing, and . . . bashful face! Really, bashful. Bashful! of Katerina Nikolaevna Ahmakov! Bashful and chaste, I swear! More than chaste — childlike! — that’s your face! I have been astounded by it all this time, and have been asking myself, is the woman so, too? I know now that you are very clever, but do you know, at first I thought you were a simpleton? You have a bright and lively mind, but without embellishments of any sort. . . . Another thing I like is that your smile never deserts you; that’s my paradise! I love your calmness, too, your quietness, and your uttering your words so smoothly, so calmly and almost lazily, it’s just that laziness I like. I believe if a bridge were to break down under you, you would say something in a smooth and even voice. . . . I imagined you as the acme of pride and passion, and for the last two months you’ve been talking to me as

one student talks to another. I never imagined that you had such a brow; it's rather low, like the foreheads of statues, but soft and as white as marble, under your glorious hair. Your bosom is high, your movements are light. You are extraordinarily beautiful, but there's no pride about you. It's only now I've come to believe it, I've disbelieved in it all this time!"

She listened to this wild tirade with large wide-open eyes, she saw that I was trembling. Several times she lifted her gloved hand with a charming apprehensive gesture to stop me, but every time she drew it back in dismay and perplexity. Sometimes she even stepped back a little. Two or three times the smile lighted up her face again; at one time she flushed very red, but in the end was really frightened and turned pale. As soon as I stopped she held out her hand, and in a voice that was still even, though it had a note of entreaty, said:

"You must not say that . . . you can't talk like that. . . ."

And suddenly she got up from her place, deliberately gathering up her scarf and sable muff.

"Are you going?" I cried.

"I'm really afraid of you . . . you are abusing . . ," she articulated slowly and as it were with compassion and reproach.

"Listen, on my honour I won't knock down the walls."

"But you've begun already," she could not refrain from smiling. "I don't even know if you will allow me to pass." And she seemed to be actually afraid I would not let her go.

"I will open the door myself, but let me tell you I've taken a tremendous resolution; and if you care to give light to my soul, come back, sit down, and listen to just two words. But if you won't, then go away, and I will open the door to you myself!"

She looked at me and sat down again.

"Some women would have gone out with a show of indignation, but you sit down!" I cried in exaltation.

"You have never allowed yourself to talk like this before."

"I was always afraid before, I came in now not knowing what I should say. You imagine I'm not afraid now: I am. But I've just taken a tremendous resolution, and I feel I shall carry it out. And as soon as I took that resolution I went out of my mind and began saying all this. . . . Listen, this is what I have to say, am I your spy or not? Answer me that question!"

The colour rushed into her face.

“Don’t answer yet, Katerina Nikolaevna, but listen to every thing and then tell the whole truth.”

I had broken down all barriers at once and plunged headlong into space.

2

“Two months ago I was standing here behind the curtain . . . you know . . . and you talked to Tatyana Pavlovna about the letter. I rushed out, and beside myself, I blurted out the truth. You saw at once that I knew something . . . you could not help seeing it . . . you were trying to find an important document, and were uneasy about it. . . . Wait a bit, Katerina Nikolaevna, don’t speak yet. I must tell you that your suspicion was well founded: that document does exist . . . that is to say it did. . . . I have seen it — your letter to Andronikov, that’s it, isn’t it?”

“You’ve seen that letter?” she asked quickly, in embarrassment and agitation. “When did you see it?”

“I saw it . . . I saw it at Kraft’s . . . you know, the man that shot himself. . . .”

“Really? You saw it yourself? What became of it?”

“Kraft tore it up.”

“In your presence, did you see him?”

“Yes, he tore it up, probably because he was going to die. . . . I did not know then, of course, that he was going to shoot himself. . . .”

“So it has been destroyed, thank God!” she commented slowly with a deep sigh, and she crossed herself.

I was not lying to her, that is to say I was lying because the letter in question was in my hands and had never been in Kraft’s, but that was a mere detail; in what really mattered I did not lie, because at the instant I told the lie I nerved myself to burn the letter that very evening. I swear that if it had been in my pocket that moment I would have taken it out and given it her; but I hadn’t it with me, it was at my lodging. Perhaps though I should not have given it her because I should have felt horribly ashamed to confess to her then that I had it, and had been keeping it and waiting so long before I gave it back. It made no difference, I should have burnt it at home in any case, and I was not lying! I swear that at that moment my heart was pure.

“And since that’s how it is,” I went on, almost beside myself, “tell me, have you been attracting me, have you been welcoming me in your

drawing-room because you suspected that I knew of the letter? Stay, Katerina Nikolaevna, one minute more, don't speak, but let me finish: all the time I've been coming to see you, all this time I've been suspecting that it was only because of that that you made much of me, to get that letter out of me, to lead me on to telling you about it. . . . Wait one more minute: I suspected it, but I suffered. Your duplicity was more than I could bear, for I found you a noble creature! I tell you plainly; I was your enemy, but I found you a noble creature! I was utterly vanquished. But your duplicity, that is the suspicion of your duplicity, was anguish. . . . Now everything must be settled, everything must be explained, the time has come for it; but wait yet a little longer, don't speak, let me tell you how I look at it myself, just now at this moment; I tell you plainly, if it has been so I don't resent it . . . that is, I mean, I'm not offended, for it's so natural; I understand, you see. What is there unnatural or wrong about it? You were worried about a letter, you suspected that So-and-so knew all about it; well, you might very naturally desire So-and-so to speak out. . . . There's no harm in that, none at all. I am speaking sincerely. Yet now you must tell me something . . . you must confess (forgive the word), I must have the truth. I want it for a reason! And so tell me, why did you make much of me? Was it to get that letter out of me . . . Katerina Nikolaevna?"

I spoke as though I were falling from a height, and my forehead was burning. She was listening to me now without apprehension; on the contrary, her face was full of feeling; but she looked somehow abashed, as though she were ashamed.

"It was for that," she said slowly and in a low voice. "Forgive me, I did wrong," she added suddenly, with a faint movement of her hands towards me. I had never expected this . . . had expected anything rather that those two words — even from her whom I knew already.

"And you tell me you did wrong! so simply: 'I did wrong,'" I cried.

"Oh, for a long time I've been feeling that I was not treating you fairly . . . and, indeed, I'm glad to be able to speak of it. . . ."

"For a long time you've been feeling that? Why did you not speak of it before?"

"Oh, I did not know how to say it," she smiled; "that is, I should have known how," she smiled again, "but I always felt ashamed . . . because at first it really was only on that account that I 'attracted' you, as you expressed it; but very soon afterwards I felt disgusted and sick of all this

deception, I assure you!" she added with bitter feeling; "and of all this troublesome business!"

"And why — why couldn't you have asked me then straightforwardly? You should have said: 'you know about the letter, why do you pretend?' And I should have told you at once, I should have confessed at once!"

"Oh, I was . . . a little afraid of you. I must admit I did not trust you either. And after all, if I dissembled, you did the same," she added with a laugh.

"Yes, yes, I have been contemptible!" I cried, overwhelmed. "Oh, you don't know yet the abyss into which I have fallen."

"An abyss already! I recognize your style," she smiled softly. "That letter," she added mournfully, "was the saddest and most indiscreet thing I ever did. The consciousness of it was a continual reproach. Moved by circumstances and apprehension, I had doubts of my dear generous-hearted father. Knowing that that letter might fall . . . into the hands of malicious people . . . and I had good reasons for fearing this" (she added hotly), "I trembled that they might use it, might show my father . . . and it might make a tremendous impression on him . . . in his condition . . . on his health . . . and he might be estranged from me. . . . Yes," she added, looking me candidly in the face, and probably catching some shade in my expression; "yes, and I was afraid for my future too; I was afraid that he . . . under the influence of his illness . . . might deprive me of his favour. . . . That feeling came in too; no doubt I did him an injustice; he is so kind and generous, that no doubt he would have forgiven me. That's all. But I ought not to have treated you as I did," she concluded, again seeming suddenly abashed. "You have made me feel ashamed."

"No, you have nothing to be ashamed of," I cried.

"I certainly did reckon . . . on your impulsiveness . . . and I recognize it," she brought out, looking down.

"Katerina Nikolaevna! Who forces you to make such confessions to me, tell me that?" I cried, as though I were drunk. "Wouldn't it have been easy for you to get up, and in the most exquisite phrases to prove to me subtly and as clearly as twice two make four that though it was so, yet it was nothing of the sort — you understand, as people of your world know how to deal with the truth? I am crude and foolish, you know, I should have believed you at once, I should have believed anything from you, whatever you said! It would have cost you nothing to behave like that, of course!

You are not really afraid of me, you know! How could you be so willing to humiliate yourself like this before an impudent puppy, a wretched raw youth?"

"In this anyway I've not humiliated myself before you," she enunciated with immense dignity, apparently not understanding my exclamation.

"No, indeed, quite the contrary, that's just what I am saying. . . ."

"Oh, it was so wrong, so thoughtless of me!" she exclaimed, putting her hand to her face, as though to hide it. "I felt ashamed yesterday, that's why I was not myself when I was with you. . . . The fact is," she added, "that circumstances have made it absolutely essential for me at last to find out the truth about that unlucky letter, or else I should have begun to forget about it . . . for I have not let you come to see me simply on account of that," she added suddenly.

There was a tremor at my heart.

"Of course not," she went on with a subtle smile, "of course not! I . . . You very aptly remarked, Arkady Makarovitch, that we have often talked together as one student to another. I assure you I am sometimes very much bored in company; I have felt so particularly since my time abroad and all these family troubles . . . I very rarely go anywhere, in fact, and not simply from laziness. I often long to go into the country. There I could read over again my favourite books, which I have laid aside for so long, and have never been able to bring myself to read again. I have spoken to you of that already. Do you remember, you laughed at my reading the Russian newspapers at the rate of two a day."

"I didn't laugh. . . ."

"Of course not, for you, too, were excited over them, and I confessed, too, long ago, that I am Russian, and love Russia. You remember we always read 'facts' as you called them" (she smiled). "Though you are at times somewhat . . . strange, yet sometimes you grew so eager and would say such good things, and you were interested just in what I was interested in. When you are a 'student' you are charming and original. Nothing else suits you so well," she added, with a sly and charming smile. "Do you remember we sometimes talked for hours about nothing but figures, reckoned and compared, and took trouble to find out how many schools there are in Russia, and in what direction progress is being made? We reckoned up the murders and serious crimes and set them off against the cheering items. . . . We wanted to find out in what direction we were

moving, and what would happen to us in the end. In you I found sincerity. In our world men never talk like that to us, to women. Last week I was talking to Prince X. about Bismarck, for I was very much interested, and could not make up my mind about him, and only fancy, he sat down beside me and began telling me about him very fully, indeed, but always with a sort of irony, and that patronizing condescension which I always find so insufferable, and which is so common in 'great men' when they talk to us women if we meddle with 'subjects beyond our sphere.' . . . Do you remember that we almost had a quarrel, you and I, over Bismarck? You showed me that you had ideas of your own 'far more definite' than Bismarck's," she laughed suddenly. "I have only met two people in my whole life who talked to me quite seriously; my husband, a very, very intelligent and hon-our-able man," she pronounced the words impressively, "and you know whom. . . ."

"Versilov!" I cried; I hung breathless on every word she uttered.

"Yes, I was very fond of listening to him, I became at last absolutely open . . . perhaps too open with him, but even then he did not believe in me!"

"Did not believe in you?"

"No, no one has ever believed in me."

"But Versilov, Versilov!"

"He did not simply disbelieve in me," she pronounced, dropping her eyes, and smiling strangely, "but considered that I had all the vices."

"Of which you have not one!"

"No, even I have some."

"Versilov did not love you, so he did not understand you," I cried with flashing eyes.

Her face twitched.

"Say no more of that and never speak to me of . . . of that man," she added hotly, with vehement emphasis. "But that's enough: I must be going" — she got up to go. "Well, do you forgive me or not?" she added, looking at me brightly.

"Me . . . forgive you. . . . Listen, Katerina Nikolaevna, and don't be angry; is it true that you are going to be married?"

"That's not settled," she said in confusion, seeming frightened of something.

"Is he a good man? Forgive me, forgive me that question!"

“Yes, very.”

“Don’t answer further, don’t vouchsafe me an answer! I know that such questions from me are impossible! I only wanted to know whether he is worthy of you or not, but I will find out for myself.”

“Ah, listen!” she said in dismay.

“No, I won’t, I won’t. I’ll step aside. . . . Only this one thing I want to say: God grant you every happiness according to your choice . . . for having given me so much happiness in this one hour! Your image is imprinted on my heart for ever now. I have gained a treasure: the thought of your perfection. I expected duplicity and coarse coquetry and was wretched because I could not connect that idea with you. I’ve been thinking day and night lately, and suddenly everything has become clear as daylight! As I was coming here I thought I should bear away an image of jesuitical cunning, of deception, of an inquisitorial serpent, and I found honour, magnificence, a student. You laugh. Laugh away! You are holy, you know, you cannot laugh at what is sacred. . . .”

“Oh no, I’m only laughing because you use such wonderful expressions. . . . But what is an ‘inquisitorial serpent’?” she laughed.

“You let slip to-day a priceless sentence,” I went on ecstatically. “How could you to my face utter the words; ‘I reckoned on your impulsiveness’? Well, granted you are a saint, and confess even that, because you imagined yourself guilty in some way and want to punish yourself . . . though there was no fault of any sort, for, if there had been, from you everything is holy! But yet you need not have uttered just that word, that expression! . . . Such unnatural candour only shows your lofty purity, your respect for me, your faith in me!” I cried incoherently. “Oh, do not blush, do not blush! . . . And how, how could anyone slander you, and say that you are a woman of violent passions? Oh, forgive me: I see a look of anguish on your face; forgive a frenzied boy his clumsy words! Besides, do words matter now? Are you not above all words? . . . Versilov said once that Othello did not kill Desdemona and afterwards himself because he was jealous, but because he had been robbed of his ideal. . . . I understand that, because to-day my ideal has been restored to me!”

“You praise me too much: I don’t deserve this,” she pronounced with feeling. “Do you remember what I told you about your eyes?” she added playfully.

“That I have microscopes for eyes, and that I exaggerate every fly into a camel! No, this time it’s not a camel. . . . What, you are going?”

She was standing in the middle of the room with her muff and her shawl in her hands.

“No, I shall wait till you’re gone, and then I shall go afterwards. I must write a couple of words to Tatyana Pavlovna.”

“I’m going directly, directly, but once more: may you be happy alone, or with the man of your choice, and God bless you! All that I need is my ideal!”

“Dear, good Arkady Makarovitch, believe me I . . . My father always says of you ‘the dear, good boy!’ Believe me I shall always remember what you have told me of your lonely childhood, abandoned amongst strangers, and your solitary dreams. . . . I understand only too well how your mind has been formed . . . but now though we are students,” she added, with a deprecating and shamefaced smile, pressing my hand, “we can’t go on seeing each other as before and, and . . . no doubt you will understand that?”

“We cannot?”

“No, we cannot, for a long time, we cannot . . . it’s my fault. . . . I see now that it’s quite out of the question. . . . We shall meet sometimes at my father’s.”

“You are afraid of my ‘impulsiveness,’ my feelings, you don’t believe in me!” I would have exclaimed, but she was so overcome with shame that my words refused to be uttered.

“Tell me,” she said, stopping me all at once in the doorway, “did you see yourself that . . . that letter was torn up? You are sure you remember it? How did you know at the time that it was the letter to Andronikov?”

“Kraft told me what was in it, and even showed it to me. . . . Good-bye! When I am with you in your study I am shy of you, but when you go away I am ready to fall down and kiss the spot where your foot has touched the floor. . . .” I brought out all at once, unconsciously, not knowing how or why I said it. And without looking at her I went quickly out of the room.

I set off for home; there was rapture in my soul. My brain was in a whirl, my heart was full. As I drew near my mother’s house I recalled Liza’s ingratitude to Anna Andreyevna, her cruel and monstrous saying that morning, and my heart suddenly ached for them all!

“How hard their hearts are! And Liza too, what’s the matter with her?” I thought as I stood on the steps.

I dismissed Matvey and told him to come to my lodging for me at nine o’clock.

CHAPTER V

1

I was late for dinner, but they had not yet sat down to table, they had waited for me. Perhaps because I did not often dine with them, some special additions to the menu had been made on my account: with the savouries there were sardines and so on. But to my surprise and regret, I found them all rather worried and out of humour. Liza scarcely smiled when she saw me, and mother was obviously uneasy; Versilov gave me a smile, but it was a forced one. "Have they been quarrelling?" I wondered. Everything went well at first, however; Versilov only frowned over the soup with dumplings in it, and made wry faces when he was handed the beef olives.

"I have only to mention that a particular dish does not suit me, for it to reappear next day," he pronounced in vexation.

"But how's one to invent things, Andrey Petrovitch? There's no inventing a new dish of any sort," my mother answered timidly.

"Your mother is the exact opposite of some of our newspapers, to whom whatever is new is good," Versilov tried to make a joke in a more playful and amiable voice; but it somehow fell flat, and only added to the discomfiture of my mother, who of course could make nothing of the comparison of herself with the newspapers, and looked about her in perplexity. At that moment Tatyana Pavlovna came in, and announcing that she had already dined, sat down near mother, on the sofa.

I had not yet succeeded in gaining the good graces of that lady, quite the contrary in fact; she used to fall foul of me more than ever, for everything, and about everything. Her displeasure had of late become more accentuated than ever; she could not endure the sight of my foppish clothes, and Liza told me that she almost had a fit when she heard that I kept a coachman and a smart turn-out. I ended by avoiding meeting her as far as possible. Two months before, when the disputed inheritance was given up to Prince Sergay, I had run to Tatyana Pavlovna, meaning to talk over Versilov's conduct with her, but I met with no trace of sympathy; on the contrary she was dreadfully angry: she was particularly vexed that the whole had been given back, instead of half the fortune; she observed sharply:

“I’ll bet you are persuaded that he has given up the money and challenged the prince to a duel, solely to regain the good opinion of Arkady Makarovitch.”

And indeed she was almost right. I was in reality feeling something of the sort at the time.

As soon as she came in I saw at once that she would infallibly attack me. I was even inclined to believe that she had come in expressly with that object, and so I immediately became exceptionally free-and-easy in my manner; this was no effort to me, for what had just happened had left me still radiant and joyful. I may mention once and for all that a free-and-easy manner never has been right for me, that is to say, it never suits me, but always covers me with disgrace. So it happened now. I instantly said the wrong thing, with no evil intent, but simply from thoughtlessness; noticing that Liza was horribly depressed, I suddenly blurted out, without thinking of what I was saying:

“I haven’t dined here for such ages, and now I have come, see how bored you are, Liza!”

“My head aches,” answered Liza.

“Good gracious!” said Tatyana Pavlovna, instantly catching at it. “What if you are ill? Arkady Makarovitch has deigned to come to dinner, you must dance and be merry.”

“You really are the worry of my life, Tatyana Pavlovna. I will never come again when you are here!” and I brought my hand down on the table with genuine vexation; mother started, and Versilov looked at me strangely. I laughed at once and begged their pardon.

“Tatyana Pavlovna, I take back the word ‘worry,’” I said, turning to her, with the same free-and-easy tone.

“No, no,” she snapped out, “it’s much more flattering to be a worry to you than to be the opposite, you may be sure of that.”

“My dear boy, one must learn to put up with the small worries of life,” Versilov murmured with a smile, “life is not worth living without them.”

“Do you know, you are sometimes a fearful reactionary,” I cried, laughing nervously.

“My dear boy, it doesn’t matter.”

“Yes, it does! Why not tell the blunt truth to an ass, if he is an ass?”

“Surely you are not speaking of yourself? To begin with, I can’t judge anyone, and I don’t want to.”

“Why don’t you want to, why can’t you?”

“Laziness and distaste. A clever woman told me once that I had no right to judge others because ‘I don’t know how to suffer,’ that before judging others, one must gain the right to judge, from suffering. Rather exalted, but, as applied to me, perhaps it’s true, so that I very readily accepted the criticism.”

“Wasn’t it Tatyana Pavlovna who told you that?” I cried.

“Why, how do you know?” said Versilov, glancing at me with some surprise.

“I knew it from Tatyana Pavlovna’s face: she gave a sudden start.”

I guessed by chance. The phrase, as it appeared later, actually had been uttered by Tatyana Pavlovna, the evening before, in a heated discussion. And indeed, I repeat, I had, brimming over with joy and expansiveness, swooped down upon them at an unfortunate moment; all of them had their separate troubles, and they were heavy ones.

“I don’t understand it,” I went on, “because it’s all so abstract; it’s dreadful how fond you are of abstract discussion, Andrey Petrovitch; it’s a sign of egoism; only egoists are fond of generalization.”

“That’s not a bad saying, but don’t persecute me.”

“But let me ask,” I insisted expansively, “what’s the meaning of ‘gaining the right to judge?’ Anyone who is honest may be a judge, that’s my idea.”

“You won’t find many judges in that case.”

“I know one anyway.”

“Who’s that?”

“He is sitting and talking to me now.”

Versilov laughed strangely, he stooped down to my ear, and taking me by the shoulder whispered, “He is always lying to you.”

I don’t know to this day what was in his mind, but evidently he was in some agitation at the time (in consequence of something he had learned, as I found out later). But those words, “he is always lying to you,” were so unexpected and uttered so earnestly, and with such a strange and far from playful expression, that it gave me a nervous shudder. I was almost alarmed and looked at him wildly; but Versilov made haste to laugh.

“Well, thank God!” murmured my mother, who was uneasy at seeing him whisper to me, “I was almost thinking. . . . Don’t be angry with us, Arkasha; you’ll have clever friends apart from us, but who is going to love you, if we don’t love one another?”

“The love of one’s relations is immoral, mother, just because it’s undeserved; love ought to be earned.”

“You’ll earn it later on, but here you are loved without.”

Every one suddenly laughed.

“Well, mother, you may not have meant to shoot, but you hit your bird!” I cried, laughing, too.

“And you actually imagined that there’s something to love you for,” cried Tatyana Pavlovna, falling upon me again: “You are not simply loved for nothing, you are loved in spite of loathing.”

“Oh not a bit of it,” I cried gaily; “do you know, perhaps, some one told me to-day I was loved.”

“Said it laughing at you!” Tatyana Pavlovna said suddenly with a sort of unnatural malignity, as though she had just been waiting for me to say that, “yes, a person of delicacy, especially a woman, would be moved to disgust by the uncleanness of your soul. Your hair is done with a smart parting, you have fine linen, and a suit made by a French tailor, but it’s all uncleanness really! Who’s paid your tailor’s bill, who keeps you, and gives you money to play roulette with? Think who it is you’ve been so shameless as to sponge on!”

My mother flushed painfully, and I had never seen a look of such shame on her face before. Everything seemed to be giving way within me.

“If I am spending money it’s my own, and I am not bound to give an account of it to anyone,” I blurted out, turning crimson.

“Whose own? What money’s your own?”

“If it’s not mine, it’s Andrey Petrovitch’s. He won’t refuse it me. . . . I borrowed from what Prince Sergay owes Andrey Petrovitch. . . .”

“My dear boy,” Versilov said firmly, all of a sudden, “not a farthing of that money is mine.”

The phrase was horribly significant. I was dumbfoundered. Oh, of course, considering my paradoxical and careless attitude at that time, I might quite well have turned it off with some outburst of “generous” feeling, or high-sounding phrase, or something, but I suddenly caught on Liza’s face a resentful accusing expression, an expression I had not deserved, almost a sneer, and a devil seemed to prompt me.

“You seem,” I said, turning to her suddenly, “to visit Darya Onisimovna very often at Prince Sergay’s flat, miss, so will you be pleased to give her

this three hundred roubles, which you've given me such a nagging about already to-day?"

I took out the money and held it out to her. But will it be believed that those mean words were uttered entirely without motive, that is, without the faintest allusion to anything. And indeed there could have been no such allusion, for at that moment I knew absolutely nothing. Perhaps I had just a desire to vex her by something comparatively most innocent, by way of a gibe, "Since you are such an interfering young lady, wouldn't you like to return the money yourself to the prince, a charming young man and a Petersburg officer, as you are so anxious to meddle in young men's business." But what was my amazement when my mother got up, and, with a menacing gesture, cried:

"How dare you! How dare you!"

I could never have conceived of anything like it from her, and I too jumped up from my seat, not exactly in alarm, but with a sort of anguish, a poignant wound in my heart, suddenly realizing that something dreadful had happened. But unable to control herself, mother hid her face in her hands and ran out of the room. Liza followed her out without so much as a glance at me. Tatyana Pavlovna gazed at me for half a minute in silence.

"Can you really have meant to jeer?" she exclaimed enigmatically, looking at me in profound astonishment, but without waiting for me to answer, she, too, ran out to join them. With an unsympathetic, almost angry expression, Versilov got up from the table, and took his hat from the corner.

"I imagine that you are not so much a fool as an innocent," he mumbled to me ironically. "If they come back, tell them to have their pudding without waiting for me. I am going out for a little."

I remained alone; at first I felt bewildered, then I felt resentful, but afterwards I saw clearly that I was to blame. However, I did not know exactly how I was to blame, I simply had a feeling of it. I sat in the window and waited. After waiting ten minutes, I, too, took my hat, and went upstairs to the attic, which had been mine. I knew that they, that is my mother and Liza, were there, and that Tatyana Pavlovna had gone away. And so I found them on my sofa, whispering together about something. They left off whispering at once, when I appeared; to my amazement they were not angry with me; mother anyway smiled at me.

"I am sorry, mother," I began.

“Never mind!” mother cut me short, “only love each other and never quarrel and God will send you happiness.”

“He is never nasty to me, mother, I assure you,” Liza said with conviction and feeling.

“If it hadn’t been for that Tatyana Pavlovna nothing would have happened,” I cried; “she’s horrid!”

“You see, mother? You hear?” said Liza with a motion towards me.

“What I want to tell you both is this,” I declared: “if there is anything nasty in the world, it’s I that am nasty, and all the rest is delightful!”

“Arkasha, don’t be angry, darling, but if you really would give up . . .”

“Gambling, you mean, gambling? I will give it up, mother. I am going there for the last time to-day — especially since Andrey Petrovitch himself has declared that not a farthing of that money is his, you can’t imagine how I blush. . . . I must go into it with him, though . . . Mother darling, last time I was here I said something clumsy . . . it was nonsense, darling; I truly want to believe, it was only swagger, I love Christ. . . .”

On my last visit there had been a conversation about religion. Mother had been much grieved and upset. When she heard my words now, she smiled at me as though I were a little child.

“Christ forgives everything, Arkasha; he forgives your wrongdoing and worse than yours. Christ is our Father, Christ never fails us, and will give light in the blackest night. . . .”

I said good-bye to them, and went away, thinking over the chances of seeing Versilov that day; I had a great deal to talk over with him, and it had been impossible that afternoon. I had a strong suspicion that he would be waiting for me at my lodging. I walked there on foot; it had turned colder and begun to freeze and walking was very pleasant.

2

I lived near the Voznesenky Bridge, in a huge block of flats overlooking the courtyard. Almost as I went into the gate I ran into Versilov coming out.

“As usual when I go for a walk, I only get as far as your lodging, and I’ve been to Pyotr Ippolitovitch’s, but I got tired of waiting for you; your people there are for ever quarrelling, and to-day his wife is even a little tearful; I looked in and came away.”

For some reason I felt annoyed.

“I suppose you never go to see anyone except me and Pyotr Ippolitovitch; you have no one else in all Petersburg to go to.”

“My dear fellow . . . but it doesn’t matter.”

“Where are you going now?”

“I am not coming back to you. If you like we’ll go for a walk, it’s a glorious evening.”

“If instead of abstract discussions, you had talked to me like a human being, and had for instance given me the merest hint about that confounded gambling, I should perhaps not have let myself be drawn into it like a fool,” I said suddenly.

“You regret it? That’s a good thing,” he answered, bringing out his words reluctantly; “I always suspected that play was not a matter of great consequence with you, but only a temporary aberration. . . . You are right, my dear boy, gambling is beastly, and what’s more one may lose.”

“And lose other people’s money, too.”

“Have you lost other people’s money?”

“I have lost yours. I borrowed of Prince Sergay, from what was owing you. Of course it was fearfully stupid and absurd of me . . . to consider your money mine, but I always meant to win it back.”

“I must warn you once more, my dear boy, that I have no money in Prince Sergay’s hands. I know that young man is in straits himself, and I am not reckoning on him for anything, in spite of his promises.”

“That makes my position twice as bad. . . . I am in a ludicrous position! And what grounds has he for lending me money, and me for borrowing in that case?”

“That’s your affair. . . . But there’s not the slightest reason for you to borrow money from him, is there?”

“Except that we are comrades. . . .”

“No other reason? Is there anything which has made you feel it possible to borrow from him? Any consideration whatever?”

“What sort of consideration do you mean? I don’t understand.”

“So much the better if you don’t, and I will own, my boy, that I was sure of it. Brisons-là, mon cher, and do try to avoid playing somehow.”

“If only you had told me before! You seem half-hearted about it even now.”

“If I had spoken to you about it before, we should only have quarrelled, and you wouldn’t have let me come and see you in the evenings so readily.

And let me tell you, my dear, that all such saving counsels and warnings are simply an intrusion into another person's conscience, at another person's expense. I have done enough meddling with the consciences of others, and in the long run I get nothing but taunts and rebuffs for it. Taunts and rebuffs, of course, don't matter; the point is that one never obtains one's object in that way: no one listens to you, however much you meddle . . . and every one gets to dislike you."

"I am glad that you have begun to talk to me of something besides abstractions. I want to ask you one thing, I have wanted to for a long time, but it's always been impossible when I've been with you. It is a good thing we are in the street. Do you remember that evening, the last evening I spent in your house, two months ago, how we sat upstairs in my 'coffin,' and I questioned you about mother and Makar Ivanovitch; do you remember how free and easy I was with you then? How could you allow a young puppy to speak in those terms of his mother? And yet you made not the faintest sign of protest; on the contrary, 'you let yourself go,' and so made me worse than ever."

"My dear boy, I'm very glad to hear . . . such sentiments, from you. . . . Yes, I remember very well; I was actually waiting to see the blush on your cheek, and if I fell in with your tone, it was just to bring you to the limit. . . ."

"And you only deceived me then, and troubled more than ever the springs of purity in my soul! Yes, I'm a wretched raw youth, and I don't know from minute to minute what is good and what is evil. Had you given me the tiniest hint of the right road, I should have realized things and should have been eager to take the right path. But you only drove me to fury."

"Cher enfant, I always foresaw that, one way or another, we should understand one another; that 'blush' has made its appearance of itself, without my aid, and that I swear is better for you. . . . I notice, my dear boy, that you have gained a great deal of late . . . can it be the companionship of that princeling?"

"Don't praise me, I don't like it. Don't leave me with a painful suspicion that you are flattering me without regard for truth, so as to go on pleasing me. Well, lately . . . you see . . . I've been visiting ladies. I am very well received, you know, by Anna Andreyevna, for instance."

"I know that from her, my dear boy. Yes, she is very charming and intelligent. Mais brisons-là, mon cher. It's odd how sick I feel of

everything to-day, spleen I suppose. I put it down to haemorrhoids. How are things at home? All right? You made it up, of course, and embraces followed? Celà va sans dire. It's melancholy sometimes to go back to them, even after the nastiest walk. In fact, I sometimes go a longer way round in the rain, simply to delay the moment of returning to the bosom of my family. . . . And how bored I am there, good God, how bored!"

"Mother . . ."

"Your mother is a most perfect and delightful creature, mais. . . . In short I am probably unworthy of them. By the way, what's the matter with them to-day? For the last few days they've all been out of sorts somehow. . . . I always try to ignore such things you know, but there is something fresh brewing to-day. . . . Have you noticed nothing?"

"I know nothing positive, and in fact I should not have noticed it at all it if hadn't been for that confounded Tatyana Pavlovna, who can never resist trying to get her knife in. You are right; there is something wrong. I found Liza at Anna Andreyevna's this morning, and she was so . . . she surprised me in fact. You know, of course, that she visits Anna Andreyevna?"

"I know, my dear. And you . . . when were you at Anna Andreyevna's, to-day? At what time? I want to know for a reason."

"From two till three. And only fancy as I was going out Prince Sergay arrived. . . ."

Then I described my whole visit very circumstantially. He listened without speaking; he made no comment whatever on the possibility of a match between Prince Sergay and Anna Andreyevna; in response to my enthusiastic praise of Anna Andreyevna he murmured again that "she was very charming."

"I gave her a great surprise this morning, with the latest bit of drawing-room gossip that Mme. Ahmakov is to be married to Baron Büring," I said all of a sudden, as though something were torn out of me.

"Yes? Would you believe it, she told me that 'news' earlier in the day, much earlier than you can have surprised her with it."

"What do you mean?" I was simply struck dumb. "From whom could she have heard it? Though after all, there's no need to ask; of course she might have heard it before I did; but only imagine, she listened to me when I told her as though it were absolutely news to her! But . . . but what of it? Hurrah for 'breadth!' One must take a broad view of people's characters, mustn't one? I, for instance, should have poured it all out at once, and she

shuts it up in a snuff box . . . and so be it, so be it, she is none the less a most delightful person, and a very fine character!”

“Oh, no doubt of it, every one must go his own way. And something more original — these fine characters can sometimes baffle one completely — just imagine. Anna Andreyevna took my breath away this morning by asking: ‘Whether I were in love with Katerina Nikolaevna Ahmakov or not?’”

“What a wild and incredible question!” I cried, dumbfoundered again. There was actually a mist before my eyes I had never yet broached this subject with him, and here he had begun on it himself.

“In what way did she put it?”

“No way, my dear boy, absolutely no way; the snuff-box shut again at once, more closely than ever, and what’s more, observe, I’ve never admitted the conceivability of such questions being addressed to me, nor has she . . . however, you say yourself that you know her and therefore you can imagine how far such a question is characteristic. . . . Do you know anything about it by chance?”

“I am just as puzzled as you are. Curiosity, perhaps, or a joke.”

“Oh, quite the contrary, it was a most serious question, hardly a question in fact, more a cross-examination, and evidently there were very important and positive reasons for it. Won’t you be going to see her? Couldn’t you find out something? I would ask you as a favour, do you see . . .”

“But the strangest thing is that she could imagine you to be in love with Katerina Nikolaevna! Forgive me, I can’t get over my amazement. I should never, never have ventured to speak to you on this subject, or anything like it.”

“And that’s very sensible of you, my dear boy.”

“Your intrigues and your relations in the past — well, of course, the subject’s out of the question between us, and indeed it would be stupid of me, but of late, the last few days, I have several times exclaimed to myself that if you had ever loved that woman, if only for a moment — oh, you could never have made such a terrible mistake in your opinion of her as you did! I know what happened, I know of your enmity, of your aversion, so to say, for each other, I’ve heard of it, I’ve heard too much of it; even before I left Moscow I heard of it, but the fact that stands out so clearly is intense aversion, intense hostility, the very OPPOSITE of love, and Anna Andreyevna suddenly asks point-blank, ‘Do you love her?’ Can she have

heard so little about it? It's wild! She was laughing, I assure you she was laughing!"

"But I observe, my dear boy," said Versilov, and there was something nervous and sincere in his voice, that went to one's heart, as his words rarely did: "that you speak with too much heat on this subject. You said just now that you have taken to visiting ladies . . . of course, for me to question you . . . on that subject, as you expressed it. . . . But is not 'that woman' perhaps on the list of your new acquaintances?"

"That woman" . . . my voice suddenly quivered; "listen, Andrey Petrovitch, listen. That woman is what you were talking of with Prince Sergay this morning, 'living life,' do you remember? You said that living life is something so direct and simple, something that looks you so straight in the face, that its very directness and clearness make us unable to believe that it can be the very thing we're seeking so laboriously all our lives. . . . With ideas like that, you met the ideal woman and in perfection, in the ideal, you recognized 'all the vices'! That's what you did!"

The reader can guess what a state of frenzy I was in.

"All the vices! Oho! I know that phrase," cried Versilov: "and if things have gone so far, that you are told of such a phrase, oughtn't I to congratulate you? It suggests such a degree of intimacy, that perhaps you deserve credit for a modesty and reserve of which few young men are capable."

There was a note of sweet, friendly and affectionate laughter in his voice . . . there was something challenging and charming in his words, and in his bright face, as far as I could see it in the night. He was strangely excited. I beamed all over in spite of myself.

"Modesty, reserve! Oh, no, no!" I exclaimed blushing and at the same time squeezing his hand, which I had somehow seized and was unconsciously holding. "No, there's no reason! . . . In fact there's nothing to congratulate me on, and nothing of the sort can ever, ever happen."

I was breathless and let myself go, I so longed to let myself go, it was so very agreeable to me.

"You know. . . . Well, after all I will . . . just this once. . . . You are my darling, splendid father; you will allow me to call you father; it's utterly out of the question for a son to speak to his father — for anyone, in fact, to speak to a third person — of his relations with a woman, even if they are of the purest! In fact, the purer they are the greater the obligation of silence.

It would be distasteful, it would be coarse; in short, a confidant is out of the question! But if there's nothing, absolutely nothing, then surely one may speak, mayn't one?"

"As your heart tells you!"

"An indiscreet, a very indiscreet question: I suppose in the course of your life you've known women, you've had intimacies? . . . I only ask generally, generally, I don't mean anything particular!" I blushed, and was almost choking with delight.

"We will assume there have been transgressions."

"Well then, I want to ask you this, and you tell me what you think of it, as a man of more experience: a woman suddenly says, as she is taking leave of you, casually, looking away, 'Tomorrow at three o'clock I shall be at a certain place . . . at Tatyana Pavlovna's, for example,'" I burst out, taking the final plunge. My heart throbbed and stood still; I even ceased speaking, I could not go on. He listened eagerly. "And so next day at three o'clock I went to Tatyana Pavlovna's, and this is what I thought: 'when the cook opens the door' — you know her cook—'I shall ask first thing whether Tatyana Pavlovna is at home? And if the cook says Tatyana Pavlovna is not at home, but there's a visitor waiting for her,' what ought I to conclude, tell me if it were you. . . . In short, if you . . ."

"Simply that an appointment had been made you. Then I suppose that did happen, and it happened to-day. Yes?"

"Oh no, no, no, nothing, nothing of the sort! It did happen, but it wasn't that; it was an appointment, but not of that sort, and I hasten to say so or I should be a blackguard; it did happen, but. . . ."

"My dear fellow, all this begins to be so interesting that I suggest . . ."

"I used to give away ten roubles and twenty-five roubles at a time to those who begged of me. For a drink! just a few coppers, it's a lieutenant implores your aid, a former lieutenant begging of you!"

Our road was suddenly barred by the figure of a tall beggar possibly, in fact, a retired lieutenant. What was most singular was that he was very well dressed for his profession, and yet he was begging.

3

I purposely do not omit this paltry incident of the wretched lieutenant, for my picture of Versilov is not complete without the petty details of his

surroundings at that minute, which was so momentous for him — momentous it was, and I did not know it!

“If you don’t leave off, sir, I shall call the police at once,” Versilov said, suddenly raising his voice unnaturally, and standing still before the lieutenant. I could never imagine such anger from a man so philosophic, and for such a trivial cause. And, note, our conversation was interrupted at the point of most interest to him, as he had just said himself.

“What, you haven’t a five-kopeck piece?” the lieutenant cried rudely, waving his hand in the air. “And indeed what canaille have five kopecks nowadays! the low rabble! the scoundrels! He goes dressed in beaver, and makes all this to-do about a copper!”

“Constable,” cried Versilov.

But there was no need to shout, a policeman was standing close by, at the corner, and he had heard the lieutenant’s abuse himself.

“I ask you to bear witness to this insult, I ask you to come to the police-station,” said Versilov.

“O-ho, I don’t care, there’s nothing at all you can prove! You won’t show yourself so wonderfully clever!”

“Keep hold of him, constable, and take us to the police-station,” Versilov decided emphatically.

“Surely we are not going to the police-station? Bother the fellow!” I whispered to him.

“Certainly we are, dear boy. The disorderly behaviour in our streets begins to bore one beyond endurance, and if everyone did his duty it would make it better for us all. C’est comique, mais c’est ce que nous ferons.”

For a hundred paces the lieutenant kept up a bold and swaggering demeanour, and talked with heat; he declared “that it was not the thing to do,” that it was “all a matter of five kopecks,” and so on, and so on. But at last he began whispering something to the policeman. The policeman, a sagacious man, with apparently a distaste for exhibitions of “nerves” in the street, seemed to be on his side, though only to a certain degree. He muttered in an undertone, in reply, that “it was too late for that now,” that “it had gone too far,” and that “if you were to apologize, for instance, and the gentleman would consent to accept your apology, then perhaps. . . .”

“Come li-isten, honoured sir, where are we going? I ask you what are we hurrying to and what’s the joke of it?” the lieutenant cried aloud: “if a man who is down on his luck is willing to make an apology . . . in fact, if

you want to put him down . . . damn it all! we are not in a drawing-room, we are in the street! For the street, that's apology enough. . . ."

Versilov stopped, and suddenly burst out laughing; I actually imagined that he had got the whole thing up for amusement, but it was not so.

"I entirely accept your apology, Monsieur l'officier, and I assure you that you are a man of ability. Behave like that in the drawing-room; it will soon pass muster perfectly there, too, and meanwhile here are twenty kopecks for you; eat and drink your fill with it; pardon me, constable, for troubling you; I would have thanked you more substantially for your pains, but you are so highly respectable nowadays. . . . My dear boy," he added turning to me, "there's an eating house close here, it's really a horrible sewer, but one could get tea there, and I invite you to a cup . . . this way, quite close, come along."

I repeat, I had never seen him so excited, though his face was full of brightness and gaiety; yet I noticed that when he was taking the coin out of his purse to give it to the officer, his hands trembled, and his fingers refused to obey him, so that at last he asked me to take out the money, and give it to the man for him; I cannot forget it.

He took me to a little restaurant on the canal side, in the basement. The customers were few. A loud barrel-organ was playing out of tune, there was a smell of dirty dinner napkins; we sat down in a corner.

"Perhaps you don't know. I am sometimes so bored . . . so horribly bored in my soul . . . that I like coming to all sorts of stinking holes like this. These surroundings, the halting tune from 'Lucia,' the waiters in their unseemly Russian getup, the fumes of cheap tobacco, the shouts from the billiard-room, it's all so vulgar and prosaic that it almost borders on the fantastic. . . . Well, my dear boy, that son of Mars interrupted us, I believe, at the most interesting moment. . . . Here's the tea; I like the tea here. . . . Imagine Pyotr Ippolitovitch suddenly began to-day assuring the other lodger, the one marked with small-pox, that during the last century a special committee of lawyers was appointed in the English parliament to examine the trial of Christ before the High Priest and Pilate, with the sole object of finding how the case would have gone nowadays by modern law, and that the inquiry was conducted with all solemnity, with counsel for the prosecution and all the rest of it. . . . And that the jury were obliged to uphold the original verdict. . . . A wonderful story! That fool of a lodger began to argue about it, lost his temper, quarrelled and declared he should

leave next day. . . . The landlady dissolved in tears at the thought of losing his rent . . . Mais passons. In these restaurants they sometimes have nightingales. Do you know the old Moscow anecdote à la Pyotr Ippolitovitch? A nightingale was singing in a Moscow restaurant, a merchant came in; 'I must have my fancy, whatever it costs, said he, 'what's the price of the nightingale?' 'A hundred roubles.' 'Roast it and serve it.' So they roasted it and served it up. 'Cut me off two-pennorth.' I once told it to Pyotr Ippolitovitch, but he did not believe it, and was quite indignant."

He said a great deal more. I quote these fragments as a sample of his talk. He repeatedly interrupted me every time I opened my mouth to begin my story. He began each time talking of some peculiar and utterly irrelevant nonsense; he talked gaily, excitedly; laughed, goodness knows what at, and even chuckled in an undignified way, as I had never seen him do before. He swallowed a glass of tea at one gulp, and poured out another. Now I can understand it, he was like a man who had received a precious, interesting, and long-expected letter, and who lays it down before him and purposely refrains from opening it, turning it over and over in his hands, examining the envelope and the seal, going to see to things in another room, in short deferring the interesting moment of perusal, knowing that it cannot escape him. And all this he does to make his enjoyment more complete.

I told him all there was to tell, of course, everything from the very beginning, and it took me perhaps an hour telling it. And indeed how could I have helped telling him? I had been dying to talk of it that afternoon. I began with our very first meeting at the old prince's on the day she arrived from Moscow; then I described how it had all come about by degrees. I left nothing out, and indeed I could not have left anything out; he led me on, he guessed what was coming and prompted me. At moments it seemed to me that something fantastic was happening, that he must have been sitting or standing behind the door, for those two months; he knew beforehand every gesture I made, every feeling I had felt. I derived infinite enjoyment from this confession to him, for I found in him such intimate softness, such deep psychological subtlety, such a marvellous faculty for guessing what I meant from half a word. He listened as tenderly as a woman. And above all he knew how to save me from feeling ashamed; at times he stopped me at some detail; often when he stopped me he repeated nervously: "Don't forget details; the great thing is, not to forget any details; the more minute a

point is, the more important it may sometimes be." And he interrupted me several times with words to that effect. Oh, of course I began at first in a tone of superiority, superiority to her, but I quickly dropped into sincerity. I told him honestly that I was ready to kiss the spot on the floor where her foot had rested. The most beautiful and glorious thing was that he absolutely understood that she might "be suffering from terror over the letter" and yet remain the pure and irreproachable being she had revealed herself to be. He absolutely realized what was meant by the word "student." But when I was near the end of my story I noticed that behind his good-natured smile there were signs in his face from time to time of some impatience, some abruptness and preoccupation; when I came to the letter, I thought to myself:

"Shall I tell him the exact truth or not?" and I did not tell it, in spite of my enthusiasm. I note this here that I may remember it all my life. I explained to him, as I had done to her, that it had been destroyed by Kraft. His eyes began to glow; a strange line, a line of deep gloom was visible on his forehead.

"You are sure you remember, my dear boy, that that letter was burned by Kraft in the candle? You are not mistaken?"

"I am not mistaken," I repeated.

"The point is that that scrap of paper is of such importance to her, and if you had only had it in your hands to-day, you might. . . ." But what "I might" he did not say. "But you haven't it in your hands now?"

I shuddered all over inwardly, but not outwardly. Outwardly I did not betray myself, I did not turn a hair; but I was still unwilling to believe in the question:

"Haven't it in my hands! In my hands now? How could I since Kraft burned it that day?"

"Yes?" A glowing intent look was fastened upon me, a look I shall never forget; he smiled, however, but all his good-nature, all the feminine softness that had been in his expression suddenly vanished. It was replaced by something vague and troubled; he become more and more preoccupied. If he had controlled himself at that moment, as he had till then, he would not have asked me that question about the letter; he had asked it, no doubt, because he was carried away himself. I say this, however, only now; at the time, I did not so quickly perceive the change that had come over him; I still

went on plunging, and there was still the same music in my heart. But my story was over; I looked at him.

"It's strange," he said suddenly, when I had told him everything to the minutest detail: "it's a very strange thing, my dear boy: you say that you were there from three o'clock till four and that Tatyana Pavlovna was not at home?"

"From three o'clock till half-past four exactly."

"Well, only fancy, I went to see Tatyana Pavlovna exactly at half- past four to the minute, and she met me in the kitchen: I nearly always go to see her by the back entrance."

"What, she met you in the kitchen?" I cried, staggering back in amazement.

"And she told me she could not ask me in; I only stayed two minutes, I only looked in to ask her to come to dinner."

"Perhaps she had only just come home from somewhere?"

"I don't know, of course not, though she was wearing a loose dressing-gown. That was at half-past four exactly."

"But . . . Tatyana Pavlovna didn't tell you I was there?"

"No, she did not tell me you were there . . . otherwise I should have known it, and should not have asked you about it."

"Listen, that's awfully important. . . ."

"Yes . . . from a certain point of view; and you've turned quite white, my dear; but, after all, what is there important in it?"

"They've been laughing at me as though I were a baby!"

"It's simply 'that she was afraid of your impulsiveness,' as she expressed it herself — and so she felt safer with Tatyana Pavlovna there."

"But, good God, what a trick! Think, she let me say all that before a third person, before Tatyana Pavlovna; so she heard everything I said! It . . . it's horrible to conceive of!"

"C'est selon, mon cher. Besides, you spoke just now of 'breadth' of view in regard to women and exclaimed 'Hurrah for breadth'!"

"If I were Othello and you Jago, you could not have done better. . . . I am laughing though! There can be no sort of Othello, because there have been no relations of the kind. And why laugh indeed? It doesn't matter! I believe she's infinitely above me all the same, and I have not lost my ideal! . . . If it was a joke on her part I forgive her. A joke with a wretched raw youth doesn't matter! Besides, I did not pose as anything, and the student

— the student was there in her soul, and remained there in spite of everything; it was in her heart, it exists there, and will always exist there! Enough! Listen, what do you think: shall I go to her at once to find out the whole truth or not?"

I said "I am laughing," but there were tears in my eyes.

"Well, my dear boy, go if you want to."

"I feel as though I were defiled in soul, from having told you all this. Don't be angry, dear, but, I repeat, one can't tell things about a woman to a third person; no confidant will understand. Even an angel wouldn't understand. If you respect a woman, don't confide in anyone! If you respect yourself don't confide in anyone. Now I don't respect myself. Good-bye for the present; I can't forgive myself."

"Nonsense, my dear boy, you exaggerate. You say yourself that 'there was nothing in it.'"

We came out on the canal bank and said good-bye.

"Will you never give me a real warm kiss, as a child kisses its father?" he said, with a strange quiver in his voice. I kissed him fervently.

"Dear boy . . . may you be always as pure in heart as you are now."

I had never kissed him before in my life, I never could have conceived that he would like me to.

CHAPTER VI

1

“I’ll go, of course!” I made up my mind as I hurried home, “I’ll go at once. Very likely I shall find her at home alone; whether she is alone or with some one else makes no difference: I can ask her to come out to me. She will receive me; she’ll be surprised, but she will receive me. And if she won’t see me I’ll insist on her seeing me, I’ll send in word that it’s most urgent. She will think it’s something about that letter and will see me. And I’ll find out all about Tatyana there . . . and what then? If I am not right I will be her servant, if I am right and she is to blame it’s the end of everything! In any case it’s the end of everything! What am I going to lose? I can lose nothing. I’ll go! I’ll go!”

I shall never forget and I recall with pride that I did NOT go! It will never be known to anyone, it will die with me, but it’s enough that I know of it and at such a moment I was capable of an honourable impulse.

“This is a temptation, and I will put it behind me,” I made up my mind at last, on second thoughts. They had tried to terrify me with a fact, but I refused to believe it, and had not lost my faith in her purity! And what had I to go for, what was there to find out about? Why was she bound to believe in me as I did in her, to have faith in my “purity,” not to be afraid of my “impulsiveness” and not to provide against all risks with Tatyana? I had not yet, as far as she could see, deserved her confidence. No matter, no matter that she does not know that I am worthy of it, that I am not seduced by “temptations,” that I do not believe in malicious calumnies against her; I know it and I shall respect myself for it. I shall respect my own feeling. Oh, yes, she had allowed me to utter everything before Tatyana, she had allowed Tatyana to be there, she knew that Tatyana was sitting there listening (for she was incapable of not listening); she knew that she was laughing at me out there, — that was awful, awful! But . . . but what if it were impossible to avoid it? What could she have done in her position, and how could one blame her for it? Why, I had told her a lie about Kraft, I had deceived her because that, too, could not be helped, and I had lied innocently against my will. “My God!” I cried suddenly, flushing painfully, “what have I just done myself! Haven’t I exposed her, too, before Tatyana,

haven’t I repeated it all to Versilov just now? Though, after all, there was a difference. It was only a question of the letter; I had in reality only told Versilov about the letter because there was nothing else to tell, and could be nothing else. Was not I the first to declare that “there could not be”? He was a man of insight. Hm! But what hatred there was in his heart for this woman even to this day! And what sort of drama must have taken place between them in the past, and about what? All due to vanity, of course!” VERSILOV CANNOT BE CAPABLE OF ANY FEELING BUT BOUNDLESS VANITY!”

That last thought rose spontaneously in my mind and I did not even remark it. Such were the thoughts that floated through my mind one after another, and I was straightforward with myself; I did not cheat or deceive myself; and if there was anything I did not understand at that moment, it was not from sophistry with myself but only from lack of brains.

I returned home in great excitement, and — I don’t know why — in a very cheerful, though confused state of mind. But I was afraid of analysing my feelings and did my utmost to distract my mind. I went in at once to see my landlady: it turned out that a terrible quarrel really had taken place between her husband and her. She was in advanced consumption, and though, perhaps, she was a good- natured woman, like all consumptives she was of uncertain temper. I began trying to reconcile them at once; I went to the lodger, who was a very vain little bank clerk, called, Tchervyak, a coarse pock-marked fool. I disliked him very much, but I got on with him quite well, for I often was so mean as to join him in turning Pyotr Ippolitovitch into ridicule. I at once persuaded him to keep on the lodgings, and indeed he would not in any case have really gone so far as to move. It ended in my reassuring the landlady completely, and even succeeding in very deftly putting a pillow under her head: “Pyotr Ippolitovitch would never have known how to do it,” she commented malignantly. Then I busied myself in the kitchen preparing mustard plasters for her and succeeded in making two capital ones with my own hand. Poor Pyotr Ippolitovitch looked on envious, but I did not allow him to touch them, and was rewarded by liberal tears of gratitude from the lady. I remember I suddenly felt sick of it all, and suddenly realized that I was not looking after the invalid from kindness at all, but from something else, some very different motive.

I waited for Matvey with nervous impatience: I had resolved that evening to try my luck at cards for the last time and . . . and, apart from my need to win, I had an intense longing to play; but for that, my excitement would have been unbearable. If I had not gone anywhere I might have been unable to hold out and should have gone to her. It was almost time for Matvey to come, when the door was opened and an unexpected visitor, Darya Onisimovna, walked in. I frowned and was surprised. She knew my lodging, for she had been there once with some message from my mother. I made her sit down and looked at her inquiringly. She said nothing, and only looked straight into my face with a deferential smile.

"You've not come from Liza?" it occurred to me to ask.

"No, it's nothing special."

I informed her that I was just going out; she replied again that it was "nothing special," and that she was going herself in a minute. I suddenly for some reason felt sorry for her. I may observe that she had met with a great deal of sympathy from all of us, from my mother, and still more from Tatyana Pavlovna, but after installing her at Mme. Stolbyeev's all of us had rather begun to forget her, except perhaps Liza, who often visited her. I think she was herself the cause of this neglect, for she had a special faculty for effacing herself and holding herself aloof from people in spite of her obsequiousness and her ingratiating smiles. I personally disliked those smiles of hers, and her affected expression, and I even imagined on one occasion that she had not grieved very long for her Olya. But this time for some reason I felt very sorry for her.

And behold, without uttering a word, she suddenly bent forward with her eyes cast down, and all at once, throwing her arms round my waist, hid her face on my knees. She seized my hand, I thought she meant to kiss it, but she pressed it to her eyes, and hot tears trickled upon it. She was shaking all over with sobs, but she wept silently. It sent a pang to my heart, even though I felt at the same time somehow annoyed. But she was embracing me with perfect confidence and without the least fear that I might be vexed, though only just before she had smiled so timidly and cringingly.

I began begging her to calm herself.

"Kind, good friend, I don't know what to do with myself. As soon as it gets dark, I can't bear it; as soon as it gets dark I can't go on bearing it, and I feel drawn into the street, into the darkness. And I am drawn there by my imaginings. My mind is possessed by the fancy that as soon as ever I go

out I shall meet her in the street. I walk and seem to see her. That is other girls are walking along the street and I walk behind them on purpose, and I think: 'Isn't it she, there she is,' I think, 'it really is my Olya!' I dream and dream. I turn giddy at last, and feel sick, and stumble and jostle against people; I stumble as though I were drunk and some swear at me; I hide by myself and don't go to see anyone, and wherever one goes, it makes one's heart more sick; I passed by your lodging just now, and thought: 'I'll go in to him; he is kinder than any of them, and he was there at the time.' Forgive a poor creature who's no use to anyone; I'll go away directly; I'm going. . . ."

She suddenly got up and made haste to depart. Matvey arrived just then; I made her get into the sledge with me, and left her at Mme. Stolbyeev's on my way.

2

I had of late begun to frequent Zerstchikov's gambling saloon. I had so far visited three gambling houses, always in company with Prince Sergay, who had introduced me to these places. At one of these houses the game was faro especially, and the stakes were high. But I did not care for going there: I saw that one could not get on there without a long purse, and also that the place was crowded with insolent fellows and swaggering young snobs. This was what Prince Sergay liked; he liked playing, too, but he particularly liked getting to know these young prodigals. I noticed that though he went in with me he kept away from me during the evening and did not introduce me to any of "his set." I stared about me like a wild man of the woods, so much so that I sometimes attracted attention. At the gambling table people spoke to one another freely; but once I tried bowing next day to a young fop, with whom I had not only talked but laughed the previous evening, sitting beside him, and had even guessed two cards from him. Yet when I greeted him in the same room next day, he actually did not recognize me. Or what was worse, stared at me with simulated amazement, and passed by with a smile. So I quickly gave up the place and preferred to visit a "sewer" — I don't know what else to call it — it was a wretched sordid little place for roulette, managed by a kept woman, who, however, never showed herself in the saloon. It was all horribly free and easy there, and though officers and wealthy merchants sometimes frequented it, there was a squalid

filthiness about the place, though that was an attraction to many. Moreover, I was often lucky there. But I gave that place up, too, after a disgusting scene, which occurred when the game was at its hottest and ended in a fight between two players. I began going instead to Zerstchikov's, to which Prince Sergay took me also. The man was a retired captain, and the tone at his rooms was very tolerable, military, curt, and businesslike, and there was a fastidiously scrupulous keeping up of the forms of punctilio. No boisterous practical jokers or very fast men frequented it. Moreover, the stakes played for were often considerable. Both faro and roulette were played. I had only been there twice before that evening, the 15th of November, but I believe Zerstchikov already knew me by sight; I had made no acquaintances there, however. As luck would have it Prince Sergay did not turn up till about midnight, when he dropped in with Darzan after spending the evening at the gambling saloon of the young snobs which I had given up; and so that evening I found myself alone and unknown in a crowd of strangers.

If I had a reader and he had read all I have written so far of my adventures, there would be certainly no need to inform him that I am not created for any sort of society. The trouble is I don't know how to behave in company. If I go anywhere among a great many people I always have a feeling as though I were being electrified by so many eyes looking at me. It positively makes me shrivel up, physically shrivel up, even in such places as a theatre, to say nothing of private houses. I did not know how to behave with dignity in these gambling saloons and assemblies; I either sat still, inwardly upbraiding myself for my excessive mildness and politeness, or I suddenly got up and did something rude. And meanwhile all sorts of worthless fellows far inferior to me knew how to behave with wonderful aplomb — and that's what exasperated me above everything, so that I lost my self-possession more and more. I may say frankly, even at that time, if the truth is to be told, the society there, and even winning money at cards, had become revolting and a torture to me. Positively a torture. I did, of course, derive acute enjoyment from it, but this enjoyment was at the cost of torture: the whole thing, the people, the gambling, and, most of all, myself in the midst of them, seemed horribly nasty. "As soon as I win I'll chuck it all up!" I said to myself every time when I woke up in my lodgings in the morning after gambling over night. Then, again, how account for my desire to win, since I certainly was not fond of money? Not that I am going

to repeat the hackneyed phrases usual in such explanations, that I played for the sake of the game, for the pleasure of it, for the risk, the excitement and so on, and not for gain. I was horribly in need of money, and though this was not my chosen path, not my idea, yet somehow or other I had made up my mind to try it by way of experiment. I was continually possessed by one overwhelming thought: "You maintained that one could reckon with certainty on becoming a millionaire if only one had sufficient strength of will; you've tested your strength of will already; so show yourself as strong in this case: can more strength of will be needed for roulette than for your idea?" that is what I kept repeating to myself. And as I still retain the conviction, that in games of chance, if one has perfect control of one's will, so that the subtlety of one's intelligence and one's power of calculation are preserved, one cannot fail to overcome the brutality of blind chance and to win, I naturally could not help growing more and more irritated when at every moment I failed to preserve my strength of will and was carried away by excitement, like a regular child. "Though I was able to endure hunger, I am not able to control myself in an absurd thing like this!" that was what provoked me. Moreover, the consciousness that however absurd and abject I might seem, I had within me a rich store of strength which would one day make them all change their opinion of me, that consciousness has been from the days of my oppressed childhood the one spring of life for me, my light, my dignity, my weapon and my consolation, without which I might have committed suicide as a little child. And so how could I help being irritated when I saw what a pitiful creature I became at the gambling table? That is why I could not give up playing! I see it all clearly now. This was the chief reason, but apart from that my petty vanity was wounded. Losing had lowered me in the eyes of Prince Sergay, of Versilov, though he did not deign to speak of it, of every one, even of Tatyana Pavlovna; that is what I thought, I felt. Finally, I will make another confession! By that time I had begun to be corrupted: it had become hard for me to give up a dinner of seven dishes at the restaurant, to give up Matvey, and the English shop, to lose the good opinion of my hairdresser, and all that, in fact. I was conscious of it even at the time, but I refused to admit the thought; now I blush to write it.

Finding myself alone in a crowd of strangers, I established myself at first at a corner of the table and began staking small sums. I remained sitting there without stirring for two hours. For those two hours the play was horribly flat — neither one thing nor another. I let slip some wonderful chances and tried not to lose my temper, but to preserve my coolness and confidence. At the end of the two hours I had neither lost nor won. Out of my three hundred roubles I had lost ten or fifteen roubles. This trivial result exasperated me, and what's more an exceedingly unpleasant, disgusting incident occurred. I know that such gambling saloons are frequented by thieves, who are not simply pickpockets out of the street but well-known gamblers. I am certain that the well- known gambler Aferdov is a thief; he is still to be seen about the town; I met him not long ago driving a pair of his own ponies, but he is a thief and he stole from me. But this incident I will describe later; what happened this evening was simply a prelude.

I spent there two hours sitting at a corner of the table, and beside me, on the left, there was all the time an abominable little dandy, a Jew I believe; he is on some paper though, and even writes something and gets it published. At the very last moment I suddenly won twenty roubles. Two red notes lay before me, and suddenly I saw this wretched little Jew put out his hand and remove one of my notes. I tried to stop him; but with a most impudent air he immediately informed me, without raising his voice in the least, that it was what he had won, that he had just put down a stake and won it; he declined to continue the conversation and turned away. As ill-luck would have it, I was in a state of extreme stupidity at that moment: I was brooding over a great idea, and with a curse I got up quickly and walked away; I did not want to dispute, so made him a present of the red note. And indeed it would have been difficult to go into the matter with an impudent thief, for I had let slip the right moment, and the game was going on again. And that was my great mistake, the effect of which was apparent later on: three or four players near us saw how the matter ended, and noticing how easily I had given way, took me for another of the same sort.

It was just twelve o'clock; I walked into the other room, and after a little reflection formed a new plan. Going back I changed my notes at the bank for half imperials. I received over forty of them. I divided them into ten lots, and resolved to stake four half imperials ten times running on the zero. "If I win it's my luck. If I lose, so much the better, I'll never play again." I

may mention that zero had not turned up once during those two hours, so that at last no one was staking on zero.

I put down my stakes standing, silent, frowning and clenching my teeth. At the third round, Zerstchikov called aloud zero, which had not turned up all day. A hundred and forty half imperials were counted out to me in gold. I had seven chances left and I went on, though everything seemed whirling round, and dancing before my eyes.

“Come here!” I shouted right across the table to a player beside whom I had been sitting before, a grey-headed man with a moustache, and a purple face, wearing evening dress, who had been for some hours staking small sums with ineffable patience and losing stake after stake: “come this end! There’s luck here!”

“Are you speaking to me?” the moustached gentleman shouted from the other end of the table, with a note of menacing surprise in his voice.

“Yes, you! You’ll go on losing for ever there!”

“That’s not your business, please not to interfere!”

But I could not restrain myself. An elderly officer was sitting facing me at the other side of the table. Looking at my stake he muttered to his neighbour:

“That’s queer, zero. No, I won’t venture on zero.”

“Do, colonel!” I shouted laying down another stake.

“Kindly leave me alone, and don’t force your advice upon me,” he rapped out sharply. “You are making too much noise!”

“I am giving you good advice; would you like to bet on zero’s turning up directly: ten gold pieces, I’ll bet that, will you take it?”

And I laid down ten half imperials.

“A bet of ten gold pieces! That I can do,” he brought out drily and severely. “I’ll bet against you that zero won’t turn up.”

“Ten louis d’or, colonel.”

“What do you mean by ten louis d’or?”

“Ten half imperials, colonel, and, in grand language, ten louis d’or.”

“Well, then, say they are half imperials, and please don’t joke with me.”

I did not of course hope to win the bet; there were thirty-six chances against one that zero would not turn up again; but I proposed it out of swagger, and because I wanted to attract every one’s attention. I quite saw that for some reason nobody here liked me, and that they all would have taken particular pleasure in letting me know it. The roulette wheel was sent

spinning, — and what was the general amazement when it stopped at zero again! There was actually a general shout. The glory of my success dazed me completely. Again a hundred and forty half imperials were counted out to me. Zerstchikov asked me if I would not like to take part of them in notes, but I mumbled something inarticulate in reply, for I was literally incapable of expressing myself in a calm and definite way. My head was going round and my legs felt weak. I suddenly felt that I would take a fearful risk at once; moreover, I had a longing to do something more, to make another bet, to carry off some thousands from some one. Mechanically I scooped up my notes and gold in the hollow of my hand, and could not collect myself to count them. At that moment I noticed Prince Sergay and Darzan behind me: they had only just come from their faro saloon, where as I heard afterwards they had lost their last farthing.

"Ah! Darzan," I cried "There's luck here! Stake on zero!"

"I've been losing, I've no money," he answered drily; Prince Sergay actually appeared not to notice or recognize me.

"Here's money," I cried pointing to my heap of gold. "As much as you like."

"Hang it all!" cried Darzan, flushing crimson; "I didn't ask you for money, I believe."

"You are being called," said Zerstchikov pulling my arm.

The colonel who had lost ten half imperials to me had called to me several times almost abusingly.

"Kindly take this!" he shouted, purple with rage. "It's not for me to stand over you, but if I don't you'll be saying afterwards you haven't had the money. Count it."

"I trust you, I trust you, colonel, without counting; only please don't shout at me like that and don't be angry," and I drew his heap of gold towards me.

"Sir, I beg you to keep your transports for some one else and not to force them on me," the colonel rasped out. "I've never fed pigs with you!"

"It's queer to admit such people"— "Who is he?"— "Only a lad," I heard exclamations in undertones.

But I did not listen, I was staking at random, not on zero this time. I staked a whole heap of hundred rouble notes on the first eighteen numbers.

"Let's go, Darzan," I heard Prince Sergay's voice behind me.

“Home?” I asked, turning round to them. “Wait for me: we’ll go together, I’ve had enough.”

My stake won, I had gained a big sum. “Enough!” I cried, and without counting the money I began with trembling hands, gathering up the gold and dropping it into my pockets, and clumsily crumpling the notes in my fingers, and trying to stuff them all at once into my side pocket. Suddenly Aferdov, who was sitting next to me on the right and had been playing for high stakes, laid a fat hand with a ring on the first finger over three of my hundred-rouble notes.

“Excuse me that’s not yours,” he brought out sternly and incisively, though he spoke rather softly.

This was the prelude, which was destined a few days afterwards to have such a serious sequel. Now I swear on my honour those three notes were mine, but to my misfortune, at the time, though I was convinced they were mine I still had the fraction of a doubt, and for an honest man, that is enough; and I am an honest man. What made all the difference was that I did not know at the time that Aferdov was a thief: I did not even know his name then, so that at that moment I might very well imagine I had made a mistake, and that those three notes were really not in the heap that had just been paid me. I had not counted my gains at all, I had simply gathered up the heaps with my hands, and there had been money lying in front of Aferdov too, and quite close to mine, but in neat heaps and counted. Above all Aferdov was known here and looked upon as a wealthy man; he was treated with respect: all this had an influence on me and again I did not protest. A terrible mistake! The whole beastly incident was the result of my enthusiasm.

“I am awfully sorry, I don’t remember for certain; but I really think they are mine,” I brought out with lips trembling with indignation. These words at once aroused a murmur.

“To say things like that, you ought to REMEMBER for certain, but you’ve graciously announced yourself that you DON’T remember for certain,” Aferdov observed with insufferable superciliousness.

“Who is he?”— “It can’t be allowed!” I heard several exclamations.

“That’s not the first time he has done it; there was the same little game over a ten-rouble note with Rechberg just now,” a mean little voice said somewhere near.

“That’s enough! that’s enough!” I exclaimed, “I am not protesting, take it . . . where’s Prince . . . where are Prince Sokolsky and Darzan? Have they gone? Gentlemen, did you see which way Prince Sokolsky and Darzan went?” And gathering up all my money at last, I could not succeed in getting some of the half imperials into my pocket, and holding them in my hands I rushed to overtake Prince Sergay and Darzan. The reader will see, I think, that I don’t spare myself, and am recording at this moment what I was then, and all my nastiness, so as to explain the possibility of what followed.

Prince Sergay and Darzan were going downstairs, without taking the slightest notice of my shouts, and calls to them. I had overtaken them, but I stopped for a moment before the hall-porter, and, goodness knows why, thrust three half imperials into his hand; he gazed at me in amazement and did not even thank me. But that was nothing to me, and if Matvey had been there I should probably have pressed handfuls of gold upon him; and so indeed I believe I meant to do, but as I ran out on the steps, I suddenly remembered that I had let him go home when I arrived. At that moment Prince Sergay’s horse came up, and he got into his sledge.

“I am coming with you, prince, and to your flat!” I cried, clutching the fur cover and throwing it open, to get into the empty seat; but all at once Darzan skipped past me into the sledge, and the coachman snatched the fur cover out of my hands, and tucked it round them.

“Damn it all!” I cried dumbfoundered; it looked as though I had unbuttoned the cover for Darzan’s benefit, like a flunkey.

“Home!” shouted Prince Sergay.

“Stop!” I roared, clutching at the sledge, but the horse started, and I was sent rolling in the snow. I even fancied they were laughing. Jumping up I took the first sledge I came across, and dashed after Prince Sergay, urging on the wretched nag at every second.

4

As ill-luck would have it, the wretched beast crawled along with unnatural slowness, though I promised the driver a whole rouble. The driver did nothing but lash the beast to earn his rouble. My heart was sinking: I began trying to talk to the driver, but I could not even articulate my words, and I muttered something incoherent. This was my condition when I ran up to

Prince Sergay's! He had only just come back; he had left Darzan on the way, and was alone. Pale and ill-humoured, he was pacing up and down his study. I repeat again he had lost heavily that evening. He looked at me with a sort of preoccupied wonder.

"You again!" he brought out frowning.

"To settle up with you for good, sir!" I said breathlessly. "How dared you treat me like that!"

He looked at me inquiringly.

"If you meant to drive with Darzan you might have answered that you were going with him, but you started your horse, and I. . . ."

"Oh yes, you tumbled into the snow," he said and laughed into my face.

"An insult like that can be only answered with a challenge, so to begin with we'll settle accounts. . . ."

And with a trembling hand I began pulling out my money and laying it on the sofa, on the marble table, and even on an open book, in heaps, in handfuls, and in rolls of notes; several coins rolled on the carpet.

"Oh, yes, you've won, it seems? . . . One can tell that from your tone."

He had never spoken to me so insolently before. I was very pale.

"Here . . . I don't know how much . . . it must be counted. I owe you three thousand . . . or how much? . . . More or less?"

"I am not pressing you to pay, I believe."

"No, it's I want to pay, and you ought to know why. I know that in that roll there's a thousand roubles, here!" And I began with trembling fingers to count the money, but gave it up. "It doesn't matter, I know it's a thousand. Well, that thousand I will keep for myself, but all the rest, all these heaps, take for what I owe you, for part of what I owe you: I think there's as much as two thousand or may be more!"

"But you are keeping a thousand for yourself then?" said Prince Sergay with a grin.

"Do you want it? In that case . . . I was meaning . . . I was thinking you didn't wish it . . . but if you want it here it is. . . ."

"No, you need not," he said turning away from me contemptuously, and beginning to pace up and down again.

"And what the devil's put it into your head to want to pay it back?" he said, turning to me suddenly, with a horrible challenge in his face.

"I'm paying it back to be free to insist on your giving me satisfaction!" I vociferated.

“Go to the devil with your everlasting words and gesticulations!” he stamped at me suddenly, as though in a frenzy. “I have been wanting to get rid of you both for ages; you and your Versilov.”

“You’ve gone out of your mind!” I shouted and indeed it did look like it.

“You’ve worried me to death with your high-sounding phrases, and never anything but phrases, phrases, phrases! Of honour for instance! Tfoo! I’ve been wanting to have done with you for a long time. . . . I am glad, glad, that the minute has come. I considered myself bound, and blushed that I was forced to receive you . . . both! But now I don’t consider myself bound in any way, in any way, let me tell you! Your Versilov induced me to attack Madame Ahmakov and to cast aspersions on her. . . . Don’t dare to talk of honour to me after that. For you are dishonourable people . . . both of you, both of you; I wonder you weren’t ashamed to take my money!”

There was a darkness before my eyes.

“I borrowed from you as a comrade,” I began, speaking with a dreadful quietness. “You offered it me yourself, and I believed in your affection. . . .”

“I am not your comrade! That’s not why I have given you money, you know why it is.”

“I borrowed on account of what you owed Versilov; of course it was stupid, but I . . .”

“You could not borrow on Versilov’s account without his permission . . . and I could not have given you his money without his permission. I gave you my own money, and you knew it; knew it and took it; and I allowed this hateful farce to go on in my house!”

“What did I know? What farce! Why did you give it to me?”

“Pour vos beaux yeux, mon cousin!” he said, laughing straight in my face.

“Go to hell!” I cried. “Take it all, here’s the other thousand too! Now we are quits, and to-morrow. . . .”

And I flung at him the roll of hundred rouble notes I had meant to keep to live upon. The notes hit him in the waistcoat and flopped on the floor.

With three rapid strides he stepped close up to me:

“Do you dare to tell me,” he said savagely articulating his words as it were syllable by syllable; “that all this time you’ve been taking my money you did not know your sister was with child by me?”

“What! what!” I screamed, and suddenly my legs gave way under me and I sank helplessly on the sofa. He told me himself afterwards that I literally turned as white as a handkerchief. I was stunned. I remember we still stared into each other’s faces in silence. A look of dismay passed over his face; he suddenly bent down, took me by the shoulder and began supporting me. I distinctly remember his set smile, in which there was incredulity and wonder. Yes, he had never dreamed of his words having such an effect, for he was absolutely convinced of my knowledge.

It ended in my fainting, but only for a moment: I came to myself; I got on my feet, gazed at him and reflected — and suddenly the whole truth dawned upon my mind which had been so slow to awaken! If some one had told me of it before and asked me what I should have done at such a moment, I should no doubt have answered that I should have torn him in pieces. But what happened was quite different and quite independent of my will: I suddenly covered my face with both hands and began sobbing bitterly. It happened of itself. All at once the child came out again in the young man. It seemed that fully half of my soul was still a child’s. I fell on the sofa and sobbed out, “Liza! Liza! Poor unhappy girl!” Prince Sergay was completely convinced all at once.

“Good God, how unjust I’ve been to you!” he cried in deep distress. “How abominably I’ve misjudged you in my suspiciousness. . . . Forgive me, Arkady Makarovitch!”

I suddenly jumped up, tried to say something to him, stood facing him, but said nothing, and ran out of the room and out of the flat. I dragged myself home on foot, and don’t know how I got there. I threw myself on the bed in the dark, buried my face in the pillow and thought and thought. At such moments orderly and consecutive thought is never possible; my brain and imagination seemed torn to shreds, and I remember I began dreaming about something utterly irrelevant, I don’t know what. My grief and trouble came back to my mind suddenly with an ache of anguish, and I wrung my hands again and exclaimed: “Liza, Liza!” and began crying again. I don’t remember how I fell asleep, but I slept sweetly and soundly.

CHAPTER VII

1

I waked up at eight o’clock in the morning, instantly locked my door, sat down by the window and began thinking. So I sat till ten o’clock. The servant knocked at my door twice, but I sent her away. At last at eleven o’clock there was a knock again. I was just going to shout to the servant again, but it was Liza. The servant came in with her, brought me in some coffee, and prepared to light the stove. It was impossible to get rid of the servant, and all the time Fekla was arranging the wood, and blowing up the fire, I strode up and down my little room, not beginning to talk to Liza, and even trying not to look at her. The servant, as though on purpose, was inexpressibly slow in her movements as servants always are when they notice they are preventing people from talking. Liza sat on the chair by the window and watched me.

“Your coffee will be cold,” she said suddenly.

I looked at her: not a trace of embarrassment, perfect tranquillity, and even a smile on her lips.

“Such are women,” I thought, and could not help shrugging my shoulders. At last the servant had finished lighting the stove and was about to tidy the room, but I turned her out angrily, and at last locked the door.

“Tell me, please, why have you locked the door again?” Liza asked.

I stood before her.

“Liza, I never could have imagined you would deceive me like this!” I exclaimed suddenly, though I had never thought of beginning like that, and instead of being moved to tears, an angry feeling which was quite unexpected stabbed me to the heart. Liza flushed; she did not turn away, however, but still looked straight in my face.

“Wait, Liza, wait, oh how stupid I’ve been! But was I stupid? I had no hint of it till everything came together yesterday, and from what could I have guessed it before? From your going to Mme. Stolbyeev’s and to that . . . Darya Onisimovna? But I looked upon you as the sun, Liza, and how could I dream of such a thing? Do you remember how I met you that day two months ago, at his flat, and how we walked together in the sunshine and rejoiced. . . . Had it happened then? Had it?”

She answered by nodding her head.

“So you were deceiving me even then! It was not my stupidity, Liza, it was my egoism, more than stupidity, the egoism of my heart and . . . maybe my conviction of your holiness. Oh! I have always been convinced that you were all infinitely above me and — now this! I had not time yesterday in one day to realize in spite of all the hints. . . . And besides I was taken up with something very different yesterday!”

At that point I suddenly thought of Katerina Nikolaevna, and something stabbed me to the heart like a pin, and I flushed crimson. It was natural that I could not be kind at that moment.

“But what are you justifying yourself for? You seem to be in a hurry to defend yourself, Arkady, what for?” Liza asked softly and gently, though her voice was firm and confident.

“What for? What am I to do now? if it were nothing but that question! And you ask what for? I don’t know how to act! I don’t know how brothers do act in such cases. . . . I know they go with pistols in their hands and force them to marry. . . . I will behave as a man of honour ought! Only I don’t know how a man of honour ought to behave. . . . Why? Because we are not gentlefolk, and he’s a prince and has to think of his career; he won’t listen to honest people like us. We are not even brother and sister, but nondescript illegitimate children of a house-serf without a surname; and princes don’t marry house-serfs. Oh, it’s nauseating! And what’s more, you sit now and wonder at me.”

“I believe that you are very much distressed,” said Liza flushing again, “but you are in too great a hurry, and are distressing yourself.”

“Too great a hurry? Why, do you think I’ve not been slow enough! Is it for you, Liza, to say that to me?” I cried, completely carried away by indignation at last. “And what shame I’ve endured, and how that prince must despise me! It’s all clear to me now, and I can see it all like a picture: he quite imagined that I had guessed long ago what his relation was to you, but that I held my tongue or even turned up my nose while I bragged of ‘my honour’ — that’s what he may well have thought of me! And that I have been taking his money for my sister, for my sister’s shame! It was that he loathed so, and I think he was quite right, too; to have every day to welcome a scoundrel because he was her brother, and then to talk of honour . . . it would turn any heart to stone, even his! And you allowed it all, you did not warn me! He despised me so utterly that he talked of me to

Stebelkov, and told me yesterday that he longed to get rid of us both, Versilov and me. And Stebelkov too! 'Anna Andreyevna is as much your sister as Lizaveta Makarovna,' and then he shouted after me, 'My money's better than his.' And I, I insolently lolled on HIS sofa, and forced myself on his acquaintances as though I were an equal, damn them! And you allowed all that! Most likely Darzan knows by now, judging, at least, by his tone yesterday evening. . . . Everyone, everyone knew it except me!"

"No one knows anything, he has not told any one of his acquaintances, and he COULD NOT," Liza added. "And about Stebelkov, all I know is that Stebelkov is worrying him, and that it could only have been a guess on Stebelkov's part anyway. . . . I have talked to him about you several times, and he fully believed me that you know nothing, and I can't understand how this happened yesterday."

"Oh, I paid him all I owed him yesterday, anyway, and that's a load off my heart! Liza, does mother know? Of course she does; why, yesterday she stood up for you against me. Oh, Liza! Is it possible that in your heart of hearts you think yourself absolutely right, that you really don't blame yourself in the least? I don't know how these things are considered nowadays, and what are your ideas, I mean as regards me, your mother, your brother, your father. . . . Does Versilov know?"

"Mother has told him nothing; he does not ask questions, most likely he does not want to ask."

"He knows, but does not want to know, that's it, it's like him! Well, you may laugh at a brother, a stupid brother, when he talks of pistols, but your mother! Surely you must have thought, Liza, that it's a reproach to mother? I have been tortured by that idea all night; mother's first thought now will be: 'it's because I did wrong, and the daughter takes after the mother!'"

"Oh, what a cruel and spiteful thing to say!" cried Liza, while the tears gushed from her eyes; she got up and walked rapidly towards the door.

"Stay, stay!" I caught her in my arms, made her sit down again, and sat down beside her, still keeping my arm round her.

"I thought it would be like this when I came here, and that you would insist on my blaming myself. Very well, I do blame myself. It was only through pride I was silent just now, and did not say so, I am much sorrier for you and mother than I am for myself. . . ."

She could not go on, and suddenly began crying bitterly.

“Don’t, Liza, you mustn’t, I don’t want anything. I can’t judge you. Liza, what does mother say? Tell me, has she known long?”

“I believe she has; but I only told her a little while ago, when THIS happened,” she said softly, dropping her eyes.

“What did she say?”

“She said, ‘bear it,’” Liza said still more softly.

“Ah, Liza, yes, ‘bear it!’ Don’t do anything to yourself, God keep you!”

“I am not going to,” she answered firmly, and she raised her eyes and looked at me. “Don’t be afraid,” she added, “it’s not at all like that.”

“Liza, darling, all I can see is that I know nothing about it, but I’ve only found out now how much I love you. There’s only one thing I can’t understand, Liza; it’s all clear to me, but there’s one thing I can’t understand at all: what made you love him? How could you love a man like that? That’s the question.”

“And I suppose you’ve been worrying yourself all night about that too?” said Liza, with a gentle smile.

“Stay, Liza, that’s a stupid question, and you are laughing; laugh away, but one can’t help being surprised, you know; you and HE, you are such opposite extremes! I have studied him: he’s gloomy, suspicious; perhaps he is very good-hearted, he may be, but on the other hand, he is above all extremely inclined to see evil in everything (though in that he is exactly like me). He has a passionate appreciation of what’s noble, that I admit, but I fancy it’s only in his ideal. Oh, he is apt to feel remorse, he has been all his life continually cursing himself, and repenting, but he will never reform; that’s like me, too, perhaps. Thousands of prejudices and false ideas and no real ideas at all. He is always striving after something heroic and spoiling it all over trifles. Forgive me, Liza, I’m a fool though; I say this and wound you and I know it; I understand it. . . .”

“It would be a true portrait,” smiled Liza, “but you are too bitter against him on my account, and that’s why nothing you say is true. From the very beginning he was distrustful with you, and you could not see him as he is, but with me, even at Luga. . . . He has had no eyes for anyone but me, ever since those days at Luga. Yes, he is suspicious and morbid, and but for me he would have gone out of his mind; and if he gives me up, he will go out of his mind, or shoot himself. I believe he has realized that and knows it,” Liza added dreamily as though to herself. “Yes, he is weak continually, but such weak people are capable at times of acting very strongly. . . . How

strangely you talked about a pistol, Arkady; nothing of that sort is wanted and I know what will happen. It's not my going after him, it's his coming after me. Mother cries and says that if I marry him I shall be unhappy, that he will cease to love me. I don't believe that; unhappy, perhaps, I shall be, but he won't cease to love me. That's not why I have refused my consent all along, it's for another reason. For the last two months I've refused, but to-day I told him 'yes, I will marry you.' Arkasha, do you know yesterday" (her eyes shone and she threw her arms round my neck), "he went to Anna Andreyevna's and told her with absolute frankness that he could not love her . . .? Yes, he had a complete explanation with her, and that idea's at an end! He had nothing to do with the project. It was all Prince Nikolay Ivanovitch's notion, and it was pressed upon him by those tormentors, Stebelkov and some one else. . . . And today for that I've said 'YES.' Dear Arkady, he is very anxious to see you, and don't be offended because of what happened yesterday: he's not quite well this morning, and will be at home all day. He's really unwell, Arkady; don't think it's an excuse. He has sent me on purpose, and told me to say that he 'needs' you, that he has a great deal he must tell you, and that it would be awkward to say it here, in your lodging. Well, good-bye! Oh, Arkady, I am ashamed to say it, as I was coming here I was awfully afraid that you would not love me any more. I kept crossing myself on the way, and you've been so good and kind! I shall never forget it! I am going to mother. And you try and like him a little, won't you?"

I embraced her warmly, and told her:

"I believe, Liza, you're a strong character. And I believe that it's not you who are going after him, but he who is going after you, only . . ."

"Only, what made you love him? 'that's the question!'" Liza put in with her old mischievous laugh, pronouncing the words exactly as I had done "that's the question!" And as she said it she lifted her forefinger exactly as I do. We kissed at parting, but when she had gone my heart began to ache again.

2

I note merely for myself there were moments after Liza had gone when a perfect host of the most unexpected ideas rushed into my mind, and I was actually quite pleased with them.

“Well, why should I bother,” I thought; “what is it to me? It’s the same with every one or nearly so. What of it if it has happened to Liza? Am I bound to save the honour of the family?”

I mention all these details to show how far I was from a sound understanding of the difference between good and evil. It was only feeling saved me: I knew that Liza was unhappy, that mother was unhappy, and I knew this by my feeling when I thought of them, and so I felt that what had happened must be wrong.

Now I may mention beforehand that from that day, right up to the catastrophe of my illness, events followed one another with such rapidity that recalling them now I feel surprised myself that I was able to stand up against them, crushing as they were. They clouded my mind, and even my feelings, and if in the end I had been overwhelmed by them, and had committed a crime (I was within an ace of it), the jury might well have acquitted me. But I will try to describe it all in the exact order of events, though I forewarn the reader that there was little order in my thoughts at that time. Events came rushing on me like the wind, and my thoughts whirled before them like the dead leaves in autumn. Since I was entirely made up of other people’s ideas, where could I find principles of my own when they were needed to form independent decisions? I had no guide at all.

I decided to go to see Prince Sergay that evening, that we might be perfectly free to talk things over, and he would be at home till evening. But when it was getting dark I received again a note by post, a note from Stebelkov; it consisted of three lines, containing an urgent and most persuasive request that I would call on him next morning at eleven o’clock on “most important business, and you will see for yourself that it is business.” Thinking it over I resolved to be guided by circumstances, as there was plenty of time to decide before to-morrow.

It was already eight o’clock; I should have gone out much earlier, but I kept expecting Versilov; I was longing to express myself to him, and my heart was burning. But Versilov was not coming and did not come. It was out of the question for me to go to see my mother and Liza for a time, and besides I had a feeling that Versilov certainly would not be there all day. I went on foot, and it occurred to me on the way to look in at the restaurant on the canal side where we had been the day before. Sure enough, Versilov was sitting there in the same place.

“I thought you would come here,” he said, smiling strangely and looking strangely at me. His smile was an unpleasant one, such as I had not seen on his face for a long time.

I sat down at the little table and told him in full detail about the prince and Liza, and my scene with Prince Sergay the evening before; I did not forget to mention how I had won at roulette. He listened very attentively, and questioned me as to Prince Sergay’s intention to marry Liza.

“Pauvre enfant, she won’t gain much by that perhaps. But very likely it won’t come off . . . though he is capable of it. . . .”

“Tell me, as a friend: you knew it, I suppose, had an inkling of it?”

“My dear boy, what could I do in the matter? It’s all a question of another person’s conscience and of feeling, even though only on the part of that poor girl. I tell you again; I meddled enough at one time with other people’s consciences, a most unsuitable practice! I don’t refuse to help in misfortune so far as I’m able, and if I understand the position myself. And you, my dear boy, did you really suspect nothing all this time?”

“But how could you,” I cried, flaring up, “how could you, if you’d a spark of suspicion that I knew of Liza’s position, and saw that I was taking money at the same time from Prince Sergay, how could you speak to me, sit with me, hold out your hand to me, when you must have looked on me as a scoundrel, for I bet anything you suspected I knew all about it and borrowed money from Prince Sergay knowingly!”

“Again, it’s a question of conscience,” he said with a smile. “And how do you know,” he added distinctly, with unaccountable emotion, “how do you know I wasn’t afraid, as you were yesterday, that I might lose my ‘ideal’ and find a worthless scamp instead of my impulsive, straightforward boy? I dreaded the minute and put it off. Why not instead of indolence or duplicity imagine something more innocent in me, stupid, perhaps, but more honourable, que diable! I am only too often stupid, without being honourable. What good would you have been to me if you had had such propensities? To persuade and try to reform in that case would be degrading; you would have lost every sort of value in my eyes even if you were reformed. . . .”

“And Liza? Are you sorry for her?”

“I am very sorry for her, my dear. What makes you think I am so unfeeling. . . . On the contrary, I will try my very utmost. . . . And you. What of YOUR affair?”

“Never mind my affair; I have no affairs of my own now. Tell me, why do you doubt that he’ll marry her? He was at Anna Andreyevena’s yesterday and positively refused . . . that is disowned the foolish idea . . . that originated with Prince Nikolay Ivanitch . . . of making a match between them. He disowned it absolutely.”

“Yes? When was that? And from whom did you hear it?” he inquired with interest. I told him all I knew.

“H’m . . .!” he pronounced as it were dreamily and pondering, “then it must have happened just about an hour . . . before another explanation. H’m . . .! oh, well, of course, such an interview may have taken place between them . . . although I know that nothing was said or done either on his side or on hers . . . though, of course, a couple of words would be enough for such an explanation. But I tell you what, it’s strange,” he laughed suddenly; “I shall certainly interest you directly with an extraordinary piece of news; if your prince did make his offer yesterday to Anna Andreyevna (and, suspecting about Liza, I should have done my utmost to oppose his suit, entre nous soit dit), Anna Andreyevna would in any case have refused him. I believe you are very fond of Anna Andreyevna, you respect and esteem her. That’s very nice on your part, and so you will probably rejoice on her account; she is engaged to be married, my dear boy, and judging from her character I believe she really will get married, while I — well, I give her my blessing, of course.”

“Going to be married? To whom?” I cried, greatly astonished.

“Ah, guess! I won’t torment you; to Prince Nikolay Ivanovitch, to your dear old man.”

I gazed at him with open eyes.

“She must have been cherishing the idea for a long time; and no doubt worked it out artistically in all its aspects,” he went on languidly, dropping out his words one by one. “I imagine this was arranged just an hour after Prince Sergay’s visit. You see how inappropriate was his dashing in! She simply went to Prince Nikolay Ivanovitch and made him a proposal.”

“What, ‘made him a proposal’? You mean he made her a proposal?”

“Oh, how could he! She did, she herself, though to be sure he is perfectly ecstatic. They say he is simply sitting now wondering how it was the idea never occurred to him. I have heard he has even taken to his bed . . . from sheer ecstasy, no doubt.”

“Listen, you are talking so ironically . . . I can hardly believe it. And how could she propose to him? What did she say?”

“I assure you, my dear boy, that I am genuinely delighted,” he answered, suddenly assuming a wonderfully serious air; “he is old, of course, but by every law and custom he can get married; as for her — again it’s a matter of another person’s conscience, as I’ve told you already, my dear boy. However, she is quite competent to have her own views and make her own decision. But the precise details and the words in which she expressed herself I am not in a position to give you, my dear boy. But no doubt she was equal to doing it, in a way which neither you nor I would have imagined. The best of it all is that there’s nothing scandalous in it, it’s all très comme il faut in the eyes of the world. Of course, it’s quite evident that she was eager for a good position in the world, but you know she deserves it. All this, my dear boy, is an entirely worldly matter. And no doubt she made her proposal in a magnificent and artistic style. It’s an austere type, my dear boy, ‘the girl-nun,’ as you once described her; ‘the cool young lady’ has been my name for her a long time past. She has almost been brought up by him, you know, and has seen more than one instance of his kindly feeling towards her. She assured me some time ago that she had ‘such a respect for him and such a high opinion of him, such feeling for him and such sympathy with him,’ and all the rest of it, so that I was to some extent prepared. I was informed of all this this morning in her name and at her request by my son, her brother Andrey Andreyevitch, whom I believe you don’t know, and whom I see regularly twice a year. He respectfully approves of the step she has taken.”

“Then it is public already? Good heavens, I am amazed!”

“No, it’s certainly not public yet, not for some time. . . . I don’t know . . . I am altogether out of it, in fact. But it’s all true.”

“But now Katerina Nikolaevna. . . . What do you think? it won’t suit Büring’s tastes, will it?”

“I don’t know . . . actually that he will dislike it; but you may be sure that on that side Anna Andreyevna is a highly respectable person. But what a girl she is! Yesterday morning, immediately before this, she inquired of me ‘whether I were in love with the widow Ahmakov?’ Do you remember I told you of it yesterday with surprise; it would have been impossible for her to marry the father if I had married the daughter! Do you understand now?”

“Oh, to be sure,” I cried, “but could Anna Andreyevna really have imagined . . . that you could possibly want to marry Katerina Nikolaevna?”

“Evidently she could, my dear boy, but, however . . . but, however, I believe it’s time for you to go where you were going. My head aches all the time, you know. I’ll tell them to play Lucia. I love the solemnity of its dreariness, but I’ve told you that already . . . I repeat myself unpardonably. . . . Perhaps I’ll go away from here though. I love you, my dear boy, but good-bye; whenever I have a headache or toothache I thirst for solitude.”

A line of suffering came into his face; I believe now he really was suffering with his head, his head particularly. . . .

“Till to-morrow,” I said.

“Why ‘till to-morrow,’ and what is to happen to-morrow?” he said with a wry smile.

“I shall go to see you, or you come to see me.”

“No, I shan’t come to you, but you’ll come running to me. . . .”

There was something quite malevolent in his face, but I had no thoughts to spare for him; what an event!

3

Prince Sergay was really unwell, and was sitting alone with his head wrapped in a wet towel. He was very anxious to see me; but he had not only a headache, he seemed to be aching morally all over. To anticipate events again; all that latter time, right up to the catastrophe, it was somehow my fate to meet with people who were one after another so excited that they were all almost mad, so that I couldn’t help being infected with the same malady myself. I came, I must confess, with evil feelings in my heart, and I was horribly ashamed, too, of having cried before him the previous night. And anyway Liza and he had so clearly succeeded in deceiving me that I could not help seeing myself as a fool. In short, my heart was vibrating on false notes as I went in. But all this affectation and false feeling vanished quickly. I must do him the justice to say that his suspiciousness had quickly disappeared, that he surrendered himself completely; he betrayed almost childish affection, confidence and love. He kissed me with tears and at once began talking of the position. . . . Yes, he really did need me: his words and the sequence of his ideas betrayed great mental disorder.

He announced with great firmness his intention to marry Liza and as soon as possible. “The fact that she is not of noble birth does not trouble me in the least, believe me,” he said to me; “my grandfather married a serf-girl who sang in a neighbouring landowner’s private theatre. My family, of course, have rested certain expectations upon me, but now they’ll have to give way, and it will not lead to strife. I want to break with my present life for good, for good! To have everything different, everything new! I don’t understand what made your sister love me; but if it had not been for her I should not have been alive to this day. I swear from the depth of my soul that my meeting her at Luga was the finger of Providence. I believe she loved me because ‘I had fallen so low’ . . . can you understand that though, Arkady Makarovitch?”

“Perfectly!” I declared in a voice of full conviction. I sat at the table, and he walked about the room.

“I must tell you the whole story of our meeting, without reserve. It began with a secret I had guarded in my heart, of which she alone heard, because only to her could I bring myself to trust it. And to this day no one else knows it. I went to Luga then with despair in my heart, and stayed at Mme. Stolbyeev’s, I don’t know why, seeking solitude perhaps. I had only just resigned my commission in the regiment, which I had entered on my return from abroad, after my meeting with Andrey Petrovitch out there. I had some money at the time, and in the regiment I led a dissipated life, and spent freely; well, the officers, my comrades, did not like me, though I tried not to offend anyone. And I will confess it to you, no one has ever liked me. There was a certain Cornet Stepanov, I must admit an extremely empty-headed worthless fellow not distinguished in any way. There was no doubt he was honest though. He was in the habit of coming to see me, and I did not stand on ceremony with him; he used to sit in a corner, mute but dignified, for days together, and he did not get in my way at all. One day I told him a story that was going the round, with many foolish additions of my own, such as that the colonel’s daughter was in love with me, and that the colonel had his eye upon me for her and so would do anything to please me. . . . In short, I will pass over the details, but it led to a very complicated and revolting scandal. It was not Stepanov who spread it but my orderly, who had overheard and remembered it all, for I had told an absurd story compromising the young lady. So, when there was an inquiry into the scandal, and this orderly was questioned by the officers, he threw the blame

on Stepanov, that is, he said that it was to Stepanov I'd told the story. Stepanov was put in such a position that he could not deny having heard it; it was a question of honour. And as two-thirds of the story had been lying on my part, the officers were indignant, and the commanding officer who had called us together was forced to clear the matter up. At this point the question was put to Stepanov in the presence of all: had he heard the story or not? And at once he told the whole truth. Well, what did I do then, I, a prince whose line goes back a thousand years? I denied it, and told Stepanov to his face that he was lying, in the most polite way, suggesting that he had 'misunderstood my words' and so on. . . . I'll leave out the details again, but as Stepanov came to me so often I was able with some appearance of likelihood to put the matter in such a light that he might seem to be plotting with my orderly for motives of his own; and this told in my favour. Stepanov merely looked at me in silence and shrugged his shoulders. I remember the way he looked at me and shall never forget it. Then he promptly resigned his commission; but how do you suppose it ended? Every officer without exception called on him and begged him not to resign. A fortnight later I, too, left the regiment; no one turned me out, no one suggested my resigning, I alleged family reasons for my leaving the army. That was how the matter ended. At first I didn't mind, and even felt angry with them; I stayed at Luga, made the acquaintance of Lizaveta Makarovna, but a month afterwards I began to look at my revolver and to think about death. I looked at everything gloomily, Arkady Makarovitch. I composed a letter to the commanding officer and my former comrades, with a full confession of my lie, and a vindication of Stepanov's honour. When I had written the letter I asked myself the question, should I send it and live, or should I send it and die? I should never have decided that question. Chance, blind chance brought me near to Lizaveta Makarovna after a strange and rapid conversation with her. She had been at Mme. Stolbyeev's before that, we had met and parted with bows and had rarely spoken. I suddenly told her everything. It was then she held out a hand to me."

"How did she settle the question?"

"I didn't send the letter. She decided that I should not send it. She argued that if I did send the letter I should, of course, have been doing an honourable action, sufficient to wash away all the filth of the past, and far more, but she doubted my having the strength to endure it. It was her idea that no one would have the strength to bear it, for then the future would be

utterly ruined, and no new life would be possible. It is true Stepanov had suffered for it; but he had been acquitted by public opinion, as it was. It was a paradox, of course; but she restrained me, and I gave myself into her hands completely."

"Her reasoning was jesuitical but feminine," I cried; "she had begun to love you already!"

"It was my regeneration into a new life. I vowed to change, to begin a new life, to be worthy of myself and of her and — this is how it has ended! It has ended in my going with you to roulette, in my playing faro; I could not resist the fortune, I was delighted at being in the swim, delighted with all these people, with racehorses. . . . I tortured Liza, to my shame!"

He rubbed his forehead with his hand and walked up and down the room.

"We are both, you and I, stricken by the same Russian curse, Arkady Makarovitch; you don't know what to do, and I don't know what to do. If a Russian deviates ever so little from the rut of routine laid down for him by tradition, at once he is at a loss what to do. While he's in the rut everything's clear — income, rank, position in society, a carriage, visits, a wife — but ever so little off it — and what am I? A leaf fluttering before the wind, I don't know what to do! For the last two months I have striven to keep in the rut, I have liked the rut, I've been drawn to the rut. You don't know the depth of my downfall here; I love Liza, but at the same time I've been thinking of Mme. Ahmakov!"

"Is it possible?" I cried in distress. "By the way, what did you say yesterday about Versilov's having instigated you to behave in a mean way to Katerina Nikolaevna?"

"I may have exaggerated it, and perhaps I have been unfair to him in my suspiciousness as I have been to you. Let us drop the subject. Why, do you suppose that I have not been brooding over a lofty ideal of life all this time, ever since Luga, perhaps? I swear that ideal has never left me, it has been with me continually, and has lost none of its beauty in my heart. I remembered the vow I made to Lizaveta Makarovna to reform. When Andrey Petrovitch talked about the aristocracy to me yesterday, he said nothing new, I can assure you. My ideal is firmly established: a few score acres (and only a few score, for I've scarcely anything left of the fortune), then absolutely complete abandonment of the world and a career; a rural home, a family, and myself a tiller of the soil or something of the sort. Oh, in our family it's nothing new; my uncle, my grandfather, too, tilled the soil

with their own hands. We have been princes for a thousand years, as aristocratic and as ancient a name as the Rohans, but we are beggars. And this is how I will train my children: 'Remember always, all your life, that you are a nobleman, that the sacred blood of Russian princes flows in your veins, but never be ashamed that your father tilled the soil with his own hands — he did it like a prince.' I should not leave them property, nothing but that strip of land, but I would bring them up in the loftiest principles: that I should consider a duty. Oh, I should be helped by Liza, by work, by children; oh, how we have dreamed of this together, dreamed of it here in this room. And would you believe it? at the same time I was thinking of Mme. Ahmakov, and of the possibility of a worldly and wealthy marriage, though I don't care for the woman in the least! And only after what Nastchokin said about Büring, I resolved to turn to Anna Andreyevna."

"But you went to decline the match? That was an honourable action anyway, I suppose!"

"You think so?" he stopped short before me. "No, you don't know my nature, or else there is something I don't know myself, because it seems I have more than one nature. I love you sincerely, Arkady Makarovitch, and besides I am terribly to blame for the way I've treated you for the last two months, and so I want you as Liza's brother to know all this. I went to Anna Andreyevna to make her an offer of marriage, not to disown the idea."

"Is it possible? But Liza told me . . ."

"I deceived Liza."

"Tell me, please, you made a formal offer and Anna Andreyevna refused it? Was that it? Was that it? The facts are of great importance to me, prince."

"No, I did not make an offer at all, but that was only because I hadn't time; she forestalled me, not in direct words, of course, though the meaning was clear and unmistakable — she 'delicately' gave me to understand that the idea was henceforth out of the question."

"So it was the same as your not making her an offer, and your pride has not suffered!"

"How can you reason like that! My own conscience condemns me, and what of Liza, whom I have deceived . . . and meant to abandon? And the vow I made to myself and my forefathers to reform and to atone for all my ignoble past! I entreat you not to tell her that. Perhaps that is the one thing she would not be able to forgive me! I have been ill since what happened

yesterday. And now it seems that all is over, and the last of the Sokolskys will be sent to prison. Poor Liza! I have been very anxious to see you all day, Arkady Makarovitch, to tell you as Liza's brother what she knows nothing of as yet. I am a criminal. I have taken part in forging railway shares!"

"Something more! What, you are going to prison?" I cried jumping up and looking at him in horror. His face wore a look of the deepest gloom and utterly hopeless sorrow.

"Sit down," he said, and he sat down in the armchair opposite. "To begin with, you had better know the facts; it was more than a year ago, that same summer that I was at Ems with Lidya, and Katerina Nikolaevna, and afterwards at Paris, just at the time when I was going to Paris for two months. In Paris, of course, I was short of money, and it was just then Stebelkov turned up, though I knew him before. He gave me some money and promised to give me more, but asked me in return to help him; he wanted an artist, a draughtsman, engraver, lithographer, and so on, a chemist, an expert, and — for certain purposes. What those purposes were he hinted pretty plainly from the first. And would you believe it? he understood my character — it only made me laugh. The point is that from my schooldays I had an acquaintance, at present a Russian exile, though he was not really a Russian, but a native of Hamburg. He had been mixed up in some cases of forging papers in Russia already. It was on this man that Stebelkov was reckoning, but he wanted an introduction to him and he applied to me. I wrote a couple of lines for him, and immediately forgot all about it. Afterwards he met me again and again, and I received altogether as much as three thousand from him. I had literally forgotten all about the business. Here I've been borrowing from him all the time with I O Us and securities, and he has been cringing before me like a slave, and suddenly yesterday I learned from him for the first time that I am a criminal."

"When, yesterday?"

"Yesterday morning, when we were shouting in my study just before Nastchokin arrived. For the first time he had the effrontery to speak to me quite openly of Anna Andreyevna. I raised my hand to strike him, but he suddenly stood up and informed me that his interests were mine, and that I must remember that I was his accomplice and as much a swindler as he — though he did not use those words, that was the sense."

"What nonsense, why surely it's all imagination?"

“No, it’s not imagination. He has been here to-day and explained things more exactly. These forged documents have been in circulation a long time, and are still being passed about, but it seems they’ve already begun to be noticed. Of course, I’ve nothing to do with it, but ‘you see though, you were pleased to give me that little letter,’ that’s what Stebelkov told me.”

“So you didn’t know, of course, what for, or did you know?”

“I did know,” Prince Sergay answered in a low voice, dropping his eyes; “that’s to say I knew and didn’t know, you see. I was laughing, I was amused. I did it without thinking, for I had no need of forged documents at that time, and it wasn’t I who meant to make them. But that three thousand he gave me then he did not put down in his account against me and I let it pass. But how do you know, perhaps I really am a forger. I could not help knowing, I am not a child; I did know, but I felt in a merry humour and I helped scoundrels, felons . . . helped them for money! So I, too, am a forger!”

“Oh, you are exaggerating; you’ve done wrong, but you’re exaggerating!”

“There’s some one else in it, a young man called Zhibyelsky, some sort of attorney’s clerk. He, too, had something to do with these forgeries, he came afterwards from that gentleman at Hamburg to see me about some nonsense; of course, I didn’t know what it was about myself — it was not about those forgeries I know that . . . but he has kept in his possession two documents in my handwriting, only brief notes — and, of course, they are evidence too; I understood that to-day. Stebelkov makes out that this Zhibyelsky is spoiling everything; he has stolen something, public money I believe, but means to steal something more and then to emigrate; so he wants eight thousand, not a penny less, to help him on his way. My share of the fortune I had inherited would satisfy Stebelkov, but he said Zhibyelsky must be satisfied too. . . . In short I must give up my share of the fortune and ten thousand besides, that’s their final offer. And then they will give me back my two letters. They’re in collusion, that’s clear.”

“It’s obviously absurd! If they inform against you they will betray themselves! Nothing will induce them to give information.”

“I understand that. They don’t threaten to give information at all, they only say, ‘We shall not inform, of course, but if it should be discovered, then . . .’ that’s what they say, and that’s all, but I think it’s enough! But that’s not the point; whatever happens, and even if I had those letters in my

pocket now, yet to be associated with those swindlers, to be their accomplice for ever and ever! To lie to Russia, to lie to my children, to lie to Liza, to lie to my conscience! . . .”

“Does Liza know?”

“No, she does not know everything. It would be too much for her in her condition. I wear the uniform of my regiment, and every time I meet a soldier of the regiment, at every second, I am inwardly conscious that I must not dare to wear the uniform.”

“Listen,” I cried suddenly; “there’s no need to waste time talking about it; there’s only one way of salvation for you; go to Prince Nikolay Ivanitch, borrow ten thousand from him, ask him for it, without telling him what for, then send for those two swindlers, settle up with them finally, buy back your letters . . . and the thing is over! The whole thing will be ended, and you can go and till the land! Away with vain imaginings and have faith in life!”

“I have thought of that,” he said resolutely. “I have been making up my mind all day and at last I have decided. I have only been waiting for you; I will go. Do you know I have never in my life borrowed a farthing from Prince Nikolay Ivanitch. He is well disposed to our family and even . . . and has come to their assistance, but I, I personally, have never borrowed money from him. But now I am determined to. Our family, you may note, is an older branch of the Sokolskys than Prince Nikolay Ivanitch’s; they are a younger branch, collaterals, in fact, hardly recognized. . . . There was a feud between our ancestors. At the beginning of the reforms of Peter the Great, my great-grandfather, whose name was Peter too, remained an Old Believer, and was a wanderer in the forest of Kostroma. That Prince Peter married a second wife who was not of noble birth. . . . So it was then these other Sokolskys dropped out, but I. . . . What was I talking about? . . .”

He was very much exhausted, and seemed talking almost unconsciously.

“Calm yourself,” I said, standing up and taking my hat; “go to bed, that’s the first thing. Prince Nikolay Ivanitch is sure not to refuse, especially now in the overflow of his joy. Have you heard the latest news from that quarter? Haven’t you, really? I have heard a wild story that he is going to get married; it’s a secret, but not from you, of coarse.”

And I told him all about it, standing, hat in hand. He knew nothing about it. He quickly asked questions, inquiring principally when and where the match had been arranged and how far the rumour was trustworthy. I did

not, of course, conceal from him that it had been settled immediately after his visit to Anna Andreyevna. I cannot describe what a painful impression this news made upon him; his face worked and was almost contorted, and his lips twitched convulsively in a wry smile. At the end he turned horribly pale and sank into a reverie, with his eyes on the floor. I suddenly saw quite clearly that his vanity had been deeply wounded by Anna Andreyevna's refusal of him the day before. Perhaps in his morbid state of mind he realized only too vividly at that minute the absurd and humiliating part he had played the day before in the eyes of the young lady of whose acceptance, as it now appeared, he had all the time been so calmly confident. And worst of all, perhaps, was the thought that he had behaved so shabbily to Liza, and to no purpose! It would be interesting to know for what these foppish young snobs think well of one another, and on what grounds they can respect one another; this prince might well have supposed that Anna Andreyevna knew of his connection with Liza — in reality her sister — or if she did not actually know, that she would be certain to hear of it sooner or later; and yet he had "had no doubt of her acceptance!"

"And could you possibly imagine," he said suddenly, with a proud and supercilious glance at me, "that now, after learning such a fact, I, I could be capable of going to Prince Nikolay Ivanitch and asking him for money? Ask him, the accepted fiancé of the lady who has just refused me — like a beggar, like a flunkey! No, now all is lost, and if that old man's help is my only hope, then let my last hope perish!"

In my heart I shared his feeling, but it was necessary to take a broader view of the real position: was the poor old prince really to be looked upon as a successful rival? I had several ideas fermenting in my brain. I had, apart from Prince Sergay's affairs, made up my mind to visit the old man next day. For the moment I tried to soften the impression made by the news and to get the poor prince to bed! "When you have slept, things will look brighter, you'll see!" He pressed my hand warmly, but this time he did not kiss me. I promised to come and see him the following evening, and "we'll talk, we'll talk; there's so much to talk of." He greeted these last words of mine with a fateful smile.

CHAPTER VIII

1

All that night I dreamed of roulette, of play, of gold, and reckonings. I seemed in my dreams to be calculating something at the gambling table, some stake, some chance, and it oppressed me all night like a nightmare. To tell the truth, the whole of the previous day, in spite of all the startling impressions I had received, I had been continually thinking of the money I had won at Zerstchikov's. I suppressed the thought, but I could not suppress the emotion it aroused, and I quivered all over at the mere recollection of it. That success had put me in a fever; could it be that I was a gambler, or at least — to be more accurate — that I had the qualities of a gambler? Even now, at the time of writing this, I still at moments like thinking about play! It sometimes happens that I sit for hours together absorbed in silent calculations about gambling and in dreams of putting down my stake, of the number turning up, and of picking up my winnings. Yes, I have all sorts of "qualities," and my nature is not a tranquil one.

At ten o'clock I intended to go to Stebelkov's and I meant to walk. I sent Matvey home as soon as he appeared. While I was drinking my coffee I tried to think over the position. For some reason I felt pleased; a moment's self-analysis made me realize that I was chiefly pleased because I was going that day to the old prince's. But that day was a momentous and startling one in my life, and it began at once with a surprise.

At ten o'clock my door was flung wide open, and Tatyana Pavlovna flew in. There was nothing I expected less than a visit from her, and I jumped up in alarm on seeing her. Her face was ferocious, her manner was incoherent, and I daresay if she had been asked she could not have said why she had hastened to me. I may as well say at once, that she had just received a piece of news that had completely overwhelmed her, and she had not recovered from the first shock of it. The news overwhelmed me, too. She stayed, however, only half a minute, or perhaps a minute, but not more. She simply pounced upon me.

"So this is what you've been up to!" she said, standing facing me and bending forward. "Ah, you young puppy! What have you done! What, you don't even know! Goes on drinking his coffee! Oh, you babbler, you

chatterbox, oh, you imitation lover . . . boys like you are whipped, whipped, whipped!”

“Tatyana Pavlovna, what has happened? What is the matter? Is mother? . . .”

“You will know!” she shouted menacingly, ran out of the room — and was gone. I should certainly have run after her, but I was restrained by one thought, and that was not a thought but a vague misgiving: I had an inkling that of all her vituperation, “imitation lover” was the most significant phrase. Of course I could not guess what it meant, but I hastened out, that I might finish with Stebelkov and go as soon as possible to Nikolay Ivanitch.

“The key to it all is there!” I thought instinctively.

I can’t imagine how he learned it, but Stebelkov already knew all about Anna Andreyevna down to every detail; I will not describe his conversation and his gestures, but he was in a state of enthusiasm, a perfect ecstasy of enthusiasm over this “masterstroke.”

“She is a person! Yes, she is a person!” he exclaimed. “Yes, that’s not our way; here we sit still and do nothing, but as soon as she wants something of the best she takes it. She’s an antique statue! She is an antique statue of Minerva, only she is walking about and wearing modern dress!”

I asked him to come to business; this business was, as I had guessed, solely to ask me to persuade and induce Prince Sergay to appeal to Prince Nikolay Ivanitch for a loan. “Or it will be a very very bad look-out for him, though it’s none of my doing; that’s so, isn’t it?”

He kept peeping into my face, but I fancy did not detect that I knew anything more than the day before. And indeed he could not have imagined it: I need hardly say that I did not by word or hint betray that I knew anything about the forged documents.

Our explanations did not take long, he began at once promising me money, “and a considerable sum, a considerable sum, if only you will manage that the prince should go. The matter is urgent, very urgent, and that’s the chief point that the matter’s so pressing!”

I did not want to argue and wrangle with him, as I had done the day before, and I got up to go, though to be on the safe side I flung him in reply that “I would try”; but he suddenly amazed me beyond all expression: I was on my way to the door when all at once he put his arm round my waist affectionately and began talking to me in the most incomprehensible way.

I will omit the details of the conversation that I may not be wearisome. The upshot of it was that he made me a proposition that I should introduce him to M. Dergatchev, “since you go there!”

I instantly became quiet, doing my utmost not to betray myself by the slightest gesture. I answered at once, however, that I was quite a stranger there, and though I had been in the house, it was only on one occasion, by chance.

“But if you’ve been ADMITTED once, you might go a second time; isn’t that so?”

I asked him point-blank, and with great coolness, why he wanted it? And to this day I can’t understand such a degree of simplicity in a man who was apparently no fool, and who was a “business man,” as Vassin had said of him! He explained to me quite openly that he suspected “that something prohibited and sternly prohibited was going on at Dergatchev’s, and so if I watch him I may very likely make something by it.” And with a grin he winked at me with his left eye.

I made no definite answer, but pretended to be considering it and promised to “think about it,” and with that I went hastily away. The position was growing more complicated: I flew to Vassin, and at once found him at home.

“What, you . . . too!” he said enigmatically on seeing me. Without inquiring the significance of this phrase, I went straight to the point and told him what had happened. He was evidently impressed, though he remained absolutely cool. He cross-examined me minutely.

“It may very well be that you misunderstood him.”

“No, I quite understood him, his meaning was quite clear.”

“In any case I am extremely grateful to you,” he added with sincerity. “Yes, indeed, if that is so, he imagined that you could not resist a certain sum of money.”

“And, besides, he knows my position: I’ve been playing all this time, and behaving badly, Vassin.”

“I have heard about that.”

“What puzzles me most of all is that he knows you go there constantly, too,” I ventured to observe.

“He knows perfectly well,” Vassin answered quite simply, “that I don’t go there with any object. And indeed all those young people are simply

chatterers, nothing more; you have reason to remember that as well as anyone."

I fancied that he did not quite trust me.

"In any case I am very much obliged to you."

"I have heard that M. Stebelkov's affairs are in rather a bad way," I tried to question him once more. "I've heard, anyway, of certain shares . . ."

"What shares have you heard about?"

I mentioned "the shares" on purpose, but of course not with the idea of telling him the secret Prince Sergay had told me the day before. I only wanted to drop a hint and see from his face, from his eyes, whether he knew anything about "shares." I attained my object: from a momentary indefinable change in his face, I guessed that he did perhaps know something in this matter, too. I did not answer his question "what shares," I was silent; and it was worth noting that he did not pursue the subject either.

"How's Lizaveta Makarovna?" he inquired with sympathetic interest.

"She's quite well. My sister has always thought very highly of you. . . ."

There was a gleam of pleasure in his eyes; I had guessed long before that he was not indifferent to Liza.

"Prince Sergay Petrovitch was here the other day," he informed me suddenly.

"When?" I cried.

"Just four days ago."

"Not yesterday?"

"No, not yesterday." He looked at me inquiringly. "Later perhaps I may describe our meeting more fully, but for the moment I feel I must warn you," Vassin said mysteriously, "that he struck me as being in an abnormal condition of mind, and . . . of brain indeed. I had another visit, however," he added suddenly with a smile, "just before you came, and I was driven to the same conclusion about that visitor, too."

"Has Prince Sergay just been here?"

"No, not Prince Sergay, I am not speaking of the prince just now. Andrey Petrovitch Versilov has just been here, and . . . you've heard nothing? Hasn't something happened to him?"

"Perhaps something has; but what passed between you exactly?" I asked hurriedly.

"Of course, I ought to keep it secret . . . we are talking rather queerly, with too much reserve," he smiled again. "Andrey Petrovitch, however, did

not tell me to keep it secret. But you are his son, and as I know your feelings for him, I believe I may be doing right to warn you. Only fancy, he came to me to ask the question: 'In case it should be necessary for him very shortly, in a day or two, to fight a duel, would I consent to be his second?' I refused absolutely, of course."

I was immensely astonished; this piece of news was the most disturbing of all: something was wrong, something had turned up, something had happened of which I knew nothing as yet! I suddenly recalled in a flash how Versilov had said to me the day before: "I shan't come to you, but you'll come running to me."

I rushed off to Prince Nikolay Ivanitch, feeling more than ever that the key to the mystery lay there. As he said good-bye, Vassin thanked me again.

2

The old prince was sitting before an open fire with a rug wrapped round his legs. He met me with an almost questioning air, as though he were surprised that I had come; yet almost every day he had sent messages inviting me. He greeted me affectionately, however. But his answers to my first questions sounded somewhat reluctant, and were fearfully vague. At times he seemed to deliberate, and looked intently at me, as though forgetting and trying to recall something which certainly ought to be connected with me. I told him frankly that I had heard everything and was very glad. A cordial and good-natured smile came into his face at once and his spirits rose; his mistrust and caution vanished at once as though he had forgotten them. And indeed he had, of course.

"My dear young friend, I knew you would be the first to come, and, and do you know, I thought about you yesterday: 'Who will be pleased? he will!' Well, no one else will indeed; but that doesn't matter. People are spiteful gossips, but that's no great matter. . . . Cher enfant, this is so exalted and so charming. . . . But, of course, you know her well. And Anna Andreyevna has the highest opinion of you. It's a grave and charming face out of an English keepsake. It's the most charming English engraving possible. . . . Two years ago I had a regular collection of such engravings. . . . I always had the intention, always; I only wonder why it was I never thought of it."

“You always, if I remember rightly, distinguished Anna Andreyevna and were fond of her.”

“My dear boy, we don’t want to hurt anyone. Life with one’s friends, with one’s relations, with those dear to one’s heart is paradise. All the poets. . . . In short, it has been well known from prehistoric times. In the summer you know we are going to Soden, and then to Bad-Gastein. But what a long time it is since you’ve been to see me, my dear boy; what’s been the matter with you? I’ve been expecting you. And how much, how much has happened meanwhile, hasn’t it? I am only sorry that I am uneasy; as soon as I am alone I feel uneasy. That is why I must not be left alone, must I? That’s as plain as twice two make four. I understood that at once from her first word. Oh, my dear boy, she only spoke two words, but . . . it was something like a glorious poem. But, of course, you are her brother, almost her brother, aren’t you? My dear boy, it’s not for nothing I’m so fond of you! I swear I had a presentiment of all this. I kissed her hand and wept.”

He took out his handkerchief as though preparing to weep again. He was violently agitated, suffering, I fancy, from one of his “nervous attacks,” and one of the worst I remember in the whole course of our acquaintance. As a rule, almost always in fact, he was ever so much better and more good-humoured.

“I would forgive everything, my dear boy,” he babbled on. “I long to forgive every one, and it’s a long time since I was angry with anyone. Art, la poésie dans la vie, philanthropy, and she, a biblical beauty, quelle charmante person, eh? Les chants de Salomon . . . non, c’est n’est pas Salomon, c’est David qui mettait une jeune belle dans son lit pour se chauffer dans sa vieillesse. Enfin David, Salomon, all that keeps going round in my head — a regular jumble. Everything, cher enfant may be at the same time grand and ridiculous. Cette jeune belle de la vieillesse de David — c’est tout un poème, and Paul de Kock would have made of it a scène de bassinoire, and we should all have laughed. Paul de Kook has neither taste nor sense of proportion, though he is a writer of talent . . . Katerina Nikolaevna smiles . . . I said that we would not trouble anyone. We have begun our romance and only ask them to let us finish it. Maybe it is a dream, but don’t let them rob me of this dream.”

“How do you mean it’s a dream, prince?”

“A dream? How a dream? Well, let it be a dream, but let me die with that dream.”

“Oh, why talk of dying, prince? You have to live now, only to live!”

“Why, what did I say? That’s just what I keep saying. I simply can’t understand why life is so short. To avoid being tedious, no doubt, for life, too, is the Creator’s work of art, in a perfect and irreproachable form like a poem of Pushkin’s. Brevity is the first essential of true art. But if anyone is not bored, he ought to be allowed to live longer.”

“Tell me, prince, is it public property yet?”

“No, my dear boy, certainly not! We have all agreed upon that. It’s private, private, private. So far I’ve only disclosed it fully to Katerina Nikolaevna, because I felt I was being unfair to her. Oh, Katerina Nikolaevna is an angel, she is an angel!”

“Yes, yes!”

“Yes, and you say ‘yes’? Why, I thought that you were her enemy, too. Ach, by the way, she asked me not to receive you any more. And only fancy, when you came in I quite forgot it.”

“What are you saying?” I cried, jumping up. “Why? Where?”

(My presentiment had not deceived me; I had had a presentiment of something of this sort ever since Tatyana’s visit.)

“Yesterday, my dear boy, yesterday. I don’t understand, in fact, how you got in, for orders were given. How did you come in?”

“I simply walked in.”

“The surest way. If you had tried to creep in by stealth, no doubt they would have caught you, but as you simply walked in they let you pass. Simplicity, cher enfant, is in reality the deepest cunning.”

“I don’t understand: did you, too, decide not to receive me, then!”

“No, my dear boy, I said I had nothing to do with it. . . . That is I gave my full consent. And believe me, my dear boy, I am much too fond of you. But Katerina Nikolaevna insisted so very strongly. . . . So, there it is!”

At that instant Katerina Nikolaevna appeared in the doorway. She was dressed to go out, and as usual came in to kiss her father. Seeing me she stopped short in confusion, turned quickly, and went out.

“Voilà!” cried the old prince, impressed and much disturbed.

“It’s a misunderstanding!” I cried. “One moment . . . I . . . I’ll come back to you directly, prince!”

And I ran after Katerina Nikolaevna.

All that followed upon this happened so quickly that I had no time to reflect, or even to consider in the least how to behave. If I had had time to consider, I should certainly have behaved differently! But I lost my head like a small boy. I was rushing towards her room, but on the way a footman informed me that Katerina Nikolaevna had already gone downstairs and was getting into her carriage. I rushed headlong down the front staircase. Katerina Nikolaevna was descending the stairs, in her fur coat, and beside her — or rather arm-in-arm with her — walked a tall and severe-looking officer, wearing a uniform and a sword, and followed by a footman carrying his great-coat. This was the baron, who was a colonel of five-and-thirty, a typical smart officer, thin, with rather too long a face, ginger moustache and even eyelashes of the same colour. Though his face was quite ugly, it had a resolute and defiant expression. I describe him briefly, as I saw him at that moment. I had never seen him before. I ran down the stairs after them without a hat or coat. Katerina Nikolaevna was the first to notice me, and she hurriedly whispered something to her companion. He slightly turned his head and then made a sign to the footman and the hall-porter. The footman took a step towards me at the front door, but I pushed him away and rushed after them out on the steps. Büring was assisting Katerina Nikolaevna into the carriage.

“Katerina Nikolaevna! Katerina Nikolaevna!” I cried senselessly like a fool! like a fool! Oh, I remember it all; I had no hat on!

Büring turned savagely to the footman again and shouted something to him loudly, one or two words, I did not take them in. I felt some one clutch me by the elbow. At that moment the carriage began to move; I shouted again and was rushing after the carriage. I saw that Katerina Nikolaevna was peeping out of the carriage window, and she seemed much perturbed. But in my hasty movement I jostled against Büring unconsciously, and trod on his foot, hurting him a good deal, I fancy. He uttered a faint cry, clenched his teeth, with a powerful hand grasped me by the shoulder, and angrily pushed me away, so that I was sent flying a couple of yards. At that instant his great-coat was handed him, he put it on, got into his sledge, and once more shouted angrily to the footman and the porter, pointing to me as he did so. Thereupon they seized me and held me; one footman flung my great-coat on me, while a second handed me my hat and — I don’t remember what they said; they said something, and I stood and listened, understanding nothing of it. All at once I left them and ran away.

Seeing nothing and jostling against people as I went, I ran till I reached Tatyana Pavlovna's flat: it did not even occur to me to take a cab. Büring had pushed me away before her eyes! I had, to be sure, stepped on his foot, and he had thrust me away instinctively as a man who had trodden on his corn — and perhaps I really had trodden on his corn! But she had seen it, and had seen me seized by the footman; it had all happened before her, before her! When I had reached Tatyana Pavlovna's, for the first minute I could say nothing and my lower jaw was trembling, as though I were in a fever. And indeed I was in a fever and what's more I was crying. . . . Oh, I had been so insulted!

"What! Have they kicked you out? Serve you right! serve you right!" said Tatyana Pavlovna. I sank on the sofa without a word and looked at her.

"What's the matter with him?" she said, looking at me intently. "Come, drink some water, drink a glass of water, drink it up! Tell me what you've been up to there now?"

I muttered that I had been turned out, and that Büring had given me a push in the open street.

"Can you understand anything, or are you still incapable? Come here, read and admire it." And taking a letter from the table she gave it to me, and stood before me expectantly. I at once recognized Versilov's writing, it consisted of a few lines: it was a letter to Katerina Nikolaevna. I shuddered and instantly comprehension came back to me in a rush. The contents of this horrible, atrocious, grotesque and blackguardly letter were as follows, word for word:

"DEAR MADAM KATERINA NIKOLAEVNA.

Depraved as you are in your nature and your arts, I should have yet expected you to restrain your passions and not to try your wiles on children. But you are not even ashamed to do that. I beg to inform you that the letter you know of was certainly not burnt in a candle and never was in Kraft's possession, so you won't score anything there. So don't seduce a boy for nothing. Spare him, he is hardly grown up, almost a child, undeveloped mentally and physically — what use can you have for him? I am interested in his welfare, and so I have ventured to write to you, though with little hope of attaining my object. I have the honour to inform you that I have sent a copy of this letter to Baron Büring.

“A. VERSILOV.”

I turned white as I read, then suddenly I flushed crimson and my lips quivered with indignation.

“He writes that about me! About what I told him the day before yesterday!” I cried in a fury.

“So you did tell him!” cried Tatyana Pavlovna, snatching the letter from me.

“But . . . I didn’t say that, I did not say that at all! Good God, what can she think of me now! But it’s madness, you know. He’s mad . . . I saw him yesterday. When was the letter sent?”

“It was sent yesterday, early in the day; it reached her in the evening, and this morning she gave it me herself.”

“But I saw him yesterday myself, he’s mad! Versilov was incapable of writing that, it was written by a madman. Who could write like that to a woman?”

“That’s just what such madmen do write in a fury when they are blind and deaf from jealousy and spite, and their blood is turned to venom. . . . You did not know what he is like! Now they will pound him to a jelly. He has thrust his head under the axe himself! He’d better have gone at night to the Nikolaevsky railway and have laid his head on the rail. They’d have cut it off for him, if he’s weary of the weight of it! What possessed you to tell him! What induced you to tease him! Did you want to boast?”

“But what hatred! What hatred!” I cried, clapping my hand on my head. “And what for, what for? Of a woman! What has she done to him? What can there have been between them that he can write a letter like that?”

“Ha — atred!” Tatyana Pavlovna mimicked me with furious sarcasm.

The blood rushed to my face again; all at once I seemed to grasp something new; I gazed at her with searching inquiry.

“Get along with you!” she shrieked, turning away from me quickly and waving me off. “I’ve had bother enough with you all! I’ve had enough of it now! You may all sink into the earth for all I care! . . . Your mother is the only one I’m sorry for . . .”

I ran, of course, to Versilov. But what treachery! What treachery!

Versilov was not alone. To explain the position beforehand: after sending that letter to Katerina Nikolaevna the day before and actually dispatching a copy of it to Baron Büring (God only knows why), naturally he was bound to expect certain "consequences" of his action in the course of to-day, and so had taken measures of a sort. He had in the morning moved my mother upstairs to my "coffin," together with Liza, who, as I learned afterwards, had been taken ill when she got home, and had gone to bed. The other rooms, especially the drawing-room, had been scrubbed and tidied up with extra care. And at two o'clock in the afternoon a certain Baron R. did in fact make his appearance. He was a colonel, a tall thin gentleman about forty, a little bald, of German origin, with ginger-coloured hair like Büring's, and a look of great physical strength. He was one of those Baron R.s of whom there are so many in the Russian army, all men of the highest baronial dignity, entirely without means, living on their pay, and all zealous and conscientious officers.

I did not come in time for the beginning of their interview; both were very much excited, and they might well be. Versilov was sitting on the sofa facing the table, and the baron was in an armchair on one side. Versilov was pale, but he spoke with restraint, dropping out his words one by one; the baron raised his voice and was evidently given to violent gesticulation. He restrained himself with an effort, but he looked stern, supercilious, and even contemptuous, though somewhat astonished. Seeing me he frowned, but Versilov seemed almost relieved at my coming.

"Good-morning, dear boy. Baron, this is the very young man mentioned in the letter, and I assure you he will not be in your way, and may indeed be of use." (The baron looked at me contemptuously.) "My dear boy," Versilov went on, "I am glad that you've come, indeed, so sit down in the corner please, till the baron and I have finished. Don't be uneasy, baron, he will simply sit in the corner."

I did not care, for I had made up my mind, and besides all this impressed me: I sat down in the corner without speaking, as far back as I could, and went on sitting there without stirring or blinking an eyelid till the interview was over. . . .

"I tell you again, baron," said Versilov, rapping out his words resolutely, "that I consider Katerina Nikolaevna Ahmakov, to whom I wrote that unworthy and insane letter, not only the soul of honour, but the acme of all perfection!"

“Such a disavowal of your own words, as I have observed to you already, is equivalent to a repetition of the offence,” growled the baron; “your words are actually lacking in respect.”

“And yet it would be nearest the truth if you take them in their exact sense. I suffer, do you see, from nervous attacks, and . . . nervous ailments, and am in fact being treated for them and therefore it has happened in one such moment . . .”

“These explanations cannot be admitted. I tell you for the third time that you are persistently mistaken, perhaps purposely wish to be mistaken. I have warned you from the very beginning that the whole question concerning that lady, that is concerning your letter to Mme. Ahmakov, must be entirely excluded from our explanation; you keep going back to it. Baron Büring begged and particularly charged me to make it plain that this matter concerns him only; that is, your insolence in sending him that ‘copy’ and the postcript to it in which you write that ‘you are ready to answer for it when and how he pleases.’”

“But that, I imagine, is quite clear without explanation.”

“I understand, I hear. You do not even offer an apology, but persist in asserting that ‘you are ready to answer for it when and how he pleases.’ But that would be getting off too cheaply. And therefore I now, in view of the turn which you obstinately will give to your explanation, feel myself justified on my side in telling you the truth without ceremony, that is, I have come to the conclusion that it is ut-ter-ly impossible for Baron Büring to meet you . . . on an equal footing.”

“Such a decision is no doubt advantageous for your friend, Baron Büring, and I must confess you have not surprised me in the least: I was expecting it.”

I note in parenthesis: it was quite evident to me from the first word and the first glance that Versilov was trying to lead up to this outburst, that he was intentionally teasing and provoking this irascible baron, and was trying to put him out of patience. The baron bristled all over.

“I have heard that you are able to be witty, but being witty is very different from being clever.”

“An extremely profound observation, colonel.”

“I did not ask for your approbation,” cried the baron. “I did not come to bandy words with you. Be so good as to listen. Baron Büring was in doubt how to act when he received your letter, because it was suggestive of a

madhouse. And, of course, means might be taken to . . . suppress you. However, owing to certain special considerations, your case was treated with indulgence and inquiries were made about you: it turns out that though you have belonged to good society, and did at one time serve in the Guards, you have been excluded from society and your reputation is dubious. Yet in spite of that I've come here to ascertain the facts personally, and now, to make things worse, you don't scruple to play with words, and inform me yourself that you are liable to nervous attacks. It's enough! Baron Büring's position and reputation are such that he cannot stoop to be mixed up in such an affair. . . . In short, I am authorized, sir, to inform you, that if a repetition or anything similar to your recent action should follow hereafter, measures will promptly be found to bring you to your senses, very quickly and very thoroughly I can assure you. We are not living in the jungle, but in a well ordered state!"

"You are so certain of that, my good baron?"

"Confound you," cried the baron, suddenly getting up; "you tempt me to show you at once that I am not 'your good baron.'"

"Ach, I must warn you once again," said Versilov, and he too stood up, "that my wife and daughter are not far off . . . and so I must ask you not to speak so loud, for your shouts may reach their ears."

"Your wife . . . the devil . . . I am sitting here talking to you solely in order to get to the bottom of this disgusting business," the baron continued as wrathfully as before, not dropping his voice in the least. "Enough!" he roared furiously, "you are not only excluded from the society of decent people, but you're a maniac, a regular raving maniac, and such you've been proved to be! You do not deserve indulgence, and I can tell you that this very day measures will be taken in regard to you . . . and you will be placed where they will know how to restore you to sanity . . . and will remove you from the town."

He marched with rapid strides out of the room. Versilov did not accompany him to the door. He stood gazing at me absentmindedly, as though he did not see me; all at once he smiled, tossed back his hair, and taking his hat, he too made for the door. I clutched at his hand.

"Ach, yes, you are here too. You . . . heard?" he said, stopping short before me.

"How could you do it? How could you distort . . . disgrace with such treachery!"

He looked at me intently, his smile broadened and broadened till it passed into actual laughter.

“Why, I’ve been disgraced . . . before her! before her! They laughed at me before her eyes, and he . . . and he pushed me away!” I cried, beside myself.

“Really? Ach, poor boy, I am sorry for you. . . . So they laughed at you, did they?”

“You are laughing yourself, you are laughing at me; it amuses you!”

He quickly pulled his hand away, put on his hat and laughing, laughing aloud, went out of the flat. What was the use of running after him? I understood and — I had lost everything in one instant! All at once I saw my mother; she had come downstairs and was timidly looking about her.

“Has he gone away?”

I put my arms around her without a word, and she held me tight in hers.

“Mother, my own, surely you can’t stay? Let us go at once, I will shelter you, I will work for you like a slave, for you and for Liza. Leave them all, all, and let us go away. Let us be alone. Mother, do you remember how you came to me at Touchard’s and I would not recognize you?”

“I remember, my own; I have been bad to you all your life. You were my own child, and I was a stranger to you.”

“That was his fault, mother, it was all his fault; he has never loved us.”

“Yes, yes, he did love us.”

“Let us go, mother.”

“How could I go away from him, do you suppose he is happy?”

“Where’s Liza?”

“She’s lying down; she felt ill when she came in; I’m frightened. Why are they so angry with him? What will they do to him now? Where’s he gone? What was that officer threatening?”

“Nothing will happen to him, mother, nothing does happen to him, or ever can happen to him. He’s that sort of man! Here’s Tatyana Pavlovna, ask her, if you don’t believe me, here she is.” (Tatyana Pavlovna came quickly into the room.) “Good-bye, mother. I will come to you directly, and when I come, I shall ask you the same thing again. . . .”

I ran away. I could not bear to see anyone, let alone Tatyana Pavlovna. Even mother distressed me. I wanted to be alone, alone.

But before I had crossed the street, I felt that I could hardly walk, and I jostled aimlessly, heedlessly, against the passers-by, feeling listless and adrift; but what could I do with myself? What use am I to anyone, and — what use is anything to me now? Mechanically I trudged to Prince Sergay's, though I was not thinking of him at all. He was not at home. I told Pyotr (his man) that I would wait in his study (as I had done many times before). His study was a large one, a very high room, cumbered up with furniture. I crept into the darkest corner, sat down on the sofa and, putting my elbows on the table, rested my head in my hands. Yes, that was the question: "what was of any use to me now?" If I was able to formulate that question then, I was totally unable to answer it.

But I could not myself answer the question, or think about it rationally. I have mentioned already that towards the end of those days I was overwhelmed by the rush of events. I sat now, and everything was whirling round like chaos in my mind. "Yes, I had failed to see all that was in him, and did not understand him at all," was the thought that glimmered dimly in my mind at moments. "He laughed in my face just now: that was not at me, it was all Büring then, not me. The day before yesterday he knew everything and he was gloomy. He pounced on my stupid confession in the restaurant, and distorted it, regardless of the truth; but what did he care for the truth? He did not believe a syllable of what he wrote to her. All he wanted was to insult her, to insult her senselessly, without knowing what for; he was looking out for a pretext and I gave him the pretext. . . . He behaved like a mad dog! Does he want to kill Büring now? What for? His heart knows what for! And I know nothing of what's in his heart. . . . No, no, I don't know even now. Can it be that he loves her with such passion? Or does he hate her to such a pitch of passion? I don't know, but does he know himself? Why did I tell mother that 'nothing could happen to him'; what did I mean to say by that? Have I lost him or haven't I?

". . . She saw how I was pushed away. . . . Did she laugh too, or not? I should have laughed! They were beating a spy, a spy. . . .

"What does it mean," suddenly flashed on my mind, "what does it mean that in that loathsome letter he puts in that the document has not been burnt, but is in existence? . . .

"He is not killing Büring but is sitting at this moment, no doubt, in the restaurant listening to 'Lucia'! And perhaps after Lucia he will go and kill Büring. Büring pushed me away, almost struck me; did he strike me? And

Büring disdains to fight even Versilov, so would he be likely to fight with me? Perhaps I ought to kill him to-morrow with a revolver, waiting for him in the street. . . .” I let that thought flit through my mind quite mechanically without being brought to a pause by it.

At moments I seemed to dream that the door would open all at once, that Katerina Nikolaevna would come in, would give me her hand, and we should both burst out laughing. . . . Oh, my student, my dear one! I had a vision of this, or rather an intense longing for it, as soon as it got dark. It was not long ago I had been standing before her saying good-bye to her, and she had given me her hand, and laughed. How could it have happened that in such a short time we were so completely separated! Simply to go to her and to explain everything this minute, simply, simply! Good heavens! how was it that an utterly new world had begun for me so suddenly! Yes, a new world, utterly, utterly new. . . . And Liza, and Prince Sergay, that was all old. . . . Here I was now at Prince Sergay’s. And mother — how could she go on living with him if it was like this! I could, I can do anything, but she? What will be now? And the figures of Liza, Anna Andreyevna, Stebelkov, Prince Sergay, Aferdov, kept disconnectedly whirling round in my sick brain. But my thoughts became more and more formless and elusive; I was glad when I succeeded in thinking of something and clutching at it.

“I have ‘my idea’!” I thought suddenly; “but have I? Don’t I repeat that from habit? My idea was the fruit of darkness and solitude, and is it possible to creep back into the old darkness? Oh, my God, I never burnt that ‘letter’! I actually forgot to burn it the day before yesterday. I will go back and burn it in a candle, in a candle of course; only I don’t know if I’m thinking properly. . . .”

It had long been dark and Pyotr brought candles. He stood over me and asked whether I had had supper. I simply motioned him away. An hour later, however, he brought me some tea, and I greedily drank a large cupful. Then I asked what time it was? It was half- past eight, and I felt no surprise to find I had been sitting there five hours.

“I have been in to you three times already,” said Pyotr, “but I think you were asleep.”

I did not remember his coming in. I don’t know why, but I felt all at once horribly scared to think I had been asleep. I got up and walked about the room, that I might not go to sleep again. At last my head began to ache

violently. At ten o'clock Prince Sergay came in and I was surprised that I had been waiting for him: I had completely forgotten him, completely.

"You are here, and I've been round to you to fetch you," he said to me. His face looked gloomy and severe, and there was not a trace of a smile. There was a fixed idea in his eyes.

"I have been doing my very utmost all day and straining every nerve," he said with concentrated intensity; "everything has failed, and nothing in the future, but horror. . . ." (N.B. — he had not been to Prince Nikolay Ivanitch's.) "I have seen Zhibyelsky, he is an impossible person. You see, to begin with we must get the money, then we shall see. And if we don't succeed with the money, then we shall see. . . . I have made up my mind not to think about that. If only we get hold of the money to-day, to-morrow we shall see everything. The three thousand you won is still untouched, every farthing of it. It's three thousand all except three roubles. After paying back what I lent you, there is three hundred and forty roubles change for you. Take it. Another seven hundred as well, to make up a thousand, and I will take the other two thousand. Then let us both go to Zerstchikov and try at opposite ends of the table to win ten thousand — perhaps we shall do something, if we don't win it — then. . . . This is the only way left, anyhow."

He looked at me with a fateful smile.

"Yes, yes!" I cried suddenly, as though coming to life again "let us go. I was only waiting for you. . . ."

I may remark that I had never once thought of roulette during those hours.

"But the baseness? The degradation of the action?" Prince Sergay asked suddenly.

"Our going to roulette! Why that's everything," I cried, "money's everything. Why, you and I are the only saints, while Büring has sold himself, Anna Andreyevna's sold herself, and Versilov — have you heard that Versilov's a maniac? A maniac! A maniac!"

"Are you quite well, Arkady Makarovitch? Your eyes are somehow strange."

"You say that because you want to go without me! But I shall stick to you now. It's not for nothing I've been dreaming of play all night. Let us go, let us go!" I kept exclaiming, as though I had found the solution to everything.

“Well, let us go, though you’re in a fever, and there . . .”

He did not finish. His face looked heavy and terrible. We were just going out when he stopped in the doorway.

“Do you know,” he said suddenly, “that there is another way out of my trouble, besides play?”

“What way.”

“A princely way.”

“What’s that? What’s that?”

“You’ll know what afterwards. Only let me tell you I’m not worthy of it, because I have delayed too long. Let us go, but you remember my words. We’ll try the lackey’s way. . . . And do you suppose I don’t know that I am consciously, of my own free will, behaving like a lackey?”

6

I flew to the roulette table as though in it were concentrated all hopes of my salvation, all means of escape, and yet as I have mentioned already, I had not once thought of it before Prince Sergay’s arrival. Moreover, I was going to gamble, not for myself but for Prince Sergay, and with his money; I can’t explain what was the attraction, but it was an irresistible attraction. Oh, never had those people, those faces, those croupiers with their monotonous shouts, all the details of the squalid gambling saloon seemed so revolting to me, so depressing, so coarse, and so melancholy as that evening! I remember well the sadness and misery that gripped my heart at times during those hours at the gambling table. But why didn’t I go away? Why did I endure and, as it were, accept this fate, this sacrifice, this devotion? I will only say one thing: I can hardly say of myself that I was then in my right senses. Yet at the same time, I had never played so prudently as that evening. I was silent and concentrated, attentive and extremely calculating; I was patient and niggardly, and at the same time resolute at critical moments. I established myself again at the zero end of the table, that is between Zerstchikov and Aferdov, who always sat on the former’s right hand; the place was distasteful to me, but I had an overwhelming desire to stake on zero, and all the other places at that end were taken. We had been playing over an hour; at last, from my place, I saw Prince Sergay get up from his seat and with a pale face move across to us and remain facing me the other side of the table: he had lost all he had

and watched my play in silence, though he probably did not follow it and had ceased to think of play. At that moment I just began winning, and Zerstchikov was counting me out what I had won. Suddenly, without a word, Aferdov with the utmost effrontery took one of my hundred-rouble notes before my very eyes and added it to the pile of money lying before him. I cried out, and caught hold of his hand. Then something quite unexpected happened to me: it was as though I had broken some chain that restrained me, as though all the affronts and insults of that day were concentrated in that moment in the loss of that hundred-rouble note. It was as though everything that had been accumulating and suppressed within me had only been waiting for that moment to break out.

"He's a thief, he has just stolen my hundred roubles," I exclaimed, looking round, beside myself.

I won't describe the hubbub that followed; such a scandal was a novelty there. At Zerstchikov's, people behaved with propriety, and his saloon was famous for it. But I did not know what I was doing. Zerstchikov's voice was suddenly heard in the midst of the clamour and din:

"But the money's not here, and it was lying here! Four hundred roubles!"

Another scene followed at once: the money in the bank had disappeared under Zerstchikov's very nose, a roll of four hundred roubles. Zerstchikov pointed to the spot where the notes had only that minute been lying, and that spot turned out to be close to me, next to the spot where my money was lying, much closer to me than to Aferdov.

"The thief is here! he has stolen it again, search him!" I cried pointing to Aferdov.

"This is what comes of letting in all sorts of people," thundered an impressive voice in the midst of the general uproar. "Persons have been admitted without introduction! Who brought him in? Who is he?"

"A fellow called Dolgoruky."

"Prince Dolgoruky?"

"Prince Sokolsky brought him," cried some one.

"Listen, prince," I yelled to him across the table in a frenzy; "they think I'm a thief when I've just been robbed myself! Tell them about me, tell them about me!"

And then there followed something worse than all that had happened that day . . . worse than anything that had happened in my life: Prince Sergay

disowned me. I saw him shrug his shoulders and heard him in answer to a stream of questions pronounce sharply and distinctly:

"I am not responsible for anyone. Please leave me alone."

Meanwhile Aferdov stood in the middle of the crowd loudly demanding that "he should be searched." He kept turning out his own pockets. But his demands were met by shouts of "No, no, we know the thief!"

Two footmen were summoned and they seized me by my arms from behind.

"I won't let myself be searched, I won't allow it!" I shouted, pulling myself away.

But they dragged me into the next room; there, in the midst of the crowd, they searched me to the last fold of my garments. I screamed and struggled.

"He must have thrown it away, you must look on the floor," some one decided.

"Where can we look on the floor now?"

"Under the table, he must have somehow managed to throw it away."

"Of course there's no trace . . ."

I was led out, but I succeeded in stopping in the doorway, and with senseless ferocity I shouted, to be heard by the whole saloon:

"Roulette is prohibited by the police. I shall inform against you all to-day!"

I was led downstairs. My hat and coat were put on me, and . . . the door into the street was flung open before me.

CHAPTER IX

1

The day had ended with a catastrophe, there remained the night, and this is what I remember of that night.

I believe it was one o'clock when I found myself in the street. It was a clear, still and frosty night, I was almost running and in horrible haste, but — not towards home.

"Why home? Can there be a home now? Home is where one lives, I shall wake up to-morrow to live — but is that possible now? Life is over, it is utterly impossible to live now," I thought.

And as I wandered about the streets, not noticing where I was going, and indeed I don't know whether I meant to run anywhere in particular, I was very hot and I was continually flinging open my heavy raccoon-lined coat. "No sort of action can have any object for me now" was what I felt at that moment. And strange to say, it seemed to me that everything about me, even the air I breathed, was from another planet, as though I had suddenly found myself in the moon. Everything — the town, the passers-by, the pavement I was running on — all of these were NOT MINE. "This is the Palace Square, and here is St. Isaak's," floated across my mind. "But now I have nothing to do with them." Everything had become suddenly remote, it had all suddenly become NOT MINE. "I have mother and Liza — but what are mother and Liza to me now? Everything is over, everything is over at one blow, except one thing: that I am a thief for ever."

"How can I prove that I'm not a thief? Is it possible now? Shall I go to America? What should I prove by that? Versilov will be the first to believe I stole it! My 'idea'? What idea? What is my 'idea' now? If I go on for fifty years, for a hundred years, some one will always turn up, to point at me and say: 'He's a thief, he began, "his idea" by stealing money at roulette.'"

Was there resentment in my heart? I don't know, perhaps there was. Strange to say, I always had, perhaps from my earliest childhood, one characteristic: if I were ill-treated, absolutely wronged and insulted to the last degree, I always showed at once an irresistible desire to submit passively to the insult, and even to accept more than my assailant wanted to

inflict upon me, as though I would say: “All right, you have humiliated me, so I will humiliate myself even more; look, and enjoy it!” Touchard beat me and tried to show I was a lackey, and not the son of a senator, and so I promptly took up the rôle of a lackey. I not only handed him his clothes, but of my own accord I snatched up the brush and began brushing off every speck of dust, without any request or order from him, and ran after him brush in hand, in a glow of menial devotion, to remove some particle of dirt from his dress-coat, so much so that he would sometimes check me himself and say, “That’s enough, Arkady, that’s enough.” He would come and take off his overcoat, and I would brush it, fold it carefully, and cover it with a check silk handkerchief. I knew that my school-fellows used to laugh at me and despise me for it, I knew it perfectly well, but that was just what gratified me: “Since they want me to be a lackey, well, I am a lackey then; if I’m to be a cad, well, I will be a cad.” I could keep up a passive hatred and underground resentment in that way for years.

Well, at Zerstchikov’s I had shouted to the whole room in an absolute frenzy:

“I will inform against you all — roulette is forbidden by the police!” And I swear that in that case, too, there was something of the same sort: I was humiliated, searched, publicly proclaimed a thief, crushed. “Well then I can tell you, you have guessed right, I am worse than a thief, I am an informer.” Recalling it now, that is how I explain it; at the time I was incapable of analysis; I shouted that at the time unintentionally, I did not know indeed a second before that I should say it: it shouted itself — the CHARACTERISTIC was there already in my heart.

There is no doubt that I had begun to be delirious while I was running in the streets, but I remember quite well that I knew what I was doing; and yet I can confidently assert that a whole cycle of ideas and conclusions were impossible for me at that time; I felt in myself even at those moments that “some thoughts I was able to think, but others I was incapable of.” In the same way some of my decisions, though they were formed with perfect consciousness, were utterly devoid of logic. What is more, I remember very well that at some moments I could recognize fully the absurdity of some conclusion and at the same time with complete consciousness proceed to act upon it. Yes, crime was hovering about me that night, and only by chance was not committed.

I suddenly recalled Tatyana Pavlovna's saying about Versilov: "He'd better have gone at night to the Nikolaevsky Railway and have laid his head on the rails — they'd have cut it off for him."

For a moment that idea took possession of all my feelings, but I instantly drove it away with a pang at my heart: "If I lay my head on the rails and die, they'll say to-morrow he did it because he stole the money, he did it from shame — no, for nothing in the world!" And at that instant I remember I experienced a sudden flash of fearful anger. "To clear my character is impossible," floated through my mind, "to begin a new life is impossible too, and so I must submit, become a lackey, a dog, an insect, an informer, a real informer, while I secretly prepare myself, and one day suddenly blow it all up into the air, annihilate everything and every one, guilty and innocent alike, so that they will all know that this was the man they had all called a thief . . . and then kill myself."

I don't remember how I ran into a lane somewhere near Konnogvardeysky Boulevard. For about a hundred paces on both sides of this lane there were high stone walls enclosing backyards. Behind the wall on the left I saw a huge stack of wood, a long stack such as one sees in timber-yards, and more than seven feet higher than the wall. I stopped and began pondering.

In my pocket I had wax matches in a little silver matchbox. I repeat, I realized quite distinctly at that time what I was thinking about and what I meant to do, and so I remember it even now, but why I meant to do it I don't know, I don't know at all. I only know that I suddenly felt a great longing to do it. "To climb over the wall is quite possible," I reflected; at that moment I caught sight of a gate in the wall not two paces away, probably barred up for months together. "Standing on the projection below, and taking hold of the top of the gate I could easily climb on to the wall," I reflected, "and no one will notice me, there's no one about, everything's still! And there I can sit on the wall and easily set fire to the woodstack. I can do it without getting down, for the wood almost touches the wall. The frost will make it burn all the better, I have only to take hold of a birch-log with my hand. . . . And indeed there's no need to reach a log at all: I can simply strip the bark off with my hand, while I sit on the wall, set light to it with a match and thrust it into the stack — and there will be a blaze. And I will jump down and walk away; there will be no need to run, for it won't be

noticed for a long while. . . .” That was how I reasoned at the time, and all at once I made up my mind.

I felt an extraordinary satisfaction and enjoyment, and I climbed up. I was very good at climbing: gymnastics had been my speciality at school, but I had my overboots on and it turned out to be a difficult task. I succeeded somehow in catching hold of one very slight projection above, and raised myself; I lifted my other hand to clutch the top of the wall, but at that instant I slipped and went flying backwards.

I suppose I must have struck the ground with the back of my head, and must have lain for two or three minutes unconscious. When I came to myself I mechanically wrapped my fur coat about me, feeling all at once unbearably cold, and scarcely conscious of what I was doing, I crept into the corner of the gateway and sat crouching and huddled up in the recess between the gate and the wall. My ideas were in confusion, and most likely I soon fell into a doze. I remember now, as it were in a dream, that there suddenly sounded in my ears the deep heavy clang of a bell, and I began listening to it with pleasure.

2

The bell rang steadily and distinctly, once every two or three seconds; it was not an alarm bell, however, but a pleasant and melodious chime, and I suddenly recognized that it was a familiar chime; that it was the bell of St. Nikolay’s, the red church opposite Touchard’s, the old-fashioned Moscow church which I remembered so well, built in the reign of Tsar Alexey Mihalovitch, full of tracery, and with many domes and columns, and that Easter was only just over, and the new-born little green leaves were trembling on the meagre birches in Touchard’s front garden. The brilliant evening sun was pouring its slanting rays into our classroom, and in my little room on the left, where a year before Touchard had put me apart that I might not mix with “counts’ and senators’ children,” there was sitting a visitor. Yes, I, who had no relations, had suddenly got a visitor for the first time since I had been at Touchard’s. I recognized this visitor as soon as she came in: it was mother, though I had not seen her once since she had taken me to the village church and the dove had flown across the cupola. We were sitting alone together and I watched her strangely. Many years afterwards I learned that being left by Versilov, who had suddenly gone

abroad, she had come on her own account to Moscow, paying for the journey out of her small means, and almost by stealth, without the knowledge of the people who had been commissioned to look after her, and she had done this solely to see me. It was strange, too, that when she came in and talked to Touchard, she did not say one word to me of being my mother. She sat beside me, and I remember I wondered at her talking so little. She had a parcel with her and she undid it: in it there turned out to be six oranges, several gingerbread cakes, and two ordinary loaves of French bread. I was offended at the sight of the bread, and with a constrained air I announced that our 'food' was excellent, and that they gave us a whole French loaf for our tea every day.

"Never mind, darling, in my foolishness I thought 'maybe they don't feed them properly at school,' don't be vexed, my own."

"And Antonina Vassilyevna (Touchard's wife) will be offended. My schoolfellows will laugh at me too. . . ."

"Won't you have them; perhaps you'll eat them up?"

"Please, don't. . . ."

And I did not even touch her presents; the oranges and gingerbread cakes lay on the little table before me, while I sat with my eyes cast down, but with a great air of dignity. Who knows, perhaps I had a great desire to let her see that her visit made me feel ashamed to meet my schoolfellows, to let her have at least a glimpse that she might understand, as though to say, "See, you are disgracing me, and you don't understand what you are doing." Oh, by that time I was running after Touchard with a brush to flick off every speck of dust! I was picturing to myself, too, what taunts I should have to endure as soon as she was gone, from my schoolfellows and perhaps from Touchard himself; and there was not the least friendly feeling for her in my heart. I only looked sideways at her dark-coloured old dress, at her rather coarse, almost working-class hands, at her quite coarse shoes, and her terribly thin face; there were already furrows on her forehead, though Antonina Vassilyevna did say that evening after she had gone: "Your mamma must have been very pretty."

So we sat, and suddenly Agafya came in with a cup of coffee on a tray. It was just after dinner, and at that time Touchard always drank a cup of coffee in his drawing-room. But mother thanked her and did not take the cup: as I learned afterwards she never drank coffee in those days, as it brought on palpitations of the heart. The fact was that Touchard inwardly

considered her visit, and his permitting me to see her, an act of great condescension on his part, so that the cup of coffee sent her was, comparatively speaking, a signal proof of humanity which did the utmost credit to his civilization, feelings, and European ideas. And as though on purpose, mother refused it.

I was summoned to Touchard, and he told me to take all my lesson books and exercise books to show my mother: "That she may see what you have succeeded in attaining in my establishment." At that point Antonina Vassilyevna, pursing up her lips, minced out to me in a jeering and insulting way:

"Your mamma does not seem to like our coffee."

I collected my exercise books and carried them to my waiting mother, passing through the crowd of "counts' and senators' children" in the classroom who were staring at mother and me. And it actually pleased me to carry out Touchard's behests with literal exactitude. "Here are my lessons in French grammar, here are my dictation exercises, here are the conjugations of the auxiliary verbs avoir and être, here is the geography, descriptions of the principal towns of Europe, and all parts of the world," and so on. For half an hour or more I went on explaining in a monotonous little voice, keeping my eyes sedately cast down. I knew that my mother knew nothing of these learned subjects, could not perhaps even write, but in this too I was pleased with my part. But I did not succeed in wearying her: she listened all the time without interrupting me, with extraordinary and even reverent attention, so that at last I got tired of it myself and left off; her expression was sad, however, and there was something pitiful in her face.

She got up to go at last; Touchard suddenly walked in, and with an air of foolish importance asked her: "Whether she was satisfied with her son's progress? Mother began muttering incoherent thanks; Antonina Vassilyevna came up too. Mother began begging them both "not to abandon the orphan, who was as good as an orphan now, but to treat him with kindness." . . . And with tears in her eyes she bowed to them both, each separately, and to each with a deep bow, exactly as "simple people" bow down when they ask a favour of the gentry. The Touchards had not expected this, and Antonina Vassilyevna was evidently softened, and revised her opinion about the cup of coffee. Touchard humanely responded with even greater dignity "that he made no distinction between the children, that here all were his children, and he was their father, that I was almost on

an equal footing with the sons of senators and counts, and that she ought to appreciate that," and so on, and so on. Mother only bowed down, but was much embarrassed. At last she turned to me, and with tears shining in her eyes said: "Good-bye, darling."

She kissed me, that is I allowed myself to be kissed. She evidently wanted to go on kissing, embracing and hugging me, but either she herself felt ashamed before company, or felt hurt by something else, or guessed that I was ashamed of her, for she hurriedly went out, bowing once more to the Touchards. I stood still.

"Mais suivez donc votre mère," said Antonina Vassilyevna: "il n'a pas de coeur, cet enfant!"

Touchard responded by shrugging his shoulders, which meant, of course, "it's not without reason that I treat him as a lackey."

I obediently followed my mother; we went out on to the steps. I knew that they were all looking at me out of the window. Mother turned towards the church and crossed herself three times; her lips were trembling, the deep bell chimed musically and regularly from the belfry. She turned to me and could not restrain herself, she laid both hands on my head and began crying over it.

"Mother, stop . . . I'm ashamed . . . they can see from the window. . . ."

She broke out hurriedly:

"Well God . . . God be with you. . . . The heavenly angels keep you. Holy Mother, Saint Nikolay. . . . My God, my God!" she repeated, speaking rapidly and making as many signs of the cross over me as she possibly could. "My darling, my darling! Stay, my darling. . . ."

She hurriedly put her hand in her pocket and drew out a handkerchief, a blue checked handkerchief, with a tightly fastened knot at the corner, and began untying the knot . . . but it would not come untied. . . .

"Well never mind, take it with the handkerchief: it's clean, it may be of use perhaps. There are four fourpenny-bits in it, perhaps you'll need the money; forgive me, darling, I have not got any more just now . . . forgive me, darling."

I took the handkerchief. I wanted to observe that we were allowed very liberal diet by M. Touchard and Antonina Vassilyevna, and were not in need of anything, but I restrained myself and took the handkerchief.

Once more she made the sign of the cross over me, once more she whispered a prayer, and suddenly — suddenly bowed to me exactly as she

had done to the Touchards upstairs — a prolonged low bow — I shall never forget it! Then I shuddered, I don't know why. What had she meant by that bow? "Was she confessing the wrong she had done me?" as I fancied once long afterwards — I don't know. But at the time it made me more ashamed than ever that they "were looking out of window and that Lambert would, most likely, begin beating me."

At last she went away. The apples and oranges had been devoured by the sons of counts and senators, and the four fourpenny-bits were promptly taken from me by Lambert and spent at the confectioner's on tarts and chocolates, of which I was not offered a taste.

Fully six months had passed and it was a wet and windy October. I had quite forgotten about mother. Oh, by then hate, a blind hatred of everything had crept into my heart, and was its sustenance, though I still brushed Touchard as before; but I hated him with all my might, and every day hated him more and more. It was then that in the melancholy dusk of one evening I began rummaging for something in my little box, and suddenly in the corner I saw her blue cotton handkerchief; it had been lying there ever since I had thrust it away. I took it out and even looked at it with some interest. The corner of the handkerchief still retained the creases made by the knot, and even the round impress of the money was distinctly visible; I put the handkerchief in again, however, and pushed the box back. It was the eve of a holiday, and the bells were ringing for the all-night service. The pupils had all gone to their homes after dinner, but this time Lambert had stayed for Sunday. I don't know why he hadn't been fetched. Though he used still to beat me, as before, he used to talk to me a great deal, and often needed me. We talked the whole evening about Lepage's pistols, which neither of us had seen, and Circassian swords and how they cut, how splendid it would be to establish a band of brigands, and finally Lambert passed to the familiar obscene subjects which were his favourite topics, and though I wondered at myself, I remember I liked listening. Suddenly I felt it unbearable, and I told him I had a headache. At ten o'clock we went to bed; I turned away with my head under the quilt and took the blue handkerchief from under my pillow: I had for some reason fetched it from the box an hour before, and as soon as our beds were made I put it under the pillow. I put it to my face and suddenly began kissing it: "Mother, mother," I whispered, and my whole chest contracted as though in a vice. I closed my eyes, and saw her face with the quivering lips when she crossed herself

facing the church, and afterwards made the sign of the cross over me, and I said to her, “I’m ashamed, they are looking at us.” “Mother darling, mother, were you really with me once? . . . Mother darling, where are you now, my far-away visitor? Do you remember your poor boy, whom you came to see? . . . Show yourself to me just this once, come to me if only in a dream, just that I may tell you how I love you, may hug you and kiss your blue eyes, and tell you that I’m not ashamed of you now, and tell you that I loved you even then, and that my heart was aching then, though I simply sat like a lackey. You will never know, mother, how I loved you then! Mother, where are you now? Do you hear me? Mother, mother, do you remember the dove in the country? . . .”

“Confound him. . . . What’s the matter with him!” Lambert grumbled from his bed. “Stop it, I’ll give it you! You won’t let me sleep. . . .” He jumped out of bed at last, ran to me, and began pulling off the bedclothes, but I kept tight hold of the quilt, which I had wrapped round my head.

“You are blubbering; what are you blubbering about, you fool? I’ll give it you!” and he thumped me, he thumped me hard on my back, on my side, hurting me more and more and . . . and I suddenly opened my eyes. . . .

It was bright daylight, and the snow on the wall was glistening with hoarfrost. . . . I was sitting huddled up, almost frozen, and almost numb in my fur coat, and some one was standing over me, waking me up, abusing me loudly, and kicking me in the ribs with his right foot. I raised myself and looked: I saw a man wearing a splendid bear-lined coat, and a sable cap. He had black eyes, foppish pitch-black whiskers, a hook nose, white teeth grinning at me, a face white and red like a mask. . . . He bent down over me very close, and a frosty vapour came from his lips at each breath.

“Frozen, the drunken fool! You’ll freeze like a dog; get up! Getup!”

“Lambert,” I cried.

“Whoever are you?”

“Dolgoruky.”

“Who the devil’s Dolgoruky?”

“SIMPLY Dolgoruky! . . . Touchard. . . . The one you stuck a fork into, in the restaurant! . . .”

“Ha-a-a!” he cried, with a slow smile of recollection (could he possibly have forgotten me?), “ha! So it’s you, it’s you!”

He lifted me up and put me on my legs; I could hardly stand, could hardly walk; he led me, supporting me with his arm. He looked into my

eyes as though considering and recalling, and listening to me intently, and I babbled on continuously without pause, and I was delighted, so delighted to be talking, and so delighted too that it was Lambert. Whether for some reason I looked on him as my “salvation,” or whether I pounced on him at that moment because I took him for some one of another world, I don’t know — I did not consider it then — but I pounced on him without considering. What I said then, I don’t remember at all, and I doubt whether any of it was coherent, I doubt whether I even pronounced a word clearly; but he listened very attentively. He took the first sledge we came upon, and within a few minutes I was sitting in his room in the warmth.

3

Every man, whoever he may be, must certainly preserve a recollection of something which has happened to him, upon which he looks, or is inclined to look, as something fantastic, exceptional, outside the common order of things, almost miraculous, whether it be a dream, a meeting, a divination, a presentiment or anything of that kind. I am to this day inclined to look upon this meeting with Lambert as something almost supernatural . . . judging, that is, from the circumstances and consequences of that meeting. It all happened from one point of view, however, perfectly naturally; he was simply returning from one of his nocturnal pursuits (the nature of it will be explained later on) half-drunk, and stopping at the gate for a moment, caught sight of me. He had only been in Petersburg a few days.

The room in which I found myself was small and furnished in an unsophisticated style, a typical example of the ordinary Petersburg furnished lodgings of the middling sort. Lambert himself, however, was very well and expensively dressed. On the floor there lay two trunks, only half unpacked. A corner of the room was shut off by a screen which concealed the bed.

“Alphonsine!” cried Lambert.

“Présente!” responded from behind the screen a cracked female voice with a Parisian accent, and two minutes later Mlle. Alphonsine emerged, just out of bed, hurriedly dressed in a loose wrapper, a queer creature, tall and as lean as a rake, a brunette with a long waist and a long face, with dancing eyes and sunken cheeks, who looked terribly the worse for wear.

“Make haste” (he spoke to her in French, I translate), “they must have got a samovar; hot water quick, red wine and sugar, a glass here, look sharp, he’s frozen, it’s a friend of mine . . . he’s been sleeping the night in the snow. . . .”

“Malheureux!” she exclaimed with a theatrical air, clasping her hands.

“Now then!” he shouted, holding up his finger and speaking exactly as though to a dog; she at once desisted and ran to carry out his orders.

He examined me and felt me over; tried my pulse, touched my forehead and my temple. “It’s strange,” he muttered, “that you did not freeze. . . . However, you were entirely covered with your fur coat, head and all, so that you were sitting in a sort of nest of fur. . . .”

A glass of something hot arrived, I sipped it greedily and it revived me at once; I began babbling again; I was half lying on the sofa in a corner and was talking all the time, I talked even as I sipped — but what I said, again I scarcely remember; moments and even whole intervals of time I’ve completely forgotten. I repeat: whether he understood anything of what I said, I don’t know; but one thing I distinctly gathered afterwards, and that was that he succeeded in understanding me sufficiently to deduce that he must not take his meeting with me lightly. . . . I will explain later in its proper place how he came to make this calculation.

I was not only extremely lively, but at moments, I believe, cheerful. I remember the sun suddenly flooding the room with light when the blinds were drawn up, and the crackling stove which some one was lighting, who and how I forget. I remember, too, the tiny black lap-dog which Mlle. Alphonsine held in her arms, coquettishly pressing it to her heart. This lap-dog attracted me so much that I left off talking and twice stretched out towards it, but Lambert waved his hand, and Alphonsine with her lap-dog instantly vanished behind the screen.

He was very silent himself, he sat facing me and bending close down to me, listened without moving; at times he smiled, a broad slow smile, showing his teeth, and screwing up his eyes as though reflecting intensely and trying to guess something. I have a clear recollection only of the fact that when I told him about the “document,” I could not express myself intelligibly and tell the story consecutively, and from his face I quite saw that he could not understand me, but that he would very much have liked to understand, so much so that he even ventured to stop me with a question, which was risky, as at the slightest interruption I broke off and forgot what I

was talking of. How long we sat and talked like this I don't know and cannot even imagine. He suddenly got up and called to Alphonsine.

"He needs rest; he may have to have the doctor. Do everything he asks, that is . . . vous comprenez, ma fille? Vous avez l'argent, no? here!" and he drew out a ten-rouble note. He began whispering with her: "Vous comprenez? vous comprenez?" he repeated to her, holding up his finger menacingly to her, and frowning sternly. I saw that she was dreadfully afraid of him.

"I'll come back, and you had better go to sleep," he said, smiling to me, and took his cap. "Mais vous n'avez pas dormi de tout, Maurice!" Alphonsine began pathetically. "Taisez-vous je dormirai après," and he went out.

"Sauvée," she murmured, pathetically pointing after him.

"Monsieur, Monsieur," she began declaiming at once, taking up an attitude in the middle of the room, "jamais homme ne fut si cruel, si Bismarck que cet être, qui regarde une femme, comme une saleté de hazard. Une femme, qu'est-ce que ça dans notre époque? Tue-la! voilà le dernier mot de l'Académie française!"

I stared at her open-eyed; I saw everything double, I had a vision of two Alphonsines. . . . I suddenly noticed that she was crying, I started and realized that she had been talking to me for a long time, and that I must have been asleep or unconscious.

". . . Hélas! de quoi m'aurait servi de le découvrir plutôt," she exclaimed, "et n'aurais-je pas autant gagné à tenir ma honte cachée toute ma vie? Peut-être n'est-il pas honnête à une demoiselle de s'expliquer si librement devant monsieur, mais enfin je vous avoue que s'il m'était permis de vouloir quelque chose, oh, ce serait de lui plonger au coeur mon couteau, mais en détournant les yeux, de peur que son regard exécrable ne fit trembler mon bras et ne glaçât mon courage! Il a assassiné ce pape russe, monsieur, il lui arracha sa barbe rousse pour la vendre à un artiste en cheveux au pont de Maréchaux, tout près de la maison de Monsieur Andrieux — hautes nouveautés, articles de Paris, linge, chemises, vous savez, n'est-ce pas? . . . Oh, monsieur, quand l'amitié rassemble à table épouse, enfants, soeurs, amis, quand une vive allégresse enflamme mon coeur, je vous le demande, monsieur: est-il bonheur préférable à celui dont tout jouit? Mais il rit, monsieur, ce monstre exécrable et inconcévable, et si ce n'était pas par

l’entremise de Monsieur Andrieux, jamais, oh, jamais je ne serais . . . Mais quoi, monsieur, qu’avez vous, monsieur?”

She rushed up to me. I believe I had an attack of shivering, perhaps a fainting fit. I cannot express what a painful and miserable impression this half-crazy creature made upon me. She imagined perhaps that she had been commanded to entertain me: at any rate she did not leave my side for one instant. She had perhaps at one time or another been on the stage; she declaimed in a terrible way, pirouetted, talked incessantly, while I had long been silent. All I could understand from her story was that she had been closely connected with “la maison de M. Andrieux — hautes nouveautés, articles de Paris, etc,” and perhaps was one of the family of la Maison de M. Andrieux; but she had somehow been torn for ever from M. Andrieux, par ce monstre furieux et inconcévable, and that was the point of the tragedy. . . . She sobbed, but I fancied that this was all part of the performance, and that she was not really crying at all; sometimes I fancied that she would suddenly drop to pieces, like a skeleton; she articulated her words in a jangling, broken voice; the word préferable, for instance, she pronounced préfér-a-able, and on the syllable A positively baa-ed like a sheep. Coming to myself on one occasion I found her executing a pirouette in the middle of the room, but she was not actually dancing, the pirouette had some connection with her story, and she was simply impersonating some figure in it. Suddenly she rushed and opened a little, old, out-of-tune piano that was in the room, and began strumming on it and singing. I believe that for ten minutes or more I lost consciousness completely, I fell asleep, but the lap-dog yelped and I waked up again; for a moment consciousness returned completely and suddenly flooded my mind with light; I jumped up in horror:

“Lambert, I am at Lambert’s!” I thought, and snatching up my hat, I rushed to my fur coat.

“Où allez-vous, monsieur?” cried the vigilant Alphonsine.

“I want to get out, I want to go away! Let me out, don’t keep me. . . .”

“Oui, monsieur!” Alphonsine assented vigorously, and she rushed to open the door into the corridor herself. “Mais ce n’est pas loin, monsieur, c’est pas loin du tout, ça ne vaut pas la peine de mettre votre chouba, c’est ici près, monsieur!” she shouted for the benefit of the whole corridor. Running out of the room I turned to the right.

“Par ici, monsieur, c’est par ici!” she shouted at the top of her voice, clutching at my coat with her long bony fingers, and with the other hand pointing to the left of the corridor, where I did not at all want to go. I broke away and ran to the outer door opening on to the stairs.

“Il s’en va, il s’en va!” Alphonsine ran after me shouting in her cracked voice; “mais il me tuera, monsieur, ii me tuera!” But I was already on the stairs and, though she ran after me down stairs, I succeeded in opening the front door, dashing out into the street, and jumping into the first sledge I met. I gave the driver my mother’s address. . . .

4

But the clear consciousness that had flickered up for one moment was soon dimmed. I still have a faint recollection of the drive and being taken up to my mother’s, but there I sank almost at once into complete unconsciousness. Next day, as they told me afterwards, and indeed I remember it myself, I had a moment of lucidity again. I found myself in Versilov’s room and on his sofa. I remember around me the faces of Versilov, my mother, Liza; I remember particularly Versilov’s speaking to me about Zerstchikov, and about Prince Sergay, and showing me some letter to soothe me. They told me afterwards that I kept asking with horror about someone called Lambert, and kept hearing the barking of some lap- dog. But the faint light of consciousness was soon quenched again: by the evening of the second day I was completely prostrate with brainfever. But I will anticipate events, and explain what had happened.

When I had run out in the street from Zerstchikov’s that evening, and when calm had been restored there, Zerstchikov, who had returned to the table, proclaimed aloud that a regrettable mistake had been made: the missing money, four hundred roubles, had been found in a pile of other money, and the bank account turned out to be quite correct. Then Prince Sergay, who had remained in the room, went up to Zerstchikov and insisted that he should make a public declaration of my innocence and should, moreover, send me an apology in the form of a letter. Zerstchikov on his side accepted this suggestion as a very proper one, and promised, in the presence of all, to send me next day a letter of explanation and apology. Prince Sergay gave him Versilov’s address. And Versilov did in fact receive next day a letter addressed to me in Zerstchikov’s hand, and more than

thirteen hundred roubles belonging to me, which I had left on the roulette table. And so the affair with Zerstchikov ended: this joyful news did much to hasten my recovery, when I regained consciousness.

When Prince Sergay returned from the gambling saloon that night he wrote two letters — one to me, and the other to his old regiment, in which he had behaved so scandalously to Cornet Stepanov. He dispatched both letters next morning. After that, he wrote a report for the authorities, and with that report in his hand he went early in the morning to the officer in command of his regiment and announced to him that he, "a common criminal, who had taken part in the forging of the X —— railway shares, surrendered to justice and asked to be tried." Therewith he handed him the report in which all this was set out in writing. He was arrested.

Here is the letter he wrote to me that night, word for word:

"PRECIOUS ARKADY MAKAROVITCH,

"Having tried the lackey's way of escape, I have lost the right to comfort my soul a little with the thought that I was able in the end to dare to do what was just and fine. I have sinned against my fatherland and against my family, and for this I, the last of my family, am punishing myself. I don't know how I could have caught at the bare idea of self-preservation, and for a time have dreamed of buying them off with money! I should have still remained to all eternity a criminal in my conscience! Even if those people had given back the notes that compromised me, they would never have been induced to let me alone as long as I lived! What remained? To live with them, to be on a level with them all my life — that was the fate awaiting me! I could not accept it, and have at last found in myself strength enough, or perhaps only despair enough, to act as I am acting now.

"I have written a letter to my old regiment, to my fellow officers, clearing Stepanov's character. This is not and cannot be an atonement: it is only the last will and testament of a man who will be dead to-morrow. That is how one must look at it.

"Forgive me for turning away from you in the gambling saloon; it was because at the moment I was not sure of you. Now that I am a dead man I can make this confession . . . from the other world.

"Poor Liza! she knows nothing of this decision; let her not curse me, but judge of it herself. I cannot defend myself and cannot even find the words to explain anything to her. I must tell you, too, Arkady Makarovitch, that when she came to me yesterday morning for the last time, I confessed that I

had deceived her, and owned that I had been to Anna Andreyevna with the intention of making her an offer. I could not, seeing her love, keep this upon my conscience in face of my last determination, and I told her. She forgave me, she forgave everything, but I could not believe her; it is not forgiveness; in her place I could not forgive.

"Remember me a little.

"Your unhappy friend,

"THE LAST PRINCE SOKOLSKY."

I lay unconscious for exactly nine days.

PART III

CHAPTER I

1

Now for something quite different.

I keep declaring: “something different, something different,” yet I keep on scribbling of nothing but myself. Yet I have announced a thousand times already that I don’t want to describe myself at all, and I firmly meant not to do so when I began my story: I quite understand that I’m not of the slightest interest to the reader. I am describing and want to describe other people, not myself, and if I keep coming in it’s only a lamentable mistake, because I can’t avoid it, however much I should like to. What I regret most is that I describe my own adventures with such heat; by doing so I give ground for supposing that I am still the same as I was. The reader will remember, however, that I have exclaimed more than once, “Oh, if one could only change the past and begin all over again!” I could not have uttered that exclamation if I were not radically changed and had not become an entirely different man now; that is quite evident. And no one can imagine how sick I am of these apologies and prefaces, which I am continually forced to squeeze into the very middle of my narrative!

To return.

After nine days’ unconsciousness I came to myself, regenerated but not reformed; my regeneration was a stupid one, however, of course, if the word is taken in the wide sense, and perhaps if it had happened now it would have been different. The idea, or rather the feeling, that possessed me was, as it had been a thousand times before, the desire to get away altogether, but this time I meant to go away, not as in the past, when I had so often considered the project and been incapable of carrying it out. I didn’t want to revenge myself on anyone, and I give my word of honour that I did not, though I had been insulted by all of them. I meant to go away without loathing, without cursing, and never to return, but I wanted to do this by my own effort, and by real effort unassisted by any one of them, or by anyone in the whole world; yet I was almost on the point of being reconciled with every one! I record this absorbing dream not as a thought, but as an overwhelming sensation. I did not care to formulate it as long as I

was in bed. Sick and helpless I lay in Versilov's room, which they had given up to me; I recognized, with a pang, how abjectly helpless I was.

What was tossing on the bed was not a man but a feeble straw, and this impotence was not only through illness — and how degrading I felt it! And so from the very depth of my being, from all the forces in me, a protest began to rise, and I was choking with a feeling of infinitely exaggerated pride and defiance. Indeed, I can't remember any time in my whole life when I was so full of arrogant feeling as I was during the early days of my convalescence, that is, while I was tossing like a weak straw on my bed.

But for the time I held my peace, and even made up my mind not to think of anything! I kept peeping at their faces, trying to guess from them all I wanted to know. It was evident that they too did not want to ask questions or be inquisitive, but talked of something irrelevant. This pleased me and at the same time mortified me; I won't attempt to explain the contradiction. I did not see Liza so often as my mother, though she came in to see me every day, and indeed twice a day. From fragments of their talk and from their whole air I gathered that Liza had a great deal on her hands and that she was indeed often absent from home on business of her own: the very fact that she could have "business of her own" was something like a grievance to me; but all these were morbid, purely physical, sensations, which are not worth describing. Tatyana Pavlovna came, too, almost daily to see me, and though she was by no means tender with me, she did not abuse me as usual, which annoyed me extremely — so much so that I said to her openly: "You know, Tatyana Pavlovna, when you're not scolding you are very tedious." "Well, then, I won't come and see you," she blurted out, and went away. And I was pleased that I had got rid of one of them, at least.

Most of all I worried my mother; I was irritable with her. I developed a terrific appetite and grumbled very much that the meals were late (and they never were late). Mother did not know how to satisfy me. Once she brought some soup, and began, as usual, feeding me with it herself, and I kept grumbling as I ate it. And suddenly I felt vexed that I was grumbling: "She is perhaps the only one I love, and I am tormenting her." But I was none the less ill-humoured, and I suddenly began to cry from ill-humour; and she, poor darling, thought I was crying from tenderness, stooped down and began kissing me. I restrained myself and endured it, but at that instant I positively hated her. But I always loved my mother, and at that very time

I loved her and did not hate her at all, but it happened as it always does — that the one you love best you treat worst.

The only person I hated in those days was the doctor. He was a young man with a conceited air, who talked abruptly and even rudely, as though all these scientific people had only yesterday discovered something special, when in reality nothing special had happened; but the "mediocrity," the man in the street, is always like that. I restrained myself for a long time, but at last I suddenly broke out and informed him before every one that he was hanging about unnecessarily, that I should get better just as well without him; that, though he looked like a scientific man, he was filled with nothing but conventional ideas and did not even understand that medicine had never cured anyone; that, in fact, he was in all probability grossly ill-educated, "like all the specialists who had become so high and mighty among us of late years." The doctor was very much offended (showing by that very fact that he was that sort of person); however, he still came as before. I told Versilov at last that if the doctor did not give up coming, that I should say something to him ten times as disagreeable. Versilov only observed that it was impossible to say anything even twice as disagreeable as I had said, let alone ten times. I was pleased at his saying that.

He was a man, though! I am speaking of Versilov. He, he was the sole cause of it all, and, strange to say, he was the only one towards whom I did not feel resentful. It was not only his manner to me that won me over. I imagine that we felt at that time that we owed each other many explanations . . . and for that very reason it would be our best course never to explain. It's extremely pleasant in such situations to have to do with a man of intelligence: I have mentioned already, in the second part of my story, that he told me briefly and clearly of Prince Sergay's letter to me about Zerstchikov, about what he, Prince Sergay, had said to the latter, and so on. As I had made up my mind to keep quiet, I only asked him two or three brief questions; he answered them clearly and exactly but entirely without superfluous words and, what was best of all, without feeling. I was afraid of superfluous feeling at that time.

I said nothing about Lambert, but the reader will readily understand that I thought a great deal about him. In my delirium I spoke more than once about Lambert; but, recovering from my delirium and looking about me, I quickly reflected that everything about Lambert remained a secret, and that every one, even Versilov, knew nothing about him. Then I was relieved and

my fears passed away; but I was mistaken, as I found out later to my astonishment. He had come to the house during my illness, but Versilov said nothing to me about it, and I concluded that Lambert had lost all trace of me for ever. Nevertheless, I often thought of him; what is more, I thought of him not only without repulsion, not only with curiosity, but even with sympathy, as though foreseeing from him something new, some means of escape in harmony with my new feelings and plans. In short, I made up my mind to think over Lambert as soon as I should be ready to think over anything. I will note one strange fact: I had entirely forgotten where he lived and in what street it had all happened. The room, Alphonsine, the lap-dog, the corridor, all I remembered, so that I could have sketched them at once; but where it had all happened — that is, in what street and in what house — I had utterly forgotten. And, what is strangest of all, I only realized this three or four days after I had regained complete consciousness, when I had been occupied with the thought of Lambert for a long time.

These, then, were my first sensations on my resurrection. I have noted only what was most on the surface, and most probably I was not able to detect what was most important. In reality, perhaps, what was really most important was even then taking shape and becoming defined in my heart; I was not, of course, always vexed and resentful simply at my broth's not being brought me. Oh, I remember how sad I was then and how depressed, especially at moments when I had remained a long while alone. As ill-luck would have it, they soon saw that I was dreary with them and that their sympathy irritated me, and they began more and more often to leave me alone — a superfluous delicacy of perception on their part.

2

On the fourth day of consciousness I was lying in my bed at three o'clock in the afternoon, and there was no one with me. It was a bright day, and I knew that at four o'clock, when the sun would set, its slanting red rays would fall on the corner of my wall, and throw a patch of glaring light upon it. I knew that from the days before, and that that would certainly happen in an hour's time, and above all, that I knew of this beforehand, as certainly as twice two make four, exasperated me to fury. I turned round impulsively and suddenly, in the midst of the profound stillness, I clearly distinguished the words: "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us." The words were

pronounced in a half-whisper, and were followed by a deep-drawn sigh, and then everything was still again. I raised my head quickly.

I had before, that is the previous day, and even the day before that, noticed something special in our three rooms downstairs. In the little room beyond the dining-room where mother and Liza were accustomed to sleep, there was evidently now some one else. I had more than once heard sounds, both by day and by night, but only for brief moments, and complete stillness followed immediately and lasted for several hours, so that I took no notice of the sounds. The thought had occurred to me the evening before that Versilov was in there, especially as he soon afterwards came in to me, though I knew for a fact from their conversation that during my illness Versilov had been sleeping out in another lodging. I had known for some time past that mother and Liza had moved into my former "coffin" upstairs (to make it quieter for me, I imagined) and I had even once wondered how the two of them could have possibly fitted themselves into it. And now it suddenly appeared that there was some person living in their old room, and that that person was not Versilov. With an ease which I had not the least expected (for I had till then imagined I was quite helpless) I dropped my feet over the bed, slipped them into slippers, threw on a grey astrachan dressing-gown which lay close at hand (Versilov had sacrificed it for my benefit), and made my way through the parlour to what had been mother's bedroom. What I saw there completely astounded me; I had never expected anything of the kind, and I stood still in the doorway petrified. There was sitting there a very grey-headed old man, with a big and very white beard, and it was clear that he had been sitting there for a long time. He was not sitting on the bed but on mother's little bench, resting his back against the bed. He held himself so upright, however, that he hardly seemed to need a support for his back, though he was evidently ill. He had over his shirt a short jacket lined with fur. His knees were covered with mother's plaid, and on his feet were slippers. He was, it could be discerned, tall, broad-shouldered, and of a hale appearance, in spite of his invalid state, though he was somewhat thin and looked ill. He had rather a long face and thick but not very long hair; he looked about seventy. On a little table, within reach, lay three or four books and a pair of silver-rimmed spectacles. Though I had not the slightest idea of meeting him, I guessed instantly who he was, though I was still unable to imagine how he could have been sitting all

those days, almost beside me, so quietly that till that time I had heard nothing of him.

He did not stir on seeing me, he looked intently at me in silence, just as I did at him, the only difference being that I stared at him with the greatest astonishment, and he looked at me without the slightest. Scrutinizing me, on the contrary, from head to foot during those five or ten seconds of silence, he suddenly smiled and even laughed a gentle noiseless laugh, and though the laugh was soon over, traces of its serene gaiety remained upon his face and above all in his eyes, which were very blue, luminous and large, though they were surrounded by innumerable wrinkles, and the eyelids were swollen and drooping. This laugh of his was what had most effect on me.

I consider that in the majority of cases people are revolting to look at when they are laughing. As a rule something vulgar, something as it were degrading, comes to the surface when a man laughs, though he is almost unconscious of the impression he is making in his mirth, as little in fact as anyone knows what he looks like when he is asleep. One person's face will look intelligent asleep, while another man, intelligent in waking life, will look stupid and ridiculous when he is sleeping. I don't know what this is due to: I only mean to say that people laughing, like people asleep, have no idea what they look like. The vast majority of people don't know how to laugh at all. It is not a matter of knowing how, though: it's a gift and it cannot be cultivated. One can only cultivate it, perhaps, by training oneself to be different, by developing and improving and by struggling against the evil instincts of one's character: then a man's laugh might very likely change for the better. A man will sometimes give himself away completely by his laugh, and you suddenly know him through and through. Even an unmistakably intelligent laugh will sometimes be repulsive. What is most essential in laughter is sincerity, and where is one to find sincerity? A good laugh must be free from malice, and people are constantly laughing maliciously. A sincere laugh free from malice is gaiety, and where does one find gaiety nowadays? People don't know how to be gay (Versilov made this observation about gaiety and I remember it). A man's gaiety is what most betrays the whole man from head to foot. Sometimes one will be for a long time unable to read a character, but if the man begins to laugh his whole character will suddenly lie open before you. It is only the loftiest and happiest natures whose gaiety is infectious, that is, good-hearted and

irresistible. I am not talking of intellectual development, but of character, of the whole man. And so if you want to see into a man and to understand his soul, don't concentrate your attention on the way he talks or is silent, on his tears, or the emotion he displays over exalted ideas; you will see through him better when he laughs. If a man has a good laugh, it means that he is a good man. Take note of every shade; a man's laugh must never, for instance, strike you as stupid, however gay and good-humoured be may be. If you notice the slightest trace of stupidity in his laughter, you may be sure that that man is of limited intelligence, though he is continually dropping ideas wherever he goes. Even if his laugh is not stupid, but the man himself strikes you as being ever so little ridiculous when he laughs, you may be sure that the man is deficient in personal dignity, to some extent anyway. Or if the laughter though infectious, strikes you for some reason as vulgar, you may be sure that that man's nature is vulgar, and all the generous and lofty qualities you have observed in him before are either intentionally assumed or unconsciously borrowed and that the man is certain to deteriorate, to go in for the profitable, and to cast off his noble ideas without regret as the errors and enthusiasm of youth.

I am intentionally introducing here this long tirade on the subject of laughter and am sacrificing the continuity of my story for the sake of it, for I consider it one of the most valuable deductions I have drawn from life, and I particularly recommend it to the attention of girls who are ready to accept the man of their choice, but are still hesitating and watching him mistrustfully, unable to make their final decision: and don't let them jeer at a wretched raw youth for obtruding his moral reflections on marriage, a subject which he knows nothing about. But I only understand that laughter is the surest test of the heart. Look at a baby — some children know how to laugh to perfection; a crying baby is disgusting to me, but a laughing, merry one is a sunbeam from paradise, it is a revelation from the future, when man will become at last as pure and simple-hearted as a child. And, indeed, there was something childlike and incredibly attractive in the momentary laughter of this old man. I went up to him at once.

3

"Sit down, sit down a bit, you can scarcely stand on your legs, I dare say," he urged me, motioning me to a seat beside him, and still gazing into my

face with the same luminous gaze. I sat down beside him and said:

"I know you, you are Makar Ivanovitch."

"Yes, darling. It's very good that you are up. You are young, it is good for you. The old monk looks towards the grave, but the young must live."

"But are you ill?"

"Yes, dear, chiefly in my legs; my feet brought me as far as the door, and here I've sat down and they are swollen. I've had it since last Friday when there were degrees" (i.e. when there was a frost) "I used to rub them with ointment you see; the year before last the doctor, Edmond Karlovitch, prescribed it me in Moscow, and the ointment did good, aye, it did good; but now it's no use. And my chest, too, is choked up. And since yesterday my spine has been bad, as though dogs were gnawing it. . . . I don't sleep at nights."

"How is it I haven't heard you here at all?" I broke in. He looked at me as though considering something.

"Only don't wake your mother," he added as though suddenly remembering something. "She has been busy close at hand all night, and as quiet as a mouse; and now I know she is lying down. Ach, it's bad for a sick monk," he sighed; "the soul hangs by a thread it seems, yet it still holds on, and still is glad of the light; and it seems, if all life were to begin over again the soul would not shrink even from that; though maybe such a thought is sinful."

"Why sinful?"

"Such a thought is a dream, and the old monk should take leave with blissful resignation. Again, if one goes to meet death with murmur or repining that is a great sin, but if from the gladness of the spirit one has grown to love life, I fancy God will forgive, even a monk. It's hard for a man to tell of every sin what is sinful and what is not; therein is mystery passing the mind of man. A monk must be content at all times, and ought to die in the full light of his understanding, in holy peace and blessedness, filled full with days, yearning for his last hour, and rejoicing when he is gathered as the ear of wheat to the sheaf, and has fulfilled his mystery."

"You keep talking of 'mystery'; what does it mean 'having fulfilled his mystery'?" I asked, and looked round towards the door. I was glad that we were alone, and that all around the stillness was unbroken. The setting sun cast a dazzling light on the window. His talk was rather highflown and rambling, but very sincere; there was a sort of intense exaltation in it, as

though he really were delighted at my coming. But I noticed unmistakable signs that he was feverish, extremely so in fact. I, too, was ill; I, too, had been in a fever, from the moment I went in to him.

"What is the mystery? Everything is a mystery, dear; in all is God's mystery. In every tree, in every blade of grass that same mystery lies hid. Whether the tiny bird of the air is singing, or the stars in all their multitudes shine at night in heaven, the mystery is one, ever the same. And the greatest mystery of all is what awaiteth the soul of man in the world beyond. So it is, dear!"

"I don't know in what sense you . . . I am not speaking, of course, to tease you, and I assure you I believe in God; but all these mysteries have long been discovered by human intelligence, or if they have not yet been discovered they will be, for certain, and probably in a very short time. The botanist knows perfectly well how the tree grows. The psychologist and the anatomist know why the bird sings, or soon will know, and as for the stars, they are not only all counted, but all their motions have been calculated with the greatest exactitude, so that they can predict even a thousand years beforehand the very minute of the appearance of some comet . . . and now even the composition of the most remote star is known. You take a microscope, that is a sort of magnifying glass that magnifies a thousand times, and look through it at a drop of water, and you will see in it a whole new world, a whole world of living creatures, yet this, too, was once a mystery, but it has been revealed by science."

"I've heard about that, darling, I have heard folk tell of it more than once. To be sure, it's a great and glorious thing; all has been vouchsafed to man by God's will; not for naught did the Lord breathe into him the breath of life; 'live and learn.'"

"That's a commonplace. You're not antagonistic to science though, not a clerical? though I don't know whether you'll understand?"

"No, darling, I did not study science in my youth, and though I am not learned I do not repine at that; if it's not for me it will be for another. Maybe better so, for every man has his allotted part, for science, dear, is not of use for all. All men are unbridled, each wants to astonish all the world, and I should have perhaps more than all if I had been learned. But now being very unlearned, how can I be puffed up when I know nothing? You, now, are young and clever, you must study — such is the lot ordained you. Understand all things, that when you meet an infidel or an evil- doer you

may be able to answer him, and he may not lead you astray with his frantic words, or confound your unripe thoughts. That glass I saw not so long ago."

He took breath and heaved a sigh. There was no doubt that my coming in was a source of great satisfaction to him. His desire to be communicative was almost morbid. What is more, I am certainly not mistaken in declaring that at moments he looked at me with extraordinary affection; he laid his hand on mine caressingly, stroked me on the shoulder . . . though there were minutes when I must confess he seemed to forget all about me, as though he had been sitting alone, and though he went on talking warmly, it seemed at times as though he were talking to the air.

"In the Gennadiev desert, dear, there lives a man of great understanding. He is of noble birth, and by rank a major, and he has great possessions. When he lived in the world he would not be bound by marriage; he has been withdrawn from the world for nearly ten years, loving still and silent resting-places, and keeping his heart free from worldly vanities. He follows all the monastic rules, but will not become a monk, and he has so many books, dear, as I have never seen in any other man's possession; he told me himself that his books were worth eight thousand roubles. His name is Pyotr Valerianitch. He has taught me a great deal at different times, and I loved listening to him exceedingly. I said to him once: 'How is it, sir, that with your great understanding, after living here ten years in monastic obedience, and in complete renunciation of your will, how is it you don't take honourable vows, so as to be still more perfect,' and he said to me thereupon, "You talk of my understanding, old man, but perhaps my understanding has held me in bondage and I have not kept it in submission. And you speak of my obedience; maybe I've long since lost the right measure for myself. And you talk of the renunciation of my will; I am ready to be deprived of my money on the spot and to give up my rank and to lay all my medals and ribbons on the table, but my pipe of tobacco, though I've been struggling for ten years, I can't do without. What sort of a monk should I be, and how could you glorify the renunciation of my will?' And I marvelled then at this humility. Well, last year, about St. Peter's day, I went again to that desert — the Lord led me there — and I saw standing in his cell that very thing, a microscope; he had ordered it for a great sum of money from abroad. 'Stay,' said he, 'old man, I'll show you a marvellous thing you have never hitherto looked upon; you see a drop of water as pure

as a tear; well, look what is in it and you will see that the mechanicians will soon seek out all the mysteries of God and not leave one for either you or me!' That is what he said, I remember. But I had looked through such a microscope thirty-five years before that, at Alexandr Vladimirovitch Malgasov's, who was our old master, Andrey Petrovitch's maternal uncle. It was from him the property came on his death to Andrey Petrovitch. He was a grand gentleman, a great general, and he used to keep a pack of hounds, and I lived many years with him as huntsman; so he, too, set up this microscope; he brought it with him, and he told all the servants to come up one after another, male and female, and look through; he showed them a flea and a louse and the end of a needle, and a hair and a drop of water. And it was diverting, they were afraid to go up and afraid of the master — he was hasty. Some did not know how to look properly, and the elder saw nothing; others were frightened and cried out; the elder Savin Makarov covered his eyes with both hands and cried, 'Do what you will with me, I won't go near!' There was much foolish laughter. I didn't confess to Pyotr Valerianitch, though, that I had seen this marvel before more than thirty-five years ago, because I saw it was a great pleasure to him showing it; I began, on the contrary, admiring it and marvelling. He waited a bit and asked, 'Well, old man, what do you say now?' And I lifted myself up and said to him, 'The Lord said, Let there be light and there was light,' and thereupon he said to me all at once, 'And was there not darkness?' And he said that so strangely, he did not even laugh. I wondered at him then, and he seemed to be angered and said no more."

"The fact of the matter is your Pyotr Valerianitch is eating rice and raisins in the monastery, and bowing to the ground, while he does not believe in God, and you hit on the wrong moment, that's all," I said. "And what's more, he is rather an absurd person: I suppose he must have seen that microscope a dozen times before, why should he go off his head when he saw it for the thirteenth? What nervous susceptibility . . . he must have got that from living in a monastery."

"He was a man of pure life and lofty mind," the old man pronounced impressively, "and he was not an infidel. There was a cloud over his mind and his heart was not at peace. Very many such men have come nowadays from the ranks of the gentry and learned. And something more I will tell you, a man punishes himself. But you watch them and do not worry them,

and before you lie down to sleep at night remember them in your prayers, for such are seeking God. Do you pray at night?"

"No, I regard it as an empty ceremony. I must own, though, that I like your Pyotr Valerianitch. He's not a man of straw, anyway, but a real person, rather like a man very near and well-known to us both."

The old man only paid attention to the first part of my answer.

"You're wrong, my dear, not to pray; it is a good thing, it cheers the heart before sleep, and rising up from sleep and awakening in the night. Let me tell you this. In the summer in July we were hastening to the monastery of Our Lady for the holy festival. The nearer we got to the place the greater the crowd of people, and at last there were almost two hundred of us gathered together, all hastening to kiss the holy and miraculous relics of the two great saints, Aniky and Grigory. We spent the night, brother, in the open country, and I waked up early in the morning when all was still sleeping and the dear sun had not yet peeped out from behind the forest. I lifted up my head, dear, I gazed about me and sighed. Everywhere beauty passing all utterance! All was still, the air was light; the grass grows — Grow, grass of God, the bird sings — Sing, bird of God, the babe cries in the woman's arms — God be with you, little man; grow and be happy, little babe! And it seemed that only then for the first time in my life I took it all in. . . . I lay down again, I slept so sweetly. Life is sweet, dear! If I were better, I should like to go out again in the spring. And that it's a mystery makes it only the better; it fills the heart with awe and wonder and that awe maketh glad the heart: 'All is in Thee my Lord, and I, too, am in Thee; have me in Thy keeping.' Do not repine, young man; it is even more beautiful because it is a mystery," he added fervently.

"It's the more beautiful for being a mystery. . . . I will remember those words. You express yourself very inaccurately, but I understand you. . . . It strikes me that you understand and know a great deal more than you can express; only you seem to be in delirium." . . . I added abruptly, looking at his feverish eyes and pale face. But he did not seem to hear my words.

"Do you know, dear young man," he began again, as though going on with what he had been saying before: "Do you know there is a limit to the memory of a man on this earth? The memory of a man is limited to a hundred years. For a hundred years after his death his children or his grandchildren who have seen his face can still remember him, but after that though his memory may still remain, it is only by hearsay, in thought, for all

who have seen his living face have gone before. And his grave in the churchyard is overgrown with grass, the stones upon it crumble away, and all men, and even his children's children, forget him; afterwards they forget even his name, for only a few are kept in the memory of men — and so be it! You may forget me, dear ones, but I love you from the tomb. I hear, my children, your gay voices; I hear your steps on the graves of your kin; live for a while in the sunshine, rejoice and I will pray to God for you, I will come to you in your dreams . . . it is all the same — even in death is love! . . . ."

I was myself in the same feverish state as he was; instead of going away or persuading him to be quiet, or perhaps putting him to bed, for he seemed quite delirious, I suddenly seized his arm and bending down to him and squeezing his hand, I said in an excited whisper, with inward tears:

"I am glad of you. I have been waiting a long time for you, perhaps. I don't like any of them; there is no 'seemliness' in them . . . I won't follow them, I don't know where I'm going, I'll go with you." . . . But luckily mother suddenly came in, or I don't know how it would have ended. She came in only just awake and looking agitated; in her hand she had a tablespoon and a glass; seeing us she exclaimed:

"I knew it would be so! I am late with his quinine and he's all in a fever! I overslept myself, Makar Ivanovitch, darling!"

I got up and went out. She gave him his quinine and put him to bed. I, too, lay down on mine in a state of great excitement. I tossed about pondering on this meeting with intense interest and curiosity. What I expected from it I don't know. Of course, my reasoning was disconnected, and not thoughts but fragments of thoughts flitted through my brain. I lay with my face to the wall, and suddenly I saw in the corner the patch of glowing light which I had been looking forward to with such curses, and now I remember my whole soul seemed to be leaping for joy, and a new light seemed penetrating to my heart. I remember that sweet moment and I do not want to forget it. It was only an instant of new hope and new strength. . . . I was convalescent then, and therefore such transports may have been the inevitable result of the state of my nerves; but I have faith even now in that bright hope — that is what I wanted to record and to recall. Of course, even then I knew quite well that I should not go on a pilgrimage with Makar Ivanovitch, and that I did not know the nature of the new impulse that had taken hold of me, but I had pronounced one word,

though in delirium, “There is no seemliness in their lives!” “Of course,” I thought in a frenzy, “from this minute I am seeking ‘seemliness,’ and they have none of it, and that is why I am leaving them.”

There was a rustle behind me, I turned round: mother stood there bending down to me and looking with timid inquiry into my face. I took her hand.

“Why did you tell me nothing about our dear guest, mother?” I asked suddenly, not knowing I was going to say it. All the uneasiness vanished from her face at once, and there was a flush as it were of joy, but she made me no reply except the words:

“Liza, don’t forget Liza, either; you’ve forgotten Liza.”

She said this in a hurried murmur, flushing crimson, and would have made haste to get away, for above all things she hated displaying her feelings, and in that she was like me, that is reverent and delicate; of course, too, she would not care to begin on the subject of Makar Ivanovitch with me; what we could say to each other with our eyes was quite enough. But though I hated demonstrativeness, I still kept her by her hand; I looked tenderly into her eyes, and laughed softly and tenderly, and with my other hand stroked her dear face, her hollow cheeks. She bent down and pressed her forehead to mine.

“Well, Christ be with you,” she said suddenly, standing up, beaming all over: “get well, I shall count on your doing so. He is ill, very ill. Life is in God’s hands. . . . Ach, what have I said, oh that could not be! . . .”

She went away. All her life, in fear and trembling and reverence, she had honoured her legal husband, the monk, Makar Ivanovitch, who with large-hearted generosity had forgiven her once and for ever.

CHAPTER II

1

I had not ‘forgotten’ Liza; mother was mistaken. The keen-sighted mother saw that there was something like coolness between brother and sister, but it was rather jealousy than lack of love. In view of what followed, I will explain in a couple of words. Ever since Prince Sergay’s arrest, poor Liza had shown a sort of conceited pride, an unapproachable haughtiness, almost unendurable; but every one in the house knew the truth and understood how she was suffering, and if at first I scowled and was sulky at her manner with us, it was simply owing to my petty irritability, increased tenfold by illness — that is how I explain it now. I had not ceased to love Liza; on the contrary, I loved her more than ever, only I did not want to be the first to make advances, though I understood that nothing would have induced her either to make the first advances.

As soon as all the facts came out about Prince Sergay, that is, immediately after his arrest, Liza made haste at once to take up an attitude to us, and to every one else, that would not admit of the possibility of sympathy or any sort of consolation and excuses for Prince Sergay. On the contrary, she seemed continually priding herself on her luckless lover’s action as though it were the loftiest heroism, though she tried to avoid all discussion of the subject. She seemed every moment to be telling us all (though I repeat that she did not utter a word), ‘None of you would do the same — you would not give yourself up at the dictates of honour and duty, none of you have such a pure and delicate conscience! And as for his misdeeds, who has not evil actions upon his conscience? Only every one conceals them, and this man preferred facing ruin to remaining ignoble in his own eyes.’ This seemed to be expressed by every gesture Liza made. I don’t know, but I think in her place I should have behaved almost in the same way. I don’t know either whether those were the thoughts in her heart, in fact I privately suspect that they were not. With the other, clear part of her reason, she must have seen through the insignificance of her ‘hero,’ for who will not agree now that that unhappy man, noble- hearted in his own way as he was, was at the same time an absolutely insignificant person? This very haughtiness and as it were antagonism towards us all,

this constant suspiciousness that we were thinking differently of him, made one surmise that in the secret recesses of her heart a very different judgment of her unhappy friend had perhaps been formed. But I hasten to add, however, that in my eyes she was at least half right; it was more pardonable for her than for any of us to hesitate in drawing the final conclusion. I will admit with my whole heart that even now, when all is over, I don't know at all how to judge the unhappy man who was such a problem to us all.

Home was beginning to be almost a little hell on account of her. Liza whose love was so intense was bound to suffer terribly. It was characteristic of her to prefer to suffer in silence. Her character was like mine, proud and domineering, and I thought then, and I think now that it was that that made her love Prince Sergay, just because he had no will at all, and that from the first word, from the first hour, he was utterly in subjection to her. This comes about of itself, in the heart, without any preliminary calculation; but such a love, the love of the strong woman for the weak man, is sometimes incomparably more intense and more agonizing than the love of equal characters, because the stronger unconsciously undertakes responsibility for the weaker. That is what I think at any rate.

All the family from the first surrounded her with the tenderest care, especially mother; but Liza was not softened, she did not respond to sympathy, and seemed to repulse every sort of help. At first she did talk to mother, but every day she became more reluctant to speak, more abrupt and even more harsh. She asked Versilov's advice at first, but soon afterwards she chose Vassin for her counsellor and helper, as I learned afterwards with surprise. . . .

She went to see Vassin every day; she went to the law courts, too, by Prince Sergay's instructions; she went to the lawyers, to the crown prosecutor; she came in the end to being absent from home for whole days together. Twice a day, of course, she visited Prince Sergay, who was in prison, in the division for noblemen, but these interviews, as I was fully convinced later, were very distressing to Liza. Of course no third person can judge of the relations of two lovers. But I know that Prince Sergay was always wounding her deeply, and by what do you suppose? Strange to say, by his continual jealousy. Of that, however, I will speak later; but I will add one thought on the subject: it would be hard to decide which of them tormented the other more. Though with us she prided herself on her hero,

Liza perhaps behaved quite differently alone with him; I suspect so indeed from various facts, of which, however, I will also speak later.

And so, as regards my feeling and my attitude towards Liza, any external change there was was only simulated, a jealous deception on both sides, but we had never loved each other more than at that time. I must add, too, that though Liza showed surprise and interest when Makar Ivanovitch first arrived, she had since for some reason begun to treat him almost disdainfully, even contemptuously. She seemed intentionally to take not the slightest notice of him.

Having inwardly vowed "to be silent," as I explained in the previous chapter, I expected, of course theoretically, that is in my dreams, to keep my word. Oh, with Versilov, for instance, I would have sooner begun talking of zoology or of the Roman Emperors, than of HER for example, or of that most important line in his letter to her, in which he informed her that 'the document was not burnt but in existence' — a line on which I began pondering to myself again as soon as I had begun to recover and come to my senses after my fever. But alas! from the first steps towards practice, and almost before the first steps, I realized how difficult and impossible it was to stick to such resolutions: the day after my first acquaintance with Makar Ivanovitch, I was fearfully excited by an unexpected circumstance.

2

I was excited by an unexpected visit from Darya Onisimovna, the mother of the dead girl, Olya. From my mother I had heard that she had come once or twice during my illness, and that she was very much concerned about my condition. Whether "that good woman," as my mother always called her when she spoke of her, had come entirely on my account, or whether she had come to visit my mother in accordance with an established custom, I did not ask. Mother usually told me all the news of the household to entertain me when she came with my soup to feed me (before I could feed myself): I always tried to appear uninterested in these domestic details, and so I did not ask about Darya Onisimovna; in fact, I said nothing about her at all.

It was about eleven o'clock; I was just meaning to get out of bed and install myself in the armchair by the table, when she came in. I purposely remained in bed. Mother was very busy upstairs and did not come down, so

that we were left alone. She sat down on a chair by the wall facing me, smiled and said not a word. I foresaw this pause, and her entrance altogether made an irritating impression on me. Without even nodding to her, I looked her straight in the face, but she too looked straight at me.

"Are you dull in your flat now the prince has gone?" I asked, suddenly losing patience.

"No, I am not in that flat now. Through Anna Andreyevna I am looking after his honour's baby now."

"Whose baby?"

"Andrey Petrovitch's," she brought out in a confidential whisper, glancing round towards the door.

"Why, but there's Tatyana Pavlovna. . . ."

"Yes, Tatyana Pavlovna, and Anna Andreyevna, both of them, and Lizaveta Makarovna also, and your mamma . . . all of them. They all take an interest; Tatyana Pavlovna and Anna Andreyevna are great friends now."

A piece of news! She grew much livelier as she talked. I looked at her with hatred.

"You are much livelier than when you came to see me last."

"Oh, yes."

"I think, you've grown stouter?"

She looked strangely at me:

"I have grown very fond of her, very."

"Fond of whom?"

"Why, Anna Andreyevna. Very fond. Such a noble young lady, and with such judgment. . . ."

"You don't say so! What about her, how are things now?"

"She is very quiet, very."

"She was always quiet."

"Always."

"If you've come here with scandal," I cried suddenly, unable to restrain myself, "let me tell you that I won't have anything to do with it, I have decided to drop . . . everything, every one. . . . I don't care — I am going away! . . ."

I ceased suddenly, for I realized what I was doing. I felt it degrading to explain my new projects to her. She heard me without surprise and without emotion. But again a pause followed, again she got up, went to the door and peeped into the next room. Having assured herself that there was no

one there, and we were alone, she returned with great composure and sat down in the same place as before.

“You did that prettily!” I laughed suddenly.

“You are keeping on your lodging at the clerk’s?” she asked suddenly, bending a little towards me, and dropping her voice as though this question were the chief object for which she had come.

“Lodging? I don’t know. Perhaps I shall give it up. How do I know?”

“They are anxiously expecting you: the man’s very impatient to see you, and his wife too. Andrey Petrovitch assured them you’d come back for certain.”

“But what is it to you?”

“Anna Andreyevna wanted to know, too; she was very glad to learn that you were staying.”

“How does she know so positively that I shall certainly stay on at that lodging?”

I wanted to add, “And what is it to her,” but I refrained from asking through pride.

“And M. Lambert said the same thing, too.”

“Wha-at?”

“M. Lambert, he declared most positively to Andrey Petrovitch that you would remain, and he assured Anna Andreyevna of it, too.”

I felt shaken all over. What marvels! Then Lambert already knew Versilov, Lambert had found his way to Versilov — Lambert and Anna Andreyevna — he had found his way to her too! I felt overcome with fever, but I kept silent. My soul was flooded with a terrible rush of pride, pride or I don’t know what. But I suddenly said to myself at that moment, “If I ask for one word in explanation, I shall be involved in that world again, and I shall never have done with it.” There was a glow of hate in my heart. I resolutely made up my mind to be mute, and to lie without moving; she was silent too, for a full minute.

“What of Prince Nikolay Ivanovitch?” I asked suddenly, as though I had taken leave of my senses. The fact is, I asked simply to change the subject, and again I chanced to ask the leading question; like a madman I plunged back again into that world from which I had just before, with such a shudder, resolved to flee.

“His honour is at Tsarskoe Syelo. He is rather poorly; and as the hot days have begun in town, they all advised him to move to their house at

Tsarskoe for the sake of the air."

I made no answer.

"Madame and Anna Andreyevna visit him there twice a week, they go together."

Anna Andreyevna and Madame (that is SHE) were friends then! They go together! I did not speak.

"They have become so friendly, and Anna Andreyevna speaks so highly of Katerina Nikolaevna. . . ."

I still remained silent.

"And Katerina Nikolaevna is in a whirl of society again; it's one fête after another; she is making quite a stir; they say all the gentlemen at court are in love with her . . . and everything's over with M. Büring, and there's to be no wedding; so everybody declares . . . it's been off ever since THEN."

That is since Versilov's letter. I trembled all over, but I did not utter a word.

"Anna Andreyevna is so sorry about Prince Sergay, and Katerina Nikolaevna too, and they all say that he will be acquitted and that Stebelkov will be condemned. . . ."

I looked at her with hatred. She got up and suddenly bent down to me.

"Anna Andreyevna particularly told me to find out how you are," she said quite in a whisper; "and she particularly begged you to go and see her as soon as you begin to go out; good-bye. Make haste and get well and I'll tell her. . . ."

She went away. I sat on the edge of the bed, a cold sweat came out on my forehead, but I did not feel terror: the incredible and grotesque news about Lambert and his machinations did not, for instance, fill me with horror in the least, as might have been expected from the dread, perhaps unaccountable, with which during my illness and the early days of my convalescence I recalled my meeting with him on that night. On the contrary, in that first moment of confusion, as I sat on the bed after Darya Onisimovna had gone, my mind did not dwell on Lambert, but . . . more than all I thought about the news of HER, of her rupture with Büring, and of her success in society, of her fêtes, of her triumphs, of the "stir" she was making. "She's making quite a stir," Darya Onisimovna's phrase, was ringing in my ears. And I suddenly felt that I had not the strength to struggle out of that whirlpool; I had known how to control myself, to hold my tongue and not to question Darya Onisimovna after her tales of

marvels! An overwhelming thirst for that life, for THEIR life, took possession of my whole spirit and . . . and another blissful thirst which I felt as a keen joy and an intense pain. My thoughts were in a whirl; but I let them whirl. . . . "Why be reasonable," I felt. "Even mother kept Lambert's coming a secret," I thought, in incoherent snatches. "Versilov must have told her not to speak of it. . . . I would rather die than ask Versilov about Lambert!"

"Versilov," the thought flashed upon me again. "Versilov and Lambert. Oh, what a lot that's new among them! Bravo, Versilov! He frightened the German Büring with that letter; he libelled her, la calomnie . . . il en reste tonjours quelque chose, and the German courtier was afraid of the scandal. Ha! ha! it's a lesson for her."

"Lambert . . . surely Lambert hasn't found his way to her? To be sure he has! Why shouldn't she have an intrigue with him?"

At this point I suddenly gave up pondering on this senseless tangle, and sank back in despair with my head on my pillow. "But it shall not be," I exclaimed with sudden determination. I jumped out of bed, put on my slippers and dressing-gown, and went straight to Makar Ivanovitch's room, as though there were in it a talisman to repel all enticements, a means of salvation, and an anchor to which I could cling.

It may really have been that I was feeling this at the time with my whole soul; else why should I have leaped up with such a sudden and irresistible impulse and rushed in to Makar Ivanovitch in such a state of mind?

3

But to my surprise I found other people — my mother and the doctor — with Makar Ivanovitch. As I had for some reason imagined I should find the old man alone, as he had been yesterday, I stopped short in the doorway in blank amazement. Before I had time to frown, Versilov came in followed by Liza. . . . So they had all met for some reason in Makar Ivanovitch's room "just when they were not wanted!"

"I have come to ask how you are," I said, going straight up to Makar Ivanovitch.

"Thank you, my dear, I was expecting you; I knew you would come; I was thinking of you in the night."

He looked into my face caressingly, and I saw that perhaps he liked me best of them all, but I could not help seeing instantly that, though his face was cheerful, his illness had made progress in the night. The doctor had only just been examining him very seriously. I learned afterwards that the doctor (the same young man with whom I had quarrelled had been treating Makar Ivanovitch ever since he arrived) had been very attentive to the patient and had diagnosed a complication of various diseases in him — but I don't know their medical terms. Makar Ivanovitch, as I observed from the first glance, was on the warmest, friendliest terms with him; I disliked that at that instant; but I was of course in a very bad mood at the moment.

"Yes, Alexandr Semyonovitch, how is our dear invalid today," inquired Versilov. If I had not been so agitated, it would have been most interesting to me to watch Versilov's attitude to this old man; I had wondered about it the day before. What struck me most of all now was the extremely soft and pleasant expression in Versilov's face, there was something perfectly sincere in it. I have noted already, I believe, that Versilov's face became wonderfully beautiful as soon as it became ever so little kindly.

"Why, we keep quarrelling," answered the doctor.

"With Makar Ivanovitch? I don't believe it; it's impossible to quarrel with him."

"But he won't obey; he doesn't sleep at night. . . ."

"Come give over, Alexandr Semyonovitch, that's enough scolding," said Makar Ivanovitch laughing. "Well, Andrey Petrovitch, how have they treated our good lady? Here she's been sighing and moaning all the morning, she's worrying," he added, indicating mother.

"Ach, Andrey Petrovitch," cried my mother, who was really very uneasy; "do make haste and tell us, don't keep us in suspense; how has it been settled for her, poor thing?"

"They have found her guilty and sentenced her!"

"Ach!" cried my mother.

"But not to Siberia, don't distress yourself — to a fine of fifteen roubles, that's all; it was a farce!"

He sat down, the doctor sat down too; they were talking of Tatyana Pavlovna; I knew nothing yet of what had happened. I sat down on Makar Ivanovitch's left, and Liza sat opposite me on the right; she evidently had some special sorrow of her own to-day, with which she had come to my mother; there was a look of uneasiness and irritation in her face. At that

moment we exchanged glances, and I thought to myself, “we are both disgraced, and I must make the first advances.” My heart was suddenly softened to her. Versilov meanwhile had begun describing what had happened that morning.

It seemed that Tatyana Pavlovna had had to appear before the justice of the peace that morning, on a charge brought against her by her cook. The whole affair was utterly absurd; I have mentioned already that the ill-tempered cook would sometimes, when she was sulky, refuse to speak, and would not say a word to her mistress for a whole week at a time. I mentioned, too, Tatyana’s weakness in regard to her, how she put up with anything from her and absolutely refused to get rid of her. All these whimsical caprices of old maiden ladies are, in my eyes, utterly beneath contempt and so undeserving of attention. And I only mention this story here because this cook is destined to play a leading and momentous part in the sequel of my story.

So Tatyana Pavlovna, driven out of all patience by the obstinate Finnish woman, who had refused to answer a word for several days, had suddenly at last struck her, a thing she had never done before. Even then the cook did not utter the slightest sound, but the same day she communicated the fact to a discharged midshipman called Osyetrov, who earned a precarious existence by undertaking cases of various sorts and of course, by getting up such cases as this for the courts. It had ended in Tatyana Pavlovna’s being summoned before the justice of the peace, and when the case was tried Versilov had for some reason appeared as a witness.

Versilov described all this with extraordinary gaiety and humour, so that even mother laughed; he even mimicked Tatyana Pavlovna and the midshipman and the cook. The cook had from the very beginning announced to the court that she wanted a money fine, “For if they put my mistress in prison, whom am I going to cook for?” In answer to the judge, Tatyana Pavlovna answered with immense condescension, not even deigning to defend herself; on the contrary, she had concluded with the words, “I did beat her and I shall do it again,” whereupon she was promptly fined three roubles for her impudent answer. The midshipman, a lean lanky young man, would have begun with a long speech in defence of his client, but broke down disgracefully to the amusement of the whole court.

The hearing was soon over, and Tatyana Pavlovna was condemned to pay fifteen roubles to the injured Marya.

Tatyana Pavlovna promptly drew out her purse, and proceeded on the spot to pay the money, whereupon the midshipman at once approached her, and was putting out his hand to take it, but Tatyana Pavlovna thrust aside his hand, almost with a blow, and turned to Marya. “Don’t you trouble, madam, you needn’t put yourself out, put it down in our accounts, I’ll settle with this fellow.” “See, Marya, what a lanky fellow you’ve picked out for yourself,” said Tatyana Pavlovna, pointing to the midshipman, hugely delighted that Marya had spoken to her at last.

“He is a lanky one to be sure,” Marya answered slily. “Did you order cutlets with peas? I did not hear this morning, I was in a hurry to get here.” “Oh no, with cabbage, Marya, and please don’t burn it to a cinder, as you did yesterday.” “No, I’ll do my best to-day, madam, let me have your hand,” and she kissed her mistress’s hand in token of reconciliation; she entertained the whole court in fact.

“Ah, what a woman!” said mother, shaking her head, very much pleased with the news and Andrey Petrovitch’s account of it, though she looked uneasily on the sly at Liza.

“She has been a self-willed lady from her childhood,” smiled Makar Ivanovitch.

“Spleen and idleness,” opined the doctor.

“Is it I am self-willed? Is it I am spleen and idleness?” asked Tatyana Pavlovna, coming in upon us suddenly, evidently very well pleased with herself. “It’s not for you to talk nonsense, Alexandr Semyonovitch; when you were ten years old, you knew whether I was idle, and you’ve been treating yourself for spleen for the last year and have not been able to cure yourself, so you ought to be ashamed; well, you’ve picked me to pieces enough; thanks for troubling to come to the court, Andrey Petrovitch. Well, how are you, Makarushka; it’s only you I’ve come to see, not this fellow,” she pointed to me, but at once gave me a friendly pat on the shoulder; I had never before seen her in such a good humour. “Well, how is he?” turning suddenly to the doctor and frowning anxiously.

“Why, he won’t lie in bed, and he only tires himself out sitting up like this.”

“Why, I only sit up like this a little, with company,” Makar Ivanovitch murmured with a face of entreaty, like a child’s.

“Yes, we like this, we like this; we like a little gossip when our friends gather round us; I know Makarushka,” said Tatyana Pavlovna.

“Yes you’re a quick one, you are! And there’s no getting over you; wait a bit, let me speak: I’ll lie down, darling, I’ll obey, but you know, to my thinking, ‘If you take to your bed, you may never get up,’ that’s what I’ve got at the back of my head, friend.”

“To be sure I knew that was it, peasant superstitions: ‘If I take to my bed,’ they say, ‘ten to one I shan’t get up,’ that’s what the peasants very often fear, and they would rather keep on their legs when they’re ill than go to a hospital. As for you, Makar Ivanovitch, you’re simply home-sick for freedom, and the open road — that’s all that’s the matter with you, you’ve got out of the habit of staying long in one place. Why, you’re what’s called a pilgrim, aren’t you? And tramping is almost a passion in our peasantry. I’ve noticed it more than once in them, our peasants are tramps before everything.”

“Then Makar is a tramp according to you?” Tatyana Pavlovna caught him up.

“Oh, I did not mean that, I used the word in a general sense. Well yes, a religious tramp, though he is a holy man, yet he is a tramp. In a good respectful sense, but a tramp. . . . I speak from the medical point of view. . . .”

“I assure you,” I addressed the doctor suddenly: “that you and I and all the rest here are more like tramps than this old man from whom you and I ought to learn, too, because he has a firm footing in life, while we all of us have no firm standpoint at all. . . . But how should you understand that, though!”

I spoke very cuttingly, it seemed, but I had come in feeling upset. I don’t know why I went on sitting there, and felt as though I were beside myself.

“What are you saying?” said Tatyana Pavlovna, looking at me suspiciously. “How did you find him, Makar Ivanovitch?” she asked, pointing her finger at me.

“God bless him, he’s a sharp one,” said the old man, with a serious air, but at the words “sharp one” almost every one laughed. I controlled myself somehow; the doctor laughed more than anyone. It was rather unlucky that I did not know at the time of a previous compact between them. Versilov, the doctor, and Tatyana Pavlovna had agreed three days before to do all they could to distract mother from brooding and apprehension on account of Makar Ivanovitch, whose illness was far more dangerous and hopeless than I had any suspicion of then. That’s why they were all making jokes, and

trying to laugh. Only the doctor was stupid, and did not know how to make jokes naturally: that was the cause of all that followed. If I had known of their agreement at that time, I should not have done what I did. Liza knew nothing either.

I sat listening with half my mind; they talked and laughed and all the time my head was full of Darya Onisimovna, and her news, and I could not shake off the thought of her; I kept picturing how she had sat and looked, and had cautiously got up, and peeped into the next room. At last they all suddenly laughed. Tatyana Pavlovna, I don't in the least know why, called the doctor an infidel: "Why, all you doctors are infidels!"

"Makar Ivanovitch!" said the doctor, very stupidly pretending to be offended and to be appealing to him as an umpire, "am I an infidel?"

"You an infidel? No you are not an infidel," the old man answered sedately, looking at him instantly. "No, thank God!" he said, shaking his head: "you are a merry-hearted man."

"And if a man's merry-hearted, he's not an infidel?" the doctor observed ironically.

"That's in its own way an idea," observed Versilov; he was not laughing, however.

"It's a great idea," I could not help exclaiming, struck by the thought.

The doctor looked round inquiringly.

"These learned people, these same professors" (probably they had been talking about professors just before), began Makar Ivanovitch, looking down: "at the beginning, ough, I was frightened of them. I was in terror in their presence, for I dreaded an infidel more than anything. I have only one soul, I used to think; what if I lose it, I shan't be able to find another; but, afterwards, I plucked up heart. 'After all,' I thought, 'they are not gods but just the same as we are, men of like passions with ourselves.' And my curiosity was great. 'I shall find out,' I thought, 'what this infidelity is like.' But afterwards even that curiosity passed over."

He paused, though he meant to go on, still with the same gentle sedate smile. There are simple souls who put complete trust in every, one, and have no suspicion of mockery. Such people are always of limited intelligence, for they are always ready to display all that is precious in their hearts to every newcomer. But in Makar Ivanovitch I fancied there was something else, and the impulse that led him to speak was different, and not only the innocence of simplicity: one caught glimpses as it were of the

missionary in him. I even caught, with pleasure, some sly glances he bent upon the doctor, and even perhaps on Versilov. The conversation was evidently a continuation of a previous discussion between them the week before, but unluckily the fatal phrase which had so electrified me the day before cropped up in it again, and led me to an outburst which I regret to this day.

"I am afraid of the unbeliever, even now perhaps," the old man went on with concentrated intensity; "only, friend Alexandr Semyonovitch, I tell you what, I've never met an infidel, but I have met worldly men; that's what one must call them. They are of all sorts, big and little, ignorant and learned, and even some of the humblest class, but it's all vanity. They read and argue all their lives, filling themselves with the sweetness of books, while they remain in perplexity and can come to no conclusion. Some quite let themselves go, and give up taking notice of themselves. Some grow harder than a stone and their hearts are full of wandering dreams; others become heartless and frivolous, and all they can do is to mock and jeer. Another will, out of books, gather some flowers, and those according to his own fancy; but he still is full of vanity, and there is no decision in him. And then again: there is a great deal of dreariness. The small man is in want, he has no bread and naught to keep his babes alive with, he sleeps on rough straw, and all the time his heart is light and merry; he is coarse and sinful, yet his heart is light. But the great man drinks too much, and eats too much, and sits on a pile of gold, yet there is nothing in his heart but gloom. Some have been through all the sciences, and are still depressed, and I fancy that the more intellect a man has, the greater his dreariness. And then again: they have been teaching ever since the world began, and to what good purpose have they taught, that the world might be fairer and merrier, and the abode of every sort of joy? And another thing I must tell you: they have no seemliness, they don't even want it at all; all are ruined, but they boast of their own destruction; but to return to the one Truth, they never think; and to live without God is naught but torment. And it seems that we curse that whereby we are enlightened and know it not ourselves: and what's the sense of it? It's impossible to be a man and not bow down to something; such a man could not bear the burden of himself, nor could there be such a man. If he rejects God, then he bows down to an idol — fashioned of wood, or of gold, or of thought. They are all idolaters and not infidels, that is how we ought to describe them — though we can't say there are no infidels. There

are men who are downright infidels, only they are far more terrible than those others, for they come with God's name on their lips. I have heard of them more than once, but I have not met them at all. There are such, friend, and I fancy, too, that there are bound to be."

"There are, Makar Ivanovitch," Versilov agreed suddenly: "there are such, 'and there are bound to be.'"

"There certainly are, and 'there are certainly bound to be,'" I burst out hotly, and impulsively, I don't know why; but I was carried away by Versilov's tone, and fascinated by a sort of idea in the words "there are bound to be." The conversation was an absolute surprise to me. But at that minute something happened also quite unexpected.

4

It was a very bright day; by the doctor's orders Makar Ivanovitch's blind was as a rule not drawn up all day; but there was a curtain over the window now, instead of the blind, so that the upper part of the window was not covered; this was because the old man was miserable at not seeing the sun at all when he had the blind, and as we were sitting there the sun's rays fell suddenly full upon Makar Ivanovitch's face. At first, absorbed in conversation, he took no notice of it, but mechanically as he talked he several times turned his head on one side, because the bright sunlight hurt and irritated his bad eyes. Mother, standing beside him, glanced several times uneasily towards the window; all that was wanted was to screen the window completely with something, but to avoid interrupting the conversation she thought it better to try and move the bench on which Makar Ivanovitch was sitting a little to the right. It did not need to be moved more than six or at the most eight inches. She had bent down several times and taken hold of the bench, but could not move it; the bench with Makar Ivanovitch sitting on it would not move. Feeling her efforts unconsciously, in the heat of conversation, Makar Ivanovitch several times tried to get up, but his legs would not obey him. But mother went on straining all her strength to move it, and at last all this exasperated Liza horribly. I noticed several angry irritated looks from her, but for the first moment I did not know to what to ascribe them, besides I was carried away by the conversation. And I suddenly heard her almost shout sharply to Makar Ivanovitch:

“Do get up, if it’s ever so little: you see how hard it is for mother.”

The old man looked at her quickly, instantly grasped her meaning, and hurriedly tried to stand up, but without success; he raised himself a couple of inches and fell back on the bench.

“I can’t, my dearie,” he answered plaintively, looking, as it were, meekly at Liza.

“You can talk by the hour together, but you haven’t the strength to stir an inch!”

“Liza!” cried Tatyana Pavlovna. Makar Ivanovitch made another great effort.

“Take your crutches, they are lying beside you; you can get up with your crutches!” Liza snapped out again.

“To be sure,” said the old man, and he made haste to pick up his crutches.

“He must be lifted!” said Versilov, standing up; the doctor, too, moved, and Tatyana Pavlovna ran up, but before they had time to reach him Makar Ivanovitch, leaning on the crutches, with a tremendous effort, suddenly raised himself and stood up, looking round with a triumphant air.

“There, I have got up!” he said almost with pride, laughing gleefully; “thank you, my dear, you have taught me a lesson, and I thought that my poor legs would not obey me at all. . . .”

But he did not remain standing long; he had hardly finished speaking, when his crutch, on which he was leaning with the whole weight of his body, somehow slipped on the rug, and as his “poor legs” were scarcely any support at all, he fell heavily full length on the floor. I remember it was almost horrible to see. All cried out, and rushed to lift him up, but, thank God, he had broken no bones; he had only knocked his knees with a heavy thud against the floor, but he had succeeded in putting out his right hand and breaking his fall with it. He was picked up and seated on the bed. He was very pale, not from fright, but from the shock. (The doctor had told them that he was suffering more from disease of the heart than anything.) Mother was beside herself with fright, and still pale, trembling all over and still a little bewildered, Makar Ivanovitch turned suddenly to Liza, and almost tenderly, in a soft voice, said to her:

“No, my dearie, my legs really won’t hold me!”

I cannot express what an impression this made on me, at the time. There was not the faintest note of complaint or reproach in the poor old man’s

words; on the contrary, it was perfectly evident that he had not noticed anything spiteful in Liza's words, and had accepted her shout as something quite befitting, that is, that it was quite right to pitch into him for his remissness. All this had a very great effect on Liza too. At the moment when he fell she had rushed forward, like all the rest of us, and stood numb with horror, and miserable, of course, at having caused it all; hearing his words, she almost instantly flushed crimson with shame and remorse.

"That's enough!" Tatyana Pavlovna commanded suddenly: "this comes of talking too much! It's time we were off; it's a bad look-out when the doctor himself begins to chatter!"

"Quite so," assented Alexandr Semyonovitch who was occupied with the invalid. "I'm to blame, Tatyana Pavlovna; he needs rest."

But Tatyana Pavlovna did not hear him: she had been for half a minute watching Liza intently.

"Come here, Liza, and kiss me, that is if you care to kiss an old fool like me," she said unexpectedly.

And she kissed the girl, I don't know why, but it seemed exactly the right thing to do; so that I almost rushed to kiss Tatyana Pavlovna myself. What was fitting was not to overwhelm Liza with reproach, but to welcome with joy and congratulation the new feeling that must certainly have sprung up in her. But instead of all those feelings, I suddenly stood up and rapped out resolutely:

"Makar Ivanovitch, you used again the word 'seemliness,' and I have been worrying about that word yesterday, and all these days . . . in fact, all my life I have been worrying about it, only I didn't know what it was. This coincidence I look upon as momentous, almost miraculous. . . . I say this in your presence . . ."

But I was instantly checked. I repeat I did not know their compact about mother and Makar Ivanovitch; they considered me, of course judging from my doings in the past, capable of making a scene of any sort.

"Stop him, stop him!" cried Tatyana Pavlovna, utterly infuriated. Mother began trembling. Makar Ivanovitch, seeing the general alarm, was alarmed too.

"Arkady, hush!" Versilov cried sternly.

"For me, my friends," I said raising my voice: "to see you all beside this babe (I indicated Makar) is unseemly; there is only one saint here — and that is mother, and even she . . ."

“You are alarming him,” the doctor said emphatically.

“I know I am the enemy to every one in the world” (or something of the sort), I began faltering, but looking round once more, I glared defiantly at Versilov.

“Arkady,” he cried again, “just such a scene has happened once here already between us. I entreat you, restrain yourself now!”

I cannot describe the intense feeling with which he said this. A deep sadness, sincere and complete, was manifest in his face. What was most surprising was that he looked as though he were guilty; as though I were the judge, and he were the criminal. This was the last straw for me.

“Yes,” I shouted to him in reply: “just such a scene we had before, when I buried Versilov, and tore him out of my heart . . . but then there followed a resurrection from the dead . . . but now . . . now there will be no rising again! But . . . but all of you here shall see what I am capable of: you have no idea what I can show you!”

Saying this, I rushed into my room. Versilov ran after me.

5

I had a relapse; I had a violent attack of fever, and by nightfall was delirious. But I was not all the time in delirium; I had innumerable dreams, shapeless and following one another, in endless succession. One such dream or fragment of a dream I shall remember as long as I live. I will describe it without attempting to explain it; it was prophetic and I cannot leave it out.

I suddenly found myself with my heart full of a grand and proud design, in a large lofty room; I remember the room very well, it was not at Tatyana Pavlovna’s, I may observe, anticipating events. But although I was alone, I felt continually with uneasiness and discomfort that I was not alone at all, that I was awaited, and that something was being expected of me. Somewhere outside the door people were sitting and waiting for what I was going to do. The sensation was unendurable “Oh, if I could only be alone!” And suddenly SHE walked in. She looked at me timidly, she was very much afraid, she looked into my eyes. IN MY HAND I HAD THE LETTER. She smiled to fascinate me, she fawned upon me; I was sorry, but I began to feel repulsion. Suddenly she hid her face in her hands. I flung the letter on the table with unutterable disdain, as much as to say,

“You needn’t beg, take it, I want nothing of you! I revenge myself for all your insults by contempt.” I went out of the room, choking with immense pride. But at the door Lambert clutched me in the darkness! “Fool, fool!” he whispered, holding me by the arm with all his might, “she will have to open a high- class boarding-house for wenches in Vassilyevsky Island.” (N.B. — to get her living, if her father, hearing of the letter from me, were to deprive her of her inheritance, and drive her out of the house. I quote what Lambert said, word for word, as I dreamed it.)

“Arkady Makarovitch is in quest of ‘seemliness,’” I heard the low voice of Anna Andreyevna, somewhere close by on the stairs; but there was a note, not of approval, but of insufferable mockery in her words. I returned to the room with Lambert. But, seeing Lambert, SHE began to laugh. My first impression was one of horrible dismay, such dismay that I stopped short and would not go up to her. I stared at her, and could not believe my eyes, as though she had just thrown off a mask: the features were the same, but each feature seemed distorted by an insolence that was beyond all bounds. “The ransom, the ransom, madam!” cried Lambert, and both laughed louder than ever, while my heart went cold. “Oh, can that shameless creature be the woman one glance from whom set my heart glowing with virtue!”

“You see what these proud creatures in their good society are ready to do for money!” cried Lambert. But the shameless creature was not even abashed by that; she laughed at my being so horrified. Oh, she was ready to pay the ransom, that I saw, and . . . and what came over me? I no longer felt pity or disgust; I was thrilled as I had never been before. . . . I was overwhelmed by a new and indescribable feeling, such as I had never known before, and strong as life itself. . . . I could not have gone away now for anything on earth! Oh, how it pleased me that it was so shameful! I clutched her hands; the touch of her hands sent an agonizing thrill through me, and I put my lips to her insolent crimson lips, that invited me, quivering with laughter.

Oh, away with that vile memory? Accursed dream! I swear that until that loathsome dream nothing like that shameful idea had ever been in my mind. There had never been even an unconscious dream of the sort (though I had kept the “letter” sewn up in my pocket, and I sometimes gripped my pocket with a strange smile). How was it all this came to me so complete? It was because I had the soul of a spider! It shows that all this had long ago

been hatching in my corrupt heart, and lay latent in my desires, but my waking heart was still ashamed, and my mind dared not consciously picture anything of the sort. But in sleep the soul presented and laid bare all that was hidden in the heart, with the utmost accuracy, in a complete picture and in prophetic form. And was THAT what I had threatened to SHOW them, when I had run out of Makar Ivanovitch's room that morning? But enough: for the time no more of this! That dream is one of the strangest things that has happened in my life.

CHAPTER III

1

Three days later I got up from my bed, and as soon as I was on my legs I felt that I should not go back to it again. I felt all over that convalescence was at hand. All these little details perhaps would not be worth writing, but then several days followed which were not remarkable for anything special that happened, and yet have remained in my memory as something soothing and consolatory, and that is rare in my reminiscences. I will not for the time attempt to define my spiritual condition; if I were to give an account of it the reader would scarcely believe in it. It will be better for it to be made clear by facts themselves. And so I will only say one thing: let the reader remember the SOUL OF THE SPIDER; and that in the man who longed to get away from them all, and from the whole world for the sake of "seemliness!" The longing for "seemliness" was still there, of course, and very intense, but how it could be linked with other longings of a very different sort is a mystery to me. It always has been a mystery, and I have marvelled a thousand times at that faculty in man (and in the Russian, I believe, more especially) of cherishing in his soul his loftiest ideal side by side with the most abject baseness, and all quite sincerely. Whether this is breadth in the Russian which takes him so far or simply baseness — that is the question!

But enough of that. However that may be, a time of calm followed. All I knew was that I must get well at all costs and as quickly as possible that I might as soon as possible begin to act, and so I resolved to live hygienically and to obey the doctor (whoever he might be), disturbing projects I put off with great good sense (the fruit of this same breadth) to the day of my escape, that is, to the day of my complete recovery. How all the peaceful impressions and sensations in that time of stillness were consistent with the painfully sweet and agitated throbbings of my heart when I dreamed of violent decisions I do not know, but again I put it all down to "breadth." But there was no trace now of the restlessness I had suffered from of late. I put it all off for the time, and did not tremble at the thought of the future as I had so recently, but looked forward to it, like a wealthy man relying on his power and his resources. I felt more and more proud and defiant of the fate

awaiting me, and this was partly due, I imagine, to my actual return to health, and the rapid recovery of my vital forces. Those few days of final and complete recovery I recall even now with great pleasure.

Oh, they forgave me everything, that is my outburst, and these were the people whom I had called “unseemly” to their faces! That I love in people; that is what I call intelligence of the heart; anyway, this attracted me at once, to a certain degree, of course. Versilov and I, for instance, talked together like the best of friends, but only to a certain point: if at times we became ever so little too expansive (and we were over-expansive at times) we pulled ourselves up at once as though a trifle ashamed of something. There are cases when the victor cannot help feeling abashed before the vanquished, and just because he has gained the upper hand over him. I was evidently the victor; and I was ashamed.

That morning, that is the one on which I got up again after my relapse, he came in to see me, and then I learned from him for the first time of their compact in regard to mother and Makar Ivanovitch. He added that though the old man was better, the doctor would not answer for the future. I promised him with my whole heart that I would be more careful of my behaviour in the future. While Versilov was telling me all this I detected for the first time that he was most genuinely concerned about the old man, far more, indeed, than I could have expected from a man like him: and that he looked upon him as a being for some reason particularly precious to himself, not simply for mother’s sake. This at once interested me and almost surprised me, and I must confess if it had not been for Versilov I should have overlooked and failed to appreciate a great deal in this old man, who has left one of the most lasting and original impressions on my mind.

Versilov seemed to be afraid of my attitude to Makar Ivanovitch, that is he distrusted my intelligence and my tact, and he was therefore particularly pleased afterwards when he discerned that I knew how to behave with a man of quite different ideas and conceptions, could, in fact, be broad-minded and make allowances. I must confess, too (and I don’t think it’s humiliating to do so), that in this man of the people I found something absolutely new to me in regard to certain feelings and conceptions, something I had known nothing of, something far more serene and consolatory than my own previous ideas on those subjects. It was none the less impossible sometimes to keep from being impatient at some positive superstitions in which he believed with the most revolting placidity and

steadfastness. But this, of course, was only due to his lack of education; his soul was rather happily constructed, so much so that I have never met a man superior in that respect.

2

What attracted one first of all, as I have observed already, was his extraordinary pure-heartedness and his freedom from amour- propre; one felt instinctively that he had an almost sinless heart. He had "gaiety" of heart, and therefore "seemliness." The word "gaiety" he was very fond of and often used. He sometimes showed an almost abnormal exaltation, an almost abnormal fervour, partly, I imagine, because the fever never really left him; but that did not mar his beautiful serenity. There were contrasts in him, too: side by side with his marvellous simplicity (at times, to my vexation, he completely failed to detect irony) there was a sort of sly subtlety, most frequently apparent in controversy. And he was fond of controversy, though at times only through caprice. It was evident that he had been on foot over a great part of Russia, had heard a great deal; but I repeat, what he liked best of all was religious emotion, and therefore everything that led up to it, and he was fond of telling incidents that moved one to tenderness and reverence.

He was fond of telling stories in general. I listened to many tales from him of his own wanderings and various legends of the lives of the "ascetics" of ancient times. I'm not familiar with these stories, but I believe that he told them all wrong, adapting them for the most part from the traditions current among the peasantry. It was simply impossible to accept some of his versions. But together with evident distortions or even inventions there were continual flashes of something wonderfully complete, full of peasant feeling, and always touching. . . . I recall, for instance, one long story out of the life of "Marya of Egypt." Of this "life" and of all such "lives" I had had no idea at all till then. I frankly confess that it was almost impossible to hear the story without tears, not from tender feeling, but from a sort of strange ecstasy. One felt something strange and burning like the parched sandy desert upon which the holy woman wandered among lions. I don't want to talk of this though, and, indeed, I am not competent to do so.

Apart from the tender feeling of his stories I particularly liked certain extremely original views on disputed questions of modern life. He told me

once, for instance, of something that had happened recently with a retired soldier; he had almost witnessed the incident. A soldier had come home to his village from serving in the army and did not like going back to live with peasants, the peasants did not like him either. The man went wrong, took to drinking, and robbed some one. There was no strong evidence against him, but he was taken up and tried. The lawyer was defending him successfully — there was no proof against him, but suddenly, after listening a long time, the prisoner suddenly stood up and interrupted him. "No, you stop," said be, and then he told the whole story "to the tiniest grain of dust"; he confessed his full guilt with tears and penitence. The jury went out, were shut up to confer, and suddenly they all came back. "No, not guilty!" Every one shouted, and rejoiced, and the soldier stood rooted to the spot; he seemed turned into a post, and couldn't make head or tail of it; he didn't understand a word of the judge's exhortation to him when he dismissed him. The soldier came out to freedom and still couldn't believe it. He began to fret, sank into brooding, gave up eating and drinking, spoke to no one, and on the fifth day he took and hanged himself. "That's what it is to live with sin on the soul," said Makar Ivanovitch in conclusion. Of course that's a foolish story, and there are masses of such stories nowadays in all the newspapers, but I liked his tone, and most of all some phrases of quite a new significance. Describing, for instance, how the soldier was disliked by the peasants when he went back to the village, Makar Ivanovitch used the expression, "And we know what a soldier is: a soldier's a peasant spoilt." Speaking afterwards of the lawyer who had almost won the case, he said: "We know what a lawyer is: a lawyer's a conscience for hire." Both these expressions he brought out without effort and almost without noticing them, and yet those two utterances revealed a complete and special attitude of mind on those subjects, not borrowed but peculiar to Makar Ivanovitch if not to the whole peasantry. These judgments among the peasants in regard to certain subjects are sometimes really marvellous in their originality.

"And how do you look upon the sin of suicide, Makar Ivanovitch?" I asked him, apropos of the same story.

"Suicide is the greatest human sin," he answered with a sigh, "but God alone is judge of it, for He alone knows all, every limit, every measure. We must pray without ceasing for such sinners. Whenever you hear of such a sin pray fervently at bedtime for the sinner; if only you breathe a sigh for

him to God, even though you don't know his name — the more acceptable will be your prayer for him."

"But will my prayer be any help to him if he is condemned already?"

"How can you tell? There are many, ah, many without faith who thereby confound those of little knowledge. Heed them not, for they know not what foolishness they are speaking. The prayer of the living for the condemned may still, in truth, benefit him. So what a plight for him who has no one to pray for him. Therefore, at your evening prayer say also at the end: 'Lord Jesus, have mercy on all those also who have none to pray for them.' Very acceptable and pleasant will be this prayer. Also for all living sinners —'Lord, who holdest all destinies in Thy hand, save all sinners that repent not! — that, too, is a good prayer."

I promised him I would pray, feeling that I was giving him immense pleasure by this promise. And his face did, in fact, beam with joy; but I hasten to add that in such cases he did not take up a superior attitude to me, as a monk speaking to a raw youth; on the contrary, he very often liked listening to me. He was never weary in fact of hearing me talk on various subjects, realizing that though a "youth" I was immeasurably superior to him in education. He was very fond, for instance, of talking of the life of hermits in the desert, and thought of the "desert" as something far above "pilgrimage." I hotly opposed him, laying stress on the egoism of these people, who had abandoned the world and all the services they might have rendered mankind, simply with the egoistic idea of their own salvation. At first he didn't quite understand; I suspect, indeed, he didn't understand at all, but he zealously defended the "desert." "At first, of course, one grieves (that is when first one goes to dwell in the desert), but then each day one is more glad at heart, and at last one looks upon the face of God."

Then I drew a picture to him of the useful activity in the world of the man of science, the doctor, or any friend of humanity, and roused him to real enthusiasm, for I spoke with warmth; he kept eagerly assenting to my words, "That's so, dear, that's so! God bless you, your thoughts are true."

But when I had finished he did not seem to agree entirely.

"To be sure, to be sure," he sighed deeply, "but are there many who hold fast and are not led astray? Though money be not their God, yet it is a demi-god — a great temptation, and then there's the female sex, and then doubt and envy. And so they will forget their great work, and will be absorbed in little things. But in the desert a man strengthens himself for

every great deed. My dear, what is there in the world?" he exclaimed with intense feeling. "But is it only a dream? Take a grain of sand and sow it on a stone; when that yellow grain of sand of yours on the stone springs up, then your dream will come true in the world. That's a saying of ours. Very different from Christ's 'Go and give all that thou hast to the poor and become the servant of all.' Then thou wilt be a thousandfold richer than ever before; for not by bread alone, not by rich garments, not by pride, not by envy, wilt thou be happy, but by love multiplied immeasurably. Not a little riches, not a hundred-thousand, not a million, but the whole world wilt thou gain! Now we gather and have not enough and squander senselessly, but then there will be no orphans nor beggars, for all will be my people, all will be akin. I have gained all, I have bought all, every one! Now it is no uncommon thing for the rich and powerful to care nothing for the length of their days, and to be at a loss to invent a pastime; then thy days and thy hours will be multiplied a thousandfold, for thou wilt grudge the loss of a single minute, and wilt rejoice in every minute in gaiety of heart. Then thou wilt attain wisdom, not from books alone, but wilt be face to face with God Himself; and the earth will shine more brightly than the sun, and there shall be no more sorrow nor sighing, nothing but one priceless Paradise. . . ."

It was these enthusiastic outbursts that I believe Versilov liked particularly. He was in the room on this occasion.

"Makar Ivanovitch," I interrupted suddenly, feeling immensely stirred myself (I remember that evening), "why, it's communism, absolute communism, you're preaching!"

And as he knew absolutely nothing of the doctrine of communism, and heard the word indeed for the first time, I began at once expounding to him all I knew on the subject. I must confess my knowledge was scanty and confused, even now, in fact, it is not very ample. But in spite of that I discoursed with great heat on what I did know. To this day I recall with pleasure the extraordinary impression I made on the old man. It was more than an impression. It was really an overwhelming effect. He was passionately interested, too, in the historical details, asking, "Where? How? Who arranged it? Who said so?" I have noticed, by the way, that that is characteristic of the Russian peasant. If he is much interested he is not content with general ideas, but insists on having the most solid and exact facts. It was just for such details that I was at a loss, and as Versilov was present I felt ashamed of my incompetence, and that made me hotter

than ever. In the end Makar Ivanovitch could do nothing but repeat with emotion, “Yes: yes!” though he had evidently lost the thread and did not understand. I felt vexed, but Versilov interrupted the conversation and said it was bedtime. We were all in the room and it was late. But when he peeped into my room a few minutes later I asked him at once what he thought of Makar Ivanovitch, and what was his opinion of him? Versilov laughed gaily (but not at my mistakes about communism — he did not mention them in fact). I repeat again, he seemed absolutely devoted to Makar Ivanovitch, and I often caught a very attractive smile on his face when he was listening to the old man. At the same time this smile did not prevent his criticising him.

“Makar Ivanovitch is above all not a peasant but a house-serf,” he pronounced with great readiness, “who has been a servant, born a servant, and of servants. The house-serfs and servants used to share a very great deal in the interests of their masters’ private, spiritual, and intellectual life in the past. Note that to this day Makar Ivanovitch is most interested in the life of the gentry and upper class. You don’t know yet how much interest he takes in recent events in Russia. Do you know that he is a great politician? Don’t feed him on honey, but tell him where anyone is fighting and whether we are going to fight. In old days I used to delight him by such accounts. He has the greatest respect for science, and of all sciences is fondest of astronomy. At the same time he has worked out for himself something so independent that nothing you could do would shake it. He has convictions, firm, fairly clear . . . and genuine. Though he’s so absolutely uneducated he is often able to astound one by his surprising knowledge of certain ideas which one would never have expected to find in him. He extols the ‘desert’ with enthusiasm, but nothing would induce him to retire to the desert or enter a monastery, because he is above all things a ‘tramp,’ as he was so charmingly called by Alexandr Semyonovitch (and by the way there’s no need for you to be angry with him). Well, and what more? He’s something of an artist, many of his sayings are his own, though some are not. He’s somewhat halting in his logic, and at times too abstract; he has moods of sentimentality, but of a thoroughly peasant kind, or rather moods of that tenderness universally found among peasants, which the people introduce so freely into their religious feelings. As for his purity of heart and freedom from malice, I won’t discuss them; it’s not for you and me to begin upon that. . . .”

3

To complete my picture of Makar Ivanovitch I'll repeat some of his stories, choosing those taken from private life. These stories were of a strange character. It was impossible to extract any sort of moral or general tendency from them, except perhaps that they were all more or less touching. There were some, however, which were not touching, some, in fact, were quite gay, others even made fun of certain foolish monks, so that he actually discredited his own convictions by telling them. I pointed this out to him, but he did not understand what I meant. Sometimes it was difficult to imagine what induced him to tell the story, so that at times I wondered at his talkativeness and put it down to the loquacity of old age and his feverish condition.

"He is not what he used to be," Versilov whispered to me once, "he was not quite like this in the old days. He will soon die, much sooner than we expect, and we must be prepared."

I have forgotten to say that we had begun to have something like "evenings." Besides my mother, who never left him, Versilov was in his little room every evening; I came too — and indeed I had nowhere else to go. Of late Liza, too, had always been present, though she came a little later than the rest of us, and always sat in silence. Tatyana Pavlovna came too, and, though more rarely, the doctor. Somehow I suddenly began to get on with the doctor, and though we were never very friendly there were no further scenes between us. I liked a sort of simple-mindedness which I detected in him, and the attachment he showed to our family, so that I made up my mind at last to forgive him his professional superciliousness, and, moreover, I taught him to wash his hands and clean his nails, even if he couldn't put on clean linen. I explained to him bluntly that this was not a sign of foppishness or of elegant artificiality, but that cleanliness is a natural element of the trade of a doctor, and I proved it to him. Finally, Lukerya often came out of the kitchen and stood at the door listening to Makar Ivanovitch's stories. Versilov once called her in from the door, and asked her to sit down with us. I liked his doing this, but from that time she gave up coming to the door. Her sense of the fitting!

I quote one of his stories, selecting it simply because I remember it more completely. It is a story about a merchant, and I imagine that such incidents occur by thousands in our cities and country towns, if only one knew how

to look for them. The reader may prefer to skip the story, especially as I quote it in the old man's words.

4

I'll tell you now of a wonderful thing that happened in our town, Afimyevsk. There was a merchant living there, his name was Skotoboynikov, Maxim Ivanovitch, and there was no one richer than he in all the countryside. He built a cotton factory, and he kept some hundreds of hands, and he exalted himself exceedingly. And everything, one may say, was at his beck and call, and even those in authority hindered him in nothing, and the archimandrite thanked him for his zeal: he gave freely of his substance to the monastery, and when the fit came upon him he sighed and groaned over his soul and was troubled not a little over the life to come. A widower he was and childless; of his wife there were tales that he had beaten her from the first year of their marriage, and that from his youth up he had been apt to be too free with his hands. Only all that had happened long ago; he had no desire to enter into the bonds of another marriage. He had a weakness for strong drink, too, and when the time came he would run drunk about the town, naked and shouting; the town was of little account and was full of iniquity. And when the time was ended he was moved to anger, and all that he thought fit was good, and all he bade them do was right. He paid his people according to his pleasure, he brings out his reckoning beads, puts on his spectacles: "How much for you, Foma?" "I've had nothing since Christmas, Maxim Ivanovitch; thirty-nine roubles is my due." "Ough! what a sum of money! That's too much for you! It's more than you're worth altogether; it would not be fitting for you; ten roubles off the beads and you take twenty-nine." And the man says nothing; no one dares open his lips; all are dumb before him.

"I know how much I ought to give him," he says. "It's the only way to deal with the folk here. The folk here are corrupt. But for me they would have perished of hunger, all that are here. The folk here are thieves again. They covet all that they behold, there is no courage in them. They are drunkards too; if you pay a man his money he'll take it to the tavern and will sit in the tavern till he's naked — not a thread on him, he will come out as bare as your hand. They are mean wretches. A man will sit on a stone facing the tavern and begin wailing: 'Oh mother, my dear mother, why did

you bring me into the world a hopeless drunkard? Better you had strangled me at birth, a hopeless drunkard like me!' Can you call that a man? That's a beast, not a man. One must first teach him better, and then give him money. I know when to give it him."

That's how Maxim Ivanovitch used to talk of the folk of Afimyevsk. Though he spoke evil of them, yet it was the truth. The folk were froward and unstable.

There lived in the same town another merchant, and he died. He was a young man and light-minded. He came to ruin and lost all his fortune. For the last year he struggled like a fish on the sand, and his life drew near its end. He was on bad terms with Maxim Ivanovitch all the time, and was heavily in debt to him. And he left behind a widow, still young, and five children. And for a young widow to be left alone without a husband, like a swallow without a refuge, is a great ordeal, to say nothing of five little children, and nothing to give them to eat. Their last possession, a wooden house, Maxim Ivanovitch had taken for a debt. She set them all in a row at the church porch, the eldest a boy of seven, and the others all girls, one smaller than another, the biggest of them four, and the youngest babe at the breast. When Mass was over Maxim Ivanovitch came out of church, and all the little ones, all in a row, knelt down before him — she had told them to do this beforehand — and they clasped their little hands before them, and she behind them, with the fifth child in her arms, bowed down to the earth before him in the sight of all the congregation: "Maxim Ivanovitch, have mercy on the orphans! Do not take away their last crust! Do not drive them out of their home!" And all who were present were moved to tears, so well had she taught them. She thought that he would be proud before the people and would forgive the debt, and give back the house to the orphans. But it did not fall out so. Maxim Ivanovitch stood still. "You're a young widow," said he, "you want a husband, you are not weeping over your orphans. Your husband cursed me on his deathbed." And he passed by and did not give up the house. "Why follow their foolishness (that is, connive at it)? If I show her benevolence they'll abuse me more than ever. All that nonsense will be revived and the slander will only be confirmed."

For there was a story that ten years before he had sent to that widow before she was married, and had offered her a great sum of money (she was very beautiful), forgetting that that sin is no less than defiling the temple of God. But he did not succeed then in his evil design. Of such abominations

he had committed not a few, both in the town and all over the province, and indeed had gone beyond all bounds in such doings.

The mother wailed with her nurselings. He turned the orphans out of the house, and not from spite only, for, indeed, a man sometimes does not know himself what drives him to carry out his will. Well, people helped her at first and then she went out to work for hire. But there was little to be earned, save at the factory; she scrubs floors, weeds in the garden, heats the bath-house, and she carries the babe in her arms, and the other four run about the streets in their little shirts. When she made them kneel down at the church porch they still had little shoes, and little jackets of a sort, for they were merchant's children but now they began to run barefoot. A child soon gets through its little clothes we know. Well, the children didn't care: so long as there was sunshine they rejoiced, like birds, did not feel their ruin, and their voices were like little bells. The widow thought "the winter will come and what shall I do with you then? If God would only take you to Him before then!" But she had not to wait for the winter. About our parts the children have a cough, the whooping-cough, which goes from one to the other. First of all the baby died, and after her the others fell ill, and all four little girls she buried that autumn one after the other; one of them, it's true, was trampled by the horses in the street. And what do you think? She buried them and she wailed. Though she had cursed them, yet when God took them she was sorry. A mother's heart!

All she had left was the eldest, the boy, and she hung over him trembling. He was weak and tender, with a pretty little face like a girl's, and she took him to the factory to the foreman who was his godfather, and she herself took a place as nurse.

But one day the boy was running in the yard, and Maxim Ivanovitch suddenly drove up with a pair of horses, and he had just been drinking; and the boy came rushing down the steps straight at him, and slipped and stumbled right against him as he was getting out of the droshky, and hit him with both hands in the stomach. He seized the boy by the hair and yelled, "Whose boy is it? A birch! Thrash him before me, this minute." The boy was half-dead with fright. They began thrashing him; he screamed. "So you scream, too, do you? Thrash him till he leaves off screaming." Whether they thrashed him hard or not, he didn't give up screaming till he fainted altogether. Then they left off thrashing him, they were frightened. The boy lay senseless, hardly breathing. They did say afterwards they had

not beaten him much, but the boy was terrified. Maxim Ivanovitch was frightened! "Whose boy is he?" he asked. When they told him, "Upon my word! Take him to his mother. Why is he hanging about the factory here?" For two days afterwards he said nothing. Then he asked again: "How's the boy?" And it had gone hard with the boy. He had fallen ill, and lay in the corner at his mother's, and she had given up her job to look after him, and inflammation of the lungs had set in.

"Upon my word!" said Maxim Ivanovitch, "and for so little. It's not as though he were badly beaten. They only gave him a bit of a fright. I've given all the others just as sound a thrashing and never had this nonsense." He expected the mother to come and complain, and in his pride he said nothing. As though that were likely! The mother didn't dare to complain. And then he sent her fifteen roubles from himself, and a doctor; and not because he was afraid, but because he thought better of it. And then soon his time came and he drank for three weeks.

Winter passed, and at the Holy Ascension of Our Lord, Maxim Ivanovitch asks again: "And how's that same boy?" And all the winter he'd been silent and not asked. And they told him, "He's better and living with his mother, and she goes out by the day." And Maxim Ivanovitch went that day to the widow. He didn't go into the house, but called her out to the gate while he sat in his droshky. "See now, honest widow," says he. "I want to be a real benefactor to your son, and to show him the utmost favour. I will take him from here into my house. And if the boy pleases me I'll settle a decent fortune on him; and if I'm completely satisfied with him I may at my death make him the heir of my whole property as though he were my own son, on condition, however, that you do not come to the house except on great holidays. If this suits you, bring the boy to-morrow morning, he can't always be playing knuckle-bones." And saying this, he drove away, leaving the mother dazed. People had overheard and said to her, "When the boy grows up he'll reproach you himself for having deprived him of such good fortune." In the night she cried over him, but in the morning she took the child. And the lad was more dead than alive.

Maxim Ivanovitch dressed him like a little gentleman, and hired a teacher for him, and sat him at his book from that hour forward; and it came to his never leaving him out of his sight, always keeping him with him. The boy could scarcely begin to yawn before he'd shout at him, "Mind your book! Study! I want to make a man of you." And the boy was frail; ever

since the time of that beating he'd had a cough. "As though we didn't live well in my house!" said Maxim Ivanovitch, wondering; "at his mother's he used to run barefoot and gnaw crusts; why is he more puny than before?" And the teacher said, "Every boy," says he, "needs to play about, not to be studying all the time; he needs exercise," and he explained it all to him reasonably. Maxim Ivanovitch reflected. "That's true," he said. And that teacher's name was Pyotr Stepanovitch; the Kingdom of Heaven be his! He was almost like a crazy saint, he drank much, too much indeed, and that was the reason he had been turned out of so many places, and he lived in the town on alms one may say, but he was of great intelligence and strong in science. "This is not the place for me," he thought to himself, "I ought to be a professor in the university; here I'm buried in the mud, my very garments loathe me." Maxim Ivanovitch sits and shouts to the child, "Play!" and he scarcely dares to breathe before him. And it came to such a pass that the boy could not hear the sound of his voice without trembling all over. And Maxim Ivanovitch wondered more and more. "He's neither one thing nor the other; I picked him out of the mud, I dressed him in drap de dames with little boots of good material, he has embroidered shirts like a general's son, why has he not grown attached to me? Why is he as dumb as a little wolf?" And though people had long given up being surprised at Maxim Ivanovitch, they began to be surprised at him again — the man was beside himself: he pestered the little child and would never let him alone. "As sure as I'm alive I'll root up his character. His father cursed me on his deathbed after he'd taken the last sacrament. It's his father's character." And yet he didn't once use the birch to him (after that time he was afraid to). He frightened him, that's what he did. He frightened him without a birch.

And something happened. One day, as soon as he'd gone out, the boy left his book and jumped on to a chair. He had thrown his ball on to the top of the sideboard, and now he wanted to get it, and his sleeve caught in a china lamp on the sideboard, the lamp fell to the floor and was smashed to pieces, and the crash was heard all over the house, and it was an expensive thing, made of Saxony china. And Maxim Ivanovitch heard at once, though he was two rooms away, and he yelled. The boy rushed away in terror. He ran out on the verandah, across the garden, and through the back gate on to the river-bank. And there was a boulevard running along the river- bank, there were old willows there, it was a pleasant place. He ran down to the

water, people saw, and clasped his hands at the very place where the ferry-boat comes in, but seemed frightened of the water, and stood as though turned to stone. And it's a broad open space, the river is swift there, and boats pass by; on the other side there are shops, a square, a temple of God, shining with golden domes. And just then Mme. Ferzing, the colonel's wife, came hurrying down to the ferry with her little daughter. The daughter, who was also a child of eight, was wearing a little white frock; she looked at the boy and laughed, and she was carrying a little country basket, and in it a hedgehog. "Look, mother," said she, "how the boy is looking at my hedgehog!" "No," said the lady, "he's frightened of something. What are you afraid of, pretty boy?" (All this was told afterwards.) "And what a pretty boy," she said; "and how nicely he's dressed. Whose boy are you?" she asked. And he'd never seen a hedgehog before, he went up and looked, and forgot everything at once — such is childhood! "What is it you have got there?" he asked. "It's a hedgehog," said the little lady, "we've just bought it from a peasant, he found it in the woods." "What's that," he asked, "what is a hedgehog?" and he began laughing and poking it with his finger, and the hedgehog put up its bristles, and the little girl was delighted with the boy. "We'll take it home with us and tame it," she said. "Ach," said he, "do give me your hedgehog!" And he asked her this so pleadingly, and he'd hardly uttered the words, when Maxim Ivanovitch came running down upon him. "Ah, there you are! Hold him!" (He was in such a rage, that he'd run out of the house after him, without a hat.) Then the boy remembered everything, he screamed, and ran to the water, pressed his little fists against his breast, looked up at the sky (they saw it, they saw it!) and leapt into the water. Well, people cried out, and jumped from the ferry, tried to get him out, but the current carried him away. The river was rapid, and when they got him out, the little thing was dead. His chest was weak, he couldn't stand being in the water, his hold on life was weak. And such a thing had never been known in those parts, a little child like that to take its life! What a sin! And what could such a little soul say to our Lord God in the world beyond?

And Maxim Ivanovitch brooded over it ever after. The man became so changed one would hardly have known him. He sorrowed grievously. He tried drinking, and drank heavily, but gave it up — it was no help. He gave up going to the factory too, he would listen to no one. If anyone spoke to him, he would be silent, or wave his hand. So he spent two months, and

then he began talking to himself. He would walk about talking to himself. Vaskovo, the little village down the hill, caught fire, and nine houses were burnt; Maxim Ivanovitch drove up to look. The peasants whose cottages were burnt came round him wailing; he promised to help them and gave orders, and then he called his steward again and took it back. "There's no need," said he, "don't give them anything," and he never said why. "God has sent me to be a scorn unto all men," said he, "like some monster, and therefore so be it. Like the wind," said he, "has my fame gone abroad." The archimandrite himself came to him. He was a stern man, the head of the community of the monastery. "What are you doing?" he asked sternly.

"I will tell you." And Maxim Ivanovitch opened the Bible and pointed to the passage:

"Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Math. xviii, 6.)

"Yes," said the archimandrite, "though it was not said directly of this, yet it fits it well. It is sad when a man loses his measure — the man is lost. And thou hast exalted thyself."

And Maxim Ivanovitch sits as though a stupor had come upon him. The archimandrite gazed upon him.

"Listen," said he, "and remember. It is said: 'the word of a desperate man flies on the wind.' And remember, also, that even the angels of God are not perfect. But perfect and sinless is one only, our Lord Jesus Christ, and Him the angels serve. Moreover, thou didst not will the death of that child, but wast only without wisdom. But this," said he, "is marvellous in my eyes. Thou hast committed many even worse iniquities. Many men thou hast ruined, many thou hast corrupted, many thou hast destroyed, no less than, if thou hadst slain them. And did not his sisters, all the four babes, die almost before thine eyes? Why has this one only confounded thee? For all these in the past thou hast not grieved, I dare say, but hast even forgotten to think of them. Why art thou so horror-stricken for this child for whom thou wast not greatly to blame?"

"I dream at night," Maxim Ivanovitch said.

"And what?"

But he told nothing more. He sat mute. The archimandrite marvelled, but with that he went away. There was no doing anything with him.

And Maxim Ivanovitch sent for the teacher, for Pyotr Stepanovitch; they had not met since that day.

“You remember him?” says he.

“Yes.”

“You painted a picture with oil colours, here in the tavern,” said he, “and took a copy of the chief priest’s portrait. Could you paint me a picture?”

“I can do anything, I have every talent. I can do everything.”

“Paint me a very big picture, to cover the whole wall, and paint in it first of all the river, and the slope, and the ferry, and all the people who were there, the colonel’s wife, and her daughter and the hedgehog. And paint me the other bank too, so that one can see the church and the square and the shops, and where the cabs stand — paint it all just as it is. And the boy by the ferry, just above the river, at that very place, and paint him with his two little fists pressed to his little breast. Be sure to do that. And open the heavens above the church on the further side, and let all the angels of heaven be flying to meet him. Can you do it or not?”

“I can do anything.”

“I needn’t ask a dauber like you. I might send for the finest painter in Moscow, or even from London itself, but you remember his face. If it’s not like, or little like, I’ll only give you fifty roubles. But if it’s just like, I’ll give you two hundred. You remember his eyes were blue. . . . And it must be made a very, very big picture.”

It was prepared. Pyotr Stepanovitch began painting and then he suddenly went and said:

“No, it can’t be painted like that.”

“Why so?”

“Because that sin, suicide, is the greatest of all sins. And would the angels come to meet him after such a sin?”

“But he was a babe, he was not responsible.”

“No, he was not a babe, he was a youth. He was eight years old when it happened. He was bound to render some account.”

Maxim Ivanovitch was more terror-stricken than ever.

“But I tell you what, I’ve thought something,” said Pyotr Stepanovitch, “we won’t open the heaven, and there’s no need to paint the angels, but I’ll let a beam of light, one bright ray of light, come down from heaven as though to meet him. It’s all the same as long as there’s something.”

So he painted the ray. I saw that picture myself afterwards, and that very ray of light, and the river. It stretched right across the wall, all blue, and the sweet boy was there, both little hands pressed to his breast, and the little lady, and the hedgehog, he put it all in. Only Maxim Ivanovitch showed no one the picture at the time, but locked it up in his room, away from all eyes; and when the people trooped from all over the town to see it, he bade them drive every one away. There was a great talk about it. Pyotr Stepanovitch seemed as though he were beside himself. "I can do anything now," said he. "I've only to set up in St. Petersburg at the court." He was a very polite man, but he liked boasting beyond all measure. And his fate overtook him; when he received the full two hundred roubles, he began drinking at once, and showed his money to every one, bragging of it, and he was murdered at night, when he was drunk, and his money stolen by a workman with whom he was drinking, and it all became known in the morning.

And it all ended so that even now they remember it everywhere there. Maxim Ivanovitch suddenly drives up to the same widow. She lodged at the edge of the town in a working-woman's hut; he stood before her and bowed down to the ground. And she had been ill ever since that time and could scarcely move.

"Good mother," he wailed, "honest widow, marry me, monster as I am. Let me live again!"

She looks at him more dead than alive.

"I want us to have another boy," said he. "And if he is born, it will mean that that boy has forgiven us both, both you and me. For so the boy has bidden me."

She saw the man was out of his mind, and in a frenzy, but she could not refrain.

"That's all nonsense," she answered him, "and only cowardice. Through the same cowardice I have lost all my children. I cannot bear the sight of you before me, let alone accepting such an everlasting torture."

Maxim Ivanovitch drove off, but he did not give in. The whole town was agog at such a marvel. Maxim Ivanovitch sent match-makers to her. He sent for two of his aunts, working women in the chief town of the province. Aunts they were not, but kinsfolk of some sort, decent people. They began trying to turn her, they kept persuading her and would not leave the cottage. He sent her merchants' wives of the town too, and the wife of

the head priest of the cathedral, and the wives of officials; she was besieged by the whole town, and she got really sick of it.

"If my orphans had been living," she said, "but why should I now? Am I to be guilty of such a sin against my children?"

The archimandrite, too, tried to persuade her. He breathed into her ear:

"You will make a new man of him."

She was horrified, and people wondered at her.

"How can you refuse such a piece of luck?"

And this was how he overcame her in the end.

"Anyway he was a suicide," he said, "and not a babe, but a youth, and owing to his years he could not have been admitted to the Holy Communion, and so he must have been bound to give at least some account. If you enter into matrimony with me, I'll make you a solemn promise, I'll build a church of God to the eternal memory of his soul."

She could not stand out against that, and consented. So they were married.

And all were in amazement. They lived from the very first day in great and unfeigned harmony, jealously guarding their marriage vow, and like one soul in two bodies. She conceived that winter, and they began visiting the churches, and fearing the wrath of God. They stayed in three monasteries, and consulted prophecy. He built the promised church, and also a hospital, and almshouses in the town. He founded an endowment for widows and orphans. And he remembered all whom he had injured, and desired to make them restitution; he began to give away money without stint, so that his wife and the archimandrite even had to restrain him; "for that is enough," they said. Maxim Ivanovitch listened to them. "I cheated Foma of his wages that time," said he. So they paid that back to Foma. And Foma was moved even to tears. "As it is I'm content . . ," says he, "you've given me so much without that." It touched every one's heart in fact, and it shows it's true what they say that a living man will be a good example. And the people are good- hearted there.

His wife began to manage the factory herself, and so well that she's remembered to this day. He did not give up drinking, but she looked after him at those times, and began to nurse him. His language became more decorous, and even his voice changed. He became merciful beyond all wont, even to animals. If he saw from the window a peasant shamelessly beating his horse on the head, he would send out at once, and buy the horse

at double its value. And he received the gift of tears. If any one talked to him he melted into tears. When her time had come, God answered their prayers at last, and sent them a son, and for the first time Maxim Ivanovitch became glad; he gave alms freely, and forgave many debts, and invited the whole town to the christening. And next day he was black as night. His wife saw that something was wrong with him, and held up to him the new-born babe.

"The boy has forgiven us," she said; "he has accepted our prayers and our tears for him."

And it must be said they had neither of them said one word on that subject for the whole year, they had kept it from each other in their hearts. And Maxim Ivanovitch looked at her, black as night. "Wait a bit," said he, "consider, for a whole year he has not come to me, but last night he came in my dream."

"I was struck to the heart with terror when I heard those strange words," she said afterwards.

The boy had not come to him in his dream for nothing. Scarcely had Maxim Ivanovitch said this, when something happened to the new-born babe, it suddenly fell ill. And the child was ill for eight days; they prayed unceasingly and sent for doctors, and sent for the very best doctor in Moscow by train. The doctor came, and he flew into a rage.

"I'm the foremost doctor," said he, "all Moscow is awaiting me."

He prescribed a drop, and hurried away again. He took eight hundred roubles. And the baby died in the evening.

And what after that? Maxim Ivanovitch settled all his property on his beloved wife, gave up all his money and all his papers to her, doing it all in due form according to law, then he stood before her and bowed down to the earth.

"Let me go, my priceless spouse, save my soul while it is still possible. If I spend the time without profit to my soul, I shall not return. I have been hard and cruel, and laid heavy burdens upon men, but I believe that for the woes and wanderings that lie before me, God will not leave me without requital, seeing that to leave all this is no little cross and no little woe."

And his wife heard him with many tears.

"You are all I have now upon the earth, and to whom am I left?" said she, "I have laid up affection in my heart for you this year."

And every one in the town counselled him against it and besought him; and thought to hold him back by force. But he would not listen to them, and he went away in secret by night, and was not seen again. And the tale is that he perseveres in pilgrimage and in patience to this day, and visits his dear wife once a year.

CHAPTER IV

1

I am now approaching the culminating catastrophe to which my whole story is leading up. But before I can continue I must give a preliminary explanation of things of which I knew nothing at the time when I was taking part in them, but which I only understood and fully realized long afterwards, that is when everything was over. I don't know how else to be clear, as otherwise I should have to write the whole story in riddles. And so I will give a simple and direct explanation, sacrificing so-called artistic effect, and presenting it without any personal feelings, as though I were not writing it myself, something after the style of an entrefilet in the newspaper.

The fact is that my old schoolfellow, Lambert, might well, and indeed with certainty, be said to belong to one of those disreputable gangs of petty scoundrels who form associations for the sake of what is now called chantage, an offence nowadays defined and punished by our legal code. The gang to which Lambert belonged had been formed in Moscow and had already succeeded in a good many enterprises there (it was to some extent exposed later on). I heard afterwards that they had in Moscow an extremely experienced and clever leader, a man no longer young. They embarked upon enterprises, sometimes acting individually and sometimes in concert. While they were responsible for some filthy and indecent scandals (accounts of which have, however, already been published in the newspapers) they also carried out some subtle and elaborate intrigues under the leadership of their chief. I found out about some of them later on, but I will not repeat the details. I will only mention that it was their characteristic method to discover some secret, often in the life of people of the greatest respectability and good position. Then they would go to these persons and threaten to make public documentary evidence (which they often did not possess) and would demand a sum of money as the price of silence. There are things neither sinful nor criminal which even honourable and strong-minded people would dread to have exposed. They worked chiefly upon family secrets. To show how adroit their chief sometimes was in his proceedings, I will describe in three lines and without any details one of their exploits. A really wicked and sinful action was committed in a

certain honourable family; the wife of a well-known and highly respected man entered into a secret love-affair with a young and wealthy officer. They scented this out, and what they did was to give the young man plainly to understand that they would inform the husband. They hadn't the slightest proof, and the young man knew that quite well, and indeed they did not conceal it from him. But the whole ingenuity and the whole cunning of their calculations lay in the reflection that on receiving information, even without proofs, the husband would take exactly the same steps as though he had positive proofs. They relied upon their knowledge of the man's character, and of the circumstances of the family. The fact was that one member of the gang was a young man belonging to a very good set, and he had been able to collect information beforehand. They extracted a considerable sum from the lover, and without any risk to themselves, because their victim was himself eager for secrecy.

Though Lambert took part in this affair, he was not actually one of the Moscow gang; acquiring a taste for the work he began by degrees and experimentally acting on his own account. I may mention beforehand that he was not altogether well fitted for it. He was very sharp and calculating, but hasty, and what's more, simple, or rather naive, that is he had very little knowledge of men or of good society. I fancy, for instance, that he did not realize the capacity of the Moscow chief, and imagined that the organization and conduct of such projects were very easy. And he imagined that almost every one was as great a scoundrel as he was himself, and if once he had conceived that a certain person was afraid, or must be afraid for this reason or for that, he would be as certain that the man was afraid as though it were an axiomatic truth. I don't know how to express this; I'll explain the fact more clearly later, but in my opinion he had rather a coarse-grained intelligence, and not only had he no faith in certain good and generous feelings, but perhaps he had actually no conception of them.

He had come to Petersburg because he had long conceived of Petersburg as offering a wider scope for his energies, and because in Moscow he had got into a scrape, and because some one was looking for him there with extremely evil intentions. On arriving in Petersburg he at once got into touch with an old comrade, but he found the outlook unpromising and nothing to be done on a large scale. His acquaintance had increased, but nothing had come of it. "They're a wretched lot here, no better than boys," he said to me himself afterwards. And behold, one fine morning at sunrise

he found me half-frozen under a wall, and at once dropped upon the scent of what he regarded as a “very rich job.”

It all rested on my ravings as I thawed in his lodgings. I was practically delirious then! But from my words it was manifest that of all the affronts I had suffered on that momentous day, the thing which most rankled in my heart, and was most vivid in my memory, was the insult I had received from Büring and from her; I should not otherwise have talked of nothing else in my delirium at Lambert’s, but should have raved of Zerstchikov for example, but it was only of the former I had talked, as I learned afterwards from Lambert himself. And besides, I was in a sort of ecstasy, and looked upon both Lambert and Alphonsine on that awful morning as, so-to-say, champions and deliverers. Afterwards, as I got better and lay in bed, wondering what Lambert could have learned from my ravings, and to what extent I had babbled, it never occurred to me even to suspect that he could have found out so much. Oh, of course, from the gnawing at my conscience I suspected even then that I had said a great deal I should not have said, but, I repeat, I never imagined that it had gone so far. I hoped, too, that I was not able to articulate my words clearly, and indeed I reckoned upon this, as I distinctly remembered it. And yet it turned out in fact that my articulation had been much more distinct than I afterwards supposed and hoped. But the worst of it was that all this only came to light afterwards, and long afterwards, and that was a misfortune for me.

From my deliriums, my ravings, my mutterings, my transports, and so on, he learned, to begin with, almost all the surnames correctly, and even some addresses. And, secondly, he was able to get a fairly correct idea of the consequence of the persons concerned (the old prince, HER, Büring, Anna Andreyevna, and even Versilov); thirdly, he learned that I had been insulted and was threatening revenge; and lastly, and chiefly, that there was in existence a mysterious, hidden document, a letter, such, that if it were shown to a half-crazy old prince he would learn that his own daughter thought him a lunatic and was already consulting lawyers to get him locked up — and would either go quite mad, or would turn her out of the house, and leave her out of his will, or would marry a certain Mme. Versilov whom he already wanted to marry, and was being prevented from marrying. In short, Lambert understood a great deal; no doubt a great deal still remained obscure, but the expert blackmailer had anyway dropped on a trustworthy scent. When I ran away afterwards from Alphonsine he promptly found out

my address (in the simplest possible way, by going to the address bureau); and then immediately made the necessary inquiries, from which he discovered that all these persons about whom I had babbled to him did actually exist. Then he promptly took the first step.

The most important fact was the existence of the DOCUMENT, and that I was in possession of it, and that that document was of the highest value — of that Lambert had no doubt. Here I omit one circumstance, which will come in better later, in its proper place, and will only mention here that that circumstance was what principally confirmed Lambert in the conviction of the real existence and, still more, of the value of the document. It was, I may say beforehand, a momentous circumstance, of which I could have no conception either at the time or afterwards, until the final catastrophe, when everything was discovered and became evident of itself. And so, convinced of the main facts, his first step was to go to Anna Andreyevna.

Yet one thing perplexes me to this day: how he, Lambert, succeeded in gaining admittance to, and fastening himself upon, such an unapproachable and superior personage as Anna Andreyevna. It is true that he gathered information about her, but what of that? It is true that he was extremely well dressed, spoke French with a Parisian accent, and had a French surname, but surely Anna Andreyevna must have discerned that he was a scoundrel at once? Or is one to suppose that a scoundrel was just what she wanted at that time? But surely that cannot be so?

I never could find out the details of their interview, but I have often pictured the scene to myself in my imagination. What is most likely is that from the first word Lambert posed as a friend of my childhood, anxious over a dear and cherished comrade. But no doubt at that first interview he succeeded in hinting quite clearly that I had a document, and letting her know that it was a secret, and that only he, Lambert, was in possession of it, and that I was intending to revenge myself on Mme. Ahmakov by means of it, and so on, and so on. Above all he could explain to her as precisely as possible the importance and value of this document. As for Anna Andreyevna she was in such a position that she must have caught at any information of this kind, must have listened with the closest attention, and . . . must have risen to the bait through “the struggle for existence.” Just at that time they had abstracted her fiancé from her, and had carried him off under guardianship to Tsarskoe; and they had even put her under supervision, too. And then a find like this! This was not a case of some old

woman whispering in her ear, of tearful lamentations, of scheming and backbiting, there was a letter, an actual piece of writing, that is a positive proof of the treacherous design of his daughter, and of all those who had snatched him from her, and that, therefore, he must be saved even by flight, to her, to Anna Andreyevna, and must be married to her in twenty-four hours, otherwise he would be at once spirited away into a lunatic asylum.

And perhaps the fact that Lambert attempted no subterfuges with the young lady even for a moment, but practically blurted straight out from the first word:

"Mademoiselle, either remain an old maid or become a princess and a millionaire. There is a document and I will steal it from the lad and give it to you . . . for a note of hand from you for thirty thousand."

I positively imagine that that's just how it was. Oh, he thought they were all as scoundrelly as himself; I repeat he had that sort of simplicity, that sort of innocence of the scoundrel. . . . However it happened, it may very well be that even when she was demeaning herself like this, Anna Andreyevna was not embarrassed for a minute, but could perfectly well control herself and listen to the blackmailer talking in his own style — and all from "the breadth of her nature." Oh, no doubt she flushed a little at first, and then she mastered herself and listened. And when I imagine that proud, unapproachable, genuinely dignified girl, with her brains, too, hand in hand with Lambert, well . . . what a mind! A Russian mind, so large, with such a desire for breadth, a woman's too, and in such circumstances!

Now I'll make a résumé. By the time I went out after my illness, Lambert had two plans (I know that for a fact now). The first was to get an IOU for not less than thirty thousand from Anna Andreyevna for the letter, and then to help her to frighten the prince, to abduct him and to get her married to him at once — something of that sort anyway. The plan for this was complete. They were only waiting for my help, that is for the document.

The second plan was to desert Anna Andreyevna, throw her over, and sell the letter to Mme. Ahmakov, if that would pay him better. In this he was reckoning on Büring. But Lambert had not yet applied to Mme. Ahmakov, and was only on her track. He was waiting for me too.

Oh, he needed me, that is, not me but the letter! He had formed two plans in regard to me also. The first was, if necessary, to act in concert with me, and to go halves with me, first taking possession of me morally and

physically. But the second plan attracted him much more. It was to deceive me as a silly boy, and to steal the letter from me, or even simply to take it from me by force. This was his favourite plan, and the one he cherished in his dreams. I repeat, there was a circumstance which made him reckon with certainty on the success of his second plan, but, as I have said already, I will explain that later. In any case he awaited me with nervous impatience. Everything depended upon me, every step and every decision.

And I must do him the justice to say that he knew how to restrain himself till the time came, in spite of his hasty temper. He did not come to see me all the while I was ill, he only came once to the house and saw Versilov; he did not worry or frighten me, he kept up an attitude of complete independence as regards me till the day and hour of my going out. As for the possibility of my giving up the letter, telling about it, or destroying it, he had no anxiety on that score. From my words he had been able to gather how much importance I attached to secrecy, and how afraid I was that some one might find out about the letter. And that I should go straight to him and to no one else, on the first day I was well enough, he did not doubt in the least either. Darya Onisimovna came to see me partly by his orders, and he knew that my curiosity and apprehension were already aroused, and that I should not hold out. . . . And, indeed, he had taken all precautions, he was in a position to know what day I was going out, so that I could hardly have eluded him if I had wanted to.

But however eagerly Lambert may have been expecting me, Anna Andreyevna perhaps was awaiting me even more eagerly. I must say frankly that Lambert was to some extent right in his reckoning when he contemplated throwing her over, and it was her own fault. In spite of the agreement that no doubt existed between them (in what form I don't know, but I have no doubt about it), Anna Andreyevna up to the very last moment was not fully open with him. She did not lay all her cards on the table. She hinted at complete agreement on her part and at all sorts of promises — but she confined herself to hints. She listened perhaps to his whole plan in detail; but she only approved in silence. I have good evidence for this conclusion, and the reason of it all was THAT SHE WAS WAITING FOR ME. She would rather have had to do with me than with the rascally Lambert — that's a fact I have no doubt of. That I understand; but her mistake was in letting Lambert at last understand it. And it would not have suited him at all, if passing him by she had enticed the letter out of me and

entered into a compact with me. Moreover, at that time he had complete confidence in the "soundness of the job"; another man in his place would have had fears and still have been uncertain; but Lambert was young, insolent, and filled with impatient greed for gain; he knew little of human nature, and confidently assumed that all were scoundrels. Such a man could have no doubts, especially as he had already observed all sorts of traits in Anna Andreyevna which supported his belief.

One last point, and the most important: did Versilov know anything by that time, and had he even then taken part with Lambert in any plan, however remote? No, no, no, at that time he had not. Though, perhaps, even then a fatal word had been dropped. But enough, enough, I am hastening too far ahead.

Well, and what of me? Did I know anything, and what did I know on the day I went out? When I began this entrefilet I declared that I knew nothing on that day, but found out about everything much later, and only when it was all over. That's the truth, but is it the full truth? No, it is not; I certainly knew something already, I knew a great deal, indeed. But how? Let the reader remember my DREAM! If I could have had such a dream, if it could have surged up from my heart and taken that shape, I must have had, not a knowledge but a presentiment of a very great deal of what I have just explained, though in actual fact I only discovered it when everything was over. I had no knowledge of it, but my heart was throbbing with forebodings, and evil spirits had possession of my dreams. And it was to that man that I rushed, fully knowing what sort of man he was and foreseeing everything even in detail. And why did I rush to him? Imagine; it seems to me now at the very minute when I am writing that I knew exactly at the time why I was rushing to him, though, again, I knew nothing then. Perhaps the reader will understand this. Now to get on with my story, fact by fact.

2

It begins two days before my outburst, when Liza came home in the evening in a state of agitation. She felt terribly humiliated and indeed something insufferable had happened to her.

I have already mentioned the terms she was on with Vassin. She went to see him not simply to show us that she did not need us, but because she

really had a high opinion of him. Their acquaintance had begun at Luga, and I always fancied that Vassin was not indifferent to her, in the misfortunes that had overwhelmed her she might naturally have wished for the advice of a calm, resolute, always lofty mind such as she supposed Vassin's to be. Besides, women are not very clever in appreciating a man's mind at its true value when they like a man; and they will gladly accept paradoxes as the closest reasoning, if they fall in with their own desires. What Liza liked in Vassin was his sympathy for her in her position and, as she had fancied at first, his sympathy with Prince Sergay. When, later on, she suspected his feeling for her, she could not help appreciating the sympathy he showed for his rival. When she told Prince Sergay that she sometimes went to consult Vassin, he had from the first shown the greatest uneasiness; he began to be jealous. Liza was offended at this, and purposely maintained her friendly relations with Vassin. Prince Sergay said nothing, but was gloomy. Liza confessed to me (long afterwards) that Vassin had very soon ceased to attract her; he was composed, and just this everlasting unruffled composure, which had so attracted her at first, afterwards seemed to her distasteful. One would have thought he was practical, and he did, in fact, give her some apparently good advice, but all his advice, as ill-luck would have it, appeared later on impossible to carry out. He gave his opinions sometimes too conceitedly, and showed no trace of diffidence with her, becoming more and more free in his manner as time went on, which she ascribed to his unconsciously feeling less and less respect for her position. Once she thanked him for his invariable goodwill to me, and for talking to me as an intellectual equal though he was so superior to me (she was repeating my words). He answered:

"That's not so, and not for that reason. It's because I see no difference between him and other people. I don't consider him more foolish than the clever, or more evil than the good. I treat every one alike because every one's alike in my eyes."

"Why, do you mean to say you see no differences?"

"Oh, of course, people are all different in one way or another, but differences don't exist for me because the differences between people don't concern me; to me they are all the same and everything's the same; and so I'm equally kind to all."

"And don't you find it dull?"

"No, I'm always satisfied with myself."

“And there’s nothing you desire?”

“Of course there is. But nothing I desire very much. There’s scarcely anything I want, not another rouble. Whether I wear cloth of gold or remain as I am is all the same to me. Cloth of gold would add nothing to me. Tit-bits don’t tempt me. Could places or honours be worth the place that I am worth?”

Liza declared on her honour that these were literally his words. But it’s not fair to criticize them like this without knowing the circumstances under which they were uttered.

Little by little Liza came also to the conclusion that his indulgent attitude to Prince Sergay was not due to sympathy for her, but was perhaps only because “all were alike to him, and differences did not exist for him.” But in the end he did apparently begin to lose his indifference, and to take up an attitude not only of disapproval, but even of contemptuous irony towards Prince Sergay. This incensed Liza, but Vassin remained unaffected. Above all, he always expressed himself gently, and showed no indignation even in his disapproval, but confined himself to logical exposition of her hero’s worthlessness; but there was irony in this very logic. Finally he demonstrated almost directly the “irrationality,” the perverse violence of her love. “Your feelings have been mistaken, and a mistake once recognized ought invariably to be corrected.”

This had happened on that very day; Liza indignantly got up from her place to go, but it will hardly be believed what this rational man did next, and how he concluded. With the air of a man of honour, and even with feeling, he offered her his hand. Liza bluntly called him a fool to his face and walked out.

To suggest deserting a man in misfortune because that man was “unworthy of her,” and above all to suggest it to a woman who was with child by that very man — there you have the mind of these people! I call this being dreadfully theoretical and knowing nothing whatever of life, and put it down to a prodigious conceit. And what’s more, Liza saw quite clearly that he was actually proud of his action, because he knew of her condition. With tears of indignation she hurried off to Prince Sergay, and he positively surpassed Vassin. One would have thought that after what she told him he might have been convinced that he had no cause for jealousy; but he became perfectly frantic. But jealous people are always like that!

He made a fearful scene and insulted her so outrageously that she almost resolved to break off all relations with him.

She came home, however, still controlling herself, but she could not help telling mother. Oh, that evening the ice was completely broken, and they were on their old affectionate terms again; both, of course, shed tears as usual in each other's arms, and Liza apparently regained her composure, though she was very gloomy. She sat through the evening in Makar Ivanovitch's room, without uttering a word, but without leaving the room. She listened very attentively to what he said. Ever since the incident with the bench she had become extremely and, as it were, timidly respectful to him, though she still remained taciturn.

But this time Makar Ivanovitch suddenly gave an unexpected and wonderful turn to the conversation. I may mention that Versilov and the doctor had talked of his health with very gloomy faces that morning. I may mention, too, that we had for some days been talking a great deal about mother's birthday, and making preparations to celebrate it in five days' time. Apropos of her birthday Makar Ivanovitch suddenly launched into reminiscences of mother's childhood, and the time when she "couldn't stand up on her little feet." "She was never out of my arms," the old man recalled. "I used to teach her to walk too sometimes. I set her up in a corner three steps away and called her, and she used to totter across to me, and she wasn't frightened, but would run to me laughing, she'd rush at me and throw her arms round my neck. I used to tell you fairytales later on, Sofia Andreyevna; you were very fond of fairy tales, you'd sit on my knee listening for two hours at a stretch. They used to wonder in the cottage, 'just see how she's taken to Makar.' Or I'd carry you off into the woods, I'd seek out a raspberry-bush, I would sit you down by it, and cut you a whistle-pipe out of wood. When we'd had a nice walk, I'd carry you home in my arms — and the little thing would fall asleep. Once she was afraid of a wolf; she flew to me all of a tremble, and there wasn't a wolf there at all."

"I remember that," said mother.

"Can you really remember it?"

"I remember a great deal. Ever since I remember anything in life I have felt your love and tender care over me," she said in a voice full of feeling, and she suddenly flushed crimson.

Makar Ivanovitch paused for a little.

“Forgive me, children, I am leaving you. The term of my life is close at hand. In my old age I have found consolation for all afflictions. Thank you, my dear ones.”

“That’s enough, Makar Ivanovitch darling,” exclaimed Versilov in some agitation. “The doctor told me just now that you were a great deal better. . . .”

Mother listened in alarm.

“Why, what does he know, your Alexandr Semyonovitch — he’s a dear man and nothing more. Give over, friends, do you think that I’m afraid to die? After my morning prayer to-day I had the feeling in my heart that I should never go out again from here; it was told me. Well, what of it, blessed be the name of the Lord. Yet I have a longing to be looking upon all of you still. Job, after all his sufferings, was comforted looking upon his new children, and forgot the children that were gone — it is impossible! Only with the years the sorrow is mingled with the joy and turned to sighs of gladness. So it is in the world. Every soul is tried and is comforted. I thought, children, to say one little word to you,” he went on with a gentle, exquisite smile which I shall never forget, and he turned to me, “be zealous for the Holy Church, my dear, and if the time calls for it — die for her; but wait a bit, don’t be frightened, it won’t be at once,” he added, laughing. “Now perhaps you don’t think of it, afterwards you will think of it. And something more. Any good thing you bethink yourself to do, do it for the sake of God and not for envy. Stand firmly to your cause, and do not give way through any sort of cowardice; act steadily, neither rushing nor turning about; well, that is all I want to tell you. Only accustom yourself to pray daily and unceasingly. I say this now, maybe you’ll remember it. I should like to say something to you, too, Andrey Petrovitch, sir, but God will find your heart without my words. And for long years we have ceased to speak of that, ever since that arrow pierced my heart. Now that I am departing I would only remind you of what you promised then. . . .”

He almost whispered the last words, with his eyes cast down.

“Makar Ivanovitch!” Versilov said in confusion, and he got up from his chair.

“There, there, don’t be troubled, sir, I only recalled it . . . and in the sight of God I am more to blame than any of you, seeing that though you were my master I ought not to have allowed this weakness, and therefore, Sofia, fret not your soul too much, for all your sin is mine, and you scarcely had

full judgment in those days, so I fancy; nor maybe you either, sir," he smiled with lips that quivered from some sort of pain, "and though I might then have taught you, my wife, even with the rod and indeed ought to have, yet I pitied you when you fell in tears before me, and hid nothing, and kissed my feet. Not to reproach you have I recalled this, beloved, but only to remind Andrey Petrovitch . . . for you remember, sir, yourself your promise, as a nobleman, and all will be covered with the wedding crown. I speak before the children, master . . ."

He was extremely agitated and looked at Versilov as though expecting from him some word of confirmation. I repeat it was all so sudden, so unexpected, that I sat motionless. Versilov was no less agitated: he went up to mother in silence and warmly embraced her; then mother, also in silence, went up to Makar Ivanovitch and bowed down to his feet.

In short the scene was overwhelming; on this occasion we were by ourselves. Even Tatyana Pavlovna was not present. Liza drew herself up in her chair and listened in silence; suddenly she stood up and said firmly to Makar Ivanovitch:

"Bless me, too, Makar Ivanovitch for my great anguish. To morrow will decide my whole fate, and you will pray for me to-day."

And she went out of the room. I knew that Makar Ivanovitch knew all about her already from mother. But it was the first time I had seen mother and Versilov side by side: till then I had only seen her as his slave near him. There was still so much I did not understand and had not detected in that man whom I had condemned, and so I went back to my room in confusion. And it must be said that it was just at this time that my perplexity about him was greatest. He had never seemed to me so mysterious and unfathomable as just at that time; but it's just about that that I'm writing this whole account; all in its good time.

"It turns out though," I thought to myself as I got into bed, "that he gave his word 'as a nobleman' to marry mother if she were left a widow. He said nothing of that when he told me about Makar Ivanovitch before."

Liza was out the whole of the following day, and when she came back, rather late, she went straight to Makar Ivanovitch. I thought I would not go in that I might not be in their way, but soon, noticing that mother and Versilov were already there, I went in. Liza was sitting by the old man crying on his shoulder, and he with a sorrowful face was stroking her head.

Versilov told me in my room afterwards that Prince Sergay insisted on having his way, and proposed marrying Liza at the first opportunity before his trial was over. It was hard for Liza to make up her mind to it, though she scarcely had the right to refuse. And indeed Makar Ivanovitch "commanded" her to be married. Of course all this would have come about of itself, and she would certainly have been married of her own accord and without hesitation, but at the moment she had been so insulted by the man she loved, and she was so humiliated by this love even in her own eyes that it was difficult for her to decide. But apart from her mortification there was another circumstance deterring her of which I could have no suspicion.

"Did you hear that all those young people on the Petersburg Side were arrested?" Versilov added suddenly.

"What? Dergatchev?" I cried.

"Yes, and Vassin, too."

I was amazed, especially to hear about Vassin.

"Why, was he mixed up in anything? Good heavens, what will happen to them now! And just when Liza was being so severe upon him! . . . What do you think? What may happen to them? It's Stebelkov, I swear it's Stebelkov's doing."

"We won't go into it," said Versilov, looking at me strangely (as people look at a man who has no knowledge or suspicion of something). "Who can tell what is going on among them, and who can tell what may happen to them? I didn't come to speak of that. I hear you meant to go out to-morrow. Won't you be going to see Prince Sergay?"

"The first thing; though I must own it's very distasteful to me. Why, have you some message to send him?"

"No, nothing. I shall see him myself. I'm sorry for Liza. And what advice can Makar Ivanovitch give her? He knows nothing about life or about people himself. Another thing, my dear boy" (it was a long time since he had called me "my dear boy"), "there are here too . . . certain young men . . . among whom is your old schoolfellow, Lambert . . . I fancy they are all great rascals. . . . I speak simply to warn you. . . . But, of course, it's your business, and I have no right . . ."

"Andrey Petrovitch!" I clutched his hand, speaking without a moment's thought and almost by inspiration as I sometimes do (the room was almost in darkness). "Andrey Petrovitch, I have said nothing; you have seen that of course, I have been silent till now, do you know why? To avoid knowing

your secrets. I've simply resolved not to know them, ever. I'm a coward. I'm afraid your secrets may tear you out of my heart altogether, and I don't want that to happen. Since it's so, why should you know my secrets? It doesn't matter to you where I go. Does it?"

"You are right; but not a word more, I beseech you!" he said, and went away. So, by accident, we had the merest scrap of an explanation. But he only added to my excitement on the eve of my new step in life next day, and I kept waking up all night in consequence. But I felt quite happy.

3

Next day I went out of the house at ten o'clock in the morning, doing my utmost to steal out quietly without taking leave or saying anything. I, so to speak, slipped out. Why I did so I don't know; but if even mother had seen that I was going out and spoken to me I should have answered with something spiteful. When I found myself in the street and breathed the cold outdoor air I shuddered from an intense feeling — almost animal — which I might call "carnivorous." What was I going for, where was I going? The feeling was utterly undefined and at the same time I felt frightened and delighted, both at once.

"Shall I disgrace myself to-day or not?" I thought to myself with a swagger, though I knew that the step once taken that day would be decisive, and could not be retrieved all my life. But it's no use talking in riddles.

I went straight to the prison to Prince Sergay. I had received a letter for the superintendent from Tatyana Pavlovna two days before, and I met with an excellent reception. I don't know whether he was a good man, and it's beside the point; but he permitted my interview with the prince and arranged that it should take place in his room, courteously giving it up for our use. The room was the typical room of a government official of a certain standing, living in a government building — I think to describe it is unnecessary.

So it turned out that Prince Sergay and I were left alone.

He came in dressed in some sort of half-military attire, but wearing very clean linen and a dandified tie; he was washed and combed, at the same time he looked terribly thin and very yellow. I noticed the same yellowness even in his eyes. In fact he was so changed in appearance that I stood still in amazement.

“How you have changed!” I cried.

“That’s nothing. Sit down, dear boy,” half-fatuously he motioned me to the armchair and sat down opposite, facing me. “Let’s get to the point. You see, my dear Alexey Makarovitch . . .”

“Arkady,” I corrected him.

“What? Oh yes! No matter! Oh yes!” He suddenly collected himself. “Excuse me, my dear fellow, we’ll return to the point.”

He was, in fact, in a fearful hurry to turn to something. He was entirely from head to foot absorbed by something; some vital idea which he wanted to formulate and expound to me. He talked a great deal and fearfully fast, gesticulating and explaining with strained and painful effort, but for the first minute I really could make nothing of it.

“To put it briefly” (he had used this expression “To put it briefly” ten times already), “to put it briefly,” he concluded, “I troubled you yesterday, Arkady Makarovitch, and so urgently through Liza begged you to come to me, as though the place were on fire, but seeing that the essential part of the decision is bound to be momentous and conclusive for me . . .”

“Excuse me, prince,” I interrupted, “did you send me a message yesterday? Liza said nothing to me about it.”

“What?” he cried, suddenly stopping short in extreme astonishment, almost in alarm.

“She gave me no message at all. She came home last night so upset that she couldn’t say a word to me.”

Prince Sergay leapt up from his seat.

“Are you telling me the truth, Arkady Makarovitch? If so this . . . this . . .”

“Why, what is there so serious about it? Why are you so uneasy? She simply forgot or something.”

He sat down and seemed overcome by a kind of stupor. It seemed as though the news that Liza had given me no message had simply crushed him. He suddenly began talking rapidly and waving his hands, and again it was fearfully difficult to follow him.

“Stay” he exclaimed suddenly, pausing and holding up his finger. “Stay, this . . . this . . . if I’m not mistaken this is a trick! . . ,” he muttered with the grin of a maniac, “and it means that . . .”

“It means absolutely nothing,” I interposed, “and I can’t understand how such a trivial circumstance can worry you so much. . . . Ach, prince, since

that time — since that night, do you remember . . .”

“Since what night, and what of it?” he cried pettishly, evidently annoyed at my interrupting him.

“At Zerstchikov’s, where we saw each other last. Why, before your letter. . . . Don’t you remember you were terribly excited then, but the difference between then and now is so great that I am positively horrified when I look at you.”

“Oh yes,” he pronounced in the tone of a man of polite society, seeming suddenly to remember. “Oh yes; that evening . . . I heard. . . . Well, and are you better? How are you after all that, Arkady Makarovitch? . . . But let us return to the point. I am pursuing three aims precisely, you see; there are three problems before me, and I . . .”

He began rapidly talking again of his “chief point.” I realized at last that I was listening to a man who ought at once to have at least a vinegar compress applied to his head, if not perhaps to be bled. All his incoherent talk turned, of course, around his trial, and the possible issue of it, and the fact that the colonel of his regiment had visited him and given him a lengthy piece of advice about something which he had not taken, and the notes he had just lately sent to some one, and the prosecutor, and the certainty that they would deprive him of his rights as a nobleman and send him to the Northern Region of Russia, and the possibility of settling as a colonist and regaining his position, in Tashkent, and his plans for training his son (which Liza would bear him) and handing something down to him “in the wilds of Archangel, in the Holmogory.” “I wanted your opinion, Arkady Makarovitch, believe me I so feel and value. . . . If only you knew, if only you knew, Arkady Makarovitch, my dear fellow, my brother, what Liza means to me, what she has meant to me here, now, all this time!” he shouted, suddenly clutching at his head with both hands.

“Sergay Petrovitch, surely you won’t sacrifice her by taking her away with you! To the Holmogory!” I could not refrain from exclaiming. Liza’s fate, bound to this maniac for life, suddenly, and as it were for the first time, rose clearly before my imagination. He looked at me, got up again, took one step, turned and sat down again, still holding his head in his hands.

“I’m always dreaming of spiders!” he said suddenly.

“You are terribly agitated. I should advise you to go to bed, prince, and to ask for a doctor at once.”

“No, excuse me — of that afterwards. I asked you to come and see me chiefly to discuss our marriage. The marriage, as you know, is to take place here, at the church. I’ve said so already. Permission has been given for all this, and, in fact, they encourage it. . . . As for Liza . . .”

“Prince, have pity on Liza, my dear fellow!” I cried. “Don’t torture her, now, at least, don’t be jealous!”

“What!” he cried, staring at me intently with eyes almost starting out of his head, and his whole face distorted into a sort of broad grin of senseless inquiry. It was evident that the words “don’t be jealous” had for some reason made a fearful impression on him.

“Forgive me, prince, I spoke without thinking. Oh prince, I have lately come to know an old man, my nominal father. . . . Oh, if you could see him you would be calmer. . . . Liza thinks so much of him, too.”

“Ah, yes, Liza . . . ah, yes, is that your father? Or pardon, mon cher, something of the sort . . . I remember . . . she told me . . . an old man. . . . I’m sure of it, I’m sure of it. I knew an old man, too . . . mais passons. . . . The chief point is to make clear what’s essential at the moment, we must . . .”

I got up to go away. It was painful to me to look at him.

“I don’t understand!” he pronounced sternly and with dignity, seeing that I had got up to go.

“It hurts me to look at you,” I said.

“Arkady Makarovitch, one word, one word more!” He clutched me by the shoulder with quite a different expression and gesture, and sat me down in the armchair. “You’ve heard about those . . . you understand?” he bent down to me.

“Oh yes, Dergatchev. No doubt it’s Stebelkov’s doing!” I cried impulsively.

“Yes, Stebelkov. And . . . you don’t know?”

He broke off and again he stared at me with the same wide eyes and the same spasmodic, senselessly questioning grin, which grew broader and broader. His face gradually grew paler. I felt a sudden shudder. I remembered Versilov’s expression when he had told me of Vassin’s arrest the day before.

“Oh, is it possible?” I cried, panic-stricken.

“You see, Arkady Makarovitch, that’s why I sent to you to explain . . . I wanted . . ,” he began whispering rapidly.

“It was you who informed against Vassin!” I cried.

“No; you see, there was a manuscript. Vassin gave it only a few days ago to Liza . . . to take care of. And she left it here for me to look at, and then it happened that they quarrelled next day . . .”

“You gave the manuscript to the authorities!”

“Arkady Makarovitch, Arkady Makarovitch!”

“And so you,” I screamed, leaping up, emphasizing every word, “without any other motive, without any other object, simply because poor Vassin was YOUR RIVAL, simply out of jealousy, you gave up the MANUSCRIPT ENTRUSTED TO LIZA . . . gave it up to whom? To whom? To the Public Prosecutor?”

But he did not answer, and he hardly could have answered, for he stood before me like a statue, still with the same sickly smile and the same fixed look. But suddenly the door opened and Liza came in. She almost swooned when she saw us together.

“You’re here? So you’re here?” she cried, her face suddenly distorted, seizing my hand. “So you . . . KNOW?”

But she could read in my face already that I “knew.” With a swift irresistible impulse I threw my arms round her and held her close! And at that minute for the first time I grasped in all its intensity the hopeless, endless misery which shrouded in unbroken darkness the whole life of this . . . wilful seeker after suffering.

“Is it possible to talk to him now,” she said, tearing herself away from me. “Is it possible to be with him? Why are you here? Look at him! look at him! And can one, can one judge him?”

Her face was full of infinite suffering and infinite compassion as exclaiming this she motioned towards the unhappy wretch.

He was sitting in the armchair with his face hidden in his hands. And she was right. He was a man in a raging fever and not responsible. They put him in the hospital that morning, and by the evening he had brain fever.

4

Leaving Prince Sergay with Liza I went off about one o’clock to my old lodging. I forgot to say that it was a dull, damp day, with a thaw beginning, and a warm wind that would upset the nerves of an elephant. The master of the house met me with a great display of delight, and a great deal of fuss

and bustle, which I particularly dislike, especially at such moments. I received this drily, and went straight to my room, but he followed me, and though he did not venture to question me, yet his face was beaming with curiosity, and at the same time he looked as though he had a right to be curious. I had to behave politely for my own sake; but though it was so essential to me to find out something (and I knew I should learn it), I yet felt it revolting to begin cross-examining him. I inquired after the health of his wife, and we went in to see her. The latter met me deferentially indeed, but with a businesslike and taciturn manner; this to some extent softened my heart. To be brief, I learned on this occasion some very wonderful things.

Well, of course, Lambert had been and he came twice afterwards, and "he looked at all the rooms, saying that perhaps he would take them." Darya Onisimovna had come several times, goodness knows why. "She was very inquisitive," added my landlord.

But I did not gratify him by asking what she was inquisitive about. I did not ask questions at all, in fact. He did all the talking, while I kept up a pretence of rummaging in my trunk (though there was scarcely anything left in it). But what was most vexatious, he too thought fit to play at being mysterious, and noticing that I refrained from asking questions, felt it incumbent upon him to be more fragmentary and even enigmatic in his communications.

"The young lady has been here, too," he added, looking at me strangely.

"What young lady?"

"Anna Andreyevna; she's been here twice; she made the acquaintance of my wife. A very charming person, very pleasant. Such an acquaintance is quite a privilege, Arkady Makarovitch."

And as he pronounced these words he positively took a step towards me. He seemed very anxious that I should understand something.

"Did she really come twice?" I said with surprise.

"The second time she came with her brother."

"That was with Lambert," I thought involuntarily.

"No, not with Mr. Lambert," he said, seeming to guess at once, as though piercing into my soul with his eyes. "But with her real brother, young Mr. Versilov. A kammer-junker, I believe."

I was very much confused. He looked at me, smiling very caressingly.

“Oh, and some one else came and was asking after you, that ma’amselle, a French lady, Mamselle Alphonsine de Verden. Oh, how well she sings and recites poetry. She’d slipped off to see Prince Nikolay Ivanovitch at Tskarskoe, to sell him a dog, she told me, a rare kind, black, and no bigger than your fist . . .”

I asked him to leave me alone on the pretext of a headache. He immediately fell in with my request, even breaking off in the middle of a sentence, and not only without the slightest sign of huffiness, but almost with pleasure, waving his hand mysteriously, as though to say, “I understand, I understand,” and though he did not actually say this he could not resist the satisfaction of walking out of the room on tiptoe.

There are very vexatious people in the world.

I sat for an hour and a half alone, deliberating; rather, not really deliberating but dreaming. Though I was perplexed I was not in the least surprised. I even expected to hear something more, other marvels. “Perhaps they have already hatched them,” I thought. I had for a long time been firmly persuaded that the machinery of their plot was wound up and was in full swing. “They’re only waiting for me,” I thought again with a sort of irritable and pleasant self-satisfaction. That they were eagerly awaiting me, and were scheming to carry out some plan at my lodging was clear as day. “The old prince’s wedding, can it be? He’s surrounded by a regular network of intrigue. But am I going to permit it, my friends? That’s the question,” I said in conclusion with haughty satisfaction.

“Once I begin I shall be carried away by the whirlpool like a chip. Am I free now, this minute, or am I not? When I go back to mother this evening can I still say to myself as I have done all these days ‘I am my own master’?”

That was the gist of my questions, or rather of the throbbing at my heart in the hour and a half I spent sitting on the bed in the corner, with my elbows on my knees and my head propped in my hands. But I knew, I knew even then that all these questions were utter nonsense, and that I was drawn only by HER — by her, by her alone! At last I have said this straight out and have written it with pen on paper, though even now as I write this a year later I don’t know what name to give to the feeling I had then!

Oh, I was sorry for Liza, and my heart was full of a most unfeigned grief. Nothing but the feeling of pain on her account could have calmed or effaced in me for a time that “carnivorousness” (I recall that word). But I

was immensely spurred on by curiosity and a sort of dread and another feeling — I don't know what; but I know and I knew then that it was an evil feeling. Perhaps my impulse was to fall at HER feet, or perhaps I wanted to put her to every torture, and "quickly, quickly" to show her something. No grief, no compassion for Liza, could stop me. Could I have got up and gone home . . . to Makar Ivanovitch?

"And is it quite impossible to go to them, to find out everything from them, and to go away from them for ever, passing unscathed among marvels and monsters?"

At three o'clock, pulling myself together and reflecting that I might be late, I went out hastily, took a cab, and flew to Anna Andreyevna.

CHAPTER V

1

As soon as I was announced, Anna Andreyevna threw down her sewing and rushed to meet me in the outermost of her rooms, a thing which had never happened before. She held out both hands to me and flushed quickly. She led me into her room in silence, sat down to her needlework again, made me sit down beside her. She did not go on with her sewing, but still scrutinized me with the same fervent sympathy, without uttering a word.

"You sent Darya Onisimovna to me," I began bluntly, rather overwhelmed by this exaggerated display of sympathy, though I found it agreeable.

She suddenly began talking without answering my question.

"I have heard all about it, I know all about it. That terrible night. . . . Oh, what you must have gone through! Can it be true! Can it be true that you were found unconscious in the frost?"

"You heard that . . . from Lambert. . . ." I muttered, reddening.

"I heard it all from him at the time; but I've been eager to see you. Oh, he came to me in alarm! At your lodging . . . where you have been lying ill, they would not let him in to see you . . . and they met him strangely . . . I really don't know how it was, but he kept telling me about that night; he told me that when you had scarcely come to yourself, you spoke of me, and . . . and of your devotion to me. I was touched to tears, Arkady Makarovitch, and I don't know how I have deserved such warm sympathy on your part, especially considering the condition in which you were yourself! Tell me, M. Lambert was the friend of your childhood, was he not?"

"Yes, but what happened? . . . I confess I was indiscreet, and perhaps I told him then a great deal I shouldn't have."

"Oh, I should have heard of that wicked horrible intrigue apart from him! I always had a presentiment that they would drive you to that, always. Tell me, is it true that Büring dared to lift his hand against you?"

She spoke as though it were entirely owing to Büring and HER that I had been found under the wall. And she is right too, I thought, but I flared up:

“If he had lifted his hand against me, he would not have gone away unpunished. And I should not be sitting before you now without having avenged myself,” I answered hotly. It struck me that she wanted for some reason to irritate me, to set me against somebody (I knew of course against whom); yet I fell in with it.

“You say that you had a presentiment that I should be driven to THIS, but on Katerina Nikolaevna’s side it was of course only a misunderstanding . . . though it is true that she was too hasty in allowing her kindly feeling for me to be influenced by that misunderstanding. . . .”

“I should think she was too hasty indeed!” Anna Andrevevna assented quickly, with a sort of ecstasy of sympathy. “Oh, if only you knew the intrigue that is being hatched there now! Of course, Arkady Makarovitch, of course it is difficult for you to realize now all the delicacy of my position,” she brought out, blushing and casting down her eyes. “Since I saw you last . . . that very morning I took a step which not every one would be able to understand and interpret rightly; so it is hardly likely that it would be understood by anyone with your still uncorrupted mind, and your fresh, loving, unsophisticated heart. Believe me, my dear friend, I appreciate your devotion to me, and I shall repay it with my everlasting gratitude. In the world, of course, they will throw stones at me, they have thrown them already. But even if they were right, from their odious point of view, which of them could, which of them dare judge me I have been abandoned by my father from childhood up; we Versilovs are an ancient noble Russian family, yet we are adventurers, and I am eating the bread of charity. Was it not natural I should turn to one who has taken the place of a father to me, at whose hands I have received nothing but kindness during all these years? My feelings for him are known only to God, and he alone can judge them, and I refuse to accept the judgment of the world upon the step I have taken. When there is, moreover, at the bottom of this the most cunning, the most evil intrigue, and the plot to ruin a trusting, noble-hearted father is the work of his own daughter, is it to be endured? No, I will save him if I have to ruin my reputation. I am ready to be with him simply as a nurse, to take care of him, and to look after him, but I will not let hateful, cold, mercenary worldliness triumph!”

She spoke with unwonted fire, very possibly half assumed, though at the same time sincere, because it was evident how deeply involved she was in the matter. Oh, I felt that she was lying (though sincerely, for one can lie

sincerely). And that she was now evil; but it is wonderful how it often is, in dealing with women: this assumption of perfect refinement, these lofty manners, these inaccessible heights of well-bred grandeur and proud chastity — all this quite threw me out of my reckoning, and I began agreeing with her on every point, so long as I was with her; that is, I could not bring myself to contradict her, anyway. Oh, a man is in absolute moral slavery to a woman, especially if he is a generous man! Such a woman can convince a generous man of anything she likes. "She and Lambert, my goodness!" I thought, looking at her in perplexity. To tell the whole truth, however, I don't know what to think of her to this day; truly her feelings were known only to God, and, besides, human beings are such complicated machines, that one cannot analyse them in some cases, and above all if the human being in question is a woman.

"Anna Andreyevna, what is it you exactly want me to do?" I asked, with a good deal of decision however.

"How? What do you mean by your question, Arkady Makarovitch?"

"I fancy, from everything . . . and from certain other considerations . . ." I explained stammering, "that you sent to me because you expected something from me; so what is it exactly?"

Without answering my question, she immediately began talking again, as rapidly and as earnestly as before:

"But I cannot, I am too proud to enter into explanations and negotiations with unknown persons, like M. Lambert. I have been waiting for you, I don't want M. Lambert. My position is awful, desperate, Arkady Makarovitch! I am forced to duplicity, hemmed in by the machinations of that woman — and that is more than I can endure. I am driven almost to the humiliation of intriguing, and I have been waiting for you as my saviour. You must not blame me for looking greedily about me to find one friend at least, and so I cannot help being glad to see a friend: he, who could think of me and even utter my name, half frozen on that night, must be devoted to me. That's what I've been thinking all this time and that is why I rely on you."

She looked into my face with impatient inquiry. And again I had not the heart to disillusion her, and to tell her plainly that Lambert had deceived her, and that I had by no means told him that I was so devoted to her, and that her name was not the only one I mentioned. And so by my silence I confirmed, as it were, Lambert's lie. Oh, she knew very well, I am

convinced, that Lambert had been exaggerating and simply lying to her, solely in order to have a plausible excuse to call upon her, and to get into touch with her; though she looked into my face as though she were convinced of my truth and devotion, she must have known that I did not bring myself to contradict her from delicacy of feeling, and the awkwardness of youth. But whether I was right in this surmise, I don't know. Perhaps I am horribly evil-minded.

"My brother is taking my part," she said with sudden heat, seeing that I was not disposed to speak.

"I'm told you have been at my lodgings," I muttered in confusion.

"Yes . . . you know poor Prince Nikolay Ivanitch has no place now where he can take refuge from this intrigue, or rather from his own daughter, unless in your lodgings, that is the lodgings of a friend; you know he looks upon you at least as a friend! . . . And if you will only do something for his benefit, then do this — if only you can, if only you have the generosity and courage . . . and, and finally if it is really true, that there is SOMETHING YOU CAN DO. Oh, it is not for my sake, it's not for my sake, but for the sake of the poor old man, the only person who genuinely loved you, and who has become as attached to you as though you were his own son, and is still missing you! For myself I expect nothing, even from you — since even my own father has played me such a treacherous, such a spiteful trick."

"I believe, Andrey Petrovitch . . ." I began.

"Andrey Petrovitch," she repeated with bitter mockery; "Andrey Petrovitch, in answer to a direct question from me, told me on his word of honour that he had never had any intentions in regard to Katerina Nikolaevna and I completely believed it when I took that step; and yet it seemed that his composure only lasted till he heard of Baron Büring."

"That's wrong," I cried, "there was a moment when I too believed in his love for that woman, but it's a mistake . . . and even if it were so, he might, I should think, be perfectly composed about it now . . . since the retirement of that gentleman."

"What gentleman?"

"Büring."

"Who has told you of his retirement? Perhaps the gentle man in question never had any such views," she jeered malignantly; I fancied too, that she looked at me jeeringly.

“Darya Onisimovna told me,” I muttered in confusion, which I was not able to conceal, and which she saw only too clearly.

“Darya Onisimovna is a very nice person, and, of course, I cannot forbid her loving me, but she has no means of knowing what does not concern her.”

My heart began to ache; and, as she had been reckoning on rousing my indignation, I did in fact begin to feel indignant, but not with “that woman,” but for the time being with Anna Andreyevna herself. I got up.

“As an honourable man, I ought to warn you, Anna Andreyevna, that your expectations . . . in regard to me . . . may turn out to be utterly unfounded. . . .”

“I expect you to be my champion,” she said, looking at me resolutely: “abandoned as I am by every one . . . your sister, if you care to have it so, Arkady Makarovitch.”

Another instant, and she would have burst into tears.

“Well, you had better not expect anything, for, ‘perhaps’ nothing will come of it,” I muttered with an indescribable feeling of disgust.

“How am I to understand your words?” she said, showing her consternation too plainly.

“Why, that I am going away from you all, and — that’s the end of it!” I suddenly exclaimed almost furiously, “and the LETTER — I shall tear up. Good-bye.”

I bowed to her, and went out without speaking, though at the same time I scarcely dared to look at her, but had hardly gone downstairs when Darya Onisimovna ran after me, with a half sheet of paper folded in two. Where Darya Onisimovna had sprung from, and where she had been sitting while I was talking with Anna Andreyevna, I cannot conceive. She did not utter a word, but merely gave me the paper, and ran away. I unfolded it: on the paper, clearly and distinctly written, was Lambert’s address, and it had apparently been got ready several days before. I suddenly recalled that when Darya Onisimovna had been with me that day, I had told her that I did not know where Lambert lived, meaning, “I don’t know and don’t want to know.” But by this time I had learned Lambert’s address from Liza, whom I had specially asked to get it for me from the address bureau. Anna Andreyevna’s action seemed to me too definite, even cynical: although I had declined to assist her, she was simply sending me straight to Lambert, as though she had not the slightest faith in my refusal. It was quite clear to

me that she knew everything about the letter, and from whom could she have learnt it if not from Lambert, to whom she was sending me that I might co-operate with him.

There was no doubt that they all, every one of them, looked upon me as a feeble boy without character or will, with whom they could do anything, I thought with indignation.

2

Nevertheless, I did go to Lambert's. Where else could I have satisfied my curiosity? Lambert, as it appeared, lived a long way off, in Cross Alley, close to the Summer Gardens, still in the same lodgings; but when I ran away from him that night I had so completely failed to notice the way and the distance, that when I got his address from Liza, four days earlier, I was surprised and could scarcely believe that he lived there. As I was going upstairs I noticed at the door of the flat, on the third storey, two young men, and thought they had rung the bell before I came and were waiting for the door to be opened. While I was mounting the stairs they both, turning their backs on the door, scrutinized me very attentively. "The flat is all let out in rooms, and they must be going to see another lodger," I thought, frowning, as I went up to them. It would have been very disagreeable to me to find anyone else at Lambert's. Trying not to look at them, I put out my hand to the bell.

"Attendez!" one of them cried to me.

"Please, please don't ring again yet," said the other young man in a soft musical voice, slightly drawling the words. "Here we'll finish this, and then we'll all ring altogether. Shall we?"

I waited. They were both very young men, about twenty or twenty- two; they were doing something rather strange at the door, and I began to watch them with surprise. The one who had cried "attendez" was a very tall fellow, over six feet, thin and lean, but very muscular, with a very small head in proportion to his height, and with a strange, as it were comic expression of gloom on his rather pock-marked though agreeable and by no means stupid face. There was a look as it were of exaggerated intentness and of unnecessary and excessive determination in his eyes. He was very badly dressed: in an old wadded overcoat, with a little fur collar of mangy-looking raccoon; it was too short for him and obviously second-hand. He

had on shabby high boots almost like a peasant's, and on his head was a horribly crushed, dirty-looking top-hat. His whole appearance was marked by slovenliness; his ungloved hands were dirty and his long nails were black. His companion, on the other hand, was smartly dressed, judging from his light skunk fur coat, his elegant hat, and the light new gloves on his slender fingers; he was about my height, and he had an extremely charming expression on his fresh and youthful face.

The tall fellow was taking off his tie — an utterly threadbare greasy ribbon, hardly better than a piece of tape — and the pretty- looking youth, taking out of his pocket another newly purchased black tie, was putting it round the neck of the tall fellow, who, with a perfectly serious face, submissively stretched out his very long neck, throwing his overcoat back from his shoulders.

"No; it won't do if the shirt is so dirty," said the younger one, "the effect won't be good, it will only make it look dirtier. I told you to put on a collar. I don't know how . . . do you know how to do it," he said, turning suddenly to me.

"What?" I asked.

"Why, fasten his tie. You see it ought to go like this, to hide his dirty shirt, or else the whole effect is spoilt whatever we do. I have just bought the tie for a rouble at Filip's, the hairdresser's, on purpose for him."

"Was it — that rouble?" muttered the tall one.

"Yes, I haven't a farthing now. Then you can't do it? In that case we must ask Alphonsine."

"To see Lambert?" the tall fellow asked me abruptly.

"Yes," I answered with no less determination, looking him in the face.

"Dolgorowky?" he went on with the same air and the same voice.

"No, not Korovkin," I answered as abruptly, mistaking what he said.

"Dolgorowky?" the tall fellow almost shouted again, and he took a step towards me almost menacingly. His companion burst out laughing.

"He says 'Dolgorowky' and not Korovkin," he explained to me. "You know in the Journal des Débats the French constantly distort Russian names. . . ."

"In the Indépendance," growled the tall fellow.

"Well, it's just the same in the Indépendance. Dolgoruky, for instance, they write Dolgorowky — I have seen it myself, and Valonyev is always written comte Wallonieff."

“Doboyny! “cried the tall fellow.

“Yes, there’s Doboyny, too, I’ve seen it myself; and we both laughed; some Russian Madame Doboyny abroad . . . but there’s no need to mention them all, you know,” he said, turning suddenly to the tall fellow.

“Excuse me, are you M. Dolgoruky?”

“Yes, my name is Dolgoruky; how do you know it?”

The tall one suddenly whispered something to the pretty-looking lad; the latter frowned and shook his head, but the tall fellow immediately addressed me;

“Monsieur le prince, vous n’avez pas de rouble d’argent pour nous, pas deux, mais un seul, voulez-vous?”

“Oh, how horrid you are,” cried the boy.

“Nous vous rendons,” concluded the tall one, mispronouncing the French words coarsely and clumsily.

“He’s a cynic, you know,” the boy laughed to me; “and do you suppose he can’t speak French? He speaks like a Parisian, but he is mimicking those Russians who are awfully fond of talking aloud in French together before other people, though they can’t speak it themselves. . . .”

“Dans les wagons,” the tall fellow explained.

“To be sure, in railway carriages; oh, what a bore you are! There’s no need to explain. Why will you always pretend to be a fool?”

Meanwhile I took out a rouble and offered it to the tall fellow.

“Nous vous rendons,” said the latter, pocketing the rouble; and turning to the door with a perfectly unmoved and serious face, he proceeded to kick it with his huge coarse boot and without the faintest sign of ill-humour. . . .

“Ah, you will be fighting with Lambert again!” the boy observed uneasily. “You had much better ring the bell!”

I rang the bell, but the tall fellow continued kicking the door nevertheless.

“Ah, sacré . . ,” we heard Lambert’s voice the other side of the door, and he quickly opened it.

“Dites donc, voulez-vous que je vous casse la tête, mon ami!” he shouted to the tall man.

“Mon ami, voilà Dolgorowky, l’autre mon ami,” the tall fellow replied with dignified gravity, staring at Lambert, who was red with anger. As soon as the latter saw me, he seemed suddenly transformed.

“It’s you, Arkady! At last! Then you are better, better are you at last?”

He seized my hands, pressing them warmly; he was in fact so genuinely delighted that I felt pleased at once, and even began to like him.

“I’ve come to you first of all!”

“Alphonsine!” cried Lambert.

She instantly skipped out from behind the screen.

“Le voilà!”

“C’est lui!” cried Alphonsine, clasping and unclasping her hands; she would have rushed to embrace me, but Lambert protected me.

“There, there, there, down, down!” he shouted to her as though she were a dog. “It’s like this, Arkady: some fellows have agreed to dine together to-day at the Tatars’. I shan’t let you go, you must come with us. We’ll have dinner; I’ll get rid of these fellows at once, and then we can have a chat. Come in, come in! We’ll set off at once, only wait a minute . . .”

I went in and stood in the middle of that room, looking about me, and remembering it. Lambert behind the screen hurriedly dressed. The tall fellow and his companion followed us in, in spite of Lambert’s words. We all remained standing.

“Mlle. Alphonsine, voulez-vous me baiser?” growled the tall man.

“Mlle. Alphonsine,” the younger one was beginning, showing her the tie, but she flew savagely at both of them.

“Ah, le petit vilain! “ she shouted to the younger one; “ne m’approchez pas, ne me salissez pas, et vous, le grand dadais, je vous planque à la porte tous les deux, savez vous cela!”

Though she warned him off with contempt and disgust, as though she were really afraid of being soiled by contact with him (which I could not at all understand because he was such a pretty fellow, and turned out to be just as well dressed when he took off his overcoat), the younger of the two men kept asking her to tie his tall friend’s cravat for him, and to put him on one of Lambert’s clean collars first. She was on the point of beating them in her indignation at such a suggestion, but Lambert overhearing, shouted to her behind the screen not to hinder them, but to do as they asked; “they won’t leave off if you don’t,” he added, and Alphonsine instantly produced a collar and began to fasten the tall man’s cravat without the slightest sign of disinclination. The man stretched out his neck just as he had done on the stairs, while she tied his cravat.

“Mlle. Alphonsine, avez vous vendu votre bologne?” he asked.

“Qu’est-ce que ça, ma bologne?”

The younger man explained that “ma bologne” meant a lapdog.

“Tiens, quel est ce baragouin?”

“Je parle comme une dame russe sur les eaux minérales,” observed le grand dadais, still with his neck outstretched.

“Qu’est-ce que ça qu’une dame russe sur les eaux minérales et . . . où est donc votre jolie montre, que Lambert vous a donnée,” she said suddenly to the younger one.

“What, no watch again,” Lambert chimed in irritably behind the screen.

“We’ve eaten it up!” growled le grand dadais.

“I sold it for eight roubles: it was only silver gilt, and you said it was gold; so now at the shop it’s only sixteen roubles,” the younger answered Lambert, defending himself reluctantly.

“We must put an end to this!” Lambert said even more irritably. “I don’t buy you clothes, my young friend, and give you good things, for you to spend them on your tall friend. . . . What was that tie too that you bought him?”

“That was only a rouble; that was not with your money. He had no cravat at all, and he ought to buy a hat too.”

“Nonsense!” Lambert was really angry. “I gave him enough for a hat too, and he goes off and wastes it on oysters and champagne. He positively reeks; he’s dirty and untidy; you can’t take him anywhere. How can I take him out to dinner?”

“I’m a cad,” growled the dadais. “Nous avons un rouble d’argent que nous avons prêté chez notre nouvel ami.”

“Don’t you give him anything, Arkady,” Lambert cried again.

“Excuse me, Lambert; I ask you plainly for ten roubles,” cried the boy, growing suddenly angry and flushing, which made him look twice as handsome as before; “and don’t ever dare to say such stupid things as you did just now to Dolgoruky. I must have ten roubles to pay Dolgoruky back that rouble at once, and with the rest I’ll buy Andreyev a hat, so you see.”

Lambert came out from behind the screen:

“Here are three yellow notes, and three roubles, and there’s nothing more till Tuesday, and don’t dare . . . or else. . . .”

Le grand dadais fairly snatched the money from him.

“Dolgorowky, here is the rouble nous vous rendons avec beaucoup de grâce. Petya, come along!” he called to his companion. Then holding up

the two notes and waving them in the air, while he stared fixedly at Lambert, he yelled at the top of his voice:

"Ohé Lambert! Oû est Lambert, as-tu vu Lambert?"

"How dare you, how dare you," Lambert yelled too, in terrible wrath: I saw that underlying all this was something in the past of which I knew nothing, and I looked on in astonishment. But the tall fellow was not in the least alarmed by Lambert's wrath; on the contrary, he yelled louder than ever: "Ohé Lambert!" and so on. And so shouting, they went out on the stairs. Lambert was running after them, but he turned back.

"I'll throw them out by the scr-r-ruff of their necks! They cost more than they are worth. . . . Come along, Arkady! I'm late. I am expected there by another . . . fellow I need . . . a beast too. . . . They're all beasts! A low lot, a low lot!" he shouted again, almost gnashing his teeth; but all at once he recovered himself completely.

"I am glad that you have come at last. Alphonsine, not a step out of the house! Let us go."

At the steps a smart turn-out was waiting for him. We got in; but all the way he could not quite regain his composure and get over a sort of rage against the two young men. I was surprised at his taking it so seriously; and what's more, at their being so disrespectful to Lambert, and his seeming almost frightened of them.

From the old impression that had been stamped on me from childhood, it still seemed to me that every one must be afraid of Lambert, as in spite of all my independence, I certainly stood in awe of him myself at that moment.

"I tell you now they are all a low lot," Lambert persisted. "Would you believe it that tall ruffian pestered me, the day before yesterday, in decent company. He stood in front of me and shouted: 'Ohé Lambert!' in decent company! Every one laughed, and do you know, it was for me to give him money — would you believe it. I gave it him. Oh, that — r-r-ruffian! Would you believe it? He was an ensign in a regiment, but he was kicked out, and, you wouldn't imagine it, but he is a man of education: he was brought up in a good family, you would hardly believe it! He has ideas, he might . . . and damn it all! And he is a perfect Hercules. He is of use, though of not much use. And you can see he does not wash his hands. I interested a lady in his case, an old lady of very good position, telling her that he was penitent, and on the point of committing suicide from remorse, and he went to see her, sat down and began whistling. And the other, the

pretty fellow, is a general's son; his family is ashamed of him. I got him off when he was arrested, I saved him, and you see how he repays me. There are no people worth their salt here! I'll pay them out, I'll pay them out!"

"They know my name; did you talk to them about me?"

"Yes, it was stupid of me. Please stay on a little after dinner, control your feelings. . . . There's an awful canaille coming. Yes, he's an awful canaille, and awfully cunning; they are all rascals here, there's not an honest man about! Well, we'll finish — then. . . . What's your favourite dish? But it doesn't matter, the fare is always good. I'll pay, don't you worry. It's a good thing you are well dressed. I can give you money. You must come often. Only fancy, I've stood them meat and drink here, it's fish pie every day of the week; that watch he sold — it's the second time. That little fellow, Trishatov, you saw him; Alphonsine is sick at the very sight of him, and won't let him come near her; and here in the presence of officers he calls out: 'I must have woodcock.' I stood him woodcock! But I'll pay them out."

"Do you remember, Lambert, how we went to a restaurant together in Moscow, and you stuck a fork into me, and how you had fifty roubles then!"

"Yes, I remember! Damn it, I remember! I like you . . . you may believe it. Nobody likes you; but I like you; I'm the only one that does, you remember that. . . . The pockmarked fellow that is coming here is a cunning canaille; don't you answer any of his questions; if he begins talking, it's all right; but if he begins questioning, make some nonsensical answer, or hold your tongue."

At any rate, in his excitement he did not question me much on the way. I even felt insulted at his having such confidence in me, and not even suspecting that I mistrusted him; I fancied that I detected in him the absurd idea that he could still order me about. "And what's more, he's awfully ignorant and ill-bred," I thought, as I went into the restaurant.

3

I had been into that restaurant, in the Morskaya, before, during my disgraceful period of degradation and depravity, and so the impression of those rooms, of those lackeys looking at me, and recognizing me as a familiar visitor, and finally the impression made on me by the mysterious

company of Lambert's friends, amongst whom I found myself so suddenly, and to whom I seemed already to belong, and above all an obscure feeling that of my own freewill I was going into something abominable, and that I should certainly end up by doing something horrid — all this seemed to go through me in a flash. There was a moment when I very nearly went away; but the moment passed and I remained.

The "pock-marked man," of whom for some reason Lambert was so much afraid, was already waiting for us. He was one of those men of stupidly practical appearance, whom I have always from my childhood detested; he was about forty-five, of middle height, with hair just turning grey. He was disgustingly close-shaven, except for two little neatly trimmed grey whiskers, like sausages, one on each side of his extremely flat and spiteful-looking face. He was of course dull, solemn, and taciturn, and even conceited, as such nonentities always are. He looked at me very attentively, but he did not say a word. Lambert was so stupid that though he sat us down at the same table together, he did not think it necessary to introduce us, and so he may well have taken me for one of the blackmailers associated with Lambert. To the two young men (who arrived almost simultaneously with us) he did not address a single word during the whole of dinner, but it was evident that he knew them well. He talked only to Lambert, and then almost in a whisper, and indeed Lambert did most of the talking, and the pock-marked man confined himself to fragmentary and wrathful ejaculations, which sounded like an ultimatum. He behaved superciliously, was ill-humoured and sarcastic, while Lambert on the other hand was extremely excited and was evidently trying to persuade him all the time, probably urging him on to some undertaking. On one occasion I put out my hand to take a bottle of red wine; the pock-marked man immediately took a bottle of sherry and handed it to me, though he had not said a word to me till then.

"Try this," he said, offering me the bottle. I guessed, on the spot, that he too, knew everything in the world about me — my story, and my name, and perhaps the fact that Lambert was counting upon me. The idea that he was taking me for a satellite maddened me again, and Lambert's face betrayed an intense and very stupid uneasiness when the pock-marked man addressed me; the latter noticed it and laughed. "There's no doubt that Lambert depends on all of them," I thought, hating him at that instant with my whole soul. In this way, though we were sitting at the same table, throughout the

whole dinner we were divided into two groups; the pock-marked man with Lambert, facing each other close to the window, while I was beside the grubby Andreyev, and Trishatov sat facing me. Lambert hurried on the dinner, continually urging the waiters to make haste with the dishes. When the champagne was brought he held out his glass to me:

"To your health, let's clink glasses!" he said, breaking off his conversation with the pock-marked man.

"And will you let me clink with you too?" said the pretty youth, holding out his glass across the table. Till the champagne arrived he had been very silent, and seemed pensive. The dadais said nothing at all, but sat silent and ate a great deal.

"With pleasure," I answered Trishatov. We clinked glasses and drank.

"But I'm not going to drink your health," observed the dadais turning to me; "not because I desire your death, but so that you may not drink any more here to-day." He spoke gloomily and ponderously. "Three glasses is enough for you. I see you are looking at my unwashed fist!" he went on, putting his fist on the table. "I don't wash it, but as it is I put it at Lambert's service for smashing other people's heads when he's in a tight place." And saying this he brought down his fist on the table with such force that he set all the plates and glasses rattling. Besides us there were people dining at four other tables, all of them officers or gentlemen of dignified appearance. It was a fashionable restaurant; all broke off their conversation for a moment and looked round to our corner; and indeed I fancied we had attracted curiosity for some time past. Lambert flushed crimson.

"Ah, he's at it again! I thought I had asked you to behave yourself, Nikolay Semyonovitch," he said to Andreyev in a furious whisper. The latter gave him a prolonged stare.

"I don't want my new friend Dolgorowky to drink a great deal here to-day."

Lambert flushed more hotly than ever.

The pock-marked man listened in silence but with evident pleasure. Andreyev's behaviour seemed to please him, for some reason. I was the only one who did not understand why I was not to drink much wine.

"He says that because he's only just had some money! You shall have another seven roubles directly after dinner — only do let us have dinner, don't disgrace us," Lambert hissed at him.

“Aha!” the dadais growled triumphantly. At this the pock-marked man was absolutely delighted, and he sniggered spitefully.

“Listen, you really . . ,” began Trishatov to his friend with uneasiness and almost distress in his voice, evidently anxious to restrain him. Andreyev subsided, but not for long; that was not his intention. Just across the table, five paces from us, two gentleman were dining, engaged in lively conversation. Both were middle-aged gentleman, who looked extremely conscious of their own dignity; one was tall and very stout, the other was also very stout but short, they were discussing in Polish the events of the day in Paris. For some time past the dadais had been watching them inquisitively and listening to their talk. The short Pole evidently struck him as a comic figure, and he promptly conceived an aversion for him after the manner of envious and splenetic people, who often take such sudden dislikes for no reason whatever. Suddenly the short Pole pronounced the name of the deputy, Madier de Montjeau, but, as so many Poles do, he pronounced it with an accent on the syllable before the last, instead of on the last syllable; this was enough for the dadais, he turned to the Poles, and drawing up himself with dignity, he suddenly articulated loudly and distinctly as though addressing a question to them:

“Madier de Montjeáu?”

The Poles turned to him savagely.

“What do you want?” the tall stout Pole shouted threateningly to him in Russian.

The dadais paused. “Madier de Montjeáu,” he repeated suddenly again, to be heard by the whole room, giving no sort of explanation, just as he had stupidly set upon me at the door with the reiterated question “Dolgorowky.” The Poles jumped up from their seats, Lambert leapt up from the table and rushed to Andreyev, but leaving him, darted up to the Poles and began making cringing apologies to them.

“They are buffoons, Pani, they are buffoons,” the little Pole repeated contemptuously, as red as a carrot with indignation. “Soon it will be impossible to come!” There was a stir all over the room too, and a murmur of disapproval, though laughter was predominant.

“Come out . . . please . . . come along!” Lambert muttered completely disconcerted, doing his utmost to get Andreyev out of the room. The latter looking searchingly at Lambert, and judging that he would now give the money, agreed to follow him. Probably he had already extorted money

from Lambert by the same kind of disgraceful behaviour. Trishatov seemed about to run after them too, but he looked at me and checked himself.

“Ach, how horrid,” he said hiding his eyes with his slender fingers.

“Very horrid,” whispered the pock-marked man, looking really angry at last.

Meanwhile Lambert came back looking quite pale, and gesticulating eagerly, began whispering something to the pock-marked man. The latter listened disdainfully, and meanwhile ordered the waiter to make haste with the coffee; he was evidently in a hurry to get off. And yet the whole affair had only been a schoolboyish prank. Trishatov got up with his cup of coffee, and came and sat down beside me.

“I am very fond of him,” he said to me with a face as open as though he had been talking to me like this all his life. “You can’t imagine how unhappy Andreyev is. He has wasted all his sister’s dowry on eating and drinking, and in fact all they had he spent on eating and drinking during the year he was in the service, and I see now he worries. And as for his not washing, it’s just through despair. And he has awfully strange ideas: he’ll tell you all of a sudden that he’s both a scoundrel and an honest man — that it’s all the same and no difference: and that there’s no need to do anything, either good or bad, they are just the same, one may do good or bad, but that the best of all is to be still, not taking off one’s clothes for a month at a time, to eat, and drink, and sleep — and nothing else. But believe me, he only says that. And do you know, I really believe he played the fool like this just now to break off with Lambert once for all. He spoke of it yesterday. Would you believe it, sometimes at night or when he has been sitting long alone, he begins to cry, and, do you know, when he cries, it’s different from anyone else; he howls, he howls in an awful way, and you know it’s even more pitiful . . . and he’s such a big strong fellow, and then all of a sudden — to see him howling. It is sad, poor fellow, isn’t it? I want to save him, though I am a wretched hopeless scamp myself, you wouldn’t believe. Will you let me in, Dolgoruky, if I ever come and see you?”

“Oh, do come, I really like you.”

“What for? Well, thank you. Listen, will you drink another glass? But after all you’d better not. He was right when he said you had better not drink any more,” he suddenly gave me a significant wink, “but I’ll drink it all the same. I have nothing now, but would you believe it, I can’t hold myself back in anything; if you were to tell me I must not dine at a

restaurant again, I should be ready to do anything, simply to dine there. Oh, we genuinely want to be honest, I assure you, but we keep putting it off,

"And the years pass by and the best of our years!

"I am awfully afraid that he will hang himself. He'll go and do it without telling anyone. He's like that. They are all hanging themselves nowadays; why, I don't know — perhaps there are a great many people like us. I, for instance, can't exist without money to spend. Luxuries matter a great deal more to me than necessities.

"I say, are you fond of music? I'm awfully fond of it. I'll play you something when I come and see you. I play very well on the piano and I studied music a very long time. I've studied seriously. If I were to compose an opera, do you know I should take the subject from Faust. I am very fond of that subject. I am always making up a scene in the cathedral, just imagining it in my head, I mean. The Gothic cathedral, the interior, the choirs, the hymns; Gretchen enters, and mediaeval singing, you know, so that you can hear the fifteenth century in it. Gretchen overwhelmed with grief; to begin with a recitative, subdued but terrible, full of anguish; the choirs thunder on, gloomily, sternly, callously,

"Dies irae, dies illa!

"And all of a sudden — the voice of the devil, the song of the devil. He is unseen, there is only his song, side by side with the hymns, mingling with the hymns, almost melting into them, but at the same time quite different from them — that must be managed somehow. The song is prolonged, persistent, it must be a tenor, it must be a tenor. It begins softly, tenderly: 'Do you remember, Gretchen, when you were innocent, when you were a child, you came with your mother to this cathedral and lisped your prayers from an old prayer-book?' But the song gets louder and louder, more intense; on higher notes: there's a sound of tears in them, misery unceasing, and hopeless, and finally despair. 'There's no forgiveness, Gretchen, there's no forgiveness for you here!' Gretchen tries to pray, but only cries of misery rise up from her soul — you know when the breast is convulsed with tears — but Satan's song never ceases, and pierces deeper and deeper into the soul like a spear; it gets higher and higher, and suddenly breaks off almost in a shriek: 'The end to all, accursed one!' Gretchen falls on her knees, clasps her hands before her — and then comes her prayer, something very short, semi-recitative, but naïve, entirely without ornament, something mediaeval in the extreme, four lines, only four lines altogether — Stradella

has some such notes — and at the last note she swoons! General confusion. She is picked up, carried out, and then the choir thunders forth. It is, as it were, a storm of voices, a hymn of inspiration, of victory, overwhelming, something in the style of our

‘Borne on high by angels’

— so that everything is shaken to its foundations, and it all passes into the triumphant cry of exaltation ‘Hosanna!’ — as though it were the cry of the whole universe and it rises and rises, and then the curtain falls! Yes, you know if only I could, I should have done something; only I can never do anything now, I do nothing but dream. I am always dreaming; my whole life has turned into a dream. I dream at night too. Ah, Dolgoruky, have you read Dickens”Old Curiosity Shop’?”

“Yes, why?”

“Do you remember — wait, I will have another glass — do you remember, there’s one passage at the end, when they — that mad old man and that charming girl of thirteen, his grandchild, take refuge after their fantastic flight and wandering in some remote place in England, near a Gothic mediaeval church, and the little girl has received some post there, and shows the church to visitors . . . then the sun is setting, and the child in the church porch, bathed in the last rays of light, stands and gazes at the sunset, with gentle pensive contemplation in her child soul, a soul full of wonder as though before some mystery, for both alike are mysteries, the sun, the thought of God, and the church, the thought of man, aren’t they? Oh, I don’t know how to express it, only God loves such first thoughts in children. . . . While near her, on the step, the crazy old grandfather gazes at her with a fixed look . . . you know there’s nothing special in it, in that picture of Dickens, there’s absolutely nothing in it, but yet one will remember it all one’s life, and it has survived for all Europe — why? It’s splendid! It’s the innocence in it! And I don’t know what there is in it, but it’s fine. I used always to be reading novels when I was at school. Do you know I had a sister in the country only a year older than me. . . . Oh, now it’s all sold, and we have no country-place! I was sitting with her on the terrace under our old lime trees, we were reading that novel, and the sun was setting too, and suddenly we left off reading, and said to one another that we would be kind too, that we would be good — I was then preparing for the university and . . . Ach, Dolgoruky, you know, every man has his memories! . . .”

And he suddenly let his pretty little head fall on my shoulder and burst out crying. I felt very very sorry for him. It is true that he had drunk a great deal of wine, but he had talked to me so sincerely, so like a brother, with such feeling. . . . Suddenly, at that instant, we heard a shout from the street, and there was a violent tapping at the window (there was a large plate-glass window on the ground floor, so that anyone could tap on the window with his fingers from the street). This was the ejected Andreyev.

"Ohé Lambert! Où est Lambert? As-tu vu Lambert?" we heard his wild shout in the street.

"Ah! yes, here he is! So he's not gone away?" cried the boy, jumping up from his place.

"Our account!" Lambert cried through his clenched teeth to the waiter. His hands shook with anger as he paid the bill, but the pock-marked man did not allow Lambert to pay for him.

"Why not? Why, I invited you, you accepted my invitation."

"No, excuse me," the pock-marked man pulled out his purse, and reckoning out his share he paid separately.

"You'll offend me, Semyon Sidorovitch."

"That's what I wish," Semyon Sidorovitch snapped out, taking his hat, and without saying good-bye to anybody, he walked alone out of the room. Lambert tossed the money to the waiter and hurriedly ran after him, even forgetting my existence in his confusion. Trishatov and I walked out last of all. Andreyev was standing like a post at the door, waiting for Trishatov.

"You scoundrel!" cried Lambert, unable to restrain himself.

"There, there!" Andreyev grunted at him, and with one swing of his arm he knocked off his round hat, which went spinning along the pavement. Lambert flew abjectly to pick it up.

"Vinq-cinq roubles!" Andreyev showed Trishatov the note, which he had just got from Lambert.

"That's enough," Trishatov shouted to him. "Why must you always make an uproar? . . . And why have you wrung twenty-five roubles out of him? You only ought to have had seven."

"Why did I wring it out of him? He promised us a private dinner with Athenian women, and instead of women he regaled us with the pock-marked man, and what's more, I did not finish my dinner and I've been freezing here in the cold, it's certainly worth eighteen roubles. He owed me seven, so that makes twenty-five."

“Go to the devil both of you!” yelled Lambert. “I’ll send you both packing, I’ll pay you out . . .”

“Lambert, I’ll send you packing. I’ll pay you out!” cried Andreyev. “Adieu, mon prince, don’t drink any more wine! Petya, marche! Ohé Lambert! Où est Lambert? As-tu vu Lambert?” he roared for the last time as he strode away.

“So I shall come and see you, may I?” Trishatov murmured hurriedly, and hastened after his friend.

I was left alone with Lambert.

“Well . . . come along!” he brought out, seeming stupefied and breathing with difficulty.

“Where shall I come along? I’m not coming anywhere with you!” I made haste to reply defiantly.

“You’re not coming,” he said, startled and apprehensive. “Why, I have only been waiting for us to be alone!”

“But where to go?” I must confess I, too, had a slight ringing in my head, from the three glasses of champagne and the two wine- glasses of sherry I had drunk.

“This way, this way. Do you see?”

“But this is an oyster bar: you see it is written up. It smells so horrid . . .”

“That’s only because you have just had dinner. We won’t have oysters, but I’ll give you some champagne. . . .”

“I don’t want any! You want to make me drunk.”

“That’s what they told you; they’ve been laughing at you. You believe blackguards like that!”

“No, Trishatov’s not a blackguard. But I know how to take care of myself — that’s all!”

“So you’ve a will of your own, have you?”

“Yes, I have a character; more than you have, for you’re servile to everybody you meet. You disgraced us, you begged pardon of the Poles like a lackey. I suppose you’ve often been beaten in restaurants?”

“But we must have a talk, you fool!” he cried with the same contemptuous impatience, which almost implied, what are you driving at? “Why, you are afraid, aren’t you? Are you my friend or not?”

“I am not your friend and you are a swindler. We’ll go along simply to show you I’m not afraid of you. Oh, what a horrid smell, it smells of

cheese! How disgusting!”

CHAPTER VI

1

I must beg the reader to remember again that I had a slight giddiness in my head; if it had not been for that I should have acted and spoken differently. In the shop, in a back room, one could indeed have eaten oysters, and we sat down to a table covered with a filthy cloth. Lambert ordered champagne; a glass of cold wine of a golden colour was set before me and seemed looking at me invitingly; but I felt annoyed.

"You see, Lambert, what annoys me most is that you think you can order me about now as you used to do at Touchard's, while you are cringing upon everybody here."

"You fool! Aië, let's clink glasses."

"You don't even deign to keep up appearances with me: you might at least disguise the fact that you want to make me drunk."

"You are talking rot and you're drunk. You must drink some more, and you'll be more cheerful. Take your glass, take it!"

"Why do you keep on 'take it'? I am going and that's the end of it."

And I really did get up. He was awfully vexed:

"It was Trishatov whispered that to you: I saw you whispering. You are a fool for that. Alphonsine is really disgusted if he goes near her. . . . He's a dirty beast, I'll tell you what he's like."

"You've told me already. You can talk of nothing but your Alphonsine, you're frightfully limited."

"Limited?" he did not understand. "They've gone over now to that pock-marked fellow. That's what it is! That's why I sent them about their business. They're dishonest. That fellow's a blackguard and he's corrupting them. I insisted that they should always behave decently."

I sat still and as it were mechanically took my glass and drank a draught.

"I'm ever so far ahead of you in education," I said. But he was only too delighted that I went on sitting there, and at once filled up my glass.

"And you know you're afraid of them!" I went on taunting him, and no doubt I was even nastier than he was at that moment. "Andreyev knocked your hat off, and you gave him twenty-five roubles for it."

“I did give it him, but he’ll pay me back. They are rebellious, but I’ll be quits with them.”

“You are awfully upset by that pock-marked man. And do you know it strikes me that I’m the only one left you. All your hopes now are resting on me — aren’t they?”

“Yes, Arkasha, that is so: you are the only friend left me; you are right in saying that!” he slapped me on the shoulder.

What could be done with a man so crude; he was utterly obtuse, and took irony for serious praise.

“You could save me from bad things if you would be a good comrade, Arkady,” he went on, looking at me caressingly.

“In what way could I save you?”

“You know yourself what it is. Without me, like a fool, you will certainly be stupid; but I’d get you thirty thousand and we would go halves and you know how. Why, think who you are; you’re nothing — no name, no position, and here you’d win first prize straight off: and having such a fortune, you’ll know how to make a career!”

I was simply astounded at this attack. I had taken for granted that he would dissemble, but he had begun upon it with such bluntness, such schoolboyish bluntness. I resolved to listen to him from a desire to be open-minded and . . . from intense curiosity.

“Look here, Lambert, you won’t understand this, but I’m consenting to listen to you because I’m open-minded,” I declared firmly, and again I took a gulp at my glass. Lambert at once filled it up.

“I’ll tell you what, Arkady: if a fellow like Büring had dared to abuse me and strike me in the presence of a lady I adored, I don’t know what I should have done! But you put up with it, I’m ashamed of you: you’re a poor creature!”

“How dare you say that Büring struck me!” I shouted, turning crimson. “It was more I struck him than he me.”

“No, it was he struck you, not you struck him.”

“You’re lying, I trod on his foot too!”

“But he shoved you back, and told the footman to drag you away . . . and she sat and looked on from her carriage and laughed at you; she knows that you have no father and that you can be insulted.”

“I don’t understand this schoolboyish conversation, Lambert, and I’m ashamed of it. You are saying this to irritate me, and as crudely and as

openly as though I were a boy of sixteen. You've been plotting with Anna Andreyevna!" I cried, trembling with anger, and still mechanically sipping my wine.

"Anna Andreyevna's a sly jade! She's humbugging you and me and all the world! I have been waiting for you, because you can best finish off with that woman."

"With what woman?"

"With Madame Ahmakov. I know all about it. You told me yourself that she is afraid of that letter you've got . . ."

"What letter . . . you're talking nonsense. . . . Have you seen her?" I muttered in confusion.

"Yes, I saw her. She's beautiful. Très belle; and you've taste."

"I know you've seen her but you did not dare speak to her, and I wish you did not dare to speak of her either."

"You're a boy, and she laughs at you — so there! We had a virtuous lady like that in Moscow. Ough, didn't she turn up her nose! but she began to tremble when we threatened that we would tell all we knew and she knuckled under directly; and we got all we wanted both ways, money, and — you understand? Now she's virtue unapproachable again in society — foo! my word, isn't she high and mighty, and hasn't she got a turn-out. Ah, you should have seen that little back room it happened in! You've not lived; if only you knew the little back rooms they don't shrink from . . ."

"I've thought that," I could not help muttering.

"They're corrupt to their very finger-tips; you don't know what they're capable of! Alphonsine lived in a house like that, and she was disgusted."

"I have thought of that," I chimed in again.

"But they beat you, and you complain . . ."

"Lambert, you're a blackguard, you're a damned beast!" I cried, suddenly pulling myself together and beginning to tremble. "I have dreamed all this, you were in it and Anna Andreyevna. . . . Oh, you damned brute! Did you really think I was such a scoundrel? I dreamed it because I knew that you would say this. And besides, all this can't be so simple that you can talk to me about it so simply and directly."

"He is in a rage, tut, tut, tut!" Lambert drawled, laughing and triumphant. "Well, Arkasha, my boy, now I've found out all I wanted to know. That's why I was so eager to see you. Listen, you love her I see, and want to revenge yourself on Büring. That's what I wanted to find out. I've

been suspecting it all this time while I've been waiting to see you. Ceci posé, celà change la question. And so much the better, for she loves you too. So you must marry her without a moment's delay, that's the best thing; you can't do anything else, that's your safest position. And then remember, Arkady, that you have a friend in me of whom you can make any use you like. And that friend will help you, and will marry you: I'll move heaven and earth, Arkasha! And you can give your old friend thirty thousand for his trouble afterwards, eh? And I'll help you, don't doubt that. I know all the ins and outs of the business, and they shall give you the whole dowry, and you'll be a wealthy man with a career before you!"

Though my head was in a whirl I looked at Lambert with wonder. He was in earnest, and not merely in earnest in what he said, but in believing in the possibility of my marrying; I could see that he thoroughly believed in it himself, and, in fact, caught at the idea with enthusiasm. I saw, of course, too, that he was entrapping me like a schoolboy (I certainly must have seen it even then); but the thought of marrying her so thrilled me that though I wondered how Lambert could believe in such a fantastic notion, yet, at the same time I tried violently to believe in it myself, though I did not for an instant lose consciousness of the fact that it could not possibly come to pass. All this was mingled together at the same time.

"But is it possible?" I faltered.

"Why not? you will show her the letter, she'll be frightened and marry you to keep her money."

I made up my mind not to stop Lambert in his vile suggestions, for he disclosed them to me with such simplicity and did not suspect that I might be revolted by them; I did mutter, however, that I should not like to marry her simply by force.

"I don't want to use force for anything; how can you be so base as to think me capable of it!"

"Hoity-toity! Why, she'll marry you of her own accord: it won't be your doing, she'll be frightened and marry you herself, and she'll marry you because she loves you, too," Lambert put in hastily.

"That's a lie; you're laughing at me. How do you know she loves me?"

"Of course she does. I know it. And Anna Andreyevna assumes it. It's the truth in earnest. I'm telling you that Anna Andreyevna assumes it. And I'll tell you something else when you come to me, and you'll see that she does love you. Alphonsine has been at Tsarskoe; she found out there . . ."

“What could she find out there?”

“You come back with me; she’ll tell you herself, and it will please you. Why, aren’t you as good as anybody, you are handsome, you are well educated.”

“Yes, I am well educated,” I answered, hardly able to breathe; my heart was thumping and, of course, not only from the wine.

“You are handsome, you are well dressed.”

“Yes, I’m well dressed.”

“And you are good-natured. . . .”

“Yes, I’m good-natured.”

“Why shouldn’t she consent? Büring won’t take her without money anyway, and you can deprive her of her money — so she’ll be in a fright: you’ll marry her and punish Büring. Why, you told me yourself that night after you were frozen that she was in love with you.”

“Can I have told you that? I’m sure I did not tell you that.”

“Yes, you did.”

“I was delirious when I said that. I suppose I told you of the letter too?”

“Yes, you told me you had such a letter; I thought at the time: how can he let slip his luck if he has such a letter?”

“It’s all a mad idea, and I’m not so stupid as to believe it,” I muttered; “to begin with there’s a difference in our ages, and besides I’ve no surname.”

“But she’ll marry you though; she can’t help marrying you when it’s a question of so much money — I’ll arrange that. And, what’s more, she loves you. You know that old prince is very well disposed to you; through his protection, you know, you can form connections; and what does it matter if you have no name, nowadays nothing of that’s necessary: once you pocket the money you’ll get on and get on, and in ten years’ time you will be such a millionaire that all Russia will resound with your fame, so you won’t need a name then. Why, you can buy a title in Austria. And when you get married, keep her well in hand. They want a firm hand. If a woman’s in love, she likes to feel a man’s got a tight grip on her. Women like will in a man. When you frighten her with the letter, from that hour you will show her you have strength of will. ‘Ah,’ she’ll say ‘he’s so young, and yet he has will.’”

I sat, as it were, spell-bound. I should never with anyone else have sunk to such an idiotic conversation. But in this case a sort of voluptuous

craving drew me on to continue it. Besides, Lambert was so stupid and so low that no one could feel ashamed of anything before him.

"No, do you know, Lambert," I said suddenly: "you may say what you like, but a great deal of this is absurd; I have been talking to you because we were schoolfellows, and we need not be ashamed of saying anything to one another; but I would not have demeaned myself to it with anyone else for any consideration. And, first of all, tell me why you keep repeating so positively that she's in love with me? That was quite good what you said just now about having capital; but you see, Lambert, you don't know anything of good society: all this is still with them on the most patriarchal, family system, so to say, and, therefore, as so far she does not know my abilities and what a position I may achieve in the world, she'll be ashamed of me. But I won't conceal from you, Lambert, that there really is one point that might give one hope. You see: she might marry me from gratitude, because I might save her from a man she hates. And she is afraid of that man."

"Ah, you mean your father? Why, is he so much in love with her?" Lambert said, pricking up his ears with peculiar curiosity.

"Oh no!" I cried: "and how horrid you are, and at the same time how stupid, Lambert! Why, if he were in love with her, how could I want to marry her? After all we are father and son, that would be shameful. He loves my mother, my mother, and I saw how he held her in his arms. I did think at one time he loved Katerina Nikolaevna, but now I know for certain that though he may once have loved her, he has hated her for a long time now . . . and wants to revenge himself on her, and she's afraid of him, for I tell you, Lambert, he is very terrible when he begins to revenge himself. He becomes almost insane. When he's in a rage with her, he doesn't stick at anything. This is a feud in the old style on account of the loftiest principles. In our time we don't care a hang for any general principles; nowadays there are no general principles but only special cases. Ah, Lambert, you don't understand, you are as stupid as a post; I am talking to you about these principles, but I am sure you don't understand. You are awfully uneducated. Do you remember you used to beat me! Now I'm stronger than you are — do you know that?"

"Arkasha, come home with me! We'll spend the evening and drink another bottle, and Alphonsine will sing to the guitar."

“No, I’m not coming. Listen, Lambert, I’ve got an ‘idea.’ If I don’t succeed and don’t marry, I shall fall back on the ‘idea’; but you haven’t an idea.”

“All right, all right, you shall tell me about it, come along.”

“I am not coming,” I said, getting up. “I don’t want to, and I’m not coming. I shall come and see you, but you are a blackguard. I’ll give you thirty thousand, but I am cleaner and better than you. . . . I see, you want to deceive me all round. But I forbid you even to think of her: she’s above every one, and your plan is so low that I really wonder at you, Lambert. I want to be married, that’s a different matter; but I don’t want money, I despise money. I wouldn’t take it if she begged me to on her knees . . . but marriage, marriage, that’s a different matter. But you know that was quite right what you said, that one ought to keep a tight hand on her. It’s a good thing to love, to love passionately, with all the generosity of which a man is capable, and which can never be found in a woman; but to be despotic is a good thing too. For, do you know, Lambert, a woman loves despotism. You understand woman, Lambert. But you are wonderfully stupid in everything else. And do you know, Lambert, you are not at all such a blackguard as you seem, you’re simple. I like you. Ah, Lambert, why are you such a rogue? What a jolly time we might have if you weren’t! You know Trishatov’s a dear.”

These last incoherent phrases I muttered in the street. Oh, I set all this down in every trivial detail, that the reader may see that with all my enthusiasm and my vows and promises to reform, and to strive for “seemliness,” I was capable then of falling so easily and into such filth. And I swear that if I were not fully convinced that I am no longer the same, but have gained strength of character by practical life, I should not have confessed all this to the reader.

We went out of the shop, and Lambert supported me slightly, putting his arm round me. Suddenly I looked at him, and saw in his fixed, terribly intent and perfectly sober eyes the very same expression as I had seen that morning when I was frozen and when he had led me to the cab with his arm round me in the same way, and listened, all eyes and ears, to my incoherent babble. Men who are drunk but not quite hopelessly drunk, sometimes have moments of absolute soberness.

“I’m not going home with you for anything,” I declared firmly and coherently, looking at him sarcastically and putting aside his arm.

“Come, nonsense. I’ll tell Alphonsine to make tea for us, come!”

He was horribly confident that I should not get away; he put his arm round me and held me with a sort of relish, as his prey, and the prey was what he needed of course, that evening and in that condition! It will be clear later why.

“I’m not coming!” I repeated. “Cab!”

At that instant a sledge drove up and I jumped into it.

“Where are you off to? What are you about!” yelled Lambert, clutching at my fur coat in extreme dismay.

“And don’t dare to follow me!” I cried, “don’t drive after me.” At that very instant the sledge started, and my coat was torn out of Lambert’s hands.

“You’ll come all the same!” he shouted after me in an angry voice.

“I shall come if I want to. I can do as I like!” I retorted, turning round in the sledge.

2

He did not follow me, of course, because there did not happen to be another sledge at hand, and I succeeded in getting out of his sight. I drove on as far as the Haymarket, and there I stopped and dismissed the sledge. I had a great desire to walk. I was not conscious of being tired or of being much intoxicated, I felt full of vigour; I was aware of a fresh flow of energy, of an exceptional readiness for any sort of enterprise, and of innumerable pleasant ideas in my brain.

My heart was thudding violently and loudly, I could hear every beat. And everything seemed so charming, so easy. When I passed the sentry at the Haymarket I felt inclined to go up and kiss him. There was a thaw, the market-place was dingy and evil-smelling, but I was delighted even with the marketplace.

“I am in the Obuhovsky Prospect,” I thought, “and afterwards I shall turn to the left and come out in the Semyonovsky Polk. I shall take a short cut, that’s delightful, it’s all delightful. My coat is unbuttoned, how is it no one snatches it off, where are the thieves? They say there are thieves in the Haymarket; let them come, I might give them my fur coat. What do I want with a fur coat? A fur coat is property. La propriété c’est le vol. But what nonsense, and how nice everything is! It’s nice that the snow is melting.

Why frost? There's no need of a frost at all. It's nice to talk nonsense too. What was it I said to Lambert about principles? I said there were no general principles, but only special cases; that was stuff, utter stuff! And I said it on purpose, out of swagger. I am a little ashamed, but after all it doesn't matter, I'll make up for it. Don't be ashamed, don't distress yourself, Arkady Makarovitch. Arkady Makarovitch. I like you. I like you very much, in fact, my young friend. It's a pity you're a little rascal . . . and . . . and . . . ah, yes . . . ah!"

I suddenly stood still, and my heart began to ache with ecstasy again.

"Good God! what was it he said? He said that she loves me. Oh, he is a scoundrel, he told a lot of lies, that was to make me stay the night with him. But perhaps not. He said Anna Andreyevna thinks so too. . . . Ba! But Darya Onisimovna might have found out something about it for him; she pokes her nose into everything. And why didn't I go to him? I should have found out everything! H'm! He has a plan, and I had a presentiment of it all, every bit of it. The dream. A bold scheme, M. Lambert, only let me tell you it won't be so. Perhaps it will though, perhaps it will! And can he bring off my marriage? Perhaps he can. He is naïve and he believes it. He is stupid and impudent like all practical people. Stupidity and impudence combined are a great force. But confess, you were really afraid of Lambert, Arkady Makarovitch! And what does he want with honest people? He says so seriously: 'There isn't an honest man here!' Why, what are you yourself? And what am I! Don't scoundrels need honest men? In swindling honest men are more needed than anywhere. Ha! ha! You did not know that till now, Arkady Makarovitch, you were so innocent. Good God! What if he really were to bring about my marriage!"

I stood still again. Here I must confess something stupid (as it is all so long ago): I must confess that I had long before been wishing to be married — at least not wishing, and it would never have happened (and I can guarantee it never will in the future), but more than once — a great many times in fact — I had dreamed how splendid it would be to be married, especially as I was falling asleep at night. I began to dream of it when I was about sixteen. I had a schoolfellow of my own age at the high school, called Lavrovsky, such a quiet, sweet, pretty boy, not particularly distinguished in any other way, however. I hardly ever talked to him. One day we happened to be sitting side by side, and he was very dreamy, and suddenly he said to me: 'Ah, Dolgoruky, what do you think, we ought to be

married now; yes, really when should we be married if not now; now would be the very best time, and yet it's impossible.' And he said that so frankly. And I agreed with it at once entirely, for I already had visions of something of the sort. For several days afterwards we met and talked, as it were, in secret, only of that however. But afterwards, I don't know how it happened, but we left off talking to each other and drifted apart. And from that time I began to dream of marriage. This, of course, would not have been worth mentioning, only I wanted to show how far back this feeling sometimes goes. . . .

"There is only one serious objection," I mused, as I went on again. "Oh, of course, the trivial difference in our ages is no real obstacle, but she is such an aristocrat and I am simply Dolgoruky! It's awfully horrid! H'm! Couldn't Versilov marry mother and petition the government for me to be legitimatized as a reward for his services, so to say. . . . He's been in the service, so must have rendered services; he was a mediator at the emancipation. . . . Oh, damn it all, how loathsome."

I suddenly uttered this exclamation and stood still for the third time, but this time I felt as though I had been crushed to the earth. The agonizing feeling of humiliation from the consciousness that I could desire anything so shameful as the change of my surname by being legitimized, this treachery to my whole childhood, all this in one flash shattered my previous mood, and all my joyfulness was dissipated like smoke. "No, I'll never tell that to anyone," I thought, turning crimson: "I've sunk so low because I'm in love and stupid. . . . No, if Lambert is right in anything, it is that nowadays, in our age, the man is what matters, and afterwards his money. Or rather not his money, but rather his property. With a capital like that I would throw myself into the 'idea,' and all Russia would ring with my fame in ten years, and I would revenge myself on them all. And there's no need to stand on ceremony with her. Lambert's right there. She'll be frightened and simply marry me. She'll consent in the simplest and most abject way, and marry me." "You don't know, you don't know in what little back room that happened!" I remembered Lambert's words. "That's true," I went on musing: "Lambert's right in everything, a thousand times more right than Versilov and I and all the idealists! He is a realist. She shall see that I have strength of will, and she will say: 'He has will!' Lambert's a scoundrel, and all he wants is to get thirty thousand out of me, and yet he is the only friend I have. There is no other sort of friendship and there can be no other,

that's all been invented by unpractical people. And I shan't be even degrading her; shall I be degrading her? Not in the least: all women are like that! Are there any women who are not abject? That's why she must have a man over her; that's why she's created a subordinate creature. Woman is vice and temptation, and man is honour and generosity. So it will be to the end of time. And what if I do mean to use that 'document'! That does not matter. That does not prevent honour or generosity. Pure, unadulterated Schillers don't exist, they are invented. It does not matter if one has to pass through filth to get there, as long as the goal is magnificent. It will all be washed off, it will all be smoothed away afterwards. And now it's only 'breadth,' it's only life, it's only vital truth — that's what it is called nowadays."

Oh, I repeat again: I must be forgiven for recording all my drunken ravings at the time. Of course this is only the essence of what I thought then, but I fancy I used those very words. I was bound to record them because I have sat down to write in order to condemn myself. And what is to be condemned, if not that? Can there be anything graver in my life? Wine is no justification. In vino veritas.

Entirely absorbed in such dreams I did not notice that I had reached home, that is, mother's lodgings. I did not even notice going in, but as soon as I slipped into our tiny entrance, I realized at once that something unusual was happening.

There were loud voices and outcries in the room, and I could hear that mother was crying. In the doorway I almost fell over Lukerya, who was running from Makar Ivanovitch's room to the kitchen. I flung down my fur coat and went in to Makar Ivanovitch, for they were all gathered together in his room.

There I found mother and Versilov. Mother was supported in his arms, and he was pressing her to his heart. Makar Ivanovitch was sitting as usual on his little bench, but he seemed overcome with weakness, and Liza had her arms round his shoulders and with an effort was holding him up; and it was evident that he was on the point of falling. I took a rapid step towards him and realized with a shudder that the old man was dead.

He had only just died, one minute before I arrived. Only ten minutes before he had felt just as usual. No one was with him then but Liza; she had been sitting with him, telling her grief, and he had been stroking her head just as he had done the day before. Suddenly he began to tremble (Liza told

us), tried to stand up, tried to cry out, and began falling on his left side, and was silent. “Rupture of the heart!” said Versilov. Liza uttered a scream that could be heard all over the house, and they had all run in at once, and all that only the minute before I came in.

“Arkady,” Versilov cried, “run instantly to Tatyana Pavlovna. She’s sure to be at home. Ask her to come at once. Take a sledge. Make haste, I entreat you!”

His eyes were shining. I remember that clearly. I did not notice in his face anything like simple pity, anything like tears. The others, mother, Liza, and Lukerya, were crying. I was struck, on the contrary — and I remember this very well — by a look of unusual excitement almost of elation in his face. I ran for Tatyana Pavlovna.

It was not far to go, as the reader knows already. I did not take a sledge, but ran all the way without stopping. My mind was in confusion, and yet there was something almost like elation in my heart, too. I realized something momentous was happening. Every trace of drunkenness had disappeared completely, and with it every ignoble thought, by the time I was ringing at Tatyana Pavlovna’s door.

The Finnish cook opened the door: “Not at home!” she said and would have shut it at once.

“Not at home?” I cried, and rushed headlong into the passage. “Impossible! Makar Ivanovitch is dead!”

“Wha — at!” I heard Tatyana Pavlovna cry out in her drawing-room, through the closed door.

“He is dead! Makar Ivanovitch is dead! Andrey Petrovitch begs you to go this minute!”

“What nonsense you’re talking.”

The bolt clicked, but the door only opened an inch. “What has happened, tell me! . . .”

“I don’t know, he was dead when I arrived. Andrey Petrovitch says it’s rupture of the heart!”

“I’ll come at once, this minute. Run and tell them I’m coming, run along! run along! run along! What are you stopping for?”

But through the half-opened door I had distinctly seen some one come suddenly out from behind the curtain that screened Tatyana Pavlovna’s bed, and that some one was standing at the back of the room behind Tatyana

Pavlovna. Mechanically and instinctively I clutched at the look and would not let the door be shut.

"Arkady Makarovitch, is it really true that he's dead?" I heard a soft, smooth, ringing voice, a well-known voice that thrilled everything in my heart at once. In the question was a note of some emotion that deeply stirred HER heart.

"Oh, if that's how it is," cried Tatyana Pavlovna, abandoning the door, "if that's how it is — you may settle it to please yourself. It's your own doing!"

She ran full speed out of the flat, flinging on her kerchief and her fur coat as she went downstairs. We were left alone. I threw off my fur coat, took a step forward, and shut the door. She stood before me as she had done that time before, with a bright face, and just as she had done then, she held out both hands to me. As though I had been struck down I literally fell at her feet.

3

I was beginning to cry, I don't know why; I don't remember how she made me sit down beside her, I only remember, as one of my most precious memories, that we sat side by side, hand in hand, and talked eagerly: she was questioning me about the old man and his death, and I was telling her about him — so that it might have been supposed that I had been crying over Makar Ivanovitch, though that would have been the acme of absurdity; and I know that she could not possibly have suspected me of such childish banality. All at once I pulled myself together and felt ashamed. I imagine now that I cried simply from joy, and I believe she knew that perfectly well, so that my heart is quite at rest when I remember it.

It suddenly struck me as very strange that she should go on questioning me about Makar Ivanovitch.

"Why, did you know him?" I asked in surprise.

"Yes. I have never seen him, but he has played a part in my life, too. I was told a great deal about him at one time, by that man whom I fear. You know what man I mean."

"All I know is that 'that man' has been in the past much nearer to your heart than you told me before," I said. I don't know what I meant to express by this, but I spoke as it were reproachfully and with a frown.

“You say he was kissing your mother just now? Holding her in his arms? You saw that yourself?” she did not hear what I said, but went on cross-examining me.

“Yes, I saw it; and, believe me,” I hastened to assure her, seeing her joy, “it was with true and generous feeling.”

“God grant it,” she said, crossing herself. “Now he is set free. That admirable old man simply held his life in bondage. His death will mean for him a renewal of duty . . . and dignity, as they were renewed once before. Oh, he is before all things generous, he will give peace of heart to your mother, whom he loves more than anything on earth, and will at last be at peace himself, and thank God — it’s high time.”

“He is dear to you?”

“Yes, very dear, though not in the way he would have liked to be and you mean by your question.”

“And is it for yourself or for him that you are afraid now?” I asked suddenly.

“Oh, these are deep questions, let us leave them.”

“Let us leave them, of course; but I knew nothing of this, nor of too much else perhaps; but may you be right, now everything will begin anew, and if anyone is to be renewed, it’s I first of all. I have been base in my thoughts in regard to you, Katerina Nikolaevna, and not more than an hour ago, perhaps, I was guilty of a low action in regard to you, but do you know I am sitting beside you and feel no pang of conscience. For everything now is over, and everything is beginning anew, and the man who was plotting vileness against you an hour ago I don’t know, and don’t want to know!”

“Come, calm yourself,” she smiled; “one would think you were a little delirious.”

“And how can one condemn oneself beside you, whether one is good or vile — you are as far beyond one as the sun. . . . Tell me, how could you come out to me after all that’s happened? Oh, if only you knew what happened only an hour ago! And what a dream has come true.”

“I expect I know all that,” she smiled softly: “you have just been wanting to punish me in some way, you swore to ruin me, and would certainly have killed, or at least have beaten, anyone who had dared to say one word against me.”

Oh, she smiled and jested: but this was only from her excessive kindness, for her heart at that moment, as I realized later, was full of such

an immense anxiety of her own, such a violent over- mastering emotion, that she can only have talked to me and have answered my foolish irritating questions, she can only have done that as one sometimes answers the persistent prattle of a little child, simply to get rid of it. I understood that dully and felt ashamed, but I could not help persisting.

"No," I cried, unable to control myself. "No, I did not kill the man who spoke ill of you, I encouraged him instead!"

"Oh, for goodness' sake, please don't; there's no need to tell me anything," she said, suddenly putting out her hand to stop me, with a look of compassion in her face; but I leapt up from my seat and was standing before her, to tell her everything, and if I had told her, nothing of what happened afterwards would have happened, for it would certainly have ended in my confessing everything and returning the document to her. But she suddenly laughed.

"There's no need, there's no need of anything, no facts at all! I know all your misdoings; I'm ready to bet that you meant to marry me or something of that sort, and you have only just been plotting about it with some one, with some accomplice, some old school friend. . . . Why I believe I've guessed right!" she cried, looking gravely at my face.

"What . . . how could you guess!" I faltered like a fool, tremendously impressed.

"Well, what next! But that's enough, that's enough! I forgive you, but no more about it," she waved her hand again, with unmistakable impatience. "I am given to dreaming myself, and if you only knew what shifts I have recourse to in my dreams when I let myself go! That's enough, you make me forget what I was going to say. I am very glad that Tatyana Pavlovna has gone away; I have been very anxious to see you, and we could not have talked as we are doing before her. I believe I was to blame for what happened. I was! Of course I was!"

"You to blame? But I had betrayed you to HIM, and — what can you have thought of me! I have been thinking of that all this time, all these days, I've been thinking and feeling about it every minute." (It was not a lie.)

"There was no need for you to distress yourself so much, I quite understood at the time how it had all happened; you simply spoke too freely in your joy, and told him that you were in love with me and that I . . . well, that I listened to you. Just what you would do at twenty. You love him

more than anyone in the world, don't you, and look to him to be your friend, your ideal? I quite understood that, but it was too late. Oh yes, I was to blame: I ought to have sent for you at the time, and have set your mind at rest, but I felt annoyed; and I told them not to admit you; that's what led to the scene at the entrance, and then that night. And do you know, like you, I've been dreaming all this time of meeting you secretly, only I did not know how to arrange it? And what do you suppose I dreaded more than anything? That you would believe what he said against me."

"Never!" I cried.

"The memory of our meetings in the past is dear to me; the boy in you is very dear to me, and perhaps, too, that very sincerity . . . you know, I'm a very serious person, I am one of the most serious and gloomy characters among modern women, let me tell you . . . ha — ha — ha! We'll have another talk some time, but now I'm not quite myself, I am upset and . . . I believe I'm a little hysterical. But, at last, at last, HE will let me, too, live in peace."

This exclamation broke from her unconsciously; I understood it at once, and did not want to catch it up, but I trembled all over.

"He knows I've forgiven him!" she exclaimed suddenly again, as though to herself.

"Could you really forgive him that letter? And how could he tell that you forgave him?" I could not help exclaiming.

"How could he tell? Oh, he knows," she went on answering me, yet she looked as though she had forgotten my existence and were talking to herself. "He has come to his senses now. And how could he not know that I forgave him, when he knows every secret of my soul by heart? Why, he knows that I am a little after his kind myself."

"You?"

"Why, yes, he knows that. Oh, I'm not passionate, I'm calm: but like him I should like all men to be fine. . . . Of course there was something made him love me."

"How could he say that you had all the vices."

"He only said that; he has another secret in his heart. And didn't he write an awfully funny letter?"

"Funny?" (I was listening to her with strained attention. I imagined that she really was hysterical, and . . . was speaking, perhaps, not for my benefit; but I could not resist the question.)

“Oh yes, funny, and how I should have laughed, if . . . if I hadn’t been frightened. Though I’m not such a coward, don’t think it; but I didn’t sleep all night after that letter, it seemed written in blood and frenzy . . . and after such a letter what was left to come. I love life, I’m horribly afraid for my life, I’m horribly cowardly in that. . . . Ah, listen,” she cried, suddenly darting at me, “go to him, he’s alone now, he can’t be there still, most likely he’s gone off somewhere alone; make haste and find him, you must make haste, run to him, show him that you are his son and love him, prove that you are the dear kind boy, my student whom I . . . Oh, God give you happiness, I love nobody, and it is better so, but I want every one to be happy, every one, and him above all, and let him know that . . . at once . . . I should be very glad.”

She got up and suddenly disappeared behind the curtain. At that instant tears were shining on her face (hysterical after her laughter). I remained alone, agitated and confused. I was completely at a loss to what to ascribe such emotion in her, an emotion which I never should have suspected. Something seemed to be clutching at my heart.

I waited five minutes, ten; the profound silence suddenly struck me, and I ventured to peep out of the door, and to call. In answer to my call Marya appeared and informed me in the most stolid tone, that the lady had put on her things long, long ago and gone out by the back way.

CHAPTER VII

1

This was enough for me. I snatched up my fur coat and, throwing it on as I went, rushed off with the thought: "She bade me go to him, but where shall I find him?"

But together with everything else I was struck by the question, "Why does she suppose that something has happened, and that now HE will leave her in peace? Of course, because he will marry mother, but what is she feeling? Is she glad that he will marry mother, or is she unhappy about it? And was that why she was hysterical? Why is it I can't get to the bottom of it?

I note this second thought that flashed upon me, literally in order to record it: it is important. That evening was a momentous one. And really one is forced to believe in predestination: I had not gone a hundred steps in the direction of mother's lodging when I came across the man I was looking for. He clutched me by the shoulder and stopped me.

"It's you!" he cried joyfully, and at the same time with the greatest astonishment. "Only fancy, I've been at your lodgings," he began quickly, "I have been looking for you, I've been asking for you, you are the one person I want in the whole universe! Your landlord told me some extraordinary tale; but you weren't there, and I came away and even forgot to tell him to ask you to run round to me at once, and, would you believe it, I set off, nevertheless, with the positive conviction that fate could not fail to send you to me now when most I need you, and here you are the first person to meet me! Come home with me: you've never been to my rooms."

In fact we had been looking for each other, and something of the same sort had happened to each of us. We walked very rapidly.

On the way he uttered only a few brief phrases, telling me he had left mother with Tatyana Pavlovna and so on. He walked holding my arm. His lodging was not far off and we soon arrived. I had, in fact, never been in these rooms of his. It was a small flat of three rooms, which he had taken or rather Tatyana Pavlovna had taken simply for that "tiny baby." The flat had always been under Tatyana Pavlovna's supervision, and in it had been installed a nurse with the baby (and now Darya Onisimovna, too), but there

had always been a room there for Versilov, the outermost of the three, a fairly good and spacious room, snugly furnished, like a study for literary pursuits. On the table, on the shelves, and on a whatnot there were numbers of books (while at mother's there were none at all); there were manuscripts and bundles of letters — in fact, it all looked snug and as though it had been long inhabited, and I know that in the past Versilov had sometimes, though not very often, moved into this flat altogether, and had stayed there even for weeks at a time. The first thing that caught my attention was a portrait of mother that hung over the writing table; a photograph in a magnificent carved frame of rare wood, obviously taken abroad and judging from its size a very expensive one. I had never heard of this portrait and knew nothing of it before, and what struck me most of all was the likeness which was remarkable in a photograph, the spiritual truth of it, so to say; in fact it looked more like a real portrait by the hand of an artist than a mere mechanical print. When I went in I could not help stopping before it at once.

"Isn't it, isn't it?" Versilov repeated behind me, meaning, "Isn't it like?" I glanced at him and was struck by the expression of his face. He was rather pale, but there was a glowing and intense look in his eyes which seemed shining with happiness and strength. I had never seen such an expression on his face.

"I did not know that you loved mother so much!" I blurted out, suddenly delighted.

He smiled blissfully, though in his smile there was a suggestion of something like a martyr's anguish, or rather something humane and lofty . . . I don't know how to express it; but highly developed people, I fancy, can never have triumphantly and complacently happy faces. He did not answer, but taking the portrait from the rings with both hands brought it close to him, kissed it, and gently hung it back on the wall.

"Observe," he said; "photographs very rarely turn out good likenesses, and that one can easily understand: the originals, that is all of us, are very rarely like ourselves. Only on rare occasions does a man's face express his leading quality, his most characteristic thought. The artist studies the face and divines its characteristic meaning, though at the actual moment when he's painting, it may not be in the face at all. Photography takes a man as he is, and it is extremely possible that at moments Napoleon would have turned out stupid, and Bismarck tender. Here, in this portrait, by good luck

the sun caught Sonia in her characteristic moment of modest gentle love and rather wild shrinking chastity. And how happy she was when at last she was convinced that I was so eager to have her portrait. Though that photograph was taken not so long ago, still she was younger then and handsomer; yet even then she had those hollow cheeks, those lines on her forehead, that shrinking timidity in her eyes, which seems to gain upon her with the years, and increase as time goes on. Would you believe it, dear boy? I can scarcely picture her now with a different face, and yet you know she was once young and charming. Russian women go off quickly, their beauty is only a passing gleam, and this is not only due to racial peculiarity, but is because they are capable of unlimited love. The Russian woman gives everything at once when she loves — the moment and her whole destiny and the present and the future: she does not know how to be thrifty, she keeps nothing hidden in reserve; and their beauty is quickly consumed upon him whom they love. Those hollow cheeks, they too were once a beauty that has been consumed on me, on my brief amusement. You are glad that I love your mother, and perhaps you didn't believe that I did love her? Yes, my dear, I did love her very much, but I've done her nothing but harm. . . . Here is another portrait — look at that, too."

He took it from the table and handed it me. It, too, was a photograph, a great deal smaller, in a thin oval wooden frame — it was the face of a young girl, thin and consumptive, and at the same time very good-looking; dreamy and yet strangely lacking in thought. The features were regular, of the type suggesting the pampering of generations, but it left a painful impression: it looked as though some fixed idea had taken possession of this creature and was torturing her, just because it was too much for her strength.

"That . . . that is the girl you meant to marry and who died of consumption . . . HER step-daughter?" I said rather timidly.

"Yes, I meant to marry her, she died of consumption, HER step-daughter. I knew that you knew . . . all that gossip. Though you could have known nothing about it but the gossip. Put the portrait down, my boy, that was a poor, mad girl and nothing more."

"Really mad?"

"Or imbecile; I think she was mad though. She had a child by Prince Sergay. It came about through madness not through love; it was one of Prince Sergay's most scoundrelly actions. The child is here now in the next

room, and I've long wanted to show it to you. Prince Sergay has never dared come here to look at the child; that was the compact I made with him abroad. I took the child to bring up with your mother's permission. With your mother's permission I meant at the time to marry that unhappy creature . . ."

"Could such permission have been possible?" I protested warmly.

"Oh yes, she allowed it: jealousy could only have been felt of a woman, and that was not a woman."

"Not a woman to anyone but mother! I shall never in my life believe that mother was not jealous!" I cried.

"And you're right. I guessed it was so when everything was over, that is when she had given her permission. But enough of that. It all came to nothing through Lidya's death, and perhaps it wouldn't have come off if she had lived, and even now I don't let mother come to see the child. It was only an episode. My dear boy, I've been looking forward to having you here for ever so long. I've been dreaming of how we should get to know each other here. Do you know how long? — for the last two years."

He looked at me sincerely and truthfully, and with a warmth of heart in which there was no reserve. I gripped his hand:

"Why have you put it off, why did you not invite me long ago? If only you knew all that has been . . . which would not have been if only you had sent for me earlier! . . ."

At that instant the samovar was brought in, and Darya Onisimovna suddenly brought in the baby asleep.

"Look at it," said Versilov; "I am fond of it, and I told them to bring it in now that you might look at it. Well, take it away again, Darya Onisimovna. Sit down to the samovar. I shall imagine that we have always lived together like this, and that we've been meeting every evening with no parting before us. Let me look at you: there, sit like this, that I can see your face. How I love your face. How I used to imagine your face when I was expecting you from Moscow. You ask why I did not send for you long ago? Wait a little, perhaps you will understand that now."

"Can it be that it's only that old man's death that has set your tongue free? That's strange . . ."

But though I said that, I looked at him with love. We talked like two friends in the highest and fullest sense of the word. He had asked me to come here to make something clear to me, to tell me something, to justify

himself; and yet everything was explained and justified before a word was said. Whatever I might hear from him now, the result was already attained, and we both knew that and were happy, and looked at each other knowing it.

"It's not the death of that old man," he answered: "it's not his death alone, there is something else too, which has happened at the same time. . . . God bless this moment and our future for a long time to come! Let us talk, my dear boy. I keep wandering from the point and letting myself be drawn off. I want to speak about one thing, but I launch into a thousand side issues. It's always like that when the heart is full. . . . But let us talk; the time has come and I've been in love with you, boy, for ever so long . . ."

He sank back in the armchair and looked at me once more.

"How strange it is to hear that, how strange it is," I repeated in an ecstasy of delight. And then I remember there suddenly came into his face that habitual line, as it were, of sadness and mockery together, which I knew so well. He controlled himself and with a certain stiffness began.

2

"You see, Arkady, if I had asked you to come earlier what should I have said to you? That question is my whole answer."

"You mean that now you are mother's husband, and my father, while then. . . . You did not know what to say to me before about the social position? Is that it?"

"Not only about that, dear boy. I should not have known what to say to you: there was so much I should have had to be silent about. Much that was absurd, indeed, and humiliating, because it was like a mountebank performance — yes, a regular show at a fair. Come, how could we have understood each other before, when I've only understood myself to-day at five o'clock this afternoon, just two hours before Makar Ivanovitch's death? You look at me with unpleasant perplexity. Don't be uneasy: I will explain the facts, but what I have just said is absolutely true; my whole life has been lost in mazes and perplexity, and suddenly they are all solved on such a day, at five o'clock this afternoon! It's quite mortifying, isn't it? A little while ago I should really have felt mortified."

I was listening indeed with painful wonder; that old expression of Versilov's, which I should have liked not to meet that evening after what

had been said, was strongly marked. Suddenly I exclaimed:

"My God! You've received something from her . . . at five o'clock this afternoon?"

He looked at me intently, and was evidently struck at my exclamation: and, perhaps, at my expression: "from her."

"You shall know all about it," he said, with a dreamy smile, "and, of course, I shall not conceal from you anything you ought to know; for that's what I brought you here for; but let us put that off for a time. You see, my dear boy, I knew long ago that there are children who brood from their earliest years over their family through being humiliated by the unseemliness of their surroundings and of their parents' lives. I noticed these brooding natures while I was still at school, and I concluded then that it all came from their being prematurely envious. Though I was myself a brooding child, yet . . . excuse me, my dear, I'm wonderfully absent-minded. I only meant to say that almost all this time I have been continually uneasy about you. I always imagined you one of those little creatures doomed to solitude, though conscious of being gifted. Like you, I was never fond of my schoolfellows. It is sad for those natures who are flung back on their own resources and dreams, especially when they have a passionate, premature and almost vindictive longing for 'seemliness' — yes, 'vindictive.' But enough, dear boy, I'm wandering from the point. Before I had begun to love you, I was picturing you and your solitary wild dreams. . . . But enough; I've actually forgotten what I had begun to speak about. But all this had to be said, however. But what could I have said to you before? Now I see your eyes looking at me, and I feel it's my SON looking at me. Why, even yesterday I could not have believed that I should ever be sitting and talking to my boy as I am to-day."

He certainly did seem unable to concentrate his mind, and at the same time he seemed, as it were, softened.

"I have no need to dream and brood now; it's enough for me, now, that I have you! I will follow you!" I said, dedicating myself to him with my whole heart.

"Follow me? But my wanderings are just over, they have ended to- day: you are too late, my dear boy. To-day is the end of the last act, and the curtain has gone down. This last act has dragged on long. It began very long ago — the last time I rushed off abroad. I threw up everything then, and you must know, my dear, I broke off all relations for good with your

mother, and told her I was doing so myself. That you ought to know. I told her then I was going away for ever; that she would never see me again. What was worst of all, I even forgot to leave her any money. I did not think of you either, not for one minute. I went away meaning to remain in Europe and never to return home, my dear. I emigrated."

"To Herzen? To take part in the revolutionary propaganda abroad? Probably all your life you have been taking part in political conspiracies?" I cried, unable to restrain myself.

"No, my dear, I've never taken part in any conspiracy. But how your eyes sparkle; I like your exclamations, my dear. No, I simply went away then from a sudden attack of melancholy. It was the typical melancholy of the Russian nobleman, I really don't know how to describe it better. The melancholy of our upper class, and nothing else."

"Of the serf-owner . . . the emancipation of the serfs," I was beginning to mutter, breathless.

"Serf-owner? You think I was grieving for the loss of it? That I could not endure the emancipation of the serfs. Oh no, my boy; why, we were all for the emancipation. I emigrated with no resentful feeling. I had only just been a mediator, and exerted myself to the utmost, I exerted myself disinterestedly, and I did not even go away because I got very little for my liberalism. We none of us got anything in those days, that is to say again, not those that were like me. I went away more in pride than in penitence, and, believe me, I was far from imagining that the time had come for me to end my life as a modest shoemaker. Je suis gentilhomme avant tout et je mourrai gentilhomme! Yet all the same I was sad. There are, perhaps, a thousand of my sort in Russia, no more perhaps really, but you know that is quite enough to keep the idea alive. We are the bearers of the idea, my dear boy! . . . I am talking, my darling, in the strange hope that you may understand this rigmarole. I've brought you here acting on a caprice of the heart: I've long been dreaming of how I might tell you something . . . you, and no one else. However . . . however . . ."

"No, tell me," I cried: "I see the look of sincerity in your face again. . . . Tell me, did Europe bring you back to life again? And what do you mean by the 'melancholy of the nobleman!' Forgive me, darling, I don't understand yet."

"Europe bring me back to life? Why, I went to bury Europe!"

"To bury?" I repeated in surprise.

He smiled.

“Arkady dear, my soul was weary then, and I was troubled in spirit. I shall never forget my first moments in Europe that time. I had stayed in Europe before, but this was a special time, and I had never gone there before with such desperate sadness, and . . . with such love, as on that occasion. I will tell you about one of my first impressions, one of the dreams I had in those days, a real dream. It was when I was in Germany, I had only just left Dresden, and in absence of mind I passed the station at which I ought to have got out, and went off on to another line. I had to get out at once to change, it was between two and three in the afternoon, a fine day. It was a little German town: I was directed to an hotel. I had to wait; the next train was at eleven o’clock at night. I was quite glad of the adventure, for I was in no particular haste to get anywhere, and was simply wandering from place to place, my dear. The hotel turned out to be small and poor, but all surrounded by green trees and flower-beds, as is always the case in Germany. They gave me a tiny room, and as I had been travelling all night I fell asleep, after dinner, at four o’clock in the afternoon.

“I dreamed a dream that was a complete surprise to me, for I had never had any dreams of the sort before. In the gallery at Dresden there is a picture by Claude Lorraine, called in the catalogue ‘Acis and Galatea,’ but I used to call it ‘The Golden Age,’ I don’t know why. I had seen it before, but I had noticed it again in passing three days earlier. I dreamed of this picture, but not as a picture, but, as it were, a reality. I don’t know exactly what I did dream though: it was just as in the picture, a corner of the Grecian Archipelago, and time seemed to have gone back three thousand years; blue smiling waves, isles and rocks, a flowery shore, a view like fairyland in the distance, a setting sun that seemed calling to me — there’s no putting it into words. It seemed a memory of the cradle of Europe, and that thought seemed to fill my soul, too, with a love as of kinship. Here was the earthly paradise of man: the gods came down from the skies, and were of one kin with men. . . . Oh, here lived a splendid race! they rose up and lay down to sleep happy and innocent; the woods and meadows were filled with their songs and merry voices. Their wealth of untouched strength was spent on simple-hearted joy and love. The sun bathed them in warmth and light, rejoicing in her splendid children . . . Marvellous dream, lofty error of mankind! The Golden Age is the most unlikely of all the dreams that

have been, but for it men have given up their life and all their strength, for the sake of it prophets have died and been slain, without it the peoples will not live and cannot die, and the feeling of all this I lived through, as it were, in that dream; rocks and sea, and the slanting rays of the setting sun — all this I seemed still to see when I woke up and opened my eyes, literally wet with tears. I remembered that I was glad, a sensation of happiness I had never known before thrilled my heart till it ached; it was the love of all humanity. It was by then quite evening; through the green of the flowers that stood in the windows of my little room, broke slanting rays that flooded me with light. And then, my dear — that setting sun of the first day of European civilization which I had seen in my dream was transformed for me at once on waking, into the setting sun of the last day of civilization! One seemed to hear the death-knell ringing over Europe in those days. I am not speaking of the war and the Tuileries; apart from that, I knew that all would pass away, the whole face of the old world of Europe — sooner or later, but I, as a Russian European, could not accept it. Yes, they had only just burnt the Tuileries. . . .

"Oh, rest assured, I know it was logical; I quite understand the irresistible force of the idea, but as the bearer of the idea of the highest Russian culture, I could not accept it, for the highest Russian thought is the reconciliation of ideas, and who in the whole world could understand such a thought at that time; I was a solitary wanderer. I am not speaking of myself personally — it's the Russian idea I'm speaking of. There all was strife and logic; there the Frenchman was nothing but a Frenchman, the German was nothing but a German, and this more intensely so than at any time in their whole history; consequently never had the Frenchman done so much harm to France, or the German to Germany, as just at that time! In those days in all Europe there was not one European: I alone among all the vitriol-throwers could have told them to their face that their Tuileries was a mistake. And I alone among the avenging reactionists could have told them that the Tuileries, although a crime, was none the less logical. And that, my boy, was because I, as a Russian, was the ONLY EUROPEAN in Russia. I am not talking of myself, I am talking of the whole Russian idea. I have been a wanderer, my boy. I was a wanderer, and I knew well that I must wander and be silent. But yet I was sad. I cannot help respecting my position as a Russian nobleman. My boy, I believe you are laughing?"

“No, I’m not laughing,” I said in a voice full of feeling, “I’m not laughing at all; you thrilled my heart by your vision of ‘The Golden Age,’ and, I assure you, I’m beginning to understand you. But, above all, I’m glad that you have such a respect for yourself. I hasten to tell you so. I never expected that of you!”

“I’ve told you already that I love your exclamations, dear boy,” he smiled again at my naïve exclamation, and getting up from his chair, began unconsciously walking up and down the room. I, too, got up. He went on talking in his strange language which was yet so deeply pregnant with thought.

3

“Yes, boy, I tell you again, I cannot help respecting my position as a Russian nobleman. Among us has been created by the ages, a type of the highest culture never seen before, and existing nowhere else in the world — the type of world-wide compassion for all. It is a Russian type, but since it is taken from the most highly cultured stratum of the Russian people, I have the honour of being a representative of it. That type is the custodian of the future of Russia. There are, perhaps, only a thousand of us in Russia, possibly more, possibly less — but all Russia has existed, so far, only to produce that thousand. I shall be told with indignation that the result is poor, if so many ages and so many millions of people have been spent to produce only this thousand. I don’t think it little.”

I listened with strained attention. A conviction, the guiding principle of a whole life, was emerging. That “thousand men” made his personality stand out in such strong relief!

I felt that his expansiveness with me was due to some external shock. He talked so warmly to me because he loved me; but the reason he had suddenly begun to talk, and the reason he so wanted to talk to me especially, I could not guess.

“I emigrated,” he went on; “and I regretted nothing I had left behind. I had served Russia to the utmost of my abilities as long as I was there; when I went away I went on serving her, too, but in a wider sense. But serving her in that way I served her far more than if I had remained only a Russian, just as the Frenchman at that time was a Frenchman, and a German only a German. In Europe they don’t understand that yet. Europe has created a

noble type of Frenchman, of Englishman, and of German, but of the man of the future she scarcely knows at present. And, I fancy, so far she does not want to know. And that one can well imagine; they are not free and we are free. I, with my Russian melancholy, was the only one free in Europe. . . .

"Take note, my dear, of a strange fact: every Frenchman can serve not only his France, but humanity, only on condition that he remains French to the utmost possible degree, and it's the same for the Englishman and the German. Only to the Russian, even in our day, has been vouchsafed the capacity to become most of all Russian only when he is most European, and this is true even in our day, that is, long before the millennium has been reached. That is the most essential difference between us Russians and all the rest, and in that respect the position in Russia is as nowhere else. I am in France a Frenchman, with a German I am a German, with the ancient Greeks I am a Greek, and by that very fact I am most typically a Russian. By that very fact I am a true Russian, and am most truly serving Russia, for I am bringing out her leading idea. I am a pioneer of that idea. I was an emigrant then, but had I forsaken Russia? No, I was still serving her. What though I did nothing in Europe, what if I only went there as a wanderer (indeed, I know that was so) it was enough that I went there with my thought and my consciousness. I carried thither my Russian melancholy. Oh, it was not only the bloodshed in those days that appalled me, and it was not the Tuileries, but all that was bound to follow it. They are doomed to strife for a long time yet, because they are still too German and too French, and have not yet finished struggling in those national characters. And I regret the destruction that must come before they have finished. To the Russian, Europe is as precious as Russia: every stone in her is cherished and dear. Europe is as much our fatherland as Russia. Oh, even more so. No one could love Russia more than I do, but I never reproached myself that Venice, Rome, Paris, the treasures of their arts and sciences, their whole history, are dearer to me than Russia. Oh, those old stones of foreign lands, those wonders of God's ancient world, those fragments of holy marvels are dear to the Russian, and are even dearer to us than to the inhabitants of those lands themselves! They now have other thoughts and other feelings, and they have ceased to treasure the old stones. . . . There the conservative struggles only for existence; and the vitriol-thrower is only fighting for a crust of bread. Only Russia lives not for herself, but for an idea, and, you must admit, my dear, the remarkable fact that for almost the last hundred

years Russia has lived absolutely not for herself, but only for the other States of Europe! And, what of them! Oh, they are doomed to pass though fearful agonies before they attain the Kingdom of God."

I must confess I listened in great perplexity; the very tone of his talk alarmed me, though I could not help being impressed by his ideas. I was morbidly afraid of falsity. I suddenly observed in a stern voice:

"You spoke just now of the 'Kingdom of God.' I've heard that you used to preach, used to wear chains?"

"Let my chains alone," he said with a smile: "that's quite a different matter. I did not preach anything in those days, but that I grieved for their God, that is true. Atheism was proclaimed . . . only by one group of them, but that made no difference; it was only the hot-heads, but it was the first active step — that's what mattered. In that, too, you have their logic; but there's always melancholy in logic. I was the outcome of a different culture, and my heart could not accept it. The ingratitude with which they parted from the idea, the hisses and pelting with mud were intolerable to me. The brutality of the process shocked me. Reality always has a smack of the brutal about it, even when there's an unmistakable striving towards the ideal, and, of course, I ought to have known that; but yet I was a man of another type; I was free to choose, and they were not, and I wept, I wept for them, I wept for the old idea. And I wept, perhaps, with real tears, with no figure of speech."

"Did you believe so much in God?" I asked incredulously.

"My dear boy, that question, perhaps, is unnecessary. Supposing I did not believe very much, yet I could not help grieving for the idea. I could not help wondering, at times, how man could live without God, and whether that will ever be possible. My heart always decided that it was impossible; but at a certain period perhaps it is possible . . . I have no doubt that it is coming; but I always imagined a different picture. . . ."

"What picture?"

It was true that he had told me before that he was happy; there was, of course, a great deal of enthusiasm in his words; that is how I take a great deal that he said. Respecting him as I do, I can't bring myself to record here, on paper, all our conversation; but some points in the strange picture I succeeded in getting out of him I will quote. What had always worried me most was the thought of those "chains," and I wanted to clear up the matter

now, and so I persisted. Some fantastic and extremely strange ideas, to which he gave utterance then, have remained in my heart for ever.

"I picture to myself, my boy," he said with a dreamy smile, "that war is at an end and strife has ceased. After curses, pelting with mud, and hisses, has come a lull, and men are left alone, according to their desire: the great idea of old has left them; the great source of strength that till then had nourished and fostered them was vanishing like the majestic sun setting in Claude Lorraine's picture, but it was somehow the last day of humanity, and men suddenly understood that they were left quite alone, and at once felt terribly forlorn. I have never, my dear boy, been able to picture men ungrateful and grown stupid. Men left forlorn would begin to draw together more closely and more lovingly; they would clutch one another's hands, realizing that they were all that was left for one another! The great idea of immortality would have vanished, and they would have to fill its place; and all the wealth of love lavished of old upon Him, who was immortal, would be turned upon the whole of nature, on the world, on men, on every blade of grass. They would inevitably grow to love the earth and life as they gradually became aware of their own transitory and finite nature, and with a special love, not as of old, they would begin to observe and would discover in nature phenomena and secrets which they had not suspected before, for they would look on nature with new eyes, as a lover looking on his beloved. On awakening they would hasten to kiss one another, eager to love, knowing that the days are short, and that is all that is left them. They would work for one another, and each would give up all that he had to all, and by that only would be happy. Every child would know and feel that every one on earth was for him like a father or mother. 'To-morrow may be my last day,' each one would think, looking at the setting sun; 'but no matter, I shall die, but all they will remain and after them their children,' and that thought that they will remain, always as loving and as anxious over each other, would replace the thought of meeting beyond the tomb. Oh, they would be in haste to love, to stifle the great sorrow in their hearts. They would be proud and brave for themselves, but would grow timid for one another; every one would tremble for the life and happiness of each; they would grow tender to one another, and would not be ashamed of it as now, and would be caressing as children. Meeting, they would look at one another with deep and thoughtful eyes, and in their eyes would be love and sorrow. . . .

“My dear boy,” he broke off with a smile, “this is a fantasy and a most improbable one; but I have pictured it to myself so often, for all my life I could not have lived without it, and the thought of it. I am not speaking of my belief: my faith is great, I am a deist, a philosophic deist, like all the thousand of us I imagine, but . . . but it’s noteworthy that I always complete my picture with Heine’s vision of ‘Christ on the Baltic Sea.’ I could not get on without Him, I could not help imagining Him, in fact, in the midst of His bereaved people. He comes to them, holds out His hands, and asks them, ‘How could they forget Him? And then, as it were, the scales would fall from their eyes and there would break forth the great rapturous hymn of the new and the last resurrection . . .

“Enough of that, my dear; but my ‘chains ‘ are all nonsense; don’t trouble your mind about them. And another thing: you know that I am modest and sober of speech; if I’m talking too freely now, it’s . . . due to various feelings, and it’s with you; to no one else shall I ever speak like this. I add this to set your mind at rest.”

But I was really touched; there was none of the falsity I had dreaded, and I was particularly delighted to see clearly that he really had been melancholy and suffering, and that he really, undoubtedly, had loved much, and that was more precious to me than anything. I told him this with impulsive eagerness.

“But do you know,” I added suddenly, “it seems to me that in spite of all your melancholy in those days you must have been very happy?”

He laughed gaily.

“You are particularly apt in your remarks to-day,” he said. “Well, yes, I was happy. How could I be unhappy with a melancholy like that? No one is freer and happier than a Russian wanderer in Europe, one of our thousand. I am not laughing when I say that, and there’s a great deal that’s serious in it. And I would not have given up my melancholy for any happiness. In that sense I’ve always been happy, my dear, all my life. And through being happy I began then, for the first time in my life, really to love your mother.”

“How do you mean for the first time in your life?”

“It was just that. Wandering and melancholy, I suddenly began to love her as I had never loved her before, and I sent for her at once.”

“Oh, tell me about that, too, tell me about mother.”

“Yes, that’s why I asked you here,” he smiled gaily. “And do you know I was afraid that you’d forgiven the way I treated your mother for the sake of Herzen, or some little conspiracy. . . .”

CHAPTER VIII

1

As we talked the whole evening and stayed together till midnight, I am not recording the whole conversation, but am only selecting what cleared up for me one enigmatic point in his life.

I will begin by saying that I have no doubt that he loved my mother, and though he did abandon her and “break off all relations with her” when he went away, it was, of course, only because he was bored or something of that kind, which is apt to happen indeed to every one on earth, but which is always difficult to explain. Abroad, after some length of time, however, he suddenly began to love mother again, at a distance, that is in thought, and sent for her. I shall be told perhaps that it was a “caprice,” but I think differently: to my mind it was a question of all that can be serious in human life, in spite of the apparent sloppiness which I am ready, if you like, to some extent to admit. But I swear that I put his grieving for Europe unmistakably on a level with, and in fact incomparably higher than, any modern practical activity in the construction of railways. His love for humanity I recognize as a most sincere and deep feeling, free from any sort of pose, and his love for mother as something quite beyond dispute, though perhaps a little fantastic. Abroad, in melancholy and happiness, and I may add in the strictest monastic solitude (this fact I learned afterwards through Tatyana Pavlovna), he suddenly thought of mother — to be exact, thought of her “hollow cheeks,” and at once sent for her.

“My dear,” he blurted out among other things, “I suddenly reflected that my serving the idea did not release me, as a morally rational creature, from the duty of making, in the course of my life, at least one fellow-creature happy, in a practical way.”

“Can such a bookish thought have really been the reason of it?” I asked him with surprise.

“It’s not a bookish thought. Though — perhaps it is. It was everything together; you know I loved your mother really, sincerely, not bookishly. If I hadn’t loved her, I shouldn’t have sent for her, but should have made happy some casual German, man or woman, if I had formulated that thought. To make in one’s lifetime at least one fellow-creature happy, in a practical way,

that is really happy, I would make a binding duty for every educated man; just as I would make it a law or an obligation for every peasant to plant at least one tree in his life to counteract the deforestation of Russia; though indeed one tree in one's lifetime isn't much, one might order him to plant one every year. The man of higher education and culture, pursuing higher ideas, sometimes loses sight of reality altogether becomes ridiculous, capricious and cold, and indeed I may say stupid, not only in practical life but in theory. The duty not to neglect practice and to make at least one real person happy would correct everything and would give fresh life even to the philanthropist himself.

"As a theory this is very absurd; but if it were adopted in practice and became a habit, it would not be stupid at all. I have experienced it myself: so soon as I began to develop this idea of a new creed, and at first of course in jest, I suddenly began to realize the depth of the love for your mother that lay hidden in my heart. Until then I had not understood that I loved her. While I lived with her I was only charmed with her while she was pretty, then I began to be moody and changeable. It was only in Germany that I understood that I loved her. It began with her hollow cheeks, of which I could never think, and sometimes not even see, without a pain in my heart, real physical pain. There are memories that hurt, my dear, that cause actual pain. Almost everyone has some such memories, only people forget them, but it does happen that they suddenly recall them, or perhaps only some feature of them, and then they cannot shake them off. I began to recall a thousand details of my life with Sonia. In the end they recalled themselves, and came crowding on my mind, and almost tortured me while I was waiting for her coming. What distressed me most of all was the memory of her everlasting submissiveness to me, and the way she continually thought herself inferior to me, in every respect, even — imagine it — physically; she was ashamed and flushed crimson when I looked at her hands and fingers, which were by no means aristocratic, and not her fingers only — she was ashamed of everything in herself, in spite of my loving her beauty. She was always shrinkingly modest with me, but what was wrong was that in it there was always a sort of fear, in short she thought herself something insignificant beside me, something almost unseemly in fact. I used really sometimes to think at first that she still looked upon me as her master, and was afraid of me, but it was not that at all. Yet, I assure you, no one was more capable of understanding my failings, and I have never in my life met

a woman with so much insight and delicacy of heart. Oh, how unhappy she was if I insisted at first, when she was so pretty, on her dressing smartly; it was a question of vanity, and some other feeling, that was wounded. She realized that it would never be in her line to be a lady, and that in any dress but her own she would simply be ridiculous. As a woman she did not want to be ridiculous in her dress, and knew that every woman has HER OWN style of dress, which thousands and hundreds of thousands of women will never understand — so long as they are dressed in the fashion. She feared my ironical looks — that was what she feared!

"But it was particularly sad for me to recall the look of deep amazement which I often caught fixed upon me, during the time we were together: in her eyes there was the fullest comprehension of her lot and of the future awaiting her, so that I too felt weighed down, by that look in them, though I must admit, in those days, I did not discuss things with her, and treated all this somewhat disdainfully. And, you know, she wasn't always such a timorous, shy creature as she is now; even now it happens that she will all at once grow gay, and look as pretty as a girl of twenty; and in those days in her youth she was very fond of chattering and laughing, only with people she was at home with, with girls and women belonging to the household; and how she started if I came on her unawares, if she were laughing, how she blushed, and how timorously she looked at me! Once, not long before I went abroad, almost on the eve of my breaking off all relations with her, in fact, I went into her room and found her alone, at a little table, without any work in her hands, but deep in thought, resting her elbow on the table. It had hardly ever happened to her before to sit without work. At that time I had quite given up showing her affection. I succeeded in stealing in very quietly, on tiptoe, and suddenly embracing and kissing her. . . . She leapt up — and I shall never forget the rapture, the bliss in her eyes, and suddenly it was succeeded by a swift rush of colour, and her eyes flashed. Do you know what I read in those flashing eyes? 'You are kissing me as a charity — that's what it is!' She began sobbing hysterically, making the excuse that I had startled her, but even at the time it made me think. And, in fact, all such reminiscences are very dreary things, dear boy. It's like those PAINFUL scenes which you sometimes find in the works of great artists, which one remembers ever afterwards with pain; for instance, Othello's last monologue in Shakespeare, Yevgeny, at the feet of Tatyana, or the meeting of the runaway convict with the little girl on the cold night at the well, in

‘Les Miserables’ of Victor Hugo; it stabs the heart once for all, and leaves a wound for ever. Oh, how eager I was for Sonia to come and how I longed to hold her in my arms! I dreamed with feverish impatience of a complete new programme of existence; I dreamed that gradually, by systematic efforts, I would break down that constant fear of me in her soul, would make her appreciate her own value, and all in which she was actually superior to me. Oh, I knew quite well, even then, that I always began to love your mother as soon as we were parted, and always grew cold to her at once as soon as we were together again; but that time, it was different, then it was different.”

I was astonished: “And SHE?” the idea flashed across me.

“Well, and how did mother and you meet then?” I asked cautiously.

“Then? Oh, we didn’t meet then at all. She only got as far as Königsberg, and stopped there, and I was on the Rhine. I didn’t go to her, and I told her to stay there and wait. We only saw each other again long after, oh, long after, when I went to her to ask her to consent to my marriage. . . .”

2

Now I’m coming to the core of it all, that is, as far as I was able to grasp it myself; for, indeed, his own account began to be somewhat disconnected. His talk became ten times as incoherent and rambling as soon as he reached this part of the story.

He met Katerina Nikolaevna suddenly, just when he was expecting mother, at the moment of most impatient expectation. They were all, at the time, on the Rhine, at some spa, all drinking the waters. Katerina Nikolaevna’s husband was by then almost dying, he had, at any rate, been given up by the doctors. She made an impression on him at the first meeting, as it were cast a sort of spell upon him. It was a case of fate. It’s remarkable that recalling it and writing it down now, I don’t remember that he once used the word “love” in connection with her, or spoke of “being in love.” The word “fate” I remember.

And, of course, it was fate. He did NOT CHOOSE it, “he did not want to love her.” I don’t know whether I can give a clear account of it, but his whole soul was in revolt at the fact that this could have happened to him. Everything in him that was free was annihilated by this meeting. And the

man was fettered for life to a woman who had really nothing to do with him. He did not desire this slavery of passion. To state the fact plainly, Katerina Nikolaevna is a type rare amongst society women — a type perhaps unique in that circle. That is, she is an extremely good-natured and straightforward woman. I've heard, indeed I know for a fact that this was what made her irresistible in the fashionable world whenever she made her appearance in it. (She used at times to withdraw into complete seclusion.)

Versilov did not believe, of course, when he first met her, that she was like that; in fact, he believed she was the exact opposite, that she was a hypocrite and a Jesuit. At this point I will anticipate by quoting her own criticism of him: she declared that he could not help thinking what he did of her "because an idealist always runs his head against reality and is more inclined than other people to assume anything horrid."

I don't know if this is true of idealists in general, but it was entirely true of him, no doubt. I may perhaps add here my own judgment, which flashed across my mind while I was listening to him then: I thought that he loved mother, more so to say with the humane love one feels for all mankind, than with the simple love with which women are loved as a rule, and that as soon as he met a woman whom he began to love with that simple love, he at once turned against that love — most probably because the feeling was new to him. Perhaps, though, this idea is incorrect; I did not of course utter it to him. It would have been indelicate, and he really was in such a condition that it was almost necessary to spare him: he was agitated; at some points in his story he simply broke off, and was silent for some moments, walking about the room with a vindictive face.

She soon divined his secret. Oh, perhaps she flirted with him on purpose; even the most candid women are base in these cases, and it is their overwhelming instinct. It ended in a rupture full of rankling bitterness, and I believe he tried to kill her; he frightened her, and would have killed her, perhaps, "but it was all turned to hatred." Then there came a strange period: he was suddenly possessed by the strange idea of torturing himself by a discipline, "the same as that used by the monks. Gradually, by systematic practice, you overcome your will, beginning with the most absurd and trivial things, and end by conquering your will completely, and become free." He added that this practice of the monks is a serious thing; in the course of a thousand years it has been brought by them to a science. But what is most remarkable is that he gave himself up to this idea of discipline,

not in order to get rid of the image of Katerina Nikolaevna, but in the full conviction that he had not only ceased to love her, but hated her. He so thoroughly believed in his hatred for her as to conceive the idea of loving and marrying her step-daughter, who had been seduced by Prince Sergay, to persuade himself absolutely of this new love, and to win the poor imbecile's heart completely, by his devotion making her perfectly happy. Why, instead of devoting himself to her, he did not think of mother, who was all this time waiting for him at Königsberg, remained for me inexplicable. . . . He quite forgot mother, indeed, and even neglected to send money for her maintenance, so that Tatyana Pavlovna had to come to her rescue; yet finally he did go to mother "to ask her permission" to marry the young lady, pleading that "such a bride was not a woman." Oh, perhaps all this is only a portrait of a theoretical man, as Katerina Nikolaevna said of him later. But why is it, though, that these theoretical people (if they really are theoretical people) are capable of such very real suffering, and end in such very real tragedy? On that evening, however, I looked at it differently, and I was disturbed by the thought:

"All your development, your whole soul, has been won by the suffering and the struggle of your whole life, while her perfection has cost her nothing. That's unjust. . . . Woman is revolting in that way." I said this without the least intention of flattering him, speaking with warmth and indignation.

"Perfection? Her perfection? But she has no sort of perfection!" he said suddenly, seeming almost surprised at my words. "She is the most ordinary woman, she is really a contemptible woman. . . . But she is bound to have every perfection!"

"Why is she bound to?"

"Because she has such power, she is bound to have every sort of perfection!" he cried vindictively.

"The saddest thing is that you are so harassed even now," I could not help blurting out suddenly.

"How harassed!" he repeated my words again, standing still before me as though in some perplexity. And suddenly a slow, gentle, dreamy smile lighted up his whole face, and he held up his finger as though considering. Then as though waking up, he took from the table an open letter, and flung it down in front of me.

“Read it! You must know everything . . . and why have you made me rake up all this bygone foolishness? . . . It has only roused up nasty and spiteful feelings in my heart. . . .”

I cannot describe my astonishment. The letter was from her to him, received by him that afternoon at five o’clock. I read it, almost shaking with emotion. It was not long, and was written so simply and straightforwardly, that as I read it I seemed to see her before me and hear her words. With the most simple truthfulness (and so almost touchingly) she confessed her terror, and then simply besought him to “leave her in peace.” In conclusion, she told him that she definitely was to marry Büring. Till then she had never written a word to him.

And this is what I could make out of his explanation:

As soon as he had read the letter that day, he was aware of a new sensation: for the first time in those fatal two years he felt not the slightest hatred for her, or the slightest shock of emotion, such as had “driven him out of his mind” at a mere rumour of Büring. “On the contrary, I sent her my blessing, with perfect sincerity,” he told me, with deep feeling. I heard these words with ecstasy. Then all the passion and agony that had possessed him had vanished all at once of itself, like a dream, like an obsession that had lasted two years. Hardly yet able to believe in himself he hastened to mother’s and — arrived at the very moment when she was set free by the death of the old man who had bequeathed her to him. The coincidence of these two events had deeply stirred his soul. Not long afterwards he rushed to find me — and that immediate thought of me I shall never forget.

I shall never forget the end of that evening either. The whole man was suddenly transformed again. We did not separate till late at night. The effect that all he told me had upon me I will describe later, in its proper place, and will confine myself now to a few words, in conclusion, about him. Reflecting upon it now, I realize that what captivated me so much at the time was his humility, so to speak, with me, his frank sincerity with a boy like me! “It was infatuation, but my blessings on it!” he exclaimed. “But for that blind obsession I might perhaps have never discovered in my heart my sole queen, my suffering darling — your mother.” These passionate words, wrung from him by over-mastering feeling, I note particularly, in view of what followed. But at the time he gained complete possession of my heart and conquered it.

I remember in the end we became very cheerful. He asked for some champagne, and we drank to mother, and to the "future." Oh, he was so full of life, and so eager to live! But we suddenly became extremely merry, not from the wine: we only drank two glasses. I don't know why, but in the end we laughed almost helplessly. We began talking of quite extraneous matters; he began telling me an anecdote and I told him one. And our laughter and our anecdotes, were by no means malicious or amusing, but we were merry. He was unwilling to let me go: "Stay, stay a little longer," he repeated, and I stayed. He even came out to see me home; it was an exquisite evening, with a slight frost. "Tell me, have you sent her an answer yet?" I asked, quite casually, as I pressed his hand for the last time at the cross road.

"No, not yet, but that's no matter. Come to-morrow, come early. . . . Oh, and another thing: drop Lambert altogether and tear up that 'document,' and make haste about it. Goodbye!"

Saying this he went away quickly; I remained standing still, and so much taken aback that I could not bring myself to call after him. The expression, the "document," startled me particularly: how could he have known of it, and that particular word too, if not from Lambert? I went home in great confusion. And how can it have happened, the question flashed upon me suddenly, that such an obsession for two years can have vanished like a dream, like a vapour, like a phantom.

CHAPTER IX

1

But I waked up next morning feeling fresher and in better heart. I unconsciously reproached myself, indeed, with perfect sincerity, for a certain levity, and, as it were, superciliousness, with which it seemed to me, recalling it, I had listened to some parts of his "confession" the evening before. Supposing it had been to some extent muddled, and some revelations had been, as it were, a little delirious and incoherent, he had not, of course, prepared to deliver a speech when he invited me the day before. He had simply done me a great honour in turning to me, as his one friend at such a moment, and I shall never forget his doing it. On the contrary, his confession was "touching," though people may laugh at me for saying so, and if there were glimpses from time to time of something cynical, or even something that seemed ridiculous, I was not so narrow as to be unable to understand and accept realism, which did not, however, detract from the ideal. The great point was now that I understood the man, and I even felt, and was almost vexed at feeling, that it had all turned out to be so simple: I had always in my heart set that man on a supreme pinnacle, in the clouds, and had insisted on shrouding his life in mystery, so that I had naturally wished not to fit the key to it so easily.

In his meeting WITH HER, however, and in the sufferings he had endured for two years, there was much that was complex. "He did not want to live under the yoke of fate; he wanted to be free, and not a slave to fate; through his bondage to fate he had been forced to hurt mother, who was still waiting for him at Königsberg. . . ." Besides, I looked upon him in any case as a preacher: he cherished in his heart the golden age, and knew all about the future of atheism; and then the meeting with HER had shattered everything, distorted everything! Oh, I was not a traitor to her, but still I was on his side. Mother, for instance, I reflected, would have been no hindrance, nor would marriage with her be so indeed. That I understood; that was something utterly different from his meeting with THAT WOMAN. Mother, it is true, would not have given him peace either, but that was all the better: one cannot judge of such men as of others, and their life must always be different; and that's not unseemly at all; on the contrary,

it would be unseemly if they settled down and became altogether like other ordinary people. His praises of the nobility, and his words: "Je mourrai gentilhomme," did not disconcert me in the least; I understood what sort of gentilhomme he was; he was a man ready to abandon everything, and to become the champion of political rights for all, and the leading Russian thought of a universal harmony of ideas. And even though all this might be nonsense, that is "the universal harmony of ideas" (which is of course inconceivable), yet the very fact that he had all his life bowed down to an idea, and not to the stupid golden calf, was good. My God! why, conceiving "my idea," had I, I myself — could I — have been bowing down to the golden calf, could I have been aiming only at money, then? I swear that all I wanted was the idea! I swear I would not have had one chair, one sofa upholstered in velvet, and I would have eaten the same plate of soup as now, if I had had millions. I dressed and hurried off impatiently to see him. I may add that in regard to his outburst yesterday about the "document," I was ever so much more at ease in my mind than I had been the day before. To begin with, I hoped to have it out with him, and besides, what was there in Lambert's having wormed his way in to him, and having talked to him of something? But what rejoiced me most was an extraordinary sensation: it came from the thought that "he no longer loved HER"; I put absolute faith in it, and felt as if some one had lifted a fearful weight off my heart. I recall a conjecture that flashed upon me at the time: that the unseemliness and senselessness of his last violent outbreak, on hearing about Büring, and the sending of that insulting letter, that that final crisis might be taken as a sign and augury of a change in his feeling, and an approaching return to sanity; it must be as it is in illness, I thought, and, in fact, he is bound to reach the opposite extreme, it is a pathological episode, and nothing more.

This thought made me happy.

"And let her arrange her life as she pleases, let her marry her Büring as much as she likes, so long as he, my father, my friend, loves her no longer," I exclaimed.

I had, however, certain secret feelings of my own, on which I do not care to enlarge in my notes here.

That's enough. And now, without further reflections, I will give an account of the awful event that followed, and how the facts worked together to bring it about.

At ten o'clock, just as I was getting ready to go out, to see him of course, Darya Onisimovna appeared. I asked her joyfully: "whether she came from him?" and heard with vexation that she did not come from him, but from Anna Andreyevna, and that she, Darya Onisimovna, "had left the lodging as soon as it was light."

"What lodging?"

"Why, the same where you were yesterday. You know, the lodging where you were yesterday, where the baby is; it is taken in my name now, and Tatyana Pavlovna pays the rent. . . ."

"Oh, well, that's nothing to me!" I interrupted with annoyance. "Is he at home, anyway? Shall I find him?"

And to my surprise I heard from her that he had gone out even before she had; so she had gone out as soon as it was light, and he had gone out even earlier.

"Then has he come back yet?"

"No, he's certainly not back yet, and perhaps he won't come back at all," she declared, turning upon me the same sharp and furtive eye, and keeping it fixed on me, as she had done on the occasion I have described, when she visited me as I lay ill in bed. What infuriated me most was that their mysteries and imbecilities should be forced on me again, and that these people could not get on without secrets and intrigues.

"Why do you say: 'he will certainly not come back'? What do you mean by that? He has gone to see mother, that's all!"

"I d — don't know."

"And what have you come for?"

She told me that she had just come from Anna Andreyevna, who had sent her for me, and urgently expected me at once, or else it would be "too late." These last enigmatic words finally exasperated me:

"Why too late? I don't want to come and I'm not coming! I won't let them take possession of me again! I don't care a damn for Lambert, you can tell her so, and if she sends Lambert to me, I'll kick him out, you can tell her so!"

Darya Onisimovna was awfully alarmed.

"Oh no," she said, taking a step towards me, clasping her hands as though she were beseeching me. "Don't be so hasty. There's something

very important the matter, very important to yourself, to them, too, to Andrey Petrovitch, to your mamma, to every one. . . . Go and see Anna Andreyevna at once, she can't wait any longer . . . I assure you, on my honour . . . and afterwards you can make your decision."

I looked at her with surprise and repulsion.

"Nonsense, it will be nothing, I'm not coming!" I shouted obstinately and vindictively: "Now everything's different! Though how could you understand that? Good-bye, Darya Onisimovna, I won't go on purpose, I won't question you on purpose. You simply bother me. I don't want to know anything about your mysteries."

As she did not go away, however, but still stood waiting, I snatched up my fur coat and cap, and went out myself, leaving her in the middle of the room. There were no letters or papers in my room, and I never used to lock my door when I went out. But before I had reached the front door my landlord ran after me downstairs, without his hat, and not in full uniform.

"Arkady Makarovitch! Arkady Makarovitch!"

"What now?"

"Have you no instructions to leave?"

"No, nothing."

He looked at me with eyes like gimlets, in evident uneasiness:

"About your room, for instance?"

"What about my room? Why, I sent you the rent when it was due?"

"Oh no, sir, I was not thinking of the money," he said with a broad smile, his eyes still piercing into me like pins.

"Why, what on earth's the matter with you all?" I shouted at last, growing almost savage. "What do you want too?"

He waited for a few seconds longer, still seeming to expect something from me.

"Well, then, you will give instructions later . . . if you are not in the humour now," he muttered, grinning more broadly than ever; "you go on and I'll see to it."

He ran back upstairs. Of course all this might well make one reflect. I purposely avoid omitting a single detail in all that petty tomfoolery, for every little detail helped to make up the final situation and had its place in it, a fact of which the reader will be convinced. But that they really did bother me was true. If I was upset and irritated, it was at hearing again in

their words that tone of intrigue and mystery of which I was so sick, and which so brought back the past. But to continue.

It turned out that Versilov was not at home, and it appeared that he really had gone out as soon as it was light. “To mother’s, of course”: I stuck obstinately to my idea. I did not question the nurse, rather a stupid peasant woman, and there was no one else in the lodging. I ran to mother’s and I must admit I was so anxious that I took a sledge half-way. HE HAD NOT BEEN AT MOTHER’S SINCE THE EVENING BEFORE. There was no one with mother except Tatyana Pavlovna and Liza. Liza began getting ready to go out as soon as I went in.

They were all sitting upstairs, in my “coffin.” In the drawing room Makar Ivanovitch was laid out on the table, and an old man was reading the psalter over him in an even, monotonous voice. For the future I am not going to describe anything more that does not relate to the matter in hand. I will only say that the coffin, which they had already made, was standing in the middle of the room, and was not a plain one, though it was black; it was upholstered in velvet, and the pall was of an expensive sumptuousness that was not in keeping with the character of a monk, or with the convictions of the dead man; but such was the special desire of my mother and Tatyana Pavlovna, who arranged the matter together.

I had not of course expected to find them cheerful; but the peculiar overwhelming distress mixed with uneasiness and anxiety, which I read in their eyes, struck me at once, and I instantly concluded that “sorrow for the dead was certainly not the only cause.” All this, I repeat, I remember perfectly.

In spite of everything I embraced mother tenderly and at once asked about HIM. A gleam of tremulous curiosity came into mother’s eyes at once. I made haste to mention that we had spent the whole evening together, till late at night, but that to-day he had been away from home since early morning, though at parting last night he had asked me to come as early as I could this morning. Mother made no answer, and Tatyana Pavlovna, seizing a favourable moment, shook her finger at me meaningly.

“Good-bye, brother,” Liza blurted out, going quickly out of the room. I ran after her, of course, but she stopped short at the outer door.

“I thought you would guess you must come with me,” she said in a rapid whisper.

“Liza, what’s the matter?”

“I don’t know what, but a great deal, no doubt the last chapter of ‘the same old story.’ He has not come, but they have heard something about him. They won’t tell you, you needn’t trouble yourself, and you won’t ask, if you are sensible; but mother’s shattered. I’ve not asked about anything either. Good-bye.”

She opened the door.

“And, Liza, about you, yourself, have you nothing to tell me?” I dashed after her into the entry. Her terribly exhausted and despairing face pierced my heart. She looked at me, not simply with anger, but with a sort of exasperated fury, laughed bitterly, and waved me off.

“If only he were dead I should thank God!” she flung up at me from the stairs, and was gone. She said this of Prince Sergay, and he, at that very time, was lying delirious and unconscious.

I went upstairs, sad but excited. “The same old story! What same old story?” I thought defiantly, and I had suddenly an irresistible impulse to tell them at least a part of the impression left upon me by his last night’s confession, and the confession too. “They’re thinking some evil of him now, so let them know all about it!” floated though my mind.

I remember that I succeeded very cleverly in beginning to tell them my story. Instantly their faces betrayed an intense curiosity. This time Tatyana Pavlovna positively fixed me with her eyes; but mother showed more reserve; she was very grave, but the glimmer of a faint, beautiful, though utterly hopeless smile came into her face, and scarcely left it all the time I was talking. I told the story well, of course, though I knew that it would be almost beyond their comprehension. To my surprise Tatyana Pavlovna did not attack me, did not insist on minute details, or try to pick holes as she usually did as soon as I began telling anything. She only pinched up her lips and screwed up her eyes, as though making an effort to get to the bottom of it. At times I positively fancied that they understood it all, though that could hardly have been so. . . . I spoke for instance of his convictions, but principally of his enthusiasm last night, his enthusiastic feeling for mother, his love for mother and how he had kissed her portrait. . . . Hearing this they exchanged a rapid silent glance with each other, and mother flushed all over, though both continued silent. Then . . . then I could not of course BEFORE MOTHER touch on the principal point, that is his meeting with HER and all the rest of it, above all HER letter to him the day before, and his moral resurrection after getting that letter; and that indeed

was the chief point, so that all his feeling, with which I had hoped to please mother so much, naturally remained inexplicable, though of course that was not my fault; I had told all that could be told extremely well. I ended in complete confusion; their silence was still unbroken and I began to feel very uncomfortable with them.

"Most likely he's come back now, and may be at my lodgings waiting for me," I said, and got up to go.

"Go and see! go and see!" Tatyana Pavlovna urged me resolutely.

"Have you been downstairs?" mother asked me, in a sort of half whisper, as she said good-bye.

"Yes, I have been, and I bowed down and prayed for him. What a peaceful, serene face he has, mother! Thank you, mother, for not sparing expense over his coffin. At first I thought it strange, but I thought, at once, that I should have done the same."

"Will you come to the church to-morrow?" she asked, and her lips trembled.

"What do you mean, mother?" I asked in surprise. "I shall come to the requiem service to-day, and I shall come again; and . . . besides, to-morrow is your birthday, mother darling! To think that he died only thee days before!"

I went away painfully surprised: how could she ask such questions, whether I were coming to the funeral service in the church? "If that's what they think of me, what must they think of HIM?"

I knew that Tatyana Pavlovna would run after me and I purposely waited at the outer door of the flat; but she pushed me out on to the stairs and closed the door behind her.

"Tatyana Pavlovna, don't you expect Andrey Petrovitch today or to-morrow, then? I am alarmed. . . ."

"Hold your tongue. Much it matters your being alarmed. Tell me, tell me what you kept back when you were telling us about that rigmarole last night!"

I didn't think it necessary to conceal it, and feeling almost irritated with Versilov I told her all about Katerina Nikolaevna's letter to him the day before and of the effect of the letter, that is of his resurrection into a new life. To my amazement the fact of the letter did not surprise her in the least, and I guessed that she knew of it already.

"But you are lying."

“No, I’m not.”

“I dare say,” she smiled malignantly, as though meditating: “risen again, has he, so that’s the latest, is it? But is it true that he kissed her portrait?”

“Yes, Tatyana Pavlovna.”

“Did he kiss it with feeling, he wasn’t putting it on?”

“Putting it on, as though he ever did! For shame, Tatyana Pavlovna; you’ve a coarse soul, a woman’s soul.”

I said this with heat; but she did not seem to hear me; she seemed to be pondering something again, in spite of the terrible chilliness of the stairs. I had on my fur coat, but she was in her indoor dress.

“I might have asked you to do something, the only pity is you’re so stupid,” she said with contempt and apparent vexation. “Listen, go to Anna Andreyevna’s, and see what’s going on there. . . . But no, don’t go; a booby’s always a booby! Go along, quick march, why do you stand like a post?”

“And I’m not going to Anna Andreyevna’s. Anna Andreyevna sent to ask me herself.”

“She did? Darya Onisimovna?” she turned to me quickly; she had been on the point of going away, and had already opened the door, but she shut it again with a slam.

“Nothing will induce me to go to Anna Andreyevna’s,” I repeated with spiteful enjoyment; “I won’t go because I’ve just been called a booby, though I’ve never been so sharp-sighted as to-day. I see all you’re doing, it’s as clear as day, but I’m not going to Anna Andreyevna all the same!”

“I know it,” she exclaimed, but again pursuing her own thoughts, and taking no notice of my words at all. “They will devour her now completely, and draw her into a deadly noose.”

“Anna Andreyevna?”

“Fool!”

“Then whom do you mean? Surely not Katerina Nikolaevna? What sort of deadly noose?”

I was terribly frightened, a vague but terrible idea set my whole heart quivering. Tatyana Pavlovna looked at me searchingly.

“What are you up to there?” she asked suddenly. “What are you meddling in there? I’ve heard something about you too, you’d better look out!”

“Listen, Tatyana Pavlovna, I’ll tell you a terrible secret, only not just now, there’s not time now, but to-morrow, when we’re alone; but in return you tell me the whole truth, how and what you mean by a deadly noose, for I am all in a tremble. . . .”

“Much I care for your trembling,” she exclaimed. “What’s this other secret you want to tell to-morrow? Why, you know nothing whatever!” she transfixed me with a questioning look. “Why, you swore then that Kraft had burnt the letter, didn’t you?”

“Tatyana Pavlovna, I tell you again, don’t torment me,” I persisted in my turn, not answering her question, for I was beside myself. “Take care, Tatyana Pavlovna, that your hiding this from me may not lead to something worse . . . why, yesterday he was absolutely turning over a new leaf!”

“Go along, you idiot! you are like a love-sick sparrow yourself, I’ll be bound; father and son in love with the same idol! Foo, horrid creatures!”

She vanished, slamming the door indignantly. Furious at the impudent, shameless cynicism of these last words, a cynicism of which only a woman would have been capable, I ran away, deeply insulted. But I won’t describe my vague sensations as I have vowed to keep to facts which will explain everything now; on my way of course, I called in at his lodging, and heard from the nurse that he had not been home at all.

“And isn’t he coming at all?”

“Goodness knows.”

3

Facts, facts! . . . But will the reader understand? I remember how these facts overwhelmed me and prevented me from thinking clearly, so that by the end of the day my head was in a perfect whirl. And so I think I must say two or three words by way of introduction.

The question that tormented me was this: if he really had gone through a spiritual change and had ceased to love her, in that case where should he have been now? The answer was: first of all with me whom he had embraced the evening before, and next with mother, whose portrait he had kissed. And yet, in spite of these natural alternatives, he had suddenly, “as soon as it was light,” left home and gone off somewhere, and Darya Onisimovna had for some reason babbled of his not being likely to return. What’s more, Liza had hinted at the “last chapter” of some “same old

story," and of mother's having some news of him, and the latest news, too; moreover, they undoubtedly knew of Katerina Nikolaevna's letter, too (I noticed that), and yet they did not believe in "his resurrection into a new life" though they had listened to me attentively. Mother was crushed, and Tatyana Pavlovna had been diabolically sarcastic at the word "resurrection." But if all this was so, it must mean that some revulsion of feeling had come over him again in the night, another crisis, and this — after yesterday's enthusiasm, emotion, pathos! So all his "resurrection" had burst like a soap-bubble, and he, perhaps, was rushing about somewhere again now, in the same frenzy as he had been after hearing the news of Buring! There was the question, too, what would become of mother, of me, of all of us, and . . . and, finally, what would become of HER? What was the deadly noose Tatyana had babbled of when she was sending me to Anna Andreyevna? So that "deadly noose" was there, at Anna Andreyevna's! Why at Anna Andreyevna's? Of course I should run to Anna Andreyevna's; I had said that I wouldn't go on purpose, only in annoyance; I would run there at once, but what was it Tatyana had said about the "document"? And hadn't he himself said to me the evening before: "Burn the document"?

These were my thoughts, this was what strangled me, too, in a deadly noose; but what I wanted most of all was HIM. With him I could have decided everything — I felt that; we should have understood each other in two words! I should have gripped his hands, pressed them; I should have found burning words in my heart — this was the dream that haunted me. Oh, I would have calmed his frenzy. . . . But where was he? Where was he?

And, as though this were not enough, Lambert must needs turn up at such a moment, when I was so excited! When I was only a few steps from my door I met him; he uttered a yell of delight on seeing me, and seized me by the arm.

"I've been to see you thr-r-ree times already. . . . Enfin! come and have lunch."

"Stay, have you been to my rooms; was Andrey Petrovitch there?"

"No, there was no one there. Dr-r-rop them all! You're a fool, you were cross yesterday; you were drunk, and I've something important to tell you; I heard a splendid piece of news this morning, about what we were discussing yesterday. . . ."

“Lambert,” I interrupted hurriedly, breathing hard and unconsciously declaiming a little. “I am only stopping with you now to finish with you for good. I told you yesterday, but you still won’t understand. Lambert, you’re a baby and as stupid as a Frenchman. You persist in thinking that it’s the same as it was at Touchard’s, and that I’m as stupid as at Touchard’s. . . . But I’m not so silly as I was at Touchard’s. . . . I was drunk yesterday, but not from wine, but because I was excited; and if I seemed to agree with the stuff you talked, it was because I pretended, so as to find out what you were driving at. I deceived you, and you were delighted and believed it and went on talking nonsense. Let me tell you that marrying her is such nonsense that it wouldn’t take in a schoolboy in the first form. How could you imagine I should believe it? Did you believe it? You believed it because you have never been in aristocratic society, and don’t know how things are done among decent people. Things aren’t done so simply in aristocratic society, and it’s not possible for her so simply to go and get married. . . . Now I will tell you plainly what it is you want: you mean to entice me, so as to make me drunk, and to get me to give up the document, and to join you in some scoundrelly plot against Katerina Nikolaevna! So I tell you it’s nonsense! I’ll never come to you. And you may as well know that to-morrow or the day after that letter will be in her own hands, for it belongs to her, for it was written by her, and I’ll give it to her myself, and if you care to know where, I can tell you that through Tatyana Pavlovna, her friend, I shall give it at Tatyana Pavlovna’s, and in Tatyana Pavlovna’s presence, and I’ll take nothing from her for giving it her. And now be off and keep away from me for ever, or else . . . or else, I shan’t treat you so civilly next time, Lambert. . . .”

As I finished I was in a slight shudder all over. A very serious thing and the nastiest habit in life, which vitiates everything in all one does, is . . . is showing off. Some evil spirit prompted me to work myself up with Lambert, till rapping out the words with relish, and raising my voice higher and higher, in my heat I ended up by dragging in the quite unnecessary detail, that I should return the document through Tatyana Pavlovna, and in her lodging! But I had such a longing to crush him! When I burst out so directly about the letter, and suddenly saw his stupid alarm, I immediately felt a desire to overwhelm him by giving him precise details. And this womanish, boastful babbling was afterwards the cause of terrible misfortunes, for that detail about Tatyana Pavlovna and her lodging was

naturally caught up and retained by a scoundrel who had a practical mind for little things; in more exalted and important matters he was useless and unintelligent, but for such trifles he had a keen sense, nevertheless. If I had held my tongue about Tatyana Pavlovna, great disasters would not have occurred. Yet when he heard what I said, for the first minute he was terribly upset.

"Listen," he muttered. "Alphonsine . . . Alphonsine will sing. . . . Alphonsine has been to see HER; listen. I have a letter, almost a letter, in which Mme. Ahmakov writes of you; the pock-marked fellow got it for me, do you remember him — and you will see, you will see, come along!"

"You are lying; show me the letter!"

"It's at home, Alphonsine has got it; come along!"

He was lying and talking wildly, of course, trembling for fear I should run away from him; but I suddenly abandoned him in the middle of the street, and when he seemed disposed to follow me I stood still and shook my fist at him. But he already stood hesitating, and let me get away; perhaps a new plan had dawned upon him. But the meetings and surprises in store for me were not yet over. . . . And when I remember the whole of that disastrous day, it always seems as though all those surprises and unforeseen accidents were somehow conspiring together and were showered on my head from some accursed horn of plenty. I had scarcely opened the door of my lodging when in the entry I jostled against a tall young man, of dignified and elegant exterior with a long pale face, wearing a magnificent fur coat. He had a pince-nez on his nose; but as soon as he saw me he took it off (evidently as a mark of politeness), and courteously lifting his top-hat, but without stopping, however, said to me with an elegant smile: "Hullo, bonsoir," and passing me went downstairs. We recognized each other at once, though I had only once seen him for a moment in Moscow. It was Anna Andreyevna's brother, the young kammer-junker, Versilov's son, and consequently almost my brother. He was accompanied by my landlady. (The landlord was not yet back from his office.) As soon as he had gone, I simply pounced on her:

"What has he been doing here? Has he been in my room?"

"He's not been in your room at all. He came to see me . . ," she snapped out briefly and dryly, and returned to her room.

"No, you can't put me off like that," I cried. "Kindly answer me; why did he come?"

“My goodness! Am I always to tell you why people come to see me? We may have our own interests to consider, mayn’t we? The young man may have wanted to borrow money; he found out an address from me. Perhaps I promised it him last time. . . .”

“Last time? When?”

“Oh my goodness, why it’s not the first time he’s been!”

She went away. The chief thing I gathered was the change of tone. They had begun to be rude to me. It was clear that this was another secret; secrets were accumulating with every step, with every hour. For the first time young Versilov had come with his sister, with Anna Andreyevna, when I was ill; I remember that perfectly, as well as Anna Andreyevna’s amazing words the day before, that, perhaps, the old prince would stay at my rooms. . . . But all this was so mixed up and so monstrous that I could scarcely gather anything from it. Clapping my hands to my forehead, and not even sitting down to rest, I ran to Anna Andreyevna’s; it appeared that she was not at home, and I received from the porter the information that “she had gone to Tsarskoe; and might, perhaps, not be back till about this time to-morrow.”

She was at Tsarskoe, and no doubt with the old prince, and her brother was examining my lodgings! “No, that shall not be,” I cried, gnashing my teeth; “and if there really is some ‘deadly noose’ I will defend ‘the poor woman’!”

From Anna Andreyevna’s I did not return home, for there suddenly flashed upon my feverish brain the thought of the restaurant on the canal side, where Andrey Petrovitch had the habit of going in his gloomy hours. Delighted at this conjecture, I instantly ran thither; it was by now four o’clock and was already beginning to get dark. In the restaurant I was told that he had been there, stayed a little while and had gone away, but, perhaps, he would come back. I suddenly determined to wait for him, and ordered dinner; there was a hope any how.

I ate my dinner, ate, indeed, more than I wanted, so as to have a right to stay as long as possible, and I stayed, I believe, four hours. I won’t describe my disappointment and feverish impatience, everything within me seemed shaking and quivering. That organ, those diners — oh, all the dreariness of it is stamped upon my soul, perhaps for the rest of my life! I won’t describe the ideas that whirled in my head like a crowd of dry leaves in autumn after

a hurricane; it really was something like that, and I confess that I felt at times that my reason was beginning to desert me.

But what worried me till it was a positive pain (in a side-current, of course, besides my chief torment) was a persistent poisonous impression, persistent as a venomous autumn fly, which one does not think about but which whirls about one, pesters one, and suddenly bites one painfully; it was only a reminiscence, an incident of which I had never spoken to anyone in the world before. This was what it was, since it seems I must tell this, too.

4

When it was settled that I was to leave Moscow and come to Petersburg, I received instructions through Nikolay Semyonovitch to wait for money to be sent me for the journey. From whom the money was coming I did not ask; I knew it was from Versilov, and as I dreamed day and night of my meeting with him, making exalted plans about it while my heart almost swooned within me, I had quite given up speaking about him aloud even to Marie Ivanovna. I remember that I had money of my own, but I proceeded to wait expectantly for the money to come by post.

Suddenly, however, Nikolay Semyonovitch, returning home, informed me (as usual briefly and without going off into explanations) that I was to go next day to Myasnitsky, at eleven o'clock in the morning, to Prince V.'s flat, and that there Andrey Petrovitch's son, the kammer-junker, Versilov, who had just arrived from Petersburg and was staying with his schoolfellow, Prince V. would hand over to me a sum of money for my journey. On the face of it the arrangement was simple enough: Andrey Petrovitch might well send the money by his son rather than by post; but the news crushed me and filled me with alarm. I had no doubt that Versilov wished to bring his son, my brother, and me together; this threw a light upon the intentions and feelings of the man of whom I dreamed; but a question of the utmost magnitude presented itself to me: how should I, and how must I behave at this utterly unexpected interview, and how could I best keep up my dignity?

Next day, exactly at eleven o'clock, I turned up at Prince V.'s flat, which, as I was able to judge, was splendidly furnished, though it was a bachelor's establishment. I was kept waiting in the hall where there were several

lackeys in livery. And from the next room came sounds of loud talk and laughter: Prince V. had other visitors besides the kammer-junker. I told the footman to announce me, and, I fancy, in rather haughty terms. Anyway, he looked at me strangely, and, as I fancied, not so respectfully as he should have done. To my amazement he was a very long time in announcing me, five minutes, and all the while the same laughter, and the same sounds of conversation reached me.

I waited standing, knowing that it would be impossible and unseemly for me, "just as much a gentleman," to sit down in a hall where there were footmen. My pride would have prevented me under any circumstances from entering the drawing-room without a special invitation; over-fastidious pride perhaps it was, but that was only fitting. To my amazement the two lackeys who were left in the hall had the impertinence to sit down. I turned away to avoid noticing it, and yet I could not help quivering all over, and suddenly turning and stepping up to one of the footmen, I ORDERED him to go "at once" and take in my name again. In spite of my stern expression and extreme excitement, the lackey looked at me lazily, without getting up, and the other one answered for him:

"It's been taken in, don't disturb yourself."

I made up my mind to wait only another minute or possibly even less, and then TO GO. I was very well-dressed: my suit and overcoat were new anyway, and my linen was perfectly fresh, Marie Ivanovna had seen to that with a special view to the occasion. But I learned for a fact, much later, when I was in Petersburg, that these lackeys had heard the evening before from young Versilov's valet that "the young gentleman's bastard brother, a student, was coming." I know this now for a fact.

The minute passed. It's a strange sensation when one decides and cannot decide. "Shall I go or not, shall I go or not?" I repeated to myself every second, almost in a fever, and suddenly the lackey who had taken my name returned. Between his fingers he held fluttering four red notes — forty roubles!

"Here, sir, will you please take forty roubles!"

I boiled over. This was such an insult! All the night before I had been dreaming of the meeting Versilov had arranged between us two brothers; I had spent the whole night in feverish visions of the demeanour I ought to adopt, that I might not discredit — not discredit the whole cycle of ideas which I had worked out in my solitude, and which might have made me feel

proud in any circle. I dreamed of how proud, gentlemanly, and sad, perhaps, I would be even in Prince V.'s society, and how in that way I should be admitted into that circle — oh, I'm not sparing myself, and so be it, for it's just such details that I ought to record! And then — to be given forty roubles by a lackey in the hall, and after being kept ten minutes waiting, and not even in an envelope, not even on a salver, but straight from the lackey's fingers!

I shouted so violently at the lackey that he started and stepped back; I told him he must go back at once and "his master must bring the money himself" — in fact, my request was, of course, incoherent and incomprehensible to the man. But I shouted so that he went. To make things worse my shouting was heard in the room, and the talk and laughter suddenly subsided.

Almost at the same time I heard footsteps, dignified, quiet, unhurried, and a tall figure of a handsome and haughty-looking young man (he seemed to me then even thinner and paler than when I met him to-day) appeared in the doorway a yard from the door leading into the passage. He was wearing a magnificent red silk dressing-gown and slippers, and had a pince-nez on his nose. Without uttering a word he fixed me with his pince-nez and proceeded to stare at me. I took one step towards him like a wild beast, and began glaring at him defiantly. But he only scrutinized me for a moment, ten seconds at the utmost; suddenly I detected on his lips a scarcely perceptible, but most malignant smile — what made it so malignant was that it was scarcely perceptible: he turned round without a word and went back into the room, just as deliberately, just as quietly and smoothly as he had come. Oh, these insolent fellows are trained by their mothers from childhood to be insolent! I lost my head of course. . . . Oh, why did I lose my head!

Almost at that moment the same lackey reappeared with the same notes in his hand.

"Be so good as to take this, it is sent you from Petersburg, but his honour can't see you: 'perhaps another time, when he's more at leisure.'" I felt that these last words were his own addition. But I was still overwhelmed with confusion. I took the money and walked to the door, I took it simply because I was confused, I ought not to have taken it; but the lackey, no doubt wanting to mortify me further, ventured upon a regular flunkey's

impertinence; he flung the door extra wide open before me, and pronounced with exaggerated emphasis and dignity, as I went out:

"This way, if you please!"

"You blackguard," I roared at him, and I raised my hand, but I did not bring it down; "and your master's a blackguard, too! Tell him so directly," I added, and went down the stairs.

"Don't you dare! if I were to report that to my master, you would be taken, that very minute, with a note to the police station. And don't you dare threaten me!"

I went down the stairs. It was a grand open staircase, and above I could be watched as I went down the red carpeted stairs. All three lackeys came out and stood looking over the banisters. I made up my mind to keep quiet, of course: to brawl with lackeys was impossible. I walked the whole length of the stairs without increasing my pace; I believe I even moved more slowly.

Oh, there may be philosophers (and shame upon them!) who will say that all this is nonsense, the irritability of a milksop; let them say so, but for me it was a wound — a wound which has not healed to this day, even to the present moment, when I am writing this, when all is over and even avenged. Oh, I swear I am not given to harbouring malice and I am not revengeful. No doubt I always, even before my illness, wanted to revenge myself when I was insulted, but I swear it was only to revenge myself by magnanimity. Let me revenge myself magnanimously, but so that he felt it and understood, and I should have been avenged! And, by the way, I must add: that though I am not revengeful I have a good memory for injuries, in spite of being magnanimous; I wonder whether others are the same? Then, oh, then I went with generous feelings, perhaps absurd, but no matter: better they were absurd and generous, than not absurd but mean, vulgar and mediocre! I never told anyone of that meeting with "my brother," even Marie Ivanovna, even Liza: that interview was exactly like an insulting slap in the face. And now I came across this gentleman when I least expected to meet him; he smiles to me, takes off his hat and says bonsoir in quite a friendly way. That give one something to think about of course. . . . But the wound was reopened.

After sitting for more than four hours in the restaurant I suddenly rushed away as though I were in a fit, again to Versilov's of course, and again, of course, I did not find him at home; he had not been to the house at all; the nurse was bored, and she asked me to send Darya Onisimovna; as though I had thoughts for that! I ran to mother's, but did not go in. Calling Lukerya into the passage I learnt from her that he had not been there either, and that Liza, too, was not at home. I saw that Lukerya, too, would have liked to ask me something, and also, perhaps, to give me some commission; but I had no thoughts for that! There was one last hope left — that he had gone to my lodging; but I had no faith in this.

I have already stated that I was almost out of my mind. And lo, and behold! in my room I found Alphonsine and my landlord. They were coming out, it is true, and in Pyotr Ippolitovitch's hand was a candle.

"What's this?" I yelled at the landlord, almost senselessly. "How dare you take that hussy into my room?"

"Tien," cried Alphonsine "et les amis?"

"Get out," I roared.

"Mais c'est un ours!" she whisked out into the passage, pretending to be alarmed, and instantly disappeared into the landlady's room. Pyotr Ippolitovitch, still holding the candle in his hand, came up to me with a severe face.

"Allow me to observe, Arkady Makarovitch, that you are too hasty; with all respect to you, Mademoiselle Alphonsine is not a hussy, but quite the contrary, indeed, is here, not as your visitor, but as my wife's, with whom she has been for some time past acquainted."

"And how dared you take her into my room?" I repeated, clutching at my head, which almost suddenly began to ache violently.

"By chance. I went in to shut the window, which I had opened to air the room; and as Alphonsine Karlovna and I were continuing our conversation, she came into your room simply following me."

"That's a lie. Alphonsine's a spy, Lambert's a spy! Perhaps you're a spy, too! And Alphonsine came into my room to steal something."

"That's as you please. You'll say one thing to-day, but tomorrow you'll speak differently. And I've let our rooms for some time, and have moved with my wife into the little room so that Alphonsine Karlovna is almost as much a lodger here as you are."

"You've let your rooms to Lambert?" I cried in dismay.

“No, not to Lambert,” he answered with the same broad grin, in which, however, the hesitation I had seen in the morning was replaced by determination. “I imagine that you know to whom and only affect not to know for the sake of appearances, and that’s why you’re angry. Good-night, sir!”

“Yes, yes, leave me, leave me alone!” I waved my hand, almost crying, so that he looked at me in surprise; he went away, however. I fastened the door with the hook and threw myself on my bed with my face in the pillow. And that is how I passed that awful day, the first of those three momentous days with which my story concludes.

CHAPTER X

1

But, again anticipating the course of events, I find it is necessary to explain to the reader something of what is coming, for the logical sequence of the story is obscured by such numerous incidents, that otherwise it would be impossible to understand it.

That something is the “deadly noose” to which Tatyana Pavlovna let slip an allusion. It appeared that Anna Andreyevna had ventured at last on the most audacious step that could be imagined in her position; she certainly had a will of her own! On the pretext of his health the old prince had been in the nick of time carried off to Tsarskoe Syelo so that the news of his approaching marriage with Anna Andreyevna might not be spread abroad, but might for the time be stifled, so to say, in embryo, yet the feeble old man, with whom one could do anything else, would not on any consideration have consented to give up his idea and jilt Anna Andreyevna, who had made him an offer. On this subject he was a paragon of chivalry, so that he might sooner or later bestir himself and suddenly proceed to carry out his intentions with that irresistible force which is so very frequently met with in weak characters, for they often have a line beyond which they cannot be driven. Moreover, he fully recognised the delicacy of the position of Anna Andreyevna, for whom he had an unbounded respect; he was quite alive to the possibility of rumours, of gibes, of injurious gossip. The only thing that checked him and kept him quiet for the time was that Katerina Nikolaevna had never once allowed herself to drop the faintest hint reflecting on Anna Andreyevna in his presence, or to raise the faintest objection to his intention of marrying her; on the contrary, she showed the greatest cordiality and every attention to her father’s fiancée. In this way Anna Andreyevna was placed in an extremely awkward position, perceiving with her subtle feminine instinct that she would wound all the old prince’s tenderest feelings, and would arouse his distrust and even, perhaps, his indignation by the slightest criticism of Katerina Nikolaevna, whom he worshipped, too, and now more than ever just because she had so graciously and dutifully consented to his marriage. And so for the present the conflict was waged on that plane: the two rivals vied with one another in delicacy

and patience, and as time went on the prince did not know which of them to admire the most, and like all weak but tender-hearted people, he ended by being miserable and blaming himself for everything. His depression of spirits reached a morbid point, I was told: his nerves were thoroughly upset, and instead of regaining health in Tsarskoe, he was, so I was assured, on the point of taking to his bed.

Here I may note in parenthesis what I only learnt long afterwards that Büring had bluntly proposed to Katerina Nikolaevna that they should take the old gentleman abroad, inducing him to go by some sort of strategy, letting people know privately meanwhile that he had gone out of his mind, and obtaining a doctor's certificate to that effect abroad. But Katerina Nikolaevna would not consent to that on any account; so at least it was declared afterwards. She seems to have rejected the project with indignation. All this is only a rather roundabout rumour, but I believe it.

And just when things had reached this apparently hopeless position, Anna Andreyevna suddenly learnt through Lambert that there was in existence a letter, in which the daughter had consulted a lawyer about declaring her father insane. Her proud and revengeful mind was roused to the utmost. Recalling previous conversations with me and putting together many trifling circumstances, she could not doubt the truth of it. Then, inevitably, the plan of a bold stroke matured in her resolute, inflexible, feminine heart. . . . That plan was to tell the prince all about it, suddenly, with no preliminaries or negotiations, to frighten him, to give him a shock, to prove to him that what inevitably awaited him was the lunatic asylum, and if he were perverse, if he refused to believe and expressed indignation, to show him his daughter's letter, as though to say, "Since there was once an intention of declaring him insane, it might well be tried again in order to prevent his marriage." Then to take the frightened and shattered old man to Petersburg — STRAIGHT TO MY LODGING.

It was a terrible risk, but she had complete confidence in her powers. Here I will digress for a moment to observe that the later course of events proved that she had not been mistaken as to the effect of this blow; what is more, the effect of it exceeded her expectations. The news of the existence of this letter produced, perhaps, a far stronger effect on the old prince than she or any of us had anticipated. I had no idea until then that the old prince had heard of this letter before; but like all weak and timid people he did not believe the rumour, and did his utmost to dismiss it from his mind in order

to preserve his serenity; what is more, he reproached himself for his baseness in being ready to believe it. I may add that the fact, that is the existence of the letter, had a far greater effect on Katerina Nikolaevna than I had expected. . . . In fact, this scrap of paper turned out to be of far greater consequence than I, carrying it in my pocket, had imagined. But I am running too far ahead.

But why, I shall be asked to my lodgings? Why convey the old prince to my pitiful little den, and alarm him, perhaps, by the sordidness of his surroundings? If not to his own home (where all her plans might be thwarted at once), why not to some "sumptuous" private apartments, as Lambert urged? But it was just on this that Anna Andreyevna reckoned in her desperate step.

Her chief object was to confront the prince with the document; but nothing would have induced me to give it up. And as there was no time to lose, Anna Andreyevna, relying on her power to carry off the position, resolved to begin without the document, bringing the old prince straight to me — for what purpose? To catch me by that same step; so to say, to kill two birds with one stone. She reckoned on working upon me by the sudden blow, the shock, the unexpectedness of it. She anticipated that when I found the old man in my room, when I saw his helplessness and his alarm, and heard them all imploring me, I should give in and show the document! I must confess her calculation was crafty and clever, and showed psychological insight; what is more, she was very nearly successful. . . . As for the old man, Anna Andreyevna had succeeded in bringing him away, and had forced him to believe her simply by telling him that she was bringing him TO ME. All this I learned later; the mere statement that the letter was in my hands extinguished in his timid heart the last doubts of the fact — so great were his love and respect for me!

I may remark, too, that Anna Andreyevna herself never for a moment doubted that I still had the letter and had not let it go out of my hands: her great mistake was that she had a wrong conception of my character and was synically reckoning on my innocence, my good- nature, and even my sentimentality; and, on the other hand, she imagined that even if I had made up my mind to give up the letter, to Katerina Nikolaevna for instance, I should only do so under special conditions, and she made haste to anticipate those conditions by the suddenness, the unexpectedness of her master-stroke.

And, finally, Lambert confirmed her in all this. I have mentioned already that Lambert's position at this time was most critical; the traitor would have liked above everything to lure me from Anna Andreyevna so that with him I might sell the letter to Mme. Ahmakov, which he, for some reason, considered a more profitable course; but since nothing would induce me to give up the document till the last moment, he decided, at any rate, to act with Anna Andreyevna also, that he might not risk losing everything, and therefore he did his utmost to force his services on her till the very last hour, and I know that he even offered to procure a priest, if necessary . . . but Anna Andreyevna had asked him, with a contemptuous smile, not to suggest this. Lambert struck her as horribly coarse, and aroused her utmost aversion; but to be on the safe side she still accepted his services, as a spy for instance. By the way, I do not know for certain to this day whether they bought over Pyotr Ippolitovitch, my landlord, and whether he got anything at all from them for his services, or whether he simply worked for them for the joy of intrigue; but that he acted as a spy upon me, and that his wife did also, I know for a fact.

The reader will understand now that though I was to some extent forewarned, yet I could not have guessed that the next day, or the day after, I should find the old prince in my lodgings and in such circumstances. Indeed, I never could have conceived of such audacity from Anna Andreyevna. One may talk freely and hint at anything one likes, but to decide, to act, and to carry things out — well, that really is character!

2

To continue.

I waked up late in the morning. I slept an exceptionally sound and dreamless sleep, as I remember with wonder, so that I waked up next morning feeling unusually confident again, as though nothing had happened the day before. I intended not going first to mother's but straight to the church of the cemetery, with the idea of returning to mother's after the ceremony and remaining the rest of the day. I was firmly convinced that in any case I should meet him sooner or later at mother's.

Neither Alphonsine nor the landlord had been at the flat for a long time. I would not on any account question the landlady, and, indeed, I made up my mind to cut off all relations with them for the future, and even to give up

my lodgings as soon as I could; and so, as soon as my coffee had been brought, I put the hook on the door again. But suddenly there was a knock at the door, and to my surprise it turned out to be Trishatov.

I opened the door at once and, delighted to see him, asked him to come in, but he refused.

"I will only say two words from the door . . . or, perhaps, I will come in, for I fancy one must talk in a whisper here; only I won't sit down. You are looking at my horrid coat: Lambert took my great-coat."

He was, in fact, wearing a wretched old great-coat, which did not fit him. He stood before me without taking off his hat, a gloomy, dejected figure, with his hands in his pockets.

"I won't sit down, I won't sit down. Listen, Dolgoruky, I know nothing in detail, but I know that Lambert is preparing some treachery against you at once, and you won't escape it — and that's certain. And so be careful; I was told by that pock-marked fellow, do you remember him? But he did not tell me anything more about it, so I can't tell you. I've only come to warn you — good-bye."

"But sit down, dear Trishatov; though I'm in a hurry I'm so glad to see you. . . ." I cried.

"I won't sit down, I won't sit down; but I shall remember you were glad to see me. Oh, Dolgoruky, why deceive others? I've consciously of my own free will consented to every sort of abomination, to things so vile, that I can't speak of them before you. Now we are at the pock-marked fellow's. Good-bye. I am not worthy to sit down with you."

"Nonsense, Trishatov, dear. . . ."

"No, you see, Dolgoruky, I keep a bold face before every one, and I'm going to have a rollicking time. I shall soon have a better fur coat than my old one, and shall be driving a fast trotter. But I shall know in my own mind that I did not sit down in your room, because I judge myself unworthy, because I'm low compared with you. It will always be nice for me to remember that when I'm in the midst of disgraceful debauchery. Good-bye, good-bye. And I won't give you my hand; why, Alphonsine won't take my hand. And please don't follow me or come to see me, that's a compact between us."

The strange boy turned and went out. I had no time then, but I made up my mind to seek him out as soon as I had settled our affairs.

I won’t describe the rest of that morning, though there is a great deal that might be recalled. Versilov was not at the funeral service in the church, and I fancy from their faces I could have gathered that they did not expect him there. Mother prayed devoutly and seemed entirely absorbed in the service; there were only Liza and Tatyana Pavlovna by the coffin. But I will describe nothing, nothing. After the burial we all returned and sat down to a meal, and again I gathered by their faces that he was not expected to it. When we rose from the table, I went up to mother, embraced her and congratulated her on her birthday; Liza did the same after me.

“Listen, brother,” Liza whispered to me on the sly; “they are expecting him.”

“I guessed so, Liza. I see it.”

“He’s certainly coming.”

“So they must have heard something positive,” I thought, but I didn’t ask any question. Though I’m not going to describe my feelings, all this mystery began to weigh like a stone upon my heart again in spite of my confident mood. We all settled down in the drawing-room, near mother, at the round table. Oh, how I liked being with her then, and looking at her! Mother suddenly asked me to read something out of the Gospel. I read a chapter from St. Luke. She did not weep, and was not even very sorrowful, but her face had never seemed to me so full of spiritual meaning. There was the light of thought in her gentle eyes, but I could not trace in them any sign that she expected something with apprehension. The conversation never flagged; we recalled many reminiscences of Makar Ivanovitch; Tatyana Pavlovna, too, told us many things about him of which I had no idea before. And, in fact, it would make an interesting chapter if it were all written down. Even Tatyana Pavlovna wore quite a different air from usual: she was very gentle, very affectionate, and, what is more, also very quiet, though she talked a good deal to distract mother’s mind. But one detail I remember well: mother was sitting on the sofa, and on a special round table on her left there lay, apparently put there for some purpose, a plain antique ikon, with halos on the heads of the saints, of which there were two. This ikon had belonged to Makar Ivanovitch — I knew that, and knew also that the old man had never parted from it, and looked upon it with superstitious reverence. Tatyana Pavlovna glanced at it several times.

“Listen, Sofia,” she said, suddenly changing the conversation; “instead of the ikon’s lying down, would it not be better to stand it up on the table

against the wall, and to light the lamp before it?”

“No, better as it is,” said mother.

“I dare say you’re right; it might seem making too much fuss. . . .”

I did not understand at the time, but this ikon had long ago been verbally bequeathed by Makar Ivanovitch to Andrey Petrovitch, and mother was preparing to give it to him now.

It was five o’clock in the afternoon; we were still talking when I noticed a sudden quiver in mother’s face; she drew herself up quickly and began listening, while Tatyana Pavlovna, who was speaking at the time, went on talking without noticing anything. I at once turned to the door, and an instant later saw Andrey Petrovitch in the doorway. He had come in by the back stairs, through the kitchen and the passage, and mother was the only one of us who had heard his footsteps. Now I will describe the whole of the insane scene that followed, word by word, and gesture by gesture; it was brief.

To begin with, I did not, at the first glance anyway, observe the slightest change in his face. He was dressed as always, that is almost foppishly; in his hand was a small but expensive nosegay of fresh flowers. He went up and handed it to mother with a smile; she was looking at him with frightened perplexity, but she took the nosegay, and a faint flush at once glowed on her pale cheeks, and there was a gleam of pleasure in her eyes.

“I knew you would take it like that, Sonia,” he said. As we all got up when he came in, he took Liza’s easy-chair, which was on the left of mother, and sat down in it without noticing he was taking her seat. And so he was quite close to the little table on which the ikon was lying.

“Good evening to you all; I felt I must bring you this nosegay on your birthday, Sonia, and so I did not go to the funeral, as I could not come to the grave with a nosegay; and you didn’t expect me at the funeral, I know. The old man certainly won’t be angry at these flowers, for he bequeathed us joy himself, didn’t he? I believe he’s here somewhere in the room.”

Mother looked at him strangely; Tatyana Pavlovna seemed to wince.

“Who’s here in the room?” she asked.

“Makar Ivanovitch. Never mind. You know that the man who is not entirely a believer in these marvels is always more prone to superstition. . . . But I had better tell you about the nosegay: how I succeeded in bringing it I don’t know. Three times on the way I had a longing to throw it in the snow and trample on it.”

Mother shuddered.

“A terrible longing. You must have pity on me and my poor head, Sonia. I longed to, because they are too beautiful. Is there any object in the world more beautiful than a flower? I carried it, with snow and frost all round. Our frost and flowers — such an incongruity! I wasn’t thinking of that though, I simply longed to crush it because it was so lovely. Sonia, though I’m disappearing again now, I shall soon come back, for I believe I shall be afraid. If I am afraid, who will heal me of my terrors, where can I find an angel like Sonia? . . . What is this ikon you’ve got here? Ah, Makar Ivanovitch’s, I remember. It belonged to his family, his ancestors; he would never part from it; I know, I remember he left it to me; I quite remember . . . and I fancy it’s an unorthodox one. Let me have a look at it.”

He took up the ikon, carried it to the light and looked at it intently, but, after holding it a few seconds only, laid it on the table before him. I was astonished, but all his strange speech was uttered so quickly that I had not time to reflect upon it. All I remember is that a sick feeling of dread began to clutch at my heart. Mother’s alarm had passed into perplexity and compassion; she looked on him as some one, above all, to be pitied; it had sometimes happened in the past that he had talked almost as strangely as now. Liza, for some reason, became suddenly very pale, and strangely made a sign to me with a motion of her head towards him. But most frightened of all was Tatyana Pavlovna.

“What’s the matter with you, Andrey Petrovitch darling?” she inquired cautiously.

“I really don’t know, Tatyana Pavlovna dear, what’s the matter with me. Don’t be uneasy, I still remember that you are Tatyana Pavlovna, and that you are dear. But I’ve only come for a minute though; I should like to say something nice to Sonia, and I keep trying to find the right word, though my heart is full of words, which I don’t know how to utter; yes, really, all such strange words somehow. Do you know I feel as though I were split in two” — he looked round at us all with a terribly serious face and with perfectly genuine candour. “Yes, I am really split in two mentally, and I’m horribly afraid of it. It’s just as though one’s second self were standing beside one; one is sensible and rational oneself, but the other self is impelled to do something perfectly senseless, and sometimes very funny; and suddenly you notice that you are longing to do that amusing thing, goodness knows why; that is you want to, as it were, against your will; though you fight against it

with all your might, you want to. I once knew a doctor who suddenly began whistling in church, at his father's funeral. I really was afraid to come to the funeral to-day, because, for some reason, I was possessed by a firm conviction that I should begin to whistle or laugh in church, like that unfortunate doctor, who came to rather a bad end. . . . And I really don't know why, but I've been haunted by the thought of that doctor all day; I am so haunted by him that I can't shake him off. Do you know, Sonia, here I've taken up the ikon again" (he had picked it up and was turning it about in his hand), "and do you know, I have a dreadful longing now, this very second, to smash it against the stove, against this corner. I am sure it would break into two halves — neither more nor less."

What was most striking was that he said this without the slightest trace of affectation or whimsical caprice; he spoke quite simply, but that made it all the more terrible; and he seemed really frightened of something; I noticed suddenly that his hands were trembling a little.

"Andrey Petrovitch!" cried mother, clasping her hands.

"Let the ikon alone, let it alone, Andrey Petrovitch, let it alone, put it down!" cried Tatyana Pavlovna, jumping up. "Undress sad go to bed. Arkady, run for the doctor!"

"But . . . but what a fuss you're making," he said gently, scrutinising us all intently. Then he suddenly put both elbows on the table and leaned his head in his hands.

"I'm scaring you, but I tell you what, my friends, try to comfort me a little, sit down again, and all be calm, if only for a minute! Sonia, I did not come to talk of this at all; I came to tell you something, but it was quite different. Good-bye, Sonia, I'm going off on my wanderings again, as I have left you several times before . . . but, no doubt, I shall come back to you again one day — in that sense you are inevitable. To whom should I come back, when all is over? Believe, Sonia, that I've come to you now as to an angel, and not as to an enemy; how could you be an enemy to me, how could you be an enemy! Don't imagine that I came to break this ikon, for do you know, Sonia, I am still longing to break it all the same. . . ."

When Tatyana Pavlovna had cried out "Let the ikon alone," she had snatched it out of his hands and was holding it in hers. Suddenly, at his last word, he jumped up impulsively, snatched the ikon in a flash from Tatyana's hands, and with a ferocious swing smashed it with all his might against the corner of the tiled stove. The ikon was broken into two pieces. .

. . He turned to us and his pale face suddenly flushed red, almost purple, and every feature in his face quivered and worked.

“Don’t take it for a symbol, Sonia; it’s not as Makar’s legacy I have broken it, but only to break something . . . and, anyway, I shall come back to you, my last angel! You may take it as a symbol, though; of course it must have been so! . . .”

And with sudden haste he went out of the room, going again through the kitchen (where he had left his fur coat and cap). I won’t attempt to describe what happened to mother: in mortal terror she stood clasping her hands above her, and she suddenly screamed after him:

“Andrey Petrovitch, come back, if only to say good-bye, dear!”

“He’ll come, Sofia, he’ll come! Don’t worry yourself!” Tatyana shrieked, trembling all over in a terrible rage, a really brutal rage. “Why, you heard he promised to come back himself! Let him go and amuse himself for the last time, the fool. He’s getting old — and who’ll nurse him when he’s bedridden except you, his old nurse? Why, he tells you so himself, he’s not ashamed. . . .”

As for us, Liza was in a swoon; I would have run after him, but I rushed to mother. I threw my arms round her and held her tight. Lukerya ran in with a glass of water for Liza, but mother soon came to herself, she sank on the sofa, hid her face in her hands, and began crying.

“But . . . but you’d better run after him,” Tatyana Pavlovna shouted suddenly with all her might, as though she had suddenly waked up. “Go along . . . go along . . . overtake him, don’t leave him for a minute, go along, go along!” She pulled me forcibly away from mother. “Oh, I shall run myself.”

“Arkasha, oh, run after him, make haste!” mother cried suddenly, too.

I ran off, full speed, through the kitchen and through the yard, but there was no sign of him anywhere. In the distance I saw black shadows in the darkness; I ran after them and examined each passer- by carefully as I overtook them. So I ran on to the cross-roads.

“People are not angry with the insane,” suddenly flashed through my mind, “but Tatyana was wild with rage at him, so he’s not mad at all. . . .” Oh, it seemed to me all the time that it was symbolic, and that he was bent on putting an end to everything as he did to the ikon, and showing that to us, to mother, and all. But that second self was unmistakably beside him, too; of that there could be no doubt. . . .

He was nowhere to be found, however, and I could not run to him. It was difficult to believe that he would have simply gone home. Suddenly an idea flashed upon me and I rushed off to Anna Andreyevna.

Anna Andreyevna had just returned, and I was shown up at once. I went in, controlling myself as far as I could. Without sitting down, I at once described to her the scene which had just taken place, that is the "second self." I shall never forget the greedy but pitilessly composed and self-complacent curiosity with which she listened, also standing, and I shall never forgive her for it.

"Where is he? Perhaps you know?" I ended, insistently. "Tatyana Pavlovna sent me to you yesterday. . . ."

"I sent for you, too, yesterday. Yesterday he was at Tsarskoe Syelo; he came to see me, too. And now" (she looked at her watch), "now it is seven o'clock. . . . So he's pretty sure to be at home."

"I see that you know all about it — so tell me, tell me," I cried.

"I know a good deal; but I don't know everything. Of course, there's no reason to conceal it from you. . . ." She scanned me with a strange glance, smiling and as though deliberating. "Yesterday morning, in answer to her letter, he made Katerina Nikolaevna a formal offer of marriage."

"That's false," I said, opening my eyes wide.

"The letter went through my hands; I took it to her myself, unopened. This time he behaved 'chivalrously' and concealed nothing from me."

"Anna Andreyevna, I can't understand it!"

"Of course, it's hard to understand it, but it's like a gambler who stakes his last crown, while he has a loaded pistol ready in his pocket — that's what his offer amounts to. It's ten to one she won't accept his offer; but still he's reckoning on that tenth chance, and I confess that's very curious; I imagine, though, that it may be a case of frenzy, that 'second self,' as you said so well just now."

"And you laugh? And am I really to believe that the letter was given through you? Why, you are the fiancée of her father? Spare me, Anna Andreyevna!"

"He asked me to sacrifice my future to his happiness, though he didn't really ask; it was all done rather silently. I simply read it all in his eyes. Oh, my goodness, what will he do next! Why, he went to Königsberg to ask

your mother's leave to marry Katerina Nikolaevna's step-daughter. That's very like his pitching on me for his go-between and confidante yesterday."

She was rather pale. But her calmness was only exaggerated sarcasm. Oh, I forgave her much then, as I began to grasp the position. For a minute I pondered; she waited in silence.

"Do you know," I laughed suddenly, "you delivered the letter because there was not the slightest risk for you, because there's no chance of a marriage, but what of him? Of her, too? Of course she will reject his offer and then . . . what may not happen then? Where is he now, Anna Andreyevna?" I cried. "Every minute is precious now, any minute there may be trouble!"

"He's at home. I have told you so. In the letter to Katerina Nikolaevna, which I delivered, he asked her in ANY CASE to grant him an interview in his lodgings to-day at seven o'clock this evening. She promised."

"She's going to his lodging? How can that be?"

"Why not, the lodging is Darya Onisimovna's; they might very well meet there as her guests. . . ."

"But she's afraid of him. . . . He may kill her."

Anna Andreyevna only smiled.

"In spite of the terror which I detected in her myself, Katerina Nikolaevna has always from the first cherished a certain reverence and admiration for the nobility of Andrey Petrovitch's principles and the loftiness of his mind. She is trusting herself to him this once, so as to have done with him for ever. In his letter he gave her the most solemn and chivalrous promise that she should have nothing to fear. . . . In short, I don't remember the words of the letter, but she trusted herself . . . so to speak, for the last time . . . and so to speak, responding with the same heroic feelings. There may have been a sort of chivalrous rivalry on both sides."

"But the second self, the second self!" I exclaimed; "besides, he's out of his mind!"

"Yesterday, when she gave her promise to grant him an interview, Katerina Nikolaevna probably did not conceive of the possibility of that."

I suddenly turned and was rushing out . . . to him, to them, of course! But from the next room I ran back for a second.

"But, perhaps, that is just what would suit you, that he should kill her!" I cried, and ran out of the house.

I was shaking all over, as though in a fit, but I went into the lodging quietly, through the kitchen, and asked in a whisper to see Darya Onisimovna; she came out at once and fastened a gaze of intense curiosity upon me.

“His honour . . . he’s not at home.”

But in a rapid whisper I explained, bluntly and exactly, that I knew all about it from Anna Andreyevna, and that I had just come from her.

“Darya Onisimovna, where are they?”

“They are in the room where you sat the day before yesterday, at the table.”

“Darya Onisimovna, let me go in!”

“That’s impossible!”

“Not in there, but in the next room. Darya Onisimovna, Anna Andreyevna wishes it, perhaps; if she didn’t wish it, she wouldn’t have told me herself. They won’t hear me . . . she wishes it herself. . . .”

“And if she doesn’t wish it?” said Darya Onisimovna, her eyes still riveted upon me.

“Darya Onisimovna, I remember your Olya; let me in.”

Her lips and chin suddenly began to quiver.

“Dear friend . . . for Olya’s sake . . . for the sake of your feeling . . . don’t desert Anna Andreyevna. My dear! you won’t desert her, will you? You won’t desert her?”

“No, I won’t!”

“Give me your solemn promise, you won’t rush out upon them, and won’t call out if I hide you in there?”

“I swear on my honour, Darya Onisimovna.”

She took me by my coat, led me into a dark room — next to the one where they were sitting — guided me, almost noiselessly, over the soft carpet to the doorway, stationed me at the curtain that hung over it, and lifting the curtain a fraction of an inch showed me them both.

I remained; she went away. Of course, I remained. I knew that I was eavesdropping, spying on other people’s secrets, but I remained. How could I help remaining with the thought of the ‘second self’ in my mind! Why, he had smashed the ikon before my eyes!

They were sitting facing one another at the table at which we had yesterday drunk to his “resurrection.” I got a good view of their faces. She was wearing a simple black dress, and was as beautiful and apparently calm as always. He was speaking; she was listening with intense and sympathetic attention. Perhaps there was some trace of timidity in her, too. He was terribly excited. I had come in the middle of their conversation, and so for some time I could make nothing of it. I remember she suddenly asked:

“And I was the cause?”

“No, I was the cause,” he answered; “and you were only innocently guilty. You know that there are the innocently guilty. Those are generally the most unpardonable crimes, and they almost always bring their punishment,” he added, laughing strangely. “And I actually thought for a moment that I had forgotten you and could laugh at my stupid passion . . . but you know that. What is he to me, though, that man you’re going to marry? Yesterday I made you an offer, forgive me for it; it was absurd and yet I had no alternative but that. . . . What could I have done but that absurd thing? I don’t know. . . .”

As he said this, he laughed hopelessly, suddenly lifting his eyes to her; till then he had looked away as he talked. If I had been in her place, I should have been frightened at that laugh, I felt that. He suddenly got up from his chair.

“Tell me, how could you consent to come here?” he asked suddenly, as though remembering the real point. “My invitation and my whole letter was absurd. . . . Stay, I can quite imagine how it came to pass that you consented to come, but — why did you come? that’s the question. Can you have come simply from fear?”

“I came to see you,” she said, looking at him with timid caution. Both were silent for half a minute. Versilov sank back in his chair, and in a voice soft but almost trembling and full of intense feeling began:

“It’s so terribly long since I’ve seen you, Katerina Nikolaevna, so long that I scarcely thought it possible I should ever be sitting beside you again as I now am, looking into your face and listening to your voice. . . . For two years we’ve not seen each other, for two years we’ve not talked. I never thought to speak to you again. But so be it, what is past is past, and what is will vanish like smoke to-morrow — so be it! I assent because there is no alternative again, but don’t let your coming be in vain,” he added suddenly,

almost imploringly; “since you have shown me this charity and have come, don’t let it be in vain; answer me one question!”

“What question?”

“You know we shall never see each other again, and what is it to you? Tell me the truth for once, and answer me one question which sensible people never ask. Did you ever love me, or was I . . . mistaken?”

She flushed crimson.

“I did love you,” she brought out.

I expected she would say that. Oh, always truthful, always sincere, always honest!

“And now?” he went on.

“I don’t love you now.”

“And you are laughing?”

“No, I laughed just now by accident, because I knew you would ask, ‘And now.’ And I smiled at that, because when one guesses right one always does smile. . . .”

It seemed quite strange to me; I had never seen her so much on her guard, almost timid, indeed, and embarrassed.

His eyes devoured her.

“I know that you don’t love me . . . and — you don’t love me at all?”

“Perhaps not at all. I don’t love you,” she added firmly, without smiling or flushing. “Yes, I did love you, but not for long. I very soon got over it.”

“I know, I know, you saw that it was not what you wanted, but . . . what do you want? Explain that once more. . . .”

“Have I ever explained that to you? What do I want? Why, I’m the most ordinary woman; I’m a peaceful person. I like . . . I like cheerful people.”

“Cheerful?”

“You see, I don’t know even how to talk to you. I believe that if you could have loved me less, I should have loved you then,” she smiled timidly again. The most absolute sincerity was transparent in her answer; and was it possible she did not realise that her answer was the most final summing up of their relations, explaining everything. Oh, how well he must have understood that! But he looked at her and smiled strangely.

“Is Büring a cheerful person?” he went on, questioning her.

“He ought not to trouble you at all,” she answered with some haste. “I’m marrying him simply because with him I shall be most at peace. My whole heart remains in my own keeping.”

“They say that you have grown fond of society, of the fashionable world again?”

“Not fond of it. I know that there is just the same disorderliness in good society as everywhere else; but the outer forms are still attractive, so that if one lives only to pass the time, one can do it better there than anywhere.”

“I’ve often heard the word ‘disorderliness’ of late; you used to be afraid of my disorderliness, too — chains, ideas, and imbecilities!”

“No, it was not quite that. . . .”

“What then, for God’s sake tell me all, frankly.”

“Well, I’ll tell you frankly, for I look on you as a man of great intellect. . . . I always felt there was something ridiculous about you.” When she had said this she suddenly flushed crimson, as though she feared she had said something fearfully indiscreet.

“For what you have just said I can forgive you a great deal,” he commented strangely.

“I hadn’t finished,” she said hurriedly, still flushing. “It’s I who am ridiculous to talk to you like a fool.”

“No, you are not ridiculous, you are only a depraved, worldly woman,” he said, turning horribly white. “I did not finish either, when I asked you why you had come. Would you like me to finish? There is a document, a letter in existence, and you’re awfully afraid of it, because if that letter comes into your father’s hands, he may curse you, and cut you out of his will. You’re afraid of that letter, and you’ve come for that letter,” he brought out. He was shaking all over, and his teeth were almost chattering. She listened to him with a despondent and pained expression of face.

“I know that you can do all sorts of things to harm me,” she said, as if warding off his words, “but I have come not so much to persuade you not to persecute me, as to see you yourself. I’ve been wanting to meet you very much for a long time. But I find you just the same as ever,” she added suddenly, as though carried away by a special and striking thought, and even by some strange sudden emotion.

“Did you hope to see me different, after my letter about your depravity? Tell me, did you come here without any fear?”

“I came because I once loved you; but do you know, I beg you not to threaten me, please, with anything. While we are now together, don’t remind me of my evil thoughts and feelings. If you could talk to me of something else I should be very glad. Let threats come afterwards; but it

should be different now. . . . I came really to see you for a minute and to hear you. Oh, well, if you can't help it, kill me straight off, only don't threaten me and don't torture yourself before me," she concluded, looking at him in strange expectation, as though she really thought he might kill her. He got up from his seat again, and looking at her with glowing eyes, said resolutely:

"While you are here you will suffer not the slightest annoyance."

"Oh yes, your word of honour," she said, smiling.

"No, not only because I gave my word of honour in my letter, but because I want to think of you all night. . . ."

"To torture yourself?"

"I picture you in my mind whenever I'm alone. I do nothing but talk to you. I go into some squalid, dirty hole, and as a contrast you appear to me at once. But you always laugh at me as you do now. . . ." He said this as though he were beside himself. . . .

"I have never laughed at you, never!" she exclaimed in a voice full of feeling, and with a look of the greatest compassion in her face. "In coming here I tried my utmost to do it so that you should have no reason to be mortified," she added suddenly. "I came here to tell you that I almost love you. . . . Forgive me, perhaps I used the wrong words," she went on hurriedly.

He laughed.

"How is it you cannot dissemble? Why is it you are such a simple creature? Why is it you're not like all the rest? . . . Why, how can you tell a man you are turning away that you 'almost love him'?"

"It's only that I could not express myself," she put in hurriedly. "I used the wrong words; it's because I've always felt abashed and unable to talk to you from the first time I met you, and if I used the wrong words, saying that I almost love you, in my thought it was almost so — so that's why I said so, though I love you with that . . . well, with that GENERAL love with which one loves every one and which one is never ashamed to own. . . ."

He listened in silence, fixing his glowing eyes upon her.

"I am offending you, of course," he went on, as though beside himself. "This must really be what they call passion. . . . All I know is that in your presence I am done for, in your absence, too. It's just the same whether you are there or not, wherever you may be you are always before me. I know, too, that I can hate you intensely, more than I can love you. But I've long

given up thinking about anything now — it's all the same to me. I am only sorry I should love a woman like you."

His voice broke; he went on, as it were, gasping for breath.

"What is it to you? You think it wild of me to talk like that!" He smiled a pale smile. "I believe, if only that would charm you, I would be ready to stand for thirty years like a post on one leg. . . . I see you are sorry for me; your face says 'I would love you if I could but I can't. . . .' Yes? Never mind, I've no pride. I'm ready to take any charity from you like a beggar — do you hear, any . . . a beggar has no pride."

She got up and went to him. "Dear friend," she said, with inexpressible feeling in her face, touching his shoulder with her hand, "I can't hear you talk like that! I shall think of you all my life as some one most precious, great-hearted, as some thing most sacred of all that I respect and Love. Andrey Petrovitch, understand what I say. Why, it's not for nothing I've come here now, dear friend . . . dear to me then and now: I shall never forget how deeply you stirred my mind when first we met. Let us part as friends, and you will be for me the most earnest and dearest thought in my whole life."

"Let us part and then I will love you; I will love you — only let us part. Listen," he brought out, perfectly white, "grant me one charity more: don't love me, don't live with me, let us never meet; I will be your slave if you summon me, and I will vanish at once if you don't want to see me, or hear me, only . . . ONLY DON'T MARRY ANYONE!"

It sent a pang to my heart to hear those words. That naïvely humiliating entreaty was the more pitiful, the more heartrending for being so flagrant and impossible. Yes, indeed, he was asking charity! Could he imagine she would consent? Yet he had humbled himself to put it to the test; he had tried entreating her! This depth of spiritual degradation was insufferable to watch. Every feature in her face seemed suddenly distorted with pain, but before she had time to utter a word, he suddenly realised what he had done.

"I will STRANGLE you," he said suddenly, in a strange distorted voice unlike his own.

But she answered him strangely, too, and she, too, spoke in a different voice, unlike her own.

"If I granted you charity," she said with sudden firmness, "you would punish me for it afterwards worse than you threaten me now, for you would never forget that you stood before me as a beggar. . . . I can't listen to

threats from you!” she added, looking at him with indignation, almost defiance.

“‘Threats from you,’ you mean — from such a beggar. I was joking,” he said softly, smiling. “I won’t touch you, don’t be afraid, go away . . . and I’ll do my utmost to send you that letter — only go; go! I wrote you a stupid letter, and you answered my stupid letter in kind by coming; we are quits. This is your way.” He pointed towards the door. (She was moving towards the room in which I was standing behind the curtain.)

“Forgive me if you can,” she said, stopping in the doorway.

“What if we meet some day quite friends and recall this scene with laughter?” he said suddenly, but his face was quivering all over like the face of a man in convulsions.

“Oh, God grant we may!” she cried, clasping her hands, though she watched his face timidly, as though trying to guess what he meant.

“Go along. Much sense we have, the pair of us, but you. . . . Oh, you are one of my own kind! I wrote you a mad letter, and you agreed to come to tell me that ‘you almost love me.’ Yes, we are possessed by the same madness! Be always as mad, don’t change, and we shall meet as friends — that I predict, that I swear!”

“And then I shall certainly love you, for I feel that even now!” The woman in her could not resist flinging those last words to him from the doorway.

She went out. With noiseless haste I went into the kitchen, and scarcely glancing at Darya Onisimovna, who was waiting for me, I went down the back staircase and across the yard into the street, but I had only time to see her get into the sledge that was waiting for her at the steps. I ran down the street.

CHAPTER XI

1

I ran to Lambert. Oh, how I should have liked to give a show of logic to my behaviour, and to find some trace of common sense in my actions that evening and all that night; but even now, when I can reflect on it all, I am utterly unable to present my conduct in any clear and logical connection. It was a case of feeling, or rather a perfect chaos of feelings, in the midst of which I was naturally bound to go astray. It is true there was one dominant feeling, which mastered me completely and overwhelmed all the others, but . . . need I confess to it? Especially as I am not certain. . . .

I ran to Lambert, beside myself of course. I positively scared Alphonsine and him for the first minute. I have always noticed that even the most profligate, most degraded Frenchmen are in their domestic life extremely given to a sort of bourgeois routine, a sort of very prosaic daily ceremonial of life established once and for ever. Lambert quickly realised, however, that something had happened, and was delighted that I had come to him at last, and that I was IN HIS CLUTCHES. He had been thinking of nothing else day and night! Oh, how badly he needed me! And behold now, when he had lost all hope, I had suddenly appeared of my own accord, and in such a frantic state — just in the state which suited him.

"Lambert, wine!" I cried: "let's drink, let's have a jolly time. Alphonsine, where's your guitar?"

I won't describe the scene, it's unnecessary. We drank, and I told him all about it, everything. He listened greedily. I openly of my own accord suggested a plot, a general flare-up. To begin with, we were by letter to ask Katerina Nikolaevna to come to us. . . .

"That's possible," Lambert assented, gloating over every word I said.

Secondly, we must send a copy of the "document" in full, that she might see at once that she was not being deceived.

"That's right, that's what we must do!" Lambert agreed, continually exchanging glances with Alphonsine.

Thirdly, Lambert must ask her to come, writing as though he were an unknown person and had just arrived from Moscow, and I must bring Versilov.

“And we might have Versilov, too,” Lambert assented.

“Not might, but must!” I cried. “It’s essential! It’s for his sake it’s all being done!” I explained, taking one sip after another from my glass. (We were all three drinking, while I believe I really drank the whole bottle of champagne, while they only made a show of drinking.) “Versilov and I will sit in the next room” — (Lambert would have to take the next room!)— “and suddenly when she had agreed to everything — to paying the cash, and to his OTHER demands too, for all women were abject creatures, then Versilov and I would come in and convict her of being abject, and Versilov, seeing what a horrid woman she was, would at once be cured, and reject her with scorn. Only we ought to have Büring too, that he might see her put to shame.”

“No, we don’t want Büring,” Lambert observed.

“We do, we do,” I yelled again: “you don’t know anything about it, Lambert, for you are a fool! On the contrary, let it make a scandal in fashionable society, it will be our revenge on fashionable society, and upon her, and let her be punished! Lambert, she will give you an IOU. . . . I don’t want money, I don’t care a damn for money, but you can stoop to pick it up and stuff it in your pocket, and my curse with it, but I shall crush her!”

“Yes, yes,” Lambert kept approving, “you are right there.”

He kept exchanging glances with Alphonsine.

“Lambert, she has an awful reverence for Versilov: I saw that for certain just now,” I babbled to him.

“It’s a good thing you did peep and see it all. I should never have thought that you would have made such a good spy and that you had so much sense!” He said this to flatter me.

“That’s a lie, Frenchman; I’m not a spy, but I have plenty of sense! And do you know, Lambert, she loves him, really!” I went on making desperate efforts to express myself. “But she won’t marry him because Büring’s an officer in the guards, and Versilov is only a noble-hearted man, and a friend of humanity: to their thinking a comic person and nothing else! Oh, she understands his passion and gloats over it, flirts, is carried away by it, but won’t marry him! She’s a woman, she’s a serpent! Every woman is a serpent, and every serpent is a woman! He must be cured; we must tear the scales off his eyes; let him see what she is and be cured. I will bring him to you, Lambert!”

“Just so,” Lambert kept repeating, filling up my glass every minute.

He was in a perfect tremble of anxiety to avoid contradicting or offending me and to make me go on drinking. It was so coarse and obvious that even at the time I could not help noticing it. But nothing could have made me go away; I kept drinking and talking, and was desperately anxious to give full expression to what I was feeling. When Lambert brought in another bottle, Alphonsine was playing some Spanish air on the guitar; I was almost in tears.

"Lambert, do you know everything?" I exclaimed with intense feeling. "That man must be saved, for he's spell-bound . . . by sorcery. If she were to marry him, he would spurn her from him the day after the wedding . . . for that does happen sometimes. For such a wild outrageous love is like a fit, like a deadly noose, like an illness, and — as soon as it is gratified — the scales fall from the eyes at once and the opposite feeling comes — loathing and hatred, the desire to strangle, to crush. Do you know the story of Avisage, Lambert? Have you read it?"

"No, I don't remember: a novel?" muttered Lambert.

"Oh, you know nothing. Lambert, you're fearfully, fearfully ignorant . . . but I don't care a damn for that. It's no matter. Oh, he loves mother, he kissed her portrait; he'll spurn that woman next morning and come back to mother of himself; but then it will be too late, so we must save him now. . . ."

In the end I began crying bitterly, but I still went on talking and drank a fearful quantity of champagne. It was most characteristic of Lambert that all that evening he did not once ask about the "document": where it was, that I should show it, should put it on the table. What would have been more natural than to inquire about it, since we were planning to take action? Another point: we kept saying that we must do "this," that we certainly would do "this," but of the place, the time and manner — we did not say a word! He only assented to all I said and kept looking at Alphonsine, that was all! Of course, I was incapable of reflecting on that at the time, but I remember it.

I ended by falling asleep on his sofa without undressing. I slept a long time and waked up very late. I remember that after waking I lay for a long time on the sofa, as it were petrified, trying to reflect and remember, and pretending that I was still asleep. But it appeared that Lambert was not in the room, he had gone out. It was past nine o'clock, the stove had been heated and was crackling exactly as it had done when I found myself the

first time at Lambert's after that night. But Alphonsine was behind the screen keeping guard on me; I noticed it at once, for she had twice peeped out and glanced at me, but each time I shut my eyes and pretended to be asleep. I did this because I was overwhelmed and wanted to think over my position. I felt with horror all the ineptitude and loathsomeness of my confession to Lambert, my plotting with him, the blunder I had made in running to him! But, thank God, the letter was still in my keeping; it was still sewn up in my side pocket; I felt with my hand — it was there! So all I had to do was to get up and run away, I need not care what Lambert thought of me afterwards. Lambert was not worth it.

But I was ashamed of myself! I was my own judge, and — my God, what was there in my heart! But there's no need to describe that hellish, insufferable feeling, and that consciousness of filth and vileness. But yet I must confess it, for I feel the time has come. It must be recorded in my story. So let it be known that I meant to shame her, and planned to be almost a witness of her yielding to Lambert's demands — oh, the baseness! — not for the sake of saving Versilov in his madness and bringing him back to mother, but because . . . perhaps because I was myself in love and jealous! Jealous of whom: of Büring, of Versilov? Of anyone she might look at, or talk to at a ball, while I should be standing in a corner ashamed of myself. . . . Oh, the hideousness of it!

In short, I don't know of whom I was jealous on her account; but all I felt and knew the evening before was that as certainly as twice two make four, she was lost to me, that that woman would spurn me and laugh at me for falseness and absurdity! She was truthful and honest, while I — I was a spy, using letters to threaten her!

All this I have kept hidden in my heart ever since, but now the day has come and I make up my account, but, again, for the last time. Perhaps fully half, or perhaps even seventy-five per cent. of what I am saying is a libel upon myself! That night I hated her in a kind of delirium, and afterwards like a drunken rowdy. I have said already that it was a chaos of feelings and sensations in which I could distinguish nothing clearly myself. But still I have had to confess it, for though only a part of what I felt, it was certainly present.

With an overpowering sense of disgust, and a firm determination to cancel all that had happened, I suddenly jumped up from the sofa; but as I jumped up, Alphonsine instantly popped out. I seized my overcoat and cap

and told her to tell Lambert that I had been raving the evening before, that I had slandered a woman, that I had been joking, and that Lambert must not dare come near me again. . . . All this I expressed in a blundering fashion, talking hurriedly in French, and, of course, anything but clearly, but, to my surprise, Alphonsine understood everything perfectly; and what was most surprising of all, she seemed positively relieved at something.

"Oui, oui," she said approvingly, "c'est une honte! Une dame. . . . Oh, vous être génereux, vous! Soyez tranquille, je ferai voir raison à Lambert. . . ."

So that I was even at that moment puzzled to explain the sudden change in her attitude, and consequently I suppose in Lambert's. I went away, however, saying nothing; all was in confusion within me, and I was hardly capable of reasoning. Oh, afterwards I could explain it all, but then it was too late! Oh, what a hellish plot it was! I will pause here and explain it beforehand, as otherwise it will be impossible for the reader to understand it.

The fact was that at my very first interview with Lambert, when I was thawing in his lodging, I had muttered to him like a fool that the letter was sewn up in my pocket; then I had suddenly fallen asleep for a time on the sofa in the corner, and Lambert had promptly felt my pocket and was convinced that there was a piece of paper sewn up in it. Several times afterwards he made sure that the paper was still there; when we were dining, for instance, at the "Tatar's," I remember that he several times put his arms round my waist on purpose. Grasping the importance of the letter he made a separate plan of his own of which I had no suspicion at all. I, like a fool, imagined all the time that he urged me to come home so persistently to get me to join his gang and to act only in concert with him, but, alas! he invited me with quite a different object! He wanted to make me dead drunk, and when I was stretched snoring and unconscious, to rip open my pocket and take possession of the letter. This was precisely what he and Alphonsine had done that night; Alphonsine had unpicked the pocket, taking out the letter, HER LETTER, the document I had brought from Moscow, they had taken a piece of plain notepaper the same size, put it in the pocket and sewn it up again, as if nothing had happened, so that I might notice no difference. Alphonsine had sewn it up. And I, up to the very end, for another day and a half — still went on believing that I was in

possession of the secret, and that Katerina Nikolaevena's fate was still in my hands.

A last word: that theft of the letter was the cause of everything and of all the other disasters that followed.

2

The last twenty-four hours of my story have come and I am at the end!

It was, I believe, about half-past ten, when excited, and, as far as I remember, strangely absent-minded, but with a firm determination in my heart, I dragged myself to my lodgings. I was not in a hurry, I knew how I was going to act. And scarcely had I stepped into the passage when I realised at once that a new calamity had occurred, and an extraordinary complication had arisen: the old prince had just been brought from Tsarskoe-Syelo and was in the flat; with him was Anna Andreyevna!

He had been put not in my room but in the two rooms next to mine that had been occupied by my landlord and his wife. The day before, as it appeared, some changes and improvements had been made in the room, but only of the most superficial kind. The landlord and his wife had moved into the little room of the whimsical lodger marked with small-pox whom I have mentioned already, and that individual had been temporarily banished, I don't know where.

I was met by the landlord, who at once whisked into my room. He looked less sure of his ground than he had done the evening before, but was in an unusual state of excitement, so to say, at the climax of the affair. I said nothing to him, but, moving aside into a corner and clutching my head in my hands, I stood so for a moment. He thought for the first moment that I was "putting it on," but at last his fortitude gave way, and he could not help being scared.

"Can anything be wrong?" he muttered. "I've been waiting for you to ask," he added, seeing I did not answer, "whether you preferred that door to be opened so that you may have direct access to the prince's rooms . . . instead of going by the passage?" He pointed to the door at the side always locked, which led to the landlord's rooms, now the old prince's apartments.

"Look here, Pyotr Ippolitovitch," I turned to him with a stern air, "I humbly beg you to go to Anna Andreyevna and ask her to come here at once to discuss the situation. Have they been here long?"

“Going on for an hour.”

“Go and fetch her then.”

He went and brought the strange reply “that Anna Andreyevna and Prince Nikolay Ivanitch were impatiently expecting me in the next room”; so Anna Andreyevna would not come. I smoothed out my coat, which was creased from sleeping in it that night, brushed it, washed, combed my hair; I did all this deliberately, realising how necessary it was to be careful, and I went in to the old prince.

The prince was sitting on the sofa at a round table, and Anna Andreyevna in another corner, at another table covered with a cloth, on which the landlady’s samovar, polished as it had never been before, was boiling for tea. I walked in with the same stern look on my face, and the old man instantly noticed this and winced, and the smile on his face was instantly replaced by a look of terror; but I could not keep it up, I instantly laughed and held out my hands to him; the poor old fellow simply flung himself into my arms.

I realised unmistakably at once the condition of the man I had to deal with. To begin with, it was as clear as twice two make four that in the interval since I had seen him last they had turned the old man, till lately almost hale, and to some extent rational, and not altogether without will-power, into a sort of mummy, a scared and mistrustful child. I may add, he quite knew why they had brought him here, and everything had been done as I have explained already. He was suddenly shocked, crushed, and overwhelmed by being told of his daughter’s treachery and of a possible madhouse. He had allowed himself to be carried off, so scared that he hardly knew what he was doing; he was told that I was in possession of the secret and that I had the proof that would establish the fact conclusively. I may mention at once: it was just that proof that would establish the fact which he dreaded more than anything in the world. He was expecting me to go in to him with a sort of death sentence in my face and a document in my hand, and was immensely delighted that I was ready meanwhile to laugh and chatter of other things. While we were embracing he shed tears. I must confess I shed a tear also; I felt suddenly very sorry for him. Alphonsine’s little lap-dog broke into a bark as shrill as a bell, and made dashes at me from the sofa. He had not parted from this tiny dog since he had had it and even slept with it.

“Oh je disais, qu’il a du coeur!” he exclaimed, indicating me to Anna Andreyevna.

“But how much stronger you look, prince, how well and fresh and strong you look!” I observed. Alas! It was just the opposite: he looked like a mummy and I only said it to cheer him up!

“N’est-ce pas, n’est-ce pas?” he repeated joyfully. “Oh, I’ve regained my health wonderfully.”

“But drink your tea, and if you’ll give me a cup I’ll drink some with you.”

“That’s delightful! ‘Let us drink the cup that cheers’ . . . or how does it go, that’s in some poem. Anna Andreyevna, give him some tea; il prend toujours par les sentiments. . . . Give us some tea, my dear.”

Anna Andreyevna poured out the tea, but suddenly turning to me began with extreme solemnity:

“Arkady Makarovitch, we both, my benefactor, Prince Nikolay Ivanitch and I, have taken refuge with you. I consider that we have come to you, to you alone, and we both beg of you to shelter us. Remember that the whole fate of this saintly, this noble and injured man, is in your hands . . . we await the decision, and count upon the justice of your heart!”

But she could not go on; the old prince was reduced to terror and almost trembling with alarm.

“Après, après, n’est-ce pas, chère amie,” he kept repeating, holding out his hands to her.

I cannot express how disagreeably her outburst impressed me. I made no response but a chilly and dignified bow; then I sat down to the table, and with undisguised intention began talking of other things, of various trifles, laughing and making jokes. . . . The old man was evidently grateful to me and was enthusiastically delighted; but enthusiastic as his gaiety was, it was evidently insincere and might any moment have been followed by absolute dejection: that was clear from the first glance.

“Cher enfant, I hear you’ve been ill. . . . Ah, pardon, I hear you’ve been busy with spiritualism all this time.”

“I never thought of such a thing,” I said smiling.

“No? who was it told me about spiritualism?”

“It was your landlord here, Pyotr Ippolitovitch,” Anna Andreyevna explained, “he’s a very amusing man and knows a great many anecdotes; shall I ask him in?”

“Oui, oui, il est charmant . . . he knows anecdotes, but better send for him later. We’ll send for him and he’ll tell us stories, mais après. Only fancy, they were laying the table just now and he said: ‘Don’t be uneasy, it won’t fly about, we are not spiritualists.’ Is it possible that the tables fly about among the spiritualists?”

“I really don’t know, they say so, they say they jump right off the ground.”

“Mais c’est terrible ce que tu dis,” he looked at me in alarm.

“Oh, don’t be uneasy, of course that’s nonsense.”

“That’s what I say too. Nastasya Stepanovna Salomeyev . . . you know her, of course . . . oh no, you don’t know her . . . would you believe it she believes in spiritualism, too; and only fancy, chère enfant,” he turned to Anna Andreyevna, “I said to her, there are tables in the Ministry of Finance and eight pairs of clerks’ hands are lying on them, writing all the while, so why is it the tables don’t dance there? Fancy if they suddenly all began dancing! The revolt of the tables in the Ministry of Finance or popular education — that’s the last straw.”

“What charming things you say, prince, just as you always did,” I exclaimed, trying to laugh as genuinely as possible.

“N’est-ce pas? Je ne parle pas trop, mais je dis bien.”

“I will bring Pyotr Ippolitovitch,” Anna Andreyevna said, getting up. There was a gleam of pleasure in her face: she was relieved at seeing how affectionate I was with the old prince. But she had hardly gone out when the old man’s face changed instantly. He looked hurriedly at the door, glanced about him, and stooping towards me from the sofa, whispered to me in a frightened voice:

“Cher ami! Oh, if I could see them both here together! Oh, cher enfant!”

“Prince, don’t distress yourself. . . .”

“Yes, yes, but . . . we’ll reconcile them, n’est-ce pas? It’s a foolish petty quarrel between two most estimable women, n’est-ce pas? You are my only hope. . . . We’ll set everything straight here; and what a queer place this is,” he looked about him almost fearfully; “and that landlord, you know . . . he’s got such a face. . . . Tell me! He’s not dangerous?”

“The landlord? Oh no, how could he be dangerous?”

“C’est ça. So much the better. Il semble qu’il est bête, ce gentilhomme. Cher enfant, for Christ’s sake don’t tell Anna Andreyevna that I’m afraid of

everything here; I praised everything from the first moment, I praised the landlord too. Listen, do you know the story of what happened to Von Sohn — do you remember?"

"Well, what of it?"

"Rien, rien de tout. . . . Mais je suis libre ici, n'est-ce pas? What do you think, nothing could happen to me here . . . of the same sort?"

"But I assure you, dear prince . . . upon my word!"

"Mon ami, mon enfant!" he exclaimed suddenly, clasping his hands before him, not seeking to disguise his alarm: "if you really have something . . . some document . . . in fact — if you have something to say to me, don't say it; for God's sake don't say anything at all . . . put it off as long as you can. . . ."

He was on the point of throwing himself in my arms; tears were flowing down his face; I cannot describe how it made my heart ache; the poor old man was like a pitiful frightened child stolen from his home by gypsies and carried away to live with strangers, but we were not allowed to embrace. The door opened and Anna Andreyevna walked in, not with the landlord, but with her brother, the kammer- junker. This new surprise petrified me. I got up and was making for the door.

"Arkady Makarovitch, allow me to introduce you," Anna Andreyevna said aloud, so that I was compelled to stop.

"I know your brother TOO well already," I rapped out, laying special emphasis on the word "too."

"Ah, that was a terrible blunder! And I'm so sor-r-ry, dear, and . . . Andrey Makarovitch," the young man began lisping, coming up to me with an extraordinarily free-and-easy air and seizing my hand, which I was incapable of withdrawing, "it was all the fault of my Stepan; he announced you so stupidly that I mistook you for some one else: that was in Moscow," he explained to his sister: "afterwards, I did everything I could to look you up and explain, but I was ill, ask her. Cher prince, nous devons être amis même par droit de naissance. . . ."

And the impudent young man had the effrontery to put his arm round my shoulder, which was the height of familiarity. I drew back, but overcome by embarrassment preferred to beat a hasty retreat, without saying a word. Going back to my room I sat down on my bed in uncertainty and agitation. I felt suffocated by the atmosphere of intrigue, but I could not deal Anna

Andreyevna such a direct and crushing blew. I suddenly felt that she, too, was dear to me, and that her position was an awful one.

3

As I had expected, she came into my room herself, leaving the prince with her brother, who immediately began telling him some society scandal, as fresh as hot cakes, which at once distracted the impressionable old man's attention and cheered him up. I got up from the bed in silence, with a look of inquiry.

"I have told you everything, Arkady Makarovitch," she began directly, "our fate is in your hands."

"But I told you beforehand that I cannot . . . the most sacred duties prevent me doing what you desire. . . ."

"Yes? Is that your answer? Well, let me perish, but what of the old prince? What do you expect? Why, he'll be out of his mind by the evening!"

"No, he'll go out of his mind if I show him the letter in which his daughter writes to a lawyer about certifying him insane!" I cried with heat. "That's what would be too much for him. Do you know he won't believe that letter, he's told me so already!"

I lied, saying he had said this of the letter; but it was effective.

"He has said so already? I thought so! In that case I'm lost. He's been crying already and asking to go home."

"Tell me, what's your plan exactly?" I asked insistently. She flushed from exasperated haughtiness, so to speak, but she controlled herself:

"With that letter of his daughter's in our hands, we are justified in the eyes of the world. I should send it at once to Prince V. and to Boris Mihalovitch Pelistchev, the friends of his childhood; both persons highly respected and influential in society, and I know that some years ago they were indignant with the conduct of his greedy and merciless daughter. They will of course reconcile him with his daughter at my request. I shall insist on it myself; but the position of affairs will be completely changed. And my relations, too, the Fanariotovs, will, I judge, make up their minds to support my rights, but what weighs most with me is his happiness: I want him to understand and appreciate who is really devoted to him. Of course I've always reckoned most on your influence with him, Arkady

Makarovitch; you are so fond of him. . . . And who does care for him except you and me? He has done nothing but talk about you these last few days; he was pining for you 'his young friend. . . .' I need not say that for the rest of my life my gratitude will be unmeasured. . . ."

She was actually promising me a reward — money perhaps.

I interrupted her sharply.

"Whatever you say I cannot," I brought out with an air of immovable determination. "I can only repay you with equal frankness and explain my final decision: I shall, at the earliest possible moment, put this fatal letter into Katerina Nikolaevna's hands, but only on condition that all that has happened shall not be made a scandal, and that she gives me her word beforehand that she will not interfere with your happiness; that's all that I can do."

"That's impossible!" she said, flushing all over. The mere idea that Katerina Nikolaevna would SPARE her roused her to indignation.

"I shall not change, Anna Andreyevna."

"Perhaps you will change."

"You had better apply to Lambert!"

"Arkady Makarovitch, you don't know what misery may come from your obstinacy," she said with grim exasperation.

"Misery will follow, that's true . . . my head is going round. I've had enough of you: I've made up my mind — and that's the end of it. Only I beg you for God's sake don't bring your brother in to me."

"But he is very anxious to make up for . . ."

"There is nothing to make up for! I don't want it, I don't wish for it, I don't wish for it!" I exclaimed, clutching my head. (Oh, perhaps I treated her too disdainfully then.) "Tell me, though, where will the prince sleep to-night? Surely not here?"

"He will stay the night here in your flat, and with you."

"I am moving into another lodging this evening."

And uttering these ruthless words I seized my cap and began putting on my great-coat. Anna Andreyevna watched me in sullen silence. I felt sorry for her — oh, I felt sorry for that proud girl! But I rushed out of the flat, without leaving her one word of hope.

I will try to be brief. My decision was taken beyond recall, and I went straight to Tatyana Pavlovna. Alas! A great calamity might have been averted if I had only found her at home; but as though of design, I was pursued by ill-luck all that day. I went of course to my mother's, in the first place to see her, and secondly, because I reckoned certainly on meeting Tatyana Pavlovna there. But she was not there either; she had only just gone away, while mother was lying down ill, and Liza was left alone with her. Liza begged me not to go in, and not to wake mother: "She has not slept all night, she's so worried; thank God she has fallen asleep at last." I embraced Liza and said two or three words to her, telling her I had made an immense and momentous resolution, and should carry it out at once. She listened without particular surprise, as though to the usual thing. Oh, they had all grown used by then to my constantly repeated 'final resolutions,' and the feeble cancelling of them afterwards. But this time, this time it would be a different matter. I went to the eating-house on the canal side and sat down there to wait awhile in the certainty of finding Tatyana Pavlovna afterwards. I must explain, though, why I found it so necessary to see that lady. The fact is that I wanted to send her at once to Katerina Nikolaevna, to ask her to come back with her, meaning in Tatyana Pavlovna's presence to return the letter, explaining everything once for all. In short, I wanted nothing but what was fitting; I wanted to put myself right once and for all. At the same time I was quite determined to put in a few words on behalf of Anna Andreyevna and, if possible, to take Katerina Nikolaevna, together with Tatyana Pavlovna (by way of a witness), back with me to see the prince, there to reconcile the hostile ladies, to bring the old prince back to life and . . . and . . . in fact, in that little group anyway, to make every one happy on the spot, that very day, so that there would be none left unhappy but Versilov and mother. I could have no doubt of my success. From gratitude for my restoration of the letter from which I should ask nothing of her in return, Katerina Nikolaevna would not have refused me such a request. Alas! I still imagined I was in possession of the document. Oh, what a stupid and ignominious position I was in, though without suspecting it!

It was getting quite dark, about four o'clock, when I called at Tatyana Pavlovna's again. Marya answered gruffly that she had not come in. I remember very well now the strange look Marya gave me from under her brows; but of course it did not strike me at the time. I was suddenly stung

by another idea. As I went down the stairs, from Tatyana Pavlovna's, vexed and somewhat dejected, I thought of the poor old prince, who had held out his hands to me that morning, and I suddenly reproached myself bitterly for having deserted him, perhaps indeed from feeling personally aggrieved.

I began uneasily imagining that something really very bad might have happened in my absence, and hurriedly went home. At home, however, all that had been happening was this.

When Anna Andreyevna had gone out of my room in a rage, that morning, she had not yet lost heart; I must mention that she had already, that morning, sent to Lambert, then she sent to him again, and as Lambert appeared to be still absent from home, she finally dispatched her brother to look for him. In face of my opposition the poor girl was resting her last hopes on Lambert and his influence on me; she expected him with impatience, and only wondered that after hovering round her and never leaving her side till that day, he should now have suddenly deserted her and vanished. Alas! she could not possibly have imagined that Lambert, being now in possession of the document, had made entirely different plans, and so, of course, was keeping out of the way and hiding from her on purpose.

And so in her anxiety and growing uneasiness Anna Andreyevna was scarcely capable of entertaining the old man: his uneasiness was growing to threatening proportions, he kept asking strange and timorous questions, he began looking suspiciously at her, and several times fell to weeping. Young Versilov did not stay long. After he had gone Anna Andreyevna was reduced to bringing in Pyotr Ippolitovitch, on whom she was relying, but he did not please the old prince at all, and even aroused his aversion. In fact the old prince, for some reason regarded Pyotr Ippolitovitch with increasing distrust and suspicion. As ill-luck would have it, the landlord launched again into a disquisition on spiritualism, and described all sorts of tricks which he said he had seen himself at séances. He declared that one medium had, before the whole audience, cut off people's heads, so that blood flowed, and every one saw it, and afterwards put them back on their necks, and that they grew on again, also in the sight of the whole audience, and all this happened in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-nine. The old prince was so frightened, and at the same time for some reason was so indignant, that Anna Andreyevna was obliged to get rid of the story-teller promptly; fortunately, dinner arrived, ordered expressly the evening before from somewhere near (through Lambert and Alphonsine) from a remarkable

French cook who was out of a place, and wanted to find a situation in a nobleman's family or a club. The dinner and the champagne that accompanied it greatly cheered the old prince; he ate a great deal and was very jocose. After dinner he felt heavy and drowsy, of course, and as he always took a nap after dinner, Anna Andreyevna made up a bed for him. He kept kissing her hand as he fell asleep and declaring that she was his paradise, his hope, his houri, "his golden flower" — in fact he dropped into the most Oriental expressions. At last he fell asleep, and it was just then I came back.

Anna Andreyevna came in to me hurriedly, clasped her hands before me and said, that not for her own sake, but for the prince's she besought me not to go away, but to go in to him as soon as he waked up. "He will be lost without you, he will have a nervous attack; I'm afraid he may break down before night. . . ." She added that she herself would be compelled to be away "possibly for a couple of hours, and so she would be leaving the prince in my sole charge." I promised her warmly that I would remain till the evening, and that when the prince waked up I would do my very best to entertain him.

"And I will do my duty!" she declared with energy.

She went out. I may add, anticipating events, that she went out to look for Lambert herself; this was her last hope; she also went to her brother's, and to her relations, the Fanariotovs'; it may well be understood what her state of mind must have been when she returned.

The old prince waked up about an hour after her departure. I heard him groan through the wall, and at once ran in to him; I found him sitting on the bed in his dressing-gown, but so terrified by his isolation, the light of the solitary lamp, and the strange room, that when I went in he started, jumped up and screamed. I flew up to him, and when he recognised me, he began embracing me with tears of joy.

"I was told that you had moved into another lodging, that you had taken fright, and run away."

"Who can have told you that?"

"Who could? You see I may have imagined it myself, or some one may have told me. Only fancy, I've just had a dream: an old man with a beard came in carrying an ikon, an ikon broken in two, and all at once he said, 'So shall your life be broken in two!'"

“Good heavens! You must have heard from some one that Versilov broke an ikon in two yesterday?”

“N’est-ce pas? I heard so, I heard so! I heard from Darya Onisimovna yesterday morning. She brought my trunk here and the dog.”

“And so you dreamed of it.”

“Yes, I suppose so, and that old man kept shaking his finger at me. Where is Anna Andreyevna?”

“She’ll be back directly.”

“Where from? Has she gone away, too?” he exclaimed piteously.

“No, no, she’ll be here directly, and she asked me to stay with you.”

“Oui. And so our Andrey Petrovitch has gone off his head, ‘so rapidly and unexpectedly!’ I always predicted that that’s how he’d end. Stay, my dear. . . .”

He suddenly clutched me by my coat, and drew me towards him.

“The landlord,” he whispered: “brought in some photographs just now, horrid photographs of women, naked women in various oriental poses, and began showing them me in a glass. . . . I admired them of course, though I did not like them, but you know that’s just as they brought horrid women to that poor fellow, so as to make him drunk more easily. . . .”

“Why, you are talking of Von Sohn, but that’s enough, prince! The landlord’s a fool and nothing more!”

“A fool and nothing more! C’est mon opinion! My dear, rescue me from here if you can!” He suddenly clasped his hands before me.

“Prince, I will do everything I can! I am entirely at your service. . . . Dear prince, wait a little and perhaps I will put everything right!”

“N’est-ce pas? We’ll cut and run and we’ll leave my trunk here to look as though we are coming back.”

“Where should we run to! And what of Anna Andreyevna?”

“No, no, we’ll go with Anna Andreyevna. . . . Oh, mon cher, there’s a regular muddle in my head. . . . Stay: there in my bag on the right, is Katya’s portrait. I slipped it in on the sly so that Anna Andreyevna, and still more, that Darya Onisimovna should not notice it; take it out, for goodness’ sake make haste, be careful, mind we are not caught. . . . Couldn’t you fasten the door with the hook?”

I did in fact, find in the bag a photograph of Katerina Nikolaevna in an oval frame. He took it in his hands, carried it to the light, and tears suddenly flowed down his thin yellow cheeks.

“C’est un ange, c’est un ange du ciel!” he exclaimed: “I never have been as good to her as I ought . . . and see what’s happened now! Cher enfant, I don’t believe a word of it, not a word of it! My dear, tell me: can you imagine, they are wanting to put me in a madhouse? Je dis des choses charmantes et tout le monde rit . . . and all of a sudden they take a man like that to a madhouse!”

“That’s never happened!” I cried, “that’s a mistake. I know her feelings.”

“You know her feelings, too? That’s splendid! My dear, you’ve given me new life. How could they say things against you! My dear, fetch Katya here, and let them kiss each other before me, and I will take them home, and we’ll get rid of the landlord!”

He stood up, clasped his hands, and fell on his knees before me.

“Cher,” he whispered, shaking like a leaf in a sort of insane terror: “My dear, tell me the whole truth: where will they put me now?”

“My God!” I cried, raising him up, and making him sit on the bed: “why you don’t believe in me at last; do you think that I’m in the plot too? I won’t let anyone lay a finger on you!”

“C’est-ça, don’t let them,” he faltered, clutching me tightly by the elbow with both hands, and still trembling. “Don’t let anyone touch me! And don’t tell me lies yourself about anything . . . for will they take me away from here? Listen, that landlord, Ippolit or whatever his name is . . . isn’t a doctor?”

“A doctor?”

“This . . . this isn’t a madhouse, here, in this room?”

But at that instant the door opened, and Anna Andreyevna came in. She must have been listening at the door, and, could not resist opening the door too suddenly — and the prince, who started at every creak, shrieked, and flung himself on his face on the pillow. Finally he had something like a fit, which ended in sobs.

“See? This is your doing,” I said to her, pointing to the old man.

“No, it’s your doing!” she raised her voice harshly, “I appeal to you for the last time, Arkady Makarovitch, will you unmask the diabolical intrigue against this defenceless old man, and sacrifice ‘your mad and childish dreams of love,’ to save your OWN sister?”

“I will save you all, but only in the way I told you this morning! I am running off again, and perhaps in an hour Katerina Nikolaevna will be here

herself! I will reconcile you all, and you will all be happy!" I exclaimed almost with inspiration.

"Fetch her, fetch her here," cried the prince in a flutter. "Take me to her! I want to see Katya and to bless her," he exclaimed, lifting up his hands and springing off the bed.

"You see," I said to Anna Andreyevna, motioning towards him: "you hear what he says: now at all events no 'document' will be any help to you."

"I see, but it might help to justify my conduct in the opinion of the world, as it is, I'm disgraced! Enough, my conscience is clear. I am abandoned by everyone, even by my own brother, who has taken fright at my failure. . . . But I will do my duty and will remain by this unhappy man, to take care of him and be his nurse!"

But there was no time to be lost. I ran out of the room: "I shall come back in an hour, and shall not come back alone," I cried from the doorway.

CHAPTER XII

1

At last I found Tatyana Pavlovna at home! I at once explained everything to her — all about the “document,” and every detail of what was going on at my lodgings. Though she quite understood the position, and might have fully grasped what was happening in two words, yet the explanation took us, I believe, some ten minutes. I did the talking, I put aside all shame and told her the whole truth. She sat in her chair silent and immovable, drawing herself up straight as a knitting needle, with her lips compressed, and her eyes fixed upon me, listening greedily. But when I finished she promptly jumped up from her chair, and with such impetuosity that I jumped up too.

“Ach, you puppy! So you really had that letter sewn up in your pocket and it was sewn up there by that fool Marya Ivanovna! Oh, you shameless villains! So you came here to conquer hearts and take the fashionable world by storm. You wanted to revenge yourself on the devil knows who, because you’re an illegitimate son, eh?”

“Tatyana Pavlovna, don’t dare to abuse me!” I cried. “Perhaps you in your abuse have been the cause from the very beginning of my vindictiveness here. Yes, I am an illegitimate son, and perhaps I worked to revenge myself for being an illegitimate son, and perhaps I did want to revenge myself on the devil knows who, the devil himself could scarcely find who is guilty; but remember, I’ve cut off all connection with these villains, and have conquered my passions. I will lay the document before her in silence and will go away without even waiting for a word from her; you’ll be the witness of it!”

“Give me the letter, give me the letter, lay it on the table at once; but you are lying, perhaps.”

“It’s sewn up in my pocket. Marya Ivanovna sewed it up herself; and when I had a new coat made here I took it out of the old one and sewed it up in the new coat; here it is, feel it, I’m not lying!”

“Give it me, take it out,” Tatyana Pavlovna stormed.

“Not on any account, I tell you again; I will lay it before her in your presence and will go away without waiting for a single word; but she must

know and see with her eyes that it is my doing, that I'm giving it up to her of my own accord, without compulsion and without recompense."

"Showing off again? You're in love, puppy, eh?"

"You may say horrid things to me as much as you like. I've deserved them, but I'm not offended. Oh, I may seem to her a paltry boy who has been keeping watch on her and plotting against her; but let her recognise that I have conquered myself and put her happiness above everything on earth! Never mind, Tatyana Pavlovna, never mind! I keep crying to myself: courage and hope! What if this is my first step in life, anyway it is ending well, it is ending honourably! And what if I do love her," I went on fervently with flashing eyes; "I am not ashamed of it: mother is a heavenly angel, but she is an earthly queen! Versilov will go back to mother, and I've no cause to be ashamed to face her; you know I once heard what Versilov and she were saying, I stood behind the curtain. . . . Oh, we are all three possessed by the same madness. Oh, do you know whose phrase that is 'possessed by the same madness'? They are his words, Andrey Petrovitch's! But do you know, perhaps there are more than three of us possessed by the same madness? Yes, I don't mind betting, you're a fourth — possessed by the same madness! Shall I say it — I will bet that you've been in love with Andrey Petrovitch all your life and perhaps you are so still . . ."

I repeat I was carried away by excitement and a sort of happiness, but I could not finish; she suddenly, with superhuman quickness, seized me by the hair and twice shook me backwards and forwards with all her might. . . . Then she suddenly abandoned me and retreated into the corner, and hid her face in her handkerchief.

"You young puppy! Never dare say that to me again!" she brought out, crying.

All this was so unexpected, that I was naturally thunderstruck. I stood gazing at her, not knowing what to do.

"Foo, you stupid! Come here and give me a kiss, though I am an old fool!" she said suddenly, laughing and crying: "and don't you dare, don't you ever dare to say that to me again . . . but I love you and have always loved you . . . you stupid."

I kissed her. I may mention in parenthesis that Tatyana Pavlovna and I were friends from that time forward.

“But oh! what am I doing?” she said suddenly, slapping herself on the forehead; “but what were you saying: the old prince is at your lodging? But is it true?”

“I assure you he is.”

“Oh, my goodness! Ach, it makes me sick!” she hurried to and fro about the room. “And they are doing what they like with him there! Ech, is there nothing will frighten the fools! And ever since the morning! Oh, oh, Anna Andreyevna. Oh, oh, the nun! And she of course, Militrissa, knows nothing about it.”

“What Militrissa?”

“Why, your earthly queen, your ideal! Ach, but what’s to be done now?”

“Tatyana Pavlovna,” I cried, coming to myself, “we’ve been talking nonsense and have forgotten what matters; I ran out to fetch Katerina Nikolaevna, and they’re all waiting for me there.”

And I explained that I should give up the letter only on condition that she promised to be reconciled to Anna Andreyevna at once, and even agree to the marriage. . . .

“Quite right, too,” Tatyana Pavlovna interposed, “and I’ve said the same thing to her a hundred times. Why, he’ll die before the wedding — he won’t be married anyhow, and if he leaves money to Anna in his will, why their names are in it as it is, and will remain there.”

“Surely it’s not only the money that Katerina Nikolaevna cares about?”

“No, she has been afraid all along that the letter was in Anna’s hands, and I was afraid of it, too! We were keeping watch on her. The daughter did not want to give the old father a shock, and the German, Büring, certainly did feel anxious about the money.”

“And after that she can marry Büring?”

“Why, what’s one to do with a little fool? It’s a true saying, a fool’s a fool and will be a fool for ever. He gives her a certain calm you see; ‘Since I must marry some one,’ she said, ‘I’ll marry him, he will suit me better than anyone’; she says; but we shall see afterwards how he suits her. One may tear one’s hair afterwards, but then it’s too late.”

“Then why do you allow it? You are fond of her, aren’t you? Why, you told her to her face you were in love with her!”

“Yes, I am in love with her, and I love her more than all the rest of you put together, but she’s a senseless little fool all the same.”

“Well, run and fetch her now, and we will settle it all, and take her to her father ourselves.”

“But we can’t, we can’t, you little stupid! That’s just it! Ach, what are we to do! Ach, it makes me sick!” She fell to rushing to and fro again, though she snatched up her shawl. “Ech, if only you had come to me four hours earlier, but now it’s eight o’clock, and she went off just now to the Pelistchevs’ to dinner, and afterwards she was going with them to the opera.”

“Good heavens! can’t we run to the opera then . . . oh, no, we can’t. What will become of the old man now? He may die in the night!”

“Listen, don’t go there, but go to your mother’s for the night, and early to-morrow . . .”

“No, I won’t desert the old man, whatever happens.”

“Well, don’t desert him; you are right there. But do you know I’ll run round to her and leave a note . . . I write in our own words (she’ll understand), that the document’s here and that she must be here at ten o’clock to-morrow morning — punctually! Don’t worry yourself, she’ll come, she’ll obey me; and then we’ll put everything right. And you run home, and use all your little arts to please the old prince, put him to bed, and perhaps he’ll hold out till the morning! Don’t frighten Anna either, I am fond of her too; you are unjust to her, because you can’t understand: she feels injured, she has been injured from a child; ach, you’ve all been a burden on me! Oh, don’t forget, tell her from me, that I’ll see to this business myself, and with a good will, and tell her not to worry, and her pride shall not suffer. . . . You see of late we’ve done nothing but quarrel — we’ve been spitting and scolding at one another! Come, run along. . . . But stay, show me your pocket again . . . is it true, is it true? Oh, is it true? Give me that letter if only for the night, what is it to you? Leave it, I won’t eat it. You may let it slip out of your hands in the night you know. . . . You’ll change your mind?”

“Not for anything!” I shouted. “Here, feel it, look at it, but I won’t leave it for anything!”

“I see it’s paper,” she said, feeling it with her fingers. “Oh, very well, go along, and I’ll go round to her, maybe I’ll look in at the theatre, too, that was a good idea of yours! But run along, run along!”

“Tatyana Pavlovna, wait a minute. How is mother?”

“She’s alive.”

“And Andrey Petrovitch?”

She waved her hand.

“He will come to himself!”

I ran off, feeling cheered, and more hopeful, although I had not been successful, as I had reckoned to be, but alas! destiny had decided otherwise, and there were other things in store for me — there certainly is a fate in things.

2

From the stairs I heard a noise in my lodging, and the door of the flat turned out to be open. At the door stood a servant in livery whom I did not know. Pyotr Ippolitovitch and his wife were both in the passage, too, looking scared and expectant. The door into the prince’s room was open, and I could hear within a voice of thunder, which I could recognise at once — the voice of Büring. I had hardly taken two steps forward when I saw the old prince trembling and in tears, led out into the passage by Büring and Baron R. the gentleman who had called on Versilov about the duel. The prince was sobbing loudly, embracing and kissing Büring. Büring was shouting at Anna Andreyevna, who had followed the old prince into the passage. Büring was threatening her, and I believe stamped at her — in fact the coarse German soldier came to the surface in spite of his aristocratic breeding. It afterwards came out that he had somehow got hold of the notion that Anna Andreyevna was guilty of something positively criminal, and certainly would have to answer for her conduct before a court of law. In his ignorance he exaggerated it as the ignorant commonly do, and so considered he had the right to be unceremonious in the extreme. He had not yet got to the bottom of the business: he had been informed of it by an anonymous letter (which I shall have to refer to later) and he had rushed round in that state of fury in which even the most sharp- witted people of his nationality are sometimes prepared to fight like brigands. Anna Andreyevna had met all this outburst with the utmost dignity, but I missed that. All I saw was that, after bringing the old man into the passage, Büring left him in the hands of Baron R. and rushing impetuously back to her, shouted, probably in reply to some remark of hers:

“You’re an intriguing adventuress, you’re after his money! You’ve disgraced yourself in society and will answer for it in a court of law! . . .”

“You’re taking advantage of an unfortunate invalid and driving him to madness . . . and you’re shouting at me because I’m a woman, and there’s no one to defend me . . .”

“Oh, yes, you are his betrothed, a fine betrothed,” Büring chuckled, with spiteful violence.

“Baron, Baron . . . chère enfant, je nous aime,” wailed the prince, stretching out his hands towards Anna Andreyevna.

“Go along, prince, go along, there’s been a plot against you, and maybe your life was threatened,” shouted Büring.

“Qui, oui, je comprends, j’ai compris au commencement . . .”

“Prince,” Anna Andreyevna raised her voice. “You are insulting me, and letting me be insulted!”

“Get along with you,” Büring shouted at her suddenly.

That I could not endure.

“Blackguard!” I yelled at him: “Anna Andreyevna, I’m here to defend you!”

What happened then I cannot describe exactly, and will not attempt to. The scene that followed was horrible and degrading. I seemed suddenly to lose my reason. I believe I dashed up and struck him, or at least gave him a violent push. He struck me with all his might on my head so that I fell on the floor. When I came to, I rushed after them down stairs. I remember that my nose was bleeding. At the entrance a carriage was waiting for them, and while they were getting the prince in, I ran up, and in spite of the lackey, who pushed me back I rushed at Büring again. At this point the police turned up, I don’t know how. Büring seized me by the collar and in a threatening voice ordered the police to take me into custody. I shouted that he ought to come with me, that we might make our affirmation together, and that they dare not take me almost from my own lodging. But as it had all happened in the street and not in the flat, and as I shouted and fought like a drunken man, and as Büring was wearing his uniform, the policeman took me. But flying into a perfect frenzy, I believe at that point I struck the policeman too. Then I remember two of them suddenly appeared and carried me off. I faintly remember they took me to a room full of tobacco smoke, with all sorts of people standing and sitting about in it waiting and writing; here too I went on shouting, and insisting on making a statement. But things had gone beyond that, and were complicated by violence and resisting the police, besides I looked absolutely disreputable. Some one

shouted at me angrily. Meanwhile the policeman charging me with fighting was describing the colonel . . .

"What's your name?" some one shouted to me.

"Dolgoruky," I yelled.

"Prince Dolgoruky?"

Beside myself, I answered by a very coarse word of abuse, and then . . . then I remember they dragged me to a very dark little room, set apart for drunkards. Oh, I'm not complaining. Readers will have seen of late in the newspapers a complaint made by a gentleman who was kept all night under arrest, tied up, and in a room set apart for drunkards, but I believe he was quite innocent while I had done something. I threw myself on the common bed which I shared with two unconscious sleepers. My head ached, my temples throbbed, and so did my heart. I must have been unconscious, and I believe I was delirious. I only remember waking up in the middle of the night, and sitting on the bed. I remembered everything at once and understood it in all its bearings, and, with my elbow propped on my knees and my head in my hands, I sank into profound meditation.

Oh, I am not going to describe my feelings, and there is no time to do it, but I will note one thing only: perhaps I never spent moments more consolatory to my soul than those moments of reflection in the middle of the night on that prison bed. This will perhaps strike the reader as strange, and he may be inclined to set it down to brag and the desire to be original — and yet it was just as I have said. It was one of those minutes which come perhaps to every one, but only come once in a lifetime. At such moments men decide their fate, define their point of view, and say to themselves once and for all: "That's where the truth lies, and that is the path to take to attain it." Yes, those moments were the light of my soul. Insulted by haughty Büring and expecting to be insulted next day by that aristocratic lady, I knew that I could revenge myself on them, but I decided not to revenge myself. I decided, in spite of every temptation, that I would not produce the letter, and publish it to the whole world (the idea had been floating in my mind); I repeated to myself that next day I would put that letter before her, and, if need be, instead of gratitude, would bear her ironical smile, but in any case I would not say a word but would go away from her for ever. . . . There is no need to enlarge on this, however. What would happen next day here, how I should be brought before the authorities, and what they would do with me — I almost forgot to think about. I

crossed myself with love in my heart, lay down on the bed, and fell into a sound childlike sleep.

I waked up late, when it was daylight. I found myself alone in the room. I sat down to wait in silence and waited about an hour; it must have been about nine o'clock when I was suddenly summoned. I might go into greater detail but it is not worth while, for all this is now irrelevant; I need only record what matters. I must note, however, that to my great astonishment I was treated with unexpected courtesy; I was questioned, I answered, and I was at once allowed to depart. I went out in silence, and to my satisfaction saw in their faces some surprise at a man who was able to keep up his dignity even in such circumstances. If I had not noticed that, I should not have recorded it. Tatyana Pavlovna was waiting for me at the entrance. I will explain in a couple of words why I was let off so easily.

Early in the morning, by eight o'clock perhaps, Tatyana Pavlovna had flown round to my lodging, that is to Pyotr Ippolitovitch's, expecting to find the old prince still there, and she heard at once of all the horrors of the previous day, above all that I had been arrested. She instantly rushed off to Katerina Nikolaevna (who on returning from the theatre the evening before had had an interview with the father who had been restored to her). Tatyana Pavlovna waked her up, alarmed her and insisted that I should be at once released. With a note from her she flew at once to Büring's and demanded from him forthwith another note, to the proper authorities, with an urgent request from Büring himself that I should be released, as I had been arrested through a misunderstanding. With this note she presented herself to the prison and her request was respectfully granted.

3

Now I will go on with my story.

Tatyana Pavlovna pounced on me, put me in a sledge, and took me home with her, she immediately ordered the samovar, and washed and brushed me herself in the kitchen. In the kitchen she told me in a loud voice that at half-past eleven Katerina Nikolaevna would come herself — as they had agreed that morning — to meet me. Marya overheard this. A few minutes later she brought in the samovar, and two minutes later, when Tatyana Pavlovna called her, she did not answer; it appeared that she had gone out for something. I beg the reader to make special note of this; it was about a

quarter to ten I believe. Though Tatyana Pavlovna was angry at her disappearance without asking leave, she only thought she had gone out to the shop, and immediately forgot about it. And, indeed, we had no thoughts to spare for it, we talked away without ceasing, for we had plenty to talk about, so that I, at least, scarcely noticed Marya's disappearance; I beg the reader to make a note of that.

As for me, I was in a sort of delirium, I poured out my feelings, and above all we were expecting Katerina Nikolaevna, and the thought that in an hour I should meet her at last, and at such a turning-point in my life, made me tremble and quiver. At last, when I had drunk two cups of tea, Tatyana Pavlovna suddenly stood up, took a pair of scissors from the table, and said:

"Let me have your pocket, I must take out the letter, we can't unpick it when she's here."

"Yes," I exclaimed and unbuttoned my coat.

"What a muddle it's in! who sewed it up?"

"I did, I did, Tatyana Pavlovna."

"Well, I can see you did. Come, here it is. . . ."

We took it out . . . the old envelope was the same, but inside was a blank sheet of paper.

"What's this?" cried Tatyana Pavlovna, turning it round and round . . . "what's the matter with you?"

But I was standing pale and speechless . . . and I suddenly sank helplessly into a chair. I really almost fainted.

"What does it mean?" wailed Tatyana Pavlovna. "Where is your letter?"

"Lambert!" I jumped up suddenly, slapping myself on the forehead as I guessed.

With breathless haste I explained to her — the night at Lambert's and our plot; I had, however, confessed that to her the night before.

"They've stolen it, they've stolen it!" I cried, stamping on the floor and clutching at my hair.

"That's terrible!" cried Tatyana Pavlovna, grasping what had happened.

"What time is it?"

It was about eleven.

"Ech, there's no Marya! . . . Marya, Marya!"

"What is it, mistress?" Marya responded from the kitchen.

“Are you here? What are we to do now! I will fly to her. . . . Ah, slow coach, slow coach!”

“And I to Lambert,” I yelled, “and I will strangle him if need be.”

“Mistress,” Marya piped suddenly from the kitchen, “here’s a person asking for you very particularly.”

But before she had time to finish, the person burst in from the kitchen, making a great outcry and lamentation. It was Alphonsine. I will not describe the scene in detail; the scene was a fraud and a deception, but I must say Alphonsine acted it splendidly. With tears of repentance and with violent gesticulations she babbled (in French, of course), that she had unpicked the letter herself, that it was now in Lambert’s hands, and that Lambert, together with that “brigand,” cet homme noir, meant to entice Mme. la générale to shoot her, immediately within an hour . . . that she knew all this from them, and that she had suddenly taken fright because she saw they had a pistol, le pistolet, and now she had rushed off to us, that we might go, might save, might warn. . . . That cet homme noir. . . .”

In fact, it all sounded very probable, the very stupidity of some of Alphonsine’s expressions only increased its apparent truthfulness.

“What homme noir?” cried Tatyana Pavlovna.

“Tien, j’ai oublié son nom. . . Un homme affreux. . . Tiens, Versilov.”

“Versilov, it cannot be,” I cried!

“Oh, yes, it can!” wailed Tatyana Pavlovna: “come, tell us my good woman without dancing about, don’t wave your arms about; what do they want? Explain, my good woman; I don’t believe they mean to shoot her.”

“My good woman” did explain as follows (N.B. — it was all a lie, I must remind the reader again): Versilov was to sit at the door and when she went in Lambert was to show her cette lettre, then Versilov was to rush in and they would. . . . . Oh! ils feront leur vengeance! that she, Alphonsine, was afraid there would be trouble, because she had had a share in the business herself, cette dame, la générale would certainly come at once, at once, because they had sent her a copy of the letter, and she would see at once that they really had the letter, and would go to interview them, but only Lambert had written the letter, so she knew nothing about Versilov; and Lambert had introduced himself as a stranger who had come from a lady in Moscow, une dame de Moscou (N.B. — Marie Ivanovna!)

“Ach, I feel sick! Ach, I feel sick!” exclaimed Tatyana Pavlovna.

“Sauvez la, sauvez la!” cried Alphonsine.

Oh, of course there was something inconsistent, even at first sight, in this mad story, but there was no time to think it over, for in essentials it sounded very probable. Of course, one might still suppose, and with the greatest likelihood, that Katerina Nikolaevna, on receiving Lambert's summons, would come first to Tatyana Pavlovna's to discuss the matter with us; and on the other hand, this might not happen, and she might go straight to him, and then — she was lost! It was difficult to believe that she would rush off to a stranger like Lambert at the first summons; yet, again, this might somehow happen, after seeing the copy and satisfying herself that they really had her letter, and then there would be disaster anyway! Above all, we had no time even to reflect.

"Versilov will murder her! if he has stooped to make use of Lambert he'll murder her! It's the second self," I cried.

"Ah that 'second self'!" cried Tatyana Pavlovna, wringing her hands. "Well, this is no use," she said decidedly, "take your cap and coat and quick march together. Lead us straight to them, my good woman. Ach, it's a long way. Marya, Marya, if Katerina Nikolaevna comes, tell her I shall be back directly and make her sit and wait for me, and if she does not want to wait, lock the door and keep her by force. Tell her I told her to. A hundred roubles for you, Marya, if you deserve it."

We ran down stairs. No doubt nothing better could have been suggested, for, in any case, the chief scene of danger was in Lambert's lodging, and if Katerina Nikolaevna did really come first to Tatyana Pavlovna's lodgings, Marya could always detain her. Yet after she had called a sledge, Tatyana Pavlovna changed her mind.

"You go with her," she bade me, leaving me with Alphonsine "and if need be, die there, do you understand? I'll follow you directly, but first I'll whisk round to her, maybe I shall find her, for say what you like, I feel suspicious!"

And she flew off to Katerina Nikolaevna.

Alphonsine and I went our way towards Lambert's. I urged on the driver and continued to question Alphonsine, but she confined herself to exclamations, and finally took refuge in tears. But God saved and preserved us all when everything was hanging on a thread. We had not driven a quarter of the way when I suddenly heard a shout behind me; some one was calling me by my name. I looked round — Trishatov was driving after us in another sledge.

“Where are you going,” he shouted in alarm, “and with her, with Alphonsine?”

“Trishatov,” I cried, “you told the truth, there is trouble! I am going to that scoundrel, Lambert’s! Let’s go together, the more the better!”

“Turn back, turn back at once,” shouted Trishatov, “Lambert’s deceiving you, and Alphonsine’s deceiving you. The pock-marked fellow sent me; they are not at home, I met Versilov and Lambert just now; they were driving to Tatyana Pavlovna’s . . . they’re there now. . . .”

I stopped the driver and jumped out to join Trishatov. To this day I don’t know how I could make up my mind so quickly, but I believed him at once, and made up my mind. Alphonsine raised a terrible outcry, but we did not trouble ourselves about her, and I don’t know whether she followed us or went home, anyway, I did not see her again.

In the sledge, Trishatov told me breathlessly that there was some sort of plot on foot, that Lambert had been plotting with the pock- marked man, but that the latter had betrayed him at the last moment, and had sent Trishatov to Tatyana Pavlovna’s to warn her not to believe Lambert and Alphonsine. Trishatov added that he knew nothing more, and that the pock-marked gentleman had told him nothing more, for he had been in a hurry himself, and it had all been settled in haste. “I saw you driving,” Trishatov went on, “and drove after you.”

It was clear, of course, that this pock-marked individual also knew the whole story, since he had sent Trishatov straight to Tatyana Pavlovna’s, but that was another mystery. But to avoid a muddle I will, before describing the catastrophe, explain the actual fact, and for the last time anticipate the order of events.

4

After stealing the letter Lambert at once got into communication with Versilov. How Versilov could have brought himself to join Lambert — I won’t discuss for the time; that will come later; what was chiefly responsible was the “second self!” After joining Versilov, Lambert still had to entice Katerina Nikolaevna as cunningly as he could. Versilov assured him at once that she would not come. But ever since the day before yesterday, when I met him in the street in the evening, broke off all relations with him, and told him that I should give back the letter at Tatyana

Pavlovna's lodgings and in her presence — Lambert had arranged to keep a watch on Tatyana Pavlovna's lodgings; Marya was bought over as a spy. Marya was given twenty roubles, and after the theft of the letter, Lambert visited Marya a second time, settling with her finally, and promising to pay her two hundred roubles for her services.

That was why Marya had rushed from the flat and galloped off in a sledge to Lambert's, with the news, as soon as she heard that Katerina Nikolaevna was to be at Tatyana Pavlovna's at half-past eleven, and that I, too, should be present. This was just the information she was to bring Lambert; that was precisely the duty assigned her. Versilov happened to be with Lambert at that very moment. In one moment Versilov had devised the diabolical plan. They say that madmen are at times extraordinarily cunning.

The plot was to lure both of us, Tatyana and me, out of the flat at all costs, if only for a quarter of an hour, but before Katerina Nikolaevna arrived. Then they meant to wait in the street, and as soon as Tatyana Pavlovna and I had come out, to run into the flat, which Marya was to open to them, and there to await Katerina Nikolaevna. Alphonsine, meantime, was to do her utmost to detain us where and how she pleased. Katerina Nikolaevna would be sure to come, as she promised, at half-past eleven, so that she would certainly be there long before we could be back. (Of course, Katerina Nikolaevna had received no summons from Lambert. Alphonsine had told us a lie and Versilov had invented the story in all its details, and Alphonsine had simply played the part of the frightened traitor.) Of course, it was a risk, but they probably reasoned that if it answered all would be well, if it failed nothing would have been lost, for the document would still be in their possession. But it did answer and could not possibly have failed to do so, for we could not but follow Alphonsine on the barest supposition that what she said might be true. I repeat again: there was no time to reflect.

5

We ran with Trishatov into the kitchen and found Marya in a fright. She was horrified to notice that when she let Versilov and Lambert in, that the latter had a revolver in his hand. Though she had taken money, the revolver had not entered into her calculations. She was bewildered and rushed at me as soon as she saw me.

“The lady has come and they’ve got a pistol!”

“Trishatov, stay here in the kitchen,” I said, “and as soon as I shout, run as quickly as you can to help me.”

Marya opened the door in the passage and I slipped into Tatyana Pavlovna’s bedroom — into the tiny cupboard of a room in which there was only space for Tatyana Pavlovna’s bed, and in which once I had already accidentally played the eavesdropper. I sat down on the bed and at once found a peephole for myself in the curtain.

There was already a noise in the room and they were talking loudly; I may mention that Katerina Nikolaevna arrived at the flat just a minute after them. I heard the noise and talk from the kitchen: Lambert was shouting. She was sitting on the sofa, and he was standing before her shouting like a fool. Now I know why he lost his head so stupidly: he was in a hurry and afraid they would be discovered. I will explain later who it was he feared. The letter was in his hand. But Versilov was not in the room. I was ready to rush in at the first sign of danger. I record only the gist of the conversation, perhaps a good deal I don’t remember correctly, but I was too much excited to remember with perfect accuracy.

“This letter’s worth thirty thousand roubles, and you are surprised! It’s worth a hundred thousand, and I only ask thirty!” Lambert said in a loud voice, terribly excited.

Though Katerina Nikolaevna was evidently frightened, she looked at him with a sort of contemptuous wonder.

“I see that a trap has been laid for me, and I don’t understand it,” she said: “but if only that letter is really in your hands.” . . . .

“But here it is, see for yourself! Isn’t that it? An IOU for thirty thousand and not a farthing less!” Lambert interrupted her.

“I’ve no money.”

“Write an IOU — here’s paper. Then go and get the money, and I will wait a week — no more. . . . Give me the money and then I will give you back the IOU and give you the letter.”

“You take such a strange tone. You are making a mistake. That letter will be taken from you, if I go to-day and lodge a complaint.”

“To whom? Ha-ha-ha? What of the scandal, and we shall show the letter to the prince! Where are they going to find it? I don’t keep the document at my lodging. I shall show it to your father through a third person. Don’t be obstinate, madam, be thankful that I’m not asking much,

any other man would ask for something else besides . . . you know what . . . which many a pretty woman would not refuse in such trying circumstances, that's what I mean . . . ha-ha-ha! Vous êtes belle, vous!"

Katerina Nikolaevna rose impetuously, turned crimson — and spat in his face. Then she turned quickly towards the door. It was at this point that the fool, Lambert, pulled out the revolver.

Like an unimaginative fool he had put blind faith in the effect of the document; his chief error lay in not distinguishing what sort of woman he had to deal with, because, as I have said already, he thought every one was as mean in their feelings as he was. He angered her from the first word by his rudeness, though perhaps otherwise she might not have declined to consider the question of payment.

"Don't stir!" he yelled, furious at her spitting at him, clutching her by the shoulder, and showing her the revolver — simply, of course, to frighten her. She uttered a shriek and sank on the sofa. I burst into the room; but, at the same instant, Versilov ran in at the other door. (He had been standing outside the door waiting.) In a flash he had snatched the revolver from Lambert, and with all his might hit him on the head with it. Lambert staggered and fell senseless; the blood streamed from his head upon the carpet.

She saw Versilov, turned suddenly as white as a sheet, gazed at him for some moments immovable with indescribable horror, and fell into a swoon. He rushed to her. It all flashes before my eyes as I write. I remember with what terror I saw his flushed almost purple face and his bloodshot eyes. I believe that though he saw me in the room he did not recognise me. He caught her as she fell unconscious, and with amazing ease lifted her up in his arms, as though she were a feather, and began aimlessly carrying her about the room like a baby. It was a tiny room, but he paced to and fro from corner to corner, evidently with no idea why he was doing so. In one instant he had lost his reason. He kept gazing at her, at her face. I ran after him; what I was most afraid of was the revolver, which he seemed to have forgotten in his right hand, and was holding close to her head. But he pushed me away, once with his elbow, and the second time with his foot. I wanted to shout to Trishatov, but I was afraid of irritating the madman. At last I drew back the curtain and began entreating him to put her on the bed. He went up and laid her down on it, stood over her, and gazed at her face; and, suddenly bending down, kissed her twice on her pale lips. Oh, I

realised at last that this was a man utterly beside himself. He suddenly waved the revolver over her, but, as though realising, turned the revolver and aimed it at her face. I instantly seized his arm and shouted to Trishatov. I remember we both struggled with him, but he succeeded in pulling away his arm and firing at himself. He would have shot her and then himself, but since we would not let him get at her, he pressed the revolver against his heart; I succeeded, however, in pushing his arm upwards, and the bullet struck him in the shoulder. At that instant Tatyana Pavlovna burst into the room shrieking; but he was already lying senseless on the carpet beside Lambert.

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION

1

Almost six months have passed since that scene, much has happened, much has completely changed, and a new life has begun for me since then. . . . But I must settle what I have left doubtful in my story.

To me at least, the first question at the time, and long afterwards was: how Versilov could have brought himself to act in concert with a man like Lambert, and what were his objects in doing so? Little by little, I have arrived at an explanation of a sort; to my thinking, at those moments, that is, all that last day and the day before, Versilov can have had no definite aim, and I believe, indeed, he did not reflect on the matter at all, but acted under the influence of a whirlwind of conflicting emotions. But the theory of actual madness I cannot accept, especially as he is not in the least mad now. But the "second self" I do accept unquestionably. What is a second self exactly? The second self, according to a medical book, written by an expert, which I purposely read afterwards, is nothing else than the first stage of serious mental derangement, which may lead to something very bad. And in that scene at my mother's, Versilov himself had with strange frankness described the "duality" of his will and feelings. But I repeat again: though that scene at mother's and that broken ikon were undoubtedly partly due to the influence of a real "second self," yet I have ever since been haunted by the fancy that there was in it an element of a sort of vindictive symbolism, a sort of resentment against the expectations of those women, a sort of angry revolt against their rights and their criticism. And so hand in hand with the "second self" he broke the ikon, as though to say "that's how your expectations will be shattered!" In fact, even though the "second self" did come in, it was partly simply a whim. . . . But all this is only my theory; it would be hard to decide for certain.

It is true that in spite of his adoration for Katerina Nikolaevna, he had a deep-rooted and perfectly genuine disbelief in her moral qualities. I really believe that he waited outside the door then, to see her humiliated before Lambert. But did he desire it, if even he waited for it? Again I repeat: I

firmly believe that he had no desire, no intention even. He simply wanted to be there, to rush in afterwards, to say something, perhaps to insult, perhaps even to kill her. . . . Anything might happen then; but when he came with Lambert he had no idea what would happen. I may add that the revolver was Lambert's and that he himself came unarmed. Seeing her proud dignity, and above all, exasperated by Lambert's blackguardliness in threatening her, he dashed in — and only then went mad. Did he mean to shoot her at that instant? In my opinion he did not know what he was doing, but he certainly would have shot her if we had not thrust aside his hand.

His wound proved to be not a fatal one, and it healed, but he was ill in bed rather a long time, at mother's, of course.

Now as I am writing these lines it is the middle of May, an exquisite spring day, and our windows are open. Mother is sitting beside him: he strokes her cheeks and hair and gazes into her face with tender emotion. Oh, this is only the half of the old Versilov, he never leaves mother's side now, and will never leave her again. He has even gained the "gift of tears," as Makar Ivanovitch, of precious memory, said in his story about the merchant. I fancy, however, that Versilov has a long life before him. With us he is perfectly good-natured and candid as a child, though he never loses his sense of proportion and self-control, and does not talk too freely. All his intellect and his moral nature have remained unchanged, though all his ideal side has become more marked. I may say frankly that I have never loved him so much as now, and I regret that I have neither time nor space to say more about him.

I will, however, tell one recent anecdote about him (and there are many). He had quite recovered by Lent, and in the sixth week declared that he would fast and take the sacrament. He had not taken the sacrament for thirty years or more I believe. Mother was delighted; they began preparing Lenten dishes, rather expensive, dainty ones, however. In the next room I heard him on Monday and Tuesday chanting to himself "The Bridegroom cometh," and he was delighted with the verses and the chant. He spoke beautifully of religion several times during those days; but on Wednesday the fast suddenly came to an end. Something suddenly irritated him, some "amusing contrast," as he expressed it, laughing; he disliked something in the exterior of the priest, in the surroundings; whatever it was, he returned

and said with a gentle smile: “My friends, I love God, but I am not fitted for that.” The same day roast beef was served at dinner.

But I know that even now mother often sits beside him, and in a low voice, with a gentle smile, begins to talk to him of the most abstract subjects: now she has somehow grown DARING with him, but how this has come to pass I don’t know. She sits beside him and speaks to him usually in a whisper. He listens with a smile, strokes her hair, kisses her hand, and there is the light of perfect happiness in his face. He sometimes has attacks that are almost like hysterics. Then he takes her photograph, the one he kissed that evening, gazes at it with tears, kisses it, recalls the past, gathers us all round him, but at such moments he says little.

Katerina Nikolaevna he seems to have completely forgotten and has never once mentioned. Nothing has been said of marriage with my mother so far, either. They did think of taking him abroad for the summer; but Tatyana Pavlovna strongly opposed it, and he did not desire it himself. They will spend the summer at a villa, in some country place in the neighbourhood of Petersburg. By the way we are all still living at the expense of Tatyana Pavlovna. One thing I will add: I am dreadfully sorry that I have several times in this narrative allowed myself to take up a disrespectful and superior attitude in regard to Versilov. But as I wrote I imagined myself precisely at each of the moments I was describing. As I finish my narrative and write the last lines, I suddenly feel by the very process of recalling and recording, I have re-educated myself. I regret a great deal I have written, especially the tone of certain sentences and pages, but I will not cross them out or correct a single word.

I have stated that he never says one word of Katerina Nikolaevna; but I really believe that he is quite cured of his passion. Of her I never speak except sometimes to Tatyana Pavlovna, and then in secret. Katerina Nikolaevna is now abroad; I saw her before she went away, and visited her several times. Since she has been abroad I have received two letters from her, and have answered them. But of what was in her letter and what we discussed I will say nothing; that is another story, a quite NEW story, and perhaps it is still in the future; indeed there are some things of which I say nothing even to Tatyana Pavlovna, but enough of that. I will only add that she is not married, and that she is travelling, with the Pelistchevs. Her father is dead and she is the richest of widows. At this moment she is in Paris.

Her rupture with Büring took place very quickly, and as it were of itself, that is, extremely naturally. I will describe it, however.

On the morning of that terrible scene, the pock-marked man to whom Trishatov and his tall friend had gone over, succeeded in letting Büring know of the proposed crime. This was how it happened. Lambert still tried to persuade him to work with him, and, when he gained possession of the letter, he told him all the details of the undertaking, up to the very last moment, that is, when Versilov suggested the trick to get rid of Tatyana Pavlovna. But at the last moment the pock-marked man, who had more sense than the rest, and foresaw the possibility of a serious crime being committed, preferred to betray Lambert. He reckoned upon Büring's gratitude as something more secure than the fantastic plan made by Lambert, who was clumsy and hotheaded, and by Versilov, who was almost mad with passion. All this I learned afterwards from Trishatov. I know nothing, by the way, of Lambert's relations with the pock- marked man, and I cannot understand why Lambert could not have acted without him. A question of far more interest for me is why Lambert needed Versilov when, having the letter in his possession, he might perfectly well have dispensed with the latter's assistance. The answer is clear to me now. Versilov was of use to Lambert from his knowledge of all the circumstances; moreover, if their plans miscarried, or some accident happened, Lambert reckoned on throwing all responsibility on Versilov. And since the latter did not want money, Lambert thought his help very opportune.

But Büring did not arrive in time. When he reached the scene of action an hour later, Tatyana Pavlovna's flat wore a very different aspect. Five minutes after Versilov had fallen on the carpet, covered with blood, Lambert, whom we all believed to be dead, raised his head and got up. He looked about him with amazement, quickly grasped the position, went into the kitchen without saying a word, put on his coat, and disappeared for ever. The document he left on the table. I have heard that he was not seriously ill but only slightly indisposed afterwards; the blow from the revolver had stunned him and drawn blood, but had done no further harm.

Meanwhile Trishatov had run for the doctor; but before the doctor arrived, Versilov, too, returned to consciousness, though before that Tatyana Pavlovna succeeded in bringing Katerina Nikolaevna to herself and taking her home. And so when Büring ran in upon us he found in Tatyana Pavlovna's flat only me, the doctor, Versilov, and my mother, who had been

fetched by Trishatov, and though still ill, had come in haste, beside herself with anxiety. Büring stared at us with amazement, and as soon as he learned that Katerina Nikolaevna had gone home he went off to see her without saying another word to us.

He was perturbed; he saw clearly that now scandal and gossip were almost inevitable. The affair did not make any great scandal, however. The pistol-shot could not be concealed, it is true; but the chief facts remained almost unknown. All that was discovered by the investigation that was made was that a certain V. a man passionately in love, though almost fifty and with a family, had declared his feelings to the young lady, a person worthy of the highest respect, who did not share his sentiments, and in a sudden access of madness had shot himself. Nothing more than this came out, and in that form the story even got into the papers, no names being mentioned but only initials. I know that Lambert was not troubled in any way.

Nevertheless Büring was alarmed. To make matters worse he chanced to learn of the interview between Katerina Nikolaevna and Versilov two days before the catastrophe. This enraged him, and he rather incautiously ventured to observe to Katerina Nikolaevna that after that he was not surprised that such extraordinary adventures could happen to her. Katerina Nikolaevna refused him on the spot, without anger, but without hesitation. All her preconceived ideas of the judiciousness of marrying such a man vanished like smoke. Possibly she had seen through him long before, and perhaps the shock she had been exposed to had changed some of her views and feelings. But of that again I will say nothing. I will only add that Lambert made his escape to Moscow, and that I have heard he got into trouble over something there. Trishatov I have lost sight of since that day, though I am still trying to track him; he vanished after the death of his friend “le grand dadais,” who shot himself.

2

I have mentioned the death of the old prince Nikolay Ivanovitch. The good-natured, kindly old man died not long after his adventure. His death took place, however, quite a month later in his bed at night, from a stroke. I never saw him again after the day he was in my flat. I was told that during that month he became far more rational, more tender in his manner even, he

ceased to be apprehensive, shed no more tears, and did not once utter a word about Anna Andreyevna. All his affection was centred on his daughter. On one occasion, a week before his death, Katerina Nikolaevna suggested inviting me to entertain him, but he actually frowned: I simply state this fact without trying to explain it. His estate turned out to be in good order at his death, and he left a very considerable fortune as well. A third of this fortune was by his will divided between his innumerable goddaughters but it struck every one as strange, that there was no mention of Anna Andreyevna in his will at all; her name was omitted. But I know for a fact that a few days before his death, the old man summoned his daughter and his friends, Pelistchev and Prince V. and instructed Katerina Nikolaevna, in view of the possibility of his speedy decease, to set aside out of his fortune sixty thousand roubles for Anna Andreyevna. He expressed his wishes briefly, clearly and precisely, not indulging in a single exclamation or explanation. After his death, and when his affairs were put in order, Katerina Nikolaevna, through her lawyer, informed Anna Andreyevna that the sixty thousand roubles were at her disposal; but drily, with no unnecessary words, Anna Andreyevna declined the money: she refused to accept it in spite of every assurance that this had been the old prince's desire. The money still lies waiting for her, and Katerina Nikolaevna still hopes to induce her to change her mind; but this will never happen of that I am positive, for I am now one of Anna Andreyevna's closest and most intimate friends. Her refusal made rather a stir, and people talked about it. Her aunt, Madame Fanariotov, who had been annoyed at first by her scandalous affair with the old prince, suddenly took a different view of it, and, after she refused the money, made her a solemn assurance of her respect. Her brother, on the other hand, quarrelled with her finally on account of it. But though I often go to see Anna Andreyevna, I cannot say that we ever discuss anything very intimate; we never refer to the past; she is very glad to see me, but talks to me chiefly of abstract subjects. Among other things, she has told me that she is firmly resolved to go into a convent; that was not long ago; but I don't believe this, and look upon it simply as an expression of bitterness.

But what is really tragic is what I have to tell of my sister Liza's fate. That is real unhappiness. What are all my failures beside her bitter lot? It began with Prince Sergay Petrovitch's dying in the hospital before his trial. He died before Prince Nikolay Ivanovitch. Liza was left to face the world

with her unborn child. She did not shed tears and was outwardly calm, she became gentle and resigned; but all her old fire seemed to have vanished for ever. She helped mother meekly, nursed Andrey Petrovitch through his illness, but became very silent and never seemed to notice anyone or anything, as though nothing mattered to her, as though she were simply passing by. When Versilov was better, she began to sleep a great deal. I used to take her books, but she did not read; she became terribly thin. I did not dare to try to comfort her, though I often went in to her intending to; but in her presence I could not approach her, and I found no words to speak to her. It went on like this till something terrible happened: she fell down our stairs; she did not fall far, only three steps, but it brought on a miscarriage, and she was ill all the rest of the winter. Now she is on her feet again, but her health has been shaken and it will be a long time before she is strong. She is still dreamy and silent with us, but she has begun to talk with mother a little. These last few days we have had bright, clear spring sunshine, and I am all the while inwardly recalling that sunny morning last autumn, when she and I walked along the street, both full of joy and hope and love for one another. Alas, what has happened since then? I don't complain, for me a new life has begun, but for her? Her future is a problem, and I cannot look at her even now without pain.

Three weeks ago I did succeed, however, in interesting her with news of Vassin. He was released at last and is now at liberty. That judicious person gave, so I am told, the most precise explanation and the most interesting information which completely cleared his character in the eyes of those on whom his fate depended. Moreover his celebrated manuscript turned out to be no more than a translation from the French, upon which he had intended to write an article for a magazine. He is now in the X. province, and his stepfather, Stebelkov, is still in prison on the same charge, which I hear grows more extensive and complicated as it goes on. Liza heard the news of Vassin with a strange smile, and even observed that that was just what was sure to have happened to him. But she was evidently pleased, no doubt that Prince Sergay's action had not brought worse harm to Vassin. Of Dergatchev and his friends I have nothing to say here.

I have finished. Perhaps some reader may care to know: what has become of my "idea," and what is the new life that is beginning for me now, to which I refer so mysteriously? But that new life, that new way which is opening before me is my "idea," the same as before, though in such a

different form, that it could hardly be recognised. But I cannot enter into that in this story, that is something quite different. My old life has passed away completely, and the new is just beginning. But I will add one essential matter: Tatyana Pavlovna, a true and dear friend to me, pesters me almost every day with exhortations to enter the university: "When you've taken your degree," she says, "then you can consider the position, but now you must finish your studies." I must confess I am considering her suggestion, but I don't know how I shall decide. Among other objections I have urged that I have not the right to continue my studies, as it is my duty now to work to maintain mother and Liza; but she offers to undertake this, and she says her means are sufficient to do so all the time I am at the university. I have determined at last to ask the advice of some one. Looking about me, I have chosen that some one carefully and critically. I have fixed on Nikolay Semyonovitch, my former tutor in Moscow, the husband of Marie Ivanovna. Not so much that I need advice about anything, but I feel an irresistible longing to hear the opinion of this outsider, who is a rather coldly egoistic, but undoubtedly clever man. I have sent him my whole manuscript, asking him to keep it secret from every one, especially Tatyana Pavlovna, because I have not shown it to any one so far. The manuscript came back to me a fortnight later, and with it a rather long letter. From this letter I make a few extracts, as I find in them a certain general view and something that may be explanatory. Here are the extracts.

3

". . . You could never have employed your leisure time more profitably, my ever precious Arkady Makarovitch, than in writing this autobiography! You have given yourself, so to say, an unflinching account of your first stormy, perilous steps on the path of life. I quite believe that you may by this exposition have to a great extent 're-educated yourself,' to use your own expression. I shall not, of course, venture upon the smallest criticism: though every page makes one reflect . . . for instance, the circumstance, that you so long and so obstinately retained possession of the 'document' — is highly characteristic. . . . But that is only one remark out of hundreds, which I permitted myself. I greatly appreciate also, the fact of your deciding to confide to me, and apparently to me alone, 'the secret of your

idea,' to use your own expression. But your request that I should give you my opinion on that 'idea' I must resolutely refuse: to begin with, it would be out of place in a letter, and secondly, I am not prepared to give an answer off-hand; I must ruminate upon it further. I will only observe that your 'idea' is distinguished by originality, whereas young men of the present generation, for the most part, throw themselves into ready-made ideas, of which there is always an ample provision, and which are a source of danger. Your idea, for instance, did at any rate save you for the time from the ideas of Messrs. Dergatchev and Co. certainly less original than yours. Finally I am absolutely in agreement with that honoured lady, Tatyana Pavlovna, whom I had till now failed to esteem as she deserves, though I know her personally. Her plan that you should enter the university will be of the greatest possible benefit for you. Study and life will undoubtedly in three or four years widen the horizon of your ideas and aspirations, and if after the university you still desire to return to your 'idea,' there will be nothing to prevent it.

"Now allow me, though you have not requested it, to give you frankly some thoughts and impressions that have occurred to my mind while perusing your extremely candid 'autobiography.' Yes, I agree with Andrey Petrovitch, that one might well feel anxiety about you and your SOLITARY YOUTH. And there are more than a few lads like you, and there really is always a danger of their talents leading them astray, either into secret sensuality, or a latent desire for lawlessness. But this thirst for lawlessness proceeds most frequently, perhaps, from a latent craving for discipline and 'seemliness' — (I am using your own words). Youth is pure, just because it is youth. Perhaps in these precocious impulses of madness, there lie concealed a craving for discipline and a search for truth, and whose fault is it that some young people of to-day see that truth and that discipline in such stupid and ridiculous things, that one cannot imagine how they can believe in them! I may mention, by the way, that in the recent past, a generation ago at most, such interesting lads were not so much to be pitied, for in those days they almost always ended by successfully attaching themselves to our most highly cultivated class and merging into it and even if they did at the onset recognise their own lack of order and consistency, the lack of nobility even in their family surroundings, the lack of an ancestral tradition, and of fine finished forms of social life, it was a gain for them, for they consciously strove towards all this and thereby learned to prize it.

Nowadays the position is somewhat different, for there is scarcely anything the young can attach themselves to.

"I will explain by comparison, or, so to say, by analogy. If I had been a Russian novelist and had talent I should certainly have chosen my heroes from the old nobility, because only in that type of cultivated Russian is it possible to find at least that outward semblance of fine order and aesthetic beauty so necessary in a novel to produce an artistic effect on the reader. I am not joking when I say this, although I am not a nobleman myself, as you are indeed aware. Pushkin selected the subject for his future novels from the 'Traditions of the Russian Family,' and believe me that everything beautiful we have had so far is to be found therein. Everything that has been brought to some sort of perfection, anyway. I don't say this because I am accepting unconditionally the truth and justness of that beauty; but at least there were completely worked out forms of honour and duty which have never existed anywhere in Russia except in the nobility, even in the most rudimentary shape. I speak as a calm man seeking calm.

"Whether that honour was a good thing, and whether that duty was a true one — is a secondary question. What to my mind is of most consequence is the finality of the forms and the existence of some sort of order, not prescribed from above, but developed from within. Good heavens, what matters most of all for us is to have any sort of order of our own! All hopes for the future and, so to say, restfulness of outlook lie in our having something at last built up, instead of this everlasting destruction, instead of chips flying in all directions, rubbish and disorder which has led to nothing for two hundred years.

"Don't accuse me of Slavophilism; I only say this from misanthropy, for my heart is heavy! Something is happening to us to-day and in the recent past, the very opposite of what I have imagined above. It is not that the worthless attach themselves to the highest stratum of society, but, on the contrary, with light-hearted haste, fragments are torn from what is fine and noble and thrown into one mass with the lawless and the envious. And there have been many instances of fathers and heads of what have been cultured families, laughing at what their children perhaps would have liked to believe in. What is more, they eagerly display to their children their spiteful pleasure at the sudden licence to be dishonest, which they have all at once deduced, wholesale, from something. I am not speaking of the true progressives, dear Arkady Makarovitch, but only of that rabble, so

numerous it seems, of whom it has been said ‘grattez le Russe et vous verrez le Tatare,’ and believe me there are by no means so many true liberals, true and noble friends of humanity among us, as we have imagined.

“But all this is theorising; let us come back to our supposed novelist. The position of our novelist in this case would be perfectly definite; he could not write in any other form but the historical, for there is no fine type in our day, and if there were remnants of it left they would not, according to the prevalent ideas of the day, have retained their beauty. Oh! and in historical form it is possible to depict a multitude of extremely attractive and consolatory details! It is possible so to fascinate the reader indeed that he will take the historical picture for the possible and the actual. Such a work, if executed with great talent, would belong not so much to Russian literature as to Russian history.

“It would be a picture artistically worked out of the Russian ideal, having a real existence so long as it was not guessed that it was an ideal. The grandson of those heroes who have been depicted in a picture of a Russian family of the upper middle cultivated class during three generations, side by side with and in connection with Russian history — that descendant of his forefathers would not be depicted in his modern type except in a somewhat misanthropic solitary and distinctly melancholy aspect. He is even bound to appear a somewhat strange figure, so that the reader might from the first glance recognise him as one retreating from the field of action, and might be convinced there was no field of action left for him. A little further and even that misanthrope, that grandson of heroes, will disappear entirely; new characters will appear, unknown to us as yet, and a new ideal; but what sort of characters? If they are without beauty, then the Russian novel is impossible in the future. But alas! will the novel be the only thing impossible?

“I will not pursue this further, but will hasten back to your manuscript. Consider, for instance, both the families of M. Versilov (for this once I will venture to be quite open). I won’t enlarge on Andrey Petrovitch himself; but he is anyway of a good old family. He is a nobleman of ancient lineage, and at the same time a Parisian communard. He is a true poet and loves Russia, yet denies her absolutely. He is without any sort of religion, but yet almost ready to die for something indefinite, to which he cannot give a name, but in which he fervently believes, like a number of Russian adherents of European civilisation of the Petersburg period of Russian

history. But enough of him. As for his legitimate family, I won't discuss his son, and indeed, he is not worthy of the honour. All who have eyes know what upstarts like that come to in Russia, and what they bring others to as well. Then his daughter, Anna Andreyevna — she is surely a girl of strong character? A figure on the scale of the Mother Abbess Mitrofania, not that I mean to predict anything criminal — which would be unjust on my part.

"If you can assure me, Arkady Makarovitch, that that family is an exceptional phenomenon it will rejoice my heart. But would it not be on the contrary a truer conclusion, that a multitude of unquestionably aristocratic Russian families are with irresistible force passing in masses into exceptional families and mingling with them in the general lawlessness and chaos. A typical example of such an exceptional family is sketched by you in your manuscript. Yes, Arkady Makarovitch, you are A MEMBER OF AN EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY, in contrary distinction to the aristocratic types who have had such a very different childhood and adolescence from yours.

"I must say I should not like to be a novelist whose hero comes of an exceptional family!

"To describe him is an ungrateful task and can have no beauty of form. Moreover these types are in any case transitory, and so a novel about them cannot have artistic finish. One may make serious mistakes, exaggerations, misjudgments. In any case, one would have to guess too much. But what is the writer to do who doesn't want to confine himself to the historical form, and is possessed by a longing for the present? To guess . . . and make mistakes.

"But such an autobiography as yours might serve as material for a future work of art, for a future picture of a lawless epoch already passed. Oh, when the angry strife of the day has passed, and the future has come, then a future artist will discover beautiful forms for depicting past lawlessness and chaos. Then such autobiographies as yours — so long as they are sincere — will be of use and provide material in spite of their chaotic and fortuitous character . . . they will preserve at any rate some faithful traits by which one may guess what may have lain hidden in the heart of some raw youth of that troubled time — a knowledge not altogether valueless since from raw youths are made up the generations."

THE END

THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV



Translated by Constance Garnett

Dostoyevsky’s final novel was published as a serial in *The Russian Messenger* in 1880. *The Brothers Karamazov* tells the story of a patricide, in which each of the murdered man’s sons share a varying degree of complicity. The novel is a spiritual drama of moral struggles concerning faith, doubt and reason, offering a complex narrative steeped with ethical debates of God, free will and morality. Since its first publication, the novel has been acclaimed as one of the supreme achievements of nineteenth century Russian literature. Dostoyevsky intended *The Brothers Karamazov* to be the first part in an epic story titled *The Life of a Great Sinner*, but he died less than four months after the publication.

In the October 1877, A Writer's Diary article by Dostoyevsky mentioned a "literary work that has imperceptibly and involuntarily been taken shape within me over these two years of publishing the Diary". His Diary, a collection of numerous articles, had included similar themes which *The Brothers Karamazov* would later borrow from. These include parricide, law and order and social problems. Though Dostoyevsky was influenced by religion and philosophy in his life, a personal tragedy altered the course of his last novel. In May 1878, Dostoyevsky's three-year-old son Alyosha died of epilepsy, which condition he had inherited from his father. The novelist's grief is apparent throughout the book. Dostoyevsky named the hero after his deceased son, as well as imbuing him with qualities that he most admired. The author’s sense of loss is also reflected in the story of Captain Snegiryov and his young son Ilyusha.

The novel presents Fyodor Karamazov as the father and eventual victim of patricide. Fyodor is a 55-year-old buffoon and drunkard, with three sons from two marriages. He is rumoured to have fathered an illegitimate son, Pavel Fyodorovich Smerdyakov, whom he employs as his servant. Fyodor takes no interest in any of his sons, who are, as a result, raised apart from each other and their father. The relationship between Fyodor and his adult sons drives much of the plot.

The first book introduces the Karamazov family and relates the story of their distant and recent past. The details of Fyodor's two marriages as well

as his indifference to the upbringing of his three children is chronicled. The narrator also establishes the widely varying personalities of the three brothers and the circumstances that have led to their return to Fyodor's town. The first book concludes by describing the mysterious religious order of Elders to which the younger son Alyosha has become devoted.

The Brothers Karamazov has had an enormous influence on many writers and philosophers across the world. Admirers of the novel include Albert Einstein, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger, Cormac McCarthy and Kurt Vonnegut. Franz Kafka felt immensely indebted to Dostoyevsky and *The Brothers Karamazov* for influencing his own work. Kafka called himself and Dostoyevsky "blood relatives", perhaps because of Dostoyevsky's existential style. Sigmund Freud went so far as to call *The Brothers Karamazov* "the most magnificent novel ever written" and was fascinated with its Oedipal themes. In 1928 Freud published a paper titled "Dostoevsky and Parricide" in which he investigated Dostoyevsky's own neuroses. Freud claimed that Dostoyevsky's epilepsy was not a natural condition, but instead a physical manifestation of the author's hidden guilt over his father's death. According to Freud, Dostoyevsky (and all other sons) wished for the death of his father because of latent desire for his mother; and as evidence Freud cites the fact that Dostoyevsky's epileptic fits did not begin until he turned 18, the year his father died. However, some scholars have since discredited Freud's claim due to the evidence that Dostoyevsky's children inherited his epileptic condition, making the cause biological, rather than psychological.

БРАТЬЯ КАРАМАЗОВЫ

РОМАНЪ

Истинно, истинно говорю вамъ: если пшеничное зерно, падши въ землю, не умретъ, то останется одно; а если умретъ, то принесетъ много плода.

(Евангеліе отъ Іоанна. Глава XII, 24.)

ОТЪ АВТОРА.

Начиная жизнеописаніе героя моего, Алексѣя Ѳедоровича Карамазова, нахожусь въ нѣкоторомъ недоумѣніи. А именно: хотя я и называю Алексѣя Ѳедоровича моимъ героемъ, но однако самъ знаю что человѣкъ онъ отнюдь не великій, а посему и предвижу неизбѣжные вопросы въ родѣ таковыхъ: чѣмъ же замѣчателенъ вашъ Алексѣй Ѳедоровичъ что вы выбрали его своимъ героемъ? Что сдѣлалъ онъ такого? Кому и чѣмъ извѣстенъ? Почему я, читатель, долженъ тратить время на изученіе фактовъ его жизни?

Послѣдній вопросъ самый роковой, ибо на него могу лишь отвѣтить: „Можетъ-быть увидите сами изъ романа". Ну а коль прочтутъ романъ и не увидятъ, не согласятся съ примѣчательностью моего Алексѣя Ѳедоровича? Говорю такъ потому что съ прискорбіемъ это предвижу. Да мепя онъ примѣчателенъ, но рѣшительно сомнѣваюсь успѣю ли это доказать читателю. Дѣло въ томъ, что это пожалуй и хвалитель,

The first edition

THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

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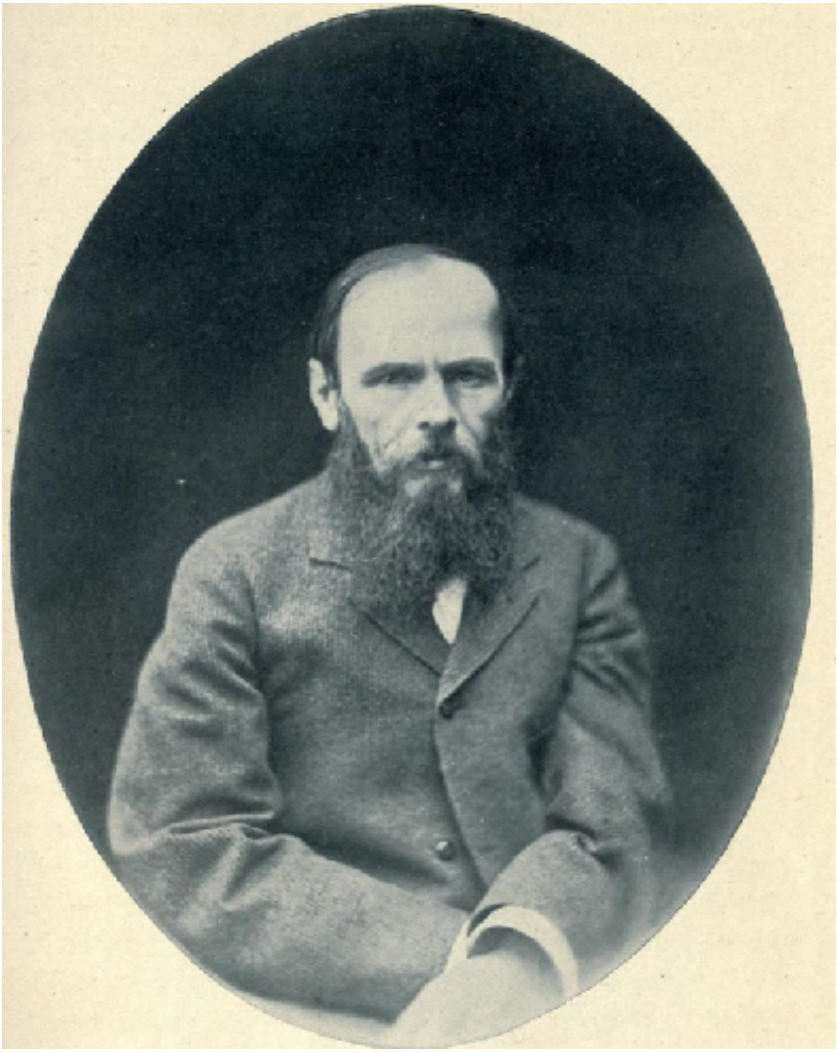
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Dostoyevsky, 1880 — the year his final novel was first published

PART I

BOOK I .THE HISTORY OF A FAMILY

CHAPTER 1

Fyodor Pavlovitch Karamazov

ALEXEY Fyodorovitch Karamazov was the third son of Fyodor Pavlovitch Karamazov, a landowner well known in our district in his own day, and still remembered among us owing to his gloomy and tragic death, which happened thirteen years ago, and which I shall describe in its proper place. For the present I will only say that this “landowner” — for so we used to call him, although he hardly spent a day of his life on his own estate — was a strange type, yet one pretty frequently to be met with, a type abject and vicious and at the same time senseless. But he was one of those senseless persons who are very well capable of looking after their worldly affairs, and, apparently, after nothing else. Fyodor Pavlovitch, for instance, began with next to nothing; his estate was of the smallest; he ran to dine at other men’s tables, and fastened on them as a toady, yet at his death it appeared that he had a hundred thousand roubles in hard cash. At the same time, he was all his life one of the most senseless, fantastical fellows in the whole district. I repeat, it was not stupidity — the majority of these fantastical fellows are shrewd and intelligent enough — but just senselessness, and a peculiar national form of it.

He was married twice, and had three sons, the eldest, Dmitri, by his first wife, and two, Ivan and Alexey, by his second. Fyodor Pavlovitch’s first wife, Adelaida Ivanovna, belonged to a fairly rich and distinguished noble family, also landowners in our district, the Miusovs. How it came to pass that an heiress, who was also a beauty, and moreover one of those vigorous intelligent girls, so common in this generation, but sometimes also to be found in the last, could have married such a worthless, puny weakling, as we all called him, I won’t attempt to explain. I knew a young lady of the last “romantic” generation who after some years of an enigmatic passion for a gentleman, whom she might quite easily have married at any moment, invented insuperable obstacles to their union, and ended by throwing herself one stormy night into a rather deep and rapid river from a high bank, almost a precipice, and so perished, entirely to satisfy her own caprice, and to be like Shakespeare’s Ophelia. Indeed, if this precipice, a chosen and favourite spot of hers, had been less picturesque, if there had been a prosaic flat bank

in its place, most likely the suicide would never have taken place. This is a fact, and probably there have been not a few similar instances in the last two or three generations. Adelaida Ivanovna Miusov's action was similarly, no doubt, an echo of other people's ideas, and was due to the irritation caused by lack of mental freedom. She wanted, perhaps, to show her feminine independence, to override class distinctions and the despotism of her family. And a pliable imagination persuaded her, we must suppose, for a brief moment, that Fyodor Pavlovitch, in spite of his parasitic position, was one of the bold and ironical spirits of that progressive epoch, though he was, in fact, an ill-natured buffoon and nothing more. What gave the marriage piquancy was that it was preceded by an elopement, and this greatly captivated Adelaida Ivanovna's fancy. Fyodor Pavlovitch's position at the time made him specially eager for any such enterprise, for he was passionately anxious to make a career in one way or another. To attach himself to a good family and obtain a dowry was an alluring prospect. As for mutual love it did not exist apparently, either in the bride or in him, in spite of Adelaida Ivanovna's beauty. This was, perhaps, a unique case of the kind in the life of Fyodor Pavlovitch, who was always of a voluptuous temper, and ready to run after any petticoat on the slightest encouragement. She seems to have been the only woman who made no particular appeal to his senses.

Immediatley after the elopement Adelaida Ivanovna discerned in a flash that she had no feeling for her husband but contempt. The marriage accordingly showed itself in its true colours with extraordinary rapidity. Although the family accepted the event pretty quickly and apportioned the runaway bride her dowry, the husband and wife began to lead a most disorderly life, and there were everlasting scenes between them. It was said that the young wife showed incomparably more generosity and dignity than Fyodor Pavlovitch, who, as is now known, got hold of all her money up to twenty five thousand roubles as soon as she received it, so that those thousands were lost to her forever. The little village and the rather fine town house which formed part of her dowry he did his utmost for a long time to transfer to his name, by means of some deed of conveyance. He would probably have succeeded, merely from her moral fatigue and desire to get rid of him, and from the contempt and loathing he aroused by his persistent and shameless importunity. But, fortunately, Adelaida Ivanovna's family intervened and circumvented his greediness. It is known for a fact that

frequent fights took place between the husband and wife, but rumour had it that Fyodor Pavlovitch did not beat his wife but was beaten by her, for she was a hot-tempered, bold, dark-browed, impatient woman, possessed of remarkable physical strength. Finally, she left the house and ran away from Fyodor Pavlovitch with a destitute divinity student, leaving Mitya, a child of three years old, in her husband's hands. Immediately Fyodor Pavlovitch introduced a regular harem into the house, and abandoned himself to orgies of drunkenness. In the intervals he used to drive all over the province, complaining tearfully to each and all of Adelaida Ivanovna's having left him, going into details too disgraceful for a husband to mention in regard to his own married life. What seemed to gratify him and flatter his self-love most was to play the ridiculous part of the injured husband, and to parade his woes with embellishments.

"One would think that you'd got a promotion, Fyodor Pavlovitch, you seem so pleased in spite of your sorrow," scoffers said to him. Many even added that he was glad of a new comic part in which to play the buffoon, and that it was simply to make it funnier that he pretended to be unaware of his ludicrous position. But, who knows, it may have been simplicity. At last he succeeded in getting on the track of his runaway wife. The poor woman turned out to be in Petersburg, where she had gone with her divinity student, and where she had thrown herself into a life of complete emancipation. Fyodor Pavlovitch at once began bustling about, making preparations to go to Petersburg, with what object he could not himself have said. He would perhaps have really gone; but having determined to do so he felt at once entitled to fortify himself for the journey by another bout of reckless drinking. And just at that time his wife's family received the news of her death in Petersburg. She had died quite suddenly in a garret, according to one story, of typhus, or as another version had it, of starvation. Fyodor Pavlovitch was drunk when he heard of his wife's death, and the story is that he ran out into the street and began shouting with joy, raising his hands to Heaven: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace," but others say he wept without restraint like a little child, so much so that people were sorry for him, in spite of the repulsion he inspired. It is quite possible that both versions were true, that he rejoiced at his release, and at the same time wept for her who released him. As a general rule, people, even the wicked, are much more naive and simple-hearted than we suppose. And we ourselves are, too.

CHAPTER 2

He Gets Rid of His Eldest Son

YOU can easily imagine what a father such a man could be and how he would bring up his children. His behaviour as a father was exactly what might be expected. He completely abandoned the child of his marriage with Adelaida Ivanovna, not from malice, nor because of his matrimonial grievances, but simply because he forgot him. While he was wearying everyone with his tears and complaints, and turning his house into a sink of debauchery, a faithful servant of the family, Grigory, took the three-year old Mitya into his care. If he hadn't looked after him there would have been no one even to change the baby's little shirt.

It happened moreover that the child's relations on his mother's side forgot him too at first. His grandfather was no longer living, his widow, Mitya's grandmother, had moved to Moscow, and was seriously ill, while his daughters were married, so that Mitya remained for almost a whole year in old Grigory's charge and lived with him in the servant's cottage. But if his father had remembered him (he could not, indeed, have been altogether unaware of his existence) he would have sent him back to the cottage, as the child would only have been in the way of his debaucheries. But a cousin of Mitya's mother, Pyotr Alexandrovitch Miusov, happened to return from Paris. He lived for many years afterwards abroad, but was at that time quite a young .man, and distinguished among the Miusovs as a man of enlightened ideas and of European culture, who had been in the capitals and abroad. Towards the end of his life he became a Liberal of the type common in the forties and fifties. In the course of his career he had come into contact with many of the most Liberal men of his epoch, both in Russia and abroad. He had known Proudhon and Bakunin personally, and in his declining years was very fond of describing the three days of the Paris Revolution of February, 1848, hinting that he himself had almost taken part in the fighting on the barricades. This was one of the most grateful recollections of his youth. He had an independent property of about a thousand souls, to reckon in the old style. His splendid estate lay on the outskirts of our little town and bordered on the lands of our famous monastery, with which Pyotr Alexandrovitch began an endless lawsuit, almost as soon as he came into

the estate, concerning the rights of fishing in the river or wood-cutting in the forest, I don’t know exactly which. He regarded it as his duty as a citizen and a man of culture to open an attack upon the “clericals.” Hearing all about Adelaida Ivanovna, whom he, of course, remembered, and in whom he had at one time been interested, and learning of the existence of Mitya, he intervened, in spite of all his youthful indignation and contempt for Fyodor Pavlovitch. He made the latter’s acquaintance for the first time, and told him directly that he wished to undertake the child’s education. He used long afterwards to tell as a characteristic touch, that when he began to speak of Mitya, Fyodor Pavlovitch looked for some time as though he did not understand what child he was talking about, and even as though he was surprised to hear that he had a little son in the house. The story may have been exaggerated, yet it must have been something like the truth.

Fyodor Pavlovitch was all his life fond of acting, of suddenly playing an unexpected part, sometimes without any motive for doing so, and even to his own direct disadvantage, as, for instance, in the present case. This habit, however, is characteristic of a very great number of people, some of them very clever ones, not like Fyodor Pavlovitch. Pyotr Alexandrovitch carried the business through vigorously, and was appointed, with Fyodor Pavlovitch, joint guardian of the child, who had a small property, a house and land, left him by his mother. Mitya did, in fact, pass into this cousin’s keeping, but as the latter had no family of his own, and after securing the revenues of his estates was in haste to return at once to Paris, he left the boy in charge of one of his cousins, a lady living in Moscow. It came to pass that, settling permanently in Paris he, too, forgot the child, especially when the Revolution of February broke out, making an impression on his mind that he remembered all the rest of his life. The Moscow lady died, and Mitya passed into the care of one of her married daughters. I believe he changed his home a fourth time later on. I won’t enlarge upon that now, as I shall have much to tell later of Fyodor Pavlovitch’s firstborn, and must confine myself now to the most essential facts about him, without which I could not begin my story.

In the first place, this Mitya, or rather Dmitri Fyodorovitch, was the only one of Fyodor Pavlovitch’s three sons who grew up in the belief that he had property, and that he would be independent on coming of age. He spent an irregular boyhood and youth. He did not finish his studies at the gymnasium, he got into a military school, then went to the Caucasus, was

promoted, fought a duel, and was degraded to the ranks, earned promotion again, led a wild life, and spent a good deal of money. He did not begin to receive any income from Fyodor Pavlovitch until he came of age, and until then got into debt. He saw and knew his father, Fyodor Pavlovitch, for the first time on coming of age, when he visited our neighbourhood on purpose to settle with him about his property. He seems not to have liked his father. He did not stay long with him, and made haste to get away, having only succeeded in obtaining a sum of money, and entering into an agreement for future payments from the estate, of the revenues and value of which he was unable (a fact worthy of note), upon this occasion, to get a statement from his father. Fyodor Pavlovitch remarked for the first time then (this, too, should be noted) that Mitya had a vague and exaggerated idea of his property. Fyodor Pavlovitch was very well satisfied with this, as it fell in with his own designs. He gathered only that the young man was frivolous, unruly, of violent passions, impatient, and dissipated, and that if he could only obtain ready money he would be satisfied, although only, of course, a short time. So Fyodor Pavlovitch began to take advantage of this fact, sending him from time to time small doles, instalments. In the end, when four years later, Mitya, losing patience, came a second time to our little town to settle up once for all with his father, it turned out to his amazement that he had nothing, that it was difficult to get an account even, that he had received the whole value of his property in sums of money from Fyodor Pavlovitch, and was perhaps even in debt to him, that by various agreements into which he had, of his own desire, entered at various previous dates, he had no right to expect anything more, and so on, and so on. The young man was overwhelmed, suspected deceit and cheating, and was almost beside himself. And, indeed, this circumstance led to the catastrophe, the account of which forms the subject of my first introductory story, or rather the external side of it. But before I pass to that story I must say a little of Fyodor Pavlovitch’s other two sons, and of their origin.

CHAPTER 3

The Second Marriage and the Second Family

VERY shortly after getting his four-year-old Mitya off his hands Fyodor Pavlovitch married a second time. His second marriage lasted eight years. He took this second wife, Sofya Ivanovna, also a very young girl, from another province, where he had gone upon some small piece of business in company with a Jew. Though Fyodor Pavlovitch was a drunkard and a vicious debauchee he never neglected investing his capital, and managed his business affairs very successfully, though, no doubt, not over-scrupulously. Sofya Ivanovna was the daughter of an obscure deacon, and was left from childhood an orphan without relations. She grew up in the house of a general's widow, a wealthy old lady of good position, who was at once her benefactress and tormentor. I do not know the details, but I have only heard that the orphan girl, a meek and gentle creature, was once cut down from a halter in which she was hanging from a nail in the loft, so terrible were her sufferings from the caprice and everlasting nagging of this old woman, who was apparently not bad-hearted but had become an insufferable tyrant through idleness.

Fyodor Pavlovitch made her an offer; inquiries were made about him and he was refused. But again, as in his first marriage, he proposed an elopement to the orphan girl. There is very little doubt that she would not on any account have married him if she had known a little more about him in time. But she lived in another province; besides, what could a little girl of sixteen know about it, except that she would be better at the bottom of the river than remaining with her benefactress. So the poor child exchanged a benefactress for a benefactor. Fyodor Pavlovitch did not get a penny this time, for the general's widow was furious. She gave them nothing and cursed them both. But he had not reckoned on a dowry; what allured him was the remarkable beauty of the innocent girl, above all her innocent appearance, which had a peculiar attraction for a vicious profligate, who had hitherto admired only the coarser types of feminine beauty.

"Those innocent eyes slit my soul up like a razor," he used to say afterwards, with his loathsome snigger. In a man so depraved this might, of course, mean no more than sensual attraction. As he had received no dowry

with his wife, and had, so to speak, taken her “from the halter,” he did not stand on ceremony with her. Making her feel that she had “wronged” him, he took advantage of her phenomenal meekness and submissiveness to trample on the elementary decencies of marriage. He gathered loose women into his house, and carried on orgies of debauchery in his wife’s presence. To show what a pass things had come to, I may mention that Grigory, the gloomy, stupid, obstinate, argumentative servant, who had always hated his first mistress, Adelaida Ivanovna, took the side of his new mistress. He championed her cause, abusing Fyodor Pavlovitch in a manner little befitting a servant, and on one occasion broke up the revels and drove all the disorderly women out of the house. In the end this unhappy young woman, kept in terror from her childhood, fell into that kind of nervous disease which is most frequently found in peasant women who are said to be “possessed by devils.” At times after terrible fits of hysterics she even lost her reason. Yet she bore Fyodor Pavlovitch two sons, Ivan and Alexey, the eldest in the first year of marriage and the second three years later. When she died, little Alexey was in his fourth year, and, strange as it seems, I know that he remembered his mother all his life, like a dream, of course. At her death almost exactly the same thing happened to the two little boys as to their elder brother, Mitya. They were completely forgotten and abandoned by their father. They were looked after by the same Grigory and lived in his cottage, where they were found by the tyrannical old lady who had brought up their mother. She was still alive, and had not, all those eight years, forgotten the insult done her. All that time she was obtaining exact information as to her Sofya’s manner of life, and hearing of her illness and hideous surroundings she declared aloud two or three times to her retainers:

“It serves her right. God has punished her for her ingratitude.”

Exactly three months after Sofya Ivanovna’s death the general’s widow suddenly appeared in our town, and went straight to Fyodor Pavlovitch’s house. She spent only half an hour in the town but she did a great deal. It was evening. Fyodor Pavlovitch, whom she had not seen for those eight years, came in to her drunk. The story is that instantly upon seeing him, without any sort of explanation, she gave him two good, resounding slaps on the face, seized him by a tuft of hair, and shook him three times up and down. Then, without a word, she went straight to the cottage to the two boys. Seeing, at the first glance, that they were unwashed and in dirty linen, she promptly gave Grigory, too, a box on the ear, and announcing that she

would carry off both the children she wrapped them just as they were in a rug, put them in the carriage, and drove off to her own town. Grigory accepted the blow like a devoted slave, without a word, and when he escorted the old lady to her carriage he made her a low bow and pronounced impressively that, “God would repay her for orphans.”

“You are a blockhead all the same,” the old lady shouted to him as she drove away.

Fyodor Pavlovitch, thinking it over, decided that it was a good thing, and did not refuse the general’s widow his formal consent to any proposition in regard to his children’s education. As for the slaps she had given him, he drove all over the town telling the story.

It happened that the old lady died soon after this, but she left the boys in her will a thousand roubles each “for their instruction, and so that all be spent on them exclusively, with the condition that it be so portioned out as to last till they are twenty-one, for it is more than adequate provision for such children. If other people think fit to throw away their money, let them.” I have not read the will myself, but I heard there was something queer of the sort, very whimsically expressed. The principal heir, Yefim Petrovitch Polenov, the Marshal of Nobility of the province, turned out, however, to be an honest man. Writing to Fyodor Pavlovitch, and discerning at once that he could extract nothing from him for his children’s education (though the latter never directly refused but only procrastinated as he always did in such cases, and was, indeed, at times effusively sentimental), Yefim Petrovitch took a personal interest in the orphans. He became especially fond of the younger, Alexey, who lived for a long while as one of his family. I beg the reader to note this from the beginning. And to Yefim Petrovitch, a man of a generosity and humanity rarely to be met with, the young people were more indebted for their education and bringing up than to anyone. He kept the two thousand roubles left to them by the general’s widow intact, so that by the time they came of age their portions had been doubled by the accumulation of interest. He educated them both at his own expense, and certainly spent far more than a thousand roubles upon each of them. I won’t enter into a detailed account of their boyhood and youth, but will only mention a few of the most important events. Of the elder, Ivan, I will only say that he grew into a somewhat morose and reserved, though far from timid boy. At ten years old he had realised that they were living not in their own home but on other people’s charity, and that their father was a

man of whom it was disgraceful to speak. This boy began very early, almost in his infancy (so they say at least), to show a brilliant and unusual aptitude for learning. I don't know precisely why, but he left the family of Yefim Petrovitch when he was hardly thirteen, entering a Moscow gymnasium and boarding with an experienced and celebrated teacher, an old friend of Yefim Petrovitch. Ivan used to declare afterwards that this was all due to the "ardour for good works" of Yefim Petrovitch, who was captivated by the idea that the boy's genius should be trained by a teacher of genius. But neither Yefim Petrovitch nor this teacher was living when the young man finished at the gymnasium and entered the university. As Yefim Petrovitch had made no provision for the payment of the tyrannical old lady's legacy, which had grown from one thousand to two, it was delayed, owing to formalities inevitable in Russia, and the young man was in great straits for the first two years at the university, as he was forced to keep himself all the time he was studying. It must be noted that he did not even attempt to communicate with his father, perhaps from pride, from contempt for him, or perhaps from his cool common sense, which told him that from such a father he would get no real assistance. However that may have been, the young man was by no means despondent and succeeded in getting work, at first giving sixpenny lessons and afterwards getting paragraphs on street incidents into the newspapers under the signature of "Eye-Witness." These paragraphs, it was said, were so interesting and piquant that they were soon taken. This alone showed the young man's practical and intellectual superiority over the masses of needy and unfortunate students of both sexes who hang about the offices of the newspapers and journals, unable to think of anything better than everlasting entreaties for copying and translations from the French. Having once got into touch with the editors Ivan Fyodorovitch always kept up his connection with them, and in his latter years at the university he published brilliant reviews of books upon various special subjects, so that he became well known in literary circles. But only in his last year he suddenly succeeded in attracting the attention of a far wider circle of readers, so that a great many people noticed and remembered him. It was rather a curious incident. When he had just left the university and was preparing to go abroad upon his two thousand roubles, Ivan Fyodorovitch published in one of the more important journals a strange article, which attracted general notice, on a subject of which he might have been supposed to know nothing, as he was a student of natural

science. The article dealt with a subject which was being debated everywhere at the time — the position of the ecclesiastical courts. After discussing several opinions on the subject he went on to explain his own view. What was most striking about the article was its tone, and its unexpected conclusion. Many of the Church party regarded him unquestioningly as on their side. And yet not only the secularists but even atheists joined them in their applause. Finally some sagacious persons opined that the article was nothing but an impudent satirical burlesque. I mention this incident particularly because this article penetrated into the famous monastery in our neighbourhood, where the inmates, being particularly interested in question of the ecclesiastical courts, were completely bewildered by it. Learning the author's name, they were interested in his being a native of the town and the son of "that Fyodor Pavlovitch." And just then it was that the author himself made his appearance among us.

Why Ivan Fyodorovitch had come amongst us I remember asking myself at the time with a certain uneasiness. This fateful visit, which was the first step leading to so many consequences, I never fully explained to myself. It seemed strange on the face of it that a young man so learned, so proud, and apparently so cautious, should suddenly visit such an infamous house and a father who had ignored him all his life, hardly knew him, never thought of him, and would not under any circumstances have given him money, though he was always afraid that his sons Ivan and Alexey would also come to ask him for it. And here the young man was staying in the house of such a father, had been living with him for two months, and they were on the best possible terms. This last fact was a special cause of wonder to many others as well as to me. Pyotr Alexandrovitch Miusov, of whom we have spoken already, the cousin of Fyodor Pavlovitch's first wife, happened to be in the neighbourhood again on a visit to his estate. He had come from Paris, which was his permanent home. I remember that he was more surprised than anyone when he made the acquaintance of the young man, who interested him extremely, and with whom he sometimes argued and not without inner pang compared himself in acquirements.

"He is proud," he used to say, "he will never be in want of pence; he has got money enough to go abroad now. What does he want here? Everyone can see that he hasn't come for money, for his father would never give him

any. He has no taste for drink and dissipation, and yet his father can’t do without him. They get on so well together!”

That was the truth; the young man had an unmistakable influence over his father, who positively appeared to be behaving more decently and even seemed at times ready to obey his son, though often extremely and even spitefully perverse.

It was only later that we learned that Ivan had come partly at the request of, and in the interests of, his elder brother, Dmitri, whom he saw for the first time on this very visit, though he had before leaving Moscow been in correspondence with him about an important matter of more concern to Dmitri than himself. What that business was the reader will learn fully in due time. Yet even when I did know of this special circumstance I still felt Ivan Fyodorovitch to be an enigmatic figure, and thought his visit rather mysterious.

I may add that Ivan appeared at the time in the light of a mediator between his father and his elder brother Dmitri, who was in open quarrel with his father and even planning to bring an action against him.

The family, I repeat, was now united for the first time, and some of its members met for the first time in their lives. The younger brother, Alexey, had been a year already among us, having been the first of the three to arrive. It is of that brother Alexey I find it most difficult to speak in this introduction. Yet I must give some preliminary account of him, if only to explain one queer fact, which is that I have to introduce my hero to the reader wearing the cassock of a novice. Yes, he had been for the last year in our monastery, and seemed willing to be cloistered there for the rest of his life.

CHAPTER 4

The Third Son, Alyosha

HE was only twenty, his brother Ivan was in his twenty-fourth year at the time, while their elder brother Dmitri was twenty-seven. First of all, I must explain that this young man, Alyosha, was not a fanatic, and, in my opinion at least, was not even a mystic. I may as well give my full opinion from the beginning. He was simply an early lover of humanity, and that he adopted the monastic life was simply because at that time it struck him, so to say, as the ideal escape for his soul struggling from the darkness of worldly wickedness to the light of love. And the reason this life struck him in this way was that he found in it at that time, as he thought an extrordinary being, our celebrated elder, Zossima, to whom he became attached with all the warm first love of his ardent heart. But I do not dispute that he was very strange even at that time, and had been so indeed from his cradle. I have mentioned already, by the way, that though he lost his mother in his fourth year he remembered her all his life her face, her caresses, “as though she stood living before me.” Such memories may persist, as everyone knows, from an even earlier age, even from two years old, but scarcely standing out through a whole lifetime like spots of light out of darkness, like a corner torn out of a huge picture, which has all faded and disappeared except that fragment. That is how it was with him. He remembered one still summer evening, an open window, the slanting rays of the setting sun (that he recalled most vividly of all); in a corner of the room the holy image, before it a lighted lamp, and on her knees before the image his mother, sobbing hysterically with cries and moans, snatching him up in both arms, squeezing him close till it hurt, and praying for him to the Mother of God, holding him out in both arms to the image as though to put him under the Mother’s protection... and suddenly a nurse runs in and snatches him from her in terror. That was the picture! And Alyosha remembered his mother’s face at that minute. He used to say that it was frenzied but beautiful as he remembered. But he rarely cared to speak of this memory to anyone. In his childhood and youth he was by no means expansive, and talked little indeed, but not from shyness or a sullen unsociability; quite the contrary, from something different, from a sort of inner preoccupation entirely

personal and unconcerned with other people, but so important to him that he seemed, as it were, to forget others on account of it. But he was fond of people: he seemed throughout his life to put implicit trust in people: yet no one ever looked on him as a simpleton or naive person. There was something about him which made one feel at once (and it was so all his life afterwards) that he did not care to be a judge of others that he would never take it upon himself to criticise and would never condemn anyone for anything. He seemed, indeed, to accept everything without the least condemnation though often grieving bitterly: and this was so much so that no one could surprise or frighten him even in his earliest youth. Coming at twenty to his father's house, which was a very sink of filthy debauchery, he, chaste and pure as he was, simply withdrew in silence when to look on was unbearable, but without the slightest sign of contempt or condemnation. His father, who had once been in a dependent position, and so was sensitive and ready to take offence, met him at first with distrust and sullenness. "He does not say much," he used to say, "and thinks the more." But soon, within a fortnight indeed, he took to embracing him and kissing him terribly often, with drunken tears, with sottish sentimentality, yet he evidently felt a real and deep affection for him, such as he had never been capable of feeling for anyone before.

Everyone, indeed, loved this young man wherever he went, and it was so from his earliest childhood. When he entered the household of his patron and benefactor, Yefim Petrovitch Polenov, he gained the hearts of all the family, so that they looked on him quite as their own child. Yet he entered the house at such a tender age that he could not have acted from design nor artfulness in winning affection. So that the gift of making himself loved directly and unconsciously was inherent in him, in his very nature, so to speak. It was the same at school, though he seemed to be just one of those children who are distrusted, sometimes ridiculed, and even disliked by their schoolfellows. He was dreamy, for instance, and rather solitary. >From his earliest childhood he was fond of creeping into a corner to read, and yet he was a general favourite all the while he was at school. He was rarely playful or merry, but anyone could see at the first glance that this was not from any sullenness. On the contrary he was bright and good-tempered. He never tried to show off among his schoolfellows. Perhaps because of this, he was never afraid of anyone, yet the boys immediately understood that he was not proud of his fearlessness and seemed to be unaware that he was bold

and courageous. He never resented an insult. It would happen that an hour after the offence he would address the offender or answer some question with as trustful and candid an expression as though nothing had happened between them. And it was not that he seemed to have forgotten or intentionally forgiven the affront, but simply that he did not regard it as an affront, and this completely conquered and captivated the boys. He had one characteristic which made all his schoolfellows from the bottom class to the top want to mock at him, not from malice but because it amused them. This characteristic was a wild fanatical modesty and chastity. He could not bear to hear certain words and certain conversations about women. There are "certain" words and conversations unhappily impossible to eradicate in schools. Boys pure in mind and heart, almost children, are fond of talking in school among themselves, and even aloud, of things, pictures, and images of which even soldiers would sometimes hesitate to speak. More than that, much that soldiers have no knowledge or conception of is familiar to quite young children of our intellectual and higher classes. There is no moral depravity, no real corrupt inner cynicism in it, but there is the appearance of it, and it is often looked upon among them as something refined, subtle, daring, and worthy of imitation. Seeing that Alyosha Karamazov put his fingers in his ears when they talked of "that," they used sometimes to crowd round him, pull his hands away, and shout nastiness into both ears, while he struggled, slipped to the floor, tried to hide himself without uttering one word of abuse, enduring their insults in silence. But at last they left him alone and gave up taunting him with being a "regular girl," and what's more they looked upon it with compassion as a weakness. He was always one of the best in the class but was never first.

At the time of Yefim Petrovitch's death Alyosha had two more years to complete at the provincial gymnasium. The inconsolable widow went almost immediately after his death for a long visit to Italy with her whole family, which consisted only of women and girls. Alyosha went to live in the house of two distant relations of Yefim Petrovitch, ladies whom he had never seen before. On what terms she lived with them he did not know himself. It was very characteristic of him, indeed, that he never cared at whose expense he was living. In that respect he was a striking contrast to his elder brother Ivan, who struggled with poverty for his first two years in the university, maintained himself by his own efforts, and had from childhood been bitterly conscious of living at the expense of his benefactor.

But this strange trait in Alyosha's character must not, I think, criticised too severely, for at the slightest acquaintance with him anyone would have perceived that Alyosha was one of those youths, almost of the type of religious enthusiast, who, if they were suddenly to come into possession of a large fortune, would not hesitate to give it away for the asking, either for good works or perhaps to a clever rogue. In general he seemed scarcely to know the value of money, not, of course, in a literal sense. When he was given pocket-money, which he never asked for, he was either terribly careless of it so that it was gone in a moment, or he kept it for weeks together, not knowing what to do with it.

In later years Pyotr Alexandrovitch Miusov, a man very sensitive on the score of money and bourgeois honesty, pronounced the following judgment, after getting to know Alyosha:

"Here is perhaps the one man in the world whom you might leave alone without a penny, in the centre of an unknown town of a million inhabitants, and he would not come to harm, he would not die of cold and hunger, for he would be fed and sheltered at once; and if he were not, he would find a shelter for himself, and it would cost him no effort or humiliation. And to shelter him would be no burden, but, on the contrary, would probably be looked on as a pleasure."

He did not finish his studies at the gymnasium. A year before the end of the course he suddenly announced to the ladies that he was going to see his father about a plan which had occurred to him. They were sorry and unwilling to let him go. The journey was not an expensive one, and the ladies would not let him pawn his watch, a parting present from his benefactor's family. They provided him liberally with money and even fitted him out with new clothes and linen. But he returned half the money they gave him, saying that he intended to go third class. On his arrival in the town he made no answer to his father's first inquiry why he had come before completing his studies, and seemed, so they say, unusually thoughtful. It soon became apparent that he was looking for his mother's tomb. He practically acknowledged at the time that that was the only object of his visit. But it can hardly have been the whole reason of it. It is more probable that he himself did not understand and could not explain what had suddenly arisen in his soul, and drawn him irresistibly into a new, unknown, but inevitable path. Fyodor Pavlovitch could not show him where his second wife was buried, for he had never visited her grave since he had

thrown earth upon her coffin, and in the course of years had entirely forgotten where she was buried.

Fyodor Pavlovitch, by the way, had for some time previously not been living in our town. Three or four years after his wife's death he had gone to the south of Russia and finally turned up in Odessa, where he spent several years. He made the acquaintance at first, in his own words, "of a lot of low Jews, Jewesses, and Jewkins," and ended by being received by "Jews high and low alike." It may be presumed that at this period he developed a peculiar faculty for making and hoarding money. He finally returned to our town only three years before Alyosha's arrival. His former acquaintances found him looking terribly aged, although he was by no means an old man. He behaved not exactly with more dignity but with more effrontery. The former buffoon showed an insolent propensity for making buffoons of others. His depravity with women was not as it used to be, but even more revolting. In a short time he opened a great number of new taverns in the district. It was evident that he had perhaps a hundred thousand roubles or not much less. Many of the inhabitants of the town and district were soon in his debt, and, of course, had given good security. Of late, too, he looked somehow bloated and seemed more irresponsible, more uneven, had sunk into a sort of incoherence, used to begin one thing and go on with another, as though he were letting himself go altogether. He was more and more frequently drunk. And, if it had not been for the same servant Grigory, who by that time had aged considerably too, and used to look after him sometimes almost like a tutor, Fyodor Pavlovitch might have got into terrible scrapes. Alyosha's arrival seemed to affect even his moral side, as though something had awakened in this prematurely old man which had long been dead in his soul.

"Do you know," he used often to say, looking at Alyosha, "that you are like her, 'the crazy woman'" — that was what he used to call his dead wife, Alyosha's mother. Grigory it was who pointed out the "crazy woman's" grave to Alyosha. He took him to our town cemetery and showed him in a remote corner a cast-iron tombstone, cheap but decently kept, on which were inscribed the name and age of the deceased and the date of her death, and below a four-lined verse, such as are commonly used on old-fashioned middle-class tombs. To Alyosha's amazement this tomb turned out to be Grigory's doing. He had put it up on the poor "crazy woman's" grave at his own expense, after Fyodor Pavlovitch, whom he had often pestered about

the grave, had gone to Odessa, abandoning the grave and all his memories. Alyosha showed no particular emotion at the sight of his mother's grave. He only listened to Grigory's minute and solemn account of the erection of the tomb; he stood with bowed head and walked away without uttering a word. It was perhaps a year before he visited the cemetery again. But this little episode was not without an influence upon Fyodor Pavlovitch — and a very original one. He suddenly took a thousand roubles to our monastery to pay for requiems for the soul of his wife; but not for the second, Alyosha's mother, the "crazy woman," but for the first, Adelaida Ivanovna, who used to thrash him. In the evening of the same day he got drunk and abused the monks to Alyosha. He himself was far from being religious; he had probably never put a penny candle before the image of a saint. Strange impulses of sudden feeling and sudden thought are common in such types.

I have mentioned already that he looked bloated. His countenance at this time bore traces of something that testified unmistakably to the life he had led. Besides the long fleshy bags under his little, always insolent, suspicious, and ironical eyes; besides the multitude of deep wrinkles in his little fat face, the Adam's apple hung below his sharp chin like a great, fleshy goitre, which gave him a peculiar, repulsive, sensual appearance; add to that a long rapacious mouth with full lips, between which could be seen little stumps of black decayed teeth. He slobbered every time he began to speak. He was fond indeed of making fun of his own face, though, I believe, he was well satisfied with it. He used particularly to point to his nose, which was not very large, but very delicate and conspicuously aquiline. "A regular Roman nose," he used to say, "with my goitre I've quite the countenance of an ancient Roman patrician of the decadent period." He seemed proud of it.

Not long after visiting his mother's grave Alyosha suddenly announced that he wanted to enter the monastery, and that the monks were willing to receive him as a novice. He explained that this was his strong desire, and that he was solemnly asking his consent as his father. The old man knew that the elder Zossima, who was living in the monastery hermitage, had made a special impression upon his "gentle boy."

"That is the most honest monk among them, of course," he observed, after listening in thoughtful silence to Alyosha, and seeming scarcely surprised at his request. "H'm!... So that's where you want to be, my gentle boy?"

He was half drunk, and suddenly he grinned his slow half-drunken grin, which was not without a certain cunning and tipsy slyness. “H’m!... I had a presentiment that you would end in something like this. Would you believe it? You were making straight for it. Well, to be sure you have your own two thousand. That’s a dowry for you. And I’ll never desert you, my angel. And I’ll pay what’s wanted for you there, if they ask for it. But, of course, if they don’t ask, why should we worry them? What do you say? You know, you spend money like a canary, two grains a week. H’m!... Do you know that near one monastery there’s a place outside the town where every baby knows there are none but ‘the monks’ wives’ living, as they are called. Thirty women, I believe. I have been there myself. You know, it’s interesting in its way, of course, as a variety. The worst of it is it’s awfully Russian. There are no French women there. Of course, they could get them fast enough, they have plenty of money. If they get to hear of it they’ll come along. Well, there’s nothing of that sort here, no ‘monks’ wives,’ and two hundred monks. They’re honest. They keep the fasts. I admit it.... H’m.... So you want to be a monk? And do you know I’m sorry to lose you, Alyosha; would you believe it, I’ve really grown fond of you? Well, it’s a good opportunity. You’ll pray for us sinners; we have sinned too much here. I’ve always been thinking who would pray for me, and whether there’s anyone in the world to do it. My dear boy, I’m awfully stupid about that. You wouldn’t believe it. Awfully. You see, however stupid I am about it, I keep thinking, I keep thinking — from time to time, of course, not all the while. It’s impossible, I think, for the devils to forget to drag me down to hell with their hooks when I die. Then I wonder — hooks? Where would they get them? What of? Iron hooks? Where do they forge them? Have they a foundry there of some sort? The monks in the monastery probably believe that there’s a ceiling in hell, for instance. Now I’m ready to believe in hell, but without a ceiling. It makes it more refined, more enlightened, more Lutheran that is. And, after all, what does it matter whether it has a ceiling or hasn’t? But, do you know, there’s a damnable question involved in it? If there’s no ceiling there can be no hooks, and if there are no hooks it all breaks down, which is unlikely again, for then there would be none to drag me down to hell, and if they don’t drag me down what justice is there in the world? Il faudrait les inventer,* those hooks, on purpose for me alone, for, if you only knew, Alyosha, what a black-guard I am.”

* It would be neccessary to invent them.

“But there are no hooks there,” said Alyosha, looking gently and seriously at his father.

“Yes, yes, only the shadows of hooks. I know, I know. That’s how a Frenchman described hell: ‘J’ai vu l’ombre d’un cocher qui avec l’ombre d’une brosse frottait l’ombre d’une carrosse.’* How do you know there are no hooks, darling? When you’ve lived with the monks you’ll sing a different tune. But go and get at the truth there, and then come and tell me. Anyway it’s easier going to the other world if one knows what there is there. Besides, it will be more seemly for you with the monks than here with me, with a drunken old man and young harlots... though you’re like an angel, nothing touches you. And I dare say nothing will touch you there. That’s why I let you go, because I hope for that. You’ve got all your wits about you. You will burn and you will burn out; you will be healed and come back again. And I will wait for you. I feel that you’re the only creature in the world who has not condemned me. My dear boy, I feel it, you know. I can’t help feeling it.”

* I’ve seen the shadow of a coachman rubbing the shadow of a coach with the shadow of a brush.

And he even began blubbering. He was sentimental. He was wicked and sentimental.

CHAPTER 5

Elders

SOME of my readers may imagine that my young man was a sickly, ecstatic, poorly developed creature, a pale, consumptive dreamer. On the contrary, Alyosha was at this time a well-grown, red-cheeked, clear-eyed lad of nineteen, radiant with health. He was very handsome, too, graceful, moderately tall, with hair of a dark brown, with a regular, rather long, oval-shaped face, and wide-set dark grey, shining eyes; he was very thoughtful, and apparently very serene. I shall be told, perhaps, that red cheeks are not incompatible with fanaticism and mysticism; but I fancy that Alyosha was more of a realist than anyone. Oh! no doubt, in the monastery he fully believed in miracles, but, to my thinking, miracles are never a stumbling-block to the realist. It is not miracles that dispose realists to belief. The genuine realist, if he is an unbeliever, will always find strength and ability to disbelieve in the miraculous, and if he is confronted with a miracle as an irrefutable fact he would rather disbelieve his own senses than admit the fact. Even if he admits it, he admits it as a fact of nature till then unrecognised by him. Faith does not, in the realist, spring from the miracle but the miracle from faith. If the realist once believes, then he is bound by his very realism to admit the miraculous also. The Apostle Thomas said that he would not believe till he saw, but when he did see he said, “My Lord and my God!” Was it the miracle forced him to believe? Most likely not, but he believed solely because he desired to believe and possibly he fully believed in his secret heart even when he said, “I do not believe till I see.”

I shall be told, perhaps, that Alyosha was stupid, undeveloped, had not finished his studies, and so on. That he did not finish his studies is true, but to say that he was stupid or dull would be a great injustice. I’ll simply repeat what I have said above. He entered upon this path only because, at that time, it alone struck his imagination and presented itself to him as offering an ideal means of escape for his soul from darkness to light. Add to that that he was to some extent a youth of our last epoch — that is, honest in nature, desiring the truth, seeking for it and believing in it, and seeking to serve it at once with all the strength of his soul, seeking for immediate action, and ready to sacrifice everything, life itself, for it. Though these

young men unhappily fail to understand that the sacrifice of life is, in many cases, the easiest of all sacrifices, and that to sacrifice, for instance, five or six years of their seething youth to hard and tedious study, if only to multiply tenfold their powers of serving the truth and the cause they have set before them as their goal such a sacrifice is utterly beyond the strength of many of them. The path Alyosha chose was a path going in the opposite direction, but he chose it with the same thirst for swift achievement. As soon as he reflected seriously he was convinced of the existence of God and immortality, and at once he instinctively said to himself: “I want to live for immortality, and I will accept no compromise.” In the same way, if he had decided that God and immortality did not exist, he would at once have become an atheist and a socialist. For socialism is not merely the labour question, it is before all things the atheistic question, the question of the form taken by atheism to-day, the question of the tower of Babel built without God, not to mount to heaven from earth but to set up heaven on earth. Alyosha would have found it strange and impossible to go on living as before. It is written: “Give all that thou hast to the poor and follow Me, if thou wouldst be perfect.”

Alyosha said to himself: “I can’t give two roubles instead of ‘all,’ and only go to mass instead of ‘following Him.’” Perhaps his memories of childhood brought back our monastery, to which his mother may have taken him to mass. Perhaps the slanting sunlight and the holy image to which his poor “crazy” mother had held him up still acted upon his imagination. Brooding on these things he may have come to us perhaps only to see whether here he could sacrifice all or only “two roubles,” and in the monastery he met this elder. I must digress to explain what an “elder” is in Russian monasteries, and I am sorry that I do not feel very competent to do so. I will try, however, to give a superficial account of it in a few words. Authorities on the subject assert that the institution of “elders” is of recent date, not more than a hundred years old in our monasteries, though in the orthodox East, especially in Sinai and Athos, it has existed over a thousand years. It is maintained that it existed in ancient times in Russia also, but through the calamities which overtook Russia — the Tartars, civil war, the interruption of relations with the East after the destruction of Constantinople — this institution fell into oblivion. It was revived among us towards the end of last century by one of the great “ascetics,” as they called him, Paissy Velitchkovsky, and his disciples. But to this day it exists in few

monasteries only, and has sometimes been almost persecuted as an innovation in Russia. It flourished especially in the celebrated Kozelski Optin Monastery. When and how it was introduced into our monastery I cannot say. There had already been three such elders and Zossima was the last of them. But he was almost dying of weakness and disease, and they had no one to take his place. The question for our monastery was an important one, for it had not been distinguished by anything in particular till then: they had neither relics of saints, nor wonder — working ikons, nor glorious traditions, nor historical exploits. It had flourished and been glorious all over Russia through its elders, to see and hear whom pilgrims had flocked for thousands of miles from all parts.

What was such an elder? An elder was one who took your soul, your will, into his soul and his will. When you choose an elder, you renounce your own will and yield it to him in complete submission, complete self-abnegation. This novitiate, this terrible school of abnegation, is undertaken voluntarily, in the hope of self-conquest, of self-mastery, in order, after a life of obedience, to attain perfect freedom, that is, from self; to escape the lot of those who have lived their whole life without finding their true selves in themselves. This institution of elders is not founded on theory, but was established in the East from the practice of a thousand years. The obligations due to an elder are not the ordinary “obedience” which has always existed in our Russian monasteries. The obligation involves confession to the elder by all who have submitted themselves to him, and to the indissoluble bond between him and them.

The story is told, for instance, that in the early days of Christianity one such novice, failing to fulfil some command laid upon him by his elder, left his monastery in Syria and went to Egypt. There, after great exploits, he was found worthy at last to suffer torture and a martyr’s death for the faith. When the Church, regarding him as a saint, was burying him, suddenly, at the deacon’s exhortation, “Depart all ye unbaptised,” the coffin containing the martyr’s body left its place and was cast forth from the church, and this took place three times. And only at last they learnt that this holy man had broken his vow of obedience and left his elder, and, therefore, could not be forgiven without the elder’s absolution in spite of his great deeds. Only after this could the funeral take place. This, of course, is only an old legend. But here is a recent instance.

A monk was suddenly commanded by his elder to quit Athos, which he loved as a sacred place and a haven of refuge, and to go first to Jerusalem to do homage to the Holy Places and then to go to the north to Siberia: “There is the place for thee and not here.” The monk, overwhelmed with sorrow, went to the Oecumenical Patriarch at Constantinople and besought him to release him from his obedience. But the Patriarch replied that not only was he unable to release him, but there was not and could not be on earth a power which could release him except the elder who had himself laid that duty upon him. In this way the elders are endowed in certain cases with unbounded and inexplicable authority. That is why in many of our monasteries the institution was at first resisted almost to persecution. Meantime the elders immediately began to be highly esteemed among the people. Masses of the ignorant people as well as of distinction flocked, for instance, to the elders of our monastery to confess their doubts, their sins, and their sufferings, and ask for counsel and admonition. Seeing this, the opponents of the elders declared that the sacrament of confession was being arbitrarily and frivolously degraded, though the continual opening of the heart to the elder by the monk or the layman had nothing of the character of the sacrament. In the end, however, the institution of elders has been retained and is becoming established in Russian monasteries. It is true, perhaps, that this instrument which had stood the test of a thousand years for the moral regeneration of a man from slavery to freedom and to moral perfectibility may be a two-edged weapon and it may lead some not to humility and complete self-control but to the most Satanic pride, that is, to bondage and not to freedom.

The elder Zossima was sixty-five. He came of a family of landowners, had been in the army in early youth, and served in the Caucasus as an officer. He had, no doubt, impressed Alyosha by some peculiar quality of his soul. Alyosha lived in the cell of the elder, who was very fond of him and let him wait upon him. It must be noted that Alyosha was bound by no obligation and could go where he pleased and be absent for whole days. Though he wore the monastic dress it was voluntarily, not to be different from others. No doubt he liked to do so. Possibly his youthful imagination was deeply stirred by the power and fame of his elder. It was said that so many people had for years past come to confess their sins to Father Zossima and to entreat him for words of advice and healing, that he had acquired the

keenest intuition and could tell from an unknown face what a new-comer wanted, and what was the suffering on his conscience. He sometimes astounded and almost alarmed his visitors by his knowledge of their secrets before they had spoken a word.

Alyosha noticed that many, almost all, went in to the elder for the first time with apprehension and uneasiness, but came out with bright and happy faces. Alyosha was particularly struck by the fact that Father Zossima was not at all stern. On the contrary, he was always almost gay. The monks used to say that he was more drawn to those who were more sinful, and the greater the sinner the more he loved him. There were, no doubt, up to the end of his life, among the monks some who hated and envied him, but they were few in number and they were silent, though among them were some of great dignity in the monastery, one, for instance, of the older monks distinguished for his strict keeping of fasts and vows of silence. But the majority were on Father Zossima's side and very many of them loved him with all their hearts, warmly and sincerely. Some were almost fanatically devoted to him, and declared, though not quite aloud, that he was a saint, that there could be no doubt of it, and, seeing that his end was near, they anticipated miracles and great glory to the monastery in the immediate future from his relics. Alyosha had unquestioning faith in the miraculous power of the elder, just as he had unquestioning faith in the story of the coffin that flew out of the church. He saw many who came with sick children or relatives and besought the elder to lay hands on them and to pray over them, return shortly after — some the next day — and, falling in tears at the elder's feet, thank him for healing their sick.

Whether they had really been healed or were simply better in the natural course of the disease was a question which did not exist for Alyosha, for he fully believed in the spiritual power of his teacher and rejoiced in his fame, in his glory, as though it were his own triumph. His heart throbbed, and he beamed, as it were, all over when the elder came out to the gates of the hermitage into the waiting crowd of pilgrims of the humbler class who had flocked from all parts of Russia on purpose to see the elder and obtain his blessing. They fell down before him, wept, kissed his feet, kissed the earth on which he stood, and wailed, while the women held up their children to him and brought him the sick "possessed with devils." The elder spoke to them, read a brief prayer over them, blessed them, and dismissed them. Of late he had become so weak through attacks of illness that he was

sometimes unable to leave his cell, and the pilgrims waited for him to come out for several days. Alyosha did not wonder why they loved him so, why they fell down before him and wept with emotion merely at seeing his face. Oh! he understood that for the humble soul of the Russian peasant, worn out by grief and toil, and still more by the everlasting injustice and everlasting sin, his own and the world's, it was the greatest need and comfort to find someone or something holy to fall down before and worship.

"Among us there is sin, injustice, and temptation, but yet, somewhere on earth there is someone holy and exalted. He has the truth; he knows the truth; so it is not dead upon the earth; so it will come one day to us, too, and rule over all the earth according to the promise."

Alyosha knew that this was just how the people felt and even reasoned. He understood it, but that the elder Zossima was this saint and custodian of God's truth — of that he had no more doubt than the weeping peasants and the sick women who held out their children to the elder. The conviction that after his death the elder would bring extraordinary glory to the monastery was even stronger in Alyosha than in anyone there, and, of late, a kind of deep flame of inner ecstasy burnt more and more strongly in his heart. He was not at all troubled at this elder's standing as a solitary example before him.

"No matter. He is holy. He carries in his heart the secret of renewal for all: that power which will, at last, establish truth on the earth, and all men will be holy and love one another, and there will be no more rich nor poor, no exalted nor humbled, but all will be as the children of God, and the true Kingdom of Christ will come." That was the dream in Alyosha's heart.

The arrival of his two brothers, whom he had not known till then, seemed to make a great impression on Alyosha. He more quickly made friends with his half-brother Dmitri (though he arrived later) than with his own brother Ivan. He was extremely interested in his brother Ivan, but when the latter had been two months in the town, though they had met fairly often, they were still not intimate. Alyosha was naturally silent, and he seemed to be expecting something, ashamed about something, while his brother Ivan, though Alyosha noticed at first that he looked long and curiously at him, seemed soon to have left off thinking of him. Alyosha noticed it with some embarrassment. He ascribed his brother's indifference at first to the disparity of their age and education. But he also wondered whether the absence of curiosity and sympathy in Ivan might be due to

some other cause entirely unknown to him. He kept fancying that Ivan was absorbed in something — something inward and important — that he was striving towards some goal, perhaps very hard to attain, and that that was why he had no thought for him. Alyosha wondered, too, whether there was not some contempt on the part of the learned atheist for him — a foolish novice. He knew for certain that his brother was an atheist. He could not take offence at this contempt, if it existed; yet, with an uneasy embarrassment which he did not himself understand, he waited for his brother to come nearer to him. Dmitri used to speak of Ivan with the deepest respect and with a peculiar earnestness. From him Alyosha learnt all the details of the important affair which had of late formed such a close and remarkable bond between the two elder brothers. Dmitri's enthusiastic references to Ivan were the more striking in Alyosha's eyes since Dmitri was, compared with Ivan, almost uneducated, and the two brothers were such a contrast in personality and character that it would be difficult to find two men more unlike.

It was at this time that the meeting, or, rather gathering of the members of this inharmonious family took place in the cell of the elder who had such an extraordinary influence on Alyosha. The pretext for this gathering was a false one. It was at this time that the discord between Dmitri and his father seemed at its acutest stage and their relations had become insufferably strained. Fyodor Pavlovitch seems to have been the first to suggest, apparently in joke, that they should all meet in Father Zossima's cell, and that, without appealing to his direct intervention, they might more decently come to an understanding under the conciliating influence of the elder's presence. Dmitri, who had never seen the elder, naturally supposed that his father was trying to intimidate him, but, as he secretly blamed himself for his outbursts of temper with his father on several recent occasions, he accepted the challenge. It must be noted that he was not, like Ivan, staying with his father, but living apart at the other end of the town. It happened that Pyotr Alexandrovitch Miusov, who was staying in the district at the time, caught eagerly at the idea. A Liberal of the forties and fifties, a freethinker and atheist, he may have been led on by boredom or the hope of frivolous diversion. He was suddenly seized with the desire to see the monastery and the holy man. As his lawsuit with the monastery still dragged on, he made it the pretext for seeing the Superior, in order to attempt to settle it amicably. A visitor coming with such laudable intentions might be received with more

attention and consideration than if he came from simple curiosity. Influences from within the monastery were brought to bear on the elder, who of late had scarcely left his cell, and had been forced by illness to deny even his ordinary visitors. In the end he consented to see them, and the day was fixed.

“Who has made me a judge over them?” was all he said, smilingly, to Alyosha.

Alyosha was much perturbed when he heard of the proposed visit. Of all the wrangling, quarrelsome party, Dmitri was the only one who could regard the interview seriously. All the others would come from frivolous motives, perhaps insulting to the elder. Alyosha was well aware of that. Ivan and Miusov would come from curiosity, perhaps of the coarsest kind, while his father might be contemplating some piece of buffoonery. Though he said nothing, Alyosha thoroughly understood his father. The boy, I repeat, was far from being so simple as everyone thought him. He awaited the day with a heavy heart. No doubt he was always pondering in his mind how the family discord could be ended. But his chief anxiety concerned the elder. He trembled for him, for his glory, and dreaded any affront to him, especially the refined, courteous irony of Miusov and the supercilious half-utterances of the highly educated Ivan. He even wanted to venture on warning the elder, telling him something about them, but, on second thoughts, said nothing. He only sent word the day before, through a friend, to his brother Dmitri, that he loved him and expected him to keep his promise. Dmitri wondered, for he could not remember what he had promised, but he answered by letter that he would do his utmost not to let himself be provoked “by vileness,” but that, although he had a deep respect for the elder and for his brother Ivan, he was convinced that the meeting was either a trap for him or an unworthy farce.

“Nevertheless I would rather bite out my tongue than be lacking in respect to the sainted man whom you reverence so highly,” he wrote in conclusion. Alyosha was not greatly cheered by the letter.

BOOK II. AN UNFORTUNATE GATHERING

CHAPTER 1

They Arrive at the Monastery

IT was a warm, bright day the end of August. The interview with the elder had been fixed for half-past eleven, immediately after late mass. Our visitors did not take part in the service, but arrived just as it was over. First an elegant open carriage, drawn by two valuable horses, drove up with Miusov and a distant relative of his, a young man of twenty, called Pyotr Fomitch Kalganov. This young man was preparing to enter the university. Miusov with whom he was staying for the time, was trying to persuade him to go abroad to the university of Zurich or Jena. The young man was still undecided. He was thoughtful and absent-minded. He was nice-looking, strongly built, and rather tall. There was a strange fixity in his gaze at times. Like all very absent-minded people he would sometimes stare at a person without seeing him. He was silent and rather awkward, but sometimes, when he was alone with anyone, he became talkative and effusive, and would laugh at anything or nothing. But his animation vanished as quickly as it appeared. He was always well and even elaborately dressed; he had already some independent fortune and expectations of much more. He was a friend of Alyosha's.

In an ancient, jolting, but roomy, hired carriage, with a pair of old pinkish-grey horses, a long way behind Miusov's carriage, came Fyodor Pavlovitch, with his son Ivan. Dmitri was late, though he had been informed of the time the evening before. The visitors left their carriage at the hotel, outside the precincts, and went to the gates of the monastery on foot. Except Fyodor Pavlovitch, more of the party had ever seen the monastery, and Miusov had probably not even been to church for thirty years. He looked about him with curiosity, together with assumed ease. But, except the church and the domestic buildings, though these too were ordinary enough, he found nothing of interest in the interior of the monastery. The last of the worshippers were coming out of the church bareheaded and crossing themselves. Among the humbler people were a few of higher rank — two or three ladies and a very old general. They were all staying at the hotel. Our visitors were at once surrounded by beggars, but none of them gave them anything, except young Kalganov, who took a ten-copeck piece out of his

purse, and, nervous and embarrassed — God knows why! — hurriedly gave it to an old woman, saying: “Divide it equally.” None of his companions made any remark upon it, so that he had no reason to be embarrassed; but, perceiving this, he was even more overcome.

It was strange that their arrival did not seem expected, and that they were not received with special honour, though one of them had recently made a donation of a thousand roubles, while another was a very wealthy and highly cultured landowner, upon whom all in the monastery were in a sense dependent, as a decision of the lawsuit might at any moment put their fishing rights in his hands. Yet no official personage met them.

Miusov looked absent-mindedly at the tombstones round the church, and was on the point of saying that the dead buried here must have paid a pretty penny for the right of lying in this “holy place,” but refrained. His liberal irony was rapidly changing almost into anger.

“Who the devil is there to ask in this imbecile place? We must find out, for time is passing,” he observed suddenly, as though speaking to himself.

All at once there came up a bald-headed, elderly man with ingratiating little eyes, wearing a full, summer overcoat. Lifting his hat, he introduced himself with a honeyed lisp as Maximov, a landowner of Tula. He at once entered into our visitors’ difficulty.

“Father Zossima lives in the hermitage, apart, four hundred paces from the monastery, the other side of the copse.”

“I know it’s the other side of the copse,” observed Fyodor Pavlovitch, “but we don’t remember the way. It is a long time since we’ve been here.”

“This way, by this gate, and straight across the copse... the copse. Come with me, won’t you? I’ll show you. I have to go.... I am going myself. This way, this way.”

They came out of the gate and turned towards the copse. Maximov, a man of sixty, ran rather than walked, turning sideways to stare at them all, with an incredible degree of nervous curiosity. His eyes looked starting out of his head.

“You see, we have come to the elder upon business of our own,” observed Miusov severely. “That personage has granted us an audience, so to speak, and so, though we thank you for showing us the way, we cannot ask you to accompany us.”

“I’ve been there. I’ve been already; un chevalier parfait,” and Maximov snapped his fingers in the air.

“Who is a chevalier?” asked Miusov.

“The elder, the splendid elder, the elder! The honour and glory of the monastery, Zossima. Such an elder!”

But his incoherent talk was cut short by a very pale, wan-looking monk of medium height wearing a monk’s cap, who overtook them. Fyodor Pavlovitch and Miusov stopped.

The monk, with an extremely courteous, profound bow, announced:

“The Father Superior invites all of you gentlemen to dine with him after your visit to the hermitage. At one o’clock, not later. And you also,” he added, addressing Maximov.

“That I certainly will, without fail,” cried Fyodor Pavlovitch, hugely delighted at the invitation. “And, believe me, we’ve all given our word to behave properly here.... And you, Pyotr Alexandrovitch, will you go, too?”

“Yes, of course. What have I come for but to study all the customs here? The only obstacle to me is your company....”

“Yes, Dmitri Fyodorovitch is non-existent as yet.”

“It would be a capital thing if he didn’t turn up. Do you suppose I like all this business, and in your company, too? So we will come to dinner. Thank the Father Superior,” he said to the monk.

“No, it is my duty now to conduct you to the elder,” answered the monk.

“If so I’ll go straight to the Father Superior — to the Father Superior,” babbled Maximov.

“The Father Superior is engaged just now. But as you please—” the monk hesitated.

“Impertinent old man!” Miusov observed aloud, while Maximov ran back to the monastery.

“He’s like von Sohn,” Fyodor Pavlovitch said suddenly.

“Is that all you can think of?... In what way is he like von Sohn? Have you ever seen von Sohn?”

“I’ve seen his portrait. It’s not the features, but something indefinable. He’s a second von Sohn. I can always tell from the physiognomy.”

“Ah, I dare say you are a connoisseur in that. But, look here, Fyodor Pavlovitch, you said just now that we had given our word to behave properly. Remember it. I advise you to control yourself. But, if you begin to play the fool I don’t intend to be associated with you here... You see what a man he is” — he turned to the monk— “I’m afraid to go among decent people with him.” A fine smile, not without a certain slyness, came on to

the pale, bloodless lips of the monk, but he made no reply, and was evidently silent from a sense of his own dignity. Miusov frowned more than ever.

“Oh, devil take them all! An outer show elaborated through centuries, and nothing but charlatanism and nonsense underneath,” flashed through Miusov’s mind.

“Here’s the hermitage. We’ve arrived,” cried Fyodor Pavlovitch. “The gates are shut.”

And he repeatedly made the sign of the cross to the saints painted above and on the sides of the gates.

“When you go to Rome you must do as the Romans do. Here in this hermitage there are twenty-five saints being saved. They look at one another, and eat cabbages. And not one woman goes in at this gate. That’s what is remarkable. And that really is so. But I did hear that the elder receives ladies,” he remarked suddenly to the monk.

“Women of the people are here too now, lying in the portico there waiting. But for ladies of higher rank two rooms have been built adjoining the portico, but outside the precincts you can see the windows — and the elder goes out to them by an inner passage when he is well enough. They are always outside the precincts. There is a Harkov lady, Madame Hohlakov, waiting there now with her sick daughter. Probably he has promised to come out to her, though of late he has been so weak that he has hardly shown himself even to the people.”

“So then there are loopholes, after all, to creep out of the hermitage to the ladies. Don’t suppose, holy father, that I mean any harm. But do you know that at Athos not only the visits of women are not allowed, but no creature of the female sex — no hens, nor turkey hens, nor cows.”

“Fyodor Pavlovitch, I warn you I shall go back and leave you here. They’ll turn you out when I’m gone.”

“But I’m not interfering with you, Pyotr Alexandrovitch. Look,” he cried suddenly, stepping within the precincts, “what a vale of roses they live in!”

Though there were no roses now, there were numbers of rare and beautiful autumn flowers growing wherever there was space for them, and evidently tended by a skilful hand; there were flower-beds round the church, and between the tombs; and the one-storied wooden house where the elder lived was also surrounded with flowers.

“And was it like this in the time of the last elder, Varsonofy? He didn’t care for such elegance. They say he used to jump up and thrash even ladies with a stick,” observed Fyodor Pavlovitch, as he went up the steps.

“The elder Varsonofy did sometimes seem rather strange, but a great deal that’s told is foolishness. He never thrashed anyone,” answered the monk. “Now, gentlemen, if you will wait a minute I will announce you.”

“Fyodor Pavlovitch, for the last time, your compact, do you hear? Behave properly or I will pay you out!” Miusov had time to mutter again.

“I can’t think why you are so agitated,” Fyodor Pavlovitch observed sarcastically. “Are you uneasy about your sins? They say he can tell by one’s eyes what one has come about. And what a lot you think of their opinion! you, a Parisian, and so advanced. I’m surprised at you.”

But Miusov had no time to reply to this sarcasm. They were asked to come in. He walked in, somewhat irritated.

“Now, I know myself, I am annoyed, I shall lose my temper and begin to quarrel — and lower myself and my ideas,” he reflected.

CHAPTER 2

The Old Buffoon

THEY entered the room almost at the same moment that the elder came in from his bedroom. There were already in the cell, awaiting the elder, two monks of the hermitage, one the Father Librarian, and the other Father Paissy, a very learned man, so they said, in delicate health, though not old. There was also a tall young man, who looked about two and twenty, standing in the corner throughout the interview. He had a broad, fresh face, and clever, observant, narrow brown eyes, and was wearing ordinary dress. He was a divinity student, living under the protection of the monastery. His expression was one of unquestioning, but self-respecting, reverence. Being in a subordinate and dependent position, and so not on an equality with the guests, he did not greet them with a bow.

Father Zossima was accompanied by a novice, and by Alyosha. The two monks rose and greeted him with a very deep bow, touching the ground with their fingers; then kissed his hand. Blessing them, the elder replied with as deep a reverence to them, and asked their blessing. The whole ceremony was performed very seriously and with an appearance of feeling, not like an everyday rite. But Miusov fancied that it was all done with intentional impressiveness. He stood in front of the other visitors. He ought — he had reflected upon it the evening before — from simple politeness, since it was the custom here, to have gone up to receive the elder’s blessing, even if he did not kiss his hand. But when he saw all this bowing and kissing on the part of the monks he instantly changed his mind. With dignified gravity he made a rather deep, conventional bow, and moved away to a chair. Fyodor Pavlovitch did the same, mimicking Miusov like an ape. Ivan bowed with great dignity and courtesy, but he too kept his hands at his sides, while Kalganov was so confused that he did not bow at all. The elder let fall the hand raised to bless them, and bowing to them again, asked them all to sit down. The blood rushed to Alyosha’s cheeks. He was ashamed. His forebodings were coming true.

Father Zossima sat down on a very old-fashioned mahogany sofa, covered with leather, and made his visitors sit down in a row along the opposite wall on four mahogany chairs, covered with shabby black leather.

The monks sat, one at the door and the other at the window. The divinity student, the novice, and Alyosha remained standing. The cell was not very large and had a faded look. It contained nothing but the most necessary furniture, of coarse and poor quality. There were two pots of flowers in the window, and a number of holy pictures in the corner. Before one huge ancient ikon of the virgin a lamp was burning. Near it were two other holy pictures in shining settings, and, next them, carved cherubim, china eggs, a Catholic cross of ivory, with a Mater Dolorosa embracing it, and several foreign engravings from the great Italian artists of past centuries. Next to these costly and artistic engravings were several of the roughest Russian prints of saints and martyrs, such as are sold for a few farthings at all the fairs. On the other walls were portraits of Russian bishops, past and present.

Miusov took a cursory glance at all these “conventional” surroundings and bent an intent look upon the elder. He had a high opinion of his own insight a weakness excusable in him as he was fifty, an age at which a clever man of the world of established position can hardly help taking himself rather seriously. At the first moment he did not like Zossima. There was, indeed, something in the elder’s face which many people besides Miusov might not have liked. He was a short, bent, little man, with very weak legs, and though he was only sixty-five, he looked at least ten years older. His face was very thin and covered with a network of fine wrinkles, particularly numerous about his eyes, which were small, light-coloured, quick, and shining like two bright points. He had a sprinkling of grey hair about his temples. His pointed beard was small and scanty, and his lips, which smiled frequently, were as thin as two threads. His nose was not long, but sharp, like a bird’s beak.

“To all appearances a malicious soul, full of petty pride,” thought Miusov. He felt altogether dissatisfied with his position.

A cheap little clock on the wall struck twelve hurriedly, and served to begin the conversation.

“Precisely to our time,” cried Fyodor Pavlovitch, “but no sign of my son, Dmitri. I apologise for him, sacred elder!” (Alyosha shuddered all over at “sacred elder”.) “I am always punctual myself, minute for minute, remembering that punctuality is the courtesy of kings....

“But you are not a king, anyway,” Miusov muttered, losing his self-restraint at once.

“Yes; that’s true. I’m not a king, and, would you believe it, Pyotr Alexandrovitch, I was aware of that myself. But, there! I always say the wrong thing. Your reverence,” he cried, with sudden pathos, “you behold before you a buffoon in earnest! I introduce myself as such. It’s an old habit, alas! And if I sometimes talk nonsense out of place it’s with an object, with the object of amusing people and making myself agreeable. One must be agreeable, mustn’t one? I was seven years ago in a little town where I had business, and I made friends with some merchants there. We went to the captain of police because we had to see him about something, and to ask him to dine with us. He was a tall, fat, fair, sulky man, the most dangerous type in such cases. It’s their liver. I went straight up to him, and with the ease of a man of the world, you know, ‘Mr. Ispravnik,’ said I, ‘be our Napravnik.”What do you mean by Napravnik?’ said he. I saw, at the first half-second, that it had missed fire. He stood there so glum. ‘I wanted to make a joke,’ said I, ‘for the general diversion, as Mr. Napravnik is our well-known Russian orchestra conductor and what we need for the harmony of our undertaking is someone of that sort.’ And I explained my comparison very reasonably, didn’t I? ‘Excuse me,’ said he, ‘I am an Ispravnik, and I do not allow puns to be made on my calling.’ He turned and walked away. I followed him, shouting, ‘Yes, yes, you are an Ispravnik, not a Napravnik.”No,’ he said, ‘since you called me a Napravnik I am one.’ And would you believe it, it ruined our business! And I’m always like that, always like that. Always injuring myself with my politeness. Once, many years ago, I said to an influential person: ‘Your wife is a ticklish lady,’ in an honourable sense, of the moral qualities, so to speak. But he asked me, ‘Why, have you tickled her?’ I thought I’d be polite, so I couldn’t help saying, ‘Yes,’ and he gave me a fine tickling on the spot. Only that happened long ago, so I’m not ashamed to tell the story. I’m always injuring myself like that.”

“You’re doing it now,” muttered Miusov, with disgust.

Father Zossima scrutinised them both in silence.

“Am I? Would you believe it, I was aware of that, too, Pyotr Alexandrovitch, and let tell you, indeed, I foresaw I should as soon as I began to speak. And do you know I foresaw, too, that you’d be the first to remark on it. The minute I see my joke isn’t coming off, your reverence, both my cheeks feel as though they were drawn down to the lower jaw and there is almost a spasm in them. That’s been so since I was young, when I

had to make jokes for my living in noblemen's families. I am an inveterate buffoon, and have been from birth up, your reverence, it's as though it were a craze in me. I dare say it's a devil within me. But only a little one. A more serious one would have chosen another lodging. But not your soul, Pyotr Alexandrovitch; you're not a lodging worth having either. But I do believe — I believe in God, though I have had doubts of late. But now I sit and await words of wisdom. I'm like the philosopher, Diderot, your reverence. Did you ever hear, most Holy Father, how Diderot went to see the Metropolitan Platon, in the time of the Empress Catherine? He went in and said straight out, 'There is no God.' To which the great bishop lifted up his finger and answered, 'The fool has said in his heart there is no God and he fell down at his feet on the spot. 'I believe,' he cried, 'and will be christened.' And so he was. Princess Dashkov was his godmother, and Potyomkin his godfather."

"Fyodor Pavlovitch, this is unbearable! You know you're telling lies and that that stupid anecdote isn't true. Why are you playing the fool?" cried Miusov in a shaking voice.

"I suspected all my life that it wasn't true," Fyodor Pavlovitch cried with conviction. "But I'll tell you the whole truth, gentlemen. Great elder! Forgive me, the last thing about Diderot's christening I made up just now. I never thought of it before. I made it up to add piquancy. I play the fool, Pyotr Alexandrovitch, to make myself agreeable. Though I really don't know myself, sometimes, what I do it for. And as for Diderot, I heard as far as 'the fool hath said in his heart' twenty times from the gentry about here when I was young. I heard your aunt, Pyotr Alexandrovitch, tell the story. They all believe to this day that the infidel Diderot came to dispute about God with the Metropolitan Platon...."

Miusov got up, forgetting himself in his impatience. He was furious, and conscious of being ridiculous.

What was taking place in the cell was really incredible. For forty or fifty years past, from the times of former elders, no visitors had entered that cell without feelings of the profoundest veneration. Almost everyone admitted to the cell felt that a great favour was being shown him. Many remained kneeling during the whole visit. Of those visitors, many had been men of high rank and learning, some even free thinkers, attracted by curiosity, but all without exception had shown the profoundest reverence and delicacy, for here there was no question of money, but only, on the one side love and

kindness, and on the other penitence and eager desire to decide some spiritual problem or crisis. So that such buffoonery amazed and bewildered the spectators, or at least some of them. The monks, with unchanged countenances, waited, with earnest attention, to hear what the elder would say, but seemed on the point of standing up, like Miusov. Alyosha stood, with hanging head, on the verge of tears. What seemed to him strangest of all was that his brother Ivan, on whom alone he had rested his hopes, and who alone had such influence on his father that he could have stopped him, sat now quite unmoved, with downcast eyes, apparently waiting with interest to see how it would end, as though he had nothing to do with it. Alyosha did not dare to look at Rakitin, the divinity student, whom he knew almost intimately. He alone in the monastery knew Rakitin's thoughts.

"Forgive me," began Miusov, addressing Father Zossima, "for perhaps I seem to be taking part in this shameful foolery. I made a mistake in believing that even a man like Fyodor Pavlovitch would understand what was due on a visit to so honoured a personage. I did not suppose I should have to apologise simply for having come with him...."

Pyotr Alexandrovitch could say no more, and was about to leave the room, overwhelmed with confusion.

"Don't distress yourself, I beg." The elder got on to his feeble legs, and taking Pyotr Alexandrovitch by both hands, made him sit down again. "I beg you not to disturb yourself. I particularly beg you to be my guest." And with a bow he went back and sat down again on his little sofa.

"Great elder, speak! Do I annoy you by my vivacity?" Fyodor Pavlovitch cried suddenly, clutching the arms of his chair in both hands, as though ready to leap up from it if the answer were unfavourable.

"I earnestly beg you, too, not to disturb yourself, and not to be uneasy," the elder said impressively. "Do not trouble. Make yourself quite at home. And, above all, do not be so ashamed of yourself, for that is at the root of it all."

"Quite at home? To be my natural self? Oh, that is much too much, but I accept it with grateful joy. Do you know, blessed father, you'd better not invite me to be my natural self. Don't risk it.... I will not go so far as that myself. I warn you for your own sake. Well, the rest is still plunged in the mists of uncertainty, though there are people who'd be pleased to describe me for you. I mean that for you, Pyotr Alexandrovitch. But as for you, holy being, let me tell you, I am brimming over with ecstasy."

He got up, and throwing up his hands, declaimed, “Blessed be the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck — the paps especially. When you said just now, ‘Don’t be so ashamed of yourself, for that is at the root of it all,’ you pierced right through me by that remark, and read me to the core. Indeed, I always feel when I meet people that I am lower than all, and that they all take me for a buffoon. So I say, ‘Let me really play the buffoon. I am not afraid of your opinion, for you are every one of you worse than I am.’ That is why I am a buffoon. It is from shame, great elder, from shame; it’s simply over-sensitiveness that makes me rowdy. If I had only been sure that everyone would accept me as the kindest and wisest of men, oh, Lord, what a good man I should have been then! Teacher!” he fell suddenly on his knees, “what must I do to gain eternal life?”

It was difficult even now to decide whether he was joking or really moved.

Father Zossima, lifting his eyes, looked at him, and said with a smile:

“You have known for a long time what you must do. You have sense enough: don’t give way to drunkenness and incontinence of speech; don’t give way to sensual lust; and, above all, to the love of money. And close your taverns. If you can’t close all, at least two or three. And, above all — don’t lie.”

“You mean about Diderot?”

“No, not about Diderot. Above all, don’t lie to yourself. The man who lies to himself and listens to his own lie comes to such a pass that he cannot distinguish the truth within him, or around him, and so loses all respect for himself and for others. And having no respect he ceases to love, and in order to occupy and distract himself without love he gives way to passions and coarse pleasures, and sinks to bestiality in his vices, all from continual lying to other men and to himself. The man who lies to himself can be more easily offended than anyone. You know it is sometimes very pleasant to take offence, isn’t it? A man may know that nobody has insulted him, but that he has invented the insult for himself, has lied and exaggerated to make it picturesque, has caught at a word and made a mountain out of a molehill — he knows that himself, yet he will be the first to take offence, and will revel in his resentment till he feels great pleasure in it, and so pass to genuine vindictiveness. But get up, sit down, I beg you. All this, too, is deceitful posturing....”

“Blessed man! Give me your hand to kiss.”

Fyodor Pavlovitch skipped up, and imprinted a rapid kiss on the elder’s thin hand. “It is, it is pleasant to take offence. You said that so well, as I never heard it before. Yes, I have been all my life taking offence, to please myself, taking offence on aesthetic grounds, for it is not so much pleasant as distinguished sometimes to be insulted — that you had forgotten, great elder, it is distinguished! I shall make a note of that. But I have been lying, lying positively my whole life long, every day and hour of it. Of a truth, I am a lie, and the father of lies. Though I believe I am not the father of lies. I am getting mixed in my texts. Say, the son of lies, and that will be enough. Only... my angel... may sometimes talk about Diderot! Diderot will do no harm, though sometimes a word will do harm. Great elder, by the way, I was forgetting, though I had been meaning for the last two years to come here on purpose to ask and to find out something. Only do tell Pyotr Alexandrovitch not to interrupt me. Here is my question: Is it true, great Father, that the story is told somewhere in the Lives of the Saints of a holy saint martyred for his faith who, when his head was cut off at last, stood up, picked up his head, and, ‘courteously kissing it,’ walked a long way, carrying it in his hands. Is that true or not, honoured Father?”

“No, it is untrue,” said the elder.

“There is nothing of the kind in all the lives of the saints. What saint do you say the story is told of?” asked the Father Librarian.

“I do not know what saint. I do not know, and can’t tell. I was deceived. I was told the story. I had heard it, and do you know who told it? Pyotr Alexandrovitch Miusov here, was so angry just now about Diderot. He it was who told the story.”

“I have never told it you, I never speak to you at all.”

“It is true you did not tell me, but you told it when I was present. It was three years ago. I mentioned it because by that ridiculous story you shook my faith, Pyotr Alexandrovitch. You knew nothing of it, but I went home with my faith shaken, and I have been getting more and more shaken ever since. Yes, Pyotr Alexandrovitch, you were the cause of a great fall. That was not a Diderot!

Fyodor Pavlovitch got excited and pathetic, though it was perfectly clear to everyone by now that he was playing a part again. Yet Miusov was stung by his words.

“What nonsense, and it is all nonsense,” he muttered. “I may really have told it, some time or other... but not to you. I was told it myself. I heard it in

Paris from a Frenchman. He told me it was read at our mass from the Lives of the Saints... he was a very learned man who had made a special study of Russian statistics and had lived a long time in Russia.... I have not read the Lives of the Saints myself, and I am not going to read them... all sorts of things are said at dinner — we were dining then."

"Yes, you were dining then, and so I lost my faith!" said Fyodor Pavlovitch, mimicking him.

"What do I care for your faith?" Miusov was on the point of shouting, but he suddenly checked himself, and said with contempt, "You defile everything you touch."

The elder suddenly rose from his seat. "Excuse me, gentlemen, for leaving you a few minutes," he said, addressing all his guests. "I have visitors awaiting me who arrived before you. But don't you tell lies all the same," he added, turning to Fyodor Pavlovitch with a good-humoured face. He went out of the cell. Alyosha and the novice flew to escort him down the steps. Alyosha was breathless: he was glad to get away, but he was glad, too, that the elder was good-humoured and not offended. Father Zossima was going towards the portico to bless the people waiting for him there. But Fyodor Pavlovitch persisted, in stopping him at the door of the cell.

"Blessed man!" he cried, with feeling. "Allow me to kiss your hand once more. Yes, with you I could still talk, I could still get on. Do you think I always lie and play the fool like this? Believe me, I have been acting like this all the time on purpose to try you. I have been testing you all the time to see whether I could get on with you. Is there room for my humility beside your pride? I am ready to give you a testimonial that one can get on with you! But now, I'll be quiet; I will keep quiet all the time. I'll sit in a chair and hold my tongue. Now it is for you to speak, Pyotr Alexandrovitch. You are the principal person left now — for ten minutes."

CHAPTER 3

Peasant Women Who Have Faith

NEAR the wooden portico below, built on to the outer wall of the precinct, there was a crowd of about twenty peasant women. They had been told that the elder was at last coming out, and they had gathered together in anticipation. Two ladies, Madame Hohlakov and her daughter, had also come out into the portico to wait for the elder, but in a separate part of it set aside for women of rank.

Madame Hohlakov was a wealthy lady, still young and attractive, and always dressed with taste. She was rather pale, and had lively black eyes. She was not more than thirty-three, and had been five years a widow. Her daughter, a girl of fourteen, was partially paralysed. The poor child had not been able to walk for the last six months, and was wheeled about in a long reclining chair. She had a charming little face, rather thin from illness, but full of gaiety. There was a gleam of mischief in her big dark eyes with their long lashes. Her mother had been intending to take her abroad ever since the spring, but they had been detained all the summer by business connected with their estate. They had been staying a week in our town, where they had come more for purposes of business than devotion, but had visited Father Zossima once already, three days before. Though they knew that the elder scarcely saw anyone, they had now suddenly turned up again, and urgently entreated “the happiness of looking once again on the great healer.”

The mother was sitting on a chair by the side of her daughter’s invalid carriage, and two paces from her stood an old monk, not one of our monastery, but a visitor from an obscure religious house in the far north. He too sought the elder’s blessing.

But Father Zossima, on entering the portico, went first straight to the peasants who were crowded at the foot of the three steps that led up into the portico. Father Zossima stood on the top step, put on his stole, and began blessing the women who thronged about him. One crazy woman was led up to him. As soon as she caught sight of the elder she began shrieking and writhing as though in the pains of childbirth. Laying the stole on her

forehead, he read a short prayer over her, and she was at once soothed and quieted.

I do not know how it may be now, but in my childhood I often happened to see and hear these “possessed” women in the villages and monasteries. They used to be brought to mass; they would squeal and bark like a dog so that they were heard all over the church. But when the sacrament was carried in and they were led up to it, at once the “possession” ceased, and the sick women were always soothed for a time. I was greatly impressed and amazed at this as a child; but then I heard from country neighbours and from my town teachers that the whole illness was simulated to avoid work, and that it could always be cured by suitable severity; various anecdotes were told to confirm this. But later on I learnt with astonishment from medical specialists that there is no pretence about it, that it is a terrible illness to which women are subject, especially prevalent among us in Russia, and that it is due to the hard lot of the peasant women. It is a disease, I was told, arising from exhausting toil too soon after hard, abnormal and unassisted labour in childbirth, and from the hopeless misery, from beatings, and so on, which some women were not able to endure like others. The strange and instant healing of the frantic and struggling woman as soon as she was led up to the holy sacrament, which had been explained to me as due to malingering and the trickery of the “clericals,” arose probably in the most natural manner. Both the women who supported her and the invalid herself fully believed as a truth beyond question that the evil spirit in possession of her could not hold if the sick woman were brought to the sacrament and made to bow down before it. And so, with a nervous and psychically deranged woman, a sort of convulsion of the whole organism always took place, and was bound to take place, at the moment of bowing down to the sacrament, aroused by the expectation of the miracle of healing and the implicit belief that it would come to pass; and it did come to pass, though only for a moment. It was exactly the same now as soon as the elder touched the sick woman with the stole.

Many of the women in the crowd were moved to tears of ecstasy by the effect of the moment: some strove to kiss the hem of his garment, others cried out in sing-song voices.

He blessed them all and talked with some of them. The “possessed” woman he knew already. She came from a village only six versts from the monastery, and had been brought to him before.

“But here is one from afar.” He pointed to a woman by no means old but very thin and wasted, with a face not merely sunburnt but almost blackened by exposure. She was kneeling and gazing with a fixed stare at the elder; there was something almost frenzied in her eyes.

“From afar off, Father, from afar off! From two hundred miles from here. From afar off, Father, from afar off!” the woman began in a sing-song voice as though she were chanting a dirge, swaying her head from side to side with her cheek resting in her hand.

There is silent and long-suffering sorrow to be met with among the peasantry. It withdraws into itself and is still. But there is a grief that breaks out, and from that minute it bursts into tears and finds vent in wailing. This is particularly common with women. But it is no lighter a grief than the silent. Lamentations comfort only by lacerating the heart still more. Such grief does not desire consolation. It feeds on the sense of its hopelessness. Lamentations spring only from the constant craving to re-open the wound.

“You are of the tradesman class?” said Father Zossima, looking curiously at her.

“Townfolk we are, Father, townfolk. Yet we are peasants though we live in the town. I have come to see you, O Father! We heard of you, Father, we heard of you. I have buried my little son, and I have come on a pilgrimage. I have been in three monasteries, but they told me, ‘Go, Nastasya, go to them’ — that is to you. I have come; I was yesterday at the service, and to-day I have come to you.”

“What are you weeping for?”

“It’s my little son I’m grieving for, Father. he was three years old — three years all but three months. For my little boy, Father, I’m in anguish, for my little boy. He was the last one left. We had four, my Nikita and I, and now we’ve no children, our dear ones have all gone I buried the first three without grieving overmuch, and now I have buried the last I can’t forget him. He seems always standing before me. He never leaves me. He has withered my heart. I look at his little clothes, his little shirt, his little boots, and I wail. I lay out all that is left of him, all his little things. I look at them and wail. I say to Nikita, my husband, ‘let me go on a pilgrimage, master.’ He is a driver. We’re not poor people, Father, not poor; he drives our own horse. It’s all our own, the horse and the carriage. And what good is it all to us now? My Nikita has begun drinking while I am away. He’s sure to. It used to be so before. As soon as I turn my back he gives way to it. But now

I don’t think about him. It’s three months since I left home. I’ve forgotten him. I’ve forgotten everything. I don’t want to remember. And what would our life be now together? I’ve done with him, I’ve done. I’ve done with them all. I don’t care to look upon my house and my goods. I don’t care to see anything at all!”

“Listen, mother,” said the elder. “Once in olden times a holy saint saw in the Temple a mother like you weeping for her little one, her only one, whom God had taken. ‘Knowest thou not,’ said the saint to her, ‘how bold these little ones are before the throne of God? Verily there are none bolder than they in the Kingdom of Heaven. “Thou didst give us life, O Lord,” they say, “and scarcely had we looked upon it when Thou didst take it back again.” And so boldly they ask and ask again that God gives them at once the rank of angels. Therefore,’ said the saint, ‘thou, too, O Mother, rejoice and weep not, for thy little son is with the Lord in the fellowship of the angels.’ That’s what the saint said to the weeping mother of old. He was a great saint and he could not have spoken falsely. Therefore you too, mother, know that your little one is surely before the throne of God, is rejoicing and happy, and praying to God for you, and therefore weep, but rejoice.”

The woman listened to him, looking down with her cheek in her hand. She sighed deeply.

“My Nikita tried to comfort me with the same words as you. ‘Foolish one,’ he said, ‘why weep? Our son is no doubt singing with the angels before God.’ He says that to me, but he weeps himself. I see that he cries like me. ‘I know, Nikita,’ said I. ‘Where could he be if not with the Lord God? Only, here with us now he is not as he used to sit beside us before.’ And if only I could look upon him one little time, if only I could peep at him one little time, without going up to him, without speaking, if I could be hidden in a corner and only see him for one little minute, hear him playing in the yard, calling in his little voice, ‘Mammy, where are you?’ If only I could hear him pattering with his little feet about the room just once, only once; for so often, so often I remember how he used to run to me and shout and laugh, if only I could hear his little feet I should know him! But he’s gone, Father, he’s gone, and I shall never hear him again. Here’s his little sash, but him I shall never see or hear now.”

She drew out of her bosom her boy’s little embroidered sash, and as soon as she looked at it she began shaking with sobs, hiding her eyes with her fingers through which the tears flowed in a sudden stream.

“It is Rachel of old,” said the elder, “weeping for her children, and will not be comforted because they are not. Such is the lot set on earth for you mothers. Be not comforted. Consolation is not what you need. Weep and be not consoled, but weep. Only every time that you weep be sure to remember that your little son is one of the angels of God, that he looks down from there at you and sees you, and rejoices at your tears, and points at them to the Lord God; and a long while yet will you keep that great mother’s grief. But it will turn in the end into quiet joy, and your bitter tears will be only tears of tender sorrow that purifies the heart and delivers it from sin. And I shall pray for the peace of your child’s soul. What was his name?”

“Alexey, Father.”

“A sweet name. After Alexey, the man of God?”

“Yes, Father.”

“What a saint he was! I will remember him, mother, and your grief in my prayers, and I will pray for your husband’s health. It is a sin for you to leave him. Your little one will see from heaven that you have forsaken his father, and will weep over you. Why do you trouble his happiness? He is living, for the soul lives for ever, and though he is not in the house he is near you, unseen. How can he go into the house when you say that the house is hateful to you? To whom is he to go if he find you not together, his father and mother? He comes to you in dreams now, and you grieve. But then he will send you gentle dreams. Go to your husband, mother; go this very day.”

“I will go, Father, at your word. I will go. You’ve gone straight to my heart. My Nikita, my Nikita, you are waiting for me,” the woman began in a sing-song voice; but the elder had already turned away to a very old woman, dressed like a dweller in the town, not like a pilgrim. Her eyes showed that she had come with an object, and in order to say something. She said she was the widow of a non-commissioned officer, and lived close by in the town. Her son Vasenka was in the commissariat service, and had gone to Irkutsk in Siberia. He had written twice from there, but now a year had passed since he had written. She did inquire about him, but she did not know the proper place to inquire.

“Only the other day Stepanida Ilyinishna — she’s a rich merchant’s wife — said to me, ‘You go, Prohorovna, and put your son’s name down for prayer in the church, and pray for the peace of his soul as though he were dead. His soul will be troubled,’ she said, ‘and he will write you a letter.’ And Stepanida Ilyinishna told me it was a certain thing which had been

many times tried. Only I am in doubt.... Oh, you light of ours! is it true or false, and would it be right?”

“Don’t think of it. It’s shameful to ask the question. How is it possible to pray for the peace of a living soul? And his own mother too! It’s a great sin, akin to sorcery. Only for your ignorance it is forgiven you. Better pray to the Queen of Heaven, our swift defence and help, for his good health, and that she may forgive you for your error. And another thing I will tell you, Prohorovna. Either he will soon come back to you, your son, or he will be sure to send a letter. Go, and henceforward be in peace. Your son is alive, I tell you.”

“Dear Father, God reward you, our benefactor, who prays for all of us and for our sins!”

But the elder had already noticed in the crowd two glowing eyes fixed upon him. An exhausted, consumptive-looking, though young peasant woman was gazing at him in silence. Her eyes besought him, but she seemed afraid to approach.

“What is it, my child?”

“Absolve my soul, Father,” she articulated softly, and slowly sank on her knees and bowed down at his feet. “I have sinned, Father. I am afraid of my sin.”

The elder sat down on the lower step. The woman crept closer to him, still on her knees.

“I am a widow these three years,” she began in a half-whisper, with a sort of shudder. “I had a hard life with my husband. He was an old man. He used to beat me cruelly. He lay ill; I thought looking at him, if he were to get well, if he were to get up again, what then? And then the thought came to me-”

“Stay!” said the elder, and he put his ear close to her lips.

The woman went on in a low whisper, so that it was almost impossible to catch anything. She had soon done.

“Three years ago?” asked the elder.

“Three years. At first I didn’t think about it, but now I’ve begun to be ill, and the thought never leaves me.”

“Have you come from far?”

“Over three hundred miles away.”

“Have you told it in confession?”

“I have confessed it. Twice I have confessed it.”

“Have you been admitted to Communion?”

“Yes. I am afraid. I am afraid to die.”

“Fear nothing and never be afraid; and don’t fret. If only your penitence fail not, God will forgive all. There is no sin, and there can be no sin on all the earth, which the Lord will not forgive to the truly repentant! Man cannot commit a sin so great as to exhaust the infinite love of God. Can there be a sin which could exceed the love of God? Think only of repentance, continual repentance, but dismiss fear altogether. Believe that God loves you as you cannot conceive; that He loves you with your sin, in your sin. It has been said of old that over one repentant sinner there is more joy in heaven than over ten righteous men. Go, and fear not. Be not bitter against men. Be not angry if you are wronged. Forgive the dead man in your heart what wrong he did you. Be reconciled with him in truth. If you are penitent, you love. And if you love you are of God. All things are atoned for, all things are saved by love. If I, a sinner, even as you are, am tender with you and have pity on you, how much more will God. Love is such a priceless treasure that you can redeem the whole world by it, and expiate not only your own sins but the sins of others.”

He signed her three times with the cross, took from his own neck a little ikon and put it upon her. She bowed down to the earth without speaking.

He got up and looked cheerfully at a healthy peasant woman with a tiny baby in her arms.

“From Vyshegorye, dear Father.”

“Five miles you have dragged yourself with the baby. What do you want?”

“I’ve come to look at you. I have been to you before — or have you forgotten? You’ve no great memory if you’ve forgotten me. They told us you were ill. Thinks I, I’ll go and see him for myself. Now I see you, and you’re not ill! You’ll live another twenty years. God bless you! There are plenty to pray for you; how should you be ill?”

“I thank you for all, daughter.”

“By the way, I have a thing to ask, not a great one. Here are sixty copecks. Give them, dear Father, to someone poorer than me. I thought as I came along, better give through him. He’ll know whom to give to.”

“Thanks, my dear, thanks! You are a good woman. I love you. I will do so certainly. Is that your little girl?”

“My little girl, Father, Lizaveta.”

“May the Lord bless you both, you and your babe Lizaveta! You have gladdened my heart, mother. Farewell, dear children, farewell, dear ones.”

He blessed them all and bowed low to them.

CHAPTER 4

A Lady of Little Faith

A visitor looking on the scene of his conversation with the peasants and his blessing them shed silent tears and wiped them away with her handkerchief. She was a sentimental society lady of genuinely good disposition in many respects. When the elder went up to her at last she met him enthusiastically.

“Ah, what I have been feeling, looking on at this touching scene!... “She could not go on for emotion. “Oh, I understand the people’s love for you. I love the people myself. I want to love them. And who could help loving them, our splendid Russian people, so simple in their greatness!”

“How is your daughter’s health? You wanted to talk to me again?”

“Oh, I have been urgently begging for it, I have prayed for it! I was ready to fall on my knees and kneel for three days at your windows until you let me in. We have come, great healer, to express our ardent gratitude. You have healed my Lise, healed her completely, merely by praying over her last Thursday and laying your hands upon her. We have hastened here to kiss those hands, to pour out our feelings and our homage.”

“What do you mean by healed? But she is still lying down in her chair.”

“But her night fevers have entirely ceased ever since Thursday,” said the lady with nervous haste. “And that’s not all. Her legs are stronger. This mourning she got up well; she had slept all night. Look at her rosy cheeks, her bright eyes! She used to be always crying, but now she laughs and is gay and happy. This morning she insisted on my letting her stand up, and she stood up for a whole minute without any support. She wagers that in a fortnight she’ll be dancing a quadrille. I’ve called in Doctor Herzenstube. He shrugged his shoulders and said, ‘I am amazed; I can make nothing of it.’ And would you have us not come here to disturb you, not fly here to thank you? Lise, thank him — thank him!”

Lise’s pretty little laughing face became suddenly serious. She rose in her chair as far as she could and, looking at the elder, clasped her hands before him, but could not restrain herself and broke into laughter.

“It’s at him,” she said, pointing to Alyosha, with childish vexation at herself for not being able to repress her mirth.

If anyone had looked at Alyosha standing a step behind the elder, he would have caught a quick flush crimsoning his cheeks in an instant. His eyes shone and he looked down.

“She has a message for you, Alexey Fyodorovitch. How are you?” the mother went on, holding out her exquisitely gloved hand to Alyosha.

The elder turned round and all at once looked attentively at Alyosha. The latter went nearer to Lise and, smiling in a strangely awkward way, held out his hand to her too. Lise assumed an important air.

“Katerina Ivanovna has sent you this through me.” She handed him a little note. “She particularly begs you to go and see her as soon as possible; that you will not fail her, but will be sure to come.”

“She asks me to go and see her? Me? What for?” Alyosha muttered in great astonishment. His face at once looked anxious.

“Oh, it’s all to do with Dmitri Fyodorovitch and — what has happened lately,” the mother explained hurriedly. “Katerina Ivanovna has made up her mind, but she must see you about it.... Why, of course, I can’t say. But she wants to see you at once. And you will go to her, of course. It is a Christian duty.”

“I have only seen her once,” Alyosha protested with the same perplexity.

“Oh, she is such a lofty, incomparable creature If only for her suffering.... Think what she has gone through, what she is enduring now Think what awaits her! It’s all terrible, terrible!

“Very well, I will come,” Alyosha decided, after rapidly scanning the brief, enigmatic note, which consisted of an urgent entreaty that he would come, without any sort of explanation.

“Oh, how sweet and generous that would be of you” cried Lise with sudden animation. “I told mamma you’d be sure not to go. I said you were saving your soul. How splendid you are I’ve always thought you were splendid. How glad I am to tell you so!”

“Lise!” said her mother impressively, though she smiled after she had said it.

“You have quite forgotten us, Alexey Fyodorovitch,” she said; “you never come to see us. Yet Lise has told me twice that she is never happy except with you.”

Alyosha raised his downcast eyes and again flushed, and again smiled without knowing why. But the elder was no longer watching him. He had begun talking to a monk who, as mentioned before, had been awaiting his

entrance by Lise's chair. He was evidently a monk of the humblest, that is of the peasant, class, of a narrow outlook, but a true believer, and, in his own way, a stubborn one. He announced that he had come from the far north, from Obdorsk, from Saint Sylvester, and was a member of a poor monastery, consisting of only ten monks. The elder gave him his blessing and invited him to come to his cell whenever he liked.

"How can you presume to do such deeds?" the monk asked suddenly, pointing solemnly and significantly at Lise. He was referring to her "healing."

"It's too early, of course, to speak of that. Relief is not complete cure, and may proceed from different causes. But if there has been any healing, it is by no power but God's will. It's all from God. Visit me, Father," he added to the monk. "It's not often I can see visitors. I am ill, and I know that my days are numbered."

"Oh, no, no! God will not take you from us. You will live a long, long time yet," cried the lady. "And in what way are you ill? You look so well, so gay and happy."

"I am extraordinarily better to-day. But I know that it's only for a moment. I understand my disease now thoroughly. If I seem so happy to you, you could never say anything that would please me so much. For men are made for happiness, and anyone who is completely happy has a right to say to himself, 'I am doing God's will on earth.' All the righteous, all the saints, all the holy martyrs were happy."

"Oh, how you speak! What bold and lofty words" cried the lady. "You seem to pierce with your words. And yet — happiness, happiness — where is it? Who can say of himself that he is happy? Oh, since you have been so good as to let us see you once more to-day, let me tell you what I could not utter last time, what I dared not say, all I am suffering and have been for so long! I am suffering! Forgive me! I am suffering!"

And in a rush of fervent feeling she clasped her hands before him.

"From what specially?"

"I suffer... from lack of faith."

"Lack of faith in God?"

"Oh, no, no! I dare not even think of that. But the future life — it is such an enigma And no one, no one can solve it. Listen! You are a healer, you are deeply versed in the human soul, and of course I dare not expect you to believe me entirely, but I assure you on my word of honour that I am not

speaking lightly now. The thought of the life beyond the grave distracts me to anguish, to terror. And I don't know to whom to appeal, and have not dared to all my life. And now I am so bold as to ask you. Oh, God! What will you think of me now?"

She clasped her hands.

"Don't distress yourself about my opinion of you," said the elder. "I quite believe in the sincerity of your suffering."

"Oh, how thankful I am to you! You see, I shut my eyes and ask myself if everyone has faith, where did it come from? And then they do say that it all comes from terror at the menacing phenomena of nature, and that none of it's real. And I say to myself, 'What if I've been believing all my life, and when I come to die there's nothing but the burdocks growing on my grave?' as I read in some author. It's awful! How — how can I get back my faith? But I only believed when I was a little child, mechanically, without thinking of anything. How, how is one to prove it? have come now to lay my soul before you and to ask you about it. If I let this chance slip, no one all my life will answer me. How can I prove it? How can I convince myself? Oh, how unhappy I am! I stand and look about me and see that scarcely anyone else cares; no one troubles his head about it, and I'm the only one who can't stand it. It's deadly — deadly!"

"No doubt. But there's no proving it, though you can be convinced of it."

"By the experience of active love. Strive to love your neighbour actively and indefatigably. In as far as you advance in love you will grow surer of the reality of God and of the immortality of your soul. If you attain to perfect self-forgetfulness in the love of your neighbour, then you will believe without doubt, and no doubt can possibly enter your soul. This has been tried. This is certain."

"In active love? There's another question and such a question! You see, I so love humanity that — would you believe it? — I often dream of forsaking all that I have, leaving Lise, and becoming a sister of mercy. I close my eyes and think and dream, and at that moment I feel full of strength to overcome all obstacles. No wounds, no festering sores could at that moment frighten me. I would bind them up and wash them with my own hands. I would nurse the afflicted. I would be ready to kiss such wounds."

"It is much, and well that your mind is full of such dreams and not others. Some time, unawares, you may do a good deed in reality."

“Yes. But could I endure such a life for long?” the lady went on fervently, almost frantically. “That’s the chief question — that’s my most agonising question. I shut my eyes and ask myself, ‘Would you persevere long on that path? And if the patient whose wounds you are washing did not meet you with gratitude, but worried you with his whims, without valuing or remarking your charitable services, began abusing you and rudely commanding you, and complaining to the superior authorities of you (which often happens when people are in great suffering) — what then? Would you persevere in your love, or not?’ And do you know, I came with horror to the conclusion that, if anything could dissipate my love to humanity, it would be ingratitude. In short, I am a hired servant, I expect my payment at once — that is, praise, and the repayment of love with love. Otherwise I am incapable of loving anyone.’”

She was in a very paroxysm of self-castigation, and, concluding, she looked with defiant resolution at the elder.

“It’s just the same story as a doctor once told me,” observed the elder. “He was a man getting on in years, and undoubtedly clever. He spoke as frankly as you, though in jest, in bitter jest. ‘I love humanity,’ he said, ‘but I wonder at myself. The more I love humanity in general, the less I love man in particular. In my dreams,’ he said, ‘I have often come to making enthusiastic schemes for the service of humanity, and perhaps I might actually have faced crucifixion if it had been suddenly necessary; and yet I am incapable of living in the same room with anyone for two days together, as I know by experience. As soon as anyone is near me, his personality disturbs my self-complacency and restricts my freedom. In twenty-four hours I begin to hate the best of men: one because he’s too long over his dinner; another because he has a cold and keeps on blowing his nose. I become hostile to people the moment they come close to me. But it has always happened that the more I detest men individually the more ardent becomes my love for humanity.’

“But what’s to be done? What can one do in such a case? Must one despair?”

“No. It is enough that you are distressed at it. Do what you can, and it will be reckoned unto you. Much is done already in you since you can so deeply and sincerely know yourself. If you have been talking to me so sincerely, simply to gain approbation for your frankness, as you did from me just now, then, of course, you will not attain to anything in the

achievement of real love; it will all get no further than dreams, and your whole life will slip away like a phantom. In that case you will naturally cease to think of the future life too, and will of yourself grow calmer after a fashion in the end.”

“You have crushed me! Only now, as you speak, I understand that I was really only seeking your approbation for my sincerity when I told you I could not endure ingratitude. You have revealed me to myself. You have seen through me and explained me to myself

“Are you speaking the truth? Well, now, after such a confession, I believe that you are sincere and good at heart. If you do not attain happiness, always remember that you are on the right road, and try not to leave it. Above all, avoid falsehood, every kind of falsehood, especially falseness to yourself. Watch over your own deceitfulness and look into it every hour, every minute. Avoid being scornful, both to others and to yourself. What seems to you bad within you will grow purer from the very fact of your observing it in yourself. Avoid fear, too, though fear is only the consequence of every sort of falsehood. Never be frightened at your own faint-heartedness in attaining love. Don’t be frightened overmuch even at your evil actions. I am sorry I can say nothing more consoling to you, for love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing compared with love in dreams. Love in dreams is greedy for immediate action, rapidly performed and in the sight of all. Men will even give their lives if only the ordeal does not last long but is soon over, with all looking on and applauding as though on the stage. But active love is labour and fortitude, and for some people too, perhaps, a complete science. But I predict that just when you see with horror that in spite of all your efforts you are getting farther from your goal instead of nearer to it — at that very moment I predict that you will reach it and behold clearly the miraculous power of the Lord who has been all the time loving and mysteriously guiding you. Forgive me for not being able to stay longer with you. They are waiting for me. Good-bye.”

The lady was weeping.

“Lise, Lise! Bless her — bless her!” she cried, starting up suddenly.

“She does not deserve to be loved. I have seen her naughtiness all along,” the elder said jestingly. “Why have you been laughing at Alexey?”

Lise had in fact been occupied in mocking at him all the time. She had noticed before that Alyosha was shy and tried not to look at her, and she found this extremely amusing. She waited intently to catch his eye.

Alyosha, unable to endure her persistent stare, was irresistibly and suddenly drawn to glance at her, and at once she smiled triumphantly in his face. Alyosha was even more disconcerted and vexed. At last he turned away from her altogether and hid behind the elder's back. After a few minutes, drawn by the same irresistible force, he turned again to see whether he was being looked at or not, and found Lise almost hanging out of her chair to peep sideways at him, eagerly waiting for him to look. Catching his eye, she laughed so that the elder could not help saying, "Why do you make fun of him like that, naughty girl?"

Lise suddenly and quite unexpectedly blushed. Her eyes flashed and her face became quite serious. She began speaking quickly and nervously in a warm and resentful voice:

"Why has he forgotten everything, then? He used to carry me about when I was little. We used to play together. He used to come to teach me to read, do you know. Two years ago, when he went away, he said that he would never forget me, that we were friends for ever, for ever, for ever! And now he's afraid of me all at once. Am I going to eat him? Why doesn't he want to come near me? Why doesn't he talk? Why won't he come and see us? It's not that you won't let him. We know that he goes everywhere. It's not good manners for me to invite him. He ought to have thought of it first, if he hasn't forgotten me. No, now he's saving his soul! Why have you put that long gown on him? If he runs he'll fall."

And suddenly she hid her face in her hand and went off into irresistible, prolonged, nervous, inaudible laughter. The elder listened to her with a smile, and blessed her tenderly. As she kissed his hand she suddenly pressed it to her eyes and began crying.

"Don't be angry with me. I'm silly and good for nothing... and perhaps Alyosha's right, quite right, in not wanting to come and see such a ridiculous girl."

"I will certainly send him," said the elder.

CHAPTER 5

So Be It! So Be It!

THE elder’s absence from his cell had lasted for about twenty-five minutes. It was more than half-past twelve, but Dmitri, on whose account they had all met there, had still not appeared. But he seemed almost to be forgotten, and when the elder entered the cell again, he found his guests engaged in eager conversation. Ivan and the two monks took the leading share in it.

Miusov, too, was trying to take a part, and apparently very eagerly, in the conversation. But he was unsuccessful in this also. He was evidently in the background, and his remarks were treated with neglect, which increased his irritability. He had had intellectual encounters with Ivan before and he could not endure a certain carelessness Ivan showed him.

“Hitherto at least I have stood in the front ranks of all that is progressive in Europe, and here the new generation positively ignores us,” he thought.

Fyodor Pavlovitch, who had given his word to sit still and be quiet, had actually been quiet for some time, but he watched his neighbour Miusov with an ironical little smile, obviously enjoying his discomfiture. He had been waiting for some time to pay off old scores, and now he could not let the opportunity slip. Bending over his shoulder he began teasing him again in a whisper.

“Why didn’t you go away just now, after the ‘courteously kissing’? Why did you consent to remain in such unseemly company? It was because you felt insulted and aggrieved, and you remained to vindicate yourself by showing off your intelligence. Now you won’t go till you’ve displayed your intellect to them.”

“You again?... On the contrary, I’m just going.”

“You’ll be the last, the last of all to go!” Fyodor Pavlovitch delivered him another thrust, almost at the moment of Father Zossima’s return.

The discussion died down for a moment, but the elder, seating himself in his former place, looked at them all as though cordially inviting them to go on. Alyosha, who knew every expression of his face, saw that he was fearfully exhausted and making a great effort. Of late he had been liable to fainting fits from exhaustion. His face had the pallor that was common before such attacks, and his lips were white. But he evidently did not want

to break up the party. He seemed to have some special object of his own in keeping them. What object? Alyosha watched him intently.

“We are discussing this gentleman’s most interesting article,” said Father Iosif, the librarian, addressing the elder, and indicating Ivan. “He brings forward much that is new, but I think the argument cuts both ways. It is an article written in answer to a book by an ecclesiastical authority on the question of the ecclesiastical court, and the scope of its jurisdiction.”

“I’m sorry I have not read your article, but I’ve heard of it,” said the elder, looking keenly and intently at Ivan.

“He takes up a most interesting position,” continued the Father Librarian. “As far as Church jurisdiction is concerned he is apparently quite opposed to the separation of Church from State.”

“That’s interesting. But in what sense?” Father Zossima asked Ivan.

The latter, at last, answered him, not condescendingly, as Alyosha had feared, but with modesty and reserve, with evident goodwill and apparently without the slightest arrierepensee

“I start from the position that this confusion of elements, that is, of the essential principles of Church and State, will, of course, go on for ever, in spite of the fact that it is impossible for them to mingle, and that the confusion of these elements cannot lead to any consistent or even normal results, for there is falsity at the very foundation of it. Compromise between the Church and State in such questions as, for instance, jurisdiction, is, to my thinking, impossible in any real sense. My clerical opponent maintains that the Church holds a precise and defined position in the State. I maintain, on the contrary, that the Church ought to include the whole State, and not simply to occupy a corner in it, and, if this is, for some reason, impossible at present, then it ought, in reality, to be set up as the direct and chief aim of the future development of Christian society!”

“Perfectly true,” Father Paissy, the silent and learned monk, assented with fervour and decision.

“The purest Ultramontanism!” cried Miusov impatiently, crossing and recrossing his legs.

“Oh, well, we have no mountains,” cried Father Iosif, and turning to the elder he continued: “Observe the answer he makes to the following ‘fundamental and essential’ propositions of his opponent, who is, you must note, an ecclesiastic. First, that ‘no social organisation can or ought to arrogate to itself power to dispose of the civic and political rights of its

members.’ Secondly, that ‘criminal and civil jurisdiction ought not to belong to the Church, and is inconsistent with its nature, both as a divine institution and as an organisation of men for religious objects,’ and, finally, in the third place, ‘the Church is a kingdom not of this world.’

“A most unworthy play upon words for an ecclesiastic!” Father Paissy could not refrain from breaking in again. “I have read the book which you have answered,” he added, addressing Ivan, “and was astounded at the words ‘The Church is a kingdom not of this world. ‘If it is not of this world, then it cannot exist on earth at all. In the Gospel, the words ‘not of this world’ are not used in that sense. To play with such words is indefensible. Our Lord Jesus Christ came to set up the Church upon earth. The Kingdom of Heaven, of course, is not of this world, but in Heaven; but it is only entered through the Church which has been founded and established upon earth. And so a frivolous play upon words in such a connection is unpardonable and improper. The Church is, in truth, a kingdom and ordained to rule, and in the end must undoubtedly become the kingdom ruling over all the earth. For that we have the divine promise.”

He ceased speaking suddenly, as though checking himself. After listening attentively and respectfully Ivan went on, addressing the elder with perfect composure and as before with ready cordiality:

“The whole point of my article lies in the fact that during the first three centuries Christianity only existed on earth in the Church and was nothing but the Church. When the pagan Roman Empire desired to become Christian, it inevitably happened that, by becoming Christian, it included the Church but remained a pagan State in very many of its departments. In reality this was bound to happen. But Rome as a State retained too much of the pagan civilisation and culture, as, for example, in the very objects and fundamental principles of the State. The Christian Church entering into the State could, of course, surrender no part of its fundamental principles — the rock on which it stands — and could pursue no other aims than those which have been ordained and revealed by God Himself, and among them that of drawing the whole world, and therefore the ancient pagan State itself, into the Church. In that way (that is, with a view to the future) it is not the Church that should seek a definite position in the State, like ‘every social organisation,’ or as ‘an organisation of men for religious purposes’ (as my opponent calls the Church), but, on the contrary, every earthly State should be, in the end, completely transformed into the Church and should become

nothing else but a Church, rejecting every purpose incongruous with the aims of the Church. All this will not degrade it in any way or take from its honour and glory as a great State, nor from the glory of its rulers, but only turns it from a false, still pagan, and mistaken path to the true and rightful path, which alone leads to the eternal goal. This is why the author of the book On the Foundations of Church Jurisdiction would have judged correctly if, in seeking and laying down those foundations, he bad looked upon them as a temporary compromise inevitable in our sinful and imperfect days. But as soon as the author ventures to declare that the foundations which he predicates now, part of which Father Iosif just enumerated, are the permanent, essential, and eternal foundations, he is going directly against the Church and its sacred and eternal vocation. That is the gist of my article."

"That is, in brief," Father Paissy began again, laying stress on each word, "according to certain theories only too clearly formulated in the nineteenth century, the Church ought to be transformed into the State, as though this would be an advance from a lower to a higher form, so as to disappear into it, making way for science, for the spirit of the age, and civilisation. And if the Church resists and is unwilling, some corner will be set apart for her in the State, and even that under control and this will be so everywhere in all modern European countries. But Russian hopes and conceptions demand not that the Church should pass as from a lower into a higher type into the State, but, on the contrary, that the State should end by being worthy to become only the Church and nothing else. So be it! So be it!"

"Well, I confess you've reassured me somewhat," Miusov said smiling, again crossing his legs. "So far as I understand, then, the realisation of such an ideal is infinitely remote, at the second coming of Christ. That's as you please. It's a beautiful Utopian dream of the abolition of war, diplomacy, banks, and so on — something after the fashion of socialism, indeed. But I imagined that it was all meant seriously, and that the Church might be now going to try criminals, and sentence them to beating, prison, and even death."

"But if there were none but the ecclesiastical court, the Church would not even now sentence a criminal to prison or to death. Crime and the way of regarding it would inevitably change, not all at once of course, but fairly soon," Ivan replied calmly, without flinching.

"Are you serious?" Miusov glanced keenly at him.

“If everything became the Church, the Church would exclude all the criminal and disobedient, and would not cut off their heads,” Ivan went on. “I ask you, what would become of the excluded? He would be cut off then not only from men, as now, but from Christ. By his crime he would have transgressed not only against men but against the Church of Christ. This is so even now, of course, strictly speaking, but it is not clearly enunciated, and very, very often the criminal of to-day compromises with his conscience: ‘I steal,’ he says, ‘but I don’t go against the Church. I’m not an enemy of Christ.’ That’s what the criminal of to-day is continually saying to himself, but when the Church takes the place of the State it will be difficult for him, in opposition to the Church all over the world, to say: ‘All men are mistaken, all in error, all mankind are the false Church. I, a thief and murderer, am the only true Christian Church.’ It will be very difficult to say this to himself; it requires a rare combination of unusual circumstances. Now, on the other side, take the Church’s own view of crime: is it not bound to renounce the present almost pagan attitude, and to change from a mechanical cutting off of its tainted member for the preservation of society, as at present, into completely and honestly adopting the idea of the regeneration of the man, of his reformation and salvation?”

“What do you mean? I fail to understand again,” Miusov interrupted. “Some sort of dream again. Something shapeless and even incomprehensible. What is excommunication? What sort of exclusion? I suspect you are simply amusing yourself, Ivan Fyodorovitch.”

“Yes, but you know, in reality it is so now,” said the elder suddenly, and all turned to him at once. “If it were not for the Church of Christ there would be nothing to restrain the criminal from evil-doing, no real chastisement for it afterwards; none, that is, but the mechanical punishment spoken of just now, which in the majority of cases only embitters the heart; and not the real punishment, the only effectual one, the only deterrent and softening one, which lies in the recognition of sin by conscience.”

“How is that, may one inquire?” asked Miusov, with lively curiosity.

“Why,” began the elder, “all these sentences to exile with hard labour, and formerly with flogging also, reform no one, and what’s more, deter hardly a single criminal, and the number of crimes does not diminish but is continually on the increase. You must admit that. Consequently the security of society is not preserved, for, although the obnoxious member is mechanically cut off and sent far away out of sight, another criminal always

comes to take his place at once, and often two of them. If anything does preserve society, even in our time, and does regenerate and transform the criminal, it is only the law of Christ speaking in his conscience. It is only by recognising his wrongdoing as a son of a Christian society — that is, of the Church — that he recognises his sin against society — that is, against the Church. So that it is only against the Church, and not against the State, that the criminal of to-day can recognise that he has sinned. If society, as a Church, had jurisdiction, then it would know when to bring back from exclusion and to reunite to itself. Now the Church having no real jurisdiction, but only the power of moral condemnation, withdraws of her own accord from punishing the criminal actively. She does not excommunicate him but simply persists in motherly exhortation of him. What is more, the Church even tries to preserve all Christian communion with the criminal. She admits him to church services, to the holy sacrament, gives him alms, and treats him more a captive than as a convict. And what would become of the criminal, O Lord, if even the Christian society — that is, the Church — were to reject him even as the civil law rejects him and cuts him off? What would become of him if the Church punished him with her excommunication as the direct consequence of the secular law? There could be no more terrible despair, at least for a Russian criminal, for Russian criminals still have faith. Though, who knows, perhaps then a fearful thing would happen, perhaps the despairing heart of the criminal would lose its faith and then what would become of him? But the Church, like a tender, loving mother, holds aloof from active punishment herself, as the sinner is too severely punished already by the civil law, and there must be at least someone to have pity on him. The Church holds aloof, above all, because its judgment is the only one that contains the truth, and therefore cannot practically and morally be united to any other judgment even as a temporary compromise. She can enter into no compact about that. The foreign criminal, they say, rarely repents, for the very doctrines of to-day confirm him in the idea that his crime is not a crime, but only a reaction against an unjustly oppressive force. Society cuts him off completely by a force that triumphs over him mechanically and (so at least they say of themselves in Europe) accompanies this exclusion with hatred, forgetfulness, and the most profound indifference as to the ultimate fate of the erring brother. In this way, it all takes place without the compassionate intervention of the Church, for in many cases there are no churches there at

all, for though ecclesiastics and splendid church buildings remain, the churches themselves have long ago striven to pass from Church into State and to disappear in it completely. So it seems at least in Lutheran countries. As for Rome, it was proclaimed a State instead of a Church a thousand years ago. And so the criminal is no longer conscious of being a member of the Church and sinks into despair. If he returns to society, often it is with such hatred that society itself instinctively cuts him off. You can judge for yourself how it must end. In many cases it would seem to be the same with us, but the difference is that besides the established law courts we have the Church too, which always keeps up relations with the criminal as a dear and still precious son. And besides that, there is still preserved, though only in thought, the judgment of the Church, which though no longer existing in practice is still living as a dream for the future, and is, no doubt, instinctively recognised by the criminal in his soul. What was said here just now is true too, that is, that if the jurisdiction of the Church were introduced in practice in its full force, that is, if the whole of the society were changed into the Church, not only the judgment of the Church would have influence on the reformation of the criminal such as it never has now, but possibly also the crimes themselves would be incredibly diminished. And there can be no doubt that the Church would look upon the criminal and the crime of the future in many cases quite differently and would succeed in restoring the excluded, in restraining those who plan evil, and in regenerating the fallen. It is true," said Father Zossima, with a smile, "the Christian society now is not ready and is only resting on some seven righteous men, but as they are never lacking, it will continue still unshaken in expectation of its complete transformation from a society almost heathen in character into a single universal and all-powerful Church. So be it, so be it! Even though at the end of the ages, for it is ordained to come to pass! And there is no need to be troubled about times and seasons, for the secret of the times and seasons is in the wisdom of God, in His foresight, and His love. And what in human reckoning seems still afar off, may by the Divine ordinance be close at hand, on the eve of its appearance. And so be it, so be it!

"So be it, so be it!" Father Paissy repeated austerely and reverently.

"Strange, extremely strange" Miusov pronounced, not so much with heat as with latent indignation.

"What strikes you as so strange?" Father Iosif inquired cautiously.

“Why, it’s beyond anything!” cried Miusov, suddenly breaking out; “the State is eliminated and the Church is raised to the position of the State. It’s not simply Ultramontanism, it’s arch-Ultramontanism! It’s beyond the dreams of Pope Gregory the Seventh!”

“You are completely misunderstanding it,” said Father Paissy sternly. “Understand, the Church is not to be transformed into the State. That is Rome and its dream. That is the third temptation of the devil. On the contrary, the State is transformed into the Church, will ascend and become a Church over the whole world — which is the complete opposite of Ultramontanism and Rome, and your interpretation, and is only the glorious destiny ordained for the Orthodox Church. This star will arise in the east!”

Miusov was significantly silent. His whole figure expressed extraordinary personal dignity. A supercilious and condescending smile played on his lips. Alyosha watched it all with a throbbing heart. The whole conversation stirred him profoundly. He glanced casually at Rakitin, who was standing immovable in his place by the door listening and watching intently though with downcast eyes. But from the colour in his cheeks Alyosha guessed that Rakitin was probably no less excited, and he knew what caused his excitement.

“Allow me to tell you one little anecdote, gentlemen,” Miusov said impressively, with a peculiarly majestic air. “Some years ago, soon after the coup d’etat of December, I happened to be calling in Paris on an extremely influential personage in the Government, and I met a very interesting man in his house. This individual was not precisely a detective but was a sort of superintendent of a whole regiment of political detectives — a rather powerful position in its own way. I was prompted by curiosity to seize the opportunity of conversation with him. And as he had not come as a visitor but as a subordinate official bringing a special report, and as he saw the reception given me by his chief, he deigned to speak with some openness, to a certain extent only, of course. He was rather courteous than open, as Frenchmen know how to be courteous, especially to a foreigner. But I thoroughly understood him. The subject was the socialist revolutionaries who were at that time persecuted. I will quote only one most curious remark dropped by this person. ‘We are not particularly afraid,’ said he, ‘of all these socialists, anarchists, infidels, and revolutionists; we keep watch on them and know all their goings on. But there are a few peculiar men among them who believe in God and are Christians, but at the same time are

socialists. These are the people we are most afraid of. They are dreadful people The socialist who is a Christian is more to be dreaded than a socialist who is an atheist.' The words struck me at the time, and now they have suddenly come back to me here, gentlemen."

"You apply them to us, and look upon us as socialists?" Father Paissy asked directly, without beating about the bush.

But before Pyotr Alexandrovitch could think what to answer, the door opened, and the guest so long expected, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, came in. They had, in fact, given up expecting him, and his sudden appearance caused some surprise for a moment.

CHAPTER 6

Why Is Such a Man Alive?

DMITRI FYODOROVITCH, a young man of eight and twenty, of medium height and agreeable countenance, looked older than his years. He was muscular, and showed signs of considerable physical strength. Yet there was something not healthy in his face. It was rather thin, his cheeks were hollow, and there was an unhealthy sallowness in their colour. His rather large, prominent, dark eyes had an expression of firm determination, and yet there was a vague look in them, too. Even when he was excited and talking irritably, his eyes somehow did not follow his mood, but betrayed something else, sometimes quite incongruous with what was passing. “It’s hard to tell what he’s thinking,” those who talked to him sometimes declared. People who saw something pensive and sullen in his eyes were startled by his sudden laugh, which bore witness to mirthful and light-hearted thoughts at the very time when his eyes were so gloomy. A certain strained look in his face was easy to understand at this moment. Everyone knew, or had heard of, the extremely restless and dissipated life which he had been leading of late, as well as of the violent anger to which he had been roused in his quarrels with his father. There were several stories current in the town about it. It is true that he was irascible by nature, “of an unstable and unbalanced mind,” as our justice of the peace, Katchalnikov, happily described him.

He was stylishly and irreproachably dressed in a carefully buttoned frock-coat. He wore black gloves and carried a top hat. Having only lately left the army, he still had moustaches and no beard. His dark brown hair was cropped short, and combed forward on his temples. He had the long, determined stride of a military man. He stood still for a moment on the threshold, and glancing at the whole party went straight up to the elder, guessing him to be their host. He made him a low bow, and asked his blessing. Father Zossima, rising in his chair, blessed him. Dmitri kissed his hand respectfully, and with intense feeling, almost anger, he said:

“Be so generous as to forgive me for having kept you waiting so long, but Smerdyakov, the valet sent me by my father, in reply to my inquiries,

told me twice over that the appointment was for one. Now I suddenly learn —”

“Don’t disturb yourself,” interposed the elder. “No matter. You are a little late. It’s of no consequence....”

“I’m extremely obliged to you, and expected no less from your goodness.”

Saying this, Dmitri bowed once more. Then, turning suddenly towards his father, made him, too, a similarly low and respectful bow. He had evidently considered it beforehand, and made this bow in all seriousness, thinking it his duty to show his respect and good intentions.

Although Fyodor Pavlovitch was taken unawares, he was equal to the occasion. In response to Dmitri’s bow he jumped up from his chair and made his son a bow as low in return. His face was suddenly solemn and impressive, which gave him a positively malignant look. Dmitri bowed generally to all present, and without a word walked to the window with his long, resolute stride, sat down on the only empty chair, near Father Paissy, and, bending forward, prepared to listen to the conversation he had interrupted.

Dmitri’s entrance had taken no more than two minutes, and the conversation was resumed. But this time Miusov thought it unnecessary to reply to Father Paissy’s persistent and almost irritable question.

“Allow me to withdraw from this discussion,” he observed with a certain well-bred nonchalance. “It’s a subtle question, too. Here Ivan Fyodorovitch is smiling at us. He must have something interesting to say about that also. Ask him.”

“Nothing special, except one little remark,” Ivan replied at once. “European Liberals in general, and even our liberal dilettanti, often mix up the final results of socialism with those of Christianity. This wild notion is, of course, a characteristic feature. But it’s not only Liberals and dilettanti who mix up socialism and Christianity, but, in many cases, it appears, the police — the foreign police, of course — do the same. Your Paris anecdote is rather to the point, Pyotr Alexandrovitch.”

“I ask your permission to drop this subject altogether,” Miusov repeated. “I will tell you instead, gentlemen, another interesting and rather characteristic anecdote of Ivan Fyodorovitch himself. Only five days ago, in a gathering here, principally of ladies, he solemnly declared in argument that there was nothing in the whole world to make men love their

neighbours. That there was no law of nature that man should love mankind, and that, if there had been any love on earth hitherto, it was not owing to a natural law, but simply because men have believed in immortality. Ivan Fyodorovitch added in parenthesis that the whole natural law lies in that faith, and that if you were to destroy in mankind the belief in immortality, not only love but every living force maintaining the life of the world would at once be dried up. Moreover, nothing then would be immoral, everything would be lawful, even cannibalism. That's not all. He ended by asserting that for every individual, like ourselves, who does not believe in God or immortality, the moral law of nature must immediately be changed into the exact contrary of the former religious law, and that egoism, even to crime, must become not only lawful but even recognised as the inevitable, the most rational, even honourable outcome of his position. From this paradox, gentlemen, you can judge of the rest of our eccentric and paradoxical friend Ivan Fyodorovitch's theories."

"Excuse me," Dmitri cried suddenly; "if I've heard aright, crime must not only be permitted but even recognised as the inevitable and the most rational outcome of his position for every infidel! Is that so or not?"

"Quite so," said Father Paissy.

"I'll remember it."

Having uttered these words Dmitri ceased speaking as suddenly as he had begun. Everyone looked at him with curiosity.

"Is that really your conviction as to the consequences of the disappearance of the faith in immortality?" the elder asked Ivan suddenly.

"Yes. That was my contention. There is no virtue if there is no immortality."

"You are blessed in believing that, or else most unhappy."

"Why unhappy?" Ivan asked smiling.

"Because, in all probability you don't believe yourself in the immortality of your soul, nor in what you have written yourself in your article on Church Jurisdiction."

"Perhaps you are right!... But I wasn't altogether joking," Ivan suddenly and strangely confessed, flushing quickly.

"You were not altogether joking. That's true. The question is still fretting your heart, and not answered. But the martyr likes sometimes to divert himself with his despair, as it were driven to it by despair itself. Meanwhile, in your despair, you, too, divert yourself with magazine articles, and

discussions in society, though you don’t believe your own arguments, and with an aching heart mock at them inwardly.... That question you have not answered, and it is your great grief, for it clamours for an answer.”

“But can it be answered by me? Answered in the affirmative?” Ivan went on asking strangely, still looking at the elder with the same inexplicable smile.

“If it can’t be decided in the affirmative, it will never be decided in the negative. You know that that is the peculiarity of your heart, and all its suffering is due to it. But thank the Creator who has given you a lofty heart capable of such suffering; of thinking and seeking higher things, for our dwelling is in the heavens. God grant that your heart will attain the answer on earth, and may God bless your path.”

The elder raised his hand and would have made the sign of the cross over Ivan from where he stood. But the latter rose from his seat, went up to him, received his blessing, and kissing his hand went back to his place in silence. His face looked firm and earnest. This action and all the preceding conversation, which was so surprising from Ivan, impressed everyone by its strangeness and a certain solemnity, so that all were silent for a moment, and there was a look almost of apprehension in Alyosha’s face. But Miusov suddenly shrugged his shoulders. And at the same moment Fyodor Pavlovitch jumped up from his seat.

“Most pious and holy elder,” he cried pointing to Ivan, “that is my son, flesh of my flesh, the dearest of my flesh! He is my most dutiful Karl Moor, so to speak, while this son who has just come in, Dmitri, against whom I am seeking justice from you, is the undutiful Franz Moor — they are both out of Schiller’s Robbers, and so I am the reigning Count von Moor! Judge and save us! We need not only your prayers but your prophecies!”

“Speak without buffoonery, and don’t begin by insulting the members of your family,” answered the elder, in a faint, exhausted voice. He was obviously getting more and more fatigued, and his strength was failing.

“An unseemly farce which I foresaw when I came here!” cried Dmitri indignantly. He too leapt up. “Forgive it, reverend Father,” he added, addressing the elder. “I am not a cultivated man, and I don’t even know how to address you properly, but you have been deceived and you have been too good-natured in letting us meet here. All my father wants is a scandal. Why he wants it only he can tell. He always has some motive. But I believe I know why—”

“They all blame me, all of them!” cried Fyodor Pavlovitch in his turn. “Pyotr Alexandrovitch here blames me too. You have been blaming me, Pyotr Alexandrovitch, you have!” he turned suddenly to Miusov, although the latter was not dreaming of interrupting him. “They all accuse me of having hidden the children’s money in my boots, and cheated them, but isn’t there a court of law? There they will reckon out for you, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, from your notes, your letters, and your agreements, how much money you had, how much you have spent, and how much you have left. Why does Pyotr Alexandrovitch refuse to pass judgment? Dmitri is not a stranger to him. Because they are all against me, while Dmitri Fyodorovitch is in debt to me, and not a little, but some thousands of which I have documentary proof. The whole town is echoing with his debaucheries. And where he was stationed before, he several times spent a thousand or two for the seduction of some respectable girl; we know all about that, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, in its most secret details. I’ll prove it.... Would you believe it, holy Father, he has captivated the heart of the most honourable of young ladies of good family and fortune, daughter of a gallant colonel, formerly his superior officer, who had received many honours and had the Anna Order on his breast. He compromised the girl by his promise of marriage, now she is an orphan and here; she is betrothed to him, yet before her very eyes he is dancing attendance on a certain enchantress. And although this enchantress has lived in, so to speak, civil marriage with a respectable man, yet she is of an independent character, an unapproachable fortress for everybody, just like a legal wife — for she is virtuous, yes, holy Fathers, she is virtuous. Dmitri Fyodorovitch wants to open this fortress with a golden key, and that’s why he is insolent to me now, trying to get money from me, though he has wasted thousands on this enchantress already. He’s continually borrowing money for the purpose. From whom do you think? Shall I say, Mitya?”

“Be silent!” cried Dmitri, “wait till I’m gone. Don’t dare in my presence to asperse the good name of an honourable girl! That you should utter a word about her is an outrage, and I won’t permit it!” He was breathless.

He was breathless. “Mitya! Mitya!” cried Fyodor Pavlovitch hysterically, squeezing out a tear. “And is your father’s blessing nothing to you? If I curse you, what then?”

“Shameless hypocrite! “exclaimed Dmitri furiously.

“He says that to his father! his father What would he be with others? Gentlemen, only fancy; there’s a poor but honourable man living here, burdened with a numerous family, a captain who got into trouble and was discharged from the army, but not publicly, not by court-martial, with no slur on his honour. And three weeks ago, Dmitri seized him by the beard in a tavern, dragged him out into the street and beat him publicly, and all because he is an agent in a little business of mine.”

“It’s all a lie! Outwardly it’s the truth, but inwardly a lie!” Dmitri was trembling with rage. “Father, I don’t justify my action. Yes, I confess it publicly, I behaved like a brute to that captain, and I regret it now, and I’m disgusted with myself for my brutal rage. But this captain, this agent of yours, went to that lady whom you call an enchantress, and suggested to her from you, that she should take I.O.U.s of mine which were in your possession, and should sue me for the money so as to get me into prison by means of them, if I persisted in claiming an account from you of my property. Now you reproach me for having a weakness for that lady when you yourself incited her to captivate me! She told me so to my face.... She told me the story and laughed at you.... You wanted to put me in prison because you are jealous of me with her, because you’d begun to force your attentions upon her; and I know all about that, too; she laughed at you for that as well — you hear — she laughed at you as she described it. So here you have this man, this father who reproaches his profligate son! Gentlemen, forgive my anger, but I foresaw that this crafty old man would only bring you together to create a scandal. I had come to forgive him if he held out his hand; to forgive him, and ask forgiveness! But as he has just this minute insulted not only me, but an honourable young lady, for whom I feel such reverence that I dare not take her name in vain, I have made up my mind to show up his game, though he is my father....”

He could not go on. His eyes were glittering and he breathed with difficulty. But everyone in the cell was stirred. All except Father Zossima got up from their seats uneasily. The monks looked austere but waited for guidance from the elder. He sat still, pale, not from excitement but from the weakness of disease. An imploring smile lighted up his face; from time to time he raised his hand, as though to check the storm, and, of course, a gesture from him would have been enough to end the scene; but he seemed to be waiting for something and watched them intently as though trying to

make out something which was not perfectly clear to him. At last Miusov felt completely humiliated and disgraced.

“We are all to blame for this scandalous scene,” he said hotly. “But I did not foresee it when I came, though I knew with whom I had to deal. This must be stopped at once! Believe me, your reverence, I had no precise knowledge of the details that have just come to light, I was unwilling to believe them, and I learn for the first time.... A father is jealous of his son’s relation with a woman of loose behaviour and intrigues with the creature to get his son into prison! This is the company in which I have been forced to be present! I was deceived. I declare to you all that I was as much deceived as anyone.”

“Dmitri Fyodorovitch,” yelled Fyodor Pavlovitch suddenly, in an unnatural voice, “if you were not my son I would challenge you this instant to a duel... with pistols, at three paces... across a handkerchief,” he ended, stamping with both feet.

With old liars who have been acting all their lives there are moments when they enter so completely into their part that they tremble or shed tears of emotion in earnest, although at that very moment, or a second later, they are able to whisper to themselves, “You know you are lying, you shameless old sinner! You’re acting now, in spite of your ‘holy’ wrath.”

Dmitri frowned painfully, and looked with unutterable contempt at his father.

“I thought... I thought,” he said. in a soft and, as it were, controlled voice, “that I was coming to my native place with the angel of my heart, my betrothed, to cherish his old age, and I find nothing but a depraved profligate, a despicable clown!”

“A duel!” yelled the old wretch again, breathless and spluttering at each syllable. “And you, Pyotr Alexandrovitch Miusov, let me tell you that there has never been in all your family a loftier, and more honest — you hear — more honest woman than this ‘creature,’ as you have dared to call her! And you, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, have abandoned your betrothed for that ‘creature,’ so you must yourself have thought that your betrothed couldn’t hold a candle to her. That’s the woman called a “creature”

“Shameful!” broke from Father Iosif.

“Shameful and disgraceful!” Kalganov, flushing crimson cried in a boyish voice, trembling with emotion. He had been silent till that moment.

“Why is such a man alive?” Dmitri, beside himself with rage, growled in a hollow voice, hunching up his shoulders till he looked almost deformed. “Tell me, can he be allowed to go on defiling the earth?” He looked round at everyone and pointed at the old man. He spoke evenly and deliberately.

“Listen, listen, monks, to the parricide!” cried Fyodor Pavlovitch, rushing up to Father Iosif. “That’s the answer to your ‘shameful!’ What is shameful? That ‘creature,’ that ‘woman of loose behaviour’ is perhaps holier than you are yourselves, you monks who are seeking salvation! She fell perhaps in her youth, ruined by her environment. But she loved much, and Christ himself forgave the woman ‘who loved much.’”

“It was not for such love Christ forgave her,” broke impatiently from the gentle Father Iosif.

“Yes, it was for such, monks, it was! You save your souls here, eating cabbage, and think you are the righteous. You eat a gudgeon a day, and you think you bribe God with gudgeon.”

“This is unendurable!” was heard on all sides in the cell.

But this unseemly scene was cut short in a most unexpected way. Father Zossima Father Zossima rose suddenly from his seat. Almost distracted with anxiety for the elder and everyone else, Alyosha succeeded, however, in supporting him by the arm. Father Zossima moved towards Dmitri and reaching him sank on his knees before him. Alyosha thought that he had fallen from weakness, but this was not so. The elder distinctly and deliberately bowed down at Dmitri’s feet till his forehead touched the floor. Alyosha was so astounded that he failed to assist him when he got up again. There was a faint smile on his lips.

“Good-bye! Forgive me, all of you” he said, bowing on all sides to his guests.

Dmitri stood for a few moments in amazement. Bowing down to him — what did it mean? Suddenly he cried aloud, “Oh God!” hid his face in his hands, and rushed out of the room. All the guests flocked out after him, in their confusion not saying good-bye, or bowing to their host. Only the monks went up to him again for a blessing.

“What did it mean, falling at his feet like that? Was it symbolic or what?” said Fyodor Pavlovitch, suddenly quieted and trying to reopen conversation without venturing to address anybody in particular. They were all passing out of the precincts of the hermitage at the moment.

“I can’t answer for a madhouse and for madmen,” Miusov answered at once ill-humouredly, “but I will spare myself your company, Fyodor Pavlovitch, and, trust me, for ever. Where’s that monk?”

“That monk,” that is, the monk who had invited them to dine with the Superior, did not keep them waiting. He met them as soon as they came down the steps from the elder’s cell, as though he had been waiting for them all the time.

“Reverend Father, kindly do me a favour. Convey my deepest respect to the Father Superior, apologise for me, personally, Miusov, to his reverence, telling him that I deeply regret that owing to unforeseen circumstances I am unable to have the honour of being present at his table, greatly I should desire to do so,” Miusov said irritably to the monk.

“And that unforeseen circumstance, of course, is myself,” Fyodor Pavlovitch cut in immediately. “Do you hear, Father; this gentleman doesn’t want to remain in my company or else he’d come at once. And you shall go, Pyotr Alexandrovitch, pray go to the Father Superior and good appetite to you. I will decline, and not you. Home, home, I’ll eat at home, I don’t feel equal to it here, Pyotr Alexandrovitch, my amiable relative.”

“I am not your relative and never have been, you contemptible man!”

“I said it on purpose to madden you, because you always disclaim the relationship, though you really are a relation in spite of your shuffling. I’ll prove it by the church calendar. As for you, Ivan, stay if you like. I’ll send the horses for you later. Propriety requires you to go to the Father Superior, Pyotr Alexandrovitch, to apologise for the disturbance we’ve been making....”

“Is it true that you are going home? Aren’t you lying?”

“Pyotr Alexandrovitch! How could I dare after what’s happened! Forgive me, gentlemen, I was carried away! And upset besides! And, indeed, I am ashamed. Gentlemen, one man has the heart of Alexander of Macedon and another the heart of the little dog Fido. Mine is that of the little dog Fido. I am ashamed! After such an escapade how can I go to dinner, to gobble up the monastery’s sauces? I am ashamed, I can’t. You must excuse me!”

“The devil only knows, what if he deceives us?” thought Miusov, still hesitating, and watching the retreating buffoon with distrustful eyes. The latter turned round, and noticing that Miusov was watching him, waved him a kiss.

“Well, are you coming to the Superior?” Miusov asked Ivan abruptly.

“Why not? I was especially invited yesterday.”

“Unfortunately I feel myself compelled to go to this confounded dinner,” said Miusov with the same irritability, regardless of the fact that the monk was listening. “We ought, at least, to apologise for the disturbance, and explain that it was not our doing. What do you think?”

“Yes, we must explain that it wasn’t our doing. Besides, father won’t be there,” observed Ivan.

“Well, I should hope not! Confound this dinner!”

They all walked on, however. The monk listened in silence. On the road through the copse he made one observation however — that the Father Superior had been waiting a long time, and that they were more than half an hour late. He received no answer. Miusov looked with hatred at Ivan.

“Here he is, going to the dinner as though nothing had happened,” he thought. “A brazen face, and the conscience of a Karamazov!”

CHAPTER 7

A Young Man Bent on a Career

ALYOSHA helped Father Zossima to his bedroom and seated him on his bed. It was a little room furnished with the bare necessities. There was a narrow iron bedstead, with a strip of felt for a mattress. In the corner, under the ikons, was a reading-desk with a cross and the Gospel lying on it. The elder sank exhausted on the bed. His eyes glittered and he breathed hard. He looked intently at Alyosha, as though considering something.

"Go, my dear boy, go. Porfiry is enough for me. Make haste, you are needed there, go and wait at the Father Superior's table."

"Let me stay here," Alyosha entreated.

"You are more needed there. There is no peace there. You will wait, and be of service. If evil spirits rise up, repeat a prayer. And remember, my son" — the elder liked to call him that— "this is not the place for you in the future. When it is God's will to call me, leave the monastery. Go away for good."

Alyosha started.

"What is it? This is not your place for the time. I bless you for great service in the world. Yours will be a long pilgrimage. And you will have to take a wife, too. You will have to bear all before you come back. There will be much to do. But I don't doubt of you, and so I send you forth. Christ is with you. Do not abandon Him and He will not abandon you. You will see great sorrow, and in that sorrow you will be happy. This is my last message to you: in sorrow seek happiness. Work, work unceasingly. Remember my words, for although I shall talk with you again, not only my days but my hours are numbered."

Alyosha's face again betrayed strong emotion. The corners of his mouth quivered.

"What is it again?" Father Zossima asked, smiling gently. "The worldly may follow the dead with tears, but here we rejoice over the father who is departing. We rejoice and pray for him. Leave me, I must pray. Go, and make haste. Be near your brothers. And not near one only, but near both."

Father Zossima raised his hand to bless him. Alyosha could make no protest, though he had a great longing to remain. He longed, moreover, to

ask the significance of his bowing to Dmitri, the question was on the tip of his tongue, but he dared not ask it. He knew that the elder would have explained it unasked if he had thought fit. But evidently it was not his will. That action had made a terrible impression on Alyosha; he believed blindly in its mysterious significance. Mysterious, and perhaps awful.

As he hastened out of the hermatage precincts to reach the monastery in time to serve at the Father Superior's dinner, he felt a sudden pang at his heart, and stopped short. He seemed to hear again Father Zossima's words, foretelling his approaching end. What he had foretold so exactly must infallibly come to pass. Alyosha believed that implicitly. But how could he go? He had told him not to weep, and to leave the monastery. Good God! It was long since Alyosha had known such anguish. He hurried through the copse that divided the monastery from the hermitage, and unable to bear the burden of his thoughts, he gazed at the ancient pines beside the path. He had not far to go — about five hundred paces. He expected to meet no one at that hour, but at the first turn of the path he noticed Rakitin. He was waiting for someone.

"Are you waiting for me?" asked Alyosha, overtaking him.

"Yes," grinned Rakitin. "You are hurrying to the Father Superior, I know; he has a banquet. There's not been such a banquet since the Superior entertained the Bishop and General Pahatov, do you remember? I shan't be there, but you go and hand the sauces. Tell me one thing, Alexey, what does that vision mean? That's what I want to ask you."

"What vision?"

"That bowing to your brother, Dmitri. And didn't he tap the ground with his forehead, too!"

"You speak of Father Zossima?"

"Yes, of Father Zossima,"

"Tapped the ground?"

"Ah, an irreverent expression! Well, what of it? Anyway, what does that vision mean?"

"I don't know what it means, Misha."

"I knew he wouldn't explain it to you There's nothing wonderful about it, of course, only the usual holy mummery. But there was an object in the performance. All the pious people in the town will talk about it and spread the story through the province, wondering what it meant. To my thinking

the old man really has a keen nose; he sniffed a crime. Your house stinks of it.”

Rakitin evidently had something he was eager to speak of.

“It’ll be in your family, this crime. Between your brothers and your rich old father. So Father Zossima flopped down to be ready for what may turn up. If something happens later on, it’ll be: ‘Ah, the holy man foresaw it, prophesied it!’ though it’s a poor sort of prophecy, flopping like that. ‘Ah, but it was symbolic,’ they’ll say, ‘an allegory,’ and the devil knows what all! It’ll be remembered to his glory: ‘He predicted the crime and marked the criminal!’ That’s always the way with these crazy fanatics; they cross themselves at the tavern and throw stones at the temple. Like your elder, he takes a stick to a just man and falls at the feet of a murderer.”

“What crime? What do you mean?”

Alyosha stopped dead. Rakitin stopped, too.

“What murderer? As though you didn’t know! I’ll bet you’ve thought of it before. That’s interesting, too, by the way. Listen, Alyosha, you always speak the truth, though you’re always between two stools. Have you thought of it or not? Answer.”

“I have,” answered Alyosha in a low voice. Even Rakitin was taken aback.

“What? Have you really?” he cried.

“I... I’ve not exactly thought it,” muttered Alyosha, “but directly you began speaking so strangely, I fancied I had thought of it myself.”

“You see? (And how well you expressed it!) Looking at your father and your brother Mitya to-day you thought of a crime. Then I’m not mistaken?”

“But wait, wait a minute,” Alyosha broke in uneasily, “What has led you to see all this? Why does it interest you? That’s the first question.”

“Two questions, disconnected, but natural. I’ll deal with them separately. What led me to see it? I shouldn’t have seen it, if I hadn’t suddenly understood your brother Dmitri, seen right into the very heart of him all at once. I caught the whole man from one trait. These very honest but passionate people have a line which mustn’t be crossed. If it were, he’d run at your father with a knife. But your father’s a drunken and abandoned old sinner, who can never draw the line — if they both themselves go, they’ll both come to grief.”

“No, Misha, no. If that’s all, you’ve reassured me. It won’t come to that.”

“But why are you trembling? Let me tell you; he may be honest, our Mitya (he is stupid, but honest), but he’s — a sensualist. That’s the very definition and inner essence of him. It’s your father has handed him on his low sensuality. Do you know, I simply wonder at you, Alyosha, how you can have kept your purity. You’re a Karamazov too, you know! In your family sensuality is carried to a disease. But now, these three sensualists are watching one another, with their knives in their belts. The three of them are knocking their heads together, and you may be the fourth.”

“You are mistaken about that woman. Dmitri despises her,” said Alyosha, with a sort of shudder.

“Grushenka? No, brother, he doesn’t despise her. Since he has openly abandoned his betrothed for her, he doesn’t despise her. There’s something here, my dear boy, that you don’t understand yet. A man will fall in love with some beauty, with a woman’s body, or even with a part of a woman’s body (a sensualist can understand that), and he’ll abandon his own children for her, sell his father and mother, and his country, Russia, too. If he’s honest, he’ll steal; if he’s humane, he’ll murder; if he’s faithful, he’ll deceive. Pushkin, the poet of women’s feet, sung of their feet in his verse. Others don’t sing their praises, but they can’t look at their feet without a thrill — and it’s not only their feet. Contempt’s no help here, brother, even if he did despise Grushenka. He does, but he can’t tear himself away.”

“I understand that,” Alyosha jerked out suddenly.

“Really? Well, I dare say you do understand, since you blurt it out at the first word,” said Rakitin, malignantly. “That escaped you unawares, and the confession’s the more precious. So it’s a familiar subject; you’ve thought about it already, about sensuality, I mean! Oh, you virgin soul! You’re a quiet one, Alyosha, you’re a saint, I know, but the devil only knows what you’ve thought about, and what you know already! You are pure, but you’ve been down into the depths.... I’ve been watching you a long time. You’re a Karamazov yourself; you’re a thorough Karamazov — no doubt birth and selection have something to answer for. You’re a sensualist from your father, a crazy saint from your mother. Why do you tremble? Is it true, then? Do you know, Grushenka has been begging me to bring you along. ‘I’ll pull off his cassock,’ she says. You can’t think how she keeps begging me to bring you. I wondered why she took such an interest in you. Do you know, she’s an extraordinary woman, too!”

“Thank her and say I’m not coming,” said Alyosha, with a strained smile. “Finish what you were saying, Misha. I’ll tell you. my idea after.”

“There’s nothing to finish. It’s all clear. It’s the same old tune, brother. If even you are a sensualist at heart, what of your brother, Ivan? He’s a Karamazov, too. What is at the root of all you Karamazovs is that you’re all sensual, grasping and crazy! Your brother Ivan writes theological articles in joke, for some idiotic, unknown motive of his own, though he’s an atheist, and he admits it’s a fraud himself — that’s your brother Ivan. He’s trying to get Mitya’s betrothed for himself, and I fancy he’ll succeed, too. And what’s more, it’s with Mitya’s consent. For Mitya will surrender his betrothed to him to be rid of her, and escape to Grushenka. And he’s ready to do that in spite of all his nobility and disinterestedness. Observe that. Those are the most fatal people! Who the devil can make you out? He recognises his vileness and goes on with it! Let me tell you, too, the old man, your father, is standing in Mitya’s way now. He has suddenly gone crazy over Grushenka. His mouth waters at the sight of her. It’s simply on her account he made that scene in the cell just now, simply because Miusov called her an ‘abandoned creature.’ He’s worse than a tom-cat in love. At first she was only employed by him in connection with his taverns and in some other shady business, but now he has suddenly realised all she is and has gone wild about her. He keeps pestering her with his offers, not honourable ones, of course. And they’ll come into collision, the precious father and son, on that path! But Grushenka favours neither of them, she’s still playing with them, and teasing them both, considering which she can get most out of. For though she could filch a lot of money from the papa he wouldn’t marry her, and maybe he’ll turn stingy in the end, and keep his purse shut. That’s where Mitya’s value comes in; he has no money, but he’s ready to marry her. Yes, ready to marry her! to abandon his betrothed, a rare beauty, Katerina Ivanovna, who’s rich, and the daughter of a colonel, and to marry Grushenka, who has been the mistress of a dissolute old merchant, Samsonov, a coarse, uneducated, provincial mayor. Some murderous conflict may well come to pass from all this, and that’s what your brother Ivan is waiting for. It would suit him down to the ground. He’ll carry off Katerina Ivanovna, for whom he is languishing, and pocket her dowry of sixty thousand. That’s very alluring to start with, for a man of no consequence and a beggar. And, take note, he won’t be wronging Mitya, but doing him the greatest service. For I know as a fact that Mitya only last

week, when he was with some Gipsy girls drunk in a tavern, cried out aloud that he was unworthy of his betrothed, Katya, but that his brother Ivan, he was the man who deserved her. And Katerina Ivanovna will not in the end refuse such a fascinating man as Ivan. She's hesitating between the two of them already. And how has that Ivan won you all, so that you all worship him? He is laughing at you, and enjoying himself at your expense."

"How do you know? How can you speak so confidently?" Alyosha asked sharply, frowning.

"Why do you ask, and are frightened at my answer? It shows that you know I'm speaking the truth."

"You don't like Ivan. Ivan wouldn't be tempted by money."

"Really? And the beauty of Katerina Ivanovna? It's not only the money, though a fortune of sixty thousand is an attraction."

"Ivan is above that. He wouldn't make up to anyone for thousands. It is not money, it's not comfort Ivan is seeking. Perhaps it's suffering he is seeking."

"What wild dream now? Oh, you — aristocrats!"

"Ah, Misha, he has a stormy spirit. His mind is in bondage. He is haunted by a great, unsolved doubt. He is one of those who don't want millions, but an answer to their questions."

"That's plagiarism, Alyosha. You're quoting your elder's phrases. Ah, Ivan has set you a problem!" cried Rakitin, with undisguised malice. His face changed, and his lips twitched. "And the problem's a stupid one. It is no good guessing it. Rack your brains — you'll understand it. His article is absurd and ridiculous. And did you hear his stupid theory just now: if there's no immortality of the soul, then there's no virtue, and everything is lawful. (And by the way, do you remember how your brother Mitya cried out: 'I will remember!') An attractive theory for scoundrels! — (I'm being abusive, that's stupid.) Not for scoundrels, but for pedantic poseurs, 'haunted by profound, unsolved doubts.' He's showing off, and what it all comes to is, 'on the one hand we cannot but admit' and 'on the other it must be confessed!' His whole theory is a fraud! Humanity will find in itself the power to live for virtue even without believing in immortality. It will find it in love for freedom, for equality, for fraternity."

Rakitin could hardly restrain himself in his heat, but, suddenly, as though remembering something, he stopped short.

“Well, that’s enough,” he said, with a still more crooked smile. “Why are you laughing? Do you think I’m a vulgar fool?”

“No, I never dreamed of thinking you a vulgar fool. You are clever but... never mind, I was silly to smile. I understand your getting hot about it, Misha. I guess from your warmth that you are not indifferent to Katerina Ivanovna yourself; I’ve suspected that for a long time, brother, that’s why you don’t like my brother Ivan. Are you jealous of him?”

“And jealous of her money, too? Won’t you add that?”

“I’ll say nothing about money. I am not going to insult you.”

“I believe it, since you say so, but confound you, and your brother Ivan with you. Don’t you understand that one might very well dislike him, apart from Katerina Ivanovna. And why the devil should I like him? He condescends to abuse me, you know. Why haven’t I a right to abuse him?”

“I never heard of his saying anything about you, good or bad. He doesn’t speak of you at all.”

“But I heard that the day before yesterday at Katerina Ivanovna’s he was abusing me for all he was worth — you see what an interest he takes in your humble servant. And which is the jealous one after that, brother, I can’t say. He was so good as to express the opinion that, if I don’t go in for the career of an archimandrite in the immediate future and don’t become a monk, I shall be sure to go to Petersburg and get on to some solid magazine as a reviewer, that I shall write for the next ten years, and in the end become the owner of the magazine, and bring it out on the liberal and atheistic side, with a socialistic tinge, with a tiny gloss of socialism, but keeping a sharp lookout all the time, that is, keeping in with both sides and hoodwinking the fools. According to your brother’s account, the tinge of socialism won’t hinder me from laying by the proceeds and investing them under the guidance of some Jew, till at the end of my career I build a great house in Petersburg and move my publishing offices to it, and let out the upper stories to lodgers. He has even chosen the place for it, near the new stone bridge across the Neva, which they say is to be built in Petersburg.”

“Ah, Misha, that’s just what will really happen, every word of it,” cried Alyosha, unable to restrain a good-humoured smile.

“You are pleased to be sarcastic, too, Alexey Fyodorovitch.”

“No, no, I’m joking, forgive me. I’ve something quite different in my mind. But, excuse me, who can have told you all this? You can’t have been at Katerina Ivanovna’s yourself when he was talking about you?”

“I wasn’t there, but Dmitri Fyodorovitch was; and I heard him tell it with my own ears; if you want to know, he didn’t tell me, but I overheard him, unintentionally, of course, for I was sitting in Grushenka’s bedroom and I couldn’t go away because Dmitri Fyodorovitch was in the next room.”

“Oh yes, I’d forgotten she was a relation of yours.”

“A relation! That Grushenka a relation of mine!” cried Rakitin, turning crimson. “Are you mad? You’re out of your mind!”

“Why, isn’t she a relation of yours? I heard so.”

“Where can you have heard it? You Karamazovs brag of being an ancient, noble family, though your father used to run about playing the buffoon at other men’s tables, and was only admitted to the kitchen as a favour. I may be only a priest’s son, and dirt in the eyes of noblemen like you, but don’t insult me so lightly and wantonly. I have a sense of honour, too, Alexey Fyodorovitch, I couldn’t be a relation of Grushenka, a common harlot. I beg you to understand that!”

Rakitin was intensely irritated.

“Forgive me, for goodness’ sake, I had no idea... besides... how can you call her a harlot? Is she... that sort of woman?” Alyosha flushed suddenly. “I tell you again, I heard that she was a relation of yours. You often go to see her, and you told me yourself you’re not her lover. I never dreamed that you of all people had such contempt for her! Does she really deserve it?”

“I may have reasons of my own for visiting her. That’s not your business. But as for relationship, your brother, or even your father, is more likely to make her yours than mine. Well, here we are. You’d better go to the kitchen. Hullo! what’s wrong, what is it? Are we late? They can’t have finished dinner so soon! Have the Karamazovs been making trouble again? No doubt they have. Here’s your father and your brother Ivan after him. They’ve broken out from the Father Superior’s. And look, Father Isidor’s shouting out something after them from the steps. And your father’s shouting and waving his arms. I expect he’s swearing. Bah, and there goes Miusov driving away in his carriage. You see, he’s going. And there’s old Maximov running! — there must have been a row. There can’t have been any dinner. Surely they’ve not been beating the Father Superior! Or have they, perhaps, been beaten? It would serve them right!”

There was reason for Rakitin’s exclamations. There had been a scandalous, an unprecedented scene. It had all come from the impulse of a moment.

CHAPTER 8

The Scandalous Scene

MIUSOV, as a man of breeding and delicacy, could not but feel some inward qualms, when he reached the Father Superior's with Ivan: he felt ashamed of having lost his temper. He felt that he ought to have disdained that despicable wretch, Fyodor Pavlovitch, too much to have been upset by him in Father Zossima's cell, and so to have forgotten himself. "The monks were not to blame, in any case," he reflected, on the steps. "And if they're decent people here (and the Father Superior, I understand, is a nobleman) why not be friendly and courteous with them? I won't argue, I'll fall in with everything, I'll win them by politeness, and... and... show them that I've nothing to do with that Aesop, that buffoon, that Pierrot, and have merely been taken in over this affair, just as they have."

He determined to drop his litigation with the monastery, and relinquish his claims to the wood-cutting and fishery rights at once. He was the more ready to do this because the rights had become much less valuable, and he had indeed the vaguest idea where the wood and river in question were.

These excellent intentions were strengthened when he entered the Father Superior's dining-room, though, strictly speaking, it was not a dining-room, for the Father Superior had only two rooms altogether; they were, however, much larger and more comfortable than Father Zossima's. But there was no great luxury about the furnishing of these rooms either. The furniture was of mahogany, covered with leather, in the old-fashioned style of 1820 the floor was not even stained, but everything was shining with cleanliness, and there were many choice flowers in the windows; the most sumptuous thing in the room at the moment was, of course, the beautifully decorated table. The cloth was clean, the service shone; there were three kinds of well-baked bread, two bottles of wine, two of excellent mead, and a large glass jug of kvas — both the latter made in the monastery, and famous in the neighbourhood. There was no vodka. Rakitin related afterwards that there were five dishes: fish-soup made of sterlets, served with little fish patties; then boiled fish served in a special way; then salmon cutlets, ice pudding and compote, and finally, blanc-mange. Rakitin found out about all these good things, for he could not resist peeping into the kitchen, where he

already had a footing. He had a footing everywhere, and got information about everything. He was of an uneasy and envious temper. He was well aware of his own considerable abilities, and nervously exaggerated them in his self-conceit. He knew he would play a prominent part of some sort, but Alyosha, who was attached to him, was distressed to see that his friend Rakitin was dishonourable, and quite unconscious of being so himself, considering, on the contrary, that because he would not steal money left on the table he was a man of the highest integrity. Neither Alyosha nor anyone else could have influenced him in that.

Rakitin, of course, was a person of too little consequence to be invited to the dinner, to which Father Iosif, Father Paissy, and one other monk were the only inmates of the monastery invited. They were already waiting when Miusov, Kalganov, and Ivan arrived. The other guest, Maximov, stood a little aside, waiting also. The Father Superior stepped into the middle of the room to receive his guests. He was a tall, thin, but still vigorous old man, with black hair streaked with grey, and a long, grave, ascetic face. He bowed to his guests in silence. But this time they approached to receive his blessing. Miusov even tried to kiss his hand, but the Father Superior drew it back in time to avoid the salute. But Ivan and Kalganov went through the ceremony in the most simple-hearted and complete manner, kissing his hand as peasants do.

“We must apologise most humbly, your reverence,” began Miusov, simpering affably, and speaking in a dignified and respectful tone. “Pardon us for having come alone without the gentleman you invited, Fyodor Pavlovitch. He felt obliged to decline the honour of your hospitality, and not without reason. In the reverend Father Zossima’s cell he was carried away by the unhappy dissension with his son, and let fall words which were quite out of keeping... in fact, quite unseemly... as” — he glanced at the monks— “your reverence is, no doubt, already aware. And therefore, recognising that he had been to blame, he felt sincere regret and shame, and begged me, and his son Ivan Fyodorovitch, to convey to you his apologies and regrets. In brief, he hopes and desires to make amends later. He asks your blessing, and begs you to forget what has taken place.”

As he uttered the last word of his tirade, Miusov completely recovered his self-complacency, and all traces of his former irritation disappeared. He fully and sincerely loved humanity again.

The Father Superior listened to him with dignity, and, with a slight bend of the head, replied:

“I sincerely deplore his absence. Perhaps at our table he might have learnt to like us, and we him. Pray be seated, gentlemen.”

He stood before the holy image, and began to say grace, aloud. All bent their heads reverently, and Maximov clasped his hands before him, with peculiar fervour.

It was at this moment that Fyodor Pavlovitch played his last prank. It must be noted that he really had meant to go home, and really had felt the impossibility of going to dine with the Father Superior as though nothing had happened, after his disgraceful behaviour in the elder’s cell. Not that he was so very much ashamed of himself — quite the contrary perhaps. But still he felt it would be unseemly to go to dinner. Yet his creaking carriage had hardly been brought to the steps of the hotel, and he had hardly got into it, when he suddenly stopped short. He remembered his own words at the elder’s: “I always feel when I meet people that I am lower than all, and that they all take me for a buffoon; so I say let me play the buffoon, for you are, every one of you, stupider and lower than I.” He longed to revenge himself on everyone for his own unseemliness. He suddenly recalled how he had once in the past been asked, “Why do you hate so and so, so much?” And he had answered them, with his shameless impudence, “I’ll tell you. He has done me no harm. But I played him a dirty trick, and ever since I have hated him.”

Remembering that now, he smiled quietly and malignantly, hesitating for a moment. His eyes gleamed, and his lips positively quivered.

“Well, since I have begun, I may as well go on,” he decided. His predominant sensation at that moment might be expressed in the following words, “Well, there is no rehabilitating myself now. So let me shame them for all I am worth. I will show them I don’t care what they think — that’s all!”

He told the coachman to wait, while with rapid steps he returned to the monastery and straight to the Father Superior’s. He had no clear idea what he would do, but he knew that he could not control himself, and that a touch might drive him to the utmost limits of obscenity, but only to obscenity, to nothing criminal, nothing for which he could be legally punished. In the last resort, he could always restrain himself, and had marvelled indeed at himself, on that score, sometimes. He appeared in the Father Superior’s

dining-room, at the moment when the prayer was over, and all were moving to the table. Standing in the doorway, he scanned the company, and laughing his prolonged, impudent, malicious chuckle, looked them all boldly in the face. “They thought I had gone, and here I am again,” he cried to the whole room.

For one moment everyone stared at him without a word; and at once everyone felt that something revolting, grotesque, positively scandalous, was about to happen. Miusov passed immediately from the most benevolent frame of mind to the most savage. All the feelings that had subsided and died down in his heart revived instantly.

“No! this I cannot endure!” he cried. “I absolutely cannot! and... I certainly cannot!”

The blood rushed to his head. He positively stammered; but he was beyond thinking of style, and he seized his hat.

“What is it he cannot?” cried Fyodor Pavlovitch, “that he absolutely cannot and certainly cannot? Your reverence, am I to come in or not? Will you receive me as your guest?”

“You are welcome with all my heart,” answered the Superior. “Gentlemen!” he added, “I venture to beg you most earnestly to lay aside your dissensions, and to be united in love and family harmony — with prayer to the Lord at our humble table.”

“No, no, it is impossible!” cried Miusov, beside himself.

“Well, if it is impossible for Pyotr Alexandrovitch, it is impossible for me, and I won’t stop. That is why I came. I will keep with Pyotr Alexandrovitch everywhere now. If you will go away, Pyotr Alexandrovitch, I will go away too, if you remain, I will remain. You stung him by what you said about family harmony, Father Superior, he does not admit he is my relation. That’s right, isn’t it, von Sohn? Here’s von Sohn. How are you, von Sohn?”

“Do you mean me?” muttered Maximov, puzzled.

“Of course I mean you,” cried Fyodor Pavlovitch. “Who else? The Father Superior could not be von Sohn.”

“But I am not von Sohn either. I am Maximov.”

“No, you are von Sohn. Your reverence, do you know who von Sohn was? It was a famous murder case. He was killed in a house of harlotry — I believe that is what such places are called among you — he was killed and robbed, and in spite of his venerable age, he was nailed up in a box and sent

from Petersburg to Moscow in the luggage van, and while they were nailing him up, the harlots sang songs and played the harp, that is to say, the piano. So this is that very von Solin. He has risen from the dead, hasn't he, von Sohn?"

"What is happening? What's this?" voices were heard in the group of monks.

"Let us go," cried Miusov, addressing Kalganov.

"No, excuse me," Fyodor Pavlovitch broke in shrilly, taking another step into the room. "Allow me to finish. There in the cell you blamed me for behaving disrespectfully just because I spoke of eating gudgeon, Pyotr Alexandrovitch. Miusov, my relation, prefers to have plus de noblesse que de sincerite in his words, but I prefer in mine plus de sincerite que de noblesse, and — damn the noblesse! That's right, isn't it, von Sohn? Allow me, Father Superior, though I am a buffoon and play the buffoon, yet I am the soul of honour, and I want to speak my mind. Yes, I am the soul of honour, while in Pyotr Alexandrovitch there is wounded vanity and nothing else. I came here perhaps to have a look and speak my mind. My son, Alexey, is here, being saved. I am his father; I care for his welfare, and it is my duty to care. While I've been playing the fool, I have been listening and having a look on the sly; and now I want to give you the last act of the performance. You know how things are with us? As a thing falls, so it lies. As a thing once has fallen, so it must lie for ever. Not a bit of it! I want to get up again. Holy Father, I am indignant with you. Confession is a great sacrament, before which I am ready to bow down reverently; but there in the cell, they all kneel down and confess aloud. Can it be right to confess aloud? It was ordained by the holy Fathers to confess in secret: then only your confession will be a mystery, and so it was of old. But how can I explain to him before everyone that I did this and that... well, you understand what — sometimes it would not be proper to talk about it — so it is really a scandal! No, Fathers, one might be carried along with you to the Flagellants, I dare say.... at the first opportunity I shall write to the Synod, and I shall take my son, Alexey, home."

We must note here that Fyodor Pavlovitch knew where to look for the weak spot. There had been at one time malicious rumours which had even reached the Archbishop (not only regarding our monastery, but in others where the institution of elders existed) that too much respect was paid to the elders, even to the detriment of the authority of the Superior, that the elders

abused the sacrament of confession and so on and so on — absurd charges which had died away of themselves everywhere. But the spirit of folly, which had caught up Fyodor Pavlovitch and was bearing him on the current of his own nerves into lower and lower depths of ignominy, prompted him with this old slander. Fyodor Pavlovitch did not understand a word of it, and he could not even put it sensibly, for on this occasion no one had been kneeling and confessing aloud in the elder's cell, so that he could not have seen anything of the kind. He was only speaking from confused memory of old slanders. But as soon as he had uttered his foolish tirade, he felt he had been talking absurd nonsense, and at once longed to prove to his audience, and above all to himself, that he had not been talking nonsense. And, though he knew perfectly well that with each word he would be adding more and more absurdity, he could not restrain himself, and plunged forward blindly.

"How disgraceful!" cried Pyotr Alexandrovitch.

"Pardon me!" said the Father Superior. "It was said of old, 'Many have begun to speak against me and have uttered evil sayings about me. And hearing it I have said to myself: it is the correction of the Lord and He has sent it to heal my vain soul.' And so we humbly thank you, honoured guest!" and he made Fyodor Pavlovitch a low bow.

"Tut — tut — tut — sanctimoniousness and stock phrases! Old phrases and old gestures. The old lies and formal prostrations. We know all about them. A kiss on the lips and a dagger in the heart, as in Schiller's Robbers. I don't like falsehood, Fathers, I want the truth. But the truth is not to be found in eating gudgeon and that I proclaim aloud! Father monks, why do you fast? Why do you expect reward in heaven for that? Why, for reward like that I will come and fast too! No, saintly monk, you try being virtuous in the world, do good to society, without shutting yourself up in a monastery at other people's expense, and without expecting a reward up aloft for it — you'll find that a bit harder. I can talk sense, too, Father Superior. What have they got here?" He went up to the table. "Old port wine, mead brewed by the Eliseyev Brothers. Fie, fie, fathers! That is something beyond gudgeon. Look at the bottles the fathers have brought out, he he he! And who has provided it all? The Russian peasant, the labourer, brings here the farthing earned by his horny hand, wringing it from his family and the tax-gatherer! You bleed the people, you know, holy Fathers."

“This is too disgraceful!” said Father Iosif.

Father Paissy kept obstinately silent. Miusov rushed from the room, and Kalgonov after him.

“Well, Father, I will follow Pyotr Alexandrovitch! I am not coming to see you again. You may beg me on your knees, I shan’t come. I sent you a thousand roubles, so you have begun to keep your eye on me. He he he! No, I’ll say no more. I am taking my revenge for my youth, for all the humiliation I endured.” He thumped the table with his fist in a paroxysm of simulated feeling. “This monastery has played a great part in my life! It has cost me many bitter tears. You used to set my wife, the crazy one, against me. You cursed me with bell and book, you spread stories about me all over the place. Enough, fathers! This is the age of Liberalism, the age of steamers and railways. Neither a thousand, nor a hundred roubles, no, nor a hundred farthings will you get out of me!”

It must be noted again that our monastery never had played any great part in his life, and he never had shed a bitter tear owing to it. But he was so carried away by his simulated emotion, that he was for one moment almost believing it himself. He was so touched he was almost weeping. But at that very instant, he felt that it was time to draw back.

The Father Superior bowed his head at his malicious lie, and again spoke impressively:

“It is written again, ‘Bear circumspectly and gladly dishonour that cometh upon thee by no act of thine own, be not confounded and hate not him who hath dishonoured thee.’ And so will we.”

“Tut, tut, tut! Bethinking thyself and the rest of the rigmarole. Bethink yourselves Fathers, I will go. But I will take my son, Alexey, away from here for ever, on my parental authority. Ivan Fyodorovitch, my most dutiful son, permit me to order you to follow me. Von Sohn, what have you to stay for? Come and see me now in the town. It is fun there. It is only one short verst; instead of lenten oil, I will give you sucking-pig and kasha. We will have dinner with some brandy and liqueur to it.... I’ve cloudberry wine. Hey, von Sohn, don’t lose your chance.” He went out, shouting and gesticulating.

It was at that moment Rakitin saw him and pointed him out to Alyosha.

“Alexey!” his father shouted, from far off, catching sight of him. “You come home to me to-day, for good, and bring your pillow and mattress, and leave no trace behind.”

Alyosha stood rooted to the spot, watching the scene in silence. Meanwhile, Fyodor Pavlovitch had got into the carriage, and Ivan was about to follow him in grim silence without even turning to say good-bye to Alyosha. But at this point another almost incredible scene of grotesque buffoonery gave the finishing touch to the episode. Maximov suddenly appeared by the side of the carriage. He ran up, panting, afraid of being too late. Rakitin and Alyosha saw him running. He was in such a hurry that in his impatience he put his foot on the step on which Ivan's left foot was still resting, and clutching the carriage he kept trying to jump in. "I am going with you! " he kept shouting, laughing a thin mirthful laugh with a look of reckless glee in his face. "Take me, too."

"There!" cried Fyodor Pavlovitch, delighted. "Did I not say he was von Sohn. It is von Sohn himself, risen from the dead. Why, how did you tear yourself away? What did you von Sohn there? And how could you get away from the dinner? You must be a brazen-faced fellow! I am that myself, but I am surprised at you, brother! Jump in, jump in! Let him pass, Ivan. It will be fun. He can lie somewhere at our feet. Will you lie at our feet, von Sohn? Or perch on the box with the coachman. Skip on to the box, von Sohn!"

But Ivan, who had by now taken his seat, without a word gave Maximov a violent punch in the breast and sent him flying. It was quite by chance he did not fall.

"Drive on!" Ivan shouted angrily to the coachman.

"Why, what are you doing, what are you about? Why did you do that?" Fyodor Pavlovitch protested.

But the carriage had already driven away. Ivan made no reply.

"Well, you are a fellow," Fyodor Pavlovitch said again.

After a pause of two minutes, looking askance at his son, "Why, it was you got up all this monastery business. You urged it, you approved of it. Why are you angry now?"

"You've talked rot enough. You might rest a bit now," Ivan snapped sullenly.

Fyodor Pavlovitch was silent again for two minutes.

"A drop of brandy would be nice now," he observed sententiously, but Ivan made no response.

"You shall have some, too, when we get home."

Ivan was still silent.

Fyodor Pavlovitch waited another two minutes.

“But I shall take Alyosha away from the monastery, though you will dislike it so much, most honoured Karl von Moor.”

Ivan shrugged his shoulders contemptuously, and turning away stared at the road. And they did not speak again all the way home.

BOOK III. THE SENSUALISTS

CHAPTER 1

In the Servants' Quarters

THE Karamazovs' house was far from being in the centre of the town, but it was not quite outside it. It was a pleasant-looking old house of two stories, painted grey, with a red iron roof. It was roomy and snug, and might still last many years. There were all sorts of unexpected little cupboards and closets and staircases. There were rats in it, but Fyodor Pavlovitch did not altogether dislike them. "One doesn't feel so solitary when one's left alone in the evening," he used to say. It was his habit to send the servants away to the lodge for the night and to lock himself up alone. The lodge was a roomy and solid building in the yard. Fyodor Pavlovitch used to have the cooking done there, although there was a kitchen in the house; he did not like the smell of cooking, and, winter and summer alike, the dishes were carried in across the courtyard. The house was built for a large family; there was room for five times as many, with their servants. But at the time of our story there was no one living in the house but Fyodor Pavlovitch and his son Ivan. And in the lodge there were only three servants: old Grigory, and his old wife Marfa, and a young man called Smerdyakov. Of these three we must say a few words. Of old Grigory we have said something already. He was firm and determined and went blindly and obstinately for his object, if once be had been brought by any reasons (and they were often very illogical ones) to believe that it was immutably right. He was honest and incorruptible. His wife, Marfa Ignatyevna, had obeyed her husband's will implicitly all her life, yet she had pestered him terribly after the emancipation of the serfs. She was set on leaving Fyodor Pavlovitch and opening a little shop in Moscow with their small savings. But Grigory decided then, once for all, that "the woman's talking nonsense, for every woman is dishonest," and that they ought not to leave their old master, whatever he might be, for "that was now their duty."

"Do you understand what duty is?" he asked Marfa Ignatyevna.

"I understand what duty means, Grigory Vassilyevitch, but why it's our duty to stay here I never shall understand," Marfa answered firmly.

"Well, don't understand then. But so it shall be. And you hold your tongue."

And so it was. They did not go away, and Fyodor Pavlovitch promised them a small sum for wages, and paid it regularly. Grigory knew, too, that he had an indisputable influence over his master. It was true, and he was aware of it. Fyodor Pavlovitch was an obstinate and cunning buffoon, yet, though his will was strong enough “in some of the affairs of life,” as he expressed it, he found himself, to his surprise, extremely feeble in facing certain other emergencies. He knew his weaknesses and was afraid of them. There are positions in which one has to keep a sharp lookout. And that’s not easy without a trustworthy man, and Grigory was a most trustworthy man. Many times in the course of his life Fyodor Pavlovitch had only just escaped a sound thrashing through Grigory’s intervention, and on each occasion the old servant gave him a good lecture. But it wasn’t only thrashings that Fyodor Pavlovitch was afraid of. There were graver occasions, and very subtle and complicated ones, when Fyodor Pavlovitch could not have explained the extraordinary craving for someone faithful and devoted, which sometimes unaccountably came upon him all in a moment. It was almost a morbid condition. Corrupt and often cruel in his lust, like some noxious insect, Fyodor Pavlovitch was sometimes, in moments of drunkenness, overcome by superstitious terror and a moral convulsion which took an almost physical form. “My soul’s simply quaking in my throat at those times,” he used to say. At such moments he liked to feel that there was near at hand, in the lodge if not in the room, a strong, faithful man, virtuous and unlike himself, who had seen all his debauchery and knew all his secrets, but was ready in his devotion to overlook all that, not to oppose him, above all, not to reproach him or threaten him with anything, either in this world or in the next, and, in case of need, to defend him — from whom? From somebody unknown, but terrible and dangerous. What he needed was to feel that there was another man, an old and tried friend, that he might call him in his sick moments merely to look at his face, or, perhaps, exchange some quite irrelevant words with him. And if the old servant were not angry, he felt comforted, and if he were angry, he was more dejected. It happened even (very rarely however) that Fyodor Pavlovitch went at night to the lodge to wake Grigory and fetch him for a moment. When the old man came, Fyodor Pavlovitch would begin talking about the most trivial matters, and would soon let him go again, sometimes even with a jest. And after he had gone, Fyodor Pavlovitch would get into bed with a curse and sleep the sleep of the just. Something of the same sort

had happened to Fyodor Pavlovitch on Alyosha's arrival. Alyosha "pierced his heart" by "living with him, seeing everything and blaming nothing." Moreover, Alyosha brought with him something his father had never known before: a complete absence of contempt for him and an invariable kindness, a perfectly natural unaffected devotion to the old man who deserved it so little. All this was a complete surprise to the old profligate, who had dropped all family ties. It was a new and surprising experience for him, who had till then loved nothing but "evil." When Alyosha had left him, he confessed to himself that he had learnt something he had not till then been willing to learn.

I have mentioned already that Grigory had detested Adelaida Ivanovna, the first wife of Fyodor Pavlovitch and the mother of Dmitri, and that he had, on the contrary, protected Sofya Ivanovna, the poor "crazy woman," against his master and anyone who chanced to speak ill or lightly of her. His sympathy for the unhappy wife had become something sacred to him, so that even now, twenty years after, he could not bear a slighting allusion to her from anyone, and would at once check the offender. Externally, Grigory was cold, dignified and taciturn, and spoke, weighing his words, without frivolity. It was impossible to tell at first sight whether he loved his meek, obedient wife; but he really did love her, and she knew it.

Marfa Ignatyevna was by no means foolish; she was probably, indeed, cleverer than her husband, or, at least, more prudent than he in worldly affairs, and yet she had given in to him in everything without question or complaint ever since her marriage, and respected him for his spiritual superiority. It was remarkable how little they spoke to one another in the course of their lives, and only of the most necessary daily affairs. The grave and dignified Grigory thought over all his cares and duties alone, so that Marfa Ignatyevna had long grown used to knowing that he did not need her advice. She felt that her husband respected her silence, and took it as a sign of her good sense. He had never beaten her but once, and then only slightly. Once during the year after Fyodor Pavlovitch's marriage with Adelaida Ivanovna, the village girls and women — at that time serfs — were called together before the house to sing and dance. They were beginning "In the Green Meadows," when Marfa, at that time a young woman, skipped forward and danced "the Russian Dance," not in the village fashion, but as she had danced it when she was a servant in the service of the rich Miusov family, in their private theatre, where the actors were taught to dance by a

dancing master from Moscow. Grigory saw how his wife danced, and, an hour later, at home in their cottage he gave her a lesson, pulling her hair a little. But there it ended: the beating was never repeated, and Marfa Ignatyevna gave up dancing.

God had not blessed them with children. One child was born but it died. Grigory was fond of children, and was not ashamed of showing it. When Adelaida Ivanovna had run away, Grigory took Dmitri, then a child of three years old, combed his hair and washed him in a tub with his own hands, and looked after him for almost a year. Afterwards he had looked after Ivan and Alyosha, for which the general's widow had rewarded him with a slap in the face; but I have already related all that. The only happiness his own child had brought him had been in the anticipation of its birth. When it was born, he was overwhelmed with grief and horror. The baby had six fingers. Grigory was so crushed by this, that he was not only silent till the day of the christening, but kept away in the garden. It was spring, and he spent three days digging the kitchen garden. The third day was fixed for christening the baby: meantime Grigory had reached a conclusion. Going into the cottage where the clergy were assembled and the visitors had arrived, including Fyodor Pavlovitch, who was to stand godfather, he suddenly announced that the baby "ought not to be christened at all." He announced this quietly, briefly, forcing out his words, and gazing with dull intentness at the priest.

"Why not?" asked the priest with good-humoured surprise.

"Because it's a dragon," muttered Grigory.

"A dragon? What dragon?"

Grigory did not speak for some time. "It's a confusion of nature," he muttered vaguely, but firmly, and obviously unwilling to say more.

They laughed, and, of course, christened the poor baby. Grigory prayed earnestly at the font, but his opinion of the new-born child remained unchanged. Yet he did not interfere in any way. As long as the sickly infant lived he scarcely looked at it, tried indeed not to notice it, and for the most part kept out of the cottage. But when, at the end of a fortnight, the baby died of thrush, he himself laid the child in its little coffin, looked at it in profound grief, and when they were filling up the shallow little grave he fell on his knees and bowed down to the earth. He did not for years afterwards mention his child, nor did Marfa speak of the baby before him, and, even if Grigory were not present, she never spoke of it above a whisper. Marfa observed that, from the day of the burial, he devoted himself to "religion,"

and took to reading the Lives of the Saints, for the most part sitting alone and in silence, and always putting on his big, round, silver-rimmed spectacles. He rarely read aloud, only perhaps in Lent. He was fond of the Book of Job, and had somehow got hold of a copy of the sayings and sermons of “the God fearing Father Isaac the Syrian, which he read persistently for years together, understanding very little of it, but perhaps prizing and loving it the more for that. Of late he had begun to listen to the doctrines of the sect of Flagellants settled in the neighbourhood. He was evidently shaken by them, but judged it unfitting to go over to the new faith. His habit of theological reading gave him an expression of still greater gravity.

He was perhaps predisposed to mysticism. And the birth of his deformed child, and its death, had, as though by special design, been accompanied by another strange and marvellous event, which, as he said later, had left a “stamp” upon his soul. It happened that, on the very night after the burial of his child, Marfa was awakened by the wail of a new-born baby. She was frightened and waked her husband. He listened and said he thought it was more like someone groaning, “it might be a woman.” He got up and dressed. It was a rather warm night in May. As he went down the steps, he distinctly heard groans coming from the garden. But the gate from the yard into the garden was locked at night, and there was no other way of entering it, for it was enclosed all round by a strong, high fence. Going back into the house, Grigory lighted a lantern, took the garden key, and taking no notice of the hysterical fears of his wife, who was still persuaded that she heard a child crying, and that it was her own baby crying and calling for her, went into the garden in silence. There he heard at once that the groans came from the bath-house that stood near the garden gate, and that they were the groans of a woman. Opening the door of the bath-house, he saw a sight which petrified him. An idiot girl, who wandered about the streets and was known to the whole town by the nickname of Lizaveta Smerdyastchaya (Stinking Lizaveta), had got into the bath-house and had just given birth to a child. She lay dying with the baby beside her. She said nothing, for she had never been able to speak. But her story needs a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER 2

Lizaveta

THERE was one circumstance which struck Grigory particularly, and confirmed a very unpleasant and revolting suspicion. This Lizaveta was a dwarfish creature, “not five foot within a wee bit,” as many of the pious old women said pathetically about her, after her death. Her broad, healthy, red face had a look of blank idiocy and the fixed stare in her eyes was unpleasant, in spite of their meek expression. She wandered about, summer and winter alike, barefooted, wearing nothing but a hempen smock. Her coarse, almost black hair curled like lamb’s wool, and formed a sort of huge cap on her head. It was always crusted with mud, and had leaves; bits of stick, and shavings clinging to it, as she always slept on the ground and in the dirt. Her father, a homeless, sickly drunkard, called Ilya, had lost everything and lived many years as a workman with some well-to-do tradespeople. Her mother had long been dead. Spiteful and diseased, Ilya used to beat Lizaveta inhumanly whenever she returned to him. But she rarely did so, for everyone in the town was ready to look after her as being an idiot, and so specially dear to God. Ilya’s employers, and many others in the town, especially of the tradespeople, tried to clothe her better, and always rigged her out with high boots and sheepskin coat for the winter. But, although she allowed them to dress her up without resisting, she usually went away, preferably to the cathedral porch, and taking off all that had been given her — kerchief, sheepskin, skirt or boots — she left them there and walked away barefoot in her smock as before. It happened on one occasion that a new governor of the province, making a tour of inspection in our town, saw Lizaveta, and was wounded in his tenderest susceptibilities. And though he was told she was an idiot, he pronounced that for a young woman of twenty to wander about in nothing but a smock was a breach of the proprieties, and must not occur again. But the governor went his way, and Lizaveta was left as she was. At last her father died, which made her even more acceptable in the eyes of the religious persons of the town, as an orphan. In fact, everyone seemed to like her; even the boys did not tease her, and the boys of our town, especially the schoolboys, are a mischievous set. She would walk into strange houses, and no one drove her away.

Everyone was kind to her and gave her something. If she were given a copper, she would take it, and at once drop it in the alms-jug of the church or prison. If she were given a roll or bun in the market, she would hand it to the first child she met. Sometimes she would stop one of the richest ladies in the town and give it to her, and the lady would be pleased to take it. She herself never tasted anything but black bread and water. If she went into an expensive shop, where there were costly goods or money lying about, no one kept watch on her, for they knew that if she saw thousands of roubles overlooked by them, she would not have touched a farthing. She scarcely ever went to church. She slept either in the church porch or climbed over a hurdle (there are many hurdles instead of fences to this day in our town) into a kitchen garden. She used at least once a week to turn up “at home,” that is at the house of her father’s former employers, and in the winter went there every night, and slept either in the passage or the cow-house. People were amazed that she could stand such a life, but she was accustomed to it, and, although she was so tiny, she was of a robust constitution. Some of the townspeople declared that she did all this only from pride, but that is hardly credible. She could hardly speak, and only from time to time uttered an inarticulate grunt. How could she have been proud?

It happened one clear, warm, moonlight night in September (many years ago) five or six drunken revellers were returning from the club at a very late hour, according to our provincial notions. They passed through the “backway,” which led between the back gardens of the houses, with hurdles on either side. This way leads out on to the bridge over the long, stinking pool which we were accustomed to call a river. Among the nettles and burdocks under the hurdle our revellers saw Lizaveta asleep. They stopped to look at her, laughing, and began jesting with unbridled licentiousness. It occurred to one young gentleman to make the whimsical inquiry whether anyone could possibly look upon such an animal as a woman, and so forth.... They all pronounced with lofty repugnance that it was impossible. But Fyodor Pavlovitch, who was among them, sprang forward and declared that it was by no means impossible, and that, indeed, there was a certain piquancy about it, and so on.... It is true that at that time he was overdoing his part as a buffoon. He liked to put himself forward and entertain the company, ostensibly on equal terms, of course, though in reality he was on a servile footing with them. It was just at the time when he had received the news of his first wife’s death in Petersburg, and, with crape upon his hat,

was drinking and behaving so shamelessly that even the most reckless among us were shocked at the sight of him. The revellers, of course, laughed at this unexpected opinion; and one of them even began challenging him to act upon it. The others repelled the idea even more emphatically, although still with the utmost hilarity, and at last they went on their way. Later on, Fyodor Pavlovitch swore that he had gone with them, and perhaps it was so, no one knows for certain, and no one ever knew. But five or six months later, all the town was talking, with intense and sincere indignation, of Lizaveta's condition, and trying to find out who was the miscreant who had wronged her. Then suddenly a terrible rumour was all over the town that this miscreant was no other than Fyodor Pavlovitch. Who set the rumour going? Of that drunken band five had left the town and the only one still among us was an elderly and much respected civil councillor, the father of grown-up daughters, who could hardly have spread the tale, even if there had been any foundation for it. But rumour pointed straight at Fyodor Pavlovitch, and persisted in pointing at him. Of course this was no great grievance to him: he would not have troubled to contradict a set of tradespeople. In those days he was proud, and did not condescend to talk except in his own circle of the officials and nobles, whom he entertained so well.

At the time, Grigory stood up for his master vigorously. He provoked quarrels and altercations in defence of him and succeeded in bringing some people round to his side. "It's the wench's own fault," he asserted, and the culprit was Karp, a dangerous convict, who had escaped from prison and whose name was well known to us, as he had hidden in our town. This conjecture sounded plausible, for it was remembered that Karp had been in the neighbourhood just at that time in the autumn, and had robbed three people. But this affair and all the talk about it did not estrange popular sympathy from the poor idiot. She was better looked after than ever. A well-to-do merchants's widow named Kondratyev arranged to take her into her house at the end of April, meaning not to let her go out until after the confinement. They kept a constant watch over her, but in spite of their vigilance she escaped on the very last day, and made her way into Fyodor Pavlovitch's garden. How, in her condition, she managed to climb over the high, strong fence remained a mystery. Some maintained that she must have been lifted over by somebody; others hinted at something more uncanny. The most likely explanation is that it happened naturally — that Lizaveta,

accustomed to clambering over hurdles to sleep in gardens, had somehow managed to climb this fence, in spite of her condition, and had leapt down, injuring herself.

Grigory rushed to Marfa and sent her to Lizaveta, while he ran to fetch an old midwife who lived close by. They saved the baby, but Lizaveta died at dawn. Grigory took the baby, brought it home, and making his wife sit down, put it on her lap. “A child of God — an orphan is akin to all,” he said, “and to us above others. Our little lost one has sent us this, who has come from the devil’s son and a holy innocent. Nurse him and weep no more.”

So Marfa brought up the child. He was christened Pavel, to which people were not slow in adding Fyodorovitch (son of Fyodor). Fyodor Pavlovitch did not object to any of this, and thought it amusing, though he persisted vigorously in denying his responsibility. The townspeople were pleased at his adopting the foundling. Later on, Fyodor Pavlovitch invented a surname for the child, calling him Smerdyakov, after his mother’s nickname.

So this Smerdyakov became Fyodor Pavlovitch’s second servant, and was living in the lodge with Grigory and Marfa at the time our story begins. He was employed as cook. I ought to say something of this Smerdyakov, but I am ashamed of keeping my readers’ attention so long occupied with these common menials, and I will go back to my story, hoping to say more of Smerdyakov in the course of it.

CHAPTER 3

The Confession of a Passionate Heart — in Verse

ALYOSHA remained for some time irresolute after hearing the command his father shouted to him from the carriage. But in spite of his uneasiness he did not stand still. That was not his way. He went at once to the kitchen to find out what his father had been doing above. Then he set off, trusting that on the way he would find some answer to the doubt tormenting him. I hasten to add that his father's shouts, commanding him to return home "with his mattress and pillow" did not frighten him in the least. He understood perfectly that those peremptory shouts were merely "a flourish" to produce an effect. In the same way a tradesman in our town who was celebrating his name-day with a party of friends, getting angry at being refused more vodka, smashed up his own crockery and furniture and tore his own and his wife's clothes, and finally broke his windows, all for the sake of effect. Next day, of course, when he was sober, he regretted the broken cups and saucers. Alyosha knew that his father would let him go back to the monastery next day, possibly even that evening. Moreover, he was fully persuaded that his father might hurt anyone else, but would not hurt him. Alyosha was certain that no one in the whole world ever would want to hurt him, and, what is more, he knew that no one could hurt him. This was for him an axiom, assumed once for all without question, and he went his way without hesitation, relying on it.

But at that moment an anxiety of sort disturbed him, and worried him the more because he could not formulate it. It was the fear of a woman, of Katerina Ivanovna, who had so urgently entreated him in the note handed to him by Madame Hohlakov to come and see her about something. This request and the necessity of going had at once aroused an uneasy feeling in his heart, and this feeling had grown more and more painful all the morning in spite of the scenes at the hermitage and at the Father Superior's. He was not uneasy because he did not know what she would speak of and what he must answer. And he was not afraid of her simply as a woman. Though he knew little of women, he spent his life, from early childhood till he entered the monastery, entirely with women. He was afraid of that woman, Katerina Ivanovna. He had been afraid of her from the first time he saw her. He had

only seen her two or three times, and had only chanced to say a few words to her. He thought of her as a beautiful, proud, imperious girl. It was not her beauty which troubled him, but something else. And the vagueness of his apprehension increased the apprehension itself. The girl's aims were of the noblest, he knew that. She was trying to save his brother Dmitri simply through generosity, though he had already behaved badly to her. Yet, although Alyosha recognised and did justice to all these fine and generous sentiments, a shiver began to run down his back as soon as he drew near her house.

He reflected that he would not find Ivan, who was so intimate a friend, with her, for Ivan was certainly now with his father. Dmitri he was even more certain not to find there, and he had a foreboding of the reason. And so his conversation would be with her alone. He had a great longing to run and see his brother Dmitri before that fateful interview. Without showing him the letter, he could talk to him about it. But Dmitri lived a long way off, and he was sure to be away from home too. Standing still for a minute, he reached a final decision. Crossing himself with a rapid and accustomed gesture, and at once smiling, he turned resolutely in the direction of his terrible lady.

He knew her house. If he went by the High Street and then across the market-place, it was a long way round. Though our town is small, it is scattered, and the houses are far apart. And meanwhile his father was expecting him, and perhaps had not yet forgotten his command. He might be unreasonable, and so he had to make haste to get there and back. So he decided to take a short cut by the backway, for he knew every inch of the ground. This meant skirting fences, climbing over hurdles, and crossing other people's back-yards, where everyone he met knew him and greeted him. In this way he could reach the High Street in half the time.

He had to pass the garden adjoining his father's, and belonging to a little tumbledown house with four windows. The owner of this house, as Alyosha knew, was a bedridden old woman, living with her daughter, who had been a genteel maid-servant in generals' families in Petersburg. Now she had been at home a year, looking after her sick mother. She always dressed up in fine clothes, though her old mother and she had sunk into such poverty that they went every day to Fyodor Pavlovitch's kitchen for soup and bread, which Marfa gave readily. Yet, though the young woman came up for soup, she had never sold any of her dresses, and one of these even had a long train

— a fact which Alyosha had learned from Rakitin, who always knew everything that was going on in the town. He had forgotten it as soon as he heard it, but now, on reaching the garden, he remembered the dress with the train, raised his head, which had been bowed in thought, and came upon something quite unexpected.

Over the hurdle in the garden, Dmitri, mounted on something, was leaning forward, gesticulating violently, beckoning to him, obviously afraid to utter a word for fear of being overheard. Alyosha ran up to the hurdle.

“It’s a good thing you looked up. I was nearly shouting to you,” Mitya said in a joyful, hurried whisper. “Climb in here quickly! How splendid that you’ve come! I was just thinking of you”

Alyosha was delighted too, but he did not know how to get over the hurdle. Mitya put his powerful hand under his elbow to help him jump. Tucking up his cassock, Alyosha leapt over the hurdle with the agility of a bare-legged street urchin.

“Well done! Now come along,” said Mitya in an enthusiastic whisper.

“Where?” whispered Alyosha, looking about him and finding himself in a deserted garden with no one near but themselves. The garden was small, but the house was at least fifty paces away.

“There’s no one here. Why do you whisper?” asked Alyosha.

“Why do I whisper? Deuce take it” cried Dmitri at the top of his voice. “You see what silly tricks nature plays one. I am here in secret, and on the watch. I’ll explain later on, but, knowing it’s a secret, I began whispering like a fool, when there’s no need. Let us go. Over there. Till then be quiet. I want to kiss you. Glory to God in the world, Glory to God in me...

I was just repeating that, sitting here, before you came.”

The garden was about three acres in extent, and planted with trees only along the fence at the four sides. There were apple-trees, maples, limes and birch-trees. The middle of the garden was an empty grass space, from which several hundredweight of hay was carried in the summer. The garden was let out for a few roubles for the summer. There were also plantations of raspberries and currants and gooseberries laid out along the sides; a kitchen garden had been planted lately near the house.

Dmitri led his brother to the most secluded corner of the garden. There, in a thicket of lime-trees and old bushes of black currant, elder, snowball-tree, and lilac, there stood a tumbledown green summer-house; blackened with age. Its walls were of lattice-work, but there was still a roof which

could give shelter. God knows when this summer-house was built. There was a tradition that it had been put up some fifty years before by a retired colonel called von Schmidt, who owned the house at that time. It was all in decay, the floor was rotting, the planks were loose, the woodwork smelled musty. In the summer-house there was a green wooden table fixed in the ground, and round it were some green benches upon which it was still possible to sit. Alyosha had at once observed his brother's exhilarated condition, and on entering the arbour he saw half a bottle of brandy and a wineglass on the table.

"That's brandy," Mitya laughed. "I see your look: 'He's drinking again" Distrust the apparition. Distrust the worthless, lying crowd,

And lay aside thy doubts.

I'm not drinking, I'm only 'indulging,' as that pig, your Rakitin, says. He'll be a civil councillor one day, but he'll always talk about 'indulging.' Sit down. I could take you in my arms, Alyosha, and press you to my bosom till I crush you, for in the whole world — in reality — in real-i-ty — (can you take it in?) I love no one but you!

He uttered the last words in a sort of exaltation.

"No one but you and one 'jade' I have fallen in love with, to my ruin. But being in love doesn't mean loving. You may be in love with a woman and yet hate her. Remember that! I can talk about it gaily still. Sit down here by the table and I'll sit beside you and look at you, and go on talking. You shall keep quiet and I'll go on talking, for the time has come. But on reflection, you know, I'd better speak quietly, for here — here — you can never tell what ears are listening. I will explain everything; as they say, 'the story will be continued.' Why have I been longing for you? Why have I been thirsting for you all these days, and just now? (It's five days since I've cast anchor here.) Because it's only to you I can tell everything; because I must, because I need you, because to-morrow I shall fly from the clouds, because to-morrow life is ending and beginning. Have you ever felt, have you ever dreamt of falling down a precipice into a pit? That's just how I'm falling, but not in a dream. And I'm not afraid, and don't you be afraid. At least, I am afraid, but I enjoy it. It's not enjoyment though, but ecstasy. Damn it all, whatever it is! A strong spirit, a weak spirit, a womanish spirit — what, ever it is! Let us praise nature: you see what sunshine, how clear the sky is, the leaves are all green, it's still summer; four o'clock in the afternoon and the stillness! Where were you going?"

“I was going to father’s, but I meant to go to Katerina Ivanovna’s first.”

“To her, and to father! Oo! what a coincidence! Why was I waiting for you? Hungering and thirsting for you in every cranny of my soul and even in my ribs? Why, to send you to father and to her, Katerina Ivanovna, so as to have done with her and with father. To send an angel. I might have sent anyone, but I wanted to send an angel. And here you are on your way to see father and her.”

“Did you really mean to send me?” cried Alyosha with a distressed expression.

“Stay! You knew it And I see you understand it all at once. But be quiet, be quiet for a time. Don’t be sorry, and don’t cry.”

Dmitri stood up, thought a moment, and put his finger to his forehead.

“She’s asked you, written to you a letter or something, that’s why you’re going to her? You wouldn’t be going except for that?”

“Here is her note.” Alyosha took it out of his pocket. Mitya looked through it quickly.

“And you were going the backway! Oh, gods, I thank you for sending him by the backway, and he came to me like the golden fish to the silly old fishermen in the fable! Listen, Alyosha, listen, brother! Now I mean to tell you everything, for I must tell someone. An angel in heaven I’ve told already; but I want to tell an angel on earth. You are an angel on earth. You will hear and judge and forgive. And that’s what I need, that someone above me should forgive. Listen! If two people break away from everything on earth and fly off into the unknown, or at least one of them, and before flying off or going to ruin he comes to someone else and says, ‘Do this for me’ — some favour never asked before that could only be asked on one’s deathbed — would that other refuse, if he were a friend or a brother?”

“I will do it, but tell me what it is, and make haste,” said Alyosha.

“Make haste! H’m!... Don’t be in a hurry, Alyosha, you hurry and worry yourself. There’s no need to hurry now. Now the world has taken a new turning. Ah, Alyosha, what a pity you can’t understand ecstasy. But what am I saying to him? As though you didn’t understand it. What an ass I am! What am I saying? ‘Be noble, O man!’ — who says that?”

Alyosha made up his mind to wait. He felt that, perhaps, indeed, his work lay here. Mitya sank into thought for a moment, with his elbow on the table and his head in his hand. Both were silent.

“Alyosha,” said Mitya, “you’re the only one who won’t laugh. I should like to begin — my confession — with Schiller’s Hymn to Joy, An die Freude! I don’t know German, I only know it’s called that. Don’t think I’m talking nonsense because I’m drunk. I’m not a bit drunk. Brandy’s all very well, but I need two bottles to make me drunk: Silenus with his rosy phiz Upon his stumbling ass.

But I’ve not drunk a quarter of a bottle, and I’m not Silenus. I’m not Silenus, though I am strong,* for I’ve made a decision once for all. Forgive me the pun; you’ll have to forgive me a lot more than puns to-day. Don’t be uneasy. I’m not spinning it out. I’m talking sense, and I’ll come to the point in a minute. I won’t keep you in suspense. Stay, how does it go?”

* In Russian, silen.

He raised his head, thought a minute, and began with enthusiasm:

Wild and fearful in his cavern
Hid the naked troglodyte,
And the homeless nomad wandered
Laying waste the fertile plain.
Menacing with spear and arrow
In the woods the hunter strayed....
Woe to all poor wretches stranded
On those cruel and hostile shores!
From the peak of high Olympus
Came the mother Ceres down,
Seeking in those savage regions
Her lost daughter Proserpine.
But the Goddess found no refuge,
Found no kindly welcome there,
And no temple bearing witness
To the worship of the gods.
From the fields and from the vineyards
Came no fruits to deck the feasts,
Only flesh of bloodstained victims
Smouldered on the altar-fires,
And where’er the grieving goddess
Turns her melancholy gaze,
Sunk in vilest degradation

Man his loathsomeness displays
Mitya broke into sobs and seized Alyosha’s hand.

“My dear, my dear, in degradation, in degradation now, too. There’s a terrible amount of suffering for man on earth, a terrible lot of trouble. Don’t think I’m only a brute in an officer’s uniform, wallowing in dirt and drink. I hardly think of anything but of that degraded man — if only I’m not lying. I pray God I’m not lying and showing off. I think about that man because I am that man myself. Would he purge his soul from vileness

And attain to light and worth,
He must turn and cling for ever
To his ancient Mother Earth.

But the difficulty is how am I to cling for ever to Mother Earth. I don’t kiss her. I don’t cleave to her bosom. Am I to become a peasant or a shepherd? I go on and I don’t know whether I’m going to shame or to light and joy. That’s the trouble, for everything in the world is a riddle! And whenever I’ve happened to sink into the vilest degradation (and it’s always been happening) I always read that poem about Ceres and man. Has it reformed me? Never! For I’m a Karamazov. For when I do leap into the pit, I go headlong with my heels up, and am pleased to be falling in that degrading attitude, and pride myself upon it. And in the very depths of that degradation I begin a hymn of praise. Let me be accursed. Let me be vile and base, only let me kiss the hem of the veil in which my God is shrouded. Though I may be following the devil, I am Thy son, O Lord, and I love Thee, and I feel the joy without which the world cannot stand.

Joy everlasting fostereth
The soul of all creation,
It is her secret ferment fires
The cup of life with flame.
’Tis at her beck the grass hath turned
Each blade towards the light
And solar systems have evolved
From chaos and dark night,
Filling the realms of boundless space

Beyond the sage’s sight.
At bounteous Nature’s kindly breast,
All things that breathe drink Joy,
And birds and beasts and creeping things
All follow where She leads.
Her gifts to man are friends in need,
The wreath, the foaming must,
To angels — vision of God’s throne,
To insects — sensual lust.

But enough poetry! I am in tears; let me cry. It may be foolishness that everyone would laugh at. But you won’t laugh. Your eyes are shining, too. Enough poetry. I want to tell you now about the insects to whom God gave ‘sensual lust.’ To insects — sensual lust.

I am that insect, brother, and it is said of me specially. All we Karamazovs are such insects, and, angel as you are, that insect lives in you, too, and will stir up a tempest in your blood. Tempests, because sensual lust is a tempest worse than a tempest! Beauty is a terrible and awful thing! It is terrible because it has not been fathomed and never can be fathomed, for God sets us nothing but riddles. Here the boundaries meet and all contradictions exist side by side. I am a cultivated man, brother, but I’ve thought a lot about this. It’s terrible what mysteries there are! Too many riddles weigh men down on earth. We must solve them as we can, and try to keep a dry skin in the water. Beauty! I can’t endure the thought that a man of lofty mind and heart begins with the ideal of the Madonna and ends with the ideal of Sodom. What’s still more awful is that a man with the ideal of Sodom in his soul does not renounce the ideal of the Madonna, and his heart may be on fire with that ideal, genuinely on fire, just as in his days of youth and innocence. Yes, man is broad, too broad, indeed. I’d have him narrower. The devil only knows what to make of it! What to the mind is shameful is beauty and nothing else to the heart. Is there beauty in Sodom? Believe me, that for the immense mass of mankind beauty is found in Sodom. Did you know that secret? The awful thing is that beauty is mysterious as well as terrible. God and the devil are fighting there and the battlefield is the heart of man. But a man always talks of his own ache. Listen, now to come to facts.”

CHAPTER 4

The Confession of a Passionate Heart

In Anecdote

“I WAS leading a wild life then. Father said just now that I spent several thousand roubles in seducing young girls. That’s a swinish invention, and there was nothing of the sort. And if there was, I didn’t need money simply for that. With me money is an accessory, the overflow of my heart, the framework. To-day she would be my lady, to-morrow a wench out of the streets in her place. I entertained them both. I threw away money by the handful on music, rioting, and Gypsies. Sometimes I gave it to the ladies, too, for they’ll take it greedily, that must be admitted, and be pleased and thankful for it. Ladies used to be fond of me: not all of them, but it happened, it happened. But I always liked side-paths, little dark back-alleys behind the main road — there one finds adventures and surprises, and precious metal in the dirt. I am speaking figuratively, brother. In the town I was in, there were no such back-alleys in the literal sense, but morally there were. If you were like me, you’d know what that means. I loved vice, I loved the ignominy of vice. I loved cruelty; am I not a bug, am I not a noxious insect? In fact a Karamazov! Once we went, a whole lot of us, for a picnic, in seven sledges. It was dark, it was winter, and I began squeezing a girl’s hand, and forced her to kiss me. She was the daughter of an official, a sweet, gentle, submissive creature. She allowed me, she allowed me much in the dark. She thought, poor thing, that I should come next day to make her an offer (I was looked upon as a good match, too). But I didn’t say a word to her for five months. I used to see her in a corner at dances (we were always having dances), her eyes watching me. I saw how they glowed with fire — a fire of gentle indignation. This game only tickled that insect lust I cherished in my soul. Five months later she married an official and left the town, still angry, and still, perhaps, in love with me. Now they live happily. Observe that I told no one. I didn’t boast of it. Though I’m full of low desires, and love what’s low, I’m not dishonourable. You’re blushing; your eyes flashed. Enough of this filth with you. And all this was nothing much — wayside blossoms a la Paul de Kock — though the cruel insect had

already grown strong in my soul. I've a perfect album of reminiscences, brother. God bless them, the darlings. I tried to break it off without quarrelling. And I never gave them away, I never bragged of one of them. But that's enough. You can't suppose I brought you here simply to talk of such nonsense. No, I'm going to tell you something more curious; and don't be surprised that I'm glad to tell you, instead of being ashamed."

"You say that because I blushed," Alyosha said suddenly. "I wasn't blushing at what you were saying or at what you've done. I blushed because I am the same as you are."

"You? Come, that's going a little too far!"

"No, it's not too far," said Alyosha warmly (obviously the idea was not a new one). "The ladder's the same. I'm at the bottom step, and you're above, somewhere about the thirteenth. That's how I see it. But it's all the same. Absolutely the same in kind. Anyone on the bottom step is bound to go up to the top one."

"Then one ought not to step on at all."

"Anyone who can help it had better not."

"But can you?"

"I think not."

"Hush, Alyosha, hush, darling! I could kiss your hand, you touch me so. That rogue Grushenka has an eye for men. She told me once that she'd devour you one day. There, there, I won't! From this field of corruption fouled by flies, let's pass to my tragedy, also befouled by flies, that is, by every sort of vileness. Although the old man told lies about my seducing innocence, there really was something of the sort in my tragedy, though it was only once, and then it did not come off. The old man who has reproached me with what never happened does not even know of this fact; I never told anyone about it. You're the first, except Ivan, of course — Ivan knows everything. He knew about it long before you. But Ivan's a tomb."

"Ivan's a tomb?"

Alyosha listened with great attention.

"I was lieutenant in a line regiment, but still I was under supervision, like a kind of convict. Yet I was awfully well received in the little town. I spent money right and left. I was thought to be rich; I thought so myself. But I must have pleased them in other ways as well. Although they shook their heads over me, they liked me. My colonel, who was an old man, took a sudden dislike to me. He was always down upon me, but I had powerful

friends, and, moreover, all the town was on my side, so he couldn’t do me much harm. I was in fault myself for refusing to treat him with proper respect. I was proud. This obstinate old fellow, who was really a very good sort, kind-hearted and hospitable, had had two wives, both dead. His first wife, who was of a humble family, left a daughter as unpretentious as herself. She was a young woman of four and twenty when I was there, and was living with her father and an aunt, her mother’s sister. The aunt was simple and illiterate; the niece was simple but lively. I like to say nice things about people. I never knew a woman of more charming character than Agafya — fancy, her name was Agafya Ivanovna! And she wasn’t bad-looking either, in the Russian style: tall, stout, with a full figure, and beautiful eyes, though a rather coarse face. She had not married, although she had had two suitors. She refused them, but was as cheerful as ever. I was intimate with her, not in ‘that’ way, it was pure friendship. I have often been friendly with women quite innocently. I used to talk to her with shocking frankness, and she only laughed. Many woman like such freedom, and she was a girl too, which made it very amusing. Another thing, one could never think of her as a young lady. She and her aunt lived in her father’s house with a sort of voluntary humility, not putting themselves on an equality with other people. She was a general favourite, and of use of everyone, for she was a clever dressmaker. She had a talent for it. She gave her services freely without asking for payment, but if anyone offered her payment, she didn’t refuse. The colonel, of course, was a very different matter. He was one of the chief personages in the district. He kept open house, entertained the whole town, gave suppers and dances. At the time I arrived and joined the battalion, all the town was talking of the expected return of the colonel’s second daughter, a great beauty, who had just left a fashionable school in the capital. This second daughter is Katerina Ivanovna, and she was the child of the second wife, who belonged to a distinguished general’s family; although, as I learnt on good authority, she too brought the colonel no money. She had connections, and that was all. There may have been expectations, but they had come to nothing.

“Yet, when the young lady came from boarding-school on a visit, the whole town revived. Our most distinguished ladies — two ‘Excellencies’ and a colonel’s wife — and all the rest following their lead, at once took her up and gave entertainments in her honour. She was the belle of the balls and picnics, and they got up tableaux vivants in aid of distressed governesses. I

took no notice, I went on as wildly as before, and one of my exploits at the time set all the town talking. I saw her eyes taking my measure one evening at the battery commander's, but I didn't go up to her, as though I disdained her acquaintance. I did go up and speak to her at an evening party not long after. She scarcely looked at me, and compressed her lips scornfully. 'Wait a bit. I'll have my revenge,' thought I. I behaved like an awful fool on many occasions at that time, and I was conscious of it myself. What made it worse was that I felt that 'Katenka' was not an innocent boarding-school miss, but a person of character, proud and really high-principled; above all, she had education and intellect, and I had neither. You think I meant to make her an offer? No, I simply wanted to revenge myself, because I was such a hero and she didn't seem to feel it.

"Meanwhile, I spent my time in drink and riot, till the lieutenant-colonel put me under arrest for three days. Just at that time father sent me six thousand roubles in return for my sending him a deed giving up all claims upon him — settling our accounts, so to speak, and saying that I wouldn't expect anything more. I didn't understand a word of it at the time. Until I came here, Alyosha, till the last few days, indeed, perhaps even now, I haven't been able to make head or tail of my money affairs with father. But never mind that, we'll talk of it later.

"Just as I received the money, I got a letter from a friend telling me something that interested me immensely. The authorities, I learnt, were dissatisfied with our lieutenant-colonel. He was suspected of irregularities; in fact, his enemies were preparing a surprise for him. And then the commander of the division arrived, and kicked up the devil of a shindy. Shortly afterwards he was ordered to retire. I won't tell you how it all happened. He had enemies certainly. Suddenly there was a marked coolness in the town towards him and all his family. His friends all turned their backs on him. Then I took my first step. I met Agafya Ivanovna, with whom I'd always kept up a friendship, and said, 'Do you know there's a deficit of 4500 roubles of government money in your father's accounts?'

"'What do you mean? What makes you say so? The general was here not long ago, and everything was all right.'

"'Then it was, but now it isn't.'

"She was terribly scared.

"'Don't frighten me!' she said. 'Who told you so?'

“‘Don’t be uneasy,’ I said, ‘I won’t tell anyone. You know I’m as silent as the tomb. I only wanted, in view of “possibilities,” to add, that when they demand that 4500 roubles from your father, and he can’t produce it, he’ll be tried, and made to serve as a common soldier in his old age, unless you like to send me your young lady secretly. I’ve just had money paid me. I’ll give her four thousand, if you like, and keep the secret religiously.’

“‘Ah, you scoundrel!’ — that’s what she said. ‘You wicked scoundrel! How dare you!’

“She went away furiously indignant, while I shouted after her once more that the secret should be kept sacred. Those two simple creatures, Agafya and her aunt, I may as well say at once, behaved like perfect angels all through this business. They genuinely adored their ‘Katya,’ thought her far above them, and waited on her, hand and foot. But Agafya told her of our conversation. I found that out afterwards. She didn’t keep it back, and of course that was all I wanted.

“Suddenly the new major arrived to take command of the battalion. The old lieutenant-colonel was taken ill at once, couldn’t leave his room for two days, and didn’t hand over the government money. Dr. Kravchenko declared that he really was ill. But I knew for a fact, and had known for a long time, that for the last four years the money had never been in his hands except when the Commander made his visits of inspection. He used to lend it to a trustworthy person, a merchant of our town called Trifonov, an old widower, with a big beard and gold-rimmed spectacles. He used to go to the fair, do a profitable business with the money, and return the whole sum to the colonel, bringing with it a present from the fair, as well as interest on the loan. But this time (I heard all about it quite by chance from Trifonov’s son and heir, a drivelling youth and one of the most vicious in the world) — this time, I say, Trifonov brought nothing back from the fair. The lieutenant-colonel flew to him. ‘I’ve never received any money from you, and couldn’t possibly have received any.’ That was all the answer he got. So now our lieutenant-colonel is confined to the house, with a towel round his head, while they’re all three busy putting ice on it. All at once an orderly arrives on the scene with the book and the order to ‘hand over the battalion money immediately, within two hours.’ He signed the book (I saw the signature in the book afterwards), stood up, saying he would put on his uniform, ran to his bedroom, loaded his double-barrelled gun with a service bullet, took the boot off his right foot, fixed the gun against his chest, and began feeling for

the trigger with his foot. But Agafya, remembering what I had told her, had her suspicions. She stole up and peeped into the room just in time. She rushed in, flung herself upon him from behind, threw her arms round him, and the gun went off, hit the ceiling, but hurt no one. The others ran in, took away the gun, and held him by the arms. I heard all about this afterwards. I was at home, it was getting dusk, and I was just preparing to go out. I had dressed, brushed my hair, scented my handkerchief, and taken up my cap, when suddenly the door opened, and facing me in the room stood Katerina Ivanovna.

“It’s strange how things happen sometimes. No one had seen her in the street, so that no one knew of it in the town. I lodged with two decrepit old ladies, who looked after me. They were most obliging old things, ready to do anything for me, and at my request were as silent afterwards as two cast-iron posts. Of course I grasped the position at once. She walked in and looked straight at me, her dark eyes determined, even defiant, but on her lips and round mouth I saw uncertainty.

“‘My sister told me,’ she began, ‘that you would give me 4500 roubles if I came to you for it — myself. I have come... give me the money!’

“She couldn’t keep it up. She was breathless, frightened, her voice failed her, and the corners of her mouth and the lines round it quivered. Alyosha, are you listening, or are you asleep?”

“Mitya, I know you will tell the whole truth, said Alyosha in agitation.

“I am telling it. If I tell the whole truth just as it happened I shan’t spare myself. My first idea was a — Karamazov one. Once I was bitten by a centipede, brother, and laid up a fortnight with fever from it. Well, I felt a centipede biting at my heart then — a noxious insect, you understand? I looked her up and down. You’ve seen her? She’s a beauty. But she was beautiful in another way then. At that moment she was beautiful because she was noble, and I was a scoundrel; she in all the grandeur of her generosity and sacrifice for her father, and I — a bug! And, scoundrel as I was, she was altogether at my mercy, body and soul. She was hemmed in. I tell you frankly, that thought, that venomous thought, so possessed my heart that it almost swooned with suspense. It seemed as if there could be no resisting it; as though I should act like a bug, like a venomous spider, without a spark of pity. I could scarcely breathe. Understand, I should have gone next day to ask for her hand, so that it might end honourably, so to speak, and that nobody would or could know. For though I’m a man of base

desires, I’m honest. And at that very second some voice seemed to whisper in my ear, ‘But when you come to-morrow to make your proposal, that girl won’t even see you; she’ll order her coachman to kick you out of the yard. “Publish it through all the town,” she would say, “I’m not afraid of you.” ‘I looked at the young lady, my voice had not deceived me. That is how it would be, not a doubt of it. I could see from her face now that I should be turned out of the house. My spite was roused. I longed to play her the nastiest swinish cad’s trick: to look at her with a sneer, and on the spot where she stood before me to stun her with a tone of voice that only a shopman could use.

“‘Four thousand! What do you mean? I was joking. You’ve been counting your chickens too easily, madam. Two hundred, if you like, with all my heart. But four thousand is not a sum to throw away on such frivolity. You’ve put yourself out to no purpose.’

“I should have lost the game, of course. She’d have run away. But it would have been an infernal revenge. It would have been worth it all. I’d have howled with regret all the rest of my life, only to have played that trick. Would you believe it, it has never happened to me with any other woman, not one, to look at her at such a moment with hatred. But, on my oath, I looked at her for three seconds, or five perhaps, with fearful hatred — that hate which is only a hair’s-breadth from love, from the maddest love!

“I went to the window, put my forehead against the frozen pane, and I remember the ice burnt my forehead like fire. I did not keep her long, don’t be afraid. I turned round, went up to the table, opened the drawer and took out a banknote for five thousand roubles (it was lying in a French dictionary). Then I showed it her in silence, folded it, handed it to her, opened the door into the passage, and, stepping back, made her a deep bow. a most respectful, a most impressive bow, believe me! She shuddered all over, gazed at me for a second, turned horribly pale-white as a sheet, in fact — and all at once, not impetuously but softly, gently, bowed down to my feet — not a boarding-school curtsey, but a Russian bow, with her forehead to the floor. She jumped up and ran away. I was wearing my sword. I drew it and nearly stabbed myself with it on the spot; why, I don’t know. It would have been frightfully stupid, of course. I suppose it was from delight. Can you understand that one might kill oneself from delight? But I didn’t stab myself. I only kissed my sword and put it back in the scabbard — which

there was no need to have told you, by the way. And I fancy that in telling you about my inner conflict I have laid it on rather thick to glorify myself. But let it pass, and to hell with all who pry into the human heart! Well, so much for that ‘adventure’ with Katerina Ivanovna. So now Ivan knows of it, and you — no one else.”

Dmitri got up, took a step or two in his excitement, pulled out his handkerchief and mopped his forehead, then sat down again, not in the same place as before, but on the opposite side, so that Alyosha had to turn quite round to face him.

CHAPTER 5

The Confession of a Passionate Heart

“Heels Up”

“NOW,” said Alyosha, “I understand the first half.”

“You understand the first half. That half is a drama, and it was played out there. The second half is a tragedy, and it is being acted here.”

“And I understand nothing of that second half so far,” said Alyosha.

“And I? Do you suppose I understand it?”

“Stop, Dmitri. There’s one important question. Tell me, you were betrothed, betrothed still?”

“We weren’t betrothed at once, not for three months after that adventure. The next day I told myself that the incident was closed, concluded, that there would be no sequel. It seemed to me caddish to make her an offer. On her side she gave no sign of life for the six weeks that she remained in the town; except, indeed, for one action. The day after her visit the maid-servant slipped round with an envelope addressed to me. I tore it open; it contained the change out of the banknote. Only four thousand five hundred roubles was needed, but there was a discount of about two hundred on changing it. She only sent me about two hundred and sixty. I don’t remember exactly, but not a note, not a word of explanation. I searched the packet for a pencil mark n-nothing! Well, I spent the rest of the money on such an orgy that the new major was obliged to reprimand me.

“Well, the lieutenant-colonel produced the battalion money, to the astonishment of everyone, for nobody believed that he had the money untouched. He’d no sooner paid it than he fell ill, took to his bed, and, three weeks later, softening of the brain set in, and he died five days afterwards. He was buried with military honours, for he had not had time to receive his discharge. Ten days after his funeral, Katerina Ivanovna, with her aunt and sister, went to Moscow. And, behold, on the very day they went away (I hadn’t seen them, didn’t see them off or take leave) I received a tiny note, a sheet of thin blue paper, and on it only one line in pencil: ‘I will write to you. Wait. K.’ And that was all.

“I’ll explain the rest now, in two words. In Moscow their fortunes changed with the swiftness of lightning and the unexpectedness of an Arabian fairy-tale. That general’s widow, their nearest relation, suddenly lost the two nieces who were her heiresses and next-of-kin — both died in the same week of small-pox. The old lady, prostrated with grief, welcomed Katya as a daughter, as her one hope, clutched at her, altered her will in Katya’s favour. But that concerned the future. Meanwhile she gave her, for present use, eighty thousand roubles, as a marriage portion, to do what she liked with. She was an hysterical woman. I saw something of her in Moscow, later.

“Well, suddenly I received by post four thousand five hundred roubles. I was speechless with surprise, as you may suppose. Three days later came the promised letter. I have it with me now. You must read it. She offers to be my wife, offers herself to me. ‘I love you madly, she says, ‘even if you don’t love me, never mind. Be my husband. Don’t be afraid. I won’t hamper you in any way. I will be your chattel. I will be the carpet under your feet. I want to love you for ever. I want to save you from yourself.’ Alyosha, I am not worthy to repeat those lines in my vulgar words and in my vulgar tone, my everlastingly vulgar tone, that I can never cure myself of. That letter stabs me even now. Do you think I don’t mind — that I don’t mind still? I wrote her an answer at once, as it was impossible for me to go to Moscow. I wrote to her with tears. One thing I shall be ashamed of for ever. I referred to her being rich and having a dowry while I was only a stuck-up beggar! I mentioned money! I ought to have borne it in silence, but it slipped from my pen. Then I wrote at once to Ivan, and told him all I could about it in a letter of six pages, and sent him to her. Why do you look like that? Why are you staring at me? Yes, Ivan fell in love with her; he’s in love with her still. I know that. I did a stupid thing, in the world’s opinion; but perhaps that one stupid thing may be the saving of us all now. Oo! Don’t you see what a lot she thinks of Ivan, how she respects him? When she compares us, do you suppose she can love a man like me, especially after all that has happened here?”

“But I’m convinced that she does love a man like you, and not a man like him.”

“She loves her own virtue, not me.” The words broke involuntarily, and almost malignantly, from Dmitri. He laughed, but a minute later his eyes gleamed, he flushed crimson and struck the table violently with his fist.

“I swear, Alyosha,” he cried, with intense and genuine anger at himself; “You may not believe me, but as God is Holy, and as Christ is God, I swear that though I smiled at her lofty sentiments just now, I know that I am a million times baser in soul than she, and that these lofty sentiments of hers are as sincere as a heavenly angel’s. That’s the tragedy of it — that I know that for certain. What if anyone does show off a bit? Don’t I do it myself? And yet I’m sincere, I’m sincere. As for Ivan, I can understand how he must be cursing nature now with his intellect, too! To see the preference given — to whom, to what? To a monster who, though he is betrothed and all eyes are fixed on him, can’t restrain his debaucheries — and before the very eyes of his betrothed! And a man like me is preferred, while he is rejected. And why? Because a girl wants to sacrifice her life and destiny out of gratitude. It’s ridiculous! I’ve never said a word of this to Ivan, and Ivan of course has never dropped a hint of the sort to me. But destiny will be accomplished, and the best man will hold his ground while the undeserving one will vanish into his back-alley for ever — his filthy back-alley, his beloved back-alley, where he is at home and where he will sink in filth and stench at his own free will and with enjoyment. I’ve been talking foolishly. I’ve no words left. I used them at random, but it will be as I have said. I shall drown in the back-alley, and she will marry Ivan.”

“Stop, Dmitri,” Alyosha interrupted again with great anxiety. “There’s one thing you haven’t made clear yet: you are still betrothed all the same, aren’t you? How can you break off the engagement if she, your betrothed, doesn’t want to?”

“Yes, formally and solemnly betrothed. It was all done on my arrival in Moscow, with great ceremony, with ikons, all in fine style. The general’s wife blessed us, and — would you believe it? — congratulated Katya. You’ve made a good choice,’ she said, ‘I see right through him.’ And — would you believe it? — she didn’t like Ivan, and hardly greeted him. I had a lot of talk with Katya in Moscow. I told her about myself — sincerely, honourably. She listened to everything. There was sweet confusion, There were tender words.

Though there were proud words, too. She wrung out of me a mighty promise to reform. I gave my promise, and here—”

“What?”

“Why, I called to you and brought you out here to-day, this very day — remember it — to send you — this very day again — to Katerina Ivanovna,

and—”

“To tell her that I shall never come to see her again. Say, ‘He sends you his compliments.’”

“But is that possible?”

“That’s just the reason I’m sending you, in my place, because it’s impossible. And, how could I tell her myself?”

“And where are you going?”

“To the back-alley.”

“To Grushenka, then!” Alyosha exclaimed mournfully, clasping his hands. “Can Rakitin really have told the truth? I thought that you had just visited her, and that was all.”

“Can a betrothed man pay such visits? Is such a thing possible and with such a betrothed, and before the eyes of all the world? Confound it, I have some honour! As soon as I began visiting Grushenka, I ceased to be betrothed, and to be an honest man. I understand that. Why do you look at me? You see, I went in the first place to beat her. I had heard, and I know for a fact now, that that captain, father’s agent, had given Grushenka an I.O.U. of mine for her to sue me for payment, so as to put an end to me. They wanted to scare me. I went to beat her. I had had a glimpse of her before. She doesn’t strike one at first sight. I knew about her old merchant, who’s lying ill now, paralysed; but he’s leaving her a decent little sum. I knew, too, that she was fond of money, that she hoarded it, and lent it at a wicked rate of interest, that she’s a merciless cheat and swindler. I went to beat her, and I stayed. The storm broke — it struck me down like the plague. I’m plague-stricken still, and I know that everything is over, that there will never be anything more for me. The cycle of the ages is accomplished. That’s my position. And though I’m a beggar, as fate would have it, I had three thousand just then in my pocket. I drove with Grushenka to Mokroe, a place twenty-five versts from here. I got Gypsies there and champagne and made all the peasants there drunk on it, and all the women and girls. I sent the thousands flying. In three days’ time I was stripped bare, but a hero. Do you suppose the hero had gained his end? Not a sign of it from her. I tell you that rogue, Grushenka, has a supple curve all over her body. You can see it in her little foot, even in her little toe. I saw it, and kissed it, but that was all, I swear! ‘I’ll marry you if you like,’ she said, ‘you’re a beggar, you know. Say that you won’t beat me, and will let me do

anything I choose, and perhaps I will marry you.' She laughed, and she's laughing still!"

Dmitri leapt up with a sort of fury. He seemed all at once as though he were drunk. His eyes became suddenly bloodshot.

"And do you really mean to marry her?"

"At once, if she will. And if she won't, I shall stay all the same. I'll be the porter at her gate. Alyosha!" he cried. He stopped short before him, and taking him by the shoulders began shaking him violently. "Do you know, you innocent boy, that this is all delirium, senseless delirium, for there's a tragedy here. Let me tell you, Alexey, that I may be a low man, with low and degraded passions, but a thief and a pickpocket Dmitri Karamazov never can be. Well, then; let me tell you that I am a thief and a pickpocket. That very morning, just before I went to beat Grushenka, Katerina Ivanovna sent for me, and in strict secrecy (why I don't know, I suppose she had some reason) asked me to go to the chief town of the province and to post three thousand roubles to Agafya Ivanovna in Moscow, so that nothing should be known of it in the town here. So I had that three thousand roubles in my pocket when I went to see Grushenka, and it was that money we spent at Mokroe. Afterwards I pretended I had been to the town, but did not show her the post office receipt. I said I had sent the money and would bring the receipt, and so far I haven't brought it. I've forgotten it. Now what do you think you're going to her to-day to say? 'He sends his compliments,' and she'll ask you, 'What about the money?' You might still have said to her, 'He's a degraded sensualist, and a low creature, with uncontrolled passions. He didn't send your money then, but wasted it, because, like a low brute, he couldn't control himself.' But still you might have added, 'He isn't a thief though. Here is your three thousand; he sends it back. Send it yourself to Agafya Ivanovna. But he told me to say "he sends his compliments." But, as it is, she will ask, 'But where is the money?'"

"Mitya, you are unhappy, yes! But not as unhappy as you think. Don't worry yourself to death with despair."

"What, do you suppose I'd shoot myself because I can't get three thousand to pay back? That's just it. I shan't shoot myself. I haven't the strength now. Afterwards, perhaps. But now I'm going to Grushenka. I don't care what happens."

"And what then?"

“I’ll be her husband if she deigns to have me, and when lovers come, I’ll go into the next room. I’ll clean her friends’ goloshes, blow up their samovar, run their errands.”

“Katerina Ivanovna will understand it all,” Alyosha said solemnly. “She’ll understand how great this trouble is and will forgive. She has a lofty mind, and no one could be more unhappy than you. She’ll see that for herself.”

“She won’t forgive everything,” said Dmitri, with a grin. “There’s something in it, brother, that no woman could forgive. Do you know what would be the best thing to do?”

“What?”

“Pay back the three thousand.”

“Where can we get it from? I say, I have two thousand. Ivan will give you another thousand — that makes three. Take it and pay it back.”

“And when would you get it, your three thousand? You’re not of age, besides, and you must — you absolutely must — take my farewell to her to-day, with the money or without it, for I can’t drag on any longer, things have come to such a pass. To-morrow is too late. I shall send you to father.”

“To father?”

“Yes, to father first. Ask him for three thousand.”

“But, Mitya, he won’t give it.”

“As though he would! I know he won’t. Do you know the meaning of despair, Alexey?”

“Yes.”

“Listen. Legally he owes me nothing. I’ve had it all from him, I know that. But morally he owes me something, doesn’t he? You know he started with twenty-eight thousand of my mother’s money and made a hundred thousand with it. Let him give me back only three out of the twenty-eight thousand, and he’ll draw my soul out of hell, and it will atone for many of his sins. For that three thousand — I give you my solemn word — I’ll make an end of everything, and he shall hear nothing more of me. For the last time I give him the chance to be a father. Tell him God Himself sends him this chance.”

“Mitya, he won’t give it for anything.”

“I know he won’t. I know it perfectly well. Now, especially. That’s not all. I know something more. Now, only a few days ago, perhaps only yesterday he found out for the first time in earnest (underline in earnest)

that Grushenka is really perhaps not joking, and really means to marry me. He knows her nature; he knows the cat. And do you suppose he's going to give me money to help to bring that about when he's crazy about her himself? And that's not all, either. I can tell you more than that. I know that for the last five days he has had three thousand drawn out of the bank, changed into notes of a hundred roubles. packed into a large envelope, sealed with five seals, and tied across with red tape. You see how well I know all about it! On the envelope is written: 'To my angel, Grushenka, when she will come to me.' He scrawled it himself in silence and in secret, and no one knows that the money's there except the valet, Smerdyakov, whom he trusts like himself. So now he has been expecting Grushenka for the last three or four days; he hopes she'll come for the money. He has sent her word of it, and she has sent him word that perhaps she'll come. And if she does go to the old man, can I marry her after that? You understand now why I'm here in secret and what I'm on the watch for."

"For her?"

"Yes, for her. Foma has a room in the house of these sluts here. Foma comes from our parts; he was a soldier in our regiment. He does jobs for them. He's watchman at night and goes grouse-shooting in the day-time; and that's how he lives. I've established myself in his room. Neither he nor the women of the house know the secret — that is, that I am on the watch here."

"No one but Smerdyakov knows, then?"

"No one else. He will let me know if she goes to the old man."

"It was he told you about the money, then?"

"Yes. It's a dead secret. Even Ivan doesn't know about the money, or anything. The old man is sending Ivan to Tchermashnya on a two or three days' journey. A purchaser has turned up for the copse: he'll give eight thousand for the timber. So the old man keeps asking Ivan to help him by going to arrange it. It will take him two or three days. That's what the old man wants, so that Grushenka can come while he's away."

"Then he's expecting Grushenka to-day?"

"No, she won't come to-day; there are signs, She's certain not to come," cried Mitya suddenly. "Smerdyakov thinks so, too. Father's drinking now. He's sitting at table with Ivan. Go to him, Alyosha, and ask for the three thousand."

“Mitya, dear, what’s the matter with you?” cried Alyosha, jumping up from his place, and looking keenly at his brother’s frenzied face. For one moment the thought struck him that Dmitri was mad.

“What is it? I’m not insane,” said Dmitri, looking intently and earnestly at him. “No fear. I am sending you to father, and I know what I’m saying. I believe in miracles.”

“In miracles?”

“In a miracle of Divine Providence. God knows my heart. He sees my despair. He sees the whole picture. Surely He won’t let something awful happen. Alyosha, I believe in miracles. Go!”

“I am going. Tell me, will you wait for me here?”

“Yes. I know it will take some time. You can’t go at him point blank. He’s drunk now. I’ll wait three hours — four, five, six, seven. Only remember you must go to Katerina Ivanovna to-day, if it has to be at midnight, with the money or without the money, and say, ‘He sends his compliments to you.’ I want you to say that verse to her: ‘He sends his compliments to you.’”

“Mitya! And what if Grushenka comes to-day — if not to-day, or the next day?”

“Grushenka? I shall see her. I shall rush out and prevent it.”

“And if — ?”

“If there’s an if, it will be murder. I couldn’t endure it.”

“Who will be murdered?”

“The old man. I shan’t kill her.”

“Brother, what are you saying?”

“Oh, I don’t know.... I don’t know. Perhaps I shan’t kill, and perhaps I shall. I’m afraid that he will suddenly become so loathsome to me with his face at that moment. I hate his ugly throat, his nose, his eyes, his shameless snigger. I feel a physical repulsion. That’s what I’m afraid of. That’s what may be too much for me.”

“I’ll go, Mitya. I believe that God will order things for the best, that nothing awful may happen.”

“And I will sit and wait for the miracle. And if it doesn’t come to pass __”

Alyosha went thoughtfully towards his father’s house.

CHAPTER 6

Smerdyakov

HE did in fact find his father still at table. Though there was a dining-room in the house, the table was laid as usual in the drawing room, which was the largest room, and furnished with old-fashioned ostentation. The furniture was white and very old, upholstered in old, red, silky material. In the spaces between the windows there were mirrors in elaborate white and gilt frames, of old-fashioned carving. On the walls, covered with white paper, which was torn in many places, there hung two large portraits — one of some prince who had been governor of the district thirty years before, and the other of some bishop, also long since dead. In the corner opposite the door there were several ikons, before which a lamp was lighted at nightfall... not so much for devotional purposes as to light the room. Fyodor Pavlovitch used to go to bed very late, at three or four o'clock in the morning,and would wander about the room at night or sit in an armchair, thinking. This had become a habit with him. He often slept quite alone in the house, sending his servants to the lodge; but usually Smerdyakov remained, sleeping on a bench in the hall.

When Alyosha came in, dinner was over, but coffee and preserves had been served. Fyodor Pavlovitch liked sweet things with brandy after dinner. Ivan was also at table, sipping coffee. The servants, Grigory and Smerdyakov, were standing by. Both the gentlemen and the servants seemed in singularly good spirits. Fyodor Pavlovitch was roaring with laughter. Before he entered the room, Alyosha heard the shrill laugh he knew so well, and could tell from the sound of it that his father had only reached the good-humoured stage, and was far from being completely drunk.

"Here he is! Here he is!" yelled Fyodor Pavlovitch, highly delighted at seeing Alyosha. "Join us. Sit down. Coffee is a lenten dish, but it's hot and good. I don't offer you brandy, you're keeping the fast. But would you like some? No; I'd better give you some of our famous liqueur. Smerdyakov, go to the cupboard, the second shelf on the right. Here are the keys. Look sharp!"

Alyosha began refusing the liqueur.

“Never mind. If you won’t have it, we will,” said Fyodor Pavlovitch, beaming. “But stay — have you dined?”

“Yes,” answered Alyosha, who had in truth only eaten a piece of bread and drunk a glass of kvass in the Father Superior’s kitchen. “Though I should be pleased to have some hot coffee.”

“Bravo, my darling! He’ll have some coffee. Does it want warming? No, it’s boiling. It’s capital coffee: Smerdyakov’s making. My Smerdyakov’s an artist at coffee and at fish patties, and at fish soup, too. You must come one day and have some fish soup. Let me know beforehand.... But, stay; didn’t I tell you this morning to come home with your mattress and pillow and all? Have you brought your mattress? He he he!”

“No, I haven’t,” said Alyosha, smiling, too.

“Ah, but you were frightened, you were frightened this morning, weren’t you? There, my darling, I couldn’t do anything to vex you. Do you know, Ivan, I can’t resist the way he looks one straight in the face and laughs? It makes me laugh all over. I’m so fond of him. Alyosha, let me give you my blessing — a father’s blessing.”

Alyosha rose, but Fyodor Pavlovitch had already changed his mind.

“No, no,” he said. “I’ll just make the sign of the cross over you, for now. Sit still. Now we’ve a treat for you, in your own line, too. It’ll make you laugh. Balaam’s ass has begun talking to us here — and how he talks! How he talks!

Balaam’s ass, it appeared, was the valet, Smerdyakov. He was a young man of about four and twenty, remarkably unsociable and taciturn. Not that he was shy or bashful. On the contrary, he was conceited and seemed to despise everybody.

But we must pause to say a few words about him now. He was brought up by Grigory and Marfa, but the boy grew up “with no sense of gratitude,” as Grigory expressed it; he was an unfriendly boy, and seemed to look at the world mistrustfully. In his childhood he was very fond of hanging cats, and burying them with great ceremony. He used to dress up in a sheet as though it were a surplice, and sang, and waved some object over the dead cat as though it were a censer. All this he did on the sly, with the greatest secrecy. Grigory caught him once at this diversion and gave him a sound beating. He shrank into a corner and sulked there for a week. “He doesn’t care for you or me, the monster,” Grigory used to say to Marfa, “and he doesn’t care for anyone. Are you a human being?” he said, addressing the boy directly.

“You’re not a human being. You grew from the mildew in the bath-house. That’s what you are,” Smerdyakov, it appeared afterwards, could never forgive him those words. Grigory taught him to read and write, and when he was twelve years old, began teaching him the Scriptures. But this teaching came to nothing. At the second or third lesson the boy suddenly grinned.

“What’s that for?” asked Grigory, looking at him threateningly from under his spectacles.

“Oh, nothing. God created light on the first day, and the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day. Where did the light come from on the first day?”

Grigory was thunderstruck. The boy looked sarcastically at his teacher. There was something positively condescending in his expression. Grigory could not restrain himself. “I’ll show you where!” he cried, and gave the boy a violent slap on the cheek. The boy took the slap without a word, but withdrew into his corner again for some days. A week later he had his first attack of the disease to which he was subject all the rest of his life — epilepsy. When Fyodor Pavlovitch heard of it, his attitude to the boy seemed changed at once. Till then he had taken no notice of him, though he never scolded him, and always gave him a copeck when he met him. Sometimes, when he was in good humour, he would send the boy something sweet from his table. But as soon as he heard of his illness, he showed an active interest in him, sent for a doctor, and tried remedies, but the disease turned out to be incurable. The fits occurred, on an average, once a month, but at various intervals. The fits varied too, in violence: some were light and some were very severe. Fyodor Pavlovitch strictly forbade Grigory to use corporal punishment to the boy, and began allowing him to come upstairs to him. He forbade him to be taught anything whatever for a time, too. One day when the boy was about fifteen, Fyodor Pavlovitch noticed him lingering by the bookcase, and reading the titles through the glass. Fyodor Pavlovitch had a fair number of books — over a hundred — but no one ever saw him reading. He at once gave Smerdyakov the key of the bookcase. “Come, read. You shall be my librarian. You’ll be better sitting reading than hanging about the courtyard. Come, read this,” and Fyodor Pavlovitch gave him Evenings in a Cottage near Dikanka.

He read a little but didn’t like it. He did not once smile, and ended by frowning.

“Why? Isn’t it funny?” asked Fyodor Pavlovitch. Smerdyakov did not speak.

“Answer stupid!”

“It’s all untrue,” mumbled the boy, with a grin.

“Then go to the devil! You have the soul of a lackey. Stay, here’s Smaragdov’s Universal History. That’s all true. Read that.”

But Smerdyakov did not get through ten pages of Smaragdov. He thought it dull. So the bookcase was closed again.

Shortly afterwards Marfa and Grigory reported to Fyodor Pavlovitch that Smerdyakov was gradually beginning to show an extraordinary fastidiousness. He would sit before his soup, take up his spoon and look into the soup, bend over it, examine it, take a spoonful and hold it to the light.

“What is it? A beetle?” Grigory would ask.

“A fly, perhaps,” observed Marfa.

The squeamish youth never answered, but he did the same with his bread, his meat, and everything he ate. He would hold a piece on his fork to the light, scrutinise it microscopically, and only after long deliberation decide to put it in his mouth.

“Ach! What fine gentlemen’s airs!” Grigory muttered, looking at him.

When Fyodor Pavlovitch heard of this development in Smerdyakov he determined to make him his cook, and sent him to Moscow to be trained. He spent some years there and came back remarkably changed in appearance. He looked extraordinarily old for his age. His face had grown wrinkled, yellow, and strangely emasculate. In character he seemed almost exactly the same as before he went away. He was just as unsociable, and showed not the slightest inclination for any companionship. In Moscow, too, as we heard afterwards, he had always been silent. Moscow itself had little interest for him; he saw very little there, and took scarcely any notice of anything. He went once to the theatre, but returned silent and displeased with it. On the other hand, he came back to us from Moscow well dressed, in a clean coat and clean linen. He brushed his clothes most scrupulously twice a day invariably, and was very fond of cleaning his smart calf boots with a special English polish, so that they shone like mirrors. He turned out a first rate cook. Fyodor Pavlovitch paid him a salary, almost the whole of which Smerdyakov spent on clothes, pomade, perfumes, and such things. But he seemed to have as much contempt for the female sex as for men; he was discreet, almost unapproachable, with them. Fyodor Pavlovitch began to regard him rather differently. His fits were becoming more frequent, and

on the days he was ill Marfa cooked, which did not suit Fyodor Pavlovitch at all.

“Why are your fits getting worse?” asked Fyodor Pavlovitch, looking askance at his new cook. “Would you like to get married? Shall I find you a wife?”

But Smerdyakov turned pale with anger, and made no reply. Fyodor Pavlovitch left him with an impatient gesture. The great thing was that he had absolute confidence in his honesty. It happened once, when Fyodor Pavlovitch was drunk, that he dropped in the muddy courtyard three hundred-rouble notes which he had only just received. He only missed them next day, and was just hastening to search his pockets when he saw the notes lying on the table. Where had they come from? Smerdyakov had picked them up and brought them in the day before.

“Well, my lad, I’ve never met anyone like you,” Fyodor Pavlovitch said shortly, and gave him ten roubles. We may add that he not only believed in his honesty, but had, for some reason, a liking for him, although the young man looked as morosely at him as at everyone and was always silent. He rarely spoke. If it had occurred to anyone to wonder at the time what the young man was interested in, and what was in his mind, it would have been impossible to tell by looking at him. Yet he used sometimes to stop suddenly in the house, or even in the yard or street, and would stand still for ten minutes, lost in thought. A physiognomist studying his face would have said that there was no thought in it, no reflection, but only a sort of contemplation. There is a remarkable picture by the painter Kramskoy, called “Contemplation.” There is a forest in winter, and on a roadway through the forest, in absolute solitude, stands a peasant in a torn kaftan and bark shoes. He stands, as it were, lost in thought. Yet he is not thinking; he is “contemplating.” If anyone touched him he would start and look at one as though awakening and bewildered. It’s true he would come to himself immediately; but if he were asked what he had been thinking about, he would remember nothing. Yet probably he has, hidden within himself, the impression which had dominated him during the period of contemplation. Those impressions are dear to him and no doubt he hoards them imperceptibly, and even unconsciously. How and why, of course, he does not know either. He may suddenly, after hoarding impressions for many years, abandon everything and go off to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage for his soul’s salvation, or perhaps he will suddenly set fire to his native village,

and perhaps do both. There are a good many “contemplatives” among the peasantry. Well, Smerdyakov was probably one of them, and he probably was greedily hoarding up his impressions, hardly knowing why.

CHAPTER 7

The Controversy

BUT Balaam's ass had suddenly spoken. The subject was a strange one. Grigory had gone in the morning to make purchases, and had heard from the shopkeeper Lukyanov the story of a Russian soldier which had appeared in the newspaper of that day. This soldier had been taken prisoner in some remote part of Asia, and was threatened with an immediate agonising death if he did not renounce Christianity and follow Islam. He refused to deny his faith, and was tortured, flayed alive, and died, praising and glorifying Christ. Grigory had related the story at table. Fyodor Pavlovitch always liked, over the dessert after dinner, to laugh and talk, if only with Grigory. This afternoon he was in a particularly good-humoured and expansive mood. Sipping his brandy and listening to the story, he observed that they ought to make a saint of a soldier like that, and to take his skin to some monastery. "That would make the people flock, and bring the money in." Grigory frowned, seeing that Fyodor Pavlovitch was by no means touched, but, as usual, was beginning to scoff. At that moment Smerdyakov, who was standing by the door, smiled. Smerdyakov often waited at table towards the end of dinner, and since Ivan's arrival in our town he had done so every day.

"What are you grinning at?" asked Fyodor Pavlovitch, catching the smile instantly, and knowing that it referred to Grigory.

"Well, my opinion is," Smerdyakov began suddenly and unexpectedly in a loud voice, "that if that laudable soldier's exploit was so very great there would have been, to my thinking, no sin in it if he had on such an emergency renounced, so to speak, the name of Christ and his own christening, to save by that same his life, for good deeds, by which, in the course of years to expiate his cowardice."

"How could it not be a sin? You're talking nonsense. For that you'll go straight to hell and be roasted there like mutton," put in Fyodor Pavlovitch.

It was at this point that Alyosha came in, and Fyodor Pavlovitch, as we have seen, was highly delighted at his appearance.

"We're on your subject, your subject," he chuckled gleefully, making Alyosha sit down to listen.

“As for mutton, that’s not so, and there’ll be nothing there for this, and there shouldn’t be either, if it’s according to justice,” Smerdyakov maintained stoutly.

“How do you mean ‘according to justice’?” Fyodor Pavlovitch cried still more gaily, nudging Alyosha with his knee.

“He’s a rascal, that’s what he is!” burst from Grigory. He looked Smerdyakov wrathfully in the face.

“As for being a rascal, wait a little, Grigory Vassilyevitch,” answered Smerdyakov with perfect composure. “You’d better consider yourself that, once I am taken prisoner by the enemies of the Christian race, and they demand from me to curse the name of God and to renounce my holy christening, I am fully entitled to act by my own reason, since there would be no sin in it.”

“But you’ve said that before. Don’t waste words. Prove it,” cried Fyodor Pavlovitch.

“Soup-maker!” muttered Grigory contemptuously.

“As for being a soup-maker, wait a bit, too, and consider for yourself, Grigory Vassilyevitch, without abusing me. For as soon as I say to those enemies, ‘No, I’m not a Christian, and I curse my true God,’ then at once, by God’s high judgment, I become immediately and specially anathema accursed, and am cut off from the Holy Church, exactly as though I were a heathen, so that at that very instant, not only when I say it aloud, but when I think of saying it, before a quarter of a second has passed, I am cut off. Is that so or not, Grigory Vassilyevitch?”

He addressed Grigory with obvious satisfaction, though he was really answering Fyodor Pavlovitch’s questions, and was well aware of it, and intentionally pretending that Grigory had asked the questions.

“Ivan,” cried Fyodor Pavlovitch suddenly, “stoop down for me to whisper. He’s got this all up for your benefit. He wants you to praise him. Praise him.”

Ivan listened with perfect seriousness to his father’s excited whisper.

“Stay, Smerdyakov, be quiet a minute,” cried Fyodor Pavlovitch once more. “Ivan, your ear again.”

Ivan bent down again with a perfectly grave face.

“I love you as I do Alyosha. Don’t think I don’t love you. Some brandy?”

“Yes. — But you’re rather drunk yourself,” thought Ivan, looking steadily at his father.

He was watching Smerdyakov with great curiosity.

“You’re anathema accursed, as it is, Grigory suddenly burst out, “and how dare you argue, you rascal, after that, if—”

“Don’t scold him, Grigory, don’t scold him,” Fyodor Pavlovitch cut him short.

“You should wait, Grigory Vassilyevitch, if only a short time, and listen, for I haven’t finished all I had to say. For at the very moment I become accursed, at that same highest moment, I become exactly like a heathen, and my christening is taken off me and becomes of no avail. Isn’t that so?”

“Make haste and finish, my boy,” Fyodor Pavlovitch urged him, sipping from his wineglass with relish.

“And if I’ve ceased to be a Christian, then I told no lie to the enemy when they asked whether I was a Christian or not a Christian, seeing I had already been relieved by God Himself of my Christianity by reason of the thought alone, before I had time to utter a word to the enemy. And if I have already been discharged, in what manner and with what sort of justice can I be held responsible as a Christian in the other world for having denied Christ, when, through the very thought alone, before denying Him I had been relieved from my christening? If I’m no longer a Christian, then I can’t renounce Christ, for I’ve nothing then to renounce. Who will hold an unclean Tatar responsible, Grigory Vassilyevitch, even in heaven, for not having been born a Christian? And who would punish him for that, considering that you can’t take two skins off one ox? For God Almighty Himself, even if He did make the Tatar responsible, when he dies would give him the smallest possible punishment, I imagine (since he must be punished), judging that he is not to blame if he has come into the world an unclean heathen, from heathen parents. The Lord God can’t surely take a Tatar and say he was a Christian? That would mean that the Almighty would tell a real untruth. And can the Lord of Heaven and earth tell a lie, even in one word?”

Grigory was thunderstruck and looked at the orator, his eyes nearly starting out of his head. Though he did not clearly understand what was said, he had caught something in this rigmarole, and stood, looking like a man who has just hit his head against a wall. Fyodor Pavlovitch emptied his glass and went off into his shrill laugh.

“Alyosha! Alyosha! What do you say to that! Ah, you casuist! He must have been with the Jesuits, somewhere, Ivan. Oh, you stinking Jesuit,who taught you? But you’re talking nonsense, you casuist, nonsense, nonsense, nonsense. Don’t cry, Grigory, we’ll reduce him to smoke and ashes in a moment. Tell me this, O ass; you may be right before your enemies, but you have renounced your faith all the same in your own heart, and you say yourself that in that very hour you became anathema accursed. And if once you’re anathema they won’t pat you on the head for it in hell. What do you say to that, my fine Jesuit?”

“There is no doubt that I have renounced it in my own heart, but there no special sin in that. Or if there was sin, it was the most ordinary.”

“How’s that the most ordinary?”

“You lie, accursed one!” hissed Grigory.

“Consider yourself, Grigory Vassilyevitch,” Smerdyakov went on, staid and unruffled, conscious of his triumph, but, as it were, generous to the vanquished foe. “Consider yourself, Grigory Vassilyevitch; it is said in the Scripture that if you have faith, even as a mustard seed, and bid a mountain move into the sea, it will move without the least delay at your bidding. Well, Grigory Vassilyevitch, if I’m without faith and you have so great a faith that you are continually swearing at me, you try yourself telling this mountain, not to move into the sea for that’s a long way off, but even to our stinking little river which runs at the bottom of the garden. You’ll see for yourself that it won’t budge, but will remain just where it is however much you shout at it, and that shows, Grigory Vassilyevitch, that you haven’t faith in the proper manner, and only abuse others about it. Again, taking into consideration that no one in our day, not only you, but actually no one, from the highest person to the lowest peasant, can shove mountains into the sea — except perhaps some one man in the world, or, at most, two, and they most likely are saving their souls in secret somewhere in the Egyptian desert, so you wouldn’t find them — if so it be, if all the rest have no faith, will God curse all the rest? that is, the population of the whole earth, except about two hermits in the desert, and in His well-known mercy will He not forgive one of them? And so I’m persuaded that though I may once have doubted I shall be forgiven if I shed tears of repentance.”

“Stay!” cried Fyodor Pavlovitch, in a transport of delight. “So you do suppose there are two who can move mountains? Ivan, make a note of it, write it down. There you have the Russian all over!”

“You’re quite right in saying it’s characteristic of the people’s faith,” Ivan assented, with an approving smile.

“You agree. Then it must be so, if you agree. It’s true, isn’t it Alyosha? That’s the Russian faith all over, isn’t it?”

“No, Smerdyakov has not the Russian faith at all,” said Alyosha firmly and gravely.

“I’m not talking about his faith. I mean those two in the desert, only that idea. Surely that’s Russian, isn’t it?”

“Yes, that’s purely Russian,” said Alyosha smiling.

“Your words are worth a gold piece, O ass, and I’ll give it to you to-day. But as to the rest you talk nonsense, nonsense, nonsense. Let me tell you, stupid, that we here are all of little faith, only from carelessness, because we haven’t time; things are too much for us, and, in the second place, the Lord God has given us so little time, only twenty-four hours in the day, so that one hasn’t even time to get sleep enough, much less to repent of one’s sins. While you have denied your faith to your enemies when you’d nothing else to think about but to show your faith! So I consider, brother, that it constitutes a sin.”

“Constitute a sin it may, but consider yourself, Grigory Vassilyevitch, that it only extenuates it, if it does constitute. If I had believed then in very truth, as I ought to have believed, then it really would have been sinful if I had not faced tortures for my faith, and had gone over to the pagan Mohammedan faith. But, of course, it wouldn’t have come to torture then, because I should only have had to say at that instant to the mountain, ‘Move and crush the tormentor,’ and it would have moved and at the very instant have crushed him like a black-beetle, and I should have walked away as though nothing had happened, praising and glorifying God. But, suppose at that very moment I had tried all that, and cried to that mountain, ‘Crush these tormentors,’ and it hadn’t crushed them, how could I have helped doubting, pray, at such a time, and at such a dread hour of mortal terror? And apart from that, I should know already that I could not attain to the fullness of the Kingdom of Heaven (for since the mountain had not moved at my word, they could not think very much of my faith up aloft, and there could be no very great reward awaiting me in the world to come). So why should I let them flay the skin off me as well, and to no good purpose? For, even though they had flayed my skin half off my back, even then the mountain would not have moved at my word or at my cry. And at such a

moment not only doubt might come over one but one might lose one’s reason from fear, so that one would not be able to think at all. And, therefore, how should I be particularly to blame if not seeing my advantage or reward there or here, I should, at least, save my skin. And so trusting fully in the grace of the Lord I should cherish the hope that I might be altogether forgiven.”

CHAPTER 8

Over the Brandy

THE controversy was over. But, strange to say, Fyodor Pavlovitch, who had been so gay, suddenly began frowning. He frowned and gulped brandy, and it was already a glass too much.

"Get along with you, Jesuits!" he cried to the servants. "Go away, Smerdyakov. I'll send you the gold piece I promised you to-day, but be off! Don't cry, Grigory. Go to Marfa. She'll comfort you and put you to bed. The rascals won't let us sit in peace after dinner," he snapped peevishly, as the servants promptly withdrew at his word.

"Smerdyakov always pokes himself in now, after dinner. It's you he's so interested in. What have you done to fascinate him?" he added to Ivan.

"Nothing whatever," answered Ivan. "He's pleased to have a high opinion of me; he's a lackey and a mean soul. Raw material for revolution, however, when the time comes."

"There will be others and better ones. But there will be some like him as well. His kind will come first, and better ones after."

"And when will the time come?"

"The rocket will go off and fizzle out, perhaps. The peasants are not very fond of listening to these soup-makers, so far."

"Ah, brother, but a Balaam's ass like that thinks and thinks, and the devil knows where he gets to."

"He's storing up ideas," said Ivan, smiling.

"You see, I know he can't bear me, nor anyone else, even you, though you fancy that he has a high opinion of you. Worse still with Alyosha, he despises Alyosha. But he doesn't steal, that's one thing, and he's not a gossip, he holds his tongue, and doesn't wash our dirty linen in public. He makes capital fish pasties too. But, damn him, is he worth talking about so much?"

"Of course he isn't."

"And as for the ideas he may be hatching, the Russian peasant, generally speaking, needs thrashing. That I've always maintained. Our peasants are swindlers, and don't deserve to be pitied, and it's a good thing they're still flogged sometimes. Russia is rich in birches. If they destroyed the forests, it

would be the ruin of Russia. I stand up for the clever people. We've left off thrashing the peasants, we've grown so clever, but they go on thrashing themselves. And a good thing too. 'For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again,' or how does it go? Anyhow, it will be measured. But Russia's all swinishness. My dear, if you only knew how I hate Russia.... That is, not Russia, but all this vice! But maybe I mean Russia. Tout cela c'est de la cochonnerie....* Do you know what I like? I like wit."

* All this is filthiness.

"You've had another glass. That's enough."

"Wait a bit. I'll have one more, and then another, and then I'll stop. No, stay, you interrupted me. At Mokroe I was talking to an old man, and he told me: 'There's nothing we like so much as sentencing girls to be thrashed, and we always give the lads the job of thrashing them. And the girl he has thrashed to-day, the young man will ask in marriage to-morrow. So it quite suits the girls, too,' he said. There's a set of de Sades for you! But it's clever, anyway. Shall we go over and have a look at it, eh? Alyosha, are you blushing? Don't be bashful, child. I'm sorry I didn't stay to dinner at the Superior's and tell the monks about the girls at Mokroe. Alyosha, don't be angry that I offended your Superior this morning. I lost my temper. If there is a God, if He exists, then, of course, I'm to blame, and I shall have to answer for it. But if there isn't a God at all, what do they deserve, your fathers? It's not enough to cut their heads off, for they keep back progress. Would you believe it, Ivan, that that lacerates my sentiments? No, you don't believe it as I see from your eyes. You believe what people say, that I'm nothing but a buffoon. Alyosha, do you believe that I'm nothing but a buffoon?"

"No, I don't believe it."

"And I believe you don't, and that you speak the truth. You look sincere and you speak sincerely. But not Ivan. Ivan's supercilious.... I'd make an end of your monks, though, all the same. I'd take all that mystic stuff and suppress it, once for all, all over Russia, so as to bring all the fools to reason. And the gold and the silver that would flow into the mint!"

"But why suppress it?" asked Ivan.

"That Truth may prevail. That's why."

"Well, if Truth were to prevail, you know, you'd be the first to be robbed and suppressed."

“Ah! I dare say you’re right. Ah, I’m an ass!” burst out Fyodor Pavlovitch, striking himself lightly on the forehead. “Well, your monastery may stand then, Alyosha, if that’s how it is. And we clever people will sit snug and enjoy our brandy. You know, Ivan, it must have been so ordained by the Almighty Himself. Ivan, speak, is there a God or not? Stay, speak the truth, speak seriously. Why are you laughing again?”

“I’m laughing that you should have made a clever remark just now about Smerdyakov’s belief in the existence of two saints who could move mountains.”

“Why, am I like him now, then?”

“Very much.”

“Well, that shows I’m a Russian, too, and I have a Russian characteristic. And you may be caught in the same way, though you are a philosopher. Shall I catch you? What do you bet that I’ll catch you to-morrow? Speak, all the same, is there a God, or not? Only, be serious. I want you to be serious now.”

“No, there is no God.”

“Alyosha, is there a God?”

“There is.”

“Ivan, and is there immortality of some sort, just a little, just a tiny bit?”

“There is no immortality either.”

“None at all?”

“None at all.”

“There’s absolute nothingness then. Perhaps there is just something? Anything is better than nothing!”

“Alyosha, is there immortality?”

“God and immortality?”

“God and immortality. In God is immortality.”

“H’m! It’s more likely Ivan’s right. Good Lord! to think what faith, what force of all kinds, man has lavished for nothing, on that dream, and for how many thousand years. Who is it laughing at man? Ivan For the last time, once for all, is there a God or not? I ask for the last time!”

“And for the last time there is not.”

“Who is laughing at mankind, Ivan?”

“It must be the devil,” said Ivan, smiling.

“And the devil? Does he exist?”

“No, there’s no devil either.”

“It’s a pity. Damn it all, what wouldn’t I do to the man who first invented God! Hanging on a bitter aspen tree would be too good for, him.”

“There would have been no civilisation if they hadn’t invented God.”

“Wouldn’t there have been? Without God?”

“No. And there would have been no brandy either. But I must take your brandy away from you, anyway.”

“Stop, stop, stop, dear boy, one more little glass. I’ve hurt Alyosha’s feelings. You’re not angry with me, Alyosha? My dear little Alexey!”

“No, I am not angry. I know your thoughts. Your heart is better than your head.”

“My heart better than my head, is it? Oh Lord! And that from you. Ivan, do you love Alyosha?”

“You must love him” (Fyodor Pavlovitch was by this time very drunk). “Listen, Alyosha, I was rude to your elder this morning. But I was excited. But there’s wit in that elder, don’t you think, Ivan?”

“Very likely.”

“There is, there is. Il y a du Piron la-dedans.* He’s a Jesuit, a Russian one, that is. As he’s an honourable person there’s a hidden indignation boiling within him at having to pretend and affect holiness.”

* There’s something of Piron inside of him.

“But, of course, he believes in God.”

“Not a bit of it. Didn’t you know? Why, he tells everyone so, himself. That is, not everyone, but all the clever people who come to him. He said straight out to Governor Schultz not long ago: ‘Credo, but I don’t know in what.’”

“Really?”

“He really did. But I respect him. There’s something of Mephistopheles about him, or rather of ‘The hero of our time’... Arbenin, or what’s his name?... You see, he’s a sensualist. He’s such a sensualist that I should be afraid for my daughter or my wife if she went to confess to him. You know, when he begins telling stories... The year before last he invited us to tea, tea with liqueur (the ladies send him liqueur), and began telling us about old times till we nearly split our sides.... Especially how he once cured a paralysed woman. ‘If my legs were not bad I know a dance I could dance you,’ he said. What do you say to that? ‘I’ve plenty of tricks in my time,’ said he. He did Demidov, the merchant, out of sixty thousand.”

“What, he stole it?”

“He brought him the money as a man he could trust, saying, ‘Take care of it for me, friend, there’ll be a police search at my place to-morrow.’ And he kept it. ‘You have given it to the Church,’ he declared. I said to him: ‘You’re a scoundrel,’ I said. ‘No,’ said he, ‘I’m not a scoundrel, but I’m broadminded.’ But that wasn’t he, that was someone else. I’ve muddled him with someone else... without noticing it. Come, another glass and that’s enough. Take away the bottle, Ivan. I’ve been telling lies. Why didn’t you stop me, Ivan, and tell me I was lying?”

“I knew you’d stop of yourself.”

“That’s a lie. You did it from spite, from simple spite against me. You despise me. You have come to me and despised me in my own house.”

“Well, I’m going away. You’ve had too much brandy.”

“I’ve begged you for Christ’s sake to go to Tchermashnya for a day or two, and you don’t go.”

“I’ll go to-morrow if you’re so set upon it.”

“You won’t go. You want to keep an eye on me. That’s what you want, spiteful fellow. That’s why you won’t go.”

The old man persisted. He had reached that state of drunkenness when the drunkard who has till then been inoffensive tries to pick a quarrel and to assert himself.

“Why are you looking at me? Why do you look like that? Your eyes look at me and say, ‘You ugly drunkard!’ Your eyes are mistrustful. They’re contemptuous.... You’ve come here with some design. Alyosha, here, looks at me and his eyes shine. Alyosha doesn’t despise me. Alexey, you mustn’t love Ivan.”

“Don’t be ill-tempered with my brother. Leave off attacking him,” Alyosha said emphatically.

“Oh, all right. Ugh, my head aches. Take away the brandy, Ivan. It’s the third time I’ve told you.”

He mused, and suddenly a slow, cunning grin spread over his face.

“Don’t be angry with a feeble old man, Ivan. I know you don’t love me, but don’t be angry all the same. You’ve nothing to love me for. You go to Tchermashnya. I’ll come to you myself and bring you a present. I’ll show you a little wench there. I’ve had my eye on her a long time. She’s still running about bare-foot. Don’t be afraid of bare-footed wenches — don’t despise them — they’re pearls!”

And he kissed his hand with a smack.

“To my thinking,” he revived at once, seeming to grow sober the instant he touched on his favourite topic. “To my thinking... Ah, you boys! You children, little sucking-pigs, to my thinking... I never thought a woman ugly in my life — that’s been my rule! Can you understand that? How could you understand it? You’ve milk in your veins, not blood. You’re not out of your shells yet. My rule has been that you can always find something devilishly interesting in every woman that you wouldn’t find in any other. Only, one must know how to find it, that’s the point! That’s a talent! To my mind there are no ugly women. The very fact that she is a woman is half the battle... but how could you understand that? Even in vieilles filles, even in them you may discover something that makes you simply wonder that men have been such fools as to let them grow old without noticing them. Bare-footed girls or unattractive ones, you must take by surprise. Didn’t you know that? You must astound them till they’re fascinated, upset, ashamed that such a gentleman should fall in love with such a little slut. It’s a jolly good thing that there always are and will be masters and slaves in the world, so there always will be a little maid-of-all-work and her master, and you know, that’s all that’s needed for happiness. Stay... listen, Alyosha, I always used to surprise your mother, but in a different way. I paid no attention to her at all, but all at once, when the minute came, I’d be all devotion to her, crawl on my knees, kiss her feet, and I always, always — I remember it as though it were to-day — reduced her to that tinkling, quiet, nervous, queer little laugh. It was peculiar to her. I knew her attacks always used to begin like that. The next day she would begin shrieking hysterically, and this little laugh was not a sign of delight, though it made a very good counterfeit. That’s the great thing, to know how to take everyone. Once Belyavsky — he was a handsome fellow, and rich — used to like to come here and hang about her — suddenly gave me a slap in the face in her presence. And she — such a mild sheep — why, I thought she would have knocked me down for that blow. How she set on me! ‘You’re beaten, beaten now,’ she said, ‘You’ve taken a blow from him. You have been trying to sell me to him,’ she said... ‘And how dared he strike you in my presence! Don’t dare come near me again, never, never! Run at once, challenge him to a duel!’... I took her to the monastery then to bring her to her senses. The holy Fathers prayed her back to reason. But I swear, by God, Alyosha, I never insulted the poor crazy girl! Only once, perhaps, in the first year; then she was very fond of praying. She used to keep the feasts of Our Lady particularly and

used to turn me out of her room then. I'll knock that mysticism out of her, thought I! 'Here,' said I, 'you see your holy image. Here it is. Here I take it down. You believe it's miraculous, but here, I'll spit on it directly and nothing will happen to me for it!'... When she saw it, good Lord! I thought she would kill me. But she only jumped up, wrung her hands, then suddenly hid her face in them, began trembling all over and fell on the floor... fell all of a heap. Alyosha, Alyosha, what's the matter?"

The old man jumped up in alarm. From the time he had begun speaking about his mother, a change had gradually come over Alyosha's face. He flushed crimson, his eyes glowed, his lips quivered. The old sot had gone spluttering on, noticing nothing, till the moment when something very strange happened to Alyosha. Precisely what he was describing in the crazy woman was suddenly repeated with Alyosha. He jumped up from his seat exactly as his mother was said to have done, wrung his hands, hid his face in them, and fell back in his chair, shaking all over in an hysterical paroxysm of sudden violent, silent weeping. His extraordinary resemblance to his mother particularly impressed the old man.

"Ivan, Ivan! Water, quickly! It's like her, exactly as she used to be then, his mother. Spurt some water on him from your mouth, that's what I used to do to her. He's upset about his mother, his mother," he muttered to Ivan.

"But she was my mother, too, I believe, his mother. Was she not?" said Ivan, with uncontrolled anger and contempt. The old man shrank before his flashing eyes. But something very strange had happened, though only for a second; it seemed really to have escaped the old man's mind that Alyosha's mother actually was the mother of Ivan too.

"Your mother?" he muttered, not understanding. "What do you mean? What mother are you talking about? Was she?... Why, damn it! of course she was yours too! Damn it! My mind has never been so darkened before. Excuse me, why, I was thinking Ivan... He he he!" He stopped. A broad, drunken, half senseless grin overspread his face.

At that moment a fearful noise, and clamour was heard in the hall, there were violent shouts, the door was flung open, and Dmitri burst into the room. The old man rushed to Ivan in terror.

"He'll kill me! He'll kill me! Don't let him get at me!" he screamed, clinging to the skirt of Ivan's coat.

CHAPTER 9

The Sensualists

GRIGORY and Smerdyakov ran into the room after Dmitri. They had been struggling with him in the passage, refusing to admit him, acting on instructions given them by Fyodor Pavlovitch some days before. Taking advantage of the fact that Dmitri stopped a moment on entering the room to look about him, Grigory ran round the table, closed the double doors on the opposite side of the room leading to the inner apartments, and stood before the closed doors, stretching wide his arms, prepared to defend the entrance, so to speak, with the last drop of his blood. Seeing this, Dmitri uttered a scream rather than a shout and rushed at Grigory.

“Then she’s there! She’s hidden there! Out of the way, scoundrel!”

He tried to pull Grigory away, but the old servant pushed him back. Beside himself with fury, Dmitri struck out, and hit Grigory with all his might. The old man fell like a log, and Dmitri, leaping over him, broke in the door. Smerdyakov remained pale and trembling at the other end of the room, huddling close to Fyodor Pavlovitch.

“She’s here!” shouted Dmitri. “I saw her turn towards the house just now, but I couldn’t catch her. Where is she? Where is she?”

That shout, “She’s here!” produced an indescribable effect on Fyodor Pavlovitch. All his terror left him.

“Hold him! Hold him!” he cried, and dashed after Dmitri. Meanwhile Grigory had got up from the floor, but still seemed stunned. Ivan and Alyosha ran after their father. In the third room something was heard to fall on the floor with a ringing crash: it was a large glass vase — not an expensive one — on a marble pedestal which Dmitri had upset as he ran past it.

“At him!” shouted the old man. “Help!”

Ivan and Alyosha caught the old man and were forcibly bringing him back.

“Why do you run after him? He’ll murder you outright,” Ivan cried wrathfully at his father.

“Ivan! Alyosha! She must be here. Grushenka’s here. He said he saw her himself, running.”

He was choking. He was not expecting Grushenka at the time, and the sudden news that she was here made him beside himself. He was trembling all over. He seemed frantic.

“But you’ve seen for yourself that she hasn’t come,” cried Ivan.

“But she may have come by that other entrance.”

“You know that entrance is locked, and you have the key.”

Dmitri suddenly reappeared in the drawing-room. He had, of course, found the other entrance locked, and the key actually was in Fyodor Pavlovitch’s pocket. The windows of all rooms were also closed, so Grushenka could not have come in anywhere nor have run out anywhere.

“Hold him!” shrieked Fyodor Pavlovitch, as soon as he saw him again. “He’s been stealing money in my bedroom.” And tearing himself from Ivan he rushed again at Dmitri. But Dmitri threw up both hands and suddenly clutched the old man by the two tufts of hair that remained on his temples, tugged at them, and flung him with a crash on the floor. He kicked him two or three times with his heel in the face. The old man moaned shrilly. Ivan, though not so strong as Dmitri, threw his arms round him, and with all his might pulled him away. Alyosha helped him with his slender strength, holding Dmitri in front.

“Madman! You’ve killed him!” cried Ivan.

“Serve him right!” shouted Dmitri breathlessly. “If I haven’t killed him, I’ll come again and kill him. You can’t protect him!”

“Dmitri! Go away at once!” cried Alyosha commandingly.

“Alexey! You tell me. It’s only you I can believe; was she here just now, or not? I saw her myself creeping this way by the fence from the lane. I shouted, she ran away.”

“I swear she’s not been here, and no one expected her.”

“But I saw her.... So she must... I’ll find out at once where she is.... Good-bye, Alexey! Not a word to Aesop about the money now. But go to Katerina Ivanovna at once and be sure to say, ‘He sends his compliments to you!’ Compliments, his compliments! just compliments and farewell! Describe the scene to her.”

Meanwhile Ivan and Grigory had raised the old man and seated him in an arm-chair. His face was covered with blood, but he was conscious and listened greedily to Dmitri’s cries. He was still fancying that Grushenka really was somewhere in the house. Dmitri looked at him with hatred as he went out.

“I don’t repent shedding your blood!” he cried. “Beware, old man, beware of your dream, for I have my dream, too. I curse you, and disown you altogether.”

He ran out of the room.

“She’s here. She must be here. Smerdyakov! Smerdyakov!” the old man wheezed, scarcely audibly, beckoning to him with his finger.

“No, she’s not here, you old lunatic!” Ivan shouted at him angrily. “Here, he’s fainting? Water! A towel! Make haste, Smerdyakov!”

Smerdyakov ran for water. At last they got the old man undressed, and put him to bed. They wrapped a wet towel round his head. Exhausted by the brandy, by his violent emotion, and the blows he had received, he shut his eyes and fell asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow. Ivan and Alyosha went back to the drawing-room. Smerdyakov removed the fragments of the broken vase, while Grigory stood by the table looking gloomily at the floor.

“Shouldn’t you put a wet bandage on your head and go to bed, too?” Alyosha said to him. “We’ll look after him. My brother gave you a terrible blow — on the head.”

“He’s insulted me!” Grigory articulated gloomily and distinctly.

“He’s ‘insulted’ his father, not only you,” observed Ivan with a forced smile.

“I used to wash him in his tub. He’s insulted me,” repeated Grigory.

“Damn it all, if I hadn’t pulled him away perhaps he’d have murdered him. It wouldn’t take much to do for Aesop, would it?” whispered Ivan to Alyosha.

“God forbid!” cried Alyosha.

“Why should He forbid?” Ivan went on in the same whisper, with a malignant grimace. “One reptile will devour the other. And serve them both right, too.”

Alyosha shuddered.

“Of course I won’t let him be murdered as I didn’t just now. Stay here, Alyosha, I’ll go for a turn in the yard. My head’s begun to ache.”

Alyosha went to his father’s bedroom and sat by his bedside behind the screen for about an hour. The old man suddenly opened his eyes and gazed for a long while at Alyosha, evidently remembering and meditating. All at once his face betrayed extraordinary excitement.

“Alyosha,” he whispered apprehensively, “where’s Ivan?”

“In the yard. He’s got a headache. He’s on the watch.”

“Give me that looking-glass. It stands over there. Give it me.”

Alyosha gave him a little round folding looking-glass which stood on the chest of drawers. The old man looked at himself in it; his nose was considerably swollen, and on the left side of his forehead there was a rather large crimson bruise.

“What does Ivan say? Alyosha, my dear, my only son, I’m afraid of Ivan. I’m more afraid of Ivan than the other. You’re the only one I’m not afraid of....”

“Don’t be afraid of Ivan either. He is angry, but he’ll defend you.”

“Alyosha, and what of the other? He’s run to Grushenka. My angel, tell me the truth, was she here just now or not?”

“No one has seen her. It was a mistake. She has not been here.”

“You know Mitya wants to marry her, to marry her.”

“She won’t marry him.”

“She won’t. She won’t. She won’t. She won’t on any account!”

The old man fairly fluttered with joy, as though nothing more comforting could have been said to him. In his delight he seized Alyosha’s hand and pressed it warmly to his heart. Tears positively glittered in his eyes.

“That image of the Mother of God of which I was telling you just now,” he said. “Take it home and keep it for yourself. And I’ll let you go back to the monastery.... I was joking this morning, don’t be angry with me. My head aches, Alyosha.... Alyosha, comfort my heart. Be an angel and tell me the truth!”

“You’re still asking whether she has been here or not?” Alyosha said sorrowfully.

“No, no, no. I believe you. I’ll tell you what it is: you go to Grushenka yourself, or see her somehow; make haste and ask her; see for yourself, which she means to choose, him or me. Eh? What? Can you?”

“If I see her I’ll ask her,” Alyosha muttered, embarrassed.

“No, she won’t tell you,” the old man interrupted, “she’s a rogue. She’ll begin kissing you and say that it’s you she wants. She’s a deceitful, shameless hussy. You mustn’t go to her, you mustn’t!”

“No father, and it wouldn’t be suitable, it wouldn’t be right at all.”

“Where was he sending you just now? He shouted ‘Go’ as he ran away.”

“For money? To ask her for money?”

“No. Not for money.”

“He’s no money; not a farthing. I’ll settle down for the night, and think things over, and you can go. Perhaps you’ll meet her.... Only be sure to come to me to-morrow in the morning. Be sure to. I have a word to say to you to-morrow. Will you come?”

“When you come, pretend you’ve come of your own accord to ask after me. Don’t tell anyone I told you to. Don’t say a word to Ivan.”

“Very well.”

“Good-bye, my angel. You stood up for me, just now. I shall never forget it. I’ve a word to say to you to-morrow — but I must think about it.”

“And how do you feel now?”

“I shall get up to-morrow and go out, perfectly well, perfectly well!”

Crossing the yard Alyosha found Ivan sitting on the bench at the gateway. He was sitting writing something in pencil in his notebook. Alyosha told Ivan that their father had waked up, was conscious, and had let him go back to sleep at the monastery.

“Alyosha, I should be very glad to meet you to-morrow morning,” said Ivan cordially, standing up. His cordiality was a complete surprise to Alyosha.

“I shall be at the Hohlakovs’ to-morrow,” answered Alyosha, “I may be at Katerina Ivanovna’s, too, if I don’t find her now.”

“But you’re going to her now, anyway? For that ‘compliments and farewell,’” said Ivan smiling. Alyosha was disconcerted.

“I think I quite understand his exclamations just now, and part of what went before. Dmitri has asked you to go to her and say that he — well, in fact — takes his leave of her?”

“Brother, how will all this horror end between father and Dmitri?” exclaimed Alyosha.

“One can’t tell for certain. Perhaps in nothing: it may all fizzle out. That woman is a beast. In any case we must keep the old man indoors and not let Dmitri in the house.”

“Brother, let me ask one thing more: has any man a right to look at other men and decide which is worthy to live?”

“Why bring in the question of worth? The matter is most often decided in men’s hearts on other grounds much more natural. And as for rights — who has not the right to wish?”

“Not for another man’s death?”

“What even if for another man’s death? Why lie to oneself since all men live so and perhaps cannot help living so. Are you referring to what I said just now — that one reptile will devour the other? In that case let me ask you, do you think me like Dmitri capable of shedding Aesop’s blood, murdering him, eh?”

“What are you saying, Ivan? Such an idea never crossed my mind. I don’t think Dmitri is capable of it, either.”

“Thanks, if only for that,” smiled Ivan. “Be sure, I should always defend him. But in my wishes I reserve myself full latitude in this case. Good-bye till to-morrow. Don’t condemn me, and don’t look on me as a villain,” he added with a smile.

They shook hands warmly as they had never done before. Alyosha felt that his brother had taken the first step towards him, and that he had certainly done this with some definite motive.

CHAPTER 10

Both Together

ALYOSHA left his father's house feeling even more exhausted and dejected in spirit than when he had entered it. His mind too seemed shattered and unhinged, while he felt that he was afraid to put together the disjointed fragments and form a general idea from all the agonising and conflicting experiences of the day. He felt something bordering upon despair, which he had never known till then. Towering like a mountain above all the rest stood the fatal, insoluble question: How would things end between his father and his brother Dmitri with this terrible woman? Now he had himself been a witness of it, he had been present and seen them face to face. Yet only his brother Dmitri could be made unhappy, terribly, completely unhappy: there was trouble awaiting him. It appeared too that there were other people concerned, far more so than Alyosha could have supposed before. There was something positively mysterious in it, too. Ivan had made a step towards him, which was what Alyosha had been long desiring. Yet now he felt for some reason that he was frightened at it. And these women? Strange to say, that morning he had set out for Katerina Ivanovna's in the greatest embarrassment; now he felt nothing of the kind. On the contrary, he was hastening there as though expecting to find guidance from her. Yet to give her this message was obviously more difficult than before. The matter of the three thousand was decided irrevocably, and Dmitri, feeling himself dishonoured and losing his last hope, might sink to any depth. He had, moreover, told him to describe to Katerina Ivanovna the scene which had just taken place with his father.

It was by now seven o'clock, and it was getting dark as Alyosha entered the very spacious and convenient house in the High Street occupied by Katerina Ivanovna. Alyosha knew that she lived with two aunts. One of them, a woman of little education, was that aunt of her half-sister Agafya Ivanovna who had looked after her in her father's house when she came from boarding-school. The other aunt was a Moscow lady of style and consequence, though in straitened circumstances. It was said that they both gave way in everything to Katerina Ivanovna, and that she only kept them with her as chaperons. Katerina Ivanovna herself gave way to no one but

her benefactress, the general's widow, who had been kept by illness in Moscow, and to whom she was obliged to write twice a week a full account of all her doings.

When Alyosha entered the hall and asked the maid who opened the door to him to take his name up, it was evident that they were already aware of his arrival. Possibly he had been noticed from the window. At least, Alyosha heard a noise, caught the sound of flying footsteps and rustling skirts. Two or three women, perhaps, had run out of the room.

Alyosha thought it strange that his arrival should cause such excitement. He was conducted, however, to the drawing-room at once. It was a large room, elegantly and amply furnished, not at all in provincial style. There were many sofas, lounges, settees, big and little tables. There were pictures on the walls, vases and lamps on the tables, masses of flowers, and even an aquarium in the window. It was twilight and rather dark. Alyosha made out a silk mantle thrown down on the sofa, where people had evidently just been sitting; and on a table in front of the sofa were two unfinished cups of chocolate, cakes, a glass saucer with blue raisins, and another with sweetmeats. Alyosha saw that he had interrupted visitors, and frowned. But at that instant the portiere was raised, and with rapid, hurrying footsteps Katerina Ivanovna came in, holding out both hands to Alyosha with a radiant smile of delight. At the same instant a servant brought in two lighted candles and set them on the table.

"Thank God! At last you have come too! I've been simply praying for you all day! Sit down."

Alyosha had been struck by Katerina Ivanovna's beauty when, three weeks before, Dmitri had first brought him, at Katerina Ivanovna's special request, to be introduced to her. There had been no conversation between them at that interview, however. Supposing Alyosha to be very shy, Katerina Ivanovna had talked all the time to Dmitri to spare him. Alyosha had been silent, but he had seen a great deal very clearly. He was struck by the imperiousness, proud ease, and self-confidence of the haughty girl. And all that was certain, Alyosha felt that he was not exaggerating it. He thought her great glowing black eyes were very fine, especially with her pale, even rather sallow, longish face. But in those eyes and in the lines of her exquisite lips there was something with which his brother might well be passionately in love, but which perhaps could not be loved for long. He expressed this thought almost plainly to Dmitri when, after the visit, his

brother besought and insisted that he should not conceal his impressions on seeing his betrothed.

“You’ll be happy with her, but perhaps not tranquilly happy.”

“Quite so, brother. Such people remain always the same. They don’t yield to fate. So you think I shan’t love her for ever.”

“No; perhaps you will love her for ever. But perhaps you won’t always be happy with her.”

Alyosha had given his opinion at the time, blushing, and angry with himself for having yielded to his brother’s entreaties and put such “foolish” ideas into words. For his opinion had struck him as awfully foolish immediately after he had uttered it. He felt ashamed too of having given so confident an opinion about a woman. It was with the more amazement that he felt now, at the first glance at Katerina Ivanovna as she ran in to him, that he had perhaps been utterly mistaken. This time her face was beaming with spontaneous good-natured kindliness, and direct warm-hearted sincerity. The “pride and haughtiness,” which had struck Alyosha so much before, was only betrayed now in a frank, generous energy and a sort of bright, strong faith in herself. Alyosha realised at the first glance, at the first word, that all the tragedy of her position in relation to the man she loved so dearly was no secret to her; that she perhaps already knew everything, positively everything. And yet, in spite of that, there was such brightness in her face, such faith in the future. Alyosha felt at once that he had gravely wronged her in his thoughts. He was conquered and captivated immediately. Besides all this, he noticed at her first words that she was in great excitement, an excitement perhaps quite exceptional and almost approaching ecstasy.

“I was so eager to see you, because I can learn from you the whole truth — from you and no one else.”

“I have come,” muttered Alyosha confusedly, “I — he sent me.”

“Ah, he sent you I foresaw that. Now I know everything — everything!” cried Katerina Ivanovna, her eyes flashing. “Wait a moment, Alexey Fyodorovitch, I’ll tell you why I’ve been so longing to see you. You see, I know perhaps far more than you do yourself, and there’s no need for you to tell me anything. I’ll tell you what I want from you. I want to know your own last impression of him. I want you to tell me most directly, plainly, coarsely even (oh, as coarsely as you like!), what you thought of him just now and of his position after your meeting with him to-day. That will perhaps be better than if I had a personal explanation with him, as he does

not want to come to me. Do you understand what I want from you? Now, tell me simply, tell me every word of the message he sent you with (I knew he would send you).”

“He told me to give you his compliments and to say that he would never come again but to give you his compliments.”

“His compliments? Was that what he said his own expression?”

“Yes.”

“Accidentally perhaps he made a mistake in the word, perhaps he did not use the right word?”

“No; he told me precisely to repeat that word. He begged me two or three times not to forget to say so.”

Katerina Ivanovna flushed hotly.

“Help me now, Alexey Fyodorovitch. Now I really need your help. I’ll tell you what I think, and you must simply say whether it’s right or not. Listen! If he had sent me his compliments in passing, without insisting on your repeating the words, without emphasising them, that would be the end of everything! But if he particularly insisted on those words, if he particularly told you not to forget to repeat them to me, then perhaps he was in excitement, beside himself. He had made his decision and was frightened at it. He wasn’t walking away from me with a resolute step, but leaping headlong. The emphasis on that phrase may have been simply bravado.”

“Yes, yes!” cried Alyosha warmly. “I believe that is it.”

“And, if so, he’s not altogether lost. I can still save him. Stay! Did he not tell you anything about money — about three thousand roubles?”

“He did speak about it, and it’s that more than anything that’s crushing him. He said he had lost his honour and that nothing matters now,” Alyosha answered warmly, feeling a rush of hope in his heart and believing that there really might be a way of escape and salvation for his brother. “But do you know about the money?” he added, and suddenly broke off.

“I’ve known of it a long time; I telegraphed to Moscow to inquire, and heard long ago that the money had not arrived. He hadn’t sent the money, but I said nothing. Last week I learnt that he was still in need of money. My only object in all this was that he should know to whom to turn, and who was his true friend. No, he won’t recognise that I am his truest friend; he won’t know me, and looks on me merely as a woman. I’ve been tormented all the week, trying to think how to prevent him from being ashamed to face me because he spent that three thousand. Let him feel ashamed of himself,

let him be ashamed of other people's knowing, but not of my knowing. He can tell God everything without shame. Why is it he still does not understand how much I am ready to bear for his sake? Why, why doesn't he know me? How dare he not know me after all that has happened? I want to save him for ever. Let him forget me as his betrothed. And here he fears that he is dishonoured in my eyes. Why, he wasn't afraid to be open with you, Alexey Fyodorovitch. How is it that I don't deserve the same?"

The last words she uttered in tears. Tears gushed from her eyes.

"I must tell you," Alyosha began, his voice trembling too, "what happened just now between him and my father."

And he described the whole scene, how Dmitri had sent him to get the money, how he had broken in, knocked his father down, and after that had again specially and emphatically begged him to take his compliments and farewell. "He went to that woman," Alyosha added softly.

"And do you suppose that I can't put up with that woman? Does he think I can't? But he won't marry her," she suddenly laughed nervously. "Could such a passion last for ever in a Karamazov? It's passion, not love. He won't marry her because she won't marry him." Again Katerina Ivanovna laughed strangely.

"He may marry her," said Alyosha mournfully, looking down.

"He won't marry her, I tell you. That girl is an angel. Do you know that? Do you know that?" Katerina Ivanovna exclaimed suddenly with extraordinary warmth. "She is one of the most fantastic of fantastic creatures. I know how bewitching she is, but I know too that she is kind, firm, and noble. Why do you look at me like that, Alexey Fyodorovitch? Perhaps you are wondering at my words, perhaps you don't believe me? Agrafena Alexandrovna, my angel!" she cried suddenly to someone, peeping into the next room, "come in to us. This is a friend. This is Alyosha. He knows all about our affairs. Show yourself to him."

"I've only been waiting behind the curtain for you to call me," said a soft, one might even say sugary, feminine voice.

The portiere was raised and Grushenka herself, smiling and beaming, came up to the table. A violent revulsion passed over Alyosha. He fixed his eyes on her and could not take them off. Here she was, that awful woman, the "beast," as Ivan had called her half an hour before. And yet one would have thought the creature standing before him most simple and ordinary, a good-natured, kind woman, handsome certainly, but so like other handsome

ordinary women! It is true she was very, very good-looking with that Russian beauty so passionately loved by many men. She was a rather tall woman, though a little shorter than Katerina Ivanovna, who was exceptionally tall. She had a full figure, with soft, as it were, noiseless, movements, softened to a peculiar over-sweetness, like her voice. She moved, not like Katerina Ivanovna, with a vigorous, bold step, but noiselessly. Her feet made absolutely no sound on the floor. She sank softly into a low chair, softly rustling her sumptuous black silk dress, and delicately nestling her milk-white neck and broad shoulders in a costly cashmere shawl. She was twenty-two years old, and her face looked exactly that age. She was very white in the face, with a pale pink tint on her cheeks. The modelling of her face might be said to be too broad, and the lower jaw was set a trifle forward. Her upper lip was thin, but the slightly prominent lower lip was at least twice as full, and looked pouting. But her magnificent, abundant dark brown hair, her sable-coloured eyebrows and charming greyblue eyes with their long lashes would have made the most indifferent person, meeting her casually in a crowd in the street, stop at the sight of her face and remember it long after. What struck Alyosha most in that face was its expression of childlike good nature. There was a childlike look in her eyes, a look of childish delight. She came up to the table, beaming with delight and seeming to expect something with childish, impatient, and confiding curiosity. The light in her eyes gladdened the soul — Alyosha felt that. There was something else in her which he could not understand, or would not have been able to define, and which yet perhaps unconsciously affected him. It was that softness, that voluptuousness of her bodily movements, that catlike noiselessness. Yet it was a vigorous, ample body. Under the shawl could be seen full broad shoulders, a high, still quite girlish bosom. Her figure suggested the lines of the Venus of Milo, though already in somewhat exaggerated proportions. That could be divined. Connoisseurs of Russian beauty could have foretold with certainty that this fresh, still youthful beauty would lose its harmony by the age of thirty, would “spread”; that the face would become puffy, and that wrinkles would very soon appear upon her forehead and round the eyes; the complexion would grow coarse and red perhaps — in fact, that it was the beauty of the moment, the fleeting beauty which is so often met with in Russian women. Alyosha, of course, did not think of this; but though he was fascinated, yet he wondered with an unpleasant sensation, and as it were regretfully, why

she drawled in that way and could not speak naturally. She did so, evidently feeling there was a charm in the exaggerated, honeyed modulation of the syllables. It was, of course, only a bad, underbred habit that showed bad education and a false idea of good manners. And yet this intonation and manner of speaking impressed Alyosha as almost incredibly incongruous with the childishly simple and happy expression of her face, the soft, babyish joy in her eyes. Katerina Ivanovna at once made her sit down in an arm-chair facing Alyosha, and ecstatically kissed her several times on her smiling lips. She seemed quite in love with her.

“This is the first time we’ve met, Alexey Fyodorovitch,” she said rapturously. “I wanted to know her, to see her. I wanted to go to her, but I’d no sooner expressed the wish than she came to me. I knew we should settle everything together — everything. My heart told me so — I was begged not to take the step, but I foresaw it would be a way out of the difficulty, and I was not mistaken. Grushenka has explained everything to me, told me all she means to do. She flew here like an angel of goodness and brought us peace and joy.”

“You did not disdain me, sweet, excellent young lady,” drawled Grushenka in her singsong voice, still with the same charming smile of delight.

“Don’t dare to speak to me like that, you sorceress, you witch! Disdain you! Here, I must kiss your lower lip once more. It looks as though it were swollen, and now it will be more so, and more and more. Look how she laughs, Alexey Fyodorovitch!

Alyosha flushed, and faint, imperceptible shivers kept running down him.

“You make so much of me, dear young lady, and perhaps I am not at all worthy of your kindness.”

“Not worthy! She’s not worthy of it!” Katerina Ivanovna cried again with the same warmth. “You know, Alexey Fyodorovitch, we’re fanciful, we’re self-willed, but proudest of the proud in our little heart. We’re noble, we’re generous, Alexey Fyodorovitch, let me tell you. We have only been unfortunate. We were too ready to make every sacrifice for an unworthy, perhaps, or fickle man. There was one man — one, an officer too, we loved him, we sacrificed everything to him. That was long ago, five years ago, and he has forgotten us, he has married. Now he is a widower, he has written, he is coming here, and, do you know, we’ve loved him, none but

him, all this time, and we've loved him all our life! He will come, and Grushenka will be happy again. For the last five years she's been wretched. But who can reproach her, who can boast of her favour? Only that bedridden old merchant, but he is more like her father, her friend, her protector. He found her then in despair, in agony, deserted by the man she loved. She was ready to drown herself then, but the old merchant saved her — saved her!"

"You defend me very kindly, dear young lady. You are in a great hurry about everything," Grushenka drawled again.

"Defend you! Is it for me to defend you? Should I dare to defend you? Grushenka, angel, give me your hand. Look at that charming soft little hand, Alexey Fyodorovitch! Look at it! It has brought me happiness and has lifted me up, and I'm going to kiss it, outside and inside, here, here, here!"

And three times she kissed the certainly charming, though rather fat, hand of Grushenka in a sort of rapture. She held out her hand with a charming musical, nervous little laugh, watched the "sweet young lady," and obviously liked having her hand kissed.

"Perhaps there's rather too much rapture," thought Alyosha. He blushed. He felt a peculiar uneasiness at heart the whole time.

"You won't make me blush, dear young lady, kissing my hand like this before Alexey Fyodorovitch."

"Do you think I meant to make you blush?" said Katerina Ivanovna, somewhat surprised. "Ah my dear, how little you understand me!

"Yes, and you too perhaps quite misunderstand me, dear young lady. Maybe I'm not so good as I seem to you. I've a bad heart; I will have my own way. I fascinated poor Dmitri Fyodorovitch that day simply for fun."

"But now you'll save him. You've given me your word. You'll explain it all to him. You'll break to him that you have long loved another man, who is now offering you his hand."

"Oh, no I didn't give you my word to do that. It was you kept talking about that. I didn't give you my word."

"Then I didn't quite understand you," said Katerina Ivanovna slowly, turning a little pale. "You promised-"

"Oh no, angel lady, I've promised nothing," Grushenka interrupted softly and evenly, still with the same gay and simple expression. "You see at once, dear young lady, what a wilful wretch I am compared with you. If I want to

do a thing I do it. I may have made you some promise just now. But now again I'm thinking: I may take Mitya again. I liked him very much once — liked him for almost a whole hour. Now maybe I shall go and tell him to stay with me from this day forward. You see, I'm so changeable."

"Just now you said — something quite different," Katerina Ivanovna whispered faintly.

"Ah, just now! But, you know, I'm such a soft-hearted, silly creature. Only think what he's gone through on my account! What if when I go home I feel sorry for him? What then?"

"I never expected-"

"Ah, young lady, how good and generous you are compared with me! Now perhaps you won't care for a silly creature like me, now you know my character. Give me your sweet little hand, angelic lady," she said tenderly, and with a sort of reverence took Katerina Ivanovna's hand.

"Here, dear young lady, I'll take your hand and kiss it as you did mine. You kissed mine three times, but I ought to kiss yours three hundred times to be even with you. Well, but let that pass. And then it shall be as God wills. Perhaps I shall be your slave entirely and want to do your bidding like a slave. Let it be as God wills, without any agreements and promises. What a sweet hand — what a sweet hand you have! You sweet young lady, you incredible beauty!"

She slowly raised the hands to her lips, with the strange object indeed of "being even" with her in kisses.

Katerina Ivanovna did not take her hand away. She listened with timid hope to the last words, though Grushenka's promise to do her bidding like a slave was very strangely expressed. She looked intently into her eyes; she still saw in those eyes the same simple-hearted, confiding expression, the same bright gaiety.

"She's perhaps too naive," thought Katerina Ivanovna, with a gleam of hope.

Grushenka meanwhile seemed enthusiastic over the "sweet hand." She raised it deliberately to her lips. But she held it for two or three minutes near her lips, as though reconsidering something.

"Do you know, angel lady," she suddenly drawled in an even more soft and sugary voice, "do you know, after all, I think I won't kiss your hand?" And she laughed a little merry laugh.

“As you please. What’s the matter with you?” said Katerina Ivanovna, starting suddenly.

“So that you may be left to remember that you kissed my hand, but I didn’t kiss yours.”

There was a sudden gleam in her eyes. She looked with awful intentness at Katerina Ivanovna.

“Insolent creature!” cried Katerina Ivanovna, as though suddenly grasping something. She flushed all over and leapt up from her seat.

Grushenka too got up, but without haste.

“So I shall tell Mitya how you kissed my hand, but I didn’t kiss yours at all. And how he will laugh!”

“Vile slut! Go away!”

“Ah, for shame, young lady! Ah, for shame! That’s unbecoming for you, dear young lady, a word like that.”

“Go away! You’re a creature for sale” screamed Katerina Ivanovna. Every feature was working in her utterly distorted face.

“For sale indeed! You used to visit gentlemen in the dusk for money once; you brought your beauty for sale. You see, I know.”

Katerina Ivanovna shrieked, and would have rushed at her, but Alyosha held her with all his strength.

“Not a step, not a word! Don’t speak, don’t answer her. She’ll go away — she’ll go at once.”

At that instant Katerina Ivanovna’s two aunts ran in at her cry, and with them a maid-servant. All hurried to her.

“I will go away,” said Grushenka, taking up her mantle from the sofa. “Alyosha, darling, see me home!”

“Go away — go away, make haste!” cried Alyosha, clasping his hands imploringly.

“Dear little Alyosha, see me home! I’ve got a pretty little story to tell you on the way. I got up this scene for your benefit, Alyosha. See me home, dear, you’ll be glad of it afterwards.”

Alyosha turned away, wringing his hands. Grushenka ran out of the house, laughing musically.

Katerina Ivanovna went into a fit of hysterics. She sobbed, and was shaken with convulsions. Everyone fussed round her.

“I warned you,” said the elder of her aunts. “I tried to prevent your doing this. You’re too impulsive. How could you do such a thing? You don’t know

these creatures, and they say she’s worse than any of them. You are too self-willed.”

“She’s a tigress!” yelled Katerina Ivanovna. “Why did you hold me, Alexey Fyodorovitch? I’d have beaten her — beaten her!”

She could not control herself before Alyosha; perhaps she did not care to, indeed.

“She ought to be flogged in public on a scaffold!”

Alyosha withdrew towards the door.

“But, my God!” cried Katerina Ivanovna, clasping her hands. “He! He! He could be so dishonourable, so inhuman! Why, he told that creature what happened on that fatal, accursed day! ‘You brought your beauty for sale, dear young lady.’ She knows it! Your brother’s a scoundrel, Alexey Fyodorovitch.”

Alyosha wanted to say something, but he couldn’t find a word. His heart ached.

“Go away, Alexey Fyodorovitch! It’s shameful, it’s awful for me! To-morrow, I beg you on my knees, come to-morrow. Don’t condemm me. Forgive me. I don’t know what I shall do with myself now!”

Alyosha walked out into the street reeling. He could have wept as she did. Suddenly he was overtaken by the maid.

“The young lady forgot to give you this letter from Madame Hohlakov; it’s been left with us since dinner-time.”

Alyosha took the little pink envelope mechanically and put it, almost unconsciously, into his pocket.

CHAPTER 11

Another Reputation Ruined

IT was not much more than three-quarters of a mile from the town to the monastery. Alyosha walked quickly along the road, at that hour deserted. It was almost night, and too dark to see anything clearly at thirty paces ahead. There were cross-roads half-way. A figure came into sight under a solitary willow at the cross-roads. As soon as Alyosha reached the cross-roads the figure moved out and rushed at him, shouting savagely: “Your money or your life!”

“So it’s you, Mitya,” cried Alyosha, in surprise, violently startled however.

“Ha ha ha! You didn’t expect me? I wondered where to wait for you. By her house? There are three ways from it, and I might have missed you. At last I thought of waiting here, for you had to pass here, there’s no other way to the monastery. Come, tell me the truth. Crush me like a beetle. But what’s the matter?”

“Nothing, brother — it’s the fright you gave me. Oh, Dmitri! Father’s blood just now.” (Alyosha began to cry, he had been on the verge of tears for a long time, and now something seemed to snap in his soul.) “You almost killed him — cursed him — and now — here — you’re making jokes—’Your money or your life!’”

“Well, what of that? It’s not seemly — is that it? Not suitable in my position?”

“No — I only-”

“Stay. Look at the night. You see what a dark night, what clouds, what a wind has risen. I hid here under the willow waiting for you. And as God’s above, I suddenly thought, why go on in misery any longer, what is there to wait for? Here I have a willow, a handkerchief, a shirt, I can twist them into a rope in a minute, and braces besides, and why go on burdening the earth, dishonouring it with my vile presence? And then I heard you coming — Heavens, it was as though something flew down to me suddenly. So there is a man, then, whom I love. Here he is, that man, my dear little brother, whom I love more than anyone in the world, the only one I love in the world. And I loved you so much, so much at that moment that I thought,

‘I’ll fall on his neck at once.’ Then a stupid idea struck me, to have a joke with you and scare you. I shouted, like a fool, ‘Your money!’ Forgive my foolery — it was only nonsense, and there’s nothing unseemly in my soul.... Damn it all, tell me what’s happened. What did she say? Strike me, crush me, don’t spare me! Was she furious?”

“No, not that.... There was nothing like that, Mitya. There — I found them both there.”

“Both? Whom?”

“Grushenka at Katerina Ivanovna’s.”

Dmitri was struck dumb.

“Impossible!” he cried. “You’re raving! Grushenka with her?”

Alyosha described all that had happened from the moment he went in to Katerina Ivanovna’s. He was ten minutes telling his story. can’t be said to have told it fluently and consecutively, but he seemed to make it clear, not omitting any word or action of significance, and vividly describing, often in one word, his own sensations. Dmitri listened in silence, gazing at him with a terrible fixed stare, but it was clear to Alyosha that he understood it all, and had grasped every point. But as the story went on, his face became not merely gloomy, but menacing. He scowled, he clenched his teeth, and his fixed stare became still more rigid, more concentrated, more terrible, when suddenly, with incredible rapidity, his wrathful, savage face changed, his tightly compressed lips parted, and Dmitri Fyodorovitch broke into uncontrolled, spontaneous laughter. He literally shook with laughter. For a long time he could not speak.

“So she wouldn’t kiss her hand! So she didn’t kiss it; so she ran away!” he kept exclaiming with hysterical delight; insolent delight it might had been called, if it had not been so spontaneous. “So the other one called her tigress! And a tigress she is! So she ought to be flogged on a scaffold? Yes, yes, so she ought. That’s just what I think; she ought to have been long ago. It’s like this, brother, let her be punished, but I must get better first. I understand the queen of impudence. That’s her all over! You saw her all over in that hand-kissing, the she-devil! She’s magnificent in her own line! So she ran home? I’ll go — ah — I’ll run to her! Alyosha, don’t blame me, I agree that hanging is too good for her.”

“But Katerina Ivanovna!” exclaimed Alyosha sorrowfully.

“I see her, too! I see right through her, as I’ve never done before! It’s a regular discovery of the four continents of the world, that is, of the five!

What a thing to do! That’s just like Katya, who was not afraid to face a coarse, unmannerly officer and risk a deadly insult on a generous impulse to save her father! But the pride, the recklessness, the defiance of fate, the unbounded defiance! You say that aunt tried to stop her? That aunt, you know, is overbearing, herself. She’s the sister of the general’s widow in Moscow, and even more stuck-up than she. But her husband was caught stealing government money. He lost everything, his estate and all, and the proud wife had to lower her colours, and hasn’t raised them since. So she tried to prevent Katya, but she wouldn’t listen to her! She thinks she can overcome everything, that everything will give way to her. She thought she could bewitch Grushenka if she liked, and she believed it herself: she plays a part to herself, and whose fault is it? Do you think she kissed Grushenka’s hand first, on purpose, with a motive? No, she really was fascinated by Grushenka, that’s to say, not by Grushenka, but by her own dream, her own delusion — because it was her dream, her delusion! Alyosha, darling, how did you escape from them, those women? Did you pick up your cassock and run? Ha ha ha!”

“Brother, you don’t seem to have noticed how you’ve insulted Katerina Ivanovna by telling Grushenka about that day. And she flung it in her face just now that she had gone to gentlemen in secret to sell her beauty! Brother, what could be worse than that insult?”

What worried Alyosha more than anything was that, incredible as it seemed, his brother appeared pleased at Katerina Ivanovna’s humiliation.

“Bah!” Dmitri frowned fiercely, and struck his forehead with his hand. He only now realised it, though Alyosha had just told him of the insult, and Katerina Ivanovna’s cry: “Your brother is a scoundrel”

“Yes, perhaps, I really did tell Grushenka about that ‘fatal day,’ as Katya calls it. Yes, I did tell her, I remember! It was that time at Mokroe. I was drunk, the Gypsies were singing... But I was sobbing. I was sobbing then, kneeling and praying to Katya’s image, and Grushenka understood it. She understood it all then. I remember, she cried herself.... Damn it all! But it’s bound to be so now.... Then she cried, but now ‘the dagger in the heart’! That’s how women are.”

He looked down and sank into thought.

“Yes, I am a scoundrel, a thorough scoundrel” he said suddenly, in a gloomy voice. “It doesn’t matter whether I cried or not, I’m a scoundrel! Tell her I accept the name, if that’s any comfort. Come, that’s enough.

Good-bye. It’s no use talking! It’s not amusing. You go your way and I mine. And I don’t want to see you again except as a last resource. Good-bye, Alexey!”

He warmly pressed Alyosha’s hand, and still looking down, without raising his head, as though tearing himself away, turned rapidly towards the town.

Alyosha looked after him, unable to believe he would go away so abruptly.

“Stay, Alexey, one more confession to you alone” cried Dmitri, suddenly turning back. “Look at me. Look at me well. You see here, here — there’s terrible disgrace in store for me.” (As he said “here,” Dmitri struck his chest with his fist with a strange air, as though the dishonour lay precisely on his chest, in some spot, in a pocket, perhaps, or hanging round his neck.) “You know me now, a scoundrel, an avowed scoundrel, but let me tell you that I’ve never done anything before and never shall again, anything that can compare in baseness with the dishonour which I bear now at this very minute on my breast, here, here, which will come to pass, though I’m perfectly free to stop it. I can stop it or carry it through, note that. Well, let me tell you, I shall carry it through. I shan’t stop it. I told you everything just now, but I didn’t tell you this, because even I had not brass enough for it. I can still pull up; if I do, I can give back the full half of my lost honour to-morrow. But I shan’t pull up. I shall carry out my base plan, and you can bear witness that I told so beforehand. Darkness and destruction! No need to explain. You’ll find out in due time. The filthy back-alley and the she-devil. Good-bye. Don’t pray for me, I’m not worth it. And there’s no need, no need at all.... I don’t need it! Away!”

And he suddenly retreated, this time finally. Alyosha went towards the monastery.

“What? I shall never see him again! What is he saying?” he wondered wildly. “Why, I shall certainly see him to-morrow. I shall look him up. I shall make a point of it. What does he mean?”

He went round the monastery, and crossed the pine-wood to the hermitage. The door was opened to him, though no one was admitted at that hour. There was a tremor in his heart as he went into Father Zossima’s cell.

“Why, why, had he gone forth? Why had he sent him into the world? Here was peace. Here was holiness. But there was confusion, there was darkness in which one lost one’s way and went astray at once....”

In the cell he found the novice Porfiry and Father Paissy, who came every hour to inquire after Father Zossima. Alyosha learnt with alarm that he was getting worse and worse. Even his usual discourse with the brothers could not take place that day. As a rule every evening after service the monks flocked into Father Zossima's cell, and all confessed aloud their sins of the day, their sinful thoughts and temptations; even their disputes, if there had been any. Some confessed kneeling. The elder absolved, reconciled, exhorted, imposed penance, blessed, and dismissed them. It was against this general "confession" that the opponents of "elders" protested, maintaining that it was a profanation of the sacrament of confession, almost a sacrilege, though this was quite a different thing. They even represented to the diocesan authorities that such confessions attained no good object, but actually to a large extent led to sin and temptation. Many of the brothers disliked going to the elder, and went against their own will because everyone went, and for fear they should be accused of pride and rebellious ideas. People said that some of the monks agreed beforehand, saying, "I'll confess I lost my temper with you this morning, and you confirm it," simply in order to have something to say. Alyosha knew that this actually happened sometimes. He knew, too, that there were among the monks some who deep resented the fact that letters from relations were habitually taken to the elder, to be opened and read by him before those to whom they were addressed.

It was assumed, of course, that all this was done freely, and in good faith, by way of voluntary submission and salutary guidance. But, in fact, there was sometimes no little insincerity, and much that was false and strained in this practice. Yet the older and more experienced of the monks adhered to their opinion, arguing that "for those who have come within these walls sincerely seeking salvation, such obedience and sacrifice will certainly be salutary and of great benefit; those, on the other hand, who find it irksome, and repine, are no true monks, and have made a mistake in entering the monastery — their proper place is in the world. Even in the temple one cannot be safe from sin and the devil. So it was no good taking it too much into account."

"He is weaker, a drowsiness has come over him," Father Paissy whispered to Alyosha, as he blessed him. "It's difficult to rouse him. And he must not be roused. He waked up for five minutes, sent his blessing to the brothers, and begged their prayers for him at night. He intends to take

the sacrament again in the morning. He remembered you, Alexey. He asked whether you had gone away, and was told that you were in the town. ‘I blessed him for that work,’ he said, ‘his place is there, not here, for awhile.’ Those were his words about you. He remembered you lovingly, with anxiety; do you understand how he honoured you? But how is it that he has decided that you shall spend some time in the world? He must have foreseen something in your destiny! Understand, Alexey, that if you return to the world, it must be to do the duty laid upon you by your elder, and not for frivolous vanity and worldly pleasures.”

Father Paissy went out. Alyosha had no doubt that Father Zossima was dying, though he might live another day or two. Alyosha firmly and ardently resolved that in spite of his promises to his father, the Hohlakovs, and Katerina Ivanovna, he would not leave the monastery next day, but would remain with his elder to the end. His heart glowed with love, and he reproached himself bitterly for having been able for one instant to forget him whom he had left in the monastery on his death bed, and whom he honoured above everyone in the world. He went into Father Zossima’s bedroom, knelt down, and bowed to the ground before the elder, who slept quietly without stirring, with regular, hardly audible breathing and a peaceful face.

Alyosha returned to the other room, where Father Zossima received his guests in the morning. Taking off his boots, he lay down on the hard, narrow, leathern sofa, which he had long used as a bed, bringing nothing but a pillow. The mattress, about which his father had shouted to him that morning, he had long forgotten to lie on. He took off his cassock, which he used as a covering. But before going to bed, he fell on his knees and prayed a long time. In his fervent prayer he did not beseech God to lighten his darkness but only thirsted for the joyous emotion, which always visited his soul after the praise and adoration, of which his evening prayer usually consisted. That joy always brought him light untroubled sleep. As he was praying, he suddenly felt in his pocket the little pink note the servant had handed him as he left Katerina Ivanovna’s. He was disturbed, but finished his prayer. Then, after some hesitation, he opened the envelope. In it was a letter to him, signed by Lise, the young daughter of Madame Hohlakov, who had laughed at him before the elder in the morning.

“Alexey Fyodorovitch,” she wrote, “I am writing to you without anyone’s knowledge, even mamma’s, and I know how wrong it is. But I

cannot live without telling you the feeling that has sprung up in my heart, and this no one but us two must know for a time. But how am I to say what I want so much to tell you? Paper, they say, does not blush, but I assure you it's not true and that it's blushing just as I am now, all over. Dear Alyosha, I love you, I've loved you from my childhood, since our Moscow days, when you were very different from what you are now, and I shall love you all my life. My heart has chosen you, to unite our lives, and pass them together till our old age. Of course, on condition that you will leave the monastery. As for our age we will wait for the time fixed by the law. By that time I shall certainly be quite strong, I shall be walking and dancing. There can be no doubt of that.

"You see how I've thought of everything. There's only one thing I can't imagine: what you'll think of me when you read this. I'm always laughing and being naughty. I made you angry this morning, but I assure you before I took up my pen, I prayed before the Image of the Mother of God, and now I'm praying, and almost crying.

"My secret is in your hands. When you come to-morrow, I don't know how I shall look at you. Ah, Alexey Fyodorovitch, what if I can't restrain myself like a silly and laugh when I look at you as I did to-day. You'll think I'm a nasty girl making fun of you, and you won't believe my letter. And so I beg you, dear one, if you've any pity for me, when you come to-morrow, don't look me straight in the face, for if I meet your eyes, it will be sure to make me laugh, especially as you'll be in that long gown. I feel cold all over when I think of it, so when you come, don't look at me at all for a time, look at mamma or at the window....

"Here I've written you a love-letter. Oh, dear, what have I done? Alyosha, don't despise me, and if I've done something very horrid and wounded you, forgive me. Now the secret of my reputation, ruined perhaps for ever, is in your hands.

"I shall certainly cry to-day. Good-bye till our meeting, our awful meeting. — Lise.

"P.S. — Alyosha! You must, must, must come! — Lise.

Alyosha read the note in amazement, read it through twice, thought a little, and suddenly laughed a soft, sweet laugh. He started. That laugh seemed to him sinful. But a minute later he laughed again just as softly and happily. He slowly replaced the note in the envelope, crossed himself and lay down. The agitation in his heart passed at once. "God, have mercy upon

all of them, have all these unhappy and turbulent souls in Thy keeping, and set them in the right path. All ways are Thine. Save them according to Thy wisdom. Thou art love. Thou wilt send joy to all!" Alyosha murmured, crossing himself, and falling into peaceful sleep.

PART II

BOOK IV. LACERATIONS

CHAPTER 1

Father Ferapont

ALYOSHA was roused early, before daybreak. Father Zossima woke up feeling very weak, though he wanted to get out of bed and sit up in a chair. His mind was quite clear; his face looked very tired, yet bright and almost joyful. It wore an expression of gaiety, kindness and cordiality. “Maybe I shall not live through the coming day,” he said to Alyosha. Then he desired to confess and take the sacrament at once. He always confessed to Father Paissy. After taking the communion, the service of extreme unction followed. The monks assembled and the cell was gradually filled up by the inmates of the hermitage. Meantime it was daylight. People began coming from the monastery. After the service was over the elder desired to kiss and take leave of everyone. As the cell was so small the earlier visitors withdrew to make room for others. Alyosha stood beside the elder, who was seated again in his arm-chair. He talked as much as he could. Though his voice was weak, it was fairly steady.

“I’ve been teaching you so many years, and therefore I’ve been talking aloud so many years, that I’ve got into the habit of talking, and so much so that it’s almost more difficult for me to hold my tongue than to talk, even now, in spite of my weakness, dear Fathers and brothers,” he jested, looking with emotion at the group round him.

Alyosha remembered afterwards something of what he said to them. But though he spoke out distinctly and his voice was fairly steady, his speech was somewhat disconnected. He spoke of many things, he seemed anxious before the moment of death to say everything he had not said in his life, and not simply for the sake of instructing them, but as though thirsting to share with all men and all creation his joy and ecstasy, and once more in his life to open his whole heart.

“Love one another, Fathers,” said Father Zossima, as far as Alyosha could remember afterwards. “Love God’s people. Because we have come here and shut ourselves within these walls, we are no holier than those that are outside, but on the contrary, from the very fact of coming here, each of us has confessed to himself that he is worse than others, than all men on earth.... And the longer the monk lives in his seclusion, the more keenly he

must recognise that. Else he would have had no reason to come here. When he realises that he is not only worse than others, but that he is responsible to all men for all and everything, for all human sins, national and individual, only then the aim of our seclusion is attained. For know, dear ones, that every one of us is undoubtedly responsible for all men — and everything on earth, not merely through the general sinfulness of creation, but each one personally for all mankind and every individual man. This knowledge is the crown of life for the monk and for every man. For monks are not a special sort of men, but only what all men ought to be. Only through that knowledge, our heart grows soft with infinite, universal, inexhaustible love. Then every one of you will have the power to win over the whole world by love and to wash away the sins of the world with your tears....Each of you keep watch over your heart and confess your sins to yourself unceasingly. Be not afraid of your sins, even when perceiving them, if only there be penitence, but make no conditions with God. Again, I say, be not proud. Be proud neither to the little nor to the great. Hate not those who reject you, who insult you, who abuse and slander you. Hate not the atheists, the teachers of evil, the materialists — and I mean not only the good ones — for there are many good ones among them, especially in our day — hate not even the wicked ones. Remember them in your prayers thus: Save, O Lord, all those who have none to pray for them, save too all those who will not pray. And add: it is not in pride that I make this prayer, O Lord, for I am lower than all men.... Love God’s people, let not strangers draw away the flock, for if you slumber in your slothfulness and disdainful pride, or worse still, in covetousness, they will come from all sides and draw away your flock. Expound the Gospel to the people unceasingly... be not extortionate.... Do not love gold and silver, do not hoard them.... Have faith. Cling to the banner and raise it on high.”

But the elder spoke more disconnectedly than Alyosha reported his words afterwards. Sometimes he broke off altogether, as though to take breath and recover his strength, but he was in a sort of ecstasy. They heard him with emotion, though many wondered at his words and found them obscure.... Afterwards all remembered those words.

When Alyosha happened for a moment to leave the cell, he was struck by the general excitement and suspense in the monks who were crowding about it. This anticipation showed itself in some by anxiety, in others by devout solemnity. All were expecting that some marvel would happen

immediately after the elder's death. Their suspense was, from one point of view, almost frivolous, but even the most austere of the monks were affected by it. Father Paissy's face looked the gravest of all.

Alyosha was mysteriously summoned by a monk to see Rakitin, who had arrived from town with a singular letter for him from Madame Hohlakov. In it she informed Alyosha of a strange and very opportune incident. It appeared that among the women who had come on the previous day to receive Father Zossima's blessing, there had been an old woman from the town, a sergeant's widow, called Prohorovna. She had inquired whether she might pray for the rest of the soul of her son, Vassenka, who had gone to Irkutsk, and had sent her no news for over a year. To which Father Zossima had answered sternly, forbidding her to do so, and saying that to pray for the living as though they were dead was a kind of sorcery. He afterwards forgave her on account of her ignorance, and added, "as though reading the book of the future" (this was Madame Hohlakov's expression), words of comfort: "that her son Vassya was certainly alive and he would either come himself very shortly or send a letter, and that she was to go home and expect him." And "Would you believe it?" exclaimed Madame Hohlakov enthusiastically, "the prophecy has been fulfilled literally indeed, and more than that." Scarcely had the old woman reached home when they gave her a letter from Siberia which had been awaiting her. But that was not all; in the letter written on the road from Ekaterinenburg, Vassya informed his mother that he was returning to Russia with an official, and that three weeks after her receiving the letter he hoped "to embrace his mother."

Madame Hohlakov warmly entreated Alyosha to report this new "miracle of prediction" to the Superior and all the brotherhood. "All, all, ought to know of it" she concluded. The letter had been written in haste, the excitement of the writer was apparent in every line of it. But Alyosha had no need to tell the monks, for all knew of it already. Rakitin had commissioned the monk who brought his message "to inform most respectfully his reverence Father Paissy, that he, Rakitin, has a matter to speak of with him, of such gravity that he dare not defer it for a moment, and humbly begs forgiveness for his presumption." As the monk had given the message to Father Paissy, before that to Alyosha, the latter found after reading the letter, there was nothing left for him to do but to hand it to Father Paissy in confirmation of the story.

And even that austere and cautious man, though he frowned as he read the news of the “miracle,” could not completely restrain some inner emotion. His eyes gleamed, and a grave and solemn smile came into his lips.

“We shall see greater things!” broke from him.

“We shall see greater things, greater things yet!” the monks around repeated.

But Father Paissy, frowning again, begged all of them, at least for a time, not to speak of the matter “till it be more fully confirmed, seeing there is so much credulity among those of this world, and indeed this might well have chanced naturally,” he added, prudently, as it were to satisfy his conscience, though scarcely believing his own disavowal, a fact his listeners very clearly perceived.

Within the hour the “miracle” was of course known to the whole monastery, and many visitors who had come for the mass. No one seemed more impressed by it than the monk who had come the day before from St. Sylvester, from the little monastery of Obdorsk in the far North. It was he who had been standing near Madame Hohlakov the previous day and had asked Father Zossima earnestly, referring to the “healing” of the lady’s daughter, “How can you presume to do such things?”

He was now somewhat puzzled and did not know whom to believe. The evening before he had visited Father Ferapont in his cell apart, behind the apiary, and had been greatly impressed and overawed by the visit. This Father Ferapont was that aged monk so devout in fasting and observing silence who has been mentioned already, as antagonistic to Father Zossima and the whole institution of “elders,” which he regarded as a pernicious and frivolous innovation. He was a very formidable opponent, although from his practice of silence he scarcely spoke a word to anyone. What made him formidable was that a number of monks fully shared his feeling, and many of the visitors looked upon him as a great saint and ascetic, although they had no doubt that he was crazy. But it was just his craziness attracted them.

Father Ferapont never went to see the elder. Though he lived in the hermitage they did not worry him to keep its regulations, and this too because he behaved as though he were crazy. He was seventy-five or more, and he lived in a corner beyond the apiary in an old decaying wooden cell which had been built long ago for another great ascetic, Father Iona, who

had lived to be a hundred and five, and of whose saintly doings many curious stories were still extant in the monastery and the neighbourhood.

Father Ferapont had succeeded in getting himself installed in this same solitary cell seven years previously. It was simply a peasant's hut, though it looked like a chapel, for it contained an extraordinary number of ikons with lamps perpetually burning before them — which men brought to the monastery as offerings to God. Father Ferapont had been appointed to look after them and keep the lamps burning. It was said (and indeed it was true) that he ate only two pounds of bread in three days. The beekeeper, who lived close by the apiary, used to bring him the bread every three days, and even to this man who waited upon him, Father Ferapont rarely uttered a word. The four pounds of bread, together with the sacrament bread, regularly sent him on Sundays after the late mass by the Father Superior, made up his weekly rations. The water in his jug was changed every day. He rarely appeared at mass. Visitors who came to do him homage saw him sometimes kneeling all day long at prayer without looking round. If he addressed them, he was brief, abrupt, strange, and almost always rude. On very rare occasions, however, he would talk to visitors, but for the most part he would utter some one strange saying which was a complete riddle, and no entreaties would induce him to pronounce a word in explanation. He was not a priest, but a simple monk. There was a strange belief, chiefly, however, among the most ignorant, that Father Ferapont had communication with heavenly spirits and would only converse with them, and so was silent with men.

The monk from Obdorsk, having been directed to the apiary by the beekeeper, who was also a very silent and surly monk, went to the corner where Father Ferapont's cell stood. "Maybe he will speak as you are a stranger and maybe you'll get nothing out of him," the beekeeper had warned him. The monk, as he related afterwards, approached in the utmost apprehension. It was rather late in the evening. Father Ferapont was sitting at the door of his cell on a low bench. A huge old elm was lightly rustling overhead. There was an evening freshness in the air. The monk from Obdorsk bowed down before the saint and asked his blessing.

"Do you want me to bow down to you, monk?" said Father Ferapont. "Get up!"

The monk got up.

"Blessing, be blessed! Sit beside me. Where have you come from?"

What most struck the poor monk was the fact that in spite of his strict fasting and great age, Father Ferapont still looked a vigorous old man. He was tall, held himself erect, and had a thin, but fresh and healthy face. There was no doubt he still had considerable strength. He was of athletic build. In spite of his great age he was not even quite grey, and still had very thick hair and a full beard, both of which had once been black. His eyes were grey, large and luminous, but strikingly prominent. He spoke with a broad accent. He was dressed in a peasant's long reddish coat of coarse convict cloth (as it used to be called) and had a stout rope round his waist. His throat and chest were bare. Beneath his coat, his shirt of the coarsest linen showed almost black with dirt, not having been changed for months. They said that he wore irons weighing thirty pounds under his coat. His stockingless feet were thrust in old slippers almost dropping to pieces.

"From the little Obdorsk monastery, from St. Sylvester," the monk answered humbly, whilst his keen and inquisitive, but rather frightened little eyes kept watch on the hermit.

"I have been at your Sylvester's. I used to stay there. Is Sylvester well?"

The monk hesitated.

"You are a senseless lot! How do you keep the fasts?"

"Our dietary is according to the ancient conventual rules. During Lent there are no meals provided for Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. For Tuesday and Thursday we have white bread, stewed fruit with honey, wild berries, or salt cabbage and whole meal stirabout. On Saturday white cabbage soup, noodles with peas, kasha, all with hemp oil. On weekdays we have dried fish and kasha with the cabbage soup. >From Monday till Saturday evening, six whole days in Holy Week, nothing is cooked, and we have only bread and water, and that sparingly; if possible not taking food every day, just the same as is ordered for first week in Lent. On Good Friday nothing is eaten. In the same way on the Saturday we have to fast till three o'clock, and then take a little bread and water and drink a single cup of wine. On Holy Thursday we drink wine and have something cooked without oil or not cooked at all, inasmuch as the Laodicean council lays down for Holy Thursday: "It is unseemly by remitting the fast on the Holy Thursday to dishonour the whole of Lent!" This is how we keep the fast. But what is that compared with you, holy Father," added the monk, growing more confident, "for all the year round, even at Easter, you take nothing but

bread and water, and what we should eat in two days lasts you full seven. It’s truly marvellous — your great abstinence.”

“And mushrooms?” asked Father Ferapont, suddenly.

“Mushrooms?” repeated the surprised monk.

“Yes. I can give up their bread, not needing it at all, and go away into the forest and live there on the mushrooms or the berries, but they can’t give up their bread here, wherefore they are in bondage to the devil. Nowadays the unclean deny that there is need of such fasting. Haughty and unclean is their judgment.”

“Och, true,” sighed the monk.

“And have you seen devils among them?” asked Ferapont.

“Among them? Among whom?” asked the monk, timidly.

“I went to the Father Superior on Trinity Sunday last year, I haven’t been since. I saw a devil sitting on one man’s chest hiding under his cassock, only his horns poked out; another had one peeping out of his pocket with such sharp eyes, he was afraid of me; another settled in the unclean belly of one, another was hanging round a man’s neck, and so he was carrying him about without seeing him.”

“You — can see spirits?” the monk inquired.

“I tell you I can see, I can see through them. When I was coming out from the Superior’s I saw one hiding from me behind the door, and a big one, a yard and a half or more high, with a thick long grey tail, and the tip of his tail was in the crack of the door and I was quick and slammed the door, pinching his tail in it. He squealed and began to struggle, and I made the sign of the cross over him three times. And he died on the spot like a crushed spider. He must have rotted there in the corner and be stinking, but they don’t see, they don’t smell it. It’s a year since I have been there. I reveal it to you, as you are a stranger.”

“Your words are terrible! But, holy and blessed father,” said the monk, growing bolder and bolder, “is it true, as they noise abroad even to distant lands about you, that you are in continual communication with the Holy Ghost?”

“He does fly down at times.”

“How does he fly down? In what form?”

“As a bird.”

“The Holy Ghost in the form of a dove?”

“There’s the Holy Ghost and there’s the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can appear as other birds — sometimes as a swallow, sometimes a goldfinch and sometimes as a blue-tit.”

“How do you know him from an ordinary tit?”

“He speaks.”

“How does he speak, in what language?”

“Human language.”

“And what does he tell you?”

“Why, to-day he told me that a fool would visit me and would ask me unseemly questions. You want to know too much, monk.”

“Terrible are your words, most holy and blessed Father,” the monk shook his head. But there was a doubtful look in his frightened little eyes.

“Do you see this tree?” asked Father Ferapont, after a pause.

“I do, blessed Father.”

“You think it’s an elm, but for me it has another shape.”

“What sort of shape?” inquired the monk, after a pause of vain expectation.

“It happens at night. You see those two branches? In the night it is Christ holding out His arms to me and seeking me with those arms, I see it clearly and tremble. It’s terrible, terrible!”

“What is there terrible if it’s Christ Himself?”

“Why, He’ll snatch me up and carry me away.”

“Alive?”

“In the spirit and glory of Elijah, haven’t you heard? He will take me in His arms and bear me away.”

Though the monk returned to the cell he was sharing with one of the brothers, in considerable perplexity of mind, he still cherished at heart a greater reverence for Father Ferapont than for Father Zossima. He was strongly in favour of fasting, and it was not strange that one who kept so rigid a fast as Father Ferapont should “see marvels.” His words seemed certainly queer, but God only could tell what was hidden in those words, and were not worse words and acts commonly seen in those who have sacrificed their intellects for the glory of God? The pinching of the devil’s tail he was ready and eager to believe, and not only in the figurative sense. Besides he had, before visiting the monastery, a strong prejudice against the institution of “elders,” which he only knew of by hearsay and believed to be a pernicious innovation. Before he had been long at the monastery, he had

detected the secret murmurings of some shallow brothers who disliked the institution. He was, besides, a meddlesome, inquisitive man, who poked his nose into everything. This was why the news of the fresh “miracle” performed by Father Zossima reduced him to extreme perplexity. Alyosha remembered afterwards how their inquisitive guest from Obdorsk had been continually flitting to and fro from one group to another, listening and asking questions among the monks that were crowding within and without the elder’s cell. But he did not pay much attention to him at the time, and only recollected it afterwards.

He had no thought to spare for it indeed, for when Father Zossima, feeling tired again, had gone back to bed, he thought of Alyosha as he was closing his eyes, and sent for him. Alyosha ran at once. There was no one else in the cell but Father Paissy, Father Iosif, and the novice Porfiry. The elder, opening his weary eyes and looking intently at Alyosha, asked him suddenly:

“Are your people expecting you, my son?”

Alyosha hesitated.

“Haven’t they need of you? Didn’t you promise someone yesterday to see them to-day?”

“I did promise — to my father — my brothers — others too.”

“You see, you must go. Don’t grieve. Be sure I shall not die without your being by to hear my last word. To you I will say that word, my son, it will be my last gift to you. To you, dear son, because you love me. But now go to keep your promise.”

Alyosha immediately obeyed, though it was hard to go. But the promise that he should hear his last word on earth, that it should be the last gift to him, Alyosha, sent a thrill of rapture through his soul. He made haste that he might finish what he had to do in the town and return quickly. Father Paissy, too, uttered some words of exhortation which moved and surprised him greatly. He spoke as they left the cell together.

“Remember, young man, unceasingly,” Father Paissy began, without preface, “that the science of this world, which has become a great power, has, especially in the last century, analysed everything divine handed down to us in the holy books. After this cruel analysis the learned of this world have nothing left of all that was sacred of old. But they have only analysed the parts and overlooked the whole, and indeed their blindness is marvellous. Yet the whole still stands steadfast before their eyes, and the

gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Has it not lasted nineteen centuries, is it not still a living, a moving power in the individual soul and in the masses of people? It is still as strong and living even in the souls of atheists, who have destroyed everything! For even those who have renounced Christianity and attack it, in their inmost being still follow the Christian ideal, for hitherto neither their subtlety nor the ardour of their hearts has been able to create a higher ideal of man and of virtue than the ideal given by Christ of old. When it has been attempted, the result has been only grotesque. Remember this especially, young man, since you are being sent into the world by your departing elder. Maybe, remembering this great day, you will not forget my words, uttered from the heart for your guidance, seeing you are young, and the temptations of the world are great and beyond your strength to endure. Well, now go, my orphan."

With these words Father Paissy blessed him. As Alyosha left the monastery and thought them over, he suddenly realised that he had met a new and unexpected friend, a warmly loving teacher, in this austere monk who had hitherto treated him sternly. It was as though Father Zossima had bequeathed him to him at his death, and "perhaps that's just what had passed between them," Alyosha thought suddenly. The philosophic reflections he had just heard so unexpectedly testified to the warmth of Father Paissy's heart. He was in haste to arm the boy's mind for conflict with temptation and to guard the young soul left in his charge with the strongest defence he could imagine.

CHAPTER 2

At His Father's

FIRST of all, Alyosha went to his father. On the way he remembered that his father had insisted the day before that he should come without his brother Ivan seeing him. "Why so?" Alyosha wondered suddenly. "Even if my father has something to say to me alone, why should I go in unseen? Most likely in his excitement yesterday he meant to say something different," he decided. Yet he was very glad when Marfa Ignatyevna, who opened the garden gate to him (Grigory, it appeared, was ill in bed in the lodge), told him in answer to his question that Ivan Fyodorovitch had gone out two hours ago.

"And my father?"

"He is up, taking his coffee," Marfa answered somewhat drily.

Alyosha went in. The old man was sitting alone at the table wearing slippers and a little old overcoat. He was amusing himself by looking through some accounts, rather inattentively however. He was quite alone in the house, for Smerdyakov too had gone out marketing. Though he had got up early and was trying to put a bold face on it, he looked tired and weak. His forehead, upon which huge purple bruises had come out during the night, was bandaged with a red handkerchief; his nose too was swollen terribly in the night, and some smaller bruises covered it in patches, giving his whole face a peculiarly spiteful and irritable look. The old man was aware of this, and turned a hostile glance on Alyosha as he came in.

"The coffee is cold," he cried harshly; "I won't offer you any. I've ordered nothing but a Lenten fish soup to-day, and I don't invite anyone to share it. Why have you come?"

"To find out how you are," said Alyosha.

"Yes. Besides, I told you to come yesterday. It's all of no consequence. You need not have troubled. But I knew you'd come poking in directly."

He said this with almost hostile feeling. At the same time he got up and looked anxiously in the looking-glass (perhaps for the fortieth time that morning) at his nose. He began, too, binding his red handkerchief more becomingly on his forehead.

“Red’s better. It’s just like the hospital in a white one,” he observed sententiously. “Well, how are things over there? How is your elder?”

“He is very bad; he may die to-day,” answered Alyosha. But his father had not listened, and had forgotten his own question at once.

“Ivan’s gone out,” he said suddenly. “He is doing his utmost to carry off Mitya’s betrothed. That’s what he is staying here for,” he added maliciously, and, twisting his mouth, looked at Alyosha.

“Surely he did not tell you so?” asked Alyosha.

“Yes, he did, long ago. Would you believe it, he told me three weeks ago? You don’t suppose he too came to murder me, do you? He must have had some object in coming.”

“What do you mean? Why do you say such things?” said Alyosha, troubled.

“He doesn’t ask for money, it’s true, but yet he won’t get a farthing from me. I intend living as long as possible, you may as well know, my dear Alexey Fyodorovitch, and so I need every farthing, and the longer I live, the more I shall need it,” he continued, pacing from one corner of the room to the other, keeping his hands in the pockets of his loose greasy overcoat made of yellow cotton material. “I can still pass for a man at five and fifty, but I want to pass for one for another twenty years. As I get older, you know, I shan’t be a pretty object. The wenches won’t come to me of their own accord, so I shall want my money. So I am saving up more and more, simply for myself, my dear son Alexey Fyodorovitch. You may as well know. For I mean to go on in my sins to the end, let me tell you. For sin is sweet; all abuse it, but all men live in it, only others do it on the sly, and I openly. And so all the other sinners fall upon me for being so simple. And your paradise, Alexey Fyodorovitch, is not to my taste, let me tell you that; and it’s not the proper place for a gentleman, your paradise, even if it exists. I believe that I fall asleep and don’t wake up again, and that’s all. You can pray for my soul if you like. And if you don’t want to, don’t, damn you! That’s my philosophy. Ivan talked well here yesterday, though we were all drunk. Ivan is a conceited coxcomb, but he has no particular learning... nor education either. He sits silent and smiles at one without speaking — that’s what pulls him through.”

Alyosha listened to him in silence.

“Why won’t he talk to me? If he does speak, he gives himself airs. Your Ivan is a scoundrel! And I’ll marry Grushenka in a minute if I want to. For

if you've money, Alexey Fyodorovitch, you have only to want a thing and you can have it. That's what Ivan is afraid of, he is on the watch to prevent me getting married and that's why he is egging on Mitya to marry Grushenka himself. He hopes to keep me from Grushenka by that (as though I should leave him my money if I don't marry her!). Besides if Mitya marries Grushenka, Ivan will carry off his rich betrothed, that's what he's reckoning on! He is a scoundrel, your Ivan!"

"How cross you are! It's because of yesterday; you had better lie down," said Alyosha.

"There! you say that," the old man observed suddenly, as though it had struck him for the first time, "and I am not angry with you. But if Ivan said it, I should be angry with him. It is only with you I have good moments, else you know I am an ill-natured man."

"You are not ill-natured, but distorted," said Alyosha with a smile.

"Listen. I meant this morning to get that ruffian Mitya locked up and I don't know now what I shall decide about it. Of course in these fashionable days fathers and mothers are looked upon as a prejudice, but even now the law does not allow you to drag your old father about by the hair, to kick him in the face in his own house, and brag of murdering him outright — all in the presence of witnesses. If I liked, I could crush him and could have him locked up at once for what he did yesterday."

"Then you don't mean to take proceedings?"

"Ivan has dissuaded me. I shouldn't care about Ivan, but there's another thing."

And bending down to Alyosha, he went on in a confidential half-whisper.

"If I send the ruffian to prison, she'll hear of it and run to see him at once. But if she hears that he has beaten me, a weak old man, within an inch of my life, she may give him up and come to me... For that's her way, everything by contraries. I know her through and through! Won't you have a drop of brandy? Take some cold coffee and I'll pour a quarter of a glass of brandy into it, it's delicious, my boy."

"No, thank you. I'll take that roll with me if I may," said Alyosha, and taking a halfpenny French roll he put it in the pocket of his cassock. "And you'd better not have brandy, either," he suggested apprehensively, looking into the old man's face.

“You are quite right, it irritates my nerves instead of soothing them. Only one little glass. I’ll get it out of the cupboard.”

He unlocked the cupboard, poured out a glass, drank it, then locked the cupboard and put the key back in his pocket.

“That’s enough. One glass won’t kill me.”

“You see you are in a better humour now,” said Alyosha, smiling.

“Um! I love you even without the brandy, but with scoundrels I am a scoundrel. Ivan is not going to Tchermashnya — why is that? He wants to spy how much I give Grushenka if she comes. They are all scoundrels! But I don’t recognise Ivan, I don’t know him at all. Where does he come from? He is not one of us in soul. As though I’d leave him anything! I shan’t leave a will at all, you may as well know. And I’ll crush Mitya like a beetle. I squash black-beetles at night with my slipper; they squelch when you tread on them. And your Mitya will squelch too. Your Mitya, for you love him. Yes you love him and I am not afraid of your loving him. But if Ivan loved him I should be afraid for myself at his loving him. But Ivan loves nobody. Ivan is not one of us. People like Ivan are not our sort, my boy. They are like a cloud of dust. When the wind blows, the dust will be gone.... I had a silly idea in my head when I told you to come to-day; I wanted to find out from you about Mitya. If I were to hand him over a thousand or maybe two now, would the beggarly wretch agree to take himself off altogether for five years or, better still, thirty-five, and without Grushenka, and give her up once for all, eh?”

“I — I’ll ask him,” muttered Alyosha. “If you would give him three thousand, perhaps he-”

“That’s nonsense! You needn’t ask him now, no need! I’ve changed my mind. It was a nonsensical idea of mine. I won’t give him anything, not a penny, I want my money myself,” cried the old man, waving his hand. “I’ll crush him like a beetle without it. Don’t say anything to him or else he will begin hoping. There’s nothing for you to do here, you needn’t stay. Is that betrothed of his, Katerina Ivanovna, whom he has kept so carefully hidden from me all this time, going to marry him or not? You went to see her yesterday, I believe?”

“Nothing will induce her to abandon him.”

“There you see how dearly these fine young ladies love a rake and a scoundrel. They are poor creatures I tell you, those pale young ladies, very different from — Ah, if I had his youth and the looks I had then (for I was

better-looking than he at eight and twenty) I'd have been a conquering hero just as he is. He is a low cad! But he shan't have Grushenka, anyway, he shan't! I'll crush him!"

His anger had returned with the last words.

"You can go. There's nothing for you to do here to-day," he snapped harshly.

Alyosha went up to say good-bye to him, and kissed him on the shoulder.

"What's that for?" The old man was a little surprised. "We shall see each other again, or do you think we shan't?"

"Not at all, I didn't mean anything."

"Nor did I, I did not mean anything," said the old man, looking at him. "Listen, listen," he shouted after him, "make haste and come again and I'll have a fish soup for you, a fine one, not like to-day. Be sure to come! Come to-morrow, do you hear, to-morrow!"

And as soon as Alyosha had gone out of the door, he went to the cupboard again and poured out another half-glass.

"I won't have more!" he muttered, clearing his throat, and again he locked the cupboard and put the key in his pocket. Then he went into his bedroom, lay down on the bed, exhausted, and in one minute he was asleep.

CHAPTER 3

A Meeting with the Schoolboys

“THANK goodness he did not ask me about Grushenka,” thought Alyosha, as he left his father’s house and turned towards Madame Hohlakov’s, “or I might have had to tell him of my meeting with Grushenka yesterday.” Alyosha felt painfully that since yesterday both combatants had renewed their energies, and that their hearts had grown hard again. “Father is spiteful and angry, he’s made some plan and will stick to it. And what of Dmitri? He too will be harder than yesterday, he too must be spiteful and angry, and he too, no doubt, has made some plan. Oh, I must succeed in finding him to-day, whatever happens.”

But Alyosha had not long to meditate. An incident occurred on the road, which, though apparently of little consequence, made a great impression on him. just after he had crossed the square and turned the corner coming out into Mihailovsky Street, which is divided by a small ditch from the High Street (our whole town is intersected by ditches), he saw a group of schoolboys between the ages of nine and twelve, at the bridge. They were going home from school, some with their bags on their shoulders, others with leather satchels slung across them, some in short jackets, others in little overcoats. Some even had those high boots with creases round the ankles, such as little boys spoilt by rich fathers love to wear. The whole group was talking eagerly about something, apparently holding a council. Alyosha had never from his Moscow days been able to pass children without taking notice of them, and although he was particularly fond of children of three or thereabout, he liked schoolboys of ten and eleven too. And so, anxious as he was to-day, he wanted at once to turn aside to talk to them. He looked into their excited rosy faces, and noticed at once that all the boys had stones in their hands. Behind the ditch some thirty paces away, there was another schoolboy standing by a fence. He too had a satchel at his side. He was about ten years old, pale, delicate-looking and with sparkling black eyes. He kept an attentive and anxious watch on the other six, obviously his schoolfellows with whom he had just come out of school, but with whom he had evidently had a feud.

Alyosha went up and, addressing a fair, curly-headed, rosy boy in a black jacket, observed:

“When I used to wear a satchel like yours, I always used to carry it on my left side, so as to have my right hand free, but you’ve got yours on your right side. So it will be awkward for you to get at it.”

Alyosha had no art or premeditation in beginning with this practical remark. But it is the only way for a grown-up person to get at once into confidential relations with a child, or still more with a group of children. One must begin in a serious, businesslike way so as to be on a perfectly equal footing. Alyosha understood it by instinct.

“But he is left-handed,” another, a fine healthy-looking boy of eleven, answered promptly. All the others stared at Alyosha.

“He even throws stones with his left hand,” observed a third.

At that instant a stone flew into the group, but only just grazed the left-handed boy, though it was well and vigorously thrown by the boy standing on the other side of the ditch.

“Give it him, hit him back, Smurov,” they all shouted. But Smurov, the left-handed boy, needed no telling, and at once revenged himself; he threw a stone, but it missed the boy and hit the ground. The boy on the other side of the ditch, the pocket of whose coat was visibly bulging with stones, flung another stone at the group; this time it flew straight at Alyosha and hit him painfully on the shoulder.

“He aimed it at you, he meant it for you. You are Karamazov, Karamazov!” the boys shouted laughing, “Come, all throw at him at once!” and six stones flew at the boy. One struck the boy on the head and he fell down, but at once leapt up and began ferociously returning their fire. Both sides threw stones incessantly. Many of the group had their pockets full too.

“What are you about! Aren’t you ashamed? Six against one! Why, you’ll kill him,” cried Alyosha.

He ran forward and met the flying stones to screen the solitary boy. Three or four ceased throwing for a minute.

“He began first!” cried a boy in a red shirt in an angry childish voice. “He is a beast, he stabbed Krassotkin in class the other day with a penknife. It bled. Krassotkin wouldn’t tell tales, but he must be thrashed.”

“But what for? I suppose you tease him.”

“There, he sent a stone in your back again, he knows you,” cried the children. “It’s you he is throwing at now, not us. Come, all of you, at him

again, don’t miss, Smurov!” and again a fire of stones, and a very vicious one, began. The boy on the other side of the ditch was hit in the chest; he screamed, began to cry and ran away uphill towards Mihailovsky Street. They all shouted: “Aha, he is funking, he is running away. Wisp of tow!”

“You don’t know what a beast he is, Karamazov, killing is too good for him,” said the boy in the jacket, with flashing eyes. He seemed to be the eldest.

“What’s wrong with him?” asked Alyosha, “Is he a tell-tale or what?”

The boys looked at one another as though derisively.

“Are you going that way, to Mihailovsky?” the same boy went on. “Catch him up.... You see he’s stopped again, he is waiting and looking at you.”

“He is looking at you,” the other boys chimed in.

“You ask him, does he like a dishevelled wisp of tow. Do you hear, ask him that!”

There was a general burst of laughter. Alyosha looked at them, and they at him.

“Don’t go near him, he’ll hurt you,” cried Smurov in a warning voice.

“I shan’t ask him about the wisp of tow, for I expect you tease him with that question somehow. But I’ll find out from him why you hate him so.”

“Find out then, find out,” cried the boys laughing.

Alyosha crossed the bridge and walked uphill by the fence, straight towards the boy.

“You’d better look out,” the boys called after him; “he won’t be afraid of you. He will stab you in a minute, on the sly, as he did Krassotkin.”

The boy waited for him without budging. Coming up to him, Alyosha saw facing him a child of about nine years old. He was an undersized weakly boy with a thin pale face, with large dark eyes that gazed at him vindictively. He was dressed in a rather shabby old overcoat, which he had monstrously outgrown. His bare arms stuck out beyond his sleeves. There was a large patch on the right knee of his trousers, and in his right boot just at the toe there was a big hole in the leather, carefully blackened with ink. Both the pockets of his greatcoat were weighed down with stones. Alyosha stopped two steps in front of him, looking inquiringly at him, The boy, seeing at once from Alyosha’s eyes that he wouldn’t beat him, became less defiant, and addressed him first.

“I am alone, and there are six of them. I’ll beat them all, alone!” he said suddenly, with flashing eyes.

“I think one of the stones must have hurt you badly,” observed Alyosha.

“But I hit Smurov on the head!” cried the boy.

“They told me that you know me, and that you threw a stone at me on purpose,” said Alyosha.

The boy looked darkly at him.

“I don’t know you. Do you know me?” Alyosha continued.

“Let me alone!” the boy cried irritably; but he did not move, as though he were expecting something, and again there was a vindictive light in his eyes.

“Very well, I am going,” said Alyosha; “only I don’t know you and I don’t tease you. They told me how they tease you, but I don’t want to tease you. Good-bye!”

“Monk in silk trousers!” cried the boy, following Alyosha with the same vindictive and defiant expression, and he threw himself into an attitude of defence, feeling sure that now Alyosha would fall upon him; but Alyosha turned, looked at him, and walked away. He had not gone three steps before the biggest stone the boy had in his pocket hit him a painful blow in the back.

“So you’ll hit a man from behind! They tell the truth, then, when they say that you attack on the sly,” said Alyosha, turning round again. This time the boy threw a stone savagely right into Alyosha’s face; but Alyosha just had time to guard himself, and the stone struck him on the elbow.

“Aren’t you ashamed? What have I done to you?” he cried.

The boy waited in silent defiance, certain that now Alyosha would attack him. Seeing that even now he would not, his rage was like a little wild beast’s; he flew at Alyosha himself, and before Alyosha had time to move, the spiteful child had seized his left hand with both of his and bit his middle finger. He fixed his teeth in it and it was ten seconds before he let go. Alyosha cried out with pain and pulled his finger away with all his might. The child let go at last and retreated to his former distance. Alyosha’s finger had been badly bitten to the bone, close to the nail; it began to bleed. Alyosha took out his handkerchief and bound it tightly round his injured hand. He was a full minute bandaging it. The boy stood waiting all the time. At last Alyosha raised his gentle eyes and looked at him.

“Very well,” he said, “You see how badly you’ve bitten me. That’s enough, isn’t it? Now tell me, what have I done to you?”

The boy stared in amazement.

“Though I don’t know you and it’s the first time I’ve seen you,” Alyosha went on with the same serenity, “yet I must have done something to you — you wouldn’t have hurt me like this for nothing. So what have I done? How have I wronged you, tell me?”

Instead of answering, the boy broke into a loud tearful wail and ran away. Alyosha walked slowly after him towards Mihailovsky Street, and for a long time he saw the child running in the distance as fast as ever, not turning his head and no doubt still keeping up his tearful wail. He made up his mind to find him out as soon as he had time, and to solve this mystery. just now he had not the time.

CHAPTER 4

At the Hohlakovs'

ALYOSHA soon reached Madame Hohlakov's house, a handsome stone house of two stories, one of the finest in our town. Though Madame Hohlakov spent most of her time in another province where she had an estate, or in Moscow, where she had a house of her own, yet she had a house in our town too, inherited from her forefathers. The estate in our district was the largest of her three estates, yet she had been very little in our province before this time. She ran out to Alyosha in the hall.

"Did you get my letter about the new miracle?" She spoke rapidly and nervously.

"Yes"

"Did you show it to everyone? He restored the son to his mother!"

"He is dying to-day," said Alyosha.

"I have heard, I know, oh, how I long to talk to you, to you or someone, about all this. No, to you, to you! And how sorry I am I can't see him! The whole town is in excitement, they are all suspense. But now — do you know Katerina Ivanovna is here now?"

"Ah, that's lucky," cried Alyosha. "Then I shall see her here. She told me yesterday to be sure to come and see her to-day."

"I know, I know all. I've heard exactly what happened yesterday — and the atrocious behaviour of that — creature. C'est tragique, and if I'd been in her place I don't know what I should have done. And your brother Dmitri Fyodorovitch, what do you think of him? — my goodness! Alexey Fyodorovitch, I am forgetting, only fancy; your brother is in there with her, not that dreadful brother who was so shocking yesterday, but the other, Ivan Fyodorovitch, he is sitting with her talking; they are having a serious conversation. If you could only imagine what's passing between them now — it's awful, I tell you it's lacerating, it's like some incredible tale of horror. They are ruining their lives for no reason anyone can see. They both recognise it and revel in it. I've been watching for you! I've been thirsting for you! It's too much for me. that's the worst of it. I'll tell you all about it presently, but now I must speak of something else, the most important thing — I had quite forgotten what's most important. Tell me, why has Lise been

in hysterics? As soon as she heard you were here, she began to be hysterical!”

“Maman, it’s you who are hysterical now, not I,” Lise’s voice carolled through a tiny crack of the door at the side. Her voice sounded as though she wanted to laugh, but was doing her utmost to control it. Alyosha at once noticed the crack, and no doubt Lise was peeping through it, but that he could not see.

“And no wonder, Lise, no wonder... your caprices will make me hysterical too. But she is so ill, Alexey Fyodorovitch, she has been so ill all night, feverish and moaning! I could hardly wait for the morning and for Herzenstube to come. He says that he can make nothing of it, that we must wait. Herzenstube always comes and says that he can make nothing of it. As soon as you approached the house, she screamed, fell into hysterics, and insisted on being wheeled back into this room here.”

“Mamma, I didn’t know he had come. It wasn’t on his account I wanted to be wheeled into this room.”

“That’s not true, Lise, Yulia ran to tell you that Alexey Fyodorovitch was coming. She was on the lookout for you.”

“My darling mamma, it’s not at all clever of you. But if you want to make up for it and say something very clever, dear mamma, you’d better tell our honoured visitor, Alexey Fyodorovitch, that he has shown his want of wit by venturing to us after what happened yesterday and although everyone is laughing at him.”

“Lise, you go too far. I declare I shall have to be severe. Who laughs at him? I am so glad he has come, I need him, I can’t do without him. Oh, Alexey Fyodorovitch, I am exceedingly unhappy!”

“But what’s the matter with you, mamma, darling?”

“Ah, your caprices, Lise, your fidgetiness, your illness, that awful night of fever, that awful everlasting Herzenstube, everlasting, everlasting, that’s the worst of it! Everything, in fact, everything.... Even that miracle, too! Oh, how it has upset me, how it has shattered me, that miracle, dear Alexey Fyodorovitch! And that tragedy in the drawing-room, it’s more than I can bear, I warn you. I can’t bear it. A comedy, perhaps, not a tragedy. Tell me, will Father Zossima live till to-morrow, will he? Oh, my God! What is happening to me? Every minute I close my eyes and see that it’s all nonsense, all nonsense.”

“I should be very grateful,” Alyosha interrupted suddenly, “if you could give me a clean rag to bind up my finger with. I have hurt it, and it’s very painful.”

Alyosha unbound his bitten finger. The handkerchief was soaked with blood. Madame Hohlakov screamed and shut her eyes.

“Good heavens, what a wound, how awful!

But as soon as Lise saw Alyosha’s finger through the crack, she flung the door wide open.

“Come, come here,” she cried, imperiously. “No nonsense now! Good heavens, why did you stand there saying nothing about it all this time? He might have bled to death, mamma! How did you do it? Water, water! You must wash it first of all, simply hold it in cold water to stop the pain, and keep it there, keep it there.... Make haste, mamma, some water in a slop-basin. But do make haste,” she finished nervously. She was quite frightened at the sight of Alyosha’s wound.

“Shouldn’t we send for Herzenstube?” cried Madame Hohlakov.

“Mamma, you’ll be the death of me. Your Herzenstube will come and say that he can make nothing of it! Water, water! Mamma, for goodness’ sake go yourself and hurry Yulia, she is such a slowcoach and never can come quickly! Make haste, mamma, or I shall die.”

“Why, it’s nothing much,” cried Alyosha, frightened at this alarm.

Yulia ran in with water and Alyosha put his finger in it.

“Some lint, mamma, for mercy’s sake, bring some lint and that muddy caustic lotion for wounds, what’s it called? We’ve got some. You know where the bottle is, mamma; it’s in your bedroom in the right-hand cupboard, there’s a big bottle of it there with the lint.”

“I’ll bring everything in a minute, Lise, only don’t scream and don’t fuss. You see how bravely Alexey Fyodorovitch bears it. Where did you get such a dreadful wound, Alexey Fyodorovitch?”

Madame Hohlakov hastened away. This was all Lise was waiting for.

“First of all, answer the question, where did you get hurt like this?” she asked Alyosha, quickly. “And then I’ll talk to you about something quite different. Well?”

Instinctively feeling that the time of her mother’s absence was precious for her, Alyosha hastened to tell her of his enigmatic meeting with the school boys in the fewest words possible. Lise clasped her hands at his story.

“How can you, and in that dress too, associate with schoolboys?” she cried angrily, as though she had a right to control him. “You are nothing but a boy yourself if you can do that, a perfect boy! But you must find out for me about that horrid boy and tell me all about it, for there’s some mystery in it. Now for the second thing, but first a question: does the pain prevent you talking about utterly unimportant things, but talking sensibly?”

“Of course not, and I don’t feel much pain now.”

“That’s because your finger is in the water. It must be changed directly, for it will get warm in a minute. Yulia, bring some ice from the cellar and another basin of water. Now she is gone, I can speak; will you give me the letter I sent you yesterday, dear Alexey Fyodorovitch — be quick, for mamma will be back in a minute and I don’t want—”

“I haven’t got the letter.”

“That’s not true, you have. I knew you would say that. You’ve got it in that pocket. I’ve been regretting that joke all night. Give me back the letter at once, give it me.”

“I’ve left it at home.”

“But you can’t consider me as a child, a little girl, after that silly joke! I beg your pardon for that silliness, but you must bring me the letter, if you really haven’t got it — bring to-day, you must, you must.”

“To-day I can’t possibly, for I am going back to the monastery and I shan’t come and see you for the next two days — three or four perhaps — for Father Zossima—”

“Four days, what nonsense! Listen. Did you laugh at me very much?”

“I didn’t laugh at all.”

“Why not?”

“Because I believed all you said.”

“You are insulting me!”

“Not at all. As soon as I read it, I thought that all that would come to pass, for as soon as Father Zossima dies, I am to leave the monastery. Then I shall go back and finish my studies, and when you reach the legal age we will be married. I shall love you. Though I haven’t had time to think about it, I believe I couldn’t find a better wife than you, and Father Zossima tells me I must marry.”

“But I am a cripple, wheeled about in a chair,” laughed Lise, flushing crimson.

“I’ll wheel you about myself, but I’m sure you’ll get well by then.”

“But you are mad,” said Lise, nervously, “to make all this nonsense out of a joke! Here’s mamma, very a propos, perhaps. Mamma, how slow you always are, how can you be so long! And here’s Yulia with the ice!

“Oh, Lise, don’t scream, above all things don’t scream. That scream drives me... How can I help it when you put the lint in another place? I’ve been hunting and hunting — I do believe you did it on purpose.”

“But I couldn’t tell that he would come with a bad finger, or else perhaps I might have done it on purpose. My darling mamma, you begin to say really witty things.”

“Never mind my being witty, but I must say you show nice feeling for Alexey Fyodorovitch’s sufferings! Oh, my dear Alexey Fyodorovitch, what’s killing me is no one thing in particular, not Herzenstube, but everything together, that’s what is too much for me.”

“That’s enough, mamma, enough about Herzenstube,” Lise laughed gaily. “Make haste with the lint and the lotion, mamma. That’s simply Goulard’s water, Alexey Fyodorovitch, I remember the name now, but it’s a splendid lotion. Would you believe it, Mamma, on the way here he had a fight with the boys in the street, and it was a boy bit his finger, isn’t he a child, a child himself? Is he fit to be married after that? For only fancy, he wants to be married, mamma. Just think of him married, wouldn’t it be funny, wouldn’t it be awful?”

And Lise kept laughing her thin hysterical giggle, looking slyly at Alyosha.

“But why married, Lise? What makes you talk of such a thing? It’s quite out of place and perhaps the boy was rabid.”

“Why, mamma! As though there were rabid boys!”

“Why not, Lise, as though I had said something stupid! Your boy might have been bitten by a mad dog and he would become mad and bite anyone near him. How well she has bandaged it, Alexey Fyodorovitch! I couldn’t have done it. Do you still feel the pain?”

“It’s nothing much now.”

“You don’t feel afraid of water?” asked Lise.

“Come, that’s enough, Lise, perhaps I really was rather too quick talking of the boy being rabid, and you pounced upon it at once. Katerina Ivanovna has only just heard that you are here, Alexey Fyodorovitch, she simply rushed at me, she’s dying to see you, dying!”

“Ach, mamma, go to them yourself. He can’t go just now, he is in too much pain.”

“Not at all, I can go quite well,” said Alyosha.

“What! You are going away? Is that what you say?”

“Well, when I’ve seen them, I’ll come back here and we can talk as much as you like. But I should like to see Katerina Ivanovna at once, for I am very anxious to be back at the monastery as soon as I can.”

“Mamma, take him away quickly. Alexey Fyodorovitch, don’t trouble to come and see me afterwards, but go straight back to your monastery and a good riddance. I want to sleep, I didn’t sleep all night.”

“Ah, Lise, you are only making fun, but how I wish you would sleep!” cried Madame Hohlakov.

“I don’t know what I’ve done.... I’ll stay another three minutes, five if you like,” muttered Alyosha.

“Even five! Do take him away quickly, mamma, he is a monster.”

“Lise, you are crazy. Let us go, Alexey Fyodorovitch, she is too capricious to-day. I am afraid to cross her. Oh, the trouble one has with nervous girls! Perhaps she really will be able to sleep after seeing you. How quickly you have made her sleepy, and how fortunate it is!”

“Ah, mamma, how sweetly you talk! I must kiss you for it, mamma.”

“And I kiss you too, Lise. Listen, Alexey Fyodorovitch,” Madame Hohlakov began mysteriously and importantly, speaking in a rapid whisper. “I don’t want to suggest anything, I don’t want to lift the veil, you will see for yourself what’s going on. It’s appalling. It’s the most fantastic farce. She loves your brother, Ivan, and she is doing her utmost to persuade herself she loves your brother, Dmitri. It’s appalling! I’ll go in with you, and if they don’t turn me out, I’ll stay to the end.”

CHAPTER 5

A Laceration in the Drawing-Room

BUT in the drawing-room the conversation was already over. Katerina Ivanovna was greatly excited, though she looked resolute. At the moment Alyosha and Madame Hohlakov entered, Ivan Fyodorovitch stood up to take leave. His face was rather pale, and Alyosha looked at him anxiously. For this moment was to solve a doubt, a harassing enigma which had for some time haunted Alyosha. During the preceding month it had been several times suggested to him that his brother Ivan was in love with Katerina Ivanovna, and, what was more, that he meant “to carry her off from Dmitri. Until quite lately the idea seemed to Alyosha monstrous, though it worried him extremely. He loved both his brothers, and dreaded such rivalry between them. Meantime, Dmitri had said outright on the previous day that he was glad that Ivan was his rival, and that it was a great assistance to him, Dmitri. In what way did it assist him? To marry Grushenka? But that Alyosha considered the worst thing possible. Besides all this, Alyosha had till the evening before implicitly believed that Katerina Ivanovna had a steadfast and passionate love for Dmitri; but he had only believed it till the evening before. He had fancied, too, that she was incapable of loving a man like Ivan, and that she did love Dmitri, and loved him just as he was, in spite of all the strangeness of such a passion.

But during yesterday’s scene with Grushenka another idea had struck him. The word “lacerating,” which Madame Hohlakov had just uttered, almost made him start, because half waking up towards daybreak that night he had cried out “Laceration, laceration,” probably applying it to his dream. He had been dreaming all night of the previous day’s scene at Katerina Ivanovna’s. Now Alyosha was impressed by Madame Hohlakov’s blunt and persistent assertion that Katerina Ivanovna was in love with Ivan, and only deceived herself through some sort of pose, from “self-laceration,” and tortured herself by her pretended love for Dmitri from some fancied duty of gratitude. “Yes,” he thought, “perhaps the whole truth lies in those words.” But in that case what was Ivan’s position? Alyosha felt instinctively that a character like Katerina Ivanovna’s must dominate, and she could only dominate someone like Dmitri, and never a man like Ivan. For Dmitri might

— at last submit to her domination “to his own happiness” (which was what Alyosha would have desired), but Ivan — no, Ivan could not submit to her, and such submission would not give him happiness. Alyosha could not help believing that of Ivan. And now all these doubts and reflections flitted through his mind as he entered the drawing-room. Another idea, too, forced itself upon him: “What if she loved neither of them — neither Ivan nor Dmitri?”

It must be noted that Alyosha felt as it were ashamed of his own thoughts and blamed himself when they kept recurring to him during the last month. “What do I know about love and women and how can I decide such questions?” he thought reproachfully, after such doubts and surmises. And yet it was impossible not to think about it. He felt instinctively that this rivalry was of immense importance in his brothers’ lives and that a great deal depended upon it.

“One reptile will devour the other,” Ivan had pronounced the day before, speaking in anger of his father and Dmitri. So Ivan looked upon Dmitri as a reptile, and perhaps long done so. Was it perhaps since he had known Katerina Ivanovna? That phrase had, of course, escaped Ivan unawares yesterday, but that only made it more important. If he felt like that, what chance was there of peace? Were there not, on the contrary, new grounds for hatred and hostility in their family? And with which of them was Alyosha to sympathise? And what was he to wish for each of them? He loved them both, but what could he desire for each in the midst of these conflicting interests? He might go quite astray in this maze, and Alyosha’s heart could not endure uncertainty, because his love was always of an active character. He was incapable of passive love. If he loved anyone, he set to work at once to help him. And to do so he must know what he was aiming at; he must know for certain what was best for each, and having ascertained this it was natural for him to help them both. But instead of a definite aim, he found nothing but uncertainty and perplexity on all sides. “It was lacerating,” as was said just now. But what could he understand even in this “laceration”? He did not understand the first word in this perplexing maze.

Seeing Alyosha, Katerina Ivanovna said quickly and joyfully to Ivan, who had already got up to go, “A minute! Stay another minute! I want to hear the opinion of this person here whom I trust absolutely. Don’t go away,” she added, addressing Madame Hohlakov. She made Alyosha sit down beside her, and Madame Hohlakov sat opposite, by Ivan.

“You are all my friends here, all I have in the world, dear friends,” she warmly, in a voice which quivered with genuine tears of suffering, and Alyosha’s heart warmed to her at once. “You, Alexey Fyodorovitch, were witness yesterday of that abominable scene, and saw what I did. You did not see it, Ivan Fyodorovitch, he did. What he thought of me yesterday I don’t know. I only know one thing, that if it were repeated to-day, this minute, I should express the same feelings again as yesterday — the same feelings, the same words, the same actions. You remember my actions, Alexey Fyodorovitch; you checked me in one of them”... (as she said that, she flushed and her eyes shone). “I must tell you that I can’t get over it. Listen, Alexey Fyodorovitch. I don’t even know whether I still love him. I feel pity for him, and that is a poor sign of love. If I loved him, if I still loved him, perhaps I shouldn’t be sorry for him now, but should hate him”

.Her voice quivered and tears glittered on her eyelashes. Alyosha shuddered inwardly. “That girl is truthful and sincere,” he thought, “and she does not love Dmitri any more.”

“That’s true, that’s true,” cried Madame Hohlakov.

“Wait, dear. I haven’t told you the chief, the final decision I came to during the night. I feel that perhaps my decision is a terrible one — for me, but I foresee that nothing will induce me to change it — nothing. It will be so all my life. My dear, kind, ever-faithful and generous adviser, the one friend I have in the world, Ivan Fyodorovitch, with his deep insight into the heart, approves and commends my decision. He knows it.”

“Yes, I approve of it,” Ivan assented, in a subdued but firm voice.

“But I should like Alyosha, too (Ah! Alexey Fyodorovitch, forgive my calling you simply Alyosha), I should like Alexey Fyodorovitch, too, to tell me before my two friends whether I am right. I feel instinctively that you, Alyosha, my dear brother (for are a dear brother to me),” she said again ecstatically, taking his cold hand in her hot one, “I foresee that your decision, your approval, will bring me peace, in spite of all my sufferings, for, after your words, I shall be calm and submit — I feel that.”

“I don’t know what you are asking me,” said Alyosha, flushing. “I only know that I love you and at this moment wish for your happiness more than my own!... But I know nothing about such affairs,” something impelled him to add hurriedly.

“In such affairs, Alexey Fyodorovitch, in such affairs, the chief thing is honour and duty and something higher — I don’t know what but higher perhaps even than duty. I am conscious of this irresistible feeling in my heart, and it compels me irresistibly. But it may all be put in two words. I’ve already decided, even if he marries that — creature,” she began solemnly, “whom I never, never can forgive, even then I will not abandon him. Henceforward I will never, never abandon him!” she cried, breaking into a sort of pale, hysterical ecstasy. “Not that I would run after him continually, get in his way and worry him. Oh, no! I will go away to another town — where you like — but I will watch over him all my life — I will watch over him all my life unceasingly. When he becomes unhappy with that woman, and that is bound to happen quite soon, let him come to me and he will find a friend, a sister... Only a sister, of course, and so for ever; but he will learn at least that that sister is really his sister, who loves him and has sacrificed all her life to him. I will gain my point. I will insist on his knowing me confiding entirely in me, without reserve,” she cried, in a sort of frenzy. “I will be a god to whom he can pray — and that, at least, he owes me for his treachery and for what I suffered yesterday through him. And let him see that all my life I will be true to him and the promise I gave him, in spite of his being untrue and betraying me. I will — I will become nothing but a means for his happiness, or — how shall I say? — an instrument, a machine for his happiness, and that for my whole life, my whole life, and that he may see that all his life! That’s my decision. Ivan Fyodorovitch fully approves me.”

She was breathless. She had perhaps intended to express her idea with more dignity, art and naturalness, but her speech was too hurried and crude. It was full of youthful impulsiveness, it betrayed that she was still smarting from yesterday’s insult, and that her pride craved satisfaction. She felt this herself. Her face suddenly darkened, an unpleasant look came into her eyes. Alyosha at once saw it and felt a pang of sympathy. His brother Ivan made it worse by adding:

“I’ve only expressed my own view,” he said. “From anyone else, this would have been affected and over-strained, but from you — no. Any other woman would have been wrong, but you are right. I don’t know how to explain it, but I see that you are absolutely genuine and, therefore, you are right.”

“But that’s only for the moment. And what does this moment stand for? Nothing but yesterday’s insult.” Madame Hohlakov obviously had not intended to interfere, but she could not refrain from this very just comment.

“Quite so, quite so,” cried Ivan, with peculiar eagerness, obviously annoyed at being interrupted, “in anyone else this moment would be only due to yesterday’s impression and would be only a moment. But with Katerina Ivanovna’s character, that moment will last all her life. What for anyone else would be only a promise is for her an everlasting burdensome, grim perhaps, but unflagging duty. And she will be sustained by the feeling of this duty being fulfilled. Your life, Katerina Ivanovna, will henceforth be spent in painful brooding over your own feelings, your own heroism, and your own suffering; but in the end that suffering will be softened and will pass into sweet contemplation of the fulfilment of a bold and proud design. Yes, proud it certainly is, and desperate in any case, but a triumph for you. And the consciousness of it will at last be a source of complete satisfaction and will make you resigned to everything else.”

This was unmistakably said with some malice and obviously with intention; even perhaps with no desire to conceal that he spoke ironically and with intention.

“Oh, dear, how mistaken it all is!” Madame Hohlakov cried again.

“Alexey Fyodorovitch, you speak. I want dreadfully to know what you will say!” cried Katerina Ivanovna, and burst into tears. Alyosha got up from the sofa.

“It’s nothing, nothing!” she went on through her tears. “I’m upset, I didn’t sleep last night. But by the side of two such friends as you and your brother I still feel strong — for I know you two will never desert me.”

“Unluckily I am obliged to return to Moscow — perhaps to-morrow — and to leave you for a long time — and, unluckily, it’s unavoidable,” Ivan said suddenly.

“To-morrow — to Moscow!” her face was suddenly contorted; “but — but, dear me, how fortunate!” she cried in a voice suddenly changed. In one instant there was no trace left of her tears. She underwent an instantaneous transformation, which amazed Alyosha. Instead of a poor, insulted girl, weeping in a sort of “laceration,” he saw a woman completely self-possessed and even exceedingly pleased, as though something agreeable had just happened.

“Oh, not fortunate that I am losing you, of course not,” she collected herself suddenly, with a charming society smile. “Such a friend as you are could not suppose that. I am only too unhappy at losing you.” She rushed impulsively at Ivan, and seizing both his hands, pressed them warmly. “But what is fortunate is that you will be able in Moscow to see auntie and Agafya and to tell them all the horror of my present position. You can speak with complete openness to Agafya, but spare dear auntie. You will know how to do that. You can’t think how wretched I was yesterday and this morning, wondering how I could write them that dreadful letter — for one can never tell such things in a letter... Now it will be easy for me to write, for you will see them and explain everything. Oh, how glad I am! But I am only glad of that, believe me. Of course, no one can take your place.... I will run at once to write the letter,” she finished suddenly, and took a step as though to go out of the room.

“And what about Alyosha and his opinion, which you were so desperately anxious to hear?” cried Madame Hohlakov. There was a sarcastic, angry note in her voice.

“I had not forgotten that,” cried Katerina Ivanovna, coming to a sudden standstill, “and why are you so antagonistic at such a moment?” she added, with warm and bitter reproachfulness. “What I said, I repeat. I must have his opinion. More than that, I must have his decision! As he says, so it shall be. You see how anxious I am for your words, Alexey Fyodorovitch... But what’s the matter?”

“I couldn’t have believed it. I can’t understand it!” Alyosha cried suddenly in distress.

“He is going to Moscow, and you cry out that you are glad. You said that on purpose! And you begin explaining that you are not glad of that but sorry to be — losing a friend. But that was acting, too — you were playing a part as in a theatre!”

“In a theatre? What? What do you mean?” exclaimed Katerina Ivanovna, profoundly astonished, flushing crimson, and frowning.

“Though you assure him you are sorry to lose a friend in him, you persist in telling him to his face that it’s fortunate he is going,” said Alyosha breathlessly. He was standing at the table and did not sit down.

“What are you talking about? I don’t understand.”

“I don’t understand myself.... I seemed to see in a flash... I know I am not saying it properly, but I’ll say it all the same,” Alyosha went on in the

same shaking and broken voice. “What I see is that perhaps you don’t love Dmitri at all... and never have, from the beginning.... And Dmitri, too, has never loved you... and only esteems you.... I really don’t know how I dare to say all this, but somebody must tell the truth... for nobody here will tell the truth.”

“What truth?” cried Katerina Ivanovna,and there was an hysterical ring in her voice.

“I’ll tell you,” Alyosha went on with desperate haste, as though he were jumping from the top of a house. “Call Dmitri; I will fetch him and let him come here and take your hand and take Ivan’s and join your hands. For you’re torturing Ivan, simply because you love him — and torturing him, because you love Dmitri through ‘self-laceration’-with an unreal love — because you’ve persuaded yourself.”

Alyosha broke off and was silent.

“You... you... you are a little religious idiot — that’s what you are!” Katerina Ivanovna snapped. Her face was white and her lips were moving with anger.

Ivan suddenly laughed and got up. His hat was in his hand.

“You are mistaken, my good Alyosha,” he said, with an expression Alyosha had never seen in his face before — an expression of youthful sincerity and strong, irresistibly frank feeling. “Katerina Ivanovna has never cared for me! She has known all the time that I cared for her — though I never said a word of my love to her — she knew, but she didn’t care for me. I have never been her friend either, not for one moment; she is too proud to need my friendship. She kept me at her side as a means of revenge. She revenged with me and on me all the insults which she has been continually receiving from Dmitri ever since their first meeting. For even that first meeting has rankled in her heart as an insult — that’s what her heart is like! She has talked to me of nothing but her love for him. I am going now; but, believe me, Katerina Ivanovna, you really love him. And the more he insults you, the more you love him — that’s your ‘laceration.’ You love him just as he is; you love him for insulting you. If he reformed, you’d give him up at once and cease to love him. But you need him so as to contemplate continually your heroic fidelity and to reproach him for infidelity. And it all comes from your pride. Oh, there’s a great deal of humiliation and self-abasement about it, but it all comes from pride.... I am too young and I’ve loved you too much. I know that I ought not to say this, that it would be

more dignified on my part simply to leave you, and it would be less offensive for you. But I am going far away, and shall never come back.... It is for ever. I don’t want to sit beside a ‘laceration.’... But I don’t know how to speak now. I’ve said everything.... Good-bye, Katerina Ivanovna; you can’t be angry with me, for I am a hundred times more severely punished than you, if only by the fact that I shall never see you again. Good-bye! I don’t want your hand. You have tortured me too deliberately for me to be able to forgive you at this moment. I shall forgive you later, but now I don’t want your hand. Den Dank, Dame, begehr ich nicht,”* he added, with a forced smile, showing, however, that he could read Schiller, and read him till he knew him by heart — which Alyosha would never have believed. He went out of the room without saying good-bye even to his hostess, Madame Hohlakov. Alyosha clasped his hands.

* Thank you, madam, I want nothing.

“Ivan!” he cried desperately after him. “Come back, Ivan! No, nothing will induce him to come back now!” he cried again, regretfully realising it; “but it’s my fault, my fault. I began it! Ivan spoke angrily, wrongly. Unjustly and angrily. He must come back here, come back,” Alyosha kept exclaiming frantically.

Katerina Ivanovna went suddenly into the next room.

“You have done no harm. You behaved beautifully, like an angel,” Madame Hohlakov whispered rapidly and ecstatically to Alyosha. “I will do my utmost to prevent Ivan Fyodorovitch from going.”

Her face beamed with delight, to the great distress of Alyosha, but Katerina Ivanovna suddenly returned. She had two hundred-rouble notes in her hand.

“I have a great favour to ask of you, Alexey Fyodorovitch,” she began, addressing Alyosha with an apparently calm and even voice, as though nothing had happened. “A week — yes, I think it was a week ago — Dmitri Fyodorovitch was guilty of a hasty and unjust action — a very ugly action. There is a low tavern here, and in it he met that discharged officer, that captain, whom your father used to employ in some business. Dmitri Fyodorovitch somehow lost his temper with this captain, seized him by the beard and dragged him out into the street and for some distance along it, in that insulting fashion. And I am told that his son, a boy, quite a child, who is at the school here, saw it and ran beside them crying and begging for his father, appealing to everyone to defend him, while everyone laughed. You

must forgive me, Alexey Fyodorovitch, I cannot think without indignation of that disgraceful action of his... one of those actions of which only Dmitri Fyodorovitch would be capable in his anger... and in his passions! I can't describe it even.... I can't find my words. I've made inquiries about his victim, and find he is quite a poor man. His name is Snegiryov. He did something wrong in the army and was discharged. I can't tell you what. And now he has sunk into terrible destitution, with his family — an unhappy family of sick children, and, I believe, an insane wife. He has been living here a long time; he used to work as a copying clerk, but now he is getting nothing. I thought if you... that is I thought... I don't know. I am so confused. You see, I wanted to ask you, my dear Alexey Fyodorovitch, to go to him, to find some excuse to go to them — I mean to that captain — oh, goodness, how badly I explain it! — and delicately, carefully, as only you know how to" (Alyosha blushed), "manage to give him this assistance, these two hundred roubles. He will be sure to take it.... I mean, persuade him to take it.... Or, rather, what do I mean? You see it's not by way of compensation to prevent him from taking proceedings (for I believe he meant to), but simply a token of sympathy, of a desire to assist him from me, Dmitri Fyodorovitch's betrothed, not from himself.... But you know.... I would go myself, but you'll know how to do it ever so much better. He lives in Lake Street in the house of a woman called Kalmikov.... For God's sake, Alexey Fyodorovitch, do it for me, and now... now I am rather... tired... Good-bye!"

She turned and disappeared behind the portiere so quickly that Alyosha had not time to utter a word, though he wanted to speak. He longed to beg her pardon, to blame himself, to say something, for his heart was full and he could not bear to go out of the room without it. But Madame Hohlakov took him by the hand and drew him along with her. In the hall she stopped him again as before.

"She is proud, she is struggling with herself; but kind, charming, generous, "she exclaimed, in a half-whisper. "Oh, how I love her, especially sometimes, and how glad I am again of everything! Dear Alexey Fyodorovitch, you didn't know, but I must tell you, that we all, all — both her aunts, I and all of us, Lise, even — have been hoping and praying for nothing for the last month but that she may give up your favourite Dmitri, who takes no notice of her and does not care for her, and may marry Ivan Fyodorovitch — such an excellent and cultivated young man, who loves her

more than anything in the world. We are in a regular plot to bring it about, and I am even staying on here perhaps on that account.”

“But she has been crying — she has been wounded again,” cried Alyosha.

“Never trust a woman’s tears, Alexey Fyodorovitch. I am never for the women in such cases. I am always on the side of the men.”

“Mamma, you are spoiling him,” Lise’s little voice cried from behind the door.

“No, it was all my fault. I am horribly to blame,” Alyosha repeated unconsoled, hiding his face in his hands in an agony of remorse for his indiscretion.

“Quite the contrary; you behaved like an angel, like an angel. I am ready to say so a thousand times over.”

“Mamma, how has he behaved like an angel?” Lise’s voice was heard again.

“I somehow fancied all at once,” Alyosha went on as though he had not heard Lise, “that she loved Ivan, and so I said that stupid thing.... What will happen now?”

“To whom, to whom?” cried Lise. “Mamma, you really want to be the death of me. I ask you and you don’t answer.”

At the moment the maid ran in.

“Katerina Ivanovna is ill.... She is crying, struggling... hysterics.”

“What is the matter?” cried Lise, in a tone of real anxiety. “Mamma, I shall be having hysterics, and not she!”

“Lise, for mercy’s sake, don’t scream, don’t persecute me. At your age one can’t know everything that grown-up people know. I’ll come and tell you everything you ought to know. Oh, mercy on us! I am coming, I am coming.... Hysterics is a good sign, Alexey Fyodorovitch; it’s an excellent thing that she is hysterical. That’s just as it ought to be. In such cases I am always against the woman, against all these feminine tears and hysterics. Run and say, Yulia, that I’ll fly to her. As for Ivan Fyodorovitch’s going away like that, it’s her own fault. But he won’t go away. Lise, for mercy’s sake, don’t scream! Oh, yes; you are not screaming. It’s I am screaming. Forgive your mamma; but I am delighted, delighted, delighted! Did you notice, Alexey Fyodorovitch, how young, how young Ivan Fyodorovitch was just now when he went out, when he said all that and went out? I thought he was so learned, such a savant, and all of a sudden he behaved so

warmly, openly, and youthfully, with such youthful inexperience, and it was all so fine, like you.... And the way he repeated that German verse, it was just like you! But I must fly, I must fly! Alexey Fyodorovitch, make haste to carry out her commission, and then make haste back. Lise, do you want anything now? For mercy’s sake, don’t keep Alexey Fyodorovitch a minute. He will come back to you at once.”

Madame Hohlakov at last ran off. Before leaving, Alyosha would have opened the door to see Lise.

“On no account,” cried Lise. “On no account now. Speak through the door. How have you come to be an angel? That’s the only thing I want to know.”

“For an awful piece of stupidity, Lise! Goodbye!”

“Don’t dare to go away like that!” Lise was beginning.

“Lise, I have a real sorrow! I’ll be back directly, but I have a great, great sorrow!

And he ran out of the room.

CHAPTER 6

A Laceration in the Cottage

HE certainly was really grieved in a way he had seldom been before. He had rushed in like a fool, and meddled in what? In a love-affair. “But what do I know about it? What can I tell about such things?” he repeated to himself for the hundredth time, flushing crimson. “Oh, being ashamed would be nothing; shame is only the punishment I deserve. The trouble is I shall certainly have caused more unhappiness.... And Father Zossima sent me to reconcile and bring them together. Is this the way to bring them together?” Then he suddenly remembered how he had tried to join their hands, and he felt fearfully ashamed again. “Though I acted quite sincerely, I must be more sensible in the future,” he concluded suddenly, and did not even smile at his conclusion.

Katerina Ivanovna’s commission took him to Lake Street, and his brother Dmitri lived close by, in a turning out of Lake Street. Alyosha decided to go to him in any case before going to the captain, though he had a presentiment that he would not find his brother. He suspected that he would intentionally keep out of his way now, but he must find him anyhow. Time was passing: the thought of his dying elder had not left Alyosha for one minute from the time he set off from the monastery.

There was one point which interested him particularly about Katerina Ivanovna’s commission; when she had mentioned the captain’s son, the little schoolboy who had run beside his father crying, the idea had at once struck Alyosha that this must be the schoolboy who had bitten his finger when he, Alyosha, asked him what he had done to hurt him. Now Alyosha felt practically certain of this, though he could not have said why. Thinking of another subject was a relief, and he resolved to think no more about the “mischief” he had done, and not to torture himself with remorse, but to do what he had to do, let come what would. At that thought he was completely comforted. Turning to the street where Dmitri lodged, he felt hungry, and taking out of his pocket the roll he had brought from his father’s, he ate it. It made him feel stronger.

Dmitri was not at home. The people of the house, an old cabinet-maker, his son, and his old wife, looked with positive suspicion at Alyosha. “He

hasn’t slept here for the last three nights. Maybe he has gone away,” the old man said in answer to Alyosha’s persistent inquiries. Alyosha saw that he was answering in accordance with instructions. When he asked whether he were not at Grushenka’s or in hiding at Foma’s (Alyosha spoke so freely on purpose), all three looked at him in alarm. “They are fond of him, they are doing their best for him,” thought Alyosha. “That’s good.”

At last he found the house in Lake Street. It was a decrepit little house, sunk on one side, with three windows looking into the street, and with a muddy yard, in the middle of which stood a solitary cow. He crossed the yard and found the door opening into the passage. On the left of the passage lived the old woman of the house with her old daughter. Both seemed to be deaf. In answer to his repeated inquiry for the captain, one of them at last understood that he was asking for their lodgers, and pointed to a door across the passage. The captain’s lodging turned out to be a simple cottage room. Alyosha had his hand on the iron latch to open the door, when he was struck by the strange hush within. Yet he knew from Katerina Ivanovna’s words that the man had a family. “Either they are all asleep or perhaps they have heard me coming and are waiting for me to open the door. I’d better knock first,” and he knocked. An answer came, but not at once, after an interval of perhaps ten seconds.

“Who’s there?” shouted someone in a loud and very angry voice.

Then Alyosha opened the door and crossed the threshold. He found himself in a regular peasant’s room. Though it was large, it was cumbered up with domestic belongings of all sorts, and there were several people in it. On the left was a large Russian stove. From the stove to the window on the left was a string running across the room, and on it there were rags hanging. There was a bedstead against the wall on each side, right and left, covered with knitted quilts. On the one on the left was a pyramid of four print-covered pillows, each smaller than the one beneath. On the other there was only one very small pillow. The opposite corner was screened off by a curtain or a sheet hung on a string. Behind this curtain could be seen a bed made up on a bench and a chair. The rough square table of plain wood had been moved into the middle window. The three windows, which consisted each of four tiny greenish mildewy panes, gave little light, and were close shut, so that the room was not very light and rather stuffy. On the table was a frying pan with the remains of some fried eggs, a half-eaten piece of bread, and a small bottle with a few drops of vodka.

A woman of genteel appearance, wearing a cotton gown, was sitting on a chair by the bed on the left. Her face was thin and yellow, and her sunken cheeks betrayed at the first glance that she was ill. But what struck Alyosha most was the expression in the poor woman's eyes — a look of surprised inquiry and yet of haughty pride. And while he was talking to her husband, her big brown eyes moved from one speaker to the other with the same haughty and questioning expression. Beside her at the window stood a young girl, rather plain, with scanty reddish hair, poorly but very neatly dressed. She looked disdainfully at Alyosha as he came in. Beside the other bed was sitting another female figure. She was a very sad sight, a young girl of about twenty, but hunchback and crippled "with withered legs," as Alyosha was told afterwards. Her crutches stood in the corner close by. The strikingly beautiful and gentle eyes of this poor girl looked with mild serenity at Alyosha. A man of forty-five was sitting at the table, finishing the fried eggs. He was spare, small, and weakly built. He had reddish hair and a scanty light-coloured beard, very much like a wisp of tow (this comparison and the phrase "a wisp of tow" flashed at once into Alyosha's mind for some reason, he remembered it afterwards). It was obviously this gentleman who had shouted to him, as there was no other man in the room. But when Alyosha went in, he leapt up from the bench on which he was sitting, and, hastily wiping his mouth with a ragged napkin, darted up to Alyosha.

"It's a monk come to beg for the monastery. A nice place to come to!" the girl standing in the left corner said aloud. The man spun round instantly towards her and answered her in an excited and breaking voice:

"No, Varvara, you are wrong. Allow me to ask," he turned again to Alyosha, "what has brought you to our retreat?"

Alyosha looked attentively at him. It was the first time he had seen him. There was something angular, flurried and irritable about him. Though he had obviously just been drinking, he was not drunk. There was extraordinary impudence in his expression, and yet, strange to say, at the same time there was fear. He looked like a man who had long been kept in subjection and had submitted to it, and now had suddenly turned and was trying to assert himself. Or, better still, like a man who wants dreadfully to hit you but is horribly afraid you will hit him. In his words and in the intonation of his shrill voice there was a sort of crazy humour, at times spiteful and at times cringing, and continually shifting from one tone to

another. The question about “our retreat” he had asked, as it were, quivering all over, rolling his eyes, and skipping up so close to Alyosha that he instinctively drew back a step. He was dressed in a very shabby dark cotton coat, patched and spotted. He wore checked trousers of an extremely light colour, long out of fashion, and of very thin material. They were so crumpled and so short that he looked as though he had grown out of them like a boy.

“I am Alexey Karamazov,” Alyosha began in reply.

“I quite understand that, sir,” the gentleman snapped out at once to assure him that he knew who he was already. “I am Captain Snegiryov, sir, but I am still desirous to know precisely what has led you—”

“Oh, I’ve come for nothing special. I wanted to have a word with you — if only you allow me.”

“In that case, here is a chair, sir; kindly be seated. That’s what they used to say in the old comedies, ‘kindly be seated,’” and with a rapid gesture he seized an empty chair (it was a rough wooden chair, not upholstered) and set it for him almost in the middle of the room; then, taking another similar chair for himself, he sat down facing Alyosha, so close to him that their knees almost touched.

“Nikolay Ilyitch Snegiryov, sir, formerly a captain in the Russian infantry, put to shame for his vices, but still a captain. Though I might not be one now for the way I talk; for the last half of my life I’ve learnt to say ‘sir.’ It’s a word you use when you’ve come down in the world.”

“That’s very true,” smiled Alyosha. “But is it used involuntarily or on purpose?”

“As God’s above, it’s involuntary, and I usen’t to use it! I didn’t use the word ‘sir’ all my life, but as soon as I sank into low water I began to say ‘sir.’ It’s the work of a higher power. I see you are interested in contemporary questions, but how can I have excited your curiosity, living as I do in surroundings impossible for the exercise of hospitality?”

“I’ve come — about that business.”

“About what business?” the captain interrupted impatiently.

“About your meeting with my brother Dmitri Fyodorovitch,” Alyosha blurted out awkwardly.

“What meeting, sir? You don’t mean that meeting? About my ‘wisp of tow,’ then?” He moved closer so that his knees positively knocked against Alyosha. His lips were strangely compressed like a thread.

“What wisp of tow?” muttered Alyosha.

“He is come to complain of me, father!” cried a voice familiar to Alyosha — the voice of the schoolboy — from behind the curtain. “I bit his finger just now.” The curtain was pulled, and Alyosha saw his assailant lying on a little bed made up on the bench and the chair in the corner under the ikons. The boy lay covered by his coat and an old wadded quilt. He was evidently unwell, and, judging by his glittering eyes, he was in a fever. He looked at Alyosha without fear, as though he felt he was at home and could not be touched.

“What! Did he bite your finger?” The captain jumped up from his chair. “Was it your finger he bit?”

“Yes. He was throwing stones with other schoolboys. There were six of them against him alone. I went up to him, and he threw a stone at me and then another at my head. I asked him what I had done to him. And then he rushed at me and bit my finger badly, I don’t know why.”

“I’ll thrash him, sir, at once — this minute!” The captain jumped up from his seat.

“But I am not complaining at all, I am simply telling you.... I don’t want him to be thrashed. Besides, he seems to be ill.”

“And do you suppose I’d thrash him? That I’d take my Ilusha and thrash him before you for your satisfaction? Would you like it done at once, sir?” said the captain, suddenly turning to Alyosha, as though he were going to attack him. “I am sorry about your finger, sir; but instead of thrashing Ilusha, would you like me to chop off my four fingers with this knife here before your eyes to satisfy your just wrath? I should think four fingers would be enough to satisfy your thirst for vengeance. You won’t ask for the fifth one too?” He stopped short with a catch in his throat. Every feature in his face was twitching and working; he looked extremely defiant. He was in a sort of frenzy.

“I think I understand it all now,” said Alyosha gently and sorrowfully, still keeping his seat. “So your boy is a good boy, he loves his father, and he attacked me as the brother of your assailant.... Now I understand it,” he repeated thoughtfully. “But my brother Dmitri Fyodorovitch regrets his action, I know that, and if only it is possible for him to come to you, or better still, to meet you in that same place, he will ask your forgiveness before everyone — if you wish it.”

“After pulling out my beard, you mean, he will ask my forgiveness? And he thinks that will be a satisfactory finish, doesn’t he?”

“Oh, no! On the contrary, he will do anything you like and in any way you like.”

“So if I were to ask his highness to go down on his knees before me in that very tavern—’The Metropolis’ it’s called — or in the marketplace, he would do it?”

“Yes, he would even go down on his knees.”

“You’ve pierced me to the heart, sir. Touched me to tears and pierced me to the heart! I am only too sensible of your brother’s generosity. Allow me to introduce my family, my two daughters and my son — my litter. If I die, who will care for them, and while I live who but they will care for a wretch like me? That’s a great thing the Lord has ordained for every man of my sort, sir. For there must be someone able to love even a man like me.”

“Ah, that’s perfectly true!” exclaimed Alyosha.

“Oh, do leave off playing the fool! Some idiot comes in, and you put us to shame!” cried the girl by the window, suddenly turning to her father with a disdainful and contemptuous air.

“Wait a little, Varvara!” cried her father, speaking peremptorily but looking at them quite approvingly. “That’s her character,” he said, addressing Alyosha again. “And in all nature there was naught

That could find favour in his eyes-

or rather in the feminine —

that could find favour in her eyes — .

But now let me present you to my wife, Arina Petrovna. She is crippled, she is forty-three; she can move, but very little. She is of humble origin. Arina Petrovna, compose your countenance. This is Alexey Fyodorovitch Karamazov. Get up, Alexey Fyodorovitch.” He took him by the hand and with unexpected force pulled him up. “You must stand up to be introduced to a lady. It’s not the Karamazov, mamma, who... h’m... etcetera, but his brother, radiant with modest virtues. Come, Arina Petrovna, come, mamma, first your hand to be kissed.”

And he kissed his wife’s hand respectfully and even tenderly. The girl at the window turned her back indignantly on the scene; an expression of extraordinary cordiality came over the haughtily inquiring face of the woman.

“Good morning! Sit down, Mr. Tchernomazov,” she said.

“Karamazov, mamma, Karamazov. We are of humble origin,” he whispered again.

“Well, Karamazov, or whatever it is, but I always think of Tchermomazov.... Sit down. Why has he pulled you up? He calls me crippled, but I am not, only my legs are swollen like barrels, and I am shrivelled up myself. Once I used to be so fat, but now it’s as though I had swallowed a needle.”

“We are of humble origin,” the captain muttered again.

“Oh, father, father!” the hunchback girl, who had till then been silent on her chair, said suddenly, and she hid her eyes in her handkerchief.

“Buffoon!” blurted out the girl at the window.

“Have you heard our news?” said the mother, pointing at her daughters. “It’s like clouds coming over; the clouds pass and we have music again. When we were with the army, we used to have many such guests. I don’t mean to make any comparisons; everyone to their taste. The deacon’s wife used to come then and say, ‘Alexandr Alexandrovitch is a man of the noblest heart, but Nastasya Petrovna,’ she would say, ‘is of the brood of hell.”Well,’ I said, ‘that’s a matter of taste; but you are a little spitfire.”And you want keeping in your place;’ says she. ‘You black sword,’ said I, ‘who asked you to teach me?”But my breath,’ says she, ‘is clean, and yours is unclean.”You ask all the officers whether my breath is unclean.’ And ever since then I had it in my mind. Not long ago I was sitting here as I am now, when I saw that very general come in who came here for Easter, and I asked him: ‘Your Excellency,’ said I, ‘can a lady’s breath be unpleasant?”Yes,’ he answered; ‘you ought to open a window-pane or open the door, for the air is not fresh here.’ And they all go on like that! And what is my breath to them? The dead smell worse still!. ‘I won’t spoil the air,’ said I, ‘I’ll order some slippers and go away.’ My darlings, don’t blame your own mother! Nikolay Ilyitch, how is it I can’t please you? There’s only Ilusha who comes home from school and loves me. Yesterday he brought me an apple. Forgive your own mother — forgive a poor lonely creature! Why has my breath become unpleasant to you?”

And the poor mad woman broke into sobs, and tears streamed down her cheeks. The captain rushed up to her.

“Mamma, mamma, my dear, give over! You are not lonely. Everyone loves you, everyone adores you.” He began kissing both her hands again and tenderly stroking her face; taking the dinner-napkin, he began wiping

away her tears. Alyosha fancied that he too had tears in his eyes. “There, you see, you hear?” he turned with a sort of fury to Alyosha, pointing to the poor imbecile.

“I see and hear,” muttered Alyosha.

“Father, father, how can you — with him! Let him alone!” cried the boy, sitting up in his bed and gazing at his father with glowing eyes.

“Do give over fooling, showing off your silly antics which never lead to anything! shouted Varvara, stamping her foot with passion.

“Your anger is quite just this time, Varvara, and I’ll make haste to satisfy you. Come, put on your cap, Alexey Fyodorovitch, and I’ll put on mine. We will go out. I have a word to say to you in earnest, but not within these walls. This girl sitting here is my daughter Nina; I forgot to introduce her to you. She is a heavenly angel incarnate... who has flown down to us mortals,... if you can understand.”

“There he is shaking all over, as though he is in convulsions!” Varvara went on indignantly.

“And she there stamping her foot at me and calling me a fool just now, she is a heavenly angel incarnate too, and she has good reason to call me so. Come along, Alexey Fyodorovitch, we must make an end.”

And, snatching Alyosha’s hand, he drew him out of the room into the street.

CHAPTER 7

And in the Open Air

“THE air is fresh, but in my apartment it is not so in any sense of the word. Let us walk slowly, sir. I should be glad of your kind interest.”

“I too have something important to say to you,” observed Alyosha, “only I don’t know how to begin.”

“To be sure you must have business with me. You would never have looked in upon me without some object. Unless you come simply to complain of the boy, and that’s hardly likely. And, by the way, about the boy: I could not explain to you in there, but here I will describe that scene to you. My tow was thicker a week ago — I mean my beard. That’s the nickname they give to my beard, the schoolboys most of all. Well, your brother Dmitri Fyodorovitch was pulling me by my beard, I’d done nothing, he was in a towering rage and happened to come upon me. He dragged me out of the tavern into the market place; at that moment the boys were coming out of school, and with them Ilusha. As soon as he saw me in such a state he rushed up to me. ‘Father,’ he cried, ‘father!’ He caught hold of me, hugged me, tried to pull me away, crying to my assailant, ‘Let go, let go, it’s my father, forgive him!’ — yes, he actually cried ‘forgive him.’ He clutched at that hand, that very hand, in his little hands and kissed it.... I remember his little face at that moment, I haven’t forgotten it and I never shall!”

“I swear,” cried Alyosha, “that my brother will express his most deep and sincere regret, even if he has to go down on his knees in that same market-place.... I’ll make him or he is no brother of mine!

“Aha, then it’s only a suggestion! And it does not come from him but simply from the generosity of your own warm heart. You should have said so. No, in that case allow me to tell you of your brother’s highly chivalrous soldierly generosity, for he did give expression to it at the time. He left off dragging me by my beard and released me: ‘You are an officer,’ he said, ‘and I am an officer, if you can find a decent man to be your second send me your challenge. I will give satisfaction, though you are a scoundrel.’ That’s what he said. A chivalrous spirit indeed! I retired with Ilusha, and that scene is a family record imprinted forever on Ilusha’s soul. No, it’s not for us to claim the privileges of noblemen. Judge for yourself. You’ve just

been in our mansion, what did you see there? Three ladies, one a cripple and weak-minded, another a cripple and hunchback and the third not crippled but far too clever. She is a student, dying to get back to Petersburg, to work for the emancipation of the Russian woman on the banks of the Neva. I won't speak of Ilusha, he is only nine. I am alone in the world, and if I die, what will become of all of them? I simply ask you that. And if I challenge him and he kills me on the spot, what then? What will become of them? And worse still, if he doesn't kill me but only cripples me: I couldn't work, but I should still be a mouth to feed. Who would feed it and who would feed them all? Must I take Ilusha from school and send him to beg in the streets? That's what it means for me to challenge him to a duel. It's silly talk and nothing else."

"He will beg your forgiveness, he will bow down at your feet in the middle of the marketplace," cried Alyosha again, with glowing eyes.

"I did think of prosecuting him," the captain went on, "but look in our code, could I get much compensation for a personal injury? And then Agrafena Alexandrovna* sent for me and shouted at me: 'Don't dare to dream of it! If you proceed against him, I'll publish it to all the world that he beat you for your dishonesty, and then you will be prosecuted.' I call God to witness whose was the dishonesty and by whose commands I acted, wasn't it by her own and Fyodor Pavlovitch's? And what's more,' she went on, 'I'll dismiss you for good and you'll never earn another penny from me. I'll speak to my merchant too' (that's what she calls her old man) 'and he will dismiss you!' And if he dismisses me, what can I earn then from anyone? Those two are all I have to look to, for your Fyodor Pavlovitch has not only given over employing me, for another reason, but he means to make use of papers I've signed to go to law against me. And so I kept quiet, and you have seen our retreat. But now let me ask you: did Ilusha hurt your finger much? I didn't like to go into it in our mansion before him."

* Grushenka.

"Yes, very much, and he was in a great fury. He was avenging you on me as a Karamazov, I see that now. But if only you had seen how he was throwing stones at his schoolfellows! It's very dangerous. They might kill him. They are children and stupid. A stone may be thrown and break somebody's head."

"That's just what has happened. He has been bruised by a stone to-day. Not on the head but on the chest, just above the heart. He came home crying

and groaning and now he is ill."

"And you know he attacks them first. He is bitter against them on your account. They say he stabbed a boy called Krassotkin with a penknife not long ago."

"I've heard about that too, it's dangerous. Krassotkin is an official here, we may hear more about it."

"I would advise you," Alyosha went on warmly, "not to send him to school at all for a time till he is calmer. and his anger is passed."

"Anger!" the captain repeated, "that's just what it is. He is a little creature, but it's a mighty anger. You don't know all, sir. Let me tell you more. Since that incident all the boys have been teasing him about the 'wisp of tow.' Schoolboys are a merciless race, individually they are angels, but together, especially in schools, they are often merciless. Their teasing has stiffed up a gallant spirit in Ilusha. An ordinary boy, a weak son, would have submitted, have felt ashamed of his father, sir, but he stood up for his father against them all. For his father and for truth and justice. For what he suffered when he kissed your brother's hand and cried to him 'Forgive father, forgive him,' — that only God knows — and I, his father. For our children — not your children, but ours — the children of the poor gentlemen looked down upon by everyone — know what justice means, sir, even at nine years old. How should the rich know? They don't explore such depths once in their lives. But at that moment in the square when he kissed his hand, at that moment my Ilusha had grasped all that justice means. That truth entered into him and crushed him for ever, sir," the captain said hotly again with a sort of frenzy, and he struck his right fist against his left palm as though he wanted to show how "the truth" crushed Ilusha. "That very day, sir, he fell ill with fever and was delirious all night. All that day he hardly said a word to me, but I noticed he kept watching me from the corner, though he turned to the window and pretended to be learning his lessons. But I could see his mind was not on his lessons. Next day I got drunk to forget my troubles, sinful man as I am, and I don't remember much. Mamma began crying, too — I am very fond of mamma — well, I spent my last penny drowning my troubles. Don't despise me for that, sir, in Russia men who drink are the best. The best men amongst us are the greatest drunkards. I lay down and I don't remember about Ilusha, though all that day the boys had been jeering at him at school. 'Wisp of tow,' they

shouted, ‘your father was pulled out of the tavern by his wisp of tow, you ran by and begged forgiveness.’

“On the third day when he came back from school, I saw he looked pale and wretched. ‘What is it?’ I asked. He wouldn’t answer. Well, there’s no talking in our mansion without mamma and the girls taking part in it. What’s more, the girls had heard about it the very first day. Varvara had begun snarling. ‘You fools and buffoons, can you ever do anything rational?”Quite so,’ I said,’can we ever do anything rational?’ For the time I turned it off like that. So in the evening I took the boy out for a walk, for you must know we go for a walk every evening, always the same way, along which we are going now — from our gate to that great stone which lies alone in the road under the hurdle, which marks the beginning of the town pasture. A beautiful and lonely spot, sir. Ilusha and I walked along hand in hand as usual. He has a little hand, his fingers are thin and cold — he suffers with his chest, you know. ‘Father,’ said he, ‘father!”Well?’ said I. I saw his eyes flashing. ‘Father, how he treated you then!”It can’t be helped, Ilusha,’ I said. ‘Don’t forgive him, father, don’t forgive him! At school they say that he has paid you ten roubles for it.”No Ilusha,’ said I, ‘I would not take money from him for anything.’ he began trembling all over, took my hand in both his and kissed it again. ‘Father,’ he said, ‘father, challenge him to a duel, at school they say you are a coward and won’t challenge him, and that you’ll accept ten roubles from him.”I can’t challenge him to a duel, Ilusha,’ I answered. And I told briefly what I’ve just told you. He listened. ‘Father,’ he said, anyway don’t forgive it. When I grow up I’ll call him out myself and kill him.’ His eyes shone and glowed. And of course I am his father, and I had to put in a word: ‘It’s a sin to kill,’ I said, ‘even in a duel.”Father,’ he said, ‘when I grow up, I’ll knock him down, knock the sword out of his hand, I’ll fall on him, wave my sword over him and say: “I could kill you, but I forgive you, so there!”’ You see what the workings of his little mind have been during these two days; he must have been planning that vengeance all day, and raving about it at night.

“But he began to come home from school badly beaten, I found out about it the day before yesterday, and you are right, I won’t send him to that school any more. I heard that he was standing up against all the class alone and defying them all, that his heart was full of resentment, of bitterness — I was alarmed about him. We went for another walk. ‘Father,’ he asked, ‘are the rich people stronger than anyone else on earth?”Yes, Ilusha,’ I said,

‘there are no people on earth stronger than the rich.”Father,’ he said, ‘I will get rich, I will become an officer and conquer everybody. The Tsar will reward me, I will come back here and then no one will dare—’ Then he was silent and his lips still kept trembling. ‘Father,’ he said, ‘what a horrid town this is.”Yes, Ilusha,’ I said, ‘it isn’t a very nice town.”Father, let us move into another town, a nice one,’ he said, ‘where people don’t know about us.”We will move, we will, Ilusha,’ said I, ‘only I must save up for it.’ I was glad to be able to turn his mind from painful thoughts, and we began to dream of how we would move to another town, how we would buy a horse and cart. ‘We will put mamma and your sisters inside, we will cover them up and we’ll walk, you shall have a lift now and then, and I’ll walk beside, for we must take care of our horse, we can’t all ride. That’s how we’ll go.’ He was enchanted at that, most of all at the thought of having a horse and driving him. For of course a Russian boy is born among horses. We chattered a long while. Thank God, I thought, I have diverted his mind and comforted him.

“That was the day before yesterday, in the evening, but last night everything was changed. He had gone to school in the morning, he came back depressed, terribly depressed. In the evening I took him by the hand and we went for a walk; he would not talk. There was a wind blowing and no sun, and a feeling of autumn; twilight was coming on. We walked along, both of us depressed. ‘Well, my boy,’ said I, ‘how about our setting off on our travels?’ I thought I might bring him back to our talk of the day before. He didn’t answer, but I felt his fingers trembling in my hand. Ah, I thought, it’s a bad job; there’s something fresh. We had reached the stone where we are now. I sat down on the stone. And in the air there were lots of kites flapping and whirling. There were as many as thirty in sight. Of course, it’s just the season for the kites. ‘Look, Ilusha,’ said I, ‘it’s time we got out our last year’s kite again. I’ll mend it; where have you put it away?’ My boy made no answer. He looked away and turned sideways to me. And then a gust of wind blew up the sand. He suddenly fell on me, threw both his little arms round my neck and held me tight. You know, when children are silent and proud, and try to keep back their tears when they are in great trouble and suddenly break down, their tears fall in streams. With those warm streams of tears, he suddenly wetted my face. He sobbed and shook as though he were in convulsions, and squeezed up against me as I sat on the stone. ‘Father,’ he kept crying, ‘dear father, how he insulted you!’ And I

sobbed too. We sat shaking in each other's arms. 'Ilusha,' I said to him, 'Ilusha, darling.' No one saw us then. God alone saw us; I hope He will record it to my credit. You must thank your brother, Alexey Fyodorovitch. No, sir, I won't thrash my boy for your satisfaction."

He had gone back to his original tone of resentful buffoonery. Alyosha felt, though, that he trusted him, and that if there had been someone else in his, Alyosha's place, the man would not have spoken so openly and would not have told what he had just told. This encouraged Alyosha, whose heart was trembling on the verge of tears.

"Ah, how I would like to make friends with your boy!" he cried. "If you could arrange it—"

"Certainly, sir," muttered the captain.

"But now listen to something quite different!" Alyosha went on. "I have a message for you. That same brother of mine, Dmitri, has insulted his betrothed, too, a noble-hearted girl of whom you have probably heard. I have a right to tell you of her wrong; I ought to do so, in fact, for, hearing of the insult done to you and learning all about your unfortunate position, she commissioned me at once — just now — to bring you this help from her — but only from her alone, not from Dmitri, who has abandoned her. Nor from me, his brother, nor from anyone else, but from her, only from her! She entreats you to accept her help....You have both been insulted by the same man. She thought of you only when she had just received a similar insult from him — similar in its cruelty, I mean. She comes like a sister to help a brother in misfortune.... She told me to persuade you to take these two hundred roubles from her, as from a sister, knowing that you are in such need. No one will know of it, it can give rise to no unjust slander. There are the two hundred roubles, and I swear you must take them unless — unless all men are to be enemies on earth! But there are brothers even on earth.... You have a generous heart... you must see that, you must," and Alyosha held out two new rainbow-coloured hundred-rouble notes.

They were both standing at the time by the great stone close to the fence, and there was no one near. The notes seemed to produce a tremendous impression on the captain. He started, but at first only from astonishment. Such an outcome of their conversation was the last thing he expected. Nothing could have been farther from his dreams than help from anyone — and such a sum!

He took the notes, and for a minute he was almost unable to answer, quite a new expression came into his face.

“That for me? So much money — two hundred roubles! Good heavens! Why, I haven’t seen so much money for the last four years! Mercy on us! And she says she is a sister.... And is that the truth?”

“I swear that all I told you is the truth,”cried Alyosha.

The captain flushed red.

“Listen, my dear, listen. If I take it, I shan’t be behaving like a scoundrel? In your eyes, Alexey Fyodorovitch, I shan’t be a scoundrel? No, Alexey Fyodorovitch, listen, listen,” he hurried, touching Alyosha with both his hands. “You are persuading me to take it, saying that it’s a sister sends it, but inwardly, in your heart won’t you feel contempt for me if I take it, eh?”

“No, no, on my salvation I swear I shan’t! And no one will ever know but me — I, you and she, and one other lady, her great friend.”

“Never mind the lady! Listen, Alexey Fyodorovitch, at a moment like this you must listen, for you can’t understand what these two hundred roubles mean to me now.” The poor fellow went on rising gradually into a sort of incoherent, almost wild enthusiasm. He was thrown off his balance and talked extremely fast, as though afraid he would not be allowed to say all he had to say.

“Besides its being honestly acquired from a ‘sister,’ so highly respected and revered, do you know that now I can look after mamma and Nina, my hunchback angel daughter? Doctor Herzenstube came to me in the kindness of his heart and was examining them both for a whole hour. ‘I can make nothing of it,’ said he, but he prescribed a mineral water which is kept at a chemist’s here. He said it would be sure to do her good, and he ordered baths, too, with some medicine in them. The mineral water costs thirty copecks, and she’d need to drink forty bottles perhaps: so I took the prescription and laid it on the shelf under the ikons, and there it lies. And he ordered hot baths for Nina with something dissolved in them, morning and evening. But how can we carry out such a cure in our mansion, without servants, without help, without a bath, and without water? Nina is rheumatic all over, I don’t think I told you that. All her right side aches at night, she is in agony, and, would you believe it, the angel bears it without groaning for fear of waking us. We eat what we can get, and she’ll only take the leavings, what you’d scarcely give to a dog. ‘I am not worth it, I am taking

it from you, I am a burden on you,' that's what her angel eyes try to express. We wait on her, but she doesn't like it. 'I am a useless cripple, no good to anyone.' As though she were not worth it, when she is the saving of all of us with her angelic sweetness. Without her, without her gentle word it would be hell among us! She softens even Varvara. And don't judge Varvara harshly either, she is an angel too, she, too, has suffered wrong. She came to us for the summer, and she brought sixteen roubles she had earned by lessons and saved up, to go back with to Petersburg in September, that is now. But we took her money and lived on it, so now she has nothing to go back with. Though indeed she couldn't go back, for she has to work for us like a slave. She is like an overdriven horse with all of us on her back. She waits on us all, mends and washes, sweeps the floor, puts mamma to bed. And mamma is capricious and tearful and insane! And now I can get a servant with this money, you understand, Alexey Fyodorovitch, I can get medicines for the dear creatures, I can send my student to Petersburg, I can buy beef, I can feed them properly. Good Lord, but it's a dream!"

Alyosha was delighted that he had brought him such happiness and that the poor fellow had consented to be made happy.

"Stay, Alexey Fyodorovitch, stay," the captain began to talk with frenzied rapidity, carried away by a new day-dream. "Do you know that Ilusha and I will perhaps really carry out our dream. We will buy a horse and cart, a black horse, he insists on its being black, and we will set off as we pretended the other day. I have an old friend, a lawyer in K. province, and I heard through a trustworthy man that if I were to go he'd give me a place as clerk in his office, so, who knows, maybe he would. So I'd just put mamma and Nina in the cart, and Ilusha could drive, and I'd walk, I'd walk.... Why, if I only succeed in getting one debt paid that's owing me, I should have perhaps enough for that too!"

"There would be enough!" cried Alyosha. "Katerina Ivanovna will send you as much more as you need, and you know, I have money too, take what you want, as you would from a brother, from a friend, you can give it back later.... (You'll get rich. you'll get rich!) And you know you couldn't have a better idea than to move to another province! It would be the saving of you, especially of your boy and you ought to go quickly, before the winter, before the cold. You must write to us when you are there, and we will always be brothers... No, it's not a dream!"

Alyosha could have hugged him, he was so pleased. But glancing at him he stopped short. The man was standing with his neck outstretched and his lips protruding, with a pale and frenzied face. His lips were moving as though trying to articulate something; no sound came, but still his lips moved. It was uncanny.

“What is it?” asked Alyosha, startled.

“Alexey Fyodorovitch... I... you,” muttered the captain, faltering, looking at him with a strange, wild, fixed stare, and an air of desperate resolution. At the same time there was a sort of grin on his lips. “I... you, sir... wouldn’t you like me to show you a little trick I know?” he murmured, suddenly, in a firm rapid whisper, his voice no longer faltering.

“What trick?”

“A pretty trick,” whispered the captain. His mouth was twisted on the left side, his left eye was screwed up. He still stared at Alyosha.

“What is the matter? What trick?” Alyosha cried, now thoroughly alarmed.

“Why, look,” squealed the captain suddenly, and showing him the two notes which he had been holding by one corner between his thumb and forefinger during the conversation, he crumpled them up savagely and squeezed them tight in his right hand. “Do you see, do you see?” he shrieked, pale and infuriated. And suddenly flinging up his hand, he threw the crumpled notes on the sand. “Do you see?” he shrieked again, pointing to them. “Look there!”

And with wild fury he began trampling them under his heel, gasping and exclaiming as he did so:

“So much for your money! So much for your money! So much for your money! So much for your money!”

Suddenly he darted back and drew himself up before Alyosha, and his whole figure expressed unutterable pride.

“Tell those who sent you that the wisp of tow does not sell his honour,” he cried, raising his arm in the air. Then he turned quickly and began to run; but he had not run five steps before he turned completely round and kissed his hand to Alyosha. He ran another five paces and then turned round for the last time. This time his face was not contorted with laughter, but quivering all over with tears. In a tearful, faltering, sobbing voice he cried:

“What should I say to my boy if I took money from you for our shame?”

And then he ran on without turning. Alyosha looked after him, inexpressibly grieved. Oh, he saw that till the very last moment the man had not known he would crumple up and fling away the notes. He did not turn back. Alyosha knew he would not. He would not follow him and call him back, he knew why. When he was out of sight, Alyosha picked up the two notes. They were very much crushed and crumpled, and had been pressed into the sand, but were uninjured and even rustled like new ones when Alyosha unfolded them and smoothed them out. After smoothing them out, he folded them up, put them in his pocket and went to Katerina Ivanovna to report on the success of her commission.

BOOK V. PRO AND CONTRA

CHAPTER 1

The Engagement

MADAME HOHLAKOV was again the first to meet Alyosha. She was flustered; something important had happened. Katerina Ivanovna's hysterics had ended in a fainting fit, and then "a terrible, awful weakness had followed, she lay with her eyes turned up and was delirious. Now she was in a fever. They had sent for Herzenstube; they had sent for the aunts. The aunts were already here, but Herzenstube had not yet come. They were all sitting in her room, waiting. She was unconscious now, and what if it turned to brain fever!" Madame Hohlakov looked gravely alarmed. "This is serious, serious," she added at every word, as though nothing that had happened to her before had been serious. Alyosha listened with distress, and was beginning to describe his adventures, but she interrupted him at the first words. She had not time to listen. She begged him to sit with Lise and wait for her there.

"Lise," she whispered almost in his ear, "Lise has greatly surprised me just now, dear Alexey Fyodorovitch. She touched me, too, and so my heart forgives her everything. Only fancy, as soon as you had gone, she began to be truly remorseful for having laughed at you to-day and yesterday, though she was not laughing at you, but only joking. But she was seriously sorry for it, almost ready to cry, so that I was quite surprised. She has never been really sorry for laughing at me, but has only made a joke of it. And you know she is laughing at me every minute. But this time she was in earnest She thinks a great deal of your opinion, Alexey Fyodorovitch, and don't take offence or be wounded by her if you can help it. I am never hard upon her, for she's such a clever little thing. Would you believe it? She said just now that you were a friend of her childhood, 'the greatest friend of her childhood' — just think of that—'greatest friend' — and what about me? She has very strong feelings and memories, and, what's more, she uses these phrases, most unexpected words, which come out all of a sudden when you least expect them. She spoke lately about a pine-tree, for instance: there used to be a pine-tree standing in our garden in her early childhood. Very likely it's standing there still; so there's no need to speak in the past tense. Pine-trees are not like people, Alexey Fyodorovitch, they

don’t change quickly. ‘Mamma,’ she said, ‘I remember this pine tree as in a dream,’ only she said something so original about it that I can’t repeat it. Besides, I’ve forgotten it. Well, good-bye! I am so worried I feel I shall go out of my mind. Ah! Alexey Fyodorovitch, I’ve been out of my mind twice in my life. Go to Lise, cheer her up, as you always can so charmingly. Lise,” she cried, going to her door, “here I’ve brought you Alexey Fyodorovitch, whom you insulted so. He is not at all angry, I assure you; on the contrary, he is surprised that you could suppose so.”

“Merci, maman. Come in, Alexey Fyodorovitch.”

Alyosha went in. Lise looked rather embarrassed, and at once flushed crimson. She was evidently ashamed of something, and, as people always do in such cases, she began immediately talking of other things, as though they were of absorbing interest to her at the moment.

“Mamma has just told me all about the two hundred roubles, Alexey Fyodorovitch, and your taking them to that poor officer... and she told me all the awful story of how he had been insulted... and you know, although mamma muddles things... she always rushes from one thing to another... I cried when I heard. Well, did you give him the money and how is that poor man getting on?”

“The fact is I didn’t give it to him, and it’s a long story,” answered Alyosha, as though he, too, could think of nothing but his regret at having failed, yet Lise saw perfectly well that he, too, looked away, and that he, too, was trying to talk of other things.

Alyosha sat down to the table and began to tell his story, but at the first words he lost his embarrassment and gained the whole of Lise’s attention as well. He spoke with deep feeling, under the influence of the strong impression he had just received, and he succeeded in telling his story well and circumstantially. In old days in Moscow he had been fond of coming to Lise and describing to her what had just happened to him, what he had read, or what he remembered of his childhood. Sometimes they had made day-dreams and woven whole romances together — generally cheerful and amusing ones. Now they both felt suddenly transported to the old days in Moscow, two years before. Lise was extremely touched by his story. Alyosha described Ilusha with warm feeling. When he finished describing how the luckless man trampled on the money, Lise could not help clasping her hands and crying out:

“So you didn’t give him the money! So you let him run away! Oh, dear, you ought to have run after him!”

“No, Lise; it’s better I didn’t run after him,” said Alyosha, getting up from his chair and walking thoughtfully across the room.

“How so? How is it better? Now they are without food and their case is hopeless.”

“Not hopeless, for the two hundred roubles will still come to them. He’ll take the money to-morrow. To-morrow he will be sure to take it,” said Alyosha, pacing up and down, pondering. “You see, Lise,” he went on, stopping suddenly before her, “I made one blunder, but that, even that, is all for the best.”

“What blunder, and why is it for the best?”

“I’ll tell you. He is a man of weak and timorous character; he has suffered so much and is very good-natured. I keep wondering why he took offence so suddenly, for I assure you, up to the last minute, he did not know that he was going to trample on the notes. And I think now that there was a great deal to offend him... and it could not have been otherwise in his position.... To begin with, he was sore at having been so glad of the money in my presence and not having concealed it from me. If he had been pleased, but not so much; if he had not shown it; if he had begun affecting scruples and difficulties, as other people do when they take money, he might still endure — to take it. But he was too genuinely delighted, and that was mortifying. Ah, Lise, he is a good and truthful man — that’s the worst of the whole business. All the while he talked, his voice was so weak, so broken, he talked so fast, so fast, he kept laughing such a laugh, or perhaps he was crying — yes, I am sure he was crying, he was so delighted — and he talked about his daughters — and about the situation he could get in another town.... And when he had poured out his heart, he felt ashamed at having shown me his inmost soul like that. So he began to hate me at once. He is one of those awfully sensitive poor people. What had made him feel most ashamed was that he had given in too soon and accepted me as a friend, you see. At first he almost flew at me and tried to intimidate me, but as soon as he saw the money he had begun embracing me; he kept touching me with his hands. This must have been how he came to feel it all so humiliating, and then I made that blunder, a very important one. I suddenly said to him that if he had not money enough to move to another town, we would give it to him, and, indeed, I myself would give him as much as he

wanted out of my own money. That struck him all at once. Why, he thought, did I put myself forward to help him? You know, Lise, it’s awfully hard for a man who has been injured, when other people look at him as though they were his benefactors.... I’ve heard that; Father Zossima told me so. I don’t know how to put it, but I have often seen it myself. And I feel like that myself, too. And the worst of it was that though he did not know, to the very last minute, that he would trample on the notes, he had a kind of presentiment of it, I am sure of that. That’s just what made him so ecstatic, that he had that presentiment.... And though it’s so dreadful, it’s all for the best. In fact, I believe nothing better could have happened.”

“Why, why could nothing better have happened?” cried Lise, looking with great surprise at Alyosha.

“Because if he had taken the money, in an hour after getting home, he would be crying with mortification, that’s just what would have happened. And most likely he would have come to me early to-morrow, and perhaps have flung the notes at me and trampled upon them as he did just now. But now he has gone home awfully proud and triumphant, though he knows he has ‘ruined himself.’ So now nothing could be easier than to make him accept the two hundred roubles by to-morrow, for he has already vindicated his honour, tossed away the money, and trampled it under foot.... He couldn’t know when he did it that I should bring it to him again to-morrow, and yet he is in terrible need of that money. Though he is proud of himself now, yet even to-day he’ll be thinking what a help he has lost. He will think of it more than ever at night, will dream of it, and by to-morrow morning he may be ready to run to me to ask forgiveness. It’s just then that I’ll appear. ‘Here, you are a proud man,’ I shall say: ‘you have shown it; but now take the money and forgive us!’ And then he will take it!

Alyosha was carried away with joy as he uttered his last words, “And then he will take it!” Lise clapped her hands.

“Ah, that’s true! I understand that perfectly now. Ah, Alyosha, how do you know all this? So young and yet he knows what’s in the heart.... I should never have worked it out.”

“The great thing now is to persuade him that he is on an equal footing with us, in spite of his taking money from us,” Alyosha went on in his excitement, “and not only on an equal, but even on a higher footing.”

“‘On a higher footing’ is charming, Alexey Fyodorovitch; but go on, go on!”

“You mean there isn’t such an expression as ‘on a higher footing’; but that doesn’t matter because—”

“Oh, no, of course it doesn’t matter. Forgive me, Alyosha, dear.... You know, I scarcely respected you till now — that is I respected you but on an equal footing; but now I shall begin to respect you on a higher footing. Don’t be angry, dear, at my joking,” she put in at once, with strong feeling. “I am absurd and small, but you, you! Listen, Alexey Fyodorovitch. Isn’t there in all our analysis — I mean your analysis... no, better call it ours — aren’t we showing contempt for him, for that poor man — in analysing his soul like this, as it were, from above, eh? In deciding so certainly that he will take the money?”

“No, Lise, it’s not contempt,” Alyosha answered, as though he had prepared himself for the question. “I was thinking of that on the way here. How can it be contempt when we are all like him, when we are all just the same as he is? For you know we are just the same, no better. If we are better, we should have been just the same in his place.... I don’t know about you, Lise, but I consider that I have a sordid soul in many ways, and his soul is not sordid; on the contrary, full of fine feeling.... No, Lise, I have no contempt for him. Do you know, Lise, my elder told me once to care for most people exactly as one would for children, and for some of them as one would for the sick in hospitals.”

“Ah, Alexey Fyodorovitch. dear, let us care for people as we would for the sick!”

“Let us, Lise; I am ready. Though I am not altogether ready in myself. I am sometimes very impatient and at other times I don’t see things. It’s different with you.”

“Ah, I don’t believe it! Alexey Fyodorovitch, how happy I am!”

“I am so glad you say so, Lise.”

“Alexey Fyodorovitch, you are wonderfully good, but you are sometimes sort of formal.... And yet you are not a bit formal really. Go to the door, open it gently, and see whether mamma is listening,” said Lise, in a nervous, hurried whisper.

Alyosha went, opened the door, and reported that no one was listening.

“Come here, Alexey Fyodorovitch,” Lise went on, flushing redder and redder. “Give me your hand — that’s right. I have to make a great confession. I didn’t write to you yesterday in joke, but in earnest,” and she

hid her eyes with her hand. It was evident that she was greatly ashamed of the confession.

Suddenly she snatched his hand and impulsively kissed it three times.

“Ah, Lise, what a good thing!” cried Alyosha joyfully. “You know, I was perfectly sure you were in earnest.”

“Sure? Upon my word! She put aside his hand, but did not leave go of it, blushing hotly, and laughing a little happy laugh. “I kiss his hand and he says, ‘What a good thing!’”

But her reproach was undeserved. Alyosha, too, was greatly overcome.

“I should like to please you always, Lise, but don’t know how to do it,” he muttered, blushing too.

“Alyosha, dear, you are cold and rude. Do you see? He has chosen me as his wife and is quite settled about it. He is sure I was in earnest. What a thing to say! Why, that’s impertinence — that’s what it is.”

“Why, was it wrong of me to feel sure?” Alyosha asked, laughing suddenly.

“Ah, Alyosha, on the contrary, it was delightfully right,” cried Lise, looking tenderly and happily at him.

Alyosha stood still, holding her hand in his. Suddenly he stooped down and kissed her on her lips.

“Oh, what are you doing?” cried Lise. Alyosha was terribly abashed.

“Oh, forgive me if I shouldn’t.... Perhaps I’m awfully stupid.... You said I was cold, so I kissed you.... But I see it was stupid.”

Lise laughed, and hid her face in her hands. “And in that dress!” she ejaculated in the midst of her mirth. But she suddenly ceased laughing and became serious, almost stern.

“Alyosha, we must put off kissing. We are not ready for that yet, and we shall have a long time to wait,” she ended suddenly. “Tell me rather why you who are so clever, so intellectual, so observant, choose a little idiot, an invalid like me? Ah, Alyosha, I am awfully happy, for I don’t deserve you a bit.”

“You do, Lise. I shall be leaving the monastery altogether in a few days. If I go into the world, I must marry. I know that. He told me to marry, too. Whom could I marry better than you — and who would have me except you? I have been thinking it over. In the first place, you’ve known me from a child and you’ve a great many qualities I haven’t. You are more light-hearted than I am; above all, you are more innocent than I am. I have been

brought into contact with many, many things already.... Ah, you don’t know, but I, too, am a Karamazov. What does it matter if you do laugh and make jokes, and at me, too? Go on laughing. I am so glad you do. You laugh like a little child, but you think like a martyr.”

“Like a martyr? How?”

“Yes, Lise, your question just now: whether we weren’t showing contempt for that poor man by dissecting his soul — that was the question of a sufferer.... You see, I don’t know how to express it, but anyone who thinks of such questions is capable of suffering. Sitting in your invalid chair you must have thought over many things already.”

“Alyosha, give me your hand. Why are you taking it away?” murmured Lise in a failing voice, weak with happiness. “Listen, Alyosha. What will you wear when you come out of the monastery? What sort of suit? Don’t laugh, don’t be angry, it’s very, very important to me.”

“I haven’t thought about the suit, Lise; But I’ll wear whatever you like.”

“I should like you to have a dark blue velvet coat, a white pique waistcoat, and a soft grey felt hat.... Tell me, did you believe that I didn’t care for you when I said I didn’t mean what I wrote?”

“No, I didn’t believe it.”

“Oh, you insupportable person, you are incorrigible.”

“You see, I knew that you seemed to care for me, but I pretended to believe that you didn’t care for me to make it easier for you.”

“That makes it worse! Worse and better than all! Alyosha, I am awfully fond of you. Just before you came this morning, I tried my fortune. I decided I would ask you for my letter, and if you brought it out calmly and gave it to me (as might have been expected from you) it would mean that you did not love me at all, that you felt nothing, and were simply a stupid boy, good for nothing, and that I am ruined. But you left the letter at home and that cheered me. You left it behind on purpose, so as not to give it back, because you knew I would ask for it? That was it, wasn’t it?”

“Ah, Lise, it was not so a bit. The letter is with me now, and it was this morning, in this pocket. Here it is.”

Alyosha pulled the letter out laughing, and showed it her at a distance.

“But I am not going to give it to you. Look at it from here.”

“Why, then you told a lie? You, a monk, told a lie!”

“I told a lie if you like,” Alyosha laughed, too. “I told a lie so as not to give you back the letter. It’s very precious to me,” he added suddenly, with

strong feeling, and again he flushed. “It always will be, and I won’t give it up to anyone!”

Lise looked at him joyfully. “Alyosha,” she murmured again, “look at the door. Isn’t mamma listening?”

“Very well, Lise, I’ll look; but wouldn’t it be better not to look? Why suspect your mother of such meanness?”

“What meanness? As for her spying on her daughter, it’s her right, it’s not meanness!” cried Lise, firing up. “You may be sure, Alexey Fyodorovitch, that when I am a mother, if I have a daughter like myself I shall certainly spy on her!”

“Really, Lise? That’s not right.”

“Oh, my goodness! What has meanness to do with it? If she were listening to some ordinary worldly conversation, it would be meanness, but when her own daughter is shut up with a young man... Listen, Alyosha, do you know I shall spy upon you as soon as we are married, and let me tell you I shall open all your letters and read them, so you may as well be prepared.”

“Yes, of course, if so—” muttered Alyosha, “only it’s not right.”

“Ah, how contemptuous! Alyosha, dear, we won’t quarrel the very first day. I’d better tell you the whole truth. Of course, it’s very wrong to spy on people, and, of course, I am not right and you are, only I shall spy on you all the same.”

“Do, then; you won’t find out anything,” laughed Alyosha.

“And Alyosha, will you give in to me? We must decide that too.”

“I shall be delighted to, Lise, and certain to, only not in the most important things. Even if you don’t agree with me, I shall do my duty in the most important things.”

“That’s right; but let me tell you I am ready to give in to you not only in the most important matters, but in everything. And I am ready to vow to do so now — in everything, and for all my life!” cried Lise fervently, “and I’ll do it gladly, gladly! What’s more, I’ll swear never to spy on you, never once, never to read one of your letters. For you are right and I am not. And though I shall be awfully tempted to spy, I know that I won’t do it since you consider it dishonourable. You are my conscience now.... Listen, Alexey Fyodorovitch, why have you been so sad lately — both yesterday and to-day? I know you have a lot of anxiety and trouble, but I see you have some special grief besides, some secret one, perhaps?”

“Yes, Lise, I have a secret one, too,” answered Alyosha mournfully. “I see you love me, since you guessed that.”

“What grief? What about? Can you tell me?” asked Lise with timid entreaty.

“I’ll tell you later, Lise — afterwards,” said Alyosha, confused. “Now you wouldn’t understand it perhaps — and perhaps I couldn’t explain it.”

“I know your brothers and your father are worrying you, too.”

“Yes, my brothers too,” murmured Alyosha, pondering.

“I don’t like your brother Ivan, Alyosha,” said Lise suddenly.

He noticed this remark with some surprise, but did not answer it.

“My brothers are destroying themselves,” he went on, “my father, too. And they are destroying others with them. It’s ‘the primitive force of the Karamazovs,’ as father Paissy said the other day, a crude, unbridled, earthly force. Does the spirit of God move above that force? Even that I don’t know. I only know that I, too, am a Karamazov.... Me a monk, a monk! Am I a monk, Lise? You said just now that I was.”

“Yes, I did.”

“And perhaps I don’t even believe in God.”

“You don’t believe? What is the matter?” said Lise quietly and gently. But Alyosha did not answer. There was something too mysterious, too subjective in these last words of his, perhaps obscure to himself, but yet torturing him.

“And now on the top of it all, my friend, the best man in the world is going, is leaving the earth! If you knew, Lise, how bound up in soul I am with him! And then I shall be left alone.... I shall come to you, Lise.... For the future we will be together.”

“Yes, together, together! Henceforward we shall be always together, all our lives! Listen, kiss me, I allow you.”

Alyosha kissed her.

“Come, now go. Christ be with you!” and she made the sign of the cross over him. “Make haste back to him while he is alive. I see I’ve kept you cruelly. I’ll pray to-day for him and you. Alyosha, we shall be happy! Shall we be happy, shall we?”

“I believe we shall, Lise.”

Alyosha thought it better not to go in to Madame Hohlakov and was going out of the house without saying good-bye to her. But no sooner had he opened the door than he found Madame Hohlakov standing before him.

From the first word Alyosha guessed that she had been waiting on purpose to meet him.

“Alexey Fyodorovitch, this is awful. This is all childish nonsense and ridiculous. I trust you won’t dream — It’s foolishness, nothing but foolishness!” she said, attacking him at once.

“Only don’t tell her that,” said Alyosha, “or she will be upset, and that’s bad for her now.”

“Sensible advice from a sensible young man. Am I to understand that you only agreed with her from compassion for her invalid state, because you didn’t want to irritate her by contradiction?”

“Oh no, not at all. I was quite serious in what I said,” Alyosha declared stoutly.

“To be serious about it is impossible, unthinkable, and in the first place I shall never be at home to you again, and I shall take her away, you may be sure of that.”

“But why?” asked Alyosha. “It’s all so far off. We may have to wait another year and a half.”

“Ah, Alexey Fyodorovitch, that’s true, of course, and you’ll have time to quarrel and separate a thousand times in a year and a half. But I am so unhappy! Though it’s such nonsense, it’s a great blow to me. I feel like Famusov in the last scene of Sorrow from Wit. You are Tchatsky and she is Sofya, and, only fancy, I’ve run down to meet you on the stairs, and in the play the fatal scene takes place on the staircase. I heard it all; I almost dropped. So this is the explanation of her dreadful night and her hysterics of late! It means love to the daughter but death to the mother. I might as well be in my grave at once. And a more serious matter still, what is this letter she has written? Show it me at once, at once!”

“No, there’s no need. Tell me, how is Katerina Ivanovna now? I must know.”

“She still lies in delirium; she has not regained consciousness. Her aunts are here; but they do nothing but sigh and give themselves airs. Herzenstube came, and he was so alarmed that I didn’t know what to do for him. I nearly sent for a doctor to look after him. He was driven home in my carriage. And on the top of it all, you and this letter! It’s true nothing can happen for a year and a half. In the name of all that’s holy, in the name of your dying elder, show me that letter, Alexey Fyodorovitch. I’m her mother. Hold it in your hand, if you like, and I will read it so.”

“No, I won’t show it to you. Even if she sanctioned it, I wouldn’t. I am coming to-morrow, and if you like, we can talk over many things, but now good-bye!”

And Alyosha ran downstairs and into the street.

CHAPTER 2

Smerdyakov with a Guitar

HE had no time to lose indeed. Even while he was saying good-bye to Lise, the thought had struck him that he must attempt some stratagem to find his brother Dmitri, who was evidently keeping out of his way. It was getting late, nearly three o'clock. Alyosha's whole soul turned to the monastery, to his dying saint, but the necessity of seeing Dmitri outweighed everything. The conviction that a great inevitable catastrophe was about to happen grew stronger in Alyosha's mind with every hour. What that catastrophe was, and what he would say at that moment to his brother, he could perhaps not have said definitely. "Even if my benefactor must die without me, anyway I won't have to reproach myself all my life with the thought that I might have saved something and did not, but passed by and hastened home. If I do as I intend, I shall be following his great precept."

His plan was to catch his brother Dmitri unawares, to climb over the fence, as he had the day before, get into the garden and sit in the summer-house. If Dmitri were not there, thought Alyosha, he would not announce himself to Foma or the women of the house, but would remain hidden in the summer-house, even if he had to wait there till evening. If, as before, Dmitri were lying in wait for Grushenka to come, he would be very likely to come to the summer-house. Alyosha did not, however, give much thought to the details of his plan, but resolved to act upon it, even if it meant not getting back to the monastery that day.

Everything happened without hindrance, he climbed over the hurdle almost in the same spot as the day before, and stole into the summer-house unseen. He did not want to be noticed. The woman of the house and Foma too, if he were here, might be loyal to his brother and obey his instructions, and so refuse to let Alyosha come into the garden, or might warn Dmitri that he was being sought and inquired for.

There was no one in the summer-house. Alyosha sat down and began to wait. He looked round the summer-house, which somehow struck him as a great deal more ancient than before. Though the day was just as fine as yesterday, it seemed a wretched little place this time. There was a circle on the table, left no doubt from the glass of brandy having been spilt the day

before. Foolish and irrelevant ideas strayed about his mind, as they always do in a time of tedious waiting. He wondered, for instance, why he had sat down precisely in the same place as before, why not in the other seat. At last he felt very depressed — depressed by suspense and uncertainty. But he had not sat there more than a quarter of an hour, when he suddenly heard the thrum of a guitar somewhere quite close. People were sitting, or had only just sat down, somewhere in the bushes not more than twenty paces away. Alyosha suddenly recollected that on coming out of the summer-house the day before, he had caught a glimpse of an old green low garden-seat among the bushes on the left, by the fence. The people must be sitting on it now. Who were they?

A man's voice suddenly began singing in a sugary falsetto, accompanying himself on the guitar: With invincible force I am bound to my dear.

O Lord, have mercy
On her and on me!
On her and on me!
On her and on me!

The voice ceased. It was a lackey's tenor and a lackey's song. Another voice, a woman's, suddenly asked insinuatingly and bashfully, though with mincing affectation:

"Why haven't you been to see us for so long, Pavel Fyodorovitch? Why do you always look down upon us?"

"Not at all answered a man's voice politely, but with emphatic dignity. It was clear that the man had the best of the position, and that the woman was making advances. "I believe the man must be Smerdyakov," thought Alyosha, "from his voice. And the lady must be the daughter of the house here, who has come from Moscow, the one who wears the dress with a tail and goes to Marfa for soup."

"I am awfully fond of verses of all kinds, if they rhyme," the woman's voice continued. "Why don't you go on?"

The man sang again: What do I care for royal wealth If but my dear one be in health?

Lord have mercy
On her and on me!
On her and on me!
On her and on me!

“It was even better last time,” observed the woman’s voice. “You sang ‘If my darling be in health’; it sounded more tender. I suppose you’ve forgotten to-day.”

“Poetry is rubbish!” said Smerdyakov curtly.

“Oh, no! I am very fond of poetry.”

“So far as it’s poetry, it’s essential rubbish. Consider yourself, who ever talks in rhyme? And if we were all to talk in rhyme, even though it were decreed by government, we shouldn’t say much, should we? Poetry is no good, Marya Kondratyevna.”

“How clever you are! How is it you’ve gone so deep into everything?” The woman’s voice was more and more insinuating.

“I could have done better than that. I could have known more than that, if it had not been for my destiny from my childhood up. I would have shot a man in a duel if he called me names because I am descended from a filthy beggar and have no father. And they used to throw it in my teeth in Moscow. It had reached them from here, thanks to Grigory Vassilyevitch. Grigory Vassilyevitch blames me for rebelling against my birth, but I would have sanctioned their killing me before I was born that I might not have come into the world at all. They used to say in the market, and your mamma too, with great lack of delicacy, set off telling me that her hair was like a mat on her head, and that she was short of five foot by a wee bit. Why talk of a wee bit while she might have said ‘a little bit,’ like everyone else? She wanted to make it touching, a regular peasant’s feeling. Can a Russian peasant be said to feel, in comparison with an educated man? He can’t be said to have feeling at all, in his ignorance. From my childhood up when I hear ‘a wee bit,’ I am ready to burst with rage. I hate all Russia, Marya Kondratyevna.”

“If you’d been a cadet in the army, or a young hussar, you wouldn’t have talked like that, but would have drawn your sabre to defend all Russia.”

“I don’t want to be a hussar, Marya Kondratyevna, and, what’s more, I should like to abolish all soldiers.”

“And when an enemy comes, who is going to defend us?”

“There’s no need of defence. In 1812 there was a great invasion of Russia by Napoleon, first Emperor of the French, father of the present one, and it would have been a good thing if they had conquered us. A clever nation would have conquered a very stupid one and annexed it. We should have had quite different institutions.”

“Are they so much better in their own country than we are? I wouldn’t change a dandy I know of for three young englishmen,” observed Marya Kondratyevna tenderly, doubtless accompanying her words with a most languishing glance.

“That’s as one prefers.”

“But you are just like a foreigner — just like a most gentlemanly foreigner. I tell you that, though it makes me bashful.”

“If you care to know, the folks there and ours here are just alike in their vice. They are swindlers, only there the scoundrel wears polished boots and here he grovels in filth and sees no harm in it. The Russian people want thrashing, as Fyodor Pavlovitch said very truly yesterday, though he is mad, and all his children.”

“You said yourself you had such a respect for Ivan Fyodorovitch.”

“But he said I was a stinking lackey. He thinks that I might be unruly. He is mistaken there. If I had a certain sum in my pocket, I would have left here long ago. Dmitri Fyodorovitch is lower than any lackey in his behaviour, in his mind, and in his poverty. He doesn’t know how to do anything, and yet he is respected by everyone. I may be only a soup-maker, but with luck I could open a cafe restaurant in Petrovka, in Moscow, for my cookery is something special, and there’s no one in Moscow, except the foreigners, whose cookery is anything special. Dmitri Fyodorovitch is a beggar, but if he were to challenge the son of the first count in the country, he’d fight him. Though in what way is he better than I am? For he is ever so much stupider than I am. Look at the money he has wasted without any need!”

“It must be lovely, a duel,” Marya Kondratyevna observed suddenly.

“How so?”

“It must be so dreadful and so brave, especially when young officers with pistols in their hands pop at one another for the sake of some lady. A perfect picture! Ah, if only girls were allowed to look on, I’d give anything to see one!”

“It’s all very well when you are firing at someone, but when he is firing straight in your mug, you must feel pretty silly. You’d be glad to run away, Marya Kondratyevna.”

“You don’t mean you would run away?” But Smerdyakov did not deign to reply. After a moment’s silence the guitar tinkled again, and he sang again in the same falsetto: Whatever you may say,

I shall go far away.

Life will be bright and gay
In the city far away.
I shall not grieve,
I shall not grieve at all,
I don’t intend to grieve at all.

Then something unexpected happened. Alyosha suddenly sneezed. They were silent. Alyosha got up and walked towards them. He found Smerdyakov dressed up and wearing polished boots, his hair pomaded, and perhaps curled. The guitar lay on the garden-seat. His companion was the daughter of the house, wearing a light-blue dress with a train two yards long. She was young and would not have been bad-looking, but that her face was so round and terribly freckled.

“Will my brother Dmitri soon be back? asked Alyosha with as much composure as he could.

Smerdyakov got up slowly; Marya Kondratyevna rose too.

“How am I to know about Dmitri Fyodorovitch? It’s not as if I were his keeper,” answered Smerdyakov quietly, distinctly, and superciliously.

“But I simply asked whether you do know?” Alyosha explained.

“I know nothing of his whereabouts and don’t want to.”

“But my brother told me that you let him know all that goes on in the house, and promised to let him know when Agrafena Alexandrovna comes.”

Smerdyakov turned a deliberate, unmoved glance upon him.

“And how did you get in this time, since the gate was bolted an hour ago?” he asked, looking at Alyosha.

“I came in from the back-alley, over the fence, and went straight to the summer-house. I hope you’ll forgive me, he added addressing Marya Kondratyevna. “I was in a hurry to find my brother.”

“Ach, as though we could take it amiss in you!” drawled Marya Kondratyevna, flattered by Alyosha’s apology. “For Dmitri Fyodorovitch often goes to the summer-house in that way. We don’t know he is here and he is sitting in the summer-house.”

“I am very anxious to find him, or to learn from you where he is now. Believe me, it’s on business of great importance to him.”

“He never tells us,” lisped Marya Kondratyevna.

“Though I used to come here as a friend,” Smerdyakov began again, “Dmitri Fyodorovitch has pestered me in a merciless way even here by his

incessant questions about the master. ‘What news?’ he’ll ask. ‘What’s going on in there now? Who’s coming and going?’ and can’t I tell him something more. Twice already he’s threatened me with death

“With death?” Alyosha exclaimed in surprise.

“Do you suppose he’d think much of that, with his temper, which you had a chance of observing yourself yesterday? He says if I let Agrafena Alexandrovna in and she passes the night there, I’ll be the first to suffer for it. I am terribly afraid of him, and if I were not even more afraid of doing so, I ought to let the police know. God only knows what he might not do!”

“His honour said to him the other day, ‘I’ll pound you in a mortar!’” added Marya Kondratyevna.

“Oh, if it’s pounding in a mortar, it may be only talk,” observed Alyosha. “If I could meet him, I might speak to him about that too.”

“Well, the only thing I can tell you is this,” said Smerdyakov, as though thinking better of it; “I am here as an old friend and neighbour, and it would be odd if I didn’t come. On the other hand, Ivan Fyodorovitch sent me first thing this morning to your brother’s lodging in Lake Street, without a letter, but with a message to Dmitri Fyodorovitch to go to dine with him at the restaurant here, in the marketplace. I went, but didn’t find Dmitri Fyodorovitch at home, though it was eight o’clock. ‘He’s been here, but he is quite gone,’ those were the very words of his landlady. It’s as though there was an understanding between them. Perhaps at this moment he is in the restaurant with Ivan Fyodorovitch, for Ivan Fyodorovitch has not been home to dinner and Fyodor Pavlovitch dined alone an hour ago, and is gone to lie down. But I beg you most particularly not to speak of me and of what I have told you, for he’d kill me for nothing at all.”

“Brother Ivan invited Dmitri to the restaurant to-day?” repeated Alyosha quickly.

“That’s so.”

“The Metropolis tavern in the marketplace?”

“The very same.”

“That’s quite likely,” cried Alyosha, much excited. “Thank you, Smerdyakov; that’s important. I’ll go there at once.”

“Don’t betray me,” Smerdyakov called after him.

“Oh, no, I’ll go to the tavern as though by chance. Don’t be anxious.”

“But wait a minute, I’ll open the gate to you,” cried Marya Kondratyevna.

“No; it’s a short cut, I’ll get over the fence again.”

What he had heard threw Alyosha into great agitation. He ran to the tavern. It was impossible for him to go into the tavern in his monastic dress, but he could inquire at the entrance for his brothers and call them down. But just as he reached the tavern, a window was flung open, and his brother Ivan called down to him from it.

“Alyosha, can’t you come up here to me? I shall be awfully grateful.”

“To be sure I can, only I don’t quite know whether in this dress—”

“But I am in a room apart. Come up the steps; I’ll run down to meet you.”

A minute later Alyosha was sitting beside his brother. Ivan was alone dining.

CHAPTER 3

The Brothers Make Friends

IVAN was not, however, in a separate room, but only in a place shut off by a screen, so that it was unseen by other people in the room. It was the first room from the entrance with a buffet along the wall. Waiters were continually darting to and fro in it. The only customer in the room was an old retired military man drinking tea in a corner. But there was the usual bustle going on in the other rooms of the tavern; there were shouts for the waiters, the sound of popping corks, the click of billiard balls, the drone of the organ. Alyosha knew that Ivan did not usually visit this tavern and disliked taverns in general. So he must have come here, he reflected, simply to meet Dmitri by arrangement. Yet Dmitri was not there.

"Shall I order you fish, soup, or anything. You don't live on tea alone, I suppose," cried Ivan, apparently delighted at having got hold of Alyosha. He had finished dinner and was drinking tea.

"Let me have soup, and tea afterwards, I am hungry," said Alyosha gaily.

"And cherry jam? They have it here. You remember how you used to love cherry jam when you were little?"

"You remember that? Let me have jam too, I like it still."

Ivan rang for the waiter and ordered soup, jam, and tea.

"I remember everything, Alyosha, I remember you till you were eleven, I was nearly fifteen. There's such a difference between fifteen and eleven that brothers are never companions at those ages. I don't know whether I was fond of you even. When I went away to Moscow for the first few years I never thought of you at all. Then, when you came to Moscow yourself, we only met once somewhere, I believe. And now I've been here more than three months, and so far we have scarcely said a word to each other. To-morrow I am going away, and I was just thinking as I sat here how I could see you to say good-bye and just then you passed."

"Were you very anxious to see me, then?"

"Very. I want to get to know you once for all, and I want you to know me. And then to say good-bye. I believe it's always best to get to know people just before leaving them. I've noticed how you've been looking at me these three months. There has been a continual look of expectation in

your eyes, and I can't endure that. That's how it is I've kept away from you. But in the end I have learned to respect you. The little man stands firm, I thought. Though I am laughing, I am serious. You do stand firm, don't you? I like people who are firm like that whatever it is they stand by, even if they are such little fellows as you. Your expectant eyes ceased to annoy me, I grew fond of them in the end, those expectant eyes. You seem to love me for some reason, Alyosha?"

"I do love you, Ivan. Dmitri says of you — Ivan is a tomb! I say of you, Ivan is a riddle. You are a riddle to me even now. But I understand something in you, and I did not understand it till this morning."

"What's that?" laughed Ivan.

"You won't be angry?" Alyosha laughed too.

"Well?"

"That you are just as young as other young men of three and twenty, that you are just a young and fresh and nice boy, green in fact! Now, have I insulted you dreadfully?"

"On the contrary, I am struck by a coincidence," cried Ivan, warmly and good-humouredly. "Would you believe it that ever since that scene with her, I have thought of nothing else but my youthful greenness, and just as though you guessed that, you begin about it. Do you know I've been sitting here thinking to myself: that if I didn't believe in life, if I lost faith in the woman I love, lost faith in the order of things, were convinced, in fact, that everything is a disorderly, damnable, and perhaps devil-ridden chaos, if I were struck by every horror of man's disillusionment — still I should want to live and, having once tasted of the cup, I would not turn away from it till I had drained it! At thirty, though, I shall be sure to leave the cup, even if I've not emptied it, and turn away — where I don't know. But till I am thirty, I know that my youth will triumph over everything — every disillusionment, every disgust with life. I've asked myself many times whether there is in the world any despair that would overcome this frantic and perhaps unseemly thirst for life in me, and I've come to the conclusion that there isn't, that is till I am thirty, and then I shall lose it of myself, I fancy. Some drivelling consumptive moralists — and poets especially — often call that thirst for life base. It's a feature of the Karamazovs, it's true, that thirst for life regardless of everything; you have it no doubt too, but why is it base? The centripetal force on our planet is still fearfully strong, Alyosha. I have a longing for life, and I go on living in spite of logic.

Though I may not believe in the order of the universe, yet I love the sticky little leaves as they open in spring. I love the blue sky, I love some people, whom one loves you know sometimes without knowing why. I love some great deeds done by men, though I've long ceased perhaps to have faith in them, yet from old habit one's heart prizes them. Here they have brought the soup for you, eat it, it will do you good. It's first-rate soup, they know how to make it here. I want to travel in Europe, Alyosha, I shall set off from here. And yet I know that I am only going to a graveyard, but it's a most precious graveyard, that's what it is! Precious are the dead that lie there, every stone over them speaks of such burning life in the past, of such passionate faith in their work, their truth, their struggle and their science, that I know I shall fall on the ground and kiss those stones and weep over them; though I'm convinced in my heart that it's long been nothing but a graveyard. And I shall not weep from despair, but simply because I shall be happy in my tears, I shall steep my soul in emotion. I love the sticky leaves in spring, the blue sky — that's all it is. It's not a matter of intellect or logic, it's loving with one's inside, with one's stomach. One loves the first strength of one's youth. Do you understand anything of my tirade, Alyosha?" Ivan laughed suddenly.

"I understand too well, Ivan. One longs to love with one's inside, with one's stomach. You said that so well and I am awfully glad that you have such a longing for life," cried Alyosha. "I think everyone should love life above everything in the world."

"Love life more than the meaning of it?"

"Certainly, love it, regardless of logic as you say, it must be regardless of logic, and it's only then one will understand the meaning of it. I have thought so a long time. Half your work is done, Ivan, you love life, now you've only to try to do the second half and you are saved."

"You are trying to save me, but perhaps I am not lost! And what does your second half mean?"

"Why, one has to raise up your dead, who perhaps have not died after all. Come, let me have tea. I am so glad of our talk, Ivan."

"I see you are feeling inspired. I am awfully fond of such professions de foi* from such — novices. You are a steadfast person, Alexey. Is it true that you mean to leave the monastery?"

* Professions of faith.

"Yes, my elder sends me out into the world."

“We shall see each other then in the world. We shall meet before I am thirty, when I shall begin to turn aside from the cup. Father doesn’t want to turn aside from his cup till he is seventy, he dreams of hanging on to eighty in fact, so he says. He means it only too seriously, though he is a buffoon. He stands on a firm rock, too, he stands on his sensuality though after we are thirty, indeed, there may be nothing else to stand on.... But to hang on to seventy is nasty, better only to thirty; one might retain ‘a shadow of nobility’ by deceiving oneself. Have you seen Dmitri to-day?”

“No, but I saw Smerdyakov,” and Alyosha rapidly, though minutely, described his meeting with Smerdyakov. Ivan began listening anxiously and questioned him.

“But he begged me not to tell Dmitri that he had told me about him,” added Alyosha. Ivan frowned and pondered.

“Are you frowning on Smerdyakov’s account?” asked Alyosha.

“Yes, on his account. Damn him, I certainly did want to see Dmitri, but now there’s no need,” said Ivan reluctantly.

“But are you really going so soon, brother?”

“What of Dmitri and father? how will it end?” asked Alyosha anxiously.

“You are always harping upon it! What have I to do with it? Am I my brother Dmitri’s keeper?” Ivan snapped irritably, but then he suddenly smiled bitterly. “Cain’s answer about his murdered brother, wasn’t it? Perhaps that’s what you’re thinking at this moment? Well damn it all, I can’t stay here to be their keeper, can I? I’ve finished what I had to do, and I am going. Do you imagine I am jealous of Dmitri, that I’ve been trying to steal his beautiful Katerina Ivanovna for the last three months? Nonsense, I had business of my own. I finished it. I am going. I finished it just now, you were witness.”

“At Katerina Ivanovna’s?”

“Yes, and I’ve released myself once for all. And after all, what have I to do with Dmitri? Dmitri doesn’t come in. I had my own business to settle with Katerina Ivanovna. You know, on the contrary, that Dmitri behaved as though there was an understanding between us. I didn’t ask to do it, but he solemnly handed her over to me and gave us his blessing. It’s all too funny. Ah, Alyosha, if you only knew how light my heart is now! Would you believe it, I sat here eating my dinner and was nearly ordering champagne to celebrate my first hour of freedom. Tfoo! It’s been going on nearly six

months, and all at once I've thrown it off. I could never have guessed even yesterday, how easy it would be to put an end to it if I wanted."

"You are speaking of your love, Ivan?"

"Of my love, if you like. I fell in love with the young lady, I worried myself over her and she worried me. I sat watching over her... and all at once it's collapsed! I spoke this morning with inspiration, but I went away and roared with laughter. Would you believe it? Yes, it's the literal truth."

"You seem very merry about it now," observed Alyosha, looking into his face, which had suddenly grown brighter.

"But how could I tell that I didn't care for her a bit! Ha ha! It appears after all I didn't. And yet how she attracted me! How attractive she was just now when I made my speech! And do you know she attracts me awfully even now, yet how easy it is to leave her. Do you think I am boasting?"

"No, only perhaps it wasn't love."

"Alyosha," laughed Ivan, "don't make reflections about love, it's unseemly for you. How you rushed into the discussion this morning! I've forgotten to kiss you for it.... But how she tormented me! It certainly was sitting by a 'laceration.' Ah, she knew how I loved her! She loved me and not Dmitri," Ivan insisted gaily. "Her feeling for Dmitri was simply a self-laceration. All I told her just now was perfectly true, but the worst of it is, it may take her fifteen or twenty years to find out that she doesn't care for Dmitri, and loves me whom she torments, and perhaps she may never find it out at all, in spite of her lesson to-day. Well, it's better so; I can simply go away for good. By the way, how is she now? What happened after I departed?"

Alyosha told him she had been hysterical, and that she was now, he heard, unconscious and delirious.

"Isn't Madame Hohlakov laying it on?"

"I think not."

"I must find out. Nobody dies of hysterics, though. They don't matter. God gave woman hysterics as a relief. I won't go to her at all. Why push myself forward again?"

"But you told her that she had never cared for you."

"I did that on purpose. Alyosha, shall I call for some champagne? Let us drink to my freedom. Ah, if only you knew how glad I am!"

"No, brother, we had better not drink," said Alyosha suddenly. "Besides I feel somehow depressed."

“Yes, you’ve been depressed a long time, I’ve noticed it.”

“Have you settled to go to-morrow morning, then?”

“Morning? I didn’t say I should go in the morning.... But perhaps it may be the morning. Would you believe it, I dined here to-day only to avoid dining with the old man, I loathe him so. I should have left long ago, so far as he is concerned. But why are you so worried about my going away? We’ve plenty of time before I go, an eternity!”

“If you are going away to-morrow, what do you mean by an eternity?”

“But what does it matter to us?” laughed Ivan. “We’ve time enough for our talk, for what brought us here. Why do you look so surprised? Answer: why have we met here? To talk of my love for Katerina Ivanovna, of the old man and Dmitri? of foreign travel? of the fatal position of Russia? of the Emperor Napoleon? Is that it?”

“No.”

“Then you know what for. It’s different for other people; but we in our green youth have to settle the eternal questions first of all. That’s what we care about. Young Russia is talking about nothing but the eternal questions now. just when the old folks are all taken up with practical questions. Why have you been looking at me in expectation for the last three months? To ask me, ‘What do you believe, or don’t you believe at all?’ That’s what your eyes have been meaning for these three months, haven’t they?”

“Perhaps so,” smiled Alyosha. “You are not laughing at me, now, Ivan?

“Me laughing! I don’t want to wound my little brother who has been watching me with such expectation for three months. Alyosha, look straight at me! Of course, I am just such a little boy as you are, only not a novice. And what have Russian boys been doing up till now, some of them, I mean? In this stinking tavern, for instance, here, they meet and sit down in a corner. They’ve never met in their lives before and, when they go out of the tavern, they won’t meet again for forty years. And what do they talk about in that momentary halt in the tavern? Of the eternal questions, of the existence of God and immortality. And those who do not believe in God talk of socialism or anarchism, of the transformation of all humanity on a new pattern, so that it all comes to the same, they’re the same questions turned inside out. And masses, masses of the most original Russian boys do nothing but talk of the eternal questions! Isn’t it so?”

“Yes, for real Russians the questions of God’s existence and of immortality, or, as you say, the same questions turned inside out, come first

and foremost, of course, and so they should," said Alyosha, still watching his brother with the same gentle and inquiring smile.

"Well, Alyosha, it's sometimes very unwise to be a Russian at all, but anything stupider than the way Russian boys spend their time one can hardly imagine. But there's one Russian boy called Alyosha I am awfully fond of."

"How nicely you put that in!" Alyosha laughed suddenly.

"Well, tell me where to begin, give your orders. The existence of God, eh?"

"Begin where you like. You declared yesterday at father's that there was no God." Alyosha looked searchingly at his brother.

"I said that yesterday at dinner on purpose to tease you and I saw your eyes glow. But now I've no objection to discussing with you, and I say so very seriously. I want to be friends with you, Alyosha, for I have no friends and want to try it. Well, only fancy, perhaps I too accept God," laughed Ivan; "that's a surprise for you, isn't it?"

"Yes of course, if you are not joking now."

"Joking? I was told at the elder's yesterday that I was joking. You know, dear boy, there was an old sinner in the eighteenth century who declared that, if there were no God, he would have to be invented. S'il n'existait pas Dieu, il faudrait l'inventer. And man has actually invented God. And what's strange, what would be marvellous, is not that God should really exist; the marvel is that such an idea, the idea of the necessity of God, could enter the head of such a savage, vicious beast as man. So holy it is, so touching, so wise and so great a credit it does to man. As for me, I've long resolved not to think whether man created God or God man. And I won't go through all the axioms laid down by Russian boys on that subject, all derived from European hypotheses; for what's a hypothesis there is an axiom with the Russian boy, and not only with the boys but with their teachers too, for our Russian professors are often just the same boys themselves. And so I omit all the hypotheses. For what are we aiming at now? I am trying to explain as quickly as possible my essential nature, that is what manner of man I am, what I believe in, and for what I hope, that's it, isn't it? And therefore I tell you that I accept God simply. But you must note this: if God exists and if He really did create the world, then, as we all know, He created it according to the geometry of Euclid and the human mind with the conception of only three dimensions in space. Yet there have been and still are geometricians

and philosophers, and even some of the most distinguished, who doubt whether the whole universe, or to speak more widely, the whole of being, was only created in Euclid's geometry; they even dare to dream that two parallel lines, which according to Euclid can never meet on earth, may meet somewhere in infinity. I have come to the conclusion that, since I can't understand even that, I can't expect to understand about God. I acknowledge humbly that I have no faculty for settling such questions, I have a Euclidian earthly mind, and how could I solve problems that are not of this world? And I advise you never to think about it either, my dear Alyosha, especially about God, whether He exists or not. All such questions are utterly inappropriate for a mind created with an idea of only three dimensions. And so I accept God and am glad to, and what's more, I accept His wisdom, His purpose which are utterly beyond our ken; I believe in the underlying order and the meaning of life; I believe in the eternal harmony in which they say we shall one day be blended. I believe in the Word to Which the universe is striving, and Which Itself was 'with God,' and Which Itself is God and so on, and so on, to infinity. There are all sorts of phrases for it. I seem to be on the right path, don't I'? Yet would you believe it, in the final result I don't accept this world of God's, and, although I know it exists, I don't accept it at all. It's not that I don't accept God, you must understand, it's the world created by Him I don't and cannot accept. Let me make it plain. I believe like a child that suffering will be healed and made up for, that all the humiliating absurdity of human contradictions will vanish like a pitiful mirage, like the despicable fabrication of the impotent and infinitely small Euclidian mind of man, that in the world's finale, at the moment of eternal harmony, something so precious will come to pass that it will suffice for all hearts, for the comforting of all resentments, for the atonement of all the crimes of humanity, of all the blood they've shed; that it will make it not only possible to forgive but to justify all that has happened with men — but thought all that may come to pass, I don't accept it. I won't accept it. Even if parallel lines do meet and I see it myself, I shall see it and say that they've met, but still I won't accept it. That's what's at the root of me, Alyosha; that's my creed. I am in earnest in what I say. I began our talk as stupidly as I could on purpose, but I've led up to my confession, for that's all you want. You didn't want to hear about God, but only to know what the brother you love lives by. And so I've told you."

Ivan concluded his long tirade with marked and unexpected feeling.

“And why did you begin ‘as stupidly as you could’?” asked Alyosha, looking dreamily at him.

“To begin with, for the sake of being Russian. Russian conversations on such subjects are always carried on inconceivably stupidly. And secondly, the stupider one is, the closer one is to reality. The stupider one is, the clearer one is. Stupidity is brief and artless, while intelligence wriggles and hides itself. Intelligence is a knave, but stupidity is honest and straight forward. I’ve led the conversation to my despair, and the more stupidly I have presented it, the better for me.”

“You will explain why you don’t accept the world?” said Alyosha.

“To be sure I will, it’s not a secret, that’s what I’ve been leading up to. Dear little brother, I don’t want to corrupt you or to turn you from your stronghold, perhaps I want to be healed by you.” Ivan smiled suddenly quite like a little gentle child. Alyosha had never seen such a smile on his face before.

CHAPTER 4

Rebellion

“I MUST make one confession” Ivan began. “I could never understand how one can love one’s neighbours. It’s just one’s neighbours, to my mind, that one can’t love, though one might love those at a distance. I once read somewhere of John the Merciful, a saint, that when a hungry, frozen beggar came to him, he took him into his bed, held him in his arms, and began breathing into his mouth, which was putrid and loathsome from some awful disease. I am convinced that he did that from ‘self-laceration,’ from the self-laceration of falsity, for the sake of the charity imposed by duty, as a penance laid on him. For anyone to love a man, he must be hidden, for as soon as he shows his face, love is gone.”

“Father Zossima has talked of that more than once,” observed Alyosha; “he, too, said that the face of a man often hinders many people not practised in love, from loving him. But yet there’s a great deal of love in mankind, and almost Christ-like love. I know that myself, Ivan.”

“Well, I know nothing of it so far, and can’t understand it, and the innumerable mass of mankind are with me there. The question is, whether that’s due to men’s bad qualities or whether it’s inherent in their nature. To my thinking, Christ-like love for men is a miracle impossible on earth. He was God. But we are not gods. Suppose I, for instance, suffer intensely. Another can never know how much I suffer, because he is another and not I. And what’s more, a man is rarely ready to admit another’s suffering (as though it were a distinction). Why won’t he admit it, do you think? Because I smell unpleasant, because I have a stupid face, because I once trod on his foot. Besides, there is suffering and suffering; degrading, humiliating suffering such as humbles me — hunger, for instance — my benefactor will perhaps allow me; but when you come to higher suffering — for an idea, for instance — he will very rarely admit that, perhaps because my face strikes him as not at all what he fancies a man should have who suffers for an idea. And so he deprives me instantly of his favour, and not at all from badness of heart. Beggars, especially genteel beggars, ought never to show themselves, but to ask for charity through the newspapers. One can love one’s neighbours in the abstract, or even at a distance, but at close quarters

it’s almost impossible. If it were as on the stage, in the ballet, where if beggars come in, they wear silken rags and tattered lace and beg for alms dancing gracefully, then one might like looking at them. But even then we should not love them. But enough of that. I simply wanted to show you my point of view. I meant to speak of the suffering of mankind generally, but we had better confine ourselves to the sufferings of the children. That reduces the scope of my argument to a tenth of what it would be. Still we’d better keep to the children, though it does weaken my case. But, in the first place, children can be loved even at close quarters, even when they are dirty, even when they are ugly (I fancy, though, children never are ugly). The second reason why I won’t speak of grown-up people is that, besides being disgusting and unworthy of love, they have a compensation — they’ve eaten the apple and know good and evil, and they have become ‘like gods.’ They go on eating it still. But the children haven’t eaten anything, and are so far innocent. Are you fond of children, Alyosha? I know you are, and you will understand why I prefer to speak of them. If they, too, suffer horribly on earth, they must suffer for their fathers’ sins, they must be punished for their fathers, who have eaten the apple; but that reasoning is of the other world and is incomprehensible for the heart of man here on earth. The innocent must not suffer for another’s sins, and especially such innocents! You may be surprised at me, Alyosha, but I am awfully fond of children, too. And observe, cruel people, the violent, the rapacious, the Karamazovs are sometimes very fond of children. Children while they are quite little — up to seven, for instance — are so remote from grown-up people they are different creatures, as it were, of a different species. I knew a criminal in prison who had, in the course of his career as a burglar, murdered whole families, including several children. But when he was in prison, he had a strange affection for them. He spent all his time at his window, watching the children playing in the prison yard. He trained one little boy to come up to his window and made great friends with him.... You don’t know why I am telling you all this, Alyosha? My head aches and I am sad.”

“You speak with a strange air,” observed Alyosha uneasily, “as though you were not quite yourself.”

“By the way, a Bulgarian I met lately in Moscow,” Ivan went on, seeming not to hear his brother’s words, “told me about the crimes committed by Turks and Circassians in all parts of Bulgaria through fear of

a general rising of the Slavs. They burn villages, murder, outrage women and children, they nail their prisoners by the ears to the fences, leave them so till morning, and in the morning they hang them — all sorts of things you can't imagine. People talk sometimes of bestial cruelty, but that's a great injustice and insult to the beasts; a beast can never be so cruel as a man, so artistically cruel. The tiger only tears and gnaws, that's all he can do. He would never think of nailing people by the ears, even if he were able to do it. These Turks took a pleasure in torturing children, -too; cutting the unborn child from the mothers womb, and tossing babies up in the air and catching them on the points of their bayonets before their mothers' eyes. Doing it before the mothers' eyes was what gave zest to the amusement. Here is another scene that I thought very interesting. Imagine a trembling mother with her baby in her arms, a circle of invading Turks around her. They've planned a diversion: they pet the baby, laugh to make it laugh. They succeed, the baby laughs. At that moment a Turk points a pistol four inches from the baby's face. The baby laughs with glee, holds out its little hands to the pistol, and he pulls the trigger in the baby's face and blows out its brains. Artistic, wasn't it? By the way, Turks are particularly fond of sweet things, they say."

"Brother, what are you driving at?" asked Alyosha.

"I think if the devil doesn't exist, but man has created him, he has created him in his own image and likeness."

"Just as he did God, then?" observed Alyosha.

"'It's wonderful how you can turn words,' as Polonius says in Hamlet," laughed Ivan. "You turn my words against me. Well, I am glad. Yours must be a fine God, if man created Him in his image and likeness. You asked just now what I was driving at. You see, I am fond of collecting certain facts, and, would you believe, I even copy anecdotes of a certain sort from newspapers and books, and I've already got a fine collection. The Turks, of course, have gone into it, but they are foreigners. I have specimens from home that are even better than the Turks. You know we prefer beating — rods and scourges — that's our national institution. Nailing ears is unthinkable for us, for we are, after all, Europeans. But the rod and the scourge we have always with us and they cannot be taken from us. Abroad now they scarcely do any beating. Manners are more humane, or laws have been passed, so that they don't dare to flog men now. But they make up for it in another way just as national as ours. And so national that it would be

practically impossible among us, though I believe we are being inoculated with it, since the religious movement began in our aristocracy. I have a charming pamphlet, translated from the French, describing how, quite recently, five years ago, a murderer, Richard, was executed — a young man, I believe, of three and twenty, who repented and was converted to the Christian faith at the very scaffold. This Richard was an illegitimate child who was given as a child of six by his parents to some shepherds on the Swiss mountains. They brought him up to work for them. He grew up like a little wild beast among them. The shepherds taught him nothing, and scarcely fed or clothed him, but sent him out at seven to herd the flock in cold and wet, and no one hesitated or scrupled to treat him so. Quite the contrary, they thought they had every right, for Richard had been given to them as a chattel, and they did not even see the necessity of feeding him. Richard himself describes how in those years, like the Prodigal Son in the Gospel, he longed to eat of the mash given to the pigs, which were fattened for sale. But they wouldn't even give that, and beat him when he stole from the pigs. And that was how he spent all his childhood and his youth, till he grew up and was strong enough to go away and be a thief. The savage began to earn his living as a day labourer in Geneva. He drank what he earned, he lived like a brute, and finished by killing and robbing an old man. He was caught, tried, and condemned to death. They are not sentimentalists there. And in prison he was immediately surrounded by pastors, members of Christian brotherhoods, philanthropic ladies, and the like. They taught him to read and write in prison, and expounded the Gospel to him. They exhorted him, worked upon him, drummed at him incessantly, till at last he solemnly confessed his crime. He was converted. He wrote to the court himself that he was a monster, but that in the end God had vouchsafed him light and shown grace. All Geneva was in excitement about him — all philanthropic and religious Geneva. All the aristocratic and well-bred society of the town rushed to the prison, kissed Richard and embraced him; 'You are our brother, you have found grace.' And Richard does nothing but weep with emotion, 'Yes, I've found grace! All my youth and childhood I was glad of pigs' food, but now even I have found grace. I am dying in the Lord."Yes, Richard, die in the Lord; you have shed blood and must die. Though it's not your fault that you knew not the Lord, when you coveted the pigs' food and were beaten for stealing it (which was very wrong of you, for stealing is forbidden); but you've shed blood and you

must die.’And on the last day, Richard, perfectly limp, did nothing but cry and repeat every minute: ‘This is my happiest day. I am going to the Lord.”Yes,’ cry the pastors and the judges and philanthropic ladies. ‘This is the happiest day of your life, for you are going to the Lord!’ They all walk or drive to the scaffold in procession behind the prison van. At the scaffold they call to Richard: ‘Die, brother, die in the Lord, for even thou hast found grace!’ And so, covered with his brothers’ kisses, Richard is dragged on to the scaffold, and led to the guillotine. And they chopped off his head in brotherly fashion, because he had found grace. Yes, that’s characteristic. That pamphlet is translated into Russian by some Russian philanthropists of aristocratic rank and evangelical aspirations, and has been distributed gratis for the enlightenment of the people. The case of Richard is interesting because it’s national. Though to us it’s absurd to cut off a man’s head, because he has become our brother and has found grace, yet we have our own speciality, which is all but worse. Our historical pastime is the direct satisfaction of inflicting pain. There are lines in Nekrassov describing how a peasant lashes a horse on the eyes, ‘on its meek eyes,’ everyone must have seen it. It’s peculiarly Russian. He describes how a feeble little nag has foundered under too heavy a load and cannot move. The peasant beats it, beats it savagely, beats it at last not knowing what he is doing in the intoxication of cruelty, thrashes it mercilessly over and over again. ‘However weak you are, you must pull, if you die for it.’ The nag strains, and then he begins lashing the poor defenceless creature on its weeping, on its ‘meek eyes.’ The frantic beast tugs and draws the load, trembling all over, gasping for breath, moving sideways, with a sort of unnatural spasmodic action — it’s awful in Nekrassov. But that only a horse, and God has horses to be beaten. So the Tatars have taught us, and they left us the knout as a remembrance of it. But men, too, can be beaten. A well-educated, cultured gentleman and his wife beat their own child with a birch-rod, a girl of seven. I have an exact account of it. The papa was glad that the birch was covered with twigs. ‘It stings more,’ said he, and so be began stinging his daughter. I know for a fact there are people who at every blow are worked up to sensuality, to literal sensuality, which increases progressively at every blow they inflict. They beat for a minute, for five minutes, for ten minutes, more often and more savagely. The child screams. At last the child cannot scream, it gasps, ‘Daddy daddy!’ By some diabolical unseemly chance the case was brought into court. A counsel is

engaged. The Russian people have long called a barrister ‘a conscience for hire.’ The counsel protests in his client’s defence. ‘It’s such a simple thing,’ he says, ‘an everyday domestic event. A father corrects his child. To our shame be it said, it is brought into court.’ The jury, convinced by him, give a favourable verdict. The public roars with delight that the torturer is acquitted. Ah, pity I wasn’t there! I would have proposed to raise a subscription in his honour! Charming pictures.

“But I’ve still better things about children. I’ve collected a great, great deal about Russian children, Alyosha. There was a little girl of five who was hated by her father and mother, ‘most worthy and respectable people, of good education and breeding.’ You see, I must repeat again, it is a peculiar characteristic of many people, this love of torturing children, and children only. To all other types of humanity these torturers behave mildly and benevolently, like cultivated and humane Europeans; but they are very fond of tormenting children, even fond of children themselves in that sense. it’s just their defencelessness that tempts the tormentor, just the angelic confidence of the child who has no refuge and no appeal, that sets his vile blood on fire. In every man, of course, a demon lies hidden — the demon of rage, the demon of lustful heat at the screams of the tortured victim, the demon of lawlessness let off the chain, the demon of diseases that follow on vice, gout, kidney disease, and so on.

“This poor child of five was subjected to every possible torture by those cultivated parents. They beat her, thrashed her, kicked her for no reason till her body was one bruise. Then, they went to greater refinements of cruelty — shut her up all night in the cold and frost in a privy, and because she didn’t ask to be taken up at night (as though a child of five sleeping its angelic, sound sleep could be trained to wake and ask), they smeared her face and filled her mouth with excrement, and it was her mother, her mother did this. And that mother could sleep, hearing the poor child’s groans! Can you understand why a little creature, who can’t even understand what’s done to her, should beat her little aching heart with her tiny fist in the dark and the cold, and weep her meek unresentful tears to dear, kind God to protect her? Do you understand that, friend and brother, you pious and humble novice? Do you understand why this infamy must be and is permitted? Without it, I am told, man could not have existed on earth, for he could not have known good and evil. Why should he know that diabolical good and evil when it costs so much? Why, the whole world of knowledge

is not worth that child's prayer to dear, kind God'! I say nothing of the sufferings of grown-up people, they have eaten the apple, damn them, and the devil take them all! But these little ones! I am making you suffer, Alyosha, you are not yourself. I'll leave off if you like."

"Nevermind. I want to suffer too," muttered Alyosha.

"One picture, only one more, because it's so curious, so characteristic, and I have only just read it in some collection of Russian antiquities. I've forgotten the name. I must look it up. It was in the darkest days of serfdom at the beginning of the century, and long live the Liberator of the People! There was in those days a general of aristocratic connections, the owner of great estates, one of those men — somewhat exceptional, I believe, even then — who, retiring from the service into a life of leisure, are convinced that they've earned absolute power over the lives of their subjects. There were such men then. So our general, settled on his property of two thousand souls, lives in pomp, and domineers over his poor neighbours as though they were dependents and buffoons. He has kennels of hundreds of hounds and nearly a hundred dog-boys — all mounted, and in uniform. One day a serf-boy, a little child of eight, threw a stone in play and hurt the paw of the general's favourite hound. 'Why is my favourite dog lame?' He is told that the boy threw a stone that hurt the dog's paw. 'So you did it.' The general looked the child up and down. 'Take him.' He was taken — taken from his mother and kept shut up all night. Early that morning the general comes out on horseback, with the hounds, his dependents, dog-boys, and huntsmen, all mounted around him in full hunting parade. The servants are summoned for their edification, and in front of them all stands the mother of the child. The child is brought from the lock-up. It's a gloomy, cold, foggy, autumn day, a capital day for hunting. The general orders the child to be undressed; the child is stripped naked. He shivers, numb with terror, not daring to cry.... 'Make him run,' commands the general. 'Run! run!' shout the dog-boys. The boy runs.... 'At him!' yells the general, and he sets the whole pack of hounds on the child. The hounds catch him, and tear him to pieces before his mother's eyes!... I believe the general was afterwards declared incapable of administering his estates. Well — what did he deserve? To be shot? To be shot for the satisfaction of our moral feelings? Speak, Alyosha!

"To be shot," murmured Alyosha, lifting his eyes to Ivan with a pale, twisted smile.

“Bravo!” cried Ivan delighted. “If even you say so... You’re a pretty monk! So there is a little devil sitting in your heart, Alyosha Karamazov!”

“What I said was absurd, but-”

“That’s just the point, that ‘but’!” cried Ivan. “Let me tell you, novice, that the absurd is only too necessary on earth. The world stands on absurdities, and perhaps nothing would have come to pass in it without them. We know what we know!”

“What do you know?”

“I understand nothing,” Ivan went on, as though in delirium. “I don’t want to understand anything now. I want to stick to the fact. I made up my mind long ago not to understand. If I try to understand anything, I shall be false to the fact, and I have determined to stick to the fact.”

“Why are you trying me?” Alyosha cried, with sudden distress. “Will you say what you mean at last?”

“Of course, I will; that’s what I’ve been leading up to. You are dear to me, I don’t want to let you go, and I won’t give you up to your Zossima.”

Ivan for a minute was silent, his face became all at once very sad.

“Listen! I took the case of children only to make my case clearer. Of the other tears of humanity with which the earth is soaked from its crust to its centre, I will say nothing. I have narrowed my subject on purpose. I am a bug, and I recognise in all humility that I cannot understand why the world is arranged as it is. Men are themselves to blame, I suppose; they were given paradise, they wanted freedom, and stole fire from heaven, though they knew they would become unhappy, so there is no need to pity them. With my pitiful, earthly, Euclidian understanding, all I know is that there is suffering and that there are none guilty; that cause follows effect, simply and directly; that everything flows and finds its level — but that’s only Euclidian nonsense, I know that, and I can’t consent to live by it! What comfort is it to me that there are none guilty and that cause follows effect simply and directly, and that I know it? — I must have justice, or I will destroy myself. And not justice in some remote infinite time and space, but here on earth, and that I could see myself. I have believed in it. I want to see it, and if I am dead by then, let me rise again, for if it all happens without me, it will be too unfair. Surely I haven’t suffered simply that I, my crimes and my sufferings, may manure the soil of the future harmony for somebody else. I want to see with my own eyes the hind lie down with the lion and the victim rise up and embrace his murderer. I want to be there

when everyone suddenly understands what it has all been for. All the religions of the world are built on this longing, and I am a believer. But then there are the children, and what am I to do about them? That's a question I can't answer. For the hundredth time I repeat, there are numbers of questions, but I've only taken the children, because in their case what I mean is so unanswerably clear. Listen! If all must suffer to pay for the eternal harmony, what have children to do with it, tell me, please? It's beyond all comprehension why they should suffer, and why they should pay for the harmony. Why should they, too, furnish material to enrich the soil for the harmony of the future? I understand solidarity in sin among men. I understand solidarity in retribution, too; but there can be no such solidarity with children. And if it is really true that they must share responsibility for all their fathers' crimes, such a truth is not of this world and is beyond my comprehension. Some jester will say, perhaps, that the child would have grown up and have sinned, but you see he didn't grow up, he was torn to pieces by the dogs, at eight years old. Oh, Alyosha, I am not blaspheming! I understand, of course, what an upheaval of the universe it will be when everything in heaven and earth blends in one hymn of praise and everything that lives and has lived cries aloud: 'Thou art just, O Lord, for Thy ways are revealed.' When the mother embraces the fiend who threw her child to the dogs, and all three cry aloud with tears, 'Thou art just, O Lord!' then, of course, the crown of knowledge will be reached and all will be made clear. But what pulls me up here is that I can't accept that harmony. And while I am on earth, I make haste to take my own measures. You see, Alyosha, perhaps it really may happen that if I live to that moment, or rise again to see it, I, too, perhaps, may cry aloud with the rest, looking at the mother embracing the child's torturer, 'Thou art just, O Lord!' but I don't want to cry aloud then. While there is still time, I hasten to protect myself, and so I renounce the higher harmony altogether. It's not worth the tears of that one tortured child who beat itself on the breast with its little fist and prayed in its stinking outhouse, with its unexpiated tears to 'dear, kind God'! It's not worth it, because those tears are unatoned for. They must be atoned for, or there can be no harmony. But how? How are you going to atone for them? Is it possible? By their being avenged? But what do I care for avenging them? What do I care for a hell for oppressors? What good can hell do, since those children have already been tortured? And what becomes of harmony, if there is hell? I want to forgive. I want to embrace. I don't want

more suffering. And if the sufferings of children go to swell the sum of sufferings which was necessary to pay for truth, then I protest that the truth is not worth such a price. I don’t want the mother to embrace the oppressor who threw her son to the dogs! She dare not forgive him! Let her forgive him for herself, if she will, let her forgive the torturer for the immeasurable suffering of her mother’s heart. But the sufferings of her tortured child she has no right to forgive; she dare not forgive the torturer, even if the child were to forgive him! And if that is so, if they dare not forgive, what becomes of harmony? Is there in the whole world a being who would have the right to forgive and could forgive? I don’t want harmony. From love for humanity I don’t want it. I would rather be left with the unavenged suffering. I would rather remain with my unavenged suffering and unsatisfied indignation, even if I were wrong. Besides, too high a price is asked for harmony; it’s beyond our means to pay so much to enter on it. And so I hasten to give back my entrance ticket, and if I am an honest man I am bound to give it back as soon as possible. And that I am doing. It’s not God that I don’t accept, Alyosha, only I most respectfully return him the ticket.”

“That’s rebellion,” murmered Alyosha, looking down.

“Rebellion? I am sorry you call it that,” said Ivan earnestly. “One can hardly live in rebellion, and I want to live. Tell me yourself, I challenge your answer. Imagine that you are creating a fabric of human destiny with the object of making men happy in the end, giving them peace and rest at last, but that it was essential and inevitable to torture to death only one tiny creature — that baby beating its breast with its fist, for instance — and to found that edifice on its unavenged tears, would you consent to be the architect on those conditions? Tell me, and tell the truth.”

“No, I wouldn’t consent,” said Alyosha softly.

“And can you admit the idea that men for whom you are building it would agree to accept their happiness on the foundation of the unexpiated blood of a little victim? And accepting it would remain happy for ever?”

“No, I can’t admit it. Brother,” said Alyosha suddenly, with flashing eyes, “you said just now, is there a being in the whole world who would have the right to forgive and could forgive? But there is a Being and He can forgive everything, all and for all, because He gave His innocent blood for all and everything. You have forgotten Him, and on Him is built the edifice,

and it is to Him they cry aloud, ‘Thou art just, O Lord, for Thy ways are revealed!’

“Ah! the One without sin and His blood! No, I have not forgotten Him; on the contrary I’ve been wondering all the time how it was you did not bring Him in before, for usually all arguments on your side put Him in the foreground. Do you know, Alyosha — don’t laugh I made a poem about a year ago. If you can waste another ten minutes on me, I’ll tell it to you.”

“You wrote a poem?”

“Oh, no, I didn’t write it,” laughed Ivan, and I’ve never written two lines of poetry in my life. But I made up this poem in prose and I remembered it. I was carried away when I made it up. You will be my first reader — that is listener. Why should an author forego even one listener?” smiled Ivan. “Shall I tell it to you?”

“I am all attention,” said Alyosha.

“My poem is called The Grand Inquisitor; it’s a ridiculous thing, but I want to tell it to you.

CHAPTER 5

The Grand Inquisitor

“EVEN this must have a preface — that is, a literary preface,” laughed Ivan, “and I am a poor hand at making one. You see, my action takes place in the sixteenth century, and at that time, as you probably learnt at school, it was customary in poetry to bring down heavenly powers on earth. Not to speak of Dante, in France, clerks, as well as the monks in the monasteries, used to give regular performances in which the Madonna, the saints, the angels, Christ, and God Himself were brought on the stage. In those days it was done in all simplicity. In Victor Hugo’s Notre Dame de Paris an edifying and gratuitous spectacle was provided for the people in the Hotel de Ville of Paris in the reign of Louis XI in honour of the birth of the dauphin. It was called Le bon jugement de la tres sainte et gracieuse Vierge Marie, and she appears herself on the stage and pronounces her bon jugement. Similar plays, chiefly from the Old Testament, were occasionally performed in Moscow too, up to the times of Peter the Great. But besides plays there were all sorts of legends and ballads scattered about the world, in which the saints and angels and all the powers of Heaven took part when required. In our monasteries the monks busied themselves in translating, copying, and even composing such poems — and even under the Tatars. There is, for instance, one such poem (of course, from the Greek), The Wanderings of Our Lady through Hell, with descriptions as bold as Dante’s. Our Lady visits hell, and the Archangel Michael leads her through the torments. She sees the sinners and their punishment. There she sees among others one noteworthy set of sinners in a burning lake; some of them sink to the bottom of the lake so that they can’t swim out, and ‘these God forgets’ — an expression of extraordinary depth and force. And so Our Lady, shocked and weeping, falls before the throne of God and begs for mercy for all in hell — for all she has seen there, indiscriminately. Her conversation with God is immensely interesting. She beseeches Him, she will not desist, and when God points to the hands and feet of her Son, nailed to the Cross, and asks, ‘How can I forgive His tormentors?’ she bids all the saints, all the martyrs, all the angels and archangels to fall down with her and pray for mercy on all without distinction. It ends by her winning from God a respite

of suffering every year from Good Friday till Trinity Day, and the sinners at once raise a cry of thankfulness from hell, chanting, ‘Thou art just, O Lord, in this judgment.’ Well, my poem would have been of that kind if it had appeared at that time. He comes on the scene in my poem, but He says nothing, only appears and passes on. Fifteen centuries have passed since He promised to come in His glory, fifteen centuries since His prophet wrote, ‘Behold, I come quickly’; ‘Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father,’ as He Himself predicted on earth. But humanity awaits him with the same faith and with the same love. Oh, with greater faith, for it is fifteen centuries since man has ceased to see signs from heaven. No signs from heaven come to-day

To add to what the heart doth say.

There was nothing left but faith in what the heart doth say. It is true there were many miracles in those days. There were saints who performed miraculous cures; some holy people, according to their biographies, were visited by the Queen of Heaven herself. But the devil did not slumber, and doubts were already arising among men of the truth of these miracles. And just then there appeared in the north of Germany a terrible new heresy. ‘A huge star like to a torch’ (that is, to a church) ‘fell on the sources of the waters and they became bitter.’ These heretics began blasphemously denying miracles. But those who remained faithful were all the more ardent in their faith. The tears of humanity rose up to Him as before, awaited His coming, loved Him, hoped for Him, yearned to suffer and die for Him as before. And so many ages mankind had prayed with faith and fervour, ‘O Lord our God, hasten Thy coming’; so many ages called upon Him, that in His infinite mercy He deigned to come down to His servants. Before that day He had come down, He had visited some holy men, martyrs, and hermits, as is written in their lives. Among us, Tyutchev, with absolute faith in the truth of his words, bore witness that Bearing the Cross, in slavish dress,

Weary and worn, the Heavenly King

Our mother, Russia, came to bless,

And through our land went wandering.

And that certainly was so, I assure you.

“And behold, He deigned to appear for a moment to the people, to the tortured, suffering people, sunk in iniquity, but loving Him like children. My story is laid in Spain, in Seville, in the most terrible time of the

Inquisition, when fires were lighted every day to the glory of God, and ‘in the splendid auto da fe the wicked heretics were burnt.’ Oh, of course, this was not the coming in which He will appear, according to His promise, at the end of time in all His heavenly glory, and which will be sudden ‘as lightning flashing from east to west.’ No, He visited His children only for a moment, and there where the flames were crackling round the heretics. In His infinite mercy He came once more among men in that human shape in which He walked among men for thirty-three years fifteen centuries ago. He came down to the ‘hot pavements’ of the southern town in which on the day before almost a hundred heretics had, ad majorem gloriam Dei, been burnt by the cardinal, the Grand Inquisitor, in a magnificent auto da fe, in the presence of the king, the court, the knights, the cardinals, the most charming ladies of the court, and the whole population of Seville.

“He came softly, unobserved, and yet, strange to say, everyone recognised Him. That might be one of the best passages in the poem. I mean, why they recognised Him. The people are irresistibly drawn to Him, they surround Him, they flock about Him, follow Him. He moves silently in their midst with a gentle smile of infinite compassion. The sun of love burns in His heart, and power shine from His eyes, and their radiance, shed on the people, stirs their hearts with responsive love. He holds out His hands to them, blesses them, and a healing virtue comes from contact with Him, even with His garments. An old man in the crowd, blind from childhood, cries out, ‘O Lord, heal me and I shall see Thee!’ and, as it were, scales fall from his eyes and the blind man sees Him. The crowd weeps and kisses the earth under His feet. Children throw flowers before Him, sing, and cry hosannah. ‘It is He — it is He!’ repeat. ‘It must be He, it can be no one but Him!’ He stops at the steps of the Seville cathedral at the moment when the weeping mourners are bringing in a little open white coffin. In it lies a child of seven, the only daughter of a prominent citizen. The dead child lies hidden in flowers. ‘He will raise your child,’ the crowd shouts to the weeping mother. The priest, coming to meet the coffin, looks perplexed, and frowns, but the mother of the dead child throws herself at His feet with a wail. ‘If it is Thou, raise my child!’ she cries, holding out her hands to Him. The procession halts, the coffin is laid on the steps at His feet. He looks with compassion, and His lips once more softly pronounce, ‘Maiden, arise!’ and the maiden arises. The little girl sits up in the coffin and looks round,

smiling with wide-open wondering eyes, holding a bunch of white roses they had put in her hand.

“There are cries, sobs, confusion among the people, and at that moment the cardinal himself, the Grand Inquisitor, passes by the cathedral. He is an old man, almost ninety, tall and erect, with a withered face and sunken eyes, in which there is still a gleam of light. He is not dressed in his gorgeous cardinal’s robes, as he was the day before, when he was burning the enemies of the Roman Church — at this moment he is wearing his coarse, old, monk’s cassock. At a distance behind him come his gloomy assistants and slaves and the ‘holy guard.’ He stops at the sight of the crowd and watches it from a distance. He sees everything; he sees them set the coffin down at His feet, sees the child rise up, and his face darkens. He knits his thick grey brows and his eyes gleam with a sinister fire. He holds out his finger and bids the guards take Him. And such is his power, so completely are the people cowed into submission and trembling obedience to him, that the crowd immediately makes way for the guards, and in the midst of deathlike silence they lay hands on Him and lead him away. The crowd instantly bows down to the earth, like one man, before the old Inquisitor. He blesses the people in silence and passes on’ The guards lead their prisoner to the close, gloomy vaulted prison — in the ancient palace of the Holy, inquisition and shut him in it. The day passes and is followed by the dark, burning, ‘breathless’ night of Seville. The air is ‘fragrant with laurel and lemon.’ In the pitch darkness the iron door of the prison is suddenly opened and the Grand Inquisitor himself comes in with a light in his hand. He is alone; the door is closed at once behind him. He stands in the doorway and for a minute or two gazes into His face. At last he goes up slowly, sets the light on the table and speaks.

“‘Is it Thou? Thou?’ but receiving no answer, he adds at once. ‘Don’t answer, be silent. What canst Thou say, indeed? I know too well what Thou wouldst say. And Thou hast no right to add anything to what Thou hadst said of old. Why, then, art Thou come to hinder us? For Thou hast come to hinder us, and Thou knowest that. But dost thou know what will be to-morrow? I know not who Thou art and care not to know whether it is Thou or only a semblance of Him, but to-morrow I shall condemn Thee and burn Thee at the stake as the worst of heretics. And the very people who have to-day kissed Thy feet, to-morrow at the faintest sign from me will rush to heap up the embers of Thy fire. Knowest Thou that? Yes, maybe Thou

knowest it,’ he added with thoughtful penetration, never for a moment taking his eyes off the Prisoner.”

“I don’t quite understand, Ivan. What does it mean?” Alyosha, who had been listening in silence, said with a smile. “Is it simply a wild fantasy, or a mistake on the part of the old man — some impossible quid pro quo?”

“Take it as the last,” said Ivan, laughing, “if you are so corrupted by modern realism and can’t stand anything fantastic. If you like it to be a case of mistaken identity, let it be so. It is true,” he went on, laughing, “the old man was ninety, and he might well be crazy over his set idea. He might have been struck by the appearance of the Prisoner. It might, in fact, be simply his ravings, the delusion of an old man of ninety, over-excited by the auto da fe of a hundred heretics the day before. But does it matter to us after all whether it was a mistake of identity or a wild fantasy? All that matters is that the old man should speak out, that he should speak openly of what he has thought in silence for ninety years.”

“And the Prisoner too is silent? Does He look at him and not say a word?”

“That’s inevitable in any case,” Ivan laughed again. “The old man has told Him He hasn’t the right to add anything to what He has said of old. One may say it is the most fundamental feature of Roman Catholicism, in my opinion at least. ‘All has been given by Thee to the Pope,’ they say, ‘and all, therefore, is still in the Pope’s hands, and there is no need for Thee to come now at all. Thou must not meddle for the time, at least.’ That’s how they speak and write too — the Jesuits, at any rate. I have read it myself in the works of their theologians. ‘Hast Thou the right to reveal to us one of the mysteries of that world from which Thou hast come?’ my old man asks Him, and answers the question for Him. ‘No, Thou hast not; that Thou mayest not add to what has been said of old, and mayest not take from men the freedom which Thou didst exalt when Thou wast on earth. Whatsoever Thou revealest anew will encroach on men’s freedom of faith; for it will be manifest as a miracle, and the freedom of their faith was dearer to Thee than anything in those days fifteen hundred years ago. Didst Thou not often say then, “I will make you free”? But now Thou hast seen these “free” men,’ the old man adds suddenly, with a pensive smile. ‘Yes, we’ve paid dearly for it,’ he goes on, looking sternly at Him, ‘but at last we have completed that work in Thy name. For fifteen centuries we have been wrestling with Thy freedom, but now it is ended and over for good. Dost Thou not believe

that it's over for good? Thou lookest meekly at me and deignest not even to be wroth with me. But let me tell Thee that now, to-day, people are more persuaded than ever that they have perfect freedom, yet they have brought their freedom to us and laid it humbly at our feet. But that has been our doing. Was this what Thou didst? Was this Thy freedom?'"

"I don't understand again." Alyosha broke in. "Is he ironical, is he jesting?"

"Not a bit of it! He claims it as a merit for himself and his Church that at last they have vanquished freedom and have done so to make men happy. 'For now' (he is speaking of the Inquisition, of course) 'for the first time it has become possible to think of the happiness of men. Man was created a rebel; and how can rebels be happy? Thou wast warned,' he says to Him. 'Thou hast had no lack of admonitions and warnings, but Thou didst not listen to those warnings; Thou didst reject the only way by which men might be made happy. But, fortunately, departing Thou didst hand on the work to us. Thou hast promised, Thou hast established by Thy word, Thou hast given to us the right to bind and to unbind, and now, of course, Thou canst not think of taking it away. Why, then, hast Thou come to hinder us?'"

"And what's the meaning of 'no lack of admonitions and warnings'?" asked Alyosha.

"Why, that's the chief part of what the old man must say.

"'The wise and dread spirit, the spirit of self-destruction and non-existence,' the old man goes on, great spirit talked with Thee in the wilderness, and we are told in the books that he "tempted" Thee. Is that so? And could anything truer be said than what he revealed to Thee in three questions and what Thou didst reject, and what in the books is called "the temptation"? And yet if there has ever been on earth a real stupendous miracle, it took place on that day, on the day of the three temptations. The statement of those three questions was itself the miracle. If it were possible to imagine simply for the sake of argument that those three questions of the dread spirit had perished utterly from the books, and that we had to restore them and to invent them anew, and to do so had gathered together all the wise men of the earth — rulers, chief priests, learned men, philosophers, poets — and had set them the task to invent three questions, such as would not only fit the occasion, but express in three words, three human phrases, the whole future history of the world and of humanity — dost Thou believe that all the wisdom of the earth united could have invented anything in

depth and force equal to the three questions which were actually put to Thee then by the wise and mighty spirit in the wilderness? From those questions alone, from the miracle of their statement, we can see that we have here to do not with the fleeting human intelligence, but with the absolute and eternal. For in those three questions the whole subsequent history of mankind is, as it were, brought together into one whole, and foretold, and in them are united all the unsolved historical contradictions of human nature. At the time it could not be so clear, since the future was unknown; but now that fifteen hundred years have passed, we see that everything in those three questions was so justly divined and foretold, and has been so truly fulfilled, that nothing can be added to them or taken from them.

"Judge Thyself who was right — Thou or he who questioned Thee then? Remember the first question; its meaning, in other words, was this: "Thou wouldst go into the world, and art going with empty hands, with some promise of freedom which men in their simplicity and their natural unruliness cannot even understand, which they fear and dread — for nothing has ever been more insupportable for a man and a human society than freedom. But seest Thou these stones in this parched and barren wilderness? Turn them into bread, and mankind will run after Thee like a flock of sheep, grateful and obedient, though for ever trembling, lest Thou withdraw Thy hand and deny them Thy bread." But Thou wouldst not deprive man of freedom and didst reject the offer, thinking, what is that freedom worth if obedience is bought with bread? Thou didst reply that man lives not by bread alone. But dost Thou know that for the sake of that earthly bread the spirit of the earth will rise up against Thee and will strive with Thee and overcome Thee, and all will follow him, crying, "Who can compare with this beast? He has given us fire from heaven!" Dost Thou know that the ages will pass, and humanity will proclaim by the lips of their sages that there is no crime, and therefore no sin; there is only hunger? "Feed men, and then ask of them virtue!" that's what they'll write on the banner, which they will raise against Thee, and with which they will destroy Thy temple. Where Thy temple stood will rise a new building; the terrible tower of Babel will be built again, and though, like the one of old, it will not be finished, yet Thou mightest have prevented that new tower and have cut short the sufferings of men for a thousand years; for they will come back to us after a thousand years of agony with their tower. They will seek us again, hidden underground in the catacombs, for we shall be again

persecuted and tortured. They will find us and cry to us, “Feed us, for those who have promised us fire from heaven haven’t given it!” And then we shall finish building their tower, for he finishes the building who feeds them. And we alone shall feed them in Thy name, declaring falsely that it is in Thy name. Oh, never, never can they feed themselves without us! No science will give them bread so long as they remain free. In the end they will lay their freedom at our feet, and say to us, “Make us your slaves, but feed us.” They will understand themselves, at last, that freedom and bread enough for all are inconceivable together, for never, never will they be able to share between them! They will be convinced, too, that they can never be free, for they are weak, vicious, worthless, and rebellious. Thou didst promise them the bread of Heaven, but, I repeat again, can it compare with earthly bread in the eyes of the weak, ever sinful and ignoble race of man? And if for the sake of the bread of Heaven thousands shall follow Thee, what is to become of the millions and tens of thousands of millions of creatures who will not have the strength to forego the earthly bread for the sake of the heavenly? Or dost Thou care only for the tens of thousands of the great and strong, while the millions, numerous as the sands of the sea, who are weak but love Thee, must exist only for the sake of the great and strong? No, we care for the weak too. They are sinful and rebellious, but in the end they too will become obedient. They will marvel at us and look on us as gods, because we are ready to endure the freedom which they have found so dreadful and to rule over them — so awful it will seem to them to be free. But we shall tell them that we are Thy servants and rule them in Thy name. We shall deceive them again, for we will not let Thee come to us again. That deception will be our suffering, for we shall be forced to lie.

“‘This is the significance of the first question in the wilderness, and this is what Thou hast rejected for the sake of that freedom which Thou hast exalted above everything. Yet in this question lies hid the great secret of this world. Choosing “bread,” Thou wouldst have satisfied the universal and everlasting craving of humanity — to find someone to worship. So long as man remains free he strives for nothing so incessantly and so painfully as to find someone to worship. But man seeks to worship what is established beyond dispute, so that all men would agree at once to worship it. For these pitiful creatures are concerned not only to find what one or the other can worship, but to find community of worship is the chief misery of every man individually and of all humanity from the beginning of time. For the sake of

common worship they've slain each other with the sword. They have set up gods and challenged one another, "Put away your gods and come and worship ours, or we will kill you and your gods!" And so it will be to the end of the world, even when gods disappear from the earth; they will fall down before idols just the same. Thou didst know, Thou couldst not but have known, this fundamental secret of human nature, but Thou didst reject the one infallible banner which was offered Thee to make all men bow down to Thee alone — the banner of earthly bread; and Thou hast rejected it for the sake of freedom and the bread of Heaven. Behold what Thou didst further. And all again in the name of freedom! I tell Thee that man is tormented by no greater anxiety than to find someone quickly to whom he can hand over that gift of freedom with which the ill-fated creature is born. But only one who can appease their conscience can take over their freedom. In bread there was offered Thee an invincible banner; give bread, and man will worship thee, for nothing is more certain than bread. But if someone else gains possession of his conscience — Oh! then he will cast away Thy bread and follow after him who has ensnared his conscience. In that Thou wast right. For the secret of man's being is not only to live but to have something to live for. Without a stable conception of the object of life, man would not consent to go on living, and would rather destroy himself than remain on earth, though he had bread in abundance. That is true. But what happened? Instead of taking men's freedom from them, Thou didst make it greater than ever! Didst Thou forget that man prefers peace, and even death, to freedom of choice in the knowledge of good and evil? Nothing is more seductive for man than his freedom of conscience, but nothing is a greater cause of suffering. And behold, instead of giving a firm foundation for setting the conscience of man at rest for ever, Thou didst choose all that is exceptional, vague and enigmatic; Thou didst choose what was utterly beyond the strength of men, acting as though Thou didst not love them at all — Thou who didst come to give Thy life for them! Instead of taking possession of men's freedom, Thou didst increase it, and burdened the spiritual kingdom of mankind with its sufferings for ever. Thou didst desire man's free love, that he should follow Thee freely, enticed and taken captive by Thee. In place of the rigid ancient law, man must hereafter with free heart decide for himself what is good and what is evil, having only Thy image before him as his guide. But didst Thou not know that he would at last reject even Thy image and Thy truth, if he is weighed down with the

fearful burden of free choice? They will cry aloud at last that the truth is not in Thee, for they could not have been left in greater confusion and suffering than Thou hast caused, laying upon them so many cares and unanswerable problems.

"'So that, in truth, Thou didst Thyself lay the foundation for the destruction of Thy kingdom, and no one is more to blame for it. Yet what was offered Thee? There are three powers, three powers alone, able to conquer and to hold captive for ever the conscience of these impotent rebels for their happiness those forces are miracle, mystery and authority. Thou hast rejected all three and hast set the example for doing so. When the wise and dread spirit set Thee on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Thee, "If Thou wouldst know whether Thou art the Son of God then cast Thyself down, for it is written: the angels shall hold him up lest he fall and bruise himself, and Thou shalt know then whether Thou art the Son of God and shalt prove then how great is Thy faith in Thy Father." But Thou didst refuse and wouldst not cast Thyself down. Oh, of course, Thou didst proudly and well, like God; but the weak, unruly race of men, are they gods? Oh, Thou didst know then that in taking one step, in making one movement to cast Thyself down, Thou wouldst be tempting God and have lost all Thy faith in Him, and wouldst have been dashed to pieces against that earth which Thou didst come to save. And the wise spirit that tempted Thee would have rejoiced. But I ask again, are there many like Thee? And couldst Thou believe for one moment that men, too, could face such a temptation? Is the nature of men such, that they can reject miracle, and at the great moments of their life, the moments of their deepest, most agonising spiritual difficulties, cling only to the free verdict of the heart? Oh, Thou didst know that Thy deed would be recorded in books, would be handed down to remote times and the utmost ends of the earth, and Thou didst hope that man, following Thee, would cling to God and not ask for a miracle. But Thou didst not know that when man rejects miracle he rejects God too; for man seeks not so much God as the miraculous. And as man cannot bear to be without the miraculous, he will create new miracles of his own for himself, and will worship deeds of sorcery and witchcraft, though he might be a hundred times over a rebel, heretic and infidel. Thou didst not come down from the Cross when they shouted to Thee, mocking and reviling Thee, "Come down from the cross and we will believe that Thou art He." Thou didst not come down, for again Thou wouldst not enslave

man by a miracle, and didst crave faith given freely, not based on miracle. Thou didst crave for free love and not the base raptures of the slave before the might that has overawed him for ever. But Thou didst think too highly of men therein, for they are slaves, of course, though rebellious by nature. Look round and judge; fifteen centuries have passed, look upon them. Whom hast Thou raised up to Thyself? I swear, man is weaker and baser by nature than Thou hast believed him! Can he, can he do what Thou didst? By showing him so much respect, Thou didst, as it were, cease to feel for him, for Thou didst ask far too much from him — Thou who hast loved him more than Thyself! Respecting him less, Thou wouldst have asked less of him. That would have been more like love, for his burden would have been lighter. He is weak and vile. What though he is everywhere now rebelling against our power, and proud of his rebellion? It is the pride of a child and a schoolboy. They are little children rioting and barring out the teacher at school. But their childish delight will end; it will cost them dear. Mankind as a whole has always striven to organise a universal state. There have been many great nations with great histories, but the more highly they were developed the more unhappy they were, for they felt more acutely than other people the craving for world-wide union. The great conquerors, Timours and Ghenghis-Khans, whirled like hurricanes over the face of the earth striving to subdue its people, and they too were but the unconscious expression of the same craving for universal unity. Hadst Thou taken the world and Caesar’s purple, Thou wouldst have founded the universal state and have given universal peace. For who can rule men if not he who holds their conscience and their bread in his hands? We have taken the sword of Caesar, and in taking it, of course, have rejected Thee and followed him. Oh, ages are yet to come of the confusion of free thought, of their science and cannibalism. For having begun to build their tower of Babel without us, they will end, of course, with cannibalism. But then the beast will crawl to us and lick our feet and spatter them with tears of blood. And we shall sit upon the beast and raise the cup, and on it will be written, “Mystery.” But then, and only then, the reign of peace and happiness will come for men. Thou art proud of Thine elect, but Thou hast only the elect, while we give rest to all. And besides, how many of those elect, those mighty ones who could become elect, have grown weary waiting for Thee, and have transferred and will transfer the powers of their spirit and the warmth of their heart to the other camp, and end by raising their free banner against

Thee. Thou didst Thyself lift up that banner. But with us all will be happy and will no more rebel nor destroy one another as under Thy freedom. Oh, we shall persuade them that they will only become free when they renounce their freedom to us and submit to us. And shall we be right or shall we be lying? They will be convinced that we are right, for they will remember the horrors of slavery and confusion to which Thy freedom brought them. Freedom, free thought, and science will lead them into such straits and will bring them face to face with such marvels and insoluble mysteries, that some of them, the fierce and rebellious, will destroy themselves, others, rebellious but weak, will destroy one another, while the rest, weak and unhappy, will crawl fawning to our feet and whine to us: “Yes, you were right, you alone possess His mystery, and we come back to you, save us from ourselves!”

“‘Receiving bread from us, they will see clearly that we take the bread made by their hands from them, to give it to them, without any miracle. They will see that we do not change the stones to bread, but in truth they will be more thankful for taking it from our hands than for the bread itself! For they will remember only too well that in old days, without our help, even the bread they made turned to stones in their hands, while since they have come back to us, the very stones have turned to bread in their hands. Too, too well will they know the value of complete submission! And until men know that, they will be unhappy. Who is most to blame for their not knowing it?-speak! Who scattered the flock and sent it astray on unknown paths? But the flock will come together again and will submit once more, and then it will be once for all. Then we shall give them the quiet humble happiness of weak creatures such as they are by nature. Oh, we shall persuade them at last not to be proud, for Thou didst lift them up and thereby taught them to be proud. We shall show them that they are weak, that they are only pitiful children, but that childlike happiness is the sweetest of all. They will become timid and will look to us and huddle close to us in fear, as chicks to the hen. They will marvel at us and will be awe-stricken before us, and will be proud at our being so powerful and clever that we have been able to subdue such a turbulent flock of thousands of millions. They will tremble impotently before our wrath, their minds will grow fearful, they will be quick to shed tears like women and children, but they will be just as ready at a sign from us to pass to laughter and rejoicing, to happy mirth and childish song. Yes, we shall set them to work, but in

their leisure hours we shall make their life like a child's game, with children's songs and innocent dance. Oh, we shall allow them even sin, they are weak and helpless, and they will love us like children because we allow them to sin. We shall tell them that every sin will be expiated, if it is done with our permission, that we allow them to sin because we love them, and the punishment for these sins we take upon ourselves. And we shall take it upon ourselves, and they will adore us as their saviours who have taken on themselves their sins before God. And they will have no secrets from us. We shall allow or forbid them to live with their wives and mistresses, to have or not to have children according to whether they have been obedient or disobedient — and they will submit to us gladly and cheerfully. The most painful secrets of their conscience, all, all they will bring to us, and we shall have an answer for all. And they will be glad to believe our answer, for it will save them from the great anxiety and terrible agony they endure at present in making a free decision for themselves. And all will be happy, all the millions of creatures except the hundred thousand who rule over them. For only we, we who guard the mystery, shall be unhappy. There will be thousands of millions of happy babes, and a hundred thousand sufferers who have taken upon themselves the curse of the knowledge of good and evil. Peacefully they will die, peacefully they will expire in Thy name, and beyond the grave they will find nothing but death. But we shall keep the secret, and for their happiness we shall allure them with the reward of heaven and eternity. Though if there were anything in the other world, it certainly would not be for such as they. It is prophesied that Thou wilt come again in victory, Thou wilt come with Thy chosen, the proud and strong, but we will say that they have only saved themselves, but we have saved all. We are told that the harlot who sits upon the beast, and holds in her hands the mystery, shall be put to shame, that the weak will rise up again, and will rend her royal purple and will strip naked her loathsome body. But then I will stand up and point out to Thee the thousand millions of happy children who have known no sin. And we who have taken their sins upon us for their happiness will stand up before Thee and say: "Judge us if Thou canst and darest." Know that I fear Thee not. Know that I too have been in the wilderness, I too have lived on roots and locusts, I too prized the freedom with which Thou hast blessed men, and I too was striving to stand among Thy elect, among the strong and powerful, thirsting "to make up the number." But I awakened and would not serve madness. I turned back and

joined the ranks of those who have corrected Thy work. I left the proud and went back to the humble, for the happiness of the humble. What I say to Thee will come to pass, and our dominion will be built up. I repeat, to-morrow Thou shalt see that obedient flock who at a sign from me will hasten to heap up the hot cinders about the pile on which I shall burn Thee for coming to hinder us. For if anyone has ever deserved our fires, it is Thou. To-morrow I shall burn Thee. Dixi.’”*

* I have spoken.

Ivan stopped. He was carried away as he talked, and spoke with excitement; when he had finished, he suddenly smiled.

Alyosha had listened in silence; towards the end he was greatly moved and seemed several times on the point of interrupting, but restrained himself. Now his words came with a rush.

“But... that’s absurd!” he cried, flushing. “Your poem is in praise of Jesus, not in blame of Him — as you meant it to be. And who will believe you about freedom? Is that the way to understand it? That’s not the idea of it in the Orthodox Church.... That’s Rome, and not even the whole of Rome, it’s false-those are the worst of the Catholics the Inquisitors, the Jesuits!... And there could not be such a fantastic creature as your Inquisitor. What are these sins of mankind they take on themselves? Who are these keepers of the mystery who have taken some curse upon themselves for the happiness of mankind? When have they been seen? We know the Jesuits, they are spoken ill of, but surely they are not what you describe? They are not that at all, not at all.... They are simply the Romish army for the earthly sovereignty of the world in the future, with the Pontiff of Rome for Emperor... that’s their ideal, but there’s no sort of mystery or lofty melancholy about it.... It’s simple lust of power, of filthy earthly gain, of domination-something like a universal serfdom with them as masters-that’s all they stand for. They don’t even believe in God perhaps. Your suffering Inquisitor is a mere fantasy.”

“Stay, stay,” laughed Ivan. “how hot you are! A fantasy you say, let it be so! Of course it’s a fantasy. But allow me to say: do you really think that the Roman Catholic movement of the last centuries is actually nothing but the lust of power, of filthy earthly gain? Is that Father Paissy’s teaching?”

“No, no, on the contrary, Father Paissy did once say something rather the same as you... but of course it’s not the same, not a bit the same,” Alyosha hastily corrected himself.

“A precious admission, in spite of your ‘not a bit the same.’ I ask you why your Jesuits and Inquisitors have united simply for vile material gain? Why can there not be among them one martyr oppressed by great sorrow and loving humanity? You see, only suppose that there was one such man among all those who desire nothing but filthy material gain-if there’s only one like my old Inquisitor, who had himself eaten roots in the desert and made frenzied efforts to subdue his flesh to make himself free and perfect. But yet all his life he loved humanity, and suddenly his eyes were opened, and he saw that it is no great moral blessedness to attain perfection and freedom, if at the same time one gains the conviction that millions of God’s creatures have been created as a mockery, that they will never be capable of using their freedom, that these poor rebels can never turn into giants to complete the tower, that it was not for such geese that the great idealist dreamt his dream of harmony. Seeing all that he turned back and joined — the clever people. Surely that could have happened?”

“Joined whom, what clever people?” cried Alyosha, completely carried away. “They have no such great cleverness and no mysteries and secrets.... Perhaps nothing but Atheism, that’s all their secret. Your Inquisitor does not believe in God, that’s his secret!”

“What if it is so! At last you have guessed it. It’s perfectly true, it’s true that that’s the whole secret, but isn’t that suffering, at least for a man like that, who has wasted his whole life in the desert and yet could not shake off his incurable love of humanity? In his old age he reached the clear conviction that nothing but the advice of the great dread spirit could build up any tolerable sort of life for the feeble, unruly, ‘incomplete, empirical creatures created in jest.’ And so, convinced of this, he sees that he must follow the counsel of the wise spirit, the dread spirit of death and destruction, and therefore accept lying and deception, and lead men consciously to death and destruction, and yet deceive them all the way so that they may not notice where they are being led, that the poor blind creatures may at least on the way think themselves happy. And note, the deception is in the name of Him in Whose ideal the old man had so fervently believed all his life long. Is not that tragic? And if only one such stood at the head of the whole army ‘filled with the lust of power only for the sake of filthy gain’ — would not one such be enough to make a tragedy? More than that, one such standing at the head is enough to create the actual leading idea of the Roman Church with all its armies and Jesuits,

its highest idea. I tell you frankly that I firmly believe that there has always been such a man among those who stood at the head of the movement. Who knows, there may have been some such even among the Roman Popes. Who knows, perhaps the spirit of that accursed old man who loves mankind so obstinately in his own way, is to be found even now in a whole multitude of such old men, existing not by chance but by agreement, as a secret league formed long ago for the guarding of the mystery, to guard it from the weak and the unhappy, so as to make them happy. No doubt it is so, and so it must be indeed. I fancy that even among the Masons there's something of the same mystery at the bottom, and that that's why the Catholics so detest the Masons as their rivals breaking up the unity of the idea, while it is so essential that there should be one flock and one shepherd.... But from the way I defend my idea I might be an author impatient of your criticism. Enough of it."

"You are perhaps a Mason yourself!" broke suddenly from Alyosha. "You don't believe in God," he added, speaking this time very sorrowfully. He fancied besides that his brother was looking at him ironically. "How does your poem end?" he asked, suddenly looking down. "Or was it the end?"

"I meant to end it like this. When the Inquisitor ceased speaking he waited some time for his Prisoner to answer him. His silence weighed down upon him. He saw that the Prisoner had listened intently all the time, looking gently in his face and evidently not wishing to reply. The old man longed for him to say something, however bitter and terrible. But He suddenly approached the old man in silence and softly kissed him on his bloodless aged lips. That was all his answer. The old man shuddered. His lips moved. He went to the door, opened it, and said to Him: 'Go, and come no more... come not at all, never, never!' And he let Him out into the dark alleys of the town. The Prisoner went away."

"And the old man?"

"The kiss glows in his heart, but the old man adheres to his idea."

"And you with him, you too?" cried Alyosha, mournfully.

Ivan laughed.

"Why, it's all nonsense, Alyosha. It's only a senseless poem of a senseless student, who could never write two lines of verse. Why do you take it so seriously? Surely you don't suppose I am going straight off to the Jesuits, to join the men who are correcting His work? Good Lord, it's no

business of mine. I told you, all I want is to live on to thirty, and then... dash the cup to the ground!”

“But the little sticky leaves, and the precious tombs, and the blue sky, and the woman you love! How will you live, how will you love them?” Alyosha cried sorrowfully. “With such a hell in your heart and your head, how can you? No, that’s just what you are going away for, to join them... if not, you will kill yourself, you can’t endure it!”

“There is a strength to endure everything,” Ivan said with a cold smile.

“The strength of the Karamazovs — the strength of the Karamazov baseness.”

“To sink into debauchery, to stifle your soul with corruption, yes?”

“Possibly even that... only perhaps till I am thirty I shall escape it, and then-”

“How will you escape it? By what will you escape it? That’s impossible with your ideas.”

“In the Karamazov way, again.”

“‘Everything is lawful,’ you mean? Everything is lawful, is that it?”

Ivan scowled, and all at once turned strangely pale.

“Ah, you’ve caught up yesterday’s phrase, which so offended Muisov — and which Dmitri pounced upon so naively and paraphrased!” he smiled queerly. “Yes, if you like, ‘everything is lawful’ since the word has been said, I won’t deny it. And Mitya’s version isn’t bad.”

Alyosha looked at him in silence.

“I thought that going away from here I have you at least,” Ivan said suddenly, with unexpected feeling; “but now I see that there is no place for me even in your heart, my dear hermit. The formula, ‘all is lawful,’ I won’t renounce — will you renounce me for that, yes?”

Alyosha got up, went to him and softly kissed him on the lips.

“That’s plagiarism,” cried Ivan, highly delighted. “You stole that from my poem. Thank you though. Get up, Alyosha, it’s time we were going, both of us.”

They went out, but stopped when they reached the entrance of the restaurant.

“Listen, Alyosha,” Ivan began in a resolute voice, “if I am really able to care for the sticky little leaves I shall only love them, remembering you. It’s enough for me that you are somewhere here, and I shan’t lose my desire for life yet. Is that enough for you? Take it as a declaration of love if you like.

And now you go to the right and I to the left. And it’s enough, do you hear, enough. I mean even if I don’t go away to-morrow (I think I certainly shall go) and we meet again, don’t say a word more on these subjects. I beg that particularly. And about Dmitri too, I ask you specially, never speak to me again,” he added, with sudden irritation; “it’s all exhausted, it has all been said over and over again, hasn’t it? And I’ll make you one promise in return for it. When at thirty, I want to ‘dash the cup to the ground,’ wherever I may be I’ll come to have one more talk with you, even though it were from America, you may be sure of that. I’ll come on purpose. It will be very interesting to have a look at you, to see what you’ll be by that time. It’s rather a solemn promise, you see. And we really may be parting for seven years or ten. Come, go now to your Pater Seraphicus, he is dying. If he dies without you, you will be angry with me for having kept you. Good-bye, kiss me once more; that’s right, now go.”

Ivan turned suddenly and went his way without looking back. It was just as Dmitri had left Alyosha the day before, though the parting had been very different. The strange resemblance flashed like an arrow through Alyosha’s mind in the distress and dejection of that moment. He waited a little, looking after his brother. He suddenly noticed that Ivan swayed as he walked and that his right shoulder looked lower than his left. He had never noticed it before. But all at once he turned too, and almost ran to the monastery. It was nearly dark, and he felt almost frightened; something new was growing up in him for which he could not account. The wind had risen again as on the previous evening, and the ancient pines murmured gloomily about him when he entered the hermitage copse. He almost ran. “Pater Seraphicus — he got that name from somewhere — where from?” Alyosha wondered. “Ivan, poor Ivan, and when shall I see you again?... Here is the hermitage. Yes, yes, that he is, Pater Seraphicus, he will save me — from him and for ever!”

Several times afterwards he wondered how he could, on leaving Ivan, so completely forget his brother Dmitri, though he had that morning, only a few hours before, so firmly resolved to find him and not to give up doing so, even should he be unable to return to the monastery that night.

CHAPTER 6

For Awhile a Very Obscure One

AND Ivan, on parting from Alyosha, went home to Fyodor Pavlovitch's house. But, strange to say, he was overcome by insufferable depression, which grew greater at every step he took towards the house. There was nothing strange in his being depressed; what was strange was that Ivan could not have said what was the cause of it. He had often been depressed before, and there was nothing surprising at his feeling so at such a moment, when he had broken off with everything had brought him here, and was preparing that day to make a new start and enter upon a new, unknown future. He would again be as solitary as ever, and though he had great hopes, and great — too great — expectations from life, he could not have given any definite account of his hopes, his expectations, or even his desires.

Yet at that moment, though the apprehension of the new and unknown certainly found place in his heart, what was worrying him was something quite different. "Is it loathing for my father's house?" he wondered. "Quite likely; I am so sick of it; and though it's the last time I shall cross its hateful threshold, still I loathe it.... No, it's not that either. Is it the parting with Alyosha and the conversation I had with him? For so many years I've been silent with the whole world and not deigned to speak, and all of a sudden I reel off a rigmarole like that," certainly might have been the youthful vexation of youthful inexperience and vanity — vexation at having failed to express himself, especially with such a being as Alyosha, on whom his heart had certainly been reckoning. No doubt that came in, that vexation, it must have done indeed; but yet that was not it, that was not it either. "I feel sick with depression and yet I can't tell what I want. Better not think, perhaps."

Ivan tried "not to think," but that, too, was no use. What made his depression so vexatious and irritating was that it had a kind of casual, external character — he felt that. Some person or thing seemed to be standing out somewhere, just as something will sometimes obtrude itself upon the eye, and though one may be so busy with work or conversation that for a long time one does not notice it, yet it irritates and almost

torments one till at last one realises, and removes the offending object, often quite a trifling and ridiculous one — some article left about in the wrong place, a handkerchief on the floor, a book not replaced on the shelf, and so on.

At last, feeling very cross and ill-humoured, Ivan arrived home, and suddenly, about fifteen paces from the garden gate, he guessed what was fretting and worrying him.

On a bench in the gateway the valet Smerdyakov was sitting enjoying the coolness of the evening, and at the first glance at him Ivan knew that the valet Smerdyakov was on his mind, and that it was this man that his soul loathed. It all dawned upon him suddenly and became clear. just before, when Alyosha had been telling him of his meeting with Smerdyakov, he had felt a sudden twinge of gloom and loathing, which had immediately stirred responsive anger in his heart. Afterwards, as he talked, Smerdyakov had been forgotten for the time; but still he had been in his mind, and as soon as Ivan parted with Alyosha and was walking home, the forgotten sensation began to obtrude itself again. “Is it possible that a miserable, contemptible creature like that can worry me so much?” he wondered, with insufferable irritation.

It was true that Ivan had come of late to feel an intense dislike for the man, especially during the last few days. He had even begun to notice in himself a growing feeling that was almost of hatred for the creature. Perhaps this hatred was accentuated by the fact that when Ivan first came to the neighbourhood he had felt quite differently. Then he had taken a marked interest in Smerdyakov, and had even thought him very original. He had encouraged him to talk to him, although he had always wondered at a certain incoherence, or rather restlessness, in his mind, and could not understand what it was that so continually and insistently worked upon the brain of “the contemplative.” They discussed philosophical questions and even how there could have been light on the first day when the sun, moon, and stars were only created on the fourth day, and how that was to be understood. But Ivan soon saw that, though the sun, moon, and stars might be an interesting subject, yet that it was quite secondary to Smerdyakov, and that he was looking for something altogether different. In one way and another, he began to betray a boundless vanity, and a wounded vanity, too, and that Ivan disliked. It had first given rise to his aversion. Later on, there had been trouble in the house. Grushenka had come on the scene, and there

had been the scandals with his brother Dmitri — they discussed that, too. But though Smerdyakov always talked of that with great excitement, it was impossible to discover what he desired to come of it. There was, in fact, something surprising in the illogicality and incoherence of some of his desires, accidentally betrayed and always vaguely expressed. Smerdyakov was always inquiring, putting certain indirect but obviously premeditated questions, but what his object was he did not explain, and usually at the most important moment he would break off and relapse into silence or pass to another subject. But what finally irritated Ivan most and confirmed his dislike for him was the peculiar, revolting familiarity which Smerdyakov began to show more and more markedly. Not that he forgot himself and was rude; on the contrary, he always spoke very respectfully, yet he had obviously begun to consider — goodness knows why! — that there was some sort of understanding between him and Ivan Fyodorovitch. He always spoke in a tone that suggested that those two had some kind of compact, some secret between them, that had at some time been expressed on both sides, only known to them and beyond the comprehension of those around them. But for a long while Ivan did not recognise the real cause of his growing dislike and he had only lately realised what was at the root of it.

With a feeling of disgust and irritation he tried to pass in at the gate without speaking or looking at Smerdyakov. But Smerdyakov rose from the bench, and from that action alone, Ivan knew instantly that he wanted particularly to talk to him. Ivan looked at him and stopped, and the fact that he did stop, instead of passing by, as he meant to the minute before, drove him to fury. With anger and repulsion he looked at Smerdyakov's emasculate, sickly face, with the little curls combed forward on his forehead. His left eye winked and he grinned as if to say, "Where are you going? You won't pass by; you see that we two clever people have something to say to each other."

Ivan shook. "Get away, miserable idiot. What have I to do with you?" was on the tip of his tongue, but to his profound astonishment he heard himself say, "Is my father still asleep, or has he waked?"

He asked the question softly and meekly, to his own surprise, and at once, again to his own surprise, sat down on the bench. For an instant he felt almost frightened; he remembered it afterwards. Smerdyakov stood facing him, his hands behind his back, looking at him with assurance and almost severity.

“His honour is still asleep,” he articulated deliberately (“You were the first to speak, not I,” he seemed to say). “I am surprised at you, sir,” he added, after a pause, dropping his eyes affectedly, setting his right foot forward, and playing with the tip of his polished boot.

“Why are you surprised at me?” Ivan asked abruptly and sullenly, doing his utmost to restrain himself, and suddenly realising, with disgust, that he was feeling intense curiosity and would not, on any account, have gone away without satisfying it.

“Why don’t you go to Tchermashnya, sir?” Smerdyakov suddenly raised his eyes and smiled familiarly. “Why I smile you must understand of yourself, if you are a clever man,” his screwed-up left eye seemed to say.

“Why should I go to Tchermashnya?” Ivan asked in surprise.

Smerdyakov was silent again.

“Fyodor Pavlovitch himself has so begged you to,” he said at last, slowly and apparently attaching no significance to his answer. “I put you off with a secondary reason,” he seemed to suggest, “simply to say something.”

“Damn you! Speak out what you want!” Ivan cried angrily at last, passing from meekness to violence.

Smerdyakov drew his right foot up to his left, pulled himself up, but still looked at him with the same serenity and the same little smile.

“Substantially nothing — but just by way of conversation.”

Another silence followed. They did not speak for nearly a minute. Ivan knew that he ought to get up and show anger, and Smerdyakov stood before him and seemed to be waiting as though to see whether he would be angry or not. So at least it seemed to Ivan. At last he moved to get up. Smerdyakov seemed to seize the moment.

“I’m in an awful position, Ivan Fyodorovitch. I don’t know how to help myself,” he said resolutely and distinctly, and at his last word he sighed. Ivan Fyodorovitch sat down again.

“They are both utterly crazy, they are no better than little children,” Smerdyakov went on. “I am speaking of your parent and your brother Dmitri Fyodorovitch. Here Fyodor Pavlovitch will get up directly and begin worrying me every minute, ‘Has she come? Why hasn’t she come?’ and so on up till midnight and even after midnight. And if Agrafena Alexandrovna doesn’t come (for very likely she does not mean to come at all) then he will be at me again to-morrow morning, ‘Why hasn’t she come? When will she come?’ — as though I were to blame for it. On the other side it’s no better.

As soon as it gets dark, or even before, your brother will appear with his gun in his hands: ‘Look out, you rogue, you soup-maker. If you miss her and don’t let me know she’s been — I’ll kill you before anyone.’ When the night’s over, in the morning, he, too, like Fyodor Pavlovitch, begins worrying me to death. ‘Why hasn’t she come? Will she come soon?’ And he, too, thinks me to blame because his lady hasn’t come. And every day and every hour they get angrier and angrier, so that I sometimes think I shall kill myself in a fright. I can’t depend them, sir.”

“And why have you meddled? Why did you begin to spy for Dmitri Fyodorovitch?” said Ivan irritably.

“How could I help meddling? Though, indeed, I haven’t meddled at all, if you want to know the truth of the matter. I kept quiet from the very beginning, not daring to answer; but he pitched on me to be his servant. He has had only one thing to say since: ‘I’ll kill you, you scoundrel, if you miss her.’ I feel certain, sir, that I shall have a long fit to-morrow.”

“What do you mean by ‘a long fit’?”

“A long fit, lasting a long time — several hours, or perhaps a day or two. Once it went on for three days. I fell from the garret that time. The struggling ceased and then began again, and for three days I couldn’t come back to my senses. Fyodor Pavlovitch sent for Herzenstube, the doctor here, and he put ice on my head and tried another remedy, too.... I might have died.”

“But they say one can’t tell with epilepsy when a fit is coming. What makes you say you will have one to-morrow?” Ivan inquired, with a peculiar, irritable curiosity.

“That’s just so. You can’t tell beforehand.”

“Besides, you fell from the garret then.”

“I climb up to the garret every day. I might fall from the garret again to-morrow. And, if not, I might fall down the cellar steps. I have to go into the cellar every day, too.”

Ivan took a long look at him.

“You are talking nonsense, I see, and I don’t quite understand you,” he said softly, but with a sort of menace. “Do you mean to pretend to be ill to-morrow for three days, eh?”

Smerdyakov, who was looking at the ground again, and playing with the toe of his right foot, set the foot down, moved the left one forward, and, grinning, articulated:

“If I were able to play such a trick, that is, pretend to have a fit — and it would not be difficult for a man accustomed to them — I should have a perfect right to use such a means to save myself from death. For even if Agrafena Alexandrovna comes to see his father while I am ill, his honour can’t blame a sick man for not telling him. He’d be ashamed to.”

“Hang it all!” Ivan cried, his face working with anger, “Why are you always in such a funk for your life? All my brother Dmitri’s threats are only hasty words and mean nothing. He won’t kill you; it’s not you he’ll kill!”

“He’d kill me first of all, like a fly. But even more than that, I am afraid I shall be taken for an accomplice of his when he does something crazy to his father.”

“Why should you be taken for an accomplice?”

“They’ll think I am an accomplice, because I let him know the signals as a great secret.”

“What signals? Whom did you tell? Confound you, speak more plainly.”

“I’m bound to admit the fact,” Smerdyakov drawled with pedantic composure, “that I have a secret with Fyodor Pavlovitch in this business. As you know yourself (if only you do know it) he has for several days past locked himself in as soon as night or even evening comes on. Of late you’ve been going upstairs to your room early every evening, and yesterday you did not come down at all, and so perhaps you don’t know how carefully he has begun to lock himself in at night, and even if Grigory Vassilyevitch comes to the door he won’t open to him till he hears his voice. But Grigory Vassilyevitch does not come, because I wait upon him alone in his room now. That’s the arrangement he made himself ever since this to-do with Agrafena Alexandrovna began. But at night, by his orders, I go away to the lodge so that I don’t get to sleep till midnight, but am on the watch, getting up and walking about the yard, waiting for Agrafena Alexandrovna to come. For the last few days he’s been perfectly frantic expecting her. What he argues is, she is afraid of him, Dmitri Fyodorovitch (Mitya, as he calls him), ‘and so,’ says he, ‘she’ll come the back-way, late at night, to me. You look out for her,’ says he, ‘till midnight and later; and if she does come, you run up and knock at my door or at the window from the garden. Knock at first twice, rather gently, and then three times more quickly, then,’ says he, ‘I shall understand at once that she has come, and will open the door to you quietly.’ Another signal he gave me in case anything unexpected happens. At first, two knocks, and then, after an interval, another much louder. Then

he will understand that something has happened suddenly and that I must see him, and he will open to me so that I can go and speak to him. That's all in case Agrafena Alexandrovna can't come herself, but sends a message. Besides, Dmitri Fyodorovitch might come, too, so I must let him know he is near. His honour is awfully afraid of Dmitri Fyodorovitch, so that even if Agrafena Alexandrovna had come and were locked in with him, and Dmitri Fyodorovitch were to turn up anywhere near at the time, I should be bound to let him know at once, knocking three times. So that the first signal of five knocks means Agrafena Alexandrovna has come, while the second signal of three knocks means 'something important to tell you.' His honour has shown me them several times and explained them. And as in the whole universe no one knows of these signals but myself and his honour, so he'd open the door without the slightest hesitation and without calling out (he is awfully afraid of calling out aloud). Well, those signals are known to Dmitri Fyodorovitch too, now."

"How are they known? Did you tell him? How dared you tell him?"

"It was through fright I did it. How could I dare to keep it back from him? Dmitri Fyodorovitch kept persisting every day, 'You are deceiving me, you are hiding something from me! I'll break both your legs for you.' So I told him those secret signals that he might see my slavish devotion, and might be satisfied that I was not deceiving him, but was telling him all I could."

"If you think that he'll make use of those signals and try to get in, don't let him in."

"But if I should be laid up with a fit, how can I prevent him coming in then, even if I dared prevent him, knowing how desperate he is?"

"Hang it! How can you be so sure you are going to have a fit, confound you? Are you laughing at me?"

"How could I dare laugh at you? I am in no laughing humour with this fear on me. I feel I am going to have a fit. I have a presentiment. Fright alone will bring it on."

"Confound it! If you are laid up, Grigory will be on the watch. Let Grigory know beforehand; he will be sure not to let him in."

"I should never dare to tell Grigory Vassilyevitch about the signals without orders from my master. And as for Grigory Vassilyevitch hearing him and not admitting him, he has been ill ever since yesterday, and Marfa Ignatyevna intends to give him medicine to-morrow. They've just arranged

it. It’s a very strange remedy of hers. Marfa Ignatyevna knows of a preparation and always keeps it. It’s a strong thing made from some herb. She has the secret of it, and she always gives it to Grigory Vassilyevitch three times a year when his lumbago’s so bad he is almost paralysed by it. Then she takes a towel, wets it with the stuff, and rubs his whole back for half an hour till it’s quite red and swollen, and what’s left in the bottle she gives him to drink with a special prayer; but not quite all, for on such occasions she leaves some for herself, and drinks it herself. And as they never take strong drink, I assure you they both drop asleep at once and sleep sound a very long time. And when Grigory Vassilyevitch wakes up he is perfectly well after it, but Marfa Ignatyevna always has a headache from it. So, if Marfa Ignatyevna carries out her intention to-morrow, they won’t hear anything and hinder Dmitri Fyodorovitch. They’ll be asleep.”

“What a rigmarole! And it all seems to happen at once, as though it were planned. You’ll have a fit and they’ll both be unconscious,” cried Ivan. “But aren’t you trying to arrange it so?” broke from him suddenly, and he frowned threateningly.

“How could I?... And why should I, when it all depends on Dmitri Fyodorovitch and his plans?... If he means to do anything, he’ll do it; but if not, I shan’t be thrusting him upon his father.”

“And why should he go to father, especially on the sly, if, as you say yourself, Agrafena Alexandrovna won’t come at all?” Ivan went on, turning white with anger. “You say that yourself, and all the while I’ve been here, I’ve felt sure it was all the old man’s fancy, and the creature won’t come to him. Why should Dmitri break in on him if she doesn’t come? Speak, I want to know what you are thinking!”

“You know yourself why he’ll come. What’s the use of what I think? His honour will come simply because he is in a rage or suspicious on account of my illness perhaps, and he’ll dash in, as he did yesterday through impatience to search the rooms, to see whether she hasn’t escaped him on the sly. He is perfectly well aware, too, that Fyodor Pavlovitch has a big envelope with three thousand roubles in it, tied up with ribbon and sealed with three seals. On it is written in his own hand ‘To my angel Grushenka, if she will come,’ to which he added three days later, ‘for my little chicken.’ There’s no knowing what that might do.”

“Nonsense!” cried Ivan, almost beside himself. “Dmitri won’t come to steal money and kill my father to do it. He might have killed him yesterday

on account of Grushenka, like the frantic, savage fool he is, but he won't steal."

"He is in very great need of money now — the greatest need, Ivan Fyodorovitch. You don't know in what need he is," Smerdyakov explained, with perfect composure and remarkable distinctness. "He looks on that three thousand as his own, too. He said so to me himself. 'My father still owes me just three thousand,' he said. And besides that, consider, Ivan Fyodorovitch, there is something else perfectly true. It's as good as certain, so to say, that Agrafena Alexandrovna will force him, if only she cares to, to marry her — the master himself, I mean, Fyodor Pavlovitch — if only she cares to, and of course she may care to. All I've said is that she won't come, but maybe she's looking for more than that — I mean to be mistress here. I know myself that Samsonov, her merchant, was laughing with her about it, telling her quite openly that it would not be at all a stupid thing to do. And she's got plenty of sense. She wouldn't marry a beggar like Dmitri Fyodorovitch. So, taking that into consideration, Ivan Fyodorovitch, reflect that then neither Dmitri Fyodorovitch nor yourself and your brother, Alexey Fyodorovitch, would have anything after the master's death, not a rouble, for Agrafena Alexandrovna would marry him simply to get hold of the whole, all the money there is. But if your father were to die now, there'd be some forty thousand for sure, even for Dmitri Fyodorovitch whom he hates so, for he's made no will.... Dmitri Fyodorovitch knows all that very well."

A sort of shudder passed over Ivan's face. He suddenly flushed.

"Then why on earth," he suddenly interrupted Smerdyakov, "do you advise me to go to Tchermashnya? What did you mean by that? If I go away, you see what will happen here." Ivan drew his breath with difficulty.

"Precisely so," said Smerdyakov, softly and reasonably, watching Ivan intently, however.

"What do you mean by 'precisely so'?" Ivan questioned him, with a menacing light in his eyes, restraining himself with difficulty.

"I spoke because I felt sorry for you. If I were in your place I should simply throw it all up... rather than stay on in such a position," answered Smerdyakov, with the most candid air looking at Ivan's flashing eyes. They were both silent.

"You seem to be a perfect idiot, and what's more... an awful scoundrel, too." Ivan rose suddenly from the bench. He was about to pass straight through the gate, but he stopped short and turned to Smerdyakov.

Something strange followed. Ivan, in a sudden paroxysm, bit his lip, clenched his fists, and, in another minute, would have flung himself on Smerdyakov. The latter, anyway, noticed it at the same moment, started, and shrank back. But the moment passed without mischief to Smerdyakov, and Ivan turned in silence, as it seemed in perplexity, to the gate.

“I am going away to Moscow to-morrow, if you care to know — early to-morrow morning. That’s all!” he suddenly said aloud angrily, and wondered himself afterwards what need there was to say this then to Smerdyakov.

“That’s the best thing you can do,” he responded, as though he had expected to hear it; “except that you can always be telegraphed for from Moscow, if anything should happen here.”

Ivan stopped again, and again turned quickly to Smerdyakov. But a change had passed over him, too. All his familiarity and carelessnes had completely disappeared. His face expressed attention and expectation, intent but timid and cringing.

“Haven’t you something more to say — something to add?” could be read in the intent gaze he fixed on Ivan.

“And couldn’t I be sent for from Tchermashnya, too — in case anything happened?” Ivan shouted suddenly, for some unknown reason raising his voice.

“From Tchermashnya, too... you could be sent for,” Smerdyakov muttered, almost in a whisper, looking disconcerted, but gazing intently into Ivan’s eyes.

“Only Moscow is farther and Tchermashnya is nearer. Is it to save my spending money on the fare, or to save my going so far out of my way, that you insist on Tchermashnya?”

“Precisely so..,” muttered Smerdyakov, with a breaking voice. He looked at Ivan with a revolting smile, and again made ready to draw back. But to his astonishment Ivan broke into a laugh, and went through the gate still laughing. Anyone who had seen his face at that moment would have known that he was not laughing from lightness of heart, and he could not have explained himself what he was feeling at that instant. He moved and walked as though in a nervous frenzy.

CHAPTER 7

“It’s Always Worth While Speaking to a Clever Man”

AND in the same nervous frenzy, too, he spoke. Meeting Fyodor Pavlovitch in the drawing-room directly he went in, he shouted to him, waving his hands, “I am going upstairs to my room, not in to you. Good-bye!” and passed by, trying not even to look at his father. Very possibly the old man was too hateful to him at that moment; but such an unceremonious display of hostility was a surprise even to Fyodor Pavlovitch. And the old man evidently wanted to tell him something at once and had come to meet him in the drawing-room on purpose. Receiving this amiable greeting, he stood still in silence and with an ironical air watched his son going upstairs, till he passed out of sight.

“What’s the matter with him?” he promptly asked Smerdyakov, who had followed Ivan.

“Angry about something. Who can tell?” the valet muttered evasively.

“Confound him! Let him be angry then. Bring in the samovar, and get along with you. Look sharp! No news?”

Then followed a series of questions such as Smerdyakov had just complained of to Ivan, all relating to his expected visitor, and these questions we will omit. Half an hour later the house was locked, and the crazy old man was wandering along through the rooms in excited expectation of hearing every minute the five knocks agreed upon. Now and then he peered out into the darkness, seeing nothing.

It was very late, but Ivan was still awake and reflecting. He sat up late that night, till two o’clock. But we will not give an account of his thoughts, and this is not the place to look into that soul — its turn will come. And even if one tried, it would be very hard to give an account of them, for there were no thoughts in his brain, but something very vague, and, above all, intense excitement. He felt himself that he had lost his bearings. He was fretted, too, by all sorts of strange and almost surprising desires; for instance, after midnight he suddenly had an intense irresistible inclination to go down, open the door, go to the lodge and beat Smerdyakov. But if he had been asked why, he could not have given any exact reason, except perhaps that he loathed the valet as one who had insulted him more gravely than

anyone in the world. On the other hand, he was more than once that night overcome by a sort of inexplicable humiliating terror, which he felt positively paralysed his physical powers. His head ached and he was giddy. A feeling of hatred was rankling in his heart, as though he meant to avenge himself on someone. He even hated Alyosha, recalling the conversation he had just had with him. At moments he hated himself intensely. Of Katerina Ivanovna he almost forgot to think, and wondered greatly at this afterwards, especially as he remembered perfectly that when he had protested so valiantly to Katerina Ivanovna that he would go away next day to Moscow, something had whispered in his heart, “That’s nonsense, you are not going, and it won’t be so easy to tear yourself away as you are boasting now.”

Remembering that night long afterwards, Ivan recalled with peculiar repulsion how he had suddenly got up from the sofa and had stealthily, as though he were afraid of being watched, opened the door, gone out on the staircase and listened to Fyodor Pavlovitch stirring down below, had listened a long while — some five minutes — with a sort of strange curiosity, holding his breath while his heart throbbed. And why he had done all this, why he was listening, he could not have said. That “action” all his life afterwards he called “infamous,” and at the bottom of his heart, he thought of it as the basest action of his life. For Fyodor Pavlovitch himself he felt no hatred at that moment, but was simply intensely curious to know how he was walking down there below and what he must be doing now. He wondered and imagined how he must be peeping out of the dark windows and stopping in the middle of the room, listening, listening — for someone to knock. Ivan went out on the stairs twice to listen like this.

About two o’clock when everything was quiet, and even Fyodor Pavlovitch had gone to bed, Ivan had got into bed, firmly resolved to fall asleep at once, as he felt fearfully exhausted. And he did fall asleep at once, and slept soundly without dreams, but waked early, at seven o’clock, when it was broad daylight. Opening his eyes, he was surprised to feel himself extraordinarily vigorous. He jumped up at once and dressed quickly; then dragged out his trunk and began packing immediately. His linen had come back from the laundress the previous morning. Ivan positively smiled at the thought that everything was helping his sudden departure. And his departure certainly was sudden. Though Ivan had said the day before (to Katerina Ivanovna, Alyosha, and Smerdyakov) that he was leaving next day, yet he remembered that he had no thought of departure when he went

to bed, or, at least, had not dreamed that his first act in the morning would be to pack his trunk. At last his trunk and bag were ready. It was about nine o'clock when Marfa Ignatyevna came in with her usual inquiry, "Where will your honour take your tea, in your own room or downstairs?" He looked almost cheerful, but there was about him, about his words and gestures, something hurried and scattered. Greeting his father affably, and even inquiring specially after his health, though he did not wait to hear his answer to the end, he announced that he was starting off in an hour to return to Moscow for good, and begged him to send for the horses. His father heard this announcement with no sign of surprise, and forgot in an unmannerly way to show regret at losing him. Instead of doing so, he flew into a great flutter at the recollection of some important business of his own.

"What a fellow you are! Not to tell me yesterday! Never mind; we'll manage it all the same. Do me a great service, my dear boy. Go to Tchermashnya on the way. It's only to turn to the left from the station at Volovya, only another twelve versts and you come to Tchermashnya."

"I'm sorry, I can't. It's eighty versts to the railway and the train starts for Moscow at seven o'clock to-night. I can only just catch it."

"You'll catch it to-morrow or the day after, but to-day turn off to Tchermashnya. It won't put you out much to humour your father! If I hadn't had something to keep me here, I would have run over myself long ago, for I've some business there in a hurry. But here I... it's not the time for me to go now.... You see, I've two pieces of copse land there. The Maslovs, an old merchant and his son, will give eight thousand for the timber. But last year I just missed a purchaser who would have given twelve. There's no getting anyone about here to buy it. The Maslovs have it all their own way. One has to take what they'll give, for no one here dare bid against them. The priest at Ilyinskoe wrote to me last Thursday that a merchant called Gorstkin, a man I know, had turned up. What makes him valuable is that he is not from these parts, so he is not afraid of the Maslovs. He says he will give me eleven thousand for the copse. Do you hear? But he'll only be here, the priest writes, for a week altogether, so you must go at once and make a bargain with him."

"Well, you write to the priest; he'll make the bargain."

"He can't do it. He has no eye for business. He is a perfect treasure, I'd give him twenty thousand to take care of for me without a receipt; but he has no eye for business, he is a perfect child, a crow could deceive him.

And yet he is a learned man, would you believe it? This Gorstkin looks like a peasant, he wears a blue kaftan, but he is a regular rogue. That's the common complaint. He is a liar. Sometimes he tells such lies that you wonder why he is doing it. He told me the year before last that his wife was dead and that he had married another, and would you believe it, there was not a word of truth in it? His wife has never died at all, she is alive to this day and gives him a beating twice a week. So what you have to find out is whether he is lying or speaking the truth when he says he wants to buy it and would give eleven thousand."

"I shall be no use in such a business. I have no eye either."

"Stay, wait a bit! You will be of use, for I will tell you the signs by which you can judge about Gorstkin. I've done business with him a long time. You see, you must watch his beard; he has a nasty, thin, red beard. If his beard shakes when he talks and he gets cross, it's all right, he is saying what he means, he wants to do business. But if he strokes his beard with his left hand and grins — he is trying to cheat you. Don't watch his eyes, you won't find out anything from his eyes, he is a deep one, a rogue but watch his beard! I'll give you a note and you show it to him. He's called Gorstkin, though his real name is Lyagavy;* but don't call him so, he will be offended. If you come to an understanding with him, and see it's all right, write here at once. You need only write: 'He's not lying.' Stand out for eleven thousand; one thousand you can knock off, but not more. just think! there's a difference between eight thousand and eleven thousand. It's as good as picking up three thousand; it's not so easy to find a purchaser, and I'm in desperate need of money. Only let me know it's serious, and I'll run over and fix it up. I'll snatch the time somehow. But what's the good of my galloping over, if it's all a notion of the priest's? Come, will you go?"

* i.e. setter dog.

"Oh, I can't spare the time. You must excuse me."

"Come, you might oblige your father. I shan't forget it. You've no heart, any of you that's what it is! What's a day or two to you? Where are you going now — to Venice? Your Venice will keep another two days. I would have sent Alyosha, but what use is Alyosha in a thing like that? I send you just because you are a clever fellow. Do you suppose I don't see that? You know nothing about timber, but you've got an eye. All that is wanted is to see whether the man is in earnest. I tell you, watch his beard — if his beard shakes you know he is in earnest."

“You force me to go to that damned Tchermashnya yourself, then?” cried Ivan, with a malignant smile.

Fyodor Pavlovitch did not catch, or would not catch, the malignancy, but he caught the smile.

“Then you’ll go, you’ll go? I’ll scribble the note for you at once.”

“I don’t know whether I shall go. I don’t know. I’ll decide on the way.”

“Nonsense! Decide at once. My dear fellow, decide! If you settle the matter, write me a line; give it to the priest and he’ll send it on to me at once. And I won’t delay you more than that. You can go to Venice. The priest will give you horses back to Volovya station.”

The old man was quite delighted. He wrote the note, and sent for the horses. A light lunch was brought in, with brandy. When Fyodor Pavlovitch was pleased, he usually became expansive, but to-day he seemed to restrain himself. Of Dmitri, for instance, he did not say a word. He was quite unmoved by the parting, and seemed, in fact, at a loss for something to say. Ivan noticed this particularly. “He must be bored with me,” he thought. Only when accompanying his son out on to the steps, the old man began to fuss about. He would have kissed him, but Ivan made haste to hold out his hand, obviously avoiding the kiss. His father saw it at once, and instantly pulled himself up.

“Well, good luck to you, good luck to you!” he repeated from the steps. “You’ll come again some time or other? Mind you do come. I shall always be glad to see you. Well, Christ be with you!”

Ivan got into the carriage.

“Good-bye, Ivan! Don’t be too hard on me!” the father called for the last time.

The whole household came out to take leave — Smerdyakov, Marfa and Grigory. Ivan gave them ten roubles each. When he had seated himself in the carriage, Smerdyakov jumped up to arrange the rug.

“You see... I am going to Tchermashnya,” broke suddenly from Ivan. Again, as the day before, the words seemed to drop of themselves, and he laughed, too, a peculiar, nervous laugh. He remembered it long after.

“It’s a true saying then, that ‘it’s always worth while speaking to a clever man,’” answered Smerdyakov firmly, looking significantly at Ivan.

The carriage rolled away. Nothing was clear in Ivan’s soul, but he looked eagerly around him at the fields, at the hills, at the trees, at a flock of geese flying high overhead in the bright sky. And all of a sudden he felt very

happy. He tried to talk to the driver, and he felt intensely interested in an answer the peasant made him; but a minute later he realised that he was not catching anything, and that he had not really even taken in the peasant's answer. He was silent, and it was pleasant even so. The air was pure and cool, sky bright. The images of Alyosha and Katerina Ivanovna floated into his mind. But he softly smiled, blew softly on the friendly phantoms, and they flew away. "There's plenty of time for them," he thought. They reached the station quickly, changed horses, and galloped to Volovya "Why is it worth while speaking to a clever man? What did he mean by that?" The thought seemed suddenly to clutch at his breathing. "And why did I tell him I was going to Tchermashnya?" They reached Volovya station. Ivan got out of the carriage, and the drivers stood round him bargaining over the journey of twelve versts to Tchermashnya. He told them to harness the horses. He went into the station house, looked round, glanced at the overseer's wife, and suddenly went back to the entrance.

"I won't go to Tchermashnya. Am I too late to reach the railway by seven, brothers?"

"We shall just do it. Shall we get the carriage out?"

"At once. Will any one of you be going to the town to-morrow?"

"To be sure. Mitri here will."

"Can you do me a service, Mitri? Go to my father's, to Fyodor Pavlovitch Karamazov, and tell him I haven't gone to Tchermashnya. Can you?"

"Of course I can. I've known Fyodor Pavlovitch a long time."

"And here's something for you, for I dare say he won't give you anything," said Ivan, laughing gaily.

"You may depend on it he won't." Mitri laughed too. "Thank you, sir. I'll be sure to do it."

At seven o'clock Ivan got into the train and set off to Moscow. "Away with the past. I've done with the old world for ever, and may I have no news, no echo, from it. To a new life, new places, and no looking back!" But instead of delight his soul was filled with such gloom, and his heart ached with such anguish, as he had never known in his life before. He was thinking all the night. The train flew on, and only at daybreak, when he was approaching Moscow, he suddenly roused himself from his meditation.

"I am a scoundrel," he whispered to himself.

Fyodor Pavlovitch remained well satisfied at having seen his son off. For two hours afterwards he felt almost happy, and sat drinking brandy. But suddenly something happened which was very annoying and unpleasant for everyone in the house, and completely upset Fyodor Pavlovitch's equanimity at once. Smerdyakov went to the cellar for something and fell down from the top of the steps. Fortunately, Marfa Ignatyevna was in the yard and heard him in time. She did not see the fall, but heard his scream — the strange, peculiar scream, long familiar to her — the scream of the epileptic falling in a fit. They could not tell whether the fit had come on him at the moment he was decending the steps, so that he must have fallen unconscious, or whether it was the fall and the shock that had caused the fit in Smerdyakov, who was known to be liable to them. They found him at the bottom of the cellar steps, writhing in convulsions and foaming at the mouth. It was thought at first that he must have broken something — an arm or a leg — and hurt himself, but "God had preserved him," as Marfa Ignatyevna expressed it — nothing of the kind had happened. But it was difficult to get him out of the cellar. They asked the neighbours to help and managed it somehow. Fyodor Pavlovitch himself was present at the whole ceremony. He helped, evidently alarmed and upset. The sick man did not regain consciousness; the convulsions ceased for a time, but then began again, and everyone concluded that the same thing would happen, as had happened a year before, when he accidently fell from the garret. They remembered that ice been put on his head then. There was still ice in the cellar, and Marfa Ignatyevna had some brought up. In the evening, Fyodor Pavlovitch sent for Doctor Herzenstube, who arrived at once. He was a most estimable old man, and the most careful and conscientious doctor in the province. After careful examination, he concluded that the fit was a very violent one and might have serious consequences; that meanwhile he, Herzenstube, did not fully understand it, but that by to-morrow morning, if the present remedies were unavailing, he would venture to try something else. The invalid was taken to the lodge, to a room next to Grigory's and Marfa Ignatyevna's.

Then Fyodor Pavlovitch had one misfortune after another to put up with that day. Marfa Ignatyevna cooked the dinner, and the soup, compared with Smerdyakov's, was "no better than dish-water," and the fowl was so dried up that it was impossible to masticate it. To her master's bitter, though deserved, reproaches, Marfa Ignatyevna replied that the fowl was a very old

one to begin with, and that she had never been trained as a cook. In the evening there was another trouble in store for Fyodor Pavlovitch; he was informed that Grigory, who had not been well for the last three days, was completely laid up by his lumbago. Fyodor Pavlovitch finished his tea as early as possible and locked himself up alone in the house. He was in terrible excitement and suspense. That evening he reckoned on Grushenka's coming almost as a certainty. He had received from Smerdyakov that morning an assurance "that she had promised to come without fail." The incorrigible old man's heart throbbed with excitement; he paced up and down his empty rooms listening. He had to be on the alert. Dmitri might be on the watch for her somewhere, and when she knocked on the window (Smerdyakov had informed him two days before that he had told her where and how to knock) the door must be opened at once. She must not be a second in the passage, for fear which God forbid! — that she should be frightened and run away. Fyodor Pavlovitch had much to think of, but never had his heart been steeped in such voluptuous hopes. This time he could say almost certainly that she would come!

BOOK VI. THE RUSSIAN MONK.

CHAPTER 1

Father Zossima and His Visitors

WHEN with an anxious and aching heart Alyosha went into his elder's cell, he stood still almost astonished. Instead of a sick man at his last gasp, perhaps unconscious, as he had feared to find him, he saw him sitting up in his chair and, though weak and exhausted, his face was bright and cheerful, he was surrounded by visitors and engaged in a quiet and joyful conversation. But he had only got up from his bed a quarter of an hour before Alyosha's arrival; his visitors had gathered together in his cell earlier, waiting for him to wake, having received a most confident assurance from Father Paissy that "the teacher would get up, and as he had himself promised in the morning, converse once more with those dear to his heart." This promise and indeed every word of the dying elder Father Paissy put implicit trust in. If he had seen him unconscious, if he had seen him breathe his last, and yet had his promise that he would rise up and say good-bye to him, he would not have believed perhaps even in death, but would still have expected the dead man to recover and fulfil his promise. In the morning as he lay down to sleep, Father Zossima had told him positively: "I shall not die without the delight of another conversation with you, beloved of my heart. I shall look once more on your dear face and pour out my heart to you once again." The monks, who had gathered for this probably last conversation with Father Zossima, had all been his devoted friends for many years. There were four of them: Father Iosif and Father Paissy, Father Mihail the warden of the hermitage, a man not very old and far from being learned. He was of humble origin, of strong will and steadfast faith, of austere appearance, but of deep tenderness, though he obviously concealed it as though he were almost ashamed of it. The fourth, Father Anfim, was a very old and humble little monk of the poorest peasant class. He was almost illiterate, and very quiet, scarcely speaking to anyone. He was the humblest of the humble, and looked as though he had been frightened by something great and awful beyond the scope of his intelligence. Father Zossima had a great affection for this timorous man, and always treated him with marked respect, though perhaps there was no one he had known to whom he had said less, in spite of the fact that he had spent years wandering about holy

Russia with him. That was very long ago, forty years before, when Father Zossima first began his life as a monk in a poor and little monastery at Kostroma, and when, shortly after, he had accompanied Father Anfim on his pilgrimage to collect alms for their poor monastery.

The whole party were in the bedroom which, as we mentioned before, was very small, so that there was scarcely room for the four of them (in addition to Porfiry, the novice, who stood) to sit round Father Zossima on chairs brought from the sitting room. It was already beginning to get dark, the room was lighted up by the lamps and the candles before the ikons.

Seeing Alyosha standing embarrassed in the doorway, Father Zossima smiled at him joyfully and held out his hand.

“Welcome, my quiet one, welcome, my dear, here you are too. I knew you would come.”

Alyosha went up to him, bowed down before him to the ground and wept. Something surged up from his heart, his soul was quivering, he wanted to sob.

“Come, don’t weep over me yet,” Father Zossima smiled, laying his right hand on his head. “You see I am sitting up talking; maybe I shall live another twenty years yet, as that dear good woman from Vishegorye, with her little Lizaveta in her arms, wished me yesterday. God bless the mother and the little girl Lizaveta,” he crossed himself. “Porfiry, did you take her offering where I told you?”

He meant the sixty copecks brought him the day before by the good-humoured woman to be given “to someone poorer than me.” Such offerings, always of money gained by personal toil, are made by way of penance voluntarily undertaken. The elder had sent Porfiry the evening before to a widow, whose house had been burnt down lately, and who after the fire had gone with her children begging alms. Porfiry hastened to reply that he had given the money, as he had been instructed, “from an unknown benefactress.”

“Get up, my dear boy,” the elder went on to Alyosha. “Let me look at you. Have you been home and seen your brother?” It seemed strange to Alyosha that he asked so confidently and precisely, about one of his brothers only — but which one? Then perhaps he had sent him out both yesterday and to-day for the sake of that brother.

“I have seen one of my brothers,” answered Alyosha.

“I mean the elder one, to whom I bowed down.”

“I only saw him yesterday and could not find him to-day,” said Alyosha.

“Make haste to find him, go again to-morrow and make haste, leave everything and make haste. Perhaps you may still have time to prevent something terrible. I bowed down yesterday to the great suffering in store for him.”

He was suddenly silent and seemed to be pondering. The words were strange. Father Iosif, who had witnessed the scene yesterday, exchanged glances with Father Paissy. Alyosha could not resist asking:

“Father and teacher,” he began with extreme emotion, “your words are too obscure.... What is this suffering in store for him?”

“Don’t inquire. I seemed to see something terrible yesterday... as though his whole future were expressed in his eyes. A look came into his eyes — so that I was instantly horror-stricken at what that man is preparing for himself. Once or twice in my life I’ve seen such a look in a man’s face... reflecting as it were his future fate, and that fate, alas, came to pass. I sent you to him, Alexey, for I thought your brotherly face would help him. But everything and all our fates are from the Lord. ‘Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.’ Remember that. You, Alexey, I’ve many times silently blessed for your face, know that,” added the elder with a gentle smile. “This is what I think of you, you will go forth from these walls, but will live like a monk in the world. You will have many enemies, but even your foes will love you. Life will bring you many misfortunes, but you will find your happiness in them, and will bless life and will make others bless it — which is what matters most. Well, that is your character. Fathers and teachers,” he addressed his friends with a tender smile, “I have never till to-day told even him why the face of this youth is so dear to me. Now I will tell you. His face has been as it were a remembrance and a prophecy for me. At the dawn of my life when I was a child I had an elder brother who died before my eyes at seventeen. And later on in the course of my life I gradually became convinced that that brother had been for a guidance and a sign from on high for me. For had he not come into my life, I should never perhaps, so I fancy at least, have become a monk and entered on this precious path. He appeared first to me in my childhood, and here, at the end of my pilgrimage, he seems to have come to me over again. It is marvellous, fathers and teachers, that Alexey, who has some, though not a great, resemblance in face, seems to me so like him spiritually, that many times I have taken him

for that young man, my brother, mysteriously come back to me at the end of my pilgrimage, as a reminder and an inspiration. So that I positively wondered at so strange a dream in myself. Do you hear this, Porfiry?" he turned to the novice who waited on him. "Many times I've seen in your face as it were a look of mortification that I love Alexey more than you. Now you know why that was so, but I love you too, know that, and many times I grieved at your mortification. I should like to tell you, dear friends, of that youth, my brother, for there has been no presence in my life more precious, more significant and touching. My heart is full of tenderness, and I look at my whole life at this moment as though living through it again."

Here I must observe that this last conversation of Father Zossima with the friends who visited him on the last day of his life has been partly preserved in writing. Alexey Fyodorovitch Karamazov wrote it down from memory, some time after his elder's death. But whether this was only the conversation that took place then, or whether he added to it his notes of parts of former conversations with his teacher, I cannot determine. In his account, Father Zossima's talk goes on without interruption, as though he told his life to his friends in the form of a story, though there is no doubt, from other accounts of it, that the conversation that evening was general. Though the guests did not interrupt Father Zossima much, yet they too talked, perhaps even told something themselves. Besides, Father Zossima could not have carried on an uninterrupted narrative, for he was sometimes gasping for breath, his voice failed him, and he even lay down to rest on his bed, though he did not fall asleep and his visitors did not leave their seats. Once or twice the conversation was interrupted by Father Paissy's reading the Gospel. It is worthy of note, too, that no one of them supposed that he would die that night, for on that evening of his life after his deep sleep in the day he seemed suddenly to have found new strength, which kept him up through this long conversation. It was like a last effort of love which gave him marvellous energy; only for a little time, however, for his life was cut short immediately.. But of that later. I will only add now that I have preferred to confine myself to the account given by Alexey Fyodorovitch Karamazov. It will be shorter and not so fatiguing, though, of course, as I must repeat, Alyosha took a great deal from previous conversations and added them to it. Notes of the Life of the deceased Priest and Monk, the Elder Zossima, taken from his own words by Alexey Fyodorovitch Karamazov.

Biographical Notes

(a) Father Zossima’s Brother.

Beloved fathers and teachers, I was born in a distant province in the north, in the town of V. My father was a gentleman by birth, but of no great consequence or position. He died when I was only two years old, and I don’t remember him at all. He left my mother a small house built of wood, and a fortune, not large, but sufficient to keep her and her children in comfort. There were two of us, my elder brother Markel and I. He was eight years older than I was, of hasty, irritable temperament, but kind-hearted and never ironical. He was remarkably silent, especially at home with me, his mother, and the servants. He did well at school, but did not get on with his school-fellows, though he never quarrelled, at least so my mother has told me. Six months before his death, when he was seventeen, he made friends with a political exile who had been banished from Moscow to our town for freethinking, and led a solitary existence there. He was a good scholar who had gained distinction in philosophy in the university. Something made him take a fancy to Markel, and he used to ask him to see him. The young man would spend whole evenings with him during that winter, till the exile was summoned to Petersburg to take up his post again at his own request, as he had powerful friends.

It was the beginning of Lent, and Markel would not fast, he was rude and laughed at it. “That’s all silly twaddle, and there is no God,” he said, horrifying my mother, the servants, and me too. For though I was only nine, I too was aghast at hearing such words. We had four servants, all serfs. I remember my mother selling one of the four, the cook Afimya, who was lame and elderly, for sixty paper roubles, and hiring a free servant to take her place.

In the sixth week in Lent, my brother, who was never strong and had a tendency to consumption, was taken ill. He was tall but thin and delicate-looking, and of very pleasing countenance. I suppose he caught cold, anyway the doctor, who came, soon whispered to my mother that it was galloping consumption, that he would not live through the spring. My mother began weeping, and, careful not to alarm my brother, she entreated him to go to church, to confess and take the sacrament, as he was still able to move about. This made him angry, and he said something profane about the church. He grew thoughtful, however; he guessed at once that he was seriously ill, and that that was why his mother was begging him to confess

and take the sacrament. He had been aware, indeed, for a long time past, that he was far from well, and had a year before coolly observed at dinner to your mother and me, “My life won’t be long among you, I may not live another year,” which seemed now like a prophecy.

Three days passed and Holy Week had come. And on Tuesday morning my brother began going to church. “I am doing this simply for your sake, mother, to please and comfort you,” he said. My mother wept with joy and grief. “His end must be near,” she thought, “if there’s such a change in him.” But he was not able to go to church long, he took to his bed, so he had to confess and take the sacrament at home.

It was a late Easter, and the days were bright, fine, and full of fragrance. I remember he used to cough all night and sleep badly, but in the morning he dressed and tried to sit up in an arm-chair. That’s how I remember him sitting, sweet and gentle, smiling, his face bright and joyous, in spite of his illness. A marvellous change passed over him, his spirit seemed transformed. The old nurse would come in and say, “Let me light the lamp before the holy image, my dear.” And once he would not have allowed it and would have blown it out.

“Light it, light it, dear, I was a wretch to have prevented you doing it. You are praying when you light the lamp, and I am praying when I rejoice seeing you. So we are praying to the same God.”

Those words seemed strange to us, and mother would go to her room and weep, but when she went in to him she wiped her eyes and looked cheerful. “Mother, don’t weep, darling,” he would say, “I’ve long to live yet, long to rejoice with you, and life is glad and joyful.”

“Ah, dear boy, how can you talk of joy when you lie feverish at night, coughing as though you would tear yourself to pieces.”

“Don’t cry, mother,” he would answer, “life is paradise, and we are all in paradise, but we won’t see it; if we would, we should have heaven on earth the next day.”

Everyone wondered at his words, he spoke so strangely and positively; we were all touched and wept. Friends came to see us. “Dear ones,” he would say to them, “what have I done that you should love me so, how can you love anyone like me, and how was it I did not know, I did not appreciate it before?”

When the servants came in to him he would say continually, “Dear, kind people, why are you doing so much for me, do I deserve to be waited on? If

it were God’s will for me to live, I would wait on you, for all men should wait on one another.”

Mother shook her head as she listened. “My darling, it’s your illness makes you talk like that.”

“Mother darling,” he would say, “there must be servants and masters, but if so I will be the servant of my servants, the same as they are to me. And another thing, mother, every one of us has sinned against all men, and I more than any.”

Mother positively smiled at that, smiled through her tears. “Why, how could you have sinned against all men, more than all? Robbers and murderers have done that, but what sin have you committed yet, that you hold yourself more guilty than all?”

“Mother, little heart of mine,” he said (he had begun using such strange caressing words at that time), “little heart of mine, my joy, believe me, everyone is really responsible to all men for all men and for everything. I don’t know how to explain it to you, but I feel it is so, painfully even. And how is it we went on then living, getting angry and not knowing?”

So he would get up every day, more and more sweet and joyous and full of love. When the doctor, an old German called Eisenschmidt, came:

“Well, doctor, have I another day in this world?” he would ask, joking.

“You’ll live many days yet,” the doctor would answer, “and months and years too.”

“Months and years!” he would exclaim. “Why reckon the days? One day is enough for a man to know all happiness. My dear ones, why do we quarrel, try to outshine each other and keep grudges against each other? Let’s go straight into the garden, walk and play there, love, appreciate, and kiss each other, and glorify life.”

“Your son cannot last long,” the doctor told my mother, as she accompanied him the door. “The disease is affecting his brain.”

The windows of his room looked out into the garden, and our garden was a shady one, with old trees in it which were coming into bud. The first birds of spring were flitting in the branches, chirruping and singing at the windows. And looking at them and admiring them, he began suddenly begging their forgiveness too: “Birds of heaven, happy birds, forgive me, for I have sinned against you too.” None of us could understand that at the time, but he shed tears of joy. “Yes,” he said, “there was such a glory of

God all about me: birds, trees, meadows, sky; only I lived in shame and dishonoured it all and did not notice the beauty and glory."

"You take too many sins on yourself," mother used to say, weeping.

"Mother, darling, it's for joy, not for grief I am crying. Though I can't explain it to you, I like to humble myself before them, for I don't know how to love them enough. If I have sinned against everyone, yet all forgive me, too, and that's heaven. Am I not in heaven now?"

And there was a great deal more I don't remember. I remember I went once into his room when there was no one else there. It was a bright evening, the sun was setting, and the whole room was lighted up. He beckoned me, and I went up to him. He put his hands on my shoulders and looked into my face tenderly, lovingly; he said nothing for a minute, only looked at me like that.

"Well," he said, "run and play now, enjoy life for me too."

I went out then and ran to play. And many times in my life afterwards I remembered even with tears how he told me to enjoy life for him too. There were many other marvellous and beautiful sayings of his, though we did not understand them at the time. He died the third week after Easter. He was fully conscious though he could not talk; up to his last hour he did not change. He looked happy, his eyes beamed and sought us, he smiled at us, beckoned us. There was a great deal of talk even in the town about his death. I was impressed by all this at the time, but not too much so, though I cried a good deal at his funeral. I was young then, a child, but a lasting impression, a hidden feeling of it all, remained in my heart, ready to rise up and respond when the time came. So indeed it happened.

(b) Of the Holy Scriptures in the Life of Father Zossima.

I was left alone with my mother. Her friends began advising her to send me to Petersburg as other parents did. "You have only one son now," they said, "and have a fair income, and you will be depriving him perhaps of a brilliant career if you keep him here." They suggested I should be sent to Petersburg to the Cadet Corps, that I might afterwards enter the Imperial Guard. My mother hesitated for a long time, it was awful to part with her only child, but she made up her mind to it at last, though not without many tears, believing she was acting for my happiness. She brought me to Petersburg and put me into the Cadet Corps, and I never saw her again. For she too died three years afterwards. She spent those three years mourning and grieving for both of us.

From the house of my childhood I have brought nothing but precious memories, for there are no memories more precious than those of early childhood in one's first home. And that is almost always so if there is any love and harmony in the family at all. Indeed, precious memories may remain even of a bad home, if only the heart knows how to find what is precious. With my memories of home I count, too, my memories of the Bible, which, child as I was, I was very eager to read at home. I had a book of Scripture history then with excellent pictures, called A Hundred and Four Stories from the Old and New Testament, and I learned to read from it. I have it lying on my shelf now; I keep it as a precious relic of the past. But even before I learned to read, I remember first being moved to devotional feeling at eight years old. My mother took me alone to mass (I don't remember where my brother was at the time) on the Monday before Easter. It was a fine day, and I remember to-day, as though I saw it now, how the incense rose from the censer and softly floated upwards and, overhead in the cupola, mingled in rising waves with the sunlight that streamed in at the little window. I was stirred by the sight, and for the first time in my life I consciously received the seed of God's word in my heart. A youth came out into the middle of the church carrying a big book, so large that at the time I fancied he could scarcely carry it. He laid it on the reading desk, opened it, and began reading, and suddenly for the first time I understood something read in the church of God. In the land of Uz, there lived a man, righteous and God-fearing, and he had great wealth, so many camels, so many sheep and asses, and his children feasted, and he loved them very much and prayed for them. "It may be that my sons have sinned in their feasting." Now the devil came before the Lord together with the sons of God, and said to the Lord that he had gone up and down the earth and under the earth. "And hast thou considered my servant Job?" God asked of him. And God boasted to the devil, pointing to His great and holy servant. And the devil laughed at God's words. "Give him over to me and Thou wilt see that Thy servant will murmur against Thee and curse Thy name." And God gave up the just man He loved so, to the devil. And the devil smote his children and his cattle and scattered his wealth, all of a sudden like a thunderbolt from heaven. And Job rent his mantle and fell down upon the ground and cried aloud, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return into the earth; the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord for ever and ever."

Fathers and teachers, forgive my tears now, for all my childhood rises up again before me, and I breathe now as I breathed then, with the breast of a little child of eight, and I feel as I did then, awe and wonder and gladness. The camels at that time caught my imagination, and Satan, who talked like that with God, and God who gave His servant up to destruction, and His servant crying out: “Blessed be Thy name although Thou dost punish me,” and then the soft and sweet singing in the church: “Let my prayer rise up before Thee,” and again incense from the priest’s censer and the kneeling and the prayer. Ever since then — only yesterday I took it up — I’ve never been able to read that sacred tale without tears. And how much that is great, mysterious and unfathomable there is in it! Afterwards I heard the words of mockery and blame, proud words, “How could God give up the most loved of His saints for the diversion of the devil, take from him his children, smite him with sore boils so that he cleansed the corruption from his sores with a potsherd — and for no object except to boast to the devil ‘See what My saint can suffer for My sake.’ “But the greatness of it lies just in the fact that it is a mystery — that the passing earthly show and the eternal verity are brought together in it. In the face of the earthly truth, the eternal truth is accomplished. The Creator, just as on the first days of creation He ended each day with praise: “That is good that I have created,” looks upon Job and again praises His creation. And Job, praising the Lord, serves not only Him but all His creation for generations and generations, and for ever and ever, since for that he was ordained. Good heavens, what a book it is, and what lessons there are in it! What a book the Bible is, what a miracle, what strength is given with it to man! It is like a mould cast of the world and man and human nature, everything is there, and a law for everything for all the ages. And what mysteries are solved and revealed! God raises Job again, gives him wealth again. Many years pass by, and he has other children and loves them. But how could he love those new ones when those first children are no more, when he has lost them? Remembering them, how could he be fully happy with those new ones, however dear the new ones might be? But he could, he could. It’s the great mystery of human life that old grief passes gradually into quiet, tender joy. The mild serenity of age takes the place of the riotous blood of youth. I bless the rising sun each day, and, as before, my heart sings to meet it, but now I love even more its setting, its long slanting rays and the soft, tender, gentle memories that come with them, the dear images from the whole of my long, happy life — and over all the

Divine Truth, softening, reconciling, forgiving! My life is ending, I know that well, but every day that is left me I feel how earthly life is in touch with a new infinite, unknown, but approaching life, the nearness of which sets my soul quivering with rapture, my mind glowing and my heart weeping with joy.

Friends and teachers, I have heard more than once, and of late one may hear it more often, that the priests, and above all the village priests, are complaining on all sides of their miserable income and their humiliating lot. They plainly state, even in print — I've read it myself — that they are unable to teach the Scriptures to the people because of the smallness of their means, and if Lutherans and heretics come and lead the flock astray, they let them lead them astray because they have so little to live upon. May the Lord increase the sustenance that is so precious to them, for their complaint is just, too. But of a truth I say, if anyone is to blame in the matter, half the fault is ours. For he may be short of time, he may say truly that he is overwhelmed all the while with work and services, but still it's not all the time, even he has an hour a week to remember God. And he does not work the whole year round. Let him gather round him once a week, some hour in the evening, if only the children at first — the fathers will hear of it and they too will begin to come. There's no need to build halls for this, let him take them into his own cottage. They won't spoil his cottage, they would only be there one hour. Let him open that book and begin reading it without grand words or superciliousness, without condescension to them, but gently and kindly, being glad that he is reading to them and that they are listening with attention, loving the words himself, only stopping from time to time to explain words that are not understood by the peasants. Don't be anxious, they will understand everything, the orthodox heart will understand all! Let him read them about Abraham and Sarah, about Isaac and Rebecca, of how Jacob went to Laban and wrestled with the Lord in his dream and said, "This place is holy" — and he will impress the devout mind of the peasant. Let him read, especially to the children, how the brothers sold Joseph, the tender boy, the dreamer and prophet, into bondage, and told their father that a wild beast had devoured him, and showed him his blood-stained clothes. Let him read them how the brothers afterwards journeyed into Egypt for corn, and Joseph, already a great ruler, unrecognised by them, tormented them, accused them, kept his brother Benjamin, and all through love: "I love you, and loving you I torment you." For he remembered all his life

how they had sold him to the merchants in the burning desert by the well, and how, wringing his hands, he had wept and besought his brothers not to sell him as a slave in a strange land. And how, seeing them again after many years, he loved them beyond measure, but he harassed and tormented them in love. He left them at last not able to bear the suffering of his heart, flung himself on his bed and wept. Then, wiping his tears away, he went out to them joyful and told them, “Brothers, I am your brother Joseph” Let him read them further how happy old Jacob was on learning that his darling boy was still alive, and how he went to Egypt leaving his own country, and died in a foreign land, bequeathing his great prophecy that had lain mysteriously hidden in his meek and timid heart all his life, that from his offspring, from Judah, will come the great hope of the world, the Messiah and Saviour.

Fathers and teachers, forgive me and don’t be angry, that like a little child I’ve been babbling of what you know long ago, and can teach me a hundred times more skilfully. I only speak from rapture, and forgive my tears, for I love the Bible. Let him too weep, the priest of God, and be sure that the hearts of his listeners will throb in response. Only a little tiny seed is needed — drop it into the heart of the peasant and it won’t die, it will live in his soul all his life, it will be hidden in the midst of his darkness and sin, like a bright spot, like a great reminder. And there’s no need of much teaching or explanation, he will understand it all simply. Do you suppose that the peasants don’t understand? Try reading them the touching story of the fair Esther and the haughty Vashti; or the miraculous story of Jonah in the whale. Don’t forget either the parables of Our Lord, choose especially from the Gospel of St. Luke (that is what I did), and then from the Acts of the Apostles the conversion of St. Paul (that you mustn’t leave out on any account), and from the Lives of the Saints, for instance, the life of Alexey, the man of God and, greatest of all, the happy martyr and the seer of God, Mary of Egypt — and you will penetrate their hearts with these simple tales. Give one hour a week to it in spite of your poverty, only one little hour. And you will see for yourselves that our people is gracious and grateful, and will repay you a hundred foId. Mindful of the kindness of their priest and the moving words they have heard from him, they will of their own accord help him in his fields and in his house and will treat him with more respect than before — so that it will even increase his worldly well-being too. The thing is so simple that sometimes one is even afraid to put it into words, for fear of being laughed at, and yet how true it is! One who

does not believe in God will not believe in God's people. He who believes in God's people will see His Holiness too, even though he had not believed in it till then. Only the people and their future spiritual power will convert our atheists, who have torn themselves away from their native soil.

And what is the use of Christ's words, unless we set an example? The people is lost without the Word of God, for its soul is athirst for the Word and for all that is good.

In my youth, long ago, nearly forty years ago, I travelled all over Russia with Father Anfim, collecting funds for our monastery, and we stayed one night on the bank of a great navigable river with some fishermen. A good looking peasant lad, about eighteen, joined us; he had to hurry back next morning to pull a merchant's barge along the bank. I noticed him looking straight before him with clear and tender eyes. It was a bright, warm, still, July night, a cool mist rose from the broad river, we could hear the plash of a fish, the birds were still, all was hushed and beautiful, everything praying to God. Only we two were not sleeping, the lad and I, and we talked of the beauty of this world of God's and of the great mystery of it. Every blade of grass, every insect, ant, and golden bee, all so marvellously know their path, though they have not intelligence, they bear witness to the mystery of God and continually accomplish it themselves. I saw the dear lad's heart was moved. He told me that he loved the forest and the forest birds. He was a bird-catcher, knew the note of each of them, could call each bird. "I know nothing better than to be in the forest," said he, "though all things are good."

"Truly," I answered him, "all things are good and fair, because all is truth. Look," said I, "at the horse, that great beast that is so near to man; or the lowly, pensive ox, which feeds him and works for him; look at their faces, what meekness, what devotion to man, who often beats them mercilessly. What gentleness, what confidence and what beauty! It's touching to know that there's no sin in them, for all, all except man, is sinless, and Christ has been with them before us."

"Why," asked the boy, "is Christ with them too?"

"It cannot but be so," said I, "since the Word is for all. All creation and all creatures, every leaf is striving to the Word, singing glory to God, weeping to Christ, unconsciously accomplishing this by the mystery of their sinless life. Yonder," said I, "in the forest wanders the dreadful bear, fierce and menacing, and yet innocent in it." And I told him how once a bear came

to a great saint who had taken refuge in a tiny cell in the wood. And the great saint pitied him, went up to him without fear and gave him a piece of bread. “Go along,” said he, “Christ be with you,” and the savage beast walked away meekly and obediently, doing no harm. And the lad was delighted that the bear had walked away without hurting the saint, and that Christ was with him too. “Ah,” said he, “how good that is, how good and beautiful is all God’s work!” He sat musing softly and sweetly. I saw he understood. And he slept beside me a light and sinless sleep. May God bless youth! And I prayed for him as I went to sleep. Lord, send peace and light to Thy people!

CHAPTER 2

The Duel

(c) Recollections of Father Zossima's Youth before he became a Monk.

I SPENT a long time, almost eight years, in the military cadet school at Petersburg, and in the novelty of my surroundings there, many of my childish impressions grew dimmer, though I forgot nothing. I picked up so many new habits and opinions that I was transformed into a cruel, absurd, almost savage creature. A surface polish of courtesy and society manners I did acquire together with the French language.

But we all, myself included, looked upon the soldiers in our service as cattle. I was perhaps worse than the rest in that respect, for I was so much more impressionable than my companions. By the time we left the school as officers, we were ready to lay down our lives for the honour of the regiment, but no one of us had any knowledge of the real meaning of honour, and if anyone had known it, he would have been the first to ridicule it. Drunkenness, debauchery and devilry were what we almost prided ourselves on. I don't say that we were bad by nature, all these young men were good fellows, but they behaved badly, and I worst of all. What made it worse for me was that I had come into my own money, and so I flung myself into a life of pleasure, and plunged headlong into all the recklessness of youth.

I was fond of reading, yet strange to say, the Bible was the one book I never opened at that time, though I always carried it about with me, and I was never separated from it; in very truth I was keeping that book "for the day and the hour, for the month and the year," though I knew it not.

After four years of this life, I chanced to be in the town of K. where our regiment was stationed at the time. We found the people of the town hospitable, rich, and fond of entertainments. I met with a cordial reception everywhere, as I was of a lively temperament and was known to be well off, which always goes a long way in the world. And then a circumstance happened which was the beginning of it all.

I formed an attachment to a beautiful and intelligent young girl of noble and lofty character, the daughter of people much respected. They were well-to-do people of influence and position. They always gave me a cordial and

friendly reception. I fancied that the young lady looked on me with favour and my heart was aflame at such an idea. Later on I saw and fully realised that I perhaps was not so passionately in love with her at all, but only recognised the elevation of her mind and character, which I could not indeed have helped doing. I was prevented, however, from making her an offer at the time by my selfishness; I was loath to part with the allurements of my free and licentious bachelor life in the heyday of my youth, and with my pockets full of money. I did drop some hint as to my feelings however, though I put off taking any decisive step for a time. Then, all of a sudden, we were ordered off for two months to another district.

On my return two months later, I found the young lady already married to a rich neighbouring landowner, a very amiable man, still young though older than I was, connected with the best Petersburg society, which I was not, and of excellent education, which I also was not. I was so overwhelmed at this unexpected circumstance that my mind was positively clouded. The worst of it all was that, as I learned then, the young landowner had been a long while betrothed to her, and I had met him indeed many times in her house, but blinded by my conceit I had noticed nothing. And this particularly mortified me; almost everybody had known all about it, while I knew nothing. I was filled with sudden irrepressible fury. With flushed face I began recalling how often I had been on the point of declaring my love to her, and as she had not attempted to stop me or to warn me, she must, I concluded, have been laughing at me all the time. Later on, of course, I reflected and remembered that she had been very far from laughing at me; on the contrary, she used to turn off any love-making on my part with a jest and begin talking of other subjects; but at that moment I was incapable of reflecting and was all eagerness for revenge. I am surprised to remember that my wrath and revengeful feelings were extremely repugnant to my own nature, for being of an easy temper, I found it difficult to be angry with anyone for long, and so I had to work myself up artificially and became at last revolting and absurd.

I waited for an opportunity and succeeded in insulting my “rival” in the presence of a large company. I insulted him on a perfectly extraneous pretext, jeering at his opinion upon an important public event — it was in the year 1826 — my jeer was, so people said, clever and effective. Then I forced him to ask for an explanation, and behaved so rudely that he accepted my challenge in spite of the vast inequality between us, as I was

younger, a person of no consequence, and of inferior rank. I learned afterwards for a fact that it was from a jealous feeling on his side also that my challenge was accepted; he had been rather jealous of me on his wife's account before their marriage; he fancied now that if he submitted to be insulted by me and refused to accept my challenge, and if she heard of it, she might begin to despise him and waver in her love for him. I soon found a second in a comrade, an ensign of our regiment. In those days though duels were severely punished, yet duelling was a kind of fashion among the officers — so strong and deeply rooted will a brutal prejudice sometimes be.

It was the end of June, and our meeting was to take place at seven o'clock the next day on the outskirts of the town — and then something happened that in very truth was the turning point of my life. In the evening, returning home in a savage and brutal humour, I flew into a rage with my orderly Afanasy, and gave him two blows in the face with all my might, so that it was covered with blood. He had not long been in my service and I had struck him before, but never with such ferocious cruelty. And, believe me, though it's forty years ago, I recall it now with shame and pain. I went to bed and slept for about three hours; when I waked up the day was breaking. I got up — I did not want to sleep any more — I went to the window — opened it, it looked out upon the garden; I saw the sun rising; it was warm and beautiful, the birds were singing.

"What's the meaning of it?" I thought. "I feel in my heart as it were something vile and shameful. Is it because I am going to shed blood? No," I thought, "I feel it's not that. Can it be that I am afraid of death, afraid of being killed? No, that's not it, that's not it at all."... And all at once I knew what it was: it was because I had beaten Afanasy the evening before! It all rose before my mind, it all was, as it were, repeated over again; he stood before me and I was beating him straight on the face and he was holding his arms stiffly down, his head erect, his eyes fixed upon me as though on parade. He staggered at every blow and did not even dare to raise his hands to protect himself. That is what a man has been brought to, and that was a man beating a fellow creature! What a crime! It was as though a sharp dagger had pierced me right through. I stood as if I were struck dumb, while the sun was shining, the leaves were rejoicing and the birds were trilling the praise of God.... I hid my face in my hands, fell on my bed and broke into a storm of tears. And then I remembered by brother Markel and what he said

on his death-bed to his servants: “My dear ones, why do you wait on me, why do you love me, am I worth your waiting on me?”

“Yes, am I worth it?” flashed through my mind. “After all what am I worth, that another man, a fellow creature, made in the likeness and image of God, should serve me?” For the first time in my life this question forced itself upon me. He had said, “Mother, my little heart, in truth we are each responsible to all for all, it’s only that men don’t know this. If they knew it, the world would be a paradise at once.”

“God, can that too be false?” I thought as I wept. “In truth, perhaps, I am more than all others responsible for all, a greater sinner than all men in the world.” And all at once the whole truth in its full light appeared to me: what was I going to do? I was going to kill a good, clever, noble man, who had done me no wrong, and by depriving his wife of happiness for the rest of her life, I should be torturing and killing her too. I lay thus in my bed with my face in the pillow, heedless how the time was passing. Suddenly my second, the ensign, came in with the pistols to fetch me.

“Ah,” said he, “it’s a good thing you are up already, it’s time we were off, come along!”

I did not know what to do and hurried to and fro undecided; we went out to the carriage, however.

“Wait here a minute,” I said to him. “I’ll be back directly, I have forgotten my purse.”

And I ran back alone, to Afanasy’s little room.

“Afanasy,” I said, “I gave you two blows on the face yesterday, forgive me,” I said.

He started as though he were frightened, and looked at me; and I saw that it was not enough, and on the spot, in my full officer’s uniform, I dropped at his feet and bowed my head to the ground.

“Forgive me,” I said.

Then he was completely aghast.

“Your honour... sir, what are you doing? Am I worth it?”

And he burst out crying as I had done before, hid his face in his hands, turned to the window and shook all over with his sobs. I flew out to my comrade and jumped into the carriage.

“Ready,” I cried. “Have you ever seen a conqueror?” I asked him. “Here is one before you.”

I was in ecstasy, laughing and talking all the way, I don't remember what about.

He looked at me. "Well, brother, you are a plucky fellow, you'll keep up the honour of the uniform, I can see."

So we reached the place and found them there, waiting us. We were placed twelve paces apart; he had the first shot. I stood gaily, looking him full in the face; I did not twitch an eyelash, I looked lovingly at him, for I knew what I would do. His shot just grazed my cheek and ear.

"Thank God," I cried, "no man has been killed," and I seized my pistol, turned back and flung it far away into the wood. "That's the place for you," I cried.

I turned to my adversary.

"Forgive me, young fool that I am, sir," I said, "for my unprovoked insult to you and for forcing you to fire at me. I am ten times worse than you and more, maybe. Tell that to the person whom you hold dearest in the world."

I had no sooner said this than they all three shouted at me.

"Upon my word," cried my adversary, annoyed, "if you did not want to fight, why did not you let me alone?"

"Yesterday I was a fool, to-day I know better," I answered him gaily.

"As to yesterday, I believe you, but as for to-day, it is difficult to agree with your opinion," said he.

"Bravo," I cried, clapping my hands. "I agree with you there too, I have deserved it!"

"Will you shoot, sir, or not?"

"No, I won't," I said; "if you like, fire at me again, but it would be better for you not to fire."

The seconds, especially mine, were shouting too: "Can you disgrace the regiment like this, facing your antagonist and begging his forgiveness! If I'd only known this!"

I stood facing them all, not laughing now.

"Gentlemen," I said, "is it really so wonderful in these days to find a man who can repent of his stupidity and publicly confess his wrongdoing?"

"But not in a duel," cried my second again.

"That's what's so strange," I said. "For I ought to have owned my fault as soon as I got here, before he had fired a shot, before leading him into a great and deadly sin; but we have made our life so grotesque, that to act in

that way would have been almost impossible, for only after I had faced his shot at the distance of twelve paces could my words have any significance for him, and if I had spoken before, he would have said, ‘He is a coward, the sight of the pistols has frightened him, no use to listen to him.’ Gentlemen,” I cried suddenly, speaking straight from my heart, “look around you at the gifts of God, the clear sky, the pure air, the tender grass, the birds; nature is beautiful and sinless, and we, only we, are sinful and foolish, and we don’t understand that life is heaven, for we have only to understand that and it will at once be fulfilled in all its beauty, we shall embrace each other and weep.”

I would have said more but I could not; my voice broke with the sweetness and youthful gladness of it, and there was such bliss in my heart as I had never known before in my life.

“All this is rational and edifying,” said my antagonist, “and in any case you are an original person.”

“You may laugh,” I said to him, laughing too, “but afterwards you will approve of me.”

“Oh, I am ready to approve of you now,” said he; “will you shake hands? for I believe you are genuinely sincere.”

“No,” I said, “not now, later on when I have grown worthier and deserve your esteem, then shake hands and you will do well.”

We went home, my second upbraiding me all the way, while I kissed him. All my comrades heard of the affair at once and gathered together to pass judgment on me the same day.

“He has disgraced the uniform,” they said; “Let him resign his commission.”

Some stood up for me: “He faced the shot,” they said.

“Yes, but he was afraid of his other shot and begged for forgiveness.”

“If he had been afraid of being shot, he would have shot his own pistol first before asking forgiveness, while he flung it loaded into the forest. No, there’s something else in this, something original.”

I enjoyed listening and looking at them. “My dear friends and comrades,” said I, “don’t worry about my resigning my commission, for I have done so already. I have sent in my papers this morning and as soon as I get my discharge I shall go into a monastery — it’s with that object I am leaving the regiment.”

When I had said this every one of them burst out laughing.

“You should have told us of that first, that explains everything, we can’t judge a monk.”

They laughed and could not stop themselves, and not scornfully, but kindly and merrily. They all felt friendly to me at once, even those who had been sternest in their censure, and all the following month, before my discharge came, they could not make enough of me. “Ah, you monk,” they would say. And everyone said something kind to me, they began trying to dissuade me, even to pity me: “What are you doing to yourself?”

“No,” they would say, “he is a brave fellow, he faced fire and could have fired his own pistol too, but he had a dream the night before that he should become a monk, that’s why he did it.”

It was the same thing with the society of the town. Till then I had been kindly received, but had not been the object of special attention, and now all came to know me at once and invited me; they laughed at me, but they loved me. I may mention that although everybody talked openly of our duel, the authorities took no notice of it, because my antagonist was a near relation of our general, and as there had been no bloodshed and no serious consequences, and as I resigned my commission, they took it as a joke. And I began then to speak aloud and fearlessly, regardless of their laughter, for it was always kindly and not spiteful laughter. These conversations mostly took place in the evenings, in the company of ladies; women particularly liked listening to me then and they made the men listen.

“But how can I possibly be responsible for all?” everyone would laugh in my face. “Can I, for instance, be responsible for you?”

“You may well not know it,” I would answer, “since the whole world has long been going on a different line, since we consider the veriest lies as truth and demand the same lies from others. Here I have for once in my life acted sincerely and, well, you all look upon me as a madman. Though you are friendly to me, yet, you see, you all laugh at me.”

“But how can we help being friendly to you?” said my hostess, laughing. The room was full of people. All of a sudden the young lady rose, on whose account the duel had been fought and whom only lately I had intended to be my future wife. I had not noticed her coming into the room. She got up, came to me and held out her hand.

“Let me tell you,” she said, “that I am the first not to laugh at you, but on the contrary I thank you with tears and express my respect for you for your action then.”

Her husband, too, came up and then they all approached me and almost kissed me. My heart was filled with joy, but my attention was especially caught by a middle-aged man who came up to me with the others. I knew him by name already, but had never made his acquaintance nor exchanged a word with him till that evening.

(d) The Mysterious Visitor.

He had long been an official in the town; he was in a prominent position, respected by all, rich and had a reputation for benevolence. He subscribed considerable sums to the almshouse and the orphan asylum; he was very charitable, too, in secret, a fact which only became known after his death. He was a man of about fifty, almost stern in appearance and not much given to conversation. He had been married about ten years and his wife, who was still young, had borne him three children. Well, I was sitting alone in my room the following evening, when my door suddenly opened and this gentleman walked in.

I must mention, by the way, that I was no longer living in my former quarters. As soon as I resigned my commission, I took rooms with an old lady, the widow of a government clerk. My landlady's servant waited upon me, for I had moved into her rooms simply because on my return from the duel I had sent Afanasy back to the regiment, as I felt ashamed to look him in the face after my last interview with him. So prone is the man of the world to be ashamed of any righteous action.

"I have," said my visitor, "with great interest listened to you speaking in different houses the last few days and I wanted at last to make your personal acquaintance, so as to talk to you more intimately. Can you, dear sir, grant me this favour?"

"I can, with the greatest pleasure, and I shall look upon it as an honour." I said this, though I felt almost dismayed, so greatly was I impressed from the first moment by the appearance of this man. For though other people had listened to me with interest and attention, no one had come to me before with such a serious, stern, and concentrated expression. And now he had come to see me in my own rooms. He sat down.

"You are, I see, a man of great strength of character" he said; "as you have dared to serve the truth, even when by doing so you risked incurring the contempt of all."

"Your praise is, perhaps, excessive," I replied.

“No, it’s not excessive,” he answered; “believe me, such a course of action is far more difficult than you think. It is that which has impressed me, and it is only on that account that I have come to you,” he continued. “Tell me, please, that is if you are not annoyed by my perhaps unseemly curiosity, what were your exact sensations, if you can recall them, at the moment when you made up your mind to ask forgiveness at the duel. Do not think my question frivolous; on the contrary, I have in asking the question a secret motive of my own, which I will perhaps explain to you later on, if it is God’s will that we should become more intimately acquainted.”

All the while he was speaking, I was looking at him straight into the face and I felt all at once a complete trust in him and great curiosity on my side also, for I felt that there was some strange secret in his soul.

“You ask what were my exact sensations at the moment when I asked my opponent’s forgiveness,” I answered; “but I had better tell you from the beginning what I have not yet told anyone else.” And I described all that had passed between Afanasy and me, and how I had bowed down to the ground at his feet. “From that you can see for yourself,” I concluded, “that at the time of the duel it was easier for me, for I had made a beginning already at home, and when once I had started on that road, to go farther along it was far from being difficult, but became a source of joy and happiness.”

I liked the way he looked at me as he listened. “All that,” he said, “is exceedingly interesting. I will come to see you again and again.”

And from that time forth he came to see me nearly every evening. And we should have become greater friends, if only he had ever talked of himself. But about himself he scarcely ever said a word, yet continually asked me about myself. In spite of that I became very fond of him and spoke with perfect frankness to him about all my feelings; “for,” thought I, “what need have I to know his secrets, since I can see without that that is a good man? Moreover, though he is such a serious man and my senior, he comes to see a youngster like me and treats me as his equal.” And I learned a great deal that was profitable from him, for he was a man of lofty mind.

“That life is heaven,” he said to me suddenly, “that I have long been thinking about”; and all at once he added, “I think of nothing else indeed.” He looked at me and smiled. “I am more convinced of it than you are, I will tell you later why.”

I listened to him and thought that he evidently wanted to tell me something.

“Heaven,” he went on, “lies hidden within all of us — here it lies hidden in me now, and if I will it, it will be revealed to me to-morrow and for all time.”

I looked at him; he was speaking with great emotion and gazing mysteriously at me, as if he were questioning me.

“And that we are all responsible to all for all, apart from our own sins, you were quite right in thinking that, and it is wonderful how you could comprehend it in all its significance at once. And in very truth, so soon as men understand that, the Kingdom of Heaven will be for them not a dream, but a living reality.”

“And when,” I cried out to him bitterly, “when will that come to pass? and will it ever come to pass? Is not it simply a dream of ours?”

“What then, you don’t believe it,” he said. “You preach it and don’t believe it yourself. Believe me, this dream, as you call it, will come to pass without doubt; it will come, but not now, for every process has its law. It’s a spiritual, psychological process. To transform the world, to recreate it afresh, men must turn into another path psychologically. Until you have become really, in actual fact, a brother to everyone, brotherhood will not come to pass. No sort of scientific teaching, no kind of common interest, will ever teach men to share property and privileges with equal consideration for all. Everyone will think his share too small and they will be always envying, complaining and attacking one another. You ask when it will come to pass; it will come to pass, but first we have to go though the period of isolation.”

“What do you mean by isolation?” I asked him.

“Why, the isolation that prevails everywhere, above all in our age — it has not fully developed, it has not reached its limit yet. For everyone strives to keep his individuality as apart as possible, wishes to secure the greatest possible fullness of life for himself; but meantime all his efforts result not in attaining fullness of life but self-destruction, for instead of self-realisation he ends by arriving at complete solitude. All mankind in our age have split up into units, they all keep apart, each in his own groove; each one holds aloof, hides himself and hides what he has, from the rest, and he ends by being repelled by others and repelling them. He heaps up riches by himself and thinks, ‘How strong I am now and how secure,’ and in his madness he

does not understand that the more he heaps up, the more he sinks into self-destructive impotence. For he is accustomed to rely upon himself alone and to cut himself off from the whole; he has trained himself not to believe in the help of others, in men and in humanity, and only trembles for fear he should lose his money and the privileges that he has won for himself. Everywhere in these days men have, in their mockery, ceased to understand that the true security is to be found in social solidarity rather than in isolated individual effort. But this terrible individualism must inevitably have an end, and all will suddenly understand how unnaturally they are separated from one another. It will be the spirit of the time, and people will marvel that they have sat so long in darkness without seeing the light. And then the sign of the Son of Man will be seen in the heavens.... But, until then, we must keep the banner flying. Sometimes even if he has to do it alone, and his conduct seems to be crazy, a man must set an example, and so draw men's souls out of their solitude, and spur them to some act of brotherly love, that the great idea may not die."

Our evenings, one after another, were spent in such stirring and fervent talk. I gave up society and visited my neighbours much less frequently. Besides, my vogue was somewhat over. I say this, not as blame, for they still loved me and treated me good-humouredly, but there's no denying that fashion is a great power in society. I began to regard my mysterious visitor with admiration, for besides enjoying his intelligence, I began to perceive that he was brooding over some plan in his heart, and was preparing himself perhaps for a great deed. Perhaps he liked my not showing curiosity about his secret, not seeking to discover it by direct question nor by insinuation. But I noticed at last, that he seemed to show signs of wanting to tell me something. This had become quite evident, indeed, about a month after he first began to visit me.

"Do you know," he said to me once, "that people are very inquisitive about us in the town and wonder why I come to see you so often. But let them wonder, for soon all will be explained."

Sometimes an extraordinary agitation would come over him, and almost always on such occasions he would get up and go away. Sometimes he would fix a long piercing look upon me, and I thought, "He will say something directly now." But he would suddenly begin talking of something ordinary and familiar. He often complained of headache too.

One day, quite unexpectedly indeed, after he had been talking with great fervour a long time, I saw him suddenly turn pale, and his face worked convulsively, while he stared persistently at me.

“What’s the matter?” I said; “do you feel ill?” — he had just been complaining of headache.

“I... do you know... I murdered someone.”

He said this and smiled with a face as white as chalk. “Why is it he is smiling?” The thought flashed through my mind before I realised anything else. I too turned pale.

“What are you saying?” I cried.

“You see,” he said, with a pale smile, “how much it has cost me to say the first word. Now I have said it, I feel I’ve taken the first step and shall go on.”

For a long while I could not believe him, and I did not believe him at that time, but only after he had been to see me three days running and told me all about it. I thought he was mad, but ended by being convinced, to my great grief and amazement. His crime was a great and terrible one.

Fourteen years before, he had murdered the widow of a landowner, a wealthy and handsome young woman who had a house in our town. He fell passionately in love with her, declared his feeling and tried to persuade her to marry him. But she had already given her heart to another man, an officer of noble birth and high rank in the service, who was at that time away at the front, though she was expecting him soon to return. She refused his offer and begged him not to come and see her. After he had ceased to visit her, he took advantage of his knowledge of the house to enter at night through the garden by the roof, at great risk of discovery. But, as often happens, a crime committed with extraordinary audacity is more successful than others.

Entering the garret through the skylight, he went down the ladder, knowing that the door at the bottom of it was sometimes, through the negligence of the servants, left unlocked. He hoped to find it so, and so it was. He made his way in the dark to her bedroom, where a light was burning. As though on purpose, both her maids had gone off to a birthday party in the same street, without asking leave. The other servants slept in the servants’ quarters or in the kitchen on the ground floor. His passion flamed up at the sight of her asleep, and then vindictive, jealous anger took possession of his heart, and like a drunken man, beside himself, he thrust a knife into her heart, so that she did not even cry out. Then with devilish and

criminal cunning he contrived that suspicion should fall on the servants. He was so base as to take her purse, to open her chest with keys from under her pillow, and to take some things from it, doing it all as it might have been done by an ignorant servant, leaving valuable papers and taking only money. He took some of the larger gold things, but left smaller articles that were ten times as valuable. He took with him, too, some things for himself as remembrances, but of that later. Having done this awful deed. he returned by the way he had come.

Neither the next day, when the alarm was raised, nor at any time after in his life, did anyone dream of suspecting that he was the criminal. No one indeed knew of his love for her, for he was always reserved and silent and had no friend to whom he would have opened his heart. He was looked upon simply as an acquaintance, and not a very intimate one, of the murdered woman, as for the previous fortnight he had not even visited her. A serf of hers called Pyotr was at once suspected, and every circumstance confirmed the suspicion. The man knew — indeed his mistress did not conceal the fact — that having to send one of her serfs as a recruit she had decided to send him, as he had no relations and his conduct was unsatisfactory. People had heard him angrily threatening to murder her when he was drunk in a tavern. Two days before her death, he had run away, staying no one knew where in the town. The day after the murder, he was found on the road leading out of the town, dead drunk, with a knife in his pocket, and his right hand happened to be stained with blood. He declared that his nose had been bleeding, but no one believed him. The maids confessed that they had gone to a party and that the street door had been left open till they returned. And a number of similar details came to light, throwing suspicion on the innocent servant.

They arrested him, and he was tried for the murder; but a week after the arrest, the prisoner fell sick of a fever and died unconscious in the hospital. There the matter ended and the judges and the authorities and everyone in the town remained convinced that the crime had been committed by no one but the servant who had died in the hospital. And after that the punishment began.

My mysterious visitor, now my friend, told me that at first he was not in the least troubled by pangs of conscience. He was miserable a long time, but not for that reason; only from regret that he had killed the woman he loved, that she was no more, that in killing her he had killed his love, while

the fire of passion was still in his veins. But of the innocent blood he had shed, of the murder of a fellow creature, he scarcely thought. The thought that his victim might have become the wife of another man was insupportable to him, and so, for a long time, he was convinced in his conscience that he could not have acted otherwise.

At first he was worried at the arrest of the servant, but his illness and death soon set his mind at rest, for the man's death was apparently (so he reflected at the time) not owing to his arrest or his fright, but a chill he had taken on the day he ran away, when he had lain all night dead drunk on the damp ground. The theft of the money and other things troubled him little, for he argued that the theft had not been committed for gain but to avert suspicion. The sum stolen was small, and he shortly afterwards subscribed the whole of it, and much more, towards the funds for maintaining an almshouse in the town. He did this on purpose to set his conscience at rest about the theft, and it's a remarkable fact that for a long time he really was at peace — he told me this himself. He entered then upon a career of great activity in the service, volunteered for a difficult and laborious duty, which occupied him two years, and being a man of strong will almost forgot the past. Whenever he recalled it, he tried not to think of it at all. He became active in philanthropy too, founded and helped to maintain many institutions in the town, did a good deal in the two capitals, and in both Moscow and Petersburg was elected a member of philanthropic societies.

At last, however, he began brooding over the past, and the strain of it was too much for him. Then he was attracted by a fine and intelligent girl and soon after married her, hoping that marriage would dispel his lonely depression, and that by entering on a new life and scrupulously doing his duty to his wife and children, he would escape from old memories altogether. But the very opposite of what he expected happened. He began, even in the first month of his marriage, to be continually fretted by the thought, "My wife loves me — but what if she knew?" When she first told him that she would soon bear him a child, he was troubled. "I am giving life, but I have taken life." Children came. "How dare I love them, teach and educate them, how can I talk to them of virtue? I have shed blood." They were splendid children, he longed to caress them; "and I can't look at their innocent candid faces, I am unworthy."

At last he began to be bitterly and ominously haunted by the blood of his murdered victim, by the young life he had destroyed, by the blood that cried

out for vengeance. He had begun to have awful dreams. But, being a man of fortitude, he bore his suffering a long time, thinking: “I shall expiate everything by this secret agony.” But that hope, too, was vain; the longer it went on, the more intense was his suffering.

He was respected in society for his active benevolence, though everyone was overawed by his stern and gloomy character. But the more he was respected, the more intolerable it was for him. He confessed to me that he had thoughts of killing himself. But he began to be haunted by another idea — an idea which he had at first regarded as impossible and unthinkable, though at last it got such a hold on his heart that he could not shake it off. He dreamed of rising up, going out and confessing in the face of all men that he had committed murder. For three years this dream had pursued him, haunting him in different forms. At last he believed with his whole heart that if he confessed his crime, he would heal his soul and would be at peace for ever. But this belief filled his heart with terror, for how could he carry it out? And then came what happened at my duel.

“Looking at you, I have made up my mind.”

I looked at him.

“Is it possible,” I cried, clasping my hands, “that such a trivial incident could give rise to a resolution in you?”

“My resolution has been growing for the last three years,” he answered, “and your story only gave the last touch to it. Looking at you, I reproached myself and envied you.” He said this to me almost sullenly.

“But you won’t be believed,” I observed; “it’s fourteen years ago.”

“I have proofs, great proofs. I shall show them.”

Then I cried and kissed him.

“Tell me one thing, one thing,” he said (as though it all depended upon me), “my wife, my children! My wife may die of grief, and though my children won’t lose their rank and property, they’ll be a convict’s children and for ever! And what a memory, what a memory of me I shall leave in their hearts!”

I said nothing.

“And to part from them, to leave them for ever? It’s for ever, you know, for ever!” I sat still and repeated a silent prayer. I got up at last, I felt afraid.

“Well?” He looked at me.

“Go!” said I, “confess. Everything passes, only the truth remains. Your children will understand, when they grow up, the nobility of your

resolution.”

He left me that time as though he had made up his mind. Yet for more than a fortnight afterwards, he came to me every evening, still preparing himself, still unable to bring himself to the point. He made my heart ache. One day he would come determined and say fervently:

“I know it will be heaven for me, heaven, the moment I confess. Fourteen years I’ve been in hell. I want to suffer. I will take my punishment and begin to live. You can pass through the world doing wrong, but there’s no turning back. Now I dare not love my neighbour nor even my own children. Good God, my children will understand, perhaps, what my punishment has cost me and will not condemn me! God is not in strength but in truth.”

“All will understand your sacrifice,” I said to him, “if not at once, they will understand later; for you have served truth, the higher truth, not of the earth.”

And he would go away seeming comforted, but next day he would come again, bitter, pale, sarcastic.

“Every time I come to you, you look at me so inquisitively as though to say, ‘He has still not confessed!’ Wait a bit, don’t despise me too much. It’s not such an easy thing to do as you would think. Perhaps I shall not do it at all. You won’t go and inform against me then, will you?”

And far from looking at him with indiscreet curiosity, I was afraid to look at him at all. I was quite ill from anxiety, and my heart was full of tears. I could not sleep at night.

“I have just come from my wife,” he went on. “Do you understand what the word ‘wife’ means? When I went out, the children called to me, ‘Good-bye, father, make haste back to read The Children’s Magazine with us.’ No, you don’t understand that! No one is wise from another man’s woe.”

His eyes were glittering, his lips were twitching. Suddenly he struck the table with his fist so that everything on it danced — it was the first time he had done such a thing, he was such a mild man.

“But need I?” he exclaimed, “must I? No one has been condemned, no one has been sent to Siberia in my place, the man died of fever. And I’ve been punished by my sufferings for the blood I shed. And I shan’t be believed, they won’t believe my proofs. Need I confess, need I? I am ready to go on suffering all my life for the blood I have shed, if only my wife and children may be spared. Will it be just to ruin them with me? Aren’t we

making a mistake? What is right in this case? And will people recognise it, will they appreciate it, will they respect it?”

“Good Lord!” I thought to myself, “he is thinking of other people’s respect at such a moment!” And I felt so sorry for him then, that I believe I would have shared his fate if it could have comforted him. I saw he was beside himself. I was aghast, realising with my heart as well as my mind what such a resolution meant.

“Decide my fate!” he exclaimed again.

“Go and confess,” I whispered to him. My voice failed me, but I whispered it firmly. I took up the New Testament from the table, the Russian translation, and showed him the Gospel of St. John, chapter 12, verse 24: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

I had just been reading that verse when he came in. He read it.

“That’s true,” he said, he smiled bitterly. “It’s terrible the things you find in those books,” he said, after a pause. “It’s easy enough to thrust them upon one. And who wrote them? Can they have been written by men?”

“The Holy Spirit wrote them,” said I.

“It’s easy for you to prate,” he smiled again, this time almost with hatred.

I took the book again, opened it in another place and showed him the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 10, verse 31. He read: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

He read it and simply flung down the book. He was trembling all over.

“An awful text,” he said. “There’s no denying you’ve picked out fitting ones.” He rose from the chair. “Well!” he said, “good-bye, perhaps I shan’t come again... we shall meet in heaven. So I have been for fourteen years ‘in the hands of the living God,’ that’s how one must think of those fourteen years. To-morrow I will beseech those hands to let me go.”

I wanted to take him in my arms and kiss him, but I did not dare — his face was contorted and sombre. He went away.

“Good God,” I thought, “what has he gone to face!” I fell on my knees before the ikon and wept for him before the Holy Mother of God, our swift defender and helper. I was half an hour praying in tears, and it was late, about midnight. Suddenly I saw the door open and he came in again. I was surprised.

Where have you been?” I asked him.

“I think,” he said, “I’ve forgotten something... my handkerchief, I think.... Well, even if I’ve not forgotten anything, let me stay a little.”

He sat down. I stood over him.

“You sit down, too,” said he.

I sat down. We sat still for two minutes; he looked intently at me and suddenly smiled. I remembered that — then he got up, embraced me warmly and kissed me.

“Remember,” he said, “how I came to you a second time. Do you hear, remember it!”

And he went out.

“To-morrow,” I thought.

And so it was. I did not know that evening that the next day was his birthday. I had not been out for the last few days, so I had no chance of hearing it from anyone. On that day he always had a great gathering, everyone in the town went to it. It was the same this time. After dinner he walked into the middle of the room, with a paper in his hand — a formal declaration to the chief of his department who was present. This declaration he read aloud to the whole assembly. It contained a full account of the crime, in every detail.

“I cut myself off from men as a monster. God has visited me,” he said in conclusion. “I want to suffer for my sin!”

Then he brought out and laid on the table all the things he had been keeping for fourteen years, that he thought would prove his crime, the jewels belonging to the murdered woman which he had stolen to divert suspicion, a cross and a locket taken from her neck with a portrait of her betrothed in the locket, her notebook and two letters; one from her betrothed, telling her that he would soon be with her, and her unfinished answer left on the table to be sent off next day. He carried off these two letters — what for? Why had he kept them for fourteen years afterwards instead of destroying them as evidence against him?

And this is what happened: everyone was amazed and horrified, everyone refused to believe it and thought that he was deranged, though all listened with intense curiosity. A few days later it was fully decided and agreed in every house that the unhappy man was mad. The legal authorities could not refuse to take the case up, but they too dropped it. Though the trinkets and letters made them ponder, they decided that even if they did turn out to be authentic, no charge could be based on those alone. Besides,

she might have given him those things as a friend, or asked him to take care of them for her. I heard afterwards, however, that the genuineness of the things was proved by the friends and relations of the murdered woman, and that there was no doubt about them. Yet nothing was destined to come of it, after all.

Five days later, all had heard that he was ill and that his life was in danger. The nature of his illness I can't explain; they said it was an affection of the heart. But it became known that the doctors had been induced by his wife to investigate his mental condition also, and had come to the conclusion that it was a case of insanity. I betrayed nothing, though people ran to question me. But when I wanted to visit him, I was for a long while forbidden to do so, above all by his wife.

"It's you who have caused his illness," she said to me; "he was always gloomy, but for the last year people noticed that he was peculiarly excited and did strange things, and now you have been the ruin of him. Your preaching has brought him to this; for the last month he was always with you."

Indeed, not only his wife but the whole town were down upon me and blamed me. "It's all your doing," they said. I was silent and indeed rejoiced at heart, for I saw plainly God's mercy to the man who had turned against himself and punished himself. I could not believe in his insanity.

They let me see him at last. he insisted upon saying good-bye to me. I went in to him and saw at once, that not only his days, but his hours were numbered. He was weak, yellow, his hands trembled, he gasped for breath, but his face was full of tender and happy feeling.

"It is done!" he said. "I've long been yearning to see you. Why didn't you come?"

I did not tell him that they would not let me see him.

"God has had pity on me and is calling me to Himself. I know I am dying, but I feel joy and peace for the first time after so many years. There was heaven in my heart from the moment I had done what I had to do. Now I dare to love my children and to kiss them. Neither my wife nor the judges, nor anyone has believed it. My children will never believe it either. I see in that God's mercy to them. I shall die, and my name will be without a stain for them. And now I feel God near, my heart rejoices as in Heaven... I have done my duty."

He could not speak, he gasped for breath, he pressed my hand warmly, looking fervently at me. We did not talk for long, his wife kept peeping in at us. But he had time to whisper to me:

"Do you remember how I came back to you that second time, at midnight? I told you to remember it. You know what I came back for? I came to kill you!"

I started.

"I went out from you then into the darkness, I wandered about the streets, struggling with myself. And suddenly I hated you so that I could hardly bear it. Now, I thought, he is all that binds me, and he is my judge. I can't refuse to face my punishment to-morrow, for he knows all. It was not that I was afraid you would betray me (I never even thought of that), but I thought, 'How can I look him in the face if I don't confess?' And if you had been at the other end of the earth, but alive, it would have been all the same, the thought was unendurable that you were alive knowing everything and condemning me. I hated you as though you were the cause, as though you were to blame for everything. I came back to you then, remembering that you had a dagger lying on your table. I sat down and asked you to sit down, and for a whole minute I pondered. If I had killed you, I should have been ruined by that murder even if I had not confessed the other. But I didn't think about that at all, and I didn't want to think of it at that moment. I only hated you and longed to revenge myself on you for everything. The Lord vanquished the devil in my heart. But let me tell you, you were never nearer death."

A week later he died. The whole town followed him to the grave. The chief priest made a speech full of feeling. All lamented the terrible illness that had cut short his days. But all the town was up in arms against me after the funeral, and people even refused to see me. Some, at first a few and afterwards more, began indeed to believe in the truth of his story, and they visited me and questioned me with great interest and eagerness, for man loves to see the downfall and disgrace of the righteous. But I held my tongue, and very shortly after, I left the town, and five months later by God's grace I entered the safe and blessed path, praising the unseen finger which had guided me so clearly to it. But I remember in my prayer to this day, the servant of God, Mihail, who suffered so greatly.

CHAPTER 3

Conversations and Exhortations of Father Zossima

(e) The Russian Monk and his possible Significance.

FATHERS and teachers, what is the monk? In the cultivated world the word is nowadays pronounced by some people with a jeer, and by others it is used as a term of abuse, and this contempt for the monk is growing. It is true, alas, it is true, that there are many sluggards, gluttons, profligates, and insolent beggars among monks. Educated people point to these: “You are idlers, useless members of society, you live on the labour of others, you are shameless beggars.” And yet how many meek and humble monks there are, yearning for solitude and fervent prayer in peace! These are less noticed, or passed over in silence. And how suprised men would be if I were to say that from these meek monks, who yearn for solitary prayer, the salvation of Russia will come perhaps once more! For they are in truth made ready in peace and quiet “for the day and the hour, the month and the year.” Meanwhile, in their solitude, they keep the image of Christ fair and undefiled, in the purity of God’s truth, from the times of the Fathers of old, the Apostles and the martyrs. And when the time comes they will show it to the tottering creeds of the world. That is a great thought. That star will rise out of the East.

That is my view of the monk, and is it false? Is it too proud? Look at the worldly and all who set themselves up above the people of God; has not God’s image and His truth been distorted in them? They have science; but in science there is nothing but what is the object of sense. The spiritual world, the higher part of man’s being is rejected altogether, dismissed with a sort of triumph, even with hatred. The world has proclaimed the reign of freedom, especially of late, but what do we see in this freedom of theirs? Nothing but slavery and self-destruction! For the world says:

“You have desires and so satisfy them, for you have the same rights as the most rich and powerful. Don’t be afraid of satisfying them and even multiply your desires.” That is the modern doctrine of the world. In that they see freedom. And what follows from this right of multiplication of desires? In the rich, isolation and spiritual suicide; in the poor, envy and murder; for they have been given rights, but have not been shown the means

of satisfying their wants. They maintain that the world is getting more and more united, more and more bound together in brotherly community, as it overcomes distance and sets thoughts flying through the air.

Alas, put no faith in such a bond of union. Interpreting freedom as the multiplication and rapid satisfaction of desires, men distort their own nature, for many senseless and foolish desires and habits and ridiculous fancies are fostered in them. They live only for mutual envy, for luxury and ostentation. To have dinners visits, carriages, rank, and slaves to wait on one is looked upon as a necessity, for which life, honour and human feeling are sacrificed, and men even commit suicide if they are unable to satisfy it. We see the same thing among those who are not rich, while the poor drown their unsatisfied need and their envy in drunkenness. But soon they will drink blood instead of wine, they are being led on to it. I ask you is such a man free? I knew one “champion of freedom” who told me himself that, when he was deprived of tobacco in prison, he was so wretched at the privation that he almost went and betrayed his cause for the sake of getting tobacco again! And such a man says, “I am fighting for the cause of humanity.”

How can such a one fight? What is he fit for? He is capable perhaps of some action quickly over, but he cannot hold out long. And it’s no wonder that instead of gaining freedom they have sunk into slavery, and instead of serving, the cause of brotherly love and the union of humanity have fallen, on the contrary, into dissension and isolation, as my mysterious visitor and teacher said to me in my youth. And therefore the idea of the service of humanity, of brotherly love and the solidarity of mankind, is more and more dying out in the world, and indeed this idea is sometimes treated with derision. For how can a man shake off his habits? What can become of him if he is in such bondage to the habit of satisfying the innumerable desires he has created for himself? He is isolated, and what concern has he with the rest of humanity? They have succeeded in accumulating a greater mass of objects, but the joy in the world has grown less.

The monastic way is very different. Obedience, fasting, and prayer are laughed at, yet only through them lies the way to real, true freedom. I cut off my superfluous and unnecessary desires, I subdue my proud and wanton will and chastise it with obedience, and with God’s help I attain freedom of spirit and with it spiritual joy. Which is most capable of conceiving a great idea and serving it — the rich in his isolation or the man who has freed

himself from the tyranny of material things and habits? The monk is reproached for his solitude, “You have secluded yourself within the walls of the monastery for your own salvation, and have forgotten the brotherly service of humanity!” But we shall see which will be most zealous in the cause of brotherly love. For it is not we, but they, who are in isolation, though they don’t see that. Of old, leaders of the people came from among us, and why should they not again? The same meek and humble ascetics will rise up and go out to work for the great cause. The salvation of Russia comes from the people. And the Russian monk has always been on the side of the people. We are isolated only if the people are isolated. The people believe as we do, and an unbelieving reformer will never do anything in Russia, even if he is sincere in heart and a genius. Remember that! The people will meet the atheist and overcome him, and Russia will be one and orthodox. Take care of the peasant and guard his heart. Go on educating him quietly. That’s your duty as monks, for the peasant has God in his heart.

(f) Of Masters and Servants, and of whether it is possible for them to be Brothers in the Spirit.

Of course, I don’t deny that there is sin in the peasants too. And the fire of corruption is spreading visibly, hourly, working from above downwards. The spirit of isolation is coming upon the people too. Money-lenders and devourers of the commune are rising up. Already the merchant grows more and more eager for rank, and strives to show himself cultured though he has not a trace of culture, and to this end meanly despises his old traditions, and is even ashamed of the faith of his fathers. He visits princes, though he is only a peasant corrupted. The peasants are rotting in drunkenness and cannot shake off the habit. And what cruelty to their wives, to their children even! All from drunkenness! I’ve seen in the factories children of nine years old, frail, rickety, bent and already depraved. The stuffy workshop, the din of machinery, work all day long, the vile language and the drink, the drink — is that what a little child’s heart needs? He needs sunshine, childish play, good examples all about him, and at least a little love. There must be no more of this, monks, no more torturing of children, rise up and preach that, make haste, make haste!

But God will save Russia, for though the peasants are corrupted and cannot renounce their filthy sin, yet they know it is cursed by God and that they do wrong in sinning. So that our people still believe in righteousness, have faith in God and weep tears of devotion.

It is different with the upper classes. They, following science, want to base justice on reason alone, but not with Christ, as before, and they have already proclaimed that there is no crime, that there is no sin. And that's consistent, for if you have no God what is the meaning of crime? In Europe the people are already rising up against the rich with violence, and the leaders of the people are everywhere leading them to bloodshed, and teaching them that their wrath is righteous. But their "wrath is accursed, for it is cruel." But God will save Russia as He has saved her many times. Salvation will come from the people, from their faith and their meekness.

Fathers and teachers, watch over the people's faith and this will not be a dream. I've been struck all my life in our great people by their dignity, their true and seemly dignity. I've seen it myself, I can testify to it, I've seen it and marvelled at it, I've seen it in spite of the degraded sins and poverty-stricken appearance of our peasantry. They are not servile, and even after two centuries of serfdom they are free in manner and bearing, yet without insolence, and not revengeful and not envious. "You are rich and noble, you are clever and talented, well, be so, God bless you. I respect you, but I know that I too am a man. By the very fact that I respect you without envy I prove my dignity as a man."

In truth if they don't say this (for they don't know how to say this yet), that is how they act. I have seen it myself, I have known it myself, and, would you believe it, the poorer our Russian peasant is, the more noticeable is that serene goodness, for the rich among them are for the most part corrupted already, and much of that is due to our carelessness and indifference. But God will save His people, for Russia is great in her humility. I dream of seeing, and seem to see clearly already, our future. It will come to pass that even the most corrupt of our rich will end by being ashamed of his riches before the poor, and the poor, seeing his humility, will understand and give way before him, will respond joyfully and kindly to his honourable shame. Believe me that it will end in that; things are moving to that. Equality is to be found only in the spiritual dignity of man, and that will only be understood among us. If we were brothers, there would be fraternity, but before that they will never agree about the division of wealth. We preserve the image of Christ, and it will shine forth like a precious diamond to the whole world. So may it be, so may it be!

Fathers and teachers, a touching incident befell me once. In my wanderings I met in the town of K. my old orderly, Afanasy. It was eight

years since I had parted from him. He chanced to see me in the market-place, recognised me, ran up to me, and how delighted he was! He simply pounced on me: “Master dear, is it you? Is it really you I see?” He took me home with him.

He was no longer in the army, he was married and already had two little children. He and his wife earned their living as costermongers in the market-place. His room was poor, but bright and clean. He made me sit down, set the samovar, sent for his wife, as though my appearance were a festival for them. He brought me his children: “Bless them, Father.”

“Is it for me to bless them? I am only a humble monk. I will pray for them. And for you, Afanasy Pavlovitch, I have prayed every day since that day, for it all came from you,” said I. And I explained that to him as well as I could. And what do you think? The man kept gazing at me and could not believe that I, his former master, an officer, was now before him in such a guise and position; it made him shed tears.

“Why are you weeping?” said I, “better rejoice over me, dear friend, whom I can never forget, for my path is a glad and joyful one.”

He did not say much, but kept sighing and shaking his head over me tenderly.

“What has become of your fortune?” he asked.

“I gave it to the monastery,” I answered; “we live in common.”

After tea I began saying good-bye, and suddenly he brought out half a rouble as an offering to the monastery, and another half-rouble I saw him thrusting hurriedly into my hand: “That’s for you in your wanderings, it may be of use to you, Father.”

I took his half-rouble, bowed to him and his wife, and went out rejoicing. And on my way I thought: “Here we are both now, he at home and I on the road, sighing and shaking our heads, no doubt, and yet smiling joyfully in the gladness of our hearts, remembering how God brought about our meeting.”

I have never seen him again since then. I had been his master and he my servant, but now when we exchanged a loving kiss with softened hearts, there was a great human bond between us. I have thought a great deal about that, and now what I think is this: Is it so inconceivable that that grand and simple-hearted unity might in due time become universal among the Russian people? I believe that it will come to pass and that the time is at hand.

And of servants I will add this: In old days when I was young I was often angry with servants; “the cook had served something too hot, the orderly had not brushed my clothes.” But what taught me better then was a thought of my dear brother’s, which I had heard from him in childhood: “Am I worth it, that another should serve me and be ordered about by me in his poverty and ignorance?” And I wondered at the time that such simple and self-evident ideas should be so slow to occur to our minds.

It is impossible that there should be no servants in the world, but act so that your servant may be freer in spirit than if he were not a servant. And why cannot I be a servant to my servant and even let him see it, and that without any pride on my part or any mistrust on his? Why should not my servant be like my own kindred, so that I may take him into my family and rejoice in doing so? Even now this can be done, but it will lead to the grand unity of men in the future, when a man will not seek servants for himself, or desire to turn his fellow creatures into servants as he does now, but on the contrary, will long with his whole heart to be the servant of all, as the Gospel teaches.

And can it be a dream, that in the end man will find his joy only in deeds of light and mercy, and not in cruel pleasures as now, in gluttony, fornication, ostentation, boasting and envious rivalry of one with the other? I firmly believe that it is not and that the time is at hand. People laugh and ask: “When will that time come and does it look like coming?” I believe that with Christ’s help we shall accomplish this great thing. And how many ideas there have been on earth in the history of man which were unthinkable ten years before they appeared! Yet when their destined hour had come, they came forth and spread over the whole earth. So it will be with us, and our people will shine forth in the world, and all men will say: “The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone of the building.”

And we may ask the scornful themselves: If our hope is a dream, when will you build up your edifice and order things justly by your intellect alone, without Christ? If they declare that it is they who are advancing towards unity, only the most simple-hearted among them believe it, so that one may positively marvel at such simplicity. Of a truth, they have more fantastic dreams than we. They aim at justice, but, denying Christ, they will end by flooding the earth with blood, for blood cries out for blood, and he that taketh up the sword shall perish by the sword. And if it were not for Christ’s covenant, they would slaughter one another down to the last two

men on earth. And those two last men would not be able to restrain each other in their pride, and the one would slay the other and then himself. And that would come to pass, were it not for the promise of Christ that for the sake of the humble and meek the days shall be shortened.

While I was still wearing an officer's uniform after my duel, I talked about servants in general society, and I remember everyone was amazed at me. "What!" they asked, "are we to make our servants sit down on the sofa and offer them tea?" And I answered them: "Why not, sometimes at least?" Everyone laughed. Their question was frivolous and my answer was not clear; but the thought in it was to some extent right.

(g) Of Prayer, of Love, and of Contact with other Worlds.

Young man, be not forgetful of prayer. Every time you pray, if your prayer is sincere, there will be new feeling and new meaning in it, which will give you fresh courage, and you will understand that prayer is an education. Remember, too, every day, and whenever you can, repeat to yourself, "Lord, have mercy on all who appear before Thee to-day." For every hour and every moment thousands of men leave life on this earth, and their souls appear before God. And how many of them depart in solitude, unknown, sad, dejected that no one mourns for them or even knows whether they have lived or not! And behold, from the other end of the earth perhaps, your prayer for their rest will rise up to God though you knew them not nor they you. How touching it must be to a soul standing in dread before the Lord to feel at that instant that, for him too, there is one to pray, that there is a fellow creature left on earth to love him too! And God will look on you both more graciously, for if you have had so much pity on him, how much will He have pity Who is infinitely more loving and merciful than you! And He will forgive him for your sake.

Brothers, have no fear of men's sin. Love a man even in his sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is the highest love on earth. Love all God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love. Love the animals: God has given them the rudiments of thought and joy untroubled. Do not trouble it, don't harass them, don't deprive them of their happiness, don't work against God's intent. Man, do not pride yourself on

superiority to the animals; they are without sin, and you, with your greatness, defile the earth by your appearance on it, and leave the traces of your foulness after you — alas, it is true of almost every one of us! Love children especially, for they too are sinless like the angels; they live to soften and purify our hearts and, as it were, to guide us. Woe to him who offends a child! Father Anfim taught me to love children. The kind, silent man used often on our wanderings to spend the farthings given us on sweets and cakes for the children. He could not pass by a child without emotion. That's the nature of the man.

At some thoughts one stands perplexed, especially at the sight of men's sin, and wonders whether one should use force or humble love. Always decide to use humble love. If you resolve on that once for all, you may subdue the whole world. Loving humility is marvellously strong, the strongest of all things, and there is nothing else like it.

Every day and every hour, every minute, walk round yourself and watch yourself, and see that your image is a seemly one. You pass by a little child, you pass by, spiteful, with ugly words, with wrathful heart; you may not have noticed the child, but he has seen you, and your image, unseemly and ignoble, may remain in his defenceless heart. You don't know it, but you may have sown an evil seed in him and it may grow, and all because you were not careful before the child, because you did not foster in yourself a careful, actively benevolent love. Brothers, love is a teacher; but one must know how to acquire it, for it is hard to acquire, it is dearly bought, it is won slowly by long labour. For we must love not only occasionally, for a moment, but for ever. Everyone can love occasionally, even the wicked can.

My brother asked the birds to forgive him; that sounds senseless, but it is right; for all is like an ocean, all is flowing and blending; a touch in one place sets up movement at the other end of the earth. It may be senseless to beg forgiveness of the birds, but birds would be happier at your side — a little happier, anyway — and children and all animals, if you were nobler than you are now. It's all like an ocean, I tell you. Then you would pray to the birds too, consumed by an all-embracing love, in a sort of transport, and pray that they too will forgive you your sin. Treasure this ecstasy, however senseless it may seem to men.

My friends, pray to God for gladness. Be glad as children, as the birds of heaven. And let not the sin of men confound you in your doings. Fear not that it will wear away your work and hinder its being accomplished. Do not

say, “Sin is mighty, wickedness is mighty, evil environment is mighty, and we are lonely and helpless, and evil environment is wearing us away and hindering our good work from being done.” Fly from that dejection, children! There is only one means of salvation, then take yourself and make yourself responsible for all men’s sins, that is the truth, you know, friends, for as soon as you sincerely make yourself responsible for everything and for all men, you will see at once that it is really so, and that you are to blame for everyone and for all things. But throwing your own indolence and impotence on others you will end by sharing the pride of Satan and murmuring against God.

Of the pride of Satan what I think is this: it is hard for us on earth to comprehend it, and therefore it is so easy to fall into error and to share it, even imagining that we are doing something grand and fine. Indeed, many of the strongest feelings and movements of our nature we cannot comprehend on earth. Let not that be a stumbling-block, and think not that it may serve as a justification to you for anything. For the Eternal judge asks of you what you can comprehend and not what you cannot. You will know that yourself hereafter, for you will behold all things truly then and will not dispute them. On earth, indeed, we are, as it were, astray, and if it were not for the precious image of Christ before us, we should be undone and altogether lost, as was the human race before the flood. Much on earth is hidden from us, but to make up for that we have been given a precious mystic sense of our living bond with the other world, with the higher heavenly world, and the roots of our thoughts and feelings are not here but in other worlds. That is why the philosophers say that we cannot apprehend the reality of things on earth.

God took seeds from different worlds and sowed them on this earth, and His garden grew up and everything came up that could come up, but what grows lives and is alive only through the feeling of its contact with other mysterious worlds. If that feeling grows weak or is destroyed in you, the heavenly growth will die away in you. Then you will be indifferent to life and even grow to hate it. That’s what I think.

(h) Can a Man judge his Fellow Creatures? Faith to the End.

Remember particularly that you cannot be a judge of anyone. For no one can judge a criminal until he recognises that he is just such a criminal as the man standing before him, and that he perhaps is more than all men to blame for that crime. When he understands that, he will be able to be a judge.

Though that sounds absurd, it is true. If I had been righteous myself, perhaps there would have been no criminal standing before me. If you can take upon yourself the crime of the criminal your heart is judging, take it at once, suffer for him yourself, and let him go without reproach. And even if the law itself makes you his judge, act in the same spirit so far as possible, for he will go away and condemn himself more bitterly than you have done. If, after your kiss, he goes away untouched, mocking at you, do not let that be a stumbling-block to you. It shows his time has not yet come, but it will come in due course. And if it come not, no Matter; if not he, then another in his place will understand and suffer, and judge and condemn himself, and the truth will be fulfilled. Believe that, believe it without doubt; for in that lies all the hope and faith of the saints.

Work without ceasing. If you remember in the night as you go to sleep, “I have not done what I ought to have done,” rise up at once and do it. If the people around you are spiteful and callous and will not hear you, fall down before them and beg their forgiveness; for in truth you are to blame for their not wanting to hear you. And if you cannot speak to them in their bitterness, serve them in silence and in humility, never losing hope. If all men abandon you and even drive you away by force, then when you are left alone fall on the earth and kiss it, water it with your tears and it will bring forth fruit even though no one has seen or heard you in your solitude. Believe to the end, even if all men went astray and you were left the only one faithful; bring your offering even then and praise God in your loneliness. And if two of you are gathered together — then there is a whole world, a world of living love. Embrace each other tenderly and praise God, for if only in you two His truth has been fulfilled.

If you sin yourself and grieve even unto death for your sins or for your sudden sin, then rejoice for others, rejoice for the righteous man, rejoice that if you have sinned, he is righteous and has not sinned.

If the evil-doing of men moves you to indignation and overwhelming distress, even to a desire for vengeance on the evil-doers, shun above all things that feeling. Go at once and seek suffering for yourself, as though you were yourself guilty of that wrong. Accept that suffering and bear it and your heart will find comfort, and you will understand that you too are guilty, for you might have been a light to the evil-doers, even as the one man sinless, and you were not a light to them. If you had been a light, you would have lightened the path for others too, and the evil-doer might

perhaps have been saved by your light from his sin. And even though your light was shining, yet you see men were not saved by it, hold firm and doubt not the power of the heavenly light. Believe that if they were not saved, they will be saved hereafter. And if they are not saved hereafter, then their sons will be saved, for your light will not die even when you are dead. The righteous man departs, but his light remains. Men are always saved after the death of the deliverer. Men reject their prophets and slay them, but they love their martyrs and honour those whom they have slain. You are working for the whole, are acting for the future. Seek no reward, for great is your reward on this earth: the spiritual joy which is only vouchsafed to the righteous man. Fear not the great nor the mighty, but be wise and ever serene. Know the measure, know the times, study that. When you are left alone, pray. Love to throw yourself on the earth and kiss it. Kiss the earth and love it with an unceasing, consuming love. Love all men, love everything. Seek that rapture and ecstasy. Water the earth with the tears of your joy and love those tears. Don't be ashamed of that ecstasy, prize it, for it is a gift of God and a great one; it is not given to many but only to the elect.

(i) Of Hell and Hell Fire, a Mystic Reflection.

Fathers and teachers, I ponder, "What is hell?" I maintain that it is the suffering of being unable to love. Once in infinite existence, immeasurable in time and space, a spiritual creature was given on his coming to earth the power of saying, "I am and I love." Once, only once, there was given him a moment of active lifting love, and for that was earthly life given him, and with it times and seasons. And that happy creature rejected the priceless gift, prized it and loved it not, scorned it and remained callous. Such a one, having left the earth, sees Abraham's bosom and talks with Abraham as we are told in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and beholds heaven and can go up to the Lord. But that is just his torment, to rise up to the Lord without ever having loved, to be brought close to those who have loved when he has despised their love. For he sees clearly and says to himself, "Now I have understanding, and though I now thirst to love, there will be nothing great, no sacrifice in my love, for my earthly life is over, and Abraham will not come even with a drop of living water (that is the gift of earthly active life) to cool the fiery thirst of spiritual love which burns in me now, though I despised it on earth; there is no more life for me and will be no more time! Even though I would gladly give my life for others, it can

never be, for that life is passed which can be sacrificed for love, and now there is a gulf fixed between that life and this existence.”

They talk of hell fire in the material sense. I don’t go into that mystery and I shun it. But I think if there were fire in material sense, they would be glad of it, for I imagine that in material agony, their still greater spiritual agony would be forgotten for a moment. Moreover, that spiritual agony cannot be taken from them, for that suffering is not external but within them. And if it could be taken from them, I think it would be bitterer still for the unhappy creatures. For even if the righteous in Paradise forgave them, beholding their torments, and called them up to heaven in their infinite love, they would only multiply their torments, for they would arouse in them still more keenly a flaming thirst for responsive, active and grateful love which is now impossible. In the timidity of my heart I imagine, however, that the very recognition of this impossibility would serve at last to console them. For accepting the love of the righteous together with the impossibility of repaying it, by this submissiveness and the effect of this humility, they will attain at last, as it were, to a certain semblance of that active love which they scorned in life, to something like its outward expression... I am sorry, friends and brothers, that I cannot express this clearly. But woe to those who have slain themselves on earth, woe to the suicides! I believe that there can be none more miserable than they. They tell us that it is a sin to pray for them and outwardly the Church, as it were, renounces them, but in my secret heart I believe that we may pray even for them. Love can never be an offence to Christ. For such as those I have prayed inwardly all my life, I confess it, fathers and teachers, and even now I pray for them every day.

Oh, there are some who remain proud and fierce even in hell, in spite of their certain knowledge and contemplation of the absolute truth; there are some fearful ones who have given themselves over to Satan and his proud spirit entirely. For such, hell is voluntary and ever consuming; they are tortured by their own choice. For they have cursed themselves, cursing God and life. They live upon their vindictive pride like a starving man in the desert sucking blood out of his own body. But they are never satisfied, and they refuse forgiveness, they curse God Who calls them. They cannot behold the living God without hatred, and they cry out that the God of life should be annihilated, that God should destroy Himself and His own

creation. And they will burn in the fire of their own wrath for ever and yearn for death and annihilation. But they will not attain to death....

Here Alexey Fyodorovitch Karamazov's manuscript ends. I repeat, it is incomplete and fragmentary. Biographical details, for instance, cover only Father Zossima's earliest youth. Of his teaching and opinions we find brought together sayings evidently uttered on very different occasions. His utterances during the last few hours have not been kept separate from the rest, but their general character can be gathered from what we have in Alexey Fyodorovitch's manuscript.

The elder's death came in the end quite unexpectedly. For although those who were gathered about him that last evening realised that his death was approaching, yet it was difficult to imagine that it would come so suddenly. On the contrary, his friends, as I observed already, seeing him that night apparently so cheerful and talkative, were convinced that there was at least a temporary change for the better in his condition. Even five minutes before his death, they said afterwards wonderingly, it was impossible to foresee it. He seemed suddenly to feel an acute pain in his chest, he turned pale and pressed his hands to his heart. All rose from their seats and hastened to him. But though suffering, he still looked at them with a smile, sank slowly from his chair on to his knees, then bowed his face to the ground, stretched out his arms and as though in joyful ecstasy, praying and kissing the ground, quietly and joyfully gave up his soul to God.

The news of his death spread at once through the hermitage and reached the monastery. The nearest friends of the deceased and those whose duty it was from their position began to lay out the corpse according to the ancient ritual, and all the monks gathered together in the church. And before dawn the news of the death reached the town. By the morning all the town was talking of the event, and crowds were flocking from the town to the monastery. But this subject will be treated in the next book; I will only add here that before a day had passed something happened so unexpected, so strange, upsetting, and bewildering in its effect on the monks and the townspeople, that after all these years, that day of general suspense is still vividly remembered in the town.

PART III

BOOK VII. ALYOSHA

CHAPTER 1

The Breath of Corruption

THE body of Father Zossima was prepared for burial according to the established Ritual. As is well known, the bodies of dead monks and hermits are not washed. In the words of the Church Ritual: “If any one of the monks depart in the Lord, the monk designated (that is, whose office it is) shall wipe the body with warm water, making first the sign of the cross with a sponge on the forehead of the deceased, on the breast, on the hands and feet and on the knees, and that is enough.” All this was done by Father Paissy, who then clothed the deceased in his monastic garb and wrapped him in his cloak, which was, according to custom, somewhat slit to allow of its being folded about him in the form of a cross. On his head he put a hood with an eight-cornered cross. The hood was left open and the dead man’s face was covered with black gauze. In his hands was put an ikon of the Saviour. Towards morning he was put in the coffin which had been made ready long before. It was decided to leave the coffin all day in the cell, in the larger room in which the elder used to receive his visitors and fellow monks. As the deceased was a priest and monk of the strictest rule, the Gospel, not the Psalter, had to be read over his body by monks in holy orders. The reading was begun by Father Iosif immediately after the requiem service. Father Paissy desired later on to read the Gospel all day and night over his dead friend, but for the present he, as well as the Father Superintendent of the Hermitage, was very busy and occupied, for something extraordinary, an unheard-of, even “unseemly” excitement and impatient expectation began to be apparent in the monks, and the visitors from the monastery hostels, and the crowds of people flocking from the town. And as time went on, this grew more and more marked. Both the Superintendent and Father Paissy did their utmost to calm the general bustle and agitation.

When it was fully daylight, some people began bringing their sick, in most cases children, with them from the town — as though they had been waiting expressly for this moment to do so, evidently persuaded that the dead elder’s remains had a power of healing, which would be immediately made manifest in accordance with their faith. It was only then apparent how unquestionably everyone in our town had accepted Father Zossima during

his lifetime as a great saint. And those who came were far from being all of the humbler classes.

This intense expectation on the part of believers displayed with such haste, such openness, even with impatience and almost insistence, impressed Father Paissy as unseemly. Though he had long foreseen something of the sort, the actual manifestation of the feeling was beyond anything he had looked for. When he came across any of the monks who displayed this excitement, Father Paissy began to reprove them. “Such immediate expectation of something extraordinary,” he said, “shows a levity, possible to worldly people but unseemly in us.”

But little attention was paid him and Father Paissy noticed it uneasily. Yet he himself (if the whole truth must be told), secretly at the bottom of his heart, cherished almost the same hopes and could not but be aware of it, though he was indignant at the too impatient expectation around him, and saw in it light-mindedness and vanity. Nevertheless, it was particularly unpleasant to him to meet certain persons, whose presence aroused in him great misgivings. In the crowd in the dead man’s cell he noticed with inward aversion (for which he immediately reproached himself) the presence of Rakitin and of the monk from Obdorsk, who was still staying in the monastery. Of both of them Father Paissy felt for some reason suddenly suspicious — though, indeed, he might well have felt the same about others.

The monk from Obdorsk was conspicuous as the most fussy in the excited crowd. He was to be seen everywhere; everywhere he was asking questions, everywhere he was listening, on all sides he was whispering with a peculiar, mysterious air. His expression showed the greatest impatience and even a sort of irritation.

As for Rakitin, he, as appeared later, had come so early to the hermitage at the special request of Madame Hohlakov. As soon as that good-hearted but weak-minded woman, who could not herself have been admitted to the hermitage, waked and heard of the death of Father Zossima, she was overtaken with such intense curiosity that she promptly despatched Rakitin to the hermitage, to keep a careful look out and report to her by letter ever half hour or so “everything that takes place.” She regarded Rakitin as a most religious and devout young man. He was particularly clever in getting round people and assuming whatever part he thought most to their taste, if he detected the slightest advantage to himself from doing so.

It was a bright, clear day, and many of the visitors were thronging about the tombs, which were particularly numerous round the church and scattered here and there about the hermitage. As he walked round the hermitage, Father Paissy remembered Alyosha and that he had not seen him for some time, not since the night. And he had no sooner thought of him than he at once noticed him in the farthest corner of the hermitage garden, sitting on the tombstone of a monk who had been famous long ago for his saintliness. He sat with his back to the hermitage and his face to the wall, and seemed to be hiding behind the tombstone. Going up to him, Father Paissy saw that he was weeping quietly but bitterly, with his face hidden in his hands, and that his whole frame was shaking with sobs. Father Paissy stood over him for a little.

“Enough, dear son, enough, dear,” he pronounced with feeling at last. “Why do you weep? Rejoice and weep not. Don’t you know that this is the greatest of his days? Think only where he is now, at this moment!”

Alyosha glanced at him, uncovering his face, which was swollen with crying like a child’s, but turned away at once without uttering a word and hid his face in his hands again.

“Maybe it is well,” said Father Paissy thoughtfully; “weep if you must; Christ has sent you those tears.”

“Your touching tears are but a relief to your spirit and will serve to gladden your dear heart,” he added to himself, walking away from Alyosha, and thinking lovingly of him. He moved away quickly, however, for he felt that he too might weep looking at him.

Meanwhile the time was passing; the monastery services and the requiems for the dead followed in their due course. Father Paissy again took Father Iosif’s place by the coffin and began reading the Gospel. But before three o’clock in the afternoon that something took place to which I alluded at the end of the last book, something so unexpected by all of us and so contrary to the general hope, that, I repeat, this trivial incident has been minutely remembered to this day in our town and all the surrounding neighbourhood. I may add here, for myself personally, that I feel it almost repulsive that event which caused such frivolous agitation and was such a stumbling-block to many, though in reality it was the most natural and trivial matter. I should, of course, have omitted all mention of it in my story, if it had not exerted a very strong influence on the heart and soul of the chief, though future, hero of my story, Alyosha, forming a crisis and

turning-point in his spiritual development, giving a shock to his intellect, which finally strengthened it for the rest of his life and gave it a definite aim.

And so, to return to our story. When before dawn they laid Father Zossima's body in the coffin and brought it into the front room, the question of opening the windows was raised among those who were around the coffin. But this suggestion made casually by someone was unanswered and almost unnoticed. Some of those present may perhaps have inwardly noticed it, only to reflect that the anticipation of decay and corruption from the body of such a saint was an actual absurdity, calling for compassion (if not a smile) for the lack of faith and the frivolity it implied. For they expected something quite different.

And, behold, soon after midday there were signs of something, at first only observed in silence by those who came in and out and were evidently each afraid to communicate the thought in his mind. But by three o'clock those signs had become so clear and unmistakable, that the news swiftly reached all the monks and visitors in the hermitage, promptly penetrated to the monastery, throwing all the monks into amazement, and finally, in the shortest possible time, spread to the town, exciting everyone in it, believers and unbelievers alike. The unbelievers rejoiced, and as for the believers some of them rejoiced even more than the unbelievers, for "men love the downfall and disgrace of the righteous," as the deceased elder had said in one of his exhortations.

The fact is that a smell of decomposition began to come from the coffin, growing gradually more marked, and by three o'clock it was quite unmistakable. In all the past history of our monastery, no such scandal could be recalled, and in no other circumstances could such a scandal have been possible, as showed itself in unseemly disorder immediately after this discovery among the very monks themselves. Afterwards, even many years afterwards, some sensible monks were amazed and horrified, when they recalled that day, that the scandal could have reached such proportions. For in the past, monks of very holy life had died, God-fearing old men, whose saintliness was acknowledged by all, yet from their humble coffins, too, the breath of corruption had come, naturally, as from all dead bodies, but that had caused no scandal nor even the slightest excitement. Of course, there had been, in former times, saints in the monastery whose memory was carefully preserved and whose relics, according to tradition, showed no

signs of corruption. This fact was regarded by the monks as touching and mysterious, and the tradition of it was cherished as something blessed and miraculous, and as a promise, by God’s grace, of still greater glory from their tombs in the future.

One such, whose memory was particularly cherished, was an old monk, Job, who had died seventy years before at the age of a hundred and five. He had been a celebrated ascetic, rigid in fasting and silence, and his tomb was pointed out to all visitors on their arrival with peculiar respect and mysterious hints of great hopes connected with it. (That was the very tomb on which Father Paissy had found Alyosha sitting in the morning.) Another memory cherished in the monastery was that of the famous Father Varsonofy, who was only recently dead and had preceded Father Zossima in the eldership. He was reverenced during his lifetime as a crazy saint by all the pilgrims to the monastery. There was a tradition that both of these had lain in their coffins as though alive, that they had shown no signs of decomposition when they were buried and that there had been a holy light in their faces. And some people even insisted that a sweet fragrance came from their bodies.

Yet, in spite of these edifying memories, it would be difficult to explain the frivolity, absurdity and malice that were manifested beside the coffin of Father Zossima. It is my private opinion that several different causes were simultaneously at work, one of which was the deeply rooted hostility to the institution of elders as a pernicious innovation, an antipathy hidden deep in the hearts of many of the monks. Even more powerful was jealousy of the dead man’s saintliness, so firmly established during lifetime that it was almost a forbidden thing to question it. For though the late elder had won over many hearts, more by love than by miracles, and had gathered round him a mass of loving adherents, none the less, in fact, rather the more on that account he had awakened jealousy and so had come to have bitter enemies, secret and open, not only in the monastery but in the world outside it. He did no one any harm, but “Why do they think him so saintly?” And that question alone, gradually repeated, gave rise at last to an intense, insatiable hatred of him. That, I believe, was why many people were extremely delighted at the smell of decomposition which came so quickly, for not a day had passed since his death. At the same time there were some among those who had been hitherto reverently devoted to the elder, who

were almost mortified and personally affronted by this incident. This was how the thing happened.

As soon as signs of decomposition had begun to appear, the whole aspect of the monks betrayed their secret motives in entering the cell. They went in, stayed a little while and hastened out to confirm the news to the crowd of other monks waiting outside. Some of the latter shook their heads mournfully, but others did not even care to conceal the delight which gleamed unmistakably in their malignant eyes. And now no one reproached them for it, no one raised his voice in protest, which was strange, for the majority of the monks had been devoted to the dead elder. But it seemed as though God had in this case let the minority get the upper hand for a time.

Visitors from outside, particularly of the educated class, soon went into the cell, too, with the same spying intent. Of the peasantry few went into the cell, though there were crowds of them at the gates of the hermitage. After three o'clock the rush of worldly visitors was greatly increased and this was no doubt owing to the shocking news. People were attracted who would not otherwise have come on that day and had not intended to come, and among them were some personages of high standing. But external decorum was still preserved and Father Paissy, with a stern face, continued firmly and distinctly reading aloud the Gospel, apparently not noticing what was taking place around him, though he had, in fact, observed something unusual long before. But at last the murmurs, first subdued but gradually louder and more confident, reached even him. "It shows God's judgment is not as man's," Father Paissy heard suddenly. The first to give utterance to this sentiment was a layman, an elderly official from the town, known to be a man of great piety. But he only repeated aloud what the monks had long been whispering. They had long before formulated this damning conclusion, and the worst of it was that a sort of triumphant satisfaction at that conclusion became more and more apparent every moment. Soon they began to lay aside even external decorum and almost seemed to feel they had a sort of right to discard it.

"And for what reason can this have happened," some of the monks said, at first with a show of regret; "he had a small frame and his flesh was dried up on his bones, what was there to decay?"

"It must be a sign from heaven," others hastened to add, and their opinion was adopted at once without protest. For it was pointed out, too, that if the decomposition had been natural, as in the case of every dead

sinner, it would have been apparent later, after a lapse of at least twenty-four hours, but this premature corruption “was in excess of nature,” and so the finger of God was evident. It was meant for a sign. This conclusion seemed irresistible.

Gentle Father Iosif, the librarian, a great favourite of the dead man’s, tried to reply to some of the evil speakers that “this is not held everywhere alike,” and that the incorruptibility of the bodies of the just was not a dogma of the Orthodox Church, but only an opinion, and that even in the most Orthodox regions, at Athos for instance, they were not greatly confounded by the smell of corruption, and there the chief sign of the glorification of the saved was not bodily incorruptibility, but the colour of the bones when the bodies have lain many years in the earth and have decayed in it. “And if the bones are yellow as wax, that is the great sign that the Lord has glorified the dead saint, if they are not yellow but black, it shows that God has not deemed him worthy of such glory — that is the belief in Athos, a great place, which the Orthodox doctrine has been preserved from of old, unbroken and in its greatest purity,” said Father Iosif in conclusion.

But the meek Father’s words had little effect and even provoked a mocking retort. “That’s all pedantry and innovation, no use listening to it,” the monks decided. “We stick to the old doctrine; there are all sorts of innovations nowadays, are we to follow them all?” added others.

“We have had as many holy fathers as they had. There they are among the Turks, they have forgotten everything. Their doctrine has long been impure and they have no bells even, the most sneering added.

Father Iosif walked away, grieving the more since he had put forward his own opinion with little confidence as though scarcely believing in it himself. He foresaw with distress that something very unseemly was beginning and that there were positive signs of disobedience. Little by little, all the sensible monks were reduced to silence like Father Iosif. And so it came to pass that all who loved the elder and had accepted with devout obedience the institution of the eldership were all at once terribly cast down and glanced timidly in one another’s faces, when they met. Those who were hostile to the institution of elders, as a novelty, held up their heads proudly. “There was no smell of corruption from the late elder Varsonofy, but a sweet fragrance,” they recalled malignantly. “But he gained that glory not because he was an elder, but because he was a holy man.”

And this was followed by a shower of criticism and even blame of Father Zossima. “His teaching was false; he taught that life is a great joy and not a vale of tears,” said some of the more unreasonable. “He followed the fashionable belief, he did not recognise material fire in hell,” others, still more unreasonable, added. “He was not strict in fasting, allowed himself sweet things, ate cherry jam with his tea, ladies used to send it to him. Is it for a monk of strict rule to drink tea?” could be heard among some of the envious. “He sat in pride,” the most malignant declared vindictively; “he considered himself a saint and he took it as his due when people knelt before him.”

“He abused the sacrament of confession,” the fiercest opponents of the institution of elders added in a malicious whisper. And among these were some of the oldest monks, strictest in their devotion, genuine ascetics, who had kept silent during the life of the deceased elder, but now suddenly unsealed their lips. And this was terrible, for their words had great influence on young monks who were not yet firm in their convictions. The monk from Obdorsk heard all this attentively, heaving deep sighs and nodding his head. “Yes, clearly Father Ferapont was right in his judgment yesterday,” and at that moment Father Ferapont himself made his appearance, as though on purpose to increase the confusion.

I have mentioned already that he rarely left his wooden cell by the apiary. He was seldom even seen at church and they overlooked this neglect on the ground of his craziness, and did not keep him to the rules binding on all the rest. But if the whole truth is to be told, they hardly had a choice about it. For it would have been discreditable to insist on burdening with the common regulations so great an ascetic, who prayed day and night (he even dropped asleep on his knees). If they had insisted, the monks would have said, “He is holier than all of us and he follows a rule harder than ours. And if he does not go to church, it’s because he knows when he ought to; he has his own rule.” It was to avoid the chance of these sinful murmurs that Father Ferapont was left in peace.

As everyone was aware, Father Ferapont particularly disliked Father Zossima. And now the news had reached him in his hut that “God’s judgment is not the same as man’s,” and that something had happened which was “in excess of nature.” It may well be supposed that among the first to run to him with the news was the monk from Obdorsk, who had visited him the evening before and left his cell terror-stricken.

I have mentioned above, that though Father Paissy standing firm and immovable reading the Gospel over the coffin, could not hear nor see what was passing outside the cell, he gauged most of it correctly in his heart, for he knew the men surrounding him well. He was not shaken by it, but awaited what would come next without fear, watching with penetration and insight for the outcome of the general excitement.

Suddenly an extraordinary uproar in the passage in open defiance of decorum burst on his ears. The door was flung open and Father Ferapont appeared in the doorway. Behind him there could be seen accompanying him a crowd of monks, together with many people from the town. They did not, however, enter the cell, but stood at the bottom of the steps, waiting to see what Father Ferapont would say or do. For they felt with a certain awe, in spite of their audacity, that he had not come for nothing. Standing in the doorway, Father Ferapont raised his arms, and under his right arm the keen inquisitive little eyes of the monk from Obdorsk peeped in. He alone, in his intense curiosity, could not resist running up the steps after Father Ferapont. The others, on the contrary, pressed farther back in sudden alarm when the door was noisily flung open. Holding his hands aloft, Father Ferapont suddenly roared:

“Casting out I cast out!” and, turning in all directions, he began at once making the sign of the cross at each of the four walls and four corners of the cell in succession. All who accompanied Father Ferapont immediately understood his action. For they knew he always did this wherever he went, and that he would not sit down or say a word, till he had driven out the evil spirits.

“Satan, go hence! Satan, go hence!” he repeated at each sign of the cross. “Casting out I cast out,” he roared again.

He was wearing his coarse gown girt with a rope. His bare chest, covered with grey hair, could be seen under his hempen shirt. His feet were bare. As soon as he began waving his arms, the cruel irons he wore under his gown could be heard clanking.

Father Paissy paused in his reading, stepped forward and stood before him waiting

“What have you come for, worthy Father? Why do you offend against good order? Why do you disturb the peace of the flock?” he said at last, looking sternly at him.

“What have I come for? You ask why? What is your faith?” shouted Father Ferapont crazily. “I’ve come here to drive out your visitors, the unclean devils. I’ve come to see how many have gathered here while I have been away. I want to sweep them out with a birch broom.”

“You cast out the evil spirit, but perhaps you are serving him yourself,” Father Paissy went on fearlessly. “And who can say of himself ‘I am holy’? Can you, Father?”

“I am unclean, not holy. I would not sit in an arm-chair and would not have them bow down to me as an idol,” thundered Father Ferapont. “Nowadays folk destroy the true faith. The dead man, your saint,” he turned to the crowd, pointing with his finger to the coffin, “did not believe in devils. He gave medicine to keep off the devils. And so they have become as common as spiders in the corners. And now he has begun to stink himself. In that we see a great sign from God.”

The incident he referred to was this. One of the monks was haunted in his dreams and, later on, in waking moments, by visions of evil spirits. When in the utmost terror he confided this to Father Zossima, the elder had advised continual prayer and rigid fasting. But when that was of no use, he advised him while persisting in prayer and fasting, to take a special medicine. Many persons were shocked at the time and wagged their heads as they talked over it — and most of all Father Ferapont, to whom some of the censorious had hastened to report this “extraordinary” counsel on the part of the elder.

“Go away, Father!” said Father Paissy, in a commanding voice, “it’s not for man to judge but for God. Perhaps we see here a ‘sign’ which neither you, nor I, nor anyone of us is able to comprehend. Go, Father, and do not trouble the flock!” he repeated impressively.

“He did not keep the fasts according to the rule and therefore the sign has come. That is clear and it’s a sin to hide it,” the fanatic, carried away by a zeal that outstripped his reason, would not be quieted. “He was seduced by sweetmeats, ladies brought them to him in their pockets, he sipped tea, he worshipped his belly, filling it with sweet things and his mind with haughty thoughts.... And for this he is put to shame....”

“You speak lightly, Father.” Father Paissy, too, raised his voice. “I admire your fasting and severities, but you speak lightly like some frivolous youth, fickle and childish. Go away, Father, I command you!” Father Paissy thundered in conclusion.

“I will go,” said Ferapont, seeming somewhat taken aback, but still as bitter. “You learned men! You are so clever you look down upon my humbleness. I came hither with little learning and here I have forgotten what I did know; God Himself has preserved me in my weakness from your subtlety.”

Father Paissy stood over him, waiting resolutely. Father Ferapont paused and, suddenly leaning his cheek on his hand despondently, pronounced in a sing-song, voice, looking at the coffin of the dead elder:

“To-morrow they will sing over him ‘Our Helper and Defender’ — a splendid anthem — and over me when I die all they’ll sing will be ‘What Earthly Joy’ — a little cantical,”* he added with tearful regret. “You are proud and puffed up, this is a vain place!” he shouted suddenly like a madman, and with a wave of his hand he turned quickly and quickly descended the steps. The crowd awaiting him below wavered; some followed him at once and some lingered, for the cell was still open, and Father Paissy, following Father Ferapont on to the steps, stood watching him. the excited old fanatic was not completely silenced. Walking twenty steps away, he suddenly turned towards the setting sun, raised both his arms and, as though someone had cut him down, fell to the ground with a loud scream.

* When a monk’s body is carried out from the cell to the church and from the church to the graveyard, the canticle “What Earthly Joy..,” is sung. If the deceased was a priest as well as a monk the canticle “Our Helper and Defender” is sung instead.

“My God has conquered! Christ has conquered the setting sun!” he shouted frantically, stretching up his hands to the sun, and falling face downwards on the ground, he sobbed like a little child, shaken by his tears and spreading out his arms on the ground. Then all rushed up to him; there were exclamations and sympathetic sobs... a kind of frenzy seemed to take possession of them all.

“This is the one who is a saint! This is the one who is a holy man!” some cried aloud, losing their fear. “This is he who should be an elder,” others added malignantly.

“He wouldn’t be an elder... he would refuse... he wouldn’t serve a cursed innovation... he wouldn’t imitate their foolery,” other voices chimed in at once. And it is hard to say how far they might have gone, but at that moment the bell rang summoning them to service. All began crossing

themselves at once. Father Ferapont, too, got up and crossing himself went back to his cell without looking round, still uttering exclamations which were utterly incoherent. A few followed him, but the greater number dispersed, hastening to service. Father Paissy let Father Iosif read in his place and went down. The frantic outcries of bigots could not shake him, but his heart was suddenly filled with melancholy for some special reason and he felt that. He stood still and suddenly wondered, “Why am I sad even to dejection?” and immediately grasped with surprise that his sudden sadness was due to a very small and special cause. In the crowd thronging at the entrance to the cell, he had noticed Alyosha and he remembered that he had felt at once a pang at heart on seeing him. “Can that boy mean so much to my heart now?” he asked himself, wondering.

At that moment Alyosha passed him, hurrying away, but not in the direction of the church. Their eyes met. Alyosha quickly turned away his eyes and dropped them to the ground, and from the boy’s look alone, Father Paissy guessed what a great change was taking place in him at that moment.

“Have you, too, fallen into temptation?” cried Father Paissy. “Can you be with those of little faith?” he added mournfully.

Alyosha stood still and gazed vaguely at Father Paissy, but quickly turned his eyes away again and again looked on the ground. He stood sideways and did not turn his face to Father Paissy, who watched him attentively.

“Where are you hastening? The bell calls to service,” he asked again, but again Alyosha gave no answer.

“Are you leaving the hermitage? What, without asking leave, without asking a blessing?”

Alyosha suddenly gave a wry smile, cast a strange, very strange, look at the Father to whom his former guide, the former sovereign of his heart and mind, his beloved elder, had confided him as he lay dying. And suddenly, still without speaking, waved his hand, as though not caring even to be respectful, and with rapid steps walked towards the gates away from the hermitage.

“You will come back again!” murmured Father Paissy, looking after him with sorrowful surprise.

CHAPTER 2

A Critical Moment

FATHER PAISSY, of course, was not wrong when he decided that his “dear boy” would come back again. Perhaps indeed, to some extent, he penetrated with insight into the true meaning of Alyosha’s spiritual condition. Yet I must frankly own that it would be very difficult for me to give a clear account of that strange, vague moment in the life of the young hero I love so much. To Father Paissy’s sorrowful question, “Are you too with those of little faith?” I could, of course, confidently answer for Alyosha, “No, he is not with those of little faith. Quite the contrary.” Indeed, all his trouble came from the fact that he was of great faith. But still the trouble was there and was so agonising that even long afterwards Alyosha thought of that sorrowful day as one of the bitterest and most fatal days of his life. If the question is asked: “Could all his grief and disturbance have been only due to the fact that his elder’s body had shown signs of premature decomposition instead of at once performing miracles?” I must answer without beating about the bush, “Yes, it certainly was.” I would only beg the reader not to be in too great a hurry to laugh at my young hero’s pure heart. I am far from intending to apologise for him or to justify his innocent faith on the ground of his youth, or the little progress he had made in his studies, or any such reason. I must declare, on the contrary, that I have genuine respect for the qualities of his heart. No doubt a youth who received impressions cautiously, whose love was lukewarm, and whose mind was too prudent for his age and so of little value, such a young man might, I admit, have avoided what happened to my hero. But in some cases it is really more creditable to be carried away by an emotion, however unreasonable, which springs from a great love, than to be unmoved. And this is even truer in youth, for a young man who is always sensible is to be suspected and is of little worth — that’s my opinion!

“But,” reasonable people will exclaim perhaps, “every young man cannot believe in such a superstition and your hero is no model for others.”

To this I reply again, “Yes! my hero had faith, a faith holy and steadfast, but still I am not going to apologise for him.”

Though I declared above, and perhaps too hastily, that I should not explain or justify my hero, I see that some explanation is necessary for the understanding of the rest of my story. Let me say then, it was not a question of miracles. There was no frivolous and impatient expectation of miracles in his mind. And Alyosha needed no miracles at the time, for the triumph of some preconceived idea — oh no, not at all — what he saw before all was one figure — the figure of his beloved elder, the figure of that holy man whom he revered with such adoration. The fact is that all the love that lay concealed in his pure young heart for everyone and everything had, for the past year, been concentrated — and perhaps wrongly so — on one being, his beloved elder. It is true that being had for so long been accepted by him as his ideal, that all his young strength and energy could not but turn towards that ideal, even to the forgetting at the moment "of everyone and everything." He remembered afterwards how, on that terrible day, he had entirely forgotten his brother Dmitri, about whom he had been so anxious and troubled the day before; he had forgotten, too, to take the two hundred roubles to Ilusha's father, though he had so warmly intended to do so the preceding evening. But again it was not miracles he needed but only "the higher justice" which had been in his belief outraged by the blow that had so suddenly and cruelly wounded his heart. And what does it signify that this "justice" looked for by Alyosha inevitably took the shape of miracles to be wrought immediately by the ashes of his adored teacher? Why, everyone in the monastery cherished the same thought and the same hope, even those whose intellects Alyosha revered, Father Paissy himself, for instance. And so Alyosha, untroubled by doubts, clothed his dreams too in the same form as all the rest. And a whole year of life in the monastery had formed the habit of this expectation in his heart. But it was justice, justice, he thirsted for, not simply miracles.

And now the man who should, he believed, have been exalted above everyone in the whole world, that man, instead of receiving the glory that was his due, was suddenly degraded and dishonoured! What for? Who had judged him? Who could have decreed this? Those were the questions that wrung his inexperienced and virginal heart. He could not endure without mortification, without resentment even, that the holiest of holy men should have been exposed to the jeering and spiteful mockery of the frivolous crowd so inferior to him. Even had there been no miracles, had there been nothing marvellous to justify his hopes, why this indignity, why this

humiliation, why this premature decay, “in excess of nature,” as the spiteful monks said? Why this “sign from heaven,” which they so triumphantly acclaimed in company with Father Ferapont, and why did they believe they had gained the right to acclaim it? Where is the finger of Providence? Why did Providence hide its face “at the most critical moment” (so Alyosha thought it), as though voluntarily submitting to the blind, dumb, pitiless laws of nature?

That was why Alyosha’s heart was bleeding, and, of course, as I have said already, the sting of it all was that the man he loved above everything on earth should be put to shame and humiliated! This murmuring may have been shallow and unreasonable in my hero, but I repeat again for the third time — and am prepared to admit that it might be difficult to defend my feeling — I am glad that my hero showed himself not too reasonable at that moment, for any man of sense will always come back to reason in time, but, if love does not gain the upper hand in a boy’s heart at such an exceptional moment, when will it? I will not, however, omit to mention something strange, which came for a time to the surface of Alyosha’s mind at this fatal and obscure moment. This new something was the harassing impression left by the conversation with Ivan, which now persistently haunted Alyosha’s mind. At this moment it haunted him. Oh, it was not that something of the fundamental, elemental, so to speak, faith of his soul had been shaken. He loved his God and believed in Him steadfastly, though he was suddenly murmuring against Him. Yet a vague but tormenting and evil impression left by his conversation with Ivan the day before, suddenly revived again now in his soul and seemed forcing its way to the surface of his consciousness.

It had begun to get dusk when Rakitin, crossing the pine copse from the hermitage to the monastery, suddenly noticed Alyosha, lying face downwards on the ground under a tree, not moving and apparently asleep. He went up and called him by his name.

“You here, Alexey? Can you have—” he began wondering but broke off. He had meant to say, “Can you have come to this?”

Alyosha did not look at him, but from a slight movement Rakitin at once saw that he heard and understood him.

“What’s the matter?” he went on; but the surprise in his face gradually passed into a smile that became more and more ironical.

“I say, I’ve been looking for you for the last two hours. You suddenly disappeared. What are you about? What foolery is this? You might just look at me...”

Alyosha raised his head, sat up and leaned his back against the tree. He was not crying, but there was a look of suffering and irritability in his face. He did not look at Rakitin, however, but looked away to one side of him.

“Do you know your face is quite changed? There’s none of your famous mildness to be seen in it. Are you angry with someone? Have they been ill-treating you?”

“Let me alone,” said Alyosha suddenly, with a weary gesture of his hand, still looking away from him.

“Oho! So that’s how we are feeling! So you can shout at people like other mortals. That is a come-down from the angels. I say, Alyosha, you have surprised me, do you hear? I mean it. It’s long since I’ve been surprised at anything here. I always took you for an educated man.

Alyosha at last looked at him, but vaguely, as though scarcely understanding what he said.

“Can you really be so upset simply because your old man has begun to stink? You don’t mean to say you seriously believed that he was going to work miracles?” exclaimed Rakitin, genuinely surprised again.

“I believed, I believe, I want to believe, and I will believe, what more do you want?” cried Alyosha irritably.

“Nothing at all, my boy. Damn it all! why, no schoolboy of thirteen believes in that now. But there... So now you are in a temper with your God, you are rebelling against Him; He hasn’t given promotion, He hasn’t bestowed the order of merit! Eh, you are a set!”

Alyosha gazed a long while with his eyes half closed at Rakitin, and there was a sudden gleam in his eyes... but not of anger with Rakitin.

“I am not rebelling against my God; I simply ‘don’t accept His world.’” Alyosha suddenly smiled a forced smile.

“How do you mean, you don’t accept the world?” Rakitin thought a moment over his answer. “What idiocy is this?”

Alyosha did not answer.

“Come, enough nonsense, now to business. Have you had anything to eat to-day?”

“I don’t remember.... I think I have.”

“You need keeping up, to judge by your face. It makes one sorry to look at you. You didn’t sleep all night either, I hear; you had a meeting in there. And then all this bobbery afterwards. Most likely you’ve had nothing to eat but a mouthful of holy bread. I’ve got some sausage in my pocket; I’ve brought it from the town in case of need, only you won’t eat sausage....”

“Give me some.”

“I say! You are going it! Why, it’s a regular mutiny, with barricades! Well, my boy, we must make the most of it. Come to my place... shouldn’t mind a drop of vodka myself, I am tired to death. Vodka is going too far for you, I suppose... or would you like some?”

“Give me some vodka too.”

“Hullo! You surprise me, brother!” Rakitin looked at him in amazement. “Well, one way or another, vodka or sausage, this is a jolly fine chance and mustn’t be missed. Come along.”

Alyosha got up in silence and followed Rakitin.

“If your little brother Ivan could see this wouldn’t he be surprised! By the way, your brother Ivan set off to Moscow this morning, did you know?”

“Yes,” answered Alyosha listlessly, and suddenly the image of his brother Dmitri rose before his mind. But only for a minute, and though it reminded him of something that must not be put off for a moment, some duty, some terrible obligation, even that reminder made no impression on him, did not reach his heart and instantly faded out of his mind and was forgotten. But, a long while afterwards, Alyosha remembered this.

“Your brother Ivan declared once that I was a ‘liberal booby with no talents whatsoever.’ Once you, too, could not resist letting me know I was ‘dishonourable.’ Well! I should like to see what your talents and sense of honour will do for you now.” This phrase Rakitin finished to himself in a whisper.

“Listen!” he said aloud, “Let’s go by the path beyond the monastery straight to the town. H’m! I ought to go to Madame Hohlakov’s by the way. Only fancy, I’ve written to tell her everything that happened, and would you believe it, she answered me instantly in pencil (the lady has a passion for writing notes) that ‘she would never have expected such conduct from a man of such a reverend character as Father Zossima.’ That was her very word: ‘conduct.’ She is angry too. Eh, you are a set! Stay!” he cried suddenly again. He suddenly stopped and taking Alyosha by the shoulder made him stop too.

“Do you know, Alyosha,” he peeped inquisitively into his eyes, absorbed in a sudden new thought which had dawned on him, and though he was laughing outwardly he was evidently afraid to utter that new idea aloud, so difficult he still found it to believe in the strange and unexpected mood in which he now saw Alyosha. “Alyosha, do you know where we had better go?” he brought out at last timidly, and insinuatingly.

“I don’t care... where you like.”

“Let’s go to Grushenka, eh? Will you come?” pronounced Rakitin at last, trembling with timid suspense.

“Let’s go to Grushenka,” Alyosha answered calmly, at once, and this prompt and calm agreement was such a surprise to Rakitin that he almost started back.

“Well! I say!” he cried in amazement, but seizing Alyosha firmly by the arm be led him along the path, still dreading that he would change his mind.

They walked along in silence; Rakitin was positively afraid to talk.

“And how glad she will be, how delighted!” he muttered, but lapsed into silence again. And indeed it was not to please Grushenka he was taking Alyosha to her. He was a practical person and never undertook anything without a prospect of gain for himself. His object in this case was twofold, first a revengeful desire to see “the downfall of the righteous,” and Alyosha’s fall “from the saints to the sinners,” over which he was already gloating in his imagination, and in the second place he had in view a certain material gain for himself, of which more will be said later.

“So the critical moment has come,” he thought to himself with spiteful glee, “and we shall catch it on the hop, for it’s just what we want.”

CHAPTER 3

An Onion

GRUSHENKA lived in the busiest part of the town, near the cathedral square, in a small wooden lodge in the courtyard belonging to the house of the widow Morozov. The house was a large stone building of two stories, old and very ugly. The widow led a secluded life with her two unmarried nieces, who were also elderly women. She had no need to let her lodge, but everyone knew that she had taken in Grushenka as a lodger, four years before, solely to please her kinsman, the merchant Samsonov, who was known to the girl's protector. It was said that the jealous old man's object in placing his "favourite" with the widow Morozov was that the old woman should keep a sharp eye on her new lodger's conduct. But this sharp eye soon proved to be unnecessary, and in the end the widow Morozov seldom met Grushenka and did not worry her by looking after her in any way. It is true that four years had passed since the old man had brought the slim, delicate, shy, timid, dreamy, and sad girl of eighteen from the chief town of the province, and much had happened since then. Little was known of the girl's history in the town and that little was vague. Nothing more had been learnt during the last four years, even after many persons had become interested in the beautiful young woman into whom Agrafena Alexandrovna had meanwhile developed. There were rumours that she had been at seventeen betrayed by someone, some sort of officer, and immediately afterwards abandoned by him. The officer had gone away and afterwards married, while Grushenka had been left in poverty and disgrace. It was said, however, that though Grushenka had been raised from destitution by the old man, Samsonov, she came of a respectable family belonging to the clerical class, that she was the daughter of a deacon or something of the sort.

And now after four years the sensitive, injured and pathetic little orphan had become a plump, rosy beauty of the Russian type, a woman of bold and determined character, proud and insolent. She had a good head for business, was acquisitive, saving and careful, and by fair means or foul had succeeded, it was said, in amassing a little fortune. There was only, one point on which all were agreed. Grushenka was not easily to be approached

and, except her aged protector, there had not been one man who could boast of her favours during those four years. It was a positive fact, for there had been a good many, especially during the last two years, who had attempted to obtain those favours. But all their efforts had been in vain and some of these suitors had been forced to beat an undignified and even comic retreat, owing to the firm and ironical resistance they met from the strong-willed young person. It was known, too, that the young person had, especially of late, been given to what is called “speculation,” and that she had shown marked abilities in that direction, so that many people began to say that she was no better than a Jew. It was not that she lent money on interest, but it was known, for instance, that she had for some time past, in partnership with old Karamazov, actually invested in the purchase of bad debts for a trifle, a tenth of their nominal value, and afterwards had made out of them ten times their value.

The old widower Samsonov, a man of large fortune, was stingy and merciless. He tyrannised over his grown-up sons, but, for the last year during which he had been ill and lost the use of his swollen legs, he had fallen greatly under the influence of his protegee, whom he had at first kept strictly and in humble surroundings, “on Lenten fare,” as the wits said at the time. But Grushenka had succeeded in emancipating herself, while she established in him a boundless belief in her fidelity. The old man, now long since dead, had had a large business in his day and was also a noteworthy character, miserly and hard as flint. Though Grushenka’s hold upon him was so strong that he could not live without her (it had been so especially for the last two years), he did not settle any considerable fortune on her and would not have been moved to do so, if she had threatened to leave him. But he had presented her with a small sum, and even that was a surprise to everyone when it became known.

“You are a wench with brains,” he said to her, when he gave her eight thousand roubles, “and you must look after yourself, but let me tell you that except your yearly allowance as before, you’ll get nothing more from me to the day of my death, and I’ll leave you nothing in my will either.”

And he kept his word; he died and left everything to his sons, whom, with their wives and children, he had treated all his life as servants. Grushenka was not even mentioned in his will. All this became known afterwards. He helped Grushenka with his advice to increase her capital and put business in her way.

When Fyodor Pavlovitch, who first came into contact with Grushenka over a piece of speculation, ended to his own surprise by falling madly in love with her, old Samsonov, gravely ill as he was, was immensely amused. It is remarkable that throughout their whole acquaintance Grushenka was absolutely and spontaneously open with the old man, and he seems to have been the only person in the world with whom she was so. Of late, when Dmitri too had come on the scene with his love, the old man left off laughing. On the contrary, he once gave Grushenka a stern and earnest piece of advice.

"If you have to choose between the two, father or son, you'd better choose the old man, if only you make sure the old scoundrel will marry you and settle some fortune on you beforehand. But don't keep on with the captain, you'll get no good out of that."

These were the very words of the old profligate, who felt already that his death was not far off and who actually died five months later.

I will note too, in passing — that although many in our town knew of the grotesque and monstrous rivalry of the Karamazovs, father and son, the object of which was Grushenka, scarcely anyone understood what really underlay her attitude to both of them. Even Grushenka's two servants (after the catastrophe of which we will speak later) testified in court that she received Dmitri Fyodorovitch simply from fear because "he threatened to murder her." These servants were an old cook, invalidish and almost deaf, who came from Grushenka's old home, and her granddaughter, a smart young girl of twenty, who performed the duties of a maid. Grushenka lived very economically and her surroundings were anything but luxurious. Her lodge consisted of three rooms furnished with mahogany furniture in the fashion of 1820, belonging to her landlady.

It was quite dark when Rakitin and Alyosha entered her rooms, yet they were not lighted up. Grushenka was lying down in her drawing-room on the big, hard, clumsy sofa, with a mahogany back. The sofa was covered with shabby and ragged leather. Under her head she had two white down pillows taken from her bed. She was lying stretched out motionless on her back with her hands behind her head. She was dressed as though expecting someone, in a black silk dress, with a dainty lace fichu on her head, which was very becoming. Over her shoulders was thrown a lace shawl pinned with a massive gold brooch. She certainly was expecting someone. She lay

as though impatient and weary, her face rather pale and her lips and eyes hot, restlessly tapping the arm of the sofa with the tip of her right foot. The appearance of Rakitin and Alyosha caused a slight excitement. From the hall they could hear Grushenka leap up from the sofa and cry out in a frightened voice, “Who’s there?” But the maid met the visitors and at once called back to her mistress.

“It’s not he, it’s nothing, only other visitors.”

“What can be the matter?” muttered Rakitin, leading Alyosha into the drawing-room.

Grushenka was standing by the sofa as though still alarmed. A thick coil of her dark brown hair escaped from its lace covering and fell on her right shoulder, but she did not notice it and did not put it back till she had gazed at her visitors and recognised them.

“Ah, it’s you, Rakitin? You quite frightened me. Whom have you brought? Who is this with you? Good heavens, you have brought him!” she exclaimed, recognising Alyosha.

“Do send for candles!” said Rakitin, with the free-and-easy air of a most intimate friend, who is privileged to give orders in the house.

“Candles... of course, candles.... Fenya, fetch him a candle.... Well, you have chosen a moment to bring him! she exclaimed again, nodding towards Alyosha, and turning to the looking-glass she began quickly fastening up her hair with both hands. She seemed displeased.

“Haven’t I managed to please you?” asked Rakitin, instantly almost offended.

You frightened me, Rakitin, that’s what it is.” Grushenka turned with a smile to Alyosha. “Don’t be afraid of me, my dear Alyosha, you cannot think how glad I am to see you, my unexpected visitor. But you frightened me, Rakitin, I thought it was Mitya breaking in. You see, I deceived him just now, I made him promise to believe me and I told him a lie. I told him that I was going to spend the evening with my old man, Kuzma Kuzmitch, and should be there till late counting up his money. I always spend one whole evening a week with him making up his accounts. We lock ourselves in and he counts on the reckoning beads while I sit and put things down in the book. I am the only person he trusts. Mitya believes that I am there, but I came back and have been sitting locked in here, expecting some news. How was it Fenya let you in? Fenya, Fenya, run out to the gate, open it and

look about whether the captain is to be seen! Perhaps he is hiding and spying, I am dreadfully frightened.”

There’s no one there, Agrafena Alexandrovna, I’ve just looked out; I keep running to peep through the crack; I am in fear and trembling myself.”

“Are the shutters fastened, Fenya? And we must draw the curtains — that’s better!” She drew the heavy curtains herself. “He’d rush in at once if he saw a light. I am afraid of your brother Mitya to-day, Alyosha.”

Grushenka spoke aloud, and, though she was alarmed, she seemed very happy about something.

“Why are you so afraid of Mitya to-day?” inquired Rakitin. “I should have thought you were not timid with him, you’d twist him round your little finger.”

“I tell you, I am expecting news, priceless news, so I don’t want Mitya at all. And he didn’t believe, I feel he didn’t, that I should stay at Kuzma Kuzmitch’s. He must be in his ambush now, behind Fyodor Pavlovitch’s, in the garden, watching for me. And if he’s there, he won’t come here, so much the better! But I really have been to Kuzma Kuzmitch’s, Mitya escorted me there. I told him I should stay there till midnight, and I asked him to be sure to come at midnight to fetch me home. He went away and I sat ten minutes with Kuzma Kuzmitch and came back here again. Ugh, I was afraid, I ran for fear of meeting him.”

“And why are you so dressed up? What a curious cap you’ve got on!”

“How curious you are yourself, Rakitin! I tell you, I am expecting a message. If the message comes, I shall fly, I shall gallop away and you will see no more of me. That’s why I am dressed up, so as to be ready.”

“And where are you flying to?”

“If you know too much, you’ll get old too soon.”

“Upon my word! You are highly delighted... I’ve never seen you like this before. You are dressed up as if you were going to a ball.” Rakitin looked her up and down.

“Much you know about balls.”

“And do you know much about them?”

“I have seen a ball. The year before last, Kuzma Kuzmitch’s son was married and I looked on from the gallery. Do you suppose I want to be talking to you, Rakitin, while a prince like this is standing here. Such a visitor! Alyosha, my dear boy, I gaze at you and can’t believe my eyes. Good heavens, can you have come here to see me! To tell you the truth, I

never had a thought of seeing you and I didn’t think that you would ever come and see me. Though this is not the moment now, I am awfully glad to see you. Sit down on the sofa, here, that’s right, my bright young moon. I really can’t take it in even now.... Eh, Rakitin, if only you had brought him yesterday or the day before! But I am glad as it is! Perhaps it’s better he has come now, at such a moment, and not the day before yesterday.”

She gaily sat down beside Alyosha on the sofa, looking at him with positive delight. And she really was glad, she was not lying when she said so. Her eyes glowed, her lips laughed, but it was a good-hearted merry laugh. Alyosha had not expected to see such a kind expression in her face.... He had hardly met her till the day before, he had formed an alarming idea of her, and had been horribly distressed the day before by the spiteful and treacherous trick she had played on Katerina Ivanovna. He was greatly surprised to find her now altogether different from what he had expected. And, crushed as he was by his own sorrow, his eyes involuntarily rested on her with attention. Her whole manner seemed changed for the better since yesterday, there was scarcely any trace of that mawkish sweetness in her speech, of that voluptuous softness in her movements. Everything was simple and good-natured, her gestures were rapid, direct, confiding, but she was greatly excited.

“Dear me, how everything comes together to-day!” she chattered on again. “And why I am so glad to see you, Alyosha, I couldn’t say myself! If you ask me, I couldn’t tell you.”

“Come, don’t you know why you’re glad?” said Rakitin, grinning. “You used to be always pestering me to bring him, you’d some object, I suppose.”

“I had a different object once, but now that’s over, this is not the moment. I say, I want you to have something nice. I am so good-natured now. You sit down, too, Rakitin; why are you standing? You’ve sat down already? There’s no fear of Rakitin’s forgetting to look after himself. Look, Alyosha, he’s sitting there opposite us, so offended that I didn’t ask him to sit down before you. Ugh, Rakitin is such a one to take offence!” laughed Grushenka. “Don’t be angry, Rakitin, I’m kind to-day. Why are you so depressed, Alyosha? Are you afraid of me?” She peeped into his eyes with merry mockery.

“He’s sad. The promotion has not been given,” boomed Rakitin.

“His elder stinks.”

“What? You are talking some nonsense, you want to say something nasty. Be quiet, you stupid! Let me sit on your knee, Alyosha, like this.” She suddenly skipped forward and jumped, laughing, on his knee, like a nestling kitten, with her right arm about his neck. “I’ll cheer you up, my pious boy. Yes, really, will you let me sit on your knee? You won’t be angry? If you tell me, I’ll get off?”

Alyosha did not speak. He sat afraid to move, he heard her words, “If you tell me, I’ll get off,” but he did not answer. But there was nothing in his heart such as Rakitin, for instance, watching him malignantly from his corner, might have expected or fancied. The great grief in his heart swallowed up every sensation that might have been aroused, and, if only he could have thought clearly at that moment, he would have realised that he had now the strongest armour to protect him from every lust and temptation. Yet in spite of the vague irresponsiveness of his spiritual condition and the sorrow that overwhelmed him, he could not help wondering at a new and strange sensation in his heart. This woman, this “dreadful” woman, had no terror for him now, none of that terror that had stirred in his soul at any passing thought of woman. On the contrary, this woman, dreaded above all women, sitting now on his knee, holding him in her arms, aroused in him now a quite different, unexpected, peculiar feeling, a feeling of the intensest and purest interest without a trace of fear, of his former terror. That was what instinctively surprised him.

“You’ve talked nonsense enough,” cried Rakitin, “you’d much better give us some champagne. You owe it me, you know you do!”

“Yes, I really do. Do you know, Alyosha, I promised him champagne on the top of everything, if he’d bring you? I’ll have some too! Fenya, Fenya, bring us the bottle Mitya left! Look sharp! Though I am so stingy, I’ll stand a bottle, not for you, Rakitin, you’re a toadstool, but he is a falcon! And though my heart is full of something very different, so be it, I’ll drink with you. I long for some dissipation.”

“But what is the matter with you? And what is this message, may I ask, or is it a secret?” Rakitin put in inquisitively, doing his best to pretend not to notice the snubs that were being continually aimed at him.

“Ech, it’s not a secret, and you know it, too,” Grushenka said, in a voice suddenly anxious, turning her head towards Rakitin, and drawing a little away from Alyosha, though she still sat on his knee with her arm round his neck. “My officer is coming, Rakitin, my officer is coming.”

“I heard he was coming, but is he so near?”

“He is at Mokroe now; he’ll send a messenger from there, so he wrote; I got a letter from him to-day. I am expecting the messenger every minute.”

“You don’t say so! Why at Mokroe?”

“That’s a long story, I’ve told you enough.”

“Mitya’ll be up to something now — I say! Does he know or doesn’t he?”

“He know! Of course he doesn’t. If he knew, there would be murder. But I am not afraid of that now, I am not afraid of his knife. Be quiet, Rakitin, don’t remind me of Dmitri Fyodorovitch, he has bruised my heart. And I don’t want to think of that at this moment. I can think of Alyosha here, I can look at Alyosha... smile at me, dear, cheer up, smile at my foolishness, at my pleasure.... Ah, he’s smiling, he’s smiling! How kindly he looks at me! And you know, Alyosha, I’ve been thinking all this time you were angry with me, because of the day before yesterday, because of that young lady. I was a cur, that’s the truth.... But it’s a good thing it happened so. It was a horrid thing, but a good thing too.” Grushenka smiled dreamily and a little cruel line showed in her smile. “Mitya told me that she screamed out that I ‘ought to be flogged.’ I did insult her dreadfully. She sent for me, she wanted to make a conquest of me, to win me over with her chocolate.... No, it’s a good thing it did end like that.” She smiled again. “But I am still afraid of your being angry.”

“Yes, that’s really true,” Rakitin put in suddenly with genuine surprise. “Alyosha, she is really afraid of a chicken like you.”

“He is a chicken to you, Rakitin... because you’ve no conscience, that’s what it is! You see, I love him with all my soul, that’s how it is! Alyosha, do you believe I love you with all my soul?”

“Ah, you shameless woman! She is making you a declaration, Alexey!”

“Well, what of it, I love him!”

“And what about your officer? And the priceless message from Mokroe?”

“That is quite different.”

“That’s a woman’s way of looking at it!”

“Don’t you make me angry, Rakitin.” Grushenka caught him up hotly. “This is quite different. I love Alyosha in a different way. It’s true, Alyosha, I had sly designs on you before. For I am a horrid, violent creature. But at other times I’ve looked upon you, Alyosha, as my conscience. I’ve kept

thinking ‘how anyone like that must despise a nasty thing like me.’ I thought that the day before yesterday, as I ran home from the young lady’s. I have thought of you a long time in that way, Alyosha, and Mitya knows; I’ve talked to him about it. Mitya understands. Would you believe it, I sometimes look at you and feel ashamed, utterly ashamed of myself.... And how, and since when, I began to think about you like that, I can’t say, I don’t remember....”

Fenya came in and put a tray with an uncorked bottle and three glasses of champagne on the table.

“Here’s the champagne!” cried Rakitin. “You’re excited, Agrafena Alexandrovna, and not yourself. When you’ve had a glass of champagne, you’ll be ready to dance. Eh, they can’t even do that properly,” he added, looking at the bottle. “The old woman’s poured it out in the kitchen and the bottle’s been brought in warm and without a cork. Well, let me have some, anyway.”

He went up to the table, took a glass, emptied it at one gulp and poured himself out another.

“One doesn’t often stumble upon champagne,” he said, licking his lips. “Now, Alyosha, take a glass, show what you can do! What shall we drink to? The gates of paradise? Take a glass, Grushenka, you drink to the gates of paradise, too.”

“What gates of paradise?”

She took a glass, Alyosha took his, tasted it and put it back.

“No, I’d better not,” he smiled gently.

“And you bragged!” cried Rakitin.

“Well, if so, I won’t either,” chimed in Grushenka, “I really don’t want any. You can drink the whole bottle alone, Rakitin. If Alyosha has some, I will.”

“What touching sentimentality!” said Rakitin tauntingly; “and she’s sitting on his knee, too! He’s got something to grieve over, but what’s the matter with you? He is rebelling against his God and ready to eat sausage....”

“How so?”

“His elder died to-day, Father Zossima, the saint.”

“So Father Zossima is dead,” cried Grushenka. “Good God, I did not know!” She crossed herself devoutly. “Goodness, what have I been doing,

sitting on his knee like this at such a moment! She started up as though in dismay, instantly slipped off his knee and sat down on the sofa.

Alyosha bent a long wondering look upon her and a light seemed to dawn in his face.

“Rakitin,” he said suddenly, in a firm and loud voice; “don’t taunt me with having rebelled against God. I don’t want to feel angry with you, so you must be kinder, too; I’ve lost a treasure such as you have never had, and you cannot judge me now. You had much better look at her — do you see how she has pity on me? I came here to find a wicked soul — I felt drawn to evil because I was base and evil myself, and I’ve found a true sister; I have found a treasure — a loving heart. She had pity on me just now.... Agrafena Alexandrovna, I am speaking of you. You’ve raised my soul from the depths.”

Alyosha’s lips were quivering and he caught his breath.

“She has saved you, it seems,” laughed Rakitin spitefully. “And she meant to get you in her clutches, do your realise that?”

“Stay, Rakitin.” Grushenka jumped up. “Hush, both of you. Now I’ll tell you all about it. Hush, Alyosha, your words make me ashamed, for I am bad and not good — that’s what I am. And you hush, Rakitin, because you are telling lies. I had the low idea of trying to get him in my clutches, but now you are lying, now it’s all different. And don’t let me hear anything more from you, Rakitin.”

All this Grushenka said with extreme emotion.

“They are both crazy,” said Rakitin, looking at them with amazement. “I feel as though I were in a madhouse. They’re both getting so feeble they’ll begin crying in a minute.”

“I shall begin to cry, I shall,” repeated Grushenka. “He called me his sister and I shall never forget that. Only let me tell you, Rakitin, though I am bad, I did give away an onion.”

“An onion? Hang it all, you really are crazy.”

Rakitin wondered at their enthusiasm. He was aggrieved and annoyed, though he might have reflected that each of them was just passing through a spiritual crisis such as does not come often in a lifetime. But though Rakitin was very sensitive about everything that concerned himself, he was very obtuse as regards the feelings and sensations of others — partly from his youth and inexperience, partly from his intense egoism.

“You see, Alyosha,” Grushenka turned to him with a nervous laugh. “I was boasting when I told Rakitin I had given away an onion, but it’s not to boast I tell you about it. It’s only a story, but it’s a nice story. I used to hear it when I was a child from Matryona, my cook, who is still with me. It’s like this. Once upon a time there was a peasant woman and a very wicked woman she was. And she died and did not leave a single good deed behind. The devils caught her and plunged her into the lake of fire. So her guardian angel stood and wondered what good deed of hers he could remember to tell to God; ‘She once pulled up an onion in her garden,’ said he, ‘and gave it to a beggar woman.’ And God answered: ‘You take that onion then, hold it out to her in the lake, and let her take hold and be pulled out. And if you can pull her out of the lake, let her come to Paradise, but if the onion breaks, then the woman must stay where she is.’ The angel ran to the woman and held out the onion to her. ‘Come,’ said he, ‘catch hold and I’ll pull you out.’ he began cautiously pulling her out. He had just pulled her right out, when the other sinners in the lake, seeing how she was being drawn out, began catching hold of her so as to be pulled out with her. But she was a very wicked woman and she began kicking them. ‘I’m to be pulled out, not you. It’s my onion, not yours.’ As soon as she said that, the onion broke. And the woman fell into the lake and she is burning there to this day. So the angel wept and went away. So that’s the story, Alyosha; I know it by heart, for I am that wicked woman myself. I boasted to Rakitin that I had given away an onion, but to you I’ll say: ‘I’ve done nothing but give away one onion all my life, that’s the only good deed I’ve done.’ don’t praise me, Alyosha, don’t think me good, I am bad, I am a wicked woman and you make me ashamed if you praise me. Eh, I must confess everything. Listen, Alyosha. I was so anxious to get hold of you that I promised Rakitin twenty-five roubles if he would bring you to me. Stay, Rakitin, wait!”

She went with rapid steps to the table, opened a drawer, pulled out a purse and took from it a twenty-five rouble note.

“What nonsense! What nonsense!” cried Rakitin, disconcerted.

“Take it. Rakitin, I owe it you, there’s no fear of your refusing it, you asked for it yourself.” And she threw the note to him.

“Likely I should refuse it,” boomed Rakitin, obviously abashed, but carrying off his confusion with a swagger. “That will come in very handy; fools are made for wise men’s profit.”

“And now hold your tongue, Rakitin, what I am going to say now is not for your ears. Sit down in that corner and keep quiet. You don’t like us, so hold your tongue.”

“What should I like you for?” Rakitin snarled, not concealing his ill-humour. He put the twenty-five rouble note in his pocket and he felt ashamed at Alyosha’s seeing it. He had reckoned on receiving his payment later, without Alyosha’s knowing of it, and now, feeling ashamed, he lost his temper. Till that moment he had thought it discreet not to contradict Grushenka too flatly in spite of her snubbing, since he had something to get out of her. But now he, too, was angry:

“One loves people for some reason, but what have either of you done for me?”

“You should love people without a reason, as Alyosha does.”

“How does he love you? How has he shown it, that you make such a fuss about it?”

Grushenka was standing in the middle of the room; she spoke with heat and there were hysterical notes in her voice.

“Hush, Rakitin, you know nothing about us! And don’t dare to speak to me like that again. How dare you be so familiar! Sit in that corner and be quiet, as though you were my footman! And now, Alyosha, I’ll tell you the whole truth, that you may see what a wretch I am! I am not talking to Rakitin, but to you. I wanted to ruin you, Alyosha, that’s the holy truth; I quite meant to. I wanted to so much, that I bribed Rakitin to bring you. And why did I want to do such a thing? You knew nothing about it, Alyosha, you turned away from me; if you passed me, you dropped your eyes. And I’ve looked at you a hundred times before to-day; I began asking everyone about you. Your face haunted my heart. ‘He despises me,’ I thought; ‘he won’t even look at me.’ And I felt it so much at last that I wondered at myself for being so frightened of a boy. I’ll get him in my clutches and laugh at him. I was full of spite and anger. Would you believe it, nobody here dares talk or think of coming to Agrafena Alexandrovna with any evil purpose. Old Kuzma is the only man I have anything to do with here; I was bound and sold to him; Satan brought us together, but there has been no one else. But looking at you, I thought, I’ll get him in my clutches and laugh at him. You see what a spiteful cur I am, and you called me your sister! And now that man who wronged me has come; I sit here waiting for a message from him. And do you know what that man has been to me? Five years ago, when

Kuzma brought me here, I used to shut myself up, that no one might have sight or sound of me. I was a silly slip of a girl; I used to sit here sobbing; I used to lie awake all night, thinking: ‘Where is he now, the man who wronged me? He is laughing at me with another woman, most likely. If only I could see him, if I could meet him again, I’d pay him out, I’d pay him out!’ At night I used to lie sobbing into my pillow in the dark, and I used to brood over it; I used to tear my heart on purpose and gloat over my anger. ‘I’ll pay him out, I’ll pay him out! That’s what I used to cry out in the dark. And when I suddenly thought that I should really do nothing to him, and that he was laughing at me then, or perhaps had utterly forgotten me, I would fling myself on the floor, melt into helpless tears, and lie there shaking till dawn. In the morning I would get up more spiteful than a dog, ready to tear the whole world to pieces. And then what do you think? I began saving money, I became hardhearted, grew stout — grew wiser, would you say? No, no one in the whole world sees it, no one knows it, but when night comes on, I sometimes lie as I did five years ago, when I was a silly girl, clenching my teeth and crying all night, thinking, ‘I’ll pay him out, I’ll pay him out!’ Do you hear? Well then, now you understand me. A month ago a letter came to me — he was coming, he was a widower, he wanted to see me. It took my breath away; then I suddenly thought: ‘If he comes and whistles to call me, I shall creep back to him like a beaten dog.’ I couldn’t believe myself. Am I so abject? Shall I run to him or not? And I’ve been in such a rage with myself all this month that I am worse than I was five years ago. Do you see now, Alyosha, what a violent, vindictive creature I am? I have shown you the whole truth! I played with Mitya to keep me from running to that other. Hush, Rakitin, it’s not for you to judge me, I am not speaking to you. Before you came in, I was lying here waiting, brooding, deciding my whole future life, and you can never know what was in my heart. Yes, Alyosha, tell your young lady not to be angry with me for what happened the day before yesterday.... Nobody in the whole world knows what I am going through now, and no one ever can know.... For perhaps I shall take a knife with me to-day, I can’t make up my mind...”

And at this “tragic” phrase Grushenka broke down, hid her face in her hands, flung herself on the sofa pillows, and sobbed like a little child.

Alyosha got up and went to Rakitin.

“Misha,” he said, “don’t be angry. She wounded you, but don’t be angry. You heard what she said just now? You mustn’t ask too much of human

endurance, one must be merciful.”

Alyosha said this at the instinctive prompting of his heart. He felt obliged to speak and he turned to Rakitin. If Rakitin had not been there, he would have spoken to the air. But Rakitin looked at him ironically and Alyosha stopped short.

“You were so primed up with your elder’s reading last night that now you have to let it off on me, Alexey, man of God!” said Rakitin, with a smile of hatred.

“Don’t laugh, Rakitin, don’t smile, don’t talk of the dead — he was better than anyone in the world!” cried Alyosha, with tears in his voice. “I didn’t speak to you as a judge but as the lowest of the judged. What am I beside her? I came here seeking my ruin, and said to myself, ‘What does it matter?’ in my cowardliness, but she, after five years in torment, as soon as anyone says a word from the heart to her — it makes her forget everything, forgive everything, in her tears! The man who has wronged her has come back, he sends for her and she forgives him everything, and hastens joyfully to meet him and she won’t take a knife with her. She won’t! No, I am not like that. I don’t know whether you are, Misha, but I am not like that. It’s a lesson to me.... She is more loving than we.... Have you heard her speak before of what she has just told us? No, you haven’t; if you had, you’d have understood her long ago... and the person insulted the day before yesterday must forgive her, too! She will, when she knows... and she shall know.... This soul is not yet at peace with itself, one must be tender with... there may be a treasure in that soul....”

Alyosha stopped, because he caught his breath. In spite of his ill-humour Rakitin looked at him with astonishment. He had never expected such a tirade from the gentle Alyosha.

“She’s found someone to plead her cause! Why, are you in love with her? Agrafena Alexandrovna, our monk’s really in love with you, you’ve made a conquest!” he cried, with a coarse laugh.

Grushenka lifted her head from the pillow and looked at Alyosha with a tender smile shining on her tear-stained face.

“Let him alone, Alyosha, my cherub; you see what he is, he is not a person for you to speak to. Mihail Osipovitch,” she turned to Rakitin, “I meant to beg your pardon for being rude to you, but now I don’t want to. Alyosha, come to me, sit down here.” She beckoned to him with a happy smile. “That’s right, sit here. Tell me,” she took him by the hand and peeped

into his face, smiling, “tell me, do I love that man or not? The man who wronged me, do I love him or not? Before you came, I lay here in the dark, asking my heart whether I loved him. Decide for me, Alyosha, the time has come, it shall be as you say. Am I to forgive him or not?”

“But you have forgiven him already,” said Alyosha, smiling.

“Yes, I really have forgiven him,” Grushenka murmured thoughtfully. “What an abject heart! To my abject heart!” She snatched up a glass from the table, emptied it at a gulp, lifted it in the air and flung it on the floor. The glass broke with a crash. A little cruel line came into her smile.

“Perhaps I haven’t forgiven him, though,” she said, with a sort of menace in her voice, and she dropped her eyes to the ground as though she were talking to herself. “Perhaps my heart is only getting ready to forgive. I shall struggle with my heart. You see, Alyosha, I’ve grown to love my tears in these five years.... Perhaps I only love my resentment, not him...”

“Well, I shouldn’t care to be in his shoes,” hissed Rakitin.

“Well, you won’t be, Rakitin, you’ll never be in his shoes. You shall black my shoes, Rakitin, that’s the place you are fit for. You’ll never get a woman like me... and he won’t either, perhaps...”

“Won’t he? Then why are you dressed up like that?” said Rakitin, with a venomous sneer.

“Don’t taunt me with dressing up, Rakitin, you don’t know all that is in my heart! If I choose to tear off my finery, I’ll tear it off at once, this minute,” she cried in a resonant voice. “You don’t know what that finery is for, Rakitin! Perhaps I shall see him and say: ‘Have you ever seen me look like this before?’ He left me a thin, consumptive cry-baby of seventeen. I’ll sit by him, fascinate him and work him up. ‘Do you see what I am like now?’ I’ll say to him; ‘well, and that’s enough for you, my dear sir, there’s many a slip twixt the cup and the lip! That may be what the finery is for, Rakitin.” Grushenka finished with a malicious laugh. “I’m violent and resentful, Alyosha, I’ll tear off my finery, I’ll destroy my beauty, I’ll scorch my face, slash it with a knife, and turn beggar. If I choose, I won’t go anywhere now to see anyone. If I choose, I’ll send Kuzma back all he has ever given me, to-morrow, and all his money and I’ll go out charing for the rest of my life. You think I wouldn’t do it, Rakitin, that I would not dare to do it? I would, I would, I could do it directly, only don’t exasperate me... and I’ll send him about his business, I’ll snap my fingers in his face, he shall never see me again!”

She uttered the last words in an hysterical scream, but broke down again, hid her face in her hands, buried it in the pillow and shook with sobs.

Rakitin got up.

“It’s time we were off,” he said, “it’s late, we shall be shut out of the monastery.”

Grushenka leapt up from her place.

“Surely you don’t want to go, Alyosha!” she cried, in mournful surprise. “What are you doing to me? You’ve stirred up my feeling, tortured me, and now you’ll leave me to face this night alone!”

“He can hardly spend the night with you! Though if he wants to, let him! I’ll go alone,” Rakitin scoffed jeeringly.

“Hush, evil tongue!” Grushenka cried angrily at him; “you never said such words to me as he has come to say.”

“What has he said to you so special?” asked Rakitin irritably.

“I can’t say, I don’t know. I don’t know what he said to me, it went straight to my heart; he has wrung my heart.... He is the first, the only one who has pitied me, that’s what it is. Why did you not come before, you angel?” She fell on her knees before him as though in a sudden frenzy. “I’ve been waiting all my life for someone like you, I knew that someone like you would come and forgive me. I believed that, nasty as I am, someone would really love me, not only with a shameful love!”

“What have I done to you?” answered Alyosha, bending over her with a tender smile, and gently taking her by the hands; “I only gave you an onion, nothing but a tiny little onion, that was all!”

He was moved to tears himself as he said it. At that moment there was a sudden noise in the passage, someone came into the hall. Grushenka jumped up, seeming greatly alarmed. Fenya ran noisily into the room, crying out:

“Mistress, mistress darling, a messenger has galloped up,” she cried, breathless and joyful. “A carriage from Mokroe for you, Timofey the driver, with three horses, they are just putting in fresh horses.... A letter, here’s the letter, mistress.”

A letter was in her hand and she waved it in the air all the while she talked. Grushenka snatched the letter from her and carried it to the candle. It was only a note, a few lines. She read it in one instant.

“He has sent for me,” she cried, her face white and distorted, with a wan smile; “he whistles! Crawl back, little dog!”

But only for one instant she stood as though hesitating; suddenly the blood rushed to her head and sent a glow to her cheeks.

“I will go,” she cried; “five years of my life! Good-bye! Good-bye, Alyosha, my fate is sealed. Go, go, leave me all of you, don’t let me see you again! Grushenka is flying to a new life.... Don’t you remember evil against me either, Rakitin. I may be going to my death! Ugh! I feel as though I were drunk!”

She suddenly left them and ran into her bedroom.

“Well, she has no thoughts for us now!” grumbled Rakitin. “Let’s go, or we may hear that feminine shriek again. I am sick of all these tears and cries.”

Alyosha mechanically let himself be led out. In the yard stood a covered cart. Horses were being taken out of the shafts, men were running to and fro with a lantern. Three fresh horses were being led in at the open gate. But when Alyosha and Rakitin reached the bottom of the steps, Grushenka’s bedroom window was suddenly opened and she called in a ringing voice after Alyosha:

“Alyosha, give my greetings to your brother Mitya and tell him not to remember evil against me, though I have brought him misery. And tell him, too, in my words: ‘Grushenka has fallen to a scoundrel, and not to you, noble heart.’ And add, too, that Grushenka loved him only one hour, only one short hour she loved him — so let him remember that hour all his life-say, ‘Grushenka tells you to!’

She ended in a voice full of sobs. The window was shut with a slam.

“H’m, h’m!” growled Rakitin, laughing, “she murders your brother Mitya and then tells him to remember it all his life! What ferocity!”

Alyosha made no reply, he seemed not to have heard. He walked fast beside Rakitin as though in a terrible hurry. He was lost in thought and moved mechanically. Rakitin felt a sudden twinge as though he had been touched on an open wound. He had expected something quite different by bringing Grushenka and Alyosha together. Something very different from what he had hoped for had happened.

“He is a Pole, that officer of hers,” he began again, restraining himself; “and indeed he is not an officer at all now. He served in the customs in Siberia, somewhere on the Chinese frontier, some puny little beggar of a Pole, I expect. Lost his job, they say. He’s heard now that Grushenka’s

saved a little money, so he’s turned up again — that’s the explanation of the mystery.”

Again Alyosha seemed not to hear. Rakitin could not control himself.

“Well, so you’ve saved the sinner?” he laughed spitefully. “Have you turned the Magdalene into the true path? Driven out the seven devils, eh? So you see the miracles you were looking out for just now have come to pass!”

“Hush, Rakitin,” Alyosha, answered with an aching heart.

“So you despise me now for those twenty-five roubles? I’ve sold my friend, you think. But you are not Christ, you know, and I am not Judas.”

“Oh, Rakitin, I assure you I’d forgotten about it,” cried Alyosha, “you remind me of it yourself...”

But this was the last straw for Rakitin.

“Damnation take you all and each of you” he cried suddenly, “why the devil did I take you up? I don’t want to know you from this time forward. Go alone, there’s your road!” And he turned abruptly into another street, leaving Alyosha alone in the dark. Alyosha came out of the town and walked across the fields to the monastery.

CHAPTER 4

Cana of Galilee

IT was very late, according to the monastery ideas, when Alyosha returned to the hermitage; the door-keeper let him in by a special entrance. It had struck nine o'clock — the hour of rest and repose after a day of such agitation for all. Alyosha timidly opened the door and went into the elder's cell where his coffin was now standing. There was no one in the cell but Father Paissy, reading the Gospel in solitude over the coffin, and the young novice Porfiry, who, exhausted by the previous night's conversation and the disturbing incidents of the day, was sleeping the deep sound sleep of youth on the floor of the other room. Though Father Paissy heard Alyosha come in, he did not even look in his direction. Alyosha turned to the right from the door to the corner, fell on his knees and began to pray.

His soul was overflowing but with mingled feelings; no single sensation stood out distinctly; on the contrary, one drove out another in a slow, continual rotation. But there was a sweetness in his heart and, strange to say, Alyosha was not surprised at it. Again he saw that coffin before him, the hidden dead figure so precious to him, but the weeping and poignant grief of the morning was no longer aching in his soul. As soon as he came in, he fell down before the coffin as before a holy shrine, but joy, joy was glowing in his mind and in his heart. The one window of the cell was open, the air was fresh and cool. "So the smell must have become stronger, if they opened the window," thought Alyosha. But even this thought of the smell of corruption, which had seemed to him so awful and humiliating a few hours before, no longer made him feel miserable or indignant. He began quietly praying, but he soon felt that he was praying almost mechanically. Fragments of thought floated through his soul, flashed like stars and went out again at once, to be succeeded by others. But yet there was reigning in his soul a sense of the wholeness of things — something steadfast and comforting — and he was aware of it himself. Sometimes he began praying ardently, he longed to pour out his thankfulness and love...

But when he had begun to pray, he passed suddenly to something else, and sank into thought, forgetting both the prayer and what had interrupted

it. He began listening to what Father Paissy was reading, but worn out with exhaustion he gradually began to doze.

“And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee,” read Father Paissy. “And the mother of Jesus was there; And both Jesus was there; And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.”

“Marriage? What’s that?... A marriage!” floated whirling through Alyosha’s mind. “There is happiness for her, too... She has gone to the feast.... No, she has not taken the knife.... That was only a tragic phrase.... Well... tragic phrases should be forgiven, they must be. Tragic phrases comfort the heart... Without them, sorrow would be too heavy for men to bear. Rakitin has gone off to the back alley. As long as Rakitin broods over his wrongs, he will always go off to the back alley.... But the high road... The road is wide and straight and bright as crystal, and the sun is at the end of it.... Ah!... What’s being read?”...

“And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine”... Alyosha heard.

“Ah, yes, I was missing that, and I didn’t want to miss it, I love that passage: it’s Cana of Galilee, the first miracle.... Ah, that miracle! Ah, that sweet miracle! It was not men’s grief, but their joy Christ visited, He worked His first miracle to help men’s gladness.... ‘He who loves men loves their gladness, too’... He was always repeating that, it was one of his leading ideas... ‘There’s no living without joy,’ Mitya says.... Yes, Mitya.... ‘Everything that is true and good is always full of forgiveness,’ he used to say that, too”... “Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what has it to do with thee or me? Mine hour not yet come.

“His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it”. . .

“Do it.... Gladness, the gladness of some poor, very poor, people.... Of course they were poor, since they hadn’t wine enough even at a wedding.... The historians write that, in those days, the people living about the Lake of Gennesaret were the poorest that can possibly be imagined... and another great heart, that other great being, His Mother, knew that He had come not only to make His great terrible sacrifice. She knew that His heart was open even to the simple, artless merrymaking of some obscure and unlearned people, who had warmly bidden Him to their poor wedding. ‘Mine hour is not yet come,’ He said, with a soft smile (He must have smiled gently to her). And, indeed, was it to make wine abundant at poor weddings He had

come down to earth? And yet He went and did as she asked Him.... Ah, he is reading again”...

“Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

“And he saith unto them, Draw out now and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bear it.

“When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants which drew the water knew); the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

“And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk,

that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.”

“But what’s this, what’s this? Why is the room growing wider?... Ah, yes... It’s the marriage, the wedding... yes, of course. Here are the guests, here are the young couple sitting, and the merry crowd and... Where is the wise governor of the feast? But who is this? Who? Again the walls are receding.... Who is getting up there from the great table? What!... He here, too? But he’s in the coffin... but he’s here, too. He has stood up, he sees me, he is coming here.... God!”...

Yes, he came up to him, to him, he, the little, thin old man, with tiny wrinkles on his face, joyful and laughing softly. There was no coffin now, and he was in the same dress as he had worn yesterday sitting with them, when the visitors had gathered about him. His face was uncovered, his eyes were shining. How was this, then? He, too, had been called to the feast. He, too, at the marriage of Cana in Galilee....

“Yes, my dear, I am called, too, called and bidden,” he heard a soft voice saying over him. “Why have you hidden yourself here, out of sight? You come and join us too.”

It was his voice, the voice of Father Zossima. And it must be he, since he called him!

The elder raised Alyosha by the hand and he rose from his knees.

“We are rejoicing,” the little, thin old man went on. “We are drinking the new wine, the wine of new, great gladness; do you see how many guests? Here are the bride and bridegroom, here is the wise governor of the feast, he is tasting the new wine. Why do you wonder at me? I gave an onion to a beggar, so I, too, am here. And many here have given only an onion each — only one little onion.... What are all our deeds? And you, my gentle one,

you, my kind boy, you too have known how to give a famished woman an onion to-day. Begin your work, dear one, begin it, gentle one! Do you see our Sun, do you see Him?”

“I am afraid... I dare not look,” whispered Alyosha.

“Do not fear Him. He is terrible in His greatness, awful in His sublimity, but infinitely merciful. He has made Himself like unto us from love and rejoices with us. He is changing the water into wine that the gladness of the guests may not be cut short. He is expecting new guests, He is calling new ones unceasingly for ever and ever.... There they are bringing new wine. Do you see they are bringing the vessels...”

Something glowed in Alyosha’s heart, something filled it till it ached, tears of rapture rose from his soul.... He stretched out his hands, uttered a cry and waked up.

Again the coffin, the open window, and the soft, solemn, distinct reading of the Gospel. But Alyosha did not listen to the reading. It was strange, he had fallen asleep on his knees, but now he was on his feet, and suddenly, as though thrown forward, with three firm rapid steps he went right up to the coffin. His shoulder brushed against Father Paissy without his noticing it. Father Paissy raised his eyes for an instant from his book, but looked away again at once, seeing that something strange was happening to the boy. Alyosha gazed for half a minute at the coffin, at the covered, motionless dead man that lay in the coffin, with the ikon on his breast and the peaked cap with the octangular cross on his head. He had only just been hearing his voice, and that voice was still ringing in his ears. He was listening, still expecting other words, but suddenly he turned sharply and went out of the cell.

He did not stop on the steps either, but went quickly down; his soul, overflowing with rapture, yearned for freedom, space, openness. The vault of heaven, full of soft, shining stars, stretched vast and fathomless above him. The Milky Way ran in two pale streams from the zenith to the horizon. The fresh, motionless, still night enfolded the earth. The white towers and golden domes of the cathedral gleamed out against the sapphire sky. The gorgeous autumn flowers, in the beds round the house, were slumbering till morning. The silence of earth seemed to melt into the silence of the heavens. The mystery of earth was one with the mystery of the stars....

Alyosha stood, gazed, and suddenly threw himself down on the earth. He did not know why he embraced it. He could not have told why he longed so

irresistibly to kiss it, to kiss it all. But he kissed it weeping, sobbing, and watering it with his tears, and vowed passionately to love it, to love it for ever and ever. “Water the earth with the tears of your joy and love those tears,” echoed in his soul.

What was he weeping over?

Oh! in his rapture he was weeping even over those stars, which were shining to him from the abyss of space, and “he was not ashamed of that ecstasy.” There seemed to be threads from all those innumerable worlds of God, linking his soul to them, and it was trembling all over “in contact with other worlds.” He longed to forgive everyone and for everything, and to beg forgiveness. Oh, not for himself, but for all men, for all and for everything. “And others are praying for me too,” echoed again in his soul. But with every instant he felt clearly and, as it were, tangibly, that something firm and unshakable as that vault of heaven had entered into his soul. It was as though some idea had seized the sovereignty of his mind — and it was for all his life and for ever and ever. He had fallen on the earth a weak boy, but he rose up a resolute champion, and he knew and felt it suddenly at the very moment of his ecstasy. And never, never, his life long, could Alyosha forget that minute.

“Someone visited my soul in that hour,” he used to say afterwards, with implicit faith in his words.

Within three days he left the monastery in accordance with the words of his elder, who had bidden him “sojourn in the world.”

BOOK VIII. MITYA

CHAPTER 1

Kuzma Samsonov

BUT Dmitri, to whom Grushenka, flying away to a new life, had left her last greetings, bidding him remember the hour of her love for ever, knew nothing of what had happened to her, and was at that moment in a condition of feverish agitation and activity. For the last two days he had been in such an inconceivable state of mind that he might easily have fallen ill with brain fever, as he said himself afterwards. Alyosha had not been able to find him the morning before, and Ivan had not succeeded in meeting him at the tavern on the same day. The people at his lodgings, by his orders, concealed his movements.

He had spent those two days literally rushing in all directions, “struggling with his destiny and trying to save himself,” as he expressed it himself afterwards, and for some hours he even made a dash out of the town on urgent business, terrible as it was to him to lose sight of Grushenka for a moment. All this was explained afterwards in detail, and confirmed by documentary evidence; but for the present we will only note the most essential incidents of those two terrible days immediately preceding the awful catastrophe that broke so suddenly upon him.

Though Grushenka had, it is true, loved him for an hour, genuinely and sincerely, yet she tortured him sometimes cruelly and mercilessly. The worst of it was that he could never tell what she meant to do. To prevail upon her by force or kindness was also impossible: she would yield to nothing. She would only have become angry and turned away from him altogether, he knew that well already. He suspected, quite correctly, that she, too, was passing through an inward struggle, and was in a state of extraordinary indecision, that she was making up her mind to something, and unable to determine upon it. And so, not without good reason, he divined, with a sinking heart, that at moments she must simply hate him and his passion. And so, perhaps, it was, but what was distressing Grushenka he did not understand. For him the whole tormenting question lay between him and Fyodor Pavlovitch.

Here, we must note, by the way, one certain fact: he was firmly persuaded that Fyodor Pavlovitch would offer, or perhaps had offered,

Grushenka lawful wedlock, and did not for a moment believe that the old voluptuary hoped to gain his object for three thousand roubles. Mitya had reached this conclusion from his knowledge of Grushenka and her character. That was how it was that he could believe at times that all Grushenka's uneasiness rose from not knowing which of them to choose, which was most to her advantage.

Strange to say, during those days it never occurred to him to think of the approaching return of the "officer," that is, of the man who had been such a fatal influence in Grushenka's life, and whose arrival she was expecting with such emotion and dread. It is true that of late Grushenka had been very silent about it. Yet he was perfectly aware of a letter she had received a month ago from her seducer, and had heard of it from her own lips. He partly knew, too, what the letter contained. In a moment of spite Grushenka had shown him that letter, but to her astonishment he attached hardly any consequence to it. It would be hard to say why this was. Perhaps, weighed down by all the hideous horror of his struggle with his own father for this woman, he was incapable of imagining any danger more terrible, at any rate for the time. He simply did not believe in a suitor who suddenly turned up again after five years' disappearance, still less in his speedy arrival. Moreover, in the "officer's" first letter which had been shown to Mitya, the possibility of his new rival's visit was very vaguely suggested. The letter was very indefinite, high-flown, and full of sentimentality. It must be noted that Grushenka had concealed from him the last lines of the letter, in which his return was alluded to more definitely. He had, besides, noticed at that moment, he remembered afterwards, a certain involuntary proud contempt for this missive from Siberia on Grushenka's face. Grushenka told him nothing of what had passed later between her and this rival; so that by degrees he had completely forgotten the officer's existence.

He felt that whatever might come later, whatever turn things might take, his final conflict with Fyodor Pavlovitch was close upon him, and must be decided before anything else. With a sinking heart he was expecting every moment Grushenka's decision, always believing that it would come suddenly, on the impulse of the moment. All of a sudden she would say to him: "Take me, I'm yours for ever," and it would all be over. He would seize her and bear her away at once to the ends of the earth. Oh, then he would bear her away at once, as far, far away as possible; to the farthest end of Russia, if not of the earth, then he would marry her, and settle down with

her incognito, so that no one would know anything about them, there, here, or anywhere. Then, oh then, a new life would begin at once!

Of this different, reformed and “virtuous” life (“it must, it must be virtuous”) he dreamed feverishly at every moment. He thirsted for that reformation and renewal. The filthy morass, in which he had sunk of his own free will, was too revolting to him, and, like very many men in such cases, he put faith above all in change of place. If only it were not for these people, if only it were not for these circumstances, if only he could fly away from this accursed place — he would be altogether regenerated, would enter on a new path. That was what he believed in, and what he was yearning for.

But all this could only be on condition of the first, the happy solution of the question. There was another possibility, a different and awful ending. Suddenly she might say to him: “Go away. I have just come to terms with Fyodor Pavlovitch. I am going to marry him and don’t want you” — and then... but then... But Mitya did not know what would happen then. Up to the last hour he didn’t know. That must be said to his credit. He had no definite intentions, had planned no crime. He was simply watching and spying in agony, while he prepared himself for the first, happy solution of his destiny. He drove away any other idea, in fact. But for that ending a quite different anxiety arose, a new, incidental, but yet fatal and insoluble difficulty presented itself.

If she were to say to him: “I’m yours; take me away,” how could he take her away? Where had he the means, the money to do it? It was just at this time that all sources of revenue from Fyodor Pavlovitch, doles which had gone on without interruption for so many years, ceased. Grushenka had money, of course, but with regard to this Mitya suddenly evinced extraordinary pride; he wanted to carry her away and begin the new life with her himself, at his own expense, not at hers. He could not conceive of taking her money, and the very idea caused him a pang of intense repulsion. I won’t enlarge on this fact or analyse it here, but confine myself to remarking that this was his attitude at the moment. All this may have arisen indirectly and unconsciously from the secret stings of his conscience for the money of Katerina Ivanovna that he had dishonestly appropriated. “I’ve been a scoundrel to one of them, and I shall be a scoundrel again to the other directly,” was his feeling then, as he explained after: “and when Grushenka knows, she won’t care for such a scoundrel.”

Where then was he to get the means, where was he to get the fateful money? Without it, all would be lost and nothing could be done, “and only because I hadn’t the money. Oh, the shame of it!”

To anticipate things: he did, perhaps, know where to get the money, knew, perhaps, where it lay at that moment. I will say no more of this here, as it will all be clear later. But his chief trouble, I must explain however obscurely, lay in the fact that to have that sum he knew of, to have the right to take it, he must first restore Katerina Ivanovna’s three thousand — if not, “I’m a common pick-pocket, I’m a scoundrel, and I don’t want to begin a new life as a scoundrel,” Mitya decided. And so he made up his mind to move heaven and earth to return Katerina Ivanovna that three thousand, and that first of all. The final stage of this decision, so to say, had been reached only during the last hours, that is, after his last interview with Alyosha, two days before, on the high-road, on the evening when Grushenka had insulted Katerina Ivanovna, and Mitya, after hearing Alyosha’s account of it, had admitted that he was a scoundrel, and told him to tell Katerina Ivanovna so, if it could be any comfort to her. After parting from his brother on that night, he had felt in his frenzy that it would be better “to murder and rob someone than fail to pay my debt to Katya. I’d rather everyone thought me a robber and a murderer; I’d rather go to Siberia than that Katya should have the right to say that I deceived her and stole her money, and used her money to run away with Grushenka and begin a new life! That I can’t do!” So Mitya decided, grinding his teeth, and he might well fancy at times that his brain would give way. But meanwhile he went on struggling....

Strange to say, though one would have supposed there was nothing left for him but despair — for what chance had he, with nothing in the world, to raise such a sum? — yet to the very end he persisted in hoping that he would get that three thousand, that the money would somehow come to him of itself, as though it might drop from heaven. That is just how it is with people who, like Dmitri, have never had anything to do with money, except to squander what has come to them by inheritance without any effort of their own, and have no notion how money is obtained. A whirl of the most fantastic notions took possession of his brain immediately after he had parted with Alyosha two days before, and threw his thoughts into a tangle of confusion. This is how it was he pitched first on a perfectly wild enterprise. And perhaps to men of that kind in such circumstances the most impossible, fantastic schemes occur first, and seem most practical.

He suddenly determined to go to Samsonov, the merchant who was Grushenka's protector, and to propose a "scheme" to him, and by means of it to obtain from him at once the whole of the sum required. Of the commercial value of his scheme he had no doubt, not the slightest, and was only uncertain how Samsonov would look upon his freak, supposing he were to consider it from any but the commercial point of view. Though Mitya knew the merchant by sight, he was not acquainted with him and had never spoken a word to him. But for some unknown reason he had long entertained the conviction that the old reprobate, who was lying at death's door, would perhaps not at all object now to Grushenka's securing a respectable position, and marrying a man "to be depended upon." And he believed not only that he would not object, but that this was what he desired, and, if opportunity arose, that he would be ready to help. From some rumour, or perhaps from some stray word of Grushenka's, he had gathered further that the old man would perhaps prefer him to Fyodor Pavlovitch for Grushenka.

Possibly many of the readers of my novel will feel that in reckoning on such assistance, and being ready to take his bride, so to speak, from the hands of her protector, Dmitri showed great coarseness and want of delicacy. I will only observe that Mitya looked upon Grushenka's past as something completely over. He looked on that past with infinite pity and resolved with all the fervour of his passion that when once Grushenka told him she loved him and would marry him, it would mean the beginning of a new Grushenka and a new Dmitri, free from every vice. They would forgive one another and would begin their lives afresh. As for Kuzma Samsonov, Dmitri looked upon him as a man who had exercised a fateful influence in that remote past of Grushenka's, though she had never loved him, and who was now himself a thing of the past, completely done with, and, so to say, non-existent. Besides, Mitya hardly looked upon him as a man at all, for it was known to everyone in the town that he was only a shattered wreck, whose relations with Grushenka had changed their character and were now simply paternal, and that this had been so for a long time.

In any case there was much simplicity on Mitya's part in all this, for in spite of all his vices, he was a very simple-hearted man. It was an instance of this simplicity that Mitya was seriously persuaded that, being on the eve of his departure for the next world, old Kuzma must sincerely repent of his

past relations with Grushenka, and that she had no more devoted friend and protector in the world than this, now harmless, old man.

After his conversation with Alyosha, at the cross-roads, he hardly slept all night, and at ten o'clock next morning, he was at the house of Samsonov and telling the servant to announce him. It was a very large and gloomy old house of two stories, with a lodge and outhouses. In the lower story lived Samsonov's two married sons with their families, his old sister, and his unmarried daughter. In the lodge lived two of his clerks, one of whom also had a large family. Both the lodge and the lower story were overcrowded, but the old man kept the upper floor to himself, and would not even let the daughter live there with him, though she waited upon him, and in spite of her asthma was obliged at certain fixed hours, and at any time he might call her, to run upstairs to him from below.

This upper floor contained a number of large rooms kept purely for show, furnished in the old-fashioned merchant style, with long monotonous rows of clumsy mahogany chairs along the walls, with glass chandeliers under shades, and gloomy mirrors on the walls. All these rooms were entirely empty and unused, for the old man kept to one room, a small, remote bedroom, where he was waited upon by an old servant with a kerchief on her head, and by a lad, who used to sit on the locker in the passage. Owing to his swollen legs, the old man could hardly walk at all, and was only rarely lifted from his leather armchair, when the old woman supporting him led him up and down the room once or twice. He was morose and taciturn even with this old woman.

When he was informed of the arrival of the "captain," he at once refused to see him. But Mitya persisted and sent his name up again. Samsonov questioned the lad minutely: What he looked like? Whether he was drunk? Was he going to make a row? The answer he received was: that he was sober, but wouldn't go away. The old man again refused to see him. Then Mitya, who had foreseen this, and purposely brought pencil and paper with him, wrote clearly on the piece of paper the words: "On most important business closely concerning Agrafena Alexandrovna," and sent it up to the old man.

After thinking a little Samsonov told the lad to take the visitor to the drawing-room, and sent the old woman downstairs with a summons to his younger son to come upstairs to him at once. This younger son, a man over six foot and of exceptional physical strength, who was closely-shaven and

dressed in the European style, though his father still wore a kaftan and a beard, came at once without a comment. All the family trembled before the father. The old man had sent for this giant, not because he was afraid of the “captain” (he was by no means of a timorous temper), but in order to have a witness in case of any emergency. Supported by his son and the servant lad, he waddled at last into the drawing-room. It may be assumed that he felt considerable curiosity. The drawing-room in which Mitya was awaiting him was a vast, dreary room that laid a weight of depression on the heart. It had a double row of windows, a gallery, marbled walls, and three immense chandeliers with glass lustres covered with shades.

Mitya was sitting on a little chair at the entrance, awaiting his fate with nervous impatience. When the old man appeared at the opposite door, seventy feet away, Mitya jumped up at once, and with his long, military stride walked to meet him. Mitya was well dressed, in a frock-coat, buttoned up, with a round hat and black gloves in his hands, just as he had been three days before at the elder’s, at the family meeting with his father and brothers. The old man waited for him, standing dignified and unbending, and Mitya felt at once that he had looked him through and through as he advanced. Mitya was greatly impressed, too, with Samsonov’s immensely swollen face. His lower lip, which had always been thick, hung down now, looking like a bun. He bowed to his guest in dignified silence, motioned him to a low chair by the sofa, and, leaning on his son’s arm he began lowering himself on to the sofa opposite, groaning painfully, so that Mitya, seeing his painful exertions, immediately felt remorseful and sensitively conscious of his insignificance in the presence of the dignified person he had ventured to disturb.

“What is it you want of me, sir?” said the old man, deliberately, distinctly, severely, but courteously, when he was at last seated.

Mitya started, leapt up, but sat down again. Then he began at once speaking with loud, nervous haste, gesticulating, and in a positive frenzy. He was unmistakably a man driven into a corner, on the brink of ruin, catching at the last straw, ready to sink if he failed. Old Samsonov probably grasped all this in an instant, though his face remained cold and immovable as a statue’s.

“Most honoured sir, Kuzma Kuzmitch, you have no doubt heard more than once of my disputes with my father, Fyodor Pavlovitch Karamazov, who robbed me of my inheritance from my mother... seeing the whole town

is gossiping about it... for here everyone’s gossiping of what they shouldn’t... and besides, it might have reached you through Grushenka... I beg your pardon, through Agrafena Alexandrovna... Agrafena Alexandrovna, the lady of whom I have the highest respect and esteem...”

So Mitya began, and broke down at the first sentence. We will not reproduce his speech word for word, but will only summarise the gist of it. Three months ago, he said, he had of express intention (Mitya purposely used these words instead of “intentionally”) consulted a lawyer in the chief town of the province, “a distinguished lawyer, Kuzma Kuzmitch, Pavel Pavlovitch Korneplodov. You have perhaps heard of him? A man of vast intellect, the mind of a statesman... he knows you, too... spoke of you in the highest terms...” Mitya broke down again. But these breaks did not deter him. He leapt instantly over the gaps, and struggled on and on.

This Korneplodov, after questioning him minutely, and inspecting the documents he was able to bring him (Mitya alluded somewhat vaguely to these documents, and slurred over the subject with special haste), reported that they certainly might take proceedings concerning the village of Tchermashnya, which ought, he said, to have come to him, Mitya, from his mother, and so checkmate the old villain, his father... “because every door was not closed and justice might still find a loophole.” In fact, he might reckon on an additional sum of six or even seven thousand roubles from Fyodor Pavlovitch, as Tchermashnya was worth, at least, twenty-five thousand, he might say twenty-eight thousand, in fact, “thirty, thirty, Kuzma Kuzmitch, and would you believe it, I didn’t get seventeen from that heartless man!” So he, Mitya, had thrown the business up for the time, knowing nothing about the law, but on coming here was struck dumb by a cross — claim made upon him (here Mitya went adrift again and again took a flying leap forward), “so will not you, excellent and honoured Kuzma Kuzmitch, be willing to take up all my claims against that unnatural monster, and pay me a sum down of only three thousand?... You see, you cannot, in any case, lose over it. On my honour, my honour, I swear that. Quite the contrary, you may make six or seven thousand instead of three.” Above all, he wanted this concluded that very day.

“I’ll do the business with you at a notary’s, or whatever it is... in fact, I’m ready to do anything. .. I’ll hand over all the deeds... whatever you want, sign anything... and we could draw up the agreement at once... and if it were possible, if it were only possible, that very morning.... You could

pay me that three thousand, for there isn’t a capitalist in this town to compare with you, and so would save me from... save me, in fact... for a good, I might say an honourable action.... For I cherish the most honourable feelings for a certain person, whom you know well, and care for as a father. I would not have come, indeed, if it had not been as a father. And, indeed, it’s a struggle of three in this business, for it’s fate — that’s a fearful thing, Kuzma Kuzmitch! A tragedy, Kuzma Kuzmitch, a tragedy! And as you’ve dropped out long ago, it’s a tug-of-war between two. I’m expressing it awkwardly, perhaps, but I’m not a literary man. You see, I’m on the one side, and that monster on the other. So you must choose. It’s either I or the monster. It all lies in your hands-.the fate of three lives, and the happiness of two.... Excuse me, I’m making a mess of it, but you understand... I see from your venerable eyes that you understand... and if you don’t understand, I’m done for... so you see!”

Mitya broke off his clumsy speech with that, “so you see!” and jumping up from his seat, awaited the answer to his foolish proposal. At the last phrase he had suddenly become hopelessly aware that it had all fallen flat, above all, that he had been talking utter nonsense.

“How strange it is! On the way here it seemed all right, and now it’s nothing but nonsense.” The idea suddenly dawned on his despairing mind. All the while he had been talking, the old man sat motionless, watching him with an icy expression in his eyes. After keeping him for a moment in suspense, Kuzma Kuzmitch pronounced at last in the most positive and chilling tone:

“Excuse me, we don’t undertake such business.”

Mitya suddenly felt his legs growing weak under him.

“What am I to do now, Kuzma Kuzmitch?” he muttered, with a pale smile. “I suppose it’s all up with me — what do you think?”

“Excuse me...”

Mitya remained standing, staring motionless. He suddenly noticed a movement in the old man’s face. He started.

“You see, sir, business of that sort’s not in our line,” said the old man slowly. “There’s the court, and the lawyers — it’s a perfect misery. But if you like, there is a man here you might apply to.”

“Good heavens! Who is it? You’re my salvation, Kuzma Kuzmitch,” faltered Mitya.

“He doesn’t live here, and he’s not here just now. He is a peasant, he does business in timber. His name is Lyagavy. He’s been haggling with Fyodor Pavlovitch for the last year, over your copse at Tchermashnya. They can’t agree on the price, maybe you’ve heard? Now he’s come back again and is staying with the priest at Ilyinskoe, about twelve versts from the Volovya station. He wrote to me, too, about the business of the copse, asking my advice. Fyodor Pavlovitch means to go and see him himself. So if you were to be beforehand with Fyodor Pavlovitch and to make Lyagavy the offer you’ve made me, he might possibly—”

“A brilliant idea!” Mitya interrupted ecstatically. “He’s the very man, it would just suit him. He’s haggling with him for it, being asked too much, and here he would have all the documents entitling him to the property itself. Ha ha ha!”

And Mitya suddenly went off into his short, wooden laugh, startling Samsonov.

“How can I thank you, Kuzma Kuzmitch?” cried Mitya effusively.

“Don’t mention it,” said Samsonov, inclining his head.

“But you don’t know, you’ve saved me. Oh, it was a true presentiment brought me to you.... So now to this priest!

“No need of thanks.”

“I’ll make haste and fly there. I’m afraid I’ve overtaxed your strength. I shall never forget it. It’s a Russian says that, Kuzma Kuzmitch, a R-r-russian!”

“To be sure!” Mitya seized his hand to press it, but there was a malignant gleam in the old man’s eye. Mitya drew back his hand, but at once blamed himself for his mistrustfulness.

“It’s because he’s tired,” he thought.

“For her sake! For her sake, Kuzma Kuzmitch! You understand that it’s for her,” he cried, his voice ringing through the room. He bowed, turned sharply round, and with the same long stride walked to the door without looking back. He was trembling with delight.

“Everything was on the verge of ruin and my guardian angel saved me,” was the thought in his mind. And if such a business man as Samsonov (a most worthy old man, and what dignity!) had suggested this course, then... then success was assured. He would fly off immediately. “I will be back before night, I shall be back at night and the thing is done. Could the old man have been laughing at me?” exclaimed Mitya, as he strode towards his

lodging. He could, of course, imagine nothing but that the advice was practical “from such a business man” with an understanding of the business, with an understanding of this Lyagavy (curious surname!). Or — the old man was laughing at him.

Alas! The second alternative was the correct one. Long afterwards, when the catastrophe had happened, old Samsonov himself confessed, laughing, that he had made a fool of the “captain.” He was a cold, spiteful and sarcastic man, liable to violent antipathies. Whether it was the “captain’s” excited face, or the foolish conviction of the “rake and spendthrift,” that he, Samsonov, could be taken in by such a cock-and-bull story as his scheme, or his jealousy of Grushenka, in whose name this “scapegrace” had rushed in on him with such a tale to get money which worked on the old man, I can’t tell. But at the instant when Mitya stood before him, feeling his legs grow weak under him, and frantically exclaiming that he was ruined, at that moment the old man looked at him with intense spite, and resolved to make a laughing-stock of him. When Mitya had gone, Kuzma Kuzmitch, white with rage, turned to his son and bade him see to it that that beggar be never seen again, and never admitted even into the yard, or else he’d-

He did not utter his threat. But even his son, who often saw him enraged, trembled with fear. For a whole hour afterwards, the old man was shaking with anger, and by evening he was worse, and sent for the doctor.

CHAPTER 2

Lyagavy

SO he must drive at full speed, and he had not the money for horses. He had forty copecks, and that was all, all that was left after so many years of prosperity! But he had at home an old silver watch which had long ceased to go. He snatched it up and carried it to a Jewish watch maker who had a shop in the market-place. The Jew gave him six roubles for it.

“And I didn’t expect that cried Mitya, ecstatically. (He was still in a state of ecstasy.) He seized his six roubles and ran home. At home he borrowed three roubles from the people of the house, who loved him so much that they were pleased to give it him, though it was all they had. Mitya in his excitement told them on the spot that his fate would be decided that day, and he described, in desperate haste, the whole scheme he had put before Samsonov, the latter’s decision, his own hopes for the future, and so on. These people had been told many of their lodger’s secrets before, and so looked upon him as a gentleman who was not at all proud, and almost one of themselves. Having thus collected nine roubles Mitya sent for posting-horses to take him to the Volovya station. This was how the fact came to be remembered and established that “at midday, on the day before the event, Mitya had not a farthing, and that he had sold his watch to get money and had borrowed three roubles from his landlord, all in the presence of witnesses.”

I note this fact, later on it will be apparent why I do so.

Though he was radiant with the joyful anticipation that he would at last solve all his difficulties, yet, as he drew near Volovya station, he trembled at the thought of what Grushenka might be doing in his absence. What if she made up her mind to-day to go to Fyodor Pavlovitch? This was why he had gone off without telling her and why he left orders with his landlady not to let out where he had gone, if anyone came to inquire for him.

“I must, I must get back to-night,” he repeated, as he was jolted along in the cart, “and I dare say I shall have to bring this Lyagavy back here... to draw up the deed.” So mused Mitya, with a throbbing heart, but alas! his dreams were not fated to be carried out.

To begin with, he was late, taking a short cut from Volovya station which turned out to be eighteen versts instead of twelve. Secondly, he did not find the priest at home at Ilyinskoe; he had gone off to a neighbouring village. While Mitya, setting off there with the same exhausted horses, was looking for him, it was almost dark.

The priest, a shy and amiable looking little man, informed him at once that though Lyagavy had been staying with him at first, he was now at Suhoy Possyolok, that he was staying the night in the forester's cottage, as he was buying timber there too. At Mitya's urgent request that he would take him to Lyagavy at once, and by so doing "save him, so to speak," the priest agreed, after some demur, to conduct him to Suhoy Possyolok; his curiosity was obviously aroused. But, unluckily, he advised their going on foot, as it would not be "much over" a verst. Mitya, of course, agreed, and marched off with his yard-long strides, so that the poor priest almost ran after him. He was a very cautious man, though not old.

Mitya at once began talking to him, too, of his plans, nervously and excitedly asking advice in regard to Lyagavy, and talking all the way. The priest listened attentively, but gave little advice. He turned off Mitya's questions with: "I don't know. Ah, I can't say. How can I tell?" and so on. When Mitya began to speak of his quarrel with his father over his inheritance, the priest was positively alarmed, as he was in some way dependent on Fyodor Pavlovitch. He inquired, however, with surprise, why he called the peasant-trader Gorstkin, Lyagavy, and obligingly explained to Mitya that, though the man's name really was Lyagavy, he was never called so, as he would be grievously offended at the name, and that he must be sure to call him Gorstkin, "or you'll do nothing with him; he won't even listen to you," said the priest in conclusion.

Mitya was somewhat surprised for a moment, and explained that that was what Samsonov had called him. On hearing this fact, the priest dropped the subject, though he would have done well to put into words his doubt whether, if Samsonov had sent him to that peasant, calling him Lyagavy, there was not something wrong about it and he was turning him into ridicule. But Mitya had no time to pause over such trifles. He hurried, striding along, and only when he reached Suhoy Possyolok did he realise that they had come not one verst, nor one and a half, but at least three. This annoyed him, but he controlled himself.

They went into the hut. The forester lived in one half of the hut, and Gorstkin was lodging in the other, the better room the other side of the passage. They went into that room and lighted a tallow candle. The hut was extremely overheated. On the table there was a samovar that had gone out, a tray with cups, an empty rum bottle, a bottle of vodka partly full, and some half-eaten crusts of wheaten bread. The visitor himself lay stretched at full length on the bench, with his coat crushed up under his head for a pillow, snoring heavily. Mitya stood in perplexity.

“Of course, I must wake him. My business is too important. I’ve come in such haste. I’m in a hurry to get back to-day,” he said in great agitation. But the priest and the forester stood in silence, not giving their opinion. Mitya went up and began trying to wake him himself; he tried vigorously, but the sleeper did not wake.

“He’s drunk,” Mitya decided. “Good Lord! What am I to do? What am I to do?” And, terribly impatient, he began pulling him by the arms, by the legs, shaking his head, lifting him up and making him sit on the bench. Yet, after prolonged exertions, he could only succeed in getting the drunken man to utter absurd grunts, and violent, but inarticulate oaths.

“No, you’d better wait a little,” the priest pronounced at last, “for he’s obviously not in a fit state.”

“He’s been drinking the whole day,” the forester chimed in.

“Good heavens!” cried Mitya. “If only you knew how important it is to me and how desperate I am!”

“No, you’d better wait till morning,” the priest repeated.

“Till morning? Mercy! that’s impossible!” And in his despair he was on the point of attacking the sleeping man again, but stopped short at once, realising the uselessness of his efforts. The priest said nothing, the sleepy forester looked gloomy.

“What terrible tragedies real life contrives for people,” said Mitya, in complete despair. The perspiration was streaming down his face. The priest seized the moment to put before him, very reasonably, that, even if he succeeded in wakening the man, he would still be drunk and incapable of conversation. “And your business is important,” he said, “so you’d certainly better put it off till morning.” With a gesture of despair Mitya agreed.

“Father, I will stay here with a light, and seize the favourable moment. As soon as he wakes I’ll begin. I’ll pay you for the light,” he said to the forester, “for the night’s lodging, too; you’ll remember Dmitri Karamazov.

Only Father, I don’t know what we’re to do with you. Where will you sleep?”

“No, I’m going home. I’ll take his horse and get home,” he said, indicating the forester. “And now I’ll say good-bye. I wish you all success.”

So it was settled. The priest rode off on the forester’s horse, delighted to escape, though he shook his head uneasily, wondering whether he ought not next day to inform his benefactor Fyodor Pavlovitch of this curious incident, “or he may in an unlucky hour hear of it, be angry, and withdraw his favour.”

The forester, scratching himself, went back to his room without a word, and Mitya sat on the bench to “catch the favourable moment,” as he expressed it. Profound dejection clung about his soul like a heavy mist. A profound, intense dejection! He sat thinking, but could reach no conclusion. The candle burnt dimly, a cricket chirped; it became insufferably close in the overheated room. He suddenly pictured the garden, the path behind the garden, the door of his father’s house mysteriously opening and Grushenka running in. He leapt up from the bench.

“It’s a tragedy!” he said, grinding his teeth. Mechanically he went up to the sleeping man and looked in his face. He was a lean, middle-aged peasant, with a very long face, flaxen curls, and a long, thin, reddish beard, wearing a blue cotton shirt and a black waistcoat, from the pocket of which peeped the chain of a silver watch. Mitya looked at his face with intense hatred, and for some unknown reason his curly hair particularly irritated him.

What was insufferably humiliating was that, after leaving things of such importance and making such sacrifices, he, Mitya, utterly worn out, should with business of such urgency be standing over this dolt on whom his whole fate depended, while he snored as though there were nothing the matter, as though he’d dropped from another planet.

“Oh, the irony of fate!” cried Mitya, and, quite losing his head, he fell again to rousing the tipsy peasant. He roused him with a sort of ferocity, pulled at him, pushed him, even beat him; but after five minutes of vain exertions, he returned to his bench in helpless despair, and sat down.

“Stupid! Stupid!” cried Mitya. “And how dishonourable it all is!” something made him add. His head began to ache horribly. “Should he fling it up and go away altogether?” he wondered. “No, wait till to-morrow now. I’ll stay on purpose. What else did I come for? Besides, I’ve no means of

going. How am I to get away from here now? Oh, the idiocy of it” But his head ached more and more. He sat without moving, and unconsciously dozed off and fell asleep as he sat. He seemed to have slept for two hours or more. He was waked up by his head aching so unbearably that he could have screamed. There was a hammering in his temples, and the top of his head ached. It was a long time before he could wake up fully and understand what had happened to him.

At last he realised that the room was full of charcoal fumes from the stove, and that he might die of suffocation. And the drunken peasant still lay snoring. The candle guttered and was about to go out. Mitya cried out, and ran staggering across the passage into the forester’s room. The forester waked up at once, but hearing that the other room was full of fumes, to Mitya’s surprise and annoyance, accepted the fact with strange unconcern, though he did go to see to it.

“But he’s dead, he’s dead! and... what am I to do then?” cried Mitya frantically.

They threw open the doors, opened a window and the chimney. Mitya brought a pail of water from the passage. First he wetted his own head, then, finding a rag of some sort, dipped it into the water, and put it on Lyagavy’s head. The forester still treated the matter contemptuously, and when he opened the window said grumpily:

“It’ll be all right, now.”

He went back to sleep, leaving Mitya a lighted lantern. Mitya fussed about the drunken peasant for half an hour, wetting his head, and gravely resolved not to sleep all night. But he was so worn out that when he sat down for a moment to take breath, he closed his eyes, unconsciously stretched himself full length on the bench and slept like the dead.

It was dreadfully late when he waked. It was somewhere about nine o’clock. The sun was shining brightly in the two little windows of the hut. The curly-headed peasant was sitting on the bench and had his coat on. He had another samovar and another bottle in front of him. Yesterday’s bottle had already been finished, and the new one was more than half empty. Mitya jumped up and saw at once that the cursed peasant was drunk again, hopelessly and incurably. He stared at him for a moment with wide opened eyes. The peasant was silently and slyly watching him, with insulting composure, and even a sort of contemptuous condescension, so Mitya fancied. He rushed up to him.

“Excuse me, you see... I... you’ve most likely heard from the forester here in the hut. I’m Lieutenant Dmitri Karamazov, the son of the old Karamazov whose copse you are buying.”

“That’s a lie!” said the peasant, calmly and confidently.

“A lie? You know Fyodor Pavlovitch?”

“I don’t know any of your Fyodor Pavlovitches,” said the peasant, speaking thickly.

“You’re bargaining with him for the copse, for the copse. Do wake up, and collect yourself. Father Pavel of Ilyinskoe brought me here. You wrote to Samsonov, and he has sent me to you,” Mitya gasped breathlessly.

“You’re lying!” Lyagavy blurted out again. Mitya’s legs went cold.

“For mercy’s sake! It isn’t a joke! You’re drunk, perhaps. Yet you can speak and understand... or else... I understand nothing!”

“You’re a painter!”

“For mercy’s sake! I’m Karamazov, Dmitri Karamazov. I have an offer to make you, an advantageous offer... very advantageous offer, concerning the copse!”

The peasant stroked his beard importantly.

“No, you’ve contracted for the job and turned out a scamp. You’re a scoundrel!”

“I assure you you’re mistaken,” cried Mitya, wringing his hands in despair. The peasant still stroked his beard, and suddenly screwed up his eyes cunningly.

“No, you show me this: you tell me the law that allows roguery. D’you hear? You’re a scoundrel! Do you understand that?”

Mitya stepped back gloomily, and suddenly “something seemed to hit him on the head,” as he said afterwards. In an instant a light seemed to dawn in his mind, “a light was kindled and I grasped it all.” He stood, stupefied, wondering how he, after all a man of intelligence, could have yielded to such folly, have been led into such an adventure, and have kept it up for almost twenty-four hours, fussing round this Lyagavy, wetting his head.

“Why, the man’s drunk, dead drunk, and he’ll go on drinking now for a week; what’s the use of waiting here? And what if Samsonov sent me here on purpose? What if she — ? Oh God, what have I done?”

The peasant sat watching him and grinning. Another time Mitya might have killed the fool in a fury, but now he felt as weak as a child. He went

quietly to the bench, took up his overcoat, put it on without a word, and went out of the hut. He did not find the forester in the next room; there was no one there. He took fifty copecks in small change out of his pocket and put them on the table for his night's lodging, the candle, and the trouble he had given. Coming out of the hut he saw nothing but forest all round. He walked at hazard, not knowing which way to turn out of the hut, to the right or to the left. Hurrying there the evening before with the priest, he had not noticed the road. He had no revengeful feeling for anybody, even for Samsonov, in his heart. He strode along a narrow forest path, aimless, dazed, without heeding where he was going. A child could have knocked him down, so weak was he in body and soul. He got out of the forest somehow, however, and a vista of fields, bare after the harvest, stretched as far as the eye could see.

"What despair! What death all round!" he repeated, striding on and on.

He was saved by meeting an old merchant who was being driven across country in a hired trap. When he overtook him, Mitya asked the way and it turned out that the old merchant, too, was going to Volovya. After some discussion Mitya got into the trap. Three hours later they arrived. At Volovya, Mitya at once ordered posting-horses to drive to the town, and suddenly realised that he was appallingly hungry. While the horses were being harnessed, an omelette was prepared for him. He ate it all in an instant, ate a huge hunk of bread, ate a sausage, and swallowed three glasses of vodka. After eating, his spirits and his heart grew lighter. He flew towards the town, urged on the driver, and suddenly made a new and "unalterable" plan to procure that "accursed money" before evening. "And to think, only to think that a man's life should be ruined for the sake of that paltry three thousand!" he cried, contemptuously. "I'll settle it to-day." And if it had not been for the thought of Grushenka and of what might have happened to her, which never left him, he would perhaps have become quite cheerful again.... But the thought of her was stabbing him to the heart every moment, like a sharp knife.

At last they arrived, and Mitya at once ran to Grushenka.

CHAPTER 3

Gold Mines

THIS was the visit of Mitya of which Grushenka had spoken to Rakitin with such horror. She was just then expecting the “message,” and was much relieved that Mitya had not been to see her that day or the day before. She hoped that “please God he won’t come till I’m gone away,” and he suddenly burst in on her. The rest we know already. To get him off her hands she suggested at once that he should walk with her to Samsonov’s, where she said she absolutely must go “to settle his accounts,” and when Mitya accompanied her at once, she said good-bye to him at the gate, making him promise to come at twelve o’clock to take her home again. Mitya, too, was delighted at this arrangement. If she was sitting at Samsonov’s she could not be going to Fyodor Pavlovitch’s, “if only she’s not lying,” he added at once. But he thought she was not lying from what he saw.

He was that sort of jealous man who, in the absence of the beloved woman, at once invents all sorts of awful fancies of what may be happening to her, and how she may be betraying him, but, when shaken, heartbroken, convinced of her faithlessness, he runs back to her, at the first glance at her face, her gay, laughing, affectionate face, he revives at once, lays aside all suspicion and with joyful shame abuses himself for his jealousy.

After leaving Grushenka at the gate he rushed home. Oh, he had so much still to do that day! But a load had been lifted from his heart, anyway.

“Now I must only make haste and find out from Smerdyakov whether anything happened there last night, whether, by any chance, she went to Fyodor Pavlovitch; ough!” floated through his mind.

Before he had time to reach his lodging, jealousy had surged up again in his restless heart.

Jealousy! “Othello was not jealous, he was trustful,” observed Pushkin. And that remark alone is enough to show the deep insight of our great poet. Othello’s soul was shattered and his whole outlook clouded simply because his ideal was destroyed. But Othello did not begin hiding, spying, peeping. He was trustful, on the contrary. He had to be led up, pushed on, excited with great difficulty before he could entertain the idea of deceit. The truly jealous man is not like that. It is impossible to picture to oneself the shame

and moral degradation to which the jealous man can descend without a qualm of conscience. And yet it's not as though the jealous were all vulgar and base souls. On the contrary, a man of lofty feelings, whose love is pure and full of self-sacrifice, may yet hide under tables, bribe the vilest people, and be familiar with the lowest ignominy of spying and eavesdropping.

Othello was incapable of making up his mind to faithlessness — not incapable of forgiving it, but of making up his mind to it — though his soul was as innocent and free from malice as a babe's. It is not so with the really jealous man. It is hard to imagine what some jealous men can make up their mind to and overlook, and what they can forgive! The jealous are the readiest of all to forgive, and all women know it. The jealous man can forgive extraordinarily quickly (though, of course, after a violent scene), and he is able to forgive infidelity almost conclusively proved, the very kisses and embraces he has seen, if only he can somehow be convinced that it has all been "for the last time," and that his rival will vanish from that day forward, will depart to the ends of the earth, or that he himself will carry her away somewhere, where that dreaded rival will not get near her. Of course the reconciliation is only for an hour. For, even if the rival did disappear next day, he would invent another one and would be jealous of him. And one might wonder what there was in a love that had to be so watched over, what a love could be worth that needed such strenuous guarding. But that the jealous will never understand. And yet among them are men of noble hearts. It is remarkable, too, that those very men of noble hearts, standing hidden in some cupboard, listening and spying, never feel the stings of conscience at that moment, anyway, though they understand clearly enough with their "noble hearts" the shameful depths to which they have voluntarily sunk.

At the sight of Grushenka, Mitya's jealousy vanished, and, for an instant he became trustful and generous, and positively despised himself for his evil feelings. But it only proved that, in his love for the woman, there was an element of something far higher than he himself imagined, that it was not only a sensual passion, not only the "curve of her body," of which he had talked to Alyosha. But, as soon as Grushenka had gone, Mitya began to suspect her of all the low cunning of faithlessness, and he felt no sting of conscience at it.

And so jealousy surged up in him again. He had, in any case, to make haste. The first thing to be done was to get hold of at least a small,

temporary loan of money. The nine roubles had almost all gone on his expedition. And, as we all know, one can’t take a step without money. But he had thought over in the cart where he could get a loan. He had a brace of fine duelling pistols in a case, which he had not pawned till then because he prized them above all his possessions.

In the Metropolis tavern he had some time since made acquaintance with a young official and had learnt that this very opulent bachelor was passionately fond of weapons. He used to buy pistols, revolvers, daggers, hang them on his wall and show them to acquaintances. He prided himself on them, and was quite a specialist on the mechanism of the revolver. Mitya, without stopping to think, went straight to him, and offered to pawn his pistols to him for ten roubles. The official, delighted, began trying to persuade him to sell them outright. But Mitya would not consent, so the young man gave him ten roubles, protesting that nothing would induce him to take interest. They parted friends.

Mitya was in haste; he rushed towards Fyodor Pavlovitch’s by the back way, to his arbour, to get hold of Smerdyakov as soon as possible. In this way the fact was established that three or four hours before a certain event, of which I shall speak later on, Mitya had not a farthing, and pawned for ten roubles a possession he valued, though, three hours later, he was in possession of thousands.... But I am anticipating. From Marya Kondratyevna (the woman living near Fyodor Pavlovitch’s) he learned the very disturbing fact of Smerdyakov’s illness. He heard the story of his fall in the cellar, his fit, the doctor’s visit, Fyodor Pavlovitch’s anxiety; he heard with interest, too, that his brother Ivan had set off that morning for Moscow.

“Then he must have driven through Volovya before me,” thought Dmitri, but he was terribly distressed about Smerdyakov. “What will happen now? Who’ll keep watch for me? Who’ll bring me word?” he thought. He began greedily questioning the women whether they had seen anything the evening before. They quite understood what he was trying to find out, and completely reassured him. No one had been there. Ivan Fyodorovitch had been there that night; everything had been perfectly as usual. Mitya grew thoughtful. He would certainly have to keep watch to-day, but where? Here or at Samsonov’s gate? He decided that he must be on the lookout both here and there, and meanwhile... meanwhile... The difficulty was that he had to carry out the new plan that he had made on the journey back. He was sure of its success, but he must not delay acting upon it. Mitya resolved to

sacrifice an hour to it: “In an hour I shall know everything, I shall settle everything, and then, then, then, first of all to Samsonov’s. I’ll inquire whether Grushenka’s there and instantly be back here again, stay till eleven, and then to Samsonov’s again to bring her home.” This was what he decided.

He flew home, washed, combed his hair, brushed his clothes, dressed, and went to Madame Hohlakov’s. Alas! he had built his hopes on her. He had resolved to borrow three thousand from that lady. And what was more, he felt suddenly convinced that she would not refuse to lend it to him. It may be wondered why, if he felt so certain, he had not gone to her at first, one of his own sort, so to speak, instead of to Samsonov, a man he did not know, who was not of his own class, and to whom he hardly knew how to speak.

But the fact was that he had never known Madame Hohlakov well, and had seen nothing of her for the last month, and that he knew she could not endure him. She had detested him from the first because he was engaged to Katerina Ivanovna, while she had, for some reason, suddenly conceived the desire that Katerina Ivanovna should throw him over, and marry the “charming, chivalrously refined Ivan, who had such excellent manners.” Mitya’s manners she detested. Mitya positively laughed at her, and had once said about her that she was just as lively and at her ease as she was uncultivated. But that morning in the cart a brilliant idea had struck him: “If she is so anxious I should not marry Katerina Ivanovna” (and he knew she was positively hysterical upon the subject) “why should she refuse me now that three thousand, just to enable me to leave Katya and get away from her for ever. These spoilt fine ladies, if they set their hearts on anything, will spare no expense to satisfy their caprice. Besides, she’s so rich,” Mitya argued.

As for his “plan” it was just the same as before; it consisted of the offer of his rights to Tchermashnya — but not with a commercial object, as it had been with Samsonov, not trying to allure the lady with the possibility of making a profit of six or seven thousand — but simply as a security for the debt. As he worked out this new idea, Mitya was enchanted with it, but so it always was with him in all his undertakings, in all his sudden decisions. He gave himself up to every new idea with passionate enthusiasm. Yet, when he mounted the steps of Madame Hohlakov’s house he felt a shiver of fear run down his spine. At that moment he saw fully, as a mathematical

certainty, that this was his last hope, that if this broke down, nothing else was left him in the world but to “rob and murder someone for the three thousand.” It was half-past seven when he rang at the bell.

At first fortune seemed to smile upon him. As soon as he was announced he was received with extraordinary rapidity. “As though she were waiting for me,” thought Mitya, and as soon as he had been led to the drawing-room, the lady of the house herself ran in, and declared at once that she was expecting him.

“I was expecting you! I was expecting you! Though I’d no reason to suppose you would come to see me, as you will admit yourself. Yet, I did expect you. You may marvel at my instinct, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, but I was convinced all the morning that you would come.”

“That is certainly wonderful, madam,” observed Mitya, sitting down limply, “but I have come to you on a matter of great importance.... On a matter of supreme importance for me, that is, madam... for me alone... and I hasten—”

“I know you’ve come on most important business. Dmitri Fyodorovitch; it’s not a case of presentiment, no reactionary harking back to the miraculous (have you heard about Father Zossima?). This is a case of mathematics: you couldn’t help coming, after all that has passed with Katerina Ivanovna; you couldn’t, you couldn’t, that’s a mathematical certainty.”

“The realism of actual life, madam, that’s what it is. But allow me to explain-”

“Realism indeed, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. I’m all for realism now. I’ve seen too much of miracles. You’ve heard that Father Zossima is dead?”

“No, madam, it’s the first time I’ve heard of it.” Mitya was a little surprised. The image of Alyosha rose to his mind.

“Last night, and only imagine-”

“Madam,” said Mitya, “I can imagine nothing except that I’m in a desperate position, and that if you don’t help me, everything will come to grief, and I first of all. Excuse me for the triviality of the expression, but I’m in a fever-”

“I know, I know that you’re in a fever. You could hardly fail to be, and whatever you may say to me, I know beforehand. I have long been thinking over your destiny, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, I am watching over it and studying

it.... Oh, believe me, I'm an experienced doctor of the soul, Dmitri Fyodorovitch."

"Madam, if you are an experienced doctor, I'm certainly an experienced patient," said Mitya, with an effort to be polite, "and I feel that if you are watching over my destiny in this way, you will come to my help in my ruin, and so allow me, at least to explain to you the plan with which I have ventured to come to you... and what I am hoping of you.... I have come, madam-"

"Don't explain it. It's of secondary importance. But as for help, you're not the first I have helped, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. You have most likely heard of my cousin, Madame Belmesov. Her husband was ruined, 'had come to grief,' as you characteristically express it, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. I recommended him to take to horse-breeding, and now he's doing well. Have you any idea of horse-breeding, Dmitri Fyodorovitch?"

"Not the faintest, madam; ah, madam, not the faintest!" cried Mitya, in nervous impatience, positively starting from his seat. "I simply implore you, madam, to listen to me. Only give me two minutes of free speech that I may just explain to you everything, the whole plan with which I have come. Besides, I am short of time. I'm in a fearful hurry," Mitya cried hysterically, feeling that she was just going to begin talking again, and hoping to cut her short. "I have come in despair... in the last gasp of despair, to beg you to lend me the sum of three thousand, a loan, but on safe, most safe security, madam, with the most trustworthy guarantees! Only let me explain-"

"You must tell me all that afterwards, afterwards!" Madame Hohlakov with a gesture demanded silence in her turn, "and whatever you may tell me, I know it all beforehand; I've told you so already. You ask for a certain sum, for three thousand, but I can give you more, immeasurably more; I will save you, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, but you must listen to me."

Mitya started from his seat again.

"Madam, will you really be so good!" he cried, with strong feeling. "Good God, you've saved me! You have saved a man from a violent death, from a bullet.... My eternal gratitude "I will give you more, infinitely more than three thousand!" cried Madame Hohlakov, looking with a radiant smile at Mitya's ecstasy.

"Infinitely? But I don't need so much. I only need that fatal three thousand, and on my part I can give security for that sum with infinite gratitude, and I propose a plan which-"

“Enough, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, it’s said and done.” Madame Hohlakov cut him short, with the modest triumph of beneficence. “I have promised to save you, and I will save you. I will save you as I did Belmesov. What do you think of the gold mines, Dmitri Fyodorovitch?”

“Of the gold mines, madam? I have never thought anything about them.”

“But I have thought of them for you. Thought of them over and over again. I have been watching you for the last month. I’ve watched you a hundred times as you’ve walked past, saying to myself: That’s a man of energy who ought to be at the gold mines. I’ve studied your gait and come to the conclusion: that’s a man who would find gold.”

“From my gait, madam?” said Mitya, smiling.

“Yes, from your gait. You surely don’t deny that character can be told from the gait, Dmitri Fyodorovitch? Science supports the idea. I’m all for science and realism now. After all this business with Father Zossima, which has so upset me, from this very day I’m a realist and I want to devote myself to practical usefulness. I’m cured. ‘Enough!’ as Turgeney says.”

“But madam, the three thousand you so generously promised to lend me-”

“It is yours, Dmitri Fyodorovitch,” Madame Hohlakov cut in at once. “The money is as good as in your pocket, not three thousand, but three million, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, in less than no time. I’ll make you a present of the idea: you shall find gold mines, make millions, return and become a leading man, and wake us up and lead us to better things. Are we to leave it all to the Jews? You will found institutions and enterprises of all sorts. You will help the poor, and they will bless you. This is the age of railways, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. You’ll become famous and indispensable to the Department of Finance, which is so badly off at present. The depreciation of the rouble keeps me awake at night, Dmitri Fyodorovitch; people don’t know that side of me-”

“Madam, madam! Dmitri interrupted with an uneasy presentiment. “I shall indeed, perhaps, follow your advice, your wise advice, madam.... I shall perhaps set off... to the gold mines.... I’ll come and see you again about it... many times, indeed... but now, that three thousand you so generously... oh, that would set me free, and if you could to-day... you see, I haven’t a minute, a minute to lose to-day-”

“Enough, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, enough!” Madame Hohlakov interrupted emphatically. “The question is, will you go to the gold mines or not; have

you quite made up your mind? Answer yes or no.”

“I will go, madam, afterwards.... I’ll go where you like... but now-”

“Wait!” cried Madame Hohlakov. And jumping up and running to a handsome bureau with numerous little drawers, she began pulling out one drawer after another, looking for something with desperate haste.

“The three thousand,” thought Mitya, his heart almost stopping, “and at the instant... without any papers or formalities... that’s doing things in gentlemanly style! She’s a splendid woman, if only she didn’t talk so much!”

“Here!” cried Madame Hohlakov, running back joyfully to Mitya, “here is what I was looking for!”

It was a tiny silver ikon on a cord, such as is sometimes worn next the skin with a cross.

“This is from Kiev, Dmitri Fyodorovitch,” she went on reverently, “from the relics of the Holy Martyr, Varvara. Let me put it on your neck myself, and with it dedicate you to a new life, to a new career.”

And she actually put the cord round his neck, and began arranging it. In extreme embarrassment, Mitya bent down and helped her, and at last he got it under his neck-tie and collar through his shirt to his chest.

“Now you can set off,” Madame Hohlakov pronounced, sitting down triumphantly in her place again.

“Madam, I am so touched. I don’t know how to thank you, indeed... for such kindness, but... If only you knew how precious time is to me.... That sum of money, for which I shall be indebted to your generosity... Oh, madam, since you are so kind, so touchingly generous to me,” Mitya exclaimed impulsively, “then let me reveal to you... though, of course, you’ve known it a long time... that I love somebody here.... I have been false to Katya... Katerina Ivanovna I should say.... Oh, I’ve behaved inhumanly, dishonourably to her, but I fell in love here with another woman... a woman whom you, madam, perhaps, despise, for you know everything already, but whom I cannot leave on any account, and therefore that three thousand now-”

“Leave everything, Dmitri Fyodorovitch,” Madame Hohlakov interrupted in the most decisive tone. “Leave everything, especially women. Gold mines are your goal, and there’s no place for women there. Afterwards, when you come back rich and famous, you will find the girl of your heart in the highest society. That will be a modern girl, a girl of

education and advanced ideas. By that time the dawning woman question will have gained ground, and the new woman will have appeared."

"Madam, that's not the point, not at all.... Mitya clasped his hands in entreaty.

"Yes it is, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, just what you need; the very thing you're yearning for, though you don't realise it yourself. I am not at all opposed to the present woman movement, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. The development of woman, and even the political emancipation of woman in the near future — that's my ideal. I've a daughter myself, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, people don't know that side of me. I wrote a letter to the author, Shtchedrin, on that subject. He has taught me so much, so much about the vocation of woman. So last year I sent him an anonymous letter of two lines: 'I kiss and embrace you, my teacher, for the modern woman. Persevere.' And I signed myself, 'A Mother.' I thought of signing myself 'A contemporary Mother,' and hesitated, but I stuck to the simple 'Mother'; there's more moral beauty in that, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. And the word 'contemporary' might have reminded him of The Contemporary — a painful recollection owing to the censorship.... Good Heavens, what is the matter!"

"Madam!" cried Mitya, jumping up at last, clasping his hands before her in helpless entreaty. "You will make me weep if you delay what you have so generously-"

"Oh, do weep, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, do weep! That's a noble feeling... such a path lies open before you! Tears will ease your heart, and later on you will return rejoicing. You will hasten to me from Siberia on purpose to share your joy with me-"

"But allow me, too!" Mitya cried suddenly.

"For the last time I entreat you, tell me, can I have the sum you promised me to-day, if not, when may I come for it?"

"What sum, Dmitri Fyodorovitch?"

"The three thousand you promised me... that you so generously-"

"Three thousand? Roubles? Oh, no, I haven't got three thousand," Madame Hohlakov announced with serene amazement. Mitya was stupefied.

"Why, you said just now you said... you said it was as good as in my hands-"

“Oh, no, you misunderstood me, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. In that case you misunderstood me. I was talking of the gold mines. It’s true I promised you more, infinitely more than three thousand, I remember it all now, but I was referring to the gold mines.”

“But the money? The three thousand?” Mitya exclaimed, awkwardly.

“Oh, if you meant money, I haven’t any. I haven’t a penny, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. I’m quarrelling with my steward about it, and I’ve just borrowed five hundred roubles from Miusov, myself. No, no, I’ve no money. And, do you know, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, if I had, I wouldn’t give it to you. In the first place I never lend money. Lending money means losing friends. And I wouldn’t give it to you particularly. I wouldn’t give it you, because I like you and want to save you, for all you need is the gold mines, the gold mines, the gold mines!”

“Oh, the devil!” roared Mitya, and with all his might brought his fist down on the table.

“Aie! Aie!” cried Madame Hohlakov, alarmed, and she flew to the other end of the drawing-room.

Mitya spat on the ground, and strode rapidly out of the room, out of the house, into the street, into the darkness! He walked like one possessed, and beating himself on the breast, on the spot where he had struck himself two days previously, before Alyosha, the last time he saw him in the dark, on the road. What those blows upon his breast signified, on that spot, and what he meant by it — that was, for the time, a secret which was known to no one in the world, and had not been told even to Alyosha. But that secret meant for him more than disgrace; it meant ruin, suicide. So he had determined, if he did not get hold of the three thousand that would pay his debt to Katerina Ivanovna, and so remove from his breast, from that spot on his breast, the shame he carried upon it, that weighed on his conscience. All this will be fully explained to the reader later on, but now that his last hope had vanished, this man, so strong in appearance, burst out crying like a little child a few steps from the Hohlakovs’ house. He walked on, and not knowing what he was doing, wiped away his tears with his fist. In this way he reached the square, and suddenly became aware that he had stumbled against something. He heard a piercing wail from an old woman whom he had almost knocked down.

“Good Lord, you’ve nearly killed me! Why don’t you look where you’re going, scapegrace?”

“Why, it’s you!” cried Mitya, recognising the old woman in the dark. It was the old servant who waited on Samsonov, whom Mitya had particularly noticed the day before.

“And who are you, my good sir?” said the old woman in quite a different voice. “I don’t know you in the dark.”

“You live at Kuzma Kuzmitch’s. You’re the servant there?”

“Just so, sir, I was only running out to Prohoritch’s... But I don’t know you now.”

“Tell me, my good woman, is Agrafena Alexandrovna there now?” said Mitya, beside himself with suspense. “I saw her to the house some time ago.”

“She has been there, sir. She stayed a little while, and went off again.”

“What? Went away?” cried Mitya. “When did she go?”

“Why, as soon as she came. She only stayed a minute. She only told Kuzma Kuzmitch a tale that made him laugh, and then she ran away.”

“You’re lying, damn you!” roared Mitya.

“Aie! Aie!” shrieked the old woman, but Mitya had vanished.

He ran with all his might to the house where Grushenka lived. At the moment he reached it, Grushenka was on her way to Mokroe. It was not more than a quarter of an hour after her departure.

Fenya was sitting with her grandmother, the old cook, Matryona, in the kitchen when “the captain” ran in. Fenya uttered a piercing shriek on seeing him.

“You scream?” roared Mitya, “where is she?”

But without giving the terror-stricken Fenya time to utter a word, he fell all of a heap at her feet.

“Fenya, for Christ’s sake, tell me, where is she?”

“I don’t know. Dmitri Fyodorovitch, my dear, I don’t know. You may kill me but I can’t tell you.” Fenya swore and protested. “You went out with her yourself not long ago-”

“She came back!”

“Indeed she didn’t. By God I swear she didn’t come back.”

“You’re lying!” shouted Mitya. “From your terror I know where she is.”

He rushed away. Fenya in her fright was glad she had got off so easily. But she knew very well that it was only that he was in such haste, or she might not have fared so well. But as he ran, he surprised both Fenya and old Matryona by an unexpected action. On the table stood a brass mortar, with a

pestle in it, a small brass pestle, not much more than six inches long. Mitya already had opened the door with one hand when, with the other, he snatched up the pestle, and thrust it in his side-pocket.

“Oh Lord! He’s going to murder someone!” cried Fenya, flinging up her hands.

CHAPTER 4

In the Dark

WHERE was he running? “Where could she be except at Fyodor Pavlovitch’s? She must have run straight to him from Samsonov’s, that was clear now. The whole intrigue, the whole deceit was evident.”... It all rushed whirling through his mind. He did not run to Marya Kondratyevna’s. “There was no need to go there... not the slightest need... he must raise no alarm... they would run and tell directly.... Marya Kondratyevna was clearly in the plot, Smerdyakov too, he too, all had been bought over!”

He formed another plan of action: he ran a long way round Fyodor Pavlovitch’s house, crossing the lane, running down Dmitrovsky Street, then over the little bridge, and so came straight to the deserted alley at the back, which was empty and uninhabited, with, on one side the hurdle fence of a neighbour’s kitchen-garden, on the other the strong high fence that ran all round Fyodor Pavlovitch’s garden. Here he chose a spot, apparently the very place, where according to the tradition, he knew Lizaveta had once climbed over it: “If she could climb over it,” the thought, God knows why, occurred to him, “surely I can.” He did in fact jump up, and instantly contrived to catch hold of the top of the fence. Then he vigorously pulled himself up and sat astride on it. Close by, in the garden stood the bathhouse, but from the fence he could see the lighted windows of the house too.

“Yes, the old man’s bedroom is lighted up. She’s there! and he leapt from the fence into the garden. Though he knew Grigory was ill and very likely Smerdyakov, too, and that there was no one to hear him, he instinctively hid himself, stood still, and began to listen. But there was dead silence on all sides and, as though of design, complete stillness, not the slightest breath of wind.

“And naught but the whispering silence,” the line for some reason rose to his mind. “If only no one heard me jump over the fence! I think not.” Standing still for a minute, he walked softly over the grass in the garden, avoiding the trees and shrubs. He walked slowly, creeping stealthily at every step, listening to his own footsteps. It took him five minutes to reach the lighted window. He remembered that just under the window there were several thick and high bushes of elder and whitebeam. The door from the

house into the garden on the left-hand side was shut; he had carefully looked on purpose to see, in passing. At last he reached the bushes and hid behind them. He held his breath. “I must wait now,” he thought, “to reassure them, in case they heard my footsteps and are listening... if only I don’t cough or sneeze.”

He waited two minutes. His heart was beating violently, and, at moments, he could scarcely breathe. “No, this throbbing at my heart won’t stop,” he thought. “I can’t wait any longer.” He was standing behind a bush in the shadow. The light of the window fell on the front part of the bush.

“How red the whitebeam berries are!” he murmured, not knowing why. Softly and noiselessly, step by step, he approached the window, and raised himself on tiptoe. All Fyodor Pavlovitch’s bedroom lay open before him. It was not a large room, and was divided in two parts by a red screen, “Chinese,” as Fyodor Pavlovitch used to call it. The word “Chinese” flashed into Mitya’s mind, “and behind the screen, is Grushenka,” thought Mitya. He began watching Fyodor Pavlovitch who was wearing his new striped-silk dressing-gown, which Mitya had never seen, and a silk cord with tassels round the waist. A clean, dandified shirt of fine linen with gold studs peeped out under the collar of the dressing-gown. On his head Fyodor Pavlovitch had the same red bandage which Alyosha had seen.

“He has got himself up,” thought Mitya.

His father was standing near the window, apparently lost in thought. Suddenly he jerked up his head, listened a moment, and hearing nothing went up to the table, poured out half a glass of brandy from a decanter and drank it off. Then he uttered a deep sigh, again stood still a moment, walked carelessly up to the looking-glass on the wall, with his right hand raised the red bandage on his forehead a little, and began examining his bruises and scars, which had not yet disappeared.

“He’s alone,” thought Mitya, “in all probability he’s alone.”

Fyodor Pavlovitch moved away from the looking-glass, turned suddenly to the window and looked out. Mitya instantly slipped away into the shadow.

“She may be there behind the screen. Perhaps she’s asleep by now,” he thought, with a pang at his heart. Fyodor Pavlovitch moved away from the window. “He’s looking for her out of the window, so she’s not there. Why should he stare out into the dark? He’s wild with impatience.”... Mitya slipped back at once, and fell to gazing in at the window again. The old man

was sitting down at the table, apparently disappointed. At last he put his elbow on the table, and laid his right cheek against his hand. Mitya watched him eagerly.

“He’s alone, he’s alone!” he repeated again. “If she were here, his face would be different.”

Strange to say, a queer, irrational vexation rose up in his heart that she was not here. “It’s not that she’s not here,” he explained to himself, immediately, “but that I can’t tell for certain whether she is or not.” Mitya remembered afterwards that his mind was at that moment exceptionally clear, that he took in everything to the slightest detail, and missed no point. But a feeling of misery, the misery of uncertainty and indecision, was growing in his heart with every instant. “Is she here or not?” The angry doubt filled his heart, and suddenly, making up his mind, he put out his hand and softly knocked on the window frame. He knocked the signal the old man had agreed upon with Smerdyakov, twice slowly and then three times more quickly, the signal that meant “Grushenka is here!”

The old man started, jerked up his head, and, jumping up quickly, ran to the window. Mitya slipped away into the shadow. Fyodor Pavlovitch opened the window and thrust his whole head out.

“Grushenka, is it you? Is it you?” he said, in a sort of trembling half-whisper. “Where are you, my angel, where are you?” He was fearfully agitated and breathless.

“He’s alone,” Mitya decided.

“Where are you?” cried the old man again; and he thrust his head out farther, thrust it out to the shoulders, gazing in all directions, right and left. “Come here, I’ve a little present for you. Come, I’ll show you...”

“He means the three thousand,” thought Mitya.

“But where are you? Are you at the door? I’ll open it directly.”

And the old man almost climbed out of the window, peering out to the right, where there was a door into the garden, trying to see into the darkness. In another second he would certainly have run out to open the door without waiting for Grushenka’s answer.

Mitya looked at him from the side without stirring. The old man’s profile that he loathed so, his pendent Adam’s apple, his hooked nose, his lips that smiled in greedy expectation, were all brightly lighted up by the slanting lamplight falling on the left from the room. A horrible fury of hatred suddenly surged up in Mitya’s heart: “There he was, his rival, the man who

had tormented him, had ruined his life!” It was a rush of that sudden, furious, revengeful anger of which he had spoken, as though foreseeing it, to Alyosha, four days ago in the arbour, when, in answer to Alyosha’s question, “How can you say you’ll kill our father?”

“I don’t know, I don’t know,” he had said then. “Perhaps I shall not kill him, perhaps I shall. I’m afraid he’ll suddenly be so loathsome to me at that moment. I hate his double chin, his nose, his eyes, his shameless grin. I feel a personal repulsion. That’s what I’m afraid of, that’s what may be too much for me.”... This personal repulsion was growing unendurable. Mitya was beside himself, he suddenly pulled the brass pestle out of his pocket.

“God was watching over me then,” Mitya himself said afterwards. At that very moment Grigory waked up on his bed of sickness. Earlier in the evening he had undergone the treatment which Smerdyakov had described to Ivan. He had rubbed himself all over with vodka mixed with a secret, very strong decoction, had drunk what was left of the mixture while his wife repeated a “certain prayer” over him, after which he had gone to bed. Marfa Ignatyevna had tasted the stuff, too, and, being unused to strong drink, slept like the dead beside her husband.

But Grigory waked up in the night, quite suddenly, and, after a moment’s reflection, though he immediately felt a sharp pain in his back, he sat up in bed. Then he deliberated again, got up and dressed hurriedly. Perhaps his conscience was uneasy at the thought of sleeping while the house was unguarded “in such perilous times.” Smerdyakov, exhausted by his fit, lay motionless in the next room. Marfa Ignatyevna did not stir. “The stuff’s been too much for the woman,” Grigory thought, glancing at her, and groaning, he went out on the steps. No doubt he only intended to look out from the steps, for he was hardly able to walk, the pain in his back and his right leg was intolerable. But he suddenly remembered that he had not locked the little gate into the garden that evening. He was the most punctual and precise of men, a man who adhered to an unchangeable routine, and habits that lasted for years. Limping and writhing with pain he went down the steps and towards the garden. Yes, the gate stood wide open. Mechanically he stepped into the garden. Perhaps he fancied something, perhaps caught some sound, and, glancing to the left he saw his master’s window open. No one was looking out of it then.

“What’s it open for? It’s not summer now,” thought Grigory, and suddenly, at that very instant he caught a glimpse of something

extraordinary before him in the garden. Forty paces in front of him a man seemed to be running in the dark, a sort of shadow was moving very fast.

“Good Lord!” cried Grigory beside himself, and forgetting the pain in his back, he hurried to intercept the running figure. He took a short cut, evidently he knew the garden better; the flying figure went towards the bath-house, ran behind it and rushed to the garden fence. Grigory followed, not losing sight of him, and ran, forgetting everything. He reached the fence at the very moment the man was climbing over it. Grigory cried out, beside himself, pounced on him, and clutched his leg in his two hands.

Yes, his foreboding had not deceived him. He recognised him; it was he, the “monster,” the “parricide.”

“Parricide! the old man shouted so that the whole neighbourhood could hear, but he had not time to shout more, he fell at once, as though struck by lightning.

Mitya jumped back into the garden and bent over the fallen man. In Mitya’s hands was a brass pestle, and he flung it mechanically in the grass. The pestle fell two paces from Grigory, not in the grass but on the path, in a most conspicuous place. For some seconds he examined the prostrate figure before him. The old man’s head was covered with blood. Mitya put out his hand and began feeling it. He remembered afterwards clearly that he had been awfully anxious to make sure whether he had broken the old man’s skull, or simply stunned him with the pestle. But the blood was flowing horribly; and in a moment Mitya’s fingers were drenched with the hot stream. He remembered taking out of his pocket the clean white handkerchief with which he had provided himself for his visit to Madame Hohlakov, and putting it to the old man’s head, senselessly trying to wipe the blood from his face and temples. But the handkerchief was instantly soaked with blood.

“Good heavens! What am I doing it for?” thought Mitya, suddenly pulling himself together. “If I have broken his skull, how can I find out now? And what difference does it make now?” he added, hopelessly. “If I’ve killed him, I’ve killed him.... You’ve come to grief, old man, so there you must lie!” he said aloud. And suddenly turning to the fence, he vaulted over it into the lane and fell to running — the handkerchief soaked with blood he held, crushed up in his right fist, and as he ran he thrust it into the back pocket of his coat. He ran headlong, and the few passers-by who met

him in the dark, in the streets, remembered afterwards that they had met a man running that night. He flew back again to the widow Morozov's house.

Immediately after he had left it that evening, Fenya had rushed to the chief porter, Nazar Ivanovitch, and besought him, for Christ's sake, "not to let the captain in again to-day or to-morrow." Nazar Ivanovitch promised, but went upstairs to his mistress who had suddenly sent for him, and meeting his nephew, a boy of twenty, who had recently come from the country, on the way up told him to take his place, but forgot to mention "the captain." Mitya, running up to the gate, knocked. The lad instantly recognised him, for Mitya had more than once tipped him. Opening the gate at once, he let him in, and hastened to inform him with a good-humoured smile that "Agrafena Alexandrovna is not at home now, you know."

"Where is she then, Prohor?" asked Mitya, stopping short.

"She set off this evening, some two hours ago, with Timofey, to Mokroe."

"What for?" cried Mitya.

"That I can't say. To see some officer. Someone invited her and horses were sent to fetch her."

Mitya left him, and ran like a madman to Fenya.

CHAPTER 5

A Sudden Resolution

SHE was sitting in the kitchen with her grandmother; they were both just going to bed. Relying on Nazar Ivanovitch, they had not locked themselves in. Mitya ran in, pounced on Fenya and seized her by the throat.

“Speak at once! Where is she? With whom is she now, at Mokroe?” he roared furiously.

Both the women squealed.

“Aie! I’ll tell you. Aie! Dmitri Fyodorovitch, darling, I’ll tell you everything directly, I won’t hide anything,” gabbled Fenya, frightened to death; “she’s gone to Mokroe, to her officer.”

“What officer?” roared Mitya.

“To her officer, the same one she used to know, the one who threw her over five years ago,” cackled Fenya, as fast as she could speak.

Mitya withdrew the hands with which he was squeezing her throat. He stood facing her, pale as death, unable to utter a word, but his eyes showed that he realised it all, all, from the first word, and guessed the whole position. Poor Fenya was not in a condition at that moment to observe whether he understood or not. She remained sitting on the trunk as she had been when he ran into the room, trembling all over, holding her hands out before her as though trying to defend herself. She seemed to have grown rigid in that position. Her wide-opened, scared eyes were fixed immovably upon him. And to make matters worse, both his hands were smeared with blood. On the way, as he ran, he must have touched his forehead with them, wiping off the perspiration, so that on his forehead and his right cheek were bloodstained patches. Fenya was on the verge of hysterics. The old cook had jumped up and was staring at him like a mad woman, almost unconscious with terror.

Mitya stood for a moment, then mechanically sank on to a chair next to Fenya. He sat, not reflecting but, as it were, terror-stricken, benumbed. Yet everything was clear as day: that officer, he knew about him, he knew everything perfectly, he had known it from Grushenka herself, had known that a letter had come from him a month before. So that for a month, for a whole month, this had been going on, a secret from him, till the very arrival

of this new man, and he had never thought of him! But how could he, how could he not have thought of him? Why was it he had forgotten this officer, like that, forgotten him as soon as he heard of him? That was the question that faced him like some monstrous thing. And he looked at this monstrous thing with horror, growing cold with horror.

But suddenly, as gently and mildly as a gentle and affectionate child, he began speaking to Fenya as though he had utterly forgotten how he had scared and hurt her just now. He fell to questioning Fenya with an extreme preciseness, astonishing in his position, and though the girl looked wildly at his blood-stained hands, she, too, with wonderful readiness and rapidity, answered every question as though eager to put the whole truth and nothing but the truth before him. Little by little, even with a sort of enjoyment, she began explaining every detail, not wanting to torment him, but, as it were, eager to be of the utmost service to him. She described the whole of that day, in great detail, the visit of Rakitin and Alyosha, how she, Fenya, had stood on the watch, how the mistress had set off, and how she had called out of the window to Alyosha to give him, Mitya, her greetings, and to tell him "to remember for ever how she had loved him for an hour."

Hearing of the message, Mitya suddenly smiled, and there was a flush of colour on his pale cheeks. At the same moment Fenya said to him, not a bit afraid now to be inquisitive:

"Look at your hands, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. They're all over blood!

"Yes," answered Mitya mechanically. He looked carelessly at his hands and at once forgot them and Fenya's question.

He sank into silence again. Twenty minutes had passed since he had run in. His first horror was over, but evidently some new fixed determination had taken possession of him. He suddenly stood up, smiling dreamily.

"What has happened to you, sir?" said Fenya, pointing to his hands again. She spoke compassionately, as though she felt very near to him now in his grief. Mitya looked at his hands again.

"That's blood, Fenya," he said, looking at her with a strange expression. "That's human blood, and my God! why was it shed? But... Fenya... there's a fence here" (he looked at her as though setting her a riddle), "a high fence, and terrible to look at. But at dawn to-morrow, when the sun rises, Mitya will leap over that fence.... You don't understand what fence, Fenya, and, never mind.... You'll hear to-morrow and understand... and now, good-bye. I won't stand in her way. I'll step aside, I know how to step aside. Live, my

joy.... You loved me for an hour, remember Mityenka Karamazov so for ever.... She always used to call me Mityenka, do you remember?”

And with those words he went suddenly out of the kitchen. Fenya was almost more frightened at this sudden departure than she had been when he ran in and attacked her.

Just ten minutes later Dmitri went in to Pyotr Ilyitch Perhotin, the young official with whom he had pawned his pistols. It was by now half-past eight, and Pyotr Ilyitch had finished his evening tea, and had just put his coat on again to go to the Metropolis to play billiards. Mitya caught him coming out.

Seeing him with his face all smeared with blood, the young man uttered a cry of surprise.

“Good heavens! What is the matter?”

“I’ve come for my pistols,” said Mitya, “and brought you the money. And thanks very much. I’m in a hurry, Pyotr Ilyitch, please make haste.”

Pyotr Ilyitch grew more and more surprised; he suddenly caught sight of a bundle of banknotes in Mitya’s hand, and what was more, he had walked in holding the notes as no one walks in and no one carries money: he had them in his right hand, and held them outstretched as if to show them. Perhotin’s servant-boy, who met Mitya in the passage, said afterwards that he walked into the passage in the same way, with the money outstretched in his hand, so he must have been carrying them like that even in the streets. They were all rainbow-coloured hundred-rouble notes, and the fingers holding them were covered with blood.

When Pyotr Ilyitch was questioned later on as to the sum of money, he said that it was difficult to judge at a glance, but that it might have been two thousand, or perhaps three, but it was a big, “fat” bundle. “Dmitri Fyodorovitch,” so he testified afterwards, “seemed unlike himself, too; not drunk, but, as it were, exalted, lost to everything, but at the same time, as it were, absorbed, as though pondering and searching for something and unable to come to a decision. He was in great haste, answered abruptly and very strangely, and at moments seemed not at all dejected but quite cheerful.”

“But what is the matter with you? What’s wrong?” cried Pyotr Ilyitch, looking wildly at his guest. “How is it that you’re all covered with blood? Have you had a fall? Look at yourself!”

He took him by the elbow and led him to the glass.

Seeing his blood-stained face, Mitya started and scowled wrathfully.

“Damnation! That’s the last straw,” he muttered angrily, hurriedly changing the notes from his right hand to the left, and impulsively jerked the handkerchief out of his pocket. But the handkerchief turned out to be soaked with blood, too (it was the handkerchief he had used to wipe Grigory’s face). There was scarcely a white spot on it, and it had not merely begun to dry, but had stiffened into a crumpled ball and could not be pulled apart. Mitya threw it angrily on the floor.

“Oh, damn it!” he said. “Haven’t you a rag of some sort... to wipe my face?”

“So you’re only stained, not wounded? You’d better wash,” said Pyotr Ilyitch. “Here’s a wash-stand. I’ll pour you out some water.”

“A wash-stand? That’s all right... but where am I to put this?”

With the strangest perplexity he indicated his bundle of hundred-rouble notes, looking inquiringly at Pyotr Ilyitch as though it were for him to decide what he, Mitya, was to do with his own money.

“In your pocket, or on the table here. They won’t be lost.”

“In my pocket? Yes, in my pocket. All right.... But, I say, that’s all nonsense,” he cried, as though suddenly coming out of his absorption. “Look here, let’s first settle that business of the pistols. Give them back to me. Here’s your money... because I am in great need of them... and I haven’t a minute, a minute to spare.”

And taking the topmost note from the bundle he held it out to Pyotr Ilyitch.

“But I shan’t have change enough. Haven’t you less?”

“No,” said Mitya, looking again at the bundle, and as though not trusting his own words he turned over two or three of the topmost ones.

“No, they’re all alike,” he added, and again he looked inquiringly at Pyotr Ilyitch.

“How have you grown so rich?” the latter asked. “Wait, I’ll send my boy to Plotnikov’s, they close late — to see if they won’t change it. Here, Misha!” he called into the passage.

“To Plotnikov’s shop — first-rate!” cried Mitya, as though struck by an idea. “Misha,” he turned to the boy as he came in, “look here, run to Plotnikov’s and tell them that Dmitri Fyodorovitch sends his greetings, and will be there directly.... But listen, listen, tell them to have champagne, three dozen bottles, ready before I come, and packed as it was to take to Mokroe.

I took four dozen with me then," he added (suddenly addressing Pyotr Ilyitch); "they know all about it, don't you trouble, Misha," he turned again to the boy. "Stay, listen; tell them to put in cheese, Strasburg pies, smoked fish, ham, caviare, and everything, everything they've got, up to a hundred roubles, or a hundred and twenty as before.... But wait: don't let them forget dessert, sweets, pears, watermelons, two or three or four — no, one melon's enough, and chocolate, candy, toffee, fondants; in fact, everything I took to Mokroe before, three hundred roubles' worth with the champagne... let it be just the same again. And remember, Misha, if you are called Misha — His name is Misha, isn't it?" He turned to Pyotr Ilyitch again.

"Wait a minute," Pyotr Ilyitch intervened listening and watching him uneasily, "you'd better go yourself and tell them. He'll muddle it."

"He will, I see he will! Eh, Misha! Why, I was going to kiss you for the commission.... If you don't make a mistake, there's ten roubles for you, run along, make haste.... Champagne's the chief thing, let them bring up champagne. And brandy, too, and red and white wine, and all I had then.... They know what I had then."

"But listen!" Pyotr Ilyitch interrupted with some impatience. "I say, let him simply run and change the money and tell them not to close, and you go and tell them.... Give him your note. Be off, Misha! Put your best leg forward!"

Pyotr Ilyitch seemed to hurry Misha off on purpose, because the boy remained standing with his mouth and eyes wide open, apparently understanding little of Mitya's orders, gazing up with amazement and terror at his bloodstained face and the trembling blood-stained fingers that held the notes.

"Well, now come and wash," said Pyotr Ilyitch sternly. "Put the money on the table or else in your pocket.... That's right, come along. But take off your coat."

And beginning to help him off with his coat, he cried out again:

"Look, your coat's covered with blood, too!"

"That... it's not the coat. It's only a little here on the sleeve.... And that's only here where the handkerchief lay. It must have soaked through. I must have sat on the handkerchief at Fenya's, and the blood's come through," Mitya explained at once with a child-like unconsciousness that was astounding. Pyotr Ilyitch listened, frowning.

“Well, you must have been up to something; you must have been fighting with someone,” he muttered.

They began to wash. Pyotr Ilyitch held the jug and poured out the water. Mitya, in desperate haste, scarcely soaped his hands (they were trembling, and Pyotr Ilyitch remembered it afterwards). But the young official insisted on his soaping them thoroughly and rubbing them more. He seemed to exercise more and more sway over Mitya, as time went on. It may be noted in passing that he was a young man of sturdy character.

“Look, you haven’t got your nails clean. Now rub your face; here, on your temples, by your ear.... Will you go in that shirt? Where are you going? Look, all the cuff of your right sleeve is covered with blood.”

“Yes, it’s all bloody,” observed Mitya, looking at the cuff of his shirt.

“Then change your shirt.”

“I haven’t time. You see I’ll...” Mitya went on with the same confiding ingenuousness, drying his face and hands on the towel, and putting on his coat. “I’ll turn it up at the wrist. It won’t be seen under the coat.... You see!”

“Tell me now, what game have you been up to? Have you been fighting with someone? In the tavern again, as before? Have you been beating that captain again?” Pyotr Ilyitch asked him reproachfully. “Whom have you been beating now... or killing, perhaps?”

“Nonsense!” said Mitya.

“Don’t worry,” said Mitya, and he suddenly laughed. “I smashed an old woman in the market-place just now.”

“Smashed? An old woman?”

“An old man!” cried Mitya, looking Pyotr Ilyitch straight in the face, laughing, and shouting at him as though he were deaf.

“Confound it! An old woman, an old man.... Have you killed someone?”

“We made it up. We had a row — and made it up. In a place I know of. We parted friends. A fool.... He’s forgiven me.... He’s sure to have forgiven me by now... if he had got up, he wouldn’t have forgiven me” — Mitya suddenly winked— “only damn him, you know, I say, Pyotr Ilyitch, damn him! Don’t worry about him! I don’t want to just now!” Mitya snapped out, resolutely.

“Whatever do you want to go picking quarrels with everyone for?... Just as you did with that captain over some nonsense.... You’ve been fighting and now you’re rushing off on the spree — that’s you all over! Three dozen champagne — what do you want all that for?”

“Bravo! Now give me the pistols. Upon my honour I’ve no time now. I should like to have a chat with you, my dear boy, but I haven’t the time. And there’s no need, it’s too late for talking. Where’s my money? Where have I put it?” he cried, thrusting his hands into his pockets.

“You put it on the table... yourself.... Here it is. Had you forgotten? Money’s like dirt or water to you, it seems. Here are your pistols. It’s an odd thing, at six o’clock you pledged them for ten roubles, and now you’ve got thousands. Two or three I should say.”

“Three, you bet,” laughed Mitya, stuffing the notes into the side-pocket of his trousers.

“You’ll lose it like that. Have you found a gold mine?”

“The mines? The gold mines?” Mitya shouted at the top of his voice and went off into a roar of laughter. “Would you like to go to the mines, Perhotin? There’s a lady here who’ll stump up three thousand for you, if only you’ll go. She did it for me, she’s so awfully fond of gold mines. Do you know Madame Hohlakov?”

“I don’t know her, but I’ve heard of her and seen her. Did she really give you three thousand? Did she really?” said Pyotr Ilyitch, eyeing him dubiously.

“As soon as the sun rises to-morrow, as soon as Phoebus, ever young, flies upwards, praising and glorifying God, you go to her, this Madame Hohlakov, and ask her whether she did stump up that three thousand or not. Try and find out.”

“I don’t know on what terms you are... since you say it so positively, I suppose she did give it to you. You’ve got the money in your hand, but instead of going to Siberia you’re spending it all.... Where are you really off to now, eh?”

“To Mokroe.”

“To Mokroe? But it’s night!”

“Once the lad had all, now the lad has naught,” cried Mitya suddenly.

“How ‘naught’? You say that with all those thousands!”

“I’m not talking about thousands. Damn thousands! I’m talking of female character. Fickle is the heart of woman Treacherous and full of vice; I agree with Ulysses. That’s what he says.”

“I don’t understand you!”

“Am I drunk?”

“Not drunk, but worse.”

“I’m drunk in spirit, Pyotr Ilyitch, drunk in spirit! But that’s enough!”

“What are you doing, loading the pistol?”

“I’m loading the pistol.”

Unfastening the pistol-case, Mitya actually opened the powder horn, and carefully sprinkled and rammed in the charge. Then he took the bullet and, before inserting it, held it in two fingers in front of the candle.

“Why are you looking at the bullet?” asked Pyotr Ilyitch, watching him with uneasy curiosity.

“Oh, a fancy. Why, if you meant to put that bullet in your brain, would you look at it or not?”

“Why look at it?”

“It’s going into my brain, so it’s interesting to look and see what it’s like. But that’s foolishness, a moment’s foolishness. Now that’s done,” he added, putting in the bullet and driving it home with the ramrod. “Pyotr Ilyitch, my dear fellow, that’s nonsense, all nonsense, and if only you knew what nonsense! Give me a little piece of paper now.”

“Here’s some paper.”

“No, a clean new piece, writing-paper. That’s right.”

And taking a pen from the table, Mitya rapidly wrote two lines, folded the paper in four, and thrust it in his waistcoat pocket. He put the pistols in the case, locked it up, and kept it in his hand. Then he looked at Pyotr Ilyitch with a slow, thoughtful smile.

“Now, let’s go.”

“Where are we going? No, wait a minute.... Are you thinking of putting that bullet in your brain, perhaps?” Pyotr Ilyitch asked uneasily.

“I was fooling about the bullet! I want to live. I love life, You may be sure of that. I love golden-haired Phorbus and his warm light.... Dear Pyotr Ilyitch, do you know how to step aside?”

“What do you mean by ‘stepping aside’?”

“Making way. Making way for a dear creature, and for one I hate. And to let the one I hate become dear — that’s what making way means! And to say to them: God bless you, go your way, pass on, while I-”

“While you-?”

“That’s enough, let’s go.”

“Upon my word. I’ll tell someone to prevent your going there,” said Pyotr Ilyitch, looking at him. “What are you going to Mokroe for, now?”

“There’s a woman there, a woman. That’s enough for you. You shut up.”

“Listen, though you’re such a savage I’ve always liked you.... I feel anxious.”

“Thanks, old fellow. I’m a savage you say. Savages, savages! That’s what I am always saying. Savages! Why, here’s Misha! I was forgetting him.”

Misha ran in, post-haste, with a handful of notes in change, and reported that everyone was in a bustle at the Plotnikovs’; “They’re carrying down the bottles, and the fish, and the tea; it will all be ready directly.” Mitya seized ten roubles and handed it to Pyotr Ilyitch, then tossed another ten-rouble note to Misha.

“Don’t dare to do such a thing!” cried Pyotr Ilyitch. “I won’t have it in my house, it’s a bad, demoralising habit. Put your money away. Here, put it here, why waste it? It would come in handy to-morrow, and I dare say you’ll be coming to me to borrow ten roubles again. Why do you keep putting the notes in your side pocket? Ah, you’ll lose them!”

“I say, my dear fellow, let’s go to Mokroe together.”

“What should I go for?”

“I say, let’s open a bottle at once, and drink to life! I want to drink, and especially to drink with you. I’ve never drunk with you, have I?”

“Very well, we can go to the Metropolis. I was just going there.”

“I haven’t time for that. Let’s drink at the Plotnikovs’, in the back room. Shall I ask you a riddle?”

“Ask away.”

Mitya took the piece of paper out of his waistcoat pocket, unfolded it and showed it. In a large, distinct hand was written: “I punish myself for my whole life; my whole life I punish!”

“I will certainly speak to someone. I’ll go at once,” said Pyotr Ilyitch, after reading the paper.

“You won’t have time, dear boy, come and have a drink. March!”

Plotnikov’s shop was at the corner of the street, next door but one to Pyotr Ilyitch’s. It was the largest grocery shop in our town, and by no means a bad one, belonging to some rich merchants. They kept everything that could be got in a Petersburg shop, grocery of all sort, wines “bottled by the brothers Eliseyev,” fruits, cigars, tea, coffee, sugar, and so on. There were three shop-assistants and two errand boys always employed. Though our part of the country had grown poorer, the landowners had gone away, and

trade had got worse, yet the grocery stores flourished as before, every year with increasing prosperity; there were plenty of purchasers for their goods.

They were awaiting Mitya with impatience in the shop. They had vivid recollections of how he had bought, three or four weeks ago, wine and goods of all sorts to the value of several hundred roubles, paid for in cash (they would never have let him have anything on credit, of course). They remembered that then, as now, he had had a bundle of hundred-rouble notes in his hand, and had scattered them at random, without bargaining, without reflecting, or caring to reflect what use so much wine and provisions would be to him. The story was told all over the town that, driving off then with Grushenka to Mokroe, he had “spent three thousand in one night and the following day, and had come back from the spree without a penny.” He had picked up a whole troop of gypsies (encamped in our neighbourhood at the time), who for two days got money without stint out of him while he was drunk, and drank expensive wine without stint. People used to tell, laughing at Mitya, how he had given champagne to grimy-handed peasants, and feasted the village women and girls on sweets and Strasburg pies. Though to laugh at Mitya to his face was rather a risky proceeding, there was much laughter behind his back, especially in the tavern, at his own ingenuous public avowal that all he had got out of Grushenka by this “escapade” was “permission to kiss her foot, and that was the utmost she had allowed him.”

By the time Mitya and Pyotr Ilyitch reached the shop, they found a cart with three horses harnessed abreast with bells, and with Andrey, the driver, ready waiting for Mitya at the entrance. In the shop they had almost entirely finished packing one box of provisions, and were only waiting for Mitya’s arrival to nail it down and put it in the cart. Pyotr Ilyitch was astounded.

“Where did this cart come from in such a hurry?” he asked Mitya.

“I met Andrey as I ran to you, and told him to drive straight here to the shop. There’s no time to lose. Last time I drove with Timofey, but Timofey now has gone on before me with the witch. Shall we be very late, Andrey?”

“They’ll only get there an hour at most before us, not even that maybe. I got Timofey ready to start. I know how he’ll go. Their pace won’t be ours, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. How could it be? They won’t get there an hour earlier!” Andrey, a lanky, red-haired, middle-aged driver, wearing a full-skirted coat, and with a kaftan on his arm, replied warmly.

“Fifty roubles for vodka if we’re only an hour behind them.”

“I warrant the time, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. Ech, they won’t be half an hour before us, let alone an hour.”

Though Mitya bustled about seeing after things, he gave his orders strangely, as it were, disconnectedly, and inconsecutively. He began a sentence and forgot the end of it. Pyotr Ilyitch found himself obliged to come to the rescue.

“Four hundred roubles’ worth, not less than four hundred roubles’ worth, just as it was then,” commanded Mitya. “Four dozen champagne, not a bottle less.”

“What do you want with so much? What’s it for? Stay!” cried Pyotr Ilyitch. “What’s this box? What’s in it? Surely there isn’t four hundred roubles’ worth here?”

The officious shopmen began explaining with oily politeness that the first box contained only half a dozen bottles of champagne, and only “the most indispensable articles,” such as savouries, sweets, toffee, etc. But the main part of the goods ordered would be packed and sent off, as on the previous occasion, in a special cart also with three horses travelling at full speed, so that it would arrive not more than an hour later than Dmitri Fyodorovitch himself.

“Not more than an hour! Not more than an hour! And put in more toffee and fondants. The girls there are so fond of it,” Mitya insisted hotly.

“The fondants are all right. But what do you want with four dozen of champagne? One would be enough,” said Pyotr Ilyitch, almost angry. He began bargaining, asking for a bill of the goods, and refused to be satisfied. But he only succeeded in saving a hundred roubles. In the end it was agreed that only three hundred roubles’ worth should be sent.

“Well, you may go to the devil!” cried Pyotr Ilyitch, on second thoughts. “What’s it to do with me? Throw away your money, since it’s cost you nothing.”

“This way, my economist, this way, don’t be angry.” Mitya drew him into a room at the back of the shop. “They’ll give us a bottle here directly. We’ll taste it. Ech, Pyotr Ilyitch, come along with me, for you’re a nice fellow, the sort I like.”

Mitya sat down on a wicker chair, before a little table, covered with a dirty dinner-napkin. Pyotr Ilyitch sat down opposite, and the champagne soon appeared, and oysters were suggested to the gentlemen. “First-class oysters, the last lot in.”

“Hang the oysters. I don’t eat them. And we don’t need anything,” cried Pyotr Ilyitch, almost angrily.

“There’s no time for oysters,” said Mitya. “And I’m not hungry. Do you know, friend,” he said suddenly, with feeling, “I never have liked all this disorder.”

“Who does like it? Three dozen of champagne for peasants, upon my word, that’s enough to make anyone angry!”

“That’s not what I mean. I’m talking of a higher order. There’s no order in me, no higher order. But... that’s all over. There’s no need to grieve about it. It’s too late, damn it! My whole life has been disorder, and one must set it in order. Is that a pun, eh?”

“You’re raving, not making puns! “Glory be to God in Heaven, Glory be to God in me. . .

“That verse came from my heart once, it’s not a verse, but a tear.... I made it myself... not while I was pulling the captain’s beard, though...”

“Why do you bring him in all of a sudden?”

“Why do I bring him in? Foolery! All things come to an end; all things are made equal. That’s the long and short of it.”

“You know, I keep thinking of your pistols.”

“That’s all foolery, too! Drink, and don’t be fanciful. I love life. I’ve loved life too much, shamefully much. Enough! Let’s drink to life, dear boy, I propose the toast. Why am I pleased with myself? I’m a scoundrel, but I’m satisfied with myself. And yet I’m tortured by the thought that I’m a scoundrel, but satisfied with myself. I bless the creation. I’m ready to bless God and His creation directly, but... I must kill one noxious insect for fear it should crawl and spoil life for others.... Let us drink to life, dear brother. What can be more precious than life? Nothing! To life, and to one queen of queens!”

“Let’s drink to life and to your queen, too, if you like.”

They drank a glass each. Although Mitya was excited and expansive, yet he was melancholy, too. It was as though some heavy, overwhelming anxiety were weighing upon him.

“Misha... here’s your Misha come! Misha, come here, my boy, drink this glass to Phoebus the golden-haired, of to-morrow morn...”

“What are you giving it him for?” cried Pyotr Ilyitch, irritably.

“Yes, yes, yes, let me! I want to!”

“E — ech!”

Misha emptied the glass, bowed, and ran out.

“He’ll remember it afterwards,” Mitya remarked. “Woman, I love woman! What is woman? The queen of creation! My heart is sad, my heart is sad, Pyotr Ilyitch. Do you remember Hamlet? ‘I am very sorry, good Horatio! Alas, poor Yorick!’ Perhaps that’s me, Yorick? Yes, I’m Yorick now, and a skull afterwards.”

Pyotr Ilyitch listened in silence. Mitya, too, was silent for a while.

“What dog’s that you’ve got here?” he asked the shopman, casually, noticing a pretty little lap-dog with dark eyes, sitting in the corner.

“It belongs to Varvara Alexyevna, the mistress,” answered the clerk. “She brought it and forgot it here. It must be taken back to her.”

“I saw one like it... in the regiment... “ murmured Mitya dreamily, “only that one had its hind leg broken.... By the way, Pyotr Ilyitch, I wanted to ask you: have you ever stolen anything in your life?”

“What a question!”

“Oh, I didn’t mean anything. From somebody’s pocket, you know. I don’t mean government money, everyone steals that, and no doubt you do, too...”

“You go to the devil.”

“I’m talking of other people’s money. Stealing straight out of a pocket? Out of a purse, eh?”

“I stole twenty copecks from my mother when I was nine years old. I took it off the table on the sly, and held it tight in my hand.”

“Well, and what happened?”

“Oh, nothing. I kept it three days, then I felt ashamed, confessed, and gave it back.”

“And what then?”

“Naturally I was whipped. But why do you ask? Have you stolen something?”

“I have,” said Mitya, winking slyly.

“What have you stolen?” inquired Pyotr Ilyitch curiously.

“I stole twenty copecks from my mother when I was nine years old, and gave it back three days after.”

As he said this, Mitya suddenly got up.

“Dmitri Fyodorovitch, won’t you come now?” called Andrey from the door of the shop.

“Are you ready? We’ll come!” Mitya started. “A few more last words and — Andrey, a glass of vodka at starting. Give him some brandy as well! That box” (the one with the pistols) “put under my seat. Good-bye, Pyotr Ilyitch, don’t remember evil against me.”

“But you’re coming back to-morrow?”

“Will you settle the little bill now?” cried the clerk, springing forward.

“Oh yes, the bill. Of course.”

He pulled the bundle of notes out of his pocket again, picked out three hundred roubles, threw them on the counter, and ran hurriedly out of the shop. Everyone followed him out, bowing and wishing him good luck. Andrey, coughing from the brandy he had just swallowed, jumped up on the box. But Mitya was only just taking his seat when suddenly to his surprise he saw Fenya before him. She ran up panting, clasped her hands before him with a cry, and plumped down at his feet.

“Dmitri Fyodorovitch, dear good Dmitri Fyodorovitch, don’t harm my mistress. And it was I told you all about it.... And don’t murder him, he came first, he’s hers! He’ll marry Agrafena Alexandrovna now. That’s why he’s come back from Siberia. Dmitri Fyodorovitch, dear, don’t take a fellow creature’s life!”

“Tut-tut-tut! That’s it, is it? So you’re off there to make trouble!” muttered Pyotr Ilyitch. “Now, it’s all clear, as clear as daylight. Dmitri Fyodorovitch, give me your pistols at once if you mean to behave like a man,” he shouted aloud to Mitya. “Do you hear, Dmitri?”

“The pistols? Wait a bit, brother, I’ll throw them into the pool on the road,” answered Mitya. “Fenya, get up, don’t kneel to me. Mitya won’t hurt anyone, the silly fool won’t hurt anyone again. But I say, Fenya,” he shouted, after having taken his seat. “I hurt you just now, so forgive me and have pity on me, forgive a scoundrel.... But it doesn’t matter if you don’t. It’s all the same now. Now then, Andrey, look alive, fly along full speed!”

Andrey whipped up the horses, and the bells began ringing.

“Good-bye, Pyotr Ilyitch! My last tear is for you!...”

“He’s not drunk, but he keeps babbling like a lunatic,” Pyotr Ilyitch thought as he watched him go. He had half a mind to stay and see the cart packed with the remaining wines and provisions, knowing that they would deceive and defraud Mitya. But, suddenly feeling vexed with himself, he turned away with a curse and went to the tavern to play billiards.

“He’s a fool, though he’s a good fellow,” he muttered as he went. “I’ve heard of that officer, Grushenka’s former flame. Well, if he has turned up.... Ech, those pistols! Damn it all! I’m not his nurse! Let them do what they like! Besides, it’ll all come to nothing. They’re a set of brawlers, that’s all. They’ll drink and fight, fight and make friends again. They are not men who do anything real. What does he mean by ‘I’m stepping aside, I’m punishing myself’? It’ll come to nothing! He’s shouted such phrases a thousand times, drunk, in the taverns. But now he’s not drunk. ‘Drunk in spirit’ — they’re fond of fine phrases, the villains. Am I his nurse? He must have been fighting, his face was all over blood. With whom? I shall find out at the Metropolis. And his handkerchief was soaked in blood.... It’s still lying on my floor.... Hang it!”

He reached the tavern in a bad humour and at once made up a game. The game cheered him. He played a second game, and suddenly began telling one of his partners that Dmitri Karamazov had come in for some cash again — something like three thousand roubles, and had gone to Mokroe again to spend it with Grushenka.... This news roused singular interest in his listeners. They all spoke of it, not laughing, but with a strange gravity. They left off playing.

“Three thousand? But where can he have got three thousand?”

Questions were asked. The story of Madame Hohlakov’s present was received with scepticism.

“Hasn’t he robbed his old father? — that’s the question.”

“Three thousand! There’s something odd about it.”

“He boasted aloud that he would kill his father; we all heard him, here. And it was three thousand he talked about...”

Pyotr Ilyitch listened. All at once he became short and dry in his answers. He said not a word about the blood on Mitya’s face and hands, though he had meant to speak of it at first.

They began a third game, and by degrees the talk about Mitya died away. But by the end of the third game, Pyotr Ilyitch felt no more desire for billiards; he laid down the cue, and without having supper as he had intended, he walked out of the tavern. When he reached the market-place he stood still in perplexity, wondering at himself. He realised that what he wanted was to go to Fyodor Pavlovitch’s and find out if anything had happened there. “On account of some stupid nonsense as it’s sure to turn out

— am I going to wake up the household and make a scandal? Fooh! damn it, is it my business to look after them?”

In a very bad humour he went straight home, and suddenly remembered Fenya. “Damn it all! I ought to have questioned her just now,” he thought with vexation, “I should have heard everything.” And the desire to speak to her, and so find out, became so pressing and importunate that when he was halfway home he turned abruptly and went towards the house where Grushenka lodged. Going up to the gate he knocked. The sound of the knock in the silence of the night sobered him and made him feel annoyed. And no one answered him; everyone in the house was asleep.

“And I shall be making a fuss!” he thought, with a feeling of positive discomfort. But instead of going away altogether, he fell to knocking again with all his might, filling the street with clamour.

“Not coming? Well, I will knock them up, I will!” he muttered at each knock, fuming at himself, but at the same time he redoubled his knocks on the gate.

CHAPTER 6

“I Am Coming, Too!”

BUT Dmitri Fyodorovitch was speeding along the road. It was a little more than twenty versts to Mokroe, but Andrey’s three horses galloped at such a pace that the distance might be covered in an hour and a quarter. The swift motion revived Mitya. The air was fresh and cool, there were big stars shining in the sky. It was the very night, and perhaps the very hour, in which Alyosha fell on the earth, and rapturously swore to love it for ever and ever.

All was confusion, confusion in Mitya’s soul, but although many things were goading his heart, at that moment his whole being was yearning for her, his queen, to whom he was flying to look on her for the last time. One thing I can say for certain; his heart did not waver for one instant. I shall perhaps not be believed when I say that this jealous lover felt not the slightest jealousy of this new rival, who seemed to have sprung out of the earth. If any other had appeared on the scene, he would have been jealous at once, and would-perhaps have stained his fierce hands with blood again. But as he flew through the night, he felt no envy, no hostility even, for the man who had been her first lover.... It is true he had not yet seen him.

“Here there was no room for dispute: it was her right and his; this was her first love which, after five years, she had not forgotten; so she had loved him only for those five years, and I, how do I come in? What right have I? Step aside, Mitya, and make way! What am I now? Now everything is over apart from the officer even if he had not appeared, everything would be over...”

These words would roughly have expressed his feelings, if he had been capable of reasoning. But he could not reason at that moment. His present plan of action had arisen without reasoning. At Fenya’s first words, it had sprung from feeling, and been adopted in a flash, with all its consequences. And yet, in spite of his resolution, there was confusion in his soul, an agonising confusion: his resolution did not give him peace. There was so much behind that tortured him. And it seemed strange to him, at moments, to think that he had written his own sentence of death with pen and paper: “I punish myself,” and the paper was lying there in his pocket, ready; the

pistol was loaded; he had already resolved how, next morning, he would meet the first warm ray of “golden-haired Phoebus.”

And yet he could not be quit of the past, of all that he had left behind and that tortured him. He felt that miserably, and the thought of it sank into his heart with despair. There was one moment when he felt an impulse to stop Andrey, to jump out of the cart, to pull out his loaded pistol, and to make an end of everything without waiting for the dawn. But that moment flew by like a spark. The horses galloped on, “devouring space,” and as he drew near his goal, again the thought of her, of her alone, took more and more complete possession of his soul, chasing away the fearful images that had been haunting it. Oh, how he longed to look upon her, if only for a moment, if only from a distance!

“She’s now with him,” he thought, “now I shall see what she looks like with him, her first love, and that’s all I want.” Never had this woman, who was such a fateful influence in his life, aroused such love in his breast, such new and unknown feeling, surprising even to himself, a feeling tender to devoutness, to self-effacement before her! “I will efface myself!” he said, in a rush of almost hysterical ecstasy.

They had been galloping nearly an hour. Mitya was silent, and though Andrey was, as a rule, a talkative peasant, he did not utter a word, either. He seemed afraid to talk, he only whipped up smartly his three lean, but mettlesome, bay horses. Suddenly Mitya cried out in horrible anxiety:

“Andrey! What if they’re asleep?”

This thought fell upon him like a blow. It had not occurred to him before.

“It may well be that they’re gone to bed by now, Dmitri Fyodorovitch.”

Mitya frowned as though in pain. Yes, indeed... he was rushing there... with such feelings... while they were asleep... she was asleep, perhaps, there too.... An angry feeling surged up in his heart.

“Drive on, Andrey! Whip them up! Look alive!” he cried, beside himself.

“But maybe they’re not in bed!” Andrey went on after a pause. “Timofey said they were a lot of them there-.”

“At the station?”

“Not at the posting-station, but at Plastunov’s, at the inn, where they let out horses, too.”

“I know. So you say there are a lot of them? How’s that? Who are they?” cried Mitya, greatly dismayed at this unexpected news.

“Well, Timofey was saying they’re all gentlefolk. Two from our town — who they are I can’t say — and there are two others, strangers, maybe more besides. I didn’t ask particularly. They’ve set to playing cards, so Timofey said.”

“Cards?”

“So, maybe they’re not in bed if they’re at cards. It’s most likely not more than eleven.”

“Quicker, Andrey! Quicker!” Mitya cried again, nervously.

“May I ask you something, sir?” said Andrey, after a pause. “Only I’m afraid of angering you, sir.”

“What is it?”

“Why, Fenya threw herself at your feet just now, and begged you not to harm her mistress, and someone else, too... so you see, sir — It’s I am taking you there... forgive me, sir, it’s my conscience... maybe it’s stupid of me to speak of it-.”

Mitya suddenly seized him by the shoulders from behind.

“Are you a driver?” he asked frantically.

“Yes sir.”

“Then you know that one has to make way. What would you say to a driver who wouldn’t make way for anyone, but would just drive on and crush people? No, a driver mustn’t run over people. One can’t run over a man. One can’t spoil people’s lives. And if you have spoilt a life — punish yourself.... If only you’ve spoilt, if only you’ve ruined anyone’s life — punish yourself and go away.”

These phrases burst from Mitya almost hysterically. Though Andrey was surprised at him, he kept up the conversation.

“That’s right, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, you’re quite right, one mustn’t crush or torment a man, or any kind of creature, for every creature is created by God. Take a horse, for instance, for some folks, even among us drivers, drive anyhow. Nothing will restrain them, they just force it along.”

“To hell?” Mitya interrupted, and went off into his abrupt, short laugh. “Andrey, simple soul,” he seized him by the shoulders again, “tell me, will Dmitri Fyodorovitch Karamazov go to hell, or not, what do you think?”

“I don’t know, darling, it depends on you, for you are... you see, sir, when the Son of God was nailed on the Cross and died, He went straight down to hell from the Cross, and set free all sinners that were in agony. And the devil groaned, because he thought that he would get no more sinners in

hell. And God said to him, then, ‘Don’t groan, for you shall have all the mighty of the earth, the rulers, the chief judges, and the rich men, and shall be filled up as you have been in all the ages till I come again.’ Those were His very words...”

“A peasant legend! Capital! Whip up the left, Andrey!”

“So you see, sir, who it is hell’s for,” said Andrey, whipping up the left horse, “but you’re like a little child... that’s how we look on you... and though you’re hasty-tempered, sir, yet God will forgive you for your kind heart.”

“And you, do you forgive me, Andrey?”

“What should I forgive you for, sir? You’ve never done me any harm.”

“No, for everyone, for everyone, you here alone, on the road, will you forgive me for everyone? Speak, simple peasant heart!”

“Oh, sir! I feel afraid of driving you, your talk is so strange.”

But Mitya did not hear. He was frantically praying and muttering to himself.

“Lord, receive me, with all my lawlessness, and do not condemn me. Let me pass by Thy judgment... do not condemn me, for I have condemned myself, do not condemn me, for I love Thee, O Lord. I am a wretch, but I love Thee. If Thou sendest me to hell, I shall love Thee there, and from there I shall cry out that I love Thee for ever and ever.... But let me love to the end.... Here and now for just five hours... till the first light of Thy day... for I love the queen of my soul... I love her and I cannot help loving her. Thou seest my whole heart... I shall gallop up, I shall fall before her and say, ‘You are right to pass on and leave me. Farewell and forget your victim... never fret yourself about me!’”

“Mokroe!” cried Andrey, pointing ahead with his whip.

Through the pale darkness of the night loomed a solid black mass of buildings, flung down, as it were, in the vast plain. The village of Mokroe numbered two thousand inhabitants, but at that hour all were asleep, and only here and there a few lights still twinkled.

“Drive on, Andrey, I come!” Mitya exclaimed, feverishly.

“They’re not asleep,” said Andrey again, pointing with his whip to the Plastunovs’ inn, which was at the entrance to the village. The six windows, looking on the street, were all brightly lighted up.

“They’re not asleep,” Mitya repeated joyously. “Quicker, Andrey! Gallop! Drive up with a dash! Set the bells ringing! Let all know that I have

come. I’m coming! I’m coming, too!”

Andrey lashed his exhausted team into a gallop, drove with a dash and pulled up his steaming, panting horses at the high flight of steps.

Mitya jumped out of the cart just as the innkeeper, on his way to bed, peeped out from the steps curious to see who had arrived.

“Trifon Borissovitch, is that you?”

The innkeeper bent down, looked intently, ran down the steps, and rushed up to the guest with obsequious delight.

“Dmitri Fyodorovitch, your honour! Do I see you again?”

Trifon Borissovitch was a thick-set, healthy peasant, of middle height, with a rather fat face. His expression was severe and uncompromising, especially with the peasants of Mokroe, but he had the power of assuming the most obsequious countenance, when he had an inkling that it was to his interest. He dressed in Russian style, with a shirt buttoning down on one side, and a full-skirted coat. He had saved a good sum of money, but was for ever dreaming of improving his position. More than half the peasants were in his clutches, everyone in the neighbourhood was in debt to him. From the neighbouring landowners he bought and rented lands which were worked by the peasants, in payment of debts which they could never shake off. He was a widower, with four grown-up daughters. One of them was already a widow and lived in the inn with her two children, his grandchildren, and worked for him like a charwoman. Another of his daughters was married to a petty official, and in one of the rooms of the inn, on the wall could be seen, among the family photographs, a miniature photograph of this official in uniform and official epaulettes. The two younger daughters used to wear fashionable blue or green dresses, fitting tight at the back, and with trains a yard long, on Church holidays or when they went to pay visits. But next morning they would get up at dawn, as usual, sweep out the rooms with a birch-broom, empty the slops, and clean up after lodgers.

In spite of the thousands of roubles he had saved, Trifon Borissovitch was very fond of emptying the pockets of a drunken guest, and remembering that not a month ago he had, in twenty-four hours, made two if not three hundred roubles out of Dmitri, when he had come on his escapade with Grushenka, he met him now with eager welcome, scenting his prey the moment Mitya drove up to the steps.

“Dmitri Fyodorovitch, dear sir, we see you once more!”

“Stay, Trifon Borissovitch,” began Mitya, “first and foremost, where is she?”

“Agrafena Alexandrovna?” The inn-keeper understood at once, looking sharply into Mitya’s face. “She’s here, too...”

“With whom? With whom?”

“Some strangers. One is an official gentleman, a Pole, to judge from his speech. He sent the horses for her from here; and there’s another with him, a friend of his, or a fellow traveller, there’s no telling. They’re dressed like civilians.”

“Well, are they feasting? Have they money?”

“Poor sort of a feast! Nothing to boast of, Dmitri Fyodorovitch.”

“Nothing to boast of? And who are the others?”

“They’re two gentlemen from the town.... They’ve come back from Tcherny, and are putting up here. One’s quite a young gentleman, a relative of Mr. Miusov he must be, but I’ve forgotten his name... and I expect you know the other, too, a gentleman called Maximov. He’s been on a pilgrimage, so he says, to the monastery in the town. He’s travelling with this young relation of Mr. Miusov.”

“Is that all?”

“Stay, listen, Trifon Borissovitch. Tell me the chief thing: What of her? How is she?”

“Oh, she’s only just come. She’s sitting with them.”

“Is she cheerful? Is she laughing?”

“No, I think she’s not laughing much. She’s sitting quite dull. She’s combing the young gentleman’s hair.”

“The Pole — the officer?”

“He’s not young, and he’s not an officer, either. Not him, sir. It’s the young gentleman that’s Mr. Miusov’s relation. I’ve forgotten his name.”

“Kalganov?”

“That’s it, Kalganov!”

“All right. I’ll see for myself. Are they playing cards?”

“They have been playing, but they’ve left off. They’ve been drinking tea, the official gentleman asked for liqueurs.”

“Stay, Trifon Borissovitch, stay, my good soul, I’ll see for myself. Now answer one more question: are the gypsies here?”

“You can’t have the gypsies now, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. The authorities have sent them away. But we’ve Jews that play the cymbals and the fiddle

in the village, so one might send for them. They'd come."

"Send for them. Certainly send for them!" cried Mitya. "And you can get the girls together as you did then, Marya especially, Stepanida, too, and Arina. Two hundred roubles for a chorus!"

"Oh, for a sum like that I can get all the village together, though by now they're asleep. Are the peasants here worth such kindness, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, or the girls either? To spend a sum like that on such coarseness and rudeness! What's the good of giving a peasant a cigar to smoke, the stinking ruffian! And the girls are all lousy. Besides, I'll get my daughters up for nothing, let alone a sum like that. They've only just gone to bed, I'll give them a kick and set them singing for you. You gave the peasants champagne to drink the other day, e-ech!"

For all his pretended compassion for Mitya, Trifon Borissovitch had hidden half a dozen bottles of champagne on that last occasion, and had picked up a hundred-rouble note under the table, and it had remained in his clutches.

"Trifon Borissovitch, I sent more than one thousand flying last time I was here. Do you remember?"

"You did send it flying. I may well remember. You must have left three thousand behind you."

"Well, I've come to do the same again, do you see?"

And he pulled out his roll of notes, and held them up before the innkeeper's nose.

Now, listen and remember. In an hour's time the wine will arrive, savouries, pies, and sweets — bring them all up at once. That box Andrey has got is to be brought up at once, too. Open it, and hand champagne immediately. And the girls, we must have the girls, Marya especially."

He turned to the cart and pulled out the box of pistols.

"Here, Andrey, let's settle. Here's fifteen roubles for the drive, and fifty for vodka... for your readiness, for your love.... Remember Karamazov!"

"I'm afraid, sir," Andrey. "Give me five roubles extra, but more I won't take. Trifon Borissovitch, bear witness. Forgive my foolish words..."

"What are you afraid of?" asked Mitya, scanning him. "Well, go to the devil, if that's it?" he cried, flinging him five roubles. "Now, Trifon Borissovitch, take me up quietly and let me first get a look at them, so that they don't see me. Where are they? In the blue room?"

Trifon Borissovitch looked apprehensively at Mitya, but at once obediently did his bidding. Leading him into the passage, he went himself into the first large room, adjoining that in which the visitors were sitting, and took the light away. Then he stealthily led Mitya in, and put him in a corner in the dark, whence he could freely watch the company without being seen. But Mitya did not look long, and, indeed, he could not see them; he saw her, his heart throbbed violently, and all was dark before his eyes.

She was sitting sideways to the table in a low chair, and beside her, on the sofa, was the pretty youth, Kalganov. She was holding his hand and seemed to be laughing, while he, seeming vexed and not looking at her, was saying something in a loud voice to Maximov, who sat the other side of the table, facing Grushenka. Maximov was laughing violently at something. On the sofa sat he, and on a chair by the sofa there was another stranger. The one on the sofa was lolling backwards, smoking a pipe, and Mitya had an impression of a stoutish, broad-faced, short little man, who was apparently angry about something. His friend, the other stranger, struck Mitya as extraordinarily tall, but he could make out nothing more. He caught his breath. He could not bear it for a minute, he put the pistol-case on a chest, and with a throbbing heart he walked, feeling cold all over, straight into the blue room to face the company.

“Aie!” shrieked Grushenka, the first to notice him.

CHAPTER 7

The First and Rightful Lover

WITH his long, rapid strides, Mitya walked straight up to the table.

“Gentlemen,” he said in a loud voice, almost shouting, yet stammering at every word, “I... I’m all right! Don’t be afraid!” he exclaimed, “I — there’s nothing the matter,” he turned suddenly to Grushenka, who had shrunk back in her chair towards Kalganov, and clasped his hand tightly. “I... I’m coming, too. I’m here till morning. Gentlemen, may I stay with you till morning? Only till morning, for the last time, in this same room?”

So he finished, turning to the fat little man, with the pipe, sitting on the sofa. The latter removed his pipe from his lips with dignity and observed severely:

“Panie,* we’re here in private. There are other rooms.”

* Pan and Panie mean Mr. in Polish. Pani means Mrs. Panovie, gentlemen.

“Why, it’s you, Dmitri Fyodorovitch! What do you mean?” answered Kalgonov suddenly. “Sit down with us. How are you?”

“Delighted to see you, dear... and precious fellow, I always thought a lot of you.” Mitya responded, joyfully and eagerly, at once holding out his hand across the table.

“Aie! How tight you squeeze! You’ve quite broken my fingers,” laughed Kalganov.

“He always squeezes like that, always,” Grushenka put in gaily, with a timid smile, seeming suddenly convinced from Mitya’s face that he was not going to make a scene. She was watching him with intense curiosity and still some uneasiness. She was impressed by something about him, and indeed the last thing she expected of him was that he would come in and speak like this at such a moment.

“Good evening,” Maximov ventured blandly on the left. Mitya rushed up to him, too.

“Good evening. You’re here, too! How glad I am to find you here, too! Gentlemen, gentlemen, I—” (He addressed the Polish gentleman with the pipe again, evidently taking him for the most important person present.) “I flew here.... I wanted to spend my last day, my last hour in this room, in this

very room ... where I, too, adored... my queen.... Forgive me, Panie," he cried wildly, "I flew here and vowed — Oh, don't be afraid, it's my last night! Let's drink to our good understanding. They'll bring the wine at once.... I brought this with me." (Something made him pull out his bundle of notes.) "Allow me, panie! I want to have music, singing, a revel, as we had before. But the worm, the unnecessary worm, will crawl away, and there'll be no more of him. I will commemorate my day of joy on my last night."

He was almost choking. There was so much, so much he wanted to say, but strange exclamations were all that came from his lips. The Pole gazed fixedly at him, at the bundle of notes in his hand; looked at Grushenka, and was in evident perplexity.

"If my suverin lady is permitting—" he was beginning.

"What does 'suverin' mean? 'Sovereign,' I suppose?" interrupted Grushenka. "I can't help laughing at you, the way you talk. Sit down, Mitya, what are you talking about? Don't frighten us, please. You won't frighten us, will you? If you won't, I am glad to see you..."

"Me, me frighten you?" cried Mitya, flinging up his hands. "Oh, pass me by, go your way, I won't hinder you!..."

And suddenly he surprised them all, and no doubt himself as well, by flinging himself on a chair, and bursting into tears, turning his head away to the opposite wall, while his arms clasped the back of the chair tight, as though embracing it.

"Come, come, what a fellow you are!" cried Grushenka reproachfully. "That's just how he comes to see me — he begins talking, and I can't make out what he means. He cried like that once before, and now he's crying again! It's shamefull Why are you crying? As though you had anything to cry for!" she added enigmatically, emphasising each word with some irritability.

"I... I'm not crying.... Well, good evening!" He instantly turned round in his chair, and suddenly laughed, not his abrupt wooden laugh, but a long, quivering, inaudible nervous laugh.

"Well, there you are again.... Come, cheer up, cheer up!" Grushenka said to him persuasively. "I'm very glad you've come, very glad, Mitya, do you hear, I'm very glad! I want him to stay here with us," she said peremptorily, addressing the whole company, though her words were obviously meant for

the man sitting on the sofa. “I wish it, I wish it! And if he goes away I shall go, too!” she added with flashing eyes.

“What my queen commands is law!” pronounced the Pole, gallantly kissing Grushenka’s hand. “I beg you, panie, to join our company,” he added politely, addressing Mitya.

Mitya was jumping up with the obvious intention of delivering another tirade, but the words did not come.

“Let’s drink, Panie,” he blurted out instead of making a speech. Everyone laughed.

“Good heavens! I thought he was going to begin again!” Grushenka exclaimed nervously. “Do you hear, Mitya,” she went on insistently, “don’t prance about, but it’s nice you’ve brought the champagne. I want some myself, and I can’t bear liqueurs. And best of all, you’ve come yourself. We were fearfully dull here.... You’ve come for a spree again, I suppose? But put your money in your pocket. Where did you get such a lot?”

Mitya had been, all this time, holding in his hand the crumpled bundle of notes on which the eyes of all, especially of the Poles, were fixed. In confusion he thrust them hurriedly into his pocket. He flushed. At that moment the innkeeper brought in an uncorked bottle of champagne, and glasses on a tray. Mitya snatched up the bottle, but he was so bewildered that he did not know what to do with it. Kalgonov took it from him and poured out the champagne.

“Another! Another bottle!” Mitya cried to the inn-keeper, and, forgetting to clink glasses with the Pole whom he had so solemnly invited to drink to their good understanding, he drank off his glass without waiting for anyone else. His whole countenance suddenly changed. The solemn and tragic expression with which he had entered vanished completely, and a look of something childlike came into his face. He seemed to have become suddenly gentle and subdued. He looked shyly and happily at everyone, with a continual nervous little laugh, and the blissful expression of a dog who has done wrong, been punished, and forgiven. He seemed to have forgotten everything, and was looking round at everyone with a childlike smile of delight. He looked at Grushenka, laughing continually, and bringing his chair close up to her. By degrees he had gained some idea of the two Poles, though he had formed no definite conception of them yet.

The Pole on the sofa struck him by his dignified demeanour and his Polish accent; and, above all, by his pipe. “Well, what of it? It’s a good

thing he's smoking a pipe," he reflected. The Pole's puffy, middle-aged face, with its tiny nose and two very thin, pointed, dyed and impudent-looking moustaches, had not so far roused the faintest doubts in Mitya. He was not even particularly struck by the Pole's absurd wig made in Siberia, with love-locks foolishly combed forward over the temples. "I suppose it's all right since he wears a wig," he went on, musing blissfully. The other, younger Pole, who was staring insolently and defiantly at the company and listening to the conversation with silent contempt, still only impressed Mitya by his great height, which was in striking contrast to the Pole on the sofa. "If he stood up he'd be six foot three." The thought flitted through Mitya's mind. It occurred to him, too, that this Pole must be the friend of the other, as it were, a "bodyguard," and no doubt the big Pole was at the disposal of the little Pole with the pipe. But this all seemed to Mitya perfectly right and not to be questioned. In his mood of doglike submissiveness all feeling of rivalry had died away.

Grushenka's mood and the enigmatic tone of some of her words he completely failed to grasp. All he understood, with thrilling heart, was that she was kind to him, that she had forgiven him, and made him sit by her. He was beside himself with delight, watching her sip her glass of champagne. The silence of the company seemed somehow to strike him, however, and he looked round at everyone with expectant eyes.

"Why are we sitting here though, gentlemen? Why don't you begin doing something?" his smiling eyes seemed to ask.

"He keeps talking nonsense, and we were all laughing," Kalgonov began suddenly, as though divining his thought, and pointing to Maximov.

Mitya immediately stared at Kalgonov and then at Maximov

"He's talking nonsense?" he laughed, his short, wooden laugh, seeming suddenly delighted at something— "ha ha!"

"Yes. Would you believe it, he will have it that all our cavalry officers in the twenties married Polish women. That's awful rot, isn't it?"

"Polish women?" repeated Mitya, perfectly ecstatic.

Kalgonov was well aware of Mitya's attitude to Grushenka, and he guessed about the Pole, too, but that did not so much interest him, perhaps did not interest him at all; what he was interested in was Maximov. He had come here with Maximov by chance, and he met the Poles here at the inn for the first time in his life. Grushenka he knew before, and had once been with someone to see her; but she had not taken to him. But here she looked

at him very affectionately: before Mitya's arrival, she had been making much of him, but he seemed somehow to be unmoved by it. He was a boy, not over twenty, dressed like a dandy, with a very charming fair-skinned face, and splendid thick, fair hair. From his fair face looked out beautiful pale blue eyes, with an intelligent and sometimes even deep expression, beyond his age indeed, although the young man sometimes looked and talked quite like a child, and was not at all ashamed of it, even when he was aware of it himself. As a rule he was very wilful, even capricious, though always friendly. Sometimes there was something fixed and obstinate in his expression. He would look at you and listen, seeming all the while to be persistently dreaming over something else. Often he was listless and lazy; at other times he would grow excited, sometimes, apparently, over the most trivial matters.

"Only imagine, I've been taking him about with me for the last four days," he went on, indolently drawling his words, quite naturally though, without the slightest affectation. "Ever since your brother, do you remember, shoved him off the carriage and sent him flying. That made me take an interest in him at the time, and I took him into the country, but he keeps talking such rot I'm ashamed to be with him. I'm taking him back."

"The gentleman has not seen Polish ladies, and says what is impossible," the Pole with the pipe observed to Maximov.

He spoke Russian fairly well, much better, anyway, than he pretended. If he used Russian words, he always distorted them into a Polish form.

"But I was married to a Polish lady myself," tittered Maximov.

"But did you serve in the cavalry? You were talking about the cavalry. Were you a cavalry officer?" put in Kalgonov at once.

"Was he a cavalry officer indeed? Ha ha!" cried Mitya, listening eagerly, and turning his inquiring eyes to each as he spoke, as though there were no knowing what he might hear from each.

"No, you see," Maximov turned to him. "What I mean is that those pretty Polish ladies ... when they danced the mazurka with our Uhlans... when one of them dances a mazurka with a Uhlan she jumps on his knee like a kitten... a little white one... and the pan-father and pan-mother look on and allow it... They allow it... and next day the Uhlan comes and offers her his hand.... That's how it is... offers her his hand, he he!" Maximov ended, tittering.

“The pan is a lajdak!”* the tall Pole on the chair growled suddenly and crossed one leg over the other. Mitya’s eye was caught by his huge greased boot, with its thick, dirty sole. The dress of both the Poles looked rather greasy.

* Scoundrel.

“Well, now it’s lajdak! What’s he scolding about?” said Grushenka, suddenly vexed.

“Pani Agrippina, what the gentleman saw in Poland were servant girls, and not ladies of good birth,” the Pole with the pipe observed to Grushenka.

“You can reckon on that,” the tall Pole snapped contemptuously.

“What next! Let him talk! People talk, why hinder them? It makes it cheerful,” Grushenka said crossly.

“I’m not hindering them, pani,” said the Pole in the wig, with a long look at Grushenka, and relapsing into dignified silence he sucked his pipe again.

“No, no. The Polish gentleman spoke the truth.” Kalgonov got excited again, as though it were a question of vast import. “He’s never been in Poland, so how can he talk about it? I suppose you weren’t married in Poland, were you?”

“No, in the Province of Smolensk. Only, a Uhlan had brought her to Russia before that, my future wife, with her mamma and her aunt, and another female relation with a grown-up son. He brought her straight from Poland and gave her up to me. He was a lieutenant in our regiment, a very nice young man. At first he meant to marry her himself. But he didn’t marry her, because she turned out to be lame.”

“So you married a lame woman?” cried Kalganov.

“Yes. They both deceived me a little bit at the time, and concealed it. I thought she was hopping; she kept hopping.... I thought it was for fun.”

“So pleased she was going to marry you!” yelled Kalganov, in a ringing, childish voice.

“Yes, so pleased. But it turned out to be quite a different cause. Afterwards, when we were married, after the wedding, that very evening, she confessed, and very touchingly asked forgiveness. ‘I once jumped over a puddle when I was a child,’ she said, ‘and injured my leg.’ He he!”

Kalgonov went off into the most childish laughter, almost falling on the sofa. Grushenka, too, laughed. Mitya was at the pinnacle of happiness.

“Do you know, that’s the truth, he’s not lying now,” exclaimed Kalganov, turning to Mitya; “and do you know, he’s been married twice; it’s his first

wife he’s talking about. But his second wife, do you know, ran away, and is alive now.”

“Is it possible?” said Mitya, turning quickly to Maximov with an expression of the utmost astonishment.

“Yes. She did run away. I’ve had that unpleasant experience,” Maximov modestly assented, “with a monsieur. And what was worse, she’d had all my little property transferred to her beforehand. ‘You’re an educated man,’ she said to me. ‘You can always get your living.’ She settled my business with that. A venerable bishop once said to me: ‘One of your wives was lame, but the other was too light-footed.’ He he!

“Listen, listen!” cried Kalganov, bubbling over, “if he’s telling lies — and he often is — he’s only doing it to amuse us all. There’s no harm in that, is there? You know, I sometimes like him. He’s awfully low, but it’s natural to him, eh? Don’t you think so? Some people are low from self-interest, but he’s simply so, from nature. Only fancy, he claims (he was arguing about it all the way yesterday) that Gogol wrote Dead Souls about him. Do you remember, there’s a landowner called Maximov in it, whom Nozdryov thrashed. He was charged, do you remember, ‘for inflicting bodily injury with rods on the landowner Maximov in a drunken condition.’ Would you believe it, he claims that he was that Maximov and that he was beaten! Now can it be so? Tchitchikov made his journey, at the very latest, at the beginning of the twenties, so that the dates don’t fit. He couldn’t have been thrashed then, he couldn’t, could he?”

It was diffcult to imagine what Kalgonov was excited about, but his excitement was genuine. Mitya followed his lead without protest.

“Well, but if they did thrash him!” he cried, laughing.

“It’s not that they thrashed me exactly, but what I mean is—” put in Maximov.

“What do you mean? Either they thrashed you or they didn’t.”

“What o’clock is it, panie?” the Pole, with the pipe, asked his tall friend, with a bored expression. The other shrugged his shoulders in reply. Neither of them had a watch.

“Why not talk? Let other people talk. Mustn’t other people talk because you’re bored?” Grushenka flew at him with evident intention of finding fault. Something seemed for the first time to flash upon Mitya’s mind. This time the Pole answered with unmistakable irritability.

“Pani, I didn’t oppose it. I didn’t say anything.”

“All right then. Come, tell us your story,” Grushenka cried to Maximov. “Why are you all silent?”

“There’s nothing to tell, it’s all so foolish,” answered Maximov at once, with evident satisfaction, mincing a little. “Besides, all that’s by way of allegory in Gogol, for he’s made all the names have a meaning. Nozdryov was really called Nosov, and Kuvshinikov had quite a different name, he was called Shkvornev. Fenardi really was called Fenardi, only he wasn’t an Italian but a Russian, and Mamsel Fenardi was a pretty girl with her pretty little legs in tights, and she had a little short skirt with spangles, and she kept turning round and round, only not for four hours but for four minutes only, and she bewitched everyone...”

“But what were you beaten for?” cried Kalganov.

“For Piron!” answered Maximov.

“What Piron?” cried Mitya.

“The famous French writer, Piron. We were all drinking then, a big party of us, in a tavern at that very fair. They’d invited me, and first of all I began quoting epigrams. ‘Is that you, Boileau? What a funny get-up!’ and Boileau answers that he’s going to a masquerade, that is to the baths, he he! And they took it to themselves, so I made haste to repeat another, very sarcastic, well known to all educated people: Yes, Sappho and Phaon are we! But one grief is weighing on me.

You don’t know your way to the sea!

“They were still more offended and began abusing me in the most unseemly way for it. And as ill-luck would have it, to set things right, I began telling a very cultivated anecdote about Piron, how he was not accepted into the French Academy, and to revenge himself wrote his own epitaph: Ci-git Piron qui ne fut rien, Pas meme academicien,*

* Here lies Piron, who was nothing, not even an Academician.

They seized me and thrashed me.”

“But what for? What for?”

“For my education. People can thrash a man for anything,” Maximov concluded, briefly and sententiously.

“Eh, that’s enough! That’s all stupid, I don’t want to listen. I thought it would be amusing,” Grushenka cut them short, suddenly.

Mitya started, and at once left off laughing. The tall Pole rose upon his feet, and with the haughty air of a man, bored and out of his element, began pacing from corner to corner of the room, his hands behind his back.

“Ah, he can’t sit still,” said Grushenka, looking at him contemptuously. Mitya began to feel anxious. He noticed besides, that the Pole on the sofa was looking at him with an irritable expression.

“Panie!” cried Mitya, “Let’s drink! and the other pan, too! Let us drink.”

In a flash he had pulled three glasses towards him, and filled them with champagne.

“To Poland, Panovie, I drink to your Poland!” cried Mitya.

“I shall be delighted, panie,” said the Pole on the sofa, with dignity and affable condescension, and he took his glass.

“And the other pan, what’s his name? Drink, most illustrious, take your glass!” Mitya urged.

“Pan Vrublevsky,” put in the Pole on the sofa.

Pan Vrublevsky came up to the table, swaying as he walked.

“To Poland, Panovie!” cried Mitya, raisin, his glass. “Hurrah!”

All three drank. Mitya seized the bottle and again poured out three glasses.

“Now to Russia, Panovie, and let us be brothers!”

“Pour out some for us,” said Grushenka; “I’ll drink to Russia, too!”

“So will I,” said Kalganov.

“And I would, too... to Russia, the old grandmother!” tittered Maximov.

“All! All!” cried Mitya. “Trifon Borissovitch, some more bottles!”

The other three bottles Mitya had brought with him were put on the table. Mitya filled the glasses.

“To Russia! Hurrah!” he shouted again. All drank the toast except the Poles, and Grushenka tossed off her whole glass at once. The Poles did not touch theirs.

“How’s this, Panovie?” cried Mitya, “won’t you drink it?”

Pan Vrublevsky took the glass, raised it and said with a resonant voice:

“To Russia as she was before 1772.”

“Come, that’s better!” cried the other Pole, and they both emptied their glasses at once.

“You’re fools, you Panovie,” broke suddenly from Mitya.

“Panie!” shouted both the Poles, menacingly, setting on Mitya like a couple of cocks. Pan Vrublevsky was specially furious.

“Can one help loving one’s own country?” he shouted.

“Be silent! Don’t quarrel! I won’t have any quarrelling!” cried Grushenka imperiously, and she stamped her foot on the floor. Her face

glowed, her eyes were shining. The effects of the glass she had just drunk were apparent. Mitya was terribly alarmed.

“Panovie, forgive me! It was my fault, I’m sorry. Vrublevsky, panie Vrublevsky, I’m sorry.”

“Hold your tongue, you, anyway! Sit down, you stupid!”. Grushenka scolded with angry annoyance.

Everyone sat down, all were silent, looking at one another.

“Gentlemen, I was the cause of it all,” Mitya began again, unable to make anything of Grushenka’s words. “Come, why are we sitting here? What shall we do... to amuse ourselves again?”

“Ach, it’s certainly anything but amusing!” Kalgonov mumbled lazily.

“Let’s play faro again, as we did just now,” Maximov tittered suddenly.

“Faro? Splendid!” cried Mitya. “If only the panovie-”

“It’s lite, panovie,” the Pole on the sofa responded, as it were unwillingly.

“That’s true,” assented Pan Vrublevsky.

“Lite? What do you mean by ‘lite’?” asked Grushenka.

“Late, pani! ‘A late hour’ I mean,” the Pole on the sofa explained.

“It’s always late with them. They can never do anything!” Grushenka almost shrieked in her anger. “They’re dull themselves, so they want others to be dull. Before came, Mitya, they were just as silent and kept turning up their noses at me.”

“My goddess!” cried the Pole on the sofa, “I see you’re not well-disposed to me, that’s why I’m gloomy. I’m ready, panie,” added he, addressing Mitya.

“Begin, panie,” Mitya assented, pulling his notes out of his pocket, and laying two hundred-rouble notes on the table. “I want to lose a lot to you. Take your cards. Make the bank.”

“We’ll have cards from the landlord, panie,” said the little Pole, gravely and emphatically.

“That’s much the best way,” chimed in Pan Vrublevsky.

“From the landlord? Very good, I understand, let’s get them from him. Cards!” Mitya shouted to the landlord.

The landlord brought in a new, unopened pack, and informed Mitya that the girls were getting ready, and that the Jews with the cymbals would most likely be here soon; but the cart with the provisions had not yet arrived. Mitya jumped up from the table and ran into the next room to give orders,

but only three girls had arrived, and Marya was not there yet. And he did not know himself what orders to give and why he had run out. He only told them to take out of the box the presents for the girls, the sweets, the toffee and the fondants. “And vodka for Andrey, vodka for Andrey!” he cried in haste. “I was rude to Andrey!”

Suddenly Maximov, who had followed him out, touched him on the shoulder.

“Give me five roubles,” he whispered to Mitya. “I’ll stake something at faro, too, he he!”

“Capital! Splendid! Take ten, here!”

Again he took all the notes out of his pocket and picked out one for ten roubles. “And if you lose that, come again, come again.”

“Very good,” Maximov whispered joyfully, and he ran back again. Mitya, too, returned, apologising for having kept them waiting. The Poles had already sat down, and opened the pack. They looked much more amiable, almost cordial. The Pole on the sofa had lighted another pipe and was preparing to throw. He wore an air of solemnity.

“To your places, gentlemen,” cried Pan Vrublevsky.

“No, I’m not going to play any more,” observed Kalganov, “I’ve lost fifty roubles to them just now.”

“The pan had no luck, perhaps he’ll be lucky this time,” the Pole on the sofa observed in his direction.

“How much in the bank? To correspond?” asked Mitya.

“That’s according, panie, maybe a hundred, maybe two hundred, as much as you will stake.”

“A million!” laughed Mitya.

“The Pan Captain has heard of Pan Podvysotsky, perhaps?”

“What Podvysotsky?”

“In Warsaw there was a bank and anyone comes and stakes against it. Podvysotsky comes, sees a thousand gold pieces, stakes against the bank. The banker says, ‘Panie Podvysotsky, are you laying down the gold, or must we trust to your honour?”To my honour, panie,’ says Podvysotsky. ‘So much the better.’ The banker throws the dice. Podvysotsky wins. ‘Take it, panie,’ says the banker, and pulling out the drawer he gives him a million. ‘Take it, panie, this is your gain.’ There was a million in the bank. ‘I didn’t know that,’ says Podvysotsky. ‘Panie Podvysotsky,’ said the banker, ‘you pledged your honour and we pledged ours.’ Podvysotsky took the million.”

“That’s not true,” said Kalganov.

“Panie Kalganov, in gentlemanly society one doesn’t say such things.”

“As if a Polish gambler would give away a million!” cried Mitya, but checked himself at once. “Forgive me, panie, it’s my fault again; he would, he would give away a million, for honour, for Polish honour. You see how I talk Polish, ha ha! Here, I stake ten roubles, the knave leads.”

“And I put a rouble on the queen, the queen of hearts, the pretty little panienotchka* he! he!” laughed Maximov, pulling out his queen, and, as though trying to conceal it from everyone, he moved right up and crossed himself hurriedly under the table. Mitya won. The rouble won, too.

* Little miss.

“A corner!” cried Mitya.

“I’ll bet another rouble, a ‘single’ stake,” Maximov muttered gleefully, hugely delighted at having won a rouble.

“Lost!” shouted Mitya. “A ‘double’ on the seven!”

The seven too was trumped.

“Stop!” cried Kalganov suddenly.

“Double! Double!” Mitya doubled his stakes, and each time he doubled the stake, the card he doubled was trumped by the Poles. The rouble stakes kept winning.

“On the double!” shouted Mitya furiously.

“You’ve lost two hundred, panie. Will you stake another hundred?” the Pole on the sofa inquired.

“What? Lost two hundred already? Then another two hundred! All doubles!” And pulling his money out of his pocket, Mitya was about to fling two hundred roubles on the queen, but Kalgonov covered it with his hand.

“That’s enough!” he shouted in his ringing voice.

“What’s the matter?” Mitya stared at him.

“That’s enough! I don’t want you to play anymore. Don’t!”

“Why?”

“Because I don’t. Hang it, come away. That’s why. I won’t let you go on playing.”

Mitya gazed at him in astonishment.

“Give it up, Mitya. He may be right. You’ve lost a lot as it is,” said Grushenka, with a curious note in her voice. Both the Poles rose from their seats with a deeply offended air.

“Are you joking, panie?” said the short man, looking severely at Kalganov.

“How dare you!” Pan Vrublevsky, too, growled at Kalganov.

“Don’t dare to shout like that,” cried Grushenka. “Ah, you turkey-cocks!”

Mitya looked at each of them in turn. But something in Grushenka’s face suddenly struck him, and at the same instant something new flashed into his mind — a strange new thought!

“Pani Agrippina,” the little Pole was beginning, crimson with anger, when Mitya suddenly went up to him and slapped him on the shoulder.

“Most illustrious, two words with you.”cried Grushenka.

“What do you want?”

“In the next room, I’ve two words to say to you, something pleasant, very pleasant. You’ll be glad to hear it.”

The little pan was taken aback and looked apprehensively at Mitya. He agreed at once, however, on condition that Pan Vrublevsky went with them.

“The bodyguard? Let him come, and I want him, too. I must have him!” cried Mitya. “March, panovie!”

“Where are you going?” asked Grushenka, anxiously.

“We’ll be back in one moment,” answered Mitya.

There was a sort of boldness, a sudden confidence shining in his eyes. His face had looked very different when he entered the room an hour before.

He led the Poles, not into the large room where the chorus of girls was assembling and the table was being laid, but into the bedroom on the right, where the trunks and packages were kept, and there were two large beds, with pyramids of cotton pillows on each. There was a lighted candle on a small deal table in the corner. The small man and Mitya sat down to this table, facing each other, while the huge Vrublevsky stood beside them, his hands behind his back. The Poles looked severe but were evidently inquisitive.

“What can I do for you, panie?” lisped the little Pole.

“Well, look here, panie, I won’t keep you long. There’s money for you,” he pulled out his notes. “Would you like three thousand? Take it and go your way.”

The Pole gazed open-eyed at Mitya, with a searching look.

“Three thousand, panie?” He exchanged glances with Vrublevsky.

“Three, panovie, three! Listen, panie, I see you’re a sensible man. Take three thousand and go to the devil, and Vrublevsky with you d’you hear? But, at once, this very minute, and for ever. You understand that, panie, for ever. Here’s the door, you go out of it. What have you got there, a great-coat, a fur coat? I’ll bring it out to you. They’ll get the horses out directly, and then-good-bye, panie!”

Mitya awaited an answer with assurance. He had no doubts. An expression of extraordinary resolution passed over the Pole’s face.

“And the money, panie?”

“The money, panie? Five hundred roubles I’ll give you this moment for the journey, and as a first instalment, and two thousand five hundred to-morrow, in the town — I swear on my honour, I’ll get it, I’ll get it at any cost!” cried Mitya.

The Poles exchanged glances again. The short man’s face looked more forbidding.

“Seven hundred, seven hundred, not five hundred, at once, this minute, cash down!” Mitya added, feeling something wrong. “What’s the matter, panie? Don’t you trust me? I can’t give you the whole three thousand straight off. If I give it, you may come back to her to-morrow.... Besides, I haven’t the three thousand with me. I’ve got it at home in the town,” faltered Mitya, his spirit sinking at every word he uttered. “Upon my word, the money’s there, hidden.”

In an instant an extraordinary sense of personal dignity showed itself in the little man’s face.

“What next?” he asked ironically. “For shame!” and he spat on the floor. Pan Vrublevsky spat too.

“You do that, panie,” said Mitya, recognising with despair that all was over, “because you hope to make more out of Grushenka? You’re a couple of capons, that’s what you are!”

“This is a mortal insult!” The little Pole turned as red as a crab, and he went out of the room, briskly, as though unwilling to hear another word. Vrublevsky swung out after him, and Mitya followed, confused and crestfallen. He was afraid of Grushenka, afraid that the Pan would at once raise an outcry. And so indeed he did. The Pole walked into the room and threw himself in a theatrical attitude before Grushenka.

“Pani Agrippina, I have received a mortal insult!” he exclaimed. But Grushenka suddenly lost all patience, as though they had wounded her in

the tenderest spot.

“Speak Russian! Speak Russian!” she cried, “not another word of Polish! You used to talk Russian. You can’t have forgotten it in five years.”

She was red with passion.

“Pani Agrippina-”

“My name’s Agrafena, Grushenka, speak Russian or I won’t listen!”

The Pole gasped with offended dignity, and quickly and pompously delivered himself in broken Russian:

“Pani Agrafena, I came here to forget the past and forgive it, to forget all that has happened till to-day-”

“Forgive? Came here to forgive me?” Grushenka cut him short, jumping up from her seat.

“Just so, Pani, I’m not pusillanimous, I’m magnanimous. But I was astounded when I saw your lovers. Pan Mitya offered me three thousand, in the other room to depart. I spat in the pan’s face.”

“What? He offered you money for me?” cried Grushenka, hysterically. “Is it true, Mitya? How dare you? Am I for sale?”

“Panie, panie!” yelled Mitya, “she’s pure and shining, and I have never been her lover! That’s a lie...”

“How dare you defend me to him?” shrieked Grushenka. “It wasn’t virtue kept me pure, and it wasn’t that I was afraid of Kuzma, but that I might hold up my head when I met him, and tell him he’s a scoundrel. And he did actually refuse the money?”

“He took it! He took it!” cried Mitya; “only he wanted to get the whole three thousand at once, and I could only give him seven hundred straight off.”

“I see: he heard I had money, and came here to marry me!”

“Pani Agrippina!” cried the little Pole. “I’m — a knight, I’m — a nobleman, and not a lajdak. I came here to make you my wife and I find you a different woman, perverse and shameless.”

“Oh, go back where you came from! I’ll tell them to turn you out and you’ll be turned out,” cried Grushenka, furious. “I’ve been a fool, a fool, to have been miserable these five years! And it wasn’t for his sake, it was my anger made me miserable. And this isn’t he at all! Was he like this? It might be his father! Where did you get your wig from? He was a falcon, but this is a gander. He used to laugh and sing to me.... And I’ve been crying for five years, damned fool, abject, shameless I was!

She sank back in her low chair and hid her face in her hands. At that instant the chorus of Mokroe began singing in the room on the left — a rollicking dance song.

“A regular Sodom!” Vrublevsky roared suddenly. “Landlord, send the shameless hussies away!”

The landlord, who had been for some time past inquisitively peeping in at the door, hearing shouts and guessing that his guests were quarrelling, at once entered the room.

“What are you shouting for? D’you want to split your throat?” he said, addressing Vrublevsky, with surprising rudeness.

“Animal!” bellowed Pan Vrublevsky.

“Animal? And what sort of cards were you playing with just now? I gave you a pack and you hid it. You played with marked cards! I could send you to Siberia for playing with false cards, d’you know that, for it’s just the same as false banknotes...

And going up to the sofa he thrust his fingers between the sofa back and the cushion, and pulled out an unopened pack of cards.

“Here’s my pack unopened!”

He held it up and showed it to all in the room. “From where I stood I saw him slip my pack away, and put his in place of it — you’re a cheat and not a gentleman!”

“And I twice saw the pan change a card!” cried Kalganov.

“How shameful! How shameful!” exclaimed Grushenka, clasping her hands, and blushing for genuine shame. “Good Lord, he’s come to that!”

“I thought so, too!” said Mitya. But before he had uttered the words, Vrublevsky, with a confused and infuriated face, shook his fist at Grushenka, shouting:

“You low harlot!”

Mitya flew at him at once, clutched him in both hands, lifted him in the air, and in one instant had carried him into the room on the right, from which they had just come.

“I’ve laid him on the floor, there,” he announced, returning at once, gasping with excitement. “He’s struggling, the scoundrel! But he won’t come back, no fear of that!...”

He closed one half of the folding doors, and holding the other ajar called out to the little Pole:

“Most illustrious, will you please to retire as well?”

“My dear Dmitri Fyodorovitch,” said Trifon Borissovitch, “make them give you back the money you lost. It’s as good as stolen from you.”

“I don’t want my fifty roubles back,” Kalgonov declared suddenly.

“I don’t want my two hundred, either,” cried Mitya, “I wouldn’t take it for anything! Let him keep it as a consolation.”

“Bravo, Mitya! You’re a trump, Mitya!” cried Grushenka, and there was a note of fierce anger in the exclamation.

The little pan, crimson with fury but still mindful of his dignity, was making for the door, but he stopped short and said suddenly, addressing Grushenka:

“Pani, if you want to come with me, come. If not, good-bye.”

And swelling with indignation and importance he went to the door. This was a man of character: he had so good an opinion of himself that after all that had passed, he still expected that she would marry him. Mitya slammed the door after him.

“Lock it,” said Kalganov. But the key clicked on the other side, they had locked it from within.

“That’s capital!” exclaimed Grushenka relentlessly. “Serve them right!”

CHAPTER 8

Delirium

WHAT followed was almost an orgy, a feast to which all were welcome. Grushenka was the first to call for wine.

“I want to drink. I want to be quite drunk, as we were before. Do you remember, Mitya, do you remember how we made friends here last time!”

Mitya himself was almost delirious, feeling that his happiness was at hand. But Grushenka was continually sending him away from her.

“Go and enjoy yourself. Tell them to dance, to make merry, ‘let the stove and cottage dance’; as we had it last time,” she kept exclaiming. She was tremendously excited. And Mitya hastened to obey her. The chorus were in the next room. The room in which they had been sitting till that moment was too small, and was divided in two by cotton curtains, behind which was a huge bed with a puffy feather mattress and a pyramid of cotton pillows. In the four rooms for visitors there were beds. Grushenka settled herself just at the door. Mitya set an easy chair for her. She had sat in the same place to watch the dancing and singing “the time before,” when they had made merry there. All the girls who had come had been there then; the Jewish band with fiddles and zithers had come, too, and at last the long expected cart had arrived with the wines and provisions.

Mitya bustled about. All sorts of people began coming into the room to look on, peasants and their women, who had been roused from sleep and attracted by the hopes of another marvellous entertainment such as they had enjoyed a month before. Mitya remembered their faces, greeting and embracing everyone he knew. He uncorked bottles and poured out wine for everyone who presented himself. Only the girls were very eager for the champagne. The men preferred rum, brandy, and, above all, hot punch. Mitya had chocolate made for all the girls, and ordered that three samovars should be kept boiling all night to provide tea and punch for everyone to help himself.

An absurd chaotic confusion followed, but Mitya was in his natural element, and the more foolish it became, the more his spirits rose. If the peasants had asked him for money at that moment, he would have pulled out his notes and given them away right and left. This was probably why

the landlord, Trifon Borissovitch, kept hovering about Mitya to protect him. He seemed to have given up all idea of going to bed that night; but he drank little, only one glass of punch, and kept a sharp look-out on Mitya's interests after his own fashion. He intervened in the nick of time, civilly and obsequiously persuading Mitya not to give away "cigars and Rhine wine," and, above all, money to the peasants as he had done before. He was very indignant, too, at the peasant girls drinking liqueur, and eating sweets.

"They're a lousy lot, Dmitri Fyodorovitch," he said. "I'd give them a kick, every one of them, and they'd take it as an honour — that's all they're worth!"

Mitya remembered Andrey again, and ordered punch to be sent out to him. "I was rude to him just now," he repeated with a sinking, softened voice. Kalgonov did to drink, and at first did not care for the girls singing; but after he had drunk a couple of glasses of champagne he became extraordinarily lively, strolling about the room, laughing and praising the music and the songs, admiring everyone and everything. Maximov, blissfully drunk, never left his side. Grushenka, too, was beginning to get drunk. Pointing to Kalganov, she said to Mitya:

"What a dear, charming boy he is!"

And Mitya, delighted, ran to kiss Kalgonov and Maximov. Oh, great were his hopes! She had said nothing yet, and seemed, indeed, purposely to refrain from speaking. But she looked at him from time to time with caressing and passionate eyes. At last she suddenly gripped his hand and drew him vigorously to her. She was sitting at the moment in the low chair by the door.

"How was it you came just now, eh? Have you walked in!... I was frightened. So you wanted to give me up to him, did you? Did you really want to?"

"I didn't want to spoil your happiness!" Mitya faltered blissfully. But she did not need his answer.

"Well, go and enjoy yourself..," she sent him away once more. "Don't cry, I'll call you back again."

He would run away and she listened to the singing and looked at the dancing, though her eyes followed him wherever he went. But in another quarter of an hour she would call him once more and again he would run back to her.

“Come, sit beside me, tell me, how did you hear about me, and my coming here yesterday? From whom did you first hear it?”

And Mitya began telling her all about it, disconnectedly, incoherently, feverishly. He spoke strangely, often frowning, and stopping abruptly.

“What are you frowning at?” she asked.

“Nothing.... I left a man ill there. I’d give ten years of my life for him to get well, to know he was all right!”

“Well, never mind him, if he’s ill. So you meant to shoot yourself to-morrow! What a silly boy! What for? I like such reckless fellows as you,” she lisped, with a rather halting tongue. “So you would go any length for me, eh? Did you really mean to shoot yourself to-morrow, you stupid? No, wait a little. To-morrow I may have something to say to you.... I won’t say it to-day, but to-morrow. You’d like it to be to-day? No, I don’t want to to-day. Come, go along now, go and amuse yourself.”

Once, however, she called him, as it were, puzzled and uneasy.

“Why are you sad? I see you’re sad.... Yes, I see it,” she added, looking intently into his eyes. “Though you keep kissing the peasants and shouting, I see something. No, be merry. I’m merry; you be merry, too.... I love somebody here. Guess who it is. Ah, look, my boy has fallen asleep, poor dear, he’s drunk.”

She meant Kalganov. He was, in fact, drunk, and had dropped asleep for a moment, sitting on the sofa. But he was not merely drowsy from drink; he felt suddenly dejected, or, as he said, “bored.” He was intensely depressed by the girls’ songs, which, as the drinking went on, gradually became coarse and more reckless. And the dances were as bad. Two girls dressed up as bears, and a lively girl, called Stepanida, with a stick in her hand, acted the part of keeper, and began to “show them.”

“Look alive, Marya, or you’ll get the stick!

The bears rolled on the ground at last in the most unseemly fashion, amid roars of laughter from the closely-packed crowd of men and women.

“Well, let them! Let them!” said Grushenka sententiously, with an ecstatic expression on her face. “When they do get a day to enjoy themselves; why shouldn’t folks be happy?”

Kalgonov looked as though he had been besmirched with dirt.

“It’s swinish, all this peasant foolery,” he murmured, moving away; “it’s the game they play when it’s light all night in summer.”

He particularly disliked one “new” song to a jaunty dance-tune. It described how a gentleman came and tried his luck with the girls, to see whether they would love him: The master came to try the girls: Would they love him, would they not?

But the girls could not love the master: He would beat me cruelly And such love won’t do for me.

Then a gypsy comes along and he, too, tries: The gypsy came to try the girls: Would they love him, would they not?

But they couldn’t love the gypsy either: He would be a thief, I fear, And would cause me many a tear.

And many more men come to try their luck, among them a soldier: The soldier came to try the girls: Would they love him, would they not?

But the soldier is rejected with contempt, in two indecent lines, sung with absolute frankness and producing a furore in the audience. The song ends with a merchant: The merchant came to try the girls: Would they love him, would they not?

And it appears that he wins their love because: The merchant will make gold for me And his queen I’ll gladly be.

Kalgonov was positively indignant.

“That’s just a song of yesterday,” he said aloud. “Who writes such things for them? They might just as well have had a railwayman or a Jew come to try his luck with the girls; they’d have carried all before them.”

And, almost as though it were a personal affront, he declared, on the spot, that he was bored, sat down on the sofa and immediately fell asleep. His pretty little face looked rather pale, as it fell back on the sofa cushion.

“Look how pretty he is,” said Grushenka, taking Mitya up to him. “I was combing his hair just now; his hair’s like flax, and so thick...”

And, bending over him tenderly, she kissed his forehead. Kalgonov instantly opened his eyes, looked at her, stood up, and with the most anxious air inquired where was Maximov?

“So that’s who it is you want.” Grushenka laughed. “Stay with me a minute. Mitya, run and find his Maximov.”

Maximov, it appeared, could not tear himself away from the girls, only running away from time to time to pour himself out a glass of liqueur. He had drunk two cups of chocolate. His face was red, and his nose was crimson; his eyes were moist, and mawkishly sweet.He ran up and announced that he was going to dance the “sabotiere.”

“They taught me all those well-bred, aristocratic dances when I was little...”

“Go, go with him, Mitya, and I’ll watch from here how he dances,” said Grushenka.

“No, no, I’m coming to look on, too,” exclaimed Kalganov, brushing aside in the most naive way Grushenka’s offer to sit with him. They all went to look on. Maximov danced his dance. But it roused no great admiration in anyone but Mitya. It consisted of nothing but skipping and hopping, kicking the feet, and at every skip Maximov slapped the upturned sole of his foot. Kalgonov did not like it at all, but Mitya kissed the dancer.

“Thanks. You’re tired perhaps? What are you looking for here? Would you like some sweets? A cigar, perhaps?”

“A cigarette.”

“Don’t you want a drink?”

“I’ll just have a liqueur.... Have you any chocolates?”

“Yes, there’s a heap of them on the table there. Choose one, my dear soul!”

“I like one with vanilla... for old people. He he!

“No, brother, we’ve none of that special sort.”

“I say,” the old man bent down to whisper in Mitya’s ear. “That girl there, little Marya, he he! How would it be if you were to help me make friends with her?”

“So that’s what you’re after! No, brother, that won’t do!”

“I’d do no harm to anyone,” Maximov muttered disconsolately.

“Oh, all right, all right. They only come here to dance and sing, you know, brother. But damn it all, wait a bit!... Eat and drink and be merry, meanwhile. Don’t you want money?”

“Later on, perhaps,” smiled Maximov.

“All right, all right...”

Mitya’s head was burning. He went outside to the wooden balcony which ran round the whole building on the inner side, overlooking the courtyard. The fresh air revived him. He stood alone in a dark corner, and suddenly clutched his head in both hands. His scattered thoughts came together; his sensations blended into a whole and threw a sudden light into his mind. A fearful and terrible light! “If I’m to shoot myself, why not now?” passed through his mind. “Why not go for the pistols, bring them here, and here, in this dark dirty corner, make an end?” Almost a minute he

undecided. A few hours earlier, when he had been dashing here, he was pursued by disgrace, by the theft he had committed, and that blood, that blood!... But yet it was easier for him then. Then everything was over: he had lost her, given her up. She was gone, for him — oh, then his death sentence had been easier for him; at least it had seemed necessary, inevitable, for what had he to stay on earth for?

But now? Was it the same as then? Now one phantom, one terror at least was at an end: that first, rightful lover, that fateful figure had vanished, leaving no trace. The terrible phantom had turned into something so small, so comic; it had been carried into the bedroom and locked in. It would never return. She was ashamed, and from her eyes he could see now whom she loved. Now he had everything to make life happy... but he could not go on living, he could not; oh, damnation! “O God! restore to life the man I knocked down at the fence! Let this fearful cup pass from me! Lord, thou hast wrought miracles for such sinners as me! But what, what if the old man’s alive? Oh, then the shame of the other disgrace I would wipe away. I would restore the stolen money. I’d give it back; I’d get it somehow.... No trace of that shame will remain except in my heart for ever! But no, no; oh, impossible cowardly dreams! Oh, damnation!”

Yet there was a ray of light and hope in his darkness. He jumped up and ran back to the room — to her, to her, his queen for ever! Was not one moment of her love worth all the rest of life, even in the agonies of disgrace? This wild question clutched at his heart. “To her, to her alone, to see her, to hear her, to think of nothing, to forget everything, if only for that night, for an hour, for a moment!” Just as he turned from the balcony into the passage, he came upon the landlord, Trifon Borissovitch. He thought he looked gloomy and worried, and fancied he had come to find him.

“What is it, Trifon Borissovitch? Are you looking for me?”

“No, sir,” The landlord seemed disconcerted. “Why should I be looking for you? Where have you been?”

“Why do you look so glum? You’re not angry, are you? Wait a bit, you shall soon get to bed.... What’s the time?”

“It’ll be three o’clock. Past three, it must be.”

“We’ll leave off soon. We’ll leave off.”

“Don’t mention it; it doesn’t matter. Keep it up as long as you like...”

“What’s the matter with him?” Mitya wondered for an instant, and he ran back to the room where the girls were dancing. But she was not there. She

was not in the blue room either; there was no one but Kalgonov asleep on the sofa. Mitya peeped behind the curtain — she was there. She was sitting in the corner, on a trunk. Bent forward, with her head and arms on the bed close by, she was crying bitterly, doing her utmost to stifle her sobs that she might not be heard. Seeing Mitya, she beckoned him to her, and when he ran to her, she grasped his hand tightly.

“Mitya, Mitya, I loved him, you know. How I have loved him these five years, all that time! Did I love him or only my own anger? No, him, him! It’s a lie that it was my anger I loved and not him. Mitya, I was only seventeen then; he was so kind to me, so merry; he used to sing to me.... Or so it seemed to a silly girl like me.... And now, O Lord, it’s not the same man. Even his face is not the same; he’s different altogether. I shouldn’t have known him. I drove here with Timofey, and all the way I was thinking how I should meet him, what I should say to him, how we should look at one another. My soul was faint, and all of a sudden it was just as though he had emptied a pail of dirty water over me. He talked to me like a schoolmaster, all so grave and learned; he met me so solemnly that I was struck dumb. I couldn’t get a word in. At first I thought he was ashamed to talk before his great big Pole. I sat staring at him and wondering why I couldn’t say a word to him now. It must have been his wife that ruined him; you know he threw me up to get married. She must have changed him like that. Mitya, how shameful it is! Oh, Mitya, I’m ashamed, I’m ashamed for all my life. Curse it, curse it, curse those five years!”

And again she burst into tears, but clung tight to Mitya’s hand and did not let it go.

“Mitya, darling, stay, don’t go away. I want to say one word to you,” she whispered, and suddenly raised her face to him. “Listen, tell me who it is I love? I love one man here. Who is that man? That’s what you must tell me.”

A smile lighted up her face that was swollen with weeping, and her eyes shone in the half darkness.

“A falcon flew in, and my heart sank. “Fool! that’s the man you love!’ That was what my heart whispered to me at once. You came in and all grew bright. What’s he afraid of? I wondered. For you were frightened; you couldn’t speak. It’s not them he’s afraid of — could you be frightened of anyone? It’s me he’s afraid of, I thought, only me. So Fenya told you, you little stupid, how I called to Alyosha out of the window that I’d loved Mityenka for one hour, and that I was going now to love... another. Mitya,

Mitya, how could I be such a fool as to think I could love anyone after you? Do you forgive me, Mitya? Do you forgive me or not? Do you love me? Do you love me?" She jumped up and held him with both hands on his shoulders. Mitya, dumb with rapture, gazed into her eyes, at her face, at her smile, and suddenly clasped her tightly his arms and kissed her passionately.

"You will forgive me for having tormented you? It was through spite I tormented you all. It was for spite I drove the old man out of his mind.... Do you remember how you drank at my house one day and broke the wine-glass? I remembered that and I broke a glass to-day and drank 'to my vile heart.' Mitya, my falcon, why don't you kiss me? He kissed me once, and now he draws back and looks and listens. Why listen to me? Kiss me, kiss me hard, that's right. if you love, well, then, love! I'll be your slave now, your slave for the rest of my life. It's sweet to be a slave. Kiss me! Beat me, ill-treat me, do what you will with me.... And I do deserve to suffer. Stay, wait, afterwards, I won't have that..," she suddenly thrust him away. "Go along, Mitya, I'll come and have some wine, I want to be drunk, I'm going to get drunk and dance; I must, I must!" She tore herself away from him and disappeared behind the curtain. Mitya followed like a drunken man.

"Yes, come what may — whatever may happen now, for one minute I'd give the whole world," he thought. Grushenka did, in fact, toss off a whole glass of champagne at one gulp, and became at once very tipsy. She sat down in the same chair as before, with a blissful smile on her face. Her cheeks were glowing, her lips were burning, her flashing eyes were moist; there was passionate appeal in her eyes. Even Kalgonov felt a stir at the heart and went up to her.

"Did you feel how I kissed you when you were asleep just now?" she said thickly. "I'm drunk now, that's what it is.... And aren't you drunk? And why isn't Mitya drinking? Why don't you drink, Mitya? I'm drunk, and you don't drink..."

"I am drunk! I'm drunk as it is... drunk with you... and now I'll be drunk with wine, too."

He drank off another glass, and — he thought it strange himself — that glass made him completely drunk. He was suddenly drunk, although till that moment he had been quite sober, he remembered that. >From that moment everything whirled about him, as though he were delirious. He walked, laughed, talked to everybody, without knowing what he was doing. Only

one persistent burning sensation made itself felt continually, “like a red-hot coal in his heart,” he said afterwards. He went up to her, sat beside her, gazed at her, listened to her.... She became very talkative, kept calling everyone to her, and beckoned to different girls out of the chorus. When the girl came up, she either kissed her, or made the sign of the cross over her. In another minute she might have cried. She was greatly amused by the “little old man,” as she called Maximov. He ran up every minute to kiss her hands, each little finger,” and finally he danced another dance to an old song, which he sang himself. He danced with special vigour to the refrain:

The little pig says — umph! umph! umph!
The little calf says — moo, moo, moo,
The little duck says — quack, quack, quack,
The little goose says — ga, ga, ga.
The hen goes strutting through the porch;
Troo-roo-roo-roo-roo, she’ll say,
Troo-roo-roo-roo-roo, she’ll say!

“Give him something, Mitya,” said Grushenka. “Give him a present, he’s poor, you know. Ah, the poor, the insulted!... Do you know, Mitya, I shall go into a nunnery. No, I really shall one day. Alyosha said something to me to-day that I shall remember all my life.... Yes.... But to-day let us dance. To-morrow to the nunnery, but to-day we’ll dance. I want to play to-day, good people, and what of it? God will forgive us. If I were God, I’d forgive everyone: ‘My dear sinners, from this day forth I forgive you.’ I’m going to beg forgiveness: ‘Forgive me, good people, a silly wench.’ I’m a beast, that’s what I am. But I want to pray. I gave a little onion. Wicked as I’ve been, I want to pray. Mitya, let them dance, don’t stop them. Everyone in the world is good. Everyone — even the worst of them. The world’s a nice place. Though we’re bad the world’s all right. We’re good and bad, good and bad.... Come, tell me, I’ve something to ask you: come here everyone, and I’ll ask you: Why am I so good? You know I am good. I’m very good.... Come, why am I so good?”

So Grushenka babbled on, getting more and more drunk. At last she announced that she was going to dance, too. She got up from her chair, staggering. “Mitya, don’t give me any more wine — if I ask you, don’t give it to me. Wine doesn’t give peace. Everything’s going round, the stove, and everything. I want to dance. Let everyone see how I dance... let them see how beautifully I dance...”

She really meant it. She pulled a white cambric handkerchief out of her pocket, and took it by one corner in her right hand, to wave it in the dance. Mitya ran to and fro, the girls were quiet, and got ready to break into a dancing song at the first signal. Maximov, hearing that Grushenka wanted to dance, squealed with delight, and ran skipping about in front of her, humming: With legs so slim and sides so trim And its little tail curled tight.

But Grushenka waved her handkerchief at him and drove him away.

“Sh-h! Mitya, why don’t they come? Let everyone come... to look on. Call them in, too, that were locked in.... Why did you lock them in? Tell them I’m going to dance. Let them look on, too...”

Mitya walked with a drunken swagger to the locked door, and began knocking to the Poles with his fist.

“Hi, you... Podvysotskis! Come, she’s going to dance. She calls you.”

“Lajdak!” one of the Poles shouted in reply.

“You’re a lajdak yourself! You’re a little scoundrel, that’s what you are.”

“Leave off laughing at Poland,” said Kalganov sententiously. He too was drunk.

“Be quiet, boy! If I call him a scoundrel, it doesn’t mean that I called all Poland so. One lajdak doesn’t make a Poland. Be quiet, my pretty boy, eat a sweetmeat.”

“Ach, what fellows! As though they were not men. Why won’t they make friends?” said Grushenka, and went forward to dance. The chorus broke into “Ah, my porch, my new porch!” Grushenka flung back her head, half opened her lips, smiled, waved her handkerchief, and suddenly, with a violent lurch, stood still in the middle of the room, looking bewildered.

“I’m weak..,” she said in an exhausted voice. “Forgive me.... I’m weak, I can’t.... I’m sorry.”

She bowed to the chorus, and then began bowing in all directions.

“I’m sorry.... Forgive me...”

“The lady’s been drinking. The pretty lady has been drinking,” voices were heard saying.

“The lady’s drunk too much,” Maximov explained to the girls, giggling.

“Mitya, lead me away... take me,” said Grushenka helplessly. Mitya pounced on her, snatched her up in his arms, and carried the precious burden through the curtains.

“Well, now I’ll go,” thought Kalganov, and walking out of the blue room, he closed the two halves of the door after him. But the orgy in the

larger room went on and grew louder and louder. Mitya laid Grushenka on the bed and kissed her on the lips.

“Don’t touch me..,” she faltered, in an imploring voice. “Don’t touch me, till I’m yours.... I’ve told you I’m yours, but don’t touch me... spare me.... With them here, with them close, you mustn’t. He’s here. It’s nasty here...”

“I’ll obey you! I won’t think of it... I worship you!” muttered Mitya. “Yes, it’s nasty here, it’s abominable.”

And still holding her in his arms, he sank on his knees by the bedside.

“I know, though you’re a brute, you’re generous,” Grushenka articulated with difficulty. “It must be honourable... it shall be honourable for the future... and let us be honest, let us be good, not brutes, but good... take me away, take me far away, do you hear? I don’t want it to be here, but far, far away...”

“Oh, yes, yes, it must be!” said Mitya, pressing her in his arms. “I’ll take you and we’ll fly away.... Oh, I’d give my whole life for one year only to know about that blood!”

“What blood?” asked Grushenka, bewildered.

“Nothing,” muttered Mitya, through his teeth. “Grusha, you wanted to be honest, but I’m a thief. But I’ve stolen money from Katya.... Disgrace, a disgrace!”

“From Katya, from that young lady? No, you didn’t steal it. Give it back to her, take it from me.... Why make a fuss? Now everything of mine is yours. What does money matter? We shall waste it anyway.... Folks like us are bound to waste money. But we’d better go and work the land. I want to dig the earth with my own hands. We must work, do you hear? Alyosha said so. I won’t be your mistress, I’ll be faithful to you, I’ll be your slave, I’ll work for you. We’ll go to the young lady and bow down to her together, so that she may forgive us, and then we’ll go away. And if she won’t forgive us, we’ll go, anyway. Take her money and love me.... Don’t love her.... Don’t love her any more. If you love her, I shall strangle her.... I’ll put out both her eyes with a needle...”

“I love you. love only you. I’ll love you in Siberia...”

“Why Siberia? Never mind, Siberia, if you like. I don’t care... we’ll work... there’s snow in Siberia.... I love driving in the snow... and must have bells.... Do you hear, there’s a bell ringing? Where is that bell ringing? There are people coming.... Now it’s stopped.”

She closed her eyes, exhausted, and suddenly fell asleep for an instant. There had certainly been the sound of a bell in the distance, but the ringing had ceased. Mitya let his head sink on her breast. He did not notice that the bell had ceased ringing, nor did he notice that the songs had ceased, and that instead of singing and drunken clamour there was absolute stillness in the house. Grushenka opened her eyes.

“What’s the matter? Was I asleep? Yes... a bell... I’ve been asleep and dreamt I was driving over the snow with bells, and I dozed. I was with someone I loved, with you. And far, far away. I was holding you and kissing you, nestling close to you. I was cold, and the snow glistened.... You know how the snow glistens at night when the moon shines. It was as though I was not on earth. I woke up, and my dear one is close to me. How sweet that is!...”

“Close to you,” murmured Mitya, kissing her dress, her bosom, her hands. And suddenly he had a strange fancy: it seemed to him that she was looking straight before her, not at him, not into his face, but over his head, with an intent, almost uncanny fixity. An expression of wonder, almost of alarm, came suddenly into her face.

“Mitya, who is that looking at us?” she whispered.

Mitya turned, and saw that someone had, in fact, parted the curtains and seemed to be watching them. And not one person alone, it seemed.

He jumped up and walked quickly to the intruder.

“Here, come to us, come here,” said a voice, speaking not loudly, but firmly and peremptorily.

Mitya passed to the other side of the curtain and stood stock still. The room was filled with people, but not those who had been there before. An instantaneous shiver ran down his back, and he shuddered. He recognised all those people instantly. That tall, stout old man in the overcoat and forage-cap with a cockade — was the police captain, Mihail Makarovitch. And that “consumptive-looking” trim dandy,”who always has such polished boots” — that was the deputy prosecutor. “He has a chronometer worth four hundred roubles; he showed it to me.” And that small young man in spectacles.... Mitya forgot his surname though he knew him, had seen him: he was the “investigating lawyer,” from the “school of jurisprudence,” who had only lately come to the town. And this man — the inspector of police, Mavriky Mavrikyevitch, a man he knew well. And those fellows with the

brass plates on, why are they here? And those other two... peasants.... And there at the door Kalganov with Trifon Borissovitch....

“Gentlemen! What’s this for, gentlemen?” began Mitya, but suddenly, as though beside himself, not knowing what he was doing, he cried aloud, at the top of his voice:

“I un-der-stand!”

The young man in spectacles moved forward suddenly, and stepping up to Mitya, began with dignity, though hurriedly:

“We have to make... in brief, I beg you to come this way, this way to the sofa.... It is absolutely imperative that you should give an explanation.”

“The old man!” cried Mitya frantically. “The old man and his blood!... I understand.”

And he sank, almost fell, on a chair close by, as though he had been mown down by a scythe.

“You understand? He understands it! Monster and parricide! Your father’s blood cries out against you!” the old captain of police roared suddenly, stepping up to Mitya.

He was beside himself, crimson in the face and quivering all over.

“This is impossible!” cried the small young man. “Mihail Makarovitch, Mihail Makarovitch, this won’t do!... I beg you’ll allow me to speak. I should never have expected such behaviour from you...”

“This is delirium, gentlemen, raving delirium,” cried the captain of police; “look at him: drunk, at this time of night, in the company of a disreputable woman, with the blood of his father on his hands.... It’s delirium!...”

“I beg you most earnestly, dear Mihail Makarovitch, to restrain your feelings,” the prosecutor said in a rapid whisper to the old police captain, “or I shall be forced to resort to—”

But the little lawyer did not allow him to finish. He turned to Mitya, and delivered himself in a loud, firm, dignified voice:

“Ex-Lieutenant Karamazov, it is my duty to inform you that you are charged with the murder of your father, Fyodor Pavlovitch Karamazov, perpetrated this night...”

He said something more, and the prosecutor, too, put in something, but though Mitya heard them he did not understand them. He stared at them all with wild eyes.

BOOK IX. THE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

CHAPTER 1

The Beginning of Perhotin's Official Career

PYOTR ILYITCH PERHOTIN, whom we left knocking at the strong locked gates of the widow Morozov's house, ended, of course, by making himself heard. Fenya, who was still excited by the fright she had had two hours before, and too much "upset" to go to bed, was almost frightened into hysterics on hearing the furious knocking at the gate. Though she had herself seen him drive away, she fancied that it must be Dmitri Fyodorovitch knocking again, no one else could knock so savagely. She ran to the house-porter, who had already waked up and gone out to the gate, and began imploring him not to open it. But having questioned Pyotr Ilyitch, and learned that he wanted to see Fenya on very "important business," the man made up his mind at last to open. Pyotr Ilyitch was admitted into Fenya's kitchen, but the girl begged him to allow the houseporter to be present, "because of her misgivings." He began questioning her and at once learnt the most vital fact, that is, that when Dmitri Fyodorovitch had run out to look for Grushenka, he had snatched up a pestle from the mortar, and that when he returned, the pestle was not with him and his hands were smeared with blood.

"And the blood was simply flowing, dripping from him, dripping!" Fenya kept exclaiming. This horrible detail was simply the product of her disordered imagination. But although not "dripping," Pyotr Ilyitch had himself seen those hands stained with blood, and had helped to wash them. Moreover, the question he had to decide was, not how soon the blood had dried, but where Dmitri Fyodorovitch had run with the pestle, or rather, whether it really was to Fyodor Pavlovitch's, and how he could satisfactorily ascertain. Pyotr Ilyitch persisted in returning to this point, and though he found out nothing conclusive, yet he carried away a conviction that Dmitri Fyodorovitch could have gone nowhere but to his father's house, and that, therefore, something must have happened there.

"And when he came back," Fenya added with excitement. "I told him the whole story, and then I began asking him, 'Why have you got blood on your hands, Dmitri Fyodorovitch?' and he answered that that was human blood, and that he had just killed someone. He confessed it all to me, and suddenly

ran off like a madman. I sat down and began thinking, where's he run off to now like a madman? He'll go to Mokroe, I thought, and kill my mistress there. I ran out to beg him not to kill her. I was running to his lodgings, but I looked at Plotnikov's shop, and saw him just setting off, and there was no blood on his hands then." (Fenya had noticed this and remembered it.) Fenya's old grandmother confirmed her evidence as far as she was capable. After asking some further questions, Pyotr Ilyitch left the house, even more upset and uneasy than he had been when he entered it.

The most direct and the easiest thing for him to do would have been to go straight to Fyodor Pavlovitch's, to find out whether anything had happened there, and if so, what; and only to go to the police captain, as Pyotr Ilyitch firmly intended doing, when he had satisfied himself of the fact. But the night was dark, Fyodor Pavlovitch's gates were strong, and he would have to knock again. His acquaintance with Fyodor Pavlovitch was of the slightest, and what if, after he had been knocking, they opened to him, and nothing had happened? Fyodor Pavlovitch in his jeering way would go telling the story all over the town, how a stranger, called Perhotin, had broken in upon him at midnight to ask if anyone had killed him. It would make a scandal. And scandal was what Pyotr Ilyitch dreaded more than anything in the world.

Yet the feeling that possessed him was so strong, that though he stamped his foot angrily and swore at himself, he set off again, not to Fyodor Pavlovitch's but to Madame Hohlakov's. He decided that if she denied having just given Dmitri Fyodorovitch three thousand roubles, he would go straight to the police captain, but if she admitted having given him the money, he would go home and let the matter rest till next morning.

It is, of course, perfectly evident that there was even more likelihood of causing scandal by going at eleven o'clock at night to a fashionable lady, a complete stranger, and perhaps rousing her from her bed to ask her an amazing question, than by going to Fyodor Pavlovitch. But that is just how it is, sometimes, especially in cases like the present one, with the decisions of the most precise and phlegmatic people. Pyotr Ilyitch was by no means phlegmatic at that moment. He remembered all his life how a haunting uneasiness gradually gained possession of him, growing more and more painful and driving him on, against his will. Yet he kept cursing himself, of course, all the way for going to this lady, but "I will get to the bottom of it, I

will!” he repeated for the tenth time, grinding his teeth, and he carried out his intention.

It was exactly eleven o’clock when he entered Madame Hohlakov’s house. He was admitted into the yard pretty quickly, but, in response to his inquiry whether the lady was still up, the porter could give no answer, except that she was usually in bed by that time.

“Ask at the top of the stairs. If the lady wants to receive you, she’ll receive you. If she won’t, she won’t.”

Pyotr Ilyitch went up, but did not find things so easy here. The footman was unwilling to take in his name, but finally called a maid. Pyotr Ilyitch politely but insistently begged her to inform her lady that an official, living in the town, called Perhotin, had called on particular business, and that if it were not of the greatest importance he would not have ventured to come. “Tell her in those words, in those words exactly,” he asked the girl.

She went away. He remained waiting in the entry. Madame Hohlakov herself was already in her bedroom, though not yet asleep. She had felt upset ever since Mitya’s visit, and had a presentiment that she would not get through the night without the sick headache which always, with her, followed such excitement. She was surprised on hearing the announcement from the maid. She irritably declined to see him, however, though the unexpected visit at such an hour, of an “official living in the town,” who was a total stranger, roused her feminine curiosity intensely. But this time Pyotr Ilyitch was as obstinate as a mule. He begged the maid most earnestly to take another message in these very words:

“That he had come on business of the greatest importance, and that Madame Hohlakov might have cause to regret it later, if she refused to see him now.”

“I plunged headlong,” he described it afterwards.

The maid, gazing at him in amazement, went to take his message again. Madame Hohlakov was impressed. She thought a little, asked what he looked like, and learned that he was very well dressed, young, and so polite.” We may note, parenthetically, that Pyotr Ilyitch was a rather good-looking young man, and well aware of the fact. Madame Hohlakov made up her mind to see him. She was in her dressing-gown and slippers, but she flung a black shawl over her shoulders. “The official” was asked to walk into the drawing-room, the very room in which Mitya had been received shortly before. The lady came to meet her visitor, with a sternly inquiring

countenance, and, without asking him to sit down, began at once with the question:

“What do you want?”

“I have ventured to disturb you, madam, on a matter concerning our common acquaintance, Dmitri Fyodorovitch Karamazov,” Perhotin began.

But he had hardly uttered the name, when the lady’s face showed signs of acute irritation. She almost shrieked, and interrupted him in a fury:

“How much longer am I to be worried by that awful man?” she cried hysterically. “How dare you, sir, how could you venture to disturb a lady who is a stranger to you, in her own house at such an hour!... And to force yourself upon her to talk of a man who came here, to this very drawing-room, only three hours ago, to murder me, and went stamping out of the room, as no one would go out of a decent house. Let me tell you, sir, that I shall lodge a complaint against you, that I will not let it pass. Kindly leave me at once... I am a mother.... I... I-”

“Murder! then he tried to murder you, too?”

“Why, has he killed somebody else?” Madame Hohlakov asked impulsively.

“If you would kindly listen, madam, for half a moment, I’ll explain it all in a couple of words,” answered Perhotin, firmly. “At five o’clock this afternoon Dmitri Fyodorovitch borrowed ten roubles from me, and I know for a fact he had no money. Yet at nine o’clock, he came to see me with a bundle of hundred-rouble notes in his hand, about two or three thousand roubles. His hands and face were all covered with blood, and he looked like a madman. When I asked him where he had got so much money, he answered that he had just received it from you, that you had given him a sum of three thousand to go to the gold mines...”

Madame Hohlakov’s face assumed an expression of intense and painful excitement.

“Good God! He must have killed his old father!” she cried, clasping her hands. “I have never given him money, never! Oh, run, run!... Don’t say another word Save the old man... run to his father... run!”

“Excuse me, madam, then you did not give him money? You remember for a fact that you did not give him any money?”

“No, I didn’t, I didn’t! I refused to give it him, for he could not appreciate it. He ran out in a fury, stamping. He rushed at me, but I slipped away.... And let me tell you, as I wish to hide nothing from you now, that he

positively spat at me. Can you fancy that! But why are we standing? Ah, sit down.”

“Excuse me, I...”

“Or better run, run, you must run and save the poor old man from an awful death!”

“But if he has killed him already?”

“Ah, good heavens, yes! Then what are we to do now? What do you think we must do now?”

Meantime she had made Pyotr Ilyitch sit down and sat down herself, facing him briefly, but fairly clearly, Pyotr Ilyitch told her the history of the affair, that part of it at least which he had himself witnessed. He described, too, his visit to Fenya, and told her about the pestle. All these details produced an overwhelming effect on the distracted lady, who kept uttering shrieks, and covering her face with her hands...

“Would you believe it, I foresaw all this! I have that special faculty, whatever I imagine comes to pass. And how often I’ve looked at that awful man and always thought, that man will end by murdering me. And now it’s happened... that is, if he hasn’t murdered me, but only his own father, it’s only because the finger of God preserved me, and what’s more, he was ashamed to murder me because, in this very place, I put the holy ikon from the relics of the holy martyr, Saint Varvara, on his neck.... And to think how near I was to death at that minute I went close up to him and he stretched out his neck to me!... Do you know, Pyotr Ilyitch (I think you said your name was Pyotr Ilyitch), I don’t believe in miracles, but that ikon and this unmistakable miracle with me now — that shakes me, and I’m ready to believe in anything you like. Have you heard about Father Zossima?... But I don’t know what I’m saying... and only fancy, with the ikon on his neck he spat at me.... He only spat, it’s true, he didn’t murder me and... he dashed away! But what shall we do, what must we do now? What do you think?”

Pyotr Ilyitch got up, and announced that he was going straight to the police captain, to tell him all about it, and leave him to do what he thought fit.

“Oh, he’s an excellent man, excellent! Mihail Makarovitch, I know him. Of course, he’s the person to go to. How practical you are, Pyotr Ilyitch! How well you’ve thought of everything! I should never have thought of it in your place!”

“Especially as I know the police captain very well, too,” observed Pyotr Ilyitch, who still continued to stand, and was obviously anxious to escape as quickly as possible from the impulsive lady, who would not let him say good-bye and go away.

“And be sure, be sure,” she prattled on, “to come back and tell me what you see there, and what you find out... what comes to light... how they’ll try him... and what he’s condemned to.... Tell me, we have no capital punishment, have we? But be sure to come, even if it’s at three o’clock at night, at four, at half-past four.... Tell them to wake me, to wake me, to shake me, if I don’t get up.... But, good heavens, I shan’t sleep! But wait, hadn’t I better come with you?”

“N-no. But if you would write three lines with your own hand, stating that you did not give Dmitri Fyodorovitch money, it might, perhaps, be of use... in case it’s needed...”

“To be sure!” Madame Hohlakov skipped, delighted, to her bureau. “And you know I’m simply struck, amazed at your resourcefulness, your good sense in such affairs. Are you in the service here? I’m delighted to think that you’re in the service here!”

And still speaking, she scribbled on half a sheet of notepaper the following lines:

I’ve never in my life lent to that unhappy man, Dmitri Fyodorovitch Karamazov (for, in spite of all, he is unhappy), three thousand roubles to-day. I’ve never given him money, never: That I swear by all thats holy! K. Hohlakov

“Here’s the note!” she turned quickly to Pyotr Ilyitch. “Go, save him. It’s a noble deed on your part!”

And she made the sign of the cross three times over him. She ran out to accompany him to the passage.

“How grateful I am to you! You can’t think how grateful I am to you for having come to me, first. How is it I haven’t met you before? I shall feel flattered at seeing you at my house in the future. How delightful it is that you are living here!... Such precision! Such practical ability!... They must appreciate you, they must understand you. If there’s anything I can do, believe me... oh, I love young people! I’m in love with young people! The younger generation are the one prop of our suffering country. Her one hope.... Oh, go, go!...”

But Pyotr Ilyitch had already run away or she would not have let him go so soon. Yet Madame Hohlakov had made a rather agreeable impression on him, which had somewhat softened his anxiety at being drawn into such an unpleasant affair. Tastes differ, as we all know. “She’s by no means so elderly,” he thought, feeling pleased, “on the contrary I should have taken her for her daughter.”

As for Madame Hohlakov, she was simply enchanted by the young man. “Such sence such exactness! in so young a man! in our day! and all that with such manners and appearance! People say the young people of to-day are no good for anything, but here’s an example!” etc. So she simply forgot this “dreadful affair,” and it was only as she was getting into bed, that, suddenly recalling “how near death she had been,” she exclaimed: “Ah, it is awful, awful!”

But she fell at once into a sound, sweet sleep.

I would not, however, have dwelt on such trivial and irrelevant details, if this eccentric meeting of the young official with the by no means elderly widow had not subsequently turned out to be the foundation of the whole career of that practical and precise young man. His story is remembered to this day with amazement in our town, and I shall perhaps have something to say about it, when I have finished my long history of the Brothers Karamazov.

CHAPTER 2

The Alarm

OUR police captain, Mihail Makarovitch Makarov, a retired lieutenant-colonel, was a widower and an excellent man. He had only come to us three years previously, but had won general esteem, chiefly because he “knew how to keep society together.” He was never without visitors, and could not have got on without them. Someone or other was always dining with him; he never sat down to table without guests. He gave regular dinners, too, on all sorts of occasions, sometimes most surprising ones. Though the fare was not recherche, it was abundant. The fish-pies were excellent, and the wine made up in quantity for what it lacked in quality.

The first room his guests entered was a well fitted billiard-room, with pictures of English race horses, in black frames on the walls, an essential decoration, as we all know, for a bachelor’s billiard-room. There was card playing every evening at his house, if only at one table. But at frequent intervals, all the society of our town, with the mammas and young ladies, assembled at his house to dance. Mihail Makarovitch was a widower, he did not live alone. His widowed daughter lived with him, with her two unmarried daughters, grown-up girls, who had finished their education. They were of agreeable appearance and lively character, and though everyone knew they would have no dowry, they attracted all the young men of fashion to their grandfather’s house.

Mihail Makarovitch was by no means very efficient in his work, though he performed his duties no worse than many others. To speak plainly, he was a man of rather narrow education. His understanding of the limits of his administrative power could not always be relied upon. It was not so much that he failed to grasp certain reforms enacted during the present reign, as that he made conspicuous blunders in his interpretation of them. This was not from any special lack of intelligence, but from carelessness, for he was always in to great a hurry to go into the subject.

“I have the heart of a soldier rather than of a civilian,” he used to say of himself. He had not even formed a definite idea of the fundamental principles of the reforms connected with the emancipation of the serfs, and only picked it up, so to speak, from year to year, involuntarily increasing his

knowledge by practice. And yet he was himself a landowner. Pyotr Ilyitch knew for certain that he would meet some of Mihail Makarovitch's visitors there that evening, but he didn't know which. As it happened, at that moment the prosecutor, and Varvinsky, our district doctor, a young man, who had only just come to us from Petersburg after taking a brilliant degree at the Academy of Medicine, were playing whist at the police captain's. Ippolit Kirillovitch, the prosecutor (he was really the deputy prosecutor, but we always called him the prosecutor), was rather a peculiar man, of about five and thirty, inclined to be consumptive, and married to a fat and childless woman. He was vain and irritable, though he had a good intellect, and even a kind heart. It seemed that all that was wrong with him was that he had a better opinion of himself than his ability warranted. And that made him seem constantly uneasy. He had, moreover, certain higher, even artistic, leanings, towards psychology, for instance, a special study of the human heart, a special knowledge of the criminal and his crime. He cherished a grievance on this ground, considering that he had been passed over in the service, and being firmly persuaded that in higher spheres he had not been properly appreciated, and had enemies. In gloomy moments he even threatened to give up his post, and practise as a barrister in criminal cases. The unexpected Karamazov case agitated him profoundly: "It was a case that might well be talked about all over Russia." But I am anticipating.

Nikolay Parfenovitch Nelyudov, the young investigating lawyer, who had only come from Petersburg two months before, was sitting in the next room with the young ladies. People talked about it afterwards and wondered that all the gentlemen should, as though intentionally, on the evening of "the crime" have been gathered together at the house of the executive authority. Yet it was perfectly simple and happened quite naturally.

Ippolit Kirillovitch's wife had had toothache for the last two days, and he was obliged to go out to escape from her groans. The doctor, from the very nature of his being, could not spend an evening except at cards. Nikolay Parfenovitch Nelyudov had been intending for three days past to drop in that evening at Mihail Makarovitch's, so to speak casually, so as slyly to startle the eldest granddaughter, Olga Mihailovna, by showing that he knew her secret, that he knew it was her birthday, and that she was trying to conceal it on purpose, so as not to be obliged to give a dance. He anticipated a great deal of merriment, many playful jests about her age, and her being afraid to reveal it, about his knowing her secret and telling

everybody, and so on. The charming young man was a great adept at such teasing; the ladies had christened him “the naughty man,” and he seemed to be delighted at the name. He was extremely well-bred, however, of good family, education and feelings, and, though leading a life of pleasure, his sallies were always innocent and in good taste. He was short, and delicate-looking. On his white, slender, little fingers he always wore a number of big, glittering rings. When he was engaged in his official duties, he always became extraordinarily grave, as though realising his position and the sanctity of the obligations laid upon him. He had a special gift for mystifying murderers and other criminals of the peasant class during interrogation, and if he did not win their respect, he certainly succeeded in arousing their wonder.

Pyotr Ilyitch was simply dumbfounded when he went into the police captain’s. He saw instantly that everyone knew. They had positively thrown down their cards, all were standing up and talking. Even Nikolay Parfenovitch had left the young ladies and run in, looking strenuous and ready for action. Pyotr Ilyitch was met with the astounding news that old Fyodor Pavlovitch really had been murdered that evening in his own house, murdered and robbed. The news had only just reached them in the following manner:

Marfa Ignatyevna, the wife of old Grigory, who had been knocked senseless near the fence, was sleeping soundly in her bed and might well have slept till morning after the draught she had taken. But, all of a sudden she waked up, no doubt roused by a fearful epileptic scream from Smerdyakov, who was lying in the next room unconscious. That scream always preceded his fits, and always terrified and upset Marfa Ignatyevna. She could never get accustomed to it. She jumped up and ran half-awake to Smerdyakov’s room. But it was dark there, and she could only hear the invalid beginning to gasp and struggle. Then Marfa Ignatyevna herself screamed out and was going to call her husband, but suddenly realised that when she had got up, he was not beside her in bed. She ran back to the bedstead and began groping with her hands, but the bed was really empty. Then he must have gone out where? She ran to the steps and timidly called him. She got no answer, of course, but she caught the sound of groans far away in the garden in the darkness. She listened. The groans were repeated, and it was evident they came from the garden.

“Good Lord! just as it was with Lizaveta Smerdyashtchaya!” she thought distractedly. She went timidly down the steps and saw that the gate into the garden was open.

“He must be out there, poor dear,” she thought. She went up to the gate and all at once she distinctly heard Grigory calling her by name, Marfa! Marfa!” in a weak, moaning, dreadful voice.

“Lord, preserve us from harm!” Marfa Ignatyevna murmured, and ran towards the voice, and that was how she found Grigory. But she found him not by the fence where he had been knocked down, but about twenty paces off. It appeared later, that he had crawled away on coming to himself, and probably had been a long time getting so far, losing consciousness several times. She noticed at once that he was covered with blood, and screamed at the top of her voice. Grigory was muttering incoherently:

“He has murdered... his father murdered.... Why scream, silly... run... fetch someone...”

But Marfa continued screaming, and seeing that her master’s window was open and that there was a candle alight in the window, she ran there and began calling Fyodor Pavlovitch. But peeping in at the window, she saw a fearful sight. Her master was lying on his back, motionless, on the floor. His light-coloured dressing-gown and white shirt were soaked with blood. The candle on the table brightly lighted up the blood and the motionless dead face of Fyodor Pavlovitch.

Terror-stricken, Marfa rushed away from the window, ran out of the garden, drew the bolt of the big gate and ran headlong by the back way to the neighbour, Marya Konndratyevna. Both mother and daughter were asleep, but they waked up at Marfa’s desperate and persistent screaming and knocking at the shutter. Marfa, shrieking and screaming incoherently, managed to tell them the main fact, and to beg for assistance. It happened that Foma had come back from his wanderings and was staying the night with them. They got him up immediately and all three ran to the scene of the crime. On the way, Marya Kondratyevna remembered that at about eight o’clock she heard a dreadful scream from their garden, and this was no doubt Grigory’s scream, “Parricide!” uttered when he caught hold of Mitya’s leg.

“Some one person screamed out and then was silent,” Marya Kondratyevna explained as she ran. Running to the place where Grigory lay, the two women with the help of Foma carried him to the lodge. They

lighted a candle and saw that Smerdyakov was no better, that he was writhing in convulsions, his eyes fixed in a squint, and that foam was flowing from his lips. They moistened Grigory's forehead with water mixed with vinager, and the water revived him at once. He asked immediately:

"Is the master murdered?"

Then Foma and both the women ran to the house and saw this time that not only the window, but also the door into the garden was wide open, though Fyodor Pavlovitch had for the last week locked himself in every night and did not allow even Grigory to come in on any pretext. Seeing that door open, they were afraid to go in to Fyodor Pavlovitch "for fear anything should happen afterwards." And when they returned to Grigory, the old man told them to go straight to the police captain. Marya Kondratyevna ran there and gave the alarm to the whole party at the police captain's. She arrived only five minutes before Pyotr Ilyitch, so that his story came, not as his own surmise and theory, but as the direct conformation by a witness, of the theory held by all, as to the identity of the criminal (a theory he had in the bottom of his heart refused to believe till that moment).

It was resolved to act with energy. The deputy police inspector of the town was commissioned to take four witnesses, to enter Fyodor Pavlovitch's house and there to open an inquiry on the spot, according to the regular forms, which I will not go into here. The district doctor, a zealous man, new to his work, almost insisted on accompanying the police captain, the prosecutor, and the investigating lawyer.

I will note briefly that Fyodor Pavlovitch was found to be quite dead, with his skull battered in. But with what? Most likely with the same weapon with which Grigory had been attacked. And immediately that weapon was found, Grigory, to whom all possible medical assistance was at once given, described in a weak and breaking voice how he had been knocked down. They began looking with a lantern by the fence and found the brass pestle dropped in a most conspicuous place on the garden path. There were no signs of disturbance in the room where Fyodor Pavlovitch was lying. But by the bed, behind the screen, they picked up from the floor a big and thick envelope with the inscription: "A present of three thousand roubles for my angel Grushenka, if she is willing to come." And below had been added by Fyodor Pavlovitch, "For my little chicken." There were three seals of red sealing-wax on the envelope, but it had been torn open and was empty: the

money had been removed. They found also on the floor a piece of narrow pink ribbon, with which the envelope had been tied up.

One piece of Pyotr Ilyitch's evidence made a great impression on the prosecutor and the investigating magistrate, namely, his idea that Dmitri Fyodorovitch would shoot himself before daybreak, that he had resolved to do so, had spoken of it to Ilyitch, had taken the pistols, loaded them before him, written a letter, put it in his pocket, etc. When Pyotr Ilyitch, though still unwilling to believe in it, threatened to tell someone so as to prevent the suicide, Mitya had answered grinning: "You'll be too late." So they must make haste to Mokroe to find the criminal, before he really did shoot himself.

"That's clear, that's clear!" repeated the prosecutor in great excitement. "That's just the way with mad fellows like that: 'I shall kill myself to-morrow, so I'll make merry till I die!'"

The story of how he had bought the wine and provisions excited the prosecutor more than ever.

"Do you remember the fellow that murdered a merchant called Olsufyev, gentlemen? He stole fifteen hundred, went at once to have his hair curled, and then, without even hiding the money, carrying it almost in his hand in the same way, he went off to the girls."

All were delayed, however, by the inquiry, the search, and the formalities, etc. in the house of Fyodor Pavlovitch. It all took time and so, two hours before starting, they sent on ahead to Mokroe the officer of the rural police, Mavriky Mavrikyevitch Schmertsov, who had arrived in the town the morning before to get his pay. He was instructed to avoid raising the alarm when he reached Mokroe, but to keep constant watch over the "criminal" till the arrival of the proper authorities, to procure also witnesses for the arrest, police constables, and so on. Mavriky Mavrikyevitch did as he was told, preserving his incognito, and giving no one but his old acquaintance, Trifon Borissovitch, the slightest hint of his secret business. He had spoken to him just before Mitya met the landlord in the balcony, looking for him in the dark, and noticed at once a change in Trifon Borissovitch's face and voice. So neither Mitya nor anyone else knew that he was being watched. The box with the pistols had been carried off by Trifon Borissovitch and put in a suitable place. Only after four o'clock, almost at sunrise, all the officials, the police captain, the prosecutor, the investigating lawyer, drove up in two carriages, each drawn by three horses.

The doctor remained at Fyodor Pavlovitch’s to make a post-mortem next day on the body. But he was particularly interested in the condition of the servant, Smerdyakov.

“Such violent and protracted epileptic fits, recurring continually for twenty-four hours, are rarely to be met with, and are of interest to science,” he declared enthusiastically to his companions, and as they left they laughingly congratulated him on his find. The prosecutor and the investigating lawyer distinctly remembered the doctor’s saying that Smerdyakov could not outlive the night.

After these long, but I think necessary explanations, we will return to that moment of our tale at which we broke off.

CHAPTER 3

The Sufferings of a Soul

The First Ordeal

AND so Mitya sat looking wildly at the people round him, not understanding what was said to him. Suddenly he got up, flung up his hands, and shouted aloud:

“I’m not guilty! I’m not guilty of that blood! I’m not guilty of my father’s blood.... I meant to kill him. But I’m not guilty. Not I.”

But he had hardly said this, before Grushenka rushed from behind the curtain and flung herself at the police captain’s feet.

“It was my fault! Mine! My wickedness!” she cried, in a heart-rending voice, bathed in tears, stretching out her clasped hands towards them. “He did it through me. I tortured him and drove him to it. I tortured that poor old man that’s dead, too, in my wickedness, and brought him to this! It’s my fault, mine first, mine most, my fault!”

“Yes, it’s your fault! You’re the chief criminal! You fury! You harlot! You’re the most to blame!” shouted the police captain, threatening her with his hand. But he was quickly and resolutely suppressed. The prosecutor positively seized hold of him.

“This is absolutely irregular, Mihail Makarovitch!” he cried. “You are positively hindering the inquiry.... You’re ruining the case,” he almost gasped.

“Follow the regular course! Follow the regular course!” cried Nikolay Parfenovitch, fearfully excited too, “otherwise it’s absolutely impossible!...”

“Judge us together!” Grushenka cried frantically, still kneeling. “Punish us together. I will go with him now, if it’s to death!”

“Grusha, my life, my blood, my holy one!” Mitya fell on his knees beside her and held her tight in his arms. “Don’t believe her,” he cried, “she’s not guilty of anything, of any blood, of anything!”

He remembered afterwards that he was forcibly dragged away from her by several men, and that she was led out, and that when he recovered himself he was sitting at the table. Beside him and behind him stood the men with metal plates. Facing him on the other side of the table sat Nikolay

Parfenovitch, the investigating lawyer. He kept persuading him to drink a little water out of a glass that stood on the table.

“That will refresh you, that will calm you. Be calm, don’t be frightened,” he added, extremely politely. Mitya (he remembered it afterwards) became suddenly intensely interested in his big rings, one with an amethyst, and another with a transparent bright yellow stone, of great brilliance. And long afterwards he remembered with wonder how those rings had riveted his attention through all those terrible hours of interrogation, so that he was utterly unable to tear himself away from them and dismiss them, as things that had nothing to do with his position. On Mitya’s left side, in the place where Maximov had been sitting at the beginning of the evening, the prosecutor was now seated, and on Mitya’s right hand, where Grushenka had been, was a rosy-cheeked young man in a sort of shabby hunting-jacket, with ink and paper before him. This was the secretary of the investigating lawyer, who had brought him with him. The police captain was now standing by the window at the other end of the room, beside Kalganov, who was sitting there.

“Drink some water,” said the investigating lawyer softly, for the tenth time.

“I have drunk it, gentlemen, I have... but come gentlemen, crush me, punish me, decide my fate!” cried Mitya, staring with terribly fixed wide-open eyes at the investigating lawyer.

“So you positively declare that you are not guilty of the death of your father, Fyodor Pavlovitch?” asked the investigating lawyer, softly but insistently.

“I am not guilty. I am guilty of the blood of another old man, but not of my father’s. And I weep for it! I killed, I killed the old man and knocked him down.... But it’s hard to have to answer for that murder with another, a terrible murder of which I am not guilty....It’s a terrible accusation, gentlemen, a knockdown blow. But who has killed my father, who has killed him? Who can have killed him if I didn’t? It’s marvellous, extraordinary, impossible.”

“Yes, who can have killed him?” the investigating lawyer was beginning, but Ippolit Kirillovitch, the prosecutor, glancing at him, addressed Mitya.

“You need not worry yourself about the old servant, Grigory Vasilyevitch. He is alive, he has recovered, and in spite of the terrible blows

inflicted, according to his own and your evidence, by you, there seems no doubt that he will live, so the doctor says, at least."

"Alive? He's alive?" cried Mitya, flinging up his hands. His face beamed. "Lord, I thank Thee for the miracle Thou has wrought for me, a sinner and evildoer. That's an answer to my prayer. I've been praying all night." And he crossed himself three times. He was almost breathless.

"So from this Grigory we have received such important evidence concerning you, that-" The prosecutor would have continued, but Mitya suddenly jumped up from his chair.

"One minute, gentlemen, for God's sake, one minute; I will run to her-"

"Excuse me, at this moment it's quite impossible," Nikolay Parfenovitch almost shrieked. He, too, leapt to his feet. Mitya was seized by the men with the metal plates, but he sat down of his own accord....

"Gentlemen, what a pity! I wanted to see her for one minute only; I wanted to tell her that it has been washed away, it has gone, that blood that was weighing on my heart all night, and that I am not a murderer now! Gentlemen, she is my betrothed!" he said ecstatically and reverently, looking round at them all. "Oh, thank you, gentlemen! Oh, in one minute you have given me new life, new heart!... That old man used to carry me in his arms, gentlemen. He used to wash me in the tub when I was a baby three years old, abandoned by everyone, he was like a father to me!..."

"And so you-" the investigating lawyer began.

"Allow me, gentlemen, allow me one minute more," interposed Mitya, putting his elbows on the table and covering his face with his hands. "Let me have a moment to think, let me breathe, gentlemen. All this is horribly upsetting, horribly. A man is not a drum, gentlemen!"

"Drink a little more water," murmured Nikolay Parfenovitch. Mitya took his hands from his face and laughed. His eyes were confident. He seemed completely transformed in a moment. His whole bearing was changed; he was once more the equal of these men, with all of whom he was acquainted, as though they had all met the day before, when nothing had happened, at some social gathering. We may note in passing that, on his first arrival, Mitya had been made very welcome at the police captain's, but later, during the last month especially, Mitya had hardly called at all, and when the police captain met him, in the street, for instance, Mitya noticed that he frowned and only bowed out of politeness. His acquaintance with the prosecutor was less intimate, though he sometimes paid his wife, a nervous

and fanciful lady, visits of politeness, without quite knowing why, and she always received him graciously and had, for some reason, taken an interest in him up to the last. He had not had time to get to know the investigating lawyer, though he had met him and talked to him twice, each time about the fair sex.

“You’re a most skilful lawyer, I see, Nikolay Parfenovitch,” cried Mitya, laughing gaily, “but I can help you now. Oh, gentlemen, I feel like a new man, and don’t be offended at my addressing you so simply and directly. I’m rather drunk, too, I’ll tell you that frankly. I believe I’ve had the honour and pleasure of meeting you, Nikolay Parfenovitch, at my kinsman Miusov’s. Gentlemen, gentlemen, I don’t pretend to be on equal terms with you. I understand, of course, in what character I am sitting before you. Oh, of course, there’s a horrible suspicion... hanging over me... if Grigory has given evidence.... A horrible suspicion! It’s awful, awful, I understand that! But to business, gentlemen, I am ready, and we will make an end of it in one moment; for, listen, listen, gentlemen! Since I know I’m innocent, we can put an end to it in a minute. Can’t we? Can’t we?”

Mitya spoke much and quickly, nervously and effusively, as though he positively took his listeners to be his best friends.

“So, for the present, we will write that you absolutely deny the charge brought against you,” said Nikolay Parfenovitch, impressively, and bending down to the secretary he dictated to him in an undertone what to write.

“Write it down? You want to write that down? Well, write it; I consent, I give my full consent, gentlemen, only... do you see?... Stay, stay, write this. Of disorderly conduct I am guilty, of violence on a poor old man I am guilty. And there is something else at the bottom of my heart, of which I am guilty, too but that you need not write down” (he turned suddenly to the secretary); “that’s my personal life, gentlemen, that doesn’t concern you, the bottom of my heart, that’s to say.... But of the murder of my old father I’m not guilty. That’s a wild idea. It’s quite a wild idea!... I will prove you that and you’ll be convinced directly.... You will laugh, gentlemen. You’ll laugh yourselves at your suspicion!...”

“Be calm, Dmitri Fyodorovitch,” said the investigating lawyer evidently trying to allay Mitya’s excitement by his own composure. “Before we go on with our inquiry, I should like, if you will consent to answer, to hear you confirm the statement that you disliked your father, Fyodor Pavlovitch, that you were involved in continual disputes with him. Here at least, a quarter of

an hour ago, you exclaimed that you wanted to kill him: ‘I didn’t kill him,’ you said,’but I wanted to kill him.’”

“Did I exclaim that? Ach, that may be so, gentlemen! Yes, unhappily, I did want to kill him... many times I wanted to... unhappily, unhappily!”

“You wanted to. Would you consent to explain what motives precisely led you to such a sentiment of hatred for your parent?”

“What is there to explain, gentlemen?” Mitya shrugged his shoulders sullenly, looking down. “I have never concealed my feelings. All the town knows about it — everyone knows in the tavern. Only lately I declared them in Father Zossima’s cell. And the very same day, in the evening I beat my father. I nearly killed him, and I swore I’d come again and kill him, before witnesses.... Oh, a thousand witnesses! I’ve been shouting it aloud for the last month, anyone can tell you that!... The fact stares you in the face, it speaks for itself, it cries aloud, but feelings, gentlemen, feelings are another matter. You see, gentlemen” — Mitya frowned— “it seemed to me that about feelings you’ve no right to question me. I know that you are bound by your office, I quite understand that, but that’s my affair, my private, intimate affair, yet... since I haven’t concealed my feelings in the past... in the tavern, for instance, I’ve talked to everyone, so... so I won’t make a secret of it now. You see, I understand, gentlemen, that there are terrible facts against me in this business. I told everyone that I’d kill him, and now, all of a sudden, he’s been killed. So it must have been me! Ha ha! I can make allowances for you, gentlemen, I can quite make allowances. I’m struck all of a heap myself, for who can have murdered him, if not I? That’s what it comes to, isn’t it? If not I, who can it be, who? Gentlemen, I want to know, I insist on knowing!” he exclaimed suddenly. “Where was he murdered? How was he murdered? How, and with what? Tell me,” he asked quickly, looking at the two lawyers.

“We found him in his study, lying on his back on the floor, with his head battered in,” said the prosecutor.

“That’s horrible!” Mitya shuddered and, putting his elbows on the table, hid his face in his right hand.

“We will continue,” interposed Nikolay Parfenovitch. “So what was it that impelled you to this sentiment of hatred? You have asserted in public, I believe, that it was based upon jealousy?”

“Well, yes, jealousy. not only jealousy.”

“Disputes about money?”

“Yes, about money, too.”

“There was a dispute about three thousand roubles, I think, which you claimed as part of your inheritance?”

“Three thousand! More, more,” cried Mitya hotly; “more than six thousand, more than ten, perhaps. I told everyone so, shouted it at them. But I made up my mind to let it go at three thousand. I was desperately in need of that three thousand... so the bundle of notes for three thousand that I knew he kept under his pillow, ready for Grushenka, I considered as simply stolen from me. Yes, gentlemen, I looked upon it as mine, as my own property...”

The prosecutor looked significantly at the investigating lawyer, and had time to wink at him on the sly.

“We will return to that subject later,” said the lawyer promptly. “You will allow us to note that point and write it down; that you looked upon that money as your own property?”

“Write it down, by all means. I know that’s another fact that tells against me, but I’m not afraid of facts and I tell them against myself. Do you hear? Do you know, gentlemen, you take me for a different sort of man from what I am,” he added, suddenly gloomy and dejected. “You have to deal with a man of honour, a man of the highest honour; above all don’t lose sight of it — a man who’s done a lot of nasty things, but has always been, and still is, honourable at bottom, in his inner being. I don’t know how to express it. That’s just what’s made me wretched all my life, that I yearned to be honourable, that I was, so to say, a martyr to a sense of honour, seeking for it with a lantern, with the lantern of Diogenes, and yet all my life I’ve been doing filthy things like all of us, gentlemen... that is like me alone. That was a mistake, like me alone, me alone!... Gentlemen, my head aches...” His brows contracted with pain. “You see, gentlemen, I couldn’t bear the look of him, there was something in him ignoble, impudent, trampling on everything sacred, something sneering and irreverent, loathsome, loathsome. But now that he’s dead, I feel differently.”

“How do you mean?”

“I don’t feel differently, but I wish I hadn’t hated him so.”

“You feel penitent?”

“No, not penitent, don’t write that. I’m not much good myself; I’m not very beautiful, so I had no right to consider him repulsive. That’s what I mean. Write that down, if you like.”

Saying this Mitya became very mournful. He had grown more and more gloomy as the inquiry continued.

At that moment another unexpected scene followed. Though Grushenka had been removed, she had not been taken far away, only into the room next but one from the blue room, in which the examination was proceeding. It was a little room with one window, next beyond the large room in which they had danced and feasted so lavishly. She was sitting there with no one by her but Maximov, who was terribly depressed, terribly scared, and clung to her side, as though for security. At their door stood one of the peasants with a metal plate on his breast. Grushenka was crying, and suddenly her grief was too much for her, she jumped up, flung up her arms and, with a loud wail of sorrow, rushed out of the room to him, to her Mitya, and so unexpectedly that they had not time to stop her. Mitya, hearing her cry, trembled, jumped up, and with a yell rushed impetuously to meet her, not knowing what he was doing. But they were not allowed to come together, though they saw one another. He was seized by the arms. He struggled, and tried to tear himself away. It took three or four men to hold him. She was seized too, and he saw her stretching out her arms to him, crying aloud as they carried her away. When the scene was over, he came to himself again, sitting in the same place as before, opposite the investigating lawyer, and crying out to them:

“What do you want with her? Why do you torment her? She’s done nothing, nothing!

The lawyers tried to soothe him. About ten minutes passed like this. At last Mihail Makarovitch, who had been absent, came hurriedly into the room, and said in a loud and excited voice to the prosecutor:

“She’s been removed, she’s downstairs. Will you allow me to say one word to this unhappy man, gentlemen? In your presence, gentlemen, in your presence.”

“By all means, Mihail Makarovitch,” answered the investigating lawyer. “In the present case we have nothing against it.”

“Listen, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, my dear fellow,” began the police captain, and there was a look of warm, almost fatherly, feeling for the luckless prisoner on his excited face. “I took your Agrafena Alexandrovna downstairs myself, and confided her to the care of the landlord’s daughters, and that old fellow Maximov is with her all the time. And I soothed her, do you hear? I soothed and calmed her. I impressed on her that you have to

clear yourself, so she mustn’t hinder you, must not depress you, or you may lose your head and say the wrong thing in your evidence. In fact, I talked to her and she understood. She’s a sensible girl, my boy, a good-hearted girl, she would have kissed my old hands, begging help for you. She sent me herself, to tell you not to worry about her. And I must go, my dear fellow, I must go and tell her that you are calm and comforted about her. And so you must be calm, do you understand? I was unfair to her; she is a Christian soul, gentlemen, yes, I tell you, she’s a gentle soul, and not to blame for anything. So what am I to tell her, Dmitri Fyodorovitch? Will you sit quiet or not?”

The good-natured police captain said a great deal that was irregular, but Grushenka’s suffering, a fellow creature’s suffering, touched his good-natured heart, and tears stood in his eyes. Mitya jumped up and rushed towards him.

“Forgive me, gentlemen, oh, allow me, allow me!” he cried. “You’ve the heart of an angel, an angel, Mihail Makarovitch, I thank you for her. I will, I will be calm, cheerful, in fact. Tell her, in the kindness of your heart, that I am cheerful, quite cheerful, that I shall be laughing in a minute, knowing that she has a guardian angel like you. I shall have done with all this directly, and as soon as I’m free, I’ll be with her, she’ll see, let her wait. Gentlemen,” he said, turning to the two lawyers, now I’ll open my whole soul to you; I’ll pour out everything. We’ll finish this off directly, finish it off gaily. We shall laugh at it in the end, shan’t we? But gentlemen, that woman is the queen of my heart. Oh, let me tell you that. That one thing I’ll tell you now.... I see I’m with honourable men. She is my light, she is my holy one, and if only you knew! Did you hear her cry, ‘I’ll go to death with you’? And what have I, a penniless beggar, done for her? Why such love for me? How can a clumsy, ugly brute like me, with my ugly face, deserve such love, that she is ready to go to exile with me? And how she fell down at your feet for my sake, just now!... and yet she’s proud and has done nothing! How can I help adoring her, how can I help crying out and rushing to her as I did just now? Gentlemen, forgive me! But now, now I am comforted.”

And he sank back in his chair and, covering his face with his hands, burst into tears. But they were happy tears. He recovered himself instantly. The old police captain seemed much pleased, and the lawyers also. They

felt that the examination was passing into a new phase. When the police captain went out, Mitya was positively gay.

“Now, gentlemen, I am at your disposal, entirely at your disposal. And if it were not for all these trivial details, we should understand one another in a minute. I’m at those details again. I’m at your disposal, gentlemen, but I declare that we must have mutual confidence, you in me and I in you, or there’ll be no end to it. I speak in your interests. To business, gentlemen, to business, and don’t rummage in my soul; don’t tease me with trifles, but only ask me about facts and what matters, and I will satisfy you at once. And damn the details!”

So spoke Mitya. The interrogation began again.

CHAPTER 4

The Second Ordeal

“YOU don’t know how you encourage us, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, by your readiness to answer,” said Nikolay Parfenovitch, with an animated air, and obvious satisfaction beaming in his very prominent, short-sighted, light grey eyes, from which he had removed his spectacles a moment before. “And you have made a very just remark about the mutual confidence, without which it is sometimes positively impossible to get on in cases of such importance, if the suspected party really hopes and desires to defend himself and is in a position to do so. We on our side, will do everything in our power, and you can see for yourself how we are conducting the case. You approve, Ippolit Kirillovitch?” He turned to the prosecutor.

“Oh, undoubtedly,” replied the prosecutor. His tone was somewhat cold, compared with Nikolay Parfenovitch’s impulsiveness.

I will note once for all that Nikolay Parfenovitch, who had but lately arrived among us, had from the first felt marked respect for Ippolit Kirillovitch, our prosecutor, and had become almost his bosom friend. He was almost the only person who put implicit faith in Ippolit Kirillovitch’s extraordinary talents as a psychologist and orator and in the justice of his grievance. He had heard of him in Petersburg. On the other hand, young Nikolay Parfenovitch was the only person in the whole world whom our “unappreciated” prosecutor genuinely liked. On their way to Mokroe they had time to come to an understanding about the present case. And now as they sat at the table, the sharp-witted junior caught and interpreted every indication on his senior colleague’s face — half a word, a glance, or a wink.

“Gentlemen, only let me tell my own story and don’t interrupt me with trivial questions and I’ll tell you everything in a moment,” said Mitya excitedly.

“Excellent! Thank you. But before we proceed to listen to your communication, will you allow me to inquire as to another little fact of great interest to us? I mean the ten roubles you borrowed yesterday at about five o’clock on the security of your pistols, from your friend, Pyotr Ilyitch Perhotin.”

“I pledged them, gentlemen. I pledged them for ten roubles. What more? That’s all about it. As soon as I got back to town I pledged them.”

“You got back to town? Then you had been out of town?”

“Yes, I went a journey of forty versts into the country. Didn’t you know?”

The prosecutor and Nikolay Parfenovitch exchanged glances.

“Well, how would it be if you began your story with a systematic description of all you did yesterday, from the morning onwards? Allow us, for instance, to inquire why you were absent from the town, and just when you left and when you came back — all those facts.”

“You should have asked me like that from the beginning,” cried Mitya, laughing aloud, “and, if you like, we won’t begin from yesterday, but from the morning of the day before; then you’ll understand how, why, and where I went. I went the day before yesterday, gentlemen, to a merchant of the town, called Samsonov, to borrow three thousand roubles from him on safe security. It was a pressing matter, gentlemen, it was a sudden necessity.”

“Allow me to interrupt you,” the prosecutor put in politely. “Why were you in such pressing need for just that sum, three thousand?”

“Oh, gentlemen, you needn’t go into details, how, when and why, and why just so much money, and not so much, and all that rigmarole. Why, it’ll run to three volumes, and then you’ll want an epilogue!” Mitya said all this with the good-natured but impatient familiarity of a man who is anxious to tell the whole truth and is full of the best intentions.

“Gentlemen!” — he corrected himself hurriedly— “don’t be vexed with me for my restiveness, I beg you again. Believe me once more, I feel the greatest respect for you and understand the true position of affairs. Don’t think I’m drunk. I’m quite sober now. And, besides, being drunk would be no hindrance. It’s with me, you know, like the saying: ‘When he is sober, he is a fool; when he is drunk, he is a wise man.’ Ha ha! But I see, gentlemen, it’s not the proper thing to make jokes to you, till we’ve had our explanation, I mean. And I’ve my own dignity to keep up, too. I quite understand the difference for the moment. I am, after all, in the position of a criminal, and so, far from being on equal terms with you. And it’s your business to watch me. I can’t expect you to pat me on the head for what I did to Grigory, for one can’t break old men’s heads with impunity. I suppose you’ll put me away for him for six months, or a year perhaps, in a house of correction. I don’t know what the punishment is — but it will be without

loss of the rights of my rank, without loss of my rank, won't it? So you see, gentlemen, I understand the distinction between us.... But you must see that you could puzzle God Himself with such questions. 'How did you step? Where did you step? When did you step? And on what did you step?' I shall get mixed up, if you go on like this, and you will put it all down against me. And what will that lead to? To nothing! And even if it's nonsense I'm talking now, let me finish, and you, gentlemen, being men of honour and refinement, will forgive me! I'll finish by asking you, gentlemen, to drop that conventional method of questioning. I mean, beginning from some miserable trifle, how I got up, what I had for breakfast, how I spat, and where I spat, and so distracting the attention of the criminal, suddenly stun him with an overwhelming question, 'Whom did you murder? Whom did you rob?' Ha-ha! That's your regulation method, that's where all your cunning comes in. You can put peasants off their guard like that, but not me. I know the tricks. I've been in the service, too. Ha ha ha! You're not angry, gentlemen? You forgive my impertinence?" he cried, looking at them with a good-nature that was almost surprising. "It's only Mitya Karamazov, you know, so you can overlook it. It would be inexcusable in a sensible man; but you can forgive it in Mitya. Ha ha!"

Nikolay Parfenovitch listened, and laughed too. Though the prosecutor did not laugh, he kept his eyes fixed keenly on Mitya, as though anxious not to miss the least syllable, the slightest movement, the smallest twitch of any feature of his face.

"That's how we have treated you from the beginning," said Nikolay Parfenovitch, still laughing. "We haven't tried to put you out by asking how you got up in the morning and what you had for breakfast. We began, indeed, with questions of the greatest importance."

"I understand. I saw it and appreciated it, and I appreciate still more your present kindness to me, an unprecedented kindness, worthy of your noble hearts. We three here are gentlemen and let everything be on the footing of mutual confidence between educated, well-bred people, who have the common bond of noble birth and honour. In any case, allow me to look upon you as my best friends at this moment of my life, at this moment when my honour is assailed. That's no offence to you, gentlemen, is it?"

On the contrary. You've expressed all that so well, Dmitri Fyodorovitch," Nikolay Parfenovitch answered with dignified approbation.

“And enough of those trivial questions, gentlemen, all those tricky questions! cried Mitya enthusiastically. “Or there’s simply no knowing where we shall get to! Is there?”

“I will follow your sensible advice entirely,” the prosecutor interposed, addressing Mitya. “I don’t withdraw my question, however. It is now vitally important for us to know exactly why you needed that sum, I mean precisely three thousand.”

“Why I needed it?... Oh, for one thing and another.... Well, it was to pay a debt.”

“A debt to whom?”

“That I absolutely refuse to answer, gentlemen. Not because I couldn’t, or because I shouldn’t dare, or because it would be damaging, for it’s all a paltry matter and absolutely trifling, but — I won’t, because it’s a matter of principle: that’s my private life, and I won’t allow any intrusion into my private life. That’s my principle. Your question has no bearing on the case, and whatever has nothing to do with the case is my private affair. I wanted to pay a debt. I wanted to pay a debt of honour but to whom I won’t say.”

“Allow me to make a note of that,” said the prosecutor.

“By all means. Write down that I won’t say, that I won’t. Write that I should think it dishonourable to say. Ech! you can write it; you’ve nothing else to do with your time.”

“Allow me to caution you, sir, and to remind you once more, if you are unaware of it,” the prosecutor began, with a peculiar and stern impressiveness, “that you have a perfect right not to answer the questions put to you now, and we on our side have no right to extort an answer from you, if you decline to give it for one reason or another. That is entirely a matter for your personal decision. But it is our duty, on the other hand, in such cases as the present, to explain and set before you the degree of injury you will be doing yourself by refusing to give this or that piece of evidence. After which I will beg you to continue.”

“Gentlemen, I’m not angry... I... “Mitya muttered in a rather disconcerted tone. “Well, gentlemen, you see, that Samsonov to whom I went then...”

We will, of course, not reproduce his account of what is known to the reader already. Mitya was impatiently anxious not to omit the slightest detail. At the same time he was in a hurry to get it over. But as he gave his evidence it was written down, and therefore they had continually to pull him up. Mitya disliked this, but submitted; got angry, though still good-

humouredly. He did, it is true, exclaim, from time to time, “Gentlemen, that’s enough to make an angel out of patience!” Or, “Gentlemen, it’s no good your irritating me.”

But even though he exclaimed he still preserved for a time his genially expansive mood. So he told them how Samsonov had made a fool of him two days before. (He had completely realised by now that he had been fooled.) The sale of his watch for six roubles to obtain money for the journey was something new to the lawyers. They were at once greatly interested, and even, to Mitya’s intense indignation, thought it necessary to write the fact down as a secondary confirmation of the circumstance that he had hardly a farthing in his pocket at the time. Little by little Mitya began to grow surly. Then, after describing his journey to see Lyagavy, the night spent in the stifling hut, and so on, he came to his return to the town. Here he began, without being particularly urged, to give a minute account of the agonies of jealousy he endured on Grushenka’s account.

He was heard with silent attention. They inquired particularly into the circumstance of his having a place of ambush in Marya Kondratyevna’s house at the back of Fyodor Pavlovitch’s garden to keep watch on Grushenka, and of Smerdyakov’s bringing him information. They laid particular stress on this, and noted it down. Of his jealousy he spoke warmly and at length, and though inwardly ashamed at exposing his most intimate feelings to “public ignominy,” so to speak, he evidently overcame his shame in order to tell the truth. The frigid severity with which the investigating lawyer, and still more the prosecutor, stared intently at him as he told his story, disconcerted him at last considerably.

“That boy, Nikolay Parfenovitch, to whom I was talking nonsense about women only a few days ago, and that sickly prosecutor are not worth my telling this to,” he reflected mournfully. “It’s ignominious. ‘Be patient, humble, hold thy peace.’” He wound up his reflections with that line. But he pulled himself together to go on again. When he came to telling of his visit to Madame Hohlakov, he regained his spirits and even wished to tell a little anecdote of that lady which had nothing to do with the case. But the investigating lawyer stopped him, and civilly suggested that he should pass on to “more essential matters.” At last, when he described his despair and told them how, when he left Madame Hohlakov’s, he thought that he’d “get three thousand if he had to murder someone to do it,” they stopped him again and noted down that he had “meant to murder someone.” Mitya let

them write it without protest. At last he reached the point in his story when he learned that Grushenka had deceived him and had returned from Samsonov's as soon as he left her there, though she had said that she would stay there till midnight.

"If I didn't kill Fenya then, gentlemen, it was only because I hadn't time," broke from him suddenly at that point in his story. That, too, was carefully written down. Mitya waited gloomily, and was beginning to tell how he ran into his father's garden when the investigating lawyer suddenly stopped him, and opening the big portfolio that lay on the sofa beside him he brought out the brass pestle.

"Do you recognise this object?" he asked, showing it to Mitya.

"Oh, yes," he laughed gloomily. "Of course, I recognise it. Let me have a look at it.... Damn it, never mind!"

"You have forgotten to mention it," observed the investigating lawyer.

"Hang it all, I shouldn't have concealed it from you. Do you suppose I could have managed without it? It simply escaped my memory."

"Be so good as to tell us precisely how you came to arm yourself with it."

"Certainly I will be so good, gentlemen."

And Mitya described how he took the pestle and ran.

"But what object had you in view in arming yourself with such a weapon?"

"What object? No object. I just picked it up and ran off."

"What for, if you had no object?"

Mitya's wrath flared up. He looked intently at "the boy" and smiled gloomily and malignantly. He was feeling more and more ashamed at having told "such people" the story of his jealousy so sincerely and spontaneously.

"Bother the pestle!" broke from him suddenly.

"But still-"

"Oh, to keep off dogs... Oh, because it was dark.... In case anything turned up."

"But have you ever on previous occasions taken a weapon with you when you went out, since you're afraid of the dark?"

"Ugh! damn it all, gentlemen! There's positively no talking to you!" cried Mitya, exasperated beyond endurance, and turning to the secretary, crimson with anger, he said quickly, with a note of fury in his voice:

“Write down at once... at once... ‘that I snatched up the pestle to go and kill my father... Fyodor Pavlovitch... by hitting him on the head with it!’ Well, now are you satisfied, gentlemen? Are your minds relieved?” he said, glaring defiantly at the lawyers.

“We quite understand that you made that statement just now through exasperation with us and the questions we put to you, which you consider trivial, though they are, in fact, essential,” the prosecutor remarked drily in reply.

“Well, upon my word, gentlemen! Yes, I took the pestle.... What does one pick things up for at such moments? I don’t know what for. I snatched it up and ran — that’s all. For to me, gentlemen, passons, or I declare I won’t tell you any more.”

He sat with his elbows on the table and his head in his hand. He sat sideways to them and gazed at the wall, struggling against a feeling of nausea. He had, in fact, an awful inclination to get up and declare that he wouldn’t say another word, “not if you hang me for it.”

“You see, gentlemen,” he said at last, with difficulty controlling himself, “you see. I listen to you and am haunted by a dream.... It’s a dream I have sometimes, you know.... I often dream it — it’s always the same... that someone is hunting me, someone I’m awfully afraid of... that he’s hunting me in the dark, in the night... tracking me, and I hide somewhere from him, behind a door or cupboard, hide in a degrading way, and the worst of it is, he always knows where I am, but he pretends not to know where I am on purpose, to prolong my agony, to enjoy my terror.... That’s just what you’re doing now. It’s just like that!”

“Is that the sort of thing you dream about?” inquired the prosecutor.

“Yes, it is. Don’t you want to write it down?” said Mitya, with a distorted smile.

“No; no need to write it down. But still you do have curious dreams.”

“It’s not a question of dreams now, gentlemen — this is realism, this is real life! I’m a wolf and you’re the hunters. Well, hunt him down!”

“You are wrong to make such comparisons,” began Nikolay Parfenovitch, with extraordinary softness.

“No, I’m not wrong, at all!” Mitya flared up again, though his outburst of wrath had obviously relieved his heart. He grew more good humoured at every word. “You may not trust a criminal or a man on trial tortured by your questions, but an honourable man, the honourable impulses of the heart (I

say that boldly!) — no! That you must believe you have no right indeed... but — Be silent, heart, Be patient, humble, hold thy peace.

Well, shall I go on?" he broke off gloomily.

"If you'll be so kind," answered Nikolay Parfenovitch.

CHAPTER 5

The Third Ordeal

THOUGH Mitya spoke sullenly, it was evident that he was trying more than ever not to forget or miss a single detail of his story. He told them how he had leapt over the fence into his father's garden; how he had gone up to the window; told them all that had passed under the window. Clearly, precisely, distinctly, he described the feelings that troubled him during those moments in the garden when he longed so terribly to know whether Grushenka was with his father or not. But, strange to say, both the lawyers listened now with a sort of awful reserve, looked coldly at him, asked few questions. Mitya could gather nothing from their faces.

"They're angry and offended," he thought. "Well, bother them!"

When he described how he made up his mind at last to make the "signal" to his father that Grushenka had come, so that he should open the window, the lawyers paid no attention to the word "signal," as though they entirely failed to grasp the meaning of the word in this connection: so much so, that Mitya noticed it. Coming at last to the moment when, seeing his father peering out of the window, his hatred flared up and he pulled the pestle out of his pocket, he suddenly, as though of design, stopped short. He sat gazing at the wall and was aware that their eyes were fixed upon him.

"Well?" said the investigating lawyer. "You pulled out the weapon and... and what happened then?

"Then? Why, then I murdered him... hit him on the head and cracked his skull.... I suppose that's your story. That's it!"

His eyes suddenly flashed. All his smothered wrath suddenly flamed up with extraordinary violence in his soul.

"Our story?" repeated Nikolay Parfenovitch.

Mitya dropped his eyes and was a long time silent.

"My story, gentlemen? Well, was like this," he began softly. "Whether it was like this," he began softly. "Whether it was someone's tears, or my mother prayed to God, or a good angel kissed me at that instant, I don't know. But the devil was conquered. I rushed from the window and ran to the fence. My father was alarmed and, for the first time, he saw me then, cried out, and sprang back from the window. I remember that very well. I

ran across the garden to the fence... and there Grigory caught me, when I was sitting on the fence.”

At that point he raised his eyes at last and looked at his listeners. They seemed to be staring at him with perfectly unruffled attention. A sort of paroxysm of indignation seized on Mitya’s soul.

“Why, you’re laughing at me at this moment, gentlemen!” he broke off suddenly.

“What makes you think that?” observed Nikolay Parfenovitch.

“You don’t believe one word — that’s why! I understand, of course, that I have come to the vital point. The old man’s lying there now with his skull broken, while I — after dramatically describing how I wanted to kill him, and how I snatched up the pestle — I suddenly run away from the window. A romance! Poetry! As though one could believe a fellow on his word. Ha ha! You are scoffers, gentlemen!”

And he swung round on his chair so that it creaked.

“And did you notice,” asked the prosecutor suddenly, as though not observing Mitya’s excitement, “did you notice when you ran away from the window, whether the door into the garden was open?”

“No, it was not open.”

“It was not?”

“It was shut. And who could open it? Bah! the door. Wait a bit!” he seemed suddenly to bethink himself, and almost with a start:

“Why, did you find the door open?”

“Yes, it was open.”

“Why, who could have opened it if you did not open it yourselves?” cried Mitya, greatly astonished.

“The door stood open, and your father’s murderer undoubtedly went in at that door, and, having accomplished the crime, went out again by the same door,” the prosecutor pronounced deliberately, as though chiselling out each word separately. “That is perfectly clear. The murder was committed in the room and not through the window; that is absolutely certain from the examination that has been made, from the position of the body and everything. There can be no doubt of that circumstance.”

Mitya was absolutely dumbfounded.

“But that’s utterly impossible!” he cried, completely at a loss. “I... I didn’t go in.... I tell you positively, definitely, the door was shut the whole time I was in the garden, and when I ran out of the garden. I only stood at

the window and saw him through the window. That's all, that's all.... I remember to the last minute. And if I didn't remember, it would be just the same. I know it, for no one knew the signals except Smerdyakov, and me, and the dead man. And he wouldn't have opened the door to anyone in the world without the signals."

"Signals? What signals?" asked the prosecutor, with greedy, almost hysterical, curiosity. He instantly lost all trace of his reserve and dignity. He asked the question with a sort of cringing timidity. He scented an important fact of which he had known nothing, and was already filled with dread that Mitya might be unwilling to disclose it.

"So you didn't know!" Mitya winked at him with a malicious and mocking smile. "What if I won't tell you? From whom could you find out? No one knew about the signals except my father, Smerdyakov, and me: that was all. Heaven knew, too, but it won't tell you. But it's an interesting fact. There's no knowing what you might build on it. Ha ha! Take comfort, gentlemen, I'll reveal it. You've some foolish idea in your hearts. You don't know the man you have to deal with! You have to do with a prisoner who gives evidence against himself, to his own damage! Yes, for I'm a man of honour and you — are not."

The prosecutor swallowed this without a murmur. He was trembling with impatience to hear the new fact. Minutely and diffusely Mitya told them everything about the signals invented by Fyodor Pavlovitch for Smerdyakov. He told them exactly what every tap on the window meant, tapped the signals on the table, and when Nikolay Parfenovitch said that he supposed he, Mitya, had tapped the signal "Grushenka has come," when he tapped to his father, he answered precisely that he had tapped that signal, that "Grushenka had come."

"So now you can build up your tower," Mitya broke off, and again turned away from them contemptuously.

"So no one knew of the signals but your dead father, you, and the valet Smerdyakov? And no one else?" Nikolay Parfenovitch inquired once more.

"Yes. The valet Smerdyakov, and Heaven. Write down about Heaven. That may be of use. Besides, you will need God yourselves."

And they had already of course, begun writing it down. But while they wrote, the prosecutor said suddenly, as though pitching on a new idea:

"But if Smerdyakov also knew of these signals and you absolutely deny all responsibility for the death of your father, was it not he, perhaps, who

knocked the signal agreed upon, induced your father to open to him, and then... committed the crime?”

Mitya turned upon him a look of profound irony and intense hatred. His silent stare lasted so long that it made the prosecutor blink.

“You’ve caught the fox again,” commented Mitya at last; “you’ve got the beast by the tail. Ha ha! I see through you, Mr. Prosecutor. You thought, of course, that I should jump at that, catch at your prompting, and shout with all my might, ‘Aie! it’s Smerdyakov; he’s the murderer.’ Confess that’s what you thought. Confess, and I’ll go on.”

But the prosecutor did not confess. He held his tongue and waited.

“You’re mistaken. I’m not going to shout, ‘It’s Smerdyakov,’” said Mitya.

“And you don’t even suspect him?”

“Why, do you suspect him?”

“He is suspected, too.”

Mitya fixed his eyes on the floor.

“Joking apart,” he brought out gloomily. “Listen. From the very beginning, almost from the moment when I ran out to you from behind the curtain, I’ve had the thought of Smerdyakov in my mind. I’ve been sitting here, shouting that I’m innocent and thinking all the time ‘Smerdyakov!’ I can’t get Smerdyakov out of my head. In fact, I, too, thought of Smerdyakov just now; but only for a second. Almost at once I thought, ‘No, it’s not Smerdyakov.’ It’s not his doing, gentlemen.”

“In that case is there anybody else you suspect?” Nikolay Parfenovitch inquired cautiously.

“I don’t know anyone it could be, whether it’s the hand of Heaven or of Satan, but... not Smerdyakov,” Mitya jerked out with decision.

“But what makes you affirm so confidently and emphatically that it’s not he?”

“From my conviction — my impression. Because Smerdyakov is a man of the most abject character and a coward. He’s not a coward, he’s the epitome of all the cowardice in the world walking on two legs. He has the heart of a chicken. When he talked to me, he was always trembling for fear I should kill him, though I never raised my hand against him. He fell at my feet and blubbered; he has kissed these very boots, literally, beseeching me ‘not to frighten him.’ Do you hear? ‘Not to frighten him.’ What a thing to say! Why, I offered him money. He’s a puling chicken — sickly, epileptic,

weak-minded — a child of eight could thrash him. He has no character worth talking about. It's not Smerdyakov, gentlemen. He doesn't care for money; he wouldn't take my presents. Besides, what motive had he for murdering the old man? Why, he's very likely his son, you know — his natural son. Do you know that?"

"We have heard that legend. But you are your father's son, too, you know; yet you yourself told everyone you meant to murder him."

"That's a thrust! And a nasty, mean one, too! I'm not afraid! Oh, gentlemen, isn't it too base of you to say that to my face? It's base, because I told you that myself. I not only wanted to murder him, but I might have done it. And, what's more, I went out of my way to tell you of my own accord that I nearly murdered him. But, you see, I didn't murder him; you see, my guardian angel saved me — that's what you've not taken into account. And that's why it's so base of you. For I didn't kill him, I didn't kill him! Do you hear, I did not kill him."

He was almost choking. He had not been so moved before during the whole interrogation.

"And what has he told you, gentlemen — Smerdyakov, I mean?" he added suddenly, after a pause. "May I ask that question?"

"You may ask any question," the prosecutor replied with frigid severity, "any question relating to the facts of the case, and we are, I repeat, bound to answer every inquiry you make. We found the servant Smerdyakov, concerning whom you inquire, lying unconscious in his bed, in an epileptic fit of extreme severity, that had recurred, possibly, ten times. The doctor who was with us told us, after seeing him, that he may possibly not outlive the night."

"Well, if that's so, the devil must have killed him," broke suddenly from Mitya, as though until that moment had been asking himself: "Was it Smerdyakov or not?"

"We will come back to this later," Nikolay Parfenovitch decided. "Now wouldn't you like to continue your statement?"

Mitya asked for a rest. His request was courteously granted. After resting, he went on with his story. But he was evidently depressed. He was exhausted, mortified, and morally shaken. To make things worse the prosecutor exasperated him, as though intentionally, by vexatious interruptions about "trifling points." Scarcely had Mitya described how, sitting on the wall, he had struck Grigory on the head with the pestle, while

the old man had hold of his left leg, and how he then jumped down to look at him, when the prosecutor stopped him to ask him to describe exactly how he was sitting on the wall. Mitya was surprised.

“Oh, I was sitting like this, astride, one leg on one side of the wall and one on the other.”

“And the pestle?”

“The pestle was in my hand.”

“Not in your pocket? Do you remember that precisely? Was it a violent blow you gave him?”

“It must have been a violent one. But why do you ask?”

“Would you mind sitting on the chair just as you sat on the wall then and showing us just how you moved your arm, and in what direction?”

“You’re making fun of me, aren’t you?” asked Mitya, looking haughtily at the speaker; but the latter did not flinch.

Mitya turned abruptly, sat astride on his chair, and swung his arm.

“This was how I struck him! That’s how I knocked him down! What more do you want?”

“Thank you. May I trouble you now to explain why you jumped down, with what object, and what you had in view?”

“Oh, hang it!... I jumped down to look at the man I’d hurt... I don’t know what for!”

“Though you were so excited and were running away?”

“Yes, though I was excited and running away.”

“You wanted to help him?”

“Help!... Yes, perhaps I did want to help him.... I don’t remember.”

“You don’t remember? Then you didn’t quite know what you were doing?”

“Not at all. I remember everything — every detail. I jumped down to look at him, and wiped his face with my handkerchief.”

“We have seen your handkerchief. Did you hope to restore him to consciousness?”

“I don’t know whether I hoped it. I simply wanted to make sure whether he was alive or not.”

“Ah! You wanted to be sure? Well, what then?”

“I’m not a doctor. I couldn’t decide. I ran away thinking I’d killed him. And now he’s recovered.”

“Excellent,” commented the prosecutor. “Thank you. That’s all I wanted. Kindly proceed.”

Alas! it never entered Mitya’s head to tell them, though he remembered it, that he had jumped back from pity, and standing over the prostrate figure had even uttered some words of regret: “You’ve come to grief, old man — there’s no help for it. Well, there you must lie.”

The prosecutor could only draw one conclusion: that the man had jumped back “at such a moment and in such excitement simply with the object of ascertaining whether the only witness of his crime were dead; that he must therefore have been a man of great strength, coolness, decision, and foresight even at such a moment,”... and so on. The prosecutor was satisfied: “I’ve provoked the nervous fellow by ‘trifles’ and he has said more than he meant With painful effort Mitya went on. But this time he was pulled up immediately by Nikolay Parfenovitch.

“How came you to run to the servant, Fedosya Markovna, with your hands so covered with blood, and, as it appears, your face, too?”

“Why, I didn’t notice the blood at all at the time,” answered Mitya.

“That’s quite likely. It does happen sometimes.” The prosecutor exchanged glances with Nikolay Parfenovitch.

“I simply didn’t notice. You’re quite right there, prosecutor,” Mitya assented suddenly.

Next came the account of Mitya’s sudden determination to “step aside” and make way for their happiness. But he could not make up his mind to open his heart to them as before, and tell them about “the queen of his soul.” He disliked speaking of her before these chilly persons “who were fastening on him like bugs.” And so in response to their reiterated questions he answered briefly and abruptly:

“Well, I made up my mind to kill myself. What had I left to live for? That question stared me in the face. Her first rightful lover had come back, the man who wronged her but who’d hurried back to offer his love, after five years, and atone for the wrong with marriage.... So I knew it was all over for me.... And behind me disgrace, and that blood — Grigory’s.... What had I to live for? So I went to redeem the pistols I had pledged, to load them and put a bullet in my brain to-morrow.”

“And a grand feast the night before?”

“Yes, a grand feast the night before. Damn it all, gentlemen! Do make haste and finish it. I meant to shoot myself not far from here, beyond the

village, and I'd planned to do it at five o'clock in the morning. And I had a note in my pocket already. I wrote it at Perhotin's when I loaded my pistols. Here's the letter. Read it! It's not for you I tell it," he added contemptuously. He took it from his waistcoat pocket and flung it on the table. The lawyers read it with curiosity, and, as is usual, added it to the papers connected with the case.

"And you didn't even think of washing your hands at Perhotin's? You were not afraid then of arousing suspicion?"

"What suspicion? Suspicion or not, I should have galloped here just the same, and shot myself at five o'clock, and you wouldn't have been in time to do anything. If it hadn't been for what's happened to my father, you would have known nothing about it, and wouldn't have come here. Oh, it's the devil's doing. It was the devil murdered father, it was through the devil that you found it out so soon. How did you manage to get here so quick? It's marvellous, a dream!"

"Mr. Perhotin informed us that when you came to him, you held in your hands... your blood-stained hands... your money... a lot of money... a bundle of hundred-rouble notes, and that his servant-boy saw it too."

"That's true, gentlemen. I remember it was so."

"Now, there's one little point presents itself. Can you inform us," Nikolay Parfenovitch began, with extreme gentleness, "where did you get so much money all of a sudden, when it appears from the facts, from the reckoning of time, that you had not been home?"

The prosecutor's brows contracted at the question being asked so plainly, but he did not interrupt Nikolay Parfenovitch.

"No, I didn't go home," answered Mitya, apparently perfectly composed, but looking at the floor.

"Allow me then to repeat my question," Nikolay Parfenovitch went on as though creeping up to the subject. "Where were you able to procure such a sum all at once, when by your own confession, at five o'clock the same day you-"

"I was in want of ten roubles and pledged my pistols with Perhotin, and then went to Madame Hohlakov to borrow three thousand which she wouldn't give me, and so on, and all the rest of it," Mitya interrupted sharply. "Yes, gentlemen, I was in want of it, and suddenly thousands turned up, eh? Do you know, gentlemen, you're both afraid now 'what if he won't tell us where he got it?' That's just how it is. I'm not going to tell you,

gentlemen. You've guessed right. You'll never know," said Mitya, chipping out each word with extraordinary determination. The lawyers were silent for a moment.

"You must understand, Mr. Karamazov, that it is of vital importance for us to know," said Nikolay Parfenovitch, softly and suavely.

"I understand; but still I won't tell you."

The prosecutor, too, intervened, and again reminded the prisoner that he was at liberty to refuse to answer questions, if he thought it to his interest, and so on. But in view of the damage he might do himself by his silence, especially in a case of such importance as-

"And so on, gentlemen, and so on. Enough! I've heard that rigmarole before," Mitya interrupted again. "I can see for myself how important it is, and that this is the vital point, and still I won't say."

"What is it to us? It's not our business, but yours. .You are doing yourself harm," observed Nikolay Parfenovitch nervously.

"You see, gentlemen, joking apart" — Mitya lifted his eyes and looked firmly at them both— "I had an inkling from the first that we should come to loggerheads at this point. But at first when I began to give my evidence, it was all still far away and misty; it was all floating, and I was so simple that I began with the supposition of mutual confidence existing between us. Now I can see for myself that such confidence is out of the question, for in any case we were bound to come to this cursed stumbling-block. And now we've come to it! It's impossible and there's an end of it! But I don't blame you. You can't believe it all simply on my word. I understand that, of course."

He relapsed into gloomy silence.

"Couldn't you, without abandoning your resolution to be silent about the chief point, could you not, at the same time, give us some slight hint as to the nature of the motives which are strong enough to induce you to refuse to answer, at a crisis so full of danger to you?"

Mitya smiled mournfully, almost dreamily.

"I'm much more good-natured than you think, gentlemen. I'll tell you the reason why and give you that hint, though you don't deserve it. I won't speak of that, gentlemen, because it would be a stain on my honour. The answer to the question where I got the money would expose me to far greater disgrace than the murder and robbing of my father, if I had

murdered and robbed him. That's why I can't tell you. I can't for fear of disgrace. What, gentlemen, are you going to write that down?"

"Yes, we'll write it down," lisped Nikolay Parfenovitch.

"You ought not to write that down about 'disgrace.' I only told you that in the goodness of my heart. I needn't have told you. I made you a present of it, so to speak, and you pounce upon it at once. Oh, well, write — write what you like," he concluded, with scornful disgust. "I'm not afraid of you and I can still hold up my head before you."

"And can't you tell us the nature of that disgrace?" Nikolay Parfenovitch hazarded.

The prosecutor frowned darkly.

"No, no, c'est fini, don't trouble yourselves. It's not worth while soiling one's hands. I have soiled myself enough through you as it is. You're not worth it — no one is. Enough, gentlemen. I'm not going on."

This was said too peremptorily. Nikolay Parfenovitch did not insist further, but from Ippolit Kirillovitch's eyes he saw that he had not given up hope.

"Can you not, at least, tell us what sum you had in your hands when you went into Mr. Perhotin's — how many roubles exactly?"

"I can't tell you that."

"You spoke to Mr. Perhotin, I believe, of having received three thousand from Madame Hohlakov."

"Perhaps I did. Enough, gentlemen. I won't say how much I had."

"Will you be so good then as to tell us how you came here and what you have done since you arrived?"

"Oh! you might ask the people here about that. But I'll tell you if you like."

He proceeded to do so, but we won't repeat his story. He told it dryly and curtly. Of the raptures of his love he said nothing, but told them that he abandoned his determination to shoot himself, owing to "new factors in the case." He told the story without going into motives or details. And this time the lawyers did not worry him much. It was obvious that there was no essential point of interest to them here.

"We shall verify all that. We will come back to it during the examination of the witnesses, which will, of course, take place in your presence," said Nikolay Parfenovitch in conclusion. "And now allow me to request you to

lay on the table everything in your possession, especially all the money you still have about you.”

“My money, gentlemen? Certainly. I understand that that is necessary. I’m surprised, indeed, that you haven’t inquired about it before. It’s true I couldn’t get away anywhere. I’m sitting here where I can be seen. But here’s my money — count it — take it. That’s all, I think.”

He turned it all out of his pockets; even the small change — two pieces of twenty copecks — he pulled out of his waistcoat pocket. They counted the money, which amounted to eight hundred and thirty-six roubles, and forty copecks.

“And is that all?” asked the investigating lawyer.

“You stated just now in your evidence that you spent three hundred roubles at Plotnikovs’. You gave Perhotin ten, your driver twenty, here you lost two hundred, then...”

Nikolay Parfenovitch reckoned it all up. Mitya helped him readily. They recollected every farthing and included it in the reckoning. Nikolay Parfenovitch hurriedly added up the total. “With this eight hundred you must have had about fifteen hundred at first?”

“I suppose so,” snapped Mitya.

“How is it they all assert there was much more?”

“Let them assert it.”

“But you asserted it yourself.”

“Yes, I did, too.”

“We will compare all this with the evidence of other persons not yet examined. Don’t be anxious about your money. It will be properly taken care of and be at your disposal at the conclusion of... what is beginning... if it appears, or, so to speak, is proved that you have undisputed right to it. Well, and now...”

Nikolay Parfenovitch suddenly got up, and informed Mitya firmly that it was his duty and obligation to conduct a minute and thorough search “of your clothes and everything else...”

“By all means, gentlemen. I’ll turn out all my pockets, if you like.”

And he did, in fact, begin turning out his pockets.

“It will be necessary to take off your clothes, too.”

“What! Undress? Ugh! Damn it! Won’t you search me as I am? Can’t you?”

“It’s utterly impossible, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. You must take off your clothes.”

“As you like,” Mitya submitted gloomily; “only, please, not here, but behind the curtains. Who will search them?”

“Behind the curtains, of course.”

Nikolay Parfenovitch bent his head in assent. His small face wore an expression of peculiar solemnity.

CHAPTER 6

The Prosecutor Catches Mitya

SOMETHING utterly unexpected and amazing to Mitya followed. He could never, even a minute before, have conceived that anyone could behave like that to him, Mitya Karamazov. What was worst of all, there was something humiliating in it, and on their side something “supercilious and scornful.” It was nothing to take off his coat, but he was asked to undress further, or rather not asked but “commanded,” he quite understood that. From pride and contempt he submitted without a word. Several peasants accompanied the lawyers and remained on the same side of the curtain. “To be ready if force is required,” thought Mitya, “and perhaps for some other reason, too.”

“Well, must I take off my shirt, too?” he asked sharply, but Nikolay Parfenovitch did not answer. He was busily engaged with the prosecutor in examining the coat, the trousers, the waistcoat and the cap; and it was evident that they were both much interested in the scrutiny. “They make no bones about it,” thought Mitya, “they don’t keep up the most elementary politeness.”

“I ask you for the second time — need I take off my shirt or not?” he said, still more sharply and irritably.

“Don’t trouble yourself. We will tell you what to do,” Nikolay Parfenovitch said, and his voice was positively peremptory, or so it seemed to Mitya.

Meantime a consultation was going on in undertones between the lawyers. There turned out to be on the coat, especially on the left side at the back, a huge patch of blood, dry, and still stiff. There were bloodstains on the trousers, too. Nikolay Parfenovitch, moreover, in the presence of the peasant witnesses, passed his fingers along the collar, the cuffs, and all the seams of the coat and trousers, obviously looking for something — money, of course. He didn’t even hide from Mitya his suspicion that he was capable of sewing money up in his clothes.

“He treats me not as an officer but as a thief,” Mitya muttered to himself. They communicated their ideas to one another with amazing frankness. The secretary, for instance, who was also behind the curtain, fussing about and

listening, called Nikolay Parfenovitch's attention to the cap, which they were also fingering.

"You remember Gridyenko, the copying clerk," observed the secretary. "Last summer he received the wages of the whole office, and pretended to have lost the money when he was drunk. And where was it found? Why, in just such pipings in his cap. The hundred-rouble notes were screwed up in little rolls and sewed in the piping."

Both the lawyers remembered Gridyenko's case perfectly, and so laid aside Mitya's cap, and decided that all his clothes must be more thoroughly examined later.

"Excuse me," cried Nikolay Parfenovitch, suddenly, noticing that the right cuff of Mitya's shirt was turned in, and covered with blood, "excuse me, what's that, blood?"

"Yes," Mitya jerked out.

"That is, what blood?... and why is the cuff turned in?"

Mitya told him how he had got the sleeve stained with blood looking after Grigory, and had turned it inside when he was washing his hands at Perhotin's.

"You must take off your shirt, too. That's very important as material evidence."

Mitya flushed red and flew into a rage.

"What, am I to stay naked?" he shouted.

"Don't disturb yourself. We will arrange something. And meanwhile take off your socks."

"You're not joking? Is that really necessary?"

Mitya's eyes flashed.

"We are in no mood for joking," answered Nikolay Parfenovitch sternly.

"Well, if I must-" muttered Mitya, and sitting down on the bed, he took off his socks. He felt unbearably awkward. All were clothed, while he was naked, and strange to say, when he was undressed he felt somehow guilty in their presence, and was almost ready to believe himself that he was inferior to them, and that now they had a perfect right to despise him.

"When all are undressed, one is somehow not ashamed, but when one's the only one undressed and everybody is looking, it's degrading," he kept repeating to himself, again and again. "It's like a dream; I've sometimes dreamed of being in such degrading positions." It was a misery to him to take off his socks. They were very dirty, and so were his underclothes, and

now everyone could see it. And what was worse, he disliked his feet. All his life he had thought both his big toes hideous. He particularly loathed the coarse, flat, crooked nail on the right one, and now they would all see it. Feeling intolerably ashamed made him, at once and intentionally, rougher. He pulled off his shirt, himself.

“Would you like to look anywhere else if you’re not ashamed to?”

“No, there’s no need to, at present.”

“Well, am I to stay naked like this?” he added savagely.

“Yes, that can’t be helped for the time.... Kindly sit down here for a while. You can wrap yourself in a quilt from the bed, and I... I’ll see to all this.”

All the things were shown to the witnesses. The report of the search was drawn up, and at last Nikolay Parfenovitch went out, and the clothes were carried out after him. Ippolit Kirillovitch went out, too. Mitya was left alone with the peasants, who stood in silence, never taking their eyes off him. Mitya wrapped himself up in the quilt. He felt cold. His bare feet stuck out, and he couldn’t pull the quilt over so as to cover them. Nikolay Parfenovitch seemed to be gone a long time, “an insufferable time.”

“He thinks of me as a puppy,” thought Mitya, gnashing his teeth. “That rotten prosecutor has gone, too, contemptuous no doubt, it disgusts him to see me naked!”

Mitya imagined, however, that his clothes would be examined and returned to him. But what was his indignation when Nikolay Parfenovitch came back with quite different clothes, brought in behind him by a peasant.

“Here are clothes for you,” he observed airily, seeming well satisfied with the success of his mission. “Mr. Kalganov has kindly provided these for this unusual emergency, as well as a clean shirt. Luckily he had them all in his trunk. You can keep your own socks and underclothes.”

Mitya flew into a passion.

“I won’t have other people’s clothes!” he shouted menacingly, “give me my own!”

“It’s impossible!”

“Give me my own. Damn Kalganov and his clothes, too!”

It was a long time before they could persuade him. But they succeeded somehow in quieting him down. They impressed upon him that his clothes, being stained with blood, must be “included with the other material evidence,” and that they “had not even the right to let him have them now...

taking into consideration the possible outcome of the case.” Mitya at last understood this. He subsided into gloomy silence and hurriedly dressed himself. He merely observed, as he put them on, that the clothes were much better than his old ones, and that he disliked “gaining by the change.” The coat was, besides, “ridiculously tight. Am I to be dressed up like a fool... for your amusement?”

They urged upon him again that he was exaggerating, that Kalganov was only a little taller, so that only the trousers might be a little too long. But the coat turned out to be really tight in the shoulders.

“Damn it all! I can hardly button it,” Mitya grumbled. “Be so good as to tell Mr. Kalganov from me that I didn’t ask for his clothes, and it’s not my doing that they’ve dressed me up like a clown.”

“He understands that, and is sorry... I mean, not sorry to lend you his clothes, but sorry about all this business,” mumbled Nikolay Parfenovitch.

“Confound his sorrow! Well, where now? Am I to go on sitting here?”

He was asked to go back to the “other room.” Mitya went in, scowling with anger, and trying to avoid looking at anyone. Dressed in another man’s clothes he felt himself disgraced, even in the eyes of the peasants, and of Trifon Borissovitch, whose face appeared, for some reason, in the doorway, and vanished immediately. “He’s come to look at me dressed up,” thought Mitya. He sat down on the same chair as before. He had an absurd nightmarish feeling, as though he were out of his mind.

“Well, what now? Are you going to flog me? That’s all that’s left for you,” he said, clenching his teeth and addressing the prosecutor. He would not turn to Nikolay Parfenovitch, as though he disdained to speak to him.

“He looked too closely at my socks, and turned them inside out on purpose to show everyone how dirty they were — the scoundrel!”

“Well, now we must proceed to the examination of witnesses,” observed Nikolay Parfenovitch, as though in reply to Mitya’s question.

“Yes,” said the prosecutor thoughtfully, as though reflecting on something.

“We’ve done what we could in your interest, Dmitri Fyodorovitch,” Nikolay Parfenovitch went on, “but having received from you such an uncompromising refusal to explain to us the source from which you obtained the money found upon you, we are, at the present moment-”

“What is the stone in your ring?” Mitya interrupted suddenly, as though awakening from a reverie. He pointed to one of the three large rings

adorning Nikolay Parfenovitch’s right hand.

“Ring?” repeated Nikolay Parfenovitch with surprise.

“Yes, that one... on your middle finger, with the little veins in it, what stone is that?” Mitya persisted, like a peevish child.

“That’s a smoky topaz,” said Nikolay Parfenovitch, smiling. “Would you like to look at it? I’ll take it off...”

“No, don’t take it off,” cried Mitya furiously, suddenly waking up, and angry with himself. “Don’t take it off... there’s no need.... Damn it!... Gentlemen, you’ve sullied my heart! Can you suppose that I would conceal it from you, if I had really killed my father, that I would shuffle, lie, and hide myself? No, that’s not like Dmitri Karamazov, that he couldn’t do, and if I were guilty, I swear I shouldn’t have waited for your coming, or for the sunrise as I meant at first, but should have killed myself before this, without waiting for the dawn! I know that about myself now. I couldn’t have learnt so much in twenty years as I’ve found out in this accursed night!... And should I have been like this on this night, and at this moment, sitting with you, could I have talked like this, could I have moved like this, could I have looked at you and at the world like this, if I had really been the murderer of my father, when the very thought of having accidentally killed Grigory gave me no peace all night — not from fear — oh, not simply from fear of your punishment! The disgrace of it! And you expect me to be open with such scoffers as you, who see nothing and believe in nothing, blind moles and scoffers, and to tell you another nasty thing I’ve done, another disgrace, even if that would save me from your accusation! No, better Siberia! The man who opened the door to my father and went in at that door, he killed him, he robbed him. Who was he? I’m racking my brains and can’t think who. But I can tell you it was not Dmitri Karamazov, and that’s all I can tell you, and that’s enough, enough, leave me alone.... Exile me, punish me, but don’t bother me any more. I’ll say no more. Call your witnesses!”

Mitya uttered his sudden monologue as though he were determined to be absolutely silent for the future. The prosecutor watched him the whole time and only when he had ceased speaking, observed, as though it were the most ordinary thing, with the most frigid and composed air:

“Oh, about the open door of which you spoke just now, we may as well inform you, by the way, now, of a very interesting piece of evidence of the greatest importance both to you and to us, that has been given us by Grigory, the old man you wounded. On his recovery, he clearly and

emphatically stated, in reply to our questions, that when, on coming out to the steps, and hearing a noise in the garden, he made up his mind to go into it through the little gate which stood open, before he noticed you running, as you have told us already, in the dark from the open window where you saw your father, he, Grigory, glanced to the left, and, while noticing the open window, observed at the same time, much nearer to him, the door, standing wide open — that door which you have stated to have been shut the whole time you were in the garden. I will not conceal from you that Grigory himself confidently affirms and bears witness that you must have run from that door, though, of course, he did not see you do so with his own eyes, since he only noticed you first some distance away in the garden, running towards the fence."

Mitya had leapt up from his chair half-way through this speech.

"Nonsense!" he yelled, in a sudden frenzy, "it's a barefaced lie. He couldn't have seen the door open because it was shut. He's lying!"

"I consider it my duty to repeat that he is firm in his statement. He does not waver. He adheres to it. We've cross-examined him several times."

"Precisely. I have cross-examined him several times," Nikolay Parfenovitch confirmed warmly.

"It's false, false! It's either an attempt to slander me, or the hallucination of a madman," Mitya still shouted. "He's simply raving, from loss of blood, from the wound. He must have fancied it when he came to.... He's raving."

"Yes, but he noticed the open door, not when he came to after his injuries, but before that, as soon as he went into the garden from the lodge."

"But it's false, it's false! It can't be so! He's slandering me from spite.... He couldn't have seen it... I didn't come from the door," gasped Mitya.

The prosecutor turned to Nikolay Parfenovitch and said to him impressively:

"Confront him with it."

"Do you recognise this object?"

Nikolay Parfenovitch laid upon the table a large and thick official envelope, on which three seals still remained intact. The envelope was empty, and slit open at one end. Mitya stared at it with open eyes.

"It... it must be that envelope of my father's, the envelope that contained the three thousand roubles... and if there's inscribed on it, allow me, 'For my little chicken'... yes — three thousand!" he shouted, "do you see, three thousand, do you see?"

“Of course, we see. But we didn’t find the money in it. It was empty, and lying on the floor by the bed, behind the screen.”

For some seconds Mitya stood as though thunderstruck.

“Gentlemen, it’s Smerdyakov!” he shouted suddenly, at the top of his voice. “It’s he who’s murdered him! He’s robbed him! No one else knew where the old man hid the envelope. It’s Smerdyakov, that’s clear, now!”

“But you, too, knew of the envelope and that it was under the pillow.”

“I never knew it. I’ve never seen it. This is the first time I’ve looked at it. I’d only heard of it from Smerdyakov.... He was the only one who knew where the old man kept it hidden, I didn’t know...” Mitya was completely breathless.

“But you told us yourself that the envelope was under your deceased father’s pillow. You especially stated that it was under the pillow, so you must have known it.”

“We’ve got it written down,” confirmed Nikolay Parfenovitch.

“Nonsense! It’s absurd! I’d no idea it was under the pillow. And perhaps it wasn’t under the pillow at all.... It was just a chance guess that it was under the pillow. What does Smerdyakov say? Have you asked him where it was? What does Smerdyakov say? That’s the chief point.... And I went out of my way to tell lies against myself.... I told you without thinking that it was under the pillow, and now you — Oh, you know how one says the wrong thing, without meaning it. No one knew but Smerdyakov, only Smerdyakov, and no one else.... He didn’t even tell me where it was! But it’s his doing, his doing; there’s no doubt about it, he murdered him, that’s as clear as daylight now,” Mitya exclaimed more and more frantically, repeating himself incoherently, and growing more and more exasperated and excited. “You must understand that, and arrest him at once.... He must have killed him while I was running away and while Grigory was unconscious, that’s clear now.... He gave the signal and father opened to him... for no one but he knew the signal, and without the signal father would never have opened the door....”

“But you’re again forgetting the circumstance,” the prosecutor observed, still speaking with the same restraint, though with a note of triumph, “that there was no need to give the signal if the door already stood open when you were there, while you were in the garden...”

“The door, the door,” muttered Mitya, and he stared speechless at the prosecutor. He sank back helpless in his chair. All were silent.

“Yes, the door!... It’s a nightmare! God is against me!” he exclaimed, staring before him in complete stupefaction.

“Come, you see,” the prosecutor went on with dignity, “and you can judge for yourself, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. On the one hand, we have the evidence of the open door from which you ran out, a fact which overwhelms you and us. On the other side, your incomprehensible, persistent, and, so to speak, obdurate silence with regard to the source from which you obtained the money which was so suddenly seen in your hands, when only three hours earlier, on your own showing, you pledged your pistols for the sake of ten roubles! In view of all these facts, judge for yourself. What are we to believe, and what can we depend upon? And don’t accuse us of being ‘frigid, cynical, scoffing people,’ who are incapable of believing in the generous impulses of your heart.... Try to enter into our position...”

Mitya was indescribably agitated. He turned pale.

“Very well!” he exclaimed suddenly, “I will tell you my secret. I’ll tell you where I got the money!... I’ll reveal my shame, that I may not have to blame myself or you hereafter.”

“And believe me, Dmitri Fyodorovitch,” put in Nikolay Parfenovitch, in a voice of almost pathetic delight, “that every sincere and complete confession on your part at this moment may, later on, have an immense influence in your favour, and may, indeed, moreover-”

But the prosecutor gave him a slight shove under the table, and he checked himself in time. Mitya, it is true, had not heard him.

CHAPTER 7

Mitya's Great Secret Received with Hisses

"GENTLEMEN," he began, still in the same agitation, "I want to make a full confession: that money was my own."

The lawyer's faces lengthened. That was not at all what they expected.

"How do you mean?" faltered Nikolay Parfenovitch, "when at five o'clock on the same day, from your own confession-"

"Damn five o'clock on the same day and my own confession! That's nothing to do with it now! That money was my own, my own, that is, stolen by me...not mine, I mean, but stolen by me, and it was fifteen hundred roubles, and I had it on me all the time, all the time..."

"But where did you get it?"

"I took it off my neck, gentlemen, off this very neck... it was here, round my neck, sewn up in a rag, and I'd had it round my neck a long time, it's a month since I put it round my neck... to my shame and disgrace!"

"And from whom did you... appropriate it?"

"You mean, 'steal it'? Speak out plainly now. Yes, I consider that I practically stole it, but, if you prefer, I 'appropriated it.' I consider I stole it. And last night I stole it finally."

"Last night? But you said that it's a month since you... obtained it?..."

"Yes. But not from my father. Not from my father, don't be uneasy. I didn't steal it from my father, but from her. Let me tell you without interrupting. It's hard to do, you know. You see, a month ago, I was sent for by Katerina Ivanovna, formerly my betrothed. Do you know her?"

"Yes, of course."

"I know you know her. She's a noble creature, noblest of the noble. But she has hated me ever so long, oh, ever so long... and hated me with good reason, good reason!"

"Katerina Ivanovna!" Nikolay Parfenovitch exclaimed with wonder. The prosecutor, too, stared.

"Oh, don't take her name in vain! I'm a scoundrel to bring her into it. Yes, I've seen that she hated me... a long while.... From the very first, even that evening at my lodging... but enough, enough. You're unworthy even to know of that. No need of that at all.... I need only tell you that she sent for

me a month ago, gave me three thousand roubles to send off to her sister and another relation in Moscow (as though she couldn’t have sent it off herself!) and I... it was just at that fatal moment in my life when I... well, in fact, when I’d just come to love another, her, she’s sitting down below now, Grushenka. I carried her off here to Mokroe then, and wasted here in two days half that damned three thousand, but the other half I kept on me. Well, I’ve kept that other half, that fifteen hundred, like a locket round my neck, but yesterday I undid it, and spent it. What’s left of it, eight hundred roubles, is in your hands now, Nikolay Parfenovitch. That’s the change out of the fifteen hundred I had yesterday.”

“Excuse me. How’s that? Why, when you were here a month ago you spent three thousand, not fifteen hundred, everybody knows that.”

“Who knows it? Who counted the money? Did I let anyone count it?”

“Why, you told everyone yourself that you’d spent exactly three thousand.”

“It’s true, I did. I told the whole town so, and the whole town said so. And here, at Mokroe, too, everyone reckoned it was three thousand. Yet I didn’t spend three thousand, but fifteen hundred. And the other fifteen hundred I sewed into a little bag. That’s how it was, gentlemen. That’s where I got that money yesterday....”

“This is almost miraculous,” murmured Nikolay Parfenovitch.

“Allow me to inquire,” observed the prosecutor at last, “have you informed anyone whatever of this circumstance before; I mean that you had fifteen hundred left about you a month ago?”

“I told no one.”

“That’s strange. Do you mean absolutely no one?”

“Absolutely no one. No one and nobody.”

“What was your reason for this reticence? What was your motive for making such a secret of it? To be more precise: You have told us at last your secret, in your words, so ‘disgraceful,’ though in reality — that is, of course, comparatively speaking — this action, that is, the appropriation of three thousand roubles belonging to someone else, and, of course, only for a time is, in my view at least, only an act of the greatest recklessness and not so disgraceful, when one takes into consideration your character.... Even admitting that it was an action in the highest degree discreditable, still, discreditable is not ‘disgraceful.’... Many people have already guessed, during this last month, about the three thousand of Katerina Ivanovna’s that

you have spent, and I heard the legend myself, apart from your confession.... Mihail Makarovitch, for instance, had heard it, too, so that indeed, it was scarcely a legend, but the gossip of the whole town. There are indications, too, if I am not mistaken, that you confessed this yourself to someone, I mean that the money was Katerina Ivanovna's, and so, it's extremely surprising to me that hitherto, that is, up to the present moment, you have made such an extraordinary secret of the fifteen hundred you say you put by, apparently connecting a feeling of positive horror with that secret.... It's not easy to believe that it could cost you such distress to confess such a secret.... You cried out, just now, that Siberia would be better than confessing it..."

The prosecutor ceased speaking. He was provoked. He did not conceal his vexation, which was almost anger, and gave vent to all his accumulated spleen, disconnectedly and incoherently, without choosing words.

"It's not the fifteen hundred that's the disgrace, but that I put it apart from the rest of the three thousand," said Mitya firmly.

"Why?" smiled the prosecutor irritably. "What is there disgraceful, to your thinking, in your having set aside half of the three thousand you had discreditably, if you prefer, 'disgracefully,' appropriated? Your taking the three thousand is more important than what you did with it. And by the way, why did you do that — why did you set apart that half, for what purpose, for what object did you do it? Can you explain that to us?"

"Oh, gentlemen, the purpose is the whole point!" cried Mitya. "I put it aside because I was vile, that is, because I was calculating, and to be calculating in such a case is vile... and that vileness has been going on a whole month."

"It's incomprehensible."

"I wonder at you. But I'll make it clearer. Perhaps it really is incomprehensible. You see, attend to what I say. I appropriate three thousand entrusted to my honour; I spend it on a spree, say I spend it all, and next morning I go to her and say, 'Katya, I've done wrong, I've squandered your three thousand'; well, is that right? No, it's not right — it's dishonest and cowardly; I'm a beast, with no more self-control than a beast, that's so, isn't it? But still I'm not a thief? Not a downright thief, you'll admit! I squandered it, but I didn't steal it. Now a second, rather more favourable alternative: follow me carefully, or I may get confused again — my head's going round — and so, for the second alternative: I spend here

only fifteen hundred out of the three thousand, that is, only half. Next day I go and take that half to her: ‘Katya, take this fifteen hundred from me, I’m a low beast, and an untrustworthy scoundrel, for I’ve wasted half the money, and I shall waste this, too, so keep me from temptation!’ Well, what of that alternative? I should be a beast and a scoundrel, and whatever you like; but not a thief, not altogether a thief, or I should not have brought back what was left, but have kept that, too. She would see at once that since I brought back half, I should pay back what I’d spent, that I should never give up trying to, that I should work to get it and pay it back. So in that case I should be a scoundrel, but not a thief, you may say what you like, not a thief!”

“I admit that there is a certain distinction,” said the prosecutor, with a cold smile. “But it’s strange that you see such a vital difference.”

“Yes, I see a vital difference. Every man may be a scoundrel, and perhaps every man is a scoundrel, but not everyone can be a thief; it takes an arch-scoundrel to be that. Oh, of course, I don’t know how to make these fine distinctions... but a thief is lower than a scoundrel, that’s my conviction. Listen, I carry the money about me a whole month; I may make up my mind to give it back to-morrow, and I’m a scoundrel no longer; but I cannot make up my mind, you see, though I’m making up my mind every day, and every day spurring myself on to do it, and yet for a whole month I can’t bring myself to it, you see. Is that right to your thinking, is that right?”

“Certainly, that’s not right; that I can quite understand, and that I don’t dispute,” answered the prosecutor with reserve. “And let us give up all discussion of these subtleties and distinctions, and, if you will be so kind, get back to the point. And the point is, that you have still not told us, although we’ve asked you, why, in the first place, you halved the money, squandering one half and hiding the other? For what purpose exactly did you hide it, what did you mean to do with that fifteen hundred? I insist upon that question, Dmitri Fyodorovitch.”

“Yes, of course!” cried Mitya, striking himself on the forehead; “forgive me, I’m worrying you, and am not explaining the chief point, or you’d understand in a minute, for it’s just the motive of it that’s the disgrace! You see, it was all to do with the old man, my dead father. He was always pestering Agrafena and I was jealous; I thought then that she was hesitating between me and him. So I kept thinking everyday, suppose she were to make up her mind all of a sudden, suppose she were to leave off tormenting

me, and were suddenly to say to me, ‘I love you, not him; take me to the other end of the world.’ And I’d only forty copecks; how could I take her away, what could I do? Why, I’d be lost. You see, I didn’t know her then, I didn’t understand her, I thought she wanted money, and that she wouldn’t forgive my poverty. And so I fiendishly counted out the half of that three thousand, sewed it up, calculating on it, sewed it up before I was drunk, and after I had sewn it up, I went off to get drunk on the rest. Yes, that was base. Do you understand now?”

Both the lawyers laughed aloud.

“I should have called it sensible and moral on your part not to have squandered it all,” chuckled Nikolay Parfenovitch, “for after all what does it amount to?”

“Why, that I stole it, that’s what it amounts to! Oh, God, you horrify me by not understanding! Every day that I had that fifteen hundred sewn up round my neck, every day and every hour I said to myself, ‘You’re a thief! you’re a thief!’ Yes, that’s why I’ve been so savage all this month, that’s why I fought in the tavern, that’s why I attacked my father, it was because I felt I was a thief. I couldn’t make up my mind; I didn’t dare even to tell Alyosha, my brother, about that fifteen hundred: I felt I was such a scoundrel and such a pickpocket. But, do you know, while I carried it I said to myself at the same time every hour: ‘No, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, you may yet not be a thief.’ Why? Because I might go next day and pay back that fifteen hundred to Katya. And only yesterday I made up my mind to tear my amulet off my neck, on my way from Fenya’s to Perhotin. I hadn’t been able till that moment to bring myself to it. And it was only when I tore it off that I became a downright thief, a thief and a dishonest man for the rest of my life. Why? Because, with that I destroyed, too, my dream of going to Katya and saying, ‘I’m a scoundrel, but not a thief! Do you understand now? Do you understand?”

“What was it made you decide to do it yesterday?” Nikolay Parfenovitch interrupted.

“Why? It’s absurd to ask. Because I had condemned myself to die at five o’clock this morning, here, at dawn. I thought it made no difference whether I died a thief or a man of honour. But I see it’s not so, it turns out that it does make a difference. Believe me, gentlemen, what has tortured me most during this night has not been the thought that I’d killed the old servant, and that I was in danger of Siberia just when my love was being rewarded, and

Heaven was open to me again. Oh, that did torture me, but not in the same way; not so much as the damned consciousness that I had torn that damned money off my breast at last and spent it, and had become a downright thief! Oh, gentlemen, I tell you again, with a bleeding heart, I have learnt a great deal this night. I have learnt that it's not only impossible to live a scoundrel, but impossible to die a scoundrel.... No, gentlemen, one must die honest..."

Mitya was pale. His face had a haggard and exhausted look, in spite of his being intensely excited.

"I am beginning to understand you, Dmitri Fyodorovitch," the prosecutor said slowly, a soft and almost compassionate tone. "But all this, if you'll excuse my saying so, is a matter of nerves, in my opinion... your overwrought nerves, that's what it is. And why, for instance, should you not have saved yourself such misery for almost a month, by going and returning that fifteen hundred to the lady who had entrusted it to you? And why could you not have explained things to her, and in view of your position, which you describe as being so awful, why could you not have had recourse to the plan which would so naturally have occurred to one's mind, that is, after honourably confessing your errors to her, why could you not have asked her to lend you the sum needed for your expenses, which, with her generous heart, she would certainly not have refused you in your distress, especially if it had been with some guarantee, or even on the security you offered to the merchant Samsonov, and to Madame Hohlakov? I suppose you still regard that security as of value?"

Mitya suddenly crimsoned.

"Surely you don't think me such an out and out scoundrel as that? You can't be speaking in earnest?" he said, with indignation, looking the prosecutor straight in the face, and seeming unable to believe his ears.

"I assure you I'm in earnest... Why do you imagine I'm not serious?" It was the prosecutor's turn to be surprised.

"Oh, how base that would have been! Gentlemen, do you know, you are torturing me! Let me tell you everything, so be it. I'll confess all my infernal wickedness, but to put you to shame, and you'll be surprised yourselves at the depth of ignominy to which a medley of human passions can sink. You must know that I already had that plan myself, that plan you spoke of, just now, prosecutor! Yes, gentlemen, I, too, have had that thought in my mind all this current month, so that I was on the point of deciding to go to Katya — I was mean enough for that. But to go to her, to tell her of

my treachery, and for that very treachery, to carry it out, for the expenses of that treachery, to beg for money from her, Katya (to beg, do you hear, to beg), and go straight from her to run away with the other, the rival, who hated and insulted her — to think of it! You must be mad, prosecutor!”

“Mad I am not, but I did speak in haste, without thinking... of that feminine jealousy... if there could be jealousy in this case, as you assert... yes, perhaps there is something of the kind,” said the prosecutor, smiling.

“But that would have been so infamous!” Mitya brought his fist down on the table fiercely. “That would have been filthy beyond everything! Yes, do you know that she might have given me that money, yes, and she would have given it, too; she’d have been certain to give it, to be revenged on me, she’d have given it to satisfy her vengeance, to show her contempt for me, for hers is an infernal nature, too, and she’s a woman of great wrath. I’d have taken the money, too, oh, I should have taken it; I should have taken it, and then, for the rest of my life... oh, God! Forgive me, gentlemen, I’m making such an outcry because I’ve had that thought in my mind so lately, only the day before yesterday, that night when I was having all that bother with Lyagavy, and afterwards yesterday, all day yesterday, I remember, till that happened...”

“Till what happened?” put in Nikolay Parfenovitch inquisitively, but Mitya did not hear it.

“I have made you an awful confession,” Mitya said gloomily in conclusion. “You must appreciate it, and what’s more, you must respect it, for if not, if that leaves your souls untouched, then you’ve simply no respect for me, gentlemen, I tell you that, and I shall die of shame at having confessed it to men like you! Oh, I shall shoot myself! Yes, I see, I see already that you don’t believe me. What, you want to write that down, too?” he cried in dismay.

“Yes, what you said just now,” said Nikolay Parfenovitch, looking at him surprise, “that is, that up to the last hour you were still contemplating going to Katerina Ivanovna to beg that sum from her.... I assure you, that’s a very important piece of evidence for us, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, I mean for the whole case... and particularly for you, particularly important for you.”

“Have mercy, gentlemen!” Mitya flung up his hands. “Don’t write that, anyway; have some shame. Here I’ve torn my heart asunder before you, and you seize the opportunity and are fingering the wounds in both halves.... Oh, my God!”

In despair he hid his face in his hands.

“Don’t worry yourself so, Dmitri Fyodorovitch,” observed the prosecutor, “everything that is written down will be read over to you afterwards, and what you don’t agree to we’ll alter as you like. But now I’ll ask you one little question for the second time. Has no one, absolutely no one, heard from you of that money you sewed up? That, I must tell you, is almost impossible to believe.”

“No one, no one, I told you so before, or you’ve not understood anything! Let me alone!”

“Very well, this matter is bound to be explained, and there’s plenty of time for it, but meantime, consider; we have perhaps a dozen witnesses that you yourself spread it abroad, and even shouted almost everywhere about the three thousand you’d spent here; three thousand, not fifteen hundred. And now, too, when you got hold of the money you had yesterday, you gave many people to understand that you had brought three thousand with you.”

“You’ve got not dozens, but hundreds of witnesses, two hundred witnesses, two hundred have heard it, thousands have heard it!” cried Mitya.

“Well, you see, all bear witness to it. And the word all means something.”

“It means nothing. I talked rot, and everyone began repeating it.”

“But what need had you to ‘talk rot,’ as you call it?”

“The devil knows. From bravado perhaps... at having wasted so much money.... To try and forget that money I had sewn up, perhaps... yes, that was why... damn it... how often will you ask me that question? Well, I told a fib, and that was the end of it; once I’d said it, I didn’t care to correct it. What does a man tell lies for sometimes?”

“That’s very difficult to decide, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, what makes a man tell lies,” observed the prosecutor impressively. “Tell me, though, was that ‘amulet,’ as you call it, on your neck, a big thing?”

“No, not big.”

“How big, for instance?”

“If you fold a hundred-rouble note in half, that would be the size.”

“You’d better show us the remains of it. You must have them somewhere.”

“Damnation, what nonsense! I don’t know where they are.”

“But excuse me: where and when did you take it off your neck? According to your own evidence you didn’t go home.”

“When I was going from Fenya’s to Perhotin’s, on the way I tore it off my neck and took out the money.”

“In the dark?”

“What should I want a light for? I did it with my fingers in one minute.”

“Without scissors, in the street?”

“In the market-place I think it was. Why scissors? It was an old rag. It was torn in a minute.”

“Where did you put it afterwards?”

“I dropped it there.”

“Where was it, exactly?”

“In the market-place, in the market-place! The devil knows whereabouts. What do you want to know for?”

“That’s extremely important, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. It would be material evidence in your favour. How is it you don’t understand that? Who helped you to sew it up a month ago?”

“No one helped me. I did it myself.”

“Can you sew?”

“A soldier has to know how to sew. No knowledge was needed to do that.”

“Where did you get the material, that is, the rag in which you sewed the money?”

“Are you laughing at me?”

“Not at all. And we are in no mood for laughing, Dmitri Fyodorovitch.”

“I don’t know where I got the rag from — somewhere, I suppose.”

“I should have thought you couldn’t have forgotten it?”

“Upon my word, I don’t remember. I might have torn a bit off my linen.”

“That’s very interesting. We might find in your lodgings to-morrow the shirt or whatever it is from which you tore the rag. What sort of rag was it, cloth or linen?”

“Goodness only knows what it was. Wait a bit... I believe I didn’t tear it off anything. It was a bit of calico.... I believe I sewed it up in a cap of my landlady’s.”

“In your landlady’s cap?”

“Yes. I took it from her.”

“How did you get it?”

“You see, I remember once taking a cap for a rag, perhaps to wipe my pen on. I took it without asking, because it was a worthless rag. I tore it up, and I took the notes and sewed them up in it. I believe it was in that very rag I sewed them. An old piece of calico, washed a thousand times.”

“And you remember that for certain now?”

“I don’t know whether for certain. I think it was in the cap. But, hang it, what does it matter?”

“In that case your landlady will remember that the thing was lost?”

“No, she won’t, she didn’t miss it. It was an old rag, I tell you, an old rag not worth a farthing.”

“And where did you get the needle and thread?”

“I’ll stop now. I won’t say any more. Enough of it!” said Mitya, losing his temper at last.

“It’s strange that you should have so completely forgotten where you threw the pieces in the market-place.”

“Give orders for the market-place to be swept to-morrow, and perhaps you’ll find it,” said Mitya sneering. “Enough, gentlemen, enough!” he decided, in an exhausted voice. “I see you don’t believe me! Not for a moment! It’s my fault, not yours. I ought not to have been so ready. Why, why did I degrade myself by confessing my secret to you? it’s a joke to you. I see that from your eyes. You led me on to it, prosecutor! Sing a hymn of triumph if you can.... Damn you, you torturers!”

He bent his head, and hid his face in his hands. The lawyers were silent. A minute later he raised his head and looked at them almost vacantly. His face now expressed complete, hopeless despair, and he sat mute and passive as though hardly conscious of what was happening. In the meantime they had to finish what they were about. They had immediately to begin examining the witnesses. It was by now eight o’clock in the morning. The lights had been extinguished long ago. Mihail Makarovitch and Kalganov, who had been continually in and out of the room all the while the interrogation had been going on, had now both gone out again. The lawyers, too, looked very tired. It was a wretched morning, the whole sky was overcast, and the rain streamed down in bucketfuls. Mitya gazed blankly out of window.

“May I look out of window?” he asked Nikolay Parfenovitch, suddenly.

“Oh, as much as you like,” the latter replied.

Mitya got up and went to the window.... The rain lashed against its little greenish panes. He could see the muddy road just below the house, and farther away, in the rain and mist, a row of poor, black, dismal huts, looking even blacker and poorer in the rain. Mitya thought of “Phoebus the golden-haired, and how he had meant to shoot himself at his first ray. “Perhaps it would be even better on a morning like this,” he thought with a smile, and suddenly, flinging his hand downwards, he turned to his “torturers.”

“Gentlemen,” he cried, “I see that I am lost! But she? Tell me about her, I beseech you. Surely she need not be ruined with me? She’s innocent, you know, she was out of her mind when she cried last night ‘It’s all my fault!’ She’s done nothing, nothing! I’ve been grieving over her all night as I sat with you.... Can’t you, won’t you tell me what you are going to do with her now?”

“You can set your mind quite at rest on that score, Dmitri Fyodorovitch,” the prosecutor answered at once, with evident alacrity. “We have, so far, no grounds for interfering with the lady in whom you are so interested. I trust that it may be the same in the later development of the case.... On the contrary, we’ll do everything that lies in our power in that matter. Set your mind completely at rest.”

“Gentlemen, I thank you. I knew that you were honest, straightforward people in spite of everything. You’ve taken a load off my heart.... Well, what are we to do now? I’m ready.”

“Well, we ought to make haste. We must pass to examining the witnesses without delay. That must be done in your presence and therefore-”

“Shouldn’t we have some tea first?” interposed Nikolay Parfenovitch, “I think we’ve deserved it!”

They decided that if tea were ready downstairs (Mihail Makarovitch had, no doubt, gone down to get some) they would have a glass and then “go on and on,” putting off their proper breakfast until a more favourable opportunity. Tea really was ready below, and was soon brought up. Mitya at first refused the glass that Nikolay Parfenovitch politely offered him, but afterwards he asked for it himself and drank it greedily. He looked surprisingly exhausted. It might have been supposed from his Herculean strength that one night of carousing, even accompanied by the most violent emotions, could have had little effect on him. But he felt that he could hardly hold his head up, and from time to time all the objects about him

seemed heaving and dancing before his eyes. “A little more and I shall begin raving,” he said to himself.

CHAPTER 8

The Evidences of the Witnesses.

The Babe

THE examination of the witnesses began. But we will not continue our story in such detail as before. And so we will not dwell on how Nikolay Parfenovitch impressed on every witness called that he must give his evidence in accordance with truth and conscience, and that he would afterwards have to repeat his evidence on oath, how every witness was called upon to sign the protocol of his evidence, and so on. We will only note that the point principally insisted upon in the examination was the question of the three thousand roubles; that is, was the sum spent here, at Mokroe, by Mitya on the first occasion, a month before, three thousand or fifteen hundred? And again had he spent three thousand or fifteen hundred yesterday?

Alas, all the evidence given by everyone turned out to be against Mitya. There was not one in his favour, and some witnesses introduced new, almost crushing facts, in contradiction of his, Mitya's, story.

The first witness examined was Trifon Borissovitch. He was not in the least abashed as he stood before the lawyers. He had, on the contrary, an air of stern and severe indignation with the accused, which gave him an appearance of truthfulness and personal dignity. He spoke little, and with reserve, waited to be questioned, answered precisely and deliberately. Firmly and unhesitatingly he bore witness that the sum spent a month before could not have been less than three thousand, that all the peasants about here would testify that they had heard the sum of three thousand mentioned by Dmitri Fyodorovitch himself. "What a lot of money he flung away on the Gypsy girls alone! He wasted a thousand, I daresay, on them alone."

"I don't believe I gave them five hundred," was Mitya's gloomy comment on this. "It's a pity I didn't count the money at the time, but I was drunk..."

Mitya was sitting sideways with his back to the curtains. He listened gloomily, with a melancholy and exhausted air, as though he would say:

“Oh, say what you like. It makes no difference now.”

“More than a thousand went on them, Dmitri Fyodorovitch,” retorted Trifon Borissovitch firmly. “You flung it about at random and they picked it up. They were a rascally, thievish lot, horse-stealers, they’ve been driven away from here, or maybe they’d bear witness themselves how much they got from you. I saw the sum in your hands, myself — count it I didn’t, you didn’t let me, that’s true enough — but by the look of it I should say it was far more than fifteen hundred... fifteen hundred, indeed! We’ve seen money too. We can judge of amounts...”

As for the sum spent yesterday he asserted that Dmitri Fyodorovitch had told him, as soon as he arrived, that he had brought three thousand with him.

“Come now, is that so, Trifon Borissovitch?” replied Mitya. “Surely I didn’t declare so positively that I’d brought three thousand?”

“You did say so, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. You said it before Andrey. Andrey himself is still here. Send for him. And in the hall, when you were treating the chorus, you shouted straight out that you would leave your sixth thousand here — that is, with what you spent before, we must understand. Stepan and Semyon heard it, and Pyotr Fomitch Kalganov, too, was standing beside you at the time. Maybe he’d remember it...”

The evidence as to the “sixth” thousand made an extraordinary impression on the two lawyers. They were delighted with this new mode of reckoning; three and three made six, three thousand then and three now made six, that was clear.

They questioned all the peasants suggested by Trifon Borissovitch, Stepan and Semyon, the driver Andrey, and Kalganov. The peasants and the driver unhesitatingly confirmed Trifon Borissovitch’s evidence. They noted down, with particular care, Andrey’s account of the conversation he had had with Mitya on the road: “‘Where,’ says he, ‘am I, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, going, to heaven or to hell, and shall I be forgiven in the next world or not?’” The psychological Ippolit Kirillovitch heard this with a subtle smile, and ended by recommending that these remarks as to where Dmitri Fyodorovitch would go should be “included in the case.”

Kalganov, when called, came in reluctantly, frowning and ill-humoured, and he spoke to the lawyers as though he had never met them before in his life, though they were acquaintances whom he had been meeting every day for a long time past. He began by saying that “he knew nothing about it and

didn’t want to.” But it appeared that he had heard of the” sixth” thousand, and he admitted that he had been standing close by at the moment. As far as he could see he “didn’t know” how much money Mitya had in his hands. He affirmed that the Poles had cheated at cards. In reply to reiterated questions he stated that, after the Poles had been turned out, Mitya’s position with Agrafena Alexandrovna had certainly improved, and that she had said that she loved him. He spoke of Agrafena Alexandrovna with reserve and respect, as though she had been a lady of the best society, and did not once allow himself to call her Grushenka. In spite of the young man’s obvious repugnance at giving evidence, Ippolit Kirillovitch examined him at great length, and only from him learnt all the details of what made up Mitya’s “romance,” so to say, on that night. Mitya did not once pull Kalganov up. At last they let the young man go, and he left the room with unconcealed indignation.

The Poles, too, were examined. Though they had gone to bed in their room, they had not slept all night, and on the arrival of the police officers they hastily dressed and got ready, realising that they would certainly be sent for. They gave their evidence with dignity, though not without some uneasiness. The little Pole turned out to be a retired official of the twelfth class, who had served in Siberia as a veterinary surgeon. His name was Mussyalovitch. Pan Vrubelvsky turned out to be an uncertificated dentist. Although Nikolay Parfenovitch asked them questions on entering the room they both addressed their answers to Mihail Makarovitch, who was standing on one side, taking him in their ignorance for the most important person and in command, and addressed him at every word as “Pan Colonel.” Only after several reproofs from Mihail Makarovitch himself, they grasped that they had to address their answers to Nikolay Parfenovitch only. It turned out that they could speak Russian quite correctly except for their accent in some words. Of his relations with Grushenka, past and present, Pan Mussyalovitch spoke proudly and warmly, so that Mitya was roused at once and declared that he would not allow the “scoundrel” to speak like that in his presence! Pan Mussyalovitch at once called attention to the word “scoundrel,” and begged that it should be put down in the protocol. Mitya fumed with rage.

“He’s a scoundrel! A scoundrel! You can put that down. And put down, too, that, in spite of the protocol I still declare that he’s a scoundrel!” he cried.

Though Nikolay Parfenovitch did insert this in the protocol, he showed the most praiseworthy tact and management. After sternly reprimanding Mitya, he cut short all further inquiry into the romantic aspect of the case, and hastened to pass to what was essential. One piece of evidence given by the Poles roused special interest in the lawyers: that was how, in that very room, Mitya had tried to buy off Pan Mussyalovitch, and had offered him three thousand roubles to resign his claims, seven hundred roubles down, and the remaining two thousand three hundred "to be paid next day in the town." He had sworn at the time that he had not the whole sum with him at Mokroe, but that his money was in the town. Mitya observed hotly that he had not said that he would be sure to pay him the remainder next day in the town. But Pan Vrublevsky confirmed the statement, and Mitya, after thinking for a moment admitted, frowning, that it must have been as the Poles stated, that he had been excited at the time, and might indeed have said so.

The prosecutor positively pounced on this piece of evidence. It seemed to establish for the prosecution (and they did, in fact, base this deduction on it) that half, or a part of, the three thousand that had come into Mitya's hands might really have been left somewhere hidden in the town, or even, perhaps, somewhere here, in Mokroe. This would explain the circumstance, so baffling for the prosecution, that only eight hundred roubles were to be found in Mitya's hands. This circumstance had been the one piece of evidence which, insignificant as it was, had hitherto told, to some extent, in Mitya's favour. Now this one piece of evidence in his favour had broken down. In answer to the prosecutor's inquiry, where he would have got the remaining two thousand three hundred roubles, since he himself had denied having more than fifteen hundred, Mitya confidently replied that he had meant to offer the "little chap," not money, but a formal deed of conveyance of his rights to the village of Tchermashnya, those rights which he had already offered to Samsonov and Madame Hohlakov. The prosecutor positively smiled at the "innocence of this subterfuge."

"And you imagine he would have accepted such a deed as a substitute for two thousand three hundred roubles in cash?"

"He certainly would have accepted it," Mitya declared warmly. "Why, look here, he might have grabbed not two thousand, but four or six, for it. He would have put his lawyers, Poles and Jews, on to the job, and might have got, not three thousand, but the whole property out of the old man."

The evidence of Pan Mussyalovitch was, of course, entered in the protocol in the fullest detail. Then they let the Poles go. The incident of the cheating at cards was hardly touched upon. Nikolay Parfenovitch was too well pleased with them, as it was, and did not want to worry them with trifles, moreover, it was nothing but a foolish, drunken quarrel over cards. There had been drinking and disorder enough, that night.... So the two hundred roubles remained in the pockets of the Poles.

Then old Maximov was summoned. He came in timidly, approached with little steps, looking very dishevelled and depressed. He had, all this time, taken refuge below with Grushenka, sitting dumbly beside her, and "now and then he'd begin blubbering over her and wiping his eyes with a blue check handkerchief," as Mihail Makarovitch described afterwards. So that she herself began trying to pacify and comfort him. The old man at once confessed that he had done wrong, that he had borrowed "ten roubles in my poverty," from Dmitri Fyodorovitch, and that he was ready to pay it back. To Nikolay Parfenovitch's direct question, had he noticed how much money Dmitri Fyodorovitch held in his hand, as he must have been able to see the sum better than anyone when he took the note from him, Maximov, in the most positive manner, declared that there was twenty thousand.

"Have you ever seen so much as twenty thousand before, then?" inquired Nikolay Parfenovitch, with a smile.

"To be sure I have, not twenty, but seven, when my wife mortgaged my little property. She'd only let me look at it from a distance, boasting of it to me. It was a very thick bundle, all rainbow-coloured notes. And Dmitri Fyodorovitch's were all rainbow-coloured..."

He was not kept long. At last it was Grushenka's turn. Nikolay Parfenovitch was obviously apprehensive of the effect her appearance might have on Mitya, and he muttered a few words of admonition to him, but Mitya bowed his head in silence, giving him to understand "that he would not make a scene." Mihail Makarovitch himself led Grushenka in. She entered with a stern and gloomy face, that looked almost composed, and sat down quietly on the chair offered her by Nikolay Parfenovitch. She was very pale, she seemed to be cold, and wrapped herself closely in her magnificent black shawl. She was suffering from a slight feverish chill — the first symptom of the long illness which followed that night. Her grave air, her direct earnest look and quiet manner made a very favourable impression on everyone. Nikolay Parfenovitch was even a little bit

“fascinated.” He admitted himself, when talking about it afterwards, that only then had he seen “how handsome the woman was,” for, though he had seen her several times he had always looked upon her as something of a “provincial hetaira.”

“She has the manners of the best society,” he said enthusiastically, gossiping about her in a circle of ladies. But this was received with positive indignation by the ladies, who immediately called him a “naughty man,” to his great satisfaction.

As she entered the room, Grushenka only glanced for an instant at Mitya, who looked at her uneasily. But her face reassured him at once. After the first inevitable inquiries and warnings, Nikolay Parfenovitch asked her, hesitating a little, but preserving the most courteous manner, on what terms she was with the retired lieutenant, Dmitri Fyodorovitch Karamazov. To this Grushenka firmly and quietly replied:

“He was an acquaintance. He came to see me as an acquaintance during the last month.” To further inquisitive questions she answered plainly and with complete frankness, that, though “at times” she had thought him attractive, she had not loved him, but had won his heart as well as his old father’s “in my nasty spite,” that she had seen that Mitya was very jealous of Fyodor Pavlovitch and everyone else; but that had only amused her. She had never meant to go to Fyodor Pavlovitch, she had simply been laughing at him. “I had no thoughts for either of them all this last month. I was expecting another man who had wronged me. But I think,” she said in conclusion, “that there’s no need for you to inquire about that, nor for me to answer you, for that’s my own affair.”

Nikolay Parfenovitch immediately acted upon this hint. He again dismissed the “romantic” aspect of the case and passed to the serious one, that is, to the question of most importance, concerning the three thousand roubles. Grushenka confirmed the statement that three thousand roubles had certainly been spent on the first carousal at Mokroe, and, though she had not counted the money herself, she had heard that it was three thousand from Dmitri Fyodorovitch’s own lips.

“Did he tell you that alone, or before someone else, or did you only hear him speak of it to others in your presence?” the prosecutor inquired immediately.

To which Grushenka replied that she had heard him say so before other people, and had heard him say so when they were alone.

“Did he say it to you alone once, or several times?” inquired the prosecutor, and learned that he had told Grushenka so several times.

Ippolit Kirillovitch was very well satisfied with this piece of evidence. Further examination elicited that Grushenka knew, too, where that money had come from, and that Dmitri Fyodorovitch had got it from Katerina Ivanovna.

“And did you never, once, hear that the money spent a month ago was not three thousand, but less, and that Dmitri Fyodorovitch had saved half that sum for his own use?”

“No, I never heard that,” answered Grushenka.

It was explained further that Mitya had, on the contrary, often told her that he hadn’t a farthing.

“He was always expecting to get some from his father,” said Grushenka in conclusion.

“Did he never say before you... casually, or in a moment of irritation,” Nikolay Parfenovitch put in suddenly, “that he intended to make an attempt on his father’s life?”

“Ach, he did say so,” sighed Grushenka.

“Once or several times?”

“He mentioned it several times, always in anger.”

“And did you believe he would do it?”

“No, I never believed it,” she answered firmly. “I had faith in his noble heart.”

“Gentlemen, allow me,” cried Mitya suddenly, “allow me to say one word to Agrafena Alexandrovna, in your presence.”

“You can speak,” Nikolay Parfenovitch assented.

“Agrafena Alexandrovna!” Mitya got up from his chair, “have faith in God and in me. I am not guilty of my father’s murder!”

Having uttered these words Mitya sat down again on his chair. Grushenka stood up and crossed herself devoutly before the ikon.

“Thanks be to Thee, O Lord,” she said, in a voice thrilled with emotion, and still standing, she turned to Nikolay Parfenovitch and added:

“As he has spoken now, believe it! I know him. He’ll say anything as a joke or from obstinacy, but he’ll never deceive you against his conscience. He’s telling the whole truth, you may believe it.”

“Thanks, Agrafena Alexandrovna, you’ve given me fresh courage,” Mitya responded in a quivering voice.

As to the money spent the previous day, she declared that she did not know what sum it was, but had heard him tell several people that he had three thousand with him. And to the question where he got the money, she said that he had told her that he had “stolen” it from Katerina Ivanovna, and that she had replied to that that he hadn’t stolen it, and that he must pay the money back next day. On the prosecutor’s asking her emphatically whether the money he said he had stolen from Katerina Ivanovna was what he had spent yesterday, or what he had squandered here a month ago, she declared that he meant the money spent a month ago, and that that was how she understood him.

Grushenka was at last released, and Nikolay Parfenovitch informed her impulsively that she might at once return to the town and that if he could be of any assistance to her, with horses for example, or if she would care for an escort, he... would be-

“I thank you sincerely,” said Grushenka, bowing to him, “I’m going with this old gentleman; I am driving him back to town with me, and meanwhile, if you’ll allow me, I’ll wait below to hear what you decide about Dmitri Fyodorovitch.”

She went out. Mitya was calm, and even looked more cheerful, but only for a moment. He felt more and more oppressed by a strange physical weakness. His eyes were closing with fatigue. The examination of the witnesses was, at last, over. They procceded to a revision of the protocol. Mitya got up, moved from his chair to the corner by the curtain, lay down on a large chest covered with a rug, and instantly fell asleep.

He had a strange dream, utterly out of keeping with the place and the time.

He was driving somewhere in the steppes, where he had been stationed long ago, and a peasant was driving him in a cart with a pair of horses, through snow and sleet. He was cold, it was early in November, and the snow was falling in big wet flakes, melting as soon as it touched the earth. And the peasant drove him smartly, he had a fair, long beard. He was not an old man, somewhere about fifty, and he had on a grey peasant’s smock. Not far off was a village, he could see the black huts, and half the huts were burnt down, there were only the charred beams sticking up. And as they drove in, there were peasant women drawn up along the road, a lot of women, a whole row, all thin and wan, with their faces a sort of brownish colour, especially one at the edge, a tall, bony woman, who looked forty, but

might have been only twenty, with a long thin face. And in her arms was a little baby crying. And her breasts seemed so dried up that there was not a drop of milk in them. And the child cried and cried, and held out its little bare arms, with its little fists blue from cold.

“Why are they crying? Why are they crying?” Mitya asked, as they dashed gaily by.

“It’s the babe,” answered the driver, “the babe weeping.”

And Mitya was struck by his saying, in his peasant way, “the babe,” and he liked the peasant’s calling it a “babe.” There seemed more pity in it.

“But why is it weeping?” Mitya persisted stupidly, “why are its little arms bare? Why don’t they wrap it up?”

“The babe’s cold, its little clothes are frozen and don’t warm it.”

“But why is it? Why?” foolish Mitya still persisted.

“Why, they’re poor people, burnt out. They’ve no bread. They’re begging because they’ve been burnt out.”

“No, no,” Mitya, as it were, still did not understand. “Tell me why it is those poor mothers stand there? Why are people poor? Why is the babe poor? Why is the steppe barren? Why don’t they hug each other and kiss? Why don’t they sing songs of joy? Why are they so dark from black misery? Why don’t they feed the babe?”

And he felt that, though his questions were unreasonable and senseless, yet he wanted to ask just that, and he had to ask it just in that way. And he felt that a passion of pity, such as he had never known before, was rising in his heart, that he wanted to cry, that he wanted to do something for them all, so that the babe should weep no more, so that the dark-faced, dried-up mother should not weep, that no one should shed tears again from that moment, and he wanted to do it at once, at once, regardless of all obstacles, with all the recklessness of the Karamazovs.

“And I’m coming with you. I won’t leave you now for the rest of my life, I’m coming with you”, he heard close beside him Grushenka’s tender voice, thrilling with emotion. And his heart glowed, and he struggled forward towards the light, and he longed to live, to live, to go on and on, towards the new, beckoning light, and to hasten, hasten, now, at once! “What! Where?” he exclaimed opening his eyes, and sitting up on the chest, as though he had revived from a swoon, smiling brightly. Nikolay Parfenovitch was standing over him, suggesting that he should hear the protocol read aloud and sign it. Mitya guessed that he had been asleep an

hour or more, but he did not hear Nikolay Parfenovitch. He was suddenly struck by the fact that there was a pillow under his head, which hadn't been there when he had leant back, exhausted, on the chest.

"Who put that pillow under my head? Who was so kind?" he cried, with a sort of ecstatic gratitude, and tears in his voice, as though some great kindness had been shown him.

He never found out who this kind man was; perhaps one of the peasant witnesses, or Nikolay Parfenovitch's little secretary, had compassionately thought to put a pillow under his head; but his whole soul was quivering with tears. He went to the table and said that he would sign whatever they liked.

"I've had a good dream, gentlemen," he said in a strange voice, with a new light, as of joy, in his face.

CHAPTER 9

They Carry Mitya Away

WHEN the protocol had been signed, Nikolay Parfenovitch turned solemnly to the prisoner and read him the “Committal,” setting forth, that in such a year, on such a day, in such a place, the investigating lawyer of such-and-such a district court, having examined so-and-so (to wit, Mitya) accused of this and of that (all the charges were carefully written out) and having considered that the accused, not pleading guilty to the charges made against him, had brought forward nothing in his defence, while the witnesses, so-and-so, and so-and-so, and the circumstances such-and-such testify against him, acting in accordance with such-and-such articles of the Statute Book, and so on, has ruled, that, in order to preclude so-and-so (Mitya) from all means of evading pursuit and judgment, he be detained in such-and-such a prison, which he hereby notifies to the accused and communicates a copy of this same “Committal” to the deputy prosecutor, and so on, and so on.

In brief, Mitya was informed that he was, from that moment, a prisoner, and that he would be driven at once to the town, and there shut up in a very unpleasant place. Mitya listened attentively, and only shrugged his shoulders.

“Well, gentlemen, I don’t blame you. I’m ready.... I understand that there’s nothing else for you to do.”

Nikolay Parfenovitch informed him gently that he would be escorted at once by the rural police officer, Mavriky Mavrikyevitch, who happened to be on the spot....

“Stay,” Mitya interrupted, suddenly, and impelled by uncontrollable feeling he pronounced, addressing all in the room:

“Gentlemen, we’re all cruel, we’re all monsters, we all make men weep, and mothers, and babes at the breast, but of all, let it be settled here, now, of all I am the lowest reptile! I’ve sworn to amend, and every day I’ve done the same filthy things. I understand now that such men as I need a blow, a blow of destiny to catch them as with a noose, and bind them by a force from without. Never, never should I have risen of myself! But the thunderbolt has fallen. I accept the torture of accusation, and my public

shame; I want to suffer and by suffering I shall be purified. Perhaps I shall be purified, gentlemen? But listen, for the last time, I am not guilty of my father's blood. I accept my punishment, not because I killed him, but because I meant to kill him, and perhaps I really might have killed him. Still I mean to fight it out with you. I warn you of that. I'll fight it out with you to the end, and then God will decide. Good-bye, gentlemen, don't be vexed with me for having shouted at you during the examination. Oh, I was still such a fool then.... In another minute I shall be a prisoner, but now, for the last time, as a free man, Dmitri Karamazov offers you his hand. Saying good-bye to you, I say it to all men."

His voice quivered and he stretched out his hand, but Nikolay Parfenovitch, who happened to stand nearest to him, with a sudden, almost nervous movement, hid his hands behind his back. Mitya instantly noticed this, and started. He let his outstretched hand fall at once.

"The preliminary inquiry is not yet over," Nikolay Parfenovitch faltered, somewhat embarrassed. "We will continue it in the town, and I, for my part, of course, am ready to wish you all success... in your defence.... As a matter of fact, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, I've always been disposed to regard you as, so to speak, more unfortunate than guilty. All of us here, if I may make bold to speak for all, we are all ready to recognise that you are, at bottom, a young man of honour, but, alas, one who has been carried away by certain passions to a somewhat excessive degree..."

Nikolay Parfenovitch's little figure was positively majestic by the time he had finished speaking. It struck Mitya that in another minute this "boy" would take his arm, lead him to another corner, and renew their conversation about "girls." But many quite irrelevant and inappropriate thoughts sometimes occur even to a prisoner when he is being led out to execution.

"Gentlemen, you are good, you are humane, may I see her to say 'good-bye' for the last time?" asked Mitya.

"Certainly, but considering... in fact, now it's impossible except in the presence of-"

"Oh, well, if it must be so, it must!"

Grushenka was brought in, but the farewell was brief, and of few words, and did not at all satisfy Nikolay Parfenovitch. Grushenka made a deep bow to Mitya.

“I have told you I am yours, and I will be yours. I will follow you for ever, wherever they may send you. Farewell; you are guiltless, though you’ve been your own undoing.”

Her lips quivered, tears flowed from her eyes.

“Forgive me, Grusha, for my love, for ruining you, too, with my love.”

Mitya would have said something more, but he broke off and went out. He was at once surrounded by men who kept a constant watch on him. At the bottom of the steps to which he had driven up with such a dash the day before with Andrey’s three horses, two carts stood in readiness. Mavriky Mavrikyevitch, a sturdy, thick-set man with a wrinkled face, was annoyed about something, some sudden irregularity. He was shouting angrily. He asked Mitya to get into the cart with somewhat excessive surliness.

“When I stood him drinks in the tavern, the man had quite a different face,” thought Mitya, as he got in. At the gates there was a crowd of people, peasants, women, and drivers. Trifon Borissovitch came down the steps too. All stared at Mitya.

“Forgive me at parting, good people!” Mitya shouted suddenly from the cart.

“Forgive us too!” he heard two or three voices.

“Good-bye to you, too, Trifon Borissovitch!”

But Trifon Borissovitch did not even turn round. He was, perhaps, too busy. He, too, was shouting and fussing about something. It appeared that everything was not yet ready in the second cart, in which two constables were to accompany Mavriky Mavrikyevitch. The peasant who had been ordered to drive the second cart was pulling on his smock, stoutly maintaining that it was not his turn to go, but Akim’s. But Akim was not to be seen. They ran to look for him. The peasant persisted and besought them to wait.

“You see what our peasants are, Mavriky Mavrikyevitch. They’ve no shame!” exclaimed Trifon Borissovitch. “Akim gave you twenty-five copecks the day before yesterday. You’ve drunk it all and now you cry out. I’m simply surprised at your good-nature, with our low peasants, Mavriky Mavrikyevitch, that’s all I can say.”

“But what do we want a second cart for?” Mitya put in. “Let’s start with the one, Mavriky Mavrikyevitch. I won’t be unruly, I won’t run away from you, old fellow. What do we want an escort for?”

“I’ll trouble you, sir, to learn how to speak to me if you’ve never been taught. I’m not ‘old fellow’ to you, and you can keep your advice for another time!” Mavriky Mavrikyevitch snapped out savagely, as though glad to vent his wrath.

Mitya was reduced to silence. He flushed all over. A moment later he felt suddenly very cold. The rain had ceased, but the dull sky was still overcast with clouds, and a keen wind was blowing straight in his face.

“I’ve taken a chill,” thought Mitya, twitching his shoulders.

At last Mavriky Mavrikyevitch, too, got into the cart, sat down heavily, and, as though without noticing it, squeezed Mitya into the corner. It is true that he was out of humour and greatly disliked the task that had been laid upon him.

“Good-bye, Trifon Borissovitch!” Mitya shouted again, and felt himself, that he had not called out this time from good-nature, but involuntarily, from resentment.

But Trifon Borissovitch stood proudly, with both hands behind his back, and staring straight at Mitya with a stern and angry face, he made no reply.

“Good-bye, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, good-bye!” he heard all at once the voice of Kalganov, who had suddenly darted out. Running up to the cart he held out his hand to Mitya. He had no cap on.

Mitya had time to seize and press his hand.

“Good-bye, dear fellow! I shan’t forget your generosity,” he cried warmly.

But the cart moved and their hands parted. The bell began ringing and Mitya was driven off.

Kalganov ran back, sat down in a corner, bent his head, hid his face in his hands, and burst out crying. For a long while he sat like that, crying as though he were a little boy instead of a young man of twenty. Oh, he believed almost without doubt in Mitya’s guilt.

“What are these people? What can men be after this?” he exclaimed incoherently, in bitter despondency, almost despair. At that moment he had no desire to live.

“Is it worth it? Is it worth it?” exclaimed the boy in his grief.

PART IV

BOOK X. THE BOYS

CHAPTER 1

Kolya Krassotkin

IT was the beginning of November. There had been a hard frost, eleven degrees Reaumur, without snow, but a little dry snow had fallen on the frozen ground during the night, and a keen dry wind was lifting and blowing it along the dreary streets of our town, especially about the market-place. It was a dull morning, but the snow had ceased.

Not far from the market-place, close to Plotnikov's shop, there stood a small house, very clean both without and within. It belonged to Madame Krassotkin, the widow of a former provincial secretary, who had been dead for fourteen years. His widow, still a nice-looking woman of thirty-two, was living in her neat little house on her private means. She lived in respectable seclusion; she was of a soft but fairly cheerful disposition. She was about eighteen at the time of her husband's death; she had been married only a year and had just borne him a son. From the day of his death she had devoted herself heart and soul to the bringing up of her precious treasure, her boy Kolya. Though she had loved him passionately those fourteen years, he had caused her far more suffering than happiness. She had been trembling and fainting with terror almost every day, afraid he would fall ill, would catch cold, do something naughty, climb on a chair and fall off it, and so on and so on. When Kolya began going to school, the mother devoted herself to studying all the sciences with him so as to help him, and go through his lessons with him. She hastened to make the acquaintance of the teachers and their wives, even made up to Kolya's schoolfellows, and fawned upon them in the hope of thus saving Kolya from being teased, laughed at, or beaten by them. She went so far that the boys actually began to mock at him on her account and taunt him with being a "mother's darling."

But the boy could take his own part. He was a resolute boy, "tremendously strong," as was rumoured in his class, and soon proved to be the fact; he was agile, strong-willed, and of an audacious and enterprising temper. He was good at lessons, and there was a rumour in the school that he could beat the teacher, Dardanelov, at arithmetic and universal history. Though he looked down upon everyone, he was a good comrade and not

supercilious. He accepted his schoolfellows' respect as his due, but was friendly with them. Above all, he knew where to draw the line. He could restrain himself on occasion, and in his relations with the teachers he never overstepped that last mystic limit beyond which a prank becomes an unpardonable breach of discipline. But he was as fond of mischief on every possible occasion as the smallest boy in the school, and not so much for the sake of mischief as for creating a sensation, inventing something, something effective and conspicuous. He was extremely vain. He knew how to make even his mother give way to him; he was almost despotic in his control of her. She gave way to him, oh, she had given way to him for years. The one thought unendurable to her was that her boy had no great love for her. She was always fancying that Kolya was "unfeeling" to her, and at times, dissolving into hysterical tears, she used to reproach him with his coldness. The boy disliked this, and the more demonstrations of feeling were demanded of him, the more he seemed intentionally to avoid them. Yet it was not intentional on his part but instinctive — it was his character. His mother was mistaken; he was very fond of her. He only disliked "sheepish sentimentality," as he expressed it in his schoolboy language.

There was a bookcase in the house containing a few books that had been his father's. Kolya was fond of reading, and had read several of them by himself. His mother did not mind that and only wondered sometimes at seeing the boy stand for hours by the bookcase poring over a book instead of going to play. And in that way Kolya read some things unsuitable for his age.

Though the boy, as a rule, knew where to draw the line in his mischief, he had of late begun to play pranks that caused his mother serious alarm. It is true there was nothing vicious in what he did, but a wild mad recklessness.

It happened that July, during the summer holidays, that the mother and son went to another district, forty-five miles away, to spend a week with a distant relation, whose husband was an official at the railway station (the very station, the nearest one to our town, from which a month later Ivan Fyodorovitch Karamazov set off for Moscow). There Kolya began by carefully investigating every detail connected with the railways, knowing that he could impress his schoolfellows when he got home with his newly acquired knowledge. But there happened to be some other boys in the place with whom he soon made friends. Some of them were living at the station,

others in the neighbourhood; there were six or seven of them, all between twelve and fifteen, and two of them came from our town. The boys played together, and on the fourth or fifth day of Kolya's stay at the station, a mad bet was made by the foolish boys. Kolya, who was almost the youngest of the party and rather looked down upon by the others in consequence, was moved by vanity or by reckless bravado to bet them two roubles that he would lie down between the rails at night when the eleven o'clock train was due, and would lie there without moving while the train rolled over him at full speed. It is true they made a preliminary investigation, from which it appeared that it was possible to lie so flat between the rails that the train could pass over without touching, but to lie there was no joke! Kolya maintained stoutly that he would. At first they laughed at him, called him a little liar, a braggart, but that only egged him on. What piqued him most was that these boys of fifteen turned up their noses at him too superciliously, and were at first disposed to treat him as "a small boy," not fit to associate with them, and that was an unendurable insult. And so it was resolved to go in the evening, half a mile from the station, so that the train might have time to get up full speed after leaving the station The boys assembled. It was a pitch-dark night without a moon. At the time fixed, Kolya lay down between the rails. The five others who had taken the bet waited among the bushes below the embankment, their hearts beating with suspense, which was followed by alarm and remorse. At last they heard in the distance the rumble of the train leaving the station. Two red lights gleamed out of the darkness; the monster roared as it approached.

"Run, run away from the rails," the boys cried to Kolya from the bushes, breathless with terror. But it was too late: the train darted up and flew past. The boys rushed to Kolya. He lay without moving. They began pulling at him, lifting him up. He suddenly got up and walked away without a word. Then he explained that he had lain there as though he were insensible to frighten them, but the fact was that he really had lost consciousness, as he confessed long after to his mother. In this way his reputation as "a desperate character," was established for ever. He returned home to the station as white as a sheet. Next day he had a slight attack of nervous fever, but he was in high spirits and well pleased with himself. The incident did not become known at once, but when they came back to the town it penetrated to the school and even reached the ears of the masters. But then Kolya's mother hastened to entreat the masters on her boy's behalf, and in the end

Dardanelov, a respected and influential teacher, exerted himself in his favour, and the affair was ignored.

Dardanelov was a middle-aged bachelor, who had been passionately in love with Madame Krassotkin for many years past, and had once already, about a year previously, ventured, trembling with fear and the delicacy of his sentiments, to offer her most respectfully his hand in marriage. But she refused him resolutely, feeling that to accept him would be an act of treachery to her son, though Dardanelov had, to judge from certain mysterious symptoms, reason for believing that he was not an object of aversion to the charming but too chaste and tender-hearted widow. Kolya's mad prank seemed to have broken the ice, and Dardanelov was rewarded for his intercession by a suggestion of hope. The suggestion, it is true, was a faint one, but then Dardanelov was such a paragon of purity and delicacy that it was enough for the time being to make him perfectly happy. He was fond of the boy, though he would have felt it beneath him to try and win him over, and was severe and strict with him in class. Kolya, too, kept him at a respectful distance. He learned his lessons perfectly; he was second in his class, was reserved with Dardanelov, and the whole class firmly believed that Kolya was so good at universal history that he could "beat" even Dardanelov. Kolya did indeed ask him the question, "Who founded Troy?" to which Dardanelov had made a very vague reply, referring to the movements and migrations of races, to the remoteness of the period, to the mythical legends. But the question, "Who had founded Troy?" that is, what individuals, he could not answer, and even for some reason regarded the question as idle and frivolous. But the boys remained convinced that Dardanelov did not know who founded Troy. Kolya had read of the founders of Troy in Smaragdov, whose history was among the books in his father's bookcase. In the end all the boys became interested in the question, who it was that had founded Troy, but Krassotkin would not tell his secret, and his reputation for knowledge remained unshaken.

After the incident on the railway a certain change came over Kolya's attitude to his mother. When Anna Fyodorovna (Madame Krassotkin) heard of her son's exploit, she almost went out of her mind with horror. She had such terrible attacks of hysterics, lasting with intervals for several days, that Kolya, seriously alarmed at last, promised on his honour that such pranks should never be repeated. He swore on his knees before the holy image, and swore by the memory of his father, at Madame Krassotkin's instance, and

the “manly” Kolya burst into tears like a boy of six. And all that day the mother and son were constantly rushing into each other’s arms sobbing. Next day Kolya woke up as “unfeeling” as before, but he had become more silent, more modest, sterner, and more thoughtful.

Six weeks later, it is true, he got into another scrape, which even brought his name to the ears of our Justice of the Peace, but it was a scrape of quite another kind, amusing, foolish, and he did not, as it turned out, take the leading part in it, but was only implicated in it. But of this later. His mother still fretted and trembled, but the more uneasy she became, the greater were the hopes of Dardanelov. It must be noted that Kolya understood and divined what was in Dardanelov’s heart and, of course, despised him profoundly for his “feelings”; he had in the past been so tactless as to show this contempt before his mother, hinting vaguely that he knew what Dardanelov was after. But from the time of the railway incident his behaviour in this respect also was changed; he did not allow himself the remotest allusion to the subject and began to speak more respectfully of Dardanelov before his mother, which the sensitive woman at once appreciated with boundless gratitude. But at the slightest mention of Dardanelov by a visitor in Kolya’s presence, she would flush as pink as a rose. At such moments Kolya would either stare out of the window scowling, or would investigate the state of his boots, or would shout angrily for “Perezvon,” the big, shaggy, mangy dog, which he had picked up a month before, brought home, and kept for some reason secretly indoors, not showing him to any of his schoolfellows. He bullied him frightfully, teaching him all sorts of tricks, so that the poor dog howled for him whenever he was absent at school, and when he came in, whined with delight, rushed about as if he were crazy, begged, lay down on the ground pretending to be dead, and so on; in fact, showed all the tricks he had taught him, not at the word of command, but simply from the zeal of his excited and grateful heart.

I have forgotten, by the way, to mention that Kolya Krassotkin was the boy stabbed with a penknife by the boy already known to the reader as the son of Captain Snegiryov. Ilusha had been defending his father when the schoolboys jeered at him, shouting the nickname “wisp of tow.”

CHAPTER 2

Children

AND so on that frosty, snowy, and windy day in November, Kolya Krassotkin was sitting at home. It was Sunday and there was no school. It had just struck eleven, and he particularly wanted to go out “on very urgent business,” but he was left alone in charge of the house, for it so happened that all its elder inmates were absent owing to a sudden and singular event. Madame Krassotkin had let two little rooms, separated from the rest of the house by a passage, to a doctor’s wife with her two small children. This lady was the same age as Anna Fyodorovna, and a great friend of hers. Her husband, the doctor, had taken his departure twelve months before, going first to Orenburg and then to Tashkend, and for the last six months she had not heard a word from him. Had it not been for her friendship with Madame Krassotkin, which was some consolation to the forsaken lady, she would certainly have completely dissolved away in tears. And now, to add to her misfortunes, Katerina, her only servant, was suddenly moved the evening before to announce, to her mistress’s amazement, that she proposed to bring a child into the world before morning. It seemed almost miraculous to everyone that no one had noticed the probability of it before. The astounded doctor’s wife decided to move Katerina while there was still time to an establishment in the town kept by a midwife for such emergencies. As she set great store by her servant, she promptly carried out this plan and remained there looking after her. By the morning all Madame Krassotkin’s friendly sympathy and energy were called upon to render assistance and appeal to someone for help in the case.

So both the ladies were absent from home, the Krassotkins’ servant, Agafya, had gone out to the market, and Kolya was thus left for a time to protect and look after “the kids,” that is, the son and daughter of the doctor’s wife, who were left alone. Kolya was not afraid of taking care of the house, besides he had Perezvon, who had been told to lie flat, without moving, under the bench in the hall. Every time Kolya, walking to and fro through the rooms, came into the hall, the dog shook his head and gave two loud and insinuating taps on the floor with his tail, but alas! the whistle did not sound to release him. Kolya looked sternly at the luckless dog, who

relapsed again into obedient rigidity. The one thing that troubled Kolya was “the kids.” He looked, of course, with the utmost scorn on Katerina’s unexpected adventure, but he was very fond of the bereaved “kiddies,” and had already taken them a picture-book. Nastya, the elder, a girl of eight, could read, and Kostya, the boy, aged seven, was very fond of being read to by her. Krassotkin could, of course, have provided more diverting entertainment for them. He could have made them stand side by side and played soldiers with them, or sent them hiding all over the house. He had done so more than once before and was not above doing it, so much so that a report once spread at school that Krassotkin played horses with the little lodgers at home, prancing with his head on one side like a trace-horse. But Krassotkin haughtily parried this thrust, pointing out that to play horses with boys of one’s own age, boys of thirteen, would certainly be disgraceful “at this date,” but that he did it for the sake of “the kids” because he liked them, and no one had a right to call him to account for his feelings. The two “kids” adored him.

But on this occasion he was in no mood for games. He had very important business of his own before him, something almost mysterious. Meanwhile time was passing and Agafya, with whom he could have left the children, would not come back from market. He had several times already crossed the passage, opened the door of the lodgers’ room and looked anxiously at “the kids” who were sitting over the book, as he had bidden them. Every time he opened the door they grinned at him, hoping he would come in and would do something delightful and amusing. But Kolya was bothered and did not go in.

At last it struck eleven and he made up his mind, once for all, that if that “damned” Agafya did not come back within ten minutes he should go out without waiting for her, making “the kids” promise, of course, to be brave when he was away, not to be naughty, not to cry from fright. With this idea he put on his wadded winter overcoat with its catskin fur collar, slung his satchel round his shoulder, and, regardless of his mother’s constantly reiterated entreaties that he would always put on goloshes in such cold weather, he looked at them contemptuously as he crossed the hall and went out with only his boots on. Perezvon, seeing him in his outdoor clothes, began tapping nervously, yet vigorously, on the floor with his tail. Twitching all over, he even uttered a plaintive whine. But Kolya, seeing his dog’s passionate excitement, decided that it was a breach of discipline, kept

him for another minute under the bench, and only when he had opened the door into the passage, whistled for him. The dog leapt up like a mad creature and rushed bounding before him rapturously.

Kolya opened the door to peep at “the kids.” They were both sitting as before at the table, not reading but warmly disputing about something. The children often argued together about various exciting problems of life, and Nastya, being the elder, always got the best of it. If Kostya did not agree with her, he almost always appealed to Kolya Krassotkin, and his verdict was regarded as infallible by both of them. This time the “kids”’ discussion rather interested Krassotkin, and he stood still in the passage to listen. The children saw he was listening and that made them dispute with even greater energy.

“I shall never, never believe,” Nastya prattled, “that the old women find babies among the cabbages in the kitchen garden. It’s winter now and there are no cabbages, and so the old woman couldn’t have taken Katerina a daughter.”

Kolya whistled to himself.

“Or perhaps they do bring babies from somewhere, but only to those who are married.”

Kostya stared at Nastya and listened, pondering profoundly.

“Nastya, how silly you are!” he said at last, firmly and calmly. “How can Katerina have a baby when she isn’t married?”

Nastya was exasperated.

“You know nothing about it,” she snapped irritably. “Perhaps she has a husband, only he is in prison, so now she’s got a baby.”

“But is her husband in prison?” the matter-of-fact Kostya inquired gravely.

“Or, I tell you what,” Nastya interrupted impulsively, completely rejecting and forgetting her first hypothesis. “She hasn’t a husband, you are right there, but she wants to be married, and so she’s been thinking of getting married, and thinking and thinking of it till now she’s got it, that is, not a husband but a baby.”

“Well, perhaps so,” Kostya agreed, entirely vanquished. “But you didn’t say so before. So how could I tell?”

“Come, kiddies,” said Kolya, stepping into the room. “You’re terrible people, I see.”

“And Perezvon with you!” grinned Kostya, and began snapping his fingers and calling Perezvon.

“I am in a difficulty, kids,” Krassotkin began solemnly, “and you must help me. Agafya must have broken her leg, since she has not turned up till now, that’s certain. I must go out. Will you let me go?”

The children looked anxiously at one another. Their smiling faces showed signs of uneasiness, but they did not yet fully grasp what was expected of them.

“You won’t be naughty while I am gone? You won’t climb on the cupboard and break your legs? You won’t be frightened alone and cry?”

A look of profound despondency came into the children’s faces.

“And I could show you something as a reward, a little copper cannon which can be fired with real gunpowder.”

The children’s faces instantly brightened. “Show us the cannon,” said Kostya, beaming all over.

Krassotkin put his hand in his satchel, and pulling out a little bronze cannon stood it on the table.

“Ah, you are bound to ask that! Look, it’s on wheels.” He rolled the toy on along the table. “And it can be fired off, too. It can be loaded with shot and fired off.”

“And it could kill anyone?”

“It can kill anyone; you’ve only got to aim at anybody,” and Krassotkin explained where the powder had to be put, where the shot should be rolled in, showing a tiny hole like a touch-hole, and told them that it kicked when it was fired.

The children listened with intense interest. What particularly struck their imagination was that the cannon kicked.

“And have you got any powder?” Nastya inquired.

“Yes.”

“Show us the powder, too,” she drawled with a smile of entreaty.

Krassotkin dived again into his satchel and pulled out a small flask containing a little real gunpowder. He had some shot, too, in a screw of paper. He even uncorked the flask and shook a little powder into the palm of his hand.

“One has to be careful there’s no fire about, or it would blow up and kill us all,” Krassotkin warned them sensationally.

The children gazed at the powder with an awe-stricken alarm that only intensified their enjoyment. But Kostya liked the shot better.

“And does the shot burn?” he inquired.

“No, it doesn’t.”

“Give me a little shot,” he asked in an imploring voice.

“I’ll give you a little shot; here, take it, but don’t show it to your mother till I come back, or she’ll be sure to think it’s gunpowder, and will die of fright and give you a thrashing.”

“Mother never does whip us,” Nastya observed at once.

“I know, I only said it to finish the sentence. And don’t you ever deceive your mother except just this once, until I come back. And so, kiddies, can I go out? You won’t be frightened and cry when I’m gone?”

“We sha-all cry,” drawled Kostya, on the verge of tears already.

“We shall cry, we shall be sure to cry,” Nastya chimed in with timid haste.

“Oh, children, children, how fraught with peril are your years! There’s no help for it, chickens; I shall have to stay with you I don’t know how long. And time is passing, time is passing, oogh!”

“Tell Perezvon to pretend to be dead!” Kostya begged.

“There’s no help for it, we must have recourse to Perezvon. Ici, Perezvon.” And Kolya began giving orders to the dog, who performed all his tricks.

He was a rough-haired dog, of medium size, with a coat of a sort of lilac-grey colour. He was blind in his right eye, and his left ear was torn. He whined and jumped, stood and walked on his hind legs, lay on his back with his paws in the air, rigid as though he were dead. While this last performance was going on, the door opened and Agafya, Madame Krassotkin’s servant, a stout woman of forty, marked with small-pox, appeared in the doorway. She had come back from market and had a bag full of provisions in her hand. Holding up the bag of provisions in her left hand she stood still to watch the dog. Though Kolya had been so anxious for her return, he did not cut short the performance, and after keeping Perezvon dead for the usual time, at last he whistled to him. The dog jumped up and began bounding about in his joy at having done his duty.

“Only think, a dog!” Agafya observed sententiously.

“Why are you late, female?” asked Krassotkin sternly.

“Female, indeed! Go on with you, you brat.”

“Brat?”

“Yes, a brat. What is it to you if I’m late; if I’m late, you may be sure I have good reason,” muttered Agafya, busying herself about the stove, without a trace of anger or displeasure in her voice. She seemed quite pleased, in fact, to enjoy a skirmish with her merry young master.

“Listen, you frivolous young woman,” Krassotkin began, getting up from the sofa, “can you swear by all you hold sacred in the world and something else besides, that you will watch vigilantly over the kids in my absence? I am going out.”

“And what am I going to swear for?” laughed Agafya. “I shall look after them without that.”

“No, you must swear on your eternal salvation. Else I shan’t go.”

“Well, don’t then. What does it matter to me? It’s cold out; stay at home.”

“Kids,” Kolya turned to the children, “this woman will stay with you till I come back or till your mother comes, for she ought to have been back long ago. She will give you some lunch, too. You’ll give them something, Agafya, won’t you?”

“That I can do.”

“Good-bye, chickens, I go with my heart at rest. And you, granny,” he added gravely, in an undertone, as he passed Agafya, “I hope you’ll spare their tender years and not tell them any of your old woman’s nonsense about Katerina. Ici, Perezvon!”

“Get along with you!” retorted Agafya, really angry this time. “Ridiculous boy! You want a whipping for saying such things, that’s what you want!”

CHAPTER 3

The Schoolboy

BUT Kolya did not hear her. At last he could go out. As he went out at the gate he looked round him, shrugged up his shoulders, and saying “It is freezing,” went straight along the street and turned off to the right towards the market-place. When he reached the last house but one before the market-place he stopped at the gate, pulled a whistle out of his pocket, and whistled with all his might as though giving a signal. He had not to wait more than a minute before a rosy-cheeked boy of about eleven, wearing a warm, neat and even stylish coat, darted out to meet him. This was Smurov, a boy in the preparatory class (two classes below Kolya Krassotkin), son of a well-to-do official. Apparently he was forbidden by his parents to associate with Krassotkin, who was well known to be a desperately naughty boy, so Smurov was obviously slipping out on the sly. He was — if the reader has not forgotten one of the group of boys who two months before had thrown stones at Ilusha. He was the one who told Alyosha about Ilusha.

“I’ve been waiting for you for the last hour, Krassotkin,” said Smurov stolidly, and the boys strode towards the market-place.

“I am late,” answered Krassotkin. “I was detained by circumstances. You won’t be thrashed for coming with me?”

“Come, I say, I’m never thrashed! And you’ve got Perezvon with you?”

“Yes.”

“You’re taking him, too?”

“Yes.”

“Ah! if it were only Zhutchka!”

“That’s impossible. Zhutchka’s non-existent. Zhutchka is lost in the mists of obscurity.”

“Ah! couldn’t we do this?” Smurov suddenly stood still. “You see Ilusha says that Zhutchka was a shaggy, greyish, smoky-looking dog like Perezvon. Couldn’t you tell him this is Zhutchka, and he might believe you?”

“Boy, shun a lie, that’s one thing; even with a good object — that’s another. Above all, I hope you’ve not told them anything about my coming.”

“Heaven forbid! I know what I am about. But you won’t comfort him with Perezvon,” said Smurov, with a sigh. “You know his father, the captain, ‘the wisp of tow,’ told us that he was going to bring him a real mastiff pup, with a black nose, to-day. He thinks that would comfort Ilusha; but I doubt it.”

“And how is Ilusha?”

“Ah, he is bad, very bad! I believe he’s in consumption: he is quite conscious, but his breathing! His breathing’s gone wrong. The other day he asked to have his boots on to be led round the room. He tried to walk, but he couldn’t stand. ‘Ah, I told you before, father,’ he said, ‘that those boots were no good. I could never walk properly in them.’ He fancied it was his boots that made him stagger, but it was simply weakness, really. He won’t live another week. Herzenstube is looking after him. Now they are rich again — they’ve got heaps of money.

“They are rogues.”

“Who are rogues?”

“Doctors and the whole crew of quacks collectively, and also, of course, individually. I don’t believe in medicine. It’s a useless institution. I mean to go into all that. But what’s that sentimentality you’ve got up there? The whole class seems to be there every day.”

“Not the whole class: it’s only ten of our fellows who go to see him every day. There’s nothing in that.”

“What I don’t understand in all this is the part that Alexey Karamazov is taking in it. His brother’s going to be tried to-morrow or next day for such a crime, and yet he has so much time to spend on sentimentality with boys.”

“There’s no sentimentality about it. You are going yourself now to make it up with Ilusha.”

“Make it up with him? What an absurd expression! But I allow no one to analyse my actions.”

“And how pleased Ilusha will be to see you! He has no idea that you are coming. Why was it, why was it you wouldn’t come all this time?” Smurov cried with sudden warmth.

“My dear boy, that’s my business, not yours.

I am going of myself because I choose to, but you’ve all been hauled there by Alexey Karamazov — there’s a difference, you know. And how do you know? I may not be going to make it up at all. It’s a stupid expression.”

“It’s not Karamazov at all; it’s not his doing. Our fellows began going there of themselves. Of course, they went with Karamazov at first. And there’s been nothing of that sort of silliness. First one went, and then another. His father was awfully pleased to see us. You know he will simply go out of his mind if Ilusha dies. He sees that Ilusha’s dying. And he seems so glad we’ve made it up with Ilusha. Ilusha asked after you, that was all. He just asks and says no more. His father will go out of his mind or hang himself. He behaved like a madman before. You know he is a very decent man. We made a mistake then. It’s all the fault of that murderer who beat him then.”

“Karamazov’s a riddle to me all the same. I might have made his acquaintance long ago, but I like to have a proper pride in some cases. Besides, I have a theory about him which I must work out and verify.”

Kolya subsided into dignified silence. Smurov, too, was silent. Smurov, of course, worshipped Krassotkin and never dreamed of putting himself on a level with him. Now he was tremendously interested at Kolya’s saying that he was “going of himself” to see Ilusha. He felt that there must be some mystery in Kolya’s suddenly taking it into his head to go to him that day. They crossed the market-place, in which at that hour were many loaded wagons from the country and a great number of live fowls. The market women were selling rolls, cottons and threads, etc. in their booths. These Sunday markets were naively called “fairs” in the town, and there were many such fairs in the year.

Perezvon ran about in the wildest spirits, sniffing about first one side, then the other. When he met other dogs they zealously smelt each other over according to the rules of canine etiquette.

“I like to watch such realistic scenes, Smurov,” said Kolya suddenly. “Have you noticed how dogs sniff at one another when they meet? It seems to be a law of their nature.”

“Yes; it’s a funny habit.”

“No, it’s not funny; you are wrong there. There’s nothing funny in nature, however funny it may seem to man with his prejudices. If dogs could reason and criticise us they’d be sure to find just as much that would be funny to them, if not far more, in the social relations of men, their masters — far more, indeed. I repeat that, because I am convinced that there is far more foolishness among us. That’s Rakitin’s idea — a remarkable idea. I am a Socialist, Smurov.”

“And what is a Socialist?” asked Smurov.

“That’s when all are equal and all have property in common, there are no marriages, and everyone has any religion and laws he likes best, and all the rest of it. You are not old enough to understand that yet. It’s cold, though.”

“Yes, twelve degrees of frost. Father looked at the thermometer just now.”

“Have you noticed, Smurov, that in the middle of winter we don’t feel so cold even when there are fifteen or eighteen degrees of frost as we do now, in the beginning of winter, when there is a sudden frost of twelve degrees, especially when there is not much snow. It’s because people are not used to it. Everything is habit with men, everything even in their social and political relations. Habit is the great motive-power. What a funny-looking peasant!”

Kolya pointed to a tall peasant, with a good-natured countenance in a long sheepskin coat, who was standing by his wagon, clapping together his hands, in their shapeless leather gloves, to warm them. His long fair beard was all white with frost.

“That peasant’s beard’s frozen,” Kolya cried in a loud provocative voice as he passed him.

“Lots of people’s beards are frozen,” the peasant replied, calmly and sententiously.

“Don’t provoke him,” observed Smurov.

“It’s all right; he won’t be cross; he’s a nice fellow. Good-bye, Matvey.”

“Good-bye.”

“Is your name Matvey?”

“Yes. Didn’t you know?”

“No, I didn’t. It was a guess.”

“You don’t say so! You are a schoolboy, I suppose?”

“Yes.”

“You get whipped, I expect?”

“Nothing to speak of — sometimes.”

“Does it hurt?”

“Well, yes, it does.”

“Ech, what a life!” The peasant heaved a sigh from the bottom of his heart.

“Good-bye, Matvey.”

“Good-bye. You are a nice chap, that you are.”

The boys went on.

“That was a nice peasant,” Kolya observed to Smurov. “I like talking to the peasants, and am always glad to do them justice.”

“Why did you tell a lie, pretending we are thrashed?” asked Smurov.

“I had to say that to please him.”

“How do you mean?”

“You know, Smurov, I don’t like being asked the same thing twice. I like people to understand at the first word. Some things can’t be explained. According to a peasant’s notions, schoolboys are whipped, and must be whipped. What would a schoolboy be if he were not whipped? And if I were to tell him we are not, he’d be disappointed. But you don’t understand that. One has to know how to talk to the peasants.”

“Only don’t tease them, please, or you’ll get into another scrape as you did about that goose.”

“So you’re afraid?”

“Don’t laugh, Kolya. Of course I’m afraid. My father would be awfully cross. I am strictly forbidden to go out with you.”

“Don’t be uneasy, nothing will happen this time. Hallo, Natasha!” he shouted to a market woman in one of the booths.

“Call me Natasha! What next! My name is Marya,” the middle-aged marketwoman shouted at him.

“I am so glad it’s Marya. Good-bye!”

“Ah, you young rascal! A brat like you to carry on so!”

“I’m in a hurry. I can’t stay now. You shall tell me next Sunday.” Kolya waved his hand at her, as though she had attacked him and not he her.

“I’ve nothing to tell you next Sunday. You set upon me, you impudent young monkey. I didn’t say anything,” bawled Marya. “You want a whipping, that’s what you want, you saucy jackanapes!”

There was a roar of laughter among the other market women round her. Suddenly a man in a violent rage darted out from the arcade of shops close by. He was a young man, not a native of the town, with dark, curly hair and a long, pale face, marked with smallpox. He wore a long blue coat and a peaked cap, and looked like a merchant’s clerk. He was in a state of stupid excitement and brandished his fist at Kolya.

“I know you!” he cried angrily, “I know you!”

Kolya stared at him. He could not recall when he could have had a row with the man. But he had been in so many rows in the street that he could hardly remember them all.

“Do you?” he asked sarcastically.

“I know you! I know you!” the man repeated idiotically.

So much the better for you. Well, it’s time I was going. Good-bye!”

“You are at your saucy pranks again?” cried the man. “You are at your saucy pranks again? I know, you are at it again!”

“It’s not your business, brother, if I am at my saucy pranks again,” said Kolya, standing still and scanning him.

“Not my business?”

“No; it’s not your business.”

“Whose then? Whose then? Whose then?”

“It’s Trifon Nikititch’s business, not yours.”

“What Trifon Nikititch?” asked the youth, staring with loutish amazement at Kolya, but still as angry as ever.

Kolya scanned him gravely.

“Have you been to the Church of the Ascension?” he suddenly asked him, with stern emphasis.

“What Church of Ascension? What for? No, I haven’t,” said the young man, somewhat taken aback.

“Do you know Sabaneyev?” Kolya went on even more emphatically and even more severely.

“What Sabaneyev? No, I don’t know him.”

“Well then you can go to the devil,” said Kolya, cutting short the conversation; and turning sharply to the right he strode quickly on his way as though he disdained further conversation with a dolt who did not even know Sabaneyev.

“Stop, heigh! What Sabaneyev?” the young man recovered from his momentary stupefaction and was as excited as before. “What did he say?” He turned to the market women with a silly stare.

The women laughed.

“You can never tell what he’s after,” said one of them.

“What Sabaneyev is it he’s talking about?” the young man repeated, still furious and brandishing his right arm.

“It must be a Sabaneyev who worked for the Kuzmitchovs, that’s who it must be,” one of the women suggested.

The young man stared at her wildly.

“For the Kuzmitchovs?” repeated another woman. “But his name wasn’t Trifon. His name’s Kuzma, not Trifon; but the boy said Trifon Nikititch, so

it can’t be the same.”

“His name is not Trifon and not Sabaneyev, it’s Tchizhov,” put in suddenly a third woman, who had hitherto been silent, listening gravely. “Alexey Ivanitch is his name. Tchizhov, Alexey Ivanitch.”

“Not a doubt about it, it’s Tchizhov,” a fourth woman emphatically confirmed the statement.

The bewildered youth gazed from one to another.

“But what did he ask for, what did he ask for, good people?” he cried almost in desperation.” ‘Do you know Sabaneyev?’ says he. And who the devil’s to know who is Sabaneyev?”

“You’re a senseless fellow. I tell you it’s not Sabaneyev, but Tchizhov, Alexey Ivanitch Tchizhov, that’s who it is!” one of the women shouted at him impressively.

“What Tchizhov? Who is he? Tell me, if you know.”

“That tall, snivelling fellow who used to sit in the market in the summer.”

“And what’s your Tchizhov to do with me, good people, eh?”

“How can I tell what he’s to do with you?” put in another. “You ought to know yourself what you want with him, if you make such a clamour about him. He spoke to you, he did not speak to us, you stupid. Don’t you really know him?”

“Know whom?”

“Tchizhov.”

“The devil take Tchizhov and you with him. I’ll give him a hiding, that I will. He was laughing at me!”

“Will give Tchizhov a hiding! More likely he will give you one. You are a fool, that’s what you are!”

“Not Tchizhov, not Tchizhov, you spiteful, mischievous woman. I’ll give the boy a hiding. Catch him, catch him, he was laughing at me

The woman guffawed. But Kolya was by now a long way off, marching along with a triumphant air. Smurov walked beside him, looking round at the shouting group far behind. He too was in high spirits, though he was still afraid of getting into some scrape in Kolya’s company.

“What Sabaneyev did you mean?” he asked Kolya, foreseeing what his answer would be.

“How do I know? Now there’ll be a hubbub among them all day. I like to stir up fools in every class of society. There’s another blockhead, that

peasant there. You know, they say ‘there’s no one stupider than a stupid Frenchman,’ but a stupid Russian shows it in his face just as much. Can’t you see it all over his face that he is a fool, that peasant, eh?”

“Let him alone, Kolya. Let’s go on.”

“Nothing could stop me, now I am once off. Hey, good morning, peasant!”

A sturdy-looking peasant, with a round, simple face and grizzled beard, who was walking by, raised his head and looked at the boy. He seemed not quite sober.

“Good morning, if you are not laughing at me,” he said deliberately in reply.

“And if I am?” laughed Kolya.

“Well, a joke’s a joke. Laugh away. I don’t mind. There’s no harm in a joke.”

“I beg your pardon, brother, it was a joke.”

“Well, God forgive you!”

“Do you forgive me, too?”

“I quite forgive you. Go along.”

“I say, you seem a clever peasant.”

“Cleverer than you,” the peasant answered unexpectedly, with the same gravity.

“I doubt it,” said Kolya, somewhat taken aback.

“It’s true, though.”

“Perhaps it is.”

“It is, brother.”

“Good-bye, peasant!”

“Good-bye!”

“There are all sorts of peasants,” Kolya observed to Smurov after a brief silence. “How could I tell I had hit on a clever one? I am always ready to recognise intelligence in the peasantry.”

In the distance the cathedral clock struck half-past eleven. The boys made haste and they walked as far as Captain Snegiryov’s lodging, a considerable distance, quickly and almost in silence. Twenty paces from the house Kolya stopped and told Smurov to go on ahead and ask Karamazov to come out to him.

“One must sniff round a bit first,” he observed to Smurov.

“Why ask him to come out?” Smurov protested. “You go in; they will be awfully glad to see you. What’s the sense of making friends in the frost out here?”

“I know why I want to see him out here in the frost,” Kolya cut him short in the despotic tone he was fond of adopting with “small boys,” and Smurov ran to do his bidding.

CHAPTER 4

The Lost Dog

KOLYA leaned against the fence with an air of dignity, waiting for Alyosha to appear. Yes, he had long wanted to meet him. He had heard a great deal about him from the boys, but hitherto he had always maintained an appearance of disdainful indifference when he was mentioned, and he had even “criticised” what he heard about Alyosha. But secretely he had a great longing to make his acquaintance; there was something sympathetic and attractive in all he was told about Alyosha. So the present moment was important: to begin with, he had to show himself at his best, to show his independence. “Or he’ll think of me as thirteen and take me for a boy, like the rest of them. And what are these boys to him? I shall ask him when I get to know him. It’s a pity I am so short, though. Tuzikov is younger than I am, yet he is half a head taller. But I have a clever face. I am not good-looking. I know I’m hideous, but I’ve a clever face. I mustn’t talk too freely; if I fall into his arms all at once, he may think — Tfoo! how horrible if he should think — !”

Such were the thoughts that excited Kolya while he was doing his utmost to assume the most independent air. What distressed him most was his being so short; he did not mind so much his “hideous” face, as being so short. On the wall in a corner at home he had the year before made a pencil-mark to show his height, and every two months since he anxiously measured himself against it to see how much he had gained. But alas! he grew very slowly, and this sometimes reduced him almost to despair. His face was in reality by no means “hideous”; on the contrary, it was rather attractive, with a fair, pale skin, freckled. His small, lively grey eyes had a fearless look, and often glowed with feeling. He had rather high cheekbones; small, very red, but not very thick, lips; his nose was small and unmistakably turned up. “I’ve a regular pug nose, a regular pug nose,” Kolya used to mutter to himself when he looked in the looking-glass, and he always left it with indignation. “But perhaps I haven’t got a clever face?” he sometimes thought, doubtful even of that. But it must not be supposed that his mind was preoccupied with his face and his height. On the contrary, however bitter the moments before the looking-glass were to him, he

quickly forgot them, and forgot them for a long time, “abandoning himself entirely to ideas and to real life,” as he formulated it to himself.

Alyosha came out quickly and hastened up to Kolya. Before he reached him, Kolya could see that he looked delighted. “Can he be so glad to see me?” Kolya wondered, feeling pleased. We may note here, in passing, that Alyosha’s appearance had undergone a complete change since we saw him last. He had abandoned his cassock and was wearing now a wellcut coat, a soft, round hat, and his hair had been cropped short. All this was very becoming to him, and he looked quite handsome. His charming face always had a good-humoured expression; but there was a gentleness and serenity in his good-humour. To Kolya’s surprise, Alyosha came out to him just as he was, without an overcoat. He had evidently come in haste. He held out his hand to Kolya at once.

“Here you are at last! How anxious we’ve been to see you!”

“There were reasons which you shall know directly. Anyway, I am glad to make your acquaintance. I’ve long been hoping for an opportunity, and have heard a great deal about you,” Kolya muttered, a little breathless.

“We should have met anyway. I’ve heard a great deal about you, too; but you’ve been a long time coming here.”

“Tell me, how are things going?”

“Ilusha is very ill. He is certainly dying.”

“How awful! You must admit that medicine is a fraud, Karamazov,” cried Kolya warmly.

“Ilusha has mentioned you often, very often, even in his sleep, in delirium, you know. One can see that you used to be very, very dear to him... before the incident... with the knife.... Then there’s another reason.... Tell me, is that your dog?”

“Yes Perezvon.”

“Not Zhutchka?” Alyosha looked at Kolya with eyes full of pity. “Is she lost for ever?”

“I know you would all like it to be Zhutchka. I’ve heard all about it.” Kolya smiled mysteriously. “Listen, Karamazov, I’ll tell you all about it. That’s what I came for; that’s what I asked you to come out here for, to explain the whole episode to you before we go in,” he began with animation. “You see, Karamazov, Ilusha came into the preparatory class last spring. Well, you know what our preparatory class is — a lot of small boys. They began teasing Ilusha at once. I am two classes higher up, and, of

course, I only look on at them from a distance. I saw the boy was weak and small, but he wouldn't give in to them; he fought with them. I saw he was proud, and his eyes were full of fire. I like children like that. And they teased him all the more. The worst of it was he was horribly dressed at the time, his breeches were too small for him, and there were holes in his boots. They worried him about it; they jeered at him. That I can't stand. I stood up for him at once, and gave it to them hot. I beat them, but they adore me, do you know, Karamazov?" Kolya boasted impulsively; "but I am always fond of children. I've two chickens in my hands at home now — that's what detained me to-day. So they left off beating Ilusha and I took him under my protection. I saw the boy was proud. I tell you that, the boy was proud; but in the end he became slavishly devoted to me: he did my slightest bidding, obeyed me as though I were God, tried to copy me. In the intervals between the classes he used to run to me at once' and I'd go about with him. On Sundays, too. They always laugh when an older boy makes friends with a younger one like that; but that's a prejudice. If it's my fancy, that's enough. I am teaching him, developing him. Why shouldn't I develop him if I like him? Here you, Karamazov, have taken up with all these nestlings. I see you want to influence the younger generation — to develop them, to be of use to them, and I assure you this trait in your character, which I knew by hearsay, attracted me more than anything. Let us get to the point, though. I noticed that there was a sort of softness and sentimentality coming over the boy, and you know I have a positive hatred of this sheepish sentimentality, and I have had it from a baby. There were contradictions in him, too: he was proud, but he was slavishly devoted to me, and yet all at once his eyes would flash and he'd refuse to agree with me; he'd argue, fly into a rage. I used sometimes to propound certain ideas; I could see that it was not so much that he disagreed with the ideas, but that he was simply rebelling against me, because I was cool in responding to his endearments. And so, in order to train him properly, the tenderer he was, the colder I became. I did it on purpose: that was my idea. My object was to form his character, to lick him into shape, to make a man of him... and besides... no doubt, you understand me at a word. Suddenly I noticed for three days in succession he was downcast and dejected, not because of my coldness, but for something else, something more important. I wondered what the tragedy was. I have pumped him and found out that he had somehow got to know Smerdyakov, who was footman to your late father — it was before his death, of course —

and he taught the little fool a silly trick — that is, a brutal, nasty trick. He told him to take a piece of bread, to stick a pin in it, and throw it to one of those hungry dogs who snap up anything without biting it, and then to watch and see what would happen. So they prepared a piece of bread like that and threw it to Zhutchka, that shaggy dog there's been such a fuss about. The people of the house it belonged to never fed it at all, though it barked all day. (Do you like that stupid barking, Karamazov? I can't stand it.) So it rushed at the bread, swallowed it, and began to squeal; it turned round and round and ran away, squealing as it ran out of sight. That was Ilusha's own account of it. He confessed it to me, and cried bitterly. He hugged me, shaking all over. He kept on repeating 'He ran away squealing': the sight of that haunted him. He was tormented by remorse, I could see that. I took it seriously. I determined to give him a lesson for other things as well. So I must confess I wasn't quite straightforward, and pretended to be more indignant perhaps than I was. 'You've done a nasty thing,' I said, 'you are a scoundrel. I won't tell of it, of course, but I shall have nothing more to do with you for a time. I'll think it over and let you know through Smurov' — that's the boy who's just come with me; he's always ready to do anything for me—'whether I will have anything to do with you in the future or whether I give you up for good as a scoundrel.' He was tremendously upset. I must own I felt I'd gone too far as I spoke, but there was no help for it. I did what I thought best at the time. A day or two after, I sent Smurov to tell him that I would not speak to him again. That's what we call it when two schoolfellows refuse to have anything more to do with one another. Secretly I only meant to send him to Coventry for a few days and then, if I saw signs of repentance, to hold out my hand to him again. That was my intention. But what do you think happened? He heard Smurov's message, his eyes flashed. 'Tell Krassotkin for me,' he cried, 'that I will throw bread with pins to all the dogs — all — all of them!"So he's going in for a little temper. We must smoke it out of him.' And I began to treat him with contempt; whenever I met him I turned away or smiled sarcastically. And just then that affair with his father happened. You remember? You must realise that he was fearfully worked up by what had happened already. The boys, seeing I'd given him up, set on him and taunted him, shouting, 'Wisp of tow, wisp of tow!' And he had soon regular skirmishes with them, which I am very sorry for. They seem to have given him one very bad beating. One day he flew at them all as they were coming out of school. I stood a few yards off,

looking on. And, I swear, I don’t remember that I laughed; it was quite the other way, I felt awfully sorry for him; in another minute I would have run up to take his part. But he suddenly met my eyes. I don’t know what he fancied; but he pulled out a penknife, rushed at me, and struck at my thigh, here in my right leg. I didn’t move. I don’t mind owning I am plucky sometimes, Karamazov. I simply looked at him contemptuously, as though to say, ‘This is how you repay all my kindness! Do it again if you like, I’m at your service.’ But he didn’t stab me again; he broke down; he was frightened at what he had done; he threw away the knife, burst out crying, and ran away. I did not sneak on him, of course, and I made them all keep quiet, so it shouldn’t come to the ears of the masters. I didn’t even tell my mother till it had healed up. And the wound was a mere scratch. And then I heard that the same day he’d been throwing stones and had bitten your finger — but you understand now what a state he was in! Well, it can’t be helped: it was stupid of me not to come and forgive him — that is, to make it up with him — when he was taken ill. I am sorry for it now. But I had a special reason. So now I’ve told you all about it... but I’m afraid it was stupid of me.”

“Oh, what a pity,” exclaimed Alyosha, with feeling, “that I didn’t know before what terms you were on with him, or I’d have come to you long ago to beg you to go to him with me. Would you believe it, when he was feverish he talked about you in delirium. I didn’t know how much you were to him! And you’ve really not succeeded in finding that dog? His father and the boys have been hunting all over the town for it. Would you believe it, since he’s been ill, I’ve three times heard him repeat with tears, ‘It’s because I killed Zhutchka, father, that I am ill now. God is punishing me for it.’ He can’t get that idea out of his head. And if the dog were found and proved to be alive, one might almost fancy the joy would cure him. We have all rested our hopes on you.”

“Tell me, what made you hope that I should be the one to find him?” Kolya asked, with great curiosity. “Why did you reckon on me rather than anyone else?”

“There was a report that you were looking for the dog, and that you would bring it when you’d found it. Smurov said something of the sort. We’ve all been trying to persuade Ilusha that the dog is alive, that it’s been seen. The boys brought him a live hare: he just looked at it, with a faint smile, and asked them to set it free in the fields. And so we did. His father

has just this moment come back, bringing him a mastiff pup, hoping to comfort him with that; but I think it only makes it worse."

"Tell me, Karamazov, what sort of man is the father? I know him, but what do you make of him — a mountebank, a buffoon?"

"Oh no; there are people of deep feeling who have been somehow crushed. Buffoonery in them is a form of resentful irony against those to whom they daren't speak the truth, from having been for years humiliated and intimidated by them. Believe me, Krassotkin, that sort of buffoonery is sometimes tragic in the extreme. His whole life now is centred in Ilusha, and if Ilusha dies, he will either go mad with grief or kill himself. I feel almost certain of that when I look at him now."

"I understand you, Karamazov. I see you understand human nature," Kolya added, with feeling.

"And as soon as I saw you with a dog, I thought it was Zhutchka you were bringing."

"Wait a bit, Karamazov, perhaps we shall find it yet; but this is Perezvon. I'll let him go in now and perhaps it will amuse Ilusha more than the mastiff pup. Wait a bit, Karamazov, you will know something in a minute. But, I say, I am keeping you here!" Kolya cried suddenly. "You've no overcoat on in this bitter cold. You see what an egoist I am. Oh, we are all egoists, Karamazov!"

"Don't trouble; it is cold, but I don't often catch cold. Let us go in, though, and, by the way, what is your name? I know you are called Kolya, but what else?"

"Nikolay — Nikolay Ivanovitch Krassotkin, or, as they say in official documents, 'Krassotkin son.'" Kolya laughed for some reason, but added suddenly, "Of course I hate my name Nikolay."

"Why so?"

"It's so trivial, so ordinary."

"You are thirteen?" asked Alyosha.

"No, fourteen — that is, I shall be fourteen very soon, in a fortnight. I'll confess one weakness of mine, Karamazov, just to you, since it's our first meeting, so that you may understand my character at once. I hate being asked my age, more than that... and in fact... there's a libellous story going about me, that last week I played robbers with the preparatory boys. It's a fact that I did play with them, but it's a perfect libel to say I did it for my own amusement. I have reasons for believing that you've heard the story;

but I wasn’t playing for my own amusement, it was for the sake of the children, because they couldn’t think of anything to do by themselves. But they’ve always got some silly tale. This is an awful town for gossip, I can tell you.”

“But what if you had been playing for your own amusement, what’s the harm?”

“Come, I say, for my own amusement! You don’t play horses, do you?”

“But you must look at it like this,” said Alyosha, smiling. “Grown-up people go to the theatre and there the adventures of all sorts of heroes are represented — sometimes there are robbers and battles, too — and isn’t that just the same thing, in a different form, of course? And young people’s games of soldiers or robbers in their playtime are also art in its first stage. You know, they spring from the growing artistic instincts of the young. And sometimes these games are much better than performances in the theatre; the only difference is that people go there to look at the actors, while in these games the young people are the actors themselves. But that’s only natural.”

“You think so? Is that your idea?” Kolya looked at him intently. “Oh, you know, that’s rather an interesting view. When I go home, I’ll think it over. I’ll admit I thought I might learn something from you. I’ve come to learn of you, Karamazov,” Kolya concluded, in a voice full of spontaneous feeling.

“And I of you,” said Alyosha, smiling and pressing his hand.

Kolya was much pleased with Alyosha. What struck him most was that he treated him exactly like an equal and that he talked to him just as if he were “quite grown up.”

“I’ll show you something directly, Karamazov; it’s a theatrical performance, too,” he said, laughing nervously. “That’s why I’ve come.”

“Let us go first to the people of the house, on the left. All the boys leave their coats in there, because the room is small and hot.”

“Oh, I’m only coming in for a minute. I’ll keep on my overcoat. Perezvon will stay here in the passage and be dead. Ici, Perezvon, lie down and be dead! You see how he’s dead. I’ll go in first and explore, then I’ll whistle to him when I think fit, and you’ll see, he’ll dash in like mad. Only Smurov must not forget to open the door at the moment. I’ll arrange it all and you’ll see something.”

CHAPTER 5

By Ilusha's Bedside

THE room inhabited by the family of the retired captain Snegiryov is already familiar to the reader. It was close and crowded at that moment with a number of visitors. Several boys were sitting with Ilusha, and though all of them, like Smurov, were prepared to deny that it was Alyosha who had brought them and reconciled them with Ilusha, it was really the fact. All the art he had used had been to take them, one by one, to Ilusha, without "sheepish sentimentality," appearing to do so casually and without design. It was a great consolation to Ilusha in his suffering. He was greatly touched by seeing the almost tender affection and sympathy shown him by these boys, who had been his enemies. Krassotkin was the only one missing and his absence was a heavy load on Ilusha's heart. Perhaps the bitterest of all his bitter memories was his stabbing Krassotkin, who had been his one friend and protector. Clever little Smurov, who was the first to make it up with Ilusha, thought it was so. But when Smurov hinted to Krassotkin that Alyosha wanted to come and see him about something, the latter cut him short, bidding Smurov tell "Karamazov" at once that he knew best what to do, that he wanted no one's advice, and that, if he went to see Ilusha, he would choose his own time for he had "his own reasons."

That was a fortnight before this Sunday. That was why Alyosha had not been to see him, as he had meant to. But though he waited he sent Smurov to him twice again. Both times Krassotkin met him with a curt, impatient refusal, sending Alyosha a message not to bother him any more, that if he came himself, he, Krassotkin, would not go to Ilusha at all. Up to the very last day, Smurov did not know that Kolya meant to go to Ilusha that morning, and only the evening before, as he parted from Smurov, Kolya abruptly told him to wait at home for him next morning, for he would go with him to the Snegiryovs, but warned him on no account to say he was coming, as he wanted to drop in casually. Smurov obeyed. Smurov's fancy that Kolya would bring back the lost dog was based on the words Kolya had dropped that "they must be asses not to find the dog, if it was alive." When Smurov, waiting for an opportunity, timidly hinted at his guess about the dog, Krassotkin flew into a violent rage. "I'm not such an ass as to go

hunting about the town for other people's dogs when I've got a dog of my own! And how can you imagine a dog could be alive after swallowing a pin? Sheepish sentimentality, thats what it is!

For the last fortnight Ilusha had not left his little bed under the ikons in the corner. He had not been to school since the day he met Alyosha and bit his finger. He was taken ill the same day, though for a month afterwards he was sometimes able to get up and walk about the room and passage. But latterly he had become so weak that he could not move without help from his father. His father was terribly concerned about him. He even gave up drinking and was almost crazy with terror that his boy would die. And often, especially after leading him round the room on his arm and putting him back to bed, he would run to a dark corner in the passage and, leaning his head against the wall, he would break into paroxysms of violent weeping, stifling his sobs that they might not be heard by Ilusha.

Returning to the room, he would usually begin doing something to amuse and comfort his precious boy: he would tell him stories, funny anecdotes, or would mimic comic people he had happened to meet, even imitate the howls and cries of animals. But Ilusha could not bear to see his father fooling and playing the buffoon. Though the boy tried not to show how he disliked it, he saw with an aching heart that his father was an object of contempt, and he was continually haunted by the memory of the "wisp of tow" and that "terrible day."

Nina, Ilusha's gentle, crippled sister, did not like her father's buffoonery either (Varvara had been gone for some time past to Petersburg to study at the university). But the half-imbecile mother was greatly diverted and laughed heartily when her husband began capering about or performing something. It was the only way she could be amused; all the rest of the time she was grumbling and complaining that now everyone had forgotten her, that no one treated her with respect, that she was slighted, and so on. But during the last few days she had completely changed. She began looking constantly at Ilusha's bed in the corner and seemed lost in thought. She was more silent, quieter, and, if she cried, she cried quietly so as not to be heard. The captain noticed the change in her with mournful perplexity. The boys' visits at first only angered her, but later on their merry shouts and stories began to divert her, and at last she liked them so much that, if the boys had given up coming, she would have felt dreary without them. When the children told some story or played a game, she laughed and clapped her

hands. She called some of them to her and kissed them. She was particularly fond of Smurov.

As for the captain, the presence in his room of the children, who came to cheer up Ilusha, filled his heart from the first with ecstatic joy. He even hoped that Ilusha would now get over his depression and that that would hasten his recovery. In spite of his alarm about Ilusha, he had not, till lately, felt one minute's doubt of his boy's ultimate recovery.

He met his little visitors with homage, waited upon them hand and foot; he was ready to be their horse and even began letting them ride on his back, but Ilusha did not like the game and it was given up. He began buying little things for them, gingerbread and nuts, gave them tea and cut them sandwiches. It must be noted that all this time he had plenty of money. He had taken the two hundred roubles from Katerina Ivanovna just as Alyosha had predicted he would. And afterwards Katerina Ivanovna, learning more about their circumstances and Ilusha's illness, visited them herself, made the acquaintance of the family, and succeeded in fascinating the half-imbecile mother. Since then she had been lavish in helping them, and the captain, terror-stricken at the thought that his boy might be dying, forgot his pride and humbly accepted her assistance.

All this time Doctor Herzenstube, who was called in by Katerina Ivanovna, came punctually every other day, but little was gained by his visits and he dosed the invalid mercilessly. But on that Sunday morning a new doctor was expected, who had come from Moscow, where he had a great reputation. Katerina Ivanovna had sent for him from Moscow at great expense, not expressly for Ilusha, but for another object of which more will be said in its place hereafter. But, as he had come, she had asked him to see Ilusha as well, and the captain had been told to expect him. He hadn't the slightest idea that Kolya Krassotkin was coming, though he had long wished for a visit from the boy for whom Ilusha was fretting.

At the moment when Krassotkin opened the door and came into the room, the captain and all the boys were round Ilusha's bed, looking at a tiny mastiff pup, which had only been born the day before, though the captain had bespoken it a week ago to comfort and amuse Ilusha, who was still fretting over the lost and probably dead Zhutchka. Ilusha, who had heard three days before that he was to be presented with a puppy, not an ordinary puppy, but a pedigree mastiff (a very important point, of course), tried from delicacy of feeling to pretend that he was pleased. But his father and the

boys could not help seeing that the puppy only served to recall to his little heart the thought of the unhappy dog he had killed. The puppy lay beside him feebly moving and he, smiling sadly, stroked it with his thin, pale, wasted hand. Clearly he liked the puppy, but... it wasn't Zhutchka; if he could have had Zhutchka and the puppy, too, then he would have been completely happy.

"Krassotkin!" cried one of the boys suddenly. He was the first to see him come in.

Krassotkin's entrance made a general sensation; the boys moved away and stood on each side of the bed, so that he could get a full view of Ilusha. The captain ran eagerly to meet Kolya.

"Please come in... you are welcome!" he said hurriedly. "Ilusha, Mr. Krassotkin has come to see you!

But Krassotkin, shaking hands with him hurriedly, instantly showed his complete knowledge of the manners of good society. He turned first to the captain's wife sitting in her armchair, who was very ill-humoured at the moment, and was grumbling that the boys stood between her and Ilusha's bed and did not let her see the new puppy. With the greatest courtesy he made her a bow, scraping his foot, and turning to Nina, he made her, as the only other lady present, a similar bow. This polite behaviour made an extremely favourable impression on the deranged lady.

"There,.you can see at once he is a young man that has been well brought up," she commented aloud, throwing up her hands; "But as for our other visitors they come in one on the top of another."

"How do you mean, mamma, one on the top of another, how is that?" muttered the captain affectionately, though a little anxious on her account.

"That's how they ride in. They get on each other's shoulders in the passage and prance in like that on a respectable family. Strange sort of visitors!"

"But who's come in like that, mamma?"

"Why, that boy came in riding on that one's back and this one on that one's."

Kolya was already by Ilusha's bedside. The sick boy turned visibly paler. He raised himself in the bed and looked intently at Kolya. Kolya had not seen his little friend for two months, and he was overwhelmed at the sight of him. He had never imagined that he would see such a wasted, yellow face, such enormous, feverishly glowing eyes and such thin little hands. He

saw, with grieved surprise, Ilusha’s rapid, hard breathing and dry lips. He stepped close to him, held out his hand, and almost overwhelmed, he said:

“Well, old man... how are you?” But his voice failed him, he couldn’t achieve an appearance of ease; his face suddenly twitched and the corners of his mouth quivered. Ilusha smiled a pitiful little smile, still unable to utter a word. Something moved Kolya to raise his hand and pass it over Ilusha’s hair.

“Never mind!” he murmured softly to him to cheer him up, or perhaps not knowing why he said it. For a minute they were silent again.

“Hallo, so you’ve got a new puppy?” Kolya said suddenly, in a most callous voice.

“Ye-es,” answered Ilusha in a long whisper, gasping for breath.

“A black nose, that means he’ll be fierce, a good house-dog,” Kolya observed gravely and stolidly, as if the only thing he cared about was the puppy and its black nose. But in reality he still had to do his utmost to control his feelings not to burst out crying like a child, and do what he would he could not control it. “When it grows up, you’ll have to keep it on the chain, I’m sure.”

“He’ll be a huge dog!” cried one of the boys.

“Of course he will,”

“a mastiff,”

“large,”

“like this,”

“as big as a calf,” shouted several voices.

“As big as a calf, as a real calf,” chimed in the captain. “I got one like that on purpose, one of the fiercest breed, and his parents are huge and very fierce, they stand as high as this from the floor.... Sit down here, on Ilusha’s bed, or here on the bench. You are welcome, we’ve been hoping to see you a long time.... You were so kind as to come with Alexey Fyodorovitch?”

Krassotkin sat on the edge of the bed, at Ilusha’s feet. Though he had perhaps prepared a free-and-easy opening for the conversation on his way, now he completely lost the thread of it.

“No... I came with Perezvon. I’ve got a dog now, called Perezvon. A Slavonic name. He’s out there... if I whistle, he’ll run in. I’ve brought a dog, too,” he said, addressing Ilusha all at once. “Do you remember Zhutchka, old man?” he suddenly fired the question at him.

Ilusha’s little face quivered. He looked with an agonised expression at Kolya. Alyosha, standing at the door, frowned and signed to Kolya not to speak of Zhutchka, but he did not or would not notice.

“Where... is Zhutchka?” Ilusha asked in a broken voice.

“Oh well, my boy, your Zhutchka’s lost and done for!”

Ilusha did not speak, but he fixed an intent gaze once more on Kolya. Alyosha, catching Kolya’s eye, signed to him vigourously again, but he turned away his eyes pretending not to have noticed.

“It must have run away and died somewhere. It must have died after a meal like that,” Kolya pronounced pitilessly, though he seemed a little breathless. “But I’ve got a dog, Perezvon... A Slavonic name... I’ve brought him to show you.”

“I don’t want him!” said Ilusha suddenly.

“No, no, you really must see him... it will amuse you. I brought him on purpose.... He’s the same sort of shaggy dog.... You allow me to call in my dog, madam?” He suddenly addressed Madame Snegiryov, with inexplicable excitement in his manner.

“I don’t want him, I don’t want him!” cried Ilusha, with a mournful break in his voice. There was a reproachful light in his eyes.

“You’d better,” the captain started up from the chest by the wall on which he had just sat down, “you’d better... another time,” he muttered, but Kolya could not be restrained. He hurriedly shouted to Smurov, “Open the door,” and as soon as it was open, he blew his whistle. Perezvon dashed headlong into the room.

“Jump, Perezvon, beg! Beg!” shouted Kolya, jumping up, and the dog stood erect on its hind-legs by Ilusha’s bedside. What followed was a surprise to everyone: Ilusha started, lurched violently forward, bent over Perezvon and gazed at him, faint with suspense.

“It’s... Zhutchka!” he cried suddenly, in a voice breaking with joy and suffering.

“And who did you think it was?” Krassotkin shouted with all his might, in a ringing, happy voice, and bending down he seized the dog and lifted him up to Ilusha.

“Look, old man, you see, blind of one eye and the left ear is torn, just the marks you described to me. It was by that I found him. I found him directly. He did not belong to anyone!” he explained, to the captain, to his wife, to Alyosha and then again to Ilusha. “He used to live in the Fedotovs’

backyard. Though he made his home there, they did not feed him. He was a stray dog that had run away from the village... I found him.... You see, old man, he couldn’t have swallowed what you gave him. If he had, he must have died, he must have! So he must have spat it out, since he is alive. You did not see him do it. But the pin pricked his tongue, that is why he squealed. He ran away squealing and you thought he’d swallowed it. He might well squeal, because the skin of dogs’ mouths is so tender... tenderer than in men, much tenderer!” Kolya cried impetuously, his face glowing and radiant with delight. Ilusha could not speak. White as a sheet, he gazed open-mouthed at Kolya, with his great eyes almost starting out of his head. And if Krassotkin, who had no suspicion of it, had known what a disastrous and fatal effect such a moment might have on the sick child’s health, nothing would have induced him to play such a trick on him. But Alyosha was perhaps the only person in the room who realised it. As for the captain he behaved like a small child.

“Zhutchka! It’s Zhutchka!” he cried in a blissful voice, “Ilusha, this is Zhutchka, your Zhutchka! Mamma, this is Zhutchka!” He was almost weeping.

“And I never guessed!” cried Smurov regretfully. “Bravo, Krassotkin! I said he’d find the dog and here he’s found him.”

“Here he’s found him!” another boy repeated gleefully.

“Krassotkin’s a brick! cried a third voice.

“He’s a brick, he’s a brick!” cried the other boys, and they began clapping.

“Wait, wait,” Krassotkin did his utmost to shout above them all. “I’ll tell you how it happened, that’s the whole point. I found him, I took him home and hid him at once. I kept him locked up at home and did not show him to anyone till to-day. Only Smurov has known for the last fortnight, but I assured him this dog was called Perezvon and he did not guess. And meanwhile I taught the dog all sorts of tricks. You should only see all the things he can do! I trained him so as to bring you a well trained dog, in good condition, old man, so as to be able to say to you, ‘See, old man, what a fine dog your Zhutchka is now!’ Haven’t you a bit of meat? He’ll show you a trick that will make you die with laughing. A piece of meat, haven’t you got any?”

The captain ran across the passage to the landlady, where their cooking was done. Not to lose precious time, Kolya, in desperate haste, shouted to

Perezvon, “Dead!” And the dog immediately turned round and lay on his back with its four paws in the air. The boys laughed, Ilusha looked on with the same suffering smile, but the person most delighted with the dog’s performance was “mamma.” She laughed at the dog and began snapping her fingers and calling it, “Perezvon, Perezvon!”

“Nothing will make him get up, nothing!” Kolya cried triumphantly, proud of his success. “He won’t move for all the shouting in the world, but if I call to him, he’ll jump up in a minute. Ici, Perezvon!” The dog leapt up and bounded about, whining with delight. The captain ran back with a piece of cooked beef.

“Is it hot?” Kolya inquired hurriedly, with a business-like air, taking the meat. “Dogs don’t like hot things. No, it’s all right. Look, everybody, look, Ilusha, look, old man; why aren’t you looking? He does not look at him, now I’ve brought him.”

The new trick consisted in making the dog stand motionless with his nose out and putting a tempting morsel of meat just on his nose. The luckless dog had to stand without moving, with the meat on his nose, as long as his master chose to keep him, without a movement, perhaps for half an hour. But he kept Perezvon only for a brief moment.

“Paid for!” cried Kolya, and the meat passed in a flash from the dog’s nose to his mouth. The audience, of course, expressed enthusiasm and surprise.

“Can you really have put off coming all this time simply to train the dog?” exclaimed Alyosha, with an involuntary note of reproach in his voice.

“Simply for that!” answered Kolya, with perfect simplicity. “I wanted to show him in all his glory.”

“Perezvon! Perezvon,” called Ilusha suddenly, snapping his thin fingers and beckoning to the dog.

“What is it? Let him jump up on the bed! Ici, Perezvon!” Kolya slapped the bed and Perezvon darted up by Ilusha. The boy threw both arms round his head and Perezvon instantly licked his cheek. Ilusha crept close to him, stretched himself out in bed and hid his face in the dog’s shaggy coat.

“Dear, dear!” kept exclaiming the captain. Kolya sat down again on the edge of the bed.

“Ilusha, I can show you another trick. I’ve brought you a little cannon. You remember, I told you about it before and you said how much you’d like

to see it. Well, here, I've brought it to you."

And Kolya hurriedly pulled out of his satchel the little bronze cannon. He hurried, because he was happy himself. Another time he would have waited till the sensation made by Perezvon had passed off, now he hurried on, regardless of all consideration. "You are all happy now," he felt, "so here's something to make you happier!" He was perfectly enchanted himself.

"I've been coveting this thing for a long while; it's for you, old man, it's for you. It belonged to Morozov, it was no use to him, he had it from his brother. I swopped a book from father's book-case for it, A Kinsman of Mahomet, or Salutary Folly, a scandalous book published in Moscow a hundred years ago, before they had any censorship. And Morozov has a taste for such things. He was grateful to me, too...."

Kolya held the cannon in his hand so that all could see and admire it. Ilusha raised himself, and, with his right arm still round the dog, he gazed enchanted at the toy. The sensation was even greater when Kolya announced that he had gunpowder too, and that it could be fired off at once "if it won't alarm the ladies."

"Mamma" immediately asked to look at the toy closer and her request was granted. She was much pleased with the little bronze cannon on wheels and began rolling it to and fro on her lap. She readily gave permission for the cannon to be fired, without any idea of what she had been asked. Kolya showed the powder and the shot. The captain, as a military man, undertook to load it, putting in a minute quantity of powder. He asked that the shot might be put off till another time. The cannon was put on the floor, aiming towards an empty part of the room, three grains of powder were thrust into the touchhole and a match was put to it. A magnificent explosion followed. Mamma was startled, but at once laughed with delight. The boys gazed in speechless triumph. But the captain, looking at Ilusha, was more enchanted than any of them. Kolya picked up the cannon and immediately presented it to Ilusha, together with the powder and the shot.

"I got it for you, for you! I've been keeping it for you a long time," he repeated once more in his delight.

"Oh, give it to me! No, give me the cannon!" mamma began begging like a little child. Her face showed a piteous fear that she would not get it. Kolya was disconcerted. The captain fidgeted uneasily.

“Mamma, mamma,” he ran to her, “the cannon’s yours, of course, but let Ilusha have it, because it’s a present to him, but it’s just as good as yours. Ilusha will always let you play with it; it shall belong to both of you, both of you.”

“No, I don’t want it to belong to both of us; I want it to be mine altogether, not Ilusha’s,” persisted mamma, on the point of tears.

“Take it, mother, here, keep it!” Ilusha cried. “Krassotkin, may I give it to my mother?” he turned to Krassotkin with an imploring face, as though he were afraid he might be offended at his giving his present to someone else.

“Of course you may,” Krassotkin assented heartily, and, taking the cannon from Ilusha, he handed it himself to mamma with a polite bow. She was so touched that she cried.

“Ilusha, darling, he’s the one who loves his mammal” she said tenderly, and at once began wheeling the cannon to and fro on her lap again.

“Mamma, let me kiss your hand.” The captain darted up to her at once and did so.

“And I never saw such a charming fellow as this nice boy,” said the grateful lady, pointing to Krassotkin.

“And I’ll bring you as much powder as you like, Ilusha. We make the powder ourselves now. Borovikov found out how it’s made — twenty-four parts of saltpetre, ten of sulphur and six of birchwood charcoal. It’s all pounded together, mixed into a paste with water and rubbed through a tammy sieve-that’s how it’s done.”

“Smurov told me about your powder, only father says it’s not real gunpowder,” responded Ilusha.

“Not real?” Kolya flushed. “It burns. I don’t know, of course.”

“No, I didn’t mean that,” put in the captain with a guilty face. “I only said that real powder is not made like that, but that’s nothing, it can be made so.”

“I don’t know, you know best. We lighted some in a pomatum pot, it burned splendidly, it all burnt away leaving only a tiny ash. But that was only the paste, and if you rub it through... but of course you know best, I don’t know... And Bulkin’s father thrashed him on account of our powder, did you hear?” he turned to Ilusha.

“We had prepared a whole bottle of it and he used to keep it under his bed. His father saw it. He said it might explode, and thrashed him on the

spot. He was going to make a complaint against me to the masters. He is not allowed to go about with me now, no one is allowed to go about with me now. Smurov is not allowed to either; I've got a bad name with everyone. They say I'm a 'desperate character,'" Kolya smiled scornfully. "It all began from what happened on the railway."

"Ah, we've heard of that exploit of yours, too," cried the captain. "How could you lie still on the line? Is it possible you weren't the least afraid, lying there under the train? Weren't you frightened?"

The captain was abject in his flattery of Kolya.

"N — not particularly," answered Kolya carelessly. "What's blasted my reputation more than anything here was that cursed goose," he said, turning again to Ilusha — but though he assumed an unconcerned air as he talked, he still could not control himself and was continually missing the note he tried to keep up.

"Ah! I heard about the goose!" Ilusha laughed, beaming all over. "They told me, but I didn't understand. Did they really take you to the court?"

"The most stupid, trivial affair, they made a mountain of a mole-hill as they always do," Kolya began carelessly. "I was walking through the market-place here one day, just when they'd driven in the geese. I stopped and looked at them. All at once a fellow, who is an errand-boy at Plotnikov's now, looked at me and said, 'What are you looking at the geese for?' I looked at him; he was a stupid, moon-faced fellow of twenty. I am always on the side of the peasantry, you know. I like talking to the peasants.... We've dropped behind the peasants that's an axiom. I believe you are laughing, Karamazov?"

"No, Heaven forbid, I am listening," said Alyosha with a most good-natured air, and the sensitive Kolya was immediately reassured."

"My theory, Karamazov, is clear and simple," he hurried on again, looking pleased. "I believe in the people and am always glad to give them their due, but I am not for spoiling them, that is a sine qua non... But I was telling you about the goose. So I turned to the fool and answered, 'I am wondering what the goose thinks about.' He looked at me quite stupidly, 'And what does the goose think about?' he asked. 'Do you see that cart full of oats?'I said. 'The oats are dropping out of the sack, and the goose has put its neck right under the wheel to gobble them up — do you see?"I see that quite well,' he said. 'Well,' said I, 'if that cart were to move on a little, would it break the goose's neck or not?"It'd be sure to break it,' and he

grinned all over his face, highly delighted. ‘Come on, then,’ said I, ‘let’s try.”Let’s,’ he said. And it did not take us long to arrange: he stood at the bridle without being noticed, and I stood on one side to direct the goose. And the owner wasn’t looking, he was talking to someone, so I had nothing to do, the goose thrust its head in after the oats of itself, under the cart, just under the wheel. I winked at the lad, he tugged at the bridle, and crack. The goose’s neck was broken in half. And, as luck would have it, all the peasants saw us at that moment and they kicked up a shindy at once. ‘You did that on purpose!”No, not on purpose.”Yes, you did, on purpose!’ Well, they shouted, ‘Take him to the justice of the peace!’ They took me, too. ‘You were there, too,’ they said, ‘you helped, you’re known all over the market!’ And, for some reason, I really am known all over the market,” Kolya added conceitedly. “We all went off to the justice’s, they brought the goose, too. The fellow was crying in a great funk, simply blubbering like a woman. And the farmer kept shouting that you could kill any number of geese like that. Well, of course, there were witnesses. The justice of the peace settled it in a minute, that the farmer was to be paid a rouble for the goose, and the fellow to have the goose. And he was warned not to play such pranks again. And the fellow kept blubbering like a woman. ‘It wasn’t me,’ he said, ‘it was he egged me on,’ and he pointed to me. I answered with the utmost composure that I hadn’t egged him on, that I simply stated the general proposition, had spoken hypothetically. The justice of the peace smiled and was vexed with himself once for having smiled. ‘I’ll complain to your masters of you, so that for the future you mayn’t waste your time on such general propositions, instead of sitting at your books and learning your lessons.’ He didn’t complain to the masters, that was a joke, but the matter noised abroad and came to the ears of the masters. Their ears are long, you know! The classical master, Kolbasnikov, was particularly shocked about it, but Dardanelov got me off again. But Kolbasnikov is savage with everyone now like a green ass. Did you know, Ilusha, he is just married, got a dowry of a thousand roubles, and his bride’s a regular fright of the first rank and the last degree. The third-class fellows wrote an epigram on it:

Astounding news has reached the class, Kolbasnikov has been an ass.

And so on, awfully funny, I’ll bring it to you later on. I say nothing against Dardanelov, he is a learned man, there’s no doubt about it. I respect men like that and it’s not because he stood up for me.”

“But you took him down about the founders of Troy!” Smurov put in suddenly, proud of Krassotkin at such a moment. He was particularly pleased with the story of the goose.

“Did you really take him down?” the captain inquired, in a flattering way. “On the question who founded Troy? We heard of it, Ilusha told me about it at the time.”

“He knows everything, father, he knows more than any of us!” put in Ilusha; “he only pretends to be like that, but really he is top in every subject...”

Ilusha looked at Kolya with infinite happiness.

“Oh, that’s all nonsense about Troy, a trivial matter. I consider this an unimportant question,” said Kolya with haughty humility. He had by now completely recovered his dignity, though he was still a little uneasy. He felt that he was greatly excited and that he had talked about the goose, for instance, with too little reserve, while Alyosha had looked serious and had not said a word all the time. And the vain boy began by degrees to have a rankling fear that Alyosha was silent because he despised him, and thought he was showing off before him. If he dared to think anything like that, Kolya would-

“I regard the question as quite a trivial one,” he rapped out again, proudly.

“And I know who founded Troy,” a boy, who had not spoken before, said suddenly, to the surprise of everyone. He was silent and seemed to be shy. He was a pretty boy of about eleven, called Kartashov. He was sitting near the door. Kolya looked at him with dignified amazement.

The fact was that the identity of the founders of Troy had become a secret for the whole school, a secret which could only be discovered by reading Smaragdov, and no one had Smaragdov but Kolya. One day, when Kolya’s back was turned, Kartashov hastily opened Smaragdov, which lay among Kolya’s books, and immediately lighted on the passage relating to the foundation of Troy. This was a good time ago, but he felt uneasy and could not bring himself to announce publicly that he too knew who had founded Troy, afraid of what might happen and of Krassotkin’s somehow putting him to shame over it. But now he couldn’t resist saying it. For weeks he had been longing to.

“Well, who did found it?” Kolya, turning to him with haughty superciliousness. He saw from his face that he really did know and at once

made up his mind how to take it. There was so to speak, a discordant note in the general harmony.

“Troy was founded by Teucer, Dardanus, Ilius and Tros,” the boy rapped out at once, and in the same instant he blushed, blushed so, that it was painful to look at him. But the boys stared at him, stared at him for a whole minute, and then all the staring eyes turned at once and were fastened upon Kolya, who was still scanning the audacious boy with disdainful composure.

“In what sense did they found it?” he deigned to comment at last. “And what is meant by founding a city or a state? What do they do? Did they go and each lay a brick, do you suppose?”

There was laughter. The offending boy turned from pink to crimson. He was silent and on the point of tears. Kolya held him so for a minute.

“Before you talk of a historical event like the foundation of a nationality, you must first understand what you mean by it,” he admonished him in stern, incisive tones. “But I attach no consequence to these old wives’ tales and I don’t think much of universal history in general,” he added carelessly, addressing the company generally.

“Universal history?” the captain inquired, looking almost scared.

“Yes, universal history! It’s the study of the successive follies of mankind and nothing more. The only subjects I respect are mathematics and natural science,” said Kolya. He was showing off and he stole a glance at Alyosha; his was the only opinion he was afraid of there. But Alyosha was still silent and still serious as before. If Alyosha had said a word it would have stopped him, but Alyosha was silent and “it might be the silence of contempt,” and that finally irritated Kolya.

“The classical languages, too... they are simply madness, nothing more. You seem to disagree with me again, Karamazov?”

“I don’t agree,” said Alyosha, with a faint smile.

“The study of the classics, if you ask my opinion, is simply a police measure, that’s simply why it has been introduced into our schools.” By degrees Kolya began to get breathless again. “Latin and Greek were introduced because they are a bore and because they stupefy the intellect. It was dull before, so what could they do to make things duller? It was senseless enough before, so what could they do to make it more senseless? So they thought of Greek and Latin. That’s my opinion, I hope I shall never change it,” Kolya finished abruptly. His cheeks were flushed.

“That’s true,” assented Smurov suddenly, in a ringing tone of conviction. He had listened attentively.

“And yet he is first in Latin himself,” cried one of the group of boys suddenly.

“Yes, father, he says that and yet he is first in Latin,” echoed Ilusha.

“What of it?” Kolya thought fit to defend himself, though the praise was very sweet to him. “I am fagging away at Latin because I have to, because I promised my mother to pass my examination, and I think that whatever you do, it’s worth doing it well. But in my soul I have a profound contempt for the classics and all that fraud.... You don’t agree, Karamazov?”

“Why ‘fraud’?” Alyosha smiled again.

“Well, all the classical authors have been translated into all languages, so it was not for the sake of studying the classics they introduced Latin, but solely as a police measure, to stupefy the intelligence. So what can one call it but a fraud?”

“Why, who taught you all this?” cried Alyosha, surprised at last.

“In the first place I am capable of thinking for myself without being taught. Besides, what I said just now about the classics being translated our teacher Kolbasnikov has said to the whole of the third class.”

“The doctor has come!” cried Nina, who had been silent till then.

A carriage belonging to Madame Hohlakov drove up to the gate. The captain, who had been expecting the doctor all the morning, rushed headlong out to meet him. “Mamma” pulled herself together and assumed a dignified air. Alyosha went up to Ilusha and began setting his pillows straight. Nina, from her invalid chair, anxiously watched him putting the bed tidy. The boys hurriedly took leave. Some of them promised to come again in the evening. Kolya called Perezvon and the dog jumped off the bed.

“I won’t go away, I won’t go away,” Kolya said hastily to Ilusha. “I’ll wait in the passage and come back when the doctor’s gone, I’ll come back with Perezvon.”

But by now the doctor had entered, an important-looking person with long, dark whiskers and a shiny, shaven chin, wearing a bearskin coat. As he crossed the threshold he stopped, taken aback; he probably fancied he had come to the wrong place. “How is this? Where am I?” he muttered, not removing his coat nor his peaked sealskin cap. The crowd, the poverty of

the room, the washing hanging on a line in the corner, puzzled him. The captain, bent double, was bowing low before him.

“It’s here, sir, here, sir,” he muttered cringingly; “it’s here, you’ve come right, you were coming to us...”

“Sne-gi-ryov?” the doctor said loudly and pompously. “Mr. Snegiryov — is that you?”

“That’s me, sir!”

“Ah!”

The doctor looked round the room with a squeamish air once more and threw off his coat, displaying to all eyes the grand decoration at his neck. The captain caught the fur coat in the air, and the doctor took off his cap.

“Where is the patient?” he asked emphatically.

CHAPTER 6

Precocity

“WHAT do you think the doctor will say to him?” Kolya asked quickly. “What a repulsive mug, though, hasn’t he? I can’t endure medicine!”

“Ilusha is dying. I think that’s certain,” answered Alyosha, mournfully.

“They are rogues! Medicine’s a fraud! I am glad to have made your acquaintance, though, Karamazov. I wanted to know you for a long time. I am only sorry we meet in such sad circumstances.”

Kolya had a great inclination to say something even warmer and more demonstrative, but he felt ill at ease. Alyosha noticed this, smiled, and pressed his hand.

“I’ve long learned to respect you as a rare person,” Kolya muttered again, faltering and uncertain. “I have heard you are a mystic and have been in the monastery. I know you are a mystic, but... that hasn’t put me off. Contact with real life will cure you.... It’s always so with characters like yours.”

“What do you mean by mystic? Cure me of what?” Alyosha was rather astonished.

“Oh, God and all the rest of it.”

“What, don’t you believe in God?”

“Oh, I’ve nothing against God. Of course, God is only a hypothesis, but... I admit that He is needed... for the order of the universe and all that... and that if there were no God He would have to be invented,” added Kolya, beginning to blush. He suddenly fancied that Alyosha might think he was trying to show off his knowledge and to prove that he was “grown up.”

“I haven’t the slightest desire to show off my knowledge to him,” Kolya thought indignantly. And all of a sudden he felt horribly annoyed.

“I must confess I can’t endure entering on such discussions,” he said with a final air. “It’s possible for one who doesn’t believe in God to love mankind, don’t you think so? Voltaire didn’t believe in God and loved mankind?” (“I am at it again,” he thought to himself.)

“Voltaire believed in God, though not very much, I think, and I don’t think he loved mankind very much either,” said Alyosha quietly, gently, and quite naturally, as though he were talking to someone of his own age, or

even older. Kolya was particularly struck by Alyosha's apparent diffidence about his opinion of Voltaire. He seemed to be leaving the question for him, little Kolya, to settle.

"Have you read Voltaire?" Alyosha finished.

"No, not to say read.... But I've read Candide in the Russian translation... in an absurd, grotesque, old translation.. (At it again! again!)"

"And did you understand it?"

"Oh, yes, everything.... That is... Why do you suppose I shouldn't understand it? There's a lot of nastiness in it, of course.... Of course I can understand that it's a philosophical novel and written to advocate an idea...." Kolya was getting mixed by now. "I am a Socialist, Karamazov, I am an incurable Socialist," he announced suddenly, apropos of nothing.

"A Socialist?" laughed Alyosha. "But when have you had time to become one? Why, I thought you were only thirteen?"

Kolya winced.

"In the first place I am not thirteen, but fourteen, fourteen in a fortnight," he flushed angrily, "and in the second place I am at a complete loss to understand what my age has to do with it? The question is what are my convictions, not what is my age, isn't it?"

"When you are older, you'll understand for yourself the influence of age on convictions. I fancied, too, that you were not expressing your own ideas," Alyosha answered serenely and modestly, but Kolya interrupted him hotly:

"Come, you want obedience and mysticism. You must admit that the Christian religion, for instance, has only been of use to the rich and the powerful to keep the lower classes in slavery. That's so, isn't it?"

"Ah, I know where you read that, and I am sure someone told you so!" cried Alyosha.

"I say, what makes you think I read it? And certainly no one told so. I can think for myself.... I am not opposed to Christ, if you like. He was a most humane person, and if He were alive to-day, He would be found in the ranks of the revolutionists, and would perhaps play a conspicuous part.... There's no doubt about that."

"Oh, where, where did you get that from? What fool have you made friends with?" exclaimed Alyosha.

"Come, the truth will out! It has so chanced that I have often talked to Mr. Rakitin, of course, but... old Byelinsky said that, too, so they say."

“Byelinsky? I don’t remember. He hasn’t written that anywhere.”

“If he didn’t write it, they say he said it. I heard that from a... but never mind.”

“And have you read Byelinsky?”

“Well, no... I haven’t read all of him, but... I read the passage about Tatyana, why she didn’t go off with Onyegin.”

“Didn’t go off with Onyegin? Surely you don’t... understand that already?”

“Why, you seem to take me for little Smurov,” said Kolya, with a grin of irritation. “But please don’t suppose I am such a revolutionist. I often disagree with Mr. Rakitin. Though I mention Tatyana, I am not at all for the emancipation of women. I acknowledge that women are a subject race and must obey. Les femmes tricottent,* Napoleon said.” Kolya, for some reason, smiled, “And on that question at least I am quite of one mind with that pseudo-great man. I think, too, that to leave one’s own country and fly to America is mean, worse than mean — silly. Why go to America when one may be of great service to humanity here? Now especially. There’s a perfect mass of fruitful activity open to us. That’s what I answered.”

* Let the women knit.

“What do you mean? Answered whom? Has someone suggested your going to America already?”

“I must own, they’ve been at me to go, but I declined. That’s between ourselves, of course, Karamazov; do you hear, not a word to anyone. I say this only to you. I am not at all anxious to fall into the clutches of the secret police and take lessons at the Chain bridge. Long will you remember: The house at the Chain bridge.

Do you remember? It’s splendid. Why are you laughing? You don’t suppose I am fibbing, do you?” (“What if he should find out that I’ve only that one number of The Bell in father’s book case, and haven’t read any more of it?” Kolya thought with a shudder.)

“Oh no, I am not laughing and don’t suppose for a moment that you are lying. No, indeed, I can’t suppose so, for all this, alas! is perfectly true. But tell me, have you read Pushkin — Onyegin, for instance?... You spoke just now of Tatyana.”

“No, I haven’t read it yet, but I want to read it. I have no prejudices, Karamazov; I want to hear both sides. What makes you ask?”

“Oh, nothing.”

“Tell me, Karamazov, have you an awful contempt for me?” Kolya rapped out suddenly and drew himself up before Alyosha, as though he were on drill. “Be so kind as to tell me, without beating about the bush.”

“I have a contempt for you?” Alyosha looked at him wondering. “What for? I am only sad that a charming nature such as yours should be perverted by all this crude nonsense before you have begun life.”

“Don’t be anxious about my nature,” Kolya interrupted, not without complacency. “But it’s true that I am stupidly sensitive, crudely sensitive. You smiled just now, and I fancied you seemed to-”

“Oh, my smile meant something quite different. I’ll tell you why I smiled. Not long ago I read the criticism made by a German who had lived in Russia, on our students and schoolboys of to-day. ‘Show a Russian schoolboy,’ he writes, ‘a map of the stars, which he knows nothing about, and he will give you back the map next day with corrections on it.’ No knowledge and unbounded conceit — that’s what the German meant to say about the Russian schoolboy.”

“Yes, that’s perfectly right,” Kolya laughed suddenly, “exactly so! Bravo the German! But he did not see the good side, what do you think? Conceit may be, that comes from youth, that will be corrected if need be, but, on the other hand, there is an independent spirit almost from childhood, boldness of thought and conviction, and not the spirit of these sausage makers, grovelling before authority.... But the German was right all the same. Bravo the German! But Germans want strangling all the same. Though they are so good at science and learning they must be strangled.”

“Strangled, what for?” smiled Alyosha.

“Well, perhaps I am talking nonsense, I agree. I am awfully childish sometimes, and when I am pleased about anything I can’t restrain myself and am ready to talk any stuff. But, I say, we are chattering away here about nothing, and that doctor has been a long time in there. But perhaps he’s examining the mamma and that poor crippled Nina. I liked that Nina, you know. She whispered to me suddenly as I was coming away, ‘Why didn’t you come before?’ And in such a voice, so reproachfully! I think she is awfully nice and pathetic.”

“Yes, yes! Well, you’ll be coming often, you will see what she is like. It would do you a great deal of good to know people like that, to learn to value a great deal which you will find out from knowing these people,”

Alyosha observed warmly. “That would have more effect on you than anything.”

“Oh, how I regret and blame myself for not having come sooner!” Kolya exclaimed, with bitter feeling.

“Yes, it’s a great pity. You saw for yourself how delighted the poor child was to see you. And how he fretted for you to come!”

“Don’t tell me! You make it worse! But it serves me right. What kept me from coming was my conceit, my egoistic vanity, and the beastly wilfulness, which I never can get rid of, though I’ve been struggling with it all my life. I see that now. I am a beast in lots of ways, Karamazov!”

“No, you have a charming nature, though it’s been distorted, and I quite understand why you have had such an influence on this generous, morbidly sensitive boy,” Alyosha answered warmly.

“And you say that to me!” cried Kolya; “and would you believe it, I thought — I’ve thought several times since I’ve been here — that you despised me! If only you knew how I prize your opinion!”

“But are you really so sensitive? At your age! Would you believe it, just now, when you were telling your story, I thought, as I watched you, that you must be very sensitive!”

“You thought so? What an eye you’ve got, I say! I bet that was when I was talking about the goose. That was just when I was fancying you had a great contempt for me for being in such a hurry to show off, and for a moment I quite hated you for it, and began talking like a fool. Then I fancied — just now, here — when I said that if there were no God He would have to be invented, that I was in too great a hurry to display my knowledge, especially as I got that phrase out of a book. But I swear I wasn’t showing off out of vanity, though I really don’t know why. Because I was so pleased? Yes, I believe it was because I was so pleased... though it’s perfectly disgraceful for anyone to be gushing directly they are pleased, I know that. But I am convinced now that you don’t despise me; it was all my imagination. Oh, Karamazov, I am profoundly unhappy. I sometimes fancy all sorts of things, that everyone is laughing at me, the whole world, and then I feel ready to overturn the whole order of things.”

“And you worry everyone about you,” smiled Alyosha.

“Yes, I worry everyone about me, especially my mother. Karamazov, tell me, am I very ridiculous now?”

“Don’t think about that, don’t think of it at all!” cried Alyosha. “And what does ridiculous mean? Isn’t everyone constantly being or seeming ridiculous? Besides, nearly all clever people now are fearfully afraid of being ridiculous, and that makes them unhappy. All I am surprised at is that you should be feeling that so early, though I’ve observed it for some time past,, not only in you. Nowadays the very children have begun to suffer from it. It’s almost a sort of insanity. The devil has taken the form of that vanity and entered into the whole generation; it’s simply the devil,” added Alyosha, without a trace of the smile that Kolya, staring at him, expected to see. “You are like everyone else,” said Alyosha, in conclusion, “that is, like very many others. Only you must not be like everybody else, that’s all.”

“Even if everyone is like that?”

“Yes, even if everyone is like that. You be the only one not like it. You really are not like everyone else, here you are not ashamed to confess to something bad and even ridiculous. And who will admit so much in these days? No one. And people have even ceased to feel the impulse to self-criticism. Don’t be like everyone else, even if you are the only one.”

“Splendid! I was not mistaken in you. You know how to console one. Oh, how I have longed to know you, Karamazov! I’ve long been eager for this meeting. Can you really have thought about me, too? You said just now that you thought of me, too?”

“Yes, I’d heard of you and had thought of you, too... and if it’s partly vanity that makes you ask, it doesn’t matter.”

“Do you know, Karamazov, our talk has been like a declaration of love,” said Kolya, in a bashful and melting voice. “That’s not ridiculous, is it?”

“Not at all ridiculous, and if it were, it wouldn’t matter, because it’s been a good thing.” Alyosha smiled brightly.

“But do you know, Karamazov, you must admit that you are a little ashamed yourself, now.... I see it by your eyes.” Kolya smiled with a sort of sly happiness.

“Why ashamed?”

“Well, why are you blushing?”

“It was you made me blush,” laughed Alyosha, and he really did blush. “Oh, well, I am a little, goodness knows why, I don’t know..,” he muttered, almost embarrassed.

“Oh, how I love you and admire you at this moment just because you are rather ashamed! Because you are just like me,” cried Kolya, in positive

ecstasy. His cheeks glowed, his eyes beamed.

“You know, Kolya, you will be very unhappy in your life,” something made Alyosha say suddenly.

“I know, I know. How you know it all before hand!” Kolya agreed at once.

“But you will bless life on the whole, all the same.”

“Just so, hurrah! You are a prophet. Oh, we shall get on together, Karamazov! Do you know, what delights me most, is that you treat me quite like an equal. But we are not equals, no, we are not, you are better! But we shall get on. Do you know, all this last month, I’ve been saying to myself, ‘Either we shall be friends at once, for ever, or we shall part enemies to the grave!’”

“And saying that, of course, you loved me,” Alyosha laughed gaily.

“I did. I loved you awfully. I’ve been loving and dreaming of you. And how do you know it all beforehand? Ah, here’s the doctor. Goodness! What will he tell us? Look at his face!”

CHAPTER 7

Ilusha

THE doctor came out of the room again, muffled in his fur coat and with his cap on his head. His face looked almost angry and disgusted, as though he were afraid of getting dirty. He cast a cursory glance round the passage, looking sternly at Alyosha and Kolya as he did so. Alyosha waved from the door to the coachman, and the carriage that had brought the doctor drove up. The captain darted out after the doctor, and, bowing apologetically, stopped him to get the last word. The poor fellow looked utterly crushed; there was a scared look in his eyes.

“Your Excellency, your Excellency... is it possible?” he began, but could not go on and clasped his hands in despair. Yet he still gazed imploringly at the doctor, as though a word from him might still change the poor boy’s fate.

“I can’t help it, I am not God!” the doctor answered offhand, though with the customary impressiveness.

“Doctor... your Excellency... and will it be soon, soon?”

“You must be prepared for anything,” said the doctor in emphatic and incisive tones, and dropping his eyes, he was about to step out to the coach.

“Your Excellency, for Christ’s sake!” the terror-stricken captain stopped him again. “Your Excellency! But can nothing, absolutely nothing save him now?”

“It’s not in my hands now,” said the doctor impatiently, “but h’m!..,” he stopped suddenly. “If you could, for instance... send... your patient... at once, without delay” (the words “at once, without delay,” the doctor uttered with an almost wrathful sternness that made the captain start) “to Syracuse, the change to the new be-ne-ficial

“To Syracuse!” cried the captain, unable to grasp what was said.

“Syracuse is in Sicily,” Kolya jerked out suddenly in explanation. The doctor looked at him.

“Sicily! Your Excellency,” faltered the captain, “but you’ve seen” — he spread out his hands, indicating his surroundings— “mamma and my family?”

“N-no, SiciIy is not the place for the family, the family should go to Caucasus in the early spring... your daughter must go to the Caucasus, and your wife... after a course of the waters in the Caucasus for her rheumatism... must be sent straight to Paris to the mental specialist Lepelletier; I could give you a note to him, and then... there might be a change-”

“Doctor, doctor! But you see!” The captain flung wide his hands again despairingly, indicating the bare wooden walls of the passage.

“Well, that’s not my business,” grinned the doctor. “I have only told you the answer of medical science to your question as to possible

“Don’t be afraid, apothecary, my dog won’t bite you,” Kolya rapped out loudly, noticing the doctor’s rather uneasy glance at Perezvon, who was standing in the doorway. There was a wrathful note in Kolya’s voice. He used the word apothecary instead of doctor on purpose, and, as he explained afterwards, used it “to insult him.”

“What’s that?” The doctor flung up his head, staring with surprise at Kolya. “Who’s this?” he addressed Alyosha, as though asking him to explain.

“It’s Perezvon’s master, don’t worry about me,” Kolya said incisively again.

“Perezvon?”* repeated the doctor, perplexed.

* i.e. a chime of bells.

“He hears the bell, but where it is he cannot tell. Good-bye, we shall meet in Syracuse.”

“Who’s this? Who’s this?” The doctor flew into a terrible rage.

“He is a schoolboy, doctor, he is a mischievous boy; take no notice of him,” said Alyosha, frowning and speaking quickly. “Kolya, hold your tongue!” he cried to Krassotkin. “Take no notice of him, doctor,” he repeated, rather impatiently.

“He wants a thrashing, a good thrashing!” The doctor stamped in a perfect fury.

“And you know, apothecary, my Perezvon might bite!” said Kolya, turning pale, with quivering voice and flashing eyes. “Ici, Perezvon!”

“Kolya, if you say another word, I’ll have nothing more to do with you,” Alyosha cried peremptorily.

“There is only one man in the world who can command Nikolay Krassotkin — this is the man,” Kolya pointed to Alyosha. “I obey him,

good-bye!”

He stepped forward, opened the door, and quickly went into the inner room. Perezvon flew after him. The doctor stood still for five seconds in amazement, looking at Alyosha; then, with a curse, he went out quickly to the carriage, repeating aloud, “This is... this is... I don’t know what it is!” The captain darted forward to help him into the carriage. Alyosha followed Kolya into the room. He was already by Ilusha’s bedside. The sick boy was holding his hand and calling for his father. A minute later the captain, too, came back.

“Father, father, come... we...” Ilusha faltered in violent excitement, but apparently unable to go on, he flung his wasted arms, found his father and Kolya, uniting them in one embrace, and hugging them as tightly as he could. The captain suddenly began to shake with dumb sobs, and Kolya’s lips and chin twitched.

“Father, father! How sorry I am for you!” Ilusha moaned bitterly.

“Ilusha... darling... the doctor said... you would be all right... we shall be happy... the doctor... “ the captain began.

“Ah, father! I know what the new doctor said to you about me.... I saw!” cried Ilusha, and again he hugged them both with all his strength, hiding his face on his father’s shoulder.

“Father, don’t cry, and when I die get a good boy, another one... choose one of them all, a good one, call him Ilusha and love him instead of me...”

“Hush, old man, you’ll get well,” Krassotkin cried suddenly, in a voice that sounded angry.

“But don’t ever forget me, father,” Ilusha went on, “come to my grave...and father, bury me by our big stone, where we used to go for our walk, and come to me there with Krassotkin in the evening... and Perezvon... I shall expect you.... Father, father!”

His voice broke. They were all three silent, still embracing. Nina was crying, quietly in her chair, and at last seeing them all crying, “mamma,” too, burst into tears.

“Ilusha! Ilusha!” she exclaimed.

Krassotkin suddenly released himself from Ilusha’s embrace.

“Good-bye, old man, mother expects me back to dinner,” he said quickly. “What a pity I did not tell her! She will be dreadfully anxious... But after dinner I’ll come back to you for the whole day, for the whole evening, and

I’ll tell you all sorts of things, all sorts of things. And I’ll bring Perezvon, but now I will take him with me, because he will begin to howl when I am away and bother you. Good-bye!

And he ran out into the passage. He didn’t want to cry, but in the passage he burst into tears. Alyosha found him crying.

“Kolya, you must be sure to keep your word and come, or he will be terribly disappointed,” Alyosha said emphatically.

“I will! Oh, how I curse myself for not having come before” muttered Kolya, crying, and no longer ashamed of it.

At that moment the captain flew out of the room, and at once closed the door behind him. His face looked frenzied, his lips were trembling. He stood before the two and flung up his arms.

“I don’t want a good boy! I don’t want another boy!” he muttered in a wild whisper, clenching his teeth. “If I forget thee, knees before the wooden bench. Pressing his fists against his head, he began sobbing with absurd whimpering cries, doing his utmost that his cries should not be heard in the room.

Kolya ran out into the street.

“Good-bye, Karamazov? Will you come yourself?” he cried sharply and angrily to Alyosha.

“I will certainly come in the evening.”

“What was that he said about Jerusalem?... What did he mean by that?”

“It’s from the Bible. ‘If I forget thee, Jerusalem,’ that is, if I forget all that is most precious to me, if I let anything take its place, then may-”

“I understand, that’s enough! Mind you come! Ici, Perezvon!” he cried with positive ferocity to the dog, and with rapid strides he went home.

BOOK XI. IVAN

CHAPTER 1

At Grushenka's

ALYOSHA went towards the cathedral square to the widow Morozov's house to see Grushenka, who had sent Fenya to him early in the morning with an urgent message begging him to come. Questioning Fenya, Alyosha learned that her mistress had been particularly distressed since the previous day. During the two months that had passed since Mitya's arrest, Alyosha had called frequently at the widow Morozov's house, both from his own inclination and to take messages for Mitya. Three days after Mitya's arrest, Grushenka was taken very ill and was ill for nearly five weeks. For one whole week she was unconscious. She was very much changed — thinner and a little sallow, though she had for the past fortnight been well enough to go out. But to Alyosha her face was even more attractive than before, and he liked to meet her eyes when he went in to her. A look of firmness and intelligent purpose had developed in her face. There were signs of a spiritual transformation in her, and a steadfast, fine and humble determination that nothing could shake could be discerned in her. There was a small vertical line between her brows which gave her charming face a look of concentrated thought, almost austere at the first glance. There was scarcely a trace of her former frivolity.

It seemed strange to Alyosha, too, that in spite of the calamity that had overtaken the poor girl, betrothed to a man who had been arrested for a terrible crime, almost at the instant of their betrothal, in spite of her illness and the almost inevitable sentence hanging over Mitya, Grushenka had not yet lost her youthful cheerfulness. There was a soft light in the once proud eyes, though at times they gleamed with the old vindictive fire when she was visited by one disturbing thought stronger than ever in her heart. The object of that uneasiness was the same as ever — Katerina Ivanovna, of whom Grushenka had even raved when she lay in delirium. Alyosha knew that she was fearfully jealous of her. Yet Katerina Ivanovna had not once visited Mitya in his prison, though she might have done it whenever she liked. All this made a difficult problem for Alyosha, for he was the only person to whom Grushenka opened her heart and from whom she was continually asking advice. Sometimes he was unable to say anything.

Full of anxiety he entered her lodging. She was at home. She had returned from seeing Mitya half an hour before, and from the rapid movement with which she leapt up from her chair to meet him he saw that she had been expecting him with great impatience. A pack of cards dealt for a game of “fools” lay on the table. A bed had been made up on the leather sofa on the other side and Maximov lay, half reclining, on it. He wore a dressing-gown and a cotton nightcap, and was evidently ill and weak, though he was smiling blissfully. When the homeless old man returned with Grushenka from Mokroe two months before, he had simply stayed on and was still staying with her. He arrived with her in rain and sleet, sat down on the sofa, drenched and scared, and gazed mutely at her with a timid, appealing smile. Grushenka, who was in terrible grief and in the first stage of fever, almost forgot his existence in all she had to do the first half hour after her arrival. Suddenly she chanced to look at him intently: he laughed a pitiful, helpless little laugh. She called Fenya and told her to give him something to eat. All that day he sat in the same place, almost without stirring. When it got dark and the shutters were closed, Fenya asked her mistress:

“Is the gentleman going to stay the night, mistress?”

“Yes; make him a bed on the sofa,” answered Grushenka.

Questioning him more in detail, Grushenka learned from him that he had literally nowhere to go, and that “Mr. Kalganov, my benefactor, told me straight that he wouldn’t receive me again and gave me five roubles.”

“Well, God bless you, you’d better stay, then,” Grushenka decided in her grief, smiling compassionately at him. Her smile wrung the old man’s heart and his lips twitched with grateful tears. And so the destitute wanderer had stayed with her ever since. He did not leave the house even when she was ill. Fenya and her grandmother, the cook, did not turn him out, but went on serving him meals and making up his bed on the sofa. Grushenka had grown used to him, and coming back from seeing Mitya (whom she had begun to visit in prison before she was really well) she would sit down and begin talking to “Maximushka” about trifling matters, to keep her from thinking of her sorrow. The old man turned out to be a good story-teller on occasions, so that at last he became necessary to her. Grushenka saw scarcely anyone else beside Alyosha, who did not come every day and never stayed long. Her old merchant lay seriously ill at this time, “at his last gasp” as they said in the town, and he did, in fact, die a week after Mitya’s

trial. Three weeks before his death, feeling the end approaching, he made his sons, their wives and children, come upstairs to him at last and bade them not leave him again. From that moment he gave strict orders to his servants not to admit Grushenka and to tell her if she came, “The master wishes you long life and happiness and tells you to forget him.” But Grushenka sent almost every day to inquire after him.

“You’ve come at last!” she cried, flinging down the cards and joyfully greeting Alyosha, “and Maximushka’s been scaring me that perhaps you wouldn’t come. Ah, how I need you! Sit down to the table. What will you have coffee?”

“Yes, please,” said Alyosha, sitting down at the table. “I am very hungry.”

“That’s right. Fenya, Fenya, coffee,” cried Grushenka. “It’s been made a long time ready for you. And bring some little pies, and mind they are hot. Do you know, we’ve had a storm over those pies to-day. I took them to the prison for him, and would you believe it, he threw them back to me: he would not eat them. He flung one of them on the floor and stamped on it. So I said to him: ‘I shall leave them with the warder; if you don’t eat them before evening, it will be that your venomous spite is enough for you!’ With that I went away. We quarrelled again, would you believe it? Whenever I go we quarrel.”

Grushenka said all this in one breath in her agitation. Maximov, feeling nervous, at once smiled and looked on the floor.

“What did you quarrel about this time?” asked Alyosha.

“I didn’t expect it in the least. Only fancy, he is jealous of the Pole. ‘Why are you keeping him?’ he said. ‘So you’ve begun keeping him.’ He is jealous, jealous of me all the time, jealous eating and sleeping! He even took into his head to be jealous of Kuzma last week.”

“But he knew about the Pole before?”

“Yes, but there it is. He has known about him from the very beginning but to-day he suddenly got up and began scolding about him. I am ashamed to repeat what he said. Silly fellow! Rakitin went in as I came out. Perhaps Rakitin is egging him on. What do you think?” she added carelessly.

“He loves you, that’s what it is; he loves you so much. And now he is particularly worried.”

“I should think he might be, with the trial to-morrow. And I went to him to say something about to-morrow, for I dread to think what’s going to

happen then. You say that he is worried, but how worried I am! And he talks about the Pole! He's too silly! He is not jealous of Maximushka yet, anyway."

"My wife was dreadfully jealous over me, too," Maximov put in his word.

"Jealous of you?" Grushenka laughed in spite of herself. "Of whom could she have been jealous?"

"Of the servant girls."

"Hold your tongue, Maximushka, I am in no laughing mood now; I feel angry. Don't ogle the pies. I shan't give you any; they are not good for you, and I won't give you any vodka either. I have to look after him, too, just as though I kept an almshouse," she laughed.

"I don't deserve your kindness. I am a worthless creature," said Maximov, with tears in his voice. "You would do better to spend your kindness on people of more use than me."

"Ech, everyone is of use, Maximushka, and how can we tell who's of most use? If only that Pole didn't exist, Alyosha. He's taken it into his head to fall ill, too, to-day. I've been to see him also. And I shall send him some pies, too, on purpose. I hadn't sent him any, but Mitya accused me of it, so now I shall send some! Ah, here's Fenya with a letter! Yes, it's from the Poles — begging again!

Pan Mussyalovitch had indeed sent an extremely long and characteristically eloquent letter in which he begged her to lend him three roubles. In the letter was enclosed a receipt for the sum, with a promise to repay it within three months, signed by Pan Vrublevsky as well. Grushenka had received many such letters, accompanied by such receipts, from her former lover during the fortnight of her convalescence. But she knew that the two Poles had been to ask after her health during her illness. The first letter Grushenka got from them was a long one, written on large notepaper and with a big family crest on the seal. It was so obscure and rhetorical that Grushenka put it down before she had read half, unable to make head or tail of it. She could not attend to letters then. The first letter was followed next day by another in which Pan Mussyalovitch begged her for a loan of two thousand roubles for a very short period. Grushenka left that letter, too, unanswered. A whole series of letters had followed — one every day — all as pompous and rhetorical, but the loan asked for, gradually diminishing, dropped to a hundred roubles, than to twenty-five, to ten, and finally

Grushenka received a letter in which both the Poles begged her for only one rouble and included a receipt signed by both.

Then Grushenka suddenly felt sorry for them, and at dusk she went round herself to their lodging. She found the two Poles in great poverty, almost destitution, without food or fuel, without cigarettes, in debt to their landlady. The two hundred roubles they had carried off from Mitya at Mokroe had soon disappeared. But Grushenka was surprised at their meeting her with arrogant dignity and self-assertion, with the greatest punctilio and pompous speeches. Grushenka simply laughed, and gave her former admirer ten roubles. Then, laughing, she told Mitya of it and he was not in the least jealous. But ever since, the Poles had attached themselves to Grushenka and bombarded her daily with requests for money and she had always sent them small sums. And now that day Mitya had taken it into his head to be fearfully jealous.

“Like a fool, I went round to him just for a minute, on the way to see Mitya, for he is ill, too, my Pole,” Grushenka began again with nervous haste. “I was laughing, telling Mitya about it. ‘Fancy,’ I said, ‘my Pole had the happy thought to sing his old songs to me to the guitar. He thought I would be touched and marry him!’ Mitya leapt up swearing.... So, there, I’ll send them the pies! Fenya, is it that little girl they’ve sent? Here, give her three roubles and pack up a dozen pies in a paper and tell her to take them. And you, Alyosha, be sure to tell Mitya that I did send them the pies.”

“I wouldn’t tell him for anything,” said Alyosha, smiling.

“Ech! You think he is unhappy about it. Why, he’s jealous on purpose. He doesn’t care,” said Grushenka bitterly.

“On purpose?” queried Alyosha.

“I tell you you are silly, Alyosha. You know nothing about it, with all your cleverness. I am not offended that he is jealous of a girl like me. I would be offended if he were not jealous. I am like that. I am not offended at jealousy. I have a fierce heart, too. I can be jealous myself. Only what offends me is that he doesn’t love me at all. I tell you he is jealous now on purpose. Am I blind? Don’t I see? He began talking to me just now of that woman, of Katerina, saying she was this and that, how she had ordered a doctor from Moscow for him, to try and save him; how she had ordered the best counsel, the most learned one, too. So he loves her, if he’ll praise her to my face, more shame to him! He’s treated me badly himself, so he attacked me, to make out I am in fault first and to throw it all on me. ‘You were with

your Pole before me, so I can't be blamed for Katerina,' that's what it amounts to. He wants to throw the whole blame on me. He attacked me on purpose, on purpose, I tell you, but I'll-"

Grushenka could not finish saying what she would do. She hid her eyes in her handkerchief and sobbed violently.

"He doesn't love Katerina Ivanovna," said Alyosha firmly.

"Well, whether he loves her or not, I'll soon find out for myself," said Grushenka, with a menacing note in her voice, taking the handkerchief from her eyes. Her face was distorted. Alyosha saw sorrowfully that from being mild and serene, it had become sullen and spiteful.

"Enough of this foolishness," she said suddenly; "it's not for that I sent for you. Alyosha, darling, to-morrow — what will happen to-morrow? That's what worries me! And it's only me it worries! I look at everyone and no one is thinking of it. No one cares about it. Are you thinking about it even? To-morrow he'll be tried, you know. Tell me, how will he be tried? You know it's the valet, the valet killed him! Good heavens! Can they condemn him in place of the valet and will no one stand up for him? They haven't troubled the valet at all, have they?"

"He's been severely cross-examined," observed Alyosha thoughtfully; "but everyone came to the conclusion it was not he. Now he is lying very ill. He has been ill ever since that attack. Really ill," added Alyosha.

"Oh, dear! couldn't you go to that counsel yourself and tell him the whole thing by yourself? He's been brought from Petersburg for three thousand roubles, they say."

"We gave these three thousand together — Ivan, Katerina Ivanovna and I — but she paid two thousand for the doctor from Moscow herself. The counsel Fetyukovitch would have charged more, but the case has become known all over Russia; it's talked of in all the papers and journals. Fetyukovitch agreed to come more for the glory of the thing, because the case has become so notorious. I saw him yesterday."

"Well? Did you talk to him?" Grushenka put in eagerly.

"He listened and said nothing. He told me that he had already formed his opinion. But he promised to give my words consideration."

"Consideration! Ah, they are swindlers! They'll ruin him. And why did she send for the doctor?"

"As an expert. They want to prove that Mitya's mad and committed the murder when he didn't know what he was doing," Alyosha smiled gently,

“but Mitya won’t agree to that.”

“Yes; but that would be the truth if he had killed him!” cried Grushenka. “He was mad then, perfectly mad, and that was my fault, wretch that I am! But, of course, he didn’t do it, he didn’t do it! And they are all against him, the whole town. Even Fenya’s evidence went to prove he had done it. And the people at the shop, and that official, and at the tavern, too, before, people had heard him say so! They are all, all against him, all crying out against him.”

“Yes, there’s a fearful accumulation of evidence,” Alyosha observed grimly.

“And Grigory — Grigory Vassilyevitch — sticks to his story that the door was open, persists that he saw it — there’s no shaking him. I went and talked to him myself. He’s rude about it, too.”

“Yes, that’s perhaps the strongest evidence against him,” said Alyosha.

“And as for Mitya’s being mad, he certainly seems like it now,” Grushenka began with a peculiarly anxious and mysterious air. “Do you know, Alyosha, I’ve been wanting to talk to you about it for a long time. I go to him every day and simply wonder at him. Tell me, now, what do you suppose he’s always talking about? He talks and talks and I can make nothing of it. I fancied he was talking of something intellectual that I couldn’t understand in my foolishness. Only he suddenly began talking to me about a babe — that is, about some child. ‘Why is the babe poor?’ he said. ‘It’s for that babe I am going to Siberia now. I am not a murderer, but I must go to Siberia!’ What that meant, what babe, I couldn’t tell for the life of me. Only I cried when he said it, because he said it so nicely. He cried himself, and I cried, too. He suddenly kissed me and made the sign of the cross over me. What did it mean, Alyosha, tell me? What is this babe?”

“It must be Rakitin, who’s been going to see him lately,” smiled Alyosha, “though... that’s not Rakitin’s doing. I didn’t see Mitya yesterday. I’ll see him to-day.”

“No, it’s not Rakitin; it’s his brother Ivan Fyodorovitch upsetting him. It’s his going to see him, that’s what it is,” Grushenka began, and suddenly broke off. Alyosha gazed at her in amazement.

“Ivan’s going? Has he been to see him? Mitya told me himself that Ivan hasn’t been once.”

“There... there! What a girl I am! Blurting things out!” exclaimed Grushenka, confused and suddenly blushing. “Stay, Alyosha, hush! Since

I’ve said so much I’ll tell the whole truth — he’s been to see him twice, the first directly he arrived. He galloped here from Moscow at once, of course, before I was taken ill; and the second time was a week ago. He told Mitya not to tell you about it, under any circumstances; and not to tell anyone, in fact. He came secretly.”

Alyosha sat plunged in thought, considering something. The news evidently impressed him.

“Ivan doesn’t talk to me of Mitya’s case,” he said slowly. “He’s said very little to me these last two months. And whenever I go to see him, he seems vexed at my coming, so I’ve not been to him for the last three weeks. H’m!... if he was there a week ago... there certainly has been a change in Mitya this week.”

“There has been a change,” Grushenka assented quickly. “They have a secret, they have a secret! Mitya told me himself there was a secret, and such a secret that Mitya can’t rest. Before then, he was cheerful — and, indeed, he is cheerful now — but when he shakes his head like that, you know, and strides about the room and keeps pulling at the hair on his right temple with his right hand, I know there is something on his mind worrying him.... I know! He was cheerful before, though, indeed, he is cheerful to-day.”

“But you said he was worried.”

“Yes, he is worried and yet cheerful. He keeps on being irritable for a minute and then cheerful and then irritable again. And you know, Alyosha, I am constantly wondering at him — with this awful thing hanging over him, he sometimes laughs at such trifles as though he were a baby himself.”

“And did he really tell you not to tell me about Ivan? Did he say, ‘Don’t tell him’?”

“Yes, he told me, ‘Don’t tell him.’ It’s you that Mitya’s most afraid of. Because it’s a secret: he said himself it was a secret. Alyosha, darling, go to him and find out what their secret is and come and tell me,” Grushenka besought him with sudden eagerness. “Set my mind at rest that I may know the worst that’s in store for me. That’s why I sent for you.”

“You think it’s something to do with you? If it were, he wouldn’t have told you there was a secret.”

“I don’t know. Perhaps he wants to tell me, but doesn’t dare to. He warns me. There is a secret, he tells me, but he won’t tell me what it is.”

“What do you think yourself?”

“What do I think? It’s the end for me, that’s what I think. They all three have been plotting my end, for Katerina’s in it. It’s all Katerina, it all comes from her. She is this and that, and that means that I am not. He tells me that beforehand — warns me. He is planning to throw me over, that’s the whole secret. They’ve planned it together, the three of them — Mitya, Katerina, and Ivan Fyodorovitch. Alyosha, I’ve been wanting to ask you a long time. A week ago he suddenly told me that Ivan was in love with Katerina, because he often goes to see her. Did he tell me the truth or not? Tell me, on your conscience, tell me the worst.”

“I won’t tell you a lie. Ivan is not in love with Katerina Ivanovna, I think.”

“Oh, that’s what I thought! He is lying to me, shameless deceiver, that’s what it is! And he was jealous of me just now, so as to put the blame on me afterwards. He is stupid, he can’t disguise what he is doing; he is so open, you know.... But I’ll give it to him, I’ll give it to him! ‘You believe I did it,’ he said. He said that to me, to me. He reproached me with that! God forgive him! You wait, I’ll make it hot for Katerina at the trial! I’ll just say a word then... I’ll tell everything then!” And again she cried bitterly.

“This I can tell you for certain, Grushenka,” Alyosha said, getting up. “First, that he loves you, loves you more than anyone in the world, and you only, believe me. I know. I do know. The second thing is that I don’t want to worm his secret out of him, but if he’ll tell me of himself to-day, I shall tell him straight out that I have promised to tell you. Then I’ll come to you to-day and tell you. Only... I fancy... Katerina Ivanovna has nothing to do with it, and that the secret is about something else. That’s certain. It isn’t likely it’s about Katerina Ivanovna, it seems to me. Good-bye for now.”

Alyosha shook hands with her. Grushenka was still crying. He saw that she put little faith in his consolation, but she was better for having had her sorrow out, for having spoken of it. He was sorry to leave her in such a state of mind, but he was in haste. He had a great many things to do still.

CHAPTER 2

The Injured Foot

THE first of these things was at the house of Madame Hohlakov, and he hurried there to get it over as quickly as possible and not be too late for Mitya. Madame Hohlakov had been slightly ailing for the last three weeks: her foot had for some reason swollen up, and though she was not in bed, she lay all day half-reclining on the couch in her boudoir, in a fascinating but decorous deshabille. Alyosha had once noted with innocent amusement that, in spite of her illness, Madame Hohlakov had begun to be rather dressy — topknots, ribbons, loose wrappers had made their appearance, and he had an inkling of the reason, though he dismissed such ideas from his mind as frivolous. During the last two months the young official, Perhotin, had become a regular visitor at the house.

Alyosha had not called for four days and he was in haste to go straight to Lise, as it was with her he had to speak, for Lise had sent a maid to him the previous day specially asking him to come to her “about something very important,” a request which, for certain reasons, had interest for Alyosha. But while the maid went to take his name in to Lise, Madame Hohlakov heard of his arrival from someone, and immediately sent to beg him to come to her “just for one minute.” Alyosha reflected that it was better to accede to the mamma’s request, or else she would be sending down to Lise’s room every minute that he was there. Madame Hohlakov was lying on a couch. She was particularly smartly dressed and was evidently in a state of extreme nervous excitement. She greeted Alyosha with cries of rapture.

“It’s ages, ages, perfect ages since I’ve seen you! It’s a whole week — only think of it! Ah, but you were here only four days ago, on Wednesday. You have come to see Lise. I’m sure you meant to slip into her room on tiptoe, without my hearing you. My dear, dear Alexey Fyodorovitch, if you only knew how worried I am about her! But of that later, though that’s the most important thing, of that later. Dear Alexey Fyodorovitch, I trust you implicitly with my Lise. Since the death of Father Zossima — God rest his soul!” (she crossed herself)— “I look upon you as a monk, though you look charming in your new suit. Where did you find such a tailor in these parts?

No, no, that’s not the chief thing — of that later. Forgive me for sometimes calling you Alyosha; an old woman like me may take liberties,” she smiled coquettishly; “but that will do later, too. The important thing is that I shouldn’t forget what is important. Please remind me of it yourself. As soon as my tongue runs away with me, you just say ‘the important thing?’ Ach! how do I know now what is of most importance? Ever since Lise took back her promise — her childish promise, Alexey Fyodorovitch — to marry you, you’ve realised, of course, that it was only the playful fancy of a sick child who had been so long confined to her chair — thank God, she can walk now!... that-new doctor Katya sent for from Moscow for your unhappy brother, who will to-morrow — but why speak of to-morrow? I am ready to die at the very thought of to-morrow. Ready to die of curiosity.... That doctor was with us yesterday and saw Lise.... I paid him fifty roubles for the visit. But that’s not the point, that’s not the point again. You see, I’m mixing everything up. I am in such a hurry. Why am I in a hurry? I don’t understand. It’s awful how I seem growing unable to understand anything. Everything seems mixed up in a sort of tangle. I am afraid you are so bored you will jump up and run away, and that will be all I shall see of you. Goodness! Why are we sitting here and no coffee? Yulia, Glafira, coffee!”

Alyosha made haste to thank her, and said that he had only just had coffee.

“Where?”

“At Agrfena Alexandrovna’s.”

“At... at that woman’s? Ah, it’s she has brought ruin on everyone. I know nothing about it though. They say she has become a saint, though it’s rather late in the day. She had better have done it before. What use is it now? Hush, hush, Alexey Fyodorovitch, for I have so much to say to you that I am afraid I shall tell you nothing. This awful trial... I shall certainly go, I am making arrangements. I shall be carried there in my chair; besides I can sit up. I shall have people with me. And, you know, I am a witness. How shall I speak, how shall I speak? I don’t know what I shall say. One has to take an oath, hasn’t one?”

“Yes; but I don’t think you will be able to go.”

“I can sit up. Ah, you put me out! Ah! this trial, this savage act, and then they are all going to Siberia, some are getting married, and all this so quickly, so quickly, everything’s changing, and at last — nothing. All grow old and have death to look forward to. Well, so be it! I am weary. This

Katya, cette charmante personne, has disappointed all my hopes. Now she is going to follow one of your brothers to Siberia, and your other brother is going to follow her, and will live in the nearest town, and they will all torment one another. It drives me out of my mind. Worst of all — the publicity. The story has been told a million times over in all the papers in Moscow and Petersburg. Ah! yes, would you believe it, there's a paragraph that I was 'a dear friend' of your brother's — , I can't repeat the horrid word. just fancy, just fancy!"

"Impossible! Where was the paragraph? What did it say?"

"I'll show you directly. I got the paper and read it yesterday. Here, in the Petersburg paper Gossip. The paper began coming out this year. I am awfully fond of gossip, and I take it in, and now it pays me out — this is what gossip comes to! Here it is, here, this passage. Read it."

And she handed Alyosha a sheet of newspaper which had been under her pillow.

It was not exactly that she was upset, she seemed overwhelmed and perhaps everything really was mixed up in a tangle in her head. The paragraph was very typical, and must have been a great shock to her, but, fortunately perhaps, she was unable to keep her mind fixed on any one subject at that moment, and so might race off in a minute to something else and quite forget the newspaper.

Alyosha was well aware that the story of the terrible case had spread all over Russia. And, good heavens! what wild rumours about his brother, about the Karamazovs, and about himself he had read in the course of those two months, among other equally credible items! One paper had even stated that he had gone into a monastery and become a monk, in horror at his brother's crime. Another contradicted this, and stated that he and his elder, Father Zossima, had broken into the monastery chest and "made tracks from the monastery." The present paragraph in the paper Gossip was under the heading, "The Karamazov Case at Skotoprigonyevsk." (That, alas! was the name of our little town. I had hitherto kept it concealed.) It was brief, and Madame Hohlakov was not directly mentioned in it. No names appeared, in fact. It was merely stated that the criminal, whose approaching trial was making such a sensation — retired army captain, an idle swaggerer, and reactionary bully — was continually involved in amorous intrigues, and particularly popular with certain ladies "who were pining in solitude." One such lady, a pining widow, who tried to seem young though she had a

grown-up daughter, was so fascinated by him that only two hours before the crime she offered him three thousand roubles, on condition that he would elope with her to the gold mines. But the criminal, counting on escaping punishment, had preferred to murder his father to get the three thousand rather than go off to Siberia with the middle-aged charms of his pining lady. This playful paragraph finished, of course, with an outburst of generous indignation at the wickedness of parricide and at the lately abolished institution of serfdom. Reading it with curiosity, Alyosha folded up the paper and handed it back to Madame Hohlakov.

“Well, that must be me,” she hurried on again. “Of course I am meant. Scarcely more than an hour before, I suggested gold mines to him, and here they talk of ‘middle-aged charms’ as though that were my motive! He writes that out of spite! God Almighty forgive him for the middle-aged charms, as I forgive him! You know it’s -Do you know who it is? It’s your friend Rakitin.”

“Perhaps,” said Alyosha, “though I’ve heard nothing about it.”

“It’s he, it’s he! No ‘perhaps’ about it. You know I turned him out of the house.... You know all that story, don’t you?”

“I know that you asked him not to visit you for the future, but why it was, I haven’t heard... from you, at least.”

“Ah, then you’ve heard it from him! He abuses me, I suppose, abuses me dreadfully?”

“Yes, he does; but then he abuses everyone. But why you’ve given him up I, haven’t heard from him either. I meet him very seldom now, indeed. We are not friends.”

“Well, then, I’ll tell you all about it. There’s no help for it, I’ll confess, for there is one point in which I was perhaps to blame. Only a little, little point, so little that perhaps it doesn’t count. You see, my dear boy” — Madame Hohlakov suddenly looked arch and a charming, though enigmatic, smile played about her lips— “you see, I suspect... You must forgive me, Alyosha. I am like a mother to you... No, no; quite the contrary. I speak to you now as though you were my father — mother’s quite out of place. Well, it’s as though I were confessing to Father Zossima, that’s just it. I called you a monk just now. Well, that poor young man, your friend, Rakitin (Mercy on us! I can’t be angry with him. I feel cross, but not very), that frivolous young man, would you believe it, seems to have taken it into his head to fall in love with me. I only noticed it later. At first — a month

ago — he only began to come oftener to see me, almost every day; though, of course, we were acquainted before. I knew nothing about it... and suddenly it dawned upon me, and I began to notice things with surprise. You know, two months ago, that modest, charming, excellent young man, Ilyitch Perhotin, who's in the service here, began to be a regular visitor at the house. You met him here ever so many times yourself. And he is an excellent, earnest young man, isn't he? He comes once every three days, not every day (though I should be glad to see him every day), and always so well dressed. Altogether, I love young people, Alyosha, talented, modest, like you, and he has almost the mind of a statesman, he talks so charmingly, and I shall certainly, certainly try and get promotion for him. He is a future diplomat. On that awful day he almost saved me from death by coming in the night. And your friend Rakitin comes in such boots, and always stretches them out on the carpet.... He began hinting at his feelings, in fact, and one day, as he was going, he squeezed my hand terribly hard. My foot began to swell directly after he pressed my hand like that. He had met Pyotr Ilyitch here before, and would you believe it, he is always gibing at him, growling at him, for some reason. I simply looked at the way they went on together and laughed inwardly. So I was sitting here alone — no, I was laid up then. Well, I was lying here alone and suddenly Rakitin comes in, and only fancy! brought me some verses of his own composition — a short poem, on my bad foot: that is, he described my foot in a poem. Wait a minute — how did it go? A captivating little foot.

It began somehow like that. I can never remember poetry. I've got it here. I'll show it to you later. But it's a charming thing — charming; and, you know, it's not only about the foot, it had a good moral, too, a charming idea, only I've forgotten it; in fact, it was just the thing for an album. So, of course, I thanked him, and he was evidently flattered. I'd hardly had time to thank him when in comes Pyotr Ilyitch, and Rakitin suddenly looked as black as night. I could see that Pyotr Ilyitch was in the way, for Rakitin certainly wanted to say something after giving me the verses. I had a presentiment of it; but Pyotr Ilyitch came in. I showed Pyotr Ilyitch the verses and didn't say who was the author. But I am convinced that he guessed, though he won't own it to this day, and declares he had no idea. But he says that on purpose. Pyotr Ilyitch began to laugh at once, and fell to criticising it. 'Wretched doggerel,' he said they were, 'some divinity student must have written them,' and with such vehemence, such vehemence! Then,

instead of laughing, your friend flew into a rage. ‘Good gracious!’ I thought, ‘they’ll fly at each other.”It was I who wrote them,’ said he. ‘I wrote them as a joke,’ he said, ‘for I think it degrading to write verses.... But they are good poetry. They want to put a monument to your Pushkin for writing about women’s feet, while I wrote with a moral purpose, and you,’ said he, ‘are an advocate of serfdom. You’ve no humane ideas,’ said he. ‘You have no modern enlightened feelings, you are uninfluenced by progress, you are a mere official,’ he said, ‘and you take bribes.’ Then I began screaming and imploring them. And, you know, Pyotr Ilyitch is anything but a coward. He at once took up the most gentlemanly tone, looked at him sarcastically, listened, and apologised. ‘I’d no idea,’ said he. ‘I shouldn’t have said it, if I had known. I should have praised it. Poets are all so irritable,’ he said. In short, he laughed at him under cover of the most gentlemanly tone. He explained to me afterwards that it was all sarcastic. I thought he was in earnest. Only as I lay there, just as before you now, I thought, ‘Would it, or would it not, be the proper thing for me to turn Rakitin out for shouting so rudely at a visitor in my house?’ And, would you believe it, I lay here, shut my eyes, and wondered, would it be the proper thing or not. I kept worrying and worrying, and my heart began to beat, and I couldn’t make up my mind whether to make an outcry or not. One voice seemed to be telling me, ‘Speak,’ and the other ‘No, don’t speak.’ And no sooner had the second voice said that than I cried out, and fainted. Of course, there was a fuss. I got up suddenly and said to Rakitin, ‘It’s painful for me to say it, but I don’t wish to see you in my house again.’ So I turned him out. Ah! Alexey Fyodorovitch, I know myself I did wrong. I was putting it on. I wasn’t angry with him at all, really; but I suddenly fancied — that was what did it — that it would be such a fine scene.... And yet, believe me, it was quite natural, for I really shed tears and cried for several days afterwards, and then suddenly, one afternoon, I forgot all about it. So it’s a fortnight since he’s been here, and I kept wondering whether he would come again. I wondered even yesterday, then suddenly last night came this Gossip. I read it and gasped. Who could have written it? He must have written it. He went home, sat down, wrote it on the spot, sent it, and they put it in. It was a fortnight ago, you see. But, Alyosha, it’s awful how I keep talking and don’t say what I want to say. the words come of themselves!”

“It’s very important for me to be in time to see my brother to-day,” Alyosha faltered.

“To be sure, to be sure! You bring it all back to me. Listen, what is an aberration?”

“What aberration?” asked Alyosha, wondering.

“In the legal sense. An aberration in which everything is pardonable. Whatever you do, you will be acquitted at once.”

“What do you mean?”

“I’ll tell you. This Katya... Ah! she is a charming, charming creature, only I never can make out who it is she is in love with. She was with me some time ago and I couldn’t get anything out of her. Especially as she won’t talk to me except on the surface now. She is always talking about my health and nothing else, and she takes up such a tone with me, too. I simply said to myself, ‘Well so be it. I don’t care’...Oh, yes. I was talking of aberration. This doctor has come. You know a doctor has come? Of course, you know it — the one who discovers madmen. You wrote for him. No, it wasn’t you, but Katya. It’s all Katya’s doing. Well, you see, a man may be sitting perfectly sane and suddenly have an aberration. He may be conscious and know what he is doing and yet be in a state of aberration. And there’s no doubt that Dmitri Fyodorovitch was suffering from aberration. They found out about aberration as soon as the law courts were reformed. It’s all the good effect of the reformed law courts. The doctor has been here and questioned me about that evening, about the gold mines. ‘How did he seem then?’ he asked me. He must have been in a state of aberration. He came in shouting, ‘Money, money, three thousand! Give me three thousand!’ and then went away and immediately did the murder. ‘I don’t want to murder him,’ he said, and he suddenly went and murdered him. That’s why they’ll acquit him, because he struggled against it and yet he murdered him.”

“But he didn’t murder him,” Alyosha interrupted rather sharply. He felt more and more sick with anxiety and impatience.

“Yes, I know it was that old man Grigory murdered him.”

“Grigory?” cried Alyosha.

“Yes, yes; it was Grigory. He lay as Dmitri Fyodorovitch struck him down, and then got up, saw the door open, went in and killed Fyodor Pavlovitch.”

“But why, why?”

“Suffering from aberration. When he recovered from the blow Dmitri Fyodorovitch gave him on the head, he was suffering from aberration: he went and committed the murder. As for his saying he didn’t, he very likely doesn’t remember. Only, you know, it’ll be better, ever so much better, if Dmitri Fyodorovitch murdered him. And that’s how it must have been, though I say it was Grigory. It certainly was Dmitri Fyodorovitch, and that’s better, ever so much better! Oh! not better that a son should have killed his father, I don’t defend that. Children ought to honour their parents, and yet it would be better if it were he, as you’d have nothing to cry over then, for he did it when he was unconscious or rather when he was conscious, but did not know what he was doing. Let them acquit him — that’s so humane, and would show what a blessing reformed law courts are. I knew nothing about it, but they say they have been so a long time. And when I heard it yesterday, I was so struck by it that I wanted to send for you at once. And if he is acquitted, make him come straight from the law courts to dinner with me, and I’ll have a party of friends, and we’ll drink to the reformed law courts. I don’t believe he’d be dangerous; besides, I’ll invite a great many friends, so that he could always be led out if he did anything. And then he might be made a justice of the peace or something in another town, for those who have been in trouble themselves make the best judges. And, besides, who isn’t suffering from aberration nowadays? — you, I, all of us, are in a state of aberration, and there are ever so many examples of it: a man sits singing a song, suddenly something annoys him, he takes a pistol and shoots the first person he comes across, and no one blames him for it. I read that lately, and all the doctors confirm it. The doctors are always confirming; they confirm, — anything. Why, my Lise is in a state of aberration. She made me cry again yesterday, and the day before, too, and to-day I suddenly realised that it’s all due to aberration. Oh, Lise grieves me so! I believe she’s quite mad. Why did she send for you? Did she send for you or did you come of yourself?”

“Yes, she sent for me, and I am just going to her.” Alyosha got up resolutely.

“Oh, my dear, dear Alexey Fyodorovitch, perhaps that’s what’s most important,” Madame Hohlakov cried, suddenly bursting into tears. “God knows I trust Lise to you with all my heart, and it’s no matter her sending for you on the sly, without telling her mother. But forgive me, I can’t trust my daughter so easily to your brother Ivan Fyodorovitch, though I still

consider him the most chivalrous young man. But only fancy, he's been to see Lise and I knew nothing about it!"

"How? What? When?" Alyosha was exceedingly surprised. He had not sat down again and listened standing.

"I will tell you; that's perhaps why I asked you to come, for I don't know now why I did ask you to come. Well, Ivan Fyodorovitch has been to see me twice, since he came back from Moscow. First time he came as a friend to call on me, and the second time Katya was here and he came because he heard she was here. I didn't, of course, expect him to come often, knowing what a lot he has to do as it is, vous comprenez, cette affaire et la mort terrible de votre papa. (You know, this affair and your father's terrible death.) But I suddenly heard he'd been here again, not to see me but to see Lise. That's six days ago now. He came, stayed five minutes, and went away. And I didn't hear of it till three days afterwards, from Glafira, so it was a great shock to me. I sent for Lise directly. She laughed. 'He thought you were asleep,' she said, 'and came in to me to ask after your health.' Of course, that's how it happened. But Lise, Lise, mercy on us, how she distresses me! Would you believe it, one night, four days ago, just after you saw her last time, and had gone away, she suddenly had a fit, screaming, shrieking, hysterics! Why is it I never have hysterics? Then, next day another fit, and the same thing on the third, and yesterday too, and then yesterday that aberration. She suddenly screamed out, 'I hate Ivan Fyodorovitch. I insist on your never letting him come to the house again.' I was struck dumb at these amazing words, and answered, 'On what grounds could I refuse to see such an excellent young man, a young man of such learning too, and so unfortunate?' — for all this business is a misfortune, isn't it?' She suddenly burst out laughing at my words, and so rudely, you know. Well, I was pleased; I thought I had amused her and the fits would pass off, especially as I wanted to refuse to see Ivan Fyodorovitch anyway on account of his strange visits without my knowledge, and meant to ask him for an explanation. But early this morning Lise waked up and flew into a passion with Yulia and, would you believe it, slapped her in the face. That's monstrous; I am always polite to my servants. And an hour later she was hugging Yulia's feet and kissing them. She sent a message to me that she wasn't coming to me at all, and would never come and see me again, and when I dragged myself down to her, she rushed to kiss me, crying, and as she kissed me, she pushed me out of the room without saying a word, so

I couldn’t find out what was the matter. Now, dear Alexey Fyodorovitch, I rest all my hopes on you, and, of course, my whole life is in your hands. I simply beg you to go to Lise and find out everything from her, as you alone can, and come back and tell me — me, her mother, for you understand it will be the death of me, simply the death of me, if this goes on, or else I shall run away. I can stand no more. I have patience; but I may lose patience, and then... then something awful will happen. Ah, dear me! At last, Pyotr Ilyitch!” cried Madame Hohlakov, beaming all over as she saw Perhotin enter the room. “You are late, you are late! Well, sit down, speak, put us out of suspense. What does the counsel say. Where are you off to, Alexey Fyodorovitch?”

“To Lise.”

“Oh, yes. You won’t forget, you won’t forget what I asked you? It’s a question of life and death!

“Of course, I won’t forget, if I can... but I am so late,” muttered Alyosha, beating a hasty retreat.

“No, be sure, be sure to come in; don’t say ‘If you can.’ I shall die if you don’t,” Madame Hohlakov called after him, but Alyosha had already left the room.

CHAPTER 3

A Little Demon

GOING in to Lise, he found her half reclining in the invalid-chair, in which she had been wheeled when she was unable to walk. She did not move to meet him, but her sharp, keen eyes were simply riveted on his face. There was a feverish look in her eyes, her face was pale and yellow. Alyosha was amazed at the change that had taken place in her in three days. She was positively thinner. She did not hold out her hand to him. He touched the thin, long fingers which lay motionless on her dress, then he sat down facing her, without a word.

"I know you are in a hurry to get to the prison," Lise said curtly, "and mamma's kept you there for hours; she's just been telling you about me and Yulia."

"How do you know?" asked Alyosha.

"I've been listening. Why do you stare at me? I want to listen and I do listen, there's no harm in that. I don't apologise."

"You are upset about something?"

"On the contrary, I am very happy. I've only just been reflecting for the thirtieth time what a good thing it is I refused you and shall not be your wife. You are not fit to be a husband. If I were to marry you and give you a note to take to the man I loved after you, you'd take it and be sure to give it to him and bring an answer back, too. If you were forty, you would still go on taking my love-letters for me."

She suddenly laughed.

"There is something spiteful and yet open-hearted about you," Alyosha smiled to her.

"The open-heartedness consists in my not being ashamed of myself with you. What's more, I don't want to feel ashamed with you, just with you. Alyosha, why is it I don't respect you? I am very fond of you, but I don't respect you. If I respected you, I shouldn't talk to you without shame, should I?"

"No."

"But do you believe that I am not ashamed with you?"

"No, I don't believe it."

Lise laughed nervously again; she spoke rapidly.

“I sent your brother, Dmitri Fyodorovitch, some sweets in prison. Alyosha, you know, you are quite pretty! I shall love you awfully for having so quickly allowed me not to love you.”

“Why did you send for me to-day, Lise?”

“I wanted to tell you of a longing I have. I should like some one to torture me, marry me and then torture me, deceive me and go away. I don’t want to be happy.”

“You are in love with disorder?”

“Yes, I want disorder. I keep wanting to set fire to the house. I keep imagining how I’ll creep up and set fire to the house on the sly; it must be on the sly. They’ll try to put it out, but it’ll go on burning. And I shall know and say nothing. Ah, what silliness! And how bored I am!”

She waved her hand with a look of repulsion.

“It’s your luxurious life,” said Alyosha, softly”

“Is it better, then, to be poor?”

“Yes, it is better.”

“That’s what your monk taught you. That’s not true. Let me be rich and all the rest poor, I’ll eat sweets and drink cream and not give any to anyone else. Ach, don’t speak, don’t say anything”; she shook her hand at him, though Alyosha had not opened his mouth. “You’ve told me all that before, I know it all by heart. It bores me. If I am ever poor, I shall murder somebody, and even if I am rich, I may murder someone, perhaps — why do nothing! But do you know, I should like to reap, cut the rye? I’ll marry you, and you shall become a peasant, a real peasant; we’ll keep a colt, shall we? Do you know Kalganov?”

“Yes.”

“He is always wandering about, dreaming. He says, ‘Why live in real life? It’s better to dream. One can dream the most delightful things, but real life is a bore.’ But he’ll be married soon for all that; he’s been making love to me already. Can you spin tops?”

“Yes.”

“Well, he’s just like a top: he wants to be wound up and set spinning and then to be lashed, lashed, lashed with a whip. If I marry him, I’ll keep him spinning all his life. You are not ashamed to be with me?”

“No.”

“You are awfully cross, because I don’t talk about holy things. I don’t want to be holy. What will they do to one in the next world for the greatest sin? You must know all about that.”

“God will censure you.” Alyosha was watching her steadily.

“That’s just what I should like. I would go up and they would censure me, and I would burst out laughing in their faces. I should dreadfully like to set fire to the house, Alyosha, to our house; you still don’t believe me?”

“Why? There are children of twelve years old, who have a longing to set fire to something and they do set things on fire, too. It’s a sort of disease.”

“That’s not true, that’s not true; there may be children, but that’s not what I mean.”

“You take evil for good; it’s a passing crisis; it’s the result of your illness, perhaps.”

“You do despise me, though! It’s simply that I don’t want to do good, I want to do evil, and it has nothing to do with illness.”

“Why do evil?”

“So that everything might be destroyed. Ah, how nice it would be if everything were destroyed! You know, Alyosha, I sometimes think of doing a fearful lot of harm and everything bad, and I should do it for a long while on the sly and suddenly everyone would find it out. Everyone will stand round and point their fingers at me and I would look at them all. That would be awfully nice. Why would it be so nice, Alyosha?”

“I don’t know. It’s a craving to destroy something good or, as you say, to set fire to something. It happens sometimes.”

“I not only say it, I shall do it.”

“I believe you.”

“Ah, how I love you for saying you believe me. And you are not lying one little bit. But perhaps you think that I am saying all this on purpose to annoy you?”

“No, I don’t think that... though perhaps there is a little desire to do that in it, too.”

“There is a little. I never can tell lies to you,” she declared, with a strange fire in her eyes.

What struck Alyosha above everything was her earnestness. There was not a trace of humour or jesting in her face now, though, in old days, fun and gaiety never deserted her even at her most “earnest” moments.

“There are moments when people love crime,” said Alyosha thoughtfully.

“Yes, yes! You have uttered my thought; they love crime, everyone loves crime, they love it always, not at some ‘moments.’ You know, it’s as though people have made an agreement to lie about it and have lied about it ever since. They all declare that they hate evil, but secretly they all love it.”

“And are you still reading nasty books?”

“Yes, I am. Mamma reads them and hides them under her pillow and I steal them.”

“Aren’t you ashamed to destroy yourself?”

“I want to destroy myself. There’s a boy here, who lay down between the railway lines when the train was passing. Lucky fellow! Listen, your brother is being tried now for murdering his father and everyone loves his having killed his father.”

“Loves his having killed his father?”

“Yes, loves it; everyone loves it! Everybody says it’s so awful, but secretly they simply love it. I for one love it.”

“There is some truth in what you say about everyone,” said Alyosha softly.

“Oh, what ideas you have!” Lise shrieked in delight. “And you a monk, too! You wouldn’t believe how I respect you, Alyosha, for never telling lies. Oh, I must tell you a funny dream of mine. I sometimes dream of devils. It’s night; I am in my room with a candle and suddenly there are devils all over the place, in all the corners, under the table, and they open the doors; there’s a crowd of them behind the doors and they want to come and seize me. And they are just coming, just seizing me. But I suddenly cross myself and they all draw back, though they don’t go away altogether, they stand at the doors and in the corners, waiting. And suddenly I have a frightful longing to revile God aloud, and so I begin, and then they come crowding back to me, delighted, and seize me again and I cross myself again and they all draw back. It’s awful fun, it takes one’s breath away.”

“I’ve had the same dream, too,” said Alyosha suddenly.

“Really?” cried Lise, surprised. “I say, Alyosha, don’t laugh, that’s awfully important. Could two different people have the same dream?”

“It seems they can.”

“Alyosha, I tell you, it’s awfully important,” Lise went on, with really excessive amazement. “It’s not the dream that’s important, but your having

the same dream as me. You never lie to me, don't lie now; is it true? You are not laughing?"

"It's true."

Lise seemed extraordinarily impressed and for half a minute she was silent.

"Alyosha, come and see me, come and see me more often," she said suddenly, in a supplicating voice.

"I'll always come to see you, all my life," answered Alyosha firmly.

"You are the only person I can talk to, you know," Lise began again. "I talk to no one but myself and you. Only you in the whole world. And to you more readily than to myself. And I am not a bit ashamed with you, not a bit. Alyosha, why am I not ashamed with you, not a bit? Alyosha, is it true that at Easter the Jews steal a child and kill it?"

"I don't know."

"There's a book here in which I read about the trial of a Jew, who took a child of four years old and cut off the fingers from both hands, and then crucified him on the wall, hammered nails into him and crucified him, and afterwards, when he was tried, he said that the child died soon, within four hours. That was 'soon'! He said the child moaned, kept on moaning and he stood admiring it. That's nice!"

"Nice?"

"Nice; I sometimes imagine that it was I who crucified him. He would hang there moaning and I would sit opposite him eating pineapple compote. I am awfully fond of pineapple compote. Do you like it?"

Alyosha looked at her in silence. Her pale, sallow face was suddenly contorted, her eyes burned.

"You know, when I read about that Jew I shook with sobs all night. I kept fancying how the little thing cried and moaned (a child of four years old understands, you know), and all the while the thought of pineapple compote haunted me. In the morning I wrote a letter to a certain person, begging him particularly to come and see me. He came and I suddenly told him all about the child and the pineapple compote. All about it, all, and said that it was nice. He laughed and said it really was nice. Then he got up and went away. He was only here five minutes. Did he despise me? Did he despise me? Tell me, tell me, Alyosha, did he despise me or not?" She sat up on the couch, with flashing eyes.

"Tell me," Alyosha asked anxiously, "did you send for that person?"

“Yes, I did.”

“Did you send him a letter?”

“Yes.”

“Simply to ask about that, about that child?”

“No, not about that at all. But when he came, I asked him about that at once. He answered, laughed, got up and went away.”

“That person behaved honourably,” Alyosha murmured.

“And did he despise me? Did he laugh at me?”

“No, for perhaps he believes in the pineapple compote himself. He is very ill now, too, Lise.”

“Yes, he does believe in it,” said Lise, with flashing eyes.

“He doesn’t despise anyone,” Alyosha went on. “Only he does not believe anyone. If he doesn’t believe in people, of course, he does despise them.”

“Then he despises me, me?”

“You, too.”

“Good.” Lise seemed to grind her teeth. “When he went out laughing, I felt that it was nice to be despised. The child with fingers cut off is nice, and to be despised is nice...”

And she laughed in Alyosha’s face, a feverish malicious laugh.

“Do you know, Alyosha, do you know, I should like — Alyosha, save me!” She suddenly jumped from the couch, rushed to him and seized him with both hands. “Save me!” she almost groaned. “Is there anyone in the world I could tell what I’ve told you? I’ve told you the truth, the truth. I shall kill myself, because I loathe everything! I don’t want to live, because I loathe everything! I loathe everything, everything. Alyosha, why don’t you love me in the least?” she finished in a frenzy.

“But I do love you!” answered Alyosha warmly.

“And will you weep over me, will you?”

“Yes.”

“Not because I won’t be your wife, but simply weep for me?”

“Yes.”

“Thank you! It’s only your tears I want. Everyone else may punish me and trample me under foot, everyone, everyone, not excepting anyone. For I don’t love anyone. Do you hear, not anyone! On the contrary, I hate him! Go, Alyosha; it’s time you went to your brother”; she tore herself away from him suddenly.

“How can I leave you like this?” said Alyosha, almost in alarm.

“Go to your brother, the prison will be shut; go, here’s your hat. Give my love to Mitya, go, go!”

And she almost forcibly pushed Alyosha out of the door. He looked at her with pained surprise, when he was suddenly aware of a letter in his right hand, a tiny letter folded up tight and sealed. He glanced at it and instantly read the address, “To Ivan Fyodorovitch Karamazov.” He looked quickly at Lise. Her face had become almost menacing.

“Give it to him, you must give it to him!” she ordered him, trembling and beside herself. “To-day, at once, or I’ll poison myself! That’s why I sent for you.”

And she slammed the door quickly. The bolt clicked. Alyosha put the note in his pocket and went straight downstairs, without going back to Madame Hohlakov; forgetting her, in fact. As soon as Alyosha had gone, Lise unbolted the door, opened it a little, put her finger in the crack and slammed the door with all her might, pinching her finger. Ten seconds after, releasing her finger, she walked softly, slowly to her chair, sat up straight in it and looked intently at her blackened finger and at the blood that oozed from under the nail. Her lips were quivering and she kept whispering rapidly to herself:

“I am a wretch, wretch, wretch, wretch!”

CHAPTER 4

A Hymn and a Secret

IT was quite late (days are short in November) when Alyosha rang at the prison gate. It was beginning to get dusk. But Alyosha knew that he would be admitted without difficulty. Things were managed in our little town, as everywhere else. At first, of course, on the conclusion of the preliminary inquiry, relations and a few other persons could only obtain interviews with Mitya by going through certain inevitable formalities. But later, though the formalities were not relaxed, exceptions were made for some, at least, of Mitya's visitors. So much so, that sometimes the interviews with the prisoner in the room set aside for the purpose were practically tête-à-tête.

These exceptions, however, were few in number; only Grushenka, Alyosha and Rakitin were treated like this. But the captain of the police, Mihail Mihailovitch, was very favourably disposed to Grushenka. His abuse of her at Mokroe weighed on the old man's conscience, and when he learned the whole story, he completely changed his view of her. And strange to say, though he was firmly persuaded of his guilt, yet after Mitya was once in prison, the old man came to take a more and more lenient view of him. "He was a man of good heart, perhaps," he thought, "who had come to grief from drinking and dissipation." His first horror had been succeeded by pity. As for Alyosha, the police captain was very fond of him and had known him for a long time. Rakitin, who had of late taken to coming very often to see the prisoner, was one of the most intimate acquaintances of the "police captain's young ladies," as he called them, and was always hanging about their house. He gave lessons in the house of the prison superintendent, too, who, though scrupulous in the performance of his duties, was a kindhearted old man. Alyosha, again, had an intimate acquaintance of long standing with the superintendent, who was fond of talking to him, generally on sacred subjects. He respected Ivan Fyodorovitch, and stood in awe of his opinion, though he was a great philosopher himself; "self-taught," of course. But Alyosha had an irresistible attraction for him. During the last year the old man had taken to studying the Apocryphal Gospels, and constantly talked over his impressions with his young friend. He used to come and see him in the

monastery and discussed for hours together with him and with the monks. So even if Alyosha were late at the prison, he had only to go to the superintendent and everything was made easy. Besides, everyone in the prison, down to the humblest warder, had grown used to Alyosha. The sentry, of course, did not trouble him so long as the authorities were satisfied.

When Mitya was summoned from his cell, he always went downstairs, to the place set aside for interviews. As Alyosha entered the room he came upon Rakitin, who was just taking leave of Mitya. They were both talking loudly. Mitya was laughing heartily as he saw him out, while Rakitin seemed grumbling. Rakitin did not like meeting Alyosha, especially of late. He scarcely spoke to him, and bowed to him stiffly. Seeing Alyosha enter now, he frowned and looked away, as though he were entirely absorbed in buttoning his big, warm, fur-trimmed overcoat. Then he began looking at once for his umbrella.

“I must mind not to forget my belongings,” he muttered, simply to say something.

“Mind you don’t forget other people’s belongings,” said Mitya, as a joke, and laughed at once at his own wit. Rakitin fired up instantly.

“You’d better give that advice to your own family, who’ve always been a slave-driving lot, and not to Rakitin,” he cried, suddenly trembling with anger.

“What’s the matter? I was joking,” cried Mitya. “Damn it all! They are all like that.” He turned to Alyosha, nodding towards Rakitin’s hurriedly retreating figure. “He was sitting here, laughing and cheerful, and all at once he boils up like that. He didn’t even nod to you. Have you broken with him completely? Why are you so late? I’ve not been simply waiting, but thirsting for you the whole morning. But never mind. We’ll make up for it now.”

“Why does he come here so often? Surely you are not such great friends?” asked Alyosha. He, too, nodded at the door through which Rakitin had disappeared.

“Great friends with Rakitin? No, not as much as that. Is it likely — a pig like that? He considers I am... a blackguard. They can’t understand a joke either, that’s the worst of such people. They never understand a joke, and their souls are dry, dry and flat; they remind me of prison walls when I was

first brought here. But he is a clever fellow, very clever. Well, Alexey, it’s all over with me now.”

He sat down on the bench and made Alyosha sit down beside him.

“Yes, the trial’s to-morrow. Are you so hopeless, brother?” Alyosha said, with an apprehensive feeling.

“What are you talking about?” said Mitya, looking at him rather uncertainly. “Oh, you mean the trial! Damn it all! Till now we’ve been talking of things that don’t matter, about this trial, but I haven’t said a word to you about the chief thing. Yes, the trial is to-morrow; but it wasn’t the trial I meant, when I said it was all over with me. Why do you look at me so critically?”

“What do you mean, Mitya?”

“Ideas, ideas, that’s all! Ethics! What is ethics?”

“Ethics?” asked Alyosha, wondering.

“Yes; is it a science?”

“Yes, there is such a science... but... I confess I can’t explain to you what sort of science it is.”

“Rakitin knows. Rakitin knows a lot, damn him! He’s not going to be a monk. He means to go to Petersburg. There he’ll go in for criticism of an elevating tendency. Who knows, he may be of use and make his own career, too. Ough! they are first-rate, these people, at making a career! Damn ethics, I am done for, Alexey, I am, you man of God! I love you more than anyone. It makes my heart yearn to look at you. Who was Karl Bernard?”

“Karl Bernard?” Alyosha was surprised again.

“No, not Karl. Stay, I made a mistake. Claude Bernard. What was he? Chemist or what?”

“He must be a savant,” answered Alyosha; “but I confess I can’t tell you much about him, either. I’ve heard of him as a savant, but what sort I don’t know.”

“Well, damn him, then! I don’t know either,” swore Mitya. “A scoundrel of some sort, most likely. They are all scoundrels. And Rakitin will make his way. Rakitin will get on anywhere; he is another Bernard. Ugh, these Bernards! They are all over the place.”

“But what is the matter?” Alyosha asked insistently.

“He wants to write an article about me, about my case, and so begin his literary career. That’s what he comes for; he said so himself. He wants to prove some theory. He wants to say ‘he couldn’t help murdering his father,

he was corrupted by his environment,’ and so on. He explained it all to me. He is going to put in a tinge of Socialism, he says. But there, damn the fellow, he can put in a tinge if he likes, I don’t care. He can’t bear Ivan, he hates him. He’s not fond of you, either. But I don’t turn him out, for he is a clever fellow. Awfully conceited, though. I said to him just now,’ The Karamazovs are not blackguards, but philosophers; for all true Russians are philosophers, and though you’ve studied, you are not a philosopher — you are a low fellow.’ He laughed, so maliciously. And I said to him, ‘De ideabus non est disputandum.’* Isn’t that rather good? I can set up for being a classic, you see!” Mitya laughed suddenly.

* There’s no disputing ideas.

“Why is it all over with you? You said so just now,” Alyosha interposed.

“Why is it all over with me? H’m!... The fact of it is... if you take it as a whole, I am sorry to lose God — that’s why it is.”

“What do you mean by ‘sorry to lose God’?”

“Imagine: inside, in the nerves, in the head — that is, these nerves are there in the brain... (damn them!) there are sort of little tails, the little tails of those nerves, and as soon as they begin quivering... that is, you see, I look at something with my eyes and then they begin quivering, those little tails... and when they quiver, then an image appears... it doesn’t appear at once, but an instant, a second, passes... and then something like a moment appears; that is, not a moment — devil take the moment! — but an image; that is, an object, or an action, damn it! That’s why I see and then think, because of those tails, not at all because I’ve got a soul, and that I am some sort of image and likeness. All that is nonsense! Rakitin explained it all to me yesterday, brother, and it simply bowled me over. It’s magnificent, Alyosha, this science! A new man’s arising — that I understand.... And yet I am sorry to lose God!”

“Well, that’s a good thing, anyway,” said Alyosha.

“That I am sorry to lose God? It’s chemistry, brother, chemistry! There’s no help for it, your reverence, you must make way for chemistry. And Rakitin does dislike God. Ough! doesn’t he dislike Him! That’s the sore point with all of them. But they conceal it. They tell lies. They pretend. ‘Will you preach this in your reviews?’ I asked him. ‘Oh, well, if I did it openly, they won’t let it through, ‘he said. He laughed. ‘But what will become of men then?’ I asked him, ‘without God and immortal life? All things are lawful then, they can do what they like?”Didn’t you know?’ he

said laughing, ‘a clever man can do what he likes,’ he said. ‘A clever man knows his way about, but you’ve put your foot in it, committing a murder, and now you are rotting in prison.’ He says that to my face! A regular pig! I used to kick such people out, but now I listen to them. He talks a lot of sense, too. Writes well. He began reading me an article last week. I copied out three lines of it. Wait a minute. Here it is.”

Mitya hurriedly pulled out a piece of paper from his pocket and read:

“‘In order to determine this question, it is above all essential to put one’s personality in contradiction to one’s reality.’ Do you understand that?”

“No, I don’t,” said Alyosha. He looked at Mitya and listened to him with curiosity.

“I don’t understand either. It’s dark and obscure, but intellectual. ‘Everyone writes like that now,’ he says, ‘it’s the effect of their environment.’ They are afraid of the environment. He writes poetry, too, the rascal. He’s written in honour of Madame Hohlakov’s foot. Ha ha ha!”

“I’ve heard about it,” said Alyosha.

“Have you? And have you heard the poem?”

“No.”

“I’ve got it. Here it is. I’ll read it to you. You don’t know — I haven’t told you — there’s quite a story about it. He’s a rascal! Three weeks ago he began to tease me. ‘You’ve got yourself into a mess, like a fool, for the sake of three thousand, but I’m going to collar a hundred and fifty thousand. I am going to marry a widow and buy a house in Petersburg.’ And he told me he was courting Madame Hohlakov. She hadn’t much brains in her youth, and now at forty she has lost what she had. ‘But she’s awfully sentimental,’ he says; ‘that’s how I shall get hold of her. When I marry her, I shall take her to Petersburg and there I shall start a newspaper.’ And his mouth was simply watering, the beast, not for the widow, but for the hundred and fifty thousand. And he made me believe it. He came to see me every day. ‘She is coming round,’ he declared. He was beaming with delight. And then, all of a sudden, he was turned out of the house. Perhotin’s carrying everything before him, bravo! I could kiss the silly old noodle for turning him out of the house. And he had written this doggerel. ‘It’s the first time I’ve soiled my hands with writing poetry,’ he said. ‘It’s to win her heart, so it’s in a good cause. When I get hold of the silly woman’s fortune, I can be of great social utility.’ They have this social justification for every nasty thing they do! ‘Anyway it’s better than your Pushkin’s poetry,’ he said, ‘for I’ve

managed to advocate enlightenment even in that.’ I understand what he means about Pushkin, I quite see that, if he really was a man of talent and only wrote about women’s feet. But wasn’t Rakitin stuck up about his doggerel! The vanity of these fellows! ‘On the convalescence of the swollen foot of the object of my affections’ — he thought of that for a title. He’s a waggish fellow.

A captivating little foot,
Though swollen and red and tender!
The doctors come and plasters put,
But still they cannot mend her.
Yet, ’tis not for her foot I dread -
A theme for Pushkin’s muse more fit -
It’s not her foot, it is her head:
I tremble for her loss of wit!
For as her foot swells, strange to say,
Her intellect is on the wane -
Oh, for some remedy I pray
That may restore both foot and brain!

He is a pig, a regular pig, but he’s very arch, the rascal! And he really has put in a progressive idea. And wasn’t he angry when she kicked him out! He was gnashing his teeth!”

“He’s taken his revenge already,” said Alyosha. “He’s written a paragraph about Madame Hohlakov.”

And Alyosha told him briefly about the paragraph in Gossip.

“That’s his doing, that’s his doing!” Mitya assented, frowning. “That’s him! These paragraphs... I know... the insulting things that have been written about Grushenka, for instance.... And about Katya, too.... H’m!

He walked across the room with a harassed air.

“Brother, I cannot stay long,” Alyosha said, after a pause. “To-morrow will be a great and awful day for you, the judgment of God will be accomplished... I am amazed at you, you walk about here, talking of I don’t know what...”

“No, don’t be amazed at me,” Mitya broke in warmly. “Am I to talk of that stinking dog? Of the murderer? We’ve talked enough of him. I don’t want to say more of the stinking son of Stinking Lizaveta! God will kill him, you will see. Hush!”

He went up to Alyosha excitedly and kissed him. His eyes glowed.

“Rakitin wouldn’t understand it,” he began in a sort of exaltation; “but you, you’ll understand it all. That’s why I was thirsting for you. You see, there’s so much I’ve been wanting to tell you for ever so long, here, within these peeling walls, but I haven’t said a word about what matters most; the moment never seems to have come. Now I can wait no longer. I must pour out my heart to you. Brother, these last two months I’ve found in myself a new man. A new man has risen up in me. He was hidden in me, but would never have come to the surface, if it hadn’t been for this blow from heaven. I am afraid! And what do I care if I spend twenty years in the mines, breaking ore with a hammer? I am not a bit afraid of that — it’s something else I am afraid of now: that that new man may leave me. Even there, in the mines, underground, I may find a human heart in another convict and murderer by my side, and I may make friends with him, for even there one may live and love and suffer. One may thaw and revive a frozen heart in that convict, one may wait upon him for years, and at last bring up from the dark depths a lofty soul, a feeling, suffering creature; one may bring forth an angel, create a hero! There are so many of them, hundreds of them, and we are all to blame for them. Why was it I dreamed of that ‘babe’ at such a moment? ‘Why is the babe so poor?’ That was a sign to me at that moment. It’s for the babe I’m going. Because we are all responsible for all. For all the ‘babes,’ for there are big children as well as little children All are ‘babes.’ I go for all, because someone must go for all. I didn’t kill father, but I’ve got to go. I accept it. It’s all come to me here, here, within these peeling walls. There are numbers of them there, hundreds of them underground, with hammers in their hands. Oh, yes, we shall be in chains and there will be no freedom, but then, in our great sorrow, we shall rise again to joy, without which man cannot live nor God exist, for God gives joy: it’s His privilege — a grand one. Ah, man should be dissolved in prayer! What should I be underground there without God? Rakitin’s laughing! If they drive God from the earth, we shall shelter Him underground. One cannot exist in prison without God; it’s even more impossible than out of prison. And then we men underground will sing from the bowels of the earth a glorious hymn to God, with Whom is joy. Hail to God and His joy! I love Him!”

Mitya was almost gasping for breath as he uttered his wild speech. He turned pale, his lips quivered, and tears rolled down his cheeks.

“Yes, life is full, there is life even underground,” he began again. “You wouldn’t believe, Alexey, how I want to live now, what a thirst for existence and consciousness has sprung up in me within these peeling walls. Rakitin doesn’t understand that; all he cares about is building a house and letting flats. But I’ve been longing for you. And what is suffering? I am not afraid of it, even if it were beyond reckoning. I am not afraid of it now. I was afraid of it before. Do you know, perhaps I won’t answer at the trial at all.... And I seem to have such strength in me now, that I think I could stand anything, any suffering, only to be able to say and to repeat to myself every moment, ‘I exist.’ In thousands of agonies — I exist. I’m tormented on the rack — but I exist! Though I sit alone on a pillar — I exist! I see the sun, and if I don’t see the sun, I know it’s there. And there’s a whole life in that, in knowing that the sun is there. Alyosha, my angel, all these philosophies are the death of me. Damn them! Brother Ivan-”

“What of brother Ivan?” interrupted Alyosha, but Mitya did not hear.

“You see, I never had any of these doubts before, but it was all hidden away in me. It was perhaps just because ideas I did not understand were surging up in me, that I used to drink and fight and rage. It was to stifle them in myself, to still them, to smother them. Ivan is not Rakitin, there is an idea in him. Ivan is a sphinx and is silent; he is always silent. It’s God that’s worrying me. That’s the only thing that’s worrying me. What if He doesn’t exist? What if Rakitin’s right — that it’s an idea made up by men? Then if He doesn’t exist, man is the chief of the earth, of the universe. Magnificent! Only how is he going to be good without God? That’s the question. I always come back to that. For whom is man going to love then? To whom will he be thankful? To whom will he sing the hymn? Rakitin laughs. Rakitin says that one can love humanity without God. Well, only a snivelling idiot can maintain that. I can’t understand it. Life’s easy for Rakitin. ‘You’d better think about the extension of civic rights, or even of keeping down the price of meat. You will show your love for humanity more simply and directly by that, than by philosophy.’ I answered him, ‘Well, but you, without a God, are more likely to raise the price of meat, if it suits you, and make a rouble on every copeck.’ He lost his temper. But after all, what is goodness? Answer me that, Alexey. Goodness is one thing with me and another with a Chinaman, so it’s a relative thing. Or isn’t it? Is it not relative? A treacherous question! You won’t laugh if I tell you it’s kept me awake two nights. I only wonder now how people can live and

think nothing about it. Vanity! Ivan has no God. He has an idea. It's beyond me. But he is silent. I believe he is a Freemason. I asked him, but he is silent. I wanted to drink from the springs of his soul — he was silent. But once he did drop a word."

"What did he say?" Alyosha took it up quickly.

"I said to him, 'Then everything is lawful, if it is so?' He frowned. 'Fyodor Pavlovitch, our papa,' he said, 'was a pig, but his ideas were right enough.' That was what he dropped. That was all he said. That was going one better than Rakitin."

"Yes," Alyosha assented bitterly. "When was he with you?"

"Of that later; now I must speak of something else. I have said nothing about Ivan to you before. I put it off to the last. When my business here is over and the verdict has been given, then I'll tell you something. I'll tell you everything. We've something tremendous on hand.... And you shall be my judge in it. But don't begin about that now; be silent. You talk of to-morrow, of the trial; but, would you believe it, I know nothing about it."

"Have you talked to the counsel?"

"What's the use of the counsel? I told him all about it. He's a soft, city-bred rogue — a Bernard! But he doesn't believe me — not a bit of it. Only imagine, he believes I did it. I see it. 'In that case,' I asked him, 'why have you come to defend me?' Hang them all! They've got a doctor down, too, want to prove I'm mad. I won't have that! Katerina Ivanovna wants to do her 'duty' to the end, whatever the strain!" Mitya smiled bitterly. "The cat! Hard-hearted creature! She knows that I said of her at Mokroe that she was a woman of 'great wrath.' They repeated it. Yes, the facts against me have grown numerous as the sands of the sea. Grigory sticks to his point. Grigory's honest, but a fool. Many people are honest because they are fools: that's Rakitin's idea. Grigory's my enemy. And there are some people who are better as foes than friends. I mean Katerina Ivanovna. I am afraid, oh, I am afraid she will tell how she bowed to the ground after that four thousand. She'll pay it back to the last farthing. I don't want her sacrifice; they'll put me to shame at the trial. I wonder how I can stand it. Go to her, Alyosha, ask her not to speak of that in the court, can't you? But damn it all, it doesn't matter! I shall get through somehow. I don't pity her. It's her own doing. She deserves what she gets. I shall have my own story to tell, Alexey." He smiled bitterly again. "Only... only Grusha, Grusha! Good Lord! Why should she have such suffering to bear?" he exclaimed suddenly,

with tears. “Grusha’s killing me; the thought of her’s killing me, killing me. She was with me just now...”

“She told me she was very much grieved by you to-day.”

“I know. Confound my temper! It was jealousy. I was sorry, I kissed her as she was going. I didn’t ask her forgiveness.”

“Why didn’t you?” exclaimed Alyosha.

Suddenly Mitya laughed almost mirthfully.

“God preserve you, my dear boy, from ever asking forgiveness for a fault from a woman you love. From one you love especially, however greatly you may have been in fault. For a woman — devil only knows what to make of a woman! I know something about them, anyway. But try acknowledging you are in fault to a woman. Say, ‘I am sorry, forgive me,’ and a shower of reproaches will follow! Nothing will make her forgive you simply and directly, she’ll humble you to the dust, bring forward things that have never happened, recall everything, forget nothing, add something of her own, and only then forgive you. And even the best, the best of them do it. She’ll scrape up all the scrapings and load them on your head. They are ready to flay you alive, I tell you, every one of them, all these angels without whom we cannot live! I tell you plainly and openly, dear boy, every decent man ought to be under some woman’s thumb. That’s my conviction — not conviction, but feeling. A man ought to be magnanimous, and it’s no disgrace to a man! No disgrace to a hero, not even a Caesar! But don’t ever beg her pardon all the same for anything. Remember that rule given you by your brother Mitya, who’s come to ruin through women. No, I’d better make it up to Grusha somehow, without begging pardon. I worship her, Alexey, worship her. Only she doesn’t see it. No, she still thinks I don’t love her enough. And she tortures me, tortures me with her love. The past was nothing! In the past it was only those infernal curves of hers that tortured me, but now I’ve taken all her soul into my soul and through her I’ve become a man myself. Will they marry us? If they don’t, I shall die of jealousy. I imagine something every day.... What did she say to you about me?”

Alyosha repeated all Grushenka had said to him that day. Mitya listened, made him repeat things, and seemed pleased.

“Then she is not angry at my being jealous?” he exclaimed. “She is a regular woman! ‘I’ve a fierce heart myself!’ Ah, I love such fierce hearts, though I can’t bear anyone’s being jealous of me. I can’t endure it. We shall

fight. But I shall love her, I shall love her infinitely. Will they marry us? Do they let convicts marry? That's the question. And without her I can't exist..."

Mitya walked frowning across the room. It was almost dark. He suddenly seemed terribly worried.

"So there's a secret, she says, a secret? We have got up a plot against her, and Katya is mixed up in it, she thinks. No, my good Grushenka, that's not it. You are very wide of the mark, in your foolish feminine way. Alyosha, darling, well, here goes! I'll tell you our secret!"

He looked round, went close up quickly to Alyosha, who was standing before him, and whispered to him with an air of mystery, though in reality no one could hear them: the old warder was dozing in the corner, and not a word could reach the ears of the soldiers on guard.

"I will tell you all our secret," Mitya whispered hurriedly. "I meant to tell you later, for how could I decide on anything without you? You are everything to me. Though I say that Ivan is superior to us, you are my angel. It's your decision will decide it. Perhaps it's you that is superior and not Ivan. You see, it's a question of conscience, question of the higher conscience — the secret is so important that I can't settle it myself, and I've put it off till I could speak to you. But anyway it's too early to decide now, for we must wait for the verdict. As soon as the verdict is given, you shall decide my fate. Don't decide it now. I'll tell you now. You listen, but don't decide. Stand and keep quiet. I won't tell you everything. I'll only tell you the idea, without details, and you keep quiet. Not a question, not a movement. You agree? But, goodness, what shall I do with your eyes? I'm afraid your eyes will tell me your decision, even if you don't speak. Oo! I'm afraid! Alyosha, listen! Ivan suggests my escaping. I won't tell you the details: it's all been thought out: it can all be arranged. Hush, don't decide. I should go to America with Grusha. You know I can't live without Grusha! What if they won't let her follow me to Siberia? Do they let convicts get married? Ivan thinks not. And without Grusha what should I do there underground with a hammer? I should only smash my skull with the hammer! But, on the other hand, my conscience? I should have run away from suffering. A sign has come, I reject the sign. I have a way of salvation and I turn my back on it. Ivan says that in America, 'with the goodwill,' I can be of more use than underground. But what becomes of our hymn from underground? What's America? America is vanity again! And there's a lot

of swindling in America, too, I expect. I should have run away from crucifixion! I tell you, you know, Alexey, because you are the only person who can understand this. There's no one else. It's folly, madness to others, all I've told you of the hymn. They'll say I'm out of my mind or a fool. I am not out of my mind and I am not a fool. Ivan understands about the hymn, too. He understands, only he doesn't answer — he doesn't speak. He doesn't believe in the hymn. Don't speak, don't speak. I see how you look! You have already decided. Don't decide, spare me! I can't live without Grusha. Wait till after the trial!"

Mitya ended beside himself. He held Alyosha with both hands on his shoulders, and his yearning, feverish eyes were fixed on his brother's.

"They don't let convicts marry, do they?" he repeated for the third time in a supplicating voice.

Alyosha listened with extreme surprise and was deeply moved.

"Tell me one thing," he said. "Is Ivan very keen on it, and whose idea was it?"

"His, his, and he is very keen on it. He didn't come to see me at first, then he suddenly came a week ago and he began about it straight away. He is awfully keen on it. He doesn't ask me, but orders me to escape. He doesn't doubt of my obeying him, though I showed him all my heart as I have to you, and told him about the hymn, too. He told me he'd arrange it; he's found out about everything. But of that later. He's simply set on it. It's all a matter of money: he'll pay ten thousand for escape and give me twenty thousand for America. And he says we can arrange a magnificent escape for ten thousand."

"And he told you on no account to tell me?" Alyosha asked again.

"To tell no one, and especially not you; on no account to tell you. He is afraid, no doubt, that you'll stand before me as my conscience. Don't tell him I told you. Don't tell him, for anything."

"You are right," Alyosha pronounced; "it's impossible to decide anything before the trial is over. After the trial you'll decide of yourself. Then you'll find that new man in yourself and he will decide."

"A new man, or a Bernard who'll decide a la Bernard, for I believe I'm a contemptible Bernard myself," said Mitya, with a bitter grin.

"But, brother, have you no hope then of being acquitted?"

Mitya shrugged his shoulders nervously and shook his head.

“Alyosha, darling, it’s time you were going,” he said, with a sudden haste. “There’s the superintendent shouting in the yard. He’ll be here directly. We are late; it’s irregular. Embrace me quickly. Kiss me! Sign me with the cross, darling, for the cross I have to bear to-morrow.”

They embraced and kissed.

“Ivan,” said Mitya suddenly, “suggests my escaping; but, of course, he believes I did it.”

A mournful smile came on to his lips.

“Have you asked him whether he believes it?” asked Alyosha.

“No, I haven’t. I wanted to, but I couldn’t. I hadn’t the courage. But I saw it from his eyes. Well, good-bye!”

Once more they kissed hurriedly, and Alyosha was just going out, when Mitya suddenly called him back.

“Stand facing me! That’s right!” And again he seized Alyosha, putting both hands on his shoulders. His face became suddenly quite pale, so that it was dreadfully apparent, even through the gathering darkness. His lips twitched, his eyes fastened upon Alyosha.

“Alyosha, tell me the whole truth, as you would before God. Do you believe I did it? Do you, do you in yourself, believe it? The whole truth, don’t lie!” he cried desperately.

Everything seemed heaving before Alyosha, and he felt something like a stab at his heart.

“Hush! What do you mean?” he faltered helplessly.

“The whole truth, the whole, don’t lie!” repeated Mitya.

“I’ve never for one instant believed that you were the murderer!” broke in a shaking voice from Alyosha’s breast, and he raised his right hand in the air, as though calling God to witness his words.

Mitya’s whole face was lighted up with bliss.

“Thank you!” he articulated slowly, as though letting a sigh escape him after fainting. “Now you have given me new life. Would you believe it, till this moment I’ve been afraid to ask you, you, even you. Well, go! You’ve given me strength for to-morrow. God bless you! Come, go along! Love Ivan!” was Mitya’s last word.

Alyosha went out in tears. Such distrustfulness in Mitya, such lack of confidence even to him, to Alyosha — all this suddenly opened before Alyosha an unsuspected depth of hopeless grief and despair in the soul of his unhappy brother. Intense, infinite compassion overwhelmed him

instantly. There was a poignant ache in his torn heart. “Love Ivan” — he suddenly recalled Mitya’s words. And he was going to Ivan. He badly wanted to see Ivan all day. He was as much worried about Ivan as about Mitya, and more than ever now.

CHAPTER 5

Not You, Not You!

ON the way to Ivan he had to pass the house where Katerina Ivanovna was living. There was light in the windows. He suddenly stopped and resolved to go in. He had not seen Katerina Ivanovna for more than a week. But now it struck him that Ivan might be with her, especially on the eve of the terrible day. Ringing, and mounting the staircase, which was dimly lighted by a Chinese lantern, he saw a man coming down, and as they met, he recognised him as his brother. So he was just coming from Katerina Ivanovna.

"Ah, it's only you," said Ivan dryly. "Well, good-bye! You are going to her?"

"Yes."

"I don't advise you to; she's upset and you'll upset her more."

A door was instantly flung open above, and a voice cried suddenly:

"No, no! Alexey Fyodorovitch, have you come from him?"

"Yes, I have been with him."

"Has he sent me any message? Come up, Alyosha, and you, Ivan Fyodorovitch, you must come back, you must. Do you hear?"

There was such a peremptory note in Katya's voice that Ivan, after a moment's hesitation, made up his mind to go back with Alyosha.

"She was listening," he murmured angrily to himself, but Alyosha heard it.

"Excuse my keeping my greatcoat on," said Ivan, going into the drawing-room. "I won't sit down. I won't stay more than a minute."

"Sit down, Alexey Fyodorovitch," said Katerina Ivanovna, though she remained standing. She had changed very little during this time, but there was an ominous gleam in her dark eyes. Alyosha remembered afterwards that she had struck him as particularly handsome at that moment.

"What did he ask you to tell me?"

"Only one thing," said Alyosha, looking her straight in the face, "that you would spare yourself and say nothing at the trial of what" (he was a

little confused) “...passed between you... at the time of your first acquaintance... in that town.”

“Ah! that I bowed down to the ground for that money!” She broke into a bitter laugh. “Why, is he afraid for me or for himself? He asks me to spare — whom? Him or myself? Tell me, Alexey Fyodorovitch!”

Alyosha watched her intently, trying to understand her.

“Both yourself and him,” he answered softly.

“I am glad to hear it,” she snapped out maliciously, and she suddenly blushed.

“You don’t know me yet, Alexey Fyodorovitch,” she said menacingly. “And I don’t know myself yet. Perhaps you’ll want to trample me under foot after my examination to-morrow.”

“You will give your evidence honourably,” said Alyosha; “that’s all that’s wanted.”

“Women are often dishonourable,” she snarled. “Only an hour ago I was thinking I felt afraid to touch that monster... as though he were a reptile... but no, he is still a human being to me! But did he do it? Is he the murderer?” she cried, all of a sudden, hysterically, turning quickly to Ivan. Alyosha saw at once that she had asked Ivan that question before, perhaps only a moment before he came in, and not for the first time, but for the hundredth, and that they had ended by quarrelling.

“I’ve been to see Smerdyakov.... It was you, you who persuaded me that he murdered his father. It’s only you I believed” she continued, still addressing Ivan. He gave her a sort of strained smile. Alyosha started at her tone. He had not suspected such familiar intimacy between them.

“Well, that’s enough, anyway,” Ivan cut short the conversation. “I am going. I’ll come to-morrow.” And turning at once, he walked out of the room and went straight downstairs.

With an imperious gesture, Katerina Ivanovna seized Alyosha by both hands.

“Follow him! Overtake him! Don’t leave him alone for a minute!” she said, in a hurried whisper. “He’s mad! Don’t you know that he’s mad? He is in a fever, nervous fever. The doctor told me so. Go, run after him....”

Alyosha jumped up and ran after Ivan, who was not fifty paces ahead of him.

“What do you want?” He turned quickly on Alyosha, seeing that he was running after him. “She told you to catch me up, because I’m mad. I know it

all by heart," he added irritably.

"She is mistaken, of course; but she is right that you are ill," said Alyosha. "I was looking at your face just now. You look very ill, Ivan."

Ivan walked on without stopping. Alyosha followed him.

"And do you know, Alexey Fyodorovitch, how people do go out of their minds?" Ivan asked in a a voice suddenly quiet, without a trace of irritation, with a note of the simplest curiosity.

"No, I don't. I suppose there are all kinds of insanity."

"And can one observe that one's going mad oneself?"

"I imagine one can't see oneself clearly in such circumstances," Alyosha answered with surprise.

Ivan paused for half a minute.

"If you want to talk to me, please change the subject," he said suddenly.

"Oh, while I think of it, I have a letter for you," said Alyosha timidly, and he took Lise's note from his pocket and held it out to Ivan. They were just under a lamp-post. Ivan recognised the handwriting at once.

"Ah, from that little demon!" he laughed maliciously, and, without opening the envelope, he tore it into bits and threw it in the air. The bits were scattered by the wind.

"She's not sixteen yet, I believe, and already offering herself," he said contemptuously, striding along the street again.

"How do you mean, offering herself?" exclaimed Alyosha.

"As wanton women offer themselves, to be sure."

"How can you, Ivan, how can you?" Alyosha cried warmly, in a grieved voice. "She is a child; you are insulting a child! She is ill; she is very ill, too. She is on the verge of insanity, too, perhaps.... I had hoped to hear something from you... that would save her."

"You'll hear nothing from me. If she is a child, I am not her nurse. Be quiet, Alexey. Don't go on about her. I am not even thinking about it."

They were silent again for a moment.

"She will be praying all night now to the Mother of God to show her how to act to-morrow at the trial," he said sharply and angrily again.

"You... you mean Katerina Ivanovna?"

"Yes. Whether she's to save Mitya or ruin him. She'll pray for light from above. She can't make up her mind for herself, you see. She has not had time to decide yet. She takes me for her nurse, too. She wants me to sing lullabies to her."

“Katerina Ivanovna loves you, brother,” said Alyosha sadly.

“Perhaps; but I am not very keen on her.”

“She is suffering. Why do you... sometimes say things to her that give her hope?” Alyosha went on, with timid reproach. “I know that you’ve given her hope. Forgive me for speaking to you like this,” he added.

“I can’t behave to her as I ought — break off altogether and tell her so straight out,” said Ivan, irritably. “I must wait till sentence is passed on the murderer. If I break off with her now, she will avenge herself on me by ruining that scoundrel to-morrow at the trial, for she hates him and knows she hates him. It’s all a lie — lie upon lie! As long as I don’t break off with her, she goes on hoping, and she won’t ruin that monster, knowing how I want to get him out of trouble. If only that damned verdict would come!”

The words “murderer” and “monster” echoed painfully in Alyosha’s heart.

“But how can she ruin Mitya?” he asked, pondering on Ivan’s words. “What evidence can she give that would ruin Mitya?”

“You don’t know that yet. She’s got a document in her hands, in Mitya’s own writing, that proves conclusively that he did murder Fyodor Pavlovitch.”

“That’s impossible!” cried Alyosha.

“Why is it impossible? I’ve read it myself.”

“There can’t be such a document!” Alyosha repeated warmly. “There can’t be, because he’s not the murderer. It’s not he murdered father, not he!”

Ivan suddenly stopped.

“Who is the murderer then, according to you?” he asked, with apparent coldness. There was even a supercilious note in his voice.

“You know who,” Alyosha pronounced in a low, penetrating voice.

“Who? You mean the myth about that crazy idiot, the epileptic, Smerdyakov?”

Alyosha suddenly felt himself trembling all over.

“You know who,” broke helplessly from him. He could scarcely breathe.

“Who? Who?” Ivan cried almost fiercely. All his restraint suddenly vanished.

“I only know one thing,” Alyosha went on, still almost in a whisper, “it wasn’t you killed father.”

“‘Not you’! What do you mean by ‘not you’?” Ivan was thunderstruck.

“It was not you killed father, not you! Alyosha repeated firmly.

The silence lasted for half a minute.

“I know I didn’t. Are you raving?” said Ivan, with a pale, distorted smile. His eyes were riveted on Alyosha. They were standing again under a lamp-post.

“No, Ivan. You’ve told yourself several times that you are the murderer.”

“When did I say so? I was in Moscow.... When have I said so?” Ivan faltered helplessly.

“You’ve said so to yourself many times, when you’ve been alone during these two dreadful months,” Alyosha went on softly and distinctly as before. Yet he was speaking now, as it were, not of himself, not of his own will, but obeying some irresistible command. “You have accused yourself and have confessed to yourself that you are the murderer and no one else. But you didn’t do it: you are mistaken: you are not the murderer. Do you hear? It was not you! God has sent me to tell you so.”

They were both silent. The silence lasted a whole long minute. They were both standing still, gazing into each other’s eyes. They were both pale. Suddenly Ivan began trembling all over, and clutched Alyosha’s shoulder.

“You’ve been in my room!” he whispered hoarsely. “You’ve been there at night, when he came.... Confess... have you seen him, have you seen him?”

“Whom do you mean — Mitya?” Alyosha asked, bewildered.

“Not him, damn the monster!” Ivan shouted, in a frenzy, “Do you know that he visits me? How did you find out? Speak!”

“Who is he? I don’t know whom you are talking about,” Alyosha faltered, beginning to be alarmed.

“Yes, you do know. or how could you — ? It’s impossible that you don’t know.”

Suddenly he seemed to check himself. He stood still and seemed to reflect. A strange grin contorted his lips.

“Brother,” Alyosha began again, in a shaking voice, “I have said this to you, because you’ll believe my word, I know that. I tell you once and for all, it’s not you. You hear, once for all! God has put it into my heart to say this to you, even though it may make you hate me from this hour.”

But by now Ivan had apparently regained his self-control.

“Alexey Fyodorovitch,” he said, with a cold smile, “I can’t endure prophets and epileptics — messengers from God especially — and you know that only too well. I break off all relations with you from this moment

and probably for ever. I beg you to leave me at this turning. It’s the way to your lodgings, too. You’d better be particularly careful not to come to me to-day! Do you hear?”

He turned and walked on with a firm step, not looking back.

“Brother,” Alyosha called after him, “if anything happens to you to-day, turn to me before anyone!”

But Ivan made no reply. Alyosha stood under the lamp-post at the cross roads, till Ivan had vanished into the darkness. Then he turned and walked slowly homewards. Both Alyosha and Ivan were living in lodgings; neither of them was willing to live in Fyodor Pavlovitch’s empty house. Alyosha had a furnished room in the house of some working people. Ivan lived some distance from him. He had taken a roomy and fairly comfortable lodge attached to a fine house that belonged to a well-to-do lady, the widow of an official. But his only attendant was a deaf and rheumatic old crone who went to bed at six o’clock every evening and got up at six in the morning. Ivan had become remarkably indifferent to his comforts of late, and very fond of being alone. He did everything for himself in the one room he lived in, and rarely entered any of the other rooms in his abode.

He reached the gate of the house and had his hand on the bell, when he suddenly stopped. He felt that he was trembling all over with anger. Suddenly he let go of the bell, turned back with a curse, and walked with rapid steps in the opposite direction. He walked a mile and a half to a tiny, slanting, wooden house, almost a hut, where Marya Kondratyevna, the neighbour who used to come to Fyodor Pavlovitch’s kitchen for soup and to whom Smerdyakov had once sung his songs and played on the guitar, was now lodging. She had sold their little house, and was now living here with her mother. Smerdyakov, who was ill — almost dying-had been with them ever since Fyodor Pavlovitch’s death. It was to him Ivan was going now, drawn by a sudden and irresistible prompting.

CHAPTER 6

The First Interview with Smerdyakov

THIS was the third time that Ivan had been to see Smerdyakov since his return from Moscow. The first time he had seen him and talked to him was on the first day of his arrival, then he had visited him once more, a fortnight later. But his visits had ended with that second one, so that it was now over a month since he had seen him. And he had scarcely heard anything of him.

Ivan had only returned five days after his father's death, so that he was not present at the funeral, which took place the day before he came back. The cause of his delay was that Alyosha, not knowing his Moscow address, had to apply to Katerina Ivanovna to telegraph to him, and she, not knowing his address either, telegraphed to her sister and aunt, reckoning on Ivan's going to see them as soon as he arrived in Moscow. But he did not go to them till four days after his arrival. When he got the telegram, he had, of course, set off post-haste to our town. The first to meet him was Alyosha, and Ivan was greatly surprised to find that, in opposition to the general opinion of the town, he refused to entertain a suspicion against Mitya, and spoke openly of Smerdyakov as the murderer. Later on, after seeing the police captain and the prosecutor, and hearing the details of the charge and the arrest, he was still more surprised at Alyosha, and ascribed his opinion only to his exaggerated brotherly feeling and sympathy with Mitya, of whom Alyosha, as Ivan knew, was very fond.

By the way, let us say a word or two of Ivan's feeling to his brother Dmitri. He positively disliked him; at most, felt sometimes a compassion for him, and even that was mixed with great contempt, almost repugnance. Mitya's whole personality, even his appearance, was extremely unattractive to him. Ivan looked with indignation on Katerina Ivanovna's love for his brother. Yet he went to see Mitya on the first day of his arrival, and that interview, far from shaking Ivan's belief in his guilt, positively strengthened it. He found his brother agitated, nervously excited. Mitya had been talkative, but very absent-minded and incoherent. He used violent language, accused Smerdyakov, and was fearfully muddled. He talked principally about the three thousand roubles, which he said had been "stolen" from him by his father.

“The money was mine, it was my money,” Mitya kept repeating. “Even if I had stolen it, I should have had the right.”

He hardly contested the evidence against him, and if he tried to turn a fact to his advantage, it was in an absurd and incoherent way. He hardly seemed to wish to defend himself to Ivan or anyone else. Quite the contrary, he was angry and proudly scornful of the charges against him; he was continually firing up and abusing everyone. He only laughed contemptuously at Grigory’s evidence about the open door, and declared that it was “the devil that opened it.” But he could not bring forward any coherent explanation of the fact. He even succeeded in insulting Ivan during their first interview, telling him sharply that it was not for people who declared that “everything was lawful,” to suspect and question him. Altogether he was anything but friendly with Ivan on that occasion. Immediately after that interview with Mitya, Ivan went for the first time to see Smerdyakov.

In the railway train on his way from Moscow, he kept thinking of Smerdyakov and of his last conversation with him on the evening before he went away. Many things seemed to him puzzling and suspicious. when he gave his evidence to the investigating lawyer Ivan said nothing, for the time, of that conversation. He put that off till he had seen Smerdyakov, who was at that time in the hospital.

Doctor Herzenstube and Varvinsky, the doctor he met in the hospital, confidently asserted in reply to Ivan’s persistent questions, that Smerdyakov’s epileptic attack was unmistakably genuine, and were surprised indeed at Ivan asking whether he might not have been shamming on the day of the catastrophe. They gave him to understand that the attack was an exceptional one, the fits persisting and recurring several times, so that the patient’s life was positively in danger, and it was only now, after they had applied remedies, that they could assert with confidence that the patient would survive. “Though it might well be,” added Doctor Herzenstube, “that his reason would be impaired for a considerable period, if not permanently.” On Ivan’s asking impatiently whether that meant that he was now mad, they told him that this was not yet the case, in the full sense of the word, but that certain abnormalities were perceptible. Ivan decided to find out for himself what those abnormalities were.

At the hospital he was at once allowed to see the patient. Smerdyakov was lying on a truckle-bed in a separate ward. There was only one other bed

in the room, and in it lay a tradesman of the town, swollen with dropsy, who was obviously almost dying; he could be no hindrance to their conversation. Smerdyakov grinned uncertainly on seeing Ivan, and for the first instant seemed nervous. So at least Ivan fancied. But that was only momentary. For the rest of the time he was struck, on the contrary, by Smerdyakov's composure. From the first glance Ivan had no doubt that he was very ill. He was very weak; he spoke slowly, seeming to move his tongue with difficulty; he was much thinner and sallower.Throughout the interview, which lasted twenty minutes, he kept complaining of headache and of pain in all his limbs. His thin emasculate face seemed to have become so tiny; his hair was ruffled, and his crest of curls in front stood up in a thin tuft. But in the left eye, which was screwed up and seemed to be insinuating something, Smerdyakov showed himself unchanged. "It's always worth while speaking to a clever man." Ivan was reminded of that at once. He sat down on the stool at his feet. Smerdyakov, with painful effort, shifted his position in bed, but he was not the first to speak. He remained dumb, and did not even look much interested.

"Can you. talk to me?" asked Ivan. "I won't tire you much."

"Certainly I can," mumbled Smerdyakov, in a faint voice. "Has your honour been back long?" he added patronisingly, as though encouraging a nervous visitor.

"I only arrived to-day.... To see the mess you are in here."

Smerdyakov sighed.

"Why do you sigh? You knew of it all along," Ivan blurted out.

Smerdyakov was stolidly silent for a while.

"How could I help knowing? It was clear beforehand. But how could I tell it would turn out like that?"

"What would turn out? Don't prevaricate! You've foretold you'd have a fit; on the way down to the cellar, you know. You mentioned the very spot."

"Have you said so at the examination yet?" Smerdyakov queried with composure.

Ivan felt suddenly angry.

"No, I haven't yet, but I certainly shall. You must explain a great deal to me, my man; and let me tell you, I am not going to let you play with me!"

"Why should I play with you, when I put my whole trust in you, as in God Almighty?" said Smerdyakov, with the same composure, only for a moment closing his eyes.

“In the first place,” began Ivan, “I know that epileptic fits can’t be told beforehand. I’ve inquired; don’t try and take me in. You can’t foretell the day and the hour. How was it you told me the day and the hour beforehand, and about the cellar, too? How could you tell that you would fall down the cellar stairs in a fit, if you didn’t sham a fit on purpose?”

“I had to go to the cellar anyway, several times a day, indeed,” Smerdyakov drawled deliberately. “I fell from the garret just in the same way a year ago. It’s quite true you can’t tell the day and hour of a fit beforehand, but you can always have a presentiment of it.”

“But you did foretell the day and the hour!”

“In regard to my epilepsy, sir, you had much better inquire of the doctors here. You can ask them whether it was a real fit or a sham; it’s no use my saying any more about it.”

“And the cellar? How could you know beforehand of the cellar?”

“You don’t seem able to get over that cellar! As I was going down to the cellar, I was in terrible dread and doubt. What frightened me most was losing you and being left without defence in all the world. So I went down into the cellar thinking, ‘Here, it’ll come on directly, it’ll strike me down directly, shall I fall?’ And it was through this fear that I suddenly felt the spasm that always comes... and so I went flying. All that and all my previous conversation with you at the gate the evening before, when I told you how frightened I was and spoke of the cellar, I told all that to Doctor Herzenstube and Nikolay Parfenovitch, the investigating lawyer, and it’s all been written down in the protocol. And the doctor here, Mr. Varvinsky, maintained to all of them that it was just the thought of it brought it on, the apprehension that I might fall. It was just then that the fit seized me. And so they’ve written it down, that it’s just how it must have happened, simply from my fear.”

As he finished, Smerdyakov. drew a deep breath, as though exhausted.

“Then you have said all that in your evidence?” said Ivan, somewhat taken aback. He had meant to frighten him with the threat of repeating their conversation, and it appeared that Smerdyakov had already reported it all himself.

“What have I to be afraid of? Let them write down the whole truth,” Smerdyakov pronounced firmly.

“And have you told them every word of our conversation at the gate?”

“No, not to say every word.”

“And did you tell them that you can sham fits, as you boasted then?”

“No, I didn’t tell them that either.”

“Tell me now, why did you send me then to Tchermashnya?”

“I was afraid you’d go away to Moscow; Tchermashnya is nearer, anyway.”

“You are lying; you suggested my going away yourself; you told me to get out of the way of trouble.”

“That was simply out of affection and my sincere devotion to you, foreseeing trouble in the house, to spare you. Only I wanted to spare myself even more. That’s why I told you to get out of harm’s way, that you might understand that there would be trouble in the house, and would remain at home to protect your father.”

“You might have said it more directly, you blockhead!” Ivan suddenly fired up.

“How could I have said it more directly then? It was simply my fear that made me speak, and you might have been angry, too. I might well have been apprehensive that Dmitri Fyodorovitch would make a scene and carry away that money, for he considered it as good as his own; but who could tell that it would end in a murder like this? I thought that he would only carry off the three thousand that lay under the master’s mattress in the envelope, and you see, he’s murdered him. How could you guess it either, sir?”

“But if you say yourself that it couldn’t be guessed, how could I have guessed and stayed at home? You contradict yourself!” said Ivan, pondering.

“You might have guessed from my sending you to Tchermashnya and not to Moscow.”

“How could I guess it from that?”

Smerdyakov seemed much exhausted, and again he was silent for a minute.

“You might have guessed from the fact of my asking you not to go to Moscow, but to Tchermashnya, that I wanted to have you nearer, for Moscow’s a long way off, and Dmitri Fyodorovitch, knowing you are not far off, would not be so bold. And if anything had happened, you might have come to protect me, too, for I warned you of Grigory Vassilyevitch’s illness, and that I was afraid of having a fit. And when I explained those knocks to you, by means of which one could go in to the deceased, and that

Dmitri Fyodorovitch knew them all through me, I thought that you would guess yourself that he would be sure to do something, and so wouldn’t go to Tchermashnya even, but would stay.”

“He talks very coherently,” thought Ivan, “though he does mumble; what’s the derangement of his faculties that Herzenstube talked of?”

“You are cunning with me, damn you!” he exclaimed, getting angry.

“But I thought at the time that you quite guessed,” Smerdyakov parried with the simplest air.

“If I’d guessed, I should have stayed,” cried Ivan.

“Why, I thought that it was because you guessed, that you went away in such a hurry, only to get out of trouble, only to run away and save yourself in your fright.”

“You think that everyone is as great a coward as yourself?”

“Forgive me, I thought you were like me.”

“Of course, I ought to have guessed,” Ivan said in agitation; “and I did guess there was some mischief brewing on your part... only you are lying, you are lying again,” he cried, suddenly recollecting. “Do you remember how you went up to the carriage and said to me, ‘It’s always worth while speaking to a clever man’? So you were glad I went away, since you praised me?”

Smerdyakov sighed again and again. A trace of colour came into his face.

“If I was pleased,” he articulated rather breathlessly, “it was simply because you agreed not to go to Moscow, but to Tchermashnya. For it was nearer, anyway. Only when I said these words to you, it was not by way of praise, but of reproach. You didn’t understand it.”

“What reproach?”

“Why, that foreseeing such a calamity you deserted your own father, and would not protect us, for I might have been taken up any time for stealing that three thousand.”

“Damn you!” Ivan swore again. “Stay, did you tell the prosecutor and the investigating lawyer about those knocks?”

“I told them everything just as it was.”

Ivan wondered inwardly again.

“If I thought of anything then,” he began again, “it was solely of some wickedness on your part. Dmitri might kill him, but that he would steal — I

did not believe that then.... But I was prepared for any wickedness from you. You told me yourself you could sham a fit. What did you say that for?”

“It was just through my simplicity, and I never have shammed a fit on purpose in my life. And I only said so then to boast to you. It was just foolishness. I liked you so much then, and was open-hearted with you.”

“My brother directly accuses you of the murder and theft.”

“What else is left for him to do?” said Smerdyakov, with a bitter grin. “And who will believe him with all the proofs against him? Grigory Vassilyevitch saw the door open. What can he say after that? But never mind him! He is trembling to save himself.”

He slowly ceased speaking; then suddenly, as though on reflection, added:

“And look here again. He wants to throw it on me and make out that it is the work of my hands — I’ve heard that already. But as to my being clever at shamming a fit: should I have told you beforehand that I could sham one, if I really had had such a design against your father? If I had been planning such a murder could I have been such a fool as to give such evidence against myself beforehand? And to his son, too! Upon my word! Is that likely? As if that could be; such a thing has never happened. No one hears this talk of ours now, except Providence itself, and if you were to tell of it to the prosecutor and Nikolay Parfenovitch you might defend me completely by doing so, for who would be likely to be such a criminal, if he is so open-hearted beforehand? Anyone can see that.”

“Well,” and Ivan got up to cut short the conversation, struck by Smerdyakov’s last argument. “I don’t suspect you at all, and I think it’s absurd, indeed, to suspect you. On the contrary, I am grateful to you for setting my mind at rest. Now I am going, but I’ll come again. Meanwhile, good-bye. Get well. Is there anything you want?”

“I am very thankful for everything. Marfa Ignatyevna does not forget me, and provides me anything I want, according to her kindness. Good people visit me every day.”

“Good-bye. But I shan’t say anything of your being able to sham a fit, and I don’t advise you to, either,” something made Ivan say suddenly.

“I quite understand. And if you don’t speak of that, I shall say nothing of that conversation of ours at the gate.”

Then it happened that Ivan went out, and only when he had gone a dozen steps along the corridor, he suddenly felt that there was an insulting

significance in Smerdyakov's last words. He was almost on the point of turning back, but it was only a passing impulse, and muttering, "Nonsense!" he went out of the hospital.

His chief feeling was one of relief at the fact that it was not Smerdyakov, but Mitya, who had committed the murder, though he might have been expected to feel the opposite. He did not want to analyse the reason for this feeling, and even felt a positive repugnance at prying into his sensations. He felt as though he wanted to make haste to forget something. In the following days he became convinced of Mitya's guilt, as he got to know all the weight of evidence against him. There was evidence of people of no importance, Fenya and her mother, for instance, but the effect of it was almost overpowering. As to Perhotin, the people at the tavern, and at Plotnikov's shop, as well as the witnesses at Mokroe, their evidence seemed conclusive. It was the details that were so damning. The secret of the knocks impressed the lawyers almost as much as Grigory's evidence as to the open door. Grigory's wife, Marfa, in answer to Ivan's questions, declared that Smerdyakov had been lying all night the other side of the partition wall, "He was not three paces from our bed," and that although she was a sound sleeper she waked several times and heard him moaning, "He was moaning the whole time, moaning continually."

Talking to Herzenstube, and giving it as his opinion that Smerdyakov was not mad, but only rather weak, Ivan only evoked from the old man a subtle smile.

"Do you know how he spends his time now?" he asked; "learning lists of French words by heart. He has an exercise-book under his pillow with the French words written out in Russian letters for him by someone, he he he!"

Ivan ended by dismissing all doubts. He could not think of Dmitri without repulsion. Only one thing was strange, however. Alyosha persisted that Dmitri was not the murderer, and that "in all probability" Smerdyakov was. Ivan always felt that Alyosha's opinion meant a great deal to him, and so he was astonished at it now. Another thing that was strange was that Alyosha did not make any attempt to talk about Mitya with Ivan, that he never began on the subject and only answered his questions. This, too, struck Ivan particularly.

But he was very much preoccupied at that time with something quite apart from that. On his return from Moscow, he abandoned himself hopelessly to his mad and consuming passion for Katerina Ivanovna. This is

not the time to begin to speak of this new passion of Ivan's, which left its mark on all the rest of his life: this would furnish the subject for another novel, which I may perhaps never write. But I cannot omit to mention here that when Ivan, on leaving Katerina Ivanovna with Alyosha, as I've related already, told him, "I am not keen on her," it was an absolute lie: he loved her madly, though at times he hated her so that he might have murdered her. Many causes helped to bring about this feeling. Shattered by what had happened with Mitya, she rushed on Ivan's return to meet him as her one salvation. She was hurt, insulted and humiliated in her feelings. And here the man had come back to her, who had loved her so ardently before (oh! she knew that very well), and whose heart and intellect she considered so superior to her own. But the sternly virtuous girl did not abandon herself altogether to the man she loved, in spite of the Karamazov violence of his passions and the great fascination he had for her. She was continually tormented at the same time by remorse for having deserted Mitya, and in moments of discord and violent anger (and they were numerous) she told Ivan so plainly. This was what he had called to Alyosha "lies upon lies." There was, of course, much that was false in it, and that angered Ivan more than anything.... But of all this later.

He did, in fact, for a time almost forget Smerdyakov's existence, and yet, a fortnight after his first visit to him, he began to be haunted by the same strange thoughts as before. It's enough to say that he was continually asking himself, why was it that on that last night in Fyodor Pavlovitch's house he had crept out on to the stairs like a thief and listened to hear what his father was doing below? Why had he recalled that afterwards with repulsion? Why next morning, had he been suddenly so depressed on the journey? Why, as he reached Moscow, had he said to himself, "I am a scoundrel"? And now he almost fancied that these tormenting thoughts would make him even forget Katerina Ivanovna, so completely did they take possession of him again. It was just after fancying this, that he met Alyosha in the street. He stopped him at once, and put a question to him:

"Do you remember when Dmitri burst in after dinner and beat father, and afterwards I told you in the yard that I reserved 'the right to desire'?... Tell me, did you think then that I desired father's death or not?"

"I did think so," answered Alyosha, softly.

"It was so, too; it was not a matter of guessing. But didn't you fancy then that what I wished was just that one reptile should devour another'; that is,

just that Dmitri should kill father, and as soon as possible... and that I myself was even prepared to help to bring that about?”

Alyosha turned rather pale, and looked silently into his brother’s face.

“Speak!” cried Ivan, “I want above everything to know what you thought then. I want the truth, the truth!”

He drew a deep breath, looking angrily at Alyosha before his answer came.

“Forgive me, I did think that, too, at the time,” whispered Alyosha, and he did not add one softening phrase.

“Thanks,” snapped Ivan, and, leaving Alyosha, he went quickly on his way. From that time Alyosha noticed that Ivan began obviously to avoid him and seemed even to have taken a dislike to him, so much so that Alyosha gave up going to see him. Immediately after that meeting with him, Ivan had not gone home, but went straight to Smerdyakov again.

CHAPTER 7

The Second Visit to Smerdyakov

BY that time Smerdyakov had been discharged from the hospital. Ivan knew his new lodging, the dilapidated little wooden house, divided in two by a passage, on one side of which lived Marya Kondratyevna and her mother, and on the other, Smerdyakov. No one knew on what terms he lived with them, whether as a friend or as a lodger. It was supposed afterwards that he had come to stay with them as Marya Kondratyevna's betrothed, and was living there for a time without paying for board or lodging. Both mother and daughter had the greatest respect for him and looked upon him as greatly superior to themselves.

Ivan knocked, and, on the door being opened, went straight into the passage. By Marya Kondratyevna's directions he went straight to the better room on the left, occupied by Smerdyakov. There was a tiled stove in the room and it was extremely hot. The walls were gay with blue paper, which was a good deal used however, and in the cracks under it cockroaches swarmed in amazing numbers, so that there was a continual rustling from them. The furniture was very scanty: two benches against each wall and two chairs by the table. The table of plain wood was covered with a cloth with pink patterns on it. There was a pot of geranium on each of the two little windows. In the corner there was a case of ikons. On the table stood a little copper samovar with many dents in it, and a tray with two cups. But Smerdyakov had finished tea and the samovar was out. He was sitting at the table on a bench. He was looking at an exercise-book and slowly writing with a pen. There was a bottle of ink by him and a flat iron candlestick, but with a composite candle. Ivan saw at once from Smerdyakov's face that he had completely recovered from his illness. His face was fresher, fuller, his hair stood up jauntily in front, and was plastered down at the sides. He was sitting in a parti-coloured, wadded dressing-gown, rather dirty and frayed, however. He had spectacles on his nose, which Ivan had never seen him wearing before. This trifling circumstance suddenly redoubled Ivan's anger: "A creature like that and wearing spectacles!"

Smerdyakov slowly raised his head and looked intently at his visitor through his spectacles; then he slowly took them off and rose from the

bench, but by no means respectfully, almost lazily, doing the least possible required by common civility. All this struck Ivan instantly; he took it all in and noted it at once — most of all the look in Smerdyakov's eyes, positively malicious, churlish and haughty. "What do you want to intrude for?" it seemed to say; "we settled everything then; why have you come again?" Ivan could scarcely control himself.

"It's hot here," he said, still standing, and unbuttoned his overcoat.

"Take off your coat," Smerdyakov conceded.

Ivan took off his coat and threw it on a bench with trembling hands. He took a chair, moved it quickly to the table and sat down. Smerdyakov managed to sit down on his bench before him.

"To begin with, are we alone?" Ivan asked sternly and impulsively. "Can they overhear us in there?"

"No one can hear anything. You've seen for yourself: there's a passage."

"Listen, my good fellow; what was that you babbled, as I was leaving the hospital, that if I said nothing about your faculty of shamming fits, you wouldn't tell the investigating lawyer all our conversation at the gate? What do you mean by all? What could you mean by it? Were you threatening me? Have I entered into some sort of compact with you? Do you suppose I am afraid of you?"

Ivan said this in a perfect fury, giving him to understand with obvious intention that he scorned any subterfuge or indirectness and meant to show his cards. Smerdyakov's eyes gleamed resentfully, his left eye winked, and he at once gave his answer, with his habitual composure and deliberation. "You want to have everything above-board; very well, you shall have it," he seemed to say.

"This is what I meant then, and this is why I said that, that you, knowing beforehand of this murder of your own parent, left him to his fate, and that people mightn't after that conclude any evil about your feelings and perhaps of something else, too — that's what I promised not to tell the authorities."

Though Smerdyakov spoke without haste and obviously controlling himself, yet there was something in his voice, determined and emphatic, resentful and insolently defiant. He stared impudently at Ivan. A mist passed before Ivan's eyes for the first moment.

"How? What? Are you out of your mind?"

"I'm perfectly in possession of all my faculties."

“Do you suppose I knew of the murder?” Ivan cried at last, and he brought his fist violently on the table. “What do you mean by ‘something else, too’? Speak, scoundrel!”

Smerdyakov was silent and still scanned Ivan with the same insolent stare.

“Speak, you stinking rogue, what is that ‘something else, too’?”

“The ‘something else’ I meant was that you probably, too, were very desirous of your parent’s death.”

Ivan jumped up and struck him with all his might on the shoulder, so that he fell back against the wall. In an instant his face was bathed in tears. Saying, “It’s a shame, sir, to strike a sick man,” he dried his eyes with a very dirty blue check handkerchief and sank into quiet weeping. A minute passed.

“That’s enough! Leave off,” Ivan said peremptorily, sitting down again. “Don’t put me out of all patience.”

Smerdyakov took the rag from his eyes. Every line of his puckered face reflected the insult he had just received.

“So you thought then, you scoundrel, that together with Dmitri I meant to kill my father?”

“I didn’t know what thoughts were in your mind then,” said Smerdyakov resentfully; “and so I stopped you then at the gate to sound you on that very point.”

“To sound what, what?”

“Why, that very circumstance, whether you wanted your father to be murdered or not.”

What infuriated Ivan more than anything was the aggressive, insolent tone to which Smerdyakov persistently adhered.

“It was you murdered him?” he cried suddenly.

Smerdyakov smiled contemptuously.

“You know of yourself, for a fact, that it wasn’t I murdered him. And I should have thought that there was no need for a sensible man to speak of it again.”

“But why, why had you such a suspicion about me at the time?”

“As you know already, it was simply from fear. For I was in such a position, shaking with fear, that I suspected everyone. I resolved to sound you, too, for I thought if you wanted the same as your brother, then the business was as good as settled and I should be crushed like a fly, too.”

“Look here, you didn’t say that a fortnight ago.”

“I meant the same when I talked to you in the hospital, only I thought you’d understand without wasting words, and that being such a sensible man you wouldn’t care to talk of it openly.”

“What next! Come answer, answer, I insist: what was it... what could I have done to put such a degrading suspicion into your mean soul?”

“As for the murder, you couldn’t have done that and didn’t want to, but as for wanting someone else to do it, that was just what you did want.”

“And how coolly, how coolly he speakst But why should I have wanted it; what grounds had I for wanting it?”

“What grounds had you? What about the inheritance?” said Smerdyakov sarcastically, and, as it were, vindictively. “Why, after your parent’s death there was at least forty thousand to come to each of you, and very likely more, but if Fyodor Pavlovitch got married then to that lady, Agrafena Alexandrovna, she would have had all his capital made over to her directly after the wedding, for she’s plenty of sense, so that your parent would not have left you two roubles between the three of you. And were they far from a wedding, either? Not a hair’s-breadth: that lady had only to lift her little finger and he would have run after her to church, with his tongue out.”

Ivan restrained himself with painful effort.

“Very good,” he commented at last. “You see, I haven’t jumped up, I haven’t knocked you down, I haven’t killed you. Speak on. So, according to you, I had fixed on Dmitri to do it; I was reckoning on him?”

“How could you help reckoning on him? If he killed him, then he would lose all the rights of a nobleman, his rank and property, and would go off to exile; so his share of the inheritance would come to you and your brother Alexey Fyodorovitch in equal parts; so you’d each have not forty, but sixty thousand each. There’s not a doubt you did reckon on Dmitri Fyodorovitch.”

“What I put up with from you! Listen, scoundrel, if I had reckoned on anyone then, it would have been on you, not on Dmitri, and I swear I did expect some wickedness from you... at the time.... I remember my impression!

“I thought, too, for a minute, at the time, that you were reckoning on me as well,” said Smerdyakov, with a sarcastic grin. “So that it was just by that more than anything you showed me what was in your mind. For if you had

a foreboding about me and yet went away, you as good as said to me, ‘You can murder my parent, I won’t hinder you!”’

“You scoundrel! So that’s how you understood it!”

“It was all that going to Tchermashnya. Why! You were meaning to go to Moscow and refused all your father’s entreaties to go to Tchermashnya — and simply at a foolish word from me you consented at once! What reason had you to consent to Tchermashnya? Since you went to Tchermashnya with no reason, simply at my word, it shows that you must have expected something from me.”

No, I swear I didn’t!” shouted Ivan, grinding his teeth.

“You didn’t? Then you ought, as your father’s son, to have had me taken to the lock-up and thrashed at once for my words then... or at least, to have given me a punch in the face on the spot, but you were not a bit angry, if you please, and at once in a friendly way acted on my foolish word and went away, which was utterly absurd, for you ought to have stayed to save your parent’s life. How could I help drawing my conclusions?”

Ivan sat scowling, both his fists convulsively pressed on his knees.

“Yes, I am sorry I didn’t punch you in the face,” he said with a bitter smile. “I couldn’t have taken you to the lock-up just then. Who would have believed me and what charge could I bring against you? But the punch in the face... oh, I’m sorry I didn’t think of it. Though blows are forbidden, I should have pounded your ugly face to a jelly.”

Smerdyakov looked at him almost with relish.

“In the ordinary occasions of life,” he said in the same complacent and sententious tone in which he had taunted Grigory and argued with him about religion at Fyodor Pavlovitch’s table, “in the ordinary occasions of life, blows on the face are forbidden nowadays by law, and people have given them up, but in exceptional occasions of life people still fly to blows, not only among us but all over the world, be it even the fullest republic of France, just as in the time of Adam and Eve, and they never will leave off, but you, even in an exceptional case, did not dare.”

“What are you learning French words for?” Ivan nodded towards the exercise-book lying on the table.

“Why shouldn’t I learn them so as to improve my education, supposing that I may myself chance to go some day to those happy parts of Europe?”

“Listen, monster.” Ivan’s eyes flashed and he trembled all over. “I am not afraid of your accusations; you can say what you like about me, and if I

don’t beat you to death, it’s simply because I suspect you of that crime and I’ll drag you to justice. I’ll unmask you.”

“To my thinking, you’d better keep quiet, for what can you accuse me of, considering my absolute innocence? And who would believe you? Only if you begin, I shall tell everything, too, for I must defend myself.”

“Do you think I am afraid of you now?”

“If the court doesn’t believe all I’ve said to you just now, the public will, and you will be ashamed.”

“That’s as much as to say, ‘It’s always worth while speaking to a sensible man,’ eh?” snarled Ivan.

“You hit the mark, indeed. And you’d better be sensible.”

Ivan got up, shaking all over with indignation, put on his coat, and without replying further to Smerdyakov, without even looking at him, walked quickly out of the cottage. The cool evening air refreshed him. There was a bright moon in the sky. A nightmare of ideas and sensations filled his soul. “Shall I go at once and give information against Smerdyakov? But what information can I give? He is not guilty, anyway. On the contrary, he’ll accuse me. And in fact, why did I set off for Tchermashnya then? What for? What for?” Ivan asked himself. “Yes, of course, I was expecting something and he is right... “ And he remembered for the hundredth time how, on the last night in his father’s house, he had listened on the stairs. But he remembered it now with such anguish that he stood still on the spot as though he had been stabbed. “Yes, I expected it then, that’s true! I wanted the murder, I did want the murder! Did I want the murder? Did I want it? I must kill Smerdyakov! If I don’t dare kill Smerdyakov now, life is not worth living!”

Ivan did not go home, but went straight to Katerina Ivanovna and alarmed her by his appearance. He was like a madman. He repeated all his conversation with Smerdyakov, every syllable of it. He couldn’t be calmed, however much she tried to soothe him: he kept walking about the room, speaking strangely, disconnectedly. At last he sat down, put his elbows on the table, leaned his head on his hands and pronounced this strange sentence: “If it’s not Dmitri, but Smerdyakov who’s the murderer, I share his guilt, for I put him up to it. Whether I did, I don’t know yet. But if he is the murderer, and not Dmitri, then, of course, I am the murderer, too.”

When Katerina Ivanovna heard that, she got up from her seat without a word, went to her writing-table, opened a box standing on it, took out a

sheet of paper and laid it before Ivan. This was the document of which Ivan spoke to Alyosha later on as a “conclusive proof” that Dmitri had killed his father. It was the letter written by Mitya to Katerina Ivanovna when he was drunk, on the very evening he met Alyosha at the crossroads on the way to the monastery, after the scene at Katerina Ivanovna’s, when Grushenka had insulted her. Then, parting from Alyosha, Mitya had rushed to Grushenka. I don’t know whether he saw her, but in the evening he was at the Metropolis, where he got thoroughly drunk. Then he asked for pen and paper and wrote a document of weighty consequences to himself. It was a wordy, disconnected, frantic letter, a drunken letter, in fact. It was like the talk of a drunken man, who, on his return home, begins with extraordinary heat telling his wife or one of his household how he has just been insulted, what a rascal had just insulted him, what a fine fellow he is on the other hand, and how he will pay that scoundrel out; and all that at great length, with great excitement and incoherence, with drunken tears and blows on the table. The letter was written on a dirty piece of ordinary paper of the cheapest kind. It had been provided by the tavern and there were figures scrawled on the back of it. There was evidently not space enough for his drunken verbosity and Mitya not only filled the margins but had written the last line right across the rest. The letter ran as follows:

FATAL KATYA: To-morrow I will get the money and repay your three thousand and farewell, woman of great wrath, but farewell, too, my love! Let us make an end! To-morrow I shall try and get it from everyone, and if I can’t borrow it, I give you my word of honour I shall go to my father and break his skull and take the money from under the pillow, if only Ivan has gone. It I have to go to Siberia for it, I’ll give you back your three thousand. And farewell. I bow down to the ground before you, for I’ve been a scoundrel to you. Forgive me! No, better not forgive me, you’ll be happier and so shall I! Better Siberia than your love, for I love another woman and you got to know her too well to-day, so how can you forgive? I will murder the man who’s robbed me! I’ll leave you all and go to the East so as to see no one again. Not her either, for you are not my only tormentress; she is too. Farewel!

P.S. — I write my curse, but I adore you! I hear it in my heart. One string is left, and it vibrates. Better tear my heart in two! I shall kill myself, but first of all that cur. I shall tear three thousand from him and fling it to you. Though I’ve been a scoundrel to you, I am not a thief! You can expect three

thousand. The cur keeps it under his mattress, in pink ribbon. I am not a thief, but I'll murder my thief. Katya, don't look disdainful. Dmitri is not a thief! but a murderer! He has murdered his father and ruined himself to hold his ground, rather than endure your pride. And he doesn't love you.

P.P.S. — I kiss your feet, farewel!

P.P.P.S. — Katya, pray to God that someone'll give me the money. Then I shall not be steeped in gore, and if no one does — I shall! Kill me! Your slave and enemy, D. Karamazov

When Ivan read this "document" he was convinced. So then it was his brother, not Smerdyakov. And if not Smerdyakov, then not he, Ivan. This letter at once assumed in his eyes the aspect of a logical proof. There could be no longer the slightest doubt of Mitya's guilt. The suspicion never occurred to Ivan, by the way, that Mitya might have committed the murder in conjunction with Smerdyakov, and, indeed, such a theory did not fit in with the facts. Ivan was completely reassured. The next morning he only thought of Smerdyakov and his gibes with contempt. A few days later he positively wondered how he could have been so horribly distressed at his suspicions. He resolved to dismiss him with contempt and forget him. So passed a month. He made no further inquiry about Smerdyakov, but twice he happened to hear that he was very ill and out of his mind.

"He'll end in madness," the young doctor Varvinsky observed about him, and Ivan remembered this. During the last week of that month Ivan himself began to feel very ill. He went to consult the Moscow doctor who had been sent for by Katerina Ivanovna just before the trial. And just at that time his relations with Katerina Ivanovna became acutely strained. They were like two enemies in love with one another. Katerina Ivanovna's "returns" to Mitya, that is, her brief but violent revulsions of feeling in his favour, drove Ivan to perfect frenzy. Strange to say, until that last scene described above, when Alyosha came from Mitya to Katerina Ivanovna, Ivan had never once, during that month, heard her express a doubt of Mitya's guilt, in spite of those "returns" that were so hateful to him. It is remarkable, too, that while he felt that he hated Mitya more and more every day, he realised that it was not on account of Katya's "returns" that he hated him, but just because he was the murderer of his father. He was conscious of this and fully recognised it to himself

Nevertheless, he went to see Mitya ten days before the trial and proposed to him a plan of escape — a plan he had obviously thought over a long

time. He was partly impelled to do this by a sore place still left in his heart from a phrase of Smerdyakov's, that it was to his, Ivan's, advantage that his brother should be convicted, as that would increase his inheritance and Alyosha's from forty to sixty thousand roubles. He determined to sacrifice thirty thousand on arranging Mitya's escape. On his return from seeing him, he was very mournful and dispirited; he suddenly began to feel that he was anxious for Mitya's escape, not only to heal that sore place by sacrificing thirty thousand, but for another reason. "Is it because I am as much a murderer at heart?" he asked himself. Something very deep down seemed burning and rankling in his soul. His pride above all suffered cruelly all that month. But of that later....

When, after his conversation with Alyosha, Ivan suddenly decided with his hand on the bell of his lodging to go to Smerdyakov, he obeyed a sudden and peculiar impulse of indignation. He suddenly remembered how Katerina Ivanovna had only just cried out to him in Alyosha's presence: "It was you, you, persuaded me of his" (that is, Mitya's) "guilt!" Ivan was thunderstruck when he recalled it. He had never once tried to persuade her that Mitya was the murderer; on the contrary, he had suspected himself in her presence, that time when he came back from Smerdyakov. It was she, she, who had produced that "document" and proved his brother's guilt. And now she suddenly exclaimed: "I've been at Smerdyakov's myself!" When had she been there? Ivan had known nothing of it. So she was not at all so sure of Mitya's guilt! And what could Smerdyakov have told her? What, what, had he said to her? His heart burned with violent anger. He could not understand how he could, half an hour before, have let those words pass and not have cried out at the moment. He let go of the bell and rushed off to Smerdyakov. "I shall kill him, perhaps, this time," he thought on the way.

CHAPTER 8

The Third and Last Interview with Smerdyakov

WHEN he was half-way there, the keen dry wind that had been blowing early that morning rose again, and a fine dry snow began falling thickly. It did not lie on the ground, but was whirled about by the wind, and soon there was a regular snowstorm. There were scarcely any lamp-posts in the part of the town where Smerdyakov lived. Ivan strode alone in the darkness, unconscious of the storm, instinctively picking out his way. His head ached and there was a painful throbbing in his temples. He felt that his hands were twitching convulsively. Not far from Marya Kondratyevna's cottage, Ivan suddenly came upon a solitary drunken little peasant. He was wearing a coarse and patched coat, and was walking in zigzags, grumbling and swearing to himself. Then suddenly he would begin singing in a husky drunken voice: Ach, Vanka's gone to Petersburg;

I won't wait till he comes back.

But he broke off every time at the second line and began swearing again; then he would begin the same song again. Ivan felt an intense hatred for him before he had thought about him at all. Suddenly he realised his presence and felt an irresistible impulse to knock him down. At that moment they met, and the peasant with a violent lurch fell full tilt against Ivan, who pushed him back furiously. The peasant went flying backwards and fell like a log on the frozen ground. He uttered one plaintive "O — oh!" and then was silent. Ivan stepped up to him. He was lying on his back, without movement or consciousness. "He will be frozen," thought Ivan, and he went on his way to Smerdyakov's.

In the passage, Marya Kondratyevna, who ran out to open the door with a candle in her hand, whispered that Smerdyakov was very ill; "It's not that he's laid up, but he seems not himself, and he even told us to take the tea away; he wouldn't have any."

"Why, does he make a row?" asked Ivan coarsely.

"Oh dear no, quite the contrary, he's very quiet. Only please don't talk to him too long," Marya Kondratyevna begged him. Ivan opened the door and stepped into the room.

It was over-heated as before, but there were changes in the room. One of the benches at the side had been removed, and in its place had been put a large old mahogany leather sofa, on which a bed had been made up, with fairly clean white pillows. Smerdyakov was sitting on the sofa, wearing the same dressing-gown. The table had been brought out in front of the sofa, so that there was hardly room to move. On the table lay a thick book in yellow cover, but Smerdyakov was not reading it. He seemed to be sitting doing nothing. He met Ivan with a slow silent gaze, and was apparently not at all surprised at his coming. There was a great change in his face; he was much thinner and sallower. His eyes were sunken and there were blue marks under them.

"Why, you really are ill?" Ivan stopped short. "I won't keep you long, I wont even take off my coat. Where can one sit down?"

He went to the other end of the table, moved up a chair and sat down on it.

"Why do you look at me without speaking? We only come with one question, and I swear I won't go without an answer. Has the young lady, Katerina Ivanovna, been with you?"

Smerdyakov still remained silent, looking quietly at Ivan as before. Suddenly, with a motion of his hand, he turned his face away.

"What's the matter with you?" cried Ivan.

"Nothing."

"What do you mean by 'nothing'?"

"Yes, she has. It's no matter to you. Let me alone."

"No, I won't let you alone. Tell me, when was she here?"

"Why, I'd quite forgotten about her," said Smerdyakov, with a scornful smile, and turning his face to Ivan again, he stared at him with a look of frenzied hatred, the same look that he had fixed on him at their last interview, a month before.

"You seem very ill yourself, your face is sunken; you don't look like yourself," he said to Ivan.

"Never mind my health, tell me what I ask you.

"But why are your eyes so yellow? The whites are quite yellow. Are you so worried?" He smiled contemptuously and suddenly laughed outright.

"Listen; I've told you I won't go away without an answer!" Ivan cried, intensely irritated.

“Why do you keep pestering me? Why do you torment me?” said Smerdyakov, with a look of suffering.

“Damn it! I’ve nothing to do with you. Just answer my question and I’ll go away.”

“I’ve no answer to give you,” said Smerdyakov, looking down again.

“You may be sure I’ll make you answer!”

“Why are you so uneasy?” Smerdyakov stared at him, not simply with contempt, but almost with repulsion. “Is this because the trial begins to-morrow? Nothing will happen to you; can’t you believe that at last? Go home, go to bed and sleep in peace, don’t be afraid of anything.”

“I don’t understand you.... What have I to be afraid of to-morrow?” Ivan articulated in astonishment, and suddenly a chill breath of fear did in fact pass over his soul. Smerdyakov measured him with his eyes.

“You don’t understand?” he drawled reproachfully. “It’s a strange thing a sensible man should care to play such a farce!”

Ivan looked at him speechless. The startling, incredibly supercilious tone of this man who had once been his valet, was extraordinary in itself. He had not taken such a tone even at their last interview.

“I tell you, you’ve nothing to be afraid of. I won’t say anything about you; there’s no proof against you. I say, how your hands are trembling! Why are your fingers moving like that? Go home, you did not murder him.”

Ivan started. He remembered Alyosha.

“I know it was not I,” he faltered.

“Do you?” Smerdyakov caught him up again.

Ivan jumped up and seized him by the shoulder.

“Tell me everything, you viper! Tell me everything!”

Smerdyakov was not in the least scared. He only riveted his eyes on Ivan with insane hatred.

“Well, it was you who murdered him, if that’s it,” he whispered furiously.

Ivan sank back on his chair, as though pondering something. He laughed malignantly.

“You mean my going away. What you talked about last time?”

“You stood before me last time and understood it all, and you understand it now.”

“All I understand is that you are mad.”

“Aren’t you tired of it? Here we are face to face; what’s the use of going on keeping up a farce to each other? Are you still trying to throw it all on me, to my face? You murdered him; you are the real murderer, I was only your instrument, your faithful servant, and it was following your words I did it.”

“Did it? Why, did you murder him?” Ivan turned cold.

Something seemed to give way in his brain, and he shuddered all over with a cold shiver. Then Smerdyakov himself looked at him wonderingly; probably the genuineness of Ivan’s horror struck him.

“You don’t mean to say you really did not know?” he faltered mistrustfully, looking with a forced smile into his eyes. Ivan still gazed at him, and seemed unable to speak. Ach, Vanka’s gone to Petersburg; I won’t wait till he comes back, suddenly echoed in his head.

“Do you know, I am afraid that you are a dream, a phantom sitting before me,” he muttered.

“There’s no phantom here, but only us two and one other. No doubt he is here, that third, between us.”

“Who is he? Who is here? What third person?” Ivan cried in alarm, looking about him, his eyes hastily searching in every corner.

“That third is God Himself — Providence. He is the third beside us now. Only don’t look for Him, you won’t find him.”

“It’s a lie that you killed him!” Ivan cried madly. “You are mad, or teasing me again!”

Smerdyakov, as before, watched him curiously, with no sign of fear. He could still scarcely get over his incredulity; he still fancied that Ivan knew everything and was trying to “throw it all on him to his face.”

“Wait a minute,” he said at last in a weak voice, and suddenly bringing up his left leg from under the table, he began turning up his trouser leg. He was wearing long white stockings and slippers. Slowly he took off his garter and fumbled to the bottom of his stocking. Ivan gazed at him, and suddenly shuddered in a paroxysm of terror.

“He’s mad!” he cried, and rapidly jumping up, he drew back, so that he knocked his back against the wall and stood up against it, stiff and straight. He looked with insane terror at Smerdyakov, who, entirely unaffected by his terror, continued fumbling in his stocking, as though he were making an effort to get hold of something with his fingers and pull it out. At last he got

hold of it and began pulling it out. Ivan saw that it was a piece of paper, or perhaps a roll of papers. Smerdyakov pulled it out and laid it on the table.

“Here,” he said quietly.

“What is it?” asked Ivan, trembling.

“Kindly look at it,” Smerdyakov answered, still in the same low tone.

Ivan stepped up to the table, took up the roll of paper and began unfolding it, but suddenly drew back his fingers, as though from contact with a loathsome reptile.

“Your hands keep twitching,” observed Smerdyakov, and he deliberately unfolded the bundle himself. Under the wrapper were three packets of hundred-rouble notes.

“They are all here, all the three thousand roubles; you need not count them. Take them,” Smerdyakov suggested to Ivan, nodding at the notes. Ivan sank back in his chair. He was as white as a handkerchief.

“You frightened me... with your stocking,” he said, with a strange grin.

“Can you really not have known till now?” Smerdyakov asked once more.

“No, I did not know. I kept thinking of Dmitri. Brother, brother! Ach!” He suddenly clutched his head in both hands.

“Listen. Did you kill him alone? With my brother’s help or without?”

“It was only with you, with your help, I killed him, and Dmitri Fyodorovitch is quite innocent.”

“All right, all right. Talk about me later. Why do I keep on trembling? I can’t speak properly.”

“You were bold enough then. You said ‘everything was lawful,’ and how frightened you are now,” Smerdyakov muttered in surprise. “Won’t you have some lemonade? I’ll ask for some at once. It’s very refreshing. Only I must hide this first.”

And again he motioned at the notes. He was just going to get up and call at the door to Marya Kondratyevna to make some lemonade and bring it them, but, looking for something to cover up the notes that she might not see them, he first took out his handkerchief, and as it turned out to be very dirty, took up the big yellow book that Ivan had noticed at first lying on the table, and put it over the notes. The book was The Sayings of the Holy Father Isaac the Syrian. Ivan read it mechanically.

“I won’t have any lemonade,” he said. “Talk of me later. Sit down and tell me how you did it. Tell me all about it.”

“You’d better take off your greatcoat, or you’ll be too hot.” Ivan, as though he’d only just thought of it, took off his coat, and, without getting up from his chair, threw it on the bench.

“Speak, please, speak.”

He seemed calmer. He waited, feeling sure that Smerdyakov would tell him all about it.

“How it was done?” sighed Smerdyakov. “It was done in a most natural way, following your very words.”

“Of my words later,” Ivan broke in again, apparently with complete self-possession, firmly uttering his words, and not shouting as before. “Only tell me in detail how you did it. Everything, as it happened. Don’t forget anything. The details, above everything, the details, I beg you.”

“You’d gone away, then I fell into the cellar.”

“In a fit or in a sham one?”

“A sham one, naturally. I shammed it all. I went quietly down the steps to the very bottom and lay down quietly, and as I lay down I gave a scream, and struggled, till they carried me out.”

“Stay! And were you shamming all along, afterwards, and in the hospital?”

“No, not at all. Next day, in the morning, before they took me to the hospital, I had a real attack and a more violent one than I’ve had for years. For two days I was quite unconscious.”

“All right, all right. Go on.”

“They laid me on the bed. I knew I’d be the other side of the partition, for whenever I was ill, Marfa Ignatyevna used to put me there, near them. She’s always been very kind to me, from my birth up. At night I moaned, but quietly. I kept expecting Dmitri Fyodorovitch to come.”

“Expecting him? To come to you?”

“Not to me. I expected him to come into the house, for I’d no doubt that he’d come that night, for being without me and getting no news, he’d be sure to come and climb over the fence, as he used to, and do something.”

“And if he hadn’t come?”

“Then nothing would have happened. I should never have brought myself to it without him.”

“All right, all right. speak more intelligibly, don’t hurry; above all, don’t leave anything out!”

“I expected him to kill Fyodor Pavlovitch. I thought that was certain, for I had prepared him for it... during the last few days.... He knew about the knocks, that was the chief thing. With his suspiciousness and the fury which had been growing in him all those days, he was bound to get into the house by means of those taps. That was inevitable, so I was expecting him.”

“Stay,” Ivan interrupted; “if he had killed him, he would have taken the money and carried it away; you must have considered that. What would you have got by it afterwards? I don’t see.” 0 “But he would never have found the money. That was only what I told him, that the money was under the mattress. But that wasn’t true. It had been lying in a box. And afterwards I suggested to Fyodor Pavlovitch, as I was the only person he trusted, to hide the envelope with the notes in the corner behind the ikons, for no one would have guessed that place, especially if they came in a hurry. So that’s where the envelope lay, in the corner behind the ikons. It would have been absurd to keep it under the mattress; the box, anyway, could be locked. But all believe it was under the mattress. A stupid thing to believe. So if Dmitri Fyodorovitch had committed the murder, finding nothing, he would either have run away in a hurry, afraid of every sound, as always happens with murderers, or he would have been arrested. So I could always have clambered up to the ikons and have taken away the money next moming or even that night, and it would have all been put down to Dmitri Fyodorovitch. I could reckon upon that.”

“But what if he did not kill him, but only knocked him down?”

“If he did not kill him, of course, I would not have ventured to take the money, and nothing would have happened. But I calculated that he would beat him senseless, and I should have time to take it then, and then I’d make out to Fyodor Pavlovitch that it was no one but Dmitri Fyodorovitch who had taken the money after beating him.”

“Stop... I am getting mixed. Then it was Dmitri after all who killed him; you only took the money?”

“No, he didn’t kill him. Well, I might as well have told you now that he was the murderer.... But I don’t want to lie to you now because... because if you really haven’t understood till now, as I see for myself, and are not pretending, so as to throw your guilt on me to my very face, you are still responsible for it all, since you knew of the murder and charged me to do it, and went away knowing all about it. And so I want to prove to your face

this evening that you are the only real murderer in the whole affair, and I am not the real murderer, though I did kill him. You are the rightful murderer.”

“Why, why, am I a murderer? Oh, God!” Ivan cried, unable to restrain himself at last, and forgetting that he had put off discussing himself till the end of the conversation. “You still mean that Tchermashnya? Stay, tell me, why did you want my consent, if you really took Tchermashnya for consent? How will you explain that now?”

“Assured of your consent, I should have known that you wouldn’t have made an outcry over those three thousand being lost, even if I’d been suspected, instead of Dmitri Fyodorovitch, or as his accomplice; on the contrary, you would have protected me from others.... And when you got your inheritance you would have rewarded me when you were able, all the rest of your life. For you’d have received your inheritance through me, seeing that if he had married Agrafena Alexandrovna, you wouldn’t have had a farthing.”

“Ah! Then you intended to worry me all my life afterwards,” snarled Ivan. “And what if I hadn’t gone away then, but had informed against you?”

“What could you have informed? That I persuaded you to go to Tcherinashnya? That’s all nonsense. Besides, after our conversation you would either have gone away or have stayed. If you had stayed, nothing would have happened. I should have known that you didn’t want it done, and should have attempted nothing. As you went away, it meant you assured me that you wouldn’t dare to inform against me at the trial, and that you’d overlook my having the three thousand. And, indeed, you couldn’t have prosecuted me afterwards, because then I should have told it all in the court; that is, not that I had stolen the money or killed him — I shouldn’t have said that — but that you’d put me up to the theft and the murder, though I didn’t consent to it. That’s why I needed your consent, so that you couldn’t have cornered me afterwards, for what proof could you have had? I could always have cornered you, revealing your eagerness for your father’s death, and I tell you the public would have believed it all, and you would have been ashamed for the rest of your life.”

“Was I then so eager, was I?” Ivan snarled again.

“To be sure you were, and by your consent you silently sanctioned my doing it.” Smerdyakov looked resolutely at Ivan. He was very weak and spoke slowly and wearily, but some hidden inner force urged him on. He evidently had some design. Ivan felt that.

“Go on,” he said. “Tell me what happened that night.”

“What more is there to tell! I lay there and I thought I heard the master shout. And before that Grigory Vassilyevitch had suddenly got up and came out, and he suddenly gave a scream, and then all was silence and darkness. I lay there waiting, my heart beating; I couldn’t bear it. I got up at last, went out. I saw the window open on the left into the garden, and I stepped to the left to listen whether he was sitting there alive, and I heard the master moving about, sighing, so I knew he was alive. ‘Ech!’ I thought. I went to the window and shouted to the master, ‘It’s I.’ And he shouted to me, ‘He’s been, he’s been; he’s run away.’ He meant Dmitri Fyodorovitch had been. ‘He’s killed Grigory! “Where?’ I whispered. ‘There, in the corner,’ he pointed. He was whispering, too. ‘Wait a bit,” I said. I went to the corner of the garden to look, and there I came upon Grigory Vassilyevitch lying by the wall, covered with blood, senseless. So it’s true that Dmitri Fyodorovitch has been here, was the thought that came into my head, and I determined on the spot to make an end of it, as Grigory Vassilyevitch, even if he were alive, would see nothing of it, as he lay there senseless. The only risk was that Marfa Ignatyevna might wake up. I felt that at the moment, but the longing to get it done came over me, till I could scarcely breathe. I went back to the window to the master and said, ‘She’s here, she’s come; Agrafena Alexandrovna has come, wants to be let in.’ And he started like a baby. ‘Where is she?’ he fairly gasped, but couldn’t believe it. ‘She’s standing there,’ said I. ‘Open.’ He looked out of the window at me, half believing and half distrustful, but afraid to open. ‘Why, he is afraid of me now,’ I thought. And it was funny. I bethought me to knock on the window-frame those taps we’d agreed upon as a signal that Grushenka had come, in his presence, before his eyes. He didn’t seem to believe my word, but as soon as he heard the taps, he ran at once to open the door. He opened it. I would have gone in, but he stood in the way to prevent me passing. ‘Where is she? Where is she?’ He looked at me, all of a tremble. ‘Well,’ thought I, ‘if he’s so frightened of me as all that, it’s a bad lookout!’ And my legs went weak with fright that he wouldn’t let me in or would call out, or Marfa Ignatyevna would run up, or something else might happen. I don’t remember now, but I must have stood pale, facing him. I whispered to him, ‘Why, she’s there, there, under the window; how is it you don’t see her?’ I said. ‘Bring her then, bring her.”She’s afraid,’ said I; ‘she was frightened at the noise, she’s hidden in the bushes; go and call to her yourself from the

study.’ He ran to the window, put the candle in the window. ‘Grushenka,’ he cried, ‘Grushenka, are you here?’ Though he cried that, he didn’t want to lean out of the window, he didn’t want to move away from me, for he was panic-stricken; he was so frightened he didn’t dare to turn his back on me. ‘Why, here she is,’ said I. I went up to the window and leaned right out of it. ‘Here she is; she’s in the bush, laughing at you, don’t you see her?’ He suddenly believed it; he was all of a shake — he was awfully crazy about her — and he leaned right out of the window. I snatched up that iron paper-weight from his table; do you remember, weighing about three pounds? I swung it and hit him on the top of the skull with the corner of it. He didn’t even cry out. He only sank down suddenly, and I hit him again and a third time. And the third time I knew I’d broken his skull. He suddenly rolled on his back, face upwards, covered with blood. I looked round. There was no blood on me, not a spot. I wiped the paper-weight, put it back, went up to the ikons, took the money out of the envelope, and flung the envelope on the floor and the pink ribbon beside it. I went out into the garden all of a tremble, straight to the apple-tree with a hollow in it — you know that hollow. I’d marked it long before and put a rag and a piece of paper ready in it. I wrapped all the notes in the rag and stuffed it deep down in the hole. And there it stayed for over a fortnight. I took it out later, when I came out of the hospital. I went back to my bed, lay down and thought, ‘If Grigory Vassilyevitch has been killed outright it may be a bad job for me, but if he is not killed and recovers, it will be first-rate, for then he’ll bear witness that Dmitri Fyodorovitch has been here, and so he must have killed him and taken the money.’ Then I began groaning with suspense and impatience, so as to wake Marfa Ignatyevna as soon as possible. At last she got up and she rushed to me, but when she saw Grigory Vassilyevitch was not there, she ran out, and I heard her scream in the garden. And that set it all going and set my mind at rest.”

He stopped. Ivan had listened all the time in dead silence without stirring or taking his eyes off him. As he told his story Smerdyakov glanced at him from time to time, but for the most part kept his eyes averted. When he had finished he was evidently agitated and was breathing hard. The perspiration stood out on his face. But it was impossible to tell whether it was remorse he was feeling, or what.

“Stay,” cried Ivan pondering. “What about the door? If he only opened the door to you, how could Grigory have seen it open before? For Grigory

saw it before you went.”

It was remarkable that Ivan spoke quite amicably, in a different tone, not angry as before, so if anyone had opened the door at that moment and peeped in at them, he would certainly have concluded that they were talking peaceably about some ordinary, though interesting, subject.

“As for that door and having seen it open, that’s only his fancy,” said Smerdyakov, with a wry smile. “He is not a man, I assure you, but an obstinate mule. He didn’t see it, but fancied he had seen it, and there’s no shaking him. It’s just our luck he took that notion into his head, for they can’t fail to convict Dmitri Fyodorovitch after that.”

“Listen... “ said Ivan, beginning to seem bewildered again and making an effort to grasp something. “Listen. There are a lot of questions I want to ask you, but I forget them... I keep forgetting and getting mixed up. Yes. Tell me this at least, why did you open the envelope and leave it there on the floor? Why didn’t you simply carry off the envelope?... When you were telling me, I thought you spoke about it as though it were the right thing to do... but why, I can’t understand...”

“I did that for a good reason. For if a man had known all about it, as I did for instance, if he’d seen those notes before, and perhaps had put them in that envelope himself, and had seen the envelope sealed up and addressed, with his own eyes, if such a man had done the murder, what should have made him tear open the envelope afterwards, especially in such desperate haste, since he’d know for certain the notes must be in the envelope? No, if the robber had been someone like me, he’d simply have put the envelope straight in his pocket and got away with it as fast as he could. But it’d be quite different with Dmitri Fyodorovitch. He only knew about the envelope by hearsay; he had never seen it, and if he’d found it, for instance, under the mattress, he’d have torn it open as quickly as possible to make sure the notes were in it. And he’d have thrown the envelope down, without having time to think that it would be evidence against him. Because he was not an habitual thief and had never directly stolen anything before, for he is a gentleman born, and if he did bring himself to steal, it would not be regular stealing, but simply taking what was his own, for he’d told the whole town he meant to before, and had even bragged aloud before everyone that he’d go and take his property from Fyodor Pavlovitch. I didn’t say that openly to the prosecutor when I was being examined, but quite the contrary, I brought him to it by a hint, as though I didn’t see it myself, and as though he’d

thought of it himself and I hadn’t prompted him; so that Mr. Prosecutor’s mouth positively watered at my suggestion.”

“But can you possibly have thought of all that on the spot?” cried Ivan, overcome with astonishment. He looked at Smerdyakov again with alarm.

“Mercy on us! Could anyone think of it all in such a desperate hurry? It was all thought out beforehand.”

“Well... well, it was the devil helped you!” Ivan cried again. “No, you are not a fool, you are far cleverer than I thought...”

He got up, obviously intending to walk across the room. He was in terrible distress. But as the table blocked his way, and there was hardly room to pass between the table and the wall, he only turned round where he stood and sat down again. Perhaps the impossibility of moving irritated him, as he suddenly cried out almost as furiously as before.

“Listen, you miserable, contemptible creature! Don’t you understand that if I haven’t killed you, it’s simply because I am keeping you to answer to-morrow at the trial. God sees,” Ivan raised his hand, “perhaps I, too, was guilty; perhaps I really had a secret desire for my father’s... death, but I swear I was not as guilty as you think, and perhaps I didn’t urge you on at all. No, no, I didn’t urge you on! But no matter, I will give evidence against myself to-morrow at the trial. I’m determined to! I shall tell everything, everything. But we’ll make our appearance together. And whatever you may say against me at the trial, whatever evidence you give, I’ll face it; I am not afraid of you. I’ll confirm it all myself! But you must confess, too! You must, you must; we’ll go together. That’s how it shall be!”

Ivan said this solemnly and resolutely and from his flashing eyes alone it could be seen that it would be so.

“You are ill, I see; you are quite ill. Your eyes are yellow,” Smerdyakov commented, without the least irony, with apparent sympathy in fact.

“We’ll go together,” Ivan repeated. “And if you won’t go, no matter, I’ll go alone.”

Smerdyakov paused as though pondering.

“There’ll be nothing of the sort, and you won’t go,” he concluded at last positively.

“You don’t understand me,” Ivan exclaimed reproachfully.

“You’ll be too much ashamed, if you confess it all. And, what’s more, it will be no use at all, for I shall say straight out that I never said anything of the sort to you, and that you are either ill (and it looks like it, too), or that

you’re so sorry for your brother that you are sacrificing yourself to save him and have invented it all against me, for you’ve always thought no more of me than if I’d been a fly. And who will believe you, and what single proof have you got?”

“Listen, you showed me those notes just now to convince me.”

Smerdyakov lifted the book off the notes and laid it on one side.

“Take that money away with you,” Smerdyakov sighed.

“Of course, I shall take it. But why do you give it to me, if you committed the murder for the sake of it?” Ivan looked at him with great surprise.

“I don’t want it,” Smerdyakov articulated in a shaking voice, with a gesture of refusal. “I did have an idea of beginning a new life with that money in Moscow or, better still, abroad. I did dream of it, chiefly because ‘all things are lawful.’ That was quite right what you taught me, for you talked a lot to me about that. For if there’s no everlasting God, there’s no such thing as virtue, and there’s no need of it. You were right there. So that’s how I looked at it.”

“Did you come to that of yourself?” asked Ivan, with a wry smile.

“With your guidance.”

“And now, I suppose, you believe in God, since you are giving back the money?”

“No, I don’t believe,” whispered Smerdyakov.

“Then why are you giving it back?”

“Leave off... that’s enough!” Smerdyakov waved his hand again. “You used to say yourself that everything was lawful, so now why are you so upset, too? You even want to go and give evidence against yourself.... Only there’ll be nothing of the sort! You won’t go to give evidence,” Smerdyakov decided with conviction.

“You’ll see,” said Ivan.

“It isn’t possible. You are very clever. You are fond of money, I know that. You like to be respected, too, for you’re very proud; you are far too fond of female charms, too, and you mind most of all about living in undisturbed comfort, without having to depend on anyone — that’s what you care most about. You won’t want to spoil your life for ever by taking such a disgrace on yourself. You are like Fyodor Pavlovitch, you are more like him than any of his children; you’ve the same soul as he had.”

“You are not a fool,” said Ivan, seeming struck. The blood rushed to his face. “You are serious now!” he observed, looking suddenly at Smerdyakov with a different expression.

“It was your pride made you think I was a fool. Take the money.”

Ivan took the three rolls of notes and put them in his pocket without wrapping them in anything.

“I shall show them at the court to-morrow,” he said.

“Nobody will believe you, as you’ve plenty of money of your own; you may simply have taken it out of your cash-box and brought it to the court.”

Ivan rose from his seat.

“I repeat,” he said, “the only reason I haven’t killed you is that I need you for to-morrow, remember that, don’t forget it!”

“Well, kill me. Kill me now,” Smerdyakov said, all at once looking strangely at Ivan. “You won’t dare do that even!” he added, with a bitter smile. “You won’t dare to do anything, you, who used to be so bold!”

“Till to-morrow,” cried Ivan, and moved to go out.

“Stay a moment.... Show me those notes again.”

Ivan took out the notes and showed them to him. Smerdyakov looked at them for ten seconds.

“Well, you can go,” he said, with a wave of his hand. “Ivan Fyodorovitch!” he called after him again.

“What do you want?” Ivan turned without stopping.

“Good-bye!”

“Till to-morrow!” Ivan cried again, and he walked out of the cottage.

The snowstorm was still raging. He walked the first few steps boldly, but suddenly began staggering. “It’s something physical,” he thought with a grin. Something like joy was springing up in his heart. He was conscious of unbounded resolution; he would make an end of the wavering that had so tortured him of late. His determination was taken, “and now it will not be changed,” he thought with relief. At that moment he stumbled against something and almost fell down. Stopping short, he made out at his feet the peasant he had knocked down, still lying senseless and motionless. The snow had almost covered his face. Ivan seized him and lifted him in his arms. Seeing a light in the little house to the right he went up, knocked at the shutters, and asked the man to whom the house belonged to help him carry the peasant to the police station, promising him three roubles. The man got ready and came out. I won’t describe in detail how Ivan succeeded

in his object, bringing the peasant to the police-station and arranging for a doctor to see him at once, providing with a liberal hand for the expenses. I will only say that this business took a whole hour, but Ivan was well content with it. His mind wandered and worked incessantly.

“If I had not taken my decision so firmly for to-morrow,” he reflected with satisfaction, “I should not have stayed a whole hour to look after the peasant, but should have passed by, without caring about his being frozen. I am quite capable of watching myself, by the way,” he thought at the same instant, with still greater satisfaction, “although they have decided that I am going out of my mind!”

Just as he reached his own house he stopped short, asking himself suddenly hadn’t he better go at once to the prosecutor and tell him everything. He decided the question by turning back to the house. “Everything together to-morrow!” he whispered to himself, and, strange to say, almost all his gladness and selfsatisfaction passed in one instant.

As he entered his own room he felt something like a touch of ice on his heart, like a recollection or, more exactly, a reminder, of something agonising and revolting that was in that room now, at that moment, and had been there before. He sank wearily on his sofa. The old woman brought him a samovar; he made tea, but did not touch it. He sat on the sofa and felt giddy. He felt that he was ill and helpless. He was beginning to drop asleep, but got up uneasily and walked across the room to shake off his drowsiness. At moments he fancied he was delirious, but it was not illness that he thought of most. Sitting down again, he began looking round, as though searching for something. This happened several times. At last his eyes were fastened intently on one point. Ivan smiled, but an angry flush suffused his face. He sat a long time in his place, his head propped on both arms, though he looked sideways at the same point, at the sofa that stood against the opposite wall. There was evidently something, some object, that irritated him there, worried him and tormented him.

CHAPTER 9

The Devil. Ivan's Nightmare

I AM NOT a doctor, but yet I feel that the moment has come when I must inevitably give the reader some account of the nature of Ivan's illness. Anticipating events I can say at least one thing: he was at that moment on the very eve of an attack of brain fever. Though his health had long been affected, it had offered a stubborn resistance to the fever which in the end gained complete mastery over it. Though I know nothing of medicine, I venture to hazard the suggestion that he really had perhaps, by a terrible effort of will, succeeded in delaying the attack for a time, hoping, of course, to check it completely. He knew that he was unwell, but he loathed the thought of being ill at that fatal time, at the approaching crisis in his life, when he needed to have all his wits about him, to say what he had to say boldly and resolutely and "to justify himself to himself."

He had, however, consulted the new doctor, who had been brought from Moscow by a fantastic notion of Katerina Ivanovna's to which I have referred already. After listening to him and examining him the doctor came to the conclusion that he was actually suffering from some disorder of the brain, and was not at all surprised by an admission which Ivan had reluctantly made him. "Hallucinations are quite likely in your condition," the doctor opined, 'though it would be better to verify them... you must take steps at once, without a moment's delay, or things will go badly with you." But Ivan did not follow this judicious advice and did not take to his bed to be nursed. "I am walking about, so I am strong enough, if I drop, it'll be different then, anyone may nurse me who likes," he decided, dismissing the subject.

And so he was sitting almost conscious himself of his delirium and, as I have said already, looking persistently at some object on the sofa against the opposite wall. Someone appeared to be sitting there, though goodness knows how he had come in, for he had not been in the room when Ivan came into it, on his return from Smerdyakov. This was a person or, more accurately speaking, a Russian gentleman of a particular kind, no longer young, qui faisait la cinquantaine,* as the French say, with rather long, still thick, dark hair, slightly streaked with grey and a small pointed beard. He

was wearing a brownish reefer jacket, rather shabby, evidently made by a good tailor though, and of a fashion at least three years old, that had been discarded by smart and well-to-do people for the last two years. His linen and his long scarf-like neck-tie were all such as are worn by people who aim at being stylish, but on closer inspection his linen was not overclean and his wide scarf was very threadbare. The visitor’s check trousers were of excellent cut, but were too light in colour and too tight for the present fashion. His soft fluffy white hat was out of keeping with the season.

* Fiftyish.

In brief there was every appearance of gentility on straitened means. It looked as though the gentleman belonged to that class of idle landowners who used to flourish in the times of serfdom. He had unmistakably been, at some time, in good and fashionable society, had once had good connections, had possibly preserved them indeed, but, after a gay youth, becoming gradually impoverished on the abolition of serfdom, he had sunk into the position of a poor relation of the best class, wandering from one good old friend to another and received by them for his companionable and accommodating disposition and as being, after all, a gentleman who could be asked to sit down with anyone, though, of course, not in a place of honour. Such gentlemen of accommodating temper and dependent position, who can tell a story, take a hand at cards, and who have a distinct aversion for any duties that may be forced upon them, are usually solitary creatures, either bachelors or widowers. Sometimes they have children, but if so, the children are always being brought up at a distance, at some aunt’s, to whom these gentlemen never allude in good society, seeming ashamed of the relationship. They gradually lose sight of their children altogether, though at intervals they receive a birthday or Christmas letter from them and sometimes even answer it.

The countenance of the unexpected visitor was not so much good-natured, as accommodating and ready to assume any amiable expression as occasion might arise. He had no watch, but he had a tortoise-shell lorgnette on a black ribbon. On the middle finger of his right hand was a massive gold ring with a cheap opal stone in it.

Ivan was angrily silent and would not begin the conversation. The visitor waited and sat exactly like a poor relation who had come down from his room to keep his host company at tea, and was discreetly silent, seeing that his host was frowning and preoccupied. But he was ready for any affable

conversation as soon as his host should begin it. All at once his face expressed a sudden solicitude.

“I say,” he began to Ivan, “excuse me, I only mention it to remind you. You went to Smerdyakov’s to find out about Katerina Ivanovna, but you came away without finding out anything about her, you probably forgot-”

“Ah, yes,” broke from Ivan and his face grew gloomy with uneasiness. “Yes, I’d forgotten... but it doesn’t matter now, never mind, till to-morrow,” he muttered to himself, “and you,” he added, addressing his visitor, “I should have remembered that myself in a minute, for that was just what was tormenting me! Why do you interfere, as if I should believe that you prompted me, and that I didn’t remember it of myself?”

“Don’t believe it then,” said the gentleman, smiling amicably, “what’s the good of believing against your will? Besides, proofs are no help to believing, especially material proofs. Thomas believed, not because he saw Christ risen, but because he wanted to believe, before he saw. Look at the spiritualists, for instance.... I am very fond of them... only fancy, they imagine that they are serving the cause of religion, because the devils show them their horns from the other world. That, they say, is a material proof, so to speak, of the existence of another world. The other world and material proofs, what next! And if you come to that, does proving there’s a devil prove that there’s a God? I want to join an idealist society, I’ll lead the opposition in it, I’ll say I am a realist, but not a materialist, he he!”

“Listen,” Ivan suddenly got up from the table. “I seem to be delirious... I am delirious, in fact, talk any nonsense you like, I don’t care! You won’t drive me to fury, as you did last time. But I feel somehow ashamed... I want to walk about the room.... I sometimes don’t see you and don’t even hear your voice as I did last time, but I always guess what you are prating, for it’s I, I myself speaking, not you. Only I don’t know whether I was dreaming last time or whether I really saw you. I’ll wet a towel and put it on my head and perhaps you’ll vanish into air.”

Ivan went into the corner, took a towel, and did as he said, and with a wet towel on his head began walking up and down the room.

“I am so glad you treat me so familiarly,” the visitor began.

“Fool,” laughed Ivan, “do you suppose I should stand on ceremony with you? I am in good spirits now, though I’ve a pain in my forehead... and in the top of my head... only please don’t talk philosophy, as you did last time. If you can’t take yourself off, talk of something amusing. Talk gossip, you

are a poor relation, you ought to talk gossip. What a nightmare to have! But I am not afraid of you. I'll get the better of you. I won't be taken to a mad-house!"

"C'est charmant, poor relation. Yes, I am in my natural shape. For what am I on earth but a poor relation? By the way, I am listening to you and am rather surprised to find you are actually beginning to take me for something real, not simply your fancy, as you persisted in declaring last time-"

"Never for one minute have I taken you for reality," Ivan cried with a sort of fury. "You are a lie, you are my illness, you are a phantom. It's only that I don't know how to destroy you and I see I must suffer for a time. You are my hallucination. You are the incarnation of myself, but only of one side of me... of my thoughts and feelings, but only the nastiest and stupidest of them. From that point of view you might be of interest to me, if only I had time to waste on you-"

"Excuse me, excuse me, I'll catch you. When you flew out at Alyosha under the lamp-post this evening and shouted to him, 'You learnt it from him! How do you know that he visits me?' You were thinking of me then. So for one brief moment you did believe that I really exist," the gentleman laughed blandly.

"Yes, that was a moment of weakness... but I couldn't believe in you. I don't know whether I was asleep or awake last time. Perhaps I was only dreaming then and didn't see you really at all-"

"And why were you so surly with Alyosha just now? He is a dear; I've treated him badly over Father Zossima."

"Don't talk of Alyosha! How dare you, you flunkey!" Ivan laughed again.

"You scold me, but you laugh — that's a good sign. But you are ever so much more polite than you were last time and I know why: that great resolution of yours-"

"Don't speak of my resolution," cried Ivan, savagely.

"I understand, I understand, c'est noble, c'est charmant, you are going to defend your brother and to sacrifice yourself... C'est chevaleresque."

"Hold your tongue, I'll kick you!"

"I shan't be altogether sorry, for then my object will be attained. If you kick me, you must believe in my reality, for people don't kick ghosts. Joking apart, it doesn't matter to me, scold if you like, though it's better to be a trifle more polite even to me. 'Fool, flunkey!' what words!"

“Scolding you, I scold myself,” Ivan laughed again, “you are myself, myself, only with a different face. You just say what I am thinking... and are incapable of saying anything new!”

“If I am like you in my way of thinking, it’s all to my credit,” the gentleman declared, with delicacy and dignity.

“You choose out only my worst thoughts, and what’s more, the stupid ones. You are stupid and vulgar. You are awfully stupid. No, I can’t put up with you! What am I to do, what am I to do?” Ivan said through his clenched teeth.

“My dear friend, above all things I want to behave like a gentleman and to be recognised as such,” the visitor began in an access of deprecating and simple-hearted pride, typical of a poor relation. “I am poor, but... I won’t say very honest, but... it’s an axiom generally accepted in society that I am a fallen angel. I certainly can’t conceive how I can ever have been an angel. If I ever was, it must have been so long ago that there’s no harm in forgetting it. Now I only prize the reputation of being a gentlemanly person and live as I can, trying to make myself agreeable. I love men genuinely, I’ve been greatly calumniated! Here when I stay with you from time to time, my life gains a kind of reality and that’s what I like most of all. You see, like you, I suffer from the fantastic and so I love the realism of earth. Here, with you, everything is circumscribed, here all is formulated and geometrical, while we have nothing but indeterminate equations! I wander about here dreaming. I like dreaming. Besides, on earth I become superstitious. Please don’t laugh, that’s just what I like, to become superstitious. I adopt all your habits here: I’ve grown fond of going to the public baths, would you believe it? and I go and steam myself with merchants and priests. What I dream of is becoming incarnate once for all and irrevocably in the form of some merchant’s wife weighing eighteen stone, and of believing all she believes. My ideal is to go to church and offer a candle in simple-hearted faith, upon my word it is. Then there would be an end to my sufferings. I like being doctored too; in the spring there was an outbreak of smallpox and I went and was vaccinated in a foundling hospital — if only you knew how I enjoyed myself that day. I subscribed ten roubles in the cause of the Slavs!... But you are not listening. Do you know, you are not at all well this evening? I know you went yesterday to that doctor... well, what about your health? What did the doctor say?”

“Fool!” Ivan snapped out.

“But you are clever, anyway. You are scolding again? I didn’t ask out of sympathy. You needn’t answer. Now rheumatism has come in again-”

“Fool!” repeated Ivan.

“You keep saying the same thing; but I had such an attack of rheumatism last year that I remember it to this day.”

“The devil have rheumatism!”

“Why not, if I sometimes put on fleshly form? I put on fleshly form and I take the consequences. Satan sum et nihil humanum a me alienum puto.”*

* I am Satan, and deem nothing human alien to me.

“What, what, Satan sum et nihil humanum... that’s not bad for the devil!”

“I am glad I’ve pleased you at last.”

“But you didn’t get that from me.” Ivan stopped suddenly, seeming struck. “That never entered my head, that’s strange.”

“C’est du nouveau, n’est-ce pas?”* This time I’ll act honestly and explain to you. Listen, in dreams and especially in nightmares, from indigestion or anything, a man sees sometimes such artistic visions, such complex and real actuality, such events, even a whole world of events, woven into such a plot, with such unexpected details from the most exalted matters to the last button on a cuff, as I swear Leo Tolstoy has never invented. Yet such dreams are sometimes seen not by writers, but by the most ordinary people, officials, journalists, priests.... The subject is a complete enigma. A statesman confessed to me, indeed, that all his best ideas came to him when he was asleep. Well, that’s how it is now, though I am your hallucination, yet just as in a nightmare, I say original things which had not entered your head before. So I don’t repeat your ideas, yet I am only your nightmare, nothing more.”

* It’s new, isn’t it?

“You are lying, your aim is to convince me you exist apart and are not my nightmare, and now you are asserting you are a dream.”

“My dear fellow, I’ve adopted a special method to-day, I’ll explain it to you afterwards. Stay, where did I break off? Oh, yes! I caught cold then, only not here but yonder.”

“Where is yonder? Tell me, will you be here long. Can’t you go away?” Ivan exclaimed almost in despair. He ceased walking to and fro, sat down on the sofa, leaned his elbows on the table again and held his head tight in both hands. He pulled the wet towel off and flung it away in vexation. It was evidently of no use.

“Your nerves are out of order,” observed the gentleman, with a carelessly easy, though perfectly polite, air. “You are angry with me even for being able to catch cold, though it happened in a most natural way. I was hurrying then to a diplomatic soiree at the house of a lady of high rank in Petersburg, who was aiming at influence in the Ministry. Well, an evening suit, white tie, gloves, though I was God knows where and had to fly through space to reach your earth.... Of course, it took only an instant, but you know a ray of light from the sun takes full eight minutes, and fancy in an evening suit and open waistcoat. Spirits don’t freeze, but when one’s in fleshly form, well... in brief, I didn’t think, and set off, and you know in those ethereal spaces, in the water that is above the firmament, there’s such a frost... at least one can’t call it frost, you fancy, 150 degrees below zero! You know the game the village girls play — they invite the unwary to lick an axe in thirty degrees of frost, the tongue instantly freezes to it and the dupe tears the skin off, so it bleeds. But that’s only in 30 degrees, in 150 degrees I imagine it would be enough to put your finger on the axe and it would be the end of it... if only there could be an axe there.”

“And can there be an axe there?” Ivan interrupted, carelessly and disdainfully. He was exerting himself to the utmost not to believe in the delusion and not to sink into complete insanity

“An axe?” the guest interrupted in surprise.

“Yes, what would become of an axe there?” Ivan cried suddenly, with a sort of savage and insistent obstinacy.

“What would become of an axe in space? Quelle idee! If it were to fall to any distance, it would begin, I think, flying round the earth without knowing why, like a satellite. The astronomers would calculate the rising and the setting of the axe; Gatzuk would put it in his calendar, that’s all.”

“You are stupid, awfully stupid,” said Ivan peevishly. “Fib more cleverly or I won’t listen. You want to get the better of me by realism, to convince me that you exist, but I don’t want to believe you exist! I won’t believe it!”

“But I am not fibbing, it’s all the truth; the truth is unhappily hardly ever amusing. I see you persist in expecting something big of me, and perhaps something fine. That’s a great pity, for I only give what I can-”

“Don’t talk philosophy, you ass!”

“Philosophy, indeed, when all my right side is numb and I am moaning and groaning. I’ve tried all the medical faculty: they can diagnose beautifully, they have the whole of your disease at their finger-tips, but

they've no idea how to cure you. There was an enthusiastic little student here, 'You may die,' said he, 'but you'll know perfectly what disease you are dying of!' And then what a way they have of sending people to specialists! 'We only diagnose,' they say, 'but go to such-and-such a specialist, he'll cure you.' The old doctor who used to cure all sorts of disease has completely disappeared, I assure you, now there are only specialists and they all advertise in the newspapers. If anything is wrong with your nose, they send you to Paris: there, they say, is a European specialist who cures noses. If you go to Paris, he'll look at your nose; I can only cure your right nostril, he'll tell you, for I don't cure the left nostril, that's not my speciality, but go to Vienna, there there's a specialist who will cure your left nostril. What are you to do? I fell back on popular remedies, a German doctor advised me to rub myself with honey and salt in the bath-house. Solely to get an extra bath I went, smeared myself all over and it did me no good at all. In despair I wrote to Count Mattei in Milan. He sent me a book and some drops, bless him, and, only fancy, Hoff's malt extract cured me! I bought it by accident, drank a bottle and a half of it, and I was ready to dance, it took it away completely. I made up my mind to write to the papers to thank him, I was prompted by a feeling of gratitude, and only fancy, it led to no end of a bother: not a single paper would take my letter. 'It would be very reactionary,' they said, 'none will believe it. Le diable n'existe point.* You'd better remain anonymous,' they advised me. What use is a letter of thanks if it's anonymous? I laughed with the men at the newspaper office; 'It's reactionary to believe in God in our days,' I said, 'but I am the devil, so I may be believed in."We quite understand that,' they said. 'Who doesn't believe in the devil? Yet it won't do, it might injure our reputation. As a joke, if you like.' But I thought as a joke it wouldn't be very witty. So it wasn't printed. And do you know, I have felt sore about it to this day. My best feelings, gratitude, for instance, are literally denied me simply from my social position."

* The devil does not exist.

"Philosophical reflections again?" Ivan snarled malignantly.

"God preserve me from it, but one can't help complaining sometimes. I am a slandered man. You upbraid me every moment with being stupid. One can see you are young. My dear fellow, intelligence isn't the only thing! I have naturally a kind and merry heart. 'I also write vaudevilles of all sorts.' You seem to take me for Hlestakov grown old, but my fate is a far more

serious one. Before time was, by some decree which I could never make out, I was predestined ‘to deny’ and yet I am genuinely good-hearted and not at all inclined to negation. ‘No, you must go and deny, without denial there’s no criticism and what would a journal be without a column of criticism?’ Without criticism it would be nothing but one ‘hosannah.’ But nothing but hosannah is not enough for life, the hosannah must be tried in the crucible of doubt and so on, in the same style. But I don’t meddle in that, I didn’t create it, I am not answerable for it. Well, they’ve chosen their scapegoat, they’ve made me write the column of criticism and so life was made possible. We understand that comedy; I, for instance, simply ask for annihilation. No, live, I am told, for there’d be nothing without you. If everything in the universe were sensible, nothing would happen. There would be no events without you, and there must be events. So against the grain I serve to produce events and do what’s irrational because I am commanded to. For all their indisputable intelligence, men take this farce as something serious, and that is their tragedy. They suffer, of course... but then they live, they live a real life, not a fantastic one, for suffering is life. Without suffering what would be the pleasure of it? It would be transformed into an endless church service; it would be holy, but tedious. But what about me? I suffer, but still, I don’t live. I am x in an indeterminate equation. I am a sort of phantom in life who has lost all beginning and end, and who has even forgotten his own name. You are laughing — no, you are not laughing, you are angry again. You are for ever angry, all you care about is intelligence, but I repeat again that I would give away all this superstellar life, all the ranks and honours, simply to be transformed into the soul of a merchant’s wife weighing eighteen stone and set candles at God’s shrine.”

“Then even you don’t believe in God?” said Ivan, with a smile of hatred.

“What can I say? — that is, if you are in earnest-”

“Is there a God or not?” Ivan cried with the same savage intensity.

“Ah, then you are in earnest! My dear fellow, upon my word I don’t know. There! I’ve said it now!”

“You don’t know, but you see God? No, you are not someone apart, you are myself, you are I and nothing more! You are rubbish, you are my fancy!”

“Well, if you like, I have the same philosophy as you, that would be true. Je pense, donc je suis,* I know that for a fact; all the rest, all these worlds, God and even Satan — all that is not proved, to my mind. Does all that exist

of itself, or is it only an emanation of myself, a logical development of my ego which alone has existed for ever: but I make haste to stop, for I believe you will be jumping up to beat me directly."

* I think, therefore I am.

"You'd better tell me some anecdote!" said Ivan miserably.

"There is an anecdote precisely on our subject, or rather a legend, not an anecdote. You reproach me with unbelief; you see, you say, yet you don't believe. But, my dear fellow, I am not the only one like that. We are all in a muddle over there now and all through your science. Once there used to be atoms, five senses, four elements, and then everything hung together somehow. There were atoms in the ancient world even, but since we've learned that you've discovered the chemical molecule and protoplasm and the devil knows what, we had to lower our crest. There's a regular muddle, and, above all, superstition, scandal; there's as much scandal among us as among you, you know; a little more in fact, and spying, indeed, for we have our secret police department where private information is received. Well, this wild legend belongs to our middle ages — not yours, but ours — and no one believes it even among us, except the old ladies of eighteen stone, not your old ladies I mean, but ours. We've everything you have, I am revealing one of our secrets out of friendship for you; though it's forbidden. This legend is about Paradise. There was, they say, here on earth a thinker and philosopher. He rejected everything, 'laws, conscience, faith,' and, above all, the future life. He died; he expected to go straight to darkness and death and he found a future life before him. He was astounded and indignant. 'This is against my principles!' he said. And he was punished for that... that is, you must excuse me, I am just repeating what I heard myself, it's only a legend... he was sentenced to walk a quadrillion kilometres in the dark (we've adopted the metric system, you know): and when he has finished that quadrillion, the gates of heaven would be opened to him and he'll be forgiven-"

"And what tortures have you in the other world besides the quadrillion kilometres?" asked Ivan, with a strange eagerness.

"What tortures? Ah, don't ask. In old days we had all sorts, but now they have taken chiefly to moral punishments—'the stings of conscience' and all that nonsense. We got that, too, from you, from the softening of your manners. And who's the better for it? Only those who have got no conscience, for how can they be tortured by conscience when they have

none? But decent people who have conscience and a sense of honour suffer for it. Reforms, when the ground has not been prepared for them, especially if they are institutions copied from abroad, do nothing but mischief! The ancient fire was better. Well, this man, who was condemned to the quadrillion kilometres, stood still, looked round and lay down across the road. ‘I won’t go, I refuse on principle!’ Take the soul of an enlightened Russian atheist and mix it with the soul of the prophet Jonah, who sulked for three days and nights in the belly of the whale, and you get the character of that thinker who lay across the road.”

“What did he lie on there?”

“Well, I suppose there was something to lie on. You are not laughing?”

“Bravo!” cried Ivan, still with the same strange eagerness. Now he was listening with an unexpected curiosity. “Well, is he lying there now?”

“That’s the point, that he isn’t. He lay there almost a thousand years and then he got up and went on.”

“What an ass!” cried Ivan, laughing nervously and still seeming to be pondering something intently. “Does it make any difference whether he lies there for ever or walks the quadrillion kilometres? It would take a billion years to walk it?”

“Much more than that. I haven’t got a pencil and paper or I could work it out. But he got there long ago, and that’s where the story begins.”

“What, he got there? But how did he get the billion years to do it?”

“Why, you keep thinking of our present earth! But our present earth may have been repeated a billion times. Why, it’s become extinct, been frozen; cracked, broken to bits, disintegrated into its elements, again ‘the water above the firmament,’ then again a comet, again a sun, again from the sun it becomes earth — and the same sequence may have been repeated endlessly and exactly the same to every detail, most unseemly and insufferably tedious-”

“Well, well, what happened when he arrived?”

“Why, the moment the gates of Paradise were open and he walked in; before he had been there two seconds, by his watch (though to my thinking his watch must have long dissolved into its elements on the way), he cried out that those two seconds were worth walking not a quadrillion kilometres but a quadrillion of quadrillions, raised to the quadrillionth power! In fact, he sang ‘hosannah’ and overdid it so, that some persons there of lofty ideas wouldn’t shake hands with him at first — he’d become too rapidly

reactionary, they said. The Russian temperament. I repeat, it’s a legend. I give it for what it’s worth, so that’s the sort of ideas we have on such subjects even now.”

“I’ve caught you!” Ivan cried, with an almost childish delight, as though he had succeeded in remembering something at last. “That anecdote about the quadrillion years, I made up myself! I was seventeen then, I was at the high school. I made up that anecdote and told it to a schoolfellow called Korovkin, it was at Moscow.... The anecdote is so characteristic that I couldn’t have taken it from anywhere. I thought I’d forgotten it... but I’ve unconsciously recalled it — I recalled it myself — it was not you telling it! Thousands of things are unconsciously remembered like that even when people are being taken to execution... it’s come back to me in a dream. You are that dream! You are a dream, not a living creature!”

“From the vehemence with which you deny my existence,” laughed the gentleman, “I am convinced that you believe in me.”

“Not in the slightest! I haven’t a hundredth part of a grain of faith in you!”

“But you have the thousandth of a grain. Homeopathic doses perhaps are the strongest. Confess that you have faith even to the ten-thousandth of a grain.”

“Not for one minute,” cried Ivan furiously. “But I should like to believe in you,” he added strangely.

“Aha! There’s an admission! But I am good-natured. I’ll come to your assistance again. Listen, it was I caught you, not you me. I told you your anecdote you’d forgotten, on purpose, so as to destroy your faith in me completely.”

“You are lying. The object of your visit is to convince me of your existence!”

“Just so. But hesitation, suspense, conflict between belief and disbelief — is sometimes such torture to a conscientious man, such as you are, that it’s better to hang oneself at once. Knowing that you are inclined to believe in me, I administered some disbelief by telling you that anecdote. I lead you to belief and disbelief by turns, and I have my motive in it. It’s the new method. As soon as you disbelieve in me completely, you’ll begin assuring me to my face that I am not a dream but a reality. I know you. Then I shall have attained my object, which is an honourable one. I shall sow in you only a tiny grain of faith and it will grow into an oak-tree — and such an

oak-tree that, sitting on it, you will long to enter the ranks of ‘the hermits in the wilderness and the saintly women,’ for that is what you are secretly longing for. You’ll dine on locusts, you’ll wander into the wilderness to save your soul!”

“Then it’s for the salvation of my soul you are working, is it, you scoundrel?”

“One must do a good work sometimes. How ill-humoured you are!”

“Fool! did you ever tempt those holy men who ate locusts and prayed seventeen years in the wilderness till they were overgrown with moss?”

“My dear fellow, I’ve done nothing else. One forgets the whole world and all the worlds, and sticks to one such saint, because he is a very precious diamond. One such soul, you know, is sometimes worth a whole constellation. We have our system of reckoning, you know. The conquest is priceless! And some of them, on my word, are not inferior to you in culture, though you won’t believe it. They can contemplate such depths of belief and disbelief at the same moment that sometimes it really seems that they are within a hair’s-breadth of being ‘turned upside down,’ as the actor Gorbunov says.”

“Well, did you get your nose pulled?”

“My dear fellow,” observed the visitor sententiously, “it’s better to get off with your nose pulled than without a nose at all. As an afflicted marquis observed not long ago (he must have been treated by a specialist) in confession to his spiritual father — a Jesuit. I was present, it was simply charming. ‘Give me back my nose!’ he said, and he beat his breast. ‘My son,’ said the priest evasively, ‘all things are accomplished in accordance with the inscrutable decrees of Providence, and what seems a misfortune sometimes leads to extraordinary, though unapparent, benefits. If stern destiny has deprived you of your nose, it’s to your advantage that no one can ever pull you by your nose.”Holy father, that’s no comfort,’ cried the despairing marquis. ‘I’d be delighted to have my nose pulled every day of my life, if it were only in its proper place.”My son,’ sighs the priest, ‘you can’t expect every blessing at once. This is murmuring against Providence, who even in this has not forgotten you, for if you repine as you repined just now, declaring you’d be glad to have your nose pulled for the rest of your life, your desire has already been fulfilled indirectly, for when you lost your nose, you were led by the nose.’

“Fool, how stupid!” cried Ivan.

“My dear friend, I only wanted to amuse you. But I swear that’s the genuine Jesuit casuistry and I swear that it all happened word for word as I’ve told you. It happened lately and gave me a great deal of trouble. The unhappy young man shot himself that very night when he got home. I was by his side till the very last moment. Those Jesuit confessionals are really my most delightful diversion at melancholy moments. Here’s another incident that happened only the other day. A little blonde Norman girl of twenty — a buxom, unsophisticated beauty that would make your mouth water — comes to an old priest. She bends down and whispers her sin into the grating. ‘Why, my daughter, have you fallen again already?’ cries the priest: ‘O Sancta Maria, what do I hear! Not the same man this time, how long is this going on? Aren’t you ashamed!”Ah, mon pere,’ answers the sinner with tears of penitence, ‘Ca lui fait tant de plaisir, et a moi si peu de peine!’* Fancy, such an answer! I drew back. It was the cry of nature, better than innocence itself, if you like. I absolved her sin on the spot and was turning to go, but I was forced to turn back. I heard the priest at the grating making an appointment with her for the evening — though he was an old man hard as flint, he fell in an instant! It was nature, the truth of nature asserted its rights! What, you are turning up your nose again? Angry again? I don’t know how to please you-”

* Ah, my father, this gives him so much pleasure, and me so little pain!

“Leave me alone, you are beating on my brain like a haunting nightmare,” Ivan moaned miserably, helpless before his apparition. “I am bored with you, agonisingly and insufferably. I would give anything to be able to shake you off!”

“I repeat, moderate your expectations, don’t demand of me ‘everything great and noble,’ and you’ll see how well we shall get on,” said the gentleman impressively. “You are really angry with me for not having appeared to you in a red glow, with thunder and lightning, with scorched wings, but have shown myself in such a modest form. You are wounded, in the first place, in your asthetic feelings, and, secondly, in your pride. How could such a vulgar devil visit such a great man as you! Yes, there is that romantic strain in you, that was so derided by Byelinsky. I can’t help it, young man, as I got ready to come to you I did think as a joke of appearing in the figure of a retired general who had served in the Caucasus, with a star of the Lion and the Sun on my coat. But I was positively afraid of doing it, for you’d have thrashed me for daring to pin the Lion and the Sun on my

coat, instead of, at least, the Polar Star or the Sirius. And you keep on saying I am stupid, but, mercy on us! I make no claim to be equal to you in intelligence. Mephistopheles declared to Faust that he desired evil, but did only good. Well, he can say what he likes, it's quite the opposite with me. I am perhaps the one man in all creation who loves the truth and genuinely desires good. I was there when the Word, Who died on the Cross, rose up into heaven bearing on His bosom the soul of the penitent thief. I heard the glad shrieks of the cherubim singing and shouting hosannah and the thunderous rapture of the seraphim which shook heaven and all creation, and I swear to you by all that's sacred, I longed to join the choir and shout hosannah with them all. The word had almost escaped me, had almost broken from my lips... you know how susceptible and aesthetically impressionable I am. But common sense — oh, a most unhappy trait in my character — kept me in due bounds and I let the moment pass! For what would have happened, I reflected, what would have happened after my hosannah? Everything on earth would have been extinguished at once and no events could have occurred. And so, solely from a sense of duty and my social position, was forced to suppress the good moment and to stick to my nasty task. Somebody takes all the credit of what's good for Himself, and nothing but nastiness is left for me. But I don't envy the honour of a life of idle imposture, I am not ambitious. Why am I, of all creatures in the world, doomed to be cursed by all decent people and even to be kicked, for if I put on mortal form I am bound to take such consequences sometimes? I know, of course, there's a secret in it, but they won't tell me the secret for anything, for then perhaps, seeing the meaning of it, I might bawl hosannah, and the indispensable minus would disappear at once, and good sense would reign supreme throughout the whole world. And that, of course, would mean the end of everything, even of magazines and newspapers, for who would take them in? I know that at the end of all things I shall be reconciled. I, too, shall walk my quadrillion and learn the secret. But till that happens I am sulking and fulfil my destiny though it's against the grain — that is, to ruin thousands for the sake of saving one. How many souls have had to be ruined and how many honourable reputations destroyed for the sake of that one righteous man, Job, over whom they made such a fool of me in old days! Yes, till the secret is revealed, there are two sorts of truths for me — one, their truth, yonder, which I know nothing about so far,

and the other my own. And there’s no knowing which will turn out the better.... Are you asleep?”

“I might well be,” Ivan groaned angrily. “All my stupid ideas — outgrown, thrashed out long ago, and flung aside like a dead carcass you present to me as something new!”

“There’s no pleasing you! And I thought I should fascinate you by my literary style. That hosannah in the skies really wasn’t bad, was it? And then that ironical tone a la Heine, eh?”

“No, I was never such a flunkey! How then could my soul beget a flunkey like you?”

“My dear fellow, I know a most charming and attractive young Russian gentleman, a young thinker and a great lover of literature and art, the author of a promising poem entitled The Grand Inquisitor. I was only thinking of him!”

“I forbid you to speak of The Grand Inquisitor,” cried Ivan, crimson with shame.

“And the Geological Cataclysm. Do you remember? That was a poem, now!”

“Hold your tongue, or I’ll kill you!”

“You’ll kill me? No, excuse me, I will speak. I came to treat myself to that pleasure. Oh, I love the dreams of my ardent young friends, quivering with eagerness for life! ‘There are new men,’ you decided last spring, when you were meaning to come here, ‘they propose to destroy everything and begin with cannibalism. Stupid fellows! they didn’t ask my advice! I maintain that nothing need be destroyed, that we only need to destroy the idea of God in man, that’s how we have to set to work. It’s that, that we must begin with. Oh, blind race of men who have no understanding! As soon as men have all of them denied God — and I believe that period, analogous with geological periods, will come to pass — the old conception of the universe will fall of itself without cannibalism, and, what’s more, the old morality, and everything will begin anew. Men will unite to take from life all it can give, but only for joy and happiness in the present world. Man will be lifted up with a spirit of divine Titanic pride and the man-god will appear. From hour to hour extending his conquest of nature infinitely by his will and his science, man will feel such lofty joy from hour to hour in doing it that it will make up for all his old dreams of the joys of heaven. Everyone will know that he is mortal and will accept death proudly and serenely like a

god. His pride will teach him that it’s useless for him to repine at life’s being a moment, and he will love his brother without need of reward. Love will be sufficient only for a moment of life, but the very consciousness of its momentariness will intensify its fire, which now is dissipated in dreams of eternal love beyond the grave’... and so on and so on in the same style. Charming!”

Ivan sat with his eyes on the floor, and his hands pressed to his ears, but he began trembling all over. The voice continued.

“The question now is, my young thinker reflected, is it possible that such a period will ever come? If it does, everything is determined and humanity is settled for ever. But as, owing to man’s inveterate stupidity, this cannot come about for at least a thousand years, everyone who recognises the truth even now may legitimately order his life as he pleases, on the new principles. In that sense, ‘all things are lawful’ for him. What’s more, even if this period never comes to pass, since there is anyway no God and no immortality, the new man may well become the man-god, even if he is the only one in the whole world, and promoted to his new position, he may lightheartedly overstep all the barriers of the old morality of the old slaveman, if necessary. There is no law for God. Where God stands, the place is holy. Where I stand will be at once the foremost place... ‘all things are lawful’ and that’s the end of it! That’s all very charming; but if you want to swindle why do you want a moral sanction for doing it? But that’s our modern Russian all over. He can’t bring himself to swindle without a moral sanction. He is so in love with truth-”

The visitor talked, obviously carried away by his own eloquence, speaking louder and louder and looking ironically at his host. But he did not succeed in finishing; Ivan suddenly snatched a glass from the table and flung it at the orator.

“Ah, mais c’est bete enfin,”* cried the latter, jumping up from the sofa and shaking the drops of tea off himself. “He remembers Luther’s inkstand! He takes me for a dream and throws glasses at a dream! It’s like a woman! I suspected you were only pretending to stop up your ears.”

* But after all, that’s stupid.

A loud, persistent knocking was suddenly heard at the window. Ivan jumped up from the sofa.

“Do you hear? You’d better open,” cried the visitor; “it’s your brother Alyosha with the most interesting and surprising news, I’ll be bound!”

“Be silent, deceiver, I knew it was Alyosha, I felt he was coming, and of course he has not come for nothing; of course he brings ‘news,’” Ivan exclaimed frantically.

“Open, open to him. There’s a snowstorm and he is your brother. Monsieur sait-il le temps qu’il fait? C’est a ne pas mettre un chien dehors.”*

* Does the gentleman know the weather he’s making? It’s not weather for a dog.

The knocking continued. Ivan wanted to rush to the window, but something seemed to fetter his arms and legs. He strained every effort to break his chains, but in vain. The knocking at the window grew louder and louder. At last the chains were broken and Ivan leapt up from the sofa. He looked round him wildly. Both candles had almost burnt out, the glass he had just thrown at his visitor stood before him on the table, and there was no one on the sofa opposite. The knocking on the window frame went on persistently, but it was by no means so loud as it had seemed in his dream; on the contrary, it was quite subdued.

“It was not a dream! No, I swear it was not a dream, it all happened just now!” cried Ivan. He rushed to the window and opened the movable pane.

“Alyosha, I told you not to come,” he cried fiercely to his brother. “In two words, what do you want? In two words, do you hear?”

“An hour ago Smerdyakov hanged himself,” Alyosha answered from the yard.

“Come round to the steps, I’ll open at once,” said Ivan, going to open the door to Alyosha.

CHAPTER 10

“It Was He Who Said That”

ALYOSHA coming in told Ivan that a little over an hour ago Marya Kondratyevna had run to his rooms and informed him Smerdyakov had taken his own life. “I went in to clear away the samovar and he was hanging on a nail in the wall.” On Alyosha’s inquiring whether she had informed the police, she answered that she had told no one, “but I flew straight to you, I’ve run all the way.” She seemed perfectly crazy, Alyosha reported, and was shaking like a leaf. When Alyosha ran with her to the cottage, he found Smerdyakov still hanging. On the table lay a note: “I destroy my life of my own will and desire, so as to throw no blame on anyone.”

Alyosha left the note on the table and went straight to the police captain and told him all about it. “And from him I’ve come straight to you,” said Alyosha, in conclusion, looking intently into Ivan’s face. He had not taken his eyes off him while he told his story, as though struck by something in his expression.

“Brother,” he cried suddenly, “you must be terribly ill. You look and don’t seem to understand what I tell you.”

“It’s a good thing you came,” said Ivan, as though brooding, and not hearing Alyosha’s exclamation. “I knew he had hanged himself.”

“From whom?”

“I don’t know. But I knew. Did I know? Yes, he told me. He told me so just now.”

Ivan stood in the middle of the room, and still spoke in the same brooding tone, looking at the ground.

“Who is he?” asked Alyosha, involuntarily looking round.

“He’s slipped away.”

Ivan raised his head and smiled softly.

“He was afraid of you, of a dove like you. You are a ‘pure cherub.’ Dmitri calls you a cherub. Cherub!... the thunderous rapture of the seraphim. What are seraphim? Perhaps a whole constellation. But perhaps that constellation is only a chemical molecule. There’s a constellation of the Lion and the Sun. Don’t you know it?”

“Brother, sit down,” said Alyosha in alarm. “For goodness’ sake, sit down on the sofa! You are delirious; put your head on the pillow, that’s right. Would you like a wet towel on your head? Perhaps it will do you good.”

“Give me the towel: it’s here on the chair. I just threw it down there.”

“It’s not here. Don’t worry yourself. I know where it is — here,” said Alyosha, finding a clean towel, folded up and unused, by Ivan’s dressing-table in the other corner of the room. Ivan looked strangely at the towel: recollection seemed to come back to him for an instant.

“Stay” — he got up from the sofa— “an hour ago I took that new towel from there and wetted it. I wrapped it round my head and threw it down here... How is it it’s dry? There was no other.”

“You put that towel on your head?” asked Alyosha.

“Yes, and walked up and down the room an hour ago... Why have the candles burnt down so? What’s the time?”

“Nearly twelve”

“No, no, no!” Ivan cried suddenly. “It was not a dream. He was here; he was sitting here, on that sofa. When you knocked at the window, I threw a glass at him... this one. Wait a minute. I was asleep last time, but this dream was not a dream. It has happened before. I have dreams now, Alyosha... yet they are not dreams, but reality. I walk about, talk and see... though I am asleep. But he was sitting here, on that sofa there.... He is frightfully stupid, Alyosha, frightfully stupid.” Ivan laughed suddenly and began pacing about the room.

“Who is stupid? Of whom are you talking, brother?” Alyosha asked anxiously again.

“The devil! He’s taken to visiting me. He’s been here twice, almost three times. He taunted me with being angry at his being a simple devil and not Satan, with scorched wings, in thunder and lightning. But he is not Satan: that’s a lie. He is an impostor. He is simply a devil — a paltry, trivial devil. He goes to the baths. If you undressed him, you’d be sure to find he had a tail, long and smooth like a Danish dog’s, a yard long, dun colour.... Alyosha, you are cold. You’ve been in the snow. Would you like some tea? What? Is it cold? Shall I tell her to bring some? C’est a ne pas mettre un chien dehors...”

Alyosha ran to the washing-stand, wetted the towel, persuaded Ivan to sit down again, and put the wet towel round his head. He sat down beside him.

“What were you telling me just now about Lise?” Ivan began again. (He was becoming very talkative.) “I like Lise. I said something nasty about her. It was a lie. I like her... I am afraid for Katya to-morrow. I am more afraid of her than of anything. On account of the future. She will cast me off to-morrow and trample me under foot. She thinks that I am ruining Mitya from jealousy on her account! Yes, she thinks that! But it’s not so. To-morrow the cross, but not the gallows. No, I shan’t hang myself. Do you know, I can never commit suicide, Alyosha. Is it because I am base? I am not a coward. Is it from love of life? How did I know that Smerdyakov had hanged himself? Yes, it was he told me so.”

“And you are quite convinced that there has been someone here?” asked Alyosha.

“Yes, on that sofa in the corner. You would have driven him away. You did drive him away: he disappeared when you arrived. I love your face, Alyosha. Did you know that I loved your face? And he is myself, Alyosha. All that’s base in me, all that’s mean and contemptible. Yes, I am a romantic. He guessed it... though it’s a libel. He is frightfully stupid; but it’s to his advantage. He has cunning, animal cunning — he knew how to infuriate me. He kept taunting me with believing in him, and that was how he made me listen to him. He fooled me like a boy. He told me a great deal that was true about myself, though. I should never have owned it to myself. Do you know, Alyosha,” Ivan added in an intensely earnest and confidential tone, “I should be awfully glad to think that it was he and not I.”

“He has worn you out,” said Alyosha, looking compassionately at his brother.

“He’s been teasing me. And you know he does it so cleverly, so cleverly. ‘Conscience! What is conscience? I make it up for myself. Why am I tormented by it? From habit. From the universal habit of mankind for the seven thousand years. So let us give it up, and we shall be gods.’ It was he said that, it was he said that!”

“And not you, not you?” Alyosha could not help crying, looking frankly at his brother. “Never mind him, anyway; have done with him and forget him. And let him take with him all that you curse now, and never come back!”

“Yes, but he is spiteful. He laughed at me. He was impudent, Alyosha,” Ivan said, with a shudder of offence. “But he was unfair to me, unfair to me about lots of things. He told lies about me to my face. ‘Oh, you are going to

perform an act of heroic virtue: to confess you murdered your father, that the valet murdered him at your instigation.’”

“Brother,” Alyosha interposed, “restrain yourself. It was not you murdered him. It’s not true!”

“That’s what he says, he, and he knows it. ‘You are going to perform an act of heroic virtue, and you don’t believe in virtue; that’s what tortures you and makes you angry, that’s why you are so vindictive.’ He said that to me about me and he knows what he says.”

“It’s you say that, not he,” exclaimed Alyosha mournfully, “and you say it because you are ill and delirious, tormenting yourself.”

“No, he knows what he says. ‘You are going from pride,’ he says. ‘You’ll stand up and say it was I killed him, and why do you writhe with horror? You are lying! I despise your opinion, I despise your horror!’ He said that about me. ‘And do you know you are longing for their praise— “he is a criminal, a murderer, but what a generous soul; he wanted to save his brother and he confessed.” That’s a lie Alyosha!” Ivan cried suddenly, with flashing eyes. “I don’t want the low rabble to praise me, I swear I don’t! That’s a lie! That’s why I threw the glass at him and it broke against his ugly face.”

“Brother, calm yourself, stop!” Alyosha entreated him.

“Yes, he knows how to torment one. He’s cruel,” Ivan went on, unheeding. “I had an inkling from the first what he came for. ‘Granting that you go through pride, still you had a hope that Smerdyakov might be convicted and sent to Siberia, and Mitya would be acquitted, while you would only be punished, with moral condemnation’ (‘Do you hear?’ he laughed then)—’and some people will praise you. But now Smerdyakov’s dead, he has hanged himself, and who’ll believe you alone? But yet you are going, you are going, you’ll go all the same, you’ve decided to go. What are you going for now?’ That’s awful, Alyosha. I can’t endure such questions. Who dare ask me such questions?”

“Brother,” interposed Alyosha — his heart sank with terror, but he still seemed to hope to bring Ivan to reason— “how could he have told you of Smerdyakov’s death before I came, when no one knew of it and there was no time for anyone to know of it?”

“He told me,” said Ivan firmly, refusing to admit a doubt. “It was all he did talk about, if you come to that. ‘And it would be all right if you believed in virtue,’ he said. ‘No matter if they disbelieve you, you are going for the

sake of principle. But you are a little pig like Fyodor Pavlovitch, and what do you want with virtue? Why do you want to go meddling if your sacrifice is of no use to anyone? Because you don't know yourself why you go! Oh, you'd give a great deal to know yourself why you go! And can you have made up your mind? You've not made up your mind. You'll sit all night deliberating whether to go or not. But you will go; you know you'll go. You know that whichever way you decide, the decision does not depend on you. You'll go because you won't dare not to go. Why won't you dare? You must guess that for yourself. That's a riddle for you!' He got up and went away. You came and he went. He called me a coward, Alyosha! Le mot de l'enigme is that I am a coward. 'It is not for such eagles to soar above the earth.'It was he added that — he! And Smerdyakov said the same. He must be killed! Katya despises me. I've seen that for a month past. Even Lise will begin to despise me! 'You are going in order to be praised.' That's a brutal lie! And you despise me too, Alyosha. Now I am going to hate you again! And I hate the monster, too! I hate the monster! I don't want to save the monster. Let him rot in Siberia! He's begun singing a hymn! Oh, to-morrow I'll go, stand before them, and spit in their faces!"

He jumped up in a frenzy, flung off the towel, and fell to pacing up and down the room again. Alyosha recalled what he had just said. "I seem to be sleeping awake... I walk, I speak, I see, but I am asleep." It seemed to be just like that now. Alyosha did not leave him. The thought passed through his mind to run for a doctor, but he was afraid to leave his brother alone: there was no one to whom he could leave him. By degrees Ivan lost consciousness completely at last. He still went on talking, talking incessantly, but quite incoherently, and even articulated his words with difficulty. Suddenly he staggered violently; but Alyosha was in time to support him. Ivan let him lead him to his bed. Alyosha undressed him somehow and put him to bed. He sat watching over him for another two hours. The sick man slept soundly, without stirring, breathing softly and evenly. Alyosha took a pillow and lay down on the sofa, without undressing.

As he fell asleep he prayed for Mitya and Ivan. He began to understand Ivan's illness. "The anguish of a proud determination. An earnest conscience!" God, in Whom he disbelieved, and His truth were gaining mastery over his heart, which still refused to submit. "Yes," the thought floated through Alyosha's head as it lay on the pillow, "yes, if Smerdyakov

is dead, no one will believe Ivan’s evidence; but he will go and give it.” Alyosha smiled softly. “God will conquer!” he thought. “He will either rise up in the light of truth, or... he’ll perish in hate, revenging on himself and on everyone his having served the cause he does not believe in,” Alyosha added bitterly, and again he prayed for Ivan.

BOOK XII. A JUDICIAL ERROR

CHAPTER 1

The Fatal Day

AT ten o’clock in the morning of the day following the events I have described, the trial of Dmitri Karamazov began in our district court.

I hasten to emphasise the fact that I am far from esteeming myself capable of reporting all that took place at the trial in full detail, or even in the actual order of events. I imagine that to mention everything with full explanation would fill a volume, even a very large one. And so I trust I may not be reproached, for confining myself to what struck me. I may have selected as of most interest what was of secondary importance, and may have omitted the most prominent and essential details. But I see I shall do better not to apologise. I will do my best and the reader will see for himself that I have done all I can.

And, to begin with, before entering the court, I will mention what surprised me most on that day. Indeed, as it appeared later, everyone was surprised at it, too. We all knew that the affair had aroused great interest, that everyone was burning with impatience for the trial to begin, that it had been a subject of talk, conjecture, exclamation and surmise for the last two months in local society. Everyone knew, too, that the case had become known throughout Russia, but yet we had not imagined that it had aroused such burning, such intense, interest in everyone, not only among ourselves, but all over Russia. This became evident at the trial this day.

Visitors had arrived not only from the chief town of our province, but from several other Russian towns, as well as from Moscow and Petersburg. Among them were lawyers, ladies, and even several distinguished personages. Every ticket of admission had been snatched up. A special place behind the table at which the three judges sat was set apart for the most distinguished and important of the men visitors; a row of arm-chairs had been placed there — something exceptional, which had never been allowed before. A large proportion not less than half of the public — were ladies. There was such a large number of lawyers from all parts that they did not know where to seat them, for every ticket had long since been eagerly sought for and distributed. I saw at the end of the room, behind the platform, a special partition hurriedly put up, behind which all these

lawyers were admitted, and they thought themselves lucky to have standing room there, for all chairs had been removed for the sake of space, and the crowd behind the partition stood throughout the case closely packed, shoulder to shoulder.

Some of the ladies, especially those who came from a distance, made their appearance in the gallery very smartly dressed, but the majority of the ladies were oblivious even of dress. Their faces betrayed hysterical, intense, almost morbid, curiosity. A peculiar fact — established afterwards by many observations — was that almost all the ladies, or, at least the vast majority of them, were on Mitya's side and in favour of his being acquitted. This was perhaps chiefly owing to his reputation as a conqueror of female hearts. It was known that two women rivals were to appear in the case. One of them — Katerina Ivanovna — was an object of general interest. All sorts of extraordinary tales were told about her, amazing anecdotes of her passion for Mitya, in spite of his crime. Her pride and "aristocratic connections" were particularly insisted upon (she had called upon scarcely anyone in the town). People said she intended to petition the Government for leave to accompany the criminal to Siberia and to be married to him somewhere in the mines. The appearance of Grushenka in court was awaited with no less impatience. The public was looking forward with anxious curiosity to the meeting of the two rivals — the proud aristocratic girl and "the hetaira." But Grushenka was a more familiar figure to the ladies of the district than Katerina Ivanovna. They had already seen "the woman who had ruined Fyodor Pavlovitch and his unhappy son," and all, almost without exception, wondered how father and son could be so in love with "such a very common, ordinary Russian girl, who was not even pretty."

In brief, there was a great deal of talk. I know for a fact that there were several serious family quarrels on Mitya's account in our town. Many ladies quarrelled violently with their husbands over differences of opinion about the dreadful case, and it was that the husbands of these ladies, far from being favourably disposed to the prisoner, should enter the court bitterly prejudiced against him. In fact, one may say pretty certainly that the masculine, as distinguished from the feminine, part of the audience was biased against the prisoner. There were numbers of severe, frowning, even vindictive faces. Mitya, indeed, had managed to offend many people during his stay in the town. Some of the visitors were, of course, in excellent spirits and quite unconcerned as to the fate of Mitya personally. But all were

interested in the trial, and the majority of the men were certainly hoping for the conviction of the criminal, except perhaps the lawyers, who were more interested in the legal than in the moral aspect of the case.

Everybody was excited at the presence of the celebrated lawyer, Fetyukovitch. His talent was well known, and this was not the first time he had defended notorious criminal cases in the provinces. And if he defended them, such cases became celebrated and long remembered all over Russia. There were stories, too, about our prosecutor and about the President of the Court. It was said that Ippolit Kirillovitch was in a tremor at meeting Fetyukovitch, and that they had been enemies from the beginning of their careers in Petersburg, that though our sensitive prosecutor, who always considered that he had been aggrieved by someone in Petersburg because his talents had not been properly appreciated, was keenly excited over the Karamazov case, and was even dreaming of rebuilding his flagging fortunes by means of it, Fetyukovitch, they said, was his one anxiety. But these rumours were not quite just. Our prosecutor was not one of those men who lose heart in face of danger. On the contrary, his self-confidence increased with the increase of danger. It must be noted that our prosecutor was in general too hasty and morbidly impressionable. He would put his whole soul into some case and work at it as though his whole fate and his whole fortune depended on its result. This was the subject of some ridicule in the legal world, for just by this characteristic our prosecutor had gained a wider notoriety than could have been expected from his modest position. People laughed particularly at his passion for psychology. In my opinion, they were wrong, and our prosecutor was, I believe, a character of greater depth than was generally supposed. But with his delicate health he had failed to make his mark at the outset of his career and had never made up for it later.

As for the President of our Court, I can only say that he was a humane and cultured man, who had a practical knowledge of his work and progressive views. He was rather ambitious, but did not concern himself greatly about his future career. The great aim of his life was to be a man of advanced ideas. He was, too, a man of connections and property. He felt, as we learnt afterwards, rather strongly about the Karamazov case, but from a social, not from a personal standpoint. He was interested in it as a social phenomenon, in its classification and its character as a product of our social conditions, as typical of the national character, and so on, and so on. His attitude to the personal aspect of the case, to its tragic significance and the

persons involved in it, including the prisoner, was rather indifferent and abstract, as was perhaps fitting, indeed.

The court was packed and overflowing long before the judges made their appearance. Our court is the best hall in the town — spacious, lofty, and good for sound. On the right of the judges, who were on a raised platform, a table and two rows of chairs had been put ready for the jury. On the left was the place for the prisoner and the counsel for the defence. In the middle of the court, near the judges, was a table with the “material proofs.” On it lay Fyodor Pavlovitch’s white silk dressing-gown, stained with blood; the fatal brass pestle with which the supposed murder had been committed; Mitya’s shirt, with a blood-stained sleeve; his coat, stained with blood in patches over the pocket in which he had put his handkerchief; the handkerchief itself, stiff with blood and by now quite yellow; the pistol loaded by Mitya at Perhotin’s with a view to suicide, and taken from him on the sly at Mokroe by Trifon Borrissovitch; the envelope in which the three thousand roubles had been put ready for Grushenka, the narrow pink ribbon with which it had been tied, and many other articles I don’t remember. In the body of the hall, at some distance, came the seats for the public. But in front of the balustrade a few chairs had been placed for witnesses who remained in the court after giving their evidence.

At ten o’clock the three judges arrived — the President, one honorary justice of the peace, and one other. The prosecutor, of course, entered immediately after. The President was a short, stout, thick-set man of fifty, with a dyspeptic complexion, dark hair turning grey and cut short, and a red ribbon, of what Order I don’t remember. The prosecutor struck me and the others, too, as looking particularly pale, almost green. His face seemed to have grown suddenly thinner, perhaps in a single night, for I had seen him looking as usual only two days before. The President began with asking the court whether all the jury were present.

But I see I can’t go on like this, partly because some things I did not hear, others I did not notice, and others I have forgotten, but most of all because, as I have said before, I have literally no time or space to mention everything that was said and done. I only know that neither side objected to very many of the jurymen. I remember the twelve jurymen — four were petty officials of the town, two were merchants, and six peasants and artisans of the town. I remember, long before the trial, questions were continually asked with some surprise, especially by ladies: “Can such a

delicate, complex and psychological case be submitted for decision to petty officials and even peasants?" and "What can an official, still more a peasant, understand in such an affair?" All the four officials in the jury were, in fact, men of no consequence and of low rank. Except one who was rather younger, they were grey-headed men, little known in society, who had vegetated on a pitiful salary, and who probably had elderly, unpresentable wives and crowds of children, perhaps even without shoes and stockings. At most, they spent their leisure over cards and, of course, had never read a single book. The two merchants looked respectable, but were strangely silent and stolid. One of them was close-shaven, and was dressed in European style; the other had a small, grey beard, and wore a red ribbon with some sort of a medal upon it on his neck. There is no need to speak of the artisans and the peasants. The artisans of Skotoprigonyevsk are almost peasants, and even work on the land. Two of them also wore European dress, and, perhaps for that reason, were dirtier and more uninviting-looking than the others. So that one might well wonder, as I did as soon as I had looked at them, "what men like that could possibly make of such a case?" Yet their faces made a strangely imposing, almost menacing, impression; they were stern and frowning.

At last the President opened the case of the murder of Fyodor Pavlovitch Karamazov. I don't quite remember how he described him. The court usher was told to bring in the prisoner, and Mitya made his appearance. There was a hush through the court. One could have heard a fly. I don't know how it was with others, but Mitya made a most unfavourable impression on me. He looked an awful dandy in a brand-new frock-coat. I heard afterwards that he had ordered it in Moscow expressly for the occasion from his own tailor, who had his measure. He wore immaculate black kid gloves and exquisite linen. He walked in with his yard-long strides, looking stiffly straight in front of him, and sat down in his place with a most unperturbed air.

At the same moment the counsel for defence, the celebrated Fetyukovitch, entered, and a sort of subdued hum passed through the court. He was a tall, spare man, with long thin legs, with extremely long, thin, pale fingers, clean-shaven face, demurely brushed, rather short hair, and thin lips that were at times curved into something between a sneer and a smile. He looked about forty. His face would have been pleasant, if it had not been for his eyes, which, in themselves small and inexpressive, were set remarkably close together, with only the thin, long nose as a dividing line between

them. In fact, there was something strikingly birdlike about his face. He was in evening dress and white tie.

I remember the President's first questions to Mitya, about his name, his calling, and so on. Mitya answered sharply, and his voice was so unexpectedly loud that it made the President start and look at the prisoner with surprise. Then followed a list of persons who were to take part in the proceedings — that is, of the witnesses and experts. It was a long list. Four of the witnesses were not present — Miusov, who had given evidence at the preliminary inquiry, but was now in Paris; Madame Hohlakov and Maximov, who were absent through illness; and Smerdyakov, through his sudden death, of which an official statement from the police was presented. The news of Smerdyakov's death produced a sudden stir and whisper in the court. Many of the audience, of course, had not heard of the sudden suicide. What struck people most was Mitya's sudden outburst. As soon as the statement of Smerdyakov's death was made, he cried out aloud from his place:

"He was a dog and died like a dog!"

I remember how his counsel rushed to him, and how the President addressed him, threatening to take stern measures, if such an irregularity were repeated. Mitya nodded and in a subdued voice repeated several times abruptly to his counsel, with no show of regret:

"I won't again, I won't. It escaped me. I won't do it again."

And, of course, this brief episode did him no good with the jury or the public. His character was displayed, and it spoke for itself. It was under the influence of this incident that the opening statement was read. It was rather short, but circumstantial. It only stated the chief reasons why he had been arrested, why he must be tried, and so on. Yet it made a great impression on me. The clerk read it loudly and distinctly. The whole tragedy was suddenly unfolded before us, concentrated, in bold relief, in a fatal and pitiless light. I remember how, immediately after it had been read, the President asked Mitya in a loud impressive voice:

"Prisoner, do you plead guilty?"

Mitya suddenly rose from his seat.

"I plead guilty to drunkenness and dissipation," he exclaimed, again in a startling, almost frenzied, voice, "to idleness and debauchery. I meant to become an honest man for good, just at the moment when I was struck down by fate. But I am not guilty of the death of that old man, my enemy

and my father. No, no, I am not guilty of robbing him! I could not be. Dmitri Karamazov is a scoundrel, but not a thief.”

He sat down again, visibly trembling all over. The President again briefly, but impressively, admonished him to answer only what was asked, and not to go off into irrelevant exclamations. Then he ordered the case to proceed. All the witnesses were led up to take the oath. Then I saw them all together. The brothers of the prisoner were, however, allowed to give evidence without taking the oath. After an exhortation from the priest and the President, the witnesses were led away and were made to sit as far as possible apart from one another. Then they began calling them up one by one.

CHAPTER 2

Dangerous Witnesses

I DO NOT know whether the witnesses for the defence and for the prosecution were separated into groups by the President, and whether it was arranged to call them in a certain order. But no doubt it was so. I only know that the witnesses for the prosecution were called first. I repeat I don't intend to describe all the questions step by step. Besides, my account would be to some extent superfluous, because in the speeches for the prosecution and for the defence the whole course of the evidence was brought together and set in a strong and significant light, and I took down parts of those two remarkable speeches in full, and will quote them in due course, together with one extraordinary and quite unexpected episode, which occurred before the final speeches, and undoubtedly influenced the sinister and fatal outcome of the trial.

I will only observe that from the first moments of the trial one peculiar characteristic of the case was conspicuous and observed by all, that is, the overwhelming strength of the prosecution as compared with the arguments the defence had to rely upon. Everyone realised it from the first moment that the facts began to group themselves round a single point, and the whole horrible and bloody crime was gradually revealed. Everyone, perhaps, felt from the first that the case was beyond dispute, that there was no doubt about it, that there could be really no discussion, and that the defence was only a matter of form, and that the prisoner was guilty, obviously and conclusively guilty. I imagine that even the ladies, who were so impatiently longing for the acquittal of the interesting prisoner, were at the same time, without exception, convinced of his guilt. What's more, I believe they would have been mortified if his guilt had not been so firmly established, as that would have lessened the effect of the closing scene of the criminal's acquittal. That he would be acquitted, all the ladies, strange to say, were firmly persuaded up to the very last moment. "He is guilty, but he will be acquitted, from motives of humanity, in accordance with the new ideas, the new sentiments that had come into fashion," and so on, and so on. And that was why they had crowded into the court so impatiently. The men were more interested in the contest between the prosecutor and the famous

Fetyukovitch. All were wondering and asking themselves what could even a talent like Fetyukovitch's make of such a desperate case; and so they followed his achievements, step by step, with concentrated attention.

But Fetyukovitch remained an enigma to all up to the very end, up to his speech. Persons of experience suspected that he had some design, that he was working towards some object, but it was almost impossible to guess what it was. His confidence and self-reliance were unmistakable, however. Everyone noticed with pleasure, moreover, that he, after so short a stay, not more than three days, perhaps, among us, had so wonderfully succeeded in mastering the case and "had studied it to a nicety." People described with relish, afterwards, how cleverly he had "taken down" all the witnesses for the prosecution, and as far as possible perplexed them and, what's more, had aspersed their reputation and so depreciated the value of their evidence. But it was supposed that he did this rather by way of sport, so to speak, for professional glory, to show nothing had been omitted of the accepted methods, for all were convinced that he could do no real good by such disparagement of the witnesses, and probably was more aware of this than anyone, having some idea of his own in the background, some concealed weapon of defence, which he would suddenly reveal when the time came. But meanwhile, conscious of his strength, he seemed to be diverting himself.

So, for instance, when Grigory, Fyodor Pavlovitch's old servant, who had given the most damning piece of evidence about the open door, was examined, the counsel for the defence positively fastened upon him when his turn came to question him. It must be noted that Grigory entered the trial with a composed and almost stately air, not the least disconcerted by the majesty of the court or the vast audience listening to him. He gave evidence with as much confidence as though he had been talking with his Marfa, only perhaps more respectfully. It was impossible to make him contradict himself. The prosecutor questioned him first in detail about the family life of the Karamazovs. The family picture stood out in lurid colours. It was plain to ear and eye that the witness was guileless and impartial. In spite of his profound reverence for the memory of his deceased master, he yet bore witness that he had been unjust to Mitya and "hadn't brought up his children as he should. He'd have been devoured by lice when he was little, if it hadn't been for me," he added, describing Mitya's early childhood. "It

wasn’t fair either of the father to wrong his son over his mother’s property, which was by right his.”

In reply to the prosecutor’s question what grounds he had for asserting that Fyodor Pavlovitch had wronged his son in their money relations, Grigory, to the surprise of everyone, had no proof at all to bring forward, but he still persisted that the arrangement with the son was “unfair,” and that he ought “to have paid him several thousand roubles more.” I must note, by the way, that the prosecutor asked this question (whether Fyodor Pavlovitch had really kept back part of Mitya’s inheritance) with marked persistence of all the witnesses who could be asked it, not excepting Alyosha and Ivan, but he obtained no exact information from anyone; all alleged that it was so, but were unable to bring forward any distinct proof. Grigory’s description of the scene at the dinner-table, when Dmitri had burst in and beaten his father, threatening to come back to kill him, made a sinister impression on the court, especially as the old servant’s composure in telling it, his parsimony of words, and peculiar phraseology were as effective as eloquence. He observed that he was not angry with Mitya for having knocked him down and struck him on the face; he had forgiven him long ago, he said. Of the deceased Smerdyakov he observed, crossing himself, that he was a lad of ability, but stupid and afflicted, and, worse still, an infidel, and that it was Fyodor Pavlovitch and his elder son who had taught him to be so. But he defended Smerdyakov’s honesty almost with warmth, and related how Smerdyakov had once found the master’s money in the yard, and, instead of concealing it, had taken it to his master, who had rewarded him with a “gold piece” for it, and trusted him implicitly from that time forward. He maintained obstinately that the door into the garden had been open. But he was asked so many questions that I can’t recall them all.

At last the counsel for the defence began to cross-examine him, and the first question he asked was about the envelope in which Fyodor Pavlovitch was supposed to have put three thousand roubles for “a certain person.”

“Have you ever seen it, you, who were for so many years in close attendance on your master?” Grigory answered that he had not seen it and had never heard of the money from anyone “till everybody was talking about it.” This question about the envelope Fetyukovitch put to everyone who could conceivably have known of it, as persistently as the prosecutor asked his question about Dmitri’s inheritance, and got the same answer from all, that no one had seen the envelope, though many had heard of it.

From the beginning everyone noticed Fetyukovitch's persistence on this subject.

"Now, with your permission I'll ask you a question," Fetyukovitch said, suddenly and unexpectedly. "Of what was that balsam, or, rather, decoction, made, which, as we learn from the preliminary inquiry, you used on that evening to rub your lumbago, in the hope of curing it?"

Grigory looked blankly at the questioner, and after a brief silence muttered, "There was saffron in it."

"Nothing but saffron? Don't you remember any other ingredient?"

"There was milfoil in it, too."

"And pepper perhaps?" Fetyukovitch queried.

"Yes, there was pepper, too."

"Etcetera. And all dissolved in vodka?"

"In spirit."

There was a faint sound of laughter in the court.

"You see, in spirit. After rubbing your back, I believe, you drank what was left in the bottle with a certain pious prayer, only known to your wife?"

"I did."

"Did you drink much? Roughly speaking, a wine-glass or two?"

"It might have been a tumbler-full."

"A tumbler-full, even. Perhaps a tumbler and a half?"

Grigory did not answer. He seemed to see what was meant.

"A glass and a half of neat spirit — is not at all bad, don't you think? You might see the gates of heaven open, not only the door into the garden?"

Grigory remained silent. There was another laugh in the court. The President made a movement.

"Do you know for a fact," Fetyukovitch persisted, "whether you were awake or not when you saw the open door?"

"I was on my legs."

"That's not a proof that you were awake." (There was again laughter in the court.) "Could you have answered at that moment, if anyone had asked you a question — for instance, what year it is?"

"I don't know."

"And what year is it, Anno Domini, do you know?"

Grigory stood with a perplexed face, looking straight at his tormentor. Strange to say, it appeared he really did not know what year it was.

“But perhaps you can tell me how many fingers you have on your hands?”

“I am a servant,” Grigory said suddenly, in a loud and distinct voice. “If my betters think fit to make game of me, it is my duty to suffer it.”

Fetyukovitch was a little taken aback, and the President intervened, reminding him that he must ask more relevant questions. Fetyukovitch bowed with dignity and said that he had no more questions to ask of the witness. The public and the jury, of course, were left with a grain of doubt in their minds as to the evidence of a man who might, while undergoing a certain cure, have seen “the gates of heaven,” and who did not even know what year he was living in. But before Grigory left the box another episode occurred. The President, turning to the prisoner, asked him whether he had any comment to make on the evidence of the last witness.

“Except about the door, all he has said is true,” cried Mitya, in a loud voice. “For combing the lice off me, I thank him; for forgiving my blows, I thank him. The old man has been honest all his life and as faithful to my father as seven hundred poodles.”

“Prisoner, be careful in your language,” the President admonished him.

“I am not a poodle,” Grigory muttered.

“All right, it’s I am a poodle myself,” cried Mitya. “If it’s an insult, I take it to myself and I beg his pardon. I was a beast and cruel to him. I was cruel to Aesop too.”

“What Aesop?” the President asked sternly again.

“Oh, Pierrot... my father, Fyodor Pavlovitch.”

The President again and again warned Mitya impressively and very sternly to be more careful in his language.

“You are injuring yourself in the opinion of your judges.”

The counsel for the defence was equally clever in dealing with the evidence of Rakitin. I may remark that Rakitin was one of the leading witnesses and one to whom the prosecutor attached great significance. It appeared that he knew everything; his knowledge was amazing, he had been everywhere, seen everything, talked to everybody, knew every detail of the biography of Fyodor Pavlovitch and all the Karamazovs. Of the envelope, it is true, he had only heard from Mitya himself. But he described minutely Mitya’s exploits in the Metropolis, all his compromising doings and sayings, and told the story of Captain Snegiryov’s “wisp of tow.” But even

Rakitin could say nothing positive about Mitya's inheritance, and confined himself to contemptuous generalities.

"Who could tell which of them was to blame, and which was in debt to the other, with their crazy Karamazov way of muddling things so that no one could make head or tail of it?" He attributed the tragic crime to the habits that had become ingrained by ages of serfdom and the distressed condition of Russia, due to the lack of appropriate institutions. He was, in fact, allowed some latitude of speech. This was the first occasion on which Rakitin showed what he could do, and attracted notice. The prosecutor knew that the witness was preparing a magazine article on the case, and afterwards in his speech, as we shall see later, quoted some ideas from the article, showing that he had seen it already. The picture drawn by the witness was a gloomy and sinister one, and greatly strengthened the case for the prosecution. Altogether, Rakatin's discourse fascinated the public by its independence and the extraordinary nobility of its ideas. There were even two or three outbreaks of applause when he spoke of serfdom and the distressed condition of Russia.

But Rakitin, in his youthful ardour, made a slight blunder, of which the counsel for the defence at once adroitly took advantage. Answering certain questions about Grushenka and carried away by the loftiness of his own sentiments and his success, of which he was, of course, conscious, he went so far as to speak somewhat contemptuously of Agrafena Alexandrovna as "the kept mistress of Samsonov." He would have given a good deal to take back his words afterwards, for Fetyukovitch caught him out over it at once. And it was all because Rakitin had not reckoned on the lawyer having been able to become so intimately acquainted with every detail in so short a time.

"Allow me to ask," began the counsel for the defence, with the most affable and even respectful smile, "you are, of course, the same Mr. Rakitin whose pamphlet, The Life of the Deceased Elder, Father Zossima, published by the diocesan authorities, full of profound and religious reflections and preceded by an excellent and devout dedication to the bishop, I have just read with such pleasure?"

"I did not write it for publication... it was published afterwards," muttered Rakitin, for some reason fearfully disconcerted and almost ashamed.

"Oh, that's excellent! A thinker like you can, and indeed ought to, take the widest view of every social question. Your most instructive pamphlet

has been widely circulated through the patronage of the bishop, and has been of appreciable service.... But this is the chief thing I should like to learn from you. You stated just now that you were very intimately acquainted with Madame Svyetlov.” (It must be noted that Grushenka’s surname was Svyetlov. I heard it for the first time that day, during the case.)

“I cannot answer for all my acquaintances.... I am a young man... and who can be responsible for everyone he meets?” cried Rakitin, flushing all over.

“I understand, I quite understand,” cried Fetyukovitch; as though he, too, were embarrassed and in haste to excuse himself. “You, like any other, might well be interested in an acquaintance with a young and beautiful woman who would readily entertain the elite of the youth of the neighbourhood, but... I only wanted to know... It has come to my knowledge, that Madame Svyetlov was particularly anxious a couple of months ago to make the acquaintance of the younger Karamazov, Alexey Fyodorovitch, and promised you twenty-five roubles, if you would bring him to her in his monastic dress. And that actually took place on the evening of the day on which the terrible crime, which is the subject of the present investigation, was committed. You brought Alexey Karamazov to Madame Svyetlov, and did you receive the twenty-five roubles from Madame Svyetlov as a reward, that’s what I wanted to hear from you?”

“It was a joke.... I don’t, see of what interest that can be to you.... I took it for a joke... meaning to give it back later...”

“Then you did take — but you have not given it back yet... or have you?”

“That’s of no consequence,” muttered Rakitin, “I refuse to answer such questions.... Of course, I shall give it back.”

The President intervened, but Fetyukovitch declared he had no more questions to ask of the witness. Mr. Rakitin left the witness-box not absolutely without a stain upon his character. The effect left by the lofty idealism of his speech was somewhat marred, and Fetyukovitch’s expression, as he watched him walk away, seemed to suggest to the public “this is a specimen of the lofty-minded persons who accuse him.” I remember that this incident, too, did not pass off without an outbreak from Mitya. Enraged by the tone in which Rakitin had referred to Grushenka, he suddenly shouted “Bernard!” When, after Rakitin’s cross-examination, the President asked the prisoner if he had anything to say, Mitya cried loudly:

“Since I’ve been arrested, he has borrowed money from me! He is a contemptible Bernard and opportunist, and he doesn’t believe in God; he took the bishop in!”

Mitya of course, was pulled up again for the intemperance of his language, but Rakitin was done for. Captain Snegiryov’s evidence was a failure, too, but from quite a different reason. He appeared in ragged and dirty clothes, muddy boots, and in spite of the vigilance and expert observation of the police officers, he turned out to be hopelessly drunk. On being asked about Mitya’s attack upon him, he refused to answer.

“God bless him. Ilusha told me not to. God will make it up to me yonder.”

“Who told you not to tell? Of whom are you talking?”

“Ilusha, my little son. ‘Father, father, how he insulted you!’ He said that at the stone. Now he is dying...”

The captain suddenly began sobbing, and plumped down on His knees before the President. He was hurriedly led away amidst the laughter of the public. The effect prepared by the prosecutor did not come off at all.

Fetyukovitch went on making the most of every opportunity, and amazed people more and more by his minute knowledge of the case. Thus, for example, Trifon Borissovitch made a great impression, of course, very prejudicial to Mitya. He calculated almost on his fingers that on his first visit to Mokroe, Mitya must have spent three thousand roubles, “or very little less. Just think what he squandered on those gypsy girls alone! And as for our lousy peasants, it wasn’t a case of flinging half a rouble in the street, he made them presents of twenty-five roubles each, at least, he didn’t give them less. And what a lot of money was simply stolen from him! And if anyone did steal, he did not leave a receipt. How could one catch the thief when he was flinging his money away all the time? Our peasants are robbers, you know; they have no care for their souls. And the way he went on with the girls, our village girls! They’re completely set up since then, I tell you, they used to be poor.” He recalled, in fact, every item of expense and added it all up. So the theory that only fifteen hundred had been spent and the rest had been put aside in a little bag seemed inconceivable.

“I saw three thousand as clear as a penny in his hands, I saw it with my own eyes; I should think I ought to know how to reckon money,” cried Trifon Borissovitch, doing his best to satisfy “his betters.”

When Fetyukovitch had to cross-examine him, he scarcely tried to refute his evidence, but began asking him about an incident at the first carousal at Mokroe, a month before the arrest, when Timofey and another peasant called Akim had picked up on the floor in the passage a hundred roubles dropped by Mitya when he was drunk, and had given them to Trifon Borissovitch and received a rouble each from him for doing so. “Well,” asked the lawyer,” did you give that hundred roubles back to Mr. Karamazov?” Trifon Borissovitch shuffled in vain.... He was obliged, after the peasants had been examined, to admit the finding of the hundred roubles, only adding that he had religiously returned it all to Dmitri Fyodorovitch “in perfect honesty, and it’s only because his honour was in liquor at the time, he wouldn’t remember it.” But, as he had denied the incident of the hundred roubles till the peasants had been called to prove it, his evidence as to returning the money to Mitya was naturally regarded with great suspicion. So one of the most dangerous witnesses brought forward by the prosecution was again discredited.

The same thing happened with the Poles. They took up an attitude of pride and independence; they vociferated loudly that they had both been in the service of the Crown, and that “Pan Mitya” had offered them three thousand “to buy their honour,” and that they had seen a large sum of money in his hands. Pan Mussyalovitch introduced a terrible number of Polish words into his sentences, and seeing that this only increased his consequence in the eyes of the President and the prosecutor, grew more and more pompous, and ended by talking in Polish altogether. But Fetyukovitch caught them, too, in his snares. Trifon Borissovitch, recalled, was forced, in spite of his evasions, to admit that Pan Vrublevsky had substituted another pack of cards for the one he had provided, and that Pan Mussyalovitch had cheated during the game. Kalgonov confirmed this, and both the Poles left the witness-box with damaged reputations, amidst laughter from the public.

Then exactly the same thing happened with almost all the most dangerous witnesses. Fetyukovitch succeeded in casting a slur on all of them, and dismissing them with a certain derision. The lawyers and experts were lost in admiration, and were only at a loss to understand what good purpose could be served by it, for all, I repeat, felt that the case for the prosecution could not be refuted, but was growing more and more tragically overwhelming. But from the confidence of the “great magician” they saw that he was serene, and they waited, feeling that “such a man” had not come

from Petersburg for nothing, and that he was not a man to return unsuccessful.

CHAPTER 3

The Medical Experts and a Pound of Nuts

THE evidence of the medical experts, too, was of little use to the prisoner. And it appeared later that Fetyukovitch had not reckoned much upon it. The medical line of defence had only been taken up through the insistence of Katerina Ivanovna, who had sent for a celebrated doctor from Moscow on purpose. The case for the defence could, of course, lose nothing by it and might, with luck, gain something from it. There was, however, an element of comedy about it, through the difference of opinion of the doctors. The medical experts were the famous doctor from Moscow, our doctor, Herzenstube, and the young doctor, Varvinsky. The two latter appeared also as witnesses for the prosecution.

The first to be called in the capacity of expert was Doctor Herzenstube. He was a grey and bald old man of seventy, of middle height and sturdy build. He was much esteemed and respected by everyone in the town. He was a conscientious doctor and an excellent and pious man, a Hernguter or Moravian brother, I am not quite sure which. He had been living amongst us for many years and behaved with wonderful dignity. He was a kind-hearted and humane man. He treated the sick poor and peasants for nothing, visited them in their slums and huts, and left money for medicine, but he was as obstinate as a mule. If once he had taken an idea into his head, there was no shaking it. Almost everyone in the town was aware, by the way, that the famous doctor had, within the first two or three days of his presence among us, uttered some extremely offensive allusions to Doctor Herzenstube's qualifications. Though the Moscow doctor asked twenty-five roubles for a visit, several people in the town were glad to take advantage of his arrival, and rushed to consult him regardless of expense. All these had, of course, been previously patients of Doctor Herzenstube, and the celebrated doctor had criticised his treatment with extreme harshness. Finally, he had asked the patients as soon as he saw them, "Well, who has been cramming you with nostrums? Herzenstube? He he!" Doctor Herzenstube, of course, heard all this, and now all the three doctors made their appearance, one after another, to be examined.

Doctor Herzenstube roundly declared that the abnormality of the prisoner's mental faculties was self-evident. Then giving his grounds for this opinion, which I omit here, he added that the abnormality was not only evident in many of the prisoner's actions in the past, but was apparent even now at this very moment. When he was asked to explain how it was apparent now at this moment, the old doctor, with simple-hearted directness, pointed out that the prisoner had "an extraordinary air, remarkable in the circumstances"; that he had "marched in like a soldier, looking straight before him, though it would have been more natural for him to look to the left where, among the public, the ladies were sitting, seeing that he was a great admirer of the fair sex and must be thinking much of what the ladies are saying of him now," the old man concluded in his peculiar language.

I must add that he spoke Russian readily, but every phrase was formed in German style, which did not, however, trouble him, for it had always been a weakness of his to believe that he spoke Russian perfectly, better indeed than Russians. And he was very fond of using Russian proverbs, always declaring that the Russian proverbs were the best and most expressive sayings in the whole world. I may remark, too, that in conversation, through absent-mindedness he often forgot the most ordinary words, which sometimes went out of his head, though he knew them perfectly. The same thing happened, though, when he spoke German, and at such times he always waved his hand before his face as though trying to catch the lost word, and no one could induce him to go on speaking till he had found the missing word. His remark that the prisoner ought to have looked at the ladies on entering roused a whisper of amusement in the audience. All our ladies were very fond of our old doctor; they knew, too, that having been all his life a bachelor and a religious man of exemplary conduct, he looked upon women as lofty creatures. And so his unexpected observation struck everyone as very queer.

The Moscow doctor, being questioned in his turn, definitely and emphatically repeated that he considered the prisoner's mental condition abnormal in the highest degree. He talked at length and with erudition of "aberration" and "mania," and argued that, from all the facts collected, the prisoner had undoubtedly been in a condition of aberration for several days before his arrest, and, if the crime had been committed by him, it must, even

if he were conscious of it, have been almost involuntary, as he had not the power to control the morbid impulse that possessed him.

But apart from temporary aberration, the doctor diagnosed mania, which promised, in his words, to lead to complete insanity in the future. (It must be noted that I report this in my own words, the doctor made use of very learned and professional language.) “All his actions are in contravention of common sense and logic,” he continued. “Not to refer to what I have not seen, that is, the crime itself and the whole catastrophe, the day before yesterday, while he was talking to me, he had an unaccountably fixed look in his eye. He laughed unexpectedly when there was nothing to laugh at. He showed continual and inexplicable irritability, using strange words, ‘Bernard!”Ethics!’ and others equally inappropriate.” But the doctor detected mania, above all, in the fact that the prisoner could not even speak of the three thousand roubles, of which he considered himself to have been cheated, without extraordinary irritation, though he could speak comparatively lightly of other misfortunes and grievances. According to all accounts, he had even in the past, whenever the subject of the three thousand roubles was touched on, flown into a perfect frenzy, and yet he was reported to be a disinterested and not grasping man.

“As to the opinion of my learned colleague,” the Moscow doctor added ironically in conclusion “that the prisoner would, entering the court, have naturally looked at the ladies and not straight before him, I will only say that, apart from the playfulness of this theory, it is radically unsound. For though I fully agree that the prisoner, on entering the court where his fate will be decided, would not naturally look straight before him in that fixed way, and that that may really be a sign of his abnormal mental condition, at the same time I maintain that he would naturally not look to the left at the ladies, but, on the contrary, to the right to find his legal adviser, on whose help all his hopes rest and on whose defence all his future depends.” The doctor expressed his opinion positively and emphatically.

But the unexpected pronouncement of Doctor Varvinsky gave the last touch of comedy to the difference of opinion between the experts. In his opinion the prisoner was now, and had been all along, in a perfectly normal condition, and, although he certainly must have been in a nervous and exceedingly excited state before his arrest, this might have been due to several perfectly obvious causes, jealousy, anger, continual drunkenness, and so on. But this nervous condition would not involve the mental

abberation of which mention had just been made. As to the question whether the prisoner should have looked to the left or to the right on entering the court, “in his modest opinion,” the prisoner would naturally look straight before him on entering the court, as he had in fact done, as that was where the judges, on whom his fate depended, were sitting. So that it was just by looking straight before him that he showed his perfectly normal state of mind at the present. The young doctor concluded his “modest” testimony with some heat.

“Bravo, doctor!” cried Mitya, from his seat, “just so!”

Mitya, of course, was checked, but the young doctor’s opinion had a decisive influence on the judges and on the public, and, as appeared afterwards, everyone agreed with him. But Doctor Herzenstube, when called as a witness, was quite unexpectedly of use to Mitya. As an old resident in the town, who had known the Karamazov family for years, he furnished some facts of great value for the prosecution, and suddenly, as though recalling something, he added:

“But the poor young man might have had a very different life, for he had a good heart both in childhood and after childhood, that I know. But the Russian proverb says, ‘If a man has one head, it’s good, but if another clever man comes to visit him, it would be better still, for then there will be two heads and not only one.”’

“One head is good, but two are better,” the prosecutor put in impatiently. He knew the old man’s habit of talking slowly and deliberately, regardless of the impression he was making and of the delay he was causing, and highly prizing his flat, dull and always gleefully complacent German wit. The old man was fond of making jokes.

“Oh, yes, that’s what I say,” he went on stubbornly. “One head is good, but two are much better, but he did not meet another head with wits, and his wits went. Where did they go? I’ve forgotten the word.” He went on, passing his hand before his eyes, “Oh, yes, spazieren.”*

* Promenading.

“Wandering?”

“Oh, yes, wandering, that’s what I say. Well, his wits went wandering and fell in such a deep hole that he lost himself. And yet he was a grateful and sensitive boy. Oh, I remember him very well, a little chap so high, left neglected by his father in the back yard, when he ran about without boots on his feet, and his little breeches hanging by one button.”

A note of feeling and tenderness suddenly came into the honest old man’s voice. Fetyukovitch positively started, as though scenting something, and caught at it instantly.

“Oh, yes, I was a young man then.... I was... well, I was forty-five then, and had only just come here. And I was so sorry for the boy then; I asked myself why shouldn’t I buy him a pound of... a pound of what? I’ve forgotten what it’s called. A pound of what children are very fond of, what is it, what is it?” The doctor began waving his hands again. “It grows on a tree and is gathered and given to everyone...”

“Apples?”

“Oh, no, no. You have a dozen of apples, not a pound.... No, there are a lot of them, and call little. You put them in the mouth and crack.”

“Quite so, nuts, I say so.” The doctor repeated in the calmest way as though he had been at no loss for a word. “And I bought him a pound of nuts, for no one had ever bought the boy a pound of nuts before. And I lifted my finger and said to him, ‘Boy, Gott der Vater.’ He laughed and said, ‘Gott der Vater’... ‘Gott der Sohn.’ He laughed again and lisped ‘Gott der Sohn.”Gott der heilige Geist.’ Then he laughed and said as best he could, ‘Gott der heilige Geist.’ I went away, and two days after I happened to be passing, and he shouted to me of himself, ‘Uncle, Gott der Vater, Gott der Sohn,’ and he had only forgotten ‘Gott der heilige Geist.’ But I reminded him of it and I felt very sorry for him again. But he was taken away, and I did not see him again. Twenty-three years passed. I am sitting one morning in my study, a white-haired old man, when there walks into the room a blooming young man, whom I should never have recognised, but he held up his finger and said, laughing, ‘Gott der Vater, Gott der Sohn, and Gott der heilige Geist. I have just arrived and have come to thank you for that pound of nuts, for no one else ever bought me a pound of nuts; you are the only one that ever did.’ then I remembered my happy youth and the poor child in the yard, without boots on his feet, and my heart was touched and I said, ‘You are a grateful young man, for you have remembered all your life the pound of nuts I bought you in your childhood.’ And I embraced him and blessed him. And I shed tears. He laughed, but he shed tears, too... for the Russian often laughs when he ought to be weeping. But he did weep; I saw it. And now, alas!...”

“And I am weeping now, German, I am weeping now, too, you saintly man,” Mitya cried suddenly.

In any case the anecdote made a certain favourable impression on the public. But the chief sensation in Mitya’s favour was created by the evidence of Katerina Ivanovna, which I will describe directly. Indeed, when the witnesses a decharge, that is, called the defence, began giving evidence, fortune seemed all at once markedly more favourable to Mitya, and what was particularly striking, this was a surprise even to the counsel for the defence. But before Katerina Ivanovna was called, Alyosha was examined, and he recalled a fact which seemed to furnish positive evidence against one important point made by the prosecution.

CHAPTER 4

Fortune Smiles on Mitya

IT came quite as a surprise even to Alyosha himself. He was not required to take the oath, and I remember that both sides addressed him very gently and sympathetically. It was evident that his reputation for goodness had preceded him. Alyosha gave his evidence modestly and with restraint, but his warm sympathy for his unhappy brother was unmistakable. In answer to one question, he sketched his brother's character as that of a man, violent-tempered perhaps and carried away by his passions, but at the same time honourable, proud and generous, capable of self-sacrifice, if necessary. He admitted, however, that, through his passion for Grushenka and his rivalry with his father, his brother had been of late in an intolerable position. But he repelled with indignation the suggestion that his brother might have committed a murder for the sake of gain, though he recognised that the three thousand roubles had become almost an obsession with Mitya; that upon them as part of the inheritance he had been cheated of by his father, and that, indifferent as he was to money as a rule, he could not even speak of that three thousand without fury. As for the rivalry of the two "ladies," as the prosecutor expressed it — that is, of Grushenka and Katya — he answered evasively and was even unwilling to answer one or two questions altogether.

"Did your brother tell you, anyway, that he intended to kill your father?" asked the prosecutor. "You can refuse to answer if you think necessary," he added.

"He did not tell me so directly," answered Alyosha.

"How so? Did he indirectly?"

"He spoke to me once of his hatred for our father and his fear that at an extreme moment... at a moment of fury, he might perhaps murder him."

"And you believed him?"

"I am afraid to say that I did. But I never doubted that some higher feeling would always save him at that fatal moment, as it has indeed saved him, for it was not he killed my father," Alyosha said firmly, in a loud voice that was heard throughout the court.

The prosecutor started like a war-horse at the sound of a trumpet.

“Let me assure you that I fully believe in the complete sincerity of your conviction and do not explain it by or identify it with your affection for your unhappy brother. Your peculiar view of the whole tragic episode is known to us already from the preliminary investigation. I won’t attempt to conceal from you that it is highly individual and contradicts all the other evidence collected by the prosecution. And so I think it essential to press you to tell me what facts have led you to this conviction of your brother’s innocence and of the guilt of another person against whom you gave evidence at the preliminary inquiry?”

“I only answered the questions asked me at the preliminary inquiry,” replied Alyosha, slowly and calmly. “I made no accusation against Smerdyakov of myself.”

“Yet you gave evidence against him?”

“I was led to do so by my brother Dmitri’s words. I was told what took place at his arrest and how he had pointed to Smerdyakov before I was examined. I believe absolutely that my brother is innocent, and if he didn’t commit the murder, then-”

“Then Smerdyakov? Why Smerdyakov? And why are you so completely persuaded of your brother’s innocence?”

“I cannot help believing my brother. I know he wouldn’t lie to me. I saw from his face he wasn’t lying.”

“Only from his face? Is that all the proof you have?”

“I have no other proof.”

“And of Smerdyakov’s guilt you have no proof whatever but your brother’s word and the expression of his face?”

“No, I have no other proof.”

The prosecutor dropped the examination at this point. The impression left by Alyosha’s evidence on the public was most disappointing. There had been talk about Smerdyakov before the trial; someone had heard something, someone had pointed out something else, it was said that Alyosha had gathered together some extraordinary proofs of his brother’s innocence and Smerdyakov’s guilt, and after all there was nothing, no evidence except certain moral convictions so natural in a brother.

But Fetyukovitch began his cross-examination. On his asking Alyosha when it was that the prisoner had told him of his hatred for his father and that he might kill him, and whether he had heard it, for instance, at their last

meeting before the catastrophe, Alyosha started as he answered, as though only just recollecting and understanding something.

“I remember one circumstance now which I’d quite forgotten myself. It wasn’t clear to me at the time, but now-”

And, obviously only now for the first time struck by an idea, he recounted eagerly how, at his last interview with Mitya that evening under the tree, on the road to the monastery, Mitya had struck himself on the breast, “the upper part of the breast,” and had repeated several times that he had a means of regaining his honour, that that means was here, here on his breast. “I thought, when he struck himself on the breast, he meant that it was in his heart,” Alyosha continued, “that he might find in his heart strength to save himself from some awful disgrace which was awaiting him and which he did not dare confess even to me. I must confess I did think at the time that he was speaking of our father, and that the disgrace he was shuddering at was the thought of going to our father and doing some violence to him. Yet it was just then that he pointed to something on his breast, so that I remember the idea struck me at the time that the heart is not on that part of the breast, but below, and that he struck himself much too high, just below the neck, and kept pointing to that place. My idea seemed silly to me at the time, but he was perhaps pointing then to that little bag in which he had fifteen hundred roubles!”

“Just so, Mitya cried from his place. “That’s right, Alyosha, it was the little bag I struck with my fist.”

Fetyukovitch flew to him in hot haste entreating him to keep quiet, and at the same instant pounced on Alyosha. Alyosha, carried away himself by his recollection, warmly expressed his theory that this disgrace was probably just that fifteen hundred roubles on him, which he might have returned to Katerina Ivanovna as half of what he owed her, but which he had yet determined not to repay her and to use for another purpose — namely, to enable him to elope with Grushenka, if she consented.

“It is so, it must be so,” exclaimed Alyosha, in sudden excitement. “My brother cried several times that half of the disgrace, half of it (he said half several times) he could free himself from at once, but that he was so unhappy in his weakness of will that he wouldn’t do it... that he knew beforehand he was incapable of doing it!”

“And you clearly, confidently remember that he struck himself just on this part of the breast?” Fetyukovitch asked eagerly.

“Clearly and confidently, for I thought at the time, ‘Why does he strike himself up there when the heart is lower down?’ and the thought seemed stupid to me at the time... I remember its seeming stupid... it flashed through my mind. That’s what brought it back to me just now. How could I have forgotten it till now? It was that little bag he meant when he said he had the means but wouldn’t give back that fifteen hundred. And when he was arrested at Mokroe he cried out — I know, I was told it — that he considered it the most disgraceful act of his life that when he had the means of repaying Katerina Ivanovna half (half, note!) what he owed her, he yet could not bring himself to repay the money and preferred to remain a thief in her eyes rather than part with it. And what torture, what torture that debt has been to him!” Alyosha exclaimed in conclusion.

The prosecutor, of course, intervened. He asked Alyosha to describe once more how it had all happened, and several times insisted on the question, “Had the prisoner seemed to point to anything? Perhaps he had simply struck himself with his fist on the breast?”

“But it was not with his fist,” cried Alyosha; “he pointed with his fingers and pointed here, very high up.... How could I have so completely forgotten it till this moment?”

The President asked Mitya what he had to say to the last witness’s evidence. Mitya confirmed it, saying that he had been pointing to the fifteen hundred roubles which were on his breast, just below the neck, and that that was, of course, the disgrace, “A disgrace I cannot deny, the most shameful act of my whole life,” cried Mitya. “I might have repaid it and didn’t repay it. I preferred to remain a thief in her eyes rather than give it back. And the most shameful part of it was that I knew beforehand I shouldn’t give it back! You are right, Alyosha! Thanks, Alyosha!”

So Alyosha’s cross-examination ended. What was important and striking about it was that one fact at least had been found, and even though this were only one tiny bit of evidence, a mere hint at evidence, it did go some little way towards proving that the bag had existed and had contained fifteen hundred roubles and that the prisoner had not been lying at the preliminary inquiry when he alleged at Mokroe that those fifteen hundred roubles were “his own.” Alyosha was glad. With a flushed face he moved away to the seat assigned to him. He kept repeating to himself: “How was it I forgot? How could I have forgotten it? And what made it come back to me now?”

Katerina Ivanovna was called to the witness-box. As she entered something extraordinary happened in the court. The ladies clutched their lorgnettes and opera-glasses. There was a stir among the men: some stood up to get a better view. Everybody alleged afterwards that Mitya had turned “white as a sheet” on her entrance. All in black, she advanced modestly, almost timidly. It was impossible to tell from her face that she was agitated; but there was a resolute gleam in her dark and gloomy eyes. I may remark that many people mentioned that she looked particularly handsome at that moment. She spoke softly but clearly, so that she was heard all over the court. She expressed herself with composure, or at least tried to appear composed. The President began his examination discreetly and very respectfully, as though afraid to touch on “certain chords,” and showing consideration for her great unhappiness. But in answer to one of the first questions Katerina Ivanovna replied firmly that she had been formerly betrothed to the prisoner, “until he left me of his own accord..,” she added quietly. When they asked her about the three thousand she had entrusted to Mitya to post to her relations, she said firmly, “I didn’t give him the money simply to send it off. I felt at the time that he was in great need of money.... I gave him the three thousand on the understanding that he should post it within the month if he cared to. There was no need for him to worry himself about that debt afterwards.”

I will not repeat all the questions asked her and all her answers in detail. I will only give the substance of her evidence.

“I was firmly convinced that he would send off that sum as soon as he got money from his father,” she went on. “I have never doubted his disinterestedness and his honesty... his scrupulous honesty... in money matters. He felt quite certain that he would receive the money from his father, and spoke to me several times about it. I knew he had a feud with his father and have always believed that he had been unfairly treated by his father. I don’t remember any threat uttered by him against his father. He certainly never uttered any such threat before me. If he had come to me at that time, I should have at once relieved his anxiety about that unlucky three thousand roubles, but he had given up coming to see me... and I myself was put in such a position... that I could not invite him.... And I had no right, indeed, to be exacting as to that money, she added suddenly, and there was a ring of resolution in her voice. “I was once indebted to him for assistance in

money for more than three thousand, and I took it, although I could not at that time foresee that I should ever be in a position to repay my debt."

There was a note of defiance in her voice. It was then Fetyukovitch began his cross-examination.

"Did that take place not here, but at the beginning of your acquaintance?" Fetyukovitch suggested cautiously, feeling his way, instantly scenting something favourable. I must mention in parenthesis that, though Fetyukovitch had been brought from Petersburg partly at the instance of Katerina Ivanovna herself, he knew nothing about the episode of the four thousand roubles given her by Mitya, and of her "bowing to the ground to him." She concealed this from him and said nothing about it, and that was strange. It may be pretty certainly assumed that she herself did not know till the very last minute whether she would speak of that episode in the court, and waited for the inspiration of the moment.

No, I can never forget those moments. She began telling her story. She told everything, the whole episode that Mitya had told Alyosha, and her bowing to the ground, and her reason. She told about her father and her going to Mitya, and did not in one word, in a single hint, suggest that Mitya had himself, through her sister, proposed they should "send him Katerina Ivanovna" to fetch the money. She generously concealed that and was not ashamed to make it appear as though she had of her own impulse run to the young officer, relying on something... to beg him for the money. It was something tremendous! I turned cold and trembled as I listened. The court was hushed, trying to catch each word. It was something unexampled. Even from such a self-willed and contemptuously proud girl as she was, such an extremely frank avowal, such sacrifice, such self-immolation, seemed incredible. And for what, for whom? To save the man who had deceived and insulted her and to help, in however small a degree, in saving him, by creating a strong impression in his favour. And, indeed, the figure of the young officer who, with a respectful bow to the innocent girl, handed her his last four thousand roubles — all he had in the world — was thrown into a very sympathetic and attractive light, but... I had a painful misgiving at heart! I felt that calumny might come of it later (and it did, in fact, it did). It was repeated all over the town afterwards with spiteful laughter that was perhaps not quite complete — that is, in the statement that the officer had let the young lady depart "with nothing but a respectful bow." It was hinted that something was here omitted.

“And even if nothing had been omitted, if this were the whole story,” the most highly respected of our ladies maintained, “even then it’s very doubtful whether it was creditable for a young girl to behave in that way, even for the sake of saving her father.”

And can Katerina Ivanovna, with her intelligence, her morbid sensitiveness, have failed to understand that people would talk like that? She must have understood it, yet she made up her mind to tell everything. Of course, all these nasty little suspicions as to the truth of her story only arose afterwards and at the first moment all were deeply impressed by it. As for the judges and the lawyers, they listened in reverent, almost shamefaced silence to Katerina Ivanovna. The prosecutor did not venture upon even one question on the subject. Fetyukovitch made a low bow to her. Oh, he was almost triumphant! Much ground had been gained. For a man to give his last four thousand on a generous impulse and then for the same man to murder his father for the sake of robbing him of three thousand — the idea seemed too incongruous. Fetyukovitch felt that now the charge of theft, at least, was as good as disproved. “The case” was thrown into quite a different light. There was a wave of sympathy for Mitya. As for him.... I was told that once or twice, while Katerina Ivanovna was giving her evidence, he jumped up from his seat, sank back again, and hid his face in his hands. But when she had finished, he suddenly cried in a sobbing voice:

“Katya, why have you ruined me?” and his sobs were audible all over the court. But he instantly restrained himself, and cried again:

“Now I am condemned!”

Then he sat rigid in his place, with his teeth clenched and his arms across his chest. Katerina Ivanovna remained in the court and sat down in her place. She was pale and sat with her eyes cast down. Those who were sitting near her declared that for a long time she shivered all over as though in a fever. Grushenka was called.

I am approaching the sudden catastrophe which was perhaps the final cause of Mitya’s ruin. For I am convinced, so is everyone — all the lawyers said the same afterwards — that if the episode had not occurred, the prisoner would at least have been recommended to mercy. But of that later. A few words first about Grushenka.

She, too, was dressed entirely in black, with her magnificent black shawl on her shoulders. She walked to the witness-box with her smooth, noiseless tread, with the slightly swaying gait common in women of full figure. She

looked steadily at the President, turning her eyes neither to the right nor to the left. To my thinking she looked very handsome at that moment, and not at all pale, as the ladies alleged afterwards. They declared, too, that she had a concentrated and spiteful expression. I believe that she was simply irritated and painfully conscious of the contemptuous and inquisitive eyes of our scandal-loving public. She was proud and could not stand contempt. She was one of those people who flare up, angry and eager to retaliate, at the mere suggestion of contempt. There was an element of timidity, too, of course, and inward shame at her own timidity, so it was not strange that her tone kept changing. At one moment it was angry, contemptuous and rough, and at another there was a sincere note of self-condemnation. Sometimes she spoke as though she were taking a desperate plunge; as though she felt, “I don’t care what happens, I’ll say it....” Apropos of her acquaintance with Fyodor Pavlovitch, she remarked curtly, “That’s all nonsense, and was it my fault that he would pester me?” But a minute later she added, “It was all my fault. I was laughing at them both — at the old man and at him, too — and I brought both of them to this. It was all on account of me it happened.”

Samsonov’s name came up somehow. “That’s nobody’s business,” she snapped at once, with a sort of insolent defiance. “He was my benefactor; he took me when I hadn’t a shoe to my foot, when my family had turned me out.” The President reminded her, though very politely, that she must answer the questions directly, without going off into irrelevant details. Grushenka crimsoned and her eyes flashed.

The envelope with the notes in it she had not seen, but had only heard from “that wicked wretch” that Fyodor Pavlovitch had an envelope with notes for three thousand in it. “But that was all foolishness. I was only laughing. I wouldn’t have gone to him for anything.”

“To whom are you referring as ‘that wicked wretch’?” inquired the prosecutor.

“The lackey, Smerdyakov, who murdered his master and hanged himself last night.”

She was, of course, at once asked what ground she had for such a definite accusation; but it appeared that she, too, had no grounds for it.

“Dmitri Fyodorovitch told me so himself; you can believe him. The woman who came between us has ruined him; she is the cause of it all, let me tell you,” Grushenka added. She seemed to be quivering with hatred, and there was a vindictive note in her voice.

She was again asked to whom she was referring.

“The young lady, Katerina Ivanovna there. She sent for me, offered me chocolate, tried to fascinate me. There’s not much true shame about her, I can tell you that...”

At this point the President checked her sternly, begging her to moderate her language. But the jealous woman’s heart was burning, and she did not care what she did.

“When the prisoner was arrested at Mokroe,” the prosecutor asked, “everyone saw and heard you run out of the next room and cry out: ‘It’s all my fault. We’ll go to Siberia together!’ So you already believed him to have murdered his father?”

“I don’t remember what I felt at the time,” answered Grushenka. “Everyone was crying out that he had killed his father, and I felt that it was my fault, that it was on my account he had murdered him. But when he said he wasn’t guilty, I believed him at once, and I believe him now and always shall believe him. He is not the man to tell a lie.”

Fetyukovitch began his cross-examination. I remember that among other things he asked about Rakitin and the twenty-five roubles “you paid him for bringing Alexey Fyodorovitch Karamazov to see you.”

“There was nothing strange about his taking the money,” sneered Grushenka, with angry contempt. “He was always coming to me for money: he used to get thirty roubles a month at least out of me, chiefly for luxuries: he had enough to keep him without my help.”

“What led you to be so liberal to Mr. Rakitin?” Fetyukovitch asked, in spite of an uneasy movement on the part of the President.

“Why, he is my cousin. His mother was my mother’s sister. But he’s always besought me not to tell anyone here of it, he is so dreadfully ashamed of me.”

This fact was a complete surprise to everyone; no one in the town nor in the monastery, not even Mitya, knew of it. I was told that Rakitin turned purple with shame where he sat. Grushenka had somehow heard before she came into the court that he had given evidence against Mitya, and so she was angry. The whole effect on the public, of Rakitin’s speech, of his noble sentiments, of his attacks upon serfdom and the political disorder of Russia, was this time finally ruined. Fetyukovitch was satisfied: it was another godsend. Grushenka’s cross-examination did not last long and, of course, there could be nothing particularly new in her evidence. She left a very

disagreeable impression on the public; hundreds of contemptuous eyes were fixed upon her, as she finished giving her evidence and sat down again in the court, at a good distance from Katerina Ivanovna. Mitya was silent throughout her evidence. He sat as though turned to stone, with his eyes fixed on the ground.

Ivan was called to give evidence.

CHAPTER 5

A Sudden Catastrophe

I MAY note that he had been called before Alyosha. But the usher of the court announced to the President that, owing to an attack of illness or some sort of fit, the witness could not appear at the moment, but was ready to give his evidence as soon as he recovered. But no one seemed to have heard it and it only came out later.

His entrance was for the first moment almost unnoticed. The principal witnesses, especially the two rival ladies, had already been questioned. Curiosity was satisfied for the time; the public was feeling almost fatigued. Several more witnesses were still to be heard, who probably had little information to give after all that had been given. Time was passing. Ivan walked up with extraordinary slowness, looking at no one, and with his head bowed, as though plunged in gloomy thought. He was irreproachably dressed, but his face made a painful impression, on me at least: there was an earthy look in it, a look like a dying man's. His eyes were lustreless; he raised them and looked slowly round the court. Alyosha jumped up from his seat and moaned "Ah!" I remember that, but it was hardly noticed.

The President began by informing him that he was a witness not on oath, that he might answer or refuse to answer, but that, of course, he must bear witness according to his conscience, and so on, and so on. Ivan listened and looked at him blankly, but his face gradually relaxed into a smile, and as soon as the President, looking at him in astonishment, finished, he laughed outright.

"Well, and what else?" he asked in a loud voice.

There was a hush in the court; there was a feeling of something strange. The President showed signs of uneasiness.

"You... are perhaps still unwell?" he began, looking everywhere for the usher.

"Don't trouble yourself, your excellency, I am well enough and can tell you something interesting," Ivan answered with sudden calmness and respectfulness.

"You have some special communication to make?" the President went on, still mistrustfully.

Ivan looked down, waited a few seconds and, raising his head, answered, almost stammering:

“No... I haven’t. I have nothing particular.”

They began asking him questions. He answered, as it were, reluctantly, with extreme brevity, with a sort of disgust which grew more and more marked, though he answered rationally. To many questions he answered that he did not know. He knew nothing of his father’s money relations with Dmitri. “I wasn’t interested in the subject,” he added. Threats to murder his father he had heard from the prisoner. Of the money in the envelope he had heard from Smerdyakov.

“The same thing over and over again,” he interrupted suddenly, with a look of weariness. “I have nothing particular to tell the court.”

“I see you are unwell and understand your feelings,” the President began.

He turned to the prosecutor and the counsel for the defence to invite them to examine the witness, if necessary, when Ivan suddenly asked in an exhausted voice:

“Let me go, your excellency, I feel very ill.”

And with these words, without waiting for permission, he turned to walk out of the court. But after taking four steps he stood still, as though he had reached a decision, smiled slowly, and went back.

“I am like the peasant girl, your excellency... you know. How does it go? ‘I’ll stand up if I like, and I won’t if I don’t.’ They were trying to put on her sarafan to take her to church to be married, and she said, ‘I’ll stand up if I like, and I won’t if I don’t.’... It’s in some book about the peasantry.”

“What do you mean by that?” the President asked severely.

“Why, this,” Ivan suddenly pulled out a roll of notes. “Here’s the money... the notes that lay in that envelope” (he nodded towards the table on which lay the material evidence), “for the sake of which our father was murdered. Where shall I put them? Mr. Superintendent, take them.”

The usher of the court took the whole roll and handed it to the President.

“How could this money have come into your possession if it is the same money?” the President asked wonderingly.

“I got them from Smerdyakov, from the murderer, yesterday.... I was with him just before he hanged himself. It was he, not my brother, killed our father. He murdered him and I incited him to do it... Who doesn’t desire his father’s death?”

“Are you in your right mind?” broke involuntarily from the President.

“I should think I am in my right mind... in the same nasty mind as all of you... as all these... ugly faces.” He turned suddenly to the audience. “My father has been murdered and they pretend they are horrified,” he snarled, with furious contempt. “They keep up the sham with one another. Liars! They all desire the death of their fathers. One reptile devours another.... If there hadn’t been a murder, they’d have been angry and gone home ill-humoured. It’s a spectacle they want! Panem et circenses.* Though I am one to talk! Have you any water? Give me a drink for Christ’s sake!” He suddenly clutched his head.

* Bread and circuses.

The usher at once approached him. Alyosha jumped up and cried, “He is ill. Don’t believe him: he has brain fever.” Katerina Ivanovna rose impulsively from her seat and, rigid with horror, gazed at Ivan. Mitya stood up and greedily looked at his brother and listened to him with a wild, strange smile.

“Don’t disturb yourselves. I am not mad, I am only a murderer,” Ivan began again. “You can’t expect eloquence from a murderer,” he added suddenly for some reason and laughed a queer laugh.

The prosecutor bent over to the President in obvious dismay. The two other judges communicated in agitated whispers. Fetyukovitch pricked up his ears as he listened: the hall was hushed in expectation. The President seemed suddenly to recollect himself.

“Witness, your words are incomprehensible and impossible here. Calm yourself, if you can, and tell your story... if you really have something to tell. How can you confirm your statement... if indeed you are not delirious?”

“That’s just it. I have no proof. That cur Smerdyakov won’t send you proofs from the other world... in an envelope. You think of nothing but envelopes — one is enough. I’ve no witnesses... except one, perhaps,” he smiled thoughtfully.

“Who is your witness?”

“He has a tail, your excellency, and that would be irregular! Le diable n’existe point! Don’t pay attention: he is a paltry, pitiful devil,” he added suddenly. He ceased laughing and spoke as it were, confidentially. “He is here somewhere, no doubt — under that table with the material evidence on it, perhaps. Where should he sit if not there? You see, listen to me. I told him I don’t want to keep quiet, and he talked about the geological

cataclysm... idiocy! Come, release the monster... he’s been singing a hymn. That’s because his heart is light! It’s like a drunken man in the street bawling how ‘Vanka went to Petersburg,’ and I would give a quadrillion quadrillions for two seconds of joy. You don’t know me! Oh, how stupid all this business is! Come, take me instead of him! I didn’t come for nothing.... Why, why is everything so stupid?...”

And he began slowly, and as it were reflectively, looking round him again. But the court was all excitement by now. Alyosha rushed towards him, but the court usher had already seized Ivan by the arm.

“What are you about?” he cried, staring into the man’s face, and suddenly seizing him by the shoulders, he flung him violently to the floor. But the police were on the spot and he was seized. He screamed furiously. And all the time he was being removed, he yelled and screamed something incoherent.

The whole court was thrown into confusion. I don’t remember everything as it happened. I was excited myself and could not follow. I only know that afterwards, when everything was quiet again and everyone understood what had happened, the court usher came in for a reprimand, though he very reasonably explained that the witness had been quite well, that the doctor had seen him an hour ago, when he had a slight attack of giddiness, but that, until he had come into the court, he had talked quite consecutively, so that nothing could have been foreseen — that he had, in fact, insisted on giving evidence. But before everyone had completely regained their composure and recovered from this scene, it was followed by another. Katerina Ivanovna had an attack of hysterics. She sobbed, shrieking loudly, but refused to leave the court, struggled, and besought them not to remove her. Suddenly she cried to the President:

“There is more evidence I must give at once ... at once! Here is a document, a letter... take it, read it quickly, quickly! It’s a letter from that monster... that man there, there!” she pointed to Mitya. “It was he killed his father, you will see that directly. He wrote to me how he would kill his father! But the other one is ill, he is ill, he is delirious!” she kept crying out, beside herself.

The court usher took the document she held out to the President, and she, dropping into her chair, hiding her face in her hands, began convulsively and noiselessly sobbing, shaking all over, and stifling every sound for fear she should be ejected from the court. The document she had handed up was

that letter Mitya had written at the Metropolis tavern, which Ivan had spoken of as a “mathematical proof.” Alas! its mathematical conclusiveness was recognised, and had it not been for that letter, Mitya might have escaped his doom or, at least, that doom would have been less terrible. It was, I repeat, difficult to notice every detail. What followed is still confused to my mind. The President must, I suppose, have at once passed on the document to the judges, the jury, and the lawyers on both sides. I only remember how they began examining the witness. On being gently asked by the President whether she had recovered sufficiently, Katerina Ivanovna exclaimed impetuously:

“I am ready, I am ready! I am quite equal to answering you,” she added, evidently still afraid that she would somehow be prevented from giving evidence. She was asked to explain in detail what this letter was and under what circumstances she received it.

“I received it the day before the crime was committed, but he wrote it the day before that, at the tavern — that is, two days before he committed the crime. Look, it is written on some sort of bill!” she cried breathlessly. “He hated me at that time, because he had behaved contemptibly and was running after that creature ... and because he owed me that three thousand.... Oh! he was humiliated by that three thousand on account of his own meanness! This is how it happened about that three thousand. I beg you, I beseech you, to hear me. Three weeks before he murdered his father, he came to me one morning. I knew he was in want of money, and what he wanted it for. Yes, yes — to win that creature and carry her off. I knew then that he had been false to me and meant to abandon me, and it was I, I, who gave him that money, who offered it to him on the pretext of his sending it to my sister in Moscow. And as I gave it him, I looked him in the face and said that he could send it when he liked, ‘in a month’s time would do.’ How, how could he have failed to understand that I was practically telling him to his face, ‘You want money to be false to me with your creature, so here’s the money for you. I give it to you myself. Take it, if you have so little honour as to take it!’ I wanted to prove what he was, and what happened? He took it, he took it, and squandered it with that creature in one night.... But he knew, he knew that I knew all about it. I assure you he understood, too, that I gave him that money to test him, to see whether he was so lost to all sense of honour as to take it from me. I looked into his eyes and he

looked into mine, and he understood it all and he took it — he carried off my money!

“That’s true, Katya,” Mitya roared suddenly, “I looked into your eyes and I knew that you were dishonouring me, and yet I took your money. Despise me as a scoundrel, despise me, all of you! I’ve deserved it!”

“Prisoner,” cried the President, “another word and I will order you to be removed.”

“That money was a torment to him,” Katya went on with impulsive haste. “He wanted to repay it me. He wanted to, that’s true; but he needed money for that creature, too. So he murdered his father, but he didn’t repay me, and went off with her to that village where he was arrested. There, again, he squandered the money he had stolen after the murder of his father. And a day before the murder he wrote me this letter. He was drunk when he wrote it. I saw it at once, at the time. He wrote it from spite, and feeling certain, positively certain, that I should never show it to anyone, even if he did kill him, or else he wouldn’t have written it. For he knew I shouldn’t want to revenge myself and ruin him! But read it, read it attentively — more attentively, please — and you will see that he had described it all in his letter, all beforehand, how he would kill his father and where his money was kept. Look, please, don’t overlook that, there’s one phrase there, ‘I shall kill him as soon as Ivan has gone away.’ he thought it all out beforehand how he would kill him,” Katerina Ivanovna pointed out to the court with venomous and malignant triumph. Oh! it was clear she had studied every line of that letter and detected every meaning underlining it. “If he hadn’t been drunk, he wouldn’t have written to me; but, look, everything is written there beforehand, just as he committed the murder after. A complete programme of it!” she exclaimed frantically.

She was reckless now of all consequences to herself, though, no doubt, she had foreseen them even a month ago, for even then, perhaps, shaking with anger, she had pondered whether to show it at the trial or not. Now she had taken the fatal plunge. I remember that the letter was read aloud by the clerk, directly afterwards, I believe. It made an overwhelming impression. They asked Mitya whether he admitted having written the letter.

“It’s mine, mine!” cried Mitya. “I shouldn’t have written it if I hadn’t been drunk!... We’ve hated each other for many things, Katya, but I swear, I swear I loved you even while I hated you, and you didn’t love me!”

He sank back on his seat, wringing his hands in despair. The prosecutor and counsel for the defence began cross-examining her, chiefly to ascertain what had induced her to conceal such a document and to give her evidence in quite a different tone and spirit just before.

“Yes, yes. I was telling lies just now. I was lying against my honour and my conscience, but I wanted to save him, for he has hated and despised me so!” Katya cried madly. “Oh, he has despised me horribly, he has always despised me, and do you know, he has despised me from the very moment that I bowed down to him for that money. I saw that.... I felt it at once at the time, but for a long time I wouldn’t believe it. How often I have read it in his eyes, ‘You came of yourself, though.’ Oh, he didn’t understand, he had no idea why I ran to him, he can suspect nothing but baseness, he judged me by himself, he thought everyone was like himself!” Katya hissed furiously, in a perfect frenzy. “And he only wanted to marry me, because I’d inherited a fortune, because of that, because of that! I always suspected it was because of that! Oh, he is a brute! He was always convinced that I should be trembling with shame all my life before him, because I went to him then, and that he had a right to despise me forever for it, and so to be superior to me — that’s why he wanted to marry me! That’s so, that’s all so! I tried to conquer him by my love — a love that knew no bounds. I even tried to forgive his faithlessness; but he understood nothing, nothing! How could he understand indeed? He is a monster! I only received that letter the next evening: it was brought me from the tavern — and only that morning, only that morning I wanted to forgive him everything, everything — even his treachery!”

The President and the prosecutor, of course, tried to calm her. I can’t help thinking that they felt ashamed of taking advantage of her hysteria and of listening to such avowals. I remember hearing them say to her, “We understand how hard it is for you; be sure we are able to feel for you,” and so on, and so on. And yet they dragged the evidence out of the raving, hysterical woman. She described at last with extraordinary clearness, which is so often seen, though only for a moment, in such overwrought states, how Ivan had been nearly driven out of his mind during the last two months trying to save “the monster and murderer,” his brother.

“He tortured himself,” she exclaimed, “he was always trying to minimise his brother’s guilt and confessing to me that he, too, had never loved his father, and perhaps desired his death himself. Oh, he has a tender, over-

tender conscience! He tormented himself with his conscience! He told me everything, everything! He came every day and talked to me as his only friend. I have the honour to be his only friend!” she cried suddenly with a sort of defiance, and her eyes flashed. “He had been twice to see Smerdyakov. One day he came to me and said, ‘If it was not my brother, but Smerdyakov committed the murder’ (for the legend was circulating everywhere that Smerdyakov had done it), ‘perhaps I too am guilty, for Smerdyakov knew I didn’t like my father and perhaps believed that I desired my father’s death.’ Then I brought out that letter and showed it him. He was entirely convinced that his brother had done it, and he was overwhelmed by it. He couldn’t endure the thought that his own brother was a parricide! Only a week ago I saw that it was making him ill. During the last few days he has talked incoherently in my presence. I saw his mind was giving way. He walked about, raving; he was seen muttering in the streets. The doctor from Moscow, at my request, examined him the day before yesterday and told me that he was on the eve of brain fever — and all on his account, on account of this monster! And last night he learnt that Smerdyakov was dead! It was such a shock that it drove him out of his mind... and all through this monster, all for the sake of saving the monster!”

Oh, of course, such an outpouring, such an avowal is only possible once in a lifetime — at the hour of death, for instance, on the way to the scaffold! But it was in Katya’s character, and it was such a moment in her life. It was the same impetuous Katya who had thrown herself on the mercy of a young profligate to save her father; the same Katya who had just before, in her pride and chastity, sacrificed herself and her maidenly modesty before all these people, telling of Mitya’s generous conduct, in the hope of softening his fate a little. And now, again, she sacrificed herself; but this time it was for another, and perhaps only now — perhaps only at this moment — she felt and knew how dear that other was to her! She had sacrificed herself in terror for him; conceiving all of a sudden that he had ruined himself by his confession that it was he who had committed the murder, not his brother, she had sacrificed herself to save him, to save his good name, his reputation!

And yet one terrible doubt occurred to one — was she lying in her description of her former relations with Mitya? — that was the question. No, she had not intentionally slandered him when she cried that Mitya despised her for her bowing down to him! She believed it herself. She had

been firmly convinced, perhaps ever since that bow, that the simplehearted Mitya, who even then adored her, was laughing at her and despising her. She had loved him with an hysterical, “lacerated” love only from pride, from wounded pride, and that love was not like love, but more like revenge. Oh! perhaps that lacerated love would have grown into real love, perhaps Katya longed for nothing more than that, but Mitya’s faithlessness had wounded her to the bottom of her heart, and her heart could not forgive him. The moment of revenge had come upon her suddenly, and all that had been accumulating so long and so painfully in the offended woman’s breast burst out all at once and unexpectedly. She betrayed Mitya, but she betrayed herself, too. And no sooner had she given full expression to her feelings than the tension of course was over and she was overwhelmed with shame. Hysterics began again: she fell on the floor, sobbing and screaming. She was carried out. At that moment Grushenka, with a wail, rushed towards Mitya before they had time to prevent her.

“Mitya,” she wailed, “your serpent has destroyed you! There, she has shown you what she is!” she shouted to the judges, shaking with anger. At a signal from the President they seized her and tried to remove her from the court. She wouldn’t allow it. She fought and struggled to get back to Mitya. Mitya uttered a cry and struggled to get to her. He was overpowered.

Yes, I think the ladies who came to see the spectacle must have been satisfied — the show had been a varied one. Then I remember the Moscow doctor appeared on the scene. I believe the President had previously sent the court usher to arrange for medical aid for Ivan. The doctor announced to the court that the sick man was suffering from a dangerous attack of brain fever, and that he must be at once removed. In answer to questions from the prosecutor and the counsel for the defence he said that the patient had come to him of his own accord the day before yesterday and that he had warned him that he had such an attack coming on, but he had not consented to be looked after. “He was certainly not in a normal state of mind: he told me himself that he saw visions when he was awake, that he met several persons in the street, who were dead, and that Satan visited him every evening,” said the doctor, in conclusion. Having given his evidence, the celebrated doctor withdrew. The letter produced by Katerina Ivanovna was added to the material proofs. After some deliberation, the judges decided to proceed with the trial and to enter both the unexpected pieces of evidence (given by Ivan and Katerina Ivanovna) on the protocol.

But I will not detail the evidence of the other witnesses, who only repeated and confirmed what had been said before, though all with their characteristic peculiarities. I repeat, all was brought together in the prosecutor’s speech, which I shall quote immediately. Everyone was excited, everyone was electrified by the late catastrophe, and all were awaiting the speeches for the prosecution and the defence with intense impatience. Fetyukovitch was obviously shaken by Katerina Ivanovna’s evidence. But the prosecutor was triumphant. When all the evidence had been taken, the court was adjourned for almost an hour. I believe it was just eight o’clock when the President returned to his seat and our prosecutor, Ippolit Kirillovitch, began his speech.

CHAPTER 6

The Prosecutor's Speech. Sketches of Character

IPPOLIT KIRILLOVITCH began his speech, trembling with nervousness, with cold sweat on his forehead, feeling hot and cold all over by turns. He described this himself afterwards. He regarded this speech as his chef-d'oeuvre, the chef-d'oeuvre of his whole life, as his swan-song. He died, it is true, nine months later of rapid consumption, so that he had the right, as it turned out, to compare himself to a swan singing his last song. He had put his whole heart and all the brain he had into that speech. And poor Ippolit Kirillovitch unexpectedly revealed that at least some feeling for the public welfare and "the eternal question" lay concealed in him. Where his speech really excelled was in its sincerity. He genuinely believed in the prisoner's guilt; he was accusing him not as an official duty only, and in calling for vengeance he quivered with a genuine passion "for the security of society." Even the ladies in thee audience, though they remained hostile to Ippolit Kirillovitch, admitted that he made an extraordinary impression on them. He began in a breaking voice, but it soon gained strength and filled the court to the end of his speech. But as soon as he had finished, he almost fainted.

"Gentlemen of the jury," began the prosecutor, "this case has made a stir throughout Russia. But what is there to wonder at, what is there so peculiarly horrifying in it for us? We are so accustomed to such crimes! That's what's so horrible, that such dark deeds have ceased to horrify us. What ought to horrify us is that we are so accustomed to it, and not this or that isolated crime. What are the causes of our indifference, our lukewarm attitude to such deeds, to such signs of the times, ominous of an unenviable future? Is it our cynicism, is it the premature exhaustion of intellect and imagination in a society that is sinking into decay, in spite of its youth? Is it that our moral principles are shattered to their foundations, or is it, perhaps, a complete lack of such principles among us? I cannot answer such questions; nevertheless they are disturbing, and every citizen not only must, but ought to be harassed by them. Our newborn and still timid press has done good service to the public already, for without it we should never have heard of the horrors of unbridled violence and moral degradation which are

continually made known by the press, not merely to those who attend the new jury courts established in the present reign, but to everyone. And what do we read almost daily? Of things beside which the present case grows pale, and seems almost commonplace. But what is most important is that the majority of our national crimes of violence bear witness to a widespread evil, now so general among us that it is difficult to contend against it.

“One day we see a brilliant young officer of high society, at the very outset of his career, in a cowardly underhand way, without a pang of conscience, murdering an official who had once been his benefactor, and the servant girl, to steal his own I O U and what ready money he could find on him; ‘it will come in handy for my pleasures in the fashionable world and for my career in the future.’ After murdering them, he puts pillows under the head of each of his victims; he goes away. Next, a young hero ‘decorated for bravery’ kills the mother of his chief and benefactor, like a highwayman, and to urge his companions to join him he asserts that ‘she loves him like a son, and so will follow all his directions and take no precautions.’ Granted that he is a monster, yet I dare not say in these days that he is unique. Another man will not commit the murder, but will feel and think like him, and is as dishonourable in soul. In silence, alone with his conscience, he asks himself perhaps, ‘What is honour, and isn’t the condemnation of bloodshed a prejudice?’

“Perhaps people will cry out against me that I am morbid, hysterical, that it is a monstrous slander, that I am exaggerating. Let them say so — and heavens! I should be the first to rejoice if it were so! Oh, don’t believe me, think of me as morbid, but remember my words; if only a tenth, if only a twentieth part of what I say is true — even so it’s awful! Look how our young people commit suicide, without asking themselves Hamlet’s question what there is beyond, without a sign of such a question, as though all that relates to the soul and to what awaits us beyond the grave had long been erased in their minds and buried under the sands. Look at our vice, at our profligates. Fyodor Pavlovitch, the luckless victim in the present case, was almost an innocent babe compared with many of them. And yet we all knew him, ‘he lived among us!’...

“Yes, one day perhaps the leading intellects of Russia and of Europe will study the psychology of Russian crime, for the subject is worth it. But this study will come later, at leisure, when all the tragic topsy-turvydom of to-day is farther behind us, so that it’s possible to examine it with more insight

and more impartiality than I can do. Now we are either horrified or pretend to be horrified, though we really gloat over the spectacle, and love strong and eccentric sensations which tickle our cynical, pampered idleness. Or, like little children, we brush the dreadful ghosts away and hide our heads in the pillow so as to return to our sports and merriment as soon as they have vanished. But we must one day begin life in sober earnest, we must look at ourselves as a society; it's time we tried to grasp something of our social position, or at least to make a beginning in that direction.

"A great writer* of the last epoch, comparing Russia to a swift troika galloping to an unknown goal, exclaims, 'Oh, troika, birdlike troika, who invented thee!' and adds, in proud ecstasy, that all the peoples of the world stand aside respectfully to make way for the recklessly galloping troika to pass. That may be, they may stand aside, respectfully or no, but in my poor opinion the great writer ended his book in this way either in an excess of childish and naive optimism, or simply in fear of the censorship of the day. For if the troika were drawn by his heroes, Sobakevitch, Nozdryov, Tchitchikov, it could reach no rational goal, whoever might be driving it. And those were the heroes of an older generation, ours are worse specimens still...."

* Gogol.

At this point Ippolit Kirillovitch's speech was interrupted by applause. The liberal significance of this simile was appreciated. The applause was, it's true, of brief duration, so that the President did not think it necessary to caution the public, and only looked severely in the direction of the offenders. But Ippolit Kirillovitch was encouraged; he had never been applauded before! He had been all his life unable to get a hearing, and now he suddenly had an opportunity of securing the ear of all Russia.

"What, after all, is this Karamazov family, which has gained such an unenviable notoriety throughout Russia?" he continued. "Perhaps I am exaggerating, but it seems to me that certain fundamental features of the educated class of to-day are reflected in this family picture — only, of course, in miniature, 'like the sun in a drop of water.' Think of that unhappy, vicious, unbridled old man, who has met with such a melancholy end, the head of a family! Beginning life of noble birth, but in a poor dependent position, through an unexpected marriage he came into a small fortune. A petty knave, a toady and buffoon, of fairly good, though

undeveloped, intelligence, he was, above all, a moneylender, who grew bolder with growing prosperity. His abject and servile characteristics disappeared, his, malicious and sarcastic cynicism was all that remained. On the spiritual side he was undeveloped, while his vitality was excessive. He saw nothing in life but sensual pleasure, and he brought his children up to be the same. He had no feelings for his duties as a father. He ridiculed those duties. He left his little children to the servants, and was glad to be rid of them, forgot about them completely. The old man's maxim was Apres moi le deluge.* He was an example of everything that is opposed to civic duty, of the most complete and malignant individualism. 'The world may burn for aught I care, so long as I am all right,' and he was all right; he was content, he was eager to go on living in the same way for another twenty or thirty years. He swindled his own son and spent his money, his maternal inheritance, on trying to get his mistress from him. No, I don't intend to leave the prisoner's defence altogether to my talented colleague from Petersburg. I will speak the truth myself, I can well understand what resentment he had heaped up in his son's heart against him.

* After me, the deluge.

"But enough, enough of that unhappy old man; he has paid the penalty. Let us remember, however, that he was a father, and one of the typical fathers of to-day. Am I unjust, indeed, in saying that he is typical of many modern fathers? Alas! many of them only differ in not openly professing such cynicism, for they are better educated, more cultured, but their philosophy is essentially the same as his. Perhaps I am a pessimist, but you have agreed to forgive me. Let us agree beforehand, you need not believe me, but let me speak. Let me say what I have to say, and remember something of my words.

"Now for the children of this father, this head of a family. One of them is the prisoner before us, all the rest of my speech will deal with him. Of the other two I will speak only cursorily.

"The elder is one of those modern young men of brilliant education and vigorous intellect, who has lost all faith in everything. He has denied and rejected much already, like his father. We have all heard him, he was a welcome guest in local society. He never concealed his opinions, quite the contrary in fact, which justifies me in speaking rather openly of him now, of course, not as an individual, but as a member of the Karamazov family. Another personage closely connected with the case died here by his own

hand last night. I mean an afflicted idiot, formerly the servant, and possibly the illegitimate son, of Fyodor Pavlovitch, Smerdyakov. At the preliminary inquiry, he told me with hysterical tears how the young Ivan Karamazov had horrified him by his spiritual audacity. ‘Everything in the world is lawful according to him, and nothing must be forbidden in the future — that is what he always taught me.’ I believe that idiot was driven out of his mind by this theory, though, of course, the epileptic attacks from which he suffered, and this terrible catastrophe, have helped to unhinge his faculties. But he dropped one very interesting observation, which would have done credit to a more intelligent observer, and that is, indeed, why I’ve mentioned it: ‘If there is one of the sons that is like Fyodor Pavlovitch in character, it is Ivan Fyodorovitch.’

“With that remark I conclude my sketch of his character, feeling it indelicate to continue further. Oh, I don’t want to draw any further conclusions and croak like a raven over the young man’s future. We’ve seen to-day in this court that there are still good impulses in his young heart, that family feeling has not been destroyed in him by lack of faith and cynicism, which have come to him rather by inheritance than by the exercise of independent thought.

“Then the third son. Oh, he is a devout and modest youth, who does not share his elder brother’s gloomy and destructive theory of life. He has sought to cling to the ‘ideas of the people,’ or to what goes by that name in some circles of our intellectual classes. He clung to the monastery, and was within an ace of becoming a monk. He seems to me to have betrayed unconsciously, and so early, that timid despair which leads so many in our unhappy society, who dread cynicism and its corrupting influences, and mistakenly attribute all the mischief to European enlightenment, to return to their ‘native soil,’ as they say, to the bosom, so to speak, of their mother earth, like frightened children, yearning to fall asleep on the withered bosom of their decrepit mother, and to sleep there for ever, only to escape the horrors that terrify them.

“For my part I wish the excellent and gifted young man every success; I trust that youthful idealism and impulse towards the ideas of the people may never degenerate, as often happens, on the moral side into gloomy mysticism, and on the political into blind chauvinism — two elements which are even a greater menace to Russia than the premature decay, due to

misunderstanding and gratuitous adoption of European ideas, from which his elder brother is suffering."

Two or three people clapped their hands at the mention of chauvinism and mysticism. Ippolit Kirillovitch had been, indeed, carried away by his own eloquence. All this had little to do with the case in hand, to say nothing of the fact of its being somewhat vague, but the sickly and consumptive man was overcome by the desire to express himself once in his life. People said afterwards that he was actuated by unworthy motives in his criticism of Ivan, because the latter had on one or two occasions got the better of him in argument, and Ippolit Kirillovitch, remembering it, tried now to take his revenge. But I don't know whether it was true. All this was only introductory, however, and the speech passed to more direct consideration of the case.

"But to return to the eldest son," Ippolit Kirillovitch went on. "He is the prisoner before us. We have his life and his actions, too, before us; the fatal day has come and all has been brought to the surface. While his brothers seem to stand for 'Europeanism' and 'the principles of the people,' he seems to represent Russia as she is. Oh, not all Russia, not all! God preserve us, if it were! Yet, here we have her, our mother Russia, the very scent and sound of her. Oh, he is spontaneous, he is a marvellous mingling of good and evil, he is a lover of culture and Schiller, yet he brawls in taverns and plucks out the beards of his boon companions. Oh, he, too, can be good and noble, but only when all goes well with him. What is more, he can be carried off his feet, positively carried off his feet by noble ideals, but only if they come of themselves, if they fall from heaven for him, if they need not be paid for. He dislikes paying for anything, but is very fond of receiving, and that's so with him in everything. Oh, give him every possible good in life (he couldn't be content with less), and put no obstacle in his way, and he will show that he, too, can be noble. He is not greedy, no, but he must have money, a great deal of money, and you will see how generously, with what scorn of filthy lucre, he will fling it all away in the reckless dissipation of one night. But if he has not money, he will show what he is ready to do to get it when he is in great need of it. But all this later, let us take events in their chronological order.

"First, we have before us a poor abandoned child, running about the back-yard 'without boots on his feet,' as our worthy and esteemed fellow citizen, of foreign origin, alas! expressed it just now. I repeat it again, I

yield to no one the defence of the criminal. I am here to accuse him, but to defend him also. Yes, I, too, am human; I, too, can weigh the influence of home and childhood on the character. But the boy grows up and becomes an officer; for a duel and other reckless conduct he is exiled to one of the remote frontier towns of Russia. There he led a wild life as an officer. And, of course, he needed money, money before all things, and so after prolonged disputes he came to a settlement with his father, and the last six thousand was sent him. A letter is in existence in which he practically gives up his claim to the rest and settles his conflict with his father over the inheritance on the payment of this six thousand.

"Then came his meeting with a young girl of lofty character and brilliant education. Oh, I do not venture to repeat the details; you have only just heard them. Honour, self-sacrifice were shown there, and I will be silent. The figure of the young officer, frivolous and profligate, doing homage to true nobility and a lofty ideal, was shown in a very sympathetic light before us. But the other side of the medal was unexpectedly turned to us immediately after in this very court. Again I will not venture to conjecture why it happened so, but there were causes. The same lady, bathed in tears of long-concealed indignation, alleged that he, he of all men, had despised her for her action, which, though incautious, reckless perhaps, was still dictated by lofty and generous motives. He, he, the girl's betrothed, looked at her with that smile of mockery, which was more insufferable from him than from anyone. And knowing that he had already deceived her (he had deceived her, believing that she was bound to endure everything from him, even treachery), she intentionally offered him three thousand roubles, and clearly, too clearly, let him understand that she was offering him money to deceive her. 'Well, will you take it or not, are you so lost to shame?' was the dumb question in her scrutinising eyes. He looked at her, saw clearly what was in her mind (he's admitted here before you that he understood it all), appropriated that three thousand unconditionally, and squandered it in two days with the new object of his affections.

"What are we to believe then? The first legend of the young officer sacrificing his last farthing in a noble impulse of generosity and doing reverence to virtue, or this other revolting picture? As a rule, between two extremes one has to find the mean, but in the present case this is not true. The probability is that in the first case he was genuinely noble, and in the second as genuinely base. And why? Because he was of the broad

Karamazov character — that's just what I am leading up to — capable of combining the most incongruous contradictions, and capable of the greatest heights and of the greatest depths. Remember the brilliant remark made by a young observer who has seen the Karamazov family at close quarters — Mr. Rakitin: 'The sense of their own degradation is as essential to those reckless, unbridled natures as the sense of their lofty generosity.' And that's true, they need continually this unnatural mixture. Two extremes at the same moment, or they are miserable and dissatisfied and their existence is incomplete. They are wide, wide as mother Russia; they include everything and put up with everything.

"By the way, gentlemen of the jury, we've just touched upon that three thousand roubles, and I will venture to anticipate things a little. Can you conceive that a man like that, on receiving that sum and in such a way, at the price of such shame, such disgrace, such utter degradation, could have been capable that very day of setting apart half that sum, that very day, and sewing it up in a little bag, and would have had the firmness of character to carry it about with him for a whole month afterwards, in spite of every temptation and his extreme need of it! Neither in drunken debauchery in taverns, nor when he was flying into the country, trying to get from God knows whom, the money so essential to him to remove the object of his affections from being tempted by his father, did he bring himself to touch that little bag! Why, if only to avoid abandoning his mistress to the rival of whom he was so jealous, he would have been certain to have opened that bag and to have stayed at home to keep watch over her, and to await the moment when she would say to him at last 'I am yours,' and to fly with her far from their fatal surroundings.

"But no, he did not touch his talisman, and what is the reason he gives for it? The chief reason, as I have just said, was that when she would say' I am yours, take me where you will,' he might have the wherewithal to take her. But that first reason, in the prisoner's own words, was of little weight beside the second. While I have that money on me, he said, I am a scoundrel, not a thief, for I can always go to my insulted betrothed, and, laying down half the sum I have fraudulently appropriated, I can always say to her, 'You see, I've squandered half your money, and shown I am a weak and immoral man, and, if you like, a scoundrel' (I use the prisoner's own expressions), 'but though I am a scoundrel, I am not a thief, for if I had been a thief, I shouldn't have brought you back this half of the money, but

should have taken it as I did the other half!’ A marvellous explanation! This frantic, but weak man, who could not resist the temptation of accepting the three thousand roubles at the price of such disgrace, this very man suddenly develops the most stoical firmness, and carries about a thousand roubles without daring to touch it. Does that fit in at all with the character we have analysed? No, and I venture to tell you how the real Dmitri Karamazov would have behaved in such circumstances, if he really had brought himself to put away the money.

“At the first temptation — for instance, to entertain the woman with whom he had already squandered half the money — he would have unpicked his little bag and have taken out some hundred roubles, for why should he have taken back precisely half the money, that is, fifteen hundred roubles? Why not fourteen hundred? He could just as well have said then that he was not a thief, because he brought back fourteen hundred roubles. Then another time he would have unpicked it again and taken out another hundred, and then a third, and then a fourth, and before the end of the month he would have taken the last note but one, feeling that if he took back only a hundred it would answer the purpose, for a thief would have stolen it all. And then he would have looked at this last note, and have said to himself, ‘It’s really not worth while to give back one hundred; let’s spend that, too!’ That’s how the real Dmitri Karamazov, as we know him, would have behaved. One cannot imagine anything more incongruous with the actual fact than this legend of the little bag. Nothing could be more inconceivable. But we shall return to that later.”

After touching upon what had come out in the proceedings concerning the financial relations of father and son, and arguing again and again that it was utterly impossible, from the facts known, to determine which was in the wrong, Ippolit Kirillovitch passed to the evidence of the medical experts in reference to Mitya’s fixed idea about the three thousand owing him.

CHAPTER 7

An Historical Survey

“THE medical experts have striven to convince us that the prisoner is out of his mind and, in fact, a maniac. I maintain that he is in his right mind, and that if he had not been, he would have behaved more cleverly. As for his being a maniac, that I would agree with, but only in one point, that is, his fixed idea about the three thousand. Yet I think one might find a much simpler cause than his tendency to insanity. For my part I agree thoroughly with the young doctor who maintained that the prisoner’s mental faculties have always been normal, and that he has only been irritable and exasperated. The object of the prisoner’s continual and violent anger was not the sum itself; there was a special motive at the bottom of it. That motive is jealousy!”

Here Ippolit Kirillovitch described at length the prisoner’s fatal passion for Grushenka. He began from the moment when the prisoner went to the “young person’s” lodgings “to beat her”— “I use his own expression,” the prosecutor explained— “but instead of beating her, he remained there, at her feet. That was the beginning of the passion. At the same time the prisoner’s father was captivated by the same young person — a strange and fatal coincidence, for they both lost their hearts to her simultaneously, though both had known her before. And she inspired in both of them the most violent, characteristically Karamazov passion. We have her own confession: ‘I was laughing at both of them.’ Yes, the sudden desire to make a jest of them came over her, and she conquered both of them at once. The old man, who worshipped money, at once set aside three thousand roubles as a reward for one visit from her, but soon after that, he would have been happy to lay his property and his name at her feet, if only she would become his lawful wife. We have good evidence of this. As for the prisoner, the tragedy of his fate is evident; it is before us. But such was the young person’s ‘game.’ The enchantress gave the unhappy young man no hope until the last moment, when he knelt before her, stretching out hands that were already stained with the blood of his father and rival. It was in that position that he was arrested. ‘Send me to Siberia with him, I have brought

him to this, I am most to blame,’ the woman herself cried, in genuine remorse at the moment of his arrest.

“The talented young man, to whom I have referred already, Mr. Rakitin, characterised this heroine in brief and impressive terms: ‘She was disillusioned early in life, deceived and ruined by a betrothed, who seduced and abandoned her. She was left in poverty, cursed by her respectable family and taken under the protection of a wealthy old man, whom she still, however, considers as her benefactor. There was perhaps much that was good in her young heart, but it was embittered too early. She became prudent and saved money. She grew sarcastic and resentful against society.’ After this sketch of her character it may well be understood that she might laugh at both of them simply from mischief, from malice.

“After a month of hopeless love and moral degradation, during which he betrayed his betrothed and appropriated money entrusted to his honour, the prisoner was driven almost to frenzy, almost to madness by continual jealousy — and of whom? His father! And the worst of it was that the crazy old man was alluring and enticing the object of his affection by means of that very three thousand roubles, which the son looked upon as his own property, part of his inheritance from his mother, of which his father was cheating him. Yes, I admit it was hard to bear! It might well drive a man to madness. It was not the money, but the fact that this money was used with such revolting cynicism to ruin his happiness!”

Then the prosecutor went on to describe how the idea of murdering his father had entered the prisoner’s head, and illustrated his theory with facts.

“At first he only talked about it in taverns — he was talking about it all that month. Ah, he likes being always surrounded with company, and he likes to tell his companions everything, even his most diabolical and dangerous ideas; he likes to share every thought with others, and expects, for some reason, that those he confides in will meet him with perfect sympathy, enter into all his troubles and anxieties, take his part and not oppose him in anything. If not, he flies into a rage and smashes up everything in the tavern. (Then followed the anecdote about Captain Snegiryov.) Those who heard the prisoner began to think at last that he might mean more than threats, and that such a frenzy might turn threats into actions.”

Here the prosecutor described the meeting of the family at the monastery, the conversations with Alyosha, and the horrible scene of

violence when the prisoner had rushed into his father's house just after dinner.

"I cannot positively assert," the prosecutor continued, "that the prisoner fully intended to murder his father before that incident. Yet the idea had several times presented itself to him, and he had deliberated on it — for that we have facts, witnesses, and his own words. I confess, gentlemen of the jury," he added, "that till to-day I have been uncertain whether to attribute to the prisoner conscious premeditation. I was firmly convinced that he had pictured the fatal moment beforehand, but had only pictured it, contemplating it as a possibility. He had not definitely considered when and how he might commit the crime.

"But I was only uncertain till to-day, till that fatal document was presented to the court just now. You yourselves heard that young lady's exclamation, 'It is the plan, the programme of the murder!' That is how she defined that miserable, drunken letter of the unhappy prisoner. And, in fact, from that letter we see that the whole fact of the murder was premeditated. It was written two days before, and so we know now for a fact that, forty-eight hours before the perpetration of his terrible design, the prisoner swore that, if he could not get money next day, he would murder his father in order to take the envelope with the notes from under his pillow, as soon as Ivan had left. 'As soon as Ivan had gone away' — you hear that; so he had thought everything out, weighing every circumstance, and he carried it all out just as he had written it. The proof of premeditation is conclusive; the crime must have been committed for the sake of the money, that is stated clearly, that is written and signed. The prisoner does not deny his signature.

"I shall be told he was drunk when he wrote it. But that does not diminish the value of the letter, quite the contrary; he wrote when drunk what he had planned when sober. Had he not planned it when sober, he would not have written it when drunk. I shall be asked: Then why did he talk about it in taverns? A man who premeditates such a crime is silent and keeps it to himself. Yes, but he talked about it before he had formed a plan, when he had only the desire, only the impulse to it. Afterwards he talked less about it. On the evening he wrote that letter at the Metropolis tavern, contrary to his custom he was silent, though he had been drinking. He did not play billiards, he sat in a corner, talked to no one. He did indeed turn a shopman out of his seat, but that was done almost unconsciously, because he could never enter a tavern without making a disturbance. It is true that

after he had taken the final decision, he must have felt apprehensive that he had talked too much about his design beforehand, and that this might lead to his arrest and prosecution afterwards. But there was nothing for it; he could not take his words back, but his luck had served him before, it would serve him again. He believed in his star, you know! I must confess, too, that he did a great deal to avoid the fatal catastrophe. ‘To-morrow I shall try and borrow the money from everyone,’ as he writes in his peculiar language,’ and if they won’t give it to me, there will be bloodshed.’”

Here Ippolit Kirillovitch passed to a detailed description of all Mitya’s efforts to borrow the money. He described his visit to Samsonov, his journey to Lyagavy. “Harassed, jeered at, hungry, after selling his watch to pay for the journey (though he tells us he had fifteen hundred roubles on him — a likely story), tortured by jealousy at having left the object of his affections in the town, suspecting that she would go to Fyodor Pavlovitch in his absense, he returned at last to the town, to find, to his joy, that she had not been near his father. He accompanied her himself to her protector. (Strange to say, he doesn’t seem to have been jealous of Samsonov, which is psychologically interesting.) Then he hastens back to his ambush in the back gardens, and then learns that Smerdyakov is in a fit, that the other servant is ill — the coast is clear and he knows the ‘signals’ — what a temptation! Still he resists it; he goes off to a lady who has for some time been residing in the town, and who is highly esteemed among us, Madame Hohlakov. That lady, who had long watched his career with compassion, gave him the most judicious advice, to give up his dissipated life, his unseemly love-affair, the waste of his youth and vigour in pot-house debauchery, and to set off to Siberia to the gold mines: ‘that would be an outlet for your turbulent energies, your romantic character, your thirst for adventure.’”

After describing the result of this conversation and the moment when the prisoner learnt that Grushenka had not remained at Samsonov’s, the sudden frenzy of the luckless man worn out with jealousy and nervous exhaustion, at the thought that she had deceived him and was now with his father, Ippolit Kirillovitch concluded by dwelling upon the fatal influence of chance. “Had the maid told him that her mistress was at Mokroe with her former lover, nothing would have happened. But she lost her head, she could only swear and protest her ignorance, and if the prisoner did not kill her on the spot, it was only because he flew in pursuit of his false mistress.

“But note, frantic as he was, he took with him a brass pestle. Why that? Why not some other weapon? But since he had been contemplating his plan and preparing himself for it for a whole month, he would snatch up anything like a weapon that caught his eye. He had realised for a month past that any object of the kind would serve as a weapon, so he instantly, without hesitation, recognised that it would serve his purpose. So it was by no means unconsciously, by no means involuntarily, that he snatched up that fatal pestle. And then we find him in his father’s garden — the coast is clear, there are no witnesses, darkness and jealousy. The suspicion that she was there, with him, with his rival, in his arms, and perhaps laughing at him at that moment — took his breath away. And it was not mere suspicion, the deception was open, obvious. She must be there, in that lighted room, she must be behind the screen; and the unhappy man would have us believe that he stole up to the window, peeped respectfully in, and discreetly withdrew, for fear something terrible and immoral should happen. And he tries to persuade us of that, us, who understand his character, who know his state of mind at the moment, and that he knew the signals by which he could at once enter the house.” At this point Ippolit Kirillovitch broke off to discuss exhaustively the suspected connection of Smerdyakov with the murder. He did this very circumstantially, and everyone realised that, although he professed to despise that suspicion, he thought the subject of great importance.

CHAPTER 8

A Treatise on Smerdyakov

“TO begin with, what was the source of this suspicion?” (Ippolit Kirillovitch began). “The first person who cried out that Smerdyakov had committed the murder was the prisoner himself at the moment of his arrest, yet from that time to this he had not brought forward a single fact to confirm the charge, nor the faintest suggestion of a fact. The charge is confirmed by three persons only — the two brothers of the prisoner and Madame Svyetlov. The elder of these brothers expressed his suspicions only to-day, when he was undoubtedly suffering from brain fever. But we know that for the last two months he has completely shared our conviction of his brother’s guilt and did not attempt to combat that idea. But of that later. The younger brother has admitted that he has not the slightest fact to support his notion of Smerdyakov’s guilt, and has only been led to that conclusion from the prisoner’s own words and the expression of his face. Yes, that astounding piece of evidence has been brought forward twice to-day by him. Madame Svyetslov was even more astounding. ‘What the prisoner tells you, you must believe; he is not a man to tell a lie.’ That is all the evidence against Smerdyakov produced by these three persons. who are all deeply concerned in the prisoner’s fate. And yet the theory of Smerdyakov’s guilt has been noised about, has been and is still maintained. Is it credible? Is it conceivable?”

Here Ippolit Kirillovitch thought it necessary to describe the personality of Smerdyakov, “who had cut short his life in a fit of insanity.” He depicted him as a man of weak intellect, with a smattering of education, who had been thrown off his balance by philosophical ideas above his level and certain modern theories of duty, which he learnt in practice from the reckless life of his master, who was also perhaps his father — Fyodor Pavlovitch; and, theoretically, from various strange philosophical conversations with his master’s elder son, Ivan Fyodorovitch, who readily indulged in this diversion, probably feeling dull or wishing to amuse himself at the valet’s expense. “He spoke to me himself of his spiritual condition during the last few days at his father’s house,” Ippolit Kirillovitch

explained; “but others too have borne witness to it — the prisoner himself, his brother, and the servant Grigory — that is, all who knew him well.

“Moreover, Smerdyakov, whose health was shaken by his attacks of epilepsy, had not the courage of a chicken. ‘He fell at my feet and kissed them,’ the prisoner himself has told us, before he realised how damaging such a statement was to himself. ‘He is an epileptic chicken,’ he declared about him in his characteristic language. And the prisoner chose him for his confidant (we have his own word for it) and he frightened him into consenting at last to act as a spy for him. In that capacity he deceived his master, revealing to the prisoner the existence of the envelope with the notes in it and the signals by means of which he could get into the house. How could he help telling him, indeed? ‘He would have killed me, I could see that he would have killed me,’ he said at the inquiry, trembling and shaking even before us, though his tormentor was by that time arrested and could do him no harm. ‘He suspected me at every instant. In fear and trembling I hastened to tell him every secret to pacify him, that he might see that I had not deceived him and let me off alive.’ Those are his own words. I wrote them down and I remember them. ‘When he began shouting at me, I would fall on my knees.’

“He was naturally very honest and enjoyed the complete confidence of his master, ever since he had restored him some money he had lost. So it may be supposed that the poor fellow suffered pangs of remorse at having deceived his master, whom he loved as his benefactor. Persons severely afflicted with epilepsy are, so the most skilful doctors tell us, always prone to continual and morbid self-reproach. They worry over their ‘wickedness,’ they are tormented by pangs of conscience, often entirely without cause; they exaggerate and often invent all sorts of faults and crimes. And here we have a man of that type who had really been driven to wrongdoing by terror and intimidation.

“He had, besides, a strong presentiment that something terrible would be the outcome of the situation that was developing before his eyes. When Ivan Fyodorovitch was leaving for Moscow, just before the catastrophe, Smerdyakov besought him to remain, though he was too timid to tell him plainly what he feared. He confined himself to hints, but his hints were not understood.

“It must be observed that he looked on Ivan Fyodorovitch as a protector, whose presence in the house was a guarantee that no harm would come to

pass. Remember the phrase in Dmitri Karamazov's drunken letter, 'I shall kill the old man, if only Ivan goes away.' So Ivan Fyodorovitch's presence seemed to everyone a guarantee of peace and order in the house.

"But he went away, and within an hour of his young master's departure Smerdyakov was taken with an epileptic fit. But that's perfectly intelligible. Here I must mention that Smerdyakov, oppressed by terror and despair of a sort, had felt during those last few days that one of the fits from which he had suffered before at moments of strain, might be coming upon him again. The day and hour of such an attack cannot, of course, be foreseen, but every epileptic can feel beforehand that he is likely to have one. So the doctors tell us. And so, as soon as Ivan Fyodorovitch had driven out of the yard, Smerdyakov, depressed by his lonely and unprotected position, went to the cellar. He went down the stairs wondering if he would have a fit or not, and what if it were to come upon him at once. And that very apprehension, that very wonder, brought on the spasm in his throat that always precedes such attacks, and he fell unconscious into the cellar. And in this perfectly natural occurrence people try to detect a suspicion, a hint that he was shamming an attack on purpose. But, if it were on purpose, the question arises at once, what was his motive? What was he reckoning on? What was he aiming at? I say nothing about medicine: science, I am told, may go astray: the doctors were not able to discriminate between the counterfeit and the real. That may be so, but answer me one question: what motive had he for such a counterfeit? Could he, had he been plotting the murder, have desired to attract the attention of the household by having a fit just before?

"You see, gentlemen of the jury, on the night of the murder, there were five persons in Fyodor Pavlovitch's — Fyodor Pavlovitch himself (but he did not kill himself, that's evident); then his servant, Grigory, but he was almost killed himself; the third person was Grigory's wife, Marfa Ignatyevna, but it would be simply shameful to imagine her murdering her master. Two persons are left — the prisoner and Smerdyakov. But, if we are to believe the prisoner's statement that he is not the murderer, then Smerdyakov must have been, for there is no other alternative, no one else can be found. That is what accounts for the artful, astounding accusation against the unhappy idiot who committed suicide yesterday. Had a shadow of suspicion rested on anyone else, had there been any sixth person, I am persuaded that even the prisoner would have been ashamed to accuse

Smerdyakov, and would have accused that sixth person, for to charge Smerdyakov with that murder is perfectly absurd.

“Gentlemen, let us lay aside psychology, let us lay aside medicine, let us even lay aside logic, let us turn only to the facts and see what the facts tell us. If Smerdyakov killed him, how did he do it? Alone or with the assistance of the prisoner? Let us consider the first alternative — that he did it alone. If he had killed him it must have been with some object, for some advantage to himself. But not having a shadow of the motive that the prisoner had for the murder — hatred, jealousy, and so on — Smerdyakov could only have murdered him for the sake of gain, in order to appropriate the three thousand roubles he had seen his master put in the envelope. And yet he tells another person — and a person most closely interested, that is, the prisoner — everything about the money and the signals, where the envelope lay, what was written on it, what it was tied up with, and, above all, told him of those signals by which he could enter the house. Did he do this simply to betray himself, or to invite to the same enterprise one who would be anxious to get that envelope for himself? ‘Yes,’ I shall be told, ‘but he betrayed it from fear.’ But how do you explain this? A man who could conceive such an audacious, savage act, and carry it out, tells facts which are known to no one else in the world, and which, if he held his tongue, no one would ever have guessed!

“No, however cowardly he might be, if he had plotted such a crime, nothing would have induced him to tell anyone about the envelope and the signals, for that was as good as betraying himself beforehand. He would have invented something, he would have told some lie if he had been forced to give information, but he would have been silent about that. For, on the other hand, if he had said nothing about the money, but had committed the murder and stolen the money, no one in the world could have charged him with murder for the sake of robbery, since no one but he had seen the money, no one but he knew of its existence in the house. Even if he had been accused of the murder, it could only have been thought that he had committed it from some other motive. But since no one had observed any such motive in him beforehand, and everyone saw, on the contrary, that his master was fond of him and honoured him with his confidence, he would, of course, have been the last to be suspected. People would have suspected first the man who had a motive, a man who had himself declared he had such motives, who had made no secret of it; they would, in fact, have

suspected the son of the murdered man, Dmitri Fyodorovitch. Had Smerdyakov killed and robbed him, and the son been accused of it, that would, of course, have suited Smerdyakov. Yet are we to believe that, though plotting the murder, he told that son, Dmitri, about the money, the envelope, and the signals? Is that logical? Is that clear?

"When the day of the murder planned by Smerdyakov came, we have him falling downstairs in a feigned fit — with what object? In the first place that Grigory, who had been intending to take his medicine, might put it off and remain on guard, seeing there was no one to look after the house, and, in the second place, I suppose, that his master seeing that there was no one to guard him, and in terror of a visit from his son, might redouble his vigilance and precaution. And, most of all, I suppose that he, Smerdyakov, disabled by the fit, might be carried from the kitchen, where he always slept, apart from all the rest, and where he could go in and out as he liked, to Grigory's room at the other end of the lodge, where he was always put, shut off by a screen three paces from their own bed. This was the immemorial custom established by his master and the kindhearted Marfa Ignatyevna, whenever he had a fit. There, lying behind the screen, he would most likely, to keep up the sham, have begun groaning, and so keeping them awake all night (as Grigory and his wife testified). And all this, we are to believe, that he might more conveniently get up and murder his master!

"But I shall be told that he shammed illness on purpose that he might not be suspected and that he told the prisoner of the money and the signals to tempt him to commit the murder, and when he had murdered him and had gone away with the money, making a noise, most likely, and waking people, Smerdyakov got up, am I to believe, and went in — what for? To murder his master a second time and carry off the money that had already been stolen? Gentlemen, are you laughing? I am ashamed to put forward such suggestions, but, incredible as it seems, that's just what the prisoner alleges. When he had left the house, had knocked Grigory down and raised an alarm, he tells us Smerdyakov got up, went in and murdered his master and stole the money! I won't press the point that Smerdyakov could hardly have reckoned on this beforehand, and have foreseen that the furious and exasperated son would simply come to peep in respectfully, though he knew the signals, and beat a retreat, leaving Smerdyakov his booty. Gentlemen of the jury, I put this question to you in earnest: when was the moment when

Smerdyakov could have committed his crime? Name that moment, or you can't accuse him.

"But, perhaps, the fit was a real one, the sick man suddenly recovered, heard a shout, and went out. Well — what then? He looked about him and said, 'Why not go and kill the master?' And how did he know what had happened, since he had been lying unconscious till that moment? But there's a limit to these flights of fancy.

"'Quite so,' some astute people will tell me, 'but what if they were in agreement? What if they murdered him together and shared the money — what then?' A weighty question, truly! And the facts to confirm it are astounding. One commits the murder and takes all the trouble while his accomplice lies on one side shamming a fit, apparently to arouse suspicion in everyone, alarm in his master and alarm in Grigory. It would be interesting to know what motives could have induced the two accomplices to form such an insane plan.

"But perhaps it was not a case of active complicity on Smerdyakov's part, but only of passive acquiescence; perhaps Smerdyakov was intimidated and agreed not to prevent the murder, and foreseeing that he would be blamed for letting his master be murdered, without screaming for help or resisting, he may have obtained permission from Dmitri Karamazov to get out of the way by shamming a fit—'you may murder him as you like; it's nothing to me.' But as this attack of Smerdyakov's was bound to throw the household into confusion, Dmitri Karamazov could never have agreed to such a plan. I will waive that point however. Supposing that he did agree, it would still follow that Dmitri Karamazov is the murderer and the instigator, and Smerdyakov is only a passive accomplice, and not even an accomplice, but merely acquiesced against his will through terror.

"But what do we see? As soon as he is arrested the prisoner instantly throws all the blame on Smerdyakov, not accusing him of being his accomplice, but of being himself the murderer. 'He did it alone,' he says. 'He murdered and robbed him. It was the work of his hands.' Strange sort of accomplices who begin to accuse one another at once! And think of the risk for Karamazov. After committing the murder while his accomplice lay in bed, he throws the blame on the invalid, who might well have resented it and in self-preservation might well have confessed the truth. For he might well have seen that the court would at once judge how far he was responsible, and so he might well have reckoned that if he were punished, it

would be far less severely than the real murderer. But in that case he would have been certain to make a confession, yet he has not done so. Smerdyakov never hinted at their complicity, though the actual murderer persisted in accusing him and declaring that he had committed the crime alone.

“What’s more, Smerdyakov at the inquiry volunteered the statement that it was he who had told the prisoner of the envelope of notes and of the signals, and that, but for him, he would have known nothing about them. If he had really been a guilty accomplice, would he so readily have made this statement at the inquiry? On the contrary, he would have tried to conceal it, to distort the facts or minimise them. But he was far from distorting or minimising them. No one but an innocent man, who had no fear of being charged with complicity, could have acted as he did. And in a fit of melancholy arising from his disease and this catastrophe he hanged himself yesterday. He left a note written in his peculiar language, ‘I destroy myself of my own will and inclination so as to throw no blame on anyone.’ What would it have cost him to add: ‘I am the murderer, not Karamazov’? But that he did not add. Did his conscience lead him to suicide and not to avowing his guilt?

“And what followed? Notes for three thousand roubles were brought into the court just now, and we were told that they were the same that lay in the envelope now on the table before us, and that the witness had received them from Smerdyakov the day before. But I need not recall the painful scene, though I will make one or two comments, selecting such trivial ones as might not be obvious at first sight to everyone, and so may be overlooked. In the first place, Smerdyakov must have given back the money and hanged himself yesterday from remorse. And only yesterday he confessed his guilt to Ivan Karamazov, as the latter informs us. If it were not so, indeed, why should Ivan Fyodorovitch have kept silence till now? And so, if he has confessed, then why, I ask again, did he not avow the whole truth in the last letter he left behind, knowing that the innocent prisoner had to face this terrible ordeal the next day?

“The money alone is no proof. A week ago, quite by chance, the fact came to the knowledge of myself and two other persons in this court that Ivan Fyodorovitch had sent two five per cent coupons of five thousand each — that is, ten thousand in all — to the chief town of the province to be changed. I only mention this to point out that anyone may have money, and

that it can’t be proved that these notes are the same as were in Fyodor Pavlovitch’s envelope.

“Ivan Karamazov, after receiving yesterday a communication of such importance from the real murderer, did not stir. Why didn’t he report it at once? Why did he put it all off till morning? I think I have a right to conjecture why. His health had been giving way for a week past: he had admitted to a doctor and to his most intimate friends that he was suffering from hallucinations and seeing phantoms of the dead: he was on the eve of the attack of brain fever by which he has been stricken down to-day. In this condition he suddenly heard of Smerdyakov’s death, and at once reflected. ‘The man is dead, I can throw the blame on him and save my brother. I have money. I will take a roll of notes and say that Smerdyakov gave them me before his death.’ You will say that was dishonourable: it’s dishonourable to slander even the dead, and even to save a brother. True, but what if he slandered him unconsciously? What if, finally unhinged by the sudden news of the valet’s death, he imagined it really was so? You saw the recent scene: you have seen the witness’s condition. He was standing up and was speaking, but where was his mind?

“Then followed the document, the prisoner’s letter written two days before the crime, and containing a complete programme of the murder. Why, then, are we looking for any other programme? The crime was committed precisely according to this programme, and by no other than the writer of it. Yes, gentlemen of the jury, it went off without a hitch! He did not run respectfully and timidly away from his father’s window, though he was firmly convinced that the object of his affections was with him. No, that is absurd and unlikely! He went in and murdered him. Most likely he killed him in anger, burning with resentment, as soon as he looked on his hated rival. But having killed him, probably with one blow of the brass pestle, and having convinced himself, after careful search, that she was not there, he did not, however, forget to put his hand under the pillow and take out the envelope, the torn cover of which lies now on the table before us.

“I mention this fact that you may note one, to my thinking, very characteristic circumstance. Had he been an experienced murderer and had he committed the murder for the sake of gain only, would he have left the torn envelope on the floor as it was found, beside the corpse? Had it been Smerdyakov, for instance, murdering his master to rob him, he would have simply carried away the envelope with him, without troubling himself to

open it over his victim’s corpse, for he would have known for certain that the notes were in the envelope — they had been put in and sealed up in his presence — and had he taken the envelope with him, no one would ever have known of the robbery. I ask you, gentlemen, would Smerdyakov have behaved in that way? Would he have left the envelope on the floor?

“No, this was the action of a frantic murderer, a murderer who was not a thief and had never stolen before that day, who snatched the notes from under the pillow, not like a thief stealing them, but as though seizing his own property from the thief who had stolen it. For that was the idea which had become almost an insane obsession in Dmitri Karamazov in regard to that money. And pouncing upon the envelope, which he had never seen before, he tore it open to make sure whether the money was in it, and ran away with the money in his pocket, even forgetting to consider that he had left an astounding piece of evidence against himself in that torn envelope on the floor. All because it was Karamazov, not Smerdyakov, he didn’t think, he didn’t reflect, and how should he? He ran away; he heard behind him the servant cry out; the old man caught him, stopped him and was felled to the ground by the brass pestle.

“The prisoner, moved by pity, leapt down to look at him. Would you believe it, he tells us that he leapt down out of pity, out of compassion, to see whether he could do anything for him. Was that a moment to show compassion? No; he jumped down simply to make certain whether the only witness of his crime were dead or alive. Any other feeling, any other motive would be unnatural. Note that he took trouble over Grigory, wiped his head with his handkerchief and, convincing himself he was dead, he ran to the house of his mistress, dazed and covered with blood. How was it he never thought that he was covered with blood and would be at once detected? But the prisoner himself assures us that he did not even notice that he was covered with blood. That may be believed, that is very possible, that always happens at such moments with criminals. On one point they will show diabolical cunning, while another will escape them altogether. But he was thinking at that moment of one thing only — where was she? He wanted to find out at once where she was, so he ran to her lodging and learnt an unexpected and astounding piece of news — she had gone off to Mokroe to meet her first lover.”

CHAPTER 9

The Galloping Troika. The End of the Prosecutor's Speech

IPPOLIT KIRILLOVITCH had chosen the historial method of exposition, beloved by all nervous orators, who find in its limitation a check on their own eager rhetoric. At this moment in his speech he went off into a dissertation on Grushenka's "first lover," and brought forward several interesting thoughts on this theme.

"Karamazov, who had been frantically jealous of everyone, collapsed, so to speak, and effaced himself at once before this first lover. What makes it all the more strange is that he seems to have hardly thought of this formidable rival. But he had looked upon him as a remote danger, and Karamazov always lives in the present. Possibly he regarded him as a fiction. But his wounded heart grasped instantly that the woman had been concealing this new rival and deceiving him, because he was anything but a fiction to her, because he was the one hope of her life. Grasping this instantly, he resigned himself.

"Gentlemen of the jury, I cannot help dwelling on this unexpected trait in the prisoner's character. He suddenly evinces an irresistible desire for justice, a respect for woman and a recognition of her right to love. And all this at the very moment when he had stained his hands with his father's blood for her sake! It is true that the blood he had shed was already crying out for vengeance, for, after having ruined his soul and his life in this world, he was forced to ask himself at that same instant what he was and what he could be now to her, to that being, dearer to him than his own soul, in comparison with that former lover who had returned penitent, with new love, to the woman he had once betrayed, with honourable offers, with the promise of a reformed and happy life. And he, luckless man, what could he give her now, what could he offer her?

"Karamazov felt all this, knew that all ways were barred to him by his crime and that he was a criminal under sentence, and not a man with life before him! This thought crushed him. And so he instantly flew to one frantic plan, which, to a man of Karamazov's character, must have appeared the one inevitable way out of his terrible position. That way out was suicide. He ran for the pistols he had left in pledge with his friend Perhotin

and on the way, as he ran, he pulled out of his pocket the money, for the sake of which he had stained his hands with his father's gore. Oh, now he needed money more than ever. Karamazov would die, Karamazov would shoot himself and it should be remembered! To be sure, he was a poet and had burnt the candle at both ends all his life. 'To her, to her! and there, oh, there I will give a feast to the whole world, such as never was before, that will be remembered and talked of long after! In the midst of shouts of wild merriment, reckless gypsy songs and dances I shall raise the glass and drink to the woman I adore and her new-found happiness! And then, on the spot, at her feet, I shall dash out my brains before her and punish myself! She will remember Mitya Karamazov sometimes, she will see how Mitya loved her, she will feel for Mitya!'

"Here we see in excess a love of effect, a romantic despair and sentimentality, and the wild recklessness of the Karamazovs. Yes, but there is something else, gentlemen of the jury, something that cries out in the soul, throbs incessantly in the mind, and poisons the heart unto death — that something is conscience, gentlemen of the jury, its judgment, its terrible torments! The pistol will settle everything, the pistol is the only way out! But beyond — I don't know whether Karamazov wondered at that moment 'What lies beyond,' whether Karamazov could, like Hamlet, wonder 'What lies beyond.' No, gentlemen of the jury, they have their Hamlets, but we still have our Karamazovs!"

Here Ippolit Kirillovitch drew a minute picture of Mitya's preparations, the scene at Perhotin's, at the shop, with the drivers. He quoted numerous words and actions, confirmed by witnesses, and the picture made a terrible impression on the audience. The guilt of this harassed and desperate man stood out clear and convincing, when the facts were brought together.

"What need had he of precaution? Two or three times he almost confessed, hinted at it, all but spoke out." (Then followed the evidence given by witnesses.) "He even cried out to the peasant who drove him, 'Do you know, you are driving a murderer!' But it was impossible for him to speak out, he had to get to Mokroe and there to finish his romance. But what was awaiting the luckless man? Almost from the first minute at Mokroe he saw that his invincible rival was perhaps by no means so invincible, that the toast to their new-found happiness was not desired and would not be acceptable. But you know the facts, gentlemen of the jury, from the preliminary inquiry. Karamazov's triumph over his rival was

complete and his soul passed into quite a new phase, perhaps the most terrible phase through which his soul has passed or will pass.

“One may say with certainty, gentlemen of the jury,” the prosecutor continued, “that outraged nature and the criminal heart bring their own vengeance more completely than any earthly justice. What’s more, justice and punishment on earth positively alleviate the punishment of nature and are, indeed, essential to the soul of the criminal at such moments, as its salvation from despair. For I cannot imagine the horror and moral suffering of Karamazov when he learnt that she loved him, that for his sake she had rejected her first lover, that she was summoning him, Mitya, to a new life, that she was promising him happiness — and when? When everything was over for him and nothing was possible!

“By the way, I will note in parenthesis a point of importance for the light it throws on the prisoner’s position at the moment. This woman, this love of his, had been till the last moment, till the very instant of his arrest, a being unattainable, passionately desired by him but unattainable. Yet why did he not shoot himself then, why did he relinquish his design and even forget where his pistol was? It was just that passionate desire for love and the hope of satisfying it that restrained him. Throughout their revels he kept close to his adored mistress, who was at the banquet with him and was more charming and fascinating to him than ever — he did not leave her side, abasing himself in his homage before her.

“His passion might well, for a moment, stifle not only the fear of arrest, but even the torments of conscience. For a moment, oh, only for a moment! I can picture the state of mind of the criminal hopelessly enslaved by these influences — first, the influence of drink, of noise and excitement, of the thud of the dance and the scream of the song, and of her, flushed with wine, singing and dancing and laughing to him! Secondly, the hope in the background that the fatal end might still be far off, that not till next morning, at least, they would come and take him. So he had a few hours and that’s much, very much! In a few hours one can think of many things. I imagine that he felt something like what criminals feel when they are being taken to the scaffold. They have another long, long street to pass down and at walking pace, past thousands of people. Then there will be a turning into another street and only at the end of that street the dread place of execution! I fancy that at the beginning of the journey the condemned man, sitting on his shameful cart, must feel that he has infinite life still before him. The

houses recede, the cart moves on — oh, that's nothing, it's still far to the turning into the second street and he still looks boldly to right and to left at those thousands of callously curious people with their eyes fixed on him, and he still fancies that he is just such a man as they. But now the turning comes to the next street. Oh, that's nothing, nothing, there's still a whole street before him, and however many houses have been passed, he will still think there are many left. And so to the very end, to the very scaffold.

"This I imagine is how it was with Karamazov then. 'They've not had time yet,' he must have thought, 'I may still find some way out, oh, there's still time to make some plan of defence, and now, now — she is so fascinating!'

"His soul was full of confusion and dread, but he managed, however, to put aside half his money and hide it somewhere — I cannot otherwise explain the disappearance of quite half of the three thousand he had just taken from his father's pillow. He had been in Mokroe more than once before, he had caroused there for two days together already, he knew the old big house with all its passages and outbuildings. I imagine that part of the money was hidden in that house, not long before the arrest, in some crevice, under some floor, in some corner, under the roof. With what object? I shall be asked. Why, the catastrophe may take place at once, of course; he hadn't yet considered how to meet it, he hadn't the time, his head was throbbing and his heart was with her, but money — money was indispensable in any case! With money a man is always a man. Perhaps such foresight at such a moment may strike you as unnatural? But he assures us himself that a month before, at a critical and exciting moment, he had halved his money and sewn it up in a little bag. And though that was not true, as we shall prove directly, it shows the idea was a familiar one to Karamazov, he had contemplated it. What's more, when he declared at the inquiry that he had put fifteen hundred roubles in a bag (which never existed) he may have invented that little bag on the inspiration of the moment, because he had two hours before divided his money and hidden half of it at Mokroe till morning, in case of emergency, simply not to have it on himself. Two extremes, gentlemen of the jury, remember that Karamazov can contemplate two extremes and both at once.

"We have looked in the house, but we haven't found the money. It may still be there or it may have disappeared next day and be in the prisoner's hands now. In any case he was at her side, on his knees before her, she was

lying on the bed, he had his hands stretched out to her and he had so entirely forgotten everything that he did not even hear the men coming to arrest him. He hadn't time to prepare any line of defence in his mind. He was caught unawares and confronted with his judges, the arbiters of his destiny.

"Gentlemen of the jury, there are moments in the execution of our duties when it is terrible for us to face a man, terrible on his account, too! The moments of contemplating that animal fear, when the criminal sees that all is lost, but still struggles, still means to struggle, the moments when every instinct of self-preservation rises up in him at once and he looks at you with questioning and suffering eyes, studies you, your face, your thoughts, uncertain on which side you will strike, and his distracted mind frames thousands of plans in an instant, but he is still afraid to speak, afraid of giving himself away! This purgatory of the spirit, this animal thirst for self-preservation, these humiliating moments of the human soul, are awful, and sometimes arouse horror and compassion for the criminal even in the lawyer. And this was what we all witnessed then.

"At first he was thunderstruck and in his terror dropped some very compromising phrases. 'Blood! I've deserved it!' But he quickly restrained himself. He had not prepared what he was to say, what answer he was to make, he had nothing but a bare denial ready. 'I am not guilty of my father's death.' That was his fence for the moment and behind it he hoped to throw up a barricade of some sort. His first compromising exclamations he hastened to explain by declaring that he was responsible for the death of the servant Grigory only. 'Of that bloodshed I am guilty, but who has killed my father, gentlemen, who has killed him? Who can have killed him, if not I?' Do you hear, he asked us that, us, who had come to ask him that question! Do you hear that uttered with such premature haste—'if not I' — the animal cunning, the naivete the Karamazov impatience of it? 'I didn't kill him and you mustn't think I did! I wanted to kill him, gentlemen, I wanted to kill him,' he hastens to admit (he was in a hurry, in a terrible hurry), 'but still I am not guilty, it is not I murdered him.' He concedes to us that he wanted to murder him, as though to say, you can see for yourselves how truthful I am, so you'll believe all the sooner that I didn't murder him. Oh, in such cases the criminal is often amazingly shallow and credulous.

"At that point one of the lawyers asked him, as it were incidentally, the most simple question, 'Wasn't it Smerdyakov killed him?' Then, as we

expected, he was horribly angry at our having anticipated him and caught him unawares, before he had time to pave the way to choose and snatch the moment when it would be most natural to bring in Smerdyakov's name. He rushed at once to the other extreme, as he always does, and began to assure us that Smerdyakov could not have killed him, was not capable of it. But don't believe him, that was only his cunning; he didn't really give up the idea of Smerdyakov; on the contrary, he meant to bring him forward again; for, indeed, he had no one else to bring forward, but he would do that later, because for the moment that line was spoiled for him. He would bring him forward perhaps next day, or even a few days later, choosing an opportunity to cry out to us, 'You know I was more sceptical about Smerdyakov than you, you remember that yourselves, but now I am convinced. He killed him, he must have done!' And for the present he falls back upon a gloomy and irritable denial. Impatience and anger prompted him, however, to the most inept and incredible explanation of how he looked into his father's window and how he respectfully withdrew. The worst of it was that he was unaware of the position of affairs, of the evidence given by Grigory.

"We proceeded to search him. The search angered, but encouraged him, the whole three thousand had not been found on him, only half of it. And no doubt only at that moment of angry silence, the fiction of the little bag first occurred to him. No doubt he was conscious himself of the improbability of the story and strove painfully to make it sound more likely, to weave it into a romance that would sound plausible. In such cases the first duty, the chief task of the investigating lawyers, is to prevent the criminal being prepared, to pounce upon him unexpectedly so that he may blurt out his cherished ideas in all their simplicity, improbability and inconsistency. The criminal can only be made to speak by the sudden and apparently incidental communication of some new fact, of some circumstance of great importance in the case, of which he had no previous idea and could not have foreseen. We had such a fact in readiness — that was Grigory's evidence about the open door through which the prisoner had run out. He had completely forgotten about that door and had not even suspected that Grigory could have seen it.

"The effect of it was amazing. He leapt up and shouted to us, 'Then Smerdyakov murdered him, it was Smerdyakov!' and so betrayed the basis of the defence he was keeping back, and betrayed it in its most improbable shape, for Smerdyakov could only have committed the murder after he had

knocked Grigory down and run away. When we told him that Grigory saw the door was open before he fell down, and had heard Smerdyakov behind the screen as he came out of his bedroom — Karamazov was positively crushed. My esteemed and witty colleague, Nikolay Parfenovitch, told me afterwards that he was almost moved to tears at the sight of him. And to improve matters, the prisoner hastened to tell us about the much-talked-of little bag — so be it, you shall hear this romance!

"Gentlemen of the jury, I have told you already why I consider this romance not only an absurdity, but the most improbable invention that could have been brought forward in the circumstances. If one tried for a bet to invent the most unlikely story, one could hardly find anything more incredible. The worst of such stories is that the triumphant romancers can always be put to confusion and crushed by the very details in which real life is so rich and which these unhappy and involuntary storytellers neglect as insignificant trifles. Oh, they have no thought to spare for such details, their minds are concentrated on their grand invention as a whole, and fancy anyone daring to pull them up for a trifle! But that's how they are caught. The prisoner was asked the question, 'Where did you get the stuff for your little bag and who made it for you?"I made it myself."And where did you get the linen?' The prisoner was positively offended, he thought it almost insulting to ask him such a trivial question, and would you believe it, his resentment was genuine! But they are all like that. 'I tore it off my shirt. "Then we shall find that shirt among your linen to-morrow, with a piece torn off.' And only fancy, gentlemen of the jury, if we really had found that torn shirt (and how could we have failed to find it in his chest of drawers or trunk?) that would have been a fact, a material fact in support of his statement! But he was incapable of that reflection. 'I don't remember, it may not have been off my shirt, I sewed it up in one of my landlady's caps."What sort of a cap?"It was an old cotton rag of hers lying about."And do you remember that clearly?"No, I don't.' And he was angry, very angry, and yet imagine not remembering it! At the most terrible moments of man's life, for instance when he is being led to execution, he remembers just such trifles. He will forget anything but some green roof that has flashed past him on the road, or a jackdaw on a cross — that he will remember. He concealed the making of that little bag from his household, he must have remembered his humiliating fear that someone might come in and find him

needle in hand, how at the slightest sound he slipped behind the screen (there is a screen in his lodgings).

“But, gentlemen of the jury, why do I tell you all this, all these details, trifles?” cried Ippolit Kirillovitch suddenly. “Just because the prisoner still persists in these absurdities to this moment. He has not explained anything since that fatal night two months ago, he has not added one actual illuminating fact to his former fantastic statements; all those are trivialities. ‘You must believe it on my honour.’ Oh, we are glad to believe it, we are eager to believe it, even if only on his word of honour! Are we jackals thirsting for human blood? Show us a single fact in the prisoner’s favour and we shall rejoice; but let it be a substantial, real fact, and not a conclusion drawn from the prisoner’s expression by his own brother, or that when he beat himself on the breast he must have meant to point to the little bag, in the darkness, too. We shall rejoice at the new fact, we shall be the first to repudiate our charge, we shall hasten to repudiate it. But now justice cries out and we persist, we cannot repudiate anything.”

Ippolit Kirillovitch passed to his final peroration. He looked as though he was in a fever, he spoke of the blood that cried for vengeance, the blood of the father murdered by his son, with the base motive of robbery! He pointed to the tragic and glaring consistency of the facts.

“And whatever you may hear from the talented and celebrated counsel for the defence,” Ippolit Kirillovitch could not resist adding, “whatever eloquent and touching appeals may be made to your sensibilities, remember that at this moment you are in a temple of justice. Remember that you are the champions of our justice, the champions of our holy Russia, of her principles, her family, everything that she holds sacred! Yes, you represent Russia here at this moment, and your verdict will be heard not in this hall only but will re-echo throughout the whole of Russia, and all Russia will hear you, as her champions and her judges, and she will be encouraged or disheartened by your verdict. Do not disappoint Russia and her expectations. Our fatal troika dashes on in her headlong flight perhaps to destruction and in all Russia for long past men have stretched out imploring hands and called a halt to its furious reckless course. And if other nations stand aside from that troika that may be, not from respect, as the poet would fain believe, but simply from horror. From horror, perhaps from disgust. And well it is that they stand aside, but maybe they will cease one day to do so and will form a firm wall confronting the hurrying apparition and will

check the frenzied rush of our lawlessness, for the sake of their own safety, enlightenment and civilisation. Already we have heard voices of alarm from Europe, they already begin to sound. Do not tempt them! Do not heap up their growing hatred by a sentence justifying the murder of a father by his son!

Though Ippolit Kirillovitch was genuinely moved, he wound up his speech with this rhetorical appeal — and the effect produced by him was extraordinary. When he had finished his speech, he went out hurriedly and, as I have mentioned before, almost fainted in the adjoining room. There was no applause in the court, but serious persons were pleased. The ladies were not so well satisfied, though even they were pleased with his eloquence, especially as they had no apprehensions as to the upshot of the trial and had full trust in Fetyukovitch. “He will speak at last and of course carry all before him.”

Everyone looked at Mitya; he sat silent through the whole of the prosecutor’s speech, clenching his teeth, with his hands clasped, and his head bowed. Only from time to time he raised his head and listened, especially when Grushenka was spoken of. When the prosecutor mentioned Rakitin’s opinion of her, a smile of contempt and anger passed over his face and he murmured rather audibly, “The Bernards!” When Ippolit Kirillovitch described how he had questioned and tortured him at Mokroe, Mitya raised his head and listened with intense curiosity. At one point he seemed about to jump up and cry out, but controlled himself and only shrugged his shoulders disdainfully. People talked afterwards of the end of the speech, of the prosecutor’s feat in examining the prisoner at Mokroe, and jeered at Ippolit Kirillovitch. “The man could not resist boasting of his cleverness,” they said.

The court was adjourned, but only for a short interval, a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes at most. There was a hum of conversation and exclamations in the audience. I remember some of them.

“A weighty speech,” a gentleman in one group observed gravely.

“He brought in too much psychology,” said another voice.

“But it was all true, the absolute truth!”

“Yes, he is first rate at it.”

“He summed it all up.”

“Yes, he summed us up, too,” chimed in another voice, “Do you remember, at the beginning of his speech, making out we were all like

Fyodor Pavlovitch?”

“And at the end, too. But that was all rot.”

“And obscure too.”

“He was a little too much carried away.”

“It’s unjust, it’s unjust.”

“No, it was smartly done, anyway. He’s had long to wait, but he’s had his say, ha ha!”

“What will the counsel for the defence say?”

In another group I heard:

“He had no business to make a thrust at the Petersburg man like that; ‘appealing to your sensibilities’ — do you remember?”

“Yes, that was awkward of him.”

“He was in too great a hurry.”

“He is a nervous man.”

“We laugh, but what must the prisoner be feeling?”

“Yes, what must it be for Mitya?”

In a third group:

“What lady is that, the fat one, with the lorgnette, sitting at the end?”

“She is a general’s wife, divorced, I know her.”

“That’s why she has the lorgnette.”

“She is not good for much.”

“Oh no, she is a piquante little woman.”

“Two places beyond her there is a little fair woman, she is prettier.”

“They caught him smartly at Mokroe, didn’t they, eh?”

“Oh, it was smart enough. We’ve heard it before, how often he has told the story at people’s houses!

“And he couldn’t resist doing it now. That’s vanity.”

“He is a man with a grievance, he he!”

“Yes, and quick to take offence. And there was too much rhetoric, such long sentences.”

“Yes, he tries to alarm us, he kept trying to alarm us. Do you remember about the troika? Something about ‘They have Hamlets, but we have, so far, only Karamazovs!’ That was cleverly said!”

“That was to propitiate the liberals. He is afraid of them.”

“Yes, and he is afraid of the lawyer, too.”

“Yes, what will Fetyukovitch say?”

“Whatever he says, he won’t get round our peasants.”

“Don’t you think so?”

A fourth group:

“What he said about the troika was good, that piece about the other nations.”

“And that was true what he said about other nations not standing it.”

“What do you mean?”

“Why, in the English Parliment a Member got up last week and speaking about the Nihilists asked the Ministry whether it was not high time to intervene, to educate this barbarous people. Ippolit was thinking of him, I know he was. He was talking about that last week.”

“Not an easy job.”

“Not an easy job? Why not?”

“Why, we’d shut up Kronstadt and not let them have any corn. Where would they get it?”

“In America. They get it from America now.”

“Nonsense!”

But the bell rang, all rushed to their places. Fetyukovitch mounted the tribune.

CHAPTER 10

The Speech for the Defence.

An Argument that Cuts Both Ways

ALL was hushed as the first words of the famous orator rang out. The eyes of the audience were fastened upon him. He began very simply and directly, with an air of conviction, but not the slightest trace of conceit. He made no attempt at eloquence, at pathos, or emotional phrases. He was like a man speaking in a circle of intimate and sympathetic friends. His voice was a fine one, sonorous and sympathetic, and there was something genuine and simple in the very sound of it. But everyone realised at once that the speaker might suddenly rise to genuine pathos and "pierce the heart with untold power." His language was perhaps more irregular than Ippolit Kirillovitch's, but he spoke without long phrases, and indeed, with more precision. One thing did not please the ladies: he kept bending forward, especially at the beginning of his speech, not exactly bowing, but as though he were about to dart at his listeners, bending his long spine in half, as though there were a spring in the middle that enabled him to bend almost at right angles.

At the beginning of his speech he spoke rather disconnectedly, without system, one may say, dealing with facts separately, though, at the end, these facts formed a whole. His speech might be divided into two parts, the first consisting of criticism in refutation of the charge, sometimes malicious and sarcastic. But in the second half he suddenly changed his tone, and even his manner, and at once rose to pathos. The audience seemed on the lookout for it, and quivered with enthusiasm.

He went straight to the point, and began by saying that although he practised in Petersburg, he had more than once visited provincial towns to defend prisoners, of whose innocence he had a conviction or at least a preconceived idea. "That is what has happened to me in the present case," he explained. "From the very first accounts in the newspapers I was struck by something which strongly prepossessed me in the prisoner's favour. What interested me most was a fact which often occurs in legal practice, but rarely, I think, in such an extreme and peculiar form as in the present case. I

ought to formulate that peculiarity only at the end of my speech, but I will do so at the very beginning, for it is my weakness to go to work directly, not keeping my effects in reserve and economising my material. That may be imprudent on my part, but at least it's sincere. What I have in my mind is this: there is an overwhelming chain of evidence against the prisoner, and at the same time not one fact that will stand criticism, if it is examined separately. As I followed the case more closely in the papers my idea was more and more confirmed, and I suddenly received from the prisoner's relatives a request to undertake his defence. I at once hurried here, and here I became completely convinced. It was to break down this terrible chain of facts, and to show that each piece of evidence taken separately was unproved and fantastic, that I undertook the case."

So Fetyukovitch began.

"Gentlemen of the jury," he suddenly protested, "I am new to this district. I have no preconceived ideas. The prisoner, a man of turbulent and unbridled temper, has not insulted me. But he has insulted perhaps hundreds of persons in this town, and so prejudiced many people against him beforehand. Of course I recognise that the moral sentiment of local society is justly excited against him. The prisoner is of turbulent and violent temper. Yet he was received in society here; he was even welcome in the family of my talented friend, the prosecutor."

(N.B. At these words there were two or three laughs in the audience, quickly suppressed, but noticed by all. All of us knew that the prosecutor received Mitya against his will, solely because he had somehow interested his wife — a lady of the highest virtue and moral worth, but fanciful, capricious, and fond of opposing her husband, especially in trifles. Mitya's visits, however, had not been frequent.)

"Nevertheless I venture to suggest," Fetyukovitch continued, "that in spite of his independent mind and just character, my opponent may have formed a mistaken prejudice against my unfortunate client. Oh, that is so natural; the unfortunate man has only too well deserved such prejudice. Outraged morality, and still more outraged taste, is often relentless. We have, in the talented prosecutor's speech, heard a stern analysis of the prisoner's character and conduct, and his severe critical attitude to the case was evident. And, what's more, he went into psychological subtleties into which he could not have entered, if he had the least conscious and malicious prejudice against the prisoner. But there are things which are even worse,

even more fatal in such cases, than the most malicious and consciously unfair attitude. It is worse if we are carried away by the artistic instinct, by the desire to create, so to speak, a romance, especially if God has endowed us with psychological insight. Before I started on my way here, I was warned in Petersburg, and was myself aware, that I should find here a talented opponent whose psychological insight and subtlety had gained him peculiar renown in legal circles of recent years. But profound as psychology is, it's a knife that cuts both ways." (Laughter among the public.) "You will, of course, forgive me my comparison; I can't boast of eloquence. But I will take as an example any point in the prosecutor's speech.

"The prisoner, running away in the garden in the dark, climbed over the fence, was seized by the servant, and knocked him down with a brass pestle. Then he jumped back into the garden and spent five minutes over the man, trying to discover whether he had killed him or not. And the prosecutor refuses to believe the prisoner's statement that he ran to old Grigory out of pity. 'No,' he says, 'such sensibility is impossible at such a moment, that's unnatural; he ran to find out whether the only witness of his crime was dead or alive, and so showed that he had committed the murder, since he would not have run back for any other reason.'

"Here you have psychology; but let us take the same method and apply it to the case the other way round, and our result will be no less probable. The murderer, we are told, leapt down to find out, as a precaution, whether the witness was alive or not, yet he had left in his murdered father's study, as the prosecutor himself argues, an amazing piece of evidence in the shape of a torn envelope, with an inscription that there had been three thousand roubles in it. 'If he had carried that envelope away with him, no one in the world would have known of that envelope and of the notes in it, and that the money had been stolen by the prisoner.' Those are the prosecutor's own words. So on one side you see a complete absence of precaution, a man who has lost his head and run away in a fright, leaving that clue on the floor, and two minutes later, when he has killed another man, we are entitled to assume the most heartless and calculating foresight in him. But even admitting this was so, it is psychological subtlety, I suppose, that discerns that under certain circumstances I become as bloodthirsty and keen-sighted as a Caucasian eagle, while at the next I am as timid and blind as a mole. But if I am so bloodthirsty and cruelly calculating that when I kill a man I only run back to find out whether he is alive to witness against me, why

should I spend five minutes looking after my victim at the risk of encountering other witnesses? Why soak my handkerchief, wiping the blood off his head so that it may be evidence against me later? If he were so cold-hearted and calculating, why not hit the servant on the head again and again with the same pestle so as to kill him outright and relieve himself of all anxiety about the witness?

“Again, though he ran to see whether the witness was alive, he left another witness on the path, that brass pestle which he had taken from the two women, and which they could always recognise afterwards as theirs, and prove that he had taken it from them. And it is not as though he had forgotten it on the path, dropped it through carelessness or haste, no, he had flung away his weapon, for it was found fifteen paces from where Grigory lay. Why did he do so? just because he was grieved at having killed a man, an old servant; and he flung away the pestle with a curse, as a murderous weapon. That’s how it must have been, what other reason could he have had for throwing it so far? And if he was capable of feeling grief and pity at having killed a man, it shows that he was innocent of his father’s murder. Had he murdered him, he would never have run to another victim out of pity; then he would have felt differently; his thoughts would have been centred on self-preservation. He would have had none to spare for pity, that is beyond doubt. On the contrary, he would have broken his skull instead of spending five minutes looking after him. There was room for pity and good-feeling just because his conscience had been clear till then. Here we have a different psychology. I have purposely resorted to this method, gentlemen of the jury, to show that you can prove anything by it. It all depends on who makes use of it. Psychology lures even most serious people into romancing, and quite unconsciously. I am speaking of the abuse of psychology, gentlemen.”

Sounds of approval and laughter, at the expense of the prosecutor, were again audible in the court. I will not repeat the speech in detail; I will only quote some passages from it, some leading points.

CHAPTER 11

There Was No Money.

There Was No Robbery

THERE was one point that struck everyone in Fetyukovitch's speech. He flatly denied the existence of the fatal three thousand roubles, and consequently, the possibility of their having been stolen.

"Gentlemen of the jury," he began. "Every new and unprejudiced observer must be struck by a characteristic peculiarity in the present case, namely, the charge of robbery, and the complete impossibility of proving that there was anything to be stolen. We are told that money was stolen — three thousand roubles but whether those roubles ever existed, nobody knows. Consider, how have we heard of that sum, and who has seen the notes? The only person who saw them, and stated that they had been put in the envelope, was the servant, Smerdyakov. He had spoken of it to the prisoner and his brother, Ivan Fyodorovitch, before the catastrophe. Madame Svyetlov, too, had been told of it. But not one of these three persons had actually seen the notes, no one but Smerdyakov had seen them.

"Here the question arises, if it's true that they did exist, and that Smerdyakov had seen them, when did he see them for the last time? What if his master had taken the notes from under his bed and put them back in his cash-box without telling him? Note, that according to Smerdyakov's story the notes were kept under the mattress; the prisoner must have pulled them out, and yet the bed was absolutely unrumpled; that is carefully recorded in the protocol. How could the prisoner have found the notes without disturbing the bed? How could he have helped soiling with his blood-stained hands the fine and spotless linen with which the bed had been purposely made?

"But I shall be asked: What about the envelope on the floor? Yes, it's worth saying a word or two about that envelope. I was somewhat surprised just now to hear the highly talented prosecutor declare of himself — of himself, observe — that but for that envelope, but for its being left on the floor, no one in the world would have known of the existence of that envelope and the notes in it, and therefore of the prisoner's having stolen it.

And so that torn scrap of paper is, by the prosecutor's own admission, the sole proof on which the charge of robbery rests, 'otherwise no one would have known of the robbery, nor perhaps even of the money.' But is the mere fact that that scrap of paper was lying on the floor a proof that there was money in it, and that that money had been stolen? Yet, it will be objected, Smerdyakov had seen the money in the envelope. But when, when had he seen it for the last time, I ask you that? I talked to Smerdyakov, and he told me that he had seen the notes two days before the catastrophe. Then why not imagine that old Fyodor Pavlovitch, locked up alone in impatient and hysterical expectation of the object of his adoration, may have whiled away the time by breaking open the envelope and taking out the notes. 'What's the use of the envelope?' he may have asked himself. 'She won't believe the notes are there, but when I show her the thirty rainbow-coloured notes in one roll, it will make more impression, you may be sure, it will make her mouth water.' And so he tears open the envelope, takes out the money, and flings the envelope on the floor, conscious of being the owner and untroubled by any fears of leaving evidence.

"Listen, gentlemen, could anything be more likely than this theory and such an action? Why is it out of the question? But if anything of the sort could have taken place, the charge of robbery falls to the ground; if there was no money, there was no theft of it. If the envelope on the floor may be taken as evidence that there had been money in it, why may I not maintain the opposite, that the envelope was on the floor because the money had been taken from it by its owner?

"But I shall be asked what became of the money if Fyodor Pavlovitch took it out of the envelope since it was not found when the police searched the house? In the first place, part of the money was found in the cash-box, and secondly, he might have taken it out that morning or the evening before to make some other use of it, to give or send it away; he may have changed his idea, his plan of action completely, without thinking it necessary to announce the fact to Smerdyakov beforehand. And if there is the barest possibility of such an explanation, how can the prisoner be so positively accused of having committed murder for the sake of robbery, and of having actually carried out that robbery? This is encroaching on the domain of romance. If it is maintained that something has been stolen, the thing must be produced, or at least its existence must be proved beyond doubt. Yet no one had ever seen these notes.

“Not long ago in Petersburg a young man of eighteen, hardly more than a boy, who carried on a small business as a costermonger, went in broad daylight into a moneychanger’s shop with an axe, and with extraordinary, typical audacity killed the master of the shop and carried off fifteen hundred roubles. Five hours later he was arrested, and, except fifteen roubles he had already managed to spend, the whole sum was found on him. Moreover, the shopman, on his return to the shop after the murder, informed the police not only of the exact sum stolen, but even of the notes and gold coins of which that sum was made up, and those very notes and coins were found on the criminal. This was followed by a full and genuine confession on the part of the murderer. That’s what I call evidence, gentlemen of the jury! In that case I know, I see, I touch the money, and cannot deny its existence. Is it the same in the present case? And yet it is a question of life and death.

“Yes, I shall be told, but he was carousing that night, squandering money; he was shown to have had fifteen hundred roubles — where did he get the money? But the very fact that only fifteen hundred could be found, and the other half of the sum could nowhere be discovered, shows that that money was not the same, and had never been in any envelope. By strict calculation of time it was proved at the preliminary inquiry that the prisoner ran straight from those women servants to Perhotin’s without going home, and that he had been nowhere. So he had been all the time in company and therefore could not have divided the three thousand in half and hidden half in the town. It’s just this consideration that has led the prosecutor to assume that the money is hidden in some crevice at Mokroe. Why not in the dungeons of the castle of Udolpho, gentlemen? Isn’t this supposition really too fantastic and too romantic? And observe, if that supposition breaks down, the whole charge of robbery is scattered to the winds, for in that case what could have become of the other fifteen hundred roubles? By what miracle could they have disappeared, since it’s proved the prisoner went nowhere else? And we are ready to ruin a man’s life with such tales!

“I shall be told that he could not explain where he got the fifteen hundred that he had. and everyone knew that he was without money before that night. Who knew it, pray? The prisoner has made a clear and unflinching statement of the source of that money, and if you will have it so, gentlemen of the jury, nothing can be more probable than that statement, and more consistent with the temper and spirit of the prisoner. The prosecutor is charmed with his own romance. A man of weak will, who had brought

himself to take the three thousand so insultingly offered by his betrothed, could not, we are told, have set aside half and sewn it up, but would, even if he had done so, have unpicked it every two days and taken out a hundred, and so would have spent it all in a month. All this, you will remember, was put forward in a tone what brooked no contradiction. But what if the thing happened quite differently? What if you've been weaving a romance, and about quite a different kind of man? That's just it, you have invented quite a different man!

"I shall be told, perhaps, there are witnesses that he spent on one day all that three thousand given him by his betrothed a month before the catastrophe, so he could not have divided the sum in half. But who are these witnesses? The value of their evidence has been shown in court already. Besides, in another man's hand a crust always seems larger, and no one of these witnesses counted that money; they all judged simply at sight. And the witness Maximov has testified that the prisoner had twenty thousand in his hand. You see, gentlemen of the jury, psychology is a two edged weapon. Let me turn the other edge now and see what comes of it.

"A month before the catastrophe the prisoner was entrusted by Katerina Ivanovna with three thousand roubles to send off by post. But the question is: is it true that they were entrusted to him in such an insulting and degrading way as was proclaimed just now? The first statement made by the young lady on the subject was different, perfectly different. In the second statement we heard only cries of resentment and revenge, cries of long-concealed hatred. And the very fact that the witness gave her first evidence incorrectly gives us a right to conclude that her second piece of evidence may have been incorrect also. The prosecutor will not, dare not (his own words) touch on that story. So be it. I will not touch on it either, but will only venture to observe that if a lofty and high-principled person, such as that highly respected young lady unquestionably is, if such a person, I say, allows herself suddenly in court to contradict her first statement, with the obvious motive of ruining the prisoner, it is clear that this evidence has been given not impartially, not coolly. Have not we the right to assume that a revengeful woman might have exaggerated much? Yes, she may well have exaggerated, in particular, the insult and humiliation of her offering him the money. No, it was offered in such a way that it was possible to take it, especially for a man so easygoing as the prisoner, above all, as he expected to receive shortly from his father the three thousand roubles that he

reckoned was owing to him. It was unreflecting of him, but it was just his irresponsible want of reflection that made him so confident that his father would give him the money, that he would get it, and so could always dispatch the money entrusted to him and repay the debt.

“But the prosecutor refuses to allow that he could the same day have set aside half the money and sewn it up in a little bag. That’s not his character, he tells us, he couldn’t have had such feelings. But yet he talked himself of the broad Karamazov nature; he cried out about the two extremes which a Karamazov can contemplate at once. Karamazov is just such a two-sided nature, fluctuating between two extremes, that even when moved by the most violent craving for riotous gaiety, he can pull himself up, if something strikes him on the other side. And on the other side is love that new love which had flamed up in his heart, and for that love he needed money; oh, far more than for carousing with his mistress. If she were to say to him, ‘I am yours, I won’t have Fyodor Pavlovitch,’ then he must have money to take her away. That was more important than carousing. Could a Karamazov fail to understand it? That anxiety was just what he was suffering from — what is there improbable in his laying aside that money and concealing it in case of emergency?

“But time passed, and Fyodor Pavlovitch did not give the prisoner the expected three thousand; on the contrary, the latter heard that he meant to use this sum to seduce the woman he, the prisoner, loved. ‘If Fyodor Pavlovitch doesn’t give the money,’ he thought, ‘I shall be put in the position of a thief before Katerina Ivanovna.’ And then the idea presented itself to him that he would go to Katerina Ivanovna, lay before her the fifteen hundred roubles he still carried round his neck, and say, ‘I am a scoundrel, but not a thief.’ So here we have already a twofold reason why he should guard that sum of money as the apple of his eye, why he shouldn’t unpick the little bag, and spend it a hundred at a time. Why should you deny the prisoner a sense of honour? Yes, he has a sense of honour, granted that it’s misplaced, granted it’s often mistaken, yet it exists and amounts to a passion, and he has proved that.

“But now the affair becomes even more complex; his jealous torments reach a climax, and those same two questions torture his fevered brain more and more: ‘If I repay Katerina Ivanovna, where can I find the means to go off with Grushenka?’ If he behaved wildly, drank, and made disturbances in the taverns in the course of that month, it was perhaps because he was

wretched and strained beyond his powers of endurance. These two questions became so acute that they drove him at last to despair. He sent his younger brother to beg for the last time for the three thousand roubles, but without waiting for a reply, burst in himself and ended by beating the old man in the presence of witnesses. After that he had no prospect of getting it from anyone; his father would not give it him after that beating.

“The same evening he struck himself on the breast, just on the upper part of the breast where the little bag was, and swore to his brother that he had the means of not being a scoundrel, but that still he would remain a scoundrel, for he foresaw that he would not use that means, that he wouldn’t have the character, that he wouldn’t have the will-power to do it. Why, why does the prosecutor refuse to believe the evidence of Alexey Karamazov, given so genuinely and sincerely, so spontaneously and convincingly? And why, on the contrary, does he force me to believe in money hidden in a crevice, in the dungeons of the castle of Udolpho?

“The same evening, after his talk with his brother, the prisoner wrote that fatal letter, and that letter is the chief, the most stupendous proof of the prisoner having committed robbery! ‘I shall beg from everyone, and if I don’t get it I shall murder my father and shall take the envelope with the pink ribbon on it from under his mattress as soon as Ivan has gone.’ A full programme of the murder, we are told, so it must have been he. ‘It has all been done as he wrote,’ cries the prosecutor.

“But in the first place, it’s the letter of a drunken man and written in great irritation; secondly, he writes of the envelope from what he has heard from Smerdyakov again, for he has not seen the envelope himself; and thirdly, he wrote it indeed, but how can you prove that he did it? Did the prisoner take the envelope from under the pillow, did he find the money, did that money exist indeed? And was it to get money that the prisoner ran off, if you remember? He ran off post-haste not to steal, but to find out where she was, the woman who had crushed him. He was not running to carry out a programme, to carry out what he had written, that is, not for an act of premeditated robbery, but he ran suddenly, spontaneously, in a jealous fury. Yes! I shall be told, but when he got there and murdered him he seized the money, too. But did he murder him after all? The charge of robbery I repudiate with indignation. A man cannot be accused of robbery, if it’s impossible to state accurately what he has stolen; that’s an axiom. But did

he murder him without robbery, did he murder him at all? Is that proved? Isn’t that, too, a romance?”

CHAPTER 12

And There Was No Murder Either

“ALLOW me, gentlemen of the jury, to remind you that a man’s life is at stake and that you must be careful. We have heard the prosecutor himself admit that until to-day he hesitated to accuse the prisoner of a full and conscious premeditation of the crime; he hesitated till he saw that fatal drunken letter which was produced in court to-day. ‘All was done as written.’ But, I repeat again, he was running to her, to seek her, solely to find out where she was. That’s a fact that can’t be disputed. Had she been at home, he would not have run away, but would have remained at her side, and so would not have done what he promised in the letter. He ran unexpectedly and accidentally, and by that time very likely he did not even remember his drunken letter. ‘He snatched up the pestle,’ they say, and you will remember how a whole edifice of psychology was built on that pestle — why he was bound to look at that pestle as a weapon, to snatch it up, and so on, and so on. A very commonplace idea occurs to me at this point: What if that pestle had not been in sight, had not been lying on the shelf from which it was snatched by the prisoner, but had been put away in a cupboard? It would not have caught the prisoner’s eye, and he would have run away without a weapon, with empty hands, and then he would certainly not have killed anyone. How then can I look upon the pestle as a proof of premeditation?

“Yes, but he talked in the taverns of murdering his father, and two days before, on the evening when he wrote his drunken letter, he was quiet and only quarrelled with a shopman in the tavern, because a Karamazov could not help quarrelling, forsooth! But my answer to that is, that, if he was planning such a murder in accordance with his letter, he certainly would not have quarrelled even with a shopman, and probably would not have gone into the tavern at all, because a person plotting such a crime seeks quiet and retirement, seeks to efface himself, to avoid being seen and heard, and that not from calculation, but from instinct. Gentlemen of the jury, the psychological method is a two-edged weapon, and we, too, can use it. As for all this shouting in taverns throughout the month, don’t we often hear children, or drunkards coming out of taverns shout, ‘I’ll kill you’? but they

don’t murder anyone. And that fatal letter — isn’t that simply drunken irritability, too? Isn’t that simply the shout of the brawler outside the tavern, ‘I’ll kill you! I’ll kill the lot of you!’ Why not, why could it not be that? What reason have we to call that letter ‘fatal’ rather than absurd? Because his father has been found murdered, because a witness saw the prisoner running out of the garden with a weapon in his hand, and was knocked down by him: therefore, we are told, everything was done as he had planned in writing, and the letter was not ‘absurd,’ but ‘fatal.’

“Now, thank God! we’ve come to the real point: ‘since he was in the garden, he must have murdered him.’ In those few words: ‘since he was, then he must’ lies the whole case for the prosecution. He was there, so he must have. And what if there is no must about it, even if he was there? Oh, I admit that the chain of evidence — the coincidences — are really suggestive. But examine all these facts separately, regardless of their connection. Why, for instance, does the prosecution refuse to admit the truth of the prisoner’s statement that he ran away from his father’s window? Remember the sarcasms in which the prosecutor indulged at the expense of the respectful and ‘pious’ sentiments which suddenly came over the murderer. But what if there were something of the sort, a feeling of religious awe, if not of filial respect? ‘My mother must have been praying for me at that moment,’ were the prisoner’s words at the preliminary inquiry, and so he ran away as soon as he convinced himself that Madame Svyetlov was not in his father’s house. ‘But he could not convince himself by looking through the window,’ the prosecutor objects. But why couldn’t he? Why? The window opened at the signals given by the prisoner. Some word might have been uttered by Fyodor Pavlovitch, some exclamation which showed the prisoner that she was not there. Why should we assume everything as we imagine it, as we make up our minds to imagine it? A thousand things may happen in reality which elude the subtlest imagination.

“‘Yes, but Grigory saw the door open and so the prisoner certainly was in the house, therefore he killed him.’ Now about that door, gentlemen of the jury.... Observe that we have only the statement of one witness as to that door, and he was at the time in such a condition, that — but supposing the door was open; supposing the prisoner has lied in denying it, from an instinct of self-defence, natural in his position; supposing he did go into the house — well, what then? How does it follow that because he was there he committed the murder? He might have dashed in, run through the rooms;

might have pushed his father away; might have struck him; but as soon as he had made sure Madame Svyetlov was not there, he may have run away rejoicing that she was not there and that he had not killed his father. And it was perhaps just because he had escaped from the temptation to kill his father, because he had a clear conscience and was rejoicing at not having killed him, that he was capable of a pure feeling, the feeling of pity and compassion, and leapt off the fence a minute later to the assistance of Grigory after he had, in his excitement, knocked him down.

"With terrible eloquence the prosecutor has described to us the dreadful state of the prisoner's mind at Mokroe when love again lay before him calling him to new life, while love was impossible for him because he had his father's bloodstained corpse behind him and beyond that corpse — retribution. And yet the prosecutor allowed him love, which he explained, according to his method, talking about this drunken condition, about a criminal being taken to execution, about it being still far off, and so on and so on. But again I ask, Mr. Prosecutor, have you not invented a new personality? Is the prisoner so coarse and heartless as to be able to think at that moment of love and of dodges to escape punishment, if his hands were really stained with his father's blood? No, no, no! As soon as it was made plain to him that she loved him and called him to her side, promising him new happiness, oh! then, I protest he must have felt the impulse to suicide doubled, trebled, and must have killed himself, if he had his father's murder on his conscience. Oh, no! he would not have forgotten where his pistols lay! I know the prisoner: the savage, stony heartlessness ascribed to him by the prosecutor is inconsistent with his character. He would have killed himself, that's certain. He did not kill himself just because 'his mother's prayers had saved him,' and he was innocent of his father's blood. He was troubled, he was grieving that night at Mokroe only about old Grigory and praying to God that the old man would recover, that his blow had not been fatal, and that he would not have to suffer for it. Why not accept such an interpretation of the facts? What trustworthy proof have we that the prisoner is lying?

"But we shall be told at once again, 'There is his father's corpse! If he ran away without murdering him, who did murder him?' Here, I repeat, you have the whole logic of the prosecution. Who murdered him, if not he? There's no one to put in his place.

“Gentlemen of the jury, is that really so? Is it positively, actually true that there is no one else at all? We’ve heard the prosecutor count on his fingers all the persons who were in that house that night. They were five in number; three of them, I agree, could not have been responsible — the murdered man himself, old Grigory, and his wife. There are left then the prisoner and Smerdyakov, and the prosecutor dramatically exclaims that the prisoner pointed to Smerdyakov because he had no one else to fix on, that had there been a sixth person, even a phantom of a sixth person, he would have abandoned the charge against Smerdyakov at once in shame and have accused that other. But, gentlemen of the jury, why may I not draw the very opposite conclusion? There are two persons — the prisoner and Smerdyakov. Why can I not say that you accuse my client, simply because you have no one else to accuse? And you have no one else only because you have determined to exclude Smerdyakov from all suspicion.

“It’s true, indeed, Smerdyakov is accused only by the prisoner, his two brothers, and Madame Svyetlov. But there are others who accuse him: there are vague rumours of a question, of a suspicion, an obscure report, a feeling of expectation. Finally, we have the evidence of a combination of facts very suggestive, though, I admit, inconclusive. In the first place we have precisely on the day of the catastrophe that fit, for the genuineness of which the prosecutor, for some reason, has felt obliged to make a careful defence. Then Smerdyakov’s sudden suicide on the eve of the trial. Then the equally startling evidence given in court to-day by the elder of the prisoner’s brothers, who had believed in his guilt, but has to-day produced a bundle of notes and proclaimed Smerdyakov as the murderer. Oh, I fully share the court’s and the prosecutor’s conviction that Ivan Karamazov is suffering from brain fever, that his statement may really be a desperate effort, planned in delirium, to save his brother by throwing the guilt on the dead man. But again Smerdyakov’s name is pronounced, again there is a suggestion of mystery. There is something unexplained, incomplete. And perhaps it may one day be explained. But we won’t go into that now. Of that later.

“The court has resolved to go on with the trial, but, meantime, I might make a few remarks about the character-sketch of Smerdyakov drawn with subtlety and talent by the prosecutor. But while I admire his talent I cannot agree with him. I have visited Smerdyakov, I have seen him and talked to him, and he made a very different impression on me. He was weak in health, it is true; but in character, in spirit, he was by no means the weak

man the prosecutor has made him out to be. I found in him no trace of the timidity on which the prosecutor so insisted. There was no simplicity about him, either. I found in him, on the contrary, an extreme mistrustfulness concealed under a mask of naivete, and an intelligence of considerable range. The prosecutor was too simple in taking him for weak-minded. He made a very definite impression on me: I left him with the conviction that he was a distinctly spiteful creature, excessively ambitious, vindictive, and intensely envious. I made some inquiries: he resented his parentage, was ashamed of it, and would clench his teeth when he remembered that he was the son of ‘stinking Lizaveta.’ He was disrespectful to the servant Grigory and his wife, who had cared for him in his childhood. He cursed and jeered at Russia. He dreamed of going to France and becoming a Frenchman. He used often to say that he hadn’t the means to do so. I fancy he loved no one but himself and had a strangely high opinion of himself. His conception of culture was limited to good clothes, clean shirt-fronts and polished boots. Believing himself to be the illegitimate son of Fyodor Pavlovitch (there is evidence of this), he might well have resented his position, compared with that of his master’s legitimate sons. They had everything, he nothing. They had all the rights, they had the inheritance, while he was only the cook. He told me himself that he had helped Fyodor Pavlovitch to put the notes in the envelope. The destination of that sum — a sum which would have made his career — must have been hateful to him. Moreover, he saw three thousand roubles in new rainbow-coloured notes. (I asked him about that on purpose.) Oh, beware of showing an ambitious and envious man a large sum of money at once! And it was the first time he had seen so much money in the hands of one man. The sight of the rainbow-coloured notes may have made a morbid impression on his imagination, but with no immediate results.

“The talented prosecutor, with extraordinary subtlety, sketched for us all the arguments for and against the hypothesis of Smerdyakov’s guilt, and asked us in particular what motive he had in feigning a fit. But he may not have been feigning at all, the fit may have happened quite naturally, but it may have passed off quite naturally, and the sick man may have recovered, not completely perhaps, but still regaining consciousness, as happens with epileptics.

“The prosecutor asks at what moment could Smerdyakov have committed the murder. But it is very easy to point out that moment. He

might have waked up from deep sleep (for he was only asleep — an epileptic fit is always followed by a deep sleep) at that moment when the old Grigory shouted at the top of his voice ‘Parricide!’ That shout in the dark and stillness may have waked Smerdyakov whose sleep may have been less sound at the moment: he might naturally have waked up an hour before.

“Getting out of bed, he goes almost unconsciously and with no definite motive towards the sound to see what’s the matter. His head is still clouded with his attack, his faculties are half asleep; but, once in the garden, he walks to the lighted windows and he hears terrible news from his master, who would be, of course, glad to see him. His mind sets to work at once. He hears all the details from his frightened master, and gradually in his disordered brain there shapes itself an idea — terrible, but seductive and irresistibly logical. To kill the old man, take the three thousand, and throw all the blame on to his young master. A terrible lust of money, of booty, might seize upon him as he realised his security from detection. Oh! these sudden and irresistible impulses come so often when there is a favourable opportunity, and especially with murderers who have had no idea of committing a murder beforehand. And Smerdyakov may have gone in and carried out his plan. With what weapon? Why, with any stone picked up in the garden. But what for, with what object? Why, the three thousand which means a career for him. Oh, I am not contradicting myself — the money may have existed. And perhaps Smerdyakov alone knew where to find it, where his master kept it. And the covering of the money — the torn envelope on the floor?

“Just now, when the prosecutor was explaining his subtle theory that only an inexperienced thief like Karamazov would have left the envelope on the floor, and not one like Smerdyakov, who would have avoided leaving a piece of evidence against himself, I thought as I listened that I was hearing something very familiar, and, would you believe it, I have heard that very argument, that very conjecture, of how Karamazov would have behaved, precisely two days before, from Smerdyakov himself. What’s more, it struck me at the time. I fancied that there was an artificial simplicity about him; that he was in a hurry to suggest this idea to me that I might fancy it was my own. He insinuated it, as it were. Did he not insinuate the same idea at the inquiry and suggest it to the talented prosecutor?

“I shall be asked, ‘What about the old woman, Grigory’s wife? She heard the sick man moaning close by, all night.’ Yes, she heard it, but that evidence is extremely unreliable. I knew a lady who complained bitterly that she had been kept awake all night by a dog in the yard. Yet the poor beast, it appeared, had only yelped once or twice in the night. And that’s natural. If anyone is asleep and hears a groan he wakes up, annoyed at being waked, but instantly falls asleep again. Two hours later, again a groan, he wakes up and falls asleep again; and the same thing again two hours later — three times altogether in the night. Next morning the sleeper wakes up and complains that someone has been groaning all night and keeping him awake. And it is bound to seem so to him: the intervals of two hours of sleep he does not remember, he only remembers the moments of waking, so he feels he has been waked up all night.

“But why, why, asks the prosecutor, did not Smerdyakov confess in his last letter? Why did his conscience prompt him to one step and not to both? But, excuse me, conscience implies penitence, and the suicide may not have felt penitence, but only despair. Despair and penitence are two very different things. Despair may be vindictive and irreconcilable, and the suicide, laying his hands on himself, may well have felt redoubled hatred for those whom he had envied all his life.

“Gentlemen of the jury, beware of a miscarriage of justice! What is there unlikely in all I have put before you just now? Find the error in my reasoning; find the impossibility, the absurdity. And if there is but a shade of possibility, but a shade of probability in my propositions, do not condemn him. And is there only a shade? I swear by all that is sacred, I fully believe in the explanation of the murder I have just put forward. What troubles me and makes me indignant is that of all the mass of facts heaped up by the prosecution against the prisoner, there is not a single one certain and irrefutable. And yet the unhappy man is to be ruined by the accumulation of these facts. Yes, the accumulated effect is awful: the blood, the blood dripping from his fingers, the bloodstained shirt, the dark night resounding with the shout ‘Parricide!’ and the old man falling with a broken head. And then the mass of phrases, statements, gestures, shouts! Oh! this has so much influence, it can so bias the mind; but, gentlemen of the jury, can it bias your minds? Remember, you have been given absolute power to bind and to loose, but the greater the power, the more terrible its responsibility.

“I do not draw back one iota from what I have said just now, but suppose for one moment I agreed with the prosecution that my luckless client had stained his hands with his father’s blood. This is only hypothesis, I repeat; I never for one instant doubt of his innocence. But, so be it, I assume that my client is guilty of parricide. Even so, hear what I have to say. I have it in my heart to say something more to you, for I feel that there must be a great conflict in your hearts and minds.... Forgive my referring to your hearts and minds, gentlemen of the jury, but I want to be truthful and sincere to the end. Let us all be sincere!”

At this point the speech was interrupted by rather loud applause. The last words, indeed, were pronounced with a note of such sincerity that everyone felt that he really might have something to say, and that what he was about to say would be of the greatest consequence. But the President, hearing the applause, in a loud voice threatened to clear the court if such an incident were repeated. Every sound was hushed and Fetyukovitch began in a voice full of feeling quite unlike the tone he had used hitherto.

CHAPTER 13

A Corrupter of Thought

“IT’S not only the accumulation of facts that threatens my client with ruin, gentlemen of the jury,” he began, “what is really damning for my client is one fact — the dead body of his father. Had it been an ordinary case of murder you would have rejected the charge in view of the triviality, the incompleteness, and the fantastic character of the evidence, if you examine each part of it separately; or, at least, you would have hesitated to ruin a man’s life simply from the prejudice against him which he has, alas! only too well deserved. But it’s not an ordinary case of murder, it’s a case of parricide. That impresses men’s minds, and to such a degree that the very triviality and incompleteness of the evidence becomes less trivial and less incomplete even to an unprejudiced mind. How can such a prisoner be acquitted? What if he committed the murder and gets off unpunished? That is what everyone, almost involuntarily, instinctively, feels at heart.

“Yes, it’s a fearful thing to shed a father’s blood — the father who has begotten me, loved me, not spared his life for me, grieved over my illnesses from childhood up, troubled all his life for my happiness, and has lived in my joys, in my successes. To murder such a father — that’s inconceivable. Gentlemen of the jury, what is a father — a real father? What is the meaning of that great word? What is the great idea in that name? We have just indicated in part what a true father is and what he ought to be. In the case in which we are now so deeply occupied and over which our hearts are aching — in the present case, the father, Fyodor Pavlovitch Karamazov, did not correspond to that conception of a father to which we have just referred. That’s the misfortune. And indeed some fathers are a misfortune. Let us examine this misfortune rather more closely: we must shrink from nothing, gentlemen of the jury, considering the importance of the decision you have to make. It’s our particular duty not to shrink from any idea, like children or frightened women, as the talented prosecutor happily expresses it.

“But in the course of his heated speech my esteemed opponent (and he was my opponent before I opened my lips) exclaimed several times, ‘Oh, I will not yield the defence of the prisoner to the lawyer who has come down from Petersburg. I accuse, but I defend also!’ He exclaimed that several

times, but forgot to mention that if this terrible prisoner was for twenty-three years so grateful for a mere pound of nuts given him by the only man who had been kind to him, as a child in his father's house, might not such a man well have remembered for twenty-three years how he ran in his father's back-yard, without boots on his feet and with his little trousers hanging by one button' — to use the expression of the kindhearted doctor, Herzenstube?

"Oh, gentlemen of the jury, why need we look more closely at this misfortune, why repeat what we all know already? What did my client meet with when he arrived here, at his father's house, and why depict my client as a heartless egoist and monster? He is uncontrolled, he is wild and unruly — we are trying him now for that — but who is responsible for his life? Who is responsible for his having received such an unseemly bringing up, in spite of his excellent disposition and his grateful and sensitive heart? Did anyone train him to be reasonable? Was he enlightened by study? Did anyone love him ever so little in his childhood? My client was left to the care of Providence like a beast of the field. He thirsted perhaps to see his father after long years of separation. A thousand times perhaps he may, recalling his childhood, have driven away the loathsome phantoms that haunted his childish dreams and with all his heart he may have longed to embrace and to forgive his father! And what awaited him? He was met by cynical taunts, suspicions and wrangling about money. He heard nothing but revolting talk and vicious precepts uttered daily over the brandy, and at last he saw his father seducing his mistress from him with his own money. Oh, gentlemen of the jury, that was cruel and revolting! And that old man was always complaining of the disrespect and cruelty of his son. He slandered him in society, injured him, calumniated him, bought up his unpaid debts to get him thrown into prison.

"Gentlemen of the jury, people like my client, who are fierce, unruly, and uncontrolled on the surface, are sometimes, most frequently indeed, exceedingly tender-hearted, only they don't express it. Don't laugh, don't laugh at my idea! The talented prosecutor laughed mercilessly just now at my client for loving Schiller — loving the sublime and beautiful! I should not have laughed at that in his place. Yes, such natures — oh, let me speak in defence of such natures, so often and so cruelly misunderstood — these natures often thirst for tenderness, goodness, and justice, as it were, in contrast to themselves, their unruliness, their ferocity — they thirst for it

unconsciously. Passionate and fierce on the surface, they are painfully capable of loving woman, for instance, and with a spiritual and elevated love. Again do not laugh at me, this is very often the case in such natures. But they cannot hide their passions — sometimes very coarse — and that is conspicuous and is noticed, but the inner man is unseen. Their passions are quickly exhausted; but, by the side of a noble and lofty creature that seemingly coarse and rough man seeks a new life, seeks to correct himself, to be better, to become noble and honourable, ‘sublime and beautiful,’ however much the expression has been ridiculed.

“I said just now that I would not venture to touch upon my client’s engagement. But I may say half a word. What we heard just now was not evidence, but only the scream of a frenzied and revengeful woman, and it was not for her — oh, not for her! — to reproach him with treachery, for she has betrayed him! If she had had but a little time for reflection she would not have given such evidence. Oh, do not believe her! No, my client is not a monster, as she called him!

“The Lover of Mankind on the eve of His Crucifixion said: ‘I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep, so that not one of them might be lost.’ Let not a man’s soul be lost through us!

“I asked just now what does ‘father’ mean, and exclaimed that it was a great word, a precious name. But one must use words honestly, gentlemen, and I venture to call things by their right names: such a father as old Karamazov cannot be called a father and does not deserve to be. Filial love for an unworthy father is an absurdity, an impossibility. Love cannot be created from nothing: only God can create something from nothing.

“‘Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath,’ the apostle writes, from a heart glowing with love. It’s not for the sake of my client that I quote these sacred words, I mention them for all fathers. Who has authorised me to preach to fathers? No one. But as a man and a citizen I make my appeal — vivos voco! We are not long on earth, we do many evil deeds and say many evil words. So let us all catch a favourable moment when we are all together to say a good word to each other. That’s what I am doing: while I am in this place I take advantage of my opportunity. Not for nothing is this tribune given us by the highest authority — all Russia hears us! I am not speaking only for the fathers here present, I cry aloud to all fathers: ‘Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.’ Yes, let us first fulfil Christ’s injunction ourselves and only then venture to expect it of our children.

Otherwise we are not fathers, but enemies of our children, and they are not our children, but our enemies, and we have made them our enemies ourselves. ‘What measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you again’ — it’s not I who say that, it’s the Gospel precept, measure to others according as they measure to you. How can we blame children if they measure us according to our measure?

“Not long ago a servant girl in Finland was suspected of having secretly given birth to a child. She was watched, and a box of which no one knew anything was found in the corner of the loft, behind some bricks. It was opened and inside was found the body of a new-born child which she had killed. In the same box were found the skeletons of two other babies which, according to her own confession, she had killed at the moment of their birth.

“Gentlemen of the jury, was she a mother to her children? She gave birth to them, indeed; but was she a mother to them? Would anyone venture to give her the sacred name of mother? Let us be bold, gentlemen, let us be audacious even: it’s our duty to be so at this moment and not to be afraid of certain words and ideas like the Moscow women in Ostrovsky’s play, who are scared at the sound of certain words. No, let us prove that the progress of the last few years has touched even us, and let us say plainly, the father is not merely he who begets the child, but he who begets it and does his duty by it.

“Oh, of course, there is the other meaning, there is the other interpretation of the word ‘father,’ which insists that any father, even though he be a monster, even though he be the enemy of his children, still remains my father simply because he begot me. But this is, so to say, the mystical meaning which I cannot comprehend with my intellect, but can only accept by faith, or, better to say, on faith, like many other things which I do not understand, but which religion bids me believe. But in that case let it be kept outside the sphere of actual life. In the sphere of actual life, which has, indeed, its own rights, but also lays upon us great duties and obligations, in that sphere, if we want to be humane — Christian, in fact — we must, or ought to, act only upon convictions justified by reason and experience, which have been passed through the crucible of analysis; in a word, we must act rationally, and not as though in dream and delirium, that we may not do harm, that we may not ill-treat and ruin a man. Then it will be real Christian work, not only mystic, but rational and philanthropic....”

There was violent applause at this passage from many parts of the court, but Fetyukovitch waved his hands as though imploring them to let him finish without interruption. The court relapsed into silence at once. The orator went on.

“Do you suppose, gentlemen, that our children as they grow up and begin to reason can avoid such questions? No, they cannot, and we will not impose on them an impossible restriction. The sight of an unworthy father involuntarily suggests tormenting questions to a young creature, especially when he compares him with the excellent fathers of his companions. The conventional answer to this question is: ‘He begot you, and you are his flesh and blood, and therefore you are bound to love him.’ The youth involuntarily reflects: ‘But did he love me when he begot me?’ he asks, wondering more and more. ‘Was it for my sake he begot me? He did not know me, not even my sex, at that moment, at the moment of passion, perhaps, inflamed by wine, and he has only transmitted to me a propensity to drunkenness — that’s all he’s done for me.... Why am I bound to love him simply for begetting me when he has cared nothing for me all my life after?’

“Oh, perhaps those questions strike you as coarse and cruel, but do not expect an impossible restraint from a young mind. ‘Drive nature out of the door and it will fly in at the window,’ and, above all, let us not be afraid of words, but decide the question according to the dictates of reason and humanity and not of mystic ideas. How shall it be decided? Why, like this. Let the son stand before his father and ask him, ‘Father, tell me, why must I love you? Father, show me that I must love you,’ and if that father is able to answer him and show him good reason, we have a real, normal, parental relation, not resting on mystical prejudice, but on a rational, responsible and strictly humanitarian basis. But if he does not, there’s an end to the family tie. He is not a father to him, and the son has a right to look upon him as a stranger, and even an enemy. Our tribune, gentlemen of the jury, ought to be a school of true and sound ideas.”

(Here the orator was interrupted by irrepressible and almost frantic applause. Of course, it was not the whole audience, but a good half of it applauded. The fathers and mothers present applauded. Shrieks and exclamations were heard from the gallery, where the ladies were sitting. Handkerchiefs were waved. The President began ringing his bell with all his might. He was obviously irritated by the behaviour of the audience, but did

not venture to clear the court as he had threatened. Even persons of high position, old men with stars on their breasts, sitting on specially reserved seats behind the judges, applauded the orator and waved their handkerchiefs. So that when the noise died down, the President confined himself to repeating his stern threat to clear the court, and Fetyukovitch, excited and triumphant, continued his speech.)

“Gentlemen of the jury, you remember that awful night of which so much has been said to-day, when the son got over the fence and stood face to face with the enemy and persecutor who had begotten him. I insist most emphatically it was not for money he ran to his father’s house: the charge of robbery is an absurdity, as I proved before. And it was not to murder him he broke into the house, oh, no! If he had had that design he would, at least, have taken the precaution of arming himself beforehand. The brass pestle he caught up instinctively without knowing why he did it. Granted that he deceived his father by tapping at the window, granted that he made his way in — I’ve said already that I do not for a moment believe that legend, but let it be so, let us suppose it for a moment. Gentlemen, I swear to you by all that’s holy, if it had not been his father, but an ordinary enemy, he would, after running through the rooms and satisfying himself that the woman was not there, have made off, post-haste, without doing any harm to his rival. He would have struck him, pushed him away perhaps, nothing more, for he had no thought and no time to spare for that. What he wanted to know was where she was. But his father, his father! The mere sight of the father who had hated him from his childhood, had been his enemy, his persecutor, and now his unnatural rival, was enough! A feeling of hatred came over him involuntarily, irresistibly, clouding his reason. It all surged up in one moment! It was an impulse of madness and insanity, but also an impulse of nature, irresistibly and unconsciously (like everything in nature) avenging the violation of its eternal laws.

“But the prisoner even then did not murder him — I maintain that, I cry that aloud! — no, he only brandished the pestle in a burst of indignant disgust, not meaning to kill him, not knowing that he would kill him. Had he not had this fatal pestle in his hand, he would have only knocked his father down perhaps, but would not have killed him. As he ran away, he did not know whether he had killed the old man. Such a murder is not a murder. Such a murder is not a parricide. No, the murder of such a father cannot be

called parricide. Such a murder can only be reckoned parricide by prejudice.

“But I appeal to you again and again from the depths of my soul; did this murder actually take place? Gentlemen of the jury, if we convict and punish him, he will say to himself: ‘These people have done nothing for my bringing up, for my education, nothing to improve my lot, nothing to make me better, nothing to make me a man. These people have not given me to eat and to drink, have not visited me in prison and nakedness, and here they have sent me to penal servitude. I am quits, I owe them nothing now, and owe no one anything for ever. They are wicked and I will be wicked. They are cruel and I will be cruel.’ That is what he will say, gentlemen of the jury. And I swear, by finding him guilty you will only make it easier for him: you will ease his conscience, he will curse the blood he has shed and will not regret it. At the same time you will destroy in him the possibility of becoming a new man, for he will remain in his wickedness and blindness all his life.

“But do you want to punish him fearfully, terribly, with the most awful punishment that could be imagined, and at the same time to save him and regenerate his soul? If so, overwhelm him with your mercy! You will see, you will hear how he will tremble and be horror-struck. ‘How can I endure this mercy? How can I endure so much love? Am I worthy of it?’ That’s what he will exclaim.

“Oh, I know, I know that heart, that wild but grateful heart, gentlemen of the jury! It will bow before your mercy; it thirsts for a great and loving action, it will melt and mount upwards. There are souls which, in their limitation, blame the whole world. But subdue such a soul with mercy, show it love, and it will curse its past, for there are many good impulses in it. Such a heart will expand and see that God is merciful and that men are good and just. He will be horror-stricken; he will be crushed by remorse and the vast obligation laid upon him henceforth. And he will not say then, ‘I am quits,’ but will say, ‘I am guilty in the sight of all men and am more unworthy than all.’ With tears of penitence and poignant, tender anguish, he will exclaim: ‘Others are better than I, they wanted to save me, not to ruin me!’ Oh, this act of mercy is so easy for you, for in the absence of anything like real evidence it will be too awful for you to pronounce: ‘Yes, he is guilty.’

“Better acquit ten guilty men than punish one innocent man! Do you hear, do you hear that majestic voice from the past century of our glorious history? It is not for an insignificant person like me to remind you that the Russian court does not exist for the punishment only, but also for the salvation of the criminal! Let other nations think of retribution and the letter of the law, we will cling to the spirit and the meaning — the salvation and the reformation of the lost. If this is true, if Russia and her justice are such, she may go forward with good cheer! Do not try to scare us with your frenzied troikas from which all the nations stand aside in disgust. Not a runaway troika, but the stately chariot of Russia will move calmly and majestically to its goal. In your hands is the fate of my client, in your hands is the fate of Russian justice. You will defend it, you will save it, you will prove that there are men to watch over it, that it is in good hands!”

CHAPTER 14

The Peasants Stand Firm

THIS was how Fetyukovitch concluded his speech, and the enthusiasm of the audience burst like an irresistible storm. It was out of the question to stop it: the women wept, many of the men wept too, even two important personages shed tears. The President submitted, and even postponed ringing his bell. The suppression of such an enthusiasm would be the suppression of something sacred, as the ladies cried afterwards. The orator himself was genuinely touched.

And it was at this moment that Ippolit Kirillovitch got up to make certain objections. People looked at him with hatred. “What? What’s the meaning of it? He positively dares to make objections,” the ladies babbled. But if the whole world of ladies, including his wife, had protested he could not have been stopped at that moment. He was pale, he was shaking with emotion, his first phrases were even unintelligible, he gasped for breath, could hardly speak clearly, lost the thread. But he soon recovered himself. Of this new speech of his I will quote only a few sentences.

“... I am reproached with having woven a romance. But what is this defence if not one romance on the top of another? All that was lacking was poetry. Fyodor Pavlovitch, while waiting for his mistress, tears open the envelope and throws it on the floor. We are even told what he said while engaged in this strange act. Is not this a flight of fancy? And what proof have we that he had taken out the money? Who heard what he said? The weak-minded idiot, Smerdyakov, transformed into a Byronic hero, avenging society for his illegitimate birth — isn’t this a romance in the Byronic style? And the son who breaks into his father’s house and murders him without murdering him is not even a romance — this is a sphinx setting us a riddle which he cannot solve himself. If he murdered him, he murdered him, and what’s the meaning of his murdering him without having murdered him — who can make head or tail of this?

“Then we are admonished that our tribune is a tribune of true and sound ideas and from this tribune of ‘sound ideas’ is heard a solemn declaration that to call the murder of a father ‘parricide’ is nothing but a prejudice! But if parricide is a prejudice, and if every child is to ask his father why he is to

love him, what will become of us? What will become of the foundations of society? What will become of the family? Parricide, it appears, is only a bogy of Moscow merchants' wives. The most precious, the most sacred guarantees for the destiny and future of Russian justice are presented to us in a perverted and frivolous form, simply to attain an object — to obtain the justification of something which cannot be justified. 'Oh, crush him by mercy,' cries the counsel for the defence; but that's all the criminal wants, and to-morrow it will be seen how much he is crushed. And is not the counsel for the defence too modest in asking only for the acquittal of the prisoner? Why not found a charity in the honour of the parricide to commemorate his exploit among future generations? Religion and the Gospel are corrected — that's all mysticism, we are told, and ours is the only true Christianity which has been subjected to the analysis of reason and common sense. And so they set up before us a false semblance of Christ! 'What measure ye mete so it shall be meted unto you again,' cried the counsel for the defence, and instantly deduces that Christ teaches us to measure as it is measured to us and this from the tribune of truth and sound sense! We peep into the Gospel only on the eve of making speeches, in order to dazzle the audience by our acquaintance with what is, anyway, a rather original composition, which may be of use to produce a certain effect — all to serve the purpose! But what Christ commands us is something very different: He bids us beware of doing this, because the wicked world does this, but we ought to forgive and to turn the other cheek, and not to measure to our persecutors as they measure to us. This is what our God has taught us and not that to forbid children to murder their fathers is a prejudice. And we will not from the tribune of truth and good sense correct the Gospel of our Lord, Whom the counsel for the defence deigns to call only 'the crucified lover of humanity,' in opposition to all orthodox Russia, which calls to Him, 'For Thou art our God!'"

At this the President intervened and checked the over-zealous speaker, begging him not to exaggerate, not to overstep the bounds, and so on, as presidents always do in such cases. The audience, too, was uneasy. The public was restless: there were even exclamations of indignation. Fetyukovitch did not so much as reply; he only mounted the tribune to lay his hand on his heart and, with an offended voice, utter a few words full of dignity. He only touched again, lightly and ironically, on "romancing" and "psychology," and in an appropriate place quoted, "Jupiter, you are angry,

therefore you are wrong," which provoked a burst of approving laughter in the audience, for Ippolit Kirillovitch was by no means like Jupiter. Then, a propos of the accusation that he was teaching the young generation to murder their fathers, Fetyukovitch observed, with great dignity, that he would not even answer. As for the prosecutor's charge of uttering unorthodox opinions, Fetyukovitch hinted that it was a personal insinuation and that he had expected in this court to be secure from accusations "damaging to my reputation as a citizen and a loyal subject." But at these words the President pulled him up, too, and Fetyukovitch concluded his speech with a bow, amid a hum of approbation in the court. And Ippolit Kirillovitch was, in the opinion of our ladies, "crushed for good."

Then the prisoner was allowed to speak. Mitya stood up, but said very little. He was fearfully exhausted, physically and mentally. The look of strength and independence with which he had entered in the morning had almost disappeared. He seemed as though he had passed through an experience that day, which had taught him for the rest of his life something very important he had not understood till then. His voice was weak, he did not shout as before. In his words there was a new note of humility, defeat and submission.

"What am I to say, gentlemen of the jury? The hour of judgment has come for me, I feel the hand of God upon me! The end has come to an erring man! But, before God, I repeat to you, I am innocent of my father's blood! For the last time I repeat, it wasn't I killed him! I was erring, but I loved what is good. Every instant I strove to reform, but I lived like a wild beast. I thank the prosecutor, he told me many things about myself that I did not know; but it's not true that I killed my father, the prosecutor is mistaken. I thank my counsel, too. I cried listening to him; but it's not true that I killed my father, and he needn't have supposed it. And don't believe the doctors. I am perfectly sane, only my heart is heavy. If you spare me, if you let me go, I will pray for you. I will be a better man. I give you my word before God I will! And if you will condemn me, I'll break my sword over my head myself and kiss the pieces. But spare me, do not rob me of my God! I know myself, I shall rebel! My heart is heavy, gentlemen... spare me!"

He almost fell back in his place: his voice broke: he could hardly articulate the last phrase. Then the judges proceeded to put the questions and began to ask both sides to formulate their conclusions. But I will not describe the details. At last the jury rose to retire for consultation. The

President was very tired, and so his last charge to the jury was rather feeble. “Be impartial, don’t be influenced by the eloquence of the defence, but yet weigh the arguments. Remember that there is a great responsibility laid upon you,” and so on and so on.

The jury withdrew and the court adjourned. People could get up, move about, exchange their accumulated impressions, refresh themselves at the buffet. It was very late, almost one o’clock in the night, but nobody went away: the strain was so great that no one could think of repose. All waited with sinking hearts; though that is, perhaps, too much to say, for the ladies were only in a state of hysterical impatience and their hearts were untroubled. An acquittal, they thought, was inevitable. They all prepared themselves for a dramatic moment of general enthusiasm. I must own there were many among the men, too, who were convinced that an acquittal was inevitable. Some were pleased, others frowned, while some were simply dejected, not wanting him to be acquitted. Fetyukovitch himself was confident of his success. He was surrounded by people congratulating him and fawning upon him.

“There are,” he said to one group, as I was told afterwards, “there are invisible threads binding the counsel for the defence with the jury. One feels during one’s speech if they are being formed. I was aware of them. They exist. Our cause is won. Set your mind at rest.”

“What will our peasants say now?” said one stout, cross-looking, pock-marked gentleman, a landowner of the neighbourhood, approaching a group of gentlemen engaged in conversation.

“But they are not all peasants. There are four government clerks among them.”

“Yes, there are clerks,” said a member of the district council, joining the group.

“And do you know that Nazaryev, the merchant with the medal, a juryman?”

“What of him?”

“He is a man with brains.”

“But he never speaks.”

“He is no great talker, but so much the better. There’s no need for the Petersburg man to teach him: he could teach all Petersburg himself. He’s the father of twelve children. Think of that!”

“Upon my word, you don’t suppose they won’t acquit him?” one of our young officials exclaimed in another group.

“They’ll acquit him for certain,” said a resolute voice.

“It would be shameful, disgraceful, not to acquit him cried the official. “Suppose he did murder him — there are fathers and fathers! And, besides, he was in such a frenzy.... He really may have done nothing but swing the pestle in the air, and so knocked the old man down. But it was a pity they dragged the valet in. That was simply an absurd theory! If I’d been in Fetyukovitch’s place, I should simply have said straight out: ‘He murdered him; but he is not guilty, hang it all!’

“That’s what he did, only without saying, ‘Hang it all!’”

“No, Mihail Semyonovitch, he almost said that, too,” put in a third voice.

“Why, gentlemen, in Lent an actress was acquitted in our town who had cut the throat of her lover’s lawful wife.”

“Oh, but she did not finish cutting it.”

“That makes no difference. She began cutting it.”

“What did you think of what he said about children? Splendid, wasn’t it?”

“Splended!”

“And about mysticism, too!”

“Oh, drop mysticism, do!” cried someone else; “think of Ippolit and his fate from this day forth. His wife will scratch his eyes out to-morrow for Mitya’s sake.”

“Is she here?”

“What an idea! If she’d been here she’d have scratched them out in court. She is at home with toothache. He he he!”

“He he he!”

In a third group:

“I dare say they will acquit Mitenka, after all.”

“I should not be surprised if he turns the Metropolis upside down to-morrow. He will be drinking for ten days!”

“Oh, the devil!”

“The devil’s bound to have a hand in it. Where should he be if not here?”

“Well, gentlemen, I admit it was eloquent. But still it’s not the thing to break your father’s head with a pestle! Or what are we coming to?”

“The chariot! Do you remember the chariot?”

“Yes; he turned a cart into a chariot!”

“And to-morrow he will turn a chariot into a cart, just to suit his purpose.”

“What cunning chaps there are nowadays! Is there any justice to be had in Russia?”

But the bell rang. The jury deliberated for exactly an hour, neither more nor less. A profound silence reigned in the court as soon as the public had taken their seats. I remember how the jurymen walked into the court. At last! I won’t repeat the questions in order, and, indeed, I have forgotten them. I remember only the answer to the President’s first and chief question: “Did the prisoner commit the murder for the sake of robbery and with premeditation?” (I don’t remember the exact words.) There was a complete hush. The foreman of the jury, the youngest of the clerks, pronounced, in a clear, loud voice, amidst the deathlike stillness of the court:

“Yes, guilty!”

And the same answer was repeated to every question: “Yes, guilty!” and without the slightest extenuating comment. This no one had expected; almost everyone had reckoned upon a recommendation to mercy, at least. The death-like silence in the court was not broken — all seemed petrified: those who desired his conviction as well as those who had been eager for his acquittal. But that was only for the first instant, and it was followed by a fearful hubbub. Many of the men in the audience were pleased. Some were rubbing their hands with no attempt to conceal their joy. Those who disagreed with the verdict seemed crushed, shrugged their shoulders, whispered, but still seemed unable to realise this. But how shall I describe the state the ladies were in? I thought they would create a riot. At first they could scarcely believe their ears. Then suddenly the whole court rang with exclamations: “What’s the meaning of it? What next?” They leapt up from their places. They seemed to fancy that it might be at once reconsidered and reversed. At that instant Mitya suddenly stood up and cried in a heart-rending voice, stretching his hands out before him:

“I swear by God and the dreadful Day of Judgment I am not guilty of my father’s blood! Katya, I forgive you! Brothers, friends, have pity on the other woman!”

He could not go on, and broke into a terrible sobbing wail that was heard all over the court in a strange, unnatural voice unlike his own. From the farthest corner at the back of the gallery came a piercing shriek — it was

Grushenka. She had succeeded in begging admittance to the court again before the beginning of the lawyers' speeches. Mitya was taken away. The passing of the sentence was deferred till next day. The whole court was in a hubbub but I did not wait to hear. I only remember a few exclamations I heard on the steps as I went out.

"He'll have a twenty years' trip to the mines!"

"Not less."

"Well, our peasants have stood firm."

"And have done for our Mitya."

EPILOGUE

CHAPTER 1

Plans for Mitya's Escape

VERY early, at nine o'clock in the morning, five days after the trial, Alyosha went to Katerina Ivanovna's to talk over a matter of great importance to both of them, and to give her a message. She sat and talked to him in the very room in which she had once received Grushenka. In the next room Ivan Fyodorovitch lay unconscious in a high fever. Katerina Ivanovna had immediately after the scene at the trial ordered the sick and unconscious man to be carried to her house, disregarding the inevitable gossip and general disapproval of the public. One of two relations who lived with her had departed to Moscow immediately after the scene in court, the other remained. But if both had gone away, Katerina Ivanovna would have adhered to her resolution, and would have gone on nursing the sick man and sitting by him day and night. Varvinsky and Herzenstube were attending him. The famous doctor had gone back to Moscow, refusing to give an opinion as to the probable end of the illness. Though the doctors encouraged Katerina Ivanovna and Alyosha, it was evident that they could not yet give them positive hopes of recovery.

Alyosha came to see his sick brother twice a day. But this time he had specially urgent business, and he foresaw how difficult it would be to approach the subject, yet he was in great haste. He had another engagement that could not be put off for that same morning, and there was need of haste.

They had been talking for a quarter of an hour. Katerina Ivanovna was pale and terribly fatigued, yet at the same time in a state of hysterical excitement. She had a presentiment of the reason why Alyosha had come to her.

"Don't worry about his decision," she said, with confident emphasis to Alyosha. "One way or another he is bound to come to it. He must escape. That unhappy man, that hero of honour and principle — not he, not Dmitri Fyodorovitch, but the man lying the other side of that door, who has sacrificed himself for his brother," Katya added, with flashing eyes— "told me the whole plan of escape long ago. You know he has already entered into negotiations.... I've told you something already.... You see, it will probably come off at the third etape from here, when the party of prisoners

is being taken to Siberia. Oh, it’s a long way off yet. Ivan Fyodorovitch has already visited the superintendent of the third etape. But we don’t know yet who will be in charge of the party, and it’s impossible to find that out so long beforehand. To-morrow, perhaps, I will show you in detail the whole plan which Ivan Fyodorovitch left me on the eve of the trial in case of need.... That was when — do you remember? — you found us quarrelling. He had just gone downstairs, but seeing you I made him come back; do you remember? Do you know what we were quarrelling about then?”

“No, I don’t,” said Alyosha.

“Of course he did not tell you. It was about that plan of escape. He had told me the main idea three days before, and we began quarrelling about it at once and quarrelled for three days. We quarrelled because, when he told me that if Dmitri Fyodorovitch were convicted he would escape abroad with that creature, I felt furious at once — I can’t tell you why, I don’t know myself why.... Oh, of course, I was furious then about that creature, and that she, too, should go abroad with Dmitri!” Katerina Ivanovna exclaimed suddenly, her lips quivering with anger. “As soon as Ivan Fyodorovitch saw that I was furious about that woman, he instantly imagined I was jealous of Dmitri and that I still loved Dmitri. That is how our first quarrel began. I would not give an explanation, I could not ask forgiveness. I could not bear to think that such a man could suspect me of still loving that... and when I myself had told him long before that I did not love Dmitri, that I loved no one but him! It was only resentment against that creature that made me angry with him. Three days later, on the evening you came, he brought me a sealed envelope, which I was to open at once, if anything happened to him. Oh, he foresaw his illness! He told me that the envelope contained the details of the escape, and that if he died or was taken dangerously ill, I was to save Mitya alone. Then he left me money, nearly ten thousand — those notes to which the prosecutor referred in his speech, having learnt from someone that he had sent them to be changed. I was tremendously impressed to find that Ivan Fyodorovitch had not given up his idea of saving his brother, and was confiding this plan of escape to me, though he was still jealous of me and still convinced that I loved Mitya. Oh, that was a sacrifice! No, you cannot understand the greatness of such self-sacrifice, Alexey Fyodorovitch. I wanted to fall at his feet in reverence, but I thought at once that he would take it only for my joy at the thought of Mitya’s being saved (and he certainly would have imagined that!), and I was so

exasperated at the mere possibility of such an unjust thought on his part that I lost my temper again, and instead of kissing his feet, flew into a fury again! Oh, I am unhappy! It's my character, my awful, unhappy character! Oh, you will see, I shall end by driving him, too, to abandon me for another with whom he can get on better, like Dmitri. But... no, I could not bear it, I should kill myself. And when you came in then, and when I called to you and told him to come back, I was so enraged by the look of contempt and hatred he turned on me that do you remember? — I cried out to you that it was he, he alone who had persuaded me that his brother Dmitri was a murderer! I said that malicious thing on purpose to wound him again. He had never, never persuaded me that his brother was a murderer. On the contrary, it was I who persuaded him! Oh, my vile temper was the cause of everything! I paved the way to that hideous scene at the trial. He wanted to show me that he was an honourable man, and that, even if I loved his brother, he would not ruin him for revenge or jealousy. So he came to the court... I am the cause of it all, I alone am to blame!"

Katya never had made such confessions to Alyosha before, and he felt that she was now at that stage of unbearable suffering when even the proudest heart painfully crushes its pride and falls vanquished by grief. Oh, Alyosha knew another terrible reason of her present misery, though she had carefully concealed it from him during those days since the trial; but it would have been, for some reason, too painful to him if she had been brought so low as to speak to him now about that. She was suffering for her "treachery" at the trial, and Alyosha felt that her conscience was impelling her to confess it to him, to him, Alyosha, with tears and cries and hysterical writhings on the floor. But he dreaded that moment and longed to spare her. It made the commission on which he had come even more difficult. He spoke of Mitya again.

"It's all right, it's all right, don't be anxious about him! she began again, sharply and stubbornly. "All that is only momentary, I know him, I know his heart only too well. You may be sure he will consent to escape. It's not as though it would be immediately; he will have time to make up his mind to it. Ivan Fyodorovitch will be well by that time and will manage it all himself, so that I shall have nothing to do with it. Don't be anxious; he will consent to run away. He has agreed already: do you suppose he would give up that creature? And they won't let her go to him, so he is bound to escape. It's you he's most afraid of, he is afraid you won't approve of his escape on

moral grounds. But you must generously allow it, if your sanction is so necessary," Katya added viciously. She paused and smiled.

"He talks about some hymn," she went on again, "some cross he has to bear, some duty; I remember Ivan Fyodorovitch told me a great deal about it, and if you knew how he talked! Katya cried suddenly, with feeling she could not repress, "If you knew how he loved that wretched man at the moment he told me, and how he hated him, perhaps, at the same moment. And I heard his story and his tears with sneering disdain. Brute! Yes, I am a brute. I am responsible for his fever. But that man in prison is incapable of suffering," Katya concluded irritably. "Can such a man suffer? Men like him never suffer!" There was a note of hatred and contemptuous repulsion in her words. And yet it was she who had betrayed him. "Perhaps because she feels how she's wronged him she hates him at moments," Alyosha thought to himself. He hoped that it was only "at moments." In Katya's last words he detected a challenging note, but he did not take it up.

"I sent for you this morning to make you promise to persuade him yourself. Or do you, too, consider that to escape would be dishonourable, cowardly, or something... unchristian, perhaps?" Katya added, even more defiantly.

"Oh, no. I'll tell him everything," muttered Alyosha. "He asks you to come and see him to-day," he blurted out suddenly, looking her steadily in the face. She started, and drew back a little from him on the sofa.

"Me? Can that be?" She faltered, turning pale.

"It can and ought to be!" Alyosha began emphatically, growing more animated. "He needs you particularly just now. I would not have opened the subject and worried you, if it were not necessary. He is ill, he is beside himself, he keeps asking for you. It is not to be reconciled with you that he wants you, but only that you would go and show yourself at his door. So much has happened to him since that day. He realises that he has injured you beyond all reckoning. He does not ask your forgiveness—'It's impossible to forgive me,' he says himself — but only that you would show yourself in his doorway."

"It's so sudden..," faltered Katya. "I've had a presentiment all these days that you would come with that message. I knew he would ask me to come. It's impossible!"

"Let it be impossible, but do it. Only think, he realises for the first time how he has wounded you, the first time in his life; he had never grasped it

before so fully. He said, ‘If she refuses to come I shall be unhappy all my life.’ you hear? though he is condemned to penal servitude for twenty years, he is still planning to be happy — is not that piteous? Think — you must visit him; though he is ruined, he is innocent,” broke like a challenge from Alyosha. “His hands are clean, there is no blood on them! For the sake of his infinite sufferings in the future visit him now. Go, greet him on his way into the darkness — stand at his door, that is all.... You ought to do it, you ought to!” Alyosha concluded, laying immense stress on the word “ought.”

“I ought to... but I cannot...” Katya moaned. “He will look at me.... I can’t.”

“Your eyes ought to meet. How will you live all your life, if you don’t make up your mind to do it now?”

“Better suffer all my life.”

“You ought to go, you ought to go,” Alyosha repeated with merciless emphasis.

“But why to-day, why at once?... I can’t leave our patient-”

“You can for a moment. It will only be a moment. If you don’t come, he will be in delirium by to-night. I would not tell you a lie; have pity on him!”

“Have pity on me!” Katya said, with bitter reproach, and she burst into tears.

“Then you will come,” said Alyosha firmly, seeing her tears. “I’ll go and tell him you will come directly.”

“No, don’t tell him so on any account,” cried Katya in alarm. “I will come, but don’t tell him beforehand, for perhaps I may go, but not go in... I don’t know yet-”

Her voice failed her. She gasped for breath. Alyosha got up to go.

“And what if I meet anyone?” she said suddenly, in a low voice, turning white again.

“That’s just why you must go now, to avoid meeting anyone. There will be no one there, I can tell you that for certain. We will expect you,” he concluded emphatically, and went out of the room.

CHAPTER 2

For a Moment the Lie Becomes Truth

HE hurried to the hospital where Mitya was lying now. The day after his fate was determined, Mitya had fallen ill with nervous fever, and was sent to the prison division of the town hospital. But at the request of several persons (Alyosha, Madame Hohlakov, Lise, etc.), Doctor Varvinsky had put Mitya not with other prisoners, but in a separate little room, the one where Smerdyakov had been. It is true that there was a sentinel at the other end of the corridor, and there was a grating over the window, so that Varvinsky could be at ease about the indulgence he had shown, which was not quite legal, indeed; but he was a kind-hearted and compassionate young man. He knew how hard it would be for a man like Mitya to pass at once so suddenly into the society of robbers and murderers, and that he must get used to it by degrees. The visits of relations and friends were informally sanctioned by the doctor and overseer, and even by the police captain. But only Alyosha and Grushenka had visited Mitya. Rakitin had tried to force his way in twice, but Mitya persistently begged Varvinsky not to admit him.

Alyosha found him sitting on his bed in a hospital dressing gown, rather feverish, with a towel, soaked in vinegar and water, on his head. He looked at Alyosha as he came in with an undefined expression, but there was a shade of something like dread discernible in it. He had become terribly preoccupied since the trial; sometimes he would be silent for half an hour together, and seemed to be pondering something heavily and painfully, oblivious of everything about him. If he roused himself from his brooding and began to talk, he always spoke with a kind of abruptness and never of what he really wanted to say. He looked sometimes with a face of suffering at his brother. He seemed to be more at ease with Grushenka than with Alyosha. It is true, he scarcely spoke to her at all, but as soon as she came in, his whole face lighted up with joy.

Alyosha sat down beside him on the bed in silence. This time Mitya was waiting for Alyosha in suspense, but he did not dare ask him a question. He felt it almost unthinkable that Katya would consent to come, and at the same time he felt that if she did not come, something inconceivable would happen. Alyosha understood his feelings.

“Trifon Borissovitch,” Mitya began nervously, “has pulled his whole inn to pieces, I am told. He’s taken up the flooring, pulled apart the planks, split up all the gallery, I am told. He is seeking treasure all the time — the fifteen hundred roubles which the prosecutor said I’d hidden there. He began playing these tricks, they say, as soon as he got home. Serve him right, the swindler! The guard here told me yesterday; he comes from there.”

“Listen,” began Alyosha. “She will come, but I don’t know when. Perhaps to-day, perhaps in a few days, that I can’t tell. But she will come, she will, that’s certain.”

Mitya started, would have said something, but was silent. The news had a tremendous effect on him. It was evident that he would have liked terribly to know what had been said, but he was again afraid to ask. Something cruel and contemptuous from Katya would have cut him like a knife at that moment.

“This was what she said among other things; that I must be sure to set your conscience at rest about escaping. If Ivan is not well by then she will see to it all herself.”

“You’ve spoken of that already,” Mitya observed musingly.

“And you have repeated it to Grusha,” observed Alyosha.

“Yes,” Mitya admitted. “She won’t come this morning.” He looked timidly at his brother. “She won’t come till the evening. When I told her yesterday that Katya was taking measures, she was silent, but she set her mouth. She only whispered, ‘Let her!’ She understood that it was important. I did not dare to try her further. She understands now, I think, that Katya no longer cares for me, but loves Ivan.”

“Does she?” broke from Alyosha.

“Perhaps she does not. Only she is not coming this morning,” Mitya hastened to explain again; “I asked her to do something for me. You know, Ivan is superior to all of us. He ought to live, not us. He will recover.”

“Would you believe it, though Katya is alarmed about him, she scarcely doubts of his recovery,” said Alyosha.

“That means that she is convinced he will die. It’s because she is frightened she’s so sure he will get well.”

“Ivan has a strong constitution, and I, too, believe there’s every hope that he will get well,” Alyosha observed anxiously.

“Yes, he will get well. But she is convinced that he will die. She has a great deal of sorrow to bear...” A silence followed. A grave anxiety was

fretting Mitya.

“Alyosha, I love Grusha terribly,” he said suddenly in a shaking voice, full of tears.

“They won’t let her go out there to you,” Alyosha put in at once.

“And there is something else I wanted tell you,” Mitya went on, with a sudden ring in his voice. “If they beat me on the way or out there, I won’t submit to it. I shall kill someone, and shall be shot for it. And this will be going on for twenty years! They speak to me rudely as it is. I’ve been lying here all night, passing judgment on myself. I am not ready! I am not able to resign myself. I wanted to sing a ‘hymn’; but if a guard speaks rudely to me, I have not the strength to bear it. For Grusha I would bear anything... anything except blows.... But she won’t be allowed to come there.”

Alyosha smiled gently.

“Listen, brother, once for all,” he said. “This is what I think about it. And you know that I would not tell you a lie. Listen: you are not ready, and such a cross is not for you. What’s more, you don’t need such a martyr’s cross when you are not ready for it. If you had murdered our father, it would grieve me that you should reject your punishment. But you are innocent, and such a cross is too much for you. You wanted to make yourself another man by suffering. I say, only remember that other man always, all your life and wherever you go; and that will be enough for you. Your refusal of that great cross will only serve to make you feel all your life even greater duty, and that constant feeling will do more to make you a new man, perhaps, than if you went there. For there you would not endure it and would repine, and perhaps at last would say: ‘I am quits.’ The lawyer was right about that. Such heavy burdens are not for all men. For some they are impossible. These are my thoughts about it, if you want them so much. If other men would have to answer for your escape, officers or soldiers, then I would not have ‘allowed’ you,” smiled Alyosha. “But they declare — the superintendent of that etape* told Ivan himself — that if it’s well managed there will be no great inquiry, and that they can get off easily. Of course, bribing is dishonest even in such a case, but I can’t undertake to judge about it, because if Ivan and Katya commissioned me to act for you, I know I should go and give bribes. I must tell you the truth. And so I can’t judge of your own action. But let me assure you that I shall never condemn you. And it would be a strange thing if I could judge you in this. Now I think I’ve gone into everything.”

* Stockade.

“But I do condemn myself!” cried Mitya. “I shall escape, that was settled apart from you; could Mitya Karamazov do anything but run away? But I shall condemn myself, and I will pray for my sin for ever. That’s how the Jesuits talk, isn’t it? Just as we are doing?”

“Yes.” Alyosha smiled gently.

“I love you for always telling the whole truth and never hiding anything,” cried Mitya, with a joyful laugh. “So I’ve caught my Alyosha being Jesuitical. I must kiss you for that. Now listen to the rest; I’ll open the other side of my heart to you. This is what I planned and decided. If I run away, even with money and a passport, and even to America, I should be cheered up by the thought that I am not running away for pleasure, not for happiness, but to another exile as bad, perhaps, as Siberia. It is as bad, Alyosha, it is! I hate that America, damn it, already. Even though Grusha will be with me. Just look at her; is she an American? She is Russian, Russian to the marrow of her bones; she will be homesick for the mother country, and I shall see every hour that she is suffering for my sake, that she has taken up that cross for me. And what harm has she done? And how shall I, too, put up with the rabble out there, though they may be better than I, every one of them? I hate that America already! And though they may be wonderful at machinery, every one of them, damn them, they are not of my soul. I love Russia, Alyosha, I love the Russian God, though I am a scoundrel myself. I shall choke there!” he exclaimed, his eyes suddenly flashing. His voice was trembling with tears. “So this is what I’ve decided, Alyosha, listen,” he began again, mastering his emotion. “As soon as I arrive there with Grusha, we will set to work at once on the land, in solitude, somewhere very remote, with wild bears. There must be some remote parts even there. I am told there are still Redskins there, somewhere, on the edge of the horizon. So to the country of the Last of the Mohicans, and there we’ll tackle the grammar at once, Grusha and I. Work and grammar — that’s how we’ll spend three years. And by that time we shall speak English like any Englishman. And as soon as we’ve learnt it — good-bye to America! We’ll run here to Russia as American citizens. Don’t be uneasy — we would not come to this little town. We’d hide somewhere, a long way off, in the north or in the south. I shall be changed by that time, and she will, too, in America. The doctors shall make me some sort of wart on my face — what’s the use of their being so mechanical! — or else I’ll

put out one eye, let my beard grow a yard, and I shall turn grey, fretting for Russia. I dare say they won't recognise us. And if they do, let them send us to Siberia — I don't care. It will show it's our fate. We'll work on the land here, too, somewhere in the wilds, and I'll make up as an American all my life. But we shall die on our own soil. That's my plan, and it shan't be altered. Do you approve?"

"Yes," said Alyosha, not wanting to contradict him. Mitya paused for a minute and said suddenly:

"And how they worked it up at the trial! Didn't they work it up!"

"If they had not, you would have been convicted just the same," said Alyosha, with a sigh.

"Yes, people are sick of me here! God bless them, but it's hard," Mitya moaned miserably. Again there was silence for a minute.

"Alyosha, put me out of my misery at once!" he exclaimed suddenly. "Tell me, is she coming now, or not? Tell me? What did she say? How did she say it?"

"She said she would come, but I don't know whether she will come to-day. It's hard for her, you know," Alyosha looked timidly at his brother.

"I should think it is hard for her! Alyosha, it will drive me out of my mind. Grusha keeps looking at me. She understands. My God, calm my heart: what is it I want? I want Katya! Do I understand what I want? It's the headstrong, evil Karamazov spirit! No, I am not fit for suffering. I am a scoundrel, that's all one can say."

"Here she is!" cried Alyosha.

At that instant Katya appeared in the doorway. For a moment she stood still, gazing at Mitya with a dazed expression. He leapt pulsively to his feet, and a scared look came into his face. He turned pale, but a timid, pleading smile appeared on his lips at once, and with an irresistible impulse he held out both hands to Katya. Seeing it, she flew impetuously to him. She seized him by the hands, and almost by force made him sit down on the bed. She sat down beside him, and still keeping his hands pressed them violently. Several times they both strove to speak, but stopped short and again gazed speechless with a strange smile, their eyes fastened on one another. So passed two minutes.

"Have you forgiven me?" Mitya faltered at last, and at the same moment turning to Alyosha, his face working with joy, he cried, "Do you hear what I am asking, do you hear?"

“That’s what I loved you for, that you are generous at heart!” broke from Katya. “My forgiveness is no good to you, nor yours to me; whether you forgive me or not, you will always be a sore place in my heart, and I in yours — so it must be....” She stopped to take breath. “What have I come for?” she began again with nervous haste: “to embrace your feet, to press your hands like this, till it hurts — you remember how in Moscow I used to squeeze them — to tell you again that you are my god, my joy, to tell you that I love you madly,” she moaned in anguish, and suddenly pressed his hand greedily to her lips. Tears streamed from her eyes. Alyosha stood speechless and confounded; he had never expected what he was seeing.

“Love is over, Mitya!” Katya began again, “But the past is painfully dear to me. Know that you will always be so. But now let what might have been come true for one minute,” she faltered, with a drawn smile, looking into his face joyfully again. “You love another woman, and I love another man, and yet I shall love you for ever, and you will love me; do you know that? Do you hear? Love me, love me all your life!” she cried, with a quiver almost of menace in her voice.

“I shall love you, and... do you know, Katya,” Mitya began, drawing a deep breath at each word, “do you know, five days ago, that same evening, I loved you.... When you fell down and were carried out... All my life! So it will be, so it will always be-”

So they murmured to one another frantic words, almost meaningless, perhaps not even true, but at that moment it was all true, and they both believed what they said implicitly.

“Katya,” cried Mitya suddenly, “do you believe I murdered him? I know you don’t believe it now, but then... when you gave evidence.... Surely, surely you did not believe it!”

“I did not believe it even then. I’ve never believed it. I hated you, and for a moment I persuaded myself. While I was giving evidence I persuaded myself and believed it, but when I’d finished speaking I left off believing it at once. Don’t doubt that! I have forgotten that I came here to punish myself,” she said, with a new expression in her voice, quite unlike the loving tones of a moment before.

“Woman, yours is a heavy burden,” broke, as it were, involuntarily from Mitya.

“Let me go,” she whispered. “I’ll come again. It’s more than I can bear now.”

She was getting up from her place, but suddenly uttered a loud scream and staggered back. Grushenka walked suddenly and noiselessly into the room. No one had expected her. Katya moved swiftly to the door, but when she reached Grushenka, she stopped suddenly, turned as white as chalk and moaned softly, almost in a whisper:

“Forgive me!”

Grushenka stared at her and, pausing for an instant, in a vindictive, venomous voice, answered:

“We are full of hatred, my girl, you and I! We are both full of hatred! As though we could forgive one another! Save him, and I’ll worship you all my life.”

“You won’t forgive her!” cried Mitya, with frantic reproach.

“Don’t be anxious, I’ll save him for you!” Katya whispered rapidly, and she ran out of the room.

“And you could refuse to forgive her when she begged your forgiveness herself?’ Mitya exclaimed bitterly again.

“Mitya, don’t dare to blame her; you have no right to!” Alyosha cried hotly.

“Her proud lips spoke, not her heart,” Grushenka brought out in a tone of disgust. “If she saves you I’ll forgive her everything-”

She stopped speaking, as though suppressing something. She could not yet recover herself. She had come in, as appeared afterwards, accidentally, with no suspicion of what she would meet.

“Alyosha, run after her!” Mitya cried to his brother; “tell her... I don’t know... don’t let her go away like this!”

“I’ll come to you again at nightfall,” said Alyosha, and he ran after Katya. He overtook her outside the hospital grounds. She walking fast, but as soon as Alyosha caught her up she said quickly:

“No, before that woman I can’t punish myself! I asked her forgiveness because I wanted to punish myself to the bitter end. She would not forgive me.... I like her for that!” she added, in an unnatural voice, and her eyes flashed with fierce resentment.

“My brother did not expect this in the least,” muttered Alyosha. “He was sure she would not come-”

“No doubt. Let us leave that,” she snapped. “Listen: I can’t go with you to the funeral now. I’ve sent them flowers. I think they still have money. If necessary, tell them I’ll never abandon them.... Now leave me, leave me,

please. You are late as it is — the bells are ringing for the service.... Leave me, please!”

CHAPTER 3

Ilusha's Funeral.

The Speech at the Stone

HE really was late. They had waited for him and had already decided to bear the pretty flower-decked little coffin to the church without him. It was the coffin of poor little Ilusha. He had died two days after Mitya was sentenced. At the gate of the house Alyosha was met by the shouts of the boys, Ilusha's schoolfellows. They had all been impatiently expecting him and were glad that he had come at last. There were about twelve of them, they all had their school-bags or satchels on their shoulders. "Father will cry, be with father," Ilusha had told them as he lay dying, and the boys remembered it. Kolya Krassotkin was the foremost of them.

"How glad I am you've come, Karamazov!" he cried, holding out his hand to Alyosha. "It's awful here. It's really horrible to see it. Snegiryov is not drunk, we know for a fact he's had nothing to drink to-day, but he seems as if he were drunk... I am always manly, but this is awful. Karamazov, if I am not keeping you, one question before you go in?"

"What is it, Kolya?" said Alyosha.

"Is your brother innocent or guilty? Was it he killed your father or was it the valet? As you say, so it will be. I haven't slept for the last four nights for thinking of it."

"The valet killed him, my brother is innocent," answered Alyosha.

"That's what I said," cried Smurov.

"So he will perish an innocent victim!" exclaimed Kolya; "though he is ruined he is happy! I could envy him!"

"What do you mean? How can you? Why?" cried Alyosha surprised.

"Oh, if I, too, could sacrifice myself some day for truth!" said Kolya with enthusiasm.

"But not in such a cause, not with such disgrace and such horrer!" said Alyosha.

"Of course... I should like to die for all humanity, and as for disgrace, I don't care about that — our names may perish. I respect your brother!"

"And so do I!" the boy, who had once declared that he knew who had founded Troy, cried suddenly and unexpectedly, and he blushed up to his

ears like a peony as he had done on that occasion.

Alyosha went into the room. Ilusha lay with his hands folded and his eyes closed in a blue coffin with a white frill round it. His thin face was hardly changed at all, and strange to say there was no smell of decay from the corpse. The expression of his face was serious and, as it were, thoughtful. His hands, crossed over his breast, looked particularly beautiful, as though chiselled in marble. There were flowers in his hands and the coffin, with flowers, which had been sent early in the morning by Lise Hohlakov. But there were flowers too from Katerina Ivanovna, and when Alyosha opened the door, the captain had a bunch in his trembling hands and was strewing them again over his dear boy. He scarcely glanced at Alyosha when he came in, and he would not look at anyone, even at his crazy weeping wife, “mamma,” who kept trying to stand on her crippled legs to get a nearer look at her dead boy. Nina had been pushed in her chair by the boys close up to the coffin. She sat with her head pressed to it and she too was no doubt quietly weeping. Snegiryov’s face looked eager, yet bewildered and exasperated. There was something crazy about his gestures and the words that broke from him. “Old man, dear old man!” he exclaimed every minute, gazing at Ilusha. It was his habit to call Ilusha “old man,” as a term of affection when he was alive.

“Father, give me a flower, too; take that white one out of his hand and give it me,” the crazy mother begged, whimpering. Either because the little white rose in Ilusha’s hand had caught her fancy or that she wanted one from his hand to keep in memory of him, she moved restlessly, stretching out her hands for the flower.

“I won’t give it to anyone, I won’t give you anything,” Snegiryov cried callously. “They are his flowers, not yours! Everything is his, nothing is yours!”

“Father, give mother a flower!” said Nina, lifting her face wet with tears.

“I won’t give away anything and to her less than anyone! She didn’t love Ilusha. She took away his little cannon and he gave it to her,” the captain broke into loud sobs at the thought of how Ilusha had given up his cannon to his mother. The poor, crazy creature was bathed in noiseless tears, hiding her face in her hands.

The boys, seeing that the father would not leave the coffin and that it was time to carry it out, stood round it in a close circle and began to lift it up.

“I don’t want him to be buried in the churchyard,” Snegiryov wailed suddenly; “I’ll bury him by the stone, by our stone! Ilusha told me to. I won’t let him be carried out!” He had been saying for the last three days that he would bury him by the stone, but Alyosha, Krassotkin, the landlady, her sister and all the boys interfered.

“What an idea, bury him by an unholy stone, as though he had hanged himself!” the old landlady said sternly. “There in the churchyard the ground has been crossed. He’ll be prayed for there. One can hear the singing in church and the deacon reads so plainly and verbally that it will reach him every time just as though it were read over his grave.”

At last the captain made a gesture of despair as though to say, “Take him where you will.” The boys raised the coffin, but as they passed the mother, they stopped for a moment and lowered it that she might say good-bye to Ilusha. But on seeing that precious little face, which for the last three days she had only looked at from a distance, she trembled all over and her grey head began twitching spasmodically over the coffin.

“Mother, make the sign of the cross over him, give him your blessing, kiss him,” Nina cried to her. But her head still twitched like an automaton and with a face contorted with bitter grief she began, without a word, beating her breast with her fist. They carried the coffin past her. Nina pressed her lips to her brother’s for the last time as they bore the coffin by her. As Alyosha went out of the house he begged the landlady to look after those who were left behind, but she interrupted him before he had finished.

“To be sure, I’ll stay with them, we are Christians, too.” The old woman wept as she said it.

They had not far to carry the coffin to the church, not more than three hundred paces. It was a still, clear day, with a slight frost. The church bells were still ringing. Snegiryov ran fussing and distracted after the coffin, in his short old summer overcoat, with his head bare and his soft, old, wide-brimmed hat in his hand. He seemed in a state of bewildered anxiety. At one minute he stretched out his hand to support the head of the coffin and only hindered the bearers, at another he ran alongside and tried to find a place for himself there. A flower fell on the snow and he rushed to pick it up as though everything in the world depended on the loss of that flower.

“And the crust of bread, we’ve forgotten the crust!” he cried suddenly in dismay. But the boys reminded him at once that he had taken the crust of

bread already and that it was in his pocket. He instantly pulled it out and was reassured.

“Ilusha told me to, Ilusha,” he explained at once to Alyosha. “I was sitting by him one night and he suddenly told me: ‘Father, when my grave is filled up crumble a piece of bread on it so that the sparrows may fly down; I shall hear and it will cheer me up not to be lying alone.’”

“That’s a good thing,” said Alyosha, “we must often take some.”

“Every day, every day!” said the captain quickly, seeming cheered at the thought.

They reached the church at last and set the coffin in the middle of it. The boys surrounded it and remained reverently standing so, all through the service. It was an old and rather poor church; many of the ikons were without settings; but such churches are the best for praying in. During the mass Snegiryov became somewhat calmer, though at times he had outbursts of the same unconscious and, as it were, incoherent anxiety. At one moment he went up to the coffin to set straight the cover or the wreath, when a candle fell out of the candlestick he rushed to replace it and was a fearful time fumbling over it, then he subsided and stood quietly by the coffin with a look of blank uneasiness and perplexity. After the Epistle he suddenly whispered to Alyosha, who was standing beside him, that the Epistle had not been read properly but did not explain what he meant. During the prayer, “Like the Cherubim,” he joined in the singing but did not go on to the end. Falling on his knees, he pressed his forehead to the stone floor and lay so for a long while.

At last came the funeral service itself and candles were distributed. The distracted father began fussing about again, but the touching and impressive funeral prayers moved and roused his soul. He seemed suddenly to shrink together and broke into rapid, short sobs, which he tried at first to smother, but at last he sobbed aloud. When they began taking leave of the dead and closing the coffin, he flung his arms about, as though he would not allow them to cover Ilusha, and began greedily and persistently kissing his dead boy on the lips. At last they succeeded in persuading him to come away from the step, but suddenly he impulsively stretched out his hand and snatched a few flowers from the coffin. He looked at them and a new idea seemed to dawn upon him, so that he apparently forgot his grief for a minute. Gradually he seemed to sink into brooding and did not resist when the coffin was lifted up and carried to the grave. It was an expensive one in

the churchyard close to the church, Katerina Ivanovna had paid for it. After the customary rites the grave-diggers lowered the coffin. Snegiryov with his flowers in his hands bent down so low over the open grave that the boys caught hold of his coat in alarm and pulled him back. He did not seem to understand fully what was happening. When they began filling up the grave, he suddenly pointed anxiously at the falling earth and began trying to say something, but no one could make out what he meant, and he stopped suddenly. Then he was reminded that he must crumble the bread and he was awfully excited, snatched up the bread and began pulling it to pieces — and flinging the morsels on the grave.

“Come, fly down, birds, fly down, sparrows!” he muttered anxiously.

One of the boys observed that it was awkward for him to crumble the bread with the flowers in his hands and suggested he should give them to someone to hold for a time. But he would not do this and seemed indeed suddenly alarmed for his flowers, as though they wanted to take them from him altogether. And after looking at the grave, and as it were, satisfying himself that everything had been done and the bread had been crumbled, he suddenly, to the surprise of everyone, turned, quite composedly even, and made his way homewards. But his steps became more and more hurried, he almost ran. The boys and Alyosha kept up with him.

“The flowers are for mamma, the flowers are for mamma! I was unkind to mamma,” he began exclaiming suddenly.

Someone called to him to put on his hat as it was cold. But he flung the hat in the snow as though he were angry and kept repeating, “I won’t have the hat, I won’t have the hat.” Smurov picked it up and carried it after him. All the boys were crying, and Kolya and the boy who discovered about Troy most of all. Though Smurov, with the captain’s hat in his hand, was crying bitterly too, he managed, as he ran, to snatch up a piece of red brick that lay on the snow of the path, to fling it at the flock of sparrows that was flying by. He missed them, of course, and went on crying as he ran. Half-way, Snegiryov suddenly stopped, stood still for half a minute, as though struck by something, and suddenly turning back to the church, ran towards the deserted grave. But the boys instantly overtook him and caught hold of him on all sides. Then he fell helpless on the snow as though he had been knocked down, and struggling, sobbing, and wailing, he began crying out, “Ilusha, old man, dear old man!” Alyosha and Kolya tried to make him get up, soothing and persuading him.

“Captain, give over, a brave man must show fortitude,” muttered Kolya.

“You’ll spoil the flowers,” said Alyosha, and mamma is expecting them, she is sitting crying because you would not give her any before. Ilusha’s little bed is still there-”

“Yes, yes, mamma!” Snegiryov suddenly recollected, “they’ll take away the bed, they’ll take it away,” he added as though alarmed that they really would. He jumped up and ran homewards again. But it was not far off and they all arrived together. Snegiryov opened the door hurriedly and called to his wife with whom he had so cruelly quarrelled just before:

“Mamma, poor crippled darling, Ilusha has sent you these flowers,” he cried, holding out to her a little bunch of flowers that had been frozen and broken while he was struggling in the snow. But at that instant he saw in the corner, by the little bed, Ilusha’s little boots, which the landlady had put tidily side by side. Seeing the old, patched, rusty-looking, stiff boots he flung up his hands and rushed to them, fell on his knees, snatched up one boot and, pressing his lips to it, began kissing it greedily, crying, “Ilusha, old man, dear old man, where are your little feet?”

“Where have you taken him away? Where have you taken him?” the lunatic cried in a heart-rending voice. Nina, too, broke into sobs. Kolya ran out of the room, the boys followed him. At last Alyosha too went out.

“Let them weep,” he said to Kolya, “it’s no use trying to comfort them just now. Let wait a minute and then go back.”

“No, it’s no use, it’s awful,” Kolya assented. “Do you know, Karamazov,” he dropped his voice so that no one could hear them, “I feel dreadfully sad, and if it were only possible to bring him back, I’d give anything in the world to do it.”

“Ah, so would I,” said Alyosha.

“What do you think, Karamazov? Had we better come back here to-night? He’ll be drunk, you know.”

“Perhaps he will. Let us come together, you and I, that will be enough, to spend an hour with them, with the mother and Nina. If we all come together we shall remind them of everything again,” Alyosha suggested.

“The landlady is laying the table for them now — there’ll be a funeral dinner or something, the priest is coming; shall we go back to it, Karamazov?”

“Of course,” said Alyosha.

“It’s all so strange, Karamazov, such sorrow and then pancakes after it, it all seems so unnatural in our religion.”

“They are going to have salmon, too,” the boy who had discovered about Troy observed in a loud voice.

“I beg you most earnestly, Kartashov, not to interrupt again with your idiotic remarks, especially when one is not talking to you and doesn’t care to know whether you exist or not!” Kolya snapped out irritably. The boy flushed crimson but did not dare to reply.

Meantime they were strolling slowly along the path and suddenly Smurov exclaimed:

“There’s Ilusha’s stone, under which they wanted to bury him.”

They all stood still by the big stone. Alyosha looked and the whole picture of what Snegiryov had described to him that day, how Ilusha, weeping and hugging his father, had cried, “Father, father, how he insulted you,” rose at once before his imagination. A sudden impulse seemed to come into his soul. With a serious and earnest expression he looked from one to another of the bright, pleasant faces of Ilusha’s schoolfellows, and suddenly said to them:

“Boys, I should like to say one word to you, here at this place.”

The boys stood round him and at once bent attentive and expectant eyes upon him.

“Boys, we shall soon part. I shall be for some time with my two brothers, of whom one is going to Siberia and the other is lying at death’s door. But soon I shall leave this town, perhaps for a long time, so we shall part. Let us make a compact here, at Ilusha’s stone, that we will never forget Ilusha and one another.

And whatever happens to us later in life, if we don’t meet for twenty years afterwards, let us always remember how we buried the poor boy at whom we once threw stones, do you remember, by the bridge? and afterwards we all grew so fond of him. He was a fine boy, a kindhearted, brave boy, he felt for his father’s honour and resented the cruel insult to him and stood up for him. And so in the first place, we will remember him, boys, all our lives. And even if we are occupied with most important things, if we attain to honour or fall into great misfortune — still let us remember how good it was once here, when we were all together, united by a good and kind feeling which made us, for the time we were loving that poor boy, better perhaps than we are. My little doves let me call you so, for you are

very like them, those pretty blue birds, at this minute as I look at your good dear faces. My dear children, perhaps you won't understand what I am saying to you, because I often speak very unintelligibly, but you'll remember all the same and will agree with my words some time. You must know that there is nothing higher and stronger and more wholesome and good for life in the future than some good memory, especially a memory of childhood, of home. People talk to you a great deal about your education, but some good, sacred memory, preserved from childhood, is perhaps the best education. If a man carries many such memories with him into life, he is safe to the end of his days, and if one has only one good memory left in one's heart, even that may sometime be the means of saving us. Perhaps we may even grow wicked later on, may be unable to refrain from a bad action, may laugh at men's tears and at those people who say as Kolya did just now, 'I want to suffer for all men,' and may even jeer spitefully at such people. But however bad we may become — which God forbid — yet, when we recall how we buried Ilusha, how we loved him in his last days, and how we have been talking like friends all together, at this stone, the cruellest and most mocking of us — if we do become so will not dare to laugh inwardly at having been kind and good at this moment! What's more, perhaps, that one memory may keep him from great evil and he will reflect and say, 'Yes, I was good and brave and honest then!' Let him laugh to himself, that's no matter, a man often laughs at what's good and kind. That's only from thoughtlessness. But I assure you, boys, that as he laughs he will say at once in his heart, 'No, I do wrong to laugh, for that's not a thing to laugh at.'

"That will be so, I understand you, Karamazov!" cried Kolya, with flashing eyes.

The boys were excited and they, too, wanted to say something, but they restrained themselves, looking with intentness and emotion at the speaker.

"I say this in case we become bad," Alyosha went on, "but there's no reason why we should become bad, is there, boys? Let us be, first and above all, kind, then honest and then let us never forget each other! I say that again. I give you my word for my part that I'll never forget one of you. Every face looking at me now I shall remember even for thirty years. Just now Kolya said to Kartashov that we did not care to know whether he exists or not. But I cannot forget that Kartashov exists and that he is not blushing now as he did when he discovered the founders of Troy, but is looking at me

with his jolly, kind, dear little eyes. Boys, my dear boys, let us all be generous and brave like Ilusha, clever, brave and generous like Kolya (though he will be ever so much cleverer when he is grown up), and let us all be as modest, as clever and sweet as Kartashov. But why am I talking about those two? You are all dear to me, boys; from this day forth, I have a place in my heart for you all, and I beg you to keep a place in your hearts for me! Well, and who has united us in this kind, good feeling which we shall remember and intend to remember all our lives? Who, if not Ilusha, the good boy, the dear boy, precious to us for ever! Let us never forget him. May his memory live for ever in our hearts from this time forth!”

“Yes, yes, for ever, for ever!” the boys cried in their ringing voices, with softened faces.

“Let us remember his face and his clothes and his poor little boots, his coffin and his unhappy, sinful father, and how boldly he stood up for him alone against the whole school.”

“We will remember, we will remember,” cried the boys. “He was brave, he was good!”

“Ah, how I loved him!” exclaimed Kolya.

“Ah, children, ah, dear friends, don’t be afraid of life! How good life is when one does something good and just!”

“Yes, yes,” the boys repeated enthusiastically.

“Karamazov, we love you!” a voice, probably Kartashov’s, cried impulsively.

“We love you, we love you!” they all caught it up. There were tears in the eyes of many of them.

“Hurrah for Karamazov!” Kolya shouted ecstatically.

“And may the dead boy’s memory live for ever!” Alyosha added again with feeling.

“For ever!” the boys chimed in again.

“Karamazov,” cried Kolya, “can it be true what’s taught us in religion, that we shall all rise again from the dead and shall live and see each other again, all, Ilusha too?”

“Certainly we shall all rise again, certainly we shall see each other and shall tell each other with joy and gladness all that has happened!” Alyosha answered, half laughing, half enthusiastic.

“Ah, how splendid it will be!” broke from Kolya.

“Well, now we will finish talking and go to his funeral dinner. Don’t be put out at our eating pancakes — it’s a very old custom and there’s something nice in that!” laughed Alyosha. “Well, let us go! And now we go hand in hand.”

“And always so, all our lives hand in hand! Hurrah for Karamazov!” Kolya cried once more rapturously, and once more the boys took up his exclamation:

“Hurrah for Karamazov!”

THE END

The Short Stories



Dostoyevsky's home in Staraya Russa, Novgorod Oblast, standing on the shore Pererytitsy. It was here that he wrote his masterpiece 'The Brothers Karamazov'.

MR. PROHARTCHIN

A STORY

In the darkest and humblest corner of Ustinya Fyodorovna's flat lived Semyon Ivanovitch Prohartchin, a well-meaning elderly man, who did not drink. Since Mr. Prohartchin was of a very humble grade in the service, and received a salary strictly proportionate to his official capacity, Ustinya Fyodorovna could not get more than five roubles a month from him for his lodging. Some people said that she had her own reasons for accepting him as a lodger; but, be that as it may, as though in despite of all his detractors, Mr. Prohartchin actually became her favourite, in an honourable and virtuous sense, of course. It must be observed that Ustinya Fyodorovna, a very respectable woman, who had a special partiality for meat and coffee, and found it difficult to keep the fasts, let rooms to several other boarders who paid twice as much as Semyon Ivanovitch, yet not being quiet lodgers, but on the contrary all of them "spiteful scoffers" at her feminine ways and her forlorn helplessness, stood very low in her good opinion, so that if it had not been for the rent they paid, she would not have cared to let them stay, nor indeed to see them in her flat at all. Semyon Ivanovitch had become her favourite from the day when a retired, or, perhaps more correctly speaking, discharged clerk, with a weakness for strong drink, was carried to his last resting-place in Volkovo. Though this gentleman had only one eye, having had the other knocked out owing, in his own words, to his valiant behaviour; and only one leg, the other having been broken in the same way owing to his valour; yet he had succeeded in winning all the kindly feeling of which Ustinya Fyodorovna was capable, and took the fullest advantage of it, and would probably have gone on for years living as her devoted satellite and toady if he had not finally drunk himself to death in the most pitiable way. All this had happened at Peski, where Ustinya Fyodorovna only had three lodgers, of whom, when she moved into a new flat and set up on a larger scale, letting to about a dozen new boarders, Mr. Prohartchin was the only one who remained.

Whether Mr. Prohartchin had certain incorrigible defects, or whether his companions were, every one of them, to blame, there seemed to be misunderstandings on both sides from the first. We must observe here that

all Ustinya Fyodorovna's new lodgers without exception got on together like brothers; some of them were in the same office; each one of them by turns lost all his money to the others at faro, preference and *bixe*; they all liked in a merry hour to enjoy what they called the fizzing moments of life in a crowd together; they were fond, too, at times of discussing lofty subjects, and though in the end things rarely passed off without a dispute, yet as all prejudices were banished from the whole party the general harmony was not in the least disturbed thereby. The most remarkable among the lodgers were Mark Ivanovitch, an intelligent and well-read man; then Oplevaniev; then Prepolovenko, also a nice and modest person; then there was a certain Zinovy Prokofyevitch, whose object in life was to get into aristocratic society; then there was Okeanov, the copying clerk, who had in his time almost wrested the distinction of prime favourite from Semyon Ivanovitch; then another copying clerk called Sudbin; the plebeian Kantarev; there were others too. But to all these people Semyon Ivanovitch was, as it were, not one of themselves. No one wished him harm, of course, for all had from the very first done Prohartchin justice, and had decided in Mark Ivanovitch's words that he, Prohartchin, was a good and harmless fellow, though by no means a man of the world, trustworthy, and not a flatterer, who had, of course, his failings; but that if he were sometimes unhappy it was due to nothing else but lack of imagination. What is more, Mr. Prohartchin, though deprived in this way of imagination, could never have made a particularly favourable impression from his figure or manners (upon which scoffers are fond of fastening), yet his figure did not put people against him. Mark Ivanovitch, who was an intelligent person, formally undertook Semyon Ivanovitch's defence, and declared in rather happy and flowery language that Prohartchin was an elderly and respectable man, who had long, long ago passed the age of romance. And so, if Semyon Ivanovitch did not know how to get on with people, it must have been entirely his own fault.

The first thing they noticed was the unmistakable parsimony and niggardliness of Semyon Ivanovitch. That was at once observed and noted, for Semyon Ivanovitch would never lend any one his teapot, even for a moment; and that was the more unjust as he himself hardly ever drank tea, but when he wanted anything drank, as a rule, rather a pleasant decoction of wild flowers and certain medicinal herbs, of which he always had a considerable store. His meals, too, were quite different from the other

lodgers'. He never, for instance, permitted himself to partake of the whole dinner, provided daily by Ustinya Fyodorovna for the other boarders. The dinner cost half a rouble; Semyon Ivanovitch paid only twenty-five kopecks in copper, and never exceeded it, and so took either a plate of soup with pie, or a plate of beef; most frequently he ate neither soup nor beef, but he partook in moderation of white bread with onion, curd, salted cucumber, or something similar, which was a great deal cheaper, and he would only go back to his half rouble dinner when he could stand it no longer....

Here the biographer confesses that nothing would have induced him to allude to such realistic and low details, positively shocking and offensive to some lovers of the heroic style, if it were not that these details exhibit one peculiarity, one characteristic, in the hero of this story; for Mr. Prohartchin was by no means so poor as to be unable to have regular and sufficient meals, though he sometimes made out that he was. But he acted as he did regardless of obloquy and people's prejudices, simply to satisfy his strange whims, and from frugality and excessive carefulness: all this, however, will be much clearer later on. But we will beware of boring the reader with the description of all Semyon Ivanovitch's whims, and will omit, for instance, the curious and very amusing description of his attire; and, in fact, if it were not for Ustinya Fyodorovna's own reference to it we should hardly have alluded even to the fact that Semyon Ivanovitch never could make up his mind to send his linen to the wash, or if he ever did so it was so rarely that in the intervals one might have completely forgotten the existence of linen on Semyon Ivanovitch. From the landlady's evidence it appeared that "Semyon Ivanovitch, bless his soul, poor lamb, for twenty years had been tucked away in his corner, without caring what folks thought, for all the days of his life on earth he was a stranger to socks, handkerchiefs, and all such things," and what is more, Ustinya Fyodorovna had seen with her own eyes, thanks to the decrepitude of the screen, that the poor dear man sometimes had had nothing to cover his bare skin.

Such were the rumours in circulation after Semyon Ivanovitch's death. But in his lifetime (and this was one of the most frequent occasions of dissension) he could not endure it if any one, even somebody on friendly terms with him, poked his inquisitive nose uninvited into his corner, even through an aperture in the decrepit screen. He was a taciturn man difficult to deal with and prone to ill health. He did not like people to give him advice, he did not care for people who put themselves forward either, and if any one

jeered at him or gave him advice unasked, he would fall foul of him at once, put him to shame, and settle his business. “You are a puppy, you are a featherhead, you are not one to give advice, so there — you mind your own business, sir. You’d better count the stitches in your own socks, sir, so there!”

Semyon Ivanovitch was a plain man, and never used the formal mode of address to any one. He could not bear it either when some one who knew his little ways would begin from pure sport pestering him with questions, such as what he had in his little trunk.... Semyon Ivanovitch had one little trunk. It stood under his bed, and was guarded like the apple of his eye; and though every one knew that there was nothing in it except old rags, two or three pairs of damaged boots and all sorts of rubbish, yet Mr. Prohartchin prized his property very highly, and they used even to hear him at one time express dissatisfaction with his old, but still sound, lock, and talk of getting a new one of a special German pattern with a secret spring and various complications. When on one occasion Zinovy Prokofyevitch, carried away by the thoughtlessness of youth, gave expression to the very coarse and unseemly idea, that Semyon Ivanovitch was probably hiding and treasuring something in his box to leave to his descendants, every one who happened to be by was stupefied at the extraordinary effects of Zinovy Prokofyevitch’s sally. At first Mr. Prohartchin could not find suitable terms for such a crude and coarse idea. For a long time words dropped from his lips quite incoherently, and it was only after a while they made out that Semyon Ivanovitch was reproaching Zinovy Prokofyevitch for some shabby action in the remote past; then they realized that Semyon Ivanovitch was predicting that Zinovy Prokofyevitch would never get into aristocratic society, and that the tailor to whom he owed a bill for his suits would beat him — would certainly beat him — because the puppy had not paid him for so long; and finally, “You puppy, you,” Semyon Ivanovitch added, “here you want to get into the hussars, but you won’t, I tell you, you’ll make a fool of yourself. And I tell you what, you puppy, when your superiors know all about it they will take and make you a copying clerk; so that will be the end of it! Do you hear, puppy?” Then Semyon Ivanovitch subsided, but after lying down for five hours, to the intense astonishment of every one he seemed to have reached a decision, and began suddenly reproaching and abusing the young man again, at first to himself and afterwards addressing Zinovy Prokofyevitch. But the matter did not end there, and in the evening,

when Mark Ivanovitch and Prepolovenko made tea and asked Okeanov to drink it with them, Semyon Ivanovitch got up from his bed, purposely joined them, subscribing his fifteen or twenty kopecks, and on the pretext of a sudden desire for a cup of tea began at great length going into the subject, and explaining that he was a poor man, nothing but a poor man, and that a poor man like him had nothing to save. Mr. Prohartchin confessed that he was a poor man on this occasion, he said, simply because the subject had come up; that the day before yesterday he had meant to borrow a rouble from that impudent fellow, but now he should not borrow it for fear the puppy should brag, that that was the fact of the matter, and that his salary was such that one could not buy enough to eat, and that finally, a poor man, as you see, he sent his sister-in-law in Tver five roubles every month, that if he did not send his sister-in-law in Tver five roubles every month his sister-in-law would die, and if his sister-in-law, who was dependent on him, were dead, he, Semyon Ivanovitch, would long ago have bought himself a new suit.... And Semyon Ivanovitch went on talking in this way at great length about being a poor man, about his sister-in-law and about roubles, and kept repeating the same thing over and over again to impress it on his audience till he got into a regular muddle and relapsed into silence. Only three days later, when they had all forgotten about him, and no one was thinking of attacking him, he added something in conclusion to the effect that when Zinovy Prokofyevitch went into the hussars the impudent fellow would have his leg cut off in the war, and then he would come with a wooden leg and say; “Semyon Ivanovitch, kind friend, give me something to eat!” and then Semyon Ivanovitch would not give him something to eat, and would not look at the insolent fellow; and that’s how it would be, and he could just make the best of it.

All this naturally seemed very curious and at the same time fearfully amusing. Without much reflection, all the lodgers joined together for further investigation, and simply from curiosity determined to make a final onslaught on Semyon Ivanovitch *en masse*. And as Mr. Prohartchin, too, had of late — that is, ever since he had begun living in the same flat with them — been very fond of finding out everything about them and asking inquisitive questions, probably for private reasons of his own, relations sprang up between the opposed parties without any preparation or effort on either side, as it were by chance and of itself. To get into relations Semyon Ivanovitch always had in reserve his peculiar, rather sly, and very ingenuous

manœuvre, of which the reader has learned something already. He would get off his bed about tea-time, and if he saw the others gathered together in a group to make tea he would go up to them like a quiet, sensible, and friendly person, hand over his twenty kopecks, as he was entitled to do, and announce that he wished to join them. Then the young men would wink at one another, and so indicating that they were in league together against Semyon Ivanovitch, would begin a conversation, at first strictly proper and decorous. Then one of the wittier of the party would, *à propos* of nothing, fall to telling them news consisting most usually of entirely false and quite incredible details. He would say, for instance, that some one had heard His Excellency that day telling Demid Vassilyevitch that in his opinion married clerks were more trustworthy than unmarried, and more suitable for promotion; for they were steady, and that their capacities were considerably improved by marriage, and that therefore he — that is, the speaker — in order to improve and be better fitted for promotion, was doing his utmost to enter the bonds of matrimony as soon as possible with a certain Fevronya Prokofyevna. Or he would say that it had more than once been remarked about certain of his colleagues that they were entirely devoid of social graces and of well-bred, agreeable manners, and consequently unable to please ladies in good society, and that, therefore, to eradicate this defect it would be suitable to deduct something from their salary, and with the sum so obtained, to hire a hall, where they could learn to dance, acquire the outward signs of gentlemanliness and good-breeding, courtesy, respect for their seniors, strength of will, a good and grateful heart and various agreeable qualities. Or he would say that it was being arranged that some of the clerks, beginning with the most elderly, were to be put through an examination in all sorts of subjects to raise their standard of culture, and in that way, the speaker would add, all sorts of things would come to light, and certain gentlemen would have to lay their cards on the table — in short, thousands of similar very absurd rumours were discussed. To keep it up, every one believed the story at once, showed interest in it, asked questions, applied it to themselves; and some of them, assuming a despondent air, began shaking their heads and asking every one’s advice, saying what were they to do if they were to come under it? It need hardly be said that a man far less credulous and simple-hearted than Mr. Prohartchin would have been puzzled and carried away by a rumour so unanimously believed. Moreover, from all appearances, it might be safely concluded that Semyon Ivanovitch

was exceedingly stupid and slow to grasp any new unusual idea, and that when he heard anything new, he had always first, as it were, to chew it over and digest it, to find out the meaning, and struggling with it in bewilderment, at last perhaps to overcome it, though even then in a quite special manner peculiar to himself alone....

In this way curious and hitherto unexpected qualities began to show themselves in Semyon Ivanovitch.... Talk and tittle-tattle followed, and by devious ways it all reached the office at last, with additions. What increased the sensation was the fact that Mr. Prohartchin, who had looked almost exactly the same from time immemorial, suddenly, *à propos* of nothing, wore quite a different countenance. His face was uneasy, his eyes were timid and had a scared and rather suspicious expression. He took to walking softly, starting and listening, and to put the finishing touch to his new characteristics developed a passion for investigating the truth. He carried his love of truth at last to such a pitch as to venture, on two occasions, to inquire of Demid Vassilyevitch himself concerning the credibility of the strange rumours that reached him daily by dozens, and if we say nothing here of the consequence of the action of Semyon Ivanovitch, it is for no other reason but a sensitive regard for his reputation. It was in this way people came to consider him as misanthropic and regardless of the proprieties. Then they began to discover that there was a great deal that was fantastical about him, and in this they were not altogether mistaken, for it was observed on more than one occasion that Semyon Ivanovitch completely forgot himself, and sitting in his seat with his mouth open and his pen in the air, as though frozen or petrified, looked more like the shadow of a rational being than that rational being itself. It sometimes happened that some innocently gaping gentleman, on suddenly catching his straying, lustreless, questioning eyes, was scared and all of a tremor, and at once inserted into some important document either a smudge or some quite inappropriate word. The impropriety of Semyon Ivanovitch’s behaviour embarrassed and annoyed all really well-bred people.... At last no one could feel any doubt of the eccentricity of Semyon Ivanovitch’s mind, when one fine morning the rumour was all over the office that Mr. Prohartchin had actually frightened Demid Vassilyevitch himself, for, meeting him in the corridor, Semyon Ivanovitch had been so strange and peculiar that he had forced his superior to beat a retreat.... The news of Semyon Ivanovitch’s behaviour reached him himself at last. Hearing of it he got up at once, made

his way carefully between the chairs and tables, reached the entry, took down his overcoat with his own hand, put it on, went out, and disappeared for an indefinite period. Whether he was led into this by alarm or some other impulse we cannot say, but no trace was seen of him for a time either at home or at the office....

We will not attribute Semyon Ivanovitch's fate simply to his eccentricity, yet we must observe to the reader that our hero was a very retiring man, unaccustomed to society, and had, until he made the acquaintance of the new lodgers, lived in complete unbroken solitude, and had been marked by his quietness and even a certain mysteriousness; for he had spent all the time that he lodged at Peski lying on his bed behind the screen, without talking or having any sort of relations with any one. Both his old fellow-lodgers lived exactly as he did: they, too were, somehow mysterious people and spent fifteen years lying behind their screens. The happy, drowsy hours and days trailed by, one after the other, in patriarchal stagnation, and as everything around them went its way in the same happy fashion, neither Semyon Ivanovitch nor Ustinya Fyodorovna could remember exactly when fate had brought them together.

"It may be ten years, it may be twenty, it may be even twenty-five altogether," she would say at times to her new lodgers, "since he settled with me, poor dear man, bless his heart!" And so it was very natural that the hero of our story, being so unaccustomed to society was disagreeably surprised when, a year before, he, a respectable and modest man, had found himself, suddenly in the midst of a noisy and boisterous crew, consisting of a dozen young fellows, his colleagues at the office, and his new house-mates.

The disappearance of Semyon Ivanovitch made no little stir in the lodgings. One thing was that he was the favourite; another, that his passport, which had been in the landlady's keeping, appeared to have been accidentally mislaid. Ustinya Fyodorovna raised a howl, as was her invariable habit on all critical occasions. She spent two days in abusing and upbraiding the lodgers. She wailed that they had chased away her lodger like a chicken, and all those spiteful scoffers had been the ruin of him; and on the third day she sent them all out to hunt for the fugitive and at all costs to bring him back, dead or alive. Towards evening Sudbin first came back with the news that traces had been discovered, that he had himself seen the runaway in Tolkutchy Market and other places, had followed and stood

close to him, but had not dared to speak to him; he had been near him in a crowd watching a house on fire in Crooked Lane. Half an hour later Okeanov and Kantarev came in and confirmed Sudbin's story, word for word; they, too, had stood near, had followed him quite close, had stood not more than ten paces from him, but they also had not ventured to speak to him, but both observed that Semyon Ivanovitch was walking with a drunken cadger. The other lodgers were all back and together at last, and after listening attentively they made up their minds that Prohartchin could not be far off and would not be long in returning; but they said that they had all known beforehand that he was about with a drunken cadger. This drunken cadger was a thoroughly bad lot, insolent and cringing, and it seemed evident that he had got round Semyon Ivanovitch in some way. He had turned up just a week before Semyon Ivanovitch's disappearance in company with Remnev, had spent a little time in the flat telling them that he had suffered in the cause of justice, that he had formerly been in the service in the provinces, that an inspector had come down on them, that he and his associates had somehow suffered in a good cause, that he had come to Petersburg and fallen at the feet of Porfiry Grigoryevitch, that he had been got, by interest, into a department; but through the cruel persecution of fate he had been discharged from there too, and that afterwards through reorganization the office itself had ceased to exist, and that he had not been included in the new revised staff of clerks owing as much to direct incapacity for official work as to capacity for something else quite irrelevant — all this mixed up with his passion for justice and of course the trickery of his enemies. After finishing his story, in the course of which Mr. Zimoveykin more than once kissed his sullen and unshaven friend Remnev, he bowed down to all in the room in turn, not forgetting Avdotya the servant, called them all his benefactors, and explained that he was an undeserving, troublesome, mean, insolent and stupid man, and that good people must not be hard on his pitiful plight and simplicity. After begging for their kind protection Mr. Zimoveykin showed his livelier side, grew very cheerful, kissed Ustinya Fyodorovna's hands, in spite of her modest protests that her hand was coarse and not like a lady's; and towards evening promised to show the company his talent in a remarkable character dance. But next day his visit ended in a lamentable *dénouement*. Either because there had been too much character in the character-dance, or because he had, in Ustinya Fyodorovna's own words, somehow "insulted her and

treated her as no lady, though she was on friendly terms with Yaroslav Ilyitch himself, and if she liked might long ago have been an officer's wife," Zimoveykin had to steer for home next day. He went away, came back again, was again turned out with ignominy, then wormed his way into Semyon Ivanovitch's good graces, robbed him incidentally of his new breeches, and now it appeared he had led Semyon Ivanovitch astray.

As soon as the landlady knew that Semyon Ivanovitch was alive and well, and that there was no need to hunt for his passport, she promptly left off grieving and was pacified. Meanwhile some of the lodgers determined to give the runaway a triumphal reception; they broke the bolt and moved away the screen from Mr. Prohartchin's bed, rumpled up the bed a little, took the famous box, put it at the foot of the bed; and on the bed laid the sister-in-law, that is, a dummy made up of an old kerchief, a cap and a mantle of the landlady's, such an exact counterfeit of a sister-in-law that it might have been mistaken for one. Having finished their work they waited for Semyon Ivanovitch to return, meaning to tell him that his sister-in-law had arrived from the country and was there behind his screen, poor thing! But they waited and waited.

Already, while they waited, Mark Ivanovitch had staked and lost half a month's salary to Prepolovenko and Kantarev; already Okeanov's nose had grown red and swollen playing "flips on the nose" and "three cards;" already Avdotya the servant had almost had her sleep out and had twice been on the point of getting up to fetch the wood and light the stove, and Zinovy Prokofyevitch, who kept running out every minute to see whether Semyon Ivanovitch were coming, was wet to the skin; but there was no sign of any one yet — neither Semyon Ivanovitch nor the drunken cadger. At last every one went to bed, leaving the sister-in-law behind the screen in readiness for any emergency; and it was not till four o'clock that a knock was heard at the gate, but when it did come it was so loud that it quite made up to the expectant lodgers for all the wearisome trouble they had been through. It was he — he himself — Semyon Ivanovitch, Mr. Prohartchin, but in such a condition that they all cried out in dismay, and no one thought about the sister-in-law. The lost man was unconscious. He was brought in, or more correctly carried in, by a sopping and tattered night-cabman. To the landlady's question where the poor dear man had got so groggy, the cabman answered: "Why, he is not drunk and has not had a drop, that I can tell you,

for sure; but seemingly a faintness has come over him, or some sort of a fit, or maybe he’s been knocked down by a blow.”

They began examining him, propping the culprit against the stove to do so more conveniently, and saw that it really was not a case of drunkenness, nor had he had a blow, but that something else was wrong, for Semyon Ivanovitch could not utter a word, but seemed twitching in a sort of convulsion, and only blinked, fixing his eyes in bewilderment first on one and then on another of the spectators, who were all attired in night array. Then they began questioning the cabman, asking where he had got him from. “Why, from folks out Kolomna way,” he answered. “Deuce knows what they are, not exactly gentry, but merry, rollicking gentlemen; so he was like this when they gave him to me; whether they had been fighting, or whether he was in some sort of a fit, goodness knows what it was; but they were nice, jolly gentlemen!”

Semyon Ivanovitch was taken, lifted high on the shoulders of two or three sturdy fellows, and carried to his bed. When Semyon Ivanovitch on being put in bed felt the sister-in-law, and put his feet on his sacred box, he cried out at the top of his voice, squatted up almost on his heels, and trembling and shaking all over, with his hands and his body he cleared a space as far as he could in his bed, while gazing with a tremulous but strangely resolute look at those present, he seemed as it were to protest that he would sooner die than give up the hundredth part of his poor belongings to any one....

Semyon Ivanovitch lay for two or three days closely barricaded by the screen, and so cut off from all the world and all its vain anxieties. Next morning, of course, every one had forgotten about him; time, meanwhile, flew by as usual, hour followed hour and day followed day. The sick man’s heavy, feverish brain was plunged in something between sleep and delirium; but he lay quietly and did not moan or complain; on the contrary he kept still and silent and controlled himself, lying low in his bed, just as the hare lies close to the earth when it hears the hunter. At times a long depressing stillness prevailed in the flat, a sign that the lodgers had all gone to the office, and Semyon Ivanovitch, waking up, could relieve his depression by listening to the bustle in the kitchen, where the landlady was busy close by; or to the regular flop of Avdotya’s down-trodden slippers as, sighing and moaning, she cleared away, rubbed and polished, tidying all the rooms in the flat. Whole hours passed by in that way, drowsy, languid,

sleepy, wearisome, like the water that dripped with a regular sound from the locker into the basin in the kitchen. At last the lodgers would arrive, one by one or in groups, and Semyon Ivanovitch could very conveniently hear them abusing the weather, saying they were hungry, making a noise, smoking, quarrelling, and making friends, playing cards, and clattering the cups as they got ready for tea. Semyon Ivanovitch mechanically made an effort to get up and join them, as he had a right to do at tea; but he at once sank back into drowsiness, and dreamed that he had been sitting a long time at the tea-table, having tea with them and talking, and that Zinovy Prokofyevitch had already seized the opportunity to introduce into the conversation some scheme concerning sisters-in-law and the moral relation of various worthy people to them. At this point Semyon Ivanovitch was in haste to defend himself and reply. But the mighty formula that flew from every tongue— “It has more than once been observed” — cut short all his objections, and Semyon Ivanovitch could do nothing better than begin dreaming again that to-day was the first of the month and that he was receiving money in his office.

Undoing the paper round it on the stairs, he looked about him quickly, and made haste as fast as he could to subtract half of the lawful wages he had received and conceal it in his boot. Then on the spot, on the stairs, quite regardless of the fact that he was in bed and asleep, he made up his mind when he reached home to give his landlady what was due for board and lodging; then to buy certain necessities, and to show any one it might concern, as it were casually and unintentionally, that some of his salary had been deducted, that now he had nothing left to send his sister-in-law; then to speak with commiseration of his sister-in-law, to say a great deal about her the next day and the day after, and ten days later to say something casually again about her poverty, that his companions might not forget. Making this determination he observed that Andrey Efimovitch, that everlastingly silent, bald little man who sat in the office three rooms from where Semyon Ivanovitch sat, and hadn’t said a word to him for twenty years, was standing on the stairs, that he, too, was counting his silver roubles, and shaking his head, he said to him: “Money!”

“If there’s no money there will be no porridge,” he added grimly as he went down the stairs, and just at the door he ended: “And I have seven children, sir.” Then the little bald man, probably equally unconscious that he was acting as a phantom and not as a substantial reality, held up his hand

about thirty inches from the floor, and waving it vertically, muttered that the eldest was going to school, then glancing with indignation at Semyon Ivanovitch, as though it were Mr. Prohartchin's fault that he was the father of seven, pulled his old hat down over his eyes, and with a whisk of his overcoat he turned to the left and disappeared. Semyon Ivanovitch was quite frightened, and though he was fully convinced of his own innocence in regard to the unpleasant accumulation of seven under one roof, yet it seemed to appear that in fact no one else was to blame but Semyon Ivanovitch. Panic-stricken he set off running, for it seemed to him that the bald gentleman had turned back, was running after him, and meant to search him and take away all his salary, insisting upon the indisputable number seven, and resolutely denying any possible claim of any sort of sisters-in-law upon Semyon Ivanovitch. Prohartchin ran and ran, gasping for breath.... Beside him was running, too, an immense number of people, and all of them were jingling their money in the tailpockets of their skimpy little dress-coats; at last every one ran up, there was the noise of fire engines, and whole masses of people carried him almost on their shoulders up to that same house on fire which he had watched last time in company with the drunken cadger. The drunken cadger — alias Mr. Zimoveykin — was there now, too, he met Semyon Ivanovitch, made a fearful fuss, took him by the arm, and led him into the thickest part of the crowd. Just as then in reality, all about them was the noise and uproar of an immense crowd of people, flooding the whole of Fontanka Embankment between the two bridges, as well as all the surrounding streets and alleys; just as then, Semyon Ivanovitch, in company with the drunken cadger, was carried along behind a fence, where they were squeezed as though in pincers in a huge timber-yard full of spectators who had gathered from the street, from Tolkutchy Market and from all the surrounding houses, taverns, and restaurants. Semyon Ivanovitch saw all this and felt as he had done at the time; in the whirl of fever and delirium all sorts of strange figures began flitting before him. He remembered some of them. One of them was a gentleman who had impressed every one extremely, a man seven feet high, with whiskers half a yard long, who had been standing behind Semyon Ivanovitch's back during the fire, and had given him encouragement from behind, when our hero had felt something like ecstasy and had stamped as though intending thereby to applaud the gallant work of the firemen, from which he had an excellent view from his elevated position. Another was the sturdy lad from whom our

hero had received a shove by way of a lift on to another fence, when he had been disposed to climb over it, possibly to save some one. He had a glimpse, too, of the figure of the old man with a sickly face, in an old wadded dressing-gown, tied round the waist, who had made his appearance before the fire in a little shop buying sugar and tobacco for his lodger, and who now, with a milk-can and a quart pot in his hands, made his way through the crowd to the house in which his wife and daughter were burning together with thirteen and a half roubles in the corner under the bed. But most distinct of all was the poor, sinful woman of whom he had dreamed more than once during his illness — she stood before him now as she had done then, in wretched bark shoes and rags, with a crutch and a wicker-basket on her back. She was shouting more loudly than the firemen or the crowd, waving her crutch and her arms, saying that her own children had turned her out and that she had lost two coppers in consequence. The children and the coppers, the coppers and the children, were mingled together in an utterly incomprehensible muddle, from which every one withdrew baffled, after vain efforts to understand. But the woman would not desist, she kept wailing, shouting, and waving her arms, seeming to pay no attention either to the fire up to which she had been carried by the crowd from the street or to the people about her, or to the misfortune of strangers, or even to the sparks and red-hot embers which were beginning to fall in showers on the crowd standing near. At last Mr. Prohartchin felt that a feeling of terror was coming upon him; for he saw clearly that all this was not, so to say, an accident, and that he would not get off scot-free. And, indeed, upon the woodstack, close to him, was a peasant, in a torn smock that hung loose about him, with his hair and beard singed, and he began stirring up all the people against Semyon Ivanovitch. The crowd pressed closer and closer, the peasant shouted, and foaming at the mouth with horror, Mr. Prohartchin suddenly realized that this peasant was a cabman whom he had cheated five years before in the most inhuman way, slipping away from him without paying through a side gate and jerking up his heels as he ran as though he were barefoot on hot bricks. In despair Mr. Prohartchin tried to speak, to scream, but his voice failed him. He felt that the infuriated crowd was twining round him like a many-coloured snake, strangling him, crushing him. He made an incredible effort and awoke. Then he saw that he was on fire, that all his corner was on fire, that his screen was on fire, that the whole flat was on fire, together with Ustinya

Fyodorovna and all her lodgers, that his bed was burning, his pillow, his quilt, his box, and last of all, his precious mattress. Semyon Ivanovitch jumped up, clutched at the mattress and ran dragging it after him. But in the landlady's room into which, regardless of decorum, our hero ran just as he was, barefoot and in his shirt, he was seized, held tight, and triumphantly carried back behind the screen, which meanwhile was not on fire — it seemed that it was rather Semyon Ivanovitch's head that was on fire — and was put back to bed. It was just as some tattered, unshaven, ill-humoured organ-grinder puts away in his travelling box the Punch who has been making an upset, drubbing all the other puppets, selling his soul to the devil, and who at last ends his existence, till the next performance, in the same box with the devil, the negroes, the Pierrot, and Mademoiselle Katerina with her fortunate lover, the captain.

Immediately every one, old and young, surrounded Semyon Ivanovitch, standing in a row round his bed and fastening eyes full of expectation on the invalid. Meantime he had come to himself, but from shame or some other feeling, began pulling up the quilt over him, apparently wishing to hide himself under it from the attention of his sympathetic friends. At last Mark Ivanovitch was the first to break silence, and as a sensible man he began saying in a very friendly way that Semyon Ivanovitch must keep calm, that it was too bad and a shame to be ill, that only little children behaved like that, that he must get well and go to the office. Mark Ivanovitch ended by a little joke, saying that no regular salary had yet been fixed for invalids, and as he knew for a fact that their grade would be very low in the service, to his thinking anyway, their calling or condition did not promise great and substantial advantages. In fact, it was evident that they were all taking genuine interest in Semyon Ivanovitch's fate and were very sympathetic. But with incomprehensible rudeness, Semyon Ivanovitch persisted in lying in bed in silence, and obstinately pulling the quilt higher and higher over his head. Mark Ivanovitch, however, would not be gainsaid, and restraining his feelings, said something very honeyed to Semyon Ivanovitch again, knowing that that was how he ought to treat a sick man. But Semyon Ivanovitch would not feel this: on the contrary he muttered something between his teeth with the most distrustful air, and suddenly began glancing askance from right to left in a hostile way, as though he would have reduced his sympathetic friends to ashes with his eyes. It was no use letting it stop there. Mark Ivanovitch lost patience, and seeing that the man was offended

and completely exasperated, and had simply made up his mind to be obstinate, told him straight out, without any softening suavity, that it was time to get up, that it was no use lying there, that shouting day and night about houses on fire, sisters-in-law, drunken cadgers, locks, boxes and goodness knows what, was all stupid, improper, and degrading, for if Semyon Ivanovitch did not want to sleep himself he should not hinder other people, and please would he bear it in mind.

This speech produced its effects, for Semyon Ivanovitch, turning promptly to the orator, articulated firmly, though in a hoarse voice, “You hold your tongue, puppy! You idle speaker, you foul-mouthed man! Do you hear, young dandy? Are you a prince, eh? Do you understand what I say?”

Hearing such insults, Mark Ivanovitch fired up, but realizing that he had to deal with a sick man, magnanimously overcame his resentment and tried to shame him out of his humour, but was cut short in that too; for Semyon Ivanovitch observed at once that he would not allow people to play with him for all that Mark Ivanovitch wrote poetry. Then followed a silence of two minutes; at last recovering from his amazement Mark Ivanovitch, plainly, clearly, in well-chosen language, but with firmness, declared that Semyon Ivanovitch ought to understand that he was among gentlemen, and “you ought to understand, sir, how to behave with gentlemen.”

Mark Ivanovitch could on occasion speak effectively and liked to impress his hearers, but, probably from the habit of years of silence, Semyon Ivanovitch talked and acted somewhat abruptly; and, moreover, when he did on occasion begin a long sentence, as he got further into it every word seemed to lead to another word, that other word to a third word, that third to a fourth and so on, so that his mouth seemed brimming over; he began stuttering, and the crowding words took to flying out in picturesque disorder. That was why Semyon Ivanovitch, who was a sensible man, sometimes talked terrible nonsense. “You are lying,” he said now. “You booby, you loose fellow! You’ll come to want — you’ll go begging, you seditious fellow, you — you loafer. Take that, you poet!”

“Why, you are still raving, aren’t you, Semyon Ivanovitch?”

“I tell you what,” answered Semyon Ivanovitch, “fools rave, drunkards rave, dogs rave, but a wise man acts sensibly. I tell you, you don’t know your own business, you loafer, you educated gentleman, you learned book! Here, you’ll get on fire and not notice your head’s burning off. What do you think of that?”

“Why ... you mean.... How do you mean, burn my head off, Semyon Ivanovitch?”

Mark Ivanovitch said no more, for every one saw clearly that Semyon Ivanovitch was not yet in his sober senses, but delirious.

But the landlady could not resist remarking at this point that the house in Crooked Lane had been burnt owing to a bald wench; that there was a bald-headed wench living there, that she had lighted a candle and set fire to the lumber room; but nothing would happen in her place, and everything would be all right in the flats.

“But look here, Semyon Ivanovitch,” cried Zinovy Prokofyevitch, losing patience and interrupting the landlady, “you old fogey, you old crock, you silly fellow — are they making jokes with you now about your sister-in-law or examinations in dancing? Is that it? Is that what you think?”

“Now, I tell you what,” answered our hero, sitting up in bed and making a last effort in a paroxysm of fury with his sympathetic friends. “Who’s the fool? You are the fool, a dog is a fool, you joking gentleman. But I am not going to make jokes to please you, sir; do you hear, puppy? I am not your servant, sir.”

Semyon Ivanovitch would have said something more, but he fell back in bed helpless. His sympathetic friends were left gaping in perplexity, for they understood now what was wrong with Semyon Ivanovitch and did not know how to begin. Suddenly the kitchen door creaked and opened, and the drunken cadger — alias Mr. Zimoveykin — timidly thrust in his head, cautiously sniffing round the place as his habit was. It seemed as though he had been expected, every one waved to him at once to come quickly, and Zimoveykin, highly delighted, with the utmost readiness and haste jostled his way to Semyon Ivanovitch’s bedside.

It was evident that Zimoveykin had spent the whole night in vigil and in great exertions of some sort. The right side of his face was plastered up; his swollen eyelids were wet from his running eyes, his coat and all his clothes were torn, while the whole left side of his attire was bespattered with something extremely nasty, possibly mud from a puddle. Under his arm was somebody’s violin, which he had been taking somewhere to sell. Apparently they had not made a mistake in summoning him to their assistance, for seeing the position of affairs, he addressed the delinquent at once, and with the air of a man who knows what he is about and feels that he has the upper hand, said: “What are you thinking about? Get up, Senka. What are you

doing, a clever chap like you? Be sensible, or I shall pull you out of bed if you are obstreperous. Don’t be obstreperous!”

This brief but forcible speech surprised them all; still more were they surprised when they noticed that Semyon Ivanovitch, hearing all this and seeing this person before him, was so flustered and reduced to such confusion and dismay that he could scarcely mutter through his teeth in a whisper the inevitable protest.

“Go away, you wretch,” he said. “You are a wretched creature — you are a thief! Do you hear? Do you understand? You are a great swell, my fine gentleman, you regular swell.”

“No, my boy,” Zimoveykin answered emphatically, retaining all his presence of mind, “you’re wrong there, you wise fellow, you regular Prohartchin,” Zimoveykin went on, parodying Semyon Ivanovitch and looking round gleefully. “Don’t be obstreperous! Behave yourself, Senka, behave yourself, or I’ll give you away, I’ll tell them all about it, my lad, do you understand?”

Apparently Semyon Ivanovitch did understand, for he started when he heard the conclusion of the speech, and began looking rapidly about him with an utterly desperate air.

Satisfied with the effect, Mr. Zimoveykin would have continued, but Mark Ivanovitch checked his zeal, and waiting till Semyon Ivanovitch was still and almost calm again began judiciously impressing on the uneasy invalid at great length that, “to harbour ideas such as he now had in his head was, first, useless, and secondly, not only useless, but harmful; and, in fact, not so much harmful as positively immoral; and the cause of it all was that Semyon Ivanovitch was not only a bad example, but led them all into temptation.”

Every one expected satisfactory results from this speech. Moreover by now Semyon Ivanovitch was quite quiet and replied in measured terms. A quiet discussion followed. They appealed to him in a friendly way, inquiring what he was so frightened of. Semyon Ivanovitch answered, but his answers were irrelevant. They answered him, he answered them. There were one or two more observations on both sides and then every one rushed into discussion, for suddenly such a strange and amazing subject cropped up, that they did not know how to express themselves. The argument at last led to impatience, impatience led to shouting, and shouting even to tears; and Mark Ivanovitch went away at last foaming at the mouth and declaring

that he had never known such a blockhead. Oplevaniev spat in disgust, Okeanov was frightened, Zinovy Prokofyevitch became tearful, while Ustinya Fyodorovna positively howled, wailing that her lodger was leaving them and had gone off his head, that he would die, poor dear man, without a passport and without telling any one, while she was a lone, lorn woman and that she would be dragged from pillar to post. In fact, they all saw clearly at last that the seed they had sown had yielded a hundred-fold, that the soil had been too productive, and that in their company, Semyon Ivanovitch had succeeded in overstraining his wits completely and in the most irrevocable manner. Every one subsided into silence, for though they saw that Semyon Ivanovitch was frightened, the sympathetic friends were frightened too.

“What?” cried Mark Ivanovitch; “but what are you afraid of? What have you gone off your head about? Who’s thinking about you, my good sir? Have you the right to be afraid? Who are you? What are you? Nothing, sir. A round nought, sir, that is what you are. What are you making a fuss about? A woman has been run over in the street, so are you going to be run over? Some drunkard did not take care of his pocket, but is that any reason why your coat-tails should be cut off? A house is burnt down, so your head is to be burnt off, is it? Is that it, sir, is that it?”

“You ... you ... you stupid!” muttered Semyon Ivanovitch, “if your nose were cut off you would eat it up with a bit of bread and not notice it.”

“I may be a dandy,” shouted Mark Ivanovitch, not listening; “I may be a regular dandy, but I have not to pass an examination to get married — to learn dancing; the ground is firm under me, sir. Why, my good man, haven’t you room enough? Is the floor giving way under your feet, or what?”

“Well, they won’t ask you, will they? They’ll shut one up and that will be the end of it?”

“The end of it? That’s what’s up? What’s your idea now, eh?”

“Why, they kicked out the drunken cadger.”

“Yes; but you see that was a drunkard, and you are a man, and so am I.”

“Yes, I am a man. It’s there all right one day and then it’s gone.”

“Gone! But what do you mean by it?”

“Why, the office! The off — off — ice!”

“Yes, you blessed man, but of course the office is wanted and necessary.”

“It is wanted, I tell you; it’s wanted to-day and it’s wanted to-morrow, but the day after to-morrow it will not be wanted. You have heard what happened?”

“Why, but they’ll pay you your salary for the year, you doubting Thomas, you man of little faith. They’ll put you into another job on account of your age.”

“Salary? But what if I have spent my salary, if thieves come and take my money? And I have a sister-in-law, do you hear? A sister-in-law! You battering-ram....”

“A sister-in-law! You are a man....”

“Yes, I am; I am a man. But you are a well-read gentleman and a fool, do you hear? — you battering-ram — you regular battering-ram! That’s what you are! I am not talking about your jokes; but there are jobs such that all of a sudden they are done away with. And Demid — do you hear? — Demid Vassilyevitch says that the post will be done away with....”

“Ah, bless you, with your Demid! You sinner, why, you know....”

“In a twinkling of an eye you’ll be left without a post, then you’ll just have to make the best of it.”

“Why, you are simply raving, or clean off your head! Tell us plainly, what have you done? Own up if you have done something wrong! It’s no use being ashamed! Are you off your head, my good man, eh?”

“He’s off his head! He’s gone off his head!” they all cried, and wrung their hands in despair, while the landlady threw both her arms round Mark Ivanovitch for fear he should tear Semyon Ivanovitch to pieces.

“You heathen, you heathenish soul, you wise man!” Zimoveykin besought him. “Senka, you are not a man to take offence, you are a polite, prepossessing man. You are simple, you are good ... do you hear? It all comes from your goodness. Here I am a ruffian and a fool, I am a beggar; but good people haven’t abandoned me, no fear; you see they treat me with respect, I thank them and the landlady. Here, you see, I bow down to the ground to them; here, see, see, I am paying what is due to you, landlady!” At this point Zimoveykin swung off with pedantic dignity a low bow right down to the ground.

After that Semyon Ivanovitch would have gone on talking; but this time they would not let him, they all intervened, began entreating him, assuring him, comforting him, and succeeded in making Semyon Ivanovitch thoroughly ashamed of himself, and at last, in a faint voice, he asked leave to explain himself.

“Very well, then,” he said, “I am prepossessing, I am quiet, I am good, faithful and devoted; to the last drop of my blood you know ... do you hear,

you puppy, you swell? ... granted the job is going on, but you see I am poor. And what if they take it? do you hear, you swell? Hold your tongue and try to understand! They'll take it and that's all about it ... it's going on, brother, and then not going on ... do you understand? And I shall go begging my bread, do you hear?"

"Senka," Zimoveykin bawled frantically, drowning the general hubbub with his voice. "You are seditious! I'll inform against you! What are you saying? Who are you? Are you a rebel, you sheep's head? A rowdy, stupid man they would turn off without a character. But what are you?"

"Well, that's just it."

"What?"

"Well, there it is."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, I am free, he's free, and here one lies and thinks...."

"What?"

"What if they say I'm seditious?"

"Se — di — tious? Senka, you seditious!"

"Stay," cried Mr. Prohartchin, waving his hand and interrupting the rising uproar, "that's not what I mean. Try to understand, only try to understand, you sheep. I am law-abiding. I am law-abiding to-day, I am law-abiding to-morrow, and then all of a sudden they kick me out and call me seditious."

"What are you saying?" Mark Ivanovitch thundered at last, jumping up from the chair on which he had sat down to rest, running up to the bed and in a frenzy shaking with vexation and fury. "What do you mean? You sheep! You've nothing to call your own. Why, are you the only person in the world? Was the world made for you, do you suppose? Are you a Napoleon? What are you? Who are you? Are you a Napoleon, eh? Tell me, are you a Napoleon?"

But Mr. Prohartchin did not answer this question. Not because he was overcome with shame at being a Napoleon, and was afraid of taking upon himself such a responsibility — no, he was incapable of disputing further, or saying anything.... His illness had reached a crisis. Tiny teardrops gushed suddenly from his glittering, feverish, grey eyes. He hid his burning head in his bony hands that were wasted by illness, sat up in bed, and sobbing, began to say that he was quite poor, that he was a simple, unlucky man, that he was foolish and unlearned, he begged kind folks to forgive him, to take

care of him, to protect him, to give him food and drink, not to leave him in want, and goodness knows what else Semyon Ivanovitch said. As he uttered this appeal he looked about him in wild terror, as though he were expecting the ceiling to fall or the floor to give way. Every one felt his heart soften and move to pity as he looked at the poor fellow. The landlady, sobbing and wailing like a peasant woman at her forlorn condition, laid the invalid back in bed with her own hands. Mark Ivanovitch, seeing the uselessness of touching upon the memory of Napoleon, instantly relapsed into kindliness and came to her assistance. The others, in order to do something, suggested raspberry tea, saying that it always did good at once and that the invalid would like it very much; but Zimoveykin contradicted them all, saying there was nothing better than a good dose of camomile or something of the sort. As for Zinovy Prokofyevitch, having a good heart, he sobbed and shed tears in his remorse, for having frightened Semyon Ivanovitch with all sorts of absurdities, and gathering from the invalid's last words that he was quite poor and needing assistance, he proceeded to get up a subscription for him, confining it for a time to the tenants of the flat. Every one was sighing and moaning, every one felt sorry and grieved, and yet all wondered how it was a man could be so completely panic-stricken. And what was he frightened about? It would have been all very well if he had had a good post, had had a wife, a lot of children; it would have been excusable if he were being hauled up before the court on some charge or other; but he was a man utterly insignificant, with nothing but a trunk and a German lock; he had been lying more than twenty years behind his screen, saying nothing, knowing nothing of the world nor of trouble, saving his half-pence, and now at a frivolous, idle word the man had actually gone off his head, was utterly panic-stricken at the thought he might have a hard time of it.... And it never occurred to him that every one has a hard time of it! "If he would only take that into consideration," Okeanov said afterwards, "that we all have a hard time, then the man would have kept his head, would have given up his antics and would have put up with things, one way or another."

All day long nothing was talked of but Semyon Ivanovitch. They went up to him, inquired after him, tried to comfort him; but by the evening he was beyond that. The poor fellow began to be delirious, feverish. He sank into unconsciousness, so that they almost thought of sending for a doctor; the lodgers all agreed together and undertook to watch over Semyon Ivanovitch and soothe him by turns through the night, and if anything

happened to wake all the rest immediately. With the object of keeping awake, they sat down to cards, setting beside the invalid his friend, the drunken cadger, who had spent the whole day in the flat and had asked leave to stay the night. As the game was played on credit and was not at all interesting they soon got bored. They gave up the game, then got into an argument about something, then began to be loud and noisy, finally dispersed to their various corners, went on for a long time angrily shouting and wrangling, and as all of them felt suddenly ill-humoured they no longer cared to sit up, so went to sleep. Soon it was as still in the flat as in an empty cellar, and it was the more like one because it was horribly cold. The last to fall asleep was Okeanov. “And it was between sleeping and waking,” as he said afterwards, “I fancied just before morning two men kept talking close by me.” Okeanov said that he recognized Zimoveykin, and that Zimoveykin began waking his old friend Remnev just beside him, that they talked for a long time in a whisper; then Zimoveykin went away and could be heard trying to unlock the door into the kitchen. The key, the landlady declared afterwards, was lying under her pillow and was lost that night. Finally — Okeanov testified — he had fancied he had heard them go behind the screen to the invalid and light a candle there, “and I know nothing more,” he said, “I fell asleep, and woke up,” as everybody else did, when every one in the flat jumped out of bed at the sound behind the screen of a shriek that would have roused the dead, and it seemed to many of them that a candle went out at that moment. A great hubbub arose, every one’s heart stood still; they rushed pell-mell at the shriek, but at that moment there was a scuffle, with shouting, swearing, and fighting. They struck a light and saw that Zimoveykin and Remnev were fighting together, that they were swearing and abusing one another, and as they turned the light on them, one of them shouted: “It’s not me, it’s this ruffian,” and the other who was Zimoveykin, was shouting: “Don’t touch me, I’ve done nothing! I’ll take my oath any minute!” Both of them looked hardly like human beings; but for the first minute they had no attention to spare for them; the invalid was not where he had been behind the screen. They immediately parted the combatants and dragged them away, and saw that Mr. Prohartchin was lying under the bed; he must, while completely unconscious, have dragged the quilt and pillow after him so that there was nothing left on the bedstead but the bare mattress, old and greasy (he never had sheets). They pulled Semyon Ivanovitch out, stretched him on the mattress, but soon realized

that there was no need to make trouble over him, that he was completely done for; his arms were stiff, and he seemed all to pieces. They stood over him, he still faintly shuddered and trembled all over, made an effort to do something with his arms, could not utter a word, but blinked his eyes as they say heads do when still warm and bleeding, after being just chopped off by the executioner.

At last the body grew more and more still; the last faint convulsions died away. Mr. Prohartchin had set off with his good deeds and his sins. Whether Semyon Ivanovitch had been frightened by something, whether he had had a dream, as Remnev maintained afterwards, or there had been some other mischief — nobody knew; all that can be said is, that if the head clerk had made his appearance at that moment in the flat and had announced that Semyon Ivanovitch was dismissed for sedition, insubordination, and drunkenness; if some old draggle-tailed beggar woman had come in at the door, calling herself Semyon Ivanovitch's sister-in-law; or if Semyon Ivanovitch had just received two hundred roubles as a reward; or if the house had caught fire and Semyon Ivanovitch's head had been really burning — he would in all probability not have deigned to stir a finger in any of these eventualities. While the first stupefaction was passing over, while all present were regaining their powers of speech, were working themselves up into a fever of excitement, shouting and flying to conjectures and suppositions; while Ustinya Fyodorovna was pulling the box from under his bed, was rummaging in a fluster under the mattress and even in Semyon Ivanovitch's boots; while they cross-questioned Remnev and Zimoveykin, Okeanov, who had hitherto been the quietest, humblest, and least original of the lodgers, suddenly plucked up all his presence of mind and displayed all his latent talents, by taking up his hat and under cover of the general uproar slipping out of the flat. And just when the horrors of disorder and anarchy had reached their height in the agitated flat, till then so tranquil, the door opened and suddenly there descended upon them, like snow upon their heads, a personage of gentlemanly appearance, with a severe and displeased-looking face, behind him Yaroslav Ilyitch, behind Yaroslav Ilyitch his subordinates and the functionaries whose duty it is to be present on such occasions, and behind them all, much embarrassed, Mr. Okeanov. The severe-looking personage of gentlemanly appearance went straight up to Semyon Ivanovitch, examined him, made a wry face, shrugged his shoulders and announced what everybody knew, that is, that

the dead man was dead, only adding that the same thing had happened a day or two ago to a gentleman of consequence, highly respected, who had died suddenly in his sleep. Then the personage of gentlemanly, but displeased-looking, appearance walked away saying that they had troubled him for nothing, and took himself off. His place was at once filled (while Remnev and Zimoveykin were handed over to the custody of the proper functionaries), by Yaroslav Ilyitch, who questioned some one, adroitly took possession of the box, which the landlady was already trying to open, put the boots back in their proper place, observing that they were all in holes and no use, asked for the pillow to be put back, called up Okeanov, asked for the key of the box which was found in the pocket of the drunken cadger, and solemnly, in the presence of the proper officials, unlocked Semyon Ivanovitch's property. Everything was displayed: two rags, a pair of socks, half a handkerchief, an old hat, several buttons, some old soles, and the uppers of a pair of boots, that is, all sorts of odds and ends, scraps, rubbish, trash, which had a stale smell. The only thing of any value was the German lock. They called up Okeanov and cross-questioned him sternly; but Okeanov was ready to take his oath. They asked for the pillow, they examined it; it was extremely dirty, but in other respects it was like all other pillows. They attacked the mattress, they were about to lift it up, but stopped for a moment's consideration, when suddenly and quite unexpectedly something heavy fell with a clink on the floor. They bent down and saw on the floor a screw of paper and in the screw some dozen roubles. "A-hey!" said Yaroslav Ilyitch, pointing to a slit in the mattress from which hair and stuffing were sticking out. They examined the slit and found that it had only just been made with a knife and was half a yard in length; they thrust hands into the gap and pulled out a kitchen knife, probably hurriedly thrust in there after slitting the mattress. Before Yaroslav Ilyitch had time to pull the knife out of the slit and to say "A-hey!" again, another screw of money fell out, and after it, one at a time, two half roubles, a quarter rouble, then some small change, and an old-fashioned, solid five-kopeck piece — all this was seized upon. At this point it was realized that it would not be amiss to cut up the whole mattress with scissors. They asked for scissors.

Meanwhile, the guttering candle lighted up a scene that would have been extremely curious to a spectator. About a dozen lodgers were grouped round the bed in the most picturesque costumes, all unbrushed, unshaven,

unwashed, sleepy-looking, just as they had gone to bed. Some were quite pale, while others had drops of sweat upon their brows: some were shuddering, while others looked feverish. The landlady, utterly stupefied, was standing quietly with her hands folded waiting for Yaroslav Ilyitch's good pleasure. From the stove above, the heads of Avdotya, the servant, and the landlady's favourite cat looked down with frightened curiosity. The torn and broken screen lay cast on the floor, the open box displayed its uninviting contents, the quilt and pillow lay tossed at random, covered with fluff from the mattress, and on the three-legged wooden table gleamed the steadily growing heap of silver and other coins. Only Semyon Ivanovitch preserved his composure, lying calmly on the bed and seeming to have no foreboding of his ruin. When the scissors had been brought and Yaroslav Ilyitch's assistant, wishing to be of service, shook the mattress rather impatiently to ease it from under the back of its owner, Semyon Ivanovitch with his habitual civility made room a little, rolling on his side with his back to the searchers; then at a second shake he turned on his face, finally gave way still further, and as the last slat in the bedstead was missing, he suddenly and quite unexpectedly plunged head downward, leaving in view only two bony, thin, blue legs, which stuck upwards like two branches of a charred tree. As this was the second time that morning that Mr. Prohartchin had poked his head under his bed it at once aroused suspicion, and some of the lodgers, headed by Zinovy Prokofyevitch, crept under it, with the intention of seeing whether there were something hidden there too. But they knocked their heads together for nothing, and as Yaroslav Ilyitch shouted to them, bidding them release Semyon Ivanovitch at once from his unpleasant position, two of the more sensible seized each a leg, dragged the unsuspected capitalist into the light of day and laid him across the bed. Meanwhile the hair and flock were flying about, the heap of silver grew — and, my goodness, what a lot there was!... Noble silver roubles, stout solid rouble and a half pieces, pretty half rouble coins, plebeian quarter roubles, twenty kopeck pieces, even the unpromising old crone's small fry of ten and five kopeck silver pieces — all done up in separate bits of paper in the most methodical and systematic way; there were curiosities also, two counters of some sort, one napoléon d'or, one very rare coin of some unknown kind.... Some of the roubles were of the greatest antiquity, they were rubbed and hacked coins of Elizabeth, German kreutzers, coins of Peter, of Catherine; there were, for instance, old fifteen-kopeck pieces, now very rare, pierced

for wearing as earrings, all much worn, yet with the requisite number of dots ... there was even copper, but all of that was green and tarnished.... They found one red note, but no more. At last, when the dissection was quite over and the mattress case had been shaken more than once without a clink, they piled all the money on the table and set to work to count it. At the first glance one might well have been deceived and have estimated it at a million, it was such an immense heap. But it was not a million, though it did turn out to be a very considerable sum — exactly 2497 roubles and a half — so that if Zinovy Prokofyevitch's subscription had been raised the day before there would perhaps have been just 2500 roubles. They took the money, they put a seal on the dead man's box, they listened to the landlady's complaints, and informed her when and where she ought to lodge information in regard to the dead man's little debt to her. A receipt was taken from the proper person. At that point hints were dropped in regard to the sister-in-law; but being persuaded that in a certain sense the sister-in-law was a myth, that is, a product of the defective imagination with which they had more than once reproached Semyon Ivanovitch — they abandoned the idea as useless, mischievous and disadvantageous to the good name of Mr. Prohartchin, and so the matter ended.

When the first shock was over, when the lodgers had recovered themselves and realized the sort of person their late companion had been, they all subsided, relapsed into silence and began looking distrustfully at one another. Some seemed to take Semyon Ivanovitch's behaviour very much to heart, and even to feel affronted by it. What a fortune! So the man had saved up like this! Not losing his composure, Mark Ivanovitch proceeded to explain why Semyon Ivanovitch had been so suddenly panic-stricken; but they did not listen to him. Zinovy Prokofyevitch was very thoughtful, Okeanov had had a little to drink, the others seemed rather crestfallen, while a little man called Kantarev, with a nose like a sparrow's beak, left the flat that evening after very carefully packing up and cording all his boxes and bags, and coldly explaining to the curious that times were hard and that the terms here were beyond his means. The landlady wailed without ceasing, lamenting for Semyon Ivanovitch, and cursing him for having taken advantage of her lone, lorn state. Mark Ivanovitch was asked why the dead man had not taken his money to the bank. "He was too simple, my good soul, he hadn't enough imagination," answered Mark Ivanovitch.

“Yes, and you have been too simple, too, my good woman,” Okeanov put in. “For twenty years the man kept himself close here in your flat, and here he’s been knocked down by a feather — while you went on cooking cabbage-soup and had no time to notice it.... Ah-ah, my good woman!”

“Oh, the poor dear,” the landlady went on, “what need of a bank! If he’d brought me his pile and said to me: ‘Take it, Ustinyushka, poor dear, here is all I have, keep and board me in my helplessness, so long as I am on earth,’ then, by the holy ikon I would have fed him, I would have given him drink, I would have looked after him. Ah, the sinner! ah, the deceiver! He deceived me, he cheated me, a poor lone woman!”

They went up to the bed again. Semyon Ivanovitch was lying properly now, dressed in his best, though, indeed, it was his only suit, hiding his rigid chin behind a cravat which was tied rather awkwardly, washed, brushed, but not quite shaven, because there was no razor in the flat; the only one, which had belonged to Zinovy Prokofyevitch, had lost its edge a year ago and had been very profitably sold at Tolkutchy Market; the others used to go to the barber’s.

They had not yet had time to clear up the disorder. The broken screen lay as before, and exposing Semyon Ivanovitch’s seclusion, seemed like an emblem of the fact that death tears away the veil from all our secrets, our shifty dodges and intrigues. The stuffing from the mattress lay about in heaps. The whole room, suddenly so still, might well have been compared by a poet to the ruined nest of a swallow, broken down and torn to pieces by the storm, the nestlings and their mother killed, and their warm little bed of fluff, feather and flock scattered about them.... Semyon Ivanovitch, however, looked more like a conceited, thievish old cock-sparrow. He kept quite quiet now, seemed to be lying low, as though he were not guilty, as though he had had nothing to do with the shameless, conscienceless, and unseemly duping and deception of all these good people. He did not heed now the sobs and wailing of his bereaved and wounded landlady. On the contrary, like a wary, callous capitalist, anxious not to waste a minute in idleness even in the coffin, he seemed to be wrapped up in some speculative calculation. There was a look of deep reflection in his face, while his lips were drawn together with a significant air, of which Semyon Ivanovitch during his lifetime had not been suspected of being capable. He seemed, as it were, to have grown shrewder, his right eye was, as it were, slyly screwed up. Semyon Ivanovitch seemed wanting to say something, to make some

very important communication and explanation and without loss of time, because things were complicated and there was not a minute to lose.... And it seemed as though they could hear him.

“What is it? Give over, do you hear, you stupid woman? Don’t whine! Go to bed and sleep it off, my good woman, do you hear? I am dead; there’s no need of a fuss now. What’s the use of it, really? It’s nice to lie here.... Though I don’t mean that, do you hear? You are a fine lady, you are a regular fine lady. Understand that; here I am dead now, but look here, what if — that is, perhaps it can’t be so — but I say what if I’m not dead, what if I get up, do you hear? What would happen then?”

THE CHRISTMAS TREE AND THE WEDDING



The other day I saw a wedding... But no! I would rather tell you about a Christmas tree. The wedding was superb. I liked it immensely. But the other incident was still finer. I don't know why it is that the sight of the wedding reminded me of the Christmas tree. This is the way it happened:

Exactly five years ago, on New Year's Eve, I was invited to a children's ball by a man high up in the business world, who had his connections, his circle of acquaintances, and his intrigues. So it seemed as though the children's ball was merely a pretext for the parents to come together and discuss matters of interest to themselves, quite innocently and casually.

I was an outsider, and, as I had no special matters to air, I was able to spend the evening independently of the others. There was another gentleman present who like myself had just stumbled upon this affair of domestic bliss. He was the first to attract my attention. His appearance was not that of a man of birth or high family. He was tall, rather thin, very serious, and well dressed. Apparently he had no heart for the family festivities. The instant he went off into a corner by himself the smile disappeared from his face, and his thick dark brows knitted into a frown. He knew no one except the host and showed every sign of being bored to death, though bravely sustaining the role of thorough enjoyment to the end. Later I learned that he was a provincial, had come to the capital on some important, brain-racking business, had brought a letter of recommendation to our host, and our host had taken him under his protection, not at all *con amore*. It was merely out of politeness that he had invited him to the children's ball.

They did not play cards with him, they did not offer him cigars. No one entered into conversation with him. Possibly they recognised the bird by its feathers from a distance. Thus, my gentleman, not knowing what to do with his hands, was compelled to spend the evening stroking his whiskers. His whiskers were really fine, but he stroked them so assiduously that one got the feeling that the whiskers had come into the world first and afterwards the man in order to stroke them.

There was another guest who interested me. But he was of quite a different order. He was a personage. They called him Julian Mastakovich. At first glance one could tell he was an honoured guest and stood in the same relation to the host as the host to the gentleman of the whiskers. The

host and hostess said no end of amiable things to him, were most attentive, wining him, hovering over him, bringing guests up to be introduced, but never leading him to any one else. I noticed tears glisten in our host's eyes when Julian Mastakovich remarked that he had rarely spent such a pleasant evening. Somehow I began to feel uncomfortable in this personage's presence. So, after amusing myself with the children, five of whom, remarkably well-fed young persons, were our host's, I went into a little sitting-room, entirely unoccupied, and seated myself at the end that was a conservatory and took up almost half the room.

The children were charming. They absolutely refused to resemble their elders, notwithstanding the efforts of mothers and governesses. In a jiffy they had denuded the Christmas tree down to the very last sweet and had already succeeded in breaking half of their playthings before they even found out which belonged to whom.

One of them was a particularly handsome little lad, dark-eyed, curly-haired, who stubbornly persisted in aiming at me with his wooden gun. But the child that attracted the greatest attention was his sister, a girl of about eleven, lovely as a Cupid. She was quiet and thoughtful, with large, full, dreamy eyes. The children had somehow offended her, and she left them and walked into the same room that I had withdrawn into. There she seated herself with her doll in a corner.

"Her father is an immensely wealthy business man," the guests informed each other in tones of awe. "Three hundred thousand rubles set aside for her dowry already."

As I turned to look at the group from which I heard this news item issuing, my glance met Julian Mastakovich's. He stood listening to the insipid chatter in an attitude of concentrated attention, with his hands behind his back and his head inclined to one side.

All the while I was quite lost in admiration of the shrewdness our host displayed in the dispensing of the gifts. The little maid of the many-rubied dowry received the handsomest doll, and the rest of the gifts were graded in value according to the diminishing scale of the parents' stations in life. The last child, a tiny chap of ten, thin, red-haired, freckled, came into possession of a small book of nature stories without illustrations or even head and tail pieces. He was the governess's child. She was a poor widow, and her little boy, clad in a sorry-looking little nankeen jacket, looked thoroughly crushed and intimidated. He took the book of nature stories and circled slowly about

the children’s toys. He would have given anything to play with them. But he did not dare to. You could tell he already knew his place.

I like to observe children. It is fascinating to watch the individuality in them struggling for self-assertion. I could see that the other children’s things had tremendous charm for the red-haired boy, especially a toy theatre, in which he was so anxious to take a part that he resolved to fawn upon the other children. He smiled and began to play with them. His one and only apple he handed over to a puffy urchin whose pockets were already crammed with sweets, and he even carried another youngster pickaback — all simply that he might be allowed to stay with the theatre.

But in a few moments an impudent young person fell on him and gave him a pummelling. He did not dare even to cry. The governess came and told him to leave off interfering with the other children’s games, and he crept away to the same room the little girl and I were in. She let him sit down beside her, and the two set themselves busily dressing the expensive doll.

Almost half an hour passed, and I was nearly dozing off, as I sat there in the conservatory half listening to the chatter of the red-haired boy and the dowered beauty, when Julian Mastakovich entered suddenly. He had slipped out of the drawing-room under cover of a noisy scene among the children. From my secluded corner it had not escaped my notice that a few moments before he had been eagerly conversing with the rich girl’s father, to whom he had only just been introduced.

He stood still for a while reflecting and mumbling to himself, as if counting something on his fingers.

“Three hundred — three hundred — eleven — twelve — thirteen — sixteen — in five years! Let’s say four per cent — five times twelve — sixty, and on these sixty — . Let us assume that in five years it will amount to — well, four hundred. Hm — hm! But the shrewd old fox isn’t likely to be satisfied with four per cent. He gets eight or even ten, perhaps. Let’s suppose five hundred, five hundred thousand, at least, that’s sure. Anything above that for pocket money — hm—”

He blew his nose and was about to leave the room when he spied the girl and stood still. I, behind the plants, escaped his notice. He seemed to me to be quivering with excitement. It must have been his calculations that upset him so. He rubbed his hands and danced from place to place, and kept getting more and more excited. Finally, however, he conquered his

emotions and came to a standstill. He cast a determined look at the future bride and wanted to move toward her, but glanced about first. Then, as if with a guilty conscience, he stepped over to the child on tip-toe, smiling, and bent down and kissed her head.

His coming was so unexpected that she uttered a shriek of alarm.

“What are you doing here, dear child?” he whispered, looking around and pinching her cheek.

“We’re playing.”

“What, with him?” said Julian Mastakovich with a look askance at the governess’s child. “You should go into the drawing-room, my lad,” he said to him.

The boy remained silent and looked up at the man with wide-open eyes. Julian Mastakovich glanced round again cautiously and bent down over the girl.

“What have you got, a doll, my dear?”

“Yes, sir.” The child quailed a little, and her brow wrinkled.

“A doll? And do you know, my dear, what dolls are made of?”

“No, sir,” she said weakly, and lowered her head.

“Out of rags, my dear. You, boy, you go back to the drawing-room, to the children,” said Julian Mastakovich looking at the boy sternly.

The two children frowned. They caught hold of each other and would not part.

“And do you know why they gave you the doll?” asked Julian Mastakovich, dropping his voice lower and lower.

“No.”

“Because you were a good, very good little girl the whole week.”

Saying which, Julian Mastakovich was seized with a paroxysm of agitation. He looked round and said in a tone faint, almost inaudible with excitement and impatience:

“If I come to visit your parents will you love me, my dear?”

He tried to kiss the sweet little creature, but the red-haired boy saw that she was on the verge of tears, and he caught her hand and sobbed out loud in sympathy. That enraged the man.

“Go away! Go away! Go back to the other room, to your playmates.”

“I don’t want him to. I don’t want him to! You go away!” cried the girl. “Let him alone! Let him alone!” She was almost weeping.

There was a sound of footsteps in the doorway. Julian Mastakovich started and straightened up his respectable body. The red-haired boy was even more alarmed. He let go the girl's hand, sidled along the wall, and escaped through the drawing-room into the dining-room.

Not to attract attention, Julian Mastakovich also made for the dining-room. He was red as a lobster. The sight of himself in a mirror seemed to embarrass him. Presumably he was annoyed at his own ardour and impatience. Without due respect to his importance and dignity, his calculations had lured and pricked him to the greedy eagerness of a boy, who makes straight for his object — though this was not as yet an object; it only would be so in five years' time. I followed the worthy man into the dining-room, where I witnessed a remarkable play.

Julian Mastakovich, all flushed with vexation, venom in his look, began to threaten the red-haired boy. The red-haired boy retreated farther and farther until there was no place left for him to retreat to, and he did not know where to turn in his fright.

"Get out of here! What are you doing here? Get out, I say, you good-for-nothing! Stealing fruit, are you? Oh, so, stealing fruit! Get out, you freckle face, go to your likes!"

The frightened child, as a last desperate resort, crawled quickly under the table. His persecutor, completely infuriated, pulled out his large linen handkerchief and used it as a lash to drive the boy out of his position.

Here I must remark that Julian Mastakovich was a somewhat corpulent man, heavy, well-fed, puffy-cheeked, with a paunch and ankles as round as nuts. He perspired and puffed and panted. So strong was his dislike (or was it jealousy?) of the child that he actually began to carry on like a madman.

I laughed heartily. Julian Mastakovich turned. He was utterly confused and for a moment, apparently, quite oblivious of his immense importance. At that moment our host appeared in the doorway opposite. The boy crawled out from under the table and wiped his knees and elbows. Julian Mastakovich hastened to carry his handkerchief, which he had been dangling by the corner, to his nose. Our host looked at the three of us rather suspiciously. But, like a man who knows the world and can readily adjust himself, he seized upon the opportunity to lay hold of his very valuable guest and get what he wanted out of him.

"Here's the boy I was talking to you about," he said, indicating the red-haired child. "I took the liberty of presuming on your goodness in his

behalf.”

“Oh,” replied Julian Mastakovich, still not quite master of himself.

“He’s my governess’s son,” our host continued in a beseeching tone. “She’s a poor creature, the widow of an honest official. That’s why, if it were possible for you.”

“Impossible, impossible!” Julian Mastakovich cried hastily. “You must excuse me, Philip Alexeyevich, I really cannot. I’ve made inquiries. There are no vacancies, and there is a waiting list of ten who have a greater right — I’m sorry.”

“Too bad,” said our host. “He’s a quiet, unobtrusive child.”

“A very naughty little rascal, I should say,” said Julian Mastakovich, wryly. “Go away, boy. Why are you here still? Be off with you to the other children.”

Unable to control himself, he gave me a sidelong glance. Nor could I control myself. I laughed straight in his face. He turned away and asked our host, in tones quite audible to me, who that odd young fellow was. They whispered to each other and left the room, disregarding me.

I shook with laughter. Then I, too, went to the drawing-room. There the great man, already surrounded by the fathers and mothers and the host and the hostess, had begun to talk eagerly with a lady to whom he had just been introduced. The lady held the rich little girl’s hand. Julian Mastakovich went into fulsome praise of her. He waxed ecstatic over the dear child’s beauty, her talents, her grace, her excellent breeding, plainly laying himself out to flatter the mother, who listened scarcely able to restrain tears of joy, while the father showed his delight by a gratified smile.

The joy was contagious. Everybody shared in it. Even the children were obliged to stop playing so as not to disturb the conversation. The atmosphere was surcharged with awe. I heard the mother of the important little girl, touched to her profoundest depths, ask Julian Mastakovich in the choicest language of courtesy, whether he would honour them by coming to see them. I heard Julian Mastakovich accept the invitation with unfeigned enthusiasm. Then the guests scattered decorously to different parts of the room, and I heard them, with veneration in their tones, extol the business man, the business man’s wife, the business man’s daughter, and, especially, Julian Mastakovich.

“Is he married?” I asked out loud of an acquaintance of mine standing beside Julian Mastakovich.

Julian Mastakovich gave me a venomous look.

“No,” answered my acquaintance, profoundly shocked by my — intentional — indiscretion.

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Not long ago I passed the Church of — . I was struck by the concourse of people gathered there to witness a wedding. It was a dreary day. A drizzling rain was beginning to come down. I made my way through the throng into the church. The bridegroom was a round, well-fed, pot-bellied little man, very much dressed up. He ran and fussed about and gave orders and arranged things. Finally word was passed that the bride was coming. I pushed through the crowd, and I beheld a marvellous beauty whose first spring was scarcely commencing. But the beauty was pale and sad. She looked distracted. It seemed to me even that her eyes were red from recent weeping. The classic severity of every line of her face imparted a peculiar significance and solemnity to her beauty. But through that severity and solemnity, through the sadness, shone the innocence of a child. There was something inexpressibly naïve, unsettled and young in her features, which, without words, seemed to plead for mercy.

They said she was just sixteen years old. I looked at the bridegroom carefully. Suddenly I recognised Julian Mastakovich, whom I had not seen again in all those five years. Then I looked at the bride again. — Good God! I made my way, as quickly as I could, out of the church. I heard gossiping in the crowd about the bride’s wealth — about her dowry of five hundred thousand rubles — so and so much for pocket money.

“Then his calculations were correct,” I thought, as I pressed out into the street.

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THE HEAVENLY CHRISTMAS TREE



I am a novelist, and I suppose I have made up this story. I write “I suppose,” though I know for a fact that I have made it up, but yet I keep fancying that it must have happened somewhere at some time, that it must have happened on Christmas Eve in some great town in a time of terrible frost.

I have a vision of a boy, a little boy, six years old or even younger. This boy woke up that morning in a cold damp cellar. He was dressed in a sort of little dressing-gown and was shivering with cold. There was a cloud of white steam from his breath, and sitting on a box in the corner, he blew the steam out of his mouth and amused himself in his dullness watching it float away. But he was terribly hungry. Several times that morning he went up to the plank bed where his sick mother was lying on a mattress as thin as a pancake, with some sort of bundle under her head for a pillow. How had she come here? She must have come with her boy from some other town and suddenly fallen ill. The landlady who let the “corners” had been taken two days before to the police station, the lodgers were out and about as the holiday was so near, and the only one left had been lying for the last twenty-four hours dead drunk, not having waited for Christmas. In another corner of the room a wretched old woman of eighty, who had once been a children’s nurse but was now left to die friendless, was moaning and groaning with rheumatism, scolding and grumbling at the boy so that he was afraid to go near her corner. He had got a drink of water in the outer room, but could not find a crust anywhere, and had been on the point of waking his mother a dozen times. He felt frightened at last in the darkness: it had long been dusk, but no light was kindled. Touching his mother’s face, he was surprised that she did not move at all, and that she was as cold as the wall. “It is very cold here,” he thought. He stood a little, unconsciously letting his hands rest on the dead woman’s shoulders, then he breathed on his fingers to warm them, and then quietly fumbling for his cap on the bed, he went out of the cellar. He would have gone earlier, but was afraid of the big dog which had been howling all day at the neighbour’s door at the top of the stairs. But the dog was not there now, and he went out into the street.

Mercy on us, what a town! He had never seen anything like it before. In the town from which he had come, it was always such black darkness at night. There was one lamp for the whole street, the little, low-pitched,

wooden houses were closed up with shutters, there was no one to be seen in the street after dusk, all the people shut themselves up in their houses, and there was nothing but the howling of packs of dogs, hundreds and thousands of them barking and howling all night. But there it was so warm and he was given food, while here — oh, dear, if he only had something to eat! And what a noise and rattle here, what light and what people, horses and carriages, and what a frost! The frozen steam hung in clouds over the horses, over their warmly breathing mouths; their hoofs clanged against the stones through the powdery snow, and every one pushed so, and — oh, dear, how he longed for some morsel to eat, and how wretched he suddenly felt. A policeman walked by and turned away to avoid seeing the boy.

Here was another street — oh, what a wide one, here he would be run over for certain; how everyone was shouting, racing and driving along, and the light, the light! And what was this? A huge glass window, and through the window a tree reaching up to the ceiling; it was a fir tree, and on it were ever so many lights, gold papers and apples and little dolls and horses; and there were children clean and dressed in their best running about the room, laughing and playing and eating and drinking something. And then a little girl began dancing with one of the boys, what a pretty little girl! And he could hear the music through the window. The boy looked and wondered and laughed, though his toes were aching with the cold and his fingers were red and stiff so that it hurt him to move them. And all at once the boy remembered how his toes and fingers hurt him, and began crying, and ran on; and again through another window-pane he saw another Christmas tree, and on a table cakes of all sorts — almond cakes, red cakes and yellow cakes, and three grand young ladies were sitting there, and they gave the cakes to any one who went up to them, and the door kept opening, lots of gentlemen and ladies went in from the street. The boy crept up, suddenly opened the door and went in. Oh, how they shouted at him and waved him back! One lady went up to him hurriedly and slipped a kopeck into his hand, and with her own hands opened the door into the street for him! How frightened he was. And the kopeck rolled away and clinked upon the steps; he could not bend his red fingers to hold it tight. The boy ran away and went on, where he did not know. He was ready to cry again but he was afraid, and ran on and on and blew his fingers. And he was miserable because he felt suddenly so lonely and terrified, and all at once, mercy on us! What was this again? People were standing in a crowd admiring. Behind

a glass window there were three little dolls, dressed in red and green dresses, and exactly, exactly as though they were alive. One was a little old man sitting and playing a big violin, the two others were standing close by and playing little violins and nodding in time, and looking at one another, and their lips moved, they were speaking, actually speaking, only one couldn't hear through the glass. And at first the boy thought they were alive, and when he grasped that they were dolls he laughed. He had never seen such dolls before, and had no idea there were such dolls! And he wanted to cry, but he felt amused, amused by the dolls. All at once he fancied that some one caught at his smock behind: a wicked big boy was standing beside him and suddenly hit him on the head, snatched off his cap and tripped him up. The boy fell down on the ground, at once there was a shout, he was numb with fright, he jumped up and ran away. He ran, and not knowing where he was going, ran in at the gate of some one's courtyard, and sat down behind a stack of wood: "They won't find me here, besides it's dark!"

He sat huddled up and was breathless from fright, and all at once, quite suddenly, he felt so happy: his hands and feet suddenly left off aching and grew so warm, as warm as though he were on a stove; then he shivered all over, then he gave a start, why, he must have been asleep. How nice to have a sleep here! "I'll sit here a little and go and look at the dolls again," said the boy, and smiled thinking of them. "Just as though they were alive!..." And suddenly he heard his mother singing over him. "Mammy, I am asleep; how nice it is to sleep here!"

"Come to my Christmas tree, little one," a soft voice suddenly whispered over his head.

He thought that this was still his mother, but no, it was not she. Who it was calling him, he could not see, but some one bent over and embraced him in the darkness; and he stretched out his hands to him, and ... and all at once — oh, what a bright light! Oh, what a Christmas tree! And yet it was not a fir tree, he had never seen a tree like that! Where was he now? Everything was bright and shining, and all round him were dolls; but no, they were not dolls, they were little boys and girls, only so bright and shining. They all came flying round him, they all kissed him, took him and carried him along with them, and he was flying himself, and he saw that his mother was looking at him and laughing joyfully. "Mammy, Mammy; oh, how nice it is here, Mammy!" And again he kissed the children and wanted

to tell them at once of those dolls in the shop window. “Who are you, boys? Who are you, girls?” he asked, laughing and admiring them.

“This is Christ’s Christmas tree,” they answered. “Christ always has a Christmas tree on this day, for the little children who have no tree of their own....” And he found out that all these little boys and girls were children just like himself; that some had been frozen in the baskets in which they had as babies been laid on the doorsteps of well-to-do Petersburg people, others had been boarded out with Finnish women by the Foundling and had been suffocated, others had died at their starved mother’s breasts (in the Samara famine), others had died in the third-class railway carriages from the foul air; and yet they were all here, they were all like angels about Christ, and He was in the midst of them and held out His hands to them and blessed them and their sinful mothers.... And the mothers of these children stood on one side weeping; each one knew her boy or girl, and the children flew up to them and kissed them and wiped away their tears with their little hands, and begged them not to weep because they were so happy.

And down below in the morning the porter found the little dead body of the frozen child on the woodstack; they sought out his mother too.... She had died before him. They met before the Lord God in heaven.

Why have I made up such a story, so out of keeping with an ordinary diary, and a writer’s above all? And I promised two stories dealing with real events! But that is just it, I keep fancying that all this may have happened really — that is, what took place in the cellar and on the woodstack; but as for Christ’s Christmas tree, I cannot tell you whether that could have happened or not.

THE CROCODILE

AN EXTRAORDINARY INCIDENT

A true story of how a gentleman of a certain age and of respectable appearance was swallowed alive by the crocodile in the Arcade, and of the consequences that followed.

Ohé Lambert! Où est Lambert? As tu vu Lambert?

I

On the thirteenth of January of this present year, 1865, at half-past twelve in the day, Elena Ivanovna, the wife of my cultured friend Ivan Matveitch, who is a colleague in the same department, and may be said to be a distant relation of mine, too, expressed the desire to see the crocodile now on view at a fixed charge in the Arcade. As Ivan Matveitch had already in his pocket his ticket for a tour abroad (not so much for the sake of his health as for the improvement of his mind), and was consequently free from his official duties and had nothing whatever to do that morning, he offered no objection to his wife's irresistible fancy, but was positively aflame with curiosity himself.

"A capital idea!" he said, with the utmost satisfaction. "We'll have a look at the crocodile! On the eve of visiting Europe it is as well to acquaint ourselves on the spot with its indigenous inhabitants." And with these words, taking his wife's arm, he set off with her at once for the Arcade. I joined them, as I usually do, being an intimate friend of the family. I have never seen Ivan Matveitch in a more agreeable frame of mind than he was on that memorable morning — how true it is that we know not beforehand the fate that awaits us! On entering the Arcade he was at once full of admiration for the splendours of the building, and when we reached the shop in which the monster lately arrived in Petersburg was being exhibited, he volunteered to pay the quarter-rouble for me to the crocodile owner — a thing which had never happened before. Walking into a little room, we observed that besides the crocodile there were in it parrots of the species known as cockatoo, and also a group of monkeys in a special case in a recess. Near the entrance, along the left wall stood a big tin tank that looked

like a bath covered with a thin iron grating, filled with water to the depth of two inches. In this shallow pool was kept a huge crocodile, which lay like a log absolutely motionless and apparently deprived of all its faculties by our damp climate, so inhospitable to foreign visitors. This monster at first aroused no special interest in any one of us.

“So this is the crocodile!” said Elena Ivanovna, with a pathetic cadence of regret. “Why, I thought it was ... something different.”

Most probably she thought it was made of diamonds. The owner of the crocodile, a German, came out and looked at us with an air of extraordinary pride.

“He has a right to be,” Ivan Matveitch whispered to me, “he knows he is the only man in Russia exhibiting a crocodile.”

This quite nonsensical observation I ascribe also to the extremely good-humoured mood which had overtaken Ivan Matveitch, who was on other occasions of rather envious disposition.

“I fancy your crocodile is not alive,” said Elena Ivanovna, piqued by the irresponsive stolidity of the proprietor, and addressing him with a charming smile in order to soften his churlishness — a manœuvre so typically feminine.

“Oh, no, madam,” the latter replied in broken Russian; and instantly moving the grating half off the tank, he poked the monster’s head with a stick.

Then the treacherous monster, to show that it was alive, faintly stirred its paws and tail, raised its snout and emitted something like a prolonged snuffle.

“Come, don’t be cross, Karlchen,” said the German caressingly, gratified in his vanity.

“How horrid that crocodile is! I am really frightened,” Elena Ivanovna twittered, still more coquettishly. “I know I shall dream of him now.”

“But he won’t bite you if you do dream of him,” the German retorted gallantly, and was the first to laugh at his own jest, but none of us responded.

“Come, Semyon Semyonitch,” said Elena Ivanovna, addressing me exclusively, “let us go and look at the monkeys. I am awfully fond of monkeys; they are such darlings ... and the crocodile is horrid.”

“Oh, don’t be afraid, my dear!” Ivan Matveitch called after us, gallantly displaying his manly courage to his wife. “This drowsy denison of the

realms of the Pharaohs will do us no harm.” And he remained by the tank. What is more, he took his glove and began tickling the crocodile’s nose with it, wishing, as he said afterwards, to induce him to snort. The proprietor showed his politeness to a lady by following Elena Ivanovna to the case of monkeys.

So everything was going well, and nothing could have been foreseen. Elena Ivanovna was quite skittish in her raptures over the monkeys, and seemed completely taken up with them. With shrieks of delight she was continually turning to me, as though determined not to notice the proprietor, and kept gushing with laughter at the resemblance she detected between these monkeys and her intimate friends and acquaintances. I, too, was amused, for the resemblance was unmistakable. The German did not know whether to laugh or not, and so at last was reduced to frowning. And it was at that moment that a terrible, I may say unnatural, scream set the room vibrating. Not knowing what to think, for the first moment I stood still, numb with horror, but noticing that Elena Ivanovna was screaming too, I quickly turned round — and what did I behold! I saw — oh, heavens! — I saw the luckless Ivan Matveitch in the terrible jaws of the crocodile, held by them round the waist, lifted horizontally in the air and desperately kicking. Then — one moment, and no trace remained of him. But I must describe it in detail, for I stood all the while motionless, and had time to watch the whole process taking place before me with an attention and interest such as I never remember to have felt before. “What,” I thought at that critical moment, “what if all that had happened to me instead of to Ivan Matveitch — how unpleasant it would have been for me!”

But to return to my story. The crocodile began by turning the unhappy Ivan Matveitch in his terrible jaws so that he could swallow his legs first; then bringing up Ivan Matveitch, who kept trying to jump out and clutching at the sides of the tank, sucked him down again as far as his waist. Then bringing him up again, gulped him down, and so again and again. In this way Ivan Matveitch was visibly disappearing before our eyes. At last, with a final gulp, the crocodile swallowed my cultured friend entirely, this time leaving no trace of him. From the outside of the crocodile we could see the protuberances of Ivan Matveitch’s figure as he passed down the inside of the monster. I was on the point of screaming again when destiny played another treacherous trick upon us. The crocodile made a tremendous effort, probably oppressed by the magnitude of the object he had swallowed, once

more opened his terrible jaws, and with a final hiccup he suddenly let the head of Ivan Matveitch pop out for a second, with an expression of despair on his face. In that brief instant the spectacles dropped off his nose to the bottom of the tank. It seemed as though that despairing countenance had only popped out to cast one last look on the objects around it, to take its last farewell of all earthly pleasures. But it had not time to carry out its intention; the crocodile made another effort, gave a gulp and instantly it vanished again — this time for ever. This appearance and disappearance of a still living human head was so horrible, but at the same — either from its rapidity and unexpectedness or from the dropping of the spectacles — there was something so comic about it that I suddenly quite unexpectedly exploded with laughter. But pulling myself together and realising that to laugh at such a moment was not the thing for an old family friend, I turned at once to Elena Ivanovna and said with a sympathetic air:

"Now it's all over with our friend Ivan Matveitch!"

I cannot even attempt to describe how violent was the agitation of Elena Ivanovna during the whole process. After the first scream she seemed rooted to the spot, and stared at the catastrophe with apparent indifference, though her eyes looked as though they were starting out of her head; then she suddenly went off into a heart-rending wail, but I seized her hands. At this instant the proprietor, too, who had at first been also petrified by horror, suddenly clasped his hands and cried, gazing upwards:

"Oh my crocodile! *Oh mein allerliebster Karlchen! Mutter, Mutter, Mutter!*"

A door at the rear of the room opened at this cry, and the *Mutter*, a rosy-cheeked, elderly but dishevelled woman in a cap made her appearance, and rushed with a shriek to her German.

A perfect Bedlam followed. Elena Ivanovna kept shrieking out the same phrase, as though in a frenzy, "Flay him! flay him!" apparently entreating them — probably in a moment of oblivion — to flay somebody for something. The proprietor and *Mutter* took no notice whatever of either of us; they were both bellowing like calves over the crocodile.

"He did for himself! He will burst himself at once, for he did swallow a *ganz* official!" cried the proprietor.

"*Unser Karlchen, unser allerliebster Karlchen wird sterben,*" howled his wife.

"We are bereaved and without bread!" chimed in the proprietor.

“Flay him! flay him! flay him!” clamoured Elena Ivanovna, clutching at the German’s coat.

“He did tease the crocodile. For what did your man tease the crocodile?” cried the German, pulling away from her. “You will if *Karlchen wird* burst, therefore pay, *das war mein Sohn*, *das war mein einziger Sohn*.”

I must own I was intensely indignant at the sight of such egoism in the German and the cold-heartedness of his dishevelled *Mutter*; at the same time Elena Ivanovna’s reiterated shriek of “Flay him! flay him!” troubled me even more and absorbed at last my whole attention, positively alarming me. I may as well say straight off that I entirely misunderstood this strange exclamation: it seemed to me that Elena Ivanovna had for the moment taken leave of her senses, but nevertheless wishing to avenge the loss of her beloved Ivan Matveitch, was demanding by way of compensation that the crocodile should be severely thrashed, while she was meaning something quite different. Looking round at the door, not without embarrassment, I began to entreat Elena Ivanovna to calm herself, and above all not to use the shocking word “flay.” For such a reactionary desire here, in the midst of the Arcade and of the most cultured society, not two paces from the hall where at this very minute Mr. Lavrov was perhaps delivering a public lecture, was not only impossible but unthinkable, and might at any moment bring upon us the hisses of culture and the caricatures of Mr. Stepanov. To my horror I was immediately proved to be correct in my alarmed suspicions: the curtain that divided the crocodile room from the little entry where the quarter-roubles were taken suddenly parted, and in the opening there appeared a figure with moustaches and beard, carrying a cap, with the upper part of its body bent a long way forward, though the feet were scrupulously held beyond the threshold of the crocodile room in order to avoid the necessity of paying the entrance money.

“Such a reactionary desire, madam,” said the stranger, trying to avoid falling over in our direction and to remain standing outside the room, “does no credit to your development, and is conditioned by lack of phosphorus in your brain. You will be promptly held up to shame in the *Chronicle of Progress* and in our satirical prints....”

But he could not complete his remarks; the proprietor coming to himself, and seeing with horror that a man was talking in the crocodile room without having paid entrance money, rushed furiously at the progressive stranger and turned him out with a punch from each fist. For a moment both

vanished from our sight behind a curtain, and only then I grasped that the whole uproar was about nothing. Elena Ivanovna turned out quite innocent; she had, as I have mentioned already, no idea whatever of subjecting the crocodile to a degrading corporal punishment, and had simply expressed the desire that he should be opened and her husband released from his interior.

“What! You wish that my crocodile be perished!” the proprietor yelled, running in again. “No! let your husband be perished first, before my crocodile!... *Mein Vater* showed crocodile, *mein Grossvater* showed crocodile, *mein Sohn* will show crocodile, and I will show crocodile! All will show crocodile! I am known to *ganz Europa*, and you are not known to *ganz Europa*, and you must pay me a *strafe*!”

“*Ja, ja*,” put in the vindictive German woman, “we shall not let you go. *Strafe*, since Karlchen is burst!”

“And, indeed, it’s useless to flay the creature,” I added calmly, anxious to get Elena Ivanovna away home as quickly as possible, “as our dear Ivan Matveitch is by now probably soaring somewhere in the empyrean.”

“My dear” — we suddenly heard, to our intense amazement, the voice of Ivan Matveitch— “my dear, my advice is to apply direct to the superintendent’s office, as without the assistance of the police the German will never be made to see reason.”

These words, uttered with firmness and aplomb, and expressing an exceptional presence of mind, for the first minute so astounded us that we could not believe our ears. But, of course, we ran at once to the crocodile’s tank, and with equal reverence and incredulity listened to the unhappy captive. His voice was muffled, thin and even squeaky, as though it came from a considerable distance. It reminded one of a jocose person who, covering his mouth with a pillow, shouts from an adjoining room, trying to mimic the sound of two peasants calling to one another in a deserted plain or across a wide ravine — a performance to which I once had the pleasure of listening in a friend’s house at Christmas.

“Ivan Matveitch, my dear, and so you are alive!” faltered Elena Ivanovna.

“Alive and well,” answered Ivan Matveitch, “and, thanks to the Almighty, swallowed without any damage whatever. I am only uneasy as to the view my superiors may take of the incident; for after getting a permit to go abroad I’ve got into a crocodile, which seems anything but clever.”

“But, my dear, don’t trouble your head about being clever; first of all we must somehow excavate you from where you are,” Elena Ivanovna interrupted.

“Excavate!” cried the proprietor. “I will not let my crocodile be excavated. Now the *publicum* will come many more, and I will *fünfzig* kopecks ask and Karlchen will cease to burst.”

“*Gott sei dank!*” put in his wife.

“They are right,” Ivan Matveitch observed tranquilly; “the principles of economics before everything.”

“My dear! I will fly at once to the authorities and lodge a complaint, for I feel that we cannot settle this mess by ourselves.”

“I think so too,” observed Ivan Matveitch; “but in our age of industrial crisis it is not easy to rip open the belly of a crocodile without economic compensation, and meanwhile the inevitable question presents itself: What will the German take for his crocodile? And with it another: How will it be paid? For, as you know, I have no means....”

“Perhaps out of your salary....” I observed timidly, but the proprietor interrupted me at once.

“I will not the crocodile sell; I will for three thousand the crocodile sell! I will for four thousand the crocodile sell! Now the *publicum* will come very many. I will for five thousand the crocodile sell!”

In fact he gave himself insufferable airs. Covetousness and a revolting greed gleamed joyfully in his eyes.

“I am going!” I cried indignantly.

“And I! I too! I shall go to Andrey Osipitch himself. I will soften him with my tears,” whined Elena Ivanovna.

“Don’t do that, my dear,” Ivan Matveitch hastened to interpose. He had long been jealous of Andrey Osipitch on his wife’s account, and he knew she would enjoy going to weep before a gentleman of refinement, for tears suited her. “And I don’t advise you to do so either, my friend,” he added, addressing me. “It’s no good plunging headlong in that slap-dash way; there’s no knowing what it may lead to. You had much better go to-day to Timofey Semyonitch, as though to pay an ordinary visit; he is an old-fashioned and by no means brilliant man, but he is trustworthy, and what matters most of all, he is straightforward. Give him my greetings and describe the circumstances of the case. And since I owe him seven roubles over our last game of cards, take the opportunity to pay him the money; that

will soften the stern old man. In any case his advice may serve as a guide for us. And meanwhile take Elena Ivanovna home.... Calm yourself, my dear," he continued, addressing her. "I am weary of these outcries and feminine squabblings, and should like a nap. It's soft and warm in here, though I have hardly had time to look round in this unexpected haven."

"Look round! Why, is it light in there?" cried Elena Ivanovna in a tone of relief.

"I am surrounded by impenetrable night," answered the poor captive; "but I can feel and, so to speak, have a look round with my hands.... Good-bye; set your mind at rest and don't deny yourself recreation and diversion. Till to-morrow! And you, Semyon Semyonitch, come to me in the evening, and as you are absent-minded and may forget it, tie a knot in your handkerchief."

I confess I was glad to get away, for I was overtired and somewhat bored. Hastening to offer my arm to the disconsolate Elena Ivanovna, whose charms were only enhanced by her agitation, I hurriedly led her out of the crocodile room.

"The charge will be another quarter-rouble in the evening," the proprietor called after us.

"Oh, dear, how greedy they are!" said Elena Ivanovna, looking at herself in every mirror on the walls of the Arcade, and evidently aware that she was looking prettier than usual.

"The principles of economics," I answered with some emotion, proud that passers-by should see the lady on my arm.

"The principles of economics," she drawled in a touching little voice. "I did not in the least understand what Ivan Matveitch said about those horrid economics just now."

"I will explain to you," I answered, and began at once telling her of the beneficial effects of the introduction of foreign capital into our country, upon which I had read an article in the *Petersburg News* and the *Voice* that morning.

"How strange it is," she interrupted, after listening for some time. "But do leave off, you horrid man. What nonsense you are talking.... Tell me, do I look purple?"

"You look perfect, and not purple!" I observed, seizing the opportunity to pay her a compliment.

“Naughty man!” she said complacently. “Poor Ivan Matveitch,” she added a minute later, putting her little head on one side coquettishly. “I am really sorry for him. Oh, dear!” she cried suddenly, “how is he going to have his dinner ... and ... and ... what will he do ... if he wants anything?”

“An unforeseen question,” I answered, perplexed in my turn. To tell the truth, it had not entered my head, so much more practical are women than we men in the solution of the problems of daily life!

“Poor dear! how could he have got into such a mess ... nothing to amuse him, and in the dark.... How vexing it is that I have no photograph of him.... And so now I am a sort of widow,” she added, with a seductive smile, evidently interested in her new position. “Hm!... I am sorry for him, though.”

It was, in short, the expression of the very natural and intelligible grief of a young and interesting wife for the loss of her husband. I took her home at last, soothed her, and after dining with her and drinking a cup of aromatic coffee, set off at six o’clock to Timofey Semyonitch, calculating that at that hour all married people of settled habits would be sitting or lying down at home.

Having written this first chapter in a style appropriate to the incident recorded, I intend to proceed in a language more natural though less elevated, and I beg to forewarn the reader of the fact.

II

The venerable Timofey Semyonitch met me rather nervously, as though somewhat embarrassed. He led me to his tiny study and shut the door carefully, “that the children may not hinder us,” he added with evident uneasiness. There he made me sit down on a chair by the writing-table, sat down himself in an easy chair, wrapped round him the skirts of his old wadded dressing-gown, and assumed an official and even severe air, in readiness for anything, though he was not my chief nor Ivan Matveitch’s, and had hitherto been reckoned as a colleague and even a friend.

“First of all,” he said, “take note that I am not a person in authority, but just such a subordinate official as you and Ivan Matveitch.... I have nothing to do with it, and do not intend to mix myself up in the affair.”

I was surprised to find that he apparently knew all about it already. In spite of that I told him the whole story over in detail. I spoke with positive

excitement, for I was at that moment fulfilling the obligations of a true friend. He listened without special surprise, but with evident signs of suspicion.

“Only fancy,” he said, “I always believed that this would be sure to happen to him.”

“Why, Timofey Semyonitch? It is a very unusual incident in itself....”

“I admit it. But Ivan Matveitch’s whole career in the service was leading up to this end. He was flighty — conceited indeed. It was always ‘progress’ and ideas of all sorts, and this is what progress brings people to!”

“But this is a most unusual incident and cannot possibly serve as a general rule for all progressives.”

“Yes, indeed it can. You see, it’s the effect of over-education, I assure you. For over-education leads people to poke their noses into all sorts of places, especially where they are not invited. Though perhaps you know best,” he added, as though offended. “I am an old man and not of much education. I began as a soldier’s son, and this year has been the jubilee of my service.”

“Oh, no, Timofey Semyonitch, not at all. On the contrary, Ivan Matveitch is eager for your advice; he is eager for your guidance. He implores it, so to say, with tears.”

“So to say, with tears! Hm! Those are crocodile’s tears and one cannot quite believe in them. Tell me, what possessed him to want to go abroad? And how could he afford to go? Why, he has no private means!”

“He had saved the money from his last bonus,” I answered plaintively. “He only wanted to go for three months — to Switzerland ... to the land of William Tell.”

“William Tell? Hm!”

“He wanted to meet the spring at Naples, to see the museums, the customs, the animals....”

“Hm! The animals! I think it was simply from pride. What animals? Animals, indeed! Haven’t we animals enough? We have museums, menageries, camels. There are bears quite close to Petersburg! And here he’s got inside a crocodile himself....”

“Oh, come, Timofey Semyonitch! The man is in trouble, the man appeals to you as to a friend, as to an older relation, craves for advice — and you reproach him. Have pity at least on the unfortunate Elena Ivanovna!”

“You are speaking of his wife? A charming little lady,” said Timofey Semyonitch, visibly softening and taking a pinch of snuff with relish. “Particularly prepossessing. And so plump, and always putting her pretty little head on one side.... Very agreeable. Andrey Osipitch was speaking of her only the other day.”

“Speaking of her?”

“Yes, and in very flattering terms. Such a bust, he said, such eyes, such hair.... A sugar-plum, he said, not a lady — and then he laughed. He is still a young man, of course.” Timofey Semyonitch blew his nose with a loud noise. “And yet, young though he is, what a career he is making for himself.”

“That’s quite a different thing, Timofey Semyonitch.”

“Of course, of course.”

“Well, what do you say then, Timofey Semyonitch?”

“Why, what can I do?”

“Give advice, guidance, as a man of experience, a relative! What are we to do? What steps are we to take? Go to the authorities and ...”

“To the authorities? Certainly not,” Timofey Semyonitch replied hurriedly. “If you ask my advice, you had better, above all, hush the matter up and act, so to speak, as a private person. It is a suspicious incident, quite unheard of. Unheard of, above all; there is no precedent for it, and it is far from creditable.... And so discretion above all.... Let him lie there a bit. We must wait and see....”

“But how can we wait and see, Timofey Semyonitch? What if he is stifled there?”

“Why should he be? I think you told me that he made himself fairly comfortable there?”

I told him the whole story over again. Timofey Semyonitch pondered.

“Hm!” he said, twisting his snuff-box in his hands. “To my mind it’s really a good thing he should lie there a bit, instead of going abroad. Let him reflect at his leisure. Of course he mustn’t be stifled, and so he must take measures to preserve his health, avoiding a cough, for instance, and so on.... And as for the German, it’s my personal opinion he is within his rights, and even more so than the other side, because it was the other party who got into *his* crocodile without asking permission, and not *he* who got into Ivan Matveitch’s crocodile without asking permission, though, so far as

I recollect, the latter has no crocodile. And a crocodile is private property, and so it is impossible to slit him open without compensation."

"For the saving of human life, Timofey Semyonitch."

"Oh, well, that's a matter for the police. You must go to them."

"But Ivan Matveitch may be needed in the department. He may be asked for."

"Ivan Matveitch needed? Ha-ha! Besides, he is on leave, so that we may ignore him — let him inspect the countries of Europe! It will be a different matter if he doesn't turn up when his leave is over. Then we shall ask for him and make inquiries."

"Three months! Timofey Semyonitch, for pity's sake!"

"It's his own fault. Nobody thrust him there. At this rate we should have to get a nurse to look after him at government expense, and that is not allowed for in the regulations. But the chief point is that the crocodile is private property, so that the principles of economics apply in this question. And the principles of economics are paramount. Only the other evening, at Luka Andreitch's, Ignaty Prokofyitch was saying so. Do you know Ignaty Prokofyitch? A capitalist, in a big way of business, and he speaks so fluently. 'We need industrial development,' he said; 'there is very little development among us. We must create it. We must create capital, so we must create a middle-class, the so-called bourgeoisie. And as we haven't capital we must attract it from abroad. We must, in the first place, give facilities to foreign companies to buy up lands in Russia as is done now abroad. The communal holding of land is poison, is ruin.' And, you know, he spoke with such heat; well, that's all right for him — a wealthy man, and not in the service. 'With the communal system,' he said, 'there will be no improvement in industrial development or agriculture. Foreign companies,' he said, 'must as far as possible buy up the whole of our land in big lots, and then split it up, split it up, split it up, in the smallest parts possible' — and do you know he pronounced the words 'split it up' with such determination—'and then sell it as private property. Or rather, not sell it, but simply let it. When,' he said, 'all the land is in the hands of foreign companies they can fix any rent they like. And so the peasant will work three times as much for his daily bread and he can be turned out at pleasure. So that he will feel it, will be submissive and industrious, and will work three times as much for the same wages. But as it is, with the commune, what does he care? He knows he won't die of hunger, so he is lazy and

drunken. And meanwhile money will be attracted into Russia, capital will be created and the bourgeoisie will spring up. The English political and literary paper, *The Times*, in an article the other day on our finances stated that the reason our financial position was so unsatisfactory was that we had no middle-class, no big fortunes, no accommodating proletariat.' Ignaty Prokofyitch speaks well. He is an orator. He wants to lay a report on the subject before the authorities, and then to get it published in the *News*. That's something very different from verses like Ivan Matveitch's...."

"But how about Ivan Matveitch?" I put in, after letting the old man babble on.

Timofey Semyonitch was sometimes fond of talking and showing that he was not behind the times, but knew all about things.

"How about Ivan Matveitch? Why, I am coming to that. Here we are, anxious to bring foreign capital into the country — and only consider: as soon as the capital of a foreigner, who has been attracted to Petersburg, has been doubled through Ivan Matveitch, instead of protecting the foreign capitalist, we are proposing to rip open the belly of his original capital — the crocodile. Is it consistent? To my mind, Ivan Matveitch, as the true son of his fatherland, ought to rejoice and to be proud that through him the value of a foreign crocodile has been doubled and possibly even trebled. That's just what is wanted to attract capital. If one man succeeds, mind you, another will come with a crocodile, and a third will bring two or three of them at once, and capital will grow up about them — there you have a bourgeoisie. It must be encouraged."

"Upon my word, Timofey Semyonitch!" I cried, "you are demanding almost supernatural self-sacrifice from poor Ivan Matveitch."

"I demand nothing, and I beg you, before everything — as I have said already — to remember that I am not a person in authority and so cannot demand anything of any one. I am speaking as a son of the fatherland, that is, not as the *Son of the Fatherland*, but as a son of the fatherland. Again, what possessed him to get into the crocodile? A respectable man, a man of good grade in the service, lawfully married — and then to behave like that! Is it consistent?"

"But it was an accident."

"Who knows? And where is the money to compensate the owner to come from?"

"Perhaps out of his salary, Timofey Semyonitch?"

“Would that be enough?”

“No, it wouldn’t, Timofey Semyonitch,” I answered sadly. “The proprietor was at first alarmed that the crocodile would burst, but as soon as he was sure that it was all right, he began to bluster and was delighted to think that he could double the charge for entry.”

“Treble and quadruple perhaps! The public will simply stampede the place now, and crocodile owners are smart people. Besides, it’s not Lent yet, and people are keen on diversions, and so I say again, the great thing is that Ivan Matveitch should preserve his incognito, don’t let him be in a hurry. Let everybody know, perhaps, that he is in the crocodile, but don’t let them be officially informed of it. Ivan Matveitch is in particularly favourable circumstances for that, for he is reckoned to be abroad. It will be said he is in the crocodile, and we will refuse to believe it. That is how it can be managed. The great thing is that he should wait; and why should he be in a hurry?”

“Well, but if ...”

“Don’t worry, he has a good constitution....”

“Well, and afterwards, when he has waited?”

“Well, I won’t conceal from you that the case is exceptional in the highest degree. One doesn’t know what to think of it, and the worst of it is there is no precedent. If we had a precedent we might have something to go by. But as it is, what is one to say? It will certainly take time to settle it.”

A happy thought flashed upon my mind.

“Cannot we arrange,” I said, “that if he is destined to remain in the entrails of the monster and it is the will of Providence that he should remain alive, that he should send in a petition to be reckoned as still serving?”

“Hm!... Possibly as on leave and without salary....”

“But couldn’t it be with salary?”

“On what grounds?”

“As sent on a special commission.”

“What commission and where?”

“Why, into the entrails, the entrails of the crocodile.... So to speak, for exploration, for investigation of the facts on the spot. It would, of course, be a novelty, but that is progressive and would at the same time show zeal for enlightenment.”

Timofey Semyonitch thought a little.

“To send a special official,” he said at last, “to the inside of a crocodile to conduct a special inquiry is, in my personal opinion, an absurdity. It is not in the regulations. And what sort of special inquiry could there be there?”

“The scientific study of nature on the spot, in the living subject. The natural sciences are all the fashion nowadays, botany.... He could live there and report his observations.... For instance, concerning digestion or simply habits. For the sake of accumulating facts.”

“You mean as statistics. Well, I am no great authority on that subject, indeed I am no philosopher at all. You say ‘facts’ — we are overwhelmed with facts as it is, and don’t know what to do with them. Besides, statistics are a danger.”

“In what way?”

“They are a danger. Moreover, you will admit he will report facts, so to speak, lying like a log. And, can one do one’s official duties lying like a log? That would be another novelty and a dangerous one; and again, there is no precedent for it. If we had any sort of precedent for it, then, to my thinking, he might have been given the job.”

“But no live crocodiles have been brought over hitherto, Timofey Semyonitch.”

“Hm ... yes,” he reflected again. “Your objection is a just one, if you like, and might indeed serve as a ground for carrying the matter further; but consider again, that if with the arrival of living crocodiles government clerks begin to disappear, and then on the ground that they are warm and comfortable there, expect to receive the official sanction for their position, and then take their ease there ... you must admit it would be a bad example. We should have every one trying to go the same way to get a salary for nothing.”

“Do your best for him, Timofey Semyonitch. By the way, Ivan Matveitch asked me to give you seven roubles he had lost to you at cards.”

“Ah, he lost that the other day at Nikifor Nikiforitch’s. I remember. And how gay and amusing he was — and now!”

The old man was genuinely touched.

“Intercede for him, Timofey Semyonitch!”

“I will do my best. I will speak in my own name, as a private person, as though I were asking for information. And meanwhile, you find out

indirectly, unofficially, how much would the proprietor consent to take for his crocodile?”

Timofey Semyonitch was visibly more friendly.

“Certainly,” I answered. “And I will come back to you at once to report.”

“And his wife ... is she alone now? Is she depressed?”

“You should call on her, Timofey Semyonitch.”

“I will. I thought of doing so before; it’s a good opportunity.... And what on earth possessed him to go and look at the crocodile? Though, indeed, I should like to see it myself.”

“Go and see the poor fellow, Timofey Semyonitch.”

“I will. Of course, I don’t want to raise his hopes by doing so. I shall go as a private person.... Well, good-bye, I am going to Nikifor Nikiforitch’s again: shall you be there?”

“No, I am going to see the poor prisoner.”

“Yes, now he is a prisoner!... Ah, that’s what comes of thoughtlessness!”

I said good-bye to the old man. Ideas of all kinds were straying through my mind. A good-natured and most honest man, Timofey Semyonitch, yet, as I left him, I felt pleased at the thought that he had celebrated his fiftieth year of service, and that Timofey Semyonitchs are now a rarity among us. I flew at once, of course, to the Arcade to tell poor Ivan Matveitch all the news. And, indeed, I was moved by curiosity to know how he was getting on in the crocodile and how it was possible to live in a crocodile. And, indeed, was it possible to live in a crocodile at all? At times it really seemed to me as though it were all an outlandish, monstrous dream, especially as an outlandish monster was the chief figure in it.

III

And yet it was not a dream, but actual, indubitable fact. Should I be telling the story if it were not? But to continue.

It was late, about nine o’clock, before I reached the Arcade, and I had to go into the crocodile room by the back entrance, for the German had closed the shop earlier than usual that evening. Now in the seclusion of domesticity he was walking about in a greasy old frock-coat, but he seemed three times as pleased as he had been in the morning. It was evidently that he had no apprehensions now, and that the public had been coming “many more.” The *Mutter* came out later, evidently to keep an eye on me. The

German and the *Mutter* frequently whispered together. Although the shop was closed he charged me a quarter-rouble! What unnecessary exactitude!

“You will every time pay; the public will one rouble, and you one quarter pay; for you are the good friend of your good friend; and I a friend respect....”

“Are you alive, are you alive, my cultured friend?” I cried, as I approached the crocodile, expecting my words to reach Ivan Matveitch from a distance and to flatter his vanity.

“Alive and well,” he answered, as though from a long way off or from under the bed, though I was standing close beside him. “Alive and well; but of that later.... How are things going?”

As though purposely not hearing the question, I was just beginning with sympathetic haste to question him how he was, what it was like in the crocodile, and what, in fact, there was inside a crocodile. Both friendship and common civility demanded this. But with capricious annoyance he interrupted me.

“How are things going?” he shouted, in a shrill and on this occasion particularly revolting voice, addressing me peremptorily as usual.

I described to him my whole conversation with Timofey Semyonitch down to the smallest detail. As I told my story I tried to show my resentment in my voice.

“The old man is right,” Ivan Matveitch pronounced as abruptly as usual in his conversation with me. “I like practical people, and can’t endure sentimental milk-sops. I am ready to admit, however, that your idea about a special commission is not altogether absurd. I certainly have a great deal to report, both from a scientific and from an ethical point of view. But now all this has taken a new and unexpected aspect, and it is not worth while to trouble about mere salary. Listen attentively. Are you sitting down?”

“No, I am standing up.”

“Sit down on the floor if there is nothing else, and listen attentively.”

Resentfully I took a chair and put it down on the floor with a bang, in my anger.

“Listen,” he began dictatorially. “The public came to-day in masses. There was no room left in the evening, and the police came in to keep order. At eight o’clock, that is, earlier than usual, the proprietor thought it necessary to close the shop and end the exhibition to count the money he had taken and prepare for to-morrow more conveniently. So I know there

will be a regular fair to-morrow. So we may assume that all the most cultivated people in the capital, the ladies of the best society, the foreign ambassadors, the leading lawyers and so on, will all be present. What's more, people will be flowing here from the remotest provinces of our vast and interesting empire. The upshot of it is that I am the cynosure of all eyes, and though hidden to sight, I am eminent. I shall teach the idle crowd. Taught by experience, I shall be an example of greatness and resignation to fate! I shall be, so to say, a pulpit from which to instruct mankind. The mere biological details I can furnish about the monster I am inhabiting are of priceless value. And so, far from repining at what has happened, I confidently hope for the most brilliant of careers."

"You won't find it wearisome?" I asked sarcastically.

What irritated me more than anything was the extreme pomposity of his language. Nevertheless, it all rather disconcerted me. "What on earth, what, can this frivolous blockhead find to be so cocky about?" I muttered to myself. "He ought to be crying instead of being cocky."

"No!" he answered my observation sharply, "for I am full of great ideas, only now can I at leisure ponder over the amelioration of the lot of humanity. Truth and light will come forth now from the crocodile. I shall certainly develop a new economic theory of my own and I shall be proud of it — which I have hitherto been prevented from doing by my official duties and by trivial distractions. I shall refute everything and be a new Fourier. By the way, did you give Timofey Semyonitch the seven roubles?"

"Yes, out of my own pocket," I answered, trying to emphasise that fact in my voice.

"We will settle it," he answered superciliously. "I confidently expect my salary to be raised, for who should get a raise if not I? I am of the utmost service now. But to business. My wife?"

"You are, I suppose, inquiring after Elena Ivanovna?"

"My wife?" he shouted, this time in a positive squeal.

There was no help for it! Meekly, though gnashing my teeth, I told him how I had left Elena Ivanovna. He did not even hear me out.

"I have special plans in regard to her," he began impatiently. "If I am celebrated *here*, I wish her to be celebrated *there*. Savants, poets, philosophers, foreign mineralogists, statesmen, after conversing in the morning with me, will visit her *salon* in the evening. From next week onwards she must have an 'At Home' every evening. With my salary

doubled, we shall have the means for entertaining, and as the entertainment must not go beyond tea and hired footmen — that's settled. Both here and there they will talk of me. I have long thirsted for an opportunity for being talked about, but could not attain it, fettered by my humble position and low grade in the service. And now all this has been attained by a simple gulp on the part of the crocodile. Every word of mine will be listened to, every utterance will be thought over, repeated, printed. And I'll teach them what I am worth! They shall understand at last what abilities they have allowed to vanish in the entrails of a monster. 'This man might have been Foreign Minister or might have ruled a kingdom,' some will say. 'And that man did not rule a kingdom,' others will say. In what way am I inferior to a Garnier-Pagesishky or whatever they are called? My wife must be a worthy second — I have brains, she has beauty and charm. 'She is beautiful, and that is why she is his wife,' some will say. 'She is beautiful *because* she is his wife,' others will amend. To be ready for anything let Elena Ivanovna buy to-morrow the Encyclopædia edited by Andrey Kraevsky, that she may be able to converse on any topic. Above all, let her be sure to read the political leader in the *Petersburg News*, comparing it every day with the *Voice*. I imagine that the proprietor will consent to take me sometimes with the crocodile to my wife's brilliant *salon*. I will be in a tank in the middle of the magnificent drawing-room, and I will scintillate with witticisms which I will prepare in the morning. To the statesmen I will impart my projects; to the poet I will speak in rhyme; with the ladies I can be amusing and charming without impropriety, since I shall be no danger to their husbands' peace of mind. To all the rest I shall serve as a pattern of resignation to fate and the will of Providence. I shall make my wife a brilliant literary lady; I shall bring her forward and explain her to the public; as my wife she must be full of the most striking virtues; and if they are right in calling Andrey Alexandrovitch our Russian Alfred de Musset, they will be still more right in calling her our Russian Yevgenia Tour."

I must confess that although this wild nonsense was rather in Ivan Matveitch's habitual style, it did occur to me that he was in a fever and delirious. It was the same, everyday Ivan Matveitch, but magnified twenty times.

"My friend," I asked him, "are you hoping for a long life? Tell me, in fact, are you well? How do you eat, how do you sleep, how do you breathe?

I am your friend, and you must admit that the incident is most unnatural, and consequently my curiosity is most natural."

"Idle curiosity and nothing else," he pronounced sententiously, "but you shall be satisfied. You ask how I am managing in the entrails of the monster? To begin with, the crocodile, to my amusement, turns out to be perfectly empty. His inside consists of a sort of huge empty sack made of gutta-percha, like the elastic goods sold in the Gorohovy Street, in the Morskaya, and, if I am not mistaken, in the Voznesensky Prospect. Otherwise, if you think of it, how could I find room?"

"Is it possible?" I cried, in a surprise that may well be understood. "Can the crocodile be perfectly empty?"

"Perfectly," Ivan Matveitch maintained sternly and impressively. "And in all probability, it is so constructed by the laws of Nature. The crocodile possesses nothing but jaws furnished with sharp teeth, and besides the jaws, a tail of considerable length — that is all, properly speaking. The middle part between these two extremities is an empty space enclosed by something of the nature of gutta-percha, probably really gutta-percha."

"But the ribs, the stomach, the intestines, the liver, the heart?" I interrupted quite angrily.

"There is nothing, absolutely nothing of all that, and probably there never has been. All that is the idle fancy of frivolous travellers. As one inflates an air-cushion, I am now with my person inflating the crocodile. He is incredibly elastic. Indeed, you might, as the friend of the family, get in with me if you were generous and self-sacrificing enough — and even with you here there would be room to spare. I even think that in the last resort I might send for Elena Ivanovna. However, this void, hollow formation of the crocodile is quite in keeping with the teachings of natural science. If, for instance, one had to construct a new crocodile, the question would naturally present itself. What is the fundamental characteristic of the crocodile? The answer is clear: to swallow human beings. How is one, in constructing the crocodile, to secure that he should swallow people? The answer is clearer still: construct him hollow. It was settled by physics long ago that Nature abhors a vacuum. Hence the inside of the crocodile must be hollow so that it may abhor the vacuum, and consequently swallow and so fill itself with anything it can come across. And that is the sole rational cause why every crocodile swallows men. It is not the same in the constitution of man: the emptier a man's head is, for instance, the less he feels the thirst to fill it, and

that is the one exception to the general rule. It is all as clear as day to me now. I have deduced it by my own observation and experience, being, so to say, in the very bowels of Nature, in its retort, listening to the throbbing of its pulse. Even etymology supports me, for the very word crocodile means voracity. Crocodile — *crocodillo* — is evidently an Italian word, dating perhaps from the Egyptian Pharaohs, and evidently derived from the French verb *croquer*, which means to eat, to devour, in general to absorb nourishment. All these remarks I intend to deliver as my first lecture in Elena Ivanovna's *salon* when they take me there in the tank."

"My friend, oughtn't you at least to take some purgative?" I cried involuntarily.

"He is in a fever, a fever, he is feverish!" I repeated to myself in alarm.

"Nonsense!" he answered contemptuously. "Besides, in my present position it would be most inconvenient. I knew, though, you would be sure to talk of taking medicine."

"But, my friend, how ... how do you take food now? Have you dined to-day?"

"No, but I am not hungry, and most likely I shall never take food again. And that, too, is quite natural; filling the whole interior of the crocodile I make him feel always full. Now he need not be fed for some years. On the other hand, nourished by me, he will naturally impart to me all the vital juices of his body; it is the same as with some accomplished coquettes who embed themselves and their whole persons for the night in raw steak, and then, after their morning bath, are fresh, supple, buxom and fascinating. In that way nourishing the crocodile, I myself obtain nourishment from him, consequently we mutually nourish one another. But as it is difficult even for a crocodile to digest a man like me, he must, no doubt, be conscious of a certain weight in his stomach — an organ which he does not, however, possess — and that is why, to avoid causing the creature suffering, I do not often turn over, and although I could turn over I do not do so from humanitarian motives. This is the one drawback of my present position, and in an allegorical sense Timofey Semyonitch was right in saying I was lying like a log. But I will prove that even lying like a log — nay, that only lying like a log — one can revolutionise the lot of mankind. All the great ideas and movements of our newspapers and magazines have evidently been the work of men who were lying like logs; that is why they call them divorced from the realities of life — but what does it matter, their saying that! I am

constructing now a complete system of my own, and you wouldn’t believe how easy it is! You have only to creep into a secluded corner or into a crocodile, to shut your eyes, and you immediately devise a perfect millennium for mankind. When you went away this afternoon I set to work at once and have already invented three systems, now I am preparing the fourth. It is true that at first one must refute everything that has gone before, but from the crocodile it is so easy to refute it; besides, it all becomes clearer, seen from the inside of the crocodile.... There are some drawbacks, though small ones, in my position, however; it is somewhat damp here and covered with a sort of slime; moreover, there is a smell of india-rubber like the smell of my old galoshes. That is all, there are no other drawbacks.”

“Ivan Matveitch,” I interrupted, “all this is a miracle in which I can scarcely believe. And can you, can you intend never to dine again?”

“What trivial nonsense you are troubling about, you thoughtless, frivolous creature! I talk to you about great ideas, and you.... Understand that I am sufficiently nourished by the great ideas which light up the darkness in which I am enveloped. The good-natured proprietor has, however, after consulting the kindly *Mutter*, decided with her that they will every morning insert into the monster’s jaws a bent metal tube, something like a whistle pipe, by means of which I can absorb coffee or broth with bread soaked in it. The pipe has already been bespoken in the neighbourhood, but I think this is superfluous luxury. I hope to live at least a thousand years, if it is true that crocodiles live so long, which, by the way — good thing I thought of it — you had better look up in some natural history to-morrow and tell me, for I may have been mistaken and have mixed it up with some excavated monster. There is only one reflection rather troubles me: as I am dressed in cloth and have boots on, the crocodile can obviously not digest me. Besides, I am alive, and so am opposing the process of digestion with my whole will power; for you can understand that I do not wish to be turned into what all nourishment turns into, for that would be too humiliating for me. But there is one thing I am afraid of: in a thousand years the cloth of my coat, unfortunately of Russian make, may decay, and then, left without clothing, I might perhaps, in spite of my indignation, begin to be digested; and though by day nothing would induce me to allow it, at night, in my sleep, when a man’s will deserts him, I may be overtaken by the humiliating destiny of a potato, a pancake, or veal. Such an idea reduces me to fury. This alone is an argument for the revision

of the tariff and the encouragement of the importation of English cloth, which is stronger and so will withstand Nature longer when one is swallowed by a crocodile. At the first opportunity I will impart this idea to some statesman and at the same time to the political writers on our Petersburg dailies. Let them publish it abroad. I trust this will not be the only idea they will borrow from me. I foresee that every morning a regular crowd of them, provided with quarter-roubles from the editorial office, will be flocking round me to seize my ideas on the telegrams of the previous day. In brief, the future presents itself to me in the rosiest light."

"Fever, fever!" I whispered to myself.

"My friend, and freedom?" I asked, wishing to learn his views thoroughly. "You are, so to speak, in prison, while every man has a right to the enjoyment of freedom."

"You are a fool," he answered. "Savages love independence, wise men love order; and if there is no order...."

"Ivan Matveitch, spare me, please!"

"Hold your tongue and listen!" he squealed, vexed at my interrupting him. "Never has my spirit soared as now. In my narrow refuge there is only one thing that I dread — the literary criticisms of the monthlies and the hiss of our satirical papers. I am afraid that thoughtless visitors, stupid and envious people and nihilists in general, may turn me into ridicule. But I will take measures. I am impatiently awaiting the response of the public to-morrow, and especially the opinion of the newspapers. You must tell me about the papers to-morrow."

"Very good; to-morrow I will bring a perfect pile of papers with me."

"To-morrow it is too soon to expect reports in the newspapers, for it will take four days for it to be advertised. But from to-day come to me every evening by the back way through the yard. I am intending to employ you as my secretary. You shall read the newspapers and magazines to me, and I will dictate to you my ideas and give you commissions. Be particularly careful not to forget the foreign telegrams. Let all the European telegrams be here every day. But enough; most likely you are sleepy by now. Go home, and do not think of what I said just now about criticisms: I am not afraid of it, for the critics themselves are in a critical position. One has only to be wise and virtuous and one will certainly get on to a pedestal. If not Socrates, then Diogenes, or perhaps both of them together — that is my future rôle among mankind."

So frivolously and boastfully did Ivan Matveitch hasten to express himself before me, like feverish weak-willed women who, as we are told by the proverb, cannot keep a secret. All that he told me about the crocodile struck me as most suspicious. How was it possible that the crocodile was absolutely hollow? I don't mind betting that he was bragging from vanity and partly to humiliate me. It is true that he was an invalid and one must make allowances for invalids; but I must frankly confess, I never could endure Ivan Matveitch. I have been trying all my life, from a child up, to escape from his tutelage and have not been able to! A thousand times over I have been tempted to break with him altogether, and every time I have been drawn to him again, as though I were still hoping to prove something to him or to revenge myself on him. A strange thing, this friendship! I can positively assert that nine-tenths of my friendship for him was made up of malice. On this occasion, however, we parted with genuine feeling.

"Your friend a very clever man!" the German said to me in an undertone as he moved to see me out; he had been listening all the time attentively to our conversation.

"*À propos*," I said, "while I think of it: how much would you ask for your crocodile in case any one wanted to buy it?"

Ivan Matveitch, who heard the question, was waiting with curiosity for the answer; it was evident that he did not want the German to ask too little; anyway, he cleared his throat in a peculiar way on hearing my question.

At first the German would not listen — was positively angry.

"No one will dare my own crocodile to buy!" he cried furiously, and turned as red as a boiled lobster. "Me not want to sell the crocodile! I would not for the crocodile a million thalers take. I took a hundred and thirty thalers from the public to-day, and I shall to-morrow ten thousand take, and then a hundred thousand every day I shall take. I will not him sell."

Ivan Matveitch positively chuckled with satisfaction. Controlling myself — for I felt it was a duty to my friend — I hinted coolly and reasonably to the crazy German that his calculations were not quite correct, that if he makes a hundred thousand every day, all Petersburg will have visited him in four days, and then there will be no one left to bring him roubles, that life and death are in God's hands, that the crocodile may burst or Ivan Matveitch may fall ill and die, and so on and so on.

The German grew pensive.

“I will him drops from the chemist’s get,” he said, after pondering, “and will save your friend that he die not.”

“Drops are all very well,” I answered, “but consider, too, that the thing may get into the law courts. Ivan Matveitch’s wife may demand the restitution of her lawful spouse. You are intending to get rich, but do you intend to give Elena Ivanovna a pension?”

“No, me not intend,” said the German in stern decision.

“No, we not intend,” said the *Mutter*, with positive malignancy.

“And so would it not be better for you to accept something now, at once, a secure and solid though moderate sum, than to leave things to chance? I ought to tell you that I am inquiring simply from curiosity.”

The German drew the *Mutter* aside to consult with her in a corner where there stood a case with the largest and ugliest monkey of his collection.

“Well, you will see!” said Ivan Matveitch.

As for me, I was at that moment burning with the desire, first, to give the German a thrashing, next, to give the *Mutter* an even sounder one, and, thirdly, to give Ivan Matveitch the soundest thrashing of all for his boundless vanity. But all this paled beside the answer of the rapacious German.

After consultation with the *Mutter* he demanded for his crocodile fifty thousand roubles in bonds of the last Russian loan with lottery voucher attached, a brick house in Gorohovy Street with a chemist’s shop attached, and in addition the rank of Russian colonel.

“You see!” Ivan Matveitch cried triumphantly. “I told you so! Apart from this last senseless desire for the rank of a colonel, he is perfectly right, for he fully understands the present value of the monster he is exhibiting. The economic principle before everything!”

“Upon my word!” I cried furiously to the German. “But what should you be made a colonel for? What exploit have you performed? What service have you done? In what way have you gained military glory? You are really crazy!”

“Crazy!” cried the German, offended. “No, a person very sensible, but you very stupid! I have a colonel deserved for that I have a crocodile shown and in him a live *hofrath* sitting! And a Russian can a crocodile not show and a live *hofrath* in him sitting! Me extremely clever man and much wish colonel to be!”

“Well, good-bye, then, Ivan Matveitch!” I cried, shaking with fury, and I went out of the crocodile room almost at a run.

I felt that in another minute I could not have answered for myself. The unnatural expectations of these two block-heads were insupportable. The cold air refreshed me and somewhat moderated my indignation. At last, after spitting vigorously fifteen times on each side, I took a cab, got home, undressed and flung myself into bed. What vexed me more than anything was my having become his secretary. Now I was to die of boredom there every evening, doing the duty of a true friend! I was ready to beat myself for it, and I did, in fact, after putting out the candle and pulling up the bedclothes, punch myself several times on the head and various parts of my body. That somewhat relieved me, and at last I fell asleep fairly soundly, in fact, for I was very tired. All night long I could dream of nothing but monkeys, but towards morning I dreamt of Elena Ivanovna.

IV

The monkeys I dreamed about, I surmise, because they were shut up in the case at the German’s; but Elena Ivanovna was a different story.

I may as well say at once, I loved the lady, but I make haste — post-haste — to make a qualification. I loved her as a father, neither more nor less. I judge that because I often felt an irresistible desire to kiss her little head or her rosy cheek. And though I never carried out this inclination, I would not have refused even to kiss her lips. And not merely her lips, but her teeth, which always gleamed so charmingly like two rows of pretty, well-matched pearls when she laughed. She laughed extraordinarily often. Ivan Matveitch in demonstrative moments used to call her his “darling absurdity” — a name extremely happy and appropriate. She was a perfect sugar-plum, and that was all one could say of her. Therefore I am utterly at a loss to understand what possessed Ivan Matveitch to imagine his wife as a Russian Yevgenia Tour? Anyway, my dream, with the exception of the monkeys, left a most pleasant impression upon me, and going over all the incidents of the previous day as I drank my morning cup of tea, I resolved to go and see Elena Ivanovna at once on my way to the office — which, indeed, I was bound to do as the friend of the family.

In a tiny little room out of the bedroom — the so-called little drawing-room, though their big drawing-room was little too — Elena Ivanovna was

sitting, in some half-transparent morning wrapper, on a smart little sofa before a little tea-table, drinking coffee out of a little cup in which she was dipping a minute biscuit. She was ravishingly pretty, but struck me as being at the same time rather pensive.

“Ah, that’s you, naughty man!” she said, greeting me with an absent-minded smile. “Sit down, feather-head, have some coffee. Well, what were you doing yesterday? Were you at the masquerade?”

“Why, were you? I don’t go, you know. Besides, yesterday I was visiting our captive....” I sighed and assumed a pious expression as I took the coffee.

“Whom?... What captive?... Oh, yes! Poor fellow! Well, how is he — bored? Do you know ... I wanted to ask you.... I suppose I can ask for a divorce now?”

“A divorce!” I cried in indignation and almost spilled the coffee. “It’s that swarthy fellow,” I thought to myself bitterly.

There was a certain swarthy gentleman with little moustaches who was something in the architectural line, and who came far too often to see them, and was extremely skilful in amusing Elena Ivanovna. I must confess I hated him and there was no doubt that he had succeeded in seeing Elena Ivanovna yesterday either at the masquerade or even here, and putting all sorts of nonsense into her head.

“Why,” Elena Ivanovna rattled off hurriedly, as though it were a lesson she had learnt, “if he is going to stay on in the crocodile, perhaps not come back all his life, while I sit waiting for him here! A husband ought to live at home, and not in a crocodile....”

“But this was an unforeseen occurrence,” I was beginning, in very comprehensible agitation.

“Oh, no, don’t talk to me, I won’t listen, I won’t listen,” she cried, suddenly getting quite cross. “You are always against me, you wretch! There’s no doing anything with you, you will never give me any advice! Other people tell me that I can get a divorce because Ivan Matveitch will not get his salary now.”

“Elena Ivanovna! is it you I hear!” I exclaimed pathetically. “What villain could have put such an idea into your head? And divorce on such a trivial ground as a salary is quite impossible. And poor Ivan Matveitch, poor Ivan Matveitch is, so to speak, burning with love for you even in the bowels of the monster. What’s more, he is melting away with love like a lump of sugar. Yesterday while you were enjoying yourself at the

masquerade, he was saying that he might in the last resort send for you as his lawful spouse to join him in the entrails of the monster, especially as it appears the crocodile is exceedingly roomy, not only able to accommodate two but even three persons....”

And then I told her all that interesting part of my conversation the night before with Ivan Matveitch.

“What, what!” she cried, in surprise. “You want me to get into the monster too, to be with Ivan Matveitch? What an idea! And how am I to get in there, in my hat and crinoline? Heavens, what foolishness! And what should I look like while I was getting into it, and very likely there would be some one there to see me! It’s absurd! And what should I have to eat there? And ... and ... and what should I do there when.... Oh, my goodness, what will they think of next?... And what should I have to amuse me there?... You say there’s a smell of gutta-percha? And what should I do if we quarrelled — should we have to go on staying there side by side? Foo, how horrid!”

“I agree, I agree with all those arguments, my sweet Elena Ivanovna,” I interrupted, striving to express myself with that natural enthusiasm which always overtakes a man when he feels the truth is on his side. “But one thing you have not appreciated in all this, you have not realised that he cannot live without you if he is inviting you there; that is a proof of love, passionate, faithful, ardent love.... You have thought too little of his love, dear Elena Ivanovna!”

“I won’t, I won’t, I won’t hear anything about it!” waving me off with her pretty little hand with glistening pink nails that had just been washed and polished. “Horrid man! You will reduce me to tears! Get into it yourself, if you like the prospect. You are his friend, get in and keep him company, and spend your life discussing some tedious science....”

“You are wrong to laugh at this suggestion” — I checked the frivolous woman with dignity— “Ivan Matveitch has invited me as it is. You, of course, are summoned there by duty; for me, it would be an act of generosity. But when Ivan Matveitch described to me last night the elasticity of the crocodile, he hinted very plainly that there would be room not only for you two, but for me also as a friend of the family, especially if I wished to join you, and therefore....”

“How so, the three of us?” cried Elena Ivanovna, looking at me in surprise. “Why, how should we ... are we going to be all three there

together? Ha-ha-ha! How silly you both are! Ha-ha-ha! I shall certainly pinch you all the time, you wretch! Ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha!”

And falling back on the sofa, she laughed till she cried. All this — the tears and the laughter — were so fascinating that I could not resist rushing eagerly to kiss her hand, which she did not oppose, though she did pinch my ears lightly as a sign of reconciliation.

Then we both grew very cheerful, and I described to her in detail all Ivan Matveitch’s plans. The thought of her evening receptions and her *salon* pleased her very much.

“Only I should need a great many new dresses,” she observed, “and so Ivan Matveitch must send me as much of his salary as possible and as soon as possible. Only ... only I don’t know about that,” she added thoughtfully. “How can he be brought here in the tank? That’s very absurd. I don’t want my husband to be carried about in a tank. I should feel quite ashamed for my visitors to see it.... I don’t want that, no, I don’t.”

“By the way, while I think of it, was Timofey Semyonitch here yesterday?”

“Oh, yes, he was; he came to comfort me, and do you know, we played cards all the time. He played for sweet-meats, and if I lost he was to kiss my hands. What a wretch he is! And only fancy, he almost came to the masquerade with me, really!”

“He was carried away by his feelings!” I observed. “And who would not be with you, you charmer?”

“Oh, get along with your compliments! Stay, I’ll give you a pinch as a parting present. I’ve learnt to pinch awfully well lately. Well, what do you say to that? By the way, you say Ivan Matveitch spoke several times of me yesterday?”

“N-no, not exactly.... I must say he is thinking more now of the fate of humanity, and wants....”

“Oh, let him! You needn’t go on! I am sure it’s fearfully boring. I’ll go and see him some time. I shall certainly go to-morrow. Only not to-day; I’ve got a headache, and besides, there will be such a lot of people there to-day.... They’ll say, ‘That’s his wife,’ and I shall feel ashamed.... Good-bye. You will be ... there this evening, won’t you?”

“To see him, yes. He asked me to go and take him the papers.”

“That’s capital. Go and read to him. But don’t come and see me to-day. I am not well, and perhaps I may go and see some one. Good-bye, you

naughty man."

"It's that swarthy fellow is going to see her this evening," I thought.

At the office, of course, I gave no sign of being consumed by these cares and anxieties. But soon I noticed some of the most progressive papers seemed to be passing particularly rapidly from hand to hand among my colleagues, and were being read with an extremely serious expression of face. The first one that reached me was the *News-sheet*, a paper of no particular party but humanitarian in general, for which it was regarded with contempt among us, though it was read. Not without surprise I read in it the following paragraph:

"Yesterday strange rumours were circulating among the spacious ways and sumptuous buildings of our vast metropolis. A certain well-known *bon-vivant* of the highest society, probably weary of the *cuisine* at Borel's and at the X. Club, went into the Arcade, into the place where an immense crocodile recently brought to the metropolis is being exhibited, and insisted on its being prepared for his dinner. After bargaining with the proprietor he at once set to work to devour him (that is, not the proprietor, a very meek and punctilious German, but his crocodile), cutting juicy morsels with his penknife from the living animal, and swallowing them with extraordinary rapidity. By degrees the whole crocodile disappeared into the vast recesses of his stomach, so that he was even on the point of attacking an ichneumon, a constant companion of the crocodile, probably imagining that the latter would be as savoury. We are by no means opposed to that new article of diet with which foreign *gourmands* have long been familiar. We have, indeed, predicted that it would come. English lords and travellers make up regular parties for catching crocodiles in Egypt, and consume the back of the monster cooked like beefsteak, with mustard, onions and potatoes. The French who followed in the train of Lesseps prefer the paws baked-in hot ashes, which they do, however, in opposition to the English, who laugh at them. Probably both ways would be appreciated among us. For our part, we are delighted at a new branch of industry, of which our great and varied fatherland stands pre-eminently in need. Probably before a year is out crocodiles will be brought in hundreds to replace this first one, lost in the stomach of a Petersburg *gourmand*. And why should not the crocodile be acclimatised among us in Russia? If the water of the Neva is too cold for these interesting strangers, there are ponds in the capital and rivers and lakes outside it. Why not breed crocodiles at Pargolovo, for instance, or at

Pavlovsk, in the Presnensky Ponds and in Samoteka in Moscow? While providing agreeable, wholesome nourishment for our fastidious *gourmands*, they might at the same time entertain the ladies who walk about these ponds and instruct the children in natural history. The crocodile skin might be used for making jewel-cases, boxes, cigar-cases, pocket-books, and possibly more than one thousand saved up in the greasy notes that are peculiarly beloved of merchants might be laid by in crocodile skin. We hope to return more than once to this interesting topic."

Though I had foreseen something of the sort, yet the reckless inaccuracy of the paragraph overwhelmed me. Finding no one with whom to share my impression, I turned to Prohor Savvitch who was sitting opposite to me, and noticed that the latter had been watching me for some time, while in his hand he held the *Voice* as though he were on the point of passing it to me. Without a word he took the *News-sheet* from me, and as he handed me the *Voice* he drew a line with his nail against an article to which he probably wished to call my attention. This Prohor Savvitch was a very queer man: a taciturn old bachelor, he was not on intimate terms with any of us, scarcely spoke to any one in the office, always had an opinion of his own about everything, but could not bear to import it to any one. He lived alone. Hardly any one among us had ever been in his lodging.

This was what I read in the *Voice*.

"Every one knows that we are progressive and humanitarian and want to be on a level with Europe in this respect. But in spite of all our exertions and the efforts of our paper we are still far from maturity, as may be judged from the shocking incident which took place yesterday in the Arcade and which we predicted long ago. A foreigner arrives in the capital bringing with him a crocodile which he begins exhibiting in the Arcade. We immediately hasten to welcome a new branch of useful industry such as our powerful and varied fatherland stands in great need of. Suddenly yesterday at four o'clock in the afternoon a gentleman of exceptional stoutness enters the foreigner's shop in an intoxicated condition, pays his entrance money, and immediately without any warning leaps into the jaws of the crocodile, who was forced, of course, to swallow him, if only from an instinct of self-preservation, to avoid being crushed. Tumbling into the inside of the crocodile, the stranger at once dropped asleep. Neither the shouts of the foreign proprietor, nor the lamentations of his terrified family, nor threats to send for the police made the slightest impression. Within the crocodile was

heard nothing but laughter and a promise to flay him (*sic*), though the poor mammal, compelled to swallow such a mass, was vainly shedding tears. An uninvited guest is worse than a Tartar. But in spite of the proverb the insolent visitor would not leave. We do not know how to explain such barbarous incidents which prove our lack of culture and disgrace us in the eyes of foreigners. The recklessness of the Russian temperament has found a fresh outlet. It may be asked what was the object of the uninvited visitor? A warm and comfortable abode? But there are many excellent houses in the capital with very cheap and comfortable lodgings, with the Neva water laid on, and a staircase lighted by gas, frequently with a hall-porter maintained by the proprietor. We would call our readers' attention to the barbarous treatment of domestic animals: it is difficult, of course, for the crocodile to digest such a mass all at once, and now he lies swollen out to the size of a mountain, awaiting death in insufferable agonies. In Europe persons guilty of inhumanity towards domestic animals have long been punished by law. But in spite of our European enlightenment, in spite of our European pavements, in spite of the European architecture of our houses, we are still far from shaking off our time-honoured traditions.

"Though the houses are new, the conventions are old."

And, indeed, the houses are not new, at least the staircases in them are not. We have more than once in our paper alluded to the fact that in the Petersburg Side in the house of the merchant Lukyanov the steps of the wooden staircase have decayed, fallen away, and have long been a danger for Afimya Skapidarov, a soldier's wife who works in the house, and is often obliged to go up the stairs with water or armfuls of wood. At last our predictions have come true: yesterday evening at half-past eight Afimya Skapidarov fell down with a basin of soup and broke her leg. We do not know whether Lukyanov will mend his staircase now, Russians are often wise after the event, but the victim of Russian carelessness has by now been taken to the hospital. In the same way we shall never cease to maintain that the house-porters who clear away the mud from the wooden pavement in the Viborgsky Side ought not to spatter the legs of passers-by, but should throw the mud up into heaps as is done in Europe," and so on, and so on.

"What's this?" I asked in some perplexity, looking at Prohor Savvitch. "What's the meaning of it?"

"How do you mean?"

“Why, upon my word! Instead of pitying Ivan Matveitch, they pity the crocodile!”

“What of it? They have pity even for a beast, a *mammal*. We must be up to Europe, mustn’t we? They have a very warm feeling for crocodiles there too. He-he-he!”

Saying this, queer old Prohor Savvitch dived into his papers and would not utter another word.

I stuffed the *Voice* and the *News-sheet* into my pocket and collected as many old copies of the newspapers as I could find for Ivan Matveitch’s diversion in the evening, and though the evening was far off, yet on this occasion I slipped away from the office early to go to the Arcade and look, if only from a distance, at what was going on there, and to listen to the various remarks and currents of opinion. I foresaw that there would be a regular crush there, and turned up the collar of my coat to meet it. I somehow felt rather shy — so unaccustomed are we to publicity. But I feel that I have no right to report my own prosaic feelings when faced with this remarkable and original incident.

BOBOK

FROM SOMEBODY'S DIARY

Semyon Ardalyonovitch said to me all of a sudden the day before yesterday: "Why, will you ever be sober, Ivan Ivanovitch? Tell me that, pray."

A strange requirement. I did not resent it, I am a timid man; but here they have actually made me out mad. An artist painted my portrait as it happened: "After all, you are a literary man," he said. I submitted, he exhibited it. I read: "Go and look at that morbid face suggesting insanity."

It may be so, but think of putting it so bluntly into print. In print everything ought to be decorous; there ought to be ideals, while instead of that....

Say it indirectly, at least; that's what you have style for. But no, he doesn't care to do it indirectly. Nowadays humour and a fine style have disappeared, and abuse is accepted as wit. I do not resent it: but God knows I am not enough of a literary man to go out of my mind. I have written a novel, it has not been published. I have written articles — they have been refused. Those articles I took about from one editor to another; everywhere they refused them: you have no salt they told me. "What sort of salt do you want?" I asked with a jeer. "Attic salt?"

They did not even understand. For the most part I translate from the French for the booksellers. I write advertisements for shopkeepers too: "Unique opportunity! Fine tea, from our own plantations ..." I made a nice little sum over a panegyric on his deceased excellency Pyotr Matveyitch. I compiled the "Art of pleasing the ladies," a commission from a bookseller. I have brought out some six little works of this kind in the course of my life. I am thinking of making a collection of the *bon mots* of Voltaire, but am afraid it may seem a little flat to our people. Voltaire's no good now; nowadays we want a cudgel, not Voltaire. We knock each other's last teeth out nowadays. Well, so that's the whole extent of my literary activity. Though indeed I do send round letters to the editors gratis and fully signed. I give them all sorts of counsels and admonitions, criticise and point out the true path. The letter I sent last week to an editor's office was the fortieth I

had sent in the last two years. I have wasted four roubles over stamps alone for them. My temper is at the bottom of it all.

I believe that the artist who painted me did so not for the sake of literature, but for the sake of two symmetrical warts on my forehead, a natural phenomenon, he would say. They have no ideas, so now they are out for phenomena. And didn't he succeed in getting my warts in his portrait — to the life. That is what they call realism.

And as to madness, a great many people were put down as mad among us last year. And in such language! "With such original talent" ... "and yet, after all, it appears" ... "however, one ought to have foreseen it long ago." That is rather artful; so that from the point of view of pure art one may really commend it. Well, but after all, these so-called madmen have turned out cleverer than ever. So it seems the critics can call them mad, but they cannot produce any one better.

The wisest of all, in my opinion, is he who can, if only once a month, call himself a fool — a faculty unheard of nowadays. In old days, once a year at any rate a fool would recognise that he was a fool, but nowadays not a bit of it. And they have so muddled things up that there is no telling a fool from a wise man. They have done that on purpose.

I remember a witty Spaniard saying when, two hundred and fifty years ago, the French built their first madhouses: "They have shut up all their fools in a house apart, to make sure that they are wise men themselves." Just so: you don't show your own wisdom by shutting some one else in a madhouse. "K. has gone out of his mind, means that we are sane now." No, it doesn't mean that yet.

Hang it though, why am I maundering on? I go on grumbling and grumbling. Even my maidservant is sick of me. Yesterday a friend came to see me. "Your style is changing," he said; "it is choppy: you chop and chop — and then a parenthesis, then a parenthesis in the parenthesis, then you stick in something else in brackets, then you begin chopping and chopping again."

The friend is right. Something strange is happening to me. My character is changing and my head aches. I am beginning to see and hear strange things, not voices exactly, but as though some one beside me were muttering, "*bobok, bobok, bobok*!"

What's the meaning of this *bobok*? I must divert my mind.

I went out in search of diversion, I hit upon a funeral. A distant relation — a collegiate counsellor, however. A widow and five daughters, all marriageable young ladies. What must it come to even to keep them in slippers. Their father managed it, but now there is only a little pension. They will have to eat humble pie. They have always received me ungraciously. And indeed I should not have gone to the funeral now had it not been for a peculiar circumstance. I followed the procession to the cemetery with the rest; they were stuck-up and held aloof from me. My uniform was certainly rather shabby. It's five-and-twenty years, I believe, since I was at the cemetery; what a wretched place!

To begin with the smell. There were fifteen hearses, with palls varying in expensiveness; there were actually two catafalques. One was a general's and one some lady's. There were many mourners, a great deal of feigned mourning and a great deal of open gaiety. The clergy have nothing to complain of; it brings them a good income. But the smell, the smell. I should not like to be one of the clergy here.

I kept glancing at the faces of the dead cautiously, distrusting my impressionability. Some had a mild expression, some looked unpleasant. As a rule the smiles were disagreeable, and in some cases very much so. I don't like them; they haunt one's dreams.

During the service I went out of the church into the air: it was a grey day, but dry. It was cold too, but then it was October. I walked about among the tombs. They are of different grades. The third grade cost thirty roubles; it's decent and not so very dear. The first two grades are tombs in the church and under the porch; they cost a pretty penny. On this occasion they were burying in tombs of the third grade six persons, among them the general and the lady.

I looked into the graves — and it was horrible: water and such water! Absolutely green, and ... but there, why talk of it! The gravedigger was baling it out every minute. I went out while the service was going on and strolled outside the gates. Close by was an almshouse, and a little further off there was a restaurant. It was not a bad little restaurant: there was lunch and everything. There were lots of the mourners here. I noticed a great deal of gaiety and genuine heartiness. I had something to eat and drink.

Then I took part in the bearing of the coffin from the church to the grave. Why is it that corpses in their coffins are so heavy? They say it is due to some sort of inertia, that the body is no longer directed by its owner ... or

some nonsense of that sort, in opposition to the laws of mechanics and common sense. I don't like to hear people who have nothing but a general education venture to solve the problems that require special knowledge; and with us that's done continually. Civilians love to pass opinions about subjects that are the province of the soldier and even of the field-marshal; while men who have been educated as engineers prefer discussing philosophy and political economy.

I did not go to the requiem service. I have some pride, and if I am only received owing to some special necessity, why force myself on their dinners, even if it be a funeral dinner. The only thing I don't understand is why I stayed at the cemetery; I sat on a tombstone and sank into appropriate reflections.

I began with the Moscow exhibition and ended with reflecting upon astonishment in the abstract. My deductions about astonishment were these:

"To be surprised at everything is stupid of course, and to be astonished at nothing is a great deal more becoming and for some reason accepted as good form. But that is not really true. To my mind to be astonished at nothing is much more stupid than to be astonished at everything. And, moreover, to be astonished at nothing is almost the same as feeling respect for nothing. And indeed a stupid man is incapable of feeling respect."

"But what I desire most of all is to feel respect. I *thirst* to feel respect," one of my acquaintances said to me the other day.

He thirsts to feel respect! Goodness, I thought, what would happen to you if you dared to print that nowadays?

At that point I sank into forgetfulness. I don't like reading the epitaphs of tombstones: they are everlastingly the same. An unfinished sandwich was lying on the tombstone near me; stupid and inappropriate. I threw it on the ground, as it was not bread but only a sandwich. Though I believe it is not a sin to throw bread on the earth, but only on the floor. I must look it up in Suvorin's calendar.

I suppose I sat there a long time — too long a time, in fact; I must have lain down on a long stone which was of the shape of a marble coffin. And how it happened I don't know, but I began to hear things of all sorts being said. At first I did not pay attention to it, but treated it with contempt. But the conversation went on. I heard muffled sounds as though the speakers' mouths were covered with a pillow, and at the same time they were distinct and very near. I came to myself, sat up and began listening attentively.

“Your Excellency, it’s utterly impossible. You led hearts, I return your lead, and here you play the seven of diamonds. You ought to have given me a hint about diamonds.”

“What, play by hard and fast rules? Where is the charm of that?”

“You must, your Excellency. One can’t do anything without something to go upon. We must play with dummy, let one hand not be turned up.”

“Well, you won’t find a dummy here.”

What conceited words! And it was queer and unexpected. One was such a ponderous, dignified voice, the other softly suave; I should not have believed it if I had not heard it myself. I had not been to the requiem dinner, I believe. And yet how could they be playing preference here and what general was this? That the sounds came from under the tombstones of that there could be no doubt. I bent down and read on the tomb:

“Here lies the body of Major-General Pervoyedov ... a cavalier of such and such orders.” Hm! “Passed away in August of this year ... fifty-seven.... Rest, beloved ashes, till the joyful dawn!”

Hm, dash it, it really is a general! There was no monument on the grave from which the obsequious voice came, there was only a tombstone. He must have been a fresh arrival. From his voice he was a lower court councillor.

“Oh-ho-ho-ho!” I heard in a new voice a dozen yards from the general’s resting-place, coming from quite a fresh grave. The voice belonged to a man and a plebeian, mawkish with its affectation of religious fervour. “Oh-ho-ho-ho!”

“Oh, here he is hiccupping again!” cried the haughty and disdainful voice of an irritated lady, apparently of the highest society. “It is an affliction to be by this shopkeeper!”

“I didn’t hiccup; why, I’ve had nothing to eat. It’s simply my nature. Really, madam, you don’t seem able to get rid of your caprices here.”

“Then why did you come and lie down here?”

“They put me here, my wife and little children put me here, I did not lie down here of myself. The mystery of death! And I would not have lain down beside you not for any money; I lie here as befitting my fortune, judging by the price. For we can always do that — pay for a tomb of the third grade.”

“You made money, I suppose? You fleeced people?”

“Fleece you, indeed! We haven’t seen the colour of your money since January. There’s a little bill against you at the shop.”

“Well, that’s really stupid; to try and recover debts here is too stupid, to my thinking! Go to the surface. Ask my niece — she is my heiress.”

“There’s no asking any one now, and no going anywhere. We have both reached our limit and, before the judgment-seat of God, are equal in our sins.”

“In our sins,” the lady mimicked him contemptuously. “Don’t dare to speak to me.”

“Oh-ho-ho-ho!”

“You see, the shopkeeper obeys the lady, your Excellency.”

“Why shouldn’t he?”

“Why, your Excellency, because, as we all know, things are different here.”

“Different? How?”

“We are dead, so to speak, your Excellency.”

“Oh, yes! But still....”

Well, this is an entertainment, it is a fine show, I must say! If it has come to this down here, what can one expect on the surface? But what a queer business! I went on listening, however, though with extreme indignation.

“Yes, I should like a taste of life! Yes, you know ... I should like a taste of life.” I heard a new voice suddenly somewhere in the space between the general and the irritable lady.

“Do you hear, your Excellency, our friend is at the same game again. For three days at a time he says nothing, and then he bursts out with ‘I should like a taste of life, yes, a taste of life!’ And with such appetite, he-he!”

“And such frivolity.”

“It gets hold of him, your Excellency, and do you know, he is growing sleepy, quite sleepy — he has been here since April; and then all of a sudden ‘I should like a taste of life!’”

“It is rather dull, though,” observed his Excellency.

“It is, your Excellency. Shall we tease Avdotya Ignatyevna again, he-he?”

“No, spare me, please. I can’t endure that quarrelsome virago.”

“And I can’t endure either of you,” cried the virago disdainfully. “You are both of you bores and can’t tell me anything ideal. I know one little

story about you, your Excellency — don’t turn up your nose, please — how a man-servant swept you out from under a married couple’s bed one morning.”

“Nasty woman,” the general muttered through his teeth.

“Avdotya Ignatyevna, ma’am,” the shopkeeper wailed suddenly again, “my dear lady, don’t be angry, but tell me, am I going through the ordeal by torment now, or is it something else?”

“Ah, he is at it again, as I expected! For there’s a smell from him which means he is turning round!”

“I am not turning round, ma’am, and there’s no particular smell from me, for I’ve kept my body whole as it should be, while you’re regularly high. For the smell is really horrible even for a place like this. I don’t speak of it, merely from politeness.”

“Ah, you horrid, insulting wretch! He positively stinks and talks about me.”

“Oh-ho-ho-ho! If only the time for my requiem would come quickly: I should hear their tearful voices over my head, my wife’s lament and my children’s soft weeping!...”

“Well, that’s a thing to fret for! They’ll stuff themselves with funeral rice and go home.... Oh, I wish somebody would wake up!”

“Avdotya Ignatyevna,” said the insinuating government clerk, “wait a bit, the new arrivals will speak.”

“And are there any young people among them?”

“Yes, there are, Avdotya Ignatyevna. There are some not more than lads.”

“Oh, how welcome that would be!”

“Haven’t they begun yet?” inquired his Excellency.

“Even those who came the day before yesterday haven’t awakened yet, your Excellency. As you know, they sometimes don’t speak for a week. It’s a good job that to-day and yesterday and the day before they brought a whole lot. As it is, they are all last year’s for seventy feet round.”

“Yes, it will be interesting.”

“Yes, your Excellency, they buried Tarasevitch, the privy councillor, to-day. I knew it from the voices. I know his nephew, he helped to lower the coffin just now.”

“Hm, where is he, then?”

“Five steps from you, your Excellency, on the left.... Almost at your feet. You should make his acquaintance, your Excellency.”

“Hm, no — it’s not for me to make advances.”

“Oh, he will begin of himself, your Excellency. He will be flattered. Leave it to me, your Excellency, and I....”

“Oh, oh! ... What is happening to me?” croaked the frightened voice of a new arrival.

“A new arrival, your Excellency, a new arrival, thank God! And how quick he’s been! Sometimes they don’t say a word for a week.”

“Oh, I believe it’s a young man!” Avdotya Ignatyevna cried shrilly.

“I ... I ... it was a complication, and so sudden!” faltered the young man again. “Only the evening before, Schultz said to me, ‘There’s a complication,’ and I died suddenly before morning. Oh! oh!”

“Well, there’s no help for it, young man,” the general observed graciously, evidently pleased at a new arrival. “You must be comforted. You are kindly welcome to our Vale of Jehoshaphat, so to call it. We are kind-hearted people, you will come to know us and appreciate us. Major-General Vassili Vassilitch Pervoyedov, at your service.”

“Oh, no, no! Certainly not! I was at Schultz’s; I had a complication, you know, at first it was my chest and a cough, and then I caught a cold: my lungs and influenza ... and all of a sudden, quite unexpectedly ... the worst of all was its being so unexpected.”

“You say it began with the chest,” the government clerk put in suavely, as though he wished to reassure the new arrival.

“Yes, my chest and catarrh and then no catarrh, but still the chest, and I couldn’t breathe ... and you know....”

“I know, I know. But if it was the chest you ought to have gone to Ecke and not to Schultz.”

“You know, I kept meaning to go to Botkin’s, and all at once....”

“Botkin is quite prohibitive,” observed the general.

“Oh, no, he is not forbidding at all; I’ve heard he is so attentive and foretells everything beforehand.”

“His Excellency was referring to his fees,” the government clerk corrected him.

“Oh, not at all, he only asks three roubles, and he makes such an examination, and gives you a prescription ... and I was very anxious to see

him, for I have been told.... Well, gentlemen, had I better go to Ecke or to Botkin?”

“What? To whom?” The general’s corpse shook with agreeable laughter. The government clerk echoed it in falsetto.

“Dear boy, dear, delightful boy, how I love you!” Avdotya Ignatyevna squealed ecstatically. “I wish they had put some one like you next to me.”

No, that was too much! And these were the dead of our times! Still, I ought to listen to more and not be in too great a hurry to draw conclusions. That snivelling new arrival — I remember him just now in his coffin — had the expression of a frightened chicken, the most revolting expression in the world! However, let us wait and see.

But what happened next was such a Bedlam that I could not keep it all in my memory. For a great many woke up at once; an official — a civil councillor — woke up, and began discussing at once the project of a new sub-committee in a government department and of the probable transfer of various functionaries in connection with the sub-committee — which very greatly interested the general. I must confess I learnt a great deal that was new myself, so much so that I marvelled at the channels by which one may sometimes in the metropolis learn government news. Then an engineer half woke up, but for a long time muttered absolute nonsense, so that our friends left off worrying him and let him lie till he was ready. At last the distinguished lady who had been buried in the morning under the catafalque showed symptoms of the reanimation of the tomb. Lebeziatnikov (for the obsequious lower court councillor whom I detested and who lay beside General Pervoyedov was called, it appears, Lebeziatnikov) became much excited, and surprised that they were all waking up so soon this time. I must own I was surprised too; though some of those who woke had been buried for three days, as, for instance, a very young girl of sixteen who kept giggling ... giggling in a horrible and predatory way.

“Your Excellency, privy councillor Tarasevitch is waking!” Lebeziatnikov announced with extreme fussiness.

“Eh? What?” the privy councillor, waking up suddenly, mumbled, with a lisp of disgust. There was a note of ill-humoured peremptoriness in the sound of his voice.

I listened with curiosity — for during the last few days I had heard something about Tarasevitch — shocking and upsetting in the extreme.

“It’s I, your Excellency, so far only I.”

“What is your petition? What do you want?”

“Merely to inquire after your Excellency’s health; in these unaccustomed surroundings every one feels at first, as it were, oppressed.... General Pervoyedov wishes to have the honour of making your Excellency’s acquaintance, and hopes....”

“I’ve never heard of him.”

“Surely, your Excellency! General Pervoyedov, Vassili Vassilitch....”

“Are you General Pervoyedov?”

“No, your Excellency, I am only the lower court councillor Lebeziatnikov, at your service, but General Pervoyedov....”

“Nonsense! And I beg you to leave me alone.”

“Let him be.” General Pervoyedov at last himself checked with dignity the disgusting officiousness of his sycophant in the grave.

“He is not fully awake, your Excellency, you must consider that; it’s the novelty of it all. When he is fully awake he will take it differently.”

“Let him be,” repeated the general.

“Vassili Vassilitch! Hey, your Excellency!” a perfectly new voice shouted loudly and aggressively from close beside Avdotya Ignatyevna. It was a voice of gentlemanly insolence, with the languid pronunciation now fashionable and an arrogant drawl. “I’ve been watching you all for the last two hours. Do you remember me, Vassili Vassilitch? My name is Klinevitch, we met at the Volokonskys’ where you, too, were received as a guest, I am sure I don’t know why.”

“What, Count Pyotr Petrovitch?... Can it be really you ... and at such an early age? How sorry I am to hear it.”

“Oh, I am sorry myself, though I really don’t mind, and I want to amuse myself as far as I can everywhere. And I am not a count but a baron, only a baron. We are only a set of scurvy barons, risen from being flunkeys, but why I don’t know and I don’t care. I am only a scoundrel of the pseudo-aristocratic society, and I am regarded as ‘a charming *polis-son*.’ My father is a wretched little general, and my mother was at one time received *en haut lieu*. With the help of the Jew Zifel I forged fifty thousand rouble notes last year and then I informed against him, while Julie Charpentier de Lusignan carried off the money to Bordeaux. And only fancy, I was engaged to be married — to a girl still at school, three months under sixteen, with a dowry

of ninety thousand. Avdotya Ignatyevna, do you remember how you seduced me fifteen years ago when I was a boy of fourteen in the Corps des Pages?”

“Ah, that’s you, you rascal! Well, you are a godsend, anyway, for here....”

“You were mistaken in suspecting your neighbour, the business gentleman, of unpleasant fragrance.... I said nothing, but I laughed. The stench came from me: they had to bury me in a nailed-up coffin.”

“Ugh, you horrid creature! Still, I am glad you are here; you can’t imagine the lack of life and wit here.”

“Quite so, quite so, and I intend to start here something original. Your Excellency — I don’t mean you, Pervoyedov — your Excellency the other one, Tarasevitch, the privy councillor! Answer! I am Klinevitch, who took you to Mlle. Furie in Lent, do you hear?”

“I do, Klinevitch, and I am delighted, and trust me....”

“I wouldn’t trust you with a halfpenny, and I don’t care. I simply want to kiss you, dear old man, but luckily I can’t. Do you know, gentlemen, what this *grand-père’s* little game was? He died three or four days ago, and would you believe it, he left a deficit of four hundred thousand government money from the fund for widows and orphans. He was the sole person in control of it for some reason, so that his accounts were not audited for the last eight years. I can fancy what long faces they all have now, and what they call him. It’s a delectable thought, isn’t it? I have been wondering for the last year how a wretched old man of seventy, gouty and rheumatic, succeeded in preserving the physical energy for his debaucheries — and now the riddle is solved! Those widows and orphans — the very thought of them must have egged him on! I knew about it long ago, I was the only one who did know; it was Julie told me, and as soon as I discovered it, I attacked him in a friendly way at once in Easter week: ‘Give me twenty-five thousand, if you don’t they’ll look into your accounts to-morrow.’ And just fancy, he had only thirteen thousand left then, so it seems it was very apropos his dying now. *Grand-père, grand-père*, do you hear?”

“*Cher* Klinevitch, I quite agree with you, and there was no need for you ... to go into such details. Life is so full of suffering and torment and so little to make up for it ... that I wanted at last to be at rest, and so far as I can see I hope to get all I can from here too.”

“I bet that he has already sniffed Katiche Berestov!”

“Who? What Katiche?” There was a rapacious quiver in the old man’s voice.

“A-ah, what Katiche? Why, here on the left, five paces from me and ten from you. She has been here for five days, and if only you knew, *grand-père*, what a little wretch she is! Of good family and breeding and a monster, a regular monster! I did not introduce her to any one there, I was the only one who knew her.... Katiche, answer!”

“He-he-he!” the girl responded with a jangling laugh, in which there was a note of something as sharp as the prick of a needle. “He-he-he!”

“And a little blonde?” the *grand-père* faltered, drawling out the syllables.

“He-he-he!”

“I ... have long ... I have long,” the old man faltered breathlessly, “cherished the dream of a little fair thing of fifteen and just in such surroundings.”

“Ach, the monster!” cried Avdotya Ignatyevna.

“Enough!” Klinevitch decided. “I see there is excellent material. We shall soon arrange things better. The great thing is to spend the rest of our time cheerfully; but what time? Hey, you, government clerk, Lebeziatnikov or whatever it is, I hear that’s your name!”

“Semyon Yevseitch Lebeziatnikov, lower court councillor, at your service, very, very, very much delighted to meet you.”

“I don’t care whether you are delighted or not, but you seem to know everything here. Tell me first of all how it is we can talk? I’ve been wondering ever since yesterday. We are dead and yet we are talking and seem to be moving — and yet we are not talking and not moving. What jugglery is this?”

“If you want an explanation, baron, Platon Nikolaevitch could give you one better than I.”

“What Platon Nikolaevitch is that? To the point. Don’t beat about the bush.”

“Platon Nikolaevitch is our home-grown philosopher, scientist and Master of Arts. He has brought out several philosophical works, but for the last three months he has been getting quite drowsy, and there is no stirring him up now. Once a week he mutters something utterly irrelevant.”

“To the point, to the point!”

“He explains all this by the simplest fact, namely, that when we were living on the surface we mistakenly thought that death there was death. The

body revives, as it were, here, the remains of life are concentrated, but only in consciousness. I don’t know how to express it, but life goes on, as it were, by inertia. In his opinion everything is concentrated somewhere in consciousness and goes on for two or three months ... sometimes even for half a year.... There is one here, for instance, who is almost completely decomposed, but once every six weeks he suddenly utters one word, quite senseless of course, about some *bobok*, ‘Bobok, bobok,’ but you see that an imperceptible speck of life is still warm within him.”

i. e. small bean.

“It’s rather stupid. Well, and how is it I have no sense of smell and yet I feel there’s a stench?”

“That ... he-he.... Well, on that point our philosopher is a bit foggy. It’s apropos of smell, he said, that the stench one perceives here is, so to speak, moral — he-he! It’s the stench of the soul, he says, that in these two or three months it may have time to recover itself ... and this is, so to speak, the last mercy.... Only, I think, baron, that these are mystic ravings very excusable in his position....”

“Enough; all the rest of it, I am sure, is nonsense. The great thing is that we have two or three months more of life and then — bobok! I propose to spend these two months as agreeably as possible, and so to arrange everything on a new basis. Gentlemen! I propose to cast aside all shame.”

“Ah, let us cast aside all shame, let us!” many voices could be heard saying; and strange to say, several new voices were audible, which must have belonged to others newly awakened. The engineer, now fully awake, boomed out his agreement with peculiar delight. The girl Katiche giggled gleefully.

“Oh, how I long to cast off all shame!” Avdotya Ignatyevna exclaimed rapturously.

“I say, if Avdotya Ignatyevna wants to cast off all shame....”

“No, no, no, Klinevitch, I was ashamed up there all the same, but here I should like to cast off shame, I should like it awfully.”

“I understand, Klinevitch,” boomed the engineer, “that you want to rearrange life here on new and rational principles.”

“Oh, I don’t care a hang about that! For that we’ll wait for Kudeyarov who was brought here yesterday. When he wakes he’ll tell you all about it. He is such a personality, such a titanic personality! To-morrow they’ll bring along another natural scientist, I believe, an officer for certain, and three or

four days later a journalist, and, I believe, his editor with him. But deuce take them all, there will be a little group of us anyway, and things will arrange themselves. Though meanwhile I don't want us to be telling lies. That's all I care about, for that is one thing that matters. One cannot exist on the surface without lying, for life and lying are synonymous, but here we will amuse ourselves by not lying. Hang it all, the grave has some value after all! We'll all tell our stories aloud, and we won't be ashamed of anything. First of all I'll tell you about myself. I am one of the predatory kind, you know. All that was bound and held in check by rotten cords up there on the surface. Away with cords and let us spend these two months in shameless truthfulness! Let us strip and be naked!"

"Let us be naked, let us be naked!" cried all the voices.

"I long to be naked, I long to be," Avdotya Ignatyevna shrilled.

"Ah ... ah, I see we shall have fun here; I don't want Ecke after all."

"No, I tell you. Give me a taste of life!"

"He-he-he!" giggled Katiche.

"The great thing is that no one can interfere with us, and though I see Pervoyedov is in a temper, he can't reach me with his hand. *Grand-père,* do you agree?"

"I fully agree, fully, and with the utmost satisfaction, but on condition that Katiche is the first to give us her biography."

"I protest! I protest with all my heart!" General Pervoyedov brought out firmly.

"Your Excellency!" the scoundrel Lebeziatnikov persuaded him in a murmur of fussy excitement, "your Excellency, it will be to our advantage to agree. Here, you see, there's this girl's ... and all their little affairs."

"There's the girl, it's true, but...."

"It's to our advantage, your Excellency, upon my word it is! If only as an experiment, let us try it...."

"Even in the grave they won't let us rest in peace."

"In the first place, General, you were playing preference in the grave, and in the second we don't care a hang about you," drawled Klinevitch.

"Sir, I beg you not to forget yourself."

"What? Why, you can't get at me, and I can tease you from here as though you were Julie's lapdog. And another thing, gentlemen, how is he a general here? He was a general there, but here is mere refuse."

"No, not mere refuse.... Even here...."

“Here you will rot in the grave and six brass buttons will be all that will be left of you.”

“Bravo, Klinevitch, ha-ha-ha!” roared voices.

“I have served my sovereign.... I have the sword....”

“Your sword is only fit to prick mice, and you never drew it even for that.”

“That makes no difference; I formed a part of the whole.”

“There are all sorts of parts in a whole.”

“Bravo, Klinevitch, bravo! Ha-ha-ha!”

“I don’t understand what the sword stands for,” boomed the engineer.

“We shall run away from the Prussians like mice, they’ll crush us to powder!” cried a voice in the distance that was unfamiliar to me, that was positively spluttering with glee.

“The sword, sir, is an honour,” the general cried, but only I heard him. There arose a prolonged and furious roar, clamour, and hubbub, and only the hysterically impatient squeals of Avdotya Ignatyevna were audible.

“But do let us make haste! Ah, when are we going to begin to cast off all shame!”

“Oh-ho-ho!... The soul does in truth pass through torments!” exclaimed the voice of the plebeian, “and ...”

And here I suddenly sneezed. It happened suddenly and unintentionally, but the effect was striking: all became as silent as one expects it to be in a churchyard, it all vanished like a dream. A real silence of the tomb set in. I don’t believe they were ashamed on account of my presence: they had made up their minds to cast off all shame! I waited five minutes — not a word, not a sound. It cannot be supposed that they were afraid of my informing the police; for what could the police do to them? I must conclude that they had some secret unknown to the living, which they carefully concealed from every mortal.

“Well, my dears,” I thought, “I shall visit you again.” And with those words, I left the cemetery.

No, that I cannot admit; no, I really cannot! The *bobok* case does not trouble me (so that is what that bobok signified!)

Depravity in such a place, depravity of the last aspirations, depravity of sodden and rotten corpses — and not even sparing the last moments of consciousness! Those moments have been granted, vouchsafed to them, and ... and, worst of all, in such a place! No, that I cannot admit.

I shall go to other tombs, I shall listen everywhere. Certainly one ought to listen everywhere and not merely at one spot in order to form an idea. Perhaps one may come across something reassuring.

But I shall certainly go back to those. They promised their biographies and anecdotes of all sorts. Tfoo! But I shall go, I shall certainly go; it is a question of conscience!

I shall take it to the *Citizen*; the editor there has had his portrait exhibited too. Maybe he will print it.

A GENTLE SPIRIT



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Part I

Chapter I. Who I was and who she was

Oh, while she is still here, it is still all right; I go up and look at her every minute; but tomorrow they will take her away - and how shall I be left alone? Now she is on the table in the drawing-room, they put two card tables together, the coffin will be here tomorrow - white, pure white “gros de Naples” - but that’s not it . . .

I keep walking about, trying to explain it to myself. I have been trying for the last six hours to get it clear, but still I can’t think of it all as a whole.

The fact is I walk to and fro, and to and fro.

This is how it was. I will simply tell it in order. (Order!)

Gentlemen, I am far from being a literary man and you will see that; but no matter, I’ll tell it as I understand it myself. The horror of it for me is that I understand it all!

It was, if you care to know, that is to take it from the beginning, that she used to come to me simply to pawn things, to pay for advertising in the VOICE to the effect that a governess was quite willing to travel, to give lessons at home, and so on, and so on. That was at the very beginning, and I, of course, made no difference between her and the others: “She comes,” I thought, “like any one else,” and so on.

But afterwards I began to see a difference. She was such a slender, fair little thing, rather tall, always a little awkward with me, as though embarrassed (I fancy she was the same with all strangers, and in her eyes, of course, I was exactly like anybody else - that is, not as a pawnbroker but as a man).

As soon as she received the money she would turn round at once and go away. And always in silence. Other women argue so, entreat, haggle for me to give them more; this one did not ask for more. . . .

I believe I am muddling it up.

Yes; I was struck first of all by the things she brought: poor little silver gilt earrings, a trashy little locket, things not worth sixpence. She knew herself that they were worth next to nothing, but I could see from her face that they were treasures to her, and I found out afterwards as a fact that they were all that was left her belonging to her father and mother.

Only once I allowed myself to scoff at her things. You see I never allow myself to behave like that. I keep up a gentlemanly tone with my clients:

few words, politeness and severity. “Severity, severity!”

But once she ventured to bring her last rag, that is, literally the remains of an old hareskin jacket, and I could not resist saying something by way of a joke. My goodness! how she flared up! Her eyes were large, blue and dreamy but - how they blazed. But she did not drop one word; picking up her “rags” she walked out.

It was then for the first time I noticed her particularly, and thought something of the kind about her - that it, something of a particular kind. Yes, I remember another impression - that is, if you will have it, perhaps the chief impression, that summed up everything. It was that she was terribly young, so young that she looked just fourteen. And yet she was within three months of sixteen. I didn’t mean that, though, that wasn’t what summed it all up. Next day she came again. I found out later that she had been to Dobranravov’s and to Mozer’s with that jacket, but they take nothing but gold and would have nothing to say to it. I once took some stones from her (rubbishy little ones) and, thinking it over afterwards, I wondered: I, too, only lend on gold and silver, yet from her I accepted stones. That was my second thought about her then; that I remember. That time, that is when she came from Mozer’s, she brought an amber cigar-holder. It was a connoisseur’s article, not bad, but again, of no value to us, because we only deal in gold. As it was the day after her “mutiny”, I received her sternly. Sternness with me takes the form of dryness. As I gave her two roubles, however, I could not resist saying, with a certain irritation, “I only do it for you, of course; Mozer wouldn’t take such a thing.”

The word “for you” I emphasised particularly, and with a particular implication.

I was spiteful. She flushed up again when she heard that “for you”, but she did not say a word, she did not refuse the money, she took it - that is poverty! But how hotly she flushed! I saw I had stung her. And when she had gone out, I suddenly asked myself whether my triumph over her was worth two roubles. He! He!! He!!! I remember I put that question to myself twice over, “was is worth it? was it worth it?”

And, laughing, I inwardly answered it in the affirmative. And I felt very much elated. But that was not an evil feeling; I said it with design, with a motive; I wanted to test her, because certain ideas with regard to her had suddenly come into my mind. That was the third thing I thought particularly about her. . . . Well, it was from that time it all began. Of course, I tried at

once to find out all her circumstances indirectly, and awaited her coming with a special impatience. I had a presentiment that she would come soon. When she came, I entered into affable conversation with her, speaking with unusual politeness. I have not been badly brought up and have manners. H'm. It was then I guessed that she was soft-hearted and gentle.

The gentle and soft-hearted do not resist long, and though they are by no means very ready to reveal themselves, they do not know how to escape from a conversation; they are niggardly in their answers, but they do answer, and the more readily the longer you go on. Only, on your side you must not flag, if you want them to talk. I need hardly say that she did not explain anything to me then. About the Voice and all that I found out afterwards. She was at that time spending her last farthing on advertising, haughtily at first, of course. "A governess prepared to travel and will send terms on application," but, later on: "willing to do anything, to teach, to be a companion, to be a housekeeper, to wait on an invalid, plain sewing, and so on, and so on", the usual thing! Of course, all this was added to the advertisement a bit at a time and finally, when she was reduced to despair, it came to: "without salary in return for board." No, she could not find a situation. I made up my mind then to test her for the last time. I suddenly took up the Voice of the day and showed her an advertisement. "A young person, without friends and relations, seeks a situation as a governess to young children, preferably in the family of a middle-aged widower. Might be a comfort in the home."

"Look here how this lady has advertised this morning, and by the evening she will certainly have found a situation. That's the way to advertise."

Again she flushed crimson and her eyes blazed, she turned round and went straight out. I was very much pleased, though by that time I felt sure of everything and had no apprehensions; nobody will take her cigar-holders, I thought. Besides, she has got rid of them all. And so it was, two days later, she came in again, such a pale little creature, all agitation - I saw that something had happened to her at home, and something really had. I will explain directly what had happened, but now I only want to recall how I did something chic, and rose in her opinion. I suddenly decided to do it. The fact is she was pawning the ikon (she had brought herself to pawn it!) . . Ah! listen! listen! This is the beginning now, I've been in a muddle. You see I want to recall all this, every detail, every little point. I want to bring them

all together and look at them as a whole and - I cannot . . . It's these little things, these little things. . . . It was an ikon of the Madonna. A Madonna with the Babe, and old-fashioned, homely one, and the setting was silver gilt, worth - well, six roubles perhaps. I could see the ikon was precious to her; she was pawning it whole, not taking it out of the setting. I said to her -

"You had better take it out of the setting, and take the ikon home; for it's not the thing to pawn."

"Why, are you forbidden to take them?"

"No, it's not that we are forbidden, but you might, perhaps, yourself . . ."

"Well, take it out."

"I tell you what. I will not take it out, but I'll set it here in the shrine with the other ikons," I said, on reflection. "Under the little lamp" (I always had the lamp burning as soon as the shop was opened), "and you simply take ten roubles."

"Don't give me ten roubles. I only want five; I shall certainly redeem it."

"You don't want ten? The ikon's worth it," I added noticing that her eyes flashed again.

She was silent. I brought out five roubles.

"Don't despise any one; I've been in such straits myself; and worse too, and that you see me here in this business . . . is owing to what I've been through in the past. . . ."

"You're revenging yourself on the world? Yes?" she interrupted suddenly with rather sarcastic mockery, which, however, was to a great extent innocent (that is, it was general, because certainly at that time she did not distinguish me from others, so that she said it almost without malice).

"Aha," thought I; "so that's what you're like. You've got character; you belong to the new movement."

"You see!" I remarked at once, half-jestingly, half-mysteriously, "I am part of that part of the Whole that seeks to do ill, but does good. . . ."

Quickly and with great curiosity, in which , however, there was something very childlike, she looked at me.

"Stay . . . what's that idea? Where does it come from? I've heard it somewhere . . ."

"Don't rack your brains. In those words Mephistopheles introduces himself to Faust. Have you read Faust?"

"Not . . . not attentively."

“That is, you have not read it at all. You must read it. But I see an ironical look in your face again. Please don’t imagine that I’ve so little taste as to try to use Mephistopheles to commend myself to you and grace the role of pawnbroker. A pawnbroker will still be a pawnbroker. We know.”

“You’re so strange . . . I didn’t mean to say anything of that sort.”

She meant to say: “I didn’t expect to find you were an educated man”; but she didn’t say it; I knew, though, that she thought that. I had pleased her very much.

“You see,” I observed, “One may do good in any calling - I’m not speaking of myself, of course. Let us grant that I’m doing nothing but harm, yet . . .”

“Of course, one can do good in every position,” she said, glancing at me with a rapid, profound look. “Yes, in any position,” she added suddenly.

Oh, I remember, I remember all those moments! And I want to add, too, that when such young creatures, such sweet young creatures want to say something so clever and profound, they show at once so truthfully and naively in their faces, “Here I am saying something clever and profound now” - and that is not from vanity, as it is with any one like me, but one sees that she appreciates it awfully herself, and believes in it, and thinks a lot of it, and imagines that you think a lot of all that, just as she does. Oh, truthfulness! it’s by that they conquer us. How exquisite it was in her!

I remember it, I have forgotten nothing! As soon as she had gone, I made up my mind. That same day I made my last investigations and found out every detail of her position at the moment; every detail of her past I had learned already from Lukerya, at that time a servant in the family, whom I had bribed a few days before. This position was so awful that I can’t understand how she could laugh as she had done that day and feel interest in the words of Mephistopheles, when she was in such horrible straits. But - that’s youth! That is just what I thought about her at the time with pride and joy; for, you know, there’s a greatness of soul in it - to be able to say, “Though I am on the edge of the abyss, yet Goethe’s grand words are radiant with light.” Youth always has some greatness of soul, if its only a spark and that distorted. Though it’s of her I am speaking, of her alone. And, above all, I looked upon her then as mine and did not doubt of my power. You know, that’s a voluptuous idea when you feel no doubt of it.

But what is the matter with me? If I go on like this, when shall I put it all together and look at it as a whole. I must make haste, make haste - that is

not what matters, oh, my God!

Chapter II. The offer of marriage

The “details” I learned about her I will tell in one word: her father and mother were dead, they had died three years before, and she had been left with two disreputable aunts: though it is saying too little to call them disreputable. One aunt was a widow with a large family (six children, one smaller than another), the other a horrid old maid. Both were horrid. Her father was in the service, but only as a copying clerk, and was only a gentleman by courtesy; in fact, everything was in my favour. I came as though from a higher world; I was anyway a retired lieutenant of a brilliant regiment, a gentleman by birth, independent and all the rest of it, and as for my pawnbroker’s shop, her aunts could only have looked on that with respect. She had been living in slavery at her aunts’ for those three years: yet she had managed to pass an examination somewhere - she managed to pass it, she wrung the time for it, weighed down as a she was by the pitiless burden of daily drudgery, and that proved something in the way of striving for what was higher and better on her part! Why, what made me want to marry her? Never mind me, though; of that later on . . . As though that mattered! - She taught her aunt’s children; she made their clothes; and towards the end not only washed the clothes, but with her weak chest even scrubbed the floors. To put it plainly, they used to beat her, and taunt her with eating their bread. It ended by their scheming to sell her. Tfoo! I omit the filthy details. She told me all about it afterwards.

All this had been watched for a whole year by a neighbour, a fat shopkeeper, and not a humble one but the owner of two grocer’s shops. He had ill-treated two wives and now he was looking for a third, and so he cast his eye on her. “She’s a quiet one,” he thought; “she’s grown up in poverty, and I am marrying for the sake of my motherless children.”

He really had children. He began trying to make the match and negotiating with the aunts. He was fifty years old, besides. She was aghast with horror. It was then she began coming so often to me to advertise in the Voice. At last she began begging the aunts to give her just a little time to think it over. They granted her that little time, but would not let her have more; they were always at her: “We don’t know where to turn to find food for ourselves, without an extra mouth to feed.”

I had found all this out already, and the same day, after what had happened in the morning, I made up my mind. That evening the shopkeeper came, bringing with him a pound of sweets from the shop; she was sitting with him, and I called Lukerya out of the kitchen and told her to go and whisper to her that I was at the gate and wanted to say something to her without delay. I felt pleased with myself. And altogether I felt awfully pleased all that day.

On the spot, at the gate, in the presence of Lukerya, before she had recovered from her amazement at my sending for her, I informed her that I should look upon it as an honour and happiness . . . telling her, in the next place, not to be surprised at the manner of my declaration and at my speaking at the gate, saying that I was a straightforward man and had learned the position of affairs. And I was not lying when I said I was straightforward. Well, hang it all. I did not only speak with propriety - that is, showing I was a man of decent breeding, but I spoke with originality and that was the chief thing. After all, is there any harm in admitting it? I want to judge myself and am judging myself. I must speak pro and contra, and I do. I remembered afterwards with enjoyment, though it was stupid, that I frankly declared, without the least embarrassment, that, in the first place, I was not particularly talented, not particularly intelligent, not particularly good-natured, rather a cheap egoist (I remember that expression, I thought of it on the way and was pleased with it) and that very probably there was a great deal that was disagreeable in me in other respects. All this was said with a special sort of pride - we all know how that sort of thing is said. Of course, I had good taste enough not to proceed to enlarge on my virtues after honourably enumerating my defects, not to say “to make up for that I have this and that and the other.” I saw that she was still horrible frightened I purposely exaggerated. I told her straight out that she would have enough to eat, but that fine clothes, theatres, balls - she would have none of, at any rate not till later on, when I had attained my object. this severe tone was a positive delight to me. I added as cursorily as possible, that in adopting such a calling - that is, in keeping a pawnbroker’s shop, I had one object, hinting there was a special circumstance . . . but I really had a right to say so: I really had such an aim and there really was such a circumstance. Wait a minute, gentlemen; I have always been the first to hate this pawnbroking business, but in reality, though it is absurd to talk about oneself in such mysterious phrases, yet, you know, I was “revenging myself on society,” I

really was, I was, I was! So that her gibe that morning at the idea of my revenging myself was unjust. that is, do you see, if I had said to her straight out in words: “yes, I am revenging myself on society,” she would have laughed as she did that morning, and it would, in fact have been absurd. But by indirect hints, but dropping mysterious phrases, it appeared that it was possible to work upon her imagination. Besides, I had no fears then: I knew that the fat shopkeeper was anyway more repulsive to her than I was, and that I, standing at the gate, had appeared as a deliverer. I understood that, of course. Oh, what is base a man understands particularly well! But was it base? How can a man judge? Didn’t I love her even then?

Wait a bit: of course, I didn’t breathe a word to her of doing her a benefit; the opposite, oh, quite the opposite; I made out that it was I that would be under an obligation to her, not she to me. Indeed, I said as much - I couldn’t resist saying it - and it sounded stupid, perhaps, for I noticed a shade flit across her face. But altogether I won the day completely. Wait a bit, if I am to recall all that vileness, then I will tell of that worst beastliness. As I stood there what was stirring in my mind was, “You are tall, a good figure, educated and - speaking without conceit - good-looking.” That is what was at work in my mind. I need hardly say that, on the spot, out there at the gate she said “yes.” But . . . but I ought to add: that out there by the gate she thought a long time before she said “yes.” She pondered for so long that I said to her, “Well?” - and could not even refrain from asking it with a certain swagger.

“Wait a little. I’m thinking.”

And her little face was so serious, so serious that even then I might have read it! And I was mortified: “Can she be choosing between me and the grocer!” I thought. Oh, I did not understand then! I did not understand anything, anything, then! I did not understand till today! I remember Lukerya ran after me as I was going away, stopped me on the road and said, breathlessly: “God will reward you, sir, for taking our dear young lady; only don’t speak of that to her - she’s proud.”

Proud, is she! “I like proud people,” I thought. Proud people are particularly nice when . . . well, when one has no doubt of one’s power over them, eh? Oh, base, tactless man! Oh, how pleased I was! You know, when she was standing there at the gate, hesitating whether to say “yes” to me, and I was wondering at it, you know, she may have had some such thought as this: “If it is to be misery either way, isn’t it best to choose the very

worst” - that is, let the fat grocer beat her to death when he was drunk! Eh! what do you think, could there have been a thought like that?

And, indeed, I don’t understand it now, I don’t understand it at all, even now. I have only just said that she may have had that thought: of two evils choose the worst - that is the grocer. But which was the worst for her then - the grocer or I? The grocer or the pawnbroker who quoted Goethe? That’s another question! What a question! And even that you don’t understand: the answer is lying on the table and you call it a question! Never mind me, though. It’s not a question of me at all . . . and, by the way, what is there left for me now - whether it’s a question of me or whether it is not? That’s what I am utterly unable to answer. I had better go to bed. My head aches. . . .

Chapter III. The Noblest Of Men, Though I don’t believe it myself

I could not sleep. And how should I? There is a pulse throbbing in my head. One longs to master it all, all that degradation. Oh, the degradation! Oh, what degradation I dragged her out of then! Of course, she must have realized that, she must have appreciated my action! I was pleased, too, by various thoughts - for instance, the reflection that I was forty-one and she was only sixteen. that fascinated me, that feeling of inequality was very sweet, was very sweet.

I wanted, for instance, to have a wedding a l’anglaise, that is only the two of us, with just te two necessary witnesses, one of them Lukerya, and from the wedding straight to the train to Moscow (I happened to have business there, by the way), and then a fortnight at the hotel. She opposed it, she would not have it, and I had to visit her aunts and treat them with respect as though they were relations from whom I was taking her. I gave way, and all befitting respect was paid the aunts. I even made the creatures a present of a hundred roubles each and promised them more - not telling her anything about it, of course, that I might not make her feel humiliated by the lowness of her surroundings. the aunts were as soft as silk at once. There was a wrangle about the trousseau too; she had nothing, almost literally, but she did not want to have anything. I succeeded in proving to her, though, that she must have something, and I made up the trousseau, for who would have given her anything? But there, enough of me. I did, however, succeed in communicating some of my ideas to her then, so that she knew them anyway. I was in too great a hurry, perhaps. the best of it was that, from the very beginning, she rushed to meet me with love, greeted me with rapture, when I went to see her in the evening, told me in her chatter (the enchanting chatter of innocence) all about her childhood and girlhood, her old home, her father and mother. But I poured cold water upon all that at once. that was my idea. I met her enthusiasm with silence, friendly silence, of course . . . but, all the same, she could quickly see that we were different and that I was - an enigma. And being an enigma was what I made a point of most of all! Why, it was just for the sake of being an enigma, perhaps - that I have been guilty of all this stupidity. The first thing

was sternness - it was with an air of sternness that I took her into my house. In fact, as I went about then feeling satisfied, I framed a complete system. Oh, it came of itself without any effort. And it could not have been otherwise. I was bound to create that system owing to one inevitable fact - why should I libel myself indeed! The system was a genuine one. yes, listen; if you must judge a man, better judge him knowing all about it . . . listen.

How am I to begin this, for it is very difficult. When you begin to justify yourself - then it is difficult. You see, for instance, young people despise money - I made money of importance at once; I laid special stress on money. And laid such stress on it that she became more and more silent. She opened her eyes wide, listened, gazed and said nothing. you see, the young are heroic, that is the good among them are heroic and impulsive, but they have little tolerance; if the least thing is not quite right they are full of contempt. And I wanted breadth, I wanted to instil breadth into her very heart, to make it part of her inmost feeling, did I not? I'll take a trivial example: how should I explain my pawnbroker's shop to a character like that? Of course, I did not speak of it directly, or it would have appeared that I was apologizing, and I, so to speak, worked it through with pride, I almost spoke without words, and I am masterly at speaking without words. all my life I have spoken without words, and I have passed through whole tragedies on my own account without words. Why, I, too, have been unhappy! I was abandoned by every one, abandoned and forgotten, and no one, no one knew it! And all at once this sixteen-year-old girl picked up details about me from vulgar people and thought she knew all about me, and, meanwhile, what was precious remained hidden in this heart! I went on being silent, with her especially I was silent, with her especially, right up to yesterday - why was I silent? Because I was proud. I wanted her to find out for herself, without my help, and not from the tales of low people; I wanted her to divine of herself what manner of man I was and to understand me! Taking her into my house I wanted all her respect, I wanted her to be standing before me in homage for the sake of my sufferings - and I deserved it. Oh, I have always been proud, I always wanted all or nothing! You see it was just because I am not one who will accept half a happiness, but always wanted all, that I was forced to act like that then: it was a much as to say, "See into me for yourself and appreciate me!" For you must see that if I had begun explaining myself to her and prompting her, ingratiating myself and

asking for her respect - it would have been as good as asking for charity . . . But . . . but why am I talking of that!

Stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid! I explained to her than, in two words, directly, ruthlessly (and I emphasize the fact that it was ruthlessly) that the heroism of youth was charming, but - not worth a farthing. Why not? Because it costs them so little, because it is not gained through life; it is, so to say, merely “first impressions of existence,” but just let us see you at work! Cheap heroism is always easy, and even to sacrifice life is easy too; because it is only a case of hot blood and an overflow of energy, and there is such a longing for what is beautiful! No, take the deed of heroism that is labourious, obscure, without noise or flourish, slandered, in which there is a great deal of sacrifice and not one grain of glory - in which you, a splendid man, are made to look like a scoundrel before every one, though you might be the most honest man in the world - you try that sort of heroism and you’ll soon give it up! While I - have been bearing the burden of that all my life. At first she argued - ough, how she argued - but afterwards she began to be silent, completely silent, in fact, only opened her eyes wide as she listened, such big, big eyes, so attentive. And . . . and what is more, I suddenly saw a smile, mistrustful, silent, an evil smile. Well, it was with that smile on her face I brought her into my house. It is true that she had nowhere to go.

Chapter IV. Plans and Plans

Which of us began it first?

Neither. It began of itself from the very first. I have said that with sternness i brought her into the house. From the first step, however, I softened it. Before she was married it was explained to her that she would have to take pledges and pay out money, and she said nothing at the time (note that). What is more, she set to work with positive zeal. Well, of course, my lodging, my furniture all remained as before. My lodging consisted of two rooms, a large room from which the shop was partitioned off, and a second one, also large, our living room and bedroom. My furniture is scanty: even her aunts had better things. My shrine of ikons with the lamp was in the outer room where the shop is; in the inner room my bookcase with a few books in and a trunk of which I keep the key; married I told her that one rouble a day and not more, was to be spent on our board - that is, on food for me, her and Lukerya whom I had enticed to come to us. “I must have thirty thousand in three years,” said I, “and we can’t save the money if we spend more.” She fell in with this, but I raised the sum by thirty kopecks a day. It was the same with the theatre. I told her before marriage that she would not go to the theatre, and yet I decided once a month to go to he theatre, and in a decent way, to the stalls. We went together. We went three times and saw The Hunt after Happiness, and Singing Birds, I believe. (Oh, what does it matter!) We went in silence and in silence we returned. Why, why, from the very beginning, did we take to being silent? From the very first, you know, we had no quarrels, but always the same silence. She was always, I remember, watching me stealthily in those days; as soon as I noticed it I became more silent that before. It is true that it was I insisted on the silence, not she. On her part there were one or two outbursts, she rushed to embrace me; but as these outbursts were hysterical, painful, and I wanted secure happiness, with respect from her, I received them coldly. And indeed, I was right; each time the outburst was followed next day by a quarrel.

Though, again, there were no quarrels, but there was silence and - and on her side a more and more defiant air. “Rebellion and independence,” that’s what it was, only she didn’t know how to show it. yes, that gentle creature was becoming more and more defiant. Would you believe it, I was

becoming revolting to her? I learned that. And there could be no doubt that she was moved to frenzy at times. think, for instance, of her beginning to sniff at our poverty, after her coming from such sordidness and destitution - from scrubbing the floors! you see, there was no poverty; there was frugality, but there was abundance of what was necessary, of linen, for instance, and the greatest cleanliness. I always used to dream that cleanliness in a husband attracts a wife. It was not our poverty she was scornful of, but my supposed miserliness in the housekeeping: “he has his objects,” she seemed to say, “he is showing his strength of will.” She suddenly refused to go to the theatre. And more and more often an ironical look. . . . And I was more silent, more and more silent.

I could not begin justifying myself, could I? What was at the bottom of all this was the pawnbroking business. Allow me, I knew that a woman, above all at sixteen, must be in complete subordination to a man. Women have no originality. That - that is an axiom; even now, even now, for me it is an axiom! What does it prove that she is lying there in the outer room? Truth is truth, and even Mill is no use against it! And a woman who loves, oh, a woman who loves idealizes even the vices, even the villainies of the man she loves. He would not himself even succeed in finding such justification for his villanies as she will find for him. that is generous but not original. it is the lack of originality alone that has been the ruin of women. and, I repeat, what is the use of your point to that table? Why, what is there original in her being on that table? O - O - Oh!

Listen. I was convinced of her love at that time. Why, she used to throw herself on my neck in those days. She loved me; that is, more accurately, she wanted to love. Yes, that’s just what it was, she wanted to love; she was trying to love. And the point was that in this case there were no villanies for which she had to find justification. you will say, I’m a pawnbroker; and every one says the same. But what if I am a pawnbroker? It follows that there must be reasons since the most generous of men had become a pawnbroker. You see, gentlemen, there are ideas . . . that is, if one expresses some ideas, utters them in words, the effect is very stupid. The effect is to make one ashamed. For what reason? For no reason. Because we are all wretched creatures and cannot hear the truth, or I do not know why. I said just now, “the most generous of men” - that is absurd, and yet that is how it was. It’s the truth, that is, the absolute, absolute truth! Yes, I had the right to want to make myself secure and open that pawnbroker’s shop: “You have

rejected me, you - people, I mean - you have cast me out with contemptuous silence. My passionate yearning towards you you have met with insult all my life. Now I have the right to put up a wall against you, to save up that thirty thousand roubles and end my life somewhere in the Crimea, on the south coast, among the mountains and vineyards, on my own estate bought with that thirty thousand, and above everything, far away from you all, living without malice against you, with an ideal in my soul, with a beloved woman at my heart, and a family, if God sends one, and - helping the inhabitants all around."

Of course, it is quite right that I say this to myself now, but what could have been more stupid than describing all that aloud to her? That was the cause of my proud silence, that's why we sat in silence. For what could she have understood? Sixteen years old, the earliest youth - yes, what could she have understood of my justification, of my sufferings? Undeviating straightness, ignorance of life, the cheap convictions of youth, the hen-like blindness of those "noble hearts," and what stood for most was - the pawnbroker's shop and - enough! (And was I a villain in the pawnbroker's shop? Did not she see how I acted? Did I extort too much?)

Oh, how awful is truth on earth! That exquisite creature, that gentle spirit, that heaven - she was a tyrant, she was the insufferable tyrant and torture of my soul! I should be unfair to myself if I didn't say so! You imagine I didn't love her? Who can say that I did not love her! Do you see, it was a case of irony, the malignant irony of fate and nature! We were under a curse, the life of men in general is under a curse! (mine in particular). Of course, I understand now that I made some mistake! Something went wrong. Everything was clear, my plan was clear as daylight: "Austere and proud, asking for no moral comfort, but suffering in silence." And that was how it was. I was not lying, I was not lying! "She will see for herself, later on, that it was heroic, only that she had not known how to see it, and when, some day, she divines, it she will prize me ten times more and will abase herself in the dust and fold her hands in homage" - that was my plan. But I forgot something or lost sight of it. There was something I failed to manage. But, enough, enough! And whose forgiveness am I to ask now? What is done is done. By bolder, man, and have some pride! It is not your fault! . . .

Well, I will tell the truth, I am not afraid to face the truth; it was her fault, her fault!

Chapter V. A Gentle Spirit in Revolt

Quarrels began from her suddenly beginning to pay out loans on her own account, to price things above their worth, and even, on two occasions, she deigned to enter into a dispute about it with me. I did not agree. But then the captain’s widow turned up.

This old widow brought a medallion - a present from her dead husband, a souvenir, of course. I lent her thirty roubles on it. She fell to complaining, begged me to keep the thing for her - of course we do keep things. Well, in short, she came again to exchange it for a bracelet that was not worth eight roubles; I, of course, refused. She must have guessed something from my wife’s eyes, anyway she came again when I was not there and my wife changed it for the medallion.

Discovering it the same day, I spoke mildly but firmly and reasonably. She was sitting on the bed, looking at the ground and tapping with her right foot on the carpet (her characteristic movement); there was an ugly smile on her lips. Then, without raising my voice in the least, I explained calmly that the money was mine, that I had a right to look at life with my own eyes and - and that when I had offered to take her into my house, I had hidden nothing from her.

She suddenly leapt up, suddenly began shaking all over and - what do you think - she suddenly stamped her foot at me; it was a wild animal, it was a frenzy, it was the frenzy of a wild animal. I was petrified with astonishment; I had never expected such an outburst. But I did not lose my head. I made no movement even, and again, in the same calm voice, I announced plainly that from that time forth I should deprive her of the part she took in my work. She laughed in my face, and walked out of the house.

The fact is, she had not the right to walk out of the house. Nowhere without me, such was the agreement before she was married. In the evening she returned; I did not utter a word.

The next day, too, she went out in the morning, and the day after again. I shut the shop and went off to her aunts. I had cut off all relations with them from the time of the wedding - I would not have them to see me, and I would not go to see them. But it turned out that she had not been with them. They listened to me with curiosity and laughed in my face: “It serves you right,” they said. But I expected their laughter. At that point, then I bought

over the younger aunt, the unmarried one, for a hundred roubles, giving her twenty-five in advance. Two days later she came to me: “There’s an officer called Efimovitch mixed up in this,” she said; “a lieutenant who was a comrade of yours in the regiment.”

I was greatly amazed. That Efimovitch had done me more harm than any one in the regiment, and about a month ago, being a shameless fellow, he once or twice came into the shop with a pretence of pawning something, and I remember, began laughing with my wife. I went up at the time and told him not to dare to come to me, recalling our relations; but there was no thought of anything in my head, I simply thought that he was insolent. Now the aunt suddenly informed me that she had already appointed to see him and that the whole business had been arranged by a former friend of the aunt’s, the widow of a colonel, called Yulia Samsonovna. “It’s to her,” she said, “your wife goes now.”

I will cut the story short. The business cost me three hundred roubles, but in a couple of days it had been arranged that I should stand in an adjoining room, behind closed doors, and listen to the first rendezvous between my wife and Efimovitch, tete-a-tete. Meanwhile, the evening before, a scene, brief but very memorable for me, took place between us.

She returned towards evening, sat down on the bed, looked at me sarcastically, and tapped on the carpet with her foot. Looking at her, the idea suddenly came into my mind that for the whole of the last month, or rather, the last fortnight, her character had not been her own; one might even say that it had been the opposite of her own; she had suddenly shown herself a mutinous, aggressive creature; I cannot say shameless, but regardless of decorum and eager for trouble. She went out of her way to stir up trouble. Her gentleness hindered her, though. When a girl like that rebels, however outrageously she may behave, one can always see that she is forcing herself to do it, that she is driving herself to do it, and that it is impossible for her to master and overcome her own modesty and shamefacedness. That is why such people go such lengths at times, so that one can hardly believe one’s eyes. One who is accustomed to depravity, on the contrary, always softens things, acts more disgustingly, but with a show of decorum and seemliness by which she claims to be superior to you.

“Is it true that you were turned out of the regiment because you were afraid to fight a duel?” she asked suddenly, apropos of nothing - and her eyes flashed.

“It is true that by the sentence of the officers I was asked to give up my commission, though, as a fact, I had sent in my papers before that.”

“You were turned out as a coward?”

“Yes, they sentenced me as a coward. But I refused to fight a duel, not from cowardice, but because I would not submit to their tyrannical decision and send a challenge when I did not consider myself insulted. You know,” I could not refrain from adding, “that to resist such tyranny and to accept the consequences meant showing far more manliness than fighting any kind of duel.”

I could not resist it. I dropped the phrase, as it were, in self-defence, and that was all she wanted, this fresh humiliation for me.

She laughed maliciously.

“And is it true that for three years afterwards you wandered about the streets of Petersburg like a tramp, begging for coppers and spending your nights in billiard-rooms?”

“I even spent the night in Vyazemsky’s House in the Haymarket. Yes, it is true; there was much disgrace and degradation in my life after I left the regiment, but not moral degradation, because even at the time I hated what I did more than any one. It was only the degradation of my will and my mind, and it was only caused by the desperateness of my position. But that is over. . . .”

“Oh, now you are a personage - a financier!”

A hint at the pawnbroker’s shop. But by then I had succeeded in recovering my mastery of myself. I saw that she was thirsting for explanations that be humiliating to me and - I did not give them. A customer rang the bell very opportunely, and I went out into the shop. An hour later, when she was dressed to go out, she stood still, facing me, and said -

“You didn’t tell me anything about that, though, before our marriage?”

I made no answer and she went away.

And so next day I was standing in that room, the other side of the door, listening to hear how my fate was being decided, and in my pocket I had a revolver. She was dressed better than usual and sitting at a the table, and Efimovitch was showing off before her. And after all, it turned out exactly (I say it to my credit) as I had foreseen and had assumed it would, though I was not conscious of having foreseen and assumed it. I do not know whether I express myself intelligibly.

This is what happened.

I listened for a whole hour. For a whole hour I was present at a duel between a noble, lofty woman and a worldly, corrupt, dense man with a crawling soul. And how, I wondered in amazement, how could that naive, gentle, silent girl have come to know all that? The wittiest author of a society comedy could not have created such a scene of mockery, of naive laughter, and of the holy contempt of virtue for vice. And how brilliant her sayings, her little phrases were: what wit there was in her rapid answers, what truths in her condemnation. And, at the same time, what almost girlish simplicity. She laughed in his face at his declarations of love, at his gestures, at his proposals. Coming coarsely to the point at once, and not expecting to meet with opposition, he was utterly nonplussed. At first I might have imagined that it was simply coquetry on her part - “the coquetry of a witty, though depraved creature to enhance her own value.” But no, the truth shone out like the sun, and to doubt was impossible. It was only an exaggerated and impulsive hatred for me that had led her, in her inexperience, to arrange this interview, but, when it came off - her eyes were opened at once. She was simply in desperate haste to mortify me, come what might, but though she had brought herself to do something so low she could not endure unseemliness. And could she, so pure and sinless, with an ideal in her heart, have been seduced by Efimovitch or any worthless snob? On the contrary, she was only moved to laughter by him. All her goodness rose up from her soul and her indignation roused her to sarcasm. I repeat, the buffoon was completely nonplussed at last and sat frowning, scarcely answering, so much so that I began to be afraid that he might insult her, from a mean desire for revenge. And I repeat again: to my credit, I listened to that scene almost without surprise. I met, as it were, nothing but what I knew well. I had gone, as it were, on purpose to meet it, believing not a word of it, not a word said against her, though I did take the revolver in my pocket - that is the truth. And could I have imagined her different? For what did I love her, for what did I prize her, for what had I married her? Oh, of course, I was quite convinced of her hate for me, but at the same time I was quite convinced of her sinlessness. I suddenly cut short the scene by opening the door. Efimovitch leapt up. I took her by the hand and suggested she should go home with me. Efimovitch recovered himself and suddenly burst into loud peals of laughter.

“Oh, to sacred conjugal rights I offer no opposition; take her away, take her away! And you know,” he shouted after me, “though no decent man could fight you, yet from respect to your lady I am at your service . . . If you are ready to risk yourself.”

“Do you hear?” I said, stopping her for a second in the doorway.

After which not a word was said all the way home. I led her by the arm and she did not resist. On the contrary, she was greatly impressed, and this lasted after she got home. On reaching home she sat down in a chair and fixed her eyes upon me. She was extremely pale; though her lips were compressed ironically yet she looked at me with solemn nd austere defiance and seemed convinced in earnest, for the minute, that I should kill her with the revolver. But I took the revolver from my pocket without a word and laid it on the table! She looked at me and at the revolver (note that the revolver was already an object familiar to her. I had kept one loaded ever since I opened the shop. I made up my mind when I set up the shop that I would not keep a huge dog or a strong manservant, as Mozer does, for instance. My cook opens the doors to my visitors. But in our trade it is impossible to be without means of self-defence in case of emergency, and I kept a loaded revolver. In early days, when first she was living in my house, she took great interest in that revolver, and asked questions about it, and I even explained its construction and working; I even persuaded her once to fire at a target. Note all that). Taking no notice of her frightened eyes, I lay down on the bed, half-undressed. I felt very much exhausted; it was by then about eleven o’clock. She went on sitting in the same place, not stirring, for another hour. Then she put out the candle and she, too, without undressing, lay down on the sofa near the wall. For the first time she did not sleep with me - note that too. . . .

Chapter VI. A Terrible Reminiscence

Now for a terrible reminiscence. . . .

I woke up, I believe, before eight o’clock, and it was very nearly broad daylight. I woke up completely to full consciousness and opened my eyes. She was standing at the table holding the revolver in her hand. She did not see that I had woken up and was looking at her. And suddenly I saw that she had begun moving towards me with the revolver in her hand. I quickly closed my eyes and pretended to be still asleep.

She came up to the bed and stood over me. I heard everything; though a dead silence had fallen I heard that silence. All at once there was a convulsive movement and, irresistibly, against my will, I suddenly opened my eyes. She was looking straight at me, straight into my eyes, and the revolver was at my temple. Our eyes met. But we looked at each other for no more than a moment. With an effort I shut my eyes again, and at the same instant I resolved that I would not stir and would not open my eyes, whatever might be awaiting me.

It does sometimes happen that people who are sound asleep suddenly open their eyes, even raise their heads for a second and look about the room, then, a moment later, they lay their heads again on the pillow unconscious, and fall asleep without understanding anything. When meeting her eyes and feeling the revolver on my forehead, I closed my eyes and remained motionless, as though in a deep sleep - she certainly might have supposed that I really was asleep, and that I had seen nothing, especially as it was utterly improbable that, after seeing what I had seen, I should shut my eyes again at such a moment.

Yes, it was improbable. But she might guess the truth all the same - that thought flashed upon my mind at once, all at the same instant. Oh, what a whirl of thoughts and sensations rushed into my mind in less than a minute. Hurrah for the electric speed of thought! In that case (so I felt), if she guessed the truth and knew that I was awake, I should crush her by my readiness to accept death, and her hand might tremble. Her determination might be shaken by a new, overwhelming impression. They say that people standing on a height have an impulse to throw themselves down. I imagine that many suicides and murders have been committed simply because the revolver has been in the hand. It is like a precipice, with an incline of an

angle of forty-five degrees, down which you cannot help sliding, and something impels you irresistibly to pull the trigger. But the knowledge that I had seen, that I knew it all, and was waiting for death at her hands without a word - might hold her back on the incline.

The stillness was prolonged, and all at once I felt on my temple, on my hair, the cold contact of iron. You will ask: did I confidently expect to escape? I will answer you as God is my judge: I had no hope of it, except one chance in a hundred. Why did I accept death? But I will ask, what use was life to me after that revolver had been raised against me by the being I adored? Besides, I knew with the whole strength of my being that there was a struggle going on between us, a fearful duel for life and death, the duel fought be the coward of yesterday, rejected by his comrades for cowardice. I knew that and she knew it, if only she guessed the truth that I was not asleep.

Perhaps that was not so, perhaps I did not think that then, but yet it must have been so, even without conscious thought, because I've done nothing but think of it every hour of my life since.

But you will ask me again: why did you not save her from such wickedness? Oh! I've asked myself that question a thousand times since - every time that, with a shiver down my back, I recall that second. But at that moment my soul was plunged in dark despair! I was lost, I myself was lost - how could I save any one? And how do you know whether I wanted to save any one then? How can one tell what I could be feeling then?

My mind was in a ferment, though; the seconds passed; she still stood over me - and suddenly I shuddered with hope! I quickly opened my eyes. She was no longer in the room: I got out of bed: I had conquered - and she was conquered for ever!

I went to the samovar. We always had the samovar brought into the outer room and she always poured out the tea. I sat down at the table without a word and took a glass of tea from her. Five minutes later I looked at her. She was fearfully pale, even paler than the day before, and she looked at me. And suddenly . . . and suddenly, seeing that I was looking at her, she gave a pale smile with her pale lips, with a timid question in her eyes. "So she still doubts and is asking herself: does he know or doesn't he know; did he see or didn't he?" I turned my eyes away indifferently. After tea I close the shop, went to the market and bought an iron bedstead and a screen. Returning home, I directed that the bed should be put in the front room and

shut off with a screen. It was a bed for her, but I did not say a word to her. She understood without words, through that bedstead, that I “had seen and knew all,” and that all doubt was over. At night I left the revolver on the table, as I always did. At night she got into her new bed without a word: our marriage bond was broken, “she was conquered but not forgiven.” At night she began to be delirious, and in the morning she had brain-fever. She was in bed for six weeks.

Part II

Chapter I. The Dream of Pride

Lukerya has just announced that she can’t go on living here and that she is going away as soon as her lady is buried. I knelt down and prayed for five minutes. I wanted to pray for an hour, but I keep thinking and thinking, and always sick thoughts, and my head aches - what is the use of praying? - it’s only a sin! It is strange, too, that I am not sleepy: in great, too great sorrow, after the first outbursts one is always sleepy. Men condemned to death, they say, sleep very soundly on the last night. And so it must be, it si the law of nature, otherwise their strength would not hold out . . . I lay down on the sofa but I did not sleep. . . .

. . . For the six weeks of her illness we were looking after her day and night - Lukerya and I together with a trained nurse whom I had engaged from the hospital. I spared no expense - in fact, I was eager to spend my money for her. I called in Dr. Shreder and paid him ten roubles a visit. When she began to get better I did not show myself so much. But why am I describing it? When she got up again, she sat quietly and silently in my room at a special table, which I had bought for her, too, about that time. . . . Yes, that’s the truth, we were absolutely silent; that is, we began talking afterwards, but only of the daily routine. I purposely avoided expressing myself, but I noticed that she, too, was glad not to have to say a word more than was necessary. It seemed to me that this was perfectly normal on her part: “She is too much shattered, too completely conquered,” I thought, “and I must let her forget and grow used to it.” In this way we were silent, but every minute I was preparing myself for the future. I thought that she was too, and it was fearfully interesting to me to guess what she was thinking about to herself then. I will say more: oh! of course, no one knows what I went through, moaning over her in her illness. But I stifled my moans in my own heart, even from Lukerya. I could not imagine, could not even conceive of her dying without knowing the whole truth. When she was out of danger and began to regain her health, I very quickly and completely, I remember, recovered my tranquillity. What is more, I made up my mind to defer out future as long as possible, and meanwhile to leave things just as they were. Yes, something strange and peculiar happened to me then, I cannot call it anything else: I had triumphed, and the mere consciousness of

that was enough for me. So the whole winter passes. Oh! I was satisfied as I had never been before, and it lasted the whole winter.

You see, there had been a terrible external circumstance in my life which, up till then - that is, up to the catastrophe with my wife - had weighed upon me every day and every hour. I mean the loss of my reputation and my leaving the regiment. In two words, I was treated with tyrannical injustice. It is true my comrades did not love me because of my difficult character, and perhaps because of my absurd character, though it often happens that what is exalted, precious and of value to one, for some reason amuses the herd of one's companions. Oh, I was never liked, not even at school! I was always and everywhere disliked. Even Lukerya cannot like me. What happened in the regiment, though it was the result of their dislike to me, was in a sense accidental. I mention this because nothing is more mortifying and insufferable than to be ruined by an accident, which might have happened or not have happened, from an unfortunate accumulation of circumstances which might have passed over like a cloud. For an intelligent being it is humiliating. This is what happened.

In an interval, at a theatre, I went out to the refreshment bar. A hussar called A —— — came in and began, before all the officers present and the public, loudly talking to two other hussars, telling them that Captain Bezumtsev, of our regiment, was making a disgraceful scene in the passage and was, "he believed, drunk." The conversation did not go further and, indeed, it was a mistake, for Captain Bezumtsev was not drunk and the "disgraceful scene" was not really disgraceful. The hussars began talking of something else, and the matter ended there, but the next day the story reached our regiment, and then they began saying at once that I was the only officer of our regiment in the refreshment bar at the time, and that when A —— the hussar, had spoken insolently of Captain Bezumtsev, I had not gone up to A —— and stopped him by remonstrating. But on what grounds could I have done so? If he had a grudge against Bezumtsev, it was their personal affair and why should I interfere? Meanwhile, the officers began to declare that it was not a personal affair, but that it concerned the regiment, and as I was the only officer of the regiment present I had thereby shown all the officers and other people in the refreshment bar that there could be officers in our regiment who were not over-sensitive on the score of their own honour and the honour of their regiment. I could not agree with this view. they let me know that I could set everything right if I were

willing, even now, late as it was, to demand a formal explanation from A —— . I was not willing to do this, and as I was irritated I refused with pride. And thereupon I forthwith resigned my commission - that is the whole story. I left the regiment, proud but crushed in spirit. I was depressed in will and mind. Just then it was that my sister’s husband in Moscow squandered all our little property and my portion of it, which was tiny enough, but the loss of it left me homeless, without a farthing. I might have taken a job in a private business, but I did not. After wearing a distinguished uniform I could not take work in a railway office. And so - if it must be shame, let it be shame; if it must be disgrace, let it be disgrace; if it must be degradation, let it be degradation - (the worse it is, the better) that was my choice. Then followed three years of gloomy memories, and even Vyazemsky’s House. A year and a half ago my godmother, a wealthy old lady, died in Moscow, and to my surprise left me three thousand in her will. I thought a little and immediately decided on my course of action. I determined on setting up as a pawnbroker, without apologizing to any one: money, then a home, as far as possible from memories of the past, that was my plan. Nevertheless, the gloomy past and my ruined reputation fretted me every day, every hour. But then I married. Whether it was by chance or not I don’t know. but when I brought her into my home I thought I was bringing a friend, and I needed a friend so much. But I saw clearly that the friend must be trained, schooled, even conquered. Could I have explained myself straight off to a girl of sixteen with her prejudices? How, for instance, could I, without the chance help of the horrible incident with the revolver, have made her believe I was not a coward, and that I had been unjustly accused of cowardice in the regiment? But that terrible incident came just in the nick of time. Standing the test of the revolver, I scored off all my gloomy past. And though no one knew about it, she knew, and for me that was everything, because she was everything for me, all the hope of the future that I cherished in my dreams! She was the one person I had prepared for myself, and I needed no one else - and here she knew everything; she knew, at any rate, that she had been in haste to join my enemies against me unjustly. That thought enchanted me. In her eyes I could not be a scoundrel now, but at most a strange person, and that thought after all that had happened was by no means displeasing to me; strangeness is not a vice - on the contrary, it sometimes attracts the feminine heart. In fact, I purposely deferred the climax: what had happened was meanwhile, enough for my

peace of mind and provided a great number of pictures and materials for my dreams. That is what is wrong, that I am a dreamer: I had enough material for my dreams, and about her, I thought she could wait.

So the whole winter passed in a sort of expectation. I liked looking at her on the sly, when she was sitting at her little table. She was busy at her needlework, and sometimes in the evening she read books taken from my bookcase. The choice of books in the bookcase must have had an influence in my favour too. She hardly ever went out. Just before dusk, after dinner, I used to take her out every day for a walk. We took a constitutional, but we were not absolutely silent, as we used to be. I tried, in fact, to make a show of our not being silent, but talking harmoniously, but as I have said already, we both avoided letting ourselves go. I did it purposely, I thought it was essential to "give her time." Of course, it was strange that almost till the end of the winter it did not once strike me that, though I love to watch her stealthily, I had never once, all the winter, caught her glancing at me! I thought it was timidity in her. Besides, she had an air of such timid gentleness, such weakness after her illness. Yes, better to wait and - "she will come to you all at once of herself. . . ."

That thought fascinated me beyond all words. I will add one thing; sometimes, as it were purposely, I worked myself up and brought my mind and spirit to the point of believing she had injured me. And so it went on for some time. But my anger could never be very real or violent. And I felt myself as though it were only acting. And though I had broken off out marriage by buying that bedstead and screen, I could never, never look upon her as a criminal. And not that I took a frivolous view of her crime, but because I had the sense to forgive her completely, from the very first day, even before I bought the bedstead. In fact, it is strange on my part, for I am strict in moral questions. On the contrary, in my eyes, she was so conquered, so humiliated, so crushed, that sometimes I felt agonies of pity for her, though sometimes the thought of her humiliation was actually pleasing to me. The thought of our inequality pleased me. . . .

I intentionally performed several acts of kindness that winter. I excused two debts, I have one poor woman money without any pledge. And I said nothing to my wife about it, and I didn't do it in order that she should know; but the woman came to thank me, almost on her knees. And in that way it became public property; it seemed to me that she heard about the woman with pleasure.

But spring was coming, it was mid-April, we took out the double windows and the sun began lighting up our silent room with its bright beams. but there was, as it were, a veil before my eyes and a blindness over my mind. A fatal, terrible veil! How did it happen that the scales suddenly fell from my eyes, and I suddenly saw and understood? Was it a chance, or had the hour come, or did the ray of sunshine kindle a thought, a conjecture, in my dull mind? No, it was not a thought, not a conjecture. But a chord suddenly vibrated, a feeling that had long been dead was stirred and came to life, flooding all my darkened soul and devilish pride with light. It was as though I had suddenly leaped up from my place. And, indeed, it happened suddenly and abruptly. It happened towards evening, at five o’clock, after dinner. . . .

Chapter II. The Veil Suddenly Falls

Two words first. A month ago I noticed a strange melancholy in her, not simply silence, but melancholy. That, too, I noticed suddenly. She was sitting at her work, her head bent over her sewing, and she did not see that I was looking at her. And it suddenly struck me that she had grown so delicate-looking, so thin, that her face was pale, her lips were white. All this, together with her melancholy, struck me all at once. I had already heard a little dry cough, especially at night. I got up at once and went off to ask Shreder to come, saying nothing to her.

Shreder came next day. She was very much surprised and looked first at Shreder and then at me.

“But I am well,” she said, with an uncertain smile.

Shreder did not examine her very carefully (these doctors are sometimes superciliously careless), he only said to me in the other room, that it was just the result of her illness, and that it wouldn’t be amiss to go for a trip to the sea in the spring, or, if that were impossible to take a cottage out of town for the summer. In fact, he said nothing except that there was weakness, or something of that sort. When Shreder had gone, she said again, looking at me very earnestly -

“I am quite well, quite well.”

But as she said this she suddenly flushed, apparently from shame. Apparently it was shame. Oh! now I understand: she was ashamed that I was still her husband, that I was looking after her still as though I were a real husband. But at the time I did not understand and put down her blush to humility (the veil!).

And so, a month later, in April, at five o’clock on a bright sunny day, I was sitting in the shop making up my accounts. Suddenly I heard her, sitting in our room, at work at her table, begin softly, softly . . . singing. This novelty made an overwhelming impression upon me, and to this day I don’t understand it. Till then I had hardly ever heard her sing, unless, perhaps, in those first days, when we were still able to be playful and practise shooting at a target. Then her voice was rather strong, resonant; though not quit true it was very sweet and healthy. now her little song was so faint - it was not that it was melancholy (it was some sort of ballad), but in her voice there was something jangled, broken, as though her voice were not equal to it, as

though the song itself were sick. She sang in an undertone, and suddenly, as her voice rose, it broke - such a poor little voice, it broke so pitifully; she cleared her throat and again began softly, softly singing. . . .

My emotions will be ridiculed, but no one will understand why I was so moved! No, I was still not sorry for her, it was still something quite different. At the beginning, for the first minute, at any rate, I was filled with sudden perplexity and terrible amazement - a terrible and strange, painful and almost vindictive amazement: “She is singing, and before me; has she forgotten about me?”

Completely overwhelmed, I remained where I was, then I suddenly got up, took my hat and went out, as it were, without thinking. At least I don’t know why or where I was going. Lukerya began giving me my overcoat.

“She is singing?” I said to Lukerya involuntarily. She did not understand, and looked at me still without understanding; and, indeed, I was really unintelligible.

“Is it the first time she is singing?”

“No, she sometimes does sing when you are out,” answered Lukerya.

I remember everything. I went downstairs, went out into the street and walked along at random. I walked to the corner and began looking into the distance. People were passing by, the pushed against me. I did not feel it. I called a cab and told the man, I don’t know why, to drive to Politseysky Bridge. Then suddenly changed my mind and gave him twenty kopecks.

“That’s for my having troubled you,” I said, with a meaningless laugh, but a sort of ecstasy was suddenly shining within me.

I returned home, quickening my steps. The poor little jangled, broken note was ringing in my heart again. My breath failed me. The veil was falling, was falling from my eyes! Since she sang before me, she had forgotten me - that is what was clear and terrible. My heart felt it. But rapture was glowing in my soul and it overcame my terror.

Oh! the irony of fate! Why, there had been nothing else, and could have been nothing else but that rapture in my soul all the winter, but where had I been myself all the winter? Had I been there together with my soul? I ran up the stairs in great haste, I don’t know whether I went in timidly. I only remember that the whole floor seemed to be rocking and I felt as though I were floating on a river. I went into the room. She was sitting in the same place as before, with her head cursorily and without interest at me; it was

hardly a look but just a habitual and indifferent movement upon somebody's coming into the room.

I went straight up and sat down beside her in a chair abruptly, as though I were mad. She looked at me quickly, seeming frightened; I took her hand and I don't remember what I said to her - that is, tried to say, for I could not even speak properly. My voice broke and would not obey me and I did not know what to say. I could only gasp for breath.

"Let us talk . . . you know . . . tell me something!" I muttered something stupid. Oh! how could I help being stupid? She started again and drew back in great alarm, looking at my face, but suddenly there was an expression of stern surprise in her eyes. Yes, surprise and stern. She looked at me with wide-open eyes. That sternness, that stern surprise shattered me at once: "So you still expect love? Love?" that surprise seemed to be asking, though she said nothing. But I read it all, I read it all. Everything within me seemed quivering, and I simply fell down at her feet. Yes, I grovelled at her feet. She jumped up quickly, but I held her forcibly by both hands.

And I fully understood my despair - I understood it! But, would you believe it? ecstasy was surging up in my head so violently that I thought I should die. I kissed her feet in delirium and rapture. Yes, in immense, infinite rapture, and that, in spite of understanding all the hopelessness of my despair. I wept, said something, but could not speak. Her alarm and amazement were followed by some uneasy misgiving, some grave question, and she looked at me strangely, wildly even; she wanted to understand something quickly and she smiled. She was horribly ashamed at my kissing her feet and she drew them back. But I kissed the place on the floor where her foot had rested. She saw it and suddenly began laughing with shame (you know how it is when people laugh with shame). She became hysterical, I saw that her hands trembled - I did not think about that but went on muttering that I loved her, that I would not get up. "Let me kiss your dress . . . and worship you like this all my life." . . . I don't know, I don't remember - but suddenly she broke into sobs and trembled all over. A terrible fit of hysterics followed. I had frightened her.

I carried her to the bed. When the attack had passed off, sitting on the edge of the bed, with a terribly exhausted look, she took my two hands and begged me to calm myself: "Come, come, don't distress yourself, be calm!" and she began crying again. All that evening I did not leave her side. I kept telling her I should take her to Boulogne to bathe in the sea now, at once, in

a fortnight, that she had such a broken voice, I had heard it that afternoon, that I would shut up the shop, that I would sell it Dobronravov, that everything should begin afresh and, above all, Boulogne, Boulogne! She listened and was still afraid. She grew more and more afraid. But that was not what mattered most for me: what mattered most to me was the more and more irresistible longing to fall at her feet again, and again to kiss and kiss the spot where her foot had rested, and to worship her; and - “I ask nothing, nothing more of you,” I kept repeating, “do not answer me, take no notice of me, only let me watch you from my corner, treat me as your dog, your thing. . . .” She was crying.

“I thought you would let me go on like that,” suddenly broke from her unconsciously, so unconsciously that, perhaps, she did not notice what she had said, and yet - oh, that was the most significant, momentous phrase she uttered that evening, the easiest for me to understand, and it stabbed my heart as though with a knife! It explained everything to me, everything, but while she was beside me, before my eyes, I could not help hoping and was fearfully happy. Oh, I exhausted her fearfully that evening. I understood that, but I kept thinking that I should alter everything directly. At last, towards night, she utterly exhausted. I persuaded her to go to sleep and she fell sound asleep at once. I expected her to be delirious, she was a little delirious, but very slightly. I kept getting up every minute in the night and going softly in my slippers to look at her. I wrung my hands over her, looking at that frail creature in that wretched little iron bedstead which I had bought for three roubles. I knelt down, but did not dare to kiss her feet in her sleep (without her consent). I began praying but leapt up again. Lukerya kept watch over me and came in and out from the kitchen. I went in to her, and told her to go to bed, and that to-morrow “things would be quite different.”

And I believed in this, blindly, madly.

Oh, I was brimming over with rapture, rapture! I was eager for the next day. Above all, I did not believe that anything could go wrong, in spite of the symptoms. Reason had not altogether come back to me, though the veil had fallen from my eyes, and for a long, long time it did not come back - not till today, not till this very day! Yes, and how could it have come back then: why, she was still alive then; why, she was here before my eyes, and I was before her eyes: “Tomorrow she will wake up and I will tell her all this, and she will see it all.” That was how I reasoned then, simply and clearly,

because I was in an ecstasy! My great idea was the trip to Boulogne. I kept thinking for some reason that Boulogne would be everything, that there was something final and decisive about Boulogne. “To Boulogne, to Boulogne!” . . . I waited frantically for the morning.

Chapter III. I Understand Too Well

But you know that was only a few days ago, five days, only five days ago, last Tuesday! Yes, yes, if there had only been a little longer, if she had only waited a little - and I would have dissipated the darkness! - It was not as though she had not recovered her calmness. The very next day she listened to me with a smile, in spite of her confusion. . . . All this time, all these five days, she was either confused or ashamed. She was afraid, too, very much afraid. I don't dispute it, I am not so mad as to deny it. It was terror, but how could she help being frightened? We had so long been strangers to one another, had grown so alienated from one another, and suddenly all this. . . . But I did not look at her terror. I was dazzled by the new life beginning! . . . It is true, it is undoubtedly true that I made a mistake. There were even, perhaps, many mistakes. When I woke up next day, the first thing in the morning (that was on Wednesday), I made a mistake: I suddenly made her my friend. I was in too great a hurry, but a confession was necessary, inevitable - more than a confession! I did not even hide what I had hidden from myself all my life. I told her straight out that the whole winter I had been doing nothing but brood over the certainty of her love. I made clear to her that my money-lending had been simply the degradation of my will and my mind, my personal idea of self-castigation and self-exaltation. I explained to her that I really had been cowardly that time in the refreshment bar, that it was owing to my temperament, to my self-consciousness. I was impressed by the surroundings, by the theatre: I was doubtful how I should succeed and whether it would be stupid. I was not afraid of a duel, but of its being stupid . . . and afterwards I would not own it and tormented every one and had tormented her for it, and had married her so as to torment her for it. In fact, for the most part I talked as though in delirium. She herself took my hands and made me leave off. "You are exaggerating . . . you are distressing yourself," ad again there were tears, again almost hysterics! She kept begging me not to say all this, not to recall it.

I took no notice of her entreaties, or hardly noticed them: "Spring, Boulogne! There there would be sunshine, there our new sunshine," I kept saying that! I shut up the shop and transferred it to Dobronravov. I suddenly suggested to her giving all our money to the poor except the three thousand left me by my godmother, which we would spend on going to Boulogne,

and then we would come back and begin a new life of real work. So we decided, for she said nothing. . . . She only smiled. And I believe she smiled chiefly from delicacy, for fear of disappointing me. I saw, of course, that I was burdensome to her, don't imagine I was so stupid or egoistic as not to see it. I saw it all, all, to the smallest detail, I saw better than any one; all the hopelessness of my position stood revealed.

I told her everything about myself and about her. And about Lukerya. I told her that I had wept. . . . Oh, of course, I changed the conversation. I tried, too, not to say a word more about certain things. And, indeed, she did revive once or twice - I remember it, I remember it! Why do you say I looked at her and saw nothing? And if only this had not happened, everything would have come to life again. Why, only the day before yesterday, when we were talking of reading and what she had been reading that winter, she told me something herself, and laughed as she told me, recalling the scene of Gil Blas and the Archbishop of Granada. And with that sweet, childish laughter, just as in old days when we were eager (one instant! one instant!); how glad I was! I was awfully struck, though, by the story of the Archbishop; so she had found peace of mind and happiness enough to laugh at that literary masterpiece while she was sitting there in the winter. So then she had begun to be fully at rest, had begun to believe confidently "that I should leave her like that. I thought you would leave me like that," those were the word she uttered then on Tuesday! Oh! the thought of a child of ten! And you know she believed it, she believed that really everything would remain like that: she at her table and I at mine, and we both should go on like that till we were sixty. And all at once - I come forward, her husband, and the husband wants love! Oh, the delusion! Oh, my blindness!

It was a mistake, too, that I looked at her with rapture; I ought to have controlled myself, as it was my rapture frightened her. But, indeed, I did control myself, I did not kiss her feet again. I never made a sign of . . . well, that I was her husband - oh, there was no thought of that in my mind, I only worshipped her! But, you know, I couldn't be quite silent, I could not refrain from speaking altogether! I suddenly said to her frankly, that I enjoyed her conversation and that I thought her incomparably more cultured and developed than I. She flushed crimson and said in confusion that I exaggerated. Then, like a fool, I could not resist telling her how delighted I had been when I had stood behind the door listening to her duel, the duel of

innocence with that low cad, and how I had enjoyed her cleverness, the brilliance of her wit, and, at the same time, her childlike simplicity. She seemed to shudder all over, was murmuring again that I exaggerated, but suddenly her whole face darkened, she hit it in her hands and broke into sobs. . . . Then I could not restrain myself: again I fell at her feet, again I began kissing her feet, and again it ended in a fit of hysterics, just as on Tuesday. That was yesterday evening - and - in the morning. . . .

In the morning! Madman! why, that morning was today, just now, only just now!

Listen and try to understand: why, when we met by the samovar (it was after yesterday's hysterics), I was actually struck by her calmness, that is the actual fact! And all night I had been trembling with terror over what happened yesterday. But suddenly she came up to me and, clasping her hands (this morning, this morning!) began telling me that she was a criminal, that she knew it, that her crime had been torturing her all the winter, was torturing her now. . . . That she appreciated my generosity. . . . "I will be your faithful wife, I will respect you . . ."

Then I leapt up and embraced her like a madman. I kissed her, kissed her face, kissed her lips like a husband for the first time after a long separation. And why did I go out this morning, only two hours . . . our passports for abroad. . . . Oh, God! if only I had come back five minutes, only five minutes earlier! . . . That crowd at our gates, those eyes all fixed upon me. Oh, God!

Lukerya says (oh! I will not let Lukerya go now for anything. She knows all about it, she has been here all the winter, she will tell me everything!), she says that when I had gone out of the house and only about twenty minutes before I came back - she suddenly went into our room to her mistress to ask her something, I don't remember what, and saw that her ikon (that same ikon of the Mother of God) had been taken down and was standing before her on the table, and her mistress seemed to have only just been praying before it. "What are you doing, mistress?" "Nothing, Lukerya, run along." "Wait a minute, Lukerya." "She came up and kissed me." "Are you happy, mistress?" I said. "Yes, Lukerya," and she smiled, but so strangely. So strangely that Lukerya went back ten minutes later to have a look at her.

"She was standing by the wall, close to the window, she had laid her arm against the wall, and her head was pressed on her arm, she was standing like

that thinking. And she was standing so deep in thought that she did not hear me come and look at her from the other room. She seemed to be smiling - standing, thinking and smiling. I looked at her, turned softly and went out wondering to myself, and suddenly I heard the window opened. I went in at once to say: ‘It’s fresh, mistress; mind you don’t catch cold,’ and suddenly I saw she had got on the window and was standing there, her full height, in the open window, with her back to me, holding the ikon in her hand. My heart sank on the spot. I cried, ‘Mistress, mistress.’ She heard, made a movement to turn back to me, but, instead of turning back, took a step forward, pressed the ikon to her bosom, and flung herself out of window.”

I only remember that when I went in at the gate she was still warm. The worst of it was they were all looking at me. At first they shouted and then suddenly they were silent, and then all of them moved away from me . . . and she was lying there with the ikon. I remember, as it were, in a darkness, that I went up to her in silence and looked at her a long while. But all came round me and said something to me. Lukerya was there too, but I did not see her. She says she said something to me. I only remember that workman. He kept shouting to me that, “Only a handful of blood came from her mouth, a handful, a handful!” and he pointed to the blood on a stone. I believe I touched the blood with my finger, I smeared my finger, I looked at my finger (that I remember), and he kept repeating: “a handful, a handful!”

“What do you mean by a handful?” I yelled with all my might, I am told, and I lifted up my hands and rushed at him.

Oh, wild! wild! Delusion! Monstrous! Impossible!

Chapter IV. I Was Only Five Minutes Too Late

Is it not so? Is it likely? Can one really say it was possible? What for, why did this woman die?

Oh, believe me, I understand, but why she dies is still a question. She was frightened of my love, asked herself seriously whether to accept it or not, could not bear the question and preferred to die. I know, I know, no need to rack my brains: she had made too many promises, she was afraid she could not keep them - it is clear. There are circumstances about it quite awful.

For why did she die? That is still a question, after all. The question hammers, hammers at my brain. I would have left her like that if she had wanted to remain like that. She did not believe it, that's what it was! No - no. I am talking nonsense, it was not that at all. It was simply because with me she had to be honest - if she loved me, she would have had to love me altogether, and not as she would have loved the grocer. And as she was too chaste, too pure, to consent to such love as the grocer wanted she did not want to deceive me. Did not want to deceive me with half love, counterfeiting love, or a quarter love. They are honest, too honest, that is what it is! I wanted to instil breadth of heart in her, in those days, do you remember? A strange idea.

It is awfully interesting to know: did she respect me or not? I don't know whether she despised me or not. I don't believe she did despise me. It is awfully strange: why did it never once enter my head all the winter that she despised me? I was absolutely convinced of the contrary up to that moment when she looked at me with stern surprise. Stern it was. I understood once for all, for ever! Ah, let her, let her despise me all her life even, only let her be living! Only yesterday she was walking about, talking. I simply can't understand how she threw herself out of window! And how could I have imagined it five minutes before? I have called Lukerya. I won't let Lukerya go now for anything!

Oh, we might still have understood each other! We had simply become terribly estranged from one another during the winter, but couldn't we have grown used to each other again? Why, why, couldn't we have come together again and begun a new life again? I am generous, she was too - that was a

point in common! Only a few more words, another two days - no more, and she would have understood everything.

What is most mortifying of all is that it is chance - simply a barbarous, lagging chance. that is what is mortifying! Five minutes, only five minutes too late! Had I come five minutes earlier, the moment would have passed away like a cloud, and it would never have entered her head again. And it would have ended by her understanding it all. But now again empty rooms, and me alone. Here the pendulum is ticking; it does not care, it has no pity. . . . There is no one - that's the misery of it!

I keep walking about, I keep walking about. I know, I know, you need not tell me; it amuses you, you think it absurd that I complain of chance and those five minutes. But it is evident. Consider one thing: she did not even leave a note, to say, "Blame no one for my death," as people always do. Might she not have thought that Lukerya might get into trouble. "She was alone with her," might have been said, "and pushed her out." In any case she would have been taken up by the police if it had not happened that four people, from the windows, from the lodge, and from the yard, had seen her stand with the ikon in her hands and jump out of herself. But that, too, was a chance, that te people were standing there and saw her. No, it was all a moment, only an irresponsible moment. A sudden impulse, a fantasy! What if she did pray before the ikon? It does not follow that she was facing death. The whole impulse lasted, perhaps, only some ten minutes; it was all decided, perhaps, while she stood against the wall with her head on her arm, smiling. The idea darted into her brain, she turned giddy and - and could not resist it.

Say what you will, it was clearly misunderstanding. It could have been possible to live with me. And what if it were anaemia? Was it simply from poorness of blood, from the flagging of vital energy? She had grown tired during the winter, that was what it was. . . .

I was too late ! ! !

How thin she is in her coffin, how sharp her nose has grown! Her eyelashes lie straight as arrows. And, you know, when she fell, nothing was crushed, nothing was broken! Nothing but that "handful of blood." A dessertspoonful, that is. From internal injury. A strange thought: if only it were possible not to bury her? For if they take her away, then . . . oh, no, it is almost incredible that they take her away! I am not mad and I am not raving - on the contrary, my mind was never so lucid - but what shall I do

when again there is no one, only the two rooms, and me alone with the pledges? Madness, madness, madness! I worried her to death, that is what it is!

What are your laws to me now? What do I car for your customs, your morals, your life, your state, your faith! Let your judge judge me, let me be brought before your court, let me be tried by jury, and I shall say that I admit nothing. the judge will shout, “Be silent, officer.” And I will shout to him, “What power have you now that I will obey? Why did blind, inert force destroy that which was dearest of all? What are your laws to me now? They are nothing to me.” Oh, I don’t care!

She was blind, blind! She is dead, she does not hear! You do not know with what paradise I would have surrounded you. There was paradise in my soul, I would have made it blossom around you! Well, you wouldn’t have loved me - so be it, what of it? Things should still have been like that, everything should have remained like that. You should only have talked to me as a friend - we could have rejoiced and laughed with joy looking at one another. And so we should have lived. And if you had loved another - well, so be it, so be it! You should have walked with him laughing, and I should have watched you from the other side of the street. . . . Oh, anything, anything, if only she would open her eyes just once! For one instant, only one! If she would look at me as she did this morning, when she stood before me and made a vow to be a faithful wife! Oh, in one look she would have understood it all!

Oh, blind force! Oh, nature! Men are alone on earth - that is what is dreadful! “Is there a living man in the country?” cried the Russian hero. I cry the same, though I am not a hero, and no one answers my cry. They say the sun gives life to the universe. The sun is rising and - look at it, is it not dead? Everything is dead and everywhere there are dead. Men are alone - around them is silence - that is the earth! “Men, love one another” - who said that? Whose commandment is that? The pendulum ticks callously, heartlessly. Two o’clock at night. Her little shoes are standing by the little bed, as though waiting for her. . . . No, seriously, when they take her away tomorrow, what will become of me?

THE END

THE DREAM OF A RIDICULOUS MAN



I

I am a ridiculous person. Now they call me a madman. That would be a promotion if it were not that I remain as ridiculous in their eyes as before. But now I do not resent it, they are all dear to me now, even when they laugh at me — and, indeed, it is just then that they are particularly dear to me. I could join in their laughter — not exactly at myself, but through affection for them, if I did not feel so sad as I look at them. Sad because they do not know the truth and I do know it. Oh, how hard it is to be the only one who knows the truth! But they won't understand that. No, they won't understand it.

In old days I used to be miserable at seeming ridiculous. Not seeming, but being. I have always been ridiculous, and I have known it, perhaps, from the hour I was born. Perhaps from the time I was seven years old I knew I was ridiculous. Afterwards I went to school, studied at the university, and, do you know, the more I learned, the more thoroughly I understood that I was ridiculous. So that it seemed in the end as though all the sciences I studied at the university existed only to prove and make evident to me as I went more deeply into them that I was ridiculous. It was the same with life as it was with science. With every year the same consciousness of the ridiculous figure I cut in every relation grew and strengthened. Every one always laughed at me. But not one of them knew or guessed that if there were one man on earth who knew better than anybody else that I was absurd, it was myself, and what I resented most of all was that they did not know that. But that was my own fault; I was so proud that nothing would have ever induced me to tell it to any one. This pride grew in me with the years; and if it had happened that I allowed myself to confess to any one that I was ridiculous, I believe that I should have blown out my brains the same evening. Oh, how I suffered in my early youth from the fear that I might give way and confess it to my schoolfellows. But since I grew to manhood, I have for some unknown reason become calmer, though I realised my awful characteristic more fully every year. I say "unknown," for to this day I cannot tell why it was. Perhaps it was owing to the terrible misery that was growing in my soul

through something which was of more consequence than anything else about me: that something was the conviction that had come upon me that *nothing in the world mattered*. I had long had an inkling of it, but the full realisation came last year almost suddenly. I suddenly felt that it was all the same to me whether the world existed or whether there had never been anything at all: I began to feel with all my being that there was *nothing existing*. At first I fancied that many things had existed in the past, but afterwards I guessed that there never had been anything in the past either, but that it had only seemed so for some reason. Little by little I guessed that there would be nothing in the future either. Then I left off being angry with people and almost ceased to notice them. Indeed this showed itself even in the pettiest trifles: I used, for instance, to knock against people in the street. And not so much from being lost in thought: what had I to think about? I had almost given up thinking by that time; nothing mattered to me. If at least I had solved my problems! Oh, I had not settled one of them, and how many they were! But I gave up caring about anything, and all the problems disappeared.

And it was after that that I found out the truth. I learnt the truth last November — on the third of November, to be precise — and I remember every instant since. It was a gloomy evening, one of the gloomiest possible evenings. I was going home at about eleven o'clock, and I remember that I thought that the evening could not be gloomier. Even physically. Rain had been falling all day, and it had been a cold, gloomy, almost menacing rain, with, I remember, an unmistakable spite against mankind. Suddenly between ten and eleven it had stopped, and was followed by a horrible dampness, colder and damper than the rain, and a sort of steam was rising from everything, from every stone in the street, and from every by-lane if one looked down it as far as one could. A thought suddenly occurred to me, that if all the street lamps had been put out it would have been less cheerless, that the gas made one's heart sadder because it lighted it all up. I had had scarcely any dinner that day, and had been spending the evening with an engineer, and two other friends had been there also. I sat silent — I fancy I bored them. They talked of something rousing and suddenly they got excited over it. But they did not really care, I could see that, and only made a show of being excited. I suddenly said as much to them. "My friends," I said, "you really do not care one way or the other." They were not offended, but they all laughed at me. That was because I spoke without

any note of reproach, simply because it did not matter to me. They saw it did not, and it amused them.

As I was thinking about the gas lamps in the street I looked up at the sky. The sky was horribly dark, but one could distinctly see tattered clouds, and between them fathomless black patches. Suddenly I noticed in one of these patches a star, and began watching it intently. That was because that star gave me an idea: I decided to kill myself that night. I had firmly determined to do so two months before, and poor as I was, I bought a splendid revolver that very day, and loaded it. But two months had passed and it was still lying in my drawer; I was so utterly indifferent that I wanted to seize a moment when I would not be so indifferent — why, I don't know. And so for two months every night that I came home I thought I would shoot myself. I kept waiting for the right moment. And so now this star gave me a thought. I made up my mind that it should certainly be that night. And why the star gave me the thought I don't know.

And just as I was looking at the sky, this little girl took me by the elbow. The street was empty, and there was scarcely any one to be seen. A cabman was sleeping in the distance in his cab. It was a child of eight with a kerchief on her head, wearing nothing but a wretched little dress all soaked with rain, but I noticed particularly her wet broken shoes and I recall them now. They caught my eye particularly. She suddenly pulled me by the elbow and called me. She was not weeping, but was spasmodically crying out some words which she could not utter properly, because she was shivering and shuddering all over. She was in terror about something, and kept crying, "Mammy, mammy!" I turned facing her, I did not say a word and went on; but she ran, pulling at me, and there was that note in her voice which in frightened children means despair. I know that sound. Though she did not articulate the words, I understood that her mother was dying, or that something of the sort was happening to them, and that she had run out to call some one, to find something to help her mother. I did not go with her; on the contrary, I had an impulse to drive her away. I told her first to go to a policeman. But clasping her hands, she ran beside me sobbing and gasping, and would not leave me. Then I stamped my foot, and shouted at her. She called out "Sir! sir!..," but suddenly abandoned me and rushed headlong across the road. Some other passer-by appeared there, and she evidently flew from me to him.

I mounted up to my fifth storey. I have a room in a flat where there are other lodgers. My room is small and poor, with a garret window in the shape of a semicircle. I have a sofa covered with American leather, a table with books on it, two chairs and a comfortable arm-chair, as old as old can be, but of the good old-fashioned shape. I sat down, lighted the candle, and began thinking. In the room next to mine, through the partition wall, a perfect Bedlam was going on. It had been going on for the last three days. A retired captain lived there, and he had half a dozen visitors, gentlemen of doubtful reputation, drinking vodka and playing *stoss* with old cards. The night before there had been a fight, and I know that two of them had been for a long time engaged in dragging each other about by the hair. The landlady wanted to complain, but she was in abject terror of the captain. There was only one other lodger in the flat, a thin little regimental lady, on a visit to Petersburg, with three little children who had been taken ill since they came into the lodgings. Both she and her children were in mortal fear of the captain, and lay trembling and crossing themselves all night, and the youngest child had a sort of fit from fright. That captain, I know for a fact, sometimes stops people in the Nevsky Prospect and begs. They won't take him into the service, but strange to say (that's why I am telling this), all this month that the captain has been here his behaviour has caused me no annoyance. I have, of course, tried to avoid his acquaintance from the very beginning, and he, too, was bored with me from the first; but I never care how much they shout the other side of the partition nor how many of them there are in there: I sit up all night and forget them so completely that I do not even hear them. I stay awake till daybreak, and have been going on like that for the last year. I sit up all night in my arm-chair at the table, doing nothing. I only read by day. I sit — don't even think; ideas of a sort wander through my mind and I let them come and go as they will. A whole candle is burnt every night. I sat down quietly at the table, took out the revolver and put it down before me. When I had put it down I asked myself, I remember, "Is that so?" and answered with complete conviction, "It is." That is, I shall shoot myself. I knew that I should shoot myself that night for certain, but how much longer I should go on sitting at the table I did not know. And no doubt I should have shot myself if it had not been for that little girl.

II

You see, though nothing mattered to me, I could feel pain, for instance. If any one had struck me it would have hurt me. It was the same morally: if anything very pathetic happened, I should have felt pity just as I used to do in old days when there were things in life that did matter to me. I had felt pity that evening. I should have certainly helped a child. Why, then, had I not helped the little girl? Because of an idea that occurred to me at the time: when she was calling and pulling at me, a question suddenly arose before me and I could not settle it. The question was an idle one, but I was vexed. I was vexed at the reflection that if I were going to make an end of myself that night, nothing in life ought to have mattered to me. Why was it that all at once I did not feel that nothing mattered and was sorry for the little girl? I remember that I was very sorry for her, so much so that I felt a strange pang, quite incongruous in my position. Really I do not know better how to convey my fleeting sensation at the moment, but the sensation persisted at home when I was sitting at the table, and I was very much irritated as I had not been for a long time past. One reflection followed another. I saw clearly that so long as I was still a human being and not nothingness, I was alive and so could suffer, be angry and feel shame at my actions. So be it. But if I am going to kill myself, in two hours, say, what is the little girl to me and what have I to do with shame or with anything else in the world? I shall turn into nothing, absolutely nothing. And can it really be true that the consciousness that I shall *completely* cease to exist immediately and so everything else will cease to exist, does not in the least affect my feeling of pity for the child nor the feeling of shame after a contemptible action? I stamped and shouted at the unhappy child as though to say — not only I feel no pity, but even if I behave inhumanly and contemptibly, I am free to, for in another two hours everything will be extinguished. Do you believe that that was why I shouted that? I am almost convinced of it now. It seemed clear to me that life and the world somehow depended upon me now. I may almost say that the world now seemed created for me alone: if I shot myself the world would cease to be at least for me. I say nothing of its being likely that nothing will exist for any one when I am gone, and that as soon as my consciousness is extinguished the whole world will vanish too and become void like a phantom, as a mere appurtenance of my consciousness, for possibly all this world and all these people are only me myself. I remember that as I sat and reflected, I turned all these new questions that swarmed one after another quite the other way, and thought

of something quite new. For instance, a strange reflection suddenly occurred to me, that if I had lived before on the moon or on Mars and there had committed the most disgraceful and dishonourable action and had there been put to such shame and ignominy as one can only conceive and realise in dreams, in nightmares, and if, finding myself afterwards on earth, I were able to retain the memory of what I had done on the other planet and at the same time knew that I should never, under any circumstances, return there, then looking from the earth to the moon — *should I care or not*? Should I feel shame for that action or not? These were idle and superfluous questions for the revolver was already lying before me, and I knew in every fibre of my being that it would happen for certain, but they excited me and I raged. I could not die now without having first settled something. In short, the child had saved me, for I put off my pistol shot for the sake of these questions. Meanwhile the clamour had begun to subside in the captain's room: they had finished their game, were settling down to sleep, and meanwhile were grumbling and languidly winding up their quarrels. At that point I suddenly fell asleep in my chair at the table — a thing which had never happened to me before. I dropped asleep quite unawares.

Dreams, as we all know, are very queer things: some parts are presented with appalling vividness, with details worked up with the elaborate finish of jewellery, while others one gallops through, as it were, without noticing them at all, as, for instance, through space and time. Dreams seem to be spurred on not by reason but by desire, not by the head but by the heart, and yet what complicated tricks my reason has played sometimes in dreams, what utterly incomprehensible things happen to it! My brother died five years ago, for instance. I sometimes dream of him; he takes part in my affairs, we are very much interested, and yet all through my dream I quite know and remember that my brother is dead and buried. How is it that I am not surprised that, though he is dead, he is here beside me and working with me? Why is it that my reason fully accepts it? But enough. I will begin about my dream. Yes, I dreamed a dream, my dream of the third of November. They tease me now, telling me it was only a dream. But does it matter whether it was a dream or reality, if the dream made known to me the truth? If once one has recognised the truth and seen it, you know that it is the truth and that there is no other and there cannot be, whether you are asleep or awake. Let it be a dream, so be it, but that real life of which you make so much I had meant to extinguish by suicide, and my dream, my

dream — oh, it revealed to me a different life, renewed, grand and full of power!

Listen.

III

I have mentioned that I dropped asleep unawares and even seemed to be still reflecting on the same subjects. I suddenly dreamt that I picked up the revolver and aimed it straight at my heart — my heart, and not my head; and I had determined beforehand to fire at my head, at my right temple. After aiming at my chest I waited a second or two, and suddenly my candle, my table, and the wall in front of me began moving and heaving. I made haste to pull the trigger.

In dreams you sometimes fall from a height, or are stabbed, or beaten, but you never feel pain unless, perhaps, you really bruise yourself against the bedstead, then you feel pain and almost always wake up from it. It was the same in my dream. I did not feel any pain, but it seemed as though with my shot everything within me was shaken and everything was suddenly dimmed, and it grew horribly black around me. I seemed to be blinded and benumbed, and I was lying on something hard, stretched on my back; I saw nothing, and could not make the slightest movement. People were walking and shouting around me, the captain bawled, the landlady shrieked — and suddenly another break and I was being carried in a closed coffin. And I felt how the coffin was shaking and reflected upon it, and for the first time the idea struck me that I was dead, utterly dead, I knew it and had no doubt of it, I could neither see nor move and yet I was feeling and reflecting. But I was soon reconciled to the position, and as one usually does in a dream, accepted the facts without disputing them.

And now I was buried in the earth. They all went away, I was left alone, utterly alone. I did not move. Whenever before I had imagined being buried the one sensation I associated with the grave was that of damp and cold. So now I felt that I was very cold, especially the tips of my toes, but I felt nothing else.

I lay still, strange to say I expected nothing, accepting without dispute that a dead man had nothing to expect. But it was damp. I don’t know how long a time passed — whether an hour, or several days, or many days. But all at once a drop of water fell on my closed left eye, making its way

through a coffin lid; it was followed a minute later by a second, then a minute later by a third — and so on, regularly every minute. There was a sudden glow of profound indignation in my heart, and I suddenly felt in it a pang of physical pain. “That’s my wound,” I thought; “that’s the bullet....” And drop after drop every minute kept falling on my closed eyelid. And all at once, not with my voice, but with my whole being, I called upon the power that was responsible for all that was happening to me:

“Whoever you may be, if you exist, and if anything more rational than what is happening here is possible, suffer it to be here now. But if you are revenging yourself upon me for my senseless suicide by the hideousness and absurdity of this subsequent existence, then let me tell you that no torture could ever equal the contempt which I shall go on dumbly feeling, though my martyrdom may last a million years!”

I made this appeal and held my peace. There was a full minute of unbroken silence and again another drop fell, but I knew with infinite unshakable certainty that everything would change immediately. And behold my grave suddenly was rent asunder, that is, I don’t know whether it was opened or dug up, but I was caught up by some dark and unknown being and we found ourselves in space. I suddenly regained my sight. It was the dead of night, and never, never had there been such darkness. We were flying through space far away from the earth. I did not question the being who was taking me; I was proud and waited. I assured myself that I was not afraid, and was thrilled with ecstasy at the thought that I was not afraid. I do not know how long we were flying, I cannot imagine; it happened as it always does in dreams when you skip over space and time, and the laws of thought and existence, and only pause upon the points for which the heart yearns. I remember that I suddenly saw in the darkness a star. “Is that Sirius?” I asked impulsively, though I had not meant to ask any questions.

“No, that is the star you saw between the clouds when you were coming home,” the being who was carrying me replied.

I knew that it had something like a human face. Strange to say, I did not like that being, in fact I felt an intense aversion for it. I had expected complete non-existence, and that was why I had put a bullet through my heart. And here I was in the hands of a creature not human, of course, but yet living, existing. “And so there is life beyond the grave,” I thought with the strange frivolity one has in dreams. But in its inmost depth my heart remained unchanged. “And if I have got to exist again,” I thought, “and live

once more under the control of some irresistible power, I won't be vanquished and humiliated."

"You know that I am afraid of you and despise me for that," I said suddenly to my companion, unable to refrain from the humiliating question which implied a confession, and feeling my humiliation stab my heart as with a pin. He did not answer my question, but all at once I felt that he was not even despising me, but was laughing at me and had no compassion for me, and that our journey had an unknown and mysterious object that concerned me only. Fear was growing in my heart. Something was mutely and painfully communicated to me from my silent companion, and permeated my whole being. We were flying through dark, unknown space. I had for some time lost sight of the constellations familiar to my eyes. I knew that there were stars in the heavenly spaces the light of which took thousands or millions of years to reach the earth. Perhaps we were already flying through those spaces. I expected something with a terrible anguish that tortured my heart. And suddenly I was thrilled by a familiar feeling that stirred me to the depths: I suddenly caught sight of our sun! I knew that it could not be *our* sun, that gave life to *our* earth, and that we were an infinite distance from our sun, but for some reason I knew in my whole being that it was a sun exactly like ours, a duplicate of it. A sweet, thrilling feeling resounded with ecstasy in my heart: the kindred power of the same light which had given me light stirred an echo in my heart and awakened it, and I had a sensation of life, the old life of the past for the first time since I had been in the grave.

"But if that is the sun, if that is exactly the same as our sun," I cried, "where is the earth?"

And my companion pointed to a star twinkling in the distance with an emerald light. We were flying straight towards it.

"And are such repetitions possible in the universe? Can that be the law of Nature?... And if that is an earth there, can it be just the same earth as ours ... just the same, as poor, as unhappy, but precious and beloved for ever, arousing in the most ungrateful of her children the same poignant love for her that we feel for our earth?" I cried out, shaken by irresistible, ecstatic love for the old familiar earth which I had left. The image of the poor child whom I had repulsed flashed through my mind.

"You shall see it all," answered my companion, and there was a note of sorrow in his voice.

But we were rapidly approaching the planet. It was growing before my eyes; I could already distinguish the ocean, the outline of Europe; and suddenly a feeling of a great and holy jealousy glowed in my heart.

“How can it be repeated and what for? I love and can love only that earth which I have left, stained with my blood, when, in my ingratitude, I quenched my life with a bullet in my heart. But I have never, never ceased to love that earth, and perhaps on the very night I parted from it I loved it more than ever. Is there suffering upon this new earth? On our earth we can only love with suffering and through suffering. We cannot love otherwise, and we know of no other sort of love. I want suffering in order to love. I long, I thirst, this very instant, to kiss with tears the earth that I have left, and I don’t want, I won’t accept life on any other!”

But my companion had already left me. I suddenly, quite without noticing how, found myself on this other earth, in the bright light of a sunny day, fair as paradise. I believe I was standing on one of the islands that make up on our globe the Greek archipelago, or on the coast of the mainland facing that archipelago. Oh, everything was exactly as it is with us, only everything seemed to have a festive radiance, the splendour of some great, holy triumph attained at last. The caressing sea, green as emerald, splashed softly upon the shore and kissed it with manifest, almost conscious love. The tall, lovely trees stood in all the glory of their blossom, and their innumerable leaves greeted me, I am certain, with their soft, caressing rustle and seemed to articulate words of love. The grass glowed with bright and fragrant flowers. Birds were flying in flocks in the air, and perched fearlessly on my shoulders and arms and joyfully struck me with their darling, fluttering wings. And at last I saw and knew the people of this happy land. They came to me of themselves, they surrounded me, kissed me. The children of the sun, the children of their sun — oh, how beautiful they were! Never had I seen on our own earth such beauty in mankind. Only perhaps in our children, in their earliest years, one might find some remote, faint reflection of this beauty. The eyes of these happy people shone with a clear brightness. Their faces were radiant with the light of reason and fullness of a serenity that comes of perfect understanding, but those faces were gay; in their words and voices there was a note of childlike joy. Oh, from the first moment, from the first glance at them, I understood it all! It was the earth untarnished by the Fall; on it lived people who had not sinned. They lived just in such a paradise as that in which, according to all the

legends of mankind, our first parents lived before they sinned; the only difference was that all this earth was the same paradise. These people, laughing joyfully, thronged round me and caressed me; they took me home with them, and each of them tried to reassure me. Oh, they asked me no questions, but they seemed, I fancied, to know everything without asking, and they wanted to make haste and smoothe away the signs of suffering from my face.

IV

And do you know what? Well, granted that it was only a dream, yet the sensation of the love of those innocent and beautiful people has remained with me for ever, and I feel as though their love is still flowing out to me from over there. I have seen them myself, have known them and been convinced; I loved them, I suffered for them afterwards. Oh, I understood at once even at the time that in many things I could not understand them at all; as an up-to-date Russian progressive and contemptible Petersburger, it struck me as inexplicable that, knowing so much, they had, for instance, no science like ours. But I soon realised that their knowledge was gained and fostered by intuitions different from those of us on earth, and that their aspirations, too, were quite different. They desired nothing and were at peace; they did not aspire to knowledge of life as we aspire to understand it, because their lives were full. But their knowledge was higher and deeper than ours; for our science seeks to explain what life is, aspires to understand it in order to teach others how to live, while they without science knew how to live; and that I understood, but I could not understand their knowledge. They showed me their trees, and I could not understand the intense love with which they looked at them; it was as though they were talking with creatures like themselves. And perhaps I shall not be mistaken if I say that they conversed with them. Yes, they had found their language, and I am convinced that the trees understood them. They looked at all Nature like that — at the animals who lived in peace with them and did not attack them, but loved them, conquered by their love. They pointed to the stars and told me something about them which I could not understand, but I am convinced that they were somehow in touch with the stars, not only in thought, but by some living channel. Oh, these people did not persist in trying to make me understand them, they loved me without that, but I knew that they would

never understand me, and so I hardly spoke to them about our earth. I only kissed in their presence the earth on which they lived and mutely worshipped them themselves. And they saw that and let me worship them without being abashed at my adoration, for they themselves loved much. They were not unhappy on my account when at times I kissed their feet with tears, joyfully conscious of the love with which they would respond to mine. At times I asked myself with wonder how it was they were able never to offend a creature like me, and never once to arouse a feeling of jealousy or envy in me? Often I wondered how it could be that, boastful and untruthful as I was, I never talked to them of what I knew — of which, of course, they had no notion — that I was never tempted to do so by a desire to astonish or even to benefit them.

They were as gay and sportive as children. They wandered about their lovely woods and copses, they sang their lovely songs; their fare was light — the fruits of their trees, the honey from their woods, and the milk of the animals who loved them. The work they did for food and raiment was brief and not laborious. They loved and begot children, but I never noticed in them the impulse of that *cruel* sensuality which overcomes almost every man on this earth, all and each, and is the source of almost every sin of mankind on earth. They rejoiced at the arrival of children as new beings to share their happiness. There was no quarrelling, no jealousy among them, and they did not even know what the words meant. Their children were the children of all, for they all made up one family. There was scarcely any illness among them, though there was death; but their old people died peacefully, as though falling asleep, giving blessings and smiles to those who surrounded them to take their last farewell with bright and loving smiles. I never saw grief or tears on those occasions, but only love, which reached the point of ecstasy, but a calm ecstasy, made perfect and contemplative. One might think that they were still in contact with the departed after death, and that their earthly union was not cut short by death. They scarcely understood me when I questioned them about immortality, but evidently they were so convinced of it without reasoning that it was not for them a question at all. They had no temples, but they had a real living and uninterrupted sense of oneness with the whole of the universe; they had no creed, but they had a certain knowledge that when their earthly joy had reached the limits of earthly nature, then there would come for them, for the living and for the dead, a still greater fullness of contact with the whole of

the universe. They looked forward to that moment with joy, but without haste, not pining for it, but seeming to have a foretaste of it in their hearts, of which they talked to one another.

In the evening before going to sleep they liked singing in musical and harmonious chorus. In those songs they expressed all the sensations that the parting day had given them, sang its glories and took leave of it. They sang the praises of nature, of the sea, of the woods. They liked making songs about one another, and praised each other like children; they were the simplest songs, but they sprang from their hearts and went to one's heart. And not only in their songs but in all their lives they seemed to do nothing but admire one another. It was like being in love with each other, but an all-embracing, universal feeling.

Some of their songs, solemn and rapturous, I scarcely understood at all. Though I understood the words I could never fathom their full significance. It remained, as it were, beyond the grasp of my mind, yet my heart unconsciously absorbed it more and more. I often told them that I had had a presentiment of it long before, that this joy and glory had come to me on our earth in the form of a yearning melancholy that at times approached insufferable sorrow; that I had had a foreknowledge of them all and of their glory in the dreams of my heart and the visions of my mind; that often on our earth I could not look at the setting sun without tears ... that in my hatred for the men of our earth there was always a yearning anguish: why could I not hate them without loving them? why could I not help forgiving them? and in my love for them there was a yearning grief: why could I not love them without hating them? They listened to me, and I saw they could not conceive what I was saying, but I did not regret that I had spoken to them of it: I knew that they understood the intensity of my yearning anguish over those whom I had left. But when they looked at me with their sweet eyes full of love, when I felt that in their presence my heart, too, became as innocent and just as theirs, the feeling of the fullness of life took my breath away, and I worshipped them in silence.

Oh, every one laughs in my face now, and assures me that one cannot dream of such details as I am telling now, that I only dreamed or felt one sensation that arose in my heart in delirium and made up the details myself when I woke up. And when I told them that perhaps it really was so, my God, how they shouted with laughter in my face, and what mirth I caused! Oh, yes, of course I was overcome by the mere sensation of my dream, and

that was all that was preserved in my cruelly wounded heart; but the actual forms and images of my dream, that is, the very ones I really saw at the very time of my dream, were filled with such harmony, were so lovely and enchanting and were so actual, that on awakening I was, of course, incapable of clothing them in our poor language, so that they were bound to become blurred in my mind; and so perhaps I really was forced afterwards to make up the details, and so of course to distort them in my passionate desire to convey some at least of them as quickly as I could. But on the other hand, how can I help believing that it was all true? It was perhaps a thousand times brighter, happier and more joyful than I describe it. Granted that I dreamed it, yet it must have been real. You know, I will tell you a secret: perhaps it was not a dream at all! For then something happened so awful, something so horribly true, that it could not have been imagined in a dream. My heart may have originated the dream, but would my heart alone have been capable of originating the awful event which happened to me afterwards? How could I alone have invented it or imagined it in my dream? Could my petty heart and my fickle, trivial mind have risen to such a revelation of truth? Oh, judge for yourselves: hitherto I have concealed it, but now I will tell the truth. The fact is that I ... corrupted them all!

V

Yes, yes, it ended in my corrupting them all! How it could come to pass I do not know, but I remember it clearly. The dream embraced thousands of years and left in me only a sense of the whole. I only know that I was the cause of their sin and downfall. Like a vile trichina, like a germ of the plague infecting whole kingdoms, so I contaminated all this earth, so happy and sinless before my coming. They learnt to lie, grew fond of lying, and discovered the charm of falsehood. Oh, at first perhaps it began innocently, with a jest, coquetry, with amorous play, perhaps indeed with a germ, but that germ of falsity made its way into their hearts and pleased them. Then sensuality was soon begotten, sensuality begot jealousy, jealousy — cruelty.... Oh, I don’t know, I don’t remember; but soon, very soon the first blood was shed. They marvelled and were horrified, and began to be split up and divided. They formed into unions, but it was against one another. Reproaches, upbraidings followed. They came to know shame, and shame brought them to virtue. The conception of honour sprang up, and every

union began waving its flags. They began torturing animals, and the animals withdrew from them into the forests and became hostile to them. They began to struggle for separation, for isolation, for individuality, for mine and thine. They began to talk in different languages. They became acquainted with sorrow and loved sorrow; they thirsted for suffering, and said that truth could only be attained through suffering. Then science appeared. As they became wicked they began talking of brotherhood and humanitarianism, and understood those ideas. As they became criminal, they invented justice and drew up whole legal codes in order to observe it, and to ensure their being kept, set up a guillotine. They hardly remembered what they had lost, in fact refused to believe that they had ever been happy and innocent. They even laughed at the possibility of this happiness in the past, and called it a dream. They could not even imagine it in definite form and shape, but, strange and wonderful to relate, though they lost all faith in their past happiness and called it a legend, they so longed to be happy and innocent once more that they succumbed to this desire like children, made an idol of it, set up temples and worshipped their own idea, their own desire; though at the same time they fully believed that it was unattainable and could not be realised, yet they bowed down to it and adored it with tears! Nevertheless, if it could have happened that they had returned to the innocent and happy condition which they had lost, and if some one had shown it to them again and had asked them whether they wanted to go back to it, they would certainly have refused. They answered me:

"We may be deceitful, wicked and unjust, we *know* it and weep over it, we grieve over it; we torment and punish ourselves more perhaps than that merciful Judge Who will judge us and whose Name we know not. But we have science, and by means of it we shall find the truth and we shall arrive at it consciously. Knowledge is higher than feeling, the consciousness of life is higher than life. Science will give us wisdom, wisdom will reveal the laws, and the knowledge of the laws of happiness is higher than happiness."

That is what they said, and after saying such things every one began to love himself better than any one else, and indeed they could not do otherwise. All became so jealous of the rights of their own personality that they did their very utmost to curtail and destroy them in others, and made that the chief thing in their lives. Slavery followed, even voluntary slavery; the weak eagerly submitted to the strong, on condition that the latter aided them to subdue the still weaker. Then there were saints who came to these

people, weeping, and talked to them of their pride, of their loss of harmony and due proportion, of their loss of shame. They were laughed at or pelted with stones. Holy blood was shed on the threshold of the temples. Then there arose men who began to think how to bring all people together again, so that everybody, while still loving himself best of all, might not interfere with others, and all might live together in something like a harmonious society. Regular wars sprang up over this idea. All the combatants at the same time firmly believed that science, wisdom and the instinct of self-preservation would force men at last to unite into a harmonious and rational society; and so, meanwhile, to hasten matters, “the wise” endeavoured to exterminate as rapidly as possible all who were “not wise” and did not understand their idea, that the latter might not hinder its triumph. But the instinct of self-preservation grew rapidly weaker; there arose men, haughty and sensual, who demanded all or nothing. In order to obtain everything they resorted to crime, and if they did not succeed — to suicide. There arose religions with a cult of non-existence and self-destruction for the sake of the everlasting peace of annihilation. At last these people grew weary of their meaningless toil, and signs of suffering came into their faces, and then they proclaimed that suffering was a beauty, for in suffering alone was there meaning. They glorified suffering in their songs. I moved about among them, wringing my hands and weeping over them, but I loved them perhaps more than in old days when there was no suffering in their faces and when they were innocent and so lovely. I loved the earth they had polluted even more than when it had been a paradise, if only because sorrow had come to it. Alas! I always loved sorrow and tribulation, but only for myself, for myself; but I wept over them, pitying them. I stretched out my hands to them in despair, blaming, cursing and despising myself. I told them that all this was my doing, mine alone; that it was I had brought them corruption, contamination and falsity. I besought them to crucify me, I taught them how to make a cross. I could not kill myself, I had not the strength, but I wanted to suffer at their hands. I yearned for suffering, I longed that my blood should be drained to the last drop in these agonies. But they only laughed at me, and began at last to look upon me as crazy. They justified me, they declared that they had only got what they wanted themselves, and that all that now was could not have been otherwise. At last they declared to me that I was becoming dangerous and that they should lock me up in a madhouse if I did not hold my tongue. Then such grief took possession of

my soul that my heart was wrung, and I felt as though I were dying; and then ... then I awoke.

It was morning, that is, it was not yet daylight, but about six o'clock. I woke up in the same arm-chair; my candle had burnt out; every one was asleep in the captain's room, and there was a stillness all round, rare in our flat. First of all I leapt up in great amazement: nothing like this had ever happened to me before, not even in the most trivial detail; I had never, for instance, fallen asleep like this in my arm-chair. While I was standing and coming to myself I suddenly caught sight of my revolver lying loaded, ready — but instantly I thrust it away! Oh, now, life, life! I lifted up my hands and called upon eternal truth, not with words but with tears; ecstasy, immeasurable ecstasy flooded my soul. Yes, life and spreading the good tidings! Oh, I at that moment resolved to spread the tidings, and resolved it, of course, for my whole life. I go to spread the tidings, I want to spread the tidings — of what? Of the truth, for I have seen it, have seen it with my own eyes, have seen it in all its glory.

And since then I have been preaching! Moreover I love all those who laugh at me more than any of the rest. Why that is so I do not know and cannot explain, but so be it. I am told that I am vague and confused, and if I am vague and confused now, what shall I be later on? It is true indeed: I am vague and confused, and perhaps as time goes on I shall be more so. And of course I shall make many blunders before I find out how to preach, that is, find out what words to say, what things to do, for it is a very difficult task. I see all that as clear as daylight, but, listen, who does not make mistakes? And yet, you know, all are making for the same goal, all are striving in the same direction anyway, from the sage to the lowest robber, only by different roads. It is an old truth, but this is what is new: I cannot go far wrong. For I have seen the truth; I have seen and I know that people can be beautiful and happy without losing the power of living on earth. I will not and cannot believe that evil is the normal condition of mankind. And it is just this faith of mine that they laugh at. But how can I help believing it? I have seen the truth — it is not as though I had invented it with my mind, I have seen it, seen it, and *the living image* of it has filled my soul for ever. I have seen it in such full perfection that I cannot believe that it is impossible for people to have it. And so how can I go wrong? I shall make some slips no doubt, and shall perhaps talk in second-hand language, but not for long: the living

image of what I saw will always be with me and will always correct and guide me. Oh, I am full of courage and freshness, and I will go on and on if it were for a thousand years! Do you know, at first I meant to conceal the fact that I corrupted them, but that was a mistake — that was my first mistake! But truth whispered to me that I was *lying*, and preserved me and corrected me. But how establish paradise — I don't know, because I do not know how to put it into words. After my dream I lost command of words. All the chief words, anyway, the most necessary ones. But never mind, I shall go and I shall keep talking, I won't leave off, for anyway I have seen it with my own eyes, though I cannot describe what I saw. But the scoffers do not understand that. It was a dream, they say, delirium, hallucination. Oh! As though that meant so much! And they are so proud! A dream! What is a dream? And is not our life a dream? I will say more. Suppose that this paradise will never come to pass (that I understand), yet I shall go on preaching it. And yet how simple it is: in one day, *in one hour* everything could be arranged at once! The chief thing is to love others like yourself, that's the great thing, and that's everything; nothing else is wanted — you will find out at once how to arrange it all. And yet it's an old truth which has been told and retold a billion times — but it has not formed part of our lives! The consciousness of life is higher than life, the knowledge of the laws of happiness is higher than happiness — that is what one must contend against. And I shall. If only every one wants it, it can all be arranged at once.

And I tracked out that little girl ... and I shall go on and on!

THE END

THE PEASANT MAREY



It was the second day in Easter week. The air was warm, the sky was blue, the sun was high, warm, bright, but my soul was very gloomy. I sauntered behind the prison barracks. I stared at the palings of the stout prison fence, counting the movers; but I had no inclination to count them, though it was my habit to do so. This was the second day of the “holidays” in the prison; the convicts were not taken out to work, there were numbers of men drunk, loud abuse and quarrelling was springing up continually in every corner. There were hideous, disgusting songs and card-parties installed beside the platform-beds. Several of the convicts who had been sentenced by their comrades, for special violence, to be beaten till they were half dead, were lying on the platform-bed, covered with sheepskins till they should recover and come to themselves again; knives had already been drawn several times. For these two days of holiday all this had been torturing me till it made me ill. And indeed I could never endure without repulsion the noise and disorder of drunken people, and especially in this place. On these days even the prison officials did not look into the prison, made no searches, did not look for vodka, understanding that they must allow even these outcasts to enjoy themselves once a year, and that things would be even worse if they did not. At last a sudden fury flamed up in my heart. A political prisoner called M. met me; he looked at me gloomily, his eyes flashed and his lips quivered. “*Je haïs ces brigands!*” he hissed to me through his teeth, and walked on. I returned to the prison ward, though only a quarter of an hour before I had rushed out of it, as though I were crazy, when six stalwart fellows had all together flung themselves upon the drunken Tatar Gazin to suppress him and had begun beating him; they beat him stupidly, a camel might have been killed by such blows, but they knew that this Hercules was not easy to kill, and so they beat him without uneasiness. Now on returning I noticed on the bed in the furthest corner of the room Gazin lying unconscious, almost without sign of life. He lay covered with a sheepskin, and every one walked round him, without speaking; though they confidently hoped that he would come to himself next morning, yet if luck was against him, maybe from a beating like that, the man would die. I made my way to my own place opposite the window with the iron grating, and lay on my back with my hands behind my head and my eyes shut. I liked to lie

like that; a sleeping man is not molested, and meanwhile one can dream and think. But I could not dream, my heart was beating uneasily, and M.'s words, "*Je haïs ces brigands!*" were echoing in my ears. But why describe my impressions; I sometimes dream even now of those times at night, and I have no dreams more agonising. Perhaps it will be noticed that even to this day I have scarcely once spoken in print of my life in prison. *The House of the Dead* I wrote fifteen years ago in the character of an imaginary person, a criminal who had killed his wife. I may add by the way that since then, very many persons have supposed, and even now maintain, that I was sent to penal servitude for the murder of my wife.

Gradually I sank into forgetfulness and by degrees was lost in memories. During the whole course of my four years in prison I was continually recalling all my past, and seemed to live over again the whole of my life in recollection. These memories rose up of themselves, it was not often that of my own will I summoned them. It would begin from some point, some little thing, at times unnoticed, and then by degrees there would rise up a complete picture, some vivid and complete impression. I used to analyse these impressions, give new features to what had happened long ago, and best of all, I used to correct it, correct it continually, that was my great amusement. On this occasion, I suddenly for some reason remembered an unnoticed moment in my early childhood when I was only nine years old — a moment which I should have thought I had utterly forgotten; but at that time I was particularly fond of memories of my early childhood. I remembered the month of August in our country house: a dry bright day but rather cold and windy; summer was waning and soon we should have to go to Moscow to be bored all the winter over French lessons, and I was so sorry to leave the country. I walked past the threshing-floor and, going down the ravine, I went up to the dense thicket of bushes that covered the further side of the ravine as far as the copse. And I plunged right into the midst of the bushes, and heard a peasant ploughing alone on the clearing about thirty paces away. I knew that he was ploughing up the steep hill and the horse was moving with effort, and from time to time the peasant's call "come up!" floated upwards to me. I knew almost all our peasants, but I did not know which it was ploughing now, and I did not care who it was, I was absorbed in my own affairs. I was busy, too; I was breaking off switches from the nut trees to whip the frogs with. Nut sticks make such fine whips, but they do not last; while birch twigs are just the opposite. I was interested,

too, in beetles and other insects; I used to collect them, some were very ornamental. I was very fond, too, of the little nimble red and yellow lizards with black spots on them, but I was afraid of snakes. Snakes, however, were much more rare than lizards. There were not many mushrooms there. To get mushrooms one had to go to the birch wood, and I was about to set off there. And there was nothing in the world that I loved so much as the wood with its mushrooms and wild berries, with its beetles and its birds, its hedgehogs and squirrels, with its damp smell of dead leaves which I loved so much, and even as I write I smell the fragrance of our birch wood: these impressions will remain for my whole life. Suddenly in the midst of the profound stillness I heard a clear and distinct shout, “Wolf!” I shrieked and, beside myself with terror, calling out at the top of my voice, ran out into the clearing and straight to the peasant who was ploughing.

It was our peasant Marey. I don’t know if there is such a name, but every one called him Marey — a thick-set, rather well-grown peasant of fifty, with a good many grey hairs in his dark brown, spreading beard. I knew him, but had scarcely ever happened to speak to him till then. He stopped his horse on hearing my cry, and when, breathless, I caught with one hand at his plough and with the other at his sleeve, he saw how frightened I was.

“There is a wolf!” I cried, panting.

He flung up his head, and could not help looking round for an instant, almost believing me.

“Where is the wolf?”

“A shout ... some one shouted: ‘wolf’ ...” I faltered out.

“Nonsense, nonsense! A wolf? Why, it was your fancy! How could there be a wolf?” he muttered, reassuring me. But I was trembling all over, and still kept tight hold of his smock frock, and I must have been quite pale. He looked at me with an uneasy smile, evidently anxious and troubled over me.

“Why, you have had a fright, *aïe, aïe*!” He shook his head. “There, dear.... Come, little one, *aïe*!”

He stretched out his hand, and all at once stroked my cheek.

“Come, come, there; Christ be with you! Cross yourself!”

But I did not cross myself. The corners of my mouth were twitching, and I think that struck him particularly. He put out his thick, black-nailed, earth-stained finger and softly touched my twitching lips.

“*Aïe*, there, there,” he said to me with a slow, almost motherly smile. “Dear, dear, what is the matter? There; come, come!”

I grasped at last that there was no wolf, and that the shout that I had heard was my fancy. Yet that shout had been so clear and distinct, but such shouts (not only about wolves) I had imagined once or twice before, and I was aware of that. (These hallucinations passed away later as I grew older.)

"Well, I will go then," I said, looking at him timidly and inquiringly.

"Well, do, and I'll keep watch on you as you go. I won't let the wolf get at you," he added, still smiling at me with the same motherly expression. "Well, Christ be with you! Come, run along then," and he made the sign of the cross over me and then over himself. I walked away, looking back almost at every tenth step. Marey stood still with his mare as I walked away, and looked after me and nodded to me every time I looked round. I must own I felt a little ashamed at having let him see me so frightened, but I was still very much afraid of the wolf as I walked away, until I reached the first barn half-way up the slope of the ravine; there my fright vanished completely, and all at once our yard-dog Voltchok flew to meet me. With Voltchok I felt quite safe, and I turned round to Marey for the last time; I could not see his face distinctly, but I felt that he was still nodding and smiling affectionately to me. I waved to him; he waved back to me and started his little mare. "Come up!" I heard his call in the distance again, and the little mare pulled at the plough again.

All this I recalled all at once, I don't know why, but with extraordinary minuteness of detail. I suddenly roused myself and sat up on the platform-bed, and, I remember, found myself still smiling quietly at my memories. I brooded over them for another minute.

When I got home that day I told no one of my "adventure" with Marey. And indeed it was hardly an adventure. And in fact I soon forgot Marey. When I met him now and then afterwards, I never even spoke to him about the wolf or anything else; and all at once now, twenty years afterwards in Siberia, I remembered this meeting with such distinctness to the smallest detail. So it must have lain hidden in my soul, though I knew nothing of it, and rose suddenly to my memory when it was wanted; I remembered the soft motherly smile of the poor serf, the way he signed me with the cross and shook his head. "There, there, you have had a fright, little one!" And I remembered particularly the thick earth-stained finger with which he softly and with timid tenderness touched my quivering lips. Of course any one would have reassured a child, but something quite different seemed to have happened in that solitary meeting; and if I had been his own son, he could

not have looked at me with eyes shining with greater love. And what made him like that? He was our serf and I was his little master, after all. No one would know that he had been kind to me and reward him for it. Was he, perhaps, very fond of little children? Some people are. It was a solitary meeting in the deserted fields, and only God, perhaps, may have seen from above with what deep and humane civilised feeling, and with what delicate, almost feminine tenderness, the heart of a coarse, brutally ignorant Russian serf, who had as yet no expectation, no idea even of his freedom, may be filled. Was not this, perhaps, what Konstantin Aksakov meant when he spoke of the high degree of culture of our peasantry?

And when I got down off the bed and looked around me, I remember I suddenly felt that I could look at these unhappy creatures with quite different eyes, and that suddenly by some miracle all hatred and anger had vanished utterly from my heart. I walked about, looking into the faces that I met. That shaven peasant, branded on his face as a criminal, bawling his hoarse, drunken song, may be that very Marey; I cannot look into his heart.

I met M. again that evening. Poor fellow! he could have no memories of Russian peasants, and no other view of these people but: "*Je haïs ces brigands!*" Yes, the Polish prisoners had more to bear than I.

THE LITTLE ORPHAN

I.

IN a large city, on Christmas eve in the biting cold, I see a young child, still quite young, six years old, perhaps even less; yet too young to be sent on the street begging, but assuredly destined to be sent in a year or two.

This child awakes one morning in a damp and frosty cellar. He is wrapped in a kind of squalid dressing-gown and is shivering. His breath issues from between his lips in white vapor; he is seated on a trunk; to pass the time he blows the breath from his mouth, and amuses himself in seeing it escape. But he is very hungry. Several times since morning he has drawn near the bed covered with a straw mattress as thin as gauze, where his mother lies sick, her head resting on a bundle of rags instead of a pillow.

How did she come there? She came probably from a strange city and has fallen ill. The proprietress of the miserable lodging was arrested two days ago, and carried to the police station; it is a holiday to-day, and the other tenants have gone out. However, one of them has remained in bed for the last twenty-four hours, stupid with drink, not having waited for the holiday.

From another corner issue the complaints of an old woman of eighty years, laid up with rheumatism. This old woman was formerly a children's nurse somewhere; now she is dying all alone. She whines, moans, and growls at the little boy, who begins to be afraid to come near the corner where she lies with the death rattle in her throat. He has found something to drink in the hallway, but he has not been able to lay his hand on the smallest crust of bread, and for the tenth time he comes to wake his mother. He finishes by getting frightened in this darkness.

The evening is already late, and no one comes to kindle the fire. He finds, by feeling around, his mother's face, and is astonished that she no longer moves and that she has become as cold as the wall.

"It is so cold!" he thinks.

He remains some time without moving, his hand resting on the shoulder of the corpse. Then he begins to blow in his fingers to warm them, and, happening to find his little cap on the bed, he looks softly for the door, and issues forth from the underground lodging.

He would have gone out sooner had he not been afraid of the big dog that barks all the day up there on the landing before their neighbor’s door.

Oh! what a city! never before had he seen anything like it. Down yonder from where he came, the nights are much darker. There is only one lamp for the whole street; little low wooden houses, closed with shutters; in the street from the time it grows dark, no one; every one shut up at home: only a crowd of dogs that howl, hundreds, thousands of dogs, that howl and bark all the night. But then, it used to be so warm there! And he got something to eat. Here, ah! how good it would be to have something to eat! What a noise here, what an uproar! What a great light, and what a crowd of people! What horses, and what carriages! And the cold, the cold! The bodies of the tired horses smoke with frost and their burning nostrils puff white clouds; their shoes ring on the pavement through the soft snow. And how every body hustles every body else! “Ah! how I would like to eat a little piece of something. That is what makes my fingers ache so.”

II.

A POLICEMAN just passes by, and turns his head so as not to see the child. “Here is another street. Oh! how wide it is! I shall be crushed to death here, I know; how they all shout, how they run, how they roll along! And the light, and the light! And that, what is that? Oh! what a big window pane! And behind the pane, a room, and in the room a tree that goes up to the ceiling; it is the Christmas tree. And what lights under the tree! Such papers of gold, and such apples! And all around dolls and little hobby-horses. There are little children well-dressed, nice, and clean; they are laughing and playing, eating and drinking things. There is a little girl going to dance with the little boy. How pretty she is! And there is music. I can hear it through the glass.”

The child looks, admires, and even laughs. He feels no longer any pain in his fingers or feet. The fingers of his hand have become all red, he cannot bend them any more, and it hurts him to move them. But all at once, he feels that his fingers ache; he begins to cry, and goes away. He perceives through another window another room, and again trees and cakes of all sorts on the table, red almonds and yellow ones. Four beautiful ladies are sitting down, and when any body comes he is given some cake: and the door opens every minute, and many gentlemen enter. The little fellow crept forward, opened the door of a sudden, and went in. Oh! what a noise was made when they saw him, what confusion! Immediately a lady arose, put a kopeck in his hand, and opened herself the street door for him. How frightened he was!

III.

THE kopeck has fallen from his hands, and rings on the steps of the stairs. He was not able to tighten his little fingers enough to hold the coin. The child went out running, and walked fast, fast. Where was he going? He did not know. And he runs, runs, and blows in his hands. He is troubled. He feels so lonely, so frightened! And suddenly, what is that again! A crowd of people stand there and admire.

“A window! behind the pane, three pretty dolls attired in wee red and yellow dresses, and just exactly as though they were alive! And that little

old man sitting down, who seems to play the fiddle. There are two others, too, standing up, who play on tiny violins, keeping time with their heads to the music. They look at each other and their lips move. And they really speak? Only they cannot be heard through the glass."

And the child first thinks that they are living, and when he comprehends that they are only dolls, he begins to laugh. Never had he seen such dolls before, and he didn't know that there were any like that! He would like to cry, but those dolls are just too funny!

IV.

SUDDENLY he feels himself seized by the coat. A big rough boy stands near him, who gives him a blow of his fist on the head, snatches his cap, and trips him up.

The child falls. At the same time there is a shout; he remains a moment paralyzed with fear. Then he springs up with a bound and runs, runs, darts under a gateway somewhere and hides himself in a court-yard behind a pile of wood. He cowers and shivers in his fright; he can hardly breathe.

And suddenly he feels quite comfortable. His little hands and feet don't hurt any more; he is warm, warm as though near a stove, and all his body trembles.

"Ah! I am going asleep! how nice it is to have a sleep! I shall stay a little while and then I will go and see the dolls again," thought the little fellow, and he smiled at the recollection of the dolls. "They looked just as though they were alive!"

Then he hears his mother's song. "Mamma, I am going to sleep. Ah! how nice it is here for sleeping!"

"Come to my house, little boy, to see the Christmas tree," said a soft voice.

He thought at first it was his mother; but no, it was not she.

Then who is calling him? He does not see. But some one stoops over him, and folds him in his arms in the darkness: and he stretches out his hand and — all at once — oh! what light! Oh! what a Christmas tree! No, it is not a Christmas tree; he has never seen the like of it!

Where is he now? All is resplendent, all is radiant, and dolls all around; but no, not dolls, little boys, little girls; only they are very bright. All of

them circle round him; they fly. They hug him, they take him and carry him away, and he is flying too. And he sees his mother looking at him and laughing joyfully.

“Mamma! mamma! ah! how nice it is here!” cries her little boy to her.

And again he embraces the children, and would like very much to tell them about the dolls behind the window pane. “Who are you, little girls?” he asks, laughing and fondling them.

It is the Christmas tree at Jesus’s.

At Jesus’s, that day, there is always a Christmas tree for little children that have none themselves.

And he learned that all these little boys and girls were children like himself, who had died like him. Some had died of cold in the baskets abandoned at the doors of the public functionaries of St. Petersburg; others had died out at nurse in the foul hovels of the Tchaukhnas; others of hunger at the dry breasts of their mothers during the famine. All were here now, all little angels now, all with Jesus, and He Himself among them, spreading his hands over them, blessing them and their sinful mothers.

And the mothers of these children are there too, apart, weeping; each recognizes her son or her daughter, and the children fly towards them, embrace them, wipe away the tears with their little hands, and beg them not to weep.

And below on the earth, the concierge in the morning found the wee corpse of the child, who had taken refuge in the courtyard. Stiff and frozen behind the pile of wood it lay.

The mother was found too. She died before him; both are reunited in Heaven in the Lord’s house.

A FAINT HEART

UNDER the same roof in the same flat on the same fourth storey lived two young men, colleagues in the service, Arkady Ivanovitch Nefedevitch and Vasya Shumkov. . . . The author of course, feels the necessity of explaining to the reader why one is given his full title, while the other's name is abbreviated, if only that such a mode of expression may not be regarded as unseemly and rather familiar. But, to do so, it would first be necessary to explain and describe the rank and years and calling and duty in the service, and even, indeed, the characters of the persons concerned; and since there are so many writers who begin in that way the author of the proposed story, solely in order to be unlike them (that is, some people will perhaps say, entirely on account of his boundless vanity), decides to begin straightaway with action. Having completed this introduction, he begins.

Towards six o'clock on New Year's Eve Shumkov returned home. Arkady Ivanovitch, who was lying on the bed, woke up and looked at his friend with half-closed eyes. He saw that Vasya had on his very best trousers and a very clean shirt front. That, of course, struck him. "Where had Vasya to go like that? And he had not dined at home either!" Meanwhile, Shumkov had lighted a candle, and Arkady Ivanovitch guessed immediately that his friend was intending to wake him accidentally. Vasya did, in fact, clear his throat twice, walked twice up and down the room, and at last, quite accidentally, let the pipe, which he had begun filling in the corner by the stove, slip out of his hands. Arkady Ivanovitch laughed to himself.

"Vasya, give over pretending!" he said.

"Arkasha, you are not asleep?"

"I really cannot say for certain; it seems to me I am not."

"Oh, Arkasha! How are you, dear boy? Well, brother! Well, brother! . . . You don't know what I have to tell you!"

"I certainly don't know; come here."

As though expecting this, Vasya went up to him at once, not at all anticipating, however, treachery from Arkady Ivanovitch. The other seized him very adroitly by the arms, turned him over, held him down, and began, as it is called, "strangling" his victim, and apparently this proceeding afforded the light-hearted Arkady Ivanovitch great satisfaction.

“Caught!” he cried. “Caught!”

“Arkasha, Arkasha, what are you about? Let me go. For goodness sake, let me go, I shall crumple my dress coat!”

“As though that mattered! What do you want with a dress coat? Why were you so confiding as to put yourself in my hands? Tell me, where have you been? Where have you dined?”

“Arkasha, for goodness sake, let me go!”

“Where have you dined?”

“Why, it’s about that I want to tell you.”

“Tell away, then.”

“But first let me go.”

“Not a bit of it, I won’t let you go till you tell me!”

“Arkasha! Arkasha! But do you understand, I can’t it is utterly impossible!” cried Vasya, helplessly wriggling out of his friend’s powerful clutches, “you know there are subjects!”

“How subjects?” . . .

“Why, subjects that you can’t talk about in such a position without losing your dignity; it’s utterly impossible; it would make it ridiculous, and this is not a ridiculous matter, it is important.”

“Here, he’s going in for being important! That’s a new idea! You tell me so as to make me laugh, that’s how you must tell me; I don’t want anything important; or else you are no true friend of mine. Do you call yourself a friend? Eh?”

“Arkasha, I really can’t!”

“Well, I don’t want to hear. . . .”

“Well, Arkasha! “ began Vasya, lying across the bed and doing his utmost to put all the dignity possible into his words.” Arkasha! If you like, I will tell you; only . . .”

“Well, what? . . .”

“Well, I am engaged to be married!”

Without uttering another word Arkady Ivanovitch took Vasya up in his arms like a baby, though the latter was by no means short, but rather long and thin, and began dexterously carrying him up and down the room, pretending that he was hushing him to sleep.

“I’ll put you in your swaddling clothes, Master Bridegroom,” he kept saying. But seeing that Vasya lay in his arms, not stirring or uttering a word, he thought better of it at once, and reflecting that the joke had gone too far,

set him down in the middle of the room and kissed him on the cheek in the most genuine and friendly way.

“Vasya, you are not angry?”

“Arkasha, listen. ...”

“Come, it’s New Year’s Eve.”

“Oh, I’m all right; but why are you such a madman, such a scatterbrain? How many times I have told you: Arkasha, it’s really not funny, not funny at all!”

“Oh, well, you are not angry?”

“Oh, I’m all right; am I ever angry with any one! But you have wounded me, do you understand?”

“But how have I wounded you? In what way?”

“I come to you as to a friend, with a full heart, to pour out my soul to you, to tell you of my happiness . . .”

“What happiness? Why don’t you speak? . . .”

“Oh, well, I am going to get married!” Vasya answered with vexation, for he really was a little exasperated.

“You! You are going to get married! So you really mean it?” Arkasha cried at the top of his voice.” No, no ... but what’s this? He talks like this and his tears are flowing. . . . Vasya, my little Vasya, don’t, my little son! Is it true, really?”

And Arkady Ivanovitch flew to hug him again.

“Well, do you see, how it is now?” said Vasya. “You are kind, of course, you are a friend, I know that. I come to you with such joy, such rapture, and all of a sudden I have to disclose all the joy of my heart, all my rapture struggling across the bed, in an undignified way. . . . You understand, Arkasha,” Vasya went on, half laughing. “You see, it made it seem comic: and in a sense I did not belong to myself at that minute. I could not let this be slighted. . . What’s more, if you had asked me her name, I swear, I would sooner you killed me than have answered you.”

“But, Vasya, why did you not speak! You should have told me all about it sooner and I would not have played the fool!” cried Arkady Ivanovitch in genuine despair.

“Come, that’s enough, that’s enough! Of course, that’s how it is. . . . You know what it all comes from from my having a good heart. What vexes me is, that I could not tell you as I wanted to, making you glad and happy, telling you nicely and initiating you into my secret properly. . . . Really,

Arkasha, I love you so much that I believe if it were not for you I shouldn't be getting married, and, in fact, I shouldn't be living in this world at all!"

Arkady Ivanovitch, who was excessively sentimental, cried and laughed at once as he listened to Vasya. Vasya did the same. Both flew to embrace one another again and forgot the past.

"How is it how is it? Tell me all about it, Vasya! I am astonished, excuse me, brother, but I am utterly astonished; it's a perfect thunderbolt, by Jove! Nonsense, nonsense, brother, you have made it up, you've really made it up, you are telling fibs!" cried Arkady Ivanovitch, and he actually looked into Vasya's face with genuine uncertainty, but seeing in it the radiant confirmation of a positive intention of being married as soon as possible, threw himself on the bed and began rolling from side to side in ecstasy till the walls shook.

"Vasya, sit here," he said at last, sitting down on the bed.

"I really don't know, brother, where to begin!"

They looked at one another in joyful excitement.

"Who is she, Vasya?"

"The Artemyevs! . . ." Vasya pronounced, in a voice weak with emotion.

"No?"

"Well, I did buzz into your ears about them at first, and then I shut up, and you noticed nothing. Ah, Arkasha, if you knew how hard it was to keep it from you; but I was afraid, afraid to speak! I thought it would all go wrong, and you know I was in love, Arkasha! My God! My God! You see this was the trouble," he began, pausing continually from agitation, "she had a suitor a year ago, but he was suddenly ordered somewhere; I knew him he was a fellow, bless him! Well, he did not write at all, he simply vanished. They waited and waited, wondering what it meant. . . . Four months ago he suddenly came back married, and has never set foot within their doors! It was coarse, shabby! And they had no one to stand up for them. She cried and cried, poor girl, and I fell in love with her . . . indeed, I had been in love with her long before, all the time! I began comforting her, and was always going there. . . . Well, and I really don't know how it has all come about, only she came to love me; a week ago I could not restrain myself, I cried, I sobbed, and told her everything well, that I love her everything, in fact !... '! am ready to love you, too, Vassily Petrovitch, only I am a poor girl, don't make a mock of me; I don't dare to love any one.' Well, brother, you understand! You understand? . . . On that we got engaged

on the spot . I kept thinking and thinking and thinking and thinking, I said to her, ‘How are we to tell your mother?’ She said, ‘It will be hard, wait a little; she’s afraid, and now maybe she would not let you have me; she keeps crying, too.’ Without telling her I blurted it out to her mother today. Lizanka fell on her knees before her, I did the same . . . well, she gave us her blessing. Arkasha, Arkasha! My dear fellow! We will live together. No, I won’t part from you for anything.”

“Vasya, look at you as I may, I can’t believe it. I don’t believe it, I swear. I keep feeling as though. . . . Listen, how can you be engaged to be married? . . . How is it I didn’t know, eh? Do you know, Vasya, I will confess it to you now. I was thinking of getting married myself; but now since you are going to be married, it is just as good! Be happy, be happy! . . .”

“Brother, I feel so lighthearted now, there is such sweetness in my soul ..,” said Vasya, getting up and pacing about the room excitedly. “Don’t you feel the same? We shall be poor, of course, but we shall be happy; and you know it is not a wild fancy; our happiness is not a fairy tale; we shall be happy in reality! . . .”

“Vasya, Vasya, listen!”

“What?” said Vasya, standing before Arkady Ivanovitch.

“The idea occurs to me; I am really afraid to say it to you. . . . Forgive me, and settle my doubts. What are you going to live on? You know I am delighted that you are going to be married, of course, I am delighted, and I don’t know what to do with myself, but what are you going to live on? Eh?”

“Oh, good Heavens! What a fellow you are, Arkasha!” said Vasya, looking at Nefedevitch in profound astonishment. “What do you mean? Even her old mother, even she did not think of that for two minutes when I put it all clearly before her. You had better ask what they are living on! They have five hundred roubles a year between the three of them: the pension, which is all they have, since the father died. She and her old mother and her little brother, whose schooling is paid for out of that income too — that is how they live! It’s you and I are the capitalists! Some good years it works out to as much as seven hundred for me.”

“I say, Vasya, excuse me; I really . . . you know I ... I am only thinking how to prevent things going wrong. How do you mean, seven hundred? It’s only three hundred . . .”

“Three hundred! . . . And Yulian Mastakovitch? Have you forgotten him?”

“Yulian Mastakovitch? But you know that’s uncertain, brother; that’s not the same thing as three hundred roubles of secure salary, where every rouble is a friend you can trust. Yulian Mastakovitch, of course, he’s a great man, in fact, I respect him, I understand him, though he is so far above us; and, by Jove, I love him, because he likes you and gives you something for your work, though he might not pay you, but simply order a clerk to work for him but you will agree, Vasya. . . . Let me tell you, too, I am not talking nonsense. I admit in all Petersburg you won’t find a handwriting like your handwriting, I am ready to allow that to you,” Nefedevitch concluded, not without enthusiasm. “But, God forbid! you may displease him all at once, you may not satisfy him, your work with him may stop, he may take another clerk all sorts of things may happen, in fact! You know, Yulian Mastakovitch may be here to-day and gone to-morrow . . .”

“Well, Arkasha, the ceiling might fall on our heads this minute.”

“Oh, of course, of course, I mean nothing.”

“But listen, hear what I have got to say you know, I don’t see how he can part with me. . . . No, hear what I have to say! Hear what I have to say! You see, I perform all my duties punctually; you know how kind he is, you know, Arkasha, he gave me fifty roubles in silver today!”

“Did he really, Vasya? A bonus for you?”

“Bonus, indeed, it was out of his own pocket. He said: ‘Why, you have had no money for five months, brother, take some if you want it; thank you, I am satisfied with you.’ . . . Yes, really! ‘Yes, you don’t work for me for nothing,’ said he. He did, indeed, that’s what he said. It brought tears into my eyes, Arkasha. Good Heavens, yes!”

“I say, Vasya, have you finished copying those papers? . . .”

“No. ... I haven’t finished them yet.”

“Vas . . . ya ! My angel ! What have you been doing?”

“Listen, Arkasha, it doesn’t matter, they are not wanted for another two days, I have time enough. ...”

“How is it you have not done them?”

That’ s all right, that’s all right. You look so horror-stricken that you turn me inside out and make my heart ache! You are always going on at me like this! He’s for ever crying out: Oh, oh, oh ! ! ! Only consider, what does it matter? Why, I shall finish it, of course I shall finish it. . . .”

“What if you don’t finish it?” cried Arkady, jumping up, “and he has made you a present to-day! And you going to be married. . . . Tut, tut, tut! . .

.”

“It’s all right, it’s all right,” cried Shumkov, “I shall sit down directly, I shall sit down this minute.”

“How did you come to leave it, Vasya?”

“Oh, Arkasha! How could I sit down to work! Have I been in a fit state? Why, even at the office I could scarcely sit still, I could scarcely bear the beating of my heart. . . . Oh! oh ! Now I shall work all night, and I shall work all to-morrow night, and the night after, too and I shall finish it.”

“Is there a great deal left?”

“Don’t hinder me, for goodness’ sake, don’t hinder me; hold your tongue.”

Arkady Ivanovitch went on tip-toe to the bed and sat down, then suddenly wanted to get up, but was obliged to sit down again, remembering that he might interrupt him, though he could not sit still for excitement: it was evident that the news had thoroughly upset him, and the first thrill of delight had not yet passed off. He glanced at Shumkov; the latter glanced at him, smiled, and shook his finger at him, then, frowning severely (as though all his energy and the success of his work depended upon it), fixed his eyes on the papers.

It seemed that he, too, could not yet master his emotion; he kept changing his pen, fidgeting in his chair, re-arranging things, and setting to work again, but his hand trembled and refused to move.

“Arkasha, I’ve talked to them about you,” he cried suddenly, as though he had just remembered it.

“Yes,” cried Arkasha, “I was just wanting to ask you that. Well?”

“Well, I’ll tell you everything afterwards. Of course, it is my own fault, but it quite went out of my head that I didn’t mean to say anything till I had written four pages, but I thought of you and of them. I really can’t write, brother, I keep thinking about you. ...”

Vasya smiled.

A silence followed.

“Phew! What a horrid pen,” cried Shumkov, flinging it on the table in vexation. He took another.

“Vasya! listen! one word ...”

“Well, make haste, and for the last time.”

“Have you a great deal left to do?”

“Ah, brother!” Vasya frowned, as though there could be nothing more terrible and murderous in the whole world than such a question. “A lot, a fearful lot.”

“Do you know, I have an idea.”

“What?”

“Oh, never mind, never mind; go on writing.”

“Why, what? What!”

“It’s past six, Vasya.”

Here Nefedevitch smiled and winked slyly at Vasya, though with a certain timidity, not knowing how Vasya would take it.

“Well, what is it?” said Vasya, throwing down his pen, looking him straight in the face and actually turning pale with excitement.

“Do you know what?”

“For goodness sake, what is it?”

“I tell you what, you are excited, you won’t get much done. . . . Stop, stop, stop! I have it, I have it listen,” said Nefedevitch, jumping up from the bed in delight, preventing Vasya from speaking and doing his utmost to ward off all objections; “ first of all you must get calm, you must pull yourself together, mustn’t you?”

“Arkasha, Arkasha!” cried Vasya, jumping up from his chair, “I will work all night, I will, really.”

“Of course, of course, you won’t go to bed till morning.”

“I won’t go to bed, I won’t go to bed at all.”

“No, that won’t do, that won’t do: you must sleep, go to bed at five. I will call you at eight. Tomorrow is a holiday; you can sit and scribble away all day long. . . . Then the night and — but have you a great deal left to do?”

“Yes, look, look!”

Vasya, quivering with excitement and suspense, showed the manuscript: “Look!”

“I say, brother, that’s not much.”

“My dear fellow, there’s some more of it,” said Vasya, looking very timidly at Nefedevitch, as though the decision whether he was to go or not depended upon the latter.

“How much?”

“Two signatures.”

“Well, what’s that? Come, I tell you what. We shall have time to finish it, by Jove, we shall!”

“Arkasha!”

“Vasya, listen! To-night, on New Year’s Eve, every one is at home with his family. You and I are the only ones without a home or relations. . . . Oh, Vasya!”

Nefedevitch clutched Vasya and hugged him in his leonine arms.

“Arkasha, it’s settled.”

“Vasya, boy, I only wanted to say this. You see, Vasya listen, bandy-legs, listen! . . .”

Arkady stopped, with his mouth open, because he could not speak for delight. Vasya held him by the shoulders, gazed into his face and moved his lips, as though he wanted to speak for him.

“Well,” he brought out at last. “Introduce me to them to-day.”

“Arkady, let us go to tea there. I tell you what, I tell you what. We won’t even stay to see in the New Year, we’ll come away earlier,” cried Vasya, with genuine inspiration.

“That is, we’ll go for two hours, neither more nor less . . . .”

“And then separation till I have finished. ...”

“Vasya, boy!”

“Arkady!”

Three minutes later Arkady was dressed In his best. Vasya did nothing but brush himself, because he had been in such haste to work that he had not changed his trousers.

They hurried out into the street, each more pleased than the other. Their way lay from the Petersburg Side to Kolomna. Arkady Ivanovitch stepped out boldly and vigorously, so that from his walk alone one could see how glad he was at the good fortune of his friend, who was more and more radiant with happiness. Vasya trotted along with shorter steps, though his deportment was none the less dignified. Arkady Ivanovitch, in fact, had never seen him before to such advantage. At that moment he actually felt more respect for him, and Vasya’s physical defect, of which the reader is not yet aware (Vasya was slightly deformed), which always called forth a feeling of loving sympathy in Arkady Ivanovitch’s kind heart, contributed to the deep tenderness the latter felt for him at this moment, a tenderness of which Vasya was in every way worthy. Arkady Ivanovitch felt ready to weep with happiness, but he restrained himself.

“Where are you going, where are you going, Vasya? It is nearer this way,” he cried, seeing that Vasya was making in the direction of

Voznesenky.

“Hold your tongue, Arkasha.”

“It really is nearer, Vasya.”

“Do you know what, Arkasha?” Vasya began mysteriously, in a voice quivering with joy, “I tell you what, I want to take Lizanka a little present.”

“What sort of present?”

“At the corner here, brother, is Madame Leroux’s, a wonderful shop.”

“Well.”

“A cap, my dear, a cap; I saw such a charming little cap to-day. I inquired, I was told it was the fag on Manon Lescaut — a delightful thing. Cherry-coloured ribbons, and if it is not dear . . . Arkasha, even if it is dear. . . .”

“I think you are superior to any of the poets. Vasya. Come along.”

They ran along, and two minutes later went into the shop. They were met by a black-eyed Frenchwoman with curls, who, from the first glance at her customers, became as joyous and happy as they, even happier, if one may say so. Vasya was ready to kiss Madame Leroux in his delight. . . .

“Arkasha,” he said in an undertone, casting a casual glance at all the grand and beautiful things on little wooden stands on the huge table, “lovely things! What’s that? What’s this? This one, for instance, this little sweet, do you see?” Vasya whispered, pointing to a charming cap further away, which was not the one he meant to buy, because he had already from afar descried and fixed his eyes upon the real, famous one, standing at the other end. He looked at it in such a way that one might have supposed some one was going to steal it, or as though the cap itself might take wings and fly into the air just to prevent Vasya from obtaining it.

“Look,” said Arkady Ivanovitch, pointing to one, “I think that’s better.”

“Well, Arkasha, that does you credit; I begin to respect you for your taste,” said Vasya, resorting to cunning with Arkasha in the tenderness of his heart, “your cap is charming, but come this way.”

“Where is there a better one, brother?”

“Look; this way.”

“That,” said Arkady, doubtfully.

But when Vasya, incapable of restraining himself any longer, took it from the stand from which it seemed to fly spontaneously, as though delighted at falling at last into the hands of so good a customer, and they heard the rustle of its ribbons, ruches and lace, an unexpected cry of delight

broke from the powerful chest of Arkady Ivanovitch. Even Madame Leroux, while maintaining her incontestable dignity and pre-eminence in matters of taste, and remaining mute from condescension, rewarded Vasya with a smile of complete approbation, everything in her glance, gesture and smile saying at once: “Yes, you have chosen rightly, and are worthy of the happiness which awaits you.”

“It has been dangling its charms in coy seclusion,” cried Vasya, transferring his tender feelings to the charming cap. “You have been hiding on purpose, you sly little pet!” And he kissed it, that is the air surrounding it, for he was afraid to touch his treasure.

“Retiring as true worth and virtue,” Arkady added enthusiastically, quoting humorously from a comic paper he had read that morning. “Well, Vasya?”

“Hurrah, Arkasha! You are witty to-day. I predict you will make a sensation, as women say. Madame Leroux, Madame Leroux!”

“What is your pleasure?”

“Dear Madame Leroux.”

Madame Leroux looked at Arkady Ivanovitch and smiled condescendingly. “You wouldn’t believe how I adore you at this moment. . . . Allow me to give you a kiss. ...” And Vasya kissed the shopkeeper.

She certainly at that moment needed all her dignity to maintain her position with such a madcap. But I contend that the innate, spontaneous courtesy and grace with which Madame Leroux received Vasya’s enthusiasm, was equally befitting. She forgave him, and how tactfully, how graciously, she knew how to behave in the circumstances. How could she have been angry with Vasya?

“Madame Leroux, how much?”

“Five roubles in silver,” she answered, straightening herself with a new smile.

“And this one, Madame Leroux?” said Arkady Ivanovitch, pointing to his choice.

“That one is eight roubles.”

“There, you see there, you see! Come, Madame Leroux, tell me which is nicer, more graceful, more charming, which of them suits you best?”

“The second is richer, but your choice c’est plus coquet.”

“Then we will take it.”

Madame Leroux took a sheet of very delicate paper, pinned it up, and the paper with the cap wrapped in it seemed even lighter than the paper alone. Vasya took it carefully, almost holding his breath, bowed to Madame Leroux, said something else very polite to her and left the shop.

“I am a lady’s man, I was born to be a lady’s man,” said Vasya, laughing a little noiseless, nervous laugh and dodging the passers-by, whom he suspected of designs for crushing his precious cap.

“Listen, Arkady, brother,” he began a minute later, and there was a note of triumph, of infinite affection in his voice. “Arkady, I am so happy, I am so happy!”

“Vasya! how glad I am, dear boy!”

“No, Arkasha, no. I know that there is no limit to your affection for me; but you cannot be feeling one-hundredth part of what I am feeling at this moment. My heart is so full, so full! Arkasha, I am not worthy of such happiness. I feel that, I am conscious of it. Why has it come to me?” he said, his voice full of stifled sobs. “What have I done to deserve it? Tell me. Look what lots of people, what lots of tears, what sorrow, what work-a-day life without a holiday, while I, I am loved by a girl like that, I.... But you will see her yourself immediately, you will appreciate her noble heart. I was born in a humble station, now I have a grade in the service and an independent income — my salary. I was born with a physical defect, I am a little deformed. See, she loves me as I am. Yulian Mastakovitch was so kind, so attentive, so gracious to-day; he does not often talk to me; he came up to me: ‘Well, how goes it, Vasya’ (yes, really, he called me Vasya), ‘are you going to have a good time for the holiday, eh?’ he laughed.

“‘Well, the fact is, Your Excellency, I have work to do,’ but then I plucked up courage and said: ‘and maybe I shall have a good time, too, Your Excellency.’ I really said it. He gave me the money, on the spot, then he said a couple of words more to me. Tears came into my eyes, brother, I actually cried, and he, too, seemed touched, he patted me on the shoulder, and said: ‘Feel always, Vasya, as you feel this now.

Vasya paused for an instant. Arkady Ivanovitch turned away, and he, too, wiped away a tear with his fist.

“And, and . . .” Vasya went on, “I have never spoken to you of this, Arkady. . . Arkady, you make me so happy with your affection, without you I could not live, no, no, don’t say anything, Arkady, let me squeeze your hand, let me . . tha . . . ank . . . you ...” Again Vasya could not finish.

Arkady Ivanovitch longed to throw himself on Vasya's neck, but as they were crossing the road and heard almost in their ears a shrill: "Hi! there!" they ran frightened and excited to the pavement.

Arkady Ivanovitch was positively relieved. He set down Vasya's outburst of gratitude to the exceptional circumstances of the moment. He was vexed. He felt that he had done so little for Vasya hitherto. He felt actually ashamed of himself when Vasya began thanking him for so little. But they had all their lives before them, and Arkady Ivanovitch breathed more freely.

The Artemyevs had quite given up expecting them. The proof of it was that they had already sat down to tea! And the old, it seems, are sometimes more clear-sighted than the young, even when the young are so exceptional. Lizanka had very earnestly maintained, "He isn't coming, he isn't coming, Mamma; I feel in my heart he is not coming;" while her mother on the contrary declared "that she had a feeling that he would certainly come, that he would not stay away, that he would run round, that he could have no office work now, on New Year's Eve. Even as Lizanka opened the door she did not in the least expect to see them, and greeted them breathlessly, with her heart throbbing like a captured bird's, flushing and turning as red as a cherry, a fruit which she wonderfully resembled. Good Heavens, what a surprise it was! What a joyful "Oh!" broke from her lips. "Deceiver! My darling!" she cried, throwing her arms round Vasya's neck. But imagine her amazement, her sudden confusion: just behind Vasya, as though trying to hide behind his back, stood Arkady Ivanovitch, a trifle out of countenance. It must be admitted that he was awkward in the company of women, very awkward indeed, in fact on one occasion something occurred . . . but of that later. You must put yourself in his place, however. There was nothing to laugh at; he was standing in the entry, in his goloshes and overcoat, and in a cap with flaps over the ears, which he would have hastened to pull off, but he had, all twisted round in a hideous way, a yellow knitted scarf, which, to make things worse, was knotted at the back. He had to disentangle all this, to take it off as quickly as possible, to show himself to more advantage, for there is no one who does not prefer to show himself to advantage. And then Vasya, vexatious insufferable Vasya, of course always the same dear kind Vasya, but now insufferable, ruthless Vasya. " Here," he shouted, "Lizanka, I have brought you my Arkady? What do you think of him? He is my best friend, embrace him, kiss him, Lizanka, give him a kiss in advance; afterwards you will know him better — you can take it back again."

Well, what, I ask you, was Arkady Ivanovitch to do? And he had only untwisted half of the scarf so far. I really am sometimes ashamed of Vasya's excess of enthusiasm; it is, of course, the sign of a good heart, but . . . it's awkward, not nice!

At last both went in. ... The mother was unutterably delighted to make Arkady Ivanovitch's acquaintance, "she had heard so much about him, she had ..." But she did not finish. A joyful "Oh!" ringing musically through the room interrupted her in the middle of a sentence. Good Heavens! Lizanka was standing before the cap which had suddenly been unfolded before her gaze; she clasped her hands with the utmost simplicity, smiling such a smile.... Oh, Heavens! Why had not Madame Leroux an even lovelier cap?

Oh, Heavens! but where could you find a lovelier cap? It was quite first-rate. Where could you get a better one? I mean it seriously. This ingratitude on the part of lovers moves me, in fact, to indignation and even wounds me a little. Why, look at it for yourself, reader, look, what could be more beautiful than this little love of a cap? Come, look at it. ... But, no, no, my strictures are uncalled for; they had by now all agreed with me; it had been a momentary aberration; the blindness, the delirium of feeling; I am ready to forgive them. . . . But then you must look . . . You must excuse me, kind reader, I am still talking about the cap: made of tulle, light as a feather, a broad cherry-coloured ribbon covered with lace passing between the tulle and the ruche, and at the back two wide long ribbons they would fall down a little below the nape of the neck. . . . All that the cap needed was to be tilted a little to the back of the head; come, look at it; I ask you, after that . . . but I see you are not looking . . . you think it does not matter. You are looking in a different direction. . . . You are looking at two big tears, big as pearls, that rose in two jet black eyes, quivered for one instant on the eye lashes, and then dropped on the ethereal tulle of which Madame Leroux's artistic masterpiece was composed. . . . And again I feel vexed, those two tears were scarcely a tribute to the cap. . . . No, to my mind, such a gift should be given in cool blood, as only then can its full worth be appreciated. I am, I confess, dear reader, entirely on the side of the cap.

They sat down Vasya with Lizanka and the old mother with Arkady Ivanovitch; they began to talk, and Arkady Ivanovitch did himself credit, I am glad to say that for him. One would hardly, indeed, have expected it of him. After a couple of words about Vasya he most successfully turned the conversation to Yulian Mastakovitch, his patron. And he talked so cleverly,

so cleverly that the subject was not exhausted for an hour. You ought to have seen with what dexterity, what tact, Arkady Ivanovitch touched upon certain peculiarities of Yulian Mastakovitch which directly or indirectly affected Vasya. The mother was fascinated, genuinely fascinated; she admitted it herself; she purposely called Vasya aside, and said to him that his friend was a most excellent and charming young man, and, what was of most account, such a serious, steady young man. Vasya almost laughed aloud with delight. He remembered how the serious Arkady had tumbled him on his bed for a quarter of an hour. Then the mother signed to Vasya to follow her quietly and cautiously into the next room. It must be admitted that she treated Lizanka rather unfairly: she behaved treacherously to her daughter, in the fullness of her heart, of course, and showed Vasya on the sly the present Lizanka was preparing to give him for the New Year. It was a paper-case, embroidered in beads and gold in a very choice design: on one side was depicted a stag, absolutely lifelike, running swiftly, and so well done! On the other side was the portrait of a celebrated General, also an excellent likeness. I cannot describe Vasya's raptures. Meanwhile, time was not being wasted in the parlour. Lizanka went straight up to Arkady Ivanovitch. She took his hand, she thanked him for something, and Arkady Ivanovitch gathered that she was referring to her precious Vasya. Lizanka was, indeed, deeply touched: she had heard that Arkady Ivanovitch was such a true friend of her betrothed, so loved him, so watched over him, guiding him at every step with helpful advice, that she, Lizanka, could hardly help thanking him, could not refrain from feeling grateful, and hoping that Arkady Ivanovitch might like her, if only half as well as Vasya. Then she began questioning him as to whether Vasya was careful of his health, expressed some apprehensions in regard to his marked impulsiveness of character, and his lack of knowledge of men and practical life; she said that she would in time watch over him religiously, that she would take care of and cherish his lot, and finally, she hoped that Arkady Ivanovitch would not leave them, but would live with them.

"We three shall live like one," she cried, with extremely naive enthusiasm.

But it was time to go. They tried, of course, to keep them, but Vasya answered point blank that it was impossible. Arkady Ivanovitch said the same. The reason was, of course, inquired into, and it came out at once that there was work to be done — entrusted to Vasya by Yulian Mastakovitch,

urgent, necessary, dreadful work, which must be handed in on the morning of the next day but one, and that it was not only unfinished, but had been completely laid aside. The mamma sighed when she heard of this, while Lizanka was positively scared, and hurried Vasya off in alarm. The last kiss lost nothing from this haste; though brief and hurried it was only the more warm and ardent. At last they parted and the two friends set off home.

Both began at once confiding to each other their impressions as soon as they found themselves in the street. And could they help it? Indeed, Arkady Ivanovitch was in love, desperately in love, with Lizanka. And to whom could he better confide his feelings than to Vasya, the happy man himself. And so he did; he was not bashful, but confessed everything at once to Vasya. Vasya laughed heartily and was immensely delighted, and even observed that this was all that was needed to make them greater friends than ever. “You have guessed my feelings, Vasya,” said Arkady Ivanovitch. “Yes, I love her as I love you; she will be my good angel as well as yours, for the radiance of your happiness will be shed on me, too, and I can bask in its warmth. She will keep house for me too, Vasya; my happiness will be in her hands. Let her keep house for me as she will for you. Yes, friendship for you is friendship for her; you are not separable for me now, only I shall have two beings like you instead of one. ...” Arkady paused in the fullness of his feelings, while Vasya was shaken to the depths of his being by his friend’s words. The fact is, he had never expected anything of the sort from Arkady. Arkady Ivanovitch was not very great at talking as a rule, he was not fond of dreaming, either; now he gave way to the liveliest, freshest, rainbow-tinted day-dreams. “How I will protect and cherish you both,” he began again. “To begin with, Vasya, I will be godfather to all your children, every one of them; and secondly, Vasya, we must bestir ourselves about the future. We must buy furniture, and take a lodging so that you and she and I can each have a little room to ourselves. Do you know, Vasya, I’ll run about to-morrow and look at the notices, on the gates! Three . . . no, two rooms, we should not need more. I really believe, Vasya, I talked nonsense this morning, there will be money enough; why, as soon as I glanced into her eyes I calculated at once that there would be enough to live on. It will all be for her. Oh, how we will work! Now, Vasya, we might venture up to twenty-five roubles for rent. A lodging is everything, brother. Nice rooms . . . and at once a man is cheerful, and his dreams are of the brightest hues. And, besides, Lizanka will keep the purse for both of us: not a farthing will be

wasted. Do you suppose I would go to a restaurant? What do you take me for? Not on any account. And then we shall get a bonus and reward, for we shall be zealous in the service — oh! how we shall work, like oxen toiling in the fields. . . . Only fancy," and Arkady Ivanovitch's voice was faint with pleasure, "all at once and quite unexpected, twenty-five or thirty roubles. . . . Whenever there's an extra, there'll be a cap or a scarf or a pair of little stockings. She must knit me a scarf; look what a horrid one I've got, the nasty yellow thing, it did me a bad turn to-day! And you wore a nice one, Vasya, to introduce me while I had my head in a halter. . . . Though never mind that now. And look here, I undertake all the silver. I am bound to give you some little present, that will be an honour, that will flatter my vanity. . . . My bonuses won't fail me, surely; you don't suppose they would give them to Skorohodov? No fear, they won't be landed in that person's pocket. I'll buy you silver spoons, brother, good knives not silver knives, but thoroughly good ones; and a waistcoat, that is a waistcoat for myself. I shall be best man, of course, Only now, brother, you must keep at it, you must keep at it. I shall stand over you with a stick, brother, to-day and to-morrow and all night; I shall worry you to work. Finish, make haste and finish, brother. And then again to spend the evening, and then again both of us happy; we will go in for loto. We will spend the evening there oh, it's jolly! Oh, the devil! How, vexing it Is I can't help you. I should like to take It and write it all for you. . . . Why is it our handwriting is not alike?"

"Yes," answered Vasya." Yes, I must make haste. I think it must be eleven o'clock; we must make haste.... To work!" And saying this, Vasya, who had been all the time alternately smiling and trying to interrupt with some enthusiastic rejoinder the flow of his friend's feelings, and had, in short, been showing the most cordial response, suddenly subsided, sank into silence, and almost ran along the street. It seemed as though some burdensome idea had suddenly chilled his feverish head; he seemed all at once dispirited.

Arkady Ivanovitch felt quite uneasy; he scarcely got an answer to his hurried questions from Vasya, who confined himself to a word or two, sometimes an irrelevant exclamation.

"Why, what is the matter with you, Vasya!" he cried at last, hardly able to keep up with him." Can you really be so uneasy?"

"Oh, brother, that's enough chatter!" Vasya answered, with vexation.

“Don’t be depressed, Vasya come, come,” Arkady interposed. “ Why, I have known you write much more in a shorter time! What’s the matter? You’ve simply a talent for it! You can write quickly in an emergency; they are not going to lithograph your copy. You’ve plenty of time! . . . The only thing is that you are excited now, and preoccupied, and the work won’t go so easily.”

Vasya made no reply, or muttered something to himself, and they both ran home in genuine anxiety.

Vasya sat down to the papers at once. Arkady Ivanovitch was quiet and silent; he noiselessly undressed and went to bed, keeping his eyes fixed on Vasya. ... A sort of panic came over him. . . . “What is the matter with him?” he thought to himself, looking at Vasya’s face that grew whiter and whiter, at his feverish eyes, at the anxiety that was betrayed in every movement he made, “ why, his hand is shaking . . . what a stupid! Why did I not advise him to sleep for a couple of hours, till he had slept off his nervous excitement, any way.” Vasya had just finished a page, he raised his eyes, glanced casually at Arkady and at once, looking down, took up his pen again.

“Listen, Vasya,” Arkady Ivanovitch began suddenly, “ wouldn’t it be best to sleep a little now? Look, you are in a regular fever.”

Vasya glanced at Arkady with vexation, almost with anger, and made no answer.

“Listen, Vasya, you’ll make yourself ill.”

Vasya at once changed his mind. “How would it be to have tea, Arkady?” he said.

“How so? Why?”

“It will do me good. I am not sleepy, I’m not going to bed! I am going on writing. But now I should like to rest and have a cup of tea, and the worst moment will be over.”

“First-rate, brother Vasya, delightful! Just so. I was wanting to propose it myself. And I can’t think why it did not occur to me to do so. But I say, Mavra won’t get up, she won’t wake for anything. ...”

“True.”

“That’s no matter, though,” cried Arkady Ivanovitch, leaping out of bed. “ I will set the samovar myself. It won’t be the first time.” Arkady Ivanovitch ran to the kitchen and set to work to get the samovar; Vasya meanwhile went on writing. Arkady Ivanovitch, moreover, dressed and ran

out to the baker’s, so that Vasya might have something to sustain him for the night. A quarter of an hour later the samovar was on the table. They began drinking tea, but conversation flagged. Vasya still seemed preoccupied.

“To-morrow,” he said at last, as though he had just thought of it, “I shall have to take my congratulations for the New Year . . .”

“You need not go at all.”

“Oh yes, brother, I must,” said Vasya.

“Why, I will sign the visitors’ book for you everywhere. . . . How can you? You work to-rnorrow. You must work tonight, till five o’clock in the morning, as I said, and then get to bed. Or else you will be good for nothing to-morrow. I’ll wake you at eight o’clock, punctually.”

“But will it be all right, your signing for me?” said Vasya, half assenting.

“Why, what could be better? Everyone does it.”

“I am really afraid.”

“Why, why?”

“It’s all right, you know, with other people, but Yulian Mastakovitch ... he has been so kind to me, you know, Arkasha, and when he notices it’s not my own signature ...”

“Notices! why, what a fellow you are, really, Vasya! How could he notice? . . . Come, you know I can imitate your signature awfully well, and make just the same flourish to it, upon my word I can. What nonsense! Who would notice?”

Vasya, made no reply, but emptied his glass hurriedly. Then he shook his head doubtfully.

“Vasya, dear boy! Ah, if only we succeed! Vasya, what’s the matter with you, you quite frighten me! Do you know, Vasya, I am not going to bed now, I am not going to sleep! Show me, have you a great deal left?”

Vasya gave Arkady such a look that his heart sank, and his tongue failed him.

“Vasya, what is the matter? What are you thinking? Why do you look like that?”

“Arkady, I really must go to-morrow to wish Yulian Mastakovitch a happy New Year.”

“Well, go then! “ said Arkady, gazing at him open-eyed, in uneasy expectation. “I say, Vasya, do write faster; I am advising you for your good, I really am! How often Yulian Mastakovitch himself has said that what he

likes particularly about your writing is its legibility. Why, it is all that Skoroplehin cares for, that writing should bo good and distinct like a copy, so as afterwards to pocket the paper and take it home for his children to copy; he can't buy copybooks, the blockhead! Yulian Mastakovitch is always saying, always insisting: 'Legible, legible, legible!' . . . What is the matter? Vasya, I really don't know how to talk to you ... it quite frightens me . . . you crush me with your depression."

"It's all right, it's all right," said Vasya, and he fell back in his chair as though fainting. Arkady was alarmed.

"Will you have some water? Vasya! Vasya!"

"Don't, don't," said Vasya, pressing his hand. "I am all right, I only feel sad, I can't tell why. Better talk of something else; let me forget it."

"Calm yourself, for goodness' sake, calm yourself, Vasya. You will finish it all right, on my honour, you will. And even if you don't finish, what will it matter? You talk as though it were a crime!"

"Arkady," said Vasya, looking at his friend with such meaning that Arkady was quite frightened, for Vasya had never been so agitated before. . . . "If I were alone, as I used to be. . . . No! I don't mean that. I keep wanting to tell you as a friend, to confide in you. . . . But why worry you, though? . . . You see, Arkady, to some much is given, others do a little thing as I do. Well, if gratitude, appreciation, is expected of you, . . . and you can't give it?"

"Vasya, I don't understand you in the least."

"I have never been ungrateful," Vasya went on softly, as though speaking to himself, " but if I am incapable of expressing all I feel, it seems as though ... it seems, Arkady, as though I am really ungrateful, and that's killing me."

"What next, what next ! As though gratitude meant nothing more than your finishing that copy in time? Just think what you are saying, Vasya? Is that the whole expression of gratitude?"

Vasya sank into silence at once, and looked open-eyed at Arkady, as though his unexpected argument had settled all his doubts. He even smiled, but the same melancholy expression came back to his face at once. Arkady, taking this smile as a sign that all his uneasiness was over, and the look that succeeded it as an indication that he was determined to do better, was greatly relieved.

"Well, brother Arkasha, you will wake up," said Vasya, "keep an eye on me; if I fall asleep it will be dreadful. I'll set to work now. . . . Arkasha?"

“What?”

“Oh, it’s nothing, I only ... I meant. . . .”

Vasya settled himself, and said no more, Arkady got into bed. Neither of them said one word about their friends, the Artemyevs. Perhaps both of them felt that they had been a little to blame, and that they ought not to have gone for their jaunt when they did. Arkady soon fell asleep, still worried about Vasya. To his own surprise he woke up exactly at eight o’clock in the morning. Vasya was asleep in his chair with the pen in his hand, pale and exhausted; the candle had burnt out. Mavra was busy getting the samovar ready in the kitchen.

“Vasya, Vasya!” Arkady cried in alarm, “when did you fall asleep?”

Vasya opened his eyes and jumped up from his chair.

“Oh!” he cried, “I must have fallen asleep. . . .”

He flew to the papers — everything was right; all were in order; there was not a blot of ink, nor spot of grease from the candle on them.

“I think I must have fallen asleep about six o’clock,” said Vasya. “How cold it is in the night! Let us have tea, and I will go on again. ...”

“Do you feel better?”

“Yes, yes, I’m all right, I’m all right now.”

“A happy New Year to you, brother Vasya.”

“And to you too, brother, the same to you, dear boy.”

They embraced each other. Vasya’s chin was quivering and his eyes were moist. Arkady Ivanovitch was silent, he felt sad. They drank their tea hastily.

“Arkady, I’ve made up my mind, I am going myself to Yulian Mastakovitch.”

“Why, he wouldn’t notice.”

“But my conscience feels ill at ease, brother.”

“But you know it’s for his sake you are sitting here; it’s for his sake you are wearing yourself out.”

“Enough!”

“Do you know what, brother, I’ll go round and see. . . .”

“Whom?” asked Vasya.

“The Artemyevs. I’ll take them your good wishes for the New Year as well as mine.”

“My dear fellow! Well, I’ll stay here; and I see it’s a good idea of yours; I shall be working here, I shan’t waste my time. Wait one minute, I’ll write

a note.”

“Yes, do brother, do, there’s plenty of time. I’ve still to wash and shave and to brush my best coat. Well, Vasya, we are going to be contented and happy. Embrace me, Vasya.”

“Ah, if only we may, brother. ...”

“Does Mr. Shumkov live here?” they heard a child’s voice on the stairs.

“Yes, my dear, yes,” said Mavra, showing the visitor in.

“What’s that? What is it? “ cried Vasya, leaping up from the table and rushing to the entry, “ Petinka, you?”

“Good morning, I have the honour to wish you a happy New Year, Vassily Petrovitch,” said a pretty boy of ten years old with curly black hair. “Sister sends you her love, and so does Mamma, and Sister told me to give you a kiss for her.”

Vasya caught the messenger up in the air and printed a long, enthusiastic kiss on his lips, which were very much like Lizanka’s.

“Kiss him, Arkady,” he said handing Petya to him, and without touching the ground the boy was transferred to Arkady Ivanovitch’s powerful and eager arms.

“Will you have some breakfast, dear?”

“Thank-you, very much. We have had it already, we got up early to-day, the others have gone to church. Sister was two hours curling my hair, and pomading it, washing me and mending my trousers, for I tore them yesterday, playing with Sashka in the street, we were snowballing.”

“Well, well, well!”

“So she dressed me up to come and see you, and then pomaded my head and then gave me a regular kissing. She said : ‘Go to Vasya, wish him a happy New Year, and ask whether they are happy, whether they had a good night, and . . .’ to ask something else, oh yes! whether you had finished the work you spoke of yesterday . . . when you were there. Oh, I’ve got it all written down,” said the boy, reading from a slip of paper which he took out of his pocket. “ Yes, they were uneasy.”

“It will be finished! It will be! Tell her that it will be. I shall finish it, on my word of honour!”

“And something else. . . . Oh yes, I forgot. Sister sent a little note and a present, and I was forgetting it ! . . .”

“My goodness! Oh, you little darling! Where is it? where is it? That’s it, oh! Look, brother, see what she writes. The darling, the precious! You know

I saw there yesterday a paper-case for me; it's not finished, so she says, 'I am sending you a lock of my hair, and the other will come later.' Look, brother, look!"

And overwhelmed with rapture he showed Arkady Ivanovitch a curl of luxuriant, jet-black hair; then he kissed it fervently and put it in his breast pocket, nearest his heart.

"Vasya, I shall get you a locket for that curl," Arkady Ivanovitch said resolutely at last.

"And we are going to have hot veal, and to-morrow brains. Mamma wants to make cakes . . . but we are not going to have millet porridge," said the boy, after a moment's thought, to wind up his budget of interesting items.

"Oh! what a pretty boy," cried Arkady Ivanovitch. "Vasya, you are the happiest of mortals."

The boy finished his tea, took from Vasya a note, a thousand kisses, and went out happy and frolicsome as before.

"Well, brother," began Arkady Ivanovitch, highly delighted, *you see how splendid it all is; you see. Everything is going well, don't be downcast, don't be uneasy. Go ahead! Get it done, Vasya, get it done. I'll be home at two o'clock. I'll go round to them, and then to Yulian Mastakovitch."*

"Well, good-bye, brother; good-bye ... Oh! if only. . . . Very good, you go, very good," said Vasya, "then I really won't go to Yulian Mastakovitch."

"Good-bye."

"Stay, brother, stay, tell them . . . well, whatever you think fit. Kiss her. . . . and give me a full account of everything afterwards."

"Come, come of course, I know all about it. This happiness has upset you. The suddenness of it all; you've not been yourself since yesterday. You have not got over the excitement of yesterday. Well, it's settled. Now try and get over it, Vasya. Good-bye, good-bye!"

At last the friends parted. All the morning Arkady Ivanovitch was preoccupied, and could think of nothing but Vasya. He knew his weak, highly nervous character. "Yes, this happiness has upset him, I was right there," he said to himself. "Upon my word, he has made me quite depressed, too, that man will make a tragedy of anything! What a feverish creature! Oh, I must save him! I must save him!" said Arkady, not noticing that he himself was exaggerating into something serious a slight trouble, in

reality quite trivial. Only at eleven o'clock he reached the porter's lodge of Yulian Mastakovitch's house, to add his modest name to the long list of illustrious persons who had written their names on a sheet of blotted and scribbled paper in the porter's lodge. What was his surprise when he saw just above his own the signature of Vasya Shumkov! It amazed him. "What's the matter with him?" he thought. Arkady Ivanovitch, who had just been so buoyant with hope, came out feeling upset. There was certainly going to be trouble, but how? And in what form? He reached the Artemyevs with gloomy forebodings; he seemed absent-minded from the first, and after talking a little with Lizanka went away with tears in his eyes; he was really anxious about Vasya. He went home running, and on the Neva came full tilt upon Vasya himself. The latter, too, was uneasy.

"Where are you going!" cried Arkady Ivanovitch.

Vasya stopped as though he had been caught in a crime.

"Oh, it's nothing, brother, I wanted to go for a walk."

"You could not stand it, and have been to the Artemyevs? Oh, Vasya, Vasya! Why did you go to Yulian Mastakovitch?"

Vasya did not answer, but then with a wave of his hand, he said: " Arkady, I don't know what is the matter with me. I. . . ."

"Come, come, Vasya. I know what it is. Calm yourself. You've been excited, and overwrought ever since yesterday. Only think, it's not much to bear. Everybody's fond of you, everybody's ready to do anything for you; your work is getting on all right; you will get it done, you will certainly get it done. I know that you have been imagining something, you have had apprehensions about something. ..."

"No, it's all right, it's all right. . . ."

"Do you remember, Vasya, do you remember it was the same with you once before; do you remember, when you got your promotion, in your joy and thankfulness you were so zealous that you spoilt all your work for a week? It is just the same with you now."

"Yes, yes, Arkady; but now it is different, it is not that at all."

"How is it different? And very likely the work is not urgent at all, while you are killing yourself. . . ."

"It's nothing, it's nothing. I am all right, it's nothing. Well, come along!"

"Why, are you going home, and not to them?"

"Yes, brother, how could I have the face to turn up there? . . . I have changed my mind. It was only that I could not stay on alone without you;

now you are coming back with me — I'll sit down to write again. Let us go!"

They walked along and for some time were silent. Vasya was in haste.

"Why don't you ask me about them?" said Arkady Ivanovitch.

"Oh, yes! Well, Arkasha, what about them?"

"Vasya, you are not like yourself."

"Oh, I am all right, I am all right. Tell me everything, Arkasha," said Vasya, in an imploring voice, as though to avoid further explanations. Arkady Ivanovitch sighed. He felt utterly at a loss, looking at Vasya.

His account of their friends roused Vasya. He even grew talkative. They had dinner together. Lizanka's mother had filled Arkady Ivanovitch's pockets with little cakes, and eating them the friends grew more cheerful. After dinner Vasya promised to take a nap, so as to sit up all night. He did, in fact lie down. In the morning, some one whom it was impossible to refuse had invited Arkady Ivanovitch to tea. The friends parted. Arkady promised to come back as soon as he could, by eight o'clock if possible. The three hours of separation seemed to him like three years. At last he got away and rushed back to Vasya. When he went into the room, he found it in darkness. Vasya was not at home. He asked Mavra. Mavra said that he had been writing all the time, and had not slept at all, then he had paced up and down the room, and after that, an hour before, he had run out, saying he would be back in half -an -hour; "and when, says he, Arkady Ivanovitch comes in, tell him, old woman, says he," Mavra told him in conclusion, " that I have gone out for a walk," and he repeated the order three or four times.

"He is at the Artemyevs," thought Arkady Ivanovitch, and he shook his head.

A minute later he jumped up with renewed hope.

"He has simply finished," he thought, "that's all it is; he couldn't wait, but ran off there. But, no! he would have waited for me. . . . Let's have a peep what he has there."

He lighted a candle, and ran to Vasya's writing-table: the work had made progress and it looked as though there were not much left to do. Arkady Ivanovitch was about to investigate further, when Vasya himself walked in. . . .

"Oh, you are here?" he cried, with a start of dismay.

Arkady Ivanovitch was silent. He was afraid to question Vasya. The latter dropped his eyes and remained silent too, as he began sorting the papers. At last their eyes met. The look in Vasya's was so beseeching, imploring, and broken, that Arkady shuddered when he saw it. His heart quivered and was full.

"Vasya, my dear boy, what is it? What's wrong?" he cried, rushing to him and squeezing him in his arms. "Explain to me, I don't understand you, and your depression. What is the matter with you, my poor, tormented boy? What is it? Tell me all about it, without hiding anything. It can't be only this."

Vasya held him tight and could say nothing. He could scarcely breathe.

"Don't, Vasya, don't ! Well, if you don't finish it, what then? I don't understand you; tell me your trouble. You see it is for your sake I ... Oh dear! oh dear!" he said, walking up and down the room and clutching at everything he came across, as though seeking at once some remedy for Vasya. "I will go to Yulian Mastakovitch instead of you to-morrow. I will ask him — entreat him to let you have another day. I will explain it all to him, anything, if it worries you so. . . ."

"God forbid!" cried Vasya, and turned as white as the wall. He could scarcely stand on his feet.

"Vasya! Vasya!"

Vasya pulled himself together. His lips were quivering; he tried to say something, but could only convulsively squeeze Arkady's hand in silence. His hand was cold. Arkady stood facing him, full of anxious and miserable suspense. Vasya raised his eyes again.

"Vasya, God bless you, Vasya! You wring my heart, my dear boy, my friend."

Tears gushed from Vasya's eyes; he flung himself on Arkady's bosom.

"I have deceived you, Arkady," he said. "I have deceived you. Forgive me, forgive me! I have been faithless to your friendship ..."

"What is it, Vasya? What is the matter? " asked Arkady, in real alarm.

"Look!"

And with a gesture of despair Vasya tossed out of the drawer on to the table six thick manuscripts, similar to the one he had copied.

"What's this?"

"What I have to get through by the day after to-morrow. I haven't done a quarter! Don't ask me, don't ask me how it has happened," Vasya went on,

speaking at once of what was distressing him so terribly. “Arkady, dear friend, I don’t know myself what came over me. I feel as though I were coming out of a dream. I have wasted three weeks doing nothing. I kept ... I ... kept going to see her. . . . My heart was aching, I was tormented by ... the uncertainty ... I could not write. I did not even think about it. Only now, when happiness is at hand for me, I have come to my senses.”

“Vasya,” began Arkady Ivanovitch resolutely, “Vasya, I will save you. I understand it all. It’s a serious matter; I will save you. Listen! listen to me: I will go to Yulian Mastakovitch to-morrow. . . . Don’t shake your head; no, listen! I will tell him exactly how it has all been; let me do that . . . I will explain to him. ... I will go into everything. I will tell him how crushed you are, how you are worrying yourself.”

“Do you know that you are killing me now? “ Vasya brought out, turning cold with horror.

Arkady Ivanovitch turned pale, but at once controlling himself, laughed.

“Is that all? Is that all?” he said. “Upon my word, Vasya, upon my word ! Aren’t you ashamed ? Come, listen! I see that I am grieving you. You see I understand you; I know what is passing in your heart. Why, we have been living together for five years, thank God! You are such a kind, soft-hearted fellow, but weak, unpardonably weak. Why, even Lizaveta Mikalovna has noticed it. And you are a dreamer, and that’s a bad thing, too; you may go from bad to worse, brother. I tell you, I know what you want! You would like Yulian Mastakovitch, for instance, to be beside himself and, maybe, to give a ball, too, from joy, because you are going to get married. . . . Stop, stop! you are frowning. You see that at one word from me you are offended on Yulian Mastakovitch’s account. Let him alone. You know I respect him just as much as you do. But argue as you may, you can’t prevent my thinking that you would like there to be no one unhappy in the whole world when you are getting married. . . . Yes, brother, you must admit that you would like me, for instance, your best friend, to come in for a fortune of a hundred thousand all of a sudden, you would like all the enemies in the world to be suddenly, for no rhyme or reason, reconciled, so that in their joy they might all embrace one another in the middle of the street, and then, perhaps, come here to call on you. Vasya, my dear boy, I am not laughing; it is true; you’ve said as much to me long ago, in different ways. Because you are happy, you want every one, absolutely every one, to become happy at once. It hurts you and troubles you to be happy alone. And so you want at

once to do your utmost to be worthy of that happiness, and maybe to do some great deed to satisfy your conscience. Oh! I understand how ready you are to distress yourself for having suddenly been remiss just where you ought to have shown your zeal, your capacity . . . well, maybe your gratitude, as you say. It is very bitter for you to think that Yulian Mastakovitch may frown and even be angry when he sees that you have not justified the expectations he had of you. It hurts you to think that you may hear reproaches from the man you look upon as your benefactor and at such a moment! when your heart is full of joy and you don't know on whom to lavish your gratitude. . . . Isn't that true? It is, isn't it?"

Arkady Ivanovitch, whose voice was trembling, paused, and drew a deep breath.

Vasya looked affectionately at his friend. A smile passed over his lips. His face even lighted up, as though with a gleam of hope.

"Well, listen, then," Arkady Ivanovitch began again, growing more hopeful, "there's no necessity that you should forfeit Yulian Mastakovitch 's favour. . . Is there, dear boy? Is there any question of it? And since it is so," said Arkady, jumping up, "I shall sacrifice myself forlfyou. I am going to-morrow to Yulian Mastakovitch, and don't oppose me. You magnify your failure to a crime, Vasya. Yulian Mastakovitch is a magnanimous and merciful, and, what is more, he is not like you. He will listen to you and me, and get us out of our trouble, brother Vasya. Well, are you calmer?"

Vasya pressed his friend's hands with tears in his eyes.

"Hush, hush, Arkady," he said, "the thing is settled. I haven't finished, so very well; if I haven't finished, I haven't finished, and there's no need for you to go. I will tell him all about it, I will go myself. I am calmer now, I am perfectly calm; only you mustn't go. ... But listen ..."

"Vasya, my dear boy," Arkady Ivanovitch cried joyfully, "I judged from what you said. I am glad that you have thought better of things and have recovered yourself. But whatever may befall you, whatever happens, I am with you, remember that. I see that it worries you to think of my speaking toYulian Mastakovitch and I won't say a word, not a word, you shall tell him yourself. You see, you shall go to-morrow. . . . Oh no, you had better not go, you'll go on writing here, you see, and I'll find out about this work, whether it is very urgent or not, whether it must be done by the time or not, and if you don't finish it in time what will come of it. Then I will run back to you. Do you see, do you see! There is still hope; suppose the work is not

urgent it may be all right. Yulian Mastakovitch may not remember, then all is saved.”

Vasya shook his head doubtfully. But his grateful eyes never left his friend’s face.

“Come, that’s enough, I am so weak, so tired,” he said, sighing. “I don’t want to think about it. Let us talk of something else. I won’t write either now; do you know I’ll only finish two short pages just to get to the end of a passage. Listen ... I have long wanted to ask you, how is it you know me so well?”

Tears dropped from Vasya’s eyes on Arkady’s hand.

“If you knew, Vasya, how fond I am of you, you would not ask that yes!”

“Yes, yes, Arkady, I don’t know that, because I don’t know why you are so fond of me. Yes, Arkady, do you know, even your love has been killing me? Do you know, ever so many times, particularly when I am thinking of you in bed (for I always think of you when I am falling asleep), I shed tears, and my heart throbs at -the thought ... at the thought. . . . Well, at the thought that you are so fond of me, while I can do nothing to relieve my heart, can do nothing to repay you.”

“You see, Vasya, you see what a fellow you are! Why, how upset you are now,” said Arkady, whose heart ached at that moment and who remembered the scene in the street the day before.

“Nonsense, you want me to be calm, but I never have been calm and happy ! Do you know. . . . Listen, I want to tell you all about it, but I am afraid of wounding you. . . . You keep scolding me and being vexed; and I am afraid. . . . See how I am trembling now, I don’t know why. You see, this is what I want to say. I feel as though I had never known myself before — yes! Yes, I only began to understand other people too, yesterday. I did not feel or appreciate things fully, brother. My heart . . . was hard. . . . Listen how has it happened, that I have never done good to any one, any one in the world, because I couldn’t — I am not even pleasant to look at. ... But everybody does me good ! You, to begin with: do you suppose I don’t see that? Only I said nothing; only I said nothing.”

“Hush, Vasya!”

“Oh, Arkasha! . . . it’s all right,” Vasya interrupted, hardly able to articulate for tears. “I talked to you yesterday about Yulian Mastakovitch. And you know yourself how stern and severe he is, even you have come in for a reprimand from him; yet he deigned to jest with me yesterday, to show

his affection, and kind-heartedness, which he prudently conceals from every one. . . .”

“Come, Vasya, that only shows you deserve your good fortune.”

“Oh, Arkasha! How I longed to finish all this. . . . No, I shall ruin my good luck! I feel that! Oh no, not through that,” Vasya added, seeing that Arkady glanced at the heap of urgent work lying on the table, “that’s nothing, that’s only paper covered with writing . . . it’s nonsense! That matter’s settled. ... I went to see them to-day, Arkasha; I did not go in. I felt depressed and sad. I simply stood at the door. She was playing the piano, I listened. You see, Arkady,” he went on, dropping his voice, “I did not dare to go in.”

“I say, Vasya what is the matter with you? You look at one so strangely.”

“Oh, it’s nothing, I feel a little sick; my legs are trembling; it’s because I sat up last night. Yes ! Everything looks green before my eyes. It’s here, here—” He pointed to his heart. He fainted. When he came to himself Arkady tried to take forcible measures. He tried to compel him to go to bed. Nothing would induce Vasya to consent. He shed tears, wrung his hands, wanted to write, was absolutely set on finishing his two pages. To avoid exciting him Arkady let him sit down to the work.

“Do you know,” said Vasya, as he settled himself in his place, “an idea has occurred to me? There is hope.”

He smiled to Arkady, and his pale face lighted up with a gleam of hope. “I will take him what is done the day after to-morrow. About the rest I will tell a lie. I will say it has been burnt, that it has been sopped in water, that I have lost it. ... That, in fact, I have not finished it; I cannot lie. I will explain, do you know, what? I’ll explain to him all about it. I will tell him how it was that I could not. I’ll tell him about my love; he has got married himself just lately, he’ll understand me. I will do it all, of course, respectfully, quietly; he will see my tears and be touched by them. ...”

“Yes, of course, you must go, you must go and explain to him. . . . But there’s no need of tears! Tears for what? Really, Vasya, you quite scare me.”

“Yes, I’ll go, I’ll go. But now let me write, let me write, Kasha. I am not interfering with any one, let me write!”

Arkady flung himself on the bed. He had no confidence in Vasya, no confidence at all. Vasya was capable of anything, but to ask forgiveness for what? how? That was not the point. The point was, that Vasya had not carried out his obligations, that Vasya felt guilty in his own eyes, felt that he

was ungrateful to destiny, that Vasya was crushed, overwhelmed by happiness and thought himself unworthy of it; that, in fact, he was simply trying to find an excuse to go off his head on that point, and that he had not recovered from the unexpectedness of what had happened the day before; that's what it is," thought Arkady Ivanovitch. "I must save him. I must reconcile him to himself. He will be his own ruin." He thought and thought, and resolved to go at once next day to Yulian Mastakovitch, and to tell him all about it.

Vasya was sitting writing. Arkady Ivanovitch, worn out, lay down to think things over again, and only woke at daybreak.

"Damnation! Again!" he cried, looking at Vasya; the latter was still sitting writing.

Arkady rushed up to him, seized him and forcibly put him to bed. Vasya was smiling : his eyes were closing with sleep. He could hardly speak.

"I wanted to go to bed," he said. "Do you know, Arkady, I have an idea; I shall finish. I made my pen go faster! I could not have sat at it any longer; wake me at eight o'clock."

Without finishing his sentence, he dropped asleep and slept like the dead.

"Mavra," said Arkady Ivanovitch to Mavra, who came in with the tea, "he asked to be waked in an hour. Don't wake him on any account! Let him sleep ten hours, if he can. Do you understand?"

"I understand, sir."

"Don't get the dinner, don't bring in the wood, don't make a noise or it will be the worse for you. If he asks for me, tell him I have gone to the office do you understand?"

"I understand, bless you, sir; let him sleep and welcome! I am glad my gentlemen should sleep well, and I take good care of their things. And about that cup that was broken, and you blamed me, your honour, it wasn't me, it was poor pussy broke it, I ought to have kept an eye on her. ' S-sh, you confounded thing,' I said."

"Hush, be quiet, be quiet!"

Arkady Ivanovitch followed Mavra out into the kitchen, asked for the key and locked her up there. Then he went to the office. On the way he considered how he could present himself before Yulian Mastakovitch, and whether it would be appropriate and not impertinent. He went into the office timidly, and timidly inquired whether His Excellency were there; receiving the answer that he was not and would not be, Arkady Ivanovitch instantly

thought of going to his flat, but reflected very prudently that if Yulian Mastakovitch had not come to the office he would certainly be busy at home. He remained. The hours seemed to him endless. Indirectly he inquired about the work entrusted to Shumkov, but no one knew anything about this. All that was known was that Yulian Mastakovitch did employ him on special jobs, but what they were no one could say. At last it struck three o'clock, and Arkady Ivanovitch rushed out, eager to get home. In the vestibule he was met by a clerk, who told him that Vassily Petrovitch Shumkov had come about one o'clock and asked, the clerk added, "whether you were here, and whether Yulian Mastakovitch had been here." Hearing this Arkady Ivanovitch took a sledge and hastened home beside himself with alarm.

Shumkov was at home. He was walking about the room in violent excitement. Glancing at Arkady Ivanovitch, he immediately controlled himself, reflected, and hastened to conceal his emotion. He sat down to his papers without a word. He seemed to avoid his friend's questions, seemed to be bothered by them, to be pondering to himself on some plan, and deciding to conceal his decision, because he could not reckon further on his friend's affection. This struck Arkady, and his heart ached with a poignant and oppressive pain. He sat on the bed and began turning over the leaves of some book, the only one he had in his possession, keeping his eye on poor Vasya. But Vasya remained obstinately silent, writing, and not raising his head. So passed several hours, and Arkady's misery reached an extreme point. At last, at eleven o'clock, Vasya lifted his head and looked with a fixed, vacant stare at Arkady. Arkady waited. Two or three minutes passed; Vasya did not speak.

"Vasya!" cried Arkady.

Vasya made no answer.

"Vasya!" he repeated, jumping up from the bed, " Vasya, what is the matter with you? What is it? " he cried, running up to him.

Vasya raised his eyes and again looked at him with the same vacant, fixed stare.

"He's in a trance!" thought Arkady, trembling all over with fear. He seized a bottle of water, raised Vasya, poured some water on his head, moistened his temples, rubbed his hands in his own and Vasya came to himself. "Vasya, Vasya!" cried Arkady, unable to restrain his tears. "Vasya, save yourself, rouse yourself, rouse yourself ! . . ." He could say no more,

but held him tight in his arms. A look as of some oppressive sensation passed over Vasya's face; he rubbed his forehead and clutched at his head, as though he were afraid it would burst.

"I don't know what is the matter with me," he added, at last. "I feel torn to pieces. Come, it's all right, it's all right! Give over, Arkady; don't grieve," he repeated, looking at him with sad, exhausted eyes. "Why be so anxious? Come!"

"You, you comforting me!" cried Arkady, whose heart was torn. "Vasya," he said at last, "lie down and have a little nap, won't you? Don't wear yourself out for nothing. You'll set to work better afterwards."

"Yes, yes," said Vasya, "by all means, I'll lie down, very good. Yes! you see I meant to finish, but now I've changed my mind, yes. . . ."

And Arkady led him to the bed.

"Listen, Vasya," he said firmly, "we must settle this matter finally. Tell me what were you thinking about?"

"Oh!" said Vasya, with a flourish of his weak hand turning over on the other side.

"Come, Vasya, come, make up your mind. I don't want to hurt you. I can't be silent any longer. You won't sleep till you've made up your mind, I know."

"As you like, as you like," Vasya repeated enigmatically.

"He will give in," thought Arkady Ivanovitch.

"Attend to me, Vasya," he said, "remember what I say, and I will save you to-morrow; to-morrow I will decide your fate! What am I saying, your fate? You have so frightened me, Vasya, that I am using your own words. Fate, indeed! It's simply nonsense, rubbish! You don't want to lose Yulian Mastakovitch's favour affection, if you like. No! And you won't lose it, you will see."

Arkady Ivanovitch would have said more, but Vasya interrupted him. He sat up in bed, put both arms round Arkady Ivanovitch's neck and kissed him.

"Enough," he said in a weak voice, "enough! Say no more about that!"

And again he turned his face to the wall.

"My goodness!" thought Arkady, "my goodness! What is the matter with him? He is utterly lost. What has he in his mind! He will be his own undoing."

Arkady looked at him in despair.

“If he were to fall ill,” thought Arkady, “perhaps it would be better. His trouble would pass off with illness, and that might be the best way of settling the whole business. But what nonsense I am talking. Oh, my God!”

Meanwhile Vasya seemed to be asleep. Arkady Ivanovitch was relieved. “A good sign,” he thought. He made up his mind to sit beside him all night. But Vasya was restless; he kept twitching and tossing about on the bed, and opening his eyes for an instant. At last exhaustion got the upper hand, he slept like the dead. It was about two o’clock in the morning, Arkady Ivanovitch began to doze in the chair with his elbow on the table!

He had a strange and agitated dream. He kept fancying that he was not asleep, and that Vasya was still lying on the bed. But strange to say, he fancied that Vasya was pretending, that he was deceiving him, that he was getting up, stealthily watching him out of the corner of his eye, and was stealing up to the writing table. Arkady felt a scalding pain at his heart; he felt vexed and sad and oppressed to see Vasya not trusting him, hiding and concealing himself from him. He tried to catch hold of him, to call out, to carry him to the bed. Then Vasya kept shrieking in his arms, and he laid on the bed a lifeless corpse. He opened his eyes and woke up; Vasya was sitting before him at the table, writing.

Hardly able to believe his senses, Arkady glanced at the bed; Vasya was not there. Arkady jumped up in a panic, still under the influence of his dream. Vasya did not stir; he went on writing. All at once Arkady noticed with horror that Vasya was moving a dry pen over the paper, was turning over perfectly blank pages, and hurrying, hurrying to fill up the paper as though he were doing his work in a most thorough and efficient way. “No, this is not a trance,” thought Arkady Ivanovitch, and he trembled all over.

“Vasya, Vasya, speak to me,” he cried, clutching him by the shoulder. But Vasya did not speak; he went on as before, scribbling with a dry pen over the paper.

“At last I have made the pen go faster,” he said, without looking up at Arkady.

Arkady seized his hand and snatched away the pen.

A moan broke from Vasya. He dropped his hand and raised his eyes to Arkady; then with an air of misery and exhaustion he passed his hand over his forehead as though he wanted to shake off some leaden weight that was pressing upon his whole being, and slowly, as though lost in thought, he let his head sink on his breast.

“Vasya, Vasya!” cried Arkady in despair. “Vasya!”

A minute later Vasya looked at him, tears stood in his large blue eyes, and his pale, mild face wore a look of infinite suffering. He whispered something.

“What, what is it? “ cried Arkady, bending down to him.

“What for, why are they doing it to me?” whispered Vasya. “What for? What have I done?”

“Vasya, what is it? What are you afraid of? What is it?” cried Arkady, wringing his hands in despair.

“Why are they sending me for a soldier?” said Vasya, looking his friend straight in the face.” Why is it? What have I done?”

Arkady’s hair stood on end with horror; he refused to believe his ears. He stood over him, half dead.

A minute later he pulled himself together. “It’s nothing, it’s only for the minute,” he said to himself, with pale face and blue, quivering lips, and he hastened to put on his outdoor things. He meant to run straight for a doctor. All at once Vasya called to him. Arkady rushed to him and clasped him in his arms like a mother whose child is being torn from her.

“Arkady, Arkady, don’t tell any one! Don’t tell any one, do you hear? It is my trouble, I must bear it alone.”

“What is it what is it? Rouse yourself, Vasya, rouse yourself!”

Vasya sighed, and slow tears trickled down his cheeks.

“Why kill her? How is she to blame?” he muttered in an agonized, heartrending voice. “The sin is mine — the sin is mine!”

He was silent for a moment.

“Farewell, my love! Farewell, my love!” he whispered, shaking his luckless head. Arkady started, pulled himself together and would have rushed for the doctor. “ Let us go, it is time,” cried Vasya. carried away by Arkady’s last movement. “Let us go, brother, let us go; I am ready. You lead the way!” He paused and looked at Arkady with a downcast and mistrustful face.

“Vasya, for goodness’ sake, don’t follow me! Wait for me here. I will come back to you directly, directly,” said Arkady Ivanovitch, losing his head and snatching up his cap to run for a doctor. Vasya sat down at once, he was quiet and docile; but there was a gleam of some desperate resolution in his eye. Arkady turned back, snatched up from the table an open pen-knife, looked at the poor fellow for the last time, and ran out of the flat.

It was eight o’clock. It had been broad daylight for some time in the room.

He found no one. He was running about for a full hour.

All the doctors whose addresses he had got from the house porter when he inquired of the latter whether there were no doctor living in the building, had gone out, either to their work or on their private affairs. There was one who saw patients. This one questioned at length and in detail the servant who announced that Nefedevitch had called, asking him who it was, from whom he came, what was the matter, and concluded by saying that he could not go, that he had a great deal to do, and that patients of that kind ought to be taken to a hospital.

Then Arkady, exhausted, agitated, and utterly taken aback by this turn of affairs, cursed all the doctors on earth, and rushed home in the utmost alarm about Vasya. He ran into the flat. Mavra, as though there were nothing the matter, went on scrubbing the floor, breaking up wood and preparing to light the stove. He went into the room; there was no trace of Vasya, he had gone out.

“Which way? Where? Where will the poor fellow be off too?” thought Arkady, frozen with terror. He began questioning Mavra. She knew nothing, had neither seen nor heard him go out, God bless him! Nefedevitch rushed off to the Artemyevs’. It occurred to him for some reason that he must be there.

It was ten o’clock by the time he arrived. They did not expect him, knew nothing and had heard nothing. He stood before them frightened, distressed, and asked where was Vasya? The mother’s legs gave way under her; she sank back on the sofa. Lizanka, trembling with alarm, began asking what had happened. What could he say? Arkady Ivanovitch got out of it as best he could, invented some tale which of course was not believed, and fled, leaving them distressed and anxious. He flew to his department that he might not be too late there, and he let them know that steps might be taken at once. On the way it occurred to him that Vasya would be at Yulian Mastakovitch’s. That was more likely than anything: Arkady had thought of that first of all, even before the Artemyevs’. As he drove by His Excellency’s door, he thought of stopping, but at once told the driver to go straight on. He made up his mind to try and find out whether anything had happened at the office, and if he were not there to go to His Excellency, ostensibly to report on Vasya. Some one must be informed of it.

As soon as he got into the waiting-room he was surrounded by fellow-clerks, for the most part young men of his own standing in the service. With one voice they began asking him what had happened to Vasya? At the same time they all told him that Vasya had gone out of his mind, and thought that he was to be sent for a soldier as a punishment for having neglected his work. Arkady Ivanovitch, answering them in all directions, or rather avoiding giving a direct answer to any one, rushed into the inner room. On the way he learned that Vasya was in Yulian Mastakovitch's private room, that every one had been there and that Esper Ivanovitch had gone in there too. He was stopped on the way. One of the senior clerks asked him who he was and what he wanted? Without distinguishing the person he said something about Vasya and went straight into the room. He heard Yulian Mastakovitch's voice from within. "Where are you going?" some one asked him at the very door. Arkady Ivanovitch was almost in despair; he was on the point of turning back, but through the open door he saw his poor Vasya. He pushed the door and squeezed his way into the room. Every one seemed to be in confusion and perplexity, because Yulian Mastakovitch was apparently much chagrined. All the more important personages were standing about him talking, and coming to no decision. At a little distance stood Vasya. Arkady's heart sank when he looked at him. Vasya was standing, pale, with his head up, stiffly erect, like a recruit before a new officer, with his feet together and his hands held rigidly at his sides. He was looking Yulian Mastakovitch straight in the face. Arkady was noticed at once, and some one who knew that they lodged together mentioned the fact to His Excellency. Arkady was led up to him. He tried to make some answer to the questions put to him, glanced at Yulian Mastakovitch and seeing on his face a look of genuine compassion, began trembling and sobbing like a child. He even did more, he snatched His Excellency's hand and held it to his eyes, wetting it with his tears, so that Yulian Mastakovitch was obliged to draw it hastily aw r ay, and waving it in the air, said, "Come, my dear fellow, come! I see you have a good heart." Arkady sobbed and turned an imploring look on every one. It seemed to him that they were all brothers of his dear Vasya, that they were all worried and weeping about him. "How, how has it happened? how has it happened?" asked Yulian Mastakovitch. "What has sent him out of his mind?"

"Gra — gra — gratitude!" was all Arkady Ivanovitch could articulate.

Every one heard his answer with amazement, and it seemed strange and incredible to every one that a man could go out of his mind from gratitude. Arkady explained as best he could.

“Good Heavens! what a pity!” said Yulian Mastakovitch at last. “And the work entrusted to him was not important, and not urgent in the least. It was not worth while for a man to kill himself over it! Well, take him away!” . . .At this point Yulian Mastakovitch turned to Arkady Ivanovitch again, and began questioning him once more. “He begs,” he said, pointing to Vasya, “that some girl should not be told of this. Who is she — his betrothed, I suppose?”

Arkady began to explain. Meanwhile Vasya seemed to be thinking of something, as though he were straining his memory to the utmost to recall some important, necessary matter, which was particularly wanted at this moment. From time to time he looked round with a distressed face, as though hoping some one would remind him of what he had forgotten. He fastened his eyes on Arkady. All of a sudden there was a gleam of hope in his eyes; he moved with the left leg forward, took three steps as smartly as he could, clicking with his right boot as soldiers do when they move forward at the call from their officer. Every one was waiting to see what would happen.

“I have a physical defect and am small and weak, and I am not fit for military service, Your Excellency,” he said abruptly.

At that every one in the room felt a pang at his heart, and firm as was Yulian Mastakovitch ‘s character, tears trickled from his eyes.

“Take him away,” he said, with a wave of his hands.

“Present!” said Vasya in an undertone; he wheeled round to the left and marched out of the room. All who were interested in his fate followed him out. Arkady pushed his way out behind the others. They made Vasya sit down in the waiting-room till the carriage came which had been ordered to take him to the hospital. He sat down in silence and seemed in great anxiety. He nodded to any one he recognized as though saying good-bye. He looked round towards the door every minute, and prepared himself to set off when he should be told it was time. People crowded in a close circle round him; they were all shaking their heads and lamenting. Many of them were much impressed by his story, which had suddenly become known. Some discussed his illness, while others expressed their pity and high opinion of Vasya, saying that he was such a quiet, modest young man, that he had been

so promising; people described what efforts he had made to learn, how eager he was for knowledge, how he had worked to educate himself. “ He had risen by his own efforts from a humble position,” some one observed. They spoke with emotion of His Excellency’s affection for him. Some of them fell to explaining why Vasya was possessed by the idea that he was being sent for a soldier, because he had not finished his work. They said that the poor fellow had so lately belonged to the class liable for military service and had only received his first grade through the good offices of Yulian Mastakovitch, who had had the cleverness to discover his talent, his docility, and the rare mildness of his disposition. In fact, there was a great number of views and theories.

A very short fellow-clerk of Vasya’s was conspicuous as being particularly distressed. He was not very young, probably about thirty. He was pale as a sheet, trembling all over and smiling queerly, perhaps because any scandalous affair or terrible scene both frightens, and at the same time somewhat rejoices the outside spectator. He kept running round the circle that surrounded Vasya, and as he was so short, stood on tiptoe and caught at the button of every one that is, of those with whom he felt entitled to take such a liberty and kept saying that he knew how it had all happened, that it was not so simple, but a very important matter, that it couldn’t be left without further inquiry; then stood on tiptoe again, whispered in some one’s ear, nodded his head again two or three times, and ran round again. At last everything was over. The porter made his appearance, and an attendant from the hospital went up to Vasya and told him it was time to start. Vasya jumped up in a flutter and went with them, looking about him. He was looking about for some one.

“Vasya, Vasya!” cried Arkady Ivanovitch, sobbing. Vasya stopped, and Arkady squeezed his way up to him. They flung themselves into each other’s arms in a last bitter embrace. It was sad to see them. What monstrous calamity was wringing the tears from their eyes! What were they weeping for? What was their trouble? Why did they not understand one another?

“Here, here, take it! Take care of it,” said Shumkov, thrusting a paper of some kind into Arkady’s hand. “They will take it away from me. Bring it me later on; bring it ... take care of it. . . .” Vasya could not finish, they called to him. He ran hurriedly downstairs, nodding to every one, saying good-bye to every one. There was despair in his face. At last he was put in

the carriage and taken away. Arkady made haste to open the paper: it was Liza’s curl of black hair, from which Vasya had never parted. Hot tears gushed from Arkady’s eyes: oh, poor Liza!

When office hours were over, he went to the Artemyevs’. There is no need to describe what happened there! Even Petya, little Petya, though he could not quite understand what had happened to dear Vasya, went into a corner, hid his face in his little hands, and sobbed in the fullness of his childish heart. It was quite dusk when Arkady returned home. When he reached the Neva he stood still for a minute and turned a keen glance up the river into the smoky frozen thickness of the distance, which was suddenly flushed crimson with the last purple and blood -red glow of sunset, still smouldering on the misty horizon. . . . Night lay over the city, and the wide plain of the Neva, swollen with frozen snow, was shining in the last gleams of the sun with myriads of sparks of gleaming hoar frost. There was a frost of twenty degrees. A cloud of frozen steam hung about the overdriven horses and the hurrying people. The condensed atmosphere quivered at the slightest sound, and from all the roofs on both sides of the river, columns of smoke rose up like giants and floated across the cold sky, intertwining and untwining as they went, so that it seemed new buildings were rising up above the old, a new town was taking shape in the air. ... It seemed as if all that world, with all its inhabitants, strong and weak, with all their habitations, the refuges of the poor, or the gilded palaces for the comfort of the powerful of this world was at that twilight hour like a fantastic vision of fairy-land, like a dream which in its turn would vanish and pass away like vapour into the dark blue sky. A strange thought came to poor Vasya’s forlorn friend. He started, and his heart seemed at that instant flooded with a hot rush of blood kindled by a powerful, overwhelming sensation he had never known before. He seemed only now to understand all the trouble, and to know why his poor Vasya had gone out of his mind, unable to bear his happiness. His lips twitched, his eyes lighted up, he turned pale, and as it were had a clear vision into something new.

He became gloomy and depressed, and lost all his gaiety. His old lodging grew hateful to him he took a new room. He did not care to visit the Artemyevs, and indeed he could not. Two years later he met Lizanka in church. She was by then married; beside her walked a wet nurse with a tiny baby. They greeted each other, and for a long time avoided all mention of the past. Liza said that, thank God, she was happy, that she was not badly

off, that her husband was a kind man and that she was fond of him. . . . But suddenly in the middle of a sentence her eyes filled with tears, her voice failed, she turned away, and bowed down to the church pavement to hide her grief.

WHITE NIGHTS



A sentimental story from the diary of a dreamer

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FIRST NIGHT

It was a wonderful night, such a night as is only possible when we are young, dear reader. The sky was so starry, so bright that, looking at it, one could not help asking oneself whether ill-humoured and capricious people could live under such a sky. That is a youthful question too, dear reader, very youthful, but may the Lord put it more frequently into your heart!... Speaking of capricious and ill-humoured people, I cannot help recalling my moral condition all that day. From early morning I had been oppressed by a strange despondency. It suddenly seemed to me that I was lonely, that every one was forsaking me and going away from me. Of course, any one is entitled to ask who “every one” was. For though I had been living almost eight years in Petersburg I had hardly an acquaintance. But what did I want with acquaintances? I was acquainted with all Petersburg as it was; that was why I felt as though they were all deserting me when all Petersburg packed up and went to its summer villa. I felt afraid of being left alone, and for three whole days I wandered about the town in profound dejection, not knowing what to do with myself. Whether I walked in the Nevsky, went to the Gardens or sauntered on the embankment, there was not one face of those I had been accustomed to meet at the same time and place all the year. They, of course, do not know me, but I know them. I know them intimately, I have almost made a study of their faces, and am delighted when they are gay, and downcast when they are under a cloud. I have almost struck up a friendship with one old man whom I meet every blessed day, at the same hour in Fontanka. Such a grave, pensive countenance; he is always whispering to himself and brandishing his left arm, while in his right hand he holds a long gnarled stick with a gold knob. He even notices me and takes a warm interest in me. If I happen not to be at a certain time in the same spot in Fontanka, I am certain he feels disappointed. That is how it is that we almost bow to each other, especially when we are both in good humour. The other day, when we had not seen each other for two days and met on the third, we were actually touching our hats, but, realizing in time, dropped our hands and passed each other with a look of interest.

I know the houses too. As I walk along they seem to run forward in the streets to look out at me from every window, and almost to say: “Good-morning! How do you do? I am quite well, thank God, and I am to have a

new storey in May," or, "How are you? I am being redecorated to-morrow;" or, "I was almost burnt down and had such a fright," and so on. I have my favourites among them, some are dear friends; one of them intends to be treated by the architect this summer. I shall go every day on purpose to see that the operation is not a failure. God forbid! But I shall never forget an incident with a very pretty little house of a light pink colour. It was such a charming little brick house, it looked so hospitably at me, and so proudly at its ungainly neighbours, that my heart rejoiced whenever I happened to pass it. Suddenly last week I walked along the street, and when I looked at my friend I heard a plaintive, "They are painting me yellow!" The villains! The barbarians! They had spared nothing, neither columns, nor cornices, and my poor little friend was as yellow as a canary. It almost made me bilious. And to this day I have not had the courage to visit my poor disfigured friend, painted the colour of the Celestial Empire.

So now you understand, reader, in what sense I am acquainted with all Petersburg.

I have mentioned already that I had felt worried for three whole days before I guessed the cause of my uneasiness. And I felt ill at ease in the street — this one had gone and that one had gone, and what had become of the other? — and at home I did not feel like myself either. For two evenings I was puzzling my brains to think what was amiss in my corner; why I felt so uncomfortable in it. And in perplexity I scanned my grimy green walls, my ceiling covered with a spider's web, the growth of which Matrona has so successfully encouraged. I looked over all my furniture, examined every chair, wondering whether the trouble lay there (for if one chair is not standing in the same position as it stood the day before, I am not myself). I looked at the window, but it was all in vain ... I was not a bit the better for it! I even bethought me to send for Matrona, and was giving her some fatherly admonitions in regard to the spider's web and sluttishness in general; but she simply stared at me in amazement and went away without saying a word, so that the spider's web is comfortably hanging in its place to this day. I only at last this morning realized what was wrong. Aie! Why, they are giving me the slip and making off to their summer villas! Forgive the triviality of the expression, but I am in no mood for fine language ... for everything that had been in Petersburg had gone or was going away for the holidays; for every respectable gentleman of dignified appearance who took a cab was at once transformed, in my eyes, into a respectable head of a

household who after his daily duties were over, was making his way to the bosom of his family, to the summer villa; for all the passers-by had now quite a peculiar air which seemed to say to every one they met: “We are only here for the moment, gentlemen, and in another two hours we shall be going off to the summer villa.” If a window opened after delicate fingers, white as snow, had tapped upon the pane, and the head of a pretty girl was thrust out, calling to a street-seller with pots of flowers — at once on the spot I fancied that those flowers were being bought not simply in order to enjoy the flowers and the spring in stuffy town lodgings, but because they would all be very soon moving into the country and could take the flowers with them. What is more, I made such progress in my new peculiar sort of investigation that I could distinguish correctly from the mere air of each in what summer villa he was living. The inhabitants of Kamenny and Aptekarsky Islands or of the Peterhof Road were marked by the studied elegance of their manner, their fashionable summer suits, and the fine carriages in which they drove to town. Visitors to Pargolovo and places further away impressed one at first sight by their reasonable and dignified air; the tripper to Krestovsky Island could be recognized by his look of irrepressible gaiety. If I chanced to meet a long procession of waggoners walking lazily with the reins in their hands beside waggons loaded with regular mountains of furniture, tables, chairs, ottomans and sofas and domestic utensils of all sorts, frequently with a decrepit cook sitting on the top of it all, guarding her master’s property as though it were the apple of her eye; or if I saw boats heavily loaded with household goods crawling along the Neva or Fontanka to the Black River or the Islands — the waggons and the boats were multiplied tenfold, a hundredfold, in my eyes. I fancied that everything was astir and moving, everything was going in regular caravans to the summer villas. It seemed as though Petersburg threatened to become a wilderness, so that at last I felt ashamed, mortified and sad that I had nowhere to go for the holidays and no reason to go away. I was ready to go away with every waggon, to drive off with every gentleman of respectable appearance who took a cab; but no one — absolutely no one — invited me; it seemed they had forgotten me, as though really I were a stranger to them!

I took long walks, succeeding, as I usually did, in quite forgetting where I was, when I suddenly found myself at the city gates. Instantly I felt lighthearted, and I passed the barrier and walked between cultivated fields

and meadows, unconscious of fatigue, and feeling only all over as though a burden were falling off my soul. All the passers-by gave me such friendly looks that they seemed almost greeting me, they all seemed so pleased at something. They were all smoking cigars, every one of them. And I felt pleased as I never had before. It was as though I had suddenly found myself in Italy — so strong was the effect of nature upon a half-sick townsman like me, almost stifling between city walls.

There is something inexpressibly touching in nature round Petersburg, when at the approach of spring she puts forth all her might, all the powers bestowed on her by Heaven, when she breaks into leaf, decks herself out and spangles herself with flowers.... Somehow I cannot help being reminded of a frail, consumptive girl, at whom one sometimes looks with compassion, sometimes with sympathetic love, whom sometimes one simply does not notice; though suddenly in one instant she becomes, as though by chance, inexplicably lovely and exquisite, and, impressed and intoxicated, one cannot help asking oneself what power made those sad, pensive eyes flash with such fire? What summoned the blood to those pale, wan cheeks? What bathed with passion those soft features? What set that bosom heaving? What so suddenly called strength, life and beauty into the poor girl’s face, making it gleam with such a smile, kindle with such bright, sparkling laughter? You look round, you seek for some one, you conjecture.... But the moment passes, and next day you meet, maybe, the same pensive and preoccupied look as before, the same pale face, the same meek and timid movements, and even signs of remorse, traces of a mortal anguish and regret for the fleeting distraction.... And you grieve that the momentary beauty has faded so soon never to return, that it flashed upon you so treacherously, so vainly, grieve because you had not even time to love her....

And yet my night was better than my day! This was how it happened.

I came back to the town very late, and it had struck ten as I was going towards my lodgings. My way lay along the canal embankment, where at that hour you never meet a soul. It is true that I live in a very remote part of the town. I walked along singing, for when I am happy I am always humming to myself like every happy man who has no friend or acquaintance with whom to share his joy. Suddenly I had a most unexpected adventure.

Leaning on the canal railing stood a woman with her elbows on the rail, she was apparently looking with great attention at the muddy water of the canal. She was wearing a very charming yellow hat and a jaunty little black mantle. “She’s a girl, and I am sure she is dark,” I thought. She did not seem to hear my footsteps, and did not even stir when I passed by with bated breath and loudly throbbing heart.

“Strange,” I thought; “she must be deeply absorbed in something,” and all at once I stopped as though petrified. I heard a muffled sob. Yes! I was not mistaken, the girl was crying, and a minute later I heard sob after sob. Good Heavens! My heart sank. And timid as I was with women, yet this was such a moment!... I turned, took a step towards her, and should certainly have pronounced the word “Madam!” if I had not known that that exclamation has been uttered a thousand times in every Russian society novel. It was only that reflection stopped me. But while I was seeking for a word, the girl came to herself, looked round, started, cast down her eyes and slipped by me along the embankment. I at once followed her; but she, divining this, left the embankment, crossed the road and walked along the pavement. I dared not cross the street after her. My heart was fluttering like a captured bird. All at once a chance came to my aid.

Along the same side of the pavement there suddenly came into sight, not far from the girl, a gentleman in evening dress, of dignified years, though by no means of dignified carriage; he was staggering and cautiously leaning against the wall. The girl flew straight as an arrow, with the timid haste one sees in all girls who do not want any one to volunteer to accompany them home at night, and no doubt the staggering gentleman would not have pursued her, if my good luck had not prompted him.

Suddenly, without a word to any one, the gentleman set off and flew full speed in pursuit of my unknown lady. She was racing like the wind, but the staggering gentleman was overtaking — overtook her. The girl uttered a shriek, and ... I bless my luck for the excellent knotted stick, which happened on that occasion to be in my right hand. In a flash I was on the other side of the street; in a flash the obtrusive gentleman had taken in the position, had grasped the irresistible argument, fallen back without a word, and only when we were very far away protested against my action in rather vigorous language. But his words hardly reached us.

“Give me your arm,” I said to the girl. “And he won’t dare to annoy us further.”

She took my arm without a word, still trembling with excitement and terror. Oh, obtrusive gentleman! How I blessed you at that moment! I stole a glance at her, she was very charming and dark — I had guessed right.

On her black eyelashes there still glistened a tear — from her recent terror or her former grief — I don’t know. But there was already a gleam of a smile on her lips. She too stole a glance at me, faintly blushed and looked down.

“There, you see; why did you drive me away? If I had been here, nothing would have happened....”

“But I did not know you; I thought that you too....”

“Why, do you know me now?”

“A little! Here, for instance, why are you trembling?”

“Oh, you are right at the first guess!” I answered, delighted that my girl had intelligence; that is never out of place in company with beauty. “Yes, from the first glance you have guessed the sort of man you have to do with. Precisely; I am shy with women, I am agitated, I don’t deny it, as much so as you were a minute ago when that gentleman alarmed you. I am in some alarm now. It’s like a dream, and I never guessed even in my sleep that I should ever talk with any woman.”

“What? Really?...”

“Yes; if my arm trembles, it is because it has never been held by a pretty little hand like yours. I am a complete stranger to women; that is, I have never been used to them. You see, I am alone.... I don’t even know how to talk to them. Here, I don’t know now whether I have not said something silly to you! Tell me frankly; I assure you beforehand that I am not quick to take offence?...”

“No, nothing, nothing, quite the contrary. And if you insist on my speaking frankly, I will tell you that women like such timidity; and if you want to know more, I like it too, and I won’t drive you away till I get home.”

“You will make me,” I said, breathless with delight, “lose my timidity, and then farewell to all my chances....”

“Chances! What chances — of what? That’s not so nice.”

“I beg your pardon, I am sorry, it was a slip of the tongue; but how can you expect one at such a moment to have no desire....”

“To be liked, eh?”

“Well, yes; but do, for goodness’ sake, be kind. Think what I am! Here, I am twenty-six and I have never seen any one. How can I speak well, tactfully, and to the point? It will seem better to you when I have told you everything openly.... I don’t know how to be silent when my heart is speaking. Well, never mind.... Believe me, not one woman, never, never! No acquaintance of any sort! And I do nothing but dream every day that at last I shall meet some one. Oh, if only you knew how often I have been in love in that way....”

“How? With whom?...”

“Why, with no one, with an ideal, with the one I dream of in my sleep. I make up regular romances in my dreams. Ah, you don’t know me! It’s true, of course, I have met two or three women, but what sort of women were they? They were all landladies, that.... But I shall make you laugh if I tell you that I have several times thought of speaking, just simply speaking, to some aristocratic lady in the street, when she is alone, I need hardly say; speaking to her, of course, timidly, respectfully, passionately; telling her that I am perishing in solitude, begging her not to send me away; saying that I have no chance of making the acquaintance of any woman; impressing upon her that it is a positive duty for a woman not to repulse so timid a prayer from such a luckless man as me. That, in fact, all I ask is, that she should say two or three sisterly words with sympathy, should not repulse me at first sight; should take me on trust and listen to what I say; should laugh at me if she likes, encourage me, say two words to me, only two words, even though we never meet again afterwards!... But you are laughing; however, that is why I am telling you....”

“Don’t be vexed; I am only laughing at your being your own enemy, and if you had tried you would have succeeded, perhaps, even though it had been in the street; the simpler the better.... No kind-hearted woman, unless she were stupid or, still more, vexed about something at the moment, could bring herself to send you away without those two words which you ask for so timidly.... But what am I saying? Of course she would take you for a madman. I was judging by myself; I know a good deal about other people’s lives.”

“Oh, thank you,” I cried; “you don’t know what you have done for me now!”

“I am glad! I am glad! But tell me how did you find out that I was the sort of woman with whom ... well, whom you think worthy ... of attention

and friendship ... in fact, not a landlady as you say? What made you decide to come up to me?”

“What made me?... But you were alone; that gentleman was too insolent; it’s night. You must admit that it was a duty....”

“No, no; I mean before, on the other side — you know you meant to come up to me.”

“On the other side? Really I don’t know how to answer; I am afraid to.... Do you know I have been happy to-day? I walked along singing; I went out into the country; I have never had such happy moments. You ... perhaps it was my fancy.... Forgive me for referring to it; I fancied you were crying, and I ... could not bear to hear it ... it made my heart ache.... Oh, my goodness! Surely I might be troubled about you? Surely there was no harm in feeling brotherly compassion for you.... I beg your pardon, I said compassion.... Well, in short, surely you would not be offended at my involuntary impulse to go up to you?...”

“Stop, that’s enough, don’t talk of it,” said the girl, looking down, and pressing my hand. “It’s my fault for having spoken of it; but I am glad I was not mistaken in you.... But here I am home; I must go down this turning, it’s two steps from here.... Good-bye, thank you!...”

“Surely ... surely you don’t mean ... that we shall never see each other again?... Surely this is not to be the end?”

“You see,” said the girl, laughing, “at first you only wanted two words, and now.... However, I won’t say anything ... perhaps we shall meet....”

“I shall come here to-morrow,” I said. “Oh, forgive me, I am already making demands....”

“Yes, you are not very patient ... you are almost insisting.”

“Listen, listen!” I interrupted her. “Forgive me if I tell you something else.... I tell you what, I can’t help coming here to-morrow, I am a dreamer; I have so little real life that I look upon such moments as this now, as so rare, that I cannot help going over such moments again in my dreams. I shall be dreaming of you all night, a whole week, a whole year. I shall certainly come here to-morrow, just here to this place, just at the same hour, and I shall be happy remembering to-day. This place is dear to me already. I have already two or three such places in Petersburg. I once shed tears over memories ... like you.... Who knows, perhaps you were weeping ten minutes ago over some memory.... But, forgive me, I have forgotten myself again; perhaps you have once been particularly happy here....”

“Very good,” said the girl, “perhaps I will come here to-morrow, too, at ten o’clock. I see that I can’t forbid you.... The fact is, I have to be here; don’t imagine that I am making an appointment with you; I tell you beforehand that I have to be here on my own account. But ... well, I tell you straight out, I don’t mind if you do come. To begin with, something unpleasant might happen as it did to-day, but never mind that.... In short, I should simply like to see you ... to say two words to you. Only, mind, you must not think the worse of me now! Don’t think I make appointments so lightly.... I shouldn’t make it except that.... But let that be my secret! Only a compact beforehand....”

“A compact! Speak, tell me, tell me all beforehand; I agree to anything, I am ready for anything,” I cried delighted. “I answer for myself, I will be obedient, respectful ... you know me....”

“It’s just because I do know you that I ask you to come to-morrow,” said the girl, laughing. “I know you perfectly. But mind you will come on the condition, in the first place (only be good, do what I ask — you see, I speak frankly), you won’t fall in love with me.... That’s impossible, I assure you. I am ready for friendship; here’s my hand.... But you mustn’t fall in love with me, I beg you!”

“I swear,” I cried, gripping her hand....

“Hush, don’t swear, I know you are ready to flare up like gunpowder. Don’t think ill of me for saying so. If only you knew.... I, too, have no one to whom I can say a word, whose advice I can ask. Of course, one does not look for an adviser in the street; but you are an exception. I know you as though we had been friends for twenty years.... You won’t deceive me, will you?...”

“You will see ... the only thing is, I don’t know how I am going to survive the next twenty-four hours.”

“Sleep soundly. Good-night, and remember that I have trusted you already. But you exclaimed so nicely just now, ‘Surely one can’t be held responsible for every feeling, even for brotherly sympathy!’ Do you know, that was so nicely said, that the idea struck me at once, that I might confide in you?”

“For God’s sake do; but about what? What is it?”

“Wait till to-morrow. Meanwhile, let that be a secret. So much the better for you; it will give it a faint flavour of romance. Perhaps I will tell you to-

morrow, and perhaps not.... I will talk to you a little more beforehand; we will get to know each other better....”

“Oh yes, I will tell you all about myself to-morrow! But what has happened? It is as though a miracle had befallen me.... My God, where am I? Come, tell me aren’t you glad that you were not angry and did not drive me away at the first moment, as any other woman would have done? In two minutes you have made me happy for ever. Yes, happy; who knows, perhaps, you have reconciled me with myself, solved my doubts!... Perhaps such moments come upon me.... But there I will tell you all about it to-morrow, you shall know everything, everything....”

“Very well, I consent; you shall begin....”

“Agreed.”

“Good-bye till to-morrow!”

“Till to-morrow!”

And we parted. I walked about all night; I could not make up my mind to go home. I was so happy.... To-morrow!

SECOND NIGHT

“Well, so you have survived!” she said, pressing both my hands.

“I’ve been here for the last two hours; you don’t know what a state I have been in all day.”

“I know, I know. But to business. Do you know why I have come? Not to talk nonsense, as I did yesterday. I tell you what, we must behave more sensibly in future. I thought a great deal about it last night.”

“In what way — in what must we be more sensible? I am ready for my part; but, really, nothing more sensible has happened to me in my life than this, now.”

“Really? In the first place, I beg you not to squeeze my hands so; secondly, I must tell you that I spent a long time thinking about you and feeling doubtful to-day.”

“And how did it end?”

“How did it end? The upshot of it is that we must begin all over again, because the conclusion I reached to-day was that I don’t know you at all; that I behaved like a baby last night, like a little girl; and, of course, the fact of it is, that it’s my soft heart that is to blame — that is, I sang my own praises, as one always does in the end when one analyses one’s conduct. And therefore to correct my mistake, I’ve made up my mind to find out all about you minutely. But as I have no one from whom I can find out anything, you must tell me everything fully yourself. Well, what sort of man are you? Come, make haste — begin — tell me your whole history.”

“My history!” I cried in alarm. “My history! But who has told you I have a history? I have no history....”

“Then how have you lived, if you have no history?” she interrupted, laughing.

“Absolutely without any history! I have lived, as they say, keeping myself to myself, that is, utterly alone — alone, entirely alone. Do you know what it means to be alone?”

“But how alone? Do you mean you never saw any one?”

“Oh no, I see people, of course; but still I am alone.”

“Why, do you never talk to any one?”

“Strictly speaking, with no one.”

“Who are you then? Explain yourself! Stay, I guess: most likely, like me you have a grandmother. She is blind and will never let me go anywhere, so that I have almost forgotten how to talk; and when I played some pranks two years ago, and she saw there was no holding me in, she called me up and pinned my dress to hers, and ever since we sit like that for days together; she knits a stocking, though she’s blind, and I sit beside her, sew or read aloud to her — it’s such a queer habit, here for two years I’ve been pinned to her....”

“Good Heavens! what misery! But no, I haven’t a grandmother like that.”

“Well, if you haven’t why do you sit at home?...”

“Listen, do you want to know the sort of man I am?”

“Yes, yes!”

“In the strict sense of the word?”

“In the very strictest sense of the word.”

“Very well, I am a type!”

“Type, type! What sort of type?” cried the girl, laughing, as though she had not had a chance of laughing for a whole year. “Yes, it’s very amusing talking to you. Look, here’s a seat, let us sit down. No one is passing here, no one will hear us, and — begin your history. For it’s no good your telling me, I know you have a history; only you are concealing it. To begin with, what is a type?”

“A type? A type is an original, it’s an absurd person!” I said, infected by her childish laughter. “It’s a character. Listen; do you know what is meant by a dreamer?”

“A dreamer! Indeed I should think I do know. I am a dreamer myself. Sometimes, as I sit by grandmother, all sorts of things come into my head. Why, when one begins dreaming one lets one’s fancy run away with one — why, I marry a Chinese Prince!... Though sometimes it is a good thing to dream! But, goodness knows! Especially when one has something to think of apart from dreams,” added the girl, this time rather seriously.

“Excellent! If you have been married to a Chinese Emperor, you will quite understand me. Come, listen.... But one minute, I don’t know your name yet.”

“At last! You have been in no hurry to think of it!”

“Oh, my goodness! It never entered my head, I felt quite happy as it was....”

“My name is Nastenka.”

“Nastenka! And nothing else?”

“Nothing else! Why, is not that enough for you, you insatiable person?”

“Not enough? On the contrary, it’s a great deal, a very great deal, Nastenka; you kind girl, if you are Nastenka for me from the first.”

“Quite so! Well?”

“Well, listen, Nastenka, now for this absurd history.”

I sat down beside her, assumed a pedantically serious attitude, and began as though reading from a manuscript: —

“There are, Nastenka, though you may not know it, strange nooks in Petersburg. It seems as though the same sun as shines for all Petersburg people does not peep into those spots, but some other different new one, bespoken expressly for those nooks, and it throws a different light on everything. In these corners, dear Nastenka, quite a different life is lived, quite unlike the life that is surging round us, but such as perhaps exists in some unknown realm, not among us in our serious, over-serious, time. Well, that life is a mixture of something purely fantastic, fervently ideal, with something (alas! Nastenka) dingily prosaic and ordinary, not to say incredibly vulgar.”

“Foo! Good Heavens! What a preface! What do I hear?”

“Listen, Nastenka. (It seems to me I shall never be tired of calling you Nastenka.) Let me tell you that in these corners live strange people — dreamers. The dreamer — if you want an exact definition — is not a human being, but a creature of an intermediate sort. For the most part he settles in some inaccessible corner, as though hiding from the light of day; once he slips into his corner, he grows to it like a snail, or, anyway, he is in that respect very much like that remarkable creature, which is an animal and a house both at once, and is called a tortoise. Why do you suppose he is so fond of his four walls, which are invariably painted green, grimy, dismal and reeking unpardonably of tobacco smoke? Why is it that when this absurd gentleman is visited by one of his few acquaintances (and he ends by getting rid of all his friends), why does this absurd person meet him with such embarrassment, changing countenance and overcome with confusion, as though he had only just committed some crime within his four walls; as though he had been forging counterfeit notes, or as though he were writing verses to be sent to a journal with an anonymous letter, in which he states that the real poet is dead, and that his friend thinks it his sacred duty to

publish his things? Why, tell me, Nastenka, why is it conversation is not easy between the two friends? Why is there no laughter? Why does no lively word fly from the tongue of the perplexed newcomer, who at other times may be very fond of laughter, lively words, conversation about the fair sex, and other cheerful subjects? And why does this friend, probably a new friend and on his first visit — for there will hardly be a second, and the friend will never come again — why is the friend himself so confused, so tongue-tied, in spite of his wit (if he has any), as he looks at the downcast face of his host, who in his turn becomes utterly helpless and at his wits' end after gigantic but fruitless efforts to smooth things over and enliven the conversation, to show his knowledge of polite society, to talk, too, of the fair sex, and by such humble endeavour, to please the poor man, who like a fish out of water has mistakenly come to visit him? Why does the gentleman, all at once remembering some very necessary business which never existed, suddenly seize his hat and hurriedly make off, snatching away his hand from the warm grip of his host, who was trying his utmost to show his regret and retrieve the lost position? Why does the friend chuckle as he goes out of the door, and swear never to come and see this queer creature again, though the queer creature is really a very good fellow, and at the same time he cannot refuse his imagination the little diversion of comparing the queer fellow's countenance during their conversation with the expression of an unhappy kitten treacherously captured, roughly handled, frightened and subjected to all sorts of indignities by children, till, utterly crestfallen, it hides away from them under a chair in the dark, and there must needs at its leisure bristle up, spit, and wash its insulted face with both paws, and long afterwards look angrily at life and nature, and even at the bits saved from the master's dinner for it by the sympathetic housekeeper?"

"Listen," interrupted Nastenka, who had listened to me all the time in amazement, opening her eyes and her little mouth. "Listen; I don't know in the least why it happened and why you ask me such absurd questions; all I know is, that this adventure must have happened word for word to you."

"Doubtless," I answered, with the gravest face.

"Well, since there is no doubt about it, go on," said Nastenka, "because I want very much to know how it will end."

"You want to know, Nastenka, what our hero, that is I — for the hero of the whole business was my humble self — did in his corner? You want to

know why I lost my head and was upset for the whole day by the unexpected visit of a friend? You want to know why I was so startled, why I blushed when the door of my room was opened, why I was not able to entertain my visitor, and why I was crushed under the weight of my own hospitality?”

“Why, yes, yes,” answered Nastenka, “that’s the point. Listen. You describe it all splendidly, but couldn’t you perhaps describe it a little less splendidly? You talk as though you were reading it out of a book.”

“Nastenka,” I answered in a stern and dignified voice, hardly able to keep from laughing, “dear Nastenka, I know I describe splendidly, but, excuse me, I don’t know how else to do it. At this moment, dear Nastenka, at this moment I am like the spirit of King Solomon when, after lying a thousand years under seven seals in his urn, those seven seals were at last taken off. At this moment, Nastenka, when we have met at last after such a long separation — for I have known you for ages, Nastenka, because I have been looking for some one for ages, and that is a sign that it was you I was looking for, and it was ordained that we should meet now — at this moment a thousand valves have opened in my head, and I must let myself flow in a river of words, or I shall choke. And so I beg you not to interrupt me, Nastenka, but listen humbly and obediently, or I will be silent.”

“No, no, no! Not at all. Go on! I won’t say a word!”

“I will continue. There is, my friend Nastenka, one hour in my day which I like extremely. That is the hour when almost all business, work and duties are over, and every one is hurrying home to dinner, to lie down, to rest, and on the way all are cogitating on other more cheerful subjects relating to their evenings, their nights, and all the rest of their free time. At that hour our hero — for allow me, Nastenka, to tell my story in the third person, for one feels awfully ashamed to tell it in the first person — and so at that hour our hero, who had his work too, was pacing along after the others. But a strange feeling of pleasure set his pale, rather crumpled-looking face working. He looked not with indifference on the evening glow which was slowly fading on the cold Petersburg sky. When I say he looked, I am lying: he did not look at it, but saw it as it were without realizing, as though tired or preoccupied with some other more interesting subject, so that he could scarcely spare a glance for anything about him. He was pleased because till next day he was released from business irksome to him, and happy as a schoolboy let out from the class-room to his games and

mischief. Take a look at him, Nastenka; you will see at once that joyful emotion has already had an effect on his weak nerves and morbidly excited fancy. You see he is thinking of something.... Of dinner, do you imagine? Of the evening? What is he looking at like that? Is it at that gentleman of dignified appearance who is bowing so picturesquely to the lady who rolls by in a carriage drawn by prancing horses? No, Nastenka; what are all those trivialities to him now! He is rich now with his *own individual* life; he has suddenly become rich, and it is not for nothing that the fading sunset sheds its farewell gleams so gaily before him, and calls forth a swarm of impressions from his warmed heart. Now he hardly notices the road, on which the tiniest details at other times would strike him. Now ‘the Goddess of Fancy’ (if you have read Zhukovsky, dear Nastenka) has already with fantastic hand spun her golden warp and begun weaving upon it patterns of marvellous magic life — and who knows, maybe, her fantastic hand has borne him to the seventh crystal heaven far from the excellent granite pavement on which he was walking his way? Try stopping him now, ask him suddenly where he is standing now, through what streets he is going — he will, probably remember nothing, neither where he is going nor where he is standing now, and flushing with vexation he will certainly tell some lie to save appearances. That is why he starts, almost cries out, and looks round with horror when a respectable old lady stops him politely in the middle of the pavement and asks her way. Frowning with vexation he strides on, scarcely noticing that more than one passer-by smiles and turns round to look after him, and that a little girl, moving out of his way in alarm, laughs aloud, gazing open-eyed at his broad meditative smile and gesticulations. But fancy catches up in its playful flight the old woman, the curious passers-by, and the laughing child, and the peasants spending their nights in their barges on Fontanka (our hero, let us suppose, is walking along the canal-side at that moment), and capriciously weaves every one and everything into the canvas like a fly in a spider’s web. And it is only after the queer fellow has returned to his comfortable den with fresh stores for his mind to work on, has sat down and finished his dinner, that he comes to himself, when Matrona who waits upon him — always thoughtful and depressed — clears the table and gives him his pipe; he comes to himself then and recalls with surprise that he has dined, though he has absolutely no notion how it has happened. It has grown dark in the room; his soul is sad and empty; the whole kingdom of fancies drops to pieces about him, drops

to pieces without a trace, without a sound, floats away like a dream, and he cannot himself remember what he was dreaming. But a vague sensation faintly stirs his heart and sets it aching, some new desire temptingly tickles and excites his fancy, and imperceptibly evokes a swarm of fresh phantoms. Stillness reigns in the little room; imagination is fostered by solitude and idleness; it is faintly smouldering, faintly simmering, like the water with which old Matrona is making her coffee as she moves quietly about in the kitchen close by. Now it breaks out spasmodically; and the book, picked up aimlessly and at random, drops from my dreamer's hand before he has reached the third page. His imagination is again stirred and at work, and again a new world, a new fascinating life opens vistas before him. A fresh dream — fresh happiness! A fresh rush of delicate, voluptuous poison! What is real life to him! To his corrupted eyes we live, you and I, Nastenka, so torpidly, slowly, insipidly; in his eyes we are all so dissatisfied with our fate, so exhausted by our life! And, truly, see how at first sight everything is cold, morose, as though ill-humoured among us.... Poor things! thinks our dreamer. And it is no wonder that he thinks it! Look at these magic phantasms, which so enchantingly, so whimsically, so carelessly and freely group before him in such a magic, animated picture, in which the most prominent figure in the foreground is of course himself, our dreamer, in his precious person. See what varied adventures, what an endless swarm of ecstatic dreams. You ask, perhaps, what he is dreaming of. Why ask that? — why, of everything ... of the lot of the poet, first unrecognized, then crowned with laurels; of friendship with Hoffmann, St. Bartholomew's Night, of Diana Vernon, of playing the hero at the taking of Kazan by Ivan Vassilyevitch, of Clara Mowbray, of Effie Deans, of the council of the prelates and Huss before them, of the rising of the dead in 'Robert the Devil' (do you remember the music, it smells of the churchyard!), of Minna and Brenda, of the battle of Berezina, of the reading of a poem at Countess V. D.'s, of Danton, of Cleopatra *ei suoi amanti*, of a little house in Kolomna, of a little home of one's own and beside one a dear creature who listens to one on a winter's evening, opening her little mouth and eyes as you are listening to me now, my angel.... No, Nastenka, what is there, what is there for him, voluptuous sluggard, in this life, for which you and I have such a longing? He thinks that this is a poor pitiful life, not foreseeing that for him too, maybe, sometime the mournful hour may strike, when for one day of that pitiful life he would give all his years of phantasy, and would

give them not only for joy and for happiness, but without caring to make distinctions in that hour of sadness, remorse and unchecked grief. But so far that threatening has not arrived — he desires nothing, because he is superior to all desire, because he has everything, because he is satiated, because he is the artist of his own life, and creates it for himself every hour to suit his latest whim. And you know this fantastic world of fairyland is so easily, so naturally created! As though it were not a delusion! Indeed, he is ready to believe at some moments that all this life is not suggested by feeling, is not mirage, not a delusion of the imagination, but that it is concrete, real, substantial! Why is it, Nastenka, why is it at such moments one holds one's breath? Why, by what sorcery, through what incomprehensible caprice, is the pulse quickened, does a tear start from the dreamer's eye, while his pale moist cheeks glow, while his whole being is suffused with an inexpressible sense of consolation? Why is it that whole sleepless nights pass like a flash in inexhaustible gladness and happiness, and when the dawn gleams rosy at the window and daybreak floods the gloomy room with uncertain, fantastic light, as in Petersburg, our dreamer, worn out and exhausted, flings himself on his bed and drops asleep with thrills of delight in his morbidly overwrought spirit, and with a weary sweet ache in his heart? Yes, Nastenka, one deceives oneself and unconsciously believes that real true passion is stirring one's soul; one unconsciously believes that there is something living, tangible in one's immaterial dreams! And is it delusion? Here love, for instance, is bound up with all its fathomless joy, all its torturing agonies in his bosom.... Only look at him, and you will be convinced! Would you believe, looking at him, dear Nastenka, that he has never known her whom he loves in his ecstatic dreams? Can it be that he has only seen her in seductive visions, and that this passion has been nothing but a dream? Surely they must have spent years hand in hand together — alone the two of them, casting off all the world and each uniting his or her life with the other's? Surely when the hour of parting came she must have lain sobbing and grieving on his bosom, heedless of the tempest raging under the sullen sky, heedless of the wind which snatches and bears away the tears from her black eyelashes? Can all of that have been a dream — and that garden, dejected, forsaken, run wild, with its little moss-grown paths, solitary, gloomy, where they used to walk so happily together, where they hoped, grieved, loved, loved each other so long, "so long and so fondly?" And that queer ancestral house where she spent so many years

lonely and sad with her morose old husband, always silent and splenetic, who frightened them, while timid as children they hid their love from each other? What torments they suffered, what agonies of terror, how innocent, how pure was their love, and how (I need hardly say, Nastenka) malicious people were! And, good Heavens! surely he met her afterwards, far from their native shores, under alien skies, in the hot south in the divinely eternal city, in the dazzling splendour of the ball to the crash of music, in a *palazzo* (it must be in a *palazzo*), drowned in a sea of lights, on the balcony, wreathed in myrtle and roses, where, recognizing him, she hurriedly removes her mask and whispering, ‘I am free,’ flings herself trembling into his arms, and with a cry of rapture, clinging to one another, in one instant they forget their sorrow and their parting and all their agonies, and the gloomy house and the old man and the dismal garden in that distant land, and the seat on which with a last passionate kiss she tore herself away from his arms numb with anguish and despair.... Oh, Nastenka, you must admit that one would start, betray confusion, and blush like a schoolboy who has just stuffed in his pocket an apple stolen from a neighbour’s garden, when your uninvited visitor, some stalwart, lanky fellow, a festive soul fond of a joke, opens your door and shouts out as though nothing were happening: ‘My dear boy, I have this minute come from Pavlovsk.’ My goodness! the old count is dead, unutterable happiness is close at hand — and people arrive from Pavlovsk!”

Finishing my pathetic appeal, I paused pathetically. I remembered that I had an intense desire to force myself to laugh, for I was already feeling that a malignant demon was stirring within me, that there was a lump in my throat, that my chin was beginning to twitch, and that my eyes were growing more and more moist.

I expected Nastenka, who listened to me opening her clever eyes, would break into her childish, irrepressible laugh; and I was already regretting that I had gone so far, that I had unnecessarily described what had long been simmering in my heart, about which I could speak as though from a written account of it, because I had long ago passed judgment on myself and now could not resist reading it, making my confession, without expecting to be understood; but to my surprise she was silent, waiting a little, then she faintly pressed my hand and with timid sympathy asked —

“Surely you haven’t lived like that all your life?”

“All my life, Nastenka,” I answered; “all my life, and it seems to me I shall go on so to the end.”

“No, that won’t do,” she said uneasily, “that must not be; and so, maybe, I shall spend all my life beside grandmother. Do you know, it is not at all good to live like that?”

“I know, Nastenka, I know!” I cried, unable to restrain my feelings longer. “And I realize now, more than ever, that I have lost all my best years! And now I know it and feel it more painfully from recognizing that God has sent me you, my good angel, to tell me that and show it. Now that I sit beside you and talk to you it is strange for me to think of the future, for in the future — there is loneliness again, again this musty, useless life; and what shall I have to dream of when I have been so happy in reality beside you! Oh, may you be blessed, dear girl, for not having repulsed me at first, for enabling me to say that for two evenings, at least, I have lived.”

“Oh, no, no!” cried Nastenka and tears glistened in her eyes. “No, it mustn’t be so any more; we must not part like that! what are two evenings?”

“Oh, Nastenka, Nastenka! Do you know how far you have reconciled me to myself? Do you know now that I shall not think so ill of myself, as I have at some moments? Do you know that, maybe, I shall leave off grieving over the crime and sin of my life? for such a life is a crime and a sin. And do not imagine that I have been exaggerating anything — for goodness’ sake don’t think that, Nastenka: for at times such misery comes over me, such misery.... Because it begins to seem to me at such times that I am incapable of beginning a life in real life, because it has seemed to me that I have lost all touch, all instinct for the actual, the real; because at last I have cursed myself; because after my fantastic nights I have moments of returning sobriety, which are awful! Meanwhile, you hear the whirl and roar of the crowd in the vortex of life around you; you hear, you see, men living in reality; you see that life for them is not forbidden, that their life does not float away like a dream, like a vision; that their life is being eternally renewed, eternally youthful, and not one hour of it is the same as another; while fancy is so spiritless, monotonous to vulgarity and easily scared, the slave of shadows, of the idea, the slave of the first cloud that shrouds the sun, and overcasts with depression the true Petersburg heart so devoted to the sun — and what is fancy in depression! One feels that this *inexhaustible* fancy is weary at last and worn out with continual exercise, because one is growing into manhood, outgrowing one’s old ideals: they are being

shattered into fragments, into dust; if there is no other life one must build one up from the fragments. And meanwhile the soul longs and craves for something else! And in vain the dreamer rakes over his old dreams, as though seeking a spark among the embers, to fan them into flame, to warm his chilled heart by the rekindled fire, and to rouse up in it again all that was so sweet, that touched his heart, that set his blood boiling, drew tears from his eyes, and so luxuriously deceived him! Do you know, Nastenka, the point I have reached? Do you know that I am forced now to celebrate the anniversary of my own sensations, the anniversary of that which was once so sweet, which never existed in reality — for this anniversary is kept in memory of those same foolish, shadowy dreams — and to do this because those foolish dreams are no more, because I have nothing to earn them with; you know even dreams do not come for nothing! Do you know that I love now to recall and visit at certain dates the places where I was once happy in my own way? I love to build up my present in harmony with the irrevocable past, and I often wander like a shadow, aimless, sad and dejected, about the streets and crooked lanes of Petersburg. What memories they are! To remember, for instance, that here just a year ago, just at this time, at this hour, on this pavement, I wandered just as lonely, just as dejected as to-day. And one remembers that then one's dreams were sad, and though the past was no better one feels as though it had somehow been better, and that life was more peaceful, that one was free from the black thoughts that haunt one now; that one was free from the gnawing of conscience — the gloomy, sullen gnawing which now gives me no rest by day or by night. And one asks oneself where are one's dreams. And one shakes one's head and says how rapidly the years fly by! And again one asks oneself what has one done with one's years. Where have you buried your best days? Have you lived or not? Look, one says to oneself, look how cold the world is growing. Some more years will pass, and after them will come gloomy solitude; then will come old age trembling on its crutch, and after it misery and desolation. Your fantastic world will grow pale, your dreams will fade and die and will fall like the yellow leaves from the trees.... Oh, Nastenka! you know it will be sad to be left alone, utterly alone, and to have not even anything to regret — nothing, absolutely nothing ... for all that you have lost, all that, all was nothing, stupid, simple nullity, there has been nothing but dreams!"

"Come, don't work on my feelings any more," said Nastenka, wiping away a tear which was trickling down her cheek. "Now it's over! Now we

shall be two together. Now, whatever happens to me, we will never part. Listen; I am a simple girl, I have not had much education, though grandmother did get a teacher for me, but truly I understand you, for all that you have described I have been through myself, when grandmother pinned me to her dress. Of course, I should not have described it so well as you have; I am not educated," she added timidly, for she was still feeling a sort of respect for my pathetic eloquence and lofty style; "but I am very glad that you have been quite open with me. Now I know you thoroughly, all of you. And do you know what? I want to tell you my history too, all without concealment, and after that you must give me advice. You are a very clever man; will you promise to give me advice?"

"Ah, Nastenka," I cried, "though I have never given advice, still less sensible advice, yet I see now that if we always go on like this that it will be very sensible, and that each of us will give the other a great deal of sensible advice! Well, my pretty Nastenka, what sort of advice do you want? Tell me frankly; at this moment I am so gay and happy, so bold and sensible, that it won't be difficult for me to find words."

"No, no!" Nastenka interrupted, laughing. "I don't only want sensible advice, I want warm brotherly advice, as though you had been fond of me all your life!"

"Agreed, Nastenka, agreed!" I cried delighted; "and if I had been fond of you for twenty years, I couldn't have been fonder of you than I am now."

"Your hand," said Nastenka.

"Here it is," said I, giving her my hand.

"And so let us begin my history!"

Nastenka's History

"Half my story you know already — that is, you know that I have an old grandmother...."

"If the other half is as brief as that ..." I interrupted, laughing.

"Be quiet and listen. First of all you must agree not to interrupt me, or else, perhaps I shall get in a muddle! Come, listen quietly.

"I have an old grandmother. I came into her hands when I was quite a little girl, for my father and mother are dead. It must be supposed that grandmother was once richer, for now she recalls better days. She taught me French, and then got a teacher for me. When I was fifteen (and now I am seventeen) we gave up having lessons. It was at that time that I got into mischief; what I did I won't tell you; it's enough to say that it wasn't very

important. But grandmother called me to her one morning and said that as she was blind she could not look after me; she took a pin and pinned my dress to hers, and said that we should sit like that for the rest of our lives if, of course, I did not become a better girl. In fact, at first it was impossible to get away from her: I had to work, to read and to study all beside grandmother. I tried to deceive her once, and persuaded Fekla to sit in my place. Fekla is our charwoman, she is deaf. Fekla sat there instead of me; grandmother was asleep in her armchair at the time, and I went off to see a friend close by. Well, it ended in trouble. Grandmother woke up while I was out, and asked some questions; she thought I was still sitting quietly in my place. Fekla saw that grandmother was asking her something, but could not tell what it was; she wondered what to do, undid the pin and ran away....”

At this point Nastenka stopped and began laughing. I laughed with her. She left off at once.

“I tell you what, don’t you laugh at grandmother. I laugh because it’s funny.... What can I do, since grandmother is like that; but yet I am fond of her in a way. Oh, well, I did catch it that time. I had to sit down in my place at once, and after that I was not allowed to stir.

“Oh, I forgot to tell you that our house belongs to us, that is to grandmother; it is a little wooden house with three windows as old as grandmother herself, with a little upper storey; well, there moved into our upper storey a new lodger.”

“Then you had an old lodger,” I observed casually.

“Yes, of course,” answered Nastenka, “and one who knew how to hold his tongue better than you do. In fact, he hardly ever used his tongue at all. He was a dumb, blind, lame, dried-up little old man, so that at last he could not go on living, he died; so then we had to find a new lodger, for we could not live without a lodger — the rent, together with grandmother’s pension, is almost all we have. But the new lodger, as luck would have it, was a young man, a stranger not of these parts. As he did not haggle over the rent, grandmother accepted him, and only afterwards she asked me: ‘Tell me, Nastenka, what is our lodger like — is he young or old?’ I did not want to lie, so I told grandmother that he wasn’t exactly young and that he wasn’t old.

“‘And is he pleasant looking?’ asked grandmother.

“Again I did not want to tell a lie: ‘Yes, he is pleasant looking, grandmother,’ I said. And grandmother said: ‘Oh, what a nuisance, what a

nuisance! I tell you this, grandchild, that you may not be looking after him. What times these are! Why a paltry lodger like this, and he must be pleasant looking too; it was very different in the old days!’”

“Grandmother was always regretting the old days — she was younger in old days, and the sun was warmer in old days, and cream did not turn so sour in old days — it was always the old days! I would sit still and hold my tongue and think to myself: why did grandmother suggest it to me? Why did she ask whether the lodger was young and good-looking? But that was all, I just thought it, began counting my stitches again, went on knitting my stocking, and forgot all about it.

“Well, one morning the lodger came in to see us; he asked about a promise to paper his rooms. One thing led to another. Grandmother was talkative, and she said: ‘Go, Nastenka, into my bedroom and bring me my reckoner.’ I jumped up at once; I blushed all over, I don’t know why, and forgot I was sitting pinned to grandmother; instead of quietly undoing the pin, so that the lodger should not see — I jumped so that grandmother’s chair moved. When I saw that the lodger knew all about me now, I blushed, stood still as though I had been shot, and suddenly began to cry — I felt so ashamed and miserable at that minute, that I didn’t know where to look! Grandmother called out, ‘What are you waiting for?’ and I went on worse than ever. When the lodger saw, saw that I was ashamed on his account, he bowed and went away at once!

“After that I felt ready to die at the least sound in the passage. ‘It’s the lodger,’ I kept thinking; I stealthily undid the pin in case. But it always turned out not to be, he never came. A fortnight passed; the lodger sent word through Fyokla that he had a great number of French books, and that they were all good books that I might read, so would not grandmother like me to read them that I might not be dull? Grandmother agreed with gratitude, but kept asking if they were moral books, for if the books were immoral it would be out of the question, one would learn evil from them.”

“‘And what should I learn, grandmother? What is there written in them?’

“‘Ah,’ she said, ‘what’s described in them, is how young men seduce virtuous girls; how, on the excuse that they want to marry them, they carry them off from their parents’ houses; how afterwards they leave these unhappy girls to their fate, and they perish in the most pitiful way. I read a great many books,’ said grandmother, ‘and it is all so well described that

one sits up all night and reads them on the sly. So mind you don't read them, Nastenka,' said she. 'What books has he sent?'

"'They are all Walter Scott's novels, grandmother.'

"'Walter Scott's novels! But stay, isn't there some trick about it? Look, hasn't he stuck a love-letter among them?'

"'No, grandmother,' I said, 'there isn't a love-letter.'

"'But look under the binding; they sometimes stuff it under the bindings, the rascals!'

"'No, grandmother, there is nothing under the binding.'

"'Well, that's all right.'

"So we began reading Walter Scott, and in a month or so we had read almost half. Then he sent us more and more. He sent us Pushkin, too; so that at last I could not get on without a book and left off dreaming of how fine it would be to marry a Chinese Prince.

"That's how things were when I chanced one day to meet our lodger on the stairs. Grandmother had sent me to fetch something. He stopped, I blushed and he blushed; he laughed, though, said good-morning to me, asked after grandmother, and said, 'Well, have you read the books?' I answered that I had. 'Which did you like best?' he asked. I said, 'Ivanhoe, and Pushkin best of all,' and so our talk ended for that time.

"A week later I met him again on the stairs. That time grandmother had not sent me, I wanted to get something for myself. It was past two, and the lodger used to come home at that time. 'Good-afternoon,' said he. I said good-afternoon, too.

"'Aren't you dull,' he said, 'sitting all day with your grandmother?'

"When he asked that, I blushed, I don't know why; I felt ashamed, and again I felt offended — I suppose because other people had begun to ask me about that. I wanted to go away without answering, but I hadn't the strength.

"'Listen,' he said, 'you are a good girl. Excuse my speaking to you like that, but I assure you that I wish for your welfare quite as much as your grandmother. Have you no friends that you could go and visit?'

"I told him I hadn't any, that I had had no friend but Mashenka, and she had gone away to Pskov.

"'Listen,' he said, 'would you like to go to the theatre with me?'

"'To the theatre. What about grandmother?'

"'But you must go without your grandmother's knowing it,' he said.

“‘No,’ I said, ‘I don’t want to deceive grandmother. Good-bye.’

“‘Well, good-bye,’ he answered, and said nothing more.

“Only after dinner he came to see us; sat a long time talking to grandmother; asked her whether she ever went out anywhere, whether she had acquaintances, and suddenly said: ‘I have taken a box at the opera for this evening; they are giving *The Barber of Seville*. My friends meant to go, but afterwards refused, so the ticket is left on my hands.’ ‘*The Barber of Seville*,’ cried grandmother; ‘why, the same they used to act in old days?’

“‘Yes, it’s the same barber,’ he said, and glanced at me. I saw what it meant and turned crimson, and my heart began throbbing with suspense.

“‘To be sure, I know it,’ said grandmother; ‘why, I took the part of Rosina myself in old days, at a private performance!’

“‘So wouldn’t you like to go to-day?’ said the lodger. ‘Or my ticket will be wasted.’

“‘By all means let us go,’ said grandmother; why shouldn’t we? And my Nastenka here has never been to the theatre.’

“My goodness, what joy! We got ready at once, put on our best clothes, and set off. Though grandmother was blind, still she wanted to hear the music; besides, she is a kind old soul, what she cared most for was to amuse me, we should never have gone of ourselves.

“What my impressions of *The Barber of Seville* were I won’t tell you; but all that evening our lodger looked at me so nicely, talked so nicely, that I saw at once that he had meant to test me in the morning when he proposed that I should go with him alone. Well, it was joy! I went to bed so proud, so gay, my heart beat so that I was a little feverish, and all night I was raving about *The Barber of Seville*.

“I expected that he would come and see us more and more often after that, but it wasn’t so at all. He almost entirely gave up coming. He would just come in about once a month, and then only to invite us to the theatre. We went twice again. Only I wasn’t at all pleased with that; I saw that he was simply sorry for me because I was so hardly treated by grandmother, and that was all. As time went on, I grew more and more restless, I couldn’t sit still, I couldn’t read, I couldn’t work; sometimes I laughed and did something to annoy grandmother, at another time I would cry. At last I grew thin and was very nearly ill. The opera season was over, and our lodger had quite given up coming to see us; whenever we met — always on the same staircase, of course — he would bow so silently, so gravely, as though he

did not want to speak, and go down to the front door, while I went on standing in the middle of the stairs, as red as a cherry, for all the blood rushed to my head at the sight of him.

“Now the end is near. Just a year ago, in May, the lodger came to us and said to grandmother that he had finished his business here, and that he must go back to Moscow for a year. When I heard that, I sank into a chair half dead; grandmother did not notice anything; and having informed us that he should be leaving us, he bowed and went away.

“What was I to do? I thought and thought and fretted and fretted, and at last I made up my mind. Next day he was to go away, and I made up my mind to end it all that evening when grandmother went to bed. And so it happened. I made up all my clothes in a parcel — all the linen I needed — and with the parcel in my hand, more dead than alive, went upstairs to our lodger. I believe I must have stayed an hour on the staircase. When I opened his door he cried out as he looked at me. He thought I was a ghost, and rushed to give me some water, for I could hardly stand up. My heart beat so violently that my head ached, and I did not know what I was doing. When I recovered I began by laying my parcel on his bed, sat down beside it, hid my face in my hands and went into floods of tears. I think he understood it all at once, and looked at me so sadly that my heart was torn.

“‘Listen,’ he began, ‘listen, Nastenka, I can’t do anything; I am a poor man, for I have nothing, not even a decent berth. How could we live, if I were to marry you?’

“We talked a long time; but at last I got quite frantic, I said I could not go on living with grandmother, that I should run away from her, that I did not want to be pinned to her, and that I would go to Moscow if he liked, because I could not live without him. Shame and pride and love were all clamouring in me at once, and I fell on the bed almost in convulsions, I was so afraid of a refusal.

“He sat for some minutes in silence, then got up, came up to me and took me by the hand.

“‘Listen, my dear good Nastenka, listen; I swear to you that if I am ever in a position to marry, you shall make my happiness. I assure you that now you are the only one who could make me happy. Listen, I am going to Moscow and shall be there just a year; I hope to establish my position. When I come back, if you still love me, I swear that we will be happy. Now it is impossible, I am not able, I have not the right to promise anything.

Well, I repeat, if it is not within a year it will certainly be some time; that is, of course, if you do not prefer any one else, for I cannot and dare not bind you by any sort of promise.’

“That was what he said to me, and next day he went away. We agreed together not to say a word to grandmother: that was his wish. Well, my history is nearly finished now. Just a year has past. He has arrived; he has been here three days, and, and

“And what?” I cried, impatient to hear the end.

“And up to now has not shown himself!” answered Nastenka, as though screwing up all her courage. “There’s no sign or sound of him.”

Here she stopped, paused for a minute, bent her head, and covering her face with her hands broke into such sobs that it sent a pang to my heart to hear them. I had not in the least expected such a *dénouement*.

“Nastenka,” I began timidly in an ingratiating voice, “Nastenka! For goodness’ sake don’t cry! How do you know? Perhaps he is not here yet....”

“He is, he is,” Nastenka repeated. “He is here, and I know it. We *made an agreement* at the time, that evening, before he went away: when we said all that I have told you, and had come to an understanding, then we came out here for a walk on this embankment. It was ten o’clock; we sat on this seat. I was not crying then; it was sweet to me to hear what he said.... And he said that he would come to us directly he arrived, and if I did not refuse him, then we would tell grandmother about it all. Now he is here, I know it, and yet he does not come!”

And again she burst into tears.

“Good God, can I do nothing to help you in your sorrow?” I cried jumping up from the seat in utter despair. “Tell me, Nastenka, wouldn’t it be possible for me to go to him?”

“Would that be possible?” she asked suddenly, raising her head.

“No, of course not,” I said pulling myself up; “but I tell you what, write a letter.”

“No, that’s impossible, I can’t do that,” she answered with decision, bending her head and not looking at me.

“How impossible — why is it impossible?” I went on, clinging to my idea. “But, Nastenka, it depends what sort of letter; there are letters and letters and.... Ah, Nastenka, I am right; trust to me, trust to me, I will not give you bad advice. It can all be arranged! You took the first step — why not now?”

“I can’t. I can’t! It would seem as though I were forcing myself on him....”

“Ah, my good little Nastenka,” I said, hardly able to conceal a smile; “no, no, you have a right to, in fact, because he made you a promise. Besides, I can see from everything that he is a man of delicate feeling; that he behaved very well,” I went on, more and more carried away by the logic of my own arguments and convictions. “How did he behave? He bound himself by a promise: he said that if he married at all he would marry no one but you; he gave you full liberty to refuse him at once.... Under such circumstances you may take the first step; you have the right; you are in the privileged position — if, for instance, you wanted to free him from his promise....”

“Listen; how would you write?”

“Write what?”

“This letter.”

“I tell you how I would write: ‘Dear Sir.’...”

“Must I really begin like that, ‘Dear Sir’?”

“You certainly must! Though, after all, I don’t know, I imagine....”

“Well, well, what next?”

“‘Dear Sir, — I must apologize for — —’ But, no, there’s no need to apologize; the fact itself justifies everything. Write simply: —

“‘I am writing to you. Forgive me my impatience; but I have been happy for a whole year in hope; am I to blame for being unable to endure a day of doubt now? Now that you have come, perhaps you have changed your mind. If so, this letter is to tell you that I do not repine, nor blame you. I do not blame you because I have no power over your heart, such is my fate!

“‘You are an honourable man. You will not smile or be vexed at these impatient lines. Remember they are written by a poor girl; that she is alone; that she has no one to direct her, no one to advise her, and that she herself could never control her heart. But forgive me that a doubt has stolen — if only for one instant — into my heart. You are not capable of insulting, even in thought, her who so loved and so loves you.’”

“Yes, yes; that’s exactly what I was thinking!” cried Nastenka, and her eyes beamed with delight. “Oh, you have solved my difficulties: God has sent you to me! Thank you, thank you!”

“What for? What for? For God’s sending me?” I answered, looking delighted at her joyful little face. “Why, yes; for that too.”

“Ah, Nastenka! Why, one thanks some people for being alive at the same time with one; I thank you for having met me, for my being able to remember you all my life!”

“Well, enough, enough! But now I tell you what, listen: we made an agreement then that as soon as he arrived he would let me know, by leaving a letter with some good simple people of my acquaintance who know nothing about it; or, if it were impossible to write a letter to me, for a letter does not always tell everything, he would be here at ten o’clock on the day he arrived, where we had arranged to meet. I know he has arrived already; but now it’s the third day, and there’s no sign of him and no letter. It’s impossible for me to get away from grandmother in the morning. Give my letter to-morrow to those kind people I spoke to you about: they will send it on to him, and if there is an answer you bring it to-morrow at ten o’clock.”

“But the letter, the letter! You see, you must write the letter first! So perhaps it must all be the day after to-morrow.”

“The letter ..,” said Nastenka, a little confused, “the letter ... but....”

But she did not finish. At first she turned her little face away from me, flushed like a rose, and suddenly I felt in my hand a letter which had evidently been written long before, all ready and sealed up. A familiar sweet and charming reminiscence floated through my mind.

“R, o — Ro; s, i — si; n, a — na,” I began.

“Rosina!” we both hummed together; I almost embracing her with delight, while she blushed as only she could blush, and laughed through the tears which gleamed like pearls on her black eyelashes.

“Come, enough, enough! Good-bye now,” she said speaking rapidly. “Here is the letter, here is the address to which you are to take it. Good-bye, till we meet again! Till to-morrow!”

She pressed both my hands warmly, nodded her head, and flew like an arrow down her side street. I stood still for a long time following her with my eyes.

“Till to-morrow! till to-morrow!” was ringing in my ears as she vanished from my sight.

THIRD NIGHT

To-day was a gloomy, rainy day without a glimmer of sunlight, like the old age before me. I am oppressed by such strange thoughts, such gloomy sensations; questions still so obscure to me are crowding into my brain — and I seem to have neither power nor will to settle them. It’s not for me to settle all this!

To-day we shall not meet. Yesterday, when we said good-bye, the clouds began gathering over the sky and a mist rose. I said that to-morrow it would be a bad day; she made no answer, she did not want to speak against her wishes; for her that day was bright and clear, not one cloud should obscure her happiness.

“If it rains we shall not see each other,” she said, “I shall not come.”

I thought that she would not notice to-day’s rain, and yet she has not come.

Yesterday was our third interview, our third white night....

But how fine joy and happiness makes any one! How brimming over with love the heart is! One seems longing to pour out one’s whole heart; one wants everything to be gay, everything to be laughing. And how infectious that joy is! There was such a softness in her words, such a kindly feeling in her heart towards me yesterday.... How solicitous and friendly she was; how tenderly she tried to give me courage! Oh, the coquetry of happiness! While I ... I took it all for the genuine thing, I thought that she....

But, my God, how could I have thought it? How could I have been so blind, when everything had been taken by another already, when nothing was mine; when, in fact, her very tenderness to me, her anxiety, her love ... yes, love for me, was nothing else but joy at the thought of seeing another man so soon, desire to include me, too, in her happiness?... When he did not come, when we waited in vain, she frowned, she grew timid and discouraged. Her movements, her words, were no longer so light, so playful, so gay; and, strange to say, she redoubled her attentiveness to me, as though instinctively desiring to lavish on me what she desired for herself so anxiously, if her wishes were not accomplished. My Nastenka was so downcast, so dismayed, that I think she realized at last that I loved her, and was sorry for my poor love. So when we are unhappy we feel the unhappiness of others more; feeling is not destroyed but concentrated....

I went to meet her with a full heart, and was all impatience. I had no presentiment that I should feel as I do now, that it would not all end happily. She was beaming with pleasure; she was expecting an answer. The answer was himself. He was to come, to run at her call. She arrived a whole hour before I did. At first she giggled at everything, laughed at every word I said. I began talking, but relapsed into silence.

“Do you know why I am so glad,” she said, “so glad to look at you? — why I like you so much to-day?”

“Well?” I asked, and my heart began throbbing.

“I like you because you have not fallen in love with me. You know that some men in your place would have been pestering and worrying me, would have been sighing and miserable, while you are so nice!”

Then she wrung my hand so hard that I almost cried out. She laughed.

“Goodness, what a friend you are!” she began gravely a minute later. “God sent you to me. What would have happened to me if you had not been with me now? How disinterested you are! How truly you care for me! When I am married we will be great friends, more than brother and sister; I shall care almost as I do for him....”

I felt horribly sad at that moment, yet something like laughter was stirring in my soul.

“You are very much upset,” I said; “you are frightened; you think he won’t come.”

“Oh dear!” she answered; “if I were less happy, I believe I should cry at your lack of faith, at your reproaches. However, you have made me think and have given me a lot to think about; but I shall think later, and now I will own that you are right. Yes, I am somehow not myself; I am all suspense, and feel everything as it were too lightly. But hush! that’s enough about feelings....”

At that moment we heard footsteps, and in the darkness we saw a figure coming towards us. We both started; she almost cried out; I dropped her hand and made a movement as though to walk away. But we were mistaken, it was not he.

“What are you afraid of? Why did you let go of my hand?” she said, giving it to me again. “Come, what is it? We will meet him together; I want him to see how fond we are of each other.”

“How fond we are of each other!” I cried. (“Oh, Nastenka, Nastenka,” I thought, “how much you have told me in that saying! Such fondness at

certain moments makes the heart cold and the soul heavy. Your hand is cold, mine burns like fire. How blind you are, Nastenka!... Oh, how unbearable a happy person is sometimes! But I could not be angry with you!”)

At last my heart was too full.

“Listen, Nastenka!” I cried. “Do you know how it has been with me all day.”

“Why, how, how? Tell me quickly! Why have you said nothing all this time?”

“To begin with, Nastenka, when I had carried out all your commissions, given the letter, gone to see your good friends, then ... then I went home and went to bed.”

“Is that all?” she interrupted, laughing.

“Yes, almost all,” I answered restraining myself, for foolish tears were already starting into my eyes. “I woke an hour before our appointment, and yet, as it were, I had not been asleep. I don’t know what happened to me. I came to tell you all about it, feeling as though time were standing still, feeling as though one sensation, one feeling must remain with me from that time for ever; feeling as though one minute must go on for all eternity, and as though all life had come to a standstill for me.... When I woke up it seemed as though some musical motive long familiar, heard somewhere in the past, forgotten and voluptuously sweet, had come back to me now. It seemed to me that it had been clamouring at my heart all my life, and only now....”

“Oh my goodness, my goodness,” Nastenka interrupted, “what does all that mean? I don’t understand a word.”

“Ah, Nastenka, I wanted somehow to convey to you that strange impression....” I began in a plaintive voice, in which there still lay hid a hope, though a very faint one.

“Leave off. Hush!” she said, and in one instant the sly puss had guessed.

Suddenly she became extraordinarily talkative, gay, mischievous; she took my arm, laughed, wanted me to laugh too, and every confused word I uttered evoked from her prolonged ringing laughter.... I began to feel angry, she had suddenly begun flirting.

“Do you know,” she began, “I feel a little vexed that you are not in love with me? There’s no understanding human nature! But all the same, Mr.

Unapproachable, you cannot blame me for being so simple; I tell you everything, everything, whatever foolish thought comes into my head."

"Listen! That's eleven, I believe," I said as the slow chime of a bell rang out from a distant tower. She suddenly stopped, left off laughing and began to count.

"Yes, it's eleven," she said at last in a timid, uncertain voice.

I regretted at once that I had frightened her, making her count the strokes, and I cursed myself for my spiteful impulse; I felt sorry for her, and did not know how to atone for what I had done.

I began comforting her, seeking for reasons for his not coming, advancing various arguments, proofs. No one could have been easier to deceive than she was at that moment; and, indeed, any one at such a moment listens gladly to any consolation, whatever it may be, and is overjoyed if a shadow of excuse can be found.

"And indeed it's an absurd thing," I began, warming to my task and admiring the extraordinary clearness of my argument, "why, he could not have come; you have muddled and confused me, Nastenka, so that I too, have lost count of the time.... Only think: he can scarcely have received the letter; suppose he is not able to come, suppose he is going to answer the letter, could not come before to-morrow. I will go for it as soon as it's light to-morrow and let you know at once. Consider, there are thousands of possibilities; perhaps he was not at home when the letter came, and may not have read it even now! Anything may happen, you know."

"Yes, yes!" said Nastenka. "I did not think of that. Of course anything may happen?" she went on in a tone that offered no opposition, though some other far-away thought could be heard like a vexatious discord in it. "I tell you what you must do," she said, "you go as early as possible to-morrow morning, and if you get anything let me know at once. You know where I live, don't you?"

And she began repeating her address to me.

Then she suddenly became so tender, so solicitous with me. She seemed to listen attentively to what I told her; but when I asked her some question she was silent, was confused, and turned her head away. I looked into her eyes — yes, she was crying.

"How can you? How can you? Oh, what a baby you are! what childishness!... Come, come!"

She tried to smile, to calm herself, but her chin was quivering and her bosom was still heaving.

“I was thinking about you,” she said after a minute’s silence. “You are so kind that I should be a stone if I did not feel it. Do you know what has occurred to me now? I was comparing you two. Why isn’t he you? Why isn’t he like you? He is not as good as you, though I love him more than you.”

I made no answer. She seemed to expect me to say something.

“Of course, it may be that I don’t understand him fully yet. You know I was always as it were afraid of him; he was always so grave, as it were so proud. Of course I know it’s only that he seems like that, I know there is more tenderness in his heart than in mine.... I remember how he looked at me when I went in to him — do you remember? — with my bundle; but yet I respect him too much, and doesn’t that show that we are not equals?”

“No, Nastenka, no,” I answered, “it shows that you love him more than anything in the world, and far more than yourself.”

“Yes, supposing that is so,” answered Nastenka naïvely. “But do you know what strikes me now? Only I am not talking about him now, but speaking generally; all this came into my mind some time ago. Tell me, how is it that we can’t all be like brothers together? Why is it that even the best of men always seem to hide something from other people and to keep something back? Why not say straight out what is in one’s heart, when one knows that one is not speaking idly? As it is every one seems harsher than he really is, as though all were afraid of doing injustice to their feelings, by being too quick to express them.”

“Oh, Nastenka, what you say is true; but there are many reasons for that,” I broke in suppressing my own feelings at that moment more than ever.

“No, no!” she answered with deep feeling. “Here you, for instance, are not like other people! I really don’t know how to tell you what I feel; but it seems to me that you, for instance ... at the present moment ... it seems to me that you are sacrificing something for me,” she added timidly, with a fleeting glance at me. “Forgive me for saying so, I am a simple girl you know. I have seen very little of life, and I really sometimes don’t know how to say things,” she added in a voice that quivered with some hidden feeling, while she tried to smile; “but I only wanted to tell you that I am grateful, that I feel it all too.... Oh, may God give you happiness for it! What you told

me about your dreamer is quite untrue now — that is, I mean, it's not true of you. You are recovering, you are quite a different man from what you described. If you ever fall in love with some one, God give you happiness with her! I won't wish anything for her, for she will be happy with you. I know, I am a woman myself, so you must believe me when I tell you so."

She ceased speaking, and pressed my hand warmly. I too could not speak without emotion. Some minutes passed.

"Yes, it's clear he won't come to-night," she said at last raising her head. "It's late."

"He will come to-morrow," I said in the most firm and convincing tone.

"Yes," she added with no sign of her former depression. "I see for myself now that he could not come till to-morrow. Well, good-bye, till to-morrow. If it rains perhaps I shall not come. But the day after to-morrow, I shall come. I shall come for certain, whatever happens; be sure to be here, I want to see you, I will tell you everything."

And then when we parted she gave me her hand and said, looking at me candidly: "We shall always be together, shan't we?"

Oh, Nastenka, Nastenka! If only you knew how lonely I am now!

As soon as it struck nine o'clock I could not stay indoors, but put on my things, and went out in spite of the weather. I was there, sitting on our seat. I went to her street, but I felt ashamed, and turned back without looking at their windows, when I was two steps from her door. I went home more depressed than I had ever been before. What a damp, dreary day! If it had been fine I should have walked about all night....

But to-morrow, to-morrow! To-morrow she will tell me everything. The letter has not come to-day, however. But that was to be expected. They are together by now....

FOURTH NIGHT

My God, how it has all ended! What it has all ended in! I arrived at nine o’clock. She was already there. I noticed her a good way off; she was standing as she had been that first time, with her elbows on the railing, and she did not hear me coming up to her.

“Nastenka!” I called to her, suppressing my agitation with an effort.

She turned to me quickly.

“Well?” she said. “Well? Make haste!”

I looked at her in perplexity.

“Well, where is the letter? Have you brought the letter?” she repeated clutching at the railing.

“No, there is no letter,” I said at last. “Hasn’t he been to you yet?” She turned fearfully pale and looked at me for a long time without moving. I had shattered her last hope.

“Well, God be with him,” she said at last in a breaking voice; “God be with him if he leaves me like that.”

She dropped her eyes, then tried to look at me and could not. For several minutes she was struggling with her emotion. All at once she turned away, leaning her elbows against the railing and burst into tears.

“Oh don’t, don’t!” I began; but looking at her I had not the heart to go on, and what was I to say to her?

“Don’t try and comfort me,” she said; “don’t talk about him; don’t tell me that he will come, that he has not cast me off so cruelly and so inhumanly as he has. What for — what for? Can there have been something in my letter, that unlucky letter?”

At that point sobs stifled her voice; my heart was torn as I looked at her.

“Oh, how inhumanly cruel it is!” she began again. “And not a line, not a line! He might at least have written that he does not want me, that he rejects me — but not a line for three days! How easy it is for him to wound, to insult a poor, defenceless girl, whose only fault is that she loves him! Oh, what I’ve suffered during these three days! Oh, dear! When I think that I was the first to go to him, that I humbled myself before him, cried, that I begged of him a little love!... and after that! Listen,” she said, turning to me, and her black eyes flashed, “it isn’t so! It can’t be so; it isn’t natural. Either you are mistaken or I; perhaps he has not received the letter? Perhaps he

still knows nothing about it? How could any one — judge for yourself, tell me, for goodness' sake explain it to me, I can't understand it — how could any one behave with such barbarous coarseness as he has behaved to me? Not one word! Why, the lowest creature on earth is treated more compassionately. Perhaps he has heard something, perhaps some one has told him something about me," she cried, turning to me inquiringly: "What do you think?"

"Listen, Nastenka, I shall go to him to-morrow in your name."

"Yes?"

"I will question him about everything; I will tell him everything."

"Yes, yes?"

"You write a letter. Don't say no, Nastenka, don't say no! I will make him respect your action, he shall hear all about it, and if — —"

"No, my friend, no," she interrupted. "Enough! Not another word, not another line from me — enough! I don't know him; I don't love him any more. I will ... forget him."

She could not go on.

"Calm yourself, calm yourself! Sit here, Nastenka," I said, making her sit down on the seat.

"I am calm. Don't trouble. It's nothing! It's only tears, they will soon dry. Why, do you imagine I shall do away with myself, that I shall throw myself into the river?"

My heart was full: I tried to speak, but I could not.

"Listen," she said taking my hand. "Tell me: you wouldn't have behaved like this, would you? You would not have abandoned a girl who had come to you of herself, you would not have thrown into her face a shameless taunt at her weak foolish heart? You would have taken care of her? You would have realized that she was alone, that she did not know how to look after herself, that she could not guard herself from loving you, that it was not her fault, not her fault — that she had done nothing.... Oh dear, oh dear!"

"Nastenka!" I cried at last, unable to control my emotion. "Nastenka, you torture me! You wound my heart, you are killing me, Nastenka! I cannot be silent! I must speak at last, give utterance to what is surging in my heart!"

As I said this I got up from the seat. She took my hand and looked at me in surprise.

“What is the matter with you?” she said at last.

“Listen,” I said resolutely. “Listen to me, Nastenka! What I am going to say to you now is all nonsense, all impossible, all stupid! I know that this can never be, but I cannot be silent. For the sake of what you are suffering now, I beg you beforehand to forgive me!”

“What is it? What is it?” she said drying her tears and looking at me intently, while a strange curiosity gleamed in her astonished eyes. “What is the matter?”

“It’s impossible, but I love you, Nastenka! There it is! Now everything is told,” I said with a wave of my hand. “Now you will see whether you can go on talking to me as you did just now, whether you can listen to what I am going to say to you.”...

“Well, what then?” Nastenka interrupted me. “What of it? I knew you loved me long ago, only I always thought that you simply liked me very much.... Oh dear, oh dear!”

“At first it was simply liking, Nastenka, but now, now! I am just in the same position as you were when you went to him with your bundle. In a worse position than you, Nastenka, because he cared for no one else as you do.”

“What are you saying to me! I don’t understand you in the least. But tell me, what’s this for; I don’t mean what for, but why are you ... so suddenly.... Oh dear, I am talking nonsense! But you....”

And Nastenka broke off in confusion. Her cheeks flamed; she dropped her eyes.

“What’s to be done, Nastenka, what am I to do? I am to blame. I have abused your.... But no, no, I am not to blame, Nastenka; I feel that, I know that, because my heart tells me I am right, for I cannot hurt you in any way, I cannot wound you! I was your friend, but I am still your friend, I have betrayed no trust. Here my tears are falling, Nastenka. Let them flow, let them flow — they don’t hurt anybody. They will dry, Nastenka.”

“Sit down, sit down,” she said, making me sit down on the seat. “Oh, my God!”

“No, Nastenka, I won’t sit down; I cannot stay here any longer, you cannot see me again; I will tell you everything and go away. I only want to say that you would never have found out that I loved you. I should have kept my secret. I would not have worried you at such a moment with my

egoism. No! But I could not resist it now; you spoke of it yourself, it is your fault, your fault and not mine. You cannot drive me away from you.”...

“No, no, I don’t drive you away, no!” said Nastenka, concealing her confusion as best she could, poor child.

“You don’t drive me away? No! But I meant to run from you myself. I will go away, but first I will tell you all, for when you were crying here I could not sit unmoved, when you wept, when you were in torture at being — at being — I will speak of it, Nastenka — at being forsaken, at your love being repulsed, I felt that in my heart there was so much love for you, Nastenka, so much love! And it seemed so bitter that I could not help you with my love, that my heart was breaking and I ... I could not be silent, I had to speak, Nastenka, I had to speak!”

“Yes, yes! tell me, talk to me,” said Nastenka with an indescribable gesture. “Perhaps you think it strange that I talk to you like this, but ... speak! I will tell you afterwards! I will tell you everything.”

“You are sorry for me, Nastenka, you are simply sorry for me, my dear little friend! What’s done can’t be mended. What is said cannot be taken back. Isn’t that so? Well, now you know. That’s the starting-point. Very well. Now it’s all right, only listen. When you were sitting crying I thought to myself (oh, let me tell you what I was thinking!), I thought, that (of course it cannot be, Nastenka), I thought that you ... I thought that you somehow ... quite apart from me, had ceased to love him. Then — I thought that yesterday and the day before yesterday, Nastenka — then I would — I certainly would — have succeeded in making you love me; you know, you said yourself, Nastenka, that you almost loved me. Well, what next? Well, that’s nearly all I wanted to tell you; all that is left to say is how it would be if you loved me, only that, nothing more! Listen, my friend — for any way you are my friend — I am, of course, a poor, humble man, of no great consequence; but that’s not the point (I don’t seem to be able to say what I mean, Nastenka, I am so confused), only I would love you, I would love you so, that even if you still loved him, even if you went on loving the man I don’t know, you would never feel that my love was a burden to you. You would only feel every minute that at your side was beating a grateful, grateful heart, a warm heart ready for your sake.... Oh Nastenka, Nastenka! What have you done to me?”

“Don’t cry; I don’t want you to cry,” said Nastenka getting up quickly from the seat. “Come along, get up, come with me, don’t cry, don’t cry,” she

said, drying her tears with her handkerchief; “let us go now; maybe I will tell you something.... If he has forsaken me now, if he has forgotten me, though I still love him (I do not want to deceive you) ... but listen, answer me. If I were to love you, for instance, that is, if I only.... Oh my friend, my friend! To think, to think how I wounded you, when I laughed at your love, when I praised you for not falling in love with me. Oh dear! How was it I did not foresee this, how was it I did not foresee this, how could I have been so stupid? But.... Well, I have made up my mind, I will tell you.”

“Look here, Nastenka, do you know what? I’ll go away, that’s what I’ll do. I am simply tormenting you. Here you are remorseful for having laughed at me, and I won’t have you ... in addition to your sorrow.... Of course it is my fault, Nastenka, but good-bye!”

“Stay, listen to me: can you wait?”

“What for? How?”

“I love him; but I shall get over it, I must get over it, I cannot fail to get over it; I am getting over it, I feel that.... Who knows? Perhaps it will all end to-day, for I hate him, for he has been laughing at me, while you have been weeping here with me, for you have not repulsed me as he has, for you love me while he has never loved me, for in fact, I love you myself.... Yes, I love you! I love you as you love me; I have told you so before, you heard it yourself — I love you because you are better than he is, because you are nobler than he is, because, because he — —”

The poor girl’s emotion was so violent that she could not say more; she laid her head upon my shoulder, then upon my bosom, and wept bitterly. I comforted her, I persuaded her, but she could not stop crying; she kept pressing my hand, and saying between her sobs: “Wait, wait, it will be over in a minute! I want to tell you ... you mustn’t think that these tears — it’s nothing, it’s weakness, wait till it’s over.”... At last she left off crying, dried her eyes and we walked on again. I wanted to speak, but she still begged me to wait. We were silent.... At last she plucked up courage and began to speak.

“It’s like this,” she began in a weak and quivering voice, in which, however, there was a note that pierced my heart with a sweet pang; “don’t think that I am so light and inconstant, don’t think that I can forget and change so quickly. I have loved him for a whole year, and I swear by God that I have never, never, even in thought, been unfaithful to him.... He has despised me, he has been laughing at me — God forgive him! But he has

insulted me and wounded my heart. I ... I do not love him, for I can only love what is magnanimous, what understands me, what is generous; for I am like that myself and he is not worthy of me — well, that's enough of him. He has done better than if he had deceived my expectations later, and shown me later what he was.... Well, it's over! But who knows, my dear friend," she went on pressing my hand, "who knows, perhaps my whole love was a mistaken feeling, a delusion — perhaps it began in mischief, in nonsense, because I was kept so strictly by grandmother? Perhaps I ought to love another man, not him, a different man, who would have pity on me and ... and.... But don't let us say any more about that," Nastenka broke off, breathless with emotion, "I only wanted to tell you ... I wanted to tell you that if, although I love him (no, did love him), if, in spite of this you still say.... If you feel that your love is so great that it may at last drive from my heart my old feeling — if you will have pity on me — if you do not want to leave me alone to my fate, without hope, without consolation — if you are ready to love me always as you do now — I swear to you that gratitude ... that my love will be at last worthy of your love.... Will you take my hand?"

"Nastenka!" I cried breathless with sobs. "Nastenka, oh Nastenka!"

"Enough, enough! Well, now it's quite enough," she said, hardly able to control herself. "Well, now all has been said, hasn't it! Hasn't it? You are happy — I am happy too. Not another word about it, wait; spare me ... talk of something else, for God's sake."

"Yes, Nastenka, yes! Enough about that, now I am happy. I —— Yes, Nastenka, yes, let us talk of other things, let us make haste and talk. Yes! I am ready."

And we did not know what to say: we laughed, we wept, we said thousands of things meaningless and incoherent; at one moment we walked along the pavement, then suddenly turned back and crossed the road; then we stopped and went back again to the embankment; we were like children.

"I am living alone now, Nastenka," I began, "but to-morrow! Of course you know, Nastenka, I am poor, I have only got twelve hundred roubles, but that doesn't matter."

"Of course not, and granny has her pension, so she will be no burden. We must take granny."

"Of course we must take granny. But there's Matrona."

"Yes, and we've got Fyokla too!"

“Matrona is a good woman, but she has one fault: she has no imagination, Nastenka, absolutely none; but that doesn’t matter.”

“That’s all right — they can live together; only you must move to us to-morrow.”

“To you? How so? All right, I am ready.”

“Yes, hire a room from us. We have a top floor, it’s empty. We had an old lady lodging there, but she has gone away; and I know granny would like to have a young man. I said to her, ‘Why a young man?’ And she said, ‘Oh, because I am old; only don’t you fancy, Nastenka, that I want him as a husband for you.’ So I guessed it was with that idea.”

“Oh, Nastenka!”

And we both laughed.

“Come, that’s enough, that’s enough. But where do you live? I’ve forgotten.”

“Over that way, near X bridge, Barannikov’s Buildings.”

“It’s that big house?”

“Yes, that big house.”

“Oh, I know, a nice house; only you know you had better give it up and come to us as soon as possible.”

“To-morrow, Nastenka, to-morrow; I owe a little for my rent there but that doesn’t matter. I shall soon get my salary.”

“And do you know I will perhaps give lessons; I will learn something myself and then give lessons.”

“Capital! And I shall soon get a bonus.”

“So by to-morrow you will be my lodger.”

“And we will go to *The Barber of Seville*, for they are soon going to give it again.”

“Yes, we’ll go,” said Nastenka, “but better see something else and not *The Barber of Seville*.”

“Very well, something else. Of course that will be better, I did not think — —”

As we talked like this we walked along in a sort of delirium, a sort of intoxication, as though we did not know what was happening to us. At one moment we stopped and talked for a long time at the same place; then we went on again, and goodness knows where we went; and again tears and again laughter. All of a sudden Nastenka would want to go home, and I would not dare to detain her but would want to see her to the house; we set

off, and in a quarter of an hour found ourselves at the embankment by our seat. Then she would sigh, and tears would come into her eyes again; I would turn chill with dismay.... But she would press my hand and force me to walk, to talk, to chatter as before.

“It’s time I was home at last; I think it must be very late,” Nastenka said at last. “We must give over being childish.”

“Yes, Nastenka, only I shan’t sleep to-night; I am not going home.”

“I don’t think I shall sleep either; only see me home.”

“I should think so!”

“Only this time we really must get to the house.”

“We must, we must.”

“Honour bright? For you know one must go home some time!”

“Honour bright,” I answered laughing.

“Well, come along!”

“Come along! Look at the sky, Nastenka. Look! To-morrow it will be a lovely day; what a blue sky, what a moon! Look; that yellow cloud is covering it now, look, look! No, it has passed by. Look, look!”

But Nastenka did not look at the cloud; she stood mute as though turned to stone; a minute later she huddled timidly close up to me. Her hand trembled in my hand; I looked at her. She pressed still more closely to me.

At that moment a young man passed by us. He suddenly stopped, looked at us intently, and then again took a few steps on. My heart began throbbing.

“Who is it, Nastenka?” I said in an undertone.

“It’s he,” she answered in a whisper, huddling up to me, still more closely, still more tremulously.... I could hardly stand on my feet.

“Nastenka, Nastenka! It’s you!” I heard a voice behind us and at the same moment the young man took several steps towards us.

My God, how she cried out! How she started! How she tore herself out of my arms and rushed to meet him! I stood and looked at them, utterly crushed. But she had hardly given him her hand, had hardly flung herself into his arms, when she turned to me again, was beside me again in a flash, and before I knew where I was she threw both arms round my neck and gave me a warm, tender kiss. Then, without saying a word to me, she rushed back to him again, took his hand, and drew him after her.

I stood a long time looking after them. At last the two vanished from my sight.

MORNING

My night ended with the morning. It was a wet day. The rain was falling and beating disconsolately upon my window pane; it was dark in the room and grey outside. My head ached and I was giddy; fever was stealing over my limbs.

“There’s a letter for you, sir; the postman brought it,” Matrona said stooping over me.

“A letter? From whom?” I cried jumping up from my chair.

“I don’t know, sir, better look — maybe it is written there whom it is from.”

I broke the seal. It was from her!

* * * * *

“Oh, forgive me, forgive me! I beg you on my knees to forgive me! I deceived you and myself. It was a dream, a mirage.... My heart aches for you to-day; forgive me, forgive me!

“Don’t blame me, for I have not changed to you in the least. I told you that I would love you, I love you now, I more than love you. Oh, my God! If only I could love you both at once! Oh, if only you were he!”

[“Oh, if only he were you,” echoed in my mind. I remembered your words, Nastenka!]

“God knows what I would do for you now! I know that you are sad and dreary. I have wounded you, but you know when one loves a wrong is soon forgotten. And you love me.

“Thank you, yes, thank you for that love! For it will live in my memory like a sweet dream which lingers long after awakening; for I shall remember for ever that instant when you opened your heart to me like a brother and so generously accepted the gift of my shattered heart to care for it, nurse it, and heal it.... If you forgive me, the memory of you will be exalted by a feeling of everlasting gratitude which will never be effaced from my soul.... I will treasure that memory: I will be true to it, I will not betray it, I will not betray my heart: it is too constant. It returned so quickly yesterday to him to whom it has always belonged.

“We shall meet, you will come to us, you will not leave us, you will be for ever a friend, a brother to me. And when you see me you will give me your hand ... yes? You will give it to me, you have forgiven me, haven’t you? You love me *as before*?

“Oh, love me, do not forsake me, because I love you so at this moment, because I am worthy of your love, because I will deserve it ... my dear! Next week I am to be married to him. He has come back in love, he has never forgotten me. You will not be angry at my writing about him. But I want to come and see you with him; you will like him, won’t you?

“Forgive me, remember and love your

“Nastenka.”

* * * * *

I read that letter over and over again for a long time; tears gushed to my eyes. At last it fell from my hands and I hid my face.

“Dearie! I say, dearie — —” Matrona began.

“What is it, Matrona?”

“I have taken all the cobwebs off the ceiling; you can have a wedding or give a party.”

I looked at Matrona. She was still a hearty, *youngish* old woman, but I don’t know why all at once I suddenly pictured her with lustreless eyes, a wrinkled face, bent, decrepit.... I don’t know why I suddenly pictured my room grown old like Matrona. The walls and the floors looked discoloured, everything seemed dingy; the spiders’ webs were thicker than ever. I don’t know why, but when I looked out of the window it seemed to me that the house opposite had grown old and dingy too, that the stucco on the columns was peeling off and crumbling, that the cornices were cracked and blackened, and that the walls, of a vivid deep yellow, were patchy.

Either the sunbeams suddenly peeping out from the clouds for a moment were hidden again behind a veil of rain, and everything had grown dingy again before my eyes; or perhaps the whole vista of my future flashed before me so sad and forbidding, and I saw myself just as I was now, fifteen years hence, older, in the same room, just as solitary, with the same Matrona grown no cleverer for those fifteen years.

But to imagine that I should bear you a grudge, Nastenka! That I should cast a dark cloud over your serene, untroubled happiness; that by my bitter

reproaches I should cause distress to your heart, should poison it with secret remorse and should force it to throb with anguish at the moment of bliss; that I should crush a single one of those tender blossoms which you have twined in your dark tresses when you go with him to the altar.... Oh never, never! May your sky be clear, may your sweet smile be bright and untroubled, and may you be blessed for that moment of blissful happiness which you gave to another, lonely and grateful heart!

My God, a whole moment of happiness! Is that too little for the whole of a man’s life?

POLZUNKOV

I began to scrutinize the man closely. Even in his exterior there was something so peculiar that it compelled one, however far away one's thoughts might be, to fix one's eyes upon him and go off into the most irrepressible roar of laughter. That is what happened to me. I must observe that the little man's eyes were so mobile, or perhaps he was so sensitive to the magnetism of every eye fixed upon him, that he almost by instinct guessed that he was being observed, turned at once to the observer and anxiously analysed his expression. His continual mobility, his turning and twisting, made him look strikingly like a dancing doll. It was strange! He seemed afraid of jeers, in spite of the fact that he was almost getting his living by being a buffoon for all the world, and exposed himself to every buffet in a moral sense and even in a physical one, judging from the company he was in. Voluntary buffoons are not even to be pitied. But I noticed at once that this strange creature, this ridiculous man, was by no means a buffoon by profession. There was still something gentlemanly in him. His very uneasiness, his continual apprehensiveness about himself, were actually a testimony in his favour. It seemed to me that his desire to be obliging was due more to kindness of heart than to mercenary considerations. He readily allowed them to laugh their loudest at him and in the most unseemly way, to his face, but at the same time — and I am ready to take my oath on it — his heart ached and was sore at the thought that his listeners were so caddishly brutal as to be capable of laughing, not at anything said or done, but at him, at his whole being, at his heart, at his head, at his appearance, at his whole body, flesh and blood. I am convinced that he felt at that moment all the foolishness of his position; but the protest died away in his heart at once, though it invariably sprang up again in the most heroic way. I am convinced that all this was due to nothing else but a kind heart, and not to fear of the inconvenience of being kicked out and being unable to borrow money from some one. This gentleman was for ever borrowing money, that is, he asked for alms in that form, when after playing the fool and entertaining them at his expense he felt in a certain sense entitled to borrow money from them. But, good heavens! what a business the borrowing was! And with what a countenance he asked for the loan! I could not have imagined that on such a small space as the wrinkled, angular

face of that little man room could be found, at one and the same time, for so many different grimaces, for such strange, variously characteristic shades of feeling, such absolutely killing expressions. Everything was there — shame and an assumption of insolence, and vexation at the sudden flushing of his face, and anger and fear of failure, and entreaty to be forgiven for having dared to pester, and a sense of his own dignity, and a still greater sense of his own abjectness — all this passed over his face like lightning. For six whole years he had struggled along in God's world in this way, and so far had been unable to take up a fitting attitude at the interesting moment of borrowing money! I need not say that he never could grow callous and completely abject. His heart was too sensitive, too passionate! I will say more, indeed: in my opinion, he was one of the most honest and honourable men in the world, but with a little weakness: of being ready to do anything abject at any one's bidding, good-naturedly and disinterestedly, simply to oblige a fellow-creature. In short, he was what is called "a rag" in the fullest sense of the word. The most absurd thing was, that he was dressed like any one else, neither worse nor better, tidily, even with a certain elaborateness, and actually had pretentions to respectability and personal dignity. This external equality and internal inequality, his uneasiness about himself and at the same time his continual self-depreciation — all this was strikingly incongruous and provocative of laughter and pity. If he had been convinced in his heart (and in spite of his experience it did happen to him at moments to believe this) that his audience were the most good-natured people in the world, who were simply laughing at something amusing, and not at the sacrifice of his personal dignity, he would most readily have taken off his coat, put it on wrong side outwards, and have walked about the streets in that attire for the diversion of others and his own gratification. But equality he could never anyhow attain. Another trait: the queer fellow was proud, and even, by fits and starts, when it was not too risky, generous. It was worth seeing and hearing how he could sometimes, not sparing himself, consequently with pluck, almost with heroism, dispose of one of his patrons who had infuriated him to madness. But that was at moments.... In short, he was a martyr in the fullest sense of the word, but the most useless and consequently the most comic martyr.

There was a general discussion going on among the guests. All at once I saw our queer friend jump upon his chair, and call out at the top of his voice, anxious for the exclusive attention of the company.

“Listen,” the master of the house whispered to me. “He sometimes tells the most curious stories.... Does he interest you?”

I nodded and squeezed myself into the group. The sight of a well-dressed gentleman jumping upon his chair and shouting at the top of his voice did, in fact, draw the attention of all. Many who did not know the queer fellow looked at one another in perplexity, the others roared with laughter.

“I knew Fedosey Nikolaitch. I ought to know Fedosey Nikolaitch better than any one!” cried the queer fellow from his elevation. “Gentlemen, allow me to tell you something. I can tell you a good story about Fedosey Nikolaitch! I know a story — exquisite!”

“Tell it, Osip Mihalitch, tell it.”

“Tell it.”

“Listen.”

“Listen, listen.”

“I begin; but, gentlemen, this is a peculiar story....”

“Very good, very good.”

“It’s a comic story.”

“Very good, excellent, splendid. Get on!”

“It is an episode in the private life of your humble....”

“But why do you trouble yourself to announce that it’s comic?”

“And even somewhat tragic!”

“Eh???!”

“In short, the story which it will afford you all pleasure to hear me now relate, gentlemen — the story, in consequence of which I have come into company so interesting and profitable....”

“No puns!”

“This story.”

“In short the story — make haste and finish the introduction. The story, which has its value,” a fair-haired young man with moustaches pronounced in a husky voice, dropping his hand into his coat pocket and, as though by chance, pulling out a purse instead of his handkerchief.

“The story, my dear sirs, after which I should like to see many of you in my place. And, finally, the story, in consequence of which I have not married.”

“Married! A wife! Polzunkov tried to get married!!”

“I confess I should like to see Madame Polzunkov.”

“Allow me to inquire the name of the would-be Madame Polzunkov,” piped a youth, making his way up to the storyteller.

“And so for the first chapter, gentlemen. It was just six years ago, in spring, the thirty-first of March — note the date, gentlemen — on the eve....”

“Of the first of April!” cried a young man with ringlets.

“You are extraordinarily quick at guessing. It was evening. Twilight was gathering over the district town of N., the moon was about to float out ... everything in proper style, in fact. And so in the very late twilight I, too, floated out of my poor lodging on the sly — after taking leave of my restricted granny, now dead. Excuse me, gentlemen, for making use of such a fashionable expression, which I heard for the last time from Nikolay Nikolaitch. But my granny was indeed restricted: she was blind, dumb, deaf, stupid — everything you please.... I confess I was in a tremor, I was prepared for great deeds; my heart was beating like a kitten’s when some bony hand clutches it by the scruff of the neck.”

“Excuse me, Monsieur Polzunkov.”

“What do you want?”

“Tell it more simply; don’t over-exert yourself, please!”

“All right,” said Osip Mihalitch, a little taken aback. “I went into the house of Fedosey Nikolaitch (the house that he had bought). Fedosey Nikolaitch, as you know, is not a mere colleague, but the full-blown head of a department. I was announced, and was at once shown into the study. I can see it now; the room was dark, almost dark, but candles were not brought. Behold, Fedosey Nikolaitch walks in. There he and I were left in the darkness....”

“Whatever happened to you?” asked an officer.

“What do you suppose?” asked Polzunkov, turning promptly, with a convulsively working face, to the young man with ringlets. “Well, gentlemen, a strange circumstance occurred, though indeed there was nothing strange in it: it was what is called an everyday affair — I simply took out of my pocket a roll of paper ... and he a roll of paper.”

“Paper notes?”

“Paper notes; and we exchanged.”

“I don’t mind betting that there’s a flavour of bribery about it,” observed a respectably dressed, closely cropped young gentleman.

“Bribery!” Polzunkov caught him up.

“‘Oh, may I be a Liberal, Such as many I have seen!’

If you, too, when it is your lot to serve in the provinces, do not warm your hands at your country’s hearth.... For as an author said: ‘Even the smoke of our native land is sweet to us.’ She is our Mother, gentlemen, our Mother Russia; we are her babes, and so we suck her!”

There was a roar of laughter.

“Only would you believe it, gentlemen, I have never taken bribes?” said Polzunkov, looking round at the whole company distrustfully.

A prolonged burst of Homeric laughter drowned Polzunkov’s words in guffaws.

“It really is so, gentlemen....”

But here he stopped, still looking round at every one with a strange expression of face; perhaps — who knows? — at that moment the thought came into his mind that he was more honest than many of all that honourable company.... Anyway, the serious expression of his face did not pass away till the general merriment was quite over.

“And so,” Polzunkov began again when all was still, “though I never did take bribes, yet that time I transgressed; I put in my pocket a bribe ... from a bribe-taker ... that is, there were certain papers in my hands which, if I had cared to send to a certain person, it would have gone ill with Fedosey Nikolaitch.”

“So then he bought them from you?”

“He did.”

“Did he give much?”

“He gave as much as many a man nowadays would sell his conscience for complete, with all its variations ... if only he could get anything for it. But I felt as though I were scalded when I put the money in my pocket. I really don’t understand what always comes over me, gentlemen — but I was more dead than alive, my lips twitched and my legs trembled; well, I was to blame, to blame, entirely to blame. I was utterly conscience-stricken; I was ready to beg Fedosey Nikolaitch’s forgiveness.”

“Well, what did he do — did he forgive you?”

“But I didn’t ask his forgiveness.... I only mean that that is how I felt. Then I have a sensitive heart, you know. I saw he was looking me straight in the face. ‘Have you no fear of God, Osip Mihailitch?’ said he. Well, what could I do? From a feeling of propriety I put my head on one side and I flung up my hands. ‘In what way,’ said I, ‘have I no fear of God, Fedosey

Nikolaitch?’ But I just said that from a feeling of propriety.... I was ready to sink into the earth. ‘After being so long a friend of our family, after being, I may say, like a son — and who knows what Heaven had in store for us, Osip Mihailitch? — and all of a sudden to inform against me — to think of that now!... What am I to think of mankind after that, Osip Mihailitch?’ Yes, gentlemen, he did read me a lecture! ‘Come,’ he said, ‘you tell me what I am to think of mankind after that, Osip Mihailitch.’ ‘What is he to think?’ I thought; and do you know, there was a lump in my throat, and my voice was quivering, and knowing my hateful weakness, I snatched up my hat. ‘Where are you off to, Osip Mihailitch? Surely on the eve of such a day you cannot bear malice against me? What wrong have I done you?...’ ‘Fedosey Nikolaitch,’ I said, ‘Fedosey Nikolaitch....’ In fact, I melted, gentlemen, I melted like a sugar-stick. And the roll of notes that was lying in my pocket, that, too, seemed screaming out: ‘You ungrateful brigand, you accursed thief!’ It seemed to weigh a hundredweight ... (if only it had weighed a hundredweight!).... ‘I see,’ says Fedosey Nikolaitch, ‘I see your penitence ... you know to-morrow....’ ‘St. Mary of Egypt’s day....’ ‘Well, don’t weep,’ said Fedosey Nikolaitch, ‘that’s enough: you’ve erred, and you are penitent! Come along! Maybe I may succeed in bringing you back again into the true path,’ says he ... ‘maybe, my modest Penates’ (yes,’Penates,’ I remember he used that expression, the rascal) ‘will warm,’ says he, ‘your harden ... I will not say hardened, but erring heart....’ He took me by the arm, gentlemen, and led me to his family circle. A cold shiver ran down my back; I shuddered! I thought with what eyes shall I present myself — you must know, gentlemen ... eh, what shall I say? — a delicate position had arisen here.”

“Not Madame Polzunkov?”

“Marya Fedosyevna, only she was not destined, you know, to bear the name you have given her; she did not attain that honour. Fedosey Nikolaitch was right, you see, when he said that I was almost looked upon as a son in the house; it had been so, indeed, six months before, when a certain retired junker called Mihailo Maximitch Dvigailov, was still living. But by God’s will he died, and he put off settling his affairs till death settled his business for him.”

“Ough!”

“Well, never mind, gentlemen, forgive me, it was a slip of the tongue. It’s a bad pun, but it doesn’t matter it’s being bad — what happened was far

worse, when I was left, so to say, with nothing in prospect but a bullet through the brain, for that junker, though he would not admit me into his house (he lived in grand style, for he had always known how to feather his nest), yet perhaps correctly he believed me to be his son."

"Aha!"

"Yes, that was how it was! So they began to cold-shoulder me at Fedosey Nikolaitch's. I noticed things, I kept quiet; but all at once, unluckily for me (or perhaps luckily!), a cavalry officer galloped into our little town like snow on our head. His business — buying horses for the army — was light and active, in cavalry style, but he settled himself solidly at Fedosey Nikolaitch's, as though he were laying siege to it! I approached the subject in a roundabout way, as my nasty habit is; I said one thing and another, asking him what I had done to be treated so, saying that I was almost like a son to him, and when might I expect him to behave more like a father.... Well, he began answering me. And when he begins to speak you are in for a regular epic in twelve cantos, and all you can do is to listen, lick your lips and throw up your hands in delight. And not a ha'p'orth of sense, at least there's no making out the sense. You stand puzzled like a fool — he puts you in a fog, he twists about like an eel and wriggles away from you. It's a special gift, a real gift — it's enough to frighten people even if it is no concern of theirs. I tried one thing and another, and went hither and thither. I took the lady songs and presented her with sweets and thought of witty things to say to her. I tried sighing and groaning. 'My heart aches,' I said, 'it aches from love.' And I went in for tears and secret explanations. Man is foolish, you know.... I never reminded myself that I was thirty ... not a bit of it! I tried all my arts. It was no go. It was a failure, and I gained nothing but jeers and gibes. I was indignant, I was choking with anger. I slunk off and would not set foot in the house. I thought and thought and made up my mind to denounce him. Well, of course, it was a shabby thing — I meant to give away a friend, I confess. I had heaps of material and splendid material — a grand case. It brought me fifteen hundred roubles when I changed it and my report on it for bank notes!"

"Ah, so that was the bribe!"

"Yes, sir, that was the bribe — and it was a bribe-taker who had to pay it — and I didn't do wrong, I can assure you! Well, now I will go on: he drew me, if you will kindly remember, more dead than alive into the room where they were having tea. They all met me, seeming as it were offended, that is,

not exactly offended, but hurt — so hurt that it was simply.... They seemed shattered, absolutely shattered, and at the same time there was a look of becoming dignity on their faces, a gravity in their expression, something fatherly, parental ... the prodigal son had come back to them — that's what it had come to! They made me sit down to tea, but there was no need to do that: I felt as though a samovar was toiling in my bosom and my feet were like ice. I was humbled, I was cowed. Marya Fominishna, his wife, addressed me familiarly from the first word.

"'How is it you have grown so thin, my boy?'

"'I've not been very well, Marya Fominishna,' I said. My wretched voice shook.

"And then quite suddenly — she must have been waiting for a chance to get a dig at me, the old snake — she said —

"'I suppose your conscience felt ill at ease, Osip Mihalitch, my dear! Our fatherly hospitality was a reproach to you! You have been punished for the tears I have shed.'

"Yes, upon my word, she really said that — she had the conscience to say it. Why, that was nothing to her, she was a terror! She did nothing but sit there and pour out tea. But if you were in the market, my darling, I thought you'd shout louder than any fishwife there.... That's the kind of woman she was. And then, to my undoing, the daughter, Marya Fedosyevna, came in, in all her innocence, a little pale and her eyes red as though she had been weeping. I was bowled over on the spot like a fool. But it turned out afterwards that the tears were a tribute to the cavalry officer. He had made tracks for home and taken his hook for good and all; for you know it was high time for him to be off — I may as well mention the fact here; not that his leave was up precisely, but you see.... It was only later that the loving parents grasped the position and had found out all that had happened.... What could they do? They hushed their trouble up — an addition to the family!

"Well, I could not help it — as soon as I looked at her I was done for; I stole a glance at my hat, I wanted to get up and make off. But there was no chance of that, they took away my hat.... I must confess, I did think of getting off without it. 'Well!' I thought — but no, they latched the doors. There followed friendly jokes, winking, little airs and graces. I was overcome with embarrassment, said something stupid, talked nonsense, about love. My charmer sat down to the piano and with an air of wounded

feeling sang the song about the hussar who leaned upon the sword — that finished me off!

“‘Well,’ said Fedosey Nikolaitch, ‘all is forgotten, come to my arms!’

“I fell just as I was, with my face on his waistcoat.

“‘My benefactor! You are a father to me!’ said I. And I shed floods of hot tears. Lord, have mercy on us, what a to-do there was! He cried, his good lady cried, Mashenka cried ... there was a flaxen-headed creature there, she cried too.... That wasn’t enough: the younger children crept out of all the corners (the Lord had filled their quiver full) and they howled too.... Such tears, such emotion, such joy! They found their prodigal, it was like a soldier’s return to his home. Then followed refreshments, we played forfeits, and ‘I have a pain’—’Where is it?’—’In my heart’—’Who gave it you?’ My charmer blushed. The old man and I had some punch — they won me over and did for me completely.

“I returned to my grandmother with my head in a whirl. I was laughing all the way home; for full two hours I paced up and down our little room. I waked up my old granny and told her of my happiness.

“‘But did he give you any money, the brigand?’

“‘He did, granny, he did, my dear — luck has come to us all of a heap: we’ve only to open our hand and take it.’

“I waked up Sofron.

“‘Sofron,’ I said, ‘take off my boots.’

“Sofron pulled off my boots.

“‘Come, Sofron, congratulate me now, give me a kiss! I am going to get married, my lad, I am going to get married. You can get jolly drunk to-morrow, you can have a spree, my dear soul — your master is getting married.’

“My heart was full of jokes and laughter. I was beginning to drop off to sleep, but something made me get up again. I sat in thought: to-morrow is the first of April, a bright and playful day — what should I do? And I thought of something. Why, gentlemen, I got out of bed, lighted a candle, and sat down to the writing-table just as I was. I was in a fever of excitement, quite carried away — you know, gentlemen, what it is when a man is quite carried away? I wallowed joyfully in the mud, my dear friends. You see what I am like; they take something from you, and you give them something else as well and say, ‘Take that, too.’ They strike you on the cheek and in your joy you offer them your whole back. Then they try to lure

you like a dog with a bun, and you embrace them with your foolish paws and fall to kissing them with all your heart and soul. Why, see what I am doing now, gentlemen! You are laughing and whispering — I see it! After I have told you all my story you will begin to turn me into ridicule, you will begin to attack me, but yet I go on talking and talking and talking! And who tells me to? Who drives me to do it? Who is standing behind my back whispering to me, ‘Speak, speak and tell them’? And yet I do talk, I go on telling you, I try to please you as though you were my brothers, all my dearest friends.... Ech!”

The laughter which had sprung up by degrees on all sides completely drowned at last the voice of the speaker, who really seemed worked up into a sort of ecstasy. He paused, for several minutes his eyes strayed about the company, then suddenly, as though carried away by a whirlwind, he waved his hand, burst out laughing himself, as though he really found his position amusing, and fell to telling his story again.

“I scarcely slept all night, gentlemen. I was scribbling all night: you see, I thought of a trick. Ech, gentlemen, the very thought of it makes me ashamed. It wouldn’t have been so bad if it all had been done at night — I might have been drunk, blundered, been silly and talked nonsense — but not a bit of it! I woke up in the morning as soon as it was light, I hadn’t slept more than an hour or two, and was in the same mind. I dressed, I washed, I curled and pomaded my hair, put on my new dress coat and went straight off to spend the holiday with Fedosey Nikolaitch, and I kept the joke I had written in my hat. He met me again with open arms, and invited me again to his fatherly waistcoat. But I assumed an air of dignity. I had the joke I thought of the night before in my mind. I drew a step back.

“‘No, Fedosey Nikolaitch, but will you please read this letter,’ and I gave it him together with my daily report. And do you know what was in it? Why, ‘for such and such reasons the aforesaid Osip Mihalitch asks to be discharged,’ and under my petition I signed my full rank! Just think what a notion! Good Lord, it was the cleverest thing I could think of! As to-day was the first of April, I was pretending, for the sake of a joke, that my resentment was not over, that I had changed my mind in the night and was grumpy, and more offended than ever, as though to say, ‘My dear benefactor, I don’t want to know you nor your daughter either. I put the money in my pocket yesterday, so I am secure — so here’s my petition for a transfer to be discharged. I don’t care to serve under such a chief as Fedosey

Nikolaitch. I want to go into a different office and then, maybe, I'll inform.' I pretended to be a regular scoundrel, I wanted to frighten them. And a nice way of frightening them, wasn't it? A pretty thing, gentlemen, wasn't it? You see, my heart had grown tender towards them since the day before, so I thought I would have a little joke at the family — I would tease the fatherly heart of Fedosey Nikolaitch.

"As soon as he took my letter and opened it, I saw his whole countenance change.

"'What's the meaning of this, Osip Mihalitch?'

"And like a little fool I said —

"'The first of April! Many happy returns of the day, Fedosey Nikolaitch!' just like a silly school-boy who hides behind his grandmother's arm-chair and then shouts 'oof' into her ear suddenly at the top of his voice, meaning to frighten her. Yes ... yes, I feel quite ashamed to talk about it, gentlemen! No, I won't tell you."

"Nonsense! What happened then?"

"Nonsense, nonsense! Tell us! Yes, do," rose on all sides.

"There was an outcry and a hullabaloo, my dear friends! Such exclamations of surprise! And 'you mischievous fellow, you naughty man,' and what a fright I had given them — and all so sweet that I felt ashamed and wondered how such a holy place could be profaned by a sinner like me.

"'Well, my dear boy,' piped the mamma, 'you gave me such a fright that my legs are all of a tremble still, I can hardly stand on my feet! I ran to Masha as though I were crazy: "Mashenka," I said, "what will become of us! See how *your* friend has turned out!" and I was unjust to you, my dear boy. You must forgive an old woman like me, I was taken in! Well, I thought, when he got home last night, he got home late, he began thinking and perhaps he fancied that we sent for him on purpose, yesterday, that we wanted to get hold of him. I turned cold at the thought! Give over, Mashenka, don't go on winking at me — Osip Mihalitch isn't a stranger! I am your mother, I am not likely to say any harm! Thank God, I am not twenty, but turned forty-five.'

"Well, gentlemen, I almost flopped at her feet on the spot. Again there were tears, again there were kisses. Jokes began. Fedosey Nikolaitch, too, thought he would make April fools of us. He told us the fiery bird had flown up with a letter in her diamond beak! He tried to take us in, too — didn't we laugh? weren't we touched? Foo! I feel ashamed to talk about it.

“Well, my good friends, the end is not far off now. One day passed, two, three, a week; I was regularly engaged to her. I should think so! The wedding rings were ordered, the day was fixed, only they did not want to make it public for a time — they wanted to wait for the Inspector’s visit to be over. I was all impatience for the Inspector’s arrival — my happiness depended upon him. I was in a hurry to get his visit over. And in the excitement and rejoicing Fedosey Nikolaitch threw all the work upon me: writing up the accounts, making up the reports, checking the books, balancing the totals. I found things in terrible disorder — everything had been neglected, there were muddles and irregularities everywhere. Well, I thought, I must do my best for my father-in-law! And he was ailing all the time, he was taken ill, it appears; he seemed to get worse day by day. And, indeed, I grew as thin as a rake myself, I was afraid I would break down. However, I finished the work grandly. I got things straight for him in time.

“Suddenly they sent a messenger for me. I ran headlong — what could it be? I saw my Fedosey Nikolaitch, his head bandaged up in a vinegar compress, frowning, sighing, and moaning.

“‘My dear boy, my son,’ he said, ‘if I die, to whom shall I leave you, my darlings?’

“His wife trailed in with all his children; Mashenka was in tears and I blubbered, too.

“‘Oh no,’ he said. ‘God will be merciful, He will not visit my transgressions on you.’

“Then he dismissed them all, told me to shut the door after them, and we were left alone, *tête-à-tête*.

“‘I have a favour to ask of you.’

“‘What favour?’

“‘Well, my dear boy, there is no rest for me even on my deathbed. I am in want.’

“‘How so?’ I positively flushed crimson, I could hardly speak.

“‘Why, I had to pay some of my own money into the Treasury. I grudge nothing for the public weal, my boy! I don’t grudge my life. Don’t you imagine any ill. I am sad to think that slanderers have blackened my name to you.... You were mistaken, my hair has gone white from grief. The Inspector is coming down upon us and Matveyev is seven thousand roubles short, and I shall have to answer for it.... Who else? It will be visited upon me, my boy: where were my eyes? And how can we get it from Matveyev?

He has had trouble enough already: why should I bring the poor fellow to ruin?’

“‘Holy saints!’ I thought, ‘what a just man! What a heart!’

“‘And I don’t want to take my daughter’s money, which has been set aside for her dowry: that sum is sacred. I have money of my own, it’s true, but I have lent it all to friends — how is one to collect it all in a minute?’

“I simply fell on my knees before him. ‘My benefactor!’ I cried, ‘I’ve wronged you, I have injured you; it was slanderers who wrote against you; don’t break my heart, take back your money!’

“He looked at me and there were tears in his eyes. ‘That was just what I expected from you, my son. Get up! I forgave you at the time for the sake of my daughter’s tears — now my heart forgives you freely! You have healed my wounds. I bless you for all time!’

“Well, when he blessed me, gentlemen, I scurried home as soon as I could. I got the money:

“‘Here, father, here’s the money. I’ve only spent fifty roubles.’

“‘Well, that’s all right,’ he said. ‘But now every trifle may count; the time is short, write a report dated some days ago that you were short of money and had taken fifty roubles on account. I’ll tell the authorities you had it in advance.’

“Well, gentlemen, what do you think? I did write that report, too!”

“Well, what then? What happened? How did it end?”

“As soon as I had written the report, gentlemen, this is how it ended. The next day, in the early morning, an envelope with a government seal arrived. I looked at it and what had I got? The sack! That is, instructions to hand over my work, to deliver the accounts — and to go about my business!”

“How so?”

“That’s just what I cried at the top of my voice, ‘How so?’ Gentlemen, there was a ringing in my ears. I thought there was no special reason for it — but no, the Inspector had arrived in the town. My heart sank. ‘It’s not for nothing,’ I thought. And just as I was I rushed off to Fedosey Nikolaitch.

“‘How is this?’ I said.

“‘What do you mean?’ he said.

“‘Why, I am dismissed.’

“‘Dismissed? how?’

“‘Why, look at this!’

“‘Well, what of it?’

“‘Why, but I didn’t ask for it!’

“‘Yes, you did — you sent in your papers on the first of — April.’ (I had never taken that letter back!)

“‘Fedosey Nikolaitch! I can’t believe my ears, I can’t believe my eyes! Is this you?’

“‘It is me, why?’

“‘My God!’

“‘I am sorry, sir. I am very sorry that you made up your mind to retire from the service so early. A young man ought to be in the service, and you’ve begun to be a little light-headed of late. And as for your character, set your mind at rest: I’ll see to that! Your behaviour has always been so exemplary!’

“‘But that was a little joke, Fedosey Nikolaitch! I didn’t mean it, I just gave you the letter for your fatherly ... that’s all.’

“‘That’s all? A queer joke, sir! Does one jest with documents like that? Why, you are sometimes sent to Siberia for such jokes. Now, good-bye. I am busy. We have the Inspector here — the duties of the service before everything; you can kick up your heels, but we have to sit here at work. But I’ll get you a character —— Oh, another thing: I’ve just bought a house from Matveyev. We are moving in in a day or two. So I expect I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you at our new residence. *Bon voyage!*’

“I ran home.

“‘We are lost, granny!’

“She wailed, poor dear, and then I saw the page from Fedosey Nikolaitch’s running up with a note and a bird-cage, and in the cage there was a starling. In the fullness of my heart I had given her the starling. And in the note there were the words: ‘April 1st,’ and nothing more. What do you think of that, gentlemen?”

“What happened then? What happened then?”

“What then! I met Fedosey Nikolaitch once, I meant to tell him to his face he was a scoundrel.”

“Well?”

“But somehow I couldn’t bring myself to it, gentlemen.”

A LITTLE HERO



At that time I was nearly eleven, I had been sent in July to spend the holiday in a village near Moscow with a relation of mine called T., whose house was full of guests, fifty, or perhaps more.... I don't remember, I didn't count. The house was full of noise and gaiety. It seemed as though it were a continual holiday, which would never end. It seemed as though our host had taken a vow to squander all his vast fortune as rapidly as possible, and he did indeed succeed, not long ago, in justifying this surmise, that is, in making a clean sweep of it all to the last stick.

Fresh visitors used to drive up every minute. Moscow was close by, in sight, so that those who drove away only made room for others, and the everlasting holiday went on its course. Festivities succeeded one another, and there was no end in sight to the entertainments. There were riding parties about the environs; excursions to the forest or the river; picnics, dinners in the open air; suppers on the great terrace of the house, bordered with three rows of gorgeous flowers that flooded with their fragrance the fresh night air, and illuminated the brilliant lights which made our ladies, who were almost every one of them pretty at all times, seem still more charming, with their faces excited by the impressions of the day, with their sparkling eyes, with their interchange of spritely conversation, their peals of ringing laughter; dancing, music, singing; if the sky were overcast tableaux vivants, charades, proverbs were arranged, private theatricals were got up. There were good talkers, story-tellers, wits.

Certain persons were prominent in the foreground. Of course backbiting and slander ran their course, as without them the world could not get on, and millions of persons would perish of boredom, like flies. But as I was at that time eleven I was absorbed by very different interests, and either failed to observe these people, or if I noticed anything, did not see it all. It was only afterwards that some things came back to my mind. My childish eyes could only see the brilliant side of the picture, and the general animation, splendour, and bustle — all that, seen and heard for the first time, made such an impression upon me that for the first few days, I was completely bewildered and my little head was in a whirl.

I keep speaking of my age, and of course I was a child, nothing more than a child. Many of these lovely ladies petted me without dreaming of

considering my age. But strange to say, a sensation which I did not myself understand already had possession of me; something was already whispering in my heart, of which till then it had had no knowledge, no conception, and for some reason it began all at once to burn and throb, and often my face glowed with a sudden flush. At times I felt as it were abashed, and even resentful of the various privileges of my childish years. At other times a sort of wonder overwhelmed me, and I would go off into some corner where I could sit unseen, as though to take breath and remember something — something which it seemed to me I had remembered perfectly till then, and now had suddenly forgotten, something without which I could not show myself anywhere, and could not exist at all.

At last it seemed to me as though I were hiding something from every one. But nothing would have induced me to speak of it to any one, because, small boy that I was, I was ready to weep with shame. Soon in the midst of the vortex around me I was conscious of a certain loneliness. There were other children, but all were either much older or younger than I; besides, I was in no mood for them. Of course nothing would have happened to me if I had not been in an exceptional position. In the eyes of those charming ladies I was still the little unformed creature whom they at once liked to pet, and with whom they could play as though he were a little doll. One of them particularly, a fascinating, fair woman, with very thick luxuriant hair, such as I had never seen before and probably shall never see again, seemed to have taken a vow never to leave me in peace. I was confused, while she was amused by the laughter which she continually provoked from all around us by her wild, giddy pranks with me, and this apparently gave her immense enjoyment. At school among her schoolfellows she was probably nicknamed the Tease. She was wonderfully good-looking, and there was something in her beauty which drew one’s eyes from the first moment. And certainly she had nothing in common with the ordinary modest little fair girls, white as down and soft as white mice, or pastors’ daughters. She was not very tall, and was rather plump, but had soft, delicate, exquisitely cut features. There was something quick as lightning in her face, and indeed she was like fire all over, light, swift, alive. Her big open eyes seemed to flash sparks; they glittered like diamonds, and I would never exchange such blue sparkling eyes for any black ones, were they blacker than any Andalusian orb. And, indeed, my blonde was fully a match for the famous brunette whose praises were sung by a great and well-known poet, who, in a superb

poem, vowed by all Castille that he was ready to break his bones to be permitted only to touch the mantle of his divinity with the tip of his finger. Add to that, that *my* charmer was the merriest in the world, the wildest giggler, playful as a child, although she had been married for the last five years. There was a continual laugh upon her lips, fresh as the morning rose that, with the first ray of sunshine, opens its fragrant crimson bud with the cool dewdrops still hanging heavy upon it.

I remember that the day after my arrival private theatricals were being got up. The drawing-room was, as they say, packed to overflowing; there was not a seat empty, and as I was somehow late I had to enjoy the performance standing. But the amusing play attracted me to move forwarder and forwarder, and unconsciously I made my way to the first row, where I stood at last leaning my elbows on the back of an armchair, in which a lady was sitting. It was my blonde divinity, but we had not yet made acquaintance. And I gazed, as it happened, at her marvellous, fascinating shoulders, plump and white as milk, though it did not matter to me in the least whether I stared at a woman's exquisite shoulders or at the cap with flaming ribbons that covered the grey locks of a venerable lady in the front row. Near my blonde divinity sat a spinster lady not in her first youth, one of those who, as I chanced to observe later, always take refuge in the immediate neighbourhood of young and pretty women, selecting such as are not fond of cold-shouldering young men. But that is not the point, only this lady, noting my fixed gaze, bent down to her neighbour and with a simper whispered something in her ear. The blonde lady turned at once, and I remember that her glowing eyes so flashed upon me in the half dark, that, not prepared to meet them, I started as though I were scalded. The beauty smiled.

"Do you like what they are acting?" she asked, looking into my face with a shy and mocking expression.

"Yes," I answered, still gazing at her with a sort of wonder that evidently pleased her.

"But why are you standing? You'll get tired. Can't you find a seat?"

"That's just it, I can't," I answered, more occupied with my grievance than with the beauty's sparkling eyes, and rejoicing in earnest at having found a kind heart to whom I could confide my troubles. "I have looked everywhere, but all the chairs are taken," I added, as though complaining to her that all the chairs were taken.

“Come here,” she said briskly, quick to act on every decision, and, indeed, on every mad idea that flashed on her giddy brain, “come here, and sit on my knee.”

“On your knee,” I repeated, taken aback. I have mentioned already that I had begun to resent the privileges of childhood and to be ashamed of them in earnest. This lady, as though in derision, had gone ever so much further than the others. Moreover, I had always been a shy and bashful boy, and of late had begun to be particularly shy with women.

“Why yes, on my knee. Why don’t you want to sit on my knee?” she persisted, beginning to laugh more and more, so that at last she was simply giggling, goodness knows at what, perhaps at her freak, or perhaps at my confusion. But that was just what she wanted.

I flushed, and in my confusion looked round trying to find where to escape; but seeing my intention she managed to catch hold of my hand to prevent me from going away, and pulling it towards her, suddenly, quite unexpectedly, to my intense astonishment, squeezed it in her mischievous warm fingers, and began to pinch my fingers till they hurt so much that I had to do my very utmost not to cry out, and in my effort to control myself made the most absurd grimaces. I was, besides, moved to the greatest amazement, perplexity, and even horror, at the discovery that there were ladies so absurd and spiteful as to talk nonsense to boys, and even pinch their fingers, for no earthly reason and before everybody. Probably my unhappy face reflected my bewilderment, for the mischievous creature laughed in my face, as though she were crazy, and meantime she was pinching my fingers more and more vigorously. She was highly delighted in playing such a mischievous prank and completely mystifying and embarrassing a poor boy. My position was desperate. In the first place I was hot with shame, because almost every one near had turned round to look at us, some in wonder, others with laughter, grasping at once that the beauty was up to some mischief. I dreadfully wanted to scream, too, for she was wringing my fingers with positive fury just because I didn’t scream; while I, like a Spartan, made up my mind to endure the agony, afraid by crying out of causing a general fuss, which was more than I could face. In utter despair I began at last struggling with her, trying with all my might to pull away my hand, but my persecutor was much stronger than I was. At last I could bear it no longer, and uttered a shriek — that was all she was waiting for! Instantly she let me go, and turned away as though nothing had happened,

as though it was not she who had played the trick but some one else, exactly like some schoolboy who, as soon as the master's back is turned, plays some trick on some one near him, pinches some small weak boy, gives him a flip, a kick, or a nudge with his elbows, and instantly turns again, buries himself in his book and begins repeating his lesson, and so makes a fool of the infuriated teacher who flies down like a hawk at the noise.

But luckily for me the general attention was distracted at the moment by the masterly acting of our host, who was playing the chief part in the performance, some comedy of Scribe's. Every one began to applaud; under cover of the noise I stole away and hurried to the furthest end of the room, from which, concealed behind a column, I looked with horror towards the place where the treacherous beauty was sitting. She was still laughing, holding her handkerchief to her lips. And for a long time she was continually turning round, looking for me in every direction, probably regretting that our silly tussle was so soon over, and hatching some other trick to play on me.

That was the beginning of our acquaintance, and from that evening she would never let me alone. She persecuted me without consideration or conscience, she became my tyrant and tormentor. The whole absurdity of her jokes with me lay in the fact that she pretended to be head over ears in love with me, and teased me before every one. Of course for a wild creature as I was all this was so tiresome and vexatious that it almost reduced me to tears, and I was sometimes put in such a difficult position that I was on the point of fighting with my treacherous admirer. My naïve confusion, my desperate distress, seemed to egg her on to persecute me more; she knew no mercy, while I did not know how to get away from her. The laughter which always accompanied us, and which she knew so well how to excite, roused her to fresh pranks. But at last people began to think that she went a little too far in her jests. And, indeed, as I remember now, she did take outrageous liberties with a child such as I was.

But that was her character; she was a spoilt child in every respect. I heard afterwards that her husband, a very short, very fat, and very red-faced man, very rich and apparently very much occupied with business, spoilt her more than any one. Always busy and flying round, he could not stay two hours in one place. Every day he drove into Moscow, sometimes twice in the day, and always, as he declared himself, on business. It would be hard to find a livelier and more good-natured face than his facetious but always

well-bred countenance. He not only loved his wife to the point of weakness, softness: he simply worshipped her like an idol.

He did not restrain her in anything. She had masses of friends, male and female. In the first place, almost everybody liked her; and secondly, the feather-headed creature was not herself over particular in the choice of her friends, though there was a much more serious foundation to her character than might be supposed from what I have just said about her. But of all her friends she liked best of all one young lady, a distant relation, who was also of our party now. There existed between them a tender and subtle affection, one of those attachments which sometimes spring up at the meeting of two dispositions often the very opposite of each other, of which one is deeper, purer and more austere, while the other, with lofty humility, and generous self-criticism, lovingly gives way to the other, conscious of the friend's superiority and cherishing the friendship as a happiness. Then begins that tender and noble subtlety in the relations of such characters, love and infinite indulgence on the one side, on the other love and respect — a respect approaching awe, approaching anxiety as to the impression made on the friend so highly prized, and an eager, jealous desire to get closer and closer to that friend's heart in every step in life.

These two friends were of the same age, but there was an immense difference between them in everything — in looks, to begin with. Madame M. was also very handsome, but there was something special in her beauty that strikingly distinguished her from the crowd of pretty women; there was something in her face that at once drew the affection of all to her, or rather, which aroused a generous and lofty feeling of kindliness in every one who met her. There are such happy faces. At her side everyone grew as it were better, freer, more cordial; and yet her big mournful eyes, full of fire and vigour, had a timid and anxious look, as though every minute dreading something antagonistic and menacing, and this strange timidity at times cast so mournful a shade over her mild, gentle features which recalled the serene faces of Italian Madonnas, that looking at her one soon became oneself sad, as though for some trouble of one's own. The pale, thin face, in which, through the irreproachable beauty of the pure, regular lines and the mournful severity of some mute hidden grief, there often flitted the clear looks of early childhood, telling of trustful years and perhaps simple-hearted happiness in the recent past, the gentle but diffident, hesitating smile, all aroused such unaccountable sympathy for her that every heart was

unconsciously stirred with a sweet and warm anxiety that powerfully interceded on her behalf even at a distance, and made even strangers feel akin to her. But the lovely creature seemed silent and reserved, though no one could have been more attentive and loving if any one needed sympathy. There are women who are like sisters of mercy in life. Nothing can be hidden from them, nothing, at least, that is a sore or wound of the heart. Any one who is suffering may go boldly and hopefully to them without fear of being a burden, for few men know the infinite patience of love, compassion and forgiveness that may be found in some women's hearts. Perfect treasures of sympathy, consolation and hope are laid up in these pure hearts, so often full of suffering of their own — for a heart which loves much grieves much — though their wounds are carefully hidden from the curious eye, for deep sadness is most often mute and concealed. They are not dismayed by the depth of the wound, nor by its foulness and its stench; any one who comes to them is deserving of help; they are, as it were, born for heroism.... Mme. M. was tall, supple and graceful, but rather thin. All her movements seemed somehow irregular, at times slow, smooth, and even dignified, at times childishly hasty; and yet, at the same time, there was a sort of timid humility in her gestures, something tremulous and defenceless, though it neither desired nor asked for protection.

I have mentioned already that the outrageous teasing of the treacherous fair lady abashed me, flabbergasted me, and wounded me to the quick. But there was for that another secret, strange and foolish reason, which I concealed, at which I shuddered as at a skeleton. At the very thought of it, brooding, utterly alone and overwhelmed, in some dark mysterious corner to which the inquisitorial mocking eye of the blue-eyed rogue could not penetrate, I almost gasped with confusion, shame and fear — in short, I was in love; that perhaps is nonsense, that could hardly have been. But why was it, of all the faces surrounding me, only her face caught my attention? Why was it that it was only she whom I cared to follow with my eyes, though I certainly had no inclination in those days to watch ladies and seek their acquaintance? This happened most frequently on the evenings when we were all kept indoors by bad weather, and when, lonely, hiding in some corner of the big drawing-room, I stared about me aimlessly, unable to find anything to do, for except my teasing ladies, few people ever addressed me, and I was insufferably bored on such evenings. Then I stared at the people round me, listened to the conversation, of which I often did not understand

one word, and at that time the mild eyes, the gentle smile and lovely face of Mme. M. (for she was the object of my passion) for some reason caught my fascinated attention; and the strange vague, but unutterably sweet impression remained with me. Often for hours together I could not tear myself away from her; I studied every gesture, every movement she made, listened to every vibration of her rich, silvery, but rather muffled voice; but strange to say, as the result of all my observations, I felt, mixed with a sweet and timid impression, a feeling of intense curiosity. It seemed as though I were on the verge of some mystery.

Nothing distressed me so much as being mocked at in the presence of Mme. M. This mockery and humorous persecution, as I thought, humiliated me. And when there was a general burst of laughter at my expense, in which Mme. M. sometimes could not help joining, in despair, beside myself with misery, I used to tear myself from my tormentor and run away upstairs, where I remained in solitude the rest of the day, not daring to show my face in the drawing-room. I did not yet, however, understand my shame nor my agitation; the whole process went on in me unconsciously. I had hardly said two words to Mme. M., and indeed I should not have dared to. But one evening after an unbearable day I turned back from an expedition with the rest of the company. I was horribly tired and made my way home across the garden. On a seat in a secluded avenue I saw Mme. M. She was sitting quite alone, as though she had purposely chosen this solitary spot, her head was drooping and she was mechanically twisting her handkerchief. She was so lost in thought that she did not hear me till I reached her.

Noticing me, she got up quickly from her seat, turned round, and I saw her hurriedly wipe her eyes with her handkerchief. She was crying. Drying her eyes, she smiled to me and walked back with me to the house. I don’t remember what we talked about; but she frequently sent me off on one pretext or another, to pick a flower, or to see who was riding in the next avenue. And when I walked away from her, she at once put her handkerchief to her eyes again and wiped away rebellious tears, which would persist in rising again and again from her heart and dropping from her poor eyes. I realized that I was very much in her way when she sent me off so often, and, indeed, she saw herself that I noticed it all, but yet could not control herself, and that made my heart ache more and more for her. I raged at myself at that moment and was almost in despair; cursed myself for my awkwardness and lack of resource, and at the same time did not know

how to leave her tactfully, without betraying that I had noticed her distress, but walked beside her in mournful bewilderment, almost in alarm, utterly at a loss and unable to find a single word to keep up our scanty conversation.

This meeting made such an impression on me that I stealthily watched Mme. M. the whole evening with eager curiosity, and never took my eyes off her. But it happened that she twice caught me unawares watching her, and on the second occasion, noticing me, she gave me a smile. It was the only time she smiled that evening. The look of sadness had not left her face, which was now very pale. She spent the whole evening talking to an ill-natured and quarrelsome old lady, whom nobody liked owing to her spying and backbiting habits, but of whom every one was afraid, and consequently every one felt obliged to be polite to her....

At ten o'clock Mme. M.'s husband arrived. Till that moment I watched her very attentively, never taking my eyes off her mournful face; now at the unexpected entrance of her husband I saw her start, and her pale face turned suddenly as white as a handkerchief. It was so noticeable that other people observed it. I overheard a fragmentary conversation from which I guessed that Mme. M. was not quite happy; they said her husband was as jealous as an Arab, not from love, but from vanity. He was before all things a European, a modern man, who sampled the newest ideas and prided himself upon them. In appearance he was a tall, dark-haired, particularly thick-set man, with European whiskers, with a self-satisfied, red face, with teeth white as sugar, and with an irreproachably gentlemanly deportment. He was called a *clever man*. Such is the name given in certain circles to a peculiar species of mankind which grows fat at other people's expense, which does absolutely nothing and has no desire to do anything, and whose heart has turned into a lump of fat from everlasting slothfulness and idleness. You continually hear from such men that there is nothing they can do owing to certain very complicated and hostile circumstances, which "thwart their genius," and that it was "sad to see the waste of their talents." This is a fine phrase of theirs, their *mot d'ordre*, their watchword, a phrase which these well-fed, fat friends of ours bring out at every minute, so that it has long ago bored us as an arrant Tartuffism, an empty form of words. Some, however, of these amusing creatures, who cannot succeed in finding anything to do — though, indeed, they never seek it — try to make every one believe that they have not a lump of fat for a heart, but on the contrary, something *very deep*, though what precisely the greatest surgeon would

hardly venture to decide — from civility, of course. These gentlemen make their way in the world through the fact that all their instincts are bent in the direction of coarse sneering, short-sighted censure and immense conceit. Since they have nothing else to do but note and emphasize the mistakes and weaknesses of others, and as they have precisely as much good feeling as an oyster, it is not difficult for them with such powers of self-preservation to get on with people fairly successfully. They pride themselves extremely upon that. They are, for instance, as good as persuaded that almost the whole world owes them something; that it is theirs, like an oyster which they keep in reserve; that all are fools except themselves; that every one is like an orange or a sponge, which they will squeeze as soon as they want the juice; that they are the masters everywhere, and that all this acceptable state of affairs is solely due to the fact that they are people of so much intellect and character. In their measureless conceit they do not admit any defects in themselves, they are like that species of practical rogues, innate Tartuffes and Falstaffs, who are such thorough rogues that at last they have come to believe that that is as it should be, that is, that they should spend their lives in knavishness; they have so often assured every one that they are honest men, that they have come to believe that they are honest men, and that their roguery is honesty. They are never capable of inner judgment before their conscience, of generous self-criticism; for some things they are too fat. Their own priceless personality, their Baal and Moloch, their magnificent *ego* is always in their foreground everywhere. All nature, the whole world for them is no more than a splendid mirror created for the little god to admire himself continually in it, and to see no one and nothing behind himself; so it is not strange that he sees everything in the world in such a hideous light. He has a phrase in readiness for everything and — the acme of ingenuity on his part — the most fashionable phrase. It is just these people, indeed, who help to make the fashion, proclaiming at every cross-road an idea in which they scent success. A fine nose is just what they have for sniffing a fashionable phrase and making it their own before other people get hold of it, so that it seems to have originated with them. They have a particular store of phrases for proclaiming their profound sympathy for humanity, for defining what is the most correct and rational form of philanthropy, and continually attacking romanticism, in other words, everything fine and true, each atom of which is more precious than all their mollusc tribe. But they are too coarse to recognize the truth in an indirect,

roundabout and unfinished form, and they reject everything that is immature, still fermenting and unstable. The well-nourished man has spent all his life in merry-making, with everything provided, has done nothing himself and does not know how hard every sort of work is, and so woe betide you if you jar upon his fat feelings by any sort of roughness; he'll never forgive you for that, he will always remember it and will gladly avenge it. The long and short of it is, that my hero is neither more nor less than a gigantic, incredibly swollen bag, full of sentences, fashionable phrases, and labels of all sorts and kinds.

M. M., however, had a speciality and was a very remarkable man; he was a wit, good talker and story-teller, and there was always a circle round him in every drawing-room. That evening he was particularly successful in making an impression. He took possession of the conversation; he was in his best form, gay, pleased at something, and he compelled the attention of all; but Mme. M. looked all the time as though she were ill; her face was so sad that I fancied every minute that tears would begin quivering on her long eyelashes. All this, as I have said, impressed me extremely and made me wonder. I went away with a feeling of strange curiosity, and dreamed all night of M. M., though till then I had rarely had dreams.

Next day, early in the morning, I was summoned to a rehearsal of some tableaux vivants in which I had to take part. The tableaux vivants, theatricals, and afterwards a dance were all fixed for the same evening, five days later — the birthday of our host's younger daughter. To this entertainment, which was almost improvised, another hundred guests were invited from Moscow and from surrounding villas, so that there was a great deal of fuss, bustle and commotion. The rehearsal, or rather review of the costumes, was fixed so early in the morning because our manager, a well-known artist, a friend of our host's, who had consented through affection for him to undertake the arrangement of the tableaux and the training of us for them, was in haste now to get to Moscow to purchase properties and to make final preparations for the fête, as there was no time to lose. I took part in one tableau with Mme. M. It was a scene from mediæval life and was called "The Lady of the Castle and Her Page."

I felt unutterably confused on meeting Mme. M. at the rehearsal. I kept feeling that she would at once read in my eyes all the reflections, the doubts, the surmises, that had arisen in my mind since the previous day. I fancied, too, that I was, as it were, to blame in regard to her, for having

come upon her tears the day before and hindered her grieving, so that she could hardly help looking at me askance, as an unpleasant witness and unforgiven sharer of her secret. But, thank goodness, it went off without any great trouble; I was simply not noticed. I think she had no thoughts to spare for me or for the rehearsal; she was absent-minded, sad and gloomily thoughtful; it was evident that she was worried by some great anxiety. As soon as my part was over I ran away to change my clothes, and ten minutes later came out on the verandah into the garden. Almost at the same time Mme. M. came out by another door, and immediately afterwards coming towards us appeared her self-satisfied husband, who was returning from the garden, after just escorting into it quite a crowd of ladies and there handing them over to a competent *cavaliere servente*. The meeting of the husband and wife was evidently unexpected. Mme. M., I don't know why, grew suddenly confused, and a faint trace of vexation was betrayed in her impatient movement. The husband, who had been carelessly whistling an air and with an air of profundity stroking his whiskers, now, on meeting his wife, frowned and scrutinized her, as I remember now, with a markedly inquisitorial stare.

"You are going into the garden?" he asked, noticing the parasol and book in her hand.

"No, into the copse," she said, with a slight flush.

"Alone?"

"With him," said Mme. M., pointing to me. "I always go a walk alone in the morning," she added, speaking in an uncertain, hesitating voice, as people do when they tell their first lie.

"H'm ... and I have just taken the whole party there. They have all met there together in the flower arbour to see N. off. He is going away, you know.... Something has gone wrong in Odessa. Your cousin" (he meant the fair beauty) "is laughing and crying at the same time; there is no making her out. She says, though, that you are angry with N. about something and so wouldn't go and see him off. Nonsense, of course?"

"She's laughing," said Mme. M., coming down the verandah steps.

"So this is your daily *cavaliere servente*," added M. M., with a wry smile, turning his lorgnette upon me.

"Page!" I cried, angered by the lorgnette and the jeer; and laughing straight in his face I jumped down the three steps of the verandah at one bound.

“A pleasant walk,” muttered M. M., and went on his way.

Of course, I immediately joined Mme. M. as soon as she indicated me to her husband, and looked as though she had invited me to do so an hour before, and as though I had been accompanying her on her walks every morning for the last month. But I could not make out why she was so confused, so embarrassed, and what was in her mind when she brought herself to have recourse to her little lie? Why had she not simply said that she was going alone? I did not know how to look at her, but overwhelmed with wonder I began by degrees very naïvely peeping into her face; but just as an hour before at the rehearsal she did not notice either my looks or my mute question. The same anxiety, only more intense and more distinct, was apparent in her face, in her agitation, in her walk. She was in haste, and walked more and more quickly and kept looking uneasily down every avenue, down every path in the wood that led in the direction of the garden. And I, too, was expecting something. Suddenly there was the sound of horses’ hoofs behind us. It was the whole party of ladies and gentlemen on horseback escorting N., the gentleman who was so suddenly deserting us.

Among the ladies was my fair tormentor, of whom M. M. had told us that she was in tears. But characteristically she was laughing like a child, and was galloping briskly on a splendid bay horse. On reaching us N. took off his hat, but did not stop, nor say one word to Mme. M. Soon all the cavalcade disappeared from our sight. I glanced at Mme. M. and almost cried out in wonder; she was standing as white as a handkerchief and big tears were gushing from her eyes. By chance our eyes met: Mme. M. suddenly flushed and turned away for an instant, and a distinct look of uneasiness and vexation flitted across her face. I was in the way, worse even than last time, that was clearer than day, but how was I to get away?

And, as though guessing my difficulty, Mme. M. opened the book which she had in her hand, and colouring and evidently trying not to look at me she said, as though she had only suddenly realized it —

“Ah! It is the second part. I’ve made a mistake; please bring me the first.”

I could not but understand. My part was over, and I could not have been more directly dismissed.

I ran off with her book and did not come back. The first part lay undisturbed on the table that morning....

But I was not myself; in my heart there was a sort of haunting terror. I did my utmost not to meet Mme. M. But I looked with wild curiosity at the self-satisfied person of M. M., as though there must be something special about him now. I don't understand what was the meaning of my absurd curiosity. I only remember that I was strangely perplexed by all that I had chanced to see that morning. But the day was only just beginning and it was fruitful in events for me.

Dinner was very early that day. An expedition to a neighbouring hamlet to see a village festival that was taking place there had been fixed for the evening, and so it was necessary to be in time to get ready. I had been dreaming for the last three days of this excursion, anticipating all sorts of delights. Almost all the company gathered together on the verandah for coffee. I cautiously followed the others and concealed myself behind the third row of chairs. I was attracted by curiosity, and yet I was very anxious not to be seen by Mme. M. But as luck would have it I was not far from my fair tormentor. Something miraculous and incredible was happening to her that day; she looked twice as handsome. I don't know how and why this happens, but such miracles are by no means rare with women. There was with us at this moment a new guest, a tall, pale-faced young man, the official admirer of our fair beauty, who had just arrived from Moscow as though on purpose to replace N., of whom rumour said that he was desperately in love with the same lady. As for the newly arrived guest, he had for a long time past been on the same terms as Benedick with Beatrice, in Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*. In short, the fair beauty was in her very best form that day. Her chatter and her jests were so full of grace, so trustfully naïve, so innocently careless, she was persuaded of the general enthusiasm with such graceful self-confidence that she really was all the time the centre of peculiar adoration. A throng of surprised and admiring listeners was continually round her, and she had never been so fascinating. Every word she uttered was marvellous and seductive, was caught up and handed round in the circle, and not one word, one jest, one sally was lost. I fancy no one had expected from her such taste, such brilliance, such wit. Her best qualities were, as a rule, buried under the most harum-scarum wilfulness, the most schoolboyish pranks, almost verging on buffoonery; they were rarely noticed, and, when they were, were hardly believed in, so that now her extraordinary brilliancy was accompanied by an eager whisper of amazement among all. There was, however, one peculiar and rather

delicate circumstance, judging at least by the part in it played by Mme. M.'s husband, which contributed to her success. The madcap ventured — and I must add to the satisfaction of almost every one or, at any rate, to the satisfaction of all the young people — to make a furious attack upon him, owing to many causes, probably of great consequence in her eyes. She carried on with him a regular cross-fire of witticisms, of mocking and sarcastic sallies, of that most illusive and treacherous kind that, smoothly wrapped up on the surface, hit the mark without giving the victim anything to lay hold of, and exhaust him in fruitless efforts to repel the attack, reducing him to fury and comic despair.

I don't know for certain, but I fancy the whole proceeding was not improvised but premeditated. This desperate duel had begun earlier, at dinner. I call it desperate because M. M. was not quick to surrender. He had to call upon all his presence of mind, all his sharp wit and rare resourcefulness not to be completely covered with ignominy. The conflict was accompanied by the continual and irrepressible laughter of all who witnessed and took part in it. That day was for him very different from the day before. It was noticeable that Mme. M. several times did her utmost to stop her indiscreet friend, who was certainly trying to depict the jealous husband in the most grotesque and absurd guise, in the guise of "a bluebeard" it must be supposed, judging from all probabilities, from what has remained in my memory and finally from the part which I myself was destined to play in the affair.

I was drawn into it in a most absurd manner, quite unexpectedly. And as ill-luck would have it at that moment I was standing where I could be seen, suspecting no evil and actually forgetting the precautions I had so long practised. Suddenly I was brought into the foreground as a sworn foe and natural rival of M. M., as desperately in love with his wife, of which my persecutress vowed and swore that she had proofs, saying that only that morning she had seen in the copse....

But before she had time to finish I broke in at the most desperate minute. That minute was so diabolically calculated, was so treacherously prepared to lead up to its finale, its ludicrous *dénouement*, and was brought out with such killing humour that a perfect outburst of irrepressible mirth saluted this last sally. And though even at the time I guessed that mine was not the most unpleasant part in the performance, yet I was so confused, so irritated and alarmed that, full of misery and despair, gasping with shame and tears, I

dashed through two rows of chairs, stepped forward, and addressing my tormentor, cried, in a voice broken with tears and indignation:

“Aren’t you ashamed ... aloud ... before all the ladies ... to tell such a wicked ... lie?... Like a small child ... before all these men.... What will they say?... A big girl like you ... and married!...”

But I could not go on, there was a deafening roar of applause. My outburst created a perfect furore. My naïve gesture, my tears, and especially the fact that I seemed to be defending M. M., all this provoked such fiendish laughter, that even now I cannot help laughing at the mere recollection of it. I was overcome with confusion, senseless with horror and, burning with shame, hiding my face in my hands rushed away, knocked a tray out of the hands of a footman who was coming in at the door, and flew upstairs to my own room. I pulled out the key, which was on the outside of the door, and locked myself in. I did well, for there was a hue and cry after me. Before a minute had passed my door was besieged by a mob of the prettiest ladies. I heard their ringing laughter, their incessant chatter, their trilling voices; they were all twittering at once, like swallows. All of them, every one of them, begged and besought me to open the door, if only for a moment; swore that no harm should come to me, only that they wanted to smother me with kisses. But ... what could be more horrible than this novel threat? I simply burned with shame the other side of the door, hiding my face in the pillows and did not open, did not even respond. The ladies kept up their knocking for a long time, but I was deaf and obdurate as only a boy of eleven could be.

But what could I do now? Everything was laid bare, everything had been exposed, everything I had so jealously guarded and concealed!... Everlasting disgrace and shame had fallen on me! But it is true that I could not myself have said why I was frightened and what I wanted to hide; yet I was frightened of something and had trembled like a leaf at the thought of *that something’s* being discovered. Only till that minute I had not known what it was: whether it was good or bad, splendid or shameful, praiseworthy or reprehensible? Now in my distress, in the misery that had been forced upon me, I learned that it was *absurd* and *shameful*. Instinctively I felt at the same time that this verdict was false, inhuman, and coarse; but I was crushed, annihilated; consciousness seemed checked in me and thrown into confusion; I could not stand up against that verdict, nor criticize it properly. I was befogged; I only felt that my heart had been inhumanly and

shamelessly wounded, and was brimming over with impotent tears. I was irritated; but I was boiling with indignation and hate such as I had never felt before, for it was the first time in my life that I had known real sorrow, insult, and injury — and it was truly that, without any exaggeration. The first untried, unformed feeling had been so coarsely handled in me, a child. The first fragrant, virginal modesty had been so soon exposed and insulted, and the first and perhaps very real and æsthetic impression had been so outraged. Of course there was much my persecutors did not know and did not divine in my sufferings. One circumstance, which I had not succeeded in analysing till then, of which I had been as it were afraid, partly entered into it. I went on lying on my bed in despair and misery, hiding my face in my pillow, and I was alternately feverish and shivery. I was tormented by two questions: first, what had the wretched fair beauty seen, and, in fact, what could she have seen that morning in the copse between Mme. M. and me? And secondly, how could I now look Mme. M. in the face without dying on the spot of shame and despair?

An extraordinary noise in the yard roused me at last from the state of semi-consciousness into which I had fallen. I got up and went to the window. The whole yard was packed with carriages, saddle-horses, and bustling servants. It seemed that they were all setting off; some of the gentlemen had already mounted their horses, others were taking their places in the carriages.... Then I remembered the expedition to the village fête, and little by little an uneasiness came over me; I began anxiously looking for my pony in the yard; but there was no pony there, so they must have forgotten me. I could not restrain myself, and rushed headlong downstairs, thinking no more of unpleasant meetings or my recent ignominy....

Terrible news awaited me. There was neither a horse nor seat in any of the carriages to spare for me; everything had been arranged, all the seats were taken, and I was forced to give place to others. Overwhelmed by this fresh blow, I stood on the steps and looked mournfully at the long rows of coaches, carriages, and chaises, in which there was not the tiniest corner left for me, and at the smartly dressed ladies, whose horses were restlessly curvetting.

One of the gentlemen was late. They were only waiting for his arrival to set off. His horse was standing at the door, champing the bit, pawing the earth with his hoofs, and at every moment starting and rearing. Two stable-

boys were carefully holding him by the bridle, and every one else apprehensively stood at a respectful distance from him.

A most vexatious circumstance had occurred, which prevented my going. In addition to the fact that new visitors had arrived, filling up all the seats, two of the horses had fallen ill, one of them being my pony. But I was not the only person to suffer: it appeared that there was no horse for our new visitor, the pale-faced young man of whom I have spoken already. To get over this difficulty our host had been obliged to have recourse to the extreme step of offering his fiery unbroken stallion, adding, to satisfy his conscience, that it was impossible to ride him, and that they had long intended to sell the beast for its vicious character, if only a purchaser could be found.

But, in spite of his warning, the visitor declared that he was a good horseman, and in any case ready to mount anything rather than not go. Our host said no more, but now I fancied that a sly and ambiguous smile was straying on his lips. He waited for the gentleman who had spoken so well of his own horsemanship, and stood, without mounting his horse, impatiently rubbing his hands and continually glancing towards the door; some similar feeling seemed shared by the two stable-boys, who were holding the stallion, almost breathless with pride at seeing themselves before the whole company in charge of a horse which might any minute kill a man for no reason whatever. Something akin to their master’s sly smile gleamed, too, in their eyes, which were round with expectation, and fixed upon the door from which the bold visitor was to appear. The horse himself, too, behaved as though he were in league with our host and the stable-boys. He bore himself proudly and haughtily, as though he felt that he were being watched by several dozen curious eyes and were glorying in his evil reputation exactly as some incorrigible rogue might glory in his criminal exploits. He seemed to be defying the bold man who would venture to curb his independence.

That bold man did at last make his appearance. Conscience-stricken at having kept every one waiting, hurriedly drawing on his gloves, he came forward without looking at anything, ran down the steps, and only raised his eyes as he stretched out his hand to seize the mane of the waiting horse. But he was at once disconcerted by his frantic rearing and a warning scream from the frightened spectators. The young man stepped back and looked in perplexity at the vicious horse, which was quivering all over, snorting with

anger, and rolling his bloodshot eyes ferociously, continually rearing on his hind legs and flinging up his fore legs as though he meant to bolt into the air and carry the two stable-boys with him. For a minute the young man stood completely nonplussed; then, flushing slightly with some embarrassment, he raised his eyes and looked at the frightened ladies.

“A very fine horse!” he said, as though to himself, “and to my thinking it ought to be a great pleasure to ride him; but ... but do you know, I think I won’t go?” he concluded, turning to our host with the broad, good-natured smile which so suited his kind and clever face.

“Yet I consider you are an excellent horseman, I assure you,” answered the owner of the unapproachable horse, delighted, and he warmly and even gratefully pressed the young man’s hand, “just because from the first moment you saw the sort of brute you had to deal with,” he added with dignity. “Would you believe me, though I have served twenty-three years in the hussars, yet I’ve had the pleasure of being laid on the ground three times, thanks to that beast, that is, as often as I mounted the useless animal. Tancred, my boy, there’s no one here fit for you! Your rider, it seems, must be some Ilya Muromets, and he must be sitting quiet now in the village of Kapatcharovo, waiting for your teeth to fall out. Come, take him away, he has frightened people enough. It was a waste of time to bring him out,” he cried, rubbing his hands complacently.

It must be observed that Tancred was no sort of use to his master and simply ate corn for nothing; moreover, the old hussar had lost his reputation for a knowledge of horseflesh by paying a fabulous sum for the worthless beast, which he had purchased only for his beauty ... yet he was delighted now that Tancred had kept up his reputation, had disposed of another rider, and so had drawn closer on himself fresh senseless laurels.

“So you are not going?” cried the blonde beauty, who was particularly anxious that her *cavaliere servente* should be in attendance on this occasion. “Surely you are not frightened?”

“Upon my word I am,” answered the young man.

“Are you in earnest?”

“Why, do you want me to break my neck?”

“Then make haste and get on my horse; don’t be afraid, it is very quiet. We won’t delay them, they can change the saddles in a minute! I’ll try to take yours. Surely Tancred can’t always be so unruly.”

No sooner said than done, the madcap leaped out of the saddle and was standing before us as she finished the last sentence.

“You don’t know Tancred, if you think he will allow your wretched side-saddle to be put on him! Besides, I would not let you break your neck, it would be a pity!” said our host, at that moment of inward gratification affecting, as his habit was, a studied brusqueness and even coarseness of speech which he thought in keeping with a jolly good fellow and an old soldier, and which he imagined to be particularly attractive to the ladies. This was one of his favourite fancies, his favourite whim, with which we were all familiar.

“Well, cry-baby, wouldn’t you like to have a try? You wanted so much to go?” said the valiant horsewoman, noticing me and pointing tauntingly at Tancred, because I had been so imprudent as to catch her eye, and she would not let me go without a biting word, that she might not have dismounted from her horse absolutely for nothing.

“I expect you are not such a —— We all know you are a hero and would be ashamed to be afraid; especially when you will be looked at, you fine page,” she added, with a fleeting glance at Mme. M., whose carriage was the nearest to the entrance.

A rush of hatred and vengeance had flooded my heart, when the fair Amazon had approached us with the intention of mounting Tancred.... But I cannot describe what I felt at this unexpected challenge from the madcap. Everything was dark before my eyes when I saw her glance at Mme. M. For an instant an idea flashed through my mind ... but it was only a moment, less than a moment, like a flash of gunpowder; perhaps it was the last straw, and I suddenly now was moved to rage as my spirit rose, so that I longed to put all my enemies to utter confusion, and to revenge myself on all of them and before everyone, by showing the sort of person I was. Or whether by some miracle, some prompting from mediæval history, of which I had known nothing till then, sent whirling through my giddy brain, images of tournaments, paladins, heroes, lovely ladies, the clash of swords, shouts and the applause of the crowd, and amidst those shouts the timid cry of a frightened heart, which moves the proud soul more sweetly than victory and fame — I don’t know whether all this romantic nonsense was in my head at the time, or whether, more likely, only the first dawning of the inevitable nonsense that was in store for me in the future, anyway, I felt that my hour

had come. My heart leaped and shuddered, and I don't remember how, at one bound, I was down the steps and beside Tancred.

"You think I am afraid?" I cried, boldly and proudly, in such a fever that I could hardly see, breathless with excitement, and flushing till the tears scalded my cheeks. "Well, you shall see!" And clutching at Tancred's mane I put my foot in the stirrup before they had time to make a movement to stop me; but at that instant Tancred reared, jerked his head, and with a mighty bound forward wrenched himself out of the hands of the petrified stable-boys, and dashed off like a hurricane, while every one cried out in horror.

Goodness knows how I got my other leg over the horse while it was in full gallop; I can't imagine, either, how I did not lose hold of the reins. Tancred bore me beyond the trellis gate, turned sharply to the right and flew along beside the fence regardless of the road. Only at that moment I heard behind me a shout from fifty voices, and that shout was echoed in my swooning heart with such a feeling of pride and pleasure that I shall never forget that mad moment of my boyhood. All the blood rushed to my head, bewildering me and overpowering my fears. I was beside myself. There certainly was, as I remember it now, something of the knight-errant about the exploit.

My knightly exploits, however, were all over in an instant or it would have gone badly with the knight. And, indeed, I do not know how I escaped as it was. I did know how to ride, I had been taught. But my pony was more like a sheep than a riding horse. No doubt I should have been thrown off Tancred if he had had time to throw me, but after galloping fifty paces he suddenly took fright at a huge stone which lay across the road and bolted back. He turned sharply, galloping at full speed, so that it is a puzzle to me even now that I was not sent spinning out of the saddle and flying like a ball for twenty feet, that I was not dashed to pieces, and that Tancred did not dislocate his leg by such a sudden turn. He rushed back to the gate, tossing his head furiously, bounding from side to side as though drunk with rage, flinging his legs at random in the air, and at every leap trying to shake me off his back as though a tiger had leaped on him and were thrusting its teeth and claws into his back.

In another instant I should have flown off; I was falling; but several gentlemen flew to my rescue. Two of them intercepted the way into the open country, two others galloped up, closing in upon Tancred so that their

horses' sides almost crushed my legs, and both of them caught him by the bridle. A few seconds later we were back at the steps.

They lifted me down from the horse, pale and scarcely breathing. I was shaking like a blade of grass in the wind; it was the same with Tancred, who was standing, his hoofs as it were thrust into the earth and his whole body thrown back, puffing his fiery breath from red and streaming nostrils, twitching and quivering all over, seeming overwhelmed with wounded pride and anger at a child's being so bold with impunity. All around me I heard cries of bewilderment, surprise, and alarm.

At that moment my straying eyes caught those of Mme. M., who looked pale and agitated, and — I can never forget that moment — in one instant my face was flooded with colour, glowed and burned like fire; I don't know what happened to me, but confused and frightened by my own feelings I timidly dropped my eyes to the ground. But my glance was noticed, it was caught, it was stolen from me. All eyes turned on Mme. M., and finding herself unawares the centre of attention, she, too, flushed like a child from some naïve and involuntary feeling and made an unsuccessful effort to cover her confusion by laughing....

All this, of course, was very absurd-looking from outside, but at that moment an extremely naïve and unexpected circumstance saved me from being laughed at by every one, and gave a special colour to the whole adventure. The lovely persecutor who was the instigator of the whole escapade, and who till then had been my irreconcileable foe, suddenly rushed up to embrace and kiss me. She had hardly been able to believe her eyes when she saw me dare to accept her challenge, and pick up the gauntlet she had flung at me by glancing at Mme. M. She had almost died of terror and self-reproach when I had flown off on Tancred; now, when it was all over, and particularly when she caught the glance at Mme. M., my confusion and my sudden flush of colour, when the romantic strain in her frivolous little head had given a new secret, unspoken significance to the moment — she was moved to such enthusiasm over my "knightliness," that touched, joyful and proud of me, she rushed up and pressed me to her bosom. She lifted the most naïve, stern-looking little face, on which there quivered and gleamed two little crystal tears, and gazing at the crowd that thronged about her said in a grave, earnest voice, such as they had never heard her use before, pointing to me: "Mais c'est très sérieux, messieurs, ne riez pas!" She did not notice that all were standing, as though fascinated,

admiring her bright enthusiasm. Her swift, unexpected action, her earnest little face, the simple-hearted naïveté, the unexpected feeling betrayed by the tears that welled in her invariably laughter-loving eyes, were such a surprise that every one stood before her as though electrified by her expression, her rapid, fiery words and gestures. It seemed as though no one could take his eyes off her for fear of missing that rare moment in her enthusiastic face. Even our host flushed crimson as a tulip, and people declared that they heard him confess afterwards that “to his shame” he had been in love for a whole minute with his charming guest. Well, of course, after this I was a knight, a hero.

“De Lorge! Toggenburg!” was heard in the crowd.

There was a sound of applause.

“Hurrah for the rising generation!” added the host.

“But he is coming with us, he certainly must come with us,” said the beauty; “we will find him a place, we must find him a place. He shall sit beside me, on my knee ... but no, no! That’s a mistake!..,” she corrected herself, laughing, unable to restrain her mirth at our first encounter. But as she laughed she stroked my hand tenderly, doing all she could to soften me, that I might not be offended.

“Of course, of course,” several voices chimed in; “he must go, he has won his place.”

The matter was settled in a trice. The same old maid who had brought about my acquaintance with the blonde beauty was at once besieged with entreaties from all the younger people to remain at home and let me have her seat. She was forced to consent, to her intense vexation, with a smile and a stealthy hiss of anger. Her protectress, who was her usual refuge, my former foe and new friend, called to her as she galloped off on her spirited horse, laughing like a child, that she envied her and would have been glad to stay at home herself, for it was just going to rain and we should all get soaked.

And she was right in predicting rain. A regular downpour came on within an hour and the expedition was done for. We had to take shelter for some hours in the huts of the village, and had to return home between nine and ten in the evening in the damp mist that followed the rain. I began to be a little feverish. At the minute when I was starting, Mme. M. came up to me and expressed surprise that my neck was uncovered and that I had nothing on over my jacket. I answered that I had not had time to get my coat. She

took out a pin and pinned up the turned down collar of my shirt, took off her own neck a crimson gauze kerchief, and put it round my neck that I might not get a sore throat. She did this so hurriedly that I had not time even to thank her.

But when we got home I found her in the little drawing-room with the blonde beauty and the pale-faced young man who had gained glory for horsemanship that day by refusing to ride Tancred. I went up to thank her and give back the scarf. But now, after all my adventures, I felt somehow ashamed. I wanted to make haste and get upstairs, there at my leisure to reflect and consider. I was brimming over with impressions. As I gave back the kerchief I blushed up to my ears, as usual.

“I bet he would like to keep the kerchief,” said the young man laughing. “One can see that he is sorry to part with your scarf.”

“That’s it, that’s it!” the fair lady put in. “What a boy! Oh!” she said, shaking her head with obvious vexation, but she stopped in time at a grave glance from Mme. M., who did not want to carry the jest too far.

I made haste to get away.

“Well, you are a boy,” said the madcap, overtaking me in the next room and affectionately taking me by both hands, “why, you should have simply not returned the kerchief if you wanted so much to have it. You should have said you put it down somewhere, and that would have been the end of it. What a simpleton! Couldn’t even do that! What a funny boy!”

And she tapped me on the chin with her finger, laughing at my having flushed as red as a poppy.

“I am your friend now, you know; am I not? Our enmity is over, isn’t it? Yes or no?”

I laughed and pressed her fingers without a word.

“Oh, why are you so ... why are you so pale and shivering? Have you caught a chill?”

“Yes, I don’t feel well.”

“Ah, poor fellow! That’s the result of over-excitement. Do you know what? You had better go to bed without sitting up for supper, and you will be all right in the morning. Come along.”

She took me upstairs, and there was no end to the care she lavished on me. Leaving me to undress she ran downstairs, got me some tea, and brought it up herself when I was in bed. She brought me up a warm quilt as well. I was much impressed and touched by all the care and attention

lavished on me; or perhaps I was affected by the whole day, the expedition and feverishness. As I said good-night to her I hugged her warmly, as though she were my dearest and nearest friend, and in my exhausted state all the emotions of the day came back to me in a rush; I almost shed tears as I nestled to her bosom. She noticed my overwrought condition, and I believe my madcap herself was a little touched.

"You are a very good boy," she said, looking at me with gentle eyes, "please don't be angry with me. You won't, will you?"

In fact, we became the warmest and truest of friends.

It was rather early when I woke up, but the sun was already flooding the whole room with brilliant light. I jumped out of bed feeling perfectly well and strong, as though I had had no fever the day before; indeed, I felt now unutterably joyful. I recalled the previous day and felt that I would have given any happiness if I could at that minute have embraced my new friend, the fair-haired beauty, again, as I had the night before; but it was very early and every one was still asleep. Hurriedly dressing I went out into the garden and from there into the copse. I made my way where the leaves were thickest, where the fragrance of the trees was more resinous, and where the sun peeped in most gaily, rejoicing that it could penetrate the dense darkness of the foliage. It was a lovely morning.

Going on further and further, before I was aware of it I had reached the further end of the copse and came out on the river Moskva. It flowed at the bottom of the hill two hundred paces below. On the opposite bank of the river they were mowing. I watched whole rows of sharp scythes gleam all together in the sunlight at every swing of the mower and then vanish again like little fiery snakes going into hiding; I watched the cut grass flying on one side in dense rich swathes and being laid in long straight lines. I don't know how long I spent in contemplation. At last I was roused from my reverie by hearing a horse snorting and impatiently pawing the ground twenty paces from me, in the track which ran from the high road to the manor house. I don't know whether I heard this horse as soon as the rider rode up and stopped there, or whether the sound had long been in my ears without rousing me from my dreaming. Moved by curiosity I went into the copse, and before I had gone many steps I caught the sound of voices speaking rapidly, though in subdued tones. I went up closer, carefully parting the branches of the bushes that edged the path, and at once sprang back in amazement. I caught a glimpse of a familiar white dress and a soft

feminine voice resounded like music in my heart. It was Mme. M. She was standing beside a man on horseback who, stooping down from the saddle, was hurriedly talking to her, and to my amazement I recognized him as N., the young man who had gone away the morning before and over whose departure M. M. had been so busy. But people had said at the time that he was going far away to somewhere in the South of Russia, and so I was very much surprised at seeing him with us again so early, and alone with Mme. M.

She was moved and agitated as I had never seen her before, and tears were glistening on her cheeks. The young man was holding her hand and stooping down to kiss it. I had come upon them at the moment of parting. They seemed to be in haste. At last he took out of his pocket a sealed envelope, gave it to Mme. M., put one arm round her, still not dismounting, and gave her a long, fervent kiss. A minute later he lashed his horse and flew past me like an arrow. Mme. M. looked after him for some moments, then pensively and disconsolately turned homewards. But after going a few steps along the track she seemed suddenly to recollect herself, hurriedly parted the bushes and walked on through the copse.

I followed her, surprised and perplexed by all that I had seen. My heart was beating violently, as though from terror. I was, as it were, benumbed and befogged; my ideas were shattered and turned upside down; but I remember I was, for some reason, very sad. I got glimpses from time to time through the green foliage of her white dress before me: I followed her mechanically, never losing sight of her, though I trembled at the thought that she might notice me. At last she came out on the little path that led to the house. After waiting half a minute I, too, emerged from the bushes; but what was my amazement when I saw lying on the red sand of the path a sealed packet, which I recognized, from the first glance, as the one that had been given to Mme. M. ten minutes before.

I picked it up. On both sides the paper was blank, there was no address on it. The envelope was not large, but it was fat and heavy, as though there were three or more sheets of notepaper in it.

What was the meaning of this envelope? No doubt it would explain the whole mystery. Perhaps in it there was said all that N. had scarcely hoped to express in their brief, hurried interview. He had not even dismounted.... Whether he had been in haste or whether he had been afraid of being false to himself at the hour of parting — God only knows....

I stopped, without coming out on the path, threw the envelope in the most conspicuous place on it, and kept my eyes upon it, supposing that Mme. M. would notice the loss and come back and look for it. But after waiting four minutes I could stand it no longer, I picked up my find again, put it in my pocket, and set off to overtake Mme. M. I came upon her in the big avenue in the garden. She was walking straight towards the house with a swift and hurried step, though she was lost in thought, and her eyes were on the ground. I did not know what to do. Go up to her, give it her? That would be as good as saying that I knew everything, that I had seen it all. I should betray myself at the first word. And how should I look, at her? How would she look at me. I kept expecting that she would discover her loss and return on her tracks. Then I could, unnoticed, have flung the envelope on the path and she would have found it. But no! We were approaching the house; she had already been noticed....

As ill-luck would have it every one had got up very early that day, because, after the unsuccessful expedition of the evening before, they had arranged something new, of which I had heard nothing. All were preparing to set off, and were having breakfast in the verandah. I waited for ten minutes, that I might not be seen with Mme. M., and making a circuit of the garden approached the house from the other side a long time after her. She was walking up and down the verandah with her arms folded, looking pale and agitated, and was obviously trying her utmost to suppress the agonizing, despairing misery which could be plainly discerned in her eyes, her walk, her every movement. Sometimes she went down the verandah steps and walked a few paces among the flower-beds in the direction of the garden; her eyes were impatiently, greedily, even incautiously, seeking something on the sand of the path and on the floor of the verandah. There could be no doubt she had discovered her loss and imagined she had dropped the letter somewhere here, near the house — yes, that must be so, she was convinced of it.

Some one noticed that she was pale and agitated, and others made the same remark. She was besieged with questions about her health and condolences. She had to laugh, to jest, to appear lively. From time to time she looked at her husband, who was standing at the end of the terrace talking to two ladies, and the poor woman was overcome by the same shudder, the same embarrassment, as on the day of his first arrival. Thrusting my hand into my pocket and holding the letter tight in it, I stood

at a little distance from them all, praying to fate that Mme. M. should notice me. I longed to cheer her up, to relieve her anxiety if only by a glance; to say a word to her on the sly. But when she did chance to look at me I dropped my eyes.

I saw her distress and I was not mistaken. To this day I don't know her secret. I know nothing but what I saw and what I have just described. The intrigue was not such, perhaps, as one might suppose at the first glance. Perhaps that kiss was the kiss of farewell, perhaps it was the last slight reward for the sacrifice made to her peace and honour. N. was going away, he was leaving her, perhaps for ever. Even that letter I was holding in my hand — who can tell what it contained! How can one judge? and who can condemn? And yet there is no doubt that the sudden discovery of her secret would have been terrible — would have been a fatal blow for her. I still remember her face at that minute, it could not have shown more suffering. To feel, to know, to be convinced, to expect, as though it were one's execution, that in a quarter of an hour, in a minute perhaps, all might be discovered, the letter might be found by some one, picked up; there was no address on it, it might be opened, and then.... What then? What torture could be worse than what was awaiting her? She moved about among those who would be her judges. In another minute their smiling flattering faces would be menacing and merciless. She would read mockery, malice and icy contempt on those faces, and then her life would be plunged in everlasting darkness, with no dawn to follow.... Yes, I did not understand it then as I understand it now. I could only have vague suspicions and misgivings, and a heart-ache at the thought of her danger, which I could not fully understand. But whatever lay hidden in her secret, much was expiated, if expiation were needed, by those moments of anguish of which I was witness and which I shall never forget.

But then came a cheerful summons to set off; immediately every one was bustling about gaily; laughter and lively chatter were heard on all sides. Within two minutes the verandah was deserted. Mme. M. declined to join the party, acknowledging at last that she was not well. But, thank God, all the others set off, every one was in haste, and there was no time to worry her with commiseration, inquiries, and advice. A few remained at home. Her husband said a few words to her; she answered that she would be all right directly, that he need not be uneasy, that there was no occasion for her to lie down, that she would go into the garden, alone ... with me ... here she

glanced at me. Nothing could be more fortunate! I flushed with pleasure, with delight; a minute later we were on the way.

She walked along the same avenues and paths by which she had returned from the copse, instinctively remembering the way she had come, gazing before her with her eyes fixed on the ground, looking about intently without answering me, possibly forgetting that I was walking beside her.

But when we had already reached the place where I had picked up the letter, and the path ended, Mme. M. suddenly stopped, and in a voice faint and weak with misery said that she felt worse, and that she would go home. But when she reached the garden fence she stopped again and thought a minute; a smile of despair came on her lips, and utterly worn out and exhausted, resigned, and making up her mind to the worst, she turned without a word and retraced her steps, even forgetting to tell me of her intention.

My heart was torn with sympathy, and I did not know what to do.

We went, or rather I led her, to the place from which an hour before I had heard the tramp of a horse and their conversation. Here, close to a shady elm tree, was a seat hewn out of one huge stone, about which grew ivy, wild jasmine, and dog-rose; the whole wood was dotted with little bridges, arbours, grottoes, and similar surprises. Mme. M. sat down on the bench and glanced unconsciously at the marvellous view that lay open before us. A minute later she opened her book, and fixed her eyes upon it without reading, without turning the pages, almost unconscious of what she was doing. It was about half-past nine. The sun was already high and was floating gloriously in the deep, dark blue sky, as though melting away in its own light. The mowers were by now far away; they were scarcely visible from our side of the river; endless ridges of mown grass crept after them in unbroken succession, and from time to time the faintly stirring breeze wafted their fragrance to us. The never ceasing concert of those who “sow not, neither do they reap” and are free as the air they cleave with their sportive wings was all about us. It seemed as though at that moment every flower, every blade of grass was exhaling the aroma of sacrifice, was saying to its Creator, “Father, I am blessed and happy.”

I glanced at the poor woman, who alone was like one dead amidst all this joyous life; two big tears hung motionless on her lashes, wrung from her heart by bitter grief. It was in my power to relieve and console this poor, fainting heart, only I did not know how to approach the subject, how to take

the first step. I was in agonies. A hundred times I was on the point of going up to her, but every time my face glowed like fire.

Suddenly a bright idea dawned upon me. I had found a way of doing it; I revived.

“Would you like me to pick you a nosegay?” I said, in such a joyful voice that Mme M. immediately raised her head and looked at me intently.

“Yes, do,” she said at last in a weak voice, with a faint smile, at once dropping her eyes on the book again.

“Or soon they will be mowing the grass here and there will be no flowers,” I cried, eagerly setting to work.

I had soon picked my nosegay, a poor, simple one, I should have been ashamed to take it indoors; but how light my heart was as I picked the flowers and tied them up! The dog-rose and the wild jasmine I picked closer to the seat, I knew that not far off there was a field of rye, not yet ripe. I ran there for cornflowers; I mixed them with tall ears of rye, picking out the finest and most golden. Close by I came upon a perfect nest of forget-me-nots, and my nosegay was almost complete. Farther away in the meadow there were dark-blue campanulas and wild pinks, and I ran down to the very edge of the river to get yellow water-lilies. At last, making my way back, and going for an instant into the wood to get some bright green fan-shaped leaves of the maple to put round the nosegay, I happened to come across a whole family of pansies, close to which, luckily for me, the fragrant scent of violets betrayed the little flower hiding in the thick lush grass and still glistening with drops of dew. The nosegay was complete. I bound it round with fine long grass which twisted into a rope, and I carefully lay the letter in the centre, hiding it with the flowers, but in such a way that it could be very easily noticed if the slightest attention were bestowed upon my nosegay.

I carried it to Mme. M.

On the way it seemed to me that the letter was lying too much in view: I hid it a little more. As I got nearer I thrust it still further in the flowers; and finally, when I was on the spot, I suddenly poked it so deeply into the centre of the nosegay that it could not be noticed at all from outside. My cheeks were positively flaming. I wanted to hide my face in my hands and run away at once, but she glanced at my flowers as though she had completely forgotten that I had gathered them. Mechanically, almost without looking, she held out her hand and took my present; but at once laid it on the seat as

though I had handed it to her for that purpose and dropped her eyes to her book again, seeming lost in thought. I was ready to cry at this mischance. “If only my nosegay were close to her,” I thought; “if only she had not forgotten it!” I lay down on the grass not far off, put my right arm under my head, and closed my eyes as though I were overcome by drowsiness. But I waited, keeping my eyes fixed on her.

Ten minutes passed, it seemed to me that she was getting paler and paler ... fortunately a blessed chance came to my aid.

This was a big, golden bee, brought by a kindly breeze, luckily for me. It first buzzed over my head, and then flew up to Mme. M. She waved it off once or twice, but the bee grew more and more persistent. At last Mme. M. snatched up my nosegay and waved it before my face. At that instant the letter dropped out from among the flowers and fell straight upon the open book. I started. For some time Mme. M., mute with amazement, stared first at the letter and then at the flowers which she was holding in her hands, and she seemed unable to believe her eyes. All at once she flushed, started, and glanced at me. But I caught her movement and I shut my eyes tight, pretending to be asleep. Nothing would have induced me to look her straight in the face at that moment. My heart was throbbing and leaping like a bird in the grasp of some village boy. I don’t remember how long I lay with my eyes shut, two or three minutes. At last I ventured to open them. Mme. M. was greedily reading the letter, and from her glowing cheeks, her sparkling, tearful eyes, her bright face, every feature of which was quivering with joyful emotion, I guessed that there was happiness in the letter and all her misery was dispersed like smoke. An agonizing, sweet feeling gnawed at my heart, it was hard for me to go on pretending....

I shall never forget that minute!

Suddenly, a long way off, we heard voices —

“Mme. M.! Natalie! Natalie!”

Mme. M. did not answer, but she got up quickly from the seat, came up to me and bent over me. I felt that she was looking straight into my face. My eyelashes quivered, but I controlled myself and did not open my eyes. I tried to breathe more evenly and quietly, but my heart smothered me with its violent throbbing. Her burning breath scorched my cheeks; she bent close down to my face as though trying to make sure. At last a kiss and tears fell on my hand, the one which was lying on my breast.

“Natalie! Natalie! where are you,” we heard again, this time quite close.

“Coming,” said Mme. M., in her mellow, silvery voice, which was so choked and quivering with tears and so subdued that no one but I could hear that, “Coming!”

But at that instant my heart at last betrayed me and seemed to send all my blood rushing to my face. At that instant a swift, burning kiss scalded my lips. I uttered a faint cry. I opened my eyes, but at once the same gauze kerchief fell upon them, as though she meant to screen me from the sun. An instant later she was gone. I heard nothing but the sound of rapidly retreating steps. I was alone....

I pulled off her kerchief and kissed it, beside myself with rapture; for some moments I was almost frantic.... Hardly able to breathe, leaning on my elbow on the grass, I stared unconsciously before me at the surrounding slopes, streaked with cornfields, at the river that flowed twisting and winding far away, as far as the eye could see, between fresh hills and villages that gleamed like dots all over the sunlit distance — at the dark-blue, hardly visible forests, which seemed as though smoking at the edge of the burning sky, and a sweet stillness inspired by the triumphant peacefulness of the picture gradually brought calm to my troubled heart. I felt more at ease and breathed more freely, but my whole soul was full of a dumb, sweet yearning, as though a veil had been drawn from my eyes as though at a foretaste of something. My frightened heart, faintly quivering with expectation, was groping timidly and joyfully towards some conjecture ... and all at once my bosom heaved, began aching as though something had pierced it, and tears, sweet tears, gushed from my eyes. I hid my face in my hands, and quivering like a blade of grass, gave myself up to the first consciousness and revelation of my heart, the first vague glimpse of my nature. My childhood was over from that moment.

* * * * *

When two hours later I returned home I did not find Mme. M. Through some sudden chance she had gone back to Moscow with her husband. I never saw her again.

THE HONEST THIEF

One morning, just as I was about to set off to my office, Agrafena, my cook, washerwoman and housekeeper, came in to me and, to my surprise, entered into conversation.

She had always been such a silent, simple creature that, except her daily inquiry about dinner, she had not uttered a word for the last six years. I, at least, had heard nothing else from her.

"Here I have come in to have a word with you, sir," she began abruptly; "you really ought to let the little room."

"Which little room?"

"Why, the one next the kitchen, to be sure."

"What for?"

"What for? Why because folks do take in lodgers, to be sure."

"But who would take it?"

"Who would take it? Why, a lodger would take it, to be sure."

"But, my good woman, one could not put a bedstead in it; there wouldn't be room to move! Who could live in it?"

"Who wants to live there! As long as he has a place to sleep in. Why, he would live in the window."

"In what window?"

"In what window! As though you didn't know! The one in the passage, to be sure. He would sit there, sewing or doing anything else. Maybe he would sit on a chair, too. He's got a chair; and he has a table, too; he's got everything."

"Who is 'he' then?"

"Oh, a good man, a man of experience. I will cook for him. And I'll ask him three roubles a month for his board and lodging."

After prolonged efforts I succeeded at last in learning from Agrafena that an elderly man had somehow managed to persuade her to admit him into the kitchen as a lodger and boarder. Any notion Agrafena took into her head had to be carried out; if not, I knew she would give me no peace. When anything was not to her liking, she at once began to brood, and sank into a deep dejection that would last for a fortnight or three weeks. During that period my dinners were spoiled, my linen was mislaid, my floors went unscrubbed; in short, I had a great deal to put up with. I had observed long

ago that this inarticulate woman was incapable of conceiving a project, of originating an idea of her own. But if anything like a notion or a project was by some means put into her feeble brain, to prevent its being carried out meant, for a time, her moral assassination. And so, as I cared more for my peace of mind than for anything else, I consented forthwith.

“Has he a passport anyway, or something of the sort?”

“To be sure, he has. He is a good man, a man of experience; three roubles he’s promised to pay.”

The very next day the new lodger made his appearance in my modest bachelor quarters; but I was not put out by this, indeed I was inwardly pleased. I lead as a rule a very lonely hermit’s existence. I have scarcely any friends; I hardly ever go anywhere. As I had spent ten years never coming out of my shell, I had, of course, grown used to solitude. But another ten or fifteen years or more of the same solitary existence, with the same Agrafena, in the same bachelor quarters, was in truth a somewhat cheerless prospect. And therefore a new inmate, if well-behaved, was a heaven-sent blessing.

Agrafena had spoken truly: my lodger was certainly a man of experience. From his passport it appeared that he was an old soldier, a fact which I should have known indeed from his face. An old soldier is easily recognised. Astafy Ivanovitch was a favourable specimen of his class. We got on very well together. What was best of all, Astafy Ivanovitch would sometimes tell a story, describing some incident in his own life. In the perpetual boredom of my existence such a story-teller was a veritable treasure. One day he told me one of these stories. It made an impression on me. The following event was what led to it.

I was left alone in the flat; both Astafy and Agrafena were out on business of their own. All of a sudden I heard from the inner room somebody — I fancied a stranger — come in; I went out; there actually was a stranger in the passage, a short fellow wearing no overcoat in spite of the cold autumn weather.

“What do you want?”

“Does a clerk called Alexandrov live here?”

“Nobody of that name here, brother. Good-bye.”

“Why, the dvornik told me it was here,” said my visitor, cautiously retiring towards the door.

“Be off, be off, brother, get along.”

Next day after dinner, while Astafy Ivanovitch was fitting on a coat which he was altering for me, again some one came into the passage. I half opened the door.

Before my very eyes my yesterday's visitor, with perfect composure, took my wadded greatcoat from the peg and, stuffing it under his arm, darted out of the flat. Agrafena stood all the time staring at him, agape with astonishment and doing nothing for the protection of my property. Astafy Ivanovitch flew in pursuit of the thief and ten minutes later came back out of breath and empty-handed. He had vanished completely.

"Well, there's a piece of luck, Astafy Ivanovitch!"

"It's a good job your cloak is left! Or he would have put you in a plight, the thief!"

But the whole incident had so impressed Astafy Ivanovitch that I forgot the theft as I looked at him. He could not get over it. Every minute or two he would drop the work upon which he was engaged, and would describe over again how it had all happened, how he had been standing, how the greatcoat had been taken down before his very eyes, not a yard away, and how it had come to pass that he could not catch the thief. Then he would sit down to his work again, then leave it once more, and at last I saw him go down to the dvornik to tell him all about it, and to upbraid him for letting such a thing happen in his domain. Then he came back and began scolding Agrafena. Then he sat down to his work again, and long afterwards he was still muttering to himself how it had all happened, how he stood there and I was here, how before our eyes, not a yard away, the thief took the coat off the peg, and so on. In short, though Astafy Ivanovitch understood his business, he was a terrible slow-coach and busy-body.

"He's made fools of us, Astafy Ivanovitch," I said to him in the evening, as I gave him a glass of tea. I wanted to while away the time by recalling the story of the lost greatcoat, the frequent repetition of which, together with the great earnestness of the speaker, was beginning to become very amusing.

"Fools, indeed, sir! Even though it is no business of mine, I am put out. It makes me angry though it is not my coat that was lost. To my thinking there is no vermin in the world worse than a thief. Another takes what you can spare, but a thief steals the work of your hands, the sweat of your brow, your time ... Ugh, it's nasty! One can't speak of it! it's too vexing. How is it you don't feel the loss of your property, sir?"

“Yes, you are right, Astafy Ivanovitch, better if the thing had been burnt; it’s annoying to let the thief have it, it’s disagreeable.”

“Disagreeable! I should think so! Yet, to be sure, there are thieves and thieves. And I have happened, sir, to come across an honest thief.”

“An honest thief? But how can a thief be honest, Astafy Ivanovitch?”

“There you are right indeed, sir. How can a thief be honest? There are none such. I only meant to say that he was an honest man, sure enough, and yet he stole. I was simply sorry for him.”

“Why, how was that, Astafy Ivanovitch?”

“It was about two years ago, sir. I had been nearly a year out of a place, and just before I lost my place I made the acquaintance of a poor lost creature. We got acquainted in a public-house. He was a drunkard, a vagrant, a beggar, he had been in a situation of some sort, but from his drinking habits he had lost his work. Such a ne’er-do-weel! God only knows what he had on! Often you wouldn’t be sure if he’d a shirt under his coat; everything he could lay his hands upon he would drink away. But he was not one to quarrel; he was a quiet fellow. A soft, good-natured chap. And he’d never ask, he was ashamed; but you could see for yourself the poor fellow wanted a drink, and you would stand it him. And so we got friendly, that’s to say, he stuck to me.... It was all one to me. And what a man he was, to be sure! Like a little dog he would follow me; wherever I went there he would be; and all that after our first meeting, and he as thin as a thread-paper! At first it was ‘let me stay the night’; well, I let him stay.

“I looked at his passport, too; the man was all right.

“Well, the next day it was the same story, and then the third day he came again and sat all day in the window and stayed the night. Well, thinks I, he is sticking to me; give him food and drink and shelter at night, too — here am I, a poor man, and a hanger-on to keep as well! And before he came to me, he used to go in the same way to a government clerk’s; he attached himself to him; they were always drinking together; but he, through trouble of some sort, drank himself into the grave. My man was called Emelyan Ilyitch. I pondered and pondered what I was to do with him. To drive him away I was ashamed. I was sorry for him; such a pitiful, God-forsaken creature I never did set eyes on. And not a word said either; he does not ask, but just sits there and looks into your eyes like a dog. To think what drinking will bring a man down to!

“I keep asking myself how am I to say to him: ‘You must be moving, Emelyanoushka, there’s nothing for you here, you’ve come to the wrong place; I shall soon not have a bite for myself, how am I to keep you too?’

“I sat and wondered what he’d do when I said that to him. And I seemed to see how he’d stare at me, if he were to hear me say that, how long he would sit and not understand a word of it. And when it did get home to him at last, how he would get up from the window, would take up his bundle — I can see it now, the red-check handkerchief full of holes, with God knows what wrapped up in it, which he had always with him, and then how he would set his shabby old coat to rights, so that it would look decent and keep him warm, so that no holes would be seen — he was a man of delicate feelings! And how he’d open the door and go out with tears in his eyes. Well, there’s no letting a man go to ruin like that.... One’s sorry for him.

“And then again, I think, how am I off myself? Wait a bit, Emelyanoushka, says I to myself, you’ve not long to feast with me: I shall soon be going away and then you will not find me.

“Well, sir, our family made a move; and Alexandr Filimonovitch, my master (now deceased, God rest his soul), said, ‘I am thoroughly satisfied with you, Astafy Ivanovitch; when we come back from the country we will take you on again.’ I had been butler with them; a nice gentleman he was, but he died that same year. Well, after seeing him off, I took my belongings, what little money I had, and I thought I’d have a rest for a time, so I went to an old woman I knew, and I took a corner in her room. There was only one corner free in it. She had been a nurse, so now she had a pension and a room of her own. Well, now good-bye, Emelyanoushka, thinks I, you won’t find me now, my boy.

“And what do you think, sir? I had gone out to see a man I knew, and when I came back in the evening, the first thing I saw was Emelyanoushka! There he was, sitting on my box and his check bundle beside him; he was sitting in his ragged old coat, waiting for me. And to while away the time he had borrowed a church book from the old lady, and was holding it wrong side upwards. He’d scented me out! My heart sank. Well, thinks I, there’s no help for it — why didn’t I turn him out at first? So I asked him straight off: Have you brought your passport, Emelyanoushka?’

“I sat down on the spot, sir, and began to ponder: will a vagabond like that be very much trouble to me? And on thinking it over it seemed he would not be much trouble. He must be fed, I thought. Well, a bit of bread

in the morning, and to make it go down better I'll buy him an onion. At midday I should have to give him another bit of bread and an onion; and in the evening, onion again with kvass, with some more bread if he wanted it. And if some cabbage soup were to come our way, then we should both have had our fill. I am no great eater myself, and a drinking man, as we all know, never eats; all he wants is herb-brandy or green vodka. He'll ruin me with his drinking, I thought, but then another idea came into my head, sir, and took great hold on me. So much so that if Emelyanoushka had gone away I should have felt that I had nothing to live for, I do believe.... I determined on the spot to be a father and guardian to him. I'll keep him from ruin, I thought, I'll wean him from the glass! You wait a bit, thought I; very well, Emelyanoushka, you may stay, only you must behave yourself; you must obey orders.

"Well, thinks I to myself, I'll begin by training him to work of some sort, but not all at once; let him enjoy himself a little first, and I'll look round and find something you are fit for, Emelyanoushka. For every sort of work a man needs a special ability, you know, sir. And I began to watch him on the quiet; I soon saw Emelyanoushka was a desperate character. I began, sir, with a word of advice: I said this and that to him. 'Emelyanoushka,' said I, 'you ought to take a thought and mend your ways. Have done with drinking! Just look what rags you go about in: that old coat of yours, if I may make bold to say so, is fit for nothing but a sieve. A pretty state of things! It's time to draw the line, sure enough.' Emelyanoushka sat and listened to me with his head hanging down. Would you believe it, sir? It had come to such a pass with him, he'd lost his tongue through drink and could not speak a word of sense. Talk to him of cucumbers and he'd answer back about beans! He would listen and listen to me and then heave such a sigh. 'What are you sighing for, Emelyan Ilyitch?' I asked him.

"'Oh, nothing; don't you mind me, Astafy Ivanovitch. Do you know there were two women fighting in the street to-day, Astafy Ivanovitch? One upset the other woman's basket of cranberries by accident.'

"'Well, what of that?'

"'And the second one upset the other's cranberries on purpose and trampled them under foot, too.'

"'Well, and what of it, Emelyan Ilyitch?'

"'Why, nothing, Astafy Ivanovitch, I just mentioned it.'

“‘“Nothing, I just mentioned it!” Emelyanoushka, my boy, I thought, you’ve squandered and drunk away your brains!’

“‘And do you know, a gentleman dropped a money-note on the pavement in Gorohovy Street, no, it was Sadovy Street. And a peasant saw it and said, “That’s my luck”; and at the same time another man saw it and said, “No, it’s my bit of luck. I saw it before you did.”’

“‘Well, Emelyan Ilyitch?’

“‘And the fellows had a fight over it, Astafy Ivanovitch. But a policeman came up, took away the note, gave it back to the gentleman and threatened to take up both the men.’

“‘Well, but what of that? What is there edifying about it, Emelyanoushka?’

“‘Why, nothing, to be sure. Folks laughed, Astafy Ivanovitch.’

“‘Ach, Emelyanoushka! What do the folks matter? You’ve sold your soul for a brass farthing! But do you know what I have to tell you, Emelyan Ilyitch?’

“‘What, Astafy Ivanovitch?’

“‘Take a job of some sort, that’s what you must do. For the hundredth time I say to you, set to work, have some mercy on yourself!’

“‘What could I set to, Astafy Ivanovitch? I don’t know what job I could set to, and there is no one who will take me on, Astafy Ivanovitch.’

“‘That’s how you came to be turned off, Emelyanoushka, you drinking man!’

“‘And do you know Vlass, the waiter, was sent for to the office to-day, Astafy Ivanovitch?’

“‘Why did they send for him, Emelyanoushka?’ I asked.

“‘I could not say why, Astafy Ivanovitch. I suppose they wanted him there, and that’s why they sent for him.’

“A-ach, thought I, we are in a bad way, poor Emelyanoushka! The Lord is chastising us for our sins. Well, sir, what is one to do with such a man?

“But a cunning fellow he was, and no mistake. He’d listen and listen to me, but at last I suppose he got sick of it. As soon as he sees I am beginning to get angry, he’d pick up his old coat and out he’d slip and leave no trace. He’d wander about all day and come back at night drunk. Where he got the money from, the Lord only knows; I had no hand in that.

“‘No,’ said I, ‘Emelyan Ilyitch, you’ll come to a bad end. Give over drinking, mind what I say now, give it up! Next time you come home in

liquor, you can spend the night on the stairs. I won't let you in!'

"After hearing that threat, Emelyanoushka sat at home that day and the next; but on the third he slipped off again. I waited and waited; he didn't come back. Well, at least I don't mind owning, I was in a fright, and I felt for the man too. What have I done to him? I thought. I've scared him away. Where's the poor fellow gone to now? He'll get lost maybe. Lord have mercy upon us!

"Night came on, he did not come. In the morning I went out into the porch; I looked, and if he hadn't gone to sleep in the porch! There he was with his head on the step, and chilled to the marrow of his bones.

"'What next, Emelyanoushka, God have mercy on you! Where will you get to next!'

"'Why, you were — sort of — angry with me, Astafy Ivanovitch, the other day, you were vexed and promised to put me to sleep in the porch, so I didn't — sort of — venture to come in, Astafy Ivanovitch, and so I lay down here....'

"I did feel angry and sorry too.

"'Surely you might undertake some other duty, Emelyanoushka, instead of lying here guarding the steps,' I said.

"'Why, what other duty, Astafy Ivanovitch?'

"'You lost soul' — I was in such a rage, I called him that—'if you could but learn tailoring work! Look at your old rag of a coat! It's not enough to have it in tatters, here you are sweeping the steps with it! You might take a needle and boggle up your rags, as decency demands. Ah, you drunken man!'

"What do you think, sir? He actually did take a needle. Of course I said it in jest, but he was so scared he set to work. He took off his coat and began threading the needle. I watched him; as you may well guess, his eyes were all red and bleary, and his hands were all of a shake. He kept shoving and shoving the thread and could not get it through the eye of the needle; he kept screwing his eyes up and wetting the thread and twisting it in his fingers — it was no good! He gave it up and looked at me.

"'Well,' said I, 'this is a nice way to treat me! If there had been folks by to see, I don't know what I should have done! Why, you simple fellow, I said it you in joke, as a reproach. Give over your nonsense, God bless you! Sit quiet and don't put me to shame, don't sleep on my stairs and make a laughing-stock of me.'

“‘Why, what am I to do, Astafy Ivanovitch? I know very well I am a drunkard and good for nothing! I can do nothing but vex you, my bene — bene — factor....’

“And at that his blue lips began all of a sudden to quiver, and a tear ran down his white cheek and trembled on his stubbly chin, and then poor Emelyanoushka burst into a regular flood of tears. Mercy on us! I felt as though a knife were thrust into my heart! The sensitive creature! I’d never have expected it. Who could have guessed it? No, Emelyanoushka, thought I, I shall give you up altogether. You can go your way like the rubbish you are.

“Well, sir, why make a long story of it? And the whole affair is so trifling; it’s not worth wasting words upon. Why, you, for instance, sir, would not have given a thought to it, but I would have given a great deal — if I had a great deal to give — that it never should have happened at all.

“I had a pair of riding breeches by me, sir, deuce take them, fine, first-rate riding breeches they were too, blue with a check on it. They’d been ordered by a gentleman from the country, but he would not have them after all; said they were not full enough, so they were left on my hands. It struck me they were worth something. At the second-hand dealer’s I ought to get five silver roubles for them, or if not I could turn them into two pairs of trousers for Petersburg gentlemen and have a piece over for a waistcoat for myself. Of course for poor people like us everything comes in. And it happened just then that Emelyanoushka was having a sad time of it. There he sat day after day: he did not drink, not a drop passed his lips, but he sat and moped like an owl. It was sad to see him — he just sat and brooded. Well, thought I, either you’ve not got a copper to spend, my lad, or else you’re turning over a new leaf of yourself, you’ve given it up, you’ve listened to reason. Well, sir, that’s how it was with us; and just then came a holiday. I went to vespers; when I came home I found Emelyanoushka sitting in the window, drunk and rocking to and fro.

“Ah! so that’s what you’ve been up to, my lad! And I went to get something out of my chest. And when I looked in, the breeches were not there.... I rummaged here and there; they’d vanished. When I’d ransacked everywhere and saw they were not there, something seemed to stab me to the heart. I ran first to the old dame and began accusing her; of Emelyanoushka I’d not the faintest suspicion, though there was cause for it in his sitting there drunk.

“‘No,’ said the old body, ‘God be with you, my fine gentleman, what good are riding breeches to me? Am I going to wear such things? Why, a skirt I had I lost the other day through a fellow of your sort ... I know nothing; I can tell you nothing about it,’ she said.

“‘Who has been here, who has been in?’ I asked.

“‘Why, nobody has been, my good sir,’ says she; ‘I’ve been here all the while; Emelyan Ilyitch went out and came back again; there he sits, ask him.’

“‘Emelyanoushka,’ said I, ‘have you taken those new riding breeches for anything; you remember the pair I made for that gentleman from the country?’

“‘No, Astafy Ivanovitch,’ said he; ‘I’ve not — sort of — touched them.’

“I was in a state! I hunted high and low for them — they were nowhere to be found. And Emelyanoushka sits there rocking himself to and fro. I was squatting on my heels facing him and bending over the chest, and all at once I stole a glance at him.... Alack, I thought; my heart suddenly grew hot within me and I felt myself flushing up too. And suddenly Emelyanoushka looked at me.

“‘No, Astafy Ivanovitch,’ said he, ‘those riding breeches of yours, maybe, you are thinking, maybe, I took them, but I never touched them.’

“‘But what can have become of them, Emelyan Ilyitch?’

“‘No, Astafy Ivanovitch,’ said he, ‘I’ve never seen them.’

“‘Why, Emelyan Ilyitch, I suppose they’ve run off of themselves, eh?’

“‘Maybe they have, Astafy Ivanovitch.’

“When I heard him say that, I got up at once, went up to him, lighted the lamp and sat down to work to my sewing. I was altering a waistcoat for a clerk who lived below us. And wasn’t there a burning pain and ache in my breast! I shouldn’t have minded so much if I had put all the clothes I had in the fire. Emelyanoushka seemed to have an inkling of what a rage I was in. When a man is guilty, you know, sir, he scents trouble far off, like the birds of the air before a storm.

“‘Do you know what, Astafy Ivanovitch,’ Emelyanoushka began, and his poor old voice was shaking as he said the words, ‘Antip Prohoritch, the apothecary, married the coachman’s wife this morning, who died the other day — —’

“I did give him a look, sir, a nasty look it was; Emelyanoushka understood it too. I saw him get up, go to the bed, and begin to rummage

there for something. I waited — he was busy there a long time and kept muttering all the while, ‘No, not there, where can the blessed things have got to!’ I waited to see what he’d do; I saw him creep under the bed on all fours. I couldn’t bear it any longer. ‘What are you crawling about under the bed for, Emelyan Ilyitch?’ said I.

“‘Looking for the breeches, Astafy Ivanovitch. Maybe they’ve dropped down there somewhere.’

“‘Why should you try to help a poor simple man like me,’ said I, ‘crawling on your knees for nothing, sir?’ — I called him that in my vexation.

“‘Oh, never mind, Astafy Ivanovitch, I’ll just look. They’ll turn up, maybe, somewhere.’

“‘H’m,’ said I, ‘look here, Emelyan Ilyitch!’

“‘What is it, Astafy Ivanovitch?’ said he.

“‘Haven’t you simply stolen them from me like a thief and a robber, in return for the bread and salt you’ve eaten here?’ said I.

“I felt so angry, sir, at seeing him fooling about on his knees before me.

“‘No, Astafy Ivanovitch.’

“And he stayed lying as he was on his face under the bed. A long time he lay there and then at last crept out. I looked at him and the man was as white as a sheet. He stood up, and sat down near me in the window and sat so for some ten minutes.

“‘No, Astafy Ivanovitch,’ he said, and all at once he stood up and came towards me, and I can see him now; he looked dreadful. ‘No, Astafy Ivanovitch,’ said he, ‘I never — sort of — touched your breeches.’

“He was all of a shake, poking himself in the chest with a trembling finger, and his poor old voice shook so that I was frightened, sir, and sat as though I was rooted to the window-seat.

“‘Well, Emelyan Ilyitch,’ said I, ‘as you will, forgive me if I, in my foolishness, have accused you unjustly. As for the breeches, let them go hang; we can live without them. We’ve still our hands, thank God; we need not go thieving or begging from some other poor man; we’ll earn our bread.’

“Emelyanoushka heard me out and went on standing there before me. I looked up, and he had sat down. And there he sat all the evening without stirring. At last I lay down to sleep. Emelyanoushka went on sitting in the same place. When I looked out in the morning, he was lying curled up in his

old coat on the bare floor; he felt too crushed even to come to bed. Well, sir, I felt no more liking for the fellow from that day, in fact for the first few days I hated him. I felt as one may say as though my own son had robbed me, and done me a deadly hurt. Ach, thought I, Emelyanoushka, Emelyanoushka! And Emelyanoushka, sir, went on drinking for a whole fortnight without stopping. He was drunk all the time, and regularly besotted. He went out in the morning and came back late at night, and for a whole fortnight I didn't get a word out of him. It was as though grief was gnawing at his heart, or as though he wanted to do for himself completely. At last he stopped; he must have come to the end of all he'd got, and then he sat in the window again. I remember he sat there without speaking for three days and three nights; all of a sudden I saw that he was crying. He was just sitting there, sir, and crying like anything; a perfect stream, as though he didn't know how his tears were flowing. And it's a sad thing, sir, to see a grown-up man and an old man, too, crying from woe and grief.

"'What's the matter, Emelyanoushka?' said I.

"He began to tremble so that he shook all over. I spoke to him for the first time since that evening.

"'Nothing, Astafy Ivanovitch.'

"'God be with you, Emelyanoushka, what's lost is lost. Why are you moping about like this?' I felt sorry for him.

"'Oh, nothing, Astafy Ivanovitch, it's no matter. I want to find some work to do, Astafy Ivanovitch.'

"'And what sort of work, pray, Emelyanoushka?'

"'Why, any sort; perhaps I could find a situation such as I used to have. I've been already to ask Fedosay Ivanitch. I don't like to be a burden on you, Astafy Ivanovitch. If I can find a situation, Astafy Ivanovitch, then I'll pay it you all back, and make you a return for all your hospitality.'

"'Enough, Emelyanoushka, enough; let bygones be bygones — and no more to be said about it. Let us go on as we used to do before.'

"'No, Astafy Ivanovitch, you, maybe, think — but I never touched your riding breeches.'

"'Well, have it your own way; God be with you, Emelyanoushka.'

"'No, Astafy Ivanovitch, I can't go on living with you, that's clear. You must excuse me, Astafy Ivanovitch.'

"'Why, God bless you, Emelyan Ilyitch, who's offending you and driving you out of the place — am I doing it?'

“‘No, it’s not the proper thing for me to live with you like this, Astafy Ivanovitch. I’d better be going.’

“He was so hurt, it seemed, he stuck to his point. I looked at him, and sure enough, up he got and pulled his old coat over his shoulders.

“‘But where are you going, Emelyan Ilyitch? Listen to reason: what are you about? Where are you off to?’

“‘No, good-bye, Astafy Ivanovitch, don’t keep me now’ — and he was blubbering again—’I’d better be going. You’re not the same now.’

“‘Not the same as what? I am the same. But you’ll be lost by yourself like a poor helpless babe, Emelyan Ilyitch.’

“‘No, Astafy Ivanovitch, when you go out now, you lock up your chest and it makes me cry to see it, Astafy Ivanovitch. You’d better let me go, Astafy Ivanovitch, and forgive me all the trouble I’ve given you while I’ve been living with you.’

“Well, sir, the man went away. I waited for a day; I expected he’d be back in the evening — no. Next day no sign of him, nor the third day either. I began to get frightened; I was so worried, I couldn’t drink, I couldn’t eat, I couldn’t sleep. The fellow had quite disarmed me. On the fourth day I went out to look for him; I peeped into all the taverns, to inquire for him — but no, Emelyanoushka was lost. ‘Have you managed to keep yourself alive, Emelyanoushka?’ I wondered. ‘Perhaps he is lying dead under some hedge, poor drunkard, like a sodden log.’ I went home more dead than alive. Next day I went out to look for him again. And I kept cursing myself that I’d been such a fool as to let the man go off by himself. On the fifth day it was a holiday — in the early morning I heard the door creak. I looked up and there was my Emelyanoushka coming in. His face was blue and his hair was covered with dirt as though he’d been sleeping in the street; he was as thin as a match. He took off his old coat, sat down on the chest and looked at me. I was delighted to see him, but I felt more upset about him than ever. For you see, sir, if I’d been overtaken in some sin, as true as I am here, sir, I’d have died like a dog before I’d have come back. But Emelyanoushka did come back. And a sad thing it was, sure enough, to see a man sunk so low. I began to look after him, to talk kindly to him, to comfort him.

“‘Well, Emelyanoushka,’ said I, ‘I am glad you’ve come back. Had you been away much longer I should have gone to look for you in the taverns again to-day. Are you hungry?’

“‘No, Astafy Ivanovitch.’

“‘Come, now, aren’t you really? Here, brother, is some cabbage soup left over from yesterday; there was meat in it; it is good stuff. And here is some bread and onion. Come, eat it, it’ll do you no harm.’

“I made him eat it, and I saw at once that the man had not tasted food for maybe three days — he was as hungry as a wolf. So it was hunger that had driven him to me. My heart was melted looking at the poor dear. ‘Let me run to the tavern,’ thought I, ‘I’ll get something to ease his heart, and then we’ll make an end of it. I’ve no more anger in my heart against you, Emelyanoushka!’ I brought him some vodka. ‘Here, Emelyan Ilyitch, let us have a drink for the holiday. Like a drink? And it will do you good.’ He held out his hand, held it out greedily; he was just taking it, and then he stopped himself. But a minute after I saw him take it, and lift it to his mouth, spilling it on his sleeve. But though he got it to his lips he set it down on the table again.

“‘What is it, Emelyanoushka?’

“‘Nothing, Astafy Ivanovitch, I — sort of — —’

“‘Won’t you drink it?’

“‘Well, Astafy Ivanovitch, I’m not — sort of — going to drink any more, Astafy Ivanovitch.’

“‘Do you mean you’ve given it up altogether, Emelyanoushka, or are you only not going to drink to-day?’

“He did not answer. A minute later I saw him rest his head on his hand.

“‘What’s the matter, Emelyanoushka, are you ill?’

“‘Why, yes, Astafy Ivanovitch, I don’t feel well.’

“I took him and laid him down on the bed. I saw that he really was ill: his head was burning hot and he was shivering with fever. I sat by him all day; towards night he was worse. I mixed him some oil and onion and kvass and bread broken up.

“‘Come, eat some of this,’ said I, ‘and perhaps you’ll be better.’ He shook his head. ‘No,’ said he, ‘I won’t have any dinner to-day, Astafy Ivanovitch.’

“I made some tea for him, I quite flustered our old woman — he was no better. Well, thinks I, it’s a bad look-out! The third morning I went for a medical gentleman. There was one I knew living close by, Kostopravov by name. I’d made his acquaintance when I was in service with the Bosomyagins; he’d attended me. The doctor come and looked at him. ‘He’s in a bad way,’ said he, ‘it was no use sending for me. But if you like I can

give him a powder.’ Well, I didn’t give him a powder, I thought that’s just the doctor’s little game; and then the fifth day came.

“He lay, sir, dying before my eyes. I sat in the window with my work in my hands. The old woman was heating the stove. We were all silent. My heart was simply breaking over him, the good-for-nothing fellow; I felt as if it were a son of my own I was losing. I knew that Emelyanoushka was looking at me. I’d seen the man all the day long making up his mind to say something and not daring to.

“At last I looked up at him; I saw such misery in the poor fellow’s eyes. He had kept them fixed on me, but when he saw that I was looking at him, he looked down at once.

“‘Astafy Ivanovitch.’

“‘What is it, Emelyanoushka?’

“‘If you were to take my old coat to a second-hand dealer’s, how much do you think they’d give you for it, Astafy Ivanovitch?’

“‘There’s no knowing how much they’d give. Maybe they would give me a rouble for it, Emelyan Ilyitch.’

“But if I had taken it they wouldn’t have given a farthing for it, but would have laughed in my face for bringing such a trumpery thing. I simply said that to comfort the poor fellow, knowing the simpleton he was.

“‘But I was thinking, Astafy Ivanovitch, they might give you three roubles for it; it’s made of cloth, Astafy Ivanovitch. How could they only give one rouble for a cloth coat?’

“‘I don’t know, Emelyan Ilyitch,’ said I, ‘if you are thinking of taking it you should certainly ask three roubles to begin with.’

“Emelyanoushka was silent for a time, and then he addressed me again —

“‘Astafy Ivanovitch.’

“‘What is it, Emelyanoushka?’ I asked.

“‘Sell my coat when I die, and don’t bury me in it. I can lie as well without it; and it’s a thing of some value — it might come in useful.’

“I can’t tell you how it made my heart ache to hear him. I saw that the death agony was coming on him. We were silent again for a bit. So an hour passed by. I looked at him again: he was still staring at me, and when he met my eyes he looked down again.

“‘Do you want some water to drink, Emelyan Ilyitch?’ I asked.

“‘Give me some, God bless you, Astafy Ivanovitch.’

“I gave him a drink.

“‘Thank you, Astafy Ivanovitch,’ said he.

“‘Is there anything else you would like, Emelyanoushka?’

“‘No, Astafy Ivanovitch, there’s nothing I want, but I — sort of — —’

“‘What?’

“‘I only — —’

“‘What is it, Emelyanoushka?’

“‘Those riding breeches —— it was —— sort of —— I who took them —— Astafy Ivanovitch.’

“‘Well, God forgive you, Emelyanoushka,’ said I, ‘you poor, sorrowful creature. Depart in peace.’

“And I was choking myself, sir, and the tears were in my eyes. I turned aside for a moment.

“‘Astafy Ivanovitch — —’

“I saw Emelyanoushka wanted to tell me something; he was trying to sit up, trying to speak, and mumbling something. He flushed red all over suddenly, looked at me ... then I saw him turn white again, whiter and whiter, and he seemed to sink away all in a minute. His head fell back, he drew one breath and gave up his soul to God.”

A NOVEL IN NINE LETTERS



I

(From Pyotr Ivanitch To Ivan Petrovitch)

Dear Sir and Most Precious Friend, Ivan Petrovitch,

For the last two days I have been, I may say, in pursuit of you, my friend, having to talk over most urgent business with you, and I cannot come across you anywhere. Yesterday, while we were at Semyon Alexeyitch's, my wife made a very good joke about you, saying that Tatyana Petrovna and you were a pair of birds always on the wing. You have not been married three months and you already neglect your domestic hearth. We all laughed heartily — from our genuine kindly feeling for you, of course — but, joking apart, my precious friend, you have given me a lot of trouble. Semyon Alexeyitch said to me that you might be going to the ball at the Social Union's club! Leaving my wife with Semyon Alexeyitch's good lady, I flew off to the Social Union. It was funny and tragic! Fancy my position! Me at the ball — and alone, without my wife! Ivan Andreyitch meeting me in the porter's lodge and seeing me alone, at once concluded (the rascal!) that I had a passion for dances, and taking me by the arm, wanted to drag me off by force to a dancing class, saying that it was too crowded at the Social Union, that an ardent spirit had not room to turn, and that his head ached from the patchouli and mignonette. I found neither you, nor Tatyana Petrovna. Ivan Andreyitch vowed and declared that you would be at *Woe from Wit*, at the Alexandrinsky theatre.

I flew off to the Alexandrinsky theatre: you were not there either. This morning I expected to find you at Tchistoganov's — no sign of you there. Tchistoganov sent to the Perepalkins' — the same thing there. In fact, I am quite worn out; you can judge how much trouble I have taken! Now I am writing to you (there is nothing else I can do). My business is by no means a literary one (you understand me?); it would be better to meet face to face, it is extremely necessary to discuss something with you and as quickly as possible, and so I beg you to come to us to-day with Tatyana Petrovna to tea and for a chat in the evening. My Anna Mihalovna will be extremely pleased to see you. You will truly, as they say, oblige me to my dying day. By the way, my precious friend — since I have taken up my pen I'll go into

all I have against you — I have a slight complaint I must make; in fact, I must reproach you, my worthy friend, for an apparently very innocent little trick which you have played at my expense.... You are a rascal, a man without conscience. About the middle of last month, you brought into my house an acquaintance of yours, Yevgeny Nikolaitch; you vouched for him by your friendly and, for me, of course, sacred recommendation; I rejoiced at the opportunity of receiving the young man with open arms, and when I did so I put my head in a noose. A noose it hardly is, but it has turned out a pretty business. I have not time now to explain, and indeed it is an awkward thing to do in writing, only a very humble request to you, my malicious friend: could you not somehow very delicately, in passing, drop a hint into the young man's ear that there are a great many houses in the metropolis besides ours? It's more than I can stand, my dear fellow! We fall at your feet, as our friend Semyonovitch says. I will tell you all about it when we meet. I don't mean to say that the young man has sinned against good manners, or is lacking in spiritual qualities, or is not up to the mark in some other way. On the contrary, he is an amiable and pleasant fellow; but wait, we shall meet; meanwhile if you see him, for goodness' sake whisper a hint to him, my good friend. I would do it myself, but you know what I am, I simply can't, and that's all about it. You introduced him. But I will explain myself more fully this evening, anyway. Now good-bye. I remain, etc.

P.S. — My little boy has been ailing for the last week, and gets worse and worse every day; he is cutting his poor little teeth. My wife is nursing him all the time, and is depressed, poor thing. Be sure to come, you will give us real pleasure, my precious friend.

II

(From Ivan Petrovitch to Pyotr Ivanitch)

Dear Sir, Pyotr Ivanitch!

I got your letter yesterday, I read it and was perplexed. You looked for me, goodness knows where, and I was simply at home. Till ten o'clock I was expecting Ivan Ivanitch Tolokonov. At once on getting your letter I set out with my wife, I went to the expense of taking a cab, and reached your house about half-past six. You were not at home, but we were met by your wife. I waited to see you till half-past ten, I could not stay later. I set off with my wife, went to the expense of a cab again, saw her home, and went

on myself to the Perepalkins', thinking I might meet you there, but again I was out in my reckoning. When I get home I did not sleep all night, I felt uneasy; in the morning I drove round to you three times, at nine, at ten and at eleven; three times I went to the expense of a cab, and again you left me in the lurch.

I read your letter and was amazed. You write about Yevgeny Nikolaitch, beg me to whisper some hint, and do not tell me what about. I commend your caution, but all letters are not alike, and I don't give documents of importance to my wife for curl-papers. I am puzzled, in fact, to know with what motive you wrote all this to me. However, if it comes to that, why should I meddle in the matter? I don't poke my nose into other people's business. You can be not at home to him; I only see that I must have a brief and decisive explanation with you, and, moreover, time is passing. And I am in straits and don't know what to do if you are going to neglect the terms of our agreement. A journey for nothing; a journey costs something, too, and my wife's whining for me to get her a velvet mantle of the latest fashion. About Yevgeny Nikolaitch I hasten to mention that when I was at Pavel Semyonovitch Perepalkin's yesterday I made inquiries without loss of time. He has five hundred serfs in the province of Yaroslav, and he has expectations from his grandmother of an estate of three hundred serfs near Moscow. How much money he has I cannot tell; I think you ought to know that better. I beg you once for all to appoint a place where I can meet you. You met Ivan Andreyitch yesterday, and you write that he told you that I was at the Alexandrinsky theatre with my wife. I write, that he is a liar, and it shows how little he is to be trusted in such cases, that only the day before yesterday he did his grandmother out of eight hundred roubles. I have the honour to remain, etc.

P.S. — My wife is going to have a baby; she is nervous about it and feels depressed at times. At the theatre they sometimes have fire-arms going off and sham thunderstorms. And so for fear of a shock to my wife's nerves I do not take her to the theatre. I have no great partiality for the theatre myself.

III

(From Pyotr Ivanitch to Ivan Petrovitch)

My Precious Friend, Ivan Petrovitch,

I am to blame, to blame, a thousand times to blame, but I hasten to defend myself. Between five and six yesterday, just as we were talking of you with the warmest affection, a messenger from Uncle Stepan Alexeyitch galloped up with the news that my aunt was very bad. Being afraid of alarming my wife, I did not say a word of this to her, but on the pretext of other urgent business I drove off to my aunt's house. I found her almost dying. Just at five o'clock she had had a stroke, the third she has had in the last two years. Karl Fyodoritch, their family doctor, told us that she might not live through the night. You can judge of my position, dearest friend. We were on our legs all night in grief and anxiety. It was not till morning that, utterly exhausted and overcome by moral and physical weakness, I lay down on the sofa; I forgot to tell them to wake me, and only woke at half-past eleven. My aunt was better. I drove home to my wife. She, poor thing, was quite worn out expecting me. I snatched a bite of something, embraced my little boy, reassured my wife and set off to call on you. You were not at home. At your flat I found Yevgeny Nikolaitch. When I got home I took up a pen, and here I am writing to you. Don't grumble and be cross to me, my true friend. Beat me, chop my guilty head off my shoulders, but don't deprive me of your affection. From your wife I learned that you will be at the Slavyanovs' this evening. I will certainly be there. I look forward with the greatest impatience to seeing you.

- I remain, etc.

P.S. — We are in perfect despair about our little boy. Karl Fyodoritch prescribes rhubarb. He moans. Yesterday he did not know any one. This morning he did know us, and began lisping papa, mamma, boo.... My wife was in tears the whole morning.

IV

(From Ivan Petrovitch to Pyotr Ivanitch)

My Dear Sir, Pyotr Ivanitch!

I am writing to you, in your room, at your bureau; and before taking up my pen, I have been waiting for more than two and a half hours for you. Now allow me to tell you straight out, Pyotr Ivanitch, my frank opinion about this shabby incident. From your last letter I gathered that you were expected at the Slavyanovs', that you were inviting me to go there; I turned

up, I stayed for five hours and there was no sign of you. Why, am I to be made a laughing-stock to people, do you suppose? Excuse me, my dear sir ... I came to you this morning, I hoped to find you, not imitating certain deceitful persons who look for people, God knows where, when they can be found at home at any suitably chosen time. There is no sign of you at home. I don't know what restrains me from telling you now the whole harsh truth. I will only say that I see you seem to be going back on your bargain regarding our agreement. And only now reflecting on the whole affair, I cannot but confess that I am absolutely astounded at the artful workings of your mind. I see clearly now that you have been cherishing your unfriendly design for a long time. This supposition of mine is confirmed by the fact that last week in an almost unpardonable way you took possession of that letter of yours addressed to me, in which you laid down yourself, though rather vaguely and incoherently, the terms of our agreement in regard to a circumstance of which I need not remind you. You are afraid of documents, you destroy them, and you try to make a fool of me. But I won't allow myself to be made a fool of, for no one has ever considered me one hitherto, and every one has thought well of me in that respect. I am opening my eyes. You try and put me off, confuse me with talk of Yevgeny Nikolaitch, and when with your letter of the seventh of this month, which I am still at a loss to understand, I seek a personal explanation from you, you make humbugging appointments, while you keep out of the way. Surely you do not suppose, sir, that I am not equal to noticing all this? You promised to reward me for my services, of which you are very well aware, in the way of introducing various persons, and at the same time, and I don't know how you do it, you contrive to borrow money from me in considerable sums without giving a receipt, as happened no longer ago than last week. Now, having got the money, you keep out of the way, and what's more, you repudiate the service I have done you in regard to Yevgeny Nikolaitch. You are probably reckoning on my speedy departure to Simbirsk, and hoping I may not have time to settle your business. But I assure you solemnly and testify on my word of honour that if it comes to that, I am prepared to spend two more months in Petersburg expressly to carry through my business, to attain my objects, and to get hold of you. For I, too, on occasion know how to get the better of people. In conclusion, I beg to inform you that if you do not give me a satisfactory explanation to-day, first in writing, and then personally face to face, and do not make a fresh statement in your letter of

the chief points of the agreement existing between us, and do not explain fully your views in regard to Yevgeny Nikolaitch, I shall be compelled to have recourse to measures that will be highly unpleasant to you, and indeed repugnant to me also.
Allow me to remain, etc.

V

(FROM PYOTR IVANITCH TO IVAN PETROVITCH)

November 11.

My Dear and Honoured Friend, Ivan Petrovitch!

I was cut to the heart by your letter. I wonder you were not ashamed, my dear but unjust friend, to behave like this to one of your most devoted friends. Why be in such a hurry, and without explaining things fully, wound me with such insulting suspicions? But I hasten to reply to your charges. You did not find me yesterday, Ivan Petrovitch, because I was suddenly and quite unexpectedly called away to a death-bed. My aunt, Yefimya Nikolaevna, passed away yesterday evening at eleven o'clock in the night. By the general consent of the relatives I was selected to make the arrangements for the sad and sorrowful ceremony. I had so much to do that I had not time to see you this morning, nor even to send you a line. I am grieved to the heart at the misunderstanding which has arisen between us. My words about Yevgeny Nikolaitch uttered casually and in jest you have taken in quite a wrong sense, and have ascribed to them a meaning deeply offensive to me. You refer to money and express your anxiety about it. But without wasting words I am ready to satisfy all your claims and demands, though I must remind you that the three hundred and fifty roubles I had from you last week were in accordance with a certain agreement and not by way of a loan. In the latter case there would certainly have been a receipt. I will not condescend to discuss the other points mentioned in your letter. I see that it is a misunderstanding. I see it is your habitual hastiness, hot temper and obstinacy. I know that your goodheartedness and open character will not allow doubts to persist in your heart, and that you will be, in fact, the first to hold out your hand to me. You are mistaken, Ivan Petrovitch, you are greatly mistaken!

Although your letter has deeply wounded me, I should be prepared even to-day to come to you and apologise, but I have been since yesterday in

such a rush and flurry that I am utterly exhausted and can scarcely stand on my feet. To complete my troubles, my wife is laid up; I am afraid she is seriously ill. Our little boy, thank God, is better; but I must lay down my pen, I have a mass of things to do and they are urgent. Allow me, my dear friend, to remain, etc.

VI

(From Ivan Petrovitch to Pyotr Ivanitch)

November 14.

Dear Sir, Pyotr Ivanitch!

I have been waiting for three days, I tried to make a profitable use of them — meanwhile I feel that politeness and good manners are the greatest of ornaments for every one. Since my last letter of the tenth of this month, I have neither by word nor deed reminded you of my existence, partly in order to allow you undisturbed to perform the duty of a Christian in regard to your aunt, partly because I needed the time for certain considerations and investigations in regard to a business you know of. Now I hasten to explain myself to you in the most thoroughgoing and decisive manner.

I frankly confess that on reading your first two letters I seriously supposed that you did not understand what I wanted; that was how it was that I rather sought an interview with you and explanations face to face. I was afraid of writing, and blamed myself for lack of clearness in the expression of my thoughts on paper. You are aware that I have not the advantages of education and good manners, and that I shun a hollow show of gentility because I have learned from bitter experience how misleading appearances often are, and that a snake sometimes lies hidden under flowers. But you understood me; you did not answer me as you should have done because, in the treachery of your heart, you had planned beforehand to be faithless to your word of honour and to the friendly relations existing between us. You have proved this absolutely by your abominable conduct towards me of late, which is fatal to my interests, which I did not expect and which I refused to believe till the present moment. From the very beginning of our acquaintance you captivated me by your clever manners, by the subtlety of your behaviour, your knowledge of affairs and the advantages to be gained by association with you. I imagined that I had found a true friend and well-wisher. Now I recognise clearly that there are

many people who under a flattering and brilliant exterior hide venom in their hearts, who use their cleverness to weave snares for their neighbour and for unpardonable deception, and so are afraid of pen and paper, and at the same time use their fine language not for the benefit of their neighbour and their country, but to drug and bewitch the reason of those who have entered into business relations of any sort with them. Your treachery to me, my dear sir, can be clearly seen from what follows.

In the first place, when, in the clear and distinct terms of my letter, I described my position, sir, and at the same time asked you in my first letter what you meant by certain expressions and intentions of yours, principally in regard to Yevgeny Nikolaitch, you tried for the most part to avoid answering, and confounding me by doubts and suspicions, you calmly put the subject aside. Then after treating me in a way which cannot be described by any seemly word, you began writing that you were wounded. Pray, what am I to call that, sir? Then when every minute was precious to me and when you had set me running after you all over the town, you wrote, pretending personal friendship, letters in which, intentionally avoiding all mention of business, you spoke of utterly irrelevant matters; to wit, of the illnesses of your good lady for whom I have, in any case, every respect, and of how your baby had been dosed with rhubarb and was cutting a tooth. All this you alluded to in every letter with a disgusting regularity that was insulting to me. Of course I am prepared to admit that a father’s heart may be torn by the sufferings of his babe, but why make mention of this when something different, far more important and interesting, was needed? I endured it in silence, but now when time has elapsed I think it my duty to explain myself. Finally, treacherously deceiving me several times by making humbugging appointments, you tried, it seems, to make me play the part of a fool and a laughing-stock for you, which I never intend to be. Then after first inviting me and thoroughly deceiving me, you informed me that you were called away to your suffering aunt who had had a stroke, precisely at five o’clock as you stated with shameful exactitude. Luckily for me, sir, in the course of these three days I have succeeded in making inquiries and have learnt from them that your aunt had a stroke on the day before the seventh not long before midnight. From this fact I see that you have made use of sacred family relations in order to deceive persons in no way concerned with them. Finally, in your last letter you mention the death of your relatives as though it had taken place precisely at the time when I was to have visited you to

consult about various business matters. But here the vileness of your arts and calculations exceeds all belief, for from trustworthy information which I was able by a lucky chance to obtain just in the nick of time, I have found out that your aunt died twenty-four hours later than the time you so impiously fixed for her decease in your letter. I shall never have done if I enumerate all the signs by which I have discovered your treachery in regard to me. It is sufficient, indeed, for any impartial observer that in every letter you style me, your true friend, and call me all sorts of polite names, which you do, to the best of my belief, for no other object than to put my conscience to sleep.

I have come now to your principal act of deceit and treachery in regard to me, to wit, your continual silence of late in regard to everything concerning our common interests, in regard to your wicked theft of the letter in which you stated, though in language somewhat obscure and not perfectly intelligible to me, our mutual agreements, your barbarous forcible loan of three hundred and fifty roubles which you borrowed from me as your partner without giving any receipt, and finally, your abominable slanders of our common acquaintance, Yevgeny Nikolaitch. I see clearly now that you meant to show me that he was, if you will allow me to say so, like a billy-goat, good for neither milk nor wool, that he was neither one thing nor the other, neither fish nor flesh, which you put down as a vice in him in your letter of the sixth instant. I knew Yevgeny Nikolaitch as a modest and well-behaved young man, whereby he may well attract, gain and deserve respect in society. I know also that every evening for the last fortnight you've put into your pocket dozens and sometimes even hundreds of roubles, playing games of chance with Yevgeny Nikolaitch. Now you disavow all this, and not only refuse to compensate me for what I have suffered, but have even appropriated money belonging to me, tempting me by suggestions that I should be partner in the affair, and luring me with various advantages which were to accrue. After having appropriated, in a most illegal way, money of mine and of Yevgeny Nikolaitch's, you decline to compensate me, resorting for that object to calumny with which you have unjustifiably blackened in my eyes a man whom I, by my efforts and exertions, introduced into your house. While on the contrary, from what I hear from your friends, you are still almost slobbering over him, and give out to the whole world that he is your dearest friend, though there is no one in the world such a fool as not to guess at once what your designs are

aiming at and what your friendly relations really mean. I should say that they mean deceit, treachery, forgetfulness of human duties and proprieties, contrary to the law of God and vicious in every way. I take myself as a proof and example. In what way have I offended you and why have you treated me in this godless fashion?

I will end my letter. I have explained myself. Now in conclusion. If, sir, you do not in the shortest possible time after receiving this letter return me in full, first, the three hundred and fifty roubles I gave you, and, secondly, all the sums that should come to me according to your promise, I will have recourse to every possible means to compel you to return it, even to open force, secondly to the protection of the laws, and finally I beg to inform you that I am in possession of facts, which, if they remain in the hands of your humble servant, may ruin and disgrace your name in the eyes of all the world. Allow me to remain, etc.

VII

(From Pyotr Ivanitch to Ivan Petrovitch)

November 15.

Ivan Petrovitch!

When I received your vulgar and at the same time queer letter, my impulse for the first minute was to tear it into shreds, but I have preserved it as a curiosity. I do, however, sincerely regret our misunderstandings and unpleasant relations. I did not mean to answer you. But I am compelled by necessity. I must in these lines inform you that it would be very unpleasant for me to see you in my house at any time; my wife feels the same: she is in delicate health and the smell of tar upsets her. My wife sends your wife the book, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, with her sincere thanks. As for the galoshes you say you left behind here on your last visit, I must regretfully inform you that they are nowhere to be found. They are still being looked for; but if they do not turn up, then I will buy you a new pair.

I have the honour to remain your sincere friend,

VIII

On the sixteenth of November, Pyotr Ivanitch received by post two letters addressed to him. Opening the first envelope, he took out a carefully folded note on pale pink paper. The handwriting was his wife’s. It was addressed to

Yevgeny Nikolaitch and dated November the second. There was nothing else in the envelope. Pyotr Ivanitch read:

Dear Eugène,

Yesterday was utterly impossible. My husband was at home the whole evening. Be sure to come to-morrow punctually at eleven. At half-past ten my husband is going to Tsarskoe and not coming back till evening. I was in a rage all night. Thank you for sending me the information and the correspondence. What a lot of paper. Did she really write all that? She has style though; many thanks, dear; I see that you love me. Don’t be angry, but, for goodness sake, come to-morrow.

A.

Pyotr Ivanitch tore open the other letter:

Pyotr Ivanitch,

I should never have set foot again in your house anyway; you need not have troubled to soil paper about it.

Next week I am going to Simbirsk. Yevgany Nikolaitch remains your precious and beloved friend. I wish you luck, and don’t trouble about the galoshes.

IX

On the seventeenth of November Ivan Petrovitch received by post two letters addressed to him. Opening the first letter, he took out a hasty and carelessly written note. The handwriting was his wife’s; it was addressed to Yevgeny Nikolaitch, and dated August the fourth. There was nothing else in the envelope. Ivan Petrovitch read:

Good-bye, good-bye, Yevgeny Nikolaitch! The Lord reward you for this too. May you be happy, but my lot is bitter, terribly bitter! It is your choice. If it had not been for my aunt I should not have put such trust in you. Do not laugh at me nor at my aunt. To-morrow is our wedding. Aunt is relieved that a good man has been found, and that he will take me without a dowry. I took a good look at him for the first time to-day. He seems good-natured. They are hurrying me. Farewell, farewell.... My darling!! Think of me sometimes; I shall never forget you. Farewell! I sign this last like my first letter, do you remember?

Tatyana.

The second letter was as follows:

Ivan Petrovitch,

To-morrow you will receive a new pair of galoshes. It is not my habit to filch from other men’s pockets, and I am not fond of picking up all sorts of rubbish in the streets.

Yevgeny Nikolaitch is going to Simbirsk in a day or two on his grandfather’s business, and he has asked me to find a travelling companion for him; wouldn’t you like to take him with you?

THE LANDLADY



A STORY

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PART I

CHAPTER I

ORDYNOV had made up his mind at last to change his lodgings. The landlady with whom he lodged, the poor and elderly widow of a petty functionary, was leaving Petersburg, for some reason or other, and setting off to a remote province to live with relations, before the first of the month when his time at the lodging was up. Staying on till his time was up the young man thought regretfully of his old quarters and felt vexed at having to leave them; he was poor and lodgings were dear. The day after his landlady went away, he took his cap and went out to wander about the back streets of Petersburg, looking at all the bills stuck up on the gates of the houses, and choosing by preference the dingiest and most populous blocks of buildings, where there was always more chance of finding a corner in some poor tenant's flat.

He had been looking for a long time, very carefully, but soon he was visited by new, almost unknown, sensations. He looked about him at first carelessly and absent-mindedly, then with attention, and finally with intense curiosity. The crowd and bustle of the street, the noise, the movement, the novelty of objects and the novelty of his position, all the paltry, everyday triviality of town fife so wearisome to a busy Petersburger spending his whole life in the fruitless effort to gain by toil, by sweat and by various other means a snug little home, in which to rest in peace and quiet — all this vulgar prose and dreariness aroused in Ordynov, on the contrary, a sensation of gentle gladness and serenity. His pale cheeks began to be suffused with a faint flush, his eyes began to shine as though with new hope, and he drew deep and eager breaths of the cold fresh air. He felt unusually lighthearted.

He always led a quiet and absolutely solitary life. Three years before, after taking his degree and becoming to a great extent his own master, he went to see an old man whom he had known only at second-hand, and was kept waiting a long while before the liveried servants consented to take his name in a second time. Then he walked into a dark, lofty, and deserted room, one of those dreary-looking rooms still to be found in old-fashioned family mansions that have been spared by time, and saw in it a grey-headed old man, hung with orders of distinction, who had been the friend and colleague of his father, and was his guardian. The old man handed him a

tiny screw of notes. It turned out to be a very small sum: it was all that was left of his ancestral estates, which had been sold by auction to pay the family debts. Ordynov accepted his inheritance unconcernedly, took leave for ever of his guardian, and went out into the street. It was a cold, gloomy, autumn evening; the young man was dreamy and his heart was tom with a sort of unconscious sadness. There was a glow of fire in his eyes; he felt feverish, and was hot and chilly by turns. He calculated on the way that on his money he could live for two or three years, or even on half rations for four years. It grew dusk and began to drizzle with rain. He had taken the first corner he came across, and within an hour had moved into it. There he shut himself up as though he were in a monastery, as though he had renounced the world. Within two years he had become a complete recluse.

He had grown shy and unsociable without being aware of the fact; meanwhile, it never occurred to him that there was another sort of life — full of noise and uproar, of continual excitement, of continual variety, which was inviting him and was sooner or later inevitable. It is true that he could not avoid hearing of it, but he had never known it or sought to know it: from childhood his life had been exceptional; and now it was more exceptional than ever. He was devoured by the deepest and most insatiable passion, which absorbs a man’s whole life and does not, for beings like Ordynov, provide any niche in the domain of practical daily activity. This passion was science. Meanwhile it was consuming his youth, marring his rest at nights with its slow, intoxicating poison, robbing him of wholesome food and of fresh air which never penetrated to his stifling comer. Yet, intoxicated by his passion, Ordynov refused to notice it. He was young and, so far, asked for nothing more. His passion made him a babe as regards external existence and totally incapable of forcing other people to stand aside when needful to make some sort of place for himself among them. Some clever people’s science is a capital in their hands; for Ordynov it was a weapon turned against himself.

He was prompted rather by an instinctive impulse than by a logical, clearly defined motive for studying and knowing, and it was the same in every other work he had done hitherto, even the most trivial. Even as a child he had been thought queer and unlike his schoolfellows. He had never known his parents; he had to put up with coarse and brutal treatment from his schoolfellows, provoked by his odd and unsociable disposition, and that made him really unsociable and morose, and little by little he grew more

and more secluded in his habits. But there never had been and was not even now any order and system in his solitary studies; even now he had only the first ecstasy, the first fever, the first delirium of the artist. He was creating a system for himself, it was being evolved in him by the years; land the dim, vague, but marvellously soothing image of an idea, embodied in a new, clarified form, was gradually emerging in his soul. And this form craved expression, fretting his soul; he was still timidly aware of its originality, its truth, its independence: creative genius was already showing, it was gathering strength and taking shape. But the moment of embodiment and creation was still far off, perhaps very far off, perhaps altogether impossible!

Now he walked about the streets like a recluse, like a hermit who has suddenly come from his dumb wilderness into the noisy, roaring city. Everything seemed to him new and strange. But he was so remote from all the world that was surging and clattering around him that he did not wonder at his own strange sensation. He seemed unconscious of his own aloofness; on the contrary, there was springing up in his heart a joyful feeling, a sort of intoxication, like the ecstasy of a hungry man who has meat and drink set before him after a long fast; though, of course, it was strange that such a trivial novelty as a change of lodgings could excite and thrill any inhabitant of Petersburg, even Ordynov; but the truth is that it had scarcely ever happened to him to go out with a practical object.

He enjoyed wandering about the streets more and more. He stared about at everything like a *flâneur.*

But, even now, inconsequent as ever, he was reading significance in the picture that lay so brightly before him, as though between the lines of a book. Everything struck him; he did not miss a single impression, and looked with thoughtful eyes into the faces of passing people, watched the characteristic aspect of everything around him and listened lovingly to the speech of the people as though verifying in everything the conclusions that had been formed in the stillness of solitary nights. Often some trifle impressed him, gave rise to an idea, and for the first time he felt vexed that he had so buried himself alive in his cell. Here everything moved more swiftly, his pulse was full and rapid, his mind, which had been oppressed by solitude and had been stirred and uplifted only by strained, exalted activity, worked now swiftly, calmly and boldly. Moreover, he had an unconscious longing to squeeze himself somehow into this life which was so strange to

him, of which he had hitherto known — or rather correctly divined — only by the instinct of the artist. His heart began instinctively throbbing with a yearning for love and sympathy. He looked more attentively at the people who passed by him; but they were strangers, preoccupied and absorbed in thought, and by degrees Ordynov's careless lightheartedness began unconsciously to pass away; reality began to weigh upon him, and to inspire in him a sort of unconscious dread and awe. He began to be weary from the surfeit of new impressions, like an invalid who for the first time joyfully gets up from his sick bed, and sinks down giddy and stupefied by the movement and exhausted by the light, the glare, the whirl of life, the noise and medley of colours in the crowd that flutters by him. He began to feel dejected and miserable, he began to be full of dread for his whole life, for his work, and even for the future. A new idea destroyed his peace. A thought suddenly occurred to him that all his life he had been solitary and no one had loved him — and, indeed, he had succeeded in loving no one either. Some of the passers-by, with whom he had chanced to enter into conversation at the beginning of his walk, had looked at him rudely and strangely. He saw that they took him for a madman or a very original, eccentric fellow, which was, indeed, perfectly correct. He remembered that everyone was always somewhat ill at ease in his presence, that even in his childhood everyone had avoided him on account of his dreamy, obstinate character, that sympathy for people had always been difficult and oppressive to him, and had been unnoticed by others, for though it existed in him there was no moral equality perceptible in it, a fact which had worried him even as a child, when he was utterly unlike other children of his own age. Now he remembered and reflected that always, at all times, he had been left out and passed over by everyone.

Without noticing it, he had come into an end of Petersburg remote from the centre of the town. Dining after a fashion in a solitary restaurant, he went out to wander about again. Again he passed through many streets and squares. After them stretched long fences, grey and yellow; he began to come across quite dilapidated little cottages, instead of wealthy houses, and mingled with them colossal factories, monstrous, soot-begrimed, red buildings, with long chimneys. All round it was deserted and desolate, everything looked grim and forbidding, so at least it seemed to Ordynov. It was by now evening. He came out of a long side-street into a square where there stood a parish church.

He went into it without thinking. The service was just over, the church was almost empty, only two old women were kneeling near the entrance. The verger, a grey-headed old man, was putting out the candles. The rays of the setting sun were streaming down from above through a narrow window in the cupola and flooding one of the chapels with a sea of brilliant light, but it grew fainter and fainter, and the blacker the darkness that gathered under the vaulted roof, the more brilliantly glittered in places the gilt ikons, reflecting the flickering glow of the lamps and the lights. In an access of profound depression and some stifled feeling Ordynov leaned against the wall in the darkest corner of the church, and for an instant sank into forgetfulness. He came to himself when the even, hollow sound of the footsteps of two persons resounded in the building. He raised his eyes and an indescribable curiosity took possession of him at the sight of the two advancing figures. They were an old man and a young woman. The old man was tall, still upright and hale-looking, but thin and of a sickly pallor. From his appearance he might have been taken for a merchant from some distant province. He was wearing a long black full-skirted coat trimmed with fur, evidently a holiday dress, and he wore it unbuttoned; under it could be seen some other long-skirted Russian garment, buttoned closely from top to bottom. His bare neck was covered with a bright red handkerchief carelessly knotted; in his hands he held a fur cap. His thin, long, grizzled beard fell down to his chest, and fiery, feverishly glowing eyes flashed a haughty, prolonged stare from under his frowning, overhanging brows. The woman was about twenty and wonderfully beautiful. She wore a splendid blue, fur-trimmed jacket, and her head was covered with a white satin kerchief tied under her chin. She walked with her eyes cast down, and a sort of melancholy dignity pervaded her whole figure and was vividly and mournfully reflected in the sweet contours of the childishly soft, mild lines of her face. There was something strange in this surprising couple.

The old man stood still in the middle of the church, and bowed to all the four points of the compass, though the church was quite empty; his companion did the same. Then he took her by the hand and led her up to the big ikon of the Virgin, to whom the church was dedicated. It was shining on the altar, with the dazzling light of the candles reflected on the gold and precious stones of the setting. The church verger, the last one remaining in the church, bowed respectfully to the old man; the latter nodded to him. The

woman fell on her face, before the ikon. The old man took the hem of the veil that hung at the pedestal of the ikon and covered her head.

A muffled sob echoed through the church.

Ordynov was impressed by the solemnity of this scene and waited in impatience for its conclusion. Two minutes later the woman raised her head and again the bright light of the lamp fell on her charming face. Ordynov started and took a step forward. She had already given her hand to the old man and they both walked quietly out of the church. Tears were welling up from her dark blue eyes under the long eyelashes that glistened against the milky pallor of her face, and were rolling down her pale cheeks. There was a glimpse of a smile on her lips; but there were traces in her face of some childlike fear and mysterious horror. She pressed timidly close to the old man and it could be seen that she was trembling from emotion.

Overwhelmed, tormented by a sweet and persistent feeling that was novel to him, Ordynov followed them quickly and overtook them in the church porch. The old man looked at him with unfriendly churlishness; she glanced at him, too, but absent-mindedly, without curiosity, as though her mind were absorbed by some far-away thought. Ordynov followed them without understanding his own action. By now it had grown quite dark; he followed at a little distance. The old man and the young woman turned into a long, wide, dirty street full of hucksters' booths, com chandlers' shops and taverns, leading straight to the city gates, and turned from it into a long narrow lane, with long fences on each side of it, running alongside the huge, blackened wall of a four-storeyed block of buildings, by the gates of which one could pass into another street also big and crowded. They were approaching the house; suddenly the old man turned round and looked with impatience at Ordynov. The young man stood still as though he had been shot; he felt himself how strange his impulsive conduct was. The old man looked round once more, as though he wanted to assure himself that his menacing gaze had produced its effect, and then the two of them, he and the young woman, went in at the narrow gate of the courtyard. Ordynov turned back.

He was in the most discontented humour and was vexed with himself, reflecting that he had wasted his day, that he had tired himself for nothing, and had ended foolishly by magnifying into an adventure an incident that was absolutely ordinary.

However severe he had been with himself in the morning for his recluse habits, yet it was instinctive with him to shun anything that might distract him, impress and shock him in his external, not in his internal, artistic worlds Now he thought mournfully and regretfully of his sheltered corner; then he was overcome by depression and anxiety about his unsettled position and the exertions before him. At last, exhausted and incapable of putting two ideas together, he made his way late at night to his lodging and realised with amazement that he had been about to pass the house in which he lived. Dumb-founded, he shook his head, and put down his absentmindedness to fatigue and, going up the stairs, at last reached his garret under the roof. There he lighted a candle — and a minute later the image of the weeping woman rose vividly before his imagination. So glowing, so intense was the impression, so longingly did his heart reproduce those mild, gentle features, quivering with mysterious emotion and horror, and bathed in tears of ecstasy or childish penitence, that there was a mist before his eyes and a thrill of fire seemed to run through all his limbs. But the vision did not last long. After enthusiasm, after ecstasy came reflection, then vexation, then impotent anger; without undressing he threw himself on his hard bed...

Ordynov woke up rather late in the morning, in a nervous, timid and oppressed state of mind. He hurriedly got ready, almost forcing himself to concentrate his mind on the practical problems before him, and set off in the opposite direction from that he had taken on his pilgrimage the day before. At last he found a lodging, a little room in the flat of a poor German called Schpies, who lived alone with a daughter called Tinchen. On receiving a deposit Schpies instantly took down the notice that was nailed on the gate to attract lodgers, complimented Ordynov on his devotion to science, and promised to work with him zealously himself. Ordynov said that he would move in in the evening. From there he was going home, but changed his mind and turned off in the other direction; his self-confidence had returned and he smiled at his own curiosity. In his impatience the way seemed very long to him. At last he reached the church in which he had been the evening before. Evening service was going on. He chose a place from which he could see almost all the congregation; but the figures he was looking for were not there. After waiting a long time he went away, blushing. Resolutely suppressing in himself an involuntary feeling, he tried obstinately to force himself, to change the current of his thoughts.

Reflecting on everyday practical matters, he remembered he had not had dinner and, feeling that he was hungry, he went into the same tavern in which he had dined the day before. Unconsciously he sauntered a long time about the streets, through crowded and deserted alleys, and at last came out into a desolate region where the town ended in a vista of fields that were turning yellow; he came to himself when the deathlike silence struck him by its strangeness and unfamiliarity. It was a dry and frosty day such as are frequent in Petersburg in October. Not far away was a cottage; and near it stood two haystacks; a little horse with prominent ribs was standing unharnessed, with drooping head and lip thrust out, beside a little two-wheeled gig, and seemed to be pondering over something. A watch-dog, growling, gnawed a bone beside a broken wheel, and a child of three who, with nothing on but his shirt, was engaged in combing his shaggy white head, stared in wonder at the solitary stranger from the town. Behind the cottage there was a stretch of field and cottage garden. There was a dark patch of forest against the blue sky on the horizon, and on the opposite side were thick snow-clouds, which seemed chasing before them a flock of flying birds moving noiselessly one after another across the sky. All was still and, as it were, solemnly melancholy, full of a palpitating, hidden suspense... Ordynov was walking on farther and farther, but the desolation weighed upon him. He turned back to the town, from which there suddenly floated the deep clamour of bells, ringing for evening service; he redoubled his pace and within a short time he was again entering the church that had been so familiar to him since the day before.

The unknown woman was there already. She was kneeling at the very entrance, among the crowd of worshippers. Ordynov forced his way through the dense mass of beggars, old women in rags, sick people and cripples, who were waiting for alms at the church door, and knelt down beside the stranger. His clothes touched her clothes and he heard the breath, that came irregularly from her lips as she whispered a fervent prayer. As before, her features were quivering with a feeling of boundless devotion, and tears again were falling and drying on her burning cheeks, as though washing away I some fearful crime. It was quite dark in the place where they were both kneeling, and only from time to time the dim flame of the lamp, flickering in the draught from the narrow open window pane, threw a quivering glimmer on her face, every feature of which printed itself on the young man’s memory, making his eyes swim, and rending his heart with a

vague, insufferable pain. But this torment had a peculiar, intense ecstasy of its own. At last he could not endure it; his breast began shuddering and aching all in one instant with a sweet and unfamiliar yearning, and, bursting into sobs, he bowed down with his feverish head to the cold pavement of the church. He saw nothing and felt nothing but the ache in his heart, which thrilled with sweet anguish.

This extreme impressionability, sensitiveness, and lack of resisting power may have been developed by solitude, or this impulsiveness of heart may have been evolved in the exhausting, suffocating and hopeless silence of long, sleepless nights, in the midst of unconscious yearnings and impatient stirrings of spirit, till it was ready at last to explode and find an outlet, or it may have been simply that the time for that solemn moment had suddenly arrived and it was as inevitable as when on a sullen, stifling day the whole sky grows suddenly black and a storm pours rain and fire on the parched earth, hangs pearly drops on the emerald twigs, beats down the grass, the crops, crushes to the earth the tender cups of the flowers, in order that afterwards, at the first rays of the sun, everything, reviving again, may shine and rise to meet it, and triumphantly lift to the sky its sweet, luxuriant incense, glad and rejoicing in its new life...

But Ordynov could not think now what was the matter with him. He was scarcely conscious.

He hardly noticed how the service ended, and only recovered his senses as he threaded his way after his unknown lady through the crowd that thronged the entrance. At times he met her clear and wondering eyes. Stopped every minute by the people passing out, she turned round to him more than once; he could see that her surprise grew greater and greater, and all at once she flushed a fiery red. At that minute the same old man came forward again out of the crowd and took her by the arm. Ordynov met his morose and sarcastic stare again, and a strange anger suddenly gripped his heart. At last he lost sight of them in the darkness; then, with a superhuman effort, he pushed forward and got out of the church. But the fresh evening air could not restore him; his breathing felt oppressed and stifled, and his heart began throbbing slowly and violently as though it would have burst his breast. At last he saw that he really had lost his strangers — they were neither in the main street nor in the alley. But already a thought had come to Ordynov, and in his mind was forming one of those strange, decisive projects, which almost always succeed when they are carried out, in spite of

their wildness. At eight o’clock next morning he went to the house from the side of the alley and walked into a narrow, filthy, and unclean backyard which was like an open cesspool in a house. The porter, who was doing something in the yard, stood still, leaned with his chin on the handle of his spade, looked Ordynov up and down and asked him what he wanted. The porter was a little fellow about five and twenty, a Tatar with an extremely old-looking face, covered with wrinkles.

“I’m looking for a lodging,” Ordynov answered impatiently.

“Which?” asked the porter, with a grin. He looked at Ordynov as if he knew all about him.

“I want a furnished room in a flat,” answered Ordynov.

“There’s none in that yard,” the porter answered enigmatically.

“And here?”

“None here, either.” The porter took up his spade again.

“Perhaps they will let me have one,” said Ordynov, giving the porter ten kopecks.

The Tatar glanced at Ordynov, took the ten kopecks, then took up his spade again, and after a brief silence announced that: “No, there was no lodging.” But the young man did not hear him; he walked along the rotten, shaking planks that lay in the pool towards the one entrance from that yard into the lodge of the house, a black, filthy, muddy entrance that looked as though it were drowning in the pool. In the lower storey lived a poor coffin-maker. Passing by his cheering workshop, Ordynov clambered by a half-broken, slippery, spiral staircase to the upper storey, felt in the darkness a heavy, clumsy door covered with rags of sacking, found the latch and opened it. He was not mistaken. Before him stood the same old man, looking at him intently with extreme surprise.

“What do you want?” he asked abruptly and almost in a whisper.

“Is there a room to let?” asked Ordynov, almost forgetting everything he had meant to say. He saw over the old man’s shoulder the young woman.

The old man began silently closing the door, shutting Ordynov out.

“We have a lodging to let,” the young woman’s friendly voice said suddenly.

The old man let go of the door.

“I want a comer,” said Ordynov, hurriedly entering the room and addressing himself to the beautiful woman.

But he stopped in amazement as though petrified, looking at his future landlord and landlady; before his eyes a mute and amazing scene was taking place. The old man was as pale as death, as though on the point of losing consciousness. He looked at the woman with a leaden, fixed, searching gaze. She too grew pale at first; then blood rushed to her face and her eyes flashed strangely. She led Ordynov into another little room.

The whole flat consisted of one rather large room, divided into three by two partitions. From the outer room they went straight into a narrow dark passage; directly opposite was the door, evidently leading to a bedroom the other side of the partition. On the right, the other side of the passage, they went into the room which was to let; it was narrow and pokey, squeezed in between the partition and two low windows; it was blocked up with the objects necessary for daily life; it was poor and cramped but passably clean. The furniture consisted of a plain white table, two plain chairs and a locker that ran both sides of the wall. A big, old-fashioned ikon in a gilt wreath stood over a shelf in a corner and a lamp was burning before it. There was a huge, clumsy Russian stove partly in this room and partly in the passage. It was clear that it was impossible for three people to live in such a flat.

They began discussing terms, but incoherently and hardly understanding one another. Two paces away from her, Ordynov could hear the beating of her heart; he saw she was trembling with emotion and, it seemed, with fear. At last they came to an agreement of some sort. The young man announced that he should move in at once and glanced at his landlord. The old man was standing at the door, still pale, but a quiet, even dreamy smile had stolen on to his lips. Meeting Ordynov’s eyes he frowned again.

“Have you a passport?” he asked suddenly, in a loud and abrupt voice, opening the door into the passage for him.

“Yes,” answered Ordynov, suddenly taken aback.

“Who are you?”

“Vassily Ordynov, nobleman, not in the service, engaged in private work,” he answered, falling into the old man’s tone.

“So am I,” answered the old man. “I’m Ilya Murin, artisan. Is that enough for you? You can go..

An hour later Ordynov was in his new lodging, to the surprise of himself and of his German, who, together with his dutiful Tinchen, was beginning to suspect that his new lodger had deceived him.

Ordynov did not understand how it had all happened, and he did not want to understand....

CHAPTER II

HIS heart was beating so violently that he was giddy, and everything was green before his eyes; mechanically he busied himself arranging his scanty belongings in his new lodgings: he undid the bag containing various necessary possessions, opened the box containing his books and began laying them out on the table; but soon all this work dropped from his hands. Every minute there rose before his eyes the image of the woman, the meeting with whom had so troubled and disturbed his whole existence, who had filled his heart with such irresistible, violent ecstasy — and such happiness seemed at once flooding his starved life that his thoughts grew dizzy and his soul swooned in anguish and perplexity.

He took his passport and carried it to the landlord in the hope of getting a glance at her. But Murin scarcely opened the door; he took the paper from him, said, “Good; live in peace,” and closed the door again. An unpleasant feeling came over Ordynov. He did not know why, but it was irksome for him to look at the old man. There was something spiteful and contemptuous in his eyes. But the unpleasant impression quickly passed off. For the last three days Ordynov had, in comparison with his former stagnation, been living in a whirl of life; but he could not reflect, he was, indeed, afraid to. His whole existence was in a state of upheaval and chaos; he dimly felt as though his life had been broken in half; one yearning, one expectation possessed him, and no other thoughts troubled him.

In perplexity he went back to his room. There by the stove in which the cooking was done a little humpbacked old woman was busily at work, so filthy and clothed in such rags that she was a pitiful sight. She seemed very ill-humoured and grumbled to herself at times, mumbling with her Ups. She was his landlord’s servant. Ordynov tried to talk to her, but she would not speak, evidently from ill-humour. At last dinnertime arrived. The old woman took cabbage soup, pies and beef out of the oven, and took them to her master and mistress. She gave some of the same to Ordynov. After dinner there was a death-like silence in the flat.

Ordynov took up a book and spent a long time turning over its pages, trying to follow the meaning of what he had read often before. Losing patience, he threw down the book and began again putting his room to rights; at last he took up his cap, put on his coat and went out into the street.

Walking at hazard, without seeing the road, he still tried as far as he could to concentrate his mind, to collect his scattered thoughts and to reflect a little upon his position. But the effort only reduced him to misery, to torture. He was attacked by fever and chills alternately, and at times his heart beat so violently that he had to support himself against the wall. “No, better death,” he thought; “better death,” he whispered with feverish, trembling lips, hardly thinking of what he was saying. He walked for a very long time; at last, feeling that he was soaked to the skin and noticing for the first time that it was pouring with rain, he returned home. Not far from home he saw his porter. He fancied that the Tatar stared at him for some time with curiosity, and then went his way when he noticed that he had been seen.

“Good-morning,” said Ordynov, overtaking him. “What are you called?”

“Folks call me porter,” he answered, grinning.

“Have you been porter here long?”

“Yes.”

“Is my landlord an artisan?”

“Yes, if he says so.”

“What does he do?”

“He’s ill, lives, prays to God. That’s all.”

“Is that his wife?”

“What wife?”

“Who lives with him.”

“Ye-es, if he says so. Good-bye, sir.”

The Tatar touched his cap and went off to his den. Ordynov went to his room. The old woman, mumbling and grumbling to herself, opened the door to him, fastened it again with the latch, and again climbed on the stove where she spent her life. It was already getting dark. Ordynov was going to get a light, when he noticed that the door to the landlord’s room was locked. He called the old woman, who, propping herself on her elbow, looked sharply at him from the stove, as though wondering what he wanted with the landlord’s lock; she threw him a box of matches without a word. He went back into his room and again, for the hundredth time, tried to busy himself with his books and things. But, little by little, without understanding what he was doing, he sat down on the locker, and it seemed to him that he fell asleep. At times he came to himself and realised that his sleep was not sleep but the agonising unconsciousness of illness. He heard a knock at the door, heard it opened, and guessed that it was the landlord and landlady

returning from evening service. At that point it occurred to him that he must go in to them for something. He stood up, and it seemed to him that he was already going to them, but stumbled and fell over a heap of firewood which the old woman had flung down in the middle of the floor. At that point he lost consciousness completely, and opening his eyes after a long, long time, noticed with surprise that he was lying on the same locker, just as he was, in his clothes, and that over him there bent with tender solicitude a woman's face, divinely, beautiful and, it seemed, drenched with gentle, motherly tears. He felt her put a pillow under his head and lay something warm over him, and some tender hand was laid on his feverish brow. He wanted to say "Thank you," he wanted to take that hand, to press it to his parched lips, to wet it with his tears, to kiss, to kiss it to all eternity. He wanted to say a great deal, but what he did not know himself; he would have been glad to die at that instant. But his arms felt like lead and would not move; he was as it were numb, and felt nothing but the blood pulsing through his veins, with throbs which seemed to lift him up as he lay in bed. Somebody gave him water.... At last he fell into unconsciousness.

He woke up at eight o'clock in the morning. The sunshine was pouring through the green, mouldy windows in a sheaf of golden rays; a feeling of comfort relaxed the sick man's limbs. He was quiet and calm, infinitely happy. It seemed to him that someone had just been by his pillow. He woke up, looking anxiously around him for that unseen being; he so longed to embrace his friend and for the first time in his life to say, "A happy day to you, my dear one."

"What a long time you have been asleep!" said a woman's gentle voice.

Ordynov looked round, and the face of his beautiful landlady was bending over him with a friendly smile as clear as sunlight.

"How long you have been ill!" she said. "It's enough; get up. Why keep yourself in bondage? Freedom is sweeter than bread, fairer than sunshine. Get up, my dove, get up."

Ordynov seized her hand and pressed it warmly. It seemed to him that he was still dreaming.

"Wait; I've made tea for you. Do you want some tea? You had better have some; you'll be better. I've been ill myself and I know."

"Yes, give me something to drink," said Ordynov in a faint voice, and he got up on his feet. He was still very weak. A chill ran down his spine, all his limbs ached and felt as though they were broken. But there was a radiance

in his heart, and the sunlight seemed to warm him with a sort of solemn, serene joy. He felt that a new, intense, incredible life was beginning for him. His head was in a slight whirl.

“Your name is Vassily?” she asked. “Either I have made a mistake, or I fancy the master called you that yesterday.”

“Yes, it is. And what is your name?” said Ordynov, going nearer to her and hardly able to stand on his feet. He staggered.

She caught him by the arm, and laughed.

“My name is Katerina,” she said, looking into his face with her large, clear blue eyes. They were holding each other by the hands.

“You want to say something to me,” she said at last.

“I don’t know,” answered Ordynov; everything was dark before his eyes.

“See what a state you’re in. There, my dove, there; don’t grieve, don’t pine; sit here at the table in the sun; sit quiet, and don’t follow me,” she added, seeing that the young man made a movement as though to keep her. “I will be with you again at once; you have plenty of time to see as much as you want of me.” A minute later she brought in the tea, put it on the table, and sat down opposite him.

“Come, drink it up,” she said. “Does your head ache?”

“No, now it doesn’t ache,” he said. “I don’t know, perhaps it does.... I don’t want any... enough, enough!... I don’t know what’s the matter with me,” he said, breathless, and finding her hand at last. “Stay here, don’t go away from me; give me your hand again.... It’s all dark before my eyes; I look at you as though you were the sun,” he said, as it were tearing the words out of his heart, and almost swooning with ecstasy as he uttered them. His throat was choking with sobs.

“Poor fellow! It seems you have not lived with anyone kind. You are all lonely and forlorn. Haven’t you any relations?”

“No, no one; I am alone... never mind, it’s no matter! Now it’s better; I am all right now,” said Ordynov, as though in delirium. The room seemed to him to be going round.

“I, too, have not seen my people for many years. You look at me as..,” she said, after a minute’s silence.

“Well... what?”

“You look at me as though my eyes were warming you! You know, when you love anyone... I took you to my heart from the first word. If you are ill I will look after you again. Only don’t you be ill; no. When you get up we

will live like brother and sister. Will you? You know it’s difficult to get a sister if God has not given you one.”

“Who are you? Where do you come from?” said Ordynov in a weak voice.

“I am not of these parts.... You know the folks tell how twelve brothers lived in a dark forest, and how a fair maiden lost her way in that forest. She went to them and tidied everything in the house for them, and put her love into everything.

The brothers came home, and learned that the sister had spent the day there. They began calling her; she came out to them. They all called her sister, gave her freedom, and she was equal with all. Do you know the fairy tale?”

“I know it,” whispered Ordynov.

“Life is sweet; is it sweet to you to live in the world?”

“Yes, yes; to live for a long time, to live for ages,” answered Ordynov.

“I don’t know,” said Katerina dreamily. “I should like death, too. Is life sweet? To love, and to love good people, yes.... Look, you’ve turned as white as flour again.”

“Yes, my head’s going round....”

“Stay, I will bring you my bedclothes and another pillow; I will make up the bed here. Sleep, and dream of me; your weakness will pass. Our old woman is ill, too.”

While she talked she began making the bed, from time to time looking at Ordynov with a smile.

“What a lot of books you’ve got!” she said, moving away a box.

She went up to him, took him by the right arm, led him to the bed, tucked him up and covered him with the quilt.

“They say books spoil a man,” she said, shaking her head thoughtfully. “Do you like reading?”

“Yes,” answered Ordynov, not knowing whether he were asleep or awake, and pressing Katerina’s hand tight to assure himself that he was awake.

“My master has a lot of books; you should see! He says they are religious books. He’s always reading to me out of them. I will show you afterwards; you shall tell me afterwards what he reads to me out of them.”

“Tell me,” whispered Ordynov, keeping his eyes fixed on her.

“Are you fond of praying?” she said to him after a moment’s silence. “Do you know. I’m afraid, I am always afraid...”

She did not finish; she seemed to be meditating. At last Ordynov raised her hand to his lips.

“Why are you kissing my hand?” (and her cheeks flushed faintly crimson). “Here, kiss them,” she said, laughing and holding out both hands to him; then she took one away and laid it on his burning forehead; then she began to stroke and arrange his hair. She flushed more and more; at last she sat down on the floor by his bedside and laid her cheek against his cheek; her warm, damp breath tickled his face.... At last Ordynov felt a gush of hot tears fall from her eyes like molten lead on his cheeks. He felt weaker and weaker; he was too faint to move a hand. At that moment there was a knock at the door, followed by the grating of the bolt. Ordynov could hear the old man, his landlord, come in from the other side of the partition. Then he heard Katerina get up, without haste and without listening, take her books; he felt her make the sign of the cross over him as she went out; he closed his eyes. Suddenly a long, burning kiss scorched his feverish lips; it was like a knife thrust into his heart. He uttered a faint shriek and sank into unconsciousness....

Then a strange life began for him.

In moments when his mind was not clear, the thought flashed upon him that he was condemned to live in a long, unending dream, full of strange, fruitless agitations, struggles and sufferings. In terror he tried to resist the disastrous fatalism that weighed upon him, and at a moment of tense and desperate conflict some unknown force struck him again and he felt clearly that he was once more losing memory, that an impassable, bottomless abyss was opening before him and he was flinging himself into it with a wail of anguish and despair. At times he had moments of insufferable, devastating happiness, when the life force quickens convulsively in the whole organism, when the past shines clear, when the present glad moment resounds with triumph and one dreams, awake, of a future beyond all ken; when a hope beyond words falls with life-giving dew on the soul; when one wants to scream with ecstasy; when one feels that the flesh is too weak for such a mass of impressions, that the whole thread of existence is breaking, and yet, at the same time, one greets all one’s life with hope and renewal. At times he sank into lethargy, and then everything that had happened to him the last few days was repeated again, and passed across his mind in a swarm of

broken, vague images; but his visions came in strange and enigmatic form. At times the sick man forgot what had happened to him, and wondered that he was not in his old lodging with his old landlady. He could not understand why the old woman did not come as she always used at the twilight hour to the stove, which from time to time flooded the whole dark corner of the room with a faint, flickering glow, to warm her trembling, bony hands at the dying embers before the fire went out, always talking and whispering to herself, and sometimes looking at him, her strange lodger, who had, she thought, grown mad by sitting so long over his books.

Another time he would remember that he had moved into another lodging; but how it had happened, what was the matter with him, and why he had to move he did not know, though his whole soul was swooning in continual, irresistible yearning.... But to what end, what led him on and tortured him, and who had kindled this terrible flame that stifled him and consumed his blood, again he did not know and could not remember. Often he greedily clutched at some shadow, often he heard the rustle of light footsteps near his bed, and a whisper, sweet as music, of tender, caressing words. Someone’s moist and uneven breathing passed over his face, thrilling his whole being with love; hot tears dropped upon his feverish cheeks, and suddenly a long, tender kiss was printed on his lips; then his life lay languishing in unquenchable torture; all existence, the whole world, seemed standing still, seemed to be dying for ages around him, and everything seemed shrouded in a long night of a thousand years....

Then the tender, calmly flowing years of early childhood seemed coming back to him again with serene joy, with the inextinguishable happiness, the first sweet wonder of life, with the swarms of bright spirits that fluttered under every flower he picked, that sported with him on the luxuriant green meadow before the little house among the acacias, that smiled at him from the immense crystal lake beside which he would sit for hours together, listening to the plashing of the waves, and that rustled about him with their wings, lovingly scattering bright rainbow dreams upon his little cot, while his mother, bending over him, made the sign of the cross, kissed him, and sang him sweet lullabies in the long, peaceful nights. But then a being suddenly began to appear who overwhelmed him with a childlike terror, first bringing into his life the slow poison of sorrow and tears; he dimly felt that an unknown old man held all his future years in thrall, and, trembling, he could not turn his eyes away from him. The wicked old man followed

him about everywhere. He peeped out and treacherously nodded to the boy from under every bush in the copse, laughed and mocked at him, took the shape of every doll, grimacing and laughing in his hands, like a spiteful evil gnome: he set every one of the child’s inhuman schoolfellows against him, or, sitting with the little ones on the school bench, peeped out, grimacing, from every letter of his grammar. Then when he was asleep the evil old man sat by his pillow... he drove away the bright spirits whose gold and sapphire wings rustled about his cot, carried off his poor mother from him for ever, and began whispering to him every night long, wonderful fairy tales, unintelligible to his childish imagination, but thrilling and tormenting him with terror and unchildlike passion. But the wicked old man did not heed his sobs and entreaties, and would I go on talking to him till he sank into numbness, into unconsciousness. Then the child suddenly woke up a man; the years passed over him unseen, unheeded. He suddenly became aware of his real position. He understood all at once that he was alone, an alien to all the world, alone in a corner not his own, among mysterious and suspicious people, among enemies who were always gathering together and whispering in the comers of his dark room, and nodding to the old woman squatting on her heels near the fire, warming her bony old hands, and pointing to him. He sank into perplexity and uneasiness; he wanted to know who these people were, why they were here, why he was himself in this room, and guessed that he had strayed into some dark den of miscreants, drawn on by some powerful but incomprehensible force, without having first found out who and what the tenants were and who his landlord was. He began to be tortured by suspicion — and suddenly, in the stillness of the night, again there began a long, whispered story, and some old some old woman, mournfully nodding her white, grizzle head before the dying fire, was muttering it softly, hardly audibly to herself. But — and again he was overcome with horror — the story took shape before him in forms and faces. He saw everything, from his dim, childish visions upwards: all his thoughts and dreams, all his experiences in life, all he had read in books, things he had forgotten long ago, all were coming to life, all were being put together, taking shape and rising up before him in colossal forms and images, moving and swarming about him; he saw spread out before him magnificent, enchanted gardens, a whole town built up and demolished before his eyes, a whole churchyard giving up its dead, who began living over again; whole races and peoples came into being and passed away

before his eyes; finally, every one of his thoughts, every immaterial fancy, now took bodily shape around his sick-bed; took bodily shape almost at the moment of its conception: at last he saw himself thinking not in immaterial ideas, but in whole worlds, whole, creations, saw himself borne along like an atom in this infinite, strange world from which there was no escape, and all this life in its mutinous independence crushing and oppressing him and pursuing him with eternal, infinite irony; he felt that he was dying, dissolving into dust and ashes for ever, and even without hope of resurrection, he tried to flee, but there was no corner in all the universe to hide him At last, in an access of despair, he made an intense effort, uttered a shriek and woke up.

He woke up, bathed in a chill, icy sweat. About him was a deadly silence; it was the dead of night. But still it seemed to him that somewhere the wonderful fairy tale was going on, that some hoarse voice was really telling a long story of something that seemed familiar to him. He heard talk of dark forests, of bold brigands, of some daring bravoes, maybe of Stenka Razin himself, of merry drunken bargemen, of some fair maiden, and of Mother Volga. Was it not a fairy tale? Was he really hearing it? For a whole hour he lay, open-eyed, without stirring a muscle, in agonising numbness. At last he got up carefully, and joyfully felt that his strength had come back to him after his severe illness. The delirium was over and reality was beginning. He noticed that he was dressed exactly as he had been during his talk with Katerina, so that it could not have been long since the morning she had left him. The fire of resolution ran through his veins. Mechanically he felt with his hand for a big nail for some reason driven into the top of the partition near which stood his bed, seized it, and hanging his whole weight upon it, succeeded in pulling himself up to the crevice from which a hardly perceptible light stole into his room. He put his eye to the opening and, almost breathless with excitement, began peeping in.

There was a bed in the corner of the landlord’s room; before it was a table covered with a cloth and piled up with books of old-fashioned shape, looking from their bindings like devotional books. In the corner was an ikon of the same old-fashioned pattern as in his room; a lamp was burning before it. On the bed lay the old man, Murin, sick, worn out with suffering and pale as a sheet, covered with a fur rag. On his knees was an open book. On a bench beside the bed lay Katerina, with her arm about the old man’s chest and her head bent on his shoulder. She was looking at him with attentive,

childishly wondering eyes, and seemed, breathless with expectation, to be listening with insatiable curiosity to what Murin was telling her. From time to time the speaker’s voice rose higher, there was a shade of animation on his pale face; he frowned, his eyes began to flash, and Katerina seemed to turn pale with dread and expectation. Then something like a smile came into the old man’s face and Katerina began laughing softly: Sometimes tears came into her eyes; then the old man tenderly stroked her on the head like a child, and she embraced him more tightly than ever with her bare arm that gleamed like snow, and nestled even more lovingly to his bosom.

At times Ordynov still thought this was part of his dream; in fact, he was convinced of it; but the blood rushed to his head and the veins throbbed painfully in his temples. He let go of the nail, got off the bed, and staggering, feeling his way like a lunatic, without understanding the impulse that flamed up like fire in his blood, he went to the door and pushed violently; the rusty bolt flew open at once, and with a bang and a crash he suddenly found himself in the middle of the landlord’s bedroom. He saw Katerina start and tremble, saw the old man’s eyes flash angrily under his lowering brows, and his whole face contorted with sudden fury. He saw the old man, still keeping close watch upon him, feel hurriedly with fumbling hand for a gun that hung upon the wall; then he saw the barrel of the gun flash, aimed straight at his breast with an uncertain hand that trembled with fury.... There was the sound of a shot, then a wild, almost unhuman, scream, and when the smoke parted, a terrible sight met Ordynov’s eyes. Trembling all over, he bent over the old man. Murin was lying on the floor; he was writhing in convulsions, his face was contorted in agony, and there was foam upon his working lips. Ordynov guessed that the unhappy man was in a severe epileptic fit. He flew, together with Katerina, to help him...

CHAPTER III

THE whole night was spent in agitation. Next day Ordynov went out early in the morning, in spite of his weakness and the fever that still hung about him. In the yard he met the porter again. This time the Tartar lifted his cap to him from a distance and looked at him with curiosity. Then, as though pilling himself together, he set to work with his broom, glancing askance at Ordynov as the latter slowly approached him.

“Well, did you hear nothing in the night?” asked Ordynov.

“Yes, I heard.”

“What sort of man is he? Who is he?”

“Self took lodgings, self should know; me stranger.”

“Will you ever speak?” cried Ordynov, beside himself with an access of morbid irritability.

“What did me do? Your fault — you frightened the tenants. Below lives the coffin-maker, he deaf, but heard it all, and his wife deaf, but she heard, and in the next yard, far away, they heard. I go to the overseer.”

“I am going to him myself,” answered Ordynov; and he went to the gate.

“As you will; self took the room.... Master, master, stay.” Ordynov looked round; the porter touched his hat from politeness.

“Well!”

“If you go, I go to the landlord.”

“What?”

“Better move.”

“You’re stupid,” said Ordynov, and was going on again. “Master, master, stay.” The porter touched his hat again and grinned. “Listen, master: be not wrathful; why persecute a poor man? It’s a sin to persecute a poor man. It is not God’s law — do you hear?”

“You listen, too: here, take that. Come, what is he?”

“What is he?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll tell you without money.”

At this point the porter took up his broom, brandished it once or twice, then stopped and looked intently, with an air of importance, at Ordynov.

“You’re a nice gentleman. If you don’t want to live with a good man, do as you like; that’s what I say.”

Then the Tatar looked at him still more expressively, and fell to sweeping furiously again.

Making a show of having finished something at last, he went up to Ordynov mysteriously, and with a very expressive gesture pronounced —

“This is how it is.”

“How — what?”

“No sense.”

“What?”

“Has flown away. Yes! Has flown away!” he repeated in a still more mysterious tone. “He is ill. He used to have a barge, a big one, and a second and a third, used to be on the Volga, and me from the Volga myself. He had a factory, too, but it was burnt down, and he is off his head.”

“He is mad?”

“Nay!... Nay!..,” the Tatar answered emphatically. “Not mad. He is a clever man. He knows everything; he has read many books, many, many; he has read everything, and tells others the truth. Some bring two roubles, three roubles, forty roubles, as much as you please; he looks in a book, sees and tells the whole truth. And the money’s on the table at once — nothing without money!”

At this point the Tatar positively laughed with glee, throwing himself into Murin’s interests with extreme zest.

“Why, does he tell fortunes, prophesy?”

“H’m!..,” muttered the porter, wagging his head quickly. “He tells the truth. He prays, prays a great deal. It’s just that way, comes upon him.”

Then the Tatar made his expressive gesture again.

At that moment someone called the porter from the other yard, and then a little, bent, grey-headed man in a sheepskin appeared. He walked, stumbling and looking at the ground, groaning and muttering to himself. He looked as though he were in his dotage.

“The master, the master!” the porter whispered in a fluster, with a hurried nod to Ordynov, and taking off his cap, he ran to meet the old man, whose face looked familiar to Ordynov; he had anyway met him somewhere just lately.

Reflecting, however, that there was nothing remarkable in that, he walked out of the yard. The porter struck him as an out-and-out rogue and an impudent fellow.

“The scoundrel was practically bargaining with me!” he thought. “Goodness knows what it means!”

He had reached the street as he said this.

By degrees he began to be absorbed in other thoughts. The impression was unpleasant, the day was grey and cold; flakes of snow were flying. The young man felt overcome by a feverish shiver again; he felt, too, as though the earth were shaking under Him All at once an unpleasantly sweet, familiar voice wished him good-morning in a broken tenor.

“Yaroslav Ilyitch,” said Ordynov.

Before him stood a short, sturdy, red-cheeked man, apparently about thirty, with oily grey eyes and a little smile, dressed... as Yaroslav Ilyitch always was dressed. He was holding out his hand to him in a very amicable way. Ordynov had made the acquaintance of Yaroslav Ilyitch just a year before in quite a casual way, almost in the street. They had so easily become acquainted, partly by chance and partly through Yaroslav Ilyitch’s extraordinary propensity for picking up everywhere good-natured, well-bred people, and his preference for friends of good education whose talents and elegance of behaviour made them worthy at least of belonging to good society. Though Yaroslav Ilyitch had an extremely sweet tenor, yet even in conversation with his dearest friends there was something extraordinarily clear, powerful and dominating in the tone of his voice that would put up with no evasions; it was perhaps merely due to habit.

“How on earth...?” exclaimed Yaroslav Ilyitch, with an expression of the most genuine, ecstatic pleasure.

“I am living here.”

“Have you lived here long?” Yaroslav Ilyitch continued on an ascending note. “And I did not know it! Why, we are neighbours! I am in this quarter now. I came back from the Ryazan province a month ago. I’ve caught you, my old and noble friend!” and Yaroslav Ilyitch laughed in a most good-natured way. “Sergeyev!” he cried impressively, “wait for me at Tarasov’s, and don’t let them touch a sack without me. And stir up the Olsufyev porter; tell him to come to the office at once. I shall be there in an hour....”

Hurriedly giving someone this order, the refined Yaroslav Ilyitch took Ordynov’s arm and led him to the nearest restaurant.

“I shall not be satisfied till we have had a couple of words alone after such a long separation. Well, what of your doings?” he pronounced almost reverently, dropping his voice mysteriously. “Working at science, as ever?”

“Yes, as before,” answered Ordynov, struck by a bright idea.

“Splendid, Vassily Mihalitch, splendid!” At this point Yaroslav Ilyitch pressed Ordynov’s hand warmly. “You will be a credit to the community. God give you luck in your career.... Goodness! how glad I am I met you! How often I have thought of you, how often I have said: ‘Where is he, our good, noble-hearted, witty Vassily Mihalitch?’”

They engaged a private room. Yaroslav Ilyitch ordered lunch, asked for vodka, and looked feelingly at Ordynov.

“I have read a great deal since I saw you,” he began in a timid and somewhat insinuating voice. “I have read all Pushkin...”

Ordynov looked at him absent-mindedly.

“A marvellous understanding of human passion. But first of all, let me express my gratitude. You have done so much for me by nobly instilling into me a right way of thinking.”

“Upon my word...”

“No, let me speak; I always like to pay honour where honour is due, and I am proud that this feeling at least has found expression.”

“Really, you are unfair to yourself, and I, indeed...”

“No, I am quite fair,” Yaroslav Ilyitch replied, with extraordinary warmth. “What am I in comparison with you?”

“Good Heavens!”

“Yes....”

Then followed silence.

“Following your advice, I have dropped many low acquaintances and have, to some extent, softened the coarseness of my manners,” Yaroslav Ilyitch began again in a somewhat timid and insinuating voice. “In the time when I am free from my duties I sit for the most part at home; in the evenings I read some improving book and... I have only one desire, Vassily Mihalitch: to be of some little use to the fatherland....”

“I have always thought you a very high-minded man, Yaroslav Ilyitch.”

“You always bring balm to my spirit... you generous young man....”

Yaroslav Ilyitch pressed Ordynov’s hand warmly.

“You are drinking nothing?” he said, his enthusiasm subsiding a little.

“I can’t; I’m ill.”

“Ill? Yes, are you really? How long — in what way — did you come to be ill? If you like I’ll speak... What doctor is treating you? If you like I’ll

speak to our parish doctor. I'll run round to him myself. He's a very skilful man!" Yaroslav Ilyitch was already picking up his hat.

"Thank you very much. I don't go in for being doctored. I don't like doctors."

"You don't say so? One can't go on like that. But he's a very clever man," Yaroslav Ilyitch went on imploringly. "The other day — do allow me to tell you this, dear Vassily Mihalitch — the other day a poor carpenter came. 'Here,' said he, 'I hurt my hand with a tool; cure it for me....' Semyon Pafnutyitch, seeing that the poor fellow was in danger of gangrene, set to work to cut off the wounded hand; he did this in my presence, but it was done in such a gener... that is, in such a superb way, that I confess if it had not been for compassion for suffering humanity, it would have been a pleasure to look on, simply from curiosity. But where and how did you fall ill?"

"In moving from my lodging... I've only just got up."

"But you are still very unwell and you ought not to be out. So you are not living where you were before? But what induced you to move?"

"My landlady was leaving Petersburg."

"Domna Savishna? Really?... A thoroughly estimable, good-hearted woman! Do you know? I had almost a son's respect for her. That life, so near its end, had something of the serene dignity of our forefathers, and looking at her, one seemed to see the incarnation of our hoary-headed, stately old traditions... I mean of that... something in it so poetical!" Yaroslav Ilyitch concluded, completely overcome with shyness and blushing to his ears.

"Yes, she was a nice woman."

"But allow me to ask you where you are settled now."

"Not far from here, in Koshmarov's Buildings."

"I know him. A grand old man! I am, I may say, almost a real friend of his. A fine old veteran!"

Yaroslav Ilyitch's lips almost quivered with enthusiasm. He asked for another glass of vodka and a pipe.

"Have you taken a flat?"

"No, a furnished room in a flat."

"Who is your landlord? Perhaps I know him, too."

"Murin, an artisan; a tall old man..."

“Murin, Murin; yes, in the back court, over the coffin-maker’s, allow me to ask?”

“Yes, yes, in the back court.”

“H’m! are you comfortable there?”

“Yes; I’ve only just moved in.”

“H’m!... I only meant to say, h’m!... have you noticed nothing special?”

“Really..

“That is... I am sure you will be all right there if you are satisfied with your quarters.... I did not mean that; I am ready to warn you... but, knowing your character... How did that old artisan strike you?”

“He seems to be quite an invalid.”

“Yes, he’s a great sufferer.... But have you noticed nothing? Have you talked to him?”

“Very little; he is so morose and unsociable.”

“H’m!.. Yaroslav Ilyitch mused. “He’s an unfortunate man,” he said dreamily.

“Is he?”

“Yes, unfortunate, and at the same time an incredibly strange and interesting person. However, if he does not worry you... Excuse my dwelling upon such a subject, but I was curious...”

“And you have really roused my curiosity, too.... I should very much like to know what sort of a man he is. Besides, I am living with him...

“You know, they say the man was once very rich. He traded, as most likely you have heard. But through various unfortunate circumstances he was reduced to poverty; many of his barges were wrecked in a storm and lost, together with their cargo. His factory, which was, I believe, in the charge of a near and dear relation, was equally unlucky and was burnt down, and the relation himself perished in the flames. It must be admitted it was a terrible loss! Then, so they say, Murin sank into tearful despondency; they began to be afraid he would lose his reason, and, indeed, in a quarrel with another merchant, also an owner of barges plying on the Volga, he suddenly showed himself in such a strange an unexpected light that the whole incident could only be accounted for on the supposition that he was quite mad, which I am prepared to believe. I have heard in detail of some of his queer ways; there suddenly happened at last a very strange, so to say momentous, circumstance which can only be attributed to the malign influence of wrathful destiny.”

“What was it?” asked Ordynov.

“They say that in a fit of madness he made an attempt on the life of a young merchant, of whom he had before been very fond. He was so upset when he recovered from the attack that he was on the point of taking his own life; so at least they say. I don’t know what happened after that, but it is known that he was several years doing penance.... But what is the matter with you, Vassily Mihalitch? Am I fatiguing you with my artless tale?”

“Oh no, for goodness’ sake... You say that he has been doing penance; but he is not alone.”

“I don’t know. I am told he was alone. Anyway, no one else was mixed up in that affair. However, I have not heard what followed; I only know...”

“Well?”

“I only know — that is, I had nothing special in my mind to add... I only want to say, if you find anything strange or out of the ordinary in him, all that is merely the result of the misfortunes that have descended upon him one after the other....”

“Yes, he is so devout, so sanctimonious.”

“I don’t think so, Vassily Mihalitch; he has suffered so much; I believe he is quite sincere.”

“But now, of course, he is not mad; he is all right.”

“Oh, yes, yes; I can answer for that, I am ready to take my oath on it; he is in full possession of all his faculties. He is only, as you have justly observed, extremely strange and devout. He is a very sensible man, in fact. He speaks smartly, boldly and very subtly. The traces of his stormy life in the past are still visible on his face. He’s a curious man, and very well read.”

“He seems to be always reading religious books.”

“Yes, he is a mystic.”

“What?”

“A mystic. But I tell you that as a secret. I will tell you, as a secret, too, that a very careful watch was kept on him for a time. The man had a great influence on people who used to go to him.”

“What sort of influence?”

“But you’ll never believe it; you see, in those days he did not live in this building; Alexandr Ignatyevitch, a respectable citizen, a man of standing, held in universal esteem, went to see him with a lieutenant out of curiosity. They arrive and are received, and the strange man begins by looking into

their faces. He usually looks into people's faces if he consents to be of use to them; if not, he sends people away, and even very uncivilly, I'm told. He asks them, 'What do you want, gentlemen?'

'Well,' answers Alexandr Ignatyevitch, 'your gift can tell you that, without our saying.'

'Come with me into the next room,' he says; then he signified which of them it was who needed his services. Alexandr Ignatyevitch did not say what happened to him afterwards, but he came out from him as white as a sheet. The same thing happened to a well-known lady of high rank; she, too, came out from seeing him as white as a sheet, bathed in tears and overcome with his predictions and his sayings."

"Strange. But now does he still do the same?"

"It's strictly prohibited. There have been marvellous instances. A young comet, the hope and joy of a distinguished family, mocked at him. 'What are you laughing at?' said the old man, angered. 'In three days' time you will be like this!' and he crossed his arms over his bosom to signify a corpse."

"Well?"

"I don't venture to believe it, but they say his prediction came true. He has a gift, Vassily Mihalitch.... You are pleased to smile at my guileless story. I know that you are greatly ahead of me in culture; but I believe in him; he's not a charlatan. Pushkin himself mentions a similar case in his works."

"H'm! I don't want to contradict you. I think you said he's not living alone?"

"I don't know... I believe his daughter is with him."

"Daughter?"

"Yes, or perhaps his wife; I know there is some woman with him. I have had a passing glimpse of her, but I did not notice."

"H'm! Strange..."

The young man fell to musing, Yaroslav Ilyitch to tender contemplation of him. He was touched both at seeing an old friend and at having satisfactorily told him something very interesting. He sat sucking his pipe with his eyes fixed on Vassily Mihalitch; but suddenly he jumped up in a fluster.

"A whole hour has passed and I forgot the time! Dear Vassily Mihalitch, once more I thank the lucky chance that brought us together, but it is time

for me to be off. Will you allow me to visit you in your learned retreat?”

“Please do, I shall be delighted. I will come and see you, too, when I have a chance.”

“That’s almost too pleasant to believe. You gratify me, you gratify me unutterably! You would not believe how you have delighted me!”

They went out of the restaurant. Sergeyev was already flying to meet them and to report in a hurried sentence that Vilyam Emelyanovitch was pleased to be driving out. A pair of spirited roans in a smart light gig did, in fact, come into sight. The trace horse was particularly fine. Yaroslav Ilyitch pressed his best friend’s hand as though in a vice, touched his hat and set off to meet the flying gig. On the way he turned round once or twice to nod farewells to Ordynov.

Ordynov felt so tired, so exhausted in every limb, that he could scarcely move his legs. He managed somehow to crawl home. At the gate he was met again by the porter, who had been diligently watching his parting from Yaroslav Ilyitch, and beckoning him from a distance. But the young man passed him by. At the door of his flat he ran full tilt against a little grey-headed figure coming out from Murin’s room, looking on the ground.

“Lord forgive my transgressions!” whispered the figure, skipping on one side with the springiness of a cork.

“Did I hurt you?”

“No, I humbly thank you for your civility.... Oh, Lord, Lord!”

The meek little man, groaning and moaning and muttering something edifying to himself, went cautiously down the stairs. This was the “master” of the house, of whom the porter stood in such awe. Only then Ordynov remembered that he had seen him for the first time, here at Murin’s, when he was moving into the lodging.

He felt unhinged and shaken; he knew that his imagination and impressionability were strained to the utmost pitch, and resolved not to trust himself. By degrees he sank into a sort of apathy. A heavy oppressive feeling weighed upon his chest. His heart ached as though it were sore all over, and his whole soul was full of dumb, comfortless tears.

He fell again upon the bed which she had made Mm, and began listening again. He heard two breathings: one the heavy broken breathing of a sick man, the other soft but uneven, as though also stirred by emotion, as though that heart was beating with the same yearning, with the same passion. At times he heard the rustle of her dress the faint stir of her soft light steps, and

even that faint stir of her feet echoed with a vague but agonisingly sweet pang in his heart. At last he seemed to distinguish sobs, rebellious sighs, and at last, praying again. He knew that she was kneeling before the ikon, wringing her hands in a frenzy of despair!... Who was she? For whom was she praying? By what desperate passion was her heart torn? Why did it ache and grieve and pour itself out in such hot and hopeless tears?

He began to recall her words. All that she had said to him was still ringing in his ears like music, and his heart lovingly responded with a vague heavy throb at every recollection, every word of hers as he devoutly repeated it.... For an instant a thought flashed through his mind that he had dreamed all this. But at the same moment his whole being ached in swooning anguish as the impression of her hot breath, her words, her kiss rose vividly again in his imagination. He closed his eyes and sank into oblivion. A clock struck somewhere; it was getting late; twilight was falling. It suddenly seemed to him that she was bending over him again, that she was looking into his eyes with her exquisitely clear eyes, wet with sparkling tears of serene, happy joy, soft and bright as the infinite turquoise vault of heaven at hot midday. Her face beamed with such triumphant peace; her smile was warm with such solemnity of infinite bliss; she leaned with such sympathy, with such childlike impulsiveness on his shoulder that a moan of joy broke from his exhausted bosom. She tried to tell him something, caressingly she confided something to him. Again it was as though heartrending music smote upon his hearing. Greedily he drank in the air, warm, electrified by her near breathing. In anguish he stretched out his arms, sighed, opened his eyes.... She stood before him, bending down to his face, all pale as from fear, all in tears, all quivering with emotion. She was saying something to him, entreating him with half-bare arms, clasping and wringing her hands; he folded her in his arms, she quivered on his bosom...

PART II

CHAPTER I

WHAT is it? What is the matter with you?" said Ordynov, waking up completely, still pressing her in his strong, warm embrace. "What is the matter with you, Katerina? What is it, my love?"

She sobbed softly with downcast eyes, hiding her flushed face on his breast. For a long while she could not speak and kept trembling as though in terror.

"I don't know, I don't know," she said at last, in a hardly audible voice, gasping for breath, and scarcely able to articulate. "I don't know how I came here.. She clasped him even more tightly, with even more intensity, and in a violent irrepressible rush of feeling, kissed his shoulder, his hands, his chest; at last, as though in despair, she hid her face in her hands, fell on her knees, and buried her head in his knees. When Ordynov, in inexpressible anguish, lifted her up impatiently and made her sit down beside him, her whole face glowed with a full flush of shame, her weeping eyes sought forgiveness, and the smile that, in spite of herself, played on her lip could scarcely subdue the violence of her new feeling. Now she seemed again frightened, mistrustfully she pushed away his hand, and, with drooping head, answered his hurried questions in a fearful whisper.

"Perhaps you have had a terrible dream?" said Ordynov. "Perhaps you have seen some vision... Yes? Perhaps *he* has frightened you.... He is delirious and unconscious. Perhaps he has said something that was not for you to hear? Did you hear something? Yes?"

"No, I have not been asleep," answered Katerina, stifling her emotion with an effort. "Sleep did not come to me, he has been silent all the while and only once he called me. I went up, called his name, spoke to him; I was frightened; he did not wake and did not hear me. He is terribly sick; the Lord succour him! Then misery came upon my heart, bitter misery! I prayed and prayed and then this came upon me."

"Hush, Katerina, hush, my life, hush! You were frightened yesterday...."

"No, I was not frightened yesterday!..."

"Has it ever been like this with you at other times?"

"Yes." And again she trembled all over and huddled up to him like a child. "You see," she said, repressing her sobs, "it was not for nothing that I have come to you, it was not for nothing that I could not bear to stay alone,"

she repeated, gratefully pressing his hands. “Enough, enough shedding tears over other people’s sorrows! Save them for a dark day when you are lonely and cast down and there is no one with you!... Listen, have you ever had a love?”

“No.... I never knew a love before you...

“Before me?... You call me your love?”

She suddenly looked at him as though surprised, would have said something, but then was silent and looked down. By degrees her whole face suddenly flushed again a glowing crimson; her eyes shone more brightly through the forgotten tears still warm on her eyelashes, and it could be seen that some question was hovering on her lips. With bashful shyness she looked at him once or twice and then looked down again.

“No, it is not for me to be your first love,” she said. “No, no,” she said, shaking her head thoughtfully, while the smile stole gently again over her face. “No,” she said, at last, laughing; “it’s not for me, my own, to be your love.”

At that point she glanced at him, but there was suddenly such sadness reflected in her face, such hopeless sorrow suddenly overshadowed all her features, such despair all at once surged up from within, from her heart, that Ordynov was overwhelmed by an unaccountable, painful feeling of compassion for her mysterious grief and looked at her with indescribable distress. —

“Listen to what I say to you,” she said in a voice that wrung his heart, pressing his hands in hers, struggling to stifle her sobs. “Heed me well, listen, my joy! You calm your heart and do not love me as you love me now. It will be better for you, your heart will be lighter and gladder, and you will guard yourself from a fell foe and will win a sister fond. I will come and see you as you please, fondle you and take no shame upon myself for making friends with you. I was with you for two days when you lay in that cruel sickness! Get to know your sister! It is not for nothing that we have sworn to be brother and sister, it is not for nothing that I prayed and wept to the Holy Mother for you! You won’t get another sister! You may go all round the world, you may get to know the whole earth and not find another love like mine, if it is love your heart wants. I will love you warmly, I will always love you as I do now, and I will love you because your soul is pure and clean and can be seen through; because when first I glanced at you, at once I knew you were the guest of my house, the longed-for guest, and it

was not for nothing that you wanted to come to us; I love you because when you look at me your eyes are full of love and speak for your heart, and when they say anything, at once I know of all that is within you and long to give my life for your love, my freedom, because it is sweet to be even a slave to the man whose heart I have found.... But my life is not mine but another's... and my freedom is bound! Take me for a sister and be a brother to me and take me to your heart when misery, when cruel weakness falls upon me; only do so that I have no shame to come to you and sit through the long night with you as now.

Do you hear me? Is your heart opened to me? Do you understand what I have been saying to you?..."

She tried to say something more, glanced at him, laid her hand on his shoulder and at last sank helpless on his bosom. Her voice died away in convulsive, passionate sobbing, her bosom heaved, and her face flushed like an evening sunset.

"My life," whispered Ordynov; everything was dark before his eyes and he could hardly breathe. "My joy," he said, not knowing what he was saying, not understanding himself, trembling lest a breath should break the spell, should destroy everything that was happening, which he took rather for a vision than reality: so misty was everything around him! "I don't know, I don't understand you, I don't remember what you have just said to me, my mind is darkened, my heart aches, my queen!"

At this point his voice broke with emotion. She clung more tightly, more warmly, more fervently to him. He got up, no longer able to restrain himself; shattered, exhausted by ecstasy, he fell on his knees. Convulsive sobs broke agonisingly from his breast at last, and the voice that came straight from his heart quivered like a harp-string, from the fulness of unfathomable ecstasy and bliss.

"Who are you, who are you, my own? Where do you come from, my darling?" he said, trying to stifle his sobs. "From what heaven did you fly into my sphere? It's like a dream about me, I cannot believe in you. Don't check me, let me speak, let me tell you all, all! I have long wanted to speak... Who are you, who are you, my joy? How did you find my heart? Tell me; have you long been my sister?... Tell me everything about yourself, where you have been till now. Tell me what the place was called where you lived; what did you love there at first? what rejoiced you? what grieved you?

.... Was the air warm? was the sky clear?... Who were dear to you? who loved you before me? to whom did your soul yearn first?... Had you a mother? did she pet you as a child, or did you look round upon life as solitary as I did? Tell me, were you always like this? What were your dreams? what were your visions of the future? what was fulfilled and what was unfulfilled with you? — tell me everything.... For whom did your maiden heart yearn first, and for what did you give it? Tell me, what must I give you for it? what must I give you for yourself?... Tell me, my darling, my light, my sister; tell me, how am I to win your heart?..

Then his voice broke again, and he bowed his head. But when he raised his eyes, dumb horror froze his heart and the hair stood up on his head.

Katerina was sitting pale as a sheet. She was looking with a fixed stare into the air, her lips were blue as a corpse's and her eyes were dimmed by a mute, agonising woe. She stood up slowly, took two steps forward and, with a piercing wail, flung herself down before the ikon.... Jerky, incoherent words' broke from her throat. She lost consciousness. Shaken with horror Ordynov lifted her up and carried her to his bed; he stood over her, frantic. A minute later she opened her eyes, sat up in the bed, looked about her and seized his hand. She drew him towards her, tried to whisper something with her lips that were still pale, but her voice would not obey her. At last she burst into a flood of tears; the hot drops scalded Ordynov's chilly hand.

"It's hard for me, it's hard for me now; my last hour is at hand!" she said at last in desperate anguish.

She tried to say something else, but her faltering tongue could not utter a word. She looked in despair at Ordynov, who did not understand her. He bent closer to her and listened.... At last he heard her whisper distinctly:

"I am corrupted — they have corrupted me, they have ruined me!"

Ordynov lifted his head and looked at her in wild amazement. Some hideous thought flashed across his mind. Katerina saw the convulsive workings of his face.

"Yes! Corrupted," she went on; "a wicked man corrupted me. It is *he* who has ruined me!... I have sold my soul to him. Why, why did you speak of my mother? Why did you want to torture me? God, God be your judge!..."

A minute later she was softly weeping; Ordynov's heart was beating and aching in mortal anguish.

“He says,” she whispered in a restrained, mysterious voice, “that when he dies he will come and fetch my sinful soul....

I am his, I have sold my soul to him. He tortures me, he reads to me in his books. Here, look at his book! here is his book, He says I have committed the unpardonable sin. Look, look...” —

And she showed him a book. Ordynov did not notice where it had come from. He took it mechanically — it was all in manuscript like the old heretical books which he had happened to see before, but now he was incapable of looking or concentrating his attention on anything else. The book fell out of his hands. He softly embraced Katerina, trying to bring her to reason. “Hush, hush,” he said; “they have frightened you. I am with you; rest with me, my own, my love, my light.”

“You know nothing, nothing,” she said, warmly pressing his hand. “I am always like this! I am always afraid.... I’ve tortured you enough, enough!...”

“I go to him then,” she began a minute later, taking a breath; “sometimes he simply comforts me with his words, sometimes he takes his book, the biggest, and reads it over me — he always reads such grim, threatening things! I don’t know what, and don’t understand every word; but fear comes upon me; and when I listen to his voice, it is as though it were not he speaking, but someone else, someone evil, someone you could not soften anyhow, could not entreat, and one’s heart grows so heavy and burns.... Heavier than when this misery comes upon me!”

“Don’t go to him. Why do you go to him?” said Ordynov, hardly conscious of his own words.

“Why have I come to you? If you ask — I don’t know either.... But he keeps saying to me, ‘Pray, pray!’ Sometimes I get up in the dark night and for a long time, for hours together, I pray; sometimes sleep overtakes me, but fear always wakes me, always wakes me and then I always fancy that a storm is gathering round me, that harm is coming to me, that evil things will tear me to pieces and torment me, that my prayers will not reach the saints, and that they will not save me from cruel grief. My soul is being tom, my whole body seems breaking to pieces through crying.... Then I begin praying again, and pray and pray until the Holy Mother looks down on me from the ikon, more lovingly. Then I get up and go away to sleep, utterly shattered; sometimes I wake up on the floor, on my knees before the ikon. Then sometimes he wakes, calls me, begins to soothe me, caress me,

comfort me, and then I feel better, and if any trouble comes I am not afraid with him. He is powerful! His word is mighty!”

“But what trouble, what sort of trouble have you?”... And Ordynov wrung his hands in despair.

Katerina turned fearfully pale. She looked at him like one condemned to death, without hope of pardon.

“Me? I am under a curse, I’m a murderess; my mother cursed me! I was the ruin of my own mother!...” Ordynov embraced her without a word. She nestled tremulously to him. He felt a convulsive shiver pass all over her, and it seemed as though her soul were parting from her body.

“I hid her in the damp earth,” she said, overwhelmed by the horror of her recollections, and lost in visions of her irrevocable past. “I have long wanted to tell it; he always forbade me with supplications, upbraidings, and angry words, and at times he himself will arouse all my anguish at though he were my enemy and adversary. At night, even as now — it all comes into my mind. Listen, listen! It was long ago, very long ago.

I don’t remember when, but it is all before me as though it had been yesterday, like a dream of yesterday, devouring my heart all night. Misery makes the time twice as long. Sit here, sit here beside me; I will tell you all my sorrow; may I be struck” down, accursed as I am, by a mother’s curse.... I am putting my life into your hands...”

Ordynov tried to stop her, but she folded her hands, beseeching his love to attend, and then, with even greater agitation began to speak. Her story was incoherent, the turmoil of her spirit could be felt in her words, but Ordynov understood it all, because her life had become his life, her grief his grief, and because her foe stood visible before him, taking shape and growing up before him with every word she uttered and, as it were, with inexhaustible strength crushing his heart and cursing him malignantly. His blood was in a turmoil, it flooded his heart and obscured his reason. The wicked old man of his dream (Ordynov believed this) was living before him.

“Well, it was a night like this,” Katerina began, “only stormier, and the wind in our forest howled as I had never heard it before... it was in that night that my ruin began! An oak was broken before our window, and an old grey-headed beggar came to our door, and he said that he remembered that oak as a little child, and that it was the same then as when the wind blew it down.... That night — as I remember now — my father’s barge was

wrecked on the river by a storm, and though he was afflicted with illness, he drove to the place as soon as the fishermen ran to us at the factory. Mother and I were sitting alone. I was asleep. She was sad about something and weeping bitterly... and I knew what about! She had just been ill, she was still pale and kept telling me to get ready her shroud.

... Suddenly, at midnight, we heard a knock at the gate; I jumped up, the blood rushed to my heart; mother cried out.... I did not look at her, I was afraid. I took a lantern and went myself to open the gate.... It was *he!* I felt frightened, because I was always frightened when he came, and it was so with me from childhood ever since I remembered anything! At that time he had not white hair; his beard was black as pitch, his eyes burnt like coals; until that time he had never once looked at me kindly. He asked me, ‘Is your mother at home?’ Shutting the little gate, I answered that ‘Father was not at home.’ He said, ‘I know,’ and suddenly looked at me, looked at me in such a way... it was the first time he had looked at me like that. I went on, but he still stood. ‘Why don’t you come in?’

‘I am thinking.’ By then we were going up to the room. ‘Why did you say that father was not at home when I asked you whether mother was at home?’ I said nothing.... Mother was terror-stricken — she rushed to him.... He scarcely glanced at her. I saw it all. He was all wet and shivering; the storm had driven him fifteen miles, but whence he came and where he lived neither mother nor I ever knew; we had not seen him for nine weeks.... He threw down his cap, pulled off his gloves — did not pray to the ikon, nor bow to his hostess — he sat down by the fire...” Katerina passed her hand over her face, as though something were weighing upon her and oppressing her, but a minute later she raised her head and began again:

“He began talking in Tatar to mother. Mother knew it, I don’t understand a word. Other times when he came, they sent me away; but this time mother dared not say a word to her own child. The unclean spirit gained possession of my soul and I looked at my mother, exalting myself in my heart. I saw they were looking at me, they were talking about me; she began crying. I saw him clutch at his knife and more than once of late I had seen him clutch at the knife when he was talking with mother. I jumped up and caught at his belt, tried to tear the evil knife away from him. He clenched his teeth, cried out and tried to beat me back; he struck me in the breast but did not shake me off. I thought I should die on the spot, there was a mist before my eyes. I fell on the floor, but did not cry out. Though I could hardly see, I saw him.

He took off his belt, tucked up his sleeve, with the hand with which he had struck me took out the knife and gave it to me. ‘Here, cut it away, amuse yourself over it, even as I insulted you, while I, proud girl, will bow down to the earth to you for it.’ I laid aside the knife; the blood began to stifle me, I did not look at him. I remember I laughed without opening my lips and looked threateningly straight into mother’s mournful eyes, and the shameless laugh never left my lips, while mother sat pale, deathlike..

With strained attention Ordynov listened to her incoherent story. By degrees her agitation subsided after the first outburst; her words grew calmer. The poor creature was completely carried away by her memories and her misery was spread over their limitless expanse.

“He took his cap without bowing. I took the lantern again to see him out instead of mother, who, though she was ill, would have followed him. We reached the gates. I opened the little gate to him, drove away the dogs in silence. I see him take off his cap and bow to me, I see him feel in his bosom, take out a red morocco box, open the catch. I look in — big pearls, an offering to me. ‘I have a beauty,’ says he, ‘in the town. I got it to offer to her, but I did not take it to her; take it, fair maiden, cherish your beauty; take them, though you crush them under foot.’ I took them, but I did not want to stamp on them, I did not want to do them too much honour, but I took them like a viper, not saying a word. I came in and set them on the table before mother — it was for that I took them. Mother was silent for a minute, all white as a handkerchief. She speaks to me as though she fears me. ‘What is this, Katya?’ and I answer, ‘The merchant brought them for you, my own — I know nothing.’ I see the tears stream from her eyes. I see her gasp for breath. ‘Not for me, Katya, not for me, wicked daughter, not for me.’ I remember she said it so bitterly, so bitterly, as though she were weeping out her whole soul. I raised my eyes, I wanted to throw myself at her feet, but suddenly the evil one prompted me. ‘Well, if not to you, most likely to father; I will give them to him when he comes back; I will say the merchants have been, they have forgotten their wares...’ Then how she wept, my own.... ‘I will tell him myself what merchants have been, and for what wares they came.... I will tell him whose daughter you are, whose bastard child! You are not my daughter now, you serpent’s fry! You are my accursed child!’ I say nothing, tears do not come me to me.... I went up to my room and all night I listened to the storm, while I fitted my thoughts to its raging.

“Meanwhile, five days passed by. Towards evening after five days, father came in, surly and menacing, and he had been stricken by illness on the way. I saw his arm was bound up, I guessed that his enemy had waylaid him upon the road, his enemy had worn him out and brought sickness upon him. I knew, too, who was his enemy, I knew it all. He did not say a word to mother, he did not ask about me. He called together all the workmen, made them leave the factory, and guard the house from the evil eye. I felt in my heart, in that hour, that all was not well with the house. We waited, the night came, another stormy, snowy one, and dread came over my soul. I opened the window; my face was hot, my eyes were weeping, my restless heart was burning; I was on fire. I longed to be away from that room, far away to the land of light, where the thunder and lightning are born. My maiden heart was beating and beating.... Suddenly, in the dead of night, I was dozing, or a mist had fallen over my soul, and confounded it all of a sudden — I hear a knock at the window: Open!’ I look, there was a man at the window, he had climbed up by a rope. I knew at once who the visitor was, I opened the window and let him into my lonely room. It was *he!* Without taking off his hat, he sat down on the bench, he panted and drew his breath as though he had been pursued. I stood in the corner and knew myself that I turned white all over. ‘Is your father at home?’

‘He is.’

‘And your mother?’

‘Mother is at home, too.’

‘Be silent now; do you hear?’

‘I hear.’

‘What?’

‘A whistle under the window!’

‘Well, fair maid, do you want to cut your foe’s head off? Call your father, take my life? I am at your maiden mercy; here is the cord, tie it, if your heart bids you; avenge yourself for your insult.’ I am silent. ‘Well? Speak, my joy.’

‘What do you want?’

‘I want my enemy to be gone, to take leave for good and all of the old love, and to lay my heart at the feet of a new one, a fair maid like you....’ I laughed; and I don’t know how his evil words went to my heart. ‘Let me, fair maid, walk downstairs, test my courage, pay homage to my hosts.’ I trembled all over, my teeth knocked together, but my heart was like a red-

hot iron. I went. I opened the door to him, I let him into the house, only on the threshold with an effort I brought out, ‘Here, take your pearls and never give me a gift again,’ and I threw the box after him.”

Here Katerina stopped to take breath. At one moment she was pale and trembling like a leaf, at the next the blood rushed to her head, and now, when she stopped, her cheeks glowed with fire, her eyes flashed through her tears, and her bosom heaved with her laboured, uneven breathing. But suddenly she I turned pale again and her voice sank with a mournful and tremulous quiver.

“Then I was left alone and the storm seemed to wrap me about. All at once I hear a shout, I hear workmen run across the yard to the factory, I hear them say, ‘The factory is on fire.’ I kept in hiding; all ran out of the house; I was left with mother; I knew that she was parting from life, that she had been lying for the last three days on her death-bed. I knew it, accursed daughter!... All at once a cry under my room, a faint cry like a child when it is frightened in its sleep, and then all was silent. I blew out the candle, I was as chill as ice, I hid my face in my hands, I was afraid to look. Suddenly I hear a shout close by, I hear the men running from the factory. I hung out of the window, I see them bearing my dead father, I hear them saying among themselves, ‘He stumbled, he fell down the stairs into a red-hot cauldron; so the devil must have pushed him down.’ I fell upon my bed; I waited, all numb with terror, and I do not know for whom or what I waited, only I was overwhelmed with woe in that hour. I don’t remember how long I waited; I remember that suddenly everything began rocking, my head grew heavy, my eyes were smarting with smoke and I was glad that my end was near. Suddenly I felt someone lift me by the shoulders. I looked as best I could; he was singed all over and his kaftan, hot to the touch, was smoking.

“‘I’ve come for you, fair maid; lead me away from trouble as before you led me into trouble; I have lost my soul for your sake, no prayers of mine can undo this accursed night! Maybe we will pray together!’ He laughed, the wicked man. ‘Show me,’ said he, ‘how to get out without passing people!’ I took his hand and led him after me. We went through the corridor — the keys were with me — I opened the door to the store-room and pointed to the window. The window looked into the garden, he seized me in his powerful arms, embraced me and leapt with me out of the window. We ran together, hand-in-hand, we ran together for a long time. We looked, we were in a thick, dark forest. He began listening: ‘There’s a chase after us,

Katya! There's a chase after us, fair maid, but it is not for us in this hour to lay down our lives! Kiss me, fair maid, for love and everlasting happiness!'

'Why are your hands covered with blood?'

'My hands covered with blood, my own? I stabbed your dogs; they barked too loud at a late guest. Come along!'

"We ran on again; we saw in the path my father's horse, he had broken his bridle and run out of the stable; so he did not want to be burnt. 'Get on it, Katya, with me; God has sent us help.' I was silent. 'Won't you? I am not a heathen, not an unclean pagan; here, I will cross myself if you like,' and here he made the sign of the cross. I got on the horse, huddled up to him and forgot everything on his bosom, as though a dream had come over me, and when I woke I saw that we were standing by a broad, broad river. He got off the horse, lifted me down and went off to the reeds where his boat was hidden. We were getting in. 'Well, farewell, good horse; go to a new master, the old masters all forsake you!' I ran to father's horse and embraced him warmly at parting. Then we got in, he took the oars and in an instant we lost sight of the shore. And when we could not see the shore, I saw him lay down the oars and look about him, all over the water.

"'Hail,' he said, 'stormy river-mother, who giveth drink to God's people and food to me! Say, hast thou guarded my goods, are my wares safe, while I've been away?' I sat mute, I cast down my eyes to my bosom; my face burned with shame as with a flame. And he: 'Thou art welcome to take all, stormy and insatiable river, only let me keep my vow and cherish my priceless pearl! Drop but one word, fair maid, send a ray of sunshine into the storm, scatter the dark night with light!'

"He laughed as he spoke, his heart was burning for me, but I could not bear his jeers for shame; I longed to say a word, but was afraid and sat dumb. 'Well, then, be it so!' he answered to my timid thought; he spoke as though in sorrow, as though grief had come upon him, too. 'So one can take nothing by force. God be with you, you proud one, my dove, my fair maid! It seems, strong is your hatred for me, or I do not find favour in your clear eyes! ' I listened and was seized by spite, seized by spite and love; I steeled my heart. I said: 'Pleasing or not pleasing you came to me; it is not for me to know that, but for another senseless, shameless girl who shamed her maiden room in the dark night, who sold her soul for mortal sin and could not school her frantic heart; and for my sorrowing tears to know it, and for him who, like a thief, brags of another's woe and jeers at a maiden's heart!'

I said it, and I could bear no more. I wept.... He said nothing; looked at me so that I trembled like a leaf. ‘Listen to me,’ said he, ‘fair maid,’ and his eyes burned strangely. ‘It is not a vain word I say, I make you a solemn vow. As much happiness as you give me, so much will I be a gentleman, and if ever you do not love me — do not speak, do not drop a word, do not trouble, but stir only your sable eyebrow, turn your black eye, stir only your little finger and I will give you back your love with golden freedom; only, my proud, haughty beauty, then there will be an end to my life too.’ And then all my flesh laughed at his words....

At this point Katerina’s story was interrupted by deep emotion; she took breath, smiled at her new fancy and would have gone on, but suddenly her sparkling eyes met Ordynov’s feverish gaze fixed on her. She started, would have said something, but the blood flooded her face.... She hid her face in her hands and fell upon the pillow at though in a swoon. Ordynov was quivering all over! An agonising feeling, an unbearable, unaccountable agitation ran like poison through all his veins and grew with every word of Katerina’s story; a hopeless yearning, a greedy and unendurable passion took possession of his imagination and troubled his feelings, but at the same time his heart was more and more oppressed by bitter, infinite sadness. At moments he longed to shriek to Katerina to be silent, longed to fling himself at her feet and beseech her by his tears to give him back his former agonies of love, his former pure, unquestioning yearning, and he regretted the tears that had long dried on his cheeks. There was an ache at his heart which was painfully oppressed by fever and could not give his tortured soul the relief of tears. He did not understand what Katerina was telling him, and his love was frightened of the feeling that excited the poor woman. He cursed his passion at that moment; it smothered him, it exhausted him, and he felt as though molten lead were running in his veins instead of blood.

“Ach, that is not my grief,” said Katerina, suddenly raising her head. “What I have told you just now is not my sorrow,” she went on in a voice that rang like copper from a sudden new feeling, while her heart was rent with secret, unshed tears. “That is not my grief, that is not my anguish, not my woe! What, what do I care for my mother, though I shall never have another mother in this world! What do I care that she cursed me in her last terrible hour? What do I care for my old golden life, for my warm room, for my maiden freedom? What do I care that I have sold myself to the evil one and abandoned my soul to the destroyer, that for the sake of happiness I

have committed the unpardonable sin? Ach, that is not my grief, though in that great is my ruin! But what is bitter to me and rends my heart is that I am his shameless slave, that my shame and disgrace are dear to me, shameless as I am, but it is dear to my greedy heart to remember my sorrow as though it were joy and happiness that is my grief, that there is no strength in it and no anger for my wrongs!...”

The poor creature gasped for breath and a convulsive, hysterical sob cut short her words, her hot, laboured breath burned her lips, her bosom heaved and sank and her eyes flashed with incomprehensible indignation. But her face was radiant with such fascination at that moment, every line, every muscle quivered with such a passionate flood of feeling, such insufferable, incredible beauty that Ordynov’s black thoughts died away at once and the pure sadness in his soul was silenced. And his heart burned to be pressed to her heart and to be lost with it in frenzied emotion, to throb in harmony with the same storm, the same rush of infinite passion, and even to swoon with it. Katerina met Ordynov’s troubled eyes and smiled so that his heart burned with redoubled fire. He scarcely knew what he was doing.

“Spare me, have pity on me,” he whispered, controlling his trembling voice, bending down to her, leaning with his hand on her shoulder and looking close in her eyes, so close that their breathing was mingled in one. “You are killing me. I do not know your sorrow and my soul is troubled.... What is it to me what your heart is weeping over! Tell me what you want — I will do it. Come with me, let me go; do not kill me, do not murder me!..

Katerina looked at him immovably, the tears dried on her burning cheek. She wanted to interrupt him, to take his hand, tried to say something, but could not find the words. A strange smile came upon her lips, as though laughter were breaking through that smile.

“I have not told you all, then,” she said at last in a broken voice; “only will you hear me, will you hear me, hot heart? Listen to your sister. You have learned little of her bitter grief. I would have told you how I lived a year with him, but I will not.... A year passed, he went away with his comrades down the river, and I was left with one he called his mother to wait for him in the harbour. I waited for him one month, two, and I met a young merchant, and I glanced at him and thought of my golden years gone by. ‘Sister, darling,’ said he, when he had spoken two words to me, ‘I am Alyosha, your destined betrothed; the old folks betrothed us as children; you have forgotten me — think, I am from your parts.’

‘And what do they say of me in your parts? “Folk’s gossip says that you behaved dishonourably, forgot your maiden modesty, made friends with a brigand, a murderer,’ Alyosha said, laughing. ‘And what did you say of me?’

‘I meant to say many things when I came here’ — and his heart was troubled. ‘I meant to say many things, but now that I have seen you my heart is dead within me, you have slain me,’ he said. ‘Buy my soul, too, take it, though you mock at my heart and my love, fair maiden. I am an orphan now, my own master, and my soul is my own, not another’s. I have not sold it to anyone, like somebody who has blotted out her memory; it’s not enough to buy the heart, I give it for nothing, and it is clear it is a good bargain.’ I laughed, and more than once, more than twice he talked to me; a whole month he lived on the place, gave up his merchandise, forsook his people and was all alone. I was sorry for his lonely tears. So I said to him one morning, “Wait for me, Alyosha, lower down the harbour, as night comes on; I will go with you to your home, I am weary of my life, forlorn.’ So night came on, I tied up a bundle and my soul ached and worked within me. Behold, my master walks in without a word or warning. ‘Good-day, let us go, there will be a storm on the river and the time will not wait.’ I followed him; we came to the river and it was far to reach his mates. We look: a boat and one we knew rowing in it as though waiting for someone. ‘Good-day, Alyosha; God be your help. Why, are you belated at the harbour, are you in haste to meet your vessels? Row me, good man, with the mistress, to our mates, to our place. I have let my boat go and I don’t know how to swim.’

‘Get in,’ said Alyosha, and my whole soul swooned when I heard his voice. ‘Get in with the mistress, too, the wind is for all, and in my bower there will be room for you, too.’ We got in; it was a dark night, the stars were in hiding, the wind howled, the waves rose high and we rowed out a mile from shore — all three were silent.

“‘It’s a storm,’ said my master, ‘and it is a storm that bodes no good! I have never seen such a storm on the river in my life as is raging now! It is too much for our boat, it will not bear three!’

‘No, it will not,’ answered Alyosha, ‘and one of us, it seems, turns out to be one too many,’ he says, and his voice quivers like a harp-string. ‘Well, Alyosha, I knew you as a little child, your father was my mate, we ate at

each other’s boards — tell me, Alyosha, can you reach the shore without the boat or will you perish for nothing, will you lose your life?’

‘I cannot reach it. And you, too, good man, if it is your luck to have a drink of water, will you reach the shore or not?’

‘I cannot reach it, it is the end for my soul. I cannot hold out against the stormy river! Listen, Katerina, my precious pearl! I remember such a night, but the waves were not tossing, the stars were shining, and the moon was bright.... I simply want to ask you, have you forgotten?’

‘I remember,’ said I. ‘Well, since you have not forgotten it, well, you have not forgotten the compact when a bold man told a fair maiden to take back her freedom from one unloved — eh?’

‘No, I have not forgotten that either,’ I said, more dead than alive. ‘Ah, you have not forgotten! Well, now we are in hard case in the boat. Has not his hour come for one of us? Tell me, my own, tell me, my dove, coo to us like a dove your tender word...’”

“I did not say my word then,” whispered Katerina, turning pale....

“Katerina!” A hoarse, hollow voice resounded above them. Ordynov started. In the doorway stood Murin. He was barely covered with a fur rug, pale as death, and he was gazing at them with almost senseless eyes. Katerina turned paler and paler and she, too, gazed fixedly at him, as though spellbound.

“Come to me, Katerina,” whispered the sick man, in a voice hardly audible, and went out of the room. Katerina still gazed fixedly into the air, as though the old man had still been standing before her. But suddenly the blood rushed glowing into her pale cheek and she slowly got up from the bed. Ordynov remembered their first meeting.

“Till to-morrow then, my tears!” she said, laughing strangely; “till to-morrow! Remember at what point I stopped: ‘Choose between the two; which is dear or not dear to you, fair maid!’ Will you remember, will you wait for one night?” she repeated, laying her hand on his shoulder and looking at him tenderly.

“Katerina, do not go, do not go to your ruin! He is mad,” whispered Ordynov, trembling for her.

“Katerina!” he heard through the partition.

“What? Will he murder me? no fear!” Katerina answered, laughing: “Good-night to you, my precious heart, my warm dove, my brother!” she

said, tenderly pressing his head to her bosom, while tears bedewed her face. “Those are my last tears.

Sleep away your sorrow, my darling, wake to-morrow to joy.” And she kissed him passionately.

“Katerina, Katerina!” whispered Ordynov, falling on his knees before her and trying to stop her. “Katerina!”

She turned round, nodded to him, smiling, and went out of the room. Ordynov heard her go in to Murin; he held his breath, listening, but heard not a sound more. The old man was silent or perhaps unconscious again.... He would have gone in to her there, but his legs staggered under him.... He sank exhausted on the bed....

CHAPTER II

FOR a long while he could not find out what the time was when he woke. Whether it was the twilight of dawn or of evening, it was still dark in his room. He could not decide how long he had slept, but felt that his sleep was not healthy sleep. Coming to himself, he passed his hand over his face as though shaking off sleep and the visions of the night. But when he tried to step on the floor he felt as though his whole body were shattered, and his exhausted limbs refused to obey him. His head ached and was going round, and he was alternately shivering and feverish. Memory returned with consciousness and his heart quivered when in one instant he lived through, in memory, the whole of the past night. His heart beat as violently in response to his thoughts, his sensations were as burning, as fresh, as though not a night, not long hours, but one minute had passed since Katerina had gone away. He felt as though his eyes were still wet with tears — or were they new, fresh tears that rushed like a spring from his burning soul? And, strange to say, his agonies were even sweet to him, though he dimly felt all over that he could not endure such violence of feeling again. There was a moment when he was almost conscious of death, and was ready to meet it as a welcome guest; his sensations were so overstrained, his passion surged up with such violence on waking, such ecstasy took possession of his soul that life, quickened by its intensity, seemed on the point of breaking, of being shattered, of flickering out in one minute and being quenched for ever. Almost at that instant, as though in answer to his anguish, in answer to his quivering heart, the familiar mellow, silvery voice of Katerina rang out — like that inner music known to man’s soul in hours of joy, in hours of tranquil happiness. Close beside him, almost over his pillow, began a song, at first soft and melancholy... her voice rose and fell, dying away abruptly as though hiding in itself, and tenderly crooning over its anguish of unsatisfied, smothered desire hopelessly concealed in the grieving heart; then again it flowed into a nightingale’s trills and, quivering and glowing with unrestrained passion, melted into a perfect sea of ecstasy, a sea of mighty, boundless sound, like the first moment of the bliss of love.

Ordynov distinguished the words, too. They were simple, sincere, composed long ago with direct, calm, pure, clear feeling, but he forgot them, he heard only the sounds. Through the simple, naïve verses of the

song flashed other words resounding with all the yearning that filled his bosom, responding to the most secret subtleties of his passion, which he could not comprehend though they echoed to him clearly with full consciousness of it. And at one moment he heard the last moan of a heart swooning helplessly in passion, then he heard the joy of a will and a spirit breaking its chains and rushing brightly and freely into the boundless ocean of unfettered love. Then he heard the first vow of the beloved, with fragrant shame at the first blush on her face, with prayers, with tears, with mysterious timid murmuring; then the passion of the Bacchante, proud and rejoicing in its strength, unveiled, undisguised, turning her drunken eyes about her with a ringing laugh...

Ordynov could not endure the end of the song, and he got up from the bed. The song at once died away.

“Good-morning and good-day are over, my beloved,” Katerina’s voice rang out, “Good-evening to you; get up, come in to us, wake up to bright joy; we expect you. I and the master, both good people, your willing servants, quench hatred with love, if your heart is still resentful. Say a friendly word!”...

Ordynov had already gone out of his room at her first call and scarcely realised that he was going into the landlord’s bedroom. The door opened before him and, bright as sunshine, the golden smile of his strange landlady flashed upon him. At that instant, he saw, he heard no one but her. In one moment his whole life, his whole joy, melted into one thing in his heart — the bright image of his Katerina.

“Two dawns have passed,” she said, giving him her hands, “since we said farewell; the second is dying now — look out of the window. Like the two dawns in the soul of a maiden,”

Katerina added, laughing. “The one that flushes her face with its first shame, when first her lonely maiden heart speaks in her bosom, while the other, when a maiden forgets her first shame, glows like fire, stifles her maiden heart, and drives the red blood to her face.... Come, come into our home, good young man! Why do you stand in the doorway? Honour and love to you, and a greeting from the master!”

With a laugh ringing like music, she took Ordynov’s hand and led him into the room. His heart was overwhelmed with timidity. All the fever, all the fire raging in his bosom was quenched and died down in one instant, and for one instant he dropped his eyes in confusion and was afraid to look

at her. He felt that she was so marvellously beautiful that his heart could not endure her burning eyes. He had never seen his Katerina like this. For the first time laughter and gaiety were sparkling on her face, and drying the mournful tears on her black eyelashes. His hand trembled in her hand. And if he had raised his eyes he would have seen that Katerina, with a triumphant smile, had fastened her clear eyes on his face, which was clouded with confusion and passion.

“Get up, old man,” she said at last, as though waking up; “say a word of welcome to our guest, a guest who is like a brother! Get up, you proud, unbending old man; get up, now, take your guest by his white hand and make him sit down to the table.”

Ordynov raised his eyes and seemed only then to come to himself. Only then he thought of Murin. The old man’s eyes, looking as though dimmed by the approach of death, were staring at him fixedly; and with a pang in his heart he remembered those eyes glittering at him last time from black overhanging brows contracted as now with pain and anger. There was a slight dizziness in his head. He looked round him and only then realised everything clearly and distinctly. Murin was still lying on the bed, but he was partly dressed and had already been up and out that morning. As before, he had a red kerchief tied round his neck, he had slippers on his feet. His attack was evidently over, only his face was terribly pale and yellow. Katerina was standing by his bed, her hand leaning on the table, watching them both intently. But the smile of welcome did not leave her face. It seemed as though everything had been done at a sign from her.

“Yes! it’s you,” said Murin, raising himself up and sitting on the bed. “You are my lodger. I must beg your pardon, sir; I have sinned and wronged you all unknowingly, playing tricks with my gun the other day. Who could tell that you, too, were stricken by grievous sickness? It happens to me at times,” he added in a hoarse, ailing voice, frowning and unconsciously looking away from Ordynov. “My trouble comes upon me like a thief in the night without knocking at the gate! I almost thrust a knife into her bosom the other day...”he brought out, nodding towards Katerina. “I am ill, a fit comes, seizes me — well, that’s enough. Sit down — you will be our guest.”

Ordynov was still staring at him intently.

“Sit down, sit down!” the old man shouted impatiently; “sit down, if that will please her! So you are brother and sister, born of the same mother! You

are as fond of one another as lovers!”

Ordynov sat down.

“You see what a fine sister you’ve got,” the old man went on, laughing, and he showed two rows of white, perfectly sound teeth. “Be fond of one another, my dears. Is your sister beautiful, sir? Tell me, answer! Come, look how her cheeks are burning; come, look round, sing the praises of her beauty to all the world, show that your heart is aching for her.”

Ordynov frowned and looked angrily at the old man, who flinched under his eyes. A blind fury surged up in Ordynov’s heart. By some animal instinct he felt near him a mortal foe. He could not understand what was happening to him, his reason refused to serve him.

“Don’t look,” said a voice behind him.

Ordynov looked round.

“Don’t look, don’t look, I tell you, if the devil is tempting you; have pity on your love,” said Katerina, laughing, and suddenly from behind she covered his eyes with her hands; then at once took away her hands and hid her own face in them. But the colour in her face seemed to show through her fingers. She removed her hands and, still glowing like fire, tried to meet their laughter and inquisitive eyes brightly and without a tremor. But both looked at her in silence — Ordynov with the stupefaction of love, as though it were the first time such terrible beauty had stabbed his heart; the old man coldly and attentively. Nothing was to be seen in his pale face, except that his lips turned blue and quivered faintly.

Katerina went up to the old man, no longer laughing, and began clearing away the books, papers, inkstand, everything that was on the table and putting them all on the window-sill.

Her breathing was hurried and uneven, and from time to time she drew an eager breath as though her heart were oppressed. Her full bosom heaved and fell like a wave on the seashore. She dropped her eyes and her pitch-black eyelashes gleamed on her bright cheeks like sharp needles....

“A maiden queen,” said the old man.

“My sovereign!” whispered Ordynov, quivering all over. He came to his senses, feeling the old man’s eyes upon him — his glance flashed upon him for an instant like lightning — greedily spiteful, coldly contemptuous. Ordynov would have got up from his seat but some unseen power seemed to fetter his legs. He sat down again. At times he pinched his hand as though not believing in reality. He felt as though he were being strangled by

a nightmare, and as though his eyes were still closed in a miserable feverish sleep. But, strange to say, he did not want to wake up!

Katerina took the old cloth off the table, then opened a chest, took out of it a sumptuous cloth embroidered in gold and bright silks and put it on the table; then she took out of the cupboard an old-fashioned ancestral-looking casket, set it in the middle of the table and took out of it three silver goblets — one for the master, one for the visitor, and one for herself; then with a grave, almost pensive air, she looked at the old man and at the visitor.

“Is one of us dear to someone, or not dear,” she said. “If anyone is not dear to someone he is dear to me, and shall drink my goblet with me. Each of you is dear to me as my own brother: so let us all drink to love and concord.”

“Drink and drown dark fancies in the wine,” said the old man, in a changed voice. “Pour it out, Katerina.”

“Do you bid me pour?” asked Katerina, looking at Ordynov.

Ordynov held out his goblet in silence.

“Stay! If one has a secret and a fancy, may his wishes come true!” said the old man, raising his goblet.

All clinked their goblets and drank.

“Let me drink now with you, old man,” said Katerina, turning to the landlord. “Let us drink if your heart is kindly to me! Let us drink to past happiness, let us send a greeting to the years we have spent, let us celebrate our happiness with heart and with love. Bid me fill your goblet if your heart is warm to me.”

“Your wine is strong, my love, but you scarcely wet your lips!” said the old man, laughing and holding out his goblet again.

“Well, I will sip it, but you drink it to the bottom... why live, old man, brooding on gloomy thoughts; gloomy thoughts only make the heart ache! Thought calls for sorrow; with happiness one can live without thinking; drink, old man,” she went on; “drown your thoughts.”

“A great deal of sorrow must have fermented within you, since you arm yourself against it like this! So you want to make an end of it all at once, my white dove. I drink with you, Katya! And have you a sorrow, sir, if you allow me to ask?”

“If I have, I keep it to myself,” muttered Ordynov, keeping his eyes fixed on Katerina.

“Do you hear, old man? For a long while I did not know myself, did not remember; but the time came, I remembered all and recalled it; all that has passed I have passed through again in my unsatisfied soul.”

“Yes, it is grievous if one begins looking into the past only,” said the old man dreamily. “What is past is like wine that is drunk! What happiness is there in the past? The coat is worn out, and away with it.”

“One must get a new one,” Katerina chimed in with a strained laugh, while two big tears like diamonds hung on her eyelashes. “One cannot live down a lifetime in one minute, and a girl’s heart is eager for life — there is no keeping pace with it. Do you understand, old man? Look. I have buried my tear in your goblet.”

“And did you buy much happiness with your sorrow?” said Ordynov — and his voice quivered with emotion.

“So you must have a great deal of your own for sale,” answered the old man, “that you put your spoke in unasked,” and he laughed a spiteful, noiseless laugh, looking insolently at Ordynov.

“What I have sold it for, I have had,” answered Katerina I in a voice that sounded vexed and offended. “One thinks it much, another little. One wants to give all to take nothing, another promises nothing and yet the submissive heart follows him! Do not you reproach anyone,” she went on, looking sadly at Ordynov. “One man is like this, and another is different, and as though one knew why the soul yearns towards anyone! Fill your goblet, old man. Drink to the happiness of your dear daughter, your meek, obedient slave, as I was when first I knew you. Raise your goblet!”

“So be it! Fill yours, too!” said the old man, taking the wine.

“Stay, old man! Put off drinking, and let us say a word first!..

Katerina put her elbows on the table and looked intently, with passionate, kindling eyes, at the old man. A strange determination gleamed in her eyes. But all her movements were calm, her gestures were abrupt, unexpected, rapid. She was all as if on fire, and it was marvellous; but her beauty seemed to grow with her emotion, her animation; her hurried breath slightly inflating her nostrils, floated from her lips, half opened in a smile which showed two rows of teeth white and even as pearls. Her bosom heaved, her coil of hair, twisted three times round her head, fell carelessly over her left ear and covered part of her glowing cheek, drops of sweat came out on her temples.

“Tell my fortune, old man; tell my fortune, my father, before you drown your mind in drink. Here is my white palm for you — not for nothing do the folks call you a wizard. You have studied by the book and know all of the black art! Look, old man, tell me all my pitiful fate; only mind you don’t tell a lie. Come, tell me as you know it — will there be happiness for your daughter, or will you not forgive her, but call down upon her path an evil, sorrowful fate? Tell me whether I shall have a warm corner for my home, or, like a bird of passage, shall be seeking among good people for a home — a lonely orphan all my life. Tell me who is my enemy, who is preparing love for me, who is plotting against me; tell me, will my warm young heart open its life in solitude and languish to the end, or will it find itself a mate and beat joyfully in tune with it till new sorrow comes! Tell me for once, old man, in what blue sky, beyond far seas and forests, my bright falcon lives. And is he keenly searching for his mate, and is he waiting lovingly, and will he love me fondly; will he soon be tired of me, will he deceive me or not deceive me, and, once for all and altogether, tell me for the last time, old man, am I long to while away the time with you, to sit in a comfortless comer, to read dark books; and when am I, old man, to bow low to you, to say farewell for good and all, to thank you for your bread and salt, for giving me to drink and eat, for telling me your tales?... But mind, tell all the truth, do not He. The time has come, stand up for yourself.”

Her excitement grew greater and greater up to the last word, when suddenly her voice broke with emotion as though her heart were carried away by some inner tempest. Her eyes flashed, and her upper lip faintly quivered. A spiteful jeer could be heard hiding like a snake under every word, but yet there was the ring of tears in her laughter. She bent across the table to the old man and gazed with eager intentness into his lustreless eyes. Ordynov heard her heart suddenly begin beating when she finished; he cried out with ecstasy when he glanced at her, and was getting up from the bench. But a flitting momentary glance from the old man riveted him to his seat again. A strange mingling of contempt, mocking, impatient, angry uneasiness and at the same time sly, spiteful curiosity gleamed in his passing momentary glance, which every time made Ordynov shudder and filled his heart with annoyance, vexation and helpless anger.

Thoughtfully and with a sort of mournful curiosity the old man looked at his Katerina. His heart was stung, words had been uttered. But not an eyebrow stirred upon his face! He only smiled when she finished.

“You want to know a great deal at once, my full-fledged nestling, my fluttering bird! Better fill me a deep goblet and let us drink first to peace and goodwill; or I may spoil my forecast, through someone’s black evil eye. Mighty is the devil! Sin is never far off!”

He raised his goblet and drank. The more wine he drank, the paler he grew. His eyes burned like red coals. Evidently the feverish light of them and the sudden deathlike blueness of his face were signs that another fit was imminent. The wine was strong, so that after emptying one goblet Ordynov’s sight grew more and more blurred. His feverishly inflamed blood could bear no more: it rushed to his heart, troubled and dimmed his reason. His uneasiness grew more and more intense. To relieve his growing excitement, he filled his goblet and sipped it again, without knowing what he was doing, and the blood raced even more rapidly through his veins. He was as though in delirium, and, straining his attention to the utmost, he could hardly follow what was passing between his strange landlord and landlady.

The old man knocked his goblet with a ringing sound against the table.

“Fill it, Katerina!” he cried, “fill it again, bad daughter, fill it to the brim! Lay the old man in peace, and have done with him! That’s it, pour out more, pour it out, my beauty! Let us drink together! Why have you drunk so little? Or have my eyes deceived me?..

Katerina made him some answer, but Ordynov could not hear quite what she said: the old man did not let her finish; he caught hold of her hand as though he were incapable of restraining all that was weighing on his heart. His face was pale, his eyes at one moment were dim, at the next were flashing with fire; his lips quivered and turned white, and in an uneven, troubled voice, in which at moments there was a flash of strange ecstasy, he said to her —

“Give me your little hand, my beauty! Let me tell your fortune. I will tell the whole truth: I am truly a wizard; so you are not mistaken, Katerina! Your golden heart said truly that I alone am its wizard, and will not hide the truth from it, the simple, girlish heart! But one thing you don’t see: it’s not for me, a wizard, to teach you wisdom! Wisdom is not what a maiden wants, and she hears the whole truth, yet seems not to know, not to understand! Her head is a subtle serpent, though her heart is melting in tears. She will find out for herself, will thread her way between troubles, will keep her cunning will! Something she can win by sense, and where she

cannot win by sense she will dazzle by beauty, will intoxicate men's minds with her black eye — beauty conquers strength, even the heart of iron will be rent asunder! Will you have grief and sorrow? Heavy is the sorrow of man! but trouble is not for the weak heart, trouble is close friends with the strong heart; stealthily it sheds a bloody tear, but does not go begging to good people for shameful comfort: your grief, girl, is like a print in the sand — the rain washes it away, the sun dries it, the stormy wind lifts it and blows it away. Let me tell you more, let me tell your fortune. Whoever loves you, you will be a slave to him, you will bind your freedom yourself, you will give yourself in pledge and will not take yourself back, you will not know how to cease to love in due time, you will sow a grain and your destroyer will take back a whole ear! My tender child, my little golden head, you buried your pearl of a tear in my goblet, but you could not be content with that — at once you shed a hundred; you uttered no more sweet words, and boasted of your sad life! And there was no need for you to grieve over it — the tear, the dew of heaven! It will come back to you with interest, your pearly tear, in the woeful night when cruel sorrow, evil fancies will gnaw your heart — then for that same tear another's tear will drop upon your warm heart — not a warm tear but a tear of blood, like molten lead; it will turn your white bosom to blood, and until the dreary, heavy morning that comes on gloomy days, you will toss in your little bed, shedding your heart's blood and will not heal your fresh wound till another dawn. Fill my goblet, Katerina, fill it again, my dove; fill it for my sage counsel, and no need to waste more words." His voice grew weak and trembling, sobs seemed on the point of breaking from his bosom, he poured out the wine and greedily drained another goblet. Then he brought the goblet down on the table again with a bang. His dim eyes once more gleamed with flame.

"Ah! Live as you may!" he shouted; "what's past is gone and done with. Fill up the heavy goblet, fill it up, that it may smite the rebellious head from its shoulders, that the whole soul may be dead with it! Lay me out for the long night that has no morning and let my memory vanish altogether. What is drunk is lived and done with. So the merchant's wares have grown stale, have lain by too long, he must give them away for nothing! but the merchant would not of his free will have sold it below its price. The blood of his foe should be spilt and the innocent blood should be shed too, and

that customer should have laid down his lost soul into the bargain! Fill my goblet, fill it again, Katerina.”

But the hand that held the goblet seemed to stiffen and did not move; his breathing was laboured and difficult, his head sank back. For the last time he fixed his lustreless eyes on Ordynov, but his eyes, too, grew dim at last, and his eyelids dropped as though they were made of lead. A deadly pallor overspread his face... For some time his lips twitched and quivered as though still trying to articulate — and suddenly a big hot tear hung on his eyelash, broke and slowly ran down his pale cheek....

Ordynov could bear no more. He got up and, reeling, took a step forward, went up to Katerina and clutched her hand. But she seemed not to notice him and did not even glance at him, as though she did not recognise him....

She, too, seemed to have lost consciousness, as though one thought, one fixed idea had entirely absorbed her. She sank on the bosom of the sleeping old man, twined her white arm round his neck, and gazed with glowing, feverish eyes as though they were riveted on him. She did not seem to feel Ordynov taking her hand. At last she turned her head towards him, and bent upon him a prolonged searching gaze. It seemed as though at last she understood, and a bitter, astonished smile came wearily, as it were painfully, on her lips....

“Go away, go away,” she whispered; “you are drunk and wicked, you are not a guest for me..,” then she turned again to the old man and riveted her eyes upon him.

She seemed as it were gloating over every breath he took and soothing his slumber with her eyes. She seemed afraid to breathe, checking her full throbbing heart, and there was such frenzied admiration in her face that at once despair, fury and insatiable anger seized Ordynov’s spirit....

“Katerina! Katerina!” he called, seizing her hand as though in a vice.

A look of pain passed over her face; she raised her head again, and looked at him with such mockery, with such contemptuous haughtiness, that he could scarcely stand upon his feet. Then she pointed to the sleeping old man and — as though all his enemy’s mockery had passed into her eyes, she bent again a taunting glance at Ordynov that sent an icy shiver to his heart.

“What? He will murder me, I suppose?” said Ordynov, beside himself with fury. Some demon seemed to whisper in his ear that he understood

her... and his whole heart laughed at Katerina’s fixed idea.

“I will buy you, my beauty, from your merchant, if you want my soul; no fear, he won’t kill me!.. A fixed laugh, that froze Ordynov’s whole being, remained upon Katerina’s face. Its boundless irony rent his heart. Not knowing what he was doing, hardly conscious, he leaned against the wall and took from a nail the old man’s expensive old-fashioned knife. A look of amazement seemed to come into Katerina’s face, but at the same time anger and contempt were reflected with the same force in her eyes. Ordynov turned sick, looking at her... he felt as though someone were thrusting, urging his frenzied hand to madness. He drew out the knife... Katerina watched him, motionless, holding her breath....

He glanced at the old man.

At that moment he fancied that one of the old man’s eyes opened and looked at him, laughing. Their eyes met. For some minutes Ordynov gazed at him fixedly.... Suddenly he fancied that the old man’s whole face began laughing and that a diabolical, soul-freezing chuckle resounded at last through the room. A hideous, dark thought crawled like a snake into his head. He shuddered; the knife fell from his hands and dropped with a clang upon the floor. Katerina uttered a shriek as though awaking from oblivion, from a nightmare, from a heavy, immovable vision.... The old man, very pale, slowly got up from the bed and angrily kicked the knife into the corner of the room; Katerina stood pale, deathlike, immovable; her eyelids were closing; her face was convulsed by a vague, insufferable pain; she hid her face in her hands and, with a shriek that rent the heart, sank almost breathless at the old man’s feet....

“Alyosha, Alyosha!” broke from her gasping bosom.

The old man seized her in his powerful arms and almost crushed her on his breast. But when she hid her head upon his heart, every feature in the old man’s face worked with such undisguised, shameless laughter that Ordynov’s whole soul was overwhelmed with horror. Deception, calculation, cold, jealous tyranny and horror at the poor broken heart — that was what he read in that laugh, that shamelessly threw off all disguise.

“She is mad!” he whispered, quivering like a leaf, and, numb with terror, he ran out of the flat.

CHAPTER III

WHEN, at eight o’clock next morning, Ordynov, pale and agitated and still dazed from the excitement of that day, opened Yaroslav Ilyitch’s door (he went to see him though he could not have said why) he staggered back in amazement and stood petrified in the doorway on seeing Murin in the room. The old man, even paler than Ordynov, seemed almost too ill to stand up; he would not sit down, however, though Yaroslav Ilyitch, highly delighted at the visit, invited him to do so. Yaroslav Ilyitch, too, cried out in surprise at seeing Ordynov, but almost at once his delight died away, and he was quite suddenly overtaken by embarrassment half-way between the table and the chair next it. It was evident that he did not know what to say or to do, and was fully conscious of the impropriety of sucking at his pipe and of leaving his visitor to his own devices at such a difficult moment. And yet (such was his confusion) he did go on pulling at his pipe with all his might and indeed with a sort of enthusiasm. Ordynov went into the room at last. He flung a cursory glance at Murin, a look flitted over the old man’s face, something like the malicious smile of the day before, which even now set Ordynov shuddering with indignation. All hostility, however, vanished at once and was smoothed away, and the old man’s face assumed a perfectly unapproachable and reserved air. He dropped a very low bow to his lodger.... The scene brought Ordynov to a sense of reality at last. Eager to understand the position of affairs, he looked intently at Yaroslav Ilyitch, who began to be uneasy and flustered.

“Come in, come in,” he brought out at last. “Come in, most precious Vassily Mihalitch; honour me with your presence, and put a stamp of... on all these ordinary objects..,” said Yaroslav Ilyitch, pointing towards a corner of the room, flushing like a crimson rose; confused and angry that even his most exalted sentences floundered and missed fire, he moved the chair with a loud noise into the very middle of the room.

“I hope I’m not hindering you, Yaroslav Ilyitch,” said Ordynov. “I wanted... for two minutes...”

“Upon my word! As though you could hinder me, Vassily Mihalitch; but let me offer you a cup of tea. Hey, servant.... I am sure you, too, will not refuse a cup!”

Murin nodded, signifying thereby that he would not. Yaroslav Ilyitch shouted to the servant who came in, sternly demanded another three glasses, then sat down beside Ordynov. For some time he turned his head like a plaster kitten to right and to left, from Murin to Ordynov, and from Ordynov to Murin. His position was extremely unpleasant. He evidently wanted to say something, to his notions extremely delicate, for one side at any rate. But for all his efforts he was totally unable to utter a word... Ordynov, too, seemed in perplexity. There was a moment when both began speaking at once.... Murin, silent, watching them both with curiosity, slowly opened his mouth and showed all his teeth....

“I’ve come to tell you,” Ordynov said suddenly, “that, owing to a most unpleasant circumstance, I am obliged to leave my lodging, and...”

“Fancy, what a strange circumstance!” Yaroslav Ilyitch interrupted suddenly. “I confess I was utterly astounded when this worthy old man told me this morning of your intention. But...”

“*He* told you,” said Ordynov, looking at Murin with surprise. —

Murin stroked his beard and laughed in his sleeve.

“Yes,” Yaroslav Ilyitch rejoined; “though I may have made a mistake. But I venture to say for you — I can answer for it on my honour that there was not a shadow of anything derogatory to you in this worthy old man’s words....”

Here Yaroslav Ilyitch blushed and controlled his emotion with an effort. Murin, after enjoying to his heart’s content the discomfiture of the other two men, took a step forward.

“It is like this, your honour,” he began, bowing politely to Ordynov: “His honour made bold to take a little trouble on your behalf. As it seems, sir — you know yourself — the mistress and I, that is, we would be glad, freely and heartily, and we would not have made bold to say a word... but the way I live, you know yourself, you see for yourself, sir! Of a truth, the Lord barely keeps us alive, for which we pray His holy will; else you see yourself, sir, whether it is for me to make lamentation.” Here Murin again wiped his beard with his sleeve.

Ordynov almost turned sick.

“Yes, yes, I told you about him, myself; he is ill, that is this malheur. I should like to express myself in French but, excuse me, I don’t speak French quite easily; that is...”

“Quite so...”

“Quite so, that is...”

Ordynov and Yaroslav Ilyitch made each other a half bow, each a little on one side of his chair, and both covered their confusion with an apologetic laugh. The practical Yaroslav Ilyitch recovered at once.

“I have been questioning this honest man minutely,” he began. “He has been telling me that the illness of this woman....” Here the delicate Yaroslav Ilyitch, probably wishing to conceal a slight embarrassment that showed itself in his face, hurriedly looked at Murin with inquiry.

“Yes, of our mistress...”

The refined Yaroslav Ilyitch did not insist further.

“The mistress, that is, your former landlady; I don’t know how... but there! She is an afflicted woman, you see... She says that she is hindering you... in your studies, and he himself... you concealed from me one important circumstance, Vassily Mihalitch!”

“What?”

“About the gun,” Yaroslav Ilyitch brought out, almost whispering in the most indulgent tone with the millionth fraction of reproach softly ringing in his friendly tenor.

“But,” he added hurriedly, “he has told me all about it.

And you acted nobly in overlooking his involuntary wrong to you. I swear I saw tears in his eyes.”

Yaroslav Ilyitch flushed again, his eyes shone and he shifted in his chair with emotion.

“I, that is, we, sir, that is, your honour, I, to be sure, and my mistress remember you in our prayers,” began Murin, addressing Ordynov and looking at him while Yaroslav Ilyitch overcame his habitual agitation; “and you know yourself, sir, she is a sick, foolish woman; my legs will hardly support me...”

“Yes, I am ready,” Ordynov said impatiently; “please, that’s enough, I am going directly...”

“No, that is, sir, we are very grateful for your kindness” (Murin made a very low bow); “that is not what I meant to tell you, sir; I wanted to say a word — you see, sir, she came to me almost from her home, that is from far, as the saying is, beyond the seventh water — do not scorn our humble talk, sir, we are ignorant folk — and from a tiny child she has been like this! A sick brain, hasty, she grew up in the forest, grew up a peasant, all among bargemen and factory hands; and then their house must burn down; her

mother, sir, was burnt, her father burnt to death — I daresay there is no knowing what she'll tell you... I don't meddle, but the Chir — chir-urgi-cal Council examined her at Moscow. You see, sir, she's quite incurable, that's what it is. I am all that's left her, and she lives with me. We live, we pray to God and trust in the Almighty; I never cross her in anything."

Ordynov's face changed. Yaroslav Ilyitch looked first at one, then at the other.

"But, that is not what I wanted to say... no!" Murin corrected himself, shaking his head gravely. "She is, so to say, such a featherhead, such a whirligig, such a loving, headstrong creature, she's always wanting a sweetheart — if you will pardon my saying so — and someone to love; it's on that she's mad. I amuse her with fairy tales, I do my best at it. I saw, sir, how she — forgive my foolish words, sir," Murin went on, bowing and wiping his beard with his sleeve— "how she made friends with you; you, so to say, your excellency, were desirous to approach her with a view to love."

Yaroslav Ilyitch flushed crimson, and looked reproachfully at Murin. Ordynov could scarcely sit still in his seat.

"No... that is not it, sir... I speak simply, sir, I am a peasant, I am at your service.... Of course, we are ignorant folk, we are your servants, sir," he brought out, bowing low; "and my wife and I will pray with all our hearts for your honour.... What do we need? To be strong and have enough to eat — we do not repine; but what am I to do, sir; put my head in the noose? You know yourself, sir, what life is and will have pity on us; but what will it be like, sir, if she has a lover, too!... Forgive my rough words, sir; I am a peasant, sir, and you are a gentleman.... You're a young man, your excellency, proud and hasty, and she, you know yourself, sir, is a little child with no sense — it's easy for her to fall into sin. She's a buxom lass, rosy and sweet, while I am an old man always ailing. Well, the devil, it seems, has tempted your honour. I always flatter her with fairy tales, I do indeed; I flatter her; and how we will pray, my wife and I, for your honour! How we will pray! And what is she to you, your excellency, if she is pretty? Still she is a simple woman, an unwashed peasant woman, a foolish rustic maid, a match for a peasant like me. It is not for a gentleman like you, sir, to be friends with peasants! But she and I will pray to God for your honour; how we will pray!"

Here Murin bowed very low and for a long while remained with his back bent, continually wiping his beard with his sleeve.

Yaroslav Ilyitch did not know where he was standing.

“Yes, this good man,” he observed in conclusion, “spoke to me of some undesirable incidents; I did not venture to believe him, Vassily Mihalitch, I heard that you were still ill,” he interrupted hurriedly, looking at Ordynov in extreme embarrassment, with eyes full of tears of emotion.

“Yes, how much do I owe you?” Ordynov asked Murin hurriedly.

“What are you saying, your honour? Give over. Why, we are not Judases. Why, you are insulting us, sir, we should be ashamed, sir. Have I and my good woman offended you?”

“But this is really strange, my good man; why, his honour took the room from you; don’t you feel that you are insulting him by refusing?” Yaroslav Ilyitch interposed, thinking it his duty to show Murin the strangeness and indelicacy of his conduct.

“But upon my word, sir! What do you mean, sir? What did we not do to please your honour? Why, we tried our very best, we did our utmost, upon my word! Give over, sir, give over, *your* honour. Christ have mercy upon you! Why, are we infidels or what? You might have lived, you might have eaten our humble fare with us and welcome; you might have lain there — we’d have said nothing against it, and we wouldn’t have dropped a word; but the evil one tempted you. I am an afflicted man and my mistress is afflicted — what is one to do? There was no one to wait on you, or we would have been glad, glad from our hearts. And how the mistress and I will pray for your honour, how we will pray for you!”

Murin bowed down from the waist. Tears came into Yaroslav Uyitch’s delighted eyes. He looked with enthusiasm at Ordynov.

“What a generous trait, isn’t it! What sacred hospitality is to be found in the Russian people.”

Ordynov looked wildly at Yaroslav Ilyitch.

He was almost terrified and scrutinised him from head to foot.

“Yes, indeed, sir, we do honour hospitality; we do honour it indeed, sir,” Murin asserted, covering his beard with his whole sleeve. “Yes, indeed, the thought just came to me; we’d have welcomed you as a guest, sir, by God! we would,” he went on, approaching Ordynov; “and I had nothing against it; another day I would have said nothing, nothing at all; but sin is a sore snare and my mistress is ill. Ah, if it were not for the mistress! Here, if I had been alone, for instance; how glad I would have been of your honour, how I would have waited upon you, wouldn’t I have waited upon you! Whom

should we respect if not your honour? I'd have healed you of your sickness, I know the art....You should have been our guest, upon my word you should, that is a great word with us!..

"Yes, really; is there such an art?" observed Yaroslav Ilyitch... and broke off.

Ordynov had done Yaroslav Ilyitch injustice when, just before, he had looked him up and down with wild amazement.

He was, of course, a very honest and honourable person, but now he understood everything and it must be owned his position was a very difficult one. He wanted to explode, as it is called, with laughter! If he had been alone with Ordynov — two such friends — Yaroslav Ilyitch would, of course, have given way to an immoderate outburst of gaiety without attempting to control himself. He would, however, have done this in a gentlemanly way. He would after laughing have pressed Ordynov's hand with feeling, would genuinely and justly have assured him that he felt double respect for him and that he could make allowances in every case... and, of course, would have made no reference to his youth. But as it was, with his habitual delicacy of feeling, he was in a most difficult position and scarcely knew what to do with himself....

"Arts, that is decoctions," Murin added. A quiver passed over his face at Yaroslav Ilyitch's tactless exclamation. "What I should say, sir, in my peasant foolishness," he went on, taking another step forward, "you've read too many books, sir; as the Russian saying is among us peasants, 'Wit has overstepped wisdom..."

"Enough," said Yaroslav Ilyitch sternly.

"I am going," said Ordynov. "I thank you, Yaroslav Ilyitch. I will come, I will certainly come and see you," he said in answer to the redoubled civilities of Yaroslav Ilyitch, who was unable to detain him further. "Good-bye, good-bye."

"Good-bye, your honour, good-bye, sir; do not forget us, visit us, poor sinners."

Ordynov heard nothing more — he went out like one distraught. He could bear no more, he felt shattered, his mind was numb, he dimly felt that he was overcome by illness, but cold despair reigned in his soul, and he was only conscious of a vague pain crushing, wearing, gnawing at his breast; he longed to die at that minute. His legs were giving way under him and he sat down by the fence, taking no notice of the passing people, nor of the crowd

that began to collect around him, nor of the questions, nor the exclamations of the curious. But, suddenly, in the multitude of voices, he heard the voice of Murin above him. Ordynov raised his head. The old man really was standing before him, his pale face was thoughtful and dignified, he was quite a different man from the one who had played the coarse farce at Yaroslav Ilyitch's. Ordynov got up. Murin took his arm and led him out of the crowd. "You want to get your belongings," he said, looking sideways at Ordynov. "Don't grieve, sir," cried Murin. "You are young, why grieve?..."

Ordynov made no reply.

"Are you offended, sir?... To be sure you are very angry now... but you have no cause; every man guards his own goods!"

"I don't know you," said Ordynov; "I don't want to know your secrets. But she, she!..," he brought out, and the tears rushed in streams from his eyes. The wind blew them one after another from his cheeks... Ordynov wiped them with his hand; his gesture, his eyes, the involuntary movement of his blue lips all looked like madness.

"I've told you already," said Murin, knitting his brows, "that she is crazy! What crazed her?... Why need you know? But to me, even so, she is dear! I've loved her more than my life and I'll give her up to no one. Do you understand now?"

There was a momentary gleam of fire in Ordynov's eyes.

"But why have I...? Why have I as good as lost my life? Why does my heart ache? Why did I know Katerina?"

"Why?" Murin laughed and pondered. "Why, I don't know why," he brought out at last. "A woman's heart is not as deep as the sea; you can get to know it, but it is cunning, persistent, full of life! What she wants she must have at once! You may as well know, sir, she wanted to leave me and go away with you; she was sick of the old man, she had lived through everything that she could live with him. You took her fancy, it seems, from the first, though it made no matter whether you or another... I don't cross her in anything — if she asks for bird's milk I'll get her bird's milk. I'll make up a bird if there is no such bird; she's set on her will though she doesn't know herself what her heart is mad after. So it has turned out that it is better in the old way! Ah, sir! you are very young, your heart is still hot like a girl forsaken, drying her tears on her sleeve! Let me tell you, sir, a weak man cannot stand alone. Give him everything, he will come of himself and give it all back; give him half the kingdoms of the world to possess, try

it and what do you think? He will hide himself in your slipper at once — he will make himself so small. Give a weak man his freedom — he will bind it himself and give it back to you. To a foolish heart freedom is no use! One can't get on with ways like that. I just tell you all this, you are very young! What are you to me? You've come and gone — you or another, it's all the same. I knew from the first it would be the same thing; one can't cross her, one can't say a word to cross her if one wants to keep one's happiness; only, you know, sir" — Murin went on with his reflections— "as the saying is, anything may happen; one snatches a knife in one's anger, or an unarmed man will fall on you like a sheep, with his bare hands, and tear his enemy's throat with his teeth; but let them put the knife in your hands and your enemy bare his chest before you — no fear, you'll step back."

They went into the yard. The Tatar saw Murin from a distance, took off his cap to him and stared slyly at Ordynov.

"Where's your mother? At home?" Murin shouted to him.

"Yes."

"Tell her to help him move his things, and you get away, run along!"

They went up the stairs. The old servant, who appeared to be really the porter's mother, was getting together their lodger's belongings and peevishly putting them in a big bundle.

"Wait a minute; I'll bring you something else of yours; it's left in there...."

Murin went into his room. A minute later he came back and gave Ordynov a sumptuous cushion, covered with embroidery in silks and braid, the one that Katerina had put under his head when he was ill.

"She sends you this," said Murin. "And now go for good and good luck to you; and mind now, don't hang about," he added in a fatherly tone, dropping his voice, "or harm will come of it."

It was evident that he did not want to offend his lodger, but when he cast a last look at him, a gleam of intense malice was unconsciously apparent in his face. Almost with repulsion he closed the door after Ordynov.

Within two hours Ordynov had moved into the rooms of Schpies the German. Tinchen was horrified when she saw him. She at once asked after his health and, when she learned what was wrong, at once did her best to nurse him.

The old German showed his lodger complacently how he had just been going down to paste a new placard on the gate, because the rent Ordynov

had paid in advance had run out, that very day, to the last farthing. The old man did not lose the opportunity of commending, in a roundabout way, the accuracy and honesty of Germans. The same day Ordynov was taken ill, and it was three months before he could leave his bed.

Little by little he got better and began to go out. Daily life in the German's lodgings was tranquil and monotonous. The old man had no special characteristics: pretty Tinchen, within the limits of propriety, was all that could be desired. But life seemed to have lost its colour for Ordynov for ever! He became dreamy and irritable; his impressionability took a morbid form and he sank imperceptibly into dull, angry hypochondria. His books were sometimes not opened for weeks together. The future was closed for him, his money was being spent, and he gave up all effort, he did not even think of the future. Sometimes his old feverish zeal for science, his old fervour, the old visions of his own creation, rose up vividly from the past, but they only oppressed and stifled his spiritual energy. His mind would not get to work. His creative force was at a standstill. It seemed as though all those visionary images had grown up to giants in his imagination on purpose to mock at the impotence of their creator. At melancholy moments he could not help comparing himself with the magician's pupil who, learning by stealth his master's magic word, bade the broom bring him water and choked himself drinking it, as he had forgotten how to say, "Stop." Possibly a complete, original, independent idea really did exist within him. Perhaps he had been destined to be the artist in science. So at least he himself had believed in the past. Genuine faith is the pledge of the future. But now at some moments he laughed himself at his blind conviction, and — and did not take a step forward.

Six months before, he had worked out, created and jotted down on paper a sketch of a work upon which (as he was so young) in non-creative moments he had built his most solid hopes. It was a work relating to the history of the church, and his warmest, most fervent convictions were to find expression in it. Now he read over that plan, made changes in it, thought it over, read it again, looked things up and at last rejected the idea without constructing anything fresh on its ruins. But something akin to mysticism, to fatalism and a belief in the mysterious began to make its way into his mind. The luckless fellow felt his sufferings and besought God to heal him. The German's servant, a devout old Russian woman, used to

describe with relish how her meek lodger prayed and how he would lie for hours together as though unconscious on the church pavement...

He never spoke to anyone of what had happened to him. But at times, especially at the hour when the church bells brought back to him the moment when first his heart ached and quivered with a feeling new to him, when he knelt beside her in the house of God, forgetting everything, and hearing nothing but the beating of her timid heart, when with tears of ecstasy and joy he watered the new, radiant hopes that had sprang up in his lonely life — then a storm broke in his soul that was wounded for ever; then his soul shuddered, and again the anguish of love glowed in his bosom with scorching fire; then his heart ached with sorrow and passion and his love seemed to grow with his grief. Often for hours together, forgetting himself and his daily life, forgetting everything in the world, he would sit in the same place, solitary, disconsolate; would shake his head hopelessly and, dropping silent tears, would whisper to himself:

“Katerina, my precious dove, my one loved sister!”

A hideous idea began to torment him more and more, it haunted him more and more vividly, and every day took more probable, more actual shape before him. He fancied — and at last he believed it fully — he fancied that Katerina’s reason was sound, but that Murin was right when he called her “a weak heart”. He fancied that some mystery, some secret, bound her to the old man, and that Katerina, though innocent of crime as a pure dove, had got into his power. Who were they? He did not know, but he had constant visions of an immense, overpowering despotism over a poor, defenceless creature, and his heart raged and trembled in impotent indignation. He fancied that before the frightened eyes of her suddenly awakened soul the idea of its degradation had been craftily presented, that the poor *weak* heart had been craftily tortured, that the truth had been twisted and contorted to her, that she had, with a purpose, been kept blind when necessary, that the inexperienced inclinations of her troubled passionate heart had been subtly flattered, and by degrees the free soul had been clipt of its wings till it was incapable at last of resistance or of a free movement towards free life...

By degrees Ordynov grew more and more unsociable and, to do them justice, his Germans did not hinder him in the tendency.

He was fond of walking aimlessly about the streets. He preferred the hour of twilight, and, by choice, remote, secluded and unfrequented places.

On one rainy, unhealthy spring evening, in one of his favourite back-lanes he met Yaroslav Ilyitch.

Yaroslav Ilyitch was perceptibly thinner. His friendly eyes looked dim and he looked altogether disappointed. He was racing off full speed on some business of the utmost urgency, he was wet through and muddy and, all the evening, a drop of rain had in an almost fantastic way been hanging on his highly decorous but now blue nose. He had, moreover, grown whiskers.

These whiskers and the fact that Yaroslav Ilyitch glanced at him as though trying to avoid a meeting with an old friend almost startled Ordynov. Strange to say, it even wounded his heart, which had till then felt no need for sympathy. He preferred, in fact, the man as he had been — simple, kindly, naïve; speaking candidly, a little stupid, but free from all pretensions to disillusionment and common sense. It is unpleasant when a foolish man whom we have once liked, just on account of his foolishness, suddenly becomes sensible; it is decidedly disagreeable. However, the distrust with which he looked at Ordynov was quickly effaced.

In spite of his disillusionment he still retained his old manners, which, as we all know, accompany a man to the grave, and even now he eagerly tried to win Ordynov's confidence. First of all he observed that he was very busy, and then that they had not seen each other for a long time; but all at once the conversation took a strange turn.

Yaroslav Ilyitch began talking of the deceitfulness of mankind in general. Of the transitoriness of the blessings of this world, of the vanity of vanities; he even made a passing allusion to Pushkin with more than indifference, referred with some cynicism to his acquaintances and, in conclusion, even hinted at the deceitfulness and treachery of those who are called friends, though there is no such thing in the world as real friendship and never has been; in short, Yaroslav Ilyitch had grown wise.

Ordynov did not contradict him, but he felt unutterably sad, as though he had buried his best friend.

"Ah! fancy, I was forgetting to tell you," Yaroslav Ilyitch began suddenly, as though recalling something very interesting. "There's a piece of news! I'll tell you as a secret. Do you remember the house where you lodged?"

Ordynov started and turned pale.

“Well, only fancy, just lately a whole gang of thieves was discovered in that house; that is, would you believe me, a regular band of brigands; smugglers, robbers of all sorts, goodness knows what. Some have been caught but others are still being looked for; the sternest orders have been given. And, can you believe it! do you remember the master of the house, that pious, respectable, worthy-looking old man?”

“Well?”

“What is one to think of mankind? He was the chief of their gang, the leader. Isn’t it absurd?”

Yaroslav Ilyitch spoke with feeling and judged of all mankind from one example, because Yaroslav Ilyitch could not do otherwise, it was his character.

“And they? Murin?” Ordynov articulated in a whisper. “Ah! Murin, Murin! no, he was a worthy old man, quite respectable... but, excuse me, you throw a new light...’ “Why? Was he, too, in the gang?”

Ordynov’s heart was ready to burst with impatience. “However, as you say..,” added Yaroslav Ilyitch, fixing his pewtery eyes on Ordynov — a sign that he was reflecting— “Murin could not have been one of them. Just three weeks ago he went home with his wife to their own parts... I learned it from the porter, that little Tatar, do you remember?

THE END

AN UNPLEASANT PREDICAMENT

This unpleasant business occurred at the epoch when the regeneration of our beloved fatherland and the struggle of her valiant sons towards new hopes and destinies was beginning with irresistible force and with a touchingly naïve impetuosity. One winter evening in that period, between eleven and twelve o'clock, three highly respectable gentlemen were sitting in a comfortable and even luxuriously furnished room in a handsome house of two storeys on the Petersburg Side, and were engaged in a staid and edifying conversation on a very interesting subject. These three gentlemen were all of generals' rank. They were sitting round a little table, each in a soft and handsome arm-chair, and as they talked, they quietly and luxuriously sipped champagne. The bottle stood on the table on a silver stand with ice round it. The fact was that the host, a privy councillor called Stepan Nikiforovitch Nikiforov, an old bachelor of sixty-five, was celebrating his removal into a house he had just bought, and as it happened, also his birthday, which he had never kept before. The festivity, however, was not on a very grand scale; as we have seen already, there were only two guests, both of them former colleagues and former subordinates of Mr. Nikiforov; that is, an actual civil councillor called Semyon Ivanovitch Shipulenko, and another actual civil councillor, Ivan Ilyitch Pralinsky. They had arrived to tea at nine o'clock, then had begun upon the wine, and knew that at exactly half-past eleven they would have to set off home. Their host had all his life been fond of regularity. A few words about him.

He had begun his career as a petty clerk with nothing to back him, had quietly plodded on for forty-five years, knew very well what to work towards, had no ambition to draw the stars down from heaven, though he had two stars already, and particularly disliked expressing his own opinion on any subject. He was honest, too, that is, it had not happened to him to do anything particularly dishonest; he was a bachelor because he was an egoist; he had plenty of brains, but he could not bear showing his intelligence; he particularly disliked slovenliness and enthusiasm, regarding it as moral slovenliness; and towards the end of his life had become completely absorbed in a voluptuous, indolent comfort and systematic solitude. Though he sometimes visited people of a rather higher rank than his own, yet from his youth up he could never endure entertaining visitors

himself; and of late he had, if he did not play a game of patience, been satisfied with the society of his dining-room clock, and would spend the whole evening dozing in his arm-chair, listening placidly to its ticking under its glass case on the chimney-piece. In appearance he was closely shaven and extremely proper-looking, he was well-preserved, looking younger than his age; he promised to go on living many years longer, and closely followed the rules of the highest good breeding. His post was a fairly comfortable one: he had to preside somewhere and to sign something. In short, he was regarded as a first-rate man. He had only one passion, or more accurately, one keen desire: that was, to have his own house, and a house built like a gentleman's residence, not a commercial investment. His desire was at last realised: he looked out and bought a house on the Petersburg Side, a good way off, it is true, but it had a garden and was an elegant house. The new owner decided that it was better for being a good way off: he did not like entertaining at home, and for driving to see any one or to the office he had a handsome carriage of a chocolate hue, a coachman, Mihey, and two little but strong and handsome horses. All this was honourably acquired by the careful frugality of forty years, so that his heart rejoiced over it.

This was how it was that Stepan Nikiforovitch felt such pleasure in his placid heart that he actually invited two friends to see him on his birthday, which he had hitherto carefully concealed from his most intimate acquaintances. He had special designs on one of these visitors. He lived in the upper storey of his new house, and he wanted a tenant for the lower half, which was built and arranged in exactly the same way. Stepan Nikiforovitch was reckoning upon Semyon Ivanovitch Shipulenko, and had twice that evening broached the subject in the course of conversation. But Semyon Ivanovitch made no response. The latter, too, was a man who had doggedly made a way for himself in the course of long years. He had black hair and whiskers, and a face that always had a shade of jaundice. He was a married man of morose disposition who liked to stay at home; he ruled his household with a rod of iron; in his official duties he had the greatest self-confidence. He, too, knew perfectly well what goal he was making for, and better still, what he never would reach. He was in a good position, and he was sitting tight there. Though he looked upon the new reforms with a certain distaste, he was not particularly agitated about them: he was extremely self-confident, and listened with a shade of ironical malice to

Ivan Ilyitch Pralinsky expatiating on new themes. All of them had been drinking rather freely, however, so that Stepan Nikiforovitch himself condescended to take part in a slight discussion with Mr. Pralinsky concerning the latest reforms. But we must say a few words about his Excellency, Mr. Pralinsky, especially as he is the chief hero of the present story.

The actual civil councillor Ivan Ilyitch Pralinsky had only been “his Excellency” for four months; in short, he was a young general. He was young in years, too — only forty-three, no more — and he looked and liked to look even younger. He was a tall, handsome man, he was smart in his dress, and prided himself on its solid, dignified character; with great aplomb he displayed an order of some consequence on his breast. From his earliest childhood he had known how to acquire the airs and graces of aristocratic society, and being a bachelor, dreamed of a wealthy and even aristocratic bride. He dreamed of many other things, though he was far from being stupid. At times he was a great talker, and even liked to assume a parliamentary pose. He came of a good family. He was the son of a general, and brought up in the lap of luxury; in his tender childhood he had been dressed in velvet and fine linen, had been educated at an aristocratic school, and though he acquired very little learning there he was successful in the service, and had worked his way up to being a general. The authorities looked upon him as a capable man, and even expected great things from him in the future. Stepan Nikiforovitch, under whom Ivan Ilyitch had begun his career in the service, and under whom he had remained until he was made a general, had never considered him a good business man and had no expectations of him whatever. What he liked in him was that he belonged to a good family, had property — that is, a big block of buildings, let out in flats, in charge of an overseer — was connected with persons of consequence, and what was more, had a majestic bearing. Stepan Nikiforovitch blamed him inwardly for excess of imagination and instability. Ivan Ilyitch himself felt at times that he had too much *amour-propre* and even sensitiveness. Strange to say, he had attacks from time to time of morbid tenderness of conscience and even a kind of faint remorse. With bitterness and a secret soreness of heart he recognised now and again that he did not fly so high as he imagined. At such moments he sank into despondency, especially when he was suffering from hæmorrhoids, called his life *une existence manquée*, and ceased — privately, of course — to

believe even in his parliamentary capacities, calling himself a talker, a maker of phrases; and though all that, of course, did him great credit, it did not in the least prevent him from raising his head again half an hour later, and growing even more obstinately, even more conceitedly self-confident, and assuring himself that he would yet succeed in making his mark, and that he would be not only a great official, but a statesman whom Russia would long remember. He actually dreamed at times of monuments. From this it will be seen that Ivan Ilyitch aimed high, though he hid his vague hopes and dreams deep in his heart, even with a certain trepidation. In short, he was a good-natured man and a poet at heart. Of late years these morbid moments of disillusionment had begun to be more frequent. He had become peculiarly irritable, ready to take offence, and was apt to take any contradiction as an affront. But reformed Russia gave him great hopes. His promotion to general was the finishing touch. He was roused; he held his head up. He suddenly began talking freely and eloquently. He talked about the new ideas, which he very quickly and unexpectedly made his own and professed with vehemence. He sought opportunities for speaking, drove about the town, and in many places succeeded in gaining the reputation of a desperate Liberal, which flattered him greatly. That evening, after drinking four glasses, he was particularly exuberant. He wanted on every point to confute Stepan Nikiforovitch, whom he had not seen for some time past, and whom he had hitherto always respected and even obeyed. He considered him for some reason reactionary, and fell upon him with exceptional heat. Stepan Nikiforovitch hardly answered him, but only listened slyly, though the subject interested him. Ivan Ilyitch got hot, and in the heat of the discussion sipped his glass more often than he ought to have done. Then Stepan Nikiforovitch took the bottle and at once filled his glass again, which for some reason seemed to offend Ivan Ilyitch, especially as Semyon Ivanovitch Shipulenko, whom he particularly despised and indeed feared on account of his cynicism and ill-nature, preserved a treacherous silence and smiled more frequently than was necessary. “They seem to take me for a schoolboy,” flashed across Ivan Ilyitch’s mind.

“No, it was time, high time,” he went on hotly. “We have put it off too long, and to my thinking humanity is the first consideration, humanity with our inferiors, remembering that they, too, are men. Humanity will save everything and bring out all that is....”

“He-he-he-he!” was heard from the direction of Semyon Ivanovitch.

“But why are you giving us such a talking to?” Stepan Nikiforovitch protested at last, with an affable smile. “I must own, Ivan Ilyitch, I have not been able to make out, so far, what you are maintaining. You advocate humanity. That is love of your fellow-creatures, isn’t it?”

“Yes, if you like. I....”

“Allow me! As far as I can see, that’s not the only thing. Love of one’s fellow-creatures has always been fitting. The reform movement is not confined to that. All sorts of questions have arisen relating to the peasantry, the law courts, economics, government contracts, morals and ... and ... and those questions are endless, and all together may give rise to great upheavals, so to say. That is what we have been anxious about, and not simply humanity....”

“Yes, the thing is a bit deeper than that,” observed Semyon Ivanovitch.

“I quite understand, and allow me to observe, Semyon Ivanovitch, that I can’t agree to being inferior to you in depth of understanding,” Ivan Ilyitch observed sarcastically and with excessive sharpness. “However, I will make so bold as to assert, Stepan Nikiforovitch, that you have not understood me either....”

“No, I haven’t.”

“And yet I maintain and everywhere advance the idea that humanity and nothing else with one’s subordinates, from the official in one’s department down to the copying clerk, from the copying clerk down to the house serf, from the servant down to the peasant — humanity, I say, may serve, so to speak, as the corner-stone of the coming reforms and the reformation of things in general. Why? Because. Take a syllogism. I am human, consequently I am loved. I am loved, so confidence is felt in me. There is a feeling of confidence, and so there is trust. There is trust, and so there is love ... that is, no, I mean to say that if they trust me they will believe in the reforms, they will understand, so to speak, the essential nature of them, will, so to speak, embrace each other in a moral sense, and will settle the whole business in a friendly way, fundamentally. What are you laughing at, Semyon Ivanovitch? Can’t you understand?”

Stepan Nikiforovitch raised his eyebrows without speaking; he was surprised.

“I fancy I have drunk a little too much,” said Semyon Ivanovitch sarcastically, “and so I am a little slow of comprehension. Not quite all my wits about me.”

Ivan Ilyitch winced.

“We should break down,” Stepan Nikiforovitch pronounced suddenly, after a slight pause of hesitation.

“How do you mean we should break down?” asked Ivan Ilyitch, surprised at Stepan Nikiforovitch’s abrupt remark.

“Why, we should break under the strain.” Stepan Nikiforovitch evidently did not care to explain further.

“I suppose you are thinking of new wine in old bottles?” Ivan Ilyitch replied, not without irony. “Well, I can answer for myself, anyway.”

At that moment the clock struck half-past eleven.

“One sits on and on, but one must go at last,” said Semyon Ivanovitch, getting up. But Ivan Ilyitch was before him; he got up from the table and took his sable cap from the chimney-piece. He looked as though he had been insulted.

“So how is it to be, Semyon Ivanovitch? Will you think it over?” said Stepan Nikiforovitch, as he saw the visitors out.

“About the flat, you mean? I’ll think it over, I’ll think it over.”

“Well, when you have made up your mind, let me know as soon as possible.”

“Still on business?” Mr. Pralinsky observed affably, in a slightly ingratiating tone, playing with his hat. It seemed to him as though they were forgetting him.

Stepan Nikiforovitch raised his eyebrows and remained mute, as a sign that he would not detain his visitors. Semyon Ivanovitch made haste to bow himself out.

“Well ... after that what is one to expect ... if you don’t understand the simple rules of good manners....” Mr. Pralinsky reflected to himself, and held out his hand to Stepan Nikiforovitch in a particularly offhand way.

In the hall Ivan Ilyitch wrapped himself up in his light, expensive fur coat; he tried for some reason not to notice Semyon Ivanovitch’s shabby raccoon, and they both began descending the stairs.

“The old man seemed offended,” said Ivan Ilyitch to the silent Semyon Ivanovitch.

“No, why?” answered the latter with cool composure.

“Servile flunkey,” Ivan Ilyitch thought to himself.

They went out at the front door. Semyon Ivanovitch’s sledge with a grey ugly horse drove up.

“What the devil! What has Trifon done with my carriage?” cried Ivan Ilyitch, not seeing his carriage.

The carriage was nowhere to be seen. Stepan Nikiforovitch’s servant knew nothing about it. They appealed to Varlam, Semyon Ivanovitch’s coachman, and received the answer that he had been standing there all the time and that the carriage had been there, but now there was no sign of it.

“An unpleasant predicament,” Mr. Shipulenko pronounced. “Shall I take you home?”

“Scoundrelly people!” Mr. Pralinsky cried with fury. “He asked me, the rascal, to let him go to a wedding close here in the Petersburg Side; some crony of his was getting married, deuce take her! I sternly forbade him to absent himself, and now I’ll bet he has gone off there.”

“He certainly has gone there, sir,” observed Varlam; “but he promised to be back in a minute, to be here in time, that is.”

“Well, there it is! I had a presentiment that this would happen! I’ll give it to him!”

“You’d better give him a good flogging once or twice at the police station, then he will do what you tell him,” said Semyon Ivanovitch, as he wrapped the rug round him.

“Please don’t you trouble, Semyon Ivanovitch!”

“Well, won’t you let me take you along?”

“*Merci, bon voyage.*”

Semyon Ivanovitch drove off, while Ivan Ilyitch set off on foot along the wooden pavement, conscious of a rather acute irritation.

“Yes, indeed I’ll give it to you now, you rogue! I am going on foot on purpose to make you feel it, to frighten you! He will come back and hear that his master has gone off on foot ... the blackguard!”

Ivan Ilyitch had never abused any one like this, but he was greatly angered, and besides, there was a buzzing in his head. He was not given to drink, so five or six glasses soon affected him. But the night was enchanting. There was a frost, but it was remarkably still and there was no wind. There was a clear, starry sky. The full moon was bathing the earth in soft silver light. It was so lovely that after walking some fifty paces Ivan Ilyitch almost forgot his troubles. He felt particularly pleased. People quickly change from one mood to another when they are a little drunk. He was even pleased with the ugly little wooden houses of the deserted street.

“It’s really a capital thing that I am walking,” he thought; “it’s a lesson to Trifon and a pleasure to me. I really ought to walk oftener. And I shall soon pick up a sledge on the Great Prospect. It’s a glorious night. What little houses they all are! I suppose small fry live here, clerks, tradesmen, perhaps.... That Stepan Nikiforovitch! What reactionaries they all are, those old fogies! Fogies, yes, *c’est le mot*. He is a sensible man, though; he has that *bon sens*, sober, practical understanding of things. But they are old, old. There is a lack of ... what is it? There is a lack of something.... ‘We shall break down.’ What did he mean by that? He actually pondered when he said it. He didn’t understand me a bit. And yet how could he help understanding? It was more difficult not to understand it than to understand it. The chief thing is that I am convinced, convinced in my soul. Humanity ... the love of one’s kind. Restore a man to himself, revive his personal dignity, and then ... when the ground is prepared, get to work. I believe that’s clear? Yes! Allow me, your Excellency; take a syllogism, for instance: we meet, for instance, a clerk, a poor, downtrodden clerk. ‘Well ... who are you?’ Answer: ‘A clerk.’ Very good, a clerk; further: ‘What sort of clerk are you?’ Answer: ‘I am such and such a clerk,’ he says. ‘Are you in the service?’ ‘I am.’ ‘Do you want to be happy?’ ‘I do.’ ‘What do you need for happiness?’ ‘This and that.’ ‘Why?’ ‘Because....’ and there the man understands me with a couple of words, the man’s mine, the man is caught, so to speak, in a net, and I can do what I like with him, that is, for his good. Horrid man that Semyon Ivanovitch! And what a nasty phiz he has!... ‘Flog him in the police station,’ he said that on purpose. No, you are talking rubbish; you can flog, but I’m not going to; I shall punish Trifon with words, I shall punish him with reproaches, he will feel it. As for flogging, h’m! ... it is an open question, h’m!... What about going to Emerance? Oh, damnation take it, the cursed pavement!” he cried out, suddenly tripping up. “And this is the capital. Enlightenment! One might break one’s leg. H’m! I detest that Semyon Ivanovitch; a most revolting phiz. He was chuckling at me just now when I said they would embrace each other in a moral sense. Well, and they will embrace each other, and what’s that to do with you? I am not going to embrace you; I’d rather embrace a peasant.... If I meet a peasant, I shall talk to him. I was drunk, though, and perhaps did not express myself properly. Possibly I am not expressing myself rightly now.... H’m! I shall never touch wine again. In the evening you babble, and next

morning you are sorry for it. After all, I am walking quite steadily.... But they are all scoundrels, anyhow!”

So Ivan Ilyitch meditated incoherently and by snatches, as he went on striding along the pavement. The fresh air began to affect him, set his mind working. Five minutes later he would have felt soothed and sleepy. But all at once, scarcely two paces from the Great Prospect, he heard music. He looked round. On the other side of the street, in a very tumble-down-looking long wooden house of one storey, there was a great fête, there was the scraping of violins, and the droning of a double bass, and the squeaky tooting of a flute playing a very gay quadrille tune. Under the windows stood an audience, mainly of women in wadded pelisses with kerchiefs on their heads; they were straining every effort to see something through a crack in the shutters. Evidently there was a gay party within. The sound of the thud of dancing feet reached the other side of the street. Ivan Ilyitch saw a policeman standing not far off, and went up to him.

“Whose house is that, brother?” he asked, flinging his expensive fur coat open, just far enough to allow the policeman to see the imposing decoration on his breast.

“It belongs to the registration clerk Pseldonimov,” answered the policeman, drawing himself up instantly, discerning the decoration.

“Pseldonimov? Bah! Pseldonimov! What is he up to? Getting married?”

“Yes, your Honour, to a daughter of a titular councillor, Mlekopitaev, a titular councillor ... used to serve in the municipal department. That house goes with the bride.”

“So that now the house is Pseldonimov’s and not Mlekopitaev’s?”

“Yes, Pseldonimov’s, your Honour. It was Mlekopitaev’s, but now it is Pseldonimov’s.”

“H’m! I am asking you, my man, because I am his chief. I am a general in the same office in which Pseldonimov serves.”

“Just so, your Excellency.”

The policeman drew himself up more stiffly than ever, while Ivan Ilyitch seemed to ponder. He stood still and meditated....

Yes, Pseldonimov really was in his department and in his own office; he remembered that. He was a little clerk with a salary of ten roubles a month. As Mr. Pralinsky had received his department very lately he might not have remembered precisely all his subordinates, but Pseldonimov he remembered just because of his surname. It had caught his eye from the very first, so that

at the time he had had the curiosity to look with special attention at the possessor of such a surname. He remembered now a very young man with a long hooked nose, with tufts of flaxen hair, lean and ill-nourished, in an impossible uniform, and with unmentionables so impossible as to be actually unseemly; he remembered how the thought had flashed through his mind at the time: shouldn’t he give the poor fellow ten roubles for Christmas, to spend on his wardrobe? But as the poor fellow’s face was too austere, and his expression extremely unprepossessing, even exciting repulsion, the good-natured idea somehow faded away of itself, so Pseldonimov did not get his tip. He had been the more surprised when this same Pseldonimov had not more than a week before asked for leave to be married. Ivan Ilyitch remembered that he had somehow not had time to go into the matter, so that the matter of the marriage had been settled offhand, in haste. But yet he did remember exactly that Pseldonimov was receiving a wooden house and four hundred roubles in cash as dowry with his bride. The circumstance had surprised him at the time; he remembered that he had made a slight jest over the juxtaposition of the names Pseldonimov and Mlekopitaev. He remembered all that clearly.

He recalled it, and grew more and more pensive. It is well known that whole trains of thought sometimes pass through our brains instantaneously as though they were sensations without being translated into human speech, still less into literary language. But we will try to translate these sensations of our hero’s, and present to the reader at least the kernel of them, so to say, what was most essential and nearest to reality in them. For many of our sensations when translated into ordinary language seem absolutely unreal. That is why they never find expression, though every one has them. Of course Ivan Ilyitch’s sensations and thoughts were a little incoherent. But you know the reason.

“Why,” flashed through his mind, “here we all talk and talk, but when it comes to action — it all ends in nothing. Here, for instance, take this Pseldonimov: he has just come from his wedding full of hope and excitement, looking forward to his wedding feast.... This is one of the most blissful days of his life.... Now he is busy with his guests, is giving a banquet, a modest one, poor, but gay and full of genuine gladness.... What if he knew that at this very moment I, I, his superior, his chief, am standing by his house listening to the music? Yes, really how would he feel? No, what would he feel if I suddenly walked in? H’m!... Of course at first he would

be frightened, he would be dumb with embarrassment.... I should be in his way, and perhaps should upset everything. Yes, that would be so if any other general went in, but not I.... That’s a fact, any one else, but not I....

“Yes, Stepan Nikiforovitch! You did not understand me just now, but here is an example ready for you.

“Yes, we all make an outcry about acting humanely, but we are not capable of heroism, of fine actions.

“What sort of heroism? This sort. Consider: in the existing relations of the various members of society, for me, for me, after midnight to go in to the wedding of my subordinate, a registration clerk, at ten roubles the month — why, it would mean embarrassment, a revolution, the last days of Pompeii, a nonsensical folly. No one would understand it. Stepan Nikiforovitch would die before he understood it. Why, he said we should break down. Yes, but that’s you old people, inert, paralytic people; but I shan’t break down, I will transform the last day of Pompeii to a day of the utmost sweetness for my subordinate, and a wild action to an action normal, patriarchal, lofty and moral. How? Like this. Kindly listen....

“Here ... I go in, suppose; they are amazed, leave off dancing, look wildly at me, draw back. Quite so, but at once I speak out: I go straight up to the frightened Pseldonimov, and with a most cordial, affable smile, in the simplest words, I say: ‘This is how it is, I have been at his Excellency Stepan Nikiforovitch’s. I expect you know, close here in the neighbourhood....’ Well, then, lightly, in a laughing way, I shall tell him of my adventure with Trifon. From Trifon I shall pass on to saying how I walked here on foot.... ‘Well, I heard music, I inquired of a policeman, and learned, brother, that it was your wedding. Let me go in, I thought, to my subordinate’s; let me see how my clerks enjoy themselves and ... celebrate their wedding. I suppose you won’t turn me out?’ Turn me out! What a word for a subordinate! How the devil could he dream of turning me out! I fancy that he would be half crazy, that he would rush headlong to seat me in an arm-chair, would be trembling with delight, would hardly know what he was doing for the first minute!

“Why, what can be simpler, more elegant than such an action? Why did I go in? That’s another question! That is, so to say, the moral aspect of the question. That’s the pith.

“H’m, what was I thinking about, yes!

“Well, of course they will make me sit down with the most important guest, some titular councillor or a relation who’s a retired captain with a red nose. Gogol describes these eccentrics so capitally. Well, I shall make acquaintance, of course, with the bride, I shall compliment her, I shall encourage the guests. I shall beg them not to stand on ceremony. To enjoy themselves, to go on dancing. I shall make jokes, I shall laugh; in fact, I shall be affable and charming. I am always affable and charming when I am pleased with myself.... H’m ... the point is that I believe I am still a little, well, not drunk exactly, but ...

“Of course, as a gentleman I shall be quite on an equality with them, and shall not expect any especial marks of.... But morally, morally, it is a different matter; they will understand and appreciate it.... My actions will evoke their nobler feelings.... Well, I shall stay for half an hour ... even for an hour; I shall leave, of course, before supper; but they will be bustling about, baking and roasting, they will be making low bows, but I will only drink a glass, congratulate them and refuse supper. I shall say—’business.’ And as soon as I pronounce the word ‘business,’ all of them will at once have sternly respectful faces. By that I shall delicately remind them that there is a difference between them and me. The earth and the sky. It is not that I want to impress that on them, but it must be done ... it’s even essential in a moral sense, when all is said and done. I shall smile at once, however, I shall even laugh, and then they will all pluck up courage again.... I shall jest a little again with the bride; h’m!... I may even hint that I shall come again in just nine months to stand godfather, he-he! And she will be sure to be brought to bed by then. They multiply, you know, like rabbits. And they will all roar with laughter and the bride will blush; I shall kiss her feelingly on the forehead, even give her my blessing ... and next day my exploit will be known at the office. Next day I shall be stern again, next day I shall be exacting again, even implacable, but they will all know what I am like. They will know my heart, they will know my essential nature: ‘He is stern as chief, but as a man he is an angel!’ And I shall have conquered them; I shall have captured them by one little act which would never have entered your head; they would be mine; I should be their father, they would be my children.... Come now, your Excellency Stepan Nikiforovitch, go and do likewise....

“But do you know, do you understand, that Pseldonimov will tell his children how the General himself feasted and even drank at his wedding!

Why you know those children would tell their children, and those would tell their grandchildren as a most sacred story that a grand gentleman, a statesman (and I shall be all that by then) did them the honour, and so on, and so on. Why, I am morally elevating the humiliated, I restore him to himself.... Why, he gets a salary of ten roubles a month!... If I repeat this five or ten times, or something of the sort, I shall gain popularity all over the place.... My name will be printed on the hearts of all, and the devil only knows what will come of that popularity!...”

These, or something like these, were Ivan Ilyitch’s reflections, (a man says all sorts of things sometimes to himself, gentlemen, especially when he is in rather an eccentric condition). All these meditations passed through his mind in something like half a minute, and of course he might have confined himself to these dreams and, after mentally putting Stepan Nikiforovitch to shame, have gone very peacefully home and to bed. And he would have done well. But the trouble of it was that the moment was an eccentric one.

As ill-luck would have it, at that very instant the self-satisfied faces of Stepan Nikiforovitch and Semyon Ivanovitch suddenly rose before his heated imagination.

“We shall break down!” repeated Stepan Nikiforovitch, smiling disdainfully.

“He-he-he,” Semyon Ivanovitch seconded him with his nastiest smile.

“Well, we’ll see whether we do break down!” Ivan Ilyitch said resolutely, with a rush of heat to his face.

He stepped down from the pavement and with resolute steps went straight across the street towards the house of his registration clerk Pseldonimov.

His star carried him away. He walked confidently in at the open gate and contemptuously thrust aside with his foot the shaggy, husky little sheep-dog who flew at his legs with a hoarse bark, more as a matter of form than with any real intention. Along a wooden plank he went to the covered porch which led like a sentry box to the yard, and by three decaying wooden steps he went up to the tiny entry. Here, though a tallow candle or something in the way of a night-light was burning somewhere in a corner, it did not prevent Ivan Ilyitch from putting his left foot just as it was, in its galosh, into a galantine which had been stood out there to cool. Ivan Ilyitch bent down, and looking with curiosity, he saw that there were two other dishes of

some sort of jelly and also two shapes apparently of blancmange. The squashed galantine embarrassed him, and for one brief instant the thought flashed through his mind, whether he should not slink away at once. But he considered this too low. Reflecting that no one would have seen him, and that they would never think he had done it, he hurriedly wiped his galosh to conceal all traces, fumbled for the felt-covered door, opened it and found himself in a very little ante-room. Half of it was literally piled up with greatcoats, wadded jackets, cloaks, capes, scarves and galoshes. In the other half the musicians had been installed; two violins, a flute, and a double bass, a band of four, picked up, of course, in the street. They were sitting at an unpainted wooden table, lighted by a single tallow candle, and with the utmost vigour were sawing out the last figure of the quadrille. From the open door into the drawing-room one could see the dancers in the midst of dust, tobacco smoke and fumes. There was a frenzy of gaiety. There were sounds of laughter, shouts and shrieks from the ladies. The gentlemen stamped like a squadron of horses. Above all the Bedlam there rang out words of command from the leader of the dance, probably an extremely free and easy, and even unbuttoned gentleman: “Gentlemen advance, ladies’ chain, set to partners!” and so on, and so on. Ivan Ilyitch in some excitement cast off his coat and galoshes, and with his cap in his hand went into the room. He was no longer reflecting, however.

For the first minute nobody noticed him; all were absorbed in dancing the quadrille to the end. Ivan Ilyitch stood as though entranced, and could make out nothing definite in the chaos. He caught glimpses of ladies’ dresses, of gentlemen with cigarettes between their teeth. He caught a glimpse of a lady’s pale blue scarf which flicked him on the nose. After the wearer a medical student, with his hair blown in all directions on his head, pranced by in wild delight and jostled violently against him on the way. He caught a glimpse, too, of an officer of some description, who looked half a mile high. Some one in an unnaturally shrill voice shouted, “O-o-oh, Pseldonimov!” as the speaker flew by stamping. It was sticky under Ivan Ilyitch’s feet; evidently the floor had been waxed. In the room, which was a very small one, there were about thirty people.

But a minute later the quadrille was over, and almost at once the very thing Ivan Ilyitch had pictured when he was dreaming on the pavement took place.

A stifled murmur, a strange whisper passed over the whole company, including the dancers, who had not yet had time to take breath and wipe their perspiring faces. All eyes, all faces began quickly turning towards the newly arrived guest. Then they all seemed to draw back a little and beat a retreat. Those who had not noticed him were pulled by their coats or dresses and informed. They looked round and at once beat a retreat with the others. Ivan Ilyitch was still standing at the door without moving a step forward, and between him and the company there stretched an ever widening empty space of floor strewn with countless sweet-meat wrappings, bits of paper and cigarette ends. All at once a young man in a uniform, with a shock of flaxen hair and a hooked nose, stepped timidly out into that empty space. He moved forward, hunched up, and looked at the unexpected visitor exactly with the expression with which a dog looks at its master when the latter has called him up and is going to kick him.

“Good evening, Pseldonimov, do you know me?” said Ivan Ilyitch, and felt at the same minute that he had said this very awkwardly; he felt, too, that he was perhaps doing something horribly stupid at that moment.

“You-our Ex-cel-len-cy!” muttered Pseldonimov.

“To be sure.... I have called in to see you quite by chance, my friend, as you can probably imagine....”

But evidently Pseldonimov could imagine nothing. He stood with staring eyes in the utmost perplexity.

“You won’t turn me out, I suppose.... Pleased or not, you must make a visitor welcome....” Ivan Ilyitch went on, feeling that he was confused to a point of unseemly feebleness; that he was trying to smile and was utterly unable; that the humorous reference to Stepan Nikiforovitch and Trifon was becoming more and more impossible. But as ill luck would have it, Pseldonimov did not recover from his stupefaction, and still gazed at him with a perfectly idiotic air. Ivan Ilyitch winced, he felt that in another minute something incredibly foolish would happen.

“I am not in the way, am I?... I’ll go away,” he faintly articulated, and there was a tremor at the right corner of his mouth.

But Pseldonimov had recovered himself.

“Good heavens, your Excellency ... the honour...,” he muttered, bowing hurriedly. “Graciously sit down, your Excellency....” And recovering himself still further, he motioned him with both hands to a sofa before which a table had been moved away to make room for the dancing.

Ivan Ilyitch felt relieved and sank on the sofa; at once some one flew to move the table up to him. He took a cursory look round and saw that he was the only person sitting down, all the others were standing, even the ladies. A bad sign. But it was not yet time to reassure and encourage them. The company still held back, while before him, bending double, stood Pseldonimov, utterly alone, still completely at a loss and very far from smiling. It was horrid; in short, our hero endured such misery at that moment that his Haroun al-Raschid-like descent upon his subordinates for the sake of principle might well have been reckoned an heroic action. But suddenly a little figure made its appearance beside Pseldonimov, and began bowing. To his inexpressible pleasure and even happiness, Ivan Ilyitch at once recognised him as the head clerk of his office, Akim Petrovitch Zubikov, and though, of course, he was not acquainted with him, he knew him to be a businesslike and exemplary clerk. He got up at once and held out his hand to Akim Petrovitch — his whole hand, not two fingers. The latter took it in both of his with the deepest respect. The general was triumphant, the situation was saved.

And now indeed Pseldonimov was no longer, so to say, the second person, but the third. It was possible to address his remarks to the head clerk in his necessity, taking him for an acquaintance and even an intimate one, and Pseldonimov meanwhile could only be silent and be in a tremor of reverence. So that the proprieties were observed. And some explanation was essential, Ivan Ilyitch felt that; he saw that all the guests were expecting something, that the whole household was gathered together in the doorway, almost creeping, climbing over one another in their anxiety to see and hear him. What was horrid was that the head clerk in his foolishness remained standing.

“Why are you standing?” said Ivan Ilyitch, awkwardly motioning him to a seat on the sofa beside him.

“Oh, don’t trouble.... I’ll sit here.” And Akim Petrovitch hurriedly sat down on a chair, almost as it was being put for him by Pseldonimov, who remained obstinately standing.

“Can you imagine what happened,” addressing himself exclusively to Akim Petrovitch in a rather quavering, though free and easy voice. He even drawled out his words, with special emphasis on some syllables, pronounced the vowel *ah* like *eh*; in short, felt and was conscious that he

was being affected but could not control himself: some external force was at work. He was painfully conscious of many things at that moment.

“Can you imagine, I have only just come from Stepan Nikiforovitch Nikiforov’s, you have heard of him perhaps, the privy councillor. You know ... on that special committee....”

Akim Petrovitch bent his whole person forward respectfully: as much as to say, “Of course we have heard of him.”

“He is your neighbor now,” Ivan Ilyitch went on, for one instant for the sake of ease and good manners addressing Pseldonimov, but he quickly turned away again, on seeing from the latter’s eyes that it made absolutely no difference to him.

“The old fellow, as you know, has been dreaming all his life of buying himself a house.... Well, and he has bought it. And a very pretty house too. Yes.... And to-day was his birthday and he had never celebrated it before, he used even to keep it secret from us, he was too stingy to keep it, he-he. But now he is so delighted over his new house, that he invited Semyon Ivanovitch Shipulenko and me, you know.”

Akim Petrovitch bent forward again. He bent forward zealously. Ivan Ilyitch felt somewhat comforted. It had struck him, indeed, that the head clerk possibly was guessing that he was an indispensable *point d’appui* for his Excellency at that moment. That would have been more horrid than anything.

“So we sat together, the three of us, he gave us champagne, we talked about problems ... even dis-pu-ted.... He-he!”

Akim Petrovitch raised his eyebrows respectfully.

“Only that is not the point. When I take leave of him at last — he is a punctual old fellow, goes to bed early, you know, in his old age — I go out.... My Trifon is nowhere to be seen! I am anxious, I make inquiries. ‘What has Trifon done with the carriage?’ It comes out that hoping I should stay on, he had gone off to the wedding of some friend of his, or sister maybe.... Goodness only knows. Somewhere here on the Petersburg Side. And took the carriage with him while he was about it.”

Again for the sake of good manners the general glanced in the direction of Pseldonimov. The latter promptly gave a wriggle, but not at all the sort of wriggle the general would have liked. “He has no sympathy, no heart,” flashed through his brain.

“You don’t say so!” said Akim Petrovitch, greatly impressed. A faint murmur of surprise ran through all the crowd.

“Can you fancy my position....” (Ivan Ilyitch glanced at them all.) “There was nothing for it, I set off on foot, I thought I would trudge to the Great Prospect, and there find some cabby ... he-he!”

“He-he-he!” Akim Petrovitch echoed. Again a murmur, but this time on a more cheerful note, passed through the crowd. At that moment the chimney of a lamp on the wall broke with a crash. Some one rushed zealously to see to it. Pseldonimov started and looked sternly at the lamp, but the general took no notice of it, and all was serene again.

“I walked ... and the night was so lovely, so still. All at once I heard a band, stamping, dancing. I inquired of a policeman; it is Pseldonimov’s wedding. Why, you are giving a ball to all Petersburg Side, my friend. Ha-ha.” He turned to Pseldonimov again.

“He-he-he! To be sure,” Akim Petrovitch responded. There was a stir among the guests again, but what was most foolish was that Pseldonimov, though he bowed, did not even now smile, but seemed as though he were made of wood. “Is he a fool or what?” thought Ivan Ilyitch. “He ought to have smiled at that point, the ass, and everything would have run easily.” There was a fury of impatience in his heart.

“I thought I would go in to see my clerk. He won’t turn me out I expect ... pleased or not, one must welcome a guest. You must please excuse me, my dear fellow. If I am in the way, I will go ... I only came in to have a look....”

But little by little a general stir was beginning.

Akim Petrovitch looked at him with a mawkishly sweet expression as though to say, “How could your Excellency be in the way?” all the guests stirred and began to display the first symptoms of being at their ease. Almost all the ladies sat down. A good sign and a reassuring one. The boldest spirits among them fanned themselves with their handkerchiefs. One of them in a shabby velvet dress said something with intentional loudness. The officer addressed by her would have liked to answer her as loudly, but seeing that they were the only ones speaking aloud, he subsided. The men, for the most part government clerks, with two or three students among them, looked at one another as though egging each other on to unbend, cleared their throats, and began to move a few steps in different directions. No one, however, was particularly timid, but they were all

restive, and almost all of them looked with a hostile expression at the personage who had burst in upon them, to destroy their gaiety. The officer, ashamed of his cowardice, began to edge up to the table.

“But I say, my friend, allow me to ask you your name,” Ivan Ilyitch asked Pseldonimov.

“Porfiry Petrovitch, your Excellency,” answered the latter, with staring eyes as though on parade.

“Introduce me, Porfiry Petrovitch, to your bride.... Take me to her ... I....”

And he showed signs of a desire to get up. But Pseldonimov ran full speed to the drawing-room. The bride, however, was standing close by at the door, but as soon as she heard herself mentioned, she hid. A minute later Pseldonimov led her up by the hand. The guests all moved aside to make way for them. Ivan Ilyitch got up solemnly and addressed himself to her with a most affable smile.

“Very, very much pleased to make your acquaintance,” he pronounced with a most aristocratic half-bow, “especially on such a day....”

He gave a meaning smile. There was an agreeable flutter among the ladies.

“*Charmé*,” the lady in the velvet dress pronounced, almost aloud.

The bride was a match for Pseldonimov. She was a thin little lady not more than seventeen, pale, with a very small face and a sharp little nose. Her quick, active little eyes were not at all embarrassed; on the contrary, they looked at him steadily and even with a shade of resentment. Evidently Pseldonimov was marrying her for her beauty. She was dressed in a white muslin dress over a pink slip. Her neck was thin, and she had a figure like a chicken’s with the bones all sticking out. She was not equal to making any response to the general’s affability.

“But she is very pretty,” he went on, in an undertone, as though addressing Pseldonimov only, though intentionally speaking so that the bride could hear.

But on this occasion, too, Pseldonimov again answered absolutely nothing, and did not even wriggle. Ivan Ilyitch fancied that there was something cold, suppressed in his eyes, as though he had something peculiarly malignant in his mind. And yet he had at all costs to wring some sensibility out of him. Why, that was the object of his coming.

“They are a couple, though!” he thought.

And he turned again to the bride, who had seated herself beside him on the sofa, but in answer to his two or three questions he got nothing but “yes” or “no,” and hardly that.

“If only she had been overcome with confusion,” he thought to himself, “then I should have begun to banter her. But as it is, my position is impossible.”

And as ill-luck would have it, Akim Petrovitch, too, was mute; though this was only due to his foolishness, it was still unpardonable.

“My friends! Haven’t I perhaps interfered with your enjoyment?” he said, addressing the whole company.

He felt that the very palms of his hands were perspiring.

“No ... don’t trouble, your Excellency; we are beginning directly, but now ... we are getting cool,” answered the officer.

The bride looked at him with pleasure; the officer was not old, and wore the uniform of some branch of the service. Pseldonimov was still standing in the same place, bending forward, and it seemed as though his hooked nose stood out further than ever. He looked and listened like a footman standing with the greatcoat on his arm, waiting for the end of his master’s farewell conversation. Ivan Ilyitch made this comparison himself. He was losing his head; he felt that he was in an awkward position, that the ground was giving way under his feet, that he had got in somewhere and could not find his way out, as though he were in the dark.

Suddenly the guests all moved aside, and a short, thick-set, middle-aged woman made her appearance, dressed plainly though she was in her best, with a big shawl on her shoulders, pinned at her throat, and on her head a cap to which she was evidently unaccustomed. In her hands she carried a small round tray on which stood a full but uncorked bottle of champagne and two glasses, neither more nor less. Evidently the bottle was intended for only two guests.

The middle-aged lady approached the general.

“Don’t look down on us, your Excellency,” she said, bowing. “Since you have deigned to do my son the honour of coming to his wedding, we beg you graciously to drink to the health of the young people. Do not disdain us; do us the honour.”

Ivan Ilyitch clutched at her as though she were his salvation. She was by no means an old woman — forty-five or forty-six, not more; but she had

such a good-natured, rosy-cheeked, such a round and candid Russian face, she smiled so good-humouredly, bowed so simply, that Ivan Ilyitch was almost comforted and began to hope again.

“So you are the mo-other of your so-on?” he said, getting up from the sofa.

“Yes, my mother, your Excellency,” mumbled Pseldonimov, craning his long neck and thrusting forward his long nose again.

“Ah! I am delighted — de-ligh-ted to make your acquaintance.”

“Do not refuse us, your Excellency.”

“With the greatest pleasure.”

The tray was put down. Pseldonimov dashed forward to pour out the wine. Ivan Ilyitch, still standing, took the glass.

“I am particularly, particularly glad on this occasion, that I can ..,” he began, “that I can ... testify before all of you.... In short, as your chief ... I wish you, madam” (he turned to the bride), “and you, friend Porfiry, I wish you the fullest, completest happiness for many long years.”

And he positively drained the glass with feeling, the seventh he had drunk that evening. Pseldonimov looked at him gravely and even sullenly. The general was beginning to feel an agonising hatred of him.

“And that scarecrow” (he looked at the officer) “keeps obtruding himself. He might at least have shouted ‘hurrah!’ and it would have gone off, it would have gone off....”

“And you too, Akim Petrovitch, drink a glass to their health,” added the mother, addressing the head clerk. “You are his superior, he is under you. Look after my boy, I beg you as a mother. And don’t forget us in the future, our good, kind friend, Akim Petrovitch.”

“How nice these old Russian women are,” thought Ivan Ilyitch. “She has livened us all up. I have always loved the democracy....”

At that moment another tray was brought to the table; it was brought in by a maid wearing a crackling cotton dress that had never been washed, and a crinoline. She could hardly grasp the tray in both hands, it was so big. On it there were numbers of plates of apples, sweets, fruit meringues and fruit cheeses, walnuts and so on, and so on. The tray had been till then in the drawing-room for the delectation of all the guests, and especially the ladies. But now it was brought to the general alone.

“Do not disdain our humble fare, your Excellency. What we have we are pleased to offer,” the old lady repeated, bowing.

“Delighted!” said Ivan Ilyitch, and with real pleasure took a walnut and cracked it between his fingers. He had made up his mind to win popularity at all costs.

Meantime the bride suddenly giggled.

“What is it?” asked Ivan Ilyitch with a smile, encouraged by this sign of life.

“Ivan Kostenkinitch, here, makes me laugh,” she answered, looking down.

The general distinguished, indeed, a flaxen-headed young man, exceedingly good-looking, who was sitting on a chair at the other end of the sofa, whispering something to Madame Pseldonimov. The young man stood up. He was apparently very young and very shy.

“I was telling the lady about a ‘dream book,’ your Excellency,” he muttered as though apologising.

“About what sort of ‘dream book’?” asked Ivan Ilyitch condescendingly.

“There is a new ‘dream book,’ a literary one. I was telling the lady that to dream of Mr. Panaev means spilling coffee on one’s shirt front.”

“What innocence!” thought Ivan Ilyitch, with positive annoyance.

Though the young man flushed very red as he said it, he was incredibly delighted that he had said this about Mr. Panaev.

“To be sure, I have heard of it...,” responded his Excellency.

“No, there is something better than that,” said a voice quite close to Ivan Ilyitch. “There is a new encyclopædia being published, and they say Mr. Kraevsky will write articles... and satirical literature.”

This was said by a young man who was by no means embarrassed, but rather free and easy. He was wearing gloves and a white waistcoat, and carried a hat in his hand. He did not dance, and looked condescending, for he was on the staff of a satirical paper called *The Firebrand*, and gave himself airs accordingly. He had come casually to the wedding, invited as an honoured guest of the Pseldonimovs’, with whom he was on intimate terms and with whom only a year before he had lived in very poor lodgings, kept by a German woman. He drank vodka, however, and for that purpose had more than once withdrawn to a snug little back room to which all the guests knew their way. The general disliked him extremely.

“And the reason that’s funny,” broke in joyfully the flaxen-headed young man, who had talked of the shirt front and at whom the young man on the comic paper looked with hatred in consequence, “it’s funny, your

Excellency, because it is supposed by the writer that Mr. Kraevsky does not know how to spell, and thinks that ‘satirical’ ought to be written with a ‘y’ instead of an ‘i.’”

But the poor young man scarcely finished his sentence; he could see from his eyes that the general knew all this long ago, for the general himself looked embarrassed, and evidently because he knew it. The young man seemed inconceivably ashamed. He succeeded in effacing himself completely, and remained very melancholy all the rest of the evening.

But to make up for that the young man on the staff of the *Firebrand* came up nearer, and seemed to be intending to sit down somewhere close by. Such free and easy manners struck Ivan Ilyitch as rather shocking.

“Tell me, please, Porfiry,” he began, in order to say something, “why — I have always wanted to ask you about it in person — why you are called Pseldonimov instead of Pseudonimov? Your name surely must be Pseudonimov.”

“I cannot inform you exactly, your Excellency,” said Pseldonimov.

“It must have been that when his father went into the service they made a mistake in his papers, so that he has remained now Pseldonimov,” put in Akim Petrovitch. “That does happen.”

“Un-doubted-ly,” the general said with warmth, “un-doubted-ly; for only think, Pseudonimov comes from the literary word pseudonym, while Pseldonimov means nothing.”

“Due to foolishness,” added Akim Petrovitch.

“You mean what is due to foolishness?”

“The Russian common people in their foolishness often alter letters, and sometimes pronounce them in their own way. For instance, they say nevalid instead of invalid.”

“Oh, yes, nevalid, he-he-he....”

“Mumber, too, they say, your Excellency,” boomed out the tall officer, who had long been itching to distinguish himself in some way.

“What do you mean by mumber?”

“Mumber instead of number, your Excellency.”

“Oh, yes, mumber ... instead of number.... To be sure, to be sure.... He-he-he!” Ivan Ilyitch had to do a chuckle for the benefit of the officer too.

The officer straightened his tie.

“Another thing they say is nigh by,” the young man on the comic paper put in. But his Excellency tried not to hear this. His chuckles were not at

everybody’s disposal.

“Nigh by, instead of near,” the young man on the comic paper persisted, in evident irritation.

Ivan Ilyitch looked at him sternly.

“Come, why persist?” Pseldonimov whispered to him.

“Why, I was talking. Mayn’t one speak?” the latter protested in a whisper; but he said no more and with secret fury walked out of the room.

He made his way straight to the attractive little back room where, for the benefit of the dancing gentlemen, vodka of two sorts, salt fish, caviare into slices and a bottle of very strong sherry of Russian make had been set early in the evening on a little table, covered with a Yaroslav cloth. With anger in his heart he was pouring himself out a glass of vodka, when suddenly the medical student with the dishevelled locks, the foremost dancer and cutter of capers at Pseldonimov’s ball, rushed in. He fell on the decanter with greedy haste.

“They are just going to begin!” he said rapidly, helping himself. “Come and look, I am going to dance a solo on my head; after supper I shall risk the fish dance. It is just the thing for the wedding. So to speak, a friendly hint to Pseldonimov. She’s a jolly creature that Kleopatra Semyonovna, you can venture on anything you like with her.”

“He’s a reactionary,” said the young man on the comic paper gloomily, as he tossed off his vodka.

“Who is a reactionary?”

“Why, the personage before whom they set those sweet-meats. He’s a reactionary, I tell you.”

“What nonsense!” muttered the student, and he rushed out of the room, hearing the opening bars of the quadrille.

Left alone, the young man on the comic paper poured himself out another glass to give himself more assurance and independence; he drank and ate a snack of something, and never had the actual civil councillor Ivan Ilyitch made for himself a bitterer foe more implacably bent on revenge than was the young man on the staff of the *Firebrand* whom he had so slighted, especially after the latter had drunk two glasses of vodka. Alas! Ivan Ilyitch suspected nothing of the sort. He did not suspect another circumstance of prime importance either, which had an influence on the mutual relations of the guests and his Excellency. The fact was that though he had given a proper and even detailed explanation of his presence at his

clerk’s wedding, this explanation did not really satisfy any one, and the visitors were still embarrassed. But suddenly everything was transformed as though by magic, all were reassured and ready to enjoy themselves, to laugh, to shriek; to dance, exactly as though the unexpected visitor were not in the room. The cause of it was a rumour, a whisper, a report which spread in some unknown way that the visitor was not quite ... it seemed — was, in fact, “a little top-heavy.” And though this seemed at first a horrible calumny, it began by degrees to appear to be justified; suddenly everything became clear. What was more, they felt all at once extraordinarily free. And it was just at this moment that the quadrille for which the medical student was in such haste, the last before supper, began.

And just as Ivan Ilyitch meant to address the bride again, intending to provoke her with some innuendo, the tall officer suddenly dashed up to her and with a flourish dropped on one knee before her. She immediately jumped up from the sofa, and whisked off with him to take her place in the quadrille. The officer did not even apologise, and she did not even glance at the general as she went away; she seemed, in fact, relieved to escape.

“After all she has a right to be,’ thought Ivan Ilyitch, ‘and of course they don’t know how to behave.’ “Hm! Don’t you stand on ceremony, friend Porfiry,” he said, addressing Pseldonimov. “Perhaps you have ... arrangements to make ... or something ... please don’t put yourself out.” ‘Why does he keep guard over me?’” he thought to himself.

Pseldonimov, with his long neck and his eyes fixed intently upon him, began to be insufferable. In fact, all this was not the thing, not the thing at all, but Ivan Ilyitch was still far from admitting this.

The quadrille began.

“Will you allow me, your Excellency?” asked Akim Petrovitch, holding the bottle respectfully in his hands and preparing to pour from it into his Excellency’s glass.

“I ... I really don’t know, whether....”

But Akim Petrovitch, with reverent and radiant face, was already filling the glass. After filling the glass, he proceeded, writhing and wriggling, as it were stealthily, as it were furtively, to pour himself out some, with this difference, that he did not fill his own glass to within a finger length of the top, and this seemed somehow more respectful. He was like a woman in travail as he sat beside his chief. What could he talk about, indeed? Yet to

entertain his Excellency was an absolute duty since he had the honour of keeping him company. The champagne served as a resource, and his Excellency, too, was pleased that he had filled his glass — not for the sake of the champagne, for it was warm and perfectly abominable, but just morally pleased.

“The old chap would like to have a drink himself,” thought Ivan Ilyitch, “but he doesn’t venture till I do. I mustn’t prevent him. And indeed it would be absurd for the bottle to stand between as untouched.”

He took a sip, anyway it seemed better than sitting doing nothing.

“I am here,” he said, with pauses and emphasis, “I am here, you know, so to speak, accidentally, and, of course, it may be ... that some people would consider ... it unseemly for me to be at such ... a gathering.”

Akim Petrovitch said nothing, but listened with timid curiosity.

“But I hope you will understand, with what object I have come.... I haven’t really come simply to drink wine ... he-he!”

Akim Petrovitch tried to chuckle, following the example of his Excellency, but again he could not get it out, and again he made absolutely no consolatory answer.

“I am here ... in order, so to speak, to encourage ... to show, so to speak, a moral aim,” Ivan Ilyitch continued, feeling vexed at Akim Petrovitch’s stupidity, but he suddenly subsided into silence himself. He saw that poor Akim Petrovitch had dropped his eyes as though he were in fault. The general in some confusion made haste to take another sip from his glass, and Akim Petrovitch clutched at the bottle as though it were his only hope of salvation and filled the glass again.

“You haven’t many resources,” thought Ivan Ilyitch, looking sternly at poor Akim Petrovitch. The latter, feeling that stern general-like eye upon him, made up his mind to remain silent for good and not to raise his eyes. So they sat beside each other for a couple of minutes — two sickly minutes for Akim Petrovitch.

A couple of words about Akim Petrovitch. He was a man of the old school, as meek as a hen, reared from infancy to obsequious servility, and at the same time a good-natured and even honourable man. He was a Petersburg Russian; that is, his father and his father’s father were born, grew up and served in Petersburg and had never once left Petersburg. That is quite a special type of Russian. They have hardly any idea of Russia, though that does not trouble them at all. Their whole interest is confined to

Petersburg and chiefly the place in which they serve. All their thoughts are concentrated on preference for farthing points, on the shop, and their month's salary. They don't know a single Russian custom, a single Russian song except "Lutchinushka," and that only because it is played on the barrel organs. However, there are two fundamental and invariable signs by which you can at once distinguish a Petersburg Russian from a real Russian. The first sign is the fact that Petersburg Russians, all without exception, speak of the newspaper as the *Academic News* and never call it the *Petersburg News*. The second and equally trustworthy sign is that Petersburg Russians never make use of the word "breakfast," but always call it "Frühstück" with especial emphasis on the first syllable. By these radical and distinguishing signs you can tell them apart; in short, this is a humble type which has been formed during the last thirty-five years. Akim Petrovitch, however, was by no means a fool. If the general had asked him a question about anything in his own province he would have answered and kept up a conversation; as it was, it was unseemly for a subordinate even to answer such questions as these, though Akim Petrovitch was dying from curiosity to know something more detailed about his Excellency's real intentions.

And meanwhile Ivan Ilyitch sank more and more into meditation and a sort of whirl of ideas; in his absorption he sipped his glass every half-minute. Akim Petrovitch at once zealously filled it up. Both were silent. Ivan Ilyitch began looking at the dances, and immediately something attracted his attention. One circumstance even surprised him....

The dances were certainly lively. Here people danced in the simplicity of their hearts to amuse themselves and even to romp wildly. Among the dancers few were really skilful, but the unskilled stamped so vigorously that they might have been taken for agile ones. The officer was among the foremost; he particularly liked the figures in which he was left alone, to perform a solo. Then he performed the most marvellous capers. For instance, standing upright as a post, he would suddenly bend over to one side, so that one expected him to fall over; but with the next step he would suddenly bend over in the opposite direction at the same acute angle to the floor. He kept the most serious face and danced in the full conviction that every one was watching him. Another gentleman, who had had rather more than he could carry before the quadrille, dropped asleep beside his partner so that his partner had to dance alone. The young registration clerk, who had danced with the lady in the blue scarf through all the figures and

through all the five quadrilles which they had danced that evening, played the same prank the whole time: that is, he dropped a little behind his partner, seized the end of her scarf, and as they crossed over succeeded in imprinting some twenty kisses on the scarf. His partner sailed along in front of him, as though she noticed nothing. The medical student really did dance on his head, and excited frantic enthusiasm, stamping, and shrieks of delight. In short, the absence of constraint was very marked. Ivan Ilyitch, whom the wine was beginning to affect, began by smiling, but by degrees a bitter doubt began to steal into his heart; of course he liked free and easy manners and unconventionality. He desired, he had even inwardly prayed for free and easy manners, when they had all held back, but now that unconventionality had gone beyond all limits. One lady, for instance, the one in the shabby dark blue velvet dress, bought fourth-hand, in the sixth figure pinned her dress so as to turn it into — something like trousers. This was the Kleopatra Semyonovna with whom one could venture to do anything, as her partner, the medical student, had expressed it. The medical student defied description: he was simply a Fokin. How was it? They had held back and now they were so quickly emancipated! One might think it nothing, but this transformation was somehow strange; it indicated something. It was as though they had forgotten Ivan Ilyitch's existence. Of course he was the first to laugh, and even ventured to applaud. Akim Petrovitch chuckled respectfully in unison, though, indeed, with evident pleasure and no suspicion that his Excellency was beginning to nourish in his heart a new gnawing anxiety.

"You dance capitally, young man," Ivan Ilyitch was obliged to say to the medical student as he walked past him.

The student turned sharply towards him, made a grimace, and bringing his face close into unseemly proximity to the face of his Excellency, crowed like a cock at the top of his voice. This was too much. Ivan Ilyitch got up from the table. In spite of that, a roar of inexpressible laughter followed, for the crow was an extraordinarily good imitation, and the whole performance was utterly unexpected. Ivan Ilyitch was still standing in bewilderment, when suddenly Pseldonimov himself made his appearance, and with a bow, began begging him to come to supper. His mother followed him.

"Your Excellency," she said, bowing, "do us the honour, do not disdain our humble fare."

“I ... I really don’t know,” Ivan Ilyitch was beginning. “I did not come with that idea ... I ... meant to be going....”

He was, in fact, holding his hat in his hands. What is more, he had at that very moment taken an inward vow at all costs to depart at once and on no account whatever to consent to remain, and ... he remained. A minute later he led the procession to the table. Pseldonimov and his mother walked in front, clearing the way for him. They made him sit down in the seat of honour, and again a bottle of champagne, opened but not begun, was set beside his plate. By way of *hors d’œuvres* there were salt herrings and vodka. He put out his hand, poured out a large glass of vodka and drank it off. He had never drunk vodka before. He felt as though he were rolling down a hill, were flying, flying, flying, that he must stop himself, catch at something, but there was no possibility of it.

His position was certainly becoming more and more eccentric. What is more, it seemed as though fate were mocking at him. God knows what had happened to him in the course of an hour or so. When he went in he had, so to say, opened his arms to embrace all humanity, all his subordinates; and here not more than an hour had passed and in all his aching heart he felt and knew that he hated Pseldonimov and was cursing him, his wife and his wedding. What was more, he saw from his face, from his eyes alone, that Pseldonimov himself hated him, that he was looking at him with eyes that almost said: “If only you would take yourself off, curse you! Foisting yourself on us!” All this he had read for some time in his eyes.

Of course as he sat down to table, Ivan Ilyitch would sooner have had his hand cut off than have owned, not only aloud, but even to himself, that this was really so. The moment had not fully arrived yet. There was still a moral vacillation. But his heart, his heart ... it ached! It was clamouring for freedom, for air, for rest. Ivan Ilyitch was really too good-natured.

He knew, of course, that he ought long before to have gone away, not merely to have gone away but to have made his escape. That all this was not the same, but had turned out utterly different from what he had dreamed of on the pavement.

“Why did I come? Did I come here to eat and drink?” he asked himself as he tasted the salt herring. He even had attacks of scepticism. There was at moments a faint stir of irony in regard to his own fine action at the bottom of his heart. He actually wondered at times why he had come in.

But how could he go away? To go away like this without having finished the business properly was impossible. What would people say? They would say that he was frequenting low company. Indeed it really would amount to that if he did not end it properly. What would Stepan Nikiforovitch, Semyon Ivanovitch say (for of course it would be all over the place by to-morrow)? what would be said in the offices, at the Shembels', at the Shubins'? No, he must take his departure in such a way that all should understand why he had come, he must make clear his moral aim.... And meantime the dramatic moment would not present itself. "They don't even respect me," he went on, thinking. "What are they laughing at? They are as free and easy as though they had no feeling.... But I have long suspected that all the younger generation are without feeling! I must remain at all costs! They have just been dancing, but now at table they will all be gathered together.... I will talk about questions, about reforms, about the greatness of Russia.... I can still win their enthusiasm! Yes! Perhaps nothing is yet lost.... Perhaps it is always like this in reality. What should I begin upon with them to attract them? What plan can I hit upon? I am lost, simply lost.... And what is it they want, what is it they require?... I see they are laughing together there. Can it be at me, merciful heavens! But what is it I want ... why is it I am here, why don't I go away, why do I go on persisting?"... He thought this, and a sort of shame, a deep unbearable shame, rent his heart more and more intensely.

But everything went on in the same way, one thing after another.

Just two minutes after he had sat down to the table one terrible thought overwhelmed him completely. He suddenly felt that he was horribly drunk, that is, not as he was before, but hopelessly drunk. The cause of this was the glass of vodka which he had drunk after the champagne, and which had immediately produced an effect. He was conscious, he felt in every fibre of his being that he was growing hopelessly feeble. Of course his assurance was greatly increased, but consciousness had not deserted him, and it kept crying out: "It is bad, very bad and, in fact, utterly unseemly!" Of course his unstable drunken reflections could not rest long on one subject; there began to be apparent and unmistakably so, even to himself, two opposite sides. On one side there was swaggering assurance, a desire to conquer, a disdain of obstacles and a desperate confidence that he would attain his object. The other side showed itself in the aching of his heart, and a sort of gnawing in

his soul. “What would they say? How would it all end? What would happen to-morrow, to-morrow, to-morrow?”...

He had felt vaguely before that he had enemies in the company. “No doubt that was because I was drunk,” he thought with agonising doubt. What was his horror when he actually, by unmistakable signs, convinced himself now that he really had enemies at the table, and that it was impossible to doubt of it.

“And why — why?” he wondered.

At the table there were all the thirty guests, of whom several were quite tipsy. Others were behaving with a careless and sinister independence, shouting and talking at the top of their voices, bawling out the toasts before the time, and pelting the ladies with pellets of bread. One unprepossessing personage in a greasy coat had fallen off his chair as soon as he sat down, and remained so till the end of supper. Another one made desperate efforts to stand on the table, to propose a toast, and only the officer, who seized him by the tails of his coat, moderated his premature ardour. The supper was a pell-mell affair, although they had hired a cook who had been in the service of a general; there was the galantine, there was tongue and potatoes, there were rissoles with green peas, there was, finally, a goose, and last of all blancmange. Among the drinks were beer, vodka and sherry. The only bottle of champagne was standing beside the general, which obliged him to pour it out for himself and also for Akim Petrovitch, who did not venture at supper to officiate on his own initiative. The other guests had to drink the toasts in Caucasian wine or anything else they could get. The table was made up of several tables put together, among them even a card-table. It was covered with many tablecloths, amongst them one coloured Yaroslav cloth; the gentlemen sat alternately with the ladies. Pseldonimov’s mother would not sit down to the table; she bustled about and supervised. But another sinister female figure, who had not shown herself till then, appeared on the scene, wearing a reddish silk dress, with a very high cap on her head and a bandage round her face for toothache. It appeared that this was the bride’s mother, who had at last consented to emerge from a back room for supper. She had refused to appear till then owing to her implacable hostility to Pseldonimov’s mother, but to that we will refer later. This lady looked spitefully, even sarcastically, at the general, and evidently did not wish to be presented to him. To Ivan Ilyitch this figure appeared suspicious in the extreme. But apart from her, several other persons were suspicious and

inspired involuntary apprehension and uneasiness. It even seemed that they were in some sort of plot together against Ivan Ilyitch. At any rate it seemed so to him, and throughout the whole supper he became more and more convinced of it. A gentleman with a beard, some sort of free artist, was particularly sinister; he even looked at Ivan Ilyitch several times, and then turning to his neighbour, whispered something. Another person present was unmistakably drunk, but yet, from certain signs, was to be regarded with suspicion. The medical student, too, gave rise to unpleasant expectations. Even the officer himself was not quite to be depended on. But the young man on the comic paper was blazing with hatred, he lolled in his chair, he looked so haughty and conceited, he snorted so aggressively! And though the rest of the guests took absolutely no notice of the young journalist, who had contributed only four wretched poems to the *Firebrand*, and had consequently become a Liberal and evidently, indeed, disliked him, yet when a pellet of bread aimed in his direction fell near Ivan Ilyitch, he was ready to stake his head that it had been thrown by no other than the young man in question.

All this, of course, had a pitiable effect on him.

Another observation was particularly unpleasant. Ivan Ilyitch became aware that he was beginning to articulate indistinctly and with difficulty, that he was longing to say a great deal, but that his tongue refused to obey him. And then he suddenly seemed to forget himself, and worst of all he would suddenly burst into a loud guffaw of laughter, *à propos* of nothing. This inclination quickly passed off after a glass of champagne which Ivan Ilyitch had not meant to drink, though he had poured it out and suddenly drunk it quite by accident. After that glass he felt at once almost inclined to cry. He felt that he was sinking into a most peculiar state of sentimentality; he began to be again filled with love, he loved every one, even Pseldonimov, even the young man on the comic paper. He suddenly longed to embrace all of them, to forget everything and to be reconciled. What is more, to tell them everything openly, all, all; that is, to tell them what a good, nice man he was, with what wonderful talents. What services he would do for his country, how good he was at entertaining the fair sex, and above all, how progressive he was, how humanely ready he was to be indulgent to all, to the very lowest; and finally in conclusion to tell them frankly all the motives that had impelled him to turn up at Pseldonimov’s

uninvited, to drink two bottles of champagne and to make him happy with his presence.

“The truth, the holy truth and candour before all things! I will capture them by candour. They will believe me, I see it clearly; they actually look at me with hostility, but when I tell them all I shall conquer them completely. They will fill their glasses and drink my health with shouts. The officer will break his glass on his spur. Perhaps they will even shout hurrah! Even if they want to toss me after the Hussar fashion I will not oppose them, and indeed it would be very jolly! I will kiss the bride on her forehead; she is charming. Akim Petrovitch is a very nice man, too. Pseldonimov will improve, of course, later on. He will acquire, so to speak, a society polish.... And although, of course, the younger generation has not that delicacy of feeling, yet ... yet I will talk to them about the contemporary significance of Russia among the European States. I will refer to the peasant question, too; yes, and ... and they will all like me and I shall leave with glory!...”

These dreams were, of course, extremely agreeable, but what was unpleasant was that in the midst of these roseate anticipations, Ivan Ilyitch suddenly discovered in himself another unexpected propensity, that was to spit. Anyway saliva began running from his mouth apart from any will of his own. He observed this on Akim Petrovitch, whose cheek he spluttered upon and who sat not daring to wipe it off from respectfulness. Ivan Ilyitch took his dinner napkin and wiped it himself, but this immediately struck him himself as so incongruous, so opposed to all common sense, that he sank into silence and began wondering. Though Akim Petrovitch emptied his glass, yet he sat as though he were scalded. Ivan Ilyitch reflected now that he had for almost a quarter of an hour been talking to him about some most interesting subject, but that Akim Petrovitch had not only seemed embarrassed as he listened, but positively frightened. Pseldonimov, who was sitting one chair away from him, also craned his neck towards him, and bending his head sideways, listened to him with the most unpleasant air. He actually seemed to be keeping a watch on him. Turning his eyes upon the rest of the company, he saw that many were looking straight at him and laughing. But what was strangest of all was, that he was not in the least embarrassed by it; on the contrary, he sipped his glass again and suddenly began speaking so that all could hear:

“I was saying just now,” he began as loudly as possible, “I was saying just now, ladies and gentlemen, to Akim Petrovitch, that Russia ... yes,

Russia ... in short, you understand, that I mean to s-s-say ... Russia is living, it is my profound conviction, through a period of hu-hu-manity....”

“Hu-hu-manity ..,” was heard at the other end of the table.

“Hu-hu....”

“Tu-tu!”

Ivan Ilyitch stopped. Pseldonimov got up from his chair and began trying to see who had shouted. Akim Petrovitch stealthily shook his head, as though admonishing the guests. Ivan Ilyitch saw this distinctly, but in his confusion said nothing.

“Humanity!” he continued obstinately; “and this evening ... and only this evening I said to Stepan Niki-ki-foro-vitch ... yes ... that ... that the regeneration, so to speak, of things....”

“Your Excellency!” was heard a loud exclamation at the other end of the table.

“What is your pleasure?” answered Ivan Ilyitch, pulled up short and trying to distinguish who had called to him.

“Nothing at all, your Excellency. I was carried away, continue! Con-ti-nue!” the voice was heard again.

Ivan Ilyitch felt upset.

“The regeneration, so to speak, of those same things.”

“Your Excellency!” the voice shouted again.

“What do you want?”

“How do you do!”

This time Ivan Ilyitch could not restrain himself. He broke off his speech and turned to the assailant who had disturbed the general harmony. He was a very young lad, still at school, who had taken more than a drop too much, and was an object of great suspicion to the general. He had been shouting for a long time past, and had even broken a glass and two plates, maintaining that this was the proper thing to do at a wedding. At the moment when Ivan Ilyitch turned towards him, the officer was beginning to pitch into the noisy youngster.

“What are you about? Why are you yelling? We shall turn you out, that’s what we shall do.”

“I don’t mean you, your Excellency, I don’t mean you. Continue!” cried the hilarious schoolboy, lolling back in his chair. “Continue, I am listening, and am very, ve-ry, ve-ry much pleased with you! Praisewor-thy, praisewor-thy!”

“The wretched boy is drunk,” said Pseldonimov in a whisper.

“I see that he is drunk, but....”

“I was just telling a very amusing anecdote, your Excellency!” began the officer, “about a lieutenant in our company who was talking just like that to his superior officers; so this young man is imitating him now. To every word of his superior officers he said ‘praiseworthy, praiseworthy!’ He was turned out of the army ten years ago on account of it.”

“Wha-at lieutenant was that?”

“In our company, your Excellency, he went out of his mind over the word praiseworthy. At first they tried gentle methods, then they put him under arrest.... His commanding officer admonished him in the most fatherly way, and he answered, ‘praiseworthy, praiseworthy!’ And strange to say, the officer was a fine-looking man, over six feet. They meant to court-martial him, but then they perceived that he was mad.”

“So ... a schoolboy. A schoolboy’s prank need not be taken seriously. For my part I am ready to overlook it....”

“They held a medical inquiry, your Excellency.”

“Upon my word, but he was alive, wasn’t he?”

“What! Did they dissect him?”

A loud and almost universal roar of laughter resounded among the guests, who had till then behaved with decorum. Ivan Ilyitch was furious.

“Ladies and gentlemen!” he shouted, at first scarcely stammering, “I am fully capable of apprehending that a man is not dissected alive. I imagined that in his derangement he had ceased to be alive ... that is, that he had died ... that is, I mean to say ... that you don’t like me ... and yet I like you all ... Yes, I like Por ... Porfiry ... I am lowering myself by speaking like this....”

At that moment Ivan Ilyitch spluttered so that a great dab of saliva flew on to the tablecloth in a most conspicuous place. Pseldonimov flew to wipe it off with a table-napkin. This last disaster crushed him completely.

“My friends, this is too much,” he cried in despair.

“The man is drunk, your Excellency,” Pseldonimov prompted him again.

“Porfiry, I see that you ... all ... yes! I say that I hope ... yes, I call upon you all to tell me in what way have I lowered myself?”

Ivan Ilyitch was almost crying.

“Your Excellency, good heavens!”

“Porfiry, I appeal to you.... Tell me, when I came ... yes ... yes, to your wedding, I had an object. I was aiming at moral elevation.... I wanted it to

be felt.... I appeal to all: am I greatly lowered in your eyes or not?”

A deathlike silence. That was just it, a deathlike silence, and to such a downright question. “They might at least shout at this minute!” flashed through his Excellency’s head. But the guests only looked at one another. Akim Petrovitch sat more dead than alive, while Pseldonimov, numb with terror, was repeating to himself the awful question which had occurred to him more than once already.

“What shall I have to pay for all this to-morrow?”

At this point the young man on the comic paper, who was very drunk but who had hitherto sat in morose silence, addressed Ivan Ilyitch directly, and with flashing eyes began answering in the name of the whole company.

“Yes,” he said in a loud voice, “yes, you have lowered yourself. Yes, you are a reactionary ... re-ac-tion-ary!”

“Young man, you are forgetting yourself! To whom are you speaking, so to express it?” Ivan Ilyitch cried furiously, jumping up from his seat again.

“To you; and secondly, I am not a young man.... You’ve come to give yourself airs and try to win popularity.”

“Pseldonimov, what does this mean?” cried Ivan Ilyitch.

But Pseldonimov was reduced to such horror that he stood still like a post and was utterly at a loss what to do. The guests, too, sat mute in their seats. All but the artist and the schoolboy, who applauded and shouted, “Bravo, bravo!”

The young man on the comic paper went on shouting with unrestrained violence:

“Yes, you came to show off your humanity! You’ve hindered the enjoyment of every one. You’ve been drinking champagne without thinking that it is beyond the means of a clerk at ten roubles a month. And I suspect that you are one of those high officials who are a little too fond of the young wives of their clerks! What is more, I am convinced that you support State monopolies.... Yes, yes, yes!”

“Pseldonimov, Pseldonimov,” shouted Ivan Ilyitch, holding out his hands to him. He felt that every word uttered by the comic young man was a fresh dagger at his heart.

“Directly, your Excellency; please do not disturb yourself!” Pseldonimov cried energetically, rushing up to the comic young man, seizing him by the collar and dragging him away from the table. Such physical strength could indeed not have been expected from the weakly looking Pseldonimov. But

the comic young man was very drunk, while Pseldonimov was perfectly sober. Then he gave him two or three cuffs in the back, and thrust him out of the door.

“You are all scoundrels!” roared the young man of the comic paper. “I will caricature you all to-morrow in the *Firebrand*.”

They all leapt up from their seats.

“Your Excellency, your Excellency!” cried Pseldonimov, his mother and several others, crowding round the general; “your Excellency, do not be disturbed!”

“No, no,” cried the general, “I am annihilated.... I came... I meant to bless you, so to speak. And this is how I am paid, for everything, everything!...”

He sank on to a chair as though unconscious, laid both his arms on the table, and bowed his head over them, straight into a plate of blancmange. There is no need to describe the general horror. A minute later he got up, evidently meaning to go out, gave a lurch, stumbled against the leg of a chair, fell full length on the floor and snored....

This is what is apt to happen to men who don’t drink when they accidentally take a glass too much. They preserve their consciousness to the last point, to the last minute, and then fall to the ground as though struck down. Ivan Ilyitch lay on the floor absolutely unconscious. Pseldonimov clutched at his hair and sat as though petrified in that position. The guests made haste to depart, commenting each in his own way on the incident. It was about three o’clock in the morning.

The worst of it was that Pseldonimov’s circumstances were far worse than could have been imagined, in spite of the unattractiveness of his present surroundings. And while Ivan Ilyitch is lying on the floor and Pseldonimov is standing over him tearing his hair in despair, we will break off the thread of our story and say a few explanatory words about Porfiry Petrovitch Pseldonimov.

Not more than a month before his wedding he was in a state of hopeless destitution. He came from a province where his father had served in some department and where he had died while awaiting his trial on some charge. When five months before his wedding, Pseldonimov, who had been in hopeless misery in Petersburg for a whole year before, got his berth at ten roubles a month, he revived both physically and mentally, but he was soon

crushed by circumstances again. There were only two Pseldonimovs left in the world, himself and his mother, who had left the province after her husband's death. The mother and son barely existed in the freezing cold, and sustained life on the most dubious substances. There were days when Pseldonimov himself went with a jug to the Fontanka for water to drink. When he got his place he succeeded in settling with his mother in a "corner." She took in washing, while for four months he scraped together every farthing to get himself boots and an overcoat. And what troubles he had to endure at his office; his superiors approached him with the question: "How long was it since he had had a bath?" There was a rumour about him that under the collar of his uniform there were nests of bugs. But Pseldonimov was a man of strong character. On the surface he was mild and meek; he had the merest smattering of education, he was practically never heard to talk of anything. I do not know for certain whether he thought, made plans and theories, had dreams. But on the other hand there was being formed within him an instinctive, furtive, unconscious determination to fight his way out of his wretched circumstances. He had the persistence of an ant. Destroy an ants' nest, and they will begin at once re-erecting it; destroy it again, and they will begin again without wearying. He was a constructive house-building animal. One could see from his brow that he would make his way, would build his nest, and perhaps even save for a rainy day. His mother was the only creature in the world who loved him, and she loved him beyond everything. She was a woman of resolute character, hard-working and indefatigable, and at the same time good-natured. So perhaps they might have lived in their corner for five or six years till their circumstances changed, if they had not come across the retired titular councillor Mlekopitaev, who had been a clerk in the treasury and had served at one time in the provinces, but had latterly settled in Petersburg and had established himself there with his family. He knew Pseldonimov, and had at one time been under some obligation to his father. He had a little money, not a large sum, of course, but there it was; how much it was no one knew, not his wife, nor his elder daughter, nor his relations. He had two daughters, and as he was an awful bully, a drunkard, a domestic tyrant, and in addition to that an invalid, he took it into his head one day to marry one of his daughters to Pseldonimov: "I knew his father," he would say, "he was a good fellow and his son will be a good fellow." Mlekopitaev did exactly as he liked, his word was law. He was a very queer

bully. For the most part he spent his time sitting in an arm-chair, having lost the use of his legs from some disease which did not, however, prevent him from drinking vodka. For days together he would be drinking and swearing. He was an ill-natured man. He always wanted to have some one whom he could be continually tormenting. And for that purpose he kept several distant relations: his sister, a sickly and peevish woman; two of his wife's sisters, also ill-natured and very free with their tongues, and his old aunt, who had through some accident a broken rib; he kept another dependent also, a Russianised German, for the sake of her talent for entertaining him with stories from the *Arabian Nights*. His sole gratification consisted in jeering at all these unfortunate women and abusing them every minute with all his energies; though the latter, not excepting his wife, who had been born with toothache, dared not utter a word in his presence. He set them at loggerheads at one another, inventing and fostering spiteful backbiting and dissensions among them, and then laughed and rejoiced seeing how they were ready to tear one another to pieces. He was very much delighted when his elder daughter, who had lived in great poverty for ten years with her husband, an officer of some sort, and was at last left a widow, came to live with him with three little sickly children. He could not endure her children, but as her arrival had increased the material upon which he could work his daily experiments, the old man was very much pleased. All these ill-natured women and sickly children, together with their tormentor, were crowded together in a wooden house on Petersburg Side, and did not get enough to eat because the old man was stingy and gave out to them money a farthing at a time, though he did not grudge himself vodka; they did not get enough sleep because the old man suffered from sleeplessness and insisted on being amused. In short, they all were in misery and cursed their fate. It was at that time that Mlekopitaev's eye fell upon Pseldonimov. He was struck by his long nose and submissive air. His weakly and unprepossessing younger daughter had just reached the age of seventeen. Though she had at one time attended a German school, she had acquired scarcely anything but the alphabet. Then she grew up rickety and anæmic in fear of her crippled drunken father's crutch, in a Bedlam of domestic backbiting, eavesdropping and scolding. She had never had any friends or any brains. She had for a long time been eager to be married. In company she sat mute, but at home with her mother and the women of the household she was spiteful and cantankerous. She was particularly fond of pinching and smacking her

sister's children, telling tales of their pilfering bread and sugar, and this led to endless and implacable strife with her elder sister. Her old father himself offered her to Pseldonimov. Miserable as the latter's position was, he yet asked for a little time to consider. His mother and he hesitated for a long time. But with the young lady there was to come as dowry a house, and though it was a nasty little wooden house of one storey, yet it was property of a kind. Moreover, they would give with her four hundred roubles, and how long it would take him to save it up himself! "What am I taking the man into my house for?" shouted the drunken bully. "In the first place because you are all females, and I am sick of female society. I want Pseldonimov, too, to dance to my piping. For I am his benefactor. And in the second place I am doing it because you are all cross and don't want it, so I'll do it to spite you. What I have said, I have said! And you beat her, Porfiry, when she is your wife; she has been possessed of seven devils ever since she was born. You beat them out of her, and I'll get the stick ready."

Pseldonimov made no answer, but he was already decided. Before the wedding his mother and he were taken into the house, washed, clothed, provided with boots and money for the wedding. The old man took them under his protection possibly just because the whole family was prejudiced against them. He positively liked Pseldonimov's mother, so that he actually restrained himself and did not jeer at her. On the other hand, he made Pseldonimov dance the Cossack dance a week before the wedding.

"Well, that's enough. I only wanted to see whether you remembered your position before me or not," he said at the end of the dance. He allowed just enough money for the wedding, with nothing to spare, and invited all his relations and acquaintances. On Pseldonimov's side there was no one but the young man who wrote for the *Firebrand*, and Akim Petrovitch, the guest of honour. Pseldonimov was perfectly aware that his bride cherished an aversion for him, and that she was set upon marrying the officer instead of him. But he put up with everything, he had made a compact with his mother to do so. The old father had been drunk and abusive and foul-tongued the whole of the wedding day and during the party in the evening. The whole family took refuge in the back rooms and were crowded there to suffocation. The front rooms were devoted to the dance and the supper. At last when the old man fell asleep dead drunk at eleven o'clock, the bride's mother, who had been particularly displeased with Pseldonimov's mother that day, made up her mind to lay aside her wrath, become gracious and join

the company. Ivan Ilyitch's arrival had turned everything upside down. Madame Mlekopitaev was overcome with embarrassment, and began grumbling that she had not been told that the general had been invited. She was assured that he had come uninvited, but was so stupid as to refuse to believe it. Champagne had to be got. Pseldonimov's mother had only one rouble, while Pseldonimov himself had not one farthing. He had to grovel before his ill-natured mother-in-law, to beg for the money for one bottle and then for another. They pleaded for the sake of his future position in the service, for his career, they tried to persuade her. She did at last give from her own purse, but she forced Pseldonimov to swallow such a cupful of gall and bitterness that more than once he ran into the room where the nuptial couch had been prepared, and madly clutching at his hair and trembling all over with impotent rage, he buried his head in the bed destined for the joys of paradise. No, indeed, Ivan Ilyitch had no notion of the price paid for the two bottles of Jackson he had drunk that evening. What was the horror, the misery and even the despair of Pseldonimov when Ivan Ilyitch's visit ended in this unexpected way. He had a prospect again of no end of misery, and perhaps a night of tears and outcries from his peevish bride, and upbraidings from her unreasonable relations. Even apart from this his head ached already, and there was dizziness and mist before his eyes. And here Ivan Ilyitch needed looking after, at three o'clock at night he had to hunt for a doctor or a carriage to take him home, and a carriage it must be, for it would be impossible to let an ordinary cabby take him home in that condition. And where could he get the money even for a carriage? Madame Mlekopitaev, furious that the general had not addressed two words to her, and had not even looked at her at supper, declared that she had not a farthing. Possibly she really had not a farthing. Where could he get it? What was he to do? Yes, indeed, he had good cause to tear his hair.

Meanwhile Ivan Ilyitch was moved to a little leather sofa that stood in the dining-room. While they were clearing the tables and putting them away, Pseldonimov was rushing all over the place to borrow money, he even tried to get it from the servants, but it appeared that nobody had any. He even ventured to trouble Akim Petrovitch who had stayed after the other guests. But good-natured as he was, the latter was reduced to such bewilderment and even alarm at the mention of money that he uttered the most unexpected and foolish phrases:

“Another time, with pleasure,” he muttered, “but now ... you really must excuse me....”

And taking his cap, he ran as fast as he could out of the house. Only the good-natured youth who had talked about the dream book was any use at all; and even that came to nothing. He, too, stayed after the others, showing genuine sympathy with Pseldonimov’s misfortunes. At last Pseldonimov, together with his mother and the young man, decided in consultation not to send for a doctor, but rather to fetch a carriage and take the invalid home, and meantime to try certain domestic remedies till the carriage arrived, such as moistening his temples and his head with cold water, putting ice on his head, and so on. Pseldonimov’s mother undertook this task. The friendly youth flew off in search of a carriage. As there were not even ordinary cabs to be found on the Petersburg Side at that hour, he went off to some livery stables at a distance to wake up the coachmen. They began bargaining, and declared that five roubles would be little to ask for a carriage at that time of night. They agreed to come, however, for three. When at last, just before five o’clock, the young man arrived at Pseldonimov’s with the carriage, they had changed their minds. It appeared that Ivan Ilyitch, who was still unconscious, had become so seriously unwell, was moaning and tossing so terribly, that to move him and take him home in such a condition was impossible and actually unsafe. “What will it lead to next?” said Pseldonimov, utterly disheartened. What was to be done? A new problem arose: if the invalid remained in the house, where should he be moved and where could they put him? There were only two bedsteads in the house: one large double bed in which old Mlekopitaev and his wife slept, and another double bed of imitation walnut which had just been purchased and was destined for the newly married couple. All the other inhabitants of the house slept on the floor side by side on feather beds, for the most part in bad condition and stuffy, anything but presentable in fact, and even of these the supply was insufficient; there was not one to spare. Where could the invalid be put? A feather bed might perhaps have been found — it might in the last resort have been pulled from under some one, but where and on what could a bed have been made up? It seemed that the bed must be made up in the drawing-room, for that room was the furthest from the bosom of the family and had a door into the passage. But on what could the bed be made? Surely not upon chairs. We all know that beds can only be made up on chairs for schoolboys when they come home for the week end, and it would be

terribly lacking in respect to make up a bed in that way for a personage like Ivan Ilyitch. What would be said next morning when he found himself lying on chairs? Pseldonimov would not hear of that. The only alternative was to put him on the bridal couch. This bridal couch, as we have mentioned already, was in a little room that opened out of the dining-room, on the bedstead was a double mattress actually newly bought first-hand, clean sheets, four pillows in pink calico covered with frilled muslin cases. The quilt was of pink satin, and it was quilted in patterns. Muslin curtains hung down from a golden ring overhead, in fact it was all just as it should be, and the guests who had all visited the bridal chamber had admired the decoration of it; though the bride could not endure Pseldonimov, she had several times in the course of the evening run in to have a look at it on the sly. What was her indignation, her wrath, when she learned that they meant to move an invalid, suffering from something not unlike a mild attack of cholera, to her bridal couch! The bride's mother took her part, broke into abuse and vowed she would complain to her husband next day, but Pseldonimov asserted himself and insisted: Ivan Ilyitch was moved into the bridal chamber, and a bed was made up on chairs for the young people. The bride whimpered, would have liked to pinch him, but dared not disobey; her papa had a crutch with which she was very familiar, and she knew that her papa would call her to account next day. To console her they carried the pink satin quilt and the pillows in muslin cases into the drawing-room. At that moment the youth arrived with the carriage, and was horribly alarmed that the carriage was not wanted. He was left to pay for it himself, and he never had as much as a ten-kopeck piece. Pseldonimov explained that he was utterly bankrupt. They tried to parley with the driver. But he began to be noisy and even to batter on the shutters. How it ended I don't know exactly. I believe the youth was carried off to Peski by way of a hostage to Fourth Rozhdensky Street, where he hoped to rouse a student who was spending the night at a friend's, and to try whether he had any money. It was going on for six o'clock in the morning when the young people were left alone and shut up in the drawing-room. Pseldonimov's mother spent the whole night by the bedside of the sufferer. She installed herself on a rug on the floor and covered herself with an old coat, but could not sleep because she had to get up every minute: Ivan Ilyitch had a terrible attack of colic. Madame Pseldonimov, a woman of courage and greatness of soul, undressed him with her own hands, took off all his things, looked after him

as if he were her own son, and spent the whole night carrying basins, etc., from the bedroom across the passage and bringing them back again empty. And yet the misfortunes of that night were not yet over.

Not more than ten minutes after the young people had been shut up alone in the drawing-room, a piercing shriek was suddenly heard, not a cry of joy, but a shriek of the most sinister kind. The screams were followed by a noise, a crash, as though of the falling of chairs, and instantly there burst into the still dark room a perfect crowd of exclaiming and frightened women, attired in every kind of *déshabillé*. These women were the bride's mother, her elder sister, abandoning for the moment the sick children, and her three aunts, even the one with a broken rib dragged herself in. Even the cook was there, and the German lady who told stories, whose own feather bed, the best in the house, and her only property, had been forcibly dragged from under her for the young couple, trailed in together with the others. All these respectable and sharp-eyed ladies had, a quarter of an hour before, made their way on tiptoe from the kitchen across the passage, and were listening in the ante-room, devoured by unaccountable curiosity. Meanwhile some one lighted a candle, and a surprising spectacle met the eyes of all. The chairs supporting the broad feather bed only at the sides had parted under the weight, and the feather bed had fallen between them on the floor. The bride was sobbing with anger, this time she was mortally offended. Pseldonimov, morally shattered, stood like a criminal caught in a crime. He did not even attempt to defend himself. Shrieks and exclamations sounded on all sides. Pseldonimov's mother ran up at the noise, but the bride's mamma on this occasion got the upper hand. She began by showering strange and for the most part quite undeserved reproaches, such as: "A nice husband you are, after this. What are you good for after such a disgrace?" and so on; and at last carried her daughter away from her husband, undertaking to bear the full responsibility for doing so with her ferocious husband, who would demand an explanation. All the others followed her out exclaiming and shaking their heads. No one remained with Pseldonimov except his mother, who tried to comfort him. But he sent her away at once.

He was beyond consolation. He made his way to the sofa and sat down in the most gloomy confusion of mind just as he was, barefooted and in nothing but his night attire. His thoughts whirled in a tangled criss-cross in his mind. At times he mechanically looked about the room where only a

little while ago the dancers had been whirling madly, and in which the cigarette smoke still lingered. Cigarette ends and sweet-meat papers still littered the slopped and dirty floor. The wreck of the nuptial couch and the overturned chairs bore witness to the transitoriness of the fondest and surest earthly hopes and dreams. He sat like this almost an hour. The most oppressive thoughts kept coming into his mind, such as the doubt: What was in store for him in the office now? He recognised with painful clearness that he would have, at all costs, to exchange into another department; that he could not possibly remain where he was after all that had happened that evening. He thought, too, of Mlekopitaev, who would probably make him dance the Cossack dance next day to test his meekness. He reflected, too, that though Mlekopitaev had given fifty roubles for the wedding festivities, every farthing of which had been spent, he had not thought of giving him the four hundred roubles yet, no mention had been made of it, in fact. And, indeed, even the house had not been formally made over to him. He thought, too, of his wife who had left him at the most critical moment of his life, of the tall officer who had dropped on one knee before her. He had noticed that already; he thought of the seven devils which according to the testimony of her own father were in possession of his wife, and of the crutch in readiness to drive them out.... Of course he felt equal to bearing a great deal, but destiny had let loose such surprises upon him that he might well have doubts of his fortitude. So Pseldonimov mused dolefully. Meanwhile the candle end was going out, its fading light, falling straight upon Pseldonimov’s profile, threw a colossal shadow of it on the wall, with a drawn-out neck, a hooked nose, and with two tufts of hair sticking out on his forehead and the back of his head. At last, when the air was growing cool with the chill of early morning, he got up, frozen and spiritually numb, crawled to the feather bed that was lying between the chairs, and without rearranging anything, without putting out the candle end, without even laying the pillow under his head, fell into a leaden, deathlike sleep, such as the sleep of men condemned to flogging on the morrow must be.

On the other hand, what could be compared with the agonising night spent by Ivan Ilyitch Pralinsky on the bridal couch of the unlucky Pseldonimov! For some time, headache, vomiting and other most unpleasant symptoms did not leave him for one second. He was in the torments of hell. The faint glimpses of consciousness that visited his brain,

lighted up such an abyss of horrors, such gloomy and revolting pictures, that it would have been better for him not to have returned to consciousness. Everything was still in a turmoil in his mind, however. He recognised Pseldonimov's mother, for instance, heard her gentle admonitions, such as: "Be patient, my dear; be patient, good sir, it won't be so bad presently." He recognised her, but could give no logical explanation of her presence beside him. Revolting phantoms haunted him, most frequently of all he was haunted by Semyon Ivanitch; but looking more intently, he saw that it was not Semyon Ivanitch but Pseldonimov's nose. He had visions, too, of the free-and-easy artist, and the officer and the old lady with her face tied up. What interested him most of all was the gilt ring which hung over his head, through which the curtains hung. He could distinguish it distinctly in the dim light of the candle end which lighted up the room, and he kept wondering inwardly: What was the object of that ring, why was it there, what did it mean? He questioned the old lady several times about it, but apparently did not say what he meant; and she evidently did not understand it, however much he struggled to explain. At last by morning the symptoms had ceased and he fell into a sleep, a sound sleep without dreams. He slept about an hour, and when he woke he was almost completely conscious, with an insufferable headache, and a disgusting taste in his mouth and on his tongue, which seemed turned into a piece of cloth. He sat up in the bed, looked about him, and pondered. The pale light of morning peeping through the cracks of the shutters in a narrow streak, quivered on the wall. It was about seven o'clock in the morning. But when Ivan Ilyitch suddenly grasped the position and recalled all that had happened to him since the evening; when he remembered all his adventures at supper, the failure of his magnanimous action, his speech at table; when he realised all at once with horrifying clearness all that might come of this now, all that people would say and think of him; when he looked round and saw to what a mournful and hideous condition he had reduced the peaceful bridal couch of his clerk — oh, then such deadly shame, such agony overwhelmed him, that he uttered a shriek, hid his face in his hands and fell back on the pillow in despair. A minute later he jumped out of bed, saw his clothes carefully folded and brushed on a chair beside him, and seizing them, and as quickly as he could, in desperate haste began putting them on, looking round and seeming terribly frightened at something. On another chair close by lay his greatcoat and fur cap, and his yellow gloves were in his cap. He meant to

steal away secretly. But suddenly the door opened and the elder Madame Pseldonimov walked in with an earthenware jug and basin. A towel was hanging over her shoulder. She set down the jug, and without further conversation told him that he must wash.

“Come, my good sir, wash; you can’t go without washing....”

And at that instant Ivan Ilyitch recognised that if there was one being in the whole world whom he need not fear, and before whom he need not feel ashamed, it was that old lady. He washed. And long afterwards, at painful moments of his life, he recalled among other pangs of remorse all the circumstances of that waking, and that earthenware basin, and the china jug filled with cold water in which there were still floating icicles, and the oval cake of soap at fifteen kopecks, in pink paper with letters embossed on it, evidently bought for the bridal pair though it fell to Ivan Ilyitch to use it, and the old lady with the linen towel over her left shoulder. The cold water refreshed him, he dried his face, and without even thanking his sister of mercy, he snatched up his hat, flung over his shoulders the coat handed to him by Pseldonimov, and crossing the passage and the kitchen where the cat was already mewing, and the cook sitting up in her bed staring after him with greedy curiosity, ran out into the yard, into the street, and threw himself into the first sledge he came across. It was a frosty morning. A chilly yellow fog still hid the house and everything. Ivan Ilyitch turned up his collar. He thought that every one was looking at him, that they were all recognising him, all....

For eight days he did not leave the house or show himself at the office. He was ill, wretchedly ill, but more morally than physically. He lived through a perfect hell in those days, and they must have been reckoned to his account in the other world. There were moments when he thought of becoming a monk and entering a monastery. There really were. His imagination, indeed, took special excursions during that period. He pictured subdued subterranean singing, an open coffin, living in a solitary cell, forests and caves; but when he came to himself he recognised almost at once that all this was dreadful nonsense and exaggeration, and was ashamed of this nonsense. Then began attacks of moral agony on the theme of his *existence manquée*. Then shame flamed up again in his soul, took complete possession of him at once, consumed him like fire and re-opened his wounds. He shuddered as pictures of all sorts rose before his mind. What

would people say about him, what would they think when he walked into his office? What a whisper would dog his steps for a whole year, ten years, his whole life! His story would go down to posterity. He sometimes fell into such dejection that he was ready to go straight off to Semyon Ivanovitch and ask for his forgiveness and friendship. He did not even justify himself, there was no limit to his blame of himself. He could find no extenuating circumstances, and was ashamed of trying to.

He had thoughts, too, of resigning his post at once and devoting himself to human happiness as a simple citizen, in solitude. In any case he would have completely to change his whole circle of acquaintances, and so thoroughly as to eradicate all memory of himself. Then the thought occurred to him that this, too, was nonsense, and that if he adopted greater severity with his subordinates it might all be set right. Then he began to feel hope and courage again. At last, at the expiration of eight days of hesitation and agonies, he felt that he could not endure to be in uncertainty any longer, and *un beau matin* he made up his mind to go to the office.

He had pictured a thousand times over his return to the office as he sat at home in misery. With horror and conviction he told himself that he would certainly hear behind him an ambiguous whisper, would see ambiguous faces, would intercept ominous smiles. What was his surprise when nothing of the sort happened. He was greeted with respect; he was met with bows; every one was grave; every one was busy. His heart was filled with joy as he made his way to his own room.

He set to work at once with the utmost gravity, he listened to some reports and explanations, settled doubtful points. He felt as though he had never explained knotty points and given his decisions so intelligently, so judiciously as that morning. He saw that they were satisfied with him, that they respected him, that he was treated with respect. The most thin-skinned sensitiveness could not have discovered anything.

At last Akim Petrovitch made his appearance with some document. The sight of him sent a stab to Ivan Ilyitch’s heart, but only for an instant. He went into the business with Akim Petrovitch, talked with dignity, explained things, and showed him what was to be done. The only thing he noticed was that he avoided looking at Akim Petrovitch for any length of time, or rather Akim Petrovitch seemed afraid of catching his eye, but at last Akim Petrovitch had finished and began to collect his papers.

“And there is one other matter,” he began as dryly as he could, “the clerk Pseldonimov’s petition to be transferred to another department. His Excellency Semyon Ivanovitch Shipulenko has promised him a post. He begs your gracious assent, your Excellency.”

“Oh, so he is being transferred,” said Ivan Ilyitch, and he felt as though a heavy weight had rolled off his heart. He glanced at Akim Petrovitch, and at that instant their eyes met. “Certainly, I for my part ... I will use,” answered Ivan Ilyitch; “I am ready.”

Akim Petrovitch evidently wanted to slip away as quickly as he could. But in a rush of generous feeling Ivan Ilyitch determined to speak out. Apparently some inspiration had come to him again.

“Tell him,” he began, bending a candid glance full of profound meaning upon Akim Petrovitch, “tell Pseldonimov that I feel no ill-will, no, I do not!... That on the contrary I am ready to forget all that is past, to forget it all....”

But all at once Ivan Ilyitch broke off, looking with wonder at the strange behaviour of Akim Petrovitch, who suddenly seemed transformed from a sensible person into a fearful fool. Instead of listening and hearing Ivan Ilyitch to the end, he suddenly flushed crimson in the silliest way, began with positively unseemly haste making strange little bows, and at the same time edging towards the door. His whole appearance betrayed a desire to sink through the floor, or more accurately, to get back to his table as quickly as possible. Ivan Ilyitch, left alone, got up from his chair in confusion; he looked in the looking-glass without noticing his face.

“No, severity, severity and nothing but severity,” he whispered almost unconsciously, and suddenly a vivid flush over-spread his face. He felt suddenly more ashamed, more weighed down than he had been in the most insufferable moments of his eight days of tribulation. “I did break down!” he said to himself, and sank helplessly into his chair.

ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE



OR, THE HUSBAND UNDER THE BED

An Extraordinary Adventure

I

"Be so kind, sir ... allow me to ask you...."

The gentleman so addressed started and looked with some alarm at the gentleman in raccoon furs who had accosted him so abruptly at eight o'clock in the evening in the street. We all know that if a Petersburg gentleman suddenly in the street speaks to another gentleman with whom he is unacquainted, the second gentleman is invariably alarmed.

And so the gentleman addressed started and was somewhat alarmed.

"Excuse me for troubling you," said the gentleman in raccoon, "but I ... I really don't know ... you will pardon me, no doubt; you see, I am a little upset...."

Only then the young man in the wadded overcoat observed that this gentleman in the raccoon furs certainly was upset. His wrinkled face was rather pale, his voice was trembling. He was evidently in some confusion of mind, his words did not flow easily from his tongue, and it could be seen that it cost him a terrible effort to present a very humble request to a personage possibly his inferior in rank or condition, in spite of the urgent necessity of addressing his request to somebody. And indeed the request was in any case unseemly, undignified, strange, coming from a man who had such a dignified fur coat, such a respectable jacket of a superb dark green colour, and such distinguished decorations adorning that jacket. It was evident that the gentleman in raccoon was himself confused by all this, so that at last he could not stand it, but made up his mind to suppress his emotion and politely to put an end to the unpleasant position he had himself brought about.

"Excuse me, I am not myself: but it is true you don't know me ... forgive me for disturbing you; I have changed my mind."

Here, from politeness, he raised his hat and hurried off.

"But allow me...."

The little gentleman had, however, vanished into the darkness, leaving the gentleman in the wadded overcoat in a state of stupefaction.

“What a queer fellow!” thought the gentleman in the wadded overcoat. After wondering, as was only natural, and recovering at last from his stupefaction, he bethought him of his own affairs, and began walking to and fro, staring intently at the gates of a house with an endless number of storeys. A fog was beginning to come on, and the young man was somewhat relieved at it, for his walking up and down was less noticeable in the fog, though indeed no one could have noticed him but some cabman who had been waiting all day without a fare.

“Excuse me!”

The young man started again; again the gentleman in raccoon was standing before him.

“Excuse me again ..,” he began, “but you ... you are no doubt an honourable man! Take no notice of my social position ... but I am getting muddled ... look at it as man to man ... you see before you, sir, a man craving a humble favour....”

“If I can.... What do you want?”

“You imagine, perhaps, that I am asking for money,” said the mysterious gentleman, with a wry smile, laughing hysterically and turning pale.

“Oh, dear, no.”

“No, I see that I am tiresome to you! Excuse me, I cannot bear myself; consider that you are seeing a man in an agitated condition, almost of insanity, and do not draw any conclusion....”

“But to the point, to the point,” responded the young man, nodding his head encouragingly and impatiently.

“Now think of that! A young man like you reminding me to keep to the point, as though I were some heedless boy! I must certainly be doting!... How do I seem to you in my degrading position? Tell me frankly.”

The young man was overcome with confusion, and said nothing.

“Allow me to ask you openly: have you not seen a lady? That is all that I have to ask you,” the gentleman in the raccoon coat said resolutely at last.

“Lady?”

“Yes, a lady.”

“Yes, I have seen ... but I must say lots of them have passed....”

“Just so,” answered the mysterious gentleman, with a bitter smile. “I am muddled, I did not mean to ask that; excuse me, I meant to say, haven’t you

seen a lady in a fox fur cape, in a dark velvet hood and a black veil?”

“No, I haven’t noticed one like that ... no. I think I haven’t seen one.”

“Well, in that case, excuse me!”

The young man wanted to ask a question, but the gentleman in raccoon vanished again; again he left his patient listener in a state of stupefaction.

“Well, the devil take him!” thought the young man in the wadded overcoat, evidently troubled.

With annoyance he turned up his beaver collar, and began cautiously walking to and fro again before the gates of the house of many storeys. He was raging inwardly.

“Why doesn’t she come out?” he thought. “It will soon be eight o’clock.”

The town clock struck eight.

“Oh, devil take you!”

“Excuse me!...”

“Excuse me for speaking like that ... but you came upon me so suddenly that you quite frightened me,” said the young man, frowning and apologising.

“Here I am again. I must strike you as tiresome and queer.”

“Be so good as to explain at once, without more ado; I don’t know what it is you want....”

“You are in a hurry. Do you see, I will tell you everything openly, without wasting words. It cannot be helped. Circumstances sometimes bring together people of very different characters.... But I see you are impatient, young man.... So here ... though I really don’t know how to tell you: I am looking for a lady (I have made up my mind to tell you all about it). You see, I must know where that lady has gone. Who she is — I imagine there is no need for you to know her name, young man.”

“Well, well, what next?”

“What next? But what a tone you take with me! Excuse me, but perhaps I have offended you by calling you young man, but I had nothing ... in short, if you are willing to do me a very great service, here it is: a lady — that is, I mean a gentlewoman of a very good family, of my acquaintance ... I have been commissioned ... I have no family, you see....”

“Oh!”

“Put yourself in my position, young man (ah, I’ve done it again; excuse me, I keep calling you young man). Every minute is precious.... Only fancy,

that lady ... but cannot you tell me who lives in this house?”

“But ... lots of people live here.”

“Yes, that is, you are perfectly right,” answered the gentleman in raccoon, giving a slight laugh for the sake of good manners. “I feel I am rather muddled.... But why do you take that tone? You see, I admit frankly that I am muddled, and however haughty you are, you have seen enough of my humiliation to satisfy you.... I say a lady of honourable conduct, that is, of light tendencies — excuse me, I am so confused; it is as though I were speaking of literature — Paul de Kock is supposed to be of light tendencies, and all the trouble comes from him, you see....”

The young man looked compassionately at the gentleman in raccoon, who seemed in a hopeless muddle and pausing, stared at him with a meaningless smile and with a trembling hand for no apparent reason gripped the lappet of his wadded overcoat.

“You ask who lives here?” said the young man, stepping back a little.

“Yes; you told me lots of people live here.”

“Here ... I know that Sofya Ostafyevna lives here, too,” the young man brought out in a low and even commiserating tone.

“There, you see, you see! You know something, young man?”

“I assure you I don’t, I know nothing ... I judged from your troubled air....”

“I have just learned from the cook that she does come here; but you are on the wrong tack, that is, with Sofya Ostafyevna ... she does not know her....”

“No? Oh ... I beg your pardon, then....”

“I see this is of no interest to you, young man,” said the queer man, with bitter irony.

“Listen,” said the young man, hesitating. “I really don’t understand why you are in such a state, but tell me frankly, I suppose you are being deceived?” The young man smiled approvingly. “We shall understand one another, anyway,” he added, and his whole person loftily betrayed an inclination to make a half-bow.

“You crush me! But I frankly confess that is just it ... but it happens to every one!... I am deeply touched by your sympathy. To be sure, among young men ... though I am not young; but you know, habit, a bachelor life, among bachelors, we all know....”

“Oh, yes, we all know, we all know! But in what way can I be of assistance to you?”

“Why, look here: admitting a visit to Sofya Ostafyevna ... though I don’t know for a fact where the lady has gone, I only know that she is in that house; but seeing you walking up and down, and I am walking up and down on the same side myself, I thought ... you see, I am waiting for that lady ... I know that she is there. I should like to meet her and explain to her how shocking and improper it is!... In fact, you understand me....”

“H’m! Well?”

“I am not acting for myself; don’t imagine it; it is another man’s wife! Her husband is standing over there on the Voznesensky Bridge; he wants to catch her, but he doesn’t dare; he is still loath to believe it, as every husband is.” (Here the gentleman in raccoon made an effort to smile.) “I am a friend of his; you can see for yourself I am a person held in some esteem; I could not be what you take me for.”

“Oh, of course. Well, well!”

“So, you see, I am on the look out for her. The task has been entrusted to me (the unhappy husband!). But I know that the young lady is sly (Paul de Kock for ever under her pillow); I am certain she scurries off somewhere on the sly.... I must confess the cook told me she comes here; I rushed off like a madman as soon as I heard the news; I want to catch her. I have long had suspicions, and so I wanted to ask you; you are walking here ... you — you — I don’t know....”

“Come, what is it you want?”

“Yes ... I have not the honour of your acquaintance; I do not venture to inquire who and what you may be.... Allow me to introduce myself, anyway; glad to meet you!...”

The gentleman, quivering with agitation, warmly shook the young man’s hand.

“I ought to have done this to begin with,” he added, “but I have lost all sense of good manners.”

The gentleman in raccoon could not stand still as he talked; he kept looking about him uneasily, fidgeted with his feet, and like a drowning man clutched at the young man’s hand.

“You see,” he went on, “I meant to address you in a friendly way.... Excuse the freedom.... I meant to ask you to walk along the other side and down the side street, where there is a back entrance. I, too, on my side, will

walk from the front entrance, so that we cannot miss her; I'm afraid of missing her by myself; I don't want to miss her. When you see her, stop her and shout to me.... But I'm mad! Only now I see the foolishness and impropriety of my suggestion!..."

"No, why, no! It's all right!..."

"Don't make excuses for me; I am so upset. I have never been in such a state before. As though I were being tried for my life! I must own indeed — I will be straightforward and honourable with you, young man; I actually thought you might be the lover."

"That is, to put it simply, you want to know what I am doing here?"

"You are an honourable man, my dear sir. I am far from supposing that you are *he*, I will not insult you with such a suspicion; but ... give me your word of honour that you are not the lover...."

"Oh, very well, I'll give you my word of honour that I am a lover, but not of your wife; otherwise I shouldn't be here in the street, but should be with her now!"

"Wife! Who told you she was my wife, young man? I am a bachelor, I — that is, I am a lover myself...."

"You told me there is a husband on Voznesensky Bridge...."

"Of course, of course, I am talking too freely; but there are other ties! And you know, young man, a certain lightness of character, that is...."

"Yes, yes, to be sure, to be sure...."

"That is, I am not her husband at all...."

"Oh, no doubt. But I tell you frankly that in reassuring you now, I want to set my own mind at rest, and that is why I am candid with you; you are upsetting me and in my way. I promise that I will call you. But I most humbly beg you to move further away and let me alone. I am waiting for some one too."

"Certainly, certainly, I will move further off. I respect the passionate impatience of your heart. Oh, how well I understand you at this moment!"

"Oh, all right, all right...."

"Till we meet again!... But excuse me, young man, here I am again ... I don't know how to say it ... give me your word of honour once more, as a gentleman, that you are not her lover."

"Oh, mercy on us!"

"One more question, the last: do you know the surname of the husband of your ... that is, I mean the lady who is the object of your devotion?"

“Of course I do; it is not your name, and that is all about it.”

“Why, how do you know my name?”

“But, I say, you had better go; you are losing time; she might go away a thousand times. Why, what do you want? Your lady’s in a fox cape and a hood, while mine is wearing a plaid cloak and a pale blue velvet hat.... What more do you want? What else?”

“A pale blue velvet hat! She has a plaid cloak and a pale blue velvet hat!” cried the pertinacious man, instantly turning back again.

“Oh, hang it all! Why, that may well be.... And, indeed, my lady does not come here!”

“Where is she, then — your lady?”

“You want to know that? What is it to you?”

“I must own, I am still....”

“Tfoo! Mercy on us! Why, you have no sense of decency, none at all. Well, my lady has friends here, on the third storey looking into the street. Why, do you want me to tell you their names?”

“My goodness, I have friends too, who live on the third storey, and their windows look on to the street.... General....”

“General!”

“A general. If you like I will tell you what general: well, then ... General Polovitsyn.”

“You don’t say so! No, that is not the same! (Oh, damnation, damnation!).”

“Not the same?”

“No, not the same.”

Both were silent, looking at each other in perplexity.

“Why are you looking at me like that?” exclaimed the young man, shaking off his stupefaction and air of uncertainty with vexation.

The gentleman was in a fluster.

“I ... I must own....”

“Come, allow me, allow me; let us talk more sensibly now. It concerns us both. Explain to me ... whom do you know there?”

“You mean, who are my friends?”

“Yes, your friends....”

“Well, you see ... you see!... I see from your eyes that I have guessed right!”

“Hang it all! No, no, hang it all! Are you blind? Why, I am standing here before you, I am not with her. Oh, well! I don’t care, whether you say so or not!”

Twice in his fury the young man turned on his heel with a contemptuous wave of his hand.

“Oh, I meant nothing, I assure you. As an honourable man I will tell you all about it. At first my wife used to come here alone. They are relatives of hers; I had no suspicions; yesterday I met his Excellency: he told me that he had moved three weeks ago from here to another flat, and my wi ... that is, not mine, but somebody else’s (the husband’s on the Voznesensky Bridge) ... that lady had told me that she was with them the day before yesterday, in this flat I mean ... and the cook told me that his Excellency’s flat had been taken by a young man called Bobynitsyn....”

“Oh, damn it all, damn it all!...”

“My dear sir, I am in terror, I am in alarm!”

“Oh, hang it! What is it to me that you are in terror and in alarm? Ah! Over there ... some one flitted by ... over there....”

“Where, where? You just shout, ‘Ivan Andreyitch,’ and I will run....”

“All right, all right. Oh, confound it! Ivan Andreyitch!”

“Here I am,” cried Ivan Andreyitch, returning, utterly breathless. “What is it, what is it? Where?”

“Oh, no, I didn’t mean anything ... I wanted to know what this lady’s name is.”

“Glaf....”

“Glafira?”

“No, not Glafira.... Excuse me, I cannot tell you her name.”

As he said this the worthy man was as white as a sheet.

“Oh, of course it is not Glafira, I know it is not Glafira, and mine’s not Glafira; but with whom can she be?”

“Where?”

“There! Oh, damn it, damn it!” (The young man was in such a fury that he could not stand still.)

“There, you see! How did you know that her name was Glafira?”

“Oh, damn it all, really! To have a bother with you, too! Why, you say — that yours is not called Glafira!...”

“My dear sir, what a way to speak!”

“Oh, the devil! As though that mattered now! What is she? Your wife?”

“No — that is, I am not married.... But I would not keep flinging the devil at a respectable man in trouble, a man, I will not say worthy of esteem, but at any rate a man of education. You keep saying, ‘The devil, the devil!’”

“To be sure, the devil take it; so there you are, do you understand?”

“You are blinded by anger, and I say nothing. Oh, dear, who is that?”

“Where?”

There was a noise and a sound of laughter; two pretty girls ran down the steps; both the men rushed up to them.

“Oh, what manners! What do you want?”

“Where are you shoving?”

“They are not the right ones!”

“Aha, so you’ve pitched on the wrong ones! Cab!”

“Where do you want to go, mademoiselle?”

“To Pokrov. Get in, Annushka; I’ll take you.”

“Oh, I’ll sit on the other side; off! Now, mind you drive quickly.”

The cab drove off.

“Where did they come from?”

“Oh, dear, oh, dear! Hadn’t we better go there?”

“Where?”

“Why, to Bobynitsyn’s....”

“No, that’s out of the question.”

“Why?”

“I would go there, of course, but then she would tell me some other story; she would ... get out of it. She would say that she had come on purpose to catch me with some one, and I should get into trouble.”

“And, you know, she may be there! But you — I don’t know for what reason — why, you might go to the general’s....”

“But, you know, he has moved!”

“That doesn’t matter, you know. She has gone there; so you go, too — don’t you understand? Behave as though you didn’t know the general had gone away. Go as though you had come to fetch your wife, and so on.”

“And then?”

“Well, and then find the person you want at Bobynitsyn’s. Tfoo, damnation take you, what a senseless....”

“Well, and what is it to you, my finding? You see, you see!”

“What, what, my good man? What? You are on the same old tack again. Oh, Lord have mercy on us! You ought to be ashamed, you absurd person, you senseless person!”

“Yes, but why are you so interested? Do you want to find out....”

“Find out what? What? Oh, well, damnation take you! I have no thoughts for you now; I’ll go alone. Go away; get along; look out; be off!”

“My dear sir, you are almost forgetting yourself!” cried the gentleman in raccoon in despair.

“Well, what of it? What if I am forgetting myself?” said the young man, setting his teeth and stepping up to the gentleman in raccoon in a fury. “What of it? Forgetting myself before whom?” he thundered, clenching his fists.

“But allow me, sir....”

“Well, who are you, before whom I am forgetting myself? What is your name?”

“I don’t know about that, young man; why do you want my name?... I cannot tell it you.... I better come with you. Let us go; I won’t hang back; I am ready for anything.... But I assure you I deserve greater politeness and respect! You ought never to lose your self-possession, and if you are upset about something — I can guess what about — at any rate there is no need to forget yourself.... You are still a very, very young man!...”

“What is it to me that you are old? There’s nothing wonderful in that! Go away. Why are you dancing about here?”

“How am I old? Of course, in position; but I am not dancing about....”

“I can see that. But get away with you.”

“No, I’ll stay with you; you cannot forbid me; I am mixed up in it, too; I will come with you....”

“Well, then, keep quiet, keep quiet, hold your tongue....”

They both went up the steps and ascended the stairs to the third storey. It was rather dark.

“Stay; have you got matches?”

“Matches! What matches?”

“Do you smoke cigars?”

“Oh, yes, I have, I have; here they are, here they are; here, stay....” The gentleman in raccoon rummaged in a fluster.

“Tfoo, what a senseless ... damnation! I believe this is the door....”

“This, this, this?”

“This, this, this... Why are you bawling? Hush!...”

“My dear sir, overcoming my feelings, I ... you are a reckless fellow, so there!...”

The light flared up.

“Yes, so it is; here is the brass plate. This is Bobynitsyn’s; do you see Bobynitsyn?”

“I see it, I see it.”

“Hu-ush!”

“Why, has it gone out?”

“Yes, it has.”

“Should we knock?”

“Yes, we must,” responded the gentleman in raccoon.

“Knock, then.”

“No, why should I? You begin, you knock!”

“Coward!”

“You are a coward yourself!”

“G-et a-way with you!”

“I almost regret having confided my secret to you; you....”

“I — what about me?”

“You take advantage of my distress; you see that I am upset....”

“But do I care? I think it’s ridiculous, that’s all about it!”

“Why are you here?”

“Why are you here, too?...”

“Delightful morality!” observed the gentleman in raccoon, with indignation.

“What are you saying about morality? What are you?”

“Well, it’s immoral!”

“What?...”

“Why, to your thinking, every deceived husband is a noodle!”

“Why, are you the husband? I thought the husband was on Voznesensky Bridge? So what is it to you? Why do you meddle?”

“I do believe that you are the lover!...”

“Listen: if you go on like this I shall be forced to think you are a noodle! That is, do you know who?”

“That is, you mean to say that I am the husband,” said the gentleman in raccoon, stepping back as though he were scalded with boiling water.

“Hush, hold your tongue. Do you hear?...”

“It is she.”

“No!”

“Tfoo, how dark it is!”

There was a hush; a sound was audible in Bobynitsyn’s flat.

“Why should we quarrel, sir?” whispered the gentleman in raccoon.

“But you took offence yourself, damn it all!”

“But you drove me out of all patience.”

“Hold your tongue!”

“You must admit that you are a very young man.”

“Hold your tongue!”

“Of course I share your idea, that a husband in such a position is a noodle.”

“Oh, will you hold your tongue? Oh!...”

“But why such savage persecution of the unfortunate husband?...”

“It is she!”

But at that moment the sound ceased.

“Is it she?”

“It is, it is, it is! But why are you — you worrying about it? It is not your trouble!”

“My dear sir, my dear sir,” muttered the gentleman in raccoon, turning pale and gulping, “I am, of course, greatly agitated ... you can see for yourself my abject position; but now it’s night, of course, but to-morrow ... though indeed we are not likely to meet to-morrow, though I am not afraid of meeting you — and besides, it is not I, it is my friend on the Voznesensky Bridge, it really is he! It is his wife, it is somebody else’s wife. Poor fellow! I assure you, I know him very intimately; if you will allow me I will tell you all about it. I am a great friend of his, as you can see for yourself, or I shouldn’t be in such a state about him now — as you see for yourself. Several times I said to him: ‘Why are you getting married, dear boy? You have position, you have means, you are highly respected. Why risk it all at the caprice of coquetry? You must see that.’ ‘No, I am going to be married,’ he said; ‘domestic bliss.’... Here’s domestic bliss for you! In old days he deceived other husbands ... now he is drinking the cup ... you must excuse me, but this explanation was absolutely necessary.... He is an unfortunate man, and is drinking the cup — now!...” At this point the gentleman in raccoon gave such a gulp that he seemed to be sobbing in earnest.

“Ah, damnation take them all! There are plenty of fools. But who are you?”

The young man ground his teeth in anger.

“Well, you must admit after this that I have been gentlemanly and open with you ... and you take such a tone!”

“No, excuse me ... what is your name?”

“Why do you want to know my name?...”

“Ah!”

“I cannot tell you my name....”

“Do you know Shabrin?” the young man said quickly.

“Shabrin!!!”

“Yes, Shabrin! Ah!!!” (Saying this, the gentleman in the wadded overcoat mimicked the gentleman in raccoon.) “Do you understand?”

“No, what Shabrin?” answered the gentleman in raccoon, in a fluster. “He’s not Shabrin; he is a very respectable man! I can excuse your discourtesy, due to the tortures of jealousy.”

“He’s a scoundrel, a mercenary soul, a rogue that takes bribes, he steals government money! He’ll be had up for it before long!”

“Excuse me,” said the gentleman in raccoon, turning pale, “you don’t know him; I see that you don’t know him at all.”

“No, I don’t know him personally, but I know him from others who are in close touch with him.”

“From what others, sir? I am agitated, as you see....”

“A fool! A jealous idiot! He doesn’t look after his wife! That’s what he is, if you like to know!”

“Excuse me, young man, you are grievously mistaken....”

“Oh!”

“Oh!”

A sound was heard in Bobynitsyn’s flat. A door was opened, voices were heard.

“Oh, that’s not she! I recognise her voice; I understand it all now, this is not she!” said the gentleman in raccoon, turning as white as a sheet.

“Hush!”

The young man leaned against the wall.

“My dear sir, I am off. It is not she, I am glad to say.”

“All right! Be off, then!”

“Why are you staying, then?”

“What’s that to you?”

The door opened, and the gentleman in raccoon could not refrain from dashing headlong downstairs.

A man and a woman walked by the young man, and his heart stood still.... He heard a familiar feminine voice and then a husky male voice, utterly unfamiliar.

“Never mind, I will order the sledge,” said the husky voice.

“Oh, yes, yes; very well, do....”

“It will be here directly.”

The lady was left alone.

“Glafira! Where are your vows?” cried the young man in the wadded overcoat, clutching the lady’s arm.

“Oh, who is it? It’s you, Tvorogov? My goodness! What are you doing here?”

“Who is it you have been with here?”

“Why, my husband. Go away, go away; he’ll be coming out directly ... from ... in there ... from the Polovitsyns’. Go away; for goodness’ sake, go away.”

“It’s three weeks since the Polovitsyns moved! I know all about it!”

“*Aïe!*” The lady dashed downstairs. The young man overtook her.

“Who told you?” asked the lady.

“Your husband, madam, Ivan Andreyitch; he is here before you, madam....”

Ivan Andreyitch was indeed standing at the front door.

“*Aïe*, it’s you,” cried the gentleman in raccoon.

“Ah! *C’est vous*,” cried Glafira Petrovna, rushing up to him with unfeigned delight. “Oh, dear, you can’t think what has been happening to me. I went to see the Polovitsyns; only fancy ... you know they are living now by Izmailovsky Bridge; I told you, do you remember? I took a sledge from there. The horses took fright and bolted, they broke the sledge, and I was thrown out about a hundred yards from here; the coachman was taken up; I was in despair. Fortunately Monsieur Tvorogov ...”

“What!”

Monsieur Tvorogov was more like a fossil than like Monsieur Tvorogov.

“Monsieur Tvorogov saw me here and undertook to escort me; but now you are here, and I can only express my warm gratitude to you, Ivan Ilyitch....”

The lady gave her hand to the stupefied Ivan Ilyitch, and almost pinched instead of pressing it.

“Monsieur Tvorogov, an acquaintance of mine; it was at the Skorlupovs’ ball we had the pleasure of meeting; I believe I told you; don’t you remember, Koko?”

“Oh, of course, of course! Ah, I remember,” said the gentleman in raccoon addressed as Koko. “Delighted, delighted!” And he warmly pressed the hand of Monsieur Tvorogov.

“Who is it? What does it mean? I am waiting...,” said a husky voice.

Before the group stood a gentleman of extraordinary height; he took out a lorgnette and looked intently at the gentleman in the raccoon coat.

“Ah, Monsieur Bobynitsyn!” twittered the lady. “Where have you come from? What a meeting! Only fancy, I have just had an upset in a sledge ... but here is my husband! Jean! Monsieur Bobynitsyn, at the Karpovs’ ball....”

“Ah, delighted, very much delighted!... But I’ll take a carriage at once, my dear.”

“Yes, do, Jean, do; I still feel frightened; I am all of a tremble, I feel quite giddy.... At the masquerade to-night,” she whispered to Tvorogov.... “Good-bye, good-bye, Mr. Bobynitsyn! We shall meet to-morrow at the Karpovs’ ball, most likely.”

“No, excuse me, I shall not be there to-morrow; I don’t know about to-morrow, if it is like this now....” Mr. Bobynitsyn muttered something between his teeth, made a scrape with his boot, got into his sledge and drove away.

A carriage drove up; the lady got into it. The gentleman in the raccoon coat stopped, seemed incapable of making a movement and gazed blankly at the gentleman in the wadded coat. The gentleman in the wadded coat smiled rather foolishly.

“I don’t know....”

“Excuse me, delighted to make your acquaintance,” answered the young man, bowing with curiosity and a little intimidated.

“Delighted, delighted!...”

“I think you have lost your galosh....”

“I — oh, yes, thank you, thank you. I keep meaning to get rubber ones.”

“The foot gets so hot in rubbers,” said the young man, apparently with immense interest.

“*Jean!* Are you coming?”

“It does make it hot. Coming directly, darling; we are having an interesting conversation! Precisely so, as you say, it does make the foot hot.... But excuse me, I ...”

“Oh, certainly.”

“Delighted, very much delighted to make your acquaintance!...”

The gentleman in raccoon got into the carriage, the carriage set off, the young man remained standing looking after it in astonishment.

II

The following evening there was a performance of some sort at the Italian opera. Ivan Andreyitch burst into the theatre like a bomb. Such furore, such a passion for music had never been observed in him before. It was known for a positive fact, anyway, that Ivan Andreyitch used to be exceeding fond of a nap for an hour or two at the Italian opera; he even declared on several occasions how sweet and pleasant it was. “Why, the prima donna,” he used to say to his friends, “mews a lullaby to you like a little white kitten.” But it was a long time ago, last season, that he used to say this; now, alas! even at home Ivan Andreyitch did not sleep at nights. Nevertheless he burst into the crowded opera-house like a bomb. Even the conductor started suspiciously at the sight of him, and glanced out of the corner of his eye at his side-pocket in the full expectation of seeing the hilt of a dagger hidden there in readiness. It must be observed that there were at that time two parties, each supporting the superior claims of its favourite prima donna. They were called the —— *sists* and the —— *nists*. Both parties were so devoted to music, that the conductors actually began to be apprehensive of some startling manifestation of the passion for the good and the beautiful embodied in the two prima donnas. This was how it was that, looking at this youthful dash into the parterre of a grey-haired senior (though, indeed, he was not actually grey-haired, but a man about fifty, rather bald, and altogether of respectable appearance), the conductor could not help recalling the lofty judgment of Hamlet Prince of Denmark upon the evil example set by age to youth, and, as we have mentioned above, looking out of the corner of his eye at the gentleman’s side-pocket in the expectation of seeing a dagger. But there was a pocket-book and nothing else there.

Darting into the theatre, Ivan Andreyitch instantly scanned all the boxes of the second tier, and, oh — horror! His heart stood still, she was here! She was sitting in the box! General Polovitsyn, with his wife and sister-in-law, was there too. The general's adjutant — an extremely alert young man, was there too; there was a civilian too.... Ivan Andreyitch strained his attention and his eyesight, but — oh, horror! The civilian treacherously concealed himself behind the adjutant and remained in the darkness of obscurity.

She was here, and yet she had said she would not be here!

It was this duplicity for some time displayed in every step Glafira Petrovna took which crushed Ivan Andreyitch. This civilian youth reduced him at last to utter despair. He sank down in his stall utterly overwhelmed. Why? one may ask. It was a very simple matter....

It must be observed that Ivan Andreyitch's stall was close to the baignoire, and to make matters worse the treacherous box in the second tier was exactly above his stall, so that to his intense annoyance he was utterly unable to see what was going on over his head. At which he raged, and got as hot as a samovar. The whole of the first act passed unnoticed by him, that is, he did not hear a single note of it. It is maintained that what is good in music is that musical impressions can be made to fit any mood. The man who rejoices finds joy in its strains, while he who grieves finds sorrow in it; a regular tempest was howling in Ivan Andreyitch's ears. To add to his vexation, such terrible voices were shouting behind him, before him and on both sides of him, that Ivan Andreyitch's heart was torn. At last the act was over. But at the instant when the curtain was falling, our hero had an adventure such as no pen can describe.

It sometimes happens that a playbill flies down from the upper boxes. When the play is dull and the audience is yawning this is quite an event for them. They watch with particular interest the flight of the extremely soft paper from the upper gallery, and take pleasure in watching its zigzagging journey down to the very stalls, where it infallibly settles on some head which is quite unprepared to receive it. It is certainly very interesting to watch the embarrassment of the head (for the head is invariably embarrassed). I am indeed always in terror over the ladies' opera-glasses which usually lie on the edge of the boxes; I am constantly fancying that they will fly down on some unsuspecting head. But I perceive that this tragic observation is out of place here, and so I shall send it to the columns of those newspapers which are filled with advice, warnings against

swindling tricks, against unconscientiousness, hints for getting rid of beetles if you have them in the house, recommendations of the celebrated Mr. Princhipi, sworn foe of all beetles in the world, not only Russian but even foreign, such as Prussian cockroaches, and so on.

But Ivan Andreyitch had an adventure, which has never hitherto been described. There flew down on his — as already stated, somewhat bald — head, not a playbill; I confess I am actually ashamed to say what did fly down upon his head, because I am really loath to remark that on the respectable and bare — that is, partly hairless — head of the jealous and irritated Ivan Andreyitch there settled such an immoral object as a scented love-letter. Poor Ivan Andreyitch, utterly unprepared for this unforeseen and hideous occurrence, started as though he had caught upon his head a mouse or some other wild beast.

That the note was a love-letter of that there could be no mistake. It was written on scented paper, just as love-letters are written in novels, and folded up so as to be treacherously small so that it might be slipped into a lady's glove. It had probably fallen by accident at the moment it had been handed to her. The playbill might have been asked for, for instance, and the note, deftly folded in the playbill, was being put into her hands; but an instant, perhaps an accidental, nudge from the adjutant, extremely adroit in his apologies for his awkwardness, and the note had slipped from a little hand that trembled with confusion, and the civilian youth, stretching out his impatient hand, received instead of the note, the empty playbill, and did not know what to do with it. A strange and unpleasant incident for him, no doubt, but you must admit that for Ivan Andreyitch it was still more unpleasant.

"*Prédestiné,*" he murmured, breaking into a cold sweat and squeezing the note in his hands, "*prédestiné!* The bullet finds the guilty man," the thought flashed through his mind. "No, that's not right! In what way am I guilty? But there is another proverb, 'Once out of luck, never out of trouble.'..."

But it was not enough that there was a ringing in his ears and a dizziness in his head at this sudden incident. Ivan Andreyitch sat petrified in his chair, as the saying is, more dead than alive. He was persuaded that his adventure had been observed on all sides, although at that moment the whole theatre began to be filled with uproar and calls of encore. He sat overwhelmed with confusion, flushing crimson and not daring to raise his eyes, as though some

unpleasant surprise, something out of keeping with the brilliant assembly had happened to him. At last he ventured to lift his eyes.

“Charmingly sung,” he observed to a dandy sitting on his left side.

The dandy, who was in the last stage of enthusiasm, clapping his hands and still more actively stamping with his feet, gave Ivan Andreyitch a cursory and absent-minded glance, and immediately putting up his hands like a trumpet to his mouth, so as to be more audible, shouted the prima donna’s name. Ivan Andreyitch, who had never heard such a roar, was delighted. “He has noticed nothing!” he thought, and turned round; but the stout gentleman who was sitting behind him had turned round too, and with his back to him was scrutinising the boxes through his opera-glass. “He is all right too!” thought Ivan Andreyitch. In front, of course, nothing had been seen. Timidly and with a joyous hope in his heart, he stole a glance at the baignoire, near which was his stall, and started with the most unpleasant sensation. A lovely lady was sitting there who, holding her handkerchief to her mouth and leaning back in her chair, was laughing as though in hysterics.

“Ugh, these women!” murmured Ivan Andreyitch, and treading on people’s feet, he made for the exit.

Now I ask my readers to decide, I beg them to judge between me and Ivan Andreyitch. Was he right at that moment? The Grand Theatre, as we all know, contains four tiers of boxes and a fifth row above the gallery. Why must he assume that the note had fallen from one particular box, from that very box and no other? Why not, for instance, from the gallery where there are often ladies too? But passion is an exception to every rule, and jealousy is the most exceptional of all passions.

Ivan Andreyitch rushed into the foyer, stood by the lamp, broke the seal and read:

“To-day immediately after the performance, in G. Street at the corner of X. Lane, K. buildings, on the third floor, the first on the right from the stairs. The front entrance. Be there, *sans faute*; for God’s sake.”

Ivan Andreyitch did not know the handwriting, but he had no doubt it was an assignation. “To track it out, to catch it and nip the mischief in the bud,” was Ivan Andreyitch’s first idea. The thought occurred to him to unmask the infamy at once on the spot; but how could it be done? Ivan Andreyitch even ran up to the second row of boxes, but judiciously came back again. He was utterly unable to decide where to run. Having nothing

clear he could do, he ran round to the other side and looked through the open door of somebody else's box at the opposite side of the theatre. Yes, it was so, it was! Young ladies and young men were sitting in all the seats vertically one above another in all the five tiers. The note might have fallen from all tiers at once, for Ivan Andreyitch suspected all of them of being in a plot against him. But nothing made him any better, no probabilities of any sort. The whole of the second act he was running up and down all the corridors and could find no peace of mind anywhere. He would have dashed into the box office in hope of finding from the attendant there the names of the persons who had taken boxes on all the four tiers, but the box office was shut. At last there came an outburst of furious shouting and applause. The performance was over. Calls for the singers began, and two voices from the top gallery were particularly deafening — the leaders of the opposing factions. But they were not what mattered to Ivan Andreyitch. Already thoughts of what he was to do next flitted through his mind. He put on his overcoat and rushed off to G. Street to surprise them there, to catch them unawares, to unmask them, and in general to behave somewhat more energetically than he had done the day before. He soon found the house, and was just going in at the front door, when the figure of a dandy in an overcoat darted forward right in front of him, passed him and went up the stairs to the third storey. It seemed to Ivan Andreyitch that this was the same dandy, though he had not been able at the time to distinguish his features in the theatre. His heart stood still. The dandy was two flights of stairs ahead of him. At last he heard a door opened on the third floor, and opened without the ringing of a bell, as though the visitor was expected. The young man disappeared into the flat. Ivan Andreyitch mounted to the third floor, before there was time to shut the door. He meant to stand at the door, to reflect prudently on his next step, to be rather cautious, and then to determine upon some decisive course of action; but at that very minute a carriage rumbled up to the entrance, the doors were flung open noisily, and heavy footsteps began ascending to the third storey to the sound of coughing and clearing of the throat. Ivan Andreyitch could not stand his ground, and walked into the flat with all the majesty of an injured husband. A servant-maid rushed to meet him much agitated, then a man-servant appeared. But to stop Ivan Andreyitch was impossible. He flew in like a bomb, and crossing two dark rooms, suddenly found himself in a bedroom facing a lovely young lady, who was trembling all over with alarm and

gazing at him in utter horror as though she could not understand what was happening around her. At that instant there was a sound in the adjoining room of heavy footsteps coming straight towards the bedroom; they were the same footsteps that had been mounting the stairs.

“Goodness! It is my husband!” cried the lady, clasping her hands and turning whiter than her dressing-gown.

Ivan Andreyitch felt that he had come to the wrong place, that he had made a silly, childish blunder, that he had acted without due consideration, that he had not been sufficiently cautious on the landing. But there was no help for it. The door was already opening, already the heavy husband, that is if he could be judged by his footsteps, was coming into the room.... I don’t know what Ivan Andreyitch took himself to be at that moment! I don’t know what prevented him from confronting the husband, telling him that he had made a mistake, confessing that he had unintentionally behaved in the most unseemly way, making his apologies and vanishing — not of course with flying colours, not of course with glory, but at any rate departing in an open and gentlemanly manner. But no, Ivan Andreyitch again behaved like a boy, as though he considered himself a Don Juan or a Lovelace! He first hid himself behind the curtain of the bed, and finally, feeling utterly dejected and hopeless, he dropped on the floor and senselessly crept under the bed. Terror had more influence on him than reason, and Ivan Andreyitch, himself an injured husband, or at any rate a husband who considered himself such, could not face meeting another husband, but was afraid to wound him by his presence. Be this as it may, he found himself under the bed, though he had no idea how it had come to pass. But what was most surprising, the lady made no opposition. She did not cry out on seeing an utterly unknown elderly gentleman seek a refuge under her bed. Probably she was so alarmed that she was deprived of all power of speech.

The husband walked in gasping and clearing his throat, said good-evening to his wife in a singsong, elderly voice, and flopped into an easy chair as though he had just been carrying up a load of wood. There was a sound of a hollow and prolonged cough. Ivan Andreyitch, transformed from a ferocious tiger to a lamb, timid and meek as a mouse before a cat, scarcely dared to breathe for terror, though he might have known from his own experience that not all injured husbands bite. But this idea did not enter his head, either from lack of consideration or from agitation of some sort. Cautiously, softly, feeling his way he began to get right under the bed so as

to lie more comfortably there. What was his amazement when with his hand he felt an object which, to his intense amazement, stirred and in its turn seized his hand! Under the bed there was another person!

“Who’s this?” whispered Ivan Andreyitch.

“Well, I am not likely to tell you who I am,” whispered the strange man. “Lie still and keep quiet, if you have made a mess of things!”

“But, I say!...”

“Hold your tongue!”

And the extra gentleman (for one was quite enough under the bed) the extra gentleman squeezed Ivan Andreyitch’s hand in his fist so that the latter almost shrieked with pain.

“My dear sir....”

“Sh!”

“Then don’t pinch me so, or I shall scream.”

“All right, scream away, try it on.”

Ivan Andreyitch flushed with shame. The unknown gentleman was sulky and ill-humoured. Perhaps it was a man who had suffered more than once from the persecutions of fate, and had more than once been in a tight place; but Ivan Andreyitch was a novice and could not breathe in his constricted position. The blood rushed to his head. However, there was no help for it; he had to lie on his face. Ivan Andreyitch submitted and was silent.

“I have been to see Pavel Ivanitch, my love,” began the husband. “We sat down to a game of preference. Khee-khee-khee!” (he had a fit of coughing). “Yes ... khee! So my back ... khee! Bother it ... khee-khee-khee!”

And the old gentleman became engrossed in his cough.

“My back,” he brought out at last with tears in his eyes, “my spine began to ache.... A damned hæmorrhoid, I can’t stand nor sit ... or sit. Akkhee-khee-khee!”...

And it seemed as though the cough that followed was destined to last longer than the old gentleman in possession of it. The old gentleman grumbled something in its intervals, but it was utterly impossible to make out a word.

“Dear sir, for goodness’ sake, move a little,” whispered the unhappy Ivan Andreyitch.

“How can I? There’s no room.”

“But you must admit that it is impossible for me. It is the first time that I have found myself in such a nasty position.”

“And I in such unpleasant society.”

“But, young man!...”

“Hold your tongue!”

“Hold my tongue? You are very uncivil, young man.... If I am not mistaken, you are very young; I am your senior.”

“Hold your tongue!”

“My dear sir! You are forgetting yourself. You don’t know to whom you are talking!”

“To a gentleman lying under the bed.”

“But I was taken by surprise ... a mistake, while in your case, if I am not mistaken, immorality....”

“That’s where you are mistaken.”

“My dear sir! I am older than you, I tell you....”

“Sir, we are in the same boat, you know. I beg you not to take hold of my face!”

“Sir, I can’t tell one thing from another. Excuse me, but I have no room.”

“You shouldn’t be so fat!”

“Heavens! I have never been in such a degrading position.”

“Yes, one couldn’t be brought more low.”

“Sir, sir! I don’t know who you are, I don’t understand how this came about; but I am here by mistake; I am not what you think....”

“I shouldn’t think about you at all if you didn’t shove. But hold your tongue, do!”

“Sir, if you don’t move a little I shall have a stroke; you will have to answer for my death, I assure you.... I am a respectable man, I am the father of a family. I really cannot be in such a position!...”

“You thrust yourself into the position. Come, move a little! I’ve made room for you, I can’t do more!”

“Noble young man! Dear sir! I see I was mistaken about you,” said Ivan Andreyitch, in a transport of gratitude for the space allowed him, and stretching out his cramped limbs. “I understand your constricted condition, but there’s no help for it. I see you think ill of me. Allow me to redeem my reputation in your eyes, allow me to tell you who I am. I have come here against my will, I assure you; I am not here with the object you imagine.... I am in a terrible fright.”

“Oh, do shut up! Understand that if we are overheard it will be the worse for us. Sh!... He is talking.”

The old gentleman’s cough did, in fact, seem to be over.

“I tell you what, my love,” he wheezed in the most lachrymose chant, “I tell you what, my love ... khee-khee! Oh, what an affliction! Fedosey Ivanovitch said to me: ‘You should try drinking yarrow tea,’ he said to me; do you hear, my love?”

“Yes, dear.”

“Yes, that was what he said, ‘You should try drinking yarrow tea,’ he said. I told him I had put on leeches. But he said, ‘No, Alexandr Demyanovitch, yarrow tea is better, it’s a laxative, I tell you’ ... Khee-khee. Oh, dear! What do you think, my love? Khee! Oh, my God! Khee-khee! Had I better try yarrow tea?... Khee-khee-khee! Oh ... Khee!” and so on.

“I think it would be just as well to try that remedy,” said his wife.

“Yes, it would be! ‘You may be in consumption,” he said. “Khee-khee! And I told him it was gout and irritability of the stomach ... Khee-khee! But he would have it that it might be consumption. What do you think ... khee-khee! What do you think, my love; is it consumption?”

“My goodness, what are you talking about?”

“Why, consumption! You had better undress and go to bed now, my love ... khee-khee! I’ve caught a cold in my head to-day.”

“Ouf!” said Ivan Andreyitch. “For God’s sake, do move a little.”

“I really don’t know what is the matter with you; can’t you lie still?...”

“You are exasperated against me, young man, you want to wound me, I see that. You are, I suppose, this lady’s lover?”

“Shut up!”

“I will not shut up! I won’t allow you to order me about! You are, no doubt, her lover. If we are discovered I am not to blame in any way; I know nothing about it.”

“If you don’t hold your tongue,” said the young man, grinding his teeth, “I will say that you brought me here. I’ll say that you are my uncle who has dissipated his fortune. Then they won’t imagine I am this lady’s lover, anyway.”

“Sir, you are amusing yourself at my expense. You are exhausting my patience.”

“Hush, or I will make you hush! You are a curse to me. Come, tell me what you are here for? If you were not here I could lie here somehow till morning, and then get away.”

“But I can’t lie here till morning. I am a respectable man, I have family ties, of course.... What do you think, surely he is not going to spend the night here?”

“Who?”

“Why, this old gentleman....”

“Of course he will. All husbands aren’t like you. Some of them spend their nights at home.”

“My dear sir, my dear sir!” cried Ivan Andreyitch, turning cold with terror, “I assure you I spend my nights at home too, and this is the first time; but, my God, I see you know me. Who are you, young man? Tell me at once, I beseech you, from disinterested friendship, who are you?”

“Listen, I shall resort to violence....”

“But allow me, allow me, sir, to tell you, allow me to explain all this horrid business.”

“I won’t listen to any explanation. I don’t want to know anything about it. Be silent or....”

“But I cannot....”

A slight skirmish took place under the bed, and Ivan Andreyitch subsided.

“My love, it sounds as though there were cats hissing.”

“Cats! What will you imagine next?”

Evidently the lady did not know what to talk to her husband about. She was so upset that she could not pull herself together. Now she started and pricked up her ears.

“What cats?”

“Cats, my love. The other day I went into my study, and there was the tom-cat in my study, and hissing shoo-shoo-shoo! I said to him: ‘What is it, pussy?’ and he went shoo-shoo-shoo again, as though he were whispering. I thought, ‘Merciful heavens! isn’t he hissing as a sign of my death?’”

“What nonsense you are talking to-day! You ought to be ashamed, really!”

“Never mind, don’t be cross, my love. I see, you don’t like to think of me dying; I didn’t mean it. But you had better undress and get to bed, my love, and I’ll sit here while you go to bed.”

“For goodness’ sake, leave off; afterwards....”

“Well, don’t be cross, don’t be cross; but really I think there must be mice here.”

“Why, first cats and then mice, I really don’t know what is the matter with you.”

“Oh, I am all right ... Khee ... I ... khee! Never mind ... khee-khee-khee-khee! Oh! Lord have mercy on me ... khee.”

“You hear, you are making such an upset that he hears you,” whispers the young man.

“But if you knew what is happening to me. My nose is bleeding.”

“Let it bleed. Shut up. Wait till he goes away.”

“But, young man, put yourself in my place. Why, I don’t know with whom I am lying.”

“Would you be any better off if you did? Why, I don’t want to know your name. By the way, what is your name?”

“No; what do you want with my name?... I only want to explain the senseless way in which....”

“Hush ... he is speaking again....”

“Really, my love, there is whispering.”

“Oh, no, it’s the cotton wool in your ears has got out of place.”

“Oh, by the way, talking of the cotton wool, do you know that upstairs ... khee-khee ... upstairs ... khee-khee ..,” and so on.

“Upstairs!” whispered the young man. “Oh, the devil! I thought that this was the top storey; can it be the second?”

“Young man,” whispered Ivan Andreyitch, “what did you say? For goodness’ sake why does it concern you? I thought it was the top storey too. Tell me, for God’s sake, is there another storey?”

“Really some one is stirring,” said the old man, leaving off coughing at last.

“Hush! Do you hear?” whispered the young man, squeezing Ivan Andreyitch’s hands.

“Sir, you are holding my hands by force. Let me go!”

“Hush!”

A slight struggle followed and then there was a silence again.

“So I met a pretty woman ..,” began the old man.

“A pretty woman!” interrupted his wife.

“Yes.... I thought I told you before that I met a pretty woman on the stairs, or perhaps I did not mention it? My memory is weak. Yes, St. John’s wort ... khee!”

“What?”

“I must drink St. John’s wort; they say it does good ... khee-khee-khee! It does good!”

“It was you interrupted him,” said the young man, grinding his teeth again.

“You said, you met some pretty woman to-day?” his wife went on.

“Eh?”

“Met a pretty woman?”

“Who did?”

“Why, didn’t you?”

“I? When?”

“Oh, yes!...”

“At last! What a mummy! Well!” whispered the young man, inwardly raging at the forgetful old gentleman.

“My dear sir, I am trembling with horror. My God, what do I hear? It’s like yesterday, exactly like yesterday!...”

“Hush!”

“Yes, to be sure! I remember, a sly puss, such eyes ... in a blue hat....”

“In a blue hat! *Aïe, aïe!*”

“It’s she! She has a blue hat! My God!” cried Ivan Andreyitch.

“She? Who is she?” whispered the young man, squeezing Ivan Andreyitch’s hands.

“Hush!” Ivan Andreyitch exhorted in his turn. “He is speaking.”

“Ah, my God, my God!”

“Though, after all, who hasn’t a blue hat?”

“And such a sly little rogue,” the old gentleman went on “She comes here to see friends. She is always making eyes. And other friends come to see those friends too....”

“Foo! how tedious!” the lady interrupted. “Really, how can you take interest in that?”

“Oh, very well, very well, don’t be cross,” the old gentleman responded in a wheedling chant. “I won’t talk if you don’t care to hear me. You seem a little out of humour this evening.”

“But how did you get here?” the young man began.

“Ah, you see, you see! Now you are interested, and before you wouldn’t listen!”

“Oh, well, I don’t care! Please don’t tell me. Oh, damnation take it, what a mess!”

“Don’t be cross, young man; I don’t know what I am saying. I didn’t mean anything; I only meant to say that there must be some good reason for your taking such an interest.... But who are you, young man? I see you are a stranger, but who are you? Oh, dear, I don’t know what I am saying!”

“Ugh, leave off, please!” the young man interrupted, as though he were considering something.

“But I will tell you all about it. You think, perhaps, that I will not tell you. That I feel resentment against you. Oh, no! Here is my hand. I am only feeling depressed, nothing more. But for God’s sake, first tell me how you came here yourself? Through what chance? As for me, I feel no ill-will; no, indeed, I feel no ill-will, here is my hand. I have made it rather dirty, it is so dusty here; but that’s nothing, when the feeling is true.”

“Ugh, get away with your hand! There is no room to turn, and he keeps thrusting his hand on me!”

“But, my dear sir, but you treat me, if you will allow me to say so, as though I were an old shoe,” said Ivan Andreyitch in a rush of the meekest despair, in a voice full of entreaty. “Treat me a little more civilly, just a little more civilly, and I will tell you all about it! We might be friends; I am quite ready to ask you home to dinner. We can’t lie side by side like this, I tell you plainly. You are in error, young man, you do not know....”

“When was it he met her?” the young man muttered, evidently in violent emotion. “Perhaps she is expecting me now.... I’ll certainly get away from here!”

“She? Who is she? My God, of whom are you speaking, young man? You imagine that upstairs.... My God, my God! Why am I punished like this?”

Ivan Andreyitch tried to turn on his back in his despair.

“Why do you want to know who she is? Oh, the devil whether it was she or not, I will get out.”

“My dear sir! What are you thinking about? What will become of me?” whispered Ivan Andreyitch, clutching at the tails of his neighbour’s dress coat in his despair.

“Well, what’s that to me? You can stop here by yourself. And if you won’t, I’ll tell them that you are my uncle, who has squandered all his property, so that the old gentleman won’t think that I am his wife’s lover.”

“But that is utterly impossible, young man; it’s unnatural I should be your uncle. Nobody would believe you. Why, a baby wouldn’t believe it,”

Ivan Andreyitch whispered in despair.

“Well, don’t babble then, but lie as flat as a pancake! Most likely you will stay the night here and get out somehow to-morrow; no one will notice you. If one creeps out, it is not likely they would think there was another one here. There might as well be a dozen. Though you are as good as a dozen by yourself. Move a little, or I’ll get out.”

“You wound me, young man.... What if I have a fit of coughing? One has to think of everything.”

“Hush!”

“What’s that? I fancy I hear something going on upstairs again,” said the old gentleman, who seemed to have had a nap in the interval.

“Upstairs?”

“Do you hear, young man? I shall get out.”

“Well, I hear.”

“My goodness! Young man, I am going.”

“Oh, well, I am not, then! I don’t care. If there is an upset I don’t mind! But do you know what I suspect? I believe you are an injured husband — so there.”

“Good heavens, what cynicism!... Can you possibly suspect that? Why a husband?... I am not married.”

“Not married? Fiddlesticks!”

“I may be a lover myself!”

“A nice lover.”

“My dear sir, my dear sir! Oh, very well, I will tell you the whole story. Listen to my desperate story. It is not I — I am not married. I am a bachelor like you. It is my friend, a companion of my youth.... I am a lover.... He told me that he was an unhappy man. ‘I am drinking the cup of bitterness,’ he said; ‘I suspect my wife.’ ‘Well,’ I said to him reasonably, ‘why do you suspect her?’... But you are not listening to me. Listen, listen! ‘Jealousy is ridiculous,’ I said to him; ‘jealousy is a vice!’... ‘No,’ he said; ‘I am an unhappy man! I am drinking ... that is, I suspect my wife.’ ‘You are my friend,’ I said; ‘you are the companion of my tender youth. Together we culled the flowers of happiness, together we rolled in featherbeds of pleasure.’ My goodness, I don’t know what I am saying. You keep laughing, young man. You’ll drive me crazy.”

“But you are crazy now....”

“There, I knew you would say that ... when I talked of being crazy. Laugh away, laugh away, young man. I did the same in my day; I, too, went astray! Ah, I shall have inflammation of the brain!”

“What is it, my love? I thought I heard some one sneeze,” the old man chanted. “Was that you sneezed, my love?”

“Oh, goodness!” said his wife.

“Tch!” sounded from under the bed.

“They must be making a noise upstairs,” said his wife, alarmed, for there certainly was a noise under the bed.

“Yes, upstairs!” said the husband. “Upstairs, I told you just now, I met a ... khee-khee ... that I met a young swell with moustaches — oh, dear, my spine! — a young swell with moustaches.”

“With moustaches! My goodness, that must have been you,” whispered Ivan Andreyitch.

“Merciful heavens, what a man! Why, I am here, lying here with you! How could he have met me? But don’t take hold of my face.”

“My goodness, I shall faint in a minute.”

There certainly was a loud noise overhead at this moment.

“What can be happening there?” whispered the young man.

“My dear sir! I am in alarm, I am in terror, help me.”

“Hush!”

“There really is a noise, my love; there’s a regular hubbub. And just over your bedroom, too. Hadn’t I better send up to inquire?”

“Well, what will you think of next?”

“Oh, well, I won’t; but really, how cross you are to-day!...”

“Oh, dear, you had better go to bed.”

“Liza, you don’t love me at all.”

“Oh, yes, I do! For goodness’ sake, I am so tired.”

“Well, well; I am going!”

“Oh, no, no; don’t go!” cried his wife; “or, no, better go!”

“Why, what is the matter with you! One minute I am to go, and the next I’m not! Khee-khee! It really is bedtime, khee-khee! The Panafidins’ little girl ... khee-khee ... their little girl ... khee ... I saw their little girl’s Nuremburg doll ... khee-khee....”

“Well, now it’s dolls!”

“Khee-khee ... a pretty doll ... khee-khee.”

“He is saying good-bye,” said the young man; “he is going, and we can get away at once. Do you hear? You can rejoice!”

“Oh, God grant it!”

“It’s a lesson to you....”

“Young man, a lesson for what!... I feel it ... but you are young, you cannot teach me.”

“I will, though.... Listen.”

“Oh, dear, I am going to sneeze!...”

“Hush, if you dare.”

“But what can I do, there is such a smell of mice here; I can’t help it. Take my handkerchief cut of my pocket; I can’t stir.... Oh, my God, my God, why am I so punished?”

“Here’s your handkerchief! I will tell you what you are punished for. You are jealous. Goodness knows on what grounds, you rush about like a madman, burst into other people’s flats, create a disturbance....”

“Young man, I have not created a disturbance.”

“Hush!”

“Young man, you can’t lecture to me about morals, I am more moral than you.”

“Hush!”

“Oh, my God — oh, my God!”

“You create a disturbance, you frighten a young lady, a timid woman who does not know what to do for terror, and perhaps will be ill; you disturb a venerable old man suffering from a complaint and who needs repose above everything — and all this what for? Because you imagine some nonsense which sets you running all over the neighbourhood! Do you understand what a horrid position you are in now?”

“I do very well, sir! I feel it, but you have not the right....”

“Hold your tongue! What has right got to do with it? Do you understand that this may have a tragic ending? Do you understand that the old man, who is fond of his wife, may go out of his mind when he sees you creep out from under the bed? But no, you are incapable of causing a tragedy! When you crawl out, I expect every one who looks at you will laugh. I should like to see you in the light; you must look very funny.”

“And you. You must be funny, too, in that case. I should like to have a look at you too.”

“I dare say you would!”

“You must carry the stamp of immorality, young man.”

“Ah! you are talking about morals, how do you know why I’m here? I am here by mistake, I made a mistake in the storey. And the deuce knows why they let me in, I suppose she must have been expecting some one (not you, of course). I hid under the bed when I heard your stupid footsteps, when I saw the lady was frightened. Besides, it was dark. And why should I justify myself to you. You are a ridiculous, jealous old man, sir. Do you know why I don’t crawl out? Perhaps you imagine I am afraid to come out? No, sir, I should have come out long ago, but I stay here from compassion for you. Why, what would you be taken for, if I were not here? You’d stand facing them, like a post, you know you wouldn’t know what to do....”

“Why like that object? Couldn’t you find anything else to compare me with, young man? Why shouldn’t I know what to do? I should know what to do.”

“Oh, my goodness, how that wretched dog keeps barking!”

“Hush! Oh, it really is.... That’s because you keep jabbering. You’ve waked the dog, now there will be trouble.”

The lady’s dog, who had till then been sleeping on a pillow in the corner, suddenly awoke, sniffed strangers and rushed under the bed with a loud bark.

“Oh, my God, what a stupid dog!” whispered Ivan Andreyitch; “it will get us all into trouble. Here’s another affliction!”

“Oh, well, you are such a coward, that it may well be so.”

“Ami, Ami, come here,” cried the lady; “*ici, ici*.” But the dog, without heeding her, made straight for Ivan Andreyitch.

“Why is it Amishka keeps barking?” said the old gentleman. “There must be mice or the cat under there. I seem to hear a sneezing ... and pussy had a cold this morning.”

“Lie still,” whispered the young man. “Don’t twist about! Perhaps it will leave off.”

“Sir, let go of my hands, sir! Why are you holding them?”

“Hush! Be quiet!”

“But mercy on us, young man, it will bite my nose. Do you want me to lose my nose?”

A struggle followed, and Ivan Andreyitch got his hands free. The dog broke into volleys of barking. Suddenly it ceased barking and gave a yelp.

“*Aïe!*” cried the lady.

“Monster! what are you doing?” cried the young man. “You will be the ruin of us both! Why are you holding it? Good heavens, he is strangling it! Let it go! Monster! You know nothing of the heart of women if you can do that! She will betray us both if you strangle the dog.”

But by now Ivan Andreyitch could hear nothing. He had succeeded in catching the dog, and in a paroxysm of self-preservation had squeezed its throat. The dog yelled and gave up the ghost.

“We are lost!” whispered the young man.

“Amishka! Amishka,” cried the lady. “My God, what are they doing with my Amishka? Amishka! Amishka! *Ici!* Oh, the monsters! Barbarians! Oh, dear, I feel giddy!”

“What is it, what is it?” cried the old gentleman, jumping up from his easy chair. “What is the matter with you, my darling? Amishka! here, Amishka! Amishka! Amishka!” cried the old gentleman, snapping with his fingers and clicking with his tongue, and calling Amishka from under the bed. “Amishka, *ici, ici*. The cat cannot have eaten him. The cat wants a thrashing, my love, he hasn’t had a beating for a whole month, the rogue. What do you think? I’ll talk to Praskovya Zaharyevna. But, my goodness, what is the matter, my love? Oh, how white you are! Oh, oh, servants, servants!” and the old gentleman ran about the room.

“Villains! Monsters!” cried the lady, sinking on the sofa.

“Who, who, who?” cried the old gentleman.

“There are people there, strangers, there under the bed! Oh, my God, Amishka, Amishka, what have they done to you?”

“Good heavens, what people? Amishka.... Servants, servants, come here! Who is there, who is there?” cried the old gentleman, snatching up a candle and bending down under the bed. “Who is there?”

Ivan Andreyitch was lying more dead than alive beside the breathless corpse of Amishka, but the young man was watching every movement of the old gentleman. All at once the old gentleman went to the other side of the bed by the wall and bent down. In a flash the young man crept out from under the bed and took to his heels, while the husband was looking for his visitors on the other side.

“Good gracious!” exclaimed the lady, staring at the young man. “Who are you? Why, I thought....”

“That monster’s still there,” whispered the young man. “He is guilty of Amishka’s death!”

“*Aïe!*” shrieked the lady, but the young man had already vanished from the room.

“*Aïe!* There is some one here. Here are somebody’s boots!” cried the husband, catching Ivan Andreyitch by the leg.

“Murderer, murderer!” cried the lady. “Oh, Ami! Ami!”

“Come out, come out!” cried the old gentleman, stamping on the carpet with both feet; “come out. Who are you? Tell me who you are! Good gracious, what a queer person!”

“Why, it’s robbers!...”

“For God’s sake, for God’s sake,” cried Ivan Andreyitch creeping out, “for God’s sake, your Excellency, don’t call the servants! Your Excellency, don’t call any one. It is quite unnecessary. You can’t kick me out!... I am not that sort of person. I am a different case. Your Excellency, it has all been due to a mistake! I’ll explain directly, your Excellency,” exclaimed Ivan Andreyitch, sobbing and gasping. “It’s all my wife that is not my wife, but somebody else’s wife. I am not married, I am only.... It’s my comrade, a friend of youthful days.”

“What friend of youthful days?” cried the old gentleman, stamping. “You are a thief, you have come to steal ... and not a friend of youthful days.”

“No, I am not a thief, your Excellency; I am really a friend of youthful days.... I have only blundered by accident, I came into the wrong place.”

“Yes, sir, yes; I see from what place you’ve crawled out.”

“Your Excellency! I am not that sort of man. You are mistaken. I tell you, you are cruelly mistaken, your Excellency. Only glance at me, look at me, and by signs and tokens you will see that I can’t be a thief. Your Excellency! Your Excellency!” cried Ivan Andreyitch, folding his hands and appealing to the young lady. “You are a lady, you will understand me.... It was I who killed Amishka.... But it was not my fault.... It was really not my fault.... It was all my wife’s fault. I am an unhappy man, I am drinking the cup of bitterness!”

“But really, what has it to do with me that you are drinking the cup of bitterness? Perhaps it’s not the only cup you’ve drunk. It seems so, to judge from your condition. But how did you come here, sir?” cried the old gentleman, quivering with excitement, though he certainly was convinced by certain signs and tokens that Ivan Andreyitch could not be a thief. “I ask you: how did you come here? You break in like a robber....”

“Not a robber, your Excellency. I simply came to the wrong place; I am really not a robber! It is all because I was jealous. I will tell you all about it, your Excellency, I will confess it all frankly, as I would to my own father; for at your venerable age I might take you for a father.”

“What do you mean by venerable age?”

“Your Excellency! Perhaps I have offended you? Of course such a young lady ... and your age ... it is a pleasant sight, your Excellency, it really is a pleasant sight such a union ... in the prime of life.... But don’t call the servants, for God’s sake, don’t call the servants ... servants would only laugh.... I know them ... that is, I don’t mean that I am only acquainted with footmen, I have a footman of my own, your Excellency, and they are always laughing ... the asses! Your Highness ... I believe I am not mistaken, I am addressing a prince....”

“No, I am not a prince, sir, I am an independent gentleman.... Please do not flatter me with your ‘Highness.’ How did you get here, sir? How did you get here?”

“Your Highness, that is, your Excellency.... Excuse me, I thought that you were your Highness. I looked ... I imagined ... it does happen. You are so like Prince Korotkouhov whom I have had the honour of meeting at my friend Mr. Pusyrev’s.... You see, I am acquainted with princes, too, I have met princes, too, at the houses of my friends; you cannot take me for what you take me for. I am not a thief. Your Excellency, don’t call the servants; what will be the good of it if you do call them?”

“But how did you come here?” cried the lady. “Who are you?”

“Yes, who are you?” the husband chimed in. “And, my love, I thought it was pussy under the bed sneezing. And it was he. Ah, you vagabond! Who are you? Tell me!”

And the old gentleman stamped on the carpet again.

“I cannot speak, your Excellency, I am waiting till you are finished, I am enjoying your witty jokes. As regards me, it is an absurd story, your Excellency; I will tell you all about it. It can all be explained without more ado, that is, I mean, don’t call the servants, your Excellency! Treat me in a gentlemanly way.... It means nothing that I was under the bed, I have not sacrificed my dignity by that. It is a most comical story, your Excellency!” cried Ivan Andreyitch, addressing the lady with a supplicating air. “You, particularly, your Excellency, will laugh! You behold upon the scene a jealous husband. You see, I abase myself, I abase myself of my own free

will. I did indeed kill Amishka, but ... my God, I don't know what I am saying!"

"But how, how did you get here?"

"Under cover of night, your Excellency, under cover of night.... I beg your pardon! Forgive me, your Excellency! I humbly beg your pardon! I am only an injured husband, nothing more! Don't imagine, your Excellency, that I am a lover! I am not a lover! Your wife is virtue itself, if I may venture so to express myself. She is pure and innocent!"

"What, what? What did you have the audacity to say?" cried the old gentleman, stamping his foot again. "Are you out of your mind or not? How dare you talk about my wife?"

"He is a villain, a murderer who has killed Amishka," wailed the lady, dissolving into tears. "And then he dares!..."

"Your Excellency, your Excellency! I spoke foolishly," cried Ivan Andreyitch in a fluster. "I was talking foolishly, that was all! Think of me as out of my mind.... For goodness' sake, think of me as out of my mind.... I assure you that you will be doing me the greatest favour. I would offer you my hand, but I do not venture to.... I was not alone, I was an uncle.... I mean to say that you cannot take me for the lover.... Goodness! I have put my foot in it again.... Do not be offended, your Excellency," cried Ivan Andreyitch to the lady. "You are a lady, you understand what love is, it is a delicate feeling.... But what am I saying? I am talking nonsense again; that is, I mean to say that I am an old man — that is, a middle-aged man, not an old man; that I cannot be your lover; that a lover is a Richardson — that is, a Lovelace.... I am talking nonsense, but you see, your Excellency, that I am a well-educated man and know something of literature. You are laughing, your Excellency. I am delighted, delighted that I have *provoked* your mirth, your Excellency. Oh, how delighted I am that I have provoked your mirth."

"My goodness, what a funny man!" cried the lady, exploding with laughter.

"Yes, he is funny, and in such a mess," said the old man, delighted that his wife was laughing. "He cannot be a thief, my love. But how did he come here?"

"It really is strange, it really is strange, it is like a novel! Why! At the dead of night, in a great city, a man under the bed. Strange, funny! Rinaldo-Rinaldini after a fashion. But that is no matter, no matter, your Excellency. I will tell you all about it.... And I will buy you a new lapdog, your

Excellency.... A wonderful lapdog! Such a long coat, such short little legs, it can't walk more than a step or two: it runs a little, gets entangled in its own coat, and tumbles over. One feeds it on nothing but sugar. I will bring you one, I will certainly bring you one."

"Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!" The lady was rolling from side to side with laughter. "Oh, dear, I shall have hysterics! Oh, how funny he is!"

"Yes, yes! Ha-ha-ha! Khee-khee-khee! He is funny and he is in a mess — khee-khee-khee!"

"Your Excellency, your Excellency, I am now perfectly happy. I would offer you my hand, but I do not venture to, your Excellency. I feel that I have been in error, but now I am opening my eyes. I am certain my wife is pure and innocent! I was wrong in suspecting her."

"Wife — his wife!" cried the lady, with tears in her eyes through laughing.

"He married? Impossible! I should never have thought it," said the old gentleman.

"Your Excellency, my wife — it is all her fault; that is, it is my fault: I suspected her; I knew that an assignation had been arranged here — here upstairs; I intercepted a letter, made a mistake about the storey and got under the bed...."

"He-he-he-he!"

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!" Ivan Andreyitch began laughing at last. "Oh, how happy I am! Oh, how wonderful to see that we are all so happy and harmonious! And my wife is entirely innocent. That must be so, your Excellency!"

"He-he-he! Khee-khee! Do you know, my love, who it was?" said the old man at last, recovering from his mirth.

"Who? Ha-ha-ha."

"She must be the pretty woman who makes eyes, the one with the dandy. It's she, I bet that's his wife!"

"No, your Excellency, I am certain it is not she; I am perfectly certain."

"But, my goodness! You are losing time," cried the lady, leaving off laughing. "Run, go upstairs. Perhaps you will find them."

"Certainly, your Excellency, I will fly. But I shall not find any one, your Excellency; it is not she, I am certain of it beforehand. She is at home now. It is all my fault! It is simply my jealousy, nothing else.... What do you think? Do you suppose that I shall find them there, your Excellency?"

“Ha-ha-ha!”

“He-he-he! Khee-khee!”

“You must go, you must go! And when you come down, come in and tell us!” cried the lady; “or better still, to-morrow morning. And do bring her too, I should like to make her acquaintance.”

“Good-bye, your Excellency, good-bye! I will certainly bring her, I shall be very glad for her to make your acquaintance. I am glad and happy that it was all ended so and has turned out for the best.”

“And the lapdog! Don’t forget it: be sure to bring the lapdog!”

“I will bring it, your Excellency, I will certainly bring it,” responded Ivan Andreyitch, darting back into the room, for he had already made his bows and withdrawn. “I will certainly bring it. It is such a pretty one. It is just as though a confectioner had made it of sweet-meats. And it’s such a funny little thing — gets entangled in its own coat and falls over. It really is a lapdog! I said to my wife: ‘How is it, my love, it keeps tumbling over?’ ‘It is such a little thing,’ she said. As though it were made of sugar, of sugar, your Excellency! Good-bye, your Excellency, very, very glad to make your acquaintance, very glad to make your acquaintance!”

Ivan Andreyitch bowed himself out.

“Hey, sir! Stay, come back,” cried the old gentleman, after the retreating Ivan Andreyitch.

The latter turned back for the third time.

“I still can’t find the cat, didn’t you meet him when you were under the bed?”

“No, I didn’t, your Excellency. Very glad to make his acquaintance, though, and I shall look upon it as an honour....”

“He has a cold in his head now, and keeps sneezing and sneezing. He must have a beating.”

“Yes, your Excellency, of course; corrective punishment is essential with domestic animals.”

“What?”

“I say that corrective punishment is necessary, your Excellency, to enforce obedience in the domestic animals.”

“Ah!... Well, good-bye, good-bye, that is all I had to say.”

Coming out into the street, Ivan Andreyitch stood for a long time in an attitude that suggested that he was expecting to have a fit in another minute.

He took off his hat, wiped the cold sweat from his brow, screwed up his eyes, thought a minute, and set off homewards.

What was his amazement when he learned at home that Glafira Petrovna had come back from the theatre a long, long time before, that she had toothache, that she had sent for the doctor, that she had sent for leeches, and that now she was lying in bed and expecting Ivan Andreyitch.

Ivan Andreyitch slapped himself on the forehead, told the servant to help him wash and to brush his clothes, and at last ventured to go into his wife's room.

"Where is it you spend your time? Look what a sight you are! What do you look like? Where have you been lost all this time? Upon my word, sir; your wife is dying and you have to be hunted for all over the town. Where have you been? Surely you have not been tracking me, trying to disturb a rendezvous I am supposed to have made, though I don't know with whom. For shame, sir, you are a husband! People will soon be pointing at you in the street."

"My love ..," responded Ivan Andreyitch.

But at this point he was so overcome with confusion that he had to feel in his pocket for his handkerchief and to break off in the speech he was beginning, because he had neither words, thoughts or courage.... What was his amazement, horror and alarm when with his handkerchief fell out of his pocket the corpse of Amishka. Ivan Andreyitch had not noticed that when he had been forced to creep out from under the bed, in an access of despair and unreasoning terror he had stuffed Amishka into his pocket with a far-away idea of burying the traces, concealing the evidence of his crime, and so avoiding the punishment he deserved.

"What's this?" cried his spouse; "a nasty dead dog! Goodness! where has it come from?... What have you been up to?... Where have you been? Tell me at once where have you been?"

"My love," answered Ivan Andreyitch, almost as dead as Amishka, "my love...."

But here we will leave our hero — till another time, for a new and quite different adventure begins here. Some day we will describe all these calamities and misfortunes, gentlemen. But you will admit that jealousy is an unpardonable passion, and what is more, it is a positive misfortune.

THE GRAND INQUISITOR



An extract from 'The Brothers Karamazov', Book V, Chapter 5

"EVEN this must have a preface — that is, a literary preface," laughed Ivan, "and I am a poor hand at making one. You see, my action takes place in the sixteenth century, and at that time, as you probably learnt at school, it was customary in poetry to bring down heavenly powers on earth. Not to speak of Dante, in France, clerks, as well as the monks in the monasteries, used to give regular performances in which the Madonna, the saints, the angels, Christ, and God Himself were brought on the stage. In those days it was done in all simplicity. In Victor Hugo's Notre Dame de Paris an edifying and gratuitous spectacle was provided for the people in the Hotel de Ville of Paris in the reign of Louis XI in honour of the birth of the dauphin. It was called Le bon jugement de la tres sainte et gracieuse Vierge Marie, and she appears herself on the stage and pronounces her bon jugement. Similar plays, chiefly from the Old Testament, were occasionally performed in Moscow too, up to the times of Peter the Great. But besides plays there were all sorts of legends and ballads scattered about the world, in which the saints and angels and all the powers of Heaven took part when required. In our monasteries the monks busied themselves in translating, copying, and even composing such poems — and even under the Tatars. There is, for instance, one such poem (of course, from the Greek), The Wanderings of Our Lady through Hell, with descriptions as bold as Dante's. Our Lady visits hell, and the Archangel Michael leads her through the torments. She sees the sinners and their punishment. There she sees among others one noteworthy set of sinners in a burning lake; some of them sink to the bottom of the lake so that they can't swim out, and 'these God forgets' — an expression of extraordinary depth and force. And so Our Lady, shocked and weeping, falls before the throne of God and begs for mercy for all in hell — for all she has seen there, indiscriminately. Her conversation with God is immensely interesting. She beseeches Him, she will not desist, and when God points to the hands and feet of her Son, nailed to the Cross, and asks, 'How can I forgive His tormentors?' she bids all the saints, all the martyrs, all the angels and archangels to fall down with her and pray for mercy on all without distinction. It ends by her winning from God a respite

of suffering every year from Good Friday till Trinity Day, and the sinners at once raise a cry of thankfulness from hell, chanting, ‘Thou art just, O Lord, in this judgment.’ Well, my poem would have been of that kind if it had appeared at that time. He comes on the scene in my poem, but He says nothing, only appears and passes on. Fifteen centuries have passed since He promised to come in His glory, fifteen centuries since His prophet wrote, ‘Behold, I come quickly’; ‘Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father,’ as He Himself predicted on earth. But humanity awaits him with the same faith and with the same love. Oh, with greater faith, for it is fifteen centuries since man has ceased to see signs from heaven. No signs from heaven come to-day

To add to what the heart doth say.

There was nothing left but faith in what the heart doth say. It is true there were many miracles in those days. There were saints who performed miraculous cures; some holy people, according to their biographies, were visited by the Queen of Heaven herself. But the devil did not slumber, and doubts were already arising among men of the truth of these miracles. And just then there appeared in the north of Germany a terrible new heresy. ‘A huge star like to a torch’ (that is, to a church) ‘fell on the sources of the waters and they became bitter.’ These heretics began blasphemously denying miracles. But those who remained faithful were all the more ardent in their faith. The tears of humanity rose up to Him as before, awaited His coming, loved Him, hoped for Him, yearned to suffer and die for Him as before. And so many ages mankind had prayed with faith and fervour, ‘O Lord our God, hasten Thy coming’; so many ages called upon Him, that in His infinite mercy He deigned to come down to His servants. Before that day He had come down, He had visited some holy men, martyrs, and hermits, as is written in their lives. Among us, Tyutchev, with absolute faith in the truth of his words, bore witness that Bearing the Cross, in slavish dress,

Weary and worn, the Heavenly King

Our mother, Russia, came to bless,

And through our land went wandering.

And that certainly was so, I assure you.

“And behold, He deigned to appear for a moment to the people, to the tortured, suffering people, sunk in iniquity, but loving Him like children. My story is laid in Spain, in Seville, in the most terrible time of the

Inquisition, when fires were lighted every day to the glory of God, and ‘in the splendid auto da fe the wicked heretics were burnt.’ Oh, of course, this was not the coming in which He will appear, according to His promise, at the end of time in all His heavenly glory, and which will be sudden ‘as lightning flashing from east to west.’ No, He visited His children only for a moment, and there where the flames were crackling round the heretics. In His infinite mercy He came once more among men in that human shape in which He walked among men for thirty-three years fifteen centuries ago. He came down to the ‘hot pavements’ of the southern town in which on the day before almost a hundred heretics had, ad majorem gloriam Dei, been burnt by the cardinal, the Grand Inquisitor, in a magnificent auto da fe, in the presence of the king, the court, the knights, the cardinals, the most charming ladies of the court, and the whole population of Seville.

“He came softly, unobserved, and yet, strange to say, everyone recognised Him. That might be one of the best passages in the poem. I mean, why they recognised Him. The people are irresistibly drawn to Him, they surround Him, they flock about Him, follow Him. He moves silently in their midst with a gentle smile of infinite compassion. The sun of love burns in His heart, and power shine from His eyes, and their radiance, shed on the people, stirs their hearts with responsive love. He holds out His hands to them, blesses them, and a healing virtue comes from contact with Him, even with His garments. An old man in the crowd, blind from childhood, cries out, ‘O Lord, heal me and I shall see Thee!’ and, as it were, scales fall from his eyes and the blind man sees Him. The crowd weeps and kisses the earth under His feet. Children throw flowers before Him, sing, and cry hosannah. ‘It is He — it is He!’ repeat. ‘It must be He, it can be no one but Him!’ He stops at the steps of the Seville cathedral at the moment when the weeping mourners are bringing in a little open white coffin. In it lies a child of seven, the only daughter of a prominent citizen. The dead child lies hidden in flowers. ‘He will raise your child,’ the crowd shouts to the weeping mother. The priest, coming to meet the coffin, looks perplexed, and frowns, but the mother of the dead child throws herself at His feet with a wail. ‘If it is Thou, raise my child!’ she cries, holding out her hands to Him. The procession halts, the coffin is laid on the steps at His feet. He looks with compassion, and His lips once more softly pronounce, ‘Maiden, arise!’ and the maiden arises. The little girl sits up in the coffin and looks round,

smiling with wide-open wondering eyes, holding a bunch of white roses they had put in her hand.

“There are cries, sobs, confusion among the people, and at that moment the cardinal himself, the Grand Inquisitor, passes by the cathedral. He is an old man, almost ninety, tall and erect, with a withered face and sunken eyes, in which there is still a gleam of light. He is not dressed in his gorgeous cardinal’s robes, as he was the day before, when he was burning the enemies of the Roman Church — at this moment he is wearing his coarse, old, monk’s cassock. At a distance behind him come his gloomy assistants and slaves and the ‘holy guard.’ He stops at the sight of the crowd and watches it from a distance. He sees everything; he sees them set the coffin down at His feet, sees the child rise up, and his face darkens. He knits his thick grey brows and his eyes gleam with a sinister fire. He holds out his finger and bids the guards take Him. And such is his power, so completely are the people cowed into submission and trembling obedience to him, that the crowd immediately makes way for the guards, and in the midst of deathlike silence they lay hands on Him and lead him away. The crowd instantly bows down to the earth, like one man, before the old Inquisitor. He blesses the people in silence and passes on’ The guards lead their prisoner to the close, gloomy vaulted prison — in the ancient palace of the Holy, inquisition and shut him in it. The day passes and is followed by the dark, burning, ‘breathless’ night of Seville. The air is ‘fragrant with laurel and lemon.’ In the pitch darkness the iron door of the prison is suddenly opened and the Grand Inquisitor himself comes in with a light in his hand. He is alone; the door is closed at once behind him. He stands in the doorway and for a minute or two gazes into His face. At last he goes up slowly, sets the light on the table and speaks.

“‘Is it Thou? Thou?’ but receiving no answer, he adds at once. ‘Don’t answer, be silent. What canst Thou say, indeed? I know too well what Thou wouldst say. And Thou hast no right to add anything to what Thou hadst said of old. Why, then, art Thou come to hinder us? For Thou hast come to hinder us, and Thou knowest that. But dost thou know what will be to-morrow? I know not who Thou art and care not to know whether it is Thou or only a semblance of Him, but to-morrow I shall condemn Thee and burn Thee at the stake as the worst of heretics. And the very people who have to-day kissed Thy feet, to-morrow at the faintest sign from me will rush to heap up the embers of Thy fire. Knowest Thou that? Yes, maybe Thou

knowest it,’ he added with thoughtful penetration, never for a moment taking his eyes off the Prisoner.”

“I don’t quite understand, Ivan. What does it mean?” Alyosha, who had been listening in silence, said with a smile. “Is it simply a wild fantasy, or a mistake on the part of the old man — some impossible quid pro quo?”

“Take it as the last,” said Ivan, laughing, “if you are so corrupted by modern realism and can’t stand anything fantastic. If you like it to be a case of mistaken identity, let it be so. It is true,” he went on, laughing, “the old man was ninety, and he might well be crazy over his set idea. He might have been struck by the appearance of the Prisoner. It might, in fact, be simply his ravings, the delusion of an old man of ninety, over-excited by the auto da fe of a hundred heretics the day before. But does it matter to us after all whether it was a mistake of identity or a wild fantasy? All that matters is that the old man should speak out, that he should speak openly of what he has thought in silence for ninety years.”

“And the Prisoner too is silent? Does He look at him and not say a word?”

“That’s inevitable in any case,” Ivan laughed again. “The old man has told Him He hasn’t the right to add anything to what He has said of old. One may say it is the most fundamental feature of Roman Catholicism, in my opinion at least. ‘All has been given by Thee to the Pope,’ they say, ‘and all, therefore, is still in the Pope’s hands, and there is no need for Thee to come now at all. Thou must not meddle for the time, at least.’ That’s how they speak and write too — the Jesuits, at any rate. I have read it myself in the works of their theologians. ‘Hast Thou the right to reveal to us one of the mysteries of that world from which Thou hast come?’ my old man asks Him, and answers the question for Him. ‘No, Thou hast not; that Thou mayest not add to what has been said of old, and mayest not take from men the freedom which Thou didst exalt when Thou wast on earth. Whatsoever Thou revealest anew will encroach on men’s freedom of faith; for it will be manifest as a miracle, and the freedom of their faith was dearer to Thee than anything in those days fifteen hundred years ago. Didst Thou not often say then, “I will make you free”? But now Thou hast seen these “free” men,’ the old man adds suddenly, with a pensive smile. ‘Yes, we’ve paid dearly for it,’ he goes on, looking sternly at Him, ‘but at last we have completed that work in Thy name. For fifteen centuries we have been wrestling with Thy freedom, but now it is ended and over for good. Dost Thou not believe

that it's over for good? Thou lookest meekly at me and deignest not even to be wroth with me. But let me tell Thee that now, to-day, people are more persuaded than ever that they have perfect freedom, yet they have brought their freedom to us and laid it humbly at our feet. But that has been our doing. Was this what Thou didst? Was this Thy freedom?'"

"I don't understand again." Alyosha broke in. "Is he ironical, is he jesting?"

"Not a bit of it! He claims it as a merit for himself and his Church that at last they have vanquished freedom and have done so to make men happy. 'For now' (he is speaking of the Inquisition, of course) 'for the first time it has become possible to think of the happiness of men. Man was created a rebel; and how can rebels be happy? Thou wast warned,' he says to Him. 'Thou hast had no lack of admonitions and warnings, but Thou didst not listen to those warnings; Thou didst reject the only way by which men might be made happy. But, fortunately, departing Thou didst hand on the work to us. Thou hast promised, Thou hast established by Thy word, Thou hast given to us the right to bind and to unbind, and now, of course, Thou canst not think of taking it away. Why, then, hast Thou come to hinder us?'"

"And what's the meaning of 'no lack of admonitions and warnings'?" asked Alyosha.

"Why, that's the chief part of what the old man must say.

"'The wise and dread spirit, the spirit of self-destruction and non-existence,' the old man goes on, great spirit talked with Thee in the wilderness, and we are told in the books that he "tempted" Thee. Is that so? And could anything truer be said than what he revealed to Thee in three questions and what Thou didst reject, and what in the books is called "the temptation"? And yet if there has ever been on earth a real stupendous miracle, it took place on that day, on the day of the three temptations. The statement of those three questions was itself the miracle. If it were possible to imagine simply for the sake of argument that those three questions of the dread spirit had perished utterly from the books, and that we had to restore them and to invent them anew, and to do so had gathered together all the wise men of the earth — rulers, chief priests, learned men, philosophers, poets — and had set them the task to invent three questions, such as would not only fit the occasion, but express in three words, three human phrases, the whole future history of the world and of humanity — dost Thou believe that all the wisdom of the earth united could have invented anything in

depth and force equal to the three questions which were actually put to Thee then by the wise and mighty spirit in the wilderness? From those questions alone, from the miracle of their statement, we can see that we have here to do not with the fleeting human intelligence, but with the absolute and eternal. For in those three questions the whole subsequent history of mankind is, as it were, brought together into one whole, and foretold, and in them are united all the unsolved historical contradictions of human nature. At the time it could not be so clear, since the future was unknown; but now that fifteen hundred years have passed, we see that everything in those three questions was so justly divined and foretold, and has been so truly fulfilled, that nothing can be added to them or taken from them.

"Judge Thyself who was right — Thou or he who questioned Thee then? Remember the first question; its meaning, in other words, was this: "Thou wouldst go into the world, and art going with empty hands, with some promise of freedom which men in their simplicity and their natural unruliness cannot even understand, which they fear and dread — for nothing has ever been more insupportable for a man and a human society than freedom. But seest Thou these stones in this parched and barren wilderness? Turn them into bread, and mankind will run after Thee like a flock of sheep, grateful and obedient, though for ever trembling, lest Thou withdraw Thy hand and deny them Thy bread." But Thou wouldst not deprive man of freedom and didst reject the offer, thinking, what is that freedom worth if obedience is bought with bread? Thou didst reply that man lives not by bread alone. But dost Thou know that for the sake of that earthly bread the spirit of the earth will rise up against Thee and will strive with Thee and overcome Thee, and all will follow him, crying, "Who can compare with this beast? He has given us fire from heaven!" Dost Thou know that the ages will pass, and humanity will proclaim by the lips of their sages that there is no crime, and therefore no sin; there is only hunger? "Feed men, and then ask of them virtue!" that's what they'll write on the banner, which they will raise against Thee, and with which they will destroy Thy temple. Where Thy temple stood will rise a new building; the terrible tower of Babel will be built again, and though, like the one of old, it will not be finished, yet Thou mightest have prevented that new tower and have cut short the sufferings of men for a thousand years; for they will come back to us after a thousand years of agony with their tower. They will seek us again, hidden underground in the catacombs, for we shall be again

persecuted and tortured. They will find us and cry to us, “Feed us, for those who have promised us fire from heaven haven’t given it!” And then we shall finish building their tower, for he finishes the building who feeds them. And we alone shall feed them in Thy name, declaring falsely that it is in Thy name. Oh, never, never can they feed themselves without us! No science will give them bread so long as they remain free. In the end they will lay their freedom at our feet, and say to us, “Make us your slaves, but feed us.” They will understand themselves, at last, that freedom and bread enough for all are inconceivable together, for never, never will they be able to share between them! They will be convinced, too, that they can never be free, for they are weak, vicious, worthless, and rebellious. Thou didst promise them the bread of Heaven, but, I repeat again, can it compare with earthly bread in the eyes of the weak, ever sinful and ignoble race of man? And if for the sake of the bread of Heaven thousands shall follow Thee, what is to become of the millions and tens of thousands of millions of creatures who will not have the strength to forego the earthly bread for the sake of the heavenly? Or dost Thou care only for the tens of thousands of the great and strong, while the millions, numerous as the sands of the sea, who are weak but love Thee, must exist only for the sake of the great and strong? No, we care for the weak too. They are sinful and rebellious, but in the end they too will become obedient. They will marvel at us and look on us as gods, because we are ready to endure the freedom which they have found so dreadful and to rule over them — so awful it will seem to them to be free. But we shall tell them that we are Thy servants and rule them in Thy name. We shall deceive them again, for we will not let Thee come to us again. That deception will be our suffering, for we shall be forced to lie.

“‘This is the significance of the first question in the wilderness, and this is what Thou hast rejected for the sake of that freedom which Thou hast exalted above everything. Yet in this question lies hid the great secret of this world. Choosing “bread,” Thou wouldst have satisfied the universal and everlasting craving of humanity — to find someone to worship. So long as man remains free he strives for nothing so incessantly and so painfully as to find someone to worship. But man seeks to worship what is established beyond dispute, so that all men would agree at once to worship it. For these pitiful creatures are concerned not only to find what one or the other can worship, but to find community of worship is the chief misery of every man individually and of all humanity from the beginning of time. For the sake of

common worship they've slain each other with the sword. They have set up gods and challenged one another, "Put away your gods and come and worship ours, or we will kill you and your gods!" And so it will be to the end of the world, even when gods disappear from the earth; they will fall down before idols just the same. Thou didst know, Thou couldst not but have known, this fundamental secret of human nature, but Thou didst reject the one infallible banner which was offered Thee to make all men bow down to Thee alone — the banner of earthly bread; and Thou hast rejected it for the sake of freedom and the bread of Heaven. Behold what Thou didst further. And all again in the name of freedom! I tell Thee that man is tormented by no greater anxiety than to find someone quickly to whom he can hand over that gift of freedom with which the ill-fated creature is born. But only one who can appease their conscience can take over their freedom. In bread there was offered Thee an invincible banner; give bread, and man will worship thee, for nothing is more certain than bread. But if someone else gains possession of his conscience — Oh! then he will cast away Thy bread and follow after him who has ensnared his conscience. In that Thou wast right. For the secret of man's being is not only to live but to have something to live for. Without a stable conception of the object of life, man would not consent to go on living, and would rather destroy himself than remain on earth, though he had bread in abundance. That is true. But what happened? Instead of taking men's freedom from them, Thou didst make it greater than ever! Didst Thou forget that man prefers peace, and even death, to freedom of choice in the knowledge of good and evil? Nothing is more seductive for man than his freedom of conscience, but nothing is a greater cause of suffering. And behold, instead of giving a firm foundation for setting the conscience of man at rest for ever, Thou didst choose all that is exceptional, vague and enigmatic; Thou didst choose what was utterly beyond the strength of men, acting as though Thou didst not love them at all — Thou who didst come to give Thy life for them! Instead of taking possession of men's freedom, Thou didst increase it, and burdened the spiritual kingdom of mankind with its sufferings for ever. Thou didst desire man's free love, that he should follow Thee freely, enticed and taken captive by Thee. In place of the rigid ancient law, man must hereafter with free heart decide for himself what is good and what is evil, having only Thy image before him as his guide. But didst Thou not know that he would at last reject even Thy image and Thy truth, if he is weighed down with the

fearful burden of free choice? They will cry aloud at last that the truth is not in Thee, for they could not have been left in greater confusion and suffering than Thou hast caused, laying upon them so many cares and unanswerable problems.

"'So that, in truth, Thou didst Thyself lay the foundation for the destruction of Thy kingdom, and no one is more to blame for it. Yet what was offered Thee? There are three powers, three powers alone, able to conquer and to hold captive for ever the conscience of these impotent rebels for their happiness those forces are miracle, mystery and authority. Thou hast rejected all three and hast set the example for doing so. When the wise and dread spirit set Thee on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Thee, "If Thou wouldst know whether Thou art the Son of God then cast Thyself down, for it is written: the angels shall hold him up lest he fall and bruise himself, and Thou shalt know then whether Thou art the Son of God and shalt prove then how great is Thy faith in Thy Father." But Thou didst refuse and wouldst not cast Thyself down. Oh, of course, Thou didst proudly and well, like God; but the weak, unruly race of men, are they gods? Oh, Thou didst know then that in taking one step, in making one movement to cast Thyself down, Thou wouldst be tempting God and have lost all Thy faith in Him, and wouldst have been dashed to pieces against that earth which Thou didst come to save. And the wise spirit that tempted Thee would have rejoiced. But I ask again, are there many like Thee? And couldst Thou believe for one moment that men, too, could face such a temptation? Is the nature of men such, that they can reject miracle, and at the great moments of their life, the moments of their deepest, most agonising spiritual difficulties, cling only to the free verdict of the heart? Oh, Thou didst know that Thy deed would be recorded in books, would be handed down to remote times and the utmost ends of the earth, and Thou didst hope that man, following Thee, would cling to God and not ask for a miracle. But Thou didst not know that when man rejects miracle he rejects God too; for man seeks not so much God as the miraculous. And as man cannot bear to be without the miraculous, he will create new miracles of his own for himself, and will worship deeds of sorcery and witchcraft, though he might be a hundred times over a rebel, heretic and infidel. Thou didst not come down from the Cross when they shouted to Thee, mocking and reviling Thee, "Come down from the cross and we will believe that Thou art He." Thou didst not come down, for again Thou wouldst not enslave

man by a miracle, and didst crave faith given freely, not based on miracle. Thou didst crave for free love and not the base raptures of the slave before the might that has overawed him for ever. But Thou didst think too highly of men therein, for they are slaves, of course, though rebellious by nature. Look round and judge; fifteen centuries have passed, look upon them. Whom hast Thou raised up to Thyself? I swear, man is weaker and baser by nature than Thou hast believed him! Can he, can he do what Thou didst? By showing him so much respect, Thou didst, as it were, cease to feel for him, for Thou didst ask far too much from him — Thou who hast loved him more than Thyself! Respecting him less, Thou wouldst have asked less of him. That would have been more like love, for his burden would have been lighter. He is weak and vile. What though he is everywhere now rebelling against our power, and proud of his rebellion? It is the pride of a child and a schoolboy. They are little children rioting and barring out the teacher at school. But their childish delight will end; it will cost them dear. Mankind as a whole has always striven to organise a universal state. There have been many great nations with great histories, but the more highly they were developed the more unhappy they were, for they felt more acutely than other people the craving for world-wide union. The great conquerors, Timours and Ghenghis-Khans, whirled like hurricanes over the face of the earth striving to subdue its people, and they too were but the unconscious expression of the same craving for universal unity. Hadst Thou taken the world and Caesar’s purple, Thou wouldst have founded the universal state and have given universal peace. For who can rule men if not he who holds their conscience and their bread in his hands? We have taken the sword of Caesar, and in taking it, of course, have rejected Thee and followed him. Oh, ages are yet to come of the confusion of free thought, of their science and cannibalism. For having begun to build their tower of Babel without us, they will end, of course, with cannibalism. But then the beast will crawl to us and lick our feet and spatter them with tears of blood. And we shall sit upon the beast and raise the cup, and on it will be written, “Mystery.” But then, and only then, the reign of peace and happiness will come for men. Thou art proud of Thine elect, but Thou hast only the elect, while we give rest to all. And besides, how many of those elect, those mighty ones who could become elect, have grown weary waiting for Thee, and have transferred and will transfer the powers of their spirit and the warmth of their heart to the other camp, and end by raising their free banner against

Thee. Thou didst Thyself lift up that banner. But with us all will be happy and will no more rebel nor destroy one another as under Thy freedom. Oh, we shall persuade them that they will only become free when they renounce their freedom to us and submit to us. And shall we be right or shall we be lying? They will be convinced that we are right, for they will remember the horrors of slavery and confusion to which Thy freedom brought them. Freedom, free thought, and science will lead them into such straits and will bring them face to face with such marvels and insoluble mysteries, that some of them, the fierce and rebellious, will destroy themselves, others, rebellious but weak, will destroy one another, while the rest, weak and unhappy, will crawl fawning to our feet and whine to us: “Yes, you were right, you alone possess His mystery, and we come back to you, save us from ourselves!”

“‘Receiving bread from us, they will see clearly that we take the bread made by their hands from them, to give it to them, without any miracle. They will see that we do not change the stones to bread, but in truth they will be more thankful for taking it from our hands than for the bread itself! For they will remember only too well that in old days, without our help, even the bread they made turned to stones in their hands, while since they have come back to us, the very stones have turned to bread in their hands. Too, too well will they know the value of complete submission! And until men know that, they will be unhappy. Who is most to blame for their not knowing it?-speak! Who scattered the flock and sent it astray on unknown paths? But the flock will come together again and will submit once more, and then it will be once for all. Then we shall give them the quiet humble happiness of weak creatures such as they are by nature. Oh, we shall persuade them at last not to be proud, for Thou didst lift them up and thereby taught them to be proud. We shall show them that they are weak, that they are only pitiful children, but that childlike happiness is the sweetest of all. They will become timid and will look to us and huddle close to us in fear, as chicks to the hen. They will marvel at us and will be awe-stricken before us, and will be proud at our being so powerful and clever that we have been able to subdue such a turbulent flock of thousands of millions. They will tremble impotently before our wrath, their minds will grow fearful, they will be quick to shed tears like women and children, but they will be just as ready at a sign from us to pass to laughter and rejoicing, to happy mirth and childish song. Yes, we shall set them to work, but in

their leisure hours we shall make their life like a child's game, with children's songs and innocent dance. Oh, we shall allow them even sin, they are weak and helpless, and they will love us like children because we allow them to sin. We shall tell them that every sin will be expiated, if it is done with our permission, that we allow them to sin because we love them, and the punishment for these sins we take upon ourselves. And we shall take it upon ourselves, and they will adore us as their saviours who have taken on themselves their sins before God. And they will have no secrets from us. We shall allow or forbid them to live with their wives and mistresses, to have or not to have children according to whether they have been obedient or disobedient — and they will submit to us gladly and cheerfully. The most painful secrets of their conscience, all, all they will bring to us, and we shall have an answer for all. And they will be glad to believe our answer, for it will save them from the great anxiety and terrible agony they endure at present in making a free decision for themselves. And all will be happy, all the millions of creatures except the hundred thousand who rule over them. For only we, we who guard the mystery, shall be unhappy. There will be thousands of millions of happy babes, and a hundred thousand sufferers who have taken upon themselves the curse of the knowledge of good and evil. Peacefully they will die, peacefully they will expire in Thy name, and beyond the grave they will find nothing but death. But we shall keep the secret, and for their happiness we shall allure them with the reward of heaven and eternity. Though if there were anything in the other world, it certainly would not be for such as they. It is prophesied that Thou wilt come again in victory, Thou wilt come with Thy chosen, the proud and strong, but we will say that they have only saved themselves, but we have saved all. We are told that the harlot who sits upon the beast, and holds in her hands the mystery, shall be put to shame, that the weak will rise up again, and will rend her royal purple and will strip naked her loathsome body. But then I will stand up and point out to Thee the thousand millions of happy children who have known no sin. And we who have taken their sins upon us for their happiness will stand up before Thee and say: "Judge us if Thou canst and darest." Know that I fear Thee not. Know that I too have been in the wilderness, I too have lived on roots and locusts, I too prized the freedom with which Thou hast blessed men, and I too was striving to stand among Thy elect, among the strong and powerful, thirsting "to make up the number." But I awakened and would not serve madness. I turned back and

joined the ranks of those who have corrected Thy work. I left the proud and went back to the humble, for the happiness of the humble. What I say to Thee will come to pass, and our dominion will be built up. I repeat, to-morrow Thou shalt see that obedient flock who at a sign from me will hasten to heap up the hot cinders about the pile on which I shall burn Thee for coming to hinder us. For if anyone has ever deserved our fires, it is Thou. To-morrow I shall burn Thee. Dixi.’”*

** I have spoken.*

The Non-Fiction



Dostoyevsky's last address and the building in which he died — now a museum in St. Petersburg



Dostoyevsky's study in St. Petersburg

DOSTOYEVSKY'S JOURNAL



Translated by S. Koteliansky and J. Middleton Murry

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THE DREAM OF A QUEER FELLOW

I

I am a queer fellow. They call me mad now. That would be a promotion, if I were not still the same queer fellow for them as before. But I'm not cross with them any more; now I love them all — even when they laugh at me, somehow I love them more than ever. I would laugh with them myself — not at myself, but for love of them — if it did not make me so sad to look at them; sad, because they do not know the truth, and I do. How hard it is for one man who knows the truth! But they won't understand this. They won't understand it.

Before, I used to suffer deeply, because I seemed queer. Not seemed, but was. I always was queer; perhaps I 've known it from the day of my birth. Perhaps when I was only seven I knew that I was queer. Afterwards I went to school, then to the university, and — well, the more I studied the more I discovered that I was queer. So that finally it seemed to me that all my university knowledge existed only to explain and prove to me, the deeper I plunged into it, that I was queer. Each day increased and strengthened my consciousness that I looked queer in every way. Everybody always laughed at me. But no t one of them knew or guessed that if there was a man on earth who really knew how queer I was, that man was myself; their not knowing that was quite the most insulting thing of all, but there I was to blame. I was always so proud that nothing would induce me to confess that to any one. My pride increased with years, and I verily believe that if it had happened that I had allowed myself to confess that I was queer to any living soul, I would have blown out my brains with a revolver on the spot. Oh, how much I suffered as a youth for fear I might not be able to hold out, and might suddenly, somehow, confess to my comrades.

But since I became a young man, though each year I realised my awful nature more and more, for some reason I have been a little calmer. For some reason or other, I say, for even now I cannot define it. Perhaps because a terrible anguish had been born in my soul of one thing which was infinitely higher than the whole of me — it was the conviction that had descended upon me that it is all the same, everywhere on earth. I had suspected it long before, but the full eonviction came somehow suddenly last year. I suddenly

felt that it would be all the same to me if the world really existed, or if there was nothing anywhere. I began to feel with all my being that there had been nothing behind me. At first I thought that there really had been a great deal, but afterwards I guessed that even before there had been nothing, but it had only seemed so, somehow. Little by little I became convince'd that there never would be anything. Then I suddenly stopped being angry with people, and began almost not to notice them. Indeed, that was shown in the most trivial things. It would happen, for instance, that I would walk in the street and knoek into people. Not beeause I was lost in thought — what had I to think about, I had utterly ceased to think by then? — it was all the same to me. And as for solving questions; oh, I didn't solve one, yet what thousands there were! But it had become all the same to me, and all the questions disappeared.

Just after that, I learned the truth. I learned the truth last November, the 3rd of November last, and I remember every instant since that day. It was a gloomy night, the gloomiest night you can conceive. I was going home at about eleven o'cloek, and I remember I thought that it would be impossible to find a gloomier hour. Even physically. It had poured with rain all day, the coldest and gloomiest rain; some of it, I remember, was positively menacing, manifestly hostile to humankind. Suddenly, at eleven o'clock it stopped, and a horrible dampness followed, damper even and colder than when the rain was pouring. A mist ascended from everything, from every stone in the street, and from every alley, when I looked away from the street into the depths. I suddenly thought that it would be comfortable if the gas went out, for the heart was sadder with the gas alight, because it lit up all those mists. That day I had had praetieally no food; from the early evening I had been sitting with an engineer I knew, who had two other friends with him. I was silent all the while, and I believe I bored them. They talked of something provocative and suddenly they became quite exeited. But it was really all the same to them. I saw that. They were exeited all for nothing. Suddenly I broke out: ' I say, gentlemen, . . . but it's all the same to you.' They were not offended, but they all began to laugh at me. That was because I spoke without any reproach, just' because it was all the same to me. They saw it was all the same to me, and cheered up.

While I was thinking about the gas in the street, I glanced at the sky. The sky was terribly black, but I could clearly distinguish the ragged clouds, and between them bottomless spaces of black. Suddenly I caught sight of a little

star in one of these spaces and began to stare at it. For the little star had given me an idea: I proposed to kill myself that night. 1 had firmly decided to kill myself two months before, and though I was very poor, I bought myself an excellent revolver and loaded it that very same day. Two months had passed since and it still lay in my drawer; it was so much the same to me that at last I longed to find a day when it would not be all the same, — why, I do not know. So, every night for these two months, as I returned home, I thought that I would shoot myself. But all the while I was waiting for the moment. Now the little star had given me the idea, and I decided that it would happen that night infallibly. But why the little star should have given me the idea — I do not know.

And just as I was looking at the sky, that girl suddenly caught me by the arm. The street was already empty; hardly a soul was in it. Far away, a cabman was asleep on his box. The girl was about eight years old, and wore a little shawl. She had no coat and was wet through. But I particularly remember her wet, ragged boots; I remember them even now. They caught my eye particularly. She suddenly began to pull me by the arm and to cry out. She did not weep, but cried out some words abruptly somehow. She could not utter the words properly because she continually shivered all over from the cold. She was terrified by something and cried despairingly: ‘ Mother, Mother!’ I turned my face towards her, but did not speak. I walked on. But she ran and pulled at me. In her voice was the sound which with very frightened people means despair. I know that sound. Though she had not uttered the words, I realised that her mother was dying somewhere, or something had happened to them, and she had run out to call some one or find something to help mother. But I did not follow her; on the contrary, the idea suddenly came to me to drive her away. First, I told her to find a policeman. But she suddenly clasped her hands together and kept running at my side, sobbing and breathless, and would not leave me. Then I stamped my foot and shouted at her. She only cried out: ‘ Please, sir, sir . . .’; but suddenly she left me and rushed across the street. A passer-by appeared. Evidently she had rushed from me to him.

I climbed up to my fifth floor. I rent a room from the landlord: there are other rooms. My room is poverty-stricken and small. The window is an attic window, semi-circular. I have a sofa covered in American cloth, a table with some books, two chairs and an easy-chair, old, incredibly old, but still an easy-chair. I sat down, lit the candle, and began to think. Next door in the

other room, behind the partition, pandemonium went on. It had been going on since the day before yesterday.

A retired captain lived there, and he had friends — about half a dozen beauties — who drank vodka, and played faro with old cards. Last night there was a scuffle, and I know that a couple of them pulled each other about by the hair for a long while. The landlady wanted to complain to the police, but she is terribly afraid of the captain. The only other lodger in our rooms is a small, thin, military lady, who is only passing through here, with three little children who have already got ill through being in the rooms. She and the ehildren faint with fear of the captain: all night long they tremble and cross themselves, and the youngest child has had a fit from fright. I know for a fact that this captain sometimes accosts passers-by on the Nevsky Prospekt and begs. He is turned out of every office, but strange to say — this is the reason why I speak of him — for the whole month he has not aroused my resentment. From the very beginning, of course, I avoided his acquaintance: and he was bored by me at our very first meeting. But however loud they shouted behind the partition and however many of them there were — it was all the same to me. I sit up all night long, and really I do not hear them, so utterly do I forget them. Every night I do not sleep till dawn. That has been going on for a year. I sit in my easy-chair by the table all night and do nothing. I read books only in the daytime. I sit and do not even think, but even so some thoughts keep wandering, and I let them wander at will. The whole candle burns away during the night.

I sat by the table, took out the revolver, and put it in front of me. When I had put it there, I remember, I asked myself: ‘ Is it true? ‘ and I answered with absolute conviction: ‘ Perfectly true’ — that is, that I was going to shoot myself. I knew for certain that I would shoot myself that night, but how long I would sit by the table — that I did not know. I should certainly have shot myself, but for that little girl.

II

You see: though it was all the same to me, I felt pain, for instance. If any one were to strike me, I should feel pain. Exactly the same in the moral sense: if anything very pitiful happened, I would feel pity, just as I did before everything in life became all the same to me. I had felt pity just before: surely, I would have helped a child without fail. Why did I not help the little girl, then? It was because of an idea that came into my mind then. When she was pulling at me and calling to me, suddenly a question arose before me, which I could not answer. The question was an idle one; but it made me angry. I was angry because of my conclusion, that if I had already made up my mind that I would put an end to myself to-night, then now more than ever before everything in the world should be all the same to me. Why was it that I felt it was not all the same to me, and pitied the little girl? I remember I pitied her very much: so much that I felt a pain that was even strange and incredible in my situation. Really, I cannot give a more definite account of my momentary sensation; but it continued even when I reached home, when I had sat down to my table. I was more irritated than I had been for a long time. One thought followed another.

It seemed clear that if I was a man and not a cipher yet, and until I was changed into a cipher, then I was alive and therefore could suffer, be angry and feel shame for my actions. Very well. But if I were to kill myself, for instance, in two hours from now, what is the girl to me, and what have I to do with shame or with anything on earth? I am going to be a cipher, an absolute zero. Could my consciousness that I would soon absolutely cease to exist, and that therefore nothing would exist, have not the least influence on my feeling of pity for the girl or on my sense of shame for the vileness I had committed? But that was the very reason why I had stamped and shouted wildly at the poor child, as it were to show that not only did I feel no pity, but even if I should commit some inhuman vileness, then I had the right to do so, because in two hours everything would be extinguished. Do you believe that was why I shouted? Now I am almost convinced of it. It became clear to me that life and the world, as it were, depended upon me. I might even say that the world had existed for me alone. I should shoot myself, and then there would be no world at all, for me at least. Not to mention that perhaps there will really be nothing for any one after me, and

the whole world, as soon as my consciousness is extinguished, will also be extinguished like a phantom, as part of my consciousness only, and be utterly abolished, since perhaps all this world and all these men are myself alone. I remember that as I sat and thought, I turned all these new, thronging questions to a completely different aspect, and excogitated something utterly new. For instance, one strange consideration suddenly presented itself to me. If I had previously lived on the moon or in Mars, and I had there been dishonoured and disgraced so utterly that one can only imagine it sometimes in a dream or a nightmare, and if I afterwards found myself on earth and still preserved a consciousness of what I had done on the other planet, and if I knew besides that I would never by any chance return, then, if I were to look at the moon from the earth — would it be all the same to me or not? Would I feel any shame for my action or not? The questions were idle and useless, for the revolver was already lying before me, and I knew with all my being that this thing would happen for certain: but the questions excited me to rage. I could not die now, without having solved this first. In a word, that little girl saved me, for my questions made me postpone pulling the trigger. Meanwhile everything had begun to quiet down at the captain's. They had finished their cards, and had begun to settle themselves to sleep, grumbling and reviling each other at their leisure the while. Then I suddenly fell asleep in the easy-chair by the table, a thing which had never happened to me before. I fell asleep quite unconsciously.

Dreams are extraordinarily strange. One thing appears with terrifying clarity, with the details finely set like jewels, while you leap over another, as though you did not notice it at all — space and time, for instance. It seems that dreams are the work not of mind but of desire, not of the head but of the heart; and what complicated things my mind has sometimes contrived in a dream! In a dream things quite incomprehensible come to pass. For instance, my brother died five years ago. Sometimes I see him in a dream: he takes part in my affairs, and we are very exeited, while I, all the time my dream goes on, know and remember perfectly that my brother is dead and buried. Why am I not surprised that he, though dead, is still near me and busied about me? Why does my mind allow all that? But enough of that. I will proceed to my dream. Yes, then it was I dreamed that dream, my dream of the 3rd of November. Now they tease me beeause it was only a dream. But is it not the same whether it was a dream or not, if that dream revealed the Truth to me? Surely if you onee knew the Truth and saw her, then you

would know that she is the Truth, and that there is not, neither eould there be, another Truth, whether in sleep or wakefulness. Well, let it be a dream; nevertheless I wanted to extinguish by suieide this life that you praise so highly, while my dream, my dream — it announced to me a new life, great, renewed, and strong! Listen.

IllI said I had fallen asleep unconsciously, as it were still thinking about the same things. Suddenly I dreamed that I took the revolver and pointed it straight at my heart as I sat — at my heart and not at my head. Before I had firmly decided to shoot myself through the head — to be exaet, through the right temple. Pointing it at my heart I waited a second or two. My candle, the table, and the wall in front of me suddenly began to move and shake. I pulled the trigger quipkly.

In a dream you sometimes fall from a height, or your throat is cut, or you are beaten; but you never feel pain, unless, somehow, you really hurt yourself in bed. Then you will feel pain and nearly always will wake because of it. So it was in my dream: I felt no pain, but it seemed to me that with the report, everything in me was convulsed, and everything suddenly extinguished. It was terribly black all about me. I became as though blind and numb, and I lay on my back on something hard. I could see nothing, neither could I make any sound. People were walking and making a noise about me: the captain’s bass voice, the landlady’s screams. . . . Suddenly there was a break. I am being carried in a closed coffin. I feel the coffin swinging and I think about that, and suddenly for the first time the idea strikes me that I am dead, quite dead. I know it and do not doubt it; I cannot see nor move, yet at the same time I feel and think. But I am soon reconciled to that, and as usual in a dream I accept the reality without a question.

Now I am being buried in the earth. Every one leaves me and I am alone, quite alone. I do not stir. Before, when I imagined how I would really be buried in my grave, I always associated with it only the feeling of damp and cold. Now, too, I felt, that I was very cold, particularly in the tips of my toes, but I felt nothing besides.

I lay there and — strange to say — I expected nothing, accepting without question that a dead man has nothing to expect. But it was damp. I

do not know how long passed — an hour, a few days, or many days. Suddenly, on my left eye which was closed, a drop of water fell, which had leaked through the top of the grave. In a minute fell another, then a third,

and so on, every minute. Suddenly, deep indignation kindled in my heart and suddenly in my heart I felt physical pain. 4 It's my wound,' I thought. 4 It's where I shot myself. The bullet is there.' And all the while the water dripped straight on to my closed eye. Suddenly, I cried out, not with a voice, for I was motionless, but with all my being, to the arbiter of all that was being done to me.

' Whosoever thou art, if thou art, and if there exists a purpose more intelligent than the things which are now taking place, let it be present here also. But if thou dost take vengeance upon me for my foolish suicide, then know, by the indecency and absurdity of further existence, that no torture whatever that may befall me, can ever be compared to the contempt whieh I will silently feel, even through millions of years of martyrdom.'

I cried out and was silent. Deep silence lasted a whole minute. One more drop even fell. But I knew and believed, infinitely and steadfastly, that in a moment everything would infallibly change. Suddenly, my grave opened. I do not know whether it had been uncovered and opened, but I was taken by some dark being unknown to me, and we found ourselves in space. Suddenly, I saw. It was deep night; never, never had such darkness been! We were borne through space and were already far from the earth. I asked nothing of him who led me. I was proud and waited. I

assured myself that I was not afraid, and my heart melted with rapture at the thought that I was not afraid. I do not remember how long we rushed through space, and I cannot imagine it. It happened as always in a dream when you leap over space and time and the laws of life and mind, and you stop only there where your heart delights. I remember, I suddenly saw in the darkness one little star.

' Is it Sirius? ' I asked, suddenly losing control of myself, for I did not want to ask him anything.

' No, it is the same star which thou didst see returning home,' replied the being who bore me away. I knew that he had, as it were, a human face. It is strange, but I did not love that being; I felt even a deep repugnance towards him. I had expected utter annihilation, and with that idea I had shot myself in the heart. And now I was in the power of a being, who was, of course, not human, but who was, and did exist. ' So there is life after the grave,' I thought, with the strange light-heartedness of a dream. But the essence of my heart in all its depth remained to me. ' And if it is necessary to be once

more,’ I thought, ‘ and to live again by some one’s inexorable will, then I will not be conquered and degraded!’

‘ Thou knowest that I do not fear thee: therefore thou dost despise me? ‘ I suddenly said to my companion, unable to restrain myself from a humiliating question in which was contained a confession, and I felt my humiliation like the stab of a needle in my heart. He did not answer my question, but suddenly I felt that I was not despised, neither laughed at, nor even pitied, but that our journey had an unknown and mysterious purpose which concerned myself alone. Fear grew in my heart. Some dumb yet painful influence reached me from my silent companion and penetrated me. We were rushing through dark and unknown spaces. I had long since ceased to see any constellation familiar to my eyes. I knew there were stars in the heavenly spaces, whose rays reach the earth only after thousands and millions of years. Perhaps we had already passed beyond those spaces. With terrible anguish that wore out my heart, I was expecting something. Suddenly a familiar yet most overwhelming emotion shook me through. I saw our sun. I knew that it could not be our sun, which had begotten our earth, and that we were an infinite distance away, but somehow all through me I recognised that it was exactly the same sun as ours, its copy and double. A sweet and moving delight echoed rapturously through my soul. The dear power of light, of that same light which had given me birth, touched my heart and revived it, and I felt life, the old life, for the first time since my death.

‘ But if it is the sun, the same sun as ours,’ I exclaimed, ‘ then where is the earth? ‘ And my companion pointed to the little star which twinkled in the darkness with an emerald radiance. We were borne straight towards it.

‘ And can there be such repetitions in the universe? Is that the law of nature. . . . And if it is the earth there, is it just the same earth as ours . . . the very same, poor, unhapp3r, dear, ever-beloved earth, that rouses the same painful love for her in her most ungrateful children, just as our own? ‘ . . . I cried, trembling with irresistible, rapturous love for my own earth of old that I had left. The image of the little girl I had wronged rose before me.

‘ You will see everything,’ replied my companion, and I eould hear a note of sadness in his words. We were fast approaching the planet. It grew before my eyes. I could already discern the ocean, the outlines of Europe. Suddenly a strange feeling of great and sacred jealousy was kindled in my heart.

‘ How can such a repetition be, and why? It’s only the earth that I love or can love, the earth which I left, which was sprinkled with my blood, when I, the ungrateful, put an end to my life with a pistol-shot. But never onec, never once, did I cease to love the earth, and even on that -jglit when I parted from her, I loved her perhaps more poignantly than ever. Is there pain on this new earth? On earth we can love truly only with pain and only through pain! We cannot love otherwise, and we know no other love. I need pain in order to love. At this very moment, I want, I long, to melt into tears and kiss only that earth which I have left. I do not want, I will not accept, life on any other earth.’

But my companion had already left me. Suddenly, as it were quite unperceived by myself, I stood on that other earth in the bright light of a sunny day, beautiful as Paradise. I believe I stood on one of those islands which on our earth are the Greek Archipelago, or somewhere on the mainland coast near to that Archipelago. Oh, everything was exactly as on earth, but everything seemed to be bright with holiday, with a great and saeredb triumph, finally achieved. The smiling emerald sea gently lapped the shores, kissing them with love, with manifest, visible, almost conseious love. Tall, splendid trees stood in all the glory of their bloom, and I am convinced that their innumerable leaves greeted me with a sweet, caressing sound, as though they uttered words of love. The grass was aflame with brilliant and sweet-scented colours. Flights of birds wheeled in the air, and fearlessly settled on my shoulders and my hands, joyfully tapping me with their dear, tremulous little wings. At last I saw and recognised the people of that happy land. They came to me themselves, thronged me about, and kissed me. Children of the sun, children of the sun — oh, how beautiful they were! Never on earth have I seen sueh beauty in man. In our children alone, in their very earliest years, one could perhaps find a remote and faint reflection of that beauty. The eyes of those happy people shone with a bright radiance. Their faces gleamed with wisdom, and with a certain consciousness, consummated in tranquillity; but their faces were happy. In their words and voices sounded a childlike joy. Oh, instantly, at the first glimpse of their faees I understood everything, everything! It was the earth as yet unpolluted by transgression; on it lived men who had yet known no sin. They lived in the same paradise in which, according to the universal tradition of mankind, our fallen ancestors once lived, save that here all the earth was everywhere one single paradise. Laughing joyfully they thronged

me and earessed me; they led me to their homes, and each one of them wished to make me happy.

Oh, they asked me no questions; it seemed that they already knew all, and they wished to remove all trace of suffering from my face as quickly as they might.

IV

Again, grant that it was only a dream. But the sensation of the love of those beautiful and innocent people has remained with me for ever, and even now I feel that their love breathes upon me from yonder. I saw them with my own eyes, I came to know them, and to know that I loved them; afterwards I suffered for them. Oh, I knew immediately even then that in many things I would not understand them at all. To me, a modern Russian radical, and an abominable Petersburger, it seemed for instance unintelligible that, knowing so much, they yet did not possess our science. But I soon perceived that their knowledge was achieved and nourished by other intuitions than those we have on earth, and that their aspirations were quite other. They desired nothing, but were calm; they did not aspire to a knowledge of life, as we aspire to knowledge, because their life was fulfilled. But their knowledge was deeper and higher than our science, for our science seeks to explain what is life, she aspires to know life, that she may teach others how to live; but they, without seience, knew how to live. That also I understood, but I could not understand their knowledge. They showed me their trees, but I could not understand the depth of love with which they looked at them; exactly as though they spoke with their fellows. And perhaps I should not be wrong if I said they did speak with them. Yes, they had found their language and I am convinced that the trees understood them. In the same way did they regard all nature — the animals which lived at peace with them, did not attack them, but loved them, subdued by their love. They pointed out the stars to me and told me something about them that I could not understand, but I am convinced that in some way they were in contact with the stars of heaven, having connection with them not by thought alone but in some physical way. Oh, they did not try to make me understand them; they loved me without that. But I knew they would never understand me, and therefore I hardly spoke to them of our earth. I only kissed the earth on which they lived, in their presence, and without words I adored them, and they saw it and let themselves be adored, and felt no shame that I adored them, because they loved much. They did not suffer for me when I in tears kissed their feet, joyfully knowing in my heart with how great power of love they would requite me. Sometimes I asked myself in amazement, how could it be that they should not have offended sueh an one as myself all this

while, and never have aroused in me either jealousy or envy? Many times I asked myself, how could it be that I, a braggart and a liar, had not told them of my learning, of which, of course, they had no notion — how could it be that I had not wished to surprise them with it, even though only for the love I bore them? They were playful and happy as children. They wandered through their beautiful groves and forests, sang their lovely songs, fed on ambrosial food, the fruits of their trees, the honey of their forests, and the milk of the beasts that loved them. For their food and raiment they laboured but little and with ease. Love was amongst them and children were born, but never did I see amongst them the transports of that cruel sensuality whieh overtakes almost all men on our earth, and is the one source of nearly all their sins. They rejoiced in the children born to them as in new partners of their bliss. There were no quarrels among them, neither any jealousy: they did not even understand what it meant. Their children were the children of all, beeause they were all one family. There was hardly any disease among them, though there was death; but their old folk died quietly, as though they fell asleep, surrounded by friends who took leave of them, whom they blessed and smiled upon, themselves well sped by their friends' bright smiles. At this parting I never saw sorrow, neither tears: there was only love, as it were multiplied to ecstasy, but to an ecstasy quiet, consummated, and full of contemplation. One could have believed that they still had communion with their dead even after death, and that their earthly union was not severed by the grave. They hardly understood me when I asked them eoneern-ing eternal life, but they were evidently so convinced of it that it was no question to them. They had no temples, but they had a real, living, and continual communion with the whole universe; they had no religion, but they had the firm knowledge that when their earthly joy had been consummated to the limit of their earthly nature, then would begin for them, living as well as dead, a yet greater expansion of their contact with the whole universe. They awaited this moment with joy, but without impatience, with no anguished longing for it, but already as it were partaking of it in the presentiments of their hearts which they communicated each to the other. In the evenings, before they went to rest, they loved to sing sweetly and harmoniously in chorus. In these songs they expressed all the feelings which the dying day had given them; they glorified it and bade it farewell. They glorified nature, the earth, the sea, the forests. They loved to make songs to each other, which rose from the heart

and touched the heart. And not in songs alone, for it seemed that all their life was spent in mutual admiration. They were enamoured one of the other, completely, universally. Others of their solemn and exalted songs I could hardly understand at all. I understood the words, but I could never penetrate their deep meaning, which remained as it were inaccessible to my mind, but, unaccountably, my heart felt it only the more. I often told them that long ago I had had a presentiment of all this, that all their joy and praise had appeared to me while still upon our earth, with an anguish of yearning which sometimes reached intolerable pain; that I had anticipated them and their grace in the dreams of my heart and the visions of my mind; that often, on earth, I could not look toward the setting sun without tears . . . that in my hatred of the people on the earth was always anguish — why could I not hate them without loving them? Why could I not but forgive them; and in my love for them was also anguish: why could I not love them without hating them? They listened to me, and I saw that they could not understand what I said, but I did not regret that I had spoken to them of it: for I knew that they understood all the force of my anguish for those whom I had left. Yes, when they looked at me with their dear, love-suffused eyes, when I felt that in their presence my heart too had become as innocent and truthful as their own, then I did not regret that I did not understand them. My feeling of the completeness of their life deprived me of speech, and I revered them in silence.

Oh, every one now laughs in my face, and tells me that it is impossible even in a dream to see such details as I am telling now. They tell me that in my dream I saw or felt but one thing, begotten of my own heart in delirium, but that I myself created the particulars when I was awake. And when I said that perhaps it was so — my God, how they burst out laughing in my face, and what pleasure I gave them! Oh yes, of course, I was overcome by the sensation cf that dream alone, and that alone remained whole in my bleeding heart: yet the real images and forms of my dream, which I indeed saw at the very moment of my dream, were perfected to such a harmony, were so enchanting and beautiful, and so true, that when I awoke I certainly could not clothe them in our weak words. Therefore they must needs have blurred in my mind, and perhaps I myself unconsciously was obliged to compose the details afterwards, of course distorting them, above all by reason of my passionate desire to tell it instantly even though only in part. But, for all that, how could I not believe that all these things had really

been? It was perhaps a thousand times better, brighter, and more joyful than I have told. Let it be a dream, but yet all this could not but have really been. I will tell you a secret: perhaps all this was not a dream at all! For something happened, a thing to such a degree of horror true that it eould not have belonged to a sleeping dream. Let my heart have begotten my dream, but eould my heart alone have begotten the horrid truth, Avhich happened afterwards? How could I alone have invented it or dreamed it within my heart? Could my paltry heart and my capricious, petty mind have risen to such a revelation of truth? Oh, judge for yourselves: hitherto I have concealed it, but now I will tell openly this truth also. J rv.mu red them all!

V

Yes, yes, it ended with that. I corrupted them all! How could it have been achieved — I do not know, yet I remember clearly. The dream passed aeons away, and left in me only the sensation of the whole. I only know that the cause of the fall was I. Like a filthy germ, like an atom of pestilence, infeeting whole peoples, so did I infect with my soul that happy land, that knew not sin before me. They learned to lie, and loved lying, and knew the beauty of lies. Oh, this perhaps began innocently, from a jest, from playfulness, in a loving game, perhaps indeed from an atom, but the atom of lie entered their hearts and they loved it. Soon was begotten voluptuousness, of voluptuousness — jealousy, of jealousy — cruelty. . . . Oh,

I do not know, I do not remember, but soon, very soon, the first blood was spilled. They were surprised and horrified and began to be disunited and to disperse. Unions appeared, but they were unions one against the other. Reproach and recrimination began. They came to know shame, and made of shame a virtue. The idea of honour was born and each union had its flag. They began to use the beasts ill, and the beasts withdrew into the woods and became their enemies. A war of disunion began, in which they fought for separation, for personality, for mine and thine. They began to speak different tongues. They came to know and to love sadness; they longed for suffering and said that truth could be achieved by suffering alone. Then science appeared among them. When they were angered, they began to talk of brotherhood and humanity, and conceived those ideas. When they committed crime, they invented justice and prescribed for themselves whole codes of laws to maintain it, and to maintain the codes they set up a guillotine. Hardly, hardly did they remember what they had

lost; they did not even want to believe that they had once been innocent and happy. They laughed even at the possibility of that old happiness and called it a dream. They could not even present it to themselves in forms and. images, but it is strange and wonderful, that when they had lost all belief in their former happiness, calling it a legend, they conceived so great a desire to be innocent and happy again once more that they fell before the desire of their hearts like children, and worshipped this desire; they built many temples to it and began to pray to their ideal, to their own desire; though they fully believed it was impracticable and impossible, still they worshipped and adored it with tears. And yet if it could only have happened that they might return to the innocent and happy state which they had lost, and if some one had suddenly showed it to them and asked them if they wished to return to it, they would surely have refused. They would answer me: ‘ Grant that we are liars, evil, and unjust, we know that and weep for it, we torture and torment ourselves, and punish ourselves more hardly perhaps than even that merciful Judge, who will judge us and whose name we do not know. But we have science, and by her aid we will find the truth again, and this time we will accept her consciously. Knowledge is higher than feeling; the consciousness of life is higher than life. Science will give us wisdom; wisdom will reveal to us laws, and the knowledge of the laws of happiness is higher than happiness.’ That is what they said, and after such words, each one loved himself above all others, neither could they do otherwise. Each one had become so jealous of his own individuality that he sought with all his might only to degrade and belittle it in others; therein he saw his life. Slavery appeared, even voluntary slavery; the weak readily submitted to the strong, with one aim alone, that the strong should help them to crush those yet weaker than themselves. Godly men appeared who came to these people wi+h tears and spoke to them of their pride, of their lack of measure and harmony, of their loss of shame. They were laughed at and stoned with stones. Sacred blood flowed on the thresholds of the temples. Yet there began to appear men who pondered how they might be united in such a way that each, without ceasing to love himself most of all, might yet not stand in the way of others; they might live all together as it were in a united society. Whole wars were fought for this idea. All those who fought believed firmly that science and wisdom and the instinct of self-preservation would at last unite men into a harmonious and reasonable society; in the meanwhile, to help the work along, ‘ the wise’ tried to

exterminate with all speed ‘ the foolish’ and those who did not understand their idea in order that they should not prevent its triumph. But the instinct of self-preservation quickly began to weaken. Proud and voluptuous men appeared who straightway demanded everything or nothing. To aequire all things they had recourse to murder, and if they failed, to suicide. Religions appeared devoted to the cult of not-being and of self-destruction for the sake of eternal rest in nothingness. Finally these men beeame tired of their foolish labour, and on their faces showed suffering; and they proclaimed that suffering was beauty, since thought was in suffering alone. They praised suffering in their songs. I walked among them wringing my hands and wept over them; yet I loved them perhaps still more than when there was no suffering in their faees, and they were innoeent and beautiful. I loved the earth which they had polluted more than when it was a paradise, for this alone that sorrow had appeared upon it. Alas, I have always loved sorrow and sadness, but for myself, myself alone, and I wept for them, pitying them. I stretched out my hands to them, accusing, cursing, and despising myself in my despair. I told them that this was all my work, mine alone; that it was I who had brought corruption, infection, and the lie among them! I implored them to crucify me on the cross, I taught them how to make a cross. I could not kill myself, I had not the power, but I wanted to submit to tortures from them, I yearned for torments, I longed that in those torments my last drop of blood should be spilled. But they only laughed at me, and at last began to think me mad. They defended me; they said they had only received that which themselves desired, and that everything that was, could not but have been. At last they deelared to me that I was becoming dangerous to them, and that they would put me in a mad-house if I did not hold my peace. Their sorrow so mightily entered my soul that my heart shrank and I felt that I would die. . . . Then I awoke.

It was already morning; that is to say, day had not yet dawned, but it was six o’clock. I awoke in the same easy-ehair, my eandle was burnt out. They were asleep at the captain’s, and all about was a stillness such as was seldom in our house. First, I jumped up in surprised astonishment. Nothing like it had ever happened to me before, it was strange even to the smallest details. For instanee, I had never fallen asleep in my easy-chair. Then suddenly, while I stood regaining my senses, my loaded revolver suddenly appeared before me. But instantly I put it away from me. Oh, now — life, life! I lifted my hands and called upon the eternal truth, not called, but

wept. Rapture, ineffable rapture exalted all my being. Yes, to live and — to preach! Oh, that very minute I decided to preach, yes, to preach all my life long. I would preach, I longed to preach — what? Truth, for I had seen her, seen her with my eyes, seen her in all her glory.

Since then I have preached. More than that, I love all men, above all those who laugh at mc. Why is it so? I do not know, I cannot explain, but so let it be. They say already that I'm wandering: if he wanders now what will the end be! It's true. I wander, and perhaps it will be worse in the future. And of course I shall wander many times before I find out how to preach, with what words and deeds, for these are hard to find. Even now I see all this as clear as day; but listen. Who does not go astray? Yet all are tending to one and the same goal, at least all aspire to the same goal, from the wise man to the lowest murderer, but only by different ways. It is an old truth, but there is this new in it: I cannot go far astray. I saw the truth. I saw and know that men could be beautiful and happy, without losing the capacity to live upon the earth. I will not, I cannot believe that evil is the normal condition of men. Yet all of them only laugh at my belief. But how could I not believe? I saw the truth, I did not invent it with my mind. I saw, saw, and her living image filled my soul for ever. I saw her in such consummate perfection that I cannot possibly believe that she was not among men. How can I then go astray? I shall wander, of course, more than once even, and I will perhaps even speak with another's words, but not for long. The living image of what I saw will be with me always, and will correct and guide me always. Oh, I am strong and fresh, I can go on, go on, even for a thousand years. You know at first I even wanted to eonceal that I had corrupted them all, but it was a mistake — the first mistake, you see! But truth whispered to me that I was lying; she guarded and guided me. But how to make a paradise I do not know, because I cannot express it in words. After my dream I lost all my words, at least, all the important words, those I need most. But so let it be; I will go on and preach untiringly, because I saw plainly, although I cannot relate what I saw. But the mockers do not understand: ' He saw a dream, a delirious vision, a hallucination.' Ah, but is this really wise? A dream? What is a dream? Is not our life a dream? I'll say more! Let it be that this will never come to pass and there will be no paradise — that at least I understand — well, still I will preach. And it is so simple: in one day, in one hour, everything would be settled at once. The one thing is — love thy neighbour as thyself — that is the one thing. That is

all, nothing else is needed. You will instantly find how to live. Though it is an old truth, repeated and read ten million times, yet it is discovered. ‘ The knowledge of life is higher than life, the knowledge of the laws of happiness — is higher than happiness ‘ — that is what must be fought. And I will fight. If only every one wanted it, then everything would be right in an instant.

And the little girl I found. . . . I’ll go to her, I’ll go.

PUSHKIN

CHAPTER I

A word of explanation concerning the speech on pushkin published below

My speech upon Pushkin and his significance, printed below, which forms the chief matter of this number of The Journal of an Author (the only number published in 1880), was delivered on the 8th of June of this year in the presence of a numerous audience at the grand meeting of the Society of Lovers of Russian Literature, and made a considerable impression. Ivan Scrgueyevich Aksakov, who there said of himself that all people considered him the leader of the Slavophiles, declared from the chair that my speech was ‘ an event.’ I do not refer to this now to boast, but to say just this: if my speech is an event, then it is an event from one and only one point of view, which I will proceed to expound. That is the reason of this foreword. In my speech I endeavoured to emphasise only these four aspects of the value of Pushkin to Russia.

1. Pushkin with his profound insight, his genius, and his purely Russian heart, was the first to detect and exhibit the chief symptom of the sickness of our intellectual society, uprooted from the soil and raised above the people. He exhibited and set in relief before us our negative type, thec disturbed and unsatisfied man, who can believe neither in his own country nor in its powers, who finally denies Russia and himself (that is, his own society, his own intellectual stratum, raised from our native soil), who does not want to work with others, and who suffers sincerely. Aleko and Onyegin were the fathers of a host of their similars in our literature. After them came the Pechorins, Tchichikovs, Rudins, and Lavrezkys, Bolkonskys (in Tolstoi’s War and Peace) and many others who by the mere fact of their appearance bore witness to the truth of the idea originally enunciated by Pushkin. All honour and glory to him, to his mighty mind and genius, who discovered the most sore disease of the society which had grown up amongst us after Peter’s great reform. To his skilful diagnosis we owe our knowledge and realisation of our disease, and it was he who first gave us consolation, for he gave us also the great hope that the disease is not mortal, but that Russian society could be cured, regenerated, and revived if it were

bathed in the truth of the people, because2. He was the first — the first indeed: none was before him — to give us artistic types of Russian moral beauty, which had sprung directly out of the Russian soul, which had its home in the truth of the people, in our very soil — these types did Pushkin trace out. To which bear witness Tatiana, a perfectly Russian woman, who guarded herself from the monstrous lie; historical types, for instance the Monk and others in Boris Godunov; realistic types, as in The Captain's Daughter, and many other figures which appear in his poems, his stories, his memories, and even in his account of the riot at Pougachov. But what must be chiefly emphasised is that all these types of the positive beauty of the Russian and the Russian soul are wholly drawn from the spirit of the people. Now the whole truth must be said: not in our present civilisation, not in the so-called European culture (which, by the way, never existed with us), not in the monstrosities of European ideas and forms only outwardly assimilated, did Pushkin discover this beauty, but he found it in the spirit of the people alone. Thus, I repeat, having revealed the disease, he gave us also a great hope. ' Believe-in the spirit of the people, expect salvation from it alone, and you will be saved.' It is impossible not to come to this conclusion, when one has really gone deep into Pushkin.

3. The third aspect of Pushkin's significance which I wished to emphasise, is that most peculiar and characteristic trait of his artistic genius, one never met before — his capacity for universal sympathy, and for the most complete reincarnation in the genius of other nations, a reincarnation almost perfect. I said in my ' Speech' that there had been mighty world-geniuses in Europe: a Shakespeare, a Cervantes, a Schiller, but in none of them do we find this capacity — save in Pushkin alone. Not the sympathy only is here in point, but the astonishing completeness of the reincarnation. This capacity of course I could not help emphasising as the most characteristic peculiarity of his genius, which belongs to him alone of all the artists of the world, by which he differs from them all. I did not say it to belittle European geniuses so great as Shakespeare and Schiller: only a fool could draw a conclusion so foolish from my words. The universal comprehensibility and unfathomable depth of the types of Aryan man created by Shakespeare meet with no scepticism in me. And had Shakespeare created Othello really a Venetian Moor, and not an Englishman, he would only have added a halo of local, national peculiarity to his creation. But the universal significance of the type would have been

the same, for in an Italian too he would have expressed what he wanted to say with the same power. I repeat, 1 did not want to diminish from the universal significance of a Shakespeare and a Schiller when I pointed out Pushkin's wonderful faculty for reincarnating himself in the genius of foreign nations: I only wanted to point out the great and prophetical indication for us in this faculty and its perfection, because4. This faculty is a completely Russian faculty, a national faculty. Pushkin only shares it with the whole Russian people; but as a perfect artist, he most perfectly expresses this faculty, in his sphere at least, in the sphere of his art. Our people does truly contain within its soul this tendency to universal sympathy and reconciliation; it has already given voice to it more than once in the two centuries since Peter's reforms. As I pointed out this capacity of our people I could not help showing that in this very fact is the great consolation of our future, our great, perhaps our greatest, hope, shining for us ahead. Above all, I showed that our aspiration after Europe, in spite of all its infatuations and extremes, was not only right and necessary in its basis, but also popular; it fully coincided with the aspirations of the national spirit itself, and was without doubt ultimately a higher purpose also. In my very short speech I naturally could not develop my idea fully, but what I said at least seems to me clear. And people should not be indignant with me for saying: ' Perhaps our poor country will at the end say the new word to the world.' It is ridiculous to assert that we must complete our economic, scientific, and social development, before we can dream of saying ' new words' to such perfect organisms as the states of Europe. Indeed, I emphasise it in my ' Speech,' that I make no attempt to compare Russia with the western nations in the matter of economic or scientific renown. I say only that the Russian soul, the genius of the Russian people, is perhaps among all nations the most capable of upholding the ideal of a universal union of mankind, of brotherly love, of the calm conception which forgives contrasts, allows for and excuses the unlike, and softens all contradictions. This is not an economical, but a moral trait; and can any one deny that it is present in the Russian people? Can any one say that the Russian nation is only an inert mass, doomed to serve, only economically, the prosperity and development of the European intelligentsia which has lifted itself above the people; that the mass of the people in itself contains only a dead inertia, from which nothing can be expected, nor any hopes be formed? Alas, many people assert this, but I dared to proclaim something different. I repeat, I

naturally could not prove ‘ this fancy of mine,’ as I myself called it, circumstantially and fully; neither could I help pointing it out. To assert that our poor untidy country cannot harbour sueh lofty aspirations until it has become economically and socially the equal of the West, is simply absurd. In their fundamental substance at least the moral treasures of the spirit do not depend upon eeonomieal power. Our poor untidy land, save for its upper elasses, is as one single man. The eighty millions of her population represent a spiritual union whose like cannot be found anywhere in Europe, and because of this alone, it is impossible to say that the land is untidy, it is strictly impossible to say even that it is poor. On the other hand, in Europe — this Europe where so many treasures have been amassed — the whole social foundation of every European nation is undermined, and perhaps will crumble away to-morrow, leaving no trace behind, and in its place will arise something radically new and utterly unlike that which was before. And all the treasures which Europe has amassed will not save her from her fall, for ‘ in the twinkling of an eye all riches too will be destroyed.’ To this social order, infected and rotten indeed, our people is being pointed as to an ideal to which they must aspire, and only when they have reached it, should they dare to whisper their word to Europe. But we assert that it is possible to contain and cherish the power of a loving spirit of universal union even in our present economic poverty, and in poverty still greater than this. It can be preserved and cherished even in such poverty as there was after the Tartar invasion, or after the disasters of the ‘ Troublous Age ‘ when Russia was saved solely by her national spirit of unity. Finally, if it is indeed required, in order to love mankind and preserve within ourselves a soul for universal unity; in order to have within ourselves the capacity not to hate foreign nations because they are not like us; in order to have the desire not to let our national feeling grow so strong that we should aim at getting everything and the other nations be only so many lemons to be squeezed — there are nations of this spirit in Europe! — if to obtain all this, it is necessary, I repeat, that we should first become a rich nation and adapt the European social order to ourselves, then must we still slavishly imitate that European order which may crumble to pieces in Europe to-morrow? Will the Russian organism even now not be suffered to develop nationally by its own organic strength, but must it necessarily lose its individuality in a servile imitation of Europe? What is then to be done with the Russian organism? Do these gentlemen understand what an organism is? And they still talk of natural

sciences. ‘ The people will not suffer that,’ said a friend of mine on an occasion two years ago to a vehement Westernist. ‘ Then the people should be destroyed!’ was the quiet and majestic answer. And he was not a person of no importance, but one of the leaders of our intellectuals. The story is true.

In these four aspects I showed Pushkin’s significance for us, and my ‘ Speech ‘ made an impression. It did not make an impression by its merits — I emphasise this — nor by any talent in its exposition (wherein I agree with all my opponents, and do not boast), but by its sincerity, and I will even say by some irresistible power in the facts displayed, notwithstanding its brevity and incompleteness.

But wherein lay ‘ the event,’ as Ivan Sergueyevieh Ak^akov put it? In that the Slavophiles, or the Russian party so-called — we have a Russian party! — made an immense, and perhaps final step towards reconciliation with the Westernists, for the Slavophiles fully recognised the validity of the Westernist aspiration after Europe, the validity even of their most extreme enthusiasms and conclusions, and explained this validity by our purely Russian and national aspiration, which coincides with the national spirit itself. They explained the enthusiasms by historical necessity, by historical destiny, so that in the whole sum-total (if that sum-total is ever reckoned) it will appear that the Westernists have served the Russian land and spirit as much as all those purely Russian men who have sincerely loved their native land and hitherto perhaps too jealously guarded her from all the infatuations of ‘ Russian foreigners.’ It was finally declared that all the friction between the two parties and all their unpleasant quarrels had been due to a misunderstanding. This perhaps might have been an event, for the representatives of the Slavophiles present fully agreed with the conclusions of my speech when it was ended. And I declare now — as I declared in my ‘ Speech ‘ also — that the honour of this new step (for even a sincere desire for reconciliation is an honour), that the merit of this new word, if you will, belongs not to me alone, but to the whole Slavophile movement, to the whole spirit and tendency of our ‘ party,’ that this was always clear to those who impartially examined the movement, and that the idea which I expressed had more than once been, if not expressed, at least indicated by the Slavophiles. My part was only to seize the opportune moment. Now this is the conclusion: if the Western is to accept our reasoning and agree with it, then of course all the misunderstandings between both parties will be

removed, and the Westernists and the Slavophiles will have nothing to quarrel about, since, as Ivan Sergueyevich put it, ‘ from this day forward everything has been cleared up.’ Naturally, from this point of view my ‘ Speech ‘ would have been an event. But, alas! the word ‘ event’ was uttered in a moment of sincere enthusiasm by one side, but whether it will be accepted by the other side and not remain merely an ideal — that is another question. Together with the Slavophiles who embraced me and shook me by the hand on the platform as soon as I had finished my speech, there came up to me Westernists also, the leading representatives of the movement who oecupy the principal r61es in it, above all at the present time. They pressed my hand with the same sincere and fervent enthusiasm as the Slavophiles, spoke of my speech as the work of genius, and repeated the word over and over again. But I am afraid, genuinely afraid, that this word was pronounced in the first rush of enthusiasm. Oh, I am not afraid that they will recant their opinion that my speech was the work of genius. I myself know that it was not, I was not at all deceived by the praise, so that from my whole heart I shall forgive them their disappointment in my genius. But it may happen that the Westernists, upon reflection, will say — mark well that I am not writing of those who pressed my hand, but of the Westernists in general—’ Ah,’

they will perhaps say (you hear; no more ‘ perhaps ‘)—’ Ah, you ‘ve agreed at last, after so much dispute and discussion, that our aspiration after Europe was justified and normal, you have acknowledged that there was truth on our side as well, and you have lowered your flag. Well, we accept your acknowledgment good-heartedly, and hasten to assure you that it is not at all bad on your part. At least it shows a certain intelligence in you, which indeed we never denied, with the exception perhaps of our stupidest members, for whom we have neither the will nor the power to be responsible, but . . .’ Here you see another ‘ but’ appears, and it must be explained immediately. ‘ The point is that your thesis and conclusion that in our enthusiasms we, as it were, coincided with the national spirit and were mysteriously guided by it — that proposition is still more than doubtful to us, and so an agreement between us once more becomes impossible. Please understand that we were guided by Europe, by her science, and by Peter’s reforms, but not by the spirit of the people at all, for we neither met nor scented this spirit on our way; on the contrary, we left it behind and ran away from it as soon as we could. From the very outset we

went our way independently, and did not in the least follow some instinct or other which is leading the Russian people to universal sympathy and the unification of mankind — to all that you have just talked so much about. In the Russian people, for the time has come to speak perfectly frankly, we see, as before, only an inert mass, from which we have nothing to learn, which, on the contrary, hinders Russia's development towards something better, and must be wholly recreated and remade — if it is impossible organically, then mechanically at least — by simply making them obey us once for all. And to obtain this obedience we must adopt the social order just as it is in European countries, which we were discussing just now. Strictly speaking, our nation is poor and untidy, as it always has been, and can have neither individuality nor ideal. The whole history of our people is absurd, from which you have deduced the devil knows what, while we alone have looked at it soberty. It is necessary that a people like ours should have no history, and that what it has in the shape of a history should be utterly forgotten by it in disgust. Only an intellectual society must have a history, and this society the people must serve, and only serve, with its labour and powers.

‘ Don't worry and don't shout! We don't want to enslave our people when we talk of making it obey, of course not. Please don't rush to such conclusions. We are humane, we are Europeans, you know that as well as we. On the contrary, we intend to develop our people gradually, in due order, and to crown our edifice by raising up the people to ourselves and by remaking its nationality into something different which will appear when its development is complete. We will lay the foundations of education and begin whence we ourselves started, with the renunciation of all the past, and with the damnation'to which the people must itself deliver up its past. The moment we have taught one of the people to read and write, we shall immediately make him scent the delights of Europe, we will seduce him with Europe,

by the refinement of European life, of European,customs, clothes, drinks,.dances — in a word, we will make him ashamed of his bast shoes and his kvass, ashamed of his old songs, and though there are many excellent, musical songs among them, we will make him sing vaudeville, no matter how furious you may be. In brief, for the good purpose, by any and every means, we will first work on the weak springs of his character, just as it has been in our case, and then the people will be ours. He will be ashamed

of his past and will curse it. He who curses his past — is ours! — that is our formula. We will apply it to the full when we begin to raise up the people to ourselves. And if the people prove itself incapable of enlightenment, then “ remove the people.” For then it will be clearly shown that our people is only a worthless and barbarous horde, only to be made to obey. For what else is there to be done? Truth exists in the intellectuals and in Europe alone, and therefore though you have eighty million people — you seem to boast of it — all these millions must first serve this European truth, since there is not and cannot be another truth. You won’t frighten us with your millions. That is our permanent conclusion, though you have it now in its nakedness. We abide by it. We cannot accept your conclusions and talk together, for instance, about such a strange thing as the PravoslaviS1 and its so-called particular significance. We hope at least that you will not expect it of us, above all at a time when the last word of Europe and European Science is an enlightened and humane atheism, and we can but follow Europe. 1 The idea of the Orthodox Faith.

‘ Therefore — well — we agree to accept with certain limitations that half of your speech in which you pay us compliments: yes, we will do you this kindness. As for the other half which refers to you and those “ principles “ of yours, please forgive us, but we cannot accept it.’

Such is the sad conclusion possible. I repeat, not only would I not venture to put this conclusion into the mouths of the Westernists who pressed my hand, but not even into the mouths of a very great number of the most enlightened among them, Russian workers and perfect Russians, and, in spite of their theories, respectable and esteemed Russian citizens. But the mass, the great mass of those who have been uprooted, the outcasts, your Westernists, the average, the men in the street, through which the ideal is being dragged — all these rank and file of ‘ the tendency,’ as many as the sand of the sea, will say something of the kind, perhaps have already said it. (Concerning religion, for instance, one paper has already said, with its peculiar wit, that the aim of the Slavophiles is to rebaptize all Europe into orthodoxy.) But let us throw off gloomy thoughts and place our hope in the leaders of Europeanism. If they will accept only one half of our conclusions and our hopes in them, then honour and glory to them, and we shall meet them with full hearts. If they accept only one half, and acknowledge the independence and the individuality of the Russian spirit, the justification of its being, and its humane tendency to universal unity, even then there will

be nothing left to quarrel about, at least nothing of fundamental importance. Then my ‘ Speech ‘ would really serve for the foundation of a new event — not the ‘ Speech ‘ itself, I repeat for the last time, (it is not worthy of such a name), but the solemn celebration of the mighty Pushkin, which was the occasion of our union — a union now of all sincere and enlightened Russians for the great purpose of the future.

CHAPTER II

A SPEECH DELIVERED ON 8TH JUNE 1880 AT THE MEETING OF THE SOCIETY OF LOVERS OF RUSSIAN LITERATURE

Pushkin is an extraordinary phenomenon, and, perhaps, the unique phenomenon of the Russian spirit, said Gogol. I will add, ‘ and a prophetic phenomenon.’ Yes, in his appearing there is con- ‘ tained for all us Russians, something incontestably prophetic. Pushkin arrives exactly at the beginning of our true self-consciousness, which had only just begun to exist a whole century after Peter’s reforms, and Pushkin’s coming mightily aids us in our dark way by a new guiding light. In this sense Pushkin is a presage and a prophecy.

I divide the activity of our great poet into three periods. I speak now not as a literary critic. I dwell on Pushkin’s creative activity only to elucidate my conception of his prophetic significance to us, and the meaning I give the word prophecy. I would, however, observe in passing that the periods of Pushkin’s activity do not seem to me to be marked off from each other by firm boundaries. The beginning of Eugene Onyegin, for instance, in my opinion belongs still to the first period, while Onyeginends in the second period when Pushkin had already found his ideals in his native land, had taken them to his heart and cherished them in his loving and clairvoyant soul. It is said that in his first period Pushkin imitated European poets, Parny and Andre Chenier, and above all, Byron. Without doubt the poets of Europe had a great influence upon the development of his genius, and they maintained their influence all through his life. Nevertheless, even the very earliest poems of Pushkin were not mere imitations, and in them the extraordinary independence of his genius was expressed. In an imitation there never appears such individual suffering and such depths of self-consciousness as Pushkin displayed, for instance, in The Gipsies, a poem which I ascribe in its entirety to his first period; not to mention the creative force and impetuosity which would never have been so evident had his work been only imitation. Already, in the character of Aleko, the hero of The Gipsies, is exhibited a powerful, profound, and purely Russian idea, later to be expressed in harmonious perfection in Onyegin, where almost the

same Aleko appears not in a fantastic light, but as tangible, real and comprehensible. In Aleko Pushkin had already discovered, and portrayed with genius, the unhappy wanderer in his native land, the Russian sufferer of history, whose appearance in our society, uprooted from among the people, was a historic necessity. The type is true and perfectly rendered, it is an eternal type, long since settled in our Russian land. These homeless Russian wanderers are wandering still, and the time will be long before they disappear. If they in our day no longer go to gipsy camps to seek their universal ideals in the wild life of the Gipsies and their consolation away from the confused and pointless life of our Russian intellectuals, in the bosom of nature, they launch into Socialism, which did not exist in Aleko's day, they march with a new faith into another field, and there work zealously, believing, like Aleko, that they will by their fantastic occupations obtain their aims and happiness, not for themselves alone, but for all mankind. For the Russian wanderer can find his own peace only in the happiness of all men; he will not be more cheaply satisfied, at least while it is still a matter of theory. It is the same Russian man who appears at a different time. This man, I repeat, was born just at the beginning of the second century after Peter's great reforms, in an intellectual society, uprooted from among the people. Oh, the vast majority of intellectual Russians in Pushkin's time were serving then as they are serving now, as civil servants, in government appointments, in railways or in banks, or earning money in whatever way, or engaged in the sciences, delivering lectures — all this in a regular, leisurely, peaceful manner, receiving salaries, playing whist, without any longing to escape into gipsy camps or other places more in accordance with our modern times. The}^ go only so far as to play the liberal, ' with a tinge of European Socialism,' to which Socialism is given a certain benign Russian character — but it is only a matter of time: What if one has not yet begun to be disturbed, while another has already come up against a bolted door and violently beaten his head against it? The same fate awaits all men in their turn, unless they walk in the saving road of humble communion with the people. But suppose that this fate does not await them all: let' the chosen ' suffice, let onlyd a tenth part be disturbed lest the vast majority remaining should find no rest through them. Aleko, of course, is still unable to express his anguish rightly: with him everything is still somehow abstract; he has only a yearning after nature, a grudge against high society, aspirations for all men,

lamentations for the truth, which some one has somewhere lost, and he can by no means find. Wherein is this truth, where and in what she could appear, and when exactly she was lost, he, of course, cannot say, but he suffers sincerely. In the meantime a fantastic and impatient person seeks for salvation above all in external phenomena; and so it should be. Truth is as it were somewhere outside himself, perhaps in some other European land, with their firm and historical political organisations and their established social and civil life. And he will never understand that the truth is first of all within himself. How could he understand this? For a whole century he has not been himself in his own land. He has forgotten how to work, he has no culture, he has grown up like a convent schoolgirl within closed walls, he has fulfilled strange and unaccountable duties according as he belonged to one or another of the fourteen classes into which educated Russian society is divided. For the time being he is only a blade of grass torn from the roots and blown through the air. And he feels it, and suffers for it, suffers often acutely! Well, what if, perhaps belonging by birth to the nobility and probably possessing serfs, he allowed himself a nobleman's liberty, the pleasant fancy of being charmed by men who live ' without laws,' and began to lead a performing bear in a gipsy camp? Of course a woman, ' a wild woman,' as a certain poet says, would be most likely to give him hope of a way out of his anguish, and with an easy-going, but passionate belief, he throws himself into the arms of Zemphira. ' Here is my way of escape; here I can find my happiness, here in the bosom of nature far from the world, here with people who have neither civilisation nor law.' And what happens? He cannot endure his first collision with the conditions of this wild nature, and his hands are stained with blood. The wretched dreamer was not only unfitted for universal harmony, but even for gipsies, and they drive him away — without vengeance, without malice, with simple dignity.

Leave us, proud man.
We are wild and without law,
We torture not, neither do we punish.

This is, of course, all fantastic, but the proud man is real, his image sharply caught. Pushkin was the first to seize the type, and we should remember this. Should anything happen in the least degree not to his liking, he is ready to torment cruelly and punish for the wrong done to him, or, more comfortable still, he will remember that he belongs to one of the fourteen classes, and will himself call upon — this has happened often —

the torturing and punishing law, if only his private wrong may be revenged. No, this poem of genius is not an imitation! Here already is whispered the Russian solution of the question, ‘ the accursed question,’ in accordance with the faith and justice of the people. ‘ Humble yourself, proud man, and first of all break down your pride. Humble yourself, idle man, and first of all labour on your native land ‘ — that is the solution according to the wisdom and justice of the people. ‘ Truth is not outside thee, but in thyself. Find thyself in thyself, subdue thyself to thyself, be master of thyself and thou wilt see the truth. Not in things is this truth, not outside thee or abroad, but first of all in thine own labour upon thyself. If thou conquer and subdue thyself, then thou wilt be freer than thou hast ever dreamed, and thou wilt begin a great work and make others free, and thou wilt see happiness, for thy life will be fulfilled and thou wilt at the last understand thy people and its sacred truth. Not with the Gipsies nor elsewhere is universal harmony, if thou thyself art first unworthy of her, malicious and proud, and thou dost demand life as a gift, not even thinking, that man must pay for her.’ This solution of the question is strongly foreshadowed in Pushkin’s poem. Still more clearly is it expressed in Eugene Onyegin, which is not a fantastic, but a tangible and realistic poem, in which the real Russian life is embodied with a creative power and a perfection such as had not been before Pushkin and perhaps never after him.

Onyegin comes from Petersburg. Certainly from Petersburg: it is beyond all doubt necessary to the poem, and Pushkin could not omit that all-important realistic trait in the life of his hero. I repeat, he is the same Aleko, particularly when later on in the poem he cries in anguish:

Why am I not, like the assessor of Tula, Stricken with palsy?

But now at the beginning of the poem he is still half a coxeomb and a man of the world; he had lived too little to be utterly disappointed in life. But he is already visited and disturbed byThe demon lord of hidden weariness.

In a remote place, in the heart of his mother country, he is of course an exile in a foreign land. He does not know what to do and is somehow conscious of his own quest. Afterwards, wandering over his native country and over foreign lands, he, beyond doubt clever and sincere, feels himself among strangers, still more a stranger to himself. True, he loves his native land, but he does not trust in it. Of course he has heard of national ideals, but he does not believe in them. He only believes in the utter impossibility

of any work whatever in his native land, and upon those who believe in this possibility — then, as now, but few — he looks with sorrowful derision. He had killed Lensky out of spleen, perhaps from spleen born of yearning for the universal ideal — that is quite like us, quite probable.

Tatiana is different. She is a strong character, strongly standing on her own ground. She is deeper than Onyegin and certainly wiser than he. With a noble instinct she divines where and what is truth, and her thought finds expression in the finale of the poem. Perhaps Pushkin would even have done better to call his poem Tatiana, and not Onyegin, for she is indubitably the chief character. She is positive and not negative, a type of positive beauty, the apotheosis of the Russian woman, and the poet destined her to express the idea of his poem in the famous scene of the final meeting of Tatiana with Onyegin. One may even say that so beautiful or positive a type of the Russian woman has never been created since in our literature, save perhaps the figure of Liza in Turgeniev's A Nest of Gentlefolk. But because of his way of looking down upon people, Onyegin did not even understand Tatiana when he met her for the first time, in a remote place, under the modest guise of a pure, innocent girl, who was at first so shy of him. He eould not see the completeness and perfection of the poor girl, and perhaps he really took her for a ' moral embryo.' She, the embryo! She, after her letter to Onyegin! If there is a moral embryo in the poem, it is he himself, Onyegin, beyond all debate. And he could not comprehend her. Does he know the human soul? He has been an abstract person, a restless dreamer, all his life long. Nor does he comprehend her later in Petersburg, as a grand lady, when in the words of his own letter to her ' he in his soul understood all her perfections.' But these are only words. She passed through his life unrecognised by him and unappreciated: therein is the tragedy of their love. But if at his first meeting with her in the village Childe Harold had arrived from England, or even, by a miracle, Lord Byron himself, and had noticed her timid, modest beauty and pointed her out to him, oh, Onyegin would have been instantly struck with admiration, for in these universal sufferers there is sometimes so much spiritual servility! But this did not happen, and the seeker after universal harmony, having read her a sermon, and having done very honestly by her, set off with his universal anguish and the blood of his friend, spilt in foolish anger, on his hands, to wander over his mother country, blind to her;

and, bubbling over with health and strength, he exclaims with an oath:

I am yet young and life is strong in me,

Yet what awaits me? — anguish, anguish, anguish.

This Tatiana understood. In the immortal lines of the romance the poet represented her coming to see the house of the man who is so wonderful and still so incomprehensible to her. I do not speak of the unattainable artistic beauty and profundity of the lines. She is in his study; she looks at his books and possessions; she tries through them to understand his soul, to solve her enigma, and * the moral embryo ‘ at last pauses thoughtfully, with a foreboding that her riddle is solved, and gently whispers:

Perhaps he is only a parody?

Yes, she had to whisper this; she had divined him. Later, long afterwards in Petersburg, when they meet again, she knows him perfectly. By the way, who was it that said that the life of the court and society had affected her soul for the worse, and that her new position as a lady of fashion and her new ideas were in part the reason for her refusing Onyegin? This is not true. No, she is the same Tanya, the same country Tanya as before! She is not spoiled; on the contrary, she is tormented by the splendid life of Petersburg, she is worn down by it and suffers: she hates her position as a lady of society, and whoever thinks otherwise of her, has no understanding of what Pushkin wanted to say. Now she says firmly to Onyegin:

Now am I to another given: To him I will be faithful unto death.

She said this as a Russian woman, indeed, and herein is her apotheosis. She expresses the truths of the poem. I shall not say a word of her religious convictions, her views on the sacrament of marriage — no, I shall not touch upon that. But then, did she refuse to follow him although she herself had said to him ‘ I love you ‘? Did she refuse because she, ‘ as a Russian woman ‘ (and not a Southern or a French woman), is incapable of a bold step or has not the power to sacrifice the fascination of honours, riches, position in society, the conventions of virtue? No, a Russian woman is brave. A Russian woman will boldly follow what she believes, and she has proved it. But she ‘ is to another given; to him she will be faithful unto death.’ To whom, to what will she be true? To what obligations be faithful? Is it to that old general whom she cannot possibly love, whom she married only because ‘ with tears and adjurations her mother did beseech her,’ and in her wronged and wounded soul was there then only despair and neither hope nor ray of light at all? Yes, she is true to that general, to her husband,

to an honest man who loves her, respects her, and is proud of her. Her mother ‘ did beseech her,’ but it was she and she alone who consented, she herself swore an oath to be his faithful wife. She married him out of despair. But now he is her husband, and her perfidy will cover him with disgrace and shame and will kill him. Can any one build his happiness on the unhappiness of another? Happiness is not in the delights of love alone, but also in the spirit’s highest harmony. How could the spirit be appeased if behind it stood a dishonourable, merciless, inhuman action? Should she run away merely because her happiness lay therein? What kind of happiness would that be, based on the unhappiness of another? Imagine that you yourself are building a palace of human destiny for the final end of making all men happy, and of giving them peace and rest at last. And imagine also that for that purpose it is necessary and inevitable to torture to death one single human being, and him not a great soul, but even in some one’s eyes a ridiculous being, not a Shakespeare, but simply an honest old man, the husband of a young wife in whom he believes blindly, and whom, although he does not know her heart at all, he respects, of whom he is proud, with whom he is happy and at rest. He has only to be disgraced, dishonoured, and tortured, and on his dishonoured suffering your palace shall be built! Would you consent to be the architect on this condition? That is the question. Can you for one moment admit the thought that those for whom the building had been built would agree to receive that happiness from you, if its foundation was suffering, the suffering of an insignificant being perhaps, but one who had been cruelly and unjustly put to death, even if, when they had attained that happiness, they should be happy for ever? Could Tatiana’s great soul, which had so deeply suffered, have chosen otherwise? No, a pure, Russian soul decides thus: Let me, let me alone be deprived of happiness, let my happiness be infinitely greater than the unhappiness of this old man, and finally let no one, not this old man, know and appreciate my sacrifice: but I will not be happy through having ruined another. Here is a tragedy in act, the line cannot be passed, and Tatiana sends Onyegin away.

It may be said: But Onyegin too is unhappy. She has saved one, and ruined the other. But that is another question, perhaps the most important in the poem. By the way, the question, Why did not Tatiana go away with Onyegin? has with us, in our literature at least, a very characteristic history, and therefore I have allowed myself to dwell upon it. The most

characteristic thing is that the moral solution of the question should have been so long subject to doubt. I think that even if Tatiana had been free and her old husband had died and she become a widow, even then she would not have gone away with Onyegin. But one must understand the essential substance of the character. She sees what he is. The eternal wanderer has suddenly seen the woman whom he had previously scorned in a new and unattainable setting. In this setting is perhaps the essence of the matter. The girl whom he almost despised is now adored by all soeiety — soeiety, the awful authority for Onyegin, for all his universal aspirations. That is why he throws himself, dazzled, at her feet. Here is my ideal, he cries,-here is my salvation, here is the escape from my anguish. I did not see her then, when ‘ happiness was so possible, so near.’ And as before Aleko turned to Zemphira, so does Onyegin turn to Tatiana, seeking in his new, capricious fancy the solution of all his questions. But does not Tatiana see this in him, had she not seen it long ago? She knows beyond a doubt that at bottom he loves his new caprice, and not her, the humble Tatiana as of old. She knows that he takes her for something else, and not for what she is, that it is not her whom he loves, that perhaps he does not love any one, is incapable of loving any one, although he suffers so acutely. He loves a caprice, but he himself is a caprice. If she were to follow him, then to-morrow he would be disillusioned and look with mockery upon his infatuation. He has no root at all, he is a blade of grass, borne on the wind. She is otherwise: even in her despair, in the painful consciousness that her life has been ruined, she still has something solid and unshakable upon which her soul may bear. These are the memories of her childhood, the reminiscences of her country, her remote village, in which her pure and humble life had begun: it isthe woven shade Of branches that o’erhang her nurse’s grave.

Oh, these memories and the pictures of the past are most precious to her now; these alone are left to her, but they do save her soul from final despair. And this is not a little, but rather much, for there is here a whole foundation, unshakable and indestructible. Here is contact with her own land, with her own people, and with their sanctities. And he — what has he and what is he? Nothing, that she should follow him out of compassion, to amuse him, to give him a moment’s gift of a mirage of happiness out of the infinite pity of her love, knowing well beforehand that to-morrow he would look on his happiness with mockery. No, these are deep, firm souls, which cannot

deliberately give their sanctities to dishonour, even from infinite compassion. No, Tatiana could not follow Onyegin.

Thus in Onyegin, that immortal and unequalled poem, Pushkin was revealed as a great national writer, unlike any before him. In one stroke, with the extreme of exactness and insight, he denned the very inmost essenee of our high soeiety that stands above the people. He defined the type of the Russian wanderer before our day and in our day; he was the first to divine him, with the flair of genius, to divine his destiny in history and his enormous significance in our destiny to be. Side by side he plaeed a type of positive and indubitable beauty in the person of a Russian woman. Besides, of eourse, he was the first Russian writer to show us, in his other works of that period, a whole gallery of positively beautiful Russian types, finding them in the Russian people. The paramount beauty of these lies in their truth, their tangible and indubitable truth. It is impossible to deny them, they stand as though sculptured. I would remind you again. I speak not as a literary eritic, and therefore do not intend to elueidate my idea by a particular and detailed literary diseussion of these works of the poet's genius. Concerning the type of the Russian monkish ehronieler, for instanee, a whole book might be written to show the importance and meaning for us of this lofty Russian figure, discovered by Pushkin in the Russian land, portrayed and sculptured by him, and now eternally set before us in its humble, exalted, indubitable spiritual beauty, as the evidenee of that mighty spirit of national life which can send forth from itself figures of such certain loveliness. This type is now given; he exists, he cannot be disputed; it eannot be said that he is only the poet's fancy and ideal. You yourself see and agree: Yes, he exists, therefore the spirit of the nation whieh ereated him exists also, therefore the vital power of this spirit exists and is mighty and vast. Throughout Pushkin sounds a belief in the Russian character, in its spiritual might; and if there is belief, there is hope also, the great hope for the man of Russia.

In the hope of glory and good I look without fear ahead,

said the poet himself on another occasion; but the words may be applied directly to the whole of his national, creative activity. And yet no single Russian writer, before or after him, did ever associate himself so intimately and fraternally with his people as Pushkin. Oh, we have a multitude of experts on the people among our writers, who have written about the people, with talent and knowledge and love, and yet if we compare them

with Pushkin, then in reality, with one or at most two exceptions among his latest followers, they will be found to be only ‘ gentlemen ‘ writing about the masses. Even in the most gifted of them, even in the two exceptions 1 I have just mentioned, sometimes appears a sudden flash of something haughty, something from another life and world, something whieh desires to raise the people up to the writer, and so to make them happy. But in Pushkin there is something allied indeed to the people, which in him rises on occasion to some of the most naive emotions. Take his story of The Bear, and how a peasant killed the bear’s mate; or remember the verses,

Kinsman John, when we begin to drink . . .

and you will understand what I mean.

All these treasures of art and artistic insight are left by our great poet as it were a landmark for the1 Turgeniev and Tolstoi are meant.

writers who should come after him, for future labourers in the same field. One may say positively that if Pushkin had not existed, there would not have been the gifted writers who came after him. At least they would not have displayed themselves with such power and clarity, in spite of the great gifts with which they have succeeded in expressing themselves in our day. But not in poetry alone, not in artistic creation alone: if Pushkin had not existed, there would not have been expressed with the irresistible force with whieh it appeared after him (not in all writers, but in a chosen few), our belief in our Russian individuality, our now conscious faith in the people’s powers, and finally the belief in our future individual destiny among the family of European nations. This achievement of Pushkin’s is particularly displayed if one examines what I call the third period of his activity.

I repeat, there are no fixed divisions between the periods. Some of the works of even the third period might have been written at the very beginning of the poet’s artistic activity, for Pushkin was always a complete whole, as it were a perfect organism carrying within itself at once every one of its principles, not receiving them from beyond. The beyond only awakened in him that whieh was already in the depths of his soul. But this organism developed and the phases of this development could really be marked and defined, each of them by its peculiar character and the regular generation of one phase from another. Thus to the third period can be assigned those of his works in which universal ideas were pre-eminently reflected, in which the poetic conceptions of other nations were mirrored

and their genius re-embodied. Some of these appeared after Pushkin's death. And in this period the poet reveals something almost miraculous, never seen or heard at any time or in any nation before. There had been in the literatures of Europe men of colossal artistic genius — a Shakespeare, a Cervantes, a Schiller. But show me one of these great geniuses who possessed sueh a capacity for universal sympathy as our Pushkin. This capacity, the preeminent capacity of our nation, he shares with our nation, and by that above all he is our national poet. The greatest of European poets could never so powerfully embody in themselves the genius of a foreign, even a neighbouring, people, its spirit in all its hidden depth, and all its yearning after its appointed end, as Pushkin could. On the contrary, when they turned to foreign nations European poets most often made them one with their own people, and understood them after their own fashion. Even Shakespeare's Italians, for instance, are almost always Englishmen. Pushkin's alone of all world poets possessed the capacity of fully identifying himself with another nationality. Take scenes from Faust, take The Miserly Knight, take the ballad 4 Once there Lived a Poor Knight'; read Don Juan again. Had Pushkin not signed them, you would never know that they were not written by a Spaniard. How profound and fantastic is the imagination in the poem 4 A Feast in Time of Plague.' But in this fantastic imagination is the genius of England; and in the hero's wonderful song about the plague, and in Mary's song,

Our children's voices in the noisy school Were heard . . .

These are English songs; this is the yearning of the British genius, its lament, its painful presentiment of its future. Remember the strange lines:

Once as I wandered through the valley wild.

It is almost a literal transposition of the first three pages of a strange mystical book, written in prose by an old English sectarian — but is it only a transposition? In the sad and rapturous music of these verses is the very soul of Northern Protestantism, of the English heresiarch, of the illimitable mystic with his dull, sombre, invincible aspiration, and the impetuous power of his mystical dreaming. As you read these strange verses, you seem to hear the spirit of the times, of the Reformation, you understand the warlike fire of early Protestantism, and finally history herself, not merely by thought but as one who passes through the armed sectarian camp, sings psalms with them, weeps with them in their religious ecstasies, and with them believed in their belief. Then set beside this religious mysticism,

religious verses from the Koran or ‘Imitations from the Koran.’ Is there not here a Mohammedan, is it not the very spirit of the Koran and its sword, the naive grandeur of faith and her terrible, bloody power? And here is the ancient world; here are Egyptian Nights, here sit the gods of earth, who sat above their people like gods, and despised the genius of the people and its aspirations, who became gods in isolation, and went mad in their isolation, in the anguish of their weariness unto death, diverting themselves with fanatic brutalities, with the voluptuousness of creeping things, of a she-spider devouring her male. No, I will say deliberately, there never had been a poet with a universal sympathy like Pushkin’s. And it is not his sympathy alone, but his amazing profundity, the reincarnation of his spirit in the spirit of foreign nations, a reincarnation almost perfect and therefore also miraculous, because the phenomenon has never been repeated in any poet in all the world. It is only in Pushkin; and by this, I repeat, he is a phenomenon never seen and never heard of before, and in my opinion, a prophetic phenomenon, because . . . because herein was expressed the national spirit of his poetry, the national spirit in its future development, the national spirit of our future, which is already implicit in the present, and it was expressed prophetically. For what is the power of the spirit of Russian nationality if not its aspiration after the final goal of universality and omni-humanity? No sooner had he become a completely national poet, no sooner had he come into contact with the national power, than he already anticipated the great future of that power. In this he was a seer, in this a prophet.

For what is the reform of Peter the Great to us, not merely for the future, but in that which has been and has already been plainly manifested to us? What did that reform mean to us? Surely it was not only the adoption of European clothes, customs, inventions and science. Let us examine how it was, let us look more steadily. Yes, it is very probable that at the outset Peter began his reform in this narrowly utilitarian sense, but in course of time, as his idea developed, Peter undoubtedly obeyed some hidden instinct which drew him and his work to future purposes, undoubtedly more vast than narrow utilitarianism. Just as the Russian peoplee did not accept the reform in the utilitarian spirit alone; but undoubtedly with a presentiment which almost instantly forewarned them of a distant and incomparably higher goal than mere utilitarianism. I repeat, the people felt that purpose unconsciously, but it felt it directly and quite vitally. Surely we then turned

at once to the most vital reunion, to the unity of all mankind! Not in a spirit of enmity (as one might have thought it would have been) but in friendliness and perfect love, we received into our soul the geniuses of foreign nations, all alike without preference of race, able by instinct from almost the very first step to discern, to discount distinctions, to excuse and reconcile them, and therein we already showed our readiness and inclination, which had only just become manifest to ourselves, for a common and universal union with all the races of the great Aryan family. Yes, beyond all doubt, the destiny of a Russian is pan-European and universal. To become a true Russian, to become a Russian fully, (in the end of all, I repeat) means only to become the brother of all men, to become, if you will, a universe man. All our Slavophilism and Westernisni Is only a great misunderstanding, even though historically necessary. To a true Russian, Europe and the destiny of all the mighty Aryan family is as dear as Russia herself, as the destiny of his own native country, because our destiny is universality, won not by the sword, but by the strength of brotherhood and our fraternal aspiration to reunite mankind. If you go deep into our history since Peter’s reform, you will already find traces and indications of this idea, of this dream of mine, if you will, in the character of our intercourse with European nations, even in the policy of the state. For what has Russian policy been doing for these two centuries if not serving Europe, perhaps, far more than she has served herself. I do not believe this came to pass through the incapacity of our statesmen. The nations of Europe know how dear they are to us. And in course of time I believe that we — not we, of course, but our children to come — will all without exception understand that to be a true Russian does indeed mean to aspire finally to reconcile the contradictions of Europe, to show the end of European yearning in our Russian soul, omni-human and all-uniting, to include within our soul by brotherly love all our brethren, and at last, it may be, to pronounce the final Word of the great general harmony, of the final brotherly communion of all nations in accordance with the law of the gospel of Christ! I know, I know too well, that my words may appear ecstatic, exaggerated and fantastic. Let them be so, I do not repent having uttered them. They ought to be uttered, above all now, at the moment that we honour our great genius who by his artistic power embodied his idea. The idea has been expressed manjy times before. I say nothing new. But chiefly it will appear presumptuous. ‘ Is this

our dest my, the destiny of oui ooor, brutal land? Are we predestined among mankinl to utter the new wr’r J?’

Do I speak of economic glory, of the glory of the sword or of sciei ice? I speak only of the brotherhood of man; I sa y that to this universal, omni-human union the heart of Russia, perhaps more than all other nations, is chiefly predestined; I see its traces in our history, our men of genius, in the artistic genius of Pushkin. Let our country be poor, but this poor land ‘ Christ traversed with blessing, in the garb of a serf.’ Why then should we not contain His final word? Was not He Himself born in a manger? I say again, we at least can already point to Pushkin, to the universality and omni-humanity of his genius. He surely could contain the genius of foreign lands in his soul as his own. In art at least, in artistie creation, he undeniably revealed this universality of the aspiration of the Russian spirit, and therein is a great promise. If our thought is a dream, then in Pushkin at least this dream has solid foundation. Had he lived longer, he would perhaps have revealed great and immortal embodiments of the Russian soul, whieh would then have been intelligible to our European brethren; he would have attracted them much more and closer than they are attracted now, perhaps he would have succeeded in explaining to them all the truth of our aspirations; and they would understand us more than they do now, they would have begun to have insight into us, and would have ceased to look at us so suspiciously and presumptuous” as they still do. Had Pushkin lived longer, then amo.ng us too there would perhaps be fewe: misunderstandings and quarrels than we st o now. But God saw otherwise. Pushkin died n the full maturity of his yXowers, and undeniably)ore away with him a great secret into the grave. And now we, without him, are seeking to divine his secret.

CHAPTER III

TAKING THE OPPORTUNITY. FOUR SERMONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS READ TO ME ON THE OCCASION OF ONE LECTURE, BY M. GRADOVSKY. WITH AN ADVERTISEMENT TO M. GRADOVSKY.

§ 1

of one very fundamental thingI had just been putting the finishing touch to my Journal, confining it to my ‘ Speech,’ delivered in Moscow on the 8th of June, and to the foreword which I had written, anticipating the fuss which was actually made by the press after the publication of my ‘ Speech ‘ in the Moskovskaia Viedomosti. But when I had read your criticism, M. Gradovsky, I delayed the publication of my Journal in order to add to it also my answer to your attacks. Oh, my misgivings were justified. There was a terrible fuss. ‘ I am haughty.” I am a coward.” I am a Manilov,1 and a poet.” The police should be called in to suppress these public outbursts ‘ — the moral police, the liberal police, of course. But why not the real police? The real police nowadays are quite as liberal as the liberals themselves. Truly, it is only a very little less than calling in the real police! But we will leave that for the meanwhile; I will answer your points immediately.

1 A sentimental liar, from Gogol.

From the very beginning I will confess that I personally have nothing to do, or to discuss, with you. It is impossible for me to come to an understanding with you; and therefore I have no thought either of persuading or dissuading you. When I read some of your previous articles, I naturally was always amazed by the trend of your thought. So why should I answer you now? Simply because I have in view the others who will judge between us — the public. For them I am writing now.

I hear, I feel, I even see that new elements are rising and springing forth, whieh thirst for a new word, whieh are siek and tired of the old liberal giggling at any word of hope for Russia, sick and tired of the old toothless liberal scepticism, sick and tired of the old corpses who have forgotten to be buried and still take themselves for the rising generation, sick and tired of the old liberal guide and saviour of Russia, who after the whole twenty-five years that he stayed with us was ultimately defined, in the people’s speech,

as ‘ a man who shouts for nothing in the market-place.’ In a word, I should like to do a great deal more than to reply to your observations. In replying now, therefore, I have only seized an opportunity.

First of all you question me and even reprove me, asking why I did not show more clearly whence the ‘ wanderers ‘ came of whom I spoke in my ‘ Speech ‘? Well, that is a long story; one would have to go back too far. Besides, whatever answer I made to that question, you would not agree, because you have already preconceived and prepared your own solution of the question whence and how the ‘ wanderers ‘ came. ‘ From weariness of living with Skvoznik-Dmuhanovskys,1 and from the social yearning after the as yet unliberated serfs.’ A conclusion eminently worthy of a modern liberal-minded man, for whom everything that has to do with Russia has been settled and signed long ago, with the extraordinary ease peculiar to the Russian Liberal alone. Nevertheless the question is more complicated than you think, far more complicated, in spite of your very final solution. I will speak elsewhere of ‘ Skvozniks and Yearning,’ but first of all permit me to take hold of one most characteristic word of yours, spoken with a lightness that is already on the border of playfulness, a word which I cannot pass by in silence. You say:

‘ Whether this be so or no, two centuries have already passed since we have been under the influence of European enlightenment, which acts extremely strongly upon us by reason of the “ universal sensitiveness “ of the Russian, which M. Dostoyevsky acknowledged to be our national trait. There is no way of escape from this enlightenment; neither is there any need to escape. It is a fact, against which we can do nothing for this simple reason, that every Russian who desires to be enlightened, must get this enlightenment from a western European source, because of the absolute lack of sources in Russia.’

Certainly it is playfully expressed, but you have also uttered an important word: enlightenment. Let me ask you then what you mean by it. The sciences of the West, the useful sciences and crafts, or spiritual enlightenment? The former, the 1 A type of cunning, petty swindler, taken from Gogol.

sciences and crafts, must not pass by us unheeded: assuredly we must not avoid them, neither is there any need. I also agree fully that there is no source whence we may obtain them save in Western Europe, for which our praise and gratitude to Europe shall be eternal. But by enlightenment I

understand (I think that every one is bound to understand) that which is literally expressed in the very word: enlightenment — a spiritual light which shines upon the soul and illumines the heart, which directs the mind and reveals to it the way of life. If this be so, then allow me to observe that for this enlightenment we have no need to go to Western European sources because of the absolute sufficiency (not the absolute lack) of sources in Russia. You are surprised? You see, in discussion I love to begin with the very substance of the matter, and at once to grapple with the most disputable point.

I assert that our people became enlightened long ago, by taking into its essential soul Christ and His teaching. I may be told it has no knowledge of Christ's teaching, for no sermons are preached to it. But this is an empty objection. It knows indeed everything that it needs to know, though it cannot pass an examination in the catechism. It came to know this in temples where for centuries it had heard prayers and hymns which are better than sermons. The people repeated and sang these prayers while they were still in the forests, in hiding from their enemies; perhaps as long ago as the invasion of Batu-Khan they sang: ' Lord of Powers, be with us!' and then perhapsjdiey won a firm knowledge of that hymn, because nothing was left to them but Christ, and in that one hymn is all the Christian truth. What of it that the people hear no sermons and the clerks mumble indistinctly, which is the greatest accusation levelled against our Church, an accusation invented by the Liberals together with the inconvenience of the ecclesiastical Slavonic language, which is supposed to be incomprehensible to the common people? What of it? Instead, the priest stands forth and reads: ' Lord Sovereign of my life ' — in this prayer is the whole essence of Christianity, all its catechism, and the people know this prayer by heart. They also know by heart many Lives of the Saints; they tell them over and over again and listen to them with deep emotion. But the greatest school of Christianity through which they have passed are the centuries of innumerable and unending sufferings which they have endured through their history when, deserted by all, trodden down by all, working in all places and for all men, they remained with Christ alone, Christ the Consoler whom they had taken into their soul for ever, and who in return had saved their souls from despair! But why do I tell you all this? Do I desire to convince you? My words will assuredly appear to you childish, almost indecent. But for the third time I say: it is not for you that I am writing. And

the matter is important. Concerning it I must speak particularly and at length, and so long as I can hold a pen in my fingers, I will speak. But now I will only express the fundamental basis of my thought. If our people have already been enlightened long ago by having received into their essential soul Christ and His teaching, then with Him, with Christ, they assuredly have received the true enlightenment also. Combined with such a deep store of enlightenment the sciences of the West will of course become a true blessing to the people. Christ Himself will not be eclipsed by the sciences, as in the West, where, however, He was not eclipsed by the sciences, as the Liberals assert, but long before the advent of science, when the Western Church herself distorted the image of Christ, changing herself from a Church into a Roman State, and again incarnating the State in the form of the Papacy. Yes, in the West Christianity and the Church truly exist no longer, though there are still many Christians, nor will they ever disappear. Catholicism is truly Christianity no longer; it degenerates into idolatry: and Protestantism with giant strides runs down the steep into Atheism and into a wavering, fluid, fickle, instead of an eternal, morality.

Oh, of course, you will instantly reply that Christianity and the worship of Christ does by no means comprise in itself and by itself the whole cycle of enlightenment, that it is only one rung of the ladder, that there is need besides of science, of social ideals, of progress and the rest. To that I have nothing to reply; moreover it would be indecent to reply, for though you are right in part, concerning science, for instance, you will never agree that the Christianity of our people is and must for ever remain the chiefest and most vital basis of its enlightenment. In my ‘ Speech ‘ I said that Tatiana, by her refusal to follow Onyegin acted like a Russian, according to the Russian national truth. One of my critics, offended at finding that the Russian people has a truth of its own, replied with the ques-

tion: * What about promiscuity? ‘ Can such a critic be answered? The chief cause of his taking offence is that the Russian people should have a truth of its own, and therefore should be really enlightened. But does promiscuity exist throughout the whole of our people, and does it exist as a truth? Does the whole people take it for a truth? Yes, the people are coarse, though by no means all, by no means all. This I can swear upon oath, because I have seen the people and known them. I have lived with them years enough, I have eaten and slept with them and I myself have been ‘ reckoned with the transgressors ‘; with them I worked real work and hard,

while others ‘ whose hands were washed in blood,’ playing the liberal and sniggering at the people, settled in lectures and magazine articles that our people is of’ the likeness and the seal of the Beast.’ Don’t tell me, then, that I do not know the people! I do know them. From them I received Christ into my soul once more, whom I knew in the home of my childhood, and whom I all but lost when in my turn I changed into ‘ a European Liberal.’ But let us grant that our people is sinful and coarse, let us grant that his likeness is still the likeness of the Beast.

The son rode his mother,

His young wife the trace horse. . . .

There must be a reason for this people’s song? All Russian songs are built upon some actual event, you have observed that? But be just, only for once, you liberal minds. Remember what our people has endured through so man}’” centuries! Remember who is chiefly to blame for the likeness of the Beast, and do not condemn! But it is ludicrous to condemn the peasant because he does not have his hair cut by the coiffeur on the Great Morskaia. Yet to sueh heights of accusation do our European Liberals almost reach when they rise up against the Russian people and begin to deny them. They have not developed an individuality. They have not even a national character. And in the West, by God, wherever you will, in whatever nation you choose — is there less drunkenness and robbery, is there not the same bestiality, and into the bargain an obduracy which is not to be found in our people, and a true and veritable ignorance, a real unen-lightenment, because it is often connected with a lawlessness whieh is there no longer considered as sin, but has begun to be held for truth? Let there be bestiality and sin among our people, but what there is ineontestably within them is that they, at least as a whole, and not only in the ideal, but in the very real reality, neither accept nor desire to accept their sin for truth! Our peasant may sin, but he will always say sooner or later: ‘ I did falsely.’ If the sinner will not say it, then another will say it for him, and the truth will be fulfilled. Sin is a steneh, and the stench will pass away when the sun shines fully. Sin is passing, Christ is eternal. The people sins and defiles itself daily, but in its best moments, in its Christian moments, it will never mistake the truth. It is indeed important, in what the people believes as its truth, in what it finds her, how it represents her to itself, what it holds for its best desire, what it has come to love, what it asks of God, for what it prays and weeps. And the ideal of the people — is Christ. And surely with Christ is en-

lightenment; and in its highest and most crucial moments our people always decides and always has decided every matter of their commonweal absolutely according to Christ. You will jeer and say: ‘ It is not enough to cry, neither to sigh; one must also do, one must also be.’ And among yourselves, you Russian enlightened Europeans, are there many righteous? Show me your righteous, whom you prefer before Christ? But know that among the people there are righteous. There are positive characters of unimaginable beauty and power whom your observation has not yet touched. These righteous and martyrs for truth do exist, whether we see them or not. He who has eyes to see, he will see them; but he who has eyes only for the likeness of the Beast, he of course will see nothing. But our people at least knows that there are righteous and martyrs among them, and believes that they are there. The people is strong with this knowledge and with the hope that in the moment of common need they will save them. And how many times has the people saved the country? And but lately, defiled in sin, drunkenness and depravity, the spirit of the people, of all the people as one whole, rejoiced at the recent war for the faith of the Christian Slavs which had been trampled underfoot by the Turks. The people embraced the war, and took it as a sacrifice in expiation for its unrighteousness and sin; it sent its sons to die for a sacred cause, and did not wail because the rouble was falling and the price of food was rising. I know the elevation of the spirit of our people in the last war; but the Liberals do not recognise the causes of that elevation, they laugh at the idea: ‘ This canaille with a collective ideal, a social sense, a political idea — impossible!’ And why, why is our European Liberal so often the enemy of the Russian people? Why is it that in Europe those who call themselves democrats always stand for the people, or at any rate always rely on the people, while our democrat is often an aristocrat, nearly always supports that which oppresses the power of the people and ends by becoming a despot. Oh, I do not assert that they are consciously the enemies of the people; the tragedy is that it is not conscious. You will be exasperated by these questions? Well, all these things are axioms to me, and of course I shall go on demonstrating and proving them so long as I can write and speak.

Let me finish thus: sciences, certainly, but enlightenment we have no need to imbibe from any Western European source, or we may imbibe such social formulae as, for instance, Chacun pour soi ct Dieu pour tous or Apres moi, le deluge. Oh, it will be said instantly: ‘ Haven’t we such sayings of

our own: “The taste of a man’s salt is always forgotten,” and hundreds of other proverbs of that kind? ‘ Yes, there are a host of sayings of all kinds among the people. The mind of the people is broad, its humour too; the developed consciousness always whispers a negation. But all these are only sayings: our people does not believe in their moral truth, it laughs at them and mocks them, and as a body, at least, it denies them. But will you venture to assert that Chacun pour soi et Dieu pour tous is only a saying, and not an established social formula, accepted by everybody in the West, which all Westerners serve and in which they all believe?

At least, all those who stand above the people, who keep the people in check, who are masters of the land and the proletariat, and who stand sentinel over ‘ European enlightenment.’ Of what use to us is that enlightenment? Let us search for a different enlightenment among ourselves. Science is one thing; enlightenment another. By hope in our people and its powers we will perhaps at some time develop in fulness, in perfect radiance and illumination, this Christian enlightenment of ours.

You will of course tell me that this long discourse of mine is not an answer to your criticism. Granted. I myself consider it only a preface, but a necessary one. Just as you discover and indicate in me, in my ‘ Speech,’ the points wherein I differ from you, which you consider the most important and paramount, so have I first of all indicated and displayed the point in you where I consider our most fundamental discord lies, which more than all else prevents our coming to an agreement. But the preface is over. Let me proceed to your criticism, henceforward without digressions.

§2

ALEKO AND DERZHIMORDA. ALEKO'S YEARNINGS AFTER THE SERFS. ANECDOTESYOU WRITE IN CRITICISM OF MY * SPEECH ':

' But Pushkin, in portraying Aleko and Onyegin with their denial, did not show exactly what they " denied," and it would be extremely rash to assert that they denied " the national truth," the fundamental principles of the Russian conception of the world. This is nowhere evident.'

Well, whether it is evident or not, whether it is rash to assert it or not — to that question we shall return immediately; but first, this is what you say of the Dmuhanovskys from whom Aleko is supposed to have run to the Gipsies.

' But really the world of those old wanderers,' you write, ' was a world whieh denied another world. To explain these types other types are necessary, and these Pushkin did not create, though he turned towards them at times with burning indignation. The nature of his genius prevented him from descending into this darkness and from making " a gem of creation " out of the owls and bats whieh crowded the basements of the Russian House [and not the upper floors as well? (Dostoyevsky)]. This Gogol did, Gogol the great reverse of Pushkin. He told the world why Aleko ran to the Gipsies, why Onyegin was weary, why " superfluous people " had come into the world, the men whom Turgeniev was to immortalise. Korobochka, Sobakievieh, Skvoz-nik-Dmuhanovsky, Derzhimorda, Tyapkin1 — Lyapkin — these are the dark side of Aleko, Beltov, Rudin and many others. These are the background without which the latter figures are not to be understood. And these Gogol heroes were Russians; how very Russian they were! Korobochka had no world-sorrow, Skvoznik-Dmuhanovsky could deal splendidly with tradesmen, Sobakievich saw through his peasants and they saw through him as well. Certainly Aleko and Rudin did not see all this fully, nor did they understand it; they simply ran away 1 All these are realistic types from Gogol.

wherever they could, Aleko to the Gipsies, Rudin to Paris, to die for a cause completely foreign to him.'

You see ' they simply ran away.' Easy solution, like a feuilleton! And how simply you put it, how beautifully prepared and settled everything is

with you! Truly the words are ready to your tongue. But, by the way, why did you let drop that all these Gogol heroes were Russians, ‘ Oh, how very Russian they were!’ It has nothing at all to do with our discussion. Who does not know that they were Russians? Aleko and Onyegin were also Russians, you and I are also Russians; Rudin also was Russian, thoroughly Russian — Rudin who ran away to Paris to die for a cause, as you say, completely foreign to him. But for this very reason he is superlatively Russian, because the cause for which he died in Paris was by no means so foreign to him as it would have been to an Englishman or a German; for a European cause, a world-cause, a universal human cause, has long since not been foreign to a Russian. That is Rudin’s distinctive characteristic. Rudin’s tragedy strictly was that he could find no work in his native fields, and he died on another’s fields, which were, however, nothing like so foreign to him as you say. However, the point is this: all these Skvoznik-Dmuhanovskys and Sobakieviches, though Russians, are Russians spoiled, torn from the soil; and though they know the life of the people on one side, knowing nothing of the other, and not even suspecting that the other side does really exist — this is the whole point. The soul of the people, that for which the people thirsts, for which the people asks in a spirit of prayer, this they did not even suspect, because they terriblyf despised the people. They even denied his soul, except perhaps for the purpose of the census.1 ‘ Sobakievich saw through his peasants,’ you assert. That is impossible. Sobakievich saw in his Proshka only so much labour, which he could sell to Chichikov. You assert that Skvoznik-Dmuhanovsky could manage tradesmen splendidly. Heavens above! Read once more the monologue of the provost to the tradesmen in the fifth act. Only dogs are treated in that way, not men. Is this to manage a Russian splendidly? Do you really praise it? It would be far better to give them a blow in the face or drag them by their hair. In my childhood I once saw on the high road a King’s Messenger, in a uniform with revers, and a three-cornered hat with a feather, who never stopped beating the driver with his fist, while the driver madly lashed his sweating, galloping troika team. The King’s Messenger was, of course, a Russian born, but so blinded, so far torn from out the people, that he had no other way of dealing with a Russian than by his huge fist, instead of any human speech. Yet he had passed his whole life with post-boys and all sorts of Russian peasants. But the revers of his uniform, his feathered hat, his rank as an officer, his patent-leather Petersburg boots, were dearer to him,

psychologically and spiritually, not only than the Russian peasant, but perhaps than the whole of Russia, which he had galloped over far and wide, but in which he probably found nothing worthy of remark or of any other1 In official returns in Russia an individual is referred to as ‘a soul.’ Thus, a town of ten thousand inhabitants is in the Russian census, a town of ten thousand souls. It is significant of the English temperament that the corresponding use of the word is chiefly confined to those who go down to the sea in ships.

attention save a blow of his fist or a kick with his patent-leather boot. All Russia was to him represented only by his superiors; outside them everything was almost unworthy to exist. How eould sueh an one understand the people or their soul? Though he was a Russian, he was a ‘ European ‘ Russian, who had begun to be European, not for enlightenment, but for debauchery, as many, very many, began. Yes, debauchery of this kind has more than once been held with us to be the surest way of remaking Russians into Europeans. The son of sueh a King’s Messenger will perhaps be a professor, that is a European by letters patent.

So do not talk of those Gogol types understanding the essence of the people. A Pushkin, a Khomia-kov, a Samarin, an Aksakov were needed before one eould begin to speak of the real essenee of the people. (It had been discussed before them, indeed, but in a classical and theatrical way.) And when they began to speak of ‘ the national truth,’ every one looked upon them as epileptics and idiots, whose ideal was ‘ to eat radishes and write secret informations.’ Yes, informations! Their appearance and their opinions so much astonished everybody at first that the Liberals began even to suspect, ‘ Surely they want to lay informations against us?’ And tell me, please, how far modern Liberals have advanced beyond this silly conception of the Slavophiles.

But to get to business. You assert that Aleko ran to the Gipsies to get away from a Derzhimorda. Let us suppose that it is true. But the worst of all, M. Gradovsky, is that you yourself quite convincingly admit Aleko’s right to all his aversion. ‘ He could not help running away to the Gipsies, for a Derzhimorda was too disgusting.’ And I assert that Aleko and Onyegin were also Derzhimordas in their way, and in certain respects even worse. The only difference is that I do not in the least blame them for it, for I know perfectly well the tragedy of their fate, while you praise them for running away. ‘ Could such great and interesting men really live with those

monsters? ‘ You are profoundly mistaken. You conclude that Aleko and Onj^egin did not tear themselves away from the soil at all, and did not at all deny ‘ the national truth.’ Moreover, ‘ They were not proud at all’ — you go so far as to assert that. But pride is here the direct, logical and inevitable outcome of their abstraction and detachment from the soil. You cannot deny that they did not know the soil; they grew and were brought up like children in a convent school; they got to know Russia in their office in Petersburg; their relations with the people were those of a landlord with a serf. And suppose even that they had lived in the country with the peasants. My King’s Messenger had mixed with post-boys all his life long, and he found in them only stuff for his clenched fist. Aleko and Onyegin were haughty and impatient with Russia, like all who live in a separate coterie apart from the people, with all found, who live, that is, on the labour of the peasants and on European enlightenment whieh they also got for nothing. Indeed, the fact that all our intellectuals for almost the whole of two centuries of our history, as the result of a certain stage in their evolution, became merely idlers, explains their abstraction and detachment from their native soil. Aleko perished not because of Derzhimorda, but because of his inability to understand Derzhimorda and his genesis. For that he was too proud. Since he was unable to understand, he found it impossible to work in his native field. And he considered those who did believe in that possibility, as fools or as Derzhimordas also. And not only with Derzhimorda was our wanderer proud, but with Russia as well, since his final conclusion was that Russia contained only serfs and Derzhimordas. If there were any nobler element in her, then it was they, the Alekos and Onyegins, and no one besides. After that, pride comes of itself: living in abstraction they naturally began to be amazed by their own nobility and their superiority over the disgusting Derzhimordas, in whom they could understand nothing at all. Had they not been proud, they would have seen that they also were Derzhimordas, and seeing this they might perhaps have found in that very vision a way of reconciliation. Towards the people they felt not pride so much as utter loathing.

You will not believe all this. On the contrary, when you say that certain traits of the Alekos and Onyegins are uncomely, you presumptuously begin to reprove me for the narrowness of my outlook, because ‘ it is hardly reasonable to cure the symptoms and neglect the cause of the disease.’ You assert that when I say ‘ Humble thyself, proud man,’ I am accusing Aleko

for his personal qualities merely, and am leaving out of account the root of the matter, ‘ as if the whole point in question were the personal qualities of those who are proud and do not desire to humble themselves.” The question is not settled,’ you say, ‘ on what the wanderers did pride themselves; and the other question is also unanswered — before what should they humble themselves?’

This is all very presumptuous. I thought that I concluded in so many words that the ‘ wanderers ‘ are a product of the historical evolution of our society. Therefore I do not throw all the blame on them alone personally and on their personal qualities. You have read it; it is written and printed. Why then do you misrepresent me? You quote the passage ‘ Humble thyself,’ and write:

‘ In these words M. Dostoyevsky expressed the holy of holies among his convictions, that which is at once the strength and weakness of the author of The Brothers Karamazov. In these words is contained a great religious ideal, a mighty charge to personal morality, but there is not even an allusion to social ideals.’

After these words you instantly begin to criticise the ideal of ‘ personal perfection in the spirit of Christian love.’ I will deal with your opinion of ‘ personal perfection ‘ presently, but I will first turn inside out before your eyes all the lining of your soul which you apparently would like to hide. And that is: you are angry with me not merely because I accuse the ‘ wanderer,’ but because I do not acknowledge him as the ideal of personal perfection, as a healthy Russian, which he alone could, and ought to, be! You admit that there are uncomely traits in Aleko and Onyegin, but you are only dodging. In your inner belief, which for some reason you do not wish to reveal fully, the ‘ wanderers ‘ are normal and excellent, excellent by this alone that they ran away from the Dcrzhimordas. You look indig-

nant if any one ventures to detect even the slightest fault in them. You say immediately: ‘ It would be absurd to assert that they were destroyed by their pride, and they did not want to humble themselves before the national truth.’ And finally you hotly assert and insist that it was they who liberated the serfs. You write:

‘ I will say more: if in the soul of the best of these wanderers some great idea was preserved, then it was the care for the people; their most burning hatred was directed against serfdom, which lay heavy on the people. Grant that they loved the people and hated serfdom in their own way, grant that it

was a European way. But who else than they prepared our society for the abolition of serfdom? In what they could they too served “the native field,” first as the apostles of liberation and then as arbiters of peace.’

The point is that ‘ the wanderers ‘ hated serfdom in their own way, in ‘ the European way.’ The whole value of the argument is there. It is that they hated serfdom not for the sake of the Russian peasant, who worked for them, and fed them, and was therefore oppressed by them no less than others. If their social sorrow had indeed so strong a hold on them that they had to run away to the Gipsies or the barricades in Paris, what prevented, what hindered them from purely and simply liberating their own peasants and giving them their land, and thus removing the soeial sorrow, in so far at least as they were themselves responsible? But one heard too little of sueh liberations, and too much of social rhetoric. ‘ Their environment ruined them; moreover, why should they lose their eapital? ‘ But why should they not lose it if they had come to such a pitch-that from sorrow for the peasants they had to run away to the barricades? And that is the root of the matter. In the cosy corners of Paris a man still needs money, even though he stands sentry on a barricade, and the serfs had to forward their poll-taxes. Or ‘ the wanderers ‘ took a still simpler course: they mortgaged, sold or exchanged — isn’t it all the same? — their peasants, and when they had realised them, they went off to Paris to help in publishing French radical papers, and reviews for the salvation of all mankind, not merely of the Russian moujik. You assure me that they were devoured by sorrow for the serf? Not by sorrow for the serf, but by an abstract sorrow for slavery in mankind: it must not be, it is uncivilised. Liberie, Egalite, FraterniU. And as for the Russian peasant personally, perhaps sorrow for him did by no means inflict such terrible torments upon those great hearts. I know and remember many of the intimate opinions of very, very ‘ enlightened ‘ men of the good old days. * Undoubtedly slavery is a terrible evil,’ they used to whisper intimately among themselves, ‘ but if you take it all in all, is our people really — a people? Well, is it like the people of Paris in ‘03? It has grown accustomed to slavery; it has the face and figure of a slave. Of course a eat-o’-nine-tails is an abominable thing, speaking generally, but for a Russian, by Jove, the cat’s still a necessity.’ . . . ‘ You must flog a Russian peasant. A Russian peasant would pine away if he wasn’t flogged — that’s the kind of nation it is.’ That is what I have heard, I swear, in my time even from very enlightened men. That is ‘ the sober truth.’ Perhaps Onyegin did not flog

his domestics, though it’s really hard to say, but Aleko — well, I’m sure that Aleko used to give them a flogging, not from cruelty of heart, but almost out of compassion, almost for a good purpose. ‘ He must have it. He can’t live without a dose of flogging. He comes himself and asks:

Give me a flogging, sir; make a man of me. I ‘ve been spoiled!” Pray tell me what can be done with such a character. Well, I’ll satisf}^ him, and give him a flogging!’

I repeat, their feeling towards the peasant at times reached nausea. And what a mass of contemptuous anecdotes about the Russian peasant circulated among them, contemptuous and obscene anecdotes about his slavish soul, his ‘ idolatry,’ his priest, his wife — all these were retailed light-heartedly, sometimes by men whose private life was fit for a brothel — oh, of course, not always because of an evil soul, but sometimes really only from excessive ardour to adopt the latest European ideas (d la Lucretia Floriana, for instance) which were understood and assimilated in our own way, with true Russian impetuosity. Russians had a hand in anything! Russian sorrowing’ wanderers ‘ were at times great rogues, M. Gradovsky, and those same little anecdotes about the Russian peasant, and their contemptuous obiter dicta about him, nearly always assuaged the poignancy of their hearts’ social sorrow for serfdom, by giving to it an abstract and universal character. And with the abstract and universal kind of sorrow a man can easily live in comfort, feeding spiritually upon the contemplation of his own moral beauty and the elevation of his social thought, and physically —

well, still feeding, and feeding richly, on the rent from these same peasants!

Quite lately an old eye-witness who had observed those days told an anecdote in a review about a certain meeting of the foremost men of liberal and universal minds of that time with a peasant woman. Here we have gathered wanderers par excellence, wanderers by letters patent, as it were, who had proved their title in the matter of history. In the summer of 18-45 a crowd of guests arrived at an admirable country house near Moscow, where, in the words of an eye-witness, ‘ colossal dinners’ were given. The guests comprised the most humanitarian professors, the most amazing amateurs and connoisseurs of the fine arts and other things as well, the most renowned democrats, and finally famous political workers of world-wide importance, critics, writers, highly educated women. Suddenly

the whole company, probably after a champagne dinner, with fish-pies and pigeon's milk — there must have been some reason why these dinners were called ‘ colossal’ — set out for a walk in the fields. In a remote corner of the corn they meet a woman harvester. Heavy summer work in the fields during harvest-time: the peasants and their women-folk get up at four o'cloek to get in the corn and work until night. It's very hard to bend and reap for twelve solid hours; the sun is burning. When a harvest woman gets into the corn she generally cannot be seen. And now, here in the corn, our company finds a harvest woman — imagine it, in ‘ a primitive costume ‘ (in her shirt!). It is terrible. The universal feelings of humaneness arc offended; an indignant voice is instantly heard. ‘ Only the Russian woman among all women has no sense of shame.’ Of course, the inference is inevitable. ‘ Only before a Russian woman is one ashamed of nothing.’ A discussion began. Advocates of the Russian woman also appeared, but what advocates! and with what objections they had to contend. And all kinds of opinions and conclusions could be heard among the crowd of wanderers — landlords who slaked their thirst with champagne, swallowed oysters — and who paid? The woman with her labour! It is for you, you universal sufferers, that she is working; her labour paid for your feast. And because, while she was in the corn where she could not be seen, tormented by sun and sweat, she took off her skirt and worked in her shirt alone, she is shameless and has offended your sense of modesty—’ she is of all women most shameless ‘ — oh, you chaste gentlemen! What about your ‘ cosy corners in Paris ‘ and your pranks in ‘ the gay little city,’ and those pleasant little cancans at the Bal Mabile, only to tell of which makes a Russian leap for joy, and that fascinating little chanson,

Ma commere, quand je danse Comment va mon cotillon?

with the charming upward flick of the skirt, and the twitch of the rump — this does not in the least offend our chaste Russian gentlemen; on the contrary it delights them! ‘ By Jove, it's so graceful, the cancan, the fascinating twitch — it's the most exquisite article de Paris of its kind: but there you have a hag, a Russian hag, a block, a log!’ And now it's not even the conviction of the foulness of our peasant and our people any more, but it is a personal feeling of aversion to the peasant — oh, of course, an involuntary, almost unconscious aversion, which they themselves hardly even notice. But I confess I can by no means agree with your very fundamental proposition, M. Gradovsky: ‘ Who else but they prepared our

society for the abolition of serfdom? ‘ Perhaps they served the cause only with their abstract trivialities, while they shed their social sorrow according to all the rules. Oh, naturally, it made part of the general economy and had its use. But the liberation of the peasants was furthered, and those who laboured for that liberation were helped, rather by men who followed Samarin’s trend of ideas than by your wanderers. Men of the type, like Samarin,1 a type perfectly unlike the wanderers, appeared for the great work of that time: they were by no means few, M. Gradovsky, but of them, of course, you say not a single word. The wanderers, according to all the evidence, were very soon bored by the work of emancipation, and commenced to turn up their noses again. They would not have been wanderers had they acted otherwise. Upon the receipt of the compensation — the Government paid the landlords when it freed the serfs — they began to sell the rest of their lands and forests to merchants and speculators to be cut down and destroyed; they emigrated, and introduced absenteeism. ... Of course, you won’t agree with my opinion, Herr Professor, but what can I do? I cannot possibly agree to accept the picture of your darling, the superior and liberal-minded Russian, as the ideal of the real and normal Russian, as he was, is now, and ever shall be. Little good 1 Samavin vras a famous Slavophile leader.

work have these men done during the last decades in the national field. And there is more truth in my statement than in your dithyrambs in honour of these gentlemen of the good old times.

§3

two. halvesNow I come to your views on ‘ personal perfection in the spirit of Christian love ‘ and to what you call its insufficiency in comparison with ‘ social ideals,’ and above all in comparison with ‘ political institutions.’ You yourself begin with the assertion that this is the most important point of disagreement between us. You write:

‘ Now we have reached the most important point in our disagreement with M. Dostoyevsky. While he demands humiliation before the national truth and the national ideals, he assumes that that truth and those ideals are something ready prepared, unshakable and eternal. We will allow ourselves to assure him of the contrary. The social ideals of our people are still in process of formation and development. The people has still much work to do upon itself, that it may be worthy of the name of a great people.’

I have already partly replied to you concerning ‘ the truth’ and national ideals at the beginning of this article, in the first section. You find that truth and those ideals quite insufficient for the development of Russia’s political ideals, as though you were to have said that religion is one thing and political work another. With your scientific knife you cut a whole, living organism into two separate halves and assert that these halves must be quite independent of each other. Let us look more closely, let us examine each of these two halves separately, and perhaps we shall come to some conclusion. Let us first investigate the half concerning ‘ personal perfection in the spirit of Christian love.’ You write:

‘ M. Dostoyevsky calls to men to work upon themselves and to humble themselves. Personal self-perfeetion in the spirit of Christian love is, of course, the first premiss of any activity, great or small! But it does not follow that men who are personally perfected in the Christian sense will infallibly form a perfect society. I shall allow myself to put forward an instance.

4 Paul the Apostle instructs slaves and masters concerning their mutual relations. Slaves and masters alike could hearken, and usually did hearken to the word of the apostle. Personally they were good Christians; but slavery was not sanctified thereby. It remained an immoral institution. In the same way, M. Dostoyevsky, like all of us, has known splendid Christians, landlords and peasants alike. But serfdom remained an abomination in the sight of God, and the Tsar Liberator appeared as the

spokesman of the demands not merely of personal but of social morality as well, of whieh social morality there was no right conception in the olden time, although perhaps there were then as many good people as there are now.

‘ Personal and social morality are not one and the same. Whence it follows that no social perfection can be attained solely through the improvement of the personal qualities of those who form the society.

Let us take another example. Suppose that, beginning from the year 1800, a whole series of preachers of Christian love and humility had begun to improve the morality of the Korobochkas and the Sobakieviches. Can it be supposed that they would have achieved the abolition of serfdom, so that the word of authority would not have been necessary for the removal of that phenomenon? On the contrary, a Korobochka would have begun to demonstrate that she was a true Christian and a genuine “mother” of her peasants, and she would have remained in this conviction in spite of all the arguments of the preachers.

‘ The improvement of the people in the social sense cannot be effected by work “upon oneself” alone and by “ humbling oneself.” To work upon oneself and to subdue one’s own passions — this can be done even in the wilderness or upon a desert island. But as social beings, people develop and improve by work beside one another, for one another and with one another. That is why the social perfection of a people very greatly depends upon the degree of perfection of their political institutions, which educate in man the civic, if not the Christian virtues. . . .’

You see how much of you I have copied out! It is all very high and mighty, and ‘ personal perfection in the spirit of Christian love ‘ gets much the worst of it. It appears that in civic affairs it is good for nothing, or almost so. You have a strange way of understanding Christianity. Only imagine that Korobochka and Sobakievich should become real Christians, already perfect — you yourself speak of perfection — can they be persuaded to renounce serfdom? That is the artful question whieh you ask, and, of course, reply: ‘ No, it’s quite impossible to persuade Koroboehka, even if she were to become a perfect Christian.’ To this I will reply immediately, that if only Koroboehka could become, and became, a genuine, perfect Christian, then serfdom would no longer exist on her estate at all, so that there would be no need to trouble, notwithstanding that the title deeds and conveyances remained in her strong-box as before. But

Koroboehka was a Christian before and was born a Christian! So that when you speak of the new preachers of Christianity you understand by the word something whieh is in essence the same as the old Christianity, but in a strengthened, perfect form, as it were having reached its ideal? Well, how could there be slaves and masters then?

But one must have some small understanding of Christianity! What would it matter to Korobochka, already a perfect Christian, whether her peasants were serfs or not? She is ‘ a mother ‘ to them, a genuine mother, and the ‘ mother’ would instantly abolish the ‘ lady ‘ that was. That would come of itself. The lady and the slave that were would dissolve away like mist before the sun, and quite new people would appear, in quite new relations with one another, relations that had never been heard of before. And an unheard-of thing would be accomplished. Everywhere would appear perfect Christians, who, when they were scattered individuals, were so few that no one was sensible of their presence. You made that fantastic supposition yourself, M. Gradovsky; you yourself opened the door upon that wonderful fantasy, and since you opened the door, then you must take the consequences. I assure you, M. Gradovsky, that Korobochka’s peasants would themselves refuse to leave her, for the simple reason that every man seeks what is better for himself. Would it be better for them among your institutions than with the mother-lady who loved them? I also venture to assure you that if slavery existed in the clays of Paul the Apostle, it was only because the churches which had sprung up in those days were as yet imperfect — which we can also see from the epistles of the Apostle. And those members of the churches who had then attained to personal perfection, no longer had nor could have slaves because the slaves turned brothers, and a brother who is a true brother cannot have his brother as a slave. According to you, it follows somehow that the preaching of Christianity was impotent.

At all events, you write that slavery was not sanctified by the Apostle’s preaching. But other learned men, particularly European historians as a whole, have rebuked Christianity because, as they say, it sanctifies slavery. Which means that they fail to understand the essence of the matter. Is it possible even to imagine that Mary of Egypt could have serfs and yet not want to set them free! What absurdity! In Christianity, in true Christianity, there are and there will ever be, masters and servants, but a slave can never be even conceived. I speak of a true and perfect Christianity. Servants are

not slaves. The pupil Timothy served Paul when they journeyed together; but read Paul's epistle to Timothy. Is it written to a slave, to a servant even? He is in truth his ‘ child Timothy,’

his beloved son. These, these are indeed the relations that will be between master and servant, if master and servant became perfect Christians! Servants and masters there will be, but masters will be no longer lords nor servants slaves. Imagine that there will be a Kepler, a Kant, and a Shakespeare in the society of the future. They are working at a great work for all men, and all men acknowledge it and respect them. But Shakespeare has no time to tear himself away from his work to tidy his room, to clean up everything. Be sure another citizen will infallibly come to wait upon him, of his own desire. He will come of his own free will and tidy up Shakespeare's room. Will he be thereby degraded? Will he be a slave? By no means. He knows that Shakespeare is infinitely more useful than himself. ‘ Honour and glory to thee,’ he will say, ‘ and I am glad to serve thee. Thereby I wish to do though it be only a little service to the common good, for thus I will save thy time for thy great work, but I am not a slave. Indeed, by confessing that thou, Shakespeare, are higher than myself by thy genius, and coming to serve thee, by this my admission I have, proved that in the moral dignity I am not in the least below thee, and as a man, I am thy equal.’ But he will not even say that then, for the simple reason that such questions then will not arise; they will not be even thinkable. For verily all men will be new men, the children of Christ, and the beast of old will be conquered. You will, of course, say that this is another dream. But it was not I who was the first to dream, but you: it was you who imagined a Korobochka, already a perfect Christian, holding ‘ children serfs ‘ whom she will not set free. This a worse dream than mine.

Here the clever people will laugh and say: ‘ After that, it's all very well to worry about self-perfection in the spirit of Christian love, when there is no real Christianity at all on the earth, or so little of it that it is hard to see, because otherwise everything would be right in an instant, all slavery would be abolished, every Korobochka would be regenerated into a shining genius, and one thing alone would be left for all to do — to sing a hymn to God.’ Yes, of course, you sneering gentlemen, real Christians are still terribly few (though they do exist). But how do you know how many indeed are wanted that the ideal of Christianity should not perish from the people, and the people's great hope perish with it? Apply the thought to secular

conceptions. How many real citizens are wanted that civic virtue should not perish from society? And this you will not answer. Here is a strange political economy, one of a quite different kind and wholly unknown to you, even to you, M. Gradovsky, wholly unknown. It will be said again: ‘ If there are so few confessors of the great idea, what is the good of it? And how do you know to what advantage it will lead in the end? Hitherto it was evidently necessary that the great idea should not perish. It is a different matter now when a new thing is descending everywhere upon the world and every man should be prepared for it. . . .

And here the point is not one of advantage at all, but of truth. If I believe that the truth is here, here exactly in what I believe, then what do I care if even the whole world should refuse my truth,

mock at me and go its way? In this indeed is the strength of a great moral idea, that it unites people into the strongest union, that it is not measured by immediate advantage, but it guides the future of men towards eternal aims and absolute joy. Wherewith will you unite men for the attainment of your civic aims if you have no foundation of a primary, great moral idea? Moral ideas are all of one kind: all of them are based upon the idea of absolute personal self-perfection in the future, in the ideal, since self-perfection bears in it all things, all aspirations, all yearnings, and from it therefore spring all our civic ideals also. Try to unite people into a civic society with the one sole aim of ‘ saving their little lives.’ You will achieve nothing but the moral formula: Chacun your soi et Dieu four tous. By that formula no civic institution will live long, M. Gradovsky.

But I will go further; I intend to surprise you. Know, learned professor, that social and civic ideals, as such, in so far as they are not organically connected with moral ideals, but exist by themselves like a separate half cut off from the whole by your learned knife; in so far, finally, as they may be taken from the outside and successfully transplanted to any other place, in so far as they are a separate ‘ institution ‘ — sueh ideals, I say, neither have nor have had nor ever could have any existence at all! For what is a social ideal and how shall we understand the word? Surely its essence lies in men’s aspiration to find a formula of political organisation for themselves, a possible organisation whieh shall be faultless and satisfactory to all — is it not so?

But people do not know the formula. Though they have been searching for it through the six thousand years of history, they cannot find it. The ant

knows the formula of the ant-hill, the bee of the hive — though they do not know it after the manner of human knowledge, they know it in their own way and desire nothing beyond — bnt man does not know his formula. If this be so, whence could the ideal of civic organisation appear in human society? Examine the question historically and you will immediately see whence it comes. You will see that is nothing else than the product of the moral self-perfection of the individual units. Thence it takes its rise, and it has been so from time immemorial and it will be so for ever and ever. In the origin of any people or any nation, the moral idea has always preceded the birth of the nation, because it was the moral idea which created the nation. This moral idea always issued forth from mystical ideas, from the conviction that man is eternal, that he is more than an earth-born animal, that he is united to other worlds and to eternity. Those convictions have always and everywhere been formulated into a religion, into a confession of a new idea, and always so soon as a new religion began, a new nationality was also created immediately. Consider the Jews and the Moslems. The Jewish nationality was formed only after the law of Moses, though it began with the law of Abraham, and the Moslem nationalities appeared only after the Koran. In order to preserve the spiritual treasures they had received men instantly began to draw towards each other, and only then, jealously and avidly, working ‘ beside one another, for one another, and with one another, as you so eloquently express it, only then did men begin to seek how they should organise themselves so as to preserve without loss the treasures they had received, how they should find a civic formula of common life that would really help them to exhibit in its full glory to the whole world the moral treasure whieh they had reeeived.

And observe that so soon as the spiritual ideal — after times and centuries had passed — had begun to be shaken and weakened in a particular nationality, the nationality itself also began to deeline, and at the same time her civic organisation began to fall and all the civic ideals which had formed in her began to be obscured. According to the mould in which a nation’s religion was being cast, the social forms of the people were also engendered and formulated. Therefore civic ideals are always directly and organically connected with moral ideas, and generally the former are created by the latter alone. They never appear of themselves, for when they appear they have one aim alone, the satisfaction of the moral aspirations of the particular people to the exact degree to which those moral aspirations

are being formed. Therefore ‘ self-perfection in the spirit of religion ‘ in the life of nations is the foundation of everything, sinee self-perfection is the confession of the religion which they have received, and ‘ civic ideals ‘ never appear nor can they be engendered without the aspiration to self-perfection. You will perhaps reply that you yourself said that ‘ personal self-perfection is the beginning of everything ‘ and that you severed nothing at all with your knife. But this is the very thing that you severed; you cut the living organism into two halves. Self-

perfection is not only ‘ the beginning of everything,’ it is the continuation and the issue as well. It, and it alone, includes, creates and preserves the organism of nationality. For its sake does the civic formula of a nation live, since it was created only in order to preserve it as the treasure primarily received. But when a nationality begins to lose the desire within itself for a common self-perfection of its individuals in the spirit which gave it birth, then all the ‘ civic institutions’ gradually perish, because there is nothing left to be preserved. Thus it is quite impossible to say what you say in the following phrase:

‘ That is why the social perfection of a people very greatly depends upon the degree of perfection of their political institutions, which educate in man the civic, if not the Christian virtues.’

‘ The civic, if not the Christian virtues ‘! Can you not see here the learned knife which divides the indivisible, which cuts the whole and living organism into two separate, dead halves, the moral and the civic? You will say that the most lofty moral idea may be contained in ‘ political institutions ‘ and the title of ‘ citizen,’ that in mature and developed nations the ‘ civic idea’ always takes the place of the original religious idea, which degenerates into the former, and to which the civic idea succeeds by right. Yes, there are many who assert this thing; but we have not yet seen this dream in realisation. When the moral and religious idea of a nationality is spent, there is always revealed a panic and cowardly desire for a union, whose sole purpose is ‘ to save men’s bellies ‘ — there are no other purposes left for a civic union. At the present moment the French bourgeoisie is actually uniting itself with this purpose 4 of saving their bellies ‘ from the fourth estate which is already battering at its doors. But ‘ the saving of bellies ‘ is the last and most impotent idea of all those which unite mankind. This is already the beginning of the end, the omen of annihilation. They are uniting themselves and keeping a sharp eye open for

the first moment of danger when they will scatter like lightning. And what can save ‘ the institution ‘ as such, taken by itself? If these are brothers, there will be brotherhood. If there are no brothers, you will not achieve brotherhood by any ‘ institution.’ What is the sense of erecting an ‘ institution ‘ and carving upon it Liberie, Egalite, Fraternite”? You will get no good from an ‘ institution ‘ and you will be driven, necessarily and infallibly you will be driven, to add to the three consiiiuant words the fourth also: ou la mort. Fratemiie ou la mori: and brother will begin to chop off the head of brother in order to attain brotherhood by means of a 4 civic institution.’ This is only an example, but it is a good one.

You, M. Gradovsky, like Aleko, look for salvation in things and in external phenomena. Grant that we have fools and rogues in Russia. We have only to transplant some institution from Europe and — according to you—’ everything will be saved.’ The mechanical transportation of European forms into Russia (which will be shattered in Europe tomorrow), which are foreign to our people and contrary to the popular will, is we know well the all-important word of Russian Europeanism. And by the way, M. Gradovsky, when you censure our lack of organisation, blaming Russia and pointing to Europe with admiration, you say:

‘ And in the meanwhile we cannot get rid of the inconsistencies and contradictions of which Europe got rid long ago.’

Has Europe got rid of them? Where did you learn this? She is on the eve of ruin, your Europe, of a general, universal and terrible catastrophe. The ant-hill whieh has long been in course of formation within her, without a Church and without Christ (for the Church, having muddied her ideal, was long ago embodied in the State), with a moral principle shattered to its foundations, having lost all that it had of universal and of absolute, — that ant-hill, 1 say, is wholly undermined. The fourth estate is coming; it knocks and batters at the door, and if the door be not opened, it will be broken down. The fourth estate does not want the ideals of old; it denounces all that has been up till now. It will not make little compromises, little concessions; you will not save the building by little supports. Something will come which none imagine. All these parliamentarisms, all the social theories nowadays professed, banks, science, Jews — all will be annihilated in a single instant and leave no trace, exeept perhaps the Jews, who will even then devise a method of action by whieh the work of destruction may be profitable to them. All these things are near, ‘ at the gate.’ You laugh?

Blessed are they that laugh. God grant you years that you may yourself behold it. You will be surprised in that day. You will laugh and say: ‘ Plow well you love Europe if you prophesy this of her!’ Am I glad? I have only the feeling that the reckoning is made. The final account, the payment of the bill, may come to pass much sooner than the quickest imagination can conceive. The symptoms are terrible. Alone, the inveterately unnatural political situation of the powers of Europe may serve for a beginning to anything! How eould they be natural, if their formation was unnatural and the abnormality has accumulated for centuries? One small portion of mankind shall not possess the rest as a slave; yet it was solely for this purpose that all the civic institutions of Europe (long since un-Christian, which are now perfectly pagan) have hitherto been formed. This unnaturalness and these ‘ insoluble ‘ political questions (which are, by the way, familiar to everybody) must infallibly lead to one huge, final, disintegrating, political war, in whieh all Powers will have a share, and which will break out in our century, perhaps even in the coming decade. And do you think that society now can endure a long political war? The capitalists are cowardly and timorous, the Jews also; all the factories and banks will be closed as soon as the war begins to be protracted or threatens to be a long one, and millions of hungry mouths, of miserable proletarians, will be thrown into the street. Do you rely upon the wisdom of statesmen and upon their refusal to undertake a war? When was it possible to place any reliance upon that wisdom? Do you put your trust in Parliaments, and believe that they will foresee the results and refuse the money for the war? But when have Parliaments foreseen results and refused money to the slightest insistence of a man in power? But the proletarian is in the street. Do you think he will wait and starve in patience as he used? After he has tasted political socialism, after the International, after the Socialist Congresses and the Paris Commune? No, it will not now be as it used to be. They will hurl themselves upon Europe and all the old things will crumble for ever. The waves will be broken by our shore alone, since only then will it be palpably and evidently revealed how greatly different is our national organism from the European. Then, even you, messieurs les doctrinaires, will perhaps bethink yourselves and begin to search in our people for ‘ national principles ‘ at which you only laugli now.

And now, gentlemen, now you point us to Europe and appeal to us to transplant those very institutions which will crumble there to-morrow, as

absurdities which have had their day and in which a great many clever people even there no longer believe, which maintain themselves and exist only by the force of inertia. Who but an abstract doctrinaire could seriously take the comedy of the union of the bourgeoisie, which we see in Europe, as the normal formula of the union of men upon the earth? We are told that they got rid of contradictions long ago — and this after twenty constitutions in less than a century, and after well-nigh a dozen revolutions? Oh, perhaps, it will only be then that we shall be freed for a while from Europe, and ourselves engage, without European tutelage, in the pursuit of our own social ideals which inevitably spring from Christ and personal self-perfection, M. Gradovsky.

You will ask: ‘ What social and political ideals of our own can we have to save Europe? ‘ Why, social ideals better than the European, stronger than the European, stronger than yours and even — oh, horror — more liberal than yours! Yes, more liberal because they spring directly from the organism of our people and are not a servile and bloodless im-

portation from the West. I cannot of course say-much upon this subject, if only because this paper is already too long. But in this connection, remember what was the ancient Christian Church and what it aspires to be. It began immediately after the death of Christ, with a handful of people, and instantly, almost in the very first days after the death of Christ, it attempted to discover its ‘ civic formula,’ which was wholly based upon the moral expectation of satisfying the spirit by the principles of personal self-perfection. Then arose the Christian communities — Churches; then speedily began to be created a new and hitherto unheard-of nationality, a nationality of universal brotherhood and humanity, in the shape of the catholic oecumenical Church. But the Church was persecuted, and the ideal grew beneath the earth, and above it, on the face of the earth, an immense building was also being formed, a huge ant-hill, the old Roman empire, which was also the ideal and the outcome of the moral aspirations of the whole ancient world. But the ant-hill did not fortify itself; it was undermined by the Church. Then occurred the collision of the two most opposite ideas that could exist in the world. The Man-God met the God-Man, the Apollo Belvedere met the Christ. A compromise arose: the Empire accepted Christianity, and the Church accepted Roman law and the Roman state. A small part of the Church went into the desert and began to continue its former work. Christian communities once more appeared, then

monasteries; and there were only attempts, attempts that have lasted even unto our day. The large remaining part of the Church was subsequently divided, it is well known, into two halves. In the Western half the State ultimately completely overcame the Church. The Church was destroyed and finally transformed into the State. The Papacy appeared — the continuation of the ancient Roman Empire in a new incarnation. In the Eastern half the State was subdued and destroyed by the sword of Mahomet, and there remained Christ alone, already separated from the Church. And the State, which had accepted and exalted Christ anew, suffered such terrible and unending sufferings at the hands of its enemies, from the Tartar kingdoms, from disorganisation, from serfdom, from Europe and Europeanism, and endures so much until this day, that a real social formula in the sense of the spirit of love and Christian self-perfection has not yet been evolved in it. You, M. Gradovsky, mercilessly reproach Russia with her disorganisation. But who was it that hindered her from organising herself well during the whole of the last two centuries and especially during the last fifty years? Just such people as yourself, M. Gradovsky, Russian Europeans who were always with us for the two centuries and now have settled upon us particularly. Who is the enemy of Russia’s organic and independent development upon her own national principles? Who sneers and will not admit even the existence of those principles and does not even want to see them? Who wanted to remake our people, by fantastically ‘ raising them up to himself’ — simply in order to manufacture little Europeans, like themselves, by occasionally breaking off from the mass of the people a single individual and corrupting him into a European, if only by virtue of the revcrs of his uniform? By that I do not mean that a European is corrupt; I say only that to remake a Russian into a European in the way in which the Liberals do, is often real corruption. Yet in this lies the whole ideal of their programme of activity, in just paring off single individuals from the general mass. What absurdity! Did they really want to tear off and remake in exactly this way all the eighty millions of our people? Do you seriously believe that all our people, as a whole, in its great mass, will consent to become such an impersonality as these gentlemen, these Russian Europeans?

§ 4

TO ONE — HUMBLE THYSELF, AND TO ANOTHER — BE PROUD. A STORM IN A TEA-CUP

Hitherto I have only been debating with you, M. Gradovsky; but now I wish to accuse you for your deliberate distortion of my thought, of the chief point of my ‘ Speech.’ You write:

‘ There is still too much untruth, the residue of long years of slavery, in our people, for it to demand worship for itself, and to pretend, moreover, to the task of converting all Europe to the true path, as M. Dostoyevsky predicts. . . .

‘ A strange phenomenon! The man who punishes pride in the persons of individual wanderers invites a whole people to be proud, because he sees in them a universal apostle. To the one he says, “Humble thyself! “; to the other he says,” Exalt thyself! “‘

And further:

‘ Not yet having become a nation, suddenly to dream of a universal role! Is it not too early? M. Dostoyevsky is proud of the fact that we have served Europe for two hundred years. We must confess that the thought of this “ service “ excites no feelings of pleasure in us. Can the time of the Congress of Vienna and the age of Congresses in general be an object of pride to us? Is it by chance the time when we, serving Metternich, suppressed the national movement in Italy and Germany and looked askance even at our co-religionists, the Greeks? What undying hatred we have gained in Europe for that very “ service “!’

First, I will dwell for a moment on this last, almost innocent, little misrepresentation. Did I, when I said that k we had served Europe during the last two hundred years perhaps even more than we served ourselves,’ — did I praise the manner of our service? I only wanted to point to the fact of our service, and the fact is true. But the fact of our service and the manner of our service are two utterly different things. We may have made many political blunders, as the Europeans make them every day, but it was not our blunders which I praised. I only pointed to the fact of our almost always

disinterested service. Do you really not understand that these are two different things?

‘ M. Dostoyevsky is proud because we served Europe,’ you say. I was not priding myself at all when I said that. I was only pointing out a characteristic of our national spirit, a very significant characteristic. Does it mean that one is proud if he should find an admirable and healthy characteristic in the national spirit? And why do you talk of Metternich and the Congresses? Are you going to give, me instruction in history? When you were still a student I spoke of our service to Metternich in language much stronger than yours, and for my words concerning our ill-omened service to Metternich (among other words, of course) — I paid, as you know now, thirty years ago. Why did you distort my words? To show everybody: ‘ See what a Liberal I am, and now listen to the poet, the enthusiastic lover of the people, and hear what reaction he is babbling, priding himself on our service to Metternich!’ That is conceit, M. Gradovsky.

This is of course a trifle, but what follows is no trifle at all.

So, to say to the people, ‘ Exalt thy spirit! ‘ is the same as to say ‘ Be proud!’; is the same as inciting to pride, as teaching pride. Imagine, M. Gradovsky, that you should say to your own children: ‘ My children, exalt your spirit, be noble!’ — does it indeed mean that you teach them pride, or that you, in teaching them, are proud? And what did I say? I spoke of the hope of ‘ at the last becoming brothers of all men,’ begging that my hearers should underline the words ‘ at the last.’ Is the bright hope that some day brotherhood will be realised in our suffering world, and that we may be allowed to become brothers of all men — is that hope pride, and an incitement to pride? But I said directly, in so many words, at the conclusion of my ‘ Speech’:

‘ Do I speak of economic glory, of the glory of the sword or of science? I speak only of the brotherhood of man; I say that to this universal omni-human union the heart of Russia, perhaps more than all other nations, is predestined.’

These were my words. And do they contain an incitement to pride? Immediately after the words I have quoted from my ‘ Speech ‘ I added:

‘ Let our eountry be poor, but this poor land “ Christ traversed with blessing in the guise of a serf.” Why then should we not contain his final word?’

Does this word of Christ imply an incitement to pride; and is the hope of containing this word, pride? You write indignantly: ‘ It is too early for us to demand worship for ourselves.’ But where, pray, is the demand for worship? Is it the desire for universal service, the desire to beeome servants and brothers of all men and to serve them with love — does that mean to demand worship from all? If there be here any demand for worship, then the sacred, disinterested desire for universal service instantly becomes an absurdity. One does not bow down to servants, and a brother does not want his brother to kneel before him.

Imagine to yourself, M. Gradovsky, that you have done or are about to do a good deed, and on your way in the elation of your good feelings you think to yourself: ‘ How glad the poor fellow will be at the unexpected help I am bringing him; how his spirits will be raised, how he will revive, how he ‘11 tell of his good fortune to his friends and his children, how he ‘11 weep with them. . . .’ As you think all this to yourself, you will naturally have a feeling of elation, and sometimes tears will even eome to your eyes — have you really never experienced that? — and then eomes a clever voiee beside you, whispering into your ear: ‘ You are being proud of yourself, thinking all this to yourself.

You are weeping tears of pride.’ But now, the mere hope that we Russians may have some small significance for mankind, and that we may ultimately be worthy of doing it brotherly service — this mere hope roused enthusiasm, and enthusiastic tears, in the thousands who listened to me. I do not recall this for boasting’s sake, or for pride; I only wish to mark the seriousness of the moment. There was given only the bright hope that we too may be something for mankind if only as brothers to other men, and that passionate hint alone sufficed to unite all in one thought and one feeling. Strangers embraced and vowed to be better men. Two old men came up to me and said, ‘ For twenty years we were enemies and did each other wrong. Your words have reconciled us.’ A certain newspaper made haste to remark that all this enthusiasm meant nothing. The mood was already there, and it was idle for the orators to speak and make perorations. Whatever they said the enthusiasm would be the same, for the benign mood was prevalent in Moscow. The journalist should himself have come to Moscow and have made a speech. Would men rush to hear him, as they rushed to me, or not? Why was it that when speeches were made three days before, great ovations were given to the speakers, but to none of them happened what happened to

me? That was the only moment in the Pushkin celebrations, and it was not repeated. God is my witness that I tell this not to my own praise. But the moment was too serious to be passed by in silence. Its seriousness consisted exactly in that new elements in society were brightly and clearly revealed; there appeared new men who long for heroic action, for the consolation of an idea, for a labour of devotion. It meant that society is no longer ready to be satisfied with our liberal sniggering at Russia. It meant that the doctrine of Russia's perpetual impotence already stinks in the nostrils. Only a hope, only a hint, and men's hearts were kindled by the sacred longing for an omni-human task, for a service and an action of universal brotherhood. Were those tears the tears of pride? Was that an incitement to pride? Ah, you!

You see, M. Gradovsky, the seriousness of the moment suddenly terrified a great many people in our liberal tea-cup, the more so, seeing it was so unexpected. ‘ What! Hitherto wc sniggered at and bespattered everything — so pleasantly and profitably — and then comes this speech. . . . But it's a riot. . . . Call the police! ‘ Several frightened gentlemen sprang up: ‘ What will happen to us now? We used to write, too . . . what are we to do now? We must smother all this as quickly as we can, so that not a trace shall be left, and we must instantly proclaim to the four corners of Russia that it was only due to a benign mood that happened to be prevalent in hospitable Moscow, a pleasant little moment after a series of dinners, no more than that — and as for the riot, well, we ‘11 have the police in!’

And they have begun. They say I am a coward and a poet, and a mere nobody. My speech is quite valueless. In a word, in the heat of their passion they have even acted imprudently. The public might not believe them. The thing ought to be done skilfully. It should be taken in colder blood.

Something in my ‘ Speech’ ought even to be praised. ‘ Still,’ they should say,’ there is a sequence of ideas in his “ Speech,”’ and then little by little they should spit on it all, and smother it to the general satisfaction. In brief, they have not been so very clever. There was a blank space: it had to be filled quickly, and then and there appeared a solid, serious critic who combines a recklessness in attack with the proper blend of cmnme il faut. You were that critic, M. Gradovsky. You wrote: every one read: and all was quiet. You have at least served a common and an admirable cause. You were reprinted everywhere: ‘ The poet's speech will not bear serious criticism. Poets are poets, but wise men are on their guard and at the appointed time

will always pour cold water on the dreamer.’ At the very end of your article you ask me to forgive such expressions as I may consider hard in your article. As I finish my article, I will not offer you an apology for my sharp expressions, M. Gradovsky, if there are any in my article. I am not speaking personally to A. D. Gradovsky, but to the publicist A. Gradovsky. Personally I have not the least reason for not respecting you. But if I do not respect your opinions, and insist upon it, how can I smooth matters by apologising? It gave me pain to see that a very serious and critical moment in the life of our society was misrepresented and wrongly explained. It gave me pain to see the idea which I serve dragged about the street. It was you who dragged it there.

I know, and every one will tell me, that it was not worth while, that it was ridiculous to write this long answer to your article, which was rather short com-

pared with mine. But I repeat, your article served only as a pretext: I wished to say some things generally. I am going to begin The Journal of an Author again next year.1 Let the present number serve as a profession of faith for the future, a specimen copy, so to say.

It may perhaps still be said that by my answer I have destroyed the whole sense of the ‘ Speech ‘ whieh I delivered in Moscow, wherein I myself called upon both Russian parties to be united and reconciled, and admitted the justification of them both. No, no, no! The sense of my ‘ Speech ‘ is not destroyed; on the contrary, it is made still stronger, since in my answer to you I point out that both parties, estranged one from the other, in hostility one to the other, have put themselves and their activity into an abnormal situation, whereas in mutual union and agreement, they would perhaps exalt everything, save everything, awaken endless powers and summon Russia to a new, healthy, and mighty life, hitherto unseen.

1 At the beginning of that year Dostoyevsky died.

LETTERS OF FYODOR MICHAILOVITCH DOSTOYEVSKY TO HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS



Translated by Ethel Colburn Mayne

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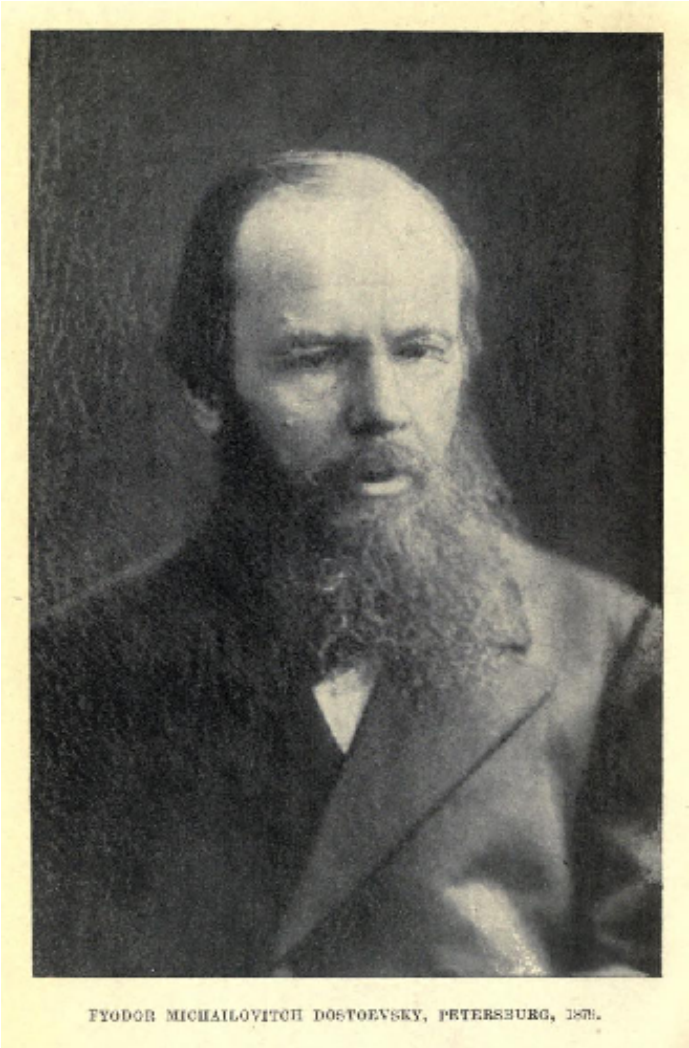
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Recollections of Dostoevsky by his Friends

FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF D. V. GRIGOROVITCH
FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF A. P. MILYUKOV
FROM THE MEMORANDA OF P. K. MARTYANOV, AT THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD
FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF BARON ALEXANDER VRANGEL
FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF SOPHIE KOVALEVSKY 1866

Dostoevsky in the Judgment of his Contemporaries

I. R. P. Pobyedonoszev to I. S. Aksakov
II. I. S. Aksakov to R. P. Pobyedonoszev
III. TURGENEV ON DOSTOEVSKY
IV. LEO TOLSTOY ON DOSTOEVSKY



FYODOR MICHAILOVITCH DOSTOEVSKY, PETERSBURG, 1878.

The original frontispiece

Letters of Fyodor Michailovitch Dostoevsky to his Family and Friends

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

IN the German translator's (Herr Alexander Eliasberg (R. Piper and Go., Munich).) preface to this volume it is pointed out that a complete collection of Dostoevsky's letters does not yet exist. "The first volume of the first collected edition of Dostoevsky's works (St. Petersburg, 1873), contains only a selection, which is usually lacking in the later editions." Herr Eliasberg goes on to tell us that "a series of letters which were to have been included in the present work was at the last moment withdrawn by the novelist's widow; the corrected proofs of these are to be preserved in a sealed portfolio at the Dostoevsky Museum in Moscow."

The present volume derives chiefly from the book by Tchechichin: "Dostoevsky in the Reminiscences of his Contemporaries, and in his Letters and Memoranda" (Moscow, 1912). The letters here numbered XXXVIII., XLIV., L., LVI., and LVIII. are lacking in Tchechichin's book, and were taken from a Russian monthly journal, *Rousskaya Starina.* Those numbered XXXIX., XLVI., XLVIIL, and LIX., which are incompletely given by Tchechichin, are here given in full.

From Tchechichin's work were also taken a number of notes, as well as the reminiscences of Dostoevsky by his contemporaries, which here form an Appendix.

The present text, therefore, while it contains much that is relatively "inedited," yet cannot pretend to full completeness. On comparing it with a French translation of some of the letters, issued by the Société du Mercure de France in 1908, it is seen to be a good deal the more judiciously edited of the two — the German translator has pared away many repetitions, much irrelevant and uninteresting matter, while he has used material of the highest biographical value which the French editor either unaccountably omitted, or, it may be, had not at disposal. Of such are the letters enumerated above; and, more than all, the peculiarly interesting passage in Letter XXXIV., which relates Dostoevsky's historic quarrel with Turgenev.

A word about the punctuation. It has been, so far as was thought at all feasible, left as Dostoevsky offered it. Like Byron, he "did not know a comma; at least, where to put one", — or rather, in Dostoevsky's case, where *not* to put one, for his lavish use of the less important and lucid sign is very remarkable. Here and there, this predilection has been departed from

by me, but only when it too deeply obscured the sense; elsewhere, since even punctuation has its value for the student of character, Dostoevsky's "system" is retained in all its chaotic originality.

E.C.M.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF DOSTOEVSKY'S LIFE

AFTER V. TCHECHICHIN

1821. "In the parish of St. Peter and Paul at Moscow was born on October 30 of the year 1821, in the dwelling-house of the Workhouse Hospital, to Staff-Physician Michail Andreyevitch Dostoevsky, a male child, who was named Fyodor. Baptised on November 4."

1831. Dostoevsky's parents purchase a country-house in the Tula Government, where the family henceforth spends the summer.

1834. Dostoevsky enters the boys' school of L. J. Tchermak at Moscow.

1836. Great influence of the Literature-master upon the boys. Enthusiasm for Pushkin.

1837. On February 27, Maria Fyodorovna Dostoevsky, his mother, dies. Early in the year, Fyodor Dostoevsky goes with his elder brother Michael to Petersburg, and enters the Preparatory School of K. F. Kostomarov. In the autumn, he is admitted to the Principal College of Engineering.

183 7-43. Study at the College of Engineering.

1838. Summer in camp. Enthusiasm for Balzac, Hugo, E. — T. A. Hoffmann. In the autumn, failure in the examinations; is not promoted. In the winter, friendly relations with Schidlovsky and Berechetzky. Interest in Schiller.

1839. Death of his father, Michail Andreyevitch Dostoevsky.

1840. November 29: Promotion to non-commissioned officer's rank. December 27: To ensign's.

1841. Dramatic efforts, "Maria Stuart" and "Boris Godounov." (They have not come down to us.) August 5: Dostoevsky undergoes the examination for promotion to commissioned rank, and is promoted to be Field-Engineer's Ensign, on the recommendation of the College of Engineering.

1842. Promotion to Lieutenant's rank.

1843. August 12: Leaves the College. August 23: Obtains an appointment in the Department of Engineering.

1844. At the end of the preceding and in the beginning of this year, Dostoevsky is occupied in translating Balzac's "Eugénie Grandet." During the year he reads and translates works by George Sand and Sue.

Works at "Poor Folk."

Project for a drama (Letter of September 30, 1844).

October 19: Dostoevsky is by Royal permission discharged with the rank of First-Lieutenant "on account of illness."

December 17: He is struck off the lists of the Corps of Military Engineers.

1845. In the beginning of May, the novel "Poor Folk" is finished.

Nekrassov and Grigorovitch pay the midnight visit after reading "Poor Folk."

Intercourse with Bielinsky. In the summer he goes, to his brother Michael at Reval.

November 15: Letter to his brother with news of his first successes in literary circles.

At the end of the year, plans for the satirical journal, *Suboskal.*

"Novel in Nine Letters."

1846. January 15: Nekrassov's *Petersburg Almanac* appears with Dostoevsky's first book, "Poor Folk."

Bielinsky's article on "Poor Folk" in the *Otetschestvennia Zapiski.*

February 1: The story of "The Double" (" Goliadkin") appears in the *Otetschestvennia Zapiski.*

"The Whiskers that were Shaved Off" and the "Story of the Abolished Public Offices." (Neither work has come down to us.)

"Mr. Prochartschin" *(O. Z.,* No. 10).

In the summer, at Reval with his brother.

In the autumn, Dostoevsky thinks of issuing his collected tales in volume form.

At the end of the year come misunderstandings, and a breach with the editorial staff of the *Sovremennik.*

1847. The "Novel in Nine Letters" is published in the *Sovremennik,* and "The Mistress of the Inn" in the *Otetschestvennia Zapiski.*

"Poor Folk" appears in book form.

1848. The February Revolution in Paris.

Political groups, such as those around Petrachevsky, form in Petersburg. — .

"The Stranger-Woman" *(O. Z.,* No. 1).

"A Weak Heart" (O. *Z„* No. 2).

"Christmas and Wedding" (O. *Z.,* No. 10).

"Bright Nights" (O. *Z.,* No. 16).

1848. "The Jealous Husband" *(O. Z.,* No. 12).

1849. "Netotchka Nesvanova" (O. Z., Nos. 1-2, 5-6).

In March, Dostoevsky reads aloud [a revolutionary letter from Bielinsky to Gogol at Petrachevsky's rooms].

On April 23, Dostoevsky, together with other members of the Petrachevsky circle, is arrested, and imprisoned in the Petropaulovsky Fortress. [He was accused of "having taken part in conversations about the severity of the Censorship; of having read, at a meeting in March, 1849, — Bielinsky's revolutionary letter to Gogol; of having again read it at Dourov's rooms, and of having given it to Monbelli to copy; of having listened at Dourov's to the reading of various articles; of having knowledge of the plan to establish a clandestine printing-press," etc.]

December 19: Dostoevsky is condemned to degradation from military rank, and imprisonment.

December 22: Dostoevsky, and all the Petrachevsky group, hear read over them, first, the death-sentence, and then the commuted sentence of hard labour in the Siberian prisons.

December 24-25: On this night Dostoevsky is put in irons, and transported from Petersburg to Siberia.

1850. January 11: Arrival at Tobolsk. Meeting with the wives of the Decembrists.

January 17: Continues journey to Omsk.

1850-54. Serves his sentence in the prison at Omsk.

1854. February 15: Completion of sentence.

February 22: Letter to his brother with description of his life in the prison.

March 2: Dostoevsky is enrolled as private in the 7th Siberian Regiment of the Line.

In end of March, arrives at Semipalatinsk.

In May, writes his poem on the European incidents of 1854.

November 21: Baron Vrangel arrives at Semipalatinsk.

1855. February 19: The Tsar Alexander II. ascends the throne. Dostoevsky writes a poem on the death of Nicholas I. and the accession of Alexander II. (It has not come down to us.) He begins "The House of the Dead."

1856. January 15: Promotion to non-commissioned rank.

March 24: Letter to General Totleben, requesting his intercession with the Tsar.

October 1: By Imperial command, he is promoted to be Ensign in the same battalion.

1854. February 6: Dostoevsky's betrothal to the widowed Maria Dmitryevna Issayev takes place at Kusnezk.

April 18: Imperial minute to the Commander of the Siberian Army Corps to the effect that Dostoevsky and his legal heirs regain the ancient title of nobility, though the confiscated property is not to be restored. Dostoevsky first hears of this in May.

At the end of the year, Dostoevsky sends in a petition, on discharge, begging to be allowed to live in Moscow.

"The Little Hero" (O. Z„ No. 8).

1859. March 18: Discharged from military service with the rank of Lieutenant. Indication of the town of Tver as a suitable place of abode.

Uncle's Dream" (*Roussky Viestnik,* No. 3).

July 2: Departure from Semipalatinsk.

Autumn in Tver. Petition to the Tsar, that he may be allowed to live freely in all the towns of the Empire. Work at "The House of the Dead."

"Stepanchikovo Village" *(0. Z„* Nos. 11-12).

At the end of November, permission to leave Tver. Leaves for Petersburg.

1860. Collected Edition of Works. Two volumes. Moscow: N. A. Osnovsky.

1861. Collaboration on the journal *Vremya.*

Publication of "Injury and Insult" in that journal and in book form.

1861-62. Publication of "The House of the Dead" (*Vremya,* 1861, Nos. 4, 9-11; and 1862, Nos. 1-3, 5, 12).

"A Silly Story" (*Vremya,* No. 11).

1862. Two editions in book form of "The House of the Dead."

June 7: Departure for abroad.

Stays in Paris, London (meeting with Herzen), and Geneva.

1863. "Winter Notes on Summer Impressions" (*Vremya,* Nos. 2-3).

In May, suppression of the *Vremya,* in consequence of an article by Strachov on the Polish Question.

During the summer, travel in foreign lands. Stay in Rome. Plan for “The Gambler.”

Wife’s illness during the winter.

1864 — 65. Direction of *The Epoch,* which took the place of the *Vremya.*

1864. March 24: Appears the first number of *The Epoch*. “From the Darkness of the Great City” (*Epoch,* Nos. 1-2 and 4).

1864. April 16: Death of his wife.

June 10: Death of his brother Michael.

December 25: Death of his friend and collaborator, Apollon Grigoryev.

1865. “An Unusual Occurrence” *(Epoch,* No. 2).

At the end of July, goes abroad. Begins the novel “Rodion Raskolnikov” (“Crime and Punishment “).

Autumn in Wiesbaden.

October: Visit to Baron Vrangel at Copenhagen.

November: Return to Russia. Sale of his author’s rights to the publisher Stellovsky.

1865 — 66. First Collected Edition, in three volumes. Petersburg: Stellovsky.

Publication of “Rodion Raskolnikov” (“Crime and Punishment”) in the *Roussky Viestnik* (Nos. 1-2, 4, 6, 8, 11-12) and in book form.

Summer at Lublin, near Moscow.

End of the year, at work on “The Gambler.” Intercourse with the stenographer Anna Grigorevna Snitkin.

1867. February 15: Marriage to A. G. Snitkin.

1867-71. Life abroad.

1867. April 14: Goes abroad. Two months in Dresden. Article on Bielinsky (not preserved).

August 16: Letter to Apollon Maikov on the quarrel with Turgenev, and Dostoevsky’s losses at roulette.

Plan for the “Diary of a Writer.” (Letter to his niece of September 29.)

At the end of the year, begins “The Idiot.”

Third edition of “The House of the Dead second and third editions of “Crime and Punishment.”

1868. Publication of “The Idiot” in the *Roussky Viestnik* (Nos. 1, 2, 4-12) and in book form.

Summer in Switzerland and Italy, Idea of a novel on Atheism (prototype of “The Brothers Karamazov”). Letters about this to Maikov and his niece.

1869. Beginning of the year, in Florence. Connection with the new journal *Sarya,* and lively interest in Danilevsky’s essay on” Russia and Europe.”

1870. “The Permanent Husband” *(Sarya,* Nos. 1, 2). Beginning of “The Possessed.” Fourth edition of “Crime and Punishment.”

1871-72. Publication of “The Possessed” *(Roussky Viestnik,* 1871, Nos. 1-2, 4, 7, 9-12; and 1872, Nos. 11-12).

1871. July 8: Return from abroad to Petersburg.

1867. Project of a trip to the East.

“The Permanent Husband” in book form.

1868. Joins editorial staff of *Grajdanin* (*The Citizen),* and publishes the “Diary of a Writer” (first sixteen chapters) and his “ Survey of Foreign Occurrences.”

“The Possessed” in book form.

1869. At the end of March, arrest for infraction of the Censorship regulations.

Autumn and winter, at Staraya-Roussa. Second edition of “The Idiot.”

Beginning of the novel, “The Hobbledehoy.”

1870. “The Hobbledehoy” (*Otetschestvennia Zapiski,* Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12), and in book form.

Fourth edition of “The House of the Dead.”

Summer at Ems.

1876-77. “Diary of a Writer.”

1871. Summer at Ems.

Article (in the June number of the *Diary)* on the Balkan Question, and Dostoevsky’s political creed.

“The Hobbledehoy” in book form.

1872. “The Little Girl” (in the Supplement to *Grajdanin).*

Summer in the Kursk Government.

December 24: “Memento for My Whole Life.”

1873. In the summer, begins “The Brothers Karamazov.”

Fourth edition of “Crime and Punishment.”

1879-80. Appearance of “The Brothers Karamazov” *(Roussky Viestnik,* 1879, Nos. 1, 2, 4-6, 8-11; 1880, Nos. 1, 4, 7-11), and in book form.

1874. Second edition of the “Diary of a Writer” from the year 1876.

Fifth edition of “Injury and Insult.”

In June, goes with Vladimir Solovyov to the monastery at Optin.

1875. May 25: Banquet of Moscow writers and journalists in Dostoevsky’s honour.

June 6 and 7: Festivities at Moscow in connection with the unveiling of the Pushkin Memorial.

June 8: Dostoevsky’s speech on Pushkin at the meeting of the Society of Lovers of Russian Literature. Takes part in the “Pushkin Evenings” got up by the Literary Fund.

1876. January 28: At 8.38 o’clock p m. Dostoevsky dies.

January 31: Public burial in the Cemetery of the Alexander Nevsky Monastery at Petersburg.

I. To his Father

May 10, 1838.

MY DEAR GOOD FATHER,

Can you really think that your son is asking too much when he applies to you for an allowance? God be my witness that not for self-interest, nor even in actual extremest need, could I ever wish to despoil you in any way. How bitter it is to have to ask my flesh and blood a favour which so heavily oppresses them! I have my own head, my own hands. Were I but free and independent, I should never have asked you for so much as a kopeck — I should have inured myself to the bitterest poverty. I should have been ashamed to write from my very death-bed, asking for support. As things are, I can only console you with promises for the future; however, that future is no longer a distant one, and time will convince you of its reality.

At present I beg you, dearest Papa, to reflect that in the literal sense of the word — I *serve*. I must, whether I wish it or not, conform to the obligations of my immediate environment. Why should I set up as an exception? Such exceptional attitudes, moreover, are often attended by the greatest unpleasantnesses. You will readily understand this, dear Papa. You have mixed enough with men to do that. And therefore consider, please, the following points: Life in camp, for every student of the Military Academy, demands at least forty roubles. (I write this, because I am addressing my father.) In that sum are not included such necessities as tea, sugar, etc. Yet all those things I must have as well — assuredly not only as comforts, but as sheer indispensables. When one has to sleep in a canvas tent during damp and rain, or when, in such weather, one returns weary and chilled from practice, one may easily fall ill for want of tea, as I have frequently experienced in former years at these times. But I want to consider your difficulties, and so I will give up tea altogether, and ask you only for the barest necessary of all — sixteen roubles for two pairs of ordinary boots. Again: I *must* keep my things, such as books, footgear, writing materials, paper, etc., somewhere or other. I need for that a trunk, for in camp there is no kind of shelter but the tents. Our beds are bundles of straw covered with sheets. Now I ask you where, without a trunk, am I to keep my things? You must know that the Treasury does not care in the least whether I have one or

not. For the exams will soon be over, and then I — shall need no books; and as it is supposed to look after my uniform, I ought not to require boots, etc. But how can I pass the time without books? and the boots with which we are supplied are so bad that three pairs scarcely see one through six months, even in the town. —

[Here follows a further catalogue of necessary purchases.]

From your last remittance I have laid by fifteen roubles. So you see, dear Papa, that I need at least twenty-five more. We break up camp in the beginning of June. If you will stand by your son in his bitter need, send him this money by the first of June. I dare not insist upon my petition: I am not asking too much, but my gratitude will be boundless.

II. To his Brother Michael

PETERSBURG,
August 9, 1838.

[The letter begins with explanations of why Dostoevsky has not written to his brother for so long: he has not had a kopeck.]

It is true that I am idle — very idle. But what will become of me, if everlasting idleness is to be my only attitude towards life? I don't know if my gloomy mood will ever leave me. And to think that such a state of mind is allotted to man alone — the atmosphere of his soul seems compounded of a mixture of the heavenly and the earthly. What an unnatural product, then, is he, since the law of spiritual nature is in him violated.... This earth seems to me a purgatory for divine spirits who have been assailed by sinful thoughts. I feel that our world has become one immense Negative, and that everything noble, beautiful, and divine, has turned itself into a satire. If in this picture there occurs an individual who neither in idea nor effect harmonizes with the whole — who is, in a word, an entirely unrelated figure — what must happen to the picture? It is destroyed, and can no longer endure.

Yet how terrible it is to perceive only the coarse veil under which the All doth languish! To know that one single effort of the will would suffice to demolish that veil and become one with eternity — to know all this, and still live on like the last and least of creatures.... How terrible! How petty is man! Hamlet! Hamlet! When I think of his moving wild speech, in which resounds the groaning of the whole numbed universe, there breaks from *my* soul not one reproach, not one sigh.... That soul is then so utterly oppressed by woe that it fears to grasp the woe entire, lest soit lacerate itself. Pascal once said: He who protests against philosophy is himself a philosopher. A poor sort of system!

But I have talked enough nonsense. Of your letters I have had only two, besides the last of all. Now, brother, you complain of your poverty. I am not rich either. But you will hardly believe that when we broke up camp I had not a kopeck. On the way I caught cold (it rained the whole day and we had no shelter), was sick with hunger as well, and had no money to moisten my

throat with so much as a sip of tea. I got well in time, but I had suffered the direst need in camp, till at last the money came from Papa. I paid my debts, and spent the rest.

[Dostoevsky enlarges further on his brother's situation and his own financial difficulties.]

However, it is time to speak of other things. You plume yourself on the number of books you have read.... But don't please imagine that I envy you that. At Peterhof I read at least as many as you have. The whole of Hoffmann in Russian and German (that is, "Kater Murr," which hasn't yet been translated), and nearly all Balzac. (Balzac is great! His characters are the creations of an all-embracing intelligence. Not the spirit of the age, but whole millenniums, with all their strivings, have worked towards such development and liberation in the soul of man.) Besides all these, I read Goethe's "Faust" and his shorter poems, Polevois' History, "Ugolino" and "Undine" (I'll write at length about "Ugolino" some other time), and, finally, Victor Hugo, except "Cromwell" and "Hernani." Farewell. Write to me, please, as often as you possibly can, for your letters are a joy and solace. Answer *this* at once. I shall expect your reply in twelve days at the very latest. Do write, that I may not utterly languish.

Thy brother,
F. DOSTOEVSKY.

I have a new plan: to go mad. That's the way: for people to lose their heads, and then be cured and brought back to reason! If you've read all Hoffmann, you'll surely remember Alban. How do you like him? It is terrible to watch a man who has the Incomprehensible within his grasp, does not know what to do with it, and sits playing with a toy called God!

III. To his Brother Michael

PETERSBURG,
October 31, 1838.

How long since I've written to you, dear brother! That hateful examination — it prevented me from writing to you and Papa, and from looking up I. N. Schidlovsky.(I. Nikolay Schidlovsky, a Treasury official, who wrote high-flown poems of abstract-ideal tendency. He later ruined himself by drink.) And what came of it all? I have not yet been promoted. O horror! to live another whole year in this misery! I should not have been so furious did I not know that I am the victim of the sheerest baseness. The failure would not have worried me so very much, if our poor father's tears had not burned into my soul. I had not hitherto known the sensation of wounded vanity. If such a feeling had got hold of me, I might well have blushed for myself.... But now you must know that I should like to crush the whole world at one blow.... I lost so much time before the examination, and was ill and miserable besides; but *underwent* it in the fullest and most literal sense of the word, and yet have failed.... It is the decree of the Professor of Algebra, to whom, in the course of the year, I had been somewhat cheeky, and who was base enough to remind me of it to-day, while ostensibly explaining to me the reason for my failure. Out of ten full marks I got an average of nine and a half, and yet I'm left.... But hang it all, if I must suffer, I will.... I'll waste no more paper on this topic, for I so seldom have an opportunity to talk with you.

My friend, you philosophize like a poet. And just because the soul cannot be for ever in a state of exaltation, your philosophy is not true and not just. To *know* more, one must *feel* less, and *vice versa.* Your judgment is feather-headed — it is a delirium of the heart. What do you mean precisely by the word *know*? Nature, the soul, love, and God, one recognizes through the heart, and not through the reason. Were we spirits, we could dwell in that region of ideas over which our souls hover, seeking the solution. But we are earth-born beings, and can only guess at the Idea — not grasp it by all sides at once. The guide for our intelligences through the temporary illusion into the innermost centre of the soul is called *Reason.* Now, Reason is a material capacity, while the soul or spirit lives on the thoughts which

are whispered by the heart. Thought is born in the soul. Reason is a tool, a machine, which is driven by the spiritual fire. When human reason (which would demand a chapter for itself) penetrates into the domain of knowledge, it works independently of the *feeling*, and consequently of the *heart*. But when our aim is the understanding of love or of nature, we march towards the very citadel of the heart. I don't want to vex you, but I do want to say that I don't share your views on poetry or philosophy. Philosophy cannot be regarded as a mere equation where nature is the unknown quantity! Remark that the poet, in the moment of inspiration, comprehends God, and consequently does the philosopher's work. Consequently poetic inspiration is nothing less than philosophical inspiration. Consequently philosophy is nothing but poetry, a higher degree of poetry! It is odd that you reason quite in the sense of our contemporary philosophy. What a lot of crazy systems have been born of late in the cleverest and most ardent brains! To get a right result from this motley troop one would have to subject them all to a mathematical formula. And yet they are the "laws" of our contemporary philosophy! I have jabbered enough. And if I look upon your flabby system as impossible, I think it quite likely that my objections are no less flabby, so I won't bother you with any more of them.

Brother, it is so sad to live without hope! When I look forward I shudder at the future. I move in a cold arctic atmosphere, wherein no sunlight ever pierces. For a long time I have not had a single outbreak of inspiration.... Hence I feel as the Prisoner of Chillon felt after his brother's death. The Paradise-bird of poetry will never, never visit me again — never again warm my frozen soul. You say that I am reserved; but all my former dreams have long since forsaken me, and from those glorious arabesques that I once could fashion all the gilding has disappeared. The thoughts that used to kindle my soul and heart have lost their glow and ardency; or else my heart is numbed, or else.... I am afraid to go on with that sentence. I won't admit that all the past was a dream, a bright golden dream.

Brother, I have read your poem. It urged some tears from my soul, and lulled it for a while by the spell of memories. You say that you have an idea for a drama. I am glad of that. Write your drama, then. If you had not these last crumbs from the Elysian feast, what would be left you in life? I am so sorry that these last few weeks I have not been able to look up Ivan Nikolayevitch (Schidlovsky); I was ill. Now listen. I think that the poet's inspiration is increased by success. Byron was an egoist; *his* longing for

fame was petty. But the mere thought that through one's inspiration there will one day lift itself from the dust to heaven's heights some noble, beautiful human soul; the thought that those lines over which one has wept are consecrated as by a heavenly rite through one's inspiration, and that over them the coming generations will weep in echo... that thought, I am convinced, has come to many a poet in the very moment of his highest creative rapture. But the shouting of the mob is empty and vain. There occur to me those lines of Pushkin, where he describes the mob and the poet:

"So let the foolish crowd, thy work despising, scream,
And spit upon the shrine where burns thy fire supreme,
Let them in childish arrogance thy tripod set a-tremble...."

Wonderful, isn't it? Farewell.

Your friend and brother,
F. DOSTOEVSKY.

By the way, do tell me what is the leading idea in Châteaubriand's work, "Génie du Christianisme."

I read lately in *Ssyn Otetschestva* an attack by the critic Nisard on Victor Hugo. How little the French esteem him! How low does Nisard rate his dramas and romances! They are unfair to him; and Nisard (though he is so intelligent) talks nonsense. Tell me, too, the leading motive of your drama; I am sure it is fine.

I pity our poor father! He has such a remarkable character. What trouble he has had. It is so bitter that I can do nothing to console him! But, do you know, Papa is wholly a stranger in the world. He has lived in it now for fifty years, and yet he has the same opinions of mankind that he had thirty years ago. What sublime innocence! Yet the world has disappointed him, and I believe that that is the destiny of us all. Farewell.

IV. To his Brother Michael

PETERSBURG,
January 1, 1840.

I thank you from my heart, good brother, for your dear letter. I am certainly quite a different sort of person from you; you could never imagine how delightfully my heart thrills when they bring me a letter from you, and I have invented a new sort of enjoyment: I put myself on the rack. I take your letter in my hand, turn it about for some minutes, feel it to see whether it's long, and when I've satiated myself with the sealed envelope, I put it in my pocket. You'd never guess what a pleasant state of heart and soul I thus procure for myself. I often wait a quarter of an hour; at last I fall greedily upon the packet, unseal it, and devour your lines — your dear lines! Countless feelings awake in my heart while I read your letter. So many tender and painful, sweet and bitter, emotions crowd into my soul — yes, dear brother, there are painful and bitted ones. You cannot dream how bitter it is for me when people don't understand me, when they mistake what I say, and see it in the wrong light. After I had read your last letter, I was quite *enragé* because you were not near me; I saw the dearest dreams of my heart, my most sacred principles, which I have won by hard experience, wholly distorted, mutilated, deformed. You said to me yourself: "Do write to me, contradict me, dispute with me." You anticipated some profit therefrom. Dear brother, it has not been of the least use! The only thing that you have got from it is, that in your egoism (we are all egoists, for that matter) you have formed just such an opinion of me, my views, ideas, and peculiarities, as happens to suit yourself. And that is an extremely insulting one! No — polemics in intimate letters are a subtle poison. How will it be now, when we see one another again? I believe that all this will be subject for endless contention. But enough of it.

Now for your verses — hear me yet again, dear brother! I believe that in human life are infinite pain and infinite joy. In the poet's life spring thorns and roses. The lyric is like the poet's shadow, always with him, for he is an articulate creature. Your lyric poems are charming: "The Walk," "The Morning," "Visions of the Mother," "Roses," "The Horse of Phoebus" — these and many others are lovely. They are all like a vital piece of news

from you — and a piece of news that moves me profoundly. For in those days I could understand you so well; and they are months which have stamped themselves deeply in my consciousness. How many strange and wondrous things had I just then lived through! It is a long story, and I shall never tell it to anyone.

When I last met Schidlovsky I took a walk with him in Ekaterinhof. What an amazing talk we had that evening! We were recalling the past winter, when we talked much of Homer, Shakespeare, Schiller, and Hoffmann — particularly Hoffmann. We spoke of ourselves also, of the future, and of you, my dear fellow. But he has been away a long time now, and I have no news of him. Is he still alive even? For his health was very bad. So do write to him!

All through last winter I was in a strangely exalted mood. Intercourse with Schidlovsky had procured me many hours of fuller life, though that was not the only reason for my inspired state. You were, perhaps, hurt with me, and may be even so still, because I did not write to you at that time. Stupid service-matters were the hindrance. I must confess to you, my dear fellow, that though I have always loved you, it was for your verses, for the poetry of your life, for your sufferings... that was all. It was neither brother-love nor comrade-love. For I had with me at that time a friend, a man, whom I *did* love so. You said once, brother, that I had not read Schiller. You are mistaken. I have him by heart, I have spoken his speech and dreamed his dreams; and I believe that it was a peculiarly good stroke of luck that made me acquainted with the great poet in that special period of my life. I could never have learnt to know Schiller so well as precisely in those days. When I read Schiller with *him*, I saw *in him* the noble and fiery Don Carlos, the Marquis Posa, and Mortimer. That friendship was of great value to me, and has caused me great pain. But I desire to keep silence about it for ever. The name of Schiller is for me a beloved and intimate password, which awakens countless memories and dreams. Those memories are bitter, and that is why I have always avoided talking with you about Schiller and the impressions which I owe to him. Even to hear his name sets my heart aching.

I meant to answer other of your reproaches, and show you that you have misunderstood me. About other things besides I wanted to speak; but as I write this letter, so many sweet remembrances and dreams come over me that I can talk of nothing else. Only one reproach will I refer to — namely,

that those great poets whom, according to you, I do not know at all, I have nevertheless sought to compare closely with one another. I *never* drew such a parallel as one between Pushkin and Schiller. I can't imagine how you came to think so; pray cite me the passage in my letter; it is just possible that I may have happened to mention the names of Pushkin and Schiller in immediate juxtaposition, but I believe that you will find a comma between them. They have no smallest point of resemblance. Now between Pushkin and Byron one *might* speak of a likeness. But as to Homer and Victor Hugo, I positively believe that you have chosen to misunderstand me! This is what I meant: Homer (a legendary figure, who was perhaps sent to us by God, as Christ was) can only be placed with Christ; by no means with Victor Hugo. Do try, brother, to enter truly into the Iliad; read it attentively (now confess that you never have read it). Homer, in the Iliad, gave to the ancient world the same organization in spiritual and earthly matters as the modern world owes to Christ. Do you understand me now? Victor Hugo is a singer, clear as an angel, and his poetry is chaste and Christian through and through; no one is like him in that respect — neither Schiller (if Schiller is a Christian poet at all), nor the lyric Shakespeare, nor Byron, nor Pushkin. I have read his Sonnets in French. Homer alone has the same unshakable belief in his vocation for poetry and in the god of poetry whom he serves — in that sole respect his poetry is like Victor Hugo's, but *not* in the ideas with which Nature gifted him, and which he succeeded in expressing — I never meant the ideas at all, never. I even think that Dershavin stands higher as a lyricist than either of those two. Fare well, my dear fellow.

P.S. — I must give you one more scolding. When you talk about form in poetry, you seem to me quite crazy. I mean it seriously. I noticed a long time ago that in this respect you are not wholly normal. Lately you let fall a remark of the kind about Pushkin; I purposely did not take it up. Of your own forms I'll speak at length in my next letter; now I have neither room nor time. But do tell me how, when you were talking about forms, you could advance the proposition that neither Racine nor Corneille could please us, because their forms were bad? You miserable wretch! And then you add with such effrontery: "Do you think; then, that they were both bad poets?" Racine no poet — Racine the ardent, the passionate, the idealist Racine, no poet! Do you dare to ask that? Have you read his "Andromaque" — eh? Have you read his "Iphigénie"? Will you by any chance maintain

that it is not splendid? And isn't Racine's Achilles of the same race as Homer's? I grant you, Racine stole from Homer, but in -what a fashion! How marvellous are his women! Do try to apprehend him. You say "Racine was no genius; how could he possibly (?) produce a drama? He could only imitate Corneille." What about "Phèdre?" Brother, if you won't agree that "Phèdre" is the highest and purest poetry, I don't know what I shall think of you. Why, there's the force of a Shakespeare in it, if the medium *is* plaster of Paris instead of marble.

Now about Corneille. Listen again, brother! I really don't know how to talk to you; perhaps, like Ivan Nikiforovitch, (The hero of a novel by Gogol.) I ought to eat a substantial portion of herbs first. I cannot believe that you've read him at all; that's why you talk such nonsense. Why, don't you know that Corneille, with his titanic figures and his romantic spirit, nearly approaches Shakespeare? You miserable wretch! Do you happen to know that it was not until fifty years later than the inept miserable Jodelle (author of that disgusting'" Cléopâtre") and Ronsard, who was a forewarning of our own Trediakovsky, that Corneille made his appearance, and that he was almost a contemporary of the insipid poetaster Malherbe? How can you demand form from him? It was as much as one could expect that he should borrow his form from Seneca. Have you read his "Cinna"? What, before the divine figure of Octavius, becomes of Karl Moor, of Fiesco, of Tell, of Don Carlos? That work would have done honour to Shakespeare. You wretch! If you haven't read it yet, read now at least the dialogue between Augustus and Cinna, where he forgives him for his treachery. Good Heavens! You will see that only offended seraphs could so speak. Particularly the passage where Augustus says: "*Soyons amis, Cinna."* Have you read his "Horace"? Decidedly only in Homer can you find such figures. Old Horace is another Diomedes; young Horace an Ajax, son of Telamon, but with the spirit of an Achilles; Curias is Patrocles and Achilles in one person; he is the very consummation of conflicting love and duty. It's all so lofty! Have you read "Le Cid"? Read it, unhappy man, and fall in the dust before Corneille. You have blasphemed him. Anyhow, read him. What does the romantic stand for, if it doesn't reach its highest development in the "Cid"? How wonderful are the figures of Don Rodrigo, of his son, and of that son's beloved — and then, the end!

Please don't be offended with me for my insulting expressions; don't bear me ill-will, as Ivan Ivanovitch Pererepenko did to Gogol.

V. To his Brother Michael

September 30, 1844.

[At first he speaks of the translation of Schiller, which the brothers wished to publish.]

Yes, brother, indeed I know that my position is desperate. I want to lay it before you now, just as it is. I am retiring because I can serve no longer. Life delights me not if I am to spend the best part of it in such a senseless manner. Moreover, I never did intend to remain long in the service — why should I waste my best years? But the chief point is that they wanted to send me to the provinces. Now, tell me, pray, what should I be good for, out of Petersburg? What could I do? You will assuredly understand me there.

As regards my future life, you really need not be anxious. I shall always find means to support myself. I mean to work tremendously hard. And I am *free* now. The only question is what I shall do just for the moment. Think of it, brother: I owe eight hundred roubles — five hundred and twenty-five for rent. (I have written home that I owe one thousand five hundred, for I know the gentry there. (His father was now dead, and an uncle-in-law acted as Dostoevsky's guardian.) They always send me a third of what I ask for.) Nobody knows yet that I am retiring. Now, what shall I do at first, when I am no longer in the service? I haven't even the money to buy civilian clothes. I retire on October 14. If I don't receive money from Moscow at once, I am lost. Seriously, they will put me in prison — this is certain. It's a quaint situation.

[There is further discussion of how he shall get money from his relatives.]

You say that my salvation lies in my drama. But it will be a long time before it's played, and longer still before I get any money for it. Meanwhile, my retirement stares me in the face. (My dear fellow, if I had not already sent in my papers, I should do so now; I in no wise regret that step.) I have one hope more. I am just finishing a novel, (His" Poor Folk.") about the length of "Eugénie Grandet." It is most original. I am now making, the fair copy; by the 14th I ought certainly to have an answer from the editor. I want to bring it out in the *Otetchestvennia Zapiski*. ("Annals of the Fatherland.)

(I am well pleased with my work.) I shall probably get four hundred roubles for it — that is all I hope for. I would have liked to tell you more about the book, but I haven't time. (I shall certainly produce the play, anyhow. For that is the way I wish to make a living.)

The Moscovians are incredibly stupid, conceited, and priggish. K. (Dostoevsky's guardian.) in his last letter advises me, with no apparent relevancy, not to let myself be so carried away by Shakespeare. He says that Shakespeare is only a soap-bubble. I wish you could explain to me this ridiculous hostility against Shakespeare. Why does he suddenly drag him in? You should have seen the answer I sent him! It was a model in the polemic style. I gave him a first-class snubbing. My letters are masterpieces of the "literary art." Brother, do, for God's sake, write home at once! My situation is desperate. The 14th is the very utmost limit of my time; I sent in my papers six weeks ago. For Heaven's sake write to them, and tell them to send me the money without delay! It is urgent, for otherwise I shall have no clothes. Chlestakov (in Gogol's "Revisor") was ready to go to prison, but only "with all dignity." Now, how can I, barefoot, go to prison "with all dignity"?...

My address: By the Vladimirkirche, care of Pryanischnikof, Grafengasse.—'

I am extraordinarily pleased with my novel — beside myself with joy. For *it* I shall certainly get money; but as for anything else:... Forgive this incoherent letter.

VI. To his Brother Michael

March 24, 1845.

You must have been burning with impatience for ever so long, dearest brother. The uncertainty of my situation prevented me from writing. I can give myself up to no employment, when only uncertainty stares me in the face. Not that I have yet succeeded in regulating my affairs in any way; but despite this unsettled state of things, I will write to you, for it is so long since I have sent you a word.

I got five hundred roubles from the Moscow folk. But I had so many old and new debts that the money did not suffice for the printing. Still, it was not so bad. I could either go on credit for the printing, or else pay only half the household debts; but the novel was not ready. I *had* finished it in November, but in December I decided to alter it radically. I did so, and wrote it out fair again; then in February I began once more to fiddle at it, polishing, cutting, adding. Towards the middle of March I was ready, and satisfied with my work. But there arose a fresh obstacle: the Censor wanted a whole month for the reading. It couldn't be done quicker. The officials at the Censorship are said to be loaded down with work. I didn't know what to do, and asked for the manuscript back. For besides the four weeks for the Censor, I had to reckon on three more for the printing. So at earliest the book would appear in May. That would have been too late! Then people began to urge me from all sides to send the novel to the *Otetchestvennia Zapiski*. It would have been madness; I should certainly have rued it. In the first place, they wouldn't have read the manuscript at all, or, if they *had*, not for at least six months. They have enough manuscripts lying about without getting mine. And if they did print, I shouldn't get a penny for it; for that paper is a pure oligarchy. What do I want with fame, when I'm writing for daily bread? I took a desperate resolve — to wait a little longer, and in the meantime incur fresh debts. Towards the beginning of September, when everyone will be in Petersburg, sniffing about like bloodhounds for something new, I'll try with my last kopeck (which probably won't nearly suffice) to get the book printed. If I published in a magazine, I should come under the yoke of not only the head *maître ê'hôtel*, but of all the kitchen wenches and urchins who swarm wherever culture is in the making. It's not a question of one dictator, but twenty. While if I print the novel at my own

expense, I may make my way by my own ability; and if the book is good, it won't be overlooked — it may even get me out of debt, and rescue me from anxiety about the means of subsistence.

And now to those means of subsistence! You know well, dear brother, that I have been thrown on my own resources in that respect. But I have vowed to myself that, however hard it may go with me, I'll pull myself together, and in no circumstances will I work to order. Work done to order would oppress and blight me. I want each of my efforts to be incontrovertibly good. Just look at Pushkin and Gogol. Both wrote very little, yet both have deserved national memorials. Gogol now gets a thousand roubles a printed page, while Pushkin had, as you know well, as much as a ducat a line of verse. Both — but particularly Gogol — bought their fame at the price of years of dire poverty. The old school is going to pieces; and the new school doesn't write — it scribbles. Talent is universally squandered in striving after a "broad conception," wherein all one can discover is a monstrous inchoate idea and colossal muscular effort. There is hardly any real serious *work* in the business. Béranger said of the modern French feuilletonists that their work was like a bottle of Chambertin in a bucket of water. And our people are the same. Raphael worked for many years at each picture, and lingered long over every detail, therefore he created masterpieces. Gods grew under his brush! And to-day Vernet gets a picture ready in a month, and each needs a huge room, built expressly. The perspective is grandiose, the conception colossal — but there's not a ha'porth of serious work in the thing. They are all no better than house-painters.

I am really pleased with my novel. It is a serious and well-constructed work. But it has terrible shortcomings, too. Seeing it in print will make up to me for everything else. *Now,* while I have as yet no new ideas, I should rather like to write something that would introduce me to the public, or even for the mere money's sake; not that I should at all wish to write rubbish, but for anything really serious I need a lot of time.

It is getting near the time, my dears, that I had hoped to spend with you all. But I shall not have the means, that is the money, for it. I have decided to stay on in my old abode. For here I have, at any rate, a contract with the landlord, and need not worry myself about anything for six months. It's simply a case of my novel covering *all*! If I fail in this, I'll hang myself.

I should like to have saved at least three hundred roubles by August. I can have the book printed for that. But the roubles run about like crabs in every direction. I had about four hundred worth of debts (including the new expenses and clothes); now I'm decently dressed for at least two years. But I really will come to you, anyhow. Write as soon as possible and say what you think about my staying on here. It is a crucial question. But what else can I do?

You write that you are terrified of the resourceless future. But Schiller will set right all that, and, besides, my novel may bring in something. Write soon. By the next post I'll tell you all my decisions.

Kiss the children from me, and greet Emilie Fyodorovna. (Michael Dostoevsky's wife.) I often think of you all. Perhaps it will interest you to know what I do when I'm not writing — well, I read. I read a great deal, and it has a curious effect on me. When I re-read anything that I knew years ago, I feel fresh powers in myself. I can pierce to the heart of the book, grasp it entire, and from it draw new confidence in myself. Of the writing of plays I don't want to know anything. To do one I should need years of repose and hard study. It is easy enough, indeed, to write plays today; the drama is more like melodrama. Shakespeare disappears in the fog. He looks, amid the fumes of our wretched modern drama, like a god, or a spectre of the Brocken. In the summer I shall, nevertheless, perhaps try again to write one. Just let us wait two or even three years! Brother, in literary matters I am not the same person that I was a couple of years ago. Then it was all childishness and folly. These two years of hard study have taken much from me, and brought much to me.

In the *Invalide* lately I read in the feuilleton about the German writers who died of hunger, cold, or in a mad-house. They were twenty in all — and what names! Even still it gives me the creeps. It's better to be a charlatan, really....

VII. To his Brother Michael

May 4, 1845.

DEAREST BROTHER,

Forgive my not having written for so long. I have, as usual, had such a confounded lot to do. My novel, which I simply can't break loose from, keeps me endlessly at work. If I had known beforehand how it would be, I should never have begun it at all. I decided to do it all over again, and, by God! that has improved it a lot: Now I'm ready with it once more, and this revision is really the last. I have given myself my word not to touch it again. After all, it's the fate of all first books to be altered over and over again. I don't know whether Châteaubriand's "Atala" was his first book, but I do know that he re-wrote it seventeen times. Pushkin did just the same with quite short poems. Gogol used to polish away at his wonderful works for two years at a time, and if you have read the "Sentimental Journey," that witty book by Sterne, you'll very likely remember what Walter Scott, in his article on Sterne, says with reference to Sterne's servant, La Fleur. La Fleur declared that his master had filled about two hundred quires of paper with the description of his journey through France. Now, the question is, What became of all that paper? The result was a little book, for writing which a parsimonious person (such as, for example, Plyushkin - A character in Gogol's "Dead Souls" — the incarnation of avarice.) would have used half a quire. I can't understand at all how that same Walter Scott could turn out such finished works as "Mannering" in a few weeks. Perhaps only because at that time he was forty years old.

I don't in the least know, brother, what will become of me! You judge me falsely when you maintain that my situation doesn't trouble me a bit. It worries me frightfully, and I often cannot sleep for nights and nights because of my tormenting thoughts. Wise folk tell me that I shall come to the ground if I publish the novel as a book. They admit that the book will be a very good one, but say that I am no business man... and that the booksellers are usurers; that they will rob me as a matter of course, and I, as sure as death, shall let them.

For these reasons I have resolved to bring out the novel in a journal — for example, the *Otetchestvennia Zapiski.* That has an edition of 2,500

copies, consequently it is read by at least 100,000 people. If I let the novel appear in this journal, my literary career and my whole future life are assured. I might easily make my fortune by it. And thus I shall gain a firm footing in the paper, and shall always have money; and if my novel appears in the August or September number, I can bring it out as a book on my own account in October, and that with the certain prospect that everyone who buys novels at all will get it. Moreover, the advertisement will cost me nothing. Well, so things stand!

Until I have arranged for the novel, I cannot come to Reval; I don't want to waste any of my time. I must not flinch at any amount of hard work. I have, besides, a lot of new ideas, which will make a name for me in literature as soon as my first book has forged a path for me. These are, in short, my only views for the future.

But as to money, I have none, alas! The devil knows where it's gone to. But, at all events, I have few debts....

When once I have produced the novel, I shall easily be able to arrange for your Schiller translation also, as true as I live! The "Juif Errant" isn't bad. But Sue strikes me as very limited in range.

I don't like to speak of it, dear brother, but your situation and the fate of your Schiller worry me so much that I often forget my own anxieties. And I really have not an easy time of it.

If I can't publish the novel, I shall probably go into the Neva. What else *should* I do? I have thought of every single thing. I could not survive the death of my fixed idea.

Write to me soon, for I am sick of myself.

VIII. To his Brother Michael

October 8, 1845.

DEAREST BROTHER,

Until now I have had neither time nor spirits to write you anything about my own affairs. Everything was disgusting and hateful, and the whole world seemed a desert. In the first place, I had no money all the time, and was living on credit, which is most unpleasant, my dear and only friend. In the second, I was in that wretched mood wherein one loses all courage, yet does not fall into dull indifference — rather, which is much worse, thinks a great deal too much about one's self, and rages uncontrollably.

At the beginning of this month Nekrassov (Nikolay Alexeyevitch Nekrassov (1821-77), a noted writer of Liberal tendencies; he edited from 1846 to 1866 the monthly magazine established by Pushkin, *Sovremennik (=The Contemporary).)* came to me and paid me back part of his debt; the rest I am to have in a few days. I must tell you that Bielinsky (Vissarion Grigoryevitch Bielinsky, a most distinguished Russian critic, of extreme Liberal tendency.) gave me, a fortnight ago, a comprehensive lesson on how to live in the literary world. As a conclusion he told me that, for my soul's sake, I must not ask less than two hundred roubles a printed sheet. In that case my "Goliadkin" ("The Double.") would bring me in at least fifteen hundred roubles. Nekrassov, who was evidently conscience-stricken, anticipated him, and promised me on January 15 a hundred roubles more for my "Poor Folk," which he has acquired from me. He felt obliged to confess to me himself that a fee of a hundred and fifty roubles was absolutely un-Christian, so he has raised it by a hundred.

This is all very nice indeed. But it is most unpleasant to have still no word from the Censor about "Poor Folk." They have kidnapped that guileless novel, and I don't know what will be the end thereof. And suppose they forbid it to appear? Or strike out every word of it? It is a real calamity! Nekrassov tells me, too, that his Almanac won't be able to appear at the right time, and that that undertaking has already cost him four thousand roubles.

Jakov Petrovitch Goliadkin is a bad hat! He is utterly base, and I positively can't manage him. He won't move a step, for he always maintains that he isn't ready; that he's mere nothingness as yet, but *could*, if it were necessary, show his true character; then why won't he? And after all, he says, he's no worse than the rest. What does *he* care about my toil? Oh, a terribly base fellow! In no case can he bring his career to a finish before the middle of November. He has already had an interview with His Excellency, and is not disinclined to take his leave — as, indeed, he well may. Me, his poor author, he is putting in a hole.

I often go to Bielinsky's. He's inordinately affectionate, seeing in me a vindication of his views to the public. I have lately made the acquaintance of Kroneberg, the translator of Shakespeare (he's a son of the old Professor from Charkov). My future — and certainly the immediate future — may shape itself, on the whole, most favourably, but may also turn out very badly indeed. Bielinsky urges me to finish my "Goliadkin." He has already spread the fame of that novel through the entire literary world, and almost sold it to Krayevsky. (Editor of the *Otetchestvennia Zapiski.)* Half Petersburg is talking of "Poor Folk." A good word from Grigorovitch (Dmitri Vassilivitch Grigorovitch (1822-99), a popular writer; author of numerous romances and novels. A colleague of Dostoevsky in the.College of Engineering.) carries weight, and he said to me myself the other day: "Je suis votre claqueur-chauffeur."

Nekrassov is always full of wild schemes. It is a condition of his being — he was born like that. Directly he arrived here, he came to me one evening and unfolded a plan for a little "flying" Almanac into which the whole literary community should put their backs; but at the head of the editorial staff are to be myself, Grigorovitch, and Nekrassov. The last will take the financial risk. The Almanac is to consist of two sheets, and to appear fortnightly — on the 7th and 21st of the month. It is to be called *Suboskal (The Scoffer).* We mean to ridicule and jeer at everything without mercy — the theatres, newspapers, society, literature, daily happenings, exhibitions, advertisements, foreign news — in short, everything; the whole is to be done with *one* tendency and in *one* spirit. The first number is to appear on November 7. It is wonderfully compounded. In the first place, there are to be illustrations as well. As motto we take the famous words of Bulgarin (Faddey Bulgarin (1789-1859), a journalist in the pay of the police; hated and feared as a denouncer and secret agent.) in his feuilleton

in the *Severnaia Ptchéla (Northern Bee):* “We are ready to die for the truth, for we cannot live without truth,” etc. Underneath we shall put Faddey Bulgarin’s signature. The prospectus, which will appear on November 1, will have the same motto. The first number will contain the following contri-butions: A sort of “send-off,” by Nekrassov, “On Certain Petersburg Basenesses” (those, of course, which have just then been perpetrated); an “anticipated” novel by Eugène Sue, “The Seven Deadly Sins” (the whole thing will be in three pages); a review of all the journals; a lecture “after” Schevirov, on Pushkin’s verses: they are so harmonious, that when Schevirov once at the Coliseum in Rome, in company with some ladies, recited a few strophes, all the frogs and lizards that house there came creeping out to hear the wondrous stanzas (Schevirov gave just such a discourse in the Moscow University). Then comes a report of the last sitting of the Society of Slavophils, whereat it was solemnly maintained that Adam was a Slav and lived in Russia; it will be pointed out how important and useful is the settling of this question for the well-being of the whole Russian nation. In the art section, our *Suboskal* will declare itself at one with Kukolnik’s *Illustration*, and call particular attention to the following passage in that journal [one where the letters and words were printed upside down and in the wrong order], for it is well known that the *Illustration* is so badly edited and proof-read that topsy-turvy letters and words running into one another are quite normal occurrences. Grigorovitch will write a “Chronicle of the Week,” and take a rise out of people with his “things seen.” I am to write “Observations of a Valet on his Master.” The paper will, as you see, be highly diverting — something in the style of the *Guêpes* of Alphonse Karr. The notion is dazzling, for to me alone will come, at the very lowest estimate, from a hundred to a hundred and fifty roubles a month. The sheet will succeed. Nekrassov will do some verse, too.

... On no account miss reading “Teverino” (by George Sand, in the *Otetchestvennia Zapiski* for October). There has been nothing like it in our century. It gives us absolute archetypes of human character....

IX. To his Brother Michael

November 16, 1845.

Dearest brother,

I write in great haste, for my time is very short. “Goliadkin” is still not ready, but I absolutely *must* have him finished by the 25th. You haven’t written to me for so long that I have been worried about you. Do write oftener; what you say about lack of time is nonsense. Does one really need much time to write a letter? Provincial life, with its eternal do-nothingness, is simply ruining you, my dear fellow — that’s all.

Well, brother, I believe that my fame is just now in its fullest flower. Everywhere I meet with the most amazing consideration and enormous interest. I have made the acquaintance of a lot of very important people. Prince Odoyevsky begs me for the honour of a visit, and Count Sollogub is tearing his hair in desperation. Panayev told him that a new genius had arisen who would sweep all the rest away. S. tore round, called on Krayevsky among others, and asked him quite bluntly: “Who is Dostoevsky? Where can I get hold of Dostoevsky?” Krayevsky, who is without respect of persons and snubs everybody, gave him for answer: “Dostoevsky won’t be at all inclined to give you the honour and pleasure of his acquaintance.” It was just the right word, for the youngster is now on his high horse, and hopes to crush me to the earth with his gracious condescension. Everybody looks upon me as a wonder of the world.

If I but open my mouth, the air resounds with what Dostoevsky said, what Dostoevsky means to do. Bielinsky loves me unboundedly. The writer Turgenev, who has just returned from Paris, has from the first been more than friendly; and Bielinsky declares that Turgenev has quite lost his heart to me. T. is a really splendid person! I’ve almost lost my own heart to *him.* A highly gifted writer, an aristocrat, handsome, rich, intelligent, cultured, and only twenty-five — I really don’t know what more he could ask from fate. Besides all that, he has an unusually upright, fine, well-disciplined nature. Do read his story, “Andrey Kolossov,” in the *Otetchestvennia Zapiski.* The hero is himself, though he did not intend to depict his own character.

I am not rich yet, though I can't complain of poverty. Lately I was quite penniless for the moment; Nekrassov has since then taken up the idea of publishing a most attractive sort of humorous Almanac, to be called *Suboskal*, and I have written the prospectus. It made a great sensation, for it is the first attempt there has been to write such productions in a light and humorous manner. It reminded me of the first feuilleton of Lucien de Rubempré. (In Balzac's "Illusions perdues.") It has already appeared in the *O. Z.*, and in another paper. I got twenty roubles for the job. When I found myself without a penny in my pocket, I went to call on Nekrassov. While I was sitting with him, I had a sudden idea of writing a novel in nine letters. As soon as I got home, I wrote it in one night: it takes about half a sheet. In the morning I took the manuscript to Nekrassov, and got 125 roubles for it, so the *Suboskal* pays me at the rate of 250 roubles a sheet. In the evening'my novel was read aloud in our circle — that is, before an audience of twenty, and had a colossal success. It will appear in the first number of the *Suboskal.* I'll send you the number for December 1. Bielinsky says he is quite sure of me now, for I have the faculty of grasping the most diverse subjects. When Krayevsky heard lately that I had no money, he begged me quite humbly to accept a loan of 500 roubles. I think that I shall get 200 roubles a sheet from him.

I have a lot of new ideas — and if I confide any of them to anybody, for instance Turgenev, by next morning it will be rumoured in every corner of Petersburg that Dostoevsky is writing this or that. Indeed, brother, if I were to recount to you all my triumphs, this paper would by no means suffice. I think that I shall soon have plenty of money. "Goliadkin" thrives mightily: it will be my masterpiece. Yesterday I was at P.'s house for the first time, and I have a sort of idea that I have fallen in love with his wife. She is wise and beautiful, amiable, too, and unusually direct. I am having a good time. Our circle is very extensive. But I'm writing about nothing but myself — forgive me, dear fellow; I will frankly confess to you that I *am* quite intoxicated by my fame. With my next letter I'll send you the *Suboskal.* Bielinsky says that I profaned myself by collaborating in it.

Farewell, my friend, I wish you luck, and congratulate you on your promotion. I kiss the hands of your Emilie Fyodorovna, and hug the children. How are they all?

P.S. — Bielinsky is keeping the publishers from tearing me to pieces. I've read this letter over, and come to two conclusions — that' I write atrociously, and that I'm a boaster.

Farewell, and for God's sake, write. Our Schiller will certainly come off. Bielinsky praises the idea of publishing the collected works. I believe that in time I shall be able to make good terms for the work — perhaps with Nekrassov. Farewell.

All the Minnas, Claras, Mariannas, etc., have got amazingly pretty, but cost a lot of money. Turgenev and Bielinsky lately gave me a talking to about my disorderly way of life. Those fellows really don't know how they can best prove their affection — they are all in love with me.

X. To his Brother Michael

February 1, 1846.

DEAREST BROTHER,

To begin with, don't be angry because I haven't written for so long. I swear to God that I've had no time, as I shall now show you. I was prevented chiefly by that rascal "Goliadkin," with whom I never finished till the 28th. It's frightful! And it's always the same whenever one promises one's-self anything. I meant to get done with him in August, but had to put off till February. Now I am sending you the Almanac. "Poor Folk" appeared on the 15th. If you only knew, brother, how bitterly the book has been abused! The criticism in the *Illustration* was one unbroken tirade. And that in the *Sévernaïa Ptchéla (Northern Bee)* is incredible, too; but at all events, I can remind myself how Gogol was received by the critics, and we both know the things that were written about Pushkin. Even the public is quite furious: three-fourths of my readers abuse, and a quarter (or even less) praise the book beyond measure. It is the subject of endless discussion. They scold, scold, scold, yet they read it. (The Almanac has gone off amazingly well. The whole edition is certain to be sold out in a fortnight.) And it was the same with Gogol. They abused, abused, but read him. Now they've made up *that* quarrel, and praise him. I've thrown a hard bone to the dogs, but let them worry at it — fools! they but add to my fame. The notice in the *Northern Bee* is a disgrace to their critic: It's stupid beyond belief. But then, the praise I get, too! Only think, all our lot, and even Bielinsky, consider that I have far surpassed Gogol. In the *Book-lover's Library,* where the critiques are mitten by Nikitenko, there is soon to be a very long and favourable notice of "Poor Folk." Bielinsky will ring a full peal in March. Odoyevsky is devoting his whole article to "Poor Folk" alone; my friend Sollogub likewise. So I'm in the empyrean, brother, and three months hence I'll tell you in person of all my experiences.

Our public, like the crowd everywhere, has good instincts, but no taste. They cannot understand how anyone can write in such a style. They are accustomed to be treated, in every work, to the author's own fads and fancies. Now I have chosen not to show mine. They *will* not perceive that this or that view is expressed by Dyevuschkin, not by me, and that *he* could

not speak otherwise. They find the book too drawn out, and yet there is not a single superfluous word in it. Many, like Bielinsky, think very original my manner of proceeding by analysis rather than by synthesis — that is, I pierce to the depths, trace out the atoms, and from them construct the whole. Gogol always works on the broad lines, and so he never goes as deep as I do. When you read my book, you'll see this for yourself. I have a brilliant future before me! Today my "Goliadkin" appears. Four days ago I was still working at him. He will fill eleven sheets of the *Oietschestvennia Zapiski*. "Goliadkin" is ten times better than "Poor Folk." Our lot say that there has been nothing like it in Russia since "Dead Souls," and that it is a truly brilliant achievement; they even say more. What don't they look for from me! "Goliadkin" really has come off well. You will be sure to like him enormously. Do they take the O. *Z.* in your part of the world? I don't know if Krayevsky will give me a free copy.

I haven't written to you for so long, dear brother, that I really don't know what I told you last. So much has been happening! We shall soon see one another again. In the summer I shall positively come to you, my friends, and shall write tremendously the whole time. I have ideas; and I'm writing now, too.

For "Goliadkin" I got exactly 600 roubles. And I've earned a lot of money besides, so that since our last meeting I've run through more than 3,000 roubles. I do live in a very disorderly way, and that's the truth!... My health is utterly shattered. I am neurotic, and dread low fever. I am so dissolute that I simply can't live decently any more....

XI. To his Brother Michael

April 1, 1846.

You do reproach me, don’t you, because I have not written for so long? But I take my stand upon Poprischtschin’s (Hero of Gogol’s “Memoirs of a Madman.”) saying: “Letters are rubbish; only apothecaries write letters.” What could I have said to you? If I had told all I had to tell, it would have taken volumes. Every day brings me so much that is new, so many changes and impressions, agreeable and disagreeable, lucky and unlucky, matters, that I have no time to reflect upon them. In the first place, I’m always busy. I have heaps of ideas, and write incessantly. But don’t imagine that mine is a bed of roses. Far from it. To begin with, I’ve spent a very great deal of money — that is to say, exactly 4,500 roubles — since our last meeting, and got about a thousand for my wares. Thus, with that economy of mine which you know so well, I have positively robbed myself, and so it often happens that I am quite penniless....

But that doesn’t signify. My fame has reached its highest point. In the course of two months I have, by my own reckoning, been mentioned five-and-thirty times in different papers. In certain articles I’ve been praised beyond measure, in others with more reserve, and in others, again, frightfully abused. What could I ask for more? But it does pain and trouble me that my own friends, Bielinsky and the others, are dissatisfied with my “Goliadkin.” The first impression was blind enthusiasm, great sensation, and endless argument. The second was the really critical one. They all — that is, my friends and the whole public — declare with one voice that my “Goliadkin” is tedious and thin, and so drawn-out as to be almost unreadable. One of our lot is now going in for the perusal of one chapter a day, so that he may not tire himself, and in this way he smacks his lips with joy over it. Some of the public say emphatically that the book is quite impossible, that no one could really read it, that it’s madness to write and print such stuff; others, again, declare that everything is from the life, and that they recognize themselves in the book; now and again, it is true, I hear such hymns of praise that I should be ashamed to repeat them. As to myself, I was for some time utterly discouraged. I have one terrible vice: I am unpardonably ambitious and egotistic. The thought that I had disappointed

all the hopes set on me, and spoilt what might have been a really significant piece of work, depressed me very heavily. The thought of “Goliadkin” made me sick. I wrote a lot of it too quickly, and in moments of fatigue. The first half is better than the second. Alongside many brilliant passages are others so disgustingly bad that I can’t read them myself. All this put me in a kind of hell for a time; I was actually ill with vexation. Dear brother, I’ll send you the book in a fortnight. Read it, and give me your honest opinion. — .

I’ll go over my life and work of late and tell you some bits of news:

1st. A big bit: Bielinsky is giving up the editorship of the O. *Z.* His health is sadly shattered, and he is going to a spa, perhaps in foreign parts. For a couple of years or so he will write no criticism at all. To bolster up his finances, he is publishing an Almanac of fabulous size — sixty sheets. I am writing two tales for him: “The Whiskers that were Shaved Off,” and “The Story of the Abolished Public Offices.” Both are overwhelmingly tragic, and extraordinarily interesting — told most curtly. The public awaits them eagerly. Both are short tales.... Besides these, I am to do something for Krayevsky, and write a novel for Nekrassov. The whole lot will take about a year. The “Whiskers” are ready now.

2nd bit of news: A whole crowd of new writers have popped up. In some I divine rivals. Particularly interesting are Herzen (Iskander) and Gontscharov. Herzen has published some things. Gontscharov is only beginning, and has not yet been printed. Both are immensely praised. But at present I have the top place, and hope to keep it for ever. In literary life there was never such activity as now. It is a good sign.

[Here follow some unimportant details of Dostoevsky’s life. He gives his brother, among other things, the advice to translate Goethe’s “Reineke Fuchs.”]

XII. To his Brother Michael

September 17, 1846.

I have already told you that I've rented a house. I'm not in distress, but I have no outlook for the future. Krayevsky has given me fifty roubles, but I could read in his face that he'll give me no more, so I shall have a pretty stiff time.

In a certain quarter (the Censorship) they have mutilated my "Prochartschin" frightfully. The gentlemen have even — God knows why — struck out the word "official." The whole thing was, for that matter, entirely without offence, yet they've cut it to pieces. They've simply killed the book dead. There is only a skeleton left of what I read to you. Henceforth I renounce that work of mine.... I am still writing at the "Whiskers." The work goes very slowly. I fear it won't be ready in time. I heard from two men, namely Grigorovitch and a certain Beketov II., that the *Petersburg Almanac (Peterbourgsky Shornik.)* is known in the provinces only by the name of "Poor Folk." The rest of the contents don't interest people in the least; and the sale in the provinces is colossal, they often pay double prices. At the booksellers' in Pensa and Kiev, for instance, the Almanac is officially priced at from 25 to 30 roubles. It is really remarkable; here the book fell flat, and *there* they scramble for it.

Grigorovitch has written a truly wonderful story. Myself and Maikov (who, by-the-bye, wants to write a long article on me) have arranged for it to appear in the *O. Z.* That journal is, by the way, in very low water; they haven't a single story in reserve.

Here we are frightfully dull. And so work goes badly. I lived in a sort of paradise with you; when things do go well with me, I ruin everything by my damnable character....

XIII. To his Brother Michael

[*Undated]* 1846.

DEAREST BROTHER,

I mean to write to you only a few lines, for I have a terrible crop of worries, and my situation is desperate. The truth is that all my plans have come to naught. The volume of stories is done for, because not a single one of the tales I told you about lately has come off. Even the “Whiskers” I have abandoned. I’ve abandoned the whole lot, for they are nothing but a repetition of old stuff, long since given forth by me. I have heaps of original, vital, and lucid thoughts that all yearn to come to the birth. When I had written the conclusion of the “Whiskers” I saw this all by myself. In my position, any monotony is fatal.

I am writing a new story, and the work, as with “Poor Folk,” goes easily and lightly. I had intended this tale for Krayevsky. The gentlemen on the *Sovremennik* may resent this; it will affect me but little. If I have this story ready in January, I shall print nothing till the following year; I want to write a novel, and shan’t rest till I do.

But that I may live in the meantime, I intend to bring out “Poor Folk” and the over-written “Goliadkin” in book-form....

XIV. To his Brother Michael

November 26, 1846.

All my plans about publishing have fallen through. The whole idea, however, was doubtfully profitable, needed much time, and was possibly premature. The public might have held off. I mean to postpone all that till next autumn. I shall by then be better known, and my position will be more defined. Besides, I have some money coming in. “Goliadkin” is now being illustrated by an artist in Moscow, and two artists here are doing pictures for “Poor Folk.” Whichever does them best, gets the commission. Bernardsky (At that time a popular engraver and book-illustrator.) tells me that in February he wants to do business with me, and will pay me a certain sum for the right to publish my works with his illustrations. Till now he has been occupied with the illustrations to “Dead Souls.” In a word, the publishing plans no longer interest me. Moreover, I have no time. I have a lot of work and commissions. I must tell you that I have broken off all relations with the *Sovremennik* as far as Nekrassov represents it. He was vexed because I wrote also for Krayevsky (as I *had* to do, so as to work off his advances of money to me), and because I would not make the public declaration which he desired, saying that I no longer was on the editorial staff of the *O. Z.* When he saw that he could get no new work from me in the immediate future, he flung various rudenesses at my head, and was foolish enough to demand money from me. I took him at his word, and drew up a promissory note which covered the whole amount, payable on December 15. I mean to see them coming to me hat in hand. As soon as I roundly abused Nekrassov, he curtsied and whimpered like a Jew that’s been robbed. In short, it’s a shabby story. Now they are spreading it about that I’m off my head with conceit, and have sold myself to Krayevsky, because Maikov praises me in his paper. Nekrassov henceforth means to drag me down. But as to Bielinsky, he is so pliable that even about literary matters he changes his views five times a week. With him alone have I kept up my former happy relations. He’s a thoroughly good fellow. Krayevsky was so delighted by this whole affair that he gave me money, and promised besides to pay all my debts up to December 15. Therefore I must work for him until the early New Year.

Now look, brother — from the whole business I have deduced a sage rule. First, the budding author of talent injures himself by having friendly relations with the publishers and proprietors of journals, the consequence of which is that those gentry take liberties and behave shabbily. Moreover, the artist must be independent; and finally, he must consecrate all his toil to the holy spirit of art — such toil is holy, chaste, and demands single-heartedness; my own heart thrills now as never before with all the new imaginings that come to life in my soul.

Brother, I am undergoing not only a moral, but a physical, metamorphosis. Never before was there in me such lucidity, such inward wealth; never before was my nature so tranquil, nor my health so satisfactory, as now. I owe this in great measure to my good friends: Beketov, Saliubezky, and the others — with whom I live. They are honest, sensible fellows, with fine instincts and affections, and noble, steadfast characters. Intercourse with them has healed me. Finally, I suggested that we should live together. We took a big house all to ourselves, and go share and share alike in all the housekeeping expenses, which come, at the most, to 1,200 roubles a head annually. So great are the blessings of the communal system! I have a room to myself, and work all day long.

XV. To his Brother Michael

1847.

DEAR BROTHER,

I must once more beg you to forgive me for not having kept my word, and written by the next post. But through all the meantime I have been so depressed in spirit that I simply *could not* write. I have thought of you with so much pain — your fate is truly grievous, dear brother! With your feeble health, your turn of mind, your total lack of companionship, living in one perpetual tedium unvaried by any little festive occasions, and then the constant care about your family — care which is sweet to you, yet nevertheless weighs you down like a heavy yoke — why, your life is unbearable. But don’t lose courage, brother. Better days will come. And know this, the richer we are in mind and spirit, the fairer will our life appear. It is indeed true that the dissonance and lack of equilibrium between

ourselves and society is a terrible thing. External and internal things should be in equilibrium. For, lacking external experiences, those of the inward life will gain the upper hand, and that is most dangerous. The nerves and the fancy then take up too much room, as it were, in our consciousness. Every external happening seems colossal, and frightens us. We begin to fear life. It is at any rate a blessing that Nature has gifted you with powers of affection and strength of character. You have, besides, a vigorous, healthy mind, sparkles of diamond-like wit, and a happy nature. This is your salvation. I always think of you a great deal. My God, there -are so many sour-faced, small-souled, narrow-minded, hoary-headed philosophers, professors of the art of existence, Pharisees, who pride themselves on their "experience of life" — that is to say, their lack of individuality (for they are all cut on the same pattern); and who are good for nothing at all, with their everlasting preachments about contentment with one's destiny, faith in something or other, modest demands from life, acceptance of the station one finds one's-self in, and so on — never once thinking about the sense of any of those words; for *their* contentment is that of cloistered self-castration; they judge with unspeakably paltry animosity the vehement, ardent nature of him who refuses to accept their insipid "daily-task" calendar of existence. Oh, how vulgar are all these preachers of the falseness of earthly joys — how vulgar, every one! Whenever I fall into their hands, I suffer the torments of hell....

[Here follows the description of a visitor who had enraged Dostoevsky with his "vulgarities."]

I wish so much to see you again. Sometimes a nameless grief possesses me. I can't help thinking perpetually how moody and "edgey" I was when with you at Reval. I was ill then. I remember still how you once said to me that my behaviour towards you excluded all sense of equality between us. My dear brother, that was unjust. I have indeed, it is true, an evil, repellent character. But I have always ranked you above myself. I could give my life for you and yours; but even when my heart is warm with love, people often can't get so much as one friendly word out of me. At such times I have lost control of my nerves. I appear ludicrous, repellent, and have to suffer inexpressibly from the misunderstanding of my fellow-creatures. People call me arid and heartless. How often have I been rude to Emilie Fyodorovna, your wife, who is a thousand times my superior! I remember, too, that frequently I was cross with your son Fedya for no reason at all, though at the very time I loved him perhaps even more than I loved you. I

can show myself to be a man of feeling and humour only when external circumstances lift me high above the external daily round. When that is not my state, I am always repellent. I account for these disparities by my malady. Have you read “Lucretia Floriani”? Take a look at the “King” too. But soon you’ll be able to read my “Netotschka Nesvanova.” That story, like “Goliadkin,” will be a selfconfession, though different in tone. About “Goliadkin” I often happen to hear such expressions of opinion that I get quite frightened. Many say that it is a veritable, as yet uncomprehended, marvel, that it will have enormous significance in the future, and that by itself alone it is enough to make me famous; some think it more exciting than Dumas. Now I’m beginning again to praise myself. But it is so delightful, brother, to be rightly understood! For what, actually, do *you* love me so much? I’ll see to it that somehow we meet again very soon. Won’t we love one another, that’s all! Wish me success. I am now working at “The Mistress of the Inn.” It is getting on more easily than “Poor Folk” did. The story is in the same manner. A flow of inspiration, which comes from my inmost soul, is guiding my pen. It is quite different from what it was with “Prochartschin,” from which I suffered the whole summer through. How I wish I could *soon* help you, brother. Depend, as on a rock, on the money that I promised you. Kiss all your dear ones for me. In the meantime I am

Thy

DOSTOEVSKY.

XVI. To his Brother Michael

[Postscript to a longer business letter, early in the year 1847.]

You will scarcely believe it. Here is the third year of my literary activity, and I am as if in a dream. I don’t see the life about me at all, I have no time to become conscious of it; no time, either, to learn anything. I want to attain to something steadfast. People have created a dubious fame for me, and I know not how long this hell of poverty and constant hurried work will last. Oh, if I could but once have rest!

XVII. To his Brother Michael

[FROM THE FORTRESS],
July 18 1849

Dear Brother,

I was inexpressibly glad of your letter, which I got on July 11. At last you are free, and I can vividly imagine how happy, you were when you saw your family again. How impatiently they must have awaited you! I seem to see that your life is beginning to shape itself differently. With what are you now occupied, and, above all, what are your means of support? Have you work, and of what sort? Summer is indeed a burden in the town. You tell me only that you have taken a new house; and probably it is much smaller. It is a pity you couldn't spend the whole summer in the country. I thank you for the things you sent; they have relieved and diverted me. You write, my dear fellow, that I must not lose heart. Indeed, I am not losing heart at all; to be sure, life here is very monotonous and dreary, but what else could it be? And after all it isn't invariably so tedious. The time goes by most irregularly, so to speak — now too quickly, now too slowly. Sometimes I have the feeling that I've grown accustomed to this sort of life, and that nothing matters very much. Of course, I try to keep all alluring thoughts out of my head, but can't always succeed; my early days, with their fresh impressions, storm in on my soul, and I live all the past over again. That is in the natural order of things. The days are now for the most part bright, and I am somewhat more cheerful. The rainy days, though, are unbearable, and on them the casemate looks terribly grim. I have occupation, however. I do not let the time go by for naught; I have made out the plots of three tales and two novels; and am writing a novel now, but avoid over-working. Such labour, when I do it with great enjoyment (I have' never worked so much *con amore* as now), has always agitated me and affected my nerves. While I was working in freedom I was always obliged to diversify my labours with amusements; but here the excitement consequent on work has to evaporate unaided. My health is good, except for the haemorrhoids, and the shattered state of my nerves, which keeps up a constant *crescendo.* Now and then I get attacks of breathlessness, my appetite is as unsatisfactory as ever, I sleep badly, and have morbid dreams. I sleep about five hours in the daytime, and

wake four times at least every night. This is the only thing that really bothers me. The worst of all are the twilight hours. By nine o’clock it is quite dark here. I often cannot get to sleep until about one or two in the morning, and the five hours during which I have to lie in darkness are hard to bear. They are injuring my health more than anything else. When our case will be finished I can’t say at all, for I have lost all sense of time, and merely use a calendar upon which I stroke out, quite passively, each day as it passes: “That’s over!” I haven’t read much since I’ve been here: two descriptions of travel in the Holy Land, and the works of Demetrius von Rostov. The latter interested me very much; but that kind of reading is only a drop in the ocean; any other sort of books would, I imagine, quite extraordinarily delight me, and they might be very useful, for thus I could diversify my own thoughts with those of others, or at all events capture a different mood.

There you have all the details of my present existence — I have nothing else to tell you. I am glad that you found your family in the best of health. Have you yet written of your liberation to Moscow? It is a pity that nothing is done here. How I should like to spend at least one day with you! It is now three months since we came to this fortress: what may not still be in store for us! Possibly I shall not, the whole summer through, see so much as one green leaf. Do you remember how in May they would take us to walk in the little garden? The green was just beginning then, and I couldn’t help thinking of Reval, where I was with you at about that season, and of the garden belonging to the Engineering College. I imagined that you *must* be making the same comparison, so sad was I. And I should like to see a lot of other people besides. Whom do you see most of now? I suppose everybody’s in the country. But our brother Andrey must surely be in town? Have you seen Nikolya? Greet them all from me. Kiss all your children for me. Greet your wife, and tell her that I am greatly touched by her thinking of me. Don’t be too anxious on my account. I have but one wish — to be in good health; the tedium is a passing matter, and cheerfulness depends in the last resort upon myself. Human beings have an incredible amount of endurance and will to live; I should never have expected to find so much in myself; now I know it from experience. Farewell! I hope that these few lines will give you much pleasure. Greet every one you see whom I have known — forget no one. I have not forgotten anybody. What can the children be thinking of me, and how do they explain to themselves my

disappearance? Farewell. If you can at all manage it, send me the *O. Z.* Then I should at any rate have something to read. Write me a few lines — it would extraordinarily cheer me.

Till next time!

XVIII. To his Brother Michael

[FROM THE FORTRESS],
August 27, 1849.

I rejoice that I may answer you, dear brother, and thank you for sending the books. I rejoice also that you are well, and that the imprisonment had no evil effects upon your constitution. I am most particularly grateful to you for the *O. Z.* But you write far too little, and my letters are much more comprehensive than yours. This only by the way — you'll do better next time.

I have nothing definite to tell you about myself. As yet I know nothing whatever about our case. My *personal* life is as monotonous as ever; but they have given me permission to walk in the garden, where there are almost seventeen trees! This is a great happiness for me. Moreover, I am given a candle in the evenings — that's my second piece of luck. The third will be mine if you answer as soon as possible, and send me the next number of the *O. Z.* I am in the same position as a country subscriber, and await each number as a great event, like some landed proprietor dying of boredom in the provinces. Will you send me some historical works? That would be splendid. But best of all would be the Bible (both Testaments). I need one. Should it prove possible, send it in a French translation. But if you could add as well a Slav edition, it would be the height of bliss.

Of my health I can tell you nothing good. For a month I have been living almost exclusively on castor oil. My haemorrhoids have been unusually tormenting; moreover I detect a pain in the breast that I have never had before. My nervous irritability has notably increased, especially in the evening hours; at night I have long, hideous dreams, and latterly I have often felt as if the ground were rocking under me so, that my room seems like the cabin of a steamer. From all this I conclude that my nerves are increasingly shattered. Whenever formerly I had such nervous disturbances, I made use of them for writing; in such a state I could write much more and much better than usual; but now I refrain from work that I may not utterly destroy myself. I took a rest of three weeks, during which time I wrote not at all; now I have begun again. But anyhow, all this is nothing: I can stick it out to the end. Perhaps I shall get quite right again.

You most tremendously astonish me when you write that you believe they know nothing of our adventure in Moscow. I have thought it over, and come to the conclusion that that’s quite impossible. They simply *must* know, and I attribute their silence to another reason. And that was, after all, to be expected. Oh, it’s quite clear....

[The letter goes on to speak of his brother’s family. Dostoevsky also makes some unimportant remarks on the articles in the *O. Z.*]

XIX. To his Brother Michael

[FROM THE FORTRESS],
September 14, 1849.

I have received, dear brother, your letter, the books (Shakespeare, the Bible, and the *O. Z)* and the money (ten roubles): thank you for all. I am glad that you are well. I go on as before. Always the same digestive troubles and the haemorrhoids. I don't know if all this will ever leave me. The autumn months, which I find so trying, are drawing near, and with them returns my hypochondria. The sky is already grey; my health and good heart are dependent on those little tatters of blue that I can see from my casemate. But at any rate I'm alive, and comparatively well. This fact I maintain; therefore I beg you not to think of my state as wholly grievous. My health *is* at present good. I had expected worse, and now I see that I have so much vitality in me that it simply won't allow itself to be exhausted.

Thank you again for the books. They divert me, at all events. For almost five months I have been living exclusively on my own provisions — that is to say, on my own head alone and solely. That machine is still in working order. But it is unspeakably hard to think *only,* everlastingly to think, without any of those external impressions which renew and nourish the soul. I live as though under the bell of an air-pump, from which the air is being drawn. My whole existence has concentrated itself in my head, and from my head has drifted into my thoughts, and the labour of those thoughts grows more arduous every day. Books are certainly a mere drop in the ocean, still they do always help me; while my own work, I think, consumes my remains of strength. Nevertheless it gives me much happiness.

I have read the books you sent. I am particularly thankful for the Shakespeare. That was a good idea of yours. The English novel in the *O. Z.* is very good. On the other hand, Turgenev's comedy is unpardonably bad. Why has he always such ill-luck? Is he fated to ruin every work of his which runs to more than one printed sheet? I simply could not recognize him in this comedy. Not a trace of originality; everything in the old, worn-out groove. He has said it all before, and much better. The last scene is puerile in its feebleness. Here and there one thinks to see signs of talent, but

only for want of something better. How splendid is the article on the Banks — and how universally true! I thank all who remember me; greet your Emilie Fyodorovna from me, our brother Andrey too, and kiss the children, who, I greatly hope, are better. Truly I don’t know, brother, when and how we shall meet again! Farewell, and please don’t forget me. Write to me, even if it can’t be for a fortnight. Till next time!

Thy

F. DOSTOEVSKY.

Pray do not be anxious about me. If you can get hold of any books, send them.

XX. To his Brother Michael

[FROM THE FORTRESS],
December 22, 1849.

To-day, the 22nd of December, we were all taken to Semionovsky Square. There the death-sentence was read to us, we were given the Cross to kiss, the dagger was broken over our heads, and our funeral toilet (white shirts) was made. Then three of us were put standing before the palisades for the execution of the death-sentence. I was sixth in the row; we were called up by groups of three, and so I was in the second group, and had not more than a minute to live. I thought of you, my brother, and of yours; in that last moment you alone were in my mind; then first I learnt how very much I love you, my beloved brother! I had time to embrace Plechtcheyev and Dourov, who stood near me, and to take my leave of them. Finally, retreat was sounded, those who were bound to the palisades were brought back, and it was read to us that His Imperial Majesty granted us our lives. Then the final sentences were recited. Palm alone is fully pardoned. He has been transferred to the line with the same rank.

F. DOSTOEVSKY.

XXI. To his Brother Michael

[FROM OMSK],
February 22, 1854.

At last I can talk with you somewhat more explicitly, and, I believe, in a more reasonable manner. But before I write another line I *must* ask you: Tell me, for God's sake, why you have never written me a single syllable till now? Could I have expected this from you? Believe me, in my lonely and isolated state, I sometimes fell into utter despair, for I believed that you were no longer alive; through whole nights I would brood upon what was to become of your children, and I cursed my fate because I could not help them. But whenever I heard for certain that you were still alive, I would get furious (this happened, however, only in times of illness, from which I have suffered a very great deal), and begin to reproach you bitterly. Then those states of mind would pass, and I would excuse you, I would exert myself to find a justification for you, and grow tranquil as soon as I discovered any — nor did I ever for a moment utterly lose faith in you: I know that you love me, and keep me in kindly remembrance. I wrote you a letter through our official staff; you simply must have got it; I expected an answer from you, and received none. Were you then forbidden to write to me? But I know that letters are allowed, for every one of the political prisoners here gets several in the year. Even Dourov had some; and we often asked the officials how it stood about correspondence, and they declared that people had the right to send us letters. I think I have guessed the real reason for your silence. You were too lazy to go to the police-office, or if you did go once, you took the first "No" for an answer — given you, probably, by some functionary or other who knew nothing rightly about the matter. Well, you have caused me a great deal of selfish anxiety, for I thought: If he won't take any trouble about a letter, he certainly won't either about more important things! Write and answer me as quickly as possible; write, without awaiting an opportunity, *officially,* and be as explicit and detailed as you possibly can. I am like a slice cut from a loaf nowadays; I long to grow back again, but can't. *Les absents ont toujours tort.* Is that saying to come true of us two? But be easy in your mind: I trust you.

It is a week now since I left the prison. I am sending this letter in the strictest secrecy; say not a syllable about it to anyone. I shall send you an official one too, through the staff of the Siberian Army Corps. Answer the official one instantly, but this — on the first suitable occasion. You must, though, write very circumstantially in the official letter of what you have been doing during these four years. For my part I should like to be sending you volumes. But as my time scarcely suffices for even this sheet, I shall tell you only the most important thing.

What *is* the most important? What was the most important to me in the recent past? When I reflect, I see that even to tell that, this sheet is far too small. How can I impart to you what is now in my mind — the things I thought, the things I did, the convictions I acquired, the conclusions I came to? I cannot even attempt the task. It is absolutely impracticable. I don't like to leave a piece of work half done; to say only a part is to say nothing. At any rate, you now have my detailed report in your hands: read it, and get from it what you will. It is my duty to tell you all, and so I will begin with my recollections. Do you remember how we parted from one another, my dear beloved fellow? You had scarcely left me when we three, Dourov, Yastrchembsky, and I, were led out to have the irons put on. Precisely at midnight on that Christmas Eve (1849), did chains touch me for the first time. They weigh about ten pounds, and make walking extraordinarily difficult. Then we were put into open sledges, each alone with a gendarme, and so, in four sledges — the orderly opening the procession — we left Petersburg. I was heavy-hearted, and the many different impressions filled me with confused and uncertain sensations. My heart beat with a peculiar flutter, and that numbed its pain. Still, the fresh air was reviving in its effect, and, since it is usual before all new experiences to be aware of a curious vivacity and eagerness, so *I* was at the bottom quite tranquil. I looked attentively at all the festively-lit houses of Petersburg, and said good-bye to each. They drove us past your abode, and at Krayevsky's the windows were brilliantly lit. You had told me that he was giving a Christmas party and tree, and that your children were going to it, with Emilie Fyodorovna; I did feel dreadfully sad as we passed that house. I took leave, as it were, of the little ones. I felt so lonely for them, and even years afterwards I often thought of them with tears in my eyes. We were driven beyond Yaroslavl; after three or four stations we stopped, in the first grey of morning, at Schlüsselburg, and went into an inn. There we drank tea with as much

avidity as if we had not touched anything for a week. After the eight months' captivity, sixty versts in a sledge gave us appetites of which, even to-day, I think with pleasure.

I was in a good temper, Dourov chattered incessantly, and Yastrchembsky expressed unwonted apprehensions for the future. We all laid ourselves out to become better acquainted with our orderly. He was a good old man, very friendly inclined towards us; a man who has seen a lot of life; he had travelled all over Europe with despatches. On the way he showed us many kindnesses. His name was Kusma Prokofyevitch Prokofyev. Among other things he let us have a covered sledge, which was very welcome, for the frost was fearful.

The second day was a holiday; the drivers, who were changed at the various stations, wore cloaks of grey German cloth with bright red belts: in the village-streets there was not a soul to be seen. It was a splendid winter-day. They drove us through the remote parts of the Petersburg, Novgorod, and Yaroslavl Governments. There' were quite insignificant little towns, at great distances from one another. But as we were passing through on a holiday, there was always plenty to eat and drink. We drove — drove terribly. We were warmly dressed, it is true, but we had to sit for ten hours at a time in the sledges, halting at only five or six stations: it was almost unendurable. I froze to the marrow, and could scarcely thaw myself in the warm rooms at the stations. Strange to say, the journey completely restored me to health. Near Perm, we had a frost of forty degrees during some of the nights. I don't recommend that to you. It was highly disagreeable. Mournful was the moment when we crossed the Ural. The horses and sledges sank deep in the snow. A snow-storm was raging. We got out of the sledges — it was night — and waited, standing, till they were extricated. All about us whirled the snow-storm. We were standing on the confines of Europe and Asia; before us lay Siberia and the mysterious future — behind us, our whole past; it was very melancholy. Tears came to my eyes. On the way, the peasants would stream out of all the villages to see us; and although we were fettered, prices were tripled to us at all the stations. Kusma Prokofyevitch took half our expenses on himself, though we tried hard to prevent him; in this way each of us, during the whole journey, spent only fifteen roubles.

On January 12 (1850) we came to Tobolsk. After we had been paraded before the authorities, and searched, in which proceeding all our money was

taken from us, myself, Dourov, and Yastrchembsky were taken into one cell; the others, Spyechnyov, etc., who had arrived before us, were in another section, and during the whole time we hardly once saw each other. I should like to tell you more of our six days' stay in Tobolsk, and of the impressions it made upon me. But I haven't room here. I will only tell you that the great compassion and sympathy which was shown us there, made up to us, like a big piece of happiness, for all that had gone before. The prisoners of former days (These were the participators in the *coup d'étal* of December 14, 1825 ("Decembrists"), who had been banished to Siberia.) (and still more their wives) cared for us as if they had been our kith and kin. Those noble souls, tested by five-and-twenty years of suffering and self-sacrifice! We saw them but seldom, for we were very strictly guarded; still, they sent us clothes and provisions, they comforted and encouraged us. I had brought far too few clothes, and had bitterly repented it, but *they* sent me clothes. Finally we left Tobolsk, and reached Omsk in three days.

While I was in Tobolsk, I gathered information about my future superiors. They told me that the Commandant was a very decent fellow, but that the Major, Krivzov, was an uncommon brute, a petty tyrant, a drunkard, a trickster — in short, the greatest horror that can be imagined. From the very beginning, he called both Dourov and me blockheads, and vowed to chastise us bodily at the first transgression. He had already held his position for two years, and done the most hideous and unsanctioned things; two years later, he was court-martialled for them. So God protected me from him. He used to come to us mad drunk (I never once saw him sober), and would seek out some inoffensive prisoner and flog him on the pretext that *he* — the prisoner — was drunk. Often he came at night and punished at random — say, because such and such an one was sleeping on his left side instead of his right, or because he talked or moaned in his sleep — in fact, anything that occurred to his drunken mind. I should have had to break out in the long run against such a man as that, and it was he who wrote the monthly reports of us to Petersburg.

I had made acquaintance with convicts in Tobolsk; at Omsk I settled myself down to live four years in common with them. They are rough, angry, embittered men. Their hatred for the nobility is boundless; they regard all of us who belong to it with hostility and enmity. They would have devoured us if they only could. Judge then for yourself in '-hat danger we stood, having to cohabit with these people for some years, eat with them,

sleep by them, and with no possibility of complaining of the affronts which were constantly put upon us.

“You nobles have iron beaks, you have torn us to pieces. When you were masters, you injured the people, and now, when it’s evil days with you, you want to be our brothers.”

This theme was developed during four years. A hundred and fifty foes never wearied of persecuting us — it was their joy, their diversion, their pastime; our sole shield was our indifference and our moral superiority, which they were forced to recognize and respect; they were also impressed by our never yielding to their will. They were for ever conscious that we stood above them. They had not the least idea of what our offence had been. We kept our own counsel about that, and so we could never come to understand one another; we had to let the whole of the vindictiveness, the whole of the hatred, that they cherish against the nobility, flow over us. We had a very bad time there. A military prison is much worse than the ordinary ones. I spent the whole four years behind dungeon walls, and only left the prison when I was taken on “hard labour.” The labour was hard, though not always; sometimes in bad weather, in rain, or in winter during the unendurable frosts, my strength would forsake me. Once I had to spend four hours at a piece of extra work, and in such frost that the quicksilver froze; it was perhaps forty degrees below zero. One of my feet was frost-bitten. We all lived together in one barrack-room. Imagine an old, crazy wooden building, that should long ago have been broken up as useless. In the summer it is unbearably hot, in the winter unbearably cold. All the boards are rotten. On the ground filth lies an inch thick; every instant one is in danger of slipping and coming down. The small windows are so frozen over that even by day one can hardly read. The ice on the panes is three inches thick. The ceilings drip, there are draughts everywhere. We are packed like herrings in a barrel. The stove is heated with six logs of wood, but the room is so cold that the ice never once thaws; the atmosphere is unbearable — and so through all the winter long. In the same room, the prisoners wash their linen, and thus make the place so wet that one scarcely dares to move. From twilight till morning we are forbidden to leave the barrack-room; the doors are barricaded; in the ante-room a great wooden trough for the calls of nature is placed; this makes one almost unable to breathe. All the prisoners stink like pigs; they say that they can’t help it, for they must live, and are but men. We slept upon bare boards; each man was

allowed one pillow only. We covered ourselves with short sheepskins, and our feet were outside the covering all the time. It was thus that we froze night after night. Fleas, lice, and other vermin by the bushel. In the winter we got thin sheepskins to wear, which didn't keep us warm at all, and boots with short legs; thus equipped, we had to go out in the frost.

To eat we got bread and cabbage-soup: the soup should, by the regulations, have contained a quarter-pound of meat per head; but they put in sausage-meat, and so I never came across a piece of genuine flesh. On feast-days we got porridge, but with scarcely any butter. On fast-days — cabbage and nothing else. My stomach went utterly to pieces, and I suffered tortures from indigestion.

From all this you can see for yourself that one couldn't live there at all without money; if I had had none, I should most assuredly have perished; no one could endure such a life. But every convict does some sort of work and sells it, thus earning, every single one of them, a few pence. I often drank tea and bought myself a piece of meat; it was my salvation. It was quite impossible to do without smoking, for otherwise the stench would have choked one. All these things were done behind the backs of the officials.

I was often in hospital. My nerves were so shattered that I had some epileptic fits — however, that was not very often. I have rheumatism in my legs now, too. But except for that, I feel right well. Add to all these discomforts, the fact that it was almost impossible to get one's self a book, and that when I did get one, I had to read it on the sly; that all around me was incessant malignity, turbulence, and quarrelling; then perpetual espionage, and the impossibility of ever being alone for even an instant — and so without variation for four long years: you'll believe me when I tell you that I was not happy. And imagine, in addition, the ever-present dread of drawing down some punishment on myself, the irons, and the utter oppression of spirits — and you have the picture of my life.

I won't even try to tell you what transformations were undergone by my soul, my faith, my mind, and my heart in those four years. It would be a long story. Still, the eternal concentration, the escape into myself from bitter reality, did bear its fruit. I now have many new needs and hopes of which I never thought in other days. But all this will be pure enigma for you, and so I'll pass to other things. I will say only one word: Do not forget me, and do help me. I need books and money. Send them me, for Christ's sake.

Omsk is a hateful hole. There is hardly a tree here. In summer — heat and winds that bring sandstorms; in winter — snow-storms. I have scarcely seen anything of the country round. The place is dirty, almost exclusively inhabited by military, and dissolute to the last degree. I mean the common people. If I hadn't discovered some human beings here, I should have gone utterly to the dogs. Constantine Ivanovitch Ivanov is like a brother to me. He has done everything that he in any way could for me. I owe him money. If he ever goes to Petersburg, show him some recognition. I owe him twenty-five roubles. But how can I repay his kindness, his constant willingness to carry out all my requests, his attention and care for me, just like a brother's? And he is not the only one whom I have to thank in that way. Brother, there are very many noble natures in the world.

I have already said that your silence often tortured me. I thank you for the money you sent. In your next letter (even if it's "official," for I don't know yet whether it is possible for me to correspond with you) — in your next, write as fully as you can of all your affairs, of Emilie Fyodorovna, the children, all relations and acquaintances; also of those in Moscow — who is alive and who is dead;and of your business: tell me with what capital you started it, (Michael Dostoevsky had at this time a tobacco and cigarette factory.) whether it is lucrative, whether you are in funds, and finally, whether you will help me financially, and how much you will send me a year. But send no money with the official letter — particularly if I don't find a covering address. For the present, give Michael Petrovitch as the consignor of all packets (you understand, don't you?). For the time I have some money, but I have no books. If you can, send me the magazines for this year, or at any rate the *O. Z.* But what I urgently need are the following; I need (very necessary) ancient historians (in French translations); modem historians: Guizot, Thierry, Thiers, Ranke, and so forth; national studies, and the Fathers of the Church..Choose the cheapest and most compact editions. Send them by return. They have ordered me to Semipalatinsk, which lies on the edge of the Kirghiz steppes; I'll let you have the address. Here is one for the present, anyhow; "Semipalatinsk, Siberian Regiment of the Line, Seventh Battalion, Private F. Dostoevsky." That's the official style. To this one send your letters. But I'll give you another for the books. For the present, write as Michael Petrovitch. Remember, above all things, I need a German dictionary.

I don’t know what awaits me at Semipalatinsk. I don’t mind the service much. But what I *do* care about is — exert yourself for me, spend yourself for me with somebody or other. Could they not transfer me in a year or two to the Caucasus? Then I should at least be in European Russia! This is my dearest desire, grant it me, for Christ’s sake! Brother, do not forget me! I write and scold you and dispose of your very property! But my faith in you is not yet extinguished. You are my brother, and you used to love me. I need money. I must have something to live on, brother. These years shall not have been in vain. I want money and books. What you spend on me will not be lost. If you give me help, you won’t be robbing your children. If I live, I’ll repay you with interest — oh, a thousandfold. In six years, perhaps even sooner, I shall surely get permission to print my books. It may indeed be quite otherwise, but I don’t write recklessly now. You shall hear of me again.

We shall see one another some day, brother. I believe in that as in the multiplication-table. To my soul, all is clear. I see my whole future, and all that I shall accomplish, plainly before me. I am content with my life. I fear only men and tyranny. How easily might I come across a superior officer who did not like me (there are such folk!), who would torment me incessantly and destroy me with the rigours of service — for I am very frail and of course in no state to bear the full burden of a soldier’s life. People try to console me: “They’re quite simple sort of fellows there.” But I dread simple men more than complex ones. For that matter, men everywhere are just — men. Even among the robber-murderers in the prison, I came to know some men in those four years. Believe me, there were among them deep, strong, beautiful natures, and it often gave me great joy to find gold under a rough exterior. And not in a single case, or even two, but in several cases. Some inspired respect; others were downright fine. I taught the Russian language and reading to a young Circassian — he had been transported to Siberia for robbery with murder. How grateful he was to me! Another convict wept when I said good-bye to him. Certainly I had often given him money, but it was so little, and his gratitude so boundless. My character, though, was deteriorating; in my relations with others I was ill-tempered and impatient. They accounted for it by my mental condition, and bore all without grumbling. Apropos: what a number of national types and characters I became familiar with in the prison! I lived *into* their lives, and so I believe I know them really well. Many tramps’ and thieves’ careers

were laid bare to me, and, above all, the whole wretched existence of the common people. Decidedly I have not spent my time there in vain. I have learnt to know the Russian people as only a few know them. I am a little vain of it. I hope that such vanity is pardonable.

Brother! Be sure to tell me of all the most important events in your life. Send the official letter to Semipalatinsk, and the unofficial — whither you soon shall know. Tell me of all our acquaintances in Petersburg, of literature (as many details as possible), and finally of our folks in Moscow. How is our brother Kolya? What (and this is much more important) is sister Sacha doing? Is Uncle still alive? What is brother Andrey about? I am writing to our aunt through sister Vera. For God's sake, keep this letter a dead secret, and burn it; it might compromise various people. Don't forget, dear friend, to send me books. Above all things histories and national studies, the *O. Z.*, the Fathers of the Church, and church-histories. Don't send all the books at once, though as soon after one another as possible. I am dispensing your money for you as if it were my own; but only because your present situation is unknown to me. Write fully about your affairs, so that I may have some idea of them. But mark this, brother: books are my life, my food, my future! For God's sake, don't abandon me. I pray you! Try to get permission to send me the books quite openly. But be cautious. If it can be done openly, send them openly. But if it can't, then send them through brother Constantine Ivanovitch, to his address. I shall get them. Constantine Ivanovitch, by-the-bye, is going this very year to Petersburg; he'll tell you everything. What a family he has! And what a wife! She is a young girl, the daughter of the Decembrist Annenkov. Such a heart, such a disposition — and to think of what they've all been through! I shall set myself, when I go to Semipalatinsk in a week, to find a new covering address. I am not quite strong yet, so must remain here a while. (Send me the Koran, and Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason"), and if you have the chance of sending anything *not* officially, then be sure to send Hegel — but particularly Hegel's "History of Philosophy." Upon that depends my whole future. For God's sake, exert yourself for me to get me transferred to the Caucasus; try to find out from well-informed people whether I shall be permitted to print my works, and in what way I should seek this sanction. I intend to try for permission in two or three years. I beg you to sustain me so long. Without money I shall be destroyed by military life. So please!

Perhaps in the beginning the other relatives would support me too? In that case they could hand the money to you, and you would send it to me. In my letters to Aunt and to Vera, though, I never ask for money. They can guess themselves that I want it, if they think about me at all.

Filippov, before he left for Sebastopol, gave me twenty-five roubles. He left them with the Commandant, Nabokov, and I knew nothing about it beforehand. He thought that I should have no money. A kind soul! All our lot are doing not so badly in banishment. Toll has done his time, and now lives quite tranquilly in Tomsk. Yastrchembsky is in Tara; his time is drawing to an end. Spyechnyov is in the Irkutsk Government; he has won general liking and respect there. That man's is a curious destiny! Wherever, and in whatever circumstances, he may appear, even the most inaccessible people show him honour and respect. Petrachevsky is now and then not in his right mind; Monbelli and Loov are well; poor Grigoryev has gone clean out of his senses and is in hospital. And how goes it with you? Do you still see a great deal of Mme. Plestcheiev? What is her son doing? From prisoners who passed through here, I heard that he is alive and in the fortress at Orsk, and that Golovinsky has long been in the Caucasus. How goes your literature, and your interest in literature? Are you writing anything? What is Krayevsky about, and what are your relations with him? I don't care for Ostrovsky; I have read nothing by Pissemsky; Drushinin I loathe. I was enchanted with Eugenie Tur. I like Krestovsky too.

I should like to have written much more; but so much time has gone by that even this letter was somewhat difficult to write. But it really cannot be that our relation is altered in any respect. Kiss your children. Can they remember Uncle Fedya at all? Greet all acquaintances — but keep this letter a dead secret. Farewell, farewell, dear fellow! You shall hear from me again, and perhaps even see me. Yes — we shall most certainly see one another again! Farewell. Read attentively all that I write to you. Write to me as often as possible (even if officially). I embrace you and all yours more times than I can count.

Thy
DOSTOEVSKY.

P.S. — Have you received my children's story, (He means "The Little Hero." The story did not appear till 1857 (in the *O. Z.*, under the pseudonym

“M — y.”).) that I wrote in the fortress? If it is in your hands, don’t do anything with it, and show it to no one. Who is Tschernov, that wrote a “Double” in 1850?

Till next time!

Thy
DOSTOEVSKY.

XXII. To Mme. N. D. Fonvisin

*(*Wife of the Decembrist M. A. Fonvisin. Dostoevsky had met her in Tobolsk in 1850. During his captivity, when he himself was not allowed to correspond with his brother, she was his only medium of communication with the outside world.)

OMSK,
Beginning of March, 1854.

At last I am writing to you, my kind N. D., after leaving my former place of abode. When I last wrote, I was sick in body and soul. I was consumed with longings, and I daresay my letter was quite senseless. That long, colourless, physically and morally difficult life had stifled me. It is always grievous to me to write letters at such times; and I regard it as cowardice to force one's sorrow on others, even when they are very fond of one. I send you this letter indirectly, and I am glad to be able to speak with you quite unconstrainedly at last; all the more because I have been transferred to Semipalatinsk to the seventh battalion, and therefore don't at all know in what way I may be able to correspond with you in future.

[Dostoevsky further discusses the question of how he may most safely correspond with his brother and with Mme. Fonvisin.]

With what delight I read your letter, dearest N. D. You write quite admirable letters, or, more precisely, your letters flow easily and naturally from your good kind heart. There are reserved and embittered natures, which only in very rare moments are expansive. I know such people. They are not necessarily bad people — quite the contrary, indeed.

I don't know why, but I guess from your letter that you returned home in bad spirits. I understand it; I have sometimes thought that if ever I return home, I shall get more grief than joy from my impressions there. I have not lived your life, and much in it is unknown to me, and indeed, no one can really know exactly his fellow-mortal's life; still, human feeling is common to us all, and it seems to me that everyone who has been banished must live all his past grief over again in consciousness and memory, on his return home. It is like a balance, by which one can test the true gravity of what one has endured, gone through, and lost. God grant you a long life! I have heard

from many people that you are very religious. But not because you are religious, but because I myself have learnt it and gone through it, I want to say to you that in such moments, one does, “like dry grass,” thirst after faith, and that one finds it in the end, solely and simply because one sees the truth more clearly when one is unhappy. I want to say to you, about myself, that I am a child of this age, a child of unfaith and scepticism, and probably (indeed I know it) shall remain so to the end of my life. How dreadfully has it tormented me (and torments me even now) — this longing for faith, which is all the stronger for the proofs I have against it. And yet God gives me sometimes moments of perfect peace; in such moments I love and believe that I am loved; in such moments I have formulated my creed, wherein all is clear and holy to me. This creed is extremely simple; here it is: I believe that there is nothing lovelier, deeper, more sympathetic, more rational, more manly, and more perfect than the Saviour; I say to myself with jealous love that not only is there no one else like Him, but that there could be no one. I would even say more: If anyone could prove to me that Christ is outside the truth, and if the truth really did exclude Christ, I should prefer to stay with Christ and not with truth.

I would rather not say anything more about it. And yet I don’t know why certain topics may never be touched on in society, and why, if anyone does introduce them, it makes the others uncomfortable. Still, enough of it. I heard that you were desirous of travelling somewhere in the South. God grant that you may succeed in obtaining permission to do so. But will you please tell me when we shall be quite free, or at any rate as free as other people? Perhaps only when we no longer need freedom? For my part, I want all or nothing. In my soldier’s uniform I am the same prisoner as before. I rejoice greatly that I find there is patience in my soul for quite a long time yet, that I desire no earthly possessions, and need nothing but books, the possibility of writing, and of being daily for a few hours alone. The last troubles me most. For almost five years I have been constantly under surveillance, or with several other people, and not one hour alone with myself. To be alone is a natural need, like eating and drinking; for in that kind of concentrated communism one becomes a whole-hearted enemy of mankind. The constant companionship of others works like poison or plague; and from that unendurable martyrdom I most suffered in the last four years. There were moments in which I hated every man, whether good or evil, and regarded him as a thief who, unpunished, was robbing me of

life. The most unbearable part is when one grows unjust, malignant, and evil, is aware of it, even reproves one's-self, and yet has not the power to control one's-self. I have experienced that. I am convinced that God will keep you from it. I believe that you, as a woman, have more power to forgive and to endure.

Do write me a line, N. D. I am now going to a veritable desert, to Asia, and there, in Semipalatinsk, it seems to me that all my past, all memories and impressions, will leave me; for the last human beings whom I still had to love, and who were like a shadow of my past, will now have to desert me. I get so dreadfully quickly used to people, and grow into my environment so tenaciously, that I never can tear myself away, when the time comes, without great pain. I wish for *you*, N. D., that you may live as happily and as long as possible! If we ever meet again, we shall learn to know one another afresh, and each of us may perhaps still have many happy days. I live in constant expectancy; I am always rather ill now, and I feel that soon, very soon, something decisive must happen, that I am nearing the crucial moment of my whole life, am ripe for anything that may come — and that perhaps something tranquil and bright, perhaps something menacing, but in any case something inevitable, closely impends. Otherwise my whole life would be a failure. Perhaps it has all been but a sick delirium! Farewell, N. D., or rather au revoir; we'll hope, won't we? that we *shall* see one another again!

Your

D.

P.S. — For goodness' sake forgive this untidy, greasy letter! But, on my sacred honour, I can't write without erasures. Don't be cross with me.

XXIII. To Mme. Maria Dmitryevna Issayev

*(*Dostoevsky's future wife. Compare the reminiscences of Baron Vrangel, in the Appendix.)

FROM SEMIPALATINSK TO KUSNEZK

[IN THE TOMSK GOVERNMENT],
June 4, 1855

A thousand thanks for your dear letter on the journey, my dear and unforgettable friend Maria Dmitryevna. I hope that you and Alexander Ivanovitch (The lady's husband.) will allow me to call you both friends. We certainly were friends here, and I trust we shall remain so. Is mere separation to alter us? I believe not; for the parting from you, my dear friends, lies so heavily upon me that by that alone I can judge how very much I cling to you. Just imagine: this is the second letter I have written to you. I had an answer to your dear cordial letter ready for the earlier post, dear Maria Dmitryevna, but I never sent it. Alexander Yegorovitch, (Baron Vrangel.) who was to have taken it to the post, quite suddenly left for Smyev last Saturday, and I never heard of his departure till Sunday. His servant simultaneously disappeared for two days, and the letter remained in my pocket. Hard luck! I am now writing to you again, but know not if this letter will get off either. Alexander Yegorovitch is not back yet. But they have sent a special messenger after him.

Here we hourly expect the Governor-General; he may perhaps be already arrived. It is said that he will spend about five days here. But enough of that. How did you arrive at Kusnezk? I hope and pray that nothing happened to you on the way. You write that you are depressed and even ill. So I am most anxious about you. The mere move caused you such trouble and such unavoidable discomforts, and now there's this illness added! How are you to bear it all? I can think of nothing but you. You know how apprehensive I am, so you can picture my anxiety. My God, how little you — *you*, who might be an ornament to any society — deserve this fate with all its petty cares and contrarieties! Accursed destiny! I await your letter with impatience. If only it would come by this post! I went several times to find out if it had; but Alexander Yegorovitch is not back yet. You ask me

how I pass the time, and how I arrange my day without you. For a fortnight I have not known what to do with myself, so sad am I. If you only knew how orphaned I now feel! It is just like the time when they arrested me in 1849, put me in prison, and tore me from all that I loved and prized. So very much had I grown to you. I never looked upon our intercourse as an ordinary acquaintanceship, and now, when I no longer have you near me, I begin to understand many things. I have lived for five years entirely without human relations — quite alone, without a creature to whom I could open my heart. But you two treated me like a brother. I remember that from the very first, I felt at home in your house. Alexander Ivanovitch could not have been kinder to his own brother than he was to me. With my unendurable character, I must have caused you much vexation, and yet you both loved me. I recognize it and feel it, for indeed I am not quite heartless. You are a wonderful woman; you have a heart of rare child-like kindliness, and you were like a sister to me. The mere fact that a woman should treat me in so friendly a way was a great event in my life. For even the best man is often, if I may say so, a block. Woman's heart, woman's compassion, woman's sympathy, the endless kindness of which we have no clear perception, and which, in our obtuseness, we often do not even notice — these are irreplaceable. All *that* I found in you; even apart from my many failings, a sister could not have been kinder and more tactful to me than you were, If we did go through some violent upheavals, it was always because I was ungrateful, and you were ill, exacerbated, and wounded; you were wounded because the disgusting society-folk neither prized nor understood you, and anyone with your energy *must* revolt against all injustice, and that revolt is noble and dignified. These are the essential features of your character; suffering and circumstances have naturally distorted much in you — but, by God, with what usurer's interest was any such failing always redeemed! And since I was not stupid all the time, I saw and treasured it. In one word, I *had* to love your house as my very own home — I could not do otherwise. I shall never forget you both, and shall be ever grateful to you. For I am convinced that neither of you has the least idea of all you did for me, and how very necessary to me were just such people as you. If I had not had you, I should most likely have turned into a block of wood; but now I am a human being again. But enough; it is not to be expressed, least of all in a letter. I curse this letter, because it reminds me of our parting; everything reminds me of that. In the twilight, in those hours when I used to go to you,

such grief overwhelms me that I could weep if I were at all prone to do so; and I know you would not laugh at my tears. Once for all, my heart is so constituted that everything it loves and treasures grows deeply rooted in it, and when uptorn, causes wounds and suffering. I live quite solitary here now, and have no idea what to do with myself; everything is spoilt for me. A frightful blank! I have only Alexander Yegorovitch now; but in his company I always feel sad, for always I involuntarily compare myself with him, and you can easily imagine what that results in. In any case, he's away just at present. During his absence I have been twice in the Kasakov Gardens, and I did feel so sad! When I think of last summer, when *you*, poor dear, had only one wish, to get out into the country so that you might have a breath of fresh air — great grief comes over me, and I feel frightfully sorry for you. Do you remember how we — you, Alexander Ivanovitch, I, and Elena — were once in the Kasakov Gardens? How vivid was the sense of it, when I went there again! In the Gardens nothing is changed, and the seat on which we sat is still standing there.... And I felt so sad. You write suggesting that I should live with Vrangel; but I don't want to do that, for I have several weighty reasons against it. First, the question of money. If I lived with him, I should of course have to spend much more money on rent, servants, and food, for I wouldn't live at his expense. Second: my character. Third: his character. Fourth: I have noticed that he is much visited by all sorts of people. I don't mean to shut myself off from society, but I can't stand strangers. Finally: I love solitude, I am used to it, and use is second nature. Enough. I have really told you nothing yet. After I had accompanied you to the forest and taken leave of you under a pine-tree (which I've marked), I returned arm-in-arm with Vrangel (who was leading his horse by the bridle) to the Pechechonov's hospitable abode. It was there that I first realized my desolate state. At first I could see your travelling-carriage in the distance, then only hear it, and at last it was quite gone. We got into the droschky, and sat talking of you both and of how you would bear the journey; and it was then that Vrangel told me something that greatly rejoiced me. On the day of your departure, early in the morning, it appears that Pyotr Michailovitch suggested that they should spend the whole evening together somewhere. Vrangel refused the offer, and when Pyotr Michailovitch asked him why, he answered: "Because I must see the Issayevs off." There were some other people there. Pyotr Michailovitch asked at once: "Then you know that pair very well?" Vrangel answered

somewhat stiffly that he had only known you for a short time, but thought your house one of the pleasantest possible, and that its mistress — that is, you — was a woman such as he had seen none to equal since he had been in Petersburg, and probably never would see again; a woman "such as *you* have never seen at all," he added, "and I consider her acquaintance the greatest honour."

This story of Vrangel's gave me extraordinary joy. I think the opinion of a man like that, who knows ladies in the best society (for in such society he was born), is quite decisive. Talking of similar subjects, and continually abusing the Pechechonovs, we reached the town about sunrise. And the driver, to whom we had given no orders, took us straight to my house. In this way the proposed tea fell through, of which I was very glad, for I was longing to be alone. I stayed at home a good while, walking up and down in my room, looking at the sunrise, and going over the whole past year, which had flown by so rapidly for me; all the memories came up, and I grew very sad, thinking of my future. From that day I wander about aimlessly, like the Wandering Jew. I go scarcely anywhere. Everything seems tiresome; I've been once to Grischin's, who is going to Kopal, and is now breaking up house (he's going to Vyerny too); to Mader's, who says I've grown thin; to Schulitchka's (I took him my birthday greetings), where I met the Pechechonovs and talked with them; I visit Byelichov now and then; and finally, go to camp for drill. I am frequently ill. How impatiently I awaited the return of the Tartar guides! Every minute I was running to Ordynsky's to find out something about it, and so was Silota. I have also been once to your house, brought away the ivy (it's here now), and saw the orphaned Surka, who ran to meet me, crazy with joy, but will not be induced to leave the house. At last the guides came back. Your letter, for which I thank you infinitely, was a great joy to me. I asked the Tartars many a question. They told me a lot, and praised you above all things (everyone praises you, Maria Dmitryevna!). I gave them a little money. The next day I met Koptyov at Vrangel's. He told me things too, but I couldn't ask him about what interested me most of all, namely, how your travelling-expenses had worked out. The question was too "ticklish." To this day I can't imagine how you ever got over the journey! How dear your letter is, Maria Dmitryevna! I expected just such an one. It is so full of detail; write me letters like that always. I can see your grandmother as if she were before my eyes. The bad old woman! How she adds to your troubles and embitters your life. May she

stay with her lap-dog to the end of her days! I hope that Alexander Ivanovitch will squeeze that last will and testament out of her, without ever letting her enter the house in person. She must be made to see that it’s the best arrangement even for herself; otherwise, she must undertake in writing to die within three months (and for each month pay 1,000 roubles); on that condition alone should you receive her. Shall you really, with your feeble health, be obliged to attend to all the lap-dogs? Such old women are truly unbearable! I read your letter to Vrangel — only parts of it, of course. I could not help going once to see Elena: the poor thing is so lonely. I am so immensely sorry that you were ill on the way! When *shall* I get a letter from you? I am so anxious! How were you on arrival? I shake Alexander Ivanovitch mightily by the hand, and kiss him. I hope he’ll soon write to me. I embrace him warmly as friend and brother, and wish him better health than he had here. And does he mean to be as entirely indiscriminate about people in Kusnezk as he was in Semipalatinsk? Are *all* those fellows really worth associating with, eating and drinking with, and, afterwards, taking all conceivable basenesses from? In that way one injures one’s-self with eyes wide open. What a loathsome lot they are, and above all, what a dirty lot! When one was in their company, one often felt one’s soul to be as soiled as if one were in a low dram-shop. I hope Alexander Ivanovitch won’t be angry with me for my wishes and my advice. Farewell, unforgettable Maria Dmitryevna — farewell! We *shall* meet again, shan’t we? Write to me very often and very much, write to me about Kusnezk, about the new people you know, and as much as possible about yourself. Kiss Pasha from me. Farewell, farewell — oh, *when* shall we see one another again?

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

XXIV. To Mme. Praskovya Yegorovna Annenkov

*(*Wife of the well-known Decembrist Annenkov.)

SEMIPALATINSK, *October* 18, 1855.

PRASKOVVA YEGOROVNA!

I wanted to write to you long ago, and have waited so long for a suitable opportunity that I will not delay now that one presents itself. The bearer of this letter, Alexey Ivanovitch Bachirev, is a very modest and very excellent young man, a simple and honest soul. I have known him now for a year and a half, and am sure that I am not mistaken in his qualities.

I shall ever remember the full, cordial sympathy which you and your whole excellent family showed to me and my companions in misfortune on my arrival in Siberia. I think of that sympathy with a quite peculiar sense of solace, and shall never, I think, forget it. He who has learnt by his own experience what “hostile destiny” means, and in certain moments has savoured the full bitterness of such a lot, knows also how sweet it then is to meet, quite unexpectedly, with brotherly compassion.

It was thus that you showed yourselves to me, and I often recall my meeting with you, when you came to Omsk and I was still in the prison.

Since my arrival at Semipalatinsk, I have heard almost nothing of Constantine Ivanovitch, and the much-honoured Olga Ivanovna; (These were the son-in-law and the daughter of Mme. Annenkov, Constantine Ivanovitch Ivanov, and Olga Ivanovna.) my intercourse with Olga Ivanovna will for ever be one of the pleasantest memories of my life. Eighteen months ago, when Dourov and I left the prison, we spent nearly a month in her house.

You can well imagine the effect that such intercourse must have had on a man who for four years, adapting myself, as I did, to my fellow-prisoners, had lived like a slice cut from a loaf, or a person buried underground. Olga Ivanovna held out her hand to me like a sister, and the memory of that beautiful, pure, proud, and noble nature will be clear and radiant all my life long. May God shower much happiness on her, happiness for herself and for those who are dear to her! I should like to hear something of her. I believe that such beautiful natures as hers must always be happy; only the evil are unhappy. I believe that happiness lies in a clear conception of life

and in goodness of heart, not in external circumstances. Is it not so? I am sure that you will understand me rightly, and that is why I write thus to you.

My life goes by somehow or other; but I may confide to you that I have great hopes.... My hopes are based on certain facts; various people are taking the greatest trouble for me in Petersburg, and I shall perhaps hear something in a few months. You will probably have heard that Dourov has been released from military service on account of his health, and has now entered the Civil Service. He is in Omsk. Perhaps you have news of him. We don't correspond, though we keep one another in good remembrance.

Baron Vrangel, whom you know, sends you greeting. I am friendly with him. His is' a fine, fresh nature; God grant it may always so remain.

My profound, entire, and sincere respects to your husband. I wish you perfect happiness. Do you happen to have heard anything from a certain oracle, (The allusion is to a spiritualistic séance, at which Mme. Ivanovna heard an astonishing prophecy with regard to a question of inheritance.) who was consulted during my stay at Omsk? I remember still what a deep impression it made upon Olga Ivanovna.

Farewell, most honoured Praskovya Yegorovna.

I am sure that we shall meet again, and perhaps quite soon. It is my sincere wish. I think with veneration of you and all yours.

I remain, in deepest reverence,
F. DOSTOEVSKY.

I had a few lines from Constantine Ivanovitch this summer.

Though I much esteem the bearer of this letter, A. I. Bachirev, I don't confide all things to him.

XXV. To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov

(The well-known author (1821-97).)

SEMIPALATINSK, *January* 18, 1856.

I meant to answer your kind letter long ago, my dear Apollon Nikolayevitch. As I read it, there came to me a breath of the past. I thank you a thousand times for not having forgotten me. I don't know why, but I always had the feeling that you wouldn't forget me; perhaps because I can't forget you. You write that much has altered in this interval, and that we've both been through many transformations. For myself I can answer. I could tell you many interesting things about myself. But please don't be angry with me for writing now in all haste, so that my letter must be broken, and even perhaps confused. I am feeling just what you felt, as you wrote — the impossibility of expressing one's-self fully after so many years, even though one should write fifty pages. One must have the word of mouth and the personal contact, so that one can read the countenance and hear the heart speak in the tone. One word, spoken frankly, two-by-two, face speaking to face, means more than dozens of sheets of writing. I thank you most particularly for all you told me about yourself.

[Here follow some remarks about people with whom Maikov was connected.]

Perhaps you have heard something of me from my brother. In my hours of leisure I am putting down a good many notes of my prison-memories. ("The House of the Dead," published 1861-62.) There are but few personal details in these sketches, though; when I've finished them, and if a really good opportunity offers, I'll send you a manuscript copy as a keepsake.

[Here follows a cordial recommendation of the bearer of this letter, Baron A. Vrangel.]

You write that you have thought of me warmly, and always asked yourself, "To what end, to what end?" And I too have thought warmly of you, but your question "To what end?" I shall answer not at all; for whatever I might say must necessarily be waste of words. You write that

you have done a great deal, thought a great deal, got a great deal that is new from life. It could not have been otherwise, and I'm sure that we should now agree in our views. For I too have thought a great deal and done a great deal; such unusual circumstances and influences have combined in my experience that I have *had* to undergo, think, and weigh far too much, more than my strength was equal to. As you know me very well, you'll easily believe that in all things I was guided by those considerations which seemed to me to be just and upright, that I never played the hypocrite, and that when I took up any particular matter, I put my whole soul into it. Don't think, though, that I mean by these words to refer to the circumstances which have brought me here. I am speaking now of more recent experiences; nor would it be relevant to allude to those gone-by occurrences — they were nothing but an episode, after all. One's views alter; one's heart remains the same. I have read your letter through, but failed to understand the most essential part of it. I mean about patriotism, the Russian Idea, the sense of duty, national honour, and all those things of which you speak with such enthusiasm. But, my friend! were you ever any different? For I was always inspired by those very emotions and convictions. Russia, Duty, Honour? Why, I always *was* Russian through and through, and I say it most decidedly. What then is "new" about the movement which is becoming perceptible around you, and of which you write as of a novel tendency? I tell you quite frankly that I don't understand you. I have read your poem, and thought it exquisite; I wholly share your patriotic emotion, your efforts towards the *moral* emancipation of the Slavs. It is there that Russia's mission lies — our noble, mighty Russia, our holy mother. How beautiful are the concluding lines of your "Council at Clermont"! Whence do you draw the eloquence with which you have so magnificently expressed those powerful thoughts? Yes — indeed I *do* share your idea that in Russia Europe will find her final account; it is Russia's true mission. That was always clear to me. You write that our society "seems to be awakened from its apathy." Yet you know that our society never does make manifestations; and who shall conclude therefrom that it is nerveless? Once an idea is really made clearly manifest, and society called upon to examine it — society has always grasped it at once. And so it is now: the Idea has been grandly, most nationally and chivalrously (one must declare *that)* made manifest — and behold, that very political ideal which Peter the Great fashioned for us has at once been universally accepted. Perhaps you were and are offended by

the fact that in those strata of society where people consciously think, feel, and investigate, French ideas are gaining ground? Undoubtedly there is a tinge of exclusiveness in that; still it is in the nature of all exclusiveness instantly to produce its own antithesis. You will admit yourself that all reasonable, thinking men — and that means, those who set the tone in everything — have ever regarded French ideas from a purely scientific standpoint, and that even they who most leaned towards exclusiveness, remained unchangingly Russian throughout. What do you see new in that? I assure you that *I*, for example, feel so near to all Russians that even the convicts never alarmed me; they were Russian, they were my brothers in misfortune; and I often had the joy of discovering magnanimity in the soul of a robber and murderer; but it was only because I am Russian myself that I could thus understand him. I have to thank my ill-luck for many practical experiences, which probably have had a great influence upon me; but I learnt at the same time that in my very inmost being I always have been Russian. One may be mistaken in an idea, but one can't mistake one's heart, and lose one's conscience by reason of the mental error — by which I mean, one can't act against one's convictions.

But why am I writing all this to you? I know well that these lines don't in the least express what I mean; then why do I go on writing? I'll tell you, instead, some things about myself. In prison I read only very little, for I couldn't get any of the books I wanted, though often books of a sort came into my hands. Since I've been here in Semipalatinsk, I've read rather more; but still I have no books, not even necessary ones, at hand, and time is going by. I couldn't at all tell you how very much I suffered from not being allowed to write in prison. My mental labour comes only thus "to the boil." Some things were all right; I felt it. I planned out in that way a great novel, which I consider will be my definitive work. I was dreadfully afraid that the first passion for my work would have gone cold when the years had passed, and the hour of realization struck at last — that passion without which one cannot write. But I was mistaken: the figure which I had conceived, and which is the basis of the whole book, needed some years for its development, and I am convinced that I should have ruined all if I had then, unready as I was, begun the work in the first flush of zeal. But even when I left the prison, I did not set to, though all was quite ready in my mind. I simply could not write. A circumstance, a contingency, which long had delayed to enter my life and then at last did invade it, wholly carried me

away, intoxicated me. I was happy, I could not work. Later I was to know grief and sadness. I lost something which was my all. Hundreds of versts now divide us. (The reference is to Mme. Issayev, later Dostoevsky's wife.) I won't speak more precisely, but will perhaps explain all at some other time; now I cannot.... However, I have not been wholly idle. I have done some work; but the carrying-out of my *chef d'œuvre I* have postponed. For that I need to be in a more tranquil mood. I began for fun to write a comedy; I invented so many droll characters and episodes, and liked my hero so much, that I abandoned the form of comedy (although I quite enjoyed it) solely that I might prolong as far as possible the pursuit of this new hero's experiences, and my own laughter at him. He is like myself in many respects. In a word,. I am writing a comic novel; ("Uncle's Dream.") hitherto I have been describing only separate adventures, but now I've had enough of that, and am unifying the whole.

There's my full report of work; I can't help writing it all to you; when I talk *with you,* my unforgettable friend, I keep thinking of our past. Indeed, I was so often happy in your company — how could I forget you? You write of literature — for a year I've hardly read anything. I'll give you my impressions, such as they are: Turgenev pleases me best; it is only a pity that he's so often unequal to his great talent. L. T. (Tolstoy) I like very well, but I have an idea that he won't do much (perhaps I'm mistaken, however). Ostrovsky I don't know at all; I've read nothing of his, though I've seen many extracts from his works in the articles about him. He may know a certain section of Russian society very accurately, but I don't believe he's an artist. Moreover he seems to me *a writer utterly without ideals.* Please try to persuade me to the contrary; for goodness' sake, send me those works of his which you consider the best, that I may not be acquainted only with the criticisms of him. Of Pissemsky I know only the "Swaggerer" and the "Rich Suitor" — nothing else. I like him very much. He is sane, good-humoured, and even naïve; he can tell a story like a master. One thing is a pity: he writes too fast. He writes much too fast, and much too much. A man should have more ambition, more respect for his talent and his craft, and more love for art. When one's young, ideas come crowding incredibly into one's head; but one should not capture each and all of them as it flies, and rush to give it forth. One should rather await the synthesis, and think more; wait till the many single details which make up an idea have gathered themselves into a nucleus, into a large, imposing picture; then, and not till

then, should one write them down. The colossal figures, created by the colossal writers, have often grown out of long, stubborn labour. But the attempts and sketches that go to the picture should not be displayed at all. I don’t know if you’ll understand me! But, as far as Pissemsky goes, I think that he doesn’t hold his pen sufficiently in check. Our literary ladies write like other literary ladies — that is, cleverly, neatly, and with much fluency of expression. Tell me, please, why a woman-writer is almost never a serious artist? Even the undoubtedly colossal artist, George Sand, often spoilt herself by her purely feminine traits.... *During the whole time there,* I came across many of your short poems in the newspapers.... I liked them greatly. Be strong and labour. I’ll tell you in confidence, in strict confidence: Tyutchev (Fyodor Tyutchev (1803-73), the moat profound of Russian poet-philosophers.) is very remarkable, but... etcetera. What Tyutchev is it, by-the-bye — is it *our* one? Many of his poems are excellent.

Farewell, my dear friend. Excuse the incoherence of this letter. One never can say anything properly in a letter. On that account alone I can’t bear Mme de Sévigné. She wrote much too good letters.... Who knows? Perhaps I shall some day clasp you in my arms again. May God so appoint it! For God’s sake, show my letter to *nobody* (really nobody)! I embrace you.

XXVI. To General E. I. Totleben

*(*Eduard Totleben (1818-84), the distinguished soldier and engineer; builder of the fortifications of Sebastopol, which resisted the united armies for twelve months.)

SEMIPALATINSK,
March 24, 1856.

Your Excellency Eduard Ivanovitch! Forgive me for daring to ask your attention to this letter. I fear that when you see the signature and my name, which you may indeed have forgotten — though many, many years ago I had the honour of being known to you — you will be angry with me and toss the letter aside without reading it. I beg for your indulgence. You might well rebuke me if I failed to realize the quite unfathomable gulf between my position and yours. But I have gone through too many sorrowful experiences in my life to be capable of overlooking that gulf. I know very well indeed that I have no right whatever to remind you that you once knew me, and thus to make even the shadow of a claim on your attention. But I am so unhappy that, almost against my will, I must yield to the hope that you will not close your heart to an unfortunate exile, and will grant him a moment’s attention.

I have requested Baron Alexander Vrangel to take you this letter. During his stay in Semipalatinsk, he has done more for me than my own brother could have done. His friendship made me happy. He knows all my circumstances. I begged him to take you this letter in person; he will do so, although I could not tell him with any conviction that you would receive the letter indulgently. Such doubts are easily comprehensible in the heart of a one-time prisoner. I have a great favour to ask of you, and only a faint hope that you will hear me.

Perhaps you have heard something of my arrest, my trial, and the supreme ratification of the sentence which was given in the case concerning me in the year 1849. Perhaps you also bestowed some attention on my fate. I base that supposition on the fact that I once was great friends with your brother Adolf Ivanovitch — as a child, even, I loved him very sincerely.

Although of late years I have not come in contact with him, I am still sure that he pitied me, and perhaps told you something of my sad story.

I dare not take up your time with an account of my trial. I was guilty, and am very conscious of it. I was convicted of the intention (but only the intention) of acting against the Government; I was lawfully and quite justly condemned; the hard and painful experiences of the ensuing years have sobered me, and altered my views in many respects. But then, while I was still blind, I believed in all the theories and Utopias. When I went to Siberia, I had at least the one comfort of having borne myself honestly before the tribunal, of not having tried to shift my guilt on others, and even of having sacrificed my own interests, if thereby I thought I could save those others. But I was at that time still convinced of the truth of my opinions; I would not confess all, and so was the more sternly punished. Previously I had suffered for two years from a strange moral disease: I had fallen into hypochondria. There was a time when I even lost my reason. I was exaggeratedly irritable, had a morbidly developed sensibility, and the power of distorting the most ordinary events into things immeasurable. But I felt that though this disease had had a really evil influence upon my destiny, it was nevertheless a poor and even a degrading excuse for me. And I was not so entirely convinced, either, that it *had* had that influence. Forgive these details. Be generous, and hear me further.

I went to prison — four sad, terrible years. My companions were criminals, men quite without human emotions, and with perverted morals; for those four years I beheld nothing uplifting — only the blackest and ugliest “realities.” I had not one single being within reach with whom I could exchange a cordial word; I endured hunger, cold, sicknesses; I suffered from the hard labours and the hatred of my companions the criminals, who bore me a grudge for being an officer and a well-born person. And yet I swear to you that none of those torments was greater than that which I felt when I realized my errors, and saw that in banishment I was cut off from my fellow-creatures and unable to serve them with all my powers, desires, and capacities. I know that I was punished for my ideas and theories. But ideas and even convictions alter, nay, one’s very self alters; thus, it is very grievous for me to be now expiating things that are no more, that have, indeed, actually, in me, turned to their very contraries; to be suffering for my former errors, which I now perceive in all their folly — to feel that I have the power and the talent to do something which would really

atone for the worthlessness of my earlier activities, and yet to languish in impotence. I am now a soldier; I am serving at Semipalatinsk, and this summer was promoted to the rank of non-commissioned officer.

I know that many people felt and feel genuine sympathy for me; they have exerted themselves on my behalf, have restored me to hope, and still do much to solace me. The monarch is kind and compassionate. Lastly, I know that it goes very hard with anyone who undertakes to prove that an unlucky man is capable of doing something worth while, if the proof should fail. But I *can* do something worth while; I am not, indeed I am not, without talent, feeling, and principle. I have a great favour to ask of you, Eduard Ivanovitch. Only one thing troubles me: I have not the least right to worry you about my affairs. But you have a great noble heart. I may say this frankly, for you have recently proved it to all the world. Moreover *I* long since had the happiness — longer since than others — of forming for myself that opinion of you; I had long learnt to esteem you. A word from you can now accomplish much with our gracious monarch, who is grateful to you, and loves you. Think of the poor exile, and help him. I want to employ myself usefully. When one has spiritual and mental powers which one cannot turn to account, one suffers deeply from inactivity. For the military career I am not fitted. I earnestly desire, so far as in me lies, to do my utmost therein; but I am sickly, and feel strongly desirous of another sphere of action, more suited to my capabilities. My dearest wish would be to be released from military service and to enter the civil service somewhere in European Russia, or even here; and also to have some liberty of choice as to my place of abode. But neither form of State service do I regard as the real purpose of my life. Some years ago, the public gave me a very hearty and encouraging welcome in the literary sphere. I very much desire permission to publish my works. And there are precedents for this: many political offenders have been graciously pardoned and given permission to write and print. I have always considered the calling of an author to be an honourable and useful one. I am certain that in that sphere alone can I do valuable work; therein I could attract attention, retrieve my good name, and make my life to some extent easier, for I possess nothing but this assured, though possibly quite modest, literary talent. But I should like to say quite frankly: besides the honest desire to change my present lot for one that will better correspond with my talents, another circumstance, upon which perhaps the happiness of my whole life depends (He hints here at his

projected marriage.) (it is a wholly personal matter), has given me courage to turn to you and recall myself to your mind. But of course I am not asking for everything at once: I am asking only for the possibility of giving up the military, and entering the civil, service.

Read this my prayer, but do not call me poor-spirited. I have suffered much, and by the very fact that I have borne so many sorrows have proved my patience and a certain degree of bravery. But now I *have* lost courage — I realize that, myself. I used always to think it cowardly to trouble anyone, whoever it might be, with my affairs. And now, I trouble *you*! But I implore you to have mercy on me. Till now I have borne my misfortune patiently. Now I have broken down under the weight of circumstances and have resolved to make this attempt — it is nothing but an attempt. I swear to you that the thought of writing to you, and importuning you, never occurred to me before. It would have been painful and difficult to me to recall myself to you. In an enthusiastic and wholly unself-seeking spirit, I have lately followed your heroic career. If you knew with what delight I spoke of you to others, you would believe me. If you knew with what pride I declared that I had the honour of knowing you personally! When your glorious deeds were recounted here, was overwhelmed with questions about you, and it was a joy to me that I was able to tell of you. I do not fear to write this to you. ‘ Your deeds are so great that even these words can hardly appear as flattery. The bearer of this letter will be able to tell you how sincere and unself-seeking are my feelings towards you. The gratitude of a Russian towards him who, at a time of national disaster, crowned the terrible defence of Sebastopol with eternal, undying glory, is comprehensible enough. I repeat that it had not been my intention to trouble you in any way. But now, when I have lost all courage, and scarcely know to what side I shall turn, I have reminded myself how kind, cordial, and natural you always were with me. I thought of your ever gallant and noble impulses, and began to hope. I asked myself if you, who have now attained to so lofty and glorious a position, would repulse me, who am fallen so low? Forgive my boldness, forgive this long (much too long, I realize) letter; and if you can do anything for me, do it, I implore you. And I have yet another great request; don’t refuse it me. Recall me, sometimes, to your brother Adolf Ivanovitch’s remembrance, and tell him that I still love him as before, and often found him among my memories during the four years in prison, when in spirit I would live my whole past over again, day by day and hour by

hour. But he knows himself how dearly I love him. I do happen to know that he has lately been ill. Is he well again? Is he alive? Forgive me this request also. But I know not through whom I may attain my heart's desire, and so turn to you. I am aware that this letter is a grave breach of discipline. A common soldier writes to an Adjutant-General! But you arc generous-hearted, and I confide in that.

With deepest respect and the sincere thanks of a Russian, I remain,

Your Excellency's most devoted servant, FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY. (Totleben's minute ran: "His Majesty is pleased to order me to suggest to the Minister of War that Fyodor Dostoevsky be promoted to the rank of ensign in a regiment of the Second Army Corps. Should this not be possible, he is to be transferred to the Civil Service with the rank of an official of the fourteenth class; in both cases he is to be permitted to employ himself in literature, and is to be given the right to print his works on condition of their generally lawful tendency.")

XXVII. To the Baron A. E. Vrangel

SEMIPALATINSK,
April 13, 1856.

[The letter begins with some not very interesting details of Dostoevsky's material circumstances.]

You write that we political offenders may expect certain indulgences, which, however, are still kept a secret. Do me the kindness, dear friend, to try to discover something concerning myself. I *must* know it. If you learn anything, impart it to me without delay. About the transfer to the Caucasus I no longer think — nor to the battalion at Barnaul. All that is unimportant to me now.

You write that everybody loves the new Tsar. I myself idolize him. I must confess that it is a great object to me to be promoted; but I may still have to wait a long time for my promotion to commissioned rank; and I should like to have something now, at once, on the occasion of the Coronation festivities. The best and wisest would be of course that I should ask for permission to publish.

I think of sending you very soon, privately, a pçem I have written about the Coronation. I might even send it "officially." You will be sure to meet Hasford. (Governor-General of Siberia.) He soon starts, of course, for the Coronation. Could you not persuade him to present my poem to the Tsar? Would it not do? Tell me too up to what time I am safe in writing to you, for if you leave Petersburg, my letters might be lost, and that would be tiresome. I have already told you about my article on Russia. It has turned into a regular political pamphlet. Yet I should not like to erase a single word of that article. They will scarcely allow me to begin my literary activity with a pamphlet, however patriotic its contents may be. But the article was good, and I was satisfied with it. It interested me extraordinarily; Still, I have abandoned the task. For if I can't get permission to publish it, why should I have all my trouble for nothing? Time is too precious now for me to waste it in writing for mere amusement. Besides, the political atmosphere has changed. And so, I have begun a new article: "Letters on Art." The Grand-Duchess Maria Nikolayevna is President of the Academy of Arts. I

intend to ask permission to dedicate this piece to her, and let it then appear anonymously. It is the fruit of ten years' deliberation. I thought it out to the last detail as long ago as Omsk. It will have many original and burning passages, but I can't answer for the execution of the whole. Probably many will disagree with me on various points. But I believe in my ideas, and that suffices me. I should like to ask Apollon Maikov to read it beforehand. Certain chapters contain whole pages from the pamphlet. It deals directly with the place of Christianity in art. But where shall I bring it out? If I let it appear as a separate publication, at most a hundred people will read it, for it is no novel, while in a journal I might get paid for it. Now, the *Sovremennik* was always hostile to me, and so was the *Moskvityanin.* In the *Roussky Viestnik* there has appeared the prelude to an article by Katkov on Pushkin, where the ideas expressed are in disaccord with mine. So there remains only the *Otetschestvennia Zapiski.* But I don't know how matters stand with that journal. Would you therefore find out from Maikov and your brother whether there is any chance of publishing and being paid for the article, and tell me what they say; just speak of it casually, as it were. The principal thing is that the novel at which I'm now working affords me great enjoyment. Only with novels shall I ever make a name and attract public attention. All the same, it would be wiser to begin with a serious article (upon art) and try for permission to publish such an one; for nowadays people regard a novel as an inferior sort of thing. So I believe, at any rate....

[Dostoevsky reiterates his request that Vrangel will exert himself on his behalf.]

XXVIII. To his Brother Michael

SEMIPALATINSK,
*May 1*1, 1858.

You beg me, my friend, to send you everything I write. I can't remember (my memory is mostly very bad now) — I can't remember whether I told you that I had approached Katkov (*Roussky Viestnik)* and offered him my co-operation on his paper; I promised that this very year I'd write a long tale for him if he would at once send me 500 roubles. Four or five weeks ago I got those 500 roubles and a very sensible and friendly letter from him. He writes that he is very glad of my co-operation, and at once responds to my request (about the 500 roubles). He begs me not to hurry myself in any way, and to write only at my leisure. That's splendid. So now I am to write a long story for the *Roussky Viestnik;* the only trouble is that I haven't arranged with Katkov about payment by the sheet — I wrote that I would leave that matter to him.

I want to write something this year also for the *Roussky Slovo* — not the novel, but a tale. I won't write the novel till I've got out of Siberia. I must put it off till then. The motive of this book is most excellent, the principal figure is new and has never yet been done. But as to-day in Russia such a figure frequently emerges in actual life (so I conclude from the new movements and ideas of which everyone seems full), I feel sure that I shall succeed in enriching my novel, after my return, with fresh observations. (The "figure" is Raskolnikov, in "Crime and Punishment.") One ought not to hurry, my friend; one must try to do nothing but what is good. You write, my dear fellow, that I am really very vain, and want to step forth now with a peculiarly distinguished work; and that therefore I sit patiently on my eggs, that the "distinguished work" may be hatched. Well, suppose it really were the case: at any rate, as I've now dropped the idea of bringing out the novel at present, and am working at two stories, which will both be only just tolerable, I don't think there can be much talk of "hatching." Where on earth did you pick up the theory that a picture should be painted "straight off," and so forth? When did you come to that conclusion? Believe me, in all things labour is necessary — gigantic labour. Believe me that a graceful, fleet poem of Pushkin's, consisting of but a few lines, *is* so graceful and so

fleet simply because the poet has worked long at it, and altered much. That is solid fact. Gogol wrote at his “Dead Souls” for eight years. Everything that he did “straight off” was crude. People say that in Shakespeare’s MSS. there is not a single erasure. That’s why there are so many monstrous errors of taste in him. If he had worked more, the whole would have come off better. You evidently confuse the inspiration, that is, the first instantaneous vision, or emotion in the artist’s soul (which is always present), with the *work.* I, for example, write every scene down at once, just as it first comes to me, and rejoice in it; then I work at it for months and years. I let it inspire me, in that form, more than once (for I love it thus); here I add, there I take away; believe me that the scene always gains by it. One must *have* the inspiration; without inspiration one can’t of course begin anything.

You write that big fees are now being paid in your part of the world. Thus, Pissemsky got 200 or 250 roubles a sheet for his “Thousand Souls.” In such circumstances one could really live, and work at ease. But do you really think Pissemsky’s novel excellent? It is mediocre work — possibly a “*golden mean,”* but nevertheless mediocre. Come! is there one fresh thing in it — one thing of *his own,* that never before was done? All has been done before him, and done by the most modem writers too, particularly by Gogol. His are but ancient words to a new tune. “Distinguished work” after foreign patterns — home products from sketches by Benvenuto Cellini. It’s true I’ve read only the two first parts of the novel; papers reach us very late here. The end of the second part is utterly improbable, and entirely bad. Kalinovitch, who consciously betrays, is simply impossible. Kalinovitch, as the author had earlier depicted him, would have *had* to offer a sacrifice, propose marriage, intoxicate himself with his own nobility, and be convinced that he was incapable of any deception. Kalinovitch is so vain that he couldn’t possibly regard himself as a scoundrel. Of course he would take his pleasure all the same, spend a night with Nastenyka and then betray her; but only afterwards, under the pressure of actualities; and he would assuredly solace himself even then, and aver that he had acted nobly in this case also. But a Kalinovitch who consciously betrays, is repulsive and *impossible;* that is to say, such a person is possible, but he is not Kalinovitch. Enough of this nonsense.

I am weary of waiting for my leave.

[Here follow plans for what Dostoevsky will do when he gets his leave.]

XXIX. To his Brother Michael

SEMIPALATINSK,

May 9, 1859.

[At first he talks of his leave, which had been granted so long ago as March 18, but of which nothing was known in Semipalatinsk till May; and of business matters.]

You always write me such tidings as, for example, that Gontscharov has got 7,000 roubles for his novel, and that Katkov (from whom I now demand 100 roubles a sheet) has offered Turgenev 4,000 roubles for his "House of Gentlefolk" — which means 400 roubles a sheet. (I have read Turgenev's novel at last. It is extraordinarily good.) My friend! I know very well that I don't write as well as Turgenev; still the difference is really not so great, and I hope in time to write quite as well as he does. Why do *I,* then, in my need, allow myself to get only 100 roubles a sheet, while Turgenev, who has 2,000 serfs, gets 400 roubles? I am poor, and so must write in greater haste and *for* money; consequently I have to *spoil everything I do.*

[Here follow considerations upon the terms which Dostoevsky thinks of offering to Kachelyov, editor of the *Roussky Slovo*.]

I am now finishing a story for Katkov; ("Stepanchikovo Village.") it has got quite long — fourteen or fifteen sheets. I have already delivered three-quarters of it; the rest I shall send in the beginning of June. Now listen; Micha! This story has of course great faults and is, above all, extravagantly long; but I am perfectly certain that it has also the greatest merits and is my best work. I have been two years writing it (with an interruption in the middle, when I wrote "Uncle's Dream"). The beginning and the middle are decently worked out, but the end was written in great haste. Still I have put my whole soul, my flesh and blood, into it. I will not say that I have therein expressed my whole self: that would be nonsense. I have much more to say. And there is, in this story, far too little of the human, that is, the passionate, element (as exemplified, for instance, in "A House of Gentlefolk "); but on the other hand it shows forth two colossal types, which I have been *working at and polishing* for five whole years; they are (as I believe) faultlessly drawn; wholly Russian types, and such as have been hitherto insufficiently studied in Russian literature. I know not whether Katkov will be able to

appreciate the book, but if it is coldly received by the public I shall really despair. On this novel I build my highest hopes, and, above all, that of the certainty of my literary vocation.

[Henceforth the topic again is money.]

XXX. To Frau Stackenschneider

[PETERSBURG],
May 3, 1860.

HONOURED AND DEAR FRAU ST.

I have now been back in Petersburg three months, and have taken up my work again. The whole visit to Moscow seems like a dream to me now; here I am again amid the damp, the dirt, the ice from Ladoga Lake, (In the early part of the year the ice from Lake Ladoga comes floating down the Neva.) the tedium, and so on. Yes — back again, and I feel as if I were in a fever. That's because of my novel. ("Injury and Insult.") I want it to come off. I feel that there is poetry in it, and I know that on it depends my whole literary career. I shall have to work night and day for the next three months. But what a reward awaits me, when I've finished! Rest, a clear outlook on my surroundings, and the knowledge that I have done and attained what I wished. Perhaps I shall give myself, as a treat, a few months' travel; but first of all I shall in any event come again to Moscow.

... Ambition is a good thing, but I think that one may take it as one's aim only in things which one has set one's-self to achieve, has made the reason for one's existence. In anything else it's nonsense. The only essential is to live with ease; and moreover one must sympathize with one's fellow-creatures, and strive to win their sympathy in return. And if, indeed, one had no other determined aim, this would by itself more than suffice.

But I'm beginning to philosophize again. I have heard little or no news. Pissemsky is ill, suffering from rheumatism. I've been to see Apollon Maikov. He told me that Pissemsky rages, sulks, takes it very badly; that's no wonder; such sufferings are great torment. By-the-bye, didn't you know one Snitkin? He published some comic verses under the pseudonym of Ammos Schichkin. Only think: he fell ill suddenly, and died within six days. The Literary Relief Fund has undertaken to look after his family. It is very sad. But perhaps you didn't know anything of him. I had a talk with Krestovsky lately. I like him very much. He wrote a poem the other day, and read it aloud to us with much pride. We told him with one voice that the poem was atrocious; it is our custom always to speak the truth. And what do

you think? He wasn’t in the least offended. He is such a dear, noble youth! I like him better and better, and on some drinking-bout or other I mean to drink brotherhood with him. One often has such odd impressions! I always have this one — that Krestovsky must soon die. But whence it comes, I can’t possibly say.

We are thinking of starting a serious literary enterprise. We are all very busy about it. (The reference is to the journal *Vremya* (*The Times).)* Perhaps it will come off. All these plans are but the first step, but at any rate they indicate vitality. I know very well what “the first step” means, and I love it. It is better than any leap.

I have a frightful character, but not always — only at times. That’s my solace.

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

XXXI. To Mme. V. D. Constantine

Paris, *September* 1, 1862.

MY DEAR AND MUCH - HONOURED VARVARA DMITRYEVNA!

You have perhaps learnt from my letter to Pasha that I arrived happy and well in Paris, and have settled down here, though I hardly think I shall stay long. I don't like Paris, though it's frightfully grand. There's a lot to see here, but when one undertakes the seeing, terrible boredom ensues. It would have been very different if I had come here as a student, to learn something: very different, for I should have had plenty to do, and should have *had* to see and hear a great deal; while for a tourist, who is merely observing customs, the French are disgusting, and the town as such is wholly unknown to me. The best things here are the wine and the fruit: the only things that in the long run don't pall on one. Of my private affairs I won't write you anything. "Letters are nonsense; only apothecaries write letters." I will write only of a certain business matter. I have in fact a request to make of you, my dear Varvara Dmitryevna. You must know that on the way I stopped four days at Wiesbaden, and of course played roulette. And what do you think? I did not lose, but won; not, certainly, as much as I could have wished, no hundred thousand, but still a nice little sum.

N.B.: Tell this to no one, dear Varvara Dmitryevna. You *can't,* it is true, tell it to anyone, for you don't meet anyone; but I really mean Pasha; he is still a little goose, and would perhaps imagine that one can make a living out of play. He took it into his head lately to be a shop-boy, and earn money that way: "and so I needn't learn anything," he informed me. "*And so*" he needn't know that Papa frequents gaming-halls. Therefore tell him not a word about it. During those four days I watched the gamblers closely. Several hundred persons took part in the play, and only two knew really how to gamble — my word of honour! They were a Frenchwoman and an English Lord; *they* knew how, and lost nothing: indeed they nearly broke the bank. But please don't think that, in my joy at having won and not lost, I am swaggering, and imagining that *I* know the secret of play. I do know the secret, and it is extremely stupid and simple: it consists in controlling one's-self the whole time, and never getting excited at ânу phase of the game. That is all; in that way one can't possibly lose and *must* win. The whole point is that the man who knows this secret should have the power and

capacity to turn it rightly to account. One may be ever so intelligent, one may have a character of pure iron, and yet one may come to! Quotation from Gogol's Memoirs of a Madman," grief. Even that philosopher Strachov would lose. Blessed therefore are they who do not gamble, who detest roulette and look upon it as the height of folly.

But to the point. I have, dear Varvara Dmitryevna, won 5,000 francs; or rather, I *had* won, at first, 10,400 francs, taken the money home, put it in my wallet, and resolved to depart next day and not go into the gaming-rooms again. But I did not hold out, and played away half the money again. So only 5,0 — francs are left. A part of these winnings I have reserved to myself in case of accidents, and the rest I am sending to Petersburg: half to my brother, that he may put it by till my return, and the other half to you, to give or send to Maria Dmitryevna.

[He then discusses how the money may best be sent from" abroad, and changed in Russia.]

XXXII. To N. N. Strachov

ROME,
September 18 [30], 1863.

[Dostoevsky begins by begging Strachov to settle his accounts at the office of the *Booklover's Library.]*

And Boborykin may as well know what is known already to the *Sovremennik* and the *Otetschestvennia Zapiski:* that I never in my life have sold a work (with the exception of "Poor Folk ") for which I have not been paid in advance. I am a proletarian among the authors, and if anyone wants my work, he must pay me for it beforehand. I myself condemn this system. But I have established it once for all, and will never abandon it. So now I'll go on: —

At the moment I have nothing ready. But I have (what seems to me) a very good idea for a story. The greater part of it is already jotted down on scraps of paper. I have even begun the actual execution, but in the first place it's too hot here, and in the second I don't want to spend more than a week in Rome; how could anyone, staying only eight days in a city like Rome, get any writing done? All the going-about tires me extraordinarily. My story will depict a typical figure, a Russian living abroad. You know of course that last summer there was a great deal of talk in our journals about the absentee Russian. This will all be reflected in my story. And the present state of our interior organizations will also (as well as I can do it, of course) be woven into the narrative. I depict a man of most simple nature, a man who, while developed in many respects, is yet in every way incomplete, who has lost all faith, yet at the same time *does not dare to be a sceptic*, who revolts against all authority and yet at the same time fears it. He comforts himself with the thought that in Russia there is nothing that he can do, and therefore condemns in the harshest manner those who would summon the absentee Russians back to Russia. I can't tell it all here. The character is very vivid (I can literally see it standing before me), and when once the story is finished it will be worth reading. The real idea, though, lies in his having wasted all his substance, energies, and talents on roulette. He is a gambler, but no common gambler, just as the "miserly knight" of Pushkin is no common miser. (I don't in the least mean to compare myself

with Pushkin. I only use the comparison for lucidity's sake.) He is in his way a poet, yet he is ashamed of such poetry, for he feels profoundly its vulgarity, even though the *longing for toach-and-go* ennobles him in his own eyes. The whole story is concerned with his playing roulette for full three years.

If my "Dead House" — as a picture of the prison, which no one before me had thus psychologically displayed — greatly interested the public, the new story, as a psychological and faithful portrait of the roulette-player, will interest them still more. Apart from the fact that that kind of work is read among us with the deepest interest, one must also consider that the gambling in a foreign watering-place is notorious, and the chief topic of the absentee Russian; this has, in addition to the rest, a certain (though of course inferior) importance.

In short, I dare to hope that I shall succeed in depicting all these most absorbing circumstances with feeling, understanding, and not too long-windedly. The story may be very good indeed. My "Dead House" was really most interesting. And here again shall be the picture of a hell, of the same kind as that "Turkish bath in the prison." I want to do this one too, and I shall take enormous pains about it.

[Henceforth money matters prevail.]

XXXIII. To A. P. Milyukov

[Moscow],
June, 1866.

MY DEAR AND HONOURED FRIEND ALEXANDER PETROVITCH!

Katkov is taking the summer air at Petrovsky-Park; Lyubimov (the editor of the *Roussky Viestnik)* also is taking the air. At the office one only now and then comes across the moping secretary, from whom one can extract nothing. I did, however, succeed in the early days in catching Lyubimov. He has had three chapters of my novel already set up. I proposed to him that I should write the fourth chapter in less than no time; the four would make exactly half the conclusion of the second part (four sheets); in the next number they could print four more chapters — that is, to the end of the second part. Lyubimov, however, almost interrupted me to say: "I was waiting to tell you that now, in June and July, we can print the novel in smaller portions — in fact, we *must*; one number, even, seeing it's the summer season, might have no portion at all. We should prefer to arrange that the whole second half of the novel appears in the autumn, and the end in the December number, for the effect of the novel ought to help towards the new year's subscriptions." It was therefore decided to pause for yet another month. The four chapters (four sheets) will therefore not appear till the July number, and are already in proof.

Later, however, it appeared that Lyubimov had yet another infamous back-thought: namely, that he won't print one of the chapters at all, and Katkov has approved of this his decision. I was infuriated with them both. But they insist on their scheme! About the chapter in question, I myself can't say at all: I wrote it in a positive inspiration, but it may be that it's really bad; however, with them it's not a question of the literary value, but of nervousness about the *morality* of it. In this respect I am in the right; the chapter contains nothing immoral, *quite the contrary* indeed; but they're of another opinion, and moreover see traces of *Nihilism* therein. Lyubimov told me finally that I must write the chapter over again. I undertook to do so, and the re-writing of this great chapter gave me at least as much labour and trouble as three new ones. Nevertheless I have re-written, and delivered

it. Unfortunately I haven’t seen Lyubimov since, so I don’t know whether they’re satisfied with the new version, or will write it all over again themselves. This actually happened to another chapter (of these four): Lyubimov told me that he had struck out a great deal of it. (That I didn’t particularly mind, for they deleted a quite unimportant passage.)

I don’t know how it will turn out, but the differences of opinion which this novel has brought to light between me and the office, begin to trouble me.

The novel for Stellovsky I haven’t yet begun, but certainly shall begin. I have a plan for a most decent little novel; there will even be shadows of actual characters in it. The thought of Stellovsky torments and disturbs me; it pursues me even in dreams.

I’m telling you all this very cursorily and in great haste, though my letter’s long enough. Answer me, for God’s sake. Write to me about yourself, your life, your views, and your health. Write to me also of our people; have you perhaps heard some news? I must be silent about many things. My best regards to your Ludmilla Alexandrovna; remember me to all your children, and greet all common acquaintances from me. Till next time, my kind friend, I embrace you and remain your FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

N.B. — I have not had any attacks up to the present. I drink schnaps. How does it stand with the cholera?

XXXIV. To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov

GENEVA,
August 16 [28], 1867.

So long have I kept silence, and not answered your welcome letter, my dear and unforgettable friend Apollon Nikolayevitch. I call you *unforgettable friend,* and feel deep in my heart that that description is just; we are both such *old* and *accustomed* friends that life, which sometimes parted us and even *separated* us, not only has not succeeded in really "separating" us, but has actually drawn us closer together. You write that you feel my absence to a certain extent; much more do I feel yours. Quite apart from the fact that every day shows me more clearly the likeness and sympathy between our thoughts and feelings, I beg you to observe as well that *I,* since I lost you, have come over into a strange land, where not only are there no Russian faces, Russian books, Russian thoughts and concerns, but no friendly faces of any sort. I truly cannot understand how any Russian living abroad, if he be a man of heart and intelligence, can fail to notice this, and be made miserable by it. Perhaps all these faces are friendly to one another; I can only say that I feel they're not friendly to us. It really is so! How *can* people endure this living abroad? By God, without home, *life is torture f* I can understand going abroad for six months, or even a year. But to travel, as I do, without knowing or even guessing when one will get home again, is very bad and grievous. The mere thought of it is hard to bear. I need Russia for my work, *for my life* (I speak of no life but *that).* I am like a fish out of water; I lose all my energies, all my faculties.... You know in what circumstances I left home, and for what reason. There are two principal reasons: in the first place, I had to save my health and even my life. The attacks were recurring every eight days, and it was unbearable to feel and *recognize* the destruction of my nerves and *brain.* I really was beginning to lose my senses — that is a fact. I felt it; the ruin of my nerves often drove me to the very edge of things'. The second reason is that my creditors would wait no longer, and on the day of my departure several summonses were out against me....

[He pursues the topic of his debts.]

... The burden was unbearable. I departed, with death in my heart. I had no faith in foreign lands — rather, I believed they might have a bad moral effect upon me. I was wholly isolated, without resources, and with a young creature by my side, who was naïvely delighted at sharing my wandering life; but I saw that that naïve delight arose partly from inexperience and youthful ardour, and this depressed and tormented me. I was afraid that Anna Grigorovna would find life with me a tedious thing. For up to the present we have been literally *alone.* Of myself I could hope little: my nature is morbid, and I anticipated that she would have much to bear from me. (N.B. — Anna Grigorovna indeed proved herself to be of a nature much stronger and deeper than I had expected; in many ways she has been my guardian angel; at the same time, there is much that is childish and immature in her, and very beautiful and most necessary and natural it is, only I can hardly respond to it. All this I saw vaguely before our departure; and although, as I said, Anna Grigorovna is finer and stronger than I had guessed, I am not even now free from all uneasiness.) Finally, our insufficient means caused me much anxiety; we had only a very little money, and owed Katkov an *advance of three thousand (!) roubles.* To be sure, I intended to begin work immediately after our departure. But what actually came to pass? Up to the present I have accomplished nothing, or almost nothing, and want now to set seriously to work at last. I must confess that I don't feel sure I've really accomplished *nothing*, for I have lived through so much, and *framed so much in my mind*; still, in *black and white* I have set down very little as yet; and only what stands written in black and white is valid and moneymaking.

We left tedious Berlin as soon as we could (I could only stop one day there, for the tiresome Germans made me nervous and irascible, and I had to take refuge in the Russian baths), and went to Dresden.

In Dresden we took lodgings and installed ourselves for a time.

The effect was very singular; instantly this question presented itself to me: Why am I in Dresden, just Dresden, and not in any other town; and why on earth had I to leave one place and go to another? The answer was most clear (my health, the debts, etc.). But worse is the clear perception that now I don't in the least care where I may have to dwell. In Dresden or another town — everywhere, in foreign lands, I feel like a slice cut from the loaf. I had meant to set to work the very first day, but I felt that I could not possibly work there, that all my impressions were topsy-turvy. What did I

do? I vegetated. I read, wrote a few lines now and then, nearly died of home-sickness, and, later, of heat. The days went monotonously by....

I can't possibly tell you *all* my thoughts. I collected many impressions. I read Russian newspapers and solaced myself thus. I felt eventually that so many new ideas had been garnered up that I could write a long article on Russia's relations to Western Europe, and on the upper classes of Russian society. I should, indeed, have had plenty to say! The Germans got on my nerves; and our Russian way of living, the life of the upper classes, the faith in Europe and *civilization* in which those upper classes are steeped — all that got on my nerves also. The incident in Paris upset me frightfully. Impressive, weren't they? the Paris lawyers who cried "Vive la Pologne!" Faugh, how nauseous, how stupid, how insipid! I felt more than ever confirmed in my view that it is rather advantageous for us that Europe does not know us in the least, and has such a disgusting idea of us.

And then the details of the proceedings against Beresovsky! How ugly, how empty; I can't imagine how they can ever recover from such twaddle, and get on to the next point!

Russia, seen from here, looks to a Russian much more plastic. On the one hand is the rare fact that our people have shown such unexpected independence and maturity in the initiation of reforms (as, for example, the judicial ones); on the other there is that news of the flogging of a merchant of the first guild in the Orenburg Government by the Chief of Police. One thing is clear: that the Russian people, thanks to its benefactor and his reforms, is at last in such a situation that it must of necessity accustom itself to affairs and self-criticism; and that's the principal thing. By God, our age, in regard to reforms and changes, is almost as important as that of Peter the Great. How goes it with the railways? We must get down as quickly as possible to the south; this is tremendously important. Before then, we must have *equitable tribunals everywhere*; how great will be the transformation! (I, over here, keep thinking of all these things, and my heart beats fast). I see hardly anyone here; it is quite impossible, though, not to come across somebody or other. In Germany I met a Russian who always lives abroad; he goes to Russia for about three weeks each year, and then returns to Germany, where he has a wife and family; they have all become German through and through. Among other things I asked him: "Why actually did you leave home?" He answered me hotly and curtly: "Because here is civilization, and with us is barbarism." This gentleman belongs to the

Young Progressives, but seems to keep himself aloof from them all to some extent. What snarling, peevish curs all these absentees do become!

At last, Anna Grigorovna and I could no longer bear our home-sickness in Dresden.... We decided to spend the winter somewhere in Switzerland or Italy. But we had no money at all. What we had brought with us was all spent. I wrote to Katkov, described my situation, and begged him for a further *advance* of 500 roubles. And what do you think: he sent me the money! What an excellent fellow he is! So we came to Switzerland. Now I am going to confess to you my baseness and my shame.

My dear Apollon Nikolayevitch, I feel that I may regard you as my judge. You have heart and feeling, as I have always, and of late freshly, been convinced; and therefore I have ever prized your judgment highly. I don't suffer in confessing my sins to you. What I write you to-day is meant for you alone. Deliver me not to the judgment of the mob.

When I was travelling in the neighbourhood of Baden-Baden, I decided to turn aside and visit the place. I was tortured by a seductive thought: 10 louis-d'or to risk, and perhaps 2,000 francs to win; such a sum would suffice me for four months, even with the expenses that I have in Petersburg. The vile part of it is that in earlier years I *had* occasionally won. But the *worst* is that I have an evil and exaggeratedly passionate nature. In all things I go to the uttermost extreme; my life long I have never been acquainted with moderation.

The devil played his games with me at the beginning; in three days I won, unusually easily, 4,000 francs. Now I'll show you how I worked matters out: on the one hand, this easy gain — from 100 francs I had in three days made 4,000 — ; on the other, my debts, my summonses, my heartfelt anxiety and the impossibility of getting back to Russia; in the third place, and this is the principal point, the play itself. If you only knew how it draws one on! No — I swear to you it was not the love of winning alone, though I actually needed the money for the money's sake. Anna Grigorovna implored me to be contented with the 4,000 francs, and depart at once. But that easy and probable possibility of bettering my situation at one blow! And the many examples! Apart from my own gains, I saw every day how the other gamblers won from 20,000 to 30,00 francs (one never sees anyone lose). Why should those others do better than I? I need the money more than they do. I risked again, and lost. I lost not only what I had won, but also my own money down to the last farthing; I got feverishly excited, and

lost all the time. Then I began to pawn my garments. Anna Grigorovna pawned her last, her very last, possession. (That angel! How she consoled me, how she suffered in that cursed Baden, in our two tiny rooms above the blacksmith's forge, the only place we could afford!) At last I had had enough; everything was gone. (How base are these Germans! They are all usurers, rascals, and cheats! When our landlady saw that we could not leave, having no money, she raised our prices!) At last we had to save ourselves somehow and flee from Baden. I wrote again to Katkov and begged him for 500 roubles (I wrote nothing of the circumstances, but as the letter came from Baden, he probably guessed the state of affairs). And he sent me the money! He did really! So now I have had altogether from the *Roussky Viestnik* 4,000 roubles in advance.

Now to end my Baden adventures: we agonized in that hell for seven weeks. Directly after my arrival there, I met Gontscharov at the railway-station. At first Ivan Alexandrovitch was cautious before me. That State-Councillor — or State-Councillor that ought-to-be — was also occupied in gambling. But when he realized that it could not be kept a secret, and as I myself was playing with gross publicity, he soon ceased to pretend to me. He played with feverish excitement (though only for small stakes). He played during the whole fortnight that he spent in Baden, and lost, I think, quite a good deal. But God give this good fellow health; when I had lost everything (he had, however, seen me with large sums in my hands), he gave me, at my request, 60 francs. Certainly he lectured me terribly at the same time, because I had lost all, and not only half, like him!

Gontscharov talked incessantly about Turgenev; I kept putting off my visit to him — still, eventually I had to call. I went about noon, and found him at breakfast. I'll tell you frankly — I never really liked that man. The worst of it is that since 1857, at Wiesbaden, I've owed him 50 dollars (which even to-day I haven't yet paid back!). I can't stand the aristocratic and Pharisaical sort of way he embraces one, and offers his cheek to be kissed. He puts on monstrous airs; but my bitterest complaint against him is his book "Smoke." He told me himself that the leading idea, the point at issue, in that book, is this: "If Russia were destroyed by an earthquake and vanished from the globe, it would mean no loss to humanity — it would not even be noticed." He declared to me that that was his fundamental view of Russia. I found him in irritable mood; it was on account of the failure of "Smoke." I must tell you that at the time the full details of that failure were

unknown to me. I *had* heard by letter of Strachov's article in the *O. Z.*, but I didn't know that they had torn him to pieces in all the other papers as well, and that in Moscow, at a club, I believe, people had collected signatures to a protest against "Smoke." He told me that himself. Frankly, I never could have imagined that anyone could so naïvely and clumsily display all the wounds in his vanity, as Turgenev did that day; and these people go about boasting that they are atheists. He told me that he was an uncompromising atheist. My God! It is to Deism that we owe the Saviour — that is to say, the conception of a man so noble that one cannot grasp it without a sense of awe — a conception of which one cannot doubt that it represents the undying ideal of mankind. And what do we owe to these gentry — Turgenev, Herzen, Utin, Tchernychevsky? In place of that loftiest divine beauty on which they spit, we behold in them such ugly vanity, such unashamed susceptibility, such ludicrous arrogance, that it is simply impossible to guess what it is that they hope for, and who shall take them as guides. He frightfully abused Russia and the Russians. But I have noticed this: all those Liberals and Progressives who derive chiefly from Bielinsky's school, find their pleasure and satisfaction in abusing Russia. The difference is that the adherents of Tchernychevsky merely abuse, and in so many words desire that Russia should disappear from the face of the earth *(that*, first of all!). But the others declare, in the same breath, that *they love Russia.* And yet they hate everything that is native to the soil, they delight in caricaturing it, and were one to oppose them with some fact that they could not explain away or caricature — any fact with which they were obliged to reckon — they would, I believe, be profoundly unhappy, annoyed, even distraught. And I've noticed that Turgenev — and for that matter all who live long abroad — have no conception of the true facts (though they do read the newspapers), and have so utterly lost all affection and understanding for Russia that even those quite ordinary matters which in Russia the very Nihilists no longer deny, but only as it were caricature after their manner — *these* fellows cannot so much as grasp. Amongst other things he told me that we are bound to crawl in„the dust before the Germans, that there is but one universal and irrefutable way — that of civilization, and that all attempts to create an independent Russian culture are but folly and pigheadedness. He said that he was writing a long article against the Russophils and Slavophils. I advised him to order a telescope from Paris for his better convenience. "What do you mean?" he asked. "The

distance is somewhat great," I replied; "direct the telescope on Russia, and then you will be able to observe us; otherwise you can't really see anything at all." He flew into a rage. When I saw him so angry, I said with well-simulated naïveté: "Really I should never have supposed that all the articles derogatory to your new novel could have discomposed you to this extent; by God, the thing's not worth getting so angry about. Come, spit upon it all!"

"I'm not in the least discomposed. What are you thinking of?" he answered, getting red.

I interrupted him, and turned the talk to personal and domestic matters. Before going away, I brought forth, as if quite casually and without any particular object, all the hatred that these three months have accumulated in me against the Germans. "Do you know what swindlers and rogues they are here? Verily, the common people are much more evil and dishonest here than they are with us; and that they are stupider there can be no doubt. You are always talking of civilization; with what has your 'civilization' endowed the Germans, and wherein do they surpass us?" He turned pale (it is no exaggeration), and said: "In speaking thus, you insult me personally. You know quite well that I have definitely settled here, that I consider myself a German and not a Russian, and am proud of it." I answered: "Although I have read your 'Smoke,' and have just talked with you for a whole hour, I could never have imagined that you would say such a thing. Forgive me, therefore, if I *have* insulted you."

Then we took leave of one another very politely, and I promised myself that I would never again cross Turgenev's threshold. The next day, Turgenev came at exactly ten o'clock in the morning to my abode, and left his card with the landlady. But as I had told him the day before that I never saw anyone till noon, and that we usually slept till eleven, I naturally took his ten-o'clock call as a hint that he doesn't wish to see any more of me. During the whole seven weeks, I saw him only once more, at the railway-station. We looked at one anothér, but no greeting passed. The animosity with which I speak of Turgenev, and the insults we offered one another, will perhaps strike you unpleasantly. But, by God, I can no other; he offended me too deeply with his amazing views. Personally, I really feel little affected, though his uppish manners are quite disagreeable enough in themselves;-but I simply can't stand by and listen when a traitor who, if he chose, could be of service to his country, abuses Russia in the way he does.

His tail-wagging to the Germans, and his hatred for the Russians, I had noticed already — four years ago. But his present rage and fury against Russia arises solely, *solely,* from the failure of “Smoke,” and from the fact that Russia has dared refuse to hail him as a genius. It is nothing but vanity, and therefore all the more repulsive.

Hear now, my friend, what I have in view. Of course it was vile in me to gamble away so much. But I have lost a relatively small sum of my own actual money. Still, it would have lasted us for two months — in our present mode of living, even for four.

I have already told you that I can’t resist winning. If, right at the beginning, I had lost the ten louis-d’or that I chose to stake, I should certainly have played no more, and gone away at once. But the gain of 4,000 francs destroyed me. The temptation of winning more (which appeared so easy) and in that way paying all my debts, and being able to provide for myself and mine — Emilie Fyodorovna, Pasha, and the others... it was too much for me, I could not resist it. But even this is no excuse, for I was not alone. I had with me a young, warmhearted, pretty creature who trusted me, whom I should have protected and sheltered, and whom consequently I ought not to have dragged down with myself to destitution,.by setting my entire, though certainly not very great, possessions upon the turn of a game. My future appears to me very dark; above all, I cannot, for the reasons I have mentioned, return to Russia; and most heavily am I oppressed by the question: What is to become of those who depend on my help? All these thoughts murder me....

You alone, my dear friend, are kind to me; you are my Providence. Help me in the future, too. For in all my great and small matters, I shall call upon your aid.

You well understand the basis of all my hopes: it is clear that *only under one condition* can everything be arranged so as to bring forth fruit — namely, *that my novel really succeeds.* To that I must devote all my powers. Ah, my dear fellow, how grave, how unendurably grave it was for me, three years ago, to yield to the crazy hope that I should be able to pay all those debts, and therefore to sign the many bills of exchange. Whence shall I draw the needful energy and vitality? Experience indeed has shown that I can make a success; but what are the conditions? These alone: that every one of my works so succeeds as to awaken the keenest public interest; else

all goes crash. And is that really possible? Is there any use in reckoning on it?...

[The letter ends with a request for a loan and a further description of Dostoevsky’s desperate situation.]

XXXV. To his Niece, Sofia Alexandrovna

GENEVA,
September 29 *[October* 11], 1867.

Good-day, my dear friend Sonetchka. Don’t be cross with me for my far too long silence — nor with Anna Grigorovna. A. G. has had a letter to you ready for a week and more, but she will not send it with this, for she wants to add something to it. Frankly, I want to entice an answer from you. We are so frightfully bored here in Geneva that every letter you write to us will be reckoned as a good deed to you in Heaven. Moreover, you know yourself how very much I love you, and how deeply interested I am in everything that happens in your life. We arranged our trip very stupidly. We ought to have had more money, so that we could change our place of abode as often as we wished. We have had to turn our travels into a stay abroad, instead of a tour through Europe.

Life abroad, wherever it may be, is very tiresome. As it was very expensive and very dusty in Paris, and as the summer in Italy was very hot, and cholera was cropping up there, we have spent this summer in different parts of Germany, which we chose according to the beauty of the scenery and the goodness of the air. Everywhere it was tiresome, everywhere the scenery was fine, and everywhere I had fairly good health. I was most particularly glad that Anna Grigorovna did not feel bored at all, though I am not an over-agreeable companion, and we have lived six months at a time together without friends or acquaintance. In that time we refreshed many of our old memories, and I swear to you that we would have enjoyed ourselves ten times better if we had spent the summer, not in foreign lands, but at Lublin, near you. Anna Grigorovna has developed a great talent for travelling; wherever we went, she discovered everything that was worth seeing, and at once wrote down her impressions; she has filled countless little notebooks and so on with her hieroglyphics; unfortunately she did not see half enough, even so. At last the autumn arrived. Our money no longer sufficed for a trip to Italy, and there were other hindrances besides. We thought of Paris, and later regretted much that we had not gone there, instead of to Geneva. I had already, it is true, been three times at Geneva, but had never stayed there long, and so knew nothing of the climate of the

town: the weather changes at least three times a day, and I have had my attacks again, just as in Petersburg. Nevertheless I must work, and must stop at least five months at Geneva. I am very seriously attacking a novel (which I shall give myself the pleasure of dedicating to you, that is, Sonetchka, Sofia Alexandrovna Ivanovna, as I long since decided); I am going to publish it in the *Roussky Viestnik.* I don't know whether I shall bring it off; my God, if it weren't for my poverty, I should never have made up my mind to publish it now — that is, in these days of ours. The sky is so overcast. Napoleon has declared that already he perceives several black marks on his horizon. To settle the Mexican, the Italian, and, chiefest of all, the German questions, he will have to divert public attention by a war, and win the French to himself by the old method — a successful campaign. But though the French of to-day are probably not thus to be beguiled, a war is nevertheless very likely. You will already have seen this yourself (do you, by the way, read some newspapers? For God's sake, do! Nowadays they must be read, not only because it is the mode, but so as to trace the ever more decisively and strikingly evident connection of great and small events). But if war does break out, artistic wares will fall considerably in price. This is a very important contingency, which of itself makes me thoughtful. With us in Russia, indeed, there has lately been apparent, even without war, a great indifference to artistic things. Most of all I dread mediocrity: a work should either be very good or very bad, but, for its life, not mediocre. Mediocrity that takes up thirty printed sheets is something quite unpardonable.

I beg you, dear, to write me as fully as possible about everything that has happened to you and yours in these six months. What have you — I mean you, yourself — been doing, and what are your plans? We shall have to make ours very much the same. My passport is good only for six months, but I shall have to stay here six months longer, or perhaps even more. It depends on purely business matters. And yet I should like to get back to Russia, and that for many reasons. In the first place, I should then have a fixed place of abode. Moreover, after my return, I should decidedly like to edit something in the shape of a paper. (I think I have spoken before to you of this; the form and scope of the undertaking I now see quite clearly in my mind's eye.) Now for *that,* I must be at home, where I can hear everything with my own ears and see it with my own eyes. For the rest, I'm glad that I now have some work on hand; if I hadn't, I should die of *ennui;* whether,

when the novel is finished (which it may not be for a long time), I shall begin anything else in these foreign lands, I really don't know. I simply can't understand the Russian "tourists," who often stay here three years. A trip abroad may be useful, and even enjoyable, if it lasts about six months, and if one stays nowhere longer than a fortnight and keeps continually on the go. And one might really get well on such a trip. But there are people who live here long with their families, educate their children here, forget the Russian language, and finally, when they are at the end of their resources, return home, and set up to instruct us, instead of learning from us. Yes; here they stay mouldering, and then need a whole year to get used to things at home and fall into the right groove again. In particular a writer (unless he's a scholar or a specialist) can't possibly stay Jong. In our craft, truth is the chief thing; but here one can see only Swiss truth.

Geneva lies on the Lake of Geneva. The lake is wonderful, its shores are picturesque, but Geneva itself is the essence of tedium. It is an old Protestant town, and yet one sees countless drunken people everywhere. When I arrived here, the Peace Congress was just beginning, to which Garibaldi himself came. He went away immediately afterwards. It was really incredible how these socialist and revolutionary gentlemen whom hitherto I had known only from books, sat and flung down lies from the platform to their audience of five thousand! It's quite indescribable. One can hardly realize, even for one's self, the absurdity, feebleness, futility, disunion, and the depth of essential contradictoriness. And it is this rabble which is stirring up the whole unfortunate working-class! It's too deplorable. That they may attain to peace on earth, they want to root out the Christian faith, annihilate the Great Powers and cut them up into a lot of small ones, abolish capital, declare that all property is common to all, and so forth. And all this is affirmed with no logical demonstration whatever; what they learnt twenty years ago, they are still babbling to-day. Only when fire and sword have exterminated everything, can, in their belief, eternal peace ensue. But enough of this. I shall most certainly answer your letters, dear, by return of post.

Your very loving
FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

XXXVI. To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov

GENEVA,
October 9 [21], 1867.

[At first he talks of his want of money.]

As far as I *personally* am concerned, I don't care at all where I spend the next five months, for I intend to work for at least that time. But though t that *is so,* Geneva is nevertheless detestable, and I deceived myself grossly in regard to it. My attacks recur every week here; and also I sometimes have a peculiar, very troublesome fluttering of the heart. It isrt a horrible town, like Cayenne. There are storms that last for days, and even on the most normal days the weather changes three and four times. And this I have to endure — *I,* with my haemorrhoids and epilepsy! And then, it's so gloomy, so depressing! And the people are so selfsatisfied and boastful! It is the mark of quite peculiar stupidity to be so self-satisfied. Everything is ugly here, utterly rotten, and expensive. The people are always drunk! Even in London there are not so many rowdies and "drunks." Every single thing, every post in the street, they regard as beautiful and majestic. "Where is such-and-such a street?" one asks. "*Voyez, monsieur, vous irez tout droit, et quand vous passerez près de cette majestueuse et élégante fontaine en bronze, vous prendrez," etc.* The "*majestueuse et élégante fontaine*" is an insignificant and tasteless object in the rococo style; but a Genevese must always boast, even if you only ask him the way. They've made a little garden out of a few bushes (there's not a single tree in it), about as big as two of the front gardens that one sees in Sadovaya Street in Moscow; but they must needs photograph it, and sell the pictures as a view of "the English Garden at Geneva." The devil run away with the humbugs! And all the while there lies, only two and a half hours from Geneva on the same lake, the town of Vevey, where, I am told, the climate in winter is very healthy and even pleasant. Who knows — perhaps we shall move over there, one of these days. Nothing depends *on me* now. Let come wliat come will.

Of my work I will write you nothing, for I have nothing to say about it as yet. Only one thing: I have to go at it hard, very hard indeed. In the intervals, my attacks rob me of all vitality, and after each one, I can't collect my thoughts for at least four days. And how well I was, at first, in

Germany! This confounded Geneva! I don't know what on earth will become of us. And the novel is my"one means of salvation. The worst of it is that it must *absolutely* come off. Nothing less will do. That's a *sine qua non.* But how *can* it, when all my capabilities are utterly crippled by my malady! I still have my power of vision intact; of late my work has shown me that. And nerves I have still. But I have lost all memory. In short, I must take this book by storm, fling myself on it head foremost, and stake all on the hazard of the die, come what may! Enough of that.

I read the news about Kelsiyev with much emotion. That's the right way, that's truth and reason! But be you very sure of this — that (of course excepting the Poles) all our Liberals of socialistic leanings will rage like wild beasts. It will thrill them to the marrow. They'll hate it worse than if all their noses had been cut off. What are they to say now, whom now shall they bespatter? The most they can do is to gnash their teeth; and everyone at home quite understands that. Have you ever yet heard a sensible idea from any of our Liberals? They can but gnash their teeth, at any time; and indeed it mightily impresses school-boys. Of Kelsiyev, it will now be maintained that he has denounced them all. By God, you'll see that I am right. But can anyone "denounce" them, I ask you? In the first place, they have themselves compromised themselves; in the second — who takes the slightest interest in them? They're not worth denouncing!...

[Again he writes of money and business matters.]

What will happen now in politics? In what will all our anticipations end? Napoleon seems to have something up his sleeve. Italy, Germany... My heart stood still with joy when I read the news that the railway is to be opened as far as Kursk. Let it but come quickly, and then — long live Russia!

XXXVII. To his Stepson, P. A. Issayev

GENEVA,
October 10 [22], 1867.

Your letter, dear boy, uncommonly delighted me. If you thought that I should forget you after my marriage (for I observed that you really were of that opinion, and I purposely did not set you right), you were wholly mistaken. It is quite the other way. Know now that I care for you even more since my marriage, and God be my witness that I suffer very much through being able to help you so little. I have always considered you a cheerful, plucky boy, and I retain that opinion. A person with those qualities must be happy in any position of life. I also think you very intelligent. Only one thing is against you: your lack of education. But if you really have no desire to learn something, at least hear my advice: you must, in any case, be earnest about your moral development, so far as that is capable of going without education (but, for education, one shall strive unto one's life's end). On my departure, I begged Apollon Nikolayevitch to be a friend to you, and assist you with good counsel. Pasha, he is the rarest of rare men, mark that. I have known him now for twenty years. He will always be able to direct you wisely. Above all things, you must be frank and upright in your intercourse with him. I have known for some time that you have been offered a place, and are still offered it. I advise you to take that place. I believe that a position with a police-magistrate *would* be incomparably more useful for you. You could in that way obtain a practical acquaintance with judicial matters, you could develop yourself, and accumulate much knowledge. But I have no confidence in you. One has to work very hard in such a post, and then it's very important to know what sort of man you would be likely to go to. If to a good sort, well and good; but if to a bad, as bad as possible. Moreover, a provincial town like Ladoga is very dangerous at your age, particularly such à dull and inferior sort of place. Of course, the social relations in the railway-service *are* very bad. But I am of opinion that even in the highest Government-offices the social side is rotten-bad; only there, more refined manners prevail. For this reason, Petersburg would be better, for there one can find suitable society. But anyhow, you must take this place. As regards the danger of your falling into evil ways, I *have* some

confidence in you there. You can’t possibly have forgotten your dead father and mother. Realize that I don’t advise you to take this place (nor on account of the salary either) because in that way you will cease to be a charge on me. Know that, though I have not a farthing to spare, I shall support you to my life’s end, whatever age you may be. I give you this advice for the sake of work alone, for work is the most important of all things. Anna Grigorovna loves you as I do. Write me fully about everything.

XXXVIII. To his Sister Vera, and his Brother-in-Law Alexander Pavlovitch Ivanov

GENEVA,

January I [13], 1868.

MY DEAR AND PRECIOUS ALEXANDER PAVLOVITCH AND VERA MICHAILOVNA!

First of all, I embrace you, congratulate you on the New Year, and wish you of course most heartily everything of the best! Yesterday Anna Grigorovna surprised me with a quarter-bottle of champagne, which, at exactly half-past ten o'clock in the evening, when it was striking twelve in Moscow, she placed on our tea-table; we clinked glasses, and drank to the health of all our dear ones. Who are dearer to me (and to Anna Grigorovna, her nearest relatives excepted) than you and your children? Besides you, only Fedya and his family, and Pasha; there stand written all my precious ones, for whom I care. I have received both your letters, the last and the November one; forgive my not having answered till now. I love you always, and think of you no less than hitherto. But I have been continually in such a state of stress and dissatisfaction that I put off answering to a better period; and indeed, of late, I have (literally) not had a single free hour. I have been working all the time — writing, and then destroying what I had written; not until the end of December was I able to send the first part of my novel to the *Roussky Viestnik.* They wanted it for the January number, and I am afraid the MS. arrived too late.

And now, for me, nearly everything depends on this work: my existence, daily bread, and my whole future. I have had huge advances of money from the *Roussky Viestnik* — nearly 4,500 roubles; then, in Petersburg, I still have bills to meet to the amount of at least 3,000; and at the same time I must exist somehow or other — and at such a period! Therefore I stake all my hopes on the novel; I shall have to work incessantly, scarcely rising from my desk, for the next four months. I am so very much behindhand, because I have rejected nearly all that I've written up to the present. The book will, by the *Roussky Viestnik's* rates, bring me in about 6.0 — roubles. Now I've had 4,500 in advance; consequently I have only 1,500 to get. If it really succeeds, I shall, in September, sell (as I am accustomed always to

do) the second edition for about 3.0 — roubles. In that way I shall manage to live, pay off, in September, about 1,500 roubles of my debts, and come back to Russia. Thus everything depends on my work *now:* my whole future and my whole present; and if the book is in any way good, I shall get further credit from the *Viestnik* in September. Now I'll tell you about our life and circumstances up to the present.

In that respect, it's all monotonous enough; while we are in Geneva, every day resembles every other. I write, and Anna Grigorovna works at the outfit for the little person whom we are expecting, or does shorthand for me when I need her help. She bears her condition excellently (though lately she has not been quite so well); our life suits her admirably, and she only longs for her Mama. Our seclusion is to me personally of great value; without it I could not have worked at all. But, all the same, Geneva, except for the view of Mont Blanc, the lake, and the River Rhone that flows from it, is mightily tedious.

I knew that before; but circumstances arranged themselves in such a way that in our situation we could find no other abode for the winter than just this Geneva, whither we came by chance in September. In Paris, for instance, the winter is much colder, and wood ten times dearer, as everything is. We really wanted to go to Italy — that is to Milan, of course (not farther south), where the winter climate is incomparably milder; while the town, with its Cathedral, theatre, and galleries, is much more attractive. But in the first place, all Europe, and particularly Italy, was at that very time threatened with a campaign; and for a woman with child to find herself in the middle of a campaign would have been far from pleasant. Secondly, it was eminently desirable that we should be able to render ourselves intelligible to the doctor and the midwife, and we do not know Italian. Germany was out of our way, nor did we much desire to return there. Geneva is, at any rate, a cultivated town with libraries, and many doctors, etc., who all speak French. We had not, to be sure, guessed that it would be so dull here, nor that there are periodical winds (called *bises),* which come over the mountains, bringing with them the chill of the eternal ice. In our first abode we suffered much; the houses here are shockingly built; instead of stoves there are only fireplaces, and there are no double windows. So all day long one has to keep, burning wood in the fireplace (wood is very expensive here also, though Switzerland is the only land of Western Europe where wood is really abundant) — and one might as well be trying to warm

the yard outside. In my room it was often only six and even five degrees above zero; in the others it sometimes happened that the water in the jug froze at night. But for the last month or so, we've been in a new house. Two of the rooms are very good, and one of them is so warm that one can live and work comfortably in it. With us in Geneva the temperature never fell below eight degrees; in Florence it was ten degrees *above*, and at Montpellier in France, on the Mediterranean Sea, farther south than Geneva, it was fifteen above.

I haven't written to Petersburg for a long time, and I scarcely ever hear from them. I am much perturbed by the thought that Fedya and Pasha need money, which must be sent them as soon as may be. But I can't possibly expect any large sum from the *Roussky Viestnik* until I deliver the second part of the novel, which won't be, at earliest, for three weeks; for I have already had too much money in advance, and have only worked off about 1,000 roubles; this worries me so that I often can't sleep at night. Fedya can't manage without extra help, and Pasha must have his money regularly. I live on the hundred roubles that the *Viestnik* sends me monthly. And soon I too shall need much more than that. At the end of February (by the Style here) Anna Grigorovna will be a mother, and for that occasion I must absolutely have money, and *a margin* — for one can't calculate with any certainty beforehand how much one will need. How goes it with you? Your letters are real treats to me, and I wish I could go to Moscow just to see you all. But, once more, my future depends on my work. I beg you to write me most fully about yourselves and the children. By-the-bye, I was greatly vexed, Veryotchka, by your letter in November, saying that you want to get a Frenchwoman for your children. Why? To what end? On account of the accent? From a Frenchwoman and even from a French tutor, one can't possibly (I know it by my own experience) acquire the French tongue in all its subtleties. One can acquire it only by firmly resolving to do so; and even then, *perfectly* to obtain the accent, one needs an extraordinarily strong will. I consider the "accent" superfluous. Believe me, dear Veryotchlca, by the time your children are grown-up, French will no longer be spoken in our drawing-rooms. Even to-day, it has often a most absurd effect. It is a different matter to be able to understand and read a language. Then, if one's travelling, and it's necessary, one can make shift to speak it; but otherwise it's quite enough to understand and read it. What is the Frenchwoman going to talk to the children about? Nothing but tomfoolery; and affected as she is,

and powerful as she'll be, she'll infect them with her vulgar, corrupt, ridiculous, and imbecile code of manners, and her distorted notions about religion and society. It's a pleasure now to observe your children. The tone in your house is unconstrained and frank; everything bears the stamp of happy, tranquil family-life. The Frenchwoman will introduce a new and evil French element. While of the expense I need not speak.

Yet another remark: If people want to acquire a correct French accent nowadays, they must adopt the guttural Parisian mode, which is very ugly and offensive to the ear. This accent is modern, and has been fashionable in Paris only within the last twenty-five years at most. Our tutors and governesses don't yet dare to introduce it among us. Therefore your children would *not* acquire this "correct pronunciation." But I have written too much about the governess. I am now about to take a rest of two days, and then set to work again. The state of my health has remarkably improved since the autumn. Sometimes I don't have a single attack for seven weeks at a stretch. And yet I am occupied in most exacting brain-work. I can't understand how it has come to pass, but I'm very glad of it.

Till next time, my dear and precious ones. I kiss and embrace you, wish you heartily, as brother and friend, all that is best, and beg you too not to forget us. My address is still Geneva. Perhaps at the end of April we may go over Mont Cenis into Italy, to Milan and Lake Como. That will be a real Paradise! Everything depends, however, on my work. Wish me success.

Your
FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

XXXIX. To his Niece Sofia Alexandrovna

GENEVA,
January I [13], 1868.

MY DEAR PRECIOUS SONETCHKA,

Despite your request I have not even yet answered your letter, and give you herewith my *word of honour* that henceforth I will write regularly every month. In my letter to Alexander Pavlovitch I explained, as well as I could, the reason for my silence. All the time I was in such a bad temper and such continuous anxiety, that I felt I needed to shut myself into myself, and bear my woe in solitude. In those days I should have found it hard to write to you — what could I have said? Should I have talked of my bad temper? (It would certainly have found expression, anyhow, in my letter.) But this nonsense is irrelevant. My position was most difficult. On my work hangs my whole future. I have not only had an advance of 4,500 roubles from the *Viestnik*, but have also promised on my word of honour, and reiterated that promise in every letter, that the novel should really be written. But directly before dispatching the finished MS. to the office, I found myself obliged to destroy the greater part of it, for I was no longer pleased with it — and if one is displeased with one's work, it can't possibly be good. So I destroyed the greater part of what I had written. Yet on this novel, and on the payment of my debts, depended my whole present and future. Three weeks ago (December 18 by the Style here) I attacked another novel, and am now working day and night. The idea of the book is the old one which I always have so greatly liked; but it is so difficult that hitherto I never have had the courage to carry it out; and if I'm setting to work at it now, it's only because I'm in a desperate plight. The basic idea is the representation of a truly perfect and noble man. And this is more difficult than anything else in the world, particularly nowadays. All writers, not ours alone but foreigners also, who have sought to represent Absolute Beauty, were unequal to the task, for it is an infinitely difficult one. The beautiful is the ideal; but ideals, with us as in civilized Europe, have long been wavering. There is in the world only one figure of absolute beauty: Christ. That infinitely lovely figure is, as a matter of course, an infinite marvel (the whole Gospel of St. John is full of this thought: John sees the wonder of the Incarnation, the

visible apparition of the Beautiful). I have gone too far in my explanation. I will only say further that of all the noble figures in Christian literature, I reckon Don Quixote as the most perfect. But Don Quixote is noble only by being at the same time comic. And Dickens's Pickwickians (they were certainly much weaker than Don Quixote, but still it's a powerful work) are comic, and this it is which gives them their great value. The reader feels sympathy and compassion with the Beautiful, derided and unconscious of its own worth. The secret of humour consists precisely in this art of wakening the reader's sympathy. Jean Valjean is likewise a remarkable attempt, but he awakens sympathy only by his terrible fate and the injustice of society towards him. I have not yet found anything similar to that, anything so *positive*, and therefore I fear that the book may be a "positive" failure. Single details will perhaps come out not badly. But I fear that the novel may be tiresome. It is to be very extensive. The first part I wrote in twenty-three days, and have lately sent off. This first part has no action at all. It is confessedly only a prologue. It is right that it should not compromise the whole work in any way, but it illuminates nothing, and poses no problem. My sole aim is to awake at least such interest in the reader as will make him read the second part. That second part I am beginning to-day, and shall finish in a month. (I have always worked as quickly as that.)

I believe that it will be stronger and more significant than the first part. Well, dear, wish me luck! The novel is called "The Idiot," and is dedicated to you, Sofia Alexandrovna. My dear, I wish that the book may turn out worthy of that dedication. At any rate, I am not called upon to judge my own work, least of all in the excited state in which I now am.

My health is most satisfactory, and I can bear well even the hardest work; but with regard to Anna Grigorovna's condition, I am now anticipating a difficult time. I shall work for four months longer, and hope then to be able to go to Italy. Solitude is essential to me just now. Fedya and Pasha make me really sad. I am writing to Fedya by this post. Life abroad is on the whole very troublesome, and I long terribly for Russia. Anna Grigorovna and I live quite solitary here. My life passes thus: I get up late, light the fire (it is fearfully cold), we drink coffee, and then I go to work. About four, I go to a restaurant, where I dine for two francs (with wine). Anna Grigorovna prefers to dine at home. After dinner I go to a café, drink coffee, and read the *Moskovskoie Viedomosti (Moscow News)* and the *Golos*

from A to Z. For exercise I walk half-an-hour in the streets, and then betake myself to home and work. I light the fire, we drink coffee, and I set to again. Anna Grigorovna declares that she’s immensely happy.

Geneva is a dull, gloomy, Protestant, stupid town with a frightful climate, but very well suited for work.

I don’t suppose I shall be able to get back to Russia at all before September — alas, my dear! As soon as I do, I shall hasten to embrace you. I still dally with the thought of starting a magazine after my return. But of course all depends upon the success of my present novel. Only think: I am working so furiously, and yet I don’t know whether the MS. will arrive in time for the January number or not. That would be very unpleasant for me!

I embrace and kiss you. Your ever friendly inclined

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

XL. To his Stepson, P. A. Issayev

GENEVA,
February 19 *[March* 3], 1868.

Don’t reproach me and don’t be angry with me, my ever dear Pasha, because I send Emilie Fyodorovna a hundred roubles, and you only fifty. You are alone, my dear boy, and she is not alone. And you wrote yourself, indeed, that she needed as much as that. And then, she has to support her Fedya; he is at work, and I wish him luck. I love him dearly. I would willingly give all I have, but I have nothing. I must tell you that it is a great joy to me that you have taken that place, and begun to work. I respect you very much for it, Pasha. It was noble of you; the position is not distinguished, but you are still young, and can wait. But remember that you can always count on me. So long as I live, I shall regard you as my dear son. I swore to your mother, the night before she died, that I would never forsake you. When you were still a little child, I used to call you my son. How could I, then, forsake you and forget you? When I married again, you threw out hints that your position would now be a different one; I never answered them, because the idea wounded me deeply; I may confess that to you now. Know once for all that you will always be my son, my eldest son; and not duty bids me say so, but my heart. If I have often scolded you, and been cross to you, that was only my evil disposition; I love you as I have seldom loved anyone. When I come back to Petersburg some day, I shall do all I can to find you a better place; I will also help you with money as long as I live, and have anything at all of my own. Your saying that you don’t feel well has alarmed me much. Write to me directly you receive this, if only a few lines. Send the letter unstamped; you must not have any unnecessary expenses. My address is still the same. I set all my hopes on the new novel. If it succeeds, I shall sell the second edition, pay my debts, and return to Russia. I may also get an advance from the paper. But I fear that the novel will miss fire. I greatly like the idea, but the execution — ! The novel is called “The Idiot the first part has already been printed in the *Roussky Viestnik.* Perhaps you’ve read it? The great thing is that it should come off — then all will be well. I work day and night; our life is monotonous. Geneva is a terribly dull town. I froze through the whole

winter; but now we are having real spring weather. Ten degrees above — Réaumur. My health is neither good nor bad. I suffer from incessant poverty. We live on a few groschen, and have pawned everything. Anna Grigorovna may be confined at any moment. I expect it to happen to-night. I am in great anxiety, but must work uninterruptedly. Judge for yourself whether I can answer all your letters punctually. Tell me fully about yourself. Take care of your health.

XLI. To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov

GENEVA,
May 18 [30], 1868.

I thank you for your letter, my dear Apollon Nikolay evitch, and for not being angry with me and so breaking off our correspondence. I was always convinced, in the depths of my soul, that Apollon Nikolayevitch would never do such a thing as that.

My Sonia is dead; we buried her three days ago. Two hours before her death, I did not know that she was to die. The doctor told us, three hours before she died, that things were going better and she would live. She was only a week ill; she died of inflammation of the lungs.

Ah, my dear Apollon Nikolayevitch, my love for my first child was probably most comical; I daresay I expressed it most comically in my letters to all who congratulated me. I have doubtless been ridiculous in everybody's eyes, but to you, to *you*, I am not ashamed to say anything. The poor little darling creature, scarcely three months old, had already, for me, individuality and character. She was just beginning to know and love me, and always smiled when I came near. And now they tell me, to console me, that I shall surely have other children. But where is Sonia? where is the little creature for whom I would, believe me, gladly have suffered death upon the cross, if *she* could have remained alive? I'll speak of it no more. My wife is crying. The day after to-morrow we shall say our last good-bye to the little grave, and go away somewhere. Anna Nikolayevna is staying with us; she arrived here only a week before the little one died.

For the last fortnight, since Sonia's illness, I have not been able to work. I have written a letter of apology to Katkov, and in the May number of the *Roussky Viestnik*, again only three chapters can appear. But I hope from now to be able to work day and night, so that from the June number onward the novel will appear with some degree of regularity.

I thank you for consenting to be godfather to the little one. She was baptized a week before her death....

[The second half of the letter is on business only.]

XLII. To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov

VEVEY, *June* 10 [22], 1868.

My DEAR FRIEND APOLLON NIKOLAYEVITCH,

I know and believe that your sympathy is real and true. But I have never yet been so profoundly unhappy as of late. I don't intend to describe my state to you, but the more time goes by, the more painful does remembrance become, and the more clearly does my dead Sonia's image stand before me. There are moments in which I can hardly bear it. She already knew me; when I was leaving the house on the day she died, just to read the papers, and without the least idea that she would be dead in two hours, she followed so attentively all my movements, and looked at me with such eyes that even at this moment I can see them, and the memory grows livelier every day. I shall never forget her; my grief will never come to an end. And if I ever should have another child, I don't know, truly, how I shall be able to love it — I don't know where the love could come from. I want only Sonia. I can't realize in the least that she is no more, and that I am never to see her again....

[He speaks of his wife's condition and of business matters.]

I have grown quite stupid from sheer hard work, and my head feels as if it were in pieces. I await your letters always as one awaits Heaven. What is there more precious than a voice from Russia, the voice of my friend? I have nothing to tell you, no news of any kind, I get duller and stupider every day that I'm here, and yet I daren't do anything until the novel's finished. Then, however, I intend in any event to go back to Russia. To get the book done, I must sit at my desk for at least eight hours daily. I have now half worked off my debt to Katkov. I shall work off the rest. Write to me, my friend — write, for Christ's sake....

In the four chapters that you will read in the June number (perhaps there may be only three, for the fourth probably arrived too late), I have depicted some types of the modern Positivist among the highly "extreme" young men. I know that I have presented them truthfully (for I understand the gentry from experience; no one but me has thus studied and observed them), and I know too that everyone will abuse me and say: "Nonsensical, naïve, stupid, and false."

XLIII. To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov

MILAN,
October 7 [19], 1868.

Above all, I must declare that I never have been in the least degree offended with you, and I say it sincerely and honestly; on the contrary — I supposed that you were angry with me for some reason or another. In the first place, you had ceased to write to me; though every one of your letters is to me, here, a great event — a breath from Russia, a real festival. But how could you ever have thought that

I considered myself offended by anything you may have written? No; my heart is not like that. And moreover, think of this: twenty-two years ago (it was at Bielinsky's, do you remember?) I made your acquaintance. Since then life has properly rattled me about, and sometimes given me amazing surprises; and in short and in fine I have at the present moment no one but you: you are the only man on whose heart and disposition I rely, whom I love, and whose thoughts and convictions I share. How then should I not love you, almost as much as I loved my brother who is dead? Your letters have always rejoiced and encouraged me, for I was in dejected mood. My work, more than anything else, has frightfully weakened and broken me. For almost a year now I have written three and a half printed sheets every month. That is very stiff. Also I miss the Russian way of life; its impressions were always essential to my work. Finally, though you praise the idea of my novel, the execution has not hitherto been distinguished. I am chiefly distressed by the thought that if I had got the novel written in a year, and then had had two or three months to devote to rewriting and re-touching, it would have been quite a different thing; I can answer for it. Now, when I can take a bird's-eye view, as it were, of the whole, I see that very clearly....

I have become totally alienated from your way of life, though my whole heart is with you; that is why your letters are like heavenly manna to me. The tidings of the new paper greatly rejoiced me.... What more can Nikolay Nikolayevitch now desire? The chief point is that he should be absolute master of the paper. It is very desirable that it be edited in the *Russian spirit*, as we both conceive it, if it is not to become purely Slavophil. I hold, my

friend, that it is no part of our duty to woo the Slavs too ardently. They must come to us of their own accord. After the Pan-Slavist Congress at Moscow, some individual Slavs made insolent mock of the Russians, because they had taken on themselves to lead others, and even aspired to dominate *them*, while they themselves had so little national consciousness, and so on. Believe me: many Slavs, for instance those in Prague, judge us from a frankly Western, from a French or German, point of view; I daresay they wonder that our Slavophils trouble themselves so little about the generally accepted formulas of West-European civilization. Thus we have no motive at all for running after them and paying court. It is a different thing for us merely to study them; we could then help them in time of need; but we should not pursue them with fraternal sentiment, although we must very assuredly regard them as brothers and treat them so. I hope too that Strachov will give the paper a definite political tone, to say nothing at all of national consciousness. National consciousness is our weak spot; it lacks more than anything else. In every case, Strachov will make a brilliant thing of it, and I look forward to the great delight that his articles will afford me; I have read nothing of his since the failure of the *Epoch*....

The book about which you write I had shortly before read, and I must confess that it enraged me terribly. I can imagine nothing more impudent. Of course one should spit upon such stuff, and so I was ready to do at first. But I am oppressed by the thought that if I don’t protest against it, I shall thus seem, as it were, to acknowledge the vile fabrication. Only, where is one to protest? In the *Nord*? But I can’t write French well, and I should like to proceed with all tact. I have an idea of going to Florence, and there getting advice from the Russian Consulate. Of course that is not the only reason why I wish to go to Florence....

XLIV. To his Niece Sofia Alexandrovna

MILAN,
October 26 [November 7], 1868.

MY DEAR GOOD FRIEND SONETCHKA, It is a very long time since I have written to you. I can say only one thing in excuse: I am still busy with my novel. Believe me, dear, I literally toil day and night; if I am not precisely writing, I am walking up and down the room, smoking and thinking of my work. I can scarcely myself believe that I can't find a free hour in which to write to you. But it really is so. Of myself and my life I can give you the following information: I live on the best of friendly terms with my wife. She is patient, and my interests are more important to her than aught else; but I see that she is pining for her friends and relations in Russia. This often grieves me, but my position is still so perplexed that for the next few months we dare not make any plans at all. My affairs have turned out sadly worse than I had calculated.

In two months, you see, the year will be at an end, but of the four parts of my novel only three are finished; the fourth and longest I have not even begun. And as it is quite impossible (working uninterruptedly through the whole year) to write more than three and a half sheets a month (I say this from actual experience), I shall be in arrears by six sheets — that is, the end of the novel cannot appear in the December number of the *Roussky Viestnik.* This puts me in a most awkward and painful position; in the first place, I cause the staff much inconvenience, and even loss, for they will have to give their subscribers the conclusion of the novel as a supplement (which, quite apart from anything else, is attended with great expense); in the second place, I myself lose thereby'900 roubles, for I proposed to the staff that I should indemnify them by claiming no fee for the six sheets by which I am in arrears. Finally, this fourth part, and particularly its conclusion, are the most important things in the whole book, which was, strictly speaking, conceived and written for its conclusion alone.

Of our personal life I'll tell you as follows. After we had buried Sonia in Geneva, we went, as you already know, to Vevey. Anna Grigorovna's mother came to her, and stayed with us a long time. In tiny, picturesque Vevey we lived like hermits, our only pastime being many mountain-walks.

Of the beauty of the scenery I'll say nothing at all; it's like a dream; yet Vevey is most enervating: all the doctors in the world know this, but I did not.

I suffered much from epileptic and other nervous attacks. My wife was ill too. So we crossed the Simplon (the most ardent imagination could not depict the beauty of the Simplon Pass) into Italy, and settled down in Milan; our means prevented us from going farther. (During the last year and a half I have had so many advances from the *Roussky Viestnik* that I must now work at full pressure to get matters square; indeed, they still send me regularly comparatively large sums, yet I often find it very difficult to manage; and for a long time I've sent nothing to Petersburg, either to Pasha or Emilie Fyodorovna, which greatly troubles me.)

In Milan it certainly rains a good deal, but the climate suits me extraordinarily well. Yet it is said that fits are highly prevalent at Milan; perhaps I shall be spared one, nevertheless. Living in Milan is very expensive. It is a big, important town, but not very picturesque, and somewhat un-Italian. In the neighbourhood, that is, half-an-hour's railway journey from Milan, lies the exquisite Lake of Como, but I have not yet been there this time. The only "sight" in the town is the famous Duomo; it is of marble, gigantic, Gothic, filigree-like, fantastic as a dream. Its interior is amazingly fine. At the end of November, I mean to move to Florence, for there are Russian papers there, and perhaps living may be cheaper. On the way I shall make a *détour* to Venice (so as to show it to my wife), which will cost me about a hundred francs.

Now I have given you in few words a full account of myself. I am very heavy-hearted; homesick, and uncertain of my position; my debts, etc., deject me terribly. And besides I have been so alienated from Russian life that I find it difficult, lacking fresh Russian impressions as I do, to write anything at all: only think — for six months I haven't seen a single Russian newspaper. And I still have the fourth part of my novel to do, and it will take about four months more. Enough of me. Write fully of all your affairs, of your external circumstances, and of your state of mind. Embrace your Mama from me; I often think of her, and pray for her every day. I frequently recall our past days together. Kiss your Missenika for me. Tell me your right address. Write to me at Milan, *poste restante.*

Even if I should have left Milan, and be in Florence or Venice (which is recommended me for the winter), I shall get your letters addressed to Milan;

before my departure I shall give my new address to the postoffice here. As soon as I go to another town, I'll let you know without delay. My wife sends greeting and kisses. We both long for our home. I have been told that after New Year, a new journal is to appear in Petersburg. The publisher is Kachpirev; the editor — my friend Strachov. They have asked me to contribute. The undertaking seems to be quite serious and very promising. Maikov writes of it in great delight.

Do read, in the September number of the *Roussky Viestnik*, the article on the British Association.

I kiss and embrace you, I press you to my heart.

Your friend and brother,

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

XLV. To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov

FLORENCE, *December 11* [23], 1868.

I have had a letter from Strachov too; he tells me a lot of literary news. Particularly do I rejoice to hear of Danilevsky's article, "Europe and Russia," which Strachov says is splendid. I must confess that I have heard nothing of Danilevsky since the year 1849, though I've often thought of him. What a frenzied Fourierist he was at one time; and now that same Fourierist has turned himself back into a Russian who loves his native soil and customs! Thus may one know the people who really matter!...

But, on the other hand, I'll never agree with the view of the dead Apollon Grigoryev, that Bielinsky also would have ended by becoming a Slavophil. No; with Bielinsky that was quite out of the question. He was, in his day, a remarkable writer, but could not possibly have developed any further. Rather, he would have ended as adjutant to some leader of the Women's Rights movement over here, and have forgotten his Russian while learning no German. Do you know what the new Russians arc like? Well, for example, look at the moujik, the "sectarian" of the time of Paul the Prussian, about whom there's an article in the June number of the *Rotissky Viestnik.* If he's not precisely typical of the coming Russian, he is undoubtedly *one* of the Russians of the future.

* * * * *

Those cursed creditors will kill me to a certainty. It was stupid of me to run away to foreign lands; assuredly 'twere better to have stayed at home and let myself be put in the debtor's prison. If I could only treat with them from here! But that can't be, for my personal presence is indispensable. I speak of this, because at the moment I am meditating two and even three publishing ventures which will demand the labour of an ox to carry out, but must-inevitably bring in money. I have often had luck with similar projects.

Now here's what I propose:

I. A long novel entitled "Atheism" (but for God's sake, let this be entirely between ourselves); before I attack it, I shall have to read a whole library of atheistic works by Catholic and Orthodox-Greek writers. Even in

the most favourable circumstances it can't be ready for two years. I have my principal figure ready in my mind. A Russian of our class, getting on in years, not particularly cultured, though not uncultured either, and of a certain degree of social importance, loses quite suddenly, in ripe age, his belief in God. His whole life long he has been wholly taken up by his work, has never dreamed of escaping from the rut, and up to his forty-fifth year, has distinguished himself in no wise. (The working-out will be pure psychology: profound in feeling, human, and thoroughly Russian.) The loss of faith has a colossal effect on him (the treatment of the story, and the environment, are both largely conceived). He tries to attach himself to the younger generation — the atheists, Slavs, Occidentalists, the Russian Sectarians and Anchorites, the mystics: amongst others he comes across a Polish Jesuit; thence he descends to the abysses of the Chlysty-sect; and finds at last salvation in Russian soil, the Russian Saviour, and the Russian God. (For heaven's sake, don't speak of this to anyone; when I have written this last novel, I shall be ready to die, for I shall have uttered therein my whole heart's burden.) My dear friend, I have a totally different conception of truth and realism from that of our "realists" and critics. My God! If one could but tell categorically all that we Russians have gone through during the last ten years in the way of spiritual development, all the realists would shriek that it was pure fantasy! And yet it would be pure realism! It is the one true, deep realism; theirs is altogether too superficial. Is not the figure of Lyubim Torzov, for instance, at bottom hideously unmeaning? Yet it's the boldest thing they've produced. And they call that profound realism! With such realism, one couldn't show so much as the hundredth part of the true facts. But our idealists have actually predicted many of the actual facts — really, that has been done. My dear fellow, don't laugh at my conceit; for I'm like Paul: "Nobody praises me, so I'll praise myself."

In the meantime I've got to live somehow. I don't mean to hurry my "Atheism" on to the market (I have such lots to say therein about Catholicism and Jesuitry, as compared with Orthodoxy). Moreover, I have an idea for a tolerably lengthy novel of about twelve sheets; it strikes me as most attractive. And I've another plan besides. Which shall I decide on, and to whom shall I offer my work? To the *Sarya*? But I always demand payment in advance; and perhaps on the *Sarya* they won't agree to that?

[Here follow some purely business details.]

XLVI. To his Niece Sofia Alexandrovna

FLORENCE,
January 25 *[February* 6], 1869.

MY DEAR, GOOD, AND VALUED FRIEND SONETCHKA, I did not at once answer your last letter (undated), and nearly died of conscience pangs therefor, because I love you very much. But it was not my fault, and it shall be different in future.

Regularity in our correspondence henceforth depends wholly on you; I shall from now onward answer each of your letters the same day I receive it; but as every letter from Russia is now an event to me, and deeply moves me *(yours* always in the most delightful sense), do write, if you love me, as often as you possibly can. I have not answered you for so long, because I put off all business and even the most important letters until I had finished the novel. Now it is done at last. I worked at the concluding chapters by day and by night, in the deepest anxiety and amid great torment of mind. A month ago I wrote to the *Roussky Viestnik*, asking them to postpone the appearance of the December number for a little while, and so make it possible for me to bring out the conclusion of my book this year. I swore that I would deliver the last lines by the 15th of January (by our Style). But what happened? I had two attacks, and therefore was obliged to overstep by ten days the term which I had myself fixed. They can only to-day (January 25) have received the two last chapters. You can easily imagine how much perturbed I have been by the thought that they might lose patience, and, as they had not received the end by the 15th, might let the number appear without the novel! That would be terrible for me. In any case, they must be infuriated; I was in dire need and had to write to Katkov for money.

The climate of Florence is perhaps even more unfavourable to my health than that of Milan or Vevey; the epileptic attacks return more frequently. Two, with an interval of six days, have brought about this delay of ten days. Besides, it rains too much in Florence; though in fine weather it is real Paradise here. One can imagine nothing lovelier than this sky, this air, and this light. For a fortnight it was somewhat cool, and as the houses here are poorly equipped, we froze during that fortnight like mice in a cellar. But now I have my work behind me, and am free; this work, which took a year,

carried me away so completely that I have not yet been able to collect my thoughts. The future is to me an enigma; I don't even yet know what I shall decide to do. However, I shall have to make up my mind to something. In three months, we shall have been exactly two years abroad. In my opinion, it is worse than deportation to Siberia. I mean that quite seriously; I'm not exaggerating. I cannot understand the Russians abroad. Even though there *is* a wonderful sky here, and though there are — as, for example, in Florence — literally unimaginable and incredible marvels of art, there are lacking many advantages which even in Siberia, as soon as I left the prison, made themselves evident to me: I mean, especially, home and the Russians, without which and whom I cannot live. Perhaps you may experience this yourself one day, and then you'll see that I don't exaggerate in the least. And yet my immediate future is still hidden from me. My original positive plan has for the moment broken down. (I say *positive,* but naturally all my plans, like those of any man who possesses no capital and lives only by his own toil, are associated with risks, and dependent on many attendant circumstances.) I hope that I shall succeed in bettering my finances by the second edition of the novel, and then returning to Russia; but I'm dissatisfied with the book, for I haven't said a tenth part of what I wanted to say. Nevertheless, I don't repudiate it, and to this day I love the plan that miscarried.

But in fact the book is not showy enough for the public taste; the second edition will therefore, even if it comes off at all, bring in so little that I can't reckon on it for any new arrangements. While I'm here in this foreign land, besides, I know nothing of what reception the book had in Russia. Just at first I was sent some cuttings, full of ecstatic praise. But lately — never a word. The worst of it is that I don't know anything, either, about the views of the *Roussky Viestnik* people. Whenever I've asked them for money, they've sent it by return of post, from which I am inclined to draw a favourable conclusion. But I may be mistaken. Now Maikov and Strachov write from Petersburg that a new journal, *Sarya,* has been started, with Strachov as editor; they sent me the first number, and begged for my collaboration. I promised it, but am hindered by my long connection with the *Roussky Viestnik* (it is always better to stay with the same paper), and by the fact that Katkov gave me an advance of 3,000 roubles before I came abroad. And I owe the editorial staff a good deal besides, for (together with the first three thousand) I have gradually borrowed in all about seven

thousand roubles; so that on that ground alone I can at present work for no other paper but the *Roussky Viestnik.*

On their answer to my request for more money all now depends. But even if they answer favourably, my position will remain most uncertain. I must at all costs get back to Russia; for here I am losing all power to write, not having the, to me, essential material at hand — that is to say, Russian actualities (from which I draw my ideas) and Russian people. Every moment I am obliged to look up something, or make inquiries about something, and know not where to turn for it. I am now dallying with the idea of a gigantic novel, which in any event, even should it miscarry with me, *must* be very effective by reason of its theme alone. That theme is — *Atheism* (it is not an indictment of the now prevalent convictions, but something quite different: a real story). What it has to do is to take the reader captive *even against his will.* Of course I shall have to study hard for it. Two or three important characters I have already got into extraordinary perspective, among others a Catholic enthusiast and priest (something like St. François Xavier). But I can't possibly write it here. I should most assuredly be able to sell the « second edition of this work, and make much money thereby; but when? Not before two years. (Don't tell anyone about this idea.) In the meantime I must write something else, for daily bread. All this is most depressing. *Some* change must absolutely, take place in my situation; but from what quarter is it to arrive?

You are right, my dear, when you say that I should be able to make money much more easily and quickly in Russia. And as a matter of fact I am now meditating two ideas for publications: one would demand much work and would entirely preclude all idea of simultaneous occupation with a novel, but might bring in much money (of that I have no doubt). The other is pure compilation and almost mechanical; it is an idea for an *annually*-appearing large and universally useful volume of about sixty sheets of small print, which would be widely bought and would come out every January; this idea I won't as yet disclose, for it is too "safe" and too valuable; the profits are beyond doubt; my work would be purely editorial. All the same it would require some ideas, and much special knowledge. And *this* work would not prevent me from doing a novel at the same time. I shall need collaborators therein, and shall think of you first of all (I shall need translators too), and of course on the understanding that profits shall be

shared in proportion to the work done; you will earn ten times as much as you now get for your work.

I can say without boasting that I've already in the course of my life had many a good literary idea.

I have suggested them to different editors, and to Krayevsky also and my dead brother; each one that has been carried out has proved highly lucrative. So I am building on these latest notions. But the chief thing is this next big novel. If I don't write it, it will torment me to death. But I can't write it here. And neither can I return to Russia until I have paid at least 4,000 roubles of my debts, and have besides in my possession 3,000 roubles (so as to be able to exist through the first year) — thus, seven thousand altogether.

But enough of me and my tiresome affairs! One way or another, some sort of an end must come, else I shall die of it all....

Your ever loving

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

P.S. — My address is Florence, *poste restante*. I hear that an enormous lot of letters get lost.

XLVII. To Nikolay Nikolayevitch Strachov

FLORENCE,
February 26 *[March* 10], 1869.

... And have you observed the following peculiarity of our Russian criticism? Every outstanding critic (such as Bielinsky, Grigoryev) first presented himself to the public under the protection, so to speak, of some outstanding writer — and thenceforward devoted himself wholly to the interpretation of that writer, nor ever expressed his ideas save in the form of a commentary upon that writer's works. The critics made no concealment of this, and indeed it appeared to be taken as a matter-of-course. I mean to say that our critics can only express their own ideas when they step forth arm-in-arm with some writer who attracts them. Thus, Bielinsky, when he passed our whole literature under review, and even when he wrote his articles on Pushkin, could only do so by leaning on Gogol, to whom he had paid honour in his youth. Grigoryev has relied on his interpretations of Ostrovsky, in championing whom he made his débût. And *you* have, as long as I've known you, had a boundless and instant sympathy for Leo Tolstoy. When I read your article in the *Sarya*, I felt, to be sure, an impression of its being wholly *necessary,* of your being *obliged* to begin with Leo Tolstoy, and *an analysis of his last work*, before you could utter your own idea. In the *Golos*, a feuilletonist declares that you share Tolstoy's *historical fatalism.* That idiotic phrase leaves things precisely where they were; do tell me how people manage to come upon such amazing notions and expressions! What may *historical fatalism* mean? Why this eternal jargon, and why do simple-minded men who can only see as far as the end of their noses, so deepen and darken counsel that no one can make out what they're driving at? It was evident that that feuilletonist had something that he wanted to say; he had read your article, beyond doubt. What you say in the passage referring to the battle of Borodino, expresses the profoundest essence of the Tolstoyan idea, and of your own reflections thereon. I don't think you could possibly have spoken with more lucidity. The national Russian idea stands almost nakedly forth in that passage. Precisely *it* is what people have failed to comprehend, and therefore have designated as fatalism. As regards other details of the article, I must await the sequel

(which I haven’t yet received). At any rate your thoughts are lucid, logical, definitely conceived, and most admirably expressed. Certain details, though, I don’t entirely agree in. We could treat these questions quite otherwise, were we talking to one another, instead of writing. In any case, I regard you as the only representative of our criticism with whom the future will reckon....

I thank you, my kind and much-esteemed Nikolay Nikolayevitch, for the great interest that you show in me. My health is as satisfactory as hitherto, and the attacks are even less violent than in Petersburg. Lately (that is, till about six weeks ago), I have been much occupied with the end of my “Idiot.” Do write and give me the opinion you promised on the book; I await it eagerly. I have my own idea about art, and it is this: What most people regard as fantastic and lacking in universality, *I* hold to be the inmost essence of truth. Arid observation of everyday trivialities I have long ceased to regard as realism — it is quite the reverse. In any newspaper one takes up, one comes across reports of wholly authentic facts, which nevertheless strike one as extraordinary. Our writers regard them as fantastic, and take no account of them; and yet they are the truth, for they are facts. But who troubles to observe, record, describe, them? They happen every day and every moment, therefore they are not “exceptional.”...

The Russians are often unjustly reproached with beginning all sorts of things, making great plans — but never carrying out even the most trivial of them.

This view is obsolete and shallow, and false besides. It is a slander on the Russian national character; and even in Bielinsky’s time it was prevalent. How paltry and petty is such a way of driving home actualities! Always the same old story! In this way, we shall let all true actuality slip through our fingers. And who will really delineate the facts, will steep himself in them? Of Turgenev’s novel I don’t wish even to speak; the devil knows what it may mean! But is not my fantastic “Idiot” the very dailiest truth? Precisely such characters *must* exist in those strata of our society which have divorced themselves from the soil — which actually are becoming fantastic. But I’ll talk of it no more! In my book much was written in haste, much is too drawn-out, much has miscarried; but much, too, is extremely good. I am not defending the novel, but the idea. Do tell me your view of it; and, of course, quite frankly. The more you find fault with me, the higher shall I rate your honest....

XLVIII. To his Niece Sofia Alexandrovna

FLORENCE, *March* 8 [20], 1869.

You have, as I begged you, answered all my letters regularly by return, my dear and precious friend Sonetchka. But I have broken my word, and made you wait more than a fortnight for my answers. This time I can't even excuse myself by pressure of work, for all my jobs have long been ready and delivered. I can explain my silence only by the depressed state of mind in which I have been.

The *Roussky Viestnik* did not answer my request for money for *seven weeks* (so that I had to wait through all Lent); only to-day have I received the money, though I had depicted my desperate situation to the people there more than two months ago. They write with *many* apologies, that they have not been able to send me the money any sooner, because as always at the beginning of the year, they were confronted with a terrible lot of work that could not be postponed, and with the accounts. And it is a fact that about New Year one never can get anything out of them; it was wont to be so in earlier days, and I can still remember how in the years 1866 and 1867 they made me wait whole months for an answer, just as now. So we've had anything but an easy time of it — we were even in actual distress. If we had not been able to borrow two hundred francs from an acquaintance, and to get a further hundred from other sources, we might easily have died of hunger in this foreign town. But what worried us most was the constant suspense and uncertainty. In such circumstances, I could not possibly write to anyone, not even you, my dear. Evidently the staff, as I gather from their letter, wish to retain me as a contributor; otherwise they would not have granted me a further advance. Indeed I can't complain of Katkov, and am even grateful to him for the many advances he has made me. Journals are impoverished nowadays, and don't usually give any advances; but in the very beginning, before I even began to write the novel, I had 4,0 — roubles from these people. For that reason I must not be either angry or disloyal.... I must strive even harder than hitherto to make myself useful to them. You write that people declare the magazine has lost ground. Is that really possible? I can't at all believe it; of course not because *I* am a contributor, but because the paper is, in my opinion, the best in Russia, and strikes a

really consistent note. To be sure, it is a little dry; and the literary side is not always up to the mark (but not oftener than in the other magazines; all the best works of modern literature have appeared therein: “War and Peace,”

“Fathers and Sons,” etc., to say nothing of more distant years; and the public knows that well); critical articles are rare (but often very remarkable, particularly when it is not a question of so-called fine literature); but then there appear annually, as every subscriber knows, three or four strikingly able, apt, individual, and in these days most necessary articles, such as one finds nowhere else. The public knows that, too. Therefore I believe that the paper, even if it *is* dry and addressed to a particular section of the public, cannot possibly lose ground.

In the year 1867, Katkov told me, in the presence of Lyubimov and the editorial secretary, that the paper had five hundred more subscribers than the year before, which was to be attributed entirely to the success of my “Raskolnikov.” I hardly think that “The Idiot” will have obtained fresh subscribers for the paper; therefore I am doubly glad that, despite the manifest failure of the story, they still depend on me. The editors beg me to excuse them for being unable to bring out the conclusion in the December number, and propose to send it to subscribers as a supplement. This is quite peculiarly painful for me. Have *you* had the conclusion? Do write and tell me. I get the *Roussky Viestnik* here, however; perhaps the supplement will come with the February number.

From Petersburg I am told quite frankly that “The Idiot” has certainly many shortcomings, and is generally regarded as a falling off; but nevertheless has been followed with great interest by those who read at all. And that is really the utmost I aimed at. As to the shortcomings, I perfectly discern them myself; I am so vexed by my errors that I should like to have written a criticism of the book. Strachov means to send me his article on “The Idiot”; I know that he is not among my partisans.

I clearly perceive that I am writing only about myself to-day; but as I am now in that vein, I’ll go on, and I beg you to hear me patiently. On all these *literary matters* depends now my whole future, and my return to Russia. My dearest wish is to embrace you all, and ever to remain with you; perhaps it will really come true some day! I needn’t emphasize the fact, dear friend (and you will be sure to understand me), that my whole literary activity has embodied for me but one definite ideal value, but one aim, but one hope — and that I do not strive for fame and money, but only and solely for the

synthesis of my imaginative and literary ideals, which means that before I die I desire to speak out, in some work that shall as far as possible express the whole of what I think.

At the moment I am meditating a novel. It will be called “Atheism”; I think that I shall succeed in saying all that I wish to say. But think, my dear: I cannot possibly write here. I must absolutely be in Russia, I must see and hear everything, I must take my own part in Russian life; and besides; the work would take at least two years. I can’t do it here, and must therefore write something else in the meantime.

On this account, life abroad becomes more unbearable to me every day. You must know that I should have 6,000, or at the very least 5,000, roubles before I can think of returning to Russia. I reckoned originally on the success of “The Idiot.” If it had been equal to that of “Raskolnikov,” I should have had those 5,000 roubles. Now I must set all my hopes on the future. God knows when I shall be able to return. But return I must.

You write of Turgenev and the Germans. Turgenev, however, has lost all his talent in this foreign sojourn, as already the *Golos* has declared. Certainly no such danger threatens me as that of succumbing to Germanic influence, for I do not like the Germans. But I must contrive to live in Russia, for here I shall lose the last vestiges of my talent and my powers. I feel that, in all my being. Therefore I must talk to you still more about those literary matters upon which depend my present, my future, and my return to Russia. So I continue.

The *Sarya* sent me, through Strachov, a second letter with an official request to contribute. This invitation comes from Strachov, from the editor Kachpirev, and some other contributors whom I do not personally know (Granovsky is not among them); Danilevsky also (whom I have not seen for twenty years) is of the number — this is not the novelist Danilevsky, but another very remarkable man of the same name. I perceive that a set of new coadjutors of great distinction, and of thoroughly Russian and national tendency, have clustered round this journal. The first number impressed me deeply with its very frank and outspoken tone, but especially the two long articles by Strachov and Danilevsky. You must be sure to read Strachov’s. It is quite certain that you have never read any critical writing that can compare with it. Danilevsky’s article, “Europe and Russia,” is to be very long and run through several numbers. This Danilevsky is a most unusual phenomenon. Once upon a time he was a Socialist and Fourierist; twenty

years ago, even, when he was involved in our affair, he struck me as most remarkable; from his banishment he returned a thorough Russian and Nationalist. This article (which I very particularly recommend to you) is his maiden effort. The paper seems to me, in general, to have a great future before it; but will the contributors continue to pull together? Again, Strachov, the real editor, strikes me as little fitted for a continuous task. But I may be mistaken. I answered the invitation to collaborate thus: I was most willing (I said) to contribute to the paper; but as my situation obliged me always to demand payment in advance, which, moreover, Katkov had always allowed me to do, I now begged for an advance of a thousand roubles. (It is not too much: what am I to live on while I'm doing the work? I can't possibly ask Katkov for money, while I'm working for another paper.) I sent this letter some days ago, and am now awaiting the answer. All I know is this: if they have money, they'll send it me at once; but I must reckon with the possibility that they have none, for I know from experience what difficulties a new journal has to encounter in its first year. Even if they do send me the thousand roubles, that will be no particular advantage to me. From Katkov I could have got quite as much, even a great deal more. The only advantage would be that I should at once have a large sum of money (which I urgently need) to dispose of; I could then lay aside 400 roubles for Pasha and Emilie Fyodorovna, and besides that pay a peculiarly worrying debt that I owe in Petersburg: it is a debt of honour without any promissory note. It's only on account of this debt that I've asked for the advance. —

Again, I think it would be to my advantage to appear successfully before the public in another paper; for then the *Roussky Viestnik* would esteem me more highly still. I fear only that the *Viestnik* people may be offended, although I never promised them an *exclusive* collaboration, and consequently have a right to work for other papers. But I don't quite like the fact that I still owe the *R.V.* about 2,000 roubles, for I've gradually obtained from them as much as 7,0 — roubles. It's just on that ground that they may take it ill of me. But three months ago, I wrote and told them that the novel I had promised them could not appear this year, but only in the course of next (1870). For the *Sarya* I want to write a story which would take about four months to do, and to which I propose to devote the hours that I had reserved to myself for walks and recreation after my fourteen months of labour. But I am afraid that the affair will get talked about, and that this may injure me with the *Roussky Viestnik*....

Wholly yours,
FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

XLIX. To Nikolay Nikolayevitch Strachov

FLORENCE,
March 18 [30], 1869.

... Danilevsky's article seems to me more and more important and valuable. It will assuredly be for many a day the "Household Companion" of every Russian. Quite apart from its content, the clear language, the "popular," lucid manner of presentation, joined to his uncompromising knowledge of his subject — all combines for success. How I should like to talk with you about this article — with you, precisely *you,* Nikolay Nikolayevitch. I should have so much to say to you on the subject! The article is so in harmony with my own views and convictions that here and there I stand amazed at the identity of our conclusions; as long as two years ago, I began to jot down certain of my reflections, for I had proposed to write an article with a very similar title, and with the same tendency and the same conclusions. How great was my joy and amazement when I beheld this plan, which I had hoped to carry out in the future, already carried out, and that so harmoniously and logically, and with such knowledge as I, with the best will in the world, could never have brought to the task. I await so eagerly the continuation of that article that I daily hurry to the post, and am always making elaborate calculations as to when the next number of the *Sarya* will be likely to arrive. My impatience is the greater because I have some misgivings about the final summing-up; I am not quite sure that Danilevsky will dwell *with sufficient emphasis* upon what is the inmost essence, and the ultimate destiny, of the Russian nation: namely, that Russia must reveal to the world her own Russian Christ, whom as yet the -peoples know not, and who is rooted in our native Orthodox faith. *There* lies, as I believe, the inmost essence of our vast impending contribution to civilization, whereby we shall awaken the European peoples; there lies the inmost core of our exuberant and intense existence that is to be. I cannot in the least express it in these few words; indeed, I regret that I have touched on it at all. I will only say this much more; after our paltry, hypocritical, angry, one-sided, and barren attitude of negation, such a journal as yours, with its grave, its thoroughly Russian, its statesmanlike and vital, tone, must undoubtedly have a great success.

[Dostoevsky goes on to praise an article by Strachov, and then enlarges on the purely business details of his proposed collaboration on the *Sarya*.]

L. To his Niece Sofia Alexandrovna

DRESDEN,
August 29 *[September* 10], 1869.

At last I have arrived at writing to you, my dear and only woman-friend Sonetchka. What can you have thought of my long silence?... I'll tell you in a few words all that is worth knowing about myself; I am only writing to link up our broken chain of communication. But I will say besides that my thoughts of you and yours have not been broken. Anya and I always talk of you, whenever we think of our Russian home, and that is many times a day.

I remained stuck so long at Florence only because I had not the money to leave it. The staff of the *Roussky Viestnik* left my urgent request for money unanswered for more than three months (I have — but this between ourselves! — grounds for supposing that they had no money in the till, and that that was the only reason why they did not answer for so long). At last they sent me (five weeks ago) seven hundred roubles to Florence. Well, dear friend, call upon your whole powers of imagination, and try to depict for yourself what we in Florence, during the whole of June and July, and half of August, were going through! In my whole life I've never experienced anything like it! The guide-books may say that Florence, by reason of its position, is the coldest town in winter of all Italy (they mean the actual Italy — that is to say, the whole peninsula); but in summer, it is the *hottest* town in the whole peninsula, and even in the whole Mediterranean region — only some parts of Sicily and Algiers can touch Florence for heat. Well, and so it was as hot as hell, and we bore it like true Russians, who notoriously can bear anything. I may add that for the last six weeks of our stay there, we were very hard-up. We had not, it is true, to suffer actual privation in any respect, nor did we deny ourselves anything, but our abode was thoroughly uncomfortable. We had been obliged, for unforeseen reasons, to leave the house where we had spent the winter; while we were waiting for that money, we went to a family with whom we are friendly, and rented provisionally a tiny dwelling. But as the money delayed to come, we had to stay in that hole (where we caught two beastly tarantulas) three whole months.

Our windows gave on a market-square with arcades and splendid granite-pillars; in the square was a municipal fountain in the form of a gigantic bronze boar from whose throat the water flowed (it is a classic masterpiece of rare beauty). Well, now reflect that all those arcades and the masses of stone by which the whole square is surrounded, drank in and accumulated all the heat of the sun, and got as scorching as a stove-pipe in a vapour-bath — and that was the atmosphere we had to live in. The real heat, that is, the real hell-heat, we had to groan under for six weeks (earlier, it was just in a sort of way endurable); it was nearly always 34 and 35 degrees Reaumur in the shade. You must know that the air, despite this heat and drought (it never once rained), was wonderfully light; the green in the gardens (of which there are astonishingly few in Florence; one sees hardly anything but stones) — the green neither withered nor faded, but seemed brighter and fresher every day; the flowers and lemon-trees had apparently only waited for the heat; but what astonished me most — me, who was imprisoned in Florence by untoward circumstance — was that the itinerant foreigners (who are nearly all very rich) mostly remained in Florence; new ones even arrived every day. Usually the tourists of all Europe throng, at the beginning of the hot weather, to the German spas. When I saw in the streets well-dressed Englishwomen and even Frenchwomen, I could not conceive why these people, *who had money to get away with,* could voluntarily stay in such a hell. I was sorriest of all for poor Anya. The poor thing was then in her seventh or eighth month, and so suffered dreadfully from the heat. Moreover, the population of Florence spends the whole night on its feet, and there’s a terrible deal of singing. Of course we had our windows open at night; then about five o’clock in the morning, the people began to racket in the market, and the donkeys to bray, so that we never could close an eye.

The distance from Florence to Prague (by Venice and then by boat to Trieste; there’s no other way) is more than a thousand versts; I was therefore very anxious about Anya; but the renowned Dr. Sapetti of Florence examined her and said that she could undertake the journey without any risk. He was right too, and the journey went off well. On the way we stopped two days in Venice; when Anya saw the Piazza of St. Mark’s and the palaces, she almost screamed with delight. In St. Mark’s (the church is a wonderful, incomparable building!) she lost her carved fan which I had bought her in Switzerland, and which was particularly dear to her; she has so few trinkets, you see. My God, how she did cry over it! We

liked Vienna very much too; Vienna is decidedly more beautiful than Paris. In Prague we spent three days looking for a place of abode, but found none. One can, in fact, only get unfurnished rooms there, as in Petersburg or Moscow; then one has to get one's own furniture, and a servant-maid, and set up house, and so forth. Nothing else is to be had. Our means did not permit of it, and therefore we left Prague.

Now we have been three months in Dresden; Anya's confinement may happen at any moment. For the present we are not doing so badly; but I am badly "sold," for it seems now that the hot, dry air in Florence was extraordinarily beneficial to my health, and even more so to my nerves (nor had Anya anything to complain of, rather the contrary). It was precisely on the *hottest* days that the epilepsy was least perceptible, and my attacks in Florence were much slighter than anywhere else. But here I'm always ill (perhaps it may be only the effect of the journey). I don't know if I've caught cold, or if the feverish attacks come from the nerves. These last three weeks I have had two; both very vicious ones. Yet the weather is glorious. I ascribe it all to the fact of coming suddenly from the Italian to the German climate. I have fever at the actual moment, and think that in this climate I shall write feverishly — that is, incoherently.

Now I have given you a lot of information about myself. Of course it is only the hundredth part; besides illness, many things oppress me, of which I can give no idea at all. Here is an example: I must absolutely deliver the beginning of my novel in time for the January number of the *Roussky Viestnik* (to be sure I am bound to admit that they do not press me in any way; they behave remarkably well to me and never refuse advances, though I already owe them a very great deal; but I am tormented by pangs of conscience, and so feel just the same as if they *did* press me). Moreover, I took an advance of 300 roubles from the *Sarya* early in the year, and that with a promise to send them this very year a story of at least three sheets. At the present moment I have not begun either the one or the other of these tasks; at Florence I could not work on account of the heat. When I undertook the obligation, I reckoned on going from Florence to Germany early in the new year, and there setting to work at once. But what can I do when people make me wait three months for money, and thus remove from me the possibility of doing anything at all? Anya will, in about ten days, present me with a child, probably a boy, and this will further delay my endeavours. She will certainly have to keep her bed for three weeks, and so

will not be able either to do shorthand or to copy for me. Of my own health, I need not speak. And then the work itself! Must I, to carry out my commissions punctually, tumble over my own feet, as it were, and so spoil all? I am now utterly possessed by one idea; yet I dare not take any steps to carry it out, for I am not sufficiently prepared to do so — I still have much to ponder, and I must collect material. Thus I have to force myself to write, meanwhile, some new stories. And to me that is terrible. What lies before me, and how I shall arrange my affairs, is to me an enigma!...

Till the next time, my dear friend. Write me a great deal about yourself. And above all as many facts as possible.

I embrace you.

Your ever devoted
FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

LI. To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov

DRESDEN,
October 16 [28], 1869.

[The greater part of the letter deals with a business misunderstanding with the staff of the *Sarya*.]

What am I to do now? When shall I get my money *now?* Why does he [Kachpirev, the editor of the *Sarya*] wait for my telegram, and request me to return to him the letter of exchange ("then I shall send you the money in the course of post," he said) instead of sending me now, directly, the second instalment of seventy-five roubles, which was due ten days ago? Does he think that the letter in which I described my destitute condition was a piece of fine writing and nothing more? How can I work, when I am hungry, and had to pawn my very pantaloons to get the two thalers for the telegram? The devil take me and my hunger! But she, my wife, who now is suckling her infant, *she* had to go herself to the pawnshop and pledge her last warm woollen garment! And it has been snowing here for the last two days (I am not lying: look at the newspapers!) How easily may she catch cold! Isn't he capable of understanding, then, that I am *ashamed* of telling him all these things? And it's nothing like the whole of them either; there are other things of which I'm *ashamed:* we haven't yet paid either the midwife or the landlady; and all these vexations must fall upon her precisely in the first month after her accouchement! Doesn't he see that it's not only me, but *my wife, whom he insults,* by taking my letter so frivolously, for I told him of my wife's great need. Indeed he has grossly insulted me!

Perhaps he may say: "Confound him and his poverty! He must *plead,* and not *demand,* for I am not bound to pay him his fee in advance." Can't he understand that by his favourable answer to my first letter he did bind *me!* Why did I turn to him with my request for 200 roubles, and not to Katkov? Only and solely because I believed that I should get the money sooner from him than from Katkov (whom I did not wish to trouble); if I *had* written to Katkov then, the money would have been in my hands at least a week ago! But I did *not.* Why? Because he [Kachpirev] had *bound* me by his answer. Consequently he has no right to say that he confounds me

and my poverty, and that it’s an impertinence in me to urge him to make haste.

But of course he *will* say that he has nothing to do with it, and that I’m impertinent. Of course he’ll say he has done all that lay in his power, that he sent off the letter of exchange in the course of post, that he is nowise to blame, that there is a misunderstanding, and so forth. And by God, he really believes that he’s right! Can he not see, then, that it’s *unforgivable* to leave my despairing letter, in which I told him that through his negligence I had been so long penniless — to leave it unanswered for *twelve* days. Yes, for twelve days, I am not telling a lie; I still have the envelope with the post-mark intact. It’s unheard of — not to reply for *six days* to a telegram, that he himself *made me send,* when a letter would have taken only four days! Such negligence is unpardonable, insulting! It is a personal offence. For I had told him about my wife and her accouchement. He had bound himself to me in advance, by making it seem superfluous that I should apply to Katkov: it *is* a serious personal offence!

He requests me to explain by telegram what my first telegram meant, and adds: “Of course at my expense”! Doesn’t he know, then, that an unstamped telegram is accepted nowhere, and that consequently I must have two thalers before I can send one? After all my letters, is he unable to divine that it’s possible I may not have those two thalers? It is the thoughtlessness of a man who cares nothing for his fellow’s perplexity. And then they demand of me lucid art, effortless and untroubled poetry, and point me to Turgenev and Gontscharov! If they but knew the conditions under which *I* have to work!...

LII. To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov

DRESDEN,
February 12 [24], 1870.

My attacks, after a long respite, are now coming on me terribly again, and disturb me in my work. I have a big idea in hand; I don’t mean that the execution is big, but the idea *as such.* It is somewhat in the kind of “Raskolnikov” [“Crime and Punishment but is still closer to actuality, and deals with the most weighty question of our time. I shall be ready with it in the autumn; and that without overhurrying. I shall make an effort to bring out the book directly — that is, in the autumn too; if I can’t, it won’t matter. I hope to earn at least as much money with it as I did with “Raskolnikov”; and so look forward to having all my affairs in order by the end of the year, and returning to Russia. Only the theme is almost too intense and thrilling. I have never yet worked so easily and with such enjoyment.

But enough. I must be positively slaying you with my interminable letters!...

[The greater part of the letter refers to his relations with the publisher Stellovsky, and with the staff of the *Sarya.]*

LIII. To Nikolay Nikolayevitch Strachov

DRESDEN,
February 26 *[March* 10], 1870.

MUCH-ESTEEMED NIKOLAY NIKOLAYEVITCH, I hasten to thank you for your letter and your interest in me. In foreign lands, the letters of our old friends are peculiarly precious to us. Maikov apparently means to write to me no more. With the deepest interest I have read the kindly lines which you devote to my story. What you say is agreeable and flattering to me; just like you, I have an earnest desire to please my readers. Kachpirev is satisfied, too; he has written two letters in that sense. It all rejoices me extraordinarily; I take particular pleasure in what you tell me about the *Sarya;* it is certainly very gratifying that the existence of the journal is assured. As far as its tendency is concerned, I am in entire agreement with it; consequently its success is my success. The paper reminds me in many respects of the *Vremya* — of our youthful days.

[Here follow some remarks upon the journal, and on the feasibility of Dostoevsky's further collaboration on the *Sarya.]* —

I will tell you honestly: I have never yet sought a theme for the money's sake, nor even from a sense of duty, so as to have a promised work ready by the appointed time. I have undertaken commissions only when I already had a theme ready in my head, one that I really desired to work out, and the working out of which I considered necessary. Such a theme I have now. I won't enlarge upon that; I will only say that I have never had a better or a more original idea. I may say this without incurring the reproach of lack of modesty, because I speak only of the idea, not of the execution of it. *That* lies in God's hand; I may indeed spoil all, as I have so often done; still, an inward voice assures me that inspiration will not fail in the execution, either. Anyhow I can answer for the novelty of the idea, and the originality of the manner, and I am, at the present moment, fire and flame. It is to be a novel in two parts of at least twelve, and at most fifteen, sheets (so I see it at this stage).

[There follow considerations of the feasibility of bringing out the new novel in the *Sarya*.]

So I await your answer; and make you, besides, one great and urgent request: Send me if possible, putting it down against my forthcoming resources (as you once sent me Tolstoy’s “War and Peace”) Stankevitch’s book upon Granovsky. You will do me thereby a great service, which I shall never forget. I want the book as urgently as I want air to breathe, and that as soon as possible; I need it as material for my work; without that book I can do nothing. Don’t forget it, for Christ’s sake; send it me, no matter how you manage it....

LIV. To Nikolay Nikolayevitch Strachov

DRESDEN,
March 24 *[April* 5], 1870.

I hasten, much-esteemed Nikolay Nikolayevitch, to answer your letter, and I shall come at once to myself. I want to tell you, decisively and frankly, that, after the closest consideration, I cannot possibly promise to have the novel ready so soon as the autumn. It appears to me quite impracticable; and I should like to beg the staff not to press me, for I want to do my work quite as carefully and neatly as certain gentlemen (that is, the Great Ones) do theirs. All I will guarantee is that the novel shall be ready in the January of the coming year. This work is more to me than aught else. The idea is more precious to me than any of my other ideas, and I want to do it well.... I also set great hopes on the novel which I am now writing for the *Roussky Viestnik*; I don't mean as a work of art, but because of its tendencies; I mean to utter certain thoughts, whether all the artistic side of it goes to the dogs or not. The thoughts that have gathered themselves together in my head and my heart are pressing me on; even if it turns into a mere pamphlet, I shall say all that I have in my heart. I hope for success. For that matter, who ever sets himself to a task without so hoping? This work for the *Roussky Viestnik* I shall soon have finished, and then I can turn with gusto to *the* novel.

I have been meditating the idea of this novel for three years; till now I have not been able to make up my mind to attack it in these foreign lands; I wanted not to begin till I was in Russia. But during these three years, the whole conception has matured within me, and I think that I *can* begin the first part (which I intend for the *Sarya),* even here, for the action of that part is concerned with many years ago. You need not be uneasy when I speak of a "first part." The idea demands great length; at least as great as in the Tolstoyan novels. It will really be a cycle of five distinct stories; these will be so independent of one another that any one of them (except the two that come midway) could perfectly well be published in different journals as completely separate works. The general title is to be: "The Life-Story of a Great Sinner," and each separate tale will have its own title as well. Each division (that is, each single story) will be about fifteen sheets at most in

length. To write the second story, I *must* be in Russia; the action of that part takes place in a Russian monastery; although I know the Russian monasteries well, I must nevertheless come back to Russia. I should like to have said much more about it to you, but what can one say in a letter? I repeat, however, that I can't possibly promise the novel for this year; don't press me, and you will get a conscientious, perhaps even a really good, work (at all events I have set myself this idea as the goal of my literary future, for I can't at all hope to live and work more than six or seven years longer).

I have read the March number of the *Sarya* with great enjoyment. I await impatiently the continuation of your article, so that I may grasp it in its entirety. It seems to me that your point is to show Herzen as an Occidentalism and in general to speak of the Occident in contradistinction to Russia; am I right? You chose your point of departure very cleverly; Herzen is a pessimist; but do you *really* hold his doubts ("Who is guilty?"

"Krupov," and the rest) to be insoluble? It seems to me that you evade that question, in order to give your fundamental idea more value. Anyhow I await most eagerly the continuation of the article; the theme is positively *too* exciting and actual. What will come of it, if you really adduce the proof that Herzen, earlier than many others, pointed to the decadence of the West? What will the Occidentalists of the Granovsky period say to that? To be sure, I don't know if that is what you really are working up to; it is only a presentiment of mine. Don't you, moreover, think (although it has nothing to do with the theme of your article) that there is another standpoint from which to judge the character and activities Herzen — namely that he ever and always was first of all a *writer*? The writer in him prevails ever and always, in everything that he does. The agitator is a writer, the politician a writer, the Socialist a writer, the philosopher, to the last degree, a writer! This peculiarity of his nature is, I think, explanatory of much in his work; even to his levity and his love of punning when he is treating the most serious moral and philosophical questions (which, by-the-bye, is not a little repellent in him).

[He then speaks of Strachov's polemical articles, which Dostoevsky thinks too mild: "The Nihilists and Occidentalists deserve the knout."]

You maintain, among other things, that Tolstoy is equal to any of our greatest writers; with that passage in your letter I cannot possibly say that I agree. It is a thing that ought not to be affirmed!

Pushkin and Lomonossov were geniuses. A writer who steps forward with the “Negro of Peter the Great” and “Bielkin” comes bringing a message of genius, a new message, that nobody before him has anywhere whatever delivered. But when such an one comes with “War and Peace,” he comes *after* that new message which had been already delivered by Pushkin; and *this stands fast*, however far Tolstoy may go in the development of that message already delivered before him by another genius. I hold this to be very important. But I can’t explain myself at all fully in these few lines....

LV. To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov

DRESDEN,
March 25 *[April* 6], 1870.

[The first half of the letter deals with business matters.]

The job for the *Roussky Viestnik* will not particularly tax me; but I have promised the *Sarya* a real piece of work, and I want *really* to do it. This latter has been maturing in my brain for two years past. It is the same idea about which I have already once written to you. This will be my last novel; it will be as long as “War and Peace.” I know from our one-time talks that you will approve the idea. The novel will consist of five longish tales (each of fifteen sheets; in these two years my plan has fully ripened). The tales are complete in themselves, so that one could even sell them separately. The first I intend for Kachpirev; its action lies in the ‘forties. (The title of the whole book will be “The Life-Story of a Great Sinner,” but each part will have its own title as well.) The fundamental idea, which will run through each of the parts, is one that has tormented me, consciously and unconsciously, all my life long: it is the question of the existence of God. The hero is now an atheist, now a believer, now a fanatic and sectarian, and then again an atheist. The second story will have for its setting a monastery. On this second story I base all my hopes. Perhaps people will admit at last that I can write something but pure nonsense. (I will confide to you alone, Apollon Nikolayevitch, that in this second story the principal character is to be taken from Tikhon Zadonsky; of course under another name, but also as a Bishop who has withdrawn to a monastery for repose.) A thirteen-yeared boy, who has been concerned in a serious crime, a lad intellectually mature, but utterly corrupt (I know the type), and the future hero of the novel as a whole — has been sent by his parents to the monastery to be there brought up. The little wolf, the little Nihilist, there comes in contact with Tikhon. In the same monastery is to be found Tchaadayev (also of course under another name). Why should not Tchaadayev have spent a year in a monastery? Let us suppose that Tchaadayev, after that first article which caused him to be weekly examined by physicians as to his state of mind, had been unable to refrain from publishing a second article somewhere

abroad (say, in France; it is quite conceivable; and for *this* article he gets banished for a year to a monastery. But he is allowed to receive visitors there — for example, Bielinsky, Granovsky, even Pushkin, and others. (Of course it is not to be the actual Tchaadayev; I only want to display the type.) At the monastery there is also a Paul the Prussian, a Golubov, and a Monk Parfeny. (I know the *milieu* through and through; I have been familiar with the Russian monasteries from childhood.) But the principal figures are to be Tikhon and the boy. For God's sake, don't tell anyone what this second part is to be about. Usually I never tell anybody about my work beforehand; only to you would I whisper it; whatever others may think of the value of my plan, to me it is worth more than aught else. Don't talk to anybody about Tikhon. I have told Strachov about the monastery idea, but said no word about the figure of Tikhon. Perhaps I shall succeed in creating a majestic, authentic saint. Mine is to be quite different from Kostanchoglov, and also from the German in Gontscharov's "Oblomov." I shall probably not *create* at all, but present the real Tikhon, who has long been shrined in my heart. But even a close, faithful delineation I should regard it as a great achievement to succeed in. Don't talk to anyone about it. Now, to write this second part of the novel, which goes on in the monastery, I must absolutely be in Russia. Ah, if I could but bring it off! The first part deals with the childhood of my hero. Of course, there are other characters besides children; it is a real novel. This first part, fortunately, I *can* write even here; I shall offer it to the *Sarya.* Will they not refuse it, though? But a thousand roubles is no very excessive fee....

Nihilism isn't worth talking about. Only wait until this scum that has cut itself adrift from Russia, is quite played-out. And, do you know, I really think that many of the young scoundrels, decadent boys that they are, will sooner or later turn over a new leaf, and be metamorphosed into decent, thorough-going Russians? And the rest may go rot. But even *they* will finally hold their tongues, for sheer impotence. What scoundrels they are, though!...

LVI. To his Sister Vera, and his Niece Sofia Alexandrovna

DRESDEN,
May 7 [19], 1870.

My DEAR FRIENDS SONETCHKA AND VEROTCHKA, I have not written to you for much too long a period; the reason is not my laziness, but lies in my many recent anxieties and my generally depressed condition of mind.

We are still living in Dresden, and are at present comfortable enough. Little Lyuba is a dear and most healthy child. As we have already lost a child, we are very anxious about this one. Anya is nursing, and it is clear that she finds it more and more trying to her every day. She has grown very thin and weak, and is consumed with home-sickness. I too long frightfully for Russia, and from that longing arises my constant enervation. My affairs are in the worst conceivable condition. We certainly have quite enough to live on, but we cannot even think of returning to Russia. Nevertheless, I must get back somehow, for life here is to me quite unbearable. To go from here to Petersburg, we should have to make a move before October; later it will be too cold, and the little one might easily catch a chill. Moreover, to pay our debts here before we leave, we should need at least three hundred roubles; besides that, the travelling expenses for our whole family and for the instalment in Petersburg: the whole amounts to no small sum. But this is not all; the principal thing is the creditors. I owe them, with the interest, nearly 6,000 roubles. Less than a third — that is, 2,000 roubles — I cannot offer them, if they are to consent to wait a year for the rest. But they would not agree to do that, even if I paid this third. They are all furious with me, and would certainly come down without mercy, in order to punish me. So you can reckon for yourself what a sum I must have to settle all, and be able to come back: that is, from three to four thousand roubles at least. Where am I to get such an amount? The one thing I can build on is my literary labour. Three years ago, when I left Russia, I cherished the same hopes. I had just had great success with a novel, and it is therefore comprehensible that I should still be filled with the hope of writing another which will enable me to get rid of all my debts in a year or so. But at *that* time I paid three creditors seven thousand roubles all of a sudden, and this enraged the

others, who came down on me, demanding to know why I had satisfied those three creditors, and not the rest as well. They indicted me, and I took to my heels, but in the hope that I should manage to write another novel in a year and pay off all my debts. That hope was mistaken. The novel has been a failure, and in addition there has happened something that I could not have foreseen: namely, that through being obliged to live away from Russia for so long, I am losing the capacity to write decently at all, and so could hope nothing from a fresh attempt at a novel. (These difficulties are less of an intellectual than a material nature: for example, while I live abroad I can have no personal outlook upon the most ordinary events of our period.) I have a plan for a new novel, the success of which I consider an absolute certainty; but I *cannot* decide to write it here, and am obliged to postpone it. For the moment I am writing a very odd story for the *Roussky Viestnik*; I have to work off an advance from them.

You remember, I daresay, my dear Sonetchka, what you wrote with regard to the novel which I did over here: that you wondered how I could undertake and bind myself to get such a work done in a fixed space of time. But the work which I am now writing for the *Roussky Viestnik* is a good deal more arduous still. I have to cram into twenty-five sheets material which ought to take at least fifty, and that only because it must be finished by a certain date; and I have to do this, because for the moment, while I am living abroad, I can't write anything else. The people at the *Sarya* office praised beyond measure a little story that I published in that journal. Even the newspaper critics (on the *Golos*, the *Peterbourgskaya Listok*, etc.) were most benevolent. But you will hardly believe how it revolts me to write that kind of thing when I have so many fully formed ideas in my mind: that is, to write something quite different from what I want to be at. You can surely understand, Sonetchka, that that alone is great torment, and added to it is the desperate state of my affairs. Since I have been absent from Petersburg, all my business matters and connections there have been frightfully neglected (although "The Idiot" did miss fire, several publishers wanted to buy the rights of the second edition from me; they offered me relatively good terms — from a thousand five hundred to two thousand roubles). But all these projects fell through, for I had no one in Petersburg to look after the business for me. Well, that's how it stands with me. And I say nothing of how very much I grieve for Anna Grigorovna, longing so terribly as she does for Russia. I can't possibly tell everything in this letter. But I *have*

finally resolved to return to Russia, in any event, in the autumn of this year, and shall quite decidedly get it done somehow. Of course, too, I shall come to Moscow (for business reasons, if for no others); that is, if the creditors do not put me in a Petersburg prison so soon as I arrive *there*. In any case I hope to see you all again, my dears, at the beginning of the winter.

In truest love:

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY, ANYA, AND LYUBA.

LVII. To Nikolay Nikolayevitch Strachov

DRESDEN,
June 11 [23], 1870.

[In the first half of the letter Dostoevsky complains of Kachpirev, who has not agreed to his proposal with regard to “The Life-Story of a Great Sinner.”]

By chance the *Viestnik Europi* for the current year fell into my hands, and I looked through all the numbers that have appeared. I was amazed. How can this unbelievably mediocre journal (which at its best can only be classed with the *Northern Bee* of Bulgaria) have such vogue with us (6,000 copies in the second edition!). It is because they know their business. How deftly they adopt the popular tone! An insipid pattern for Liberalism! These are the things we like. But the paper is, nevertheless, very well managed. It appears punctually each month, and has a varied staff of contributors. I read, among other things, “The Execution of Tropmann,” by Turgenev. You may be of a different opinion, Nikolay Nikolayevitch, but I was infuriated by that pretentious and paltry piece of pathos. Why does he keep on explaining that he was very wrong to look on at the execution? Certainly he was, if the whole thing was a mere drama for him; but the sons of men have *not* the right to turn away from anything that happens on the earth and ignore it; no, on the highest moral grounds they have not. *Homo sum et nihil humani*... and so forth. Peculiarly comic is it, when at the last moment he *does* turn away, and thus avoids seeing the actual execution. “Look you, gentlemen, of what delicate upbringing I am! I could not endure that sight!” All through, he betrays himself. The most definite impression that one gets from the whole article is that he is desperately concerned with himself and his own peace of mind, even when it comes to the cutting off of heads. Oh, I spit upon the whole business. I am fairly sick of folk. I consider Turgenev the most played-out of all played-out Russian writers, whatever you, Nikolay Nikolayevitch, may write in Turgenev’s favour: please, don’t take it ill of me....

LVIII. To his Niece Sofia Alexandrovna

DRESDEN,
July 2 [14], 1870.

MY DEAR SONETCHKA, I really wished to answer your last letter instantly, but have again delayed my reply. Blame my work and various anxieties for that. And besides, you, like all my Moscow friends, have the bad habit of giving no address in your letters.

From your letter I conclude that you have moved. Where then am I to address you? You should, you know, reckon also with the possibility of my having mislaid or lost the letter in which you gave your last address. As it is, I have spent three days looking through all my correspondence for the last three years. But I happen to remember your old address, and there I send this letter. Will it reach you, I wonder? Such doubts discourage me. I beseech you not to write your letters, at any rate not those to me, in the woman's way — that is, not to omit date and address; by God, we shall manage better so!

Your letter made a very mournful impression on me, dear. Is it really a fact that if you go into the country, they won't give you any more translation to do, even in the autumn? Why do you so torment yourself? You need happiness and healthy surroundings. You work from early morning till far into the night. You must marry. My dear Sonetchka, for Christ's sake, don't be angry with me for saying that. Happiness is meted out to us but once in life; all that comes afterwards is merely pain. We must prepare ourselves for this beforehand, and arrange our lives as normally as possible. Forgive me for writing to you in this tone, when I have not seen you for three years. I don't mean it for advice; it is only my most cherished desire. For I must love you — I cannot help it!

As for my return to Russia, it is of course but a possibility of the fancy, which *may* come true, yet nevertheless is a mere dream. We shall see. And as for the rest of your counsels (with regard to the sale of the novel, the return without money, in face of the possibility of being clapped into jail by the creditors, and so forth), I must tell you that your whole letter displays your inexperience and your ignorance of the questions at issue. I have been occupied with literature for twenty-five years, but have never yet known a

case of the author himself offering the booksellers his second edition (still less through the agency of strangers, to whom it matters nothing). If one offers the wares one's-self, one gets only a tenth of their value. But if the publisher, that is to say the purchaser, comes to one of his own accord, one gets ten times as much. "The Idiot" came too late; it should have appeared in earlier years. Then, as to the creditors, they will, as sure as death, imprison me, for therein lies their sole advantage. Believe me, these gentry know very precisely how much I can get from the *Roussky Viestnik* or the *Sarya*. They will have me imprisoned in the hope that one or the other journal, or, if not, somebody else, will get me out. That is dead certain. No — if I am to come back, I must do it quite differently.

I find it very hard to have to look on and see Anna Grigorovna consumed by home-sickness and longing as she is. That troubles me more than aught else. The child is healthy, but has not yet been weaned. Return is now my one fixed idea. If I go on living here much longer, I shall lose all power to earn anything; nobody will consent to print me. In Russia, at the worst I could edit school-books or compilations. Well, anyhow, it's not worth while wasting words upon this matter. I shall most decidedly return, even if it *is* to be put in jail. I should like just to finish the work that I am doing for the *Roussky Viestnik*, so that I might be left in peace. And yet, as things are, I can't, *in any case,* get done before Christmas. The first long half of the work I shall deliver to the office in six weeks. and get a little money. The second half I shall send at the beginning of the winter, and the third — in February. Printing will have to begin in this coming January. I am afraid that they will simply send back my novel. I shall tell them from the very first that I don't intend to alter or take out anything in the book. The idea of this novel seemed to me most attractive at first, but now I am sorry that I ever began it. Not that it does not still interest me, but I should prefer to write something else.

As often as I write to you, I feel what a long space of time divides us from one another. And by-the-bye, there's another thing: I have the most fervent desire to take, before my return to Russia, a trip to the East — that is, to Constantinople, Athens, the Archipelago, Syria, Jerusalem, and Athos. This trip would cost at least 1,500 roubles. But the expenses would not signify: I could cover them all by writing a book, about the visit to Jerusalem; I know by experience that such books are very popular nowadays. But for the moment I have neither the time nor the means; and

yesterday I read, in an extra-edition, that at any moment there may be war between France and Prussia. So much combustible material has accumulated everywhere, that the war, so soon as it begins, must assume formidable dimensions. God grant that Russia may not be mixed up in any of the European entanglements; we have enough to do at home.

I love you and yours beyond all bounds, and I hope you will believe that. Love me also a little. I do not wish to die on German soil; I want before my death to return home, and there die.

My wife and Lyuba send kisses. It is very hot here with us, and yesterday, after a long respite, I had an attack again. To-day my head is quite muddled; I feel as if I were crazy.

Till the next time, my dears — forget me not.

I embrace and kiss you.

Your FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

P.S. — If I get no answer to this letter, I shall conclude that it has not reached you. My address is: Allemagne, Saxe, Dresden, à M. Théodore Dostoevsky, Post restante.

LIX. To his Niece Sofia Alexandrovna

Dresden,
August 17 [29], 1870.

MY DEAR FRIEND SONETCHKA, Forgive me for not having at once answered on receiving your letter of August 3 (I got your short letter of July 28 also). I have, often, so many anxieties and disagreeables that I have not the energy to begin anything, least of all a letter. Only my work has to be done in any condition of mind — and I do it; but there are times when I am not equal even to that, and then I abandon all. My life is not an easy one. This time I want to write to you about my situation: to be sure I don't like letter-writing, for I find it hard, after so many years of separation, to write of things that are of consequence to me, and especially to write in such a way that you will understand me. Lively letters one can write only to those with whom one has no relations of affection.

The most important thing is that now Ï must return to Russia. That idea is simple enough; but I couldn't possibly describe to you in full detail all the torments and disadvantages that I have to endure in these foreign lands; of the moral torments (the longing for home, the necessity of being in touch with Russian life which as a writer is essential to me, etc.), I won't at all speak. How unbearable are the anxieties about my family alone! I see clearly how Anya longs for home, and how terribly she languishes here. At home, too, I could earn much more money; here we are absolutely impoverished. We have just enough to live on, it is true; but we cannot keep a nursemaid. A nursemaid here requires a room to herself, her washing, and high wages, three meals a day, and a certain amount of beer (of course only from foreigners). Anya is nursing the baby, and never gets a full night's rest. She has no amusements of any kind, and usually not one moment to herself. Also her state of health leaves something to be desired. Why do I tell you all this, though? There are hundreds of similar little troubles, and together they make up a heavy burden. How gladly, for example, would I go to Petersburg this autumn with my wife and child (as I pictured to myself early in the year); but to get away from here and travel to Russia I must have not less than 2,000 roubles; nor am I therein reckoning my debts — I need so much as that for the journey alone. Oh yes! I can see you shrugging your

shoulders and asking: “Why so much? What is the good of this exaggeration?” Do, my dear, for Heaven’s sake, get out of your habit of judging other people’s affairs without knowing all the circumstances. Two thousand roubles *are* absolutely necessary to do the journey, and to instal ourselves in Petersburg. You may believe me when I say it. Where am I to get hold of the money? And now we must be getting the child weaned, and vaccinated too. Only think what a fresh crop of cares for Anya, who is already run-down and feeble. I have to look on at it all, and am nearly driven out of my senses. And if I do get the money for the journey in three months, the winter will just be upon us, and one can’t drag an infant over a thousand versts in frosty weather. Consequently we shall have to wait till early spring. And shall we even then have money? You must know that we can scarcely manage on our income here, and have to go into debt for half we need. But enough of that. I want to talk of other things now, though they’re all connected with the principal subject.

I forget whether I’ve written to you about my difficulties with the *Roussky Viestnik;* the fact is that at the end of last year I published a story in the *Sarya,* while I still had to work off an advance from the *Roussky Viestnik;* it was a year since I had promised them the work. Did I tell you how it came about? How my novel got unexpectedly long, and how I suddenly perceived that there was no time to get anything written by the beginning of the year for the *Roussky Viestnik*? They made me no reply about the matter, but ceased to send money. At the beginning of this year I wrote to Katkov that I would deliver the novel chapter by chapter from June, so that they could print at the end of the year. Then I worked at the utmost limit of my energy and my powers; I knew that if I were to break off my literary connection with the *Roussky Viestnik,* I should have no means of livelihood here abroad (for it is very difficult to enter into fresh relations with another journal from a distance). And besides I was frightfully distressed by the thought that they were calling me a rogue at the office, when they had always treated me so extraordinarily well. The novel at which I was working was very big, very original, but the idea was a little new to me. I needed great self-confidence to get equal with that idea — and as a matter of fact. I did not get equal with it, and the book went wrong. I pushed on slowly, feeling that there was something amiss with the whole thing, but unable to discover what it was. In July, directly after my last letter to you, I had a whole succession of epileptic fits (they recurred every

week). I was so reduced by them that for a whole month I dared not even think of working; work might have been actually dangerous to me. And when, a fortnight ago, I set to again, I suddenly saw quite clearly why the book had gone so ill, and where the error lay; as if possessed by sudden inspiration, I saw in an instant a quite new plan for the book. I had to alter the whole thing radically; without much hesitation I struck out all that I had written up to that time (about fifteen sheets in all), and began again at the first page. The labour of a whole year was destroyed. If you only knew, Sonetchka, how grievous it is to be a writer — that is, to bear a writer's lot! Do you know that I am absolutely *aware* that if I could have spent two or three years at that book — as Turgenev, Gontscharov, and Tolstoy can — I could have produced a work of which men would still be talking in a hundred years from now! I am not boasting; ask your conscience and your memory if I have ever yet boasted. The idea is so good and so significant that I take off my own hat to it. But what will come to pass? I know very well: I shall get it done in eight or nine months, and utterly spoilt. Such a work demands at least two or three years. (It will, even so, be very extensive — as much as thirty-five sheets.) Separate details and characters will perhaps come not so badly off; but only sketchily. Much will be "half-baked," and much a great deal too drawn-out. Innumerable beauties I shall have altogether to renounce getting in, for inspiration depends in many respects upon the time one has at disposal. And yet I am setting to work! It is terrible; it is like a determined suicide! But it's not even the most important thing: the most important thing is that all my calculations are upset. At the beginning of the year, I was confidently hoping that I should succeed in sending a considerable portion of the novel to the *Roussky Viestnik* by the first of August, and so bettering my situation. What am I to do now? At earliest I shall be able to deliver a small portion by September 1st (I wanted to send a lot at once, so as to have an excuse for requesting an advance); now I am ashamed to ask for money; the first part (it is to be in five parts) will consist of only seven sheets — how can I ask for an advance? All my calculations having thus proved false, I don't know at this moment what on earth I am to live on. And it is in such a state of mind that I must labour!

[He writes further of his somewhat strained relations with the *Roussky Viestnik.]*

All this worries me, and deprives me of the tranquillity that I need for the work; and there are other things besides, which I do not mention at all. With this beginning of the war, all credit has very nearly ceased, so that living is much more difficult. But I shall get through it somehow or other. The most important thing, though, is health; and my state has considerably worsened.

With your views on war I can't possibly agree. Without war, people grow torpid in riches and comfort, and lose the power of thinking and feeling nobly; they get brutal, and fall back into barbarism.

I am not speaking of individuals, but of whole races. Without pain, one comprehends not joy. Ideals are purified by suffering, as gold is by fire. Mankind must strive for his Heaven. France has of late become brutalized and degraded. A passing trial will do her no harm; France will be able to endure it, and then will awake to a new life, and new ideas. But hitherto France has been dominated on the one hand by old formulas, and on the other by cravenheartedness and pleasure-seeking.

The Napoleonic dynasty will be impossible henceforth. New life and reformation of the country are so important that even the bitterest trials are nothing by comparison. Do you not recognize God's hand in it? —

Also our politics of the last seventy years — I mean Russian, European, and German politics — must inevitably alter. The Germans will at last show us their real faces. Everywhere in Europe great changes must inevitably come — and of their own accord.

What new life will be called forth everywhere by this mighty shock! For want of great conceptions, even science has sunk into arid materialism; what does a passing blow signify in face of that? —

You write "People kill and wound, and then nurse the wounded." Do but think of the noblest words that ever yet were spoken: "I desire love, and not sacrifice." At this moment, or at any rate in a few days, there will, I believe, be much decided. Who betrayed whom? Who made a strategical error? The Germans or the French? I believe, the Germans.

Or rather, ten days ago I was of that opinion. But now it appears to me that the Germans will keep the upper hand a while longer; the French are on the verge of an abyss, into which they are bound to plunge for a time — by that I mean the dynastic interests to which the fatherland is being sacrificed. I could tell you much of German opinion, which I can observe here, and which is very significant in the present political crisis; but I have no time. —

I greet you all. Remember me to everyone. I embrace you from my heart; do not forget that no one is so cordially inclined to you as I am. I am glad that I have been able to write to you. Write to me, don’t forget me; I am now setting to again at my forced labour. —

With heart and soul, your FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

When I think of the Petersburg relatives, my heart aches. I can send them nothing before the beginning of next year, though they are in great distress. This weighs heavily on my conscience; I had promised to aid them; about Pasha I am particularly grieved.

P.S. — You don’t understand my position with the creditors; that is why you think it would not be worth their while to put me in prison. On the contrary: they will quite certainly have me arrested, for in many respects it would be of great advantage to them. I forget whether I told you that I have hopes of procuring, immediately after my arrival in Petersburg, the use of about 5,000 roubles for about three years. That would save me from imprisonment. Nor is such a hope entirely without foundation. But I must do the business personally; if I attempted it from here, I might spoil all. The plan has nothing to do with my literary activities. At the same time, if my present novel should make a success, my hopes for these 5,000 roubles would be sensibly improved. This is all between ourselves.

Till next time, my dears.

Your DOSTOEVSKY.

LX. To Nikolay Nikolayevitch Strachov

DRESDEN,
October 9 [21], 1870.

I have not written to you till now, because I have been uninterruptedly occupied with the novel for the *Roussky Viestnik*. The work was going so badly, and I had to re-write so much, that at last I vowed to myself that I would read nothing and write nothing, and hardly even raise my head from my desk, until I had accomplished what I had set myself to do. And I am only at the beginning now! It is true that many scenes belonging to the middle of the novel are ready written, and separate bits of what I have rejected I shall still be able to use. Nevertheless, I am still at work on the earliest chapters. That is a bad omen, and yet I mean to make the thing as good as may be. The truth is that the tone and style of a story must make themselves. But true as that is, one occasionally loses one's note, and has to find it again. In a word: none of my works has given me so much trouble as this one. At the beginning, that is at the end of last year, I thought the novel very "made" and artificial, and rather scorned it. But later I was overtaken by real enthusiasm, I fell in love with my work of a sudden, and made a big effort to get all that I had written into good trim. Then, in the summer, came a transformation: up started a new, vital character, who insisted on being the real hero of the book; the original hero (a most interesting figure, but not worthy to be called a hero) fell into the background. The new one so inspired me that I once more began to go over the whole afresh. And now, when I have already sent the beginning to the office of the *Roussky Viestnik*, I am suddenly possessed with terror — I fear that I am not equal to the theme I have chosen. This dread torments me horribly. And yet I have not arbitrarily dragged in my hero. I arranged for his entire rôle in the synopsis of the book (I prepared a synopsis in several sheets, and sketched therein the entire action, though without the dialogues and comments). Therefore I hope that I may still bring off this hero, and even make him a quite new and original figure; I hope and fear simultaneously. For it is really time that I wrote something important at last. Perhaps it will all burst up like a soap-bubble. But come what come will, I must write; the many re-fashionings have lost me much time, and I have very little ready....

[The rest is concerned with journalism and the *Sarya.]*

LXI. To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov

DRESDEN,
December 15 [27], 1870.

I have undertaken a task to which my powers are not equal. I attacked a big novel (a novel “with a purpose “ — most unusual for me), and at first I thought I should manage it quite easily. But what has been the issue? When I had tried about ten settings, and saw what the theme demanded, I got very much out of heart with the thing. The first part I finished because I simply had to (it is very long, about ten sheets; and there are to be four parts in all), and sent it off. I believe that that first part is empty and quite ineffective. From it the reader can’t at all perceive what I’m aiming at, or how the action is to develop. The *Roussky Viestnik* people expressed themselves quite flatteringly about this beginning. The novel is called “The Possessed” (they are the same “possessed” about whom I wrote to you before), and has a motto from the Gospels. I want to speak out quite openly in this book, with no ogling of the younger generation. I can’t possibly say all I should like in a letter.

[He then speaks of his account with the publisher Stellovsky.]

LXII. To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov

DRESDEN, *December* 30, 1870.

Yes, I am resolute to return, and shall certainly be in Petersburg early in the year. Here, I am constantly in such a frightful state of mind that I can hardly write at all. Work is dreadfully difficult to me. I follow Russian and German happenings with feverish interest; I have been through much in these four years. It has been a strenuous, if a lonely, existence. Whatever God shall send me in the future, I will humbly accept. My family, too, weighs heavily on my mind. In a word, I need human intercourse.

Strachov has written to me that everything in our society is still fearfully puerile and crude. If you knew how acutely one realizes that from here! But if you knew, besides, what a deep-drawn repulsion, almost approaching hatred, I have conceived for the whole of Western Europe during these four years!

My God, how terrible are our prepossessions with regard to foreign countries! Are Russians simpletons, then, that they can believe it -is through their schooling that the Prussians have come off conquerors? Such a view is positively sinful: it’s a fine schooling whereby children are harassed and tormented, as it were by Attila’s horde, and even worse.

You write that the national spirit of France is in revolt against brute force. From the beginning I have never doubted that if only the French will not hasten to make peace, if they will but hold out for as much as three months, the Germans will be driven forth with shame and ignominy. I should have to write you a long letter if I tried to give you a series of my personal observations — for example, of the way in which soldiers are sent to France, how they are recruited, equipped, housed and fed, transported. It is extraordinarily interesting. An unfortunate poverty-stricken woman, say, who lives by letting two furnished rooms (rooms are all “furnished” here; she would have about twopence worth of furniture of her own)... such a woman is forced, because she “has her own furniture,” to supply quarters and food for ten soldiers. The quartering lasts a day, or two, or three — at most a week. But the business costs her from twenty to thirty thalers.

I have myself read letters from German soldiers in France to their parents (small business-folk). Good God, the things they have to tell! O,

how ill they are, and how hungry! But it would take too long to relate. One more observation, though, I'll give you: at first, one often heard the people in the streets singing the "Wacht am Rhein": now, one *never hears it at all*. By far the greatest excitement and pride exists among the professors, doctors, and students; the crowd are but little interested. Indeed, they are very quiet. But the professors are extraordinarily arrogant. I encounter them every evening in the public library. A very influential scholar with silver-white hair loudly exclaimed, the day before yesterday, "Paris must be bombarded!" So that's the outcome of all their learning. If not of their learning, then of their stupidity. They may be very scholarly, but they're frightfully limited! Yet another observation: all the populace here can read and write, but every one of them is terribly unintelligent, obtuse, stubborn, and devoid of any high ideals. But enough of this. Till we meet. I embrace you and thank you in anticipation. For God's sake, don't forget me, and do write to me.

Your DOSTOEVSKY.

LXIII. To Apollon Nikolayevitch Maikov

DRESDEN,
March 2 [14], 1871.

[At first the topic is a pending transaction between Dostoevsky and the publisher Stellovsky.]

I was delighted by your flattering opinion of the beginning of my novel. My God, how I feared for that book, and how I still fear! By the time you read these lines, you will have seen the second half of the first part in the February number of the *Roussky Viestnik.* What do you say to it? I am terribly anxious. I can't at all tell if I shall get on with the sequel. I am in despair. There are to be only four parts in all — that is, forty sheets. Stepan Trofimovitch is a figure of superficial importance; the novel will not in any real sense deal with him; but his story is so closely connected with the principal events of the book that I was obliged to take him as basis for the whole. This Stepan Trofimovitch will take his "benefit" in the fourth part; his destiny is to have a most original climax. I won't answer for anything else, but for *that* I answer without limitations. And yet I must once more say: I tremble like a frightened mouse. The idea tempted me, and I got tremendously carried away by it; but whether I shall bring it off, whether the whole novel isn't a [...] — well, that's my great trouble.

Only think: I have already had letters from several quarters congratulating me on the first part. This has enormously encouraged me. I tell you quite truthfully, with no idea of flattering you, that your judgment has more weight with me than any other. In the first place, I know that you are absolutely frank; in the second, your letter contains an inspired saying: "*They are Turgenev's heroes in their old age.*" That's admirably said! As I wrote, some such idea hovered before me; but you have expressed it in a word or two, in a formula, as it were. Aye — for those words I thank you; you have illuminated the whole book thereby. The work goes very heavily forward; I feel unwell, and soon now returns the period of my frequent attacks. I am afraid I shall not be ready in time. But I do not mean to hurry. True, I have thoroughly constructed and thoroughly studied my plan; nevertheless, if I hurry, I may spoil the whole thing. I have quite decided to return in the spring.

LXIV. To Nikolay Nikolayevitch Strachov

DRESDEN,
April 23 *[May* 5], 1871.

[In the first half of the letter Dostoevsky advises Strachov on no account to abandon his critical work.] —

As a consequence of the colossal revolutions which are taking place in politics as well as in the narrower literary sphere, we behold general culture and capacity for critical judgment momentarily shattered and undone. People have taken it into their heads that they have no time for literature (as if literature were a pastime — fine culture, that!); in consequence of which the level of literary taste is so terribly low that no critic of to-day, however remarkable he may be, can have his proper influence on the public. Dobrolyubov's and Pissarev's successes really derive from their having totally ignored any such thing as literature, that sole domain of intellectual and spiritual vitality here below. But one must not reckon with such phenomena; one is bound to continue one's critical work. Forgive my offering you advice: but that is how I should act, were I in your place.

In one of your brochures there was a wonderful piece of observation which nobody before you has made, namely, that every writer of any significance, any authentic talent, has finally yielded to national sentiment and become a Slavophil. Thus, for example, the facile Pushkin created, long before any of the Slavophils, that figure of the Chronicler in the monastery at Tchudov — that is to say, he grasped, far better than all the Kireyevskys, Chomyakovs, etc., the inmost essence of Slavophilism. And then, look at Herzen: what a longing, what a need, to strike into the true path! Only because of his personal weaknesses did he fail to do it. Nor is that all: this law of the conversion to nationality is not only to be observed in writers and poets, but in all other directions. So that one can in the end set up yet another law: if any man has genuine talent, he will have also that impulse to return to the people from the crumbling upper regions of society; but if he has no talent, he will not only remain in those crumbling regions, but even exile himself to foreign lands, or turn to Catholicism, or what not.

Bielinsky, whom you even to-day admire, was, as regards talent, feeble and impotent; therefore he condemned Russia and, in full consciousness of

what he was doing, reviled his native land (people will have much to say of Bielinsky in the future, and then you'll see). But I want only to say one thing more: that idea which you have expressed is enormously important, and demands further and more specialized treatment.

Your letters give me great delight. But about your last opinion on my novel I want to say this to you: first, you praise far too highly those excellencies which you find therein; second, you point with admirable acumen to its principal fault. Yes, that was and ever is my greatest torment — I never can control my material. Whenever I write a novel, I crowd it up with a lot of separate stories and episodes; therefore the whole lacks proportion and harmony. You have seen this astonishingly well; how frightfully have I always suffered from it, for I have always been aware that it was so. And I have made another great mistake besides: without calculating my powers, I have allowed myself to be transported by poetic enthusiasm, and have undertaken an idea to which my strength was not equal. (N.B. — The force of poetic enthusiasm is, to be sure, as for example with Victor Hugo, always stronger than the artistic force. Even in Pushkin one detects this disproportion.) But *I* destroy myself thereby.

I must further add that the move to Russia and the many anxieties which await me in the summer, will immensely injure the novel. Anyhow, I thank you for your sympathy. What a pity it is that we shall not see one another for so long. In the meantime

I am your most devoted

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

LXV. To Nikolay Nikolayevitch Strachov

DRESDEN,
May 18 [30], 1871.

MUCH-ESTEEMED NIKOLAY NIKOLAYEVITCH, So you really *have* begun your letter with Bielinsky, as I foresaw. But do reflect on Paris and the Commune. Will you perchance maintain, as others do, that the whole thing failed simply because of the lack of men, and as a result of unfavourable circumstances? Through the whole of this 19th century, that school has dreamed of the setting-up of earthly paradises (for instance, the phalansteries), and then, directly it came to action (as in the years 1848, 1849, and now), has shown a contemptible incapacity for any practical expression of itself. At bottom, the entire movement is but a repetition of the Russian delusion that men can reconstruct the world by reason and experience (Positivism). But we have seen enough of it by now to be entitled to declare that such impotence as is displayed can be no chance phenomenon. Why do they cut off heads? Simply because it's the easiest of all things to do. To say something sensible is far more difficult. Effort is, after all, a lesser thing than attainment. They desire the common good, but when it comes to defining "good," can only reiterate Rousseau's aphorism — that "good" is a fantasy never yet ratified by experience. The burning of Paris is something utterly monstrous: "Since we have failed, let the whole world perish!" — for the Commune is more important than the world's weal, and France's! Yet they (and many others) see in that madness not monstrosity, but only *beauty.* Since that is so, the aesthetic idea must be completely clouded over in the modern mind. A moral basis (taken from Positivist teachings) for society is not only incapable of producing any results whatever, but can't possibly even define itself to itself, and so must always lose its way amid aspirations and ideals. Have we not sufficient evidence by this time to be able to prove that a society is not thus to be built up, that quite otherwhere lie the paths to the common good, and that this common good reposes on things different altogether from those hitherto accepted? On what, then, *does* it repose? Men write and write, and overlook the principal point. In Western Europe the peoples have lost Christ (Catholicism is to blame), and therefore Western Europe is tottering to its

fall. Ideas have changed — how evidently! And the fall of the Papal power, together with that of the whole Romano-German world (France, etc.) — what a coincidence!

All this would take long wholly to express, but what I really want to say to you is: If Bielinsky, Granovsky, and all the rest of the gang, had lived to see this day, they would have said: “No, it was not to this that we aspired! No, this is a mistake; we must wait a while, the light will shine forth, progress will win, humanity will build on new and healthier foundations, and be happy at last!” They would never admit that their way can lead at best but to the Commune or to Felix Pyat. That crew was so obtuse that even *now,* after the event, they would not be able to see their error, they would persist in their fantastic dreaming. I condemn Bielinsky less as a personality than as a most repulsive, stupid, and humiliating phenomenon of Russian life. The best one can say for it is that it’s inevitable. I assure you that Bielinsky would have been moved, to-day, to take the following attitude: “The Commune has accomplished nothing, because before all things it was French — that is to say, was steeped in nationalism. Therefore we must now seek out another people, which will not have the tiniest spark of national feeling, but will be ready, like me, to box its mother’s (Russia’s) ears.” Wrathfully he would continue to foam forth his wretched articles; he would go on reviling Russia, denying Russia’s greatest phenomena (such as Pushkin), so that he might thus make Russia seem to turn into an *empty* nation, which might take the lead in universal human activities. The Jesuitry and insincerity of our prominent public men, he would regard as great good fortune. And then, for another thing: you never knew him; but I had personal intercourse with him, and now can give his full measure. The man, talking with me once, reviled the Saviour, and yet surely he could never have undertaken to compare himself and the rest of the gentry who move the world, with Christ. He was not capable of seeing how petty, angry, impatient, base, and before all else covetous and vain, they, every one of them, are. *He* never asked himself the question: “But what can we put in His place? Of a surety not ourselves, so evil as we are?” No; he never reflected in any sort of way upon the possibility that he might be evil; he was to the last degree content with himself, and in that alone is expressed his personal, petty, pitiable stupidity.

You declare that he was gifted. He was not, in any way. My God, what nonsense Grigoryev did write about him! I can still remember my youthful

amazement when I read some of his purely aesthetic efforts (as, for instance, on “Dead Souls”); he treated Gogol’s characters with incredible superficiality and lack of comprehension, and merely rejoiced insanely that Gogol had *accused* somebody. In the four years of my sojourn here abroad, I have re-read all his critical writings. He reviled Pushkin, when Pushkin dropped his false note, and produced such works as the “Tales of Bielkin,” and “The Negro of Peter the Great.” He pronounced the “Tales of Bielkin” to be entirely valueless. In Gogol’s “Carriage,” he perceived not an artistic creation, but a mere comic tale. “He wholly abjured the conclusion of “Eugène Onegin.” He was the first to speak of Pushkin as a courtier. He said that Turgenev would never make an artist; and he said *that* after he had read Turgenev’s very remarkable tale of “The Three Portraits.”

I could give you, on the spur of the moment, countless proofs that he had not an atom of critical sense, nor that “quivering sensibility” of which Grigoryev babbled (simply because he too was a poet).

We regard Bielinsky and many another of our contemporaries through the still enduring glamour of fantastic judgments.

Did I really write you nothing about your article on Turgenev? I read it, as I read all your writings, with great delight, but at the same time with some degree of vexation. Once you had admitted that Turgenev has lost grasp, that he has no idea what to say about certain manifestations of Russian life (he jeers at them, every one), you were bound to admit as well that his artistic powers are at ebb in his recent work — for it could not be otherwise. But on the contrary you hold that his recent work is on the same level with his earlier. Can both statements be accepted? Possibly I am myself mistaken (not in my judgment of Turgenev, but in my interpretation of your article). Perhaps you have merely expressed yourself confusedly.... Know this: all that school is no more than “Landed-proprietor’s Literature.” And that kind of literature has said all it had to say (particularly well in the case of Leo Tolstoy). It has spoken its last word, and is exempt from further duty. A new school that may take its place is still to come; we have not had time to produce it. The Reschetnikovs have said nothing. Nevertheless, the works of a Reschetnikov demonstrate the necessity for a new note in literature, which shall replace that of the landed proprietors — however repellently such a writer expresses himself.

LXVI. To Mme. Ch. D. Altschevsky:

PETERSBURG,
April 9, 1876.

You write that I am squandering and abusing my talents on bagatelles in the *Diary.* You are not the first from whom I have heard that. And now I want to say this to you and others: I have been driven to the conviction that an artist is bound to make himself acquainted, down to the smallest detail, not only with the technique of writing, but with everything — current no less than historical events — relating to that reality which he designs to show forth. We have only one writer who is really remarkable in that respect: it is Count Leo Tolstoy. Victor Hugo, whom I extraordinarily admire as a novelist (only think: Tchutchev, who is now dead, once got positively angry with me on account of this view of Hugo, and said that my "Raskolnikov" was much greater than Hugo's "Misérables") — is certainly prone to be too long-winded in his description of details, but he gives us most marvellous effects of observation, which would have been lost to the world but for him. As I am now purposing to write a very big novel, I must devote myself most especially to the study of actuality: I don't mean actuality in the literal sense, for I am fairly well versed in that, but certain peculiarities of the present moment. And in this present moment the younger generation particularly interests me, and, as akin to it, the question of Russian family-life, which, to my thinking, is to-day quite a different thing from what it was twenty years ago. Also many other questions of the moment interest me.

At fifty-three, I might easily, were I to slacken at all in this respect, fail to keep pace with the growing generation. Lately I had a chance encounter with Gontscharov, and I asked him whether all the phenomena of the present moment were comprehensible to him; he answered quite frankly that there was much he could not understand at all. (N.B. — This between ourselves.) Of course, I know that Gontscharov, with his remarkable intelligence, not only understands it all, but is competent to instruct the instructors of the day; but in the peculiar sense in which I put the question (and which he at once understood) he does not even desire to grasp these phenomena. "My ideals, and all that I have prized in life, are far too dear to

me," he added; "and for the few years that I have yet to live, I mean to abide by them; it would go too hard with me to study these gentry" (he pointed to the crowd that was flowing past us), "for I should be obliged to use up in so doing the time which is so precious to me...." I don't know if you'll understand me, revered Christina Danilovna: I greatly desire to write something more, and to do so with complete knowledge of my subject; for that reason I shall study a while longer and put down my impressions in the *Diary of a Writer,* so that nothing may be wasted. Of course it's merely an ideal to which I aspire! You won't believe me at all, I daresay, when I declare that I haven't yet discovered the right form for the *Diary,* and don't know in the least if I shall ever really succeed in discovering it; the *Diary* might perfectly well run for two years longer, and yet be a complete failure as a piece of work. For example, imagine this: when I set to work, I always have from ten to fifteen themes available; but those themes which strike me as particularly interesting, I always save up for another time; if I make use of them at once, they take up too much of my space, they demand my whole energy (as, for example, in the case of Kroneberg), and the number turns out a bad one — and so forth. Therefore I write of things that are not at all so near to me.

On the other hand, the idea of making it a genuine Diary was really naïve in me. A genuine Diary is almost impossible; it can only be a work cut about to suit the public taste. Every minute I come upon facts, receive impressions, that often carry me away — but there are some things about which one can't possibly write....

The day before yesterday, early, there come to me quite unexpectedly two young girls, both about twenty years old. They come and say: "We have long wanted to make your acquaintance. Everyone laughed at us, and declared that you would not receive us, and that even if you did, you would not care to talk with us. But we determined to make the attempt, and so here we are. Our names are so-and-so." They were first received by my wife. I came out later.

They told me that they were students at the Academy of Medicine, that there were at that Academy as many as five hundred women-students, and that they had entered there "to obtain higher education, so as later to be able to do useful work." I had never before seen girls of that sort (of the earlier Nihilists I know a number, and have studied them thoroughly). Believe me, I have seldom passed my time so agreeably as in the company of those two

girls, who remained with me a couple of hours. Such wonderful spontaneity, such freshness of feeling, such purity of heart and mind, such *grave sincerity, and such sincere mirth!* Through them I came, later, to know many such girls, and must confess that the impression they made on me was powerful and pleasant. But how am I to describe all that? Despite my sincerity, and the delight with which I regard these young people, I cannot possibly do it. The impression was of almost too personal a nature. But then, what impressions *am* I to put down in my *Diary*?

Or another instance: yesterday I heard the following story: A young man, a student at an institution which I do not wish to name (I happened to make his acquaintance), is visiting friends, goes accidentally into the tutor's room, and sees a *forbidden* book lying on the table; he instantly tells the master of the house, and the tutor is instantly dismissed. When, in another household, someone told this young man that he had been guilty of a *base action*, he could not in the least see it. There you have the reverse of the medal. But how am I to write about *that*? The thing is in one way of a purely personal nature; and yet the processes of reflection, and the temper, of that young man who cannot at all perceive the baseness of his action, about which I should have much of interest to say, are typical wholly, and not personal at all.

But I have written too much about all this. The truth is, I find it terribly difficult to write letters; I have no talent for it. Forgive me, also, for the bad handwriting; I have a headache, it is *la grippe* — my eyes have been paining me all day, and I write this almost without seeing my characters.

LXVII. To Vsevolod Solovyov

EMS,
July, 1876.

On my departure I left several quite personal and even pressing affairs unattended to. But here, at this tedious spa, your letter has literally refreshed me and gone straight to my heart; I was already feeling much troubled — I don't myself know why it should be so, but every time I come to Ems, I undergo a mood of tormenting, wholly groundless, more or less hypochondriacal, depression. Whether it arises from my isolation in the crowd of 8,000 "patients," or from the climate of this place, I can't decide; but I am always in a worse state here than almost anybody else is. You write that you must speak with me, and how dearly I should like to see you!

The June number of the *Diary* pleased you, then.

I am glad of that, and for a special reason. I had never yet permitted myself to follow my profoundest convictions to their ultimate consequences in my public writing — had never said my *very last word.* A very intelligent correspondent in the provinces once, indeed, reproached me for opening up so many important questions in my *Diary,* yet never thoroughly discussing them; he encouraged me, and urged me to be more daring. So I decided that I *would* for once say the last word on one of my convictions — that of Russia's part and destiny among the nations — and I proclaimed that my various anticipations would not only be fulfilled in the immediate future, but were already partly realized.

And then there happened precisely what I had expected: even those newspapers and magazines which are friendly to me raised an outcry, saying that my whole article was hopelessly paradoxical; while the others bestowed not the smallest attention on it — and here am I, who believe that I have opened up the most important of all questions! That's what happens when one attempts to carry an idea to its issue! One may set up any paradox one likes, and so long as one doesn't carry it to its ultimate conclusion, everyone will think it most subtle, witty, *comme il faut;* but once blurt out the last word, and quite frankly (not by implication) declare: "This is the Messiah!" why, nobody will believe in you any more — for it was so silly of you to push your idea to its ultimate conclusion! If many a famous wit,

such as Voltaire, had resolved for once to rout all hints, allusions, and esotericisms by force of his genuine beliefs, to show the real Himself, he would quite certainly not have had a tithe of the success he enjoyed. He would merely have been laughed at. For man instinctively avoids saying his last word; he has a prejudice against “thoughts said.”

“Once said, the thought turns lie!”

Now you can judge for yourself how precious to me are your friendly expressions about the June number. For you have understood my words and taken them exactly as I thought them myself. I thank you for that; for I was already a little disillusioned, and was reproving myself for my precipitancy. If there are but a few members of the public who understand me as you do, I have done what I aimed at doing, and am content — my words have not been in vain.... But the rest at once proclaimed with cries of joy: “He *is* so frightfully paradoxical!” And the folk who say it are precisely those who never had an idea of their own in their lives....

I remain here till August 7 (Old Style). I am drinking the waters, and indeed would never be able to make up my mind to endure this place were I not convinced that the cure is really good for me. It’s certainly not worth while to describe Ems! I have promised the public to bring out a double number of the *Diary* in August; as yet I haven’t written a single line; from sheer boredom I’ve got so apathetic that I regard the work before me with reluctance, as if it were an imminent misfortune. I already feel that the number will be very bad. At any rate, write to me again while I’m here, my dearest fellow....

LXVIII. To Mlle. Gerassimov

PETERSBURG,
March 7, 1877.

MUCH-HONOURED MLLE. GERASSIMOV!

Your letter has tormented me terribly, because I could not answer it for so long. What can you have thought of me? In your dejected state, you will perhaps have taken my silence as an affront.

You must know that I am almost overwhelmed with work. Besides the work for the periodically appearing *Diary,* I have to get through a quantity of letters. I receive daily several letters of the same kind as yours, which cannot possibly be disposed of in a few lines. Moreover, I have lately suffered from three attacks of epilepsy, and those of such violence and quick recurrence as I have not had for years.

After each attack, I was bodily and mentally so shattered that for two and three days I could not work or write, or even read. Now you know that, you will forgive my long silence.

I did not think your letter by any means *childish* or *stupid,* as you assume. For that mood is now general, and there are many young girls suffering like you. But I don't mean to write much on that theme; I shall only lay before you my fundamental ideas upon the subject, both in general; and as it concerns you personally. If I advise you to settle down, to stay in your parents' house, and take up some intelligent occupation (corresponding to the course of your education), you won't be much inclined to listen to me. But why are you in such a hurry, why should you so dread any delay? You want to do something *useful* as soon as possible. And yet, with your ardour (I am taking it for granted that it is genuine), you could — if you don't act precipitately, but pursue your education a little longer — prepare yourself for activities which would be a *hundred times* more useful than the obscure and insignificant rôle of a sick-nurse, midwife, or woman-doctor. You urgently desire to enter the Medical High School for Women here. I should like to advise you decidedly not to do so. You will get no education there, but quite the contrary. And what do you gain, if you actually do become a midwife or woman-doctor? Such a calling — if you really do expect so much from it — you could quite well take up later on;

but would it not be better now if you pursued other ends, and took pains with your general education? Do but look at all our specialists (even the University professors); why are they all losing ground, and whence comes the harm that they do (instead of doing good) to their own profession? It is simply because the majority of our specialists are shockingly ill-educated people. In other lands it is quite different: there we find a Humboldt or a Claude Bernard, persons with large ideas, great culture and knowledge outside of their special job. But with us, even highly-gifted people are incredibly uneducated; for example, Syetchenov, who at bottom is uneducated and knows nothing beyond his narrow special subject; of his scientific adversaries (the philosophers) he has no notion whatever; therefore his scientific efforts are more harmful than useful. And the majority of our students — men and women — have no true education. How then can they be useful to humanity! They study only just enough to get paid appointments as soon as may be....

LXIX. To A. P. N. —

May 19, 1877.

MUCH-HONOURED ALEXANDER PAVLOVITCH,

Will you be so very good as to excuse my not having answered you for so long? Not until to-day have I been able to leave Petersburg for a while; I have been terribly busy, and my illness added to my troubles. But what am i to write to you now? You are intelligent enough to perceive that the questions you put to me are abstract and nebulous; besides, I have no personal knowledge whatever of you. I too strove for sixteen years with doubts similar to yours; but somehow or other I was certain that sooner or later I should succeed in finding my true path, and therefore did not torment myself overmuch. It was more or less unimportant to me what position I might come to occupy in literature; in my soul was a certain flame, and in that I believed, troubling myself not at all as to what should come of it. There are my experiences, since you ask me for them.

How should I know your heart? If you will hear my counsel, I advise you to trust without hesitation to your own inward impulse; perhaps destiny may point you to a literary career. Your claims are indeed most modest, for you ask no more than to be a worker of the second rank. I should like to add this: my own youthful impulse hindered me in no wise from taking a practical grasp of life; it is true I was a writer, not an engineer; nevertheless, during my whole course at the College of Engineering, from the lowest to the highest class, I was one of the best students; later I took a post for a while, although I knew that sooner or later I should abandon that career. But I saw nothing in the career itself which could thwart that to which I aspired; I was even more convinced than before that the future belonged to me, and that I alone should control it. In the same way, if an official position does not hinder you in the pursuit of your literary vocation, why should you not temporarily undertake such an one?

Naturally I write all this at random, since I do not know you personally; but I want to be of service to you, and so answer your letter as frankly as possible. As to all the rest, it is, in great part, exaggeration.

Permit me to press your hand.

Your
FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

LXX. To N. L. Osmidov

PETERSBURG,
February, 1878.

My DEAR AND KIND NIKOLAY LUKITCH,

Let me beg you, first, to forgive my having, by reason of illness and various bothers, taken so long to answer you. In the second place, what can I say in reply to your momentous question, which belongs to the eternal problem of humanity? Can one treat such matters in the narrow compass of a letter? If I could talk with you for some hours, it would be a different thing; and even then I might well fail to achieve anything. Least of all by words and arguments does one convert an unbeliever. Would it not be better if you would read, with your best possible attention, all the epistles of St. Paul? Therein much is said of faith, and the question could not be better handled. I recommend you to read the whole Bible through in the Russian translation. The book makes a remarkable impression when one thus reads it. One gains, for one thing, the conviction that humanity possesses, and can possess, no other book of equal significance. Quite apart from the question of whether you believe or don't believe. I can't give you any sort of idea. But I'll say just this: Every single organism exists on earth but to live — not to annihilate itself. Science has made this clear, and has laid down very precise laws upon which to ground the axiom. Humanity as a whole is, of course, no less than an organism. And that organism has, naturally, its own conditions of existence, its own laws. Human reason comprehends those laws. Now suppose that there is no God, and no personal immortality (personal immortality and God are one and the same — an identical idea). Tell me then: Why am I to live decently and do good, if I die irrevocably here below? If there is no immortality, I need but live out my appointed day, and let the rest go hang. And if that's really so (and if I am clever enough not to let myself be caught by the standing laws), why should I not kill, rob, steal, or at any rate live at the expense of others? For I shall die, and all the rest will die and utterly vanish! By this road, one would reach the conclusion that the human organism alone is not subject to the universal law, that it lives but to destroy itself — not to keep itself alive. For what sort of society is one whose members are mutually hostile? Only utter confusion

can come of such a thing as that. And then reflect on the “I “which can grasp all this. If the “I” can grasp the idea of the universe and its laws, then that “I” stands above all other things, stands aside from all other things, judges them, fathoms them. In that case, the “I” is not only liberated from the earthly axioms, the earthly laws, but has its own law, which transcends the earthly. Now, whence comes that law? Certainly not from earth, where all reaches its issue, and vanishes beyond recall. Is *that* no indication of personal immortality? If there were no personal immortality, would you, Nikolay Lukitch, be worrying yourself about it, be searching for an answer, be writing letters like this? So you can’t get rid of your “I,” you see; your “I “will not subject itself to earthly conditions, but seeks for something which transcends earth, and to which it feels itself akin. But whatever I write falls short altogether — as it must. I cordially press your hand, and take my leave. Remain in your unrest — seek farther — it may be that you shall find.

Your servant and true friend,

F. DOSTOEVSKY.

LXXI. To a Mother

PETERSBURG,
March 27, 1878.

MUCH-HONOURED LADY!

Your letter of February 2nd I am answering only to-day, after a month's delay. I was ill and very much occupied, and so beg you not to take amiss this dilatoriness.

You set me problems which one could treat only in long essays, and assuredly not in a letter. Moreover, life itself can alone give any answer to such questions. If I were to write you ten sheets, some misunderstanding, which would easily be cleared up in a verbal interview, might cause you to take me up quite wrongly, and therefore to abjure my whole ten sheets. Can one, in general, when wholly unacquainted, and especially in a letter, treat of such matters at all? I consider it quite impossible, and believe that it may do more harm than good.

From your letter I gather that you are a good mother, and are very anxious about your growing child. I cannot, though, at all imagine of what service to you would prove the solution of the questions with which you have turned to me: you set yourself too hard a task, and your perplexities are exaggerated and morbid. You should take things much more simply. You ask me, for instance, "What is good, and what is not good?" To what do such questions lead? They concern you alone, and have nothing whatever to do with the bringing-up of your child. Every human being, who can grasp the *truth* at all, feels in his conscience what is good and what is evil. Be good, and let your child realize that you are good; in that way you will wholly fulfil your duty towards your child, for you will thus give him the immediate conviction that people ought to be good. Believe me, it is so. Your child will then cherish your memory all his life with great reverence, it may be often with deep emotion as well. And even if you do something wrong — that is, something frivolous, morbid, or even absurd — your child will sooner or later forget all about it, and remember only the good things. Mark me: in general, you can do no more than this for your child. And it is really more than enough. The memory of our parents' *good* qualities — of their love of truth, their rectitude, their goodness of heart, of their freedom

from false shame and their constant reluctance to deceive — all this will sooner or later make a new creature of your child: believe me. And do not think that this is a small thing. When we graft a tiny twig on a great tree, we alter all the fruits of the tree thereby.

Your child is now eight years old; make him acquainted with the Gospel, teach him to believe in God, and that in the most orthodox fashion. This is a *sine qua non*; otherwise you can't make a fine human being out of your child, but at best a *sufferer,* and at worst — a careless lethargic "success," which is a still more deplorable fate. You will never find anything better than the Saviour anywhere, believe me.

Suppose now that your child at sixteen or seventeen (after some intercourse with corrupted school-friends) comes to you or to its father, and puts this question:

"Why am I to love you, and why do you represent it as my duty?" Believe me: no sort of "questions" or knowledge will help you then; you won't be able to give any answer. Therefore it is that you must try to act so that it *will never once occur to your child to come to you with that question.* But that will be possible only if your child is attached to you by such love as would prevent such a question from ever coming into its head; true, that at school such views may be for a while your child's, but you will find it easy to separate the false from the true; and even if you *should* really have to listen to that question, you will be able to answer with just a smile, and quietly go on doing well.

If you grow superfluously and exaggeratedly anxious about your children, you may easily affect their nerves and become a nuisance to them; and that might happen even though your mutual love were great; therefore you must be careful and cultivate moderation in all things. It seems to me that in this respect you have no sense at all of moderation. In your letter, for example, occurs the following sentence: "If I live for them (that is, my husband and children), it is an egotistic life; dare I live thus egotistically, when all round me are so many people who need my help?" What an idle and unprofitable thought! What hinders you from living for others, and yet remaining a good wife and mother? On the contrary: if you live for others also and share with them your earthly goods and the emotions of your heart, you set your children a radiant example, and your husband will necessarily love you still better than before. But since such questions come into your head at all, I must assume that you consider it to be your duty so to cleave

to your husband and your children that thereby you forget all the rest of the world — that is to say, without any moderation. In that way you could but become a burden to your child, even if it loved you. It may easily befall that your sphere of activity will suddenly seem to you too narrow, and that you will aspire to a wider one, perhaps a world-wide one. But has anyone at all any right to aspire to that?

Believe me: it is uncommonly important and useful to set a good example even in a narrow sphere of activity, for in that way one influences dozens and hundreds of people. Your purpose, never to lie but to live in truth, will make those who surround you think, thus influencing them. That in itself is a great deed. In such ways you can do an enormous amount. It were truly senseless to throw all aside, and rush with such questions to Petersburg, meaning thereafter to enter the Academy of Medicine or the High School for Women. I meet here daily such women and girls; what frightful narrowness I see in them! And all who once were good for something are ruined here. Seeing no serious activity in their environment, they begin to love humanity theoretically, by the book as it were; they love humanity, and scorn the individual unfortunate, are bored in his company, and therefore avoid him.

I really don’t know how I am to answer your questions, for I don’t understand these matters at all. When a child betrays an evil character, it is of course attributable to the evil tendencies which are inborn in him (it is beyond doubt that every human being is born with evil tendencies), as well as to those who have his bringing-up in hand, and are either incapable or lazy, so that they neither *suppress* those tendencies nor (by their own example) lead them into other directions. Of the usefulness of *that* work I really need not speak. If you inculcate good propensities in your child, the work will bring its own delight. Now enough: I have written you a lot, and have tired myself, yet have really said little; but you will no doubt understand me.

With all respect, your most obedient servant,

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

P.S. — Peter the Great, with his revenue of one and a half millions, might well have led an easy lethargic existence at the Tsar’s Palace in Moscow; and yet he worked hard all his life. He always wondered at those who do not work.

LXXII. To a Group of Moscow Students

PETERSBURG,
April 18, 1878.

MUCH-HONOURED GENTLEMEN, Forgive my not having answered you for so long; I was definitely ill, and other circumstances besides delayed my answer. I wished, originally, to reply to you through the newspapers; but it appeared that, for reasons against which I am powerless, this was not feasible; and, anyhow, I could not have treated your questions with the necessary circumstantiality in the press. But indeed, what can I say to you in any land of a letter? Your questions touch upon the *whole* interior life of Russia: do you want me to write you a book? Am I to make you my full confession of faith?

Well, finally I have decided to write you this short letter, wherein I risk being completely misunderstood by you — a result which would be most painful to me.

You write: “It is of paramount importance that we should solve the problem of how far we are to blame in the affair, and what conclusions society, no less than we ourselves, should draw from these incidents?” —

You go on to indicate very adroitly and precisely the true significance of the relations between the contemporary Russian press and the younger generation at the Universities.

In our press there prevails (with regard to you) “a tone of condescension and indulgence.” That is very true; the tone is indeed condescending, and fashioned in advance upon a certain pattern, no matter what the case; in short, it is to the last degree insipid and antiquated.

You write further: “Plainly we have nothing more to expect from these people, who for their part expect nothing more from us, and so turn away, having pronounced their annihilating judgment of us as ‘savages.’”

That also is true: *they do indeed turn away from you*, and dismiss you, for the most part, from their thoughts (at any rate, the overwhelming majority do so). But there *are* men, and those not few in number both on the press and in society, who are horribly perturbed by the thought that the younger generation has broken with *the people* (this, first in importance) and with society. For such is actually the case. The younger generation lives

in dreams, follows foreign teaching, cares to know nothing that concerns Russia, aspires, rather, to instruct the fatherland. Consequently it is to-day *beyond all doubt* that our younger generation is become the prey of one or other of those political parties which influence it wholly from outside, which care not at all for its interests, but use it simply as a contribution — as it were lambs for the slaughter — to their own particular ends. Do not contradict me, gentlemen, for it is so.

You ask me, gentlemen: "How far are we students to blame for the incidents?" Here is my answer: I hold that you are in no wise to blame. For you are but children of the very society from which you now turn away, as from "an utter fraud." But when one of our students thus abjures society, he does not go to the people, but to a nebulous "abroad"; he flees to Europeanism, to the abstract realm of fantastic" Universal Man," thus severing all the bonds which still connect him with the people: he scorns the people and misjudges them, like a true child of that society with which he likewise has broken. And yet — with the people lies our whole salvation (but this is a big subject).... Nevertheless, the younger generation should not be too harshly blamed for this rupture with the people. What earthly opportunity has it had, before entering on practical life, to form any ideas whatever *about* the people? The worst of it is, though, that the people has already perceived that the younger Russian intelligences have broken with it; and still worse again is the fact that those young men whom it has marked down, are by it designated as "students." The people have long, so long as from the beginning of the 'sixties, been watchful of these young men; all those among them who "went to the people" have been abhorred by the people. The people call them "these young gentlemen." I know for certain that they are so called. As a matter of fact, the people also are wrong, for there has never yet been a period in our Russian life when the young men (as if with a foreboding that Russia has reached a certain critical point, and is on the edge of an abyss) were, in the overwhelming majority of cases, so honest, so avid for the truth, so joyfully willing to devote their lives to truth, and every word that truth can speak, as they are now. In ye is veritably the great hope of Russia! I have long felt it, and have already long been writing in that sense. But what has come of it now, all at once? Youth is seeking that truth of which it is so avid — God knows where! At the most widely diverse sources (another point in which it resembles the utterly decadent Russo-European society which has produced it); but never in the

people, never in its native soil. The consequence is that, at the given decisive moment, neither society nor the younger generation *knows the people*. Instead of living the life of the people, these young men, who understand the people in no wise, and profoundly scorn its every fundamental principle — for example, its religion — go to the people *not* to learn to know it, but condescendingly to instruct and patronize it: a thoroughly aristocratic game! The people call them “young gentlemen,” and rightly. It is really very strange; all over the world, the democrats have ever been on the side of the people; with us alone have the democratic intellectuals leagued themselves with the aristocrats against the people; they go among the people “to do it good,” while scorning all its customs and ideals. Such scorn cannot possibly lead to love!

Last winter, at your demonstration before the Kazan-Cathedral, the rank and file forced their way into the church, smoked cigarettes, desecrated the temple, and made a scandal. “Now listen to me,” I should have said to those students (I *have* said it to many of them, as a matter of fact), “you do not! The Cathedral of Our Lady, at Kazan in Petersburg. believe in God, and that is your own affair; but why do you insult the people by desecrating its temple?” The people once more retorted with its “young gentlemen,” and, far worse, with “students” — though there were numbers of obscure Jews and Armenians among the offenders (the demonstration was, as we now know, a political one, and organized from outside). In the same way, after the Sassulitch case, the people dubbed all the revolver-heroes “young gentlemen.” That is bad, though there actually *were* students among them. Bad is it too that the people should have marked down the students, and should treat them maliciously and inimically. You yourselves, gentlemen, in accord with the intellectual press, designate the people of Moscow as “butchers.” What may that mean? Why are “butchers” not members of the people? They *are*, and of the true people; was not the great Minin a butcher? Many are at this moment enraged by the manner in which the people has chosen to express its feelings. But mark this: when the people is offended, it always manifests its emotion in that manner. The people is rough, for it consists of peasants. The whole thing was in reality but the breaking out of a misunderstanding which has existed, time out of mind (and has hitherto been merely unperceived), between the people and society, that is to say, the younger generation, which stands for fieriness and rash impulses. The thing certainly was very ill done, and not at all as it ought to

have been, for with fists one can demonstrate nothing. But so it has been ever and everywhere, with every people. The English often come to blows at their public meetings; the French sang and danced before the guillotine, while it did its work. But the fact remains that the people (the whole people, not only the “butchers”; it is poor consolation to call names) has revolted against the younger generation, and has marked down the students; on the other hand, it is true, we must acknowledge the no less perturbing fact (and very significant it is) that the press, society, and the young men have conspired to misjudge the people, and to say: “This is no people, but a mob.”

Gentlemen, if you find anything in my words which contravenes your views, your best plan will be not to get angry with me about it. There is trouble enough without that. In our putrid society, nothing reigns but sheer deception. It can no longer hold together by its own strength. The people alone is strong and steadfast, but between society and the people there have reigned for the last ten years most terrible misunderstandings. When our sentimentalists freed the people from serfdom, they believed, in full tide of emotion, that the people would instantly take to its bosom that European fraud which they call civilization. But the people showed itself to be very independent, and now it is beginning to realize the insincerity of the upper stratum in our society. The events of the last couple of years have but strengthened it, and made many things clear to its eyes. Nevertheless, the people *can* distinguish between its enemies and its friends. Assuredly many sad and deplorable facts must be recognized: sincere, honest young men, earnestly seeking the truth, went on their quest to the people, trying to alleviate its woes. And what happened? The people drove them away, and refused to recognize their honest efforts. For those young men hold the people to be otherwise than as it is; they hate and despise its ideals, and offer it remedies which it cannot but regard as senseless and crazy.

With us in Petersburg the devil is indeed let loose. Among the young men reigns the cult of the revolver, and the conviction that the Government is afraid of them. The people, now as ever, despises the young men, and reckons not at all with them; but *they* do not perceive that the people has no fear of them and will never lose its head. What, when another encounter takes place, will come of it? Gentlemen, we live in disquieting times!

I have written you, gentlemen, what I could. At any rate I have, though not sufficiently at length, answered your question: In my view, the students

are in no wise to blame, but the contrary; our youth was never yet so sincere and honest as now (a fact which has its significance, great and historical). But unhappily our youth bears about with it the whole delusion of our two centuries of history. Consequently it has not the power thoroughly to sift the facts, and is in no sense to blame, particularly as it is an interested party in the affair (and, moreover, the offended party). Blessed, none the less, be those who shall find the right path in these circumstances! The breach with environment is bound to be much more decisive than the breach between the society of to-day and to-morrow, which the Socialists prophesy. For if one wants to go to the people and remain with the people, one must first of all learn not to scorn the people; and this it is well-nigh impossible for our upper class to do. In the second place, one must believe in God, which is impossible for Russian Europeans (though the genuine Europeans of Europe do believe in God).

I greet you, gentlemen, and, if you will permit me, grasp your hands. If you want to do me a great pleasure, do not, for God’s sake, regard me as a preacher who sets up to lecture you. You have called upon me to tell you the truth with my soul and conscience, and I have told you the truth as I see it, and as best I can. For no man can do more than his powers and capacities permit him.

Your devoted
FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

LXXIII. To Mlle. N. N.

Petersburg,
April II, 1880.

MUCH-HONOURED AND GRACIOUS LADY, Forgive my having left your beautiful kind letter unanswered for so long; do not regard it as negligence on my part. I wanted to say something very direct and cordial to you, but my life goes by, I vow, in such disorder and hurry that it is only at rare moments that I belong to myself at all. Even now, when at last I have a moment in which to write to you, I shall be able to impart but a tiny fragment of all that fills my heart, and that I should like to touch upon with you. Your opinion of me is extraordinarily precious to me; your lady-mother has shown me the passage in your letter to her which relates to myself, and your words moved me profoundly, nay! even astonished me: for I know that as a writer I have many faults, and even I myself am never satisfied with myself. I must tell you that in those frequent and grievous moments wherein I seek to judge myself, I come to the painful conclusion that in my works I never have said so much as the twentieth part of what I wished to say, and perhaps *could,* actually, have said. My only refuge is the constant hope that God will some day bestow upon me such inspiration and such power as are requisite to bring to full expression all that fills my heart and imagination. Recently there took place here the public debate by the young philosopher Vladimir Solovyov (a son of the renowned historian) of his thesis for Doctor’s degree; and I heard him make the following profound remark: “I am firmly convinced that mankind *knows much more* than it has hitherto expressed either in science or art.” Just so it is with me: I feel that much more is contained in me than I have as yet uttered in my writings. And if I lay all false modesty aside, I must acknowledge that even in what I *have* written, there is much that came from the very depth of my heart. I swear to you that though I have received much recognition, possibly more than I deserve, still the critics, the literary newspaper critics, who certainly have often (no, rather, very seldom) praised me, nevertheless have always spoken of me so lightly and superficially that I am obliged to assume that all those things which my heart brought forth with pain and tribulation, and which came directly from my soul, have simply passed unperceived. From this you can divine what a pleasant impression must have been made upon me

by the delicate and searching comments on my work which I read in your letter to your lady-mother.

But I am writing only of myself, which after all in a letter to the discerning and sympathetic critic whom I perceive in you is natural enough. You write to me of the phase which your mind is just now undergoing. I know that you are an artist — a painter. Permit me to give you a piece of advice which truly comes from my heart: stick to your art, and give yourself up to it even more than hitherto. I know, for I have heard (do not take this ill of me) that you are not happy. To live alone, and continually to reopen the wounds in your heart by dwelling upon memories, may well make your life too drear for endurance. There is but one cure, one refuge, for that woe: art, creative activity. But do not put it upon yourself to write me your confession: that would assuredly tax you too far. Forgive me for offering you advice; I should very much like to see you and say a few words face to face. After the letter that you have written, I must necessarily regard you as one dear to me, as a being akin to my soul, as my heart's sister — how could I fail to feel with you? But now to what you *have* told me of your inward duality. That trait is indeed common to all... that is, all who are not wholly commonplace. Nay, it is common to human nature, though it does not evince itself so strongly in all as it does in you. It is precisely on this ground that I cannot but regard you as a twin soul, for your inward duality corresponds most exactly to my own. It causes at once great torment, and great delight. Such duality simply means that you have a strong sense of yourself, much aptness for self-criticism, and an innate feeling for your moral duty to yourself and all mankind. If your intelligence were less developed, if you were more limited, you would be less sensitive, and would not possess that duality. Rather the reverse: in its stead would have appeared great arrogance. Yet such duality is a great torment. My dear, my revered Mlle. N. N., do you believe in Christ and in His commandments? If you believe in Him (or ait least have a strong desire to do so), then give yourself wholly up to Him; the pain of your duality will be thereby alleviated, and you will find the true way out — but belief is first of all in importance. Forgive the untidiness of my letter. If you only knew how I am losing the capacity to write letters, and what a difficulty I find it! But having gained such a friend as you, I don't wish to lose her in a hurry.

Farewell. Your most devoted and heartfelt friend,

F. DOSTOEVSKY.

LXXIV. To Frau E. A. Stackenschneider

STARAYA-ROUSSA,
July 17, 1880.

MUCH-ESTEEMED ELENA ANDREYEVNA, I must call upon all your humanity and indulgence when I ask you to forgive me for having left your beautiful kind letter of June 19 so long unanswered. But I shall beg you to consider facts; you may then perhaps find it in your power to be indulgent even to me. On June 11 I returned from Moscow to Staraya-Roussa, was frightfully tired, but sat down at once to the “Karamazovs,” and wrote three whole sheets at one blow. After I had sent off the MS., I applied myself to the reading of all the newspaper articles that dealt with my speech at Moscow (I had been so busy till then that I had had no time for them), and I decided to write a rejoinder to Granovsky; it was to be not so much an answer to him as a manifesto of our faith for all Russia: for the significant and moving crisis in the life of our society which declared itself at Moscow, during the Pushkin celebrations, was deliberately misrepresented by the press, and thrust of set purpose into the background. Our press, particularly that of Petersburg, was alarmed by this new development, which is indeed without parallel: society has plainly shown that it has had enough of the everlasting jeering and spitting at Russia, and is consequently desirous of something different. But that fact had of course to be distorted, hushed-up, laughed at, misrepresented: “Nothing of the sort! It was but the general beatitude after the opulent Moscow, banquets. The gentlemen had simply over-eaten themselves.” I had already decided, at Moscow, to publish my speech in the *Moskovskoie Viedomosti*, and to bring out a number of the *Diary* immediately afterwards in Petersburg; in that number, which, by-the-bye, will be the only one this year, I thought of printing my speech, with a preamble, moreover, which occurred to me the very instant I had finished speaking — on the platform itself, at the moment when, together with Aksakov and the rest, even Turgenev and Annenkov rushed up to cover me with kisses, and then shook hands with me, protesting over and over again that I had done great things. God grant they’re of the same opinion still!

I can vividly imagine how they *now* criticize my speech, having recovered from their first enthusiasm — and indeed this is precisely the theme of my preamble. When the speech, with the preamble, had been sent to the printers in Petersburg, nay, when I actually had the proofs in my hands, I suddenly resolved to write yet another chapter for the *Diary* in the shape of my *profession de foi* for Granovsky; it grew into two sheets, I put my whole soul into the article, and have sent it to the printers only this very day. Yesterday was Fedya's birthday. We had visitors, but I sat apart and finished the article. So you see that you must not take it ill that I am answering your letter only now. I dearly love you, as you well know! I could never give my Moscow impressions in a letter, still less my present state of mind. I am filled up with work — it is real hard labour. I want to have the fourth and last part of "The Brothers Karamazov" ready in September at all costs, and when I return to Petersburg in the autumn, I shall be comparatively free for a while; in that clear time I want to get myself ready for the *Diary*, with which I propose to go on in the coming year 1881.

Are you on a summer holiday? How did the Moscow news reach you? I don't know what Gayevsky may have told you, but the affair with Katkov was not a bit like what you think. The Society of Lovers of Russian Literature, which organized the festival, seriously insulted Katkov by asking him to return the invitation-card which he had originally received; Katkov had made his speech at the banquet held by the Town Council, and at the Town Council's request. Turgenev had no grounds whatever for anticipating any affront from Katkov; Katkov was much more justified in dreading some sort of annoyance. For Turgenev there had been prepared so colossal a reception (by Kovalevsky and the University people) that he really had nothing to fear. Turgenev insulted Katkov first. When, after Katkov's speech, such men as Ivan Aksakov went up to clink glasses with him (even his opponents did that), Katkov stretched out his hand with the glass in it to Turgenev, that they, too, might clink; but Turgenev drew his hand away, and would not. So Turgenev himself told me.

You ask me to send you my speech. But I have not a single transcript of it, and the only copy is at the printers, where the *Diary* is now being set up.

The *Diary* will appear about August 5; bestow some attention on that number, and show it, also, to my dear collaborator, Andrey Andreyevitch. I should like to hear his opinion too.

Your devoted
DOSTOEVSKY.

LXXV. To N. L. Osmidov

STARAYA-ROUSSA,
August 18, 1880.

MUCH-ESTEEMED NIKOLAY LUKITCH!

I have read your letter very attentively; but how am I to answer it? You remark yourself, most justly, that one can't really say anything at all in a letter. I too am of opinion that one can deal only with quite ordinary matters in any satisfactory way. But besides that, it really would be idle for you to come even personally for advice to me, for I don't consider myself competent to resolve your questions. You write that hitherto you have given your daughter nothing that is purely literary to read, lest her fancy should become over-developed. This does not appear to me entirely a right point of view; for fancy is an unborn capacity of human beings; in a child, it outweighs all others, and should most undoubtedly be nourished. For if we give a child's imagination no nourishment, it may easily die out, or, on the other hand, may over-develop itself from its own sheer force, which is no less undesirable. For such an abnormal over-development prematurely exhausts the child's mental powers. And impressions of the beautiful, moreover, are precisely in childhood of the greatest importance.

When I was ten years old, I saw at Moscow a performance of "Die Râuber," with Motchalov in one of the chief parts, and I can only say that the deep impression which that performance made upon me has worked most fruitfully ever since upon my whole mental development. At twelve, I read right through Walter Scott during the summer holidays; certainly such reading did extraordinarily stimulate my imagination and sensibility, but it led them into good, not evil, paths; I got from it many fine and noble impressions, which gave my soul much power of resistance against others which were seductive, violent, and corrupting. So I advise you to give your daughter *now* the works of Walter Scott, and all the more, because he is for the moment neglected by us Russians, and your daughter, when she is older, will have neither opportunity nor desire to make acquaintance with that great writer; therefore hasten now, while she is still in her parents' house, to introduce him to her. Besides, Walter Scott has a high educational value.

She should also read all Dickens's works without exception. Make her acquainted, too, with the literature of past centuries ("Don Quixote,"

"Gil Blas," etc.). It would be best for her to begin with poetry. She should read all Pushkin, verse as well as prose. Gogol likewise. If you like, Turgenev and Gontscharov as well; as to my own works, I don't think that all of them are suitable for your daughter. It would be well for her to read Schlosser's "Weltgeschichte," and Solovyov's Russian history; nor should she omit Karamsin. Don't give her Kostomarov as yet. The "Conquest of Peru and Mexico" by Prescott is most necessary. In general, historical works have immense educational value. She should read Leo Tolstoy all through; also Shakespeare,

Schiller, and Goethe; these writers are to be had in good Russian translations. That will be enough for the present. With time, in a few years, you will see yourself that there is much besides. Journalistic reading should, in the beginning at any rate, be kept from her. I don't know if my advice will commend itself to you. I write after much reflection, and out of my own personal experience. I shall be very glad if it is really of use to you. I think a personal visit from you is quite superfluous at present, and the more, because I am very much occupied. But I must say once again that I am not particularly competent in such matters.

The number of the *Diary* that you asked for has been sent to you. It comes, with postage, to 35 kopecks; so the balance of 65 kopecks stands to your credit with me.

Yours truly and faithfully,

F. DOSTOEVSKY.

LXXVI. To I. S. Aksakov

STARAYA-ROUSSA,
August 28, 1880.

MY DEAR AND HONOURED IVAN SERGEYEVITCH, I meant to answer your first letter by return, and now, having received your second, so *precious* to me, I see that I have a great deal to say to you. Never yet in my life have I found a critic who was so sincere, and so very sympathetic for my work. I had almost forgotten that there could be such critics, and that they actually exist. I don't mean to say by this that I see absolutely eye-to-eye with you in all things, but I must, at any rate, point out the following fact:

Although I have been issuing my *Diary* for two years now, and consequently have some experience, I am still beset by doubts in many respects — as to what I am to say about certain matters, what tone I am to adopt, and on what subjects I should keep silence altogether. Your letter came just in such a moment of hesitation, for I have firmly resolved to continue my *Diary* in the coming year, and so I am much perturbed, and often put up my prayer to Him on whom one should ever call for the needful strength, and above all the needful ability. Thus it peculiarly rejoices me to have *you;* for now I see that I can impart to you at least a portion of my questionings, and that you can always answer me with something most frank and far-seeing. This conviction I have gained from your two last letters. Unfortunately I should have to write you a lot about all this, and just now I am very busy, and not at all inclined for letters. You simply can't imagine how frightfully busy I am, day and night; it is real hard labour! For I am now finishing the "Karamazovs," and consequently summing up the entire work, which is personally very dear to me, for I have put a great deal of my inmost self into it. I work, in general, very nervously, with pain and travail of soul. Whenever I am writing, I am physically ill. And now I have to sum up all that I have pondered, gathered, set down, in the last three years. I must make this work good at all costs, or at least as good as I can. I simply don't know how anyone can write at great speed, and only for the money's sake. Now the time is come when I must wind up this novel, and that without delay. You will hardly believe me: many a

chapter, for which I had been making notes all those three years, I was obliged, after finally setting it down, to reject, and write anew. Only separate passages, which were directly inspired by enthusiasm, came off at first writing; all the rest was hard work. For these reasons I can't possibly write to you at the moment, despite my ardent desire; I am not in the requisite state of mind, and moreover I do not wish to dissipate my energies. I shall not be able to write to you until about September 10, when I shall have the work behind me. In the meantime, I shall thoroughly ponder my letter, for the questions in hand are weighty, and I want to present them as lucidly as may be. So do not be angry with me, nor accuse me of indifference; if you only knew what an error that would be on your part!

In the meantime I embrace you, and thank you from my heart. I need you, and must therefore love you.

Your truly devoted

F. DOSTOEVSKY.

LXXVII. To Doctor A. F. Blagonravov

PETERSBURG,
December 19, 1880.

HONOURED ALEXANDER FYODOROVITCH, I thank you for your letter. You judge very rightly when you opine that I hold all evil to be grounded upon disbelief, and maintain that he who abjures nationalism, abjures faith also. That applies especially to Russia, for with us national consciousness is based on Christianity. “A Christian peasant-people “believing Russia these are our fundamental conceptions. A Russian who abjures nationalism (and there are many such) is either an atheist or indifferent to religious questions. And the converse: an atheist or indifferentist cannot possibly understand the Russian people and Russian nationalism. The essential problem of our day is: How are we to persuade our educated classes of this principle? If one but utters a word in such a sense, one will either be devoured alive, or denounced as a traitor. And whom shall one have betrayed? Truly, naught but a party which has lost touch with reality, and for which not even a label can be found, for they know not themselves what to call themselves. Or is it the people whom one shall have betrayed? No; for I desire with the people to abide, for only from the people is anything worth while to be looked for — not from the educated class, which abjures the people, and is not even “educated.”

But a new generation is on the way, which will desire union with the people. The first sign of true fellowship with the people is veneration and love for that which the great mass of the people loves and venerates — that is to say, for its God and its faith.

This new Russian intelligence is beginning, as it seems to me, to lift its head, and precisely *now* is its co-operation in the common task essential; and this it is coming, itself, to perceive.

Because I preach faith in God and in the people, the gentry here would like to sec me disappear from the face of the earth. Because of that chapter in the “Karamazovs” (of the hallucination) with which you, as a physician, are so pleased, it has already been sought to stamp me as a reactionary and fanatic, who has come to believe in the Devil. The gentlemen here, in their simplicity, imagine that the public will cry out with one voice: “What?

Dostoevsky has begun to write about the Devil now, has he? How obsolete and *borne* he is!" But I believe that they will find themselves mistaken. I thank you for having, as a physician, attested for me the authenticity of my description of the psychical sickness of my hero. The opinion of one who is an expert in the matter is very valuable to me; you will, I doubt not, allow that Ivan Karamazov, in the given circumstances, could have had no different hallucination. I mean to give, in the very next number of the *Diary,* some of the critical pronouncements on that particular chapter.

With the assurance of my sincere respect, I remain Yours most faithfully,
FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY.

Recollections of Dostoevsky by his Friends

FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF D. V. GRIGOROVITCH

1837 — 1846

IT is a mystery to me to this day how I, innately the most extraordinarily nervous and timid of boys, ever got through my first year in the College of Engineering, where one's comrade were far more ruthless and cruel even than one's teachers.

Amongst the young men who were admitted to the College after I had been there about a year, was a youth of some seventeen summers, of middle height, full figure, blond hair, and sickly, pale countenance. This youth was Fyodor Michailovitch Dostoevsky. He had come from Moscow to Petersburg with his elder brother Michael. The latter did not enter the College, but joined the Corps of Sappers, and was later sent to Reval on his promotion to commissioned rank. Many years later Michael Dostoevsky took his discharge, and returned to Petersburg. There he started a cigarette manufactory, but at the same time busied himself in literature, translated Goethe, wrote a comedy, and, after Fyodor's return from banishment, became editor of the *Epoch.*

I made friends with Fyodor Dostoevsky the very first day that he entered the College. It's half-a-century ago now, but I can well remember how much more I cared for him than for any of the other friends of my youth. Despite his reticent nature and general lack of frankness and youthful expansion, he appeared to reciprocate my affection. Dostoevsky always held himself aloof, even then, from others, never took part in his comrades' amusements, and usually sat in a remote corner with a book; his favourite place was a corner in Class-Room IV. by the window. Out of school-hours, he nearly always sat with a book by that window.

I had, as a boy, a pliant character, and was easily influenced; thus my relations with Dostoevsky were those of not merely attachment, but absolute subjection. His influence was extraordinarily beneficial to me. Dostoevsky was much more advanced in all knowledge than I was, and the extent of his reading amazed me. The many things he told me about the works of writers, whose very names to me were unknown, came as a revelation. Hitherto I had, like the rest of my colleagues, read nothing but textbooks and abstracts of lectures; not only because other books were forbidden in the College, but from lack of interest in literature.

The first Russian books with which I made acquaintance I got from Dostoevsky; they were a translation of Hoffmann's "Kater Murr" and "The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," by Maturin [SIC]; the latter was especially prized by Dostoevsky. His literary influence was not confined to me alone; three of my colleagues came equally under his spell — Beketov, Vitkovsky, and Berechetzky; in this way a little circle was formed, which gathered round Dostoevsky in every leisure hour.

This reading, and the interchange of ideas which it brought about, took from me all inclination for my studies. Nor did Dostoevsky rank among the best pupils. Before the examinations he always made the most tremendous efforts, so as to get into a higher class. But he did not invariably succeed; in one examination he failed entirely, and was unpromoted. This failure worried him so much that he fell ill, and had to go to hospital for a while.

In 1844 or'45 I met him quite by chance in the street; he had then completed his studies, and had exchanged military uniform for civilian dress. I clasped him in my arms with cries of joy. Even Dostoevsky seemed glad, but behaved with some reticence. He never was, indeed, given to public displays of emotion. My delight at this unexpected meeting was so great and genuine that it never even occurred to me to feel hurt by his cool behaviour.

I told him about all my acquaintances in literary circles, about my own literary attempts, and at once invited him to come to my abode and hear my latest production. He willingly agreed.

When I had read him my story he seemed pleased with it, but gave me no very extravagant praise; with one passage he found fault. This was how it ran:

"When the organ stopped, an official threw a copper coin out of his window, which fell at the organ-grinder's feet."

"No, that's not right," said Dostoevsky, "it is much too dull: 'The copper coin fell at the organ-grinder's feet.' You should say, 'The copper coin fell *clinking* and *hopping* at the man's feet'"... That remark struck me as a revelation.

As time went on, I saw more and more of Dostoevsky. At last we decided to set up house together. My mother sent me fifty roubles a month, Dostoevsky got nearly as much from his relatives in Moscow.

As things were then, a hundred roubles was quite enough for two young fellows; but we did not understand housekeeping, and the money usually

lasted us only for the first fortnight; for the rest of the month we fared on rolls and coffee. The house we lived in was at the corner of Vladimir and Grafen Streets; it consisted of a kitchen and two rooms, whose three windows looked out on Grafen Street. We had no servants; we made our own tea, and bought all food ourselves.

When we set up house, Dostoevsky was working at the translation of Balzac's "Eugénie Grandet." Balzac was our favourite writer; we both considered him by far the most important of the French authors. Dostoevsky succeeded, I know not how, in publishing his translation in the *Book-Lovers' Library*, I can still recollect how vexed Dostoevsky was when that number of the magazine reached him — the editor had shortened the novel by a third. But that was what Senkovsky, then the editor of the *Library*, always did with his collaborators' works, and the authors were so glad to see themselves in print that they never protested.

My enthusiasm for Dostoevsky was the reason why Bielinsky, to whom Nekrassov introduced me, made quite a different impression upon me from what I had expected. Properly tutored by Nekrassov, I regarded the impending visit to Bielinsky as a great joy; long beforehand I rehearsed the words in which I should describe to him my admiration for Balzac. But scarcely had I mentioned that my housemate Dostoevsky (whose name was still unknown to Bielinsky) had translated "Eugénie Grandet" than Bielinsky began to abuse our divinity most terribly: he called him a writer for the bourgeois, and said that there was not a page of "Eugénie Grandet" without some error in taste. I was so nonplussed that I forgot every word of the beautifully rehearsed speech.

Probably I impressed him as a stupid boy who could not say a word in defence of his own opinion.

At that time Dostoevsky would spend whole days, and sometimes nights, at his desk. He never said a word about what he was working at; he answered my questions unwillingly and laconically, and I soon ceased to interrogate him; I merely saw countless sheets covered with Dostoevsky's peculiar writing — every letter as if drawn. I have seen no writing like it, except that of Dumas *père*. When Dostoevsky was not writing, he would sit crouched over a book. For a while he raved about the novels of Soulié, particularly the "Mémoires des Démons." As a consequence of his hard work and the sedentary life he led, his health was getting worse and worse; those troubles which had occasionally shown themselves even in his

boyhood now became increasingly frequent. Sometimes he would even have a fit on one of our few walks together. Once we chanced to come on a funeral. Dostoevsky insisted on turning back at once; but he had scarcely gone a few steps when he had such a violent fit that I was obliged to carry him, with the help of some passers-by, into the nearest shop; it was with great difficulty that we restored him to consciousness. Such attacks were usually followed by a state of great depression, which lasted two or three days.

One morning Dostoevsky called me into his room; he was sitting on the divan which served as bed also, and before him on the little writing-table lay a thickish manuscript-book, large size, with speckled edges.

“Sit down here a while, Grigorovitch; I only wrote it out fair yesterday and I want to read it to you; but don’t interrupt me,” said he, with unusual vivacity.

The work which he then read to me at one breath, with no pauses at all, soon afterwards appeared in print under the title of “Poor Folk.”

I always had a very high opinion of Dostoevsky; his wide reading, his knowledge of literature, his opinions, and the deep seriousness of his character, all extraordinarily impressed me; I often asked myself how it was that, while I had already written and published a good deal, and so could account myself a literary man, Dostoevsky did not yet share this distinction. But with the first pages of “Poor Folk” it was borne in on me that this work was incomparably greater than anything that I had so far written; that conviction increased as he read on. I was quite enchanted, and several times longed to clutch and hug him; only that objection of his to effusions of feeling, which I knew so well, restrained me — but I could not possibly sit there in silence, and interrupted him every moment with exclamations of delight.

The consequences of that reading are well-known. Dostoevsky has himself related in his *Diary* how I tore the manuscript from him by force, and took it to Nekrassov forthwith. He has indeed out of modesty said nothing of the reading to Nekrassov. I myself read the work aloud. At the last scene, when old Dyevuchkin takes leave of Varenyka, I could no longer control myself, and broke into sobs. I saw that Nekrassov also was weeping. I then pointed out to him that a good deed should never be put off, and that, in spite of the late hour, he should instantly betake himself to Dostoevsky,

to tell him of his success and talk over the details of the novel's appearance in the magazine.

Nekrassov too was very much excited; he agreed, and we really did go straight off to Dostoevsky.

I must confess that I had acted rashly. For I knew the character of my housemate, his morbid sensibility and reserve, his shyness — and I ought to have told him all quite quietly next morning, instead of waking him in the middle of the night, and, moreover, bringing a strange man to visit him.

Dostoevsky himself opened the door to our knocking; when he saw me with a stranger, he was frightfully embarrassed, turned pale, and for a long time could make no response to Nekrassov's eulogiums. When our guest had gone, I expected that Dostoevsky would overwhelm me with reproaches. But that did not happen; he merely shut himself up in his room, and for a long time I heard him walking excitedly up and down.

After Dostoevsky had in this way come to know Nekrassov, and through him Bielinsky too (for the latter, also, soon read "Poor Folk" in manuscript), he was suddenly as if metamorphosed. During the printing of the novel he was continually in a state of the most excessive nervous excitement. His reserve went so far that he never told me a word of what further ensued between him and Nekrassov. I heard indirectly that he exacted from Nekrassov that his novel should be set up in quite peculiar type, and that every page should have a sort of framing. I was not present at the negotiations, and cannot therefore say whether these rumours were founded on truth.

One thing I can decidedly say: the success of "Poor Folk, "and still more the extravagant eulogiums of Bielinsky, had a bad influence on Dostoevsky, who till then had lived wholly shut in with himself and had associated only with people who took no interest at all in literature. How could such a man as he have remained in his normal condition of mind, when at his very first entrance to the literary career, an authority like Bielinsky prostrated himself before him, and loudly proclaimed that a new star had arisen in Russian literature? Soon after "Poor Folk," Dostoevsky wrote his novel "Mr. Prochartchin," which likewise was read aloud to Nekrassov; I was invited to the reading. Bielinsky sat opposite the author, listened greedily to every word, and now and then expressed his delight — saying over and over again that nobody but Dostoevsky was capable of such psychological subtleties.

But perhaps Bielinsky's enthusiasm had less effect on him than the subsequent complete revulsion in Bielinsky's appreciation and that of his circle.

About that time Bielinsky said in a letter to Annenkov: "Dostoevsky's 'Mistress of the Inn' is terrible stuff! He has attempted a combination of Mariinsky and Hoffmann, with a dash of Gogol. He has written other novels besides, but every new work of his is a new calamity. In the provinces they can't stand him at all, and in Petersburg even ' Poor Folk' is abused; I tremble at the thought that I shall have to read this novel once more. We've been well taken in by our 'gifted' Dostoevsky!"

So Bielinsky wrote, the most honest man in the world, and he meant every word of it most honestly and thoroughly. Bielinsky never flinched from declaring his opinion of Dostoevsky, and all his circle echoed him.

The unexpected transition from idolization of the author of "Poor Folk" to complete denial of his literary talent might well have crushed even a less sensitive and ambitious writer than Dostoevsky. Thenceforth he avoided all those who were connected with Bielinsky's circle, and became more reserved and irritable than ever. At a meeting with Turgenev, who likewise belonged to Bielinsky's set, Dostoevsky unhappily lost control of himself, and all the anger which had gathered in him flamed forth; he said that he was not afraid of any one of them, and would tread them all into the mud in time. I forget what was the immediate cause of the outbreak; I think they were speaking of Gogol, among others. But in any case I am convinced that Dostoevsky was to blame. Turgenev was never given to quarrelling; he might rather be reproached with too great pliancy and gentleness of character.

After the scene with Turgenev it came to an open breach between Dostoevsky and the Bielinsky set. Now they overwhelmed him with derision and biting epigrams, and he was accused of monstrous conceit; they said too that he was jealous of Gogol, whom in justice he should adore, since on every page of "Poor Folk "the influence of Gogol was unmistakable.

This last reproach, if it *is* a reproach for a novice, was not quite unjustified. Old Dyevuchkin in "Poor Folk" does undoubtedly recall Poprischtschin the functionary, in the "Memoirs of a Madman" of Gogol; in the scene where Dyevuchkin loses a button in the presence of his superiors and, much embarrassed, tries to pick it up, one cannot but think of that

scene of Gogol’s where Poprischtschin tries to pick up the handkerchief which his superior’s daughter has dropped, and comes to grief on the parquet floor. Not only the constant use of the same word over and over again, but the whole composition, betrays Gogol’s influence.

Once, I forget why, he and I fell out. The consequence was that we decided to give up living together. But we parted on good terms. Later I often met him with acquaintances, and we treated one another as old friends.

FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF A. P. MILYUKOV

1848 — 1849

I MADE Dostoevsky's acquaintance in the winter of 1848. That was a momentous period for enthusiastic and cultured youth. After the February Revolution in Paris, the reforms of Pius IX., the risings in Milan, Venice, and Naples, the victory of liberal ideas in Germany and the revolutions of Berlin and Vienna, everyone believed in the renaissance of the whole European world. The rotted pillars of reaction were crumbling one after the other, and all over Europe new life seemed to be in bud. Yet in Russia, at that time, prevailed the most crushing reaction: Science, no less than the Press, could hardly breathe beneath the heavy yoke of the administration, and every sign of mental vitality was stifled. From abroad, a quantity of liberal writings, partly scientific, partly literary, were smuggled into the country. In the French and German papers, people, despite the Censorship, were reading stirring articles; but among ourselves all scientific and literary activity was rendered well-nigh impossible, and the Censorship tore each new book to pieces. Naturally all this had a highly exciting effect upon the younger generation, who on the one hand were, through these foreign books and journals, making acquaintance not only with Liberal ideas, but with the most extreme Socialist doctrine; and on the other, were finding that the 256 most harmless notions of Liberalism were relentle sly persecuted in their own country — they would read the flaming speeches made in the French Chamber and at Frankfort, and at the same time see how, among ourselves, someone was punished like a criminal every day for an incautious word or a "forbidden "book. Almost every foreign post brought news of fresh rights gained for themselves by the people, while in Russian society one heard only of fresh "special decrees" and persecutions. All who remember that time will know the effect this had upon the younger generation.

There now began to form, in Petersburg, little groups of young men, who for the most part had but recently left the High Schools. These assembled solely to discuss the latest news and rumours, and to express opinions freely. In these groups, new acquaintances were made, and old ones renewed.

I happened in this way to be present at an assembly which took place at the abode of the young writer A. N. Plechtcheyev. I there entered into

relations with a set of men whose memories I shall ever cherish. Among others were present: Porfiry Lamansky, Sergey Dourov, Nikolay Monbelli and Alexander Palm, both of whom were officers of the Guards — and the brothers Michael and Fyodor Dostoevsky. All these young men were extraordinarily sympathetic to me. I became particularly intimate with the two Dostoevskys and Monbelli. The latter then lived in barracks, and we used to assemble at his quarters too. I made further acquaintances among his circle, and learnt that large assemblies took place at the abode of one M. V. Butachevitch-Petrachevsky, whereat speeches on political and social questions were made. Someone offered to take me to Petrachevsky; but I declined, not from timidity or indifference, but because Petrachevsky, whose acquaintance I had recently made, had not particularly attracted me; he held quite too paradoxical opinions, and showed a certain aversion for all things Russian.

On the contrary I very willingly accepted an invitation to enter the little group which gathered about Dourov; he attracted many who belonged also to Petrachevsky's set, but embraced more moderate opinions. Dourov lived at that time with Palm in Gorochovoya Street. At his small abode there assembled every Friday an organized circle of young men, among whom the military element was represented. As the host was of modest means, and the guests always remained until three o'clock in the morning, each had to pay a monthly contribution towards the entertainment, and the hire of a piano. I attended these evenings regularly, until in consequence of the arrest of Petrachevsky and the members of his circle, they were suspended.

Dostoevsky also frequented these evenings at Dourov's. Our circle occupied itself with no revolutionary plans of any kind, and had no written statutes at all; in short, it could not possibly be described as a secret society. We assembled to exchange the then proscribed books, and to discuss questions which were not permitted to be openly touched on. Most of all were we interested in the question of the emancipation of the peasants, and at our meetings we always spoke of the ways and means to this reform. Some thought that in view of the reaction which had been brought about in our country by the European revolutions, the Government would never decide to carry out the emancipation of the peasants, and that it would come rather from below than from above; others, on the contrary, maintained that our people had no desire whatever to follow in the footsteps of the European revolutionaries, and would patiently await the decision of their

fate by the Government. In this sense, Fyodor Dostoevsky expressed himself with particular emphasis. When anybody in his vicinity declared that the emancipation of the peasants by the lawful path was most doubtful, he would retort that he believed in no other path.

We talked too of literature, but chiefly with reference to remarkable newspaper articles. Occasionally the older writers were discussed, and very severe, one-sided, and mistaken judgments often found expression. Once when the subject happened to be Dershavin, and somebody declared that he was much more of a turgid and servile ode-maker and courtier than the great poet for which his contemporaries and the schools had taken him, Dostoevsky sprang up as if stung by a wasp, and cried: “What! No poetic rapture, no true ardour, in Dershavin? *His* not the loftiest poetry?”

And forthwith he declaimed from memory a poem of Dershavin’s with such power, with such ardour, that the singer of Catherine the Great rose at once in our estimation. Another time he delivered some poems of Pushkin and Victor Hugo, similar in subject, and proved to us, with great success, that our poet was a much more remarkable artist than the Frenchman.

Dourov’s circle included many fervent Socialists. Intoxicated by the Utopias of certain foreign theorists, they saw in this doctrine the dawn of a new religion, which one day should remodel the world on the basis of a new social order. Everything that appeared in French on the question was discussed hotfoot by us. We were always talking about the Utopias of Robert Owen and Cabet, but still more, perhaps, of Fourier’s phalanstery, and Proudhon’s theory of progressive taxation. We all took an equal interest in the Socialists, but many refused to believe in the possibility of practically realizing their teachings. Among these latter was, again, Dostoevsky. He read all the works on Socialism, it is true, but remained wholly sceptical. Though he granted that all these doctrines were founded on noble ideals, he nevertheless regarded the Socialists as honest, but foolish, visionaries. He would say again and again that none of these theories could have any real meaning for us, and that we must find our material for the development of Russian society not in the doctrines of foreign Socialists, but in the life and customs, sanctified by centuries of use, of our own people, in whom had long been apparent far more enduring and normal conceptions than were to be found in all the Utopias of Saint-Simon. To him (he would say) life in a commune or in a phalanstery would seem much more terrible than in a Siberian prison. I need not say that our Socialists stuck to their opinions.

All new laws and other actions of the Government were also discussed and severely criticized by us. In view of the arbitrary rule which prevailed in our country, and the grand events which were coming off in Western Europe, and inspiring us with the hope of a better and freer mode of existence, our discontent is wholly comprehensible. In this respect Dostoevsky showed the same zeal and the same rebellious spirit as the other members of our circle. I cannot now remember the actual content of his speeches, but I do recollect that he ever protested against all measures which in any way implied the oppression of the people, and was especially infuriated by those abuses from which the lowest ranks of society and the students equally suffered. One could always recognize the author of “Poor Folk” in his judgments.

One of us proposed that discourses should be held in our assemblies; each was to write an indictment of the Government, and read it aloud to the rest; Dostoevsky approved this plan, and promised to do something of the kind. I forget whether he carried out his promise. The first discourse, which was given by one of the officers, dealt with an anecdote which was at that time common talk; Dostoevsky found fault both with the subject and the form of this effort. On one of the evenings, I read a passage from Lamennais’ “Paroles d’un Croyant,” which I had translated into “Church-Russian.” Dostoevsky assured me that the grave Biblical language of my translation sounded much more impressive than that of the original. Later on, we resolved to print several copies of some of our members’ papers, and circulate them widely; but this plan was never carried out, for just then the majority of our friends, and those in particular who had attended the Petrachevsky evenings, were arrested.

Shortly before the break-up of the Dourov circle, one of its members had been in Moscow, and had brought from there a transcript of the famous letter which Bielinsky had written to Gogol in the course of his “Correspondence with Friends.” Fyodor Dostoevsky read this letter aloud both in our circle and in the houses of several of his friends, and also gave it to different people to be transcribed anew. This was subsequently the main pretext for his arrest and banishment. Bielinsky’s letter, in its paradoxical one-sidedness, would scarcely impress anyone much at this time of day, but it then produced a remarkable effect upon all minds. Along with this letter, there was then circulating in our set a humorous article by Alexander Herzen (similarly brought from Moscow), in which our two capitals were

contrasted no less wittily than maliciously. On the arrest of the Petrachevsky group, I know that numerous copies of these two works were seized. Besides our evenings for discussion and reading, we had musical ones. At our last assembly, a very gifted pianist played Rossini's overture to "William Tell."

On April 23, 1849, I heard, through Michael Dostoevsky, of the arrest of his brother Fyodor, as well as of Dourov, Monbelli, Filippov, and others. A fortnight later, I was told one morning that Michael Dostoevsky also had been arrested the night before. His wife and children were left wholly without means of support, for he had no regular income whatever, and lived entirely by his literary work. As I knew the tranquil and reserved character of Michael Dostoevsky, I was really but little concerned as to his fate; it is true that he had frequented Petrachevsky, but he had been in disagreement with most members of the circle. So far as I knew, there could be little against him. Therefore I hoped that he would soon be set at liberty. As a matter of fact, he was, at the end of May; and came to me, early in the morning, to look up his son Fedya, whom I had housed. In the evening of the same day he gave me many particulars of his arrest, of his stay in the fortress, and of the questions which had been put to him by the Committee of Investigation. From these questions we could gather what would be the indictment against Fyodor. Although he was charged only with some rash utterances against high personages and with the dissemination of proscribed writings, and the momentous Bielinsky letter, these things could, with ill-will, be given a very serious turn; in that case, a grievous fate awaited him. True, that gradually many of those arrested were being set free; but it was said that many were threatened with banishment.

The summer of 1849 was a sad time for all of us. I saw Michael Dostoevsky every week. The news about our incarcerated friends was very vague; we knew only that they were all in good health. The investigating committee had now ended its labours, and we daily expected the decision. But the autumn went by, and not until shortly before Christmas was the fate of the prisoners made known. To our utter amazement and horror, they were all condemned to death. The sentence was not, however, as all the world knows, executed; capital punishment was at the last moment altered to other penalties. Fyodor Dostoevsky got four years' hard labour in Siberia, and after completion of that sentence was to be enrolled as a private in one of the Siberian regiments of the line. All this was done so hastily and suddenly

that neither I nor his brother could be present at the proclamation of the sentence on Semyonovsky Square; we heard of the fate of our friends only when all was at an end, and they had been taken back to the Petropaulovsky fortress (except Petrachevsky, who was sent straight from the tribunal to Siberia).

The prisoners were despatched in parties of two and three from the fortress to their exile. On the third day after the sentence, Michael Dostoevsky told me that his brother was to depart that very evening, and that he wanted to go and say good-bye to him at the fortress. I too wished to say good-bye to Fyodor Dostoevsky. We both went to the fortress, and applied to Major M., whom we had known in past days, and through whose mediation we hoped to obtain permission to see the prisoners. He told us that it was true that Dostoevsky and Dourov were to be sent that very evening to Omsk. But permission to see our friends could be got only from the the Commandant of the fortress.

We were conducted into a large room on the ground-floor of the Commandant's quarters. It was already late, and a lamp was burning in the room. We had to wait a very long time, and twice heard the cathedral-bell of the fortress ring out the hour. At last the door opened, and there entered, accompanied by an officer, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Dourov. We greeted them with a mighty shaking of hands.

Despite the long, solitary confinement, neither had changed at all appreciably; the one seemed quite as grave and calm, the other as cheerful and friendly, as before the arrest. Both already wore the travelling-clothes — sheepskins and felt boots — in which prisoners were dressed for transportation. The officer sat unobtrusively at some distance from us on a chair, and did not disturb our conversation. Fyodor talked first of all of his joy that his brother had escaped a similar fate to his; then he asked with warm interest for Michael's family, and about all the details of his life. During the meeting, he several times recurred to that theme. Dostoevsky and Dourov spoke with genuine liking of the Commandant of the fortress, who had treated them most humanely and done all that was in his power to alleviate their lot. Neither the one nor the other complained of the stern tribunal, or he harsh sentence. The life which awaited them in prison did not alarm them; they could not then foresee the effect which the punishment was to have upon their health.

When the Dostoevsky brothers took leave of one another, it was clear to me that not he who had to go to Siberia, but he who remained in Petersburg, suffered the more. The elder brother wept, his lips trembled, while Fyodor seemed calm and even consoled him.

“Don’t do that, brother,” he said; “why, you know me. Come, you are not seeing me to my grave; even in prison there dwell not beasts but men, and many of them are possibly better and worthier than I am.... We shall see one another again, I am sure of it; I confidently hope for that, I have no doubt at all that we shall meet again.... Write to me in Siberia, send me books;. I’ll send word to you from there what books I need; I shall surely be allowed to read there.... And when once I have the prison behind me, I’ll write regularly. During these months I have lived through much in my soul; and think of all I shall see and live through in the future! I shall truly have plenty of material for writing....”

He gave one the impression of regarding the impending punishment as a pleasure-trip abroad, in the course of which he should see beautiful scenery and artistic treasures, and make new acquaintances in perfect freedom. He never seemed to realize that he was to spend four years in the “House of the Dead,” in chains, in the company of criminals; perhaps he was full of the thought that he would find in the most fallen criminal those human traits, those sparks of divine fire that, though heaped over with ashes, still glimmer, still are unextinguished — those sparks which, according to his conviction, burn even in the most outcast of mankind, in the most hardened of criminals.

This final meeting lasted over half-an-hour; although we spoke of many things, the time seemed short. The melancholy bell was sounding again when the Major entered, and said the interview was at an end. For the last time we embraced. I did not then imagine that I should never see Dourov again, and Fyodor Dostoevsky only after eight years.

FROM THE MEMORANDA OF P. K. MARTYANOV, AT THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD

1850 — 1854

THE hardest office which was assigned to us who had been transferred on punishment was keeping guard in the prison. It was the same one that Dostoevsky has described in his “House of the Dead.” Of those who had been implicated in the Petrachevsky affair, there were then in the prison Fyodor Michailovitch Dostoevsky and Sergey Fyodorovitch Dourov. Whether they had formerly been much known in Petersburg, we are not aware; but during their stay in the prison their Petersburg friends took the greatest interest in them, and did everything possible to alleviate their lot.

The two young men, once so elegant, made a sad spectacle in the prison. They wore the usual convict dress: in the summer, vests of striped grey and black stuff with yellow badges on the back, and white caps with no brims; in the winter, short sheepskins, caps with ear-flaps, and mittens. On their arms and legs were chains which clanked at every movement; so that they were in no way externally distinguished from the other prisoners. Only one thing marked them out from the mass: the ineffaceable signs of good education and training. Dostoevsky looked liked a strong, somewhat thickset, well-disciplined working-man. His hard fate had, as it were, turned him to stone. He seemed dull, awkward, and was always taciturn. On his pale, worn, ashen face, which was freckled with dark-red spots, one never saw a smile; he opened his lips only to utter curt, disconnected remarks about his work. He always wore his cap dragged down on his forehead to his eyebrows; his glance was sullen, unpropitiating, fierce, and mostly directed on the ground. The prisoners did not like him, though they recognized his moral force; they looked askance at him, but with no malice, and would tacitly avoid him. He perceived this himself, and so kept aloof from all; only on very rare occasions, when he was beyond himself with misery, would he draw any of the prisoners into conversation. Dourov, on the contrary, looked like a fine gentleman even in prison clothes. He was well grown, held his head proudly aloft, his large black eyes looked friendly despite their short-sightedness, and he smiled on all and sundry. He wore his cap pushed back on his neck, and even in the worst hours preserved an unalterably cheerful aspect. He treated each individual prisoner amiably and

cordially, and all of them liked him. But he suffered much, and was frightfully run down — so much so that sometimes he could not stir a foot. And yet he remained good-tempered, and tried to forget his physical pain in laughter and joking.

From the prison-guard was then demanded much care, energy, and vigilance. The guard had to escort the prisoners to the working-places, and also to supervise them in the prison. The captain of the guard had to report every morning on the condition of the prisoners, to look after the cleanliness and discipline in the prison and the barrack-rooms, to make surprise inspections, and prevent the smuggling-in of schnaps, tobacco, playing-cards, and other forbidden articles; his duties, therefore, were arduous and responsible.

The naval cadets of that period were nevertheless ready to assume these duties in place of the officers, for in that way they obtained an opportunity of coming continually under the notice of their superiors, and at the same time of alleviating, so far as was feasible, the hard lot of the prisoners. Most of these worked outside the prison at the building of the fortress; but some were daily kept in to do the house-work. These latter came under the immediate surveillance of the guard, and would remain, unless they were sent to do work of some kind, either in the orderly-room or in their cells. In this way the naval cadets could always keep back any particular prisoner if they so desired. For instance, Dostoevsky and Dourov were often kept back for “house-work”; the captains of the guard would then send for them to the orderly-room, where they would tell them the news, and give them any presents, books, or letters that might have come for them. We let them come into the orderly-room only at such times as we were sure that no superior officer was likely to appear; but, in case of accident, we always kept a soldier in readiness to take them back to work. General Borislavsky, who superintended the labours, and the Commandant of the fortress, General de Grave, were made aware of this proceeding by the physician, Doctor Troizky.

According to the cadets’ reports, the character of Dostoevsky was not attractive; he always looked like a wolf in a trap, and avoided all the prisoners; even the humane treatment shown by his superiors, and their efforts to be useful to him and alleviate his lot, he took as an injury. He always looked gloomy, and amid the noise and animation of the prison held himself aloof from all; only of necessity did he ever speak a word. When

the cadets summoned him to the orderly-room, he would behave with much reserve; he paid no heed to their suggestion that he should sit down and rest, answered most unwillingly the questions put to him, and almost never permitted himself any frankness of speech. Every expression of sympathy he met with mistrust, as if he suspected in it some secret purpose. Even the books that were offered him he hardly ever accepted; only in two cases (they were “David Copperfield” and the “Pickwick Papers”) did he show any interest in the books, or take them to hospital with him. Doctor Troizky explained Dostoevsky’s unsociability by the morbid state of his whole organism, which, as everyone knows, was shattered by his nervous troubles and epileptic fits, but outwardly he looked healthy, active, and vigorous; he shared, too, in all the labours of the other convicts. The cadet from whom I obtained this description accounted for Dostoevsky’s unsociability by his fear that any relations with others, and the solicitude shown for him, might come to the knowledge of the authorities and injure him with them. Dourov, on the contrary, was universally liked. Despite his sickly, frail appearance, he took an interest in everybody, gladly entered into relationship with people outside the prison, and was cordially grateful for any alleviation or aid that was offered him. He talked, and even argued, freely upon all sorts of subjects, and often succeeded in carrying his audience with him. His open, cordial, and energetic character was apparent to us all, and so he was much better liked than Dostoevsky was.

The cadets observed with amazement that Dostoevsky and Dourov hated one another with all the force of their beings; they were never seen together, and during their whole time in the prison at Omsk they never exchanged a word with one another. When they both happened to be in the orderly-room at the same time, they would sit in opposite corners and answer any questions they were asked with no more than a Yes or No. This was noticed, and they were thenceforth summoned separately. When Dourov was interrogated as to this odd behaviour, he answered that neither would condescend to address the other, because prison-life had made enemies of them. And Dostoevsky, though he speaks in his “House of the Dead” of many interesting convicts who were in the prison during his time, never once mentions Dourov, either by his full name or by initials. And when he is obliged to refer to him, he does it thus: “We, that is, I and the other prisoner of noble birth, who came to the prison at the same time as I did....” Or thus: “I observed with terror one of my prison-mates (of noble birth)

who was visibly going out like a candle. When he came to the prison, he was young, handsome, and attractive; he left it a broken, grey-haired, lame, and asthmatic creature." The head - physician, Doctor Troizky, showed great interest in the political prisoners. He often sent them word by the cadets that they might (one or the other of them) come to him in hospital for cure; and they frequently did go to hospital for several weeks, and there got good food, tea, wine, and other such things, either from the hospital kitchen or the doctor's own. According to what Doctor Troizky told one of the cadets, Dostoevsky began his House of the Dead" in hospital, with the doctor's sanction; for the prisoners were not allowed writing materials without express permission; the first chapters of that work were long in the keeping of one of the hospital orderlies. General Borislavsky also showed favour to those two, through the medium of his adjutant, Lieutenant Ivanov. By his permission they were put only to the easier labours, except when they themselves desired to share the work of the other convicts. Among these easier labours were included painting work, the turning of wheels, the burning of alabaster, shovelling of snow, etc. Dostoevsky even got permission to do secretarial work in the office of the Engineering Department; but when Colonel Marten, in a report to the officer commanding the corps, expressed a doubt whether political offenders condemned to hard labour should be employed in such a manner, this arrangement came to an end.

Once when Dostoevsky had remained behind in the prison for "house-work," there suddenly came into his cell Major Krivzov (whom Dostoevsky later described as a "brute in human form"), to find him lying on his plank-bed.

"What is the meaning of this? Why is he not at his labour?" cried the Major.

"He is ill, sir," answered a cadet, who happened to have accompanied the Major in his capacity as officer of the guard. "He has just had an epileptic fit."

"Nonsense! I am aware that you indulge him too much. Out to the guard-room with him this instant; bring the rods!"

While he was being dragged from his plank and pushed along to the guard-room, the cadet despatched an exempt to the Commandant with a report of the occurrence. General de Grave came at once to the guard-room and stopped the whipping; while to Major Krivzov he administered a public

reprimand, and gave orders that in no circumstances were ailing prisoners to be subjected to corporal punishment.

FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF BARON ALEXANDER VRANGEL

1854 — 1865

WHEN I lived in Petersburg before my transfer to Siberia, I was not acquainted with Fyodor Dostoevsky, though I knew his favourite brother, Michael. I went to see the latter before I left; when I told him that I was going to Siberia, he begged me to take with me for his brother, a letter, some linen, some books, and fifty roubles. Apollon Maikov also gave me a letter for Fyodor Dostoevsky.

When I reached Omsk at the end of November, I found that Fyodor Dostoevsky was no longer there; he had completed his time in prison, and had been sent as a private soldier to Semipalatinsk. Soon afterwards, I was obliged, in the course of my duty, to settle for quite a long time at Semipalatinsk.

Destiny thus brought me, exactly five years after the scene on Semyonovsky Square, at which I had happened to be present and which had been so momentous for Dostoevsky, again into contact with him, and that for some years.

On my way to Semipalatinsk I visited Omsk again. There I made the acquaintance of Mme. Ivanova, who had been very kind to Dostoevsky during his time in prison. She was the daughter of the Decembrist Annenkov and his wife, Praskovya Ivanova, a Frenchwoman by birth, who, like many another of the Decembrists' wives, had followed her husband into exile. Mme. Ivanova's husband was an officer of the Gendarmerie. She was a wonderfully kind and highly cultured woman, the friend of all unfortunate folk, but particularly of the political prisoners. She and her mother had made Dostoevsky's acquaintance first at Tobolsk, whither he had been brought from Petersburg in the beginning of the year 1850. Tobolsk was then the clearing-house for all offenders transported from European Russia; from Tobolsk they were sent to the other Siberian towns. Mme. Ivanova provided Dostoevsky with linen, books, and money while he was at Tobolsk; at Omsk, too, she looked after him and alleviated his durance in many ways. When, in 1856, I returned to Petersburg, Dostoevsky asked me to visit her, and convey his gratitude for all the goodness she had shown him.

I must observe that the political offenders of that time were, in most cases, much more humanely and cordially treated by their official superiors and by the gentry than in later years. In the reign of Nicholas I. the whole of Siberia was crammed with political offenders, Russians as well as Poles; these were all cultured, liberal persons, absolutely sincere and convinced. But Fyodor Dostoevsky awakened quite peculiar sympathy. He told me himself that neither in the prison nor later during his military service was ever a hair of his head hurt by his superiors or by the other prisoners or soldiers; all the newspaper reports that declare otherwise are pure invention. For it has frequently been maintained that Dostoevsky's fits were brought on by the corporal chastisement he received; and many appear to believe this legend.

In November, 1854, then, I came to Semipalatinsk. On the morning after my arrival, I betook myself to the Military Governor, Spiridonov. He at once sent his adjutant to look out for rooms for me; and within a few hours I had settled down in my new home. I inquired of the Governor how and where I could find Dostoevsky, and ask him to come to tea with me that evening. Dostoevsky was then living in an abode of his own (and no longer in barracks).

At first he did not know who I was and why I had asked him to come; so he was in the beginning very reticent. He wore a grey military cloak with a high red collar and red epaulettes; his pale, freckled face had a morose expression. His fair hair was closely shorn. He scrutinized me keenly with his intelligent blue-grey eyes, as if seeking to divine what sort of person I was. As he confessed to me later on, he had been almost frightened when my messenger told him that the District-Attorney wished to see him. But when I apologized for not having first visited him personally, gave him the letters, parcels, and messages from Petersburg, and showed my friendly feeling, he quickly grew cheerful and confidential. Afterwards he told me that on that first evening he had instinctively divined in me an intimate friend-to-be.

While he read the letters I had brought, tears came into his eyes; I too was overcome by that mysterious sense of despair and desolation which I had so often felt during my long journey. As I was talking with Dostoevsky, a whole pile of letters from my relatives and friends in Petersburg was brought to me. I ran through the letters and suddenly began to sob; I was at that time unusually emotional and greatly attached to my family. My

separation from all who were dear to me seemed insupportable, and I was quite terrified of my future life. So there we were together, both in a desolate and lonely condition.... I felt so heavy-hearted that I forgot my exalted position as District-Attorney, and fell on the neck of Fyodor Michailovitch, who stood looking at me with mournful eyes. He comforted me, pressed my hand like an old friend, and we promised one another to meet as often as possible. Dostoevsky was, as is known, discharged from prison early in the year 1854, and sent to Semipalatinsk as a private. At first he lived with the other soldiers in barracks; but soon, through the influence of General Ivanov, he got permission to live in a private house near the barracks, under the supervision of his Captain, Stepanov. He was under surveillance by his sergeant as well, but the latter left him alone, on receipt of a trifling “recognition.”

The early days were the worst for him; the absolute isolation seemed unbearable. But gradually he came to know some of the officers and officials, though there was no close intercourse. Naturally, after the prison, this new condition of things seemed a paradise. Some cultured ladies in Semipalatinsk showed him warm sympathy, most particularly Mme. Maria Dmitryevna Issayev, and the wife of his Captain, Stepanov. The Captain, a frightful drunkard, had been transferred from Petersburg to Siberia for this offence. His wife wrote verses, which Dostoevsky was called upon to read and correct. Mme. Issayev, after her husband’s death, became, as everyone knows, Dostoevsky’s wife.

In my time, Semipalatinsk was something between a town and a village. All the houses were built of wood. The population was between five and six thousand, including the garrison and the Asiatic merchants. On the left bank of the river there lived about three thousand Circassians. There was an Orthodox church, seven mosques, a large caravanserai, a barracks, a hospital, and the Government offices. Of schools there was only a district one. In some of the shops one could buy anything, from tintacks to Parisian perfumes; but there was no bookshop, for there was nobody to buy books. At the most, from ten to fifteen of the inhabitants subscribed to a newspaper; nor was that any wonder, for at the time people in Siberia were interested only in cards, gossip, drinking-bouts, and business. Even in the Crimean War they took no interest, regarding it as an alien, non-Siberian affair.

I subscribed to three papers: a Petersburg one, a German one, and the *Indépendance Belge.* Dostoevsky delighted in reading the Russian and the French ones; he took no particular interest in the German paper, for at that time he did not understand much German, and he always disliked the language.

Between the Tartar and the Cossack suburbs lay the actual Russian town; this region was called the “Fortress,” although the fortress had long been razed; only one great stone gate remained. In this region all the military lived; here lay the battalion of the Line, the Horse-Artillery, here were all the authorities, the main guard, and the prison, which was under my control. Not a tree nor a shrub was to be seen; nothing but sand and thorny bush. Dostoevsky lived in a wretched hovel in this part of the town.

Living was then very cheap; a pound of meat cost half a kopeck, forty pounds of buckwheat groats, thirty kopecks. Dostoevsky used to take home from barracks his daily ration of cabbage-soup, groats, and black bread; anything left over, he would give to his poor landlady. He often lunched with me and other acquaintances. His hovel was in the dreariest part of the town. It was of rough timber, crazy, warped, without any foundations, and with not one window looking on the street.

Dostoevsky had a quite large, but very low and badly-lit room. The mud-walls had once been white; on both sides stood broad benches. On the walls hung fly-spotted picture-sheets. To the left of the doorway was a large stove. Behind the stove stood a bed, a little table, and a chest of drawers, which served as a dressing-table. All this corner was divided from the rest of the room by a calico curtain. In the windows were geraniums, and curtains hung there which had once been red. Walls and ceiling were blackened by smoke, and it was so dark in the room that in the evenings one could scarcely read by the tallow candle (wax candles were then a great luxury, and petroleum lamps not known at all). I can’t even imagine how Dostoevsky contrived to write for whole nights by such illumination. The lodgings had yet another great attraction: on the tables, walls, and bed there were always perfect flocks of beetles, and in summer the place swarmed with fleas.

Every day made us greater friends. Dostoevsky visited me several times a day, as often as his military and my official duties permitted; he often lunched with me, and particularly enjoyed an evening at my house, when he would drink a vast quantity of tea, and smoke endless cigarettes.

My intercourse with Dostoevsky soon attracted attention in the circle most concerned. I noticed that my letters were delayed for some days in transmission to me. My enemies, and I had not a few among the venal officials, often asked me ironical questions about Dostoevsky, and expressed their surprise at my consorting with a private. Even the Governor warned me, and said that he was afraid of the evil influence which the revolutionary Dostoevsky might have on one of my youth and inexperience.

The Military Governor, Spiridonov, was an uncommonly pleasant, humane, and unaffected man, and noted for his unusual hospitality. Being of such high rank, he was naturally the most important person in the town. I lunched with him every other day, and enjoyed his fullest confidence. I wanted him to have the opportunity of knowing Dostoevsky better, and begged for permission to bring the exile to his house. He pondered this a while, and said: “Well, bring him some time, but tell him that he is to come quite without ceremony in his uniform.”

Spiridonov very soon grew to like Dostoevsky; he helped him in every way he could. After the Military Governor had set the example, the better families of Semipalatinsk opened their doors to Dostoevsky.

There were no amusements of any sort in the town. During the two years of my stay, not a single musician came to the place; the one piano was regarded more as a rarity than anything else. Once the regimental clerks got up amateur theatricals in the riding-school. Dostoevsky was very useful in giving them advice, and persuaded me to be present on the night. The whole town assembled in the riding-school. The fair sex was particularly well represented. This performance ended in a great scandal. In the pause between two acts, some regimental clerks appeared as soloists, and offered such indecent ditties for the company’s amusement that the ladies took flight, though the officers, led by the commander of the battalion, one Byelikov, roared with laughter.

I can’t remember a single dance, picnic, or organized excursion. Every one lived for himself. The men drank, ate, played cards, made scandals, and visited the rich Tartars of the neighbourhood; the women busied themselves chiefly with gossip.

In Semipalatinsk there were other political offenders — Poles and whilom Hungarian officers of Russian-Polish origin. When Gorgey in 1848 surrendered with his army to Russia, Tsar Nicholas I. treated the officers who had been taken prisoners in the war as though they had been formerly

his subjects, and sent them to Siberia. The Poles kept to themselves, and held no intercourse with others. The rich ones looked after the poor, and there prevailed in general great solidarity among them. Fyodor Dostoevsky did not like these Poles, and usually avoided them; we became acquainted with only one, the engineer Hirschfeld, who often visited us, and brought a certain variety into our monotonous life.

I grew fonder and fonder of Dostoevsky; my house was open to him day and night. When I returned from duty, I often found him there already, having come to me from the drill-ground or the regimental office. He would be walking up and down the room with his cloak unfastened, smoking a pipe, and talking to himself; his head was always full of new ideas. I can still remember distinctly one such evening; he was then occupied with "Uncle's Dream" and "Stepanchikovo Village."

He was in an infectiously cheerful mood, laughing, telling me of his "Uncle's" adventures, singing operatic airs; when my servant Adam brought in some amber-coloured sturgeon soup, he declared that lie was hungry, and urged Adam to hurry up with the rest of the meal. He greatly liked this Adam — always stood up for him, and would give him money, which afforded my Leporello, a terrible drunkard quite superfluous opportunities for "one more."

Fyodor Dostoevsky's favourite authors were Gogol and Victor Hugo. When he was in a good temper he liked to declaim poetry, and especially Pushkin's; his favourite piece was "The Banquet of Cleopatra," from the "Egyptian Nights." He would recite it with glowing eyes and ardent voice.

I must observe that at that time I was little interested in literature; I had devoted myself wholly to dry erudition, and this often made Dostoevsky angry. More than once he said to me: "Do throw away your professorial text-books!" He often sought to convince me that Siberia could have no future, because all the Siberian rivers run into the Arctic Sea.

At that time Muravyov's achievements on the Pacific Coast were unknown to the world, and of the great Siberian Railway no one had so much as dared to dream; such a plan would have been taken for the delirium of a madman. I myself could not help laughing when Bakunin, whose acquaintance I made in 1858, unfolded the idea to me.

More and more I grew to care for Dostoevsky. How highly I esteemed him is evident from my letters to my relatives; these I have at hand to-day. On April 2, 1856, I wrote from Semipalatinsk: "Destiny has brought me

into contact with a man of rare intellect and disposition — the gifted young author Dostoevsky. I owe him much; his words, counsels, and ideas will be a source of strength to me throughout all my life. I work daily with him; at the moment we think of translating Hegel's 'Philosophy' and the 'Psyche' of Carus. He is deeply religious; frail of body, but endowed with iron will. Do try, my dear papa, to find out if there is any idea of an amnesty."

In a letter to one of my sisters I read: "I beg of you to persuade papa to find out, through Alexander Veimarn, whether any prisoners are to be pardoned on the occasion of the Coronation festivities, and whether one could do anything for Dostoevsky with Dubelt, or Prince Orlov. Is this remarkable man to languish here for ever as a private? It would be too terrible. I am sorely distressed about him; I love him like a brother, and honour him like a father."

Dostoevsky's indulgence for everyone was quite extraordinary. He found excuses for even the worst of human traits, and explained them all by defective education, the influence of environment, and inherited temperament.

"Ah, my dear Alexander Yegorovitch, God has made men so, once for all!" he used to say. He sympathized with all who were abandoned by destiny, with all the unhappy, ill, and poor. Everyone who knew him well knows of his extraordinary goodness of heart. How pathetic is his solicitude, for instance, about his brother Michael's family, about little Pasha Issayev, and many others besides!

We often spoke of politics too. Of his trial he did not care to talk, and I never alluded to it of my own accord. All I heard from him was that he had never liked Petrachevsky or approved his plans; he had always been of opinion that there should be no thought of a political upheaval in Russia at that period, and that the idea of a Russian Constitution on the model of those of West-European States was, considering the ignorance of the great mass of the people, nothing less than ridiculous.

He often thought of his comrades, Dourov, Plechtcheyev, and Grigoryev. He corresponded with none of them, though; through my hands went only his letters to his brother Michael, once in a way to Apollon Maikov, to his Aunt Kamanina, and to young Yakuchkin.

And now I must relate what I know of his epileptic fits. I never, thank God, saw one of them. But I know that they frequently recurred; his landlady usually sent for me at once. After the fits he always felt shattered

for two or three days, and his brain would not work. The first fits, as he declared, had overtaken him in Petersburg; but the malady had developed in prison. At Semipalatinsk he would have one every three months. He told me that he could always feel the fit coming on, and always experienced beforehand an indescribable sense of well-being. After each attack he presented a woefully dejected aspect.

Fyodor Dostoevsky led a more sociable life than I did; he went particularly often to the Issayevs'. He would spend whole evenings at that house, and among other things gave lessons to the only son, Pasha, an intelligent boy of eight or nine. Maria Dmitryevna Issayev was, if I am not mistaken, the daughter of a schoolmaster, and had married a junior master. How *he* had come to be in Siberia I cannot say. Issayev suffered from pulmonary consumption, and was, moreover, a great drunkard. Otherwise he was a quiet, unpretentious person. Maria Dmitryevna was about thirty, an extremely pretty blonde of middle height, very thin, passionate, and *exaltée.* Even then one often saw a hectic flush on her cheek; some years later she died of consumption. She was well read, not unaccomplished, witty and appreciative of wit, very good-hearted, and uncommonly vivacious and romantic. She took a warm interest in Fyodor Michailovitch. I do not think that she highly esteemed him; it was more that she pitied him. Possibly she was attached to him also; but in love with him she most decidedly never was. She knew that he had epileptic attacks, and that he suffered dire poverty; she often said he was "a man without a future." But Fyodor Michailovitch took her compassion and sympathy for love, and adored her with all the ardour of his youth. He would spend whole days at the Issayevs', and tried to induce me to go there too, but the family did not attract me.

In the beginning of March, Squadron-Adjutant Achmatov came to Omsk (he had done the journey from Petersburg in ten days) with news of the decease of Tsar Nicholas I. The news reached us in Semipalatinsk on March 12.

Rumours of the clemency and mildness of the new Tsar had already penetrated to Semipalatinsk. I went with Dostoevsky to the Requiem Mass. The general demeanour was grave enough, but one saw not a single tear; only some old officers and soldiers so much as sighed. Dostoevsky now began to hope for a change in his fate, for an amnesty. Most of all we discussed the question of whether the Crimean War would go on.

In the summer I went into the country with Dostoevsky to the so-called “Kasakov Gardens.” The place lay on the high bank of the Irtich. We built a bathing-box close to the bank among bush, underwood, and sedge, and began bathing as early as May. We also worked hard in the flower-garden. I can see Dostoevsky now, watering the young plants; he would take off his regimental cloak, and stand among the flower-beds in a pink cotton shirt. Round his neck hung a long chain of little blue glass beads — probably a keepsake from some fair hand. On this chain he carried a large bulbous silver watch. He was quite fascinated with gardening, and took great delight in it.

The summer was extraordinarily hot. The two daughters of Dostoevsky’s landlady in the town often helped us with our gardening. After some hours of work we would go to bathe, and then drink tea up above. We read newspapers, smoked, talked about our Petersburg friends, and abused Western Europe. The Crimean War still lasted, and we were both in a gloomy frame of mind.

I passionately loved riding; one day I succeeded in persuading Dostoevsky to try a mount, and placed one of the gentlest of my horses at his disposal; for this was the first time in his life that he had ever been on horseback. Comical and awkward as he looked in the saddle, he soon grew to like riding, and thenceforth we began to take long canters over the steppes.

Dostoevsky’s love for Mme. Issayev was by no means cooling all this time. He went to her house as often as he could, and would come back in a perfect ecstasy. He could not understand why I failed to share his enchantment.

Once he returned in utter despair and told me that Issayev was to be transferred to Kusnezk, a town five hundred versts distant from Semipalatinsk. “And she is quite calm, appears to see nothing amiss with it.... Isn’t that maddening?” he said bitterly.

Issayev was really transferred soon after that to Kusnezk. Dostoevsky’s despair Was immeasurable; he nearly went out of his mind; he regarded the impending good-bye to Maria Dmitryevna as a goodbye to life. It turned out that the Issayevs were heavily in debt; when they had sold all they had in payment of these obligations, they had nothing left over for the journey. I helped them out, and at last they started.

I shall never forget the leave-taking. Dostoevsky wept aloud like a little child. Many years afterwards in a letter to me of March 31, 1865, he alluded to that scene.

Dostoevsky and I decided to go part of the way with the Issayevs. I took him in my carriage, the Issayevs sat in an open diligence. Before the departure, they all turned in to drink a glass of wine at my house. So as to enable Dostoevsky to have one last talk undisturbed with Maria Dmitryevna before she went, I made her husband properly drunk. On the way I gave him some more champagne, thus getting him wholly into my power — then took him into my carriage, where he forthwith fell asleep. Fyodor Michailovitch went into Maria Dmitryevna's. It was a wonderful clear moonlight night in May; the air was filled with soft perfume. Thus we drove a long way. At last we were obliged to part. Those two embraced for the last time, and wiped the tears from their eyes, while I dragged the drunken and drowsy Issayev over to the carriage; he at once went off again, and never knew in the least what had been done with him. Little Pasha was fast asleep too. The diligence set off, a cloud of dust arose, already we could see it no more and the sound of the little bells was dying away in the distance; but Dostoevsky stood stark and dumb, and the tears were streaming down his cheeks. I went up to him, took his hand — he awoke from his trance and, without saying a word, got into the carriage. We did not get back till dawn. Dostoevsky did not lie down and try to sleep, but kept walking to and fro in his room, talking to himself. After that sleepless night, he went to camp for drill. Home again, he lay there the whole day, neither eating nor drinking, and smoking pipe after pipe.

Time did its work, and Dostoevsky's morbid despair came to an end. He was in constant communication with Kusnezk, but that did not always bring him happiness. Fyodor Michailovitch had gloomy forebodings. Mme. Issayev, in her letters, complained of bitter poverty, of her own ill-health and the incurable sufferings of her husband, of the joyless future which awaited her; and all this sorely depressed Dostoevsky. He failed more and more in health, became morose, irritable, and looked like the shadow of a man. He even gave up working at "The House of the Dead," which he had begun with such ardour. Only when, on warm evenings, we lay in the grass and looked up to the star-sown sky, did he know relative well-being. Such moments had a tranquillizing effect on him. We seldom spoke of religion. He was at heart religious, though he rarely entered a church; the popes, and

especially the Siberian ones, he could not stand at all. Of Christ he would speak with moving rapture. His manner in speech was most peculiar. In general he did not speak loudly, often indeed in a whisper; but when he grew enthusiastic, his voice would become louder and more sonorous; and when he was greatly excited, he would pour forth words, and enchain his hearers by the passion of his utterance. What wonderful hours I have passed with him! How much I owe to my intercourse with that greatly gifted man! In the whole of our life together there never was a single misunderstanding between us; our friendship was untroubled by one cloud. He was ten years older, and much more experienced, than I. Whenever, in my youthful crudity, I began, terrified by the repellent environment, to lose heart, Dostoevsky would always tell me to take courage, would renew my energies by his counsel and his warm sympathy. I cherish his memory especially on account of the human feeling with which he inspired me. After all this, the reader will understand that I could not be an indifferent witness of the unhappy frame of mind into which his unfortunate relation with Mme. Issayev had brought him.

I made up my mind to distract him from it in every way I could. On every opportunity, I brought him about with me, and made him known to the engineers of the lead and silver mines that lie near by. But I found it very hard to woo him from his mournful brooding. He had got superstitious all of a sudden, and would often tell me tales of somnambulists, or visit fortune-tellers; and as I, at twenty, had my own romance, he took me to an old man, who told fortunes by beans.

About this time I heard from Petersburg that the new Tsar was gracious and unusually clement, that people were feeling a new spirit in things, and expecting great reforms. This news had a most encouraging effect on Dostoevsky; he grew more cheerful, and much more rarely refused the distractions that I offered him.

One day there came tidings from Omsk that in consequence of the political tension on the southern border and the unrest among the Circassians, the Governor of Omsk was coming to Semipalatinsk, to review the troops; it was said that on this occasion he would also review the rest of the Siberian garrisons.

So Dostoevsky, like the rest, had to prepare for the possible campaign in every way; he had to get boots, a waterproof coat, linen, and other indispensable clothing — in a word, to equip himself afresh from head to

foot; for he possessed no clothes but those he had on. Again he needed money, again he racked his brains to think where to get it. These cursed money-worries never left him. From his brother Michael and his aunt he had just then had a small sum; so he could not possibly ask *them* again. Such anxieties tormented him terribly; and from Kusnezk the news grew more troubling every day. Mme. Issayev was dying of loneliness beside her sick and ever-drunken husband, and complained in all her letters of isolation and want of someone to talk to. In her more recent letters there often occurred the name of a new acquaintance, an interesting young teacher, and colleague of her husband. In each succeeding letter she spoke of him with more enthusiasm and pleasure; she praised his kindness, his fidelity, and his remarkable powers of affection. Dostoevsky was tortured by jealousy; and his dark mood had, moreover, a harmful influence on his state of health.

I was sorely distressed about him, and resolved to arrange a meeting with Maria Dmitryevna at Smiyev, half-way between Kusnezk and Semipalatinsk. I hoped that an interview might put an end to the unhappy state of affairs. But I had set myself a difficult task; how was I to take Dostoevsky from Semipalatinsk to Smiyev, without anybody's knowledge? The authorities would never permit him so long a journey. The Governor and the Colonel had already twice refused his applications for leave. It reduced itself simply to taking our chance. I wrote at once to Kusnezk and asked Maria Dmitryevna to come to Smiyev on a certain day. At the same time I spread a rumour in the town that Dostoevsky had been so run down by several violent epileptic attacks that he was obliged to keep his bed. I also informed his Colonel that he was ill, and under treatment by the military doctor, Lamotte. This Lamotte, however, was our good friend, and in our confidence. He was a Pole, formerly a student at the University of Vilna, and had been sent to Siberia for some political misdemeanour. My servants were instructed to say to everyone that Dostoevsky was lying ill in my house. The shutters were shut, "to keep the light from disturbing the invalid." Nobody was allowed to enter. Luckily for us, all the commanding officers were away, from the Military Governor downwards.

Everything was in our favour. We started about ten o'clock at night. We drove like the wind; but poor Dostoevsky thought we were going at a snail's pace, and conjured the coachman to drive still faster. We travelled all night, and reached Smiyev by morning. How terrible was Dostoevsky's

disappointment when we were told that Maria Dmitryevna was not coming! A letter from her had arrived, in which she told us that her husband was worse, and moreover that she had no money for the journey. I can't attempt to convey the despair of Dostoevsky; I had to rack my brains to tranquillize him in any sort of way.

That same day we returned, having done the 300 versts in twenty-eight hours. Once at home, we changed our clothes and instantly went to see some acquaintances. So nobody ever knew anything about our prank.

Our life went monotonously on; Dostoevsky was mostly in dejected mood, and at times worked very hard; I tried to divert him as well as I could. There was no variety at all in our way of life; we walked daily to the bank of the Irtich, worked in the garden, bathed, drank tea, and smoked on the balcony. Sometimes I would sit with a rod by the water, while Dostoevsky lay near me on the grass and read aloud; all the books I had were gone through countless times in this way. Among others he read to me, "for my instruction," Aksakov's "Angling," and "A Sportsman's Sketches." There was no library in the town. The numerous books on zoology and natural science that I had brought from Petersburg, I knew almost by heart. Dostoevsky preferred fine literature, and we eagerly devoured any new book. The monotony of our lives was redeemed, however, by the hours in which Dostoevsky's creative inspiration came over him. In such hours, he was in so uplifted a state that I too was infected by it. Even life in Semipalatinsk seemed not so bad in those moments; but alas! the mood always went as suddenly as it had come. Every unfavourable report from Kusnezk brought it to an end at one blow; Dostoevsky instantly collapsed, and was seedy and wretched again.

As I have already mentioned, he was then working at "The House of the Dead." I had the great good luck to see Dostoevsky in his inspired state, and to hear the first drafts of that incomparable work from his own lips; even now, after all these years, I recall those moments with a sense of exaltation. I was always amazed by the superb humanity that glowed in Dostoevsky's soul, despite his grievous destiny, despite the prison, the exile, the terrible malady, and the eternal want of money. Not less was I astonished by his rare guilelessness and gentleness, which never left him even in his worst hours.

[Baron Vrangel goes on to tell of the arrival of the Governor-General, Hasford, at Semipalatinsk, and of his arrogant and domineering manner.]

I was invited to lunch with the other officials at the Governor’s. I had known his wife in Petersburg.

She received me very cordially, and offered me a place by her side.

At table the Governor assumed quite a different tone, and behaved like an ordinary mortal. He seemed in good spirits, asked me about my acquaintances, and let fall the remark that he was well aware of my relations with Dostoevsky. I made up my mind to play upon his better temper, and win him to Dostoevsky’s cause. Dostoevsky had shortly before written a poem on the death of Tsar Nicholas I.; we wanted to send it through General Hasford to the widowed Tsarina. The poem began, if I remember rightly, in this way:

“As evening-red dies in the heavens,
So sank thy glorious spouse to rest...”

To my most respectfully proffered request, Hasford replied with an energetic “No,” and added: “I’ll do nothing for a whilom enemy of the Government. But if they take him up in Petersburg of their own accord, I shall put no obstacle in the way.”

The poem reached the Tsarina, nevertheless, and that in the following way: I wrote two or three times to my father and my influential relations, and begged them to discover some means of bringing it to the Tsarina’s notice. My endeavours were finally crowned with success: Prince Peter Georgyevitch von Oldenburg undertook to deliver the poem. The Prince was an impassioned musician and a bad composer; at that time he consorted much with the well-known pianist, Adolf Henselt, who had to correct his compositions. This Henselt had been for many years teaching music in our family. My relatives applied to him, and he willingly acceded to our request. The poem really did reach the Tsarina; this was told me later by a high official. Dostoevsky wrote yet another poem: “On the Accession of Alexander II.” This I later gave personally to General Eduard Ivanovitch Totleben.

Dostoevsky was now terribly affected by his malady; often he feared for his reason. He clearly perceived the aim of his life to be literary work. But so long as he was in exile, he would not be allowed to publish his works; in his despair he even begged me to let them appear under my name. That I did not agree to this proposal, flattering as it was for me, I need not say.

Literature, moreover, was his only means of earning money. He was longing at this time for a personal life; he wanted to marry, and hoped thereby to find “boundless happiness.” For many years he had suffered the direst need; who knows — if Dostoevsky had not taken that step for which his stern critics so severely blame him, one of the greatest Russian writers, the pride of Russia, might have languished to death in the deserts of Siberia.

The projected campaign never came off. The Governor-General departed, and our Semipalatinsk society sank back into its lethargy. After their urgent activities before the Governor-General, the soldiers needed some rest, and so Fyodor Michailovitch had a little spare time. We settled down again in our “Kasakov Garden,” and once more the days were all alike. From Kusnezk came the gloomiest tidings; Dostoevsky went no more to the soothsayers, bored himself to death, was always in bad spirits, and took no pleasure in work. He simply did not know how to kill the time. Then there occurred to his mind a certain Marina O., the daughter of an exiled Pole. When he used to go to the Issayevs’, he had interested himself in this girl at Maria Dmitryevna’s request, and given her some lessons.

Now he went to her father, who after some time declared himself willing to send her daily to Kasakov Gardens for instruction. Marina was then seventeen, and had grown into a blooming, pretty creature. She brought life into our house, was quite at her ease, laughing and romping, and coquetting with her teacher.

I was at that time absorbed in a love-affair, and sought diversion from it in long journeys. I was for two months absent from Semipalatinsk, and in that time covered more than 2,000 versts.

Dostoevsky stayed behind alone in the summer weather, changeable of mood, teaching Marina, working, but not over-diligently, and keeping up a lively correspondence with Maria Dmitryevna; his letters to her were as thick as exercise-books.

When, before my departure, I saw how eagerly Dostoevsky was interesting himself in the girl, who was evidently in love with her teacher, I began to hope that intercourse with Marina would woo him from his fatal passion for Maria Dmitryevna. But when I came back from my trip, I heard of a real tragedy.

On my first view of Marina after my return, I was shocked by her aspect; she was hollow-eyed, emaciated, and shrunken. And Dostoevsky told me that he had observed this alteration, but that no efforts had enabled him to

learn from her the cause of such a metamorphosis. Now, however, we both set ourselves to question the girl, and at last she poured out the following story: —

The son of the Mayor of Semipalatinsk, a youth of eighteen, had long had an eye for the pretty maiden; by the intervention of my housekeeper, he succeeded in making her his own; the scoundrel stuck to her for a while, and then deserted her. But that was not the worst. The boy's coachman, a rascally old Circassian, knew of these relations; he had often gone for the girl by his master's orders, to drive her to the rendezvous. On one such transit, he threatened that he would tell of the matter to her father and stepmother if she did not yield herself to him. The terrified Marina, who had very little force of character, consented. The coachman was now blackmailing her, and plundering her as he alone could; she hated and feared him, and implored us to save her from the clutches of this scoundrel.

The case cried to Heaven. I made use of my official powers, and expelled the Circassian from Semipalatinsk.

A year later, Marina was forced to marry, against her will, a boorish old Cossack officer, selected for her by her father. She hated him, and flirted as before with anyone she came across. The old man pestered her with his jealousy. Later on, when Dostoevsky was married, this Marina was the cause of quarrels and scenes of jealousy between him and Maria Dmitryevna; for Marina still would flirt with him, and this terribly enraged Maria Dmitryevna, who was even then marked for death.

When I returned from a trip to Barnaul, I found Dostoevsky still more broken-down, emaciated, and desperately depressed. He always got a little more cheerful in my company, but soon he was to lose heart altogether, for I had to tell him that I should be compelled to leave Semipalatinsk for ever.

[Vrangel left Semipalatinsk "for ever" in the New Year of 1855.]

The last days before my departure went by very quickly. By the end of December I was ready for the road. Dostoevsky was with me the whole day, and helped me to pack; we were both very sad. Involuntarily I asked myself if I should ever see him again.

After my departure he wrote me a succession of moving, affectionate letters, and said that he suffered frightfully from loneliness. In a letter of December 21 he writes: "I want to talk with you as we used to talk when you were everything to me — friend and brother; when we shared every thought of each other's heart... Our parting grieved me bitterly.

I was young, strong, and full of roseate hopes; while he — great, God-given writer — was losing his only friend, and had to stay behind as a common soldier, sick, forsaken, desolate — in Siberia!

The day of my departure arrived. So soon as evening fell, Adam carried out my baggage; Dostoevsky and I embraced and kissed, and promised never to forget one another. As at our first meeting, both our eyes were wet. I took my seat in the carriage, embraced my poor friend for the last time, the horses started, the troika glided away. I took a last look back; Dostoevsky's tragic figure was scarcely to be discerned in the failing light.

In February I came to Petersburg. And now began an unbroken correspondence between us. His fate was not even yet quite decided. I knew that there would be a general amnesty at the Coronation, but how far this would affect those concerned in the Petrachevsky affair was as yet uncertain. Even the highest officials of the police could give me no information. This uncertainty agitated Dostoevsky terribly. His impatience increased from hour to hour. He *would* not see that I, an insignificant little Siberian lawyer, could not possibly have any influence on the course of events, and that even my powerful relatives could do nothing to expedite his case. I did not want to pester them too incessantly, lest I should spoil all. But in his nervous excitement Dostoevsky could not understand that. I did everything that I at all could; but Count Totleben was the most urgent of any in his cause.

I had known Count Eduard Ivanovitch Totleben from my school-days; and had often met him at the house of my great-uncle Manderstyerna, then Commandant of the Petropaulovsky Fortress. He had attended the College of Engineering at the same time as Dostoevsky, and his brother Adolf had even been intimate with the latter. Directly I arrived in Petersburg I looked up Totleben, told him of Dostoevsky's insupportable lot, and begged for his support. I visited his brother Adolf also. Both showed warm sympathy for Dostoevsky, and promised me to do all they could. The name of Totleben was then in everyone's mouth, not only in Russia, but over all Europe. As a private individual, he was unusually attractive. The high honours with which he had been overwhelmed, had altered his character in no wise. He was still the same friendly, good-humoured, and humane person as when I had known him before the war. He did much for Dostoevsky by his intercession with Prince Orlov and other powerful men in Petersburg.

Dostoevsky esteemed Totleben very highly, and was much moved by his sympathy. In his letter to me of March 23, 1856, he writes: “He is through and through of knightly, noble, and generous nature. You can’t at all imagine with what joy I am following all that such splendid fellows as you and the Totleben brothers are doing for me.”

But the greatest influence on Dostoevsky’s fate was that of Prince Peter von Oldenburg. He had known me since my school-days. He was Proctor of the school, and came there nearly every day. And now, therefore, I was called upon again to turn to Adolf Henselt. I delivered to the Prince, through Henselt, the new poem that Dostoevsky had written on the Coronation. He mentions this poem in his letter to me of May 23, 1856:

“It would be, I think, clumsy to try unofficially for permission to publish my works, unless I offer a poem at the same time. Read the enclosed, then; paraphrase it, and try to bring it under the monarch’s notice in some way or other.”

I did all I could. The Prince gave the poem to the Tsarina Maria Alexandrovna; whether it ever reached the Tsar’s hands, I know not.

At the same time Dostoevsky informed me that he was going to send me an article, “Letters upon Art,” that I might deliver it to the President of the Academy, the Grand-Duchess Maria Nikolayevna. I never received that article.

In the same letter he writes of another article, which he had begun while we were still together — one “On Russia.” I never received that one, either.

All Dostoevsky’s thoughts were now set on one thing — whether, in case of his pardon, he would be permitted to publish his works. Not only his passion for literary activity, but also his great need, obliged him to strive for recognition in the highest quarters. He then required much money, and had none at all. He had numerous debts, and only that one hope — of earning something by means of the many stories and novels with which his brain was always filled.

In January, 1860, Dostoevsky at last got permission to settle in Petersburg. As the climate there was harmful to his wife’s health, he left her behind in Moscow, and came alone to Petersburg. He took rooms in Gorochovoya Street. We saw one another very often, but only in flying visits, for we were both carried away by the whirl of Petersburg life. Moreover, I was then engaged to be married, and spent all my free time

with my betrothed, while Dostoevsky was working day and night. So our short interviews were chiefly taken up with loving memories of the past.

On one of our meetings we spoke of a forthcoming public event in Petersburg. I intended to make a speech “upon the liberties and rights accorded by the Tsarina Catherine II. to the Russian nobility.” Dostoevsky instantly sketched a brilliant discourse for me; but at the meeting I controlled myself, and did not deliver it.

I was once present at a public reading by Dostoevsky. He read Gogol’s “Revisor.” I already knew his masterly art in delivery. The room was packed. Dostoevsky’s appearance and his reading were greeted with thunders of applause. But I was not satisfied with his performance that evening; I saw that he was not in the right mood; his voice sounded dead, and was sometimes barely audible. After the reading, he sought me out among the audience, and told me that he had *not* been in the mood; but that the organizer of the evening had urged him not to abandon the reading, and he never could say “No “to anyone. If I am not mistaken, that was his first reading after his return from banishment.

When in 1865 I returned to Copenhagen from my summer leave, I found a despairing letter of Dostoevsky’s from Wiesbaden. He wrote that he had gambled away all his money, and was in a desperate situation — he had not a penny left, and creditors were pressing him on every side. This craze of Dostoevsky’s for play was somewhat surprising to me.

In Siberia, where card-playing is so universal, he had never touched a card. Probably his passionate nature and shattered nerves needed the violent emotions which gambling afforded him. At all events, now I had to help my old friend out of his fix; I sent him some money, though I had not a great deal myself. With it I wrote, and said that he must positively come to me at Copenhagen.

He did actually come to Copenhagen on October, and stayed a week with me. He extraordinarily pleased my wife, and was much devoted to the two children. I thought him thin and altered. Our meeting gave us both great joy; we refreshed old memories, of course, recalled the “Kasakov Gardens,” our love affairs, etc. We spoke much of his first wife, Maria Dmitryevna, and of the fair Marina, of whom she had been so terribly jealous.

In this intimate talk we touched almost inevitably on his family-life, and the strange relation (to this day a mystery for me) between him and his first

wife. In one of his earlier letters, he wrote to me: “We were both thoroughly unhappy, but could not cease from loving one another; the more wretched we were, the more we clung together.” At the meeting in Copenhagen he confirmed that saying. I had never believed that Dostoevsky would find happiness in that marriage. Every kind of torment — the whole grievous burden that he fastened on himself by that connection — robbed him of all peace of mind for long and long.... At Semipalatinsk I had often tried to reason him out of his morbid passion for Maria Dmitryevna, but he would listen to nothing. Maria Dmitryevna was invested with a radiant halo in his eyes.

Among other things, he expounded his views on women in general, and gave me corresponding advice.

Once, in talking of our Siberian acquaintances, I mentioned a frivolous and insidious lady of Semipalatinsk; Dostoevsky thereupon remarked: “We should be eternally grateful to a woman whom we have loved, for every day and hour of joy which she has given us. We may not demand from her that she think of us only all her life long; that is ugly egoism, which we should subdue in ourselves.”

As I have said, Dostoevsky looked very ill during his stay at Copenhagen; before that, he had complained in his letters of his state of health: “Besides the epilepsy, I am a martyr to violent fever; every night I have shivering fits and fever, and lose ground day by day.”

Even a perfectly sound man could not have borne the harassed life that Dostoevsky was then leading! Eternally in want of money, anxious not only for his own family, but also for that of his brother Michael, pursued by creditors, in constant fear of being clapped in prison, he knew no rest day nor night; by day he was running from one newspaper-office to the other, and by night he was writing, as he said himself, “to order, under the lash.” Naturally all that was bound to have a hurtful effect on his health as well as his character.

He told me of one incident, among others, which will show how nervous and irritable he sometimes was. When in Paris, it had occurred to him to pay a visit to Rome. To do this, he had to have his passport signed by the Papal Nuncio in Paris. Dostoevsky went twice to the Nuncio’s, but on neither occasion found him. When he went for the third time, he was received by a young abbé, who asked him to wait a while, as Monsignor was just breakfasting, and would take his coffee first. Dostoevsky leaped up

as though gone suddenly crazy, and cried: "*Dites à votre Monseigneur, que je crache dans son café — qu'il me signe mon passeport, ou je me précipiterai chez lui avec scandale!*" The young abbé stared at him in consternation; he rushed into his chief's apartment, came back with another abbé, and requested our Fyodor Michailovitch to clear out at once, and let the porter of his hotel come and see about the passport.

"Yes — I was too hot-tempered that time!" concluded Dostoevsky, with a shy smile. But evidently this irritability long endured; for in one of his later letters he writes: "I have become frightfully nervous and irritable; my character gets worse every day, and I can't imagine what it will end in."

FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF SOPHIE KOVALEVSKY 1866

ANYUTA was so delighted by her first literary success that she at once began another story. The hero of this tale was a young man who had been brought up far away from home in a monastery by his uncle, a monk. The hero, whose name was Michael, had some resemblance to Alyosha in the “Brothers Karamazov.” When I read that novel, some years afterwards, I was instantly struck by the resemblance; I spoke of it to Dostoevsky, whom I very often met at that time.

“I believe you are right!” said he, striking his forehead. “But I give you my word of honour that I never once thought of this Michael, when I created my Alyosha.... Perhaps he was unconsciously in my memory,” he added, after a pause.

When this second story of Anyuta’s appeared in print, the catastrophe arrived; a letter of Dostoevsky’s fell into my father’s hands, and there was a great fuss. We had hardly returned to Petersburg from the country before Anyuta wrote to Dostoevsky asking him to call. And he came — on the very day she fixed. I can still remember with what feverish impatience we awaited his arrival, and how, for a whole hour before he could be expected, we jumped at every tingle of the bell. But this first visit of Dostoevsky’s was a complete failure.

Our father had a great prejudice against all literary men. It is true that he allowed my sister to make acquaintance with Dostoevsky, but it was not without secret anxiety. When we were going back to town (he stayed in the country), he said, on parting, to my mother:

“Do reflect, Lisa, on the great responsibility you are undertaking. Dostoevsky does not belong to our circles. What do we know of him, after all? Only that he is a journalist, and has been in prison. A nice recommendation! We shall have to be very cautious about him.”

Father especially enjoined on mother that she should never leave Anyuta a moment alone with Dostoevsky. I begged for permission to be present at this first meeting. Our two old German aunts came into the room every minute on one pretext or another, and stared at our guest as if he were some strange animal; finally they both sat down on the sofa and stayed there till he went.

Anyuta was furious that her first meeting with Dostoevsky, on which she had set such high hopes, should be taking place in such circumstances; she looked cross, and would not speak. Dostoevsky too was very uncomfortable in the presence of the two old ladies. It was clear that he was sharply annoyed. He looked ill and old that day, as he always did when he was in a bad temper. He pulled nervously at his short blonde beard, bit his moustache, and made dreadful faces.

Mama did her very best to get up an interesting conversation. With the friendliest conventional smile on her lips, but evidently in the greatest perplexity, she tried to say all sorts of pleasant and flattering things to him, and to ask him intelligent questions.

Dostoevsky answered monosyllabically and discourteously. At last Mama was *au bout de ses ressources*, and said no more. Dostoevsky sat with us half-an-hour; then he took his hat, bowed hastily and awkwardly to us all, but shook hands with none of us — and went.

As soon as he was gone, Anyuta ran to her room, threw herself on the bed, and began to cry. “You always spoil everything!” she said, over and over again.

Yet, some days later, Dostoevsky reappeared, and his visit this time was very opportune, for Mama and the aunts were out, and only my sister and I at home. He thawed at once. He took Anyuta by the hand, sat down beside her on the divan and instantly they began to talk as if they were two old friends. The conversation did not, as on his first visit, drag itself with difficulty from one uninteresting theme to another. Anyuta and he had to make the best use of their time, and say as much as they possibly could to one another, so on they gabbled, joked, and laughed.

I was sitting in the same room, but taking no part in their conversation; I stared unwinkingly at Dostoevsky, and devoured every single word he said. This time he looked different from what he had at his first visit — young, frank, clever, and attractive. ‘ “Can he really be forty-three years old?” thought I.

“Can he really be three-and-a-half times as old as I am, and twice as old as Anyuta? They say he’s a great writer, and yet one can talk to him like a chum!” And all at once he seemed to me such a dear. Three hours went by in no time. Suddenly there was a noise in the ante-room: Mama had come back from town. She did not know that Dostoevsky was there, and came in with her hat on, laden with parcels.

When she saw Dostoevsky with us, she was surprised and a little alarmed. “What would my husband say?” was probably her first thought. We rushed to meet her, and when she saw we were in such high spirits, *she* thawed in her turn, and asked Dostoevsky to stay for lunch.

From that day forward he came to-our house as a friend. As our stay in Petersburg was not to be very long, he came frequently, say three or four times in the week.

It was particularly agreeable when he came on evenings when we had no other visitors. On such occasions he was remarkably vivacious and interesting. Fyodor Michailovitch did not like general conversation; he could only talk as a monologuist, and even then only when all those present were sympathetic to him, and prepared to listen with eager attention. When this condition was fulfilled, he talked most beautifully — eloquent and convincing as no one else could be.

Often he told us the story of the novels he was planning, often episodes and scenes of his own life.

I can still remember clearly how, for example, he described the moment when he, condemned to death, stood with eyes blindfolded before the company of soldiers, and waited for the word “Fire!” and how instead there came the beating of drums, and they heard that they were pardoned.

Dostoevsky was often very realistic in his conversation, and quite forgot that young girls were listening, I suppose. Our mother used sometimes to be terrified. In this way he once told us a scene out of a novel he had planned in his youth. The hero was a landed proprietor of middle age, highly educated and refined; he often went abroad, read deep books, and bought pictures and engravings. In his youth he had been very wild indeed, but had grown more staid with years; by this time he had a wife and children, and was universally respected. Well, one morning he wakes very early; the sun is shining into his bedroom; everything about him is very dainty, pretty, and comfortable. He is penetrated with a sense of well-being. Thorough sybarite that he is, he takes care not to awake completely, so as not to destroy this delightful state of almost vegetable felicity. On the boundary between sleep and waking, he enjoys in spirit a series of agreeable impressions from his latest trip abroad. He thinks of the wonderful light on the naked shoulders of a St. Cecilia in one of the galleries. Then some fine passages from a book called “Of the Beauty and Harmony of the Universe” come into his mind. But in the midst of these pleasant dreams and sensations he suddenly

becomes aware of a peculiar feeling of discomfort, such as that from an internal ache or a mysterious disturbance. Very much like what a man experiences who has an old wound, from which the bullet has not been extracted; in the same way, *he* has been feeling perfectly at ease when suddenly the old wound begins to smart. And now our landed proprietor speculates on what this may portend. He has no ailment, he knows of no trouble, yet here he is, utterly wretched. But there must be something to account for it, and he urges his consciousness to the utmost.... And suddenly it *does* come to him, and he experiences it all as vividly, as tangibly — and with what horror in every atom of his being! — as if it had happened yesterday instead of twenty years ago. Yet for all that twenty years it has not troubled him.

What he remembers is how once, after a night of debauchery, egged on by drunken companions, he had forced a little girl of ten years old.

When Dostoevsky uttered those words, my mother flung her hands above her head, and cried out in terror: “Fyodor Michailovitch! For pity’s sake! The children are listening!”

At that time I had no idea what Dostoevsky was talking about, but from my mother’s horror I concluded that it must be something frightful.

Mama and Dostoevsky became good friends, all the same. She was very fond of him, though he gave her much to bear.

Before we left Petersburg Mama decided to have a farewell evening-party, and invite all our acquaintances. Of course, Dostoevsky was asked. At first he refused, but unluckily Mama succeeded in persuading him to come.

The evening was unusually dull. The guests took not the slightest interest in one another; but as well-bred people, for whom such dull evenings form an essential part of existence, they bore their tedium stoically.

One can easily divine how poor Dostoevsky felt in such company! In his personality and appearance he was frightfully alien to everybody else. He had gone so far in self-immolation as to put on a dress-coat; and this dress-coat, which fitted very badly and made him uncomfortable, ruined his temper for the whole evening. Like all neurotic people, he was very shy in the company of strangers, and it was clear that his ill-temper was to be displayed on the earliest possible opportunity.

My mother hastened to present him to the other guests; instead of a courteous acknowledgment, he muttered something inarticulate, and turned

his back at once. But the worst was that he monopolized Anyuta from the very beginning. He withdrew with her into a corner of the room, plainly intending to keep her there all the time. That was, of course, contrary to all etiquette; and he behaved to her, moreover, with anything but drawing-room manners — holding her hand and whispering in her ear. Anyuta was much embarrassed, and Mama was vexed to death. At first she tried to convey to him delicately how unsuitable his conduct was. She passed the couple as if by chance, and called my sister, as if to send her into the other room on some message. Anyuta tried to get up and go, but Dostoevsky coolly held her back, and said: “No, wait — I haven’t finished yet.” But with that my mother’s patience came to an end.

“Excuse me, Fyodor Michailovitch; she must, as daughter of the house, attend to the other guests,” said she indignantly, leading my sister away with her.

Dostoevsky was furious; he stayed silently sitting in his corner, and casting malignant looks on every side.

Among the guests was one who displeased him extraordinarily from the first moment. This was a distant relative of ours, a young German, an officer in one of the Guards’ regiments.

Handsome, tall, and self-satisfied, this personage excited his hostility. The young man was sitting, effectively posed, in a comfortable chair, and displaying his slender ankles, clad in close-fitting silk socks. He bent gaily towards my sister, and evidently said something very funny to her. Anyuta, who had not yet recovered from the scene between Dostoevsky and my mother, heard him with a somewhat stereotyped smile—” the smile of a gentle angel,” as our English governess laughingly described it.

As Dostoevsky watched the pair, a veritable romance formed itself in his brain: Anyuta hates and scorns the German, self-satisfied fop that he is, but her parents mean to marry her to him. The whole party has of course been got up to this end alone!

He believed at once in this hypothesis, and got into a fury. That winter, people were talking much of a book by an English clergyman: “Parallels between Protestantism and [Greek] Orthodoxy.” In our Russo-German circle it was exciting great interest, and the conversation grew more animated as soon as this book was mentioned. Mama, who was herself a Protestant, remarked that Protestantism had one advantage over Orthodoxy, and that was that Protestants were more conversant with the Bible.

“And was the Bible written for fashionable ladies?” Dostoevsky suddenly broke out, having sat stubbornly silent till now. “For in the Bible it is written, among other things: ‘And God made them male and female.’ And again: ‘Therefore shall a woman forsake her father and mother, and shall cleave unto her husband.’ That was Christ’s conception of marriage! What have *our* mothers to say to it, they who think only of how they may get rid of their daughters to the best advantage?”

Dostoevsky said these words with uncommon pathos. The effect was stupendous. All our well-bred Germans were confounded, and stared with all their eyes. Not for some moments did they realize how unsuitable Dostoevsky’s speech had been, and then they all began to talk at once, so as to obliterate the unfortunate impression.

Dostoevsky cast another malignant look on all, retired to his corner, and spoke not a word for the rest of the evening.

When he came next day, Mama tried by a cool reception to give him to understand that she felt herself to be offended. But in her great good-nature she never could long be angry with anyone, and so they soon became friends again.

But, on the other hand, the relations between Dostoevsky and Anyuta were completely altered from that evening. He lost all influence over her, at that one blow; she now continually took it into her head to contradict and tease him. He showed, on his side, great irritation and intolerance; he would demand an account from her of every day on which he had not been with us, and displayed much hostility to everybody whom she at all liked. He did not visit us less frequently, indeed he came oftener even than before, and stayed longer every time, though he never ceased quarrelling with my sister during his whole visit.

In the beginning of their intimacy, Anyuta used to refuse many invitations and gaieties if she knew Dostoevsky was coming on those days. Now that, too, was quite changed. When he came to us on an evening when we had other visitors, Anyuta calmly devoted herself to the other guests. And if she were invited anywhere on one of “his” evenings, she would write and put him off.

The next day, Dostoevsky was always in a bad temper. Anyuta would pretend not to notice, and take a piece of sewing. This would make him worse; he would go into a corner and sit silent. My sister would say nothing either.

“Do stop sewing!” says Dostoevsky at last, and takes her work away from her.

My sister crosses her arms on her breast, and says not a word.

“Where were you last night?” asks Dostoevsky crossly.

“At a ball,” says my sister carelessly.

“And did you dance?”

“Naturally.”

“With your cousin?”

“With him and others.”

“And that amuses you?’.’ Dostoevsky further inquires.

Anyuta shrugs.

“For want of anything better, it does,” she answers, and begins to sew again.

Dostoevsky regards her in silence for some moments.

“You are a shallow, silly creature,” he suddenly declares.

That was the tone of most of their conversations. They had their bitterest quarrels when the subject of Nihilism came up. The debates on this theme would often last till late into the night; and each would express far extremer views than either held.

“The whole younger generation is stupid and uncultured!” Dostoevsky was wont to say. “A pair of country boots is more precious to them than the whole of Pushkin.”

“Pushkin *is* out-of-date,” my sister would calmly maintain. She knew that nothing put him out so thoroughly as a disrespectful remark about Pushkin.

Dostoevsky would often spring up in a rage, seize his hat, and depart with a solemn asseveration that he did not want to have anything more to do with a Nihilist, and would never again cross our threshold. But next evening he would come again, as if nothing had happened.

The more strained became the relations between Dostoevsky and my sister, the more friendly did I grow with him. I was more fascinated by him every day, and more subject to his influence. Of course he could see how I adored him, and he evidently liked it. He often told my sister that she should take example by me.

When Dostoevsky uttered some profound idea or some clever paradox, my sister frequently chose to pretend that she did not understand him; I

would be quite carried away, while she, to torment him, would make some insipid rejoinder.

“You are a poor, insignificant thing!” Dostoevsky would then exclaim. “How different your sister is! She is still a child, but how wonderfully she understands me! *Hers* is a delicate, sensitive soul!”

I would get crimson all over with delight; I would gladly have let myself be cut in pieces to show how well I understood him. In the depths of my soul I was well pleased with this change in the relation of Dostoevsky to my sister; but I was ashamed of the feeling. I accused myself of treachery to my sister, and took great pains to make up for my secret sin by being very nice to her. But despite all pangs of conscience, I was always glad of every fresh quarrel between Dostoevsky and Anyuta. He called me his friend, and I, in my simplicity, believed that I — was really dearer to him than my sister, and understood him better. Even my looks he praised to the detriment of hers.

[Finally Dostoevsky made a proposal of marriage to the elder sister, but it was not accepted.]

Dostoevsky came once more, to take leave. He stayed only a short time, but was simple and friendly in his manner to Anyuta; they promised to write to one another. He said good-bye to me very tenderly. He even kissed me, but had no idea, I am sure, of the feelings that he had awakened in me.

After about six months, Dostoevsky wrote to my sister to say that he had learned to know and love a wonderful girl, who had consented to marry him. This girl, Anna Grigorevna Snitkin, became later his second wife. “My word of honour: if anyone had prophesied this to me half a year ago, I should not have believed it!” remarks Dostoevsky naïvely at the end of this letter.

Dostoevsky in the Judgment of his Contemporaries

I. R. P. Pobyedonoszev to I. S. Aksakov

“*January* 30, 1881.

MY DEAR FRIEND IVAN SERGEYEVITCH!

“When you wrote to me that you felt so sick at heart, you as yet knew nothing of Dostoevsky’s death. But I stand by his bier, and my heart is doubly sick. I knew this man well. I had reserved for him my Saturday evenings, and he often came to talk alone with me. I even furnished him with many hints for his ‘Zosima’; we talked of that often and intimately. The time when he was editing *Grajdanin* was that of our intimacy. I pitied him in his desperate state, and worked together with him through a whole summer; in such a way we quickly made friends. In these times, he was the very man for our cause. He cannot be replaced, for he stood entirely alone....”

II. I. S. Aksakov to R. P. Pobyedonoszev

“Moscow,
“*February*, 1881.

“The death of Dostoevsky is a real chastisement from God. “Now for the first time it is fully felt what value he had as a teacher of the younger generation. Even those who did not know him personally must perceive it. Those noble ideals which many a youth cherishes unconsciously in his soul, found in him an upholder. For ‘ injured and insulted’ is, in very truth, only the religious and moral sense of the Russian intelligence....”

III. TURGENEV ON DOSTOEVSKY

Letter to Slutchevsky of December 26, 1861

“My Bazarov, or to speak more precisely, my intentions, only two men have comprehended: Dostoevsky and Botkin.”

Letter to Dostoevsky of December 26, 1861

“I am reading with great enjoyment your ‘ House of the Dead.’ The description of the *bath* is worthy of a Dante; in several figures (for example, in Petrov) there are many most authentic psychological subtleties. I am truly rejoiced at the success of your journal, and repeat that I shall always be glad to give it a helping hand.”

Letter to Polonsky of April 24, 1871

“I am told that Dostoevsky has immortalized me in his novel; I don’t mind, if he likes to do that sort of thing....”

[Turgenev goes on to tell of his meeting with Dostoevsky at Baden-Baden, and says more than once that he considers Dostoevsky to be mad.]

Letter to Mme. Milyutin of December 3, 1872

“MY DEAR MARIA AGGEYEVNA,

“I thank you from my heart for the friendly feelings which dictated your last letter. I was not in the least surprised by Dostoevsky’s proceeding: he began to hate me when we were both young and at the commencement of our literary activities, although I did nothing to call forth that hatred. But unreasoned passions are, it is said, the strongest and most persistent of all. Dostoevsky has permitted himself something worse than a parody: he has shown me, under the mask of Karmasinov, as a secret partisan of Netchayev. It is worthy of remark that he selected for this parody the only story which I published in the journal at one time conducted by him — a story for which he overwhelmed me in his letters with thanks and praise. I still have his letters. It would certainly be rather amusing to make them public now. But he knows that I shall never do so.

I am sorry that he should use his undoubtedly great talent for the satisfaction of such unlovely feelings; evidently he does not himself prize

his gifts very highly, since he degrades them to a pamphlet."

Letter to Saltykov of November 25, 1875

"The theme of Goncourt's novel is very daring. As he says himself, the book is the fruit of a close scientific study of the life of prostitutes. But at all events, it's something very different from Dostoevsky's 'Hobbledehoy.' I glanced at that chaos in the last number of the *Otetschestvennia Zapiski;* my God, what a welter of hospital stinks! What a vain and incomprehensible stuttering; what a psychological rubbish-heap!..."

Letter to Saltykov of September 24, 1882

"I also read Michailovsky's article on Dostoevsky. He has rightly divined the characteristic mark of Dostoevsky's creative work. In French literature, too, there was a like case — namely, the famous Marquis de Sade. This latter depicts in his 'Tourments et Supplices' the sensual pleasure afforded by the infliction of refined tortures. And Dostoevsky, in one of his books, enlarges on the same sort of delights.... And when one thinks that all the Russian Bishops said masses for the soul of *this* Marquis de Sade, and even preached sermons about his great love for all mankind! Truly, we live in a remarkable age."

IV. LEO TOLSTOY ON DOSTOEVSKY

From Tolstoy's Letters to A. N. Strachov
"*September 26,* 1880.

' Lately I was ill, and read Dostoevsky's 'House of the Dead.' I have read much, and forgotten much; but I do not know in all modern literature, Pushkin included, any better book. Not the manner, but the point of view, is what is so remarkable; it is so frank, natural, and Christ-like. A fine, edifying book. Yesterday, when I read it, I knew such pleasure as I have not had for a long time. If you see Dostoevsky, tell him that I love him."

At the beginning of 1881:

“I wish I had the power to say all that I think of Dostoevsky! When you inscribed your thoughts, you partly expressed mine. I never saw the man, had no sort of direct relations with him; but when he died, I suddenly realized that he had been to me the most precious, the dearest, and the most necessary of beings. It never even entered my head to compare myself with him. Everything that he wrote (I mean only the good, the true things) was such that the more he did like that, the more I rejoiced. Artistic accomplishment and intellect can arouse my envy; but a work from the heart — only joy. I always regarded him as my friend, and reckoned most confidently on seeing him at some time. And suddenly I read that he is dead. At first I was utterly confounded, and when later I realized how I had valued him, I began to weep — I am weeping even now. Only a few days before his death, I had read with emotion and delight his ‘ Injury and Insult.’”

The Criticism



ON RUSSIAN NOVELISTS by William Lyon Phelps



This essay on Dostoyevsky's life and work is taken from Phelps' famous collection of essays on Russian writers, first published in 1911. Phelps was an American critic, whose scholarly works explored many areas of world literature.



Dr William Lyon Phelps, 1922

DOSTOEVSKI

THE life of Dostoevski contrasts harshly with the luxurious ease and steady level seen in the outward existence of his two great contemporaries, Turgenev and Tolstoi. From beginning to end he lived in the very heart of storms, in the midst of mortal coil. He was often as poor as a rat; he suffered from a horrible disease; he was sick and in prison, and no one visited him; he knew the bitterness of death. Such a man's testimony as to the value of life is worth attention; he was a faithful witness, and we know that his testimony is true.

Fedor Mikhailovich Dostoevski was born on the 30 October 1821, at Moscow. His father was a poor surgeon, and his mother the daughter of a mercantile man. He was acquainted with grief from the start, being born in a hospital. There were five children, and they very soon discovered the exact meaning of such words as hunger and cold. Poverty in early years sometimes makes men rather close and miserly in middle age, as it certainly did in the case of Ibsen, who seemed to think that charity began and ended at home. Not so Dostoevski: he was often victimised, he gave freely and impulsively, and was chronically in debt. He had about as much business instinct as a prize-fighter or an opera singer. As Merezhkovski puts it: "This victim of poverty dealt with money as if he held it not an evil, but utter rubbish. Dostoevski thinks he loves money, but money flees him. Tolstoi thinks he hates money, but money loves him, and accumulates about him. The one, dreaming all his life of wealth, lived, and but for his wife's business qualities would have died, a beggar. The other, all his life dreaming and preaching of poverty, not only has not given away, but has greatly multiplied his very substantial possessions." In order to make an impressive contrast, the Russian critic is here unfair to Tolstoi, but there is perhaps some truth in the Tolstoi paradox. No wonder Dostoevski loved children, for he was himself a great child.

He was brought up on the Bible and the Christian religion. The teachings of the New Testament were with him almost innate ideas. Thus, although his parents could not give him wealth, or ease, or comfort, or health, they gave him something better than all four put together.

When he was twenty-seven years old, having impulsively expressed revolutionary opinions at a Radical Club to which he belonged, he was

arrested with a number of his mates, and after an imprisonment of some months, he was led out on the 22 December 1849, with twenty-one companions, to the scaffold. He passed through all the horror of dying, for visible preparations had been made for the execution, and he was certain that in a moment he would cease to live. Then came the news that the Tsar had commuted the sentence to hard labour; this saved their lives, but one of the sufferers had become insane.

Then came four years in the Siberian prison, followed by a few years of enforced military service. His health actually grew better under the cruel régime of the prison, which is not difficult to understand, for even a cruel régime is better than none at all, and Dostoevski never had the slightest notion of how to take care of himself. At what time his epilepsy began is obscure, but this dreadful disease faithfully and frequently visited him during his whole adult life. From a curious hint that he once let fall, reënforced by the manner in which the poor epileptic in *The Karamazov Brothers* acquired the falling sickness, we cannot help thinking that its origin came from a blow given in anger by his father.

Dostoevski was enormously interested in his disease, studied its symptoms carefully, one might say eagerly, and gave to his friends minute accounts of exactly how he felt before and after the convulsions, which tally precisely with the vivid descriptions written out in his novels. This illness coloured his whole life, profoundly affected his character, and gave a feverish and hysterical tone to his books.

Dostoevski had a tremendous capacity for enthusiasm. As a boy, he was terribly shaken by the death of Pushkin, and he never lost his admiration for the founder of Russian literature. He read the great classics of antiquity and of modern Europe with wild excitement, and wrote burning eulogies in letters to his friends. The flame of his literary ambition was not quenched by the most abject poverty, nor by the death of those whom he loved most intensely. After his first wife died, he suffered agonies of grief, accentuated by wretched health, public neglect, and total lack of financial resources. But chill penury could not repress his noble rage. He was always planning and writing new novels, even when he had no place to lay his head. And the bodily distress of poverty did not cut him nearly so sharply as its shame. His letters prove clearly that at times he suffered in the same way as the pitiable hero of *Poor Folk.* That book was indeed a prophecy of the author’s own life.

It is impossible to exaggerate the difficulties under which he wrote his greatest novels. His wife and children were literally starving. He could not get money, and was continually harassed by creditors. During part of the time, while writing in the midst of hunger and freezing cold, he had an epileptic attack every ten days. His comment on all this is, “I am only preparing to live,” which is as heroic as Paul Jones’s shout, “I have not yet begun to fight.”

In 1880 a monument to Pushkin was unveiled, and the greatest Russian authors were invited to speak at the ceremony. This was the occasion where Turgenev vainly tried to persuade Tolstoi to appear and participate. Dostoevski paid his youthful debt to the ever living poet in a magnificent manner. He made a wonderful oration on Russian literature and the future of the Russian people, an address that thrilled the hearts of his hearers, and inspired his countrymen everywhere. On the 28 January 1881, he died, and forty thousand mourners saw his body committed to the earth.

Much as I admire the brilliant Russian critic, Merezhkovski, I cannot understand his statement that Dostoevski “drew little on his personal experiences, had little self-consciousness, complained of no one.” His novels are filled with his personal experiences, he had an almost abnormal self-consciousness, and he bitterly complained that Turgenev, who did not need the money, received much more for his work than he. Dostoevski’s inequalities as a writer are so great that it is no wonder he has been condemned by some critics as a mere journalistic maker of melodrama, while others have exhausted their entire stock of adjectives in his exaltation. His most ardent admirer at this moment is Mr. Baring, who is at the same time animated by a strange jealousy of Turgenev’s fame, and seems to think it necessary to belittle the author of *Fathers and Children* in order to magnify the author of *Crime and Punishment.* This seems idle; Turgenev and Dostoevski were geniuses of a totally different order, and we ought to rejoice in the greatness of each man, just as we do in the greatness of those two entirely dissimilar poets, Tennyson and Browning. Much of Mr. Baring’s language is an echo of Merezhkovski; but this Russian critic, while loving Dostoevski more than Turgenev, was not at all blind to the latter’s supreme qualities. Listen to Mr. Baring: —

“He possesses a certain quality which is different in kind from those of any other writer, a power of seeming to get nearer to the unknown, to what lies beyond the flesh, which is perhaps the secret of his amazing strength;

and, besides this, he has certain great qualities which other writers, and notably other Russian writers, possess also; but he has them in so far higher a degree that when seen with other writers he annihilates them. The combination of this difference in kind and this difference in degree makes something so strong and so tremendous, that it is not to be wondered at when we find many critics saying that Dostoevski is not only the greatest of all Russian writers, but one of the greatest writers that the world has ever seen. I am not exaggerating when I say that such views are held; for instance, Professor Brückner, a most level-headed critic, in his learned and exhaustive survey of Russian literature, says that it is not in *Faust,* but rather in *Crime and Punishment,* that the whole grief of mankind takes hold of us.

"Even making allowance for the enthusiasm of his admirers, it is true to say that almost any Russian judge of literature at the present day would place Dostoevski as being equal to Tolstoi and immeasurably above Turgenev; in fact, the ordinary Russian critic at the present day no more dreams of comparing Turgenev with Dostoevski, than it would occur to an Englishman to compare Charlotte Yonge with Charlotte Brontë."

This last sentence shows the real animus against Turgenev that obsesses Mr. Baring's mind; once more the reader queries, Suppose Dostoevski be all that Mr. Baring claims for him, why is it necessary to attack Turgenev? Is there not room in Russian literature for both men? But as Mr. Baring has appealed to Russian criticism, it is only fair to quote one Russian critic of good standing, Kropotkin. He says: —

"Dostoevski is still very much read in Russia; and when, some twenty years ago, his novels were first translated into French, German, and English, they were received as a revelation. He was praised as one of the greatest writers of our own time, and as undoubtedly the one who 'had best expressed the mystic Slavonic soul' — whatever that expression may mean! Turgenev was eclipsed by Dostoevski, and Tolstoi was forgotten for a time. There was, of course, a great deal of hysterical exaggeration in all this, and at the present time sound literary critics do not venture to indulge in such praises. The fact is, that there is certainly a great deal of power in whatever Dostoevski wrote: his powers of creation suggest those of Hoffmann; and his sympathy with the most down-trodden and down-cast products of the civilisation of our large towns is so deep that it carries away the most indifferent reader and exercises a most powerful impression in the right

direction upon young readers. His analysis of the most varied specimens of incipient psychical disease is said to be thoroughly correct. But with all that, the artistic qualities of his novels are incomparably below those of any one of the great Russian masters Tolstoi, Turgenev, or Goncharov. Pages of consummate realism are interwoven with the most fantastical incidents worthy only of the most incorrigible romantics. Scenes of a thrilling interest are interrupted in order to introduce a score of pages of the most unnatural theoretical discussions. Besides, the author is in such a hurry that he seems never to have had the time himself to read over his novels before sending them to the printer. And, worst of all, every one of the heroes of Dostoevski, especially in his novels of the later period, is a person suffering from some psychical disease or from moral perversion. As a result, while one may read some of the novels of Dostoevski with the greatest interest, one is never tempted to re-read them, as one re-reads the novels of Tolstoi and Turgenev, and even those of many secondary novel writers; and the present writer must confess that he had the greatest pain lately in reading through, for instance, *The Brothers Karamazov,* and never could pull himself through such a novel as *The Idiot.* However, one pardons Dostoevski everything, because when he speaks of the ill-treated and the forgotten children of our town civilisation he becomes truly great through his wide, infinite love of mankind — of man, even in his worst manifestations."

Mr. Baring's book was published in 1910, Kropotkin's in 1905, which seems to make Mr. Baring's attitude point to the past, rather than to the future. Kropotkin seems to imply that the wave of enthusiasm for Dostoevski is a phase that has already passed, rather than a new and increasing demonstration, as Mr. Baring would have us believe.

Dostoevski's first book, *Poor Folk*, appeared when he was only twenty-five years old: it made an instant success, and gave the young author an enviable reputation. The manuscript was given by a friend to the poet Nekrassov. Kropotkin says that Dostoevski "had inwardly doubted whether the novel would even be read by the editor. He was living then in a poor, miserable room, and was fast asleep when at four o'clock in the morning Nekrassov and Grigorovich knocked at his door. They threw themselves on Dostoevski's neck, congratulating him with tears in their eyes. Nekrassov and his friend had begun to read the novel late in the evening; they could not stop reading till they came to the end, and they were both so deeply impressed by it that they could not help going on this nocturnal expedition

to see the author and tell him what they felt. A few days later, Dostoevski was introduced to the great critic of the time, Bielinski, and from him he received the same warm reception. As to the reading public, the novel produced quite a sensation."

The story *Poor Folk* is told in the highly artificial form of letters, but is redeemed by its simplicity and deep tenderness. Probably no man ever lived who had a bigger or warmer heart than Dostoevski, and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. All the great qualities of the mature man are in this slender volume: the wideness of his mercy, the great deeps of his pity, the boundlessness of his sympathy, and his amazing spiritual force. If ever there was a person who would forgive any human being anything seventy times seven, that individual was Dostoevski. He never had to learn the lesson of brotherly love by long years of experience: the mystery of the Gospel, hidden from the wise and prudent, was revealed to him as a babe. The language of these letters is so simple that a child could understand every word; but the secrets of the human heart are laid bare. The lover is a grey-haired old man, with the true Slavonic genius for failure, and a hopeless drunkard; the young girl is a veritable flower of the slums, shedding abroad the radiance and perfume of her soul in a sullen and sodden environment. She has a purity of soul that will not take pollution.

"See how this mere chance-sown deft-nursed seed
That sprang up by the wayside 'neath the foot
Of the enemy, this breaks all into blaze,
Spreads itself, one wide glory of desire
To incorporate the whole great sun it loves
From the inch-height whence it looks and longs!"

No one can read a book like this without being better for it, and without loving its author.

It is unfortunate that Dostoevski did not learn from his first little masterpiece the great virtue of compression. This story is short, but it is long enough; the whole history of two lives, so far as their spiritual aspect is concerned, is fully given in these few pages. The besetting sin of Dostoevski is endless garrulity with its accompanying demon of incoherence: in later years he yielded to that, as he did to other temptations, and it finally mastered him. He was never to write again a work of art that had organic unity.

Like all the great Russian novelists, Dostoevski went to school to Gogol. The influence of his teacher is evident throughout *Poor Folk.* The hero is almost an imitation of the man in Gogol's short story, *The Cloak*, affording another striking example of the germinal power of that immortal work. Dostoevski seemed fully to realise his debt to Gogol, and in particular to *The Cloak;* for in *Poor Folk*, one entire letter is taken up with a description of Makar's emotions after reading that extraordinary tale. Makar assumes that it is a description of himself. "Why, I hardly dare show myself in the streets! Everything is so accurately described that one's very gait is recognisable."

Dostoevski's consuming ambition for literary fame is well indicated in his first book. "If anything be well written, Varinka, it is literature. I learned this the day before yesterday. What a wonderful thing literature is, which, consisting but of printed words, is able to invigorate, to instruct, the hearts of men!"

So many writers have made false starts in literature that Dostoevski's instinct for the right path at the very outset is something notable. His entire literary career was to be spent in portraying the despised and rejected. Never has a great author's first book more clearly revealed the peculiar qualities of his mind and heart.

But although he struck the right path, it was a long time before he found again the right vein. He followed up his first success with a row of failures, whose cold reception by the public nearly broke his heart. He was extremely busy, extremely productive, and extremely careless, as is shown by the fact that during the short period from 1846 to 1849, he launched thirteen original publications, not a single one of which added anything to his fame. It was not until after the cruel years of Siberia that the great books began to appear.

Nor did they appear at once. In 1859 he published *The Uncle's Dream*, a society novel, showing both in its humour and in its ruthless satire the influence of Gogol. This is an exceedingly entertaining book, and, a strange thing in Dostoevski, it is, in many places, hilariously funny. The satire is so enormously exaggerated that it completely overshoots the mark, but perhaps this very exaggeration adds to the reader's merriment. The conversation in this story is often brilliant, full of unexpected quips and retorts delivered in a manner far more French than Russian. The intention of the author seems to have been to write a scathing and terrible satire on provincial society,

where every one almost without exception is represented as absolutely selfish, absolutely conceited, and absolutely heartless. It is a study of village gossip, a favourite subject for satirists in all languages. In the middle of the book Dostoevski remarks: “Everybody in the provinces lives as though he were under a bell of glass. It is impossible for him to conceal anything whatever from his honourable fellow-citizens. They know things about him of which he himself is ignorant. The provincial, by his very nature, ought to be a very profound psychologist. That is why I am sometimes honestly amazed to meet in the provinces so few psychologists and so many imbeciles.”

Never again did Dostoevski write a book containing so little of himself, and so little of the native Russian element. Leaving out the exaggeration, it might apply to almost any village in any country, and instead of sympathy, it shows only scorn. The scheming mother, who attempts to marry her beautiful daughter to a Prince rotten with diseases, is a stock figure on the stage and in novels. The only truly Russian personage is the young lover, weak-willed and irresolute, who lives a coward in his own esteem.

This novel was immediately followed by another within the same year, *Stepanchikovo Village*, translated into English with the title *The Friend of the Family.* This has for its hero one of the most remarkable of Dostoevski’s characters, and yet one who infallibly reminds us of Dickens’s Pecksniff. The story is told in the first person, and while it cannot by any stretch of language be called a great book, it has one advantage over its author’s works of genius, in being interesting from the first page to the last. Both the uncle and the nephew, who narrate the tale, are true Russian characters: they suffer long, and are kind; they hope all things, and believe all things. The household is such a menagerie that it is no wonder that the German translation of this novel is called *Tollhaus oder Herrenhaus*? Some of the inmates are merely abnormal; others are downright mad. There is not a natural or a normal character in the entire book, and not one of the persons holds the reader’s sympathy, though frequent drafts are made on his pity. The hero is a colossal hypocrite, hopelessly exaggerated. If one finds Dickens’s characters to be caricatures, what shall be said of this collection? This is the very apotheosis of the unctuous gasbag, from whose mouth, eternally ajar, pours a viscous stream of religious and moral exhortation. Compared with this Friend of the Family, Tartuffe was unselfish and noble: Joseph Surface modest and retiring; Pecksniff a humble and loyal man. The

best scene in the story, and one that arouses outrageous mirth, is the scene where the uncle, who is a kind of Tom Pinch, suddenly revolts, and for a moment shakes off his bondage. He seizes the fat hypocrite by the shoulder, lifts him from the floor, and hurls his carcass through a glass door. All of which is in the exact manner of Dickens.

One of the most characteristic of Dostoevski's novels, characteristic in its occasional passages of wonderful beauty and pathos, characteristic in its utter formlessness and long stretches of uninspired dulness, is *Downtrodden and Oppressed.* Here the author gives us the life he knew best by actual experience and the life best suited to his natural gifts of sympathetic interpretation. Stevenson's comment on this story has attracted much attention. Writing to John Addington Symonds in 1886, he said: "Another has been translated — *Humiliés et Offensés.* It is even more incoherent than *Le Crime et le Châtiment,* but breathes much of the same lovely goodness, and has passages of power. Dostoevski is a devil of a swell, to be sure." There is no scorn and no satire in this book; it was written from an overflowing heart. One of the speeches of the spineless young Russian, Alosha, might be taken as illustrative of the life-purpose of our novelist: "I am on fire for high and noble ideals; they may be false, but the basis on which they rest is holy."

Downtrodden and Oppressed is full of melodrama and full of tears; it is four times too long, being stuffed out with interminable discussions and vain repetitions. It has no beauty of construction, no evolution, and irritates the reader beyond all endurance. The young hero is a blazing ass, who is in love with two girls at the same time, and whose fluency of speech is in inverse proportion to his power of will. The real problem of the book is how either of the girls could have tolerated his presence for five minutes. The hero's father is a melodramatic villain, who ought to have worn patent-leather boots and a Spanish cloak. And yet, with all its glaring faults, it is a story the pages of which ought not to be skipped. So far as the narrative goes, one may skip a score of leaves at will; but in the midst of aimless and weary gabble, passages of extraordinary beauty and uncanny insight strike out with the force of a sudden blow. The influence of Dickens is once more clearly seen in the sickly little girl Nelly, whose strange caprices and flashes of passion are like Goethe's Mignon, but whose bad health and lingering death recall irresistibly Little Nell. They are similar in much more than in name.

Dostoevski told the secrets of his prison-house in his great book *Memoirs of a House of the Dead* — translated into English with the title *Buried Alive.* Of the many works that have come from prison-walls to enrich literature, and their number is legion, this is one of the most powerful, because one of the most truthful and sincere. It is not nearly so well written as Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis;* but one cannot escape the suspicion that this latter masterpiece was a brilliant pose. Dostoevski's *House of the Dead* is marked by that naïve Russian simplicity that goes not to the reader's head but to his heart. It is at the farthest remove from a well-constructed novel; it is indeed simply an irregular, incoherent notebook. But if the shop-worn phrase "human document" can ever be fittingly applied, no better instance can be found than this. It is a revelation of Dostoevski's all-embracing sympathy. He shows no bitterness, no spirit of revenge, toward the government that sent him into penal servitude; he merely describes what happened there. Nor does he attempt to arouse our sympathy for his fellow-convicts by depicting them as heroes, or in showing their innate nobleness. They are indeed a bad lot, and one is forced to the conviction that they ought not to be at large. Confinement and hard labour is what most of them need; for the majority of them in this particular Siberian prison are not revolutionists, offenders against the government, sent there for some petty or trumped-up charge, but cold-blooded murderers, fiendishly cruel assassins, wife-beaters, dull, degraded brutes. But the régime, as our novelist describes it, does not improve them; the officers are as brutal as the men, and the floggings do not make for spiritual culture. One cannot wish, after reading the book, that such prisoners were free, but one cannot help thinking that something is rotten in the state of their imprisonment. Dostoevski brings out with great clearness the utter childishness of the prisoners; mentally, they are just bad little boys; they seem never to have developed, except in an increased capacity for sin. They spend what time they have in silly talk, in purposeless discussions, in endeavours to get drink, in practical jokes, and in thefts from one another. The cruel pathos of the story is not in the fact that such men are in prison, but that a Dostoevski should be among them. Here is a delicate, sensitive man of genius, in bad health, with a highly organised nervous system, with a wonderful imagination, condemned to live for years in slimy misery, with creatures far worse than the beasts of the field. Indeed, some of the most beautiful parts of the story are where Dostoevski turns from the men to the prison dog and

the prison horse, and there finds true friendship. His kindness to the neglected dog and the latter's surprise and subsequent devotion make a deep impression. The greatness of Dostoevski's heart is shown in the fact that although his comrades were detestable characters, he did not hate them. His calm account of their unblushing knavery is entirely free from either vindictive malice or superior contempt. He loved them because they were buried alive, he loved them because of their wretchedness, with a love as far removed from condescension as it was from secret admiration of their bold wickedness. There was about these men no charm of personality and no glamour of desperate crime. The delightful thing about Dostoevski's attitude is that it was so perfect an exemplification of true Christianity. No pride, no scorn, no envy. He regarded them as his brothers, and one feels that not one of the men would ever have turned to Dostoevski for sympathy and encouragement without meeting an instant and warm response. That prison was a great training-school for Dostoevski's genius, and instead of casting a black shadow over his subsequent life, it furnished him with the necessary light and heat to produce a succession of great novels.

Their production was, however, irregular, and at intervals he continued to write and publish books of no importance. One of his poorest stories is called *Memoirs of the Cellarage*, or, as the French translation has it, *L'Esprit Souterrain.* The two parts of the story contain two curious types of women. The hero is the regulation weak-willed Russian; his singular adventures with an old criminal and his mistress in the first part of the story, and with a harlot in the second, have only occasional and languid interest; it is one of the many books of Dostoevski that one vigorously vows never to read again. The sickly and impractical Ordinov spends most of his time analysing his mental states, and indulging in that ecstasy of thought which is perhaps the most fatal of all Slavonic passions. Soon after appeared a strange and far better novel, called *The Gambler.* This story is told in the first person, and contains a group of highly interesting characters, the best being an old woman, whose goodness of heart, extraordinary vitality, and fondness for speaking her mind recall the best type of English Duchess of the eighteenth century. There is not a dull page in this short book; and often as the obsession of gambling has been represented in fiction, I do not at this moment remember any other story where the fierce, consuming power of this heart-eating passion has been more powerfully pictured. No reader will ever forget the one day in the sensible old lady's life when all her years of

training, all her natural caution and splendid common sense, could not keep her away from the gaming table. This is a kind of international novel, where the English, French, German, and Russian temperaments are analysed, perhaps with more cleverness than accuracy. The Englishman, Astley, is utterly unreal, Paulina is impossible, and the Slavophil attacks on the French are rather pointless. Some of the characters are incomprehensible, but none of them lacks interest.

Of all Dostoevski's novels, the one best known outside of Russia is, of course, *Crime and Punishment.* Indeed, his fame in England and in America may be said still to depend almost entirely on this one book. It was translated into French, German, and English in the eighties, and has been dramatised in France and in America. While it is assuredly a great work, and one that nobody except a genius could have written, I do not think it is Dostoevski's most characteristic novel, nor his best. It is characteristic in its faults; it is abominably diffuse, filled with extraneous and superfluous matter, and totally lacking in the principles of good construction. There are scenes of positively breathless excitement, preceded and followed by dreary drivel; but the success of the book does not depend on its action, but rather on the characters of Sonia, her maudlin father, the student Raskolnikov, and his sister. It is impossible to read *Crime and Punishment* without reverently saluting the author's power. As is well known, the story gave Stevenson all kinds of thrills, and in a famous letter written while completely under the spell he said: "Raskolnikov is easily the greatest book I have read in ten years; I am glad you took to it. Many find it dull; Henry James could not finish it; all I can say is, it nearly finished me. It was like having an illness. James did not care for it because the character of Raskolnikov was not objective; and at that I divined a great gulf between us, and, on further reflection, the existence of a certain impotence in many minds of to-day, which prevents them from living *in* a book or a character, and keeps them standing afar off, spectators of a puppet show. To such I suppose the book may seem empty in the centre; to the others it is a room, a house of life, into which they themselves enter, and are purified. The Juge d'Instruction I thought a wonderful, weird, touching, ingenious creation; the drunken father, and Sonia, and the student friend, and the uncircumscribed, protoplasmic humanity of Raskolnikov, all upon a level that filled me with wonder; the execution, also, superb in places."

Dostoevski is fond of interrupting the course of his narratives with dreams, — dreams that often have no connection with the plot, so far as there may be said to exist a plot, — but dreams of vivid and sharp verisimilitude. Whether these dreams were interjected to deceive the reader, or merely to indulge the novelist's whimsical fancy, is hard to divine; but one always wakes with surprise to find that it is all a dream. A few hours before Svidrigailov commits suicide he has an extraordinary dream of the cold, wet, friendless little girl, whom he places tenderly in a warm bed, and whose childish eyes suddenly give him the leer of a French harlot. Both he and the reader are amazed to find that this is only a dream, so terribly real has it seemed. Then Raskolnikov's awful dream, so minutely circumstanced, of the cruel peasants maltreating a horse, their drunken laughter and vicious conversation, their fury that they cannot kill the mare with one blow, and the wretched animal's slow death makes a picture that I have long tried in vain to forget. These dream episodes have absolutely no connection with the course of the story — they are simply impressionistic sketches.

Another favourite device of Dostoevski's is to have one of his characters take a walk, and on this walk undergo some experience that has nothing whatever to do with the course of the action, but is, as it were, a miniature story of its own introduced into the novel. One often remembers these while forgetting many vital constructive features. That picture of the pretty young girl, fifteen or sixteen years old, staggering about in the heat of the early afternoon, completely drunk, while a fat libertine slowly approaches her, like a vulture after its prey, stirs Raskolnikov to rage and then to reflection — but the reader remembers it long after it has passed from the hero's mind. Dostoevski's books are full of disconnected but painfully oppressive incidents.

Raskolnikov's character cannot be described nor appraised; one must follow him all the way through the long novel. He is once more the Rudin type — utterly irresolute, with a mind teeming with ideas and surging with ambition. He wants to be a Russian Napoleon, with a completely subservient conscience, but instead of murdering on a large scale, like his ideal, he butchers two inoffensive old women. Although the ghastly details of this double murder are given with definite realism, Dostoevski's interest is wholly in the criminal psychology of the affair, in the analysis of Raskolnikov's mind before, during, and chiefly after the murder; for it is the

mind, and not the bodily sensations that constitute the chosen field of our novelist. After this event, the student passes through almost every conceivable mental state; we study all these shifting moods under a powerful microscope. The assassin is redeemed by the harlot Sonia, who becomes his religious and moral teacher. The scene where the two read together the story of the resurrection of Lazarus, and where they talk about God, prayer, and the Christian religion, shows the spiritual force of Dostoevski in its brightest manifestations. At her persuasion, he finally confesses his crime, and is deported to Siberia, where his experiences are copied faithfully from the author's own prison life. Sonia accompanies him, and becomes the good angel of the convicts, who adore her. "When she appeared while they were at work, all took off their hats and made a bow. 'Little mother, Sophia Semenova, thou art our mother, tender and compassionate,' these churlish and branded felons said to her. She smiled in return; they loved even to see her walk, and turned to look upon her as she passed by. They praised her for being so little, and knew not what not to praise her for. They even went to her with their ailments."

It is quite possible that Tolstoi got the inspiration for his novel *Resurrection* from the closing words of *Crime and Punishment.* Raskolnikov and Sonia look forward happily to the time when he will be released. "Seven years — only seven years! At the commencement of their happiness they were ready to look upon these seven years as seven days. They did not know that a new life is not given for nothing; that it has to be paid dearly for, and only acquired by much patience and suffering, and great future efforts. But now a new history commences; a story of the gradual renewing of a man, of his slow, progressive regeneration, and change from one world to another — an introduction to the hitherto unknown realities of life. This may well form the theme of a new tale; the one we wished to offer the reader is ended."

It did indeed form the theme of a new tale — and the tale was Tolstoi's *Resurrection.*

Sonia is the greatest of all Dostoevski's woman characters. The professional harlot has often been presented on the stage and in the pages of fiction, but after learning to know Sonia, the others seem weakly artificial. This girl, whose father's passion for drink is something worse than madness, goes on the street to save the family from starvation. It is the sacrifice of Monna Vanna without any reward or spectacular acclaim.

Deeply spiritual, intensely religious, she is the illumination of the book, and seems to have stepped out of the pages of the New Testament. Her whole story is like a Gospel parable, and she has saved many besides Raskolnikov. . . . She dies daily, and from her sacrifice rises a life of eternal beauty.

Two years later came another book of tremendous and irregular power — *The Idiot.* With the exception of *The Karamazov Brothers,* this is the most peculiarly characteristic of all Dostoevski's works. It is almost insufferably long; it reads as though it had never been revised; it abounds in irrelevancies and superfluous characters. One must have an unshakable faith in the author to read it through, and one should never begin to read it without having acquired that faith through the perusal of *Crime and Punishment.* The novel is a combination of a hospital and an insane asylum; its pages are filled with sickly, diseased, silly, and crazy folk. It is largely autobiographical; the hero's epileptic fits are described as only an epileptic could describe them, more convincingly than even so able a writer as Mr. De Morgan diagnoses them in *An Affair of Dishonour.* Dostoevski makes the convulsion come unexpectedly; Mr. De Morgan uses the fit as a kind of moral punctuation point. The author's sensations when under condemnation of death and expecting the immediate catastrophe are also minutely given from his own never paling recollection. Then there are allusions to Russian contemporary authors, which occur, to be sure, in his other books. One reason why Dostoevski is able to portray with such detail the thoughts and fancies of abnormal persons is because he was so abnormal himself; and because his own life had been filled with such an amazing variety of amazing experiences. Every single one of his later novels is a footnote to actual circumstance; with any other author, we should say, for example, that his accounts of the thoughts that pass in a murderer's mind immediately before he assassinates his victim were the fantastical emanation of a diseased brain, and could never have taken place; one cannot do that in Dostoevski's case, for one is certain that he is drawing on his Siberian reservoir of fact. These novels are fully as much a contribution to the study of abnormal psychology as they are to the history of fiction.

The leading character, the epileptic Idiot, has a magnetic charm that pulls the reader from the first, and from which it is vain to hope to escape. The "lovely goodness" that Stevenson found in Dostoevski's *Downtrodden and Oppressed* shines in this story with a steady radiance. The most brilliant and beautiful women in the novel fall helplessly in love with the Idiot, and the

men try hard to despise him, without the least success. He has the sincerity of a child, with a child's innocence and confidence. His character is almost the incarnation of the beauty of holiness. Such common and universal sins as deceit, pretence, revenge, ambition, are not only impossible to him, they are even inconceivable; he is without taint. From one point of view, he is a natural-born fool; but the wisdom of this world is foolishness with him. His utter harmlessness and incapacity to hurt occasion scenes of extraordinary humour, scenes that make the reader suddenly laugh out loud, and love him all the more ardently. Dostoevski loved children and animals, and so-called simple folk; what is more, he not only loved them, he looked upon them as his greatest teachers. It is a delight to hear this Idiot talk: —

"What has always surprised me, is the false idea that grown-up people have of children. They are not even understood by their fathers and mothers. We ought to conceal nothing from children under the pretext that they are little and that at their age they should remain ignorant of certain things. What a sad and unfortunate idea! And how clearly the children themselves perceive that their parents take them for babies who can't understand anything, when really they understand everything! Great folks don't know that in even the most difficult affairs a child is able to give advice that is of the utmost importance. O God! when this pretty little bird stares at you with a happy and confiding look, you are ashamed to deceive him! I call them little birds because little birds are the finest things in the world."

The Idiot later in the story narrates the following curious incident. Two friends stopping together at an inn retired to their room peacefully, when one of them, lusting to possess the other's watch, drew a knife, sneaked up behind his victim stealthily, raised his eyes to heaven, crossed himself, and piously murmured this prayer: "O Lord, pardon me through the merits of Christ!" then stabbed his friend to death, and quietly took the watch. Naturally the listener roars with laughter, but the Idiot quietly continues: "I once met a peasant woman crossing herself so piously, so piously! 'Why do you do that, my dear?' said I (I am always asking questions). 'Well,' said she, 'just as a mother is happy when she sees the first smile of her nursling, so God experiences joy every time when, from the height of heaven, he sees a sinner lift toward Him a fervent prayer.' It was a woman of the people who told me that, who expressed this thought so profound, so fine, so truly religious, which is the very basis of Christianity, that is to say, the idea that

God is our father, that He is delighted at the sight of a man as a mother is at the sight of her child, — the chief thought of Christ! A simple peasant woman! To be sure, she was a mother. . . . The religious sentiment, in its essence, can never be crushed by reasoning, by a sin, by a crime, by any form of atheism; there is something there which remains and always will remain beyond all that, something which the arguments of atheists will never touch. But the chief thing is, that nowhere does one notice this more clearly than in the heart of Russia. It is one of the most important impressions that I first received from our country."

The kindness of the Idiot toward his foes and toward those who are continually playing on his generosity and exploiting him, enrages beyond all endurance some of his friends. A beautiful young society girl impatiently cries: "There isn't a person who deserves such words from you! here not one of them is worth your little finger, not one who has your intelligence or your heart! You are more honest than all of us, more noble than all, better than all, more clever than all! There isn't one of these people who is fit to pick up the handkerchief you let fall, so why then do you humiliate yourself and place yourself below everybody! Why have you crushed yourself, why haven't you any pride?"

She had begun her acquaintance with him by laughing at him and trying to cover him with ridicule. But in his presence those who come to scoff remain to pray. Such men really overcome the world.

He is not the only Idiot in fiction who is able to teach the wise, as every one knows who remembers his *David Copperfield.* How Betsy Trotwood would have loved Dostoevski's hero! Dickens and Dostoevski were perhaps the biggest-hearted of all novelists, and their respect for children and harmless men is notable. The sacredness of mad folk is a holy tradition, not yet outworn.

The Eternal Husband is a story dealing, of course, with an abnormal character, in abnormal circumstances. It is a quite original variation on the triangle theme. It has genuine humour, and the conclusion leaves one in a muse. *The Hobbledehoy,* translated into French as *Un Adolescent,* is, on the whole, Dostoevski's worst novel, which is curious enough, coming at a time when he was doing some of his best work. He wrote this while his mind was busy with a great masterpiece, *The Karamazov Brothers,* and in this book we get nothing but the lees. It is a novel of portentous length and utter vacuity. I have read many dull books, but it is hard to recall a novel where

the steady, monotonous dulness of page after page is quite so oppressive. For it is not only dull; it is stupid.

Dostoevski's last work, *The Karamazov Brothers*, was the result of ten years' reflection, study, and labour, and he died without completing it. It is a very long novel as it stands; had he lived five years more, it would probably have been the longest novel on the face of the earth, for he seems to have regarded what he left as an introduction. Even as it is, it is too long, and could profitably be cut down one-third. It is incomplete, it is badly constructed, it is very badly written; but if I could have only one of his novels, I would take *The Karamazov Brothers*. For Dostoevski put into it all the sum of his wisdom, all the ripe fruit of his experience, all his religious aspiration, and in Alosha he created not only the greatest of all his characters, but his personal conception of what the ideal man should be. Alosha is the Idiot, minus idiocy and epilepsy.

The women in this book are not nearly so well drawn as the men. I cannot even tell them apart, so it would be a waste of labour to write further about them. But the four men who make up the Karamazov family, the father and the three sons, are one of the greatest family parties in the history of fiction. Then the idiotic and epileptic Smerdakov — for Dostoevski must have his idiot and his fits, and they make an effective combination — is an absolutely original character out of whose mouth come from time to time the words of truth and soberness. The old monk at the head of the chapter is marvellous; he would find a natural place in one of Ibsen's early historical dramas, for he is a colossal pontifical figure, and has about him the ancient air of authority. If one really doubted the genius of Dostoevski, one would merely need to contemplate the men in this extraordinary story, and listen to their talk. Then if any one continued to doubt Dostoevski's greatness as a novelist, he could no longer doubt his greatness as a man.

The criminal psychology of this novel and the scenes at the trial are more interesting than those in *Crime and Punishment*, for the prisoner is a much more interesting man than Raskolnikov, and by an exceedingly clever trick the reader is completely deceived. The discovery of the murder is as harsh a piece of realism as the most difficult realist could desire. The corpse lies on its back on the floor, its silk nightgown covered with blood. The faithful old servant, smitten down and bleeding copiously, is faintly crying for help. Close at hand is the epileptic, in the midst of a fearful convulsion. There are some dramatic moments!

But the story, as nearly always in Dostoevski, is a mere easel for the portraits. From the loins of the father — a man of tremendous force of character, all turned hellward, for he is a selfish, sensual beast — proceed three sons, men of powerful individualities, bound together by fraternal affection. Mitia is in many respects like his father, but it is wonderful how we love him in the closing scenes; Ivan is the sceptic, whose final conviction that he is morally responsible for his father's murder shows his inability to escape from the domination of moral ideas; Alosha, the priestly third brother, has all the family force of character, but in him it finds its only outlet in love to God and love to man. He has a remarkably subtle mind, but he is as innocent, as harmless, as sincere, and as pure in heart as a little child. He invariably returns for injury, not pardon, but active kindness. No one can be offended in him for long, and his cheerful conversation and beautiful, upright life are a living witness to his religious faith, known and read of all men. Angry, sneering, and selfish folk come to regard him with an affection akin to holy awe. But he is not in the least a prig or a stuffed curiosity. He is essentially a reasonable, kind-hearted man, who goes about doing good. Every one confides in him, all go to him for advice and solace. He is a multitudinous blessing, with masculine virility and shrewd insight, along with the sensitiveness and tenderness of a good woman. Seeing six boys attacking one, he attempts to rescue the solitary fighter, when to his surprise the gamin turns on him, insults him, strikes him with a stone, and bites him. Alosha, wrapping up his injured hand, after one involuntary scream of pain, looks affectionately at the young scoundrel, and quietly asks, "Tell me, what have I done to you?" The boy looks at him in amazement. Alosha continues: "I don't know you, but of course I must have injured you in some way since you treat me so. Tell me exactly where I have been wrong." The child bursts into tears, and what no violence of punishment has been able to accomplish, Alosha's kindness has done in a few moments. Here is a boy who would gladly die for him.

The conversations in this book have often quite unexpected turns of humour, and are filled with oversubtle questions of casuistry and curious reasonings. From one point of view the novel is a huge, commonplace book, into which Dostoevski put all sorts of whimsies, queries, and vagaries. Smerdakov, the epileptic, is a thorn in the side of those who endeavour to instruct him, for he asks questions and raises unforeseen difficulties that perplex those who regard themselves as his superiors. No

one but Dostoevski would ever have conceived of such a character, or have imagined such ideas.

If one reads *Poor Folk*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Memoirs of the House of the Dead*, *The Idiot*, and *The Karamazov Brothers*, one will have a complete idea of Dostoevski's genius and of his faults as a writer, and will see clearly his attitude toward life. In his story called *Devils* one may learn something about his political opinions; but these are of slight interest; for a man's opinions on politics are his views on something of temporary and transient importance, and like a railway time-table, they are subject to change without notice. But the ideas of a great man on Religion, Humanity, and Art take hold on something eternal, and sometimes borrow eternity from the object.

No doubt Dostoevski realised the sad inequalities of his work, and the great blunders due to haste in composition. He wrote side by side with Turgenev and Tolstoi, and could not escape the annual comparison in production. Indeed, he was always measuring himself with these two men, and they were never long out of his mind. Nor was his soul without bitterness when he reflected on their fortunate circumstances which enabled them to write, correct, and polish at leisure, and give to the public only the last refinement of their work. In the novel *Downtrodden and Oppressed* Natasha asks the young writer if he has finished his composition. On being told that it is all done, she says: "God be praised! But haven't you hurried it too much? Haven't you spoiled anything?"

"Oh, I don't think so," he replied; "when I have a work that demands a particular tension of the mind, I am in a state of extraordinary nervous excitement; images are clearer, my senses are more alert, and for the form, why, the style is plastic, and steadily becomes better in proportion as the tension becomes stronger." She sighed, and added: "You are exhausting yourself and you will ruin your health. Just look at S. He spent two years in writing one short story; but how he has worked at it and chiselled it down! not the least thing to revise; no one can detect a blemish." To this stricture the poor fellow rejoined, "Ah, but those fellows have their income assured, they are never compelled to publish at a fixed date, while I, why, I am only a cabhorse!"

Although Dostoevski's sins against art were black and many, it was a supreme compliment to the Novel as an art-form that such a man should have chosen it as the channel of his ideas. For he was certainly one of the

most profound thinkers of modern times. His thought dives below and soars above the regions where even notable philosophers live out their intellectual lives. He never dodged the ugly facts in the world, nor even winced before them. Nor did he defy them. The vast knowledge that he had of the very worst of life’s conditions, and of the extreme limits of sin of which humanity is capable, seemed only to deepen and strengthen his love of this world, his love of all the creatures on it, and his intense religious passion. For the religion of Dostoevski is thrilling in its clairvoyance and in its fervour. That so experienced and unprejudiced a man, gifted with such a power of subtle and profound reflection, should have found in the Christian religion the only solution of the riddle of existence, and the best rule for daily conduct, is in itself valuable evidence that the Christian religion is true.

Dostoevski has been surpassed in many things by other novelists. The deficiencies and the excrescences of his art are glaring. But of all the masters of fiction, both in Russia and elsewhere, he is the most truly spiritual.

RUSSIAN ROMANCE by Earl of Evelyn Baring Cromer



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IX

RUSSIAN ROMANCE

"The Spectator," March 15, 1913

De Vogüé's well-known book, *Le Roman Russe*, was published so long ago as 1886. It is still well worth reading. In the first place, the literary style is altogether admirable. It is the perfection of French prose, and to read the best French prose is always an intellectual treat. In the second place, the author displays in a marked degree that power of wide generalisation which distinguishes the best French writers. Then, again, M. de Vogüé writes with a very thorough knowledge of his subject. He resided for long in Russia. He spoke Russian, and had an intimate acquaintance with Russian literature. He endeavoured to identify himself with Russian aspirations, and, being himself a man of poetic and imaginative temperament, he was able to sympathise with the highly emotional side of the Slav character, whilst, at the same time, he never lost sight of the fact that he was the representative of a civilisation which is superior to that of Russia. He admires the eruptions of that volcanic genius Dostoïevsky, but, with true European instinct, charges him with a want of "mesure" — the Greek Sophrosyne — which he defines as "l'art d'assujettir ses pensées." Moreover, he at times brings a dose of vivacious French wit to temper the gloom of Russian realism. Thus, when he speaks of the Russian writers of romance, who, from 1830 to 1840, "eurent le privilège de faire pleurer les jeunes filles russes," he observes in thorough man-of-the-world fashion, "il faut toujours que quelqu'un fasse pleurer les jeunes filles, mais le génie n'y est pas nécessaire."

When Taine had finished his great history of the Revolution, he sent it forth to the world with the remark that the only general conclusion at which

a profound study of the facts had enabled him to arrive was that the true comprehension, and therefore, *a fortiori*, the government of human beings, and especially of Frenchmen, was an extremely difficult matter. Those who have lived longest in the East are the first to testify to the fact that, to the Western mind, the Oriental habit of thought is well-nigh incomprehensible. The European may do his best to understand, but he cannot cast off his love of symmetry any more than he can change his skin, and unless he can become asymmetrical he can never hope to attune his reason in perfect accordance to the Oriental key. Similarly, it is impossible to rise from a perusal of De Vogüé's book without a strong feeling of the incomprehensibility of the Russians.

What, in fact, are these puzzling Russians? They are certainly not Europeans. They possess none of the mental equipoise of the Teutons, neither do they appear to possess that logical faculty which, in spite of many wayward outbursts of passion, generally enables the Latin races in the end to cast off idealism when it tends to lapse altogether from sanity; or perhaps it would be more correct to say that, having by association acquired some portion of that Western faculty, the Russians misapply it. They seem to be impelled by a variety of causes — such as climatic and economic influences, a long course of misgovernment, Byzantinism in religion, and an inherited leaning to Oriental mysticism — to distort their reasoning powers, and far from using them, as was the case with the pre-eminently sane Greek genius, to temper the excesses of the imagination, to employ them rather as an oestrus to lash the imaginative faculties to a state verging on madness.

If the Russians are not Europeans, neither are they thorough Asiatics. It may well be, as De Vogüé says, that they have preserved the idiom and even the features of their original Aryan ancestors to a greater extent than has been the case with other Aryan nations who finally settled farther West, and that this is a fact of which many Russians boast. But, for all that, they have been inoculated with far too strong a dose of Western culture, religion, and habits of thought to display the apathy or submit to the fatalism which characterises the conduct of the true Eastern.

If, therefore, the Russians are neither Europeans nor Asiatics, what are they? Manifestly their geographical position and other attendant circumstances have, from an ethnological point of view, rendered them a hybrid race, whose national development will display the most startling

anomalies and contradictions, in which the theory and practice derived from the original Oriental stock will be constantly struggling for mastery with an Occidental aftergrowth. From the earliest days there have been two types of Russian reformers, viz. on the one hand, those who wished that the country should be developed on Eastern lines, and, on the other, those who looked to Western civilisation for guidance. De Vogüé says that from the accession of Peter the Great to the death of the Emperor Nicolas — that is to say, for a period of a hundred and fifty years — the government of Russia may be likened to a ship, of which the captain and the principal officers were persistently endeavouring to steer towards the West, while at the same time the whole of the crew were trimming the sails in order to catch any breeze which would bear the vessel Eastward. It can be no matter for surprise that this strange medley should have produced results which are bewildering even to Russians themselves and well-nigh incomprehensible to foreigners. One of their poets has said:

On ne comprend pas la Russie avec la raison, On ne peut que croire à la Russie.

One of the most singular incidents of Russian development on which De Vogüé has fastened, and which induced him to write this book, has been the predominant influence exercised on Russian thought and action by novels. Writers of romance have indeed at times exercised no inconsiderable amount of influence elsewhere than in Russia. Mrs. Beecher Stowe's epoch-making novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, certainly contributed towards the abolition of slavery in the United States. Dickens gave a powerful impetus to the reform of our law-courts and our Poor Law. Moreover, even in free England, political writers have at times resorted to allegory in order to promulgate their ideas. Swift's Brobdingnagians and Lilliputians furnish a case in point. In France, Voltaire called fictitious Chinamen, Bulgarians, and Avars into existence in order to satirise the proceedings of his own countrymen. But the effect produced by these writings may be classed as trivial compared to that exercised by the great writers of Russian romance. In the works of men like Tourguenef and Dostoïevsky the Russian people appear to have recognised, for the first time, that their real condition was truthfully depicted, and that their inchoate aspirations had found sympathetic expression. "Dans le roman, et là seulement," De Vogüé says, "on trouvera l'histoire de Russie depuis un demi-siècle."

Such being the case, it becomes of interest to form a correct judgment on the character and careers of the men whom the Russians have very generally regarded as the true interpreters of their domestic facts, and whom large numbers of them have accepted as their political pilots.

The first point to be noted about them is that they are all, for the most part, ultra-realists; but apparently we may search their writings in vain for the cheerfulness which at times illumines the pages of their English, or the light-hearted vivacity which sparkles in the pages of their French counterparts. In Dostoïevsky's powerfully written *Crime and Punishment* all is gloom and horror; the hero of the tale is a madman and a murderer. To a foreigner these authors seem to present the picture of a society oppressed with an all-pervading sense of the misery of existence, and with the impossibility of finding any means by which that misery can be alleviated. In many instances, their lives — and still more their deaths — were as sad and depressing as their thoughts. Several of their most noted authors died violent deaths. At thirty-seven years of age the poet Pouchkine was killed in a duel, Lermontof met the same fate at the age of twenty-six. Griboïédof was assassinated at the age of thirty-four. But the most tragic history is that of Dostoïevsky, albeit he lived to a green old age, and eventually died a natural death. In 1849, he was connected with some political society, but he does not appear, even at that time, to have been a violent politician. Nevertheless, he and his companions, after being kept for several months in close confinement, were condemned to death. They were brought to the place of execution, but at the last moment, when the soldiers were about to fire, their sentences were commuted to exile. Dostoïevsky remained for some years in Siberia, but was eventually allowed to return to Russia. The inhuman cruelty to which he had been subject naturally dominated his mind and inspired his pen for the remainder of his days.

De Vogüé deals almost exclusively with the writings of Pouchkine, Gogol, Dostoïevsky, Tourguenef, who was the inventor of the word Nihilism, and the mystic Tolstoy, who was the principal apostle of the doctrine. All these, with the possible exception of Tourguenef, had one characteristic in common. Their intellects were in a state of unstable equilibrium. As poets, they could excite the enthusiasm of the masses, but as political guides they were mere Jack-o'-Lanterns, leading to the deadly swamp of despair. Dostoïevsky was in some respects the most interesting and also the most typical of the group. De Vogüé met him in his old age,

and the account he gives of his appearance is most graphic. His history could be read in his face.

On y lisait mieux que dans le livre, les souvenirs de la maison des morts, les longues habitudes d'effroi, de méfiance et de martyre. Les paupières, les lèvres, toutes les fibres de cette face tremblaient de tics nerveux. Quand il s'animait de colère sur une idée, on eût juré qu'on avait déjà vu cette tête sur les banes d'une cour criminelle, ou parmi les vagabonds qui mendient aux portes des prisons. A d'autres moments, elle avait la mansuétude triste des vieux saints sur les images slavonnes.

And here is what De Vogüé says of the writings of this semi-lunatic man of genius:

Psychologue incomparable, dès qu'il étudie des âmes noires ou blessées, dramaturge habile, mais borné aux scènes d'effroi et de pitié.... Selon qu'on est plus touché par tel ou tel excès de son talent, on peut l'appeler avec justice un philosophe, un apôtre, un aliéné, le consolateur des affligés ou le bourreau des esprits tranquilles, le Jérémie de bagne ou le Shakespeare de la maison des fous; toutes ces appellations seront méritées; prise isolément, aucune ne sera suffisante.

There is manifestly much which is deeply interesting, and also much which is really lovable in the Russian national character. It must, however, be singularly mournful and unpleasant to pass through life burdened with the reflection that it would have been better not to have been born, albeit such sentiments are not altogether inconsistent with the power of deriving a certain amount of enjoyment from living. It was that pleasure-loving old cynic, Madame du Deffand, who said: "Il n'y a qu'un seul malheur, celui d'être né." Nevertheless, the avowed joyousness bred by the laughing tides and purple skies of Greece is certainly more conducive to human happiness, though at times even Greeks, such as Theognis and Palladas, lapsed into a morbid pessimism comparable to that of Tolstoy. Metrodorus, however, more fully represented the true Greek spirit when he sang, "All things are good in life" (πάντα γὰρ ἐσθλὰ βίῳ). The Roman pagan, Juvenal, gave a fairly satisfactory answer to the question, "Nil ergo optabunt homines?" whilst the Christian holds out hopes of that compensation in the next world for the afflictions of the present, which the sombre and despondent Russian philosopher, determined that we shall not find enjoyment in either world, denies to his morose and grief-stricken followers.

CHAPTER XI

DOSTOÉVSKY

All the writers of the ‘40’s of the nineteenth century had their individual peculiarities. But in this respect, Feódor Mikháilovitch Dostoévsky (1821-1880) was even more sharply separated from all the rest by his characteristics, which almost removed him from the ranks of the writers of the epoch, and gave him a special place in literature.

The chief cause of this distinction lies in the fact that while most of the other writers sprang from the country regions, being members of the landed gentry class, Dostoévsky represents the plebeian, toiling class of society, a nervously choleric son of the town; and in the second place, while the majority of them were well-to-do, Dostoévsky alone in the company belonged to the class of educated strugglers with poverty, which had recently made its reappearance.

His father was staff physician in the Márya Hospital in Moscow, and he was the second son in a family of seven children. The whole family lived in two rooms, an ante-room and kitchen, which comprised the quarters allotted to the post by the government. Here strictly religious and patriarchal customs reigned, mitigated by the high cultivation of the head of the family.

In 1837 Feódor Mikháilovitch and his elder brother were taken to St. Petersburg by their father to be placed in the School for Engineers, but the elder did not succeed in entering, on account of feeble health. Dostoévsky had already evinced an inclination for literature, and naturally he was not very diligent in his studies of the dry, applied sciences taught in the school. But he found time to make acquaintance with the best works of Russian, English, French, and German classical authors. In 1843 he completed his course, and was appointed to actual service in the draughting department of the St. Petersburg engineer corps.

With his salary and the money sent to him by his guardian (his father being dead), he had about five thousand rubles a year, but as he was extremely improvident, bohemian, and luxurious in his tastes, he could

never make both ends meet. He was still more straitened in his finances when, in 1844, he resigned from the service, which was repugnant to him, and utterly at variance with his literary proclivities, and was obliged to resort to making translations. In May, 1844, he completed his first romance, “Poor People,” and sent it to Nekrásoff by his school-friend Grigoróvitch. In his “Diary” Dostoévsky has narrated the manner of its reception by Nekrásoff (who was preparing to publish a collection), and by Byelínsky, to whom the latter gave it. Grigoróvitch and Nekrásoff sat up all night to read it, so fascinated were they, and then hastened straight to communicate their rapture to the author. Nekrásoff then gave the manuscript to Byelínsky with the exclamation, “A new Gógol has made his appearance!” to which Byelínsky sternly replied, “Gógols spring up like mushrooms with you.” But when he had read the romance, he cried out, with emotion, “Bring him, bring him to me!”

Even before the romance made its appearance in print (early in 1846), Dostoévsky had won a flattering literary reputation. The young author’s head was fairly turned with his swift success, and he grew arrogant, the result of which was that he soon quarreled with Byelínsky, Nekrásoff, and their whole circle, and published his later writings (with one exception) elsewhere than in “The Contemporary.” His coolness towards the circle of “The Contemporary” was not a little aided by the difference in opinions which began to make themselves felt. Dostoévsky was carried away by the political and social ideas which reigned in that circle, but at the same time he obstinately upheld his own religious views. The result of this was, that the members of the circle began to regard him as behind the times. He became more and more interested in socialism, and soon went to live with his new friends in quarters where the principles of association ruled. He then entered the Dúroff circle of Fourierists, the most moderate of all the Petrashévsky circles, which a good authority declares to have entertained no purely revolutionary ideas whatever. They rebelled against the maintenance of the strict censorship then in force, serfdom, and administrative abuses, but paid little attention to the question of a change in the form of government, and attributed no importance to political upheavals. Dostoévsky himself was, in general, very far from cherishing any revolutionary designs; he enthusiastically declaimed Púshkin’s verses about slavery falling “at the wave of the Tzar’s hand,” and insisted that no socialistic theories had the slightest importance for Russians, since in the

commune, and the working unions (*artél*), and mutual guarantee system there had long existed in their land more solid and normal foundations than all the dreams of Saint Simon and his school, and that life in a community and phalanstery seemed to him more terrible and repulsive than that of any galley-slave.

Notwithstanding this, in May, 1849, Dostoévsky was arrested, along with the other followers of Petrashévsky, confined in the fortress, and condemned by court-martial on the charge of having "taken part in discussions concerning the severity of the censorship, and in one assembly, in March, 1849, had read a letter from Byelínsky to Gógol, received from Pleshtchéeff in Moscow, and had then read it aloud in the assemblies at Dúroff's, and had given copies of it to Mombelli to copy. In the assemblies at Dúroff's he had listened to the reading of articles, knew of the intention to set up a printing-press, and at Spyéshneff's had listened to the reading of 'A Soldier's Conversation.'"

All the Petrashévskyians were condemned to be shot, and the sentence was read to them on January 3, 1850, on the scaffold, where they stood stripped, in the freezing cold, for twenty minutes, in momentary expectation of their execution. But the death sentence was mitigated in different degrees by the Emperor, Dostoévsky's sentence being commuted to exile with hard labor for four years, and then service as a common soldier in the ranks. He was dispatched to Siberia two days later, which was on Christmas Eve, according to the Russian reckoning.

The wives of the Decembrists (the men exiled for revolutionary plots in 1825, at the accession to the throne of the Emperor Nicholas I.), visited the Petrashévskyians in prison at Tobólsk and gave Dostoévsky a copy of the Gospels. No other book made its way within the prison walls, and after reading nothing else for the next three years, Dostoévsky, according to his own words, "forced by necessity to read the Bible only, was enabled more clearly and profoundly to grasp the meaning of Christianity." In his "Notes from a Dead House" he has described in detail his life in the prison at Omsk, and all his impressions. Prison life produced an extremely crushing and unfavorable impression on him. He was brought into close contact with the common people, was enabled to study them, but he also became thoroughly imbued with that spirit of mysticism which is peculiar to ignorant and illiterate people. His own view of the universe was that of childlike faith, and prison life strengthened this view by leading him to see

in it the foundation of the national spirit and the national life. During the last year of his prison life, under a milder commandant, he was able to renew his relations with former schoolmates and friends in the town, and through them obtain more money, write home, and even come into possession of books.

But his health was much affected, his nerves having been weak from childhood, and already so shattered that, in 1846, he was on the verge of insanity. Even at that time he had begun to have attacks by night of that "mystical terror," which he has described in detail in "Humiliated and Insulted," and he also had occasional epileptic fits. In Siberia epilepsy developed to such a point that it was no longer possible to entertain any doubt as to the character of his malady.

On leaving prison, in 1854, and becoming a soldier, Dostoévsky was much better off. He was soon promoted to the rank of ensign, wrote a little, planned "Notes from a Dead House," and in 1856 married. At last, after prolonged efforts, he received permission to return to European Russia, in July, 1859, and settled in Tver. In the winter of that year, his rights, among them that of living in the capital, were restored to him, and in 1861 he and his elder brother began to publish a journal called "The Times." The first number contained the first installment of "Humiliated and Insulted," and simultaneously, during 1861-1862, "Notes from a Dead House" appeared there also, in addition to critical literary articles from his pen. This and other editorial and journalistic ventures met with varying success, and he suffered many reverses of fortune. In 1865-1866 he wrote his masterpiece, "Crime and Punishment." His first wife having died, he married his stenographer, in 1867, and traveled in western Europe for the next four years, in the course of which he wrote his romances: "The Idiot" (1868), "The Eternal Husband" (1870), and "Devils" (1871-72). After his return to Russia he wrote (1875) "The Stripling," and (1876) began the publication of "The Diary of a Writer," which was in the nature of a monthly journal, made up of his own articles, chiefly of a political character, and bearing on the Serbo-Turkish War. But it also contained literary and autobiographical articles, and had an enormous success, despite the irregularity of its appearance.

In June, 1880, he delivered a speech before the Society of Lovers of Russian Literature, which won him such popularity as he had never before enjoyed, and resulted in a tremendous ovation, on the part of the public, at

the unveiling of the monument to Púshkin. He was besieged with letters and visits; people came to him incessantly from all parts of St. Petersburg and of Russia, with expressions of admiration, requests for aid, questions, complaints against others, and expressions of opinions hostile to him personally. In the last half of 1880 he finished “The Karamázoff Brothers.” His funeral, on February 15, 1881, was very remarkable; the occasion of an unprecedented “manifestation,” which those who took part in it are still proud of recalling. Forty-two deputations bearing wreaths and an innumerable mass of people walked miles after his coffin to the cemetery of the Alexander Névsky Monastery.

Under the various influences to which Dostoévsky was subjected, he eventually became what is known in Russia as “a native-soiler,” in literature — the leader, in fact, of that semi-Slavyánophil, semi-Western school — and towards the end of his life was converted into a genuine Slavophil and mystic. In this conversion, as well as in the mystical theories which he preached in his “Diary,” and afterwards in his romances, beginning with “Crime and Punishment,” Dostoévsky has something in common with Count L. N. Tolstóy. Both writers were disenchanted as to European progress, admitted the mental and moral insolvency of educated Russian society, and fell into despair, from which the only escape, so it seemed to them, was becoming imbued with the lively faith of the common people, and both authors regarded this faith as the sole means of getting into real communion with the people. Then, becoming more and more imbued with the spirit of the Christian doctrine, both arrived at utter rejection of material improvement of the general welfare; Count Tolstóy came out with a theory of non-resistance to evil by force, and Dostoévsky with a theory of moral elevation and purification by means of suffering, which in essence are identical; for in what manner does non-resistance to evil manifest itself, if not in unmurmuring endurance of the sufferings caused by evil?

Nevertheless, a profound difference exists between Count Tolstóy and Dostoévsky. In the former we see an absence of conservatism and devotion to tradition. His attitude towards all doctrines is that of unconditional freedom of thought, and subjecting them to daring criticism, he chooses from among them only that which is in harmony with the inspirations of his own reason. He is a genuine individualist, to his very marrow. By the masses of the common people, he does not mean the Russian nation only, but all the toilers and producers of the earth, without regard to nationality;

while by the faith which he seeks among those toilers, he does not mean any fixed religious belief, but faith in the reasonableness and advantageousness of life, and of everything which exists, placing this faith in dependence upon brisk, healthy toil.

Dostoévsky, on the contrary, is a communist, or socialist. He cares nothing for freedom and the self-perfection of the individual. The individual, according to his teaching, should merely submit, and resignedly offer itself up as a sacrifice to society, for the sake of fulfilling that mission which Russia is foreordained, as God's chosen nation, to accomplish. This mission consists in the realization upon earth of true Christianity in orthodoxy, to which the Russian people remain faithful and devoted; union with the common people is to be accomplished in that manner alone; like the common people, with the same boundless faith and devotion, orthodoxy must be professed, for in it alone lies all salvation, not only for the world as a whole, but for every individual.

The character of Dostoévsky's works is determined by the fact that he was a child of the town. In their form they possess none of that elegant regularity, of that classical finish and clear-cut outline, which impress us in the works of Turgéneff and Gontcharóff. On the contrary, they surprise us by their awkwardness, their prolixity, their lack of severe finish, which requires abundant leisure. It is evident that they were written in haste, by a man who was eternally in want, embarrassed with debts, and incapable of making the two ends meet financially. At the same time one is struck by the entire absence in Dostoévsky's works of those artistic elements in which the works of the other authors of the '40's are rich. They contain no enchanting pictures of nature, no soul-stirring love scenes, meetings, kisses, the bewitching feminine types which turn the reader's head, for which Turgéneff and Tolstóy are famous. Dostoévsky even ridicules Turgéneff for his feminine portraits, in "Devils," under the character of the writer Karmazínoff, with his passion for depicting kisses not as they take place with all mankind, but with gorse or some such weed growing round about, which one must look up in a botany, while the sky must not fail to be of a purplish hue, which, of course, no mortal ever beheld, and the tree under which the interesting pair is seated must infallibly be orange-colored, and so forth.

Dostoévsky's subjects also present a sharp difference from those of his contemporaries, whose subjects are characterized by extreme simplicity and

absence of complication, only a few actors being brought on the stage — not more than two, three, or four — and the entire plot being, as a rule, confined to the rivalry of two lovers, and to the question upon which of them the heroine will bestow her love. It is quite the contrary with Dostoévsky. His plots are complicated and entangled, he introduces a throng of acting personages. In reading his romances, one seems to hear the roar of the crowd, and the life of a town is unrolled before one, with all its bustle, its incessantly complicated and unexpected encounters, and relations of people one to another. Like a true child of the town, Dostoévsky does not confine himself to fashionable drawing-rooms, or to the educated classes; he is fond of introducing the reader to the dens of poverty and vice, which he invests, also, with their own peculiar, gloomy poetry. In his pictures of low life, he more resembles Dickens than the followers of Georges Sand of his day.

But the most essential quality of Dostoévsky's creative art is the psychical analysis, which occupies the foreground in the majority of his romances, and constitutes their chief power and value. A well-known alienist doctor, who has examined these romances from a scientific point of view, declares himself amazed by the scientific accuracy wherewith Dostoévsky has depicted the mentally afflicted. In his opinion, about one-fourth of this author's characters are more or less afflicted in this manner, some romances containing as many as three who are not normal, in one way or another. This doctor demonstrates that Dostoévsky was a great psychopathologist, and that, with his artistic insight, he anticipated even exact science. And much that he has written will certainly be incorporated in psychological text-books. It is superfluous, after such competent testimony, to insist upon the life-likeness and the truth to nature of his portraits. The effect of his books on a reader is overwhelming, even stunning and nerve-shattering.

One further point is to be noted: that notwithstanding the immense number of characters presented to the reader by Dostoévsky, they all belong to a very limited number of types, which are repeated, with slight variations, in all his romances. Thus, in conformity with the doctrine of the "native-soilers," he places at the foundation of the majority of his works one of the two following types: (1) The gentle type of the man overflowing with tender affection of utter self-sacrifice, ready to forgive everything, to justify everything, to bear himself compassionately towards the treachery of

the girl he loves, and to go on loving her, even to the point of removing the obstacles to her marriage with another man, and so forth. Such is the hero of “Crime and Punishment”; such is Prince Mýshkinh in “The Idiot,” and so on; (2) The rapacious type, the type of the egoist, brimming over with passion, knowing no bounds to his desires, and restrained by no laws, either human or divine. Such are: Stavrógin in “Devils,” Dmítry Karamázoff (“The Karamázoff Brothers”), and so forth. His women also can be divided into two similar, contrasting types; on the one hand, the gentle — the type of the woman who possesses a heart which is tender and loving to self-abnegation, like Nelly and Natásha, in “Humiliated and Insulted”; Raskólnikoff’s mother and Sónya, in “Crime and Punishment”; Nétotchka Nezvánoff, in “The Stripling.” On the other hand, there are the rapacious types of capricious, charming women who are tyrannical to the point of cruelty, like Polína, in “The Gambler,” Nastásya Filíppovna in “The Idiot,” Grúshenka and Katerína Ivánovna in “The Karamázoff Brothers,” and Varvára Petróvna, in “Devils.”

The reactionary tendency made its appearance in Dostoévsky almost contemporaneously with its appearance in Turgéneff and Gontcharóff, unhappily. The first romance in which it presented itself was “Crime and Punishment,” the masterpiece in which his talent attained its zenith. This work, in virtue of its psychical and psychological analyses, deserves to rank among the greatest and best monuments of European literary art in the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, it produced a strange impression on all reasonable people, because of the fact that the author suddenly makes the crime of his hero, Raskólnikoff, dependent upon the influence of new ideas, as though they justified crimes, committed with good objects. No less surprising is the manner in which the romance winds up with the moral regeneration of Raskólnikoff under the influence of exile with hard labor.

Dostoévsky, to be fully appreciated, requires — perhaps more than most writers — to be read at length. But the following brief extract will afford a glimpse of his manner. The extract is from the “Notes from a Dead House.” Sushíloff was a prisoner who had been sent to Siberia merely for colonization, for some trifling breach of the laws. During a fit of intoxication he had been persuaded by a prisoner named Mikháiloff to exchange names and punishments, in consideration of a new red shirt and one ruble in cash. Such exchanges were by no means rare, but the prisoner to whose disadvantage the bargain redounded, generally demanded scores

of rubles; hence, every one ridiculed Sushíloff for the cheap rate at which he had sold his light sentence. Had he been able to return the ruble (which he had immediately spent for liquor), he might have bought back his name, but the prisoners' artél, or guild, always insisted upon the strict fulfilment of such bargains in default of the money being refunded; and if the authorities suspected such exchanges, they did not pry into them, it being immaterial to the officials (in Siberia at least) what man served out the sentence, so long as they could make their accounts tally. Thus much in explanation abbreviated from Dostoévsky's statement.

"Sushíloff and I lived a long time together, several years in all. He gradually became greatly attached to me; I could not help perceiving this, as I had, also, become thoroughly used to him. But one day — I shall never forgive myself for it — he did not comply with some request of mine, although he had just received money from me, and I had the cruelty to say to him, 'Here you are taking my money, Sushíloff, but you don't do your duty.' Sushíloff made no reply, but seemed suddenly to grow melancholy. Two days elapsed. I said to myself, it cannot be the result of my words. I knew that a certain prisoner, Antón Vasílieff, was urgently dunning him for a petty debt. He certainly had no money, and was afraid to ask me for any. So on the third day, I said to him: 'Sushíloff, I think you have wanted to ask me for money to pay Antón Vasílieff. Here it is.' I was sitting on the sleeping-shelf at the time; Sushíloff was standing in front of me. He seemed very much surprised that I should offer him the money of my own accord; that I should voluntarily remember his difficult situation, the more so as, in his opinion, he had already, and that recently, taken altogether too much from me in advance, so that he dared not hope that I would give him any more. He looked at the money, then at me, abruptly turned away and left the room. All this greatly amazed me. I followed him and found him behind the barracks. He was standing by the prison stockade with his face to the fence, his head leaning against it, and propping himself against it with his arm. 'Sushíloff, what's the matter with you?' I asked him. He did not look at me, and to my extreme surprise, I observed that he was on the verge of weeping. 'You think — Alexánder Petróvitch—' he began, in a broken voice, as he endeavored to look another way, 'that I serve you — for money — but I — I — e-e-ekh!' Here he turned again to the fence, so that he even banged his brow against it — and how he did begin to sob! It was the first time I had beheld a man weep in the prison. With difficulty I comforted him, and

although from that day forth, he began to serve me more zealously than ever, if that were possible, and to watch over me, yet I perceived, from almost imperceptible signs, that his heart could never pardon me for my reproach; and yet the others laughed at us, persecuted him at every convenient opportunity, sometimes cursed him violently — but he lived in concord and friendship with them and never took offense. Yes, it is sometimes very difficult to know a man thoroughly, even after long years of acquaintance!"

Dostoévsky, in all his important novels, has much to say about religion, and his personages all illustrate some phase of religious life. This is nowhere more apparent than in his last novel, "The Karamázoff Brothers," wherein the religious note is more powerfully struck than in any of the others. The ideal of the Orthodox Church of the East is embodied in Father Zosím, and in his gentle disciple, Alexyéi (Alyósha) Karamázoff; the reconciling power of redemption is again set forth over the guilty soul of the principal hero, Dmítry Karamázoff, when he is overtaken by chastisement for a suspected crime. The doubting element is represented by Iván Karamázoff, who is tortured by a constant conflict with anxious questions. In "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor," which the author puts into Iván's mouth, Dostoévsky's famous and characteristic power of analysis reached its greatest height.

Belonging to no class, and famous for but one book, which does not even count as literature, yet chronologically a member of this period, was Nikolái Gavrílovitch Tchernyshévsky (1828-1889). After 1863 he exerted an immense influence on the minds of young people of both sexes; and of all the writers of the "storm and stress" period, he is the most interesting, because, in his renowned book, "What Is to Be Done?" he applied his theories to practical life. His success was due, not to the practicability of his theories, to his literary qualities, to his art, but to the fact that he contrived to unite two things, each one of which, as a rule, is found in a writer; he simultaneously touched the two most responsive chords in the human heart — the thirst for easy happiness, and the imperative necessity for ascetic self-sacrifice. Hence, he won a response from the most diametrically conflicting natures.

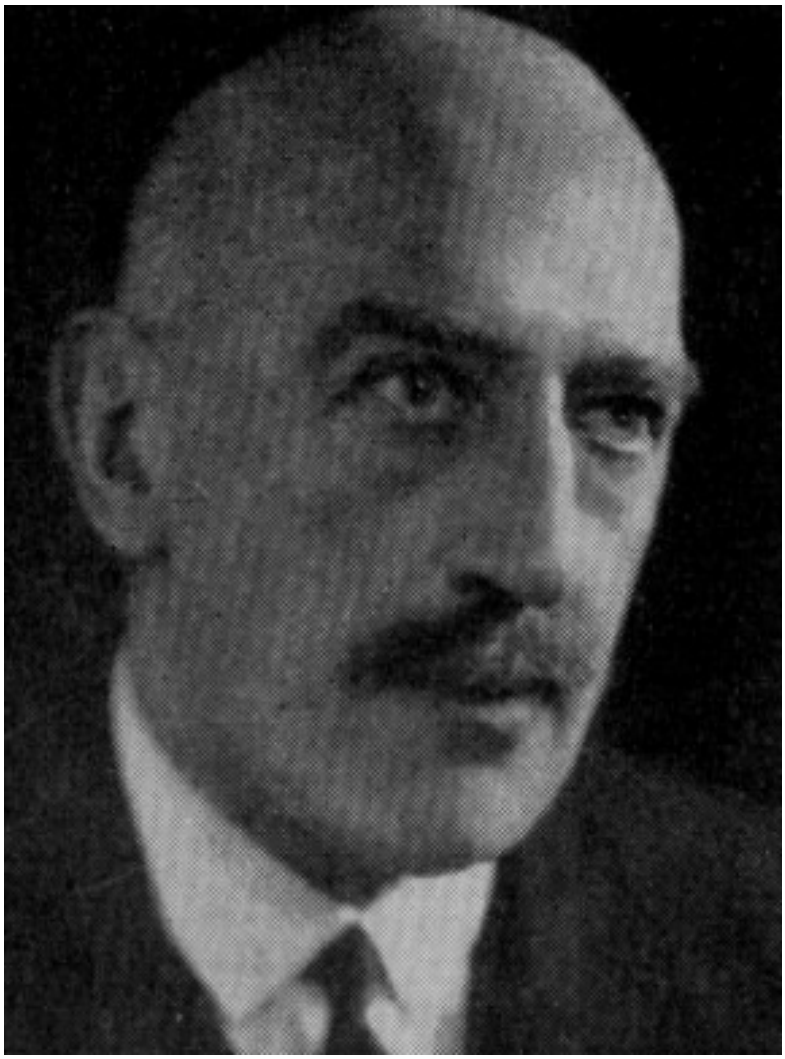
"What Is to Be Done" is the story of a young girl who, with the greatest improbability, is represented as being of the purest, most lofty character and sentiments, yet the daughter of two phenomenally (almost impossibly)

degraded people. Instead of marrying the rich and not otherwise undesirable man whom her parents urge on her, and who is deeply in love with her, she runs away with her teacher, and stipulates in advance for life in three rooms. She is only seventeen, yet she promptly establishes a fashion-shop which thrives apace, and puts forth numerous branches all over the capital. Her working-girls are treated ideally and as equals, she working with them, in which lies the answer to “What Is to Be Done?” After a while she falls in love with her husband’s dearest friend, who is described as so exactly like him that the reader is puzzled to know wherein she descried favorable difference, and the husband, perceiving this, makes things easy by pretending to drown himself, but in reality going off to America. Several years later he returns — as an American — and his ex-wife’s present husband, having become a medical celebrity, helps him to a bride by informing her panic-stricken parents (who oppose the match, although they are ignorant at first of any legal impediment to the union), that she will certainly die if they do not yield. The two newly assorted couples live in peace, happiness, and prosperity ever after. Work and community life are the chief themes of the preachment. He was exiled to Siberia in 1864, and on his return to Russia (when he settled in Ástrakhan, and was permitted to resume his literary labors), he busied himself with translations, critical articles, and the like, but was unable to regain his former place in literature.

Extract from 'AN OUTLINE OF RUSSIAN LITERATURE' by Maurice Baring



Maurice Baring (1874–1945) was an English man of letters, dramatist, poet, novelist, translator, essayist and war correspondent. The sixth chapter of his monumental work of literary criticism explores the joint influences of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy on world literature.



Maurice Baring

CHAPTER VI

TOLSTOY AND DOSTOYEVSKY

With Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, we come not only to the two great pillars of modern Russian literature which tower above all others like two colossal statues in the desert, but to two of the greatest figures in the literature of the world. Russia has not given the world a universal poet, a Shakespeare, a Dante, a Goethe, or a Molière; for Pushkin, consummate artist and inspired poet as he was, lacks that peculiar greatness which conquers all demarcations of frontier and difference of language, and produces work which becomes a part of the universal inheritance of all nations; but Russia has given us two prose-writers whose work has done this very thing. And between them they sum up in themselves the whole of the Russian soul, and almost the whole of the Russian character; I say almost the whole of the Russian *character*, because although between them they sum up all that is greatest, deepest, and all that is weakest in the Russian *soul*, there is perhaps one element of the Russian *character*, which, although they understood it well enough, their genius forbade them to possess. If you take as ingredients Peter the Great, Dostoyevsky's Mwyshkin — the idiot, the pure fool who is wiser than the wise — and the hero of Gogol's *Revisor*, Hlestyakov the liar and wind-bag, you can, I think, out of these elements, reconstitute any Russian who has ever lived. That is to say, you will find that every single Russian is compounded either of one or more of these elements.

For instance, mix Peter the Great with a sufficient dose of Hlestyakov, and you get Boris Godunov and Bakunin; leave the Peter the Great element unmixed, and you get Bazarov, and many of Gorky's heroes; mix it slightly with Hlestyakov, and you get Lermontov; let the Hlestyakov element predominate, and you get Griboyedov's Molchalin; let the Mwyshkin element predominate, with a dose of Hlestyakov, and you get Father Gapon; let it predominate without the dose of Hlestyakov, and you get Oblomov; mix it with a dose of Peter the Great, you get Herzen, Chatsky; and so on. Mix all the elements equally, and you get Onegin, the average man. I do not mean that there are necessarily all these elements in every Russian, but that you will meet with no Russian in whom there is not to be found either one or more than one of them.

Now, in Tolstoy, the Peter the Great element dominates, with a dose of Mwyshkin, and a vast but unsuccessful aspiration towards the complete characteristics of Mwyshkin; while in Dostoyevsky the Mwyshkin predominates, blent with a fiery streak of Peter the Great; but in neither of them is there a touch of Hlestyakov. In Russia, it constantly happens that a man in any class, be he a soldier, sailor, tinker, tailor, rich man, poor man, plough-boy, or thief, will suddenly leave his profession and avocation and set out on the search for God and for truth. These men are called *Bogoiskateli*, Seekers after God. The one fact that the whole world knows about Tolstoy is that, in the midst of his great and glorious artistic career, he suddenly abjured literature and art, denounced worldly possessions, and said that truth was to be found in working like a peasant, and thus created a sect of Tolstoyists. The world then blamed him for inconsistency because he went on writing, and lived as before, with his family and in his own home. But in reality there was no inconsistency, because there was in reality no break. Tolstoy had been a *Bogoiskatel*, a seeker after truth and God all his life; it was only the manner of his search which had changed; but the quest itself remained unchanged; he was unable, owing to family ties, to push his premises to their logical conclusion until just before his death; but push them to their logical conclusion he did at the last, and he died, as we know, on the road to a monastery.

Tolstoy's manner of search was extraordinary, extraordinary because he was provided for it with the eyes of an eagle which enabled him to see through everything; and, as he took nothing for granted from the day he began his career until the day he died, he was always subjecting people, objects, ideas, to the searchlight of his vision, and testing them to see whether they were true or not; moreover, he was gifted with the power of describing what he saw during this long journey through the world of fact and the world of ideas, whether it were the general or the particular, the mass or the detail, the vision, the panorama, the crowd, the portrait or the miniature, with the strong simplicity of a Homer, and the colour and reality of a Velasquez. This made him one of the world's greatest writers, and the world's greatest artist in narrative fiction. Another peculiarity of his search was that he pursued it with eagle eyes, but with blinkers.

In 1877 Dostoyevsky wrote: "In spite of his colossal artistic talent, Tolstoy is one of those Russian minds which only see that which is right before their eyes, and thus press towards that point. They have not the

power of turning their necks to the right or to the left to see what lies on one side; to do this, they would have to turn with their whole bodies. If they do turn, they will quite probably maintain the exact opposite of what they have been hitherto professing; for they are rigidly honest." It is this search carried on by eyes of unsurpassed penetration between blinkers, by a man who every now and then did turn his whole body, which accounts for the many apparent changes and contradictions of Tolstoy's career.

Another source of contradiction was that by temperament the Lucifer element predominated in him, and the ideal he was for ever seeking was the humility of Mwyshkin, the pure fool, an ideal which he could not reach, because he could not sufficiently humble himself. Thus when death overtook him he was engaged on his last and his greatest voyage of discovery; and there is something solemn and great about his having met with death at a small railway station.

Tolstoy's works are a long record of this search, and of the memories and experiences which he gathered on the way. There is not a detail, not a phase of feeling, not a shade or mood in his spiritual life that he has not told us of in his works. In his *Childhood, Boyhood and Youth*, he re-creates his own childhood, boyhood and youth, not always exactly as it happened in reality; there is *Dichtung* as well as *Wahrheit*; but the *Dichtung* is as true as the *Wahrheit*, because his aim was to recreate the impressions he had received from his early surroundings. Moreover, the searchlight of his eyes even then fell mercilessly upon everything that was unreal, sham and conventional.

As soon as he had finished with his youth, he turned to the life of a grown-up man in *The Morning of a Landowner*, and told how he tried to live a landowner's life, and how nothing but dissatisfaction came of it. He escapes to the Caucasus, and seeks regeneration, and the result of the search here is a masterpiece, *The Cossacks*. He goes back to the world, and takes part in the Crimean war; he describes what he saw in a battery; his eagle eye lays bare the *splendeurs et misères* of war more truthfully perhaps than a writer on war has ever done, but less sympathetically than Alfred de Vigny — the difference being that Alfred de Vigny is innately modest, and that Tolstoy, as he wrote himself, at the beginning of the war, "had no modesty."

After the Crimean war, he plunges again into the world and travels abroad; and on his return to Russia, he settles down at Yasnaya Polyana and marries. The hero of his novel *Domestic Happiness* appears to have found

his heart's desire in marriage and country life. It was then that he wrote *War and Peace*, which he began to publish in 1865. He always had the idea of writing a story on the Decembrist movement, and *War and Peace* was perhaps the preface to that unwritten work, for it ends when that movement was beginning. In *War and Peace*, he gave the world a modern prose epic, which did not suffer from the drawback that spoils most historical novels, namely, that of being obviously false, because it was founded on his own recollection of his parents' memories. He gives us what we feel to be the very truth; for the first time in an historical novel, instead of saying "this is very likely true," or "what a wonderful work of artistic reconstruction," we feel that we were ourselves there; that we knew those people; that they are a part of our very own past. He paints a whole generation of people; and in Pierre Bezukhov, the new landmarks of his own search are described. Among many other episodes, there is nowhere in literature such a true and charming picture of family life as that of the Rostovs, and nowhere a more vital and charming personality than Natasha; a creation as living as Pushkin's Tatiana, and alive with a reality even more convincing than Turgenev's pictures of women, since she is alive with a different kind of life; the difference being that while you have read in Turgenev's books about noble and exquisite women, you are not sure whether you have not known Natasha yourself and in your own life; you are not sure she does not belong to the borderland of your own past in which dreams and reality are mingled. *War and Peace* eclipses all other historical novels; it has all Stendhal's reality, and all Zola's power of dealing with crowds and masses. Take, for instance, a masterpiece such as Flaubert's *Salammbô*; it may and very likely does take away your breath by the splendour of its language, its colour, and its art, but you never feel that, even in a dream, you had taken part in the life which is painted there. The only bit of unreality in *War and Peace* is the figure of Napoleon, to whom Tolstoy was deliberately unfair. Another impression which Tolstoy gives us in *War and Peace* is that man is in reality always the same, and that changes of manners are not more important than changes in fashions of clothes. That is why it is not extravagant to mention *Salammbô* in this connection. One feels that, if Tolstoy had written a novel about ancient Rome, we should have known a score of patricians, senators, scribblers, clients, parasites, matrons, courtesans, better even than we know Cicero from his letters; we should not only feel that we *know* Cicero, but that we had actually known him. This

very task — namely, that of reconstituting a page out of Pagan history — was later to be attempted by Merezhkovsky; but brilliant as his work is, he only at times and by flashes attains to Tolstoy's power of convincing.

Anna Karenina appeared in 1875-76. And here Tolstoy, with the touch of a Velasquez and upon a huge canvas, paints the contemporary life of the upper classes in St. Petersburg and in the country. Levin, the hero, is himself. Here, again, the truth to nature and the reality is so intense and vivid that a reader unacquainted with Russia will in reading the book probably not think of Russia at all, but will imagine the story has taken place in his own country, whatever that may be. He shows you everything from the inside, as well as from the outside. You feel, in the picture of the races, what Anna is feeling in looking on, and what Vronsky is feeling in riding. And with what reality, what incomparable skill the gradual dawn of Anna's love for Vronsky is described; how painfully real is her pompous and excellent husband; and how every incident in her love affair, her visit to her child, her appearance at the opera, when, after having left her husband, she defies the world, her gradual growing irritability, down to the final catastrophe, bears on it the stamp of something which must have happened just in that very way and no other.

But, as far as Tolstoy's own development is concerned, Levin is the most interesting figure in the book. This character is another landmark in Tolstoy's search after truth; he is constantly putting accepted ideas to the test; he is haunted by the fear of sudden death, not the physical fear of death in itself, but the fear that in the face of death the whole of life may be meaningless; a peasant opens a new door for him and furnishes him with a solution to the problem — to live for one's soul: life no longer seems meaningless.

Thus Levin marks the stage in Tolstoy's evolution of his abandoning materialism and of seeking for the truth in the Church. But the Church does not satisfy him. He rejects its dogmas and its ritual; he turns to the Gospel, but far from accepting it, he revises it. He comes to the conclusion that Christianity as it has been taught is mere madness, and that the Church is a superfluous anachronism. Thus another change comes about, which is generally regarded as *the* change cutting Tolstoy's life in half; in reality it is only a fresh right-about-turn of a man who is searching for truth in blinkers. In his *Confession*, he says: "I grew to hate myself; and now all has become clear." He came to believe that property was the source of all evil; he

desired literally to give up all he had. This he was not able to do. It was not that he shrank from the sacrifice at the last; but that circumstances and family ties were too strong for him. But his final flight from home in the last days of his life shows that the desire had never left him.

Art was also subjected to his new standards and found wanting, both in his own work and in that of others. Shakespeare and Beethoven were summarily disposed of; his own masterpieces he pronounced to be worthless. This more than anything shows the pride of the man. He could admire no one, not even himself. He scorned the gifts which were given him, and the greatest gifts of the greatest men. But this landmark of Tolstoy's evolution, his turning his back on the Church, and on his work, is a landmark in Russian history as well as in Russian art. For far less than this Russian thinkers and writers of high position had been imprisoned and exiled. Nobody dared to touch Tolstoy. He fearlessly attacked all constituted authority, both spiritual and temporal, in an epoch of reaction, and such was his prestige that official Russia raised no finger. His authority was too great, and this is perhaps the first great victory of the liberty of individual thought over official tyranny in Russia. There had been martyrs in plenty before, but no conquerors.

After *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy, who gave up literature for a time, but for a time only, nevertheless continued to write; at first he only wrote stories for children and theological and polemical pamphlets; but in 1886 he published the terribly powerful peasant drama: *The Powers of Darkness*. Later came the *Kreutzer Sonata*, the *Death of Ivan Ilitch*, and *Resurrection*. Here the hero Nehludov is a lifeless phantom of Tolstoy himself; the episodes and details have the reality of his early work, so has Maslova, the heroine; but in the squalor and misery of the prisons he shows no precious balms of humanity and love, as Dostoyevsky did; and the book has neither the sweep and epic swing of *War and Peace*, nor the satisfying completeness of *Anna Karenina*. Since his death, some posthumous works have been published, among them a novel, and a play: *The Living Corpse*. He died, as he had lived, still searching, and perhaps at the end he found the object of his quest.

Tolstoy, even more than Pushkin, was rooted to the soil; all that is not of the soil — anything mystic or supernatural — was totally alien to him. He was the oak which could not bend; and being, as he was, the king of realistic fiction, an unsurpassed painter of pictures, portraits, men and

things, a penetrating analyst of the human heart, a genius cast in a colossal mould, his work, both by its substance and its artistic power, exercised an influence beyond his own country, affected all European nations, and gives him a place among the great creators of the world. Tolstoy was not a rebel but a heretic, a heretic not only to religion and the Church, but in philosophy, opinions, art, and even in food; but what the world will remember of him are not his heretical theories but his faithful practice, which is orthodox in its obedience to the highest canons, orthodox as Homer and Shakespeare are orthodox, and like theirs, one of the greatest earthly examples of the normal and the sane.

To say that Dostoyevsky is the antithesis to Tolstoy, and the second great pillar of Russian prose literature, will surprise nobody now. Had one been writing ten years ago, the expression of such an opinion would have met with an incredulous smile amongst the majority of English readers of Russian literature, for Dostoyevsky was practically unknown save for his *Crime and Punishment*, and to have compared him with Turgenev would have seemed sacrilegious. Now when Dostoyevsky is one of the shibboleths of our *intelligentsia*, one can boldly say, without fear of being misunderstood, that, as a creator and a force in literature, Dostoyevsky is in another plane than that of Turgenev, and as far greater than him as Leonardo da Vinci is greater than Vandyke, or as Wagner is greater than Gounod, while some Russians consider him even infinitely greater than Tolstoy. Let us say he is his equal and complement. He is in any case, in almost every respect, his antithesis. Tolstoy was the incarnation of health, and is above all things and pre-eminently the painter of the sane and the earthly. Dostoyevsky was an epileptic, the painter of the abnormal, of criminals, madmen, degenerates, mystics. Tolstoy led an even, uneventful life, spending the greater part of it in his own country house, in the midst of a large family. Dostoyevsky was condemned to death, served a sentence of four years' hard labour in a convict settlement in Siberia, and besides this spent six years in exile; when he returned and started a newspaper, it was prohibited by the Censorship; a second newspaper which he started came to grief; he underwent financial ruin; his first wife, his brother, and his best friend died; he was driven abroad by debt, harassed by the authorities on the one hand, and attacked by the liberals on the other; abused and misunderstood, almost starving and never well, working under

overwhelming difficulties, always pressed for time, and ill requited for his toil. That was Dostoyevsky's life.

Tolstoy was a heretic; at first a materialist, and then a seeker after a religion of his own; Dostoyevsky was a practising believer, a vehement apostle of orthodoxy, and died fortified by the Sacraments of the Church. Tolstoy with his broad unreligious opinions was narrow-minded. Dostoyevsky with his definite religious opinions was the most broad-minded man who ever lived. Tolstoy hated the supernatural, and was alien to all mysticism. Dostoyevsky seems to get nearer to the unknown, to what lies beyond the flesh, than any other writer. In Tolstoy, the Peter the Great element of the Russian character predominated; in Dostoyevsky that of Mwyshkin, the pure fool. Tolstoy could never submit and humble himself. Submission and humility and resignation are the keynotes and mainsprings of Dostoyevsky. Tolstoy despised art, and paid no homage to any of the great names of literature; and this was not only after the so-called change. As early as 1862, he said that Pushkin and Beethoven could not please because of their absolute beauty. Dostoyevsky was catholic and cosmopolitan, and admired the literature of foreign countries — Racine as well as Shakespeare, Corneille as well as Schiller. The essence of Tolstoy is a magnificent intolerance. The essence of Dostoyevsky is sweet reasonableness. Tolstoy dreamed of giving up all he had to the poor, and of living like a peasant; Dostoyevsky had to share the hard labour of the lowest class of criminals. Tolstoy theorized on the distribution of food; but Dostoyevsky was fed like a beggar. Tolstoy wrote in affluence and at leisure, and re-wrote his books; Dostoyevsky worked like a literary hack for his daily bread, ever pressed for time and ever in crying need of money.

These contrasts are not made in disparagement of Tolstoy, but merely to point out the difference between the two men and between their circumstances. Tolstoy wrote about himself from the beginning of his career to the end; nearly all his work is autobiographical, and he almost always depicts himself in all his books. We know nothing of Dostoyevsky from his books. He was an altruist, and he loved others better than himself.

Dostoyevsky's first book, *Poor Folk*, published in 1846, is a descendant of Gogol's story *The Cloak*, and bears the influence, to a slight extent, of Gogol. In this, the story of a minor public servant battling against want, and finding a ray of light in corresponding with a girl also in poor circumstances, but who ultimately marries a rich middle-aged man, we

already get all Dostoyevsky's peculiar sweetness; what Stevenson called his "lovely goodness," his almost intolerable pathos, his love of the disinherited and of the failures of life. His next book, *Letters from a Dead House*, has a far more universal interest. It is the record of his prison experiences, which is of priceless value, not only on account of its radiant moral beauty, its perpetual discovery of the soul of goodness in things evil, its human fraternity, its complete absence of egotism and pose, and its thrilling human interest, but also on account of the light it throws on the Russian character, the Russian poor, and the Russian peasant.

In 1866 came *Crime and Punishment*, which brought Dostoyevsky fame. This book, Dostoyevsky's *Macbeth*, is so well known in the French and English translations that it hardly needs any comment. Dostoyevsky never wrote anything more tremendous than the portrayal of the anguish that seethes in the soul of Raskolnikov, after he has killed the old woman, "mechanically forced," as Professor Brückner says, "into performing the act, as if he had gone too near machinery in motion, had been caught by a bit of his clothing and cut to pieces." And not only is one held spellbound by every shifting hope, fear, and doubt, and each new pang that Raskolnikov experiences, but the souls of all the subsidiary characters in the book are revealed to us just as clearly: the Marmeladov family, the honest Razumikhin, the police inspector, and the atmosphere of the submerged tenth in St. Petersburg — the steaming smell of the city in the summer. There is an episode when Raskolnikov kneels before Sonia, the prostitute, and says to her: "It is not before you I am kneeling, but before all the suffering of mankind." That is what Dostoyevsky does himself in this and in all his books; but in none of them is the suffering of all mankind conjured up before us in more living colours, and in none of them is his act of homage in kneeling before it more impressive.

This book was written before the words "psychological novel" had been invented; but how all the psychological novels which were written years later by Bourget and others pale before this record written in blood and tears! *Crime and Punishment* was followed by *The Idiot* (1868). The idiot is Mwyshkin, who has been alluded to already, the wise fool, an epileptic, in whom irony and arrogance and egoism have been annihilated; and whose very simplicity causes him to pass unscathed through a den of evil, a world of liars, scoundrels, and thieves, none of whom can escape the influence of his radiant personality. He is the same with every one he meets, and with his

unsuspicious sincerity he combines the intuition of utter goodness, so that he can see through people and read their minds. In this character, Dostoyevsky has put all his sweetness; it is not a portrait of himself, but it is a portrait of what he would have liked to be, and reflects all that is best in him. In contrast to Mwyshkin, Rogozhin, the merchant, is the incarnation of undisciplined passion, who ends by killing the thing he loves, Nastasia, also a creature of unbridled impulses, — because he feels that he can never really and fully possess her. The catastrophe, the description of the night after Rogozhin has killed Nastasia, is like nothing else in literature; lifelike in detail and immense, in the way in which it makes you listen at the keyhole of the soul, immense with the immensity of a great revelation. The minor characters in the book are also all of them remarkable; one of them, the General's wife, Madame Epanchin, has an indescribable and playful charm.

The Idiot was followed by *The Possessed*, or *Devils*, printed in 1871-72, called thus after the Devils in the Gospel of St. Luke, that left the possessed man and went into the swine; the Devils in the book are the hangers-on of Nihilism between 1862 and 1869. The book anticipated the future, and in it Dostoyevsky created characters who were identically the same, and committed identically the same crimes, as men who actually lived many years later in 1871, and later still. The whole book turns on the exploitation by an unscrupulous, ingenious, and iron-willed knave of the various weaknesses of a crowd of idealist dupes and disciples. One of them is a decadent, one of them is one of those idealists "whom any strong idea strikes all of a sudden and annihilates his will, sometimes for ever"; one of them is a maniac whose single idea is the production of the Superman which he thinks will come, when it will be immaterial to a man whether he lives or dies, and when he will be prepared to kill himself not out of fear but in order to kill fear. That man will be God. Not the God-man, but the Man-God. The plan of the unscrupulous leader, Peter Verkhovensky, who was founded on Nechaev, a Nihilist of real life, is to create disorder, and amid the disorder to seize the authority; he imagines a central committee of which he pretends to be the representative, organizes a small local committee, and persuades his dupes that a network of similar small committees exist all over Russia; his aim being to create them gradually, by persuading people in every plot of fresh ground that they exist everywhere else.

Thus the idea of the book was to show that the strength of Nihilism lay, not in high dogmas and theories held by a large and well-organized society, but in the strength of the will of one or two men reacting on the weaker herd and exploiting the strength, the weakness, and the one-sidedness of its ideals, a herd which was necessarily weak owing to that very one-sidedness. In order to bind his disciples with a permanent bond, Verkhovensky exploits the *idée fixe* of suicide and the superman, which is held by one of his dupes, to induce him to commit a crime before he kills himself, and thus make away with another member of the committee who is represented as being a spy. Once this is done, the whole committee will be jointly responsible, and bound to him by the ties of blood and fear. But Verkhovensky is not the hero of the book. The hero is Stavrogin, whom Verkhovensky regards as his trump card, because of the strength of his character, which leads him to commit the most outrageous extravagances, and at the same time to remain as cold as ice; but Verkhovensky's whole design is shattered on Stavrogin's character, all the murders already mentioned are committed, the whole scheme comes to nothing, the conspirators are discovered, and Peter escapes abroad.

When *Devils* appeared in 1871, it was looked upon as a gross exaggeration, but real life in subsequent years was to produce characters and events of the same kind, which were more startling than Dostoyevsky's fiction. The book is the least well-constructed of Dostoyevsky's; the narrative is disconnected, and the events, incidents, and characters so crowded together, that the general effect is confused; on the other hand, it contains isolated scenes which Dostoyevsky never surpassed; and in its strength and in its limitations it is perhaps his most characteristic work.

From 1873-80 Dostoyevsky went back to journalism, and wrote his *Diary of a Writer*, in which he commented on current events. In 1880, he united all conflicting and hostile parties and shades of public opinion, by the speech he made at the unveiling of Pushkin's memorial, in one common bond of enthusiasm. At the end of the seventies, he returned to a work already begun, *The Brothers Karamazov*, which, although it remains the longest of his books, was never finished. It is the story of three brothers, Dimitri, Ivan, and Alyosha; their father is a cynical sensualist. The eldest brother is an undisciplined, passionate character, who expiates his passions by suffering; the second brother is a materialist, the tragedy of whose inner life forms a greater part of the book; the third brother, Alyosha, is a lover of

humanity, and a believer in God and man. He seeks a monastery, but his spiritual father sends him out into the world, to live and to suffer. He is to go through the furnace of the world and experience many trials; for the microbe of lust that is in his family is dormant in him also. The book was called the *History of a Great Sinner*, and the sinner was to be Alyosha. But Dostoyevsky died before this part of the subject is even approached.

He died in January 1881; the crowds of men and women of all sorts and conditions of life that attended his funeral, and the extent and the sincerity of the grief manifested, gave it an almost mythical greatness. The people gave him a funeral such as few kings or heroes have ever had. Without fear of controversy or contradiction one can now say that Dostoyevsky's place in Russian literature is at the top, equal and in the opinion of some superior to that of Tolstoy in greatness. He is also one of the greatest writers the world has ever produced, not because, like Tolstoy, he saw life steadily and saw it whole, and painted it with the supreme and easy art of a Velasquez; nor because, like Turgenev, he wove exquisite pictures into musical words. Dostoyevsky was not an artist; his work is shapeless; his books are like quarries where granite and dross, gold and ore are mingled. He paid no attention to style, and yet so strong and vital is his spoken word that when the Moscow Art Theatre put some scenes in *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Devils* on the stage, they found they could not alter one single syllable; and sometimes his words have a power beyond that of words, a power that only music has. There are pages where Dostoyevsky expresses the anguish of the soul in the same manner as Wagner expressed the delirium of dying Tristram. I should indeed put the matter the other way round, and say that in the last act of Tristram, Wagner is as great as Dostoyevsky. But Dostoyevsky is great because of the divine message he gives, not didactically, not by sermons, but by the goodness that emanates, like a precious balm, from the characters he creates; because more than any other books in the world his books reflect not only the teaching and the charity, but the accent and the divine aura of love that is in the Gospels.

"I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, or even of mortal flesh; it is my spirit that addresses your spirit, just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal — as we are!" These words, spoken by Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, express what Dostoyevsky's books do. His spirit addresses our spirit. "Be no man's judge; humble love is a terrible power which effects more

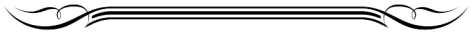
than violence. Only active love can bring out faith. Love men, and do not be afraid of their sins; love man in his sin; love all the creatures of God, and pray God to make you cheerful. Be cheerful as children and as the birds." This was Father Zosima's advice to Alyosha. And that is the gist of Dostoyevsky's message to mankind. "Life," Father Zosima also says to Alyosha, "will bring you many misfortunes, but you will be happy on account of them, and you will bless life and cause others to bless it." Here we have the whole secret of Dostoyevsky's greatness. He blessed life, and he caused others to bless it.

It is objected that his characters are abnormal; that he deals with the diseased, with epileptics, neurasthenics, criminals, sensualists, madmen; but it is just this very fact which gives so much strength and value to the blessing he gave to life; it is owing to this fact that he causes others to bless life; because he was cast in the nethermost circle of life's inferno; he was thrown together with the refuse of humanity, with the worst of men and with the most unfortunate; he saw the human soul on the rack, and he saw the vilest diseases that afflict the human soul; he faced the evil without fear or blinkers; and there, in the inferno, in the dust and ashes, he recognized the print of divine footsteps and the fragrance of goodness; he cried from the abyss: "Hosanna to the Lord, for He is just!" and he blessed life. It is true that his characters are taken almost entirely from the *Despised and Rejected*, as one of his books was called, and often from the ranks of the abnormal; but when a great writer wishes to reveal the greatest adventures and the deepest experiences which the soul of man can undergo, it is in vain for him to take the normal type; it has no adventures. The adventures of the soul of Fortinbras would be of no help to mankind; but the adventures of Hamlet are of help to mankind, and the adventures of Don Quixote; and neither Don Quixote nor Hamlet are normal types.

Dostoyevsky wrote the tragedy of life and of the soul, and to do this he chose circumstances as terrific as those which unhinged the reason of King Lear, shook that of Hamlet, and made Œdipus blind himself. His books resemble Greek tragedies by the magnitude of the spiritual adventures they set forth; they are unlike Greek Tragedies in the Christian charity and the faith and the hope which goes out of them; they inspire the reader with courage, never with despair, although Dostoyevsky, face to face with the last extremities of evil, never seeks to hide it or to shun it, but merely to search for the soul of goodness in it. He did not search in vain, and just as,

when he was on his way to Siberia, a conversation he had with a fellow-prisoner inspired that fellow-prisoner with the feeling that he could go on living and even face penal servitude, so do Dostoyevsky’s books come to mankind as a message of hope from a radiant country. That is what constitutes his peculiar greatness.

THREE ESSAYS ON DOSTOYEVSKY by Virginia Woolf



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Dostoevsky the Father.

It would be a mistake to read this book as if it were a biography. Mlle Dostoevsky expressly calls it a study, and to this the reader must add that it is a study by a daughter. The letters, the facts, the testimonies of friends, even to a great extent the dates which support the orthodox biography are here absent or are introduced as they happen to suit the writer's purpose. And what is a daughter's purpose in writing a study of her father? We need not judge her very severely if she wishes us to see him as she saw him - upright, affectionate, infallible, or, if he had his failings, she is to be excused if she represents them as the foibles of greatness. He was extravagant perhaps. He gambled sometimes. There were seasons when, misled by the wiles of women, he strayed from the paths of virtue. We can make allowance for these filial euphemisms; and if we come to feel, as this book makes us feel, that the daughter was fond as well as proud of her father, that is a real addition to our knowledge. At the same time we should have listened more sympathetically if Mile Dostoevsky had suppressed her version of the quarrel between Dostoevsky and Turgenev. To make out that your father is a hero is one thing; to insist that his enemies are villains is another. Yet she must have it that all the blame was on Turgenev's side; that he was jealous, a snob, 'even more cruel and malicious than the others'. She neglects the testimony supplied by Turgenev's own works, and, what is more serious, makes no mention of the evidence on the other side which must be known to her. The effect is naturally to make the reader scrutinize Dostoevsky's character more closely than he would otherwise have done. He asks himself inevitably what there was in the man to cause this shrill and excited partisanship on the part of his daughter. The search for an answer among the baffling yet illuminating materials which Mlle Dostoevsky supplies is the true interest of this book.

If we were to be guided by her we should base our inquiry upon the fact that Dostoevsky was of Lithuanian descent on his father's side. Mlle Dostoevsky has read Gobineau, and shows a perverse ingenuity and considerable industry in attributing almost every mental and moral characteristic to race heredity. Dostoevsky was a Lithuanian and thus loved purity; he was a Lithuanian and thus paid his brother's debts; he was a Lithuanian and thus wrote bad Russian; he was a Lithuanian and thus a

devout Catholic. When he complained that he had a strange and evil character he did not realize that it was neither strange nor evil, but simply Lithuanian. As Dostoevsky himself never attached much importance to his descent, we may be allowed to follow his example. We shall not come much closer to him by pursuing that track. But Mlle Dostoevsky increases our knowledge by more indirect methods. A clever little girl cannot run about her father's house without picking up many things which she is not expected to know. She knows whether the cook is grumbling; which of the guests bores her parents; whether her father is in a good temper, or whether there has been some mysterious grown-up catastrophe. Considering that Aimée was very young when her father died, she could scarcely be expected to observe anything of much greater importance than this. But then she is a Russian. She has that apparently involuntary candour which must make family life so disconcerting in Russia. Her father's greatness subdues her to a dutiful attitude, which, if reverent, is also a little colourless. But no one else has that power over her. 'Her self-esteem was always excessive, almost morbid; a trifle would offend her, and she easily fell a victim to those who flattered her.' Thus she describes her mother, and her mother is still alive. As for her uncles and aunts, her step-brother, her father's first wife, his mistress, she is completely outspoken about them all and - were it not that she qualifies her blame by detecting strains of Slav, Norman, Ukrainian, Negro, Mongol, and Swedish blood - equally severe. That, indeed, is her contribution to our knowledge of Dostoevsky. No doubt she exaggerates; but there can also be no doubt that her bitterness is the legacy of old family quarrels - sordid, degrading, patched-up, but bursting out afresh and pursuing Dostoevsky to the verge of his death-chamber. The pages seem to ring with scoldings and complainings and recriminations; with demands for more money and with replies that all the money has been spent. Such, or something like it, we conclude, was the atmosphere in which Dostoevsky wrote his books.

His father was a doctor who had to resign his appointment owing to drunkenness; and it was on account of his drunken savagery that his serfs smothered him one day beneath the cushions of his carriage as he was driving on his estate. The disease was inherited by his children. Two of Dostoevsky's brothers were drunkards; his sister was miserly to the verge of insanity, and was also murdered for her money. Her son was 'so stupid that his folly verged on idiocy. My uncle An drey's son, a young and brilliant

savant, died of creeping paralysis. The whole Dostoevsky family suffered from neurasthenia.' And to the family eccentricity one must add what appears to the English reader the national eccentricity - the likelihood, that is to say, that if Dostoevsky escapes death on the scaffold and survives imprisonment in Siberia he will marry a wife who has a handsome young tutor for her lover, and will take for his mistress a girl who arrives at his bedside at seven in the morning brandishing an enormous knife with which she proposes to kill a Frenchman. Dostoevsky dissuades her, and off they go to Wiesbaden where 'my father played roulette with passionate absorption, was delighted when he won, and experienced a despair hardly less delicious when he lost'. It is all violent and extreme, later, even, when Dostoevsky was happily married, there was still a worthless stepson who expected to be supported; still the brothers' debts to pay; still the sisters trying to make mischief between him and his wife; and then the rich aunt Kumanin must needs die and leave her property to stir up the last flames of hatred among the embittered relations. 'Dostoevsky lost patience and, refusing to continue the painful discussion, left the table before the meal was finished.' Three days later he was dead. One thinks of Farringford flourishing not so very far away. One wonders what Matthew Arnold, who deplored the irregularities of the Shelley set, would have said to this one.

And yet, has it anything to do with Dostoevsky? One feels rather as if one had been admitted to the kitchen where the cook is smashing the china, or to the drawing-room where the relations are gossiping in corners, while Dostoevsky sits upstairs alone in his study. He had, it is clear, an extraordinary power of absenting his mind from his body. The money troubles alone, one would think, were enough to drive him distracted. On the contrary, it was his wife who worried, and it was Dostoevsky, says his daughter, who remained serene, saying, 'in tones of conviction, "We shall never be without money." ' We catch sight of his body plainly enough, but it is rather as if we passed him taking his afternoon walk, always at four o'clock, always along the same road, so absorbed in his own thoughts that 'he never recognized the acquaintance he met on the way'. They travelled in Italy, visited the galleries, strolled in the Boboli gardens, and 'the roses blooming there struck their Northern imaginations'. But after working at The Idiot' all the morning how much did he see of the roses in the afternoon? It is the waste of his day that is gathered up and given us in place of his life. But now and then, when Mlle Dostoevsky forgets the political

rancours of the moment and the complex effect of the Norman strain upon the Lithuanian temperament, she opens the study door and lets us see her father as she saw him. He could not write if he had a spot of candle-grease on his coat. He liked dried figs and kept a box of them in a cupboard from which he helped his children. He liked eau-de-Cologne to wash with. He liked little girls to wear pale green. He would dance with them and read aloud Dickens and Scott. But he never spoke to them about his own childhood. She thinks that he dreaded discovering signs of his father's vices in himself; and she believes that he 'wished intensely to be like others'. At any rate, it was the greatest pleasure of her day to be allowed to breakfast with him and to talk to him about books. And then it is all over. There is her father laid out in his evening dress in his coffin; a painter is sketching him; grand dukes and peasants crowd the staircase; while she and her brother distribute flowers to unknown people and enjoy very much the drive to the cemetery.

More Dostoevsky.

Each time that Mrs Garnett adds another red volume to her admirable translations of the works of Dostoevsky we feel a little better able to measure what the existence of this great genius who is beginning to permeate our lives so curiously means to us. His books are now to be found on the shelves of the humblest English libraries; they have become an indestructible part of the furniture of our rooms, as they belong for good to the furniture of our minds. The latest addition to Mrs Garnett's translation, The Eternal Husband', including also The Double' and 'The Gentle Spirit', is not one of the greatest of his works, although it was produced in what may be held to be the greatest period of his genius, between The Idiot' and The Possessed'. If one had never read anything else by Dostoevsky, one might lay the book down with a feeling that the man who wrote it was bound to write a very great novel some day; but with a feeling also that something strange and important had happened. This strangeness and this sense that something important has happened persist, however, although we are familiar with his books and have had time to arrange the impression that they make on us.

Of all great writers there is, so it seems to us, none quite so surprising, or so bewildering, as Dostoevsky. And although 'The Eternal Husband' is nothing more than a long short story which we need not compare with the great novels, it too has this extraordinary power; nor while we are reading it can we liberate ourselves sufficiently to feel certain that in this or that respect there is a failure of power, or insight, or craftsmanship; nor does it occur to us to compare it with other works either by the same writer or by other writers. It is very difficult to analyse the impression it has made even when we have finished it. It is the story of one Velchaninov, who, many years before the story opens, has seduced the wife of a certain Pavel Pavlovitch in the town of T — . Velchaninov has almost forgotten her and is living in Petersburg. But now as he walks about Petersburg he is constantly running into a man who wears a crêpe hat-band and reminds him of someone he cannot put a name to. At last, after repeated meetings which bring him to a state bordering on delirium, Velchaninov is visited at two o'clock in the morning by the stranger, who explains that he is the husband of Velchaninov's old love, and that she is dead. When Velchaninov visits

him the next day he finds him maltreating a little girl, who is, he instantly perceives, his own child. He manages to take her away from Pavel, who is a drunkard and in every way disreputable, and give her lodging with friends, but almost immediately she dies. After her death Pavel announces that he is engaged to marry a girl of sixteen, but when, as he insists, Velchaninov visits her, she confides to him that she detests Pavel and is already engaged to a youth of nineteen. Between them they contrive to pack Pavel off to the country; and he turns up finally at the end of the story as the husband of a provincial beauty, and the lady, of course, has a lover.

These, at least, are the little bits of cork which mark a circle upon the top of the waves while the net drags the floor of the sea and encloses stranger monsters than have ever been brought to the light of day before. The substance of the book is made out of the relationship between Velchaninov and Pavel. Pavel is a type of what Velchaninov calls ‘the eternal husband’. ‘Such a man is born and grows up only to be a husband, and, having married, is promptly transformed into a supplement of his wife, even when he happens to have an unmistakable character of his own ... [Pavel] could only as long as his wife was alive have remained all that he used to be, but, as it was, he was only a fraction of a whole, suddenly cut off and set free, that is something wonderful and unique.’ One of the peculiarities of the eternal husband is that he is always half in love with the lovers of his wife, and at the same time wishes to kill them. Impelled by this mixture of almost amorous affection and hatred, he cannot keep away from Velchaninov, in whom he breeds a kind of reflection of his own sensations of attraction and repulsion. He can never bring himself to make any direct charge against Velchaninov; and Velchaninov is never able to confess or to deny his misconduct. Sometimes, from the stealthy way in which he approaches, Velchaninov feels certain that he has an impulse to kill him; but then he insists upon kissing him and cries out, ‘So, you understand, you’re the one friend left me now!’ One night when Velchaninov is ill and Pavel has shown the most enthusiastic devotion Velchaninov wakes from a nightmare to find Pavel standing over him and attempting to murder him with a razor. Pavel is easily mastered and slinks away shamefaced in the morning. But did he mean to murder him, Velchaninov muses, or did he want it without knowing that he wanted it?

But did he love me yesterday when he declared his feeling and said ‘Let us settle our account’? Yes, it was from hatred that he loved me; that’s the

strongest of all loves ... It would be interesting to know by what I impressed him. Perhaps by my clean gloves and my knowing how to put them on ... He comes here ‘to embrace me and weep’, as he expressed it in the most abject way - that is, he came here to murder me and thought he came ‘to embrace me and to weep’. But who knows? If I had wept with him, perhaps, really, he would have forgiven me, for he had a terrible longing to forgive me! ... Ough! wasn’t he pleased, too, when he made me kiss him! Only he didn’t know then whether he would end by embracing me or murdering me ... The most monstrous monster is the monster with noble feelings ... But it was not your fault, Pavel Pavlovitch, it was not your fault: you’re a monster, so everything about you is bound to be monstrous, your dreams and your hopes.

Perhaps this quotation may give some idea of the labyrinth of the soul through which we have to grope our way. But being only a quotation it makes the different thoughts appear too much isolated; for in the context Velchaninov, as he broods over the blood-stained razor, passes over his involved and crowded train of thought without a single hitch, just, in fact, as we ourselves are conscious of thinking when some startling fact has dropped into the pool of our consciousness. From the crowd of objects pressing upon our attention we select now this one, now that one, weaving them inconsequently into our thought; the associations of a word perhaps make another loop in the line, from which we spring back again to a different section of our main thought, and the whole process seems both inevitable and perfectly lucid. But if we try to construct our mental processes later, we find that the links between one thought and another are submerged. The chain is sunk out of sight and only the leading points emerge to mark the course. Alone among writers Dostoevsky has the power of reconstructing these most swift and complicated states of mind, of re-thinking the whole train of thought in all its speed, now as it flashes into light, now as it lapses into darkness; for he is able to follow not only the vivid streak of achieved thought but to suggest the dim and populous underworld of the mind’s consciousness where desires and impulses are moving blindly beneath the sod. Just as we awaken ourselves from a trance of this kind by striking a chair or a table to assure ourselves of an external reality, so Dostoevsky suddenly makes us behold, for an instant, the face of his hero, or some object in the room.

This is the exact opposite of the method adopted, perforce, by most of our novelists. They reproduce all the external appearances - tricks of manner, landscape, dress, and the effect of the hero upon his friends - but very rarely, and only for an instant, penetrate to the tumult of thought which rages within his own mind. But the whole fabric of a book by Dostoevsky is made out of such material. To him a child or a beggar is as full of violent and subtle emotions as a poet or a sophisticated woman of the world; and it is from the intricate maze of their emotions that Dostoevsky constructs his version of life. In reading him, therefore, we are often bewildered because we find ourselves observing men and women from a different point of view from that to which we are accustomed. We have to get rid of the old tune which runs so persistently in our ears, and to realize how little of our humanity is expressed in that old tune. Again and again we are thrown off the scent in following Dostoevsky's psychology; we constantly find ourselves wondering whether we recognize the feeling that he shows us, and we realize constantly and with a start of surprise that we have met it before in ourselves, or in some moment of intuition have suspected it in others. But we have never spoken of it, and that is why we are surprised. Intuition is the term which we should apply to Dostoevsky's genius at its best. When he is fully possessed by it he is able to read the most inscrutable writing at the depths of the darkest souls; but when it deserts him the whole of his amazing machinery seems to spin fruitlessly in the air. In the present volume, The Double', with all its brilliancy and astonishing ingenuity, is an example of this kind of elaborate failure; 'The Gentle Spirit', on the other hand, is written from start to finish with a power which for the time being turns everything we can put beside it into the palest commonplace.

Dostoevsky in Cranford.

It is amusing sometimes to freshen one's notion of a great, and thus semi-mythical, character by transplanting him in imagination to one's own age, shore, or country village. How, one asks, would Dostoevsky have behaved himself upon the vicarage lawn? In 'Uncle's Dream', the longest story in Mrs Garnett's new volume, he enables one to fancy him in those incongruous surroundings. Mordasov bears at any rate a superficial resemblance to Cranford. All the ladies in that small country town spend their time in drinking tea and talking scandal. A newcomer, such as Prince K., is instantly torn to pieces like a fish tossed to a circle of frenzied and ravenous seagulls. Mordasov cannot be altogether like Cranford, then. No such figure of speech could be used with propriety to describe the demure activities and bright-eyed curiosities of the English circle of ladies. After sending our imaginary Dostoevsky, therefore, pacing up and down the lawn, there can be no doubt that he suddenly stamps his foot, exclaims something unintelligible, and rushes off in despair. 'The instinct of provincial newsmongers sometimes approaches the miraculous ... They know you by heart, they know even what you don't know about yourself. The provincial ought, one would think, by his very nature to be a psychologist and a specialist in human nature. That is why I have been sometimes genuinely amazed at meeting in the provinces not psychologists and specialists in human nature, but a very great number of asses. But that is aside; that is a superfluous reflection.' His patience is already exhausted; it is idle to expect that he will linger in the High-street or hang in a rapture of observation round the draper's shop. The delightful shades and subdeties of English provincial life are lost upon him.

But Mordasov is a very different place from Cranford. The ladies do not confine themselves to tea, as their condition after dinner sometimes testifies. Their tongues wag with a fury that is rather that of the open market-place than of the closed drawing-room. Though they indulge in petty vices such as listening at keyholes and stealing the sugar when the hostess is out of the room, they act with the brazen boldness of viragos. One would be alarmed to find oneself left alone with one of them. Nevertheless, in his big rough way, Dostoevsky is neither savagely contemptuous nor sadly compassionate; he is genuinely amused by the spectacle of Mordasov.

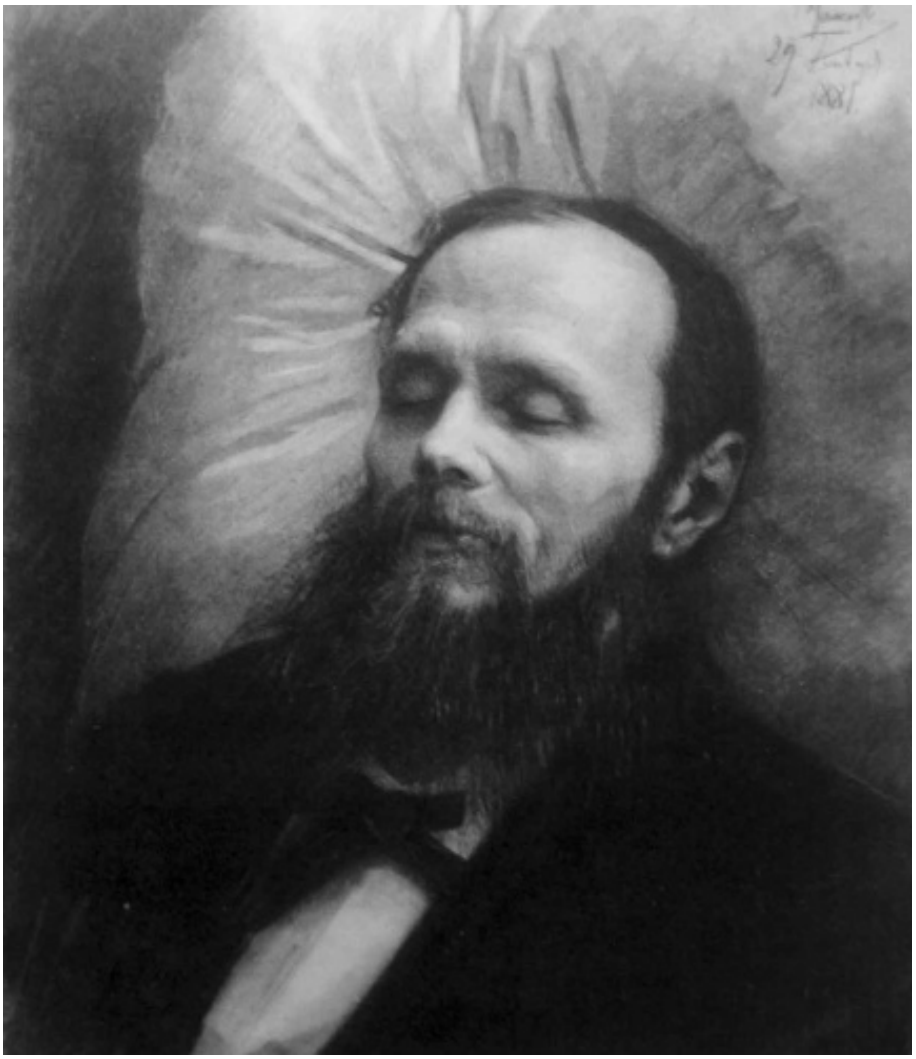
It roused, as human life so seldom did, his sense of comedy. He tries even to adapt his dialogue to the little humours of a gossiping conversation.

‘Call that a dance! I’ve danced myself, the shawl dance, at the breaking-up party at Madame Jamis’s select boarding-school - and it really was a distinguished performance. I was applauded by senators! The daughters of princes and counts were educated there! ... Only fancy’ [she runs on, as if she were imitating the patter of Miss Bates] ‘chocolate was handed round to everyone, but not offered to me, and they did not say a word to me all the time... The tub of a woman, I’ll pay her out!’

But Dostoevsky cannot keep to that tripping measure for long. The language becomes abusive, and the temper violent. His comedy has far more in common with the comedy of Wycherly than with the comedy of Jane Austen. It rapidly runs to seed, and becomes a helter-skelter, extravagant farce. The restraint and aloofness of the great comic writers are impossible to him. It is probable, for one reason, that he could not allow himself the time. ‘Uncle’s Dream’, ‘The Crocodile’, and ‘An Unpleasant Predicament’ read as if they were the improvisations of a gigantic talent reeling off its wild imaginations at breathless speed. They have the diffuseness of a mind too tired to concentrate, and too fully charged to stop short. Slack and un girt as it is, it tumbles out rubbish and splendour pell-mell.

Yet we are perpetually conscious that, if Dostoevsky fails to keep within the proper limits, it is because the fervour of his genius goads him across the boundary. Because of his sympathy his laughter passes beyond merriment into a strange violent amusement which is not merry at all. He is incapable, even when his story is hampered by the digression, of passing by anything so important and lovable as a man or a woman without stopping to consider their case and explain it. Thus at one moment it occurs to him that there must be a reason why an unfortunate clerk could not afford to pay for a bottle of wine. Immediately, as if recalling a story which is known to him down to its most minute detail, he describes how the clerk had been born and brought up; it is then necessary to bring in the career of his brutal father-in-law, and that leads him to describe the peculiarities of the five unfortunate women whom the father-in-law bullies. In short, once you are alive, there is no end to the complexity of your connections, and sorrow and misery are so rubbed into the texture of life that the more you examine it the more cloudy and confused it becomes. Perhaps it is because we know so

little about the family history of the ladies of Cranford that we can put the book down with a smile. Still, we need not underrate the value of comedy because Dostoevsky makes the perfection of the English product appear to be the result of leaving out all the most important things. It is the old, unnecessary quarrel between the inch of smooth ivory and the six feet of canvas with its strong coarse grains.



Dostoyevsky on his deathbed, 1881



Alexander Nevsky Monastery, St. Petersburg — Dostoyevsky's final resting place



Dostoyevsky's grave